

THE PLYMOUTH PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

AUGUST 2022

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1. Introduction

1.1 Since its inception in 2014, the Plymouth Plan has set out a shared direction of travel for the long term future of the city of Plymouth, helping to achieve an ambition to become one of the most vibrant waterfront cities in Europe where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone.

1.2 Transforming the city is a long term venture requiring careful planning and investment and a persistent focus on delivery. This annual report provides an overview of progress over the past year, for each of the different elements of the plan. It also provides an opportunity to reflect on progress in the first six years of the plan.

1.3 This report forms part of a suite of documents which also includes the [Plymouth Report](#) and the [Authorities Monitoring Report](#). The Authorities Monitoring Report (AMR) is a statutory document that the JLP Councils are required to produce annually, which sets out key indicators demonstrating the progress on delivery of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan. The Plymouth Report provides an overview of the needs and issues facing the city – with an accompanying narrative about the shared challenges and opportunities that we face. To understand the health of the city, it is essential to also understand the city's geography, its population and the environment within which its residents live and work. We also need to understand the economic context of the city such as jobs, wages, infrastructure and economic growth. The Plymouth Report is the core document forming the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), supported by other in depth reports which can be accessed through the website. Though the Plymouth Report is usually updated regularly, this process has been delayed to allow the incorporation of the 2021 Census data, which is a critical source of information to inform our analysis. The updated Plymouth Report will be released in April 2023.

2. Summary of key findings

The tables below provide a summary overview of the trends for each indicator, and an overall indication of the direction of travel. You can view more detail and see the data behind each indicator in Section 4.

Healthy city

● Improvement ● No change ● Deterioration ○ Base data

INDICATOR	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	OVERALL TREND
A(i) Male healthy life expectancy at birth	○	●	●	●	●	●	●			●
A(ii). Female healthy life expectancy at birth	○	●	●	●	●	●	●			●
B. Over 65s emergency hospital admissions for Plymouth residents 2016 to 2020 (per 10,000)				○	●	●	●	●		●
C. % of residents who regularly (once a month or more) do voluntary work (formal and informal)					○		●			●
D(i). % of residents who feel safe outside in their local area during the day	○				●		●			●
D(ii). % of residents who feel safe outside in their local area after dark	○				●		●			●
E. Overall satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support (extremely or very satisfied)			○	●	●	●	●			●

Growing city

● Improvement ● No change ● Deterioration ○ Base data

INDICATOR	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	OVERALL TREND
A. Population of Plymouth	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
B. Carbon emissions per capita	○	●	●	●	●	●	●			●
C. Gap between national living wage and 10th percentile	○	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
D(i). % of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) children achieving a good level of development (measured against national benchmark)	○	●	●	●	●	●				●
D(ii). Key Stage 4 Attainment 8 achieving the 'basics' (measured against national benchmark)	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
E. Capital investment in infrastructure				○					●	●

International city

● Improvement ● No change ● Deterioration ○ Base data

INDICATOR	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	OVERALL TREND
A. % of residents who agree that Plymouth has a lot to offer					○		●			●
B. Visitor numbers	○	●	●	●	●	●	●			●
C. Jobs in high-tech manufacturing and scientific research and development	○	●	●	●	●	●	●			●
D(i). UK ranking of Plymouth's universities (overall score) – University of Plymouth	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
D(ii). UK ranking of Plymouth's universities (overall score) – Plymouth Marjon University	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
D(iii). UK ranking of Plymouth's universities (student satisfaction) – University of Plymouth	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
D(iv). UK ranking of Plymouth's universities (student satisfaction) – Plymouth Marjon University	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
E. % of residents who agree with the statement: my local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	○				●		●			●

3. Methodology

3.1 A suite of high level indicators has been developed to monitor progress towards the strategic outcomes and objectives within the plan. This is a deliberately limited indicator set, structured around each of the Measures of Success identified in the Plymouth Plan.

3.2 The indicator set has been split into the four categories of Healthy City, Growing City, International City and Spatial Strategy, however it is recognised that all work together in a complex system of interaction. The Spatial Strategy indicators are reported elsewhere, in the Authorities Monitoring Report.

3.3 These indicators provide insight as to how the city is progressing on delivery against these objectives and highlight where further deep-dive analysis is needed to understand what is preventing sufficient progress. This insight also enables reviews and refreshes of the Plan to take place, ensuring it remains relevant to current challenges and that focus is given to those areas that are not yet showing improvement.

3.4 The indicators have been updated with the latest available data and at least three years of data have been included wherever possible. Also, where possible, progress is benchmarked against regional and national outcomes. The primary source of the data or statistic is shown for each indicator. It should be noted that, due to the natural lag in data reporting, some indicators are still reporting data prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, any impact of the pandemic on these indicators may not show in this report.

4. Context

4.1 With a resident population of 264,700, Plymouth is the largest city on the south coast of England and the 15th largest in the country. Plymouth is also the most significant urban area on the south west peninsula and the key urban hub of the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership.

4.2 Plymouth is Britain's Ocean City. Its connections to the sea go back beyond the sailing of the Mayflower in 1620 and now include Western Europe's largest naval base, a thriving commercial and ferry port, a significant fishing industry, and one of the most important global concentrations of marine research and production. The sea, coastline and maritime heritage are some of Plymouth's greatest assets.

4.3 Plymouth has experienced significant regeneration and transformation over the last ten to fifteen years and this is set to continue however, the city also faces some significant long-term challenges. Plymouth is the most significant urban area on the South West peninsula yet it suffers from poor road and rail connectivity. The average rail journey time from Plymouth to London is eight minutes slower than from Newcastle to London, and yet the route is 40 miles shorter.

4.4 The city has traditionally struggled to raise its competitiveness and productivity (Plymouth's GVA per hour worked stands at around 86 per cent of the UK average). This is, in part, due to a low business density and start-up rate, and poor connectivity with the rest of the region and country, a potential deterrent for inward investment and the migration of skilled workers. The city is also a low wage economy with Plymouth workers receiving £521 weekly compared to £577 nationally.

4.5 The city has higher than average levels of deprivation and health inequalities. Plymouth is within the 20% most deprived local authority districts in England. Two areas fall within the most deprived 1% in England while 28 fall within the most deprived 10% in England, affecting around 46,000 people within the city. Just under 1 in 5 children in Plymouth are estimated to be living in poverty.

4.6 The health of people in Plymouth is generally worse than the England average, with life expectancy for both men and women lower than the England average. Within Plymouth, there is considerable inequality in health, with a difference of 7.5 years in life expectancy across the city.

4.7 The 2021 census data shows the population of Plymouth has continued to age. There has been a 17.7% increase in those aged 65 and over compared to 2011 figures. The population of younger age groups have declined with a reduction across all groups aged 29 and below, with the exception of the population of those aged 5-9. More detailed census data will be released in the Plymouth Report 2023. There will be a major shift in the population structure of Plymouth over the next 15 years as the proportion of the population aged 65 and over increases. A rise in the percentage of the Plymouth 65+ population is projected, from 18.5 per cent in 2020 to 22.7 per cent by 2034. An ageing population suggests an increasing need for care and support services and also an increasing burden placed on the working age population. Further information can be found in the [Plymouth Report](#) which provides an overview of the needs and issues facing the city.

