



Adoption Inspection (5-9 December 2022)

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/7/1264707>

Scrutiny 20 March 2023



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Voluntary Adoption Agency Inspection Outcome

Judgement	Grade
<i>Overall experiences and progress of service users taken into account</i>	Good
<i>How well children, young people and adults are helped and protected</i>	Good
<i>The effectiveness of leaders and managers</i>	Requires Improvement to be Good
<i>Overall Judgement</i>	Good





Inspection Highlights

- The Trust progresses early permanence for children when adoption is identified as a part of a child's care plan. The Trust works closely with the Regional Adoption Agency... to progress early...As a result, the number of children placed in fostering to adopt placements has increased.
- Children build positive relationships with adopters.
- Children are introduced to adopters in a planned and sensitive way
- Children's SWs work collaboratively with the Regional Adoption Agency to ensure that children and adopters, once matched and placed, are supported well. As a result, there have been no disruptions for children who have been placed by the Trust.
- The Trust has developed a governance structure that enables leaders to maintain some good oversight of the delivery of the adoption service provided by the Regional Adoption Agency
- The culture of the Trust is characterised by high expectations and aspirations for all children. This is demonstrated in their desire to achieve permanence for children and stability in placements





Inspection Outcome- Recommendations

- Ensuring we encourage and gather feedback and consider the wishes, feelings, and views of children to help them improve the service
- Ensuring that life story books are personalised to each and every child consistently
- Ensuring that the later-life letter is individual and personalised to each child and that the prospective adopters receive the letter within 10 working days of the adoption ceremony
- Ensuring children are introduced to prospective adopters in a timely way that is child focused and without delay
- Ensuring that training and assessment of prospective adopters are non-judgemental
- Ensuring that we seek feedback from adopters about the experience of the adoption process from beginning to end and that we implement any learning from this



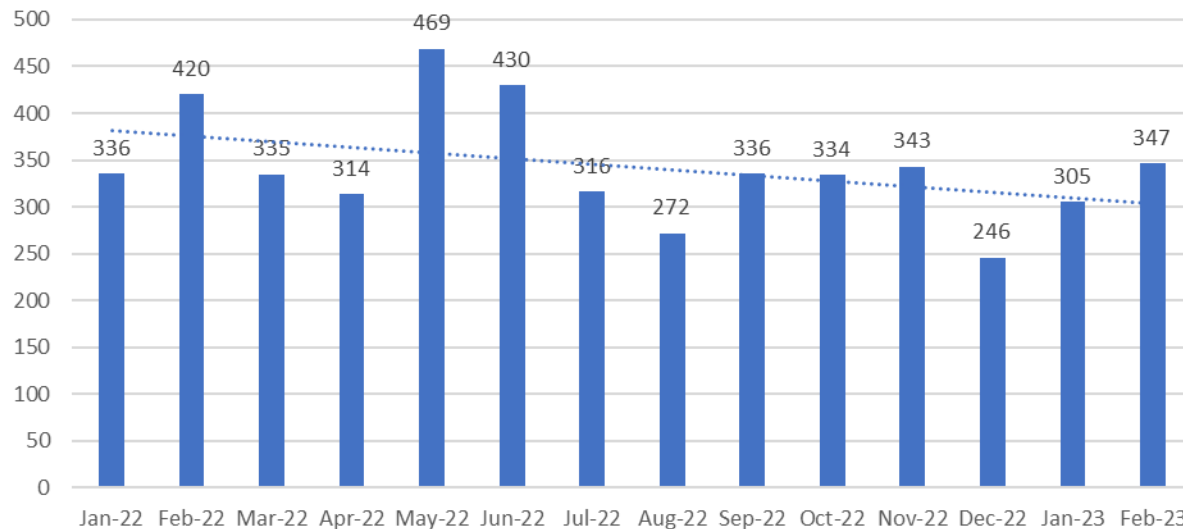


Key Performance – February 2023 (indicators comparative to Statistical Neighbours, England and West Midlands)



