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SA Ambulance Service Submission to the Review of the Late Night Trading Code of Practice



Government
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SA Health



SA
Ambulance
Service

Introduction

In December 2022, the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner wrote to the Chief Executive Officer, SA Ambulance Service (SAAS) requesting statistical information to assist in the Commissioner's Review of the Late Night Trading Code of Practice.

This Report provides SAAS's submission to the Review.

Violence and Aggression against SAAS Staff

The information below relates to Violence and Aggression (Challenging Behaviour) incidents involving SAAS staff with a specific focus on incidents where drug and or alcohol use were identified as the primary causative factor during investigation.

SAAS defines challenging behaviour as any behaviour with the potential to physically or psychologically harm another person, self, or property. It can be deliberate or unintentional and ranges from verbal abuse, through to threats or acts of physical violence. Challenging behaviour or actions result in a person or people feeling unsafe or threatened, or feeling that intervention or withdrawal is warranted to avoid harm to someone. While other health professionals operate in fixed and familiar environments where they have a complete understanding of their physical surrounds, paramedics and ambulance officers work in completely unfamiliar and often highly volatile environments.

It is important to note that not all challenging behaviour incidents are captured by the data recorded by SAAS. This may be because they are viewed as being 'less serious' by SAAS staff, and hence not reported.

In addition, some challenging behaviour leave staff traumatised, ultimately impacting on their work in future. For example, spitting incidents require the SAAS staff member to undergo testing to ensure they have not contracted an infectious disease. Such testing can take up to six months to confirm the results. Understandably, this can have an emotional impact on the staff member and their family whilst waiting for definitive results.

The impact of 'less serious' challenging behaviour can be accumulative. Innuendo, derogatory or offensive remarks, insults, overt displays of aggression, and at times inappropriate touching, are all often mediated by compassion for the patient's circumstances. The acts frequently go unreported, or are simply tolerated as 'part of the job'. Despite this tolerance, these behaviours are not an acceptable part of the job and over time contribute to staff attitude, low morale and diminished self-worth.

While the majority of challenging behaviour incidents relate to verbal aggression or threatened assault by members of the public, violence and aggression represents an ongoing risk to the safety and wellbeing of SAAS staff.

Incident Trends

Violence and Aggression incidents reported over the last several years have highlighted the following as being the most concerning challenging behaviour categories to paramedics and ambulance officers:

- > Actual or threat of physical abuse / assault / aggression (including deliberate blood and body fluid exposure).

- > Verbal abuse or disruption.
- > Intrusive behaviour.

Drug and Alcohol are the second most common causative factor identified in Violence and Aggression Incidents reported to SAAS (see Figure 1). Further, drug and alcohol use is often identified as a secondary factor in Violence and Aggression incidents where Adult Inappropriate Behaviour is the primary causative factor. This may be due to SAAS attendance to an intoxicated family member or friend, or due to the location of the patient (such as a public location).

Figure 1: Causative Factors in Violence and Aggression Incidents, 1 January 2015 - 30 November 2022

