

Local Area Agreement 2009/10 Quarter 3 Position: December 2009

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Reward Grant Targets

Safely Reduce the Numbers of Looked After Children

Safely reducing the number of looked after children, (LAC) is a key priority for all partners delivering services to children across Wirral. The cost of supporting so many children within the system is high. By reducing the numbers in care it is anticipated that resources can be used to increase family support and early intervention. Children who are LAC do not achieve as well academically as those that are not LAC.

Partners are committed to using the Child Concern Model to enable early identification of children experiencing problems. When this model is operating fully, Social Care staff will focus on prevention and support of families before they get into difficulties and the disruption caused by taking a child into care. Inevitably some cases are severe and, where a child is at risk, care proceedings will be implemented.

This priority also appears the Children and Young People's Plan and has been identified as an area for improvement by OfSTED and GONW.

Indicators used to measure this outcome include:

*NI 68 – Percentage of referrals progressing to an initial assessment
Local 1400 – Numbers of Looked After children (NON- REWARD)*

Data Collection Interval and Issues:

Data is available on a monthly basis for both these indicators. Annual the information is collected by the DCSF via statutory data returns, the CPR3 and the SSDA 903. This annual collection will form the official year end figure.

NI 68: Percentage of referrals progressing to initial assessment

This indicator seeks to establish whether appropriate thresholds are being used in the cases of children who are in need and whether their needs are being properly assessed. A high percentage of referrals leading to initial assessments may indicate good inter-agency understanding of thresholds for social care services. A low percentage of referrals leading to initial assessments may indicate a lack of understanding for social care services, perhaps due to poor inter-agency understanding or application of thresholds.

The introduction of CAF may affect this indicator as there may be a change in the patterns of referrals between agencies. Significant variation in council's figure from the SN average figure should prompt further investigation. Consideration should be given to the relationship between the processing of referrals and initial & core assessment timescales.

Historical Performance

Previously performance in this area has been volatile, with large variations from year to year.

