



**WIRRAL
INTELLIGENCE
SERVICE**

JSNA: Children & Young People Population & Demographics

**Wirral Intelligence
Service**

November 2021

JSNA: Children & Young People Population & Demographics

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Background to JSNA – Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

What is a JSNA?

A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, better known as a JSNA, is intended to be a review of the health and wellbeing needs of the local population, informing local priorities, policies and strategies that in turn informs local commissioning priorities that will improve health and wellbeing outcomes and reduce inequalities throughout the Borough.

Who is involved?

Information from Council, NHS and other partners is collected and collated to inform the JSNA, and this reflects the important role that all organisations and sectors have (statutory, voluntary, community and faith) in improving the health and wellbeing of Wirral's residents.

About this document

This JSNA section looks to contain the most relevant information on the topic and provides an overview of those related key aspects

How can you help?

If you have ideas or any suggestions about these issues or topics, then please email us at wirralintelligenceservice@wirral.gov.uk or go to <https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/>

Key findings

- Children and young people aged 0-19 make up just over one in five (22%) of Wirral residents (73,699 in 2020) and is projected to decrease by 3.5% by 2030
- Information on the ethnicity of school children in Wirral indicates that 92% of children in Wirral are White; the largest BAME groups are Asian/Asian British (3%) and Mixed ethnicity (3%)
- The number of births in Wirral in 2020 was 2,958, the lowest number since Wirral was formed as a metropolitan Borough in 1974; historical trends indicate these decreases could continue until the late 2020s (a 3% decrease by 2030 is predicted by ONS)
- The general fertility rate has also been decreasing in England overall (last 5 time periods)
- The number of women of child-bearing age (15-44 years) is projected to decrease in Wirral and this is likely to have an impact on the number of future maternities (unless there is significant inward migration)
- The largest number of births in both Wirral and England in 2019 occurred in women aged between 30 and 34, which marks a change on previous years when the most common age was between 25 and 29
- The Borough still has a slightly higher proportion of births to younger mothers (aged <20), and a lower proportion of births to older mothers (aged 35+), than England (likely to be due to births to younger mothers being more prevalent in areas of deprivation)
- Wirral has a much lower percentage of births to mothers born outside the UK compared to England overall (8.5% in Wirral compared to 30.2% in England). The largest group of non-UK born mothers in Wirral were those born in EU Accession countries (e.g., Poland)
- There is a large disparity in the birth rate between the west and east of Wirral (higher rates in the east). This is likely to result in significantly more demand for services and support for families in the east of Wirral, as deprivation is far more prevalent in the east of the borough
- One in every 10 babies born in Birkenhead & Tranmere were of low birthweight (11.2%), compared to just one in every 56 births in Greasby, Frankby and Irby (1.8%)
- Estimates suggest there may be around 2,233 young people aged 16-24 Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual (LGBTQ+) in Wirral
- The 2019 IDACI (Income Deprivation Index Affecting Children Index) shows that deprivation affecting children is concentrated in the North and East of Wirral, with small pockets in other areas of Wirral
- Child poverty data shows that the proportion of children living in low-income households ranged from 4% in Heswall, to 46% in Bidston & St. James ward
- In 2020/21, around one in four Wirral primary school aged children, one in five secondary school aged children and over half (1 in 2) of children attending special school were eligible for Free School Meals
- There were 812 Children Looked After in Wirral as of March 2020. This equates to a rate of 120 per 10,000 children, which is almost double the England rate (67 per 10,000)

Wirral JSNA: - Children & Young People Population & Demographics

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What do we know?

Why is this important?

Intelligence on the key demographics for children and young people in Wirral are important to the effective planning and commissioning of services which are required and appropriate to needs in Wirral.

Facts, figures and trends

Population

As of 2020, there were 73,699 children and young people (aged 0-19 years) in Wirral, making up 22.7% of the total population in Wirral. See **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Number of children and young people aged 0-19, in Wirral, by single year of age (2020)

| Age | Males | Females | All |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 0 | 1,524 | 1,538 | 3,062 |
| 1 | 1,732 | 1,541 | 3,273 |
| 2 | 1,825 | 1,630 | 3,455 |
| 3 | 1,867 | 1,696 | 3,563 |
| 4 | 1,985 | 1,811 | 3,796 |
| 5 | 1,894 | 1,793 | 3,687 |
| 6 | 2,044 | 1,875 | 3,919 |
| 7 | 1,932 | 1,934 | 3,866 |
| 8 | 2,250 | 2,007 | 4,257 |
| 9 | 2,026 | 1,956 | 3,982 |
| 10 | 1,962 | 1,936 | 3,898 |
| 11 | 1,950 | 1,949 | 3,899 |
| 12 | 2,000 | 1,958 | 3,958 |
| 13 | 2,101 | 1,872 | 3,973 |
| 14 | 1,974 | 1,893 | 3,867 |
| 15 | 1,857 | 1,831 | 3,688 |
| 16 | 1,898 | 1,794 | 3,692 |
| 17 | 1,864 | 1,732 | 3,596 |
| 18 | 1,767 | 1,715 | 3,482 |
| 19 | 1,452 | 1,334 | 2,786 |
| Total | 37,904 | 35,795 | 73,699 |

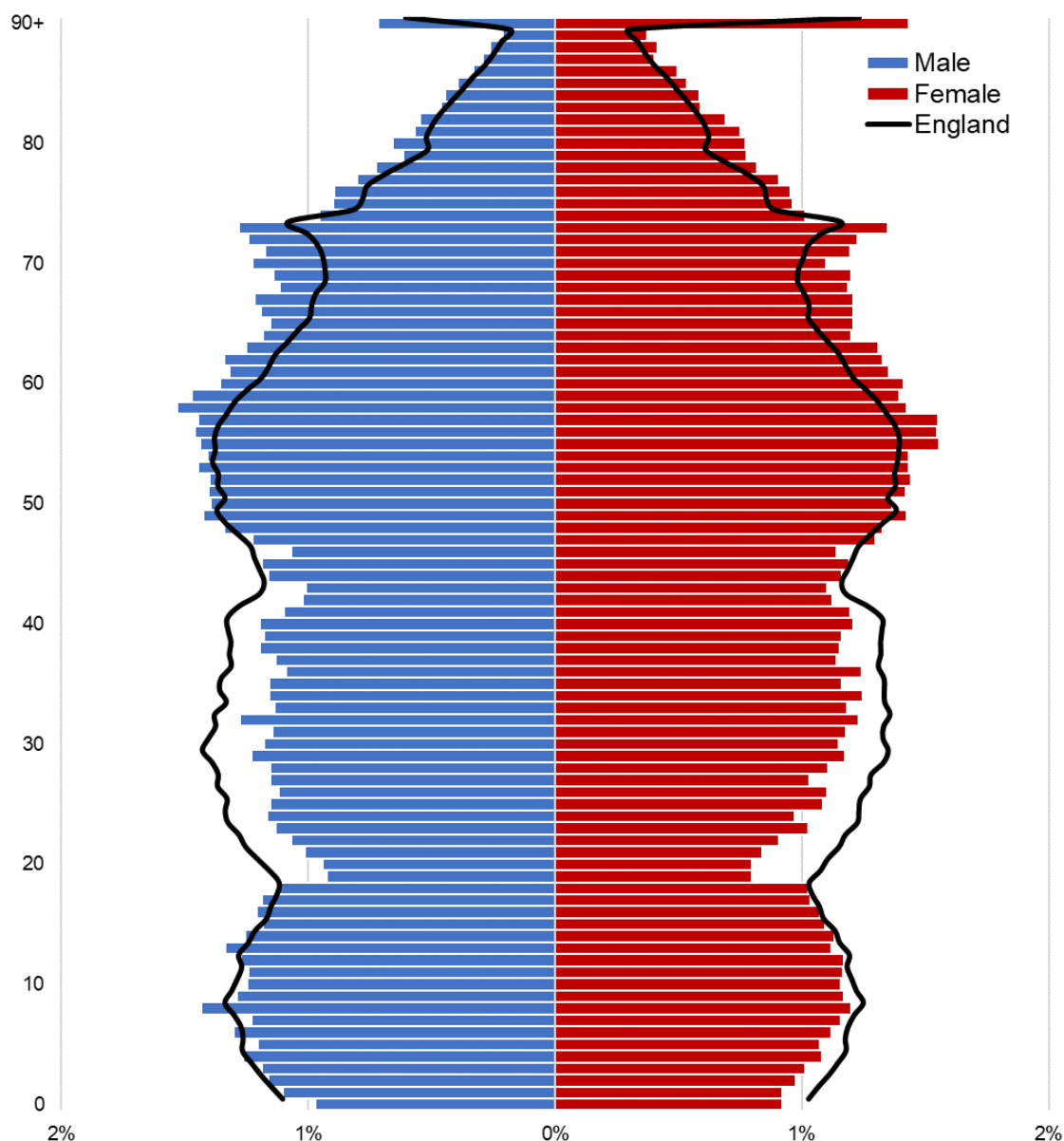
Source: Mid-2020 population estimates, [ONS \(2021\)](#)

In the overall population (all ages) in Wirral, females slightly outnumber males (51.6% vs 48.4%), but the reverse is the case in those aged 0-18 (51.4% males versus 48.6% females). There are around 2,100 more male than female children in Wirral. This trend is also observed nationally with their being more male children than female.

As boys are more likely to suffer from a range of developmental conditions such as autism and [Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder \(ADHD\)](#) and are more likely to be excluded from school or come into contact with the Youth Justice System, this is worth noting [1], [2], [3].

The population pyramid below for all ages, shows the proportion of children and young people in Wirral compared to the population overall.

Figure 1: Population pyramid for Wirral



Source: Mid-2020 population estimates, [ONS \(2021\)](#)

Figure 1 shows that the population of Wirral is weighted toward older age groups, with a large percentage of the population aged between 45 and 69. This gives our local pyramid a shape typical of developed countries (i.e. not pyramid shaped). The number of children and young people by 5-year (quinary) age band is in the **Table 2** below.

Table 2: Number of children and young people in Wirral by 5-year (quinary) age band, Mid-2020

| 5-Year Age Band | Males | Females | All |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 0-4 | 8,933 | 8,216 | 17,149 |
| 5-9 | 10,146 | 9,565 | 19,711 |
| 10-14 | 9,987 | 9,608 | 19,595 |
| 15-19 | 8,838 | 8,406 | 17,244 |
| Total 0-19 | 37,904 | 35,795 | 73,699 |

Source: Mid-2020 population estimates, [ONS \(2021\)](#)

Population projections

Table 3 below, shows the projections for future numbers of children and young people in Wirral and the percentage change in this population, as estimated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Overall, the population aged 0-19 is projected to decrease slightly by 3.5%, compared to an increase of almost 2% in the overall population of Wirral during the same period.

Please note that these projections were produced before the COVID-19 pandemic, and so figures are likely subject to change. As shown in **Figure 4**, the number of births was significantly lower in 2020 than in previous years. Such a low number of births will influence the population projection of children and young people. However, **Table 3** below still shows most currently available population projections in Wirral, hence their inclusion.