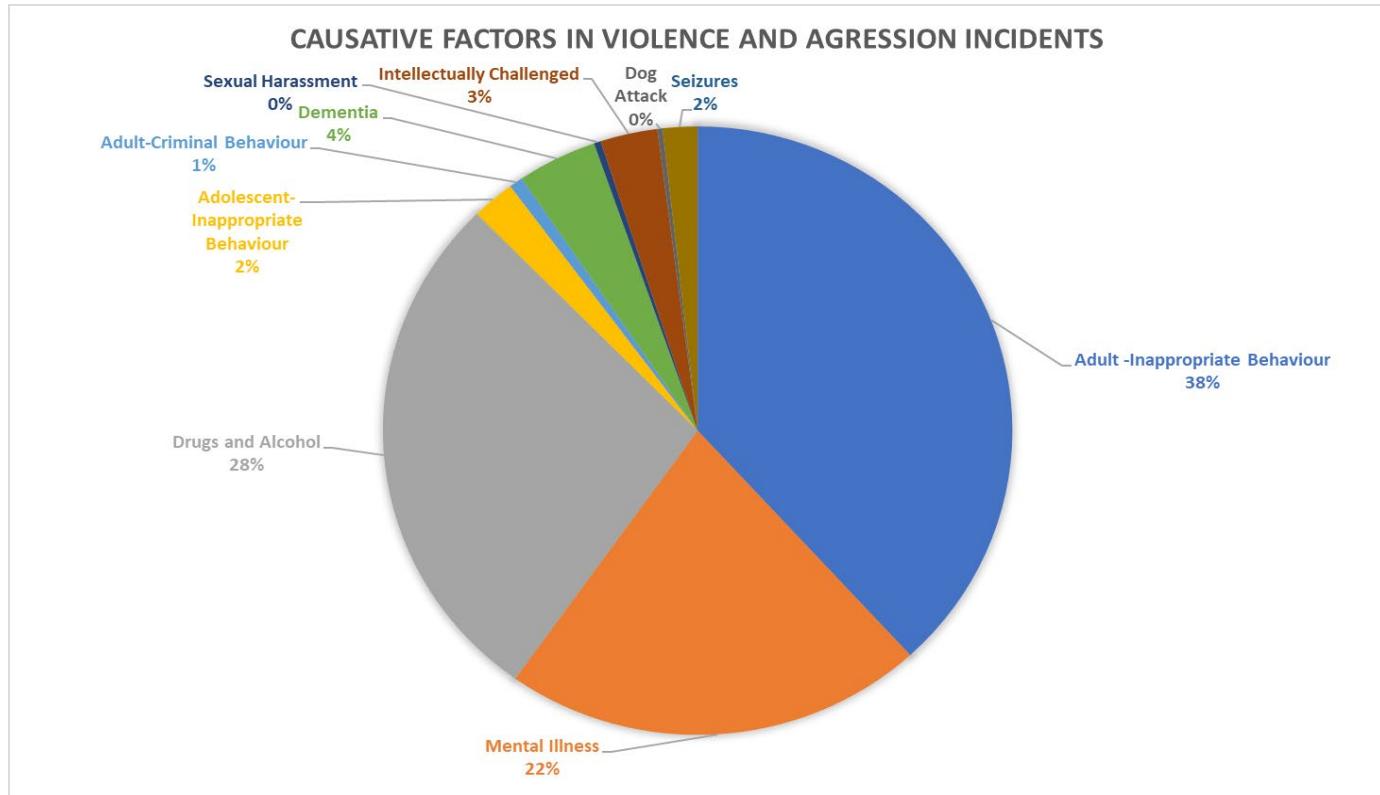
