

## Statistical Note: Ambulance Quality Indicators (AQI)

For each category C1-C3, the average response time in December 2021 for England was the second longest ever, after October 2021.

The count of 999 calls answered per day for each month June to December 2021 was more than in all previous months.

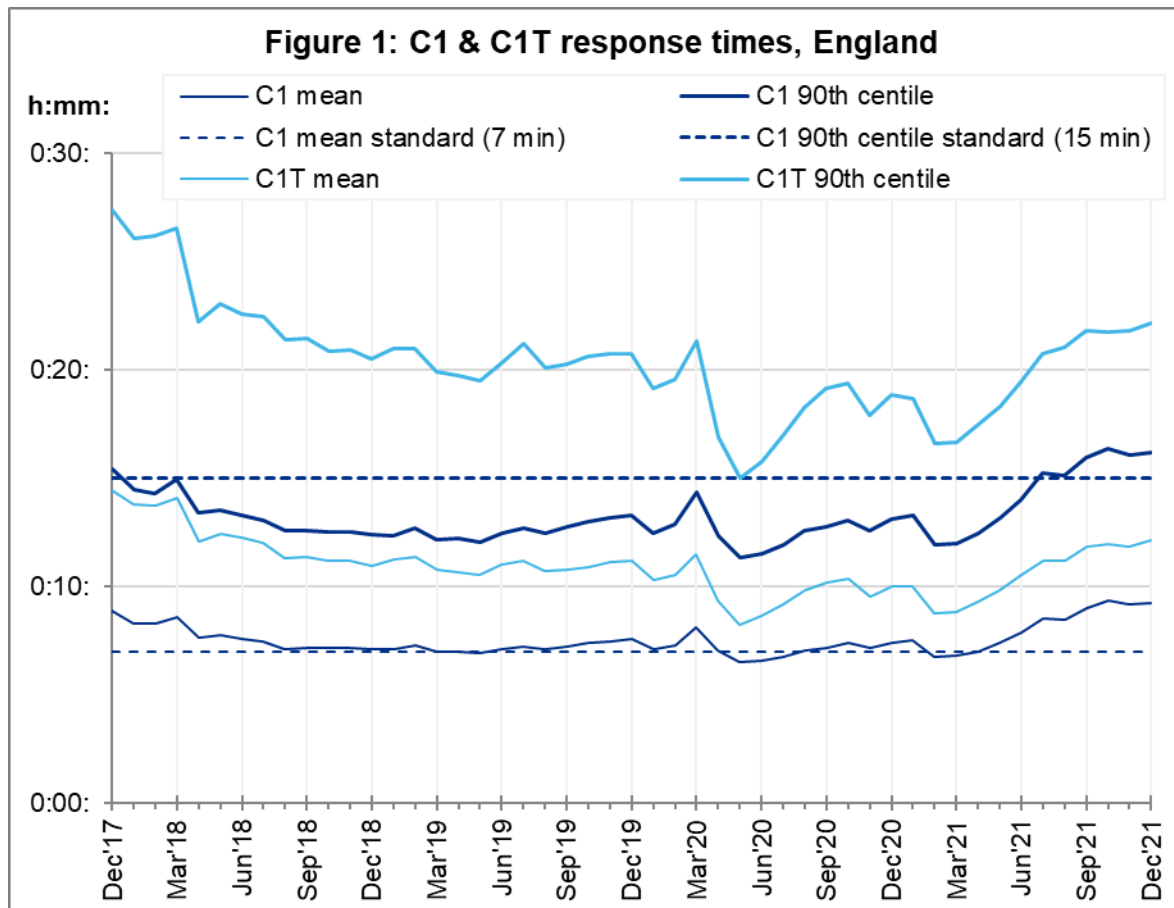
For patients conveyed by an ambulance service following a stroke, the times from hospital arrival to CT scan increased in summer 2021.

