ASSOCIATION OF AMBULANCE CHIEF EXECUTIVES

National Ambulance Data – Final

Data to the end of October 2023

Published – November 28th, 2023

2. Summary and Contents

Overview: There was a big uplift in demand in October, both in terms of 999-calls answered and the overall volume of incidents: Category-1 recorded the fourth highest total to-date. Response times slowed for every category, taking most well above their respective national standards. Hear-and-Treat response volumes were the second highest to-date, and conveyance to Emergency Departments (EDs) the second highest since late 2021. Patient handover delays at EDs increased sharply: those of 15-minutes or longer reached the second highest volume to date and the number of hour-plus delays have doubled in under six months.

Section 1.
Contact Volume and Call Answer Time

- 999-calls answered increased to their highest volume since December 2022 with 858-thousand calls across the month.
- The mean-time taken to answer calls was nine-seconds in October. This was faster than September by 12-seconds, and compares with a 50-second answer time in October 2022.

Section 2.
Incidents and Response Time, by Category

- Total incidents reached their highest monthly volume since January 2022. Category-1 reached the fourth highest to-date, and Category-2 the second highest since December 2021.
- Response times slowed for all categories. The mean for Category-1 reached 8-minutes 40-seconds, and Category-2 nearly 42-minutes, slower than national standards by some margin.

Section 3.
Incidents by Response Outcome

- Volume of Hear-and-Treat responses reached 94-thousand, the second highest to-date and 14-thousand more than October 2022.
- Conveyance to Emergency Departments increased to 373-thousand, the second highest volume since October 2021.

Section 4.
Patient Handover Delays

- Delays exceeding 15-minutes increased to 237-thousand, the second highest volume to date. Time lost to these delays reached 149-thousand hours, the equivalent of 119-thousand ambulance job-cycles.
- Hour-plus delays reached 44-thousand. This is the seventh highest to-date, and double the volume seen in July 2023. As a result of these delays, 37-thousand patients were exposed to additional potential harm.

Source of all data is AQI September 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

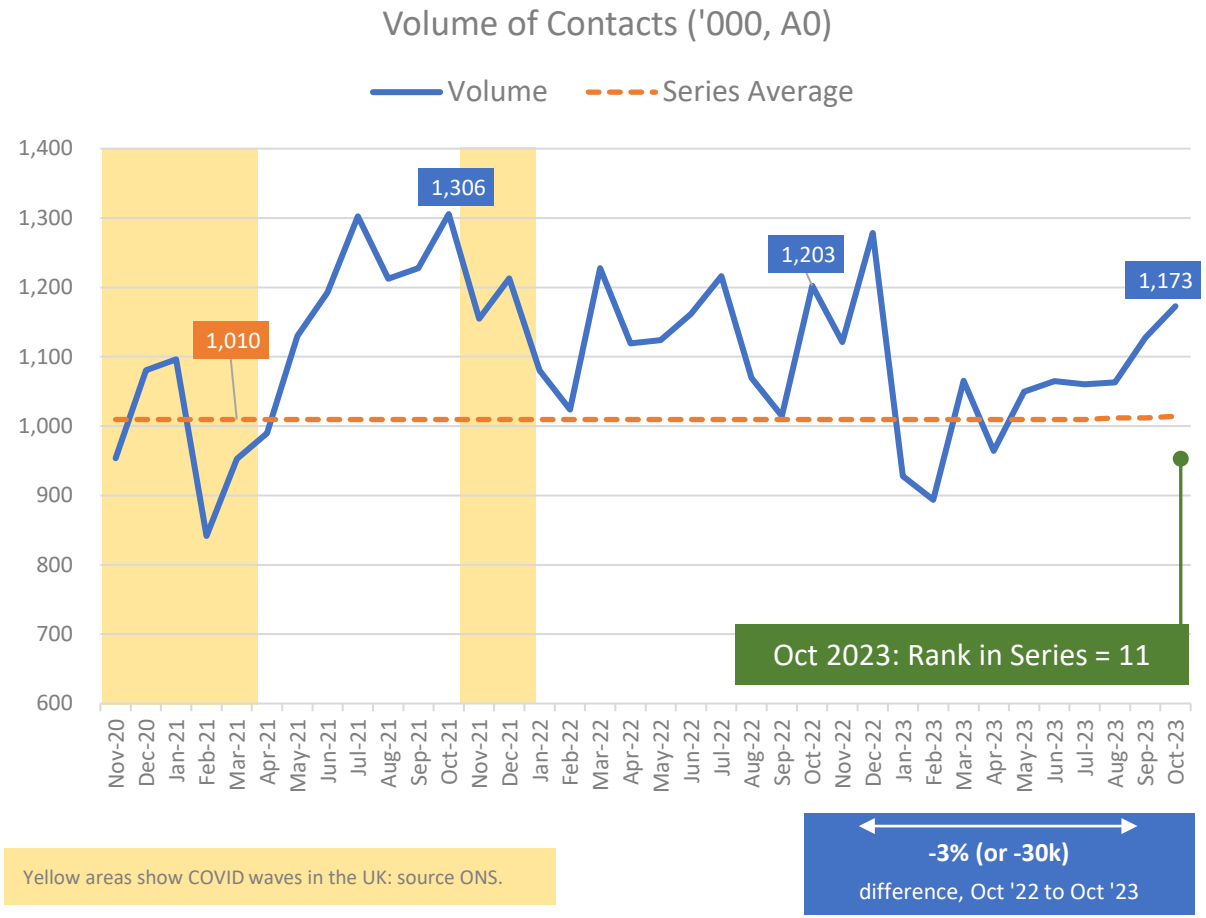
Contact Volume and Call Answer time

- 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)

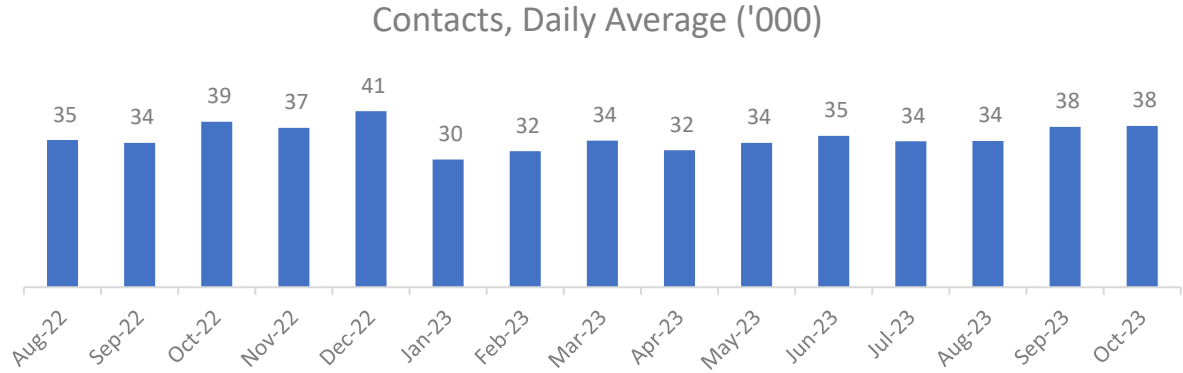
Contacts to ambulance control rooms increased by 45-thousand between September and October, taking the monthly total to 1.2-million. This is the highest monthly volume since December 2022, and the 11th highest to-date. Nonetheless, it was lower than October 2022 by 30-thousand calls.

1. Monthly

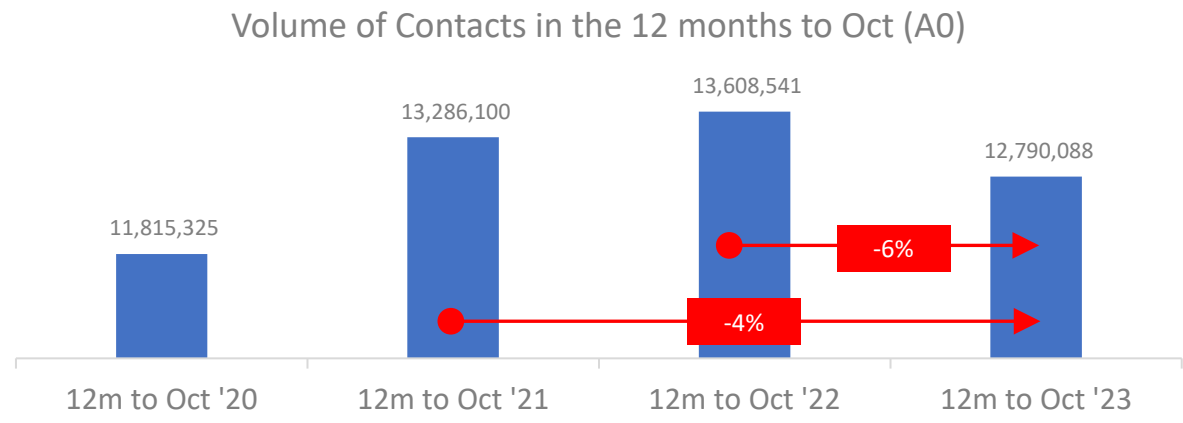


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



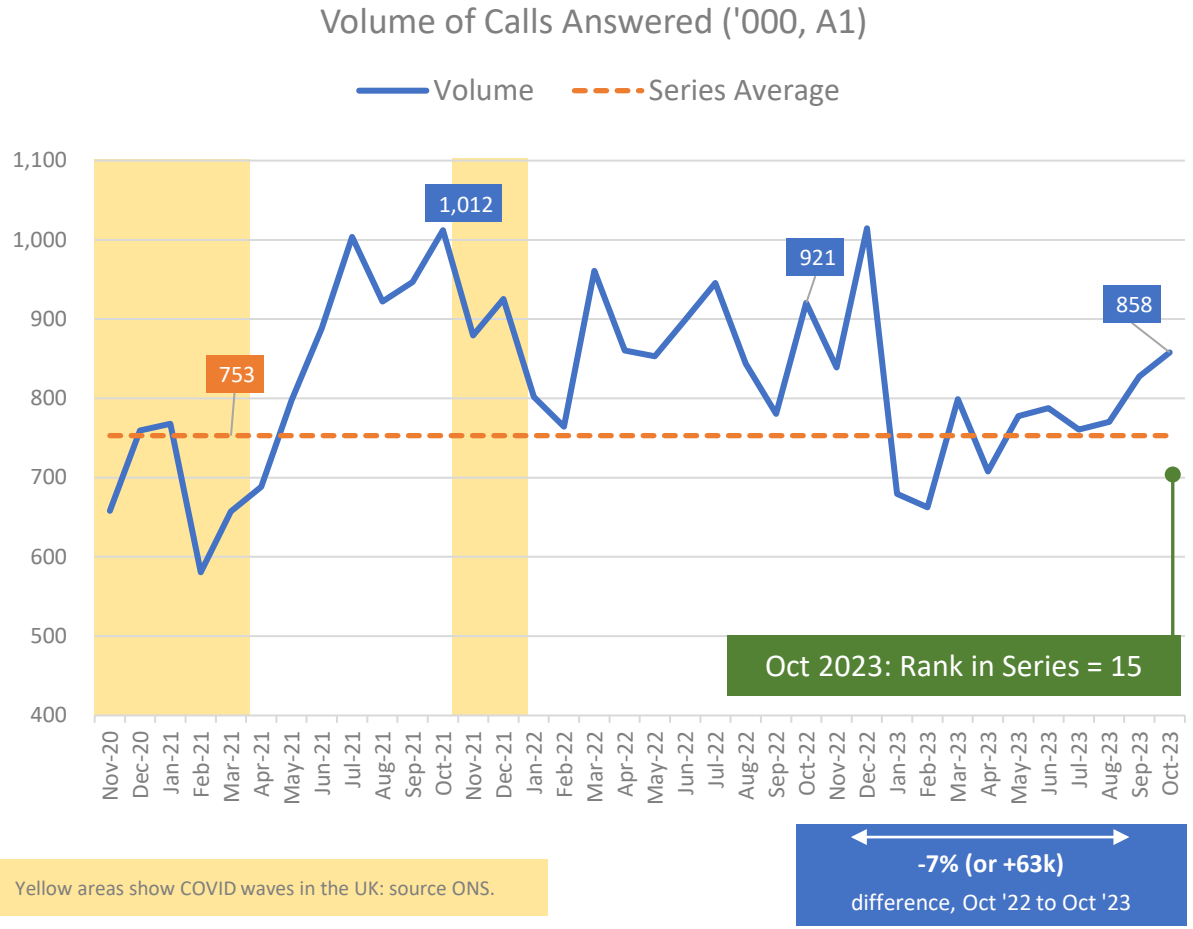
3. Annualised Data



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

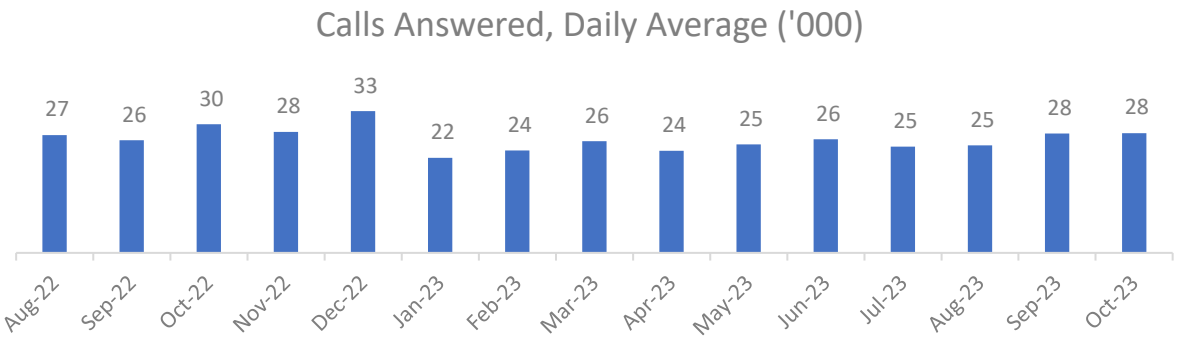
The monthly volume of 999-calls answered increased by 30-thousand between September and October, reaching 858-thousand across the month. This is lower than October 2022 by 63-thousand, but is the highest seen since December 2022.

1. Monthly

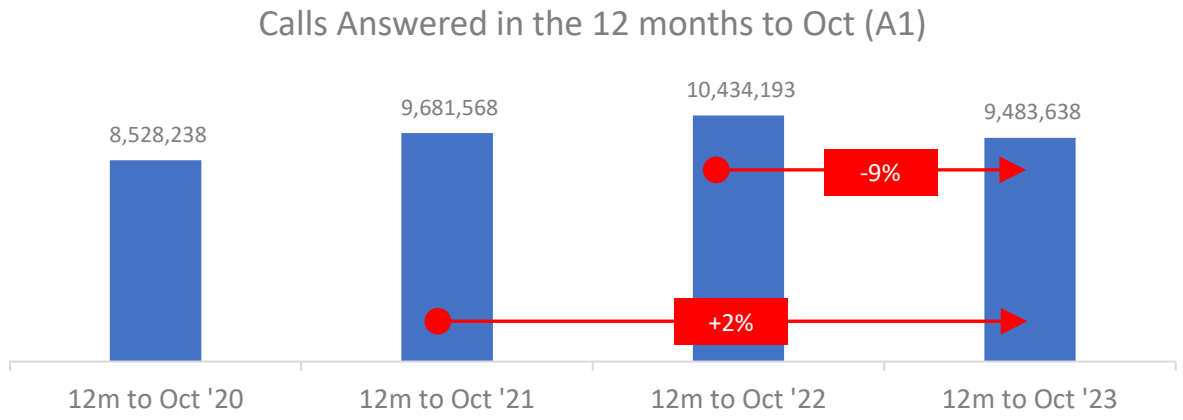


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



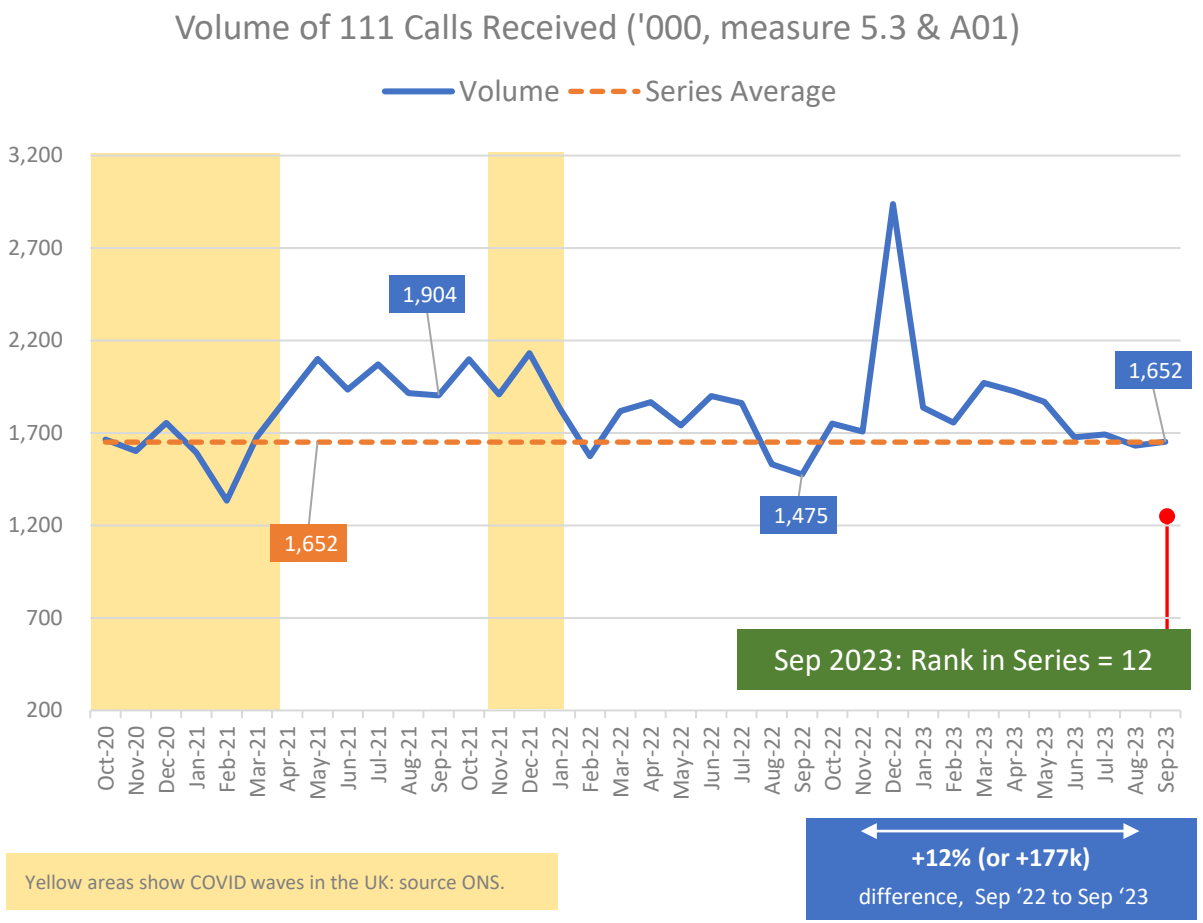
3. Annualised Data



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

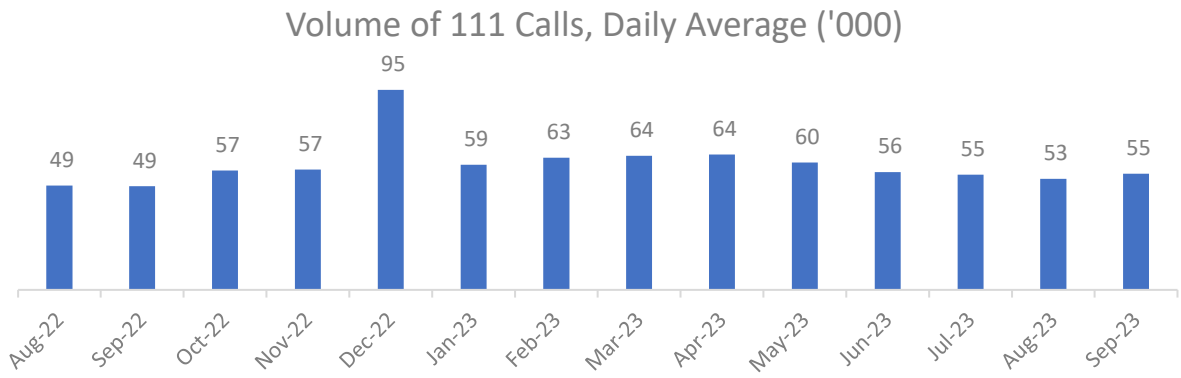
111-call data shows the monthly volume increased by 20-thousand calls in between August and September: the total of 1.6-million is the 12th highest to-date. This exceeds September 2021 by 177-thousand calls, but is some way below the 1.9 million recorded in September 2021.

1. Monthly

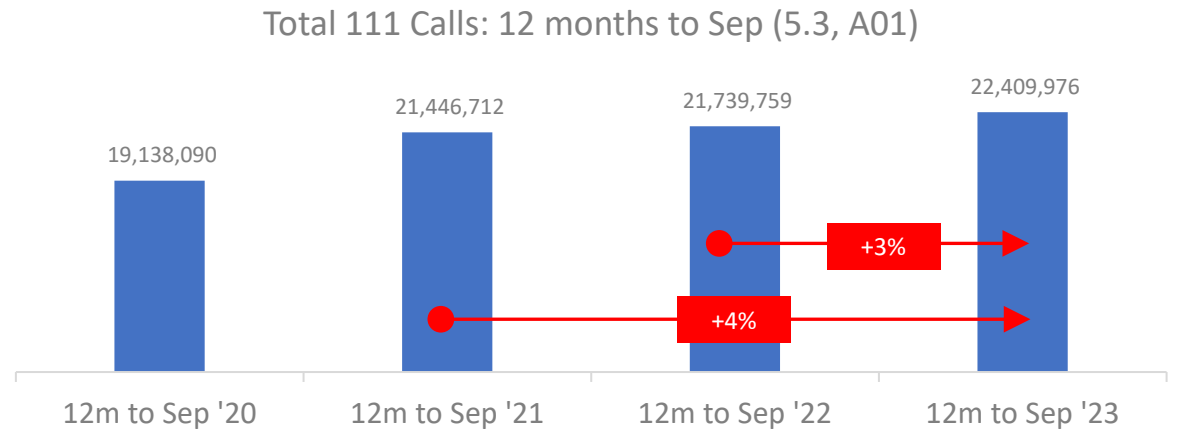


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

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))

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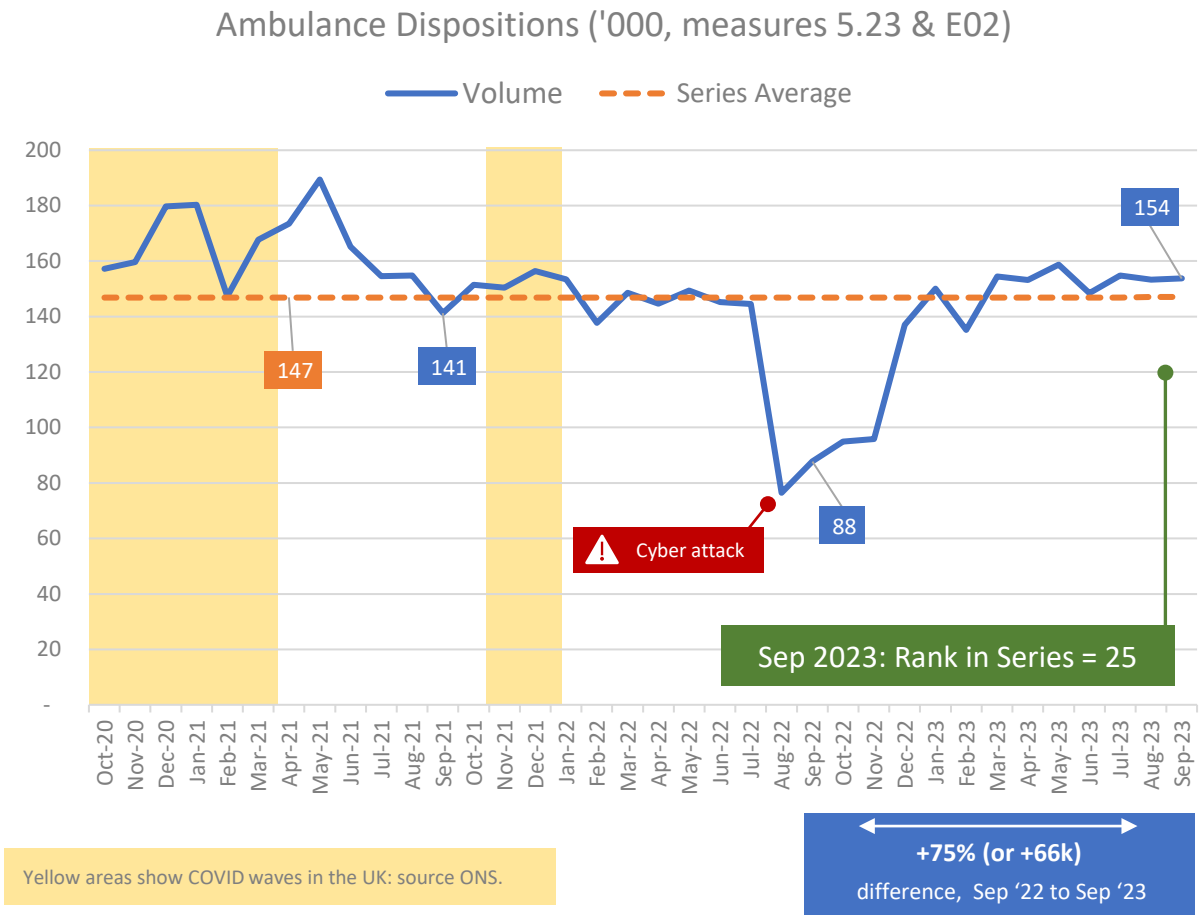
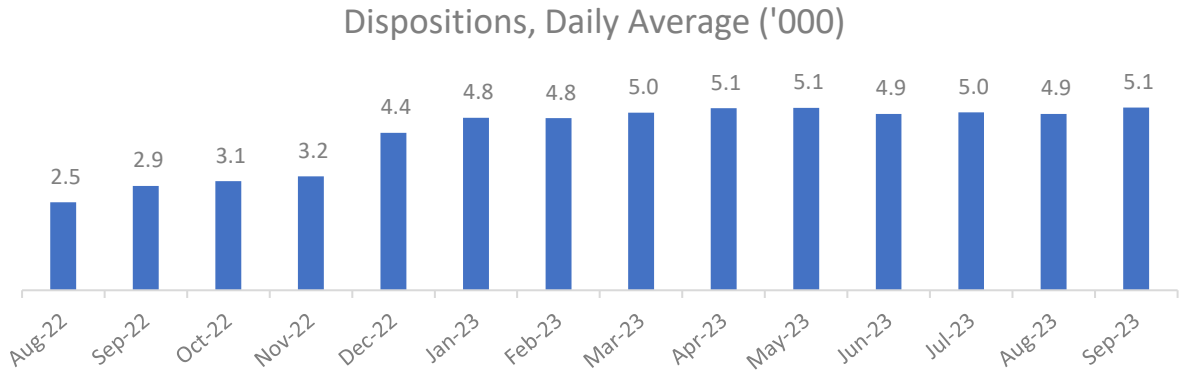
The monthly volume of 111 calls referred to ambulance services was largely unchanged between August and September, with an increase of around 400. Annualised data show there were 44-thousand more dispositions in the most recent 12-months compared with the previous period.