Referrals

Number of Referrals



Referral Rates per 10,000

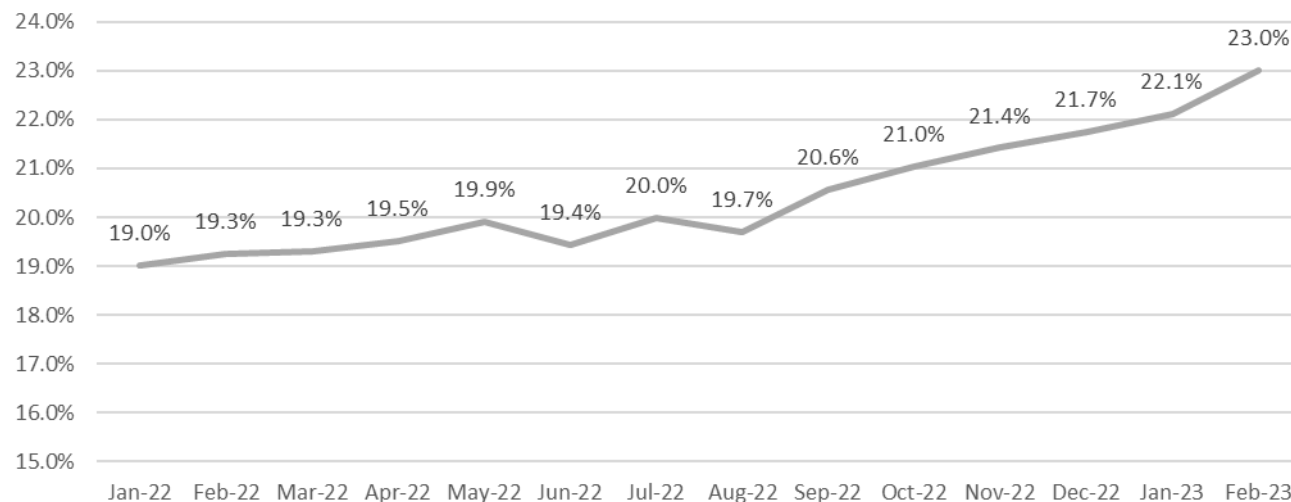


- Last 12 months- referrals decreased to 474 per 10,000
- Rate for the prior 12 month was at 580 per 10,000
- SCT now lower than Statistical Neighbour (SN) average, England and West Midlands (WM) average



Re-Referrals

Re-referral % in last 12 months



Re-Referral Rates



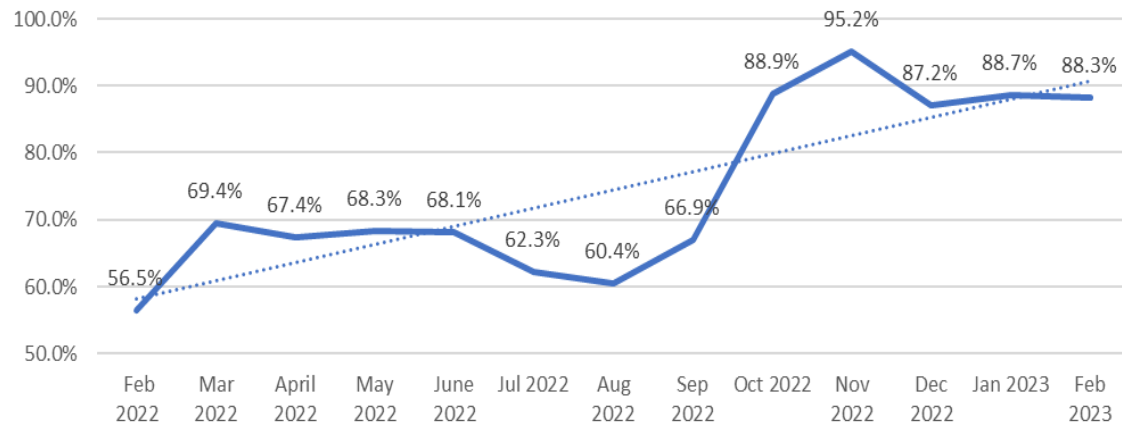
- Rates have increased from 20% to 23% over last 6 months- 2.6% higher than SN comparators and 1.5% above England Average
- Reduction in referral rate (over 400 in last 12 months) is a contributory factor
- Focus is on ensuring assessment quality and making best use of support services available, eg step down to targeted services.



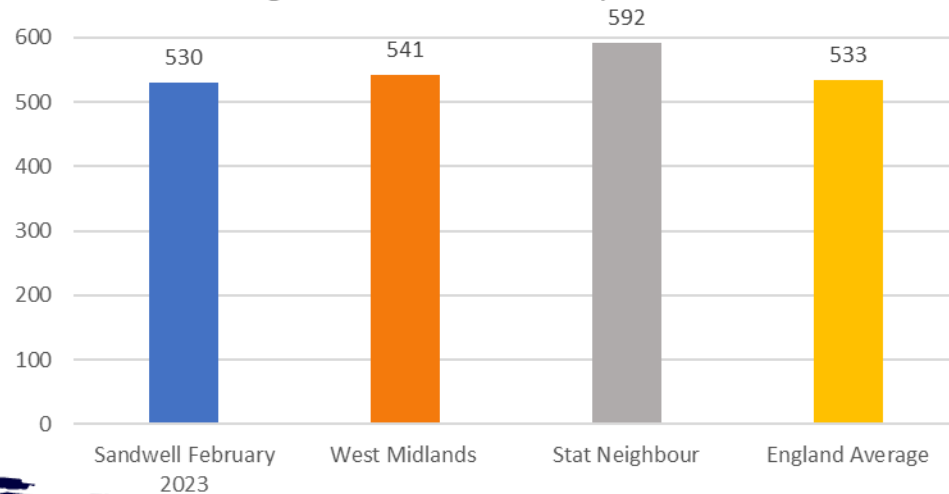


Assessments

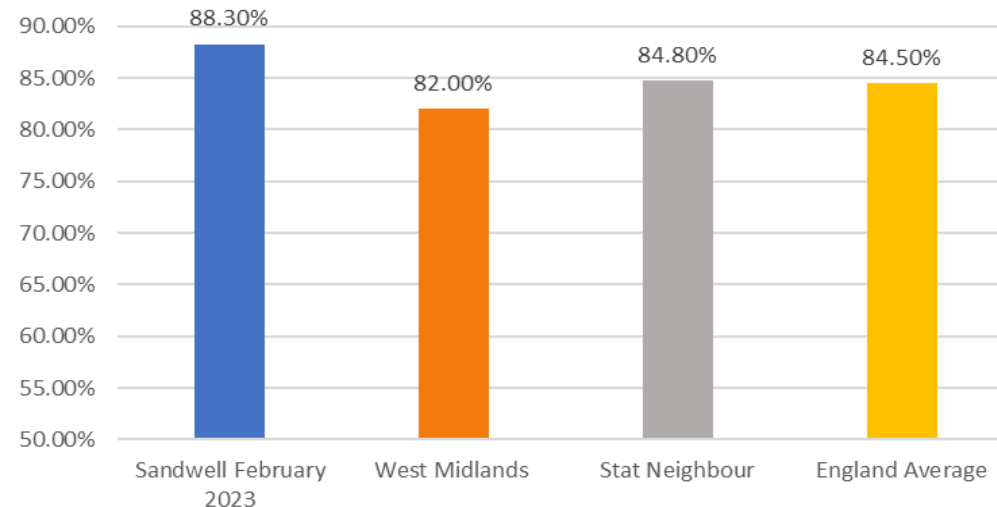
The Percentage of Single Assessments completed within 45 working days