Table 3: Population projections for children and young people in Wirral (2020-2030)

| 5-Year Age Band | 2020 | 2022 | 2024 | 2026 | 2028 | 2030 | % Change 2020-2030 |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 0-4 | 17,320 | 16,631 | 16,411 | 16,286 | 16,230 | 16,186 | -6.5% |
| 5-9 | 19,680 | 19,081 | 18,308 | 17,636 | 17,177 | 17,060 | -13.3% |
| 10-14 | 19,623 | 20,192 | 20,290 | 20,099 | 19,289 | 18,558 | -5.4% |
| 15-19 | 16,980 | 17,751 | 18,414 | 18,831 | 19,230 | 19,188 | 13.0% |
| Total 0-19 | 73,603 | 73,654 | 73,424 | 72,852 | 71,926 | 70,992 | -3.5% |
| All Ages | 324,533 | 325,816 | 326,930 | 327,873 | 328,753 | 329,608 | 1.6% |

Source: Mid-2018 population estimates, [ONS \(2019\)](#)

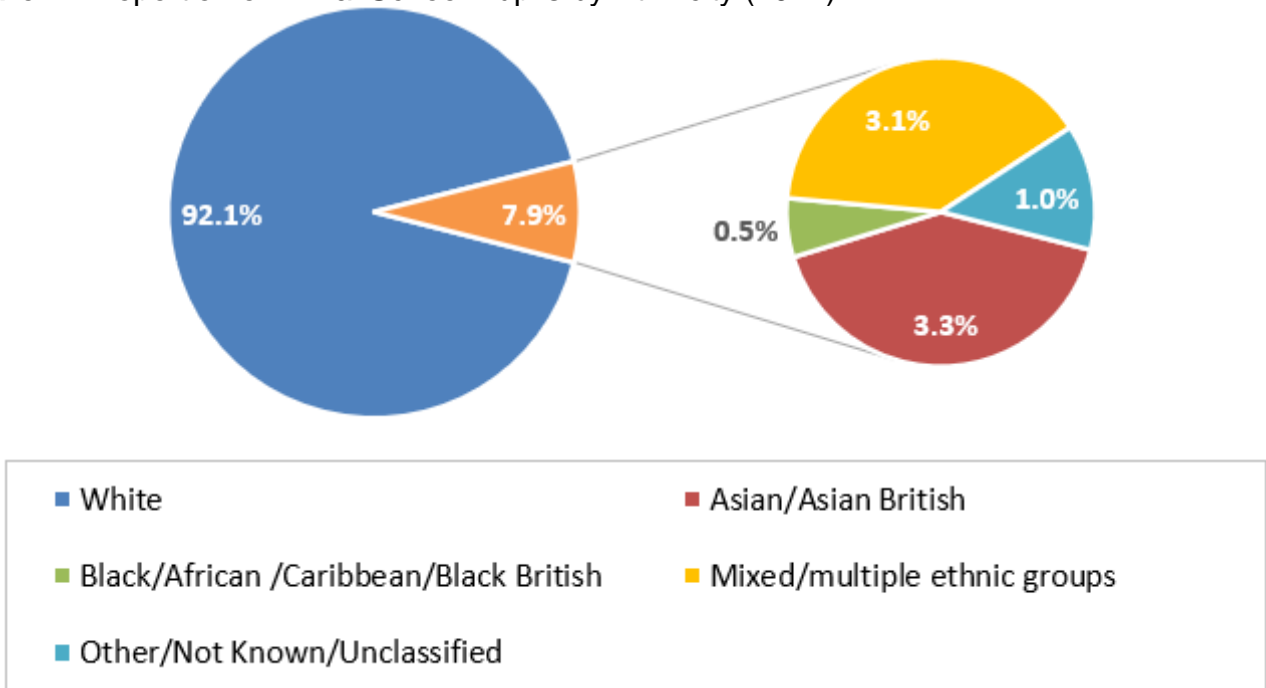
To summarise the table:

- the number of children aged 0-4 is projected to decrease by 6.5% by 2030
- the number of children aged 5-9 is projected to decrease by 13.3% by 2030
- the number of children aged 10-14 is projected to decrease by 5.4% by 2030
- the number of children aged 15-19 is projected to increase by 13.0% by 2030

Ethnicity of Wirral children

Every year, Wirral Council undertakes the National School Census, data from which provides a demographic profile of the local school-aged population. **Figure 2** below shows the five broad ethnicity groups and indicates that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups now make up 7.9% of Wirral's total school population. It should be noted however, that when using the more detailed 18 category ethnicity groups, the largest ethnicity group in Wirral (besides 'White British' which makes up 89.9%) is 'White Other' (part of the 'White' group) comprising 1.9% of all Wirral school children. This indicates that the BAME population in Wirral has increased compared to previous years. For further information on the spoken languages of Wirral School pupils and education attainment by ethnicity, please see the [Wirral BAME section of the JSNA](#).

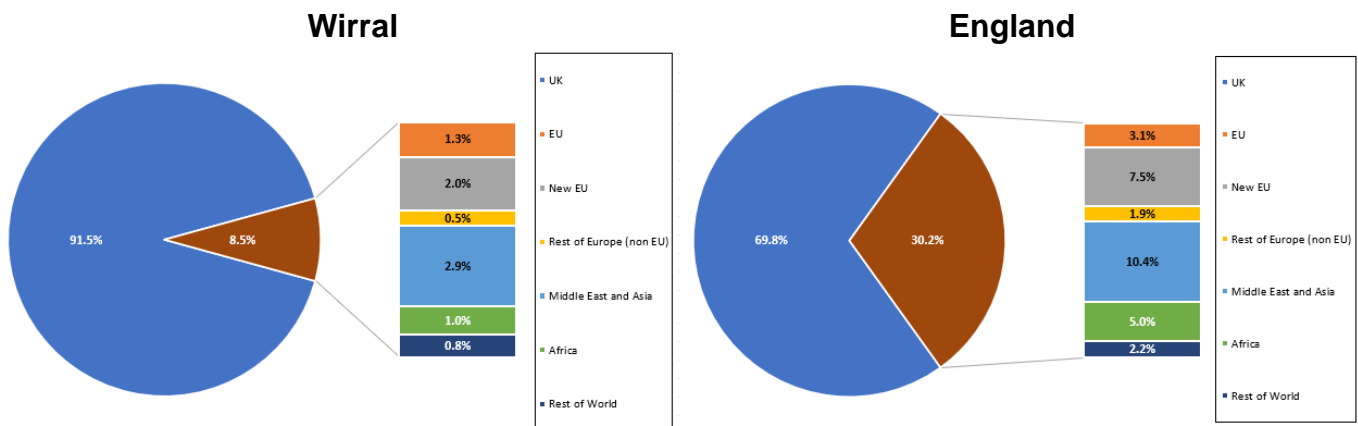
Figure 2: Proportion of Wirral School Pupils by Ethnicity (2021)



Source: Wirral School Census, (2021)

Country of origin of mothers who give birth in Wirral also gives us some further indication of the proportion of children in Wirral of ethnicities other than White British.

Figure 3: Proportion of births by the country of birth of the mother, Wirral and England (2020)



Source: ONS, (2021)

New EU countries refer to those who joined post-2004 such as Poland, Czech Republic, Romania and Lithuania etc. Original EU members refer to the original core group of members such as France, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands etc....

As the chart in **Figure 3** shows, Wirral differs significantly to the UK overall on the proportion of non-UK born mothers who gave birth in 2020. In Wirral, the percentage who were non-UK born was 8.5%, compared to 30.2% in England overall. These figures are slight increases on previous years (in 2015, for example, Wirral was 6% and England was 28%).

As the chart also shows, the majority of live births from non-UK mothers in Wirral were from Europe (3.8% of total live births) followed by the foreign-born mothers from the Middle East and Asia (2.9% of total live births). This is a similar pattern to the UK overall, where the largest group of non-UK mothers were also from Europe.

Births

Table 4 below shows the projected number of births in Wirral and England, to 2030.

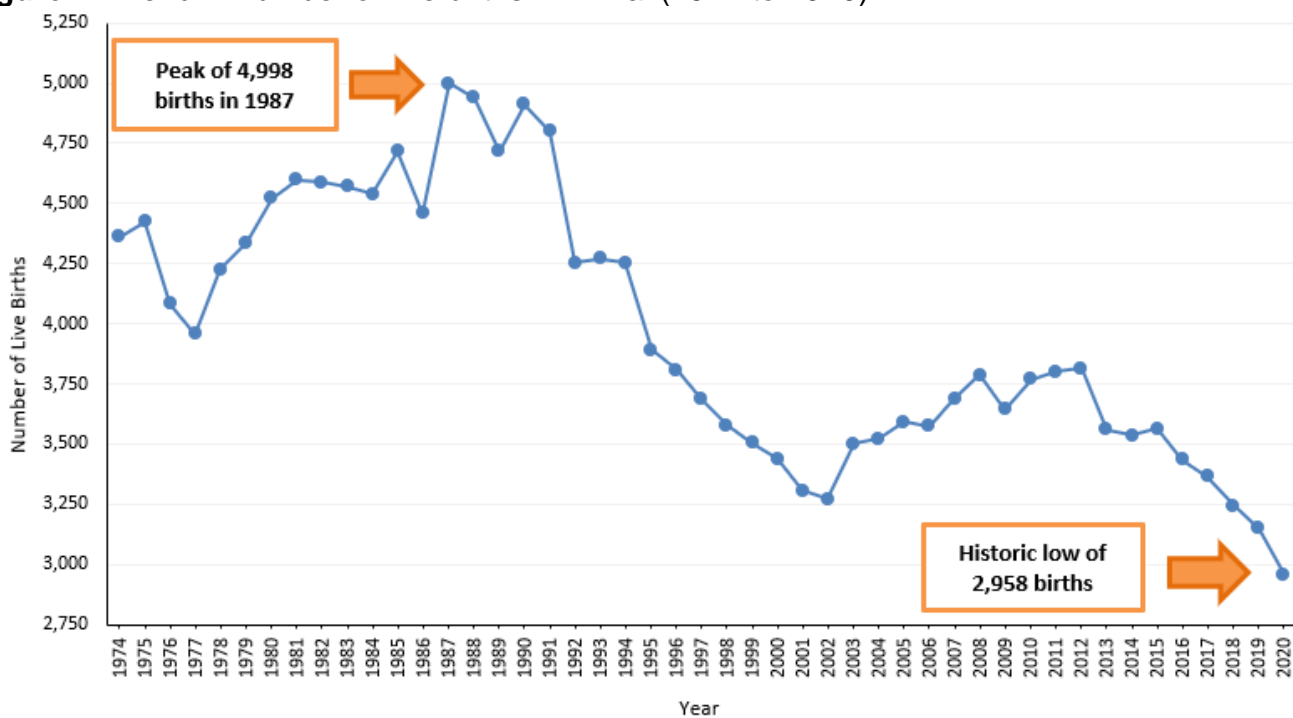
Table 4: Projected births and percentage change, Wirral and England (2020 to 2030)

| | 2020 | 2022 | 2024 | 2026 | 2028 | 2030 | % change 2020-2030 |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------------|
| Wirral | 3,230 | 3,181 | 3,165 | 3,153 | 3,138 | 3,137 | -2.9% |

Source: ONS 2018-based subnational population projections ([2020](#))

As the table shows, births are projected to decrease by almost 3% in Wirral by 2030. However, there is some evidence that this decrease is occurring sooner than these ONS predictions, as the number of births recorded by ONS in Wirral in 2020 was 2,958, the lowest since Wirral was formed as a metropolitan borough in 1974 and already much lower than ONS estimates. This information is shown in **Figure 4** below.

