
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Overview 2023

Start Well

Updated March 2023

DRAFT



Health &
Wellbeing
Board

Start well | Live well | Age well



Introduction

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is the way we try to understand the health needs and assets of Blackburn with Darwen and its residents. Overall it's about how the population of the borough is made up, what we know about how healthy it is, and the assets people and communities have to help them to stay healthy.

The Start Well section of the JSNA focuses on the health of children from birth through to young adulthood to understand the health needs and inequalities that exist within the borough. Social inequalities and disparities within these wider determinants of health are strongly linked to different health outcomes.

As this document is updated periodically, the links in the reference section will provide sources of current data.

Impact of COVID-19 on Data

Data providers such as the Office for National Statistics (ONS) have noted that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted affect the quality and coverage of some statistics collected from March 2020 to June 2021, particularly social survey data collection.¹ ONS has highlighted several potential issues with data collection during this time, including;

- Response rates;
- Change in mode of interviewing affecting responses;
- Change of people's behaviours and attitudes;
- Sample compositions.

Additionally, the possibility of an increase in non-submissions for some datasets and different patterns in the submitted data.

During this time, fewer patients were being referred and seen within community services. Therefore, data should be interpreted with care when it covers the COVID-19 period.

A key example of this is data taken from the 2021 Census, conducted on 21st March 2021 – at this time, some legal limits on social contact were still in place nationally and ONS has recognised the impact of collection during this time may have had an impact on certain results such as how people perceived and rated their health, therefore potentially affecting how people may have chosen to respond.²

Contents

Child poverty	5
Calculating child poverty.....	5
Education	6
Early Years Foundation Stage	6
Primary education – Key Stage 2	6
GCSE attainment.....	6
Disadvantage Gap	7
Vulnerable Children and Young People	8
Children in Need	8
Looked after children.....	8
‘Toxic Trio’ of family issues	8
NEETs	8
Special Educational Needs and Disability	8
ACEs	8
Children’s Mental Health Services	9
Young People’s Sexual Health	9
Teenage pregnancy.....	9
Chlamydia screening.....	9
Children’s Oral Health	10
Dental Health of Blackburn with Darwen Children.....	10
Child Obesity and Underweight	11
National Child Measurement Programme.....	11
Eat Well Move More Strategy 2022-25	11
Child Obesity Trailblazer	12
Recipe 4 Health.....	12
Re:refresh.....	12

Road Accidents	13
Pedestrian Child KSI	13
All child road casualties	13
Child Safety in the borough	14
Child Health Outcomes	15
At delivery	15
Infant and Child Mortality	15
Hospital admission/attendance	15
Child Vaccinations	16
Coverage Rates	16
Reasons For National Decline	16
References	17

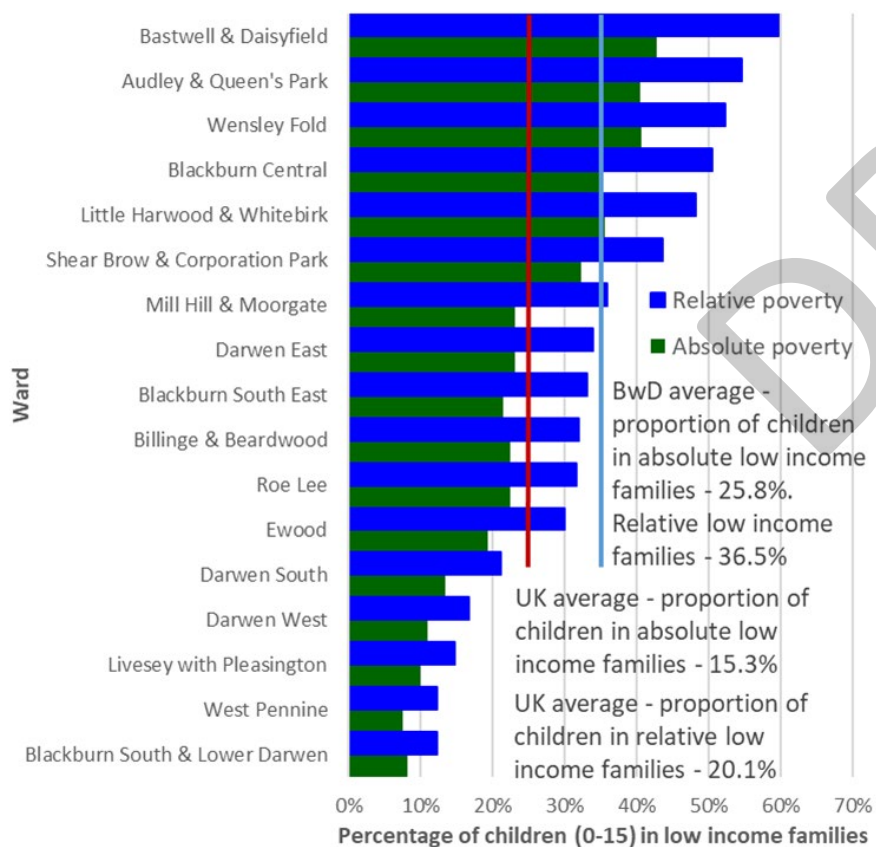
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Child poverty

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation in its 2022 poverty report highlights recent trends regarding child poverty. Almost one in three children nationally are living in poverty (31%) and almost half of children in lone-parent families live in poverty. The report also highlights that child poverty rates amongst Black, Asian and minority ethnic households are higher than other ethnic groups. Additionally, the proportion of families in in-work poverty is higher amongst these groups too.³

It was for reasons such as this that child poverty was chosen as the subject of Blackburn with Darwen’s 2018/19 Public Health Annual Report. The Public Health Annual Report takes an in-depth look at the causes and effects of child poverty, and the steps being taken or planned in Blackburn with Darwen to prevent it, reverse it, or soften its impacts.⁴

Figure 1 –Blackburn with Darwen ward estimates for the proportion of children (0-15) in relative and absolute low income families, 2021-22



Calculating child poverty

There have been multiple approaches to calculating the number of children in child poverty. Estimates from End Child Poverty and the DWP based on information from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) have come up with significantly different figures for the number of children aged 0-15 in poverty. For example, in 2020-21, the DWP estimated there were 9,428 children in absolute low income families (27.3%) and 11,742 in relative low income families (34%).⁵ Whereas, End Child Poverty estimated that 12,693 children were in poverty (37.6%).⁶ One of the main differences in the calculation of these figures is that the DWP estimate is based on figure Before Housing Costs (BHC) and the End Child Poverty figures are based on an After Housing Costs (AHC) measure.