1. Monthly

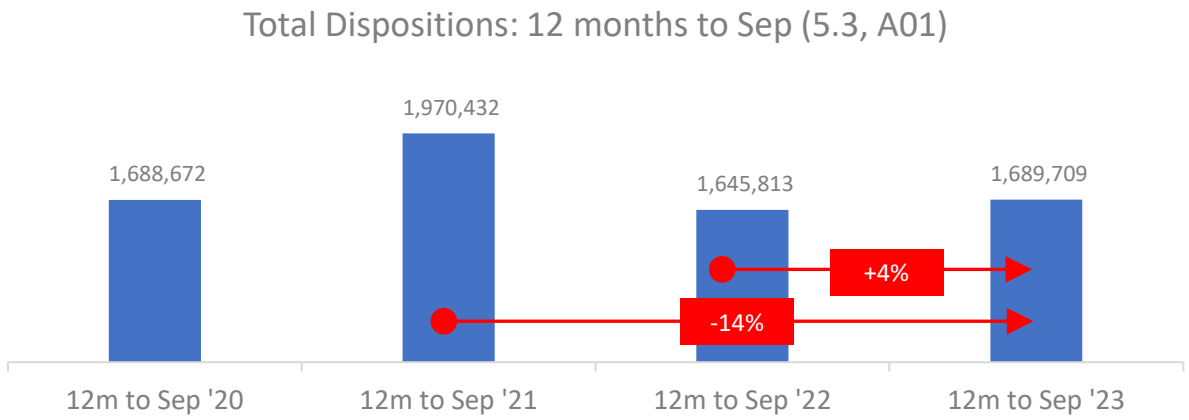


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



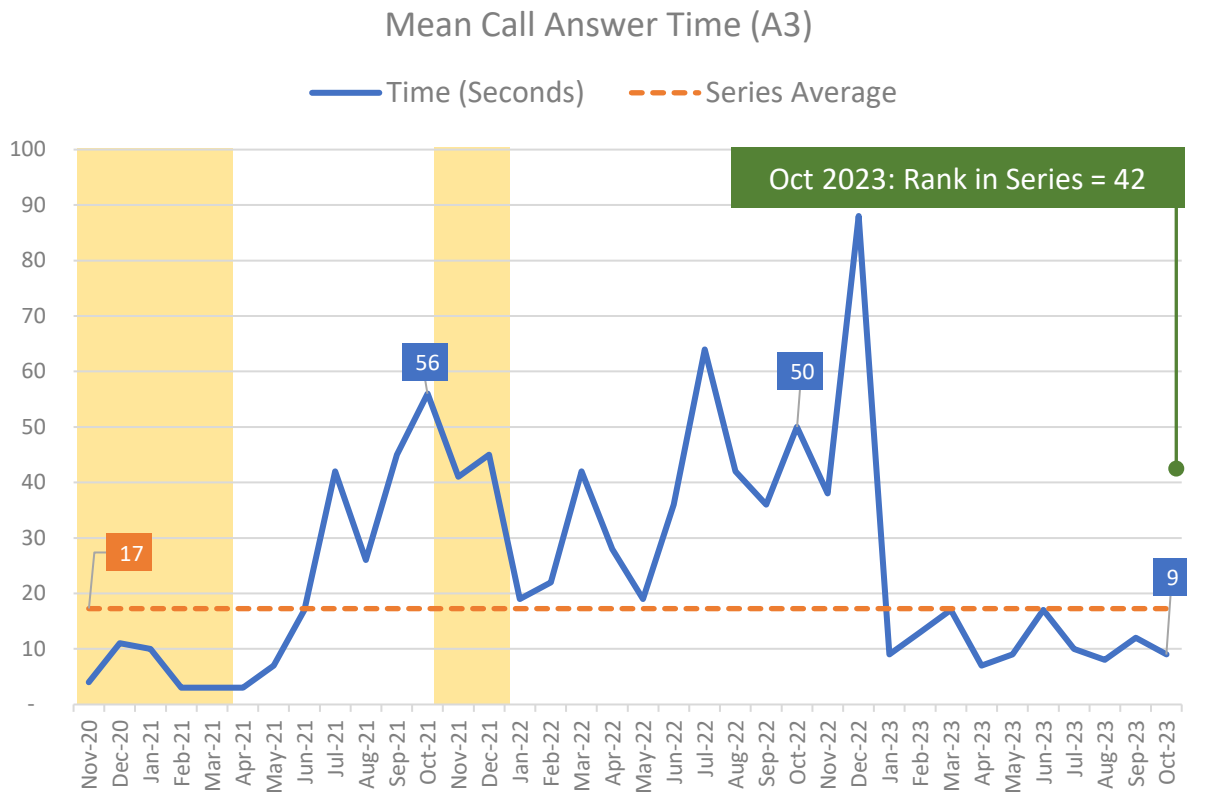
3. Annualised Data



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

Mean call answer time was three-seconds faster than September, and 41-seconds faster than October 2022. The 90th Centile answer time followed a similar pattern – a month-on-month drop to 53-seconds, which is over two-and-a-half minutes faster than in October 2022.

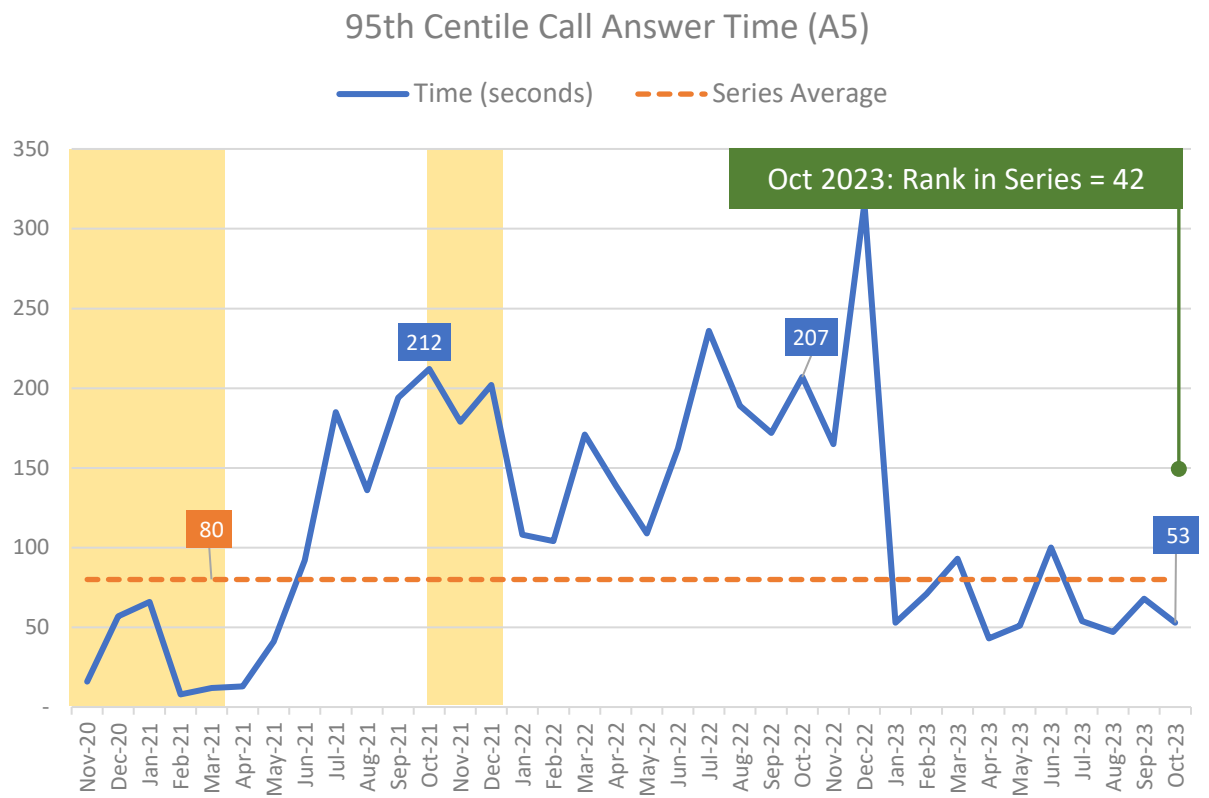
1. Mean



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

-41 seconds
difference, Oct '22 to Oct '23

2. 95th Centile



-154 seconds
difference, Oct '22 to Oct '23

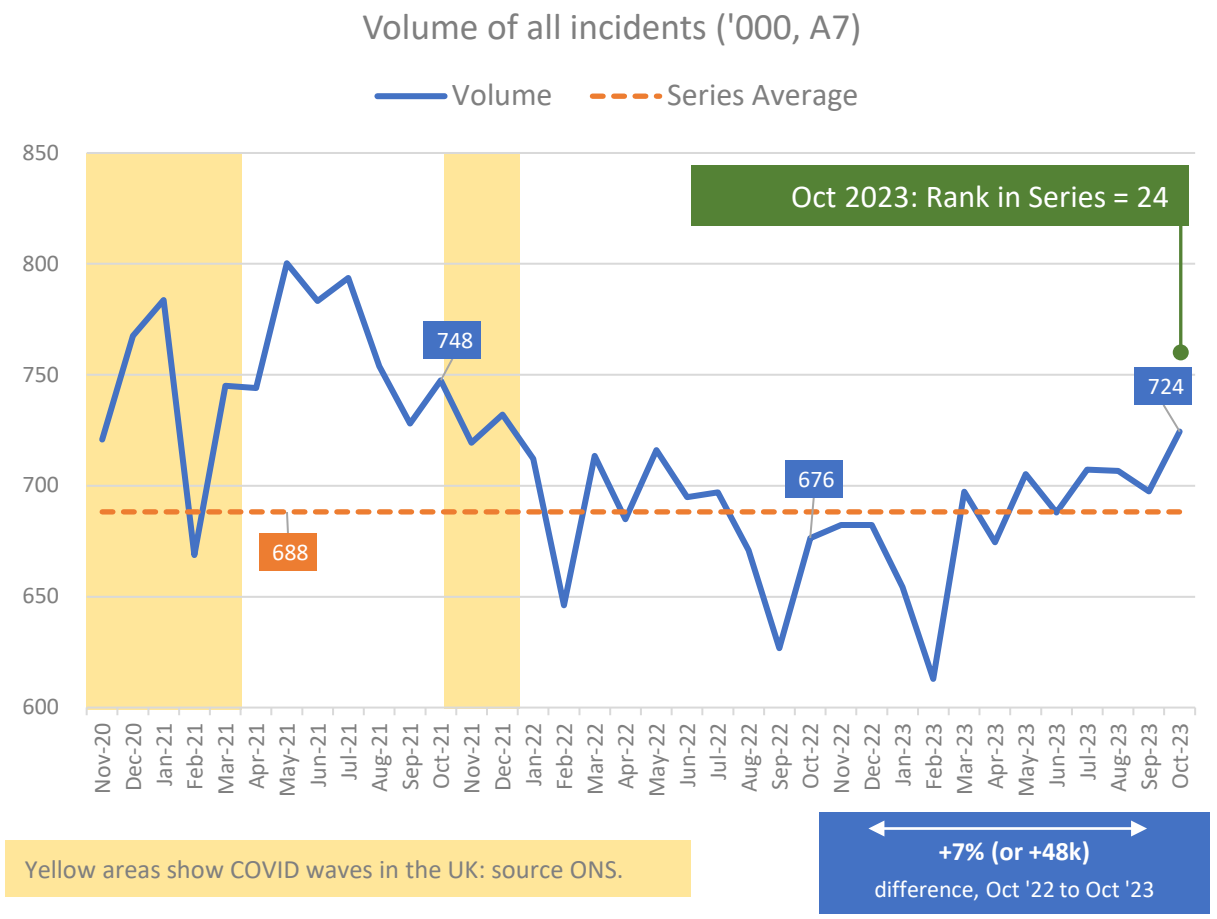
Section 2

Incidents and Response Time, by Category

10. Demand: All Incidents (A7)

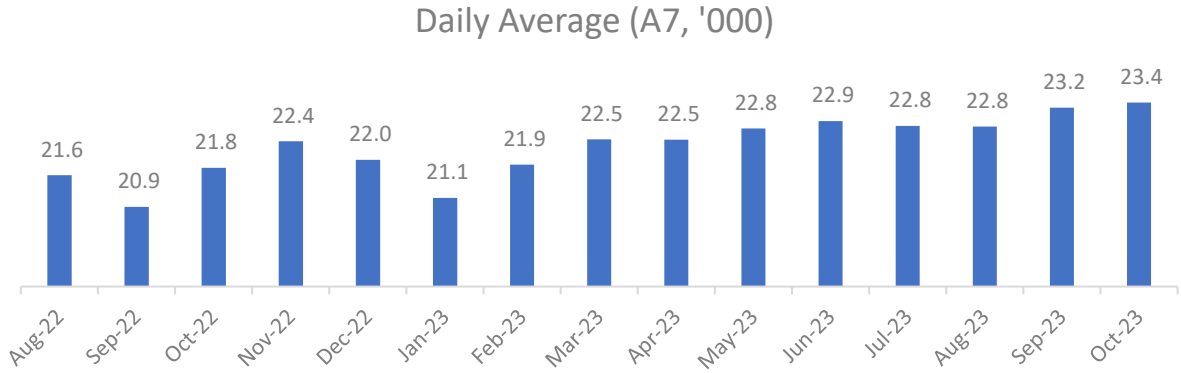
Volume of incidents increased to reach 724-thousand in October. This is the greatest monthly-volume since January 2022, and 48-thousand more than recorded in October 2022.

1. Monthly

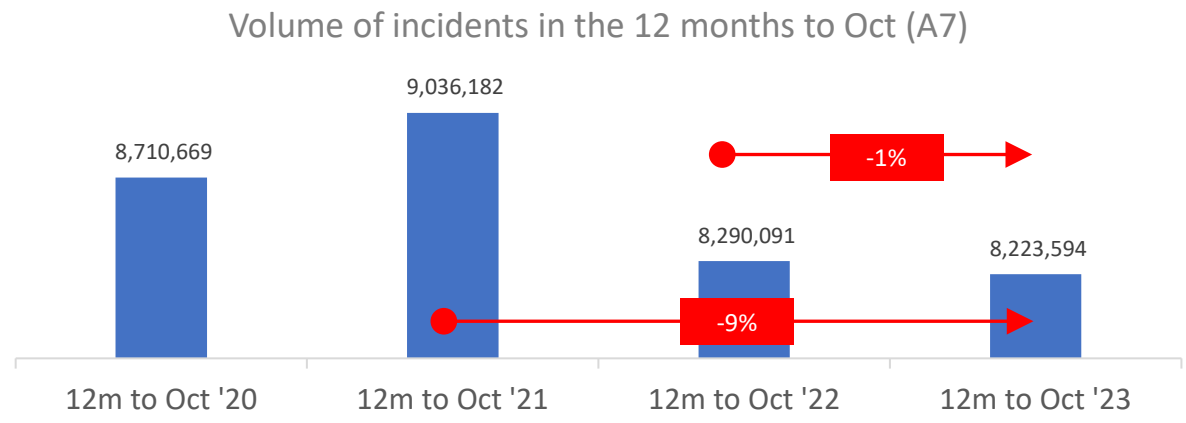


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



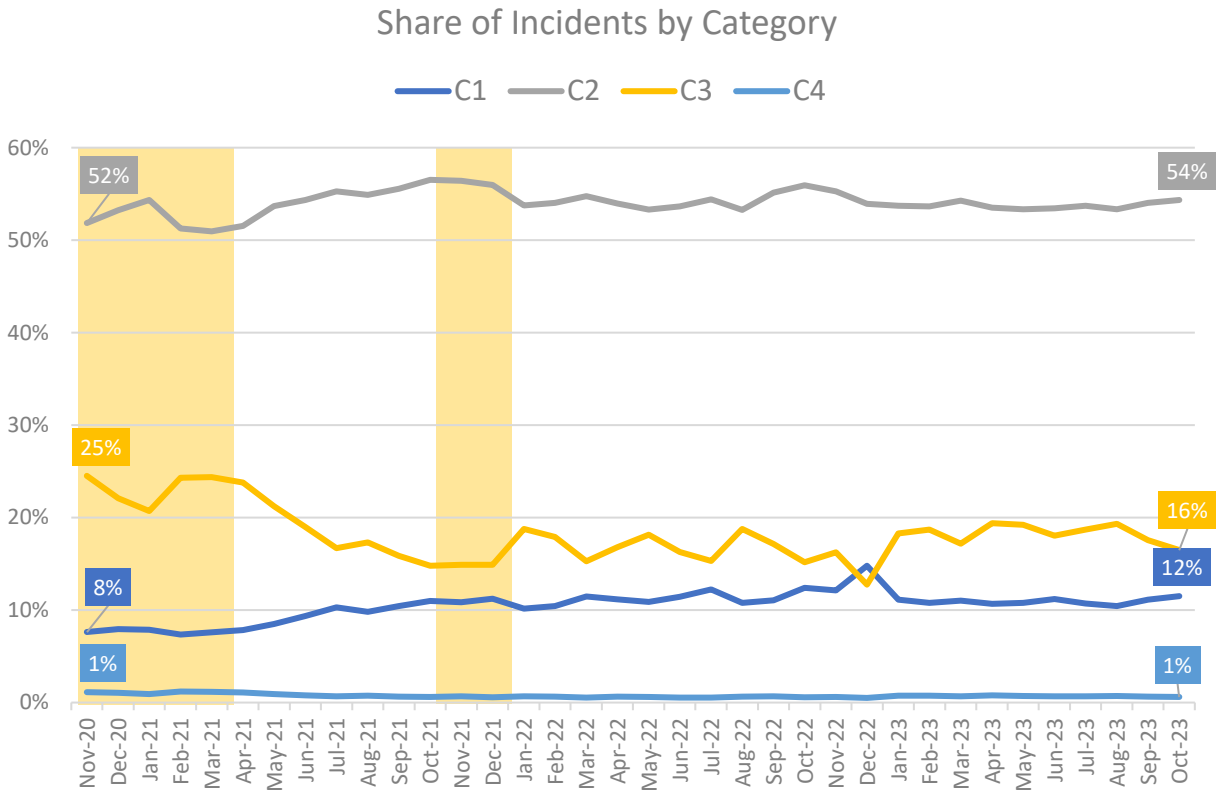
3. Annualised Data



11. Demand: Share of Incidents by Category

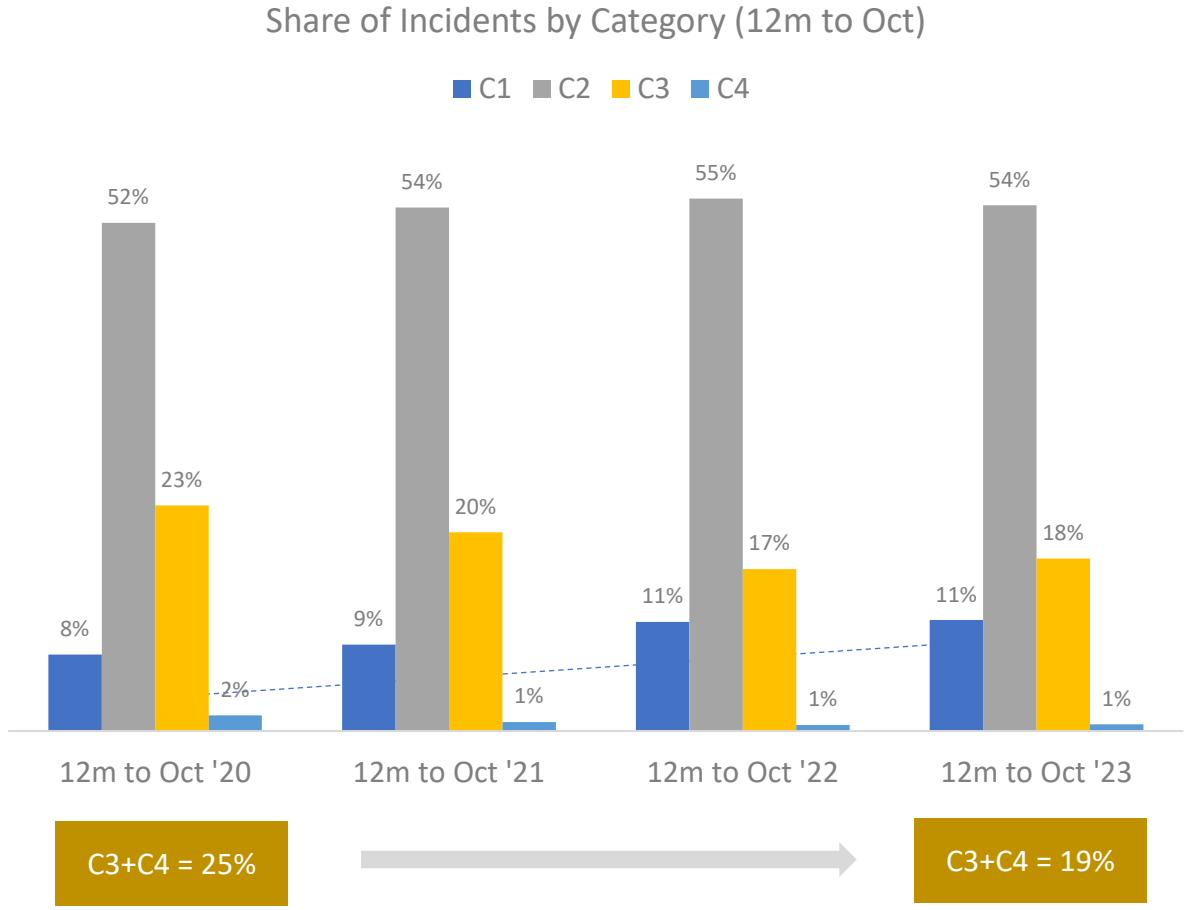
Category-1 incidents accounted for 12% of the total in October – the highest proportion since December 2022. Category-3 saw share of incidents dip to 16% (from 19% two-months ago). Category-2 and Category-4 incidents saw their share of the total unchanged.

1. Monthly



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

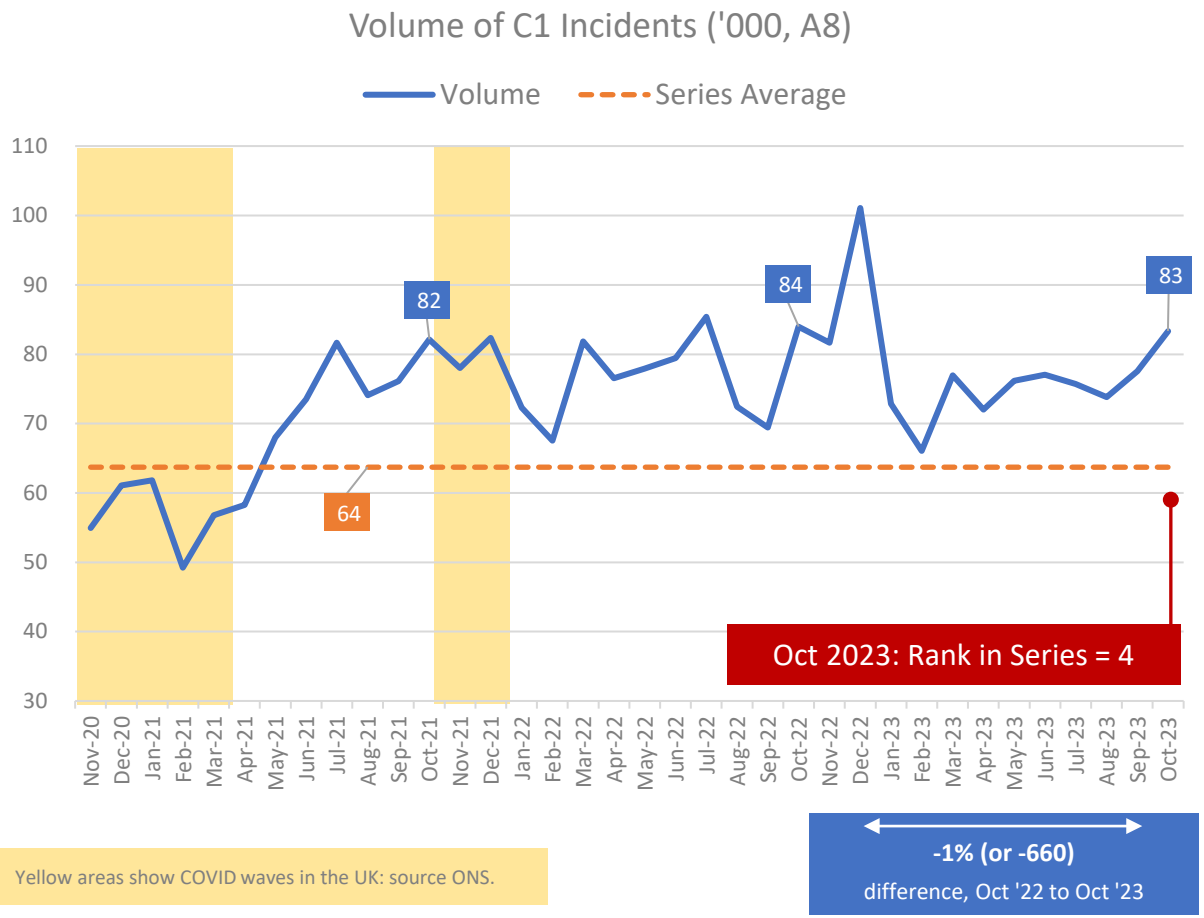
2. Annualised Data



12. Demand: Category-1 Incidents (A8)

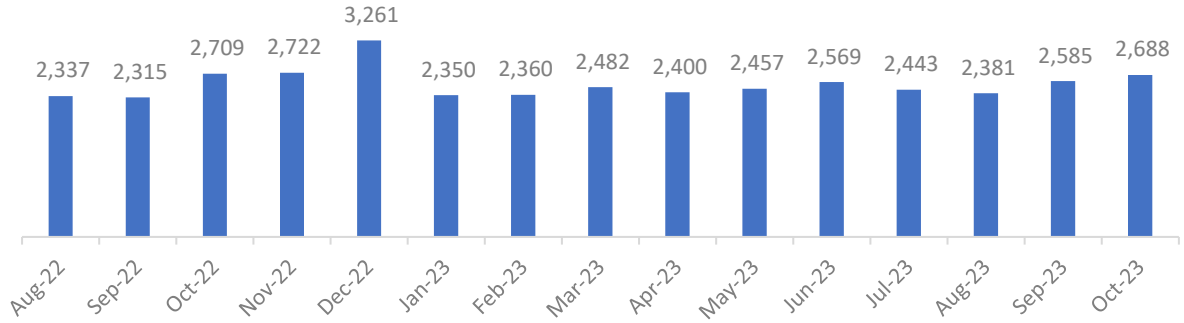
October saw the 4th greatest monthly volume of Category-1 incidents to-date, with an increase of nearly six-thousand taking the total to 83-thousand. This is only slightly lower than October 2022. Annualised volume saw growth of 1% between the current and previous periods – taking the total to 934-thousand.