### 1. Ambulance Systems Indicators

#### 1.1 Response times

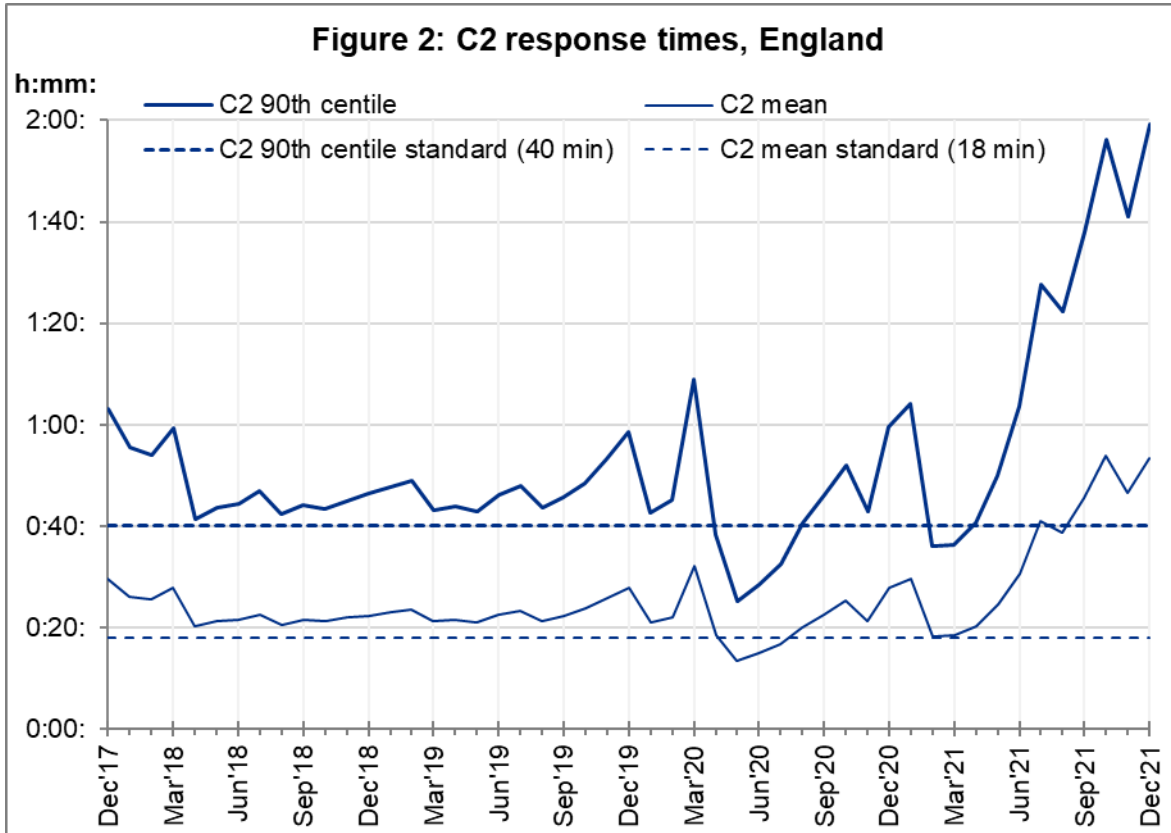
In December 2021, the England mean average response time for Category C1, the most urgent incidents, was 9:13, and the C1 90th centile was 16:12, so neither the 7-minute mean nor the 15-minute 90th centile standards<sup>1</sup> were met.

For C1T (response times for arrival of transporting vehicle, for C1 patients transported), the mean was 12:09, and the 90th centile was 22:09 (Figure 1).

