

Q3 2025/26 PERFORMANCE REPORTEducation and Children's Social Care Overview and
Scrutiny Committee**CONTENTS**

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I. CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY SERVICES

I.1. REFERRALS & RE-REFERRALS

Ref	Indicator Name	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Actual	Previous Year & Benchmarking		Current Period	
				2024/25 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q3 2025/26
1	Number of referrals received within the last 12 months	2,415	3,879	2,806	519.4 (2024/25)	578.0 (2024/25)	2,547
	Referrals received within the last 12 months - Rate per 10,000 children	467.7	748.2	538.4			488.7
2	Number of re-referrals within 12 months (last 12 months)	483	780	730	22.6% (2024/25)	21.5% (2024/25)	575
	% of re-referrals within 12 months (last 12 months)	20.0%	20.1%	26.0%			20.9%

Plymouth processed 2,547 referrals in the 12 months ending quarter three. This represents a decrease of 259 referrals compared to March 2025, returning to levels on par with the volumes seen in 2022/23.

The referral rate per 10,000 children was 488.7 at quarter three's end. This rate has decreased from Plymouth's 2024/25 published position of 538.4 and is currently at a lower level than the England average (519.4) and our statistical neighbour average (578.0).

Re-referral rates have decreased when compared to the published figure of 26.0% for 2024/25, but they remain a key area of focus following the move to the Families First Front Door model. At quarter three's end, 20.9% of referrals were re-referrals (cases where the same child had been referred within the previous 12 months). This represents:

- A 1.4 percentage point decrease on the last quarter,
- A 5.1 percentage point increase from Plymouth's 2024/25 published figure, and
- A rate that is under the England and statistical neighbour averages for 2024/25.

A reduction in contacts and thus referrals in December (due to the two- week holiday period) means that volumes in quarter three saw decreases, as did the rolling 12-month view. Along with this, the data also reflects the early impact of the Families First model, which is now embedding across the partnership. While the Front Door continues to experience a high level of demand, contacts are increasingly being responded to by the agency best placed to meet the needs of the child or young person at the earliest opportunity.

This shift demonstrates improved multi- agency decision- making, more proportionate intervention, and a reduction in unnecessary escalation into statutory services. The model is supporting a more effective and timely response for children and families, ensuring that those who do require statutory assessment are identified appropriately, while others receive targeted support through the wider partnership.

1.2. CHILDREN IN NEED

Ref	Indicator Name	Previous Year & Benchmarking					Current Period
		2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q3 2025/26
3	Number of children subject to a Child In Need Plan (snapshot)	944	1,379	857	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	791
	Children subject to a Child In Need Plan - Rate per 10,000 children	177.1	265.4	164.9	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	151.8

Plymouth's Child in Need caseload increased by 20 children in quarter three compared to quarter two. This caseload excludes children subject to Child Protection Plans or Looked After Children. The current figure remains lower than the last three year-end positions.

However, we note that children subject to Child Protection Plans or Child in Care Plans (covered in the next two sections) are currently at higher rates per 10,000 children than the published England and statistical neighbour averages for 2024/25.

In June 2025, our new Integrated Front Door was launched. At the same time, we also implemented the first phase of the Families First Reforms which saw our Targeted Support Teams now taking most of the Children in Need work alongside the Early Help and Prevention work. The teams have increased to seven teams of eight Family Help Lead Practitioners providing a significant increase in resource to ensure that children and their families receive timely and responsive support at the earliest opportunity.

The teams have worked closely with our social work teams to support with reducing the number of transitions for families which will support in building relationships, enabling practitioners to provide a more intensive package of support. We believe this will reduce escalation and subsequently support children to remain within their family.

Training is being closely developed with our Academy for staff to ensure that our workers have the right skills and confidence to work proactively with families. This will ensure that Children Social Care staff and partners have a shared understanding of need and how to respond.

1.3. CHILDREN SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

Ref	Indicator Name	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Actual	Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
				2024/25 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q3 2025/26
4	Number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan (Snapshot)	230	299	361	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	312
	Children subject to a Child Protection Plan - Rate per 10,000 children	44.5	57.7	69.3	40.6 (2024/25)	52.0 (2024/25)	59.9
5	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Neglect	45.9% (107)	50.2% (150)	52.4% (189)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	51.9% (162)
	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Physical Abuse	6.4% (15)	8.4% (25)	8.6% (31)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	7.7% (24)
	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Sexual Abuse	4.3% (10)	8.4% (25)	5.8% (21)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	2.2% (7)
	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Emotional Abuse	43.3% (101)	33.0% (99)	33.2% (120)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	38.1% (119)
6	% of children subject to multiple child protection plans - Within lifetime of the child (new plans starting in last 12 months)	25.8% (65)	30.1% (112)	19.7% (81)	24.5% (2024/25)	26.3% (2024/25)	31.0% (128)

As of 31 December 2025, 312 children were subject to Child Protection Plans, representing a rate of 59.9 children per 10,000. This is slightly higher than Plymouth's published 2023/24 rate of 57.7 (299 children) but less than the published figure of 361 for 2024/25. The current rate exceeds both the England average by 19.3 per 10,000 and our Statistical Neighbour average by 7.9 per 10,000.

