

Statistical Note: Ambulance Quality Indicators (AQI)

The average response times across all categories for Ambulance Services in England in May 2026 were slower than the previous 3 months.

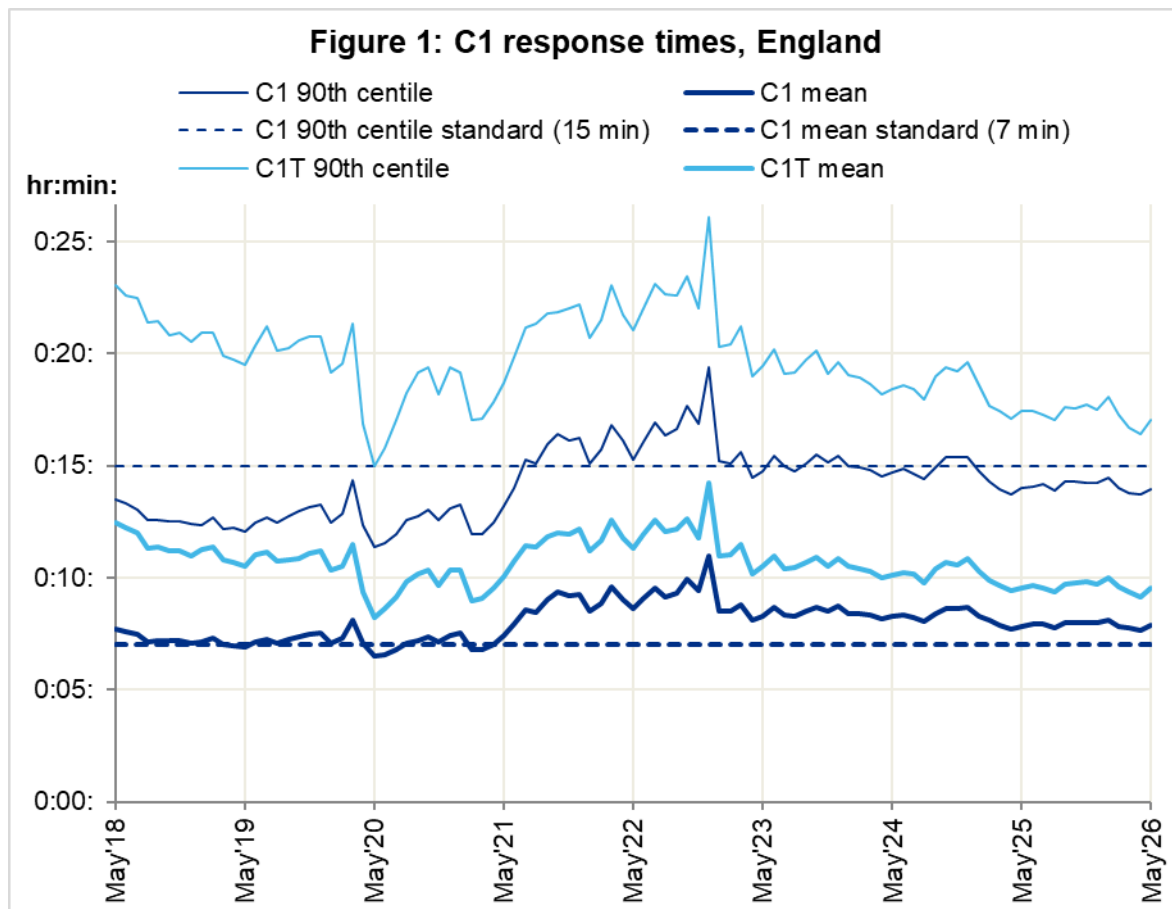
We are publishing revisions today to AmbSYS data from April 2025 to April 2026 inclusive, but the 2025-26 average Category 1 response time for England is unchanged, as is the Category 2 average.

1. Ambulance Systems Indicators (AmbSYS)

1.1 Response times

For C1 for England, the mean response time in May 2026 was 7 minutes 52 seconds, and the 90th centile was 13:58. These are both the slower than the previous 2 months. The average standard¹ of 7 minutes has not been met since April 2021 but the 90th centile standard of 15 minutes has been met in every month since December 2024.

