



<b>Title</b>	South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust's (SWASFT) report to the Somerset Scrutiny Committee on Policies, Adults and Health.
<b>Main aim</b>	To inform the Somerset Scrutiny Committee on Policies, Adults and Health of SWASFT's recent activity.
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## 1. Background

SWASFT has the responsibility for the provision of ambulance services across an area of 10,000 square miles which is 20% of mainland England. The Trust covers the counties of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and BNSSG (Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire).

The Trust serves a total population of over 5.5 million and is estimated to receive an influx of over 23 million visitors each year. The operational area is predominantly rural but also includes large urban centres including Bristol, Plymouth, Exeter, Bath, Swindon, Gloucester, Bournemouth and Poole.

We are a key part of the NHS, responding to 999 calls when members of your local community need help in an emergency. We manage around one million incidents every year. We deliver care to patients with a wide range of illnesses and injuries; in some cases our help can mean the difference between life and death.

People dial 999 when they or someone else is desperately ill or injured and they are in the direst need. They call us when minutes matter.

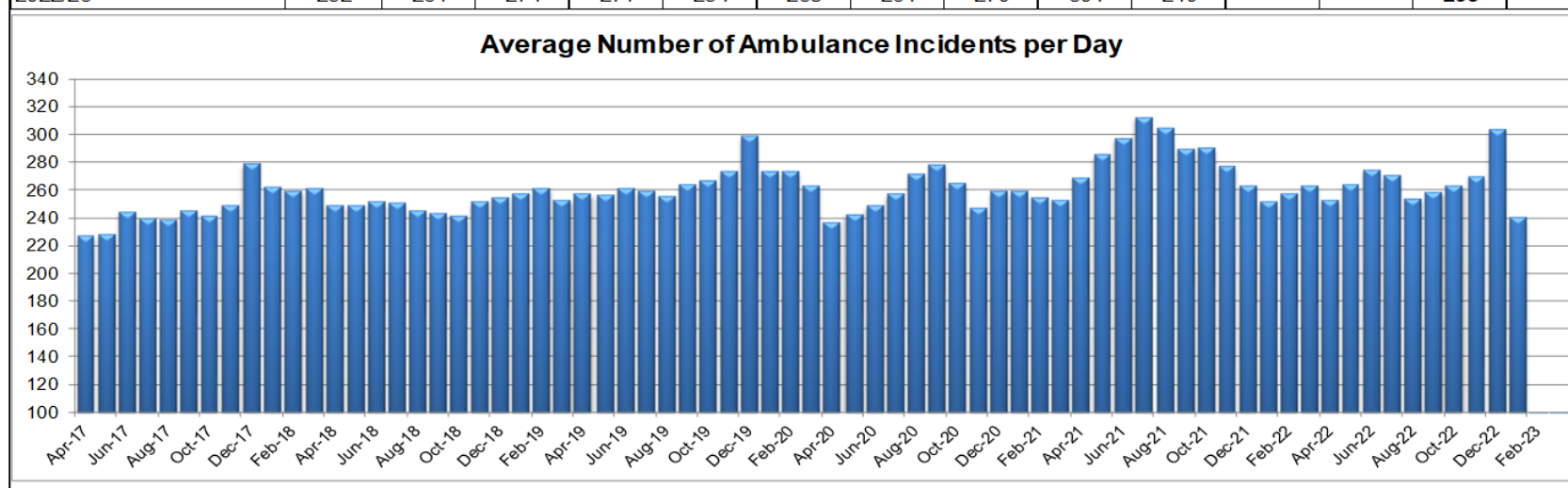


## 2. Performance

SWASFT's Performance in Somerset

<b>Ambulance Incidents per Month</b>														
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	YTD	Total
2017/18	6,817	7,071	7,334	7,424	7,410	7,351	7,483	7,471	8,649	8,132	7,275	8,105	<b>75,142</b>	<b>90,522</b>
2018/19	7,475	7,707	7,550	7,777	7,602	7,287	7,482	7,541	7,884	7,979	7,324	7,836	<b>76,284</b>	<b>91,444</b>
2019/20	7,720	7,949	7,849	8,037	7,926	7,921	8,270	8,216	9,269	8,488	7,924	8,151	<b>81,645</b>	<b>97,720</b>
2020/21	7,112	7,527	7,463	7,972	8,426	8,352	8,229	7,410	8,028	8,161	7,130	7,849	<b>78,680</b>	<b>93,659</b>
2021/22	8,076	8,846	8,918	9,686	9,432	8,696	8,997	8,333	8,152	7,797	7,221	8,152	<b>86,933</b>	<b>102,306</b>
2022/23	7,569	8,184	8,233	8,390	7,873	7,762	8,170	8,102	9,415	7,449			<b>81,147</b>	
% Variance 22/23 vs 20/21	6.43%	8.73%	10.32%	5.24%	-6.56%	-7.06%	-0.72%	9.34%	17.28%	-8.72%			<b>3.14%</b>	
% Variance 22/23 vs 21/22	-6.28%	-7.48%	-7.68%	-13.38%	-16.53%	-10.74%	-9.19%	-2.77%	15.49%	-4.46%			<b>-6.66%</b>	

<b>Average Number of Ambulance Incidents per day</b>														
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	YTD	Total
2017/18	227	228	244	239	239	245	241	249	279	262	260	261	<b>246</b>	<b>248</b>
2018/19	249	249	252	251	245	243	241	251	254	257	262	253	<b>249</b>	<b>251</b>
2019/20	257	256	262	259	256	264	267	274	299	274	273	263	<b>267</b>	<b>267</b>
2020/21	237	243	249	257	272	278	265	247	259	263	255	253	<b>257</b>	<b>257</b>
2021/22	269	285	297	312	304	290	290	278	263	252	258	263	<b>284</b>	<b>280</b>
2022/23	252	264	274	271	254	259	264	270	304	240			<b>265</b>	





## **SWASFT's Performance in Somerset – Supporting Narrative**

Activity in the Somerset area saw substantial increases in the summer of 2021 following the lifting of lockdown restrictions. In July 2021 incidents increased to above 310 per day.

