

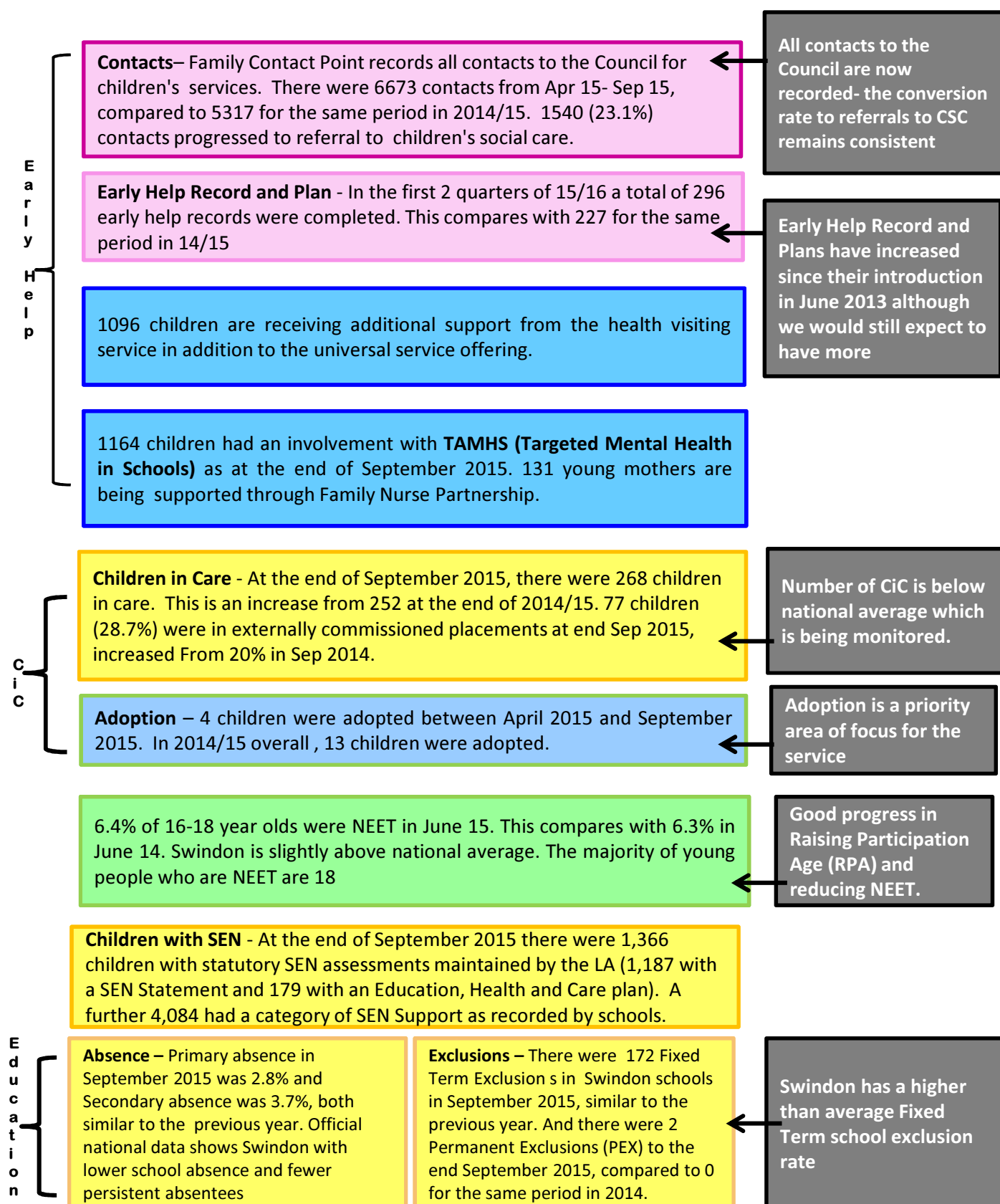


Children's Services Performance Report

Children's Health, Social Care and
Education Overview and Scrutiny
3rd February 2016

Data position at the end of September 15

Headline Messages from Data position at end of September 2015



Headline Messages from Social Care Safeguarding Data End of February 15 and end March 15 where data available

REFERRALS

Referrals – There were 1540 referrals from Apr 2015 to Sep 2015 compared to 1374 for the same period in the previous year. Of the 2540 referrals, 20.8% were re-referrals. Most relate to domestic abuse notifications.

