

Bracknell Forest

Analysis for strategic planning
'Matters of the Moment'

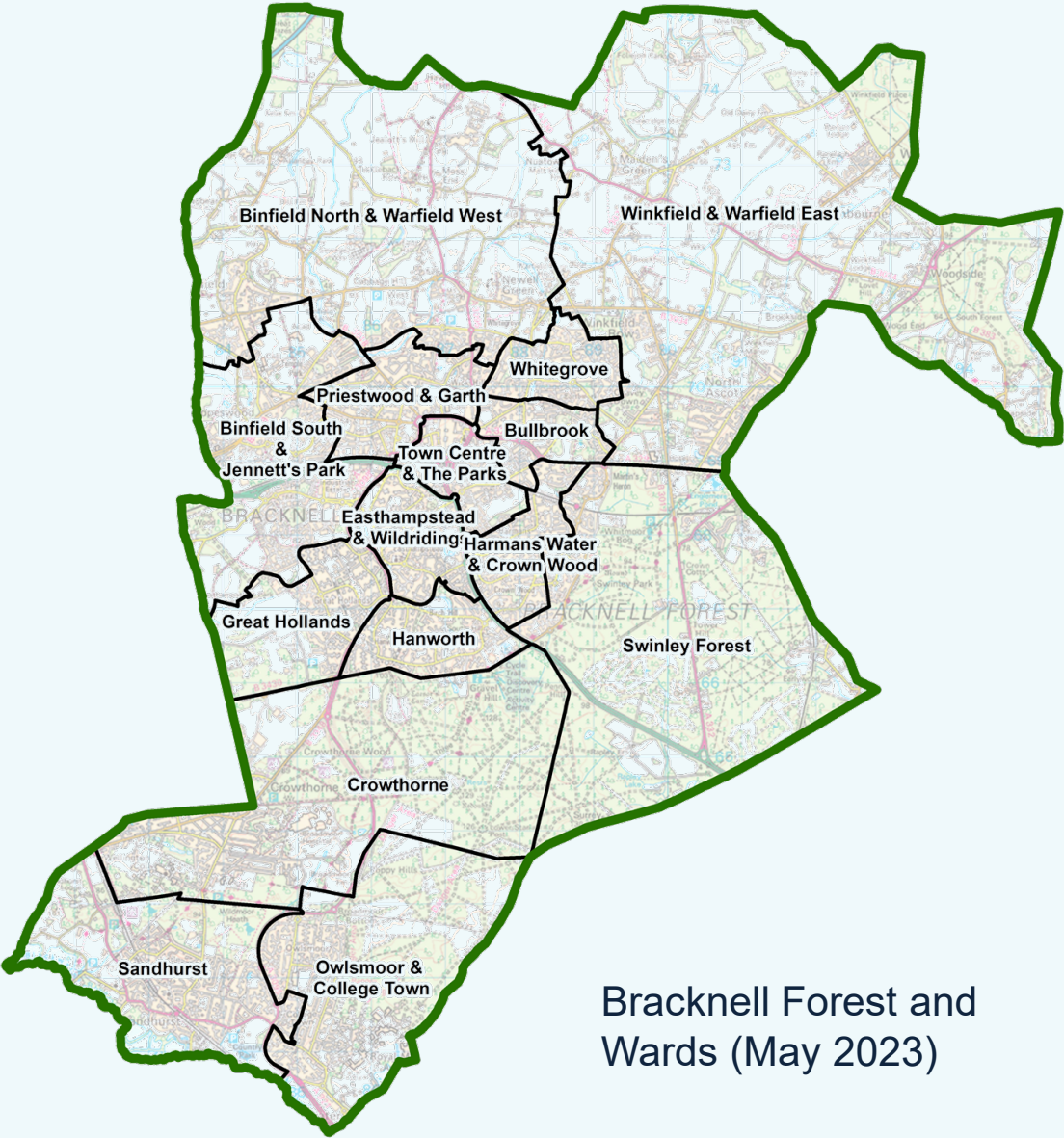


Version: 0.2

Date: January 2023

Contents

Theme	Page
Executive summary	3
Introduction	6
Community profile	11
Value for money	16
Economic and business	17
Education and skills	24
Health and wellbeing	32
Environment	45
Communities	51
Engagement	58
Accumulated impacts	61



Executive Summary

Community Profile

The community profile of Bracknell Forest residents shows there is an increasingly diverse community. This is similar to neighbouring areas. Growth has continued over the last 10 years, though many of the patterns such as age demographics have broadly stayed the same.

There are growing numbers of older people in the borough and people from different ethnicities. A large proportion of people live alone.

There is a difference between the demographics of Bracknell town wards and the rest of the borough. This includes, broadly, higher levels of deprivation, a greater population of people from ethnic minority groups, higher population density and proportionally fewer older people.

Economic and Business

The economy is continuing to thrive locally, despite the national challenges of leaving the European Union, the pandemic and the current recession. The use of the town centre has returned to pre-pandemic activity, in part, due to a number of re-activation events in 2021 and 2022. Evidence suggests that a diverse offering of retail and leisure will be essential to long term sustainability.

It is becoming clearer that there will be a long term shift away from Monday to Friday office working. The borough has a number of large office/business areas which will need to adapt to reduced demand. There is, however, an opportunity to grow industries such as science, research and development, technology and skills required for the emerging green economy.

Unemployment rates continue to be low, however the number of people not in employment and not seeking a job has also increased, reducing local economic activity rates.

Housing affordability is likely to continue to be a challenge for many local residents, though this is also a national issue. This, along with general job support, was cited as a greater concern for Bracknell Forest young people, than many of their peers in the South East and England.

Education and Skills

Broadly, school outcomes are good, particularly at early years and KS1 phases, and for post-16. There is an increasing diversity of children within the local education system, including those with special educational needs and additional language support needs. The attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils is one area that is widening, partly following the pandemic. Across primary and secondary schools this could be an area of focus to improve overall outcomes.

There are some areas of skill shortages in the borough, particularly around advanced IT skills and practical skills such as for social care, construction and haulage. Combined with the data in the economy section, this would suggest several opportunities for developing the local labour market and helping shape post-16 pathways.

Executive Summary

Health and Wellbeing

The majority of residents live a happy and healthy life, however there are growing support needs related to mental health across the spectrum of complexity. This is becoming more acute since the pandemic and particularly affecting younger people. Whilst the health of most is good, there are also growing challenges with access to healthcare, locally and nationally.

Levels of obesity and physical inactivity have been on the rise both locally and nationally. This is particularly the case for older children, adults and residents living in the most deprived areas of the borough. Current levels of obesity amongst children and adults are similar to the regional and national averages. With the extensive green spaces and active travel networks across the borough, this could be an area for further development.

There are a number of specific themes around improving health for children, specifically under-fives. This includes supporting parents to access proportionate healthcare and increasing the number of children completing two year old reviews.

For older adults there is likely to be unmet support needs related to dementia, as many residents estimated to have the condition do not have a formal diagnosis. However, it may be that there is sufficient community support for these individuals.

It is clear that there will continue to be increasing social care and safeguarding support required. This will become particularly acute considering the ageing population. Carers and service users have both reported decreases in their quality of life since the pandemic.

A number of these themes align with the current health and wellbeing strategy and driving improvement will continue to require the joint working between the council, health partners and the community. Deprivation is linked to many health outcomes and the current economic challenges are likely to worsen the health for low income households.

Environment

There has been a clear change in the patterns of transport across the borough since the pandemic. The infrastructure for cycling and walking is recognised by many as good, however there remains a barrier related to perceptions for residents using these sustainable routes more often.

Similarly, there has been significant progress related to recycling. However there remains further scope to support residents specifically around reducing their general waste. The climate will continue to be a significant priority on a national and local level. Plans will continue to be reviewed and developed as part of the climate change strategy.

The decreasing use of buses may extend social connectivity challenges following the pandemic, particularly for older people and those with disabilities.

The local parks and green spaces are a further key part of the local environment and the borough has an exceptional local offer. There is limited benchmarking and comparative data on usage of parks, so it has not been included in detail in this analysis.

Executive Summary

Communities

Many community assets and networks have now recovered from the pandemic. Libraries are becoming more and more used for facilitating community activities, support and events. The traditional book borrowing offer has nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Community led organisations are facing increasing financial pressures in light of the economic challenges, however many remain optimistic about volunteering engagement.

The local community has been integral in supporting Ukrainian arrivals. This, alongside the recent increase in residents from wider refugee schemes, will further emphasise the need for local, specialist support, for example a new Ukrainian community group has been established. The additional residents may also lead to a need for further housing/temporary accommodation placements and social care support, which are already under local pressure.

Engagement

The data shows that residents are regularly contacting the council through a number of different channels. Digital methods, including self-service on the website, are continuing to grow in popularity. However, it is also clear, since re-opening the Time Square office, that there are a cohort of residents with more complex needs, or those not digitally-able, who continue to need face-to-face support. The previous residents' survey, conducted in May 2021, identified that around 5% of households do not use and/or have the internet at home.

Accumulated Impacts

There are a number of cross-cutting themes arising through the data sets. This includes the following groups where there are specific compounding risks.

Young people

While school outcomes generally are good, there are emerging indications of increasing gaps in education attainment, compounded by deprivation. Locally, young people are most concerned about future jobs, money and homes. Many are facing more complex health and support needs, particularly related to special educational needs and mental health.

Older adults

This group is more likely to require additional health and care support, including for challenges like isolation. Older adults are also more likely to be affected by digital deprivation in skills, confidence and access to online and virtual communication methods. With more retired residents and a good healthy life expectancy, there may be further opportunities to support this group to volunteer within the community.

Low income households

Across all age groups, there is an increasing number of people affected by multiple deprivations. For example, those already on lower incomes may not have the time or money to increase their skills, or afford health related activities such as gym memberships. Many who have never experienced hardship before are now being affected.

Bracknell town wards

A number of wards in the Bracknell town areas have compounding risks and vulnerabilities. This includes higher deprivation, worse health, worse education outcomes, and a greater reliance on the council and welfare system for support.

Introduction

Purpose

The last three years have brought unprecedented change to every aspect of the local and national community. Through the impacts of leaving the EU, the coronavirus pandemic, the conflict in Ukraine and the cost of living crisis, it is clear that reprioritisation and refocusing resources will be needed.

The delivery of council services is underpinned by the Council Plan, setting out the organisation's aims and priorities. A new plan is due to be developed in 2023, following the council elections. As the landscape of the economy and the community has changed, it must now be explored how the next plan and future decision making can be shaped to best address the current situation. This report will seek to recognise and understand the current position of residents to inform future strategy and decision making at Bracknell Forest Council. This will also help to further address local inequalities.

This analysis is not intended to provide the answers or solutions to the local challenges and opportunities, it is intended to be one tool to support decision making. Wider engagement and co-production would be needed to develop solutions. Initial questions arising from the data are included at the end of each section, some of which are already being addressed with service level work.

Methodology

This evidence gathering was primarily conducted during November 2022, the newest data sets are used where available.

It is recognised that the impact of the events over the last few years will continue to change over the coming months and years therefore, this report serves as a snapshot to advise on upcoming planning and decision making.

The information provided is based on a range of local and national evidence sources:

- Local statistical sources and dashboards
- National transparency data
- Analytical primary research from local partners
- Stakeholder and partner insight

The majority of the report is structured based on the current Council Plan themes, to review how the current patterns align with existing ambitions.

Where reference is made to CIPFA neighbours, this relates to the nearest neighbours model, to compare data with similar local authorities. For Bracknell Forest this is: West Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, Milton Keynes, Bedford, Swindon, Wokingham, Trafford, South Gloucestershire, Solihull, Central Bedfordshire, Reading, Buckinghamshire, Thurrock, Stockport, and North Somerset.

Local Context

Local Planning Cycle and Management

The council has had the current Council Plan since 2019, during this period a number of national and international forces have significantly affected the council's work. Despite this, there has been clear progress towards all the original commitments.

A new Council Plan is due to be agreed in the summer of 2023, following the local elections in May. This will be a good opportunity to reflect on ambitions to date and the direction of the council over the next four years.

The council's long standing Chief Executive retired in the autumn of 2022. A new Chief Executive brings a further opportunity to reflect on the ambitions of the council in the coming years and bring experience from wider local authorities.

Local Strategies

There are already many strategic plans in place that use a range of evidence sources to identify local priorities. This includes the emerging Local Plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, therefore this analysis does not seek to reiterate that evidence but to view it within a whole-council perspective.

The majority of the council's strategies are [published online](#).

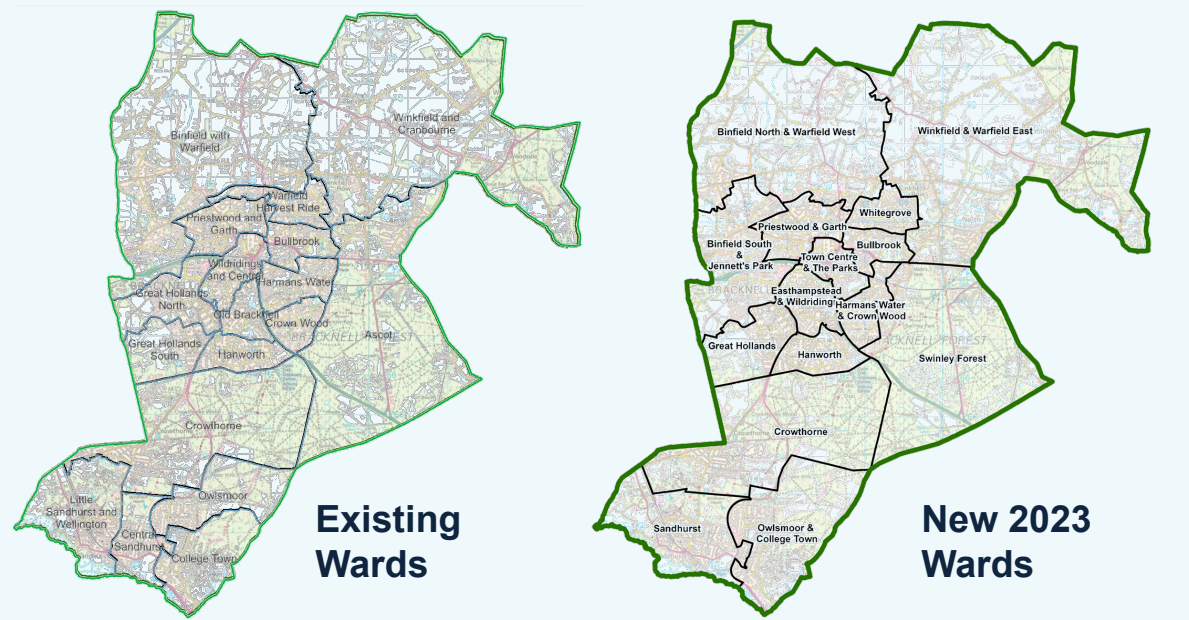
In addition to the long term strategic plans, there are also several specific plans in place to address time sensitive priorities. For example, there is currently extensive work underway related to SEND improvements, ongoing work to prepare for the social care reforms and the current financial hardship work.

Local Geography

The analysis has focused on the existing data available, some of which is available at ward level. This has been used where relevant to add local depth of data to understand nuances within the population.

However from May 2023, there will be amended ward boundaries. Many wards are largely the same, however there are notable changes in Bracknell Town area which will mean that some of the current data is no longer directly applicable.

Therefore, this report aims to set out overarching trends and patterns, rather than specific recommendations for focus areas and targets.



National Context

National Economy and Cost of Living

There continues to be increasing financial pressures across the local and national geography. The Bank of England has forecast the economy to be in recession for two years with unemployment rising to a peak to 6.4%.

Inflation is currently at a 40 year high of 11.2%, mostly related to international factors, with the primary output related to energy and food price increases. However, due to a slowing economy, the Bank of England is predicting an average closer to 7.1% next year and the rate returning to the 2% target late in 2024.

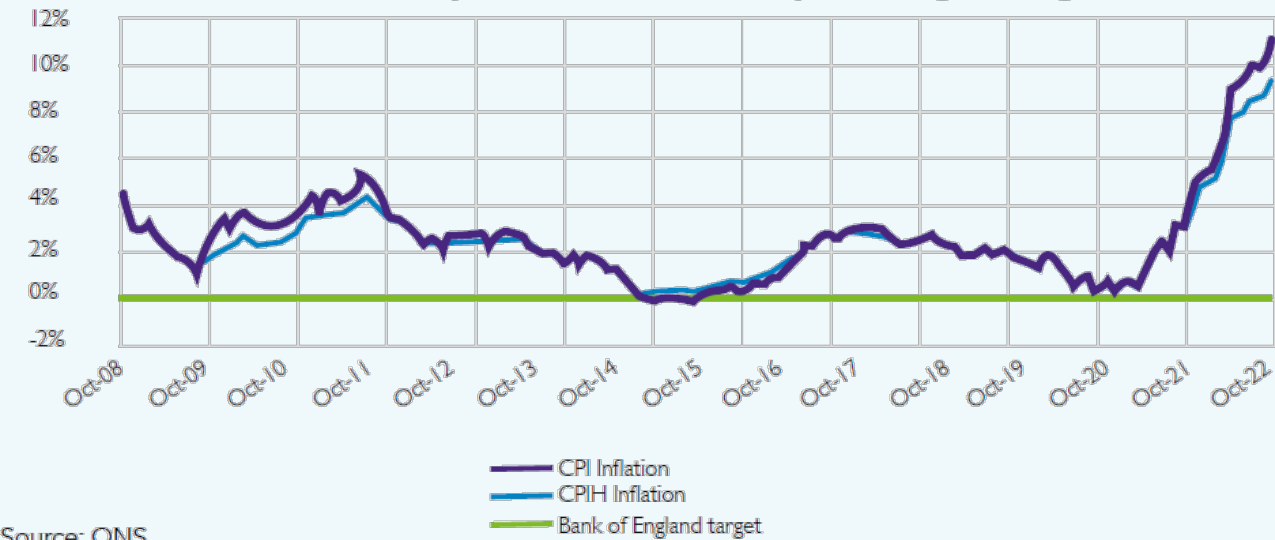
There will be continued economic uncertainty in the coming years, and for many this will manifest into cost of living challenges and financial hardship. The extent of this impact for Bracknell Forest is explored further in this analysis and supported by previous Financial Hardship Needs Analysis work.

Government Ambitions and Finances

The Levelling Up agenda has been a significant part of the current government’s agenda since the papers were published in February 2022. The ambition aims to spread opportunity more equally across the UK and reflects some of the impacts of the pandemic. Broadly this agenda does not significantly enhance the likely support for the South East, though it does provide encouragement for devolution.

That being said, the economic climate means that the government will need to increase borrowing in coming years, inevitably squeezing the finances available to the public sector.

UK consumer price inflation, annual percentage change



Source: ONS

COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery

Understanding around the risks, treatment and outcomes for those infected by COVID-19 are now much better understood. This has meant that health services have continued to be able to function and patient numbers managed. Though the national restrictions and guidance is fully lifted, there continues to be a number of significant long-term impacts. This includes direct and indirect health problems, such as missed health checks and screenings. It is also continuing to affect workforce availability nationally, including for frontline services that councils have a duty for, and where there are already recruitment challenges.

National Context

Future Drivers in Local Government

In June 2022, Ipsos Mori and the Local Government Association (LGA) published a paper about issues in UK society, to provide insights into what the leading drivers of change are in the country today and how these might play out over the coming five years.

The analysis identified 13 drivers of uncertainty summarised and linked to the Levelling Up themes, these are included below. The [full report](#) contains further detail. Key issues included a focus around workforce, digital technology, the ageing population, mental health, community led initiatives, green economy and energy transitions.

Boosting productivity, pay, jobs and living standards	How can councils attract, train and retain skilled staff to take advantage of new technology in a hyper-competitive labour market?
	How do councils prepare for next generation of more diverse young people and support future business leaders?
	How can councils bridge the narrowing yet deepening digital and physical divide?
Spreading opportunity and improving public services	What balance do councils strike in balancing digital innovation with avoiding leaving behind less connected citizens?
	How can councils tackle the challenge of further ageing, especially for urban areas used to younger populations?
	As providers of recreation and leisure facilities, what might change about councils’ roles in providing broader mental health support?
	What steps should councils take to encourage mobility in a population that is travelling less than it used to?
Restoring a sense of community and local pride	What types of support do local entrepreneurs and businesses need to thrive in a high street where footfall might never return to pre-Covid levels?
	How can councils leverage digital tools and use data analytics to provide support to physical locations and businesses?
	What innovations might councils use to harness the power of local communities to support a growing older population in need of social care?
Empowering local leaders	What role could local councils play in the green energy transition as the footprint of renewable power generation and storage expands?
	How will councils navigate emerging tensions between the central government’s priorities for levelling up and what the public want?
	What new restrictions might councils face around issues such as nutrient neutrality, biodiversity net gain and drones legislation?

National Context

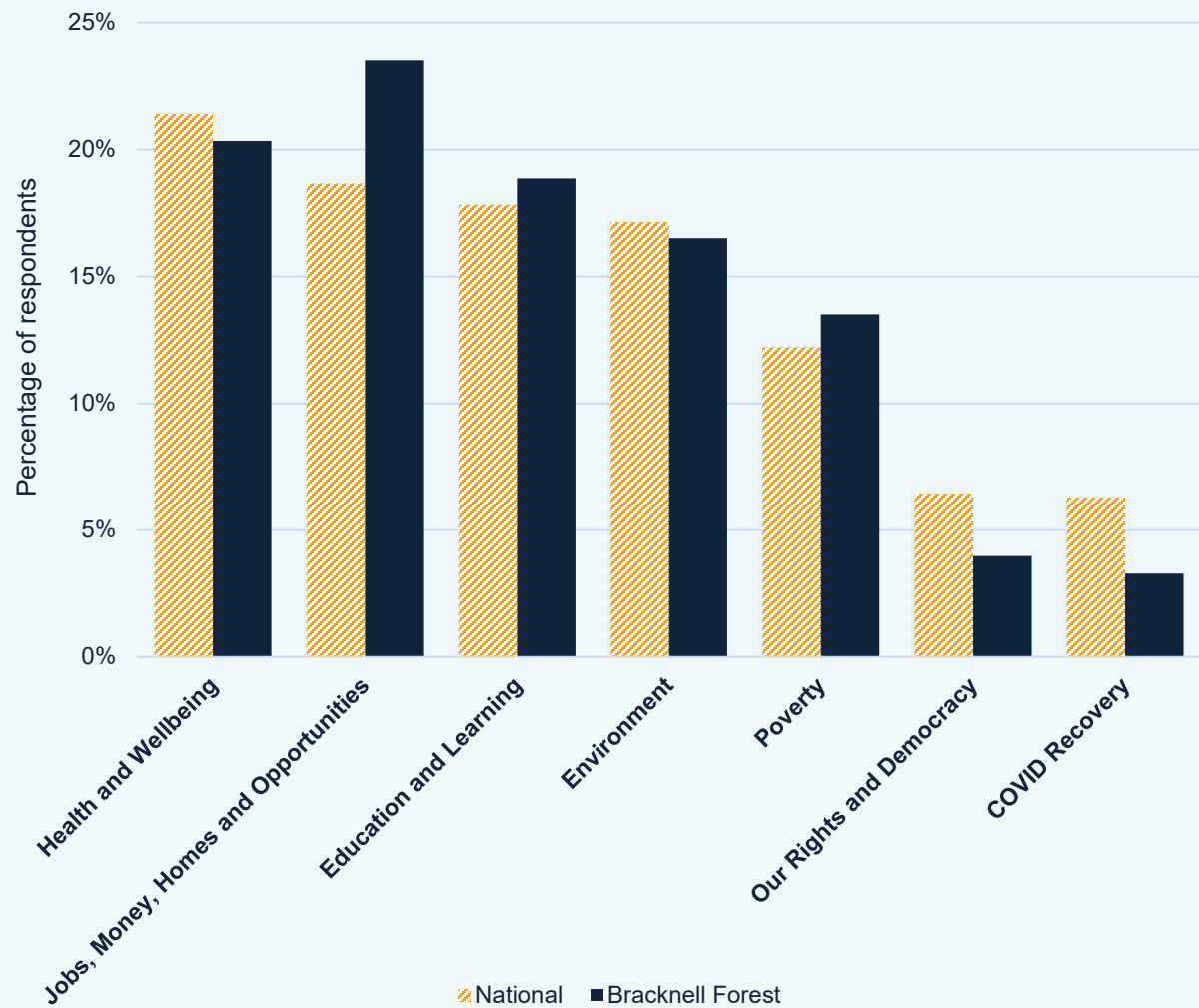
Voice of Young People

Further national research explores the important issues for young people, conducted by the British Youth Council. The [2022 survey](#) included over 430,000 11 to 18 year olds and 26% of all Bracknell Forest pupils responded. The key challenges reflect many of the areas of priority for the council though interestingly there is a slight difference in local areas of focus.

Locally, the topic that young people were most concerned about was related to jobs, money, homes and opportunities. This was followed by health and wellbeing issues. Nationally and for the South East, these two topics were reversed in terms of importance.

The Children’s Commissioner also conducts a large scale survey of children ‘The Big Ask’, however their most recent data was from May 2021.

Make your Mark Survey: Key issues for 11-18 Year Olds (2022)



Source: British Youth Council – Make Your Mark Survey

Community Profile

Within Bracknell Forest there is a diverse community. In order to set the most relevant priorities, it is important to understand who the local residents are within the borough.

Age and Gender

Bracknell Forest has a population of approximately 124,600 people, living in 50,200 households. Of these, just under half (49.3%) are male (Census 2021). The Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimate that the population of Bracknell Forest will increase to 128,356 by 2033 ([ONS](#) 2018)

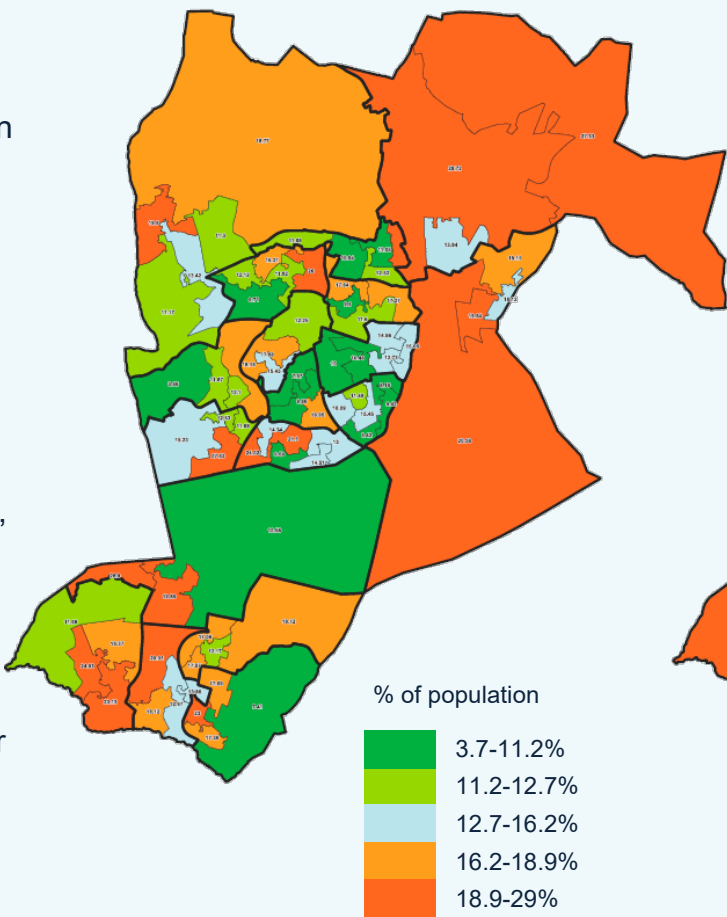
18.5% of the population are under 15 years old, more than the South East and England averages. However, there are notably fewer over 64s (15%), compared to the South East average (19.4%). This is likely to continue to increase over the coming years.