5. Primary indicators update

Healthy city

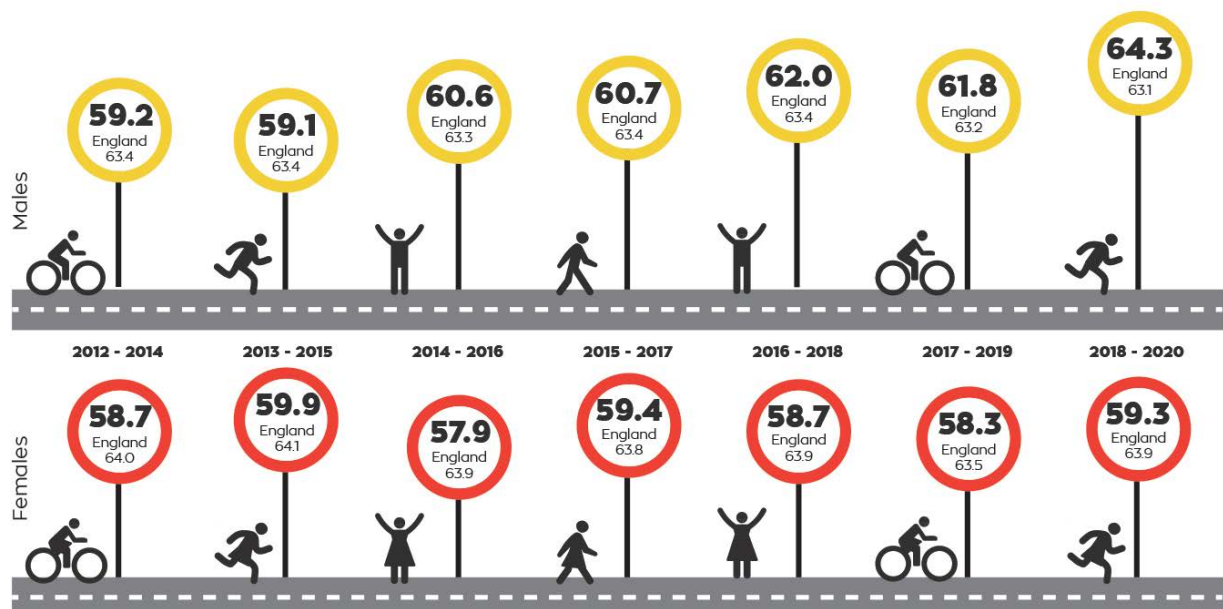
What we are trying to achieve - our strategic objective for a healthy city

Strategic Outcome

People in Plymouth live in happy, healthy, safe and aspiring communities, where social, economic and environmental conditions and services enable choices that add quality years to life and reduce the gap in health and wellbeing between communities.

People in Plymouth get the best start to life with improved health, increased life expectancy, and a better quality of life

Primary Indicator A - Healthy life expectancy at birth (males and females)



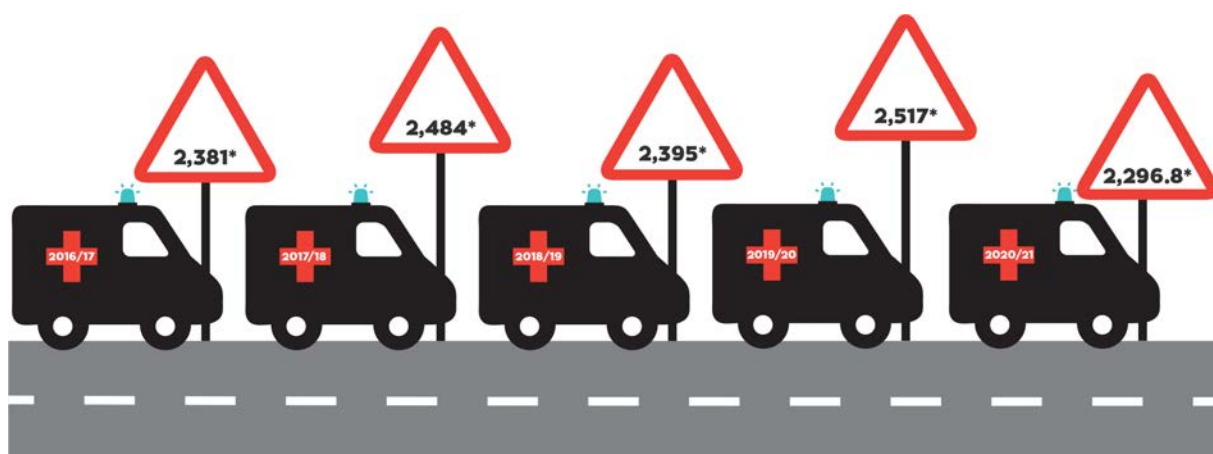
Source: [Public Health England](#)

Comments

Whilst healthy life expectancy in females has risen slightly in Plymouth, it remains below the England average of 63.9. Health life expectancy in males has risen in Plymouth and is now slightly above the England average which has remained flat over this time period.

More people taking care of themselves

Primary Indicator B - Over 65s emergency hospital admissions for Plymouth residents



Source: [Hospital Episode Statistics](#)

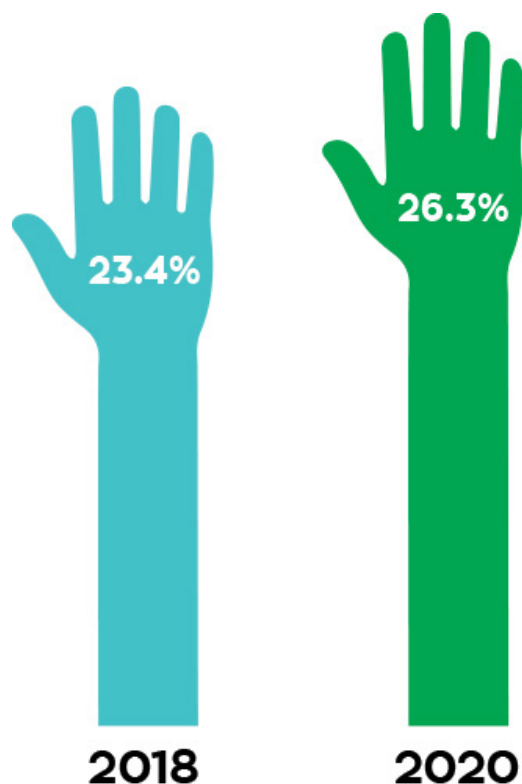
*directly age standardised rate per 10,000

Comments

In Plymouth the rate of hospital admissions in the over 65s has decreased since 2019/20. However, this reduction is likely to be due to the Covid pandemic and any comparison to rates prior to 2020 should be treated with caution. It is likely to be a few years before we can say with certainty that there has been a sustained reduction in over 65 emergency hospital admissions.

More residents are contributing to and are involved in their local community

Primary Indicator C - % of residents who regularly (once a month or more) do voluntary work (formal and informal)



Source: [Plymouth City Survey](#)

Comments

There has been an increase in the percentage of respondents who report that they regularly (once a month or more) do formal or informal voluntary work from 23.4% in 2018 to 26.3% in 2020. The city currently has a volunteer work programme with the aim of increasing the number of volunteers (at least once a month) by 1 per cent per year for five years. There was also a focus on recruiting volunteers for the Mayflower 400 activities in 2020.

The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic may well impact on the rate of volunteering going forward and this will be seen in the 2022 City Survey.

People of Plymouth are well housed and live in good quality, well looked after neighbourhoods where they feel safe and happy

Primary Indicator D - % of residents who feel safe outside in their local area



Source: [Plymouth City Survey](#)

Comments

90% of respondents felt safe in their local area during the day and 58% after dark in 2020. This is slightly higher than in 2014 for during the day although no significant change from 2018.

There has been a decrease of 3% for those feeling safe after dark between 2014 and 2020 and further analysis is needed to understand this change. The proportion of younger respondents feeling safe after dark aged 16 to 24yrs (44%) was significantly lower than those aged 45 to 54yrs (61%).

