

Statistical Note: Ambulance Quality Indicators (AQI)

The latest Systems Indicators for June 2018 for Ambulance Services in England showed that one of the six response standards in the Handbook¹ to the NHS constitution was met.

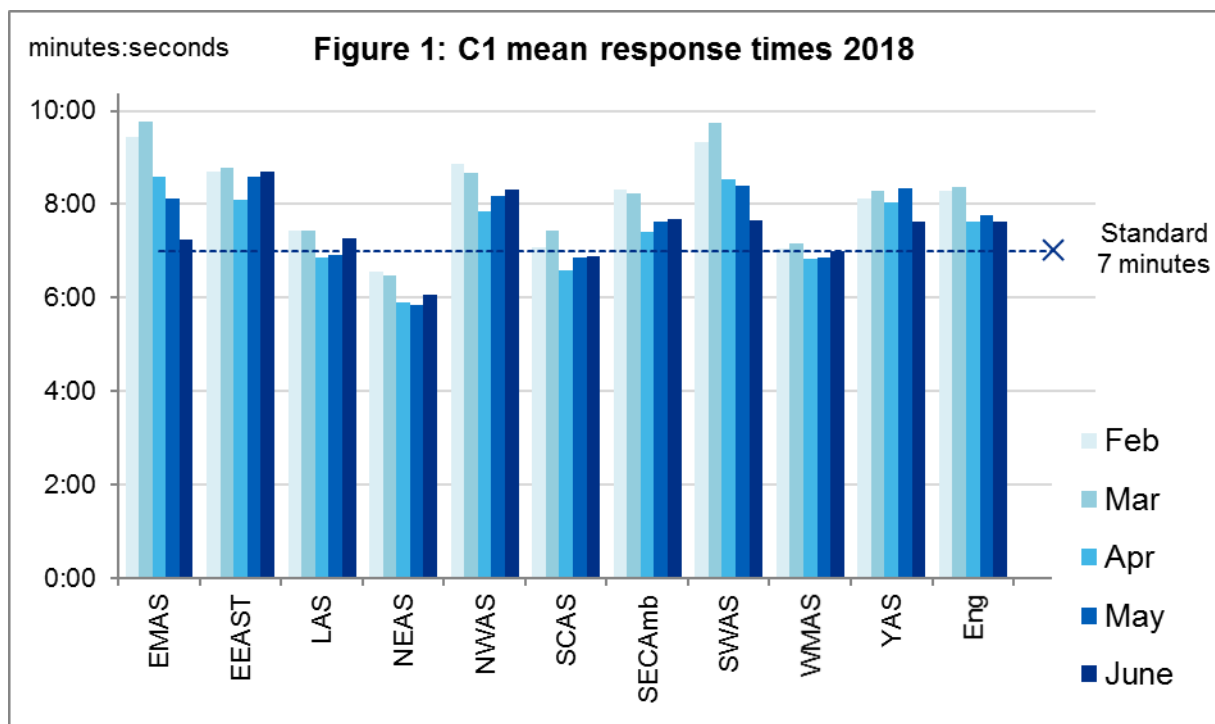
1. Systems Indicators

1.1 Response times

For England as a whole, in June 2018, both the category² C1 mean average response time, and the 90th centile response time, were quicker than all the earlier months of 2018.

For the other four standards, response times in June were slower than in May 2018 by up to 3%.

Three Services³ met the C1 mean standard of 7 minutes in June 2018: North East (NEAS), South Central (SCAS), and West Midlands (WMAS).

