NIHR | Health Determinants Research Collaboration Coventry

Data Catalogue – Information Pack 3

Children (Early Years) – Best start in life

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Definition: How do we define Children (early years)?

"*The early years – from pre-birth until starting school – is a critical period in terms of a child's development, as they form bonds with their parents, develop language skills and other cognitive functions, and establish behavioural patterns*" (Early Intervention Foundation, 2023).

Please note: For the purposes of this data catalogue, the children (early years) data includes from birth to 11 (end of primary school), capturing key data such as education (reading, writing, and maths skills), childhood weight, vaccination uptake and further public health information.

Key contact within Coventry City Council

If you are wanting to know more information about Children (early years): best start in life data, have any specific questions about the accessible data, or are keen to do research on this topic, please contact:

Datateam.PD@coventry.gov.uk

Why is early years: best start in life a wider determinant of health?

Early years are a wider determinant of health because the foundations for lifelong physical, emotional, and cognitive health are laid from conception to age five, with rapid brain development making this a crucial window for positive (or negative) impacts from experiences like responsive parenting, nutrition, education, and socioeconomic factors, influencing later risks for chronic diseases, mental health, and educational/economic success. Interventions during this time are more effective and cost-efficient than trying to fix issues later in life.

The early years are a wider determinant due to the following factors:

- **Biological Foundations**: Approximately 80-90% of brain development occurs before age five. Experiences during this window can "biologically embed" themselves, creating physiological disruptions or "memories" that influence long-term susceptibility to chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.
- **Social Gradient and Inequality**: There is a clear "social gradient" in early development; children from more deprived backgrounds often start school with lower communication and social skills, which is a key driver of lifelong health inequalities.
- **Predictor of Future Socioeconomic Status**: Early child development is a strong predictor of school readiness and later educational attainment. These, in turn, determine employment prospects, income, and the quality of housing in adulthood-all of which are major wider determinants of health.
- **Formation of Lifelong Habits**: Health-related behaviours, such as physical activity levels and dietary habits, are often established in early childhood. For example, a child living with obesity at age five is highly likely to remain obese throughout their life.
- **Emotional Resilience**: Early experiences, specifically secure attachments with caregivers, promote emotional self-regulation and resilience. This acts as

a protective factor against future mental health disorders and substance abuse.
- **Economic Return on Investment**: Investing in the early years is highly cost-effective; early childhood programs can yield a 10-to-1 benefit-to-cost ratio by reducing future healthcare costs, crime, and welfare dependency.

In essence, a "best start" ensures children build strong physical and mental foundations, leading to better long-term health, greater educational attainment, and improved socioeconomic status, making early years a critical determinant of overall well-being.

Key literature signposting

Cattan, S., Conti, G., Farquharson, C., Ginja, R., & Pecher, M. (2025). The Health Effects of Universal Early Childhood Interventions: Evidence from Sure Start. *Institute for Fiscal Studies.*

Centre on the Developing Child: Harvard University. (2020). *Connecting the Brain to the Rest of the Body: Early Childhood Development and Lifelong Health are Deeply Intertwined*.

Centre on the Developing Child: Harvard University. (2026). *Lifelong Health and Well-being*.

Jopling., & Nelson, C. A. (2025). Early life adversity and risk for non-communicable health outcomes: Challenges and opportunities for a maturing field. *BMC Medicine, 23,* e534.

Likhar, A., Baghel, P., & Patil, M. (2022). *Early childhood development and social determinants*. *Cureus, 14,* e29500.

Local Government Association. (2015). *Healthy Beginnings: Giving our Children the Best Start in Life*.

Local Government Association (2018). *A better start: Supporting child development in the early years*.

Public Health England. (2016). *Health matters: Giving every child the best start in life*.

Public Health England. (2019). *Health matters: Life Course Approach to Prevention*.

Sales, W. B., Maranhão, E. F., Ramalho, C. S. T., Gabrielle, S., Macêdo, G. F., Souza, G. F., & Maciel, A. C. C. (2024). Early life circumstances and their impact on health in adulthood and later life: A systematic review. *BMC Geriatrics, 24,* e978.

The Academy of Medical Sciences. (2023). *Prioritising Early Childhood to Promote the Nation's Health, Wellbeing, and Prosperity*.

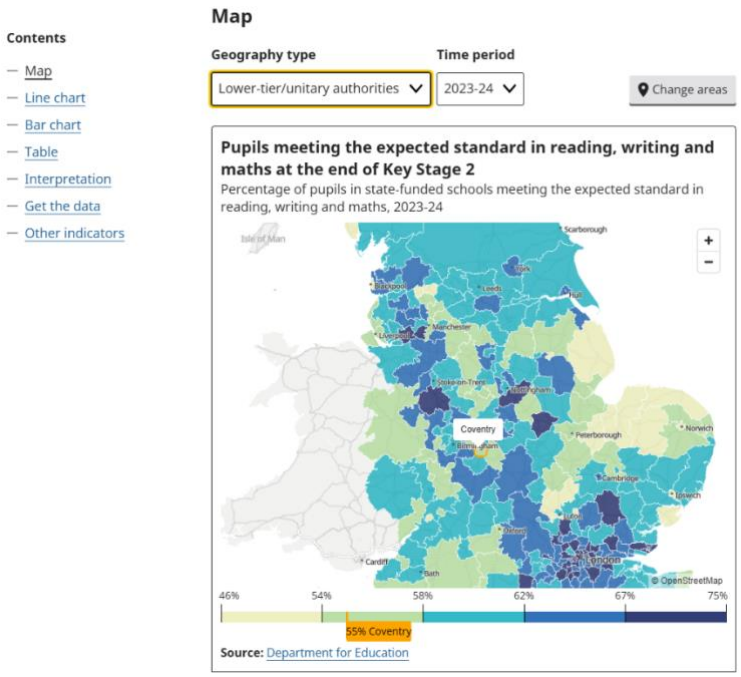
Publicly accessible data on Children (early years) – best start in life

1. Office for National Statistics https://www.ons.gov.uk/explore-local-statistics/

Office for National Statistics (ONS) is an accessible platform which is funded by the UK government through the Open Government Licence. Within this platform, individuals are able to explore local statistics, exploring how a local area compares to the Great Britain average. Data is presented in graphs which are interactive, allowing for individuals to examine how their local area (Coventry) compares to the GB average, and other local authorities.
Data provided surrounding children (early years) on the ONS sits within two key categories:

- Education and skills – attainment and participation
- Education and skills – early years learning.