Across the latest End Child Poverty estimates, the borough has the 30th highest level of child poverty amongst English authorities and 3rd highest amongst authorities in the North West. From the latest DWP figures (2021-22), the borough has the 8th highest proportion of children in relative low income families (12,840 – 36.5%) across English authorities and 3rd highest amongst authorities in the North West. Regarding the proportion of children in absolute low income families (12,840 – 36.5%), the borough has the 16th highest rate amongst English authorities and 4th highest amongst authorities in the North West.

The DWP also give figures at a ward level. For 2021-22, nearly 60% of children aged 0-15 in Bastwell and Daisyfield were estimated to be in relative low income families, whereas in Blackburn South and Lower Darwen, 12.3% of children were in relative low income families. The majority of wards in the borough have higher rates of children in low income families than seen nationally. The variation across wards for 2021-22 is shown in Figure 1.

Education

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile measures children's development at the end of the school year when they turn five. In 2021-22, just over 63% of Blackburn with Darwen children were deemed to have a 'good' level of development.⁷ This lags behind England by nearly 2% and as compared to pre-pandemic levels, the borough's figure is down nearly 5%. **Error! Reference source not found.** also shows various breakdowns of the 2021-22 results. Within the borough, there was relatively little inequality according to ethnicity. However there is more of a gap according to gender, eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM), first language and SEN.

Primary education – Key Stage 2

60% of Blackburn with Darwen Key Stage 2 pupils achieved the 'expected standard' in reading, writing and maths in 2021-22. Slightly above the national average (59%).⁸

The breakdown shows that inequalities in the borough exist between all the characteristic areas shown, with the greatest difference between those who are SEN and non-SEN.

GCSE attainment

The simplest measure of comparable attainment is the proportion of pupils obtaining grade 5+ in both subjects. Provisional results for 2021/22 show that the proportion of pupils obtaining a grade 5+ in English and Maths within schools in Blackburn with Darwen's score being 43.5%, is significantly lower than the national and regional average.⁹ Looking at some of the inequalities, White pupils fared considerably less well than those of Asian heritage. By this stage, pupils who did *not* have English as their first language were performing better than those who did. Disadvantage makes a big difference too, but students eligible for FSM and those in SEN categories have the third best results in the North West and are in the second highest quintile nationally.

Figure 1 – Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Key Stage 2 (KS2) and Key Stage 4 (KS4) results, 2021-22

Measure	Characteristic	Sub-category	Blackburn with Darwen	North West	England
EYFS - % of children reaching a good level of development	Gender	Total	63.1%	61.7%	65.2%
		Girls	68.7%	69.0%	71.9%
		Boys	57.7%	54.8%	58.7%
	Ethnicity	White	63.3%	63.3%	66.3%
		Asian/Asian British	65.1%	59.3%	64.9%
	First language	English	65.5%	63.9%	67.1%
		Other	60.6%	53.4%	60.1%
	Disadvantage	Free school meals	51.9%	46.2%	49.1%
		Non-free school meals	66.0%	65.8%	68.8%
	SEN	All SEN	26.1%	15.8%	18.8%
Non-SEN		71.2%	67.7%	70.9%	
KS2 - % of children meeting 'expected standard' in reading, writing and mathematics	Gender	Total	60%	58%	59%
		Girls	65%	62%	63%
		Boys	55%	53%	55%
	Ethnicity	White	55%	57%	58%
		Asian/Asian British	65%	61%	67%
	First language	English	56%	58%	58%
		Other	65%	57%	62%
	Disadvantage	Free school meals	43%	41%	42%
		Non-free school meals	65%	64%	65%
	SEN	All SEN	22%	17%	18%
Non-SEN		71%	68%	69%	
KS4 - % of children achieving a grade 5 or better in English and Mathematics	Gender	Total	43.5%	46.6%	49.8%
		Girls	49.7%	49.3%	52.6%
		Boys	43.5%	43.9%	47.1%
	Ethnicity	White	37.6%	45.1%	47.8%
		Asian/Asian British	56.4%	56.3%	61.9%
	First language	English	43.8%	46.1%	49.0%
		Other	53.4%	49.8%	54.2%
	Disadvantage	Free school meals	30%	25.3%	28.4%
		Non-free school meals	52%	53.2%	55.4%
	SEN	All SEN	19.3%	16.1%	18.2%
Non-SEN		50.3%	52.1%	55.8%	

Disadvantage Gap

The Education Policy Institute (EPI) has published a report on what it calls the 'Disadvantage Gap', between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers.¹⁰ They have developed a way of converting the gap into 'months of learning', to make it easy to understand.

EPI define 'disadvantaged' children as those who have been eligible for Free School Meals in any of the prior six years (which is most of the pupils eligible for Pupil Premium). Each chart in **Error! Reference source not found.** shows the gap in months between disadvantaged children locally, and non-disadvantaged children nationally as of 2019. This ensures that the gap truly reflects the performance of the disadvantaged children in each area.

