

Social Care out-turn performance and benchmarking

Presentation for Children's Services Scrutiny – 14th January 2021



Walsall Council

PROUD OF OUR PAST OUR PRESENT AND FOR OUR FUTURE

Purpose of this report

This report outlines key indicators in children's social care, reporting on the 2019-20 out-turns as reported to the Department for Education (DfE) in the Children in Need (CiN) Census which reports key data about children in need and child protection activity and outcomes and the Children Looked After (CLA903) Return which reports key data about children in care and care leavers.

In addition to Walsall outcomes and changes in performance when compared to previous years, benchmarking data is also included which compared Walsall's performance to that of overall national performance, regional West Midlands performance and performance against our statistical neighbours.

Walsall's statistical neighbours for children's services are: Bolton, Derby, Doncaster, Dudley, Peterborough, Rochdale, Rotherham, Stoke-on-Trent, Tameside, Telford and Wrekin.

Outcome data for children in care and care leavers has not yet been published. This report will be updated with that information when it is.

A final slide has been included to outline current 2020-21 data where there has been significant change and also any impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on performance.

Children Living in Walsall

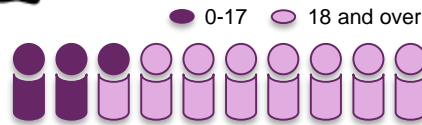
Population of 285,478

68,970 (24.2%) of whom are children aged 0-17

The number of children and young people aged 0-17 is projected to rise to 71,091 by 2025

24.2% of the population are children and young people

2019 mid-year population estimates



31.2% of Children are from BME backgrounds

2011 Census

Legend: BME (dark purple), White (light purple)



28% of children are aged 0-4, 29% are aged 5-9, 28% are aged 10-14 and 15% are aged 15-17

2019 mid-year population estimates

Legend: 0-4 (dark purple), 5-9 (medium purple), 10-14 (light purple), 15-17 (very light purple)



Deprivation levels are high

In the Indices of Deprivation Affecting Children (IDACI), Walsall is the **19th most deprived Local Authority** in the country with 48 (29%) of neighbourhoods in the top 10% of most deprived neighbourhoods nationally which is the 15th highest.

Two of Walsall's three parliamentary constituencies are in the **top 50** constituencies with the highest levels of child poverty

Legend: In poverty – before hc (dark purple), In poverty – after hc (medium purple), not in poverty (light purple)



39% of children live in poverty after housing costs

Campaign to end child poverty – May 2020

Children and young people have more health challenges than their peers

4.2% of babies are born with a low birth weight

compared with 3.5% for stat neighbours, 3.3% in the West Midlands and 2.9% nationally

9.4 per 1000 children die before their first birthday

compared with 5.2 for stat neighbours, 5.7 in the West Midlands and 3.9 nationally

3.0% of young girls get pregnant at 15,16 or 17

compared with 2.3% for stat neighbours, 1.9% in the West Midlands and 1.7% nationally

11.0 per 10,000 would be admitted to hospital as an inpatient for mental health issues

compared with 7.4 for stat neighbours, 9.0 in the West Midlands and 8.8 nationally

1.5 per 10,000 admitted to hospital for alcohol related issues

compared with 2.9 for stat neighbours, 2.6 in the West Midlands and 3.2 nationally

What is our data telling us?