Education and skills – Attainment and Participation
Within this section, ONS provides data on pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing, and maths at the end of Key Stage 2. The data is provided over 4 academic years, ranging from 2018/19-2023/24, allowing for individuals to examine differences over time for the local area or comparison across the UK.
Data is presented through a range of different formats including an interactive map. The interactive map allows for individuals to change options on geography type (ranging from country and regions to lower-tier/unitary authorities) to examine data on the pupils meeting expected standard in reading, writing and maths at the end of key stage 2.



Data for this topic is also presented in the following formats, allowing for individuals to explore and present data in the most accessible way:

- Line chart (interactive across local authorities)
- Bar chart (interactive across local authorities)
- Table.

The table provides area codes and names for all authorities, allowing for individuals again to choose an option of geography type (the same as the interactive map). The table of data provides data for all four academic years (from 2018/19 to 2023/24), allowing for a clear comparison across academic years for this data.

Geography type

Lower-tier/unitary authorities

Pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2

Percentage of pupils in state-funded schools meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, 2018-19 to 2023-24

Area code	Area name	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2018-19
E07000223	Adur	58	52	52	61
E07000026	Allerdale	–	–	52	66
E07000032	Amber Valley	58	58	54	66
E07000224	Arun	51	50	51	60
E07000170	Ashfield	59	59	57	60
E07000105	Ashford	59	57	56	65
E07000004	Aylesbury Vale	–	–	–	65
E07000200	Babergh	60	59	56	66
E09000002	Barking and Dagenham	62	61	60	66
E09000003	Barnet	69	70	68	73

Source: Department for Education

Use and share

Download table data (CSV) Embed code

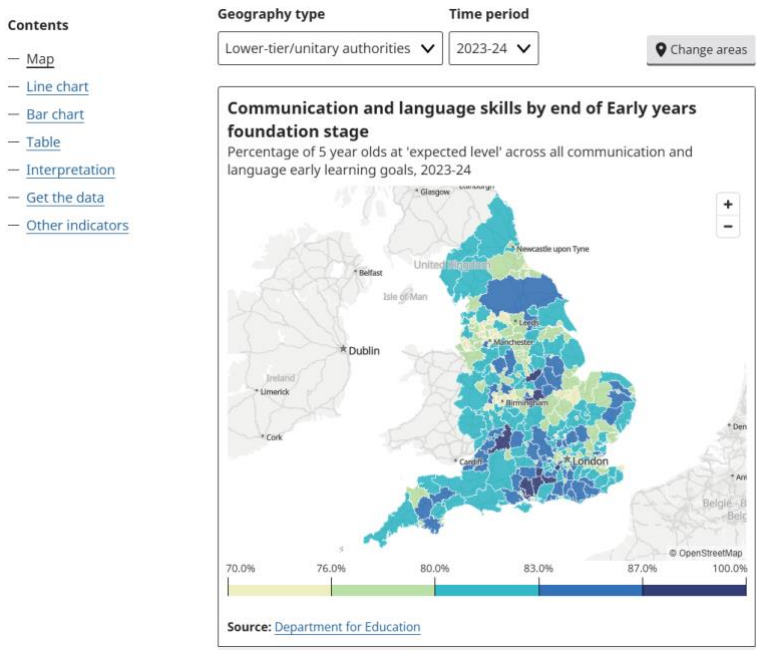
The table is also available for individuals to download, allowing individuals to use the data in their work, reports, and for any presentations surrounding this topic. **Please note**: when interpreting this data, the ONS provides some information as to why 2019/20 and 2020/21 is not available (due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Data from before 2018 is also not available for this topic due to changes in the 'Writing Teacher Assessment Frameworks' which makes data not comparable.

ONS also provides the direct link to the original dataset for this topic, via the Department of Education where a direct hyperlink is provided.

Communication and language skills by end of early year foundation age

Within this section, ONS provides data on the percentage of 5-year-olds at 'expected level' across all communication and language early learning goals. The data is provided over 3 academic years, ranging from 2021/22-2023/24, allowing for individuals to examine differences over time for the local area or comparison across the UK.

Data is presented through a range of different formats including an interactive map. The interactive map allows for individuals to change options on geography type (ranging from country and regions to lower-tier/unitary authorities) to examine data on percentage of 5-year-olds at 'expected level' across all communication and language early learning goals.



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- Line chart (interactive across local authorities)
- Bar chart (interactive across local authorities)
- Table.

The table provides area codes and names for all authorities, allowing for individuals again to choose an option of geography type (the same as the interactive map). The table of data provides data for all three academic years (from 2021/22 to 2023/24), allowing for a clear comparison across academic years for this data.
The table is also available for individuals to download, allowing individuals to use the data in their work, reports, and for any presentations surrounding this topic.

