

## Chapter 2: Healthy Start

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### Pregnancy & Birth

- 2.1 Fertility Rate
- 2.2 Low Birth Weight
- 2.3 Mother's Age

### Education

- 2.4a Primary Attainment: Reception
- 2.4b Primary Attainment: Phonics / KS2
- 2.4c Primary Attainment: KS1
- 2.5a Secondary Attainment: GCSE
- 2.5b Secondary: Attainment 8
- 2.6a School Attendance
- 2.6b School Attendance
- 2.6c Persistent Absence

### Vulnerable Children

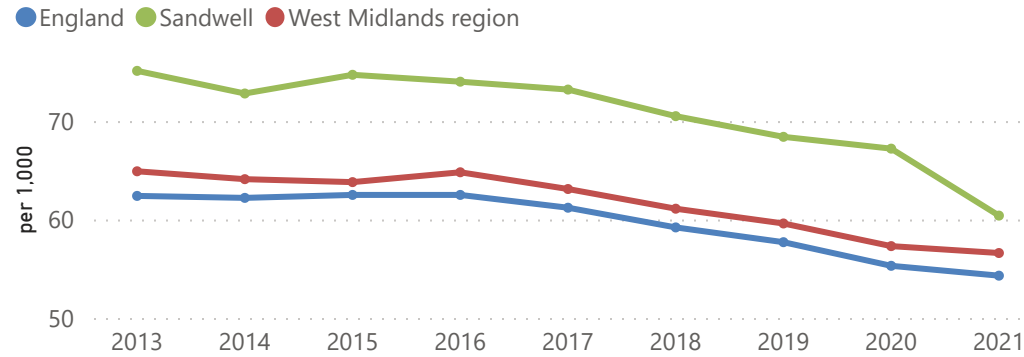
- 2.7a Vulnerable Children
- 2.7b Vulnerable Children
- 2.7c Vulnerable Children by Ward

### Appendix





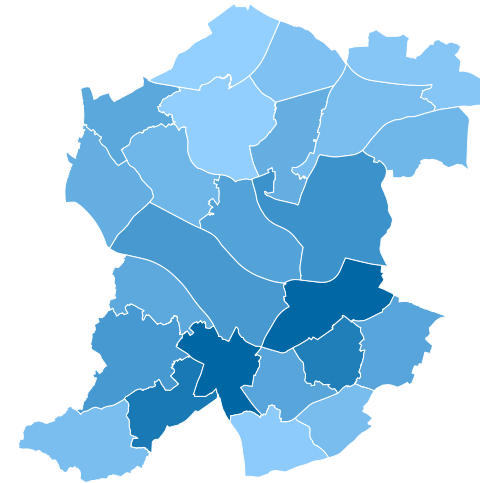
GFR for Sandwell compared to England & West Midlands



General Fertility Rate for Sandwell

Year	Births	GFR per 1,000
2021	4227	60.40
2020	4315	67.20
2019	4391	68.40
2018	4535	70.50
2017	4696	73.20
2016	4735	74.00
2015	4786	74.70
2014	4680	72.80
2013	4844	75.10

Sandwell General Fertility Rate by year and ward



2013 2014 2015  
2016 2017 2018  
2019 2020 2021

Ward Name	Births	Population	GFR per 1,000
Langley	209	2837	73.70
St Pauls	282	3829	73.60
Blackheath	158	2260	69.90
Smethwick	225	3265	68.90
West Bromwich Central	214	3311	64.60
Oldbury	209	3317	63.00
Rowley	166	2641	62.90
Greets Green and Lyng	187	3068	61.00
Bristnall	139	2298	60.50
Soho and Victoria	286	4727	60.50
Princes End	174	2904	59.90
Tividale	154	2585	59.60
Hateley Heath	187	3192	58.60
Tipton Green	192	3279	58.60
Great Bridge	169	2968	56.90
Newton	131	2307	56.80
Abbey	152	2739	55.50
Cradley Heath and Old Hill	165	2984	55.30
Charlemont with Grove Vale	132	2391	55.20
Friar Park	139	2549	54.50
Great Barr with Yew Tree	146	2728	53.50
Old Warley	124	2366	52.40
Wednesbury South	154	2984	51.60
Wednesbury North	133	2589	51.40

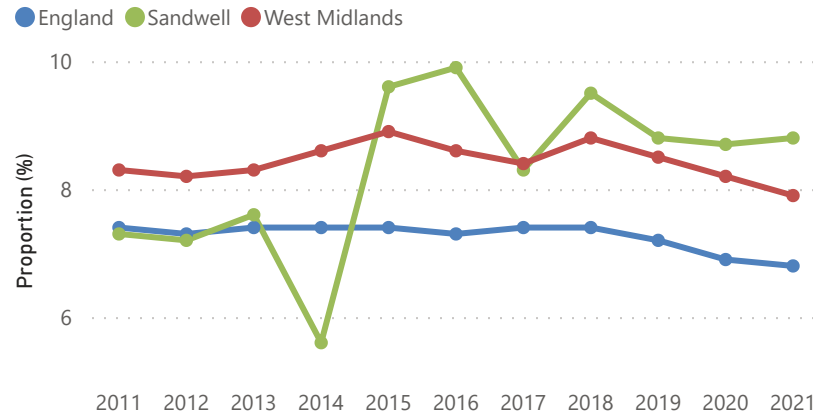
Key Points

The GFR for Sandwell has been much higher than the national rate, with an average difference of 11.6 between 2015 and 2020. However this gap narrowed to 6.1 in 2021. Sandwell's General Fertility Rate has decreased significantly from a high of 75.1 in 2013 to 60.4 in 2021.

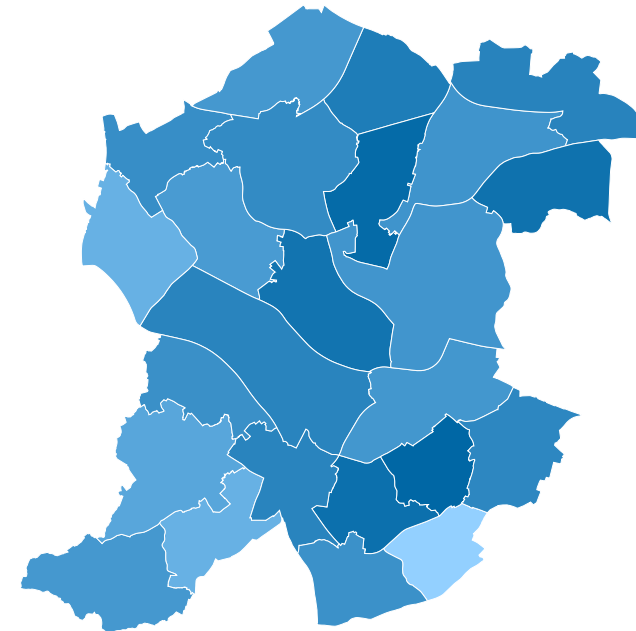
At ward level, Langley and St Pauls had the highest GFR in 2021, with a rate of over 70 per 1,000. Wednesbury North and South have the lowest rates in 2021, with a GFR of less than 52 per 1000. Across the majority of the years, Soho and Victoria has had some of the highest rates, with a peak of 101.9 in 2013, however this decreased in 2021 to 60.5.

### Sandwell's Low Birth Weight % compared to England & West Midlands

Year	Sandwell	England	West Midlands
2021	8.80	6.80	7.90
2020	8.70	6.90	8.20
2019	8.80	7.20	8.50
2018	9.50	7.40	8.80
2017	8.30	7.40	8.40
2016	9.90	7.30	8.60
2015	9.60	7.40	8.90
2014	5.60	7.40	8.60
2013	7.60	7.40	8.30
2012	7.20	7.30	8.20
2011	7.30	7.40	8.30



### Low Birth Weight % by Ward, 2021



Ward	LBW %
Smethwick	12.80
Hateley Heath	12.40
Bristnall	11.90
Newton	11.70
Greets Green and Lyng	11.50
Friar Park	10.60
Great Barr with Yew Tree	9.90
Langley	9.80
Oldbury	9.80
Soho and Victoria	9.50
Wednesbury South	9.10
Princes End	8.80
Sandwell	8.80
Tividale	8.60
Old Warley	8.50
Charlemont with Grove Vale	8.20
West Bromwich Central	8.10
St Pauls	7.90
West Midlands	7.90
Cradley Heath and Old Hill	7.80
Wednesbury North	7.80
Great Bridge	7.50
England	6.80
Rowley	6.40
Blackheath	5.30
Tipton Green	5.30
Abbey	2.10

### Key Points

#### Background

Low birth weight increases the risk of childhood mortality and of developmental problems for the child, and is associated with poorer health in later life. At a population level, a high proportion of low birth weight births could indicate problems with maternity services and/or lifestyle issues of the mothers<sup>1</sup>.

#### Definition

Low birth weight of all babies: All births (live and still births) with a recorded birth weight under 2500g as a percentage of all live births.

#### Interpretation

The percentage of low birth weight babies in Sandwell has fluctuated significantly more than England and the West Midlands, although this became more consistent between 2018 and 2021.

The difference in low birth weight percentages across the wards within Sandwell is significant, with 10 percentage points between the highest and lowest wards in 2021.