1. Monthly

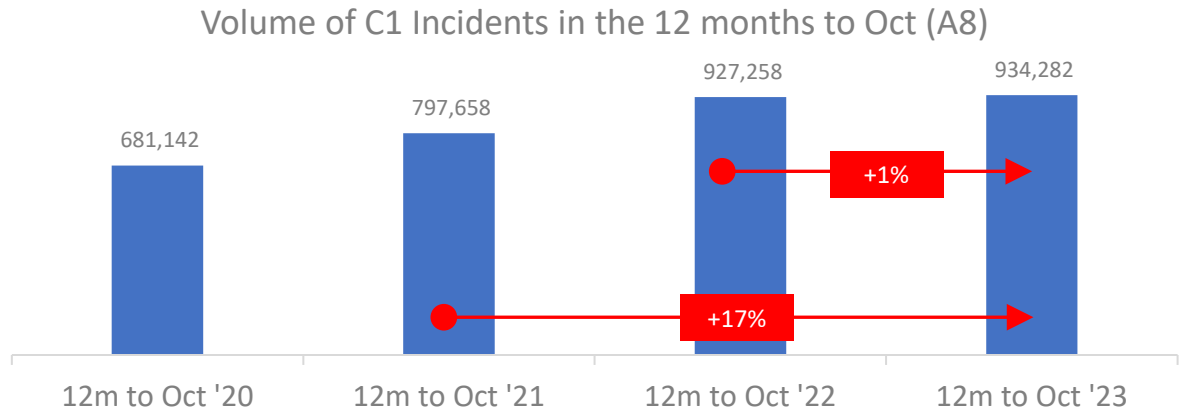


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



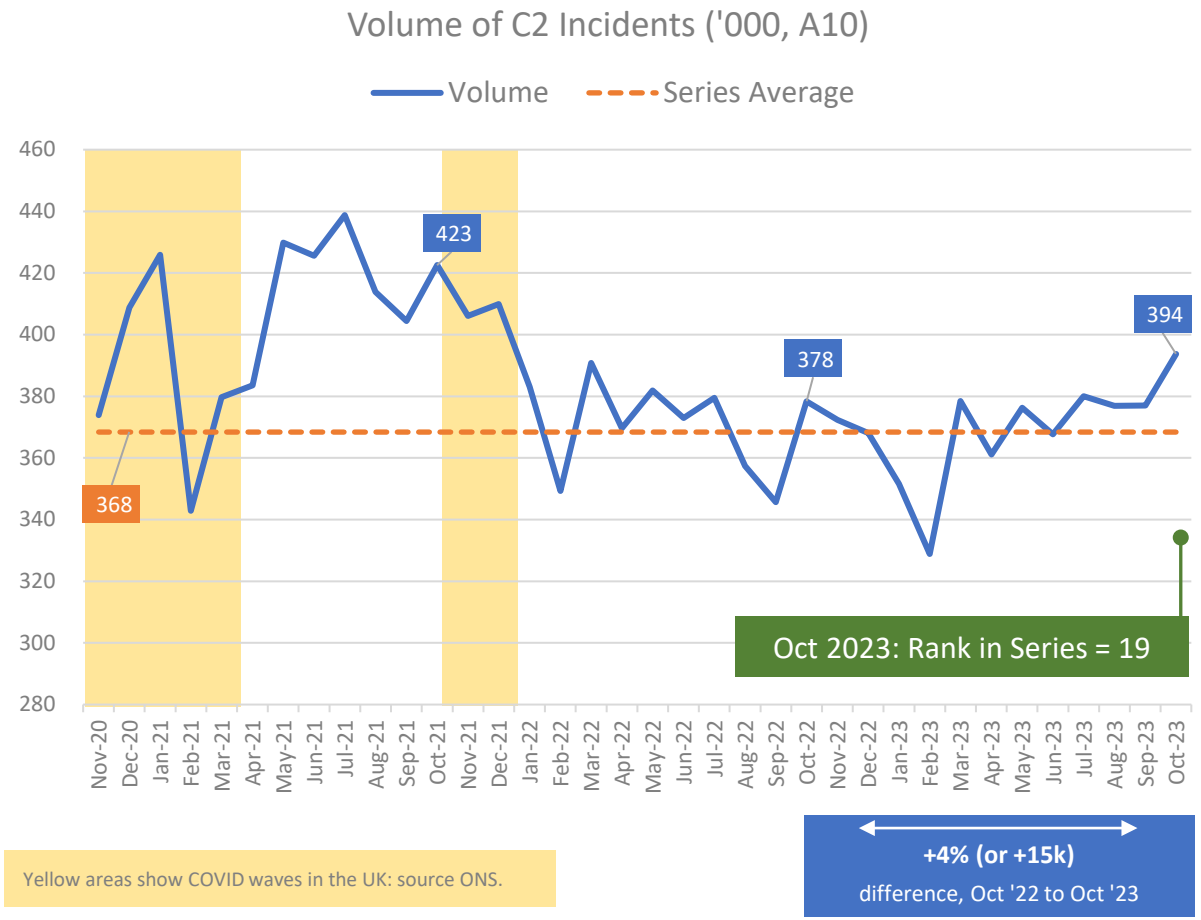
3. Annualised Data



13. Demand: Category-2 Incidents (A10)

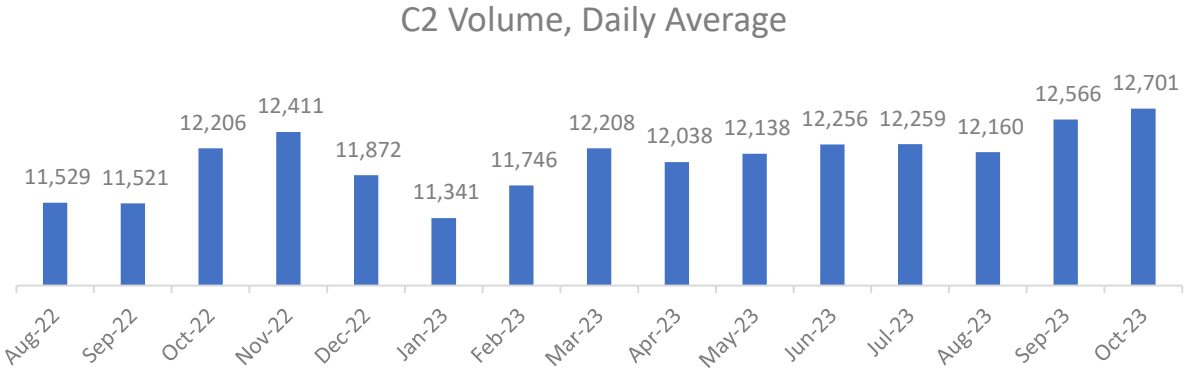
Category-2 incidents reached the highest monthly total since December 2021, with 394-thousand across the month. This equates to a 12,701 incidents each day. The annualised data for the most recent period shows a total of 4.4-million incidents. This represents a 2% decrease compared with the previous period.

1. Monthly

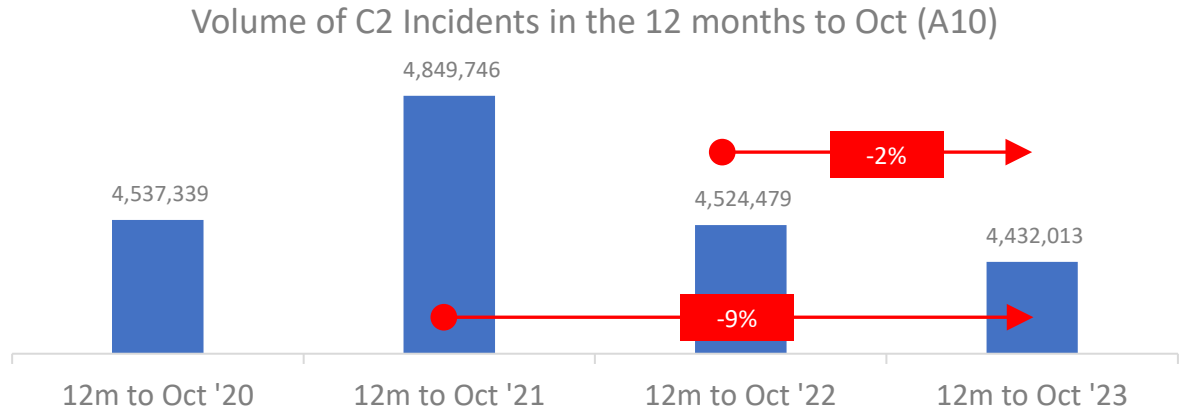


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



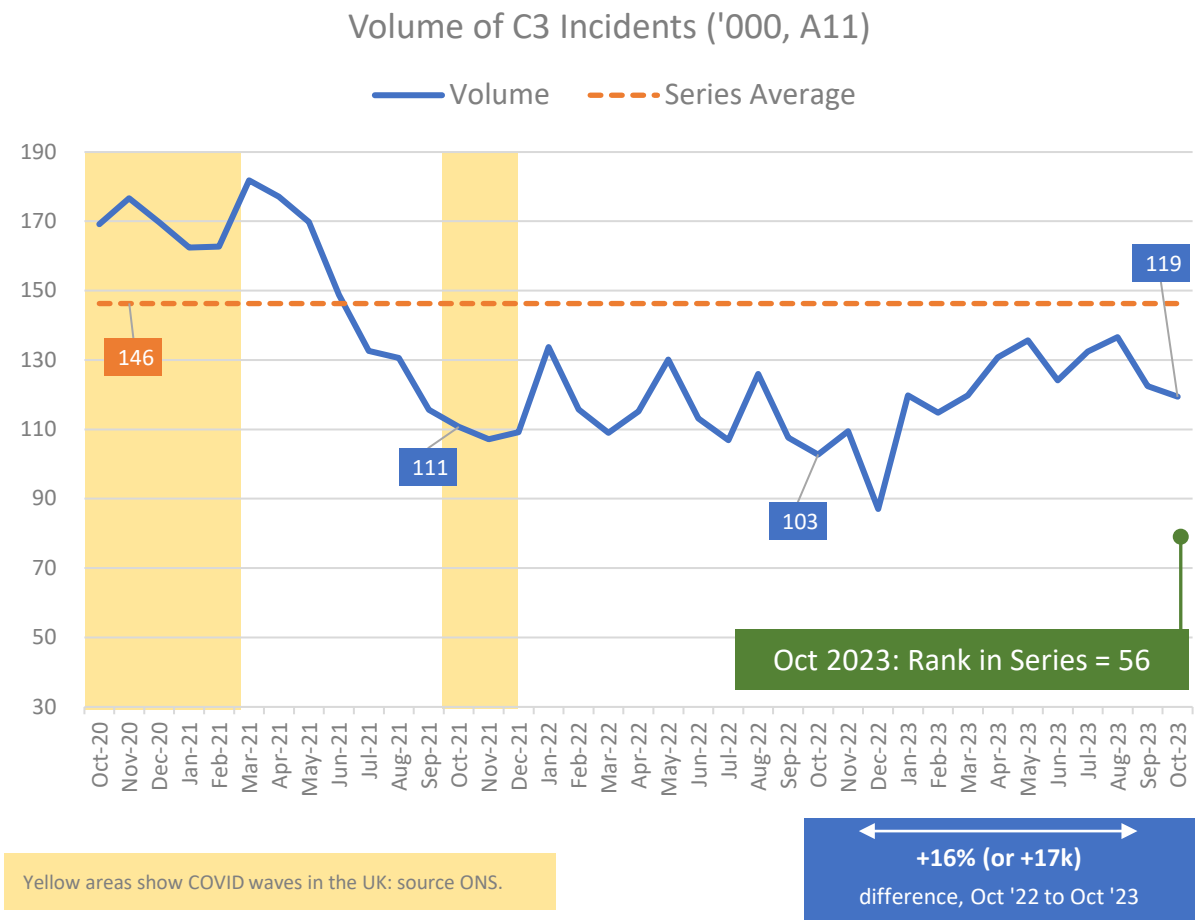
3. Annualised Data



14. Demand: Category-3 Incidents (A11)

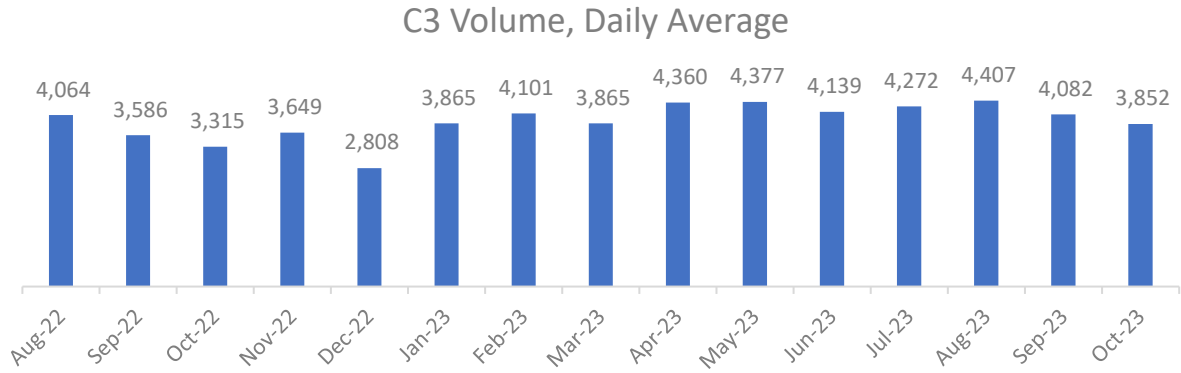
Category-3 volume dropped for the second consecutive month, reaching 119-thousand in October. However, this is 17-thousand greater than in October 2022, while the annualised data to October 2023 (1.4-million) is 6% greater than the previous period.

1. Monthly

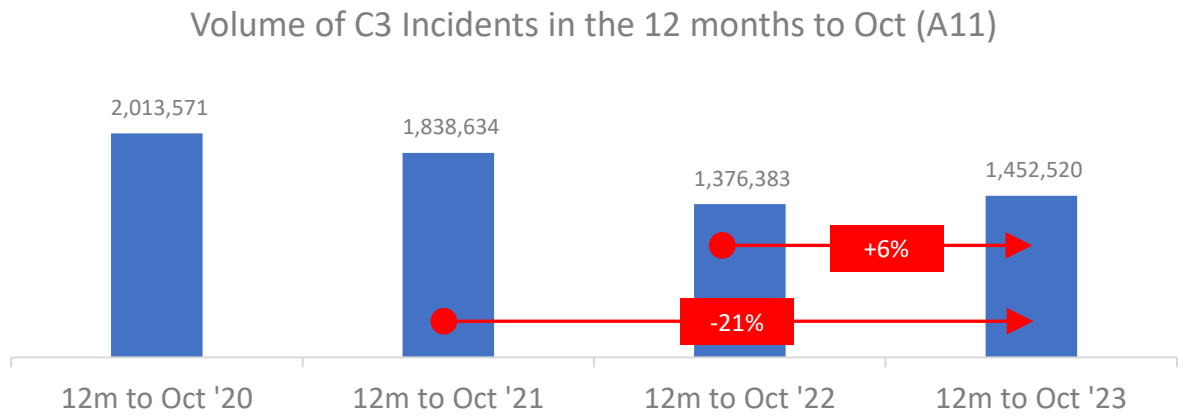


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



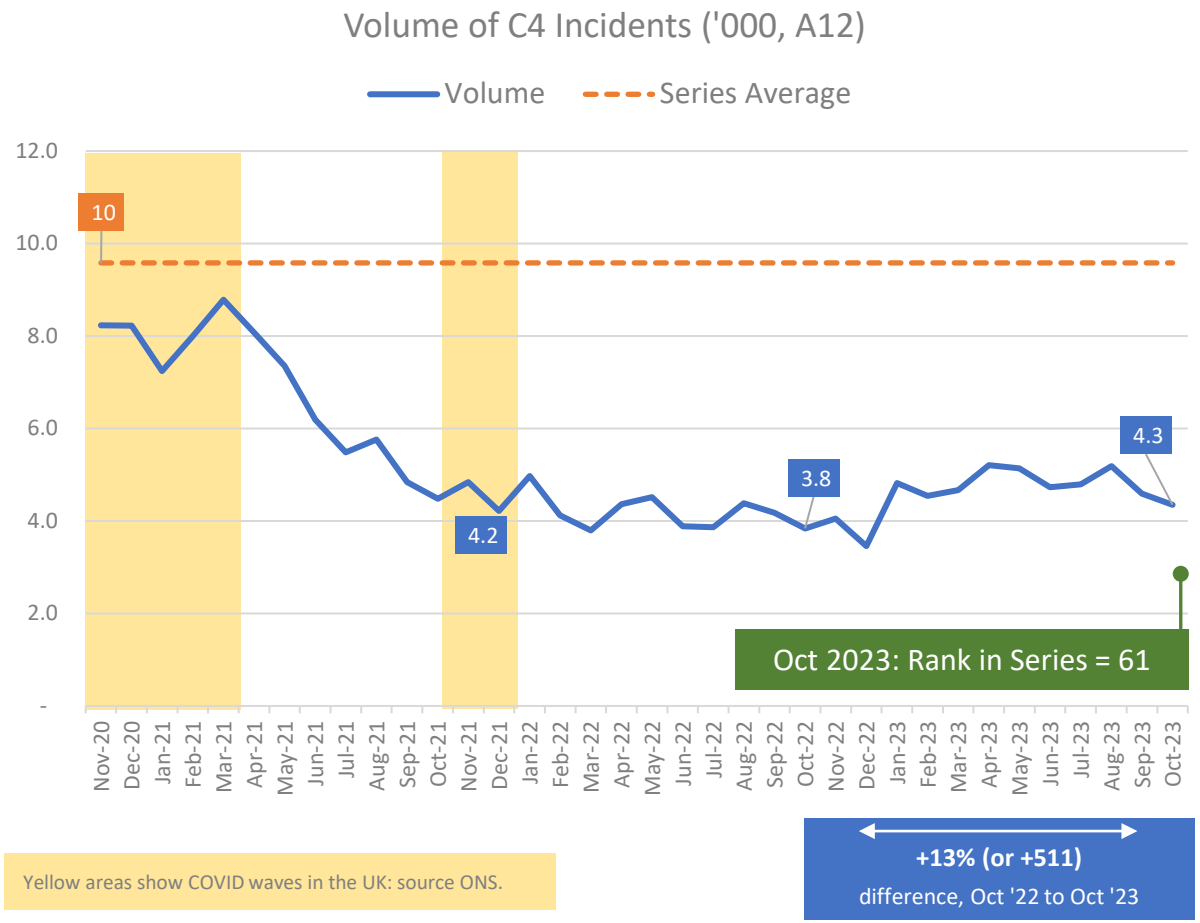
3. Annualised Data



15. Demand: Category-4 Incidents (A12)

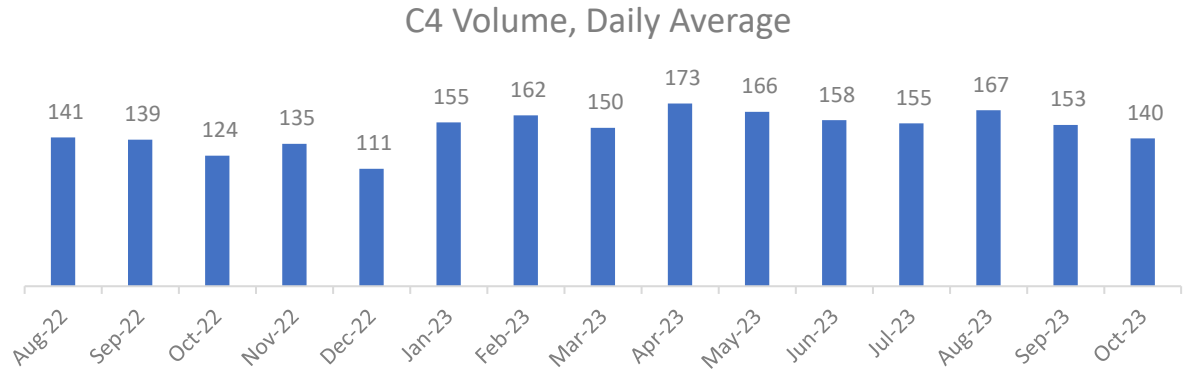
Category-4 incidents also dropped for the second month running, reaching 4.3-thousand across the month (or 140 per-day). As with Category-3, however, the most recent month recorded more incidents than October 2022, and the annualised data show an increase of nearly 10%.

1. Monthly

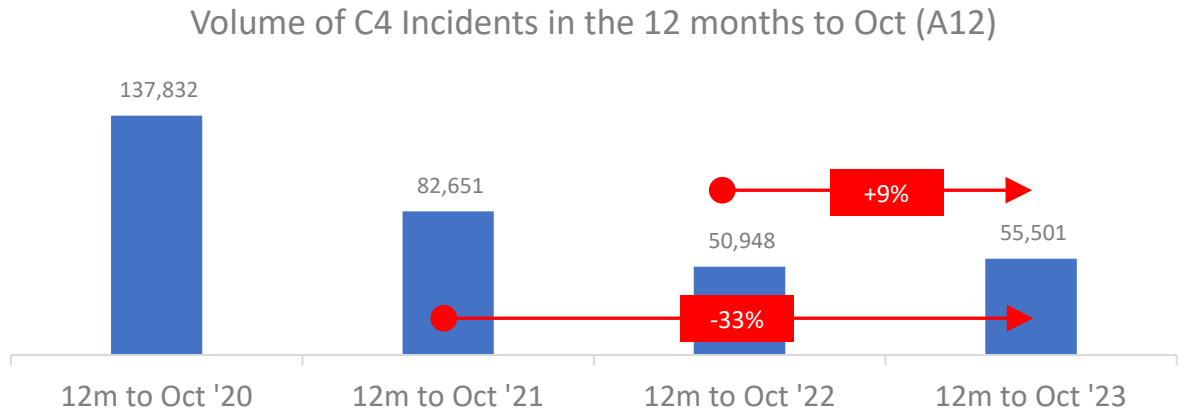


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



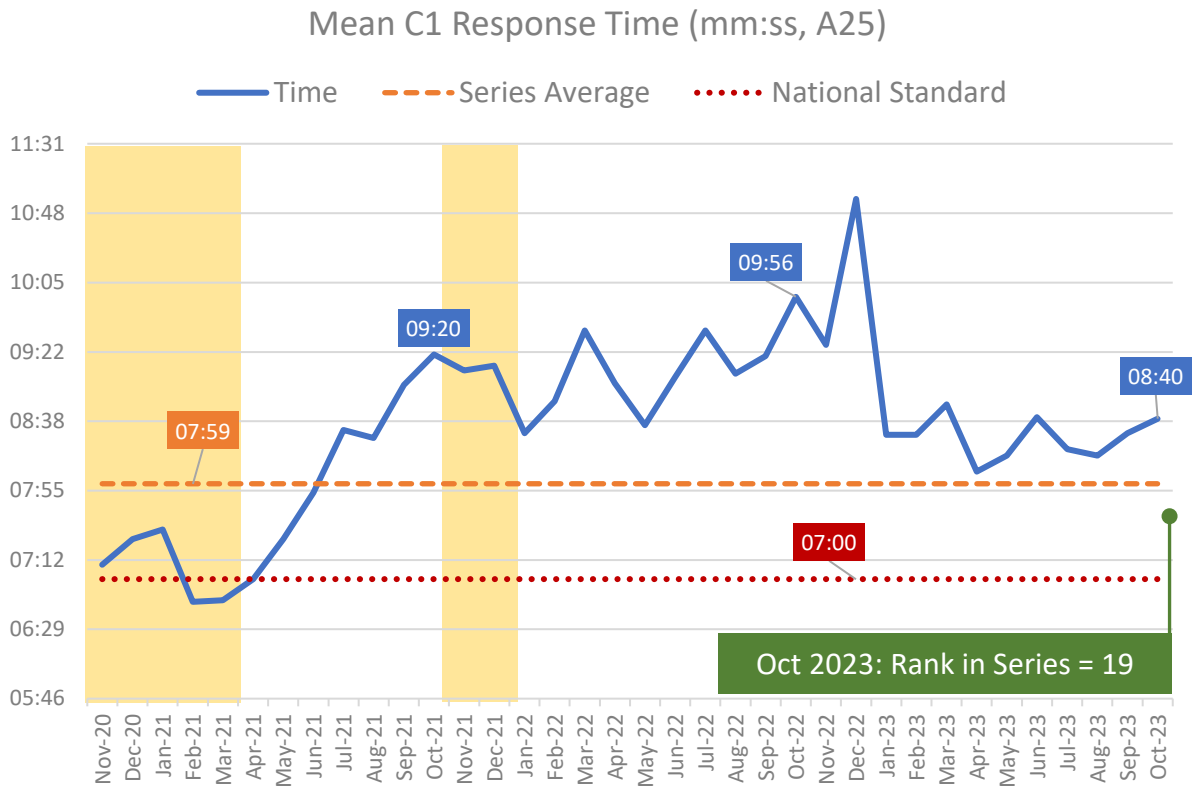
3. Annualised Data



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

Category-1 response times slowed for a second month. The mean reached 8-minutes-40-seconds, faster than October 2022 by over minute, but still some-way above the national standard. The 90th Centile has been faster than the national standard four times since April, but exceeded it by 28-seconds in October.

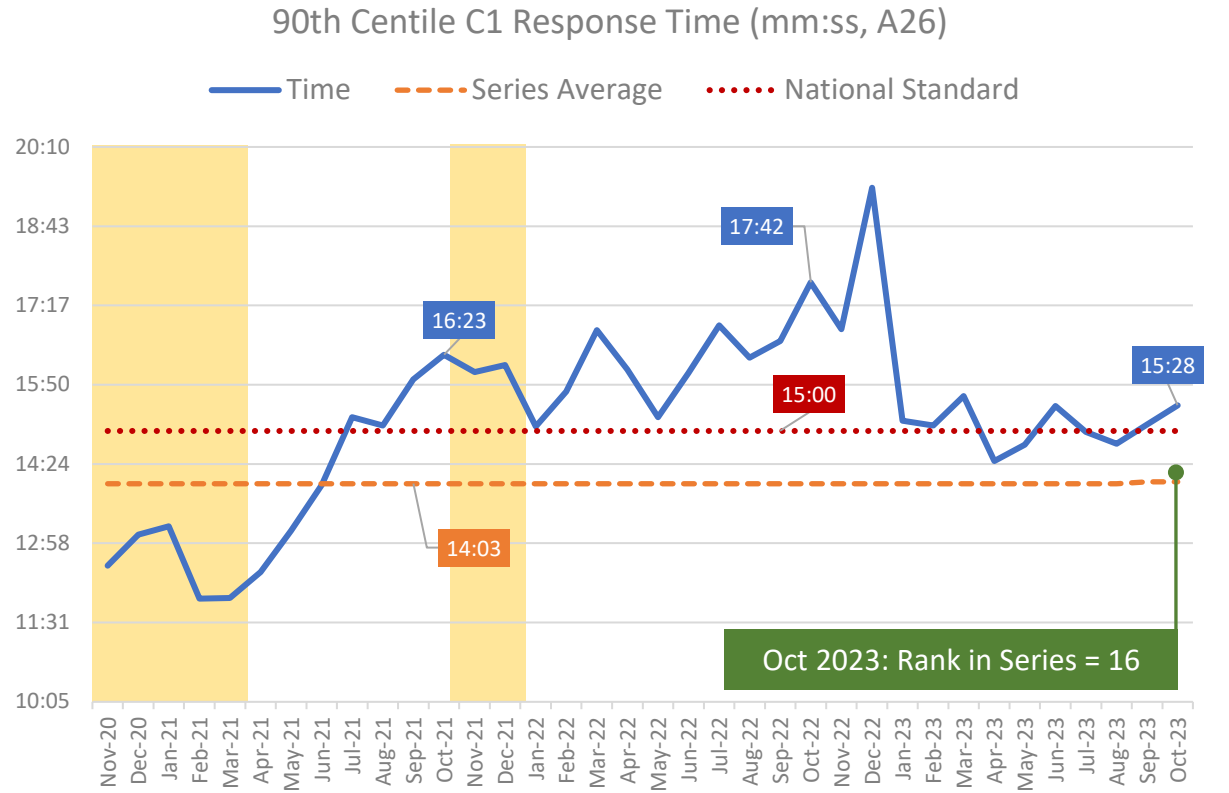
1. Mean



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

-1 minute 16 seconds
difference, Oct '22 to Oct '23

2. 90th Centile

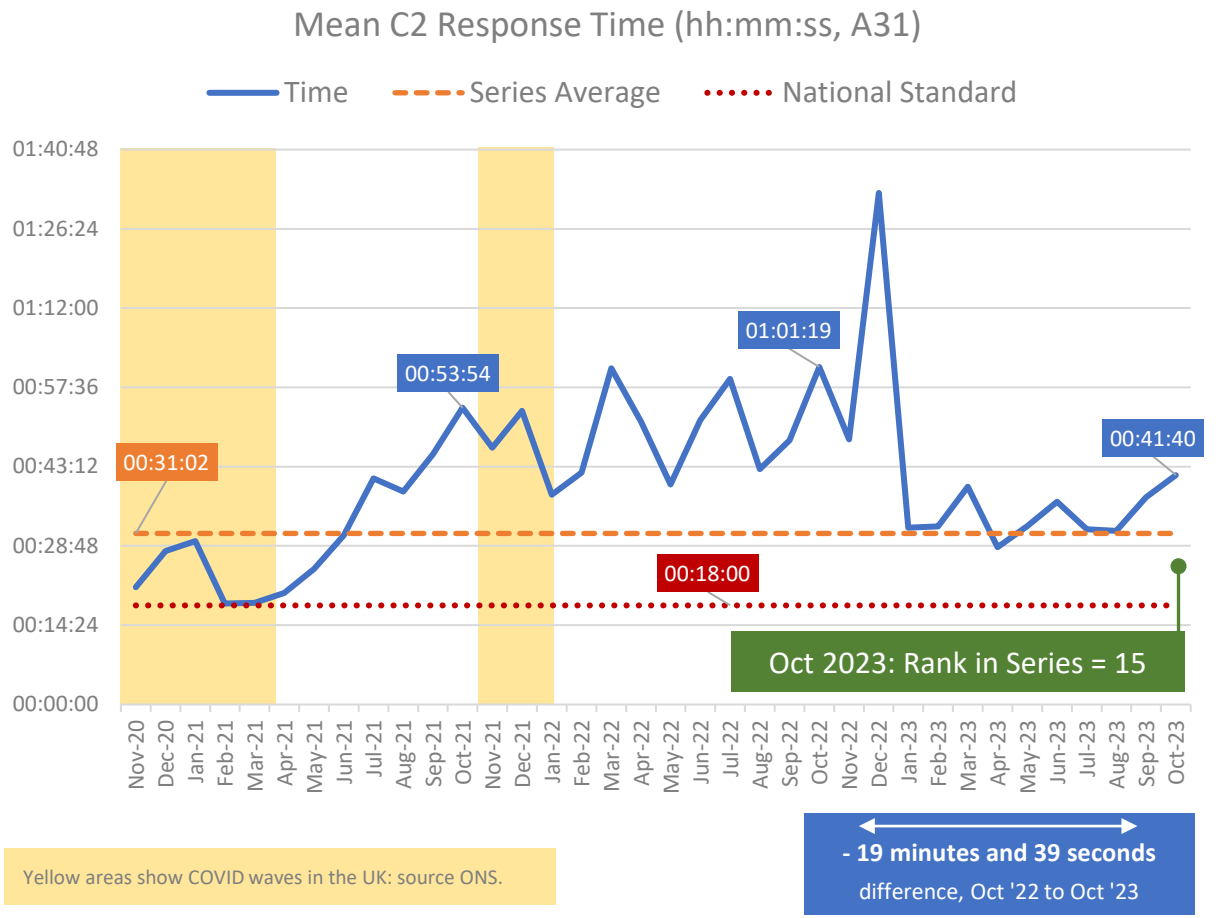


-2 minute 14 seconds
difference, Oct '22 to Oct '23

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

Category-2 response times slowed. The mean reached 42-minutes (vs. an 18-minute national standard) 19-minutes faster than October 2022, but the slowest since December 2022. The 90th Centile measure reflected this pattern, reaching an hour-and-a-half – more than twice as slow as the national standard.