A long seen pattern is also the lower number of 15-29 year olds in the area, likely reflecting the absence of a university in the area, and the close proximity to London for entry level roles.

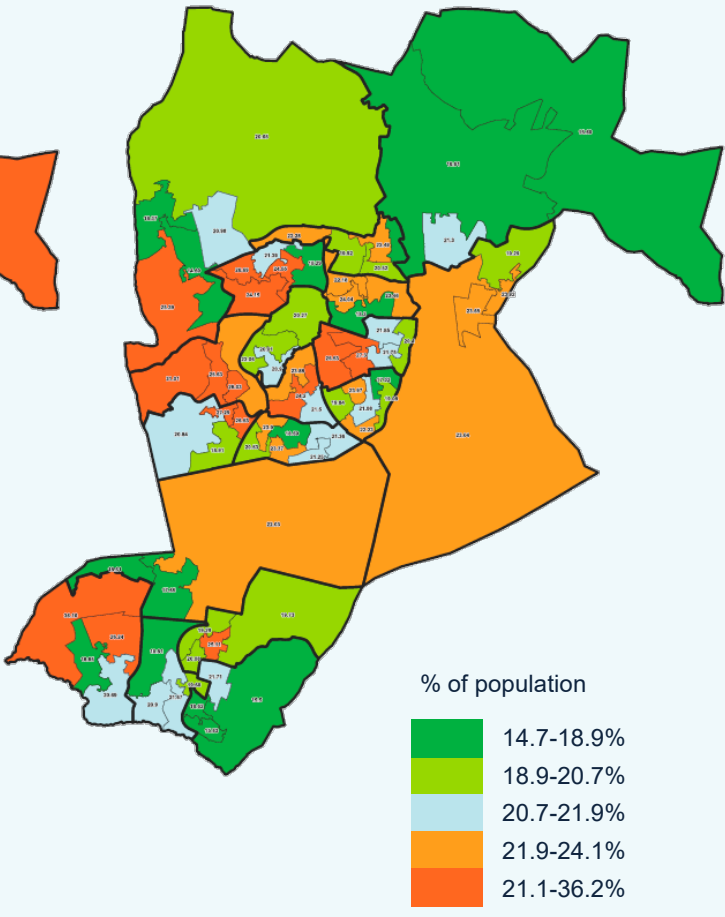
Ward level information shows a higher proportion of older people living outside of Bracknell Town, particularly in Winkfield and Cranbourne and Ascot. As might be expected, there are higher proportions of children under 17 living in Bracknell Town, particularly in wards such as Great Hollands North, Priestwood and Garth and Harmans Water. There are also a high proportion in Little Sandhurst and Wellington, which likely reflects that two independent boarding schools are located in this area.

Source: Berkshire Observatory

Population aged over 64 (mid 2020)



Population aged under 17 (mid 2020)



Community Profile

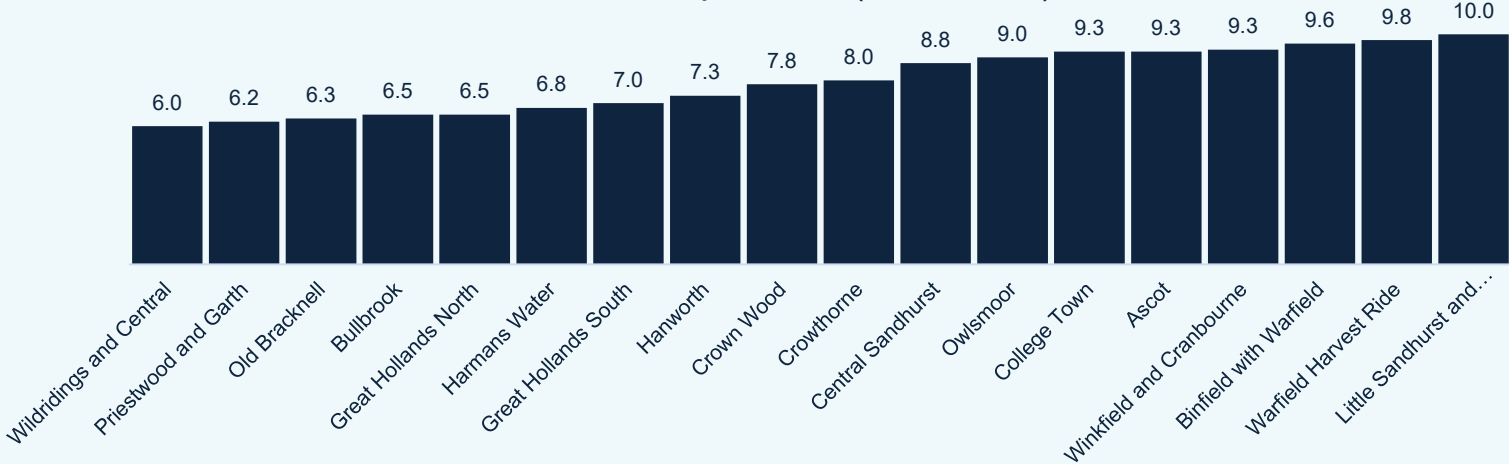
Deprivation

The level of deprivation is relatively low across the borough with just under half of neighbourhoods in the least deprived 20% of the country. However, 16% of Bracknell Forest neighbourhoods are considered more deprived than the national average. Deprivation links to a number of wider issues including health, education and employment.

Overall, Wildridings and Central is the most deprived ward in the Borough based on the 2019 index of multiple deprivation (IMD) ward level scores. Little Sandhurst and Wellington is the least deprived ward (OHID) (see bar chart below)

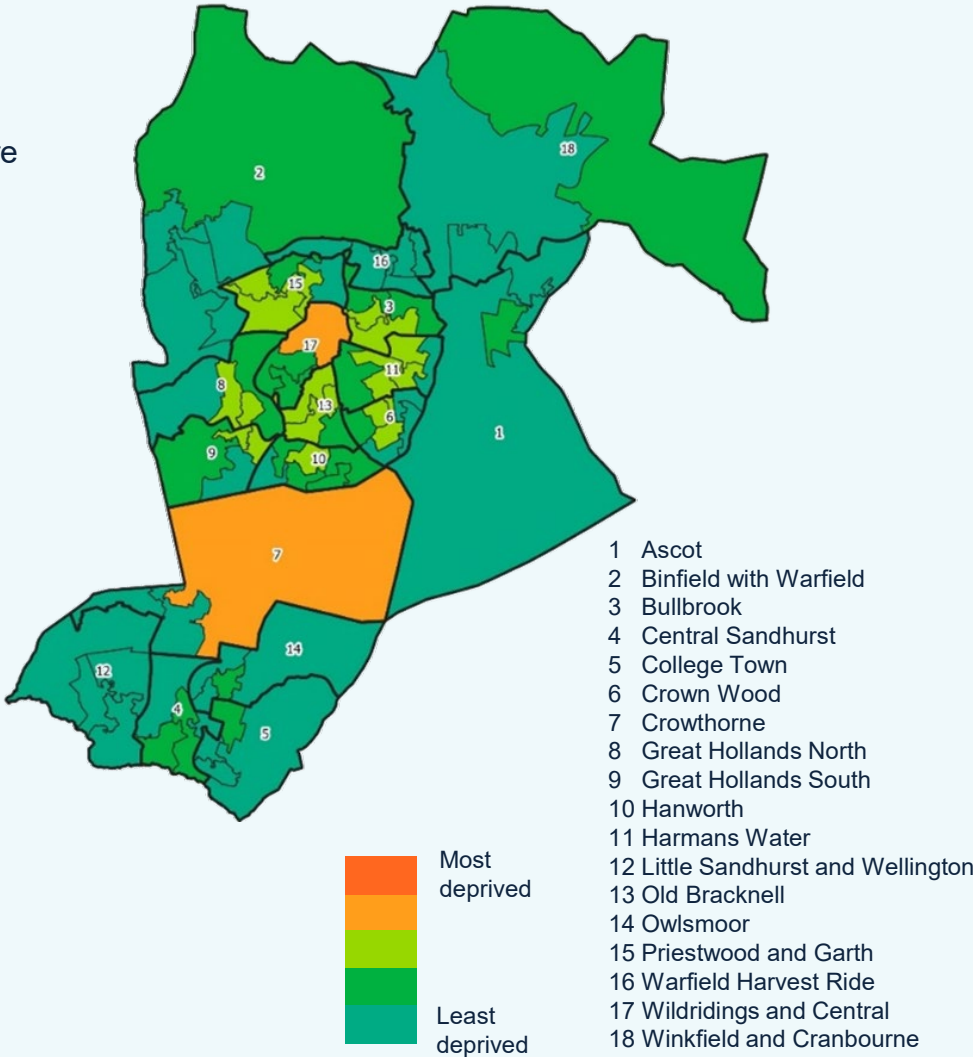
There are pockets most deprived neighbourhoods in Crowthorne, and Wildridings and Central wards, highlighted in orange on the map.

Ward level deprivation (IMD Score)



Source: Berkshire Observatory

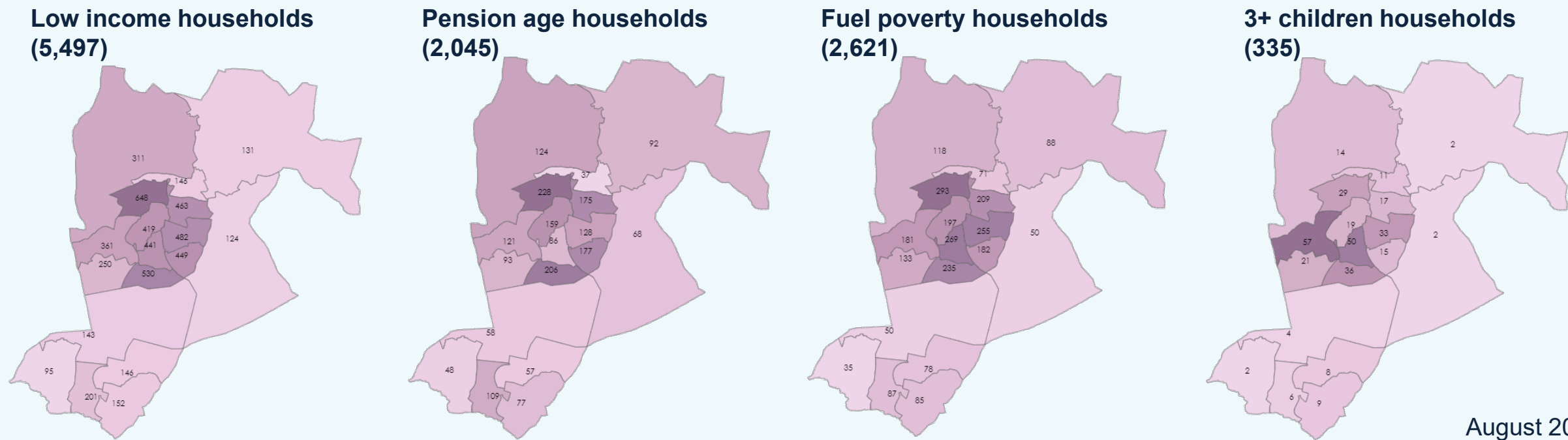
Index of Multiple Deprivation
National quintile (2019)



Cost of Living

The most recent national deprivation data (IMD) is available from 2019, however more local information is available through the council's Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT). This identified that in August 2022, there were 5,500 low income households, around 10% of the borough. There were approximately 3,000 children living in these families. 41% of these households, including 2,000 children, were identified as below the national poverty line. The largest proportion of households in relative poverty live in Priestwood and Garth, Old Bracknell and Harmans Water. Priestwood and Garth and Hanworth have the highest population of pension age low income households.

The cost of living challenges are directly affecting all households in the borough. LIFT identified 2,600 households in fuel poverty with those most affected in the same wards as above. Households with higher numbers of children are also at greater vulnerability with the cost of living. There are 335 low income households with three or more children, Great Hollands North and Old Bracknell have the highest number of these families.



Community Profile

Ethnicity

There is a similar profile of ethnicities in Bracknell Forest compared to the South East. Residents identifying themselves as white-British remain the largest ethnic group in Bracknell Forest, representing 77.8% of the total population (Census 2021). This is down from 84.9% in 2011. Ethnic minority communities comprised 13.9% of the total population, up from 9.4% in 2011

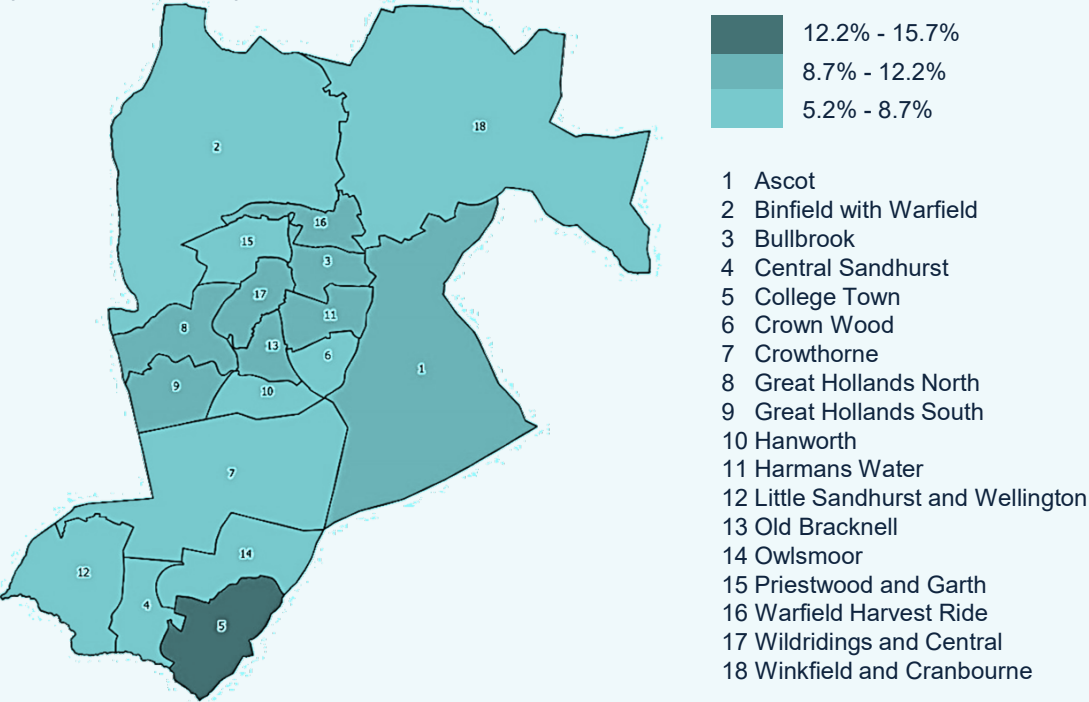
There has been the largest increase in residents from white-non-British ethnicities since 2011. There remains are a notably higher proportion of ‘other Asian’ residents than other areas of the South East and England, this is in part due to a large community of Nepali residents linked to the Gurkha Company Sittang regiment based at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

Bracknell town centre wards generally have a higher proportion of residents from ethnic minority communities. However, there is also a significantly higher proportion living in College Town where there is a large Nepali population.

The 2021 census identified that 3.7% of households in the borough contain no one with English as their first language. 1.4% of households have an under 16 year old who is the only person to have English as their main language. 91% of households have all adults speaking English as their main language. This is in line with the South East (91.4%).

Source: Public Health England Disparities Report and Berkshire Observatory

Percentage of ethnic minority population
(Census 2011)



Household environment

In the 2021 census, approximately 6% of households in the borough were single parents with dependent children, slightly lower than the 7% in 2011. A further 26% are one person households, 10% of these are single people aged 66 and over. This equates to around 13,500 houses with one adult.

An estimated 3.1% of households are considered overcrowded based on bedroom occupancy rates, this is slightly higher than in 2011 where 2.9% of households were overcrowded.

Community Profile

Community Profile Summary

The community profile of Bracknell Forest residents suggests there is an increasingly diverse community. This is similar to neighbouring areas. Growth has continued over the last 10 years, though many of the patterns such as age demographics has stayed similar.

There are growing numbers of older people in the borough and people from different ethnicities. A large proportion of people live alone.

There is a difference between the demographics of Bracknell Town wards, compared to the rest of the borough. This includes, broadly, higher levels of deprivation, a greater population of people from ethnic minority groups, higher population density and proportionally fewer older people.

Considerations for strategic planning

1. How can the local area promote a vibrant community for young people aged 15-29?
2. What local infrastructure and support is needed to plan for the increasing number of over 65s, particularly in rural parts of the borough?
3. How can prosperity and outcomes be improved where residents may experience compounding inequality, particularly in Bracknell Town wards?
4. How can the increasing local diversity help the community thrive further?

Value for Money

Current Council Plan objectives

- make sure our council tax is in the lowest 10% nationally amongst similar authorities
- invest in digital technology and access points to help people access our services
- generate income to fund local services from a commercial property portfolio
- establish a Joint Venture with a private partner to make sure of timely and appropriate development of key council sites

As the current objectives for the Value for Money theme focus primarily on internal processes, this section has not been included in this strategic community analysis. Internal data and a resources analysis could be explored as part of a supplementary to this report.

Particular aspects such as investing in digital technology is included in the engagement section of the report.

Economic Activity and Business

Businesses

Data from 2021 indicates continued growth in new businesses and sustainability in their operations. Though for the first time there was a slightly higher number of enterprise closures than start-ups. This is the same trend as the South East, though the England average remained in favour of births. This is likely a reflection on the current economic challenges and impact of the pandemic.

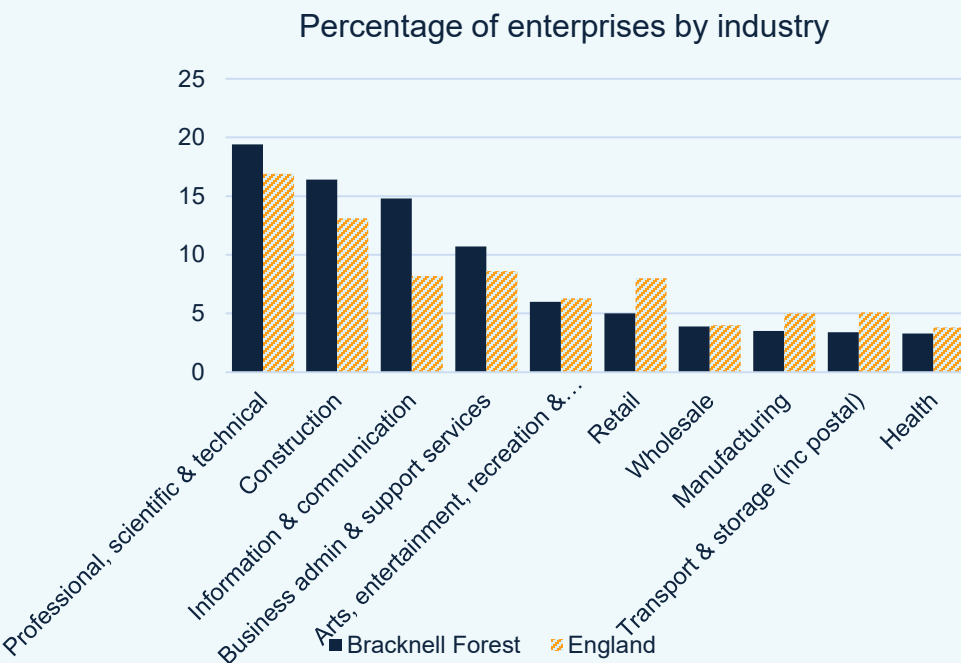
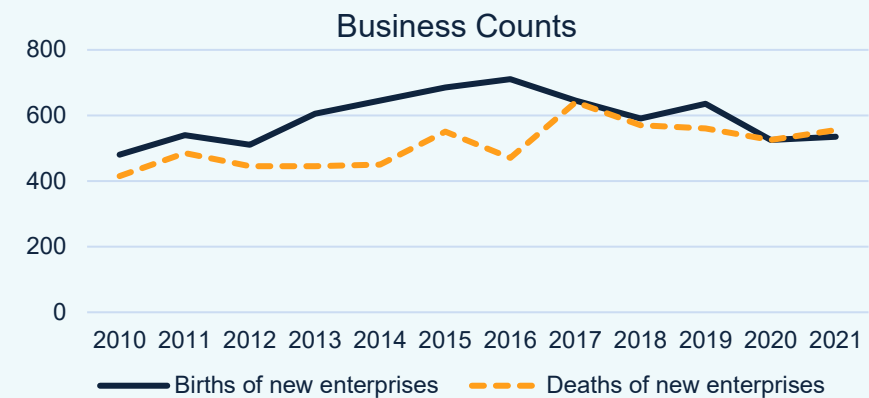
In 2021, 90.3% of businesses were micro-enterprises with less than 10 employees. There is a higher number of medium and large businesses in the borough than the South East and England average. The local area is favoured for businesses due to the proximity to a number of key transport links, this is likely to support the resilience in the appeal of the local area.

The greatest proportion of businesses located in Bracknell Forest relate to: professional, scientific and technical; construction; information and communication.

Emerging industries

Analysis published in 2020, explored the likely future increase in the green economy and related employment. Within Bracknell Forest it was estimated a further 1,260 jobs would be needed locally by 2030. The largest proportion of which (37%) would like be needed around low-carbon service roles, with a further 26% in low carbon heat employment, for example around heat pump installation. And around 24% of the new roles related to energy efficiency for improvements like insulation. The current economic climate may slow the growth of some of these aspects, particularly as households and businesses will have less disposable income for new heating or insulation systems.

A further likely area of growth is around technology related employment. 2021 research commissioned by the LGA has predicated around a 21% increase in technology specialist roles in the borough between 2020 and 2030. Technology is generally considered a more ‘recession-proof’ industry and so these skills are likely to continue to be in demand locally.



Source: Berkshire Observatory, ONS and LEP economy briefings

Economic Activity and Business

Labour market

The majority of working age residents are economically active, either in work or seeking work. This has reduced since 2019, though more residents were seeking employment. Those economically inactive seeking a job has since decreased which could be linked to a number of reasons including early retirement, health and childcare barriers.

In September 2022, there were around 61,800 Bracknell Forest residents in full or part time employment. This represents 79.9% of working age people.

Within Bracknell Forest, in July, there were 5,025 unique job postings, 500 more than the previous year, and higher than pre-pandemic (2019) levels. This implies business resilience, however, it could also demonstrate changing workforce patterns with individuals moving roles more often.

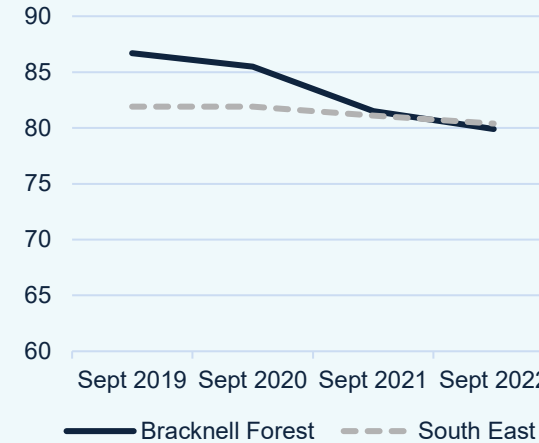
The pandemic has undoubtedly changed the way work is undertaken. This will likely affect the use of physical locations within the borough for employment purposes, and also impacts the availability of skills locally. A January 2021 report by KPMG estimated that around 27.4% of jobs based in Bracknell Forest may continue to be home-based, one of the highest rates in the country.

In July 2022, there were 4,254 unique job postings for remote positions at companies based in Berkshire, around 33% more than the figure of 3,204 for the same period one year before.

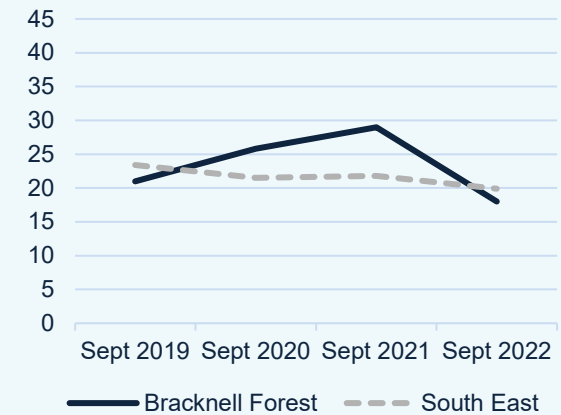
The increase in remote positions locally means there is likely to be a sustained decrease in the use of office premises. Whilst a 33% increase is high, it is smaller than the equivalent average across England, which also suggests a risk of a net loss of skills in remote work.

Source: Annual population survey and LEP economy briefings

Annual Population Survey:
Economic Activity (% 16-64)



Annual Population Survey: %
economically inactive who
want a job



Employment

Levels of employment continue to be high in the borough with a wide range of industries operating locally. The largest area of occupation for residents is community and civil enforcement occupations, employing over 12,000. This is followed by around 7,400 people working in science, research, engineering and technology roles. Three further occupations employing the greatest number of residents are corporate managers and directors, caring personal service occupations and administrative occupations.