[1]RCPCH, *Why Children Die: death in infants, children & young people in the UK*, May 2014

### Controls

#### Town

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#### Year

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### Key Points

#### Definition

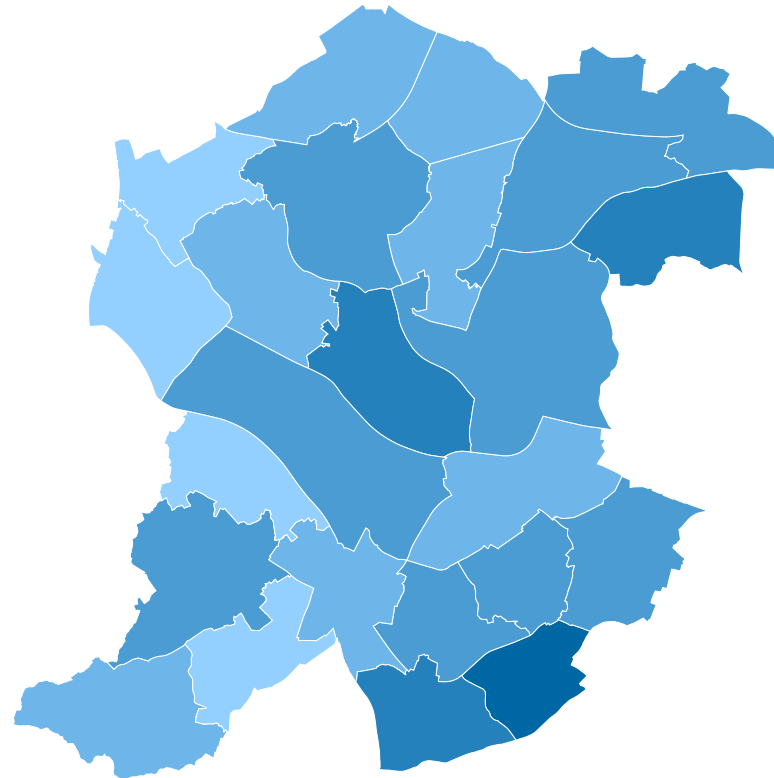
Median age of mothers at childbirth.

#### Interpretation

Between 2013 and 2021, the median age of mothers at childbirth within Sandwell has increased from 28 to 32. At ward level, there is a range of 4 years between wards with the lowest median age of 28 and the highest of 32 in 2021.

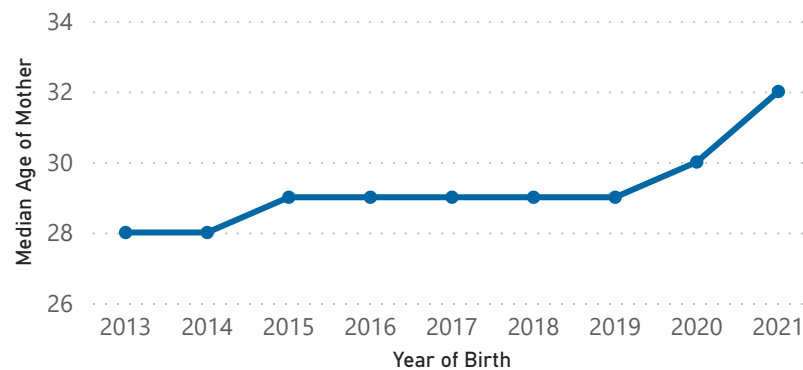
When looking at previous years, the range between wards with the highest and lowest median ages is around five years.

### Mother's Median Age at Childbirth by Ward, 2021



Ward	Mother's Median Age
Abbey	32
Greets Green and Lyng	31
Newton	31
Old Warley	31
Bristnall	30
Charlemont with Grove Vale	30
Great Barr with Yew Tree	30
Oldbury	30
Rowley	30
Smethwick	30
Soho and Victoria	30
Wednesbury South	30
West Bromwich Central	30
Cradley Heath and Old Hill	29
Friar Park	29
Great Bridge	29
Hateley Heath	29
Langley	29
St Pauls	29
Wednesbury North	29
Blackheath	28
Princes End	28
Tipton Green	28
Tividale	28

### Mother's Median Age at Childbirth in Sandwell by Year



### Controls

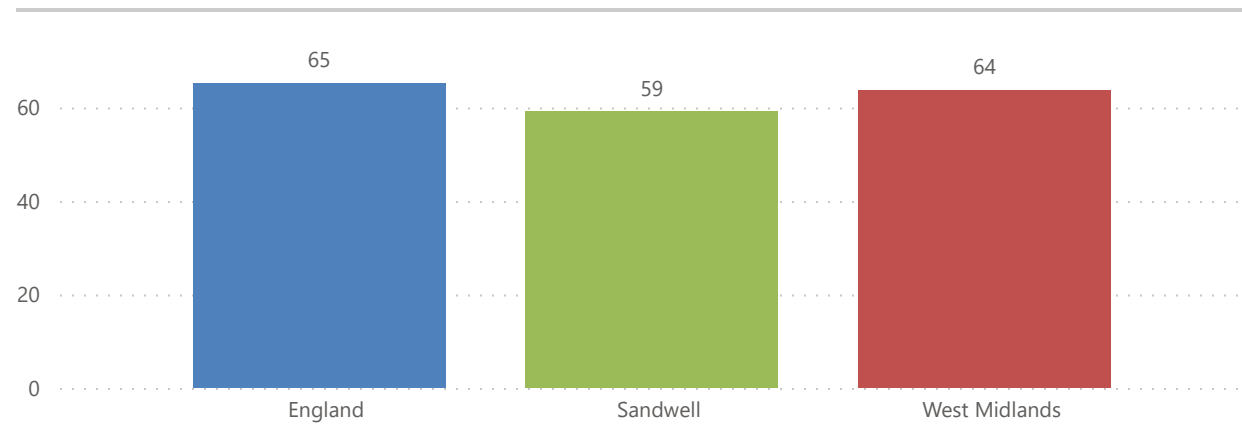
#### Birth Year

- 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016
- 2017
- 2018
- 2019
- 2020
- 2021

#### Town

- Oldbury
- Smethwick
- Wednesbury
- Rowley Regis
- Tipton
- West Bromwich

### % Achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception, 2022



#### Key Points

**The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)** is a teacher assessment of children's development at the end of the EYFS. Children achieving a good level of development are those achieving at least the expected level in different areas of learning.

**% Achieving good level of development**  
EYFSP data is only available for 2022 as there is a new Early Years framework which should not be compared to the previous framework. Overall Sandwell is just below England and the West Midlands. Locally, West Bromwich North and Wednesbury are the highest performers, with Smethwick obtaining the lowest percentage.

Select boxes from the list below to compare learning communities

- England
- Oldbury
- Rowley Regis
- Sandwell
- Smethwick
- Tipton
- Wednesbury
- West Bromwich Central
- West Bromwich North
- West Midlands

### Learning Communities

Learning Communities align roughly with the towns within Sandwell and are based around the groups of schools that actively work together.

#### School locations within Learning Communities


[Town Map](#)

Select Learning Community ▼

All ▼

**Key Points**

*Key Stage 2 data is missing for 2020 and 2021 due to statutory tests and assessments being cancelled during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

**% Achieving the expected level in Year 1 Phonics**

A decrease of 9 percentage points was seen in Sandwell from 2021 to 2022. England and the West Midlands followed the same pattern, with decreases of seven percentage points each across the same period. Locally, Oldbury received the lowest in 2022 with 67% compared to 81% the previous year. West Bromwich Central retained the highest score, which was 11.8 percentage points higher than Oldbury.

**KS2 pupils meeting the expected standard in Reading, Writing & Maths**

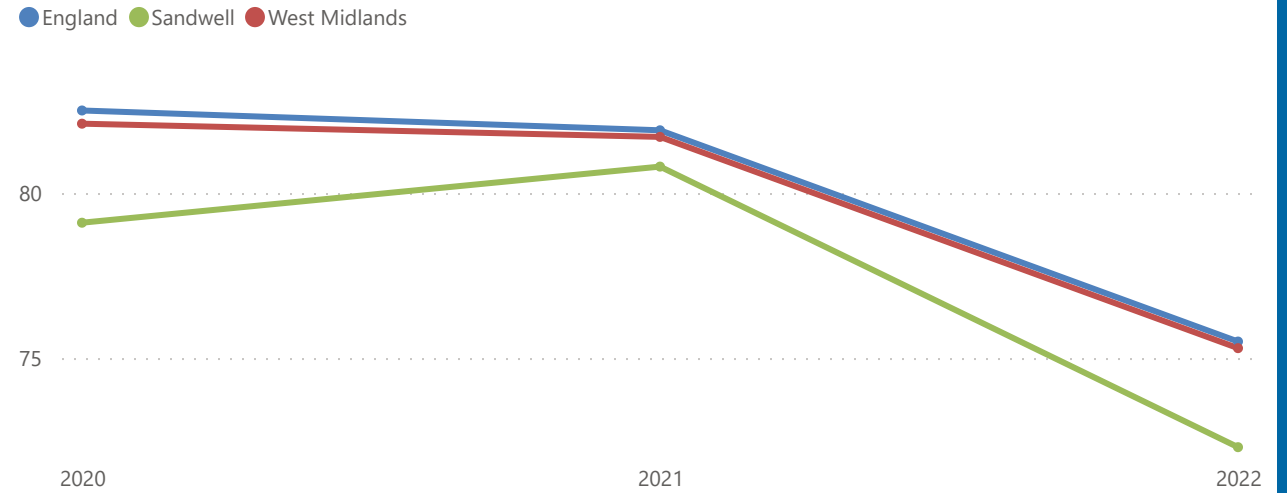
Nationally, the percentage dropped five points from 2019 to 2022. Sandwell remained four percentage points below England in 2022. Locally, Wednesbury only dropped one percentage point from 2019 to 2022, compared to Tipton which fell 11 points. In 2019, West Bromwich North was performing better than the national average, however this dropped below this level in 2022. West Bromwich Central received the lowest score of 51% in 2022.

