

## Statistical Note: Ambulance Quality Indicators (AQI)

In May 2020, for the first time, all six response time standards for Ambulance Services were achieved for England as a whole.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued, the number of 999 calls per day was lower than in April 2020, which was itself the lowest for over two years.

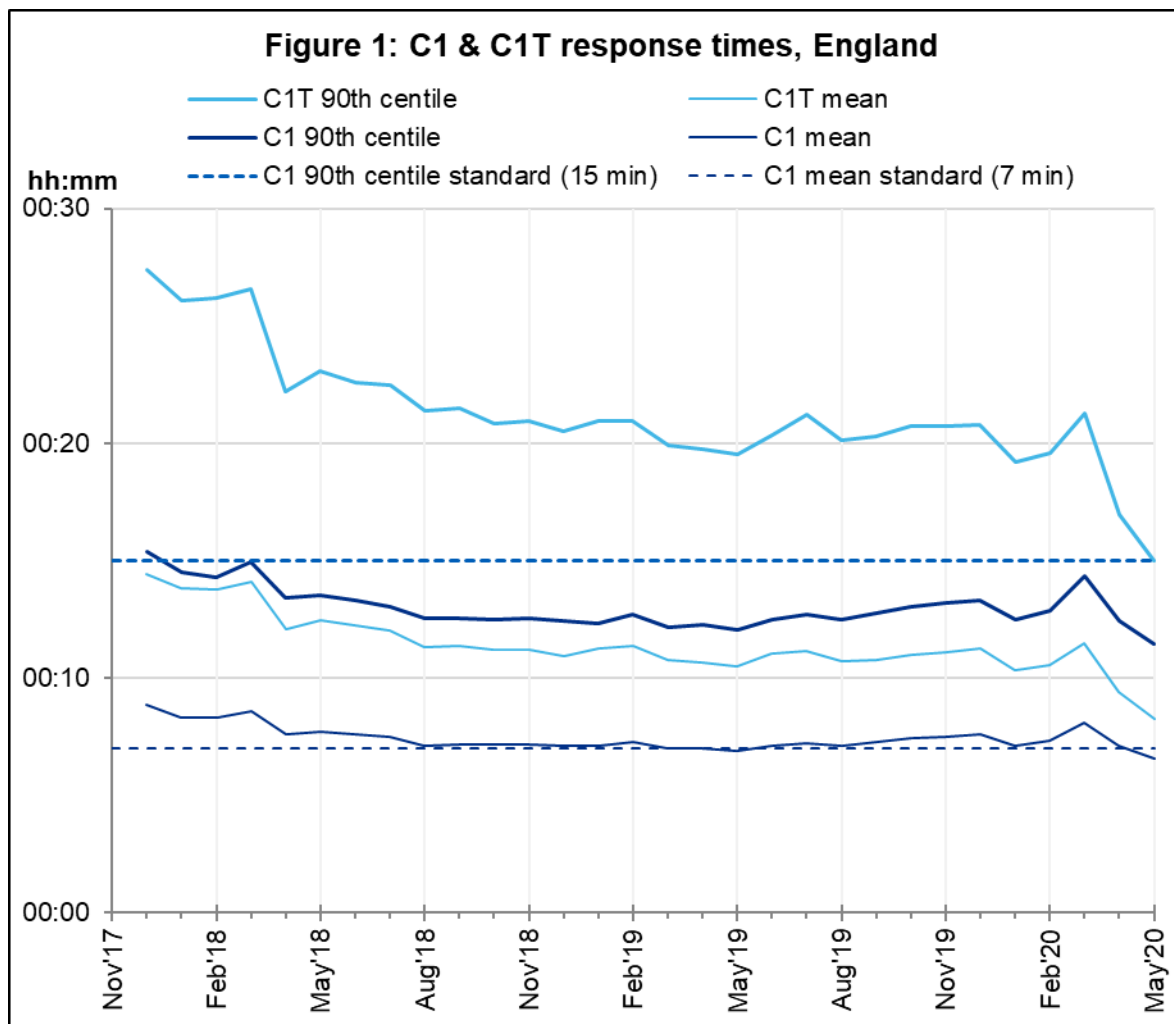
### 1. Systems Indicators

#### 1.1 Response times

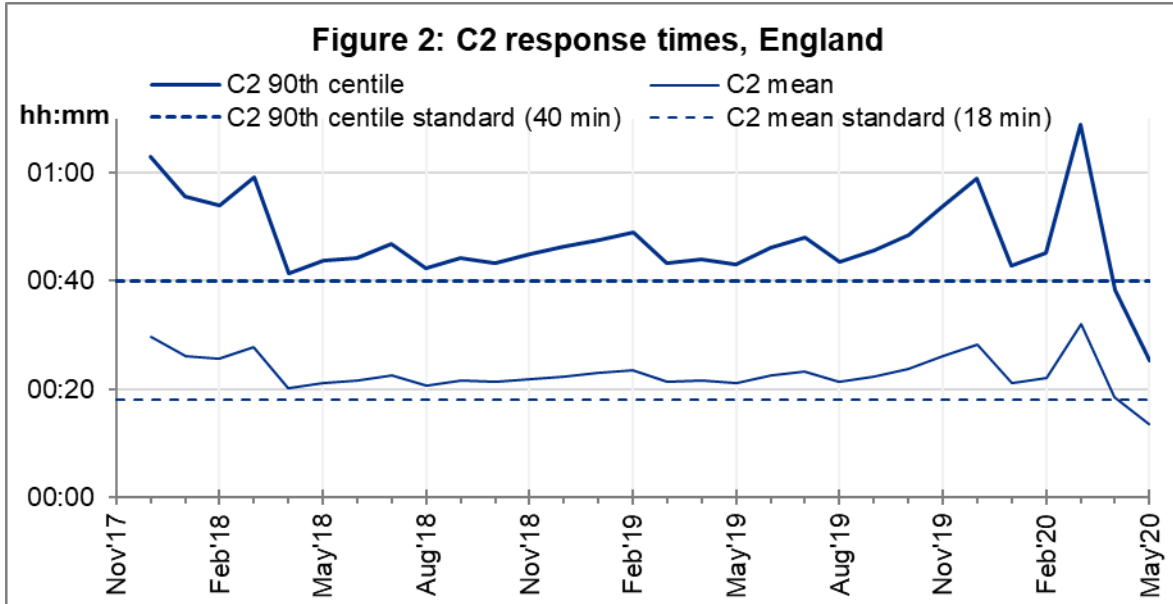
The mean average C1 response time across England was 6 minutes 34 seconds in May. For the first time since May 2019, this was shorter than the 7-minute standard.

The C1 90th centile response times averaged 11:27 across England in May, so the standard of 15 minutes was also met.

For C1T (response times for arrival of transporting vehicle, for C1 patients transported), the mean was 08:15, and the 90th centiles averaged 15:00 across England. Both the C1 mean and 90th centile, and both the C1T mean and 90th centile, were the shortest since the standards were introduced in 2017.