Figure 4: Trend in number of live births in Wirral (1974 to 2020)



Source: NOMIS, [2021](#)

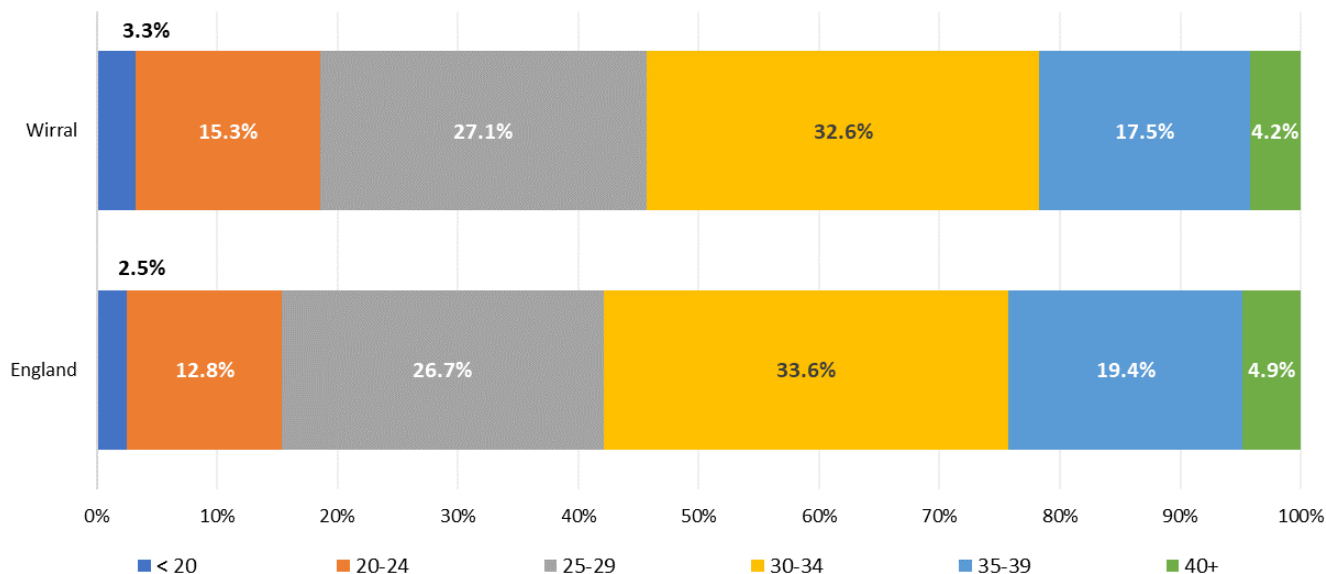
If historical trends are repeated from **Figure 4**, then the number of births may continue to fall for another 5 years before beginning to climb again in the late 2020s (as the cohort of women born during the peak of 2003-2012 start to reach childbearing years in numbers). Any future climb may be less pronounced than the previous peak (2003-2012), just as that peak was smaller than the previous peak in the late 1980s to early 1990s.

There are various reasons for this, such as women having fewer children, the average age of mothers increasing and no significant inward migration. This means the historical 20-25 cyclical peaks observed in births may become less noticeable in the future than was the case in the past.

Age of mothers is a factor in determining need for health and social care, as children born to both younger and older mothers have more health issues. **Figure 5** shows births by age of the mother in 2020 and suggests that the largest number of births in both Wirral and England in 2020 occurred in women aged between 30 and 34.

This is a change on previous years when the most common age was between 25 and 29. ONS have hypothesised that this trend of births at later ages is due to several factors, including greater participation in higher education, delaying marriage and/or partnership foundation, wanting a longer career before starting a family and labour market uncertainty and risk of unemployment.

Figure 5: Percentage of births by age of mother, England & Wirral, 2020



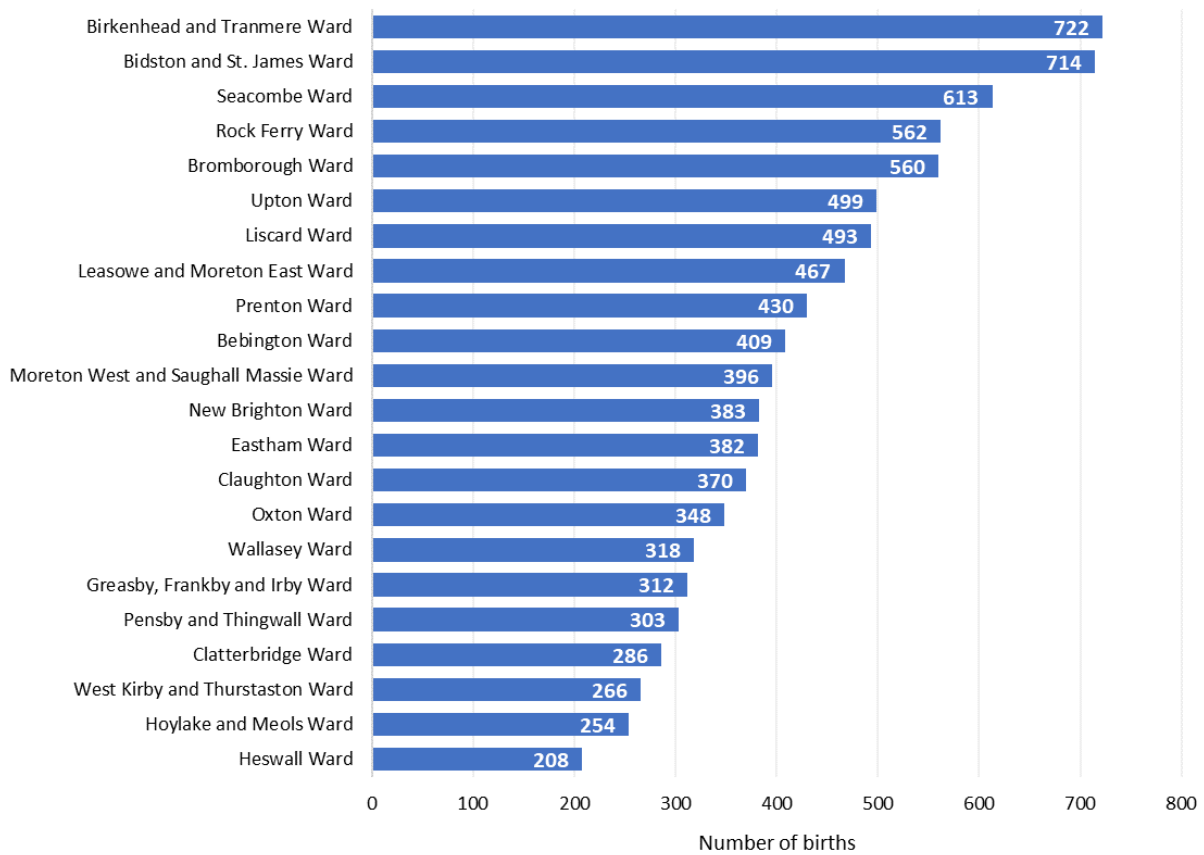
Source: NOMIS, [2021](#)

As **Figure 5** also shows, Wirral has a higher proportion of births to younger mothers compared to England.

National data shows that mothers in more deprived areas tend to be younger, and this is likely to be the reason for the differences between Wirral and England (Wirral has significant areas of deprivation and these areas have the highest birth rates).

Figure 6 shows that the four most deprived wards in Wirral had the highest number of births in 2018-20. This is a trend that has been consistent for many years, so health and social care services will likely already be aware that there is a large proportion of new mothers and children from areas of deprivation with significant health and social care needs.

Figure 6: Number of births by Wirral ward in 2018-20 (3 pooled years)



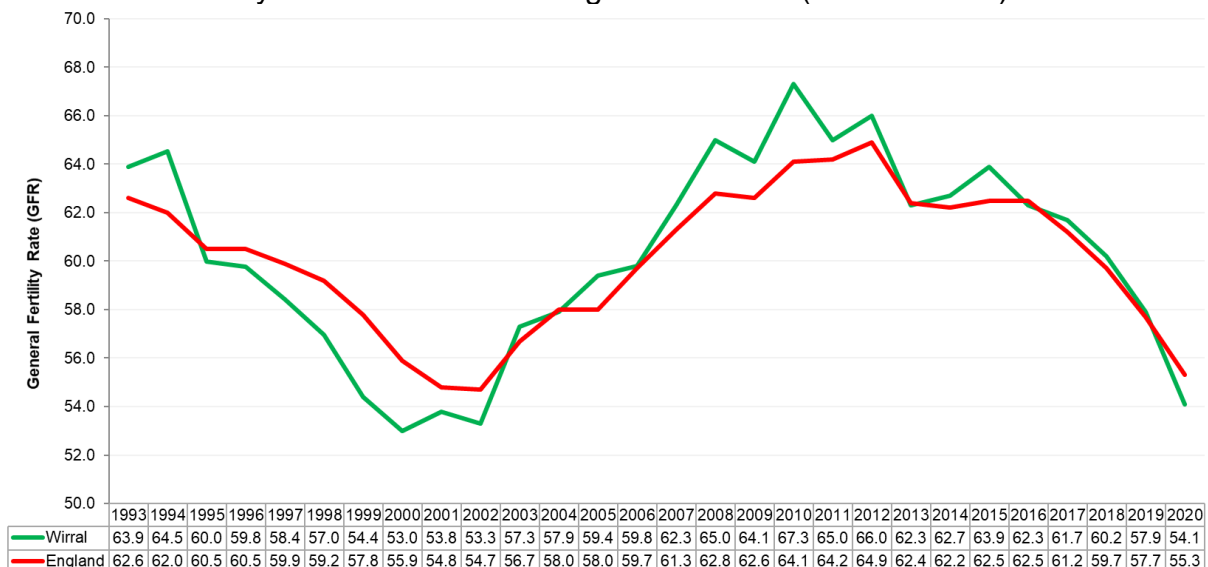
Source: Wirral Intelligence Service with data provided by ONS, 2021

Fertility Rates

Fertility rates refer to the number of live births relative to the number of women in the population (the general fertility rate is per 1,000 females aged 15-44 years). As **Figure 7** shows, the rise in fertility rates which was observed in both Wirral and England & Wales from around 2002 onwards, plateaued in 2013, before decreasing substantially between 2016 and 2020.

The population of women of child-bearing age (15-44 years) is projected to decrease in Wirral over the coming years and this is likely to have an impact on the number of births in the future.

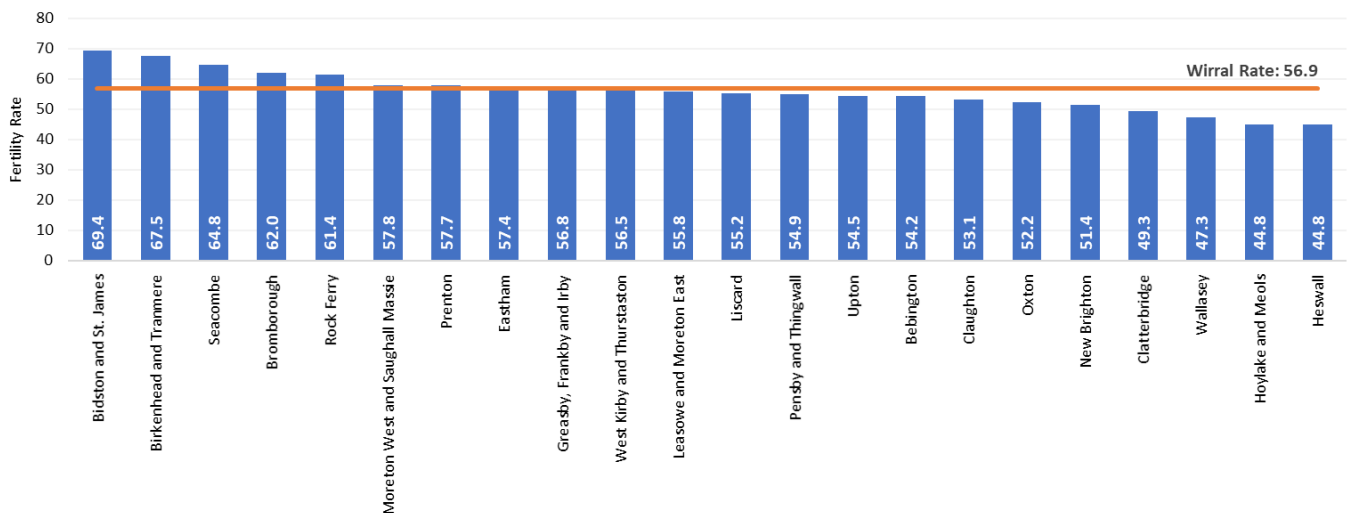
Figure 7: General fertility rate for Wirral and England & Wales (1993 to 2020)



Source: ONS, [2021](#)

The following chart show fertility rates by geography and highlight that fertility rates in Wirral vary widely across the Borough, with higher rates in the more deprived wards, compared to the less deprived west of Wirral. This is likely to impact on the provision of health and social care services as deprivation is linked to several infant health issues such as low birth weight, higher rates of hospital admissions, reduced breastfeeding, learning disability and smoking in pregnancy rates. Lower rates in parts of Oxton and Wallasey are likely to be because these wards are less deprived than the surrounding wards.