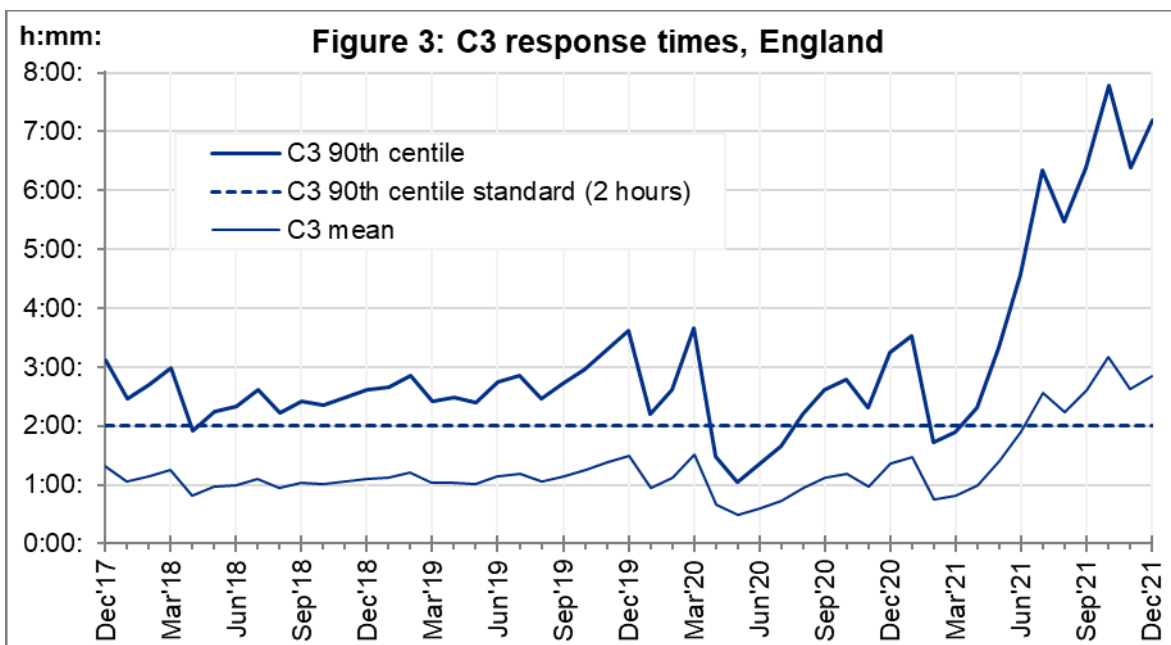


<sup>1</sup> Standards in the NHS Constitution Handbook: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/supplements-to-the-nhs-constitution-for-england/the-handbook-to-the-nhs-constitution-for-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supplements-to-the-nhs-constitution-for-england/the-handbook-to-the-nhs-constitution-for-england)

For C2 in England, the average response time in December 2021 was 53:21, and the 90th centile was 1:59:12, so the 18- and 40-minute standards were not met (Figure 2). The 90th centile was the longest ever.

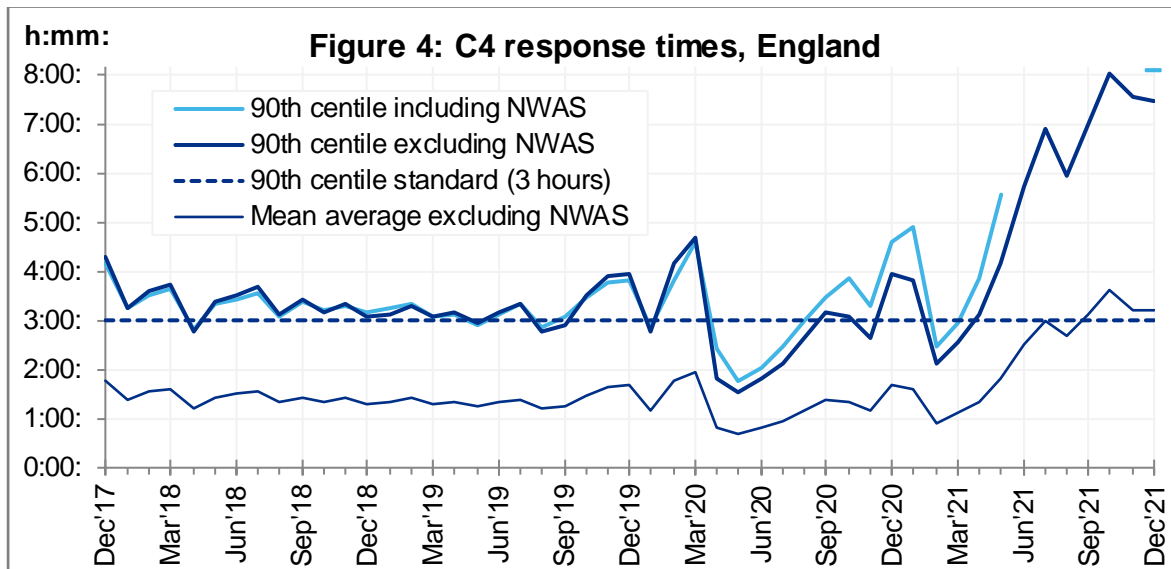


For C3, the December 2021 mean average response time was 2:51:08. The 90th centile was 7:11:44, so the two-hour standard was not met (Figure 3).



