

Trust Board Update

Support and Intervention Framework

Level 4

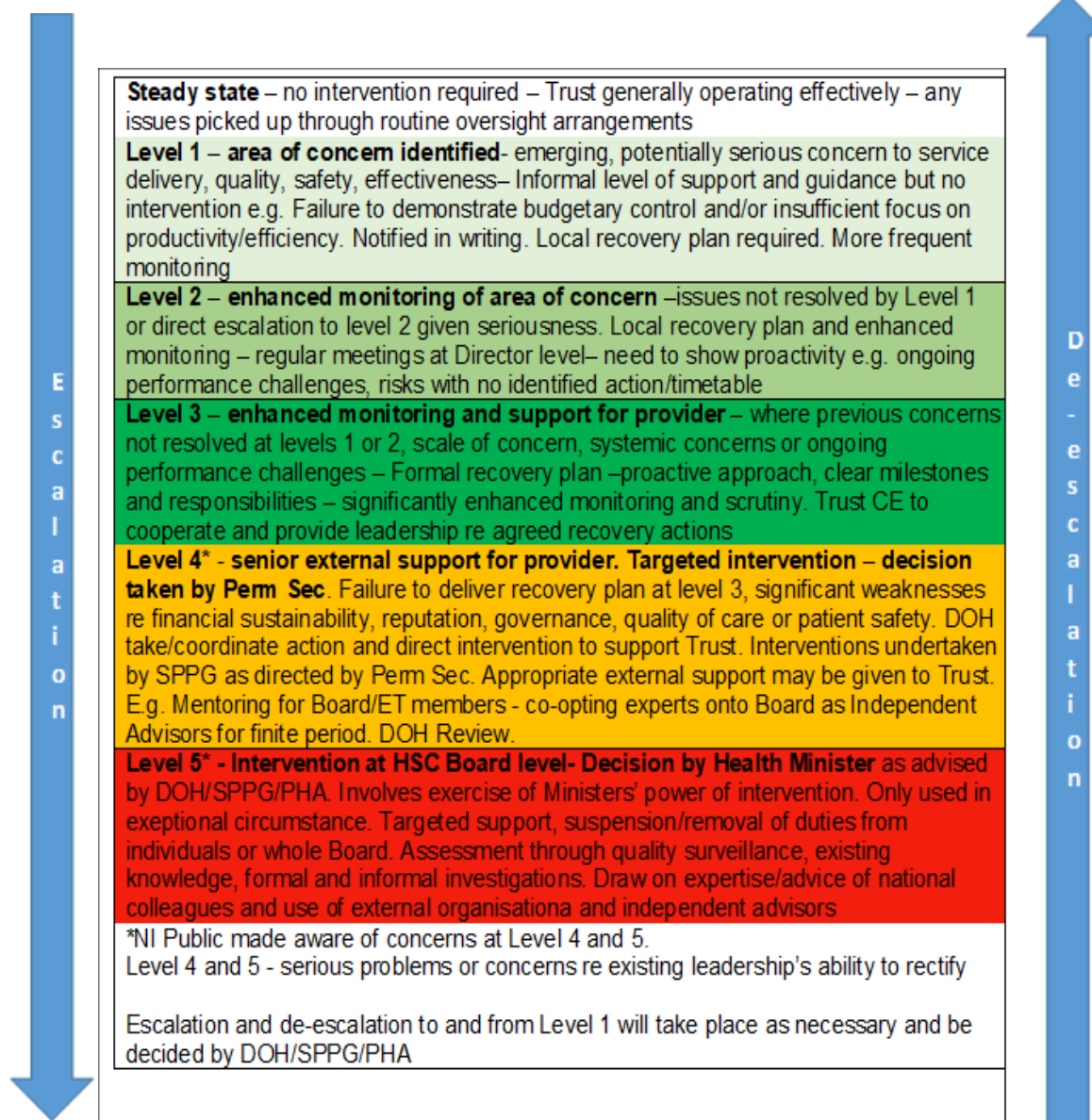
Ambulance Handover Delays and 12-hour Emergency Department Waiting Times

27 May 2026



South Eastern Health
and Social Care Trust

Support & Intervention Framework (SIF)