Good quality and sustainable health and wellbeing services for people who need them, whether they are public services or care in the community

Primary Indicator E - Overall satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support (extremely or very satisfied)



Source: [NHS Personal Social Services Adult Social Care Survey](#)

Comments

Although satisfaction rates appear to have fallen in Plymouth in recent years, overall satisfaction remains higher than both the England average (64.2%) and the CIPFA comparator group average (63.5%). The rate of satisfaction in 2019/20 dropped among those people aged 65 and over living in the community and among clients with a learning disability. An action plan is in place to target these client types and to raise satisfaction rates.

Due to COVID-19 no survey was done in 2020/21 with the next survey due later in 2022. It is difficult to predict the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on satisfaction rates when the next survey is undertaken.

Growing city

What we are trying to achieve - our strategic objective for a growing city

Strategic Outcome

Plymouth has used its economic, social, environmental and cultural strengths to deliver quality and sustainable growth. The city's long term prosperity has been improved, and its economy has been transformed and rebalanced. It has raised its productivity, and provides higher average wages as well as employment opportunities to support a skilled and talented workforce. Its population has grown to nearly 300,000 by 2034.

The population has grown to achieve the city's ambition (population of 300,000)

Primary Indicator A - Plymouth's population



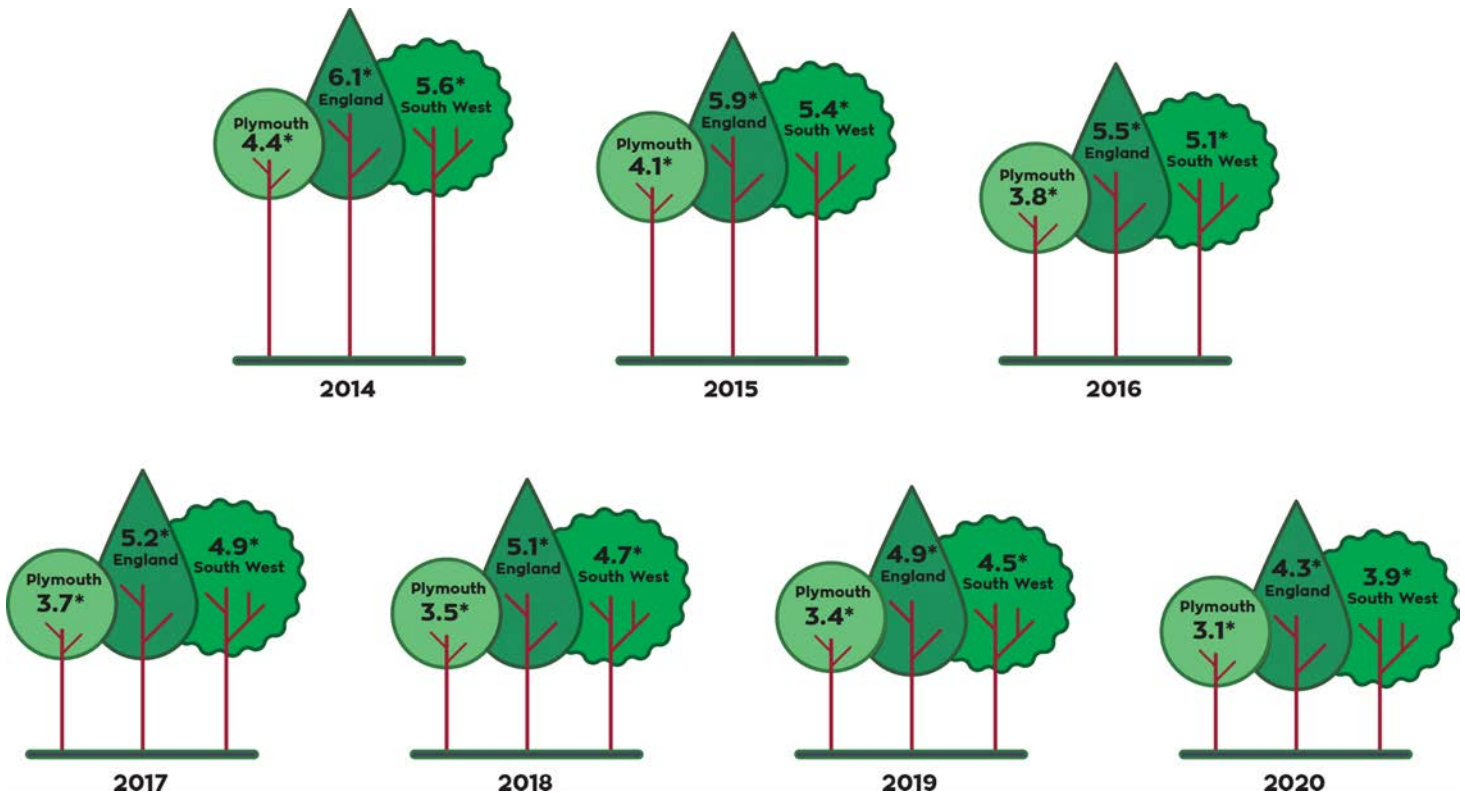
Source: [Office for National Statistics](#)

Comments

The Plymouth Plan aspires to see the city grow to nearly 300,000 in population by 2034. The measure relates to Plymouth as a functional urban area, including places such as Sherford, Woolwell and Land at West Park Hill where over 7,900 new homes are planned, but for now the more tightly defined administrative boundary of Plymouth is used as a proxy measure. The population (as measured by the Office for National Statistics) has increased by 1.6% between 2014 and 2021. This compares to an increase of 4% in England as a whole. The figures for 2021 are taken from the 2021 Census rather than from estimates based on 2011 so give a more accurate picture than in previous years. Looking forward, there is a need to consider Plymouth's population aspirations in the context of national planning reforms, the climate emergency, and any impacts on population change arising from issues such as Brexit and the COVID pandemic.

Plymouth continues to be recognised as a leading green city

Primary Indicator B - Carbon emissions per capita (tCO₂e)



Source: [Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy](#)

* Carbon emissions per capita (tCO₂e)

Comments

Plymouth's carbon emissions per capita have fallen steadily over the past 6 years, reducing from 4.4t tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) in 2014 to 3.1 in 2020 (latest available data). Substantial increases in the amount of renewables in the energy mix nationally have helped continue this reduction, and it is likely that the impact of the Covid pandemic was behind some of the decrease in 2020. The Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019 has ensured that action at a local level plays a key role too. The city published its third annual [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) in January 2022.

Plymouth has a vibrant, productive, inclusive and innovative business sector with a workforce that is paid a living wage