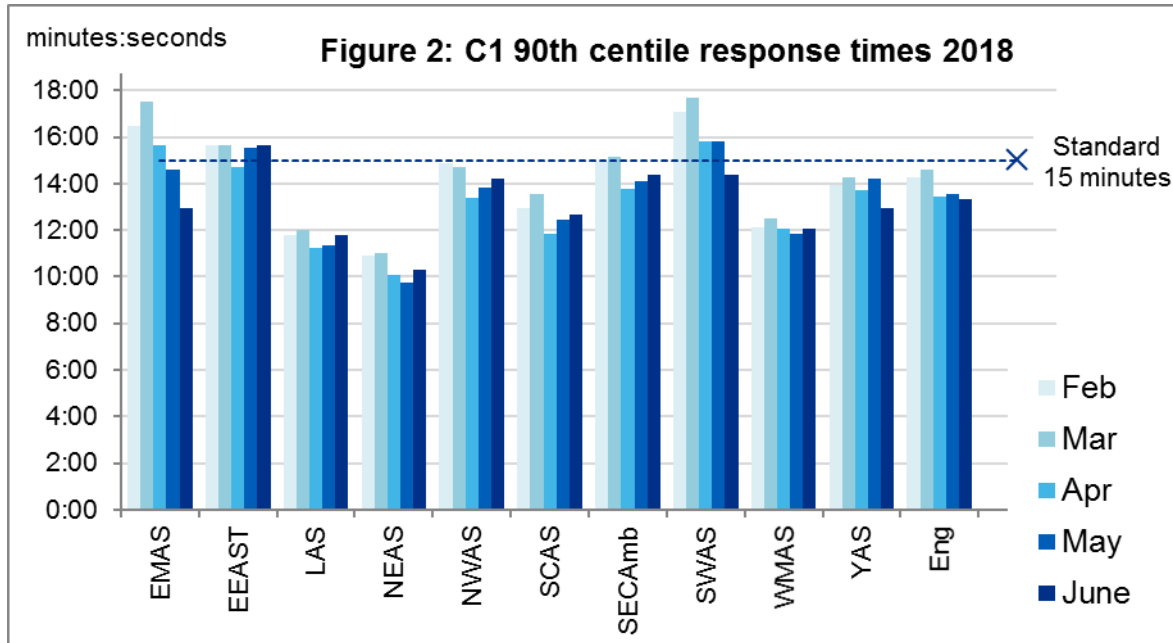


¹ Ambulance standards are in the September 2017 addendum to the Handbook to the NHS Constitution: www.gov.uk/government/publications/supplements-to-the-nhs-constitution-for-england

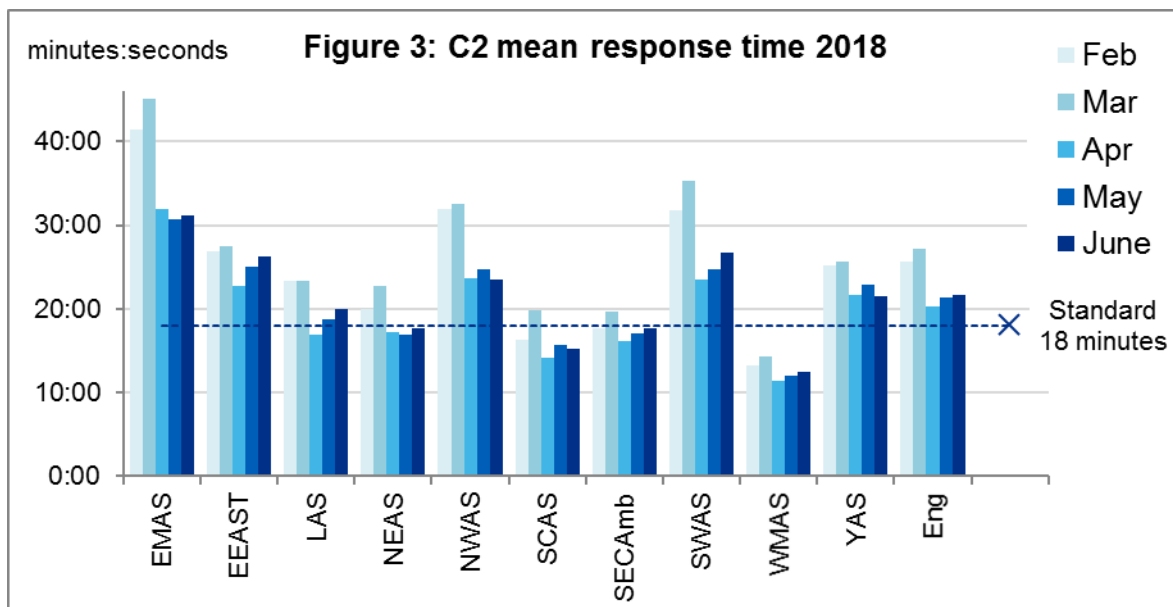
² Categories introduced across England in 2017: www.england.nhs.uk/urgent-emergency-care/arp