Ambulance Handover Delays and 12-hour Emergency Department Waiting Times

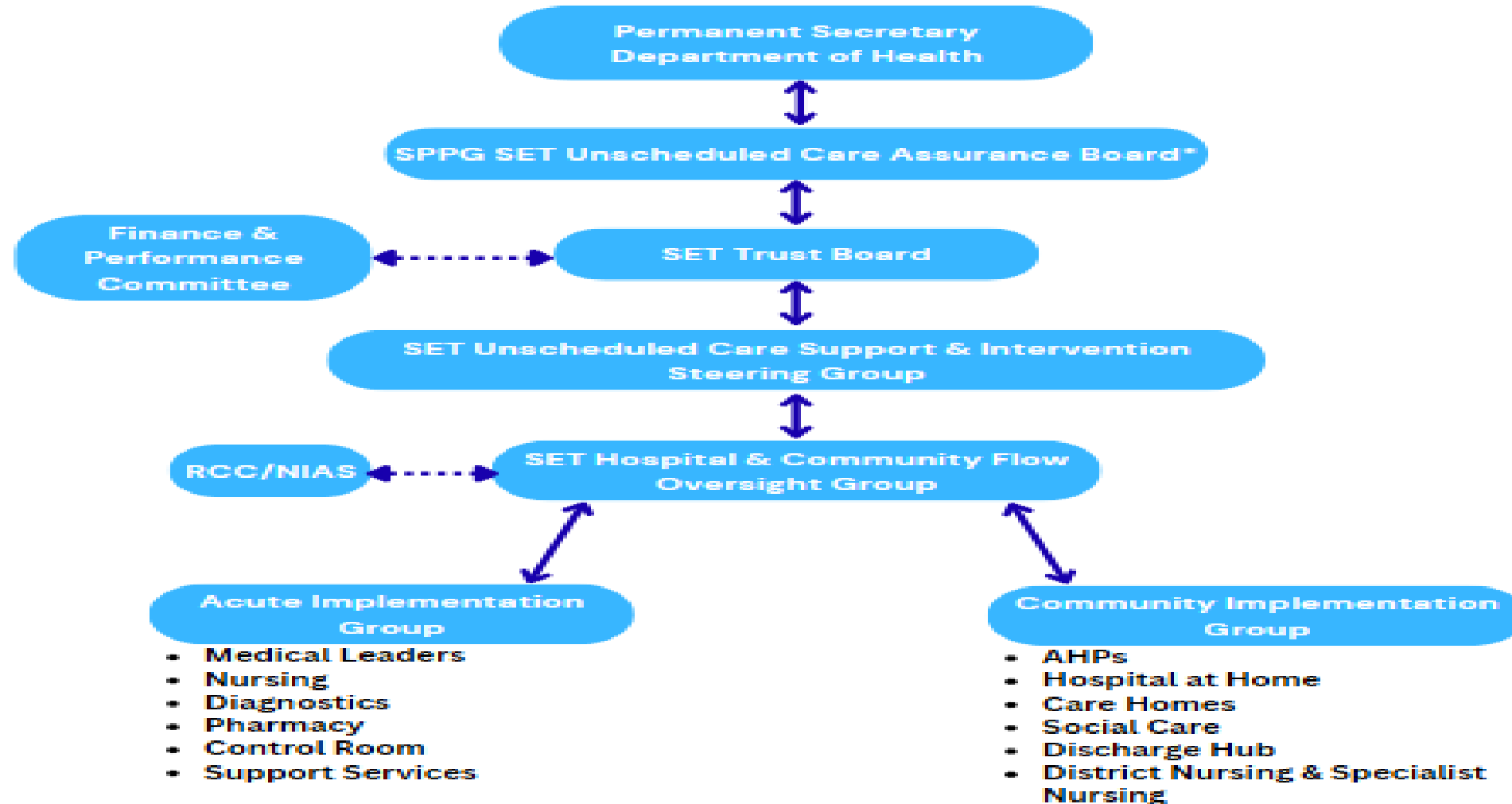
- Moved from 2 x Level 3 escalations
- 24/04/2026 – Level 4 escalation received
- The Trust must deliver immediate and sustained improvement. This includes:
 - implementing the 'Release to Rescue' Protocol from 27 April 2026 to eliminate ambulance handovers exceeding two hours
 - progressing towards a maximum handover time of 45 minutes in line with Department of Health guidance,
 - stabilising and reducing Emergency Department waits so that no patient waits longer than 12 hours, including delivering a minimum 10% reduction in >12hour waits as per Strategic Outcomes Measures (SOMs 2025/26).
- Trust has to date:
 - developed a comprehensive, clinically-led and co-produced action plan, supported by regional partners and external expertise
 - Established enhanced Governance arrangements

Release To Rescue (RtR)