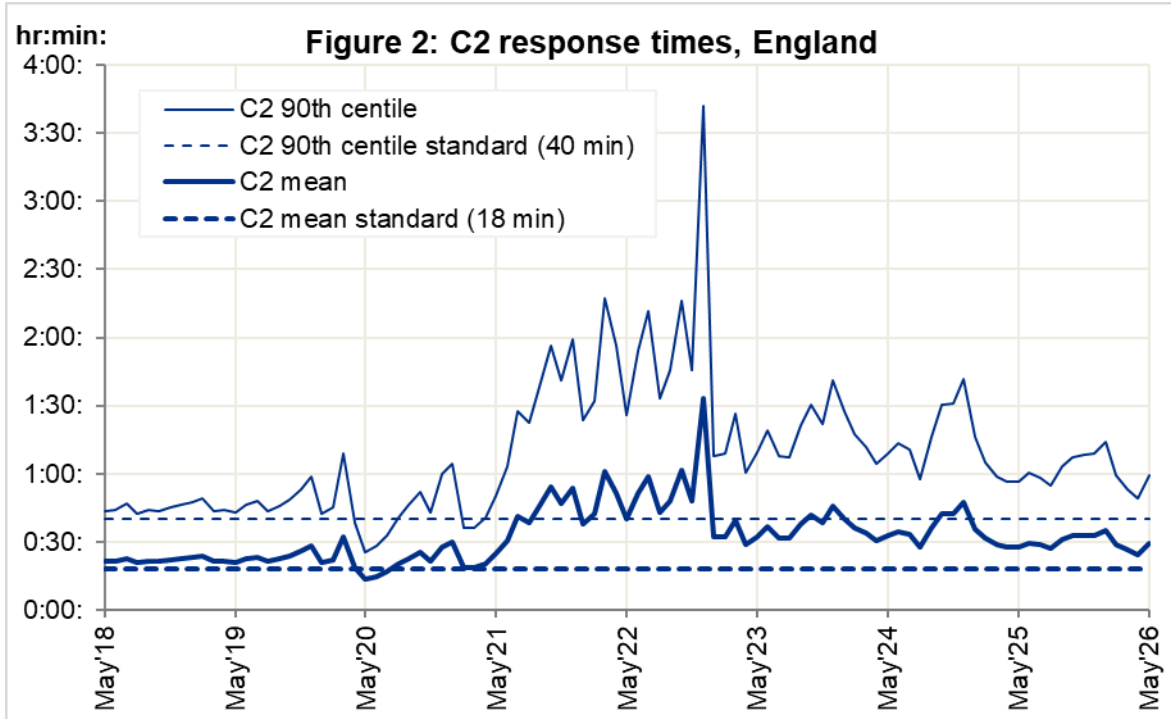
For C1T (time to the arrival of the transporting vehicle for C1 incidents), the average was 9:32, and the 90th centile was 17:02. (Figure 1)



¹ Standards in the NHS Constitution Handbook:

