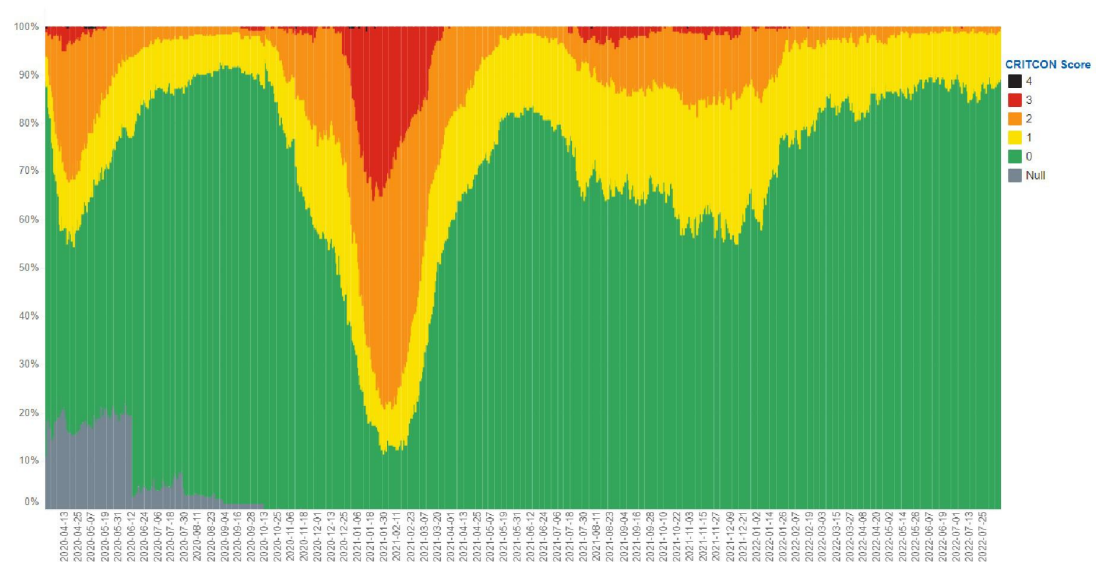


Chart 9: Critical care bed units' CRITCON levels April 2020 - present<sup>20</sup>



27. As indicated by the unprecedented number of CRITCON Level 3<sup>21</sup> declarations at the height of the pandemic waves shown in chart 9, supporting critical care patients with COVID-19 was a huge undertaking by staff individually and collectively. Staff working in critical care wards faced significant pressure - a study found that nearly half of Intensive Care Unit (ICU) staff were likely to meet the threshold for PTSD, severe anxiety or problem drinking during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>22</sup> A national peer support programme for staff working in intensive care units was launched to help support staff.

28. National funding (circa £5m) has been made available to support a training programme to enable non-specialist staff to support critical and enhanced care safely. A further £5m has been invested in pastoral and wellbeing support for all staff working in critical, enhanced, and respiratory care areas.

<sup>20</sup> Data source - adult critical care dashboard

<sup>21</sup> CRITCON is tool for ICU capacity under conditions of system stress (e.g. winter, pandemic, or major incident) designed to reflect real-world ICU pressure, and to be independent of bed numbers and occupancy which can be hard to interpret. This enables units under unusual stress to be visible and to trigger mutual aid, for example through neighbouring hospitals stopping elective activity and opening surge ICU beds supporting a regional response.

<sup>22</sup> [Mental health of intensive care staff should be immediate priority | UCL Department of Science, Technology, Engineering and Public Policy - UCL – University College London](#)