The proportion of children who became subject to a Child Protection Plan between January 2025 and December 2025, and who had previously been on a Child Protection Plan, was 31.0%. This represents a decline of 11.3 percentage points from 31 March 2025, returning to a level similar to our 2023/24 position. The increase seen in 2025/26 to date sees Plymouth return to a level that is higher than both the England average of 24.5% and the statistical neighbours average of 26.3% (England saw a small decrease on 2023/24 and the statistical neighbours saw an increase). Over the 12 months ending 31 December 2025, 128 children and young people have started repeat Child Protection Plans.

The Families First Partnership reforms that will be embedded fully by April 2026, should bring about change in ensuring earlier help and intervention take place, with better partnership working and sharing of information to identify the help and protection family's needs without there being a need to escalate. There are working groups and engagement sessions across the partnership, and this is

highlighting several practice areas to strengthen and better ways of working together to support families, we will start to embed the changes in April 2026.

We maintain strong focus on requests for repeat Child Protection Plans, with greater oversight by Service Managers. This provides more consistency and creates opportunities for reflective discussions to ensure care plans are appropriate for these children and to explore whether we can work differently with families.

We also focus strongly on Child Protection Plans lasting over 12 months. Monthly meetings are chaired jointly by the Service Manager for Safeguarding and the Service Manager for Children's Social Work Service to ensure effective oversight and timely decisions for children.

There is a lot of QA work taking place around Child Protection which is helping to identify themes so we can target improvement work.

1.4. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (ALSO REFERRED TO AS CHILDREN IN CARE)				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q3 2025/26
7	Number of children subject to a Care Plan - Looked After Children (Snapshot)	500	513	527	67.0 (2024/25)	90.0 (2024/25)	525
	Children subject to a Care Plan - Looked After Children - Rate per 10,000 children	96.9	99.0	101.0			100.7
8	Number of Looked After Children in an unregistered placement (snapshot)	6	9	7	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	7
9	% of Looked After Children placed outside of the city of Plymouth (i.e., the placement is not within PL1 to PL7 or PL9)	39.9% <small>(25% DfE: +20 miles of LA boundary)</small>	42.7% <small>(23% DfE: 20+ miles of LA boundary)</small>	44.2% (233) <small>(24% DfE: 20+ miles of LA boundary)</small>	Within boundary not benchmarked 17.0% DfE: 20+ miles of LA boundary)	Within boundary not benchmarked 17.0% DfE: 20+ miles of LA boundary)	42.5% (223)
10	Placement Type: Family Placement (fostering or connected carers)	339	368	343	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	351
	Placement Type: Children's Homes, Residential Care Homes & Residential Schools	57	57	64	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	71
	Placement Type: Hostels & other Supportive accommodation	48	47	54	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	57
	Placement Type: Lodgings or Independent living (16+)	x	x	x	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	x
	Placement Type: Other Placement	5	8	6	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	5
	Placement Type: Placed for Adoption	18	5	13	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	4
	Placement Type: Placed with Parents	32	26	42	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	34
	Placement Type: Other accommodation - NHS, Family Centres, Parent & Child	x	x	6	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	x
	Placement Type: Secure Units & Youth Offender Institutions	x	x	x	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	x

Please note: where the number of children is below five, the actual figure is suppressed and shows 'x'.

As of 31 December 2025, there were 525 children and young people in care. This represents a net increase of 12 on the published 2023/24 figure, but two less than the published 2024/25 figure of 527. The average month-end position over the past 12 months was 531 children and young people.

Of the 534 children in care, 302 (57.5%) were placed within the city, while 223 (42.5%) were placed outside the city. This is currently lower than our internal 2024/25 figure of 44.2%.

This measure is based on the postcode of the child's placement address. Postcodes outside PL1 to PL7 or PL9 are considered outside the city. For example, PL12 refers to Saltash in Cornwall and is considered outside Plymouth, even though it may be less than a mile from a child's home address.

Using provisional information, approximately 24.2% of children in care (127 out of 525) are placed more than 20 miles from their home address. A more detailed breakdown is provided:

- 75.8% (398) placed within 0 to 20 miles,
- 14.2% (75) placed between 20.1 and 100 miles,
- 5.6% (29) placed between 100.1 and 200 miles, and
- 4.4% (23) placed more than 200 miles.

The number of children in unregistered arrangements reduce by two to seven at the end of quarter three (quarter two was reported at nine), of which a small number are registered by Care Quality Commission due to the complexity of the children's health needs.

The Family Homes for Plymouth's Children programme continues to address placement sufficiency issues through fostering recruitment and retention, developing our own residential provision, progressing plans to reunify children with their families and stepping children from residential to family-based care. The sufficiency of fostering households continues to be a challenge locally and nationally;

There have been young people who have been supported to move from their residential Children's Homes to supported accommodation and back into their parents' care with a robust package of support from Reconnect. We review these children weekly to ensure there are no delays in children moving to more suitable placements or home.

The Financial Offer to Special Guardians was presented and agreed at the Family Homes Board in June 2025 and was due to be further reviewed in quarter two. This has been delayed as the outcome of a bid for a Department for Education pilot in relation to Special Guardianship has not yet been received.

A Registered Manager has been appointed and is progressing the development of our own Residential Children's Homes. The first property purchase has now completed and recruitment of support staffing for this has begun whilst further searches continue for suitable properties in Plymouth.

