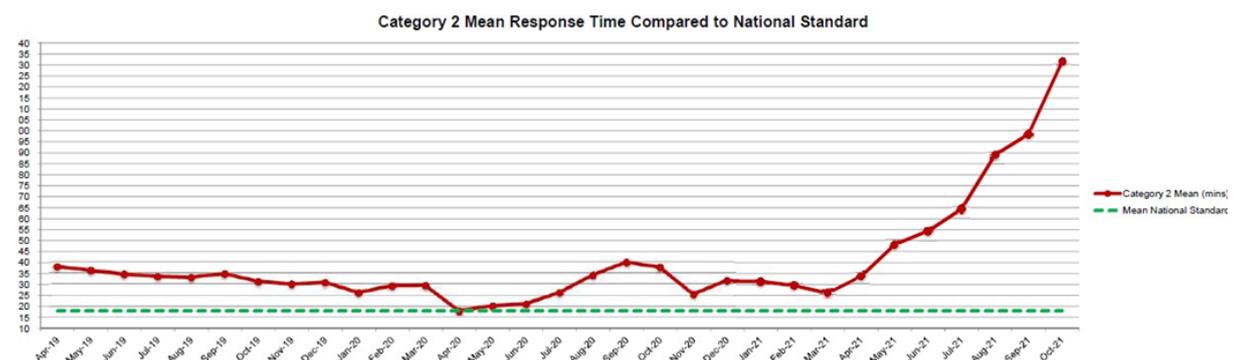
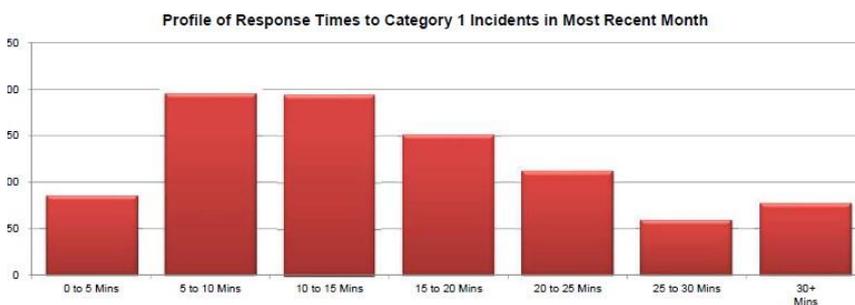
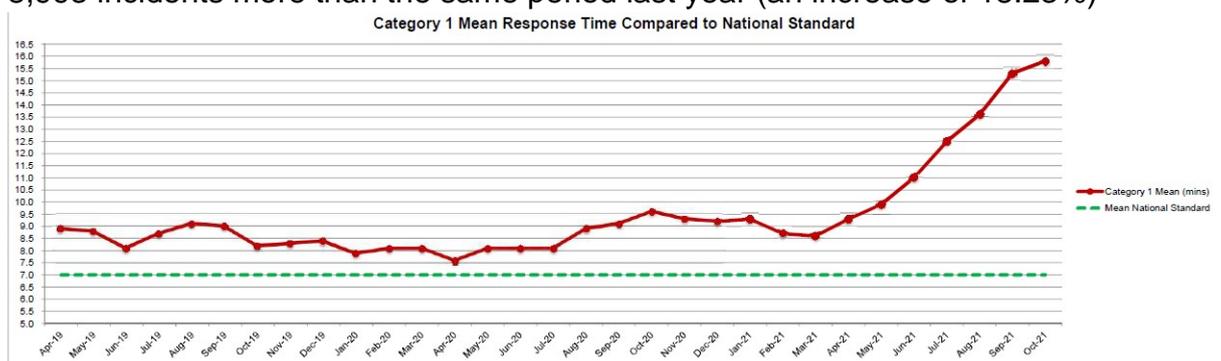