Select boxes from the list below to compare learning communities

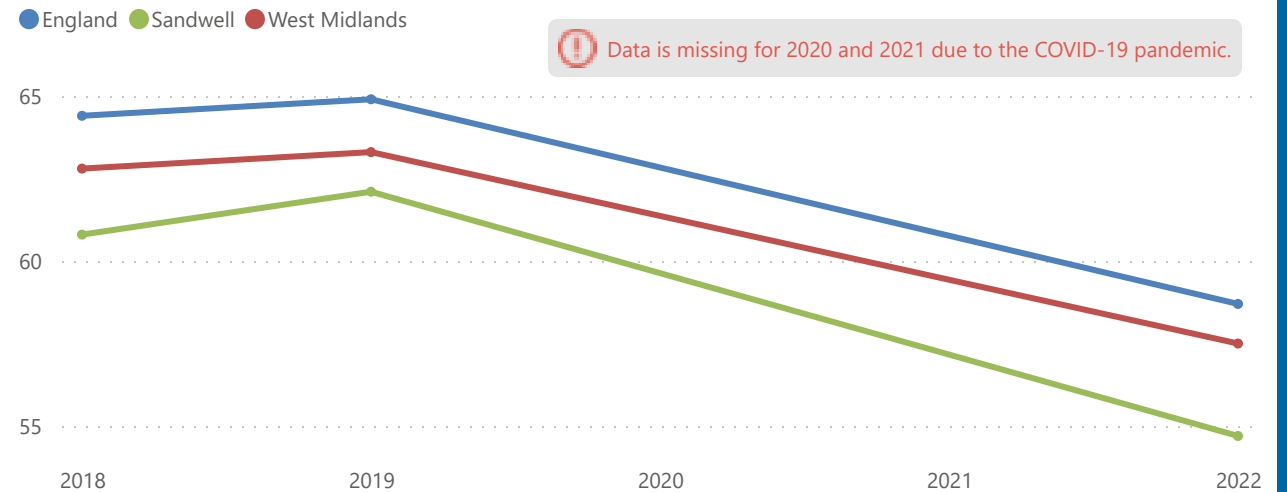
- England
- Oldbury
- Rowley Regis
- Sandwell
- Smethwick
- Tipton
- Wednesbury
- West Bromwich Central
- West Bromwich North
- West Midlands



**% Achieving the expected level in Year One Phonics**



**Key Stage Two pupils meeting the expected standard in Reading, Writing & Maths (%)**



**Key Points**



Decreases can be seen across all KS1 core subjects in 2022. These follow the same pattern as for the whole of England, and may reflect the impact of the pandemic.

**Reading**

Wednesbury was the learning community with the highest percentage in 2022, just two percentage points lower than England. Tipton was the lowest, with 8.5 percentage points between the highest and lowest. Wednesbury and Tipton were the only learning communities whose scores decreased from 2018 to 2019, with all other areas remaining consistent or improving slightly.

**Writing**

West Bromwich North was the learning community with the highest percentage in 2022, matching England. Tipton was the lowest with 44.1%. There were 13.2 percentage points between the highest and lowest in 2022, compared to just 6 points between the highest and lowest in 2019.

In 2022, five of the learning communities achieved higher percentages than Sandwell overall. Tipton and Smethwick were the only ones to achieve lower percentages in 2019 compared to 2018.

**Maths**

West Bromwich North was the highest in 2022, being only two percentage points lower than England. The lowest was Tipton - however the gap between the highest and lowest was much smaller at only 5.8 percentage points.

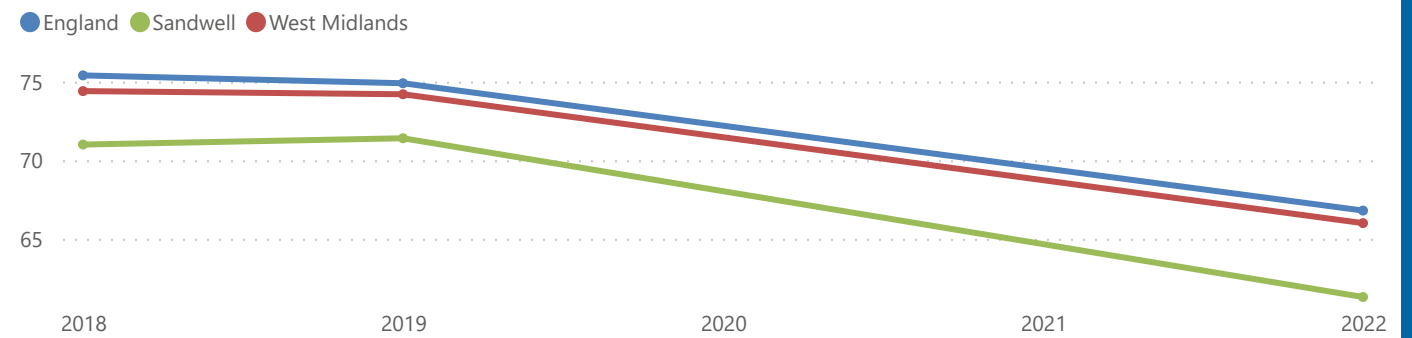
Select boxes from the list below to compare learning communities

- England
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- Tipton
- Wednesbury
- West Bromwich Central
- West Bromwich North
- West Midlands

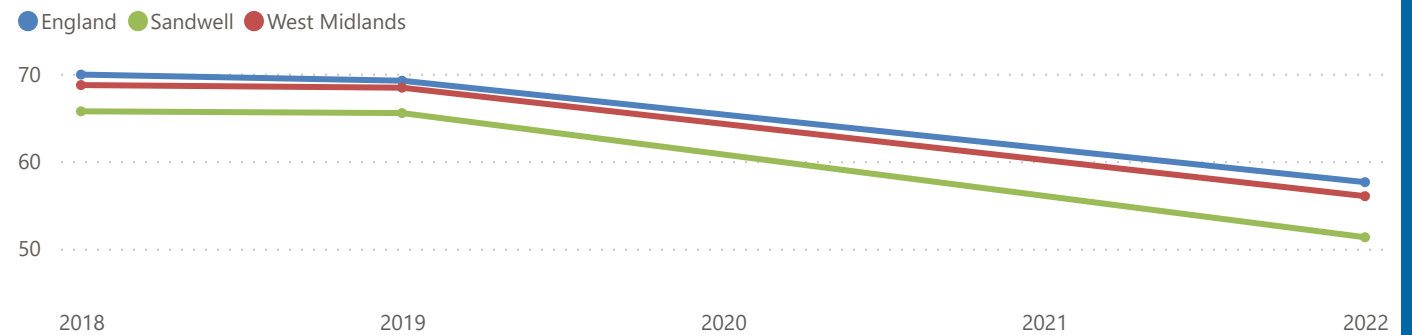


**!** Data is missing for 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

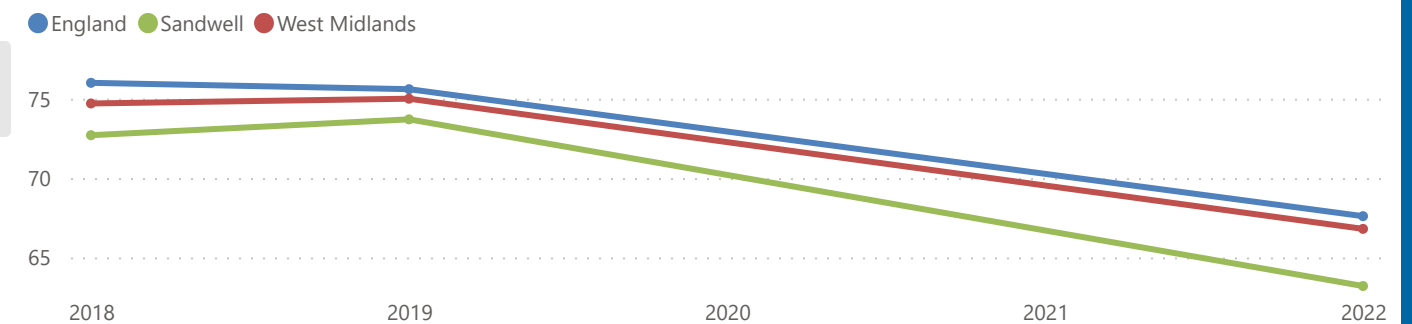
**Key Stage One pupils meeting the expected standard in Reading (%)**



**Key Stage One pupils meeting the expected standard in Writing (%)**



**Key Stage One pupils meeting the expected standard in Maths (%)**



**Key Points**

Some data is missing for 2020/2021 due to statutory tests and exams being cancelled during the COVID-19 pandemic.



**% Achieving Grade 4 or above**

The percentage of pupils achieving grade 4 or above in Sandwell has improved from 50.7% in 2018 to 61.3% in 2022. The gap between Sandwell and West Midlands is closing with Sandwell achieving only five percentage points less in 2022.

Locally, Smethwick had the highest % achieving grade 4 or above in 2022 and Tipton the lowest, with 19 percentage points between the two. West Bromwich Central was the only area to decrease from 2019 to 2022.

**% Achieving Grade 5 or above**

The percentage of pupils achieving a grade 5 or above in Sandwell has grown year on year, from 28.4% in 2018 to 41.3% in 2022. Although lower than England and the West Midlands, the gap between these has also decreased significantly in 2022.

Locally, the percentage in all areas increased from 2019 to 2022, with Wednesbury achieving the highest percentage. Wednesbury also achieved the largest increase since 2019, with a rise of 14.8 percentage points.