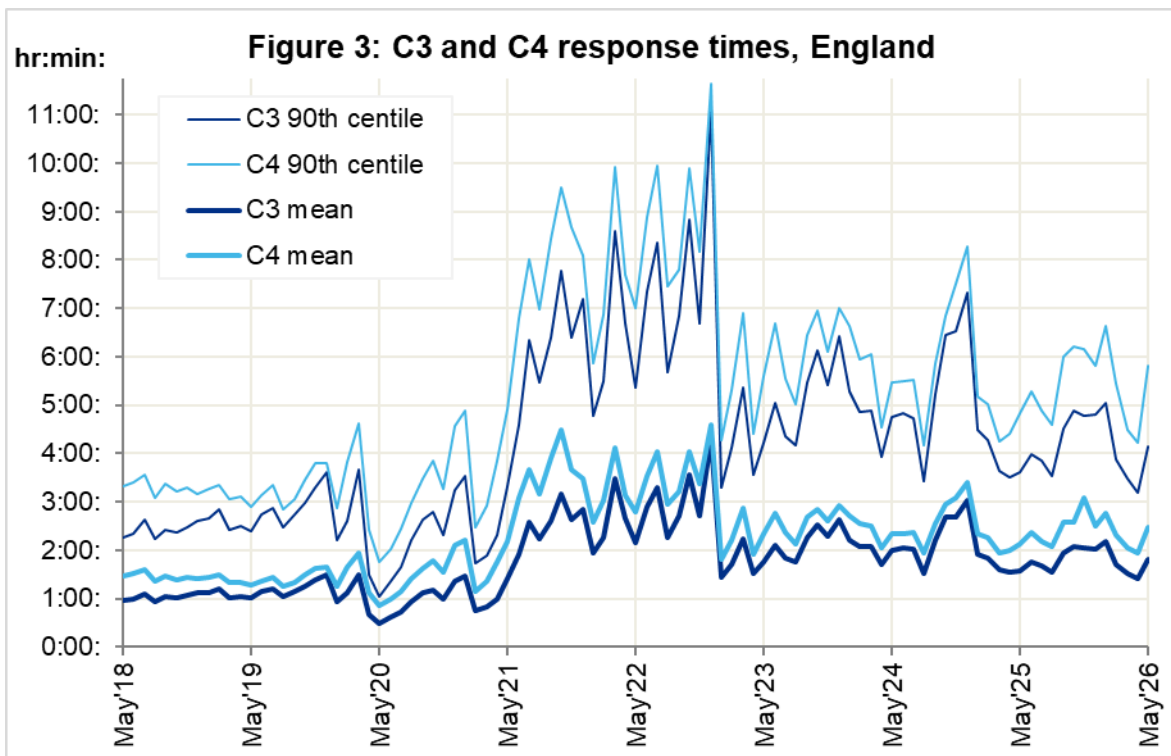
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supplements-to-the-nhs-constitution-for-england/the-handbook-to-the-nhs-constitution-for-england>

The May 2026 England C2 average was 29:13 and the 90th centile was 59:25, both the slower than the previous 2 months and May 2025. (Figure 2)



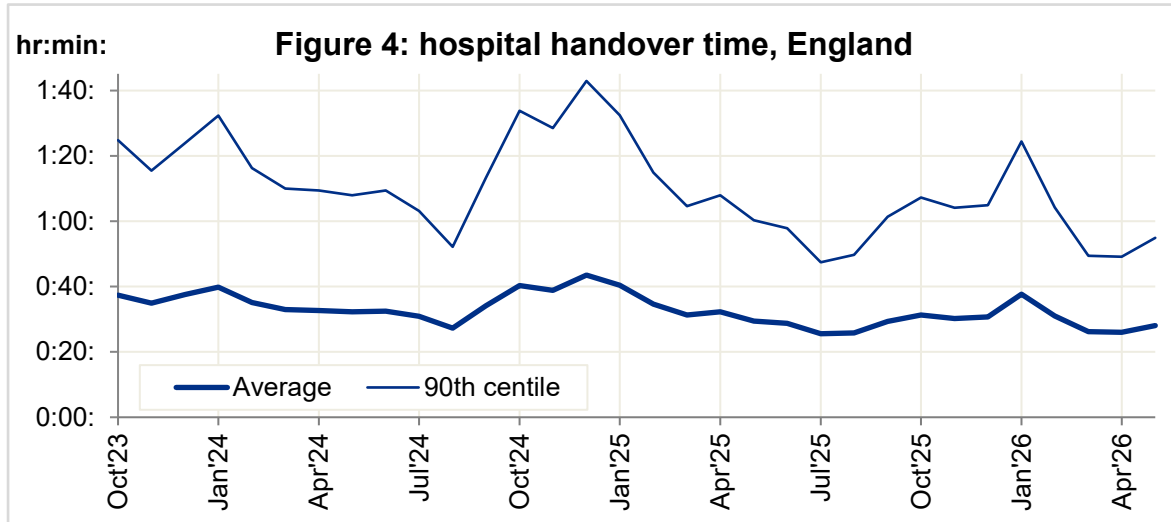
For England in May 2026, the C3 average was 1:47:49 and the 90th centile was 4:08:14. The C4 mean was 2:28:50, and the 90th centile 5:48:25. (Figure 3)

For some months of 2025-26, revisions have increased the average Category 3 or 4 response times for England by up to 26 seconds. However, for most months, these averages are unchanged.