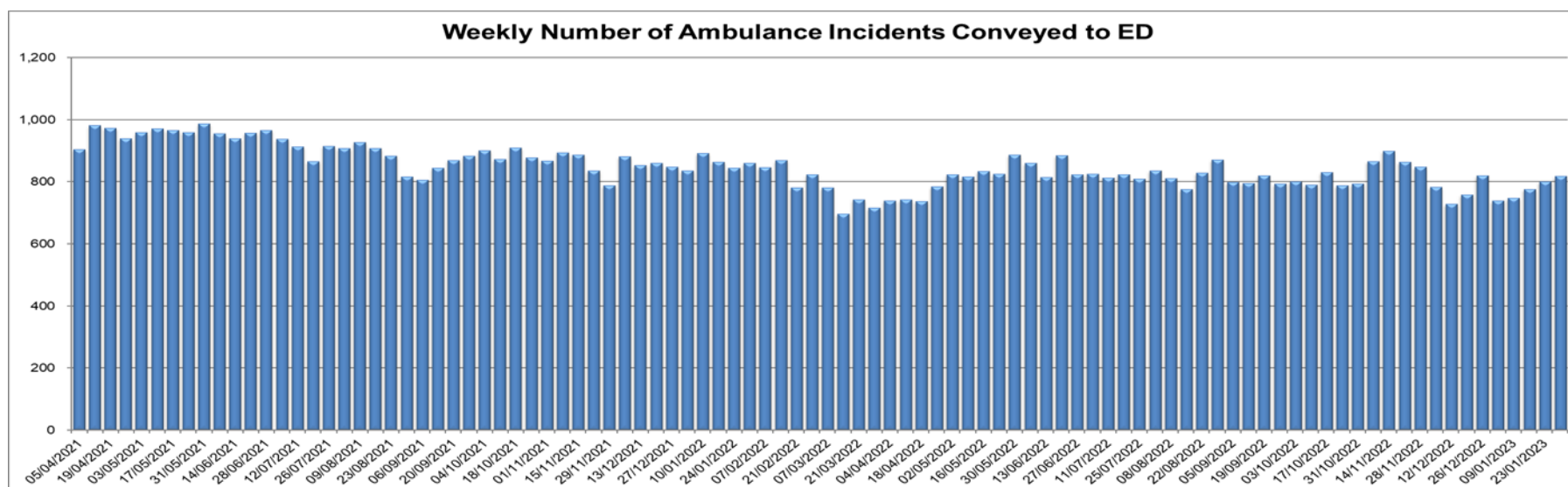
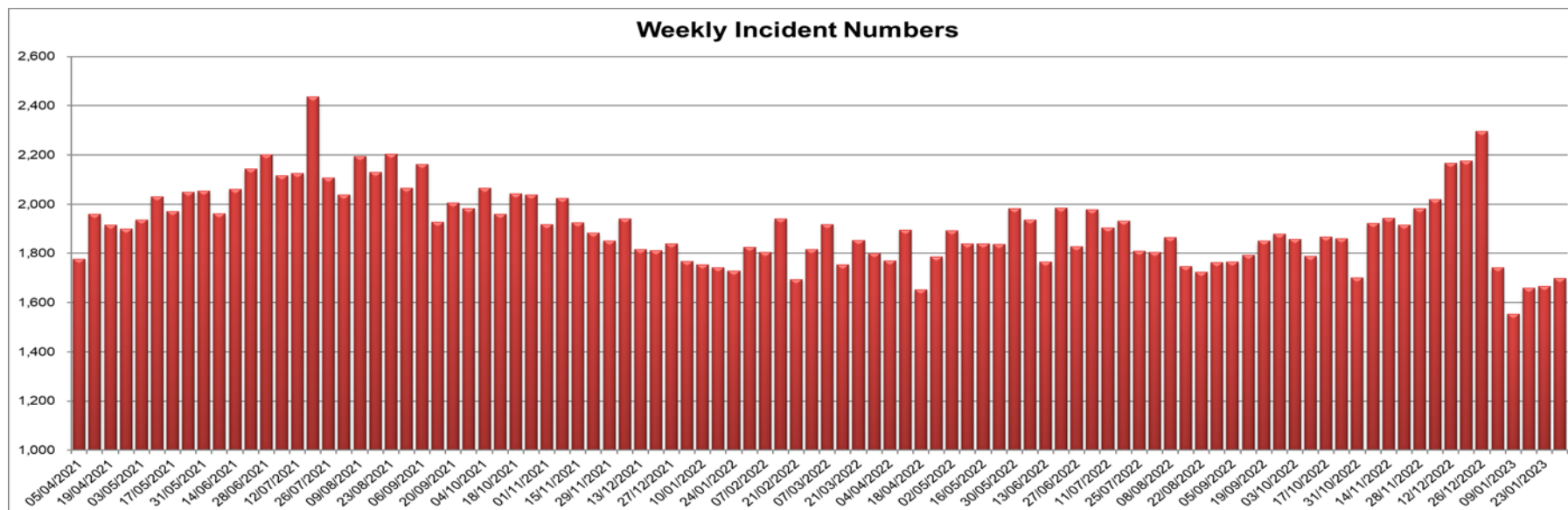
After this level of unprecedented activity, which was replicated across a large proportion of the South West region, activity levels have reverted to more sustained levels and much closer to the activity SWASFT were seeing in the period prior to COVID.

Activity in December 2022 was an exception, with activity rising to over 300 incidents per day. Similar increases were seen across most areas of the region, with winter pressures and cases of COVID and flu being a factor to the uplift.

The post-Christmas activity has been much lower. This drop in activity has provided some opportunity for the Trust to deliver some improvements in response times during January.



## Weekly Incident Numbers in Somerset





## **Weekly Incident Numbers in Somerset & Weekly Number of Incidents Conveyed to ED in Somerset – Supporting Narrative**

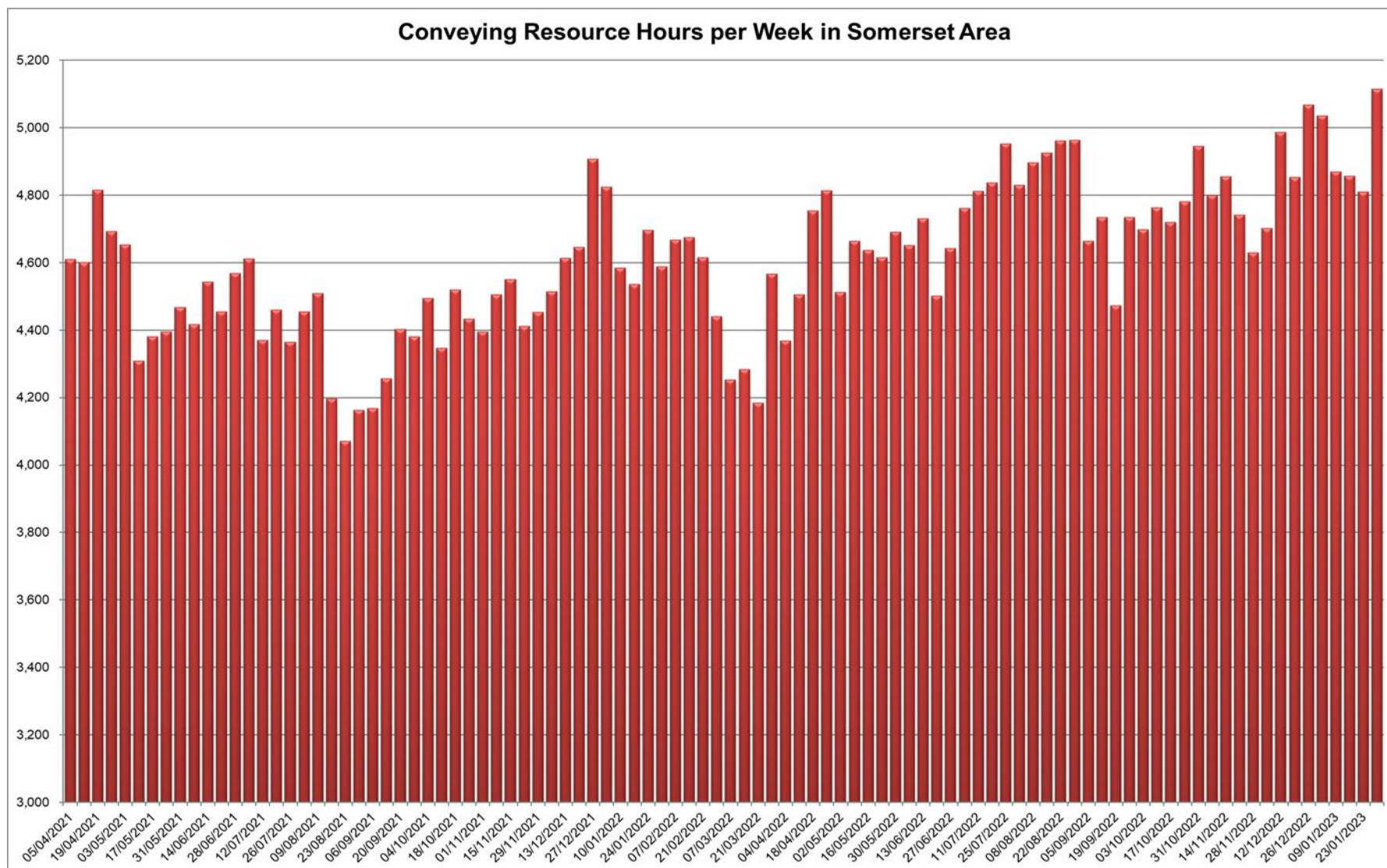
The more recent weekly incident numbers in Somerset are noticeably lower and therefore are not seen as a major factor driving the increased response times across the county at this time.