Figure 8: General Fertility Rate (GFR) by Wirral ward in 2018-20 (3 pooled years)



Source: Wirral Intelligence Service with data provided by ONS, 2021

Low birthweight

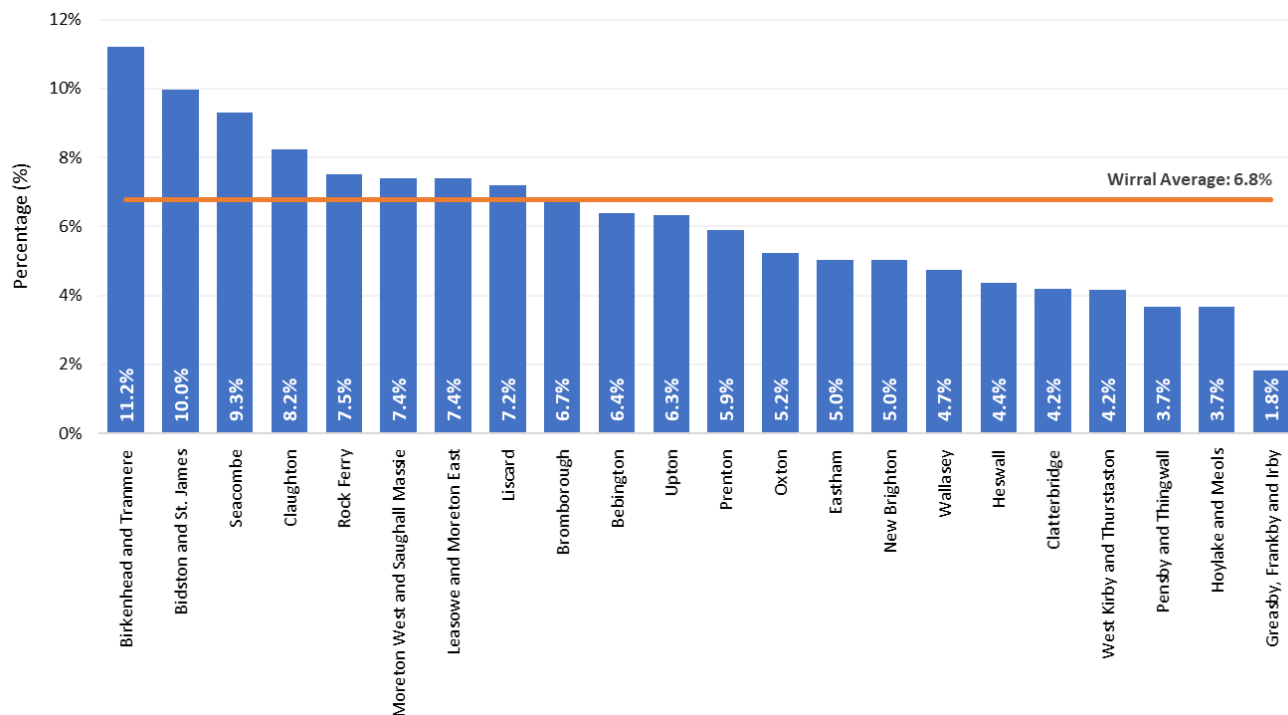
Low birthweight is an important cause of childhood morbidity, a major factor in infant mortality and has serious consequences for health in later life, e.g. children of a low birthweight are more likely to have health and cognitive impairments (e.g. learning disabilities) compared to average birthweight babies.

Low birthweight shows a pattern consistent with many health issues, in that it is a source of health inequality because it is more common in deprived areas and can be a ‘bell-weather’ for maternal health in general.

Low birthweight is defined as babies born of at least 37 weeks gestation or more, and weigh less than 2,500grams (roughly 5lb 4oz). In numbers, there were 622 babies born (all gestations) in Wirral between 2018 and 2020 classed as being of low birthweight (<2,500grams). However, the overall proportion of babies being of born of low birth weight in Wirral (6.8%) hides considerable inequalities.

As **Figure 9** shows, more than one in every 10 babies born in Birkenhead and Tranmere (11.2%) were born a low birthweight, compared to just one in every 56 births in Greasby, Frankby and Irby wards (1.8%). The four most deprived wards in Wirral (Birkenhead and Tranmere, Bidston and St James, Seacombe and Rock Ferry) have some of the highest prevalence of babies born of low birthweight in Wirral.

Figure 9: Prevalence of low birthweight of all babies by Wirral ward in 2018-20 (3 pooled years)



Source: Wirral Intelligence Service with data provided by ONS, 2021

Note: Figures are for all babies, born at any gestation

Sexuality

The most recent estimate of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning and Other (LGBTQ+) population in the UK comes from the 2019 Annual Population Survey (APS) released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Table 5 below shows the results of the APS; the percentage of the population by their identified sexual identity have been extrapolated to the Wirral population by the following ages bands.

This is a crude way of estimating likely populations that does not take into account local variation, but in the absence of more robust local data, remains the best way of estimating sexuality by age band in Wirral.

Table 5: Estimates of sexuality in Wirral by gender and age band, 2019

| Gender | Age Band | % who identify as LGBTQ+ (nationally) | Wirral population | Estimated LGBTQ+ population in Wirral |
|--------------|----------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Male | 16-24 | 6.8 | 15,345 | 1,043 |
| | 25-34 | 4.6 | 18,395 | 846 |
| | 35-49 | 3.6 | 27,474 | 989 |
| | 50-64 | 2.6 | 32,756 | 852 |
| | 65+ | 1.6 | 32,222 | 516 |
| Female | 16-24 | 8.4 | 14,169 | 1,190 |
| | 25-34 | 3.8 | 19,209 | 730 |
| | 35-49 | 2.8 | 30,155 | 844 |
| | 50-64 | 2.0 | 35,401 | 708 |
| | 65+ | 1.6 | 39,067 | 625 |
| Total | | | 264,193 | 8,343 |

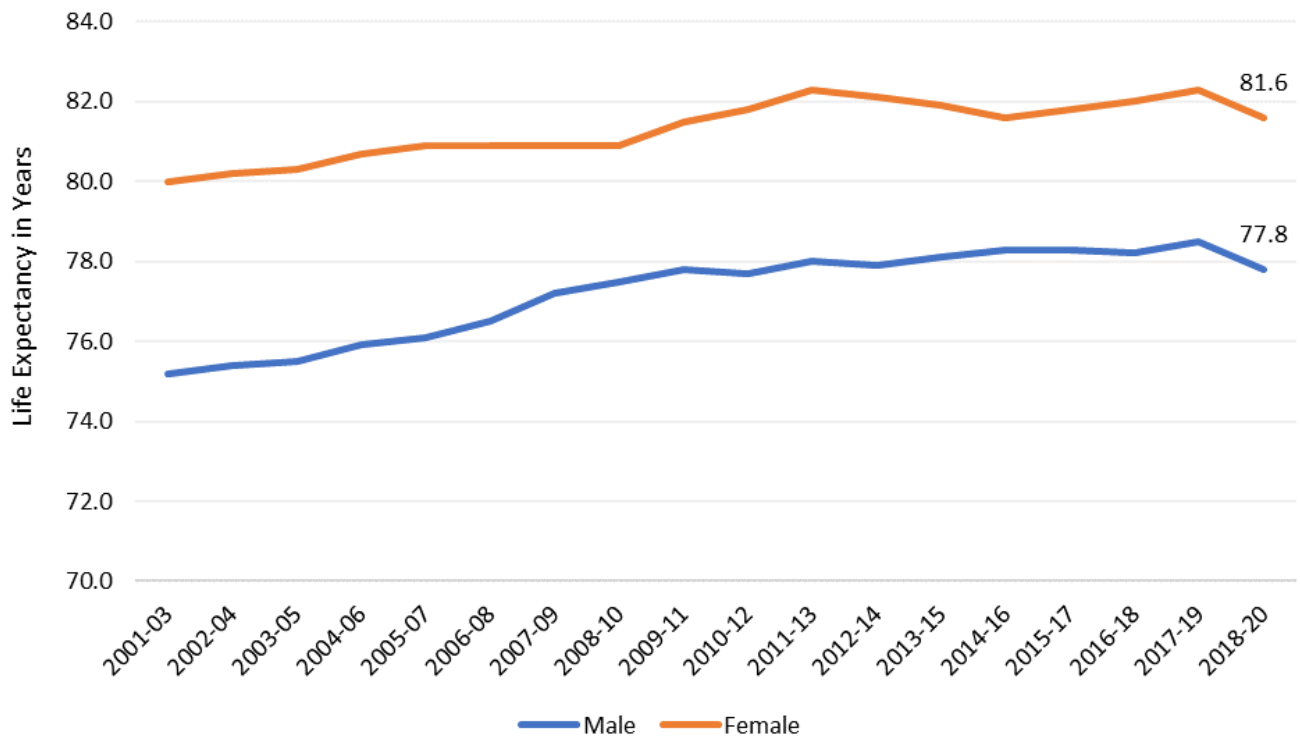
Source: [ONS, Sexual Orientation, 2019](#) and [ONS, Mid-Year Population Estimates, 2020](#)

As **Table 5** shows, the estimates indicate that there may be around 8,300 people in Wirral who identify as LGBTQ+, of which 2,233 (27%) are likely to be young people aged 16-24. Amongst all age groups in men, the most common sexual orientation (besides heterosexual/straight) was gay. For females on the other hand, bisexuality was the most common (besides heterosexual/straight), especially in the younger age groups. Estimates show that 5.5% of females aged 16-24 identify as bisexual nationally, compared to 1.9% who identify as gay/lesbian.

Life expectancy at birth

Life expectancy at birth indicates the number of years a baby born in an area can expect to live if they experience the mortality rates of that area for the whole of their life. It is not a guide to the remaining expectation of life at a later age, e.g., if life expectancy at birth in a particular area is 80 years, it does not follow that people aged 70 living in that area can expect to live for a further 10 years. It is, however, a general guide to the health of the population and inequalities in an area. **Figure 10** below shows life expectancy at birth by gender in Wirral between 2001-03 and 2018-20.