Primary Indicator C - Gap between 10th percentile and national living wage



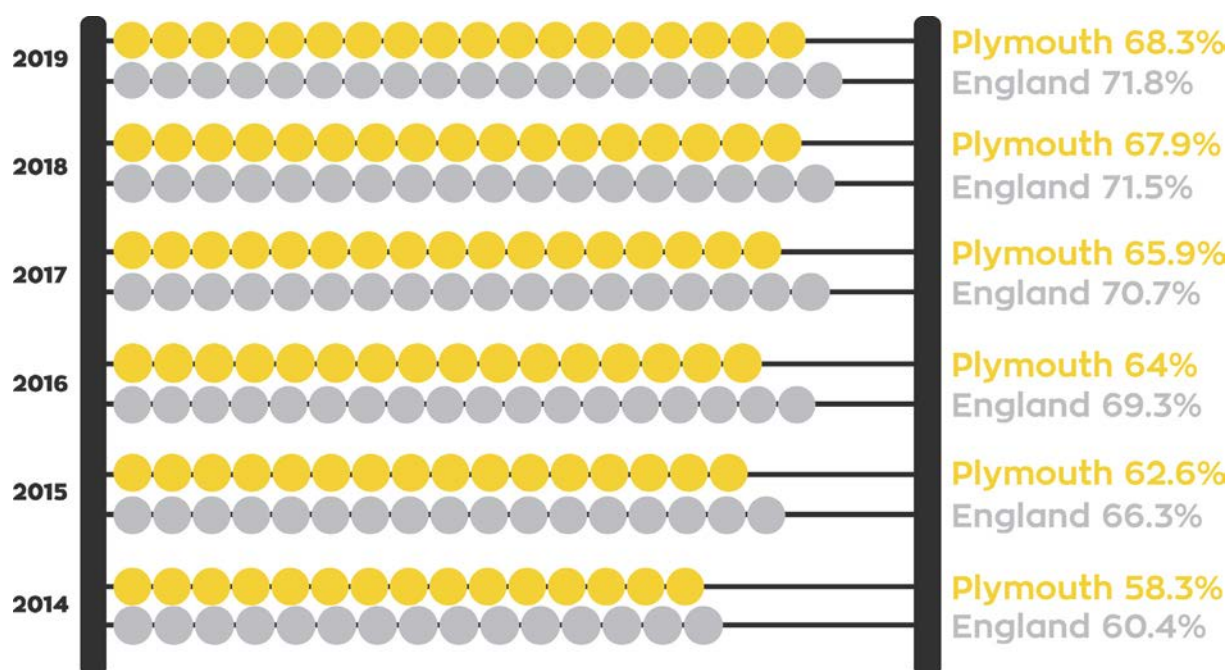
10th percentile wage per hour vs National Living Wage per hour, excluding overtime (£7.86 is 10th percentile, so less than 10% earn less than this. £7.83 is national living wage).

Source: ONS/NOMIS

Comments

Early in the plan period (2014/15 and 2015/16) Plymouth's 10th percentile wage level was below the National Minimum Wage but has since moved up to and kept pace with accelerating rises in the National Minimum Wage.

Primary Indicator D(i) - % of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) children achieving a good level of development



Source: [DfE Explore Education statistics](#)

Please note there are no results for 2020 or 2021 due to COVID-19

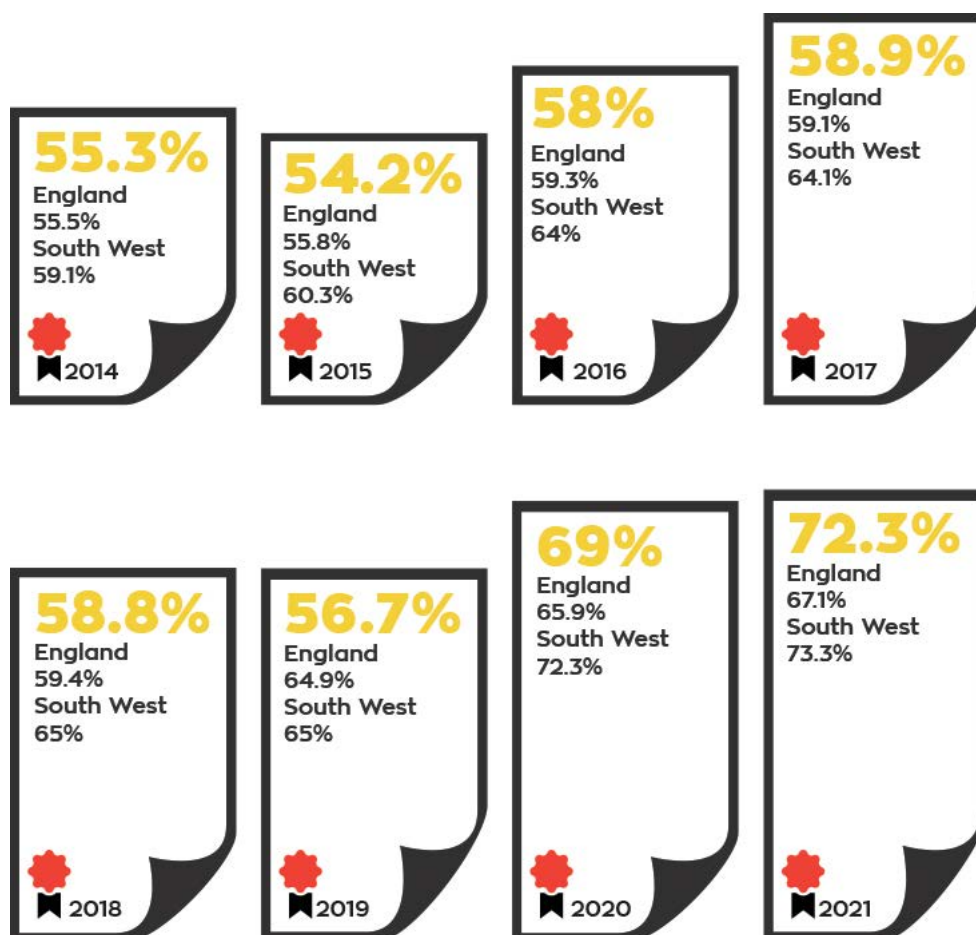
Comments

Since 2014, the percentage of Early Years Foundation Stage pupils achieving a good level of development has increased by 10 percentage points (from 58.3% in 2014 to 68.3% in 2019). However, this is below the level of improvement nationally, which has increased by 11.4 percentage points (60.4% in 2014 to 71.8% in 2019), and the gap between Plymouth and the national benchmark has widened from 2.1% to 3.5%.

In 2020 and 2021, academic testing within the Early Years was cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic and there is growing evidence that the pandemic has had a significant impact on the communication and language development of children birth to five, which may affect long term learning and development unless the necessary support and interventions are secured.

The people of Plymouth have the skills to be school ready and work ready to meet the needs of the city, enabling them to avoid poverty

Primary Indicator D(ii) - Key Stage 4 Attainment 8 achieving grade 9-4 (standard pass) in English and Maths