³ The Isle of Wight (IOW) Ambulance Service has provided data for 2018/19, including response times against the new categories C1 to C4. However, operationally, it is still using the old Red 1 / Red 2 / Green categories, so its response times will reflect the old category used at the time of the incident, rather than the new category that the incident will correspond to. In this Statistical Note, we include IOW in England data; but otherwise, charts, and descriptions of which trusts met the standards, or had the shortest / longest response time, exclude IOW.

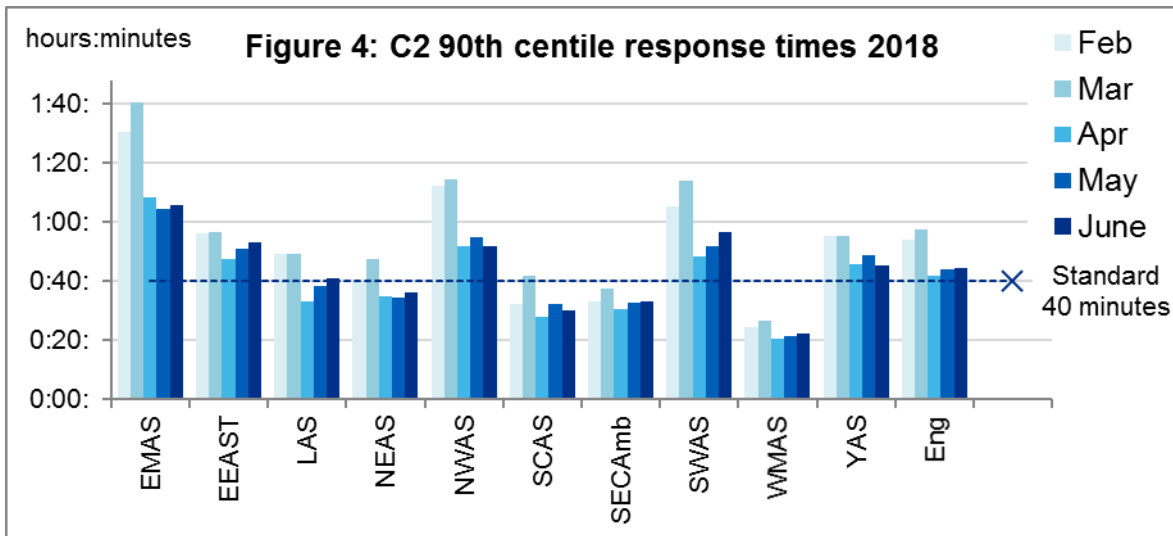
The standard for the 90th centile response time for Category C1 (Figure 2) is 15 minutes. The average 90th centile across England was 13:19 in June 2018, and ranged from 10:17 for NEAS to 15:40 for East of England (EEAST). Nine Services met the standard in June, one more than in May.