Of the incidents we receive, the Trust continues to manage a large proportion of them without conveyance to an ED. Over recent weeks the Trust has, on average, managed around 53% of ambulance incidents without conveying to an ED. This compares to the levels seen prior to COVID which was closer to 50% of incidents being managed without a conveyance to an ED.

The Trust therefore continues to work with the local health community to manage patients away from ED where clinically appropriate and has not increased the number of patients being conveyed to ED i.e., we are not adding patients to the ED pressures by taking more patients into the hospital.



## Conveying Resource Hours per Week in Somerset



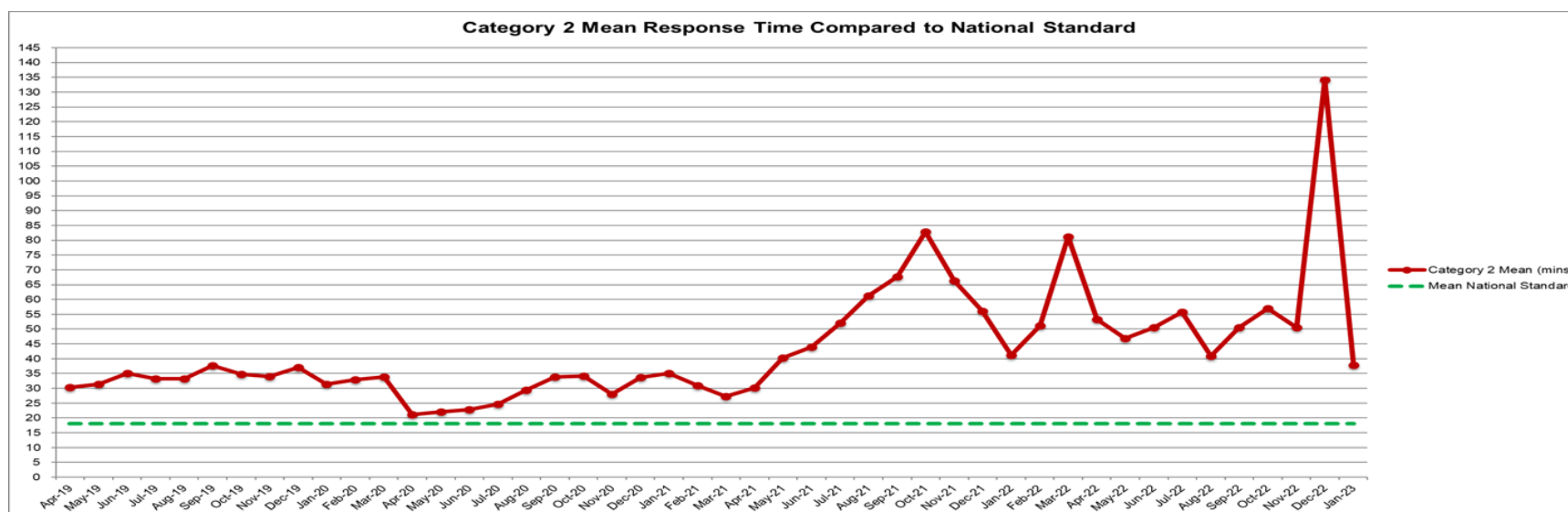
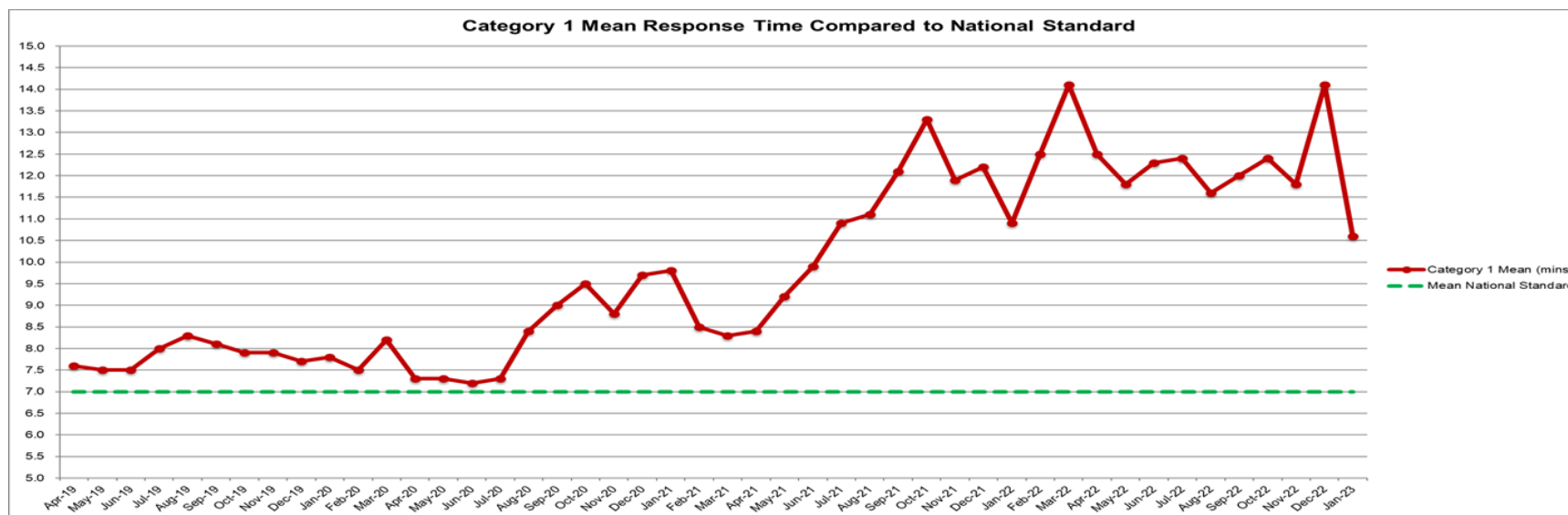


### **Conveying Resource Hours per Week in Somerset – Supporting Narrative**

Operational resourcing levels in Somerset have been under periods of additional abstraction pressures over the past year linked to high sickness levels (COVID and flu), but this position has improved over recent weeks.