1.5. CARE EXPERIENCED (ALSO REFERRED TO AS CARE LEAVERS)

Ref	Indicator Name	Previous Year & Benchmarking					Current Period
		2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q3 2025/26
11	% of Care Experienced young people in Unsuitable Accommodation (Statutory Service (aged 18 to 20))	4.1% (8/192) (12% DfE)	9.5% (19/201) (15% DfE)	7.0% (14/201) (17.0% DfE)	11.0% (2024/25 DfE)	9.3% (2024/25 DfE)	6.3% (13/205)
12	% of Care Experienced young people in Education, Employment and Training (Statutory Service (EET aged 18 to 20))	50.0% (96/192) (47.0% DfE)	43.3% (87/201) (45.0% DfE)	46.8% (94/201) (41.0% DfE)	54.0% (2024/25 DfE)	52.0% (2024/25 DfE)	46.3% (95/205)

Plymouth's quarter three data shows that 6.3% of care-experienced young people are in unsuitable accommodation. This is lower than both the England average and the statistical neighbours' average (2024/25 published figures). The number of young people in unsuitable accommodation has improved compared to our published figures for both 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Following the previous Ofsted Focused visit in quarter two, weekly meetings were implemented continued through quarter three to focus on care experienced young people in unsuitable accommodation (Bed and Breakfast) due to the concern about the length of time that young people were living in unsuitable accommodation. Working closely with Community Connections, progress has been continued in moving young people on into more suitable temporary accommodation while long term homes are identified. Through quarter four, these meetings are planned to be stepped back to fortnightly.

The proportion of care leavers in Education, Employment, and Training (EET) was 46.3%, which is 0.5 percentage points lower than our internal 2024/25 figure. Our DfE published figure of 41.0% for 2024/25 (which uses slightly different criteria than our internal reporting) was approximately 11.0 to 13.0 percentage points lower than the published figures for our comparators.

While our NEET rates remain below England and statistical neighbours' averages, we have continued to see steady improvement in reducing the number of young people recorded as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) through the introduction of EET Advocates for our 16/17-year-old children in care and the targeted EET action plan. In quarter three relationships have started to become embedded with the additional EET advocate for care leavers and the connect to work scheme, with a dedicated practitioner to support care experienced young people. This seeks to reduce barriers to education, employment and training.

The Care Leavers Hub opened in quarter three which has opened up further opportunities for support and multi-agency working for those in unsuitable accommodation and for those who are NEET.

Please note: The DfE calculation differs from our local figures. We include all care leavers (Qualifying, Relevant & Former Relevant) and use the latest information available for those aged under 21. The DfE only include Former Relevant care leavers and use information held around the young person's 19th, 20th or 21st birthday.

2. EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND SKILLS

2.1. OFSTED OUTCOMES

2.1. OFSTED OUTCOMES				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Actual	2023/24 England	2023/24 South West	Q3 2025/26
1	% of all schools judged by Ofsted as good or outstanding	76.0%	77.6%	90.8%	90.4%	86.7%	Please see note
2	% of pupils attending Plymouth schools judged by Ofsted as good or outstanding	77.1%	81.0%	90.4% (based on NOR May School Census and OFSTED outcomes at 31/08/2024)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	Please see note

PLEASE NOTE: From September 2024, OFSTED no longer provides a one-word judgement on the overall effectiveness of a school. Therefore, the figures will remain static for future reporting until it can be established how OFSTED will be using inspection data for monitoring purposes.

- At the end of 2024/25 – 16 schools have been inspected over the course of the academic year.
- Of these 16 schools, six have received good or outstanding in all of the four main areas of 'Quality of Education', 'Behaviour and attitudes', 'Personal Development' and Effectiveness of leadership and management' (37.5%)
- All 16 schools were judged as having effective Safeguarding.
- At the end of the first term of 2025/26, there have been no full (S5) school inspections in Plymouth.

2.2. ABSENCE MONITORING

2.2. ABSENCE MONITORING				Latest published data & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2022/23 Annual	2023/24 Annual	2024/25 Term 1&2	England Term 1&2	South West Term 1&2	Term 1 Sep to Dec 2025/26
3	% of overall absence in all schools	8.2%	8.3% (Academic Year 2023/24)	7.5% (Autumn & Spring Terms 24/25)	6.6% (Autumn & Spring Terms 24/25)	6.9% (Autumn & Spring Terms 24/25)	7.3% (View Your Education Data, End of Dec 25)
4	% of persistent absence (less than 90% attendance) in all schools	24.1%	23.6% (Academic Year 23/24) (Of which 3.2% were severely absent)	20.2% (Autumn & Spring Terms 24/25) (Of which 3.1% were severely absent)	17.6% (Autumn & Spring Terms 24/25) (Of which 2.3% were severely absent)	18.0% (Autumn & Spring Terms 24/25) (Of which 2.7% were severely absent)	20.6% (Of which 2.5% were severely absent) (View Your Education Data End of Dec 25)
5	% of persistent absence (less than 90% attendance) of pupils with Education, Health, and Care plans (EHCPs)	40.5%	40.5% (Academic Year 23/24) (Of which 8.5% were severely absent)	36.4% (Autumn & Spring Terms 24/25) (Of which 8.9% were severely absent)	33.8% (Autumn & Spring Terms 24/25) (Of which 7.3% were severely absent)	36.3% (Autumn & Spring Terms 24/25) (Of which 8.7% were severely absent)	39.5% (Of which 11.1% (226) were severely absent) (View Your Education Data, End of Dec 25)

The benchmark information provided above is provided from the Department for Education; compiled from the statutory school census return completed on a termly basis. The best available report for the three indicators above is the 2024/25 Autumn & Spring Term data.