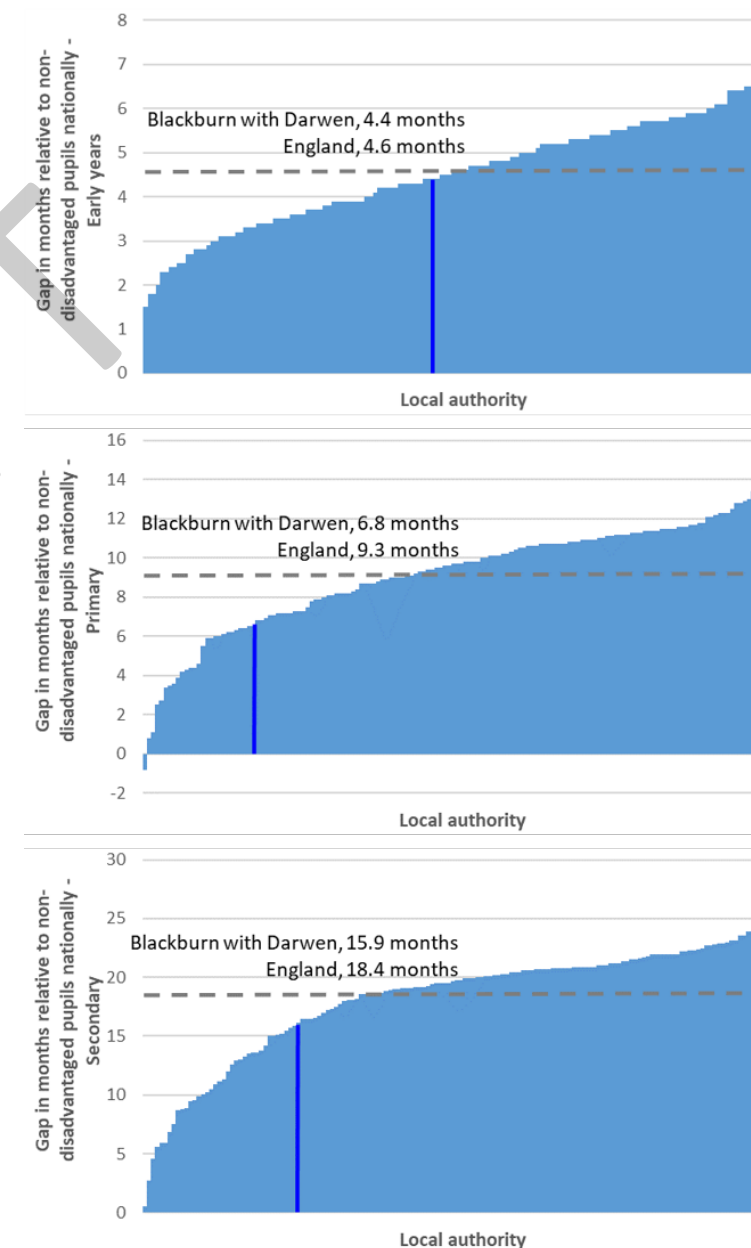
It can be seen that at the Early Years stage, the 'Disadvantage Gap' in Blackburn with Darwen is roughly the same as the national average, at 4.4 months (4.6 months nationally). At the end of primary school (Key Stage 2), disadvantaged children in Blackburn with Darwen are 6.8 months behind non-disadvantaged children nationally, but this is not as big as the national average gap of 9.3 months.

By the time disadvantaged children in Blackburn with Darwen sit their GCSEs, they are 15.9 months behind non-disadvantaged children nationally. However, disadvantaged children nationally are on average 18.4 months behind.

It is concerning how the 'disadvantage gap' grows as children get older, and the ideal would be no gap at all. However, it can be seen that Blackburn with Darwen's disadvantaged children improved their relative position in the rankings as they move through the school system.

The EPI also estimate the proportion of disadvantaged pupils in local authorities at different school stages. As of 2019, During the Early Years stage, 16.9% of pupils in Blackburn with Darwen are disadvantaged. At the end of primary school, 32% are pupils are disadvantaged and at the time of GCSE's, 36.7% of pupils in the borough are recorded as being disadvantaged.

Figure 2 – 'Disadvantage Gap' between disadvantaged children in Blackburn with Darwen and non-disadvantaged children nationally, 2019



Vulnerable Children and Young People

Children in Need

'Children in Need' is the Department for Education's (DFE) term for all those referred to the local authority and assessed to require services.¹¹ Blackburn with Darwen had a total of 1,384 Children in Need at the end of March 2022, up from 1,332 the year before. As a rate, this comes to 358.1 per 10,000 (North West 384.3, England 334.3), meaning the borough's rate is not too far from the overall average. Figure 4 shows the reasons during the assessment as to why these children were assessed as being in need.

Looked after children

A subset of 'Children in Need' is the 374 children looked after by the local authority as of 31st March 2021. This equates to 97 per 10,000 children under 18 (England = 67) and places the borough in the top quintile nationally.

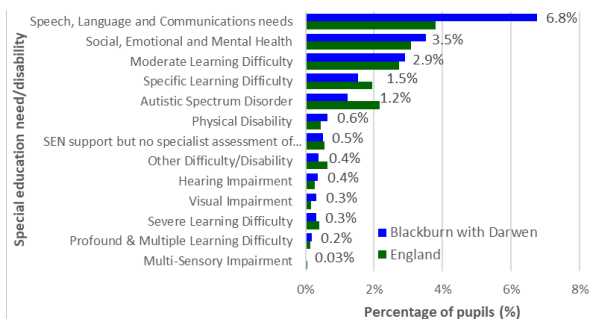
'Toxic Trio' of family issues

The Children's Commissioner's Office has issued synthetic estimates of what it calls the '**Toxic Trio**' of family issues (alcohol/substance misuse, domestic abuse and mental health problems)¹², namely where a parent is affected by some or all of the issues in the box. Depending on severity, there may be between 7,360 and 17,530 children aged 0-17 in Blackburn with Darwen living in households where an adult has at least one of these problems, with 500 to 1,340 living in a household where an adult has all three. It is important to appreciate that these are broad estimates, based on a national survey plus some modelling.

NEETs

Vulnerable young people are at particular risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), which in turn can lead to increased risk of poor health, depression, early parenthood, and other negative outcomes. Using an average of data from December 2021 to February 2022, 168 people aged 16-17 in the borough were classified as NEET (including those whose activity is unknown to the local authority), or 3.9% of the age group. This compares well with the England average of 4.7%.¹³

Figure 5 – Prevalence of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in all pupils, Blackburn with Darwen and England, 2021-22



Special Educational Needs and Disability

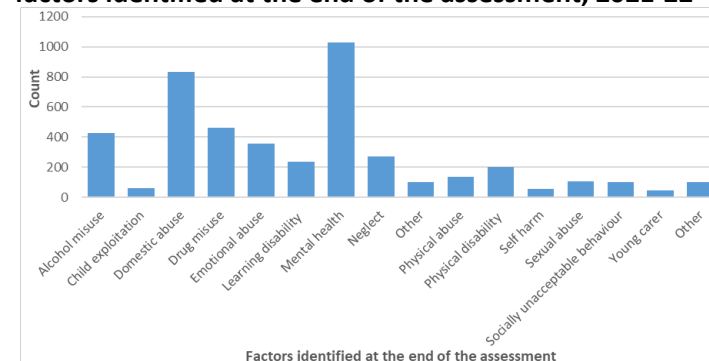
As of January 2022, there were 5,227 children in Blackburn with Darwen schools with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) or 18% of all pupils. This is higher than the average for England (16.6%) or the North West (16.9%).¹⁴

Error! Reference source not found. 5 shows the proportion of all pupils in the maintained sector having a Special Educational Need or Disability of each particular type.¹⁵ The rate of Speech, Language and Communication Needs in Blackburn with Darwen is strikingly higher than the overall national figure.