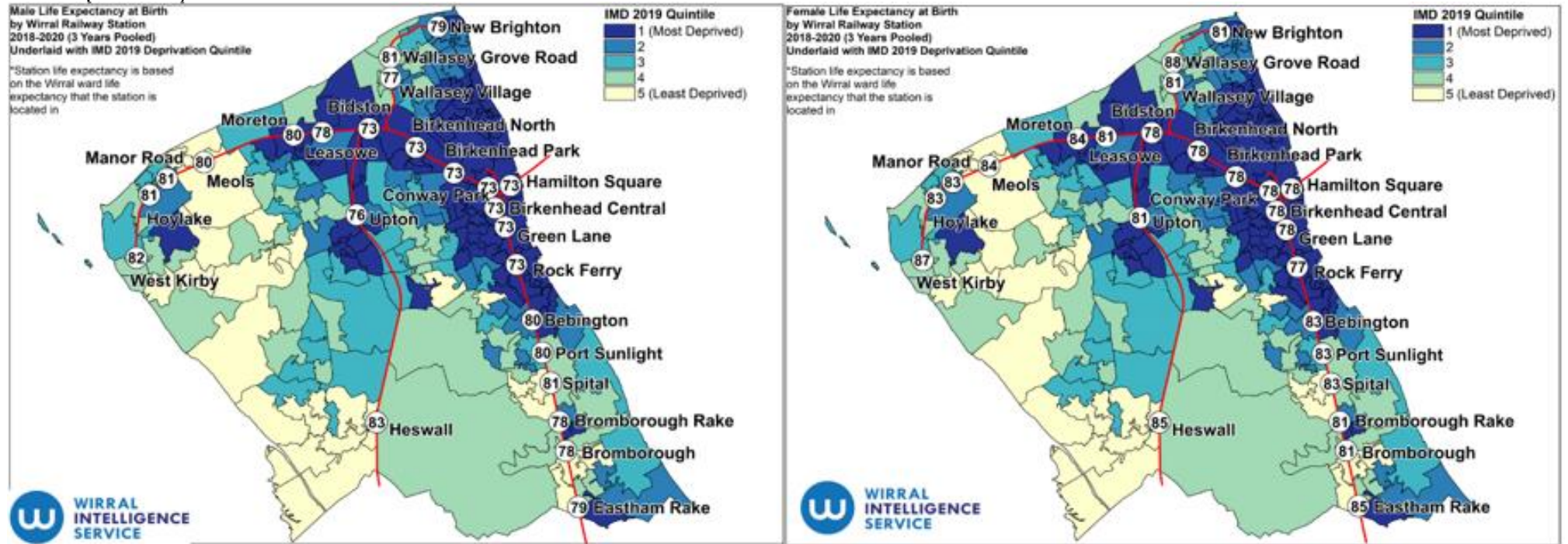
Figure 10: Trend in life expectancy at birth by gender, Wirral, 2001-03 and 2018-20



Source: Public Health England (PHE) Fingertips via ONS, [2021](#)

Note: Confidence intervals for male life expectancy are 77.4 and 78.2. Confidence intervals for female life expectancy are 81.2 and 82.0

Map 1 and 2: Inequality in male and female life expectancy in Wirral, 2018-20 (as shown by life expectancy by Wirral Train Stations, overlaid with deprivation)



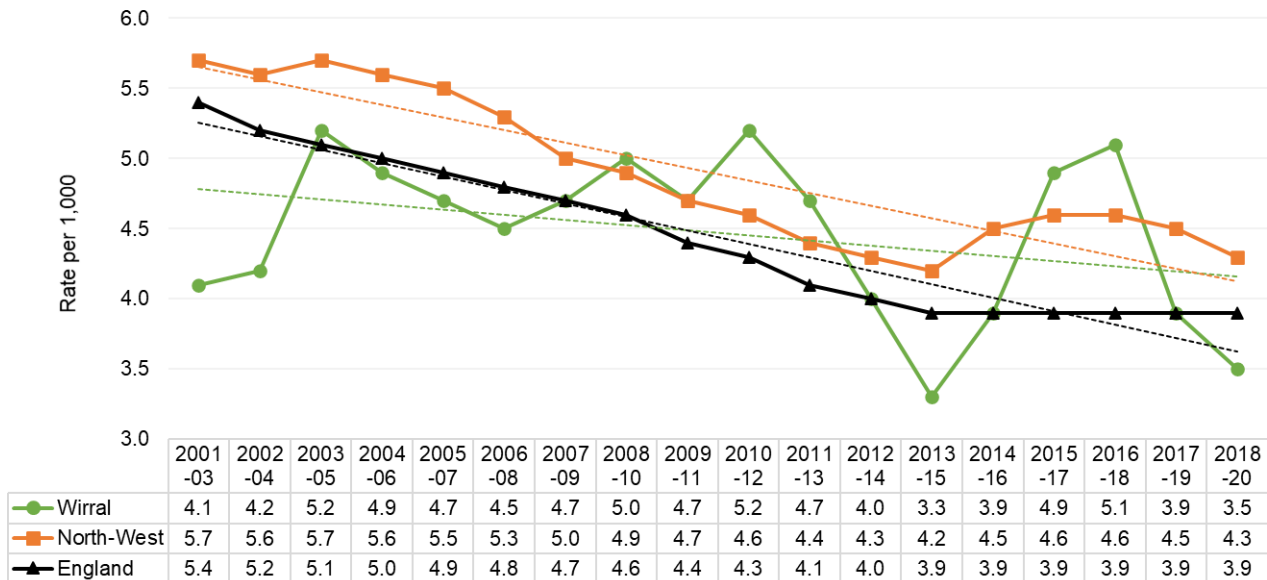
Source: ONS, 2021

Darker colours on **Maps 1 & 2** denote more acute deprivation, lighter colours indicate less deprived areas. It can be seen that broadly speaking, life expectancy is lower in the more deprived East side of Wirral compared to the less deprived West.

Infant Mortality

Infant mortality is the rate of deaths in infants aged under 1 year per 1,000 live births and is an important indicator of the general health of the entire population. It reflects the relationship between causes of infant mortality and upstream determinants of population health such as economic, social and environmental conditions. Rates are shown as 3 years pooled to smooth out large fluctuations, which are characteristic of small datasets (infant mortality numbers are small per year).

Figure 11: Trend in infant mortality: England, North-West & Wirral (2001-03 to 2018-20)



Source: PHE, [2021](#)

Note: Trendline for each area is shown by dotted lines.

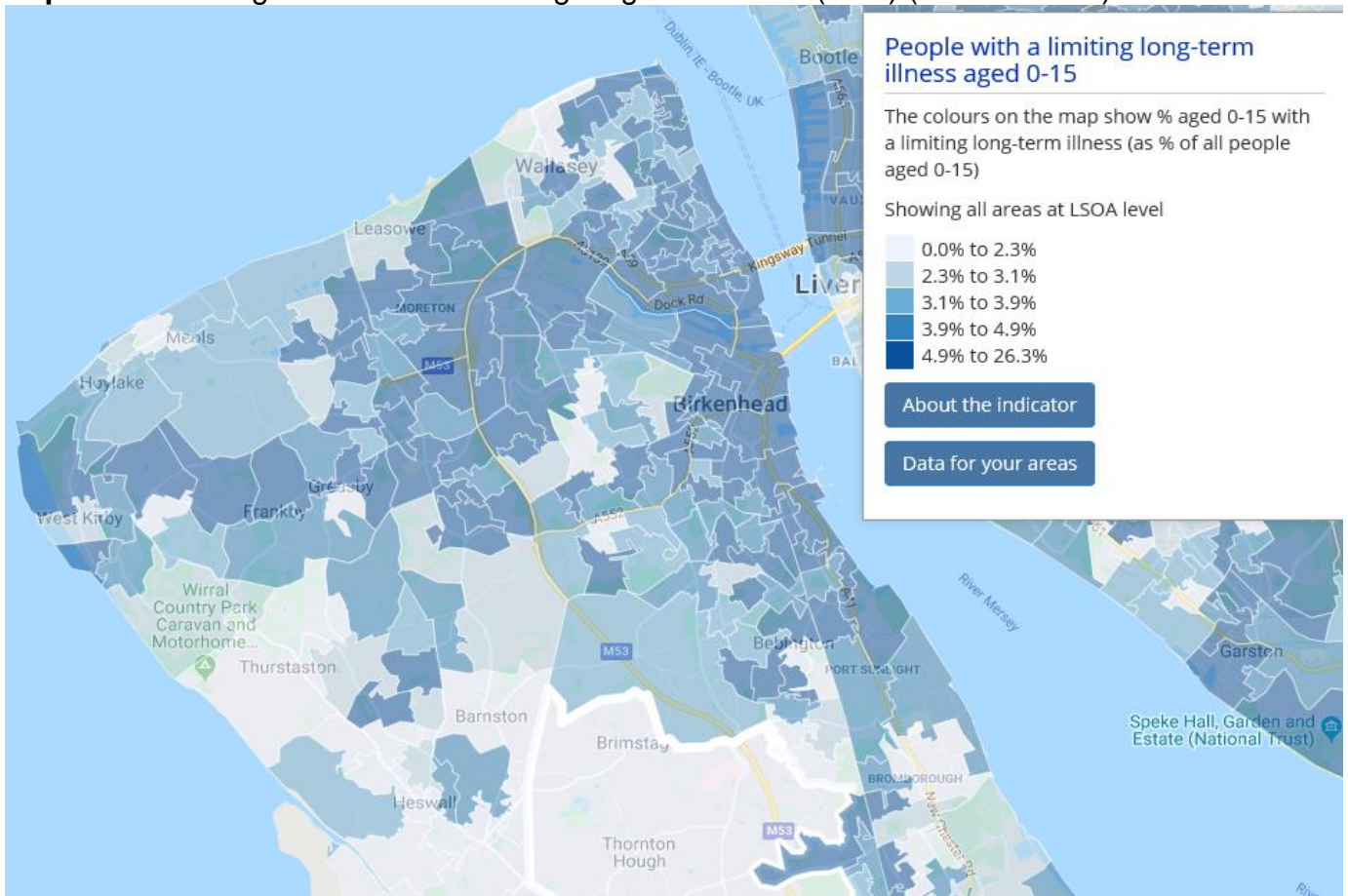
As the chart in **Figure 11** above shows, in 2018-20, infant mortality in Wirral decreased for the second time after three consecutive increases. The North-West overall showed a slight decrease in line with Wirral for 2018-20, whilst England has shown a levelling out, with the same rate for the last 4 time periods.

The rate in Wirral shows more fluctuation than both England and the North-West even though 3-pooled year rates have been used, but this is characteristic of smaller numbers (for reference, the total number of infant deaths in the 3-year pooled period of 2018-20 was 33 for Wirral – the lowest on record). Wirral had a much lower rate of infant mortality than both England and the North-West in 2001-03 and continues to have a lower rate in 2018-20.

Disability

Data on disability (at all ages) is rarely definitive or perfect. **Map 3** below shows the proportion of residents aged 0-15 with a limiting long-term illness (LLTI) according to the 2011 Census. People responded to a question that asked whether or not they (or their child) had a long-term illness, health problem or disability which limited their (or their child's) daily activities.

Map 3: Children aged 0-15 with a limiting long-term illness (LLTI) (Census 2011)



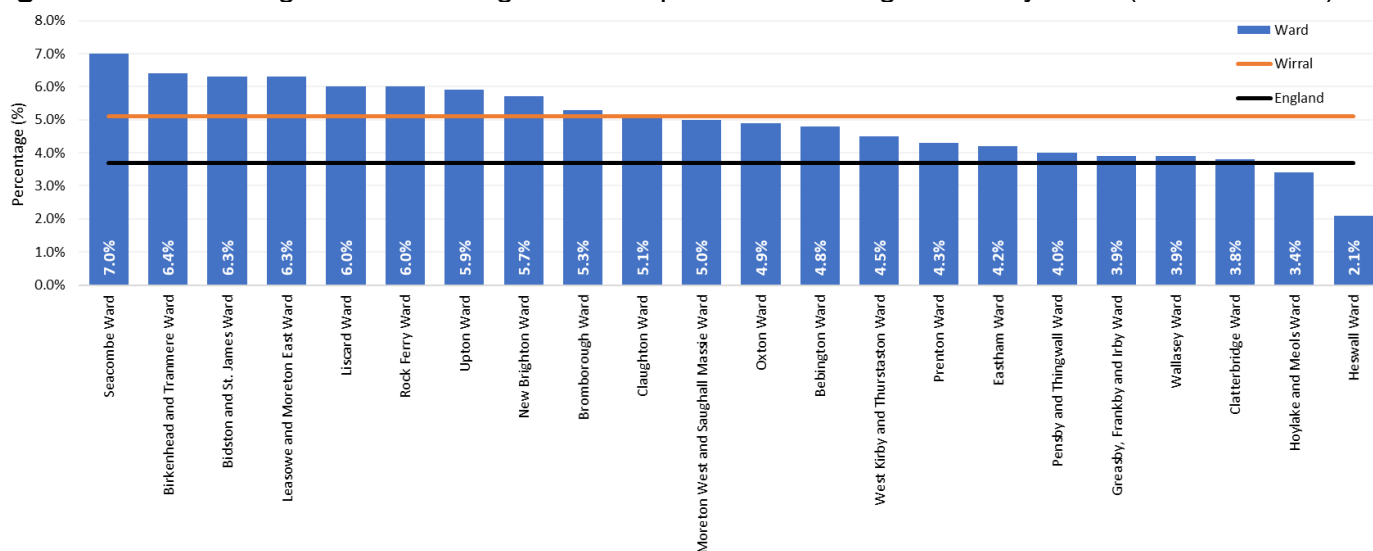
Source: Local Insight, 2019

The total number of children and young people aged 0-15 reported as having a limiting long-term illness (LLTI) in Wirral in 2011 was 3,040, although as this data is from the Census, it is now quite out of date. The percentage of children and young people aged 0-15 who were reported as having a LLTI by Wirral ward are shown in **Figure 12** below.