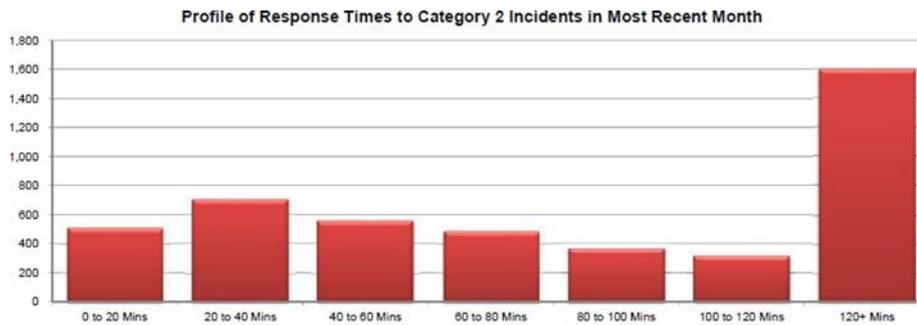
This is a report that was received to the Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 17th November 2021.

I thought it would be an important report to bring to Full Town Council.

South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWASFT) – Performance update and report

1. Background SWASFT has 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 the former Avon area (Bristol, Bath, North and North East 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.
2. Performance October 2021 During October the Trust responded to 90,940 incidents across the South West – this was an average of 2,934 per day and 8,993 incidents more than the same period last year (an increase of 18.23%)





3. Factors impacting on performance

3.1. Demand

The Trust has been experiencing activity increases since the easing of lockdown measures in May 2021, with further rises across June, July and August.

Weekly incidents ran at over 20,000 incidents for 25 consecutive weeks from the start of May, compared to levels prior to COVID-19 which were around 18,000 incidents per week.

To put this in perspective, during the previous two years (2019/2020) the trust has only reported 2 weeks above 20,000 incidents, both of which fell over the Christmas and New Year period in 2019 when activity is traditionally busier.

Ambulance incident numbers across the South West throughout September continued to be significantly higher than historic levels. During September we experienced five consecutive days where daily incident numbers exceeded 3,000 or approximately a new incident every 25 seconds.

To put this into context only 19 individual days in the history of the Trust have exceeded 3,000 incidents and only 6 of those days were outside the busy Christmas and New Year period.

This unprecedented and sustained demand resulted in the trust declaring a major incident on 7 September until 10 September. Moving to a major incident is a decision the Trust does not take lightly but allows us to better manage and tackle the high levels of demand we are currently facing and implement a number of measures around resourcing, call handling, triaging patients, and meal breaks.

3.2. Abstraction rates

As seen across other areas of the Healthcare system, SWASFT is experiencing workforce pressures with reductions in the operational frontline resourcing levels available due to high levels of abstraction.

These abstractions include high levels of sickness (in excess of 10% at present) plus abstractions in relation to COVID-19 sickness and isolation which are around 5% on top of the sickness at present.

SWASFT take the health, safety and welfare of its crews seriously and continues to monitor local and national changes in guidance and infections for the protection of our crews and ultimately patients. However, this is limiting the Trust in any ability to increase the operational resources on the road to meet any surges in demand, especially at this time of the year when annual leave levels are at their peak.

3.3. Handover delays at acute hospitals

By far, the most significant impact on performance is the length of time it's taking us to hand over many patients into busy hospitals, which is higher than we've ever seen before.

We are currently losing around 750 hours per day to handover delays at hospital emergency departments, compared to around 400 hours per week two years ago. This results in many ambulances queuing outside hospitals, and unable to respond to other emergency calls.

On Friday 5 November the Trust lost 709 hours (or the equivalent of 64.4 double crewed ambulance shifts) to handover delays, 162 of which were lost at Royal Cornwall Hospital.

During w/c 6 September 2021 the Trust lost over 5,609 hours to handover delays in excess of the 15 minute target. That is the equivalent of 510 ambulance shifts being lost (an average of 73 shifts lost per day).

These levels have become intolerable and it's an absolute priority for us and for our NHS partners to reduce these delays, so crews can get back out on the road for other patients.

SWASFT have resourced managers to Royal Cornwall Hospital to co-ordinate the timely offload of patients in conjunction with nursing staff to ensure safe continuity of care.

Locally, SWASFT have been working in collaboration with all partners in the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly health and social care system to reduce the risk associated with handover delay whilst continuing to deliver a service in the community.