The data source for local absence statistics continues to be taken from 'View Your Education Data' (VYED) website, the DfE site for collating school absence. VYED presents absence data cumulatively from the beginning of each term and therefore the following data represents the new Autumn term 2025/26 - period from 01/09/2025 to 31/12/2025.

- The Overall absence rate was 7.3%. This is 0.2 pp lower than the published Autumn & Spring Term 24/25 for Plymouth; 0.7pp higher than the published national figure and 0.4pp higher than the published South West figure. These benchmark figures cover two terms however unlike the one term recorded for the current period. (7.3% is 10pp lower than the current published full year absence figure 23/24 for Plymouth)
- The percentage of those persistently absent was 20.6%. This is 0.4pp higher than the published Autumn & Spring Term 24/25 for Plymouth; 3pp higher than the published national figure and 2.6pp higher than the published South West figure. (20.6% is 3pp lower than the current published full year absence figure 23/24 for Plymouth)
- The percentage of those with an EHCP who were persistently absent was 39.5%. This is 3.1pp higher than the Autumn & Spring Term 24/25 for Plymouth; 5.7pp higher than the published national figure and 3.2pp higher than the published South West figure. (39.5% is 1pp lower than the published full year absence figure 23/24 for Plymouth)

Work continues across the Inclusion and Welfare Service, schools, and wider partners to reduce school absence, with attendance established as the central priority for 2025/26.

Plymouth's response recognises that attendance is not simply a measure of presence in school, but a reflection of belonging, trust, inclusion, and opportunity. To address this, the city has adopted a comprehensive Place-Based Plan, designed to understand and respond to the complex and interconnected causes of absence through early intervention, shared accountability, and evidence-informed practice.

The Place-Based Plan brings together six interlinked priorities under a single citywide commitment, supported by the implementation of the Predictive Risk Model (PRM) and the Resilience Enablement Framework (REF). Together, these tools are shifting the system from reactive intervention to proactive prevention, enabling earlier identification of risk and more targeted, timely support for children and families.

Plymouth is working collaboratively with all schools and early years settings to deliver the Team Plymouth Education (pre-16) workstream. Extensive consultation has taken place with Headteachers and Multi-Academy Trust CEOs, reinforcing attendance, inclusion, and educational excellence as shared system priorities. This collaboration is further strengthened through the establishment of the Leaders of Education Across Plymouth (LEAP) Board and a new MAT CEO Strategic Group, providing stronger governance, alignment, and collective leadership across the city.

Plymouth is also contributing to national learning through close partnership with the Department for Education as part of the national attendance campaign. In collaboration with Plymouth Marjon University, a comprehensive attendance survey was completed by 2,200 parents and 1,500 children, generating rich insight that has informed both national policy development and Plymouth's local practice.

The Belonging Framework was formally launched with schools in October 2025, providing a shared foundation for strengthening emotional safety, connection, and participation across all phases. Complementing this, Plymouth City Council has match-funded the Education Endowment Foundation to roll out The Engagement Platform across all schools, enabling consistent measurement of engagement as a key indicator of belonging and a driver of attendance improvement.

Targeted Funding continues to play a critical role in supporting pupils at risk of absence. The launch of Targeted Funding for SEN Support is enabling more children to receive the right help at the right time, with early evaluation showing positive impacts on attendance and empowering school leaders to innovate. Targeted Funding 3 now supports 380 children across 38 schools, with each school receiving funding for a cohort of 10 pupils through a clear service level agreement and robust quality assurance arrangements. In parallel, a new commissioning plan for Alternative Provision and Education Other Than at School has been launched.

Every school has an allocated Plymouth City Council Attendance Officer working closely with them to support children who are severely absent. Performance dashboards are shared with phase leaders and MAT CEOs, enabling peer challenge, collaborative problem-solving, and targeted system action. Extended Virtual School duties are fully embedded, ensuring that attendance and outcomes for all eligible children remain a priority, with impact evidenced through audits and case studies.

There has been a successful launch of the Education Strategy 2026–2029, with a strong emphasis on inclusion, early help, and improving outcomes for all learners. Progress is also evident in Elective Home Education, where the new Reduction and Prevention Plan has led to stabilisation and a modest reduction in new registrations during autumn 2025/26.

Together, these actions demonstrate a coherent, citywide approach to improving attendance—rooted in strong partnership, shared leadership, smarter use of data, and a relentless focus on belonging and inclusion for every child in Plymouth.

2.3. PRIORITY AREAS OF FOCUS

2.3. PRIORITY AREAS OF FOCUS				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2022/23 Ac.Year Plymouth	2023/24 Ac.Year Plymouth	2024/25 Ac.Year Plymouth	2024/25 Ac.Year England	2024/25 Ac.Year South West	Q3 2025/26 Oct to Dec
6	Number of pupils in Elective Home Education (EHE)	580 (1.5%) *	640 (1.7%)	930 (2.4%)	152,410 (1.8%)	17,230 (2.5%)	827 (Number at end of month) (2.3%)
7	Number of pupils considered to be missing education (CME)	230 (0.6%)	310 (0.8%)	370 (1.0%)	149,900 (1.8%)	9,360 (1.3%)	91 (Number at end of month)
8	Number of pupils on part time timetables	-	409	316	Not published	Not published	294
Ref	Indicator Name	2022 Cal.Year Plymouth	2023 Cal.Year Plymouth	2024 Cal.Year Plymouth	2024 Cal.Year England	2024 Cal.Year Neighbours	Q3 2025/26 Oct to Dec
9	EHCP Timeliness – 6 weeks	-	5.0% (45/895)	9.6% (113/1176)	81.7%	Regional 74.4% Statistical 62.8%	93.4% (240/257)
10	EHCP Timeliness – 20 weeks	44.1% (175/397)	17.8% (63/354)	6.0% (24/403)	45.9%	Regional 31.0% Statistical 38.9%	16.1%