Geography type

Upper-tier/unitary authorities

Communication and language skills by end of Early years foundation stage

Percentage of 5 year olds at 'expected level' across all communication and language early learning goals, 2021-22 to 2023-24

Area code	Area name	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
E06000056	Central Bedfordshire	81.3	82.7	82.3
E06000049	Cheshire East	81.3	81.3	81.1
E06000050	Cheshire West and Chester	78.7	79.5	82.1
E09000001	City of London	91.2	87.7	89.2
E06000052	Cornwall	82.4	82.3	81.9
E06000047	County Durham	77.7	77.9	79.1
E08000026	Coventry	75.1	76.1	74.3
E09000008	Croydon	77.8	78.9	78.6
E06000063	Cumberland	80.4	82.1	79.4
E10000006	Cumbria	-	-	81.2

Source: Department for Education

Use and share

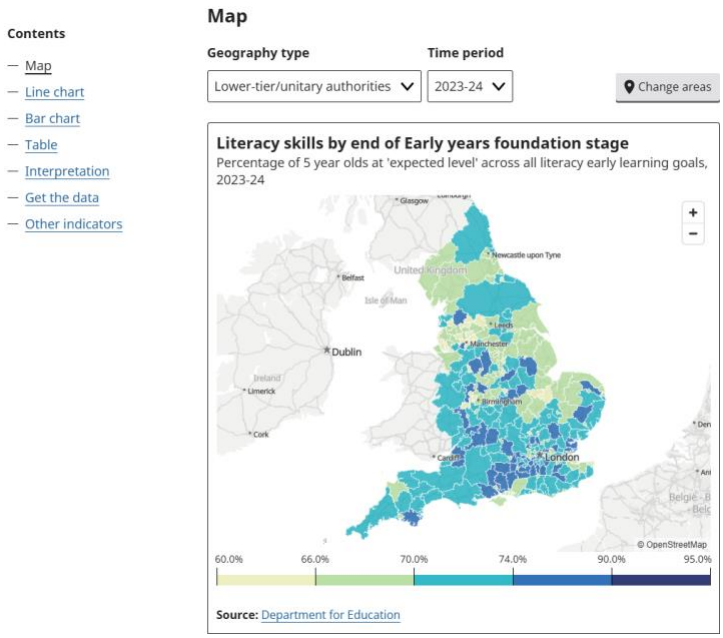
Download table data (CSV) Embed code

Please note: when exploring data on this topic, the only years available are from the academic year 2021/22. The ONS highlights that this is due to the Early Years Foundation stage profile changed significantly in September 2021 which means that any data prior to this is not comparable with current data presented. ONS also provides the direct link to the original dataset for this topic, via the Department of Education where a direct hyperlink is provided.

Literacy skills and maths skills by end of early years foundation age

Within this section, ONS provides data on the percentage of 5-year-olds at 'expected level' across all literacy early learning goals. The data is provided over 3 academic years, ranging from 2021/22-2023/24, allowing for individuals to examine differences over time for the local area or comparison across the UK.

Data is presented through a range of different formats including an interactive map. The interactive map allows for individuals to change options on geography type (ranging from country and regions to lower-tier/unitary authorities) to examine data on percentage of 5-year-olds at 'expected level' across all literacy early learning goals.



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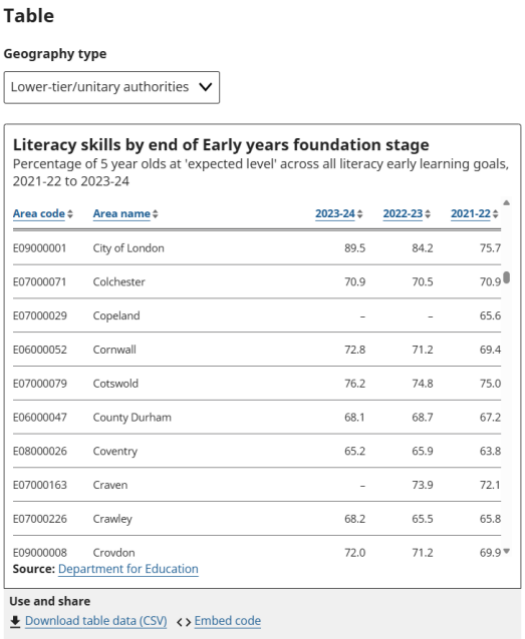
- Table.

The table provides area codes and names for all authorities, allowing for individuals again to choose an option of geography type (the same as the interactive map). The table of data provides data for all three academic years (from 2021/22 to 2023/24), allowing for a clear comparison across academic years for this data.

The table is also available for individuals to download, allowing individuals to use the data in their work, reports, and for any presentations surrounding this topic.



Table

Geography type

Lower-tier/unitary authorities

Literacy skills by end of Early years foundation stage

Percentage of 5 year olds at 'expected level' across all literacy early learning goals, 2021-22 to 2023-24

Area code	Area name	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
E09000001	City of London	89.5	84.2	75.7
E07000071	Colchester	70.9	70.5	70.9
E07000029	Copeland	-	-	65.6
E06000052	Cornwall	72.8	71.2	69.4
E07000079	Cotswold	76.2	74.8	75.0
E06000047	County Durham	68.1	68.7	67.2
E08000026	Coventry	65.2	65.9	63.8
E07000163	Craven	-	73.9	72.1
E07000226	Crawley	68.2	65.5	65.8
E09000008	Croydon	72.0	71.2	69.9

Source: Department for Education

Use and share

Download table data (CSV) Embed code

Please note: when exploring data on this topic, the only years available are from the academic year 2021/22. The ONS highlights that this is due to the Early Years Foundation stage profile changed significantly in September 2021 which means that it is not possible to compare assessment outcomes with data before the 2021/22 academic year. Also, for this topic, ONS highlights that some of the data has been aggregated, which needs to be noted when individuals are accessing and using the data. ONS also provides the direct link to the original dataset for this topic, via the Department of Education where a direct hyperlink is provided.