As **Figure 12** and **Map 3** shows, LLTIs (or disability) in children and young people broadly corresponds with deprivation, with the less deprived wards having the lowest proportion of children with an LLTI - and the most deprived wards having the highest rates. **Figure 12** also shows that Wirral overall has a much higher rate of children with LLTI than England (5.1% compared to 3.7% respectively).

Rates in Wirral, however, do seem to be in line with national estimates produced by The Family Resources Survey 2007/08, which estimated that between 4% and 7% of young people nationally would have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity and experience significant difficulty with day-to-day activities (although these estimates are fairly dated now).

Figure 12: Percentage of children aged 0-15 reported as having a LLTI by ward (Census 2011)



Source: Local Insight, 2021 (Census 2011)

Income and Unemployment

Young people not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)

Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), are at greater risk of a range of negative outcomes, including poor health, depression and early parenthood. Increasing the participation of young people in learning and employment not only makes a lasting difference to individual lives but is also central to improving social mobility and reducing inequalities.

To support more young people to study and gain the skills and qualifications that lead to sustainable jobs and reduce the risk of young people becoming NEET, legislation was included in 2013 to raise the participation age as contained within the Education and Skills Act 2008. This required that from 2013 all young people remain in some form of education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17.

From September 2016 the Department for Education (DfE) relaxed the requirement on authorities to track academic age 18-year-olds. LAs are now only required to track and submit information about young people up to the end of the academic year in which they have their 18th birthday i.e. academic age 16 and 17-year-olds.

Table 6 shows the number and percentage of young people in Wirral aged 16-17, who were NEET in 2020 and 2021. In actual numbers, this suggests an increase from 350 young people in 2020, to 370 in 2021.

Table 6: Young people who are NEET in Wirral, North-West & England, 2020 and 2021

| Year | Wirral | | North West (%) | England (%) |
|------|--------|------|----------------|-------------|
| | Number | % | | |
| 2020 | 350 | 5.0% | 5.4% | 5.5% |
| 2021 | 370 | 5.1% | 5.3% | 5.5% |

Source: Department for Education, [2021](#)

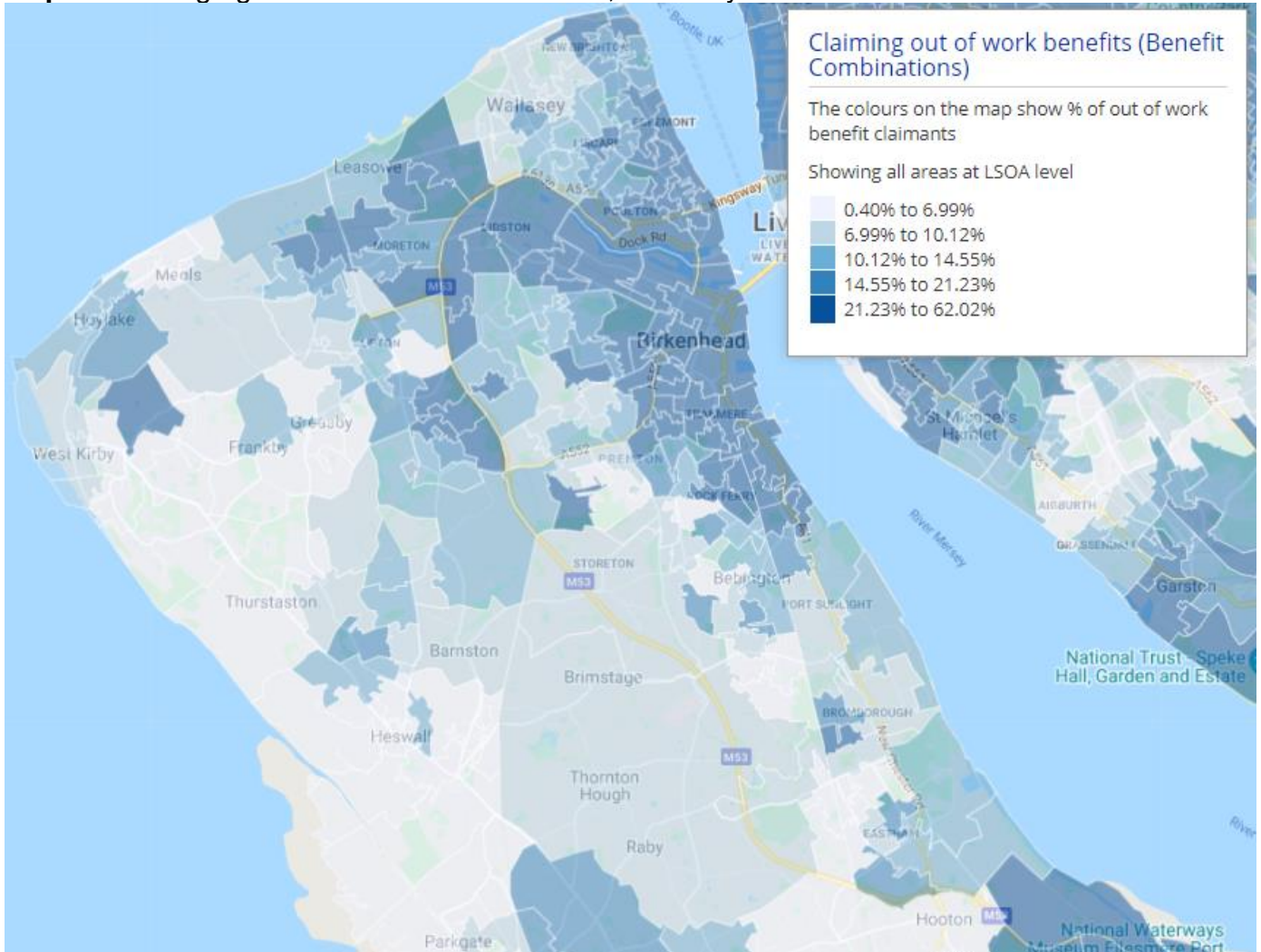
As the table shows, Wirral has a lower rate of young people aged 16-17 NEET than both the North-West region and England overall, despite an increase in those being NEET in 2021, compared to 2020, in Wirral.

Benefits

In total, there were 35,924 people claiming working age benefits in Wirral (as of February 2021), which is 18.6% of the working age population of Wirral (compared to the England average of 14.5%).

As **Map 4** below shows, there are huge variations in Wirral, with a much higher percentage of benefit claimants in the east of Wirral (e.g. over one in three or 36.6% of the working age population in Birkenhead & Tranmere compared to one in 16 or 6.0% in Heswall).

Map 4: Working age benefit claimants in Wirral, February 2021



Source: Local Insight, [2021](#)

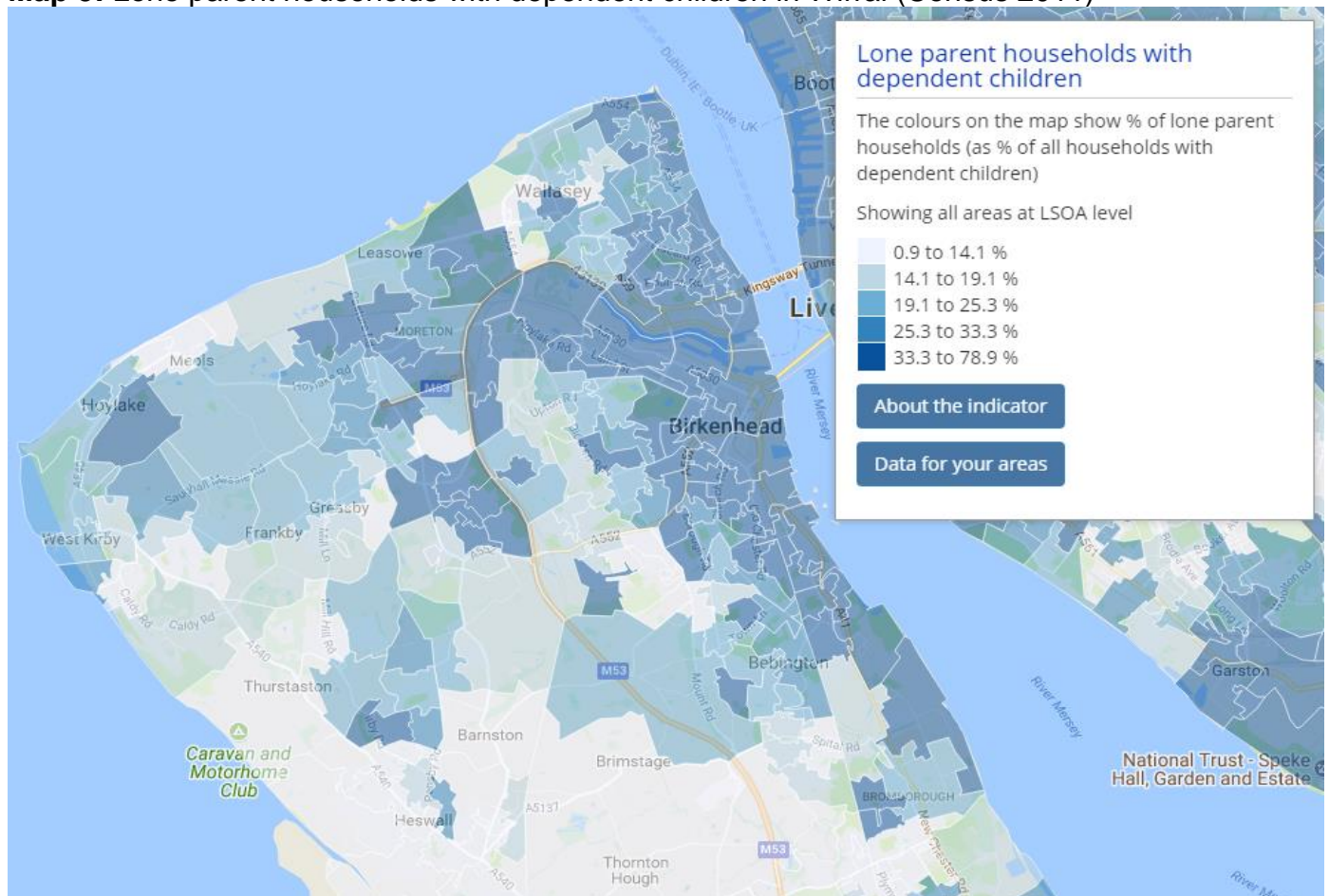
Note: Out of work benefits are defined as being on at least one of the following benefits: Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Incapacity Benefit (IB), Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA), Income Support (IS) where Carer's Allowance (CA) not also in payment, Pension Credit (PC) where Carer's Allowance (CA) and Universal Credit (UC) conditionality regime is one of Searching for Work, Preparing for Work or Planning for Work. The categories of this field are mutually exclusive and therefore can be summed without double counting. Claimants may or may not be additionally in receipt of other benefits not listed here.

Lone parent families

There were 12,735 lone parent families with dependent children according to the Census in Wirral in 2011. Obviously, this data is now relatively old, but it still provides an indication of how Wirral compares to other areas as the comparative distribution is unlikely to have changed (given that it is a long-standing trend that lone parent families tend to be concentrated in areas of deprivation – as **Map 5** shows).

Wirral is no exception to this general rule. In 2011, there was a much higher proportion of lone parent families in Wirral compared to England (32.1% compared to 24.5% of all households respectively).