Compared to neighbouring authorities, there is a notably higher proportion of residents employed in roles related to:

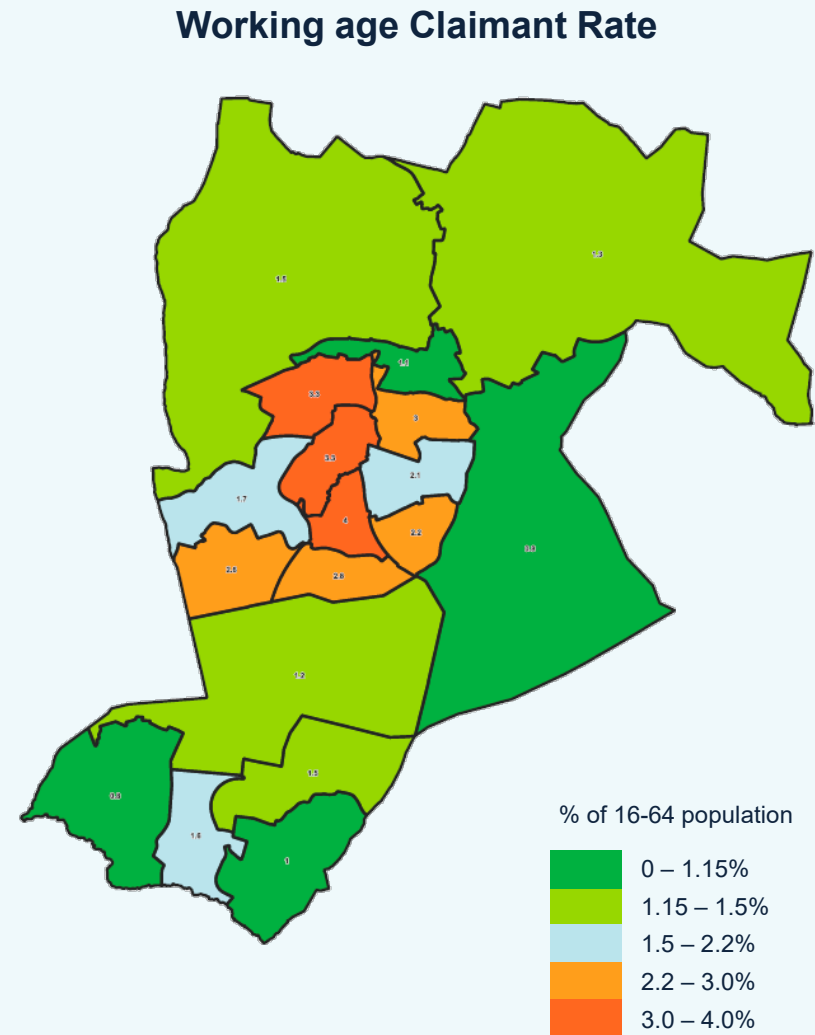
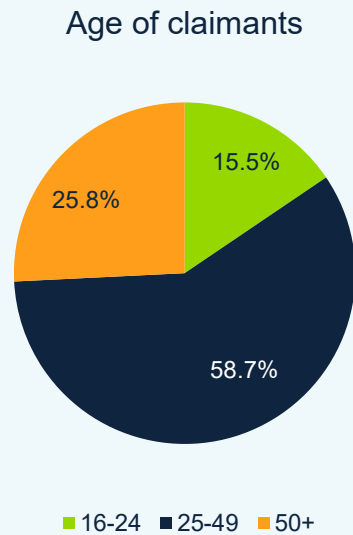
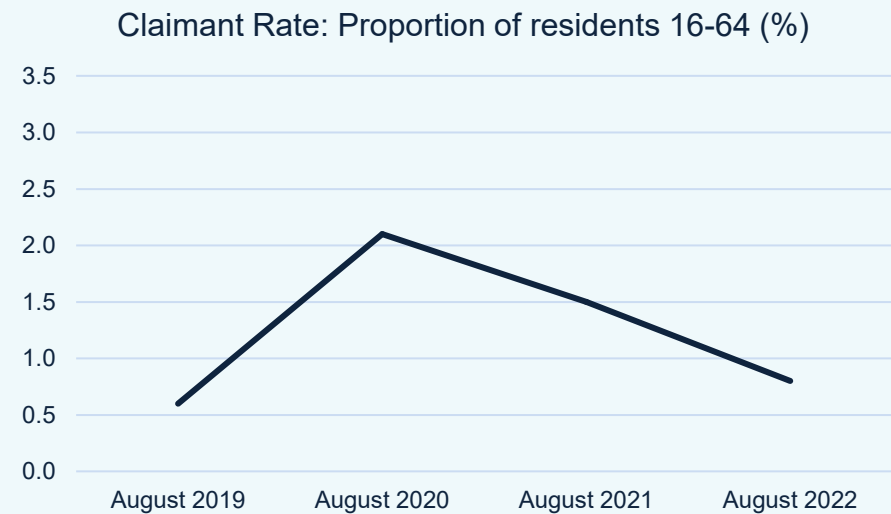
- Care, leisure and service professions
- Sales and customer service occupations
- Process plant and machine operatives

Economic Activity and Business

Claimant count

The claimant count measures the number of people claiming benefits principally for the reason of being unemployed and seeking work, it is based on universal credit information. In August 2022, there were 1,615 claimants, this is around 2% of the 16-64 year old population. Most claimants were aged 25-49, which is proportionate with the size of the population.

The highest proportion of claimants live in the Bracknell town wards of Old Bracknell, Priestwood and Garth, Wildridings and Central, Bullbrook and Hanworth. There was a significant increase in the number of claims during the peak of the pandemic however, this has largely now returned to pre-pandemic levels.



Source: ONS






Economic Activity and Business

Housing

There are 51,990 residential properties in Bracknell Forest with a higher proportion of terraced (32%) and detached houses (24%). The number of properties in Bracknell Forest is projected to increase to 53,730 by 2030 and to 56,383 by 2040.

Most property types in Bracknell Forest are more expensive than the England average, apart from flats and maisonettes. All property types in Bracknell Forest are less expensive than the South East average. On average, residents could expect to pay around 9.05 times their annual earnings on purchasing a home in Bracknell Forest, similar to England but a more affordable ratio than the average for CIPFA neighbours.

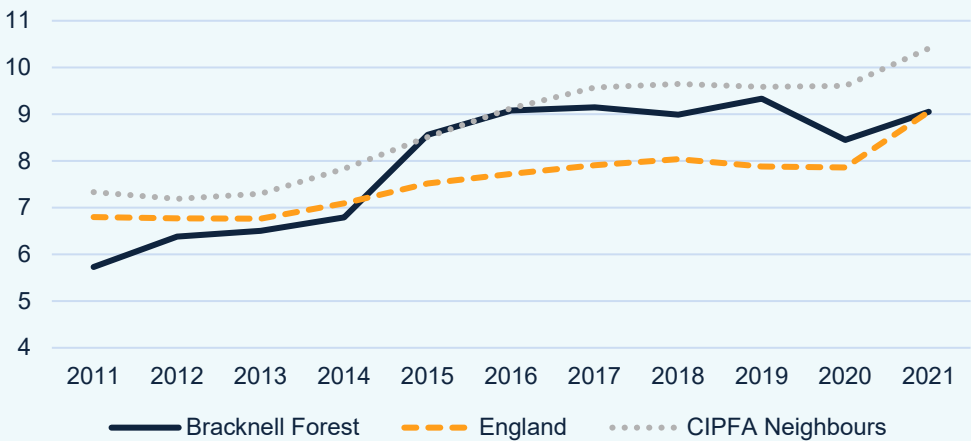
Household types in Bracknell Forest (2021)

	24% Detached	<i>In England</i> 16%
	15% Semi-detached	24%
	32% Terraced	26%
	22% Flats/ maisonettes	24%
	5% Bungalows	9%

Average price in Bracknell Forest (Oct- 21)

	£650,665	<i>In England</i> £452,675
	£338,267	£269,856
	£291,944	£229,815
	£206,211	£241,493
All property types	£345,407	£285,113

Median housing affordability ratio (workplace-based)

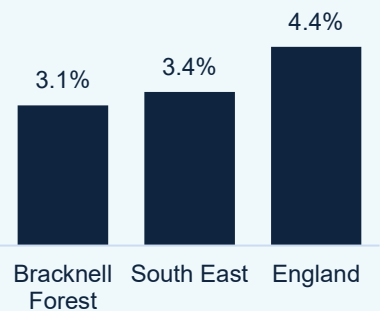


Size and overcrowding

The average household size in Bracknell Forest is 2.4 people, which is the same as national and regional figures.

Over 1,575 households in Bracknell Forest were estimated to be overcrowded in 2021. This means that there are fewer bedrooms than would usually be required for the number of people in the house.

Proportion of households that are overcrowded (2021)



Source: ONS, Valuations Office Agency, Land Registry, and LG Inform

Economic Activity and Business

New communities

There are six major housing developments sites across the borough where new communities are emerging. Amen Corner North is completed with 380 new homes. Four further sites are under development across Blue Mountain, Warfield, Jennetts Park and Buckler’s Park. Each site will be over 350 new dwellings, totalling 4,950 properties, some of these properties are already built.

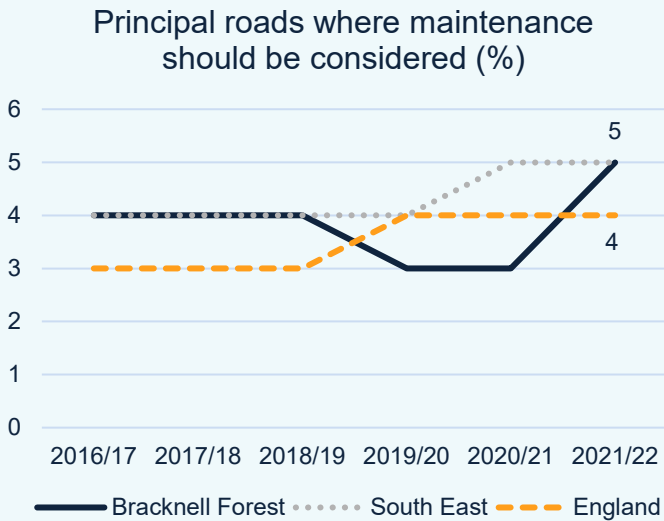
Each new community will have a range of additional local facilities depending on the site including community hubs, health services and/or schools.

The emerging Local Plan is seeking allocation for a further 2,080 dwellings, to be built by 2037. There are also 1,869 homes allocated across large and medium sites but without permission. A further 2,958 homes have planning permission but are not built yet (as at March 2022).

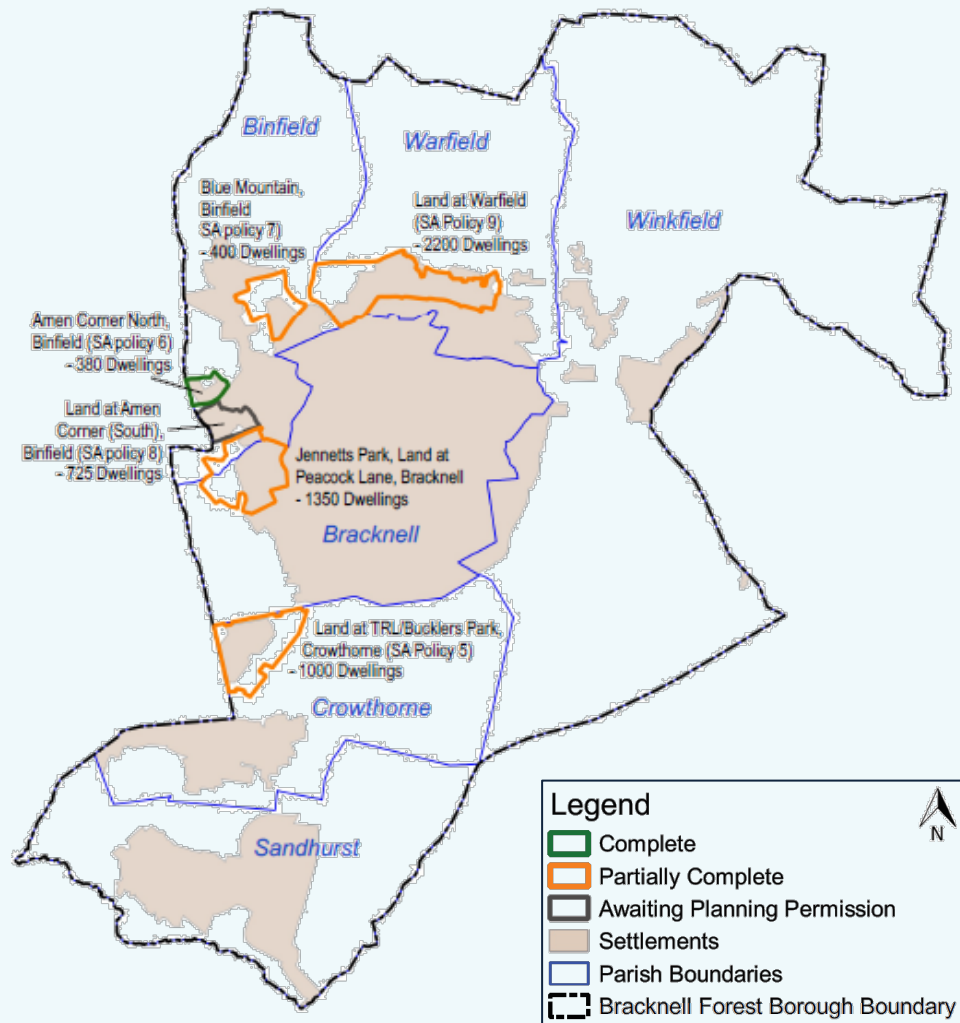
Infrastructure

Construction of Bracknell as a ‘new town’ commenced in the 1950s and many features such as key roads, roundabouts, subways and paths were built around the same time. This means that a number of assets are requiring maintenance and/or replacement within a similar timescale.

Despite this, indicators such as road maintenance for principal roads remains similar to the South East and higher than England.



New housing developments over 350 dwellings



Source: Local data sets

Economic Activity and Business

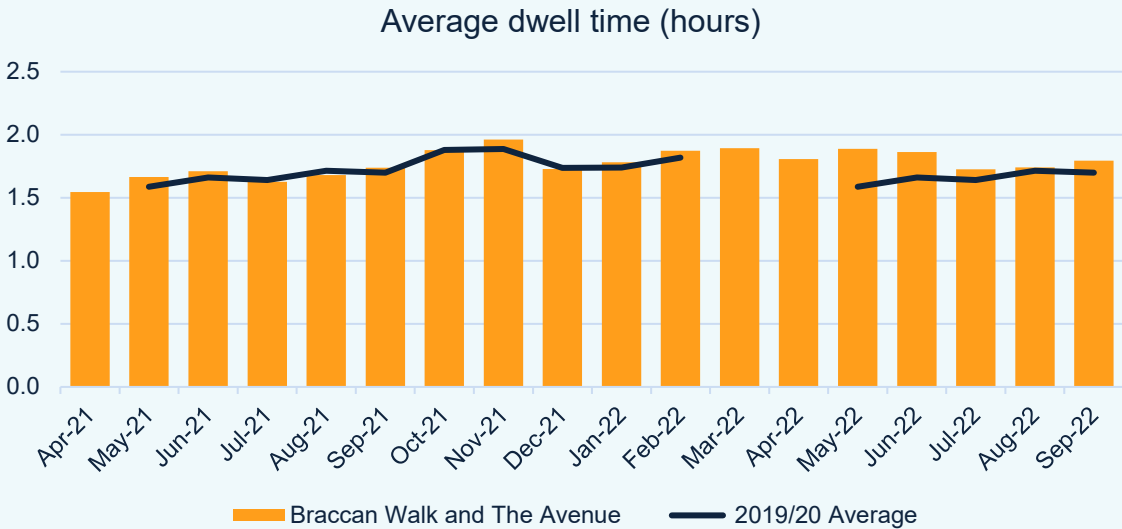
Town centre

There are around 200 businesses in Bracknell town centre. There continues to be significant development and investment in the town, with low vacancy rates and an increasingly diverse offer of retail, food and leisure.

There had been noted concern in a January 2021 KPMG report, that changing commuter habits would mean towns like Bracknell would be particularly negatively affected compared to other areas. They predicted a loss of 20-40% of the retail offering as part of the accelerated shift to online commerce.

Though the extent of this has not come to fruition for Bracknell Forest, it demonstrates the importance of the priority to diversify the town centre offer. The development of the Deck will significantly increase the leisure and evening offer.

Car park monitoring provides an indication for visitor numbers in the town centre. There was a significant reduction in visits during the periods of lockdown. The number of car park visits remains slightly lower than pre-covid levels, though the gap is narrowing. That being said, for those who are visiting the town centre, the time they are there is now the same, if not higher than pre-pandemic levels. This is a positive indication of the sustainable use of the town centre.



*Visits at Braccan Walk, High Street and The Avenue including season ticket holders.

Economic Activity and Business

Summary

The economy is continuing to thrive locally, despite the national challenges of leaving the European Union, the pandemic and the current economic challenges. The use of the town centre has returned to pre-pandemic activity, in part, due to with a number of re-activation events in 2021 and 2022. Evidence suggests that a diverse offering of retail and leisure will be essential to the long term sustainability.

It is becoming clearer that there will be a long term shift away from Monday to Friday office working. The borough has a number of large office/business areas which will need to adapt to reduced demand. There is, however, an opportunity to grow industries such as science, research and development, technology and skills required for the emerging green economy.

Unemployment rates continue to be low, however the number of people not in employment and not seeking a job has also increased, reducing local economic activity rates.

Housing affordability is likely to continue to be a challenge for many local residents, though this is also a national issue. This, along with general job support, was cited as a greater concern for Bracknell Forest young people, than many of their peers in the South East and England.

Considerations for strategic planning

1. How can the local business areas and Bracknell town centre adapt to the new hybrid working environment?
2. What targeted support is needed to improve employment and skills development in areas of deprivation?
3. How can we gear up the local economy and skills of residents for future green and technology jobs?
4. How can the council build confidence in local pupils to get them ready for future job opportunities?

Current Council Plan objectives

- adopt a new Local Development Plan that enables the development of employment areas along with the right mix and location of houses and infrastructure.
- secure delivery of the next phase of Bracknell's town centre regeneration including The Deck and the refurbishment of Princess Square
- encourage residents to become school governors
- work to retain businesses and help attract new companies to Bracknell Forest
- support the Business Improvement District (BID) area covering the South and Western Industrial Area
- actively engage with employers and support local businesses to drive local growth
- implement strategic improvements to the Highway and Transport network to support economic growth and manage congestion
- seek CIL and Section 106 funding for new infrastructure in the borough to support growth

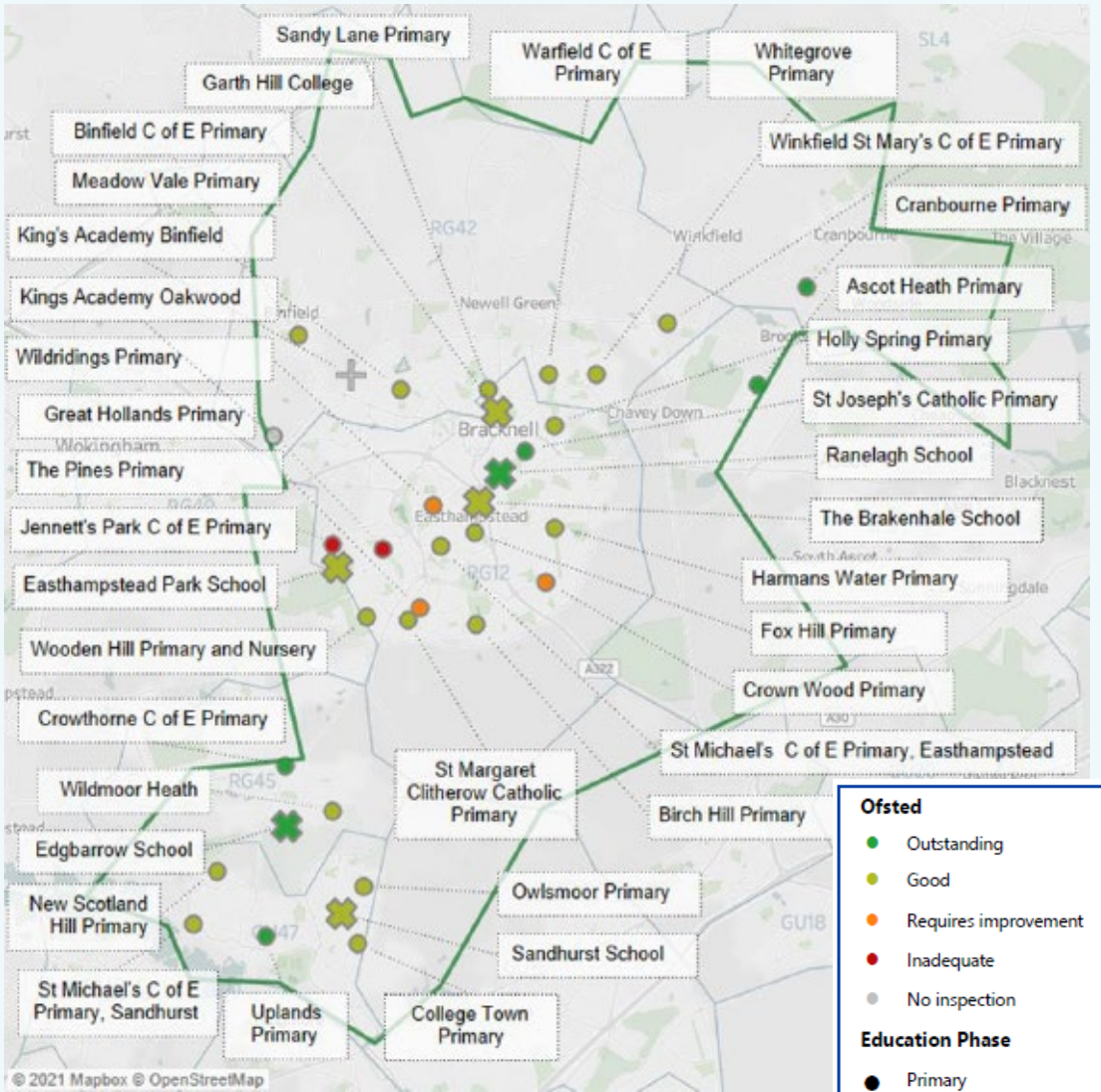
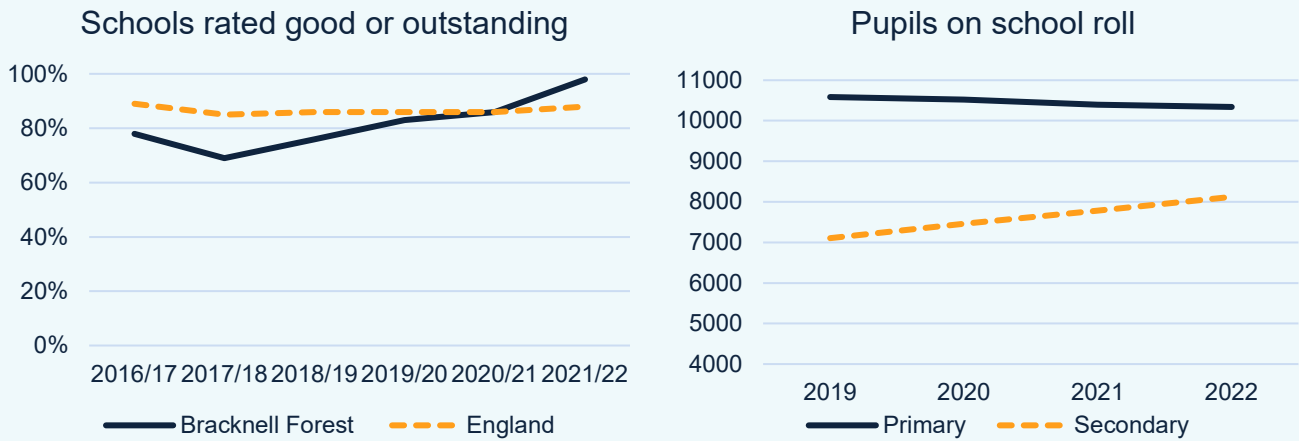
Education and Skills

Schools

Bracknell Forest has many successful schools across the borough, 98% of schools were rated good or outstanding in December 2022, this is significant above the average and in the top ten councils. There has been steady but substantial progress in the quality of schools since 2017, reflecting better opportunities for local children.

All schools were significantly impacted during the pandemic with adjustments needed to continue education remotely. This disruption has inevitably affected some children more than others, particularly those already facing education vulnerabilities such as low income families, those with special educational needs and disabilities, or those supported by social care and early help teams. 58% of Bracknell Forest parents reported in May 2021 that the pandemic was negatively affecting their child's education (13% reported a positive impact).

Schools will need to continue to address these differences over coming years and this will reflect in the additional support the council may need to provide.



Source: LG Inform, Mime LA Dashboard

Education and Skills

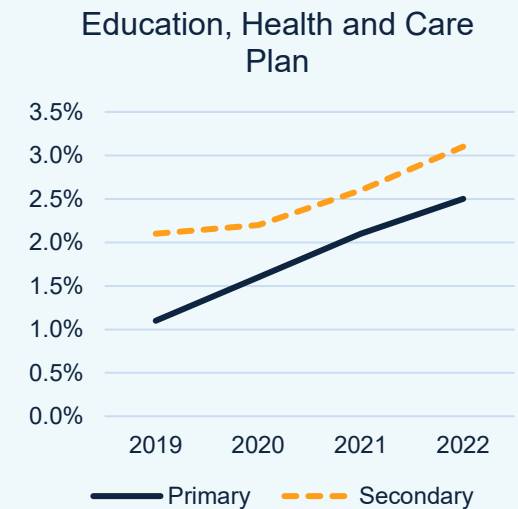
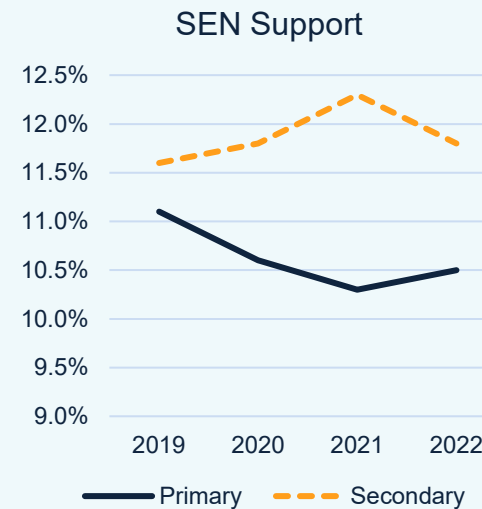
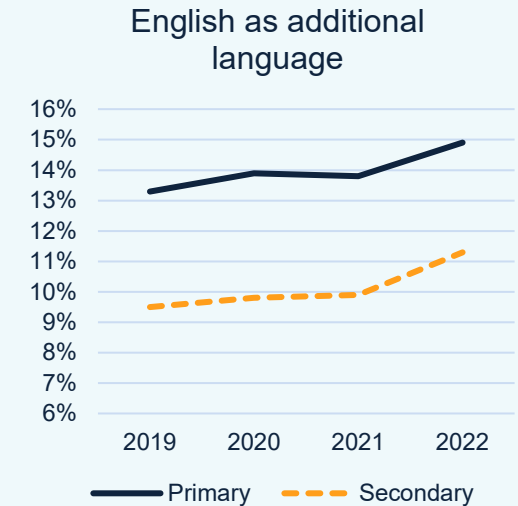
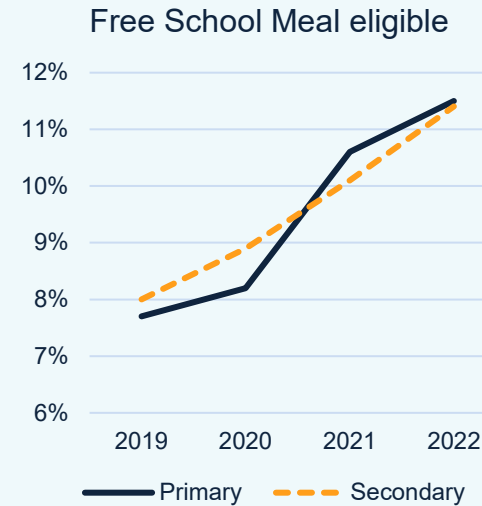
Pupil demographics

Children attending Bracknell Forest schools continue to have a diverse range of support needs and backgrounds. There has been a significant increase the numbers of children eligible for free school meals (FSM), now over 2,100 children. Since 2019, there has been a 49% and 43% increase in the FSM group at primary and secondary schools respectively. However, 11% FSM eligibility (2022) across the pupil population is still one of the lowest in the country.