ACEs

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful events in childhood which can be associated with poor outcomes in adult life. For the first time, a research team has constructed a local authority-level 'ACE Index', using publicly available administrative data that identifies recent ACE events (such as police reports of child abuse).¹⁶ The Index shows a strong association with poverty. Blackburn with Darwen is not one of the highest local authorities, but it is in the top quintile.

Figure 4 – Children in Need in Blackburn with Darwen, by factors identified at the end of the assessment, 2021-22



Children’s Mental Health Services

In a report published in February 2022, the Children’s Commissioner uses five indicators to summarise Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provision per CCG.¹⁷ Blackburn with Darwen is not in the worst quintile for any individual indicator, and this is reflected when all five are considered together, where the composite score was only two points from scores of CCGs in the top 20.

Table 1 – Five key indicators of CAMHS provision in Blackburn with Darwen, and resulting Composite Score

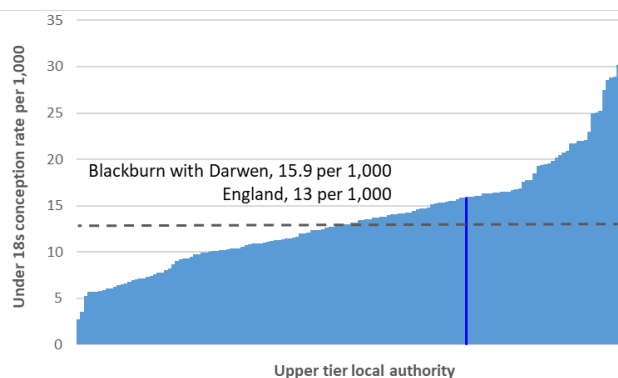
(a) Children’s mental health spend per child	(b) Children’s mental health spend as % of the CCG budget	(c) Percentage of children referred (as % of the population)	(d) Average waiting time for those children who do get seen	(e) Percentage of referrals closed before treatment	Composite Score [based on which quintile the CCG falls in for each of indicators (a) to (e)]
£62.9 (England £73)	1% (England 1.1%)	4% (England 4%)	18 days (England 32)	21% (England 24%)	17 points (worst possible = 5, best = 25)

Young People’s Sexual Health

Teenage pregnancy

The number of under-18 conceptions in Blackburn with Darwen fell to a new low of 48 in 2020, with rates falling in line with national trends. Expressed as a rate (Figure 35), Blackburn with Darwen (15.9 per 1,000) is not significantly different from the England average (13 per 1,000). In comparison to other upper tier authority areas, the latest data puts the borough just outside of the bottom quartile nationally (Figure 6).

Figure 7 – Under 18 conception rate by Upper Tier Local Authority, 2020



Within the borough, five wards (Blackburn Central, Blackburn South East, Darwen East, Ewood and Little Harwood & Whitebirk) accounted for around half the borough’s deliveries to teenage mothers from 2016-17 to 2020-21.

From 2018 to 2020, there were 36 births to women under-16 in the borough, resulting in a rate of 3.9 births per 1,000 across 2018-20, slightly higher than the England average of 2.3 births per 1,000.

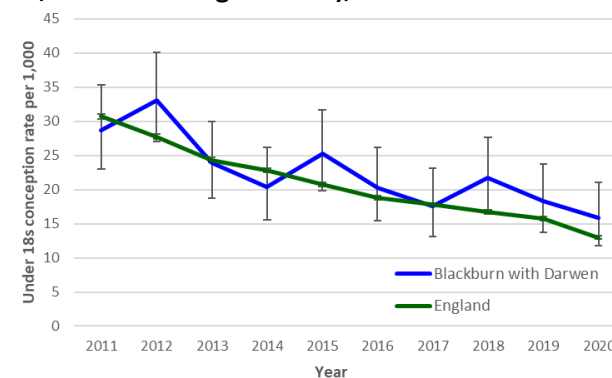
Chlamydia screening

Chlamydia is a largely hidden condition, so cases are most often discovered through opportunistic screening. The National Chlamydia Screening Programme aims to diagnose and treat as many cases as possible in young people aged 15-24, and local authorities are encouraged to aim for a ‘Chlamydia Detection Rate’ of at least 3,250 per 100,000. The

latest figures for 2021 imply that Blackburn with Darwen’s detection rate is well below that target, at 1,057 per 100,000 (England average 1,334 per 100,000).**Error!**

Bookmark not defined. This is the eighth lowest rate in the North West and the 45th lowest nationally. Since 2018, detection rates have been significantly worse than the national average since high detection rates from 2015 to 2017 which are now thought to have been due to post-coding anomalies.

Figure 6 – Under 18 conception rate (per 1,000 females aged 15-17), 2011 to 2020



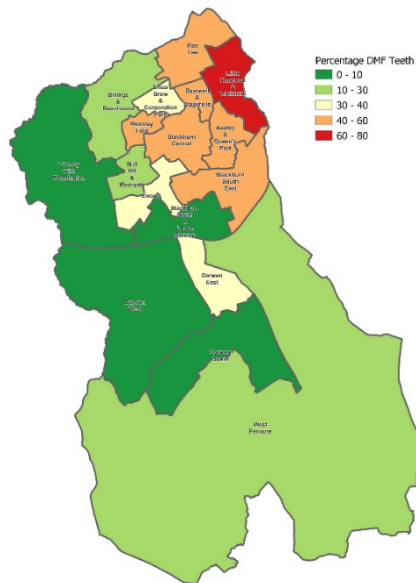
Children's Oral Health

Dental Health of Blackburn with Darwen Children

From 2018-19 to 2020-21, 295 children aged 0-5 in Blackburn with Darwen were admitted to hospital for dental caries. This is down from 350 the year before, however, the crude rate of admissions was recorded as the fifth highest amongst upper tier authorities with available data. Looking at other age groups, especially for the under 10 age groups (Figure 8).¹⁸ It does not tell the whole story, because many children also have teeth extracted in primary care.¹⁹

