

The Profile of Children Looked After in Swindon 2018

Understanding the profile of Swindon's children looked after population and forecasting future demand is integral to ensuring we provide appropriate services to meet the needs of children in care. The following analysis has been prepared to inform market development, re-shape our in-house provision, develop effective commissioning arrangements with external market (frameworks, block contracting and spot purchasing), and establish robust contract management and Quality Assurance arrangements (IPAs, IPCs, performance, business viability, inspection judgements, history, complexity of current placements, visits). Using the profile of needs of Swindon's children looked after will help us to consistently get the best placement, at the right time, in the right place.

Children in Care Rate per 10,000

Number of CLA per 10,000 under 18 population

	31 st March 2016	31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018
Swindon	60.0	66.0	73.27
Stat Neighbour average	60.6	62.2	-
England average	60.0	62.0	-

The number of looked after children per 10,000 under 18 population in Swindon is high when compared to statistical neighbours and England averages.

Age Distribution

Number of Children Looked After in Swindon by age group

	2015/16				2016/17				2017/18			
	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
U1	7	53.85%	6	46.15%	8	44.44%	10	55.56%	13	61.90%	8	38.10%
1 to 4	23	52.27%	21	47.73%	22	44.00%	28	56.00%	29	47.54%	32	52.46%
5 to 9	24	50.00%	24	50.00%	35	50.72%	34	49.28%	35	46.05%	41	53.95%
10 to 15	59	51.75%	55	48.25%	75	60.48%	49	39.52%	74	61.16%	47	38.84%
16+	42	57.53%	31	42.47%	39	59.09%	27	40.91%	44	54.32%	37	45.68%
TOTAL	155	53.08%	137	46.92%	179	54.74%	148	45.26%	195	54.17%	165	45.83%

Percentage of Children Looked After in Swindon by age group

	Under 1	1-4	5 - 9	10 -15	16 & over
Swindon (2018)	5.5%	17.2%	21.6%	33.6%	22.1%
Stat Neighbour average (2017)	5.0%	12.4%	17.5%	39.6%	25.4%
England average (2017)	5.3%	12.6%	19.4%	39.3%	23.4%

There has been a noticeable increase in the number of children aged 1- 4 years and 5 to 9 years looked after since 2016. The percentages of looked after children in the 1-4 age group is above the averages for statistical neighbour and England overall. The likelihood of returning children in these age groups to their birth families or achieving permanency through adoption or special guardianship is greater than for the older children.

Ethnicity

Ethnic profile of children looked after

	31 March 2016	31 March 2017	31 March 2018	Stat N 2017	Eng 2017
White	82.2% (240)	78.6% (257)	72.5% (261)	77.7%	74.7%
Mixed	6.2% (18)	6.1% (20)	5.3% (19)	6.2%	9.1%
Asian	6.8% (20)	6.4% (21)	8.1% (29)	3.4%	4.7%
Black	3.4% (10)	2.8% (9)	5.3% (19)	5.5%	7.2%
Other Ethnic Minority	0.7% (2)	1.5% (5)	6.1% (22)	5.9%	3.4%
Other / Not Recorded	0.7% (2)	4.6% (15)	2.8% (10)	1.3%	0.9%
Total	100.0% (292)	100.0% (327)	(100%) 360	100.0%	100.0%

There is an over representation of ethnic minority looked after children compared to the local population. Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 14% of all children living in the area, 25% of children looked after are from different ethnic minority groupings. The highest percentage of children are Asian, and 2018 has seen a rise in the number of children from the black ethnic grouping.

Legal status

Children looked after by Legal status

	31 March 2016	31 March 2017	31 March 2018	Stat N 2017	Eng 2017
Interim Care Order	14.7% (43)	16.2% (53)	12.2% (44)	12.7%	13.3%
Full care Order	33.9% (99)	39.8% (130)	39.4% (142)	47.2%	52.1%
Placement Order	6.5% (19)	10.7% (35)	12.2% (44)	7.7%	7.0%
Section 20	43.5% (127)	32.7% (107)	36.1% (130)	21.7%	21.3%
Child Protection Grounds	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0%	0.1%
Youth justice Legal Status	1.4% (4)	0.6% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.2%	0.3%
Total	100% (292)	100% (327)	100% (360)	100.0%	100.0%

There is a larger proportion of children subject to Section 20 compared to the statistical neighbour and England averages. Under section 20 the parent has no access to legal advice, the child does not have a guardian, and the attachment between the parent and child is likely to be compromised over this period. There are also a high number of children on placement orders and the length of time these children have been subject to a placement order is too long.