Select boxes from the list below to compare learning communities

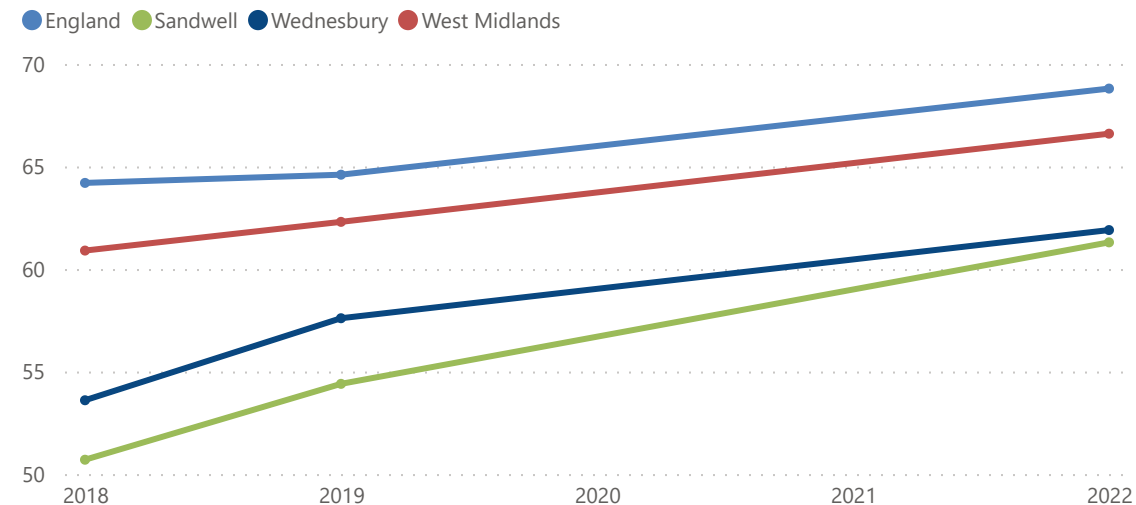
- England
- Oldbury
- Rowley Regis
- Sandwell
- Smethwick
- Tipton
- Wednesbury
- West Bromwich Central
- West Bromwich North
- West Midlands

2018      2022

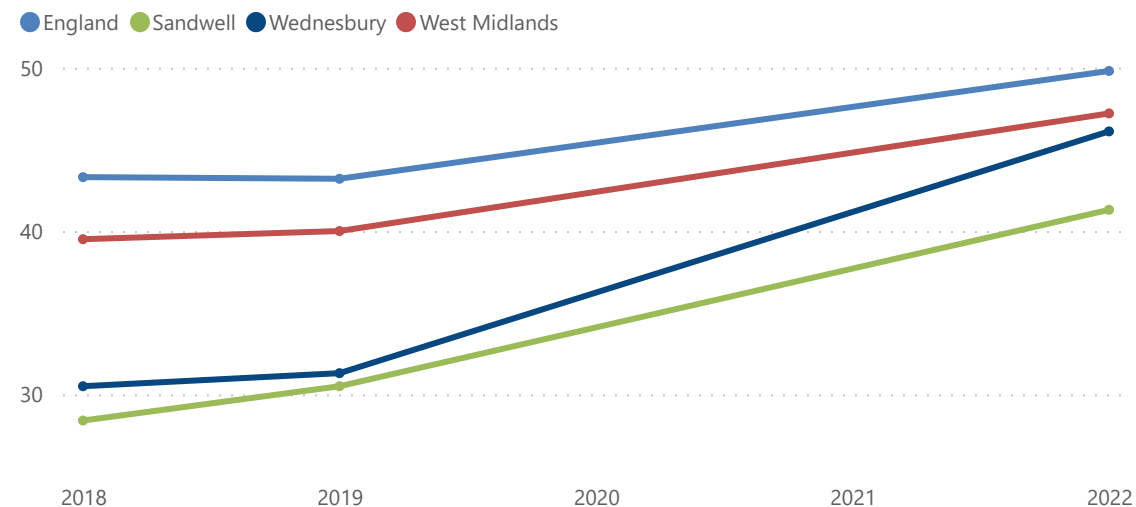


Data is missing for 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**% Achieving a grade 4 or above in GCSE English & Maths**



**% Achieving a grade 5 or above in GCSE English & Maths**





**Key Points**

Some data is missing for 2020/2021 due to statutory tests and exams being cancelled during the COVID-19 pandemic.



**Average Attainment 8 score**

The average attainment 8 score has increased by 5% from 2018 to 2022 in Sandwell. The gap between Sandwell and other areas has closed, with only two percentage points between Sandwell and England.

Locally, the average attainment 8 score increased in all areas from 2019 to 2022, apart from West Bromwich North where it decreased by one point. In 2022 there were 8 points between the highest score in Oldbury and the lowest in Tipton.

**Average Progress 8 score**

The average progress 8 score for Sandwell has improved significantly to -0.02 in 2022. This is slightly better than England and West Midlands.

Locally, the average progress 8 score has improved in all areas except West Bromwich Central and North. Tipton received the worst score of -0.7 however this has improved from the score in 2019.

Select boxes from the list below to compare learning communities

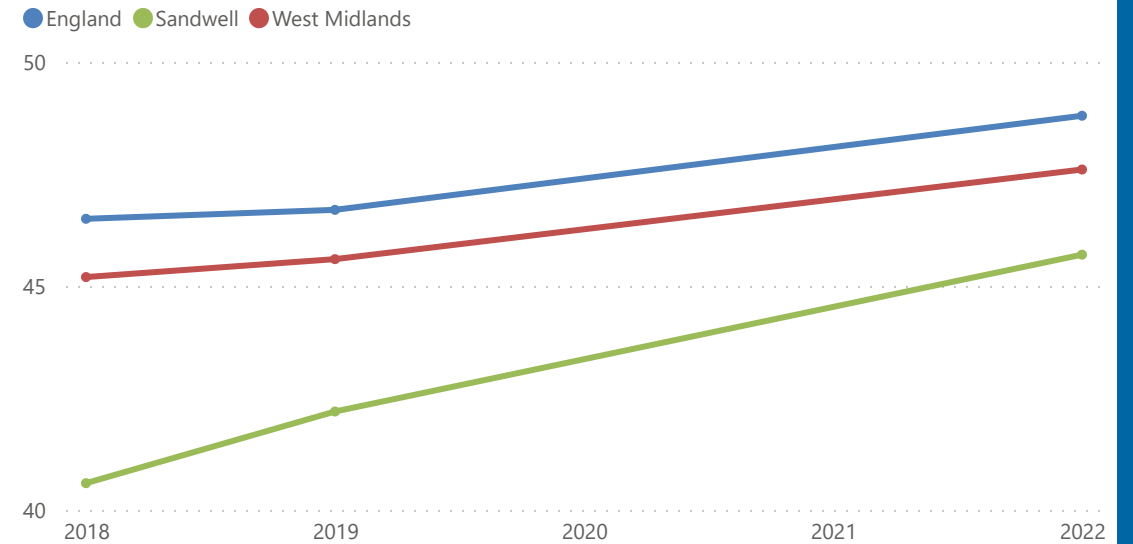
- England
- Oldbury
- Rowley Regis
- Sandwell
- Smethwick
- Tipton
- Wednesbury
- West Bromwich Central
- West Bromwich North
- West Midlands

2018 2022

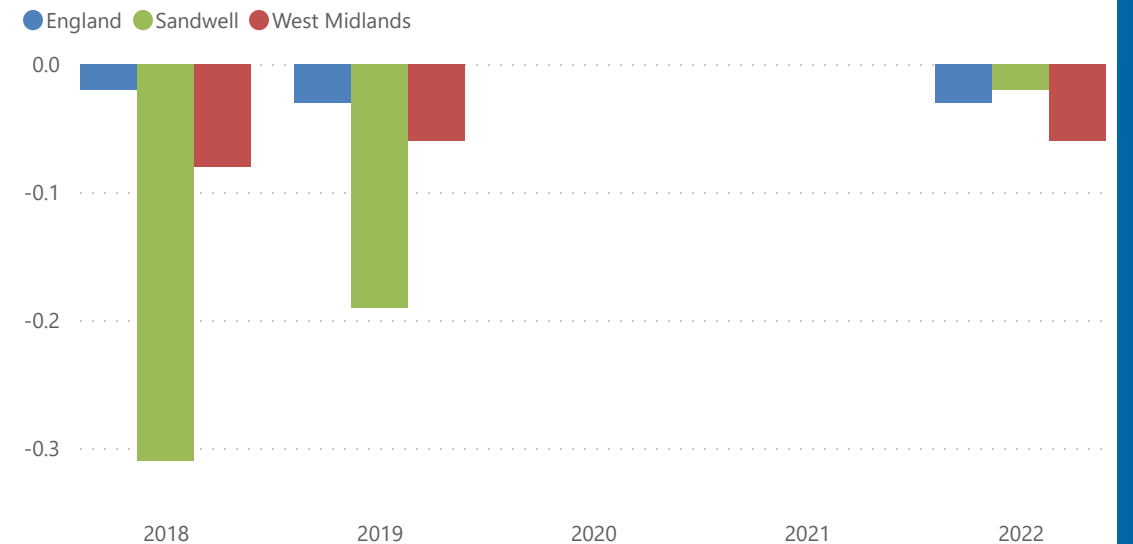


Data is missing for 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Average Attainment 8 score**



**Average Progress 8 score**



**Key Points**

**Total Authorised Absence from Primary Schools**

The rate of authorised absences for Sandwell has remained relatively consistent since 2018, decreasing from 2.8% to 2.7% in 2021. In 2021, the level for Sandwell was slightly below that of West Midlands, and matched the national level.

**Total Unauthorised Absence from Primary Schools**

Unauthorised absences for all areas decreased from 2018 to 2021. Levels in Sandwell decreased from 1.5% to 1.3%. The national level was 0.4 percentage points lower in 2021, at 0.9%.

