

Statistical Note: Ambulance Quality Indicators (AQI)

The latest AmbSYS data for June 2021 shows that the number of 999 calls answered per day and the Category 3 response times were both the highest since the categories were first introduced in 2017.

For stroke patients transported by ambulances in England in February 2021, the vast majority received the appropriate diagnosis bundle.

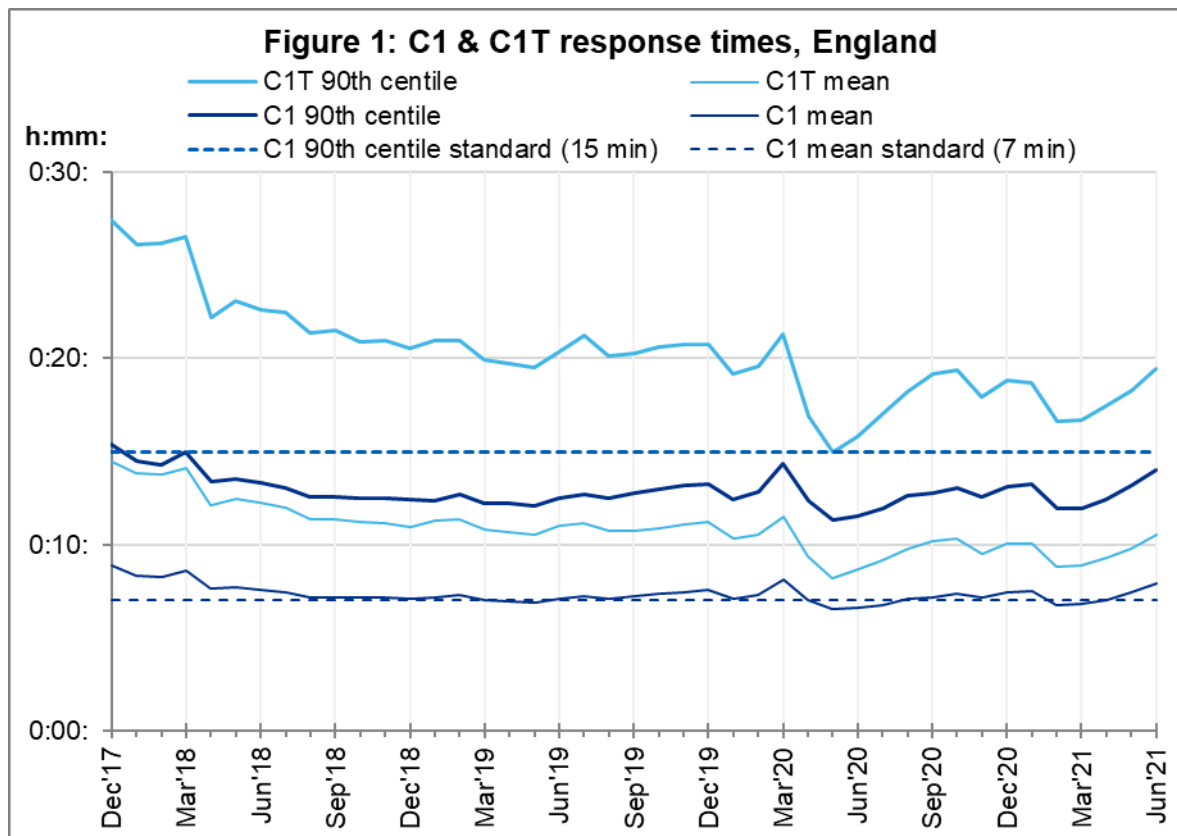
1. Ambulance Systems Indicators

1.1 Response times

In June 2021, the mean average C1 response time for England was 7 minutes 54 seconds, and the C1 90th centile response time was 14:01, so the 7-minute mean standard in the NHS Constitution¹ was not met, but the 15-minute 90th centile was.

