

Statistical Note: Ambulance Quality Indicators (AQI)

In April 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic ongoing, the number of 999 calls per day to Ambulance Services in England was the lowest for over two years.

As explained at www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/covid-19-and-the-production-of-statistics, and stated in our 9 April 2020 AQI Statistical Note, we will not publish any more Clinical Outcomes data before August 2020.

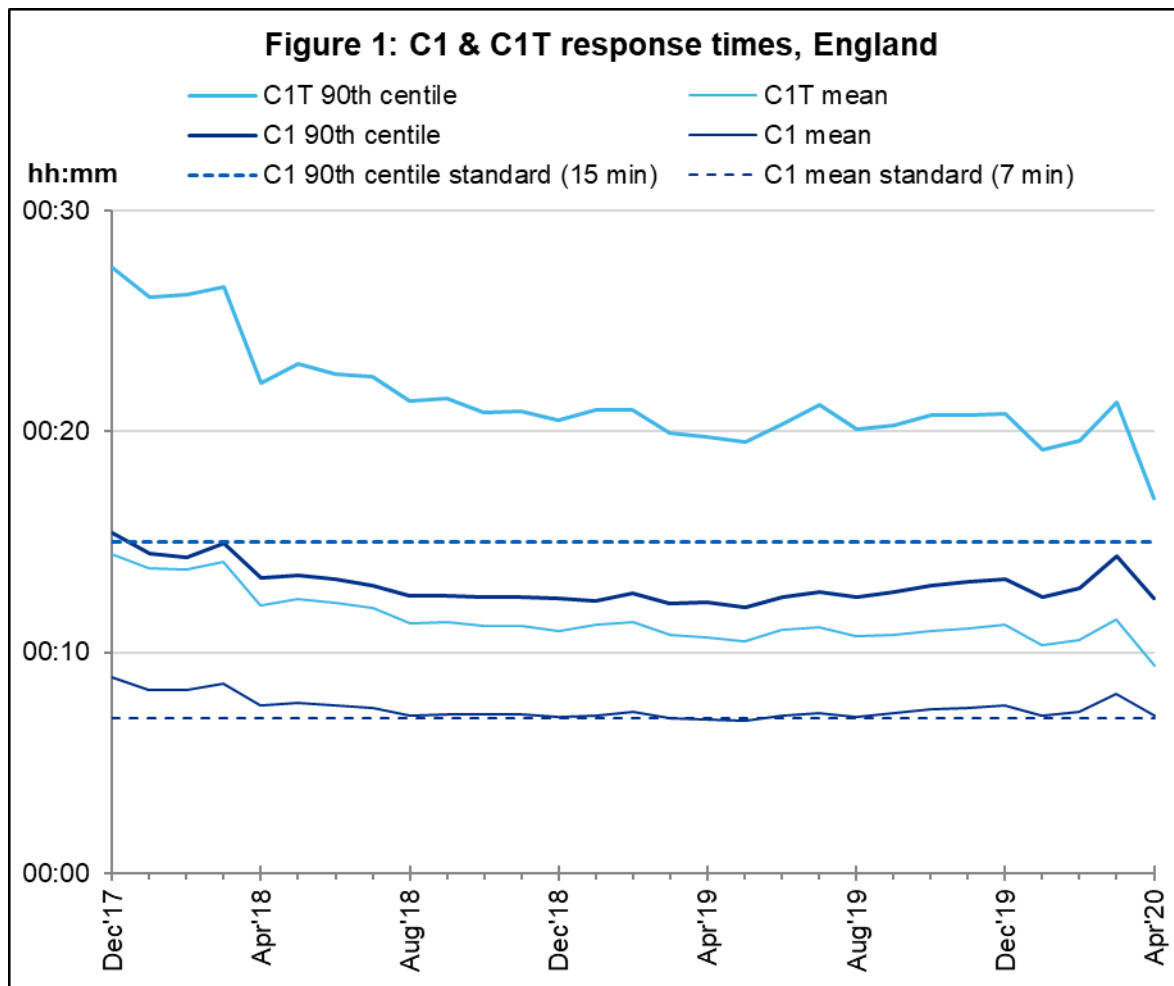
1. Systems Indicators

1.1 Response times