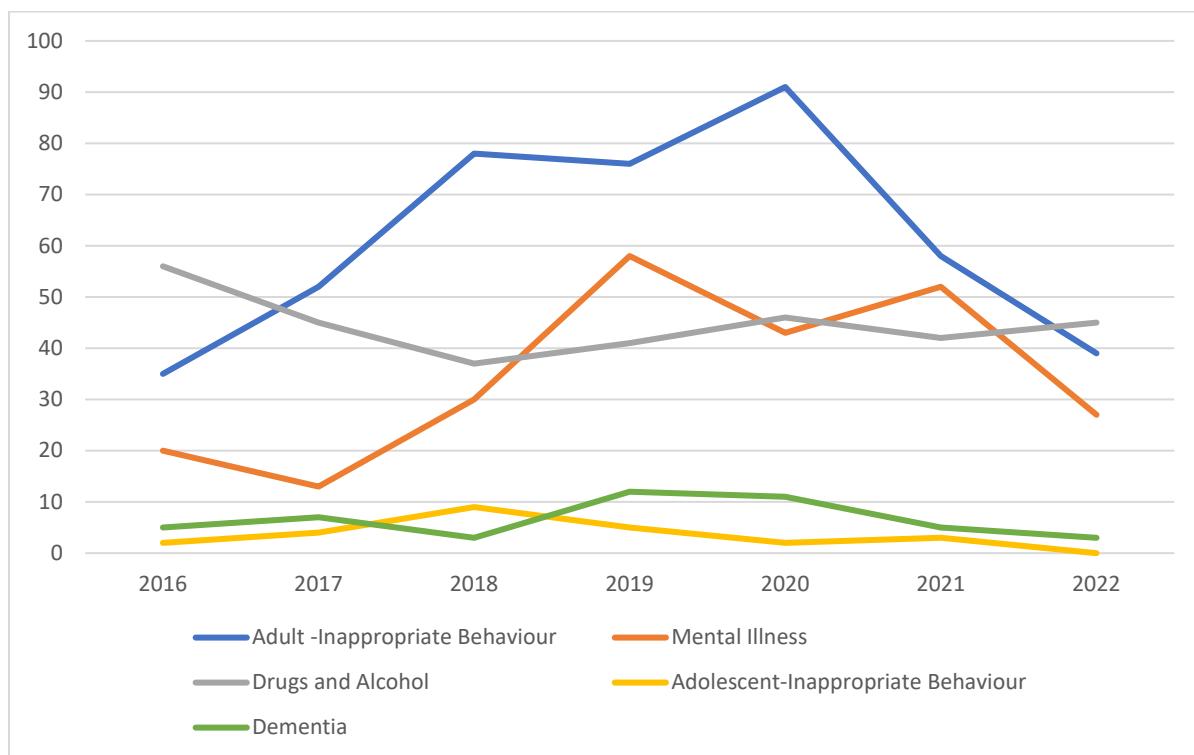