Map 5: Lone parent households with dependent children in Wirral (Census 2011)



Source: Local Insight, 2019

Adult Skill levels

The **Table 7** below shows the level of adult skills in Wirral in 2020, compared to the North-West and England overall.

Table 7: Level of qualifications in Wirral, North-West and England in 2020

| Qualification Level | Wirral | | North West (%) | England (%) |
|----------------------|---------|-------|----------------|-------------|
| | Number | % | | |
| NVQ4 and above | 72,300 | 37.5% | 38.7% | 42.8% |
| NVQ3 and above | 115,600 | 59.9% | 58.2% | 61.2% |
| NVQ2 and above | 155,700 | 80.7% | 76.9% | 78.0% |
| NVQ1 and above | 175,000 | 90.8% | 87.6% | 87.9% |
| Other qualifications | 5,000 | 2.6% | 4.9% | 5.9% |
| No qualifications | 12,800 | 6.6% | 7.5% | 6.2% |

Source: NOMIS, 2021

Notes: Table shows the total number of people who are qualified at a particular level and above, so data in this table are not additive. Separate figures for each NVQ level are available in the full Annual Population Survey data set. Trade apprenticeships are split 50/50 between NVQ level 2 and 3.

NVQ 1 is equivalent to fewer than 5 GCSEs at grades A-C, foundation GNVQ

NVQ 2 is equivalent 5+ GCSEs at grades A-C, intermediate GNVQ

NVQ 3 is equivalent to 2+ A levels or advanced GNVQ

NVQ 4 is equivalent to HND, Degree and Higher Degree level qualifications or equivalent.

There are approximately 12,800 people of working age in Wirral with no qualifications, or 6.6% of the working age population according to the ONS Annual Population Survey of 2020. This is slightly higher than the England average of 6.2% of the working population who have no qualifications, but lower than the North-West figure of 7.5%.

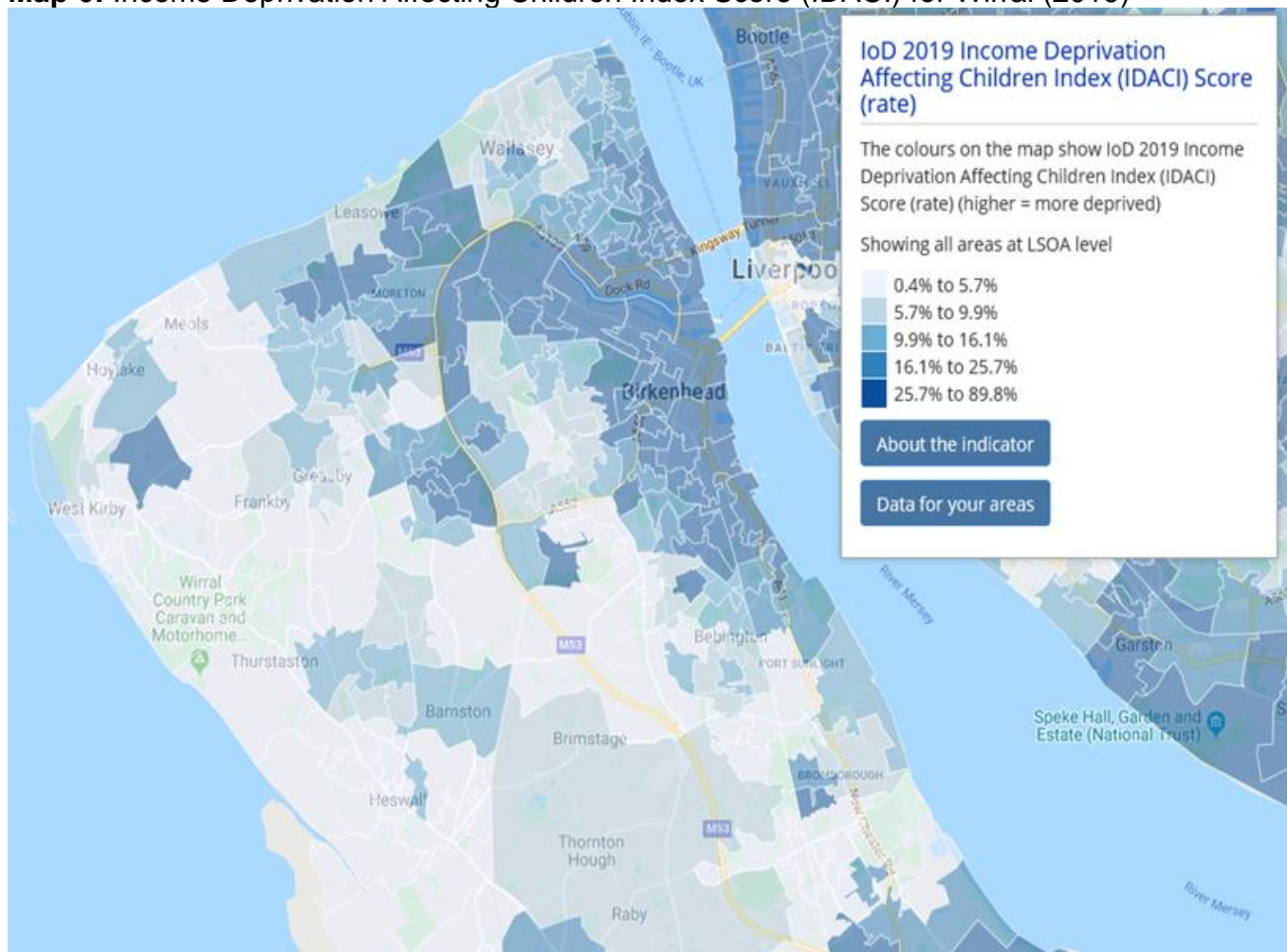
Social Circumstances

Deprivation (Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index or IDACI)

The 2019 Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) is produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government and is a supplementary index to the overall IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation). It measures the proportion or percentage of children under the age of 16 in an area living in income deprived households. The definition of low income used includes both those people that are out-of-work, and those that are in work but who have low earnings (and who satisfy the respective means tests). The IDACI is calculated at lower super output area level (LSOA). **Map 6** and **Table 8** show results by geography.

Map 6 below shows the geographical distribution by LSOA. The 2019 Index is currently the most recently available Indices of Deprivation and was released in October 2019.

Map 6: Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index Score (IDACI) for Wirral (2019)



Source: Local Insight, 2019

As **Map 6** shows, the highest proportions of children living in income deprived families are in the east of Wirral in Birkenhead and Wallasey constituency areas.

There are some pockets in the west and south of Wirral, notably in Upton ward (Woodchurch), around the Acre Lane area of Bromborough and the Gilroy Road area of West Kirby.

Table 8: Percentage of children living in income deprived families, by Ward (2019)

| Ward | % living in income deprived families | Ward Rank |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Bidston and St. James | 45.9% | 1 |
| Birkenhead and Tranmere | 41.7% | 2 |
| Rock Ferry | 41.6% | 3 |
| Seacombe | 41.5% | 4 |
| Leasowe and Moreton East | 29.8% | 5 |
| Upton | 25.9% | 6 |
| Liscard | 25.2% | 7 |
| New Brighton | 20.3% | 8 |
| Bromborough | 20.0% | 9 |
| Cloughton | 19.9% | 10 |
| Moreton West and Saughall Massie | 17.8% | 11 |
| Prenton | 13.8% | 12 |
| Oxton | 12.9% | 13 |
| Bebington | 11.5% | 14 |
| Eastham | 11.5% | 15 |
| Wallasey | 9.6% | 16 |
| Pensby and Thingwall | 8.6% | 17 |
| West Kirby and Thurstaston | 6.2% | 18 |
| Greasby, Frankby and Irby | 5.8% | 19 |
| Hoylake and Meols | 5.7% | 20 |
| Clatterbridge | 5.6% | 21 |
| Heswall | 4.1% | 22 |
| Wirral | 21.8% | |
| England | 17.5% | |

Source: Local Insight, [2019](#)

See [Child and Family Poverty](#) chapter for more details.

Children in 'relative low-income families', are defined as children aged 0-15 years old living in families in low income Before Housing Costs (BHC). A family must have claimed Child Benefit and at least one other household benefit (Universal Credit, tax credits or Housing Benefit) at any point in the year to be classed as low-income.

Table 9: Number and percentage of children in relative low-income families in Wirral, 2019

| Area | Number | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Wirral | 10,490 | 17.2% |
| United Kingdom | 2,428,284 | 18.2% |

Source: Department for Work and Pensions, [2021](#)

As **Table 9** shows, Wirral has a lower proportion of children classified as living in relative low-income families than the United Kingdom overall. Almost one in five children (17.2%) in Wirral live in relative low-income, compared to 18.2% in the United Kingdom overall.

Housing and Fuel Poverty

The effect of poor housing, fuel poverty and overcrowding on children is important, e.g. their attainment at school can suffer from lack of study space, poor sleep and concentration caused by overcrowding, respiratory illnesses and poor nutrition (due to inadequate thermal insulation of houses and inadequate food preparation and cooking facilities) to name but a few.

In Wirral in 2019, an estimated 13.9% (20,558) of households were classed as being in fuel poverty. This is slightly less than the Liverpool City Region average of 15.4% but is higher than the England average of 13.5%. The Wirral LSOA with the highest proportion of households in fuel poverty is Bidston Hill (Wirral 011B) with 32.6% of households who are fuel poor. A fuel poor household is defined as one which needs to spend more than 10% of its income on all fuel use and to heat its home to an adequate standard of warmth). Current rising fuel costs can only be expected to exacerbate this issue in the coming months and years.

Food banks

The largest operator of foodbanks in Wirral is the Trussell Trust, but there are several other foodbanks operated by various churches and charitable organisations. Information on total number of foodbanks, the number of people using them, the reasons for using them and total number of food parcels issued is not collected or collated by any official body. Below is information supplied by Wirral Foodbank (part of the Trussell Trust) on the number of people using their foodbanks in Wirral between September 2015 and August 2020.

Figure 13: Number of clients supplied with food parcels by Wirral Foodbank between 2012 and 2020



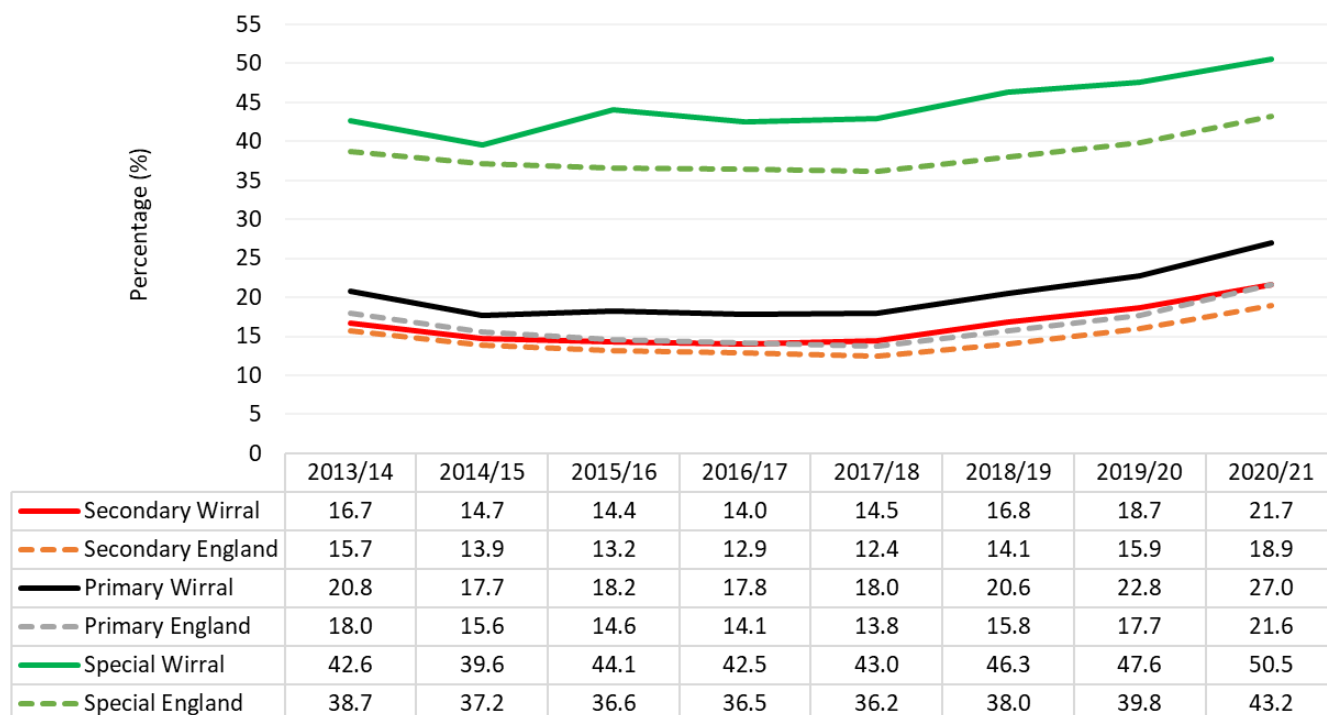
Source: Wirral Foodbank, 2021

As the information in **Figure 13** on Wirral foodbanks run by the Trussell Trust shows between September 2020 and August 2021, food parcels were provided to feed a total of 17,264 people – a slight decrease of 797 people from the previous year (-4% decrease). Since 2015/16 however, the number of people supported with the use of food parcels has increased by 5,024 people (+41% increase) in Wirral.