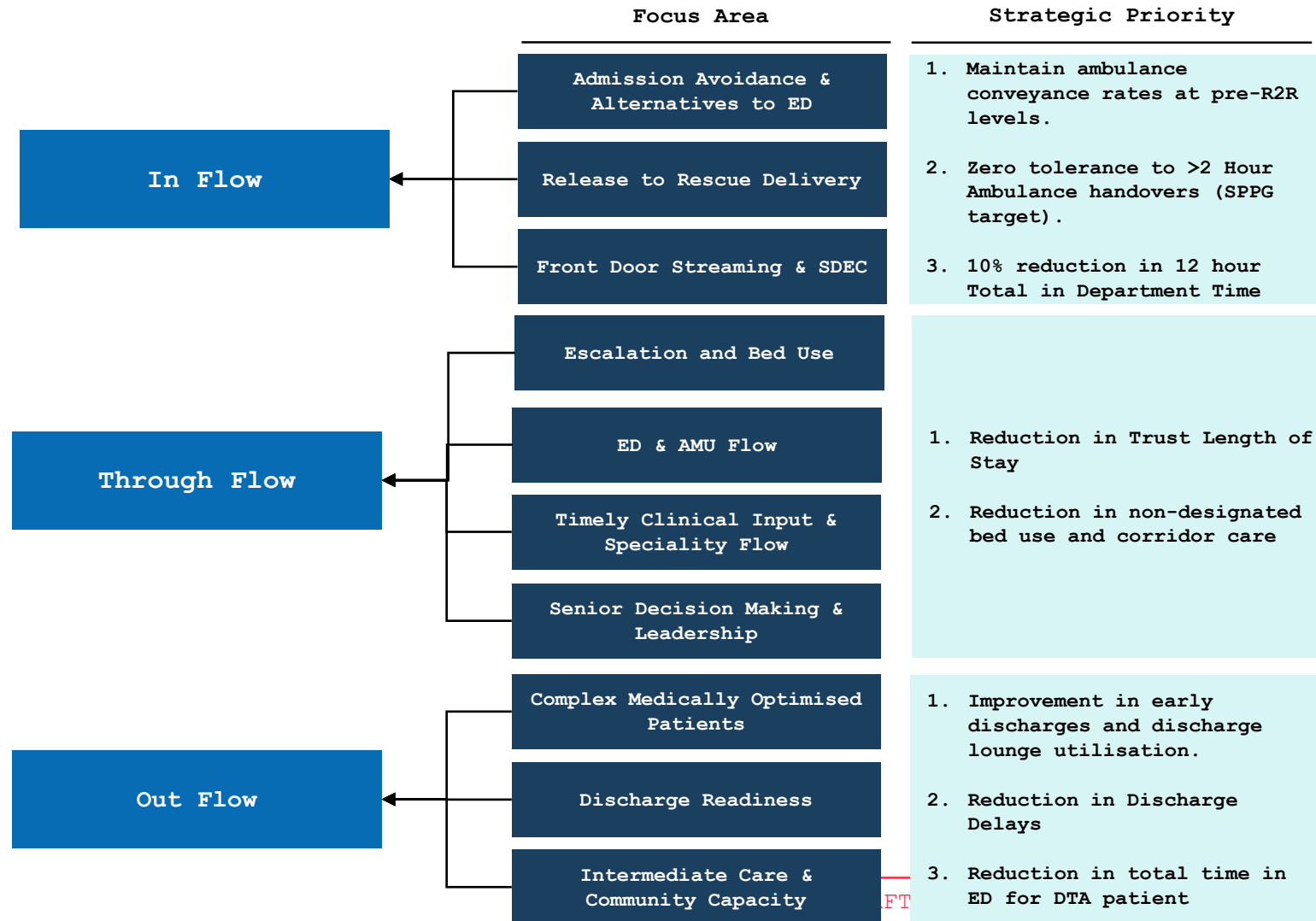
- Regional NIAS protocol
- The aim is to stop ambulances waiting for prolonged periods outside Emergency Departments (ED) across the region and Release crews back into the community
- Standard Operating Procedure provides a structured escalation process regarding the transfer of the patient from the NIAS vehicle to the hospital ED within a 2hr timeframe.
- 'RtR' protocol is not always implemented for every patient waiting longer than 2 hours.
- DoH accepts that only patients waiting longer than 2hrs15 minutes are considered for the protocol because of the variations in the NIAS recording and that on Encompass.
- The NIAS crews and ED medical and nursing team work collaboratively to offload each patient as soon as possible.
- Since the 'RtR' protocol was introduced on 27 April, there have been 4 instances when the 'RtR' protocol was implemented.