Single Assessments Rate per 10,000



Single Assessments within 45 working days



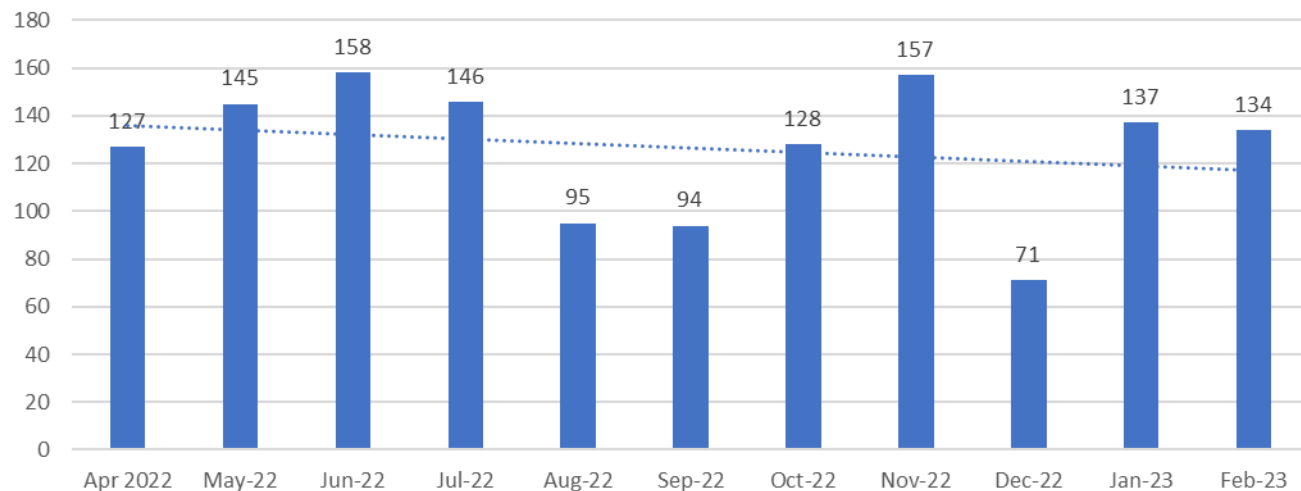
- Last 12 months ranged from 56.5 to 95.2%
- February 2023 – 88.3% and above 85% since October 2022
- Current performance above SN, WM and England Average
- Rate of assessments per 10,000 over last 12 months has reduced from 718 per 10,000 (March 2021) to 530 per 10,000