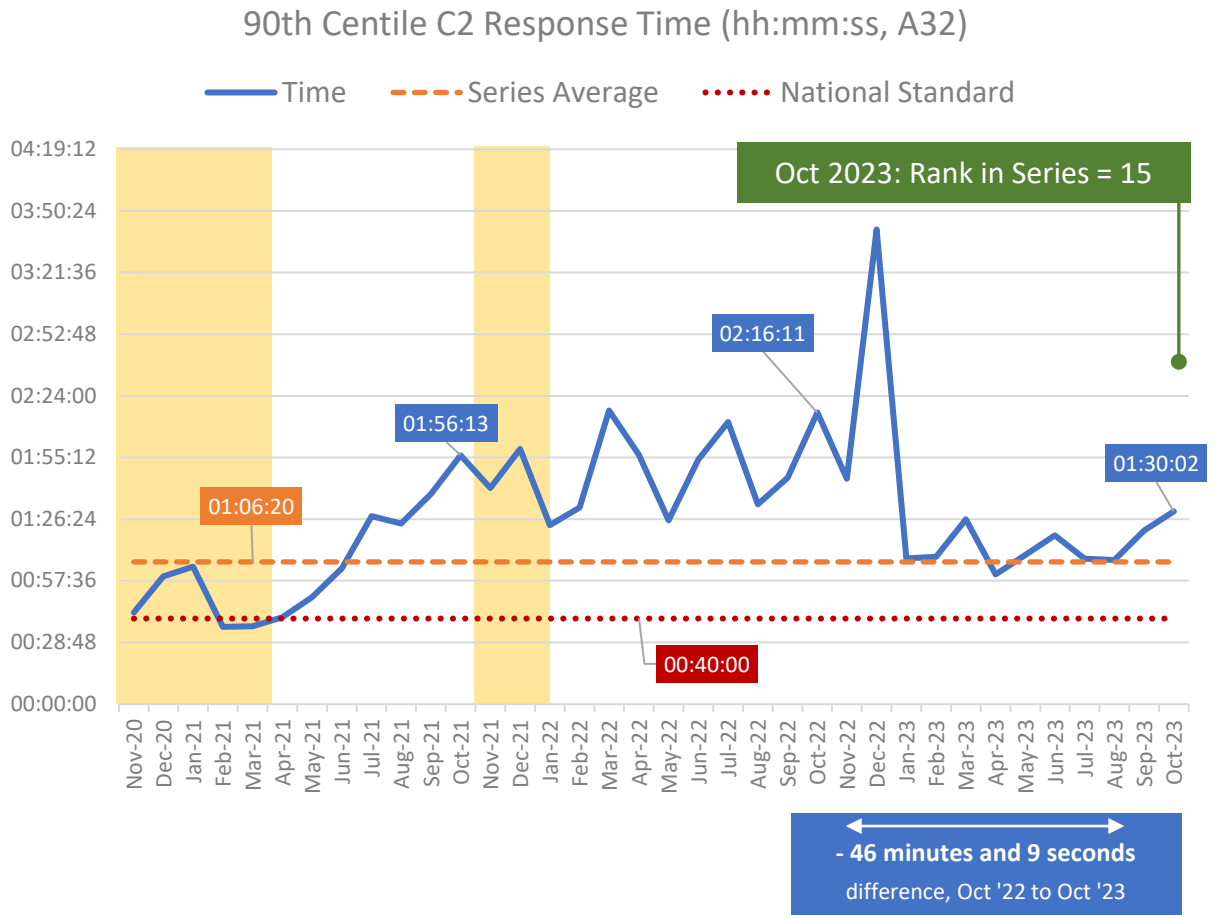
1. Mean



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

- 19 minutes and 39 seconds
difference, Oct '22 to Oct '23

2. 90th Centile

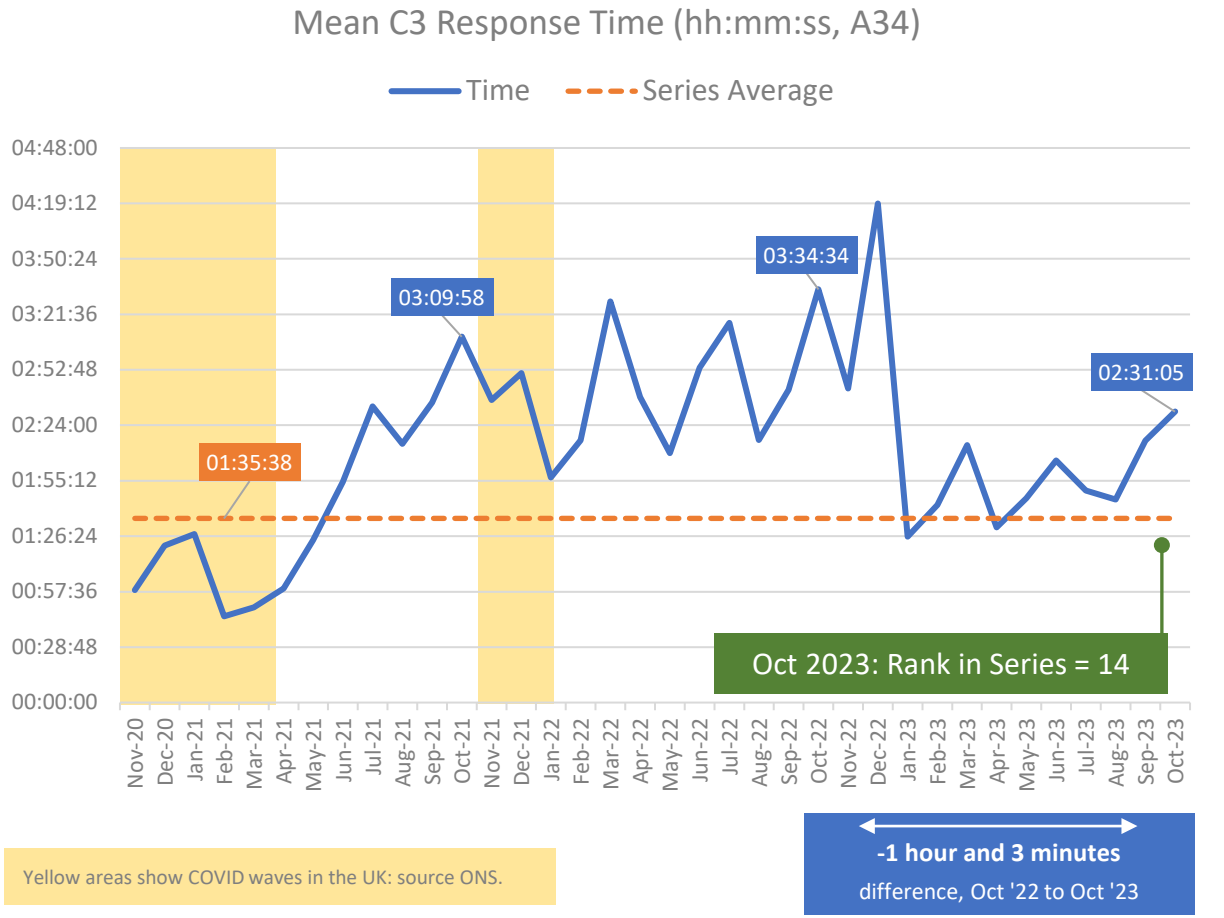


- 46 minutes and 9 seconds
difference, Oct '22 to Oct '23

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

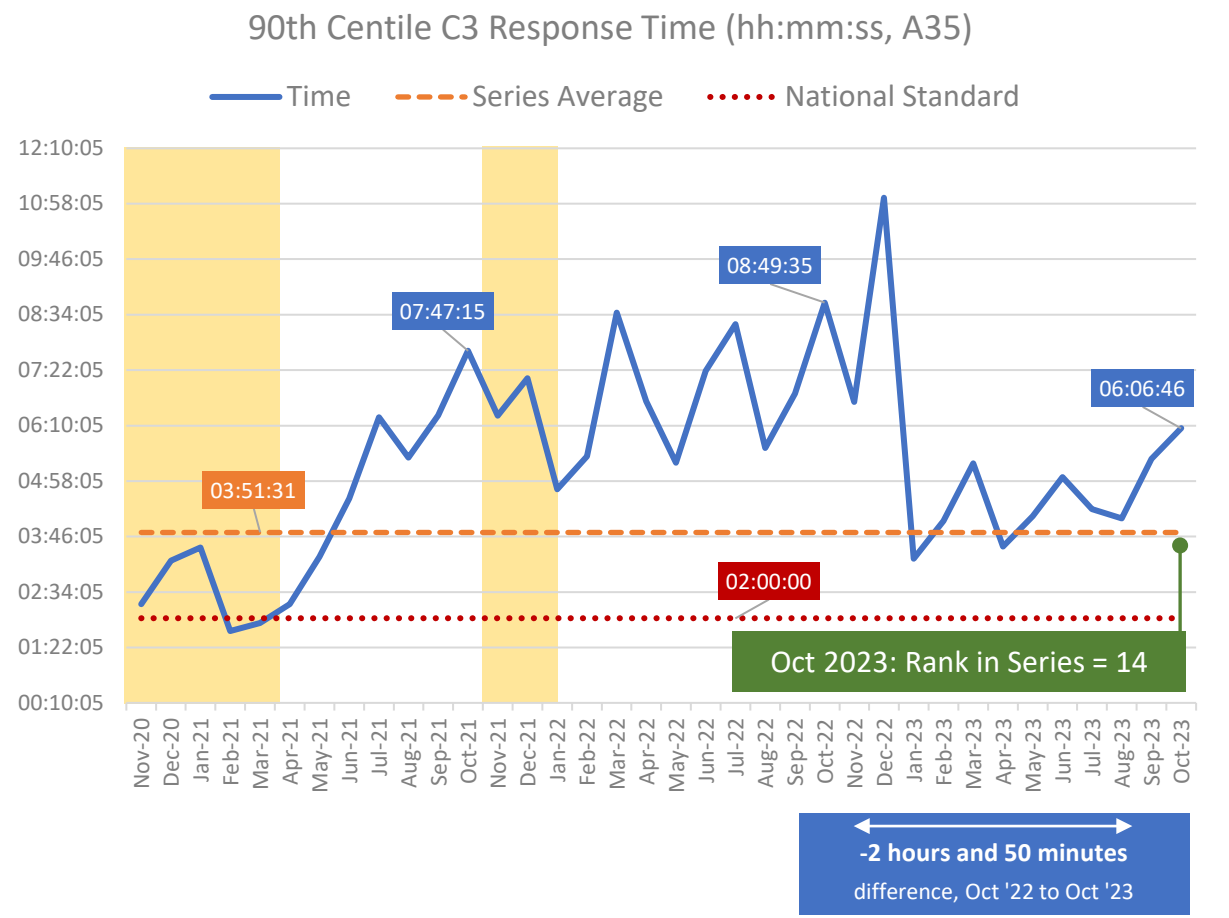
Category-3 response times were the slowest since December 2022, with both measures increasing and the 90th Centile reaching six-hours – three times greater than the national standard of two-hours. Both measures, however, were notably faster than the times recorded in October 2022.

1. Mean



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

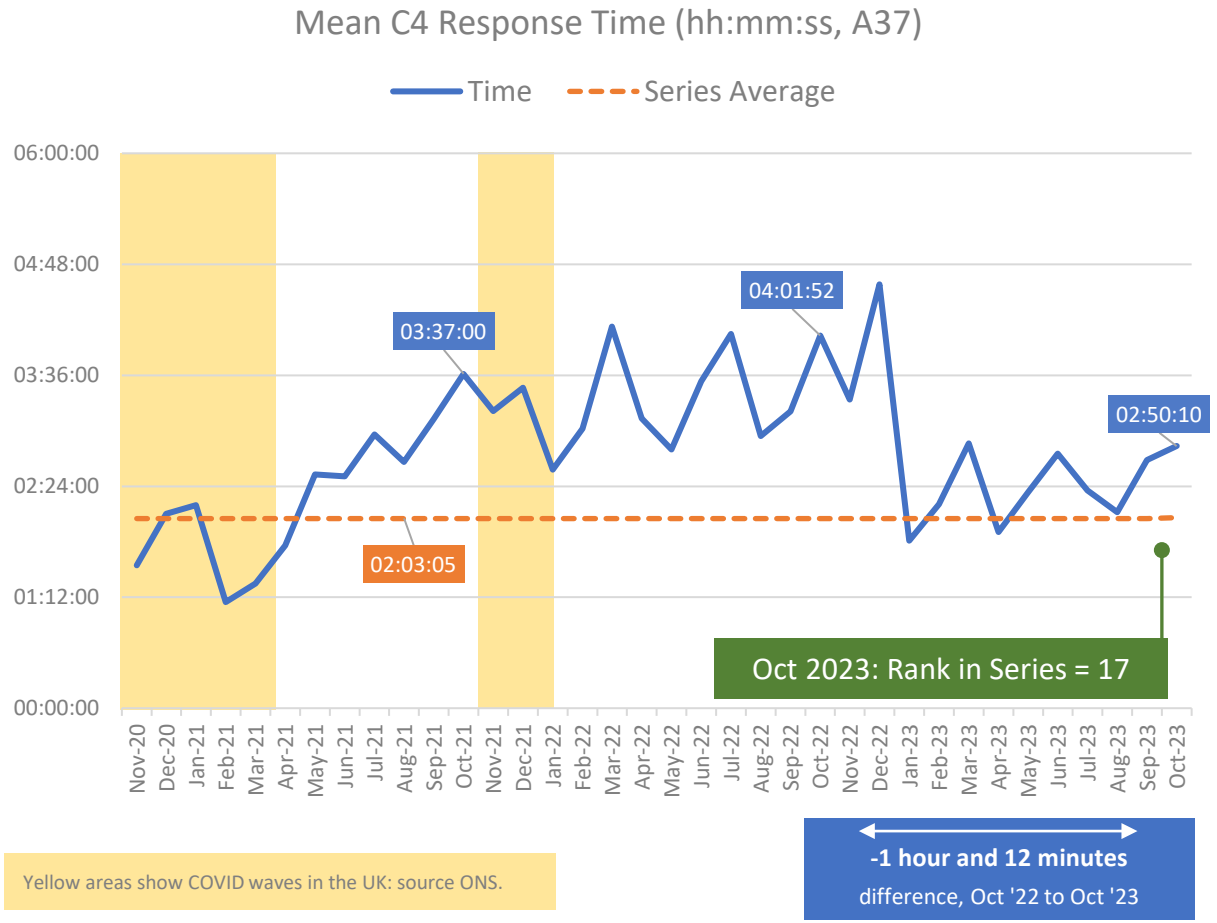
2. 90th Centile



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

Category-4 response times also slowed in October. Reflecting the pattern seen above, both were the slowest since December 2022, but significantly faster than October 2022. The 90th Centile response time was over twice as slow as the national standard.

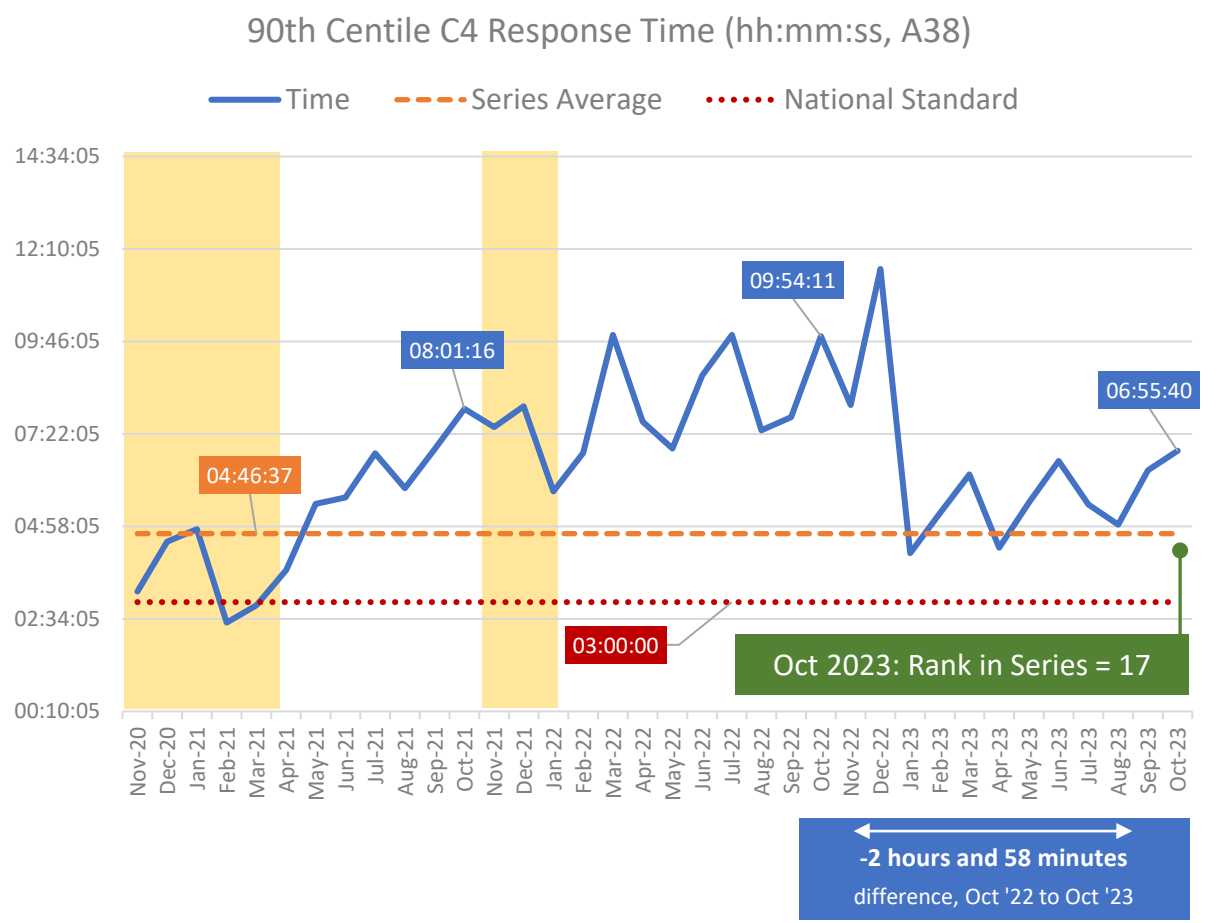
1. Mean



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

-1 hour and 12 minutes
difference, Oct '22 to Oct '23

2. 90th Centile

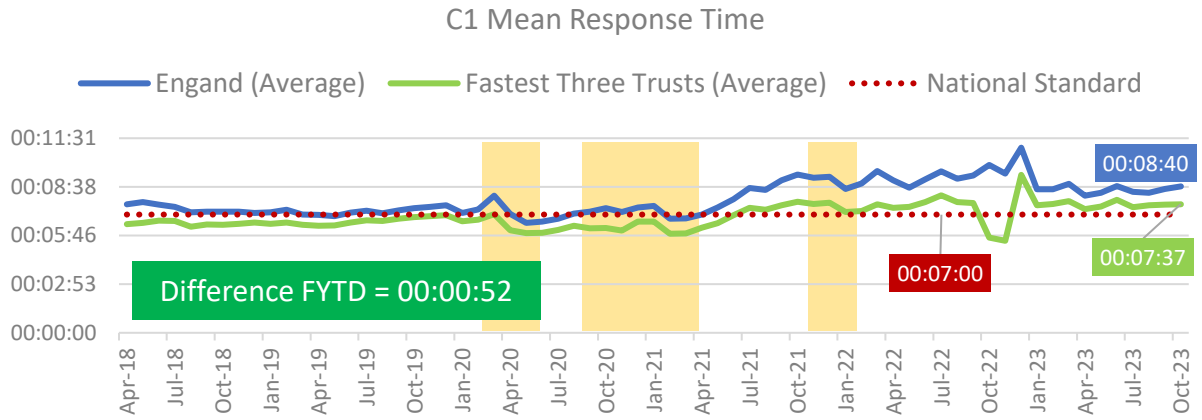


-2 hours and 58 minutes
difference, Oct '22 to Oct '23

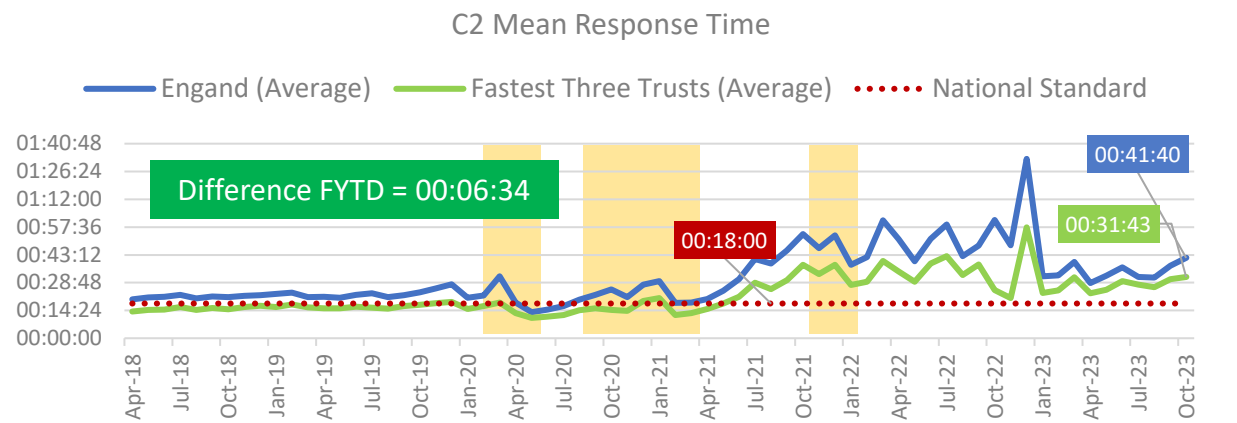
20. Demand: Mean Response Time – National Average vs. Fastest Trusts (NEW)

The following charts compare the national average with the average mean response for the fastest three trusts. For the financial year-to-date (FYTD), the difference ranges from 52-seconds for Category-1, over 6-minutes for Category-2 and over half-an-hour for Categories-3-and-4.

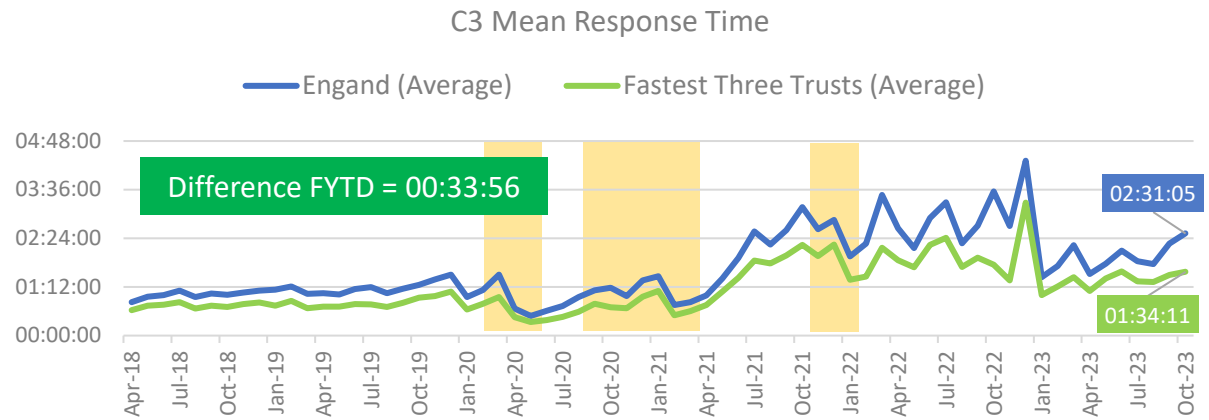
1. Category 1 – Average mean response vs. average for three fastest trusts



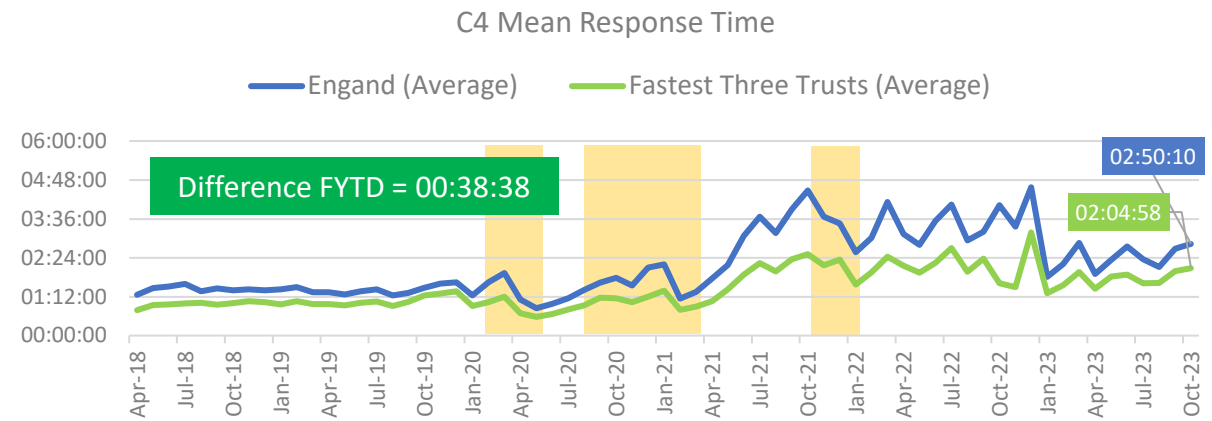
2. Category 2 – Average mean response vs. average for three fastest trusts