**Percentage figures relate to the percentage of the statutory school age cohort in EHE/CME*

EHE/CME/PTTT

The Local Authority continues to hold a firm monitoring position, an understanding of the children in the cohorts and where needed, intervention to ensure that a suitable education is being provided of those in Elective Home Education, Part-Time Timetables and Children Missing out on Education.

We have launched the accelerated EHE Action Plan which brings together Family Hubs, the voluntary and community sector, health, and other local area partners to work together in a preventative way in respect of vulnerable children being withdrawn to EHE and those at risk of exclusion.

The Virtual School Extended Schools Co-ordinator continues to lead a CAFE (Children Absent from Education) approach developed in May and June to explore the possible barriers to education for those considered to be disadvantaged; this would include those with SEN, those known to social care; those with high numbers of suspensions and those at risk of permanent exclusion. Focusing on education as a protective factor for children and young people, regular discussions, practice sharing and quality assurance activity is now embedded across Children's Services Teams, conducted jointly between Education, Participation and Skills and Children's Social Care. The learning from this is

shared through team meetings and with Senior Managers. Collaboration with schools to include their involvement in this practice is now being implemented.

The Local Authority maintains a sharp focus for any child on a protection plan being in home education. Any child in home education and on a Child Protection Plan is registered as missing education and is supported to return to school.

All children with an EHCP who are home educated have a joint approach to casework which includes the Home Education Team and 0-25 SEND Service.

Every child who is deregistered to home education has a home visit within two weeks. Any child who is considered vulnerable and who is home educated is allocated a key worker who undertakes home visits; the support remains in place until the child is receiving a suitable education at school. A child who is registered as home educated but whose parents have reached a formal notice stage (where there has not been evidence provided of a suitable education) are recorded as a child missing education and assigned a key worker who will undertake home visits and casework.

A fortnightly Service Manager review of part-time timetables is now embedded with proactive follow up by Access and Attendance Officers to ensure appropriate challenge and multi-disciplinary support to schools.

EHCP TIMELINESS

At the end of December 2025, 3,606 children and young people (CYP) in Plymouth have an EHCP, compared to 3546 in November 2025. This includes the increase for completed new plans, transitions in and out of the local area and the ceasing of any appropriate post-18 plans.

Requests for assessment levels are continuing to fluctuate across the year with variation in the number of requests for assessment. There were 84 requests for assessments in December 2025. For the academic year to date (2025/26, until the end of December) there have been 380 requests for assessment, representing a monthly average of 95. *(Data from Live Tracker, taking into account any amendment since month of reporting)*

It was expected that with the new targeted funding launched in September, would start to see a decline in requests as schools can now apply for funding to enable provision and support without the requirement of an EHCP. Any reduction is not yet evidenced in the data and further work needs to take place with schools and settings to ensure that children's needs are being identified and supported much earlier and the impact from the targeted funding is having a true impact on the reduction of requests.

There were 83 EHCNA request decisions made by the end of December. The service made 78 decisions within the required timescale of 6 weeks, representing a rate of 94%. We are seeing an increasing number of decisions being made before the month they are required to be made; our data is demonstrating where cases can be brought forward for an early decision this is taking place. Out of the expected decisions due in December 95.7% were completed to timescale, compared to 93.8% in November. *(As reported in our monthly KPI data)*

In December, 26 EHCP Educational Psychology assessments were completed and submitted, of which 19 exceeded the 12-week deadline and 11 met KPI. Current capacity allows for approximately 39 assessments per term from the core Educational Psychology team, with an additional 12 from associates. As of the end of December, 378 young people remain on the waiting list up from 344 for allocation which holds a significant risk. There are currently 9 open assessments over 52 weeks where EP advice has not been received, 57 plans over 40 weeks where EP advice has not been received and 62 plans over 30 weeks where EP advice has not been received. At this stage the 16-week decision on whether to issue a plan cannot be taken.

Rapid progress has been made since June 2024, with the team increasing EHCP assurance by 200%, clearing a backlog of 641 cases. However, demand remains high, and a new backlog is quickly forming due to capacity of the Educational Psychologists, posing a risk to sustainability. Current projections

indicate the team must issue 90 plans per month to maintain compliance, which is challenging. A business case was submitted to request support to seek agency EPs, and to plan for the long-term solution. This business case was declined, and an options paper is now being developed to agree next steps and plan a way forward and an EP review of the service will take place to look at alternative models of delivery, however without agreement for additional funding the options to deal with the backlog is limited and the waiting list will continue to increase.

58 final EHCPs were issued in December having received all amendments from settings and families. This represents an increase compared to an average of 55 plans per month being issued for the academic year 2024/25. 13.8% (8) plans were issued within the 20-week timescale. However, the overall 20-week average for the calendar year to date (Sep-Dec) is 13.5% and therefore we are not meeting our statutory timeliness for 86.5% of our children. *(As reported in our monthly KPI data)*

2.4. EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

2.4. EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2022	2023	2024	2024 England	2024 Regional	Q3 2025/26
11	% of 16- and 17-year-olds in Education, Employment and Training	91.1%	90.4%	93.3%	94.6%	94.6%	92.9% (End of Dec 2025)
12	% of 16- and 17-year-olds with SEND in Education, Employment and Training	83.2%	81.4%	89.2%	90.2%	90.0%	89.9% (End of Dec 2025)

By the end of Q3 (reported position at end of Dec 2025), 92.9% of 16-and 17-year-olds are in Education Employment and Training. By the end of the Autumn Term of 2025/26, this figure is 0.3% higher than the figure seen at the end of the Summer Term 2024/25 (92.6%).

The percentage of 16- and 17-year-olds with SEND in Education, Employment and Training at the end of Dec 2025 is 89.9%.

Continuing the positive engagement of 2023/24 and 2024/25, the target for 16- and 17-year-olds with an EHCP, being in Education, Employment and Training has been raised by 1% to 93% for 2025/26, after the post 16 Team achieved their target of 92% in 2024/25.

Moving young people from not being in education, employment, and training (NEET) to seeking (SEET), education, employment, and training remains the focus of the team, with over 60% of the NEET young people now engaged and working towards moving into EET status. The team continue to widen their offer of extensive support to transition into employment, education or training to groups who may experience disadvantage, including (but not exclusive to) the SEN cohort, those in care, care leavers, young carers, and young parents. With interventions for children in care now commencing from year 7, the team have extended an offer to all secondary schools in the city to provide support to their top 5 students (who are most likely to be NEET). This work has continued in the new academic year, to provide focused careers advice sessions.

- NEET numbers across all cohorts of 16 and 17 years old, remain low at 4.7% (December 2025).
- The joined-up work across the skills and post-16 team, virtual school and the creation of a small team which supports children in care EET status has made excellent progress. 2024/25 started with 63% employment, education, and training status for children in care, this academic year we are starting with 77% EET status (a 14% improvement). The target for July 2026 is for 90% of year 12 and 85% of year 13 to be in EET, this would move the EET status overall to 86% (a further 9%).
- We are on target to achieve 50% of Care leavers being in EET by March 2026. 14 Care Experienced young people signed up to Connect to Work programme in week one and they are being supported into positive next steps. We are anticipating outcomes in the coming weeks.
- 82 EHCP young people are on a supported internship, following 29 young people concluding their supported internship. The number of providers offering supported internships has increased from one to six, with two more providers looking to deliver before the end of the academic year.

2.5. KEY STAGE OUTCOMES				Current published data & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2022/23 Plymouth	2023/24 Plymouth	2024/25 England	2024/25 Regional	2024/25 Statistical Neighbours	2024/25 Plymouth
13	EYFS - % of pupils achieving a 'good level of development' (GLD)	64.1%	66.7%	68.3% (2024/25)	70.2% (2024/25)	67.1% (2024/25)	67.4% (2024/25)
14	Key Stage 2 - % of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined	59.8%	62.5%	62.6% (Revised)	59.8% (Revised)	61.5% (Provisional)	65.1% (Revised)
15	Key Stage 4 - % of pupils achieving 5+ in English and Maths	41.7% (1,214/ 2,912)	46.3% (1,328/ 2,869)	45.2% (Provisional)	46.0% (Provisional)	43.5% (Provisional)	45.9% (Provisional)
16	Key Stage 4 - Average Attainment 8 score	44.9 Points (Average score for 2,912 pupils)	46.2 Points (Average score for 2,869 pupils)	45.9 Points (Provisional)	46.1 Points (Provisional)	44.9 Points (Provisional)	45.6 Points (Provisional) (Average score for 2,873 pupils)

The statistical neighbours for Plymouth have changed from February 2025 (please see Annex 3).

Assessment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage examines pupils' abilities regarding 17 Early Learning Goals. Reaching the expected standard across 12 early learning goals within the five areas of learning of communication and language; personal, social and emotional development; physical development; literacy; and mathematics, is determined as having a 'Good Level of Development'. At end of 2024/25, Plymouth's GLD is 1% **higher** than that seen in 2023/24. Published data for 2024/25 is showing that Plymouth is 1.3% **lower** than the national average; 4.2% **lower** than the regional average but 0.4% **higher** than the statistical neighbour average.

At the end of primary school and Key Stage 2, assessments determine whether pupils have met the expected standard related to their age in reading, writing and maths combined. At the end of 2024/25, Plymouth's average has increased from 2023/24 to 2024/25 by 4.2%. Revised data published in December 2025 for 2024/25 indicates that Plymouth's average at 65.1% is **higher** than the national average of 62.5%, regional average of 59.8% and statistical neighbour average of 61.5%.

Outcomes for the end of Key Stage 4 (the point at which the majority of 15 & 16-year-olds complete GCSEs at the end of their statutory education) are measured primarily through numerical values assigned per GCSE subject (or an equivalent value for a non-numerical qualification outcome such as a 'pass' at BTEC).