There are higher language support needs amongst primary school pupils, nearly 15% of primary pupils having English as an additional language. This has increased across both primary and secondary schools, in line with national trends.

Special Education Needs (SEN) has been an area of local and national focus in recent years. SEN support describes those needing additional education support from the school, but where a child does not have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). These rates have not significantly increased, though this could be a reflection of the disruption to the school education environment, where education needs have been disguised by home education and also the significant rise in EHCPs.

The number of pupils with an EHCP increased significantly between 2019 and 2022, it has more than doubled across the primary cohort and increased by 48% across secondary aged pupils. At secondary age, Bracknell Forest has the highest proportion of pupils with an EHCP of statistical neighbours and is ranked 16th across 151 English authorities. This suggests growing, long term demand on local services to meet these needs. Four in ten EHCP pupils were placed in a state-funded mainstream school, well above neighbour and England averages. However, there is also a high proportion of EHCP pupils placed in independent or non-maintained provision, more than double the England average of 6.2%



Source: Mime LA Insight dashboard

Education and Skills

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

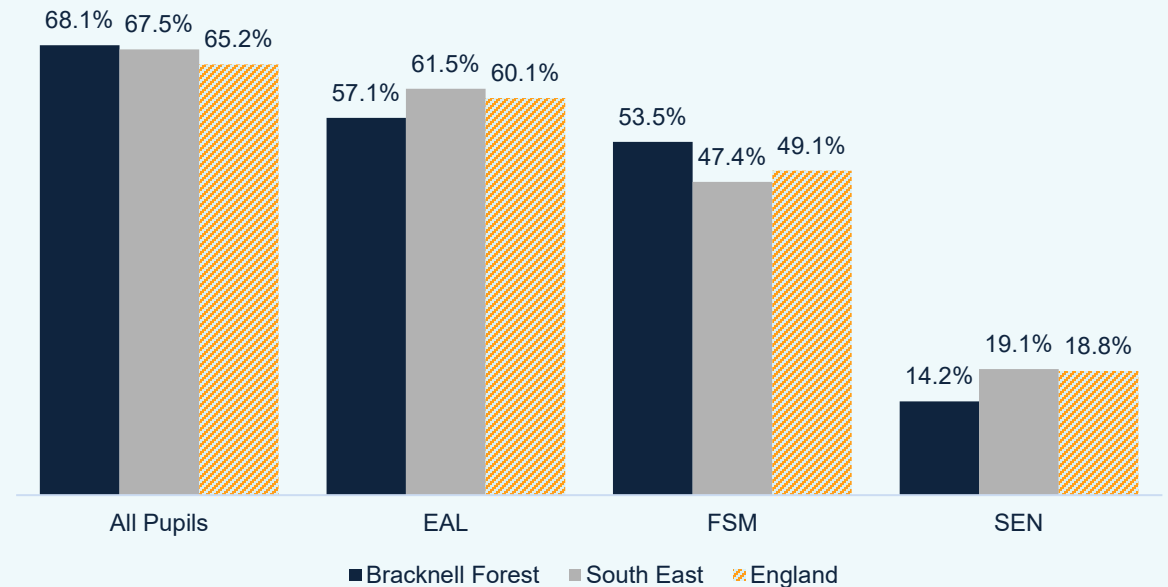
Due to the pandemic and the changes in assessment methodology, it is not possible to compare attainment trends from 2022 with 2019 levels. There is virtually no published attainment information from 2020 and data is highly limited for 2021. Therefore analysis has focused on comparisons with similar local authorities* or the South East and the England average. The EYFS reforms were also introduced in September 2021 meaning data is not comparable to previous years.

Early years outcomes in Bracknell Forest are good, with children age five scoring higher across the 'good level of development' assessment and with more achieving the early learning goals than the regional and national average. This is a similar trend to previous years, though data is not directly comparable.

However, there are a number of risks that reduce the likelihood of a child achieving this development. In particular there are a lower proportion of pupils achieving the 'good level of development' if they do not have English as a first language or if they have special educational needs (including an EHCP). Free school meal pupils are also less likely to achieve the 'good level of development', though outcomes are better than for the regional and national average.

Anecdotally, there are also wider system challenges related to early years education, particularly linked to the increasing cost of childcare, accessibility of health care professionals and parents own mental health.

EYFS Achieving Good Level of Development (2022)



Source: Mime LA Insight dashboard

*Ten other statistically similar neighbours: Hertfordshire, Hampshire, Central Bedfordshire, West Berkshire, Oxfordshire, West Sussex, Trafford, South Gloucestershire, Buckinghamshire, York.

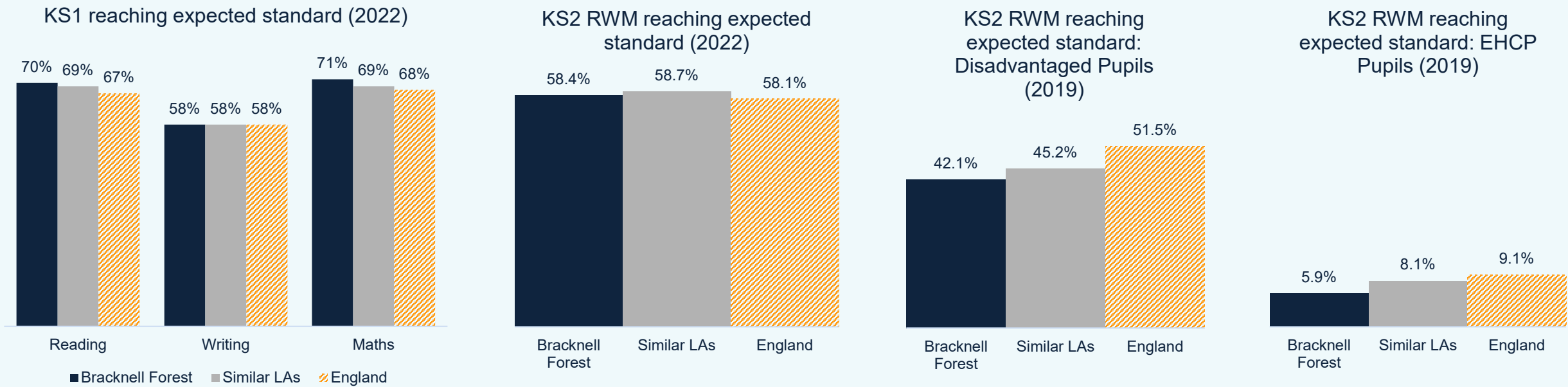
This is slightly different to CIPFA neighbours.

Education and Skills

Primary attainment

Key stage one (children aged up to seven) performance in the borough from 2022 is generally good and above the average amongst similar authorities and England.

At key stage two (children up to 11), performance is in line with the England average. However, this does not recognise that previous years' KS2 attainment was worse than the national average, so it is a positive direction of travel to demonstrate good improvement. The most recent data available for specific groups is from 2019 which shows worse outcomes for 'disadvantaged' pupils. 42.1% of this group achieved the KS2 expected standard for reading, writing and maths, compared to 64.7% across the whole school population. This is amongst the lowest rates for all local authorities and is the reverse ranking compared to early years data. The attainment of children with an EHCP is lower than would be expected, with 5.9% of children achieving the KS2 expected standard for reading, writing and maths in 2019, compared to 9.1% nationally.



Source: Mime LA Insight dashboard

Education and Skills

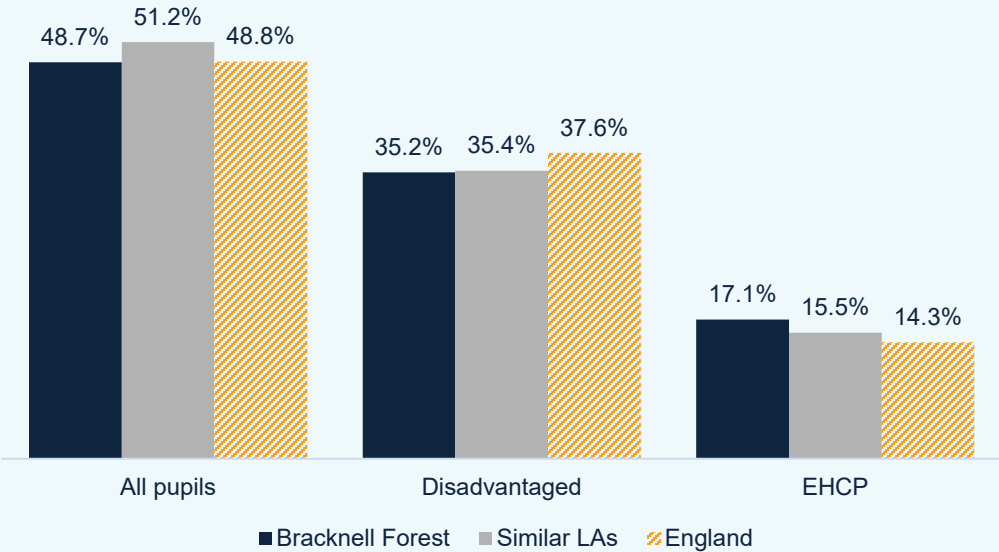
Secondary attainment

At key stage four (KS4), the ‘attainment 8’ is one of the most common measures of school performance, it measures performance across eight subjects to provide a rounded picture for attainment. ‘Progress 8’ is also a widely used measure, it reflects the extent to which a secondary school has helped pupils improve over a five year period compared to the average.

In 2022, attainment 8 scores were worse than similar authorities but around the average for England. Many similar authorities experience the same challenge with supporting disadvantaged pupils as there is a significant gap in outcomes. Attainment 8 scores for disadvantaged pupils are lower than the average for the same cohort across England. However, unlike at KS2, children with an EHCP have better secondary school outcomes than the average for similar authorities* and across England.

Most progress 8 scores are in line with the national average and similar authorities. However, there is notable success in the support for children who do not have English as their first language, their progress is significantly above what the average is expected to be. The borough is in the top 10% of authorities for progress of these pupils.

KS4 Attainment 8 (2022)



Source: Mime LA Insight dashboard

*Ten other statistically similar neighbours: Hertfordshire, Hampshire, Central Bedfordshire, West Berkshire, Oxfordshire, West Sussex, Trafford, South Gloucestershire, Buckinghamshire, York. This is slightly different to CIPFA neighbours.

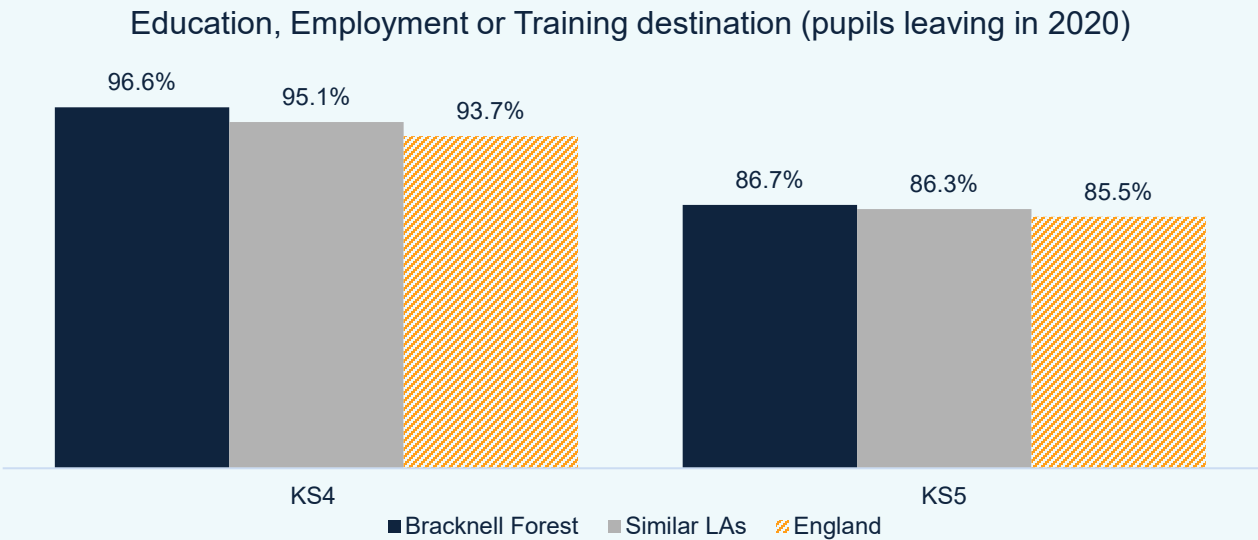
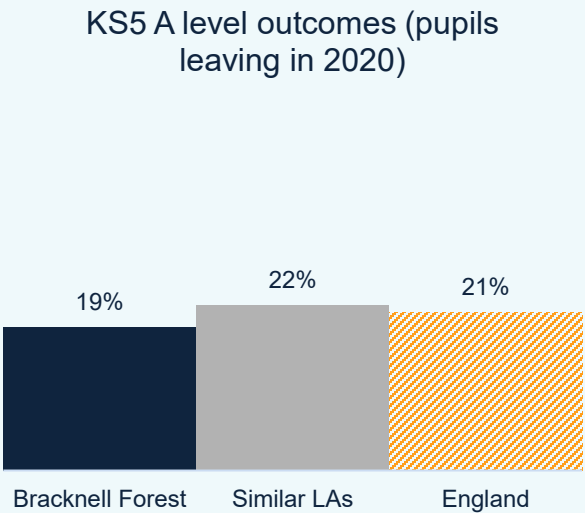
Education and Skills

Post-16 destinations

Of the 2019/20 KS4 cohort, as measured in 2021, 96.6% of Bracknell Forest pupils continued in education or employment pathways. This is the highest amongst all English authorities. This indicates significant resilience of pupils in progressing their future through the challenges of the pandemic.

As there are a wide range of education, employment and training options for pupils, it is difficult to determine a single measure of outcomes. Broadly, KS5 A-level outcomes are slightly below average for similar authorities and England. However, there are particularly good outcomes for those undertaking technology related qualifications (top 5% nationally).

Of those finishing KS5 education in 2020, 86.7% went on to further education, employment and training opportunities. This is similar to the national average though it has reduced from the previous three-year average of 89.5%. There is a higher proportion of pupils whose destinations were not known after 2020 which will likely contribute to the lower figures.



Source: Mime LA Insight dashboard

Education and Skills

Skills development

There is a highly active Economic Skills and Development Partnership that lead on local projects to increase skills. One part is to launch a skills and training hub, addressing local needs including for older employees, reskilling, and specialist training. The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) also have a leading role in supporting skill development through their Skills Advisory Panel and the [opportunities portal](#).

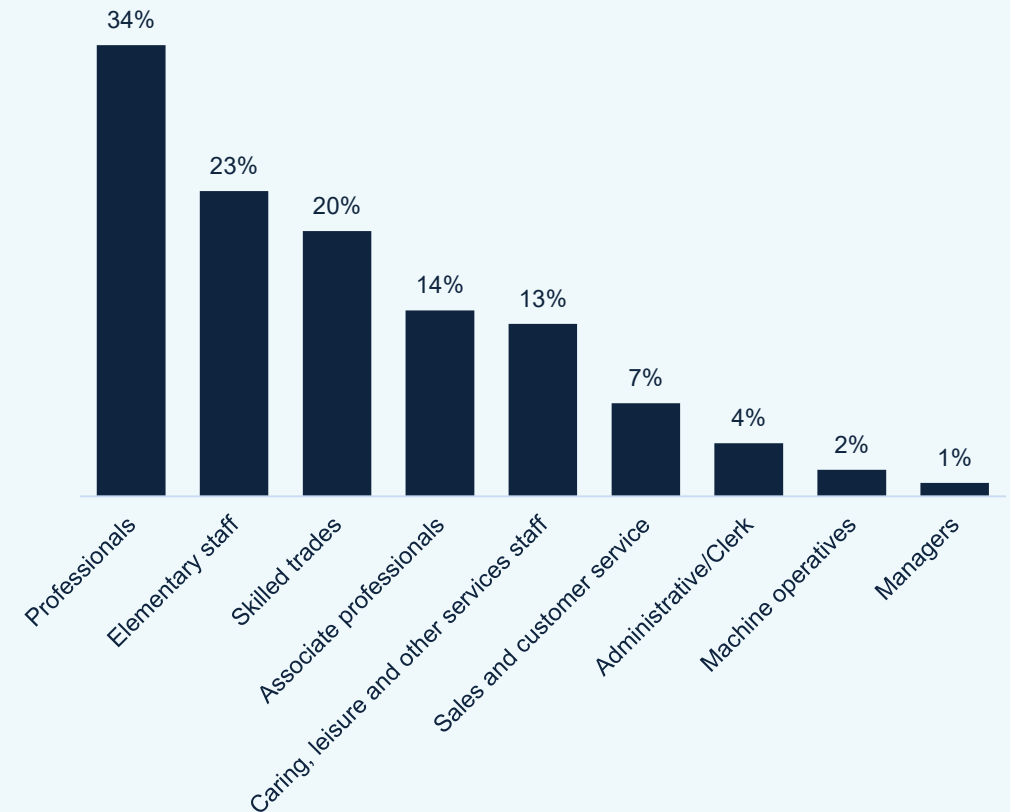
The 2022 Berkshire skills report identified that unfilled vacancies linked to skill shortages were most commonly related to professional, elementary staff, and skilled trade occupations. The LEP identify that an increase in the supply of people with the following skills is needed locally:

- Advanced or specialist IT skills.
- Social care
- Haulage and logistics
- Construction

One potential area for growth is to support those currently in sectors such as hospitality and retail to upskill and develop transferable skills. Supporting older workers is also highlighted to make sure skills are effectively utilised and supporting those who are the furthest from the labour market.

All local authorities have also been offered funding under the Multiply grant, and wider Shared Prosperity Fund, directly to support with developing adult numeracy skills. Bracknell Forest has made a plan to use £630,000 between 2023 and 2025. These initiatives focus on embedding maths skill development into practical courses such as cooking on a budget, DIY skills, and understanding household bills. Targeted skills development will also be aimed at care leavers and parents.

Incidence of skill-shortage vacancies by occupation (2022)



Source: TVB LEP Skills Report 2022

Education and Skills

Summary

Broadly, school outcomes are good, particularly at early years and KS1 phases, and for post-16. There is an increasing diversity of children within the local education system, including those with special educational needs and additional language support needs. The attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils is one area that is widening, partly following the pandemic. Across primary and secondary schools this could be an area of focus to improve overall outcomes.

There are some areas of skill shortages in the borough, particularly around advanced IT skills and practical skills such as for social care, construction and haulage. Combined with the data in the economy section, this would suggest several opportunities for developing the local labour market and helping shape post-16 pathways.

Current Council Plan objectives

- make sure we provide enough school places for every child in the borough
- work with schools to make sure standards are in the top quartile nationally
- encourage local businesses to engage with local schools
- review the future of our youth services and open a new town centre youth hub at Braccan Walk
- increase the number of apprenticeships, work experience placements and other training opportunities both within the council and in the borough
- increase the percentage of children (aged 0 to 5) achieving good levels of development in communication and language
- create opportunities for care leavers to develop skills to help them prepare for transition
- improve the protection of vulnerable children including those with Special Educational Needs

Considerations for strategic planning

1. How can the council prepare for long term SEND support needs and particularly focus on SEND pupil attainment in primary school?
2. What additional support can the council put in place to address the increased attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers, across primary and secondary education?
3. How can the council support local skills development, particularly in growth areas that are relevant such as social care?
4. How can post-16 pathways be aligned with areas identified for local skills and employment gaps?

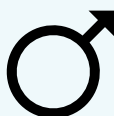
Health and Wellbeing

Physical health overview

Health relates to a significant range of individual outcomes and therefore the council recognises the need to consider the determinants and impacts through a ‘Health in all Policies Approach’. Overall health in the borough is good and above the national average.



Life expectancy at birth for females is 85.4 years, higher than the South East and England averages (84.1 and 83.1 years). The healthy life expectancy is 66.5 years, similarly above the average. (2018-20)



Life expectancy at birth for males is 81.7 years, higher than the South East and England averages (80.6 and 79.4 years). The healthy life expectancy is 66.4 years, similarly above the average. (2018-20)



10.8% of Bracknell Forest adults were smokers in 2021, lower than the South East and England averages (11.9% and 13.0%).



63.5% of adults in Bracknell Forest were overweight or obese in 2020/21, the same proportion as the England average but more than the South East average of 62.4%



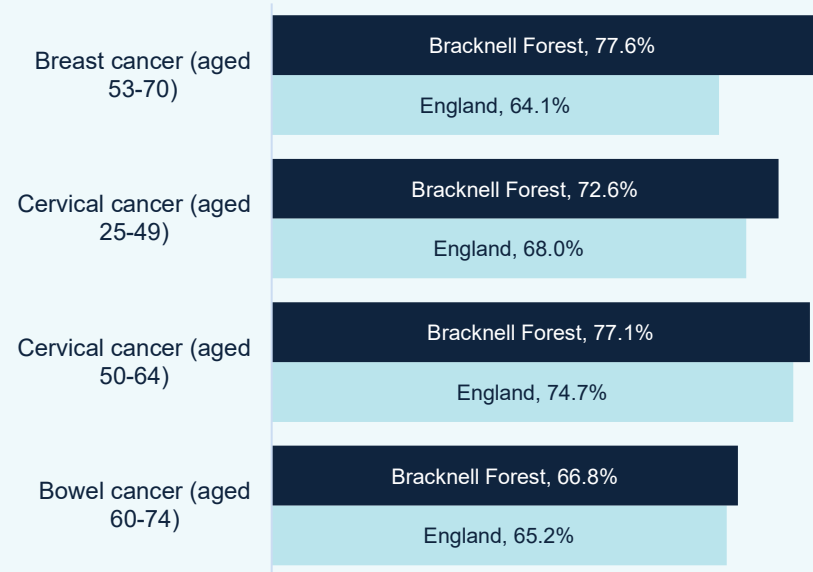
65.5% of adults in Bracknell Forest were classified as physically active (150+ minutes activity per week) in 2020/21 compared to 69.2% across the South East and 65.9% across England.



Approximately 0.9% of adults in Bracknell Forest are alcohol dependent. 74.6% of these were not in treatment in 2020/21 which is the best (lowest) rate in the South East. 43% of Bracknell Forest adults in treatment for alcohol misuse successfully completed treatment in 2020.

Cancer screening coverage (2021)

Cancer screening coverage in Bracknell Forest is significantly better than England for all three national screening programmes.



Source: Berkshire East JSNA and PHE Fingertips

Health and Wellbeing

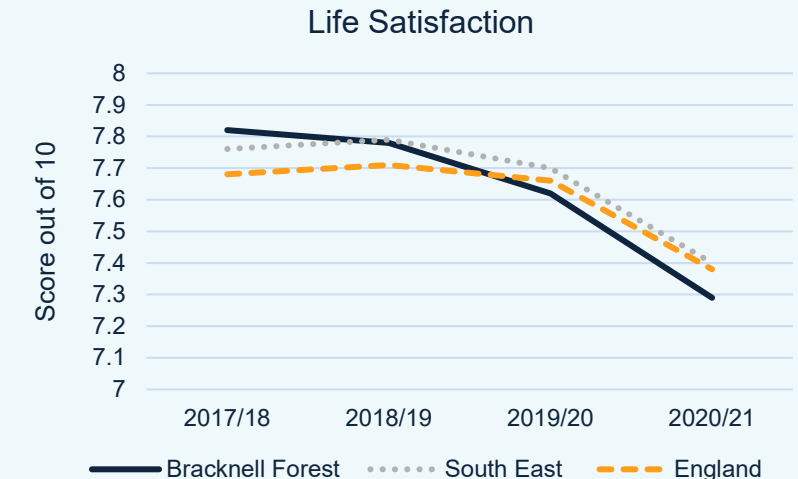
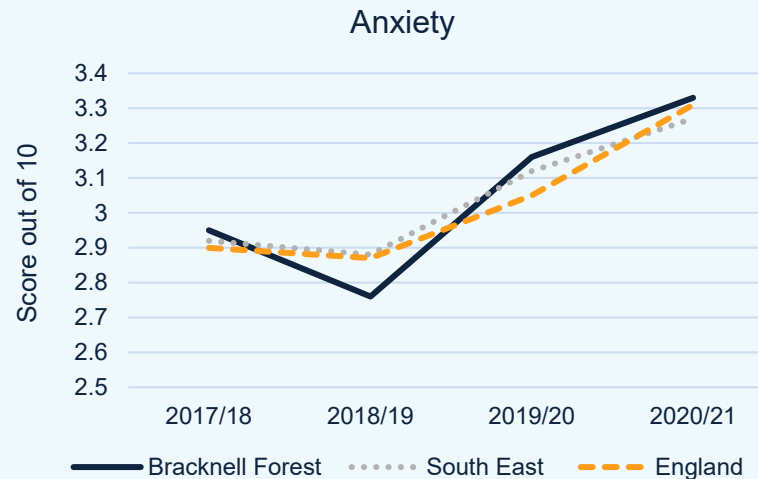
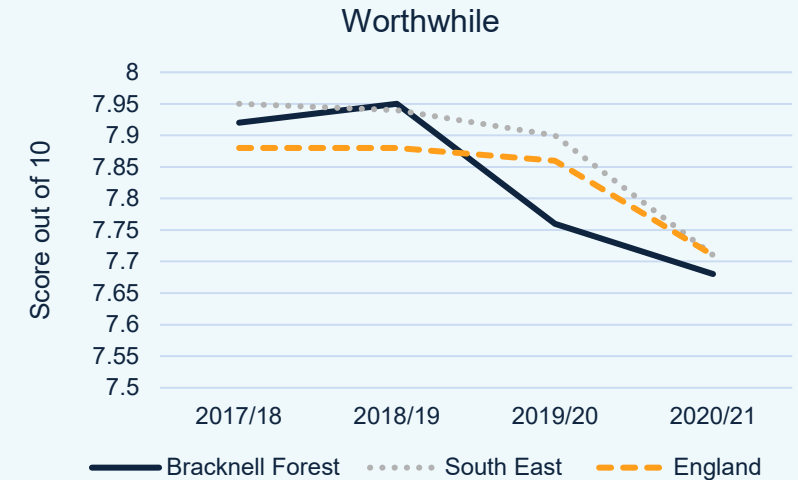
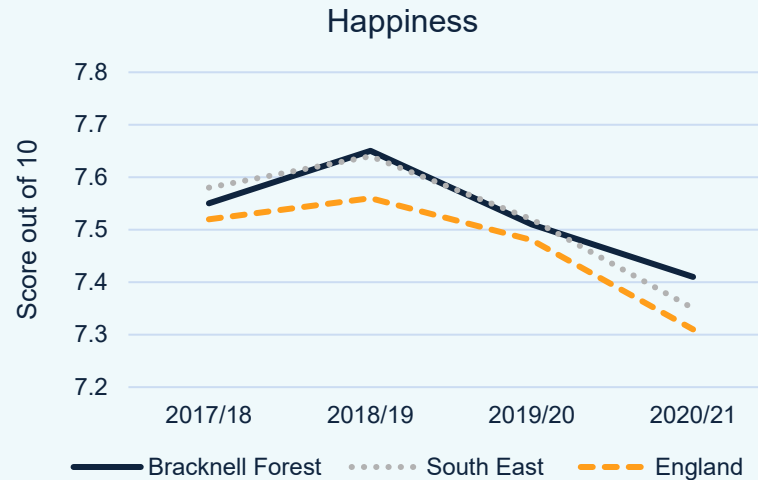
Wellbeing

Broadly, the local wellbeing trends have followed the national themes. All these measures show a negative change, particularly since 2019. This may reflect the significant challenges through the pandemic, and these are likely to continue through the current period of high inflation and cost pressures.