3. Category 3 – Average mean response vs. average for three fastest trusts



4. Category 4 – Average mean response vs. average for three fastest trusts



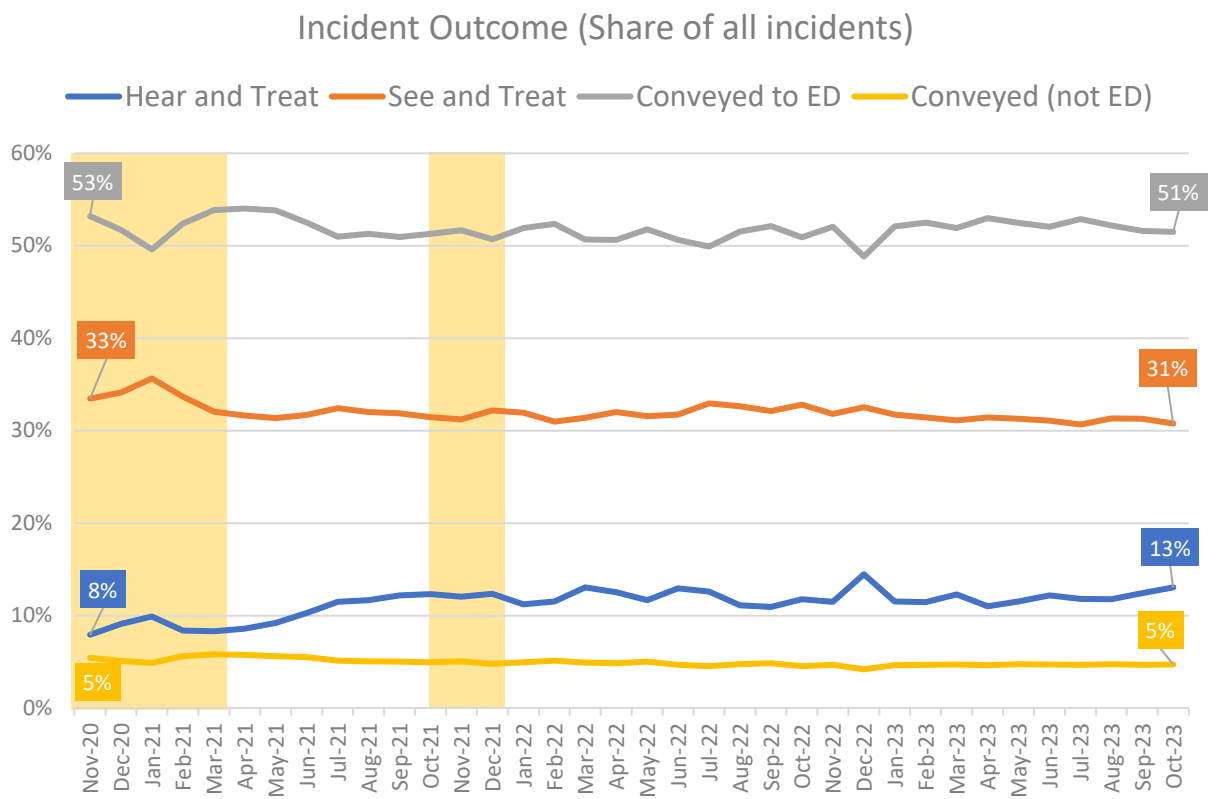
Section 3

Incidents by Response Outcome

22. Share of Incidents by Response Outcome

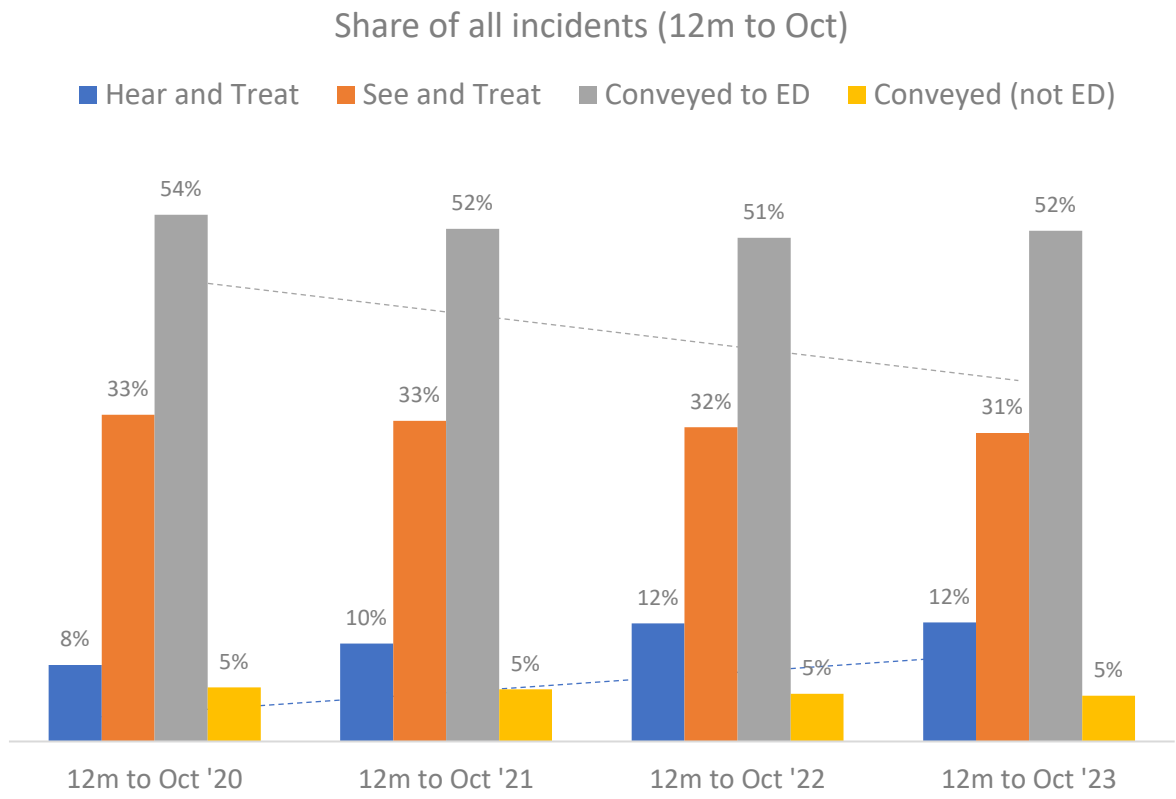
Share of Hear-and-Treat responses reached 13% in October – the highest proportion since December 2022. Other response types' shares remained steady, with a slight decrease in conveyance (from 52% to 51%).

1. Monthly



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

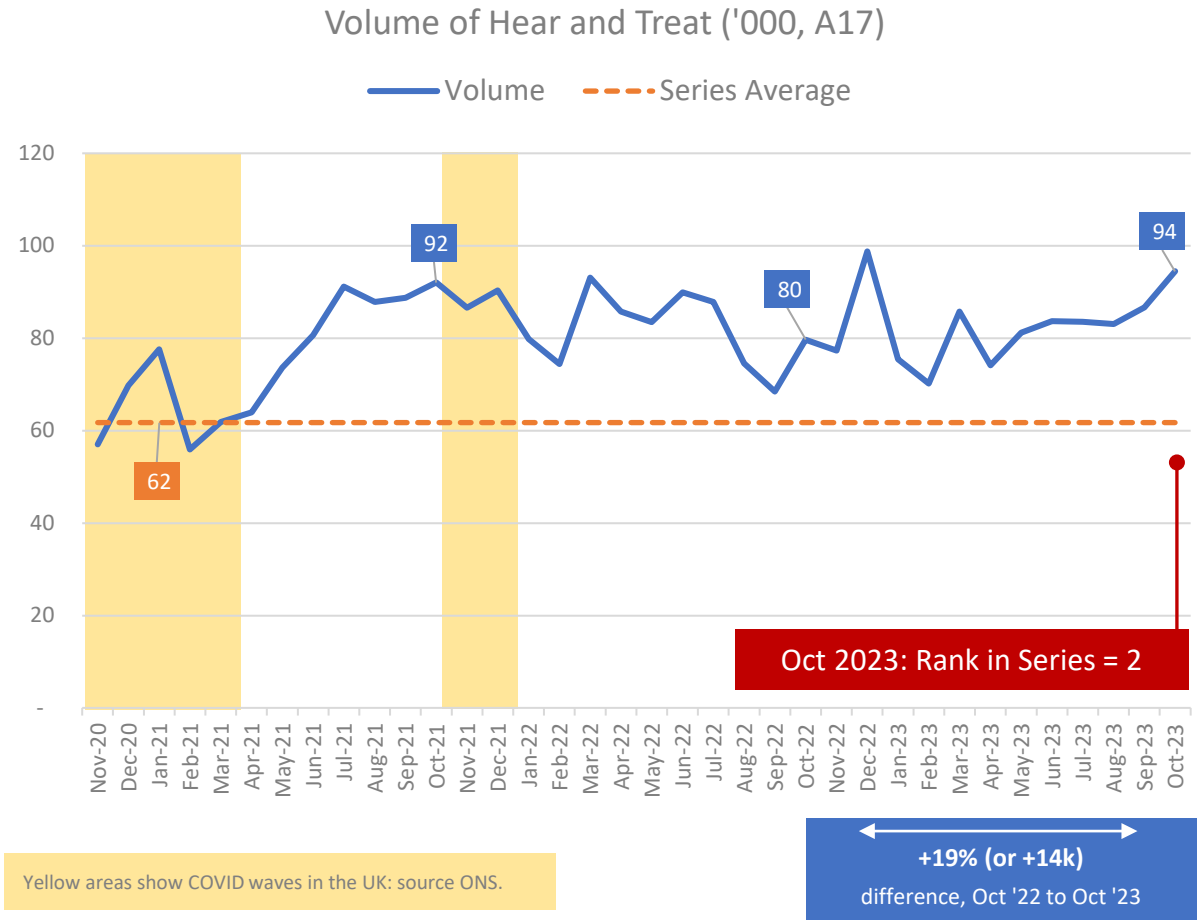
2. Annualised Data



23. Hear and Treat (measure A17)

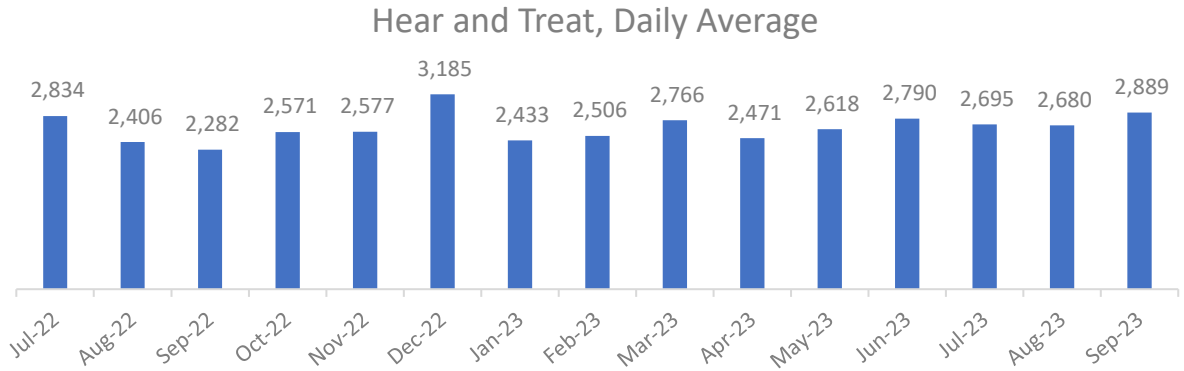
Hear-and-Treat responses reached 94-thousand in October, the second highest volume to-date, the highest since December 2022 and 14-thousand more than October 2022. The annualised volume shows a (very small) increase compared with the previous period.

1. Monthly

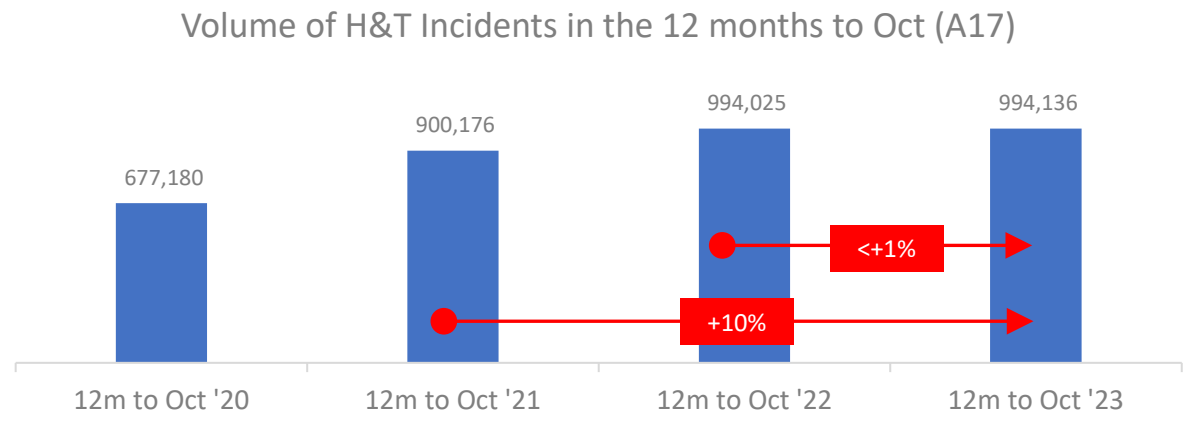


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



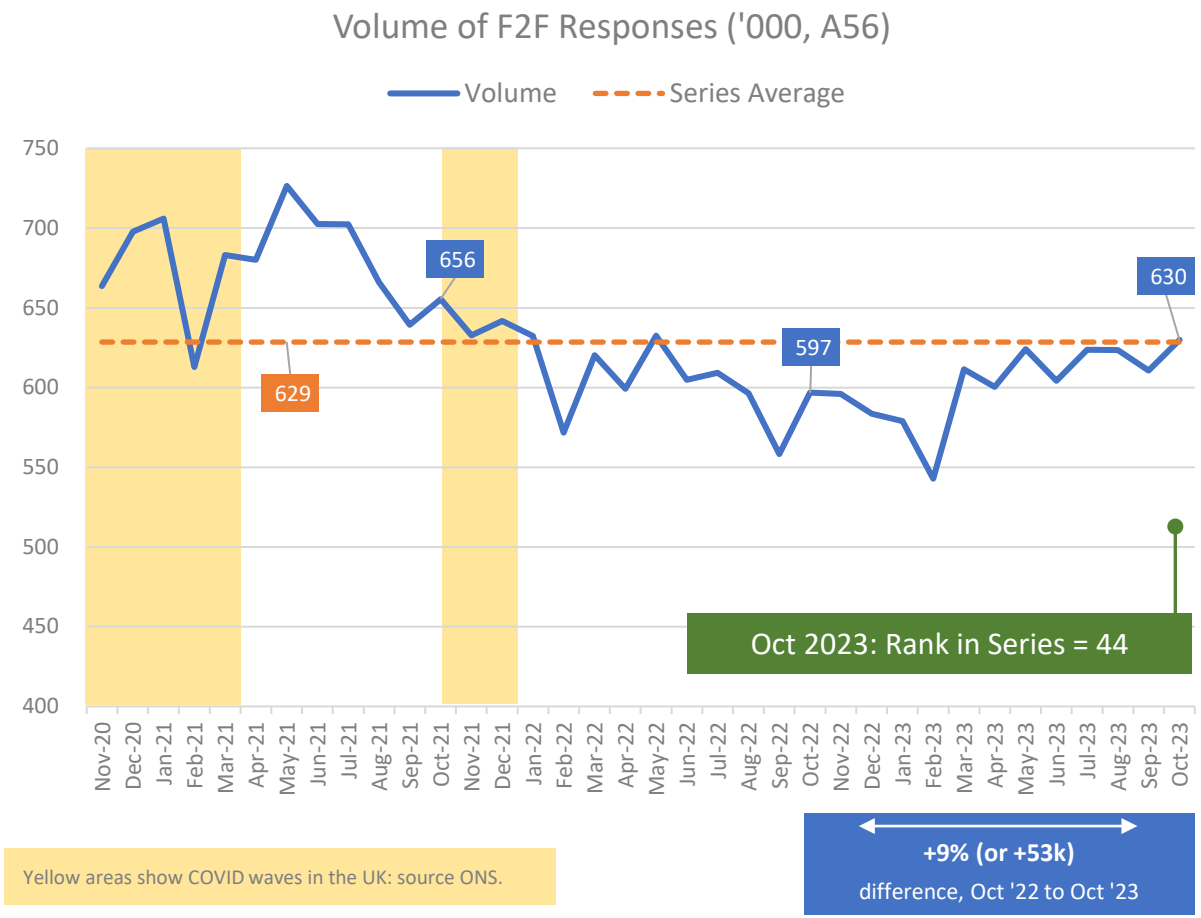
3. Annualised Data



24. Face to Face (measure A56)

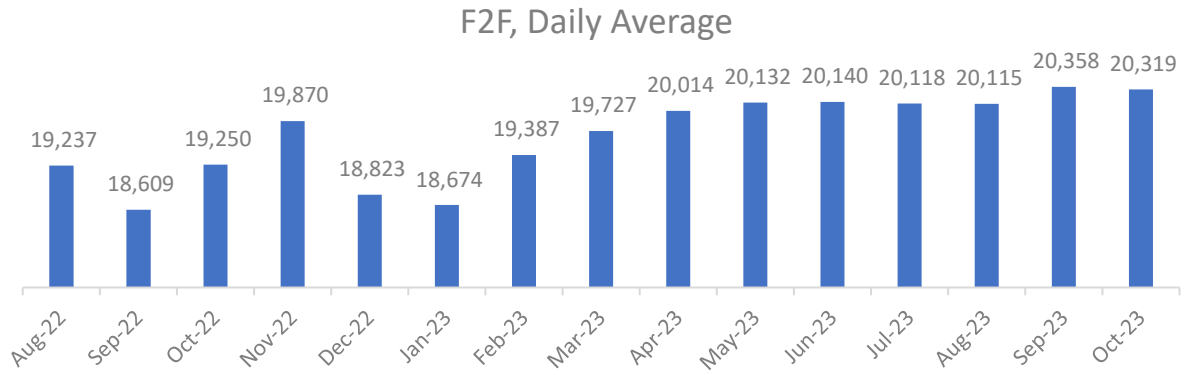
Face-to-Face responses saw monthly volume increase to 630-thousand – just above the series average. This is 53-thousand greater than October 2022 and the highest number seen since May 2022.

1. Monthly

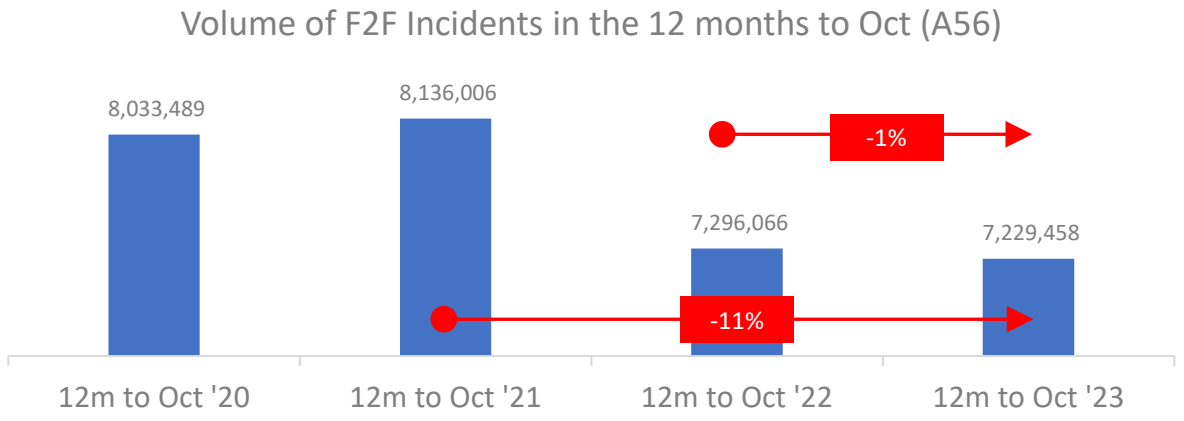


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



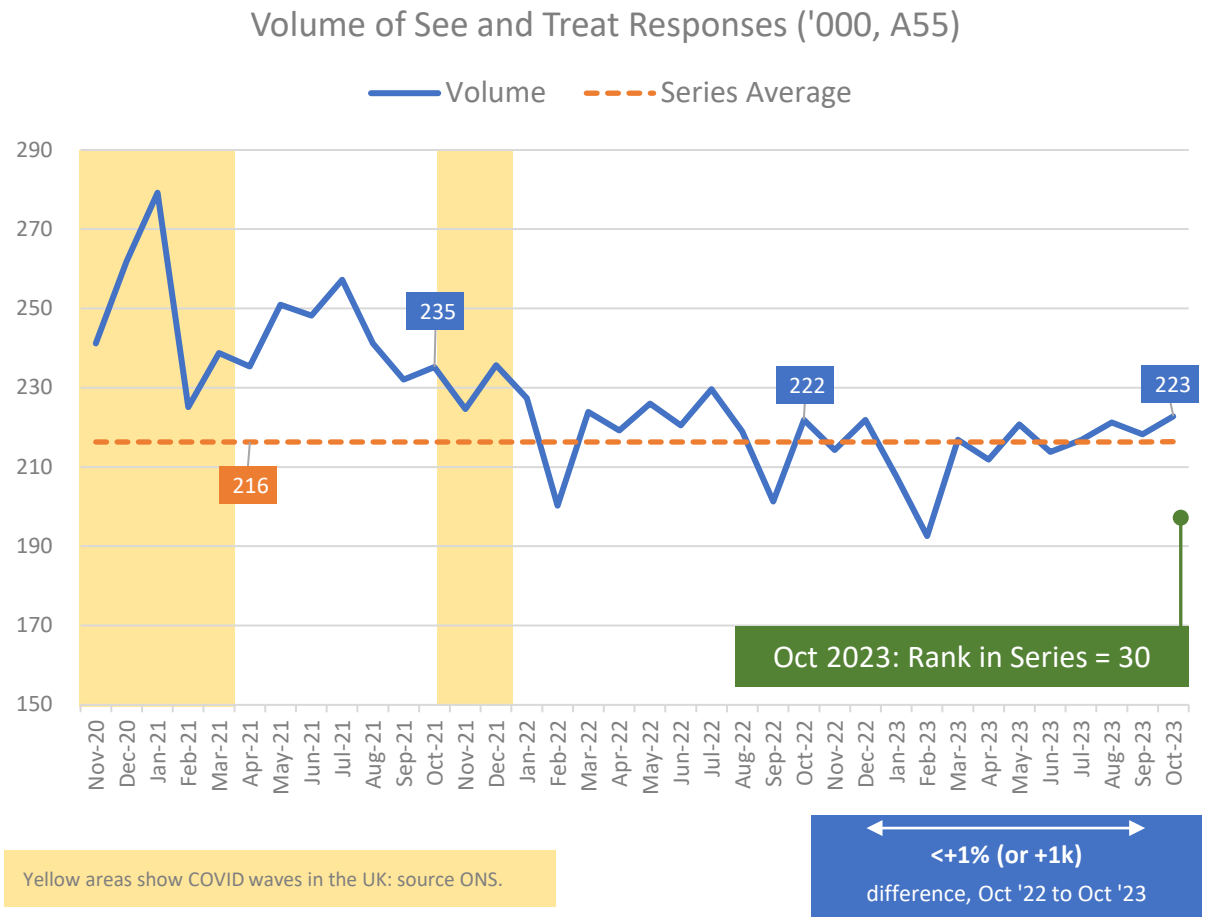
3. Annualised Data



25. See and Treat (measure A55)

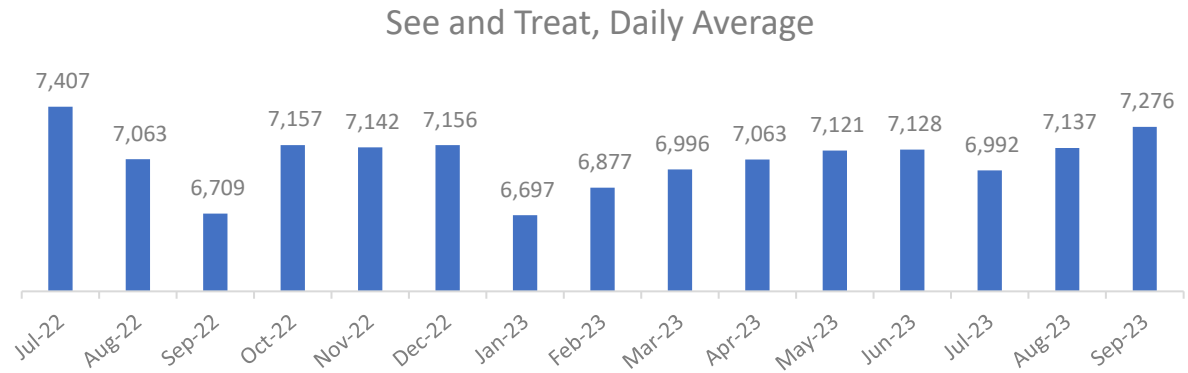
See-and-Treat responses increased to 223-thousand in October. This is largely unchanged from October 2022: with the notable exception of February 2022, monthly volume has hovered around the series average for most of the calendar year.

1. Monthly

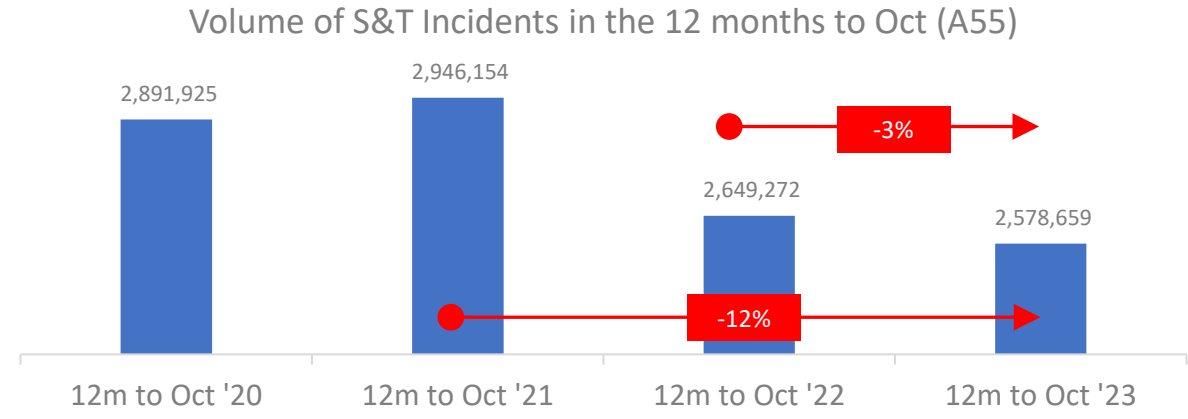


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



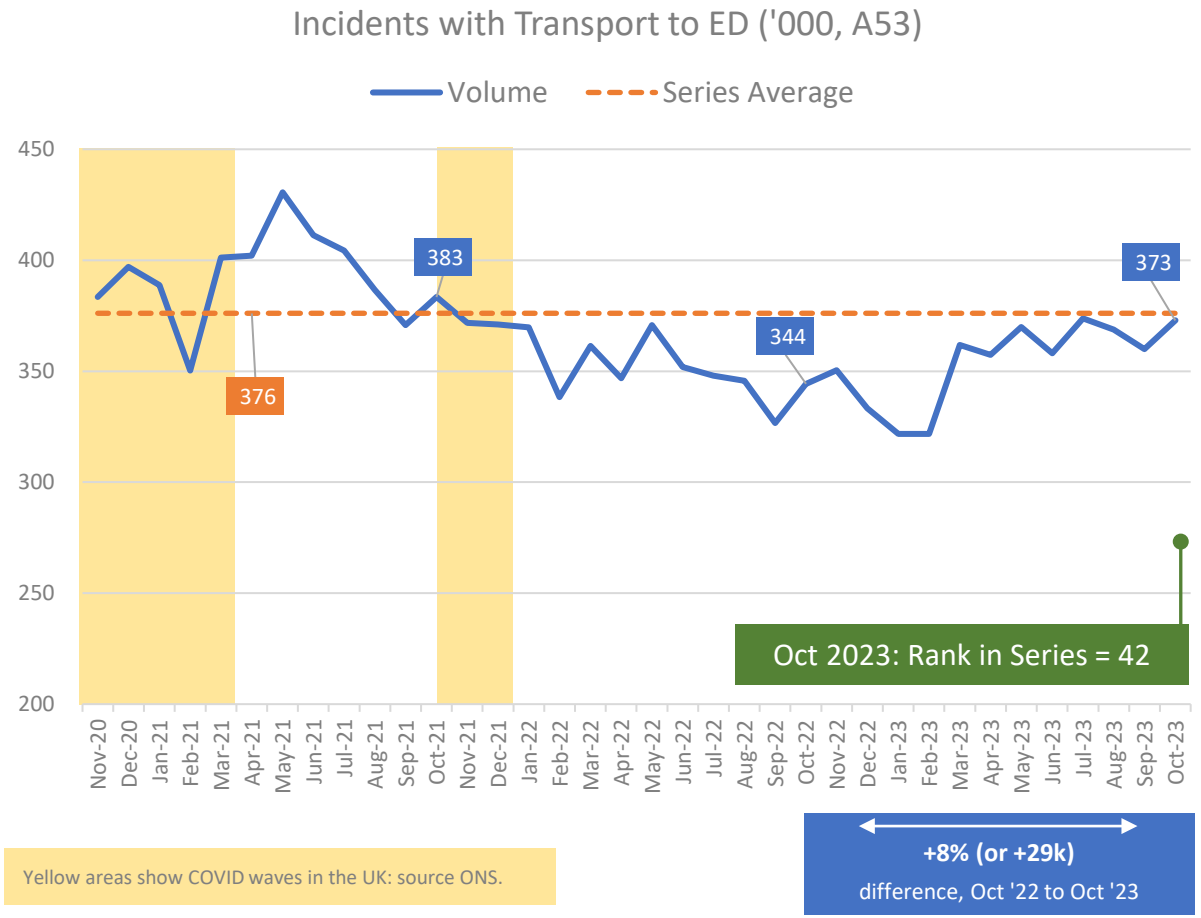
3. Annualised Data



26. Transported to Emergency Departments (measure A53)

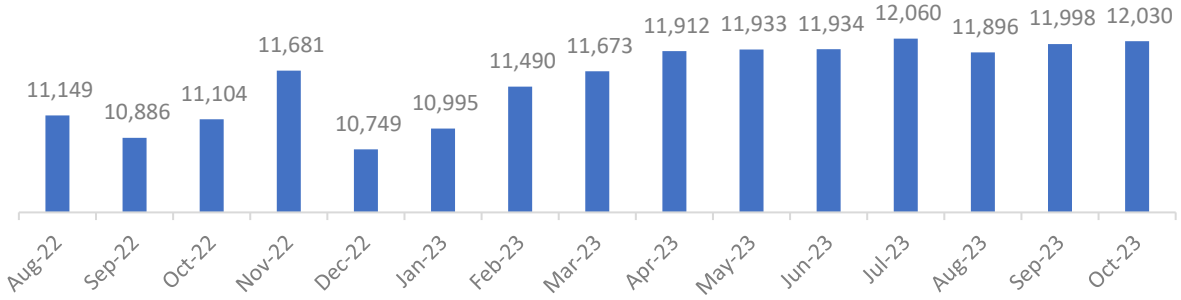
The monthly volume of patients transported to an Emergency Department (ED) grew to 373-thousand, the second highest volume since October 2021 (the first highest being July 2023). Annualised data show a 1% increased compared with the previous period.