Free school meals (FSM)

More than one in four primary school pupils in Wirral receive FSM (27.0%) as highlighted in **Figure 14** below; this compares to around one in five at secondary schools in Wirral (21.7%). The highest rate of pupils receiving FSM are in those attending special schools, where over half (50.5%) received free school meals in 2020/21, a figure that was considerably higher than the equivalent figure for England (43.2%). In fact, in all categories of school, there was a higher proportion of pupils eligible for FSMs compared to England overall. In actual numbers, there were just under 13,000 children who were eligible for free school meals in Wirral in 2020/21.

Figures 14: Trend in proportion of Wirral pupils receiving Free School Meals 2013/14 to 2020/21



Source: Department for Education, [2021](#)

Vulnerable Groups

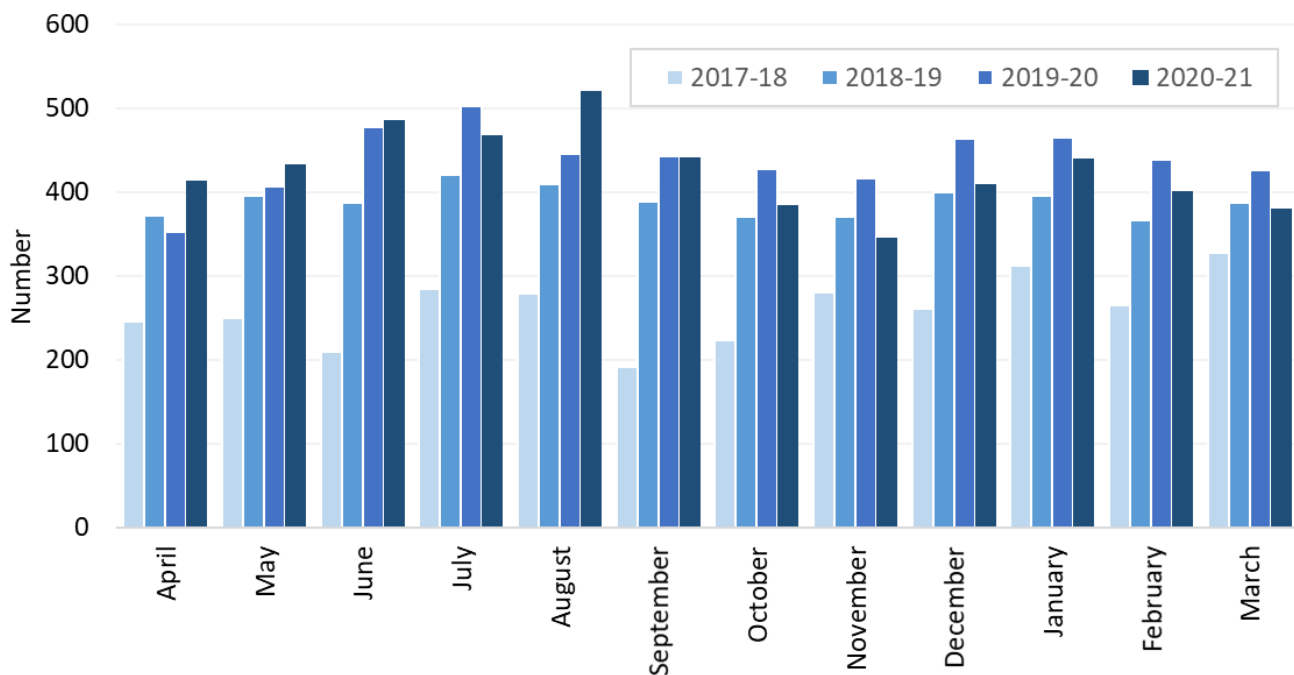
Domestic Abuse

Each year in the UK, 130,000 children are estimated to live in homes where high-risk domestic abuse is prevalent [4]. Domestic abuse, parental substance misuse and poor mental health have been identified as the three most important factors affecting parenting capacity; they were also recurring themes in a 2013 systematic analysis of neglect and serious case reviews (SCRs) in England (2003-11) [5].

Further evidence suggests that the impact on children extends beyond the immediate abuse and into adulthood [6]. Evidence shows an association between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and problems in adulthood, specifically; substance misuse; poor mental health; involvement in violence; early unplanned pregnancy; incarceration; unemployment in adulthood; vulnerability to CSE and a greater risk of exposing any children they may have in the future to ACEs can all be linked back to past experience of domestic abuse as a child [5].

The number of domestic abuse cases in Wirral which were reported to Merseyside Police (by month and year) are shown in **Figure 15** below. This will not be all cases, as many cases will not be reported to the police, but it does give an indication of trend over time.

Figure 15: Number of domestic abuse cases/incidents reported to Merseyside Police taking place in Wirral (by month and year of occurrence)



Source: Merseyside Police, 2019

As **Figure 15** above shows, the number of domestic abuse cases/incidents were at their highest levels in 2019/20, increasing from 3,129 incidents reported in 2017/18 to 5,265 in 2019/20. Figures for 2020/21 have decreased slightly compared to the previous year (n=5,122) but still remain high. Reasons for this are unclear but may indicate an increased willingness to report issues and greater awareness and recognition of domestic abuse. For more information, please see the [Domestic Abuse section of the Wirral JSNA](#).

Young carers

According to the 2011 Census, 748 young people aged 0-15 identified themselves as an unpaid carer, as did a further 2,092 young carers/young adult carers aged between 16-24. Of these, 350 reported that they were delivering 50 or more hours of unpaid care per week. There was an increase between the 2001 and 2011 Census of 2% in the number of young carers. See [Young Carers](#) section for more details and information.

Children at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

There is a specific page in our Wirral JSNA for CSE. Please [check this section](#) for more information on this topic though more updates are anticipated.

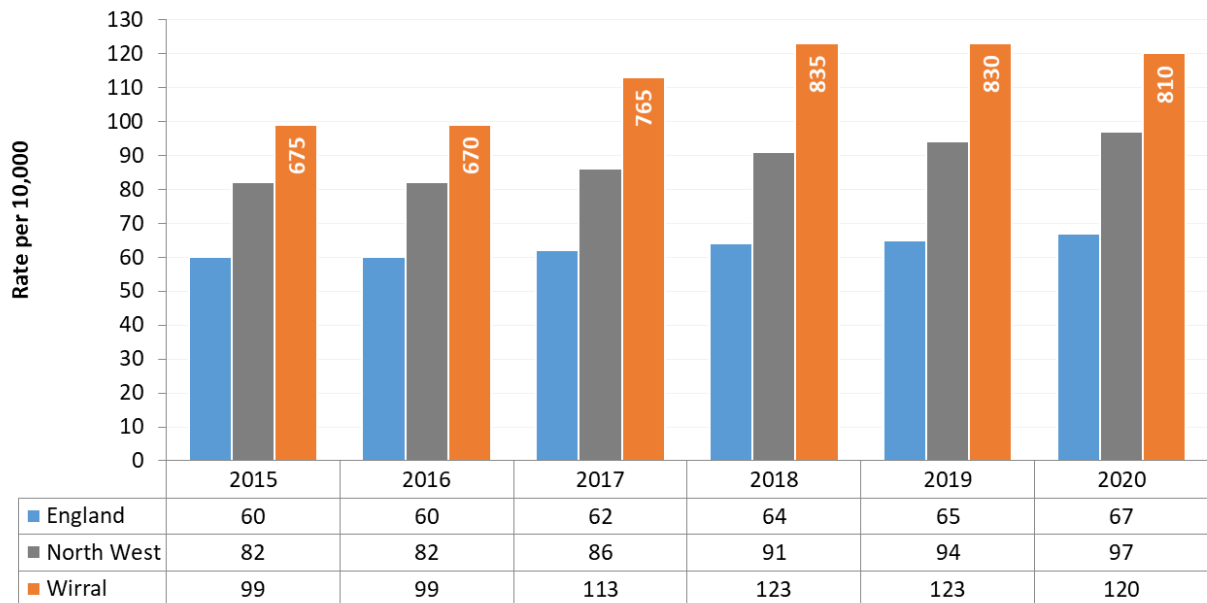
Children Looked After (CLA)

Published comparative data for 2020, suggests there were 810 Children Looked After (CLA) in Wirral. This was a rate of 120 per 10,000, which is much higher than in England overall where the rate is 67 per 10,000.

This overall rate hides huge inequalities in rates of CLA however, with more deprived wards such as Bidston & St, James ward experiencing rates of 332 per 10,000, compared to a rate of 4.5 per 10,000 in Heswall ward (for 2020 data). For more information, please see [Compendium of Statistics 2021, Table 2h](#)

Figure 16 shows the trend in CLA in England, the North-West and Wirral between 2015 and 2020. It shows that whilst there were increases in the rate in England (+12%) and the North-West (+18%) between 2015 and 2020, the rate of increase was much steeper in Wirral (+21%). For the most recent 2 years in Wirral, the rate of CLA has been decreasing, whereas in the North West and England this rate has been increasing.

Figure 16: Trend in rate of Children Looked After Wirral, North West and England, 2015-2020



Source: [Public Health England Fingertips Tool, 2021](#)

Note: Number of Children Looked After are shown in the bars for Wirral only, rounded to the nearest 5

Local data up to March 2020 sees the overall number of Wirral children looked after fall to 812 from 822 and the rate per 10,000 population reduce from 121.6 to 120.3. For more information then please go to [This is Wirral: Children and Young People section](#) on the [Wirral Intelligence Service website](#).

Bereaved children

Most young people will have been bereaved of someone close to them (a parent, sibling, grandparent, friend, and teacher) by the time they are 16. Many will cope well with their loss, but almost all will need some kind of support. The Child Bereavement Network highlights the views of children and young people themselves, who reported that the following things can help:

- Having the death acknowledged
- Being given age-appropriate information about what has happened and what is going to happen
- Having the chance to express their feelings and thoughts about the death
- Being helped to remember
- Taking part in opportunities to say goodbye and commemorate the person who has died
- Knowing they are not to blame for what has happened
- Meeting other children and young people who have been bereaved

Further information

Public England produce a range of publicly available data (Fingertips profiles include vulnerable children, injuries, obesity, vaccinations and immunisations, complex needs and mental health for example, there are many more), information, reports, tools and resources on Child and Maternal Health in [one easily accessible hub](#). It helps users find and use the information and evidence they need to improve decision making as part of the planning or commissioning process. The data is regularly updated as new releases become available.

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