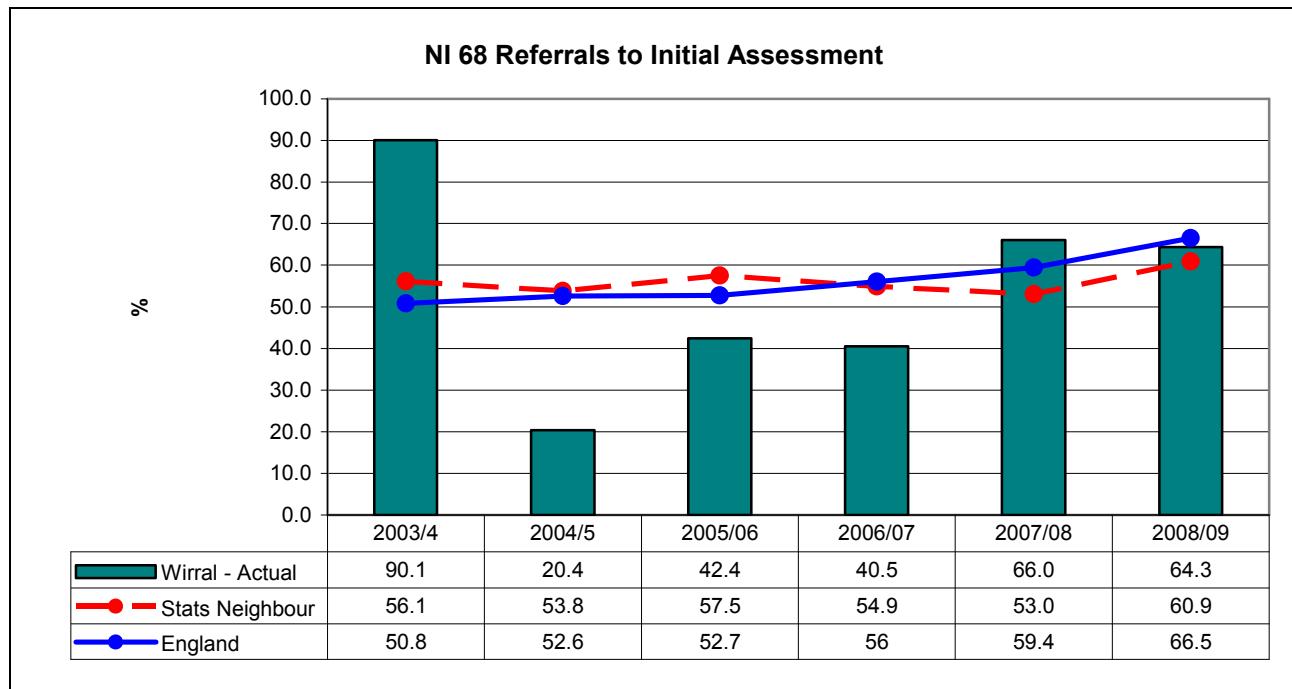


Chart 1: Historical comparator data source: OfSTED

Current Position and Targets

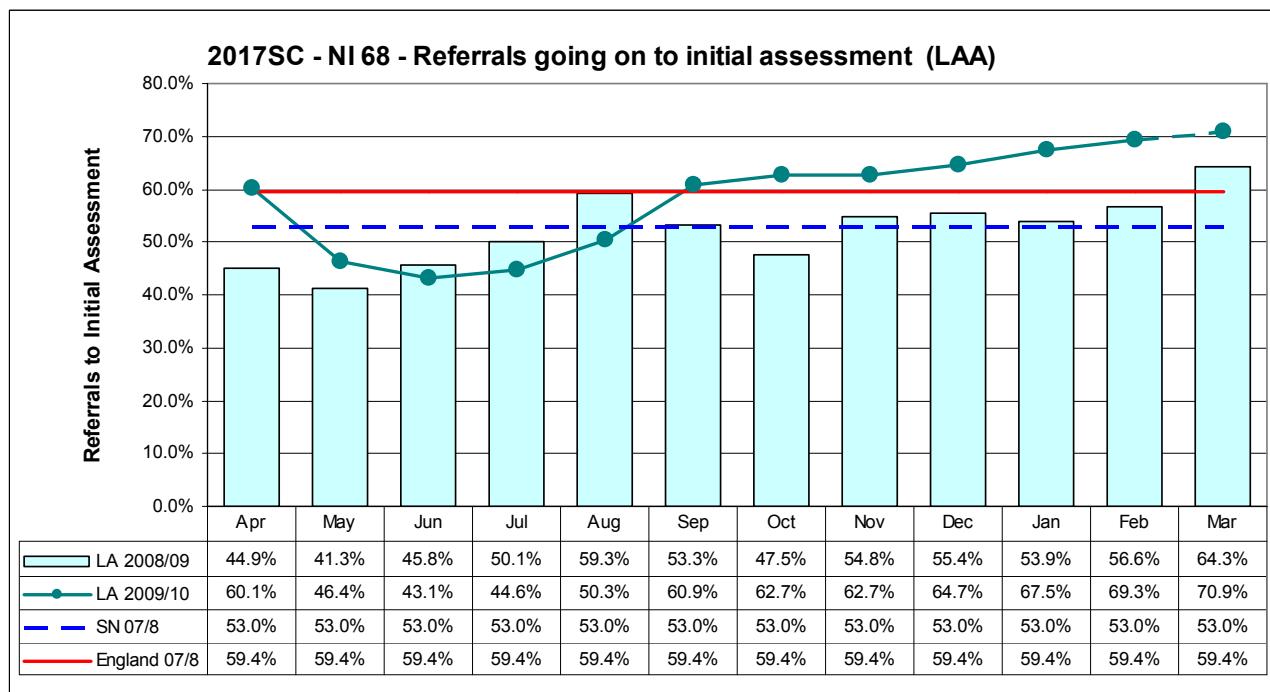


Chart 2: Data source ICS and DCSF

Latest figures as at 28th February 2010 show that 3185 referrals have been recorded as received by social care teams. Along side this 2207 initial assessments have been completed. This gives a current rate of 69.3%, a significant increase from the previous quarter figure. This reflects an increase of 18% in referrals and a 44% increase in the number of initial assessments completed from the same period in 2009.

Single Central Advice and Duty Team (CADT) Manager is now in post to provide increased consistency, in addition, increased Area Team Leader capacity will commence from February 2010 to increase support for agencies undertaking Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Team around the Child (TAC) meetings. Partnership work is ongoing to clarify domestic violence referrals, improved guidance in place at CADT. A number of new social workers have been in place since October and interviewing for the new Social Care structure is ongoing, the majority of posts are expected to be filled by March 2010. Further action in progress includes, embedding multi-agency teams, ongoing scrutiny by LSCB of consistent threshold application and consistent Social Care decision making and timely data input. The continued impact of an increased numbers of social workers and the embedding of the new structure is expected to increase this figure further by the end of March. However, it is expected that the year end outturn will fall just short of the year end target of 72%.

Reduction in the Numbers of Young People NEET

Significant progress has been made in reducing the numbers of 16 -18 year olds who are not in employment, education or training. Although higher than average numbers of young people continue in learning after year 11, the proportion of young people NEET is above similar councils. More recently the recession has seen an increase in the number of young people who are leaving employment, particularly with no qualifications up to Level 2.

The number of young people NEET is higher than at 16 and there is still much work to be done to remove barriers to participation in learning or employment, particularly for the vulnerable groups of young people i.e. those who are looked after, those with learning disabilities and difficulties, those with substance misuse issues, teenage parents and young offenders.

In response to consultation young people expressed views regarding the information that they needed if they were to make a successful transition to the labour market. Concerns about finance were significant in relation to fees, benefits, EMA and how to avoid getting into debt. The ability to become financially independent and have the means to access suitable housing was also a worry; these concerns have been addressed in the improvement strategy.

This priority also appears the Children and Young People's Plan and has been identified as an area for improvement by OfSTED and GONW.

Indicators used to measure this outcome include:

NI 117: Percentage of 16 – 18 year olds not in education, employment or training

Data Collection Interval and Issues:

Data is available on a monthly basis for this indicator; it is collated by the Connexions service. Quarterly data is submitted by the Connexions service to the DCSF. The annual figure is calculated using the November, December and January average. This methodology has been introduced and is the second such change since the LAA targets were initially agreed with GONW.

