

CITY OF  
WOLVERHAMPTON  
COUNCIL

**Children Looked After Return  
Initial Analysis**

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## **Background**

The aim of the Children Looked After Return (SSDA903 return), is to collect information about children who were looked after by local authorities during the year ending 31 March 2017, those who have left care in the year and information as to the whereabouts of care leavers on their 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th or 21st birthday.

An SSDA903 return is required for two groups of children:

- Every child who is looked after by your local authority at any time during the year ending 31 March 2017;
- Relevant and former relevant young people whose 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th or 21st birthday falls within the collection period. For the 2016 to 2017 collection, this therefore covers young people whose date of birth fell between 1 April 1995 and 31 March 2000.

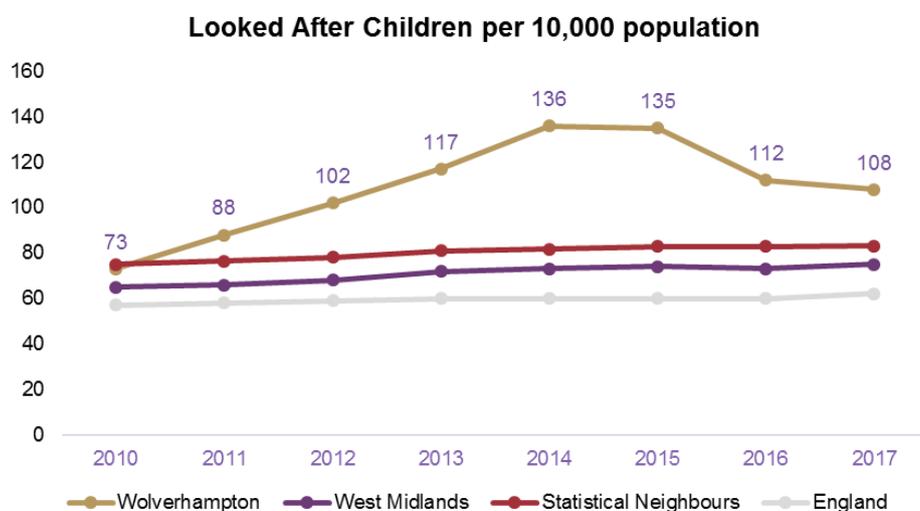
For children who were looked after during the year, the information relates to their placement, legal status and adoption from care (where appropriate). For those who have recently left care, the information required relates to their current activity and accommodation. The purpose of the SSDA903 is to provide the government with the necessary information to evaluate the outcome of policy initiatives and to monitor objectives on looked after children, both during their time in care and on reaching adulthood. The data collected is used in the provision of information for research and statistical information in response to parliamentary questions.

From this information Insight and Performance can analyse the performance of LAC services in Wolverhampton compared to the average results of our regional and statistical neighbours, along with the national averages for the country.

In October 2017, the government released initial data from the SSDA903 return showing performance relating to numbers of LAC children and percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation, education, training or employment.