Looking specifically at each element, Bracknell Forest residents have shown more resilience in reported happiness. However, feelings of worthwhile, anxiety and life satisfaction have all worsened more so than the average.

These elements link closely to the levelling up priorities as they are listed as measures for mission 8: *By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.* Therefore these measures are likely to see increased focus.

Source: [ONS - Personal Wellbeing Estimates](#)



Health and Wellbeing

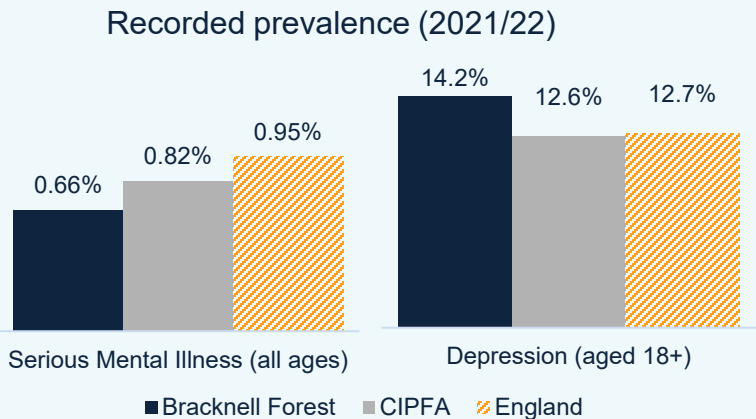
Mental health overview

Mental health problems affect around one in four people in any given year. They range from common problems, such as depression and anxiety, to rarer and more severe disorders such as psychosis. 13% of Bracknell Forest’s population aged 16 and over are estimated to have a common mental health disorder, which is significantly lower than the national (17%) and regional (15%) prevalence rates.

Prevalence of mental health conditions

In 2021/22, 848 people in Bracknell Forest were recorded as having a serious mental health disorder, 0.66% of the population. This is the third lowest rate of all CIPFA neighbours.

Many more people experience depression, with 1,728 new cases recorded in Bracknell Forest in 2021/22. In total, 14.2% of the local population are recorded with this need, an increasing trend from previous years but similar to the national rate (12.7%).



Suicide

Suicide is a significant cause of death in young adults and can be an indicator of underlying rates of mental ill-health. From 2019 to 2021 there were 28 suicides recorded for Bracknell Forest residents at a rate of 8.4 per 100,000 population. This is lower than the average for England of 10.4.

The suicide rate in males is higher, both nationally and locally. In 2019-21, 82% of suicides in Bracknell Forest were males.

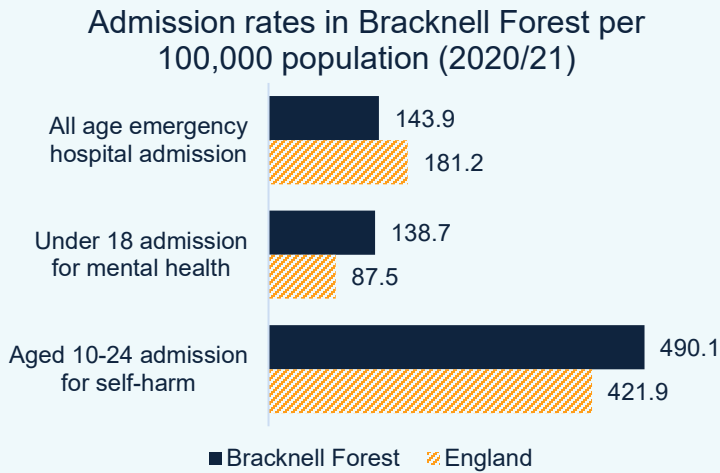
Premature mortality for people with Severe Mental Illness (SMI)

On average, people with SMI die 15 to 20 years earlier than the general population and have a 3.7 times higher death rate in people aged under 75.

In 2018-20, Bracknell Forest’s premature mortality rate for people with SMI was significantly better than England’s at 75 per 100,000 population. The under-75 mortality rate was 514% higher than the general population in Bracknell Forest for this time period.

Self-harm hospital admissions

Hospital admissions for self-harm in children have increased in recent years with admissions for young women being much higher than admissions for young men. The under 18 rate of admission for mental health reasons is in the highest 10% of all local authorities.



Source: [Berkshire East JSNA](#) and [OHID Fingertips](#)

Health and Wellbeing

Children



There is good vaccination coverage for children under two. Over 95% have received their pre-school vaccinations including MMR (2021/22). This is higher than the South East (91.5%) and England (89.2%) averages.



Child obesity is broadly lower than for England. In reception aged children, the rate is 8.6% in 2021/22, significantly lower than the England average. The rate of childhood obesity is higher in year 6, up to 18.6% of children. This remains lower than the England average. Childhood obesity is higher in Bracknell town areas, one quarter of year six children living in Wildridings and Central are obese (2019-2021). There is a correlation between deprivation and obesity.



Hospital admissions for under 18s related to alcohol specific conditions was 23.4 per 100,000 lower than the England average of 29.3



Admissions related to substance misuse for 15 to 24 year olds has one of the lowest rates of CIPFA neighbours at 48.4 per 100,000. The England average is 81.2.

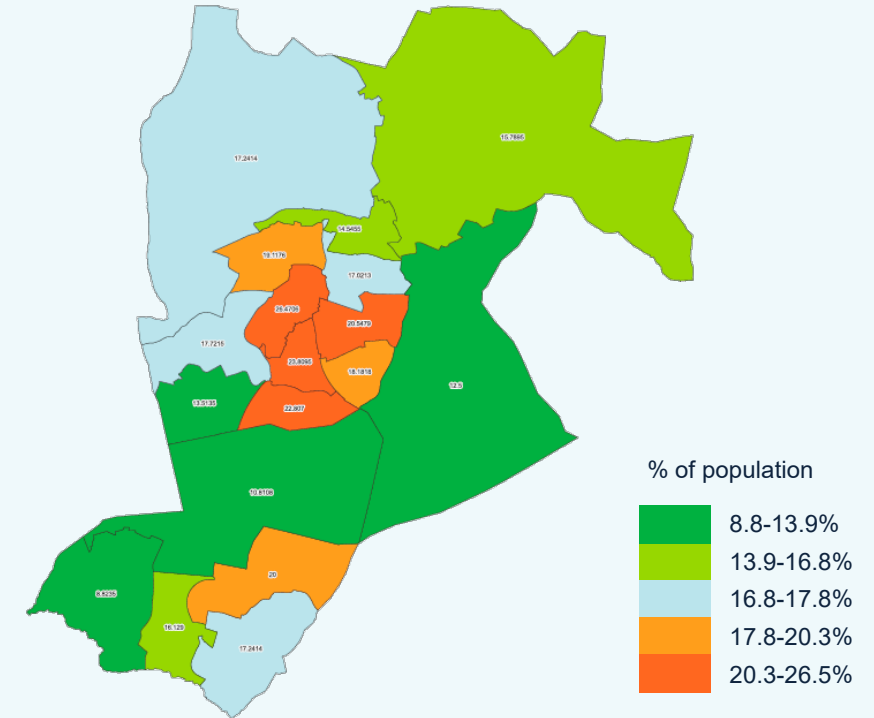


In addition to a high rate of hospital admissions related to mental health in children there is also a proportionately high rate of 0-4 year olds brought in; 712 per 100,000 compared to the average of 660 for England and 593 for the South East. This does not align with the general pattern of good health in the population. That being said the A&E admission rate for under 5s return to more average levels compared to these attendance rates.



All children and families are expected to receive a review when a child reaches two to two and a half years. In 2021/22 this was completed for 82.9% of children higher than the average for the South East (77.1%) and England (74.0%). This remains lower than before the pandemic where the average was approximately 90%. Completion rates are lower in Winkfield and Cranbourne and Ascot.

Childhood Obesity (year 6)



Health and Wellbeing

Older adults



In 2020/21 there were 380 emergency admissions due to falls for Bracknell Forest adults aged 65 and over. This is a rate of 2,072 per 100,000 population and is similar to the regional and England average.



In the same period, there were 105 emergency admissions for hip fractures in those aged 65+ meaning 579 per 100,000 population. This was the highest rate in the South East region and higher than the England average.



88.5% of those aged 65 and over who were discharged from hospital remained at home 91 days after discharge into reablement services. This is above the England average of 81.8%.



In 2021/22 there were 88 permanent admissions to residential or nursing care homes. This rate of 473 per 100,000 is similar to the England average.

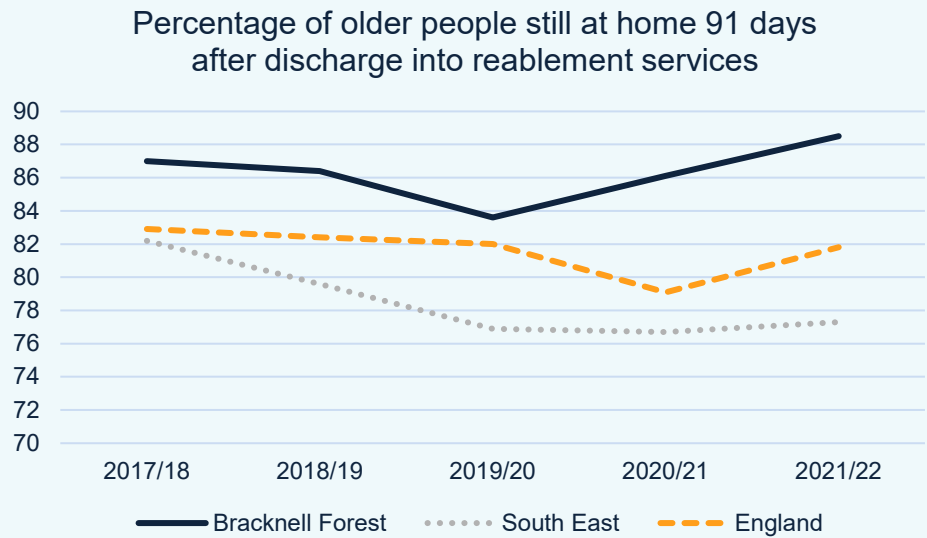


Bracknell Forest has one of the lowest rates of recording dementia in the South East of England. In 2022 53.1% of those aged 65 or over estimated to have dementia have a coded diagnosis of dementia, compared to an England recognition rate of 62%.



Excess winter deaths measure the ratio of excess deaths in winter months (Dec to Mar) compared to the rest of the year. Most of these deaths are due to circulatory and respiratory disease and the majority occur in older people.

Bracknell Forest had approximately 50 excess winter deaths in 2019/20 at a 20% increase compared to non-winter months. This was similar to the national and regional figures of 17%.



Source: Berkshire East JSNA and OHID Fingertips

Health and Wellbeing

Access to healthcare

The 2022 GP survey reported an average of 69.9% of patients registered with Bracknell Forest GP practices reported having a positive experience of their GP practice. This was in line with the average for Frimley (70.0%) and England (72.4%). There is a significant range of experiences across Bracknell Forest PCNs, from 86.1% reporting positive experiences to 64.7%.

However, over the period 2012 to 2022, there was a steady decrease in the proportion of patients reporting a good overall experience of making an appointment with their GP locally and nationally. 56.2% of patients in England reported having a good overall experience of making an appointment in 2022. This was significantly higher than the proportion of patients in Bracknell Forest GP's (43.3%) reporting a good overall experience in the same year.

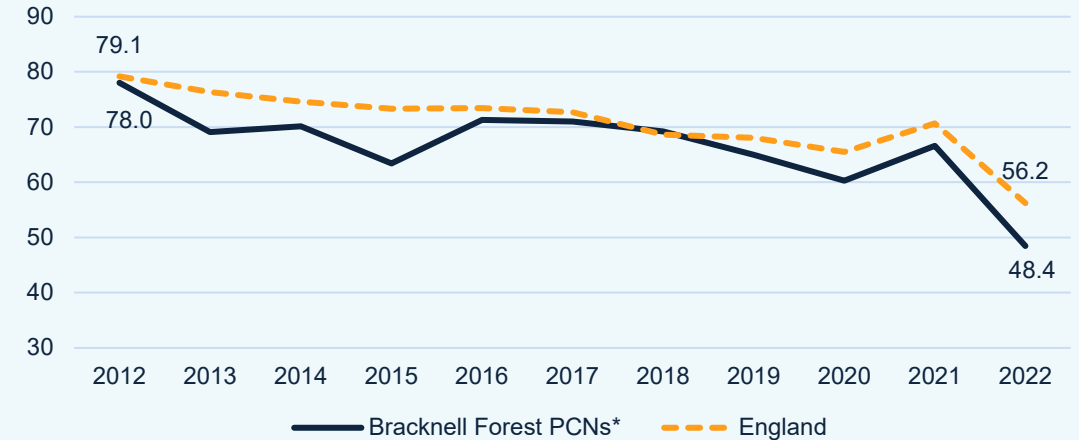
The proportion of individuals in alcohol misuse treatment waiting more than three weeks for their first treatment was significantly higher in Bracknell Forest (5.1%) than England (1.2%) in 2020/21. Similarly, the proportion of individuals in drug misuse treatment waiting more than three weeks for their first treatment was also significantly higher in Bracknell Forest (5.1%) than England (2.0%) in 2020/21.

The proportion of the patients with suspected cancer, seen within 14 days by a specialist has decreased significantly since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, both locally and nationally. 75.3% of patients with suspected cancer referred to Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust in the period covering January to March 2022 were seen within 14 days, for this first time since 2018/19, this is below the national average.

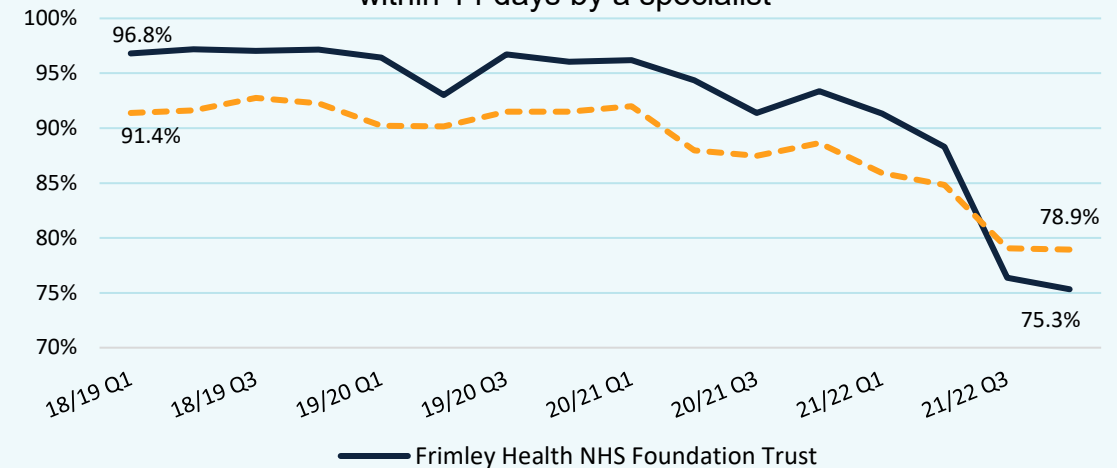
Source: OHID Fingertips, [NHS](#)

*Primary Care Network (PCN) GP data amalgamated to Bracknell Forest, based on Braccan, Bracknell and District, and The Health Triangle PCNs

% patients reporting good overall experience of making an appointment



Suspected Cancer Two Week Wait Referrals: Patients seen within 14 days by a specialist



Health and Wellbeing

A new Health and Wellbeing Strategy

In June 2022, a new Health and Wellbeing strategy was published for Bracknell Forest, a joint strategy between the council and health partners. It was also developed alongside local community and voluntary organisations. A significant range of data sets were used to inform the priorities.

The strategy recognises that the pandemic has had a significant impact on health for residents, including through the reduced contacts to healthcare services, increased alcohol intake and worsening mental health.

The strategy sets out four cross cutting themes and six priority areas to guide health related work until 2026. Within these are practical actions and outcomes to focus work. This highlights a number of key areas of work including children’s health, mental health, community connection, COVID recovery and happiness.



Health and Wellbeing

Health and disability

The most comprehensive and up to date disability information will be published as part of the census 2021 reports. Instead of using the previous 2011 data, a proxy for disability and health can be gathered from a range of more recent sources.

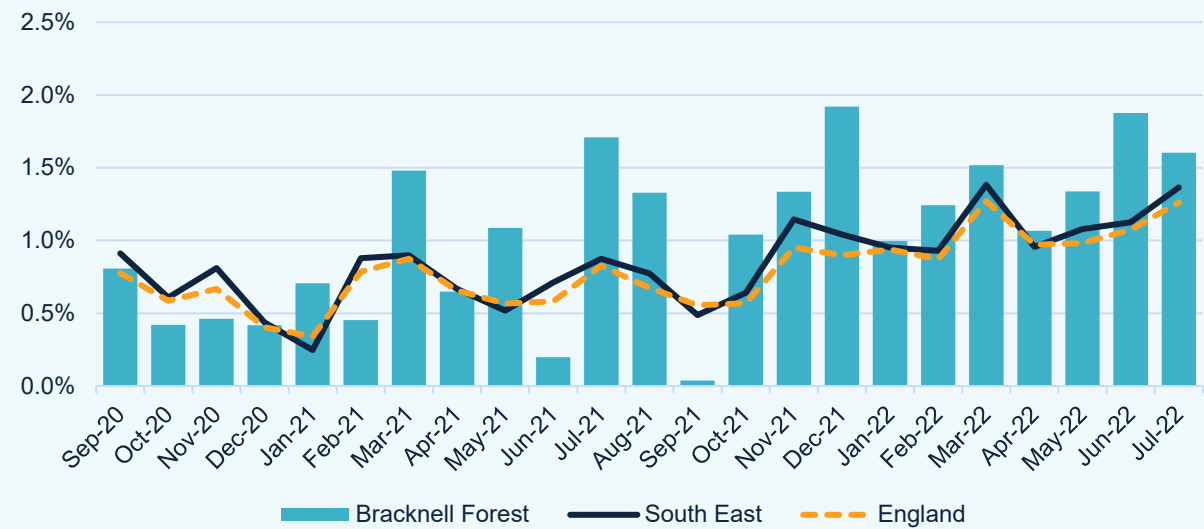
Around 3,000 adults were claiming Personal Independence Payment (PIP) support in July 2022. This is in addition to 2,000 claims for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and 2,000 claims for attendance allowance in February 2022 . Overall this is approximately 5.6% of the population. This does not represent the full cohort of residents with a disability, however, it can provide an indication of the trends. Across the UK population an average of 22% of the population report a disability.

There has been a 27% increase in PIP awards in the last two years, a greater change than for the South East (21%) and England (20%). The most common reasons for claiming PIP was psychiatric disorders, with more than a third of claims related to this. Though the overall numbers were much smaller, there was a notable increase in the rate of claims for endocrine diseases (incl. diabetes).

There is a fairly proportionate divide of PIP claimants across the adult age population. Around half of DLA claimants relate to under 16s, reflecting the discontinuation of DLA for most adult claimants.

In the council's resident survey in 2021, disabled residents were less likely to report positive impacts of the pandemic for physical health than the overall population.

Monthly change in PIP Caseload



Source: DWP Stat Explore

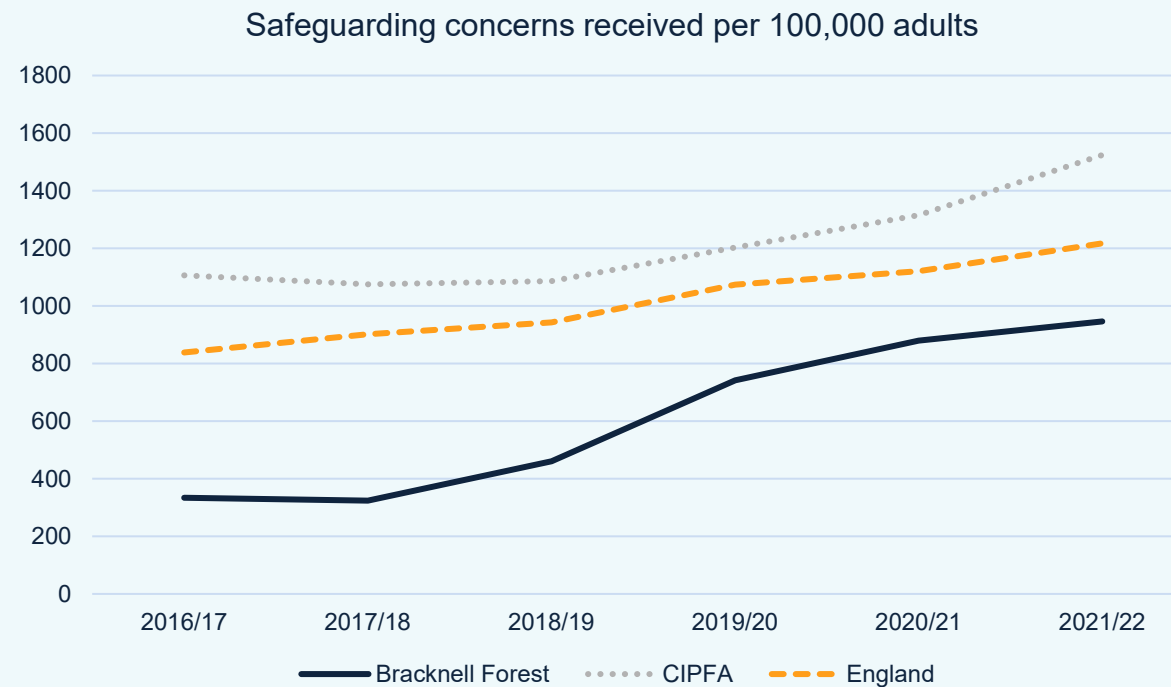
Health and Wellbeing

Safeguarding

The total number of safeguarding concerns has continued to increase locally and nationally. In the last year reports have increased by 7.5% compared to the previous year. Though the trend is similar, the number of safeguarding concerns raised is lower in the borough than the average for England and for CIPFA similar authorities.

The majority of individuals involved in safeguarding enquiries were aged 85 and over. Though there are limitations in the detail of the data, the primary reason for safeguarding reports are related to neglect. This was also a pattern that increased during the pandemic.

A high number of concerns reported should not be considered a negative indicator, as it often reflects increased awareness of accessing support. However, it does reflect changing pressures on the local authority and potentially indicates increasing support needs within the local community.

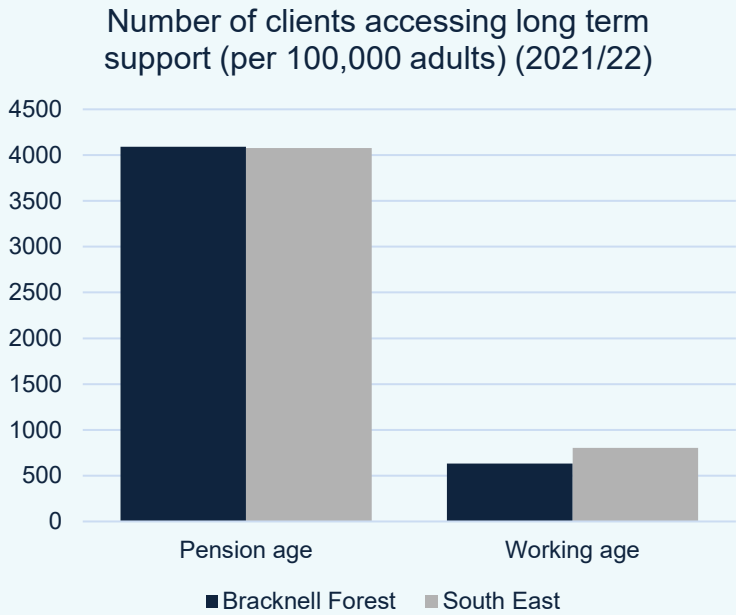
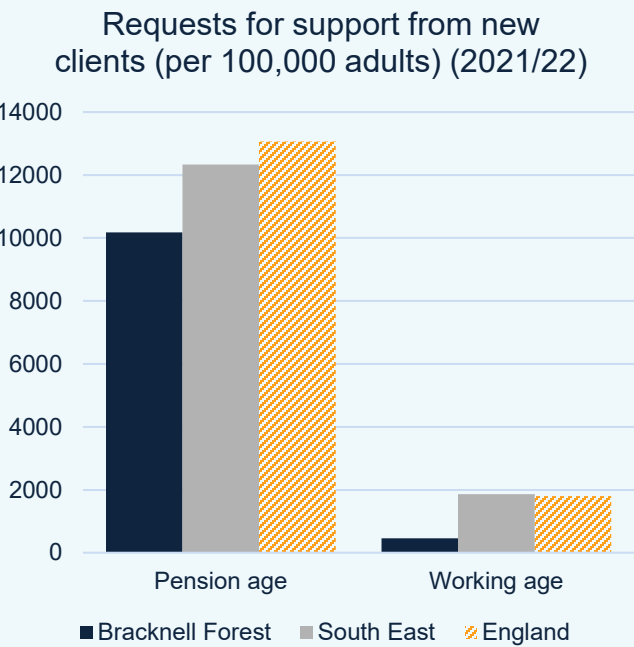


Source: [NHS Digital – Safeguarding adults dashboard](#)

Health and Wellbeing

Adult social care

There continues to be new requests for adult social care support from many local residents, though the rate of new requests appears to be relatively stable in the borough over the last five years. The majority of adult social care requests (84%) are from pension age adults (2021/22). The rate of requests is lower in Bracknell Forest than the South East and England for both age groups, fewer pension age requests may be related to there being fewer older people in the borough than national averages, though for working age it is less clear.