C4 data for June to November 2021 for North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) are unavailable, but available again for December 2021, giving an England 90th centile response time of 8:05:16 (shown in Figure 4) and a mean of 3:27:58 (not shown).

The thick dark line in Figure 4 shows that the 90th centile for England excluding NWAS was less in December 2021 than in October and November, but more than in all other months, so that is likely to also be true for England including NWAS.



## 1.2 Other Systems Indicators

In December 2021, per day, there were (Figure 5):

- 29.8 thousand calls to 999 answered, 2% more than in November 2021, 9% more than in December 2019, and 22% more than in December 2020;
- 23.6 thousand incidents that received a response (whether on the telephone or on the scene) from an ambulance service, 1.5% less than in November 2021;
- 12.0 thousand incidents where a patient was conveyed to an Emergency Department (ED), 3.3% less than in November 2021.

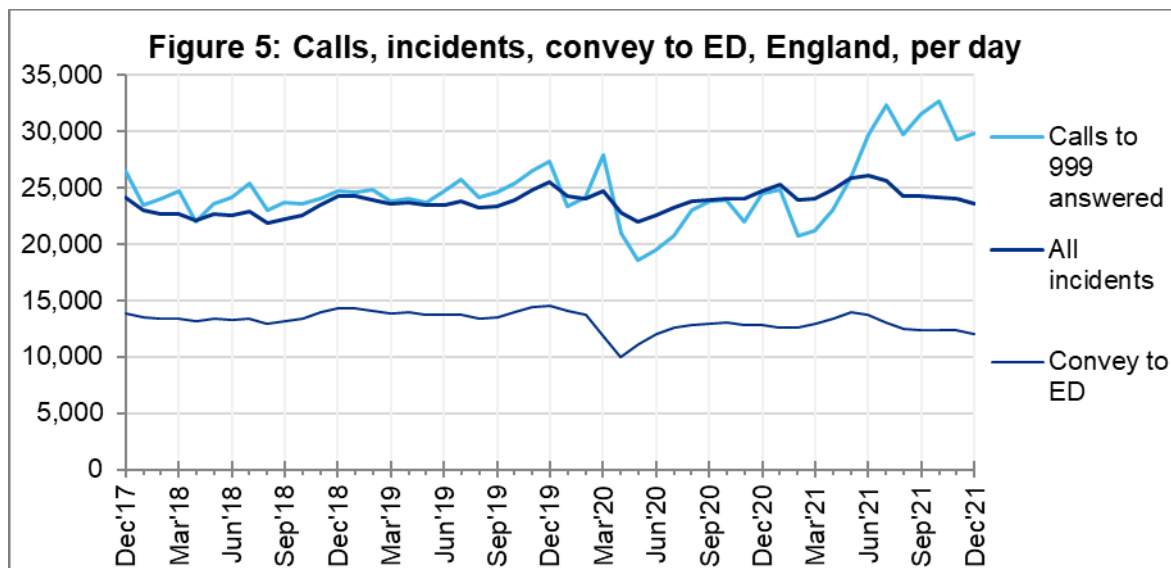
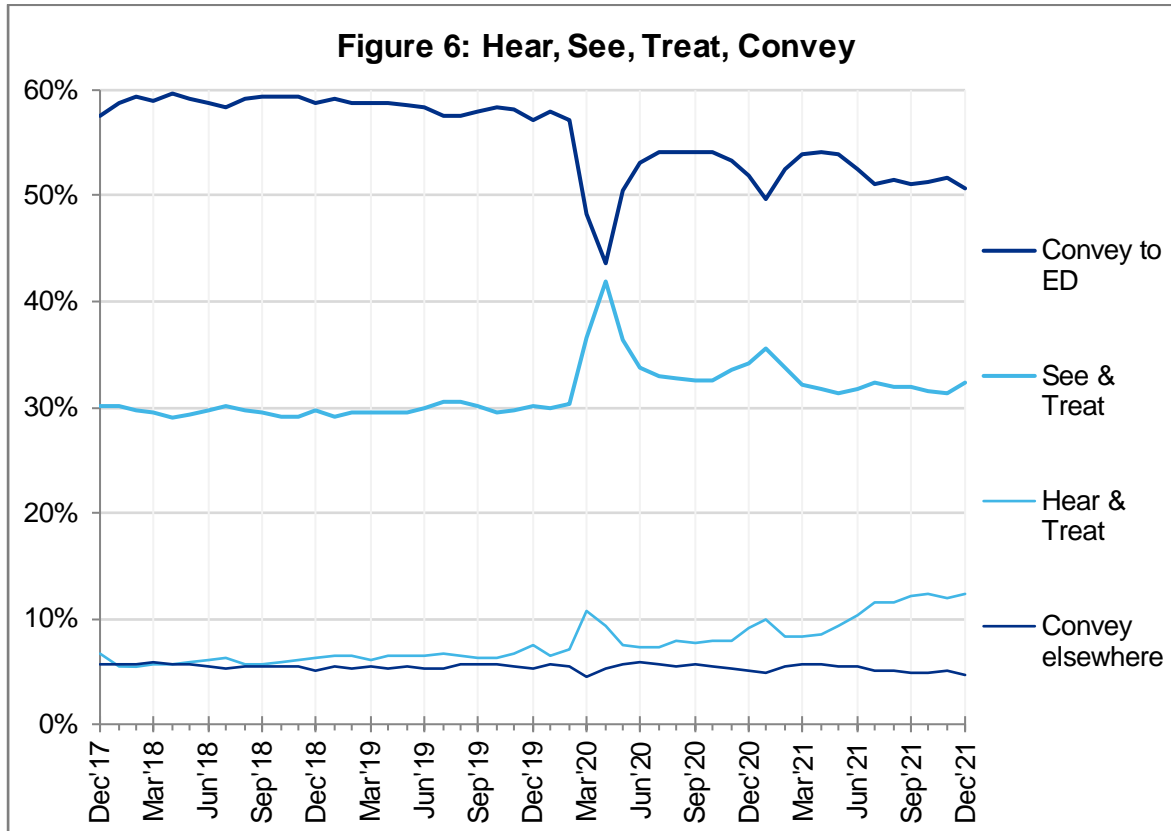