Key messages

- **In August 2019 the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership rolled out the Right Help, Right Time guidance across the partnership. The guidance is designed to ensure that all partners are aware of the thresholds of need for each level of support that children and families may need to access from universal to statutory social care services. The application of the Right Help Right Time Guidance means that children are now in the right part of the system, whether that be within universal services, Early Help or Children's Social Care. The roll out and implementation of this guidance has had an impact on the indicators that are derived from the statutory returns that are submitted to the DfE.**
- **The number of children open to social care statutory services has reduced.** There were 2,109 children in need (including children in care and children on a child protection plan) - a rate of 306 per 10,000 children aged 0-17. The number of children in need fell by 30% between 2018-19 and 2019-20 and continues to fall.
- **Requests for support from Children's Social Care have reduced.** There were 4,367 referrals to children's social care for 3,738 children, a rate of 633 per 10,000 children. The rate of referrals has decreased in 2019-20 and is lower than the rate among statistical neighbours but remains higher than the rate regionally and nationally
- **Timeliness of assessments is improving.** 74.7% of assessments were completed within 45 days. This was a reduction on performance in the previous year and is below the performance of comparators although there has been significant improvement in performance throughout 2020.
- **Child protection investigations are reducing and where a child protection conference does need to take place, they are timely.** Section 47 enquiries have decreased significantly in 2019-20 and the rate is lower than statistical neighbours but remains slightly higher than regional and national comparators. Walsall's performance in undertaking timely initial child protection conferences is improving and better than comparators.
- **The number of children who are subject of a child protection plan is reducing.** There were 240 children subject of a plan on 31st March 2020 – a 39% reduction compared to the previous year.
- **Domestic Violence and Emotional Abuse are the most common reasons for children being referred into social care** in Walsall and becoming subject of a child protection plan. There are fewer requests for assessments for parental mental ill-health, substance misuse and alcohol misuse than comparators.
- **The number of children in care is increasing** and has continued to increase throughout 2020 due to children not being able to leave care during the Covid-19 crisis.
- **More children are placed in foster care than comparators and fewer are placed at distance from home.**

Children open to services

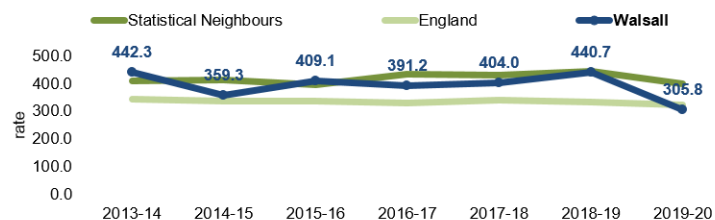


There were 2,109 children in need (including children in care and children on a child protection plan) - a rate of 306 per 10,000 children aged 0-17. The number of children in need fell by 30% between 2018-19 and 2019-20 and continues to reduce.

- The number of children in need has fallen from 3,004 on 31st March 2019 to 2,109 on 31st March 2020 – a fall of 30%. The rate of children in need has fallen by a slightly higher 31% due to increases in population from 441 to 306.
- In 2019 the rate of children in need was higher than national (334), regional (352) but slightly lower than statistical neighbours (440).
- The decrease in the number of children open to services is due to falls in the number of children open at children in need and child protection level which is linked to work that has been undertaken on implementation of the Safeguarding Partnership's Right Help, Right Time guidance. The work, which started in autumn 2019 has focused on ensuring that children are receiving help at the right level of intervention and in the right part of the system, whether that be via Early Help, a child in need plan or a child protection plan or by being taken into care.
- The number of children in care has increased between 31st March 2019 and 31st March 2020 and has continued to increase throughout 2020. The increase this year is influenced by a reduction in the number of children leaving care due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

	2013-14 rate	2014-15 rate	2015-16 rate	2016-17 rate	2017-18 rate	2018-19 rate	2019-20 rate	% change from '18-19 to '19-
Walsall	442.3	359.3	409.1	391.2	404.0	440.7	305.8	Down -31%
Statistical Neighbours	409.3	414.1	395.2	435.8	432.4	444.4	401.1	Down -10%
England	343.7	336.6	337.3	330.1	341.0	334.2	323.7	Down -3%
West Midlands	378.2	368.6	358.9	352.2	360.2	352.3	338.1	Down -4%

Rate of children in need at 31 March per 10,000 children

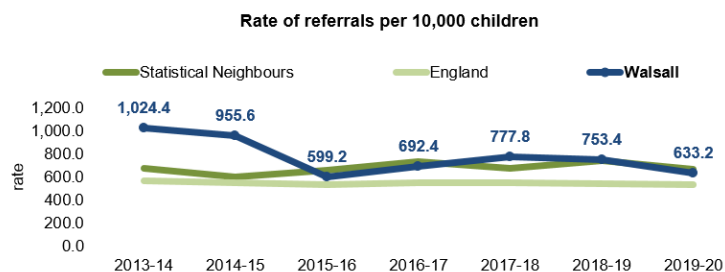


Children in need- referrals and demand



There were 4,367 referrals to children's social care for 3,738 children, a rate of 633 per 10,000 children. The rate of referrals has decreased in 2019-20 and is lower than the rate among statistical neighbours but remains higher than the rate regionally and nationally.