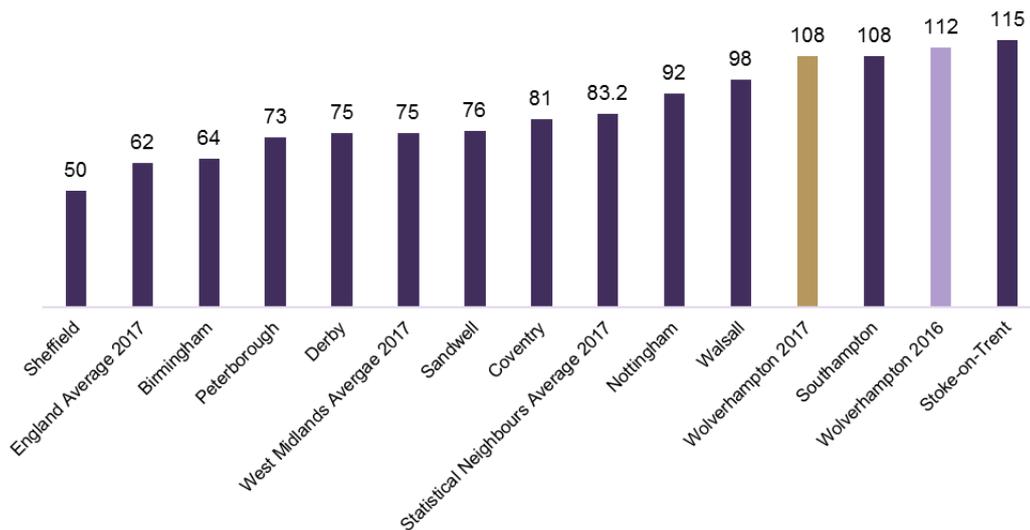
## Numbers of Looked After Children

	Looked After Children per 10,000 population								Trend
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
<b>Wolverhampton</b>	73	88	102	117	136	135	112	108	↓
<b>West Midlands</b>	65	66	68	72	73	74	73	75	↑
<b>Statistical Neighbours</b>	75.1	76.5	78	80.9	81.8	83	82.9	83.2	↑
<b>England</b>	57	58	59	60	60	60	60	62	↑



Numbers of Looked After Children in Wolverhampton considerably remain higher than regional, statistical and national averages in 2017. In the region Wolverhampton has the second highest amount of LAC per 10,000 population with only Stoke on Trent (115 per 10,000 population) having a higher rate. In comparison to statistical neighbours Wolverhampton has the third highest amount of LAC with Southampton (108 per 10,000 population) and Stoke on Trent (115 per 10,000 population) having a higher rate

**Statistical Neighbours LAC number per 10,000 population**

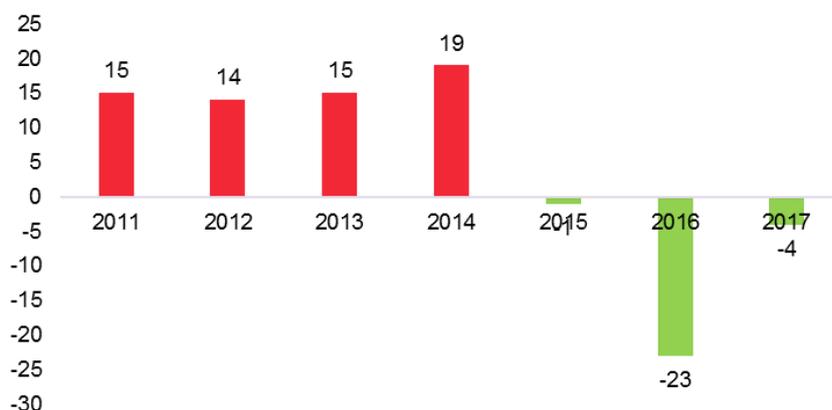


The chart shows that in comparison to our statistical neighbours Wolverhampton has over double that of the authority with the fewest Looked After Children (Sheffield). Geographically our nearest statistical neighbours are Birmingham, Sandwell, Walsall and Stoke on Trent. Birmingham have the fewest LAC per 10,000 population however Walsall and Stoke-on-Trent (who like Wolverhampton have Staffordshire borders) are also higher than regional, national and statistical averages.

Despite the numbers of LAC being higher than comparators, there is a more positive picture to be seen when analysing trends in the data. 2017 is the third consecutive year than Wolverhampton has seen a decrease in the LAC population; decrease 28 children per 10,000 population since 2014.