The demand on the 'front door' of social care remains very high. The national picture is variable.

ASSESSMENTS

Statutory Assessments

From April 2015 to September 2015, a total of 1833 statutory (social care) assessments had been completed in an average of 36 days. The national average is 25 days. The number open at any one time in Assessment & Child Protection team remains too high.

Swindon transferred to a single statutory assessment at the beginning of March 2014.

There were 41 **child protection enquiries** (also known as **section 47 investigations**) finished in Sep 2015. The percentage of enquiries going to Child Protection Conference within 15 working days has increased from 69.5% between April 2014 and March 2015 to 72.3% between April 2015 and September 2015.

CHILD PROTECTION

Child Protection Plans - 214 children were on a child protection plan at the end of September 2015. The number has stayed in line with 213 in March 2015. The number of children on a child protection plan is above the national and statistical neighbour average. 100% had their **reviews** completed on time as at the end of September compared to 93.4% in 2014/15. This is based on those children on a plan at the end of September 15.

Specific performance improvements were implemented to improve the timeliness of Initial Child Protection conferences as well as managing the increases occurring. Number of children on plans is above national and statistical neighbour average

The rate of children starting a **child protection plan** for a second or subsequent time has increased to 17.5% between April and September 15, up from 13.1% in September 14. Conference Chairs are monitoring this to explore any possible themes. Performance is also reviewed monthly by Senior managers.

Children on subsequent plans increased and is now slightly above the national average. There are fewer children remaining on a plan for 2 years compared with previous year.

At the end of September 2015, 0.8% (1 child) of children ceasing a protection plan had been on a **plan for 2 years or more** compared to 1.5% in 2014/15.

Early Help Services

Performance Assessment

Early Help Record (EHR) A total of 296 EHRs were completed between April and September 2015. This compares to 227 for the same period in 2014/15.

The CAF was replaced by the Early Help Record and Plan in November 2013. Ofsted recognised the strength of Early Help in Swindon and the access that families have to early help before entering statutory services. Partner agencies may need to consider if their staff are appropriately starting EHRs as the proportion of those undertaken in comparison to statutory social care assessments is disproportionate (although this is not particular to Swindon and is a national issue).

Early Help Plan (Plan) and Early Help Review (Review) The Early Help Record will always lead to a plan being created for the child. The plan may be delivered in a number of ways depending on its complexity.

The number of early help plans has increased as the process becomes more firmly embedded. 254 early help plans were completed between April and September 2015 compared with 149 for the same period in the previous year.

It is important to review the early help plan to see if outcomes for children are being improved and identify any further help that is needed. 520 reviews were completed between April and September 15 which was on average 87 per month. This compares with 295 for April – September 14 (average 49 per month). There can be a delay in input of Early Help Records, Plans and Reviews due to schools sending in periodically.

Strengths

- ✓ Council Early Help services are seen as a strength
- ✓ Increasing number of plans receiving a review giving confidence in the process being embedded into practice

Challenges/Risks

- We need to increase the number of Early Help Record and Plans that are created and children supported to prevent escalation of cases to children's social care.

Safeguarding at the social care front door – contacts, referrals and assessments

Performance Assessment

Contacts Family Contact Point records all contacts for children's services in their wider sense (ie includes Early Help) as well as contacts that become referrals to Children's Social Care. There were 6673 contacts to Family Contact Point between April and September 2015, compared to 5317 for the same period in 14/15. There were 1402 contacts in September 2015, compared to 1036 in August.

Referrals and Re-Referrals 1540 referrals were received in Children's Social Care between April and September 15, compared to 1374 for the same period in the previous year. In September alone there were 305 referrals compared to 167 in August. Swindon's referral rate in the first 6 month period is now higher than national and statistical neighbour averages based on the cumulative rate of referrals between April and September 15. (Swindon 316.9 per 10,000 under 18 compared with 263.5 statistical neighbour and 274.2 national average). The high referral rate in June (304), July (333), and September account for this. It is possible that by the end of year Swindon will be back in line with national and statistical neighbour average if no further fluctuations occur.