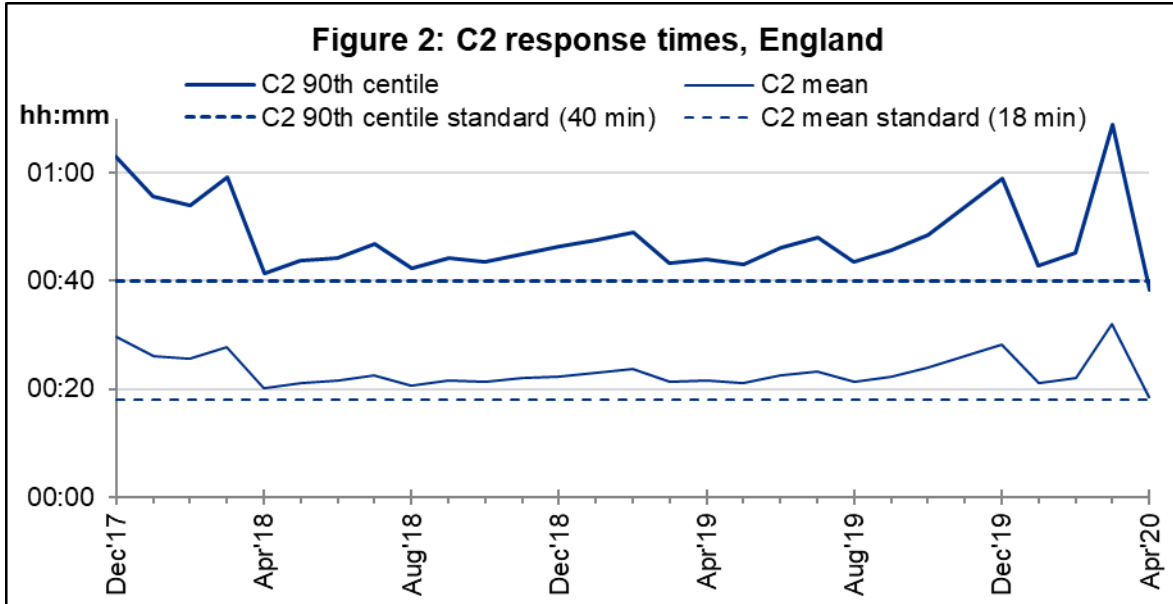
The mean average C1 response time across England was 7 minutes 8 seconds in April, longer than the standard of 7 minutes.

The C1 90th centile response times averaged 12:27 across England in April, so the standard of 15 minutes was met.

For C1T (response times for arrival of transporting vehicle, for C1 patients transported), the mean was 09:24, and the 90th centiles averaged 16:59 across England, both the shortest times since these data items were first collected nationally in December 2017.



