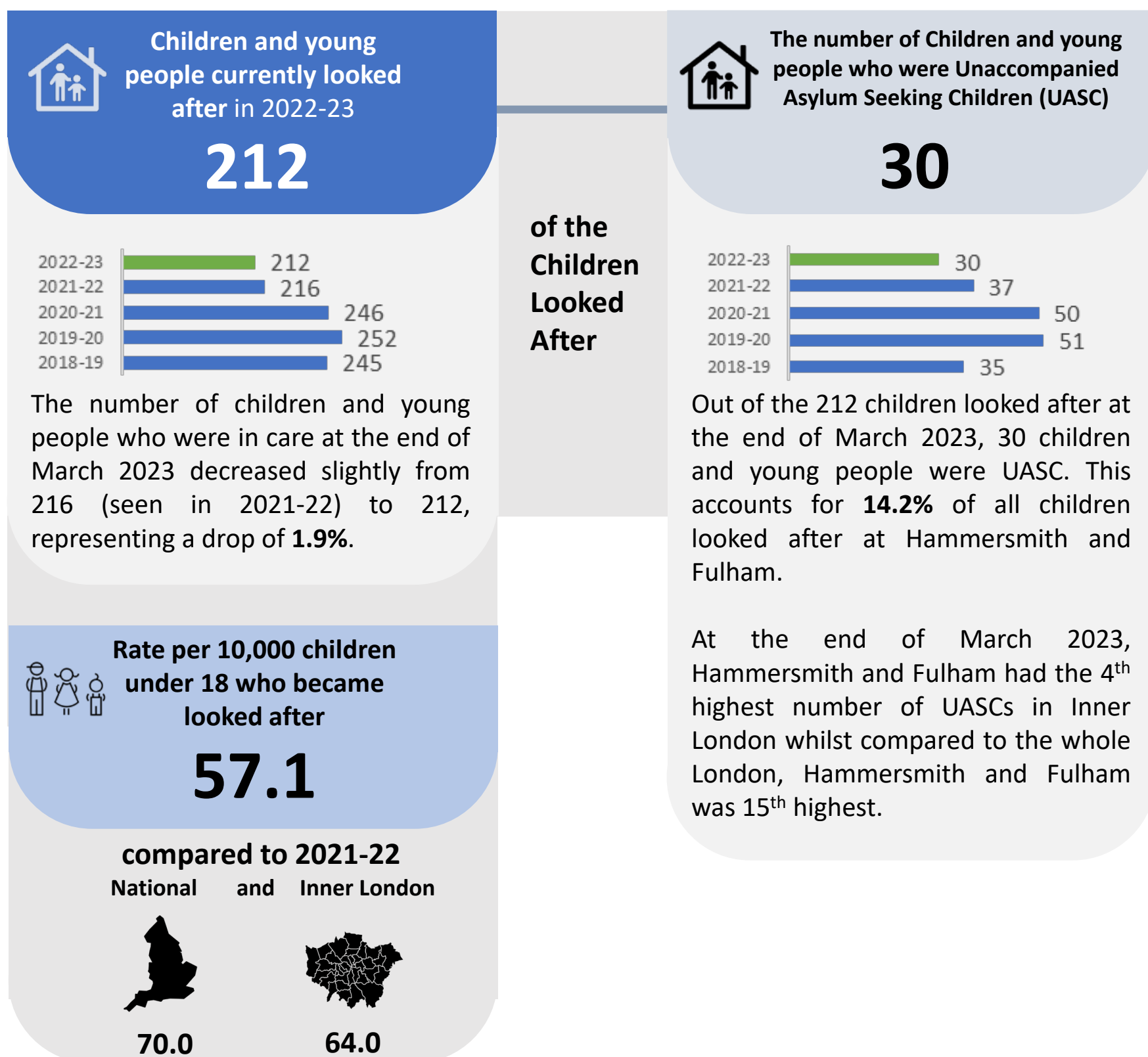


A child or young person (under the age of 18) who have been in care for more than 24 hours in a local authority are classified as looked after. The term children in care (CLA) is preferred by many children and young people over the previous term of looked after children or LAC. Children ceased to be looked after if they return home, are placed with a connected persons permanence arrangement (such as a Special Guardianship or Child Arrangement Order), turn 18 or are adopted.

Children come into care for many reasons but in summary it is because a decision is made that becoming cared for is the only way to keep them safe and will improve their outcomes. This can include, but not limited to, children who are suffering from or at risk of significant harm; unaccompanied asylum seeking children with no responsible adult to look after them, or the parent is either unwell or incapable of caring for their child/ren, therefore putting the child/ren at risk of harm. In all cases, children who are accommodated into care, would have gone through a difficult or traumatic experience in their lives including separation and loss; they are likely to be distressed and the impact of trauma and instability will affect their social and emotional development as well as their health and educational outcomes. Whilst we are incredibly proud of the achievements and successes of our cared for children, we acknowledge that children and young people who are looked after are at higher risk of not achieving the same outcomes as their peers. The London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham's mid year population estimate of children and young people aged under 18 is 31,802.