In 2022, the Council launched their Oral Health Improvement Partnership Strategy.²⁰ Key parts of the vision to improve the oral health of children and young people include; peer support through parent champions, a targeted communications campaign to promote good oral health (launched in May 2022) and the Give Up Loving Pop (GULP) campaign which teaches children in the 20 primary schools with the highest rates of decay about the negative impact of sugary drinks on their teeth. The Oral Health Improvement Service, now live, provides toothbrushes and toothpaste (as well as sippy cups where appropriate) to key groups of children (via health visiting teams and our looked after children teams). Additionally, the service is training nursery staff in the ward with the highest rate of decay and staff in the top 20 primary schools with the highest rates of decay, to deliver a supervised brushing service. The strategy also outlines how the council and NHS

Figure 9 – Percentage of 4-5 year olds in Blackburn with Darwen with at least one DMFT by Ward, 2020-21

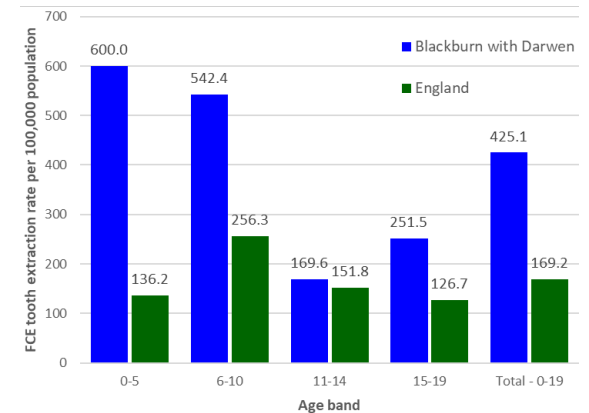


England can work with dental practices in applying fluoride varnish to children in areas found to have high rates of dental decay and to increase the proportion of children registered with a dentist by one year old.

A dental survey was carried out by the University of Central Lancashire, on dental health among 4-5 year old children across the borough. In the 2021 school year, just over 4 in 10 (43.4%) of 4-5 year olds examined, had at least one decayed, missing, or filled teeth – 56.6% of the sample population had no experience of visually obvious dental decay.²¹ Analysis from the Oral Health Improvement Partnership Strategy found across Blackburn with Darwen, Pendle and Burnley, Asian children living across these council areas (combined) had a statistically significantly higher proportion of three and five year olds experiencing tooth decay than White children.²²

The latest data (2021-22) looking at the percentage of five year olds with visually obvious dental decay²³ showed that the borough has the fourth highest rate of tooth decay amongst upper tier authorities in England (from councils with available data). This is an improvement from the previous period, where the borough had the worst rate nationally. Interventions to improve rates include; the AP Smilestars supervised tooth brushing programme, delivered by AP Smilecare on behalf of the council. This was introduced into reception and nursery classes in September 2022.²⁴ As part of the effort to improve oral health and impact other areas of child health such as reducing the risk of obesity and type-2 diabetes, the council works with Sustain, to help children reduce the amount of sugar they consume.²⁵

Figure 8 – Tooth extraction rate per 100,000 population by age group, 2020-21



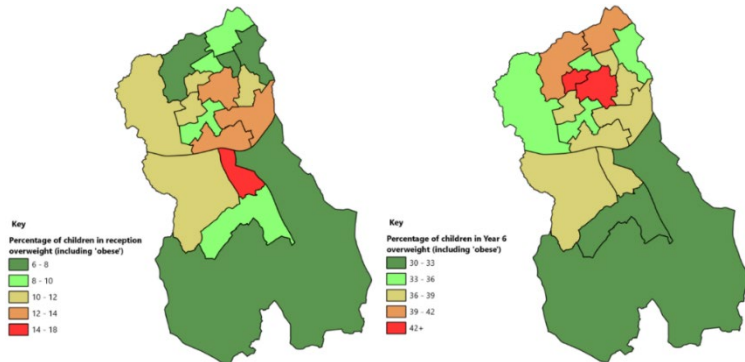
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Child Obesity and Underweight

National Child Measurement Programme

Figure 9 shows the results of the latest National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) survey in 2021-22. In Reception, the proportion of underweight children in Blackburn with Darwen is higher than average, however, the proportion of children estimated to be at healthy weight is also higher and the proportion of children with excess weight (i.e. 'overweight') and are obese, is lower than the regional and national average.

Figure 10 – Prevalence of overweight (including 'obese') at Reception and Year 6 by Ward, 2019-20 to 2021-22



By Year 6, however, the borough has an above-average proportion of children with excess weight and actual obesity. Figure 10 shows that there are marked inequalities in those classified as 'overweight' (including 'obese') across Blackburn with Darwen by ward area. Wards with the greatest proportion of children that were 'overweight' were mainly those in the most deprived wards and lowest in the least deprived wards. This is in line with previous research that has found findings.²⁶

Physical activity

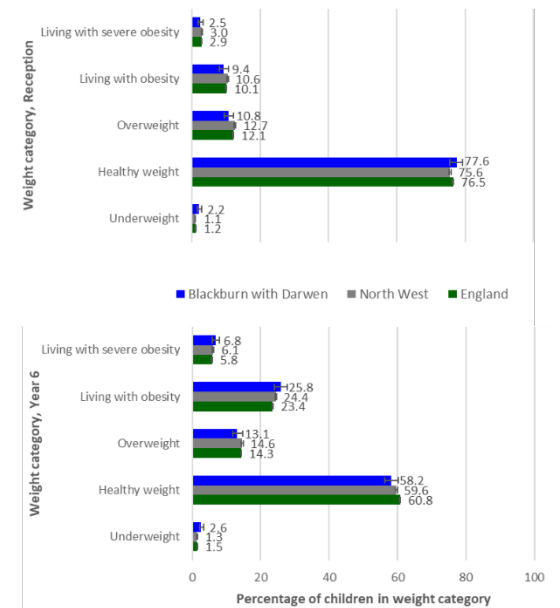
Amongst children and young people (those aged 5-16), those doing on average at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity activity per day across the week are considered 'physically active'. In 2021-22, the percentage of children estimated to be physically active was 44.3%, slightly lower than the regional (48.5%) and national average (47.2%). Amongst the North West, the borough has the third lowest proportion of children considered to be physically active.²⁷

Eat Well Move More Strategy 2022-25

The refreshed Eat Well Move More Strategy sets out a vision with the borough to tackle unhealthy weight and ensure that being physically active and eating well remain core local priorities. Through this strategy and partnership, the borough aims to implement a 'place-based' approach through collaboration, engagement and a commitment to making health everybody's business in every setting.