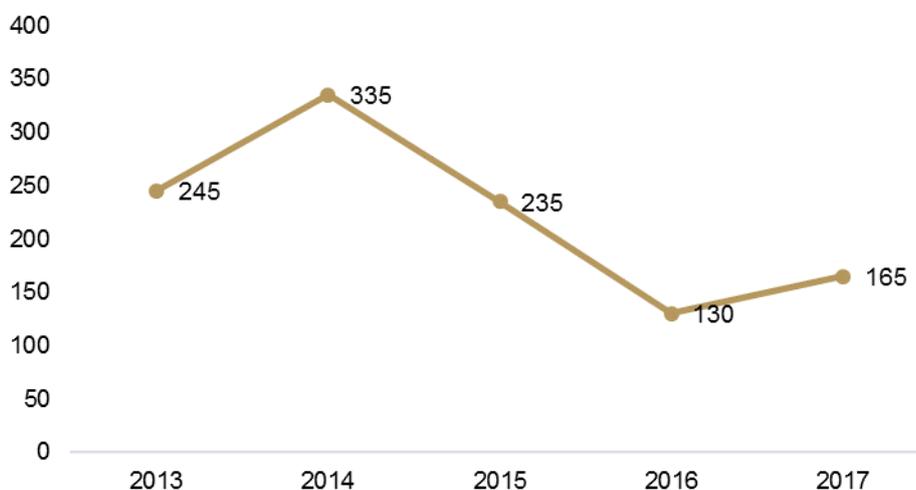
	Increase or Decrease in LAC Population in Year						
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Wolverhampton</b>	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓
<b>West Midlands</b>	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
<b>Statistical Neighbours</b>	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
<b>England</b>	↑	↑	↑	↔	↔	↔	↑

**Increase or Decrease of LAC per 10,000 in  
 Wolverhampton**



In 2017 Wolverhampton again saw decreases in the LAC population against increasing trends seen by regional and statistical neighbours as well as nationally. In the West Midlands, Wolverhampton was one of only four authorities that saw a decrease in LAC numbers, although 3 of these four authorities still had the largest amount of LAC in the region despite these increases. This suggests that the authorities with lower LAC rates are now finding it harder to find exit plans for LAC children as previous reductions in LAC has meant their current LAC cohort is more complex

**Number of Children who became LAC in the year**



The number of LAC starts in the year increased from 130 in 2015/16 to 165. Despite this increase numbers of LAC starts have seen a large decrease over the past four years with over half the number of children being LAC in 2016/17 compared to 2013/14. This would indicate that prevention work is being successful in ensuring children remain out of care and that thresholds are being more stringently monitored to ensure children only come into care if all other options have been exhausted. In the year the increase of 35 LAC starts also includes an increase of 11 custodial sentences for young people over the same term meaning an increase of 24 LAC through the traditional social care route in the year.

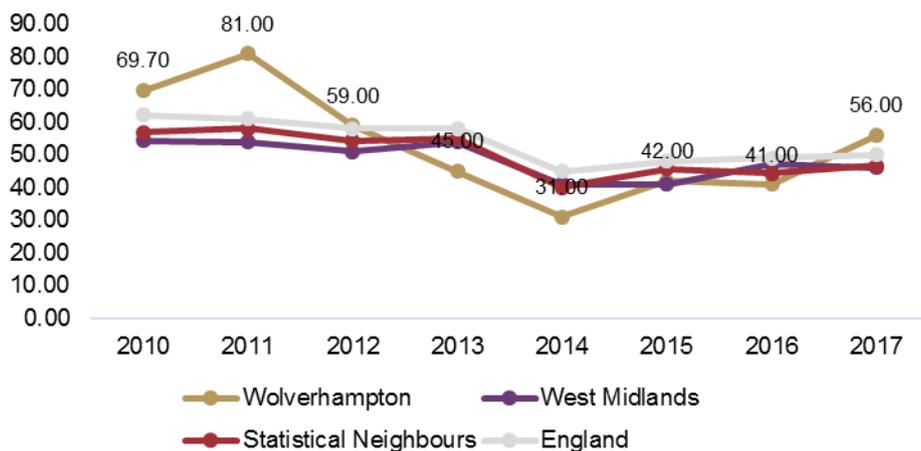
The increase in LAC starts can also in part be linked to the increase in UASC in the year with 10 UASC children making up the LAC cohort at year end. This is the highest amount of UASC recorded in Wolverhampton since recording began. Despite this increase Wolverhampton has the second lowest amount of UASC compared to statistical neighbours, 110 less than Birmingham. Data shows that the number of UASC in an authority is linked to the proximity of service stations on major motorways or the traditional major cities of the country.