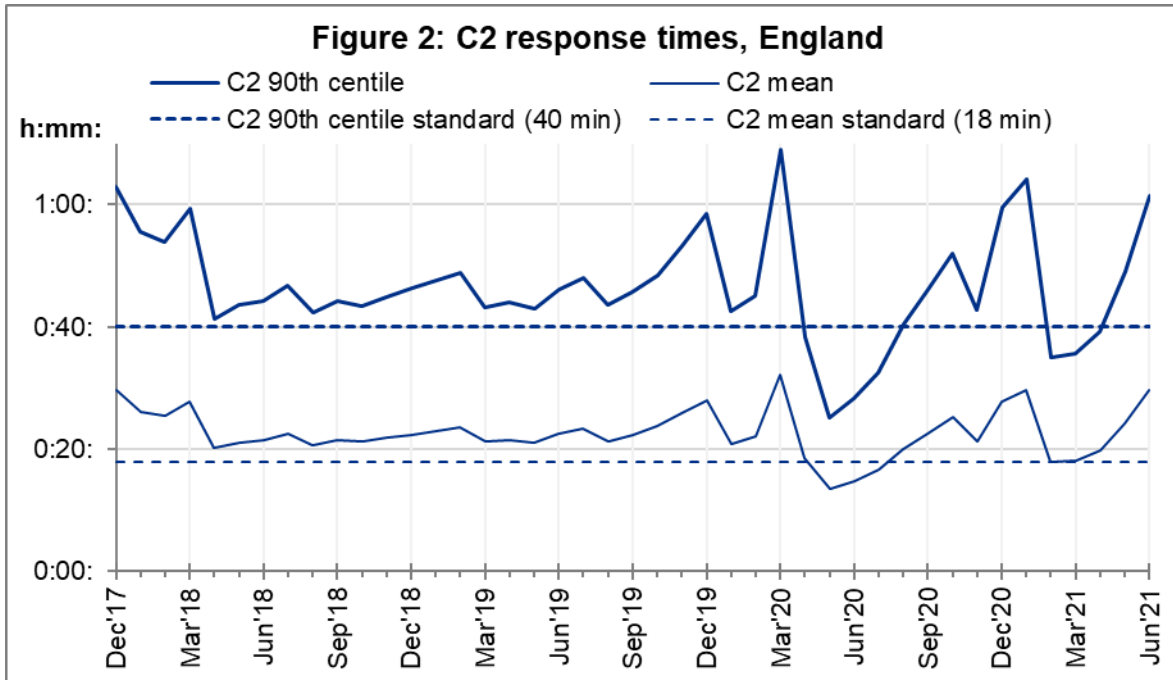
For C1T (response times for arrival of transporting vehicle, for C1 patients transported), the mean was 10:31, and the 90th centiles averaged 19:28.

In June, all four of these measures increased from May (Figure 1), but they were all within 60 seconds of their values in October 2020.