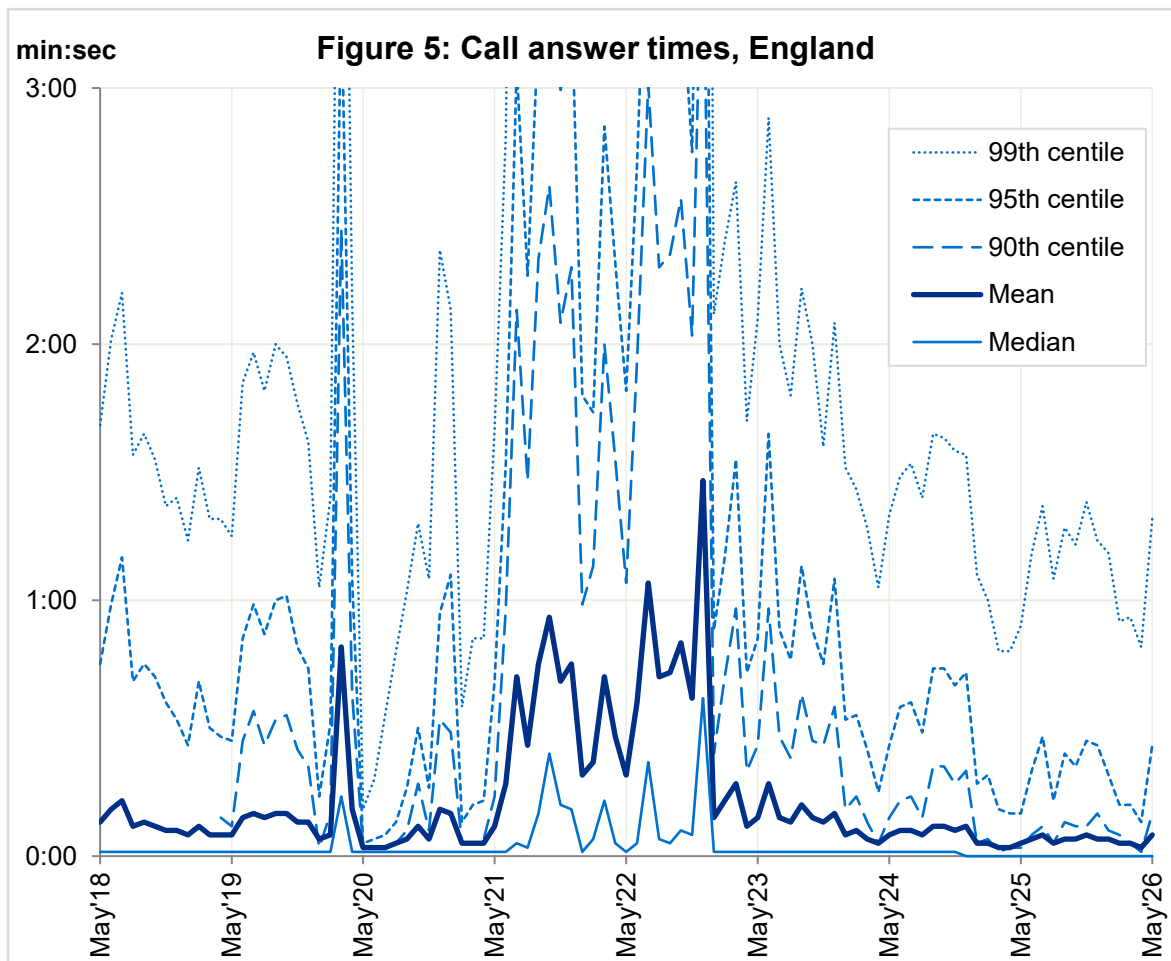


1.2 Other Systems Indicators

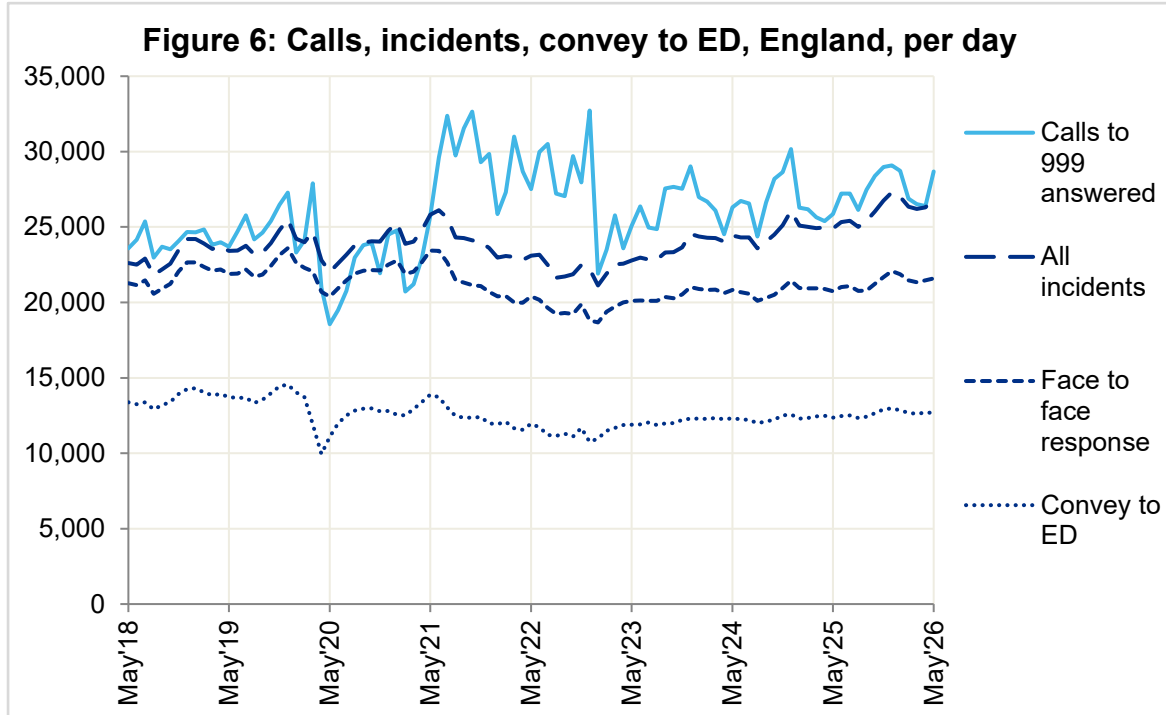
The average handover time in England in May 2026 was 28:06. This is quicker than May 2025 but slower than the previous 2 months. (Figure 4)