Children currently looked after in Hammersmith and Fulham



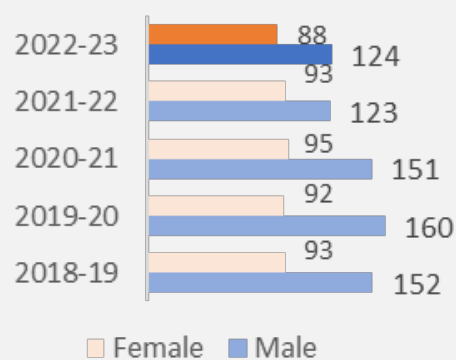
The rate per 10,000 children under 18 describes the total number of children who were looked after for every 10,000 children within the Borough. The rate provides a much easier comparison especially when areas of differing population sizes and demographics are compared.

Hammersmith and Fulham is a diverse inner London Borough with a relatively small population compared to other authorities in London. At the end of March 2023, Hammersmith and Fulham had a rate of **57.1** per 10,000 population of children under 18 who were in care at the end of March 2023. This is marginally lower than the 2021-22 national average of 70.0 and was 6.9 points lower than the inner London average.

Demographics of children looked after



Gender of children and young currently looked after in 2022-23

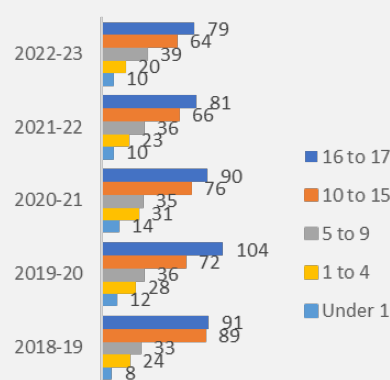


41.5% of children looked after were whilst

58.5% were



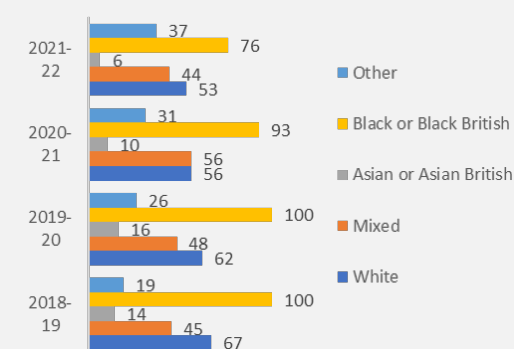
Age range of children and young people currently looked after in 2022-23



Children and young people aged 16 and 17 account for the largest age group of children and young people looked after in Hammersmith and Fulham at **37.3%**. This was followed by 10 to 15 year old at **30.2%** whilst 5 to 9 year olds account for **18.4%**. Similar trends can be seen in Hammersmith and Fulham in previous years.



Ethnicity of children and young people currently looked after in 2022-23



Children and young people from a black or black British heritage account for the largest ethnic group of children looked after with **34.0%**. This was followed by children from a white background and those classified as mixed heritage accounting for **26.9%** and **23.1%** respectively. Children and young people from an Asian or classified as any other ethnic group account for **4.2%** and **11.8%** respectively.

Health of children looked after



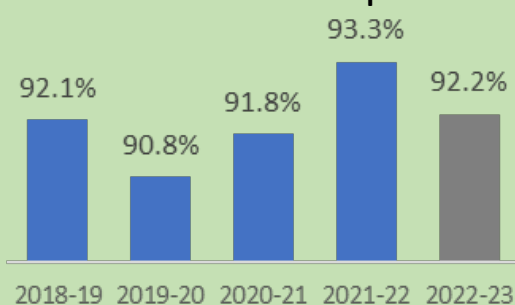
For all children looked after (and who have been looked after continuously for 12 months or more as of 31 March), ensuring each child has had their teeth checked by a dentist, had all their immunisations up to date, as well as having their annual health assessment completed is a basic health requirement for all children in care.

This is associated with good parenting, notwithstanding the fact that older children looked after may well exercise their right to refuse medical examinations and treatment. However, the expectation is that a high proportion of children looked after are receiving basic health care. Good performance should be generally high in this area.



92.2%

Children and young people had an annual health assessment completed on time



National 2021-22



89.0%

Inner London 2021-22



95.0%

92.2% of all children looked after for 12 months or more at the end of March 2023 in Hammersmith and Fulham had their health assessments completed on time.

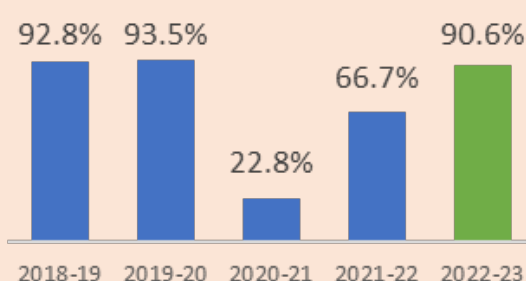
Performance is above the 2021-22 national average of 89.0% but is less than the inner London average of 95.0%.