	2013-14 rate	2014-15 rate	2015-16 rate	2016-17 rate	2017-18 rate	2018-19 rate	2019-20 rate	% change from '18-19 to '19-
Walsall	1,024.4	955.6	599.2	692.4	777.8	753.4	633.2	Down -16%
Statistical Neighbours	676.0	600.1	663.0	731.4	676.5	743.8	667.1	Down -10%
England	571.7	548.3	532.2	548.2	552.5	544.5	534.8	Down -2%
West Midlands	612.6	613.3	559.0	654.0	649.3	593.1	528.6	Down -11%



- The number of referrals received between 01st April 2019 and 31st March 2020 fell to 4,367 (633 per 10,000 population), from 5,135 (753 per 10,000 population) in the same period in the previous year – a decrease of 15%.
- In 2018-19 the rate of referrals was higher than national, regional and statistical neighbours. Demand has decreased across the board, however, the rate in 2019-20 remains 18% higher than the national and 20% higher than the regional rates but is now lower than statistical neighbours.
- Walsall had a slightly higher percentage of repeat referrals than comparators at with 26% of referrals being received within 12 months of a previous referral compared with 23% nationally, 23% regionally and 25% among statistical neighbours.

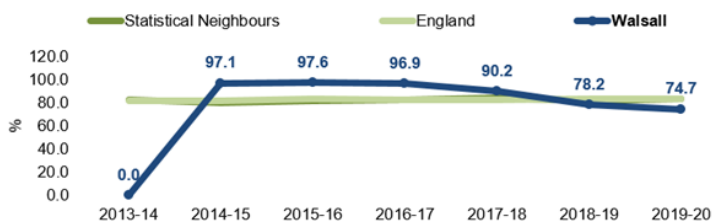
Children in need- assessments



74.7% of assessments were completed within 45 days. This was a reduction on performance in the previous year and is below the performance of comparators although there has been significant improvement in performance throughout 2020.

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% change from '18-19 to '19-	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Walsall	-	97.1	97.6	96.9	90.2	78.2	74.7	Down	-4%
Statistical Neighbours	83.0	80.1	81.6	83.0	83.9	81.7	83.5	Up	2%
England	82.2	81.5	83.4	82.9	82.7	83.1	83.9	Up	1%
West Midlands	79.2	74.9	82.1	84.3	84.6	84.5	82.7	Down	-2%

% Assessment timeliness: within 45 working days



- Although referrals remain higher than regional and national comparators, the percentage of referrals that result in an assessment where the child is found not to be in need is higher than comparators at 46% in 2019-20, compared with 30% nationally, 29% regionally and 27% among statistical neighbours.
- 75% of assessments in Walsall were completed within 45 days – this is below performance among national (84%), regional (83%) and statistical neighbour (84%) comparators. This is a reduction on previous years performance of 78%, which in turn was a significant decrease on historically good performance since 2014, where the percentage of assessments completed within 45 days was consistently over 90% and was as a result of resource pressures at the front door throughout 2018-19 and the early part of 2019-20.
- The top five factors of need identified at assessment in Walsall are: parental domestic violence (35.1%), other factors (33.7%), emotional abuse (25.7%), parental mental health issues (19.5%) and neglect (14.9%). The percentage assessments featuring domestic abuse and emotional abuse are similar to comparators and the percentage featuring neglect is slightly lower. However, the percentage of assessments featuring parental mental health is significantly lower than comparators, as are the percentage of assessments featuring parental drug abuse and alcohol misuse.