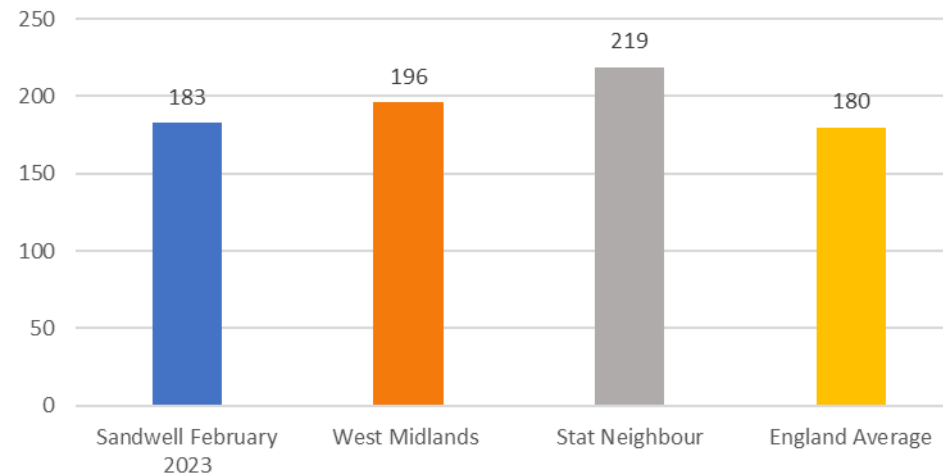


S47 Enquiries

Number of S47s



S47 Rate per 10,000

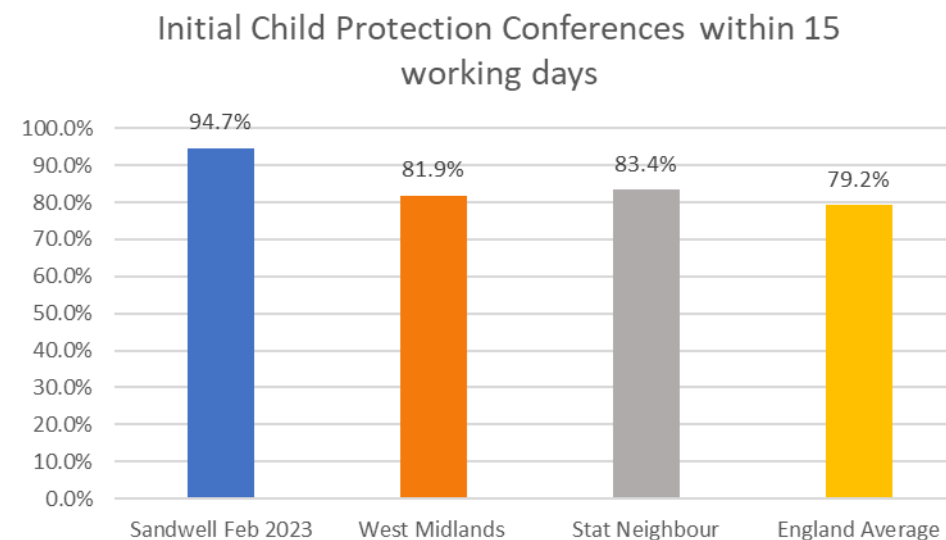
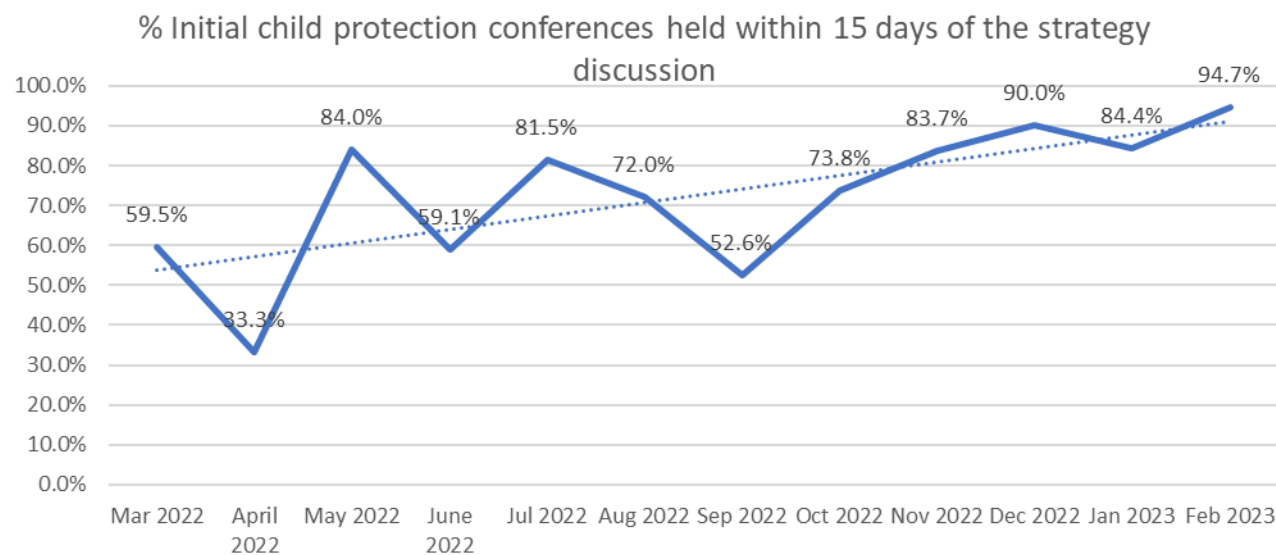


- Continuing improvement – indicative of better understanding and management of risk
- Trajectory is a rate of 183 per 10,000 (based on last 12 months)
- Significantly lower than 2018-19 rate of 312 per 10,000
- Current rate is below SN average and in line with regional comparators





Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs)

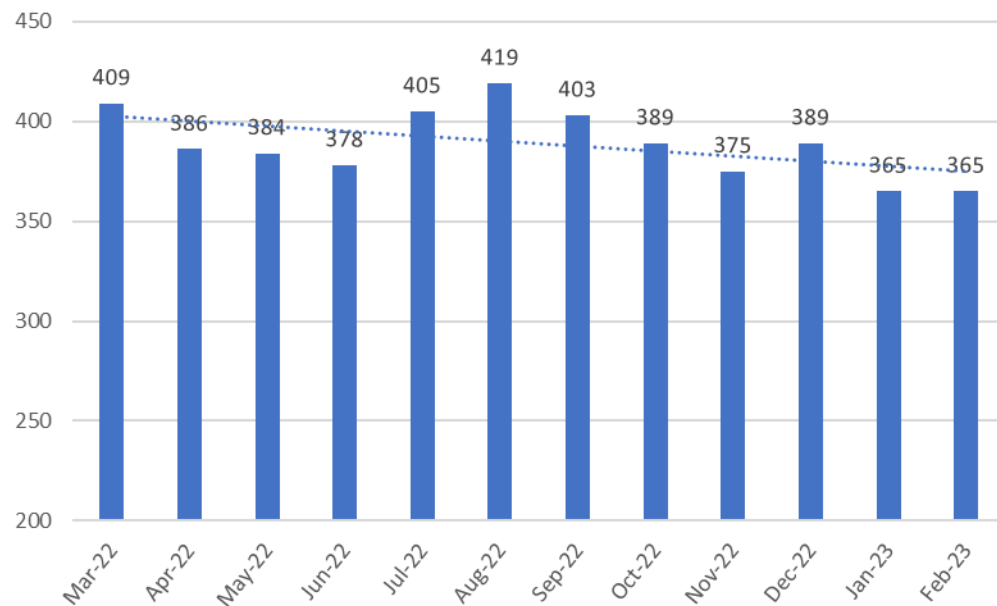


- February 2023, 94.7% of ICPCs completed within 15 working days- above all comparators this has been above all since November 2022
- ICPC rate- now below SN comparators –96.9 per 10,000 (March 2021) to 50 per 10,000 (SN average 73.8)
- 82% ICPCs resulted in a CP Plan, thresholds more consistent