Over the last few years, there have been some local successes, including; the outcomes and legacy of the Child Obesity Trailblazer Programme and becoming a Sport England Local Delivery Pilot for the Together an Active Future funding. The council has helped establish strong delivery partners through the Blackburn with Darwen Food Alliance, the BwD Active Network and walking, cycling and wheeling groups, which continue to help deliver holiday activity and food programmes for children and young people throughout the school holidays, as well as promoting the Recipe 4 Health Award to schools and hot-food takeaways across the borough. Activity is aimed at tackling issues related to poor nutrition and physical inactivity and aims to build opportunities and environments which encourage and enable people in the borough to make healthier choices.

Figure 11 – NCMP: Weight at Reception and Year 6, 2021-22



Child Obesity Trailblazer

Blackburn with Darwen's forward thinking on childhood obesity and inequalities resulted in the borough being chosen as one of only five child obesity 'Trailblazer Authorities'²⁸. The trailblazer programme received core funding from October 2019 up to July 2022 and activity in the borough was part of a wider programme across Pennine Lancashire (a grouping of authorities in East Lancashire and Food Active) that took a systems-wide approach to transforming the food environment. There have been four strands to the work: systems leadership; the planning lever; social movement; and business engagement. Some of the key achievements of the programme have been:

- Local councillors' involvement, including, regular elected member health and wellbeing forums, the development of a health and wellbeing portal and online learning resources
- Work with planning teams to develop a Planning for Healthy Environments toolkit; a review of planning applications for A3 and A5 use and the use of Supplementary Planning Documents and local plans to support healthier environments. Other cross-departmental work has included the development of a data map showing the correlation between, for example, the prevalence of childhood obesity and fast food outlets
- The Recipe4Health Award has been re-branded to recognise any food businesses (including schools and nurseries) that promote healthy eating, environmental issues and social responsibility

Alongside successfully prioritising health and well-being issues amongst participating councils. The programme highlighted some key issues in the Pennine Lancashire area such as food insecurity, particularly how issues of food insecurity and the causes of unhealthy weight are interwoven.

Recipe 4 Health

[Recipe 4 Health](#) was launched by Lancashire County Council a decade ago²⁹. As part of the Pennine Obesity Trailblazer Programme, the award was reviewed with new branding and logos produced. New certificates, window stickers, menu stickers, posters and pull-up banners as well as napkins have all been designed and printed as part of a new push from April 2023 to promote the brand across Blackburn and Darwen. Takeaways and sandwich shops will be allowed to have their business promoted as part of a Facebook promotion, which will run throughout April and May to promote the brand. The campaign aims to promote healthier food options to residents of and visitors to the two towns so they will know how to find and visit businesses with the award, using their smartphone.

The [food map](#) on the council's Public Health website shows where award holders are located, and will take the user to the business's website with their contact details. The environmental health team are pushing the new materials with award holders and persuading them to fill in the form so their business shows on the food map.

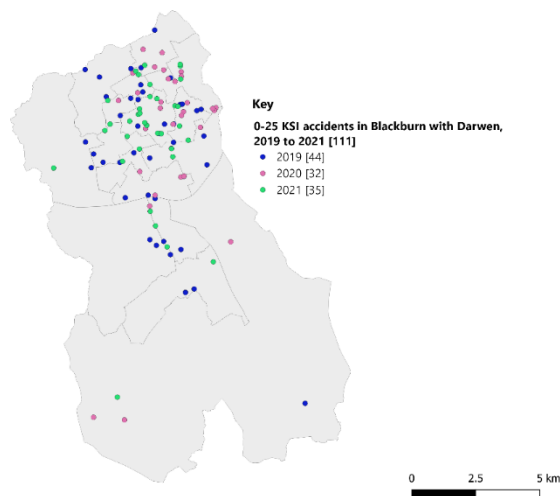
Re:refresh

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's re:refresh programme aims to get more people taking part in physical activity across the borough, particularly targeting those who may find it difficult to find time to exercise. Physical activity in early years is key to building relationships and social skills and improving development, health and sleep. As part of the re:refresh programme, there are several dedicated for young children, as well as activities to support new mums and mums to be.³⁰



Road Accidents

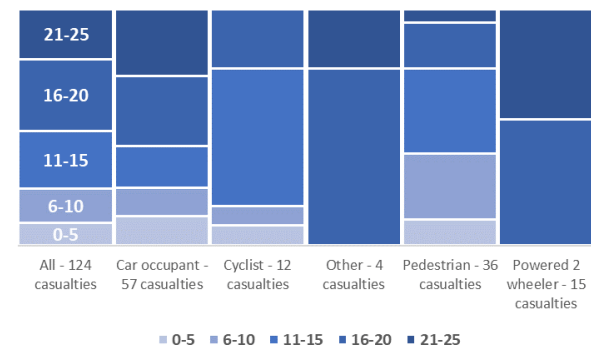
Figure 4 –KSI accidents involving at least one 0-25 year old in Blackburn with Darwen, 2019 to 2021



Reported traffic accidents captured by the Department of Transport, found 124 people aged 0-25 were killed or seriously injured (KSI) on Blackburn with Darwen's from 2019 to 2021.³¹, with 60 of those being aged 0-15. Fortunately, from 2019 to 2021, there have been no child fatalities in the borough. When comparing to other areas, from 2018-2020, Blackburn with Darwen has the highest crude child KSI rate from 148 upper-tier local authorities in England, with the rate increasing since 2016-2018. It should be noted that police forces can vary in their reporting systems, which means there can be some variability when classifying injuries regarded as 'serious'.³²

Figure 13 on the right looks at all young people killed or seriously injured up to the age of 25, over three years (2019-2021). The casualties are broken down by type of road user (columns) as well as by age (light to dark shading). 46% of casualties were car occupants, those aged 16-25 making up 57.9% of victims. 29% were pedestrians, with 36.1% of those being aged 11-15.