Child Protection - investigations



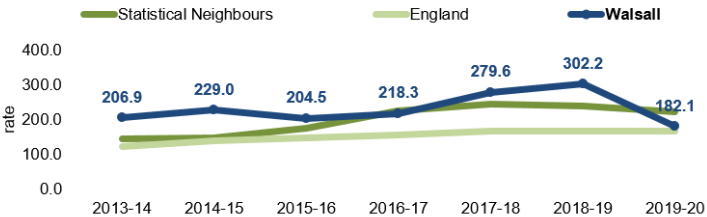
Section 47 enquiries have decreased significantly in 2019-20 and the rate is lower than statistical neighbours but slightly higher than national and regional comparators

Walsall’s performance in undertaking timely initial child protection conferences is improving and better than comparators.

	2013-14 rate	2014-15 rate	2015-16 rate	2016-17 rate	2017-18 rate	2018-19 rate	2019-20 rate	% change from '18-19 to '19-
Walsall	206.9	229.0	204.5	218.3	279.6	302.2	182.1	Down -40%
Statistical Neighbours	145.6	149.2	175.1	225.8	245.4	240.3	223.2	Down -7%
England	124.0	138.5	147.7	157.6	166.9	168.3	167.2	Down -1%
West Midlands	125.6	158.5	165.8	182.1	191.8	187.0	169.5	Down -9%

- Where there are child protection concerns a section 47 enquiry will be carried out to determine whether an initial child protection conference is required. In 2019-20 there were 1,256 (a rate of 182 per 10,000 population) section 47 enquiries completed – a 40% decrease on the previous year. In previous years the rate of section 47 enquiries was higher than comparators. In 2019-20, the rate of enquiries in Walsall remained slightly higher than regional and national comparators but was lower than statistical neighbours.
- There is a similar pattern in the number and rate of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) carried out in 2019-20 where there has been a 26% reduction in the number of ICPCs compared to the previous year. The conversion rate of section 47 enquiries to ICPCs is 44% and in line with comparators – England (43%), regional (44%) and statistical neighbours (45%). This is an improvement on a conversion rate of 36% in the previous year which was below that of comparators.
- 90% of ICPCs are completed within 15 days of the strategy discussion – performance in this area has been consistently good in Walsall over the past four years and is significantly better than performance across comparators.

Section 47s in the year as a rate per 10,000 of children aged under 18 years

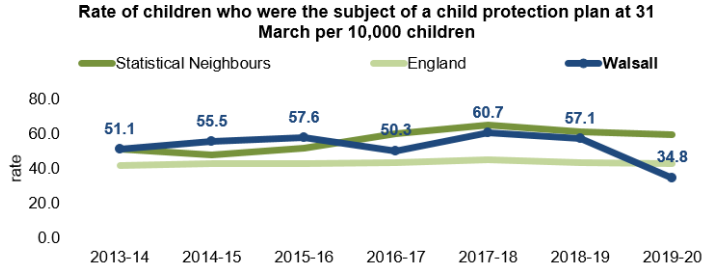


Child Protection – numbers on a plan



There were 240 children on a child protection plan at 31st March 2020, a rate of 35 per 10,000 children aged 0-17 – a reduction of 39%

	2013-14 rate	2014-15 rate	2015-16 rate	2016-17 rate	2017-18 rate	2018-19 rate	2019-20 rate	% change from '18-19 to '19-	
Walsall	51.1	55.5	57.6	50.3	60.7	57.1	34.8	Down	-39%
Statistical Neighbours	51.4	47.7	51.9	60.3	65.2	61.2	59.5	Down	-3%
England	42.0	42.9	43.1	43.3	45.3	43.7	42.8	Down	-2%
West Midlands	44.5	45.9	43.2	45.3	49.9	47.3	45.5	Down	-4%



- 441 children started to become subject of a plan (a rate of 64 per 10,000 population). This is higher than the national and regional comparators but lower than the statistical neighbours. 107 or 24% of the children who became subject of a plan during the year had previously been the subject of a child protection plan which is slightly higher than comparators.
- The number and rate of children on a child protection plan on 31st March reduced by 39% between 2019 and 2020. The rate of children who are subject of a plan has been lower than statistical neighbours since 2017 but has been consistently higher than the England and regional averages – however, in 2020 the rate was lower than all comparators. A rate of 34.8 per 10,000 population places Walsall 46th out of 150 local authorities for whom data is available.
- The reduction in the number of children subject of child protection plans is due to improvements in threshold application, changes in practice as a result of the implementation of Family Safeguarding and efforts to support families at an earlier stage of need to prevent escalation.