NI 117: Percentage of 16 – 18 year olds not in education, employment or training

Historical Performance

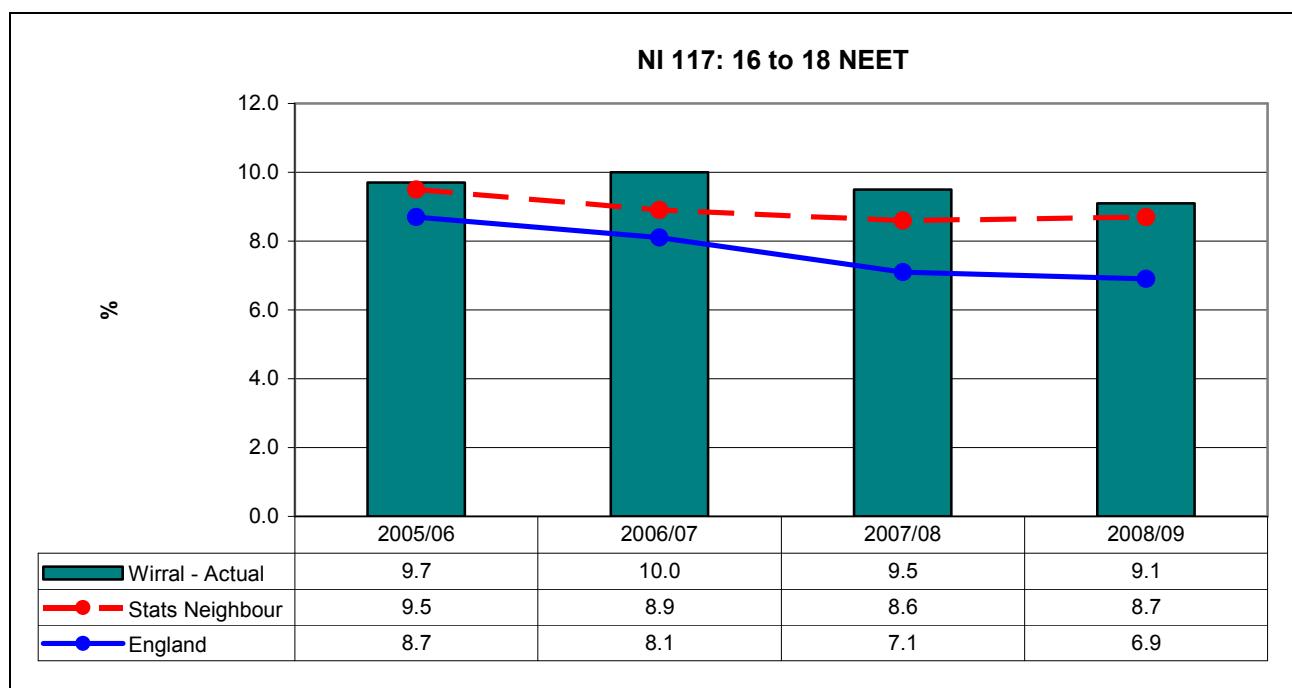


Chart 3: Historical data source - OfSTED and DSCF

Current Position and Targets

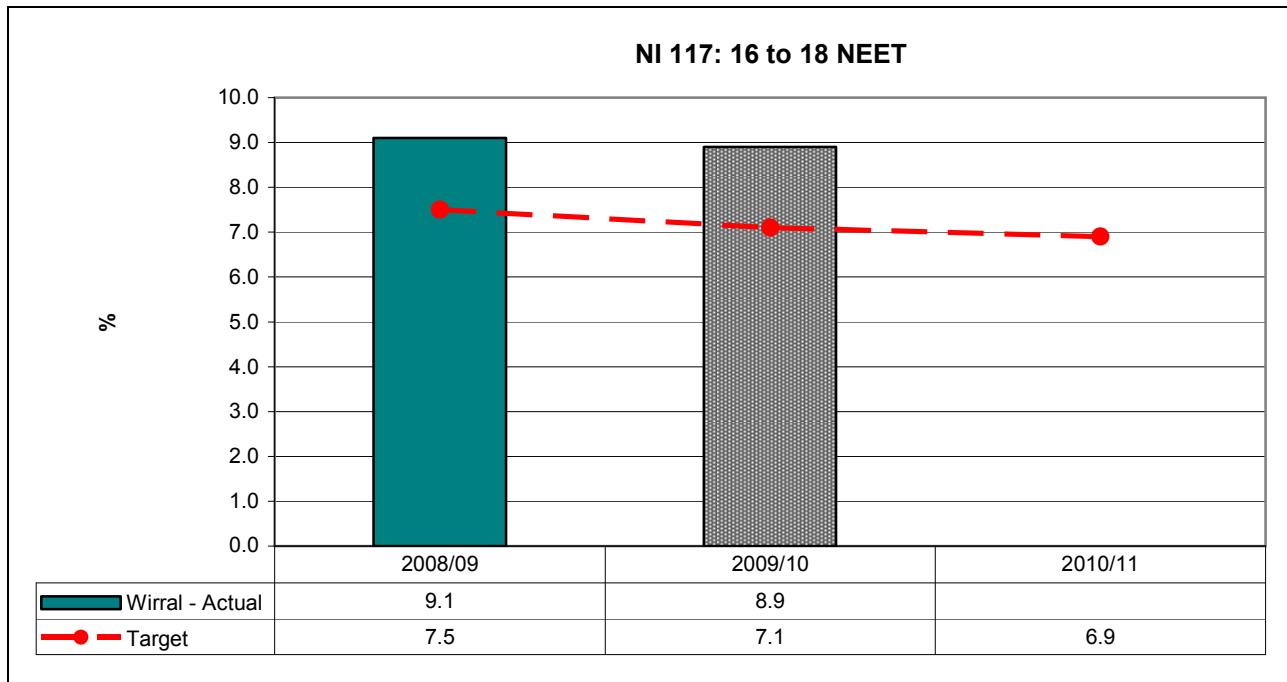


Chart 4: Performance against target

Employment, Education and Training and In Learning rates continue to improve for young people in Wirral and during November there were 90 leavers from NEET who moved into EET destinations. In terms of NEET ‘churn’, the leavers exceeded joiners by 11 young people. This is not necessarily the case across the Greater Merseyside (GM) region. In conclusion NEET rates are continuing to decrease in Wirral in a relatively consistent manner across the area.

Of the 16-18yr NEET cohort, 48.7% are 18 year olds. This is a trend reflected across GM region but in Wirral this figure has shown a decrease towards the end of 2009 and could be linked to:

- Following its’ successful pilot in Bebington, Wirral is making excellent progress in terms of developing joint working practices between Core PAs and Adult Next Step Advisers. Innovative approaches are being developed to ensure maximum coverage and the close working relationships that exist with Job Centre Plus are enhancing this.
- A clear strategy is now in place for supporting 18 and 19 year olds which is beginning to have an impact on the contact rates and tracking in order to be able to best support this cohort. Integrated operational and performance management processes have been agreed to maximise the provision and opportunities available. In comparison to last year there has been a general increase in those young people who are NEET and appear in one or more vulnerable groups, with the exception of Care Leavers. For this group: 47.5% of 19 year olds are in EET, compared to 33.8% November 2008. The general trend follows with vulnerable groups to that of the overall cohort, whereby the highest percentage is 18 year olds.
- The Wirral Apprentice programme is continuing to have a positive impact on opportunities for young people. Many of our NEET young people tell us that

they 'want a 'job' and this programme has been able to offer positive choices for young people and some really interesting opportunities from an apprenticeship in Rainwater Harvesting, through to Dairy Farming through to Jewellery Design! We now have Cabinet approval for 50 further apprenticeships and the Wirral model is being promoted as an exemplar by NWEO to LGA groups. Continued improvement in the reduction of those young people not known to Connexions in Wirral means that accuracy of tracking data is enabling earlier interventions and case loading to be put in place and a more rapid response to identification of need. December 2009 performance for this was 2.94% (only 349 young people). Inevitably this will have an impact on the NEET figure.