There is a similar rate of current long term service users in Bracknell Forest compared to the South East average (2021/22). Around 4 in every 100 adults will be a pension age residents receiving long term care. And around 6 in every 1,000 adults will be a working age resident receiving long term social care.

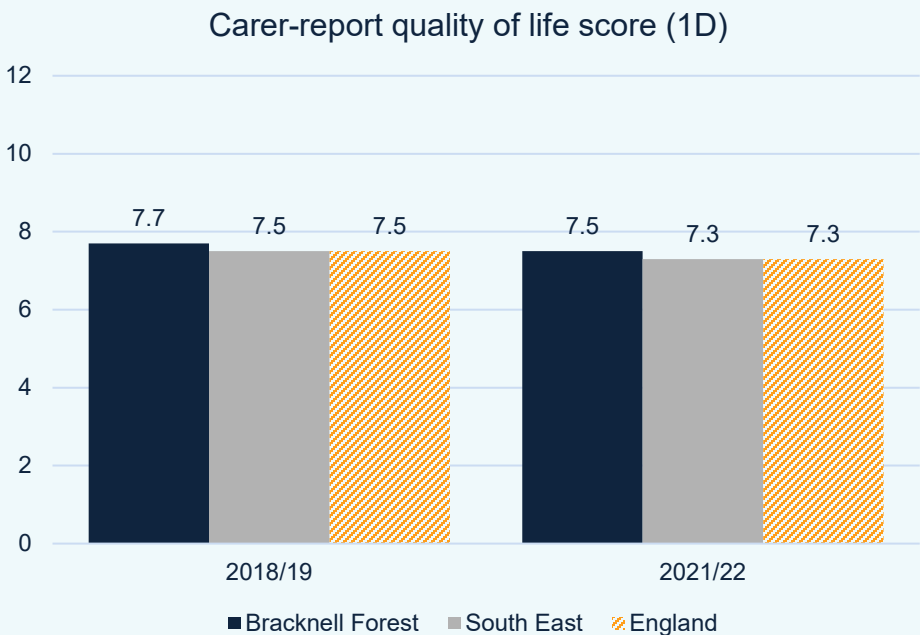
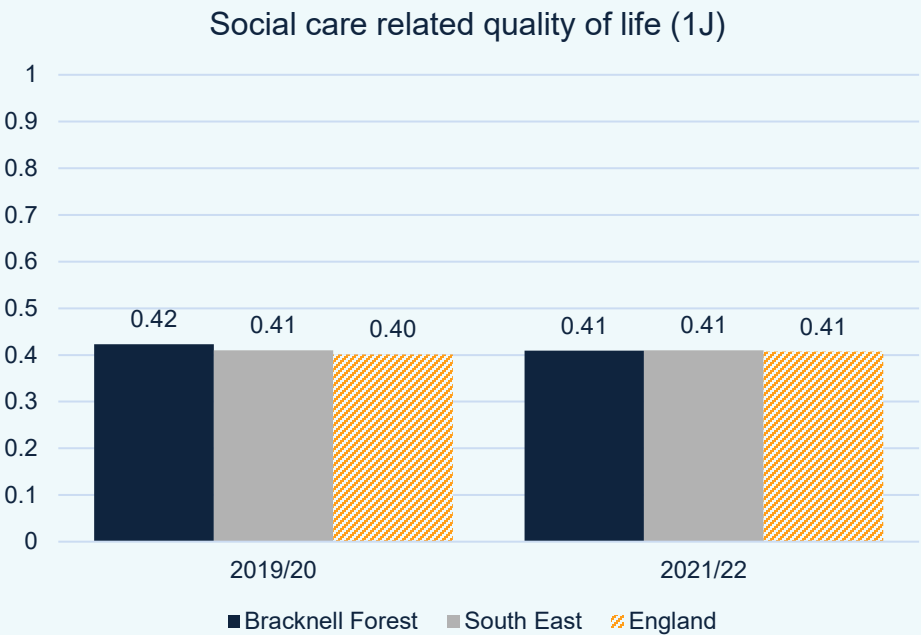
Source: [NHS Digital - Adult Social Care Activity and Finance Dashboard](#)

Health and Wellbeing

Adult social care

The Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) measures annually if care and support services are achieving good outcomes for residents. The quality of life reported by those who use social care services in the borough is generally good. However, this has reduced at a greater rate since the pandemic than for England and the South East. In England and the South East, working age service users report higher quality of life than the pension age group. The opposite is true for Bracknell Forest residents, as pension age residents report a higher quality of life.

Carers also report on their quality of life. This too has reduced across all regions since the pandemic. There remains a higher reported quality of life by Bracknell Forest carers than the regional and England averages.



Source: [NHS Digital – Measures from the adult social care outcomes framework dashboard](#)

Health and Wellbeing

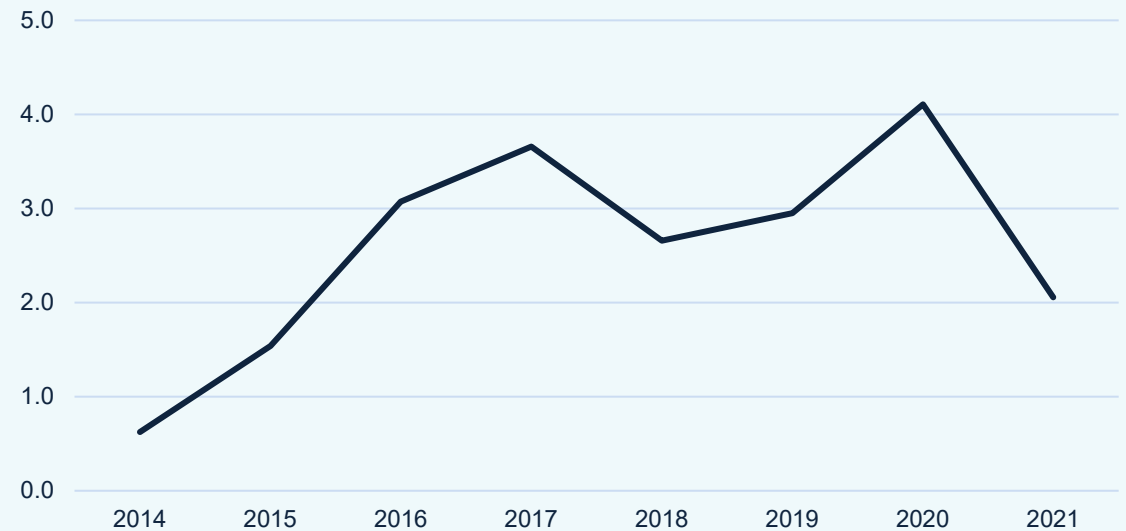
Early help services

Between 2014 and 2020, the number of families referred to the early help services increased from 30 to 210. More recently this has reduced, in part, related to pandemic related restrictions.

The most common areas of need for families accessing the service was health (mental and physical) (28%), closely followed by children needing help from abuse and exploitation at 26% between 2014 and 2021.

Families accessing the early help services between 2017 and 2021 came from every ward. The greatest proportion resided in the most deprived wards in Bracknell Forest. 36.8% of all families accessing the service resided in four wards: Wildridings and Central, Priestwood and Garth, Old Bracknell, and Bullbrook. Families residing in the most deprived wards were also more likely to require intensive support.

Rate Of Families Accessing Early Help, per 1,000 households



Source: Early Help and Communities, Bracknell Forest Council (2022)

Health and Wellbeing

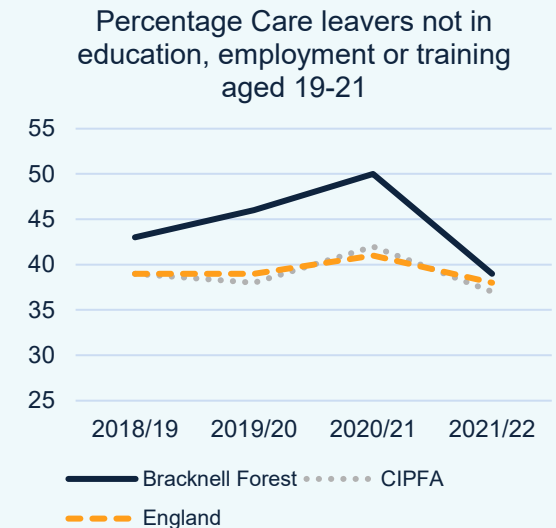
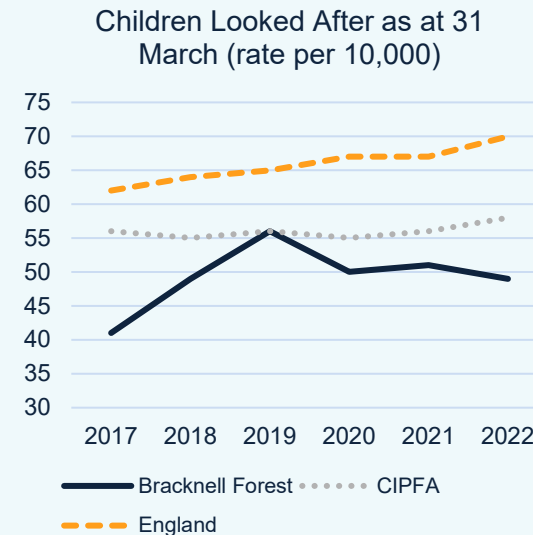
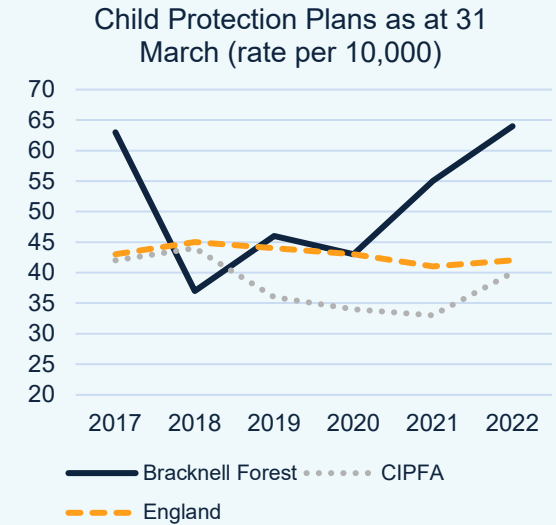
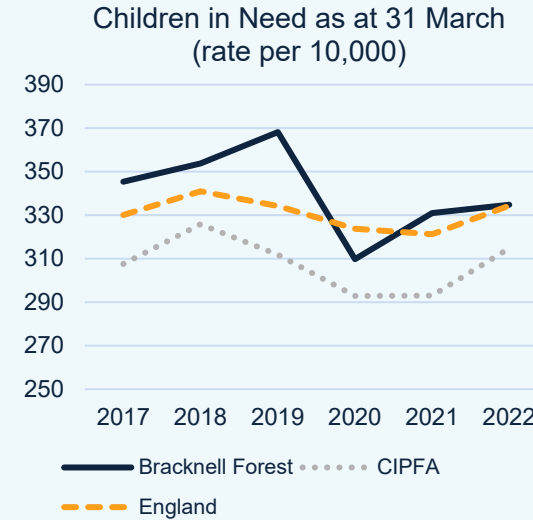
Children's social care

Children in Need (CIN) are those supported by the social care team, the case numbers include those who have a child protection plan and those who are looked after. Before the pandemic, the number of children supported as a child in need had reduced significantly. This has since increased and the caseload remains larger than the average for CIPFA neighbours.

Though the rate of open cases for CIN is higher than the average for CIPFA authorities, the detailed breakdown shows that Bracknell Forest has a higher proportion of cases open for less than three months and fewer open for more than two years, demonstrating the positive outcomes for cases.

The number of children supported with a Child Protection Plan (CPP) at 31 March 2022 was significantly higher than the national average and higher than before the pandemic. This is primarily linked to new plans continuing to be made through the pandemic but children were not coming off them as children not attending school presents a higher risk. Whilst many have now ceased their CPP, the rates have not yet decreased as there has continued to be a high number of new plans. The percentage of children subject to a second or subsequent CPP is aligned with the national average.

The rate of Children Looked After (CLA) is lower than the national and CIPFA average. This could suggest that the earlier intervention offered by the council is effective in helping children stay with their families. During the latter part of 2022, there was a higher increase in CLA due to the national refugee dispersal scheme. In December 2022, 16% of the CLA cohort were asylum seeking children. In previous years, the outcomes for CLA in terms of education and training was worse than the national average, however, these figures have significantly improved in most recent data.



Source: LG Inform

Health and Wellbeing

Themes of health needs

The majority of residents live a happy and healthy life, however there are growing support needs related to mental health and wellbeing. This is becoming more acute since the pandemic and particularly affecting younger people. Whilst the health of most is good, there are also growing challenges with access to healthcare, locally and nationally.

Levels of obesity and physical inactivity are rising locally and nationally. This is particularly the case for older children, adults and residents living in more deprived areas. Current levels of obesity are similar to the regional and national averages. With the extensive green spaces and active travel networks across the borough, this could be an area for further development.

Improving health for children specifically under-fives could include supporting parents to access proportionate healthcare and increasing the number of children completing two year old reviews. For older adults there may be unmet support needs related to dementia, as many residents estimated to have the condition do not have a formal diagnosis. However, it may be that there is sufficient community support for these individuals.

It is clear that there will continue to be increasing social care and safeguarding support required. This will become particularly acute considering the ageing population. Carers and service users have both reported decreases in their quality of life since the pandemic.

A number of these themes align with the current health and wellbeing strategy and driving improvement will continue to require the joint working between the council, health partners and the community. Deprivation is linked to many health outcomes and the current economic challenges are likely to worsen the health for low income households.

Considerations for strategic planning

1. What influence does the council have to address health inequalities for low income families? Including for eating well and staying active.
2. How can residents be encouraged to be more self-sufficient with their health? What role can community initiatives play?
3. What social care preparation is needed to meet the long term pressures?
4. What further system opportunities are there for joint working?

Current Council Plan objectives

- develop and implement a council-wide programme of measures to help improve the health of our local population
- develop a new early help mental well-being service for children and young people, working with partners including our schools
- align our social care services with Primary Care Networks to allow improved integration of care and health activities
- review our Disabled Facility Grants Adaptations Service to speed up applications to support people to live independently, implementing a new policy
- work with CCG to develop a joint community and health facility at Blue Mountain
- work with town and parish councils to deliver new community facilities
- transform the way children's centres work making them into family support hubs
- embed the Family Safeguarding Model of social work practice to protect vulnerable children and reduce entrants to the youth offending service
- deliver a new residential facility for elderly people with dementia at Heathlands in Bracknell in partnership with the health partners
- use social prescribing and support the voluntary sector to help reduce isolation and loneliness
- make sure there are opportunities for everyone to enjoy and participate in sports and leisure activities
- continue to provide easy access to the natural environment
- actively support the armed services located in Bracknell Forest

Environment

Traffic

Road traffic has steadily increased since the initial COVID restrictions, when levels were 70% lower than the same month in 2019. Traffic across all surveyed roads in Bracknell Forest increased by 13% between 2020 and 2021, although that remained 16% lower than the 2019 figure.

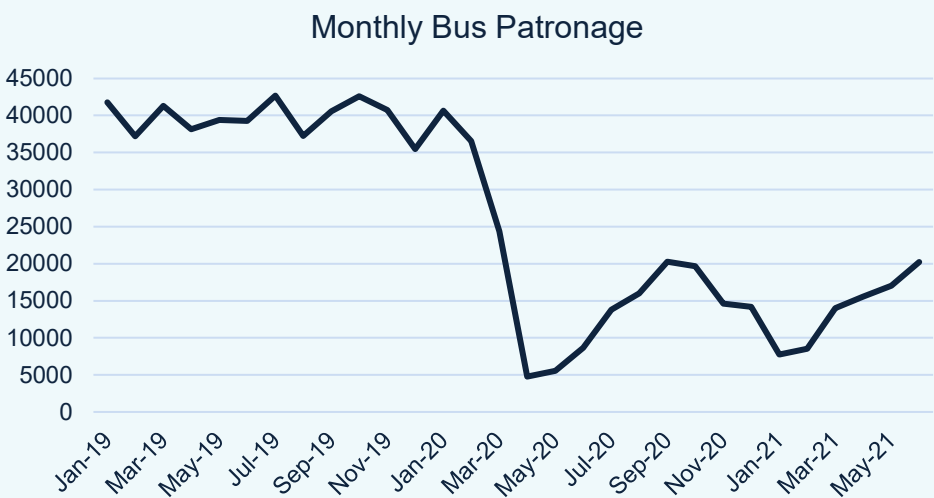
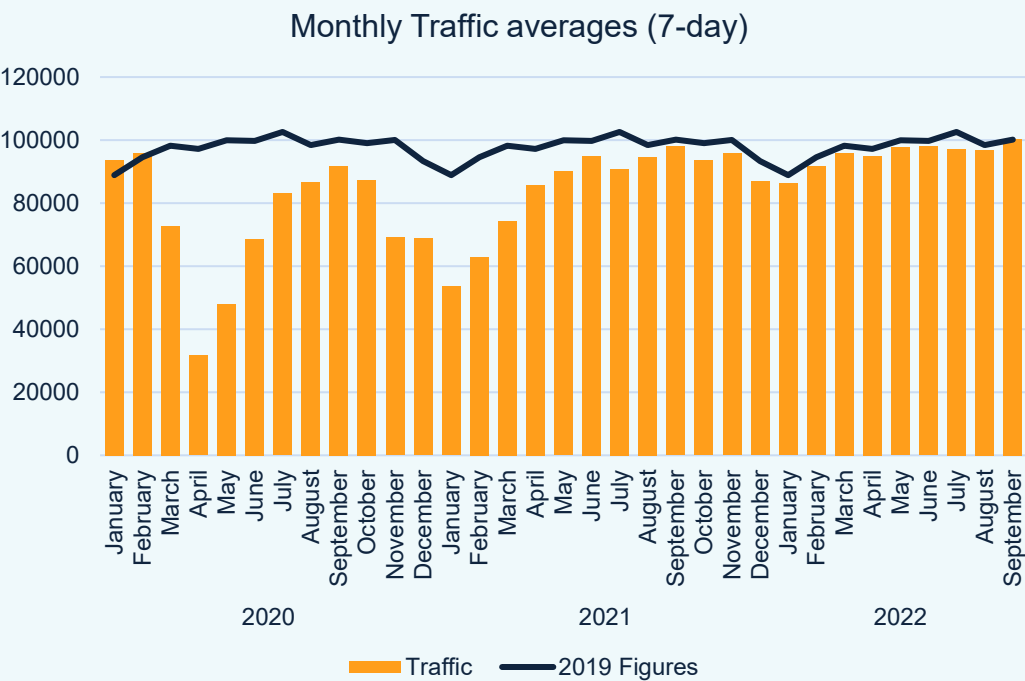
Travel patterns are continuing to evolve, alongside a changing national policy backdrop which is focussing more on climate change, alternative fuels and future mobility systems. Traffic is more spread across the day with lower morning and evening peaks, but higher traffic levels during the middle of the day. Weekend traffic volumes on some roads up to 15% higher than recorded pre-pandemic.

Key transport challenges will be meeting the transport needs of a growing and ageing population and ensuring active travel plays a part in improving the health and wellbeing of residents.

Bus travel

The number of bus passengers in Bracknell Forest fell by almost 90% in April 2020. Local statistics suggest that bus passenger numbers remain 18% lower than pre-pandemic levels. This is, however, stronger recovery than nationally which is estimated by the Department for Transport to remain at 27% below pre-pandemic levels (excluding London).

Going forward, increasing operational costs and a decline in patronage post-COVID have meant many bus services are struggling for viability and require increasing subsidy. Areas away from the town centre are becoming also increasingly difficult to serve. There is increased use of smart phone apps meaning those without digital access may find bus use increasingly difficult.



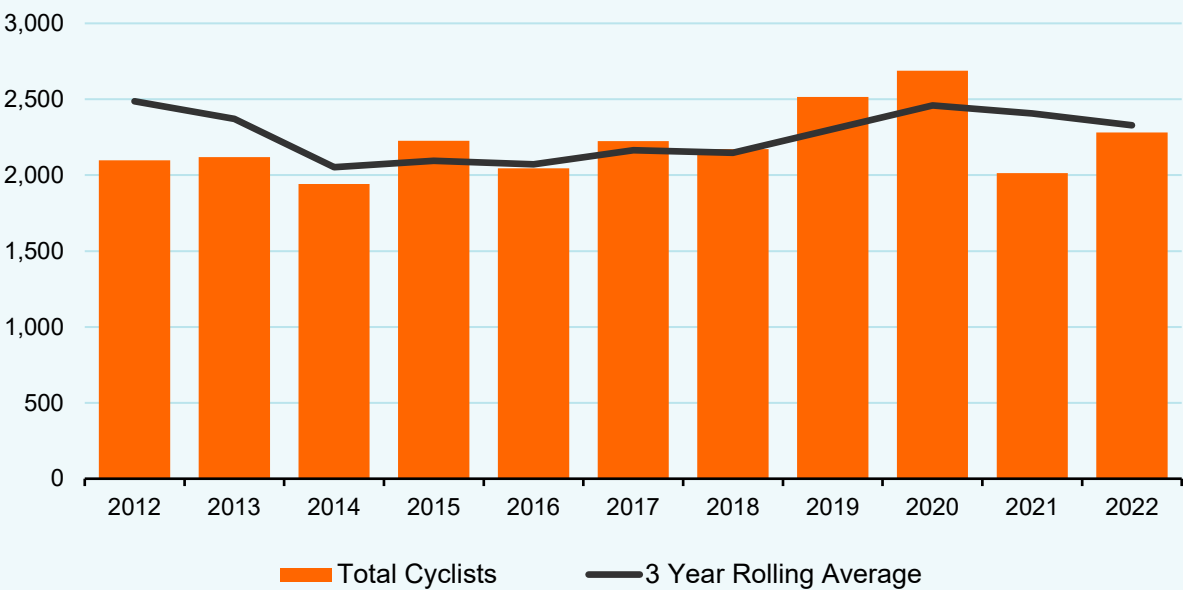
Environment

Cycling

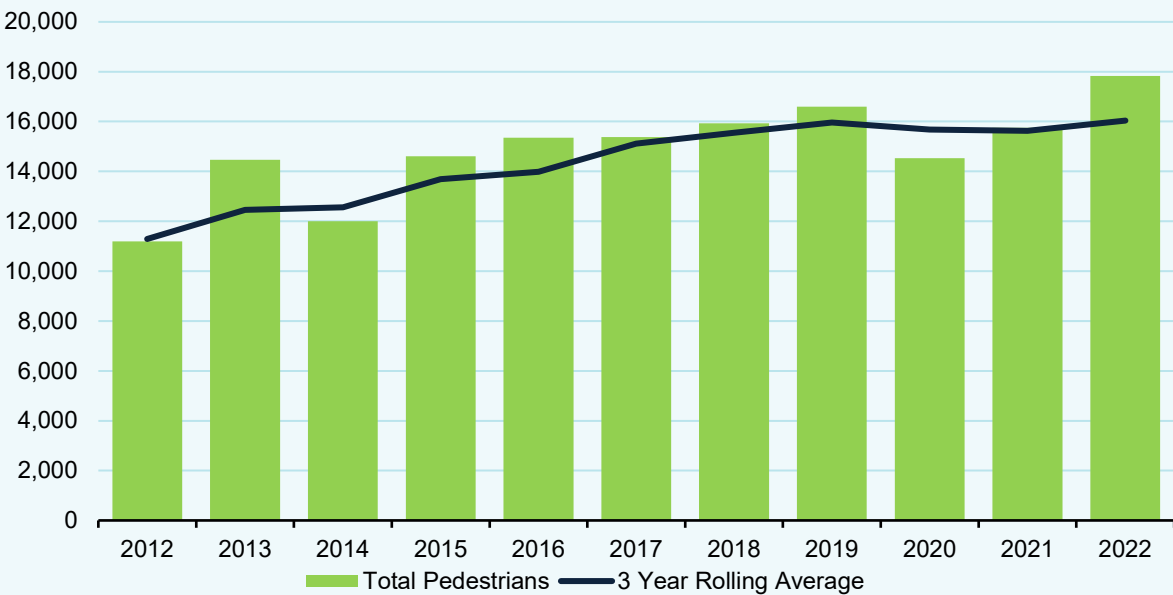
The council's cycling snapshot survey found in May 2020 one of the highest levels of cycling recorded over the 20-year survey period, an increase of 7% on 2019 (another fairly high year). However, this significantly reduced in 2021, and has since recovered slightly. The local data is similar to national trends.

Despite a well-developed network of cycleways, levels of cycling in the borough are still lower than regional and national averages. Key barriers appear to be concerns about the speed and volume of vehicular traffic, vegetation and debris on paths.

Cyclist Numbers (BF Annual Count)



Pedestrian Numbers (BF Annual Count)



Walking

Patterns of walking have also been inconsistent since the pandemic. Walking had been steadily increasing pre-pandemic, then a significant drop in September 2020 was followed by an all-time high in 2022.

Key feedback reflects that although Bracknell Forest has an extensive network of walkways and underpasses, some users are concerned around safety. Narrow or absent footways, difficulty crossing busy roads and poor surface quality are also reported by some.