Figure 2: Primary Causative Factors of Violence and Aggression Incidents, 2015-2022



When broken down to time of occurrence, there is a clear pattern in the data. 77% of Violence and Aggression related incidents related to drugs and/or alcohol typically occur between the hours of 16:00 hrs and 02:59 hrs. Further, incidents typically decrease sharply from 03:00 hrs, and remain low during the morning, gradually increasing from 12:00 hrs. Peak callout periods for Violence and Aggression Incidents are broken down in Figures 3, 4, and 5.

Figure 3: Violence and Aggression (Challenging Behaviour) Incidents by Time of Incident (All Causative Factors), 2015-2022

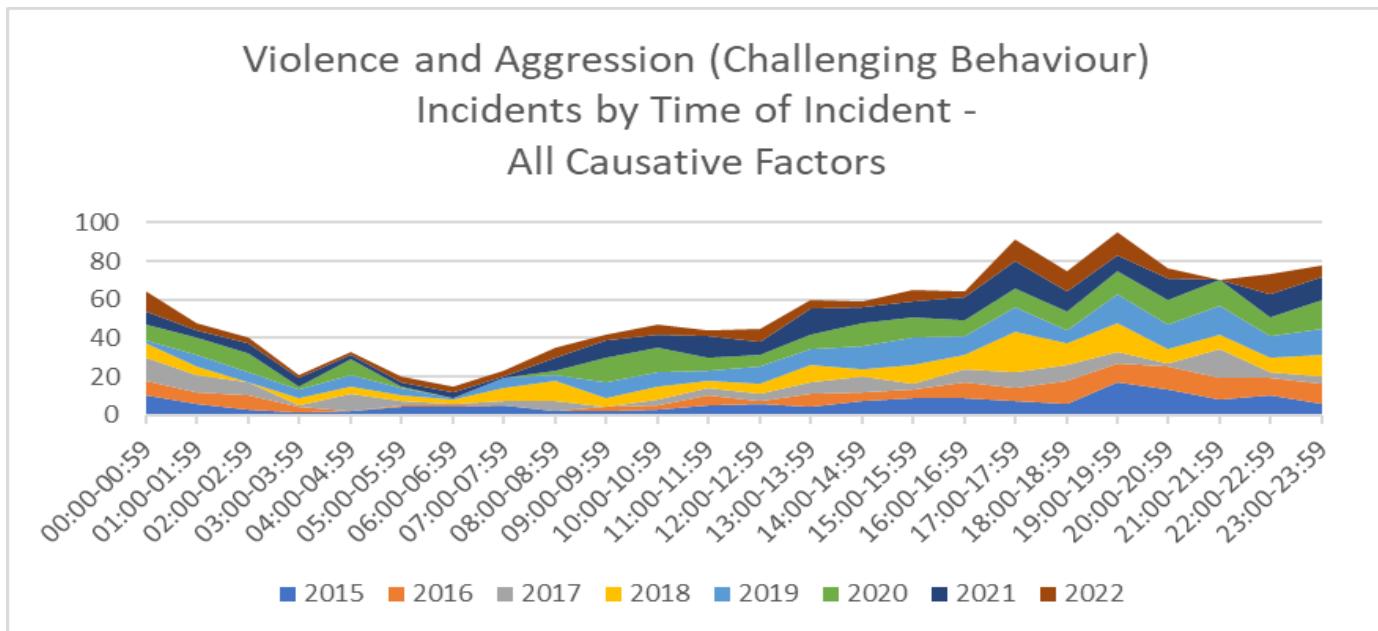


Figure 4: Drug and Alcohol Related Violence and Aggression (Challenging Behaviour) Incidents by Time of Incident (per hour), 2015-2022