**Total Authorised Absence from Secondary Schools**

The national level of authorised absences from secondary schools has remained consistent since 2016, at 3.8%. For Sandwell, the level decreased in 2018 and 2019, but then increased again to 3.1% in 2021. This remains lower than nationally and for the West Midlands.

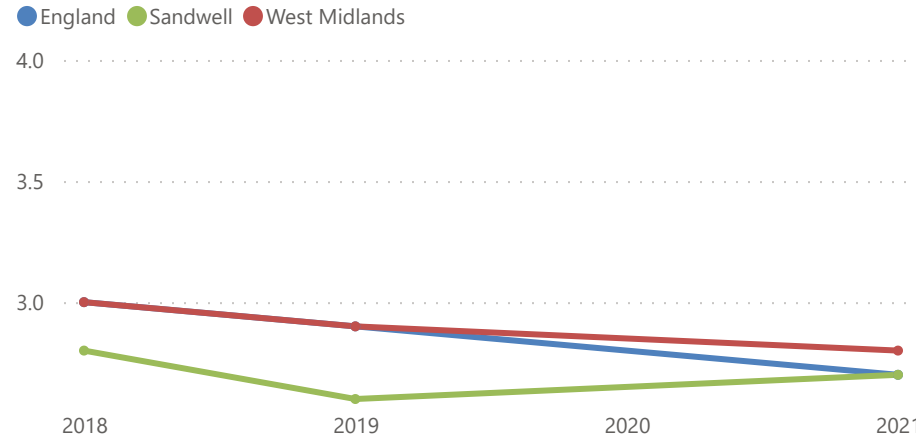
**Total Unauthorised Absence from Secondary Schools**

Unauthorised absence from secondary schools in Sandwell has consistently remained around 2% since 2013. This is only marginally higher than both the national and West Midlands figures.

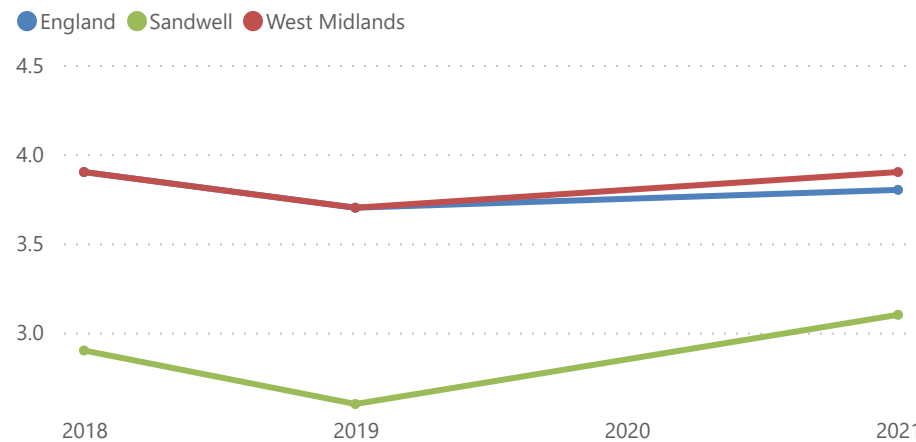


Data is missing for 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

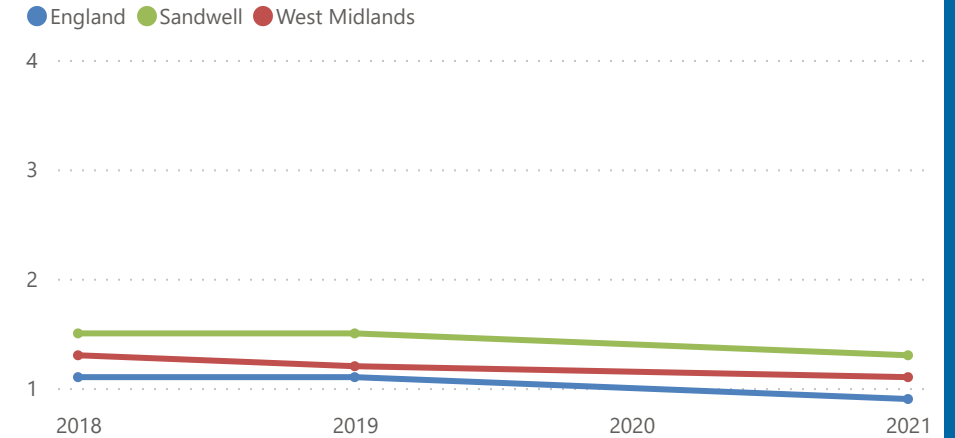
**Total Authorised Absence from Primary Schools (%)**



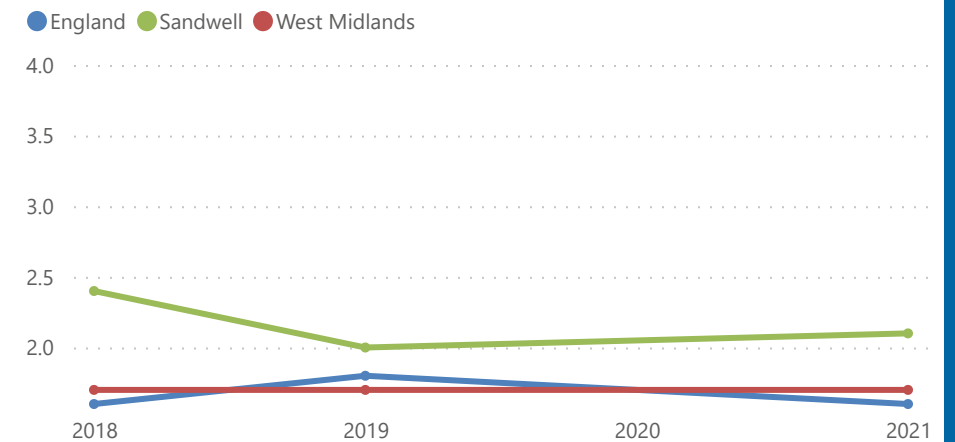
**Total Authorised Absence from Secondary Schools (%)**



**Total Unauthorised Absence from Primary Schools (%)**

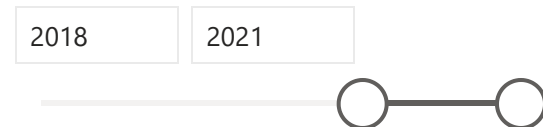


**Total Unauthorised Absence from Secondary Schools (%)**



**Controls**

- England
- Sandwell
- West Midlands



**Key Points**

**% Children in Need who missed sessions**

The percentage of children in need who missed sessions increased for all areas in 2021 compared to 2019. The largest increase was for Sandwell, which increased by 3.7 percentage points to 13.8% in 2021, matching the percentage for England.

**% Absence from School of Looked After Children**

The percentage of looked after children who are absent from school has increased in all areas. Nationally there has been an increase of 4 percentage points from 2019. In Sandwell, the increase was 3 percentage points, bringing Sandwell to 7% in 2021. This remains lower than England and West Midlands who are both at a level of around 9%.

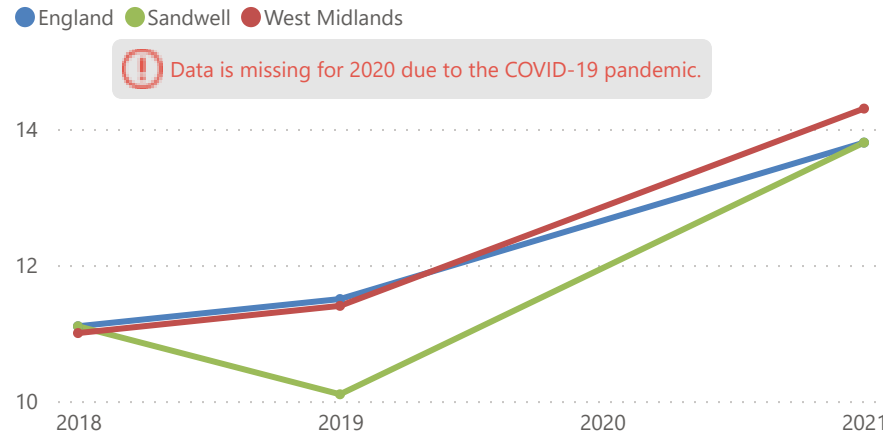
**Total Permanent Exclusions**

Permanent exclusions have dropped since 2018 for all areas other than Sandwell, where they have remained consistent at 0.7% of the school population. For other areas, the percentage was higher in 2018/19 and decreased in 2020 to around the same level as Sandwell.

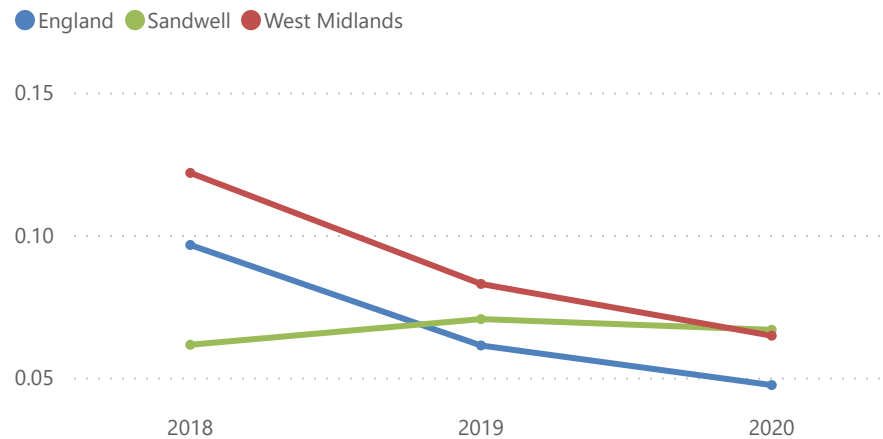
**School Suspensions**

School suspensions in Sandwell dropped to only 1.7% of the school population in 2019, but increased to 3% in 2020. This is still much lower than nationally or for the West Midlands (4.3% and 4% respectively).