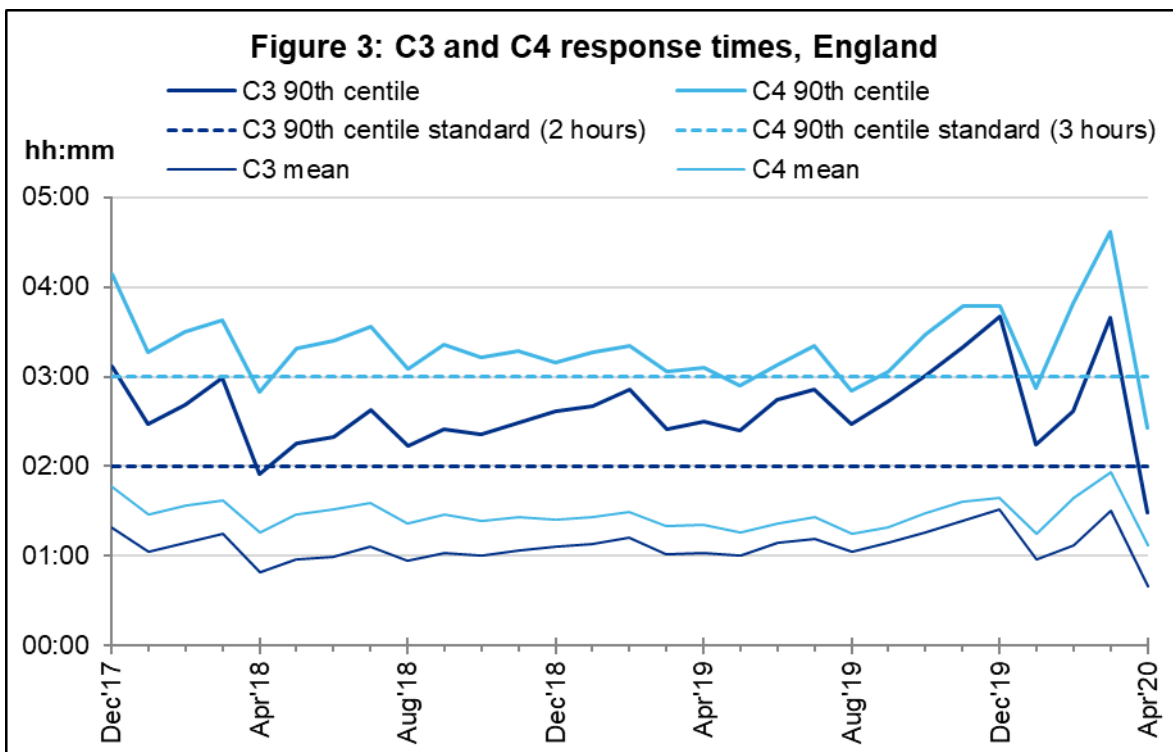
For C2 in April 2020, the mean average response time was 18:28 for England. The 90th centiles averaged 38:24 across England, meeting the standard of 40 minutes for the first time (Figure 2).



The C2, C3, and C4 response times in April 2020 (the mean averages, and the 90th centiles) were all the shortest since the standards were introduced in 2017.

The England C3 mean average response time was 39:40, and the C3 90th centile times averaged 1:29:20, shorter than the standard of two hours (Figure 3).

In April, the England C4 mean average response time was 1:06:57, and the C4 90th centile times averaged 2:25:18, shorter than the standard of three hours.