Of the 1540 referrals from April to September 15, 20.8% (320) are **re-referrals**. This is a 1%ppt increase from 19.8% for the same period in the previous year. There has been lower trend during 15/16 to date and the September position places Swindon below the national average of 24% (14/15).

Statutory Assessments From April 15 to September 15, a total of 1833 assessments were completed taking an average of 36 working days. The average length of time taken nationally last year was 28 working days.

Number of children in need (section 17 social care) The number of children in need (this does not include children subject to a child protection plan or children in care) was 1309 at the end of September 2015, down from 1379 at the end of April 2015. This is above the national (1140) and statistical neighbour (943) average. Some of these cases will be those open to assessment in Child protection, but whose needs could be met by tier 2 universal services.

Strengths and Challenges

Strengths The service is managing a significant risk in referrals and assessment being undertaken due to the sheer volume.

The re-referral rate has reduced and is now below the national average suggesting outcomes for children following receipt of service is being sustained.

Challenges. The average duration of assessment has increased to 36 days and is now above the average.

Safeguarding Referral and Assessment to Social Care

Performance Assessment

Workforce information for Children's Social Care:

Overall caseloads compare reasonably with the national picture. Caseloads in the Assessment and Child Protection Team (ACP) have reduced since Quarter one but this is the team where caseloads are higher than the service would wish. Caseloads in ACP team now average around 30 – 35 (same since last report), children, per social worker, averaging elsewhere across the service between 25 – 30 (Increase from 23-25 reported in March 15) per social worker. Throughout the year the Council has increased resource in response to increased demand and service pressure, in September 2014 agreeing to 7 extra establishment social workers.

The new configuration of teams, disbanding the Children in Care Team as well as the Court Team, has seen the creation of four community teams, with one Team Manager and two Assistant managers, 9 social workers and 2.2 social care workers, in each team, that were in place in early February 2015.

We continue with our recruitment drive for social workers and social work managers. Our overall vacancy percentage stands at 20%. We have successfully filled all team manager posts with permanent staff and have made significant progress in relation to Independent Reviewing Officer posts, but recruiting to Assistant Team Managers remains a challenge. Agency workers continue to be used to cover vacant posts within the service.

Multi-Agency Risk Panel (MARP)

Children's Social Care operate the MARP process. All the services highest risk cases may be reviewed there as well as any case that other partners are worried about high risk being referred for discussion. Most high risk CSE cases are reviewed at the Panel as well as cases where professional are concerned for other reasons – such as gang activity. To assure itself that the MARP is effective and having the desired outcomes, a review has been completed and was reported to the LSCB in June 2015.

Strengths

- Good progress in recruiting social workers

Challenges

- Continued challenges in recruiting social work managers

Child Protection Processes and Outcomes 1

Performance Assessment

Child Protection Enquires (also known as Section 47's) going to initial child protection conference within 15 working days - 252 child protection enquires were completed from April 15 to September 2015. This compares to 284 in the same period in 2014/15. There were 41 enquires completed during September 2015.

144 out of the 252 child protection enquires completed went to **child protection conference**, compared to 172 out of 284 in the same period in 2014/15. The percentage of enquires that went to initial child protection conference within 15 working days was 72.3% between April and September 15. This is roughly in line with the national average of 74.7%. This performance is good given the context of an increase in the number of children on child protection plans.

Children on Child Protection Plans 214 children were on a child protection plan at end September 15. This is a relatively high number compared to the national average (208) and statistical neighbour average (203). During June and July in particular there was a fluctuation in the number of children starting plans with 32 and 35 respectively. The monthly average was 21 between April and September 15.

Between April and September 15, 100% of children on child protection plans had their **reviews** completed on time. This is an improvement from 93.4% in March 2015. The national average is 94% and the statistical neighbour average is 97.6%.

The number of children having second or subsequent plans was 17.5% between April 2015 and September 2015, an increase from 13.1% in September 14. This is above the national average (16.6%) and statistical neighbour (17.6%). This measure should be considered alongside a low duration, as a high % of second and subsequent plans and low duration could indicate that children's plans are being ceased prematurely, or that intervention outcomes are not sustainable. It is also important to note that a percentage of children will have subsequent plans due to family circumstances changing and for different reasons to their original plan.

Duration of children on child protection plans 0.8% (1) of children ceasing a child protection plan remained on a plan for two years or more between April and September 15, compared to 3.1% in the previous year. This is below the 2014/15 national average of 3.7% and below the statistical neighbour average of 3.6%.