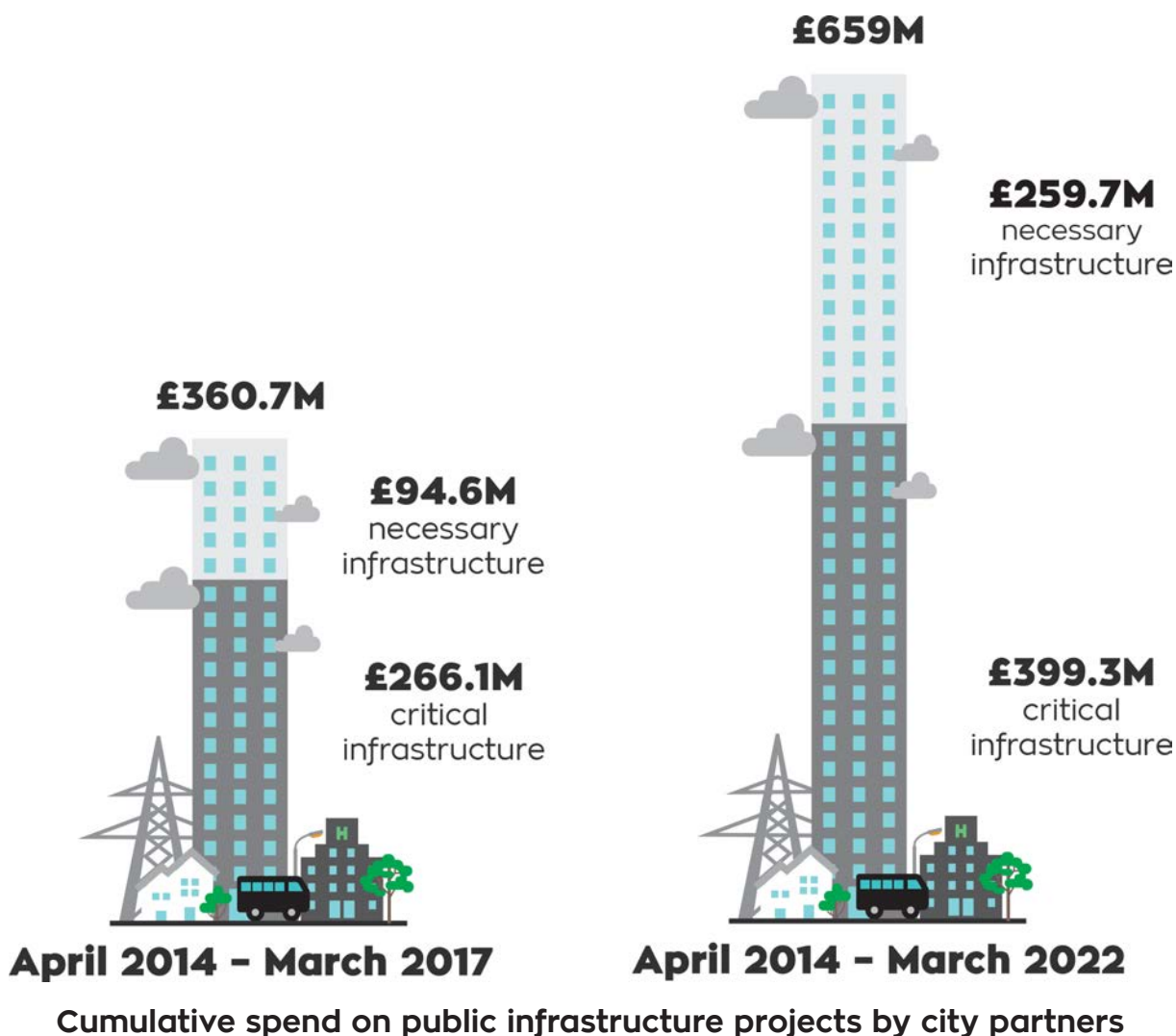
Source: [DfE Explore Education statistics](#)

Comments

The 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years will not be comparable to previous years due to the reliance on teacher assigned grades as a result of COVID-19 and the cancellation of formal exams. This explains the large increase from 56.7% in 2018/19 to 69.0% in 2019/20.

Plymouth continues to strengthen the conditions for increased growth and investment including ensuring effective infrastructure systems

Primary Indicator E - Capital investment in infrastructure



Comments

The Plymouth and South West Devon Infrastructure Needs Assessment 2017 sets out the infrastructure needed to support the Plymouth Plan and Joint Local Plan. 102 projects were identified as being critical over a 20 year timeframe. Infrastructure is defined as critical where it is needed to unlock growth and development that might not otherwise happen. To date, 41 of these projects (40%) have either been completed or started with a spend of nearly £400 million. These include the Energy from Waste Plant, Central Library, Derriford Transport Scheme, Oceansgate, School investment at Holy Cross, Pilgrim, St Matthews, Cann Bridge, Saltram Meadow, Pomphlett and Yealmpstone Farm, Millbay and City Centre Drainage Corridor and the Forder Valley Link Road.

In addition, there has been significant expenditure on infrastructure projects identified as necessary to support the city's sustainable growth agenda. Over £260 million has been spent on schemes that have been completed or started such as Well Being Hubs, Derriford Hospital, Sewage Treatment Works, Schools, Playing Pitch improvements, Extra Care Facilities, electricity renewal and improvements and The Box cultural destination.

International city

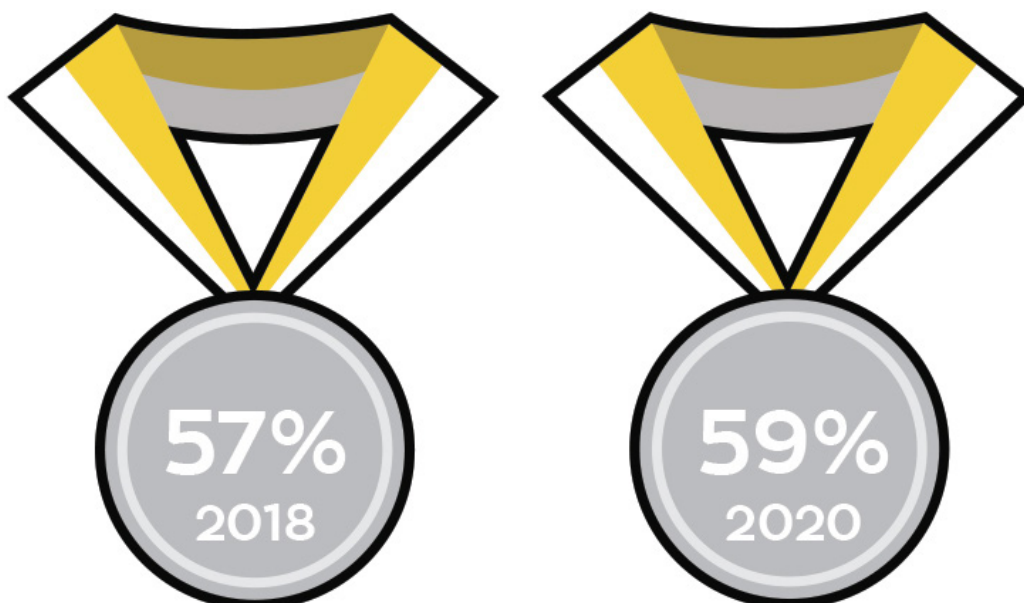
What we are trying to achieve - our strategic objective for an international city

Strategic Outcome

Plymouth is internationally renowned as Britain's Ocean City and is the UK's premier marine city, famous for its waterfront and being home to the UK's first National Marine Park. It is recognised as unique among UK cities for its natural drama and for its 500 year old history as a place of embarkation and exploration. Plymouth's continuing journey towards a world leading marine city supports the cultural experiences it offers to visitors who are looking for authenticity and character. The city's world class universities and research institutions are recognised for their innovation, and Plymouth is a place where businesses can capitalise on a unique economic position and talented workforce. Visitors from around the world are welcomed to a city that provides a diverse cultural experience and a perfect base for enjoying the city's surrounds, land and marine. Plymouth is an international city that local communities can enjoy, be a part of and be proud of.

Plymouth continues to improve its diverse cultural and sporting experience with great venues, major events, good food and hospitality offer

Primary Indicator A - Agreement with the statement 'Plymouth has a lot to offer'



Source: [Plymouth City Survey](#)

Comments

The proportion of residents agreeing that Plymouth has a lot to offer (cultural offer, events) has remained fairly consistent with 59% agreeing with this statement in the 2020 City Survey compared to 57% in 2018.

People in the age group 45 to 54 year were significantly more likely to disagree with this than those in older age groups (65+). This could reflect that the city has less to offer people in this age group and further research could help to identify what events or activities are considered to be missing.