- Alongside this the Activity Agreement Pilot continues to see 70% of young people at the most complex end of the re-engagement spectrum progressing into EET options.

Reduction in the number of Teenage Conceptions

Reducing teenage pregnancy is a key strategic objective for partners. Young parenthood remains an acceptable lifestyle choice in the most deprived wards where there is a lack of economic opportunity and a high number of young people are disengaged from education or employment. Wards with a high level of deprivation persistently exhibit rates that are near to or twice the national average. Young women in these wards are more likely to get pregnant and continue with their pregnancy. However, it is also important to note that terminations occurring in more affluent wards of West Wirral are also contributing to the over conception rate. This priority also appears the Children and Young People's Plan and has been identified as an area for improvement by OfSTED and GONW.

Indicators used to measure this outcome include:

NI 112: % Change in rate of teenage conceptions since baseline

Data Collection Interval and Issues:

Data is collected from a number of sources and published annually by the ONS. As conception can result in either, a termination or a live birth, a full set of conceptions figures are not available until five months after gestation period. This means a fourteen month lag from time of conception until the national data is made available by the ONS. Data is also supplied on a quarterly basis, subject to the same delay.

Local data is also captured on a more regular basis. This data is very sensitive both in its nature and the small number of cases involved on a monthly basis. It is used locally with caution as this data often differs from that provided by the ONS.

Rates per 1,000 of the target population are supplied by the ONS along side the NI 112 measure the % change from baseline. Baseline was taken in 1998; the rate at this time for Wirral was 50.6 per 1,000. Government target is to half the rate of teenage conceptions by 50% by 2010. Because of the lag in reporting data it is expected that this data will not be available until February 2012.