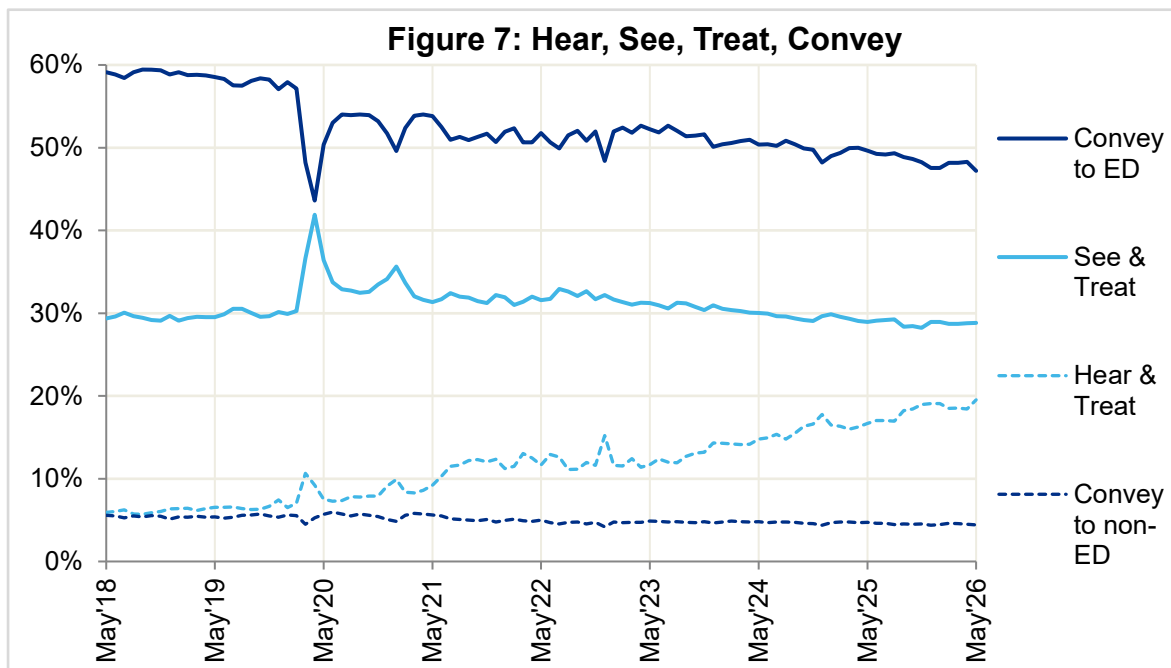
The April 2026 mean 999 call answer time was 5 seconds, which was slower than May 2025 and the past 5 months (Figure 5). None of the average or centile call answer times for England have been revised.



In May 2026, 888,848 calls to 999 were answered in England, or 28.7 thousand per day. There were 832,089 incidents, or 26.8 thousand per day, over 1,900 more per day than there were in May 2025. Of those, 669,592 (21.6 thousand per day) had a face-to-face response, and of those, 392,801 (12.7 thousand per day) required conveyance to an Emergency Department (ED). (Figure 6)



Ambulance Services in England closed 19.5% of incidents on the telephone (Hear & Treat) in May 2026, the highest on record. The proportion closed on scene (See & Treat) was 28.8%. Other incidents comprised 47.2% with conveyance to ED and 4.4% with conveyance elsewhere. (Figure 7)