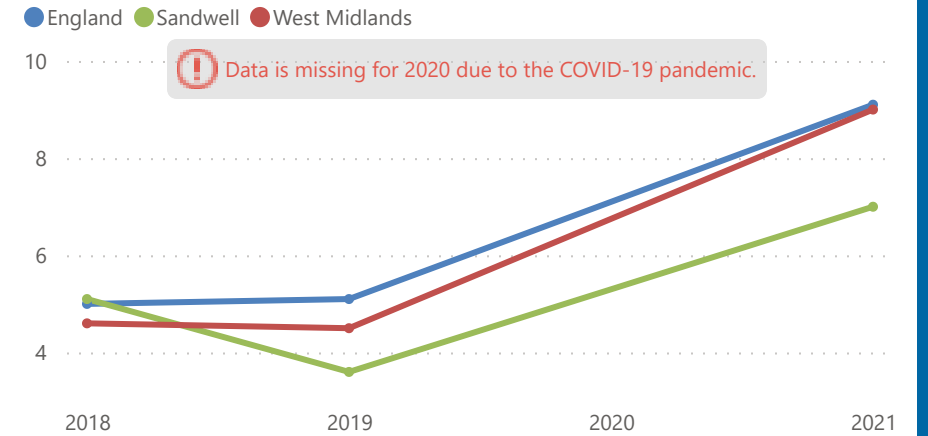
**% Children in Need who missed sessions**



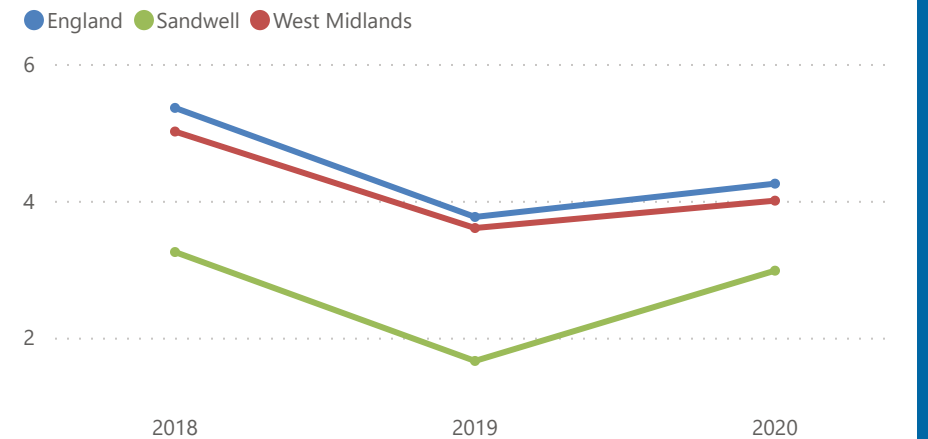
**Total Permanent Exclusions as a % of School Population**



**% Absence from School of Looked After Children**



**School Suspensions as a % of School Population**



**Controls**

England
  Sandwell
  West Midlands

**Key Points**

**Definition**

Pupils are identified as persistent absentees if they miss 10% or more of their own possible sessions, rather than if they reach a threshold of 15% of the standard number of possible sessions for the period.

**Primary Persistent Absence Rate**

In Sandwell, the rate of persistent absence in primary schools is slightly higher than West Midlands and England. In 2021 the rate increased slightly compared to the last time it was recorded in 2019.

**Secondary Persistent Absence Rate**

In Secondary schools, the rate of persistent absences for Sandwell is slightly lower than for England and West Midlands.

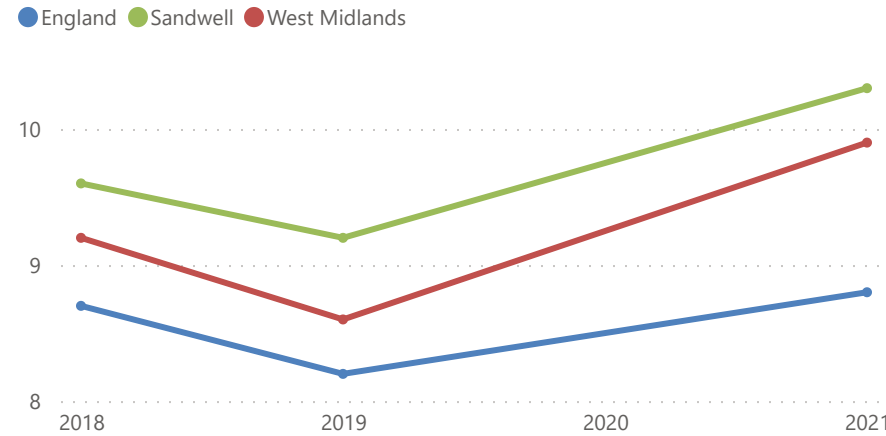
**Children in Need with Persistent Absence**

The percentage of Children in Need with persistent absence decreased to slightly below the levels of West Midlands and England in 2019, and has remained lower in 2021. A dramatic rise of around 10 percentage points was seen across all areas in 2021 compared to 2019.

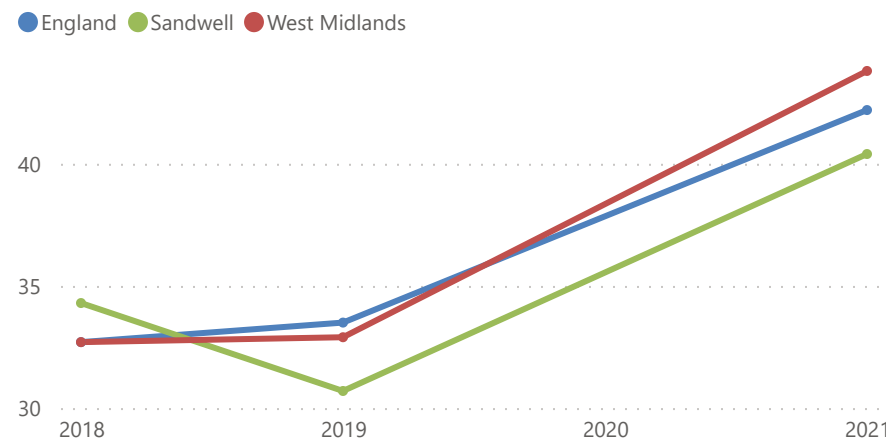
**Children Looked After with persistent absence**

The percentage of Children Looked After with persistent absence dropped to lower than the England level in 2018 and has remained lower since. There was a sharp rise in all areas between 2019 and 2021.

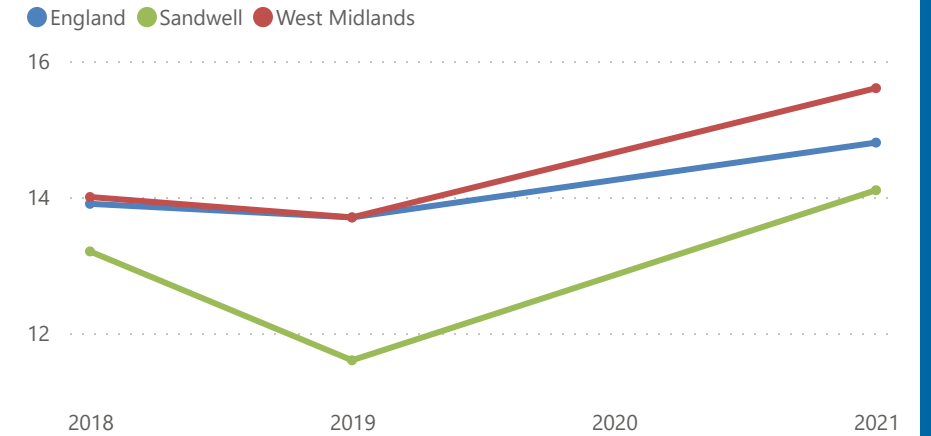
**Primary Persistent Absence Rate**



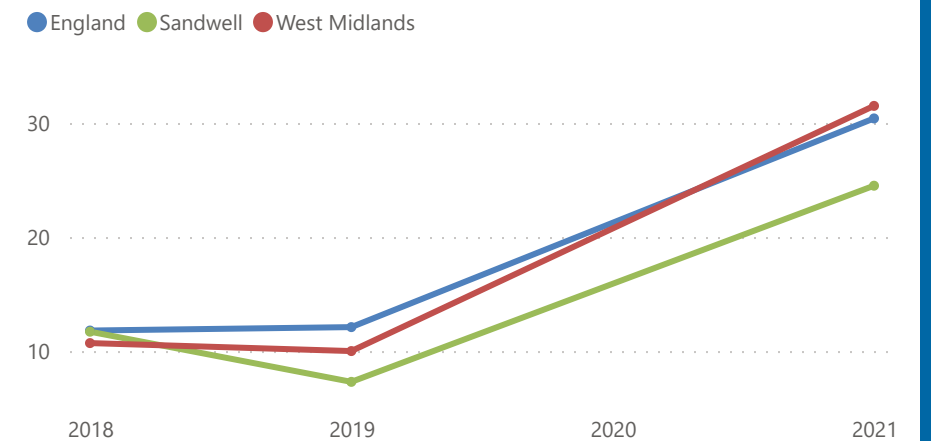
**% of Children in Need who are Persistent Absentees (3 terms)** ⓘ



**Secondary Persistent Absence Rate**



**% of Children Looked After who are classed as Persistent Absentees**



Data is missing for 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Controls**

- England
- Sandwell
- West Midlands



**Key Points**

**Children in Need Rate per 10,000**

The children in need rate per 10,000 for Sandwell has reduced by 135 since 2019. The rate in Sandwell is lower than West Midlands in 2022 for the first time since 2017. The gap between Sandwell and England has closed to almost the same rate in 2022.