NI 112: % Change in teenage conceptions since baseline

Historical Performance

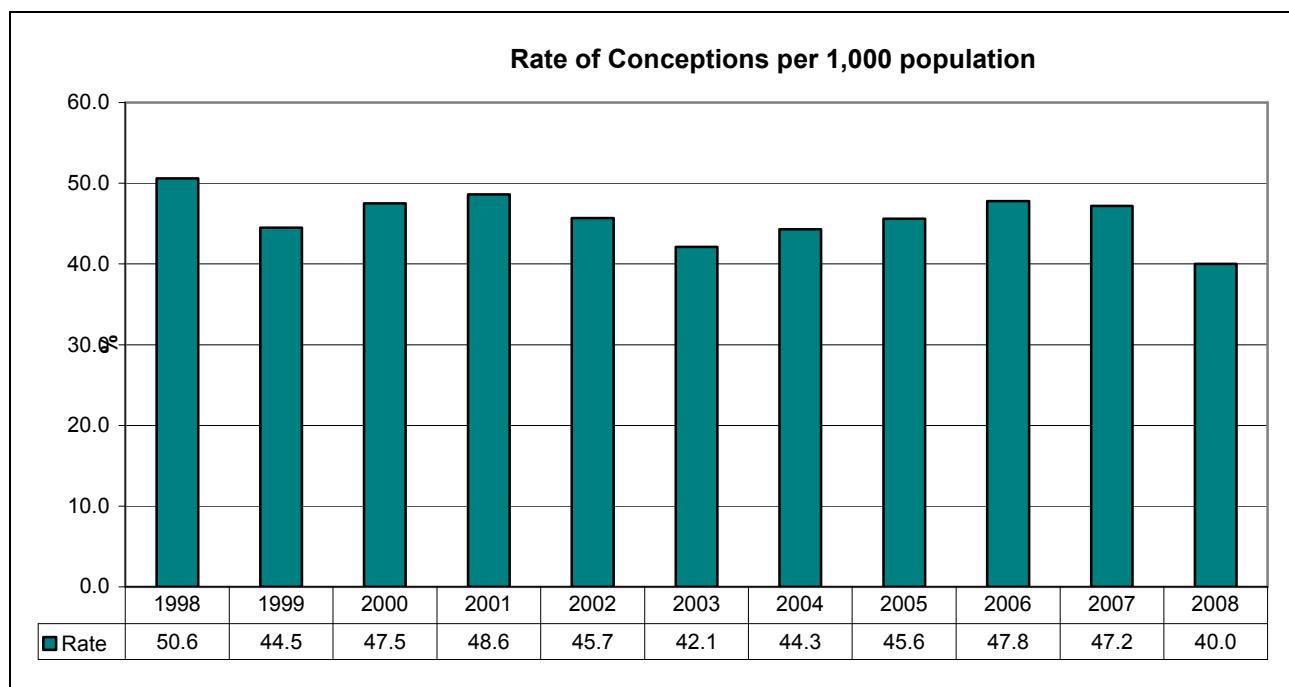


Chart 5: Historical data source - ONS

Current Position and Targets

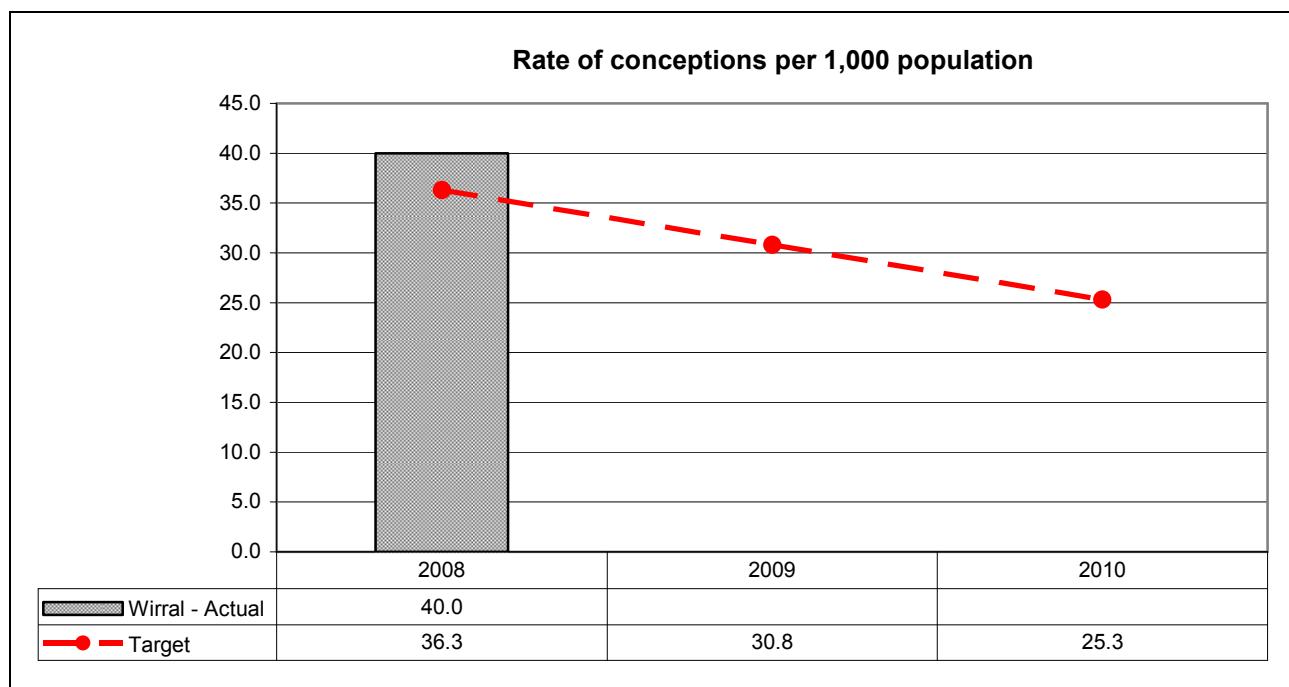


Chart 6: Data for 2008 Provisional (Source: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/IG0020/>)

Reduction in the number of First Time Entrants into the Youth Justice System

The rate of first-time entrants (FTE's) to the youth justice system per 100,000, where first-time entrants are defined as young people (aged 10-17) who receive their first substantive outcome (relating to a reprimand, a final warning with or without an intervention, or a court disposal.) National levels of FTE's have been falling over the last few years. There has been a local bucking of this trend and FTE's have been increasing.

Indicators used to measure this outcome include:

NI 111: Rate of First Time Entrants into the Youth Justice System

Data Collection Interval and Issues:

Historically data was submitted to the Youth Justice Board for the local Youth Offending Service local data system. This process was changed with the introduction of the new National Indicator in April 2008 and the counting process is now based on the data that is held by the Police National Computer, PNC. There was an initial delay in the recalculation of the data from the PNC and the final figures were released in late 2008.

The PNC figures were much higher than the local figures that had been submitted, on average for the three years, 29% higher.

Data for 2008/9 is due for release in November 2009, it is anticipated after this data that information will be released on a quarterly basis. Local data is still being collected and submitted and for forecasting purposes national figures are estimated using the average percentage increase.

NI 111: Rate of First Time Entrants into the Youth Justice System

Historical Performance

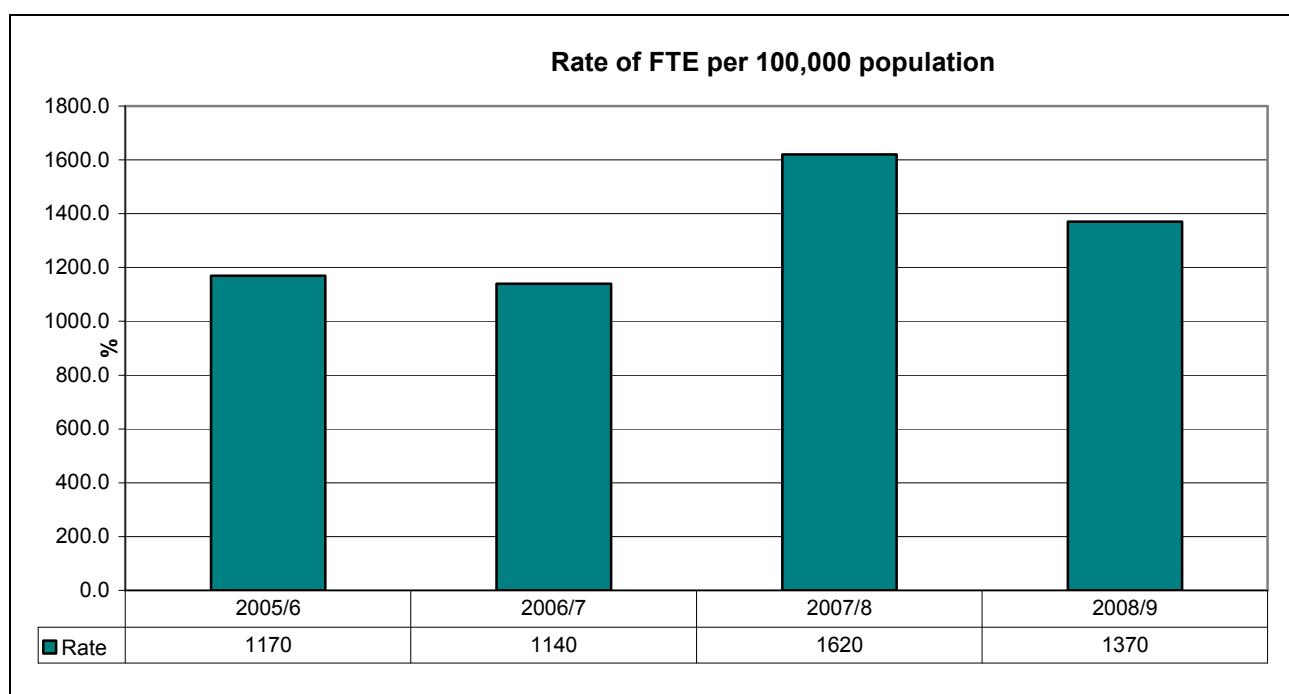


Chart 7: Data Source DSCF

Current Position and Targets

There are no targets set for 2008/9 performance. This is a targeted indicator for 2009/10 and 2010/11. Targets were set in March 2009 before data was released in September 2009. The move to use of police data rather than Youth Justice Board data meant that the figures were lower than expected, the targets have already been met. In addition there is a declining cohort (10-17 year olds).

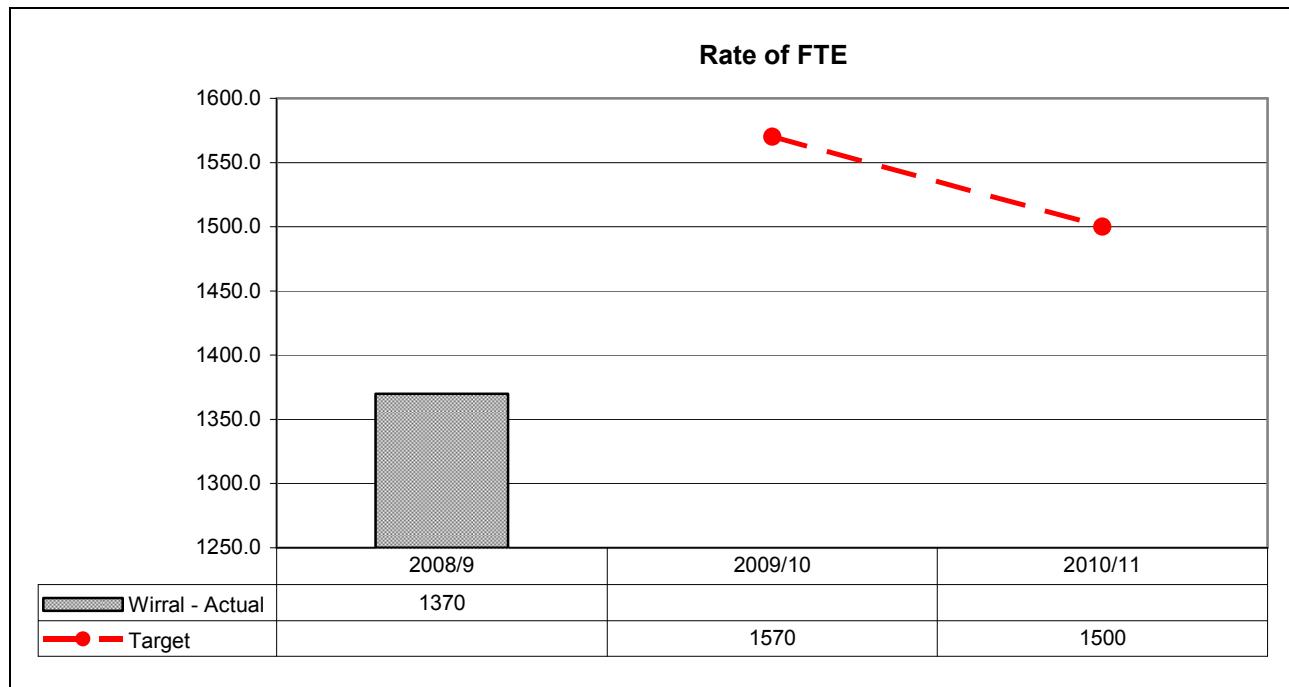


Chart 8: Estimated current position against targets.

The recent addition of Restorative Justice to the options of disposals for young offenders should help reduce the numbers of first time offenders entering the justice system.

Reduction in the number of incidence of Childhood Obesity

Being an obese child often means that obesity will continue into adulthood and be a contributing factor to many health risks.

Indicators used to measure this outcome include:

NI 55: Obesity in Reception age Children

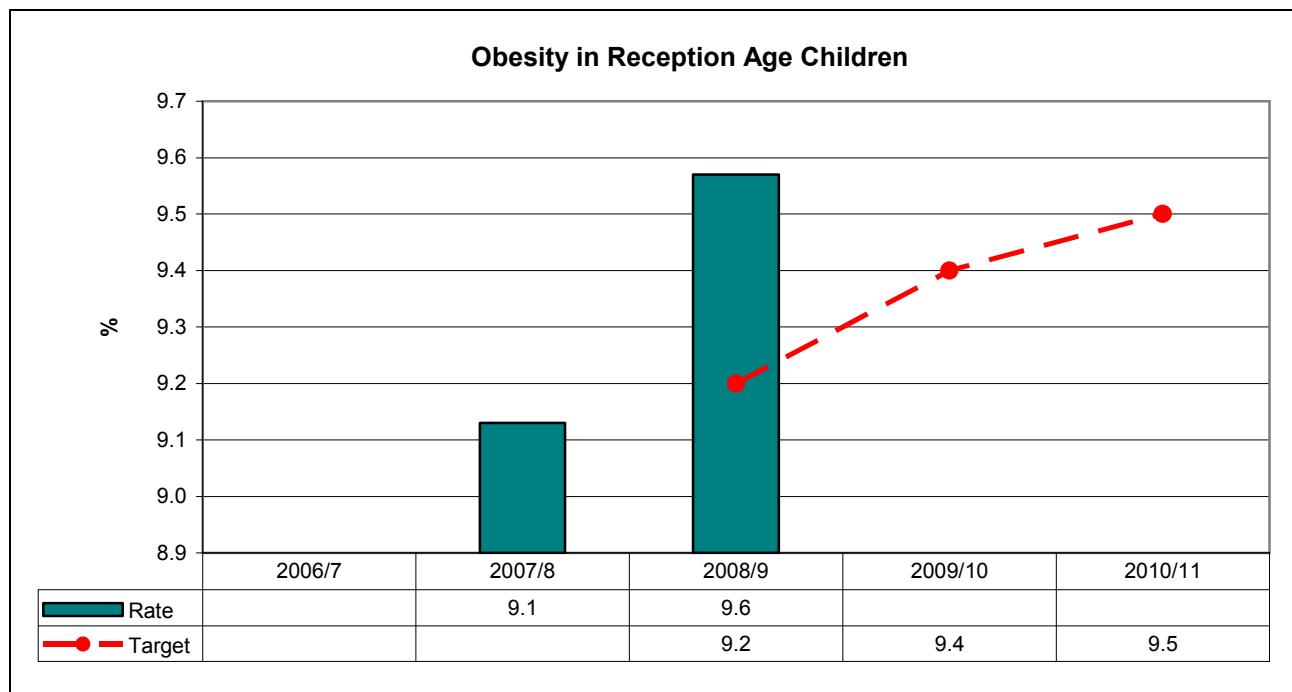
Data Collection Interval and Issues:

Data is collected each academic year through the National Child Measurement programme which takes place annually for children in both reception year and year six.