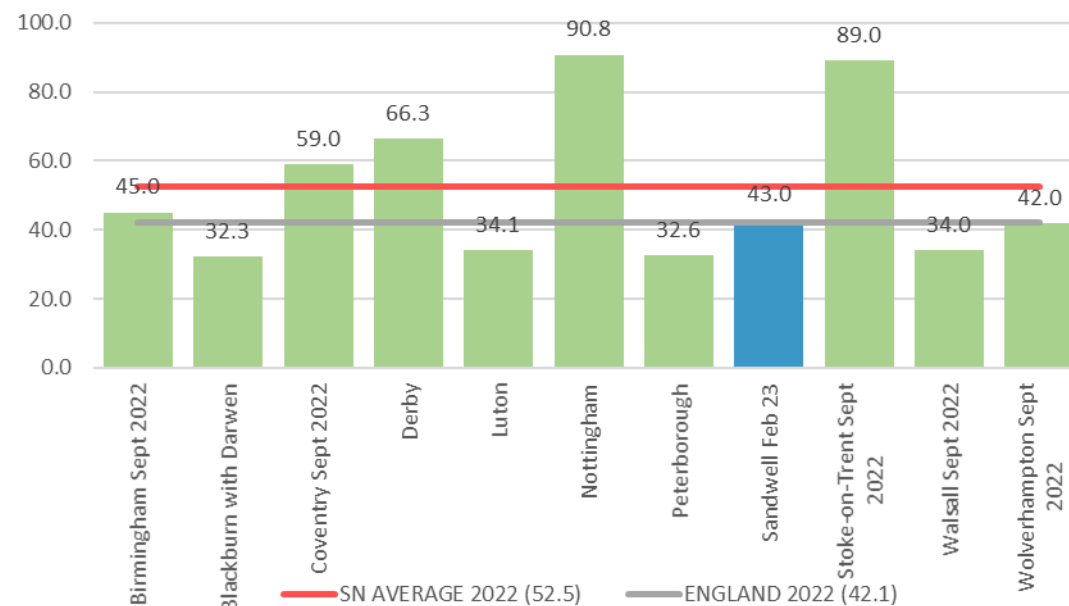


Child Protection Plans (CPPs)

Number of Children with a Child Protection Plan



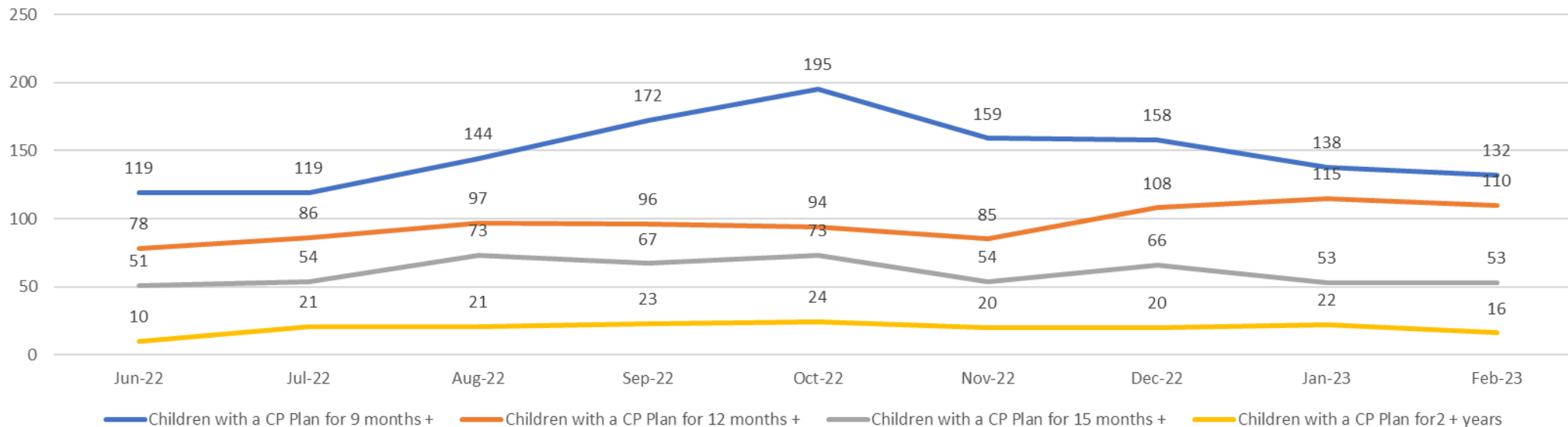
Rate of Child Protection Plans per 10,000 comparison to Statistical Neighbours (Latest SN data March 2022)



- Last 12 months- reduction in children on CPPs - 409 to 365 (rates 49.3 to 42.7 per 10,000).
- Below SN average- more in line with West Midlands and England Averages.