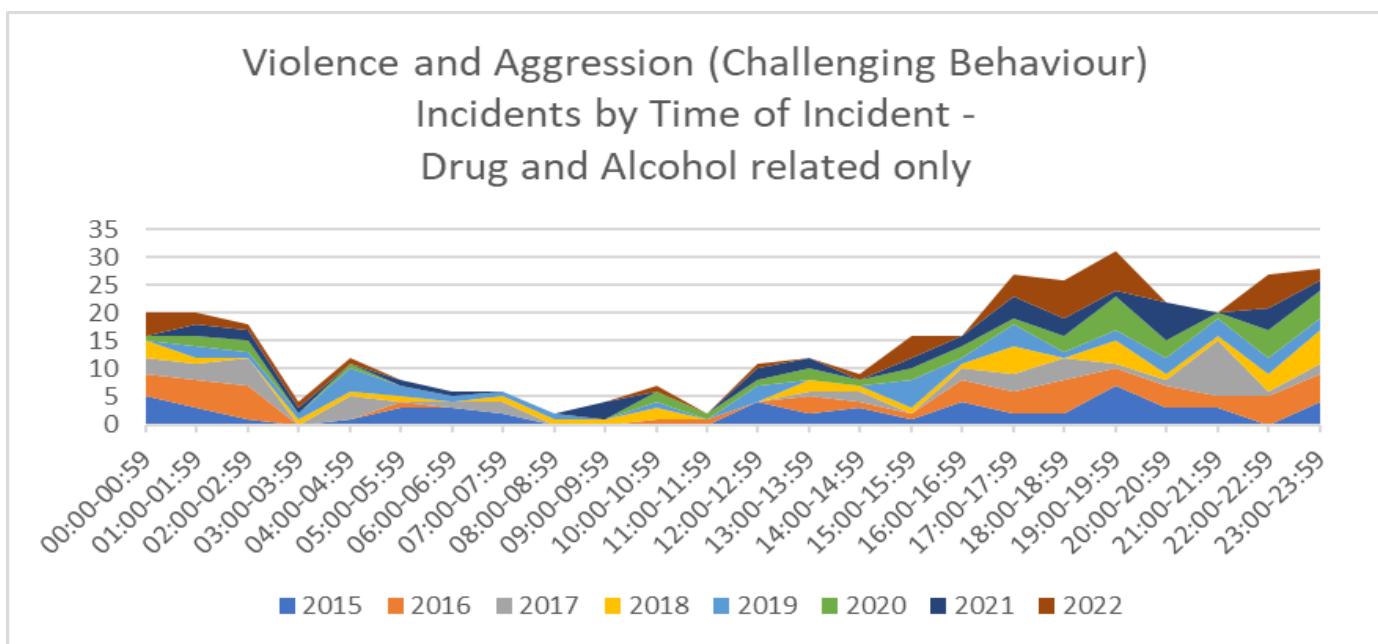
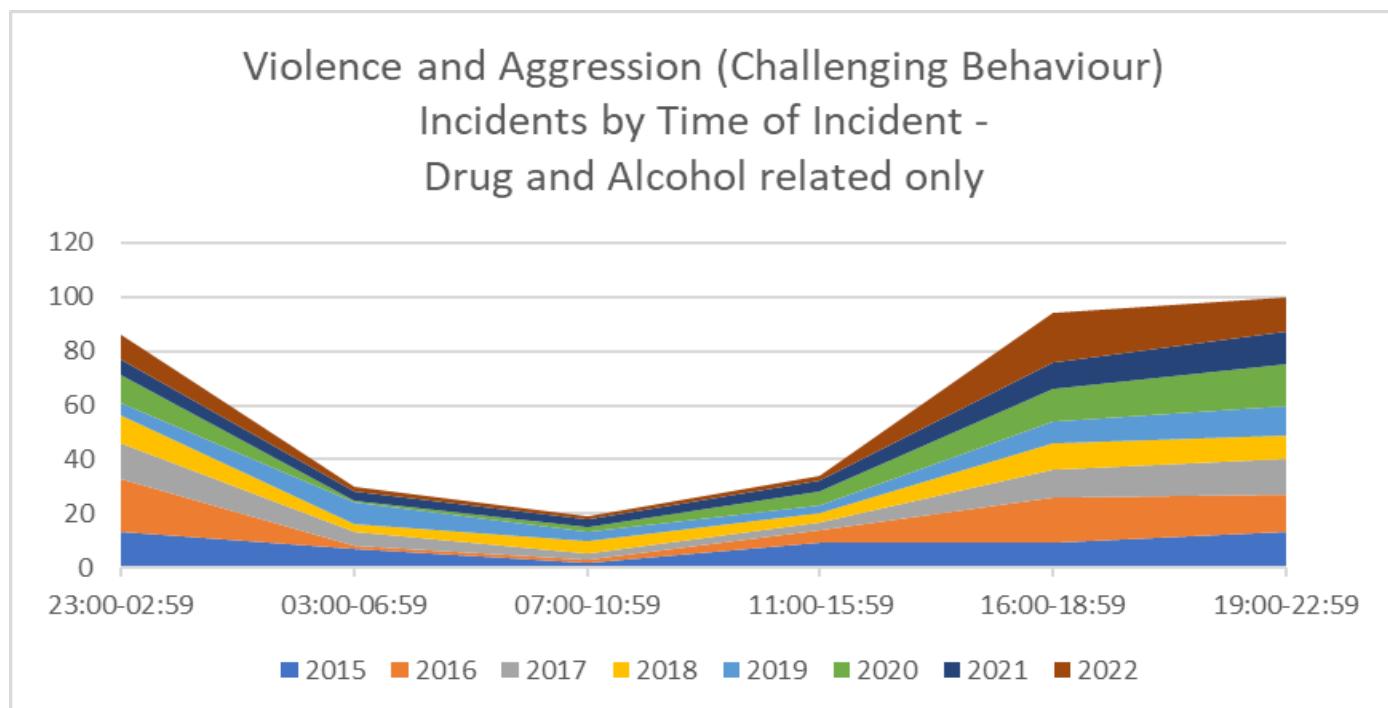