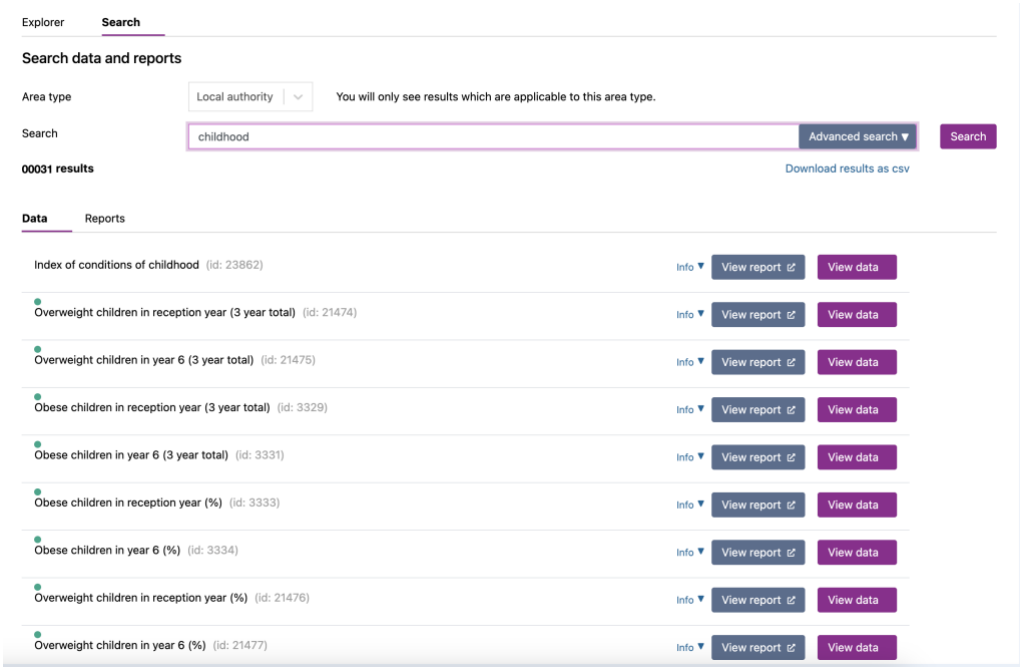
2. LG Inform (and LG Inform Plus) https://lginform.local.gov.uk/

LG Inform (Local Government Inform), is an accessible platform which is funded by the UK government. The LG Inform platform was introduced as a practical solution to ensure that local governments and organisations could access data which will help influence decision making and policy, with the addition of being a free platform which members of the public can also use.
LG Inform Plus provides the same foundation content as LG Inform but allows for individuals to look at data through specific wards and transform data into charts, maps, and tables. **Please note**: LG Inform Plus requires a ***licence*** and is therefore only accessible for Coventry City Council Colleagues via registering for an account.

Due to children (early years) not being a defined topic on LG Inform (or LG Inform Plus), individuals will need to use the following search terms to look for data on this topic:

- 'Childhood'
- 'Infants'
- 'Children'

To access the search option, individuals need to click on 'search data and reports' followed by 'search' instead of 'explorer'.



When using the above search terms, LG Inform contains a range of data, but the following are the most in depth and offer the options to view both the report and data:

- Childhood obesity (from 3 years old to year 6 age)
- Vaccination coverage (from 1-5 years).

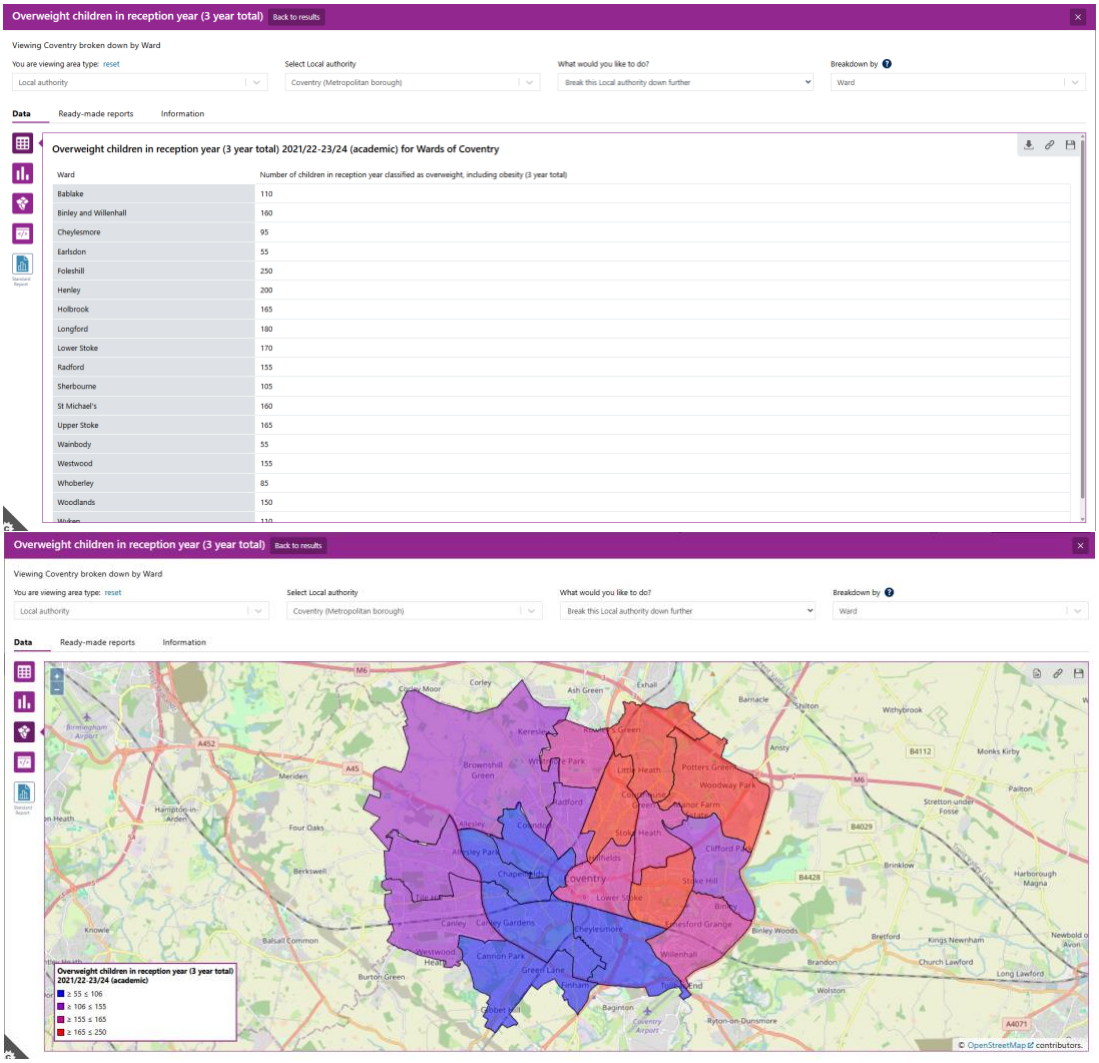
Childhood Overweight and Obesity statistics (from reception age to year 6 age)