Strengths

- ✓ The timeliness of child protection conferences is positive
- ✓ 100% of reviews of child protection plans took place within timescales

Challenges/Risks

- Partners need to work to reduce the number of children subject to Child Protection Plans
- Understanding of the reasons for a relatively high number of children receiving second/subsequent plans needs to be developed to inform any practice changes required

Permanency Children in Care and Adoption

Performance Assessment

Number of children in care 268 children were in care at the end of September 2015, this compares with 252 at the end of 2014/15. Swindon is below the national average (291 children in care when scaled to the Swindon population). 77 children in care (28.7%) were in externally commissioned placements at the end of September 2015. This compares with 25% (63 children) in 2014/15. A major reason for the increase has been in relation to a number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children coming into the Swindon area. 13.1% of children in care were placed more than 20 miles away from their home address as at the end of September, down from 16.7% at the end of March 2015 and is in line with the national average of 14%. This measure is a corporate priority with a target to reduce to 7% by 2019.

84.3% of looked after children were in family placements at the end of September 2015. This is a slight decrease from 84.9% in March 2015 and is in line with the national average of 85%.

Placement Stability. Short term placement stability is measured based on the those children having 3 or more placements during the reporting period as a percentage of the number of children in care at the end of September 2015. 2.2% of children in care had 3 or more placements. The percentage increases through the year as children move placement and is likely to be in the region of 11 to 15% for the full year. The national average for 14/15 was 10%. Swindon has more adolescent young people in care than the average and we know this age group tends to have a higher number of placement moves. Long term stability of placements for children in care for 2.5 years or more has improved to 67.7% from 66.1% at the end of March 15. Performance is in line with the national average (67%).

Adoption - 4 children were adopted between April 2015 and September 2015. In 2014/15 a total of 13 children were adopted. A further 6 children also became subject to special guardianships between April and September 15.

Timeliness of Adoption – The average number of days between coming into care and being placed for adoption is high, at 836 days compared to 636 nationally based on the September 15 position. Performance has improved since the end of 2014/15 when 850 days was recorded. We know this figure is also higher due to the complexity of the children that were found placements.

Strengths

- The numbers of children needing placement outside of Swindon remains low. We have been able to adopt some children with particular/special needs this year to date despite making the timeliness figure for adoption higher.
- Placement stability for long and short term is showing improvement
- The number of special guardianships shows these are being used a good alternative to adoption where in the child's best interests.

Challenges/Risks

- The rate of children adopted is receiving attention to ensure the levels are appropriate.

Children, Families and Community Health Quality Assurance Framework

Children, Families & Community Health have recently reviewed its **Quality Assurance Framework** and introduced a new quarterly performance board to oversee the introduction of new social work quality standards. It has also developed some Key Quality Indicators (KPIs), to sit with its Performance indicators to start providing improved information on how good the services are rather than simply how many or how much of an activity it conducts.

Section 20 Audit- this was commissioned in response to an acknowledgment of a high number of children accommodated in Swindon under S.20 in comparison to other Local Authorities a year ago, and this was a re-check. The review focused on children who are subject to S.20 accommodation, whom were under the age of 14 and had been accommodated for over 4 months. There were 20 children identified. The figures for Swindon in late 2013 illustrated that there were 44% of children looked after under S.20 versus a statistical neighbour of 30% and a national figure of 27%. Swindon's statistical neighbour with a 'good' Ofsted judgment is 16%. At 21/07/15 there were a total of 130 children looked after on a section 20 out of 267 (48.7%) children and young people. This review concluded that the use of S.20 in incidents of children's entry into care appeared appropriate and proportionate. It is, however, the long term use of S.20 which was identified as problematic in terms of securing legal permanence for those children who require long term care arrangements outside of their birth family. This will be tracked and scrutinised through the Placement Panel.

Independent Case Audits- We had an independent auditor who every quarter audits a sample of six cases of those he graded 2 good and 3 requiring improvement and 1 inadequate using the Ofsted threshold for good. The actions for each case were identified and will be reviewed in Q3.