Plymouth is internationally renowned as a leading UK tourist destination

Primary Indicator B - Visitor numbers



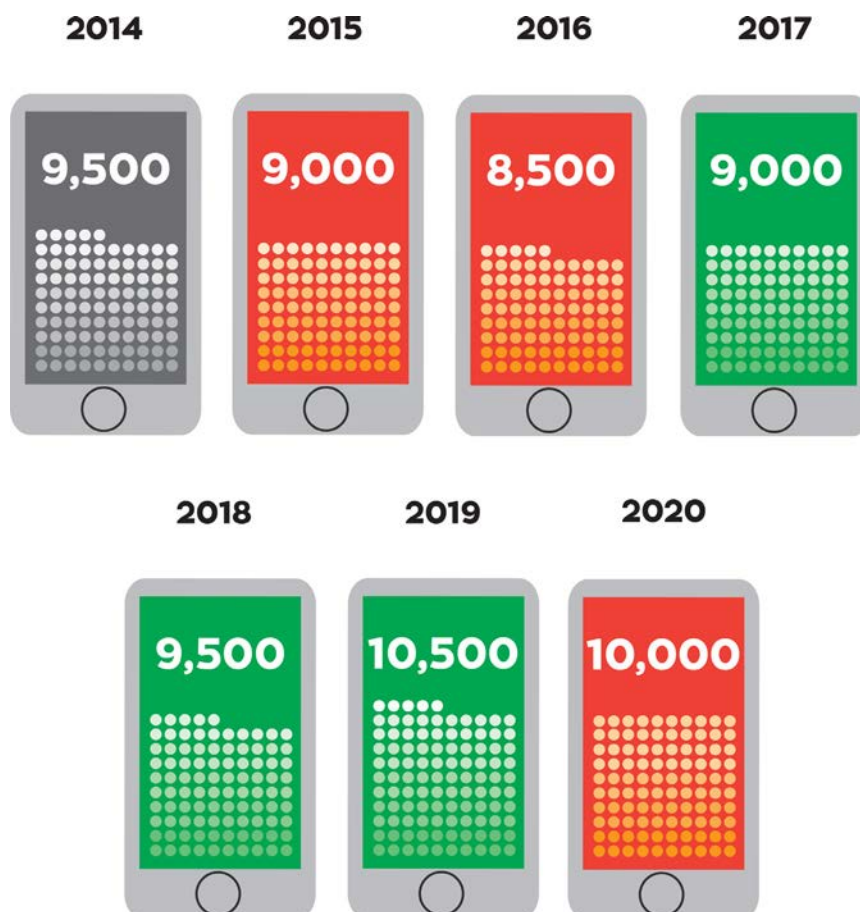
Source: South West Research Company

Comments

Visitor numbers have demonstrated a clear increase over the plan period to 2019 (about 1% a year). However, the visitor economy has been one of the hardest hit sectors by the COVID-19 pandemic and recent statistics show a reduction in visitors of over 50% from 2019 which will undoubtedly take a few years to recover from.

Plymouth is recognised internationally for expertise in the marine science and high technology manufacturing sectors

Primary Indicator C - Jobs in high-tech manufacturing and scientific research and development



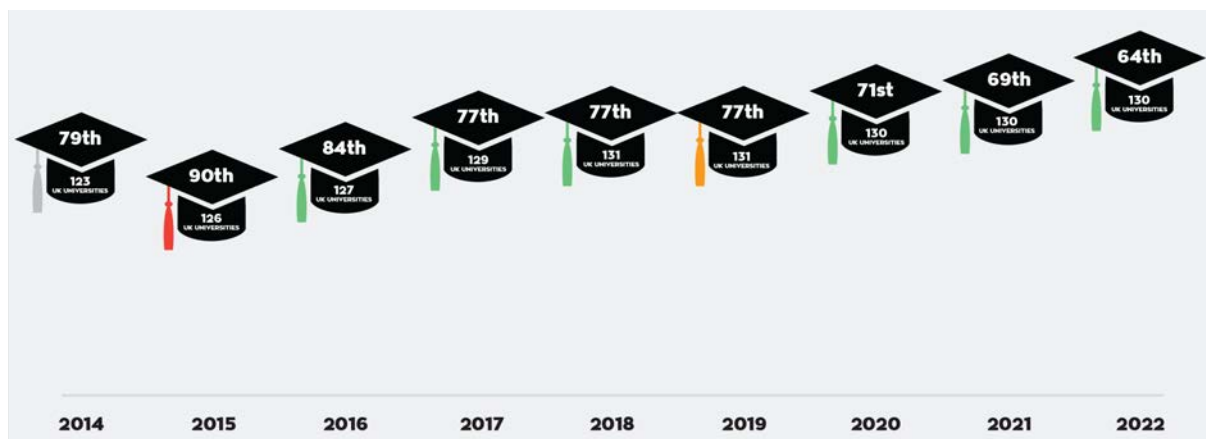
Source: University of Plymouth/AMORE

Comments

Statistics for this indicator suggest a variable but nevertheless clear increase (about 2% a year) to date in high-tech job numbers in Plymouth.

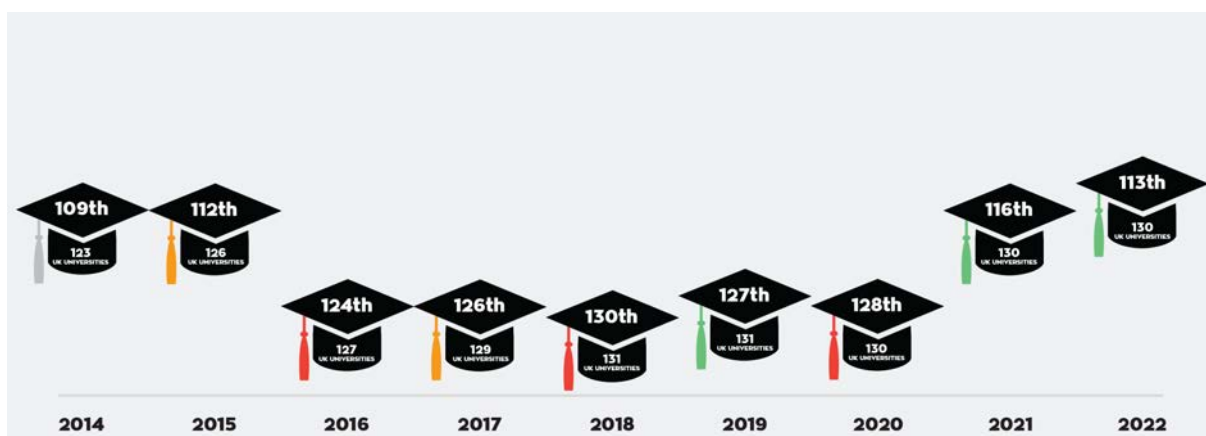
Plymouth's reputation for world class universities and research institutions continues to grow

Primary Indicator D(i) - UK ranking of Plymouth's universities (overall score) – University of Plymouth



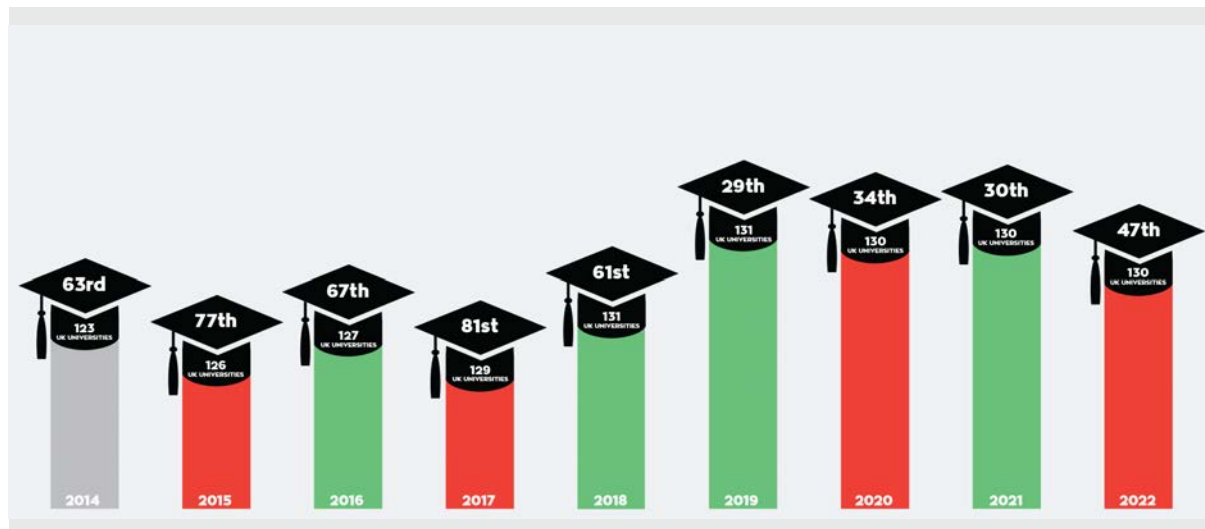
Source: [Complete University Guide](#)