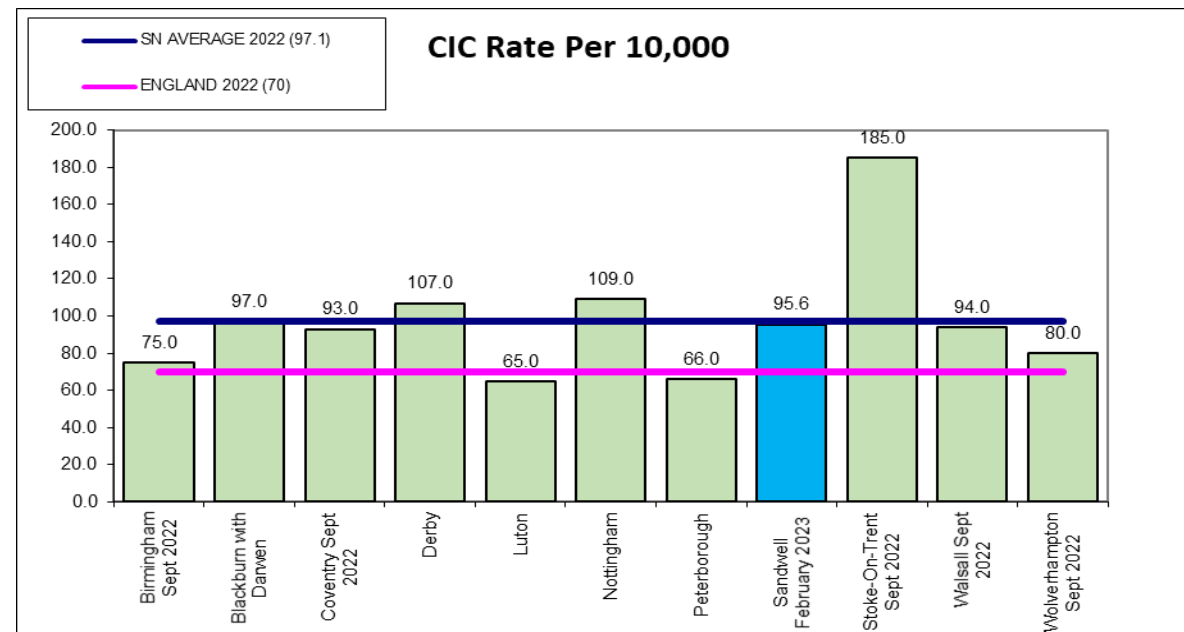
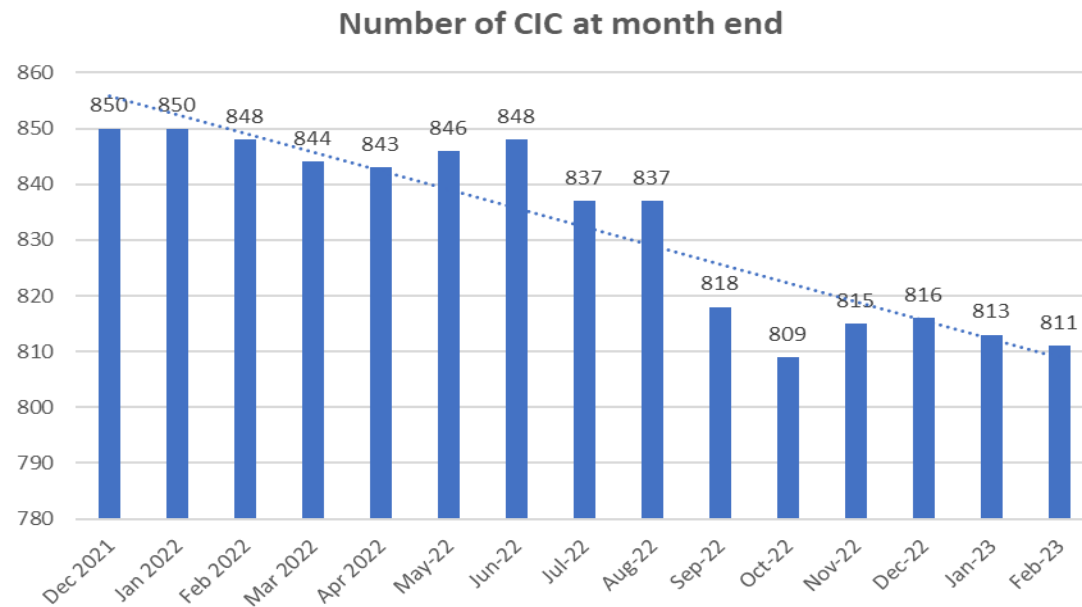
Child Protection

Children subject of a CP Plan for 9 months +, 12 Months +, 15 months + and 2 + years



- 16 children on a CPP longer than two years (equates to 4.4% of cohort)
- 1.4% above our SN average
- 9.9% of children have had a 2nd plan within two years of closing- 36 Children (11% regional average)

Children in Care

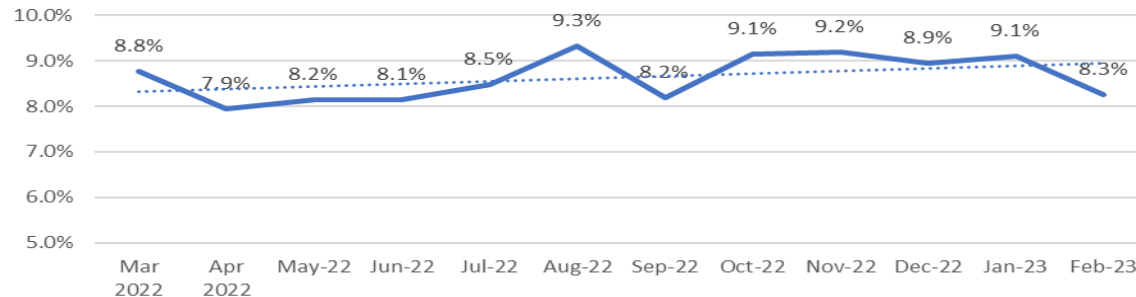


- **28 February 2023- 811 (95.6 per 10,000)- reduction from 848 previous year (102.2)**
- **Currently- SN average 97.1 per 10,000 lower than our comparators**
- **Over the last 12 months 167 children have entered care with 211 children ceasing care**
- **As a rate of entrants per 10,000 this equates to 19.7, compared with 31.6 (SN) and 27 (regional average)**
- **Exits from care is 24.9 per 10,000, slightly lower than SN (31) and in line with WM average (25)**