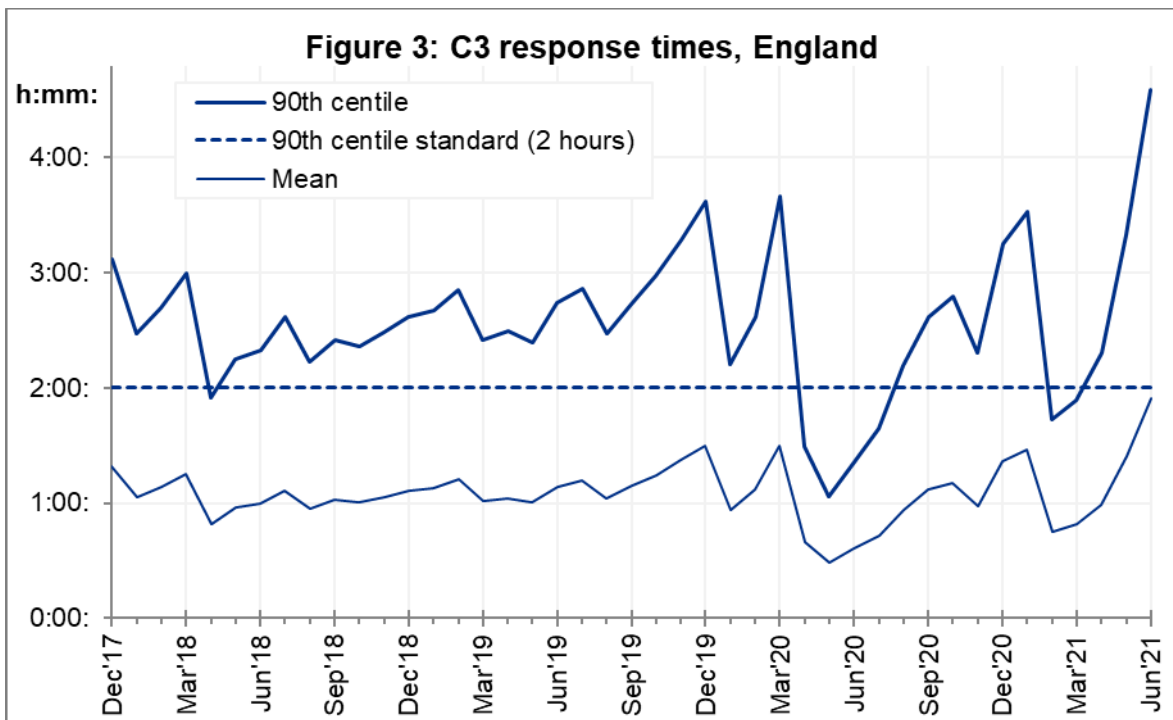


¹ Standards in the Constitution Handbook: www.gov.uk/government/publications/supplements-to-the-nhs-constitution-for-england/the-handbook-to-the-nhs-constitution-for-england

For C2 (Figure 2), the average response time in June 2021 was 30:42 for England, and the 90th centiles averaged 1:03:29 across England, so the 18- and 40-minute standards were not met.



For C3 (Figure 3), the mean average response time was 1:54:40 and the 90th centile times averaged 4:35:23, so the two-hour standard was not met.

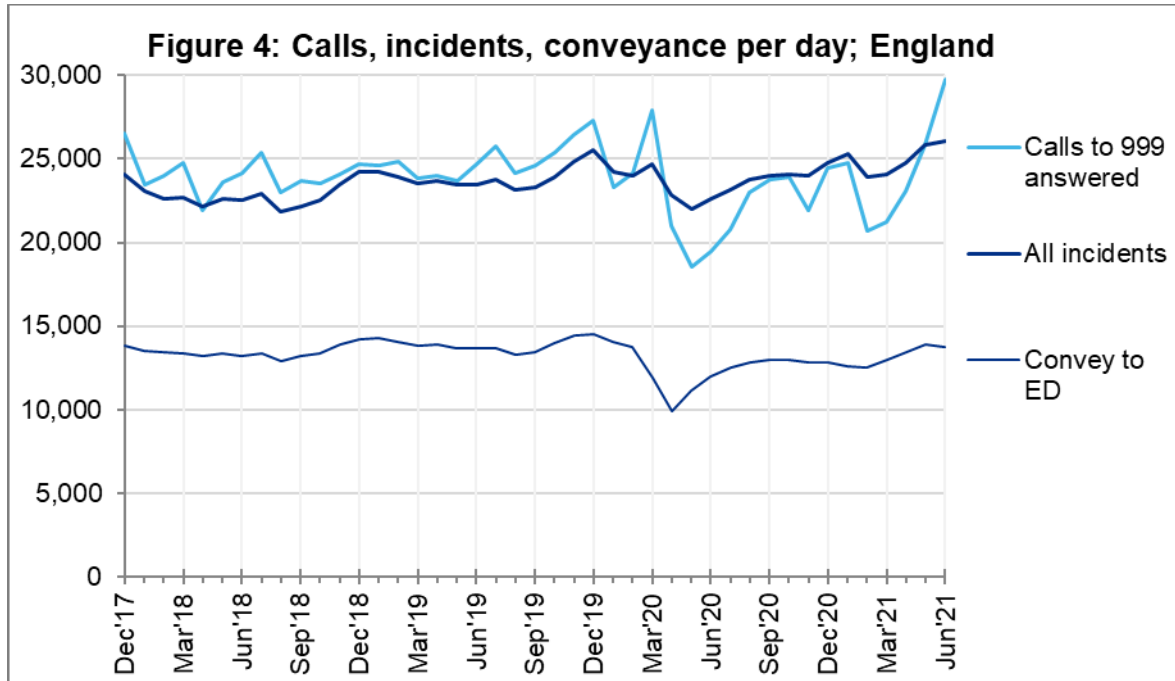


June 2021 C4 data are not available for the North West region. Excluding it from all months, the mean and 90th centile C4 response times were longer in June than in each of the previous four months, as they were for C1-C3 for England as a whole.