Environment

Electric Vehicles (EVs)

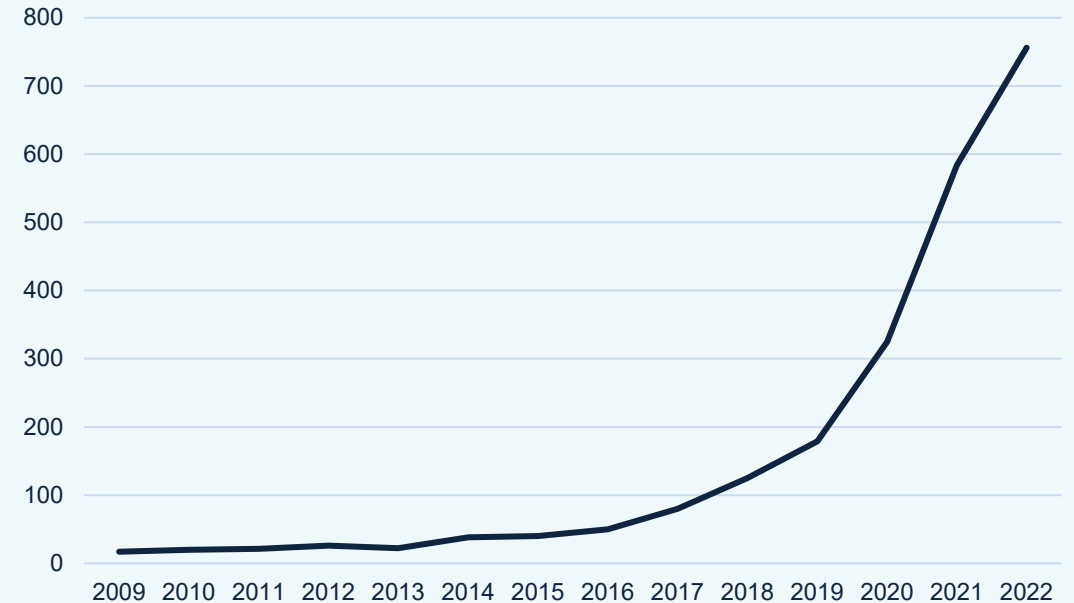
From 2030, new cars and vans cannot be sold if they are wholly powered by petrol and diesel. Therefore it is known that the number of EVs in the borough will continue to grow.

Work with chargepoint providers is ongoing to deliver charging solutions in council owned sites, such as public car parks, education and leisure destinations, whilst facilitating and encouraging further private sector investment across the borough.

One key challenge will be that up to 20,000 properties in the borough do not have off-street parking and so will rely on public charging infrastructure. The layout of these properties does not lend itself to at-the-kerb charging solutions. Therefore destination charging, workplace parking, on-route charging, and charging hubs will all need to play a part in providing charging solutions.

Over the coming years, the Council will begin to develop its next Local Transport Plan which will support the emerging Local Plan and have the climate agenda at its heart. Focusing on more sustainable forms of accessibility will align with the objectives laid out in national and regional policies.

Battery powered vehicles registered in Bracknell Forest



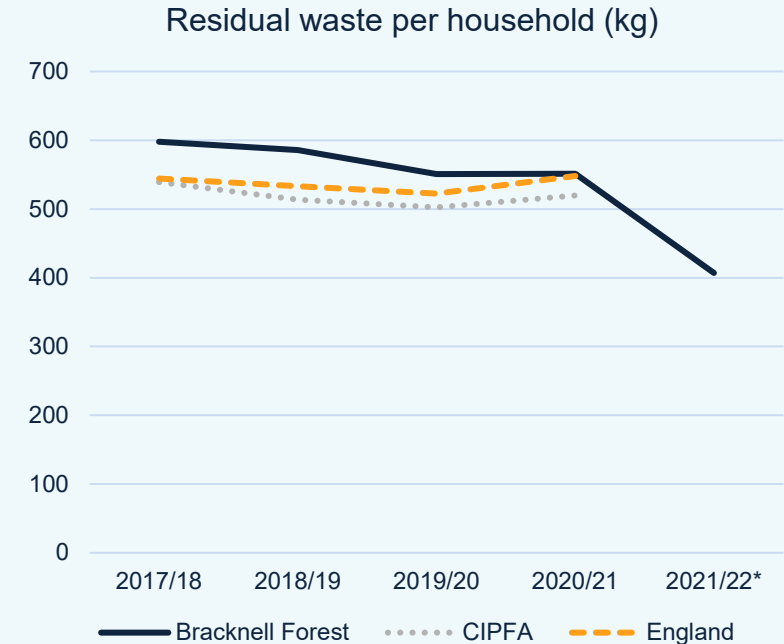
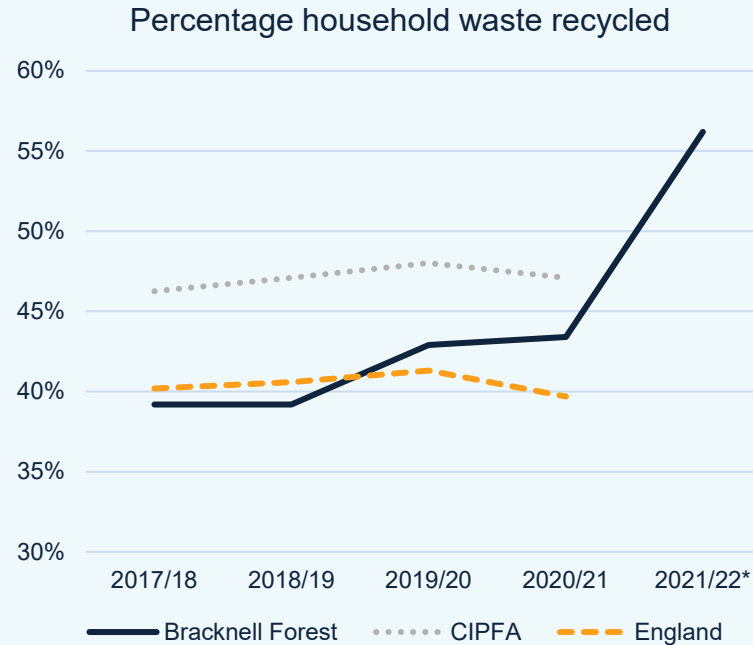
Environment

Waste and recycling

Food waste recycling was introduced in March 2021 with great success across the borough. This has significantly improved the opportunity for waste to be recycled with many residents maximising this. Unlike the slight decline in recycling rates for England and CIPFA neighbours, the overall rate of recycling for Bracknell Forest has continued to increase.

The significant increase in recycling means that the average residual waste per household is now approximately 400kg per year. This is positive compared to wider authorities.

There is a pattern that more rural CIPFA authorities, such as South Gloucestershire and North Somerset, have the lower rates of residual waste. The Bracknell Forest level of household residual waste is now in line with these authorities and households produce less residual waste than other Berkshire authorities.



Source: LG Inform

**Data validation for 2021/22 figures is underway, so this is not yet comparable to CIPFA or England averages, the significant change reflects the impact of changes to food waste and recycling in March 2021.*

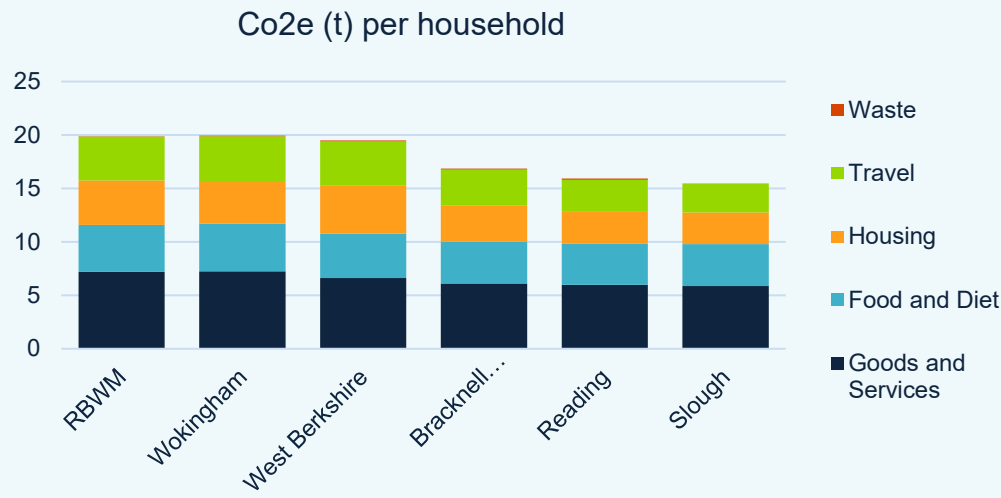
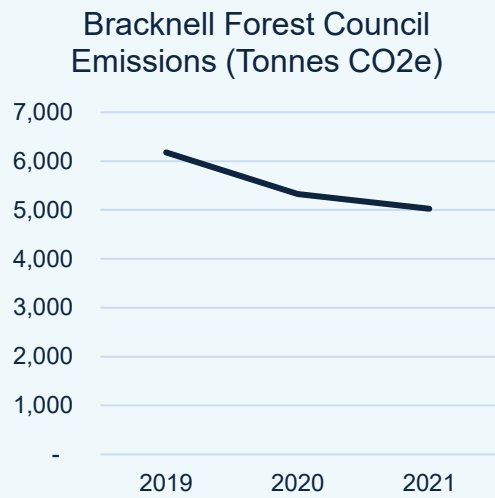
Environment

Climate

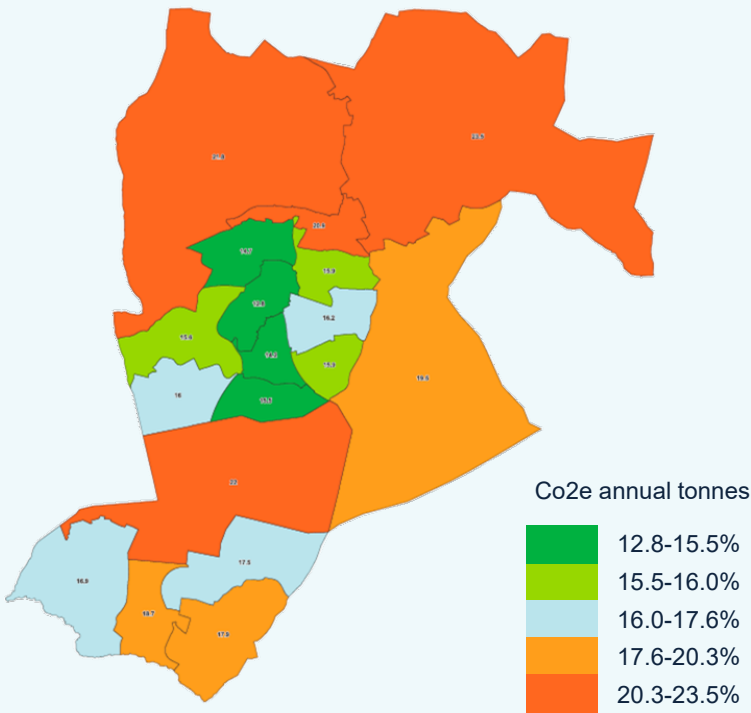
Protecting the environment has been an integral part of the council's direction over the current Council Plan period. There has been growing support and action to reduce the impacts of climate change at a local authority and wider community level.

Over the last three years, the council has reduced its own Co2 emissions by 19%. Within the community, the rate of Co2 emissions per person is also less than the average for the South East and England. Wards with the lowest emissions are generally those located within Bracknell Town, with the more affluent and rural areas producing greater levels of emissions. Little Sandhurst and Wellington and Crowthorne appear to be exceptions to this.

Further proactive work will help achieve the net zero national goals, which are attracting increasing public scrutiny. Carbon offsetting is becoming an increasingly important route to managing climate change impact. Exploring options around generating renewable energy locally, planting more trees, capturing Co2 in the ground and others will need to be an ongoing area of work.



Household Carbon Dioxide Footprint



Current climate change strategy principles

1. Working with partners
2. Preserving the climate beneficial elements of the COVID-19 pandemic
3. Working with schools and young people
4. Preserving the natural environment sustainably in line with the Bracknell Forest plans

Source: IMPACT community carbon calculator

Environment

Summary

There has been a clear change in the patterns of transport across the borough since the pandemic. The infrastructure for cycling and walking is recognised by many as good, however there remains a barrier related to perceptions for residents using these sustainable routes more often.

Similarly, there has been significant progress related to recycling. However there remains further scope to support residents specifically around reducing their general waste. The climate will continue to be a significant priority on a national and local level. Plans will continue to be reviewed and developed as part of the climate change strategy.

The decreasing use of buses may extend social connectivity challenges following the pandemic, particularly for older people and those with disabilities.

The local parks and green spaces are a further key part of the local environment and the borough has an exceptional local offer. There is limited benchmarking and comparative data on usage of parks, so it has not been included in detail in this analysis.

Considerations for strategic planning

1. How can residents be encouraged to more frequently use the walking and cycling routes?
2. How can residents further reduce their general household waste?
3. How can work across all council services continue to extend the current climate change agenda?
4. If public transport use remains low, how will those who rely on this stay connected to the community? Including older adults and those with learning disabilities.

Current Council Plan objectives

- protect our highly valued green spaces and strategic green gaps
- promote recycling and diverting waste from landfill, including introducing food waste recycling
- improve parking in residential areas
- protect green spaces, the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and maintain strategic gaps between communities
- enhance facilities and customer experience at Horseshoe Lake and maintain other council open spaces
- address the impact of man-made climate change on our local communities by putting in place actions that work towards meeting the government target of eradication its net contribution to climate change by 2050
- promote greater use of public transport and cycleways

Communities

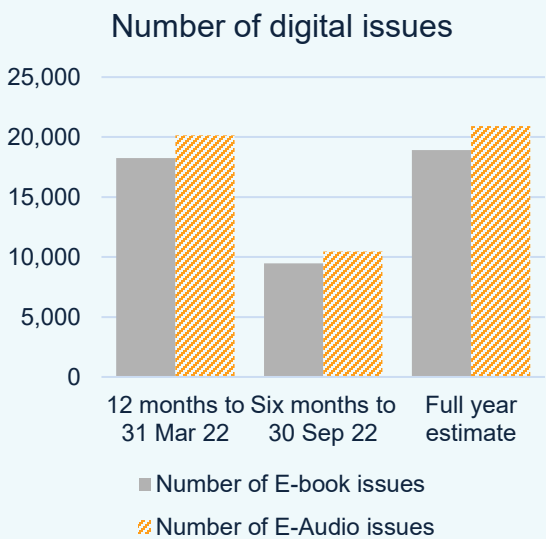
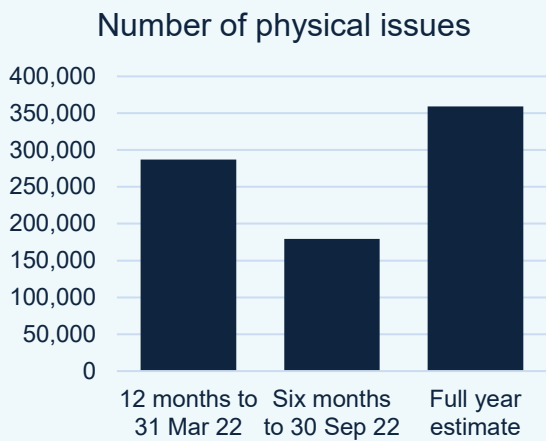
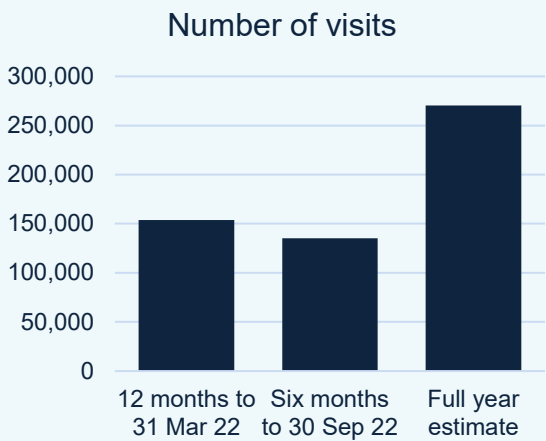
Community hub and libraries

There is increasing focus on building strong and thriving communities through access to shared spaces. Following the pandemic, the council office at Time Square reopened with enhanced community facilities. The community hub team continue to develop this offer to make it a key support destination in the borough.

The library offer has also bounced back following the pandemic. The number of events held across the library spaces between 1 April 2022 and 30 September 2022 was already more than 60% higher than the full 12 months up to 1 April 2022. 1,752 young people took part in the summer reading challenge in 2022, a third more than the previous year, though this was similar to pre-pandemic levels. Whilst visits and book issues significantly increased since last year, they remain around 90% of the pre-pandemic level.

There has been a clear pattern of library events and activities returning to, or exceeding, pre-pandemic levels. This is a possible indication of the increased value for social opportunities and taking part in community activities. This emphasises the continued need to diversify the use of these community spaces and the value in shared events and activities.

Key priorities for the libraries continue to be around digital literacy and enablement, establishing libraries as hubs for the community and supporting specific groups such as those in hardship and those unemployed.



Source: Internal data sets

Communities

Volunteering and community engagement

The pandemic saw a significant increase in the number of residents stepping forward to volunteer. Around 500 volunteers were DBS checked within the first six months of the pandemic to be part of the local community response. This achieved a huge boost in community led support.

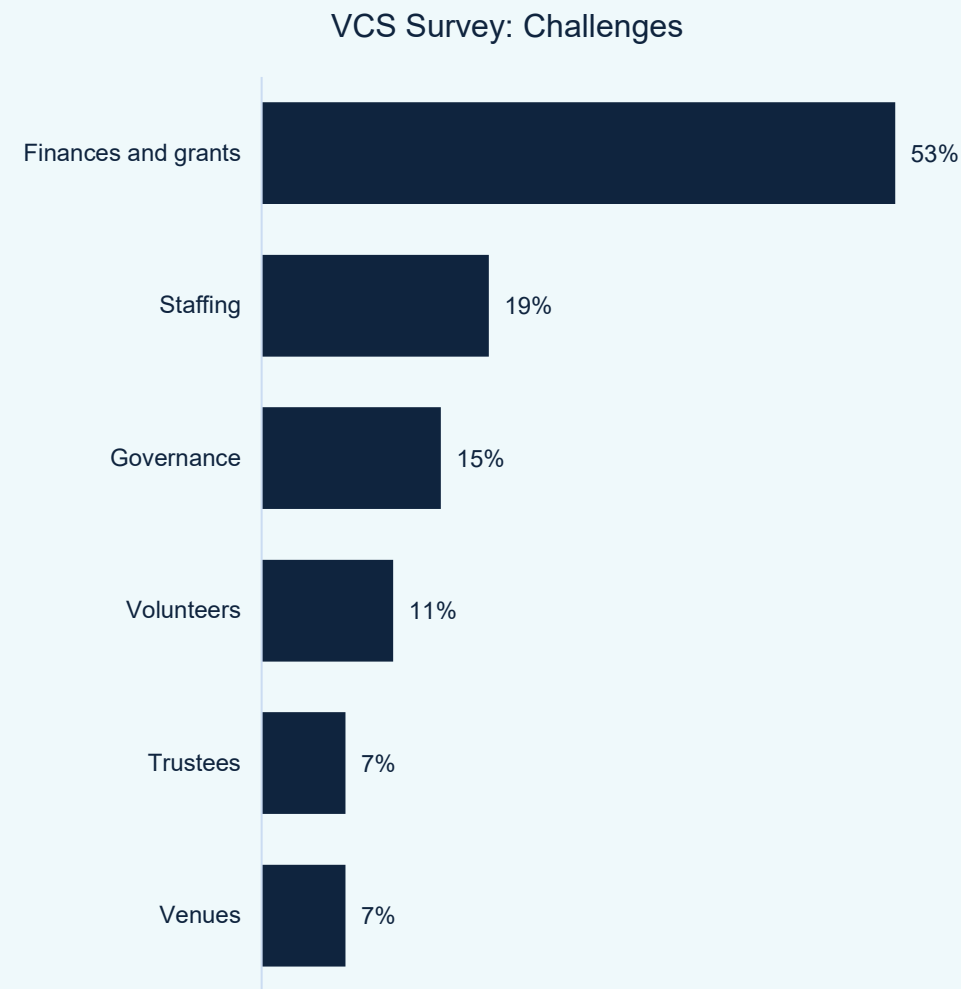
A voluntary and community sector (VCS) survey was undertaken by Involve in April and May 2022 to understand the current state of the sector and likely future challenges. Two thirds of organisations reported returning to full service delivery, with those that had not yet returned reporting challenges around access to venues and having enough suitably trained staff.

Despite the uplift in volunteers during the pandemic, many organisations are now seeing this wane, likely reflecting financial pressures for residents and a changing demographic of volunteers with less older people taking part. This is also translating into staffing challenges particularly where salaries are less competitive in relation to high levels of inflation.

The sector is seeing changing patterns of need and support to be provided. Of the organisations identifying new training areas since the pandemic, 25% recognised the additional need around providing mental health support.

Many local organisations are preparing for further challenges, particularly in relation to the cost of living, experiencing both increased demand and also internal resource pressures. The most highly cited challenges were around finance pressures followed by recruiting and retaining staff.

For the council to continue to achieve a preventative, partnership and community led approach to our own challenges, it will be critical to continue working closely with the VCS on these issues.



Source: Involve research 2022

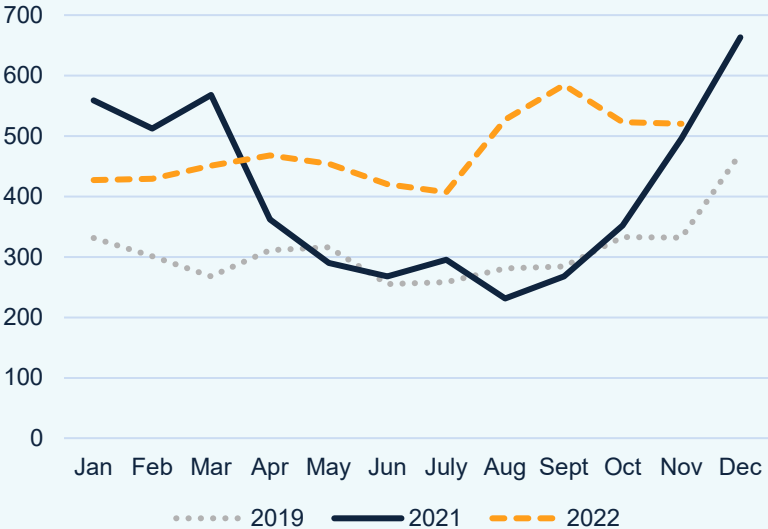
Communities

Foodbanks

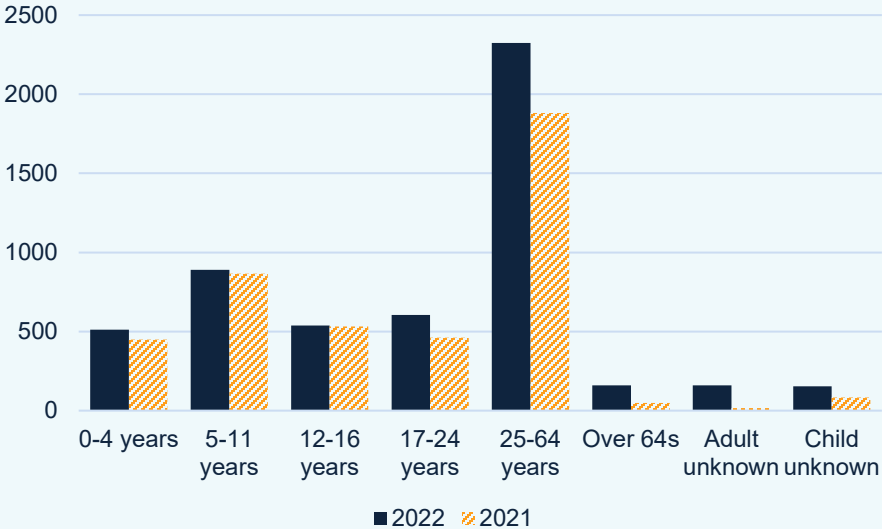
The community lead on a number of vital local support initiatives, with the Bracknell Foodbank an example of this. Their provision can provide further insight into local needs of residents. In the first 11 months of 2022, 2,149 food parcels were issued supporting 5,348 people*. This is significantly higher than previous years and the number of vouchers issued in 2022 has been 36% higher than 2021.

The change appears to be driven by the increase in adults needing support. The number of single person households seeking foodbank support was 57% higher compared to 2021. Though the overall numbers are smaller, there was also a 71% increase in couple only households seeking foodbank support.

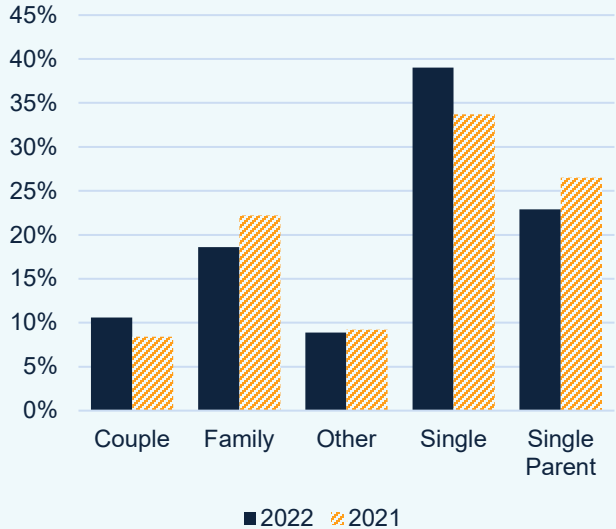
Number of Clients



Foodbank usage: Age



Foodbank Usage: Family type



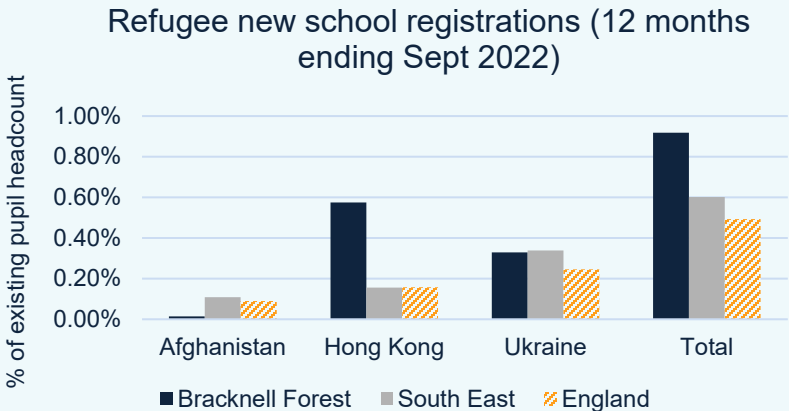
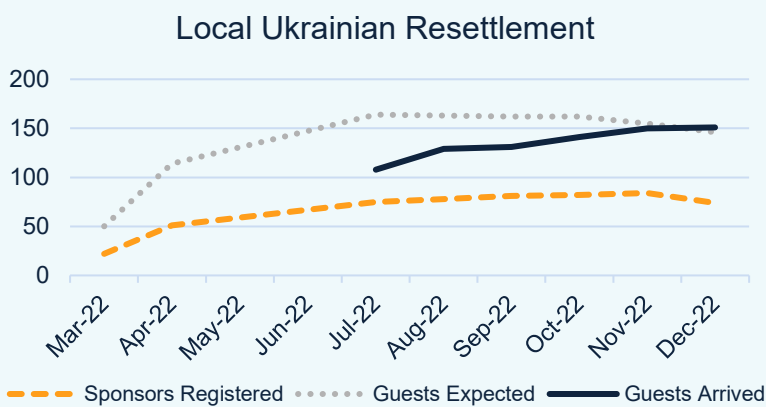
*Repeat visits would be double counted. Although based in Bracknell and primarily supporting Bracknell residents, around 7% of e-vouchers were for residents in neighbouring wards. There is also a further foodbank supporting residents in the borough in Crowthorne, therefore this does not represent all individuals who may need this support.