## Response Times in Somerset







## **Response Times in Somerset – Supporting Narrative**

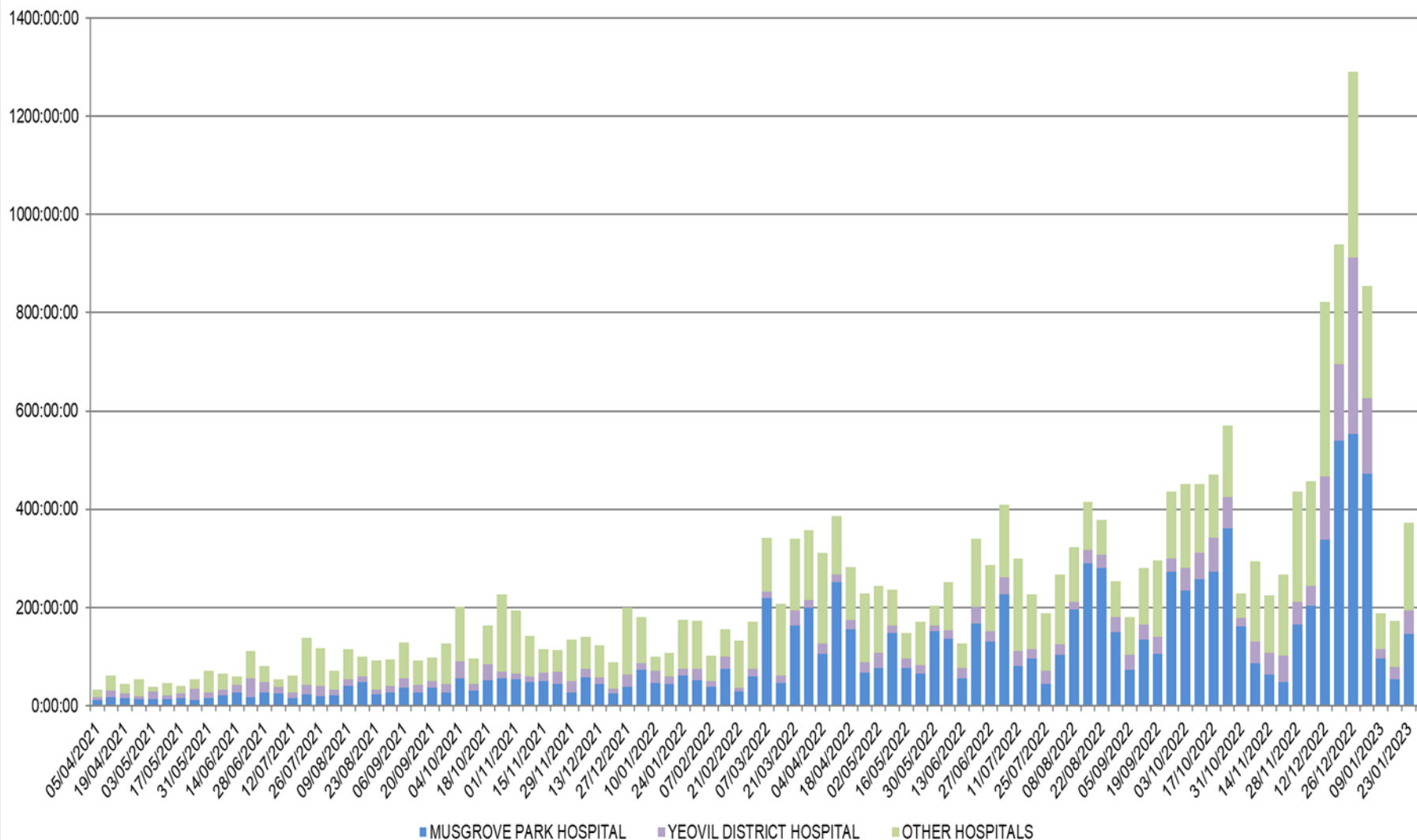
A combination of increased activity and challenges at the acute hospitals has seen the response times in Somerset escalate over the past 18 months.

Whilst some improvements were seen in November 2022, the position escalated again in December 2022 with the Category 1 mean response time rising to 14 minutes (compared to the 7 minute mean standard) and the Category 2 mean rising to 2 hours 14 mins (compared to the 18 minute mean standard). These increases were seen on the back of activity surges during December and heightened handover delay pressures at a number of the acute hospitals across the South West.

Through January the increased activity levels seen through December have reduced. The increased publicity around NHS and ambulance pressures contributed to this reduction and with some marginal (but variable) handover improvements. The Category 1 mean response time improved to around 10.5 minutes and Category 2 mean response times improved to just under 38 minutes.



### Somerset - SWASFT Resource Hours Lost to Handover Delays in Excess of 15 Minutes at Acute Hospitals





## **Hours lost to Handover Delays – Supporting Narrative**

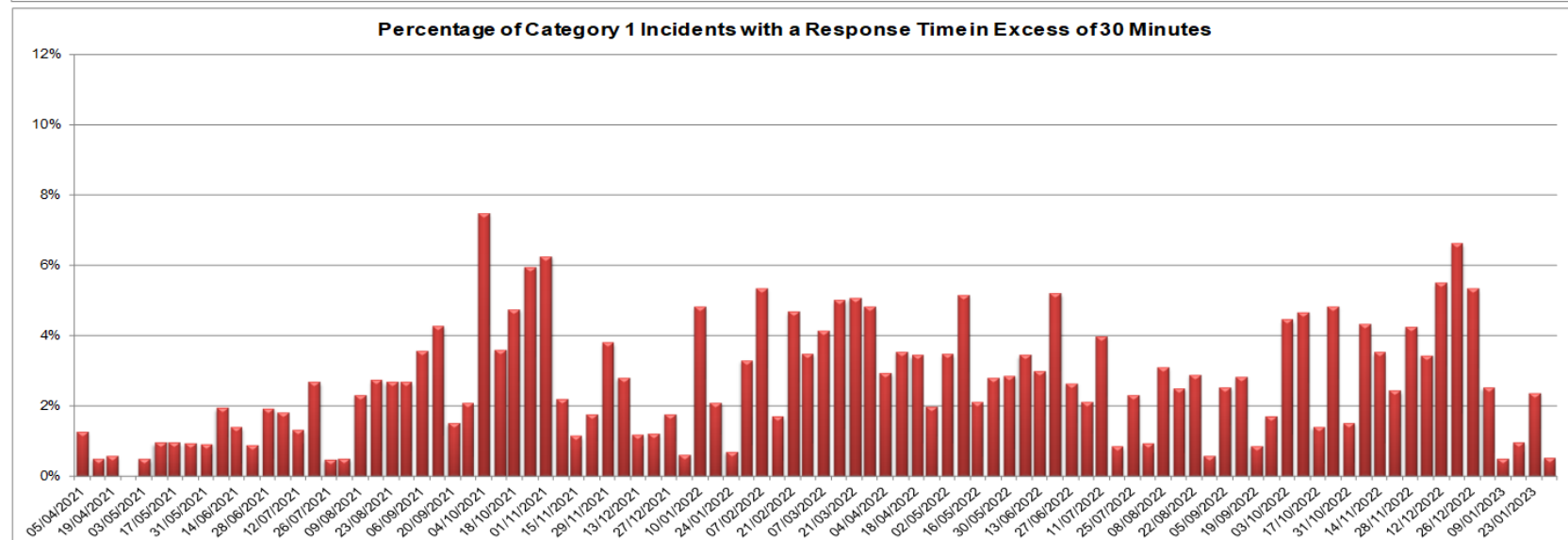
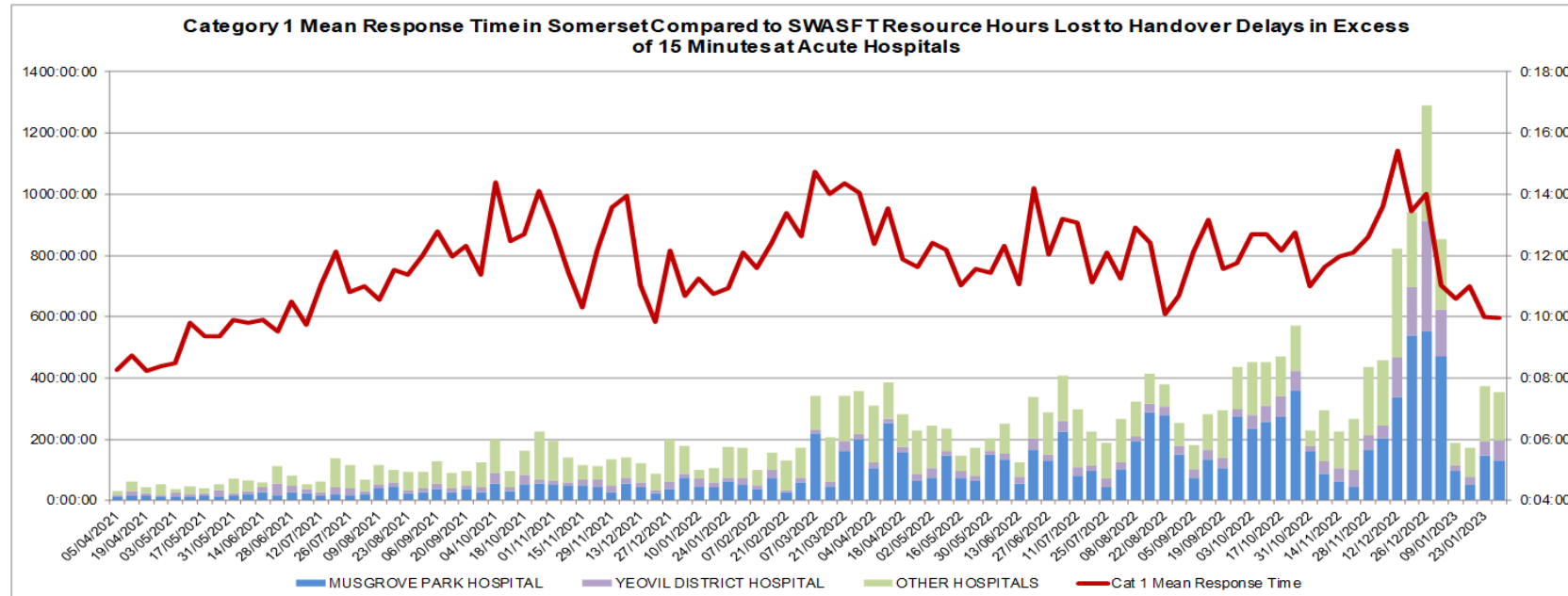
A major impact on the Trust's ability to respond to patients in a timelier manner is the amount of time lost to handover delays at acute hospitals.