2. Ambulance Clinical Outcomes (AmbCO)

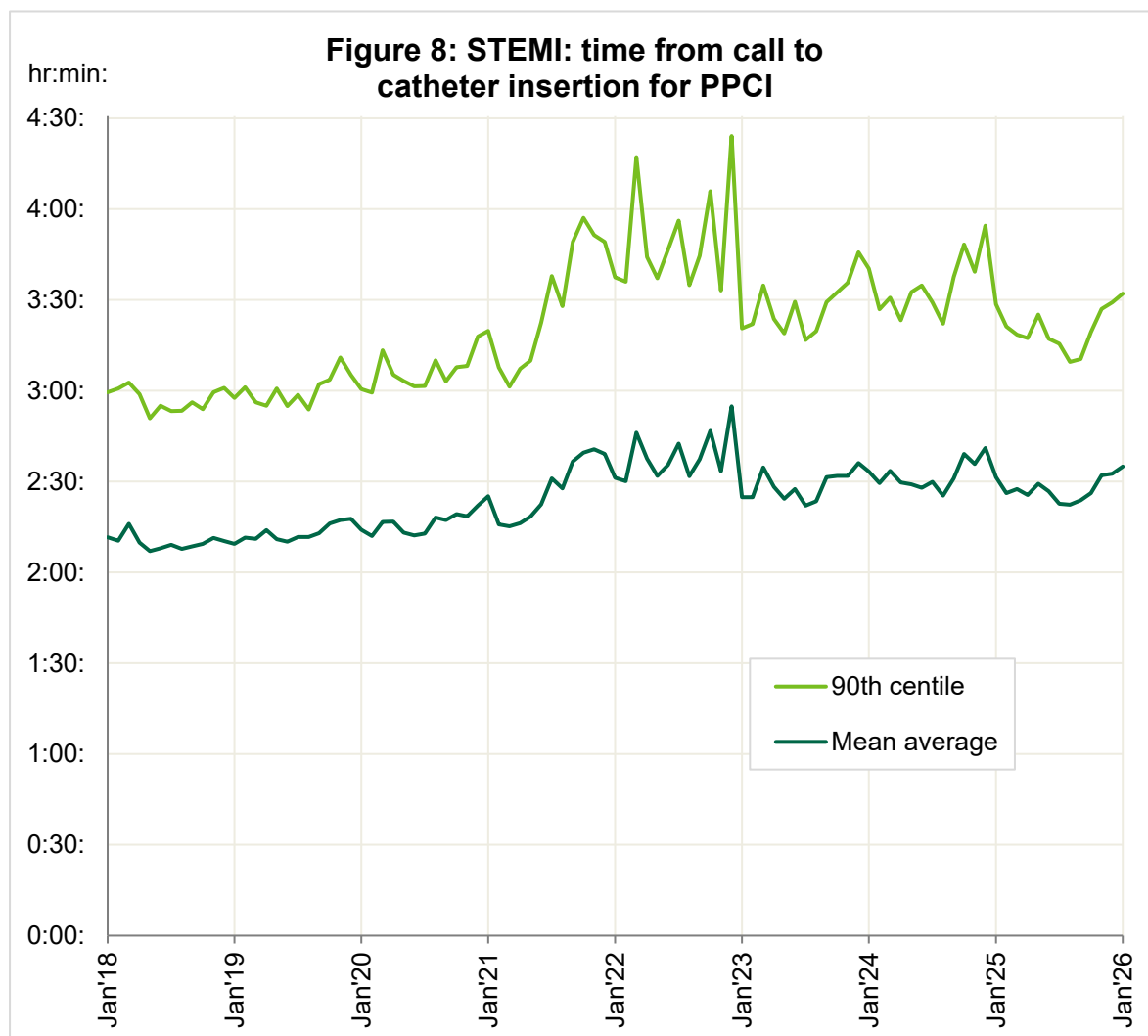
We summarise data for topics in this Statistical Note when we publish care bundle data for that topic, which this month is for STEMI.

2.1 ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI)