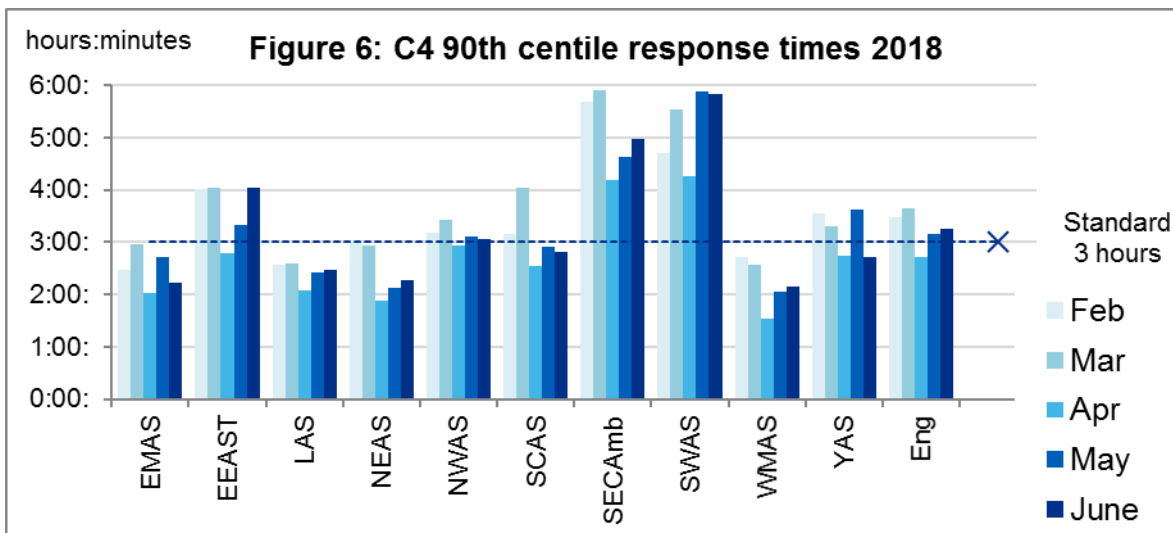
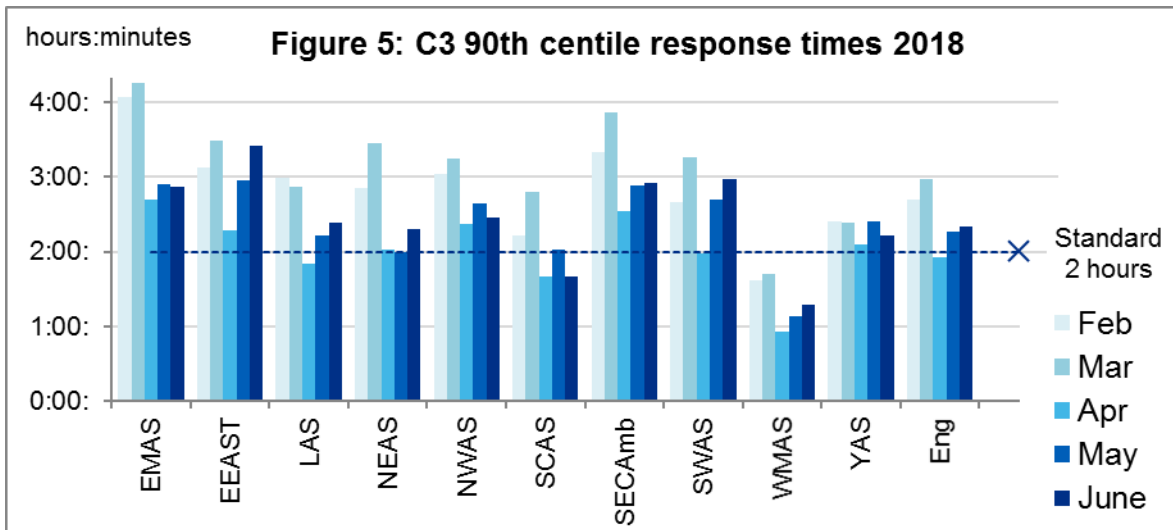
The C2 mean average response time for England was 21:38 in June. Figure 3 shows that, as in May, four Services met the C2 mean standard of 18 minutes: NEAS, SCAS, South East Coast (SECamb), and WMAS. The longest average response time was 31:10 for East Midlands (EMAS).



The average 90th centile response time across England for C2 was 44:35 in June compared with 44:05 in May. Figure 4 shows that the four Services that met the 40:00 standard in June also met it in April and May.