Child Protection – reasons for support



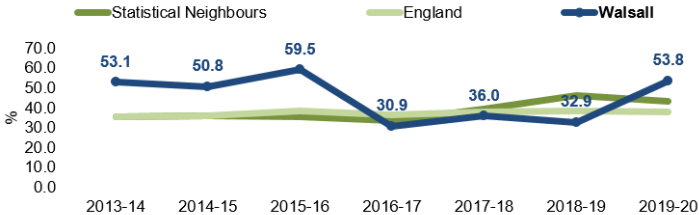
In 2019-20 the main reason children were subject of child protection plan was for emotional abuse, followed by neglect. This is different to previous years and comparators where neglect was the main category of abuse.

	2013-14 %	2014-15 %	2015-16 %	2016-17 %	2017-18 %	2018-19 %	2019-20 %	% change from '18-19 to '19-
Walsall	53.1	50.8	59.5	30.9	36.0	32.9	53.8	Up 63%
Statistical Neighbours	35.7	36.2	35.8	33.5	39.6	46.1	43.3	Down -6%
England	35.6	36.3	38.3	36.7	37.8	38.3	37.8	Down -1%
West Midlands	40.2	44.2	44.7	36.8	42.4	43.9	44.2	Up 1%

- 54% of the children who were subject of a child protection plan at the 31st March 2020 had a category of abuse of emotional abuse and 41% had a category of abuse of neglect. This is a change to the previous year when neglect was the most frequent category of abuse at 56%. Comparators have not seen the same switch and where 50% (England), 47% (West Midlands) and 47% (Statistical Neighbours) has a category of abuse of neglect and 38% (England), 44% (West Midlands) and 43% (Statistical Neighbours) are subject of a plan for emotional abuse.

- 95% of children subject of plan had received their reviews on time throughout the year compared with 98% in the previous year. Performance has been consistently good in Walsall and is better than comparators where 92% nationally, 91% regionally and 91% among comparators received their reviews on time.

CPP at 31 March category of abuse: % Emotional Abuse (latest)



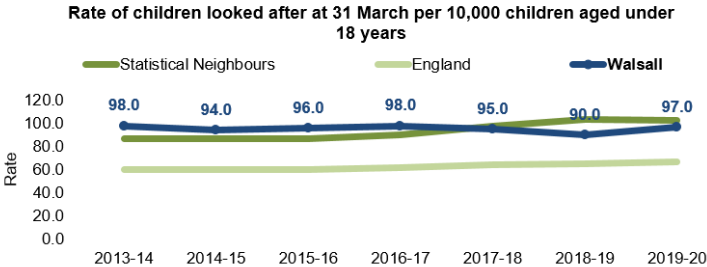
Children in care



There were 671 children in care at 31st March 2020, a rate of 97 per 10,000 children aged 0-17. This is higher than national and regional comparators but lower than statistical neighbours.

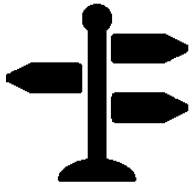
Walsall has a higher proportion of its children in care placed in foster placements than comparators and a lower proportion are placed at distance from their home.

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% change from '18-19 to '19-20	
Walsall	98.0	94.0	96.0	98.0	95.0	90.0	97.0	Up	8%
Statistical Neighbours	86.4	87.0	86.8	90.3	97.9	103.2	102.6	Down	-1%
England	60.0	60.0	60.0	62.0	64.0	65.0	67.0	Up	3%
West Midlands	73.0	74.0	73.0	75.0	78.0	82.0	82.0	Same	0%