Although the aim is reduce childhood obesity, it increasing at a strong rate. This means that targets, though increasing over the LAA period, are actually a reduction in the rate that would be expected without action. It is aiming to slow down the rate of obesity before it can actually be reduced.

NI 55: Obesity in Reception age Children

Historical Performance



Current Position and Targets

Awaiting data for 2009/10.

Non - Reward Grant Targets

Safely Reduce the Numbers of Looked After Children

Indicators used to measure this outcome include:

NI 68 – Percentage of referrals progressing to an initial assessment (REWARD)
Local 1400 – Numbers of Looked After children

Data Collection Interval and Issues:

Data is available on a monthly basis for both these indicators. Annually the information is collected by the DCSF via statutory data returns, the CPR3 and the SSDA 903. This annual collection will form the official year end figure.

Local Indicator 1400: Number of Children Looked After

This indicator gives an actual count of the number of children that are in care to the Local Authority at a given time.

Historical Performance

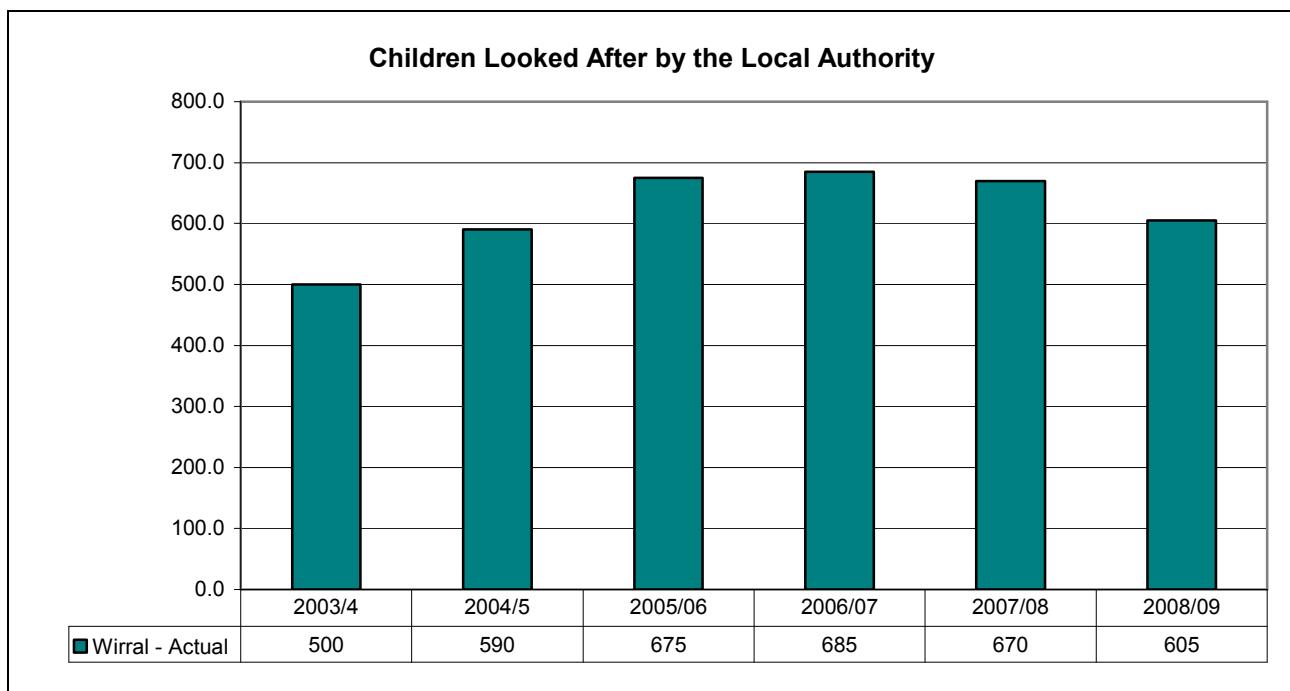


Chart 9: Historical Data Source DCSF via 903 publications

A significant number of children became looked after during 2003/4 and again in 2004/5. This remained relatively static for the three preceding years. Significant work has been undertaken to reduce the numbers of children looked after and this can be seen with a significant reduction in 2008/9 to 605 children. This missed the first year of LAA targets by 15 children. Since the start of 2009/10 a slight increase has been seen in numbers and currently, (September 2009) 618 are in care to the LA.