1. Monthly

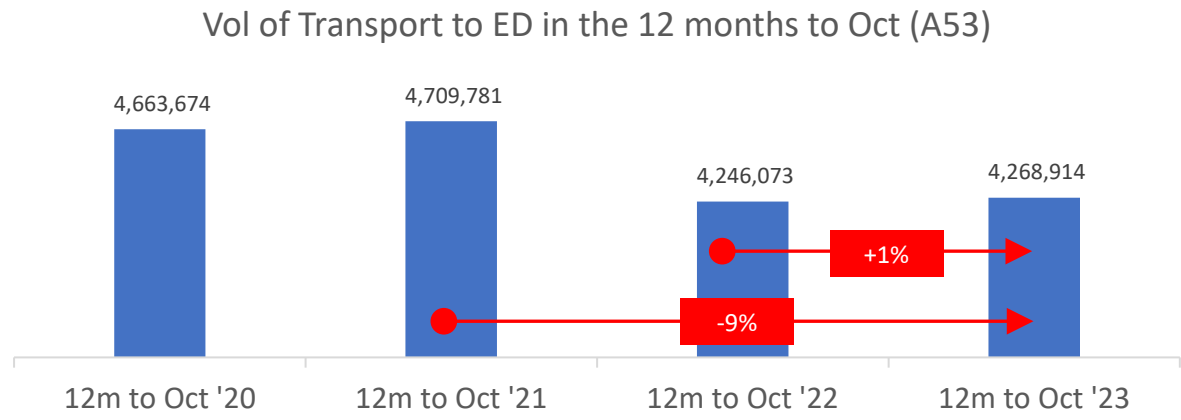


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



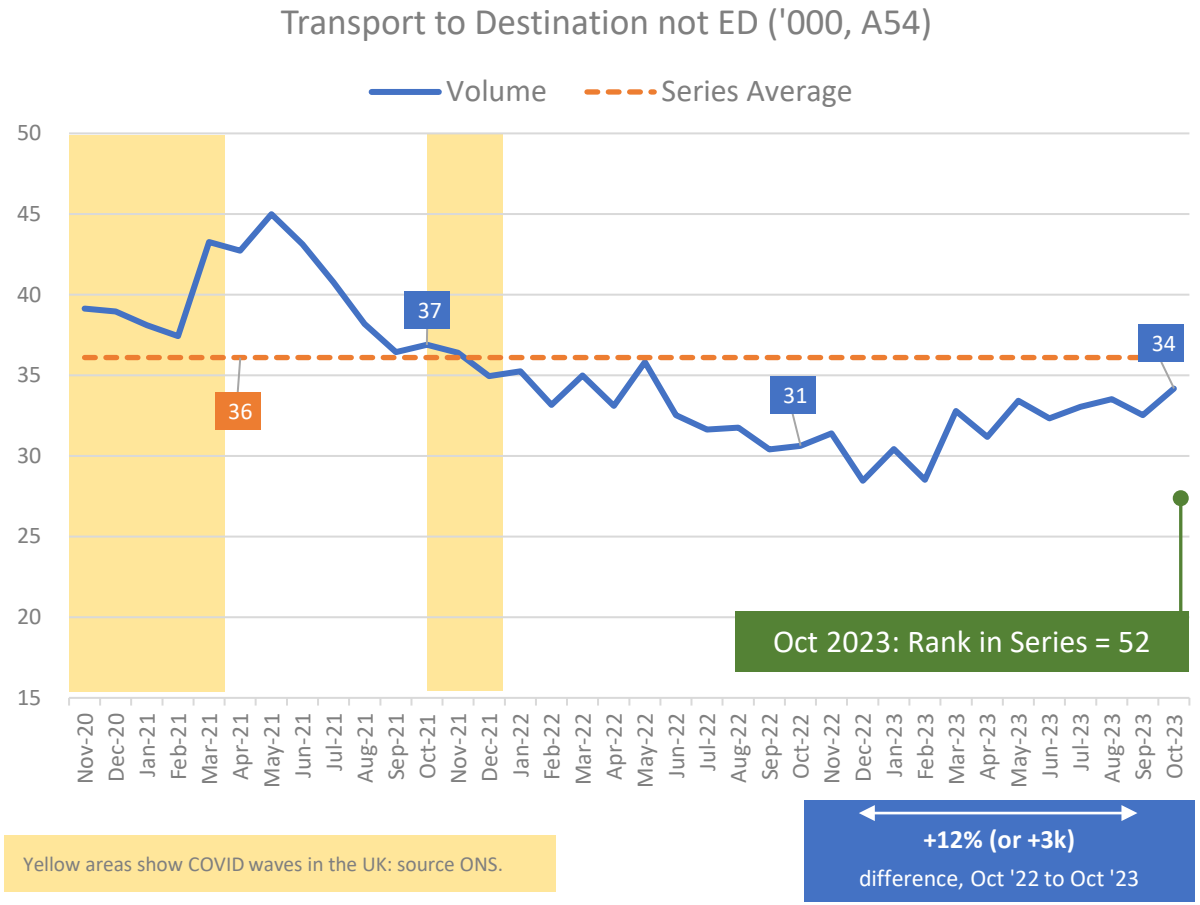
3. Annualised Data



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

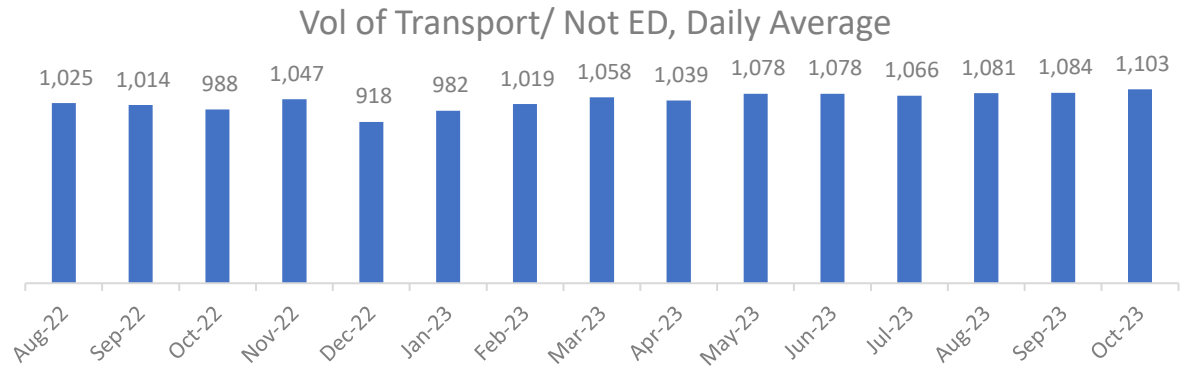
The volume of patients transported to destinations other than an ED was 34-thousand, the highest since May 2022, and three-thousand greater than in October 2022. The annualised data reached 382-thousand most recently, nearly 100-thousand fewer than two years ago.

1. Monthly

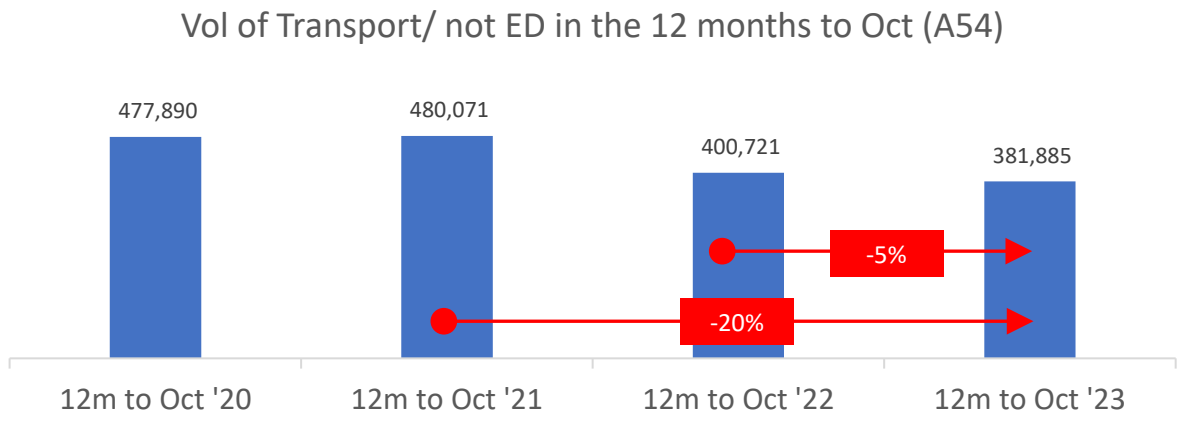


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



3. Annualised Data



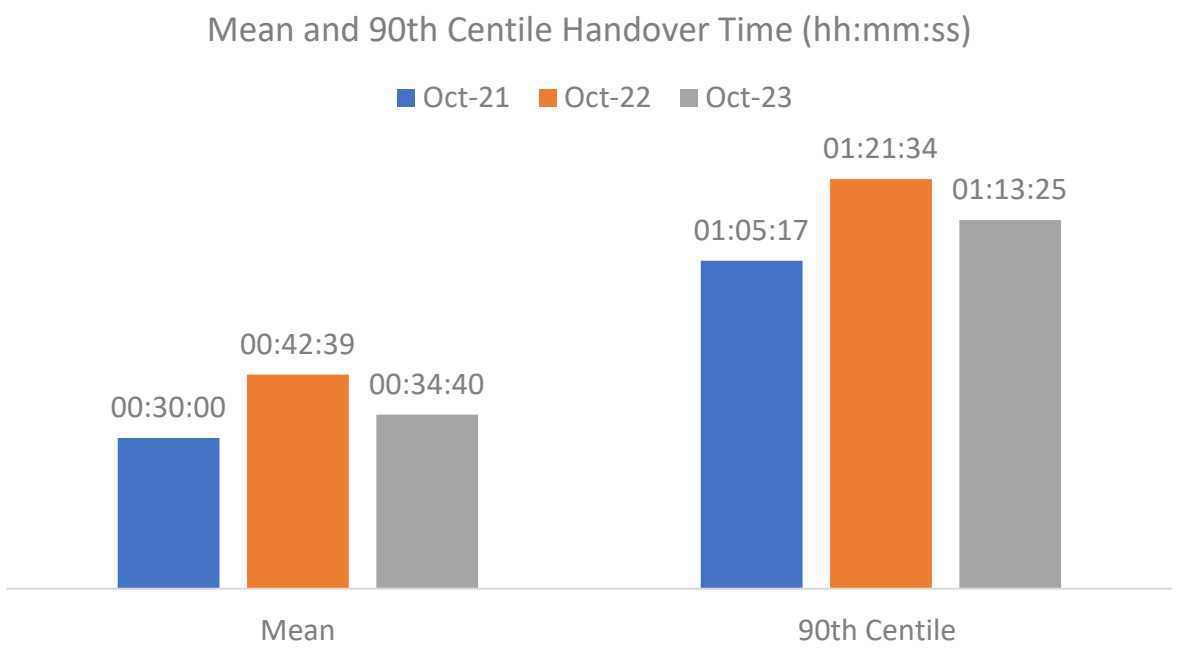
Section 4

Patient Handover Delays

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

Mean (and 90th 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.

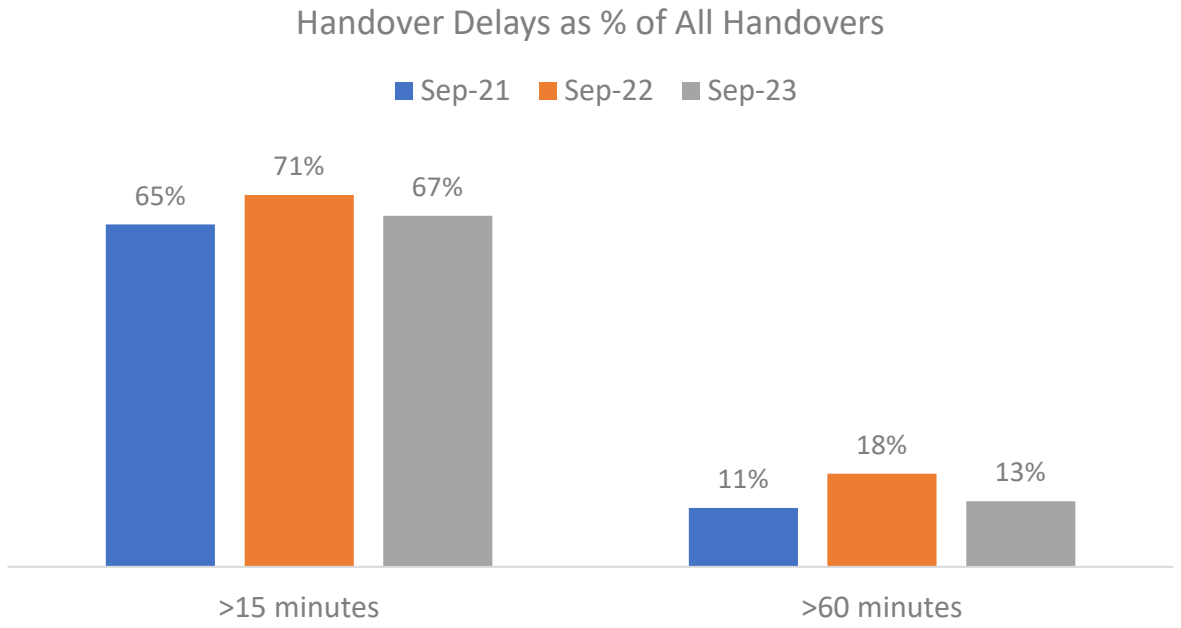
1. Mean and 90th Centile Handover Times



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



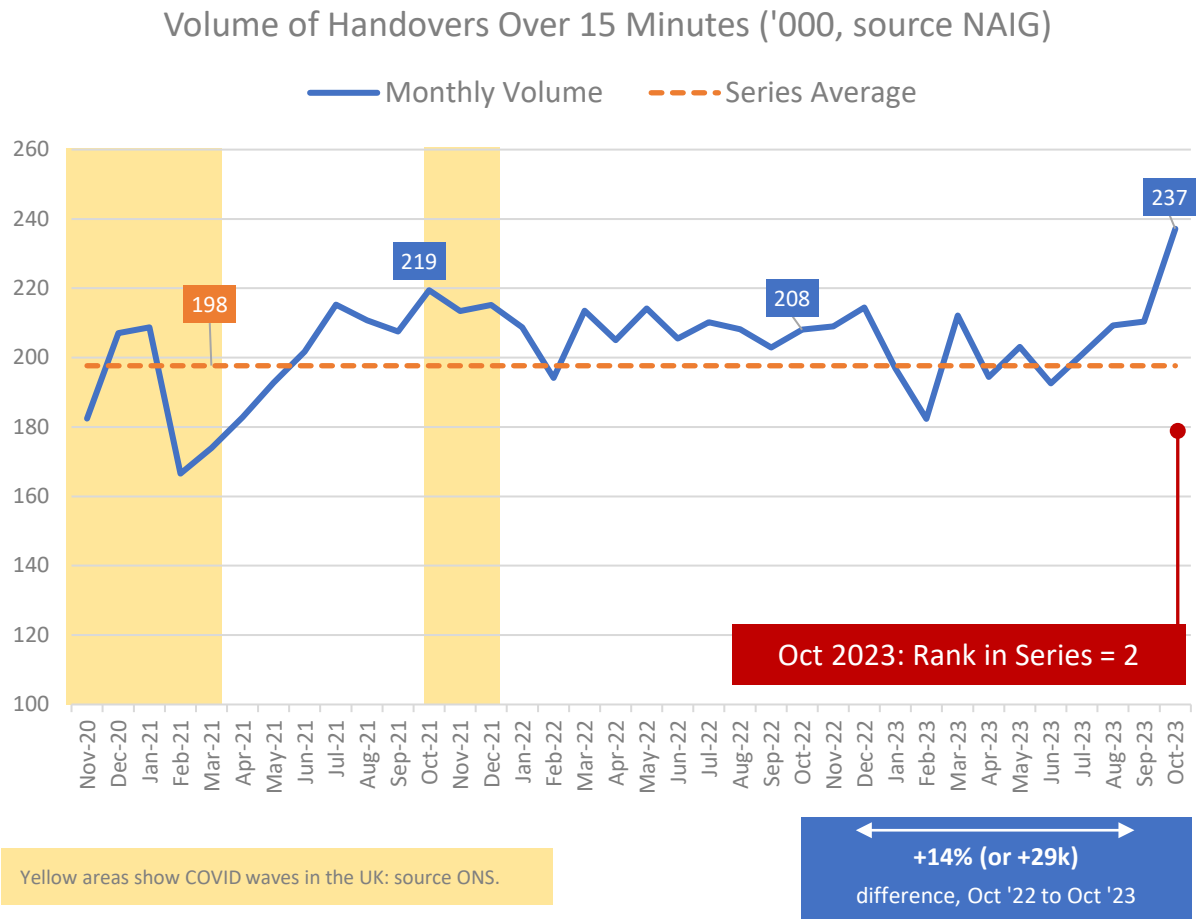
2021 to 2023	2022 to 2023
+2pp	-4pp

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

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

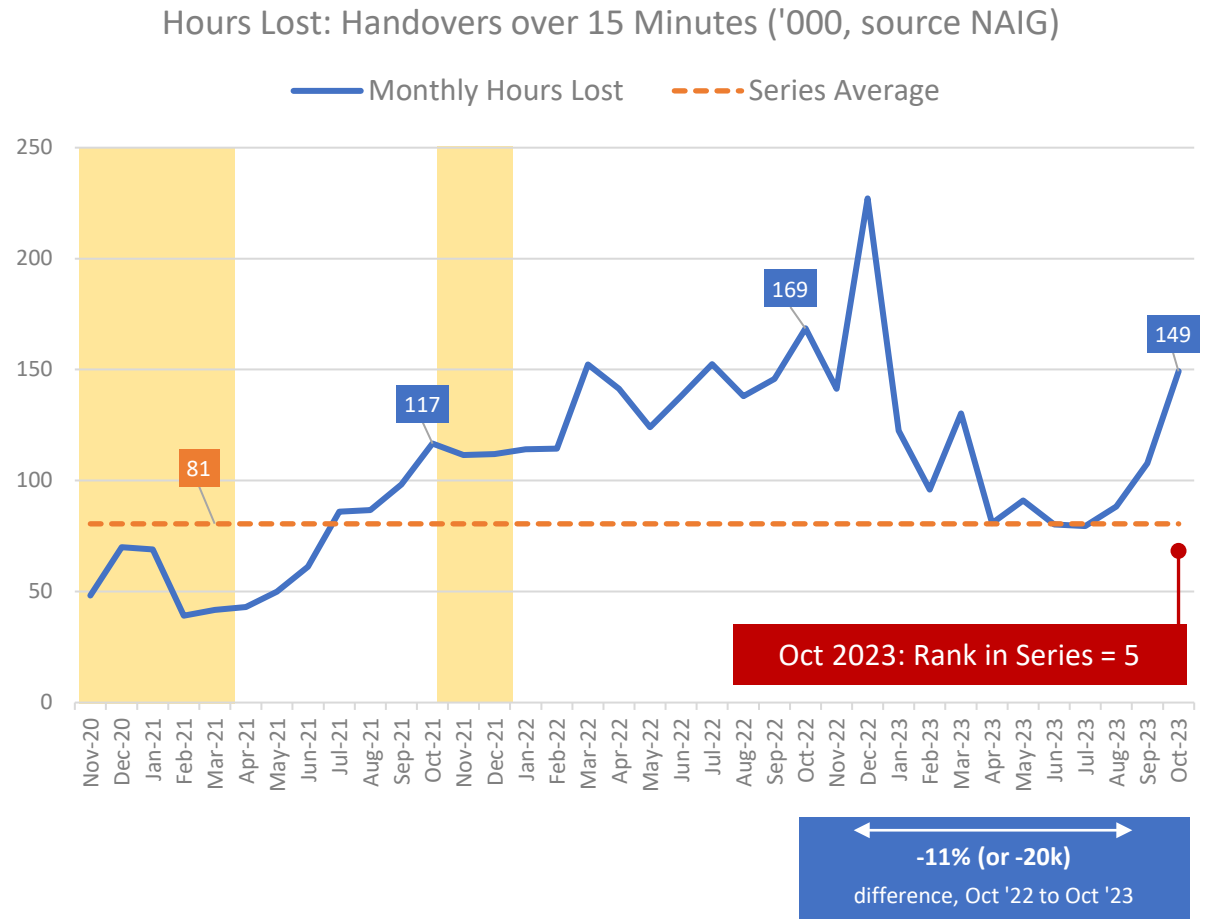
Handovers exceeding 15-minutes reached their second highest volume in October 2023 (the highest being December 2019). There were 237-thousand such delays across the month, resulting in 149-thousand hours lost – the latter being the fifth highest volume to-date.

1. Delays over 15 Minutes



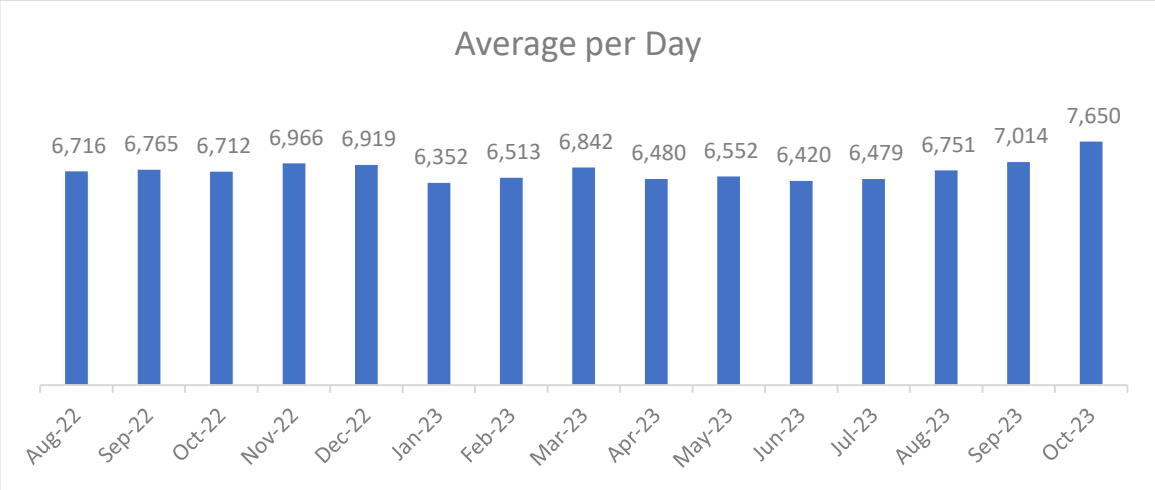
Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

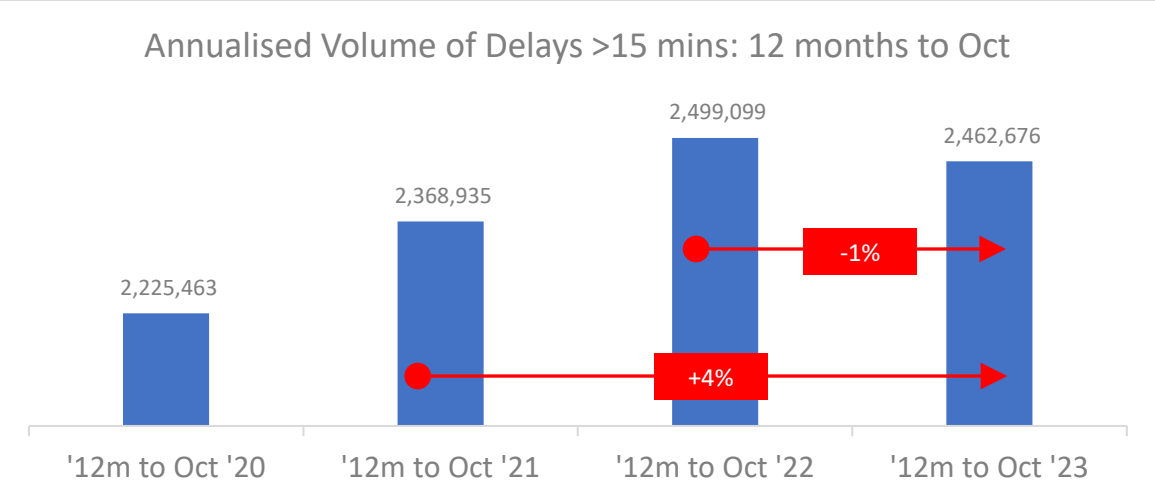
2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 15 Minutes



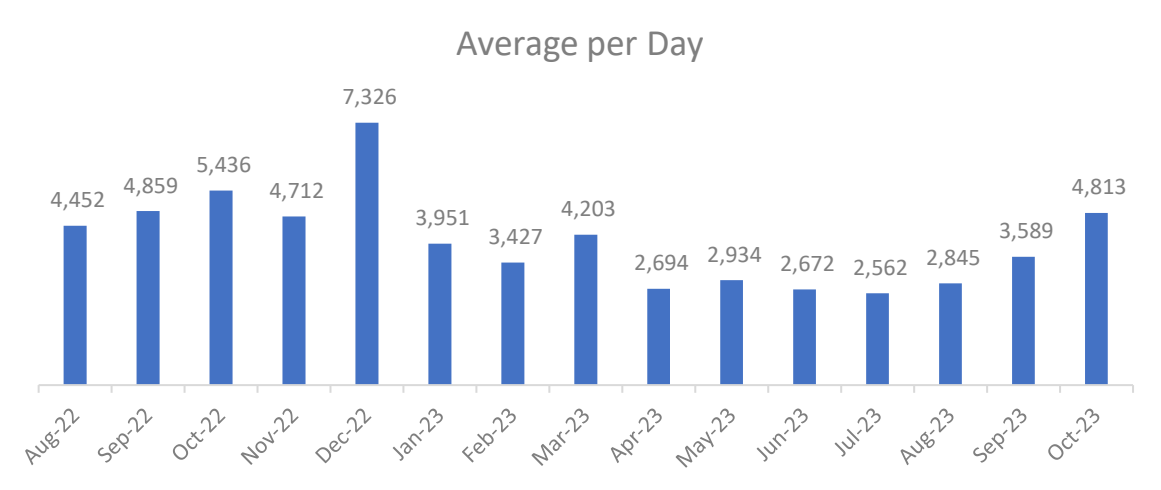
31. Average Daily and Annualised Data for >15 minute delays (source, NAIG)