In Somerset this impact has not been as high in some areas across the South West, but the position escalated sharply during November and December with the time lost to handover delays over the 15 minute target rising above 1,000 hours per week at times.

The operational resource time lost to handover delays (in excess of the 15 minute handover target) has increased over the past 12 months, rising from less than 100 hours lost per week in April 2021 to nearly 1,200 hours lost per week at the end of December.

These unprecedented levels of delays result in large numbers of the Trust operational resources being held at hospitals for extended periods of time. This significantly reduces the number of resources remaining on the road in the Somerset area to respond to patients.

Improvements have then been seen in January, which has reduced the impact and enabled the Trust to improve some response times.





### **Category 1 Mean Response Times & Handover Delays – Supporting Narrative**

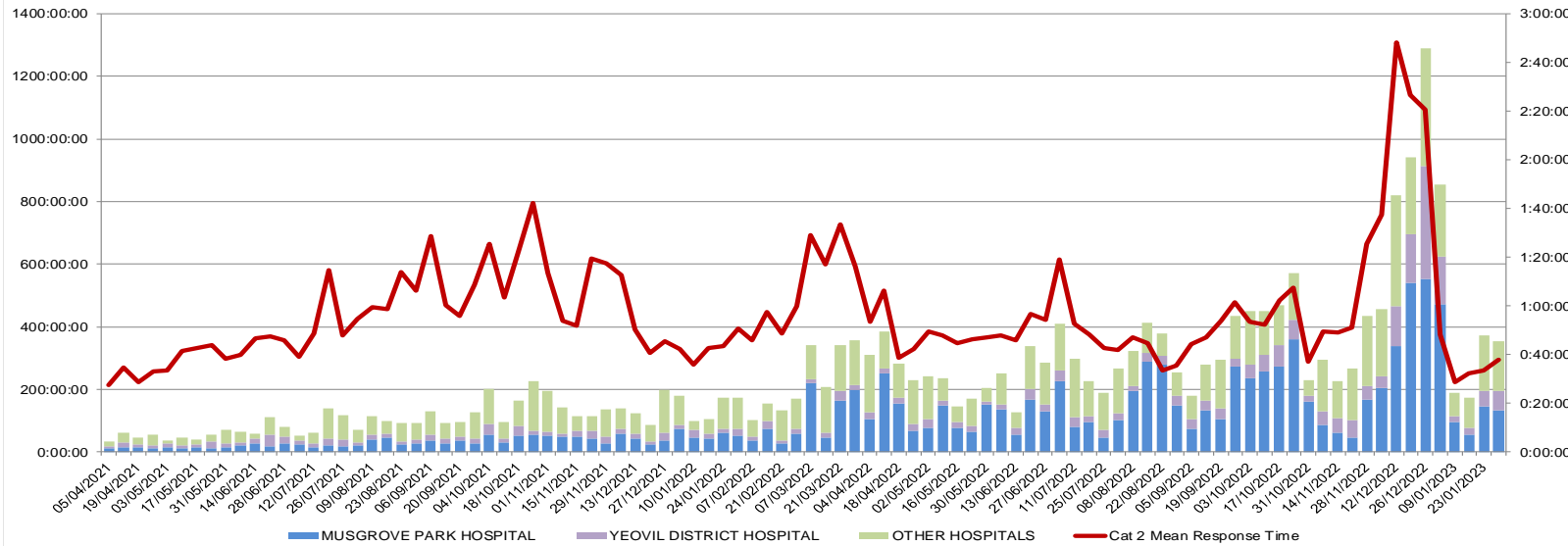
The top graph shows the correlation between the increasing Category 1 mean response time and the increase seen in the time lost to handover delays.

The blue column relates to delays at Musgrove Park Hospital and the purple column relates to delays at Yeovil District Hospital. The green column relates to delays at other hospitals, which will include Weston General hospital for those patients in the north of Somerset. As the delays increased the response times have increased sharply.

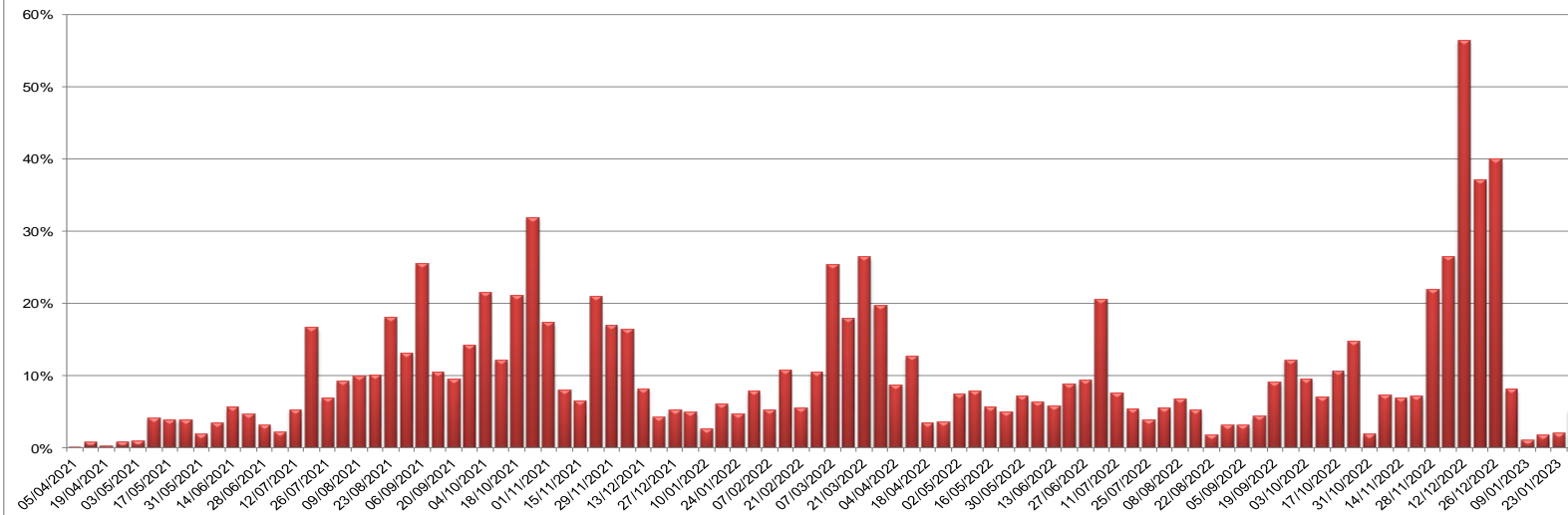
This is even more evident on the larger volume of Category 2 incidents on the below slide.