Figure 13 – Breakdown of KSI casualties in Blackburn with Darwen, 2019 to 2021



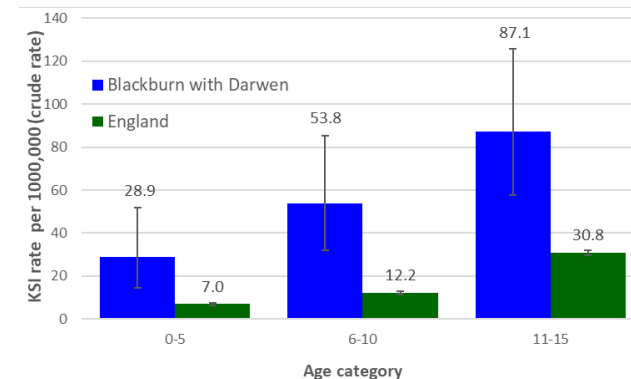
Pedestrian Child KSI

The borough's rate of pedestrian KSI casualties among children and young people is well above the national average. From 2016 to 2020, the rate of pedestrians aged 0-24 killed or seriously injured was over twice the national average. From 2016-2017 to 2020-21, the rate of emergency admissions for pedestrian casualties aged 0-24 was the sixth highest in the North West.³³

All child road casualties

Looking at the recorded crude rate of child casualties killed or seriously injured on the road by age band, Blackburn with Darwen compares badly to the national average. From 2018 to 2020, overall child casualties (0-15) and across those aged 0-5, the borough has the worst crude rate of those KSI amongst upper tier authorities in England. Across 6-10 year olds, the borough has the second worst rate nationally and across 11-15 year olds, the crude rate is the 4th worst nationally.

Figure 14 – Pedestrian KSI rate by age group, Blackburn with Darwen and England, 2018 to 2020



Child Safety in the borough

The council's Safer Roads Strategy³⁴ aims to deliver safer roads across the borough. Activity to improve road safety in the borough has included, road safety engagement in primary schools, where over 7,500 children in more than have been engaged in sessions around road safety from the 2021/22 academic year up to March 2023, with over 2,000 pupils receiving high-vis safety vests in that time.

In collaboration with the Neighbourhood Policing Team, the council launched and part-funded the new 'Road to Victory' primary schools football events. These events aim to bring young people closer to the police and the council by promoting being active. Additionally, children were given road safety training and several accessories to help keep them safer on the roads in between playing matches.

Social Sense was commissioned by the council's Public Health team to run consultations with schools and youth groups to understand the views that young people have about road safety in the borough. In the first phase of the consultation, Social Sense visited three schools consulting with 670 year 9 students. This generated a report detailing the barriers pupils have to active travel, what would encourage them to consider active travel and if they feel safe on the roads. In the second phase of the consultation, schools and youth groups were invited to design a road safety campaign. Including young people in the creation of the campaign, meant the message would be important to them and has more power when shared across the borough. The winning design chosen lead with the message: 'Be Aware, Stay Aware'. The campaign ran in November 2022 and ran through Road Safety Awareness Week and could be seen on bus stops, billboards and posters throughout Blackburn with Darwen. The campaign resulted in an increased uptake of resources on the national Brake website.

Other activities planned to improve road safety, involve the council's Safer Roads Operational Group delivering a parent workshop to educate and discuss with parents issues around driver behaviour, particularly around schools where many road safety concerns originate.

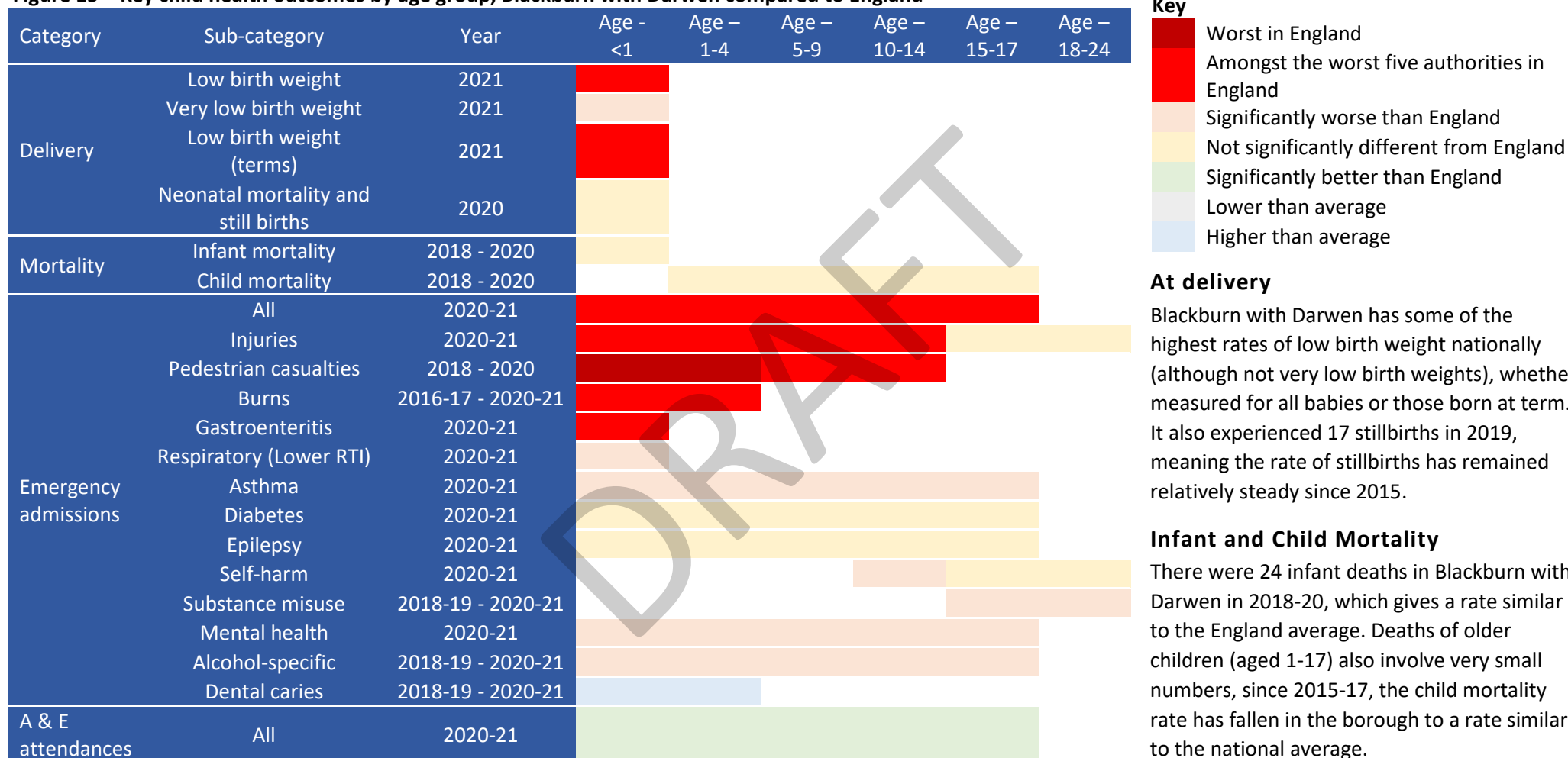


This campaign was designed
by local young people.