Please note, provisional draft figures for 2023-24 has shown an improvement and performance is likely to increase to 99%. This factsheet will be updated once actual figures (published by the Department of Education) are released.



90.6%

Children and young people had an up-to-date dental check completed on time



National 2021-22



70.0%

Inner London 2021-22



69.0%

90.6% of children looked after for 12 months or more had their teeth checked by a dentist in 2022/23. This represents a significant increase in performance for Hammersmith and Fulham.

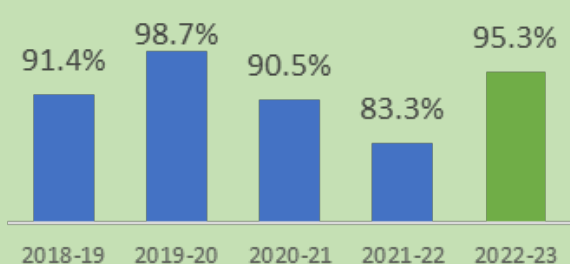
Both the national and inner London average saw significant increases in performance activity as well with figures of 70.0% and 69.0% respectively.

Please note, provisional draft figures for 2023-24 has stayed unchanged and performance is likely to be 90%. This factsheet will be updated once actual figures (published by the Department of Education) are released.



95.3%

Children and young people had an annual health assessment completed on time



National 2021-22



85.0%

Inner London 2021-22



76.0%

Performance in the number of children and young people looked after in Hammersmith and Fulham at the end of March 2023 who had an up-to-date immunisation was strong at **95.3%**. Nationally, performance for 2021-22 was standing at 85.0% whilst the inner London average in comparison was 76.0%.

Emotional and behavioural health of children looked after



The Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is used to monitor the emotional and behavioural health of children looked after aged 5 to 16. The SDQ is a short behavioural screening questionnaire that is completed by the child or young person's main carer. The purpose of the SDQ is to give social workers and health professionals the ability to monitor the wellbeing of a child/ren. A score of 0 to 13 is considered normal, 14 to 16 is considered borderline whilst a score of 17 to 40 would indicate a concern. The SDQ represents an average score for each local authority and combines all scores which is then divided by the total number of children and young people where an SDQ has been returned.



12.6

Emotional and behavioural health of children looked after as at 31 March 2023

National 2021-22



13.8

Inner London 2021-22



13.8

The national and inner London average score for children aged 5 to 16 who had been looked after for at least 12 months or more, as of 31 March 2022, were both 13.8.

Hammersmith and Fulham's average Borough score was calculated to be **12.6** which was within the normal range for emotional and behavioural health of children looked after and is lower than both the national and inner London average.

In 2021-22, in addition to the use of SDQs, Hammersmith and Fulham have been piloting the use of the BERRI tool. The BERRI is a clinical evaluation tool for identifying, tracking and improving the outcomes of children. Comprising of a detailed questionnaire, it ascertains the needs of children and is filled out by Social Workers, Carers, Virtual School Teachers and/or other professionals by asking a series of questions about a child's behaviour, emotional wellbeing, risk (to self and others), relationships and indicators (of psychiatric or neurodevelopmental conditions). Social workers and carers have been strongly committed to the use of the BERRI and it has proved a useful alternative/addition to the SDQ. The feedback has provided strong evidence about how well the service identify, track and measure the emotional and mental health needs of children and young people looked after.

Convictions and youth cautions for children looked after



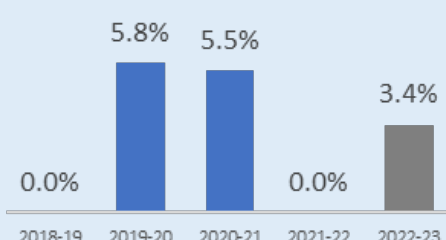
Children and young people who are looked after are more likely to offend and, subsequently, encounter the youth justice system at a higher rate than the general population. Children and young people are more likely to offend if they have been looked after for a shorter periods i.e. 12 to less 24 months, compared to those who are in care for much longer.

The offending rate is often lower for children who are placed with foster carers compared to those in residential homes as the latter are more likely to respond to challenging behaviour by calling the police compared to parents in a family environment.



3.4%

Children and young people who been convicted or subject to a youth caution as at 31 March 2023



National 2021-22



2.0%

Inner London 2021-21



4.0%

Of the children and young people who were looked after in Hammersmith and Fulham who were aged 10 and over and who had been in care for 12 months or more at the end of March 2023 a very small number of young people (**3.4%**) were convicted or were subject to a youth caution in 2022/23.

The national and the inner London average for 2021-22 was lower in comparison at 2.0% and 4.0% respectively.