**Referrals to Children's Social Care**

The rates of referrals for Sandwell have been decreasing year on year since 2019. The gap between the national rates and Sandwell has closed from 239.1 in 2020 to -1 in 2022.

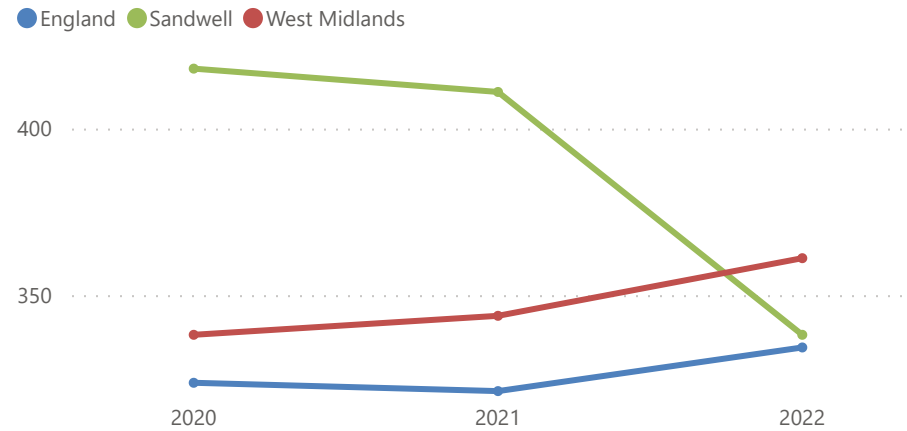
**Re-referrals to Social Care within 12 months**

Re-referrals (within 12 months of a previous referral) are decreasing year on year in Sandwell. After a high of 24.8% in 2020, re-referrals are at 19.2% in 2022, which matches the West Midlands percentage and is lower than national.

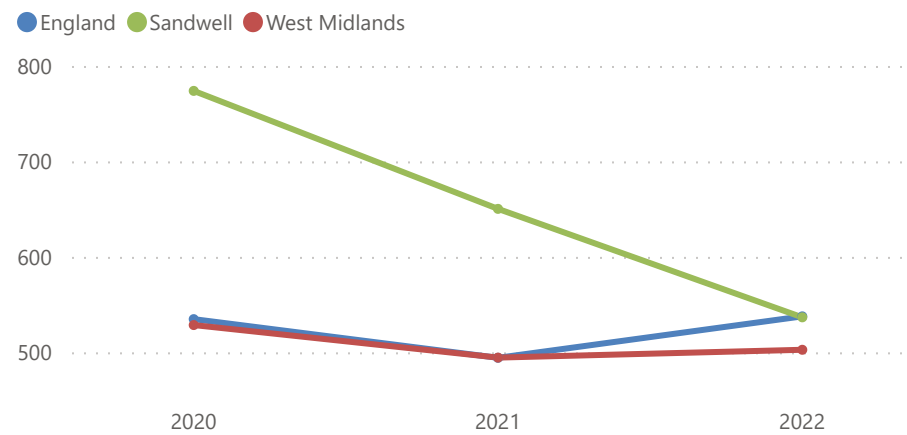
**Care Stability - placement of 2 years or more**

The percentage of children living in a long-term placement in Sandwell rose from 60% in 2020 to 73% in 2022. In 2022, the percentage for Sandwell was higher than both the West Midlands and national percentages.

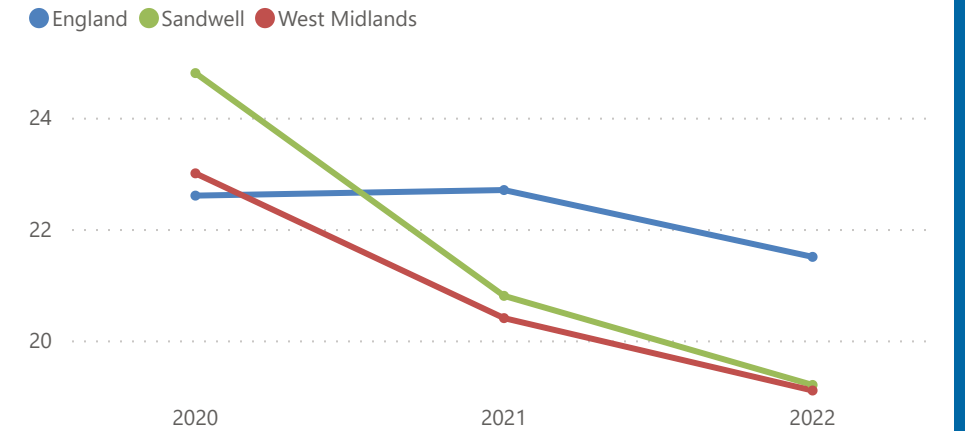
**Children in Need rate per 10,000**



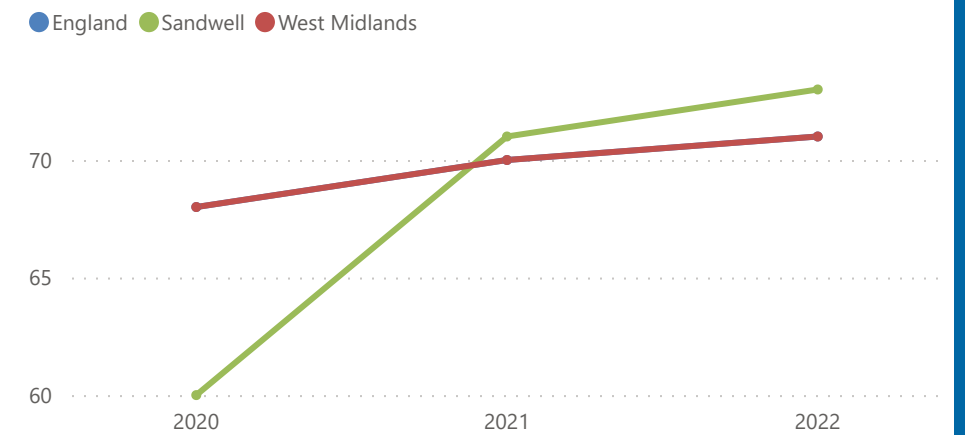
**Rate per 10,000 of Referrals to Children's Social Services**



**Re-referrals to social care within 12 months (%)**



**Care stability - placement of 2 years or more (%)**



**Controls**

**Key Points**

**Children with a Child Protection Plan**

The rate of children with a CPP in Sandwell has decreased year on year since 2020, bringing the rate per 10,000 closer to the national figure.

**Child Protection Plans starting during the year**

The rate of Child Protection Plans starting during the year in Sandwell has decreased significantly, from 88.8 in 2020 to 56.9 in 2022. The rates for England and the West Midlands have also decreased in 2022, by 2 and 4 respectively. Sandwell is now more in line with the West Midlands and national rates, having a difference of just 1 per 10,000 from West Midlands and only 4 per 10,000 from England.

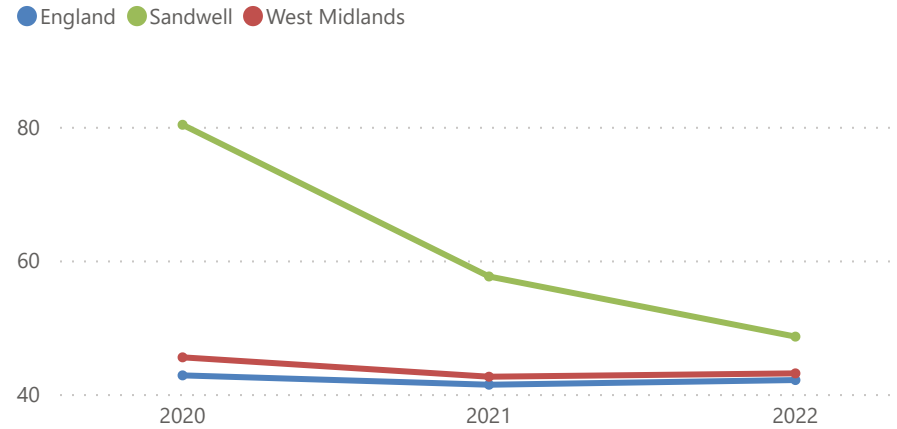
**Children Looked After rate per 10,000**

The rate of children looked after in Sandwell reached a high of 109 per 10,000 in 2019, but has dropped to 98 per 10,000 in 2022. Although this is higher than England and the West Midlands, the gap between them has decreased.

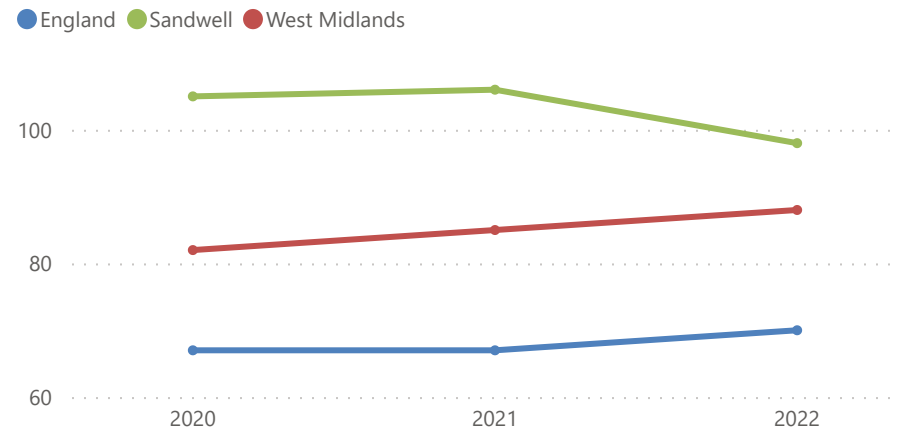
**Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training**

The percentage of care leavers in EET in Sandwell dipped in 2021 but in 2022 was rising again. The West Midlands region was 10 percentage points higher than Sandwell in 2022.