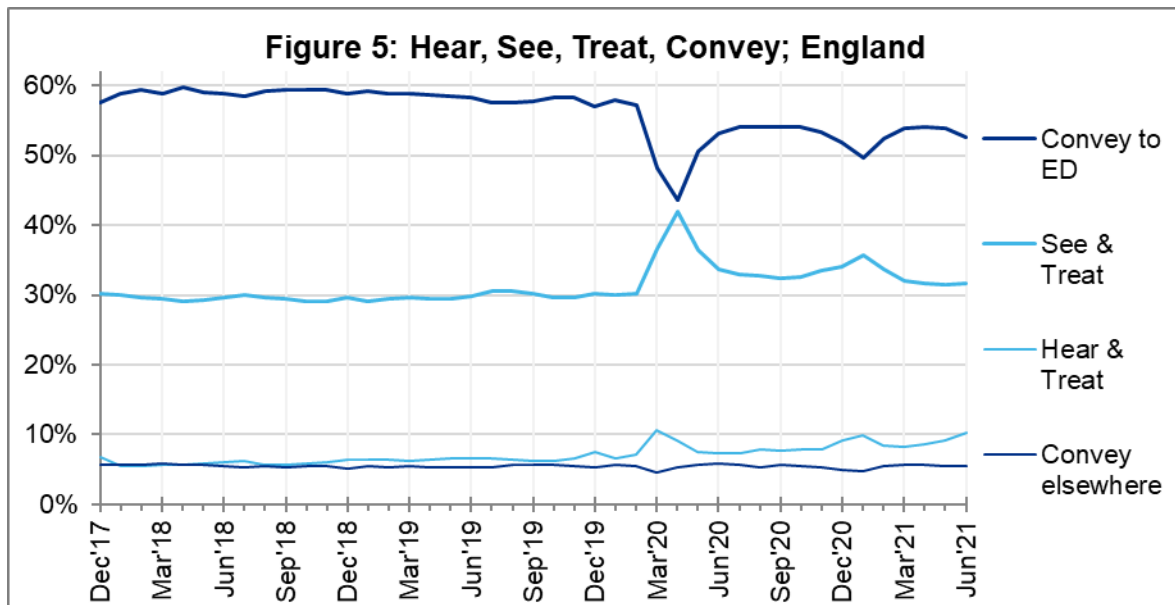
1.2 Other Systems Indicators and revisions

In June 2021, per day, there were (Figure 4):

- 29.7 thousand calls to 999 answered, 15% more than in May 2021;
- 26.1 thousand incidents that received a response (whether on the telephone or on the scene) from an ambulance service, 1% more than in May;
- 13.7 thousand incidents where a patient was conveyed to an Emergency Department (ED), 1% less than in May.



In June 2021, 10.3% of incidents were resolved on the telephone (Hear & Treat); only March 2020 had more. In June 2021, 52.6% of incidents had conveyance to ED, fewer than in May (53.9%); while 31.7% were resolved on scene (See & Treat), and 5.4% had conveyance elsewhere, both similar to May (Figure 5).