Children looked after with a legal status of S20

Length of S20	S20's as at 31/03/2018							
	N1	N2	N3	N4	N5	N6	N8	Grand Total
Less than 6 months	37.7%	22.2%	50.0%	27.3%	33.3%	40.0%	41.7%	36.2%
6 to 12 months	29.5%	11.1%	50.0%	18.2%	22.2%	40.0%	16.7%	24.6%
12 to 18 months	13.1%	0.0%	0.0%	18.2%	11.1%	20.0%	4.2%	10.8%
18 months +	19.7%	66.7%	0.0%	36.4%	33.3%	0.0%	37.5%	28.5%

Category of Need	Description
N1	Abuse or neglect – children in need as a result of, or at risk of, abuse or neglect
N2	Child's Disability – children and their families whose main need for services arises out of the child's disabilities, illness or intrinsic condition
N3	Parental illness or disability
N4	Family in acute stress – children whose needs arise from living in a family going through a temporary crisis such that parenting capacity is diminished and some of the children's needs are not being adequately met
N5	Family dysfunction – children whose needs arise mainly out of their living with families where the parenting capacity is chronically inadequate
N6	Socially unacceptable behaviour – children and families whose need for services arises primarily out of their children's behaviour impacting detrimentally on the community
N8	Absent parenting – children whose need for services arises mainly from having no parents available to provide for them. Children whose parents decide it is in the best interest for the child to be adopted would be included in this category

The majority of children who have had a section 20 for 18+ months fall under the need category of child's disability (N2).

Admissions

Number and % of Children **becoming** Looked After in Swindon by age group

Age Group	31 March 2016	31 March 2017	31 March 2018	SN 2017	England 2017
U1	25 (14.0%)	29 (16.2%)	31(17.1%)	18.1%	18.2%
1-4	36 (20.1%)	40 (22.3%)	41 (22.7%)	18.7%	18.3%
5-9	30 (16.8%)	38 (21.2%)	34 (18.8%)	15.6%	17.7%
10-15	69 (38.5%)	54 (30.2%)	48 (26.5%)	27.7%	28.6%
16+	19 (10.6%)	18 (10.1%)	27 (14.9%)	19.9%	17.2%
TOTAL	179 (100%)	179 (100%)	181 (100%)	100%	100%

Between March 2016 and 2018, there has been an increase in the proportion of babies and young children becoming looked after between birth and 4 years. An increasing proportion of 16 and over year olds have also become looked after rising from 10.6% (19 young people) to 14.9% (27 young people). Early permanence planning is key for securing permanent alternative care for babies and young children. Although all age groups would benefit from an edge of care service, the older age groups are often targeted for edge of care support. By providing 'edge of care support', professionals can work collaboratively with the families to develop the necessary skills and structure to secure re-unification into the family home.

Returning children to their birth or extended families is a good outcome when it is safe to do so. Following a decline in 2017, more children in 2018 have been discharged to their parents or Special Guardianships. Permanency arrangements through adoption have improved since 2016 but remains lower than the average for statistical neighbours and England overall.

Length of time in care (by age group)

Length of time in care	Age range										Grand Total	
	U1		1 to 4		5 to 9		10 to 15		16+			
Under 1 month	2	9.5%	1	1.6%	1	1.3%	3	2.5%	3	3.7%	10	2.8%
1 to 3 months	8	38.1%	7	11.5%	12	15.8%	11	9.1%	7	8.6%	45	12.5%
4 to 6 months	6	28.6%	10	16.4%	4	5.3%	6	5.0%	4	4.9%	30	8.3%
7 to 12 months	5	23.8%	10	16.4%	15	19.7%	13	10.7%	6	7.4%	49	13.6%
13 to 18 months	0	0.0%	13	21.3%	4	5.3%	8	6.6%	10	12.3%	35	9.7%
19 to 24 months	0	0.0%	5	8.2%	14	18.4%	14	11.6%	7	8.6%	40	11.1%
2 to 3 years	0	0.0%	12	19.7%	15	19.7%	22	18.2%	13	16.0%	62	17.2%
3 to 5 years	0	0.0%	3	4.9%	6	7.9%	17	14.0%	15	18.5%	41	11.4%
5+ years	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	6.6%	27	22.3%	16	19.8%	48	13.3%