Governance and Accountability Structure

SET Unscheduled Care Assurance & Accountability Structure



Hospital and Community Flow (HCF) Framework – Action Plan

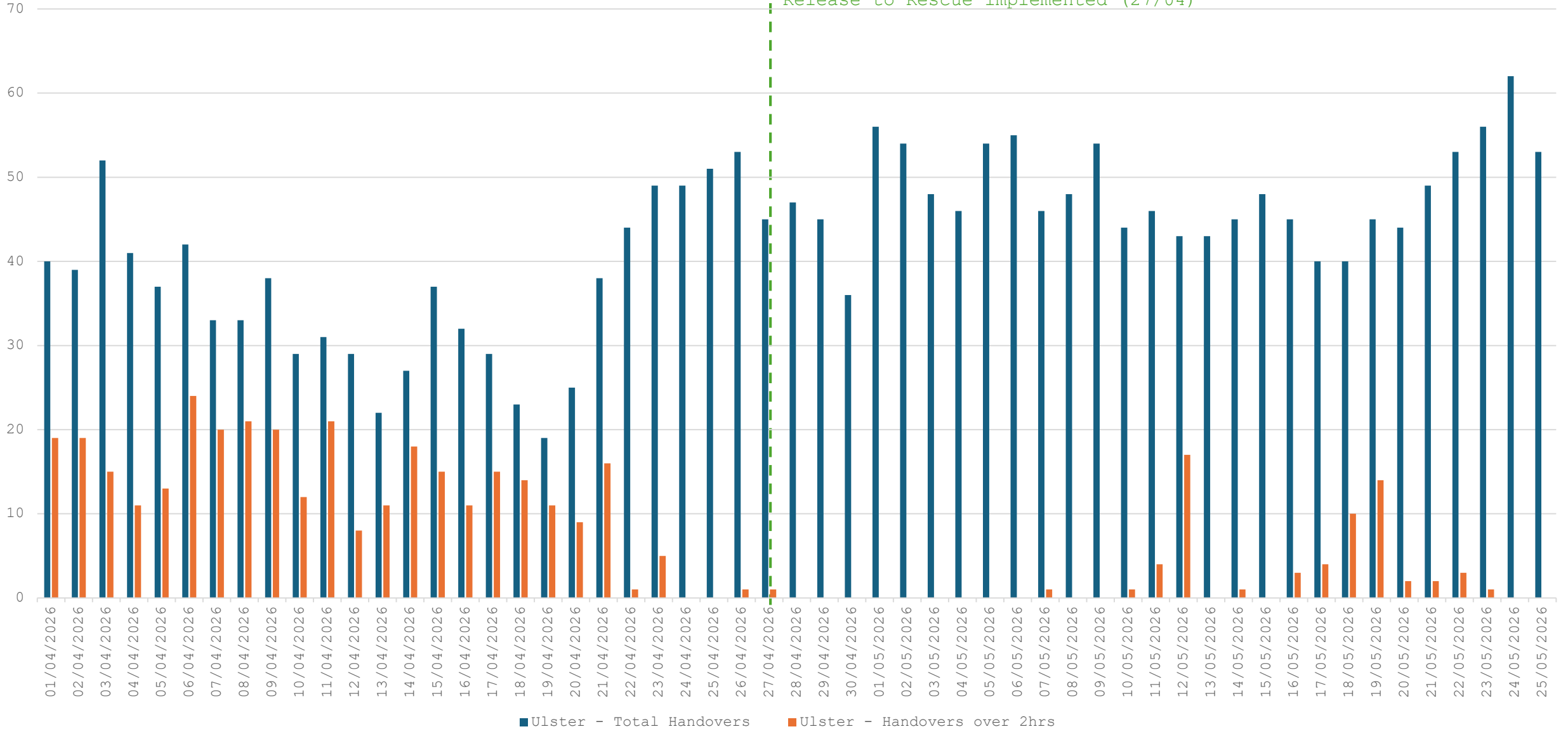


Key Metrics to date

7 day performance metrics	Mar-26	Apr-26	20/04 – 26/04	27/04 – 03/05	04/05 – 10/05*	11/05 – 17/05	18/05 – 24/05
Total Emergency Department (ED & UCC) Attendances	2435 (avg weekly)	2436 (avg weekly)	2471	2530	2558	2395	2506
Total number of Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) Handovers	266 (avg weekly)	260 (avg weekly)	309	331	347	310	349
NIAS Handovers > 2 hours	81 (avg weekly)	77 (avg weekly)	32	1	2	29	32
NIAS Handovers within 45 minutes %	42%	50%	66%	81%	66%	48%	58%
Maximum NIAS Handover Time	12 hours 58 minutes	19 hours 26 minutes	8 hours 59 minutes	2 hours 51 minutes	2 hours 9 minutes	4 hours 10 minutes	7 hours 19 minutes
Average NIAS Handover Time	2 hours 1 minute	2 hours 32 minutes	1 hour 15 minutes	0 hours 32 minutes	0 hours 42 minutes	1 hour 0 minutes	0 hours 58 minutes
12hr Performance from arrival to Discharge or Admission %	77%	76%	78%	79%	77%	74%	71%
Hospital Admissions	550 (avg weekly)	551 (avg weekly)	575	594	571	515	542
Hospital Discharges	539 (avg weekly)	558 (avg weekly)	602	607	537	547	599
ED Moves to Ward Average (hh:mm)	19:26	20:56	20:04	15:23	16:52	19:00	19:42

Ulster Hospital - Daily Ambulance Handovers & Handovers Over 2 Hours

Release to Rescue implemented (27/04)



Ulster Hospital - 12 hour Performance (%)