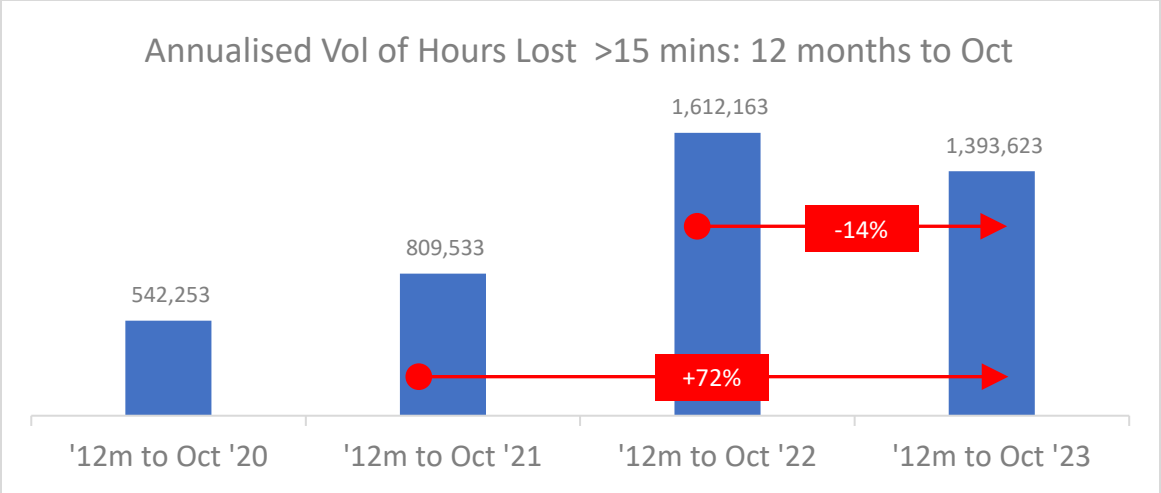
1. Volume of Handover Delays over 15 minutes





2. Hours Lost for Handover Delays over 15 minutes

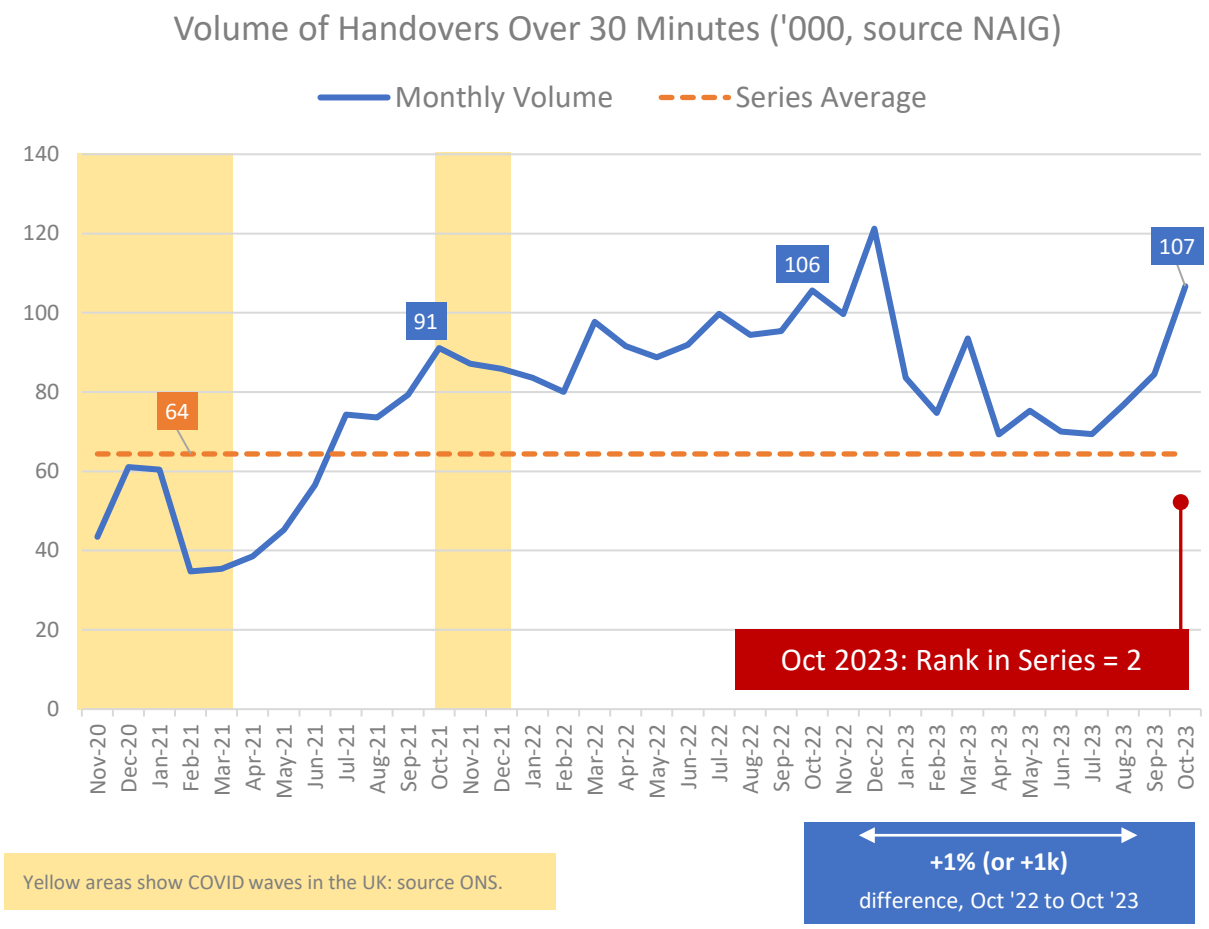




32. Patient Handover Delays over 30 Minutes (source, NAIG)

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.

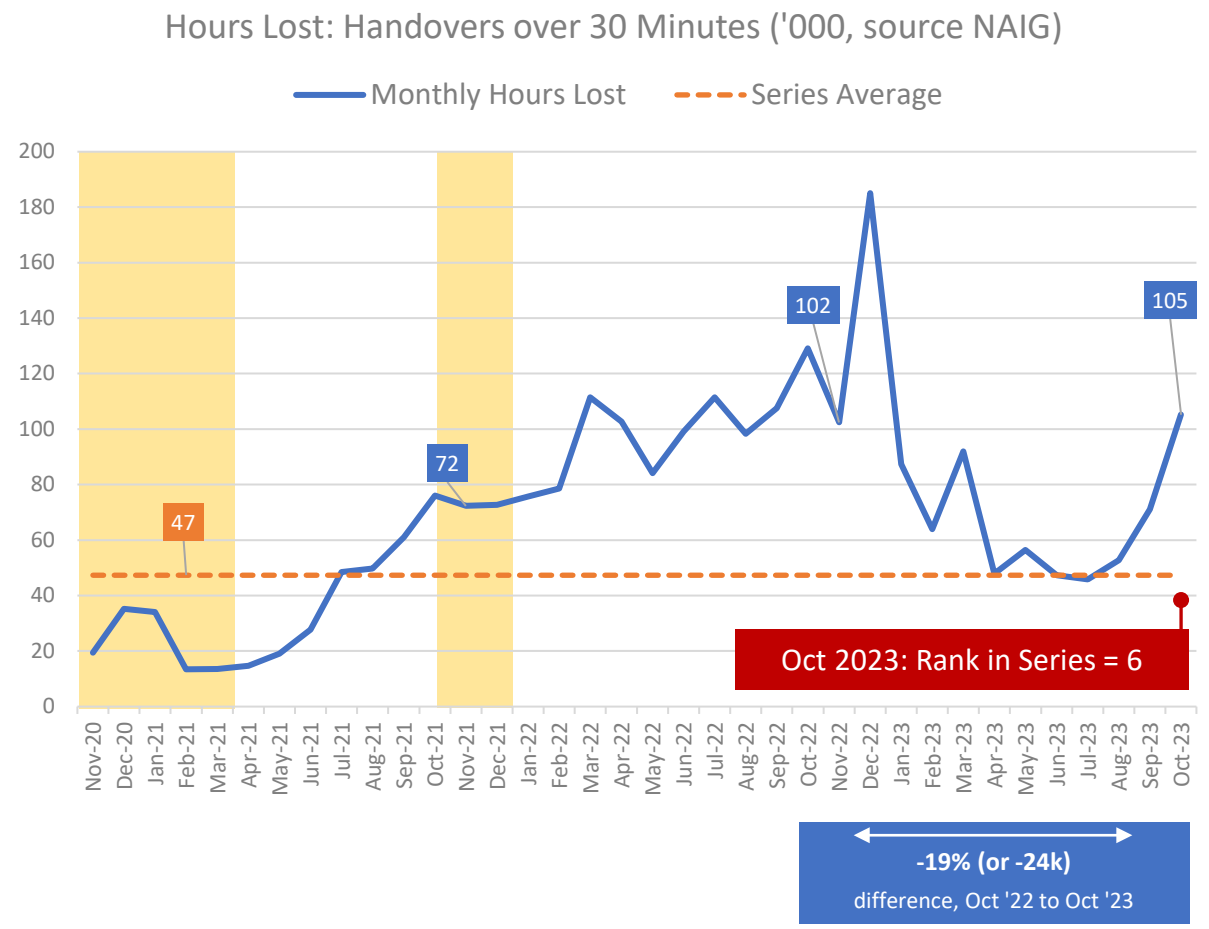
1. Delays over 30 Minutes



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

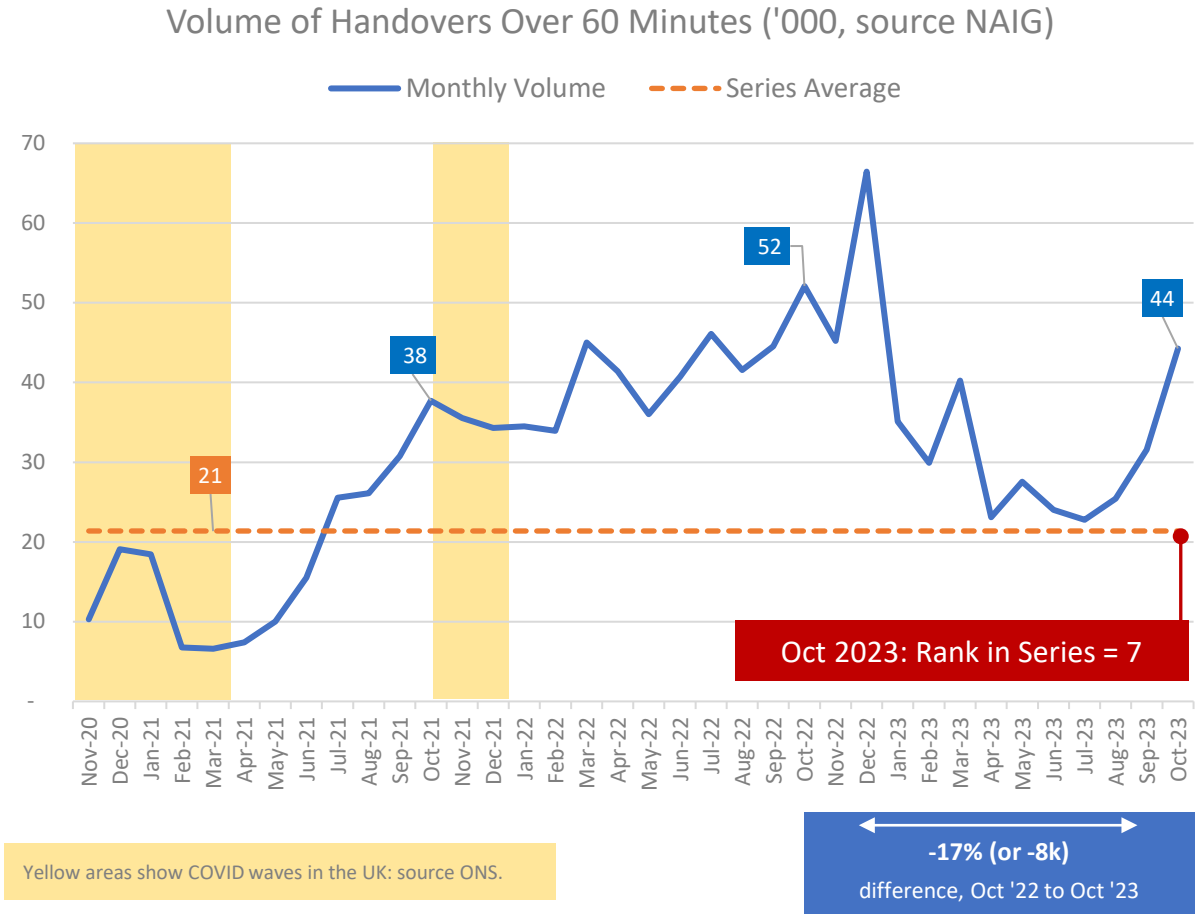


-19% (or -24k)
difference, Oct '22 to Oct '23

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

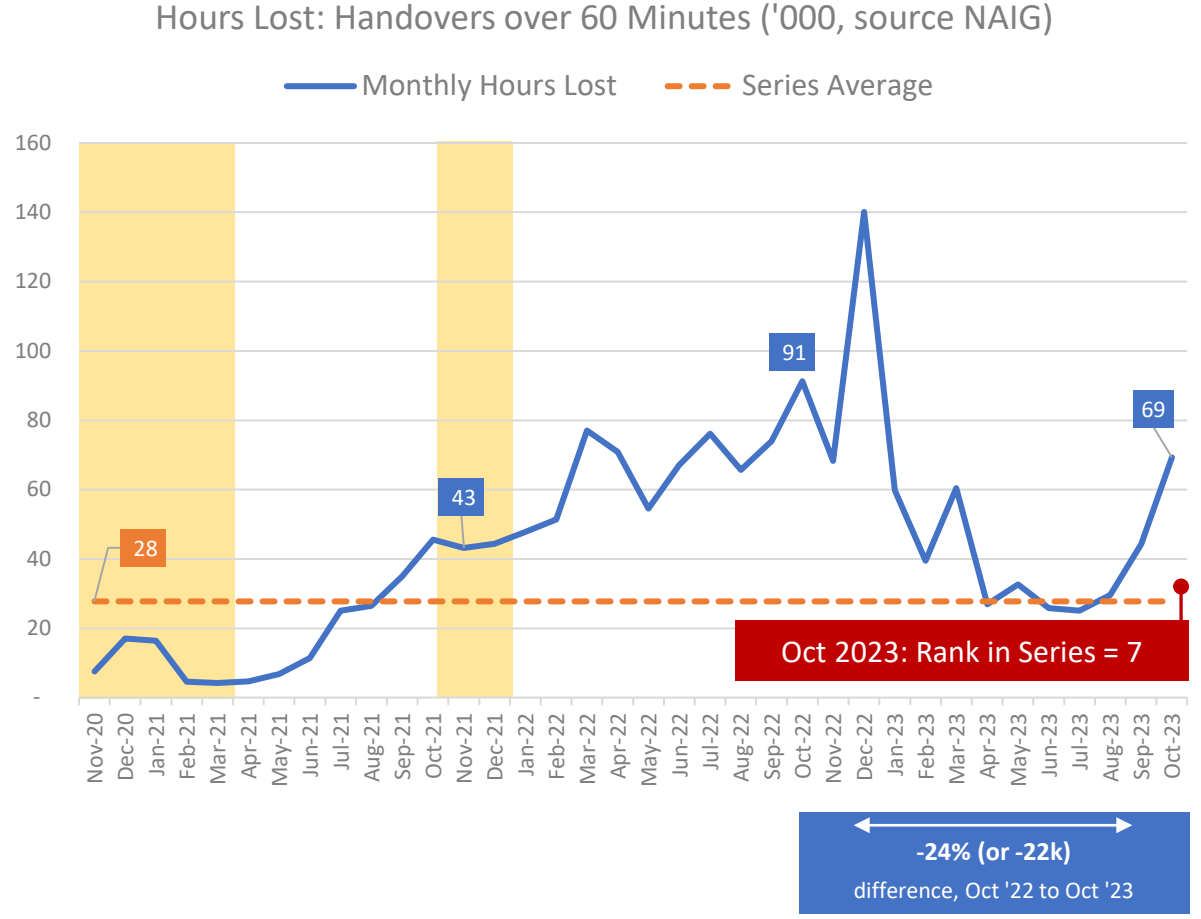
Hour-plus delays reached 44-thousand in October, the seventh highest number to-date, eight-thousand fewer than October 2022, but twice the volume seen in July 2023. Hours lost to these delays reached 69-thousand, again the seventh highest to-date and more than double the volume seen in July.

1. Delays over 60 Minutes



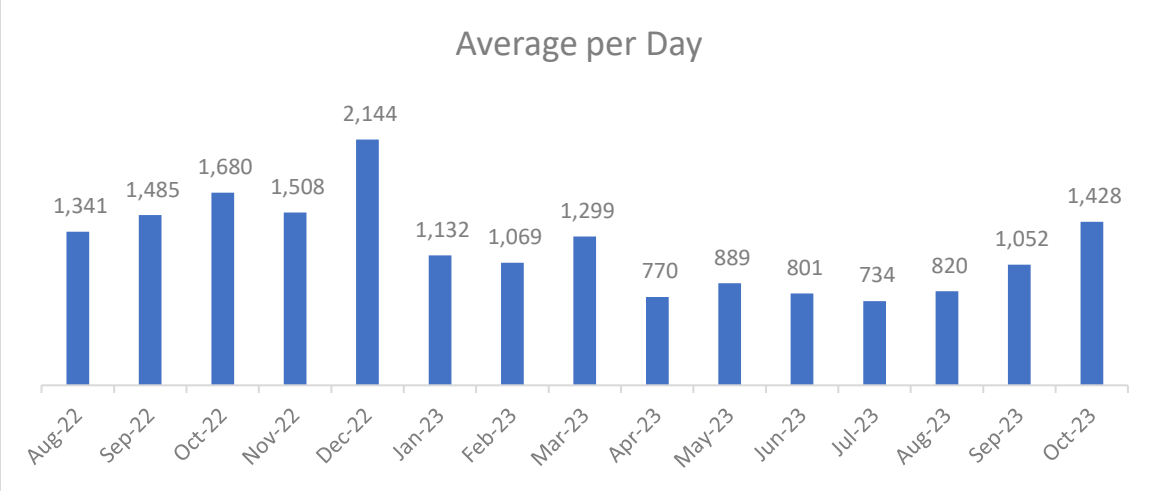
Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

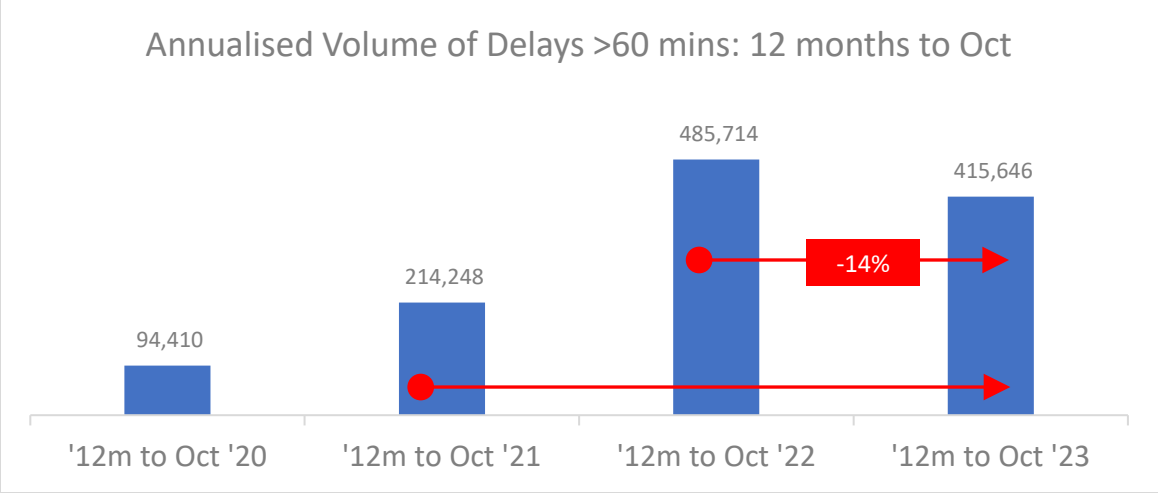
2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 60 Minutes



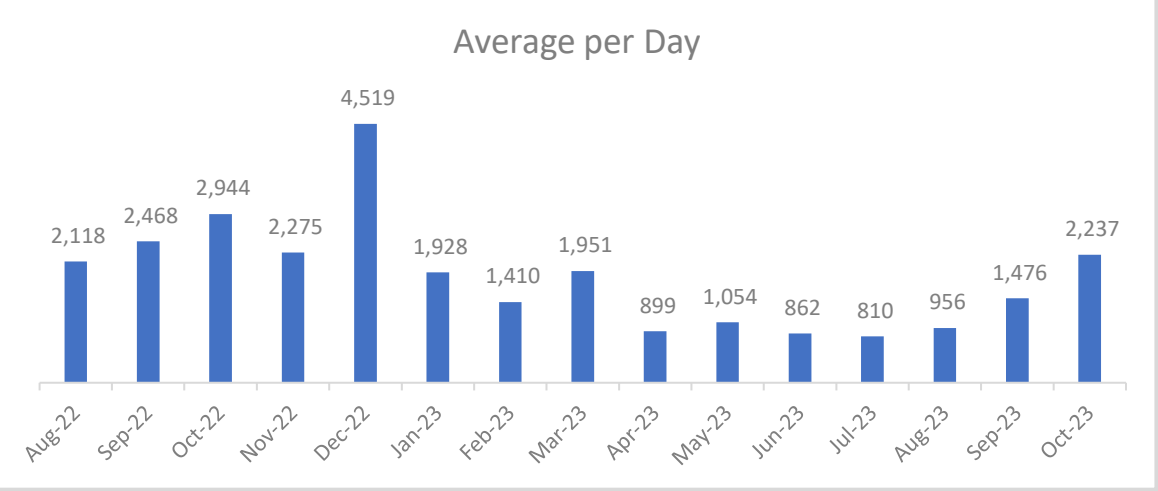
34. Average Daily and Annualised Data for >60 minute delays (source, NAIG)

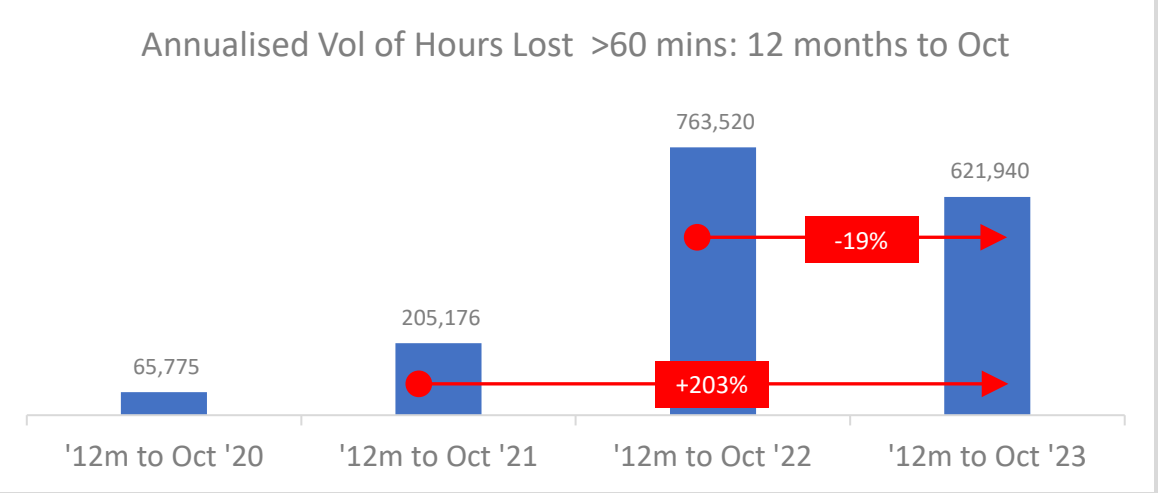
1. Volume of Handover Delays over 60 minutes





2. Hours Lost for Handover Delays over 60 minutes

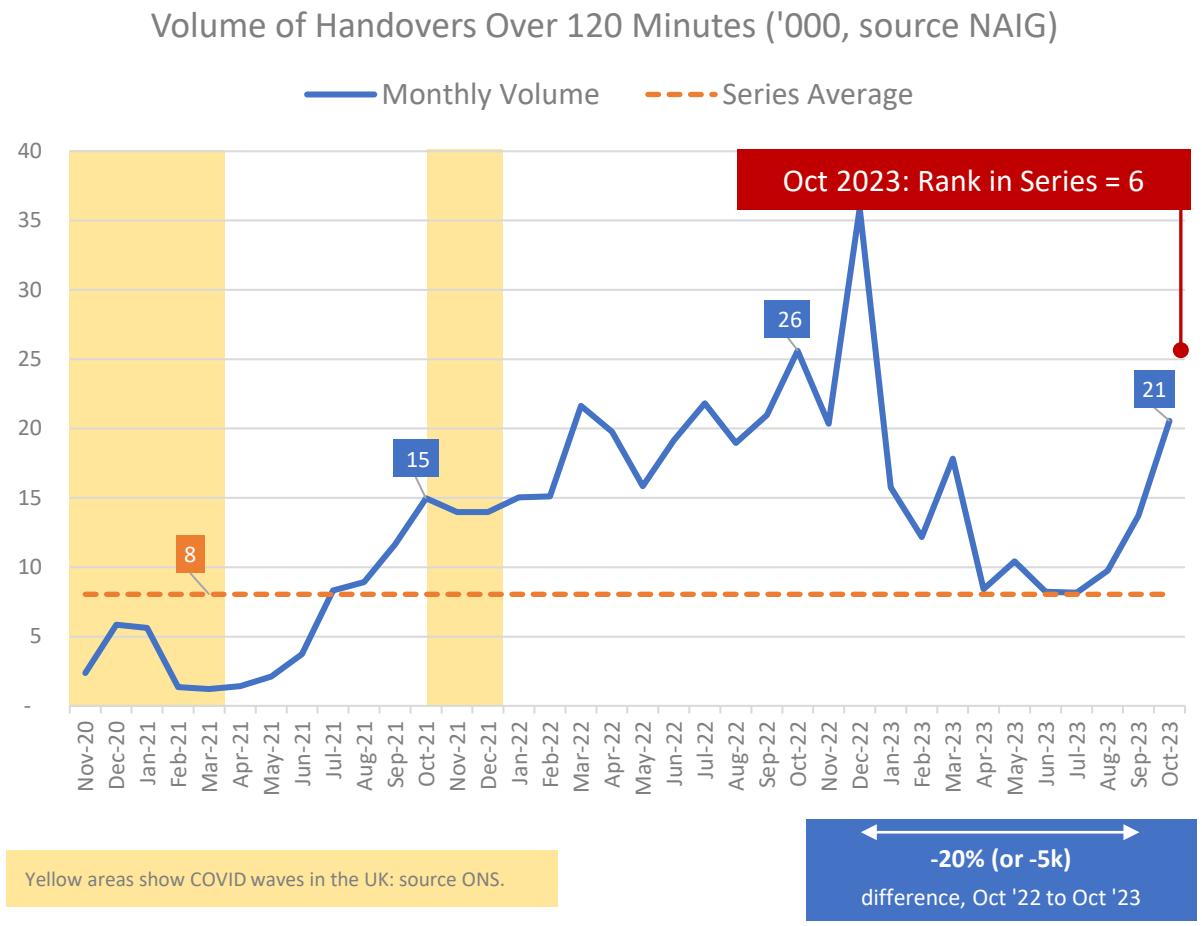




35. Patient Handover Delays over 120 Minutes (source, NAIG)

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.