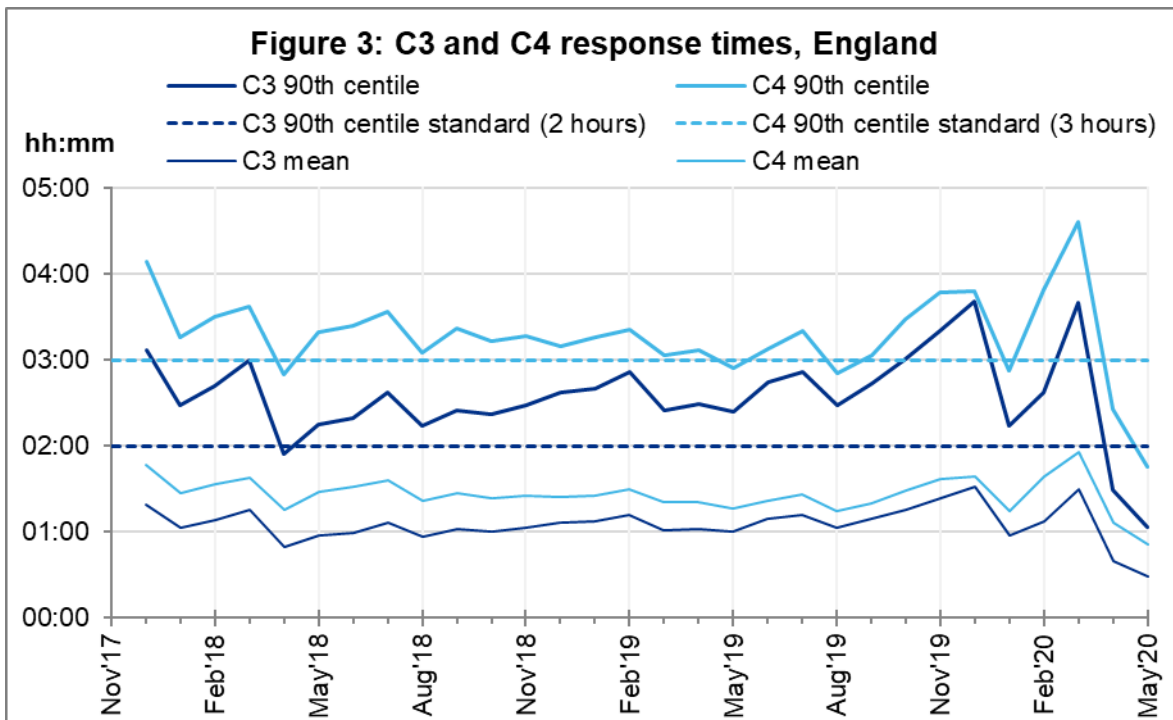


For C2 in May 2020, the mean average response time was 13:28 for England, meeting the 15-minute standard for the first time ever. The 90th centiles averaged 25:14 across England, meeting the 40-minute standard for the second time ever.



The May 2020 England C3 mean average response time was 28:50, and the C3 90th centile times averaged 1:03:07, shorter than the standard of two hours. The C4 mean average response time was 51:05, and the C4 90th centile times averaged 1:45:42, shorter than the standard of three hours (Figure 3).

The C2, C3, and C4 response times for England in May 2020 (mean averages and 90th centiles) were all at least 20% shorter than they were in April 2020, which were all themselves the previous shortest times.