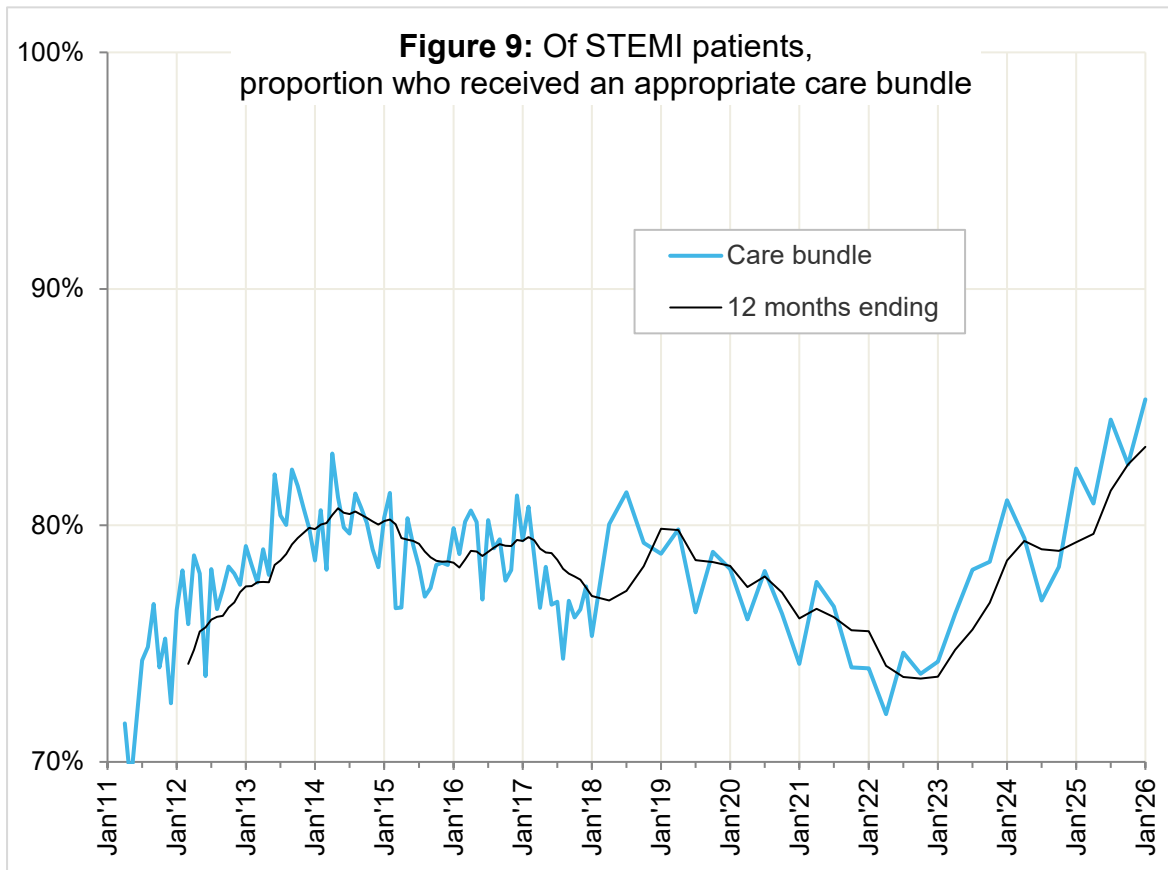
STEMI is a type of heart attack, determined by an electrocardiogram (ECG) test. Early access to reperfusion, where blocked arteries are opened to re-establish blood flow, and other assessment and care interventions, are associated with reductions in STEMI mortality and morbidity.

For STEMI patients, the Myocardial Ischaemia National Audit Project (MINAP) collects the time from ambulance call to insertion of a catheter for primary percutaneous coronary intervention (PPCI): inflation of a balloon inside a blood vessel to restore blood flow to the heart.

In England in January 2026, the mean time from 999 call to catheter insertion was 2 hours 35 minutes, and the 90th centile time was 3 hours 32 minutes (Figure 8). These are the slowest figures since December 2024.



Ambulance Services also report on a recommended bundle of care for patients with an acute STEMI that they convey. There were 1,772 such patients in England in January 2026, of which 1,512 (85.3%) received the appropriate bundle, the greatest this has been since the collection started in 2011 (Figure 9).



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 3.5 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 in section 3.1, incidents resulting from a call to NHS 111 are included in all AmbSYS indicators, except the counts of 999 calls (indicators A1, A124, and A125) and call answer times (A2 to A6 and A114).

3.3 Centiles

The centile data for England in this publication are not precise centiles calculated from national record-level data, but from each individual trust's centiles, weighted by their incident count, and averaged across England. So, if England only had two trusts, with centiles of 7 minutes and 8 minutes, and the former had twice as many incidents as the latter, the England centile would be 7 minutes 20 seconds.

3.4 Related statistics

NHS England publishes C2 response times for each Integrated Care Board (ICB) from April 2023 monthly at www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/ambulance-quality-indicators/ambulance-management-information.

Data on patients handed over to each Acute Trust are available for whole months from October 2023 at that same webpage, and also for individual days during winter from 2017-18 at www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/uec-sitrep.

The Quality Statement described in section 3.1 includes information on:

- the “Ambulance Services” publications <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/ambulance-services> by NHS Digital and predecessor organisations 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:

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

Wales: Data for Welsh Ambulance Services published by NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee at <https://jcc.nhs.wales/insighthub/asi>

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

3.5 Contact information

For media enquiries: nhsengland.media@nhs.net, 0113 825 0958.

The person responsible for this publication is Ian Kay, england.999iucdata@nhs.net, Operational Insights, Transformation Directorate, NHS England, 07918 336050.

3.6 Accredited official statistics

These official statistics were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in May 2015. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled “accredited official statistics”.