For childhood obesity and overweight statistics, LG Inform and LG Inform Plus breaks these down into reception age and year 6 age.
Overweight and obesity statistics are provided as either a 3-year total (from the academic year 2021/22 to 2023/24), or as a percentage. The 'overweight children in reception year (3-year total)', allows for individuals to view the data which is provided either in:

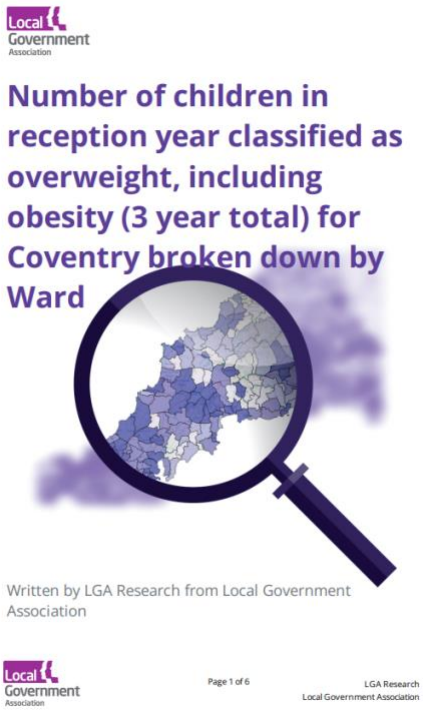
- Table format
- Bar graph format
- Interactive map format.

These formats allow for individuals to view Coventry's overall total across the 3-years and compare with other local authority areas.

Within the table format and interactive map, individuals are able to select how they would like to view data and are able to select to view the local authority and compare by wards. For Coventry, all wards are presented in the table format, allowing for comparison across the wards and identification of which area/s are higher in terms of overweight levels in childhood (of reception age).



When using LG Inform Plus, individuals can ‘view report’ for number of children in reception classified as overweight, including obesity (3-year total) for Coventry broken down by ward.



Within this 6-page report, individuals have access to data on this topic in a range of formats including:

- Tables
- Bar graphs and
- Maps

with all data being broken down by ward to allow individuals to compare statistics across Coventry. The report within LG Inform Plus can be downloaded into a PDF, allowing for individuals to share the report and use key statistics within work and to help inform policy and evidence-based decision making for this topic. All data within this report is originated from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), with acknowledgment of the name of the collection where the data sits in OHID and how to interpret the data.

Please note: statistics around childhood overweight levels and childhood obesity levels for reception and year 6 age children are presented separately but are presented in the same format.

Vaccination Coverage (from 1-5 years)

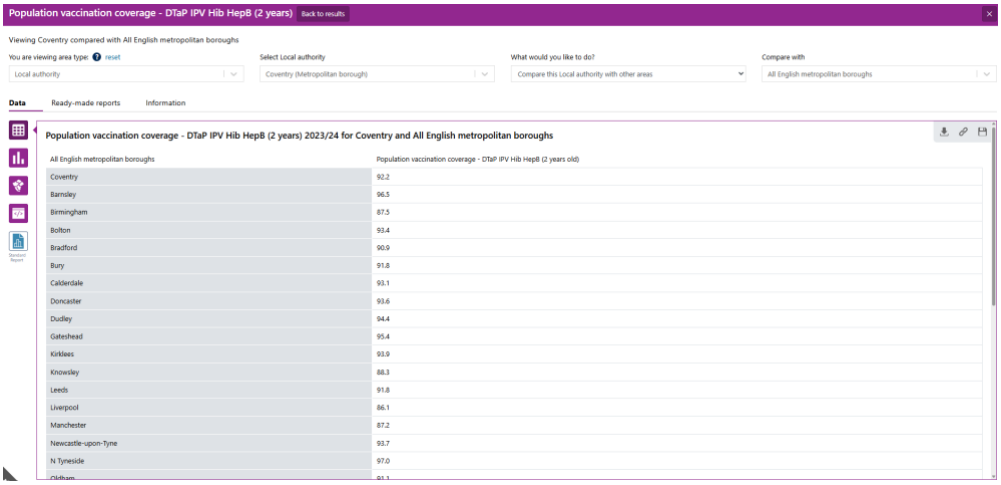
For vaccination coverage statistics, LG Inform and LG Inform Plus breaks these down into age and vaccination type including:

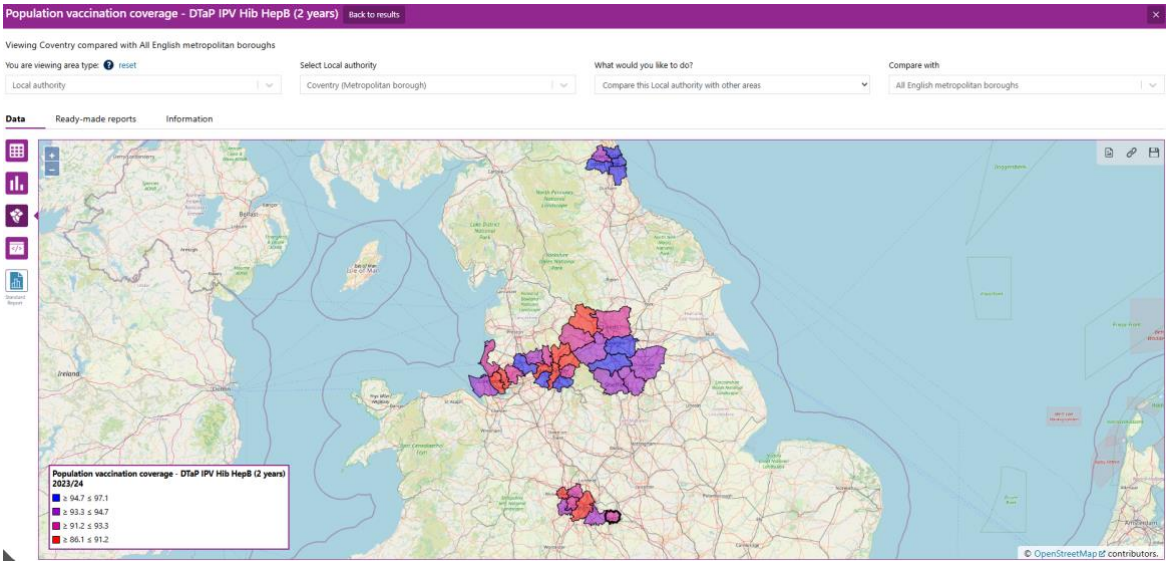
- Population vaccination coverage – MenB (1 years old)
- Population vaccination coverage – DtaP IPV Hib, HepB (2 years old)
- Population vaccination coverage – DtaP/IPV booster (5 years old)
- Population vaccination coverage – DtaP IPV Hib HepB (1 years old)
- Population vaccination coverage – MenB booster (2 years old)
- Population vaccination coverage – Rotavirus (1 years old).

Please note: for all vaccinations and ages included in LG Inform and LG Inform Plus, data is presented in the same format, allowing individuals to compare Coventry statistics to other local authorities. The data for this topic is not broken down into ward, meaning comparison of areas within Coventry is not possible.

All vaccination coverage data is available in the following formats for individuals to access and view data:

- Table format
- Bar graph format and
- Interactive map format.

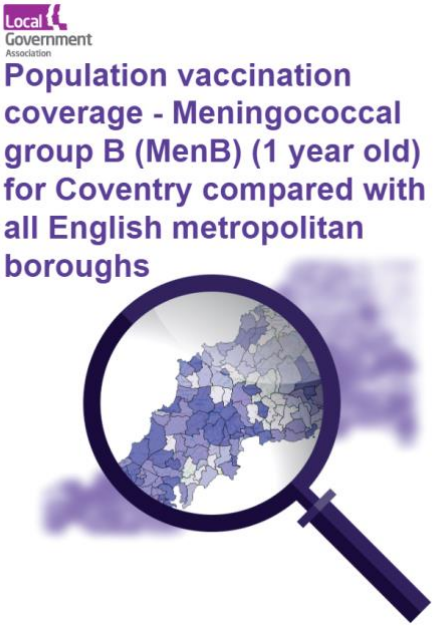




When using LG Inform Plus, individuals can ‘view report’ for vaccination coverage for all topics and ages available in LG Inform. Within this 6-page report, individuals have access to data on this topic in a range of formats including:

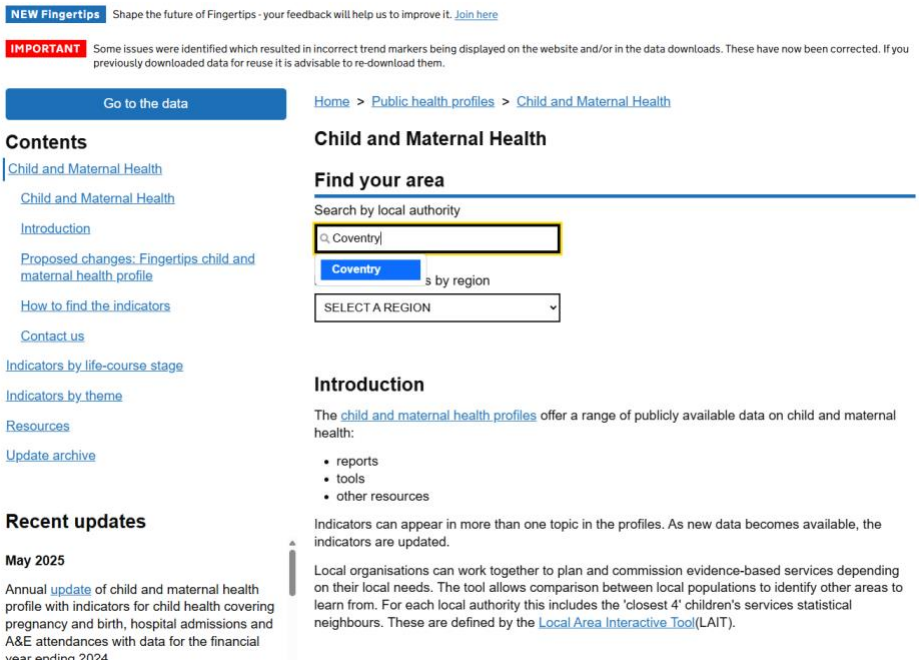
- Tables
- Bar graphs and
- Maps

with all data being available by local authority across England. The report within LG Inform Plus can be downloaded into a PDF, allowing for individuals to share the report and use key statistics within work and to help inform policy and evidence-based decision making for this topic. All data within this report is originated from the Public Health Outcomes Framework which sits within the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities.



3. Fingertips https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/

Fingertips is a large public health data collection maintained by Public Health England. Data within Fingertips is organised into themed profiles. When using the Fingertips platform, there is an option to view 'Public Health Profiles' for a specific area. There are 29 Public Health Profiles on the platform, including 'Child and Maternal Health'. When clicking on each profile, individuals can select a specific local authority to get location specific data.

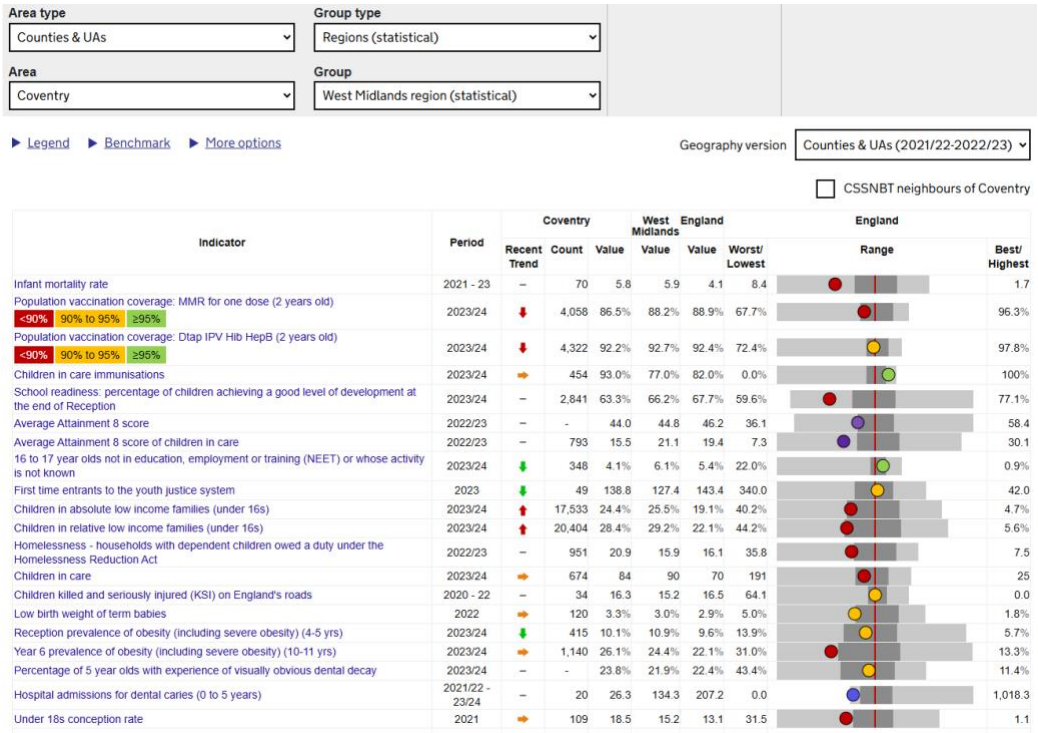


When selecting a specific area, individuals can select either ‘view data’ or ‘view reports’ for each specific profile.

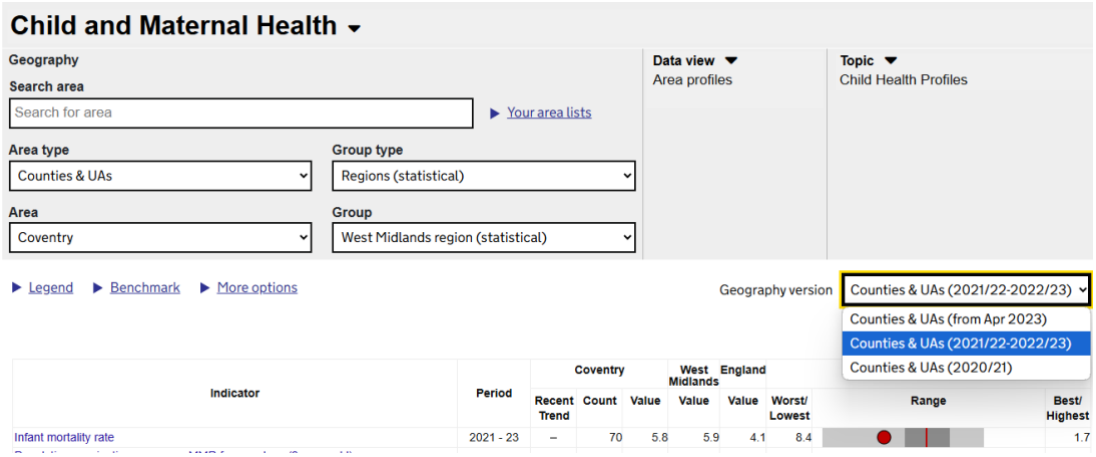
‘View Data’

When selecting ‘view data’ individuals can view the statistics for a range of topics and view the trend of the data signifying whether the statistic from the previous time period is increasing or decreasing. When viewing Coventry data, Fingertips also provides comparisons for the West Midlands and overall England statistics, allowing for individuals to examine the local area data and make comparisons.

Please note: Some data provided by Fingertips is not up to date. For example, the ‘Health Behaviours in young people’ report is from 2016, meaning that data may not be providing a ‘true’ reflection of the current picture in the specific local area.



Individuals can view three distinct timepoints allowing for a time-trend analysis between 2020/21 to 2023. Please note: Data from 2024 is currently not available on this platform.

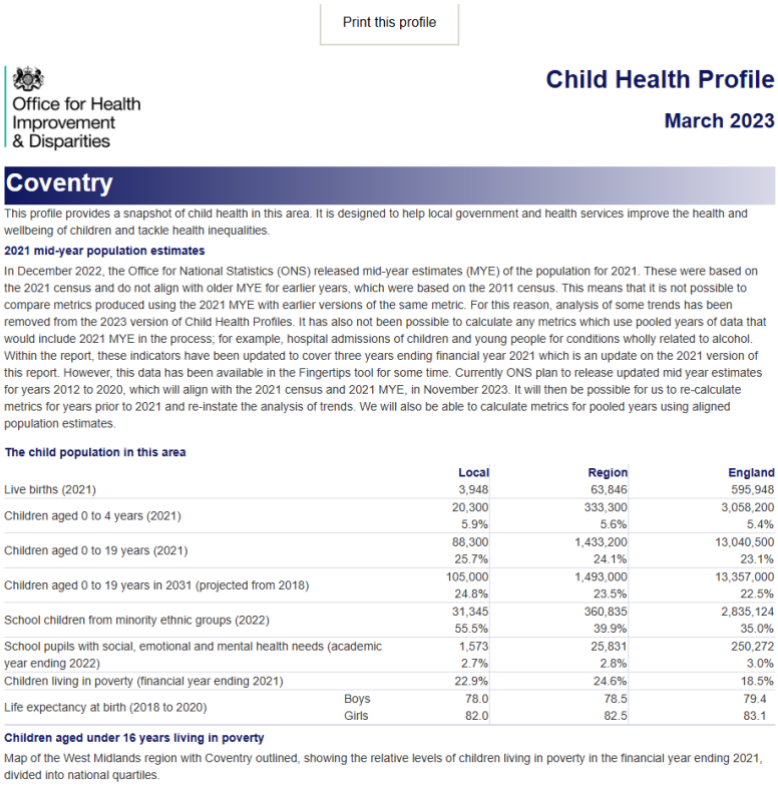


'View Reports'

When selecting 'view reports', individuals can view a range of reports on the topic for the chosen area. For 'Child and Maternal Health', the following reports are available on Fingertips:

- Child Health Profile
- Child Health Profile – Historical Reports (date range from 2011-2021)
- Health behaviours in young people
- Oral Health Profile of 5-year-olds.

Each report provides key statistics in a variety of formats including tables, maps, bar graphs, and for some figures provides statistical comparison of the local area to the England average and 'worst' statistic.



Print this profile

Office for Health Improvement & Disparities

Child Health Profile

March 2023

Coventry

This profile provides a snapshot of child health in this area. It is designed to help local government and health services improve the health and wellbeing of children and tackle health inequalities.

2021 mid-year population estimates

In December 2022, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) released mid-year estimates (MYE) of the population for 2021. These were based on the 2021 census and do not align with older MYE for earlier years, which were based on the 2011 census. This means that it is not possible to compare metrics produced using the 2021 MYE with earlier versions of the same metric. For this reason, analysis of some trends has been removed from the 2023 version of Child Health Profiles. It has also not been possible to calculate any metrics which use pooled years of data that would include 2021 MYE in the process; for example, hospital admissions of children and young people for conditions wholly related to alcohol. Within the report, these indicators have been updated to cover three years ending financial year 2021 which is an update on the 2021 version of this report. However, this data has been available in the Fingertips tool for some time. Currently ONS plan to release updated mid year estimates for years 2012 to 2020, which will align with the 2021 census and 2021 MYE, in November 2023. It will then be possible for us to re-calculate metrics for years prior to 2021 and re-instate the analysis of trends. We will also be able to calculate metrics for pooled years using aligned population estimates.

The child population in this area

		Local	Region	England
Live births (2021)		3,948	63,846	595,948
Children aged 0 to 4 years (2021)		20,300	333,300	3,058,200
		5.9%	5.6%	5.4%
Children aged 0 to 19 years (2021)		88,300	1,433,200	13,040,500
		25.7%	24.1%	23.1%
Children aged 0 to 19 years in 2031 (projected from 2018)		105,000	1,493,000	13,357,000
		24.8%	23.5%	22.5%
School children from minority ethnic groups (2022)		31,345	360,835	2,835,124
		55.5%	39.9%	35.0%
School pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs (academic year ending 2022)		1,573	25,831	250,272
		2.7%	2.8%	3.0%
Children living in poverty (financial year ending 2021)		22.9%	24.6%	18.5%
Life expectancy at birth (2018 to 2020)	Boys	78.0	78.5	79.4
	Girls	82.0	82.5	83.1

Children aged under 16 years living in poverty

Map of the West Midlands region with Coventry outlined, showing the relative levels of children living in poverty in the financial year ending 2021, divided into national quartiles.

The reports also include written summaries of the findings, including a ‘key findings' section for individuals to see the most important statistics for the local area selected. Reports are printable and available to download, allowing for reports to be shared within teams and key findings to be disseminated to encourage the use of data within practice, and evidence and policy decision making.