Figure 6 shows that in December 2021, the proportion of incidents resolved at the scene (See & Treat) increased to 32.2% from 31.3% in November 2021, while the proportion with conveyance to ED decreased from 51.7% to 50.8%. Other proportions changed less, with conveyance to non-ED at 4.7% and Hear & Treat (resolved on the telephone) 12.3% in December 2021.



## 2. Ambulance Clinical Outcomes (AmbCO)

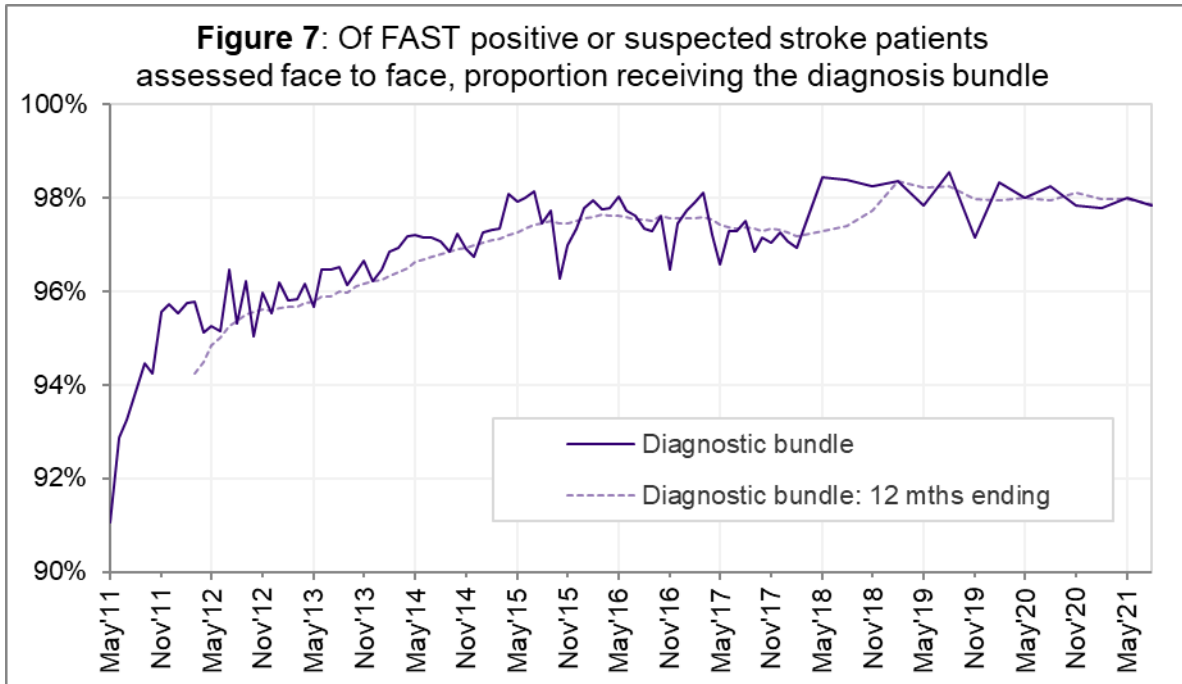
We continue to collect and publish data for the stroke diagnostic bundle once every