- 671 children were in care in Walsall as at 31st March 2020, a rate of 97 per 10,000 population. This is a higher rate than England (67) and the West Midlands (82) but a lower rate than statistical neighbours (103). The number of children in care increased in 2019-20.
- 12 (2%) of the children in care as at 31st March 2020 were unaccompanied asylum seekers (UASC). This is lower than the national rate of 6%, the regional rate of 4% and the statistical neighbour average of 3%.
- Between 2018-19 and 2019-20, the percentage of children in care on an interim care order doubled from 13% to 26%, whereas the percentage of children on a full care order fell from 73% to 61%. 7% of children in care were on a section 20 compared with 17% nationally, 12% regionally and 11% among statistical neighbours.
- Walsall has a higher percentage of children placed in Foster Care than comparators – 78% compared to 72% nationally, 74% regionally and 72% among statistical neighbours. Just 7% of children in care in Walsall were in secure units, children's homes and semi-independent living accommodation compared with 13% nationally and 12% regionally and among statistical neighbours.
- 11% of children in care as at 31st March in Walsall were placed outside of the LA boundary and more than 20 miles from home. This is positive and better performance than comparators where 16% were placed outside of the LA boundary and more than 20 miles from home in England, 14% regionally and 18% among statistical neighbours.

Children in care – Leaving care

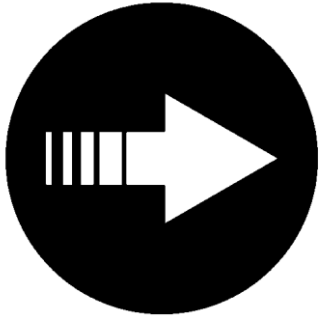


184 children left care with 41 leaving with a special guardianship order and 16 leaving due to adoption.

- 184 children left care during 2019-20. 41, 22% of children left care as part of a Special Guardianship Order compared with 12% nationally, 9% regionally and 24% among statistical neighbours.
- 16, 17% of children left care through adoption compared with 23% nationally, 27% regionally and 24% among statistical neighbours. This is half the number of children who left care as part of an adoption in 2018-19, however, the number of adoptions are likely to increase in 2020-21 or early 2021-22. At the end of November, nine children have been adopted and there are a further 24 placed for adoption who are awaiting final orders.

- Confirmed performance and comparator data for 2019-20 for care leavers (aged 19-21) is not yet available – however, our indicative out-turn for 2019-20 shows that:
- 90% of care leavers (aged 19-21) were in touch with the local authority. This was a reduction of 7% points compared with 2018-19 but remains in line with comparators.
- 57% of care leavers were in education, employment or training (EET) in 2019-20 – this was an decrease of 6% points compared with 2018-19 but remained higher than comparators 2018-19 out-turn.
- 95% of care leavers were in accommodation that was considered suitable in 2019-20 – an increase of 5% points compared with 2018-19 and higher than 2018-19 comparator results.

2020-21 Performance so far.....



- Throughout 2020 we have continued to see a decrease in the number of children who are open to services, however the number of children in care has continued to increase – this is linked to a reduction in the number of children that have been able to leave care due to pandemic, either because of court unavailability or because care leavers have chosen to remain in care.
- The number of referrals to social care have also continued to decrease. At the start of the lockdown in March 2020 and through April, we saw an initial dip in the number of referrals to social care, however, referral numbers quickly returned to more usual levels and we did not see an increase when schools returned in September. This provides assurance that the reductions in referrals seen this year are part of the ongoing work that has continued in implementing the Right Help, Right Time guidance rather than as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- There has been significant improvement in the percentage of assessments that have been completed within 45 days throughout 2020 and at the end of November performance had improved to 90%.
- The number of children who are subject of a child protection plan has continued to decrease throughout 2020. This continues to be due to improvements in threshold application and changes in practice and work, including external review, is being undertaken to continue to provide senior managers with assurance.
- There is a possibility the percentage of children placed at distance will increase in 2020-2021 as the reduction in the number of children leaving care during the pandemic has put pressure on placement sufficiency making it more difficult to find placements closer to home.
- There has been some impact of the Covid-19 pandemic for our Care Leavers with an increase in the proportion that are in touch (97% at the end of November), but a reduction in the percentage that were in Education, Employment and Training due to reduced opportunities, however, towards the end of the year there had been some improvement and at the end of November 54% were in EET.
- There was also some reduction in the proportion of care leavers in suitable accommodation in the summer months as a result of the pandemic, however by the end of November 93% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation.