

Data Transcript

As part of the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) Yearly Report 2023-24, we received data from:

- Children's Services:
 - Children and Families
 - Education and Inclusion
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

Children's Services, Children and Families data

The number of referrals to Children's Services increased by 2% in 2023-24. This is likely to have been caused by the continued impact of the cost-of-living crisis, which has led to an increase in families experiencing financial hardship and the associated social and emotional impact. Further, this may also relate to the financial pressures on agencies and their ability to deliver ongoing preventative services.

The number of referrals leading to assessments has reduced in 2023-24. This suggests that the increase in referrals does not equate to an increase in assessments. In turn, this demonstrates that families can be supported by alternative methods such as early help support, and with signposting and advice.

The number of children with early help plans has remained static over the last year, with a very small reduction being noted in recording. This evidence is that there's still very much demand for early help services and earlier intervention. It further evidences that the early help process and early help hubs are being well used as an access point.

The number of child protection plans in line with commentary from 2022-23, shows a further increase with the rate per 10,000 population figure where there's been growth in child protection numbers. We know from the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) in November 2021 that our front door Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub applies consistent thresholds and that an increase in overall numbers is a nationally recognised issue.

The percentage of child protection plans for reason of neglect shows a slight increase in neglect numbers. However, this again is in line with expectations due to the cost-of-living crisis and national trends.

The percentage of child protection plans for reason of physical abuse has remained consistent with previous years. As has the percentage of child protection plans for reasons of emotional abuse and reasons of child sexual abuse.

Children's Services, Education and Inclusion data

The primary school absence rate in Hampshire continues to sit just lower than the national average, with attendance above the national average, showing a trend consistent with other local authorities.

The secondary school absence rate remains just above and attendance just below the national average and again shows a slight downward trend, reflecting the national picture in both phases. This is an improving trend, and it's also reflected in relation to persistent absence which is 10% or more. However, severe absence, that is, pupils missing 50% or more, is showing an increasing trend across phases.

Severely absent pupils are a focus for meetings with schools to address individual pupils and cohorts, particularly where a multi-agency approach is required.

The number of pupils with at least one fixed period suspension across all phases has increased. During the autumn term of 2023, the increase observed in the autumn term of 2022 has continued in both fixed period suspensions and permanent exclusions. This trend has been experienced by other local authorities who report similar pressure in this area. The inclusion support service has provided support and challenge to schools regarding all matters of exclusion, inclusion, along with performing at statutory functions of recording and administering all suspensions and exclusions and hearings.

It is positive that the number of suspensions issued in the spring term is approximately 2,000 less than those issued in the autumn term and comparable with spring term 2023.

The number of pupils permanently excluded across all phases has increased. The increase in overall permanent exclusion that we saw in 2022 has continued into 2023-24, although it has slowed significantly. It is anticipated that the year-end number will show an increase in permanently excluded children for the academic year of 2023-24. The inclusion service has prevented 293 permanent exclusions progressing this academic year to date.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary data

The number of neglect crimes reported has increased. Much of the increase in recording can be seen through improved training and awareness for staff. There is significant evidence over the last five years of improved and more accurate crime recording in compliance with Home Office counting rules. For instance, a family of three children who suffered neglect would mean three separate crimes being recorded, since each child is a victim. Internal audits also demonstrate that where child neglect is recorded, the classification is correct.

Further work is always encouraged to ensure the correct classification is used. The increase in recording has also resulted in those crimes resulting in formal action taken, suggesting there are now more positive outcomes for children who are victims of cruelty and neglect.