**Category 2 Mean Response Time in Somerset Compared to SWASFT Resource Hours Lost to Handover Delays in Excess of 15 Minutes at Acute Hospitals**



**Percentage of Category 2 Incidents with a Response Time in Excess of 2 Hours**





## **Category 2 Mean Response Times & Handover Delays – Supporting Narrative**

For Category 2 incidents the longest response times clearly correlate with the increased handover times at the acute hospitals.

Back in April 2021 when the handover delays were much lower the Cat 2 mean response time within the Somerset area were close to 30 minutes, but in recent weeks the mean times have been in excess of two hours, (compared to the 18 mins target) when the handover delays and higher activity volumes increased pressures in the Somerset area.

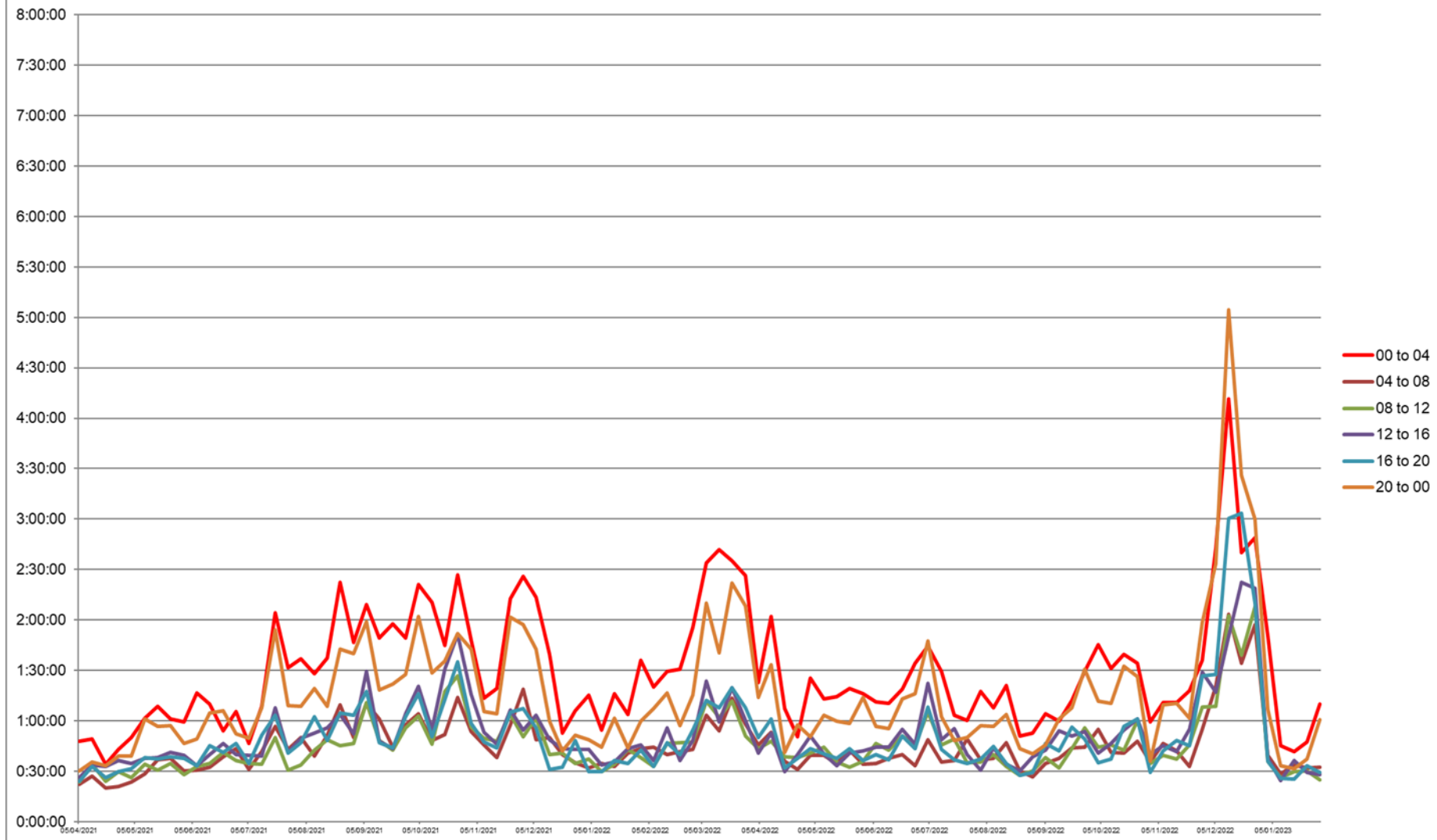
With the average handover times rising to over one hour per patient on some days, this limits the number of incidents each resource can manage within an 11 hour shift. This takes the job cycle for a conveyed patient to over three hours.

This is limiting crews to two or three patients per shift, much lower than their historic productivity levels and therefore giving us much lower return on any additional resources the Trust are putting in place.

The number of patients with very long response times increases as the impact from these delays escalates, with around 50% of our Category 2 incidents in December receiving response times of more than two hours, reducing to less than 5% of Category 2 incidents in January when the demand and resourcing levels have improved.