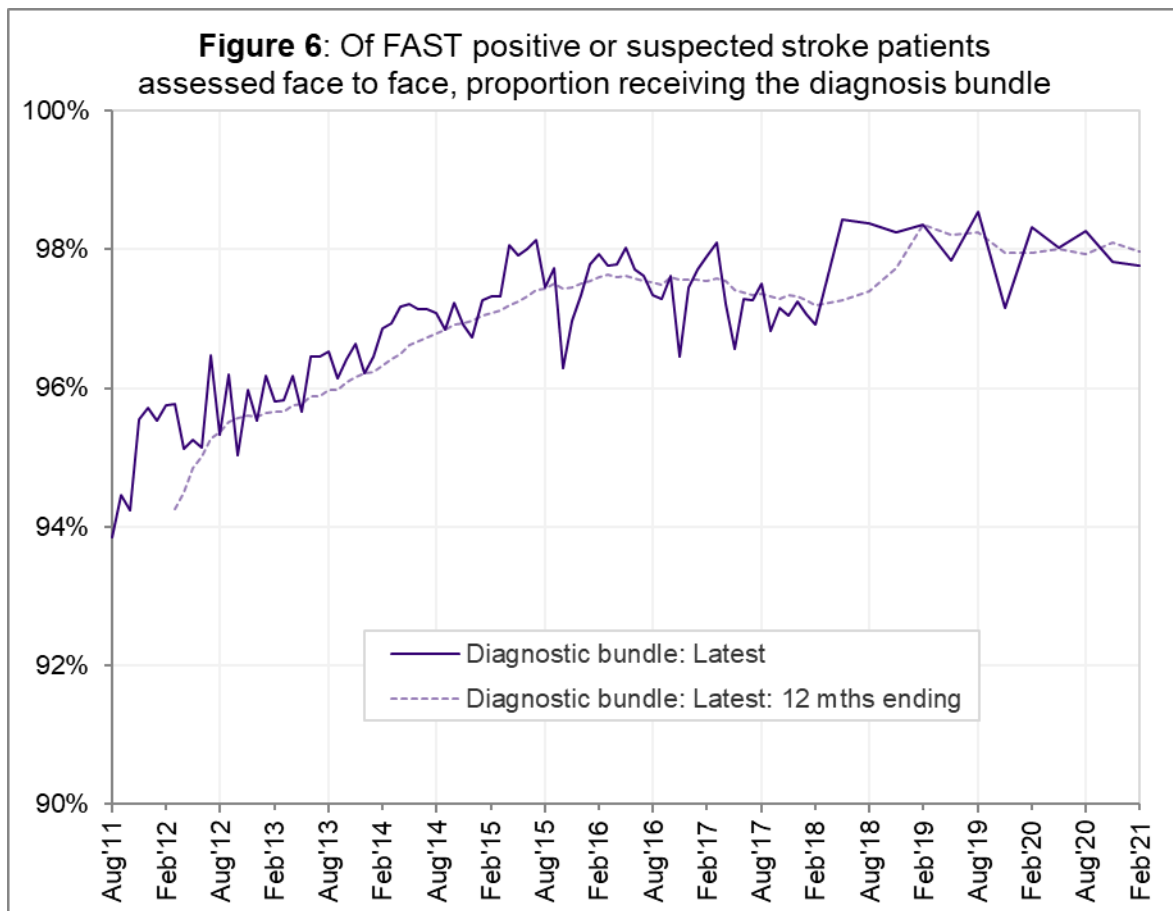
2. Ambulance Clinical Outcomes (AmbCO)

2.1 Stroke

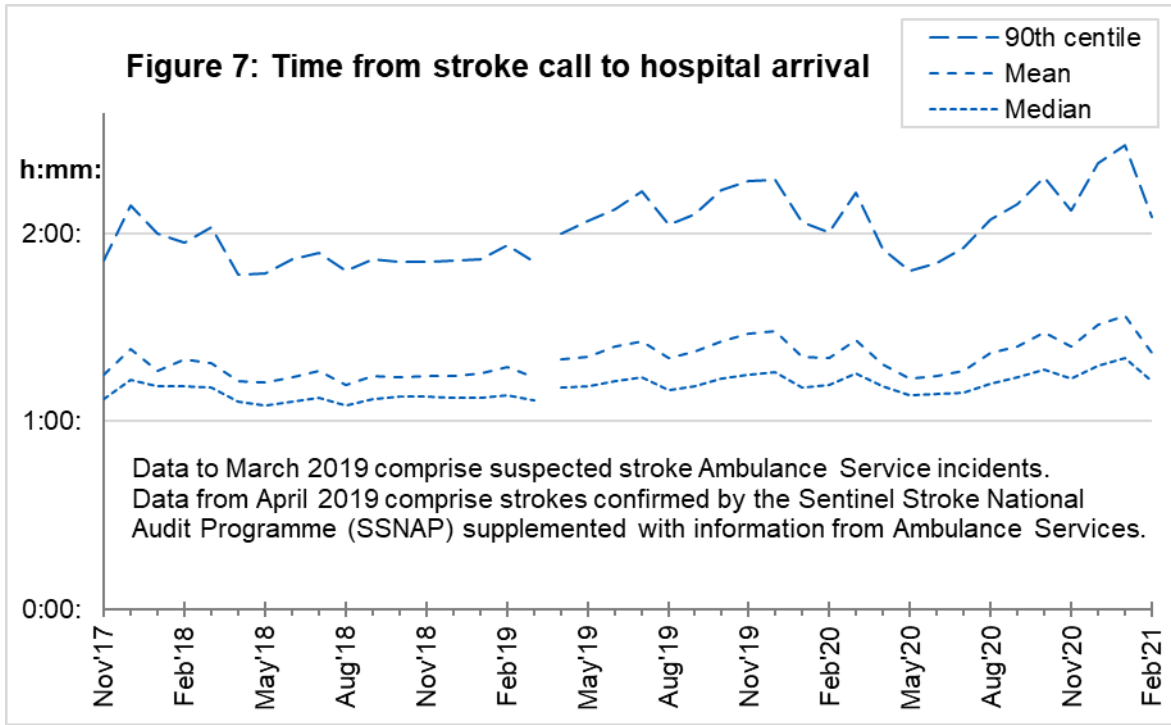
The FAST procedure helps assess whether someone has suffered a stroke:

- Facial weakness: can the person smile? Has their mouth or eye drooped?
- Arm weakness: can the person raise both arms?
- Speech problems: can the person speak clearly and understand what you say?
- Time to call 999 for an ambulance if you spot any one of these signs.