Routine Monthly Case Audits - Social Care managers reviewed 12 children's cases looking at planning; supervision and management oversight; child's voice and impact of intervention. The case holding social worker was also interviewed as part of the audit. This audit work will be progressed and embedded over the following months. 6 required improvement; 3 were inadequate and 3 were good. Actions for each case were identified and senior managers are responsible for monitoring the improvements needed.

Strengths

- A new Quality Assurance Framework will strengthen the services confidence in its assessment of the quality of the service

Challenges/Risks

- To embed the new Quality Assurance Framework.

Exclusions

Performance Assessment

Fixed term exclusions (FTEs)

In Swindon, during the month of September 2015, there were 172 FTEs from Swindon schools, with 20 exclusions for primary-aged pupils and with 152 exclusions for secondary-aged pupils. This is a similar overall figure to the same period of the previous year when there were 179 FTEs, with 12 coming from primary-aged pupils and 167 from secondary-aged pupils. However, a modest drop in FTEs was recorded for pupils attending mainstream secondary schools.

Latest available official figures by the Department for Education, for the year 2013/14, show that FTE as percentage of school population for Swindon was 4.9%, compared to 3.5% for England and for the South West.

How many children have been Permanent Excluded (PEX) from school?

2 children were permanently excluded from Swindon schools during September 2015, whereas none were excluded in the same period of the previous year. Both pupils were secondary-aged.

4 pupils had their Permanent Exclusion withdrawn during September 2015, compared to 5 in the same period of the previous year. All pupils were secondary-aged.

Latest available official figures by the Department for Education, for the year 2013/14, show that PEX as percentage of school population for Swindon was 0.05%, compared to 0.06% for England and 0.07% for the South West.

Strengths

- Collaboration between all secondary schools and SBC to manage provision for pupils at risk of or in receipt of permanent exclusion

Challenges/Risks

- Latest official figures for fixed term exclusions show Swindon among the local authorities in England with highest FTE rates (22 out of 151)
- Children with characteristics of vulnerability are significantly overrepresented among those that are excluded from school.

Attendance, NEET, Participation in Learning and Youth Unemployment

Performance Assessment

Primary School Attendance Primary absence was 2.8% in September 2015, the same as in the same period of the previous year. For reference, absence in Primary schools in Swindon in 2014/15 was 3.9% while the national and regional averages were 4.0%.

Secondary School Attendance Secondary absence was 3.7% in September 2015, the same as in the same period of the previous year. For reference, absence in Secondary schools in Swindon in 2014/15 was 5.1% while the national and regional averages were 5.2% and 5.4%, respectively.

Persistent Absenteeism (less than 85% attendance) 995 (3.6%) pupils were deemed as persistent absentees in 2014/15, slightly lower than in the previous year and also lower than the national and regional averages of 3.9% and 3.8%.

NEET, Participation in Learning (June 2015) and Youth Unemployment – September 2015

September is a month with significant proportions of young people in unknown post-16 activities, and so Participation figures are not accurate. Therefore it is best to look at June 2015 to compare ourselves against the previous year and national averages.

The proportion of 16-18 year-olds in Unknown activities in Swindon in June 2015 was 7.6% (590 young people), slightly higher than the national and regional averages of 7.3% and 7.1%.

The proportion of 16-18 year-olds that were NEET in Swindon in June 2015 was 6.4% (476 young people), similar to last year's figures of 6.3%, but higher than the national and regional averages of 4.9% and 5.1%. Most young people NEET are aged 18.

The percentage of 16 & 17 year olds 'In Learning' in June 2015 was 89.4%, this is similar to the national average of 89.5% however lower than last year's figure of 90.1%.

The number of 18-24 year-olds that are unemployed but that are actively looking for work was 510 young people as at September 2015, representing 3% of this age group. This is lower than in the same period of the previous year, when more young people (660) were out of work. Comparatively, this is a similar rate to the national average of 2.9% but is higher than the regional rate of 1.8%.

Strengths

- Latest official figures show Swindon with slightly less school absences and less persistent absentees
- Swindon has fewer young people in Unknown post-16 activities
- Fewer young people aged 18-24 out of work.