For each pupil, for each GCSE subject completed and assessed, a value will be provided between one and nine (nine being the highest achieved level). A 'level 4' is considered to be a 'standard' pass, a 'level 5' is considered to be a 'strong' pass. Attainment 8 is the sum of the eight highest achieved passes by a student; these figures are then averaged per school, per Local Authority and nationally to create performance measures. Further information can be found in Annex 1 – Indicator Definitions

Provisional data released by the DfE for 2024/25 is showing that 45.9% of all KS4 pupils achieved a strong pass in English and Maths at Key Stage 4. This is a 0.9% **decrease** from 46.3% achieved in

2023/24; 0.4pp lower. However, the national figure also **decreased**; dropping from 45.9% to 45.2% which equates to a 1.5% reduction from 2023/24 to 2024/25.

In 2024/25, Plymouth's average for those achieving a strong pass in English and Maths is 0.7pp **above** the National average (45.2%). Plymouth is **above** the statistical neighbour average of 43.5% but **below** the regional neighbour average of 46.0% (which increased from 23/24)

Provisional data released by the DfE for 2024/25 is showing that the average attainment 8 points score for KS4 pupils in Plymouth is 45.6. This is 0.6 points **lower** than the average in 2023/24 (46.2). The national figure has remained the **same** as in 2023/24 at 45.9 points. Plymouth is 0.3 points **below** the national (45.9) and 0.5 points **below** the regional neighbour average (46.1, an increase on 2023/24) but 0.7 points **above** the statistical neighbour (44.9) average.

In 2024/25, 25.4% of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) achieved 'the basics' (5+ in English and Maths). This is a 6.7% **increase** from the 23.8% achieved in 2023/24; 1.6pp higher. When compared to the national average Plymouth is 0.2pp **lower** (25.6%), which is a smaller gap than that seen in 2023/24. The national average has **reduced** from 25.8% in 2023/24. The gap between Plymouth and National in 2023/24 was 1.9pp, in 2024/25 it is 0.2pp. Plymouth is 2.1pp **higher** than the statistical neighbour average (23.3%) and 1.5pp **higher** than the regional neighbour average (22.3%).

Although Plymouth is **below** the national average of FSM pupils achieving 'the basics', Plymouth's gap in achievement between FSM and non-FSM pupils has narrowed due to the larger **increase** in achievement of FSM pupils in 2024/25. In 2024/25 this is 27.7pp (53.1% - 25.4%) compared to 29.1pp (52.9% - 23.8%) in 2023/24. This is also positive in terms of the national gap which remained at 26.5pp in 2024/25 when compared to 2023/24 (52.3%-25.8% in 2023/24; 52.1%-25.6% in 2024/25). Despite the gap remaining the **same**, the national achievement of both FSM pupils and non-FSM pupils **reduced** on the previous year.

In 2024/25, 3.8% of pupils with an EHCP (Education, Health, and Care Plan) achieved 'the basics'. This is a reduction of 43.3% compared to 2023/24 (6.7%); 2.9pp lower. This is **below** the national average of 7.5% for EHCP pupils, regional neighbour average of 8% and the statistical neighbour average of 6.6% for EHCP pupils. National and regional benchmark groups have **increased** performance from 2023/24 to 2024/25.

In 2024/25, 24.9% of pupils receiving SEN (Special Educational Needs) Support achieved 'the Basics'. This is an increase of 1.6% compared to 2023/24 (24.5%); 0.4pp higher. This is **above** the national average of 22.3%, the regional neighbour average of 22.6% and the statistical neighbour average of 19.1% for pupils receiving SEN Support. National and regional benchmark groups have **increased** performance from 2023/24 to 2024/25.

Revised data for KS4 is due to be published in February 2026.

3. ANNEX 1: INDICATOR DEFINITIONS

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY SERVICES
<p>Referrals & Re-Referrals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where concerns about a child have been raised to Children, Young People and Family Services, once the initial contact has been screened by our multi-agency hub, if appropriate, referrals will be accepted. The rate of referrals per 10,000 children is based on the number of referrals received in the 12-month period divided by the number of children aged 0 to 17 in the city (ONS estimate this at 53,291 for Mid-2021) multiplied by 10,000. This gives a rate that can be benchmarked against other authorities. A re-referral is where we receive a new referral for a child within 12 months of a previous referral. The indicator is based on a rolling 12-month period (e.g., 01 December to 30 November).
<p>Children In Need – CIN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the purposes of this report, the number of children within the CIN cohort are those that have been assessed as being in need (but not CP or LAC) and the number of children who are in the process of being assessed to understand their level of need. The rate of CIN per 10,000 children is based on the number of CIN at the end of the period divided by the number of children aged 0 to 17 in the city (ONS estimate this at 53,291 for Mid-2021) multiplied by 10,000. This gives a rate that can be benchmarked against other authorities.
<p>Children subject to a Child Protection Plan - CP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Child Protection Plan should assess the likelihood of the child suffering harm and look at ways that the child can be protected. It should decide upon short and long term aims to reduce the likelihood of harm to the child and to protect the child's welfare, clarify people's responsibilities and actions to be taken; and outline ways of monitoring and evaluating progress. The rate of CP per 10,000 children is based on the number of CP at the end of the period divided by the number of children aged 0 to 17 in the city (ONS estimate this at 53,291 for Mid-2021) multiplied by 10,000. This gives a rate that can be benchmarked against other authorities. There are four categories for a Child Protection Plan; Neglect, Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Emotional Abuse. The table shows the number and proportion under each category. The % of children subject to multiple child protection plans is the proportion of new Child Protection Plan starting within the period, which are for a child who has had a previous Child Protection Plan at any time in the child's lifetime. The indicator is based on a rolling 12-month period (e.g., the proportion of new Child Protection Plans that started in the period 01 December to 30 November).
<p>Looked After Children (also referred to as Children in Care) - LAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The table shows the number of Looked After Children at the end of the reporting period. The rate of LAC per 10,000 children is based on the number of LAC at the end of the period divided by the number of children aged 0 to 17 in the city (ONS estimate this at 53,291 for Mid-2021) multiplied by 10,000. This gives a rate that can be benchmarked against other authorities. The proportion of placements outside of the city is simply based on the postcode of the child's placement address. Those not within PL1 to PL7 or PL9 are considered outside of the city. For example, PL12 refers to Saltash in Cornwall, which could potentially be less than a mile from a child's home address, but it is outside of Plymouth. The figures provided for the placement types follow the Department for Education and Ofsted definitions, grouping multiple types into nine groups (for example, Family Placements contains six different placement types).
<p>Care Experienced (also referred to as Care Leavers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is deemed as 'Unsuitable' accommodation has been defined by the Department for Education. The following are examples of unsuitable accommodation: Bed and Breakfast / Emergency Accommodation, Prison, Temporary/No fixed abode/Street Homeless, Unknown/Not in Touch. The proportion of Care Experienced young people in Education, Employment and Training is based on our statutory service and therefore covers those young people ages 18 to 20. Whilst we work with Care Experienced young people aged 21 to 24, support is optional for the young person. Please note: The figures are likely to be different to the published Department for Education figures as they look at the age of the young person during the year at the period around their birthday and not at a specific snapshot.

EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND SKILLS
<p>Ofsted Outcomes</p> <p>Ofsted is responsible for inspecting schools and other social care services for children. There are four Ofsted ratings that a school can receive; Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement or Inadequate. These Ofsted grades are based on inspectors' judgements across four Ofsted categories – quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development of pupils, leadership and management as set out under the Ofsted framework 2019.</p>
<p>Absence Monitoring</p> <p>It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance as set out in Working together to improve school attendance.</p>
<p>Education, Employment or Training</p> <p>The law requires all young people in England to continue in education or training until at least their 18th birthday, although in practice most young people continue until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18. The responsibility and accountability for young people not in education, employment and training (NEET) lies with the local authority and is set out in Participation Statutory Guidance. The Department for Education (DfE) monitors the performance of local authorities in delivering their duties, and specifically in their tracking and supporting of 16- and 17-year-olds.</p>
<p>Key Stage Four Outcomes</p> <p>Key Stage 4 (KS4) is the legal term for the two years of school education which incorporate GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education). During this time, pupils must follow relevant programmes of study from the National Curriculum. At the end of this stage, pupils are entered for a range of external examinations. Following a phased introduction since 2017, GCSEs taken in 2020 and 2021 are all reformed GCSEs graded on a 9-1 scale. Two measures are commonly reported on at key stage four:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ percentage pupils achieving 5-9s at English and Maths GCSE in the city, and ▪ average Attainment 8 scores achieved by schools across the city. <p>Attainment 8 is calculated by adding together pupils' highest scores across eight government approved school subjects. While these numbers are not made publicly available on a pupil-by-pupil basis, scores taken from across a school year group are averaged to produce a school's overall score. The eight subjects are divided into three categories, called "buckets":</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bucket 1 - English and maths, which are worth double marks, but English will only count for double marks if both English literature and English (i.e., English language) are taken. The higher grade of the two is used. ▪ Bucket 2 – The top three scores from the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects taken, i.e. sciences, computer science, history, geography, and languages. ▪ Bucket 3 – The top three scores from remaining EBacc subjects or other government approved qualifications (e.g., other GCSEs or Level 2 Certificates in some technical subjects). <p>The grades are converted into points, put through a formula and finally out comes the school's Attainment 8 score.</p>
<p>Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) Timeliness</p> <p>The time between the receipt of the request for an EHC needs assessment, and the outcome of that request being communicated to the parent, carer or young person must take no more than 6 weeks. This is a statutory timeframe, set out in legislation (opens in new tab).</p> <p>The whole process of EHC needs assessment and EHC plan development, from the point when an EHC needs assessment is requested (or a child or young person is brought to the local authority's attention) until any final EHC plan is issued, must take no more than 20 weeks. The relevant legislation (opens in new tab) provides for exceptions to the time limits in certain situations.</p>

4. ANNEX 2: OTHER SOURCES OF PUBLISHED INFORMATION

<p>Local authority interactive tool (LAIT)</p> <p>An interactive dashboard for comparing data about children and young people across all local authorities in England.</p>	<p>https://department-for-education.shinyapps.io/local-authority-interactive-tool/</p>
<p>LG Inform</p> <p>The local area benchmarking tool from the Local Government Association</p>	<p>https://lginform.local.gov.uk/</p>
<p>GOV.UK - Explore education statistics</p> <p>Find related information and other statistical services provided by the Department for Education (DfE)</p>	<p>https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/</p>
<p>Children's Social Care - Outcomes and Enablers</p> <p>This dashboard displays data indicators to help both local and central government understand progress towards the outcomes and enablers set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework</p>	<p>https://department-for-education.shinyapps.io/csc-outcomes-enablers/</p>

5. ANNEX 3: CURRENT STATISTICAL NEIGHBOURS

- Cornwall
- Dudley
- Gateshead
- Kirklees
- Medway
- Plymouth
- Rotherham
- Tameside
- Telford and Wrekin
- Torbay
- Wakefield