three months. For those months, we will describe such data in this Statistical Note, along with the stroke timeliness data that we continue to collect every month.

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

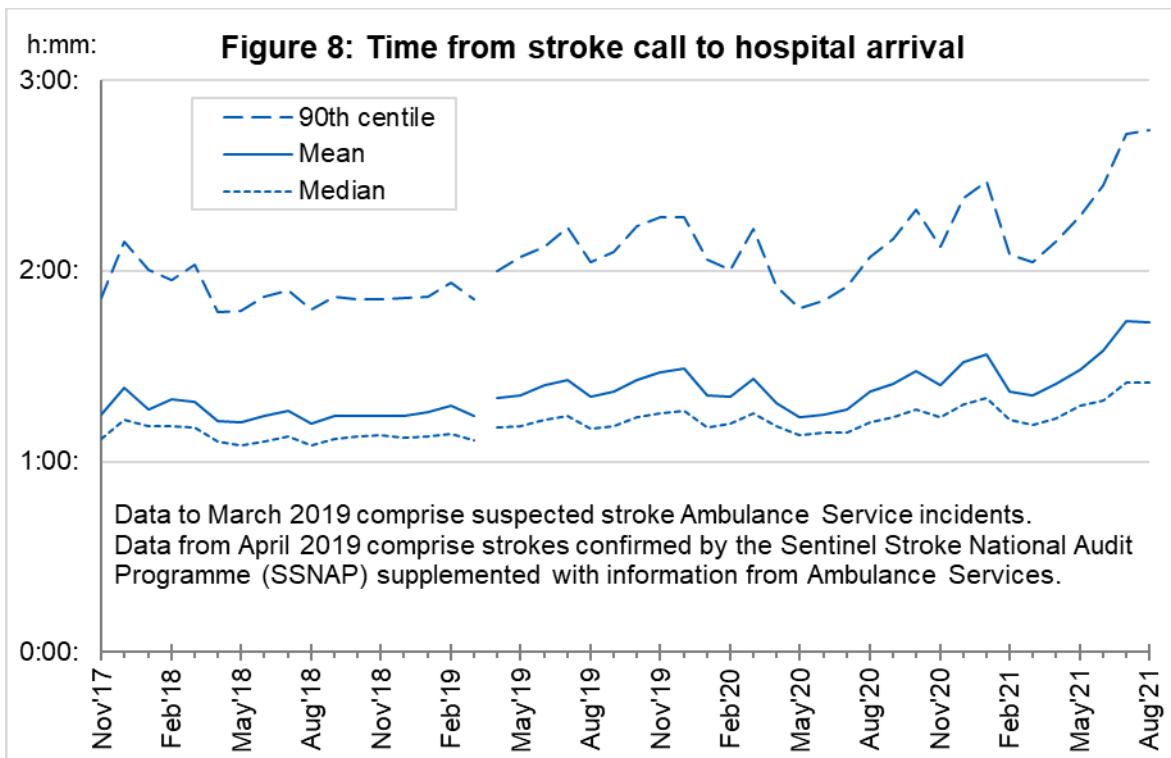
- Facial weakness: can the person smile? Has their mouth or eye drooped?
- Arm weakness: can the person raise both arms?
- Speech problems: can the person speak clearly and understand what you say?
- Time to call 999 for an ambulance if you spot any one of these signs.