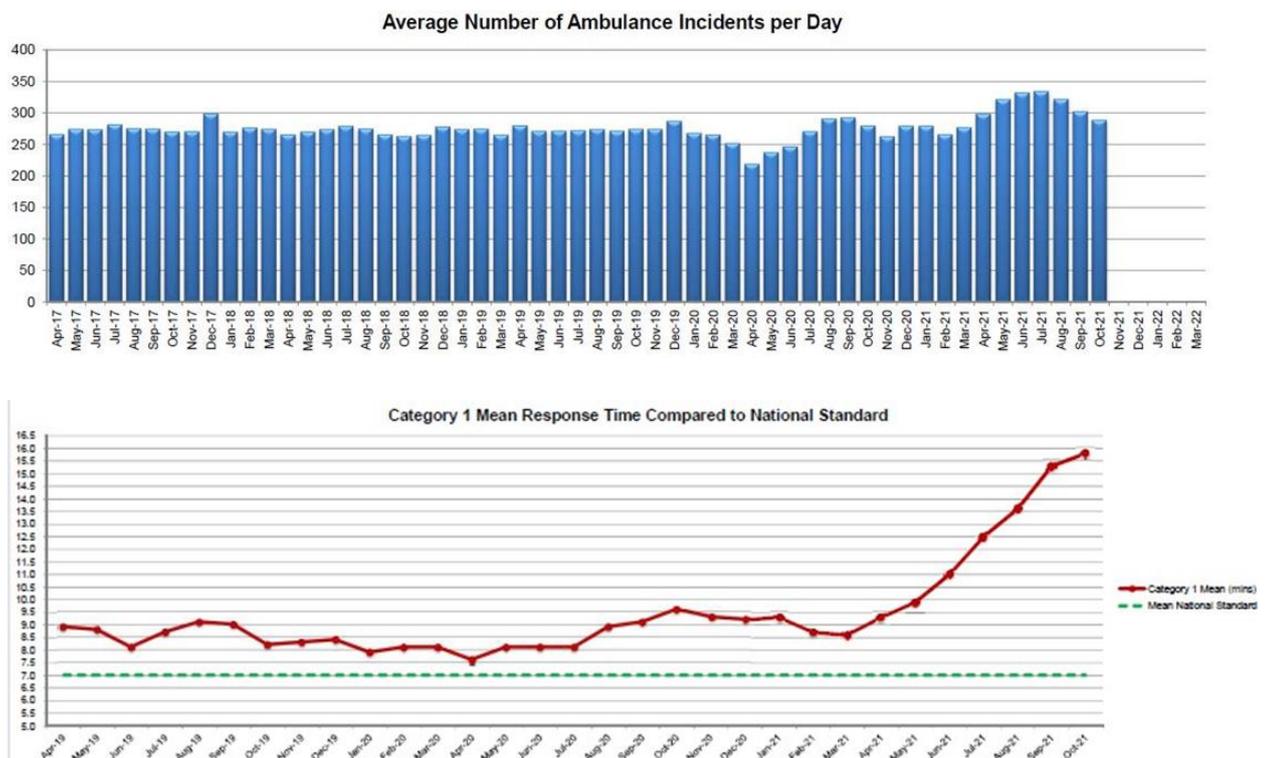
4. Demand – Cornwall

The Trust responded to 8978 incidents across Cornwall during October which is up by 274 compared to the same time last year. This was an average of 290 incidents per day. It should be noted that public demand has fluctuated significantly day on day making forecasting within the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly health system a challenge.

On average there were 28 Cat 1 incidents per day, throughout October, requiring a response at scene.

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Of these 32.1% received a response within 10 minutes, 54.2% of incidents received a response within 15 minutes and 91.1% of incidents received a response within 30 minutes.