Ukraine conflict

In March 2022, two resettlement schemes were established to provide a pathway for Ukrainian residents to seek refuge in the UK. The Family Visa scheme and the Homes for Ukraine scheme both provided routes for this and council has had a significant role particularly in the latter.

Within Bracknell Forest, around 150 Ukrainians had arrived by mid-November on the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Around one third of these were children and the vast majority of adults were female. It is unknown the number of arrivals on the Family Visa route, but applying national estimates would suggest potentially a further 60 people. Local school applications data suggests this could be much higher.

The majority of the immediate housing need for these arrivals has been met with the support of residents in the community. Over 84 sponsors are known to the council offering accommodation. However, longer term there are concerns for additional pressure on the private rented sector and council’s housing team. Currently additional requirements related to education are being met, particularly where arrivals under the Homes for Ukraine scheme have associated funding for the council to arrange support. There are specific challenges around supporting with SEN and language needs, particularly in the context of the wider refugee schemes.



Wider migrant schemes

There has also been an increase in arrivals over the last two years from wider schemes. There are a further five refugee and asylum seeker schemes currently operating in Bracknell Forest. The greatest number are linked to the Afghanistan resettlement schemes and Hong Kong resettlement.

Three Afghan families of 12 people, had been located in the borough since Dec 2021. A further six families (27 people) arrived in October, this includes 14 children. These families often require a high level of support around integration and language and all the local arrivals have had a larger than average size family making housing arrangements more challenging.

The exact number of Hong Kong arrivals is not known as arrivals do not need to declare where they chose to locate. However, there were an additional 126 Hong Kong children who applied for Bracknell Forest school places in the 12 months to the end of September 2022. Proportionately, this is a significantly higher increase than the average for the South East and England.

Currently there are no refugees in the borough from the asylum dispersal scheme and no hotels providing large scale accommodation. This is likely to change in the near future due to increasing refugee numbers nationally.

Communities

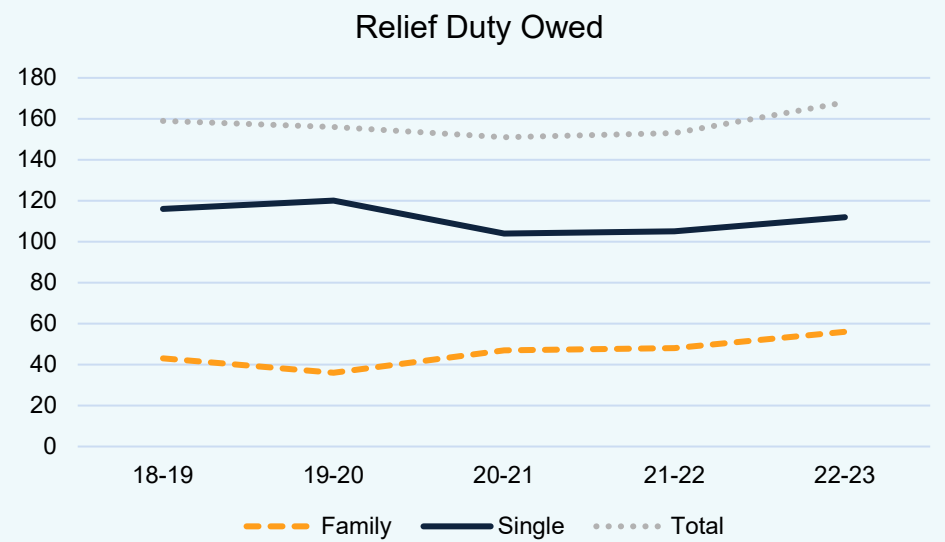
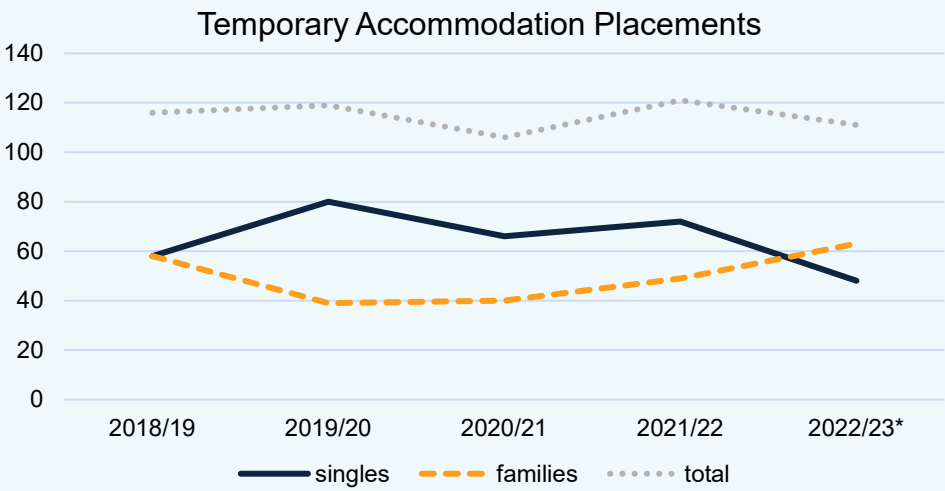
Homelessness and housing

Placements in temporary accommodation have been consistent between April 2018 and November 2022. There were particular peaks in the support needed for single people during the pandemic and also a reduction in family placements. Both have since returned approximately to pre-pandemic levels. In the last 12 months, an increase in the use of emergency accommodation has been needed due to limited capacity of local temporary accommodation homes.

Homeless Relief Duty describes when a person or household are homeless and the duty of the local authority to provide assistance in helping them obtain housing. The figures have remained steady during the period April 2018 to April 2022 with an average of 154 households owed the duty per annum (111 singles and 43 families). So far in 2022/23, the number of households owed a relief duty appears to be above the predicted levels, already exceeding previous years' annual total, particularly among families. This may indicate increased pressure on local temporary accommodation in coming years, particularly when combined with the freeze on Local Housing Allowance rates until 2027 and the increasing cost of rent.

Source: Local datasets

*22/23 numbers are full year estimates, based on actual numbers to date as at 01 November 2022. The data sets are raw data and may not align with national data.

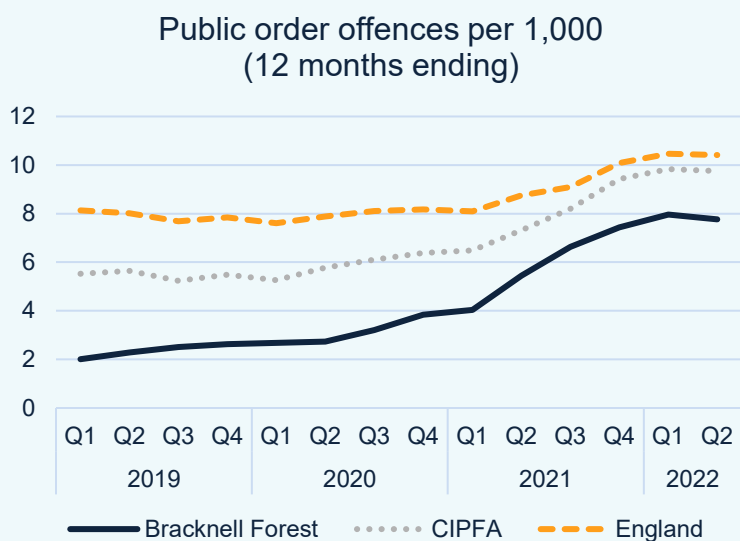
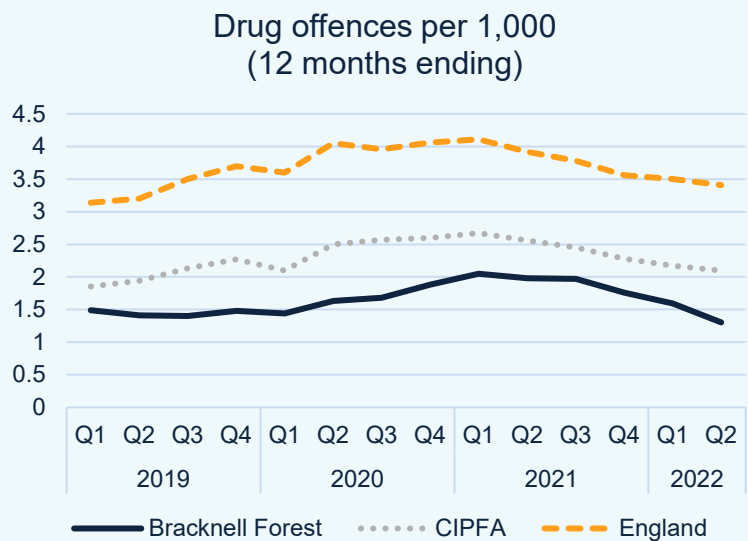
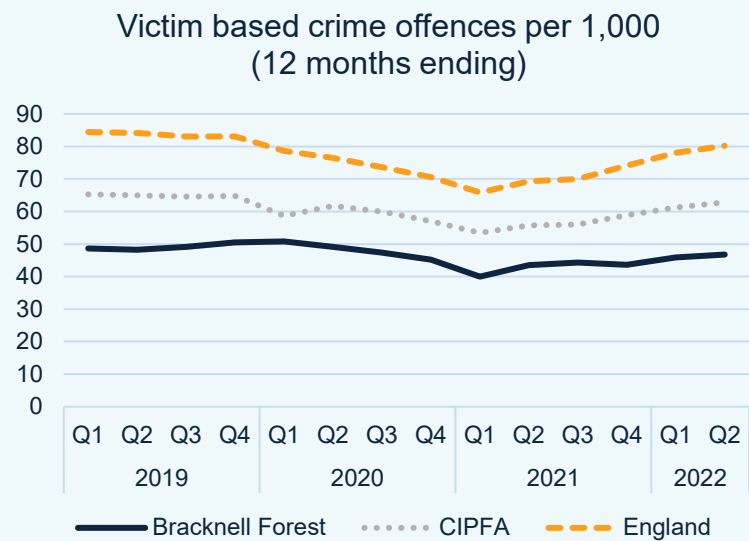
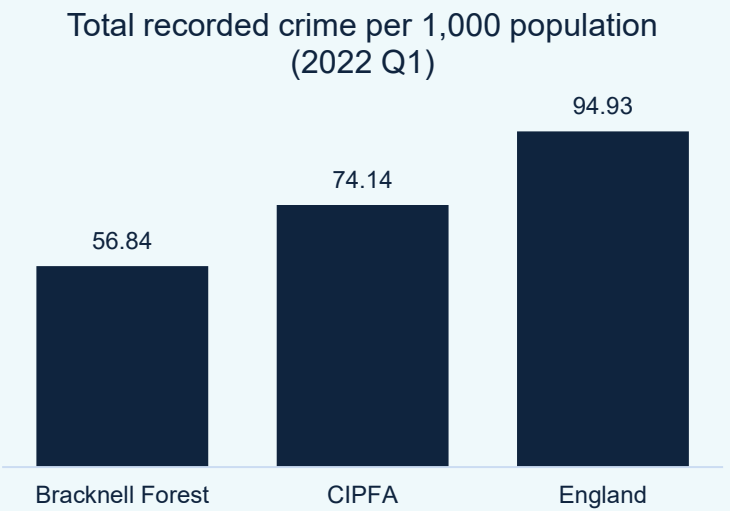


Communities

Community safety, crime and disorder

Overall, Bracknell Forest has lower rates of crime compared to CIPFA neighbours and the wider national average. There has been a slightly gradual increase in crime since September 2020. This local pattern is echoed nationally and likely reflects the increased movement of people following the pandemic lockdown periods. The rate of most offences have returned to pre-pandemic levels.

When looking at specific types of crime, these broadly follow the national rates, though at a small scale. The most notable trend is the overall increase in public order offences, significantly higher than pre-pandemic. Fraud and computer misuse offences have increased since the pandemic.



Source: LG Inform

Communities

Summary

Many community assets and networks have now recovered from the pandemic. Libraries are becoming more and more used for facilitating community activities, support and events. The traditional book borrowing offer has nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Community led organisations are facing increasing financial pressures in light of the economic challenges, however many remain optimistic about volunteering engagement.

The local community has been integral in supporting Ukrainian arrivals. This, alongside the recent increase in residents from wider refugee schemes, will further emphasise the need for local, specialist support, for example a new Ukrainian community group has been established. The additional residents may also lead to a need for further housing/temporary accommodation placements and social care support, which are already under local pressure.

Bracknell Forest continues to be a low crime area, although public order offences, including associated anti-social behaviour has increased recently.

Considerations for strategic planning

1. How can community engagement and identity be built further using local community development, organisations and assets?
2. How can the community be supported to extend their early help and prevention and crisis support?
3. Could the community be further involved in broader council functions such as procurement, service design and process change?

Current council plan objectives

- maintain the viability of our community-based shopping and employment areas
- support our network of community centres and libraries
- work with our local police to maintain good public order, reduce antisocial behaviour and combat drug related crime
- support culture and arts facilities such as South Hill Park
- establish a local lottery to help raise additional funds for local voluntary and community groups
- deliver housing services that focus on preventing homelessness
- develop a new Homeless Strategy and implement a local action plan to reduce rough sleeping
- identify the need for and facilitate the provision of affordable homes for rent and shared ownership and rent to meet that need
- review our Housing Allocations Policy to make best use of affordable housing provision to meet local needs
- support the cultural diversity of our communities

Engagement

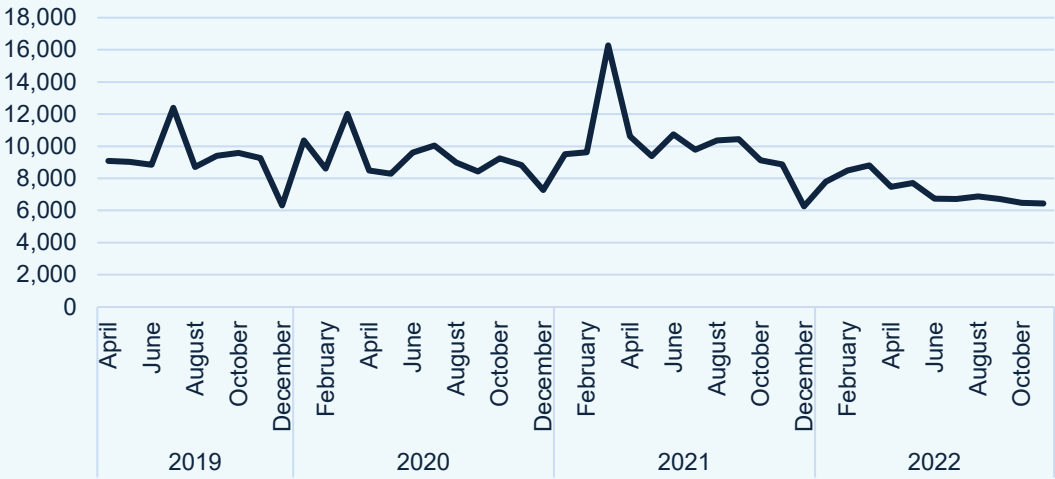
Residents continue to contact the council through a number of communication routes. One part of this is via the telephone to customer services. There was a significant peak in resident phone calls in March 2021 when the food recycling scheme and refuse collection changes were introduced. Since then, there has been a reduction in call volumes, likely a reflection that more people and services are returning to pre-covid activities. The reduction may also relate to the new website launch, aiming to help residents answer questions more easily online.

Emails have remained a regular access point over the past few years, with many opting for this digital contact. The 24/7 accessibility, coupled with the ability to construct a message almost anywhere may account for its popularity.

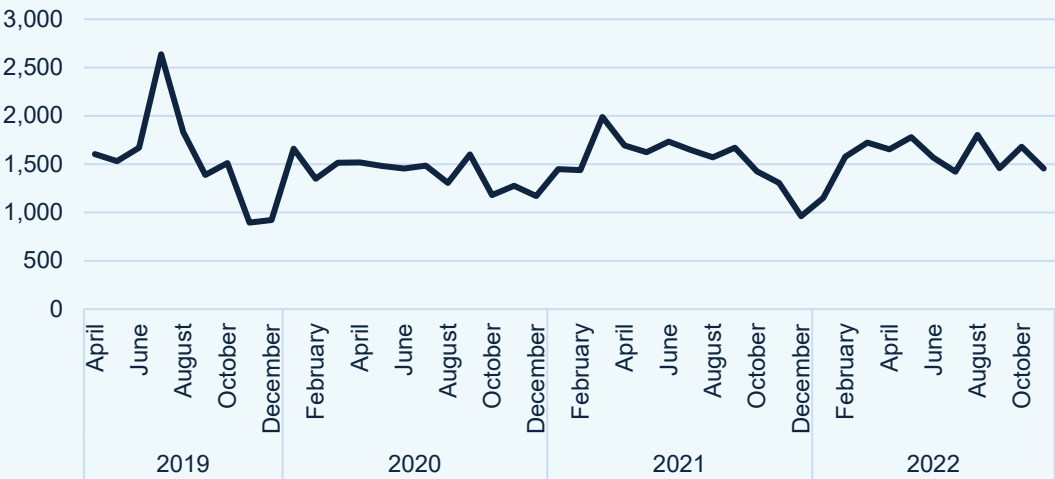
Access to Time Square was limited to the public from March 2020 to April 2022, due to the pandemic. Since then, the reception and customer area has been redesigned with a new community hub established. The community hub offers an open space for any visitor to use computers or Wi-Fi, as well as staff support to make referrals and provide low level support if needed.

Footfall data is not recorded for those who use the community hub, however, during two weeks in early December, snapshot data was recorded. This showed an average of 66 people were visiting every day. With the most common reasons being for pre-scheduled appointments (23% of visitors). During this period, 16% of visitors were also using the community winter hub offer. More than 20 individual visits during this two week period were linked to homelessness.

Phonecalls received



Emails received



Source: Internal data sets

Engagement

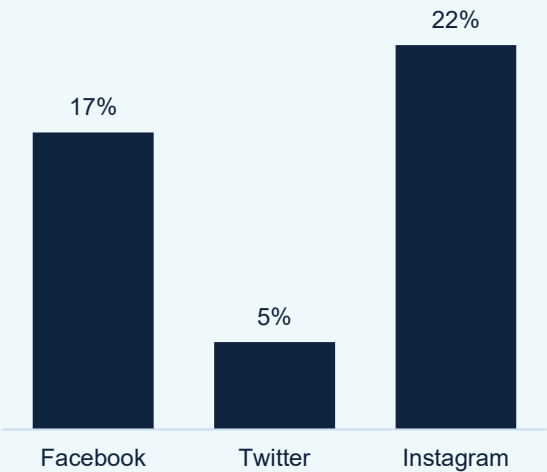
Digital Engagement

The number of unique visitors to council’s website was lower than the previous year’s average between June 2020 and November 2021. This is likely to reflect the closure of a number of normal services through the pandemic such as the libraries and The Look Out, which usually receive high web traffic. Over the last year, there has also been higher usage of the website than before the pandemic which is likely to reflect the launch of the new public website, improving the structure, navigation and content.

Device data suggests that since the start of 2020 there has been a clear preference for using mobile devices. On average, 62% of visits are completed via mobile device, compared to 35% via a desktop. The council’s website is fully created to be set up for the mobile experience, including online forms.

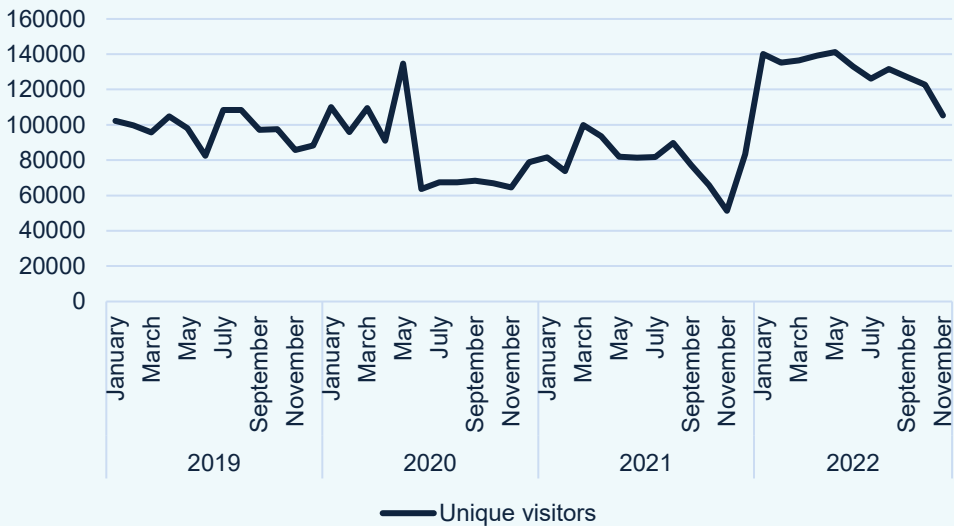
There continues to be high engagement with the council’s social media channels. Posts focus on local information, events and signposting. Instagram has seen the greatest growth, though Facebook remains the site with the largest groups of followers.

Increase in social media followers (2020 to Dec 2022)

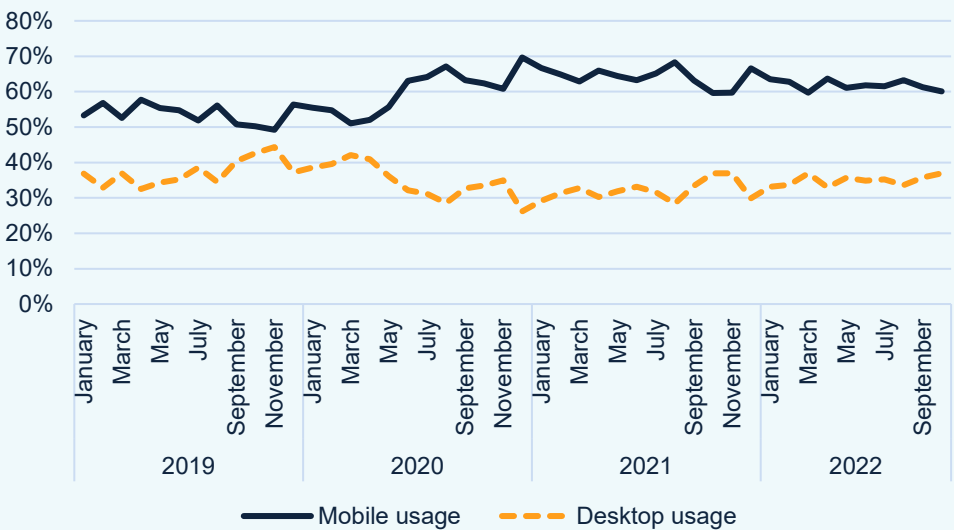


Source: Internal data sets

Number of unique visitors



Device usage (% of visits)



Engagement

Summary

The data shows that residents are regularly contacting the council through a number of different channels. Digital methods, including self-service on the website, are continuing to grow in popularity. However, it is also clear, since re-opening the Time Square office, that there are a cohort of residents with more complex needs, or those not digitally-able, who continue to need face-to-face support. The previous residents' survey, conducted in May 2021, identified that around 5% of households do not use and/or have the internet at home.

Current Council Plan objectives

- invest in digital technology and access points to help people access our services (Value for Money)

Considerations for strategic planning

1. Is there further opportunity for the Time Square and other Community Hubs to offer early intervention/triage and increase the single front door approach?
2. How can we maintain engagement with residents who can't or are less confident in accessing digital channels?
3. What role do borough wide council sites have for connected front door engagement, such as the Libraries and the Open Learning Centre.

Accumulated impacts

Though this report and the evidence gathered is primarily structured around the Council Plan, there are also cross cutting and accumulated impacts that do not fit into a single theme. The impacts of COVID and the current cost of living challenges have widened inequalities, disproportionately affecting certain groups of our local population, therefore this page briefly summarises some of the most significant overarching issues where there are multiple compounding impacts.

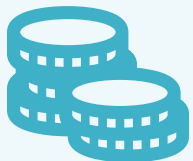


Young people

While school outcomes generally are good, there are emerging indications of increasing gaps in education attainment, compounded by deprivation. Locally, young people are most concerned about future jobs, money and homes. Many children are facing more complex health and support needs, particularly related to special educational needs and mental health.

Low income households

There are an increasing number of people affected by multiple deprivations. For example, those already on lower incomes may not have the time or money to increase their skills, or afford health related activities such as gym memberships. This is affecting single person households and families, young people and older people. Although there are multiple support initiatives within the council and across the VCS, there is growing financial pressure for households. Many who have never experienced hardship before are now being affected. Despite the national and local support schemes, further development to strengthen the financial resilience and independence of households will be important.



Older adults

Though the overall population remains relatively small, there is an ageing population who will require additional health and care support. Older adults are more likely to be affected by digital deprivation in skills, confidence and access to online and virtual communication methods. Since the pandemic, more services have moved to online, increasing the isolation of older people. With more retired residents and a good healthy life expectancy, there may, however, be further opportunities to support this group to volunteer within the community.

Bracknell town wards

A number of wards in the Bracknell town areas have compounding risks and vulnerabilities. This includes higher deprivation, worse health, worse education outcomes, and a greater reliance on the council and welfare system for support. Many of these factors will be interlinked. Increasing outcomes for this group would improve overall activity of the local economy. Particular wards most affected by these vulnerabilities include Old Bracknell, Priestwood and Garth, and Wildridings and Central.