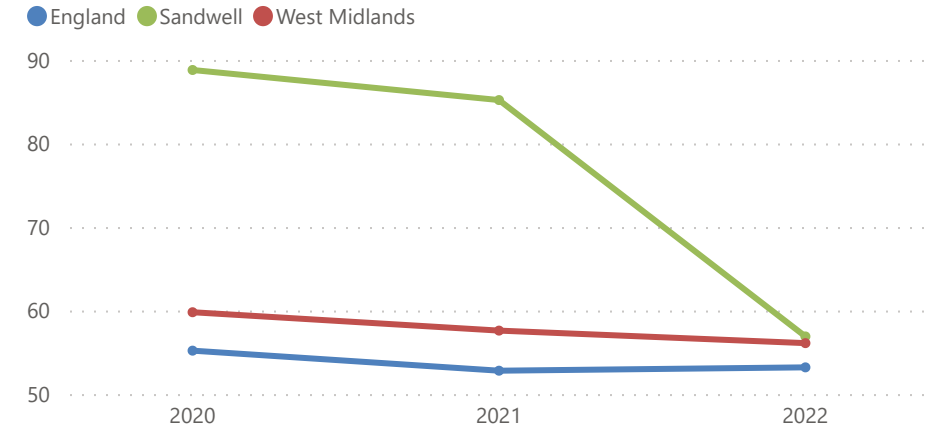
**Children with a Child Protection Plan - rate per 10,000**



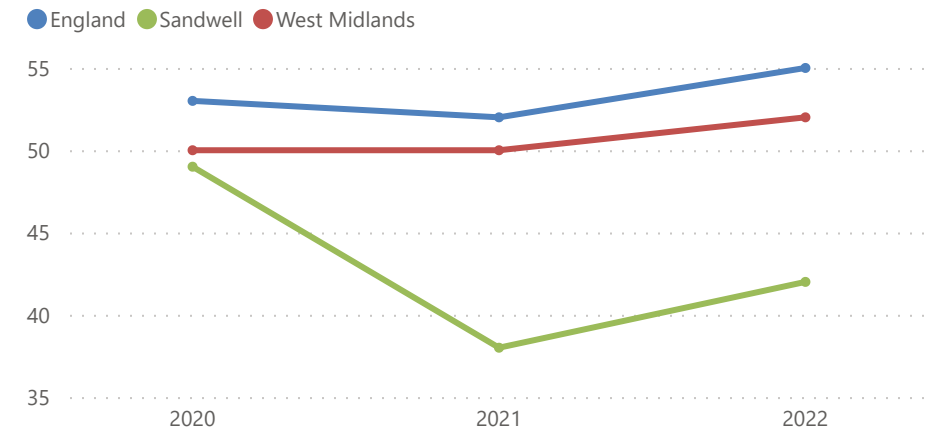
**Children Looked After rate per 10,000**



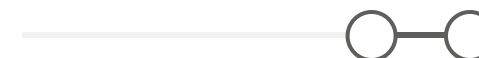
**Child Protection Plans starting during the year - rate per 10,000**



**Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training (%)**



**Controls**



**Key Points**

**Care Leavers**

The rate of care leavers per 10,000 has decreased in most wards from 2022 to 2023. The highest rate in 2023 was Hateley Health with 50.9 and the lowest was in Great Barr with Yew Tree with 3.3.

**Children in Care**

Overall in Sandwell, the rate of children in care has decreased since 2021. The highest rate of children in care per 10,000 in 2023 was in Greets Green and Lyng with 167.2 and the lowest in Blackheath with 11.2. In 2021, the most children in care belonged to the 0-5 age group, however this has shifted in 2023 to 11-15.

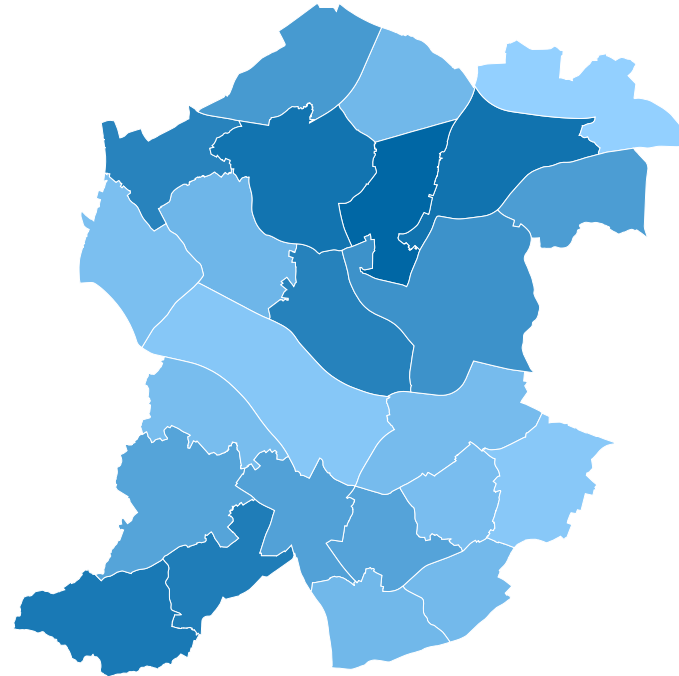
**Children in Need**

The rate of children in need in Sandwell has decreased significantly since 2021, but increased slightly from 2022 to 2023. Most wards also followed this pattern. The highest rate in 2023 was 122 per 10,000 in Cradley Heath and Old Hill and the lowest was 31.2 in West Bromwich Central.

**Children with a Child Protection Plan**

The rate of children with a CPP in Sandwell decreased from 2021 to 2023. At ward level, most wards saw a decrease from 2022 to 2023. Princes End was the ward with the highest rate, with 135.6 per 10,000. Abbey had the lowest rate of 10.2 per 10,000. The largest proportion of children with a CPP are aged 0-5, however the 11-15 age band is increasing year on year.

Care Leavers, rate per 10,000 by Ward, 2023



**Controls**

Indicator ▼

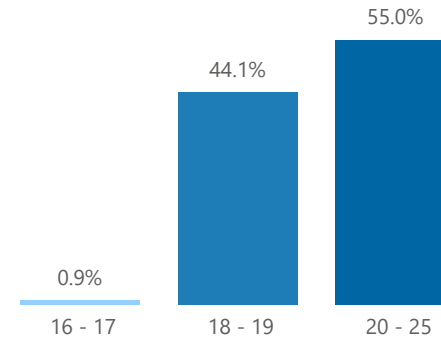
- Care Leavers, rate per 10,000
- Children in Care, rate per 10,000
- Children in Need, rate per 10,000
- Children with a Child Protection Plan, rate per 10,000

2021 2022 2023

**Ethnicity**

- White British 44.7%
- Any other Asian background 8.3%
- Any other ethnic group 7.7%
- White and Black Caribbean 7.7%
- African 5.7%
- Caribbean 5.2%
- Indian 3.7%
- Any other White background 3.4%
- Pakistani 3.4%
- White and Asian 2.9%
- Any other mixed background 2.6%
- Bangladeshi 1.7%
- Any other Black background 1.1%
- White and Black African 1.1%
- Chinese 0.3%
- Traveller of Irish Heritage 0.3%

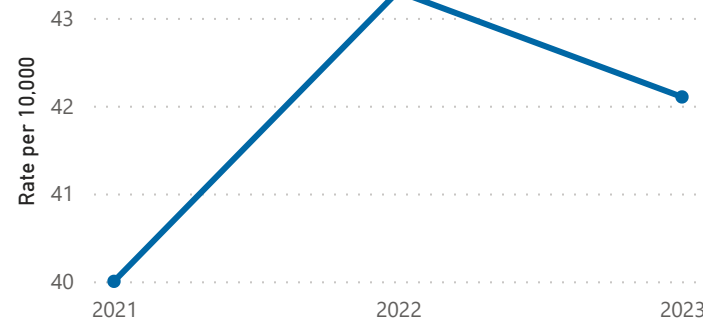
**Age Group**



**Gender**



Care Leavers, rate per 10,000 in Sandwell





# Appendix: Chapter 2 - Healthy Start

## Data Sources

### General Fertility Rate

NOMIS - Live births in England and Wales: birth rates down to local authority areas, ONS Crown Copyright Reserved (accessed 29 March 2023)

NOMIS - Live births in England and Wales for small geographic areas, ONS Crown Copyright Reserved (accessed 31 March 2023)

NOMIS - Population estimates - small area based by single year of age - England and Wales, ONS Crown Copyright Reserved (accessed 3 April 2023)

### Low birth weight

Fingertips - Low birth weight of all babies (accessed 29 March 2023)

NHS Digital - Births data (accessed 26 April 2023)

### Mother's age

NHS Digital - Births data (accessed 26 April 2023)

### Primary & Secondary Attainment

DfE Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT) (accessed 20 February 2023)

Sandwell Council - Children and Education

### Attendance

DfE Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT) (accessed 28 February 2023)

### Vulnerable Children

DfE Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT) (accessed 23 February 2023)

Sandwell Council - Children and Education

### SEND

Sandwell Council - Children and Education

DfE - School Census

## Contact

If you have any queries or comments please contact the Public Health Research and Intelligence Team:

[research\\_sandwell@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:research_sandwell@sandwell.gov.uk)



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