5. Operation Braidwood

As part of the Trust's wider response to the pandemic, the five fire and rescue services within the south west, including Devon, continue to support SWASFT by providing a cadre of fire fighters to drive ambulances and work alongside SWASFT clinicians, known as Operation Braidwood. These fire fighters, who already have blue light driving skills, have undertaken additional training and hold a skills passport to ensure they are able to safely support the delivery of patient care alongside SWASFT crews. The current agreement between SWASFT and the five Fire and Rescue Services will see Operation Braidwood continue until the end of the year.

Care Hotel

As you know from our previous briefings, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's health and care system has been under sustained pressure since the start of the summer.

There's no single reason for this – it's a complex mix of factors affecting the whole health and care system, including the impact of COVID-19, and providing care for the elderly and vulnerable outside of hospital.

Our emergency department in Truro remains busy managing demand from people needing help. Inside the hospital on 9 November, there were 147 people who were well enough to go home but are waiting for care to be provided from elsewhere within our health and care system, or for someone to collect them.

A number of initiatives have been put in place to help manage flow and demand across our system, including access to support and a 1-off discharge support grant to help care for people when they are at home.

Demand for adult social care services has increased by more than a third in the past month, causing unprecedented demand on all adult social service care services.

Since the beginning of July almost 300 packages of homecare have been handed back to Cornwall Council from home care providers. Care providers, including care homes cite staff taking up alternative employment (ie in hospitality or cleaning/maintenance) as a key factor.

I'm pleased to tell you that as part of our continued work to support people to get the care they need, when they need it, and in the right setting, we have today launched a new initiative called the care hotel.

The care hotel is a joint initiative paid for by NHS Kernow and supported by adult social care and provider Abicare.

Anyone who is ready to leave hospital when they have no clinical reason to be there but needs some extra support to get back on their feet, may be moved to a hotel in Cornwall while their needs are assessed. This hotel has been in operation since the middle of November.

Number of long-term empty homes in Cornwall reduced by nearly 800

Cornwall Council has met its aim to reduce the number of Long-Term Empty (LTE) properties in Cornwall.

There are now 800 fewer LTEs than a year ago, which is below the average for England. It marks significant progress from 2017, when the percentage of empty homes in Cornwall was a third higher than the national average.

The figure revealed in the Government's latest Council Taxbase for England, is 2,289, compared to 3,071 a year ago. It means that just 0.84 per cent of Council Tax-chargeable homes are now classed as Long-Term Empty, compared to 1.14 per cent a year ago.

Across England, the number of LTE properties has dropped by about 30,000, with 0.97 per cent being classed as such, against 1.11 per cent a year ago.

Olly Monk, the Council's Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, said: "This is very positive news. During a housing crisis the last thing anybody wants is homes sitting empty.

"Empty properties are simply a wasted resource. They can also be an eyesore for communities and cause other concerns.

"This reduction is thanks to the hard work of the Council's Empty Homes Team in our Private Sector Housing department, which communicates and engages with owners to help bring empty properties back into use through advice and assistance - including our successful Empty Property Loan scheme - and by taking enforcement action where necessary.

"The Empty Homes Team is working hard to further reduce the number, and we are also continuing to work across a wide range of other initiatives to tackle the housing issues we are faced with from all angles."

The Council set out the target to reduce the proportion of LTE properties down to or below the national figure by the end of its Housing Service Plan for 2018 to 2022.

Empty properties can be reported to the Council via a dedicated webpage and the Empty Homes Team also offers a service that matches owners of empty homes who would like to sell with potential buyers who want to bring them back into use. The team can also help supply evidence about how long a property has been empty, to help support potential VAT savings.

Dealing with the issue of empty properties is just one way in which the Council is tackling the housing pressures facing Cornwall.

In June the council announced its plans to tackle both the immediate issues around housing and the longer-term problems.

Earlier this month the Council announced that it had bought 130 homes at West Carclaze Garden Village, taking them off the open market and making them available to local households in needs for social rent, affordable rent and shared ownership.

A range of further initiatives is in action, from the provision of more emergency accommodation at New County Hall in Truro and Rosewarne Car Park in Camborne, to the purchase and refurbishment of disused properties around Cornwall, development of a landmark modular homes scheme near Pool and a significant ramp-up of the new 'council housing' programme, including a new site on the edge of Padstow.