Targets and Current Position

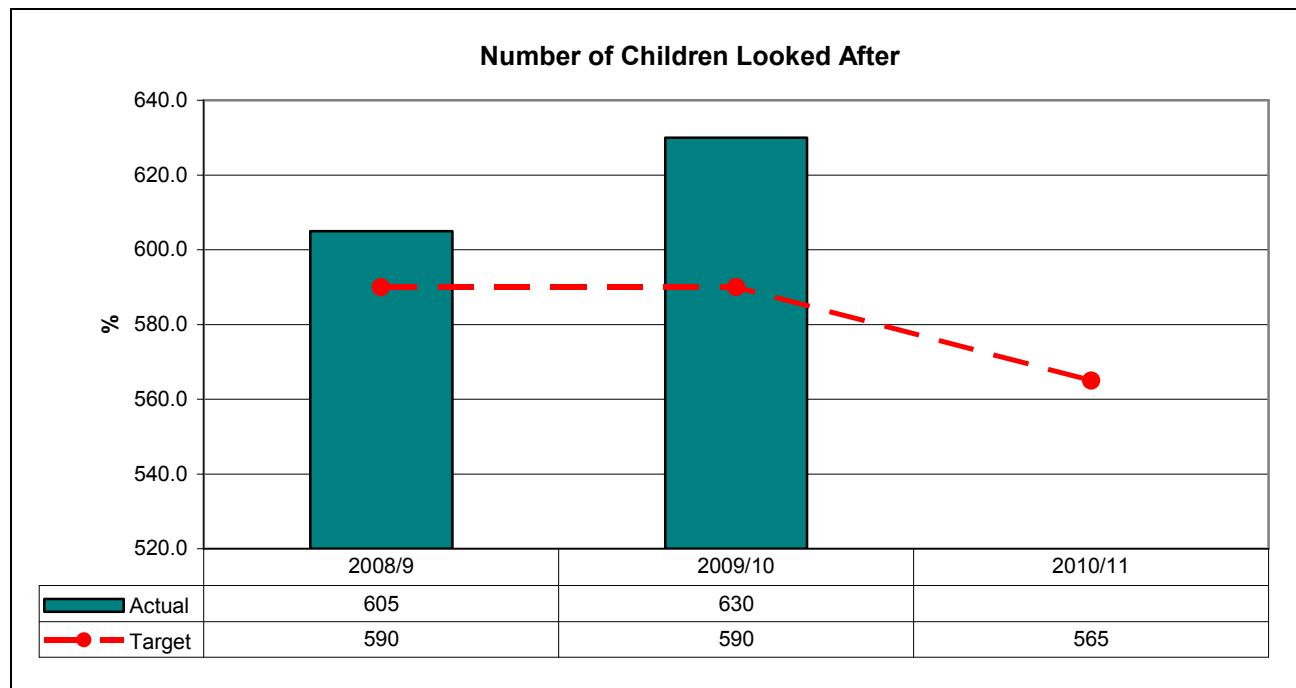


Chart 10: 2009/10 data shows latest position (February 2010) of 630 LAC

Increase Young Peoples Participation in Positive Activities

Indicators used to measure this outcome include:

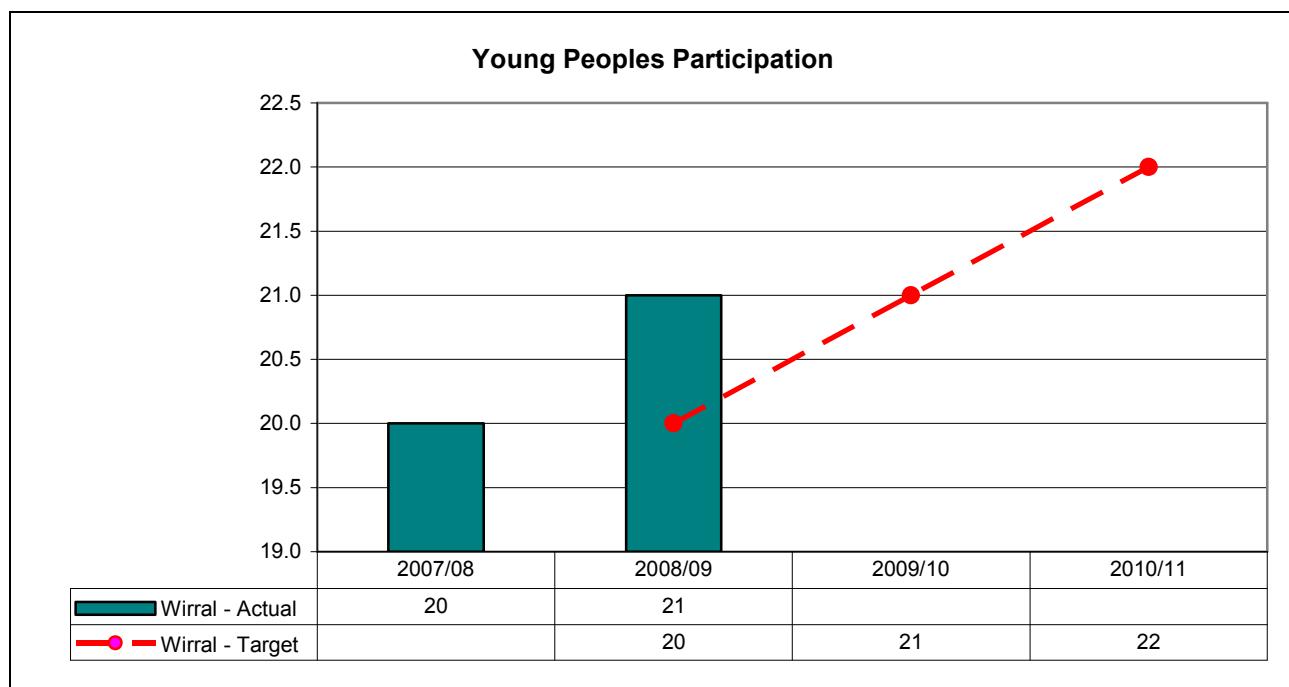
Local 1700 –Young peoples participation in activities

Data Collection Interval and Issues:

Data is available on an annual basis from the Youth Service. As a new electronic system becomes fully operational during the year it is expected that this will make data available on a more frequent basis.

Local 1700 –Young peoples participation in activities

Historical Performance and Targets



Statutory Targets

Statutory targets not included in the reward scheme.

NI	New National Indicators	LAA Improvement	
		2009/10 Target	2009/10 Actual
72	Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy	56.0%	52.0% (A)
73	Achievement at level 4 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2	77.0%	74.0% (A)
75	Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths	55.2%	53.8% (A)
87	Secondary school persistent absence rate	6.4%	
92	Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest	30.2%	31.3% (A)
93	Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2	86.0%	81.6% (P)
94	Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2	79.0%	77.8% (P)
99	Children in care reaching level 4 in English at Key Stage 2	44.0%	60% (P)
100	Children in care reaching level 4 in Maths at Key Stage 2	44.0%	52% (P)
101	Children in care achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and Maths)	7.4%	7.3% (P)