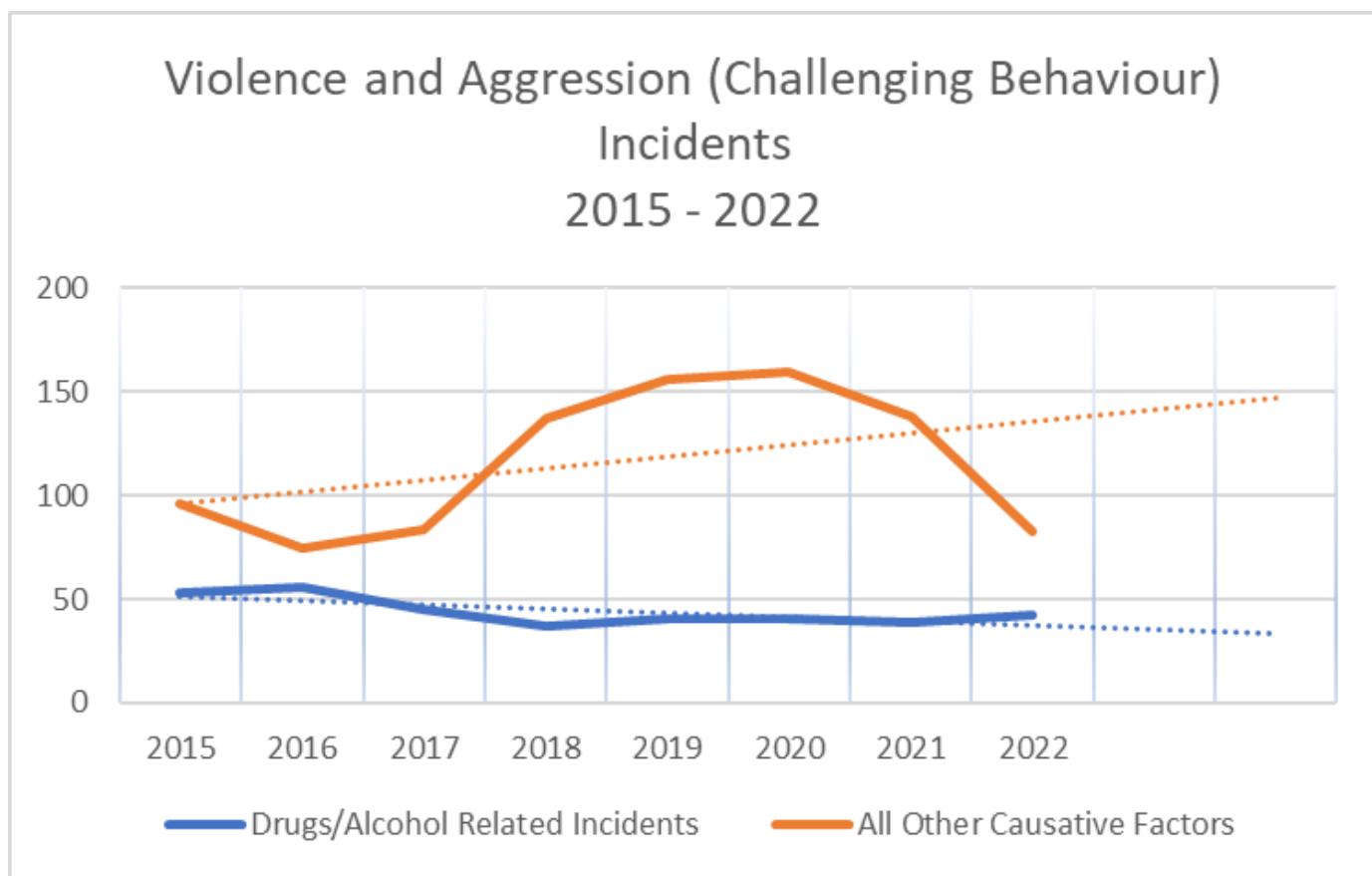