**Cat 2 Mean Response Times by Time Period Across the Day**







## **Cat 2 Mean Response Times Across the Day – Supporting Narrative**

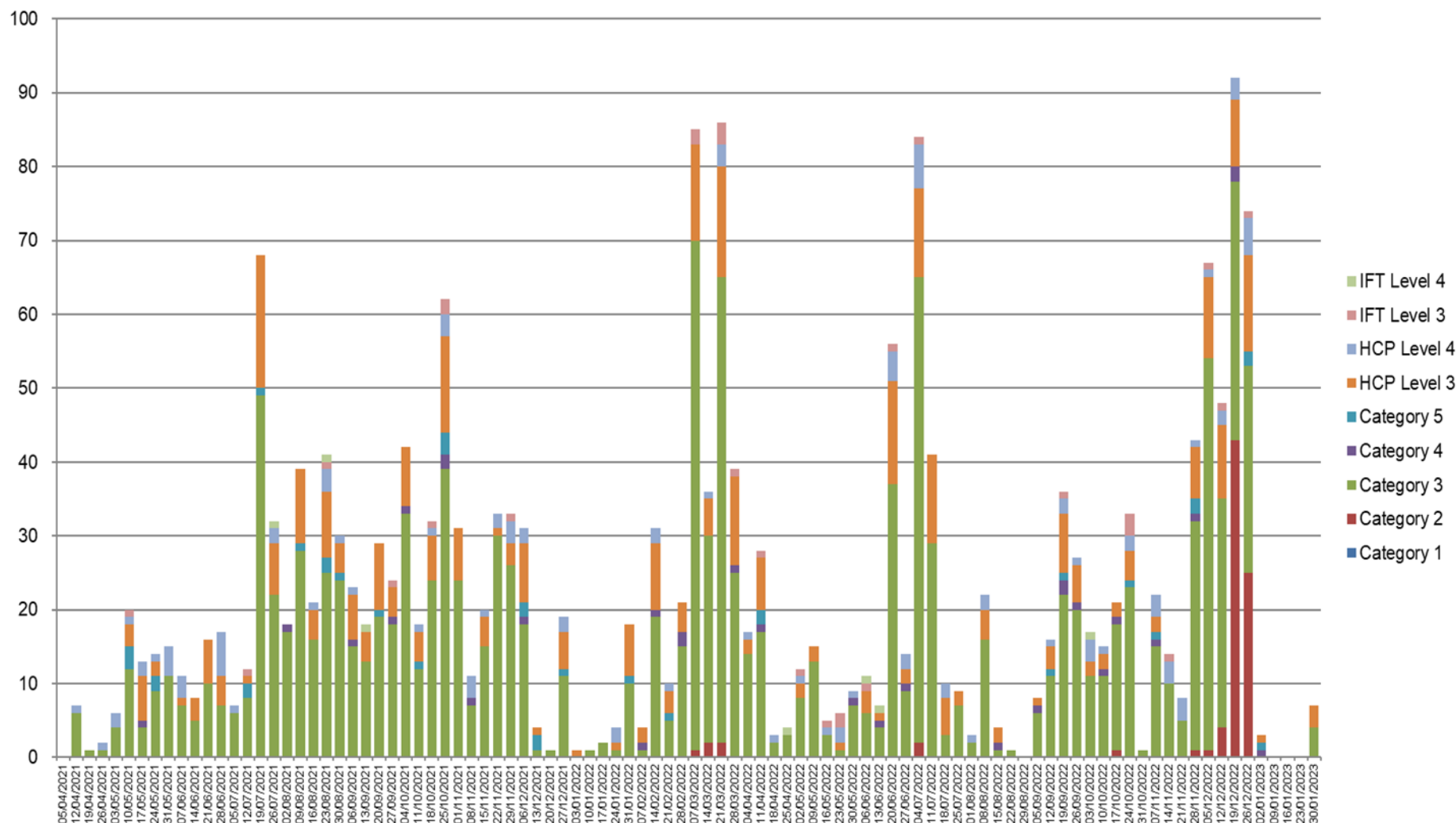
If we look at the Trust response times in different periods of the day, we can see that the response times generally increase as the day progresses with the most challenged response times seen between 20:00 and 04:00.

The Trust traditionally has fewer resources scheduled/rota overnight as there is less demand being received in this period of the day.

Losing large number of resources in the night time period therefore represents a larger proportion of all resources on duty at that time and therefore longer response times are often seen as a result.



Number of Incidents in Somerset With Response Times in Excess of 10 Hours by Incident Category



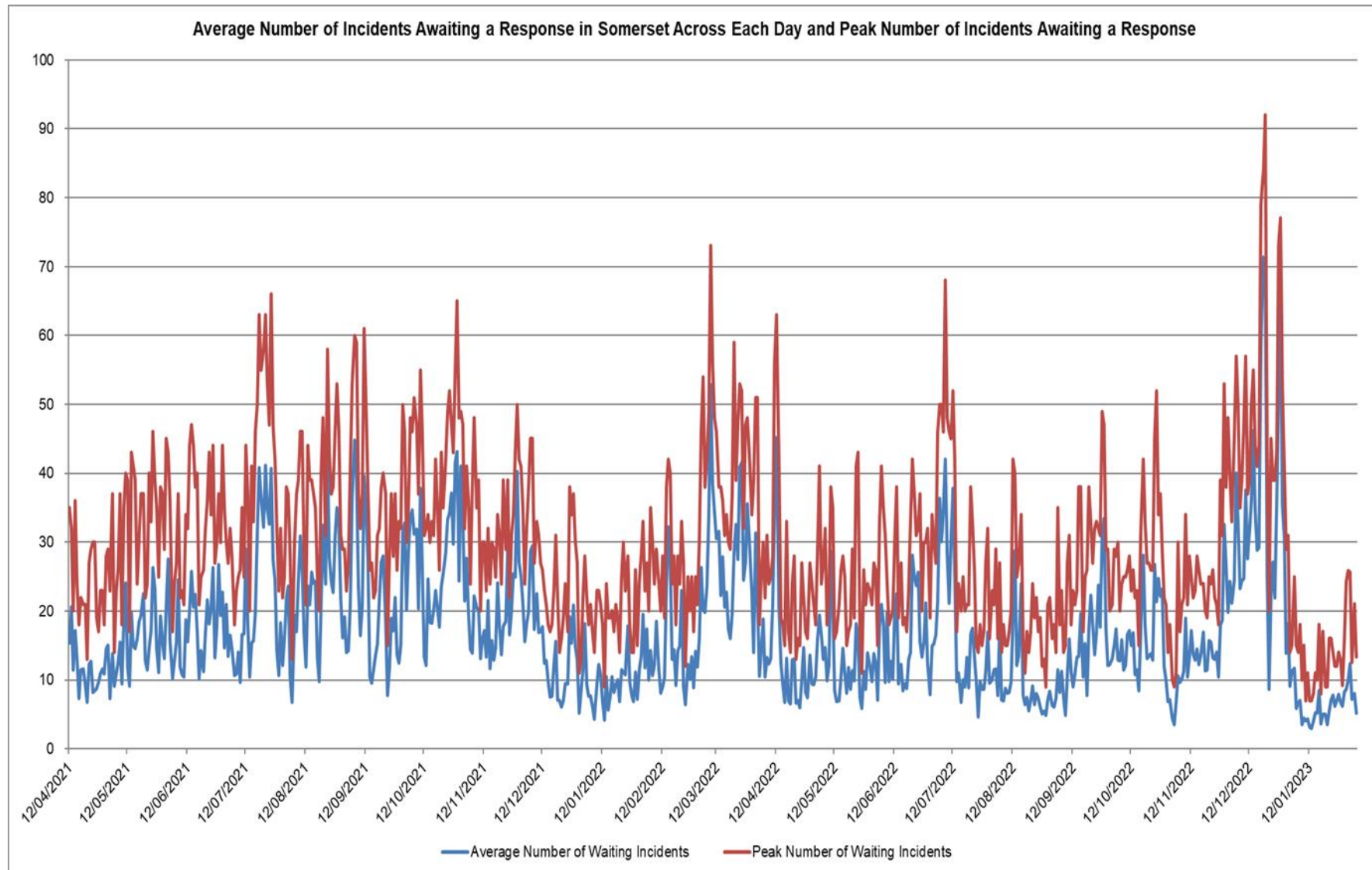


### **Number of Incidents with a Response Time in Excess of 10 Hours – Supporting Narrative**

The number of incidents with response times in excess of 10 hours has increased, at the same time we saw handover pressures increasing.

Prior to the increased delays the occurrence was rare and limited to lower acuity incidents, but at these high pressure points the Trust is seeing patients with Category 2 conditions having to wait more than 10 hours for a response due to the lack of resources on the road (with so many resources being held at hospital).

In the most recent weeks the position has improved following the reduction in activity volumes, with less than 10 incidents with response times of over 10 hours in the final week of January.





### **Average Number of Incidents Awaiting a Response in Somerset Each Day – Supporting Narrative**

This slide provides details on the average number of patients waiting across Somerset each day, as well as the peak number within each day, giving an idea of the number of patients awaiting a response at the most challenging times.