Primary Indicator D(ii) - UK ranking of Plymouth's universities (overall score) – Plymouth Marjon University



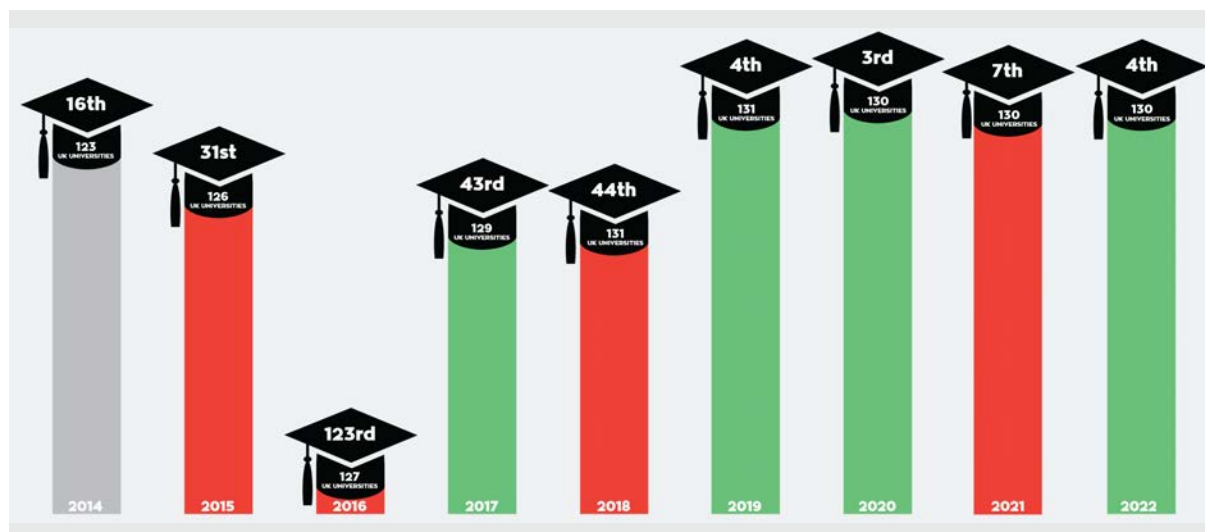
Source: [Complete University Guide](#)

Primary Indicator D(iii) - UK ranking of Plymouth's universities (student satisfaction) – University of Plymouth



Source: [Complete University Guide](#)

Primary Indicator D(iv) - UK ranking of Plymouth's universities (student satisfaction) – Plymouth Marjon University



Source: [Complete University Guide](#)

Comments

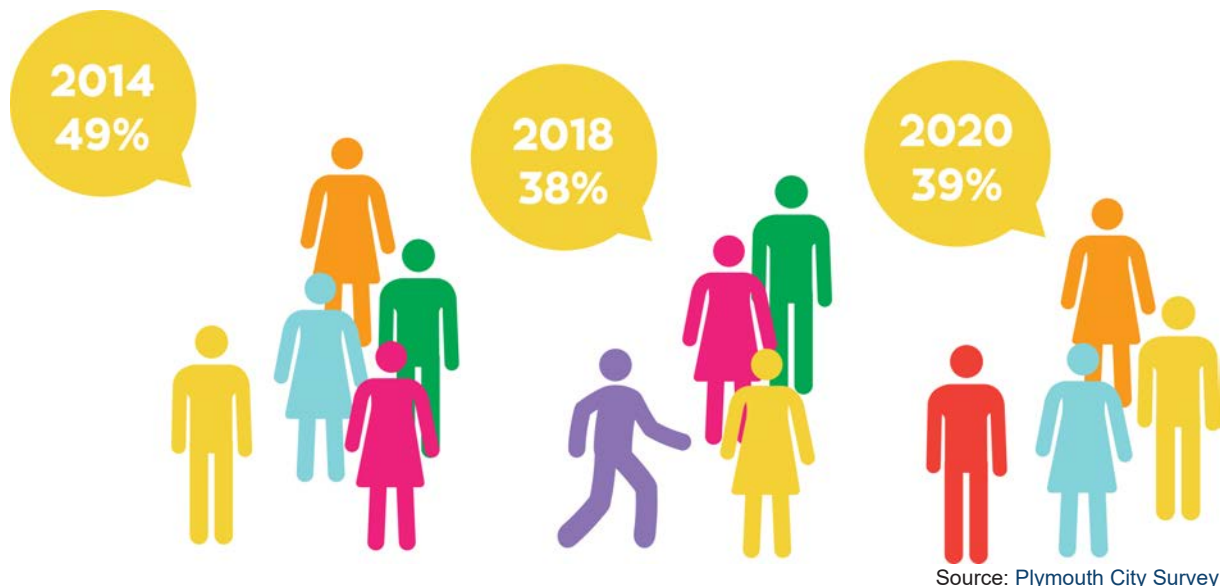
According to the Complete University Guide UK university rankings, the University of Plymouth and Plymouth Marjon University have both been on the up in recent years. The overall score covers a wide range of criteria including, for example, entry standards, graduate prospects, and academic services and facilities spend. On the criteria of student satisfaction, Plymouth Marjon University scores particularly highly, ranked fourth in the UK and first amongst all English universities. There are other national and global guides for university rankings which also provide useful information, such as the Times Good University Guide. Globally, according to the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, the University of Plymouth has consistently been ranked

within the banding 601-700, with a recent improvement shown since 2021, from a ranking of 501-600 recorded in 2020 to 401-500 in both 2021 and 2022. There are no global rankings awarded to the Plymouth Marjon University at this time.

Plymouth's newest university, Arts University Plymouth, doesn't yet feature in the Complete University Guide but will hopefully be able to be incorporated into future Annual Reports.

Plymouth's reputation is strengthened as a welcoming, multicultural city where a broad range of partners promote the benefits of diversity

Primary Indicator E - % of residents who agree with the statement: my local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together



Comments

The proportion of residents agreeing their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together has stayed consistent at 39% in 2020 compared with the 2018 City Survey where 38% agreed. However, there has been a significant decrease from 49% in 2014 (Plymouth Wellbeing Survey).

6. Look ahead

6.1 In addition to looking backwards, this annual report provides a baseline so that in future years, we can assess how national challenges have impacted upon the city and its direction of travel. The following section considers some of the main current challenges.

Coronavirus pandemic

6.2 The Coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on the city and the lives of its residents since it first began in early 2020. Covid-19 rates have remained persistently high in the city during 2022 and, whilst the city has a strong vision for the future and plan for recovery, it is still facing some unprecedented challenges going forward, not least in terms of the sustainability of the health and social care workforce. Whilst it remains too early to assess the full impact of the pandemic, some of the challenges facing us can already be identified.