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.

During August 2021, of 9,238 such patients in England, 9,037 (97.8%) had that diagnosis bundle (Figure 7), a very similar proportion to that for 2020-21 (98.0%).

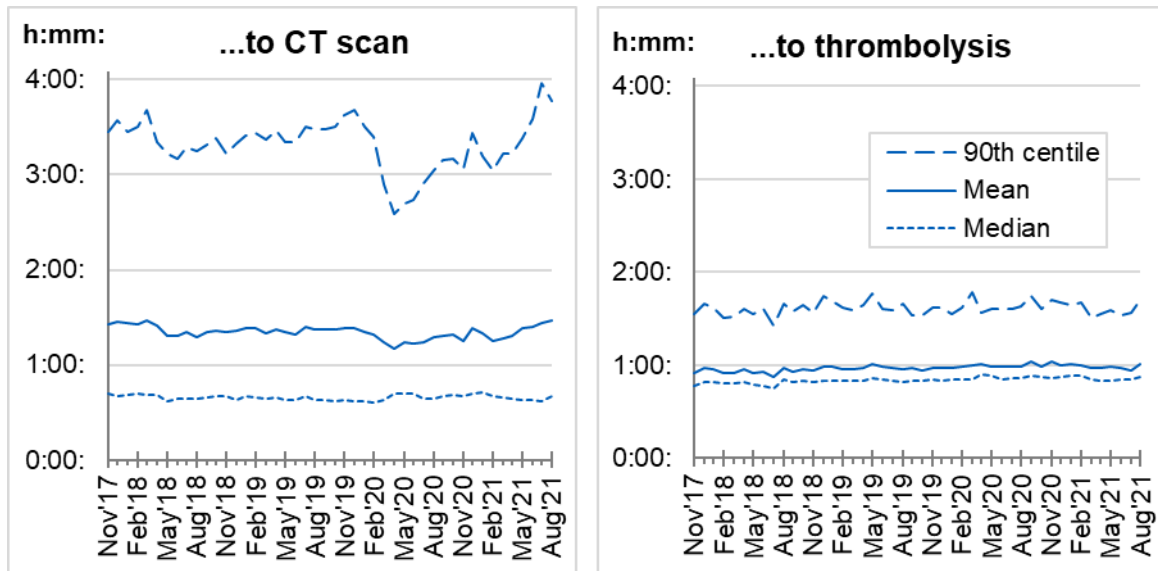


The mean average time from call until arrival at hospital was 1 hour 43 minutes in August 2021. For the mean, median, and 90th centile times, the highest times ever were in July and August 2021 (Figure 8).



The 90<sup>th</sup> centile from hospital arrival to CT scan in August 2021 was 3 hours 46 minutes with the longest ever times in July and August 2021. The 90<sup>th</sup> centile from hospital arrival to thrombolysis is also high at 1 hour 42 minutes for August 2021, the longest since September 2020 (Figure 9).

**Figure 9: 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](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 3.5 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.

#### 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 Centiles

The centile data for England in this document, also published in spreadsheets alongside this document, are not precise centiles calculated from national record-level data. Instead, they are the centiles calculated from each individual trust's record-level data, weighted by their incident count, and averaged across England. So, if England only had two trusts, with centiles of 7:10 and 7:40, and the former had twice as many incidents as the latter, the England centile would be 7:20.

### 3.4 Related statistics

NHSEI publishes ambulance handover delays at Emergency Departments of over 30 minutes during winter 2012-13 to 2014-15 and winter 2017-18 to 2021-22 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 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](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)

### 3.5 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 (NHSEI); [england.nhsdata@nhs.net](mailto:england.nhsdata@nhs.net); 0113 825 4606.

### 3.6 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.