Child Health Outcomes³⁵

Figure 15 – Key child health outcomes by age group, Blackburn with Darwen compared to England



Key

- Worst in England
- Amongst the worst five authorities in England
- Significantly worse than England
- Not significantly different from England
- Significantly better than England
- Lower than average
- Higher than average

At delivery

Blackburn with Darwen has some of the highest rates of low birth weight nationally (although not very low birth weights), whether measured for all babies or those born at term. It also experienced 17 stillbirths in 2019, meaning the rate of stillbirths has remained relatively steady since 2015.

Infant and Child Mortality

There were 24 infant deaths in Blackburn with Darwen in 2018-20, which gives a rate similar to the England average. Deaths of older children (aged 1-17) also involve very small numbers, since 2015-17, the child mortality rate has fallen in the borough to a rate similar to the national average.

Hospital admission/attendance

Overall, the borough has significantly higher than average emergency admissions at all stages of childhood. It is in the bottom five authorities for child admissions due to pedestrian casualties, injuries, burns and gastroenteritis. However, admissions for diabetes and epilepsy are not significantly different from the average. Additionally, A&E attendances in 2020-21 are also below the national average for most age groups and have been for several years.

Child Vaccinations

Coverage Rates

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, coverage for all routine vaccinations for children under 5 had fallen compared to the previous year (excluding the PCV vaccine) nationally. Across the borough, the picture of coverage uptake is mixed. Uptake has increased for the Dtap/IPV/Hib vaccination known as the ‘5-in-1’ or ‘6-in-1’ vaccine and Dtap and IPV booster (‘4-in-1’). Whereas, amongst some vaccinations, Hib and MenC booster and PCV rates have fallen in the borough. Changes in child vaccination coverage are shown in Figure 16.

The ages in the chart are the ages at which the child’s vaccination status is assessed, not the age at which the vaccination should have taken place. For full details and abbreviations, see the appendices section of the annual report by NHS Digital.³⁶ All the indicators are subject to a 95% target, but most of them failed to meet it, both locally and nationally.

Reasons For National Decline

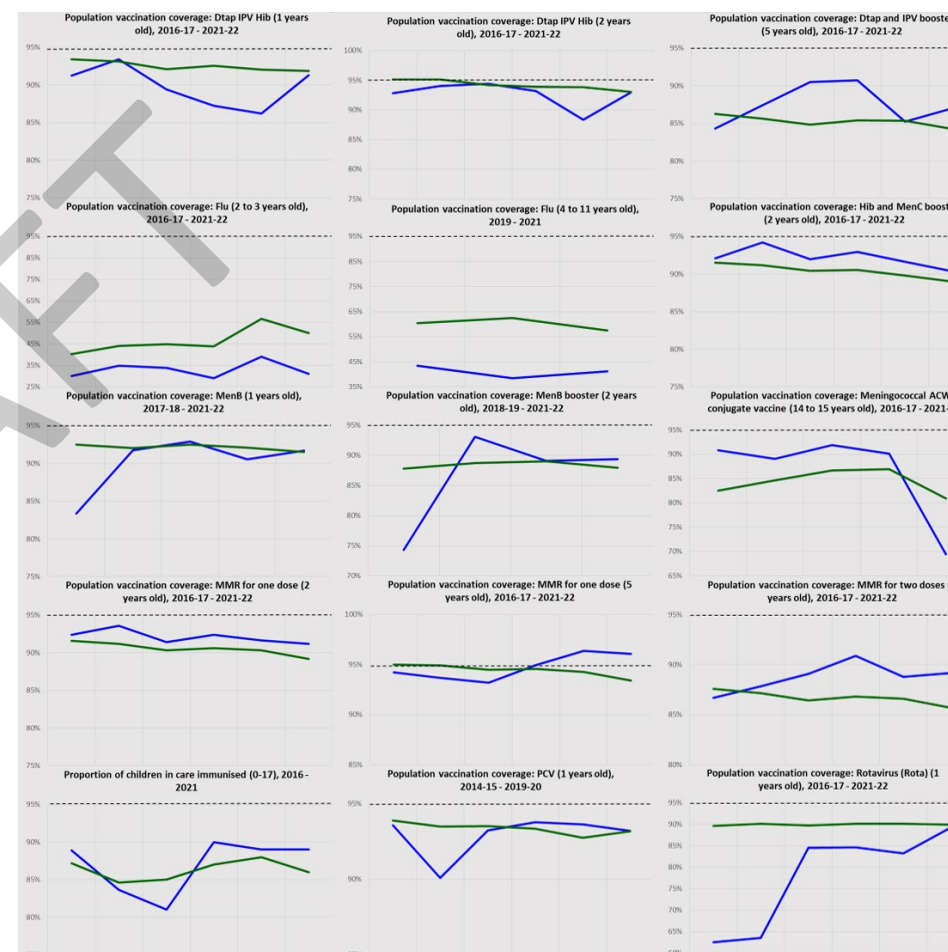
Excluding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are many possible reasons for the decline in childhood vaccine uptake that have been identified by the National Audit Office (NAO), some of the key reasons identified (although, there is no certainty as to which are the most important) are:

- **Invitations and appointments:** The system of inviting children and parents to come and have the vaccines are considered to have become more fragmented and less coherent since NHS reform in 2013. Parents may also have difficulty securing a convenient appointment;
- **‘Vaccine hesitancy’:** This is where people may be reluctant to vaccinate their children, rather than actively opposed;

Other reasons known to affect the uptake of childhood vaccines include ‘hard-to-reach’ populations and inconsistent communication between healthcare providers and parents.

There has been much speculation about the role of the ‘anti-vaxxer’ lobby, where there is growing concern that anti-vaccination sentiment is partially behind falling uptake.³⁷ A report by Healthwatch Together reported concerns through engagement with 1,216 people across Lancashire and South Cumbria (particularly those who are seldom heard), regarding their experiences of the COVID-19 vaccination programme. Primary concerns were around the vaccine safety and efficacy, the messaging around vaccines, dosing, social influence of getting a vaccine and accessibility around getting a vaccination. The experience of the programme may have some lasting impact on personal decision-making towards vaccinating children in the future³⁸

Figure 16 – Child vaccination coverage, Blackburn with Darwen (blue) compared to England



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