6.3 The economic impacts of the pandemic were deep and, even with the city having strong plans for recover, are still ongoing in some instances and there are longer term legacy impacts, the extent of which we may not fully see for several years. Leisure, hospitality, non-food retail and tourism were some of the sectors most seriously affected in Plymouth. The visitor economy was one of the hardest hit sectors and this can be seen on page 18, with visitor numbers decreasing from 5,279,000 in 2019 to 2,400,000 in 2020.

6.4 The overriding focus of the health and care system on tackling Covid-19 may well have impacted on broader health outcomes across communities and exacerbated existing health inequalities. As outlined in the [Director of Public Health Annual Report 2021](#), Covid-19 has highlighted inequalities. There is an overall gradient of increasing cases and deaths with increasing deprivation in addition to significant differences between ethnicities.

6.5 As well as the direct harms from the virus, there have been a wide range of indirect harms, and these too are not equally distributed across the population. The Covid-19 pandemic and the control measures to reduce transmission have impacted on almost all aspects of people's lives. This is having profound health, economic and social consequences, all of which will impact on mental health and wellbeing now and into the future. The Covid-19 Mental Health Needs Assessment for Plymouth 2021 indicates that before the pandemic across a variety of metrics mental health and wellbeing in Plymouth was generally in line with or worse than national rates. A Centre for Mental Health report predicts that as a direct result of the pandemic, up to 8.5 million adults in England (almost 20% of that population) will need either new or additional mental health support. The vast majority of these will be in people who have existing mental health conditions or the general population. In Plymouth these figures equate to almost 27,000 of the estimated 39,000 people with common mental disorders requiring additional support and over 17,000 from the general population

requiring new support for mainly moderate-severe depression or anxiety. Moreover, these impacts are experienced differently by different groups. There is a risk that the pandemic may increase and entrench mental health inequalities that existed and were widening before the pandemic. There are indications that the full impact of the pandemic on mental health are yet to be seen and this will need careful monitoring over the next few years.

6.6 As outlined in last year's report, the impacts of some of the measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 are likely to have negatively impacted on the life chances of children and young people. Children and young people are one of the cohorts considered to be particularly vulnerable to increased mental health issues as a result of the pandemic. A potential increase in demand of around 77% for children and young people's mental health services has been estimated, across the range of need from emerging issues to more serious concerns. One significant impact of Covid-19 on the mental health needs of children and young people that is already being seen in data from Livewell Southwest is an increasing number of young people with an eating disorder. Plans are in place to address the rising demand for services however there is a risk that progress towards some of the policies within the Plymouth Plan could be affected.

6.7 In 2020 and 2021, academic testing within the Early Years was cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic and there is growing evidence that the pandemic has had a significant impact on the communication and language development of children from birth to five, which may affect long term learning and development unless the necessary support and interventions are secured. Anecdotally, speech and language services in Plymouth are seeing high levels of demand for services and also for assessments, such as those for autism for children, partly due to face to face services being halted for significant periods of time during the lockdowns.

6.8 Plymouth has also seen a rise in children entering the care of the local authority which can be directly attributed to the pandemic. The number of looked after children in the city has increased from 408 in 2014, to 436 in 2020 and then to 497 in January 2022. This has been linked to family breakdown for older children and concerns about the quality of parental care for younger children.

6.9 As outlined in [A Bright Future 2021-2026](#), the longer-term impact of Covid-19 on Plymouth's children and young people is yet to be fully known. For those children whose lives were already more difficult or risky, the legacy is likely to be significant, and detrimental. The full impact of this is not likely to be known for a few more years.

Climate emergency

6.10 On 18 March 2019, the City Council declared a climate emergency in recognition of the need for an urgent response from the global community to the threat of climate change, with a target of a net-zero city by 2030. Carbon neutrality is defined as the point when the city achieves a net zero carbon budget by getting as close to zero greenhouse gas emissions as possible by 2030, and then offsetting any residual emissions via other credible initiatives.

6.11 Following consultation and review in 2020, the Plymouth Plan was aligned with the ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030 and these changes were approved at a City Council meeting on 25 January 2021.

6.12 Plymouth aspires to be amongst the greenest and most sustainable places in Europe. It has been recognised as one of Forum for the Future's leading 'green' cities and has a strong reputation in promoting sustainable development. For example, in recent years Plymouth has almost doubled the area of land designated as Local Nature Reserves, supported 2,500 improvements in home energy efficiency, and launched a programme of work to establish the UK's first National Marine Park within Plymouth Sound.

6.13 Current and future progress towards achieving the city's climate change ambitions are measured through a series of Climate Emergency Action Plans. Plymouth's [Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022](#) contains over 100 realistic, achievable and deliverable actions that the city is committed to delivering during 2022. This is the third of 11 action plans that will be delivered by 2030. Progress on last year's Action Plan and details of key achievements can be found in the [Plymouth Climate Emergency Action Plan Progress Report July 2021](#) as outlined on pages 13 and 14, Plymouth's carbon emissions per capita have fallen steadily over the past 6 years, reducing from 4.4t tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) in 2014 to 3.1 in 2020.

Cost of living

6.14 Partly due to the Covid pandemic and partly due to other factors such as the war in Ukraine, the cost of living has been increasing across the UK since early 2021¹. Inflation reached its highest recorded level in April 2022 and the ONS estimates that it is now higher than at any time since around 1982, affecting the affordability of goods and services for households. Energy prices are steadily increasing. From April 2021 to April 2022, domestic gas prices increased by 95% and domestic electricity prices by 54%. Another rise is forecast in October 2022. Food and road fuel prices are also on the rise with petrol currently achieving record weekly prices. Low-income and vulnerable households are forecast to be most affected by the rising cost of living. According to the Resolution Foundation, the poorest quarter of households are set to see their real incomes drop by 6% in 2022/23².

6.15 It is not possible to know whether the cost of living increases are fairly temporary or are set to continue in the longer-term. However, if household bills remain high, this is likely to have a sustained impact on the standard of living of some of the most vulnerable people in the city. This will undoubtedly exacerbate some of the city's pre-existing challenges and make some of the ambitions within the Plymouth Plan harder to achieve. Deprivation and poverty levels, which are higher than average in some parts of the city already, are likely to rise. More people in food and fuel poverty will mean that health and living conditions are likely to deteriorate for some of the city's residents. This negative effect on health and wellbeing could impact on life expectancy

¹ Rising cost of living in the UK, House of Commons Library, May 2022

² [Inflation Nation • Resolution Foundation](#)

and healthy life expectancy and may deepen existing health inequalities. Existing economic challenges such as lower than average wages and low productivity could worsen and local businesses may struggle to thrive. A reduction in disposable income could have a negative impact on the local economy. Continually increasing costs and rising inflation could impact on the delivery of major projects within the city such as those set to improve infrastructure or address the climate emergency which will in turn impact on the delivery of the Plymouth Plan objectives.

6.16 The city clearly faces significant challenge going forward however also has a number of strengths and robust plans for the future which will help to address some of these challenges. Plymouth has a positive local economic outlook and there is currently a strong demand for labour. Major projects planned for delivery over the next 5 to 10 years are forecast to have a positive impact on the local economy. These include the Plymouth and South Devon Freezone (Freeport) and wider port related potential, together with the National Marine Park which will play a significant role in the recovery of the visitor economy as well as having a number of other positive impacts. The next review of the Plymouth Plan, scheduled to take place in 2024, will need to take into account the likely effects of these changes and challenges. Consideration will need to be given as to how some of the long-term impacts can be managed effectively to keep progress on track.



CONTACT

Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Department
Plymouth City Council
Ballard House
West Hoe Road
Plymouth PL1 3BJ
E plymouthplan@plymouth.gov.uk
www.plymouth.gov.uk/plymouthplan