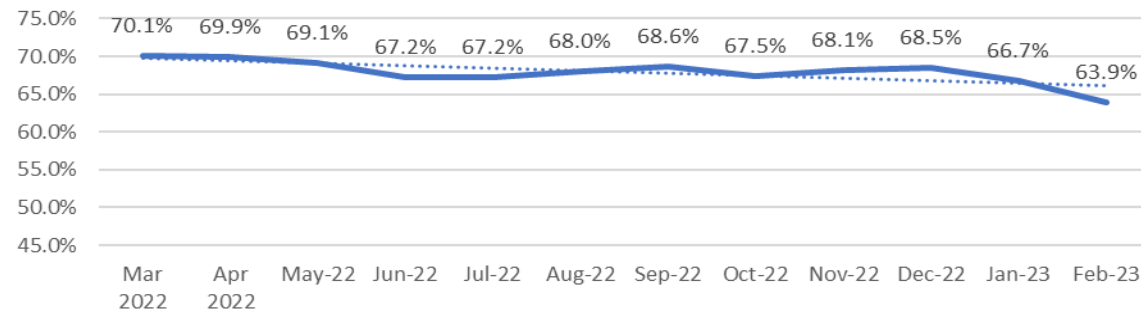


Placement Stability

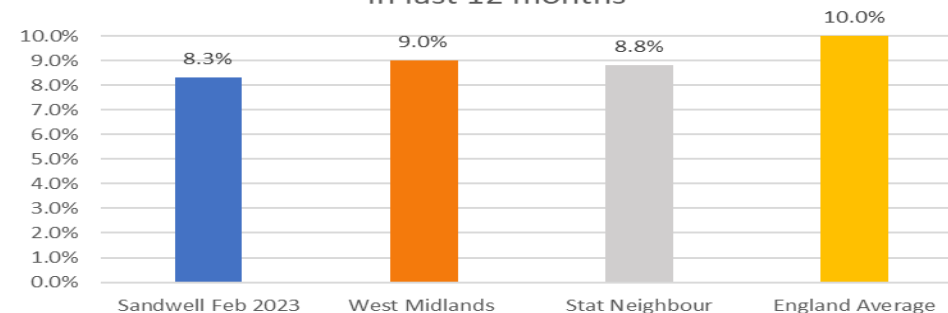
% Children in Care with 3+ Moves



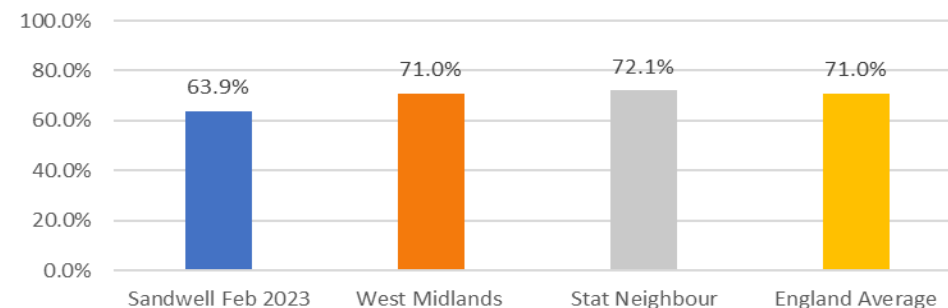
% Children in Care in Same Placement for 2 + Years



Children in Care with 3 or more placement moves in last 12 months



Children in Care in same placement for 2+ years



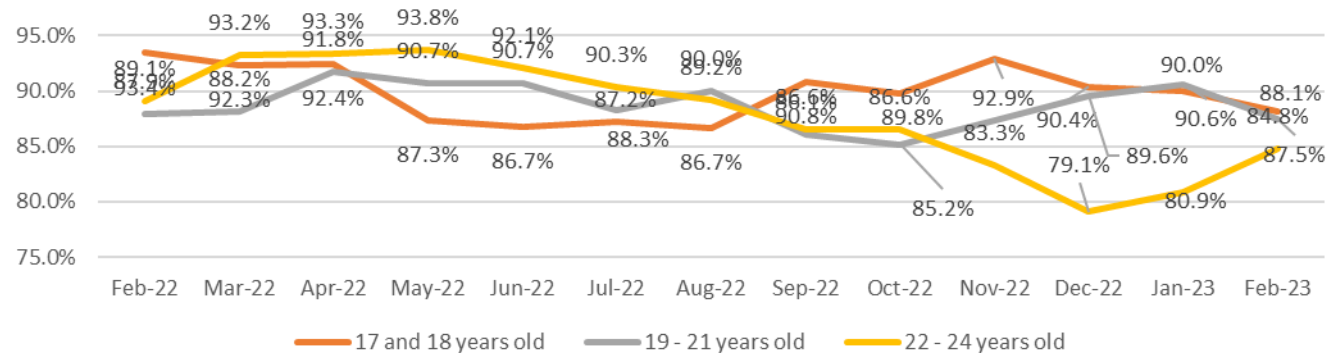
- 67 children had 3+ moves in last 12 months (8.3%) - in line with SN (8.8%), WM (9%), better than England average (10%)
- 64% children in care for 2.5 years remaining in the same placement for 2 years- below SN Average of 72.1%