Figure 5: Drug and Alcohol Related Violence and Aggression (Challenging Behaviour) Incidents by Time of Incident (4-hour window), 2015-2022



Overall, Challenging Behaviour incidents have been trending slowly downwards since peaking in 2020. The number of Drug and Alcohol related incidents have remained relatively steady since 2015, however these are also trending slowing down over the 2015 – 2022 period (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Drug and Alcohol Related Violence and Aggression Incidents vs All Other Causative Factors, 2015-2022



Alcohol Related Events

Below SAAS has provided statistical tables outlining the number of drug and alcohol ambulance attendance events within the Adelaide CBD.

We make the following comments about the data presented:

- > SAAS is unable to make a differentiation between attendances for drug use, alcohol use, or a combination of both. Hence the data presented is for both drug and alcohol attendance.
- > SAAS maintains a paper-based Patient Clinical Record (PCR) system. This limits SAAS's ability to audit case information as this must be done manually. With several thousand PCRs created per week, a comprehensive audit would significantly impact general service delivery.
- > Data presented is only for attendances that generated an invoice for service as per SAAS's obligation under the *Health Care Act 2008*.

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Number of Drug and Alcohol Ambulance Attendance Events, Adelaide CBD, 00:01 hrs to 07:00 hrs January 2015 – September 2022

2015													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	
00:01-01:00	3		2	1	2	1	1		1	1	1		3
01:01-02:00	1	3	2	1	3	1	2		1	1	2		1
02:01-03:00	2	4	2		1	2	2	2	3		2		2
03:01-04:00	2	4	2		1		2			3	2		1
04:01-05:00	4	2	2	1		1	1	1					1
05:01-06:00		1	2	1					1	1	1		
06:01-07:00													3

2016													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	
00:01-01:00	3	2	4	3	2	1	2	1		2			
01:01-02:00	6	4	1	3	3	3	2	4	2	2	2		2
02:01-03:00	1	2	2	1		2	6	2					3
03:01-04:00		2			2	3	1	1	1	3			1
04:01-05:00		1	1		2	1	4		1	1			
05:01-06:00			5		1		5		1		2		
06:01-07:00						1	3			1			

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2017														
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec		
00:01-01:00	2	3	4	5	1	3	4	1	2	2	5	3		
01:01-02:00	5	1	3	1	2	2	4		1		3	4		
02:01-03:00	1	4	5	3	4	3	1	2	1	1	1	6		
03:01-04:00	2	5	2	2	2	3				3	5			
04:01-05:00	4	1	2	1			1	1	1	1				1
05:01-06:00	1													
06:01-07:00			1			1								

2018														
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec		
00:01-01:00	3	2	2	4	5	2	3	2	2	3	2	2		8
01:01-02:00	4	2	1	5	5	2	1	3	3	3	3	2		1
02:01-03:00	6		2	2	3	1	2	3	3	2				3
03:01-04:00	1	1	2	3		1	1		5	2	4	2		
04:01-05:00	1	1		1		2	3		1	2	1	4		
05:01-06:00		2		2	2	1	1	1		3	1			
06:01-07:00	1	1	1	1	1		1	1						1

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2019														
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec		
00:01-01:00	5	3	7	5	3	6	4	1	4	8	3	3		
01:01-02:00	5	3	6	1		3	3	3	8	5	2	7		
02:01-03:00	2	3	2	1	2	2	1		4		1	3		
03:01-04:00	1	2	4	3	6		1		7	1	1	3		
04:01-05:00	1	3	2	2	2				2	1	2	1		
05:01-06:00	1	1			1		2			1			1	
06:01-07:00	1		1		3	1		1				1	3	

2020														
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec		
00:01-01:00	3	4	2	1		2	4	6	3	2	2	2		
01:01-02:00	5	8	2	1	1		3	2		3		1		
02:01-03:00	1	9				1	1	2	1	4	4	1		
03:01-04:00	3	4	3	1	1		2	3	2	3	1	2		
04:01-05:00	3	6	2				2	1	1	3	2	3		
05:01-06:00			2			1	1	2	1	2	1	1		
06:01-07:00	1				6			1					1	

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2021														
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec		
00:01-01:00	3	1	5	5	2	1	1		1		4			
01:01-02:00	2	2	3	4	1	1		1	1	1			2	
02:01-03:00	2	2	2	3	3	2		3			2			
03:01-04:00		1	1	1	2									
04:01-05:00		1	2			1	2	2		2	1			
05:01-06:00		1	1	1	1									1
06:01-07:00		1	1	1	1	1			1					

2022									
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept
00:01-01:00	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	2
01:01-02:00	2	1	2			1	1	6	2
02:01-03:00		1	2	1	1	2	2	4	1
03:01-04:00		2	1	1		2		3	1
04:01-05:00	1		1		1		1		
05:01-06:00	1							1	
06:01-07:00	1							1	