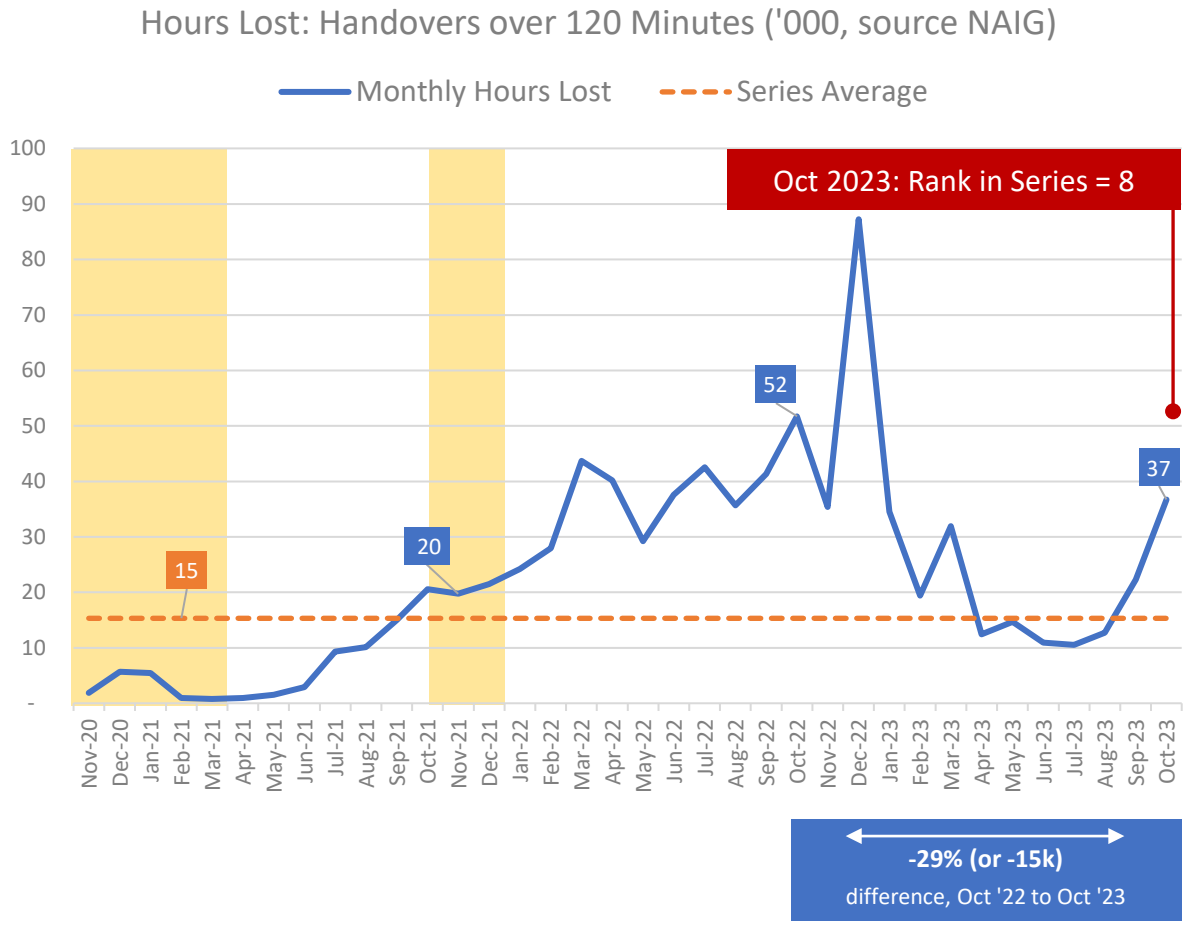
1. Delays over 120 Minutes



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

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

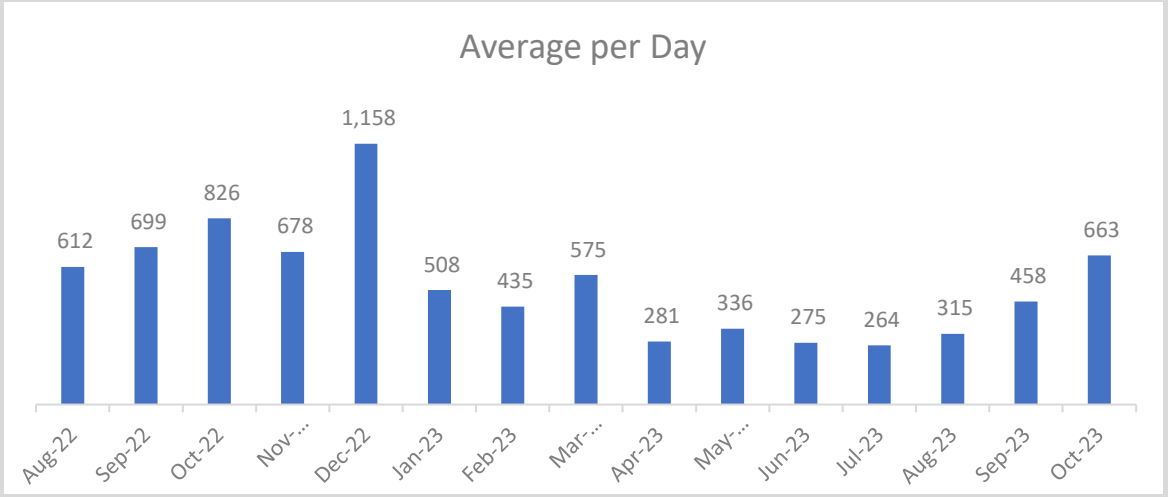
2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 120 Minutes

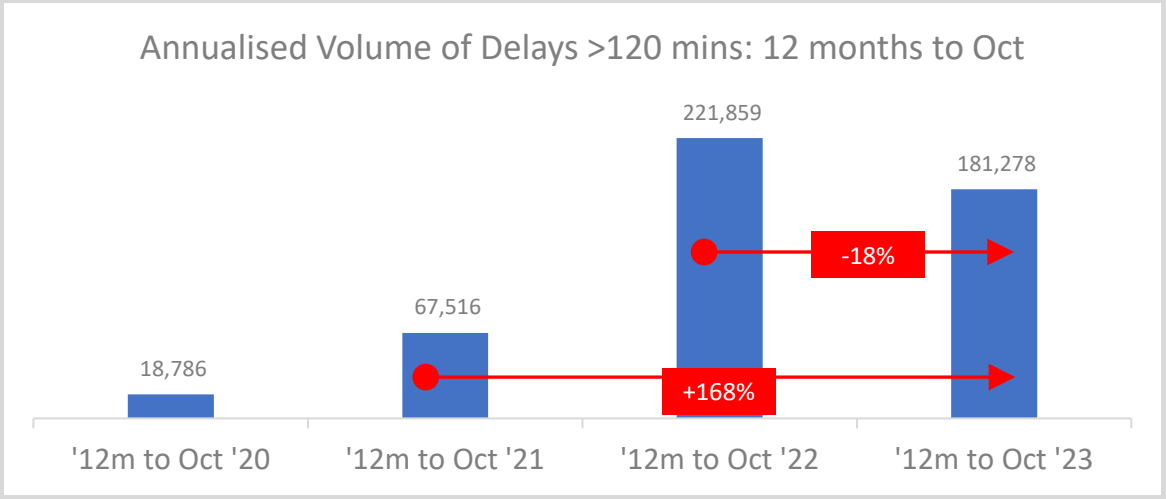


-29% (or -15k)
difference, Oct '22 to Oct '23

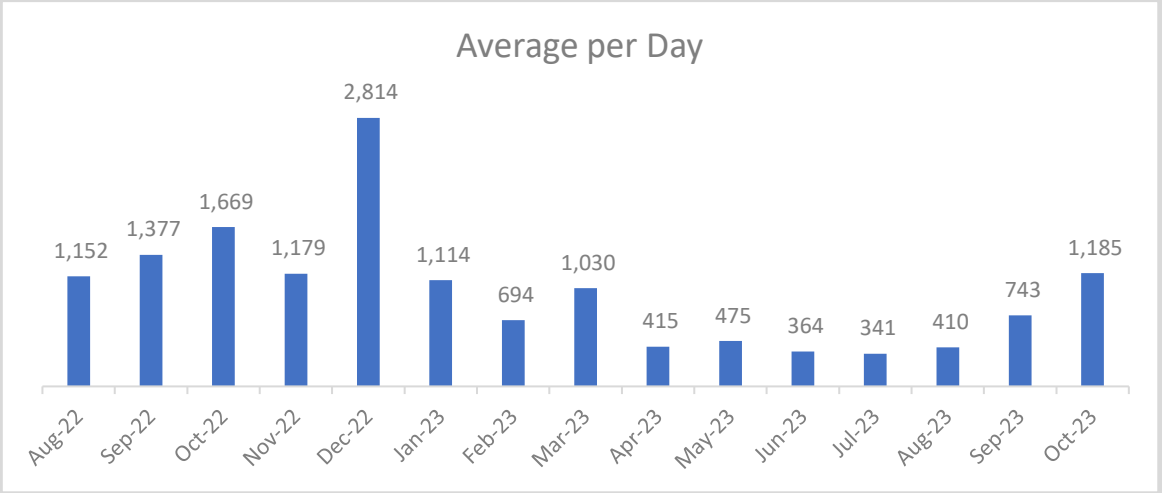
36. Average Daily and Annualised Data for >120 minute delays (source, NAIG)

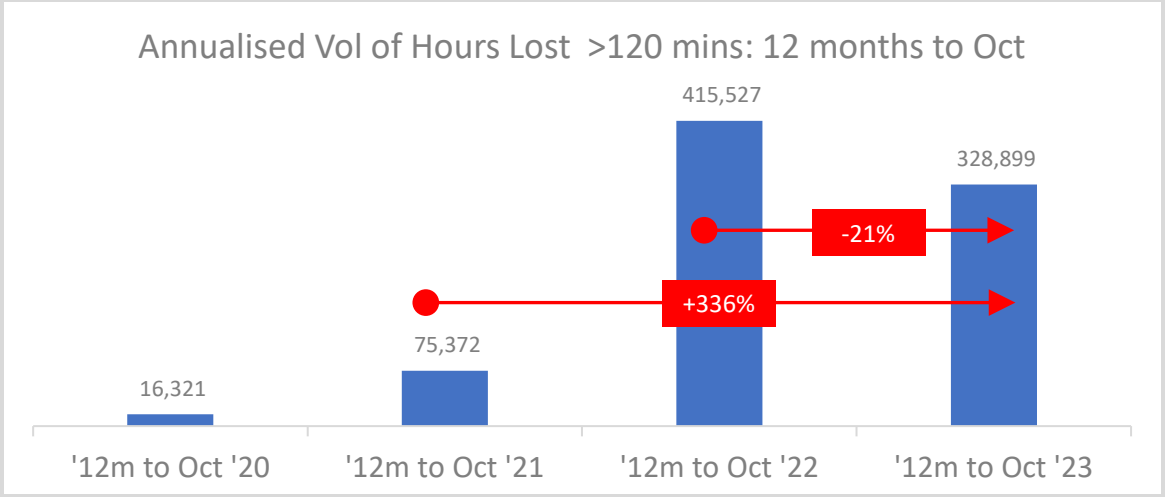
1. Volume of Handover Delays over 120 minutes





2. Hours Lost for Handover Delays over 120 minutes

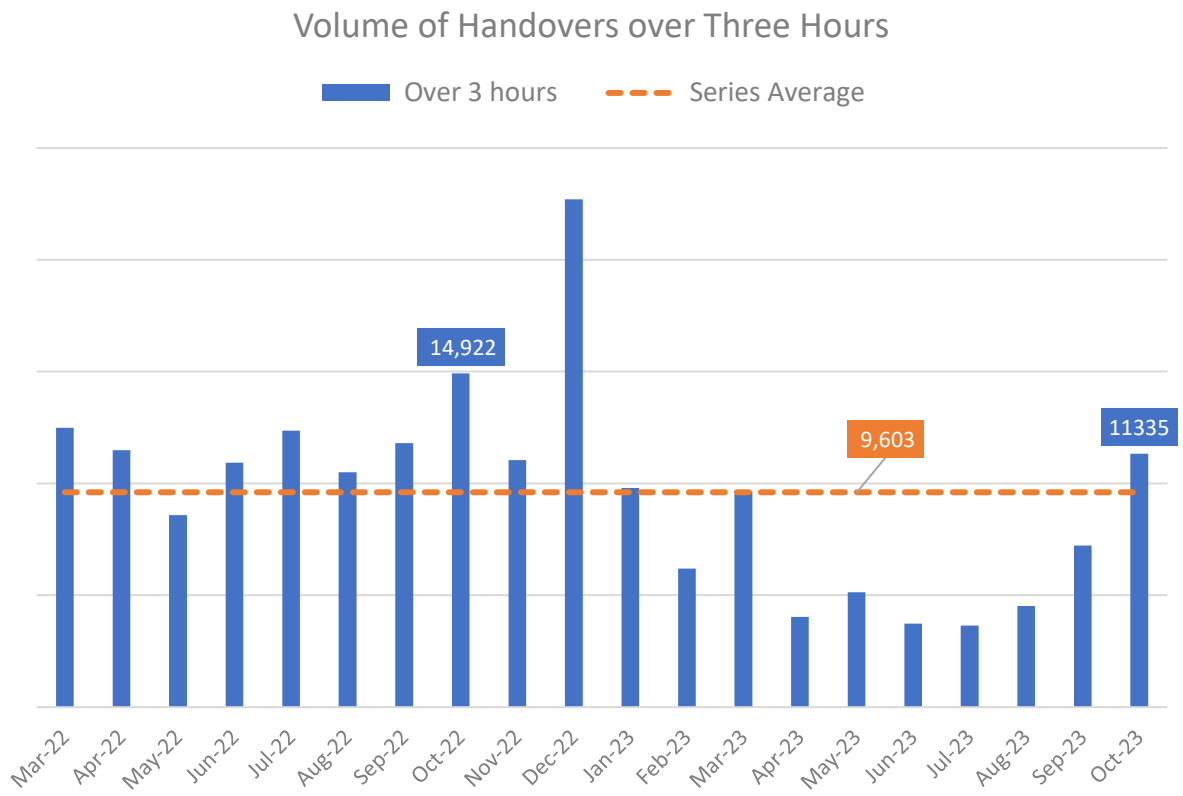




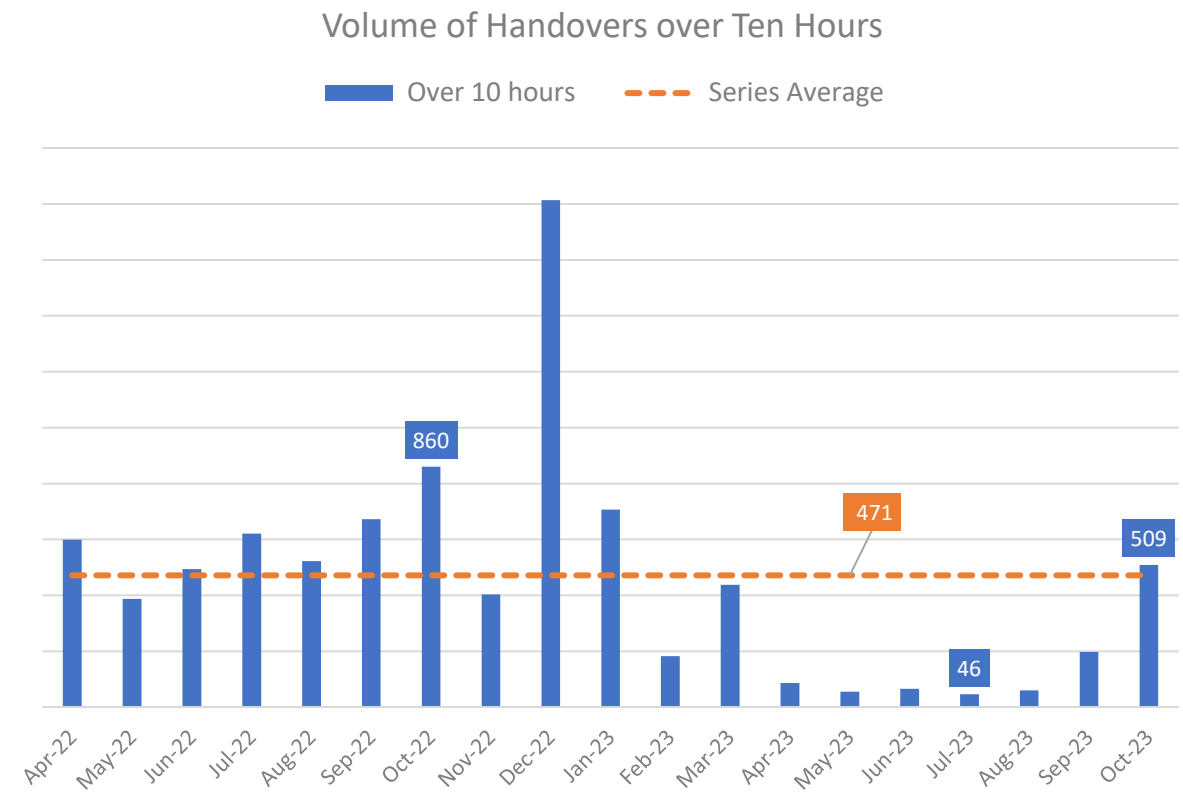
37. Patient Handovers Longer than Three Hours (source, NAIG)

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



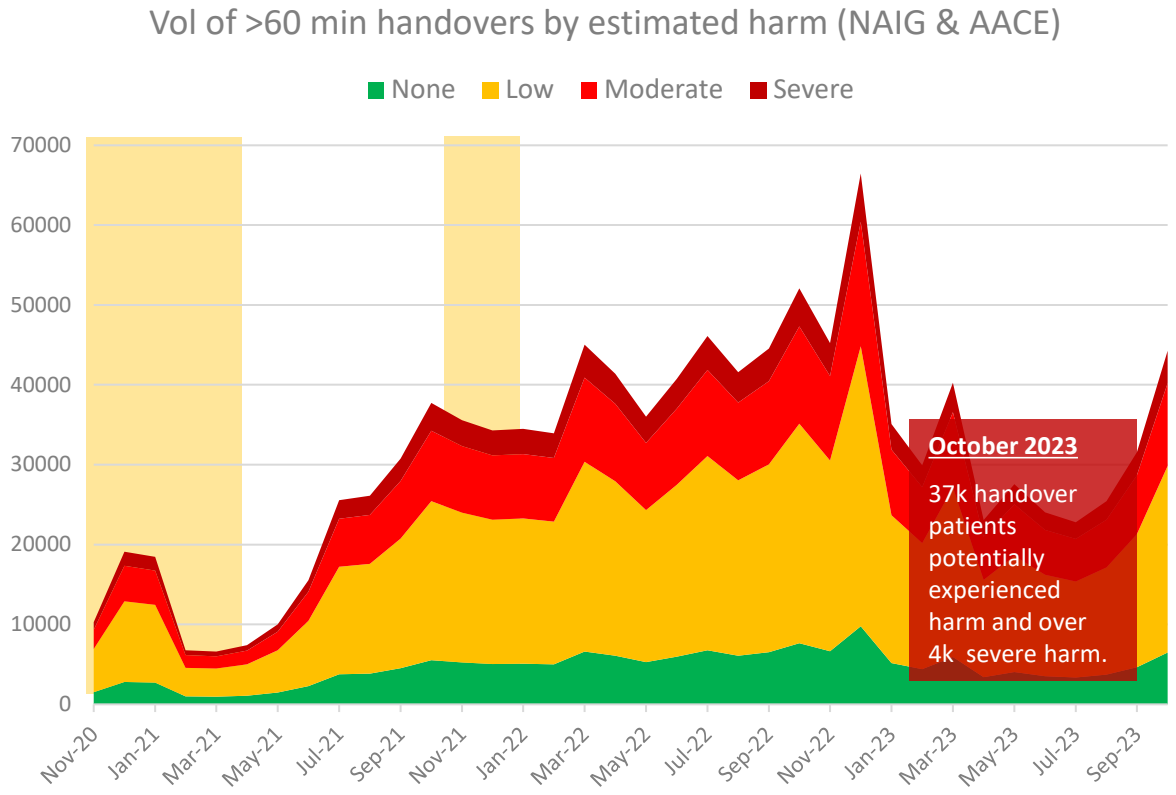
2. Longer Handover Delays: All Over Ten Hours



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

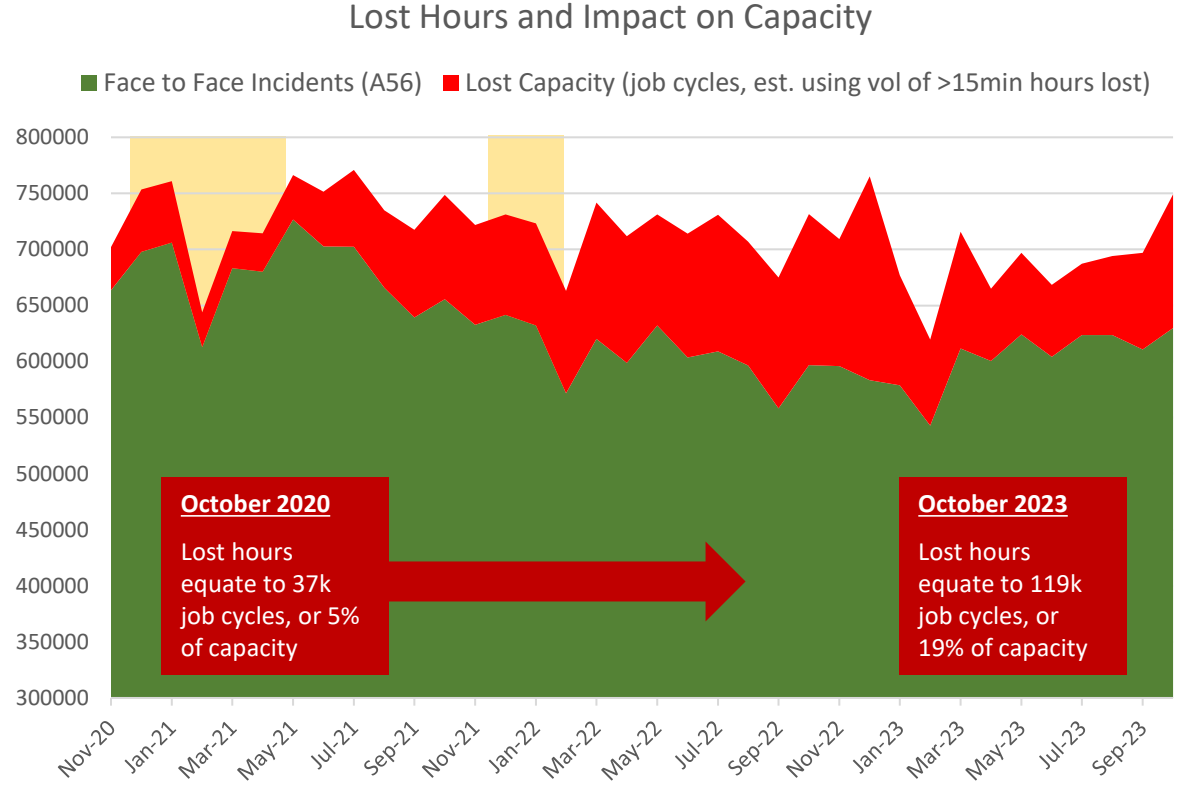
Around 37k patients experienced potential harm as a result of hour-plus handover delays in October 2023. Over the same time, the sector lost the equivalent of 119k ambulance job cycles (where patients could have been attended). This is the same as 19% of ambulance capacity across the month – compared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

1. Estimated number of patients experiencing potential harm



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

2. Estimated impact of lost hours on capacity

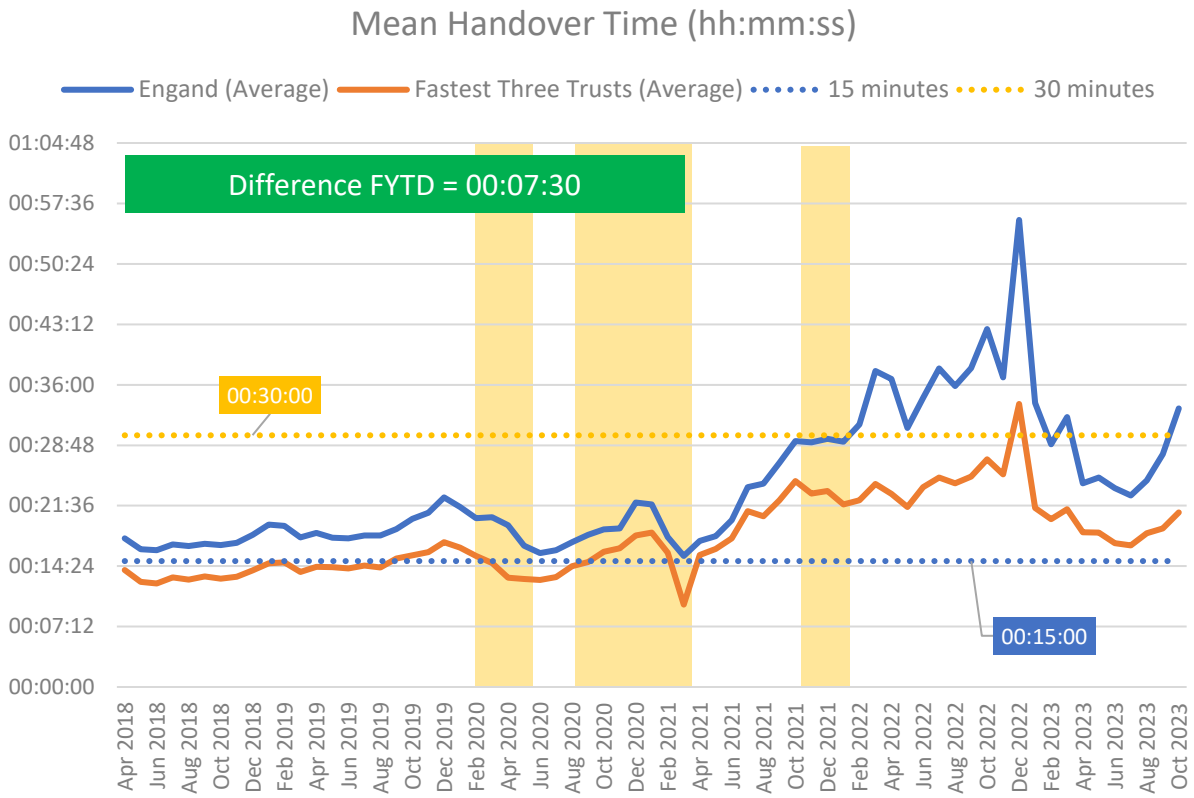


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

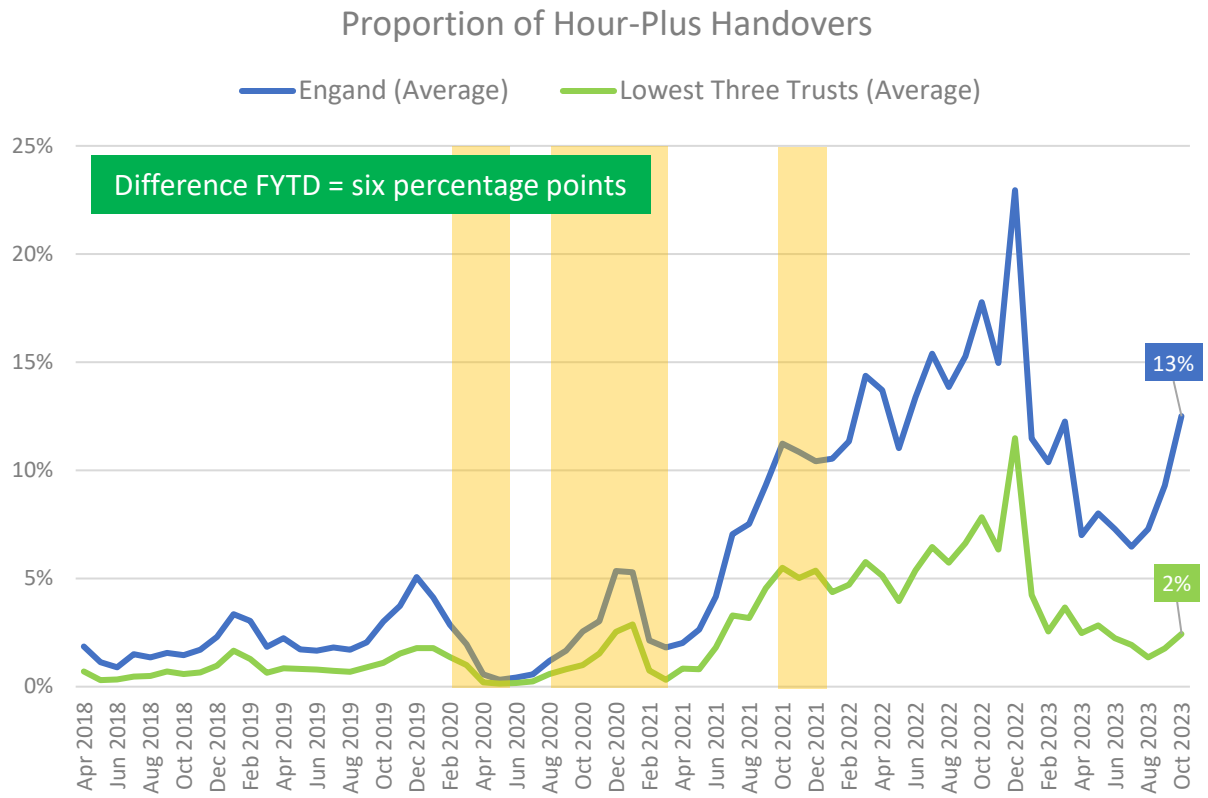
39. Patient Handovers – National Average vs Fastest Trusts (source, NAIG) (NEW)

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



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



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.