Stroke patients in England receiving an ambulance should receive a diagnosis bundle; a FAST assessment, blood glucose, and two blood pressures should all be recorded. In February 2021, this happened for 97.8% of such incidents (Figure 6), the same as in November 2020, and a very similar proportion to that for 2020-21 (98.0%).

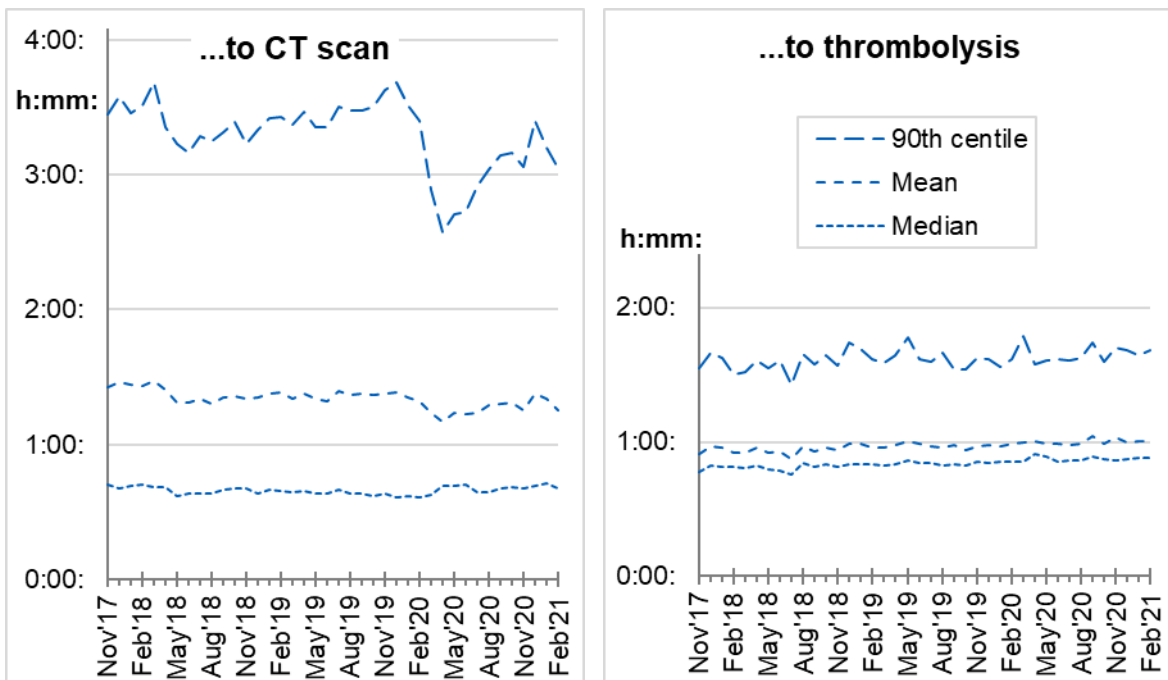


The mean average time from call until arrival at hospital was 1 hour 21 minutes in February 2021. Like the median and 90th centile times, this was a decrease on January 2021, yet within a minute of the averages for 2020-21 so far (Figure 7).



The median time from hospital arrival to CT scan in February 2021 was 40 minutes, the same as the median for 2020-21 so far. The median time from hospital arrival to thrombolysis in February 2021, 52 minutes, was the same as both the median for the previous two months, and the median for 2020-21 so far (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Time for stroke incidents from hospital arrival...



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 section 3.4 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.

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 specification guidance mentioned in section 3.1, incidents resulting from a call to NHS 111 are included in all Systems Indicators the except the call indicators, A1 to A6 and A114.

3.3 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 3.1 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



3.4 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 (NHSEI); england.nhsdata@nhs.net; 0113 825 4606.

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.