### 3. Somerset County Update

- We are continuing with our extensive Somerset recruitment programme for Paramedics and Emergency Care Assistants and have recently recruited an additional four New Zealand paramedics following a successful recruitment programme back in 2019. Similar to our other Somerset NHS providers we have found recruiting people into our county challenging at times, especially qualified clinicians. This continues to be an absolute focus for our recruitment team for this year and in recent months we have recruited a number of Graduate Paramedics and Emergency Care Assistants into Somerset.
- Following support from our commissioners we recently recruited to a new Hospital Ambulance Liaison Officer (HALO) role which covers both Musgrove Park Hospital and Yeovil District Hospital seven days a week. The role is to provide a dedicated link to our two Somerset acutes in managing periods of escalation and also working alongside our ED colleagues on systems/process and new ways of working to improve the handover process between our crews and our local EDs. The dedicated three person team are SWASFT clinicians who provide leadership and support whilst carrying out this role across both sites and we anticipate this role will be key in developing further improvements in flow into ED and the overall patient experience.
- In 2022 we received a three year extension to our Somerset GP service which provides a dedicated GP within the county seven days a week. During the weekend period we have two GPs working alongside our operational crews responding to a variety of incidents within the county whilst supporting patients in the community and reducing hospital admissions. This scheme is unique to Somerset and has been a great example of multidisciplinary team working within our organisation.
- We continue to work with our system partners and the ICS on new ways of working and new services which support care in the community and reduce the impact on ED admissions and acute capacity. We have started to redirect to other services including the new Falls Service and Rapid Response from our patient waiting queue which supports a more appropriate and timely response to some of our lower acuity patients with the benefit of freeing up our operational resources for higher acuity life-threatening calls. Our operational crews are also referring into the existing and new services when attending a patient at home or in the community as part of our 'See and Treat'.
- We are continuing to replace our operational fleet of vehicles in line with the national NHS procurement framework and a number of new FIAT type vehicles are now operational across the county with the remaining Mercedes vehicles being replaced later this year. These vehicles are more cost effective and economical which aligns to our longer term emissions and environmental carbon neutral plans.



## 4. Volunteering and Community Services

Every day, volunteers from across the South West support us in many roles. Our patient facing volunteers attend emergencies within their local communities. Sometimes the difference is providing reassurance prior to the arrival of an ambulance; sometimes it is saving someone's life. Our non-patient facing volunteers support vital roles such as: supporting crew welfare, engagement events and fundraising.

### Community First Responders in Somerset (CFRs)

- 59 Active Community First Responders
- 37 Responder groups / kits
- 12 CFRs recruited during 2022

### Groups recruited into:

- Bridgwater
- South Cadbury
- Brent Knoll
- Minehead
- North Newton
- Wellington
- Wells
- Wiveliscombe

**Incidents attended by Somerset volunteer CFRs in last 12 months:** 1,517

**CFR logged on availability:** 629 days 12 mins / 905,772 Minutes

### Fire Co-Responders in Somerset

- 22 Active Fire Co-Responders
- Five Co-Responder Stations (Cheddar, Wilton, Porlock, Dulverton, Nether Stowey)
- 358 Incidents attended by Fire Co-Responders

### SWASFT Community Public Access Defibrillators in Somerset

- 151 public access defibrillators provided directly by SWASFT
- 465 members of the public from Somerset have been trained in automated external defibrillator in the last 12 months via our awareness sessions
- 47 new SWASFT defibrillator packages have been set up in Somerset in last 12 months.



## 5. South Western Ambulance Charity

### NHS Charities Together Grant Funding

Our charity has been spending the remaining grant received from the NHS Charities Together major Covid Appeal.

- Each Community First Responders (CFR) Group has been allocated enhanced observation equipment to boost the baseline of their available equipment. We have also allocated 37 Raizer lifting chairs, which are used to enable patients who have had a non-injury fall. The roll out of all of this equipment has been a major project, supported by SWASFT teams to procure and make the kit ready, to distribute it and to train volunteers to use it effectively.
- Six dedicated Community First Responder (CFR) Dacia cars have been ordered and are anticipated to arrive in March/April. These will be allocated to each County area across the region for their CFRs to access. Plans to fund a seventh vehicle are also underway.
- We have been delivering three staff support initiatives, in collaboration with the Staying Well Service team. (1) Distribution of 1,000 thermal (hot and cold) drinks bottles to our people across the region to support hydration, particularly when they have less opportunity to return to base for breaks (2) A programme of small grants for stations to improve their outdoor spaces, with plants, pots, flowers, seating areas, etc. Some of these projects have been extended with the support of the Estates team and additional charity funds. (3) A programme of small grants for team-building events and activities, to help bring staff together post pandemic.
- We have continued to support the SWASFT Crew Welfare Car initiative, providing our hard-working people with tea, coffee and biscuits during delayed hospital handovers.

### Supporting Staff

South Western Ambulance Charity continues to support special interest forums, networks and staff engagement events. We funded the Long Service Awards presented at the end of 2022.

Working with the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Lead, the Charity has supported various initiatives related to working careers, supporting trans and non-binary staff, and work challenging toxic behavior.

Our annual investment in Christmas buffet treats for staff working on festive bank holidays.

### Caring for the Community

- We have supported the SWASFT Saving Lives Together campaign, working to improve out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survival rates, by investing in staff resources, alongside educational and promotional resources such as CPR manikins.
- We've continued investment in the GoodSAM app used to dispatch available emergency volunteer responders to 'Out of Hospital' cardiac arrests.
- We have invested in a Mental Health Strategic Lead to work with the Trust to identify and implement improvements related to supporting mental health pathways.

### Fabulous Fundraisers

We do have some incredible fundraisers who raise many thousands of pounds to enable us to go the extra mile for our exceptional people, volunteer heroes and the communities that SWASFT serves.

Examples include; a Wiltshire young Combined Cadet Force group who used their climbing wall to reach the height of Mount Everest, a man who did a 110 mile solo sponsored walk around Cornwall, a London Marathon runner, a Tractor Run involving nearly 40 tractors and several people who are preparing to Sky Dive for us.





This year the NHS celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary - #NHS75. We are encouraging fundraisers to sign up to host an NHS Big Tea party in early July to join the celebrations, or to take on our award winning Outrun an Ambulance fundraising challenge at [www.outrunanambulance.co.uk](http://www.outrunanambulance.co.uk).



## **6. SWASFT-Wide Update**

### **Trust Sexual Safety Charter**

The South Western Ambulance Service has launched its Sexual Safety Charter, setting out the importance of sexual safety and asking its people to sign up to a very clear set of guidelines to protect themselves and colleagues. The charter is designed to educate people on behaviours that are acceptable and unacceptable and encourage colleagues to check their own behaviour and call out colleagues when their behaviour is uncomfortable.

### **Launch of 8 Point Plan for Assaults & Hate Crimes**

The 8 Point Plan for Assaults and Hate Crimes is a pledge that the South Western Ambulance Service will not tolerate assaults or hate crimes against its people and volunteers. The Trust has worked closely with police colleagues across the region to develop the plan, which provides consistency with how they respond as an organisation when incidents of violence or aggression occurs towards colleagues.

### **New Appointments**

The Council of Governors at the South Western Ambulance Service have appointed Stephen Otter as the new Chair of the Trust. Stephen brings with him a wealth of experience, including as a previous chief constable of Devon and Cornwall and a non-executive director at Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust. He has significant experience in driving cultural change and delivering transformational benefits for organisations.

Jane Chandler has joined the South Western Ambulance Service as Executive Director of Quality Patient Care following Jenny Winslade's departure as Executive Director of Quality and Clinical Care. Jane was Deputy Chief Nurse at the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust for eight years and will ensure the safe provision of high-quality patient focused care across the Trust.

Justine McGuinness has taken up the role of Director of Communications and Public Affairs – she joins the South Western Ambulance Service from The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and brings a wealth of NHS experience, with a long history of working in public affairs.