The average 90th centile response time across England in June was 2:20:01 for C3 and 3:15:38 for C4, each 3% more than in May. Figures 5 and 6 show that SCAS and WMAS met both the 2 hour C3 and 3 hour C4 standards, while EMAS, London (LAS), NEAS, and Yorkshire (YAS) met just the C4 standard.



1.2 Other Systems Indicators

The mean average call answer time in June was 11 seconds. This was higher than in April and May, but lower than in every earlier month in 2018.

In June 2018, per day, there were:

- 24.2 thousand calls to 999 answered per day, an increase of 2% on May;
- 22.3 thousand incidents per day that received a response from an Ambulance Service, a decrease of 1% on May;
- 13.2 thousand incidents per day where a patient was transported to an Emergency Department (ED), a decrease of 1% on May.

The proportion of incidents where a patient was transported to ED was 59% in June. Other incidents comprised 6% where a patient was transported elsewhere, 30% where patients were attended but not transported, and 6% resolved on the telephone. Each of these proportions changed less than 1 percentage point from each earlier month of 2018.

2. Clinical Outcomes

We are working with Ambulance Services to develop more Clinical Outcome measures. To free up staff time for this, we will only publish bundle data once a quarter for the rest of 2018: Stroke diagnostic bundle for February, May, August and November, and ST-elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI, a type of heart attack) STEMI care bundle for January, April, July and October.

We continue to publish other Clinical Outcome data in spreadsheets every month, but only describe them in this Statistical Note once a quarter, so they will feature in the 9 August 2018 Statistical Note.

In the 12 April 2018 AQI publication, we introduced new timeliness measures for STEMI and stroke for November 2017 data onwards. For stroke, December 2017 and January 2018 data were unavailable in time for the 14 June publication. These are now available, except for the Isle of Wight, and so are published today in the Clinical Outcome spreadsheets, alongside the February 2018 data.

3. Further information on AQI

3.1 The AQI landing page and Quality Statement

www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/ambulance-quality-indicators, or <http://bit.ly/NHSAQI>, is the AQI landing page, and it holds:

- a Quality Statement for these statistics, which includes information on relevance, accuracy, timeliness, coherence, and user engagement;
- the specification guidance documents for those who supply the data;
- timetables for data collection and publication;
- time series spreadsheets and csv files from April 2011 up to the latest month;
- links to individual web pages for each financial year;
- contact details for the responsible statistician (also in 3.4 below).

The web pages for each financial year hold:

- separate spreadsheets of each month's data;
- this Statistical Note, and equivalent versions from previous months;
- the list of people with pre-release access to the data.

Publication dates are also at

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements?keywords=ambulance.

3.2 AQI Scope

The AQI include calls made by dialling either the usual UK-wide number 999 or its international equivalent 112.

As described in the guidance mentioned in section 3.1, calls made to NHS 111 are included in all Systems Indicators except data on calls, items A1 to A6.

3.3 Related statistics in England

Ambulance handover delays of over 30 minutes at each Emergency Department were published by NHS England for winter 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2017-18 at www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/winter-daily-sitreps.

The Quality Statement described in section 3.1 has more information on the AQI. This includes a dashboard on the AQI landing page, which has an alternative layout for the AQI data up until April 2016. The Statement also describes the "Ambulance Services" publications⁴ by NHS Digital, with data from before 2000, to 2013-14; and has information on the comparability of data for other countries of the UK:

Wales: <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/ambulance-services>

Scotland: See Quality Improvement Indicators (QII) documents at www.scottishambulance.com/TheService/BoardPapers.aspx

Northern Ireland: www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/emergency-care-and-ambulance-statistics

⁴ <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/ambulance-services>



3.4 Contact information

Media: NHS England Media team, nhsengland.media@nhs.net, 0113 825 0958.

The person responsible for producing this publication is Ian Kay, Operational Information for Commissioning (Central), NHS England, Room 5E24, Quarry House, Leeds, LS2 7UE; 0113 825 4606; i.kay@nhs.net

3.5 National Statistics

The UK Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.