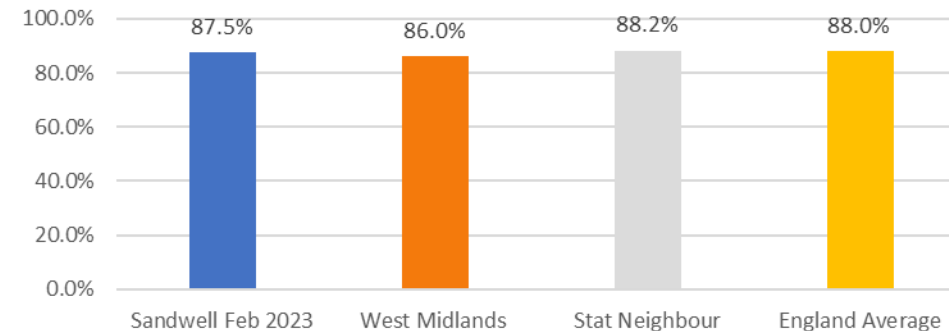


Care Leavers

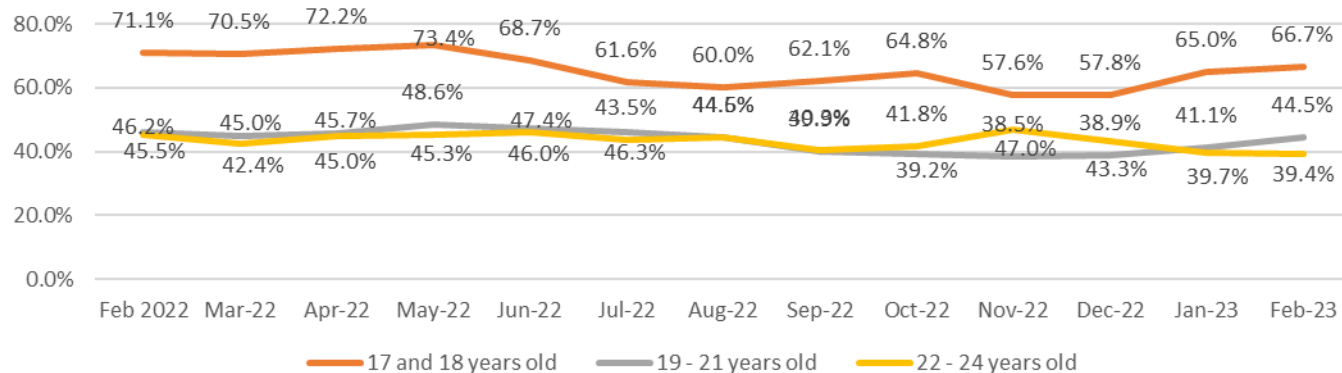
% Care leavers in Suitable Accommodation - by age



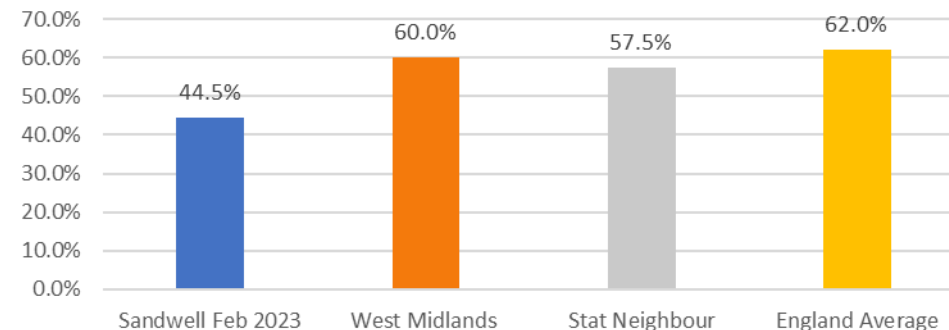
Care Leavers aged 19-21 in Suitable Accommodation



% Care leavers Engaged in Employment, Education or Training - by age



Care Leavers aged 19-21 Engaged in Employment, Education or Training



- **19-21yrs- 44.5% EET (55.5% NEET) - 13% below SN comparators and 15.5% below WM**
- **17-18yrs- 67% EET**
- **Accommodation- in line with our comparators**





Our Social Care Workforce



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Social Workers – Key Challenges

- National and regional shortage of social workers- recognised in the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and the implementation strategy
- Investment recommended in the social care workforce to address high vacancy and turnover rates
- Recruitment and availability of experienced social workers, especially child protection and court work
- Use of high cost agency project teams
- Short term agency
- West Midlands Memorandum of Understanding- difficult to adhere to given acute pressures





Social Worker- Our Approach

- **People-** first priority through our **Workforce Strategy** and **Task Group**
 - Grow our own- invest in newly qualified workers, apprenticeship and student
 - Strong marketing campaign
 - 'Sandwell Deal'
 - Leadership hub
 - Flexible working
 - International SWs
- Make best use of other skilled staff (non-SW)
- Locality model
- Capitalising on Trust culture and values
- Emphasis on early help and prevention and joint approach to solutions alongside Council