### Care Leavers

Care Leaver performance for 2016/17 has shown significant improvement with Wolverhampton now ranked as the 37<sup>th</sup> best performing authority for Care Leaver performance out of 152. Wolverhampton's 2017 performance is above all national, regional and statistical comparisons for all three of the care leavers indicators currently released. These are percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training, % of care leavers in higher education and % of care leavers in suitable accommodation

	<b>% of Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training</b>							
	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Wolverhampton</b>	69.70	81.00	59.00	45.00	31.00	42.00	41.00	56.00
<b>West Midlands</b>	54.40	54.00	51.00	54.00	41.00	41.00	47.00	46.00
<b>Statistical Neighbours</b>	56.82	58.10	54.30	55.10	40.00	45.70	44.40	46.70
<b>England</b>	62.10	61.00	58.00	58.00	45.00	48.00	49.00	50.00

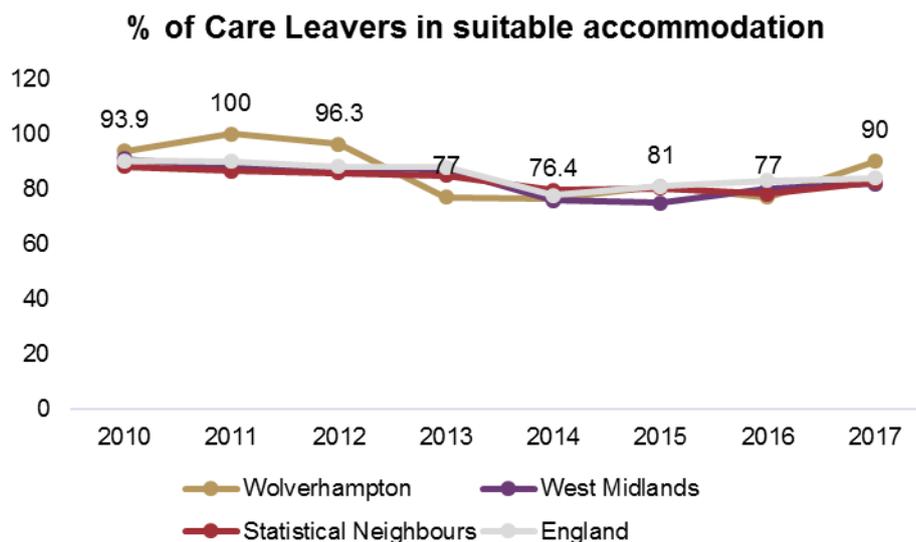
**% of Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training**



The percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training has increased from 31% in 2013/14 to 56% in 2016/17. This is against a national, regional and statistical trend of poorer performance. Current performance puts Wolverhampton above target against all comparator averages.

Regionally, Wolverhampton has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest EET percentage rate behind Shropshire, Dudley and Telford and Wrekin. In the year Wolverhampton saw the largest increase in performance in the region. Against statistical neighbours, Wolverhampton has the second highest EET percentage rate behind Nottingham. Wolverhampton again saw the largest increase in performance against statistical neighbours. Wolverhampton also has a high percentage of care leavers in higher education. Wolverhampton has the joint highest percentage of care leavers in higher education compared to regional and statistical neighbours

	% of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation							
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Wolverhampton</b>	93.9	100	96.3	77	76.4	81	77	90
<b>West Midlands</b>	91	88	87.7	87	75.8	75	80	82
<b>Statistical Neighbours</b>	88.24	86.7	85.85	85	79.67	80.4	78.3	82.6
<b>England</b>	90.3	90	88.3	88	77.8	81	83	84



Performance has also increased in the percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation. 90% of the care leaving cohort are currently in suitable accommodation. This is an impressive performance that puts Wolverhampton above regional, national and statistical averages for the year. Wolverhampton's performance is ranked 37<sup>th</sup> out of 152 authorities. In the year Wolverhampton's performance has increased from 77% to 90% the fifth highest increase across all authorities.

Regionally, performance is high and Wolverhampton are ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> behind Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin for % of care leavers in suitable accommodation. Wolverhampton's increased performance year to year is the largest out of any authority. This trend continues against statistical neighbours with Wolverhampton again ranked joint 2<sup>nd</sup> in regard to performance behind Peterborough.