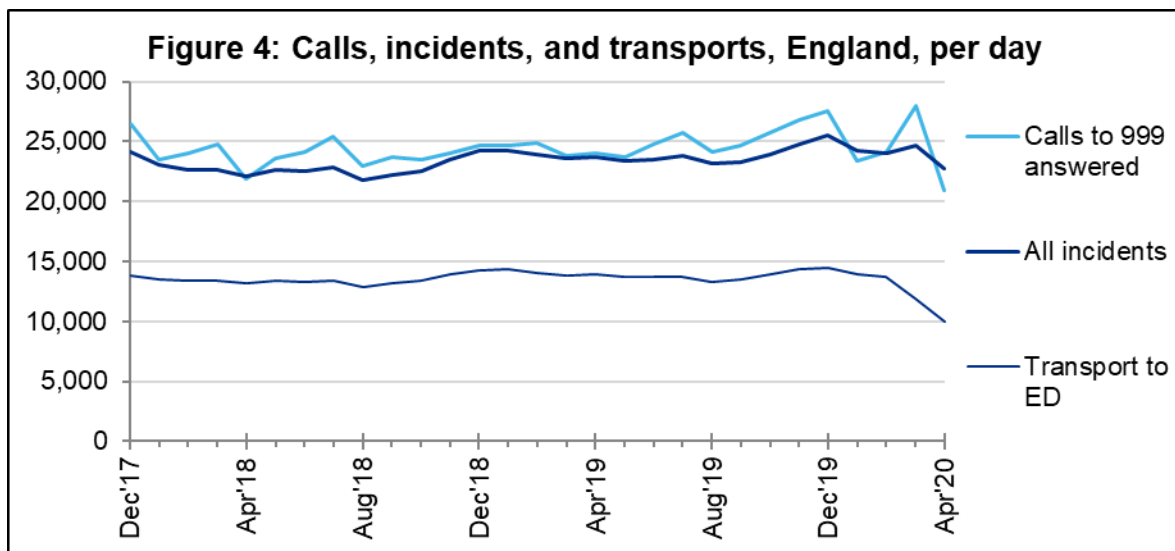


1.2 Other Systems Indicators

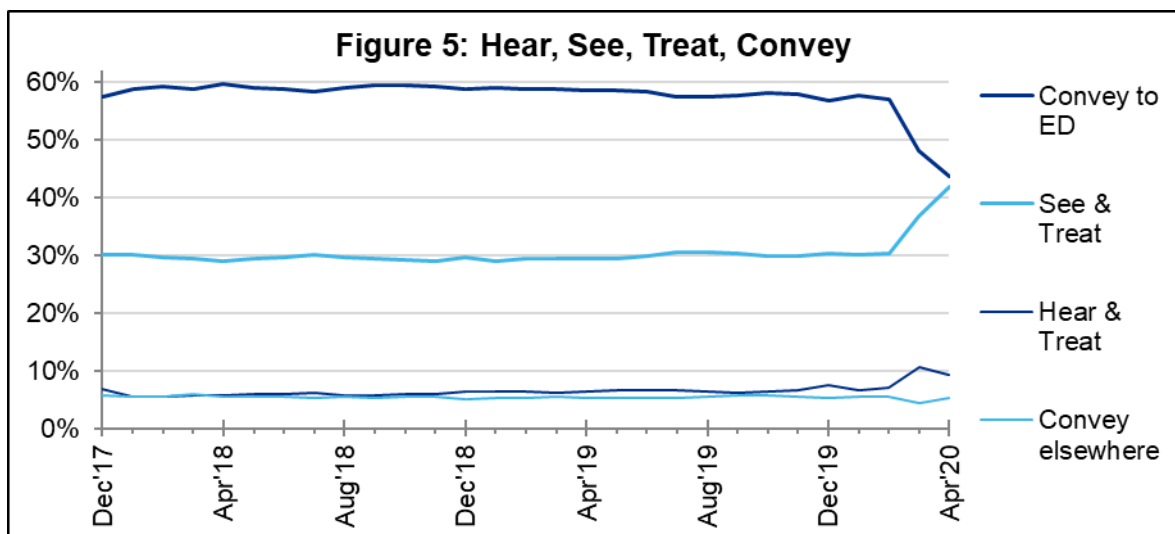
Across England, the mean average call answer time in April 2020 was 11 seconds, the same as the average for 2019/20.

In April 2020, per day, there were (Figure 4):

- 20.9 thousand calls to 999 answered, the fewest since these data items were first collected nationally in December 2017;
- 22.8 thousand incidents that received a response (whether on the telephone or on the scene) from an ambulance service, the fewest since October 2018;
- 9.9 thousand incidents where a patient was transported to an Emergency Department (ED) in April, 16% less in March 2020, which was previously the fewest in the time series.



A patient was transported to an Emergency Department (ED) in 44% of incidents in April 2020, the least in the time series. Conversely, 42% of incidents were closed at the scene (See & Treat), the most in the time series (Figure 5).



Other incidents in April 2020 comprised 5.2% where a patient was transported to somewhere other than ED; and 9.2% resolved on the telephone (Hear & Treat).

2. Further information on AQI

2.1 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 section 2.4 below).

Publication dates are also at

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

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.

2.2 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 specification guidance mentioned in section 2.1, incidents resulting from a call to NHS 111 are included in all Systems Indicators the except call data items, A1 to A6 and A114.

2.3 Related statistics

Ambulance handover delays of over 30 minutes at each Emergency Department are published by NHSEI during winter 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20, at www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/winter-daily-sitreps.

The Quality Statement described in section 2.1 includes information on:

- the “Ambulance Services” publications by NHS Digital <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/ambulance-services>, with data from before 2000, to 2014-15;
- a dashboard with an alternative layout for AQI data up to April 2016;
- the comparability of data for other countries of the UK:

Wales: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Health-and-Social-Care/NHS-Performance/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



2.4 Contact information

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

The person responsible for producing this publication is Ian Kay; Performance Analysis Team; Finance, Performance and Planning Directorate; NHS England and NHS Improvement; england.nhsdata@nhs.net; 0113 825 4606.

2.5 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.