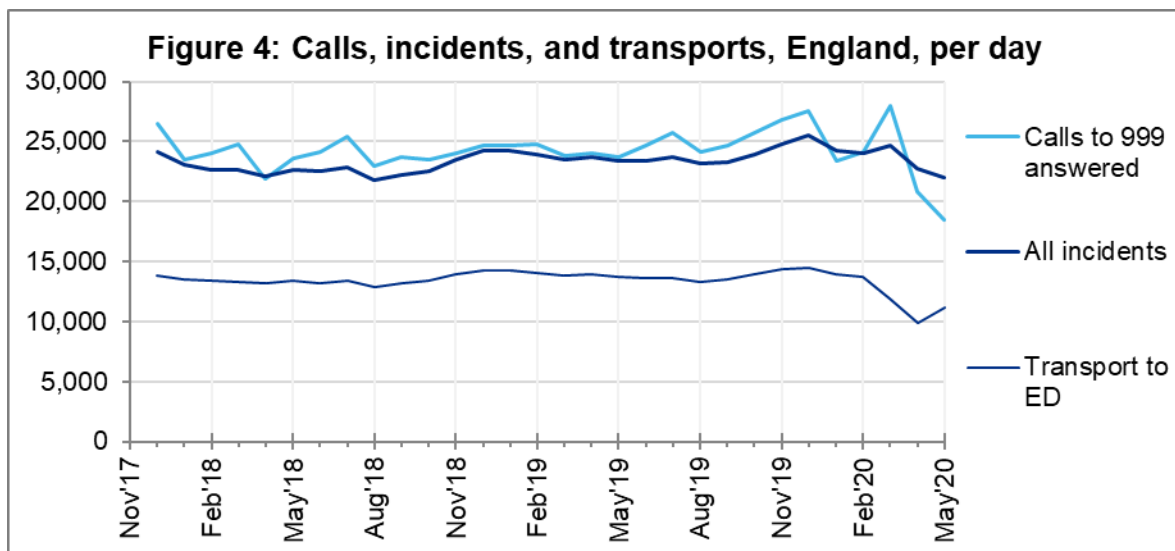


## 1.2 Other Systems Indicators

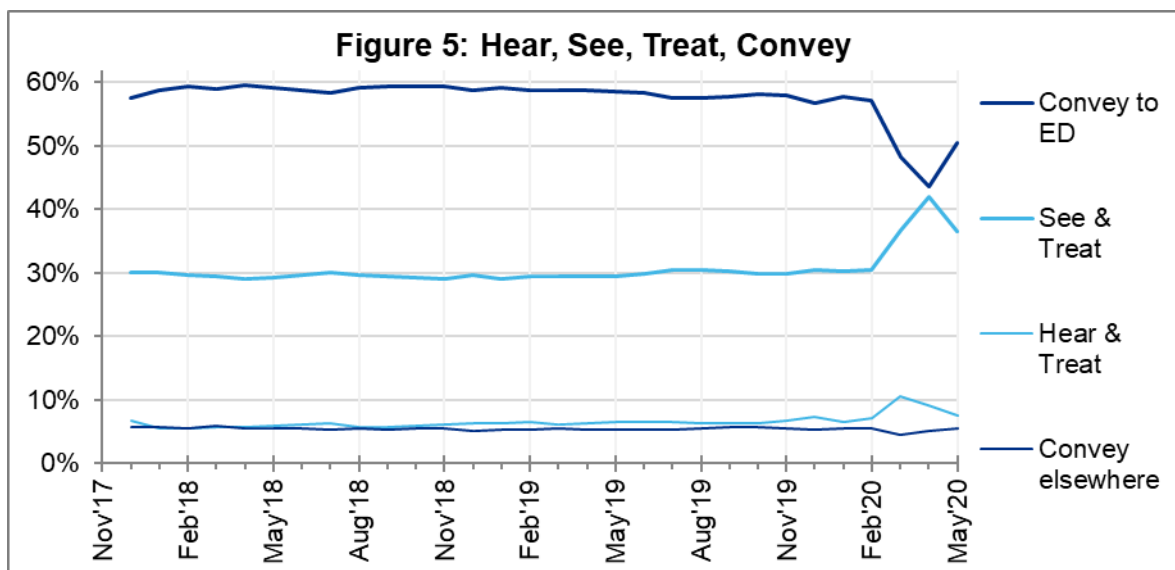
Across England, the mean average call answer time in May 2020 was 2 seconds, the lowest since this data item was first collected nationally in December 2017.

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

- 18.5 thousand calls to 999 answered, the fewest since these data items were first collected nationally in December 2017;
- 22.0 thousand incidents that received a response (whether on the telephone or on the scene) from an ambulance service, the fewest since August 2018;
- 11.1 thousand incidents where a patient was transported to an Emergency Department (ED). This was 12% more than in April 2020, but still the second fewest in the time series.



Incidents resolved on the telephone (Hear & Treat) comprised 7.5% in May 2020, and a further 36% were closed at the scene (See & Treat), both fewer than in the previous two months. Conversely, a patient was transported to an Emergency Department (ED) in 51% of incidents, and to somewhere other than ED in the other 5.5%, both more than in the previous two months. (Figure 5)



## 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.scottishambulance.com/TheService/BoardPapers.aspx)

Northern Ireland: [www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/emergency-care-and-ambulance-statistics](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/emergency-care-and-ambulance-statistics)



## 2.4 Contact information

Media: NHSEI Media team, [nhsengland.media@nhs.net](mailto: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](mailto: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.