Reasons for children coming into care

Measure	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		National Indicator 2016/17
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	%
Abuse or neglect (N1)	159	54.5%	195	59.6%	223	61.9%	62%
Child's Disability (N2)	18	6.2%	13	4.0%	16	4.4%	3%
Parental illness or disability (N3)	13	4.5%	13	4.0%	19	5.3%	3%
Family in acute stress (N4)	36	12.3%	37	11.3%	31	8.6%	8%
Family dysfunction (N5)	46	15.8%	42	12.8%	38	10.6%	15%
Socially unacceptable behaviour (N6)	5	1.7%	6	1.8%	6	1.7%	2%
Absent Parenting (N8)	15	5.1%	21	6.4%	27	7.5%	7%
Grand Total	292	100.0%	327	100.0%	360	100.0%	100%

The main reasons for children being in care in 2017/18 was due to abuse or neglect (62%). There are 64 more children in care due to abuse or neglect compared to 3 years ago.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC)

Swindon has been a dispersal area for UASCs for several years. The number of unaccompanied asylum seekers accommodated has increased from 13 in March 2016 to 25 in March 2018.

Child Exploitation

Swindon has 9 young people in care or care leavers who have been assessed as being at risk of or have been subject to child sexual exploitation (CSE). The ages of this cohort are 14 years (1), 16 years (4) and 17 years (4). Five of these young people are in placements outside Swindon.

Swindon has 7 young people in care or care leavers who have been assessed as being at risk or have been subject to criminal exploitation (CE). Five of these children are 16 years old and two are 17 years old. All these children are in placements in Swindon.

Placements profile

Children looked after by placement type

Placement Type	31 March 2016	31 March 2017	31 March 2018
Connected persons fostering	12.67% (37)	12.84% (42)	15.3% (55)
In-house fostering	51.4% (150)	44.9% (147)	33.9% (122)
IFA	19.5% (57)	24.2% (79)	29.4% (106)
Residential	7.2% (21)	7.9% (26)	9.4% (34)
Placed with parents	3.1% (9)	5.5% (18)	3.9% (14)
Independent Living	3.4% (10)	2.5% (8)	5.6% (20)
Placed for adoption	2.0% (6)	1.5% (5)	2.2% (8)
Secure	0.7% (2)	0.6% (2)	0.3% (1)
Total	100% (292)	100% (327)	100% (360)

The breakdown of placements by type indicate the vast majority of children looked after are placed in foster care (79%) which is consistent with SBC's commitment to place children in family-based arrangements. Of the 79%, 49% are in-house placements (including connected people, relatives or friends) and 29.4% with independent fostering agencies. 9% of children are placed in externally commissioned residential placements. A higher number of placements are with external providers than within the council's internal provision. Placements with external providers are significantly more expensive and therefore we are focussing on ways to broaden internal services to meet demand for placements. There are currently 76 in-house registered in-house foster carers and there is a recruitment drive to increase the number to reduce dependency on commissioned placements.

Children with disabilities by placement type

Placement Type	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018 to date	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Connected Person Fostering	2	6.90%	3	9.68%	5	11.9%	4	9.52%
In-house fostering	13	44.83%	9	29.03%	13	30.95%	10	23.81%
Independent fostering Agency	7	24.14%	9	29.03%	11	26.19%	10	23.81%
Residential	7	24.14%	10	32.26%	9	21.43%	12	28.57%
Placed with parents	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	3	7.14%	5	11.90%
Independent living	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	2.38%	1	2.38%
Placed for adoption)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Secure	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Grand Total	29	100.0%	31	100.0%	42	100.0%	42	100.0%

Location and distance from home

Number and % of children placed more than 20 miles from their home

Number and % of children placed more than 20 miles from their home	31 st March 2016 [31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018
Swindon	19%	22%	23.1%
Stat Neighbour average	13.2%	12.7%	-
England average	14%	14%	-

When compared with statistical neighbours and the rest of the country, too many looked after children are placed more than 20 miles away from their home. This has implications for the child and family in terms of maintaining contact, accessing health and support services, as well as impacting on oversight and practice for both social workers and the virtual school.



Age breakdown of children placed more than 20 miles from their home	31 st March 2018 Count	31 st March 2018 %
Under 1	7	8.4%
1 to 4	9	10.8%
5 to 9	14	16.9%
10 to 15	35	42.2%
16+	18	21.7%

Gender breakdown of children placed more than 20 miles from their home	31 st March 2018 Count	31st March 2018 %
Female	31	37.3%
Male	52	62.7%

Duration of CLA breakdown of children placed more than 20 miles from their home	31 st March 2018 Count	31st March 2018 %
Less than 1 month	2	2.4%
1 to 3 months	9	10.8%
4 to 6 months	5	6.0%
7 to 12 months	8	9.6%
1 to 2 years	18	21.7%
2+ years	41	49.4%

Placement Stability

Stability of Placements

	31 st March 2016	31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018 (provisional)	Statistical Neighbour (2017)	England (2017)
% of Long Term CLA placements stable for at least 2 years	61%	70%	51.85%	72.7%	70%
% of CLA who have had 3 or more placements – rolling 12 months	11%	12%	10.5%	9.5%	10%

The best outcomes are achieved for those children and young people who remain in a stable and consistent placements. This provides them with the opportunity to have long standing relationship with adults and peers. Although children who have experienced three or more placements is in line with national and statistical neighbour averages, long term stability continues to show signs of decrease. Capacity issues within the social work service, lack of in-house foster care provision, and a lack of locally commissioned external care for children with challenging behaviour has affected long term stability.

Episodes of Care

There were 519 young people who became looked after between April 2015 and March 2018, of which 34 had more than one episode of being in care over the three year period (6.5%). 64.7% of those who have had more than one episode of being in care are males (22 out of the 34).

The health of Children Looked After for more than a year

Data	Year ending 31/3/16		Year ending 31/3/17		Year ending 31/3/18
	Swindon data	National %	Swindon data	National %	Swindon data
Number of children looked after for more than a year on 31 st March	169	N/A	202	N/A	229
% of children who had a review health assessment completed	89% (150)	90%	87% (177)	89%	79.4% (182)
% of children who had a dental check completed	90% (152)	84%	90% (182)	83%	82% (188)
% who have immunisations up to date	87% (148)	87%	79.5% (161)	84%	87.3% (200)
% of Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ) completed for eligible children	85%	68%	82%	76%	81%
Average SDQ score	14.6	13.9	14.3	14.1	15

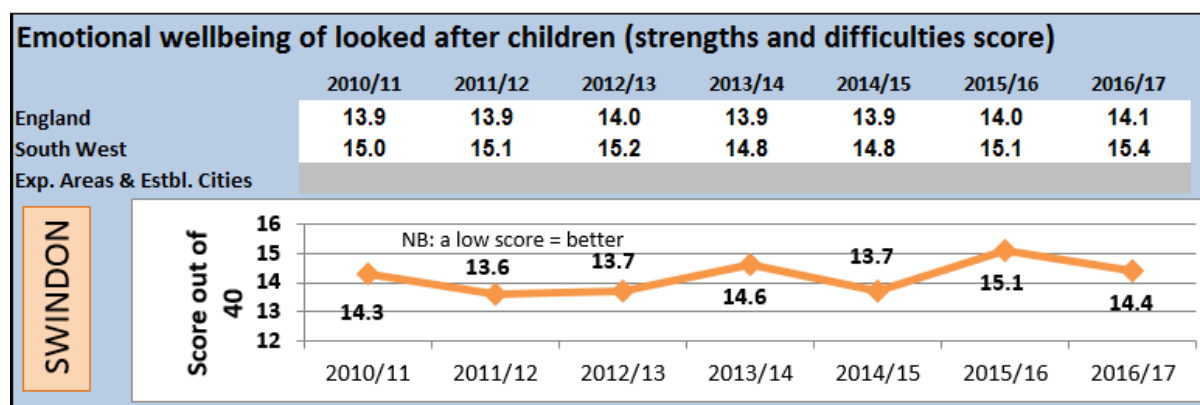
The percentage of children with completed health reviews and dental checks has declined but uptake of immunisation has increased since 2016.

Delays in identifying and meeting the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of looked after children can have far-reaching effects on all aspects of children's lives, including their ability to engage in education. As a result, their chances of reaching their full potential as adults can be hampered. The emotional and behaviour health of looked after children in Swindon continues to have a higher average SDQ score than England. The new contract with Oxford Health for Child and Adolescent Services should address the mental health needs of looked after children going forward. The commissioning by Swindon CCG of Kooth (an online resource) to support the emotional well-being of children should also have a positive impact.

Every child is expected to have an initial health assessment within 20 working days of coming into care. This ensures a child's health needs are known as soon as possible so that a health care plan can be put in place to address these needs. There has been a significant improvement in children having timely assessments with 83% of health assessments being offered within 20 working days of health being informed, and 83% completed within 20 working days. Performance is affected by late notification from social workers that a child has become looked after, and carers not bringing the child for their appointment.

Mental Health

Mental health difficulties for children in care aged 4 -17 years, are monitored nationally using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to screen for mental health and emotional wellbeing levels. (The lower the score the less likely that the child is suffering from mental health or emotional problems. Score 0 -13 low need, 14 -16 borderline, and 17 – 40 high need.)



STEP Therapeutic Service

This service provides support and life skills development / learning opportunities for children & young people who have considerable vulnerabilities, including; sufferers of physical / emotional abuse and / or neglect, primary family carers, self-harmers, those in care, with mental health issues, experiencing poverty and deprivation, as well as isolation and exclusion due to either circumstances or behaviour. During 2017/18, the service supported eight looked after children and following intervention their SDQ scores lowered to an average of 12%.

TaMHS

Number of TaMHS involvements opening in the financial year where the CYP was LAC or became LAC during the TaMHS involvement

Year	Involvements
2016/17	82
2017/18	62
2018/19 (01/04/2018 to 04/09/2018)	31
Total 01/04/2016 to 04/09/2018	175

Number of TaMHS involvements opening where the CYP was LAC or became LAC during the TaMHS involvement by Primary Involvement Reason, 01/04/2016 to 04/09/2018

Reason	Involvements
Aggression	27
Anxiety	25
Attachment	24
Autistic Spectrum Presentation	8
Behaviour	21
Bereavement / Loss	4
Deliberate Self Harm	18
Development	4
Domestic Abuse/Violence	7
Eating	1
Family Breakdown	10
Hyperkinetic	1
Learning Needs in School/SPLD	1
Low Mood	3
Low Self Esteem	3
Parenting	2
Sleep	1
Traumatic Life Event	15
Total	175

Number of TaMHS involvements opening where the CYP was LAC or became LAC during the TaMHS involvement by Age, 01/04/2016 to 04/09/2018

Age at involvement open date	Involvements
Under 4	5
4	8
5	4
6	9
7	7
8	6
9	18
10	10
11	14
12	22
13	18
14	21
15	14
16	9
17	9
Total	175

Swindon CAMHS LAC data (Jan 16 to June 18)

Referrals with LAC alert Jan 2016 to June 2018 by year

Year	Referrals
2016	80
2017	63
2018 to 30 June	41
Grand Total	184

Referrals with LAC alert by "referral reason", Jan 2016 to June 2018

Reason*	Referrals
Anxiety	1
Assessment	94
Eating Disorder	1
Gender Discomfort Issues	1
In Crisis	71
Neuro Developmental conditions	3
Relationship difficulties	2
Self harm behaviours	5
Treatment	6
Grand Total	184

*Referral reason is added by administration staff and not frequently amended later by clinicians.

The current caseload for Swindon CAMHS as at 1 July 2018 with a LAC alert is 53

Discharges from Care

Reason for care ceased	31 March 2016	31 March 2017	31 March 2018	Stat N 2017	Eng 2017
Placed with parent	44.9% (62)	29.7% (44)	33.6% (51)	22.8%	29.1%
Child Arrangement Order	3.6% (5)	6.8% (10)	5.3% (8)	3.0%	4.1%
Special guardianship	8.7% (12)	12.8% (19)	15.8% (24)	11.6%	12.6%
Adopted	4.3% (6)	12.8% (19)	10.5% (16)	15.7%	14.9%
Independent Living	3.6% (5)	1.4% (2)	2.6% (4)	26.0%	15.6%
Residential	2.9% (4)	4.1% (6)	7.2% (11)	2.7%	1.9%
Custody	2.2% (3)	0.7% (1)	2.0% (3)	1.1%	1.4%
Other	29.7% (41)	31.8% (47)	23.4% (35)	17.1%	20.4%
Total	100% (138)	100% (148)	100% (152)	100.0%	100.0%

Returning children to their birth or extended families is a good outcome when it is safe to do so. Following a decline in 2017, more children in 2018 have been discharged to their parents