Challenges/Risks

- NEET figures for 18 year olds are above national and regional averages

Youth Offending

Performance Assessment

Reducing the number of Young People committing offences for the first time – First Time Entrants (FTE)

April to September 2015 (Q1 & Q2 data)

The locally set target is to maintain low numbers of first time entrants (FTEs) into the justice system. Whenever possible, low level offending is dealt with without taking young people to court, especially if the young person has not been in trouble before. In the community the Police encourage reparation by the offender direct to those affected by their offending, (paying or repairing damage or a genuine apology etc. as part of a Community Resolution). In total there have been 61 **Community Resolutions**. In 2014/15 there were 186, so this is a reducing trend to watch.

Where offences are not suitable for a community resolution young people may be suitable for a **Cautions**. An example would be where there is no victim or the circumstances are more complicated and need a formal process. Cautions are given at the police station and can involve an assessment by the YOT and can involve Conditions being agreed to make good the harm done or completing basic interventions such as improving school attendance. In total there were 61 Cautions and 15 Conditional Cautions. In 2014/15 there were 106 Cautions and 16 Conditional Cautions.

Based on the previous year's outturn the target is to have less than 44 **first time entrants** into the justice system per quarter. Against this figure there were 75 First Time Entrants (subject to data cleaning) by the end of Q2, which shows a continuing trend for the reduction in FTEs. These trends are in line with what is happening nationally, where there is a significant reduction in youth offending.

Re-offending data is produced by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) using police and Youth Justice Board (YJB) data and is based on a rolling cohort identified 24 months previously. Year on year Swindon YOT re-offending rate has been broadly in line or better than the national average which is currently 35%. During this period, however, the local rate rose to a high of 43.2%. Data suggests this is due to a small number of persistent offenders from Oct12-Sep13 re-offending, but as they 'roll through' the cohort timeframe it is expected to return to normal rates. Re-offending rates are predicted to rise across the country due to the reducing cohort of young people entering the justice system. In March 2015 the YOT was subject of a **full joint inspection** which ascertained that there were no practice or procedural issues of concern that were contributing to this rise at the time or in place currently. The final inspection report was published on 10th June.

Strengths

- FTE's rates in Swindon are reducing despite a national trend which suggests a slow down in this regard. Offending rates also remain low. The RJ Scrutiny Group (Pan Wilts/Swindon; membership includes the PCC, Senior Police Officer and Yot Managers) recently scrutinised the Swindon YCC's and confirmed the good work undertaken with this cohort of Swindon young people by the Yot.

Challenges

- To ensure re-offending rates are monitored to ensure we fully understand the issues and impact of small numbers of offenders. To continue to scrutinise the Pre Court disposals and cautioning process to ensure the right response is delivered to the right person and at the right time.

Child Health

Performance Assessment

Breastfeeding

In Q2 the prevalence of breastfeeding at 6 weeks was 44.1% (out of 672 Health Visitor contacts), decreasing from 50.5% (of 688) in Q1. The drop in coverage, however, was not so pronounced – 95.2% in Q2 compared to 96.8% in Q1.

Obesity

The prevalence of obesity for both Reception and Year 6 children in the 2014/15 academic year was higher in Swindon than in the whole of England: 9.2% of 2,584 Reception were classed as obese (decreasing from 9.5% the previous year) compared to 9.1% of 610,636 pupils across the country. In Year 6 the prevalence was 19.5% of 2,166 children (a 2% increase from 2013/14) compared to 19.1% of 531,223 nationally.

The combined proportion of overweight and obese children in Reception was lower in Swindon than in the whole of England – 20.5% compared to 21.9% – and decreased significantly from the previous year's figure of 24.2%. The prevalence in Year 6, however, was higher than the national figure (34.3% as opposed to 33.2%) and increased from 33.0% in 2013/14.

Immunisations

Uptake of primary vaccinations at 12 and 24 months has decreased since Q1 (from 96.2% to 95.5% and 98.0% to 97.1%, respectively) and uptake of both primary and booster MMR vaccinations at 5 years decreased also (from 97.6% to 96.2% and 94.1% to 92.0%). However, all 13 measures were higher than the national figures as well as those for the Bath, Gloucestershire, Swindon and Wiltshire Area Team.

Strengths

- Despite the decreases seen in Q2, immunisation uptake remains a strong point and is helped by the thorough data auditing processes within the Child Health and the robust lines of communication with GP practices.

Challenges

- Breastfeeding coverage has declined in the last quarter but a new audit of Health Visiting data has been introduced by the Performance and Data Intelligence team which will hopefully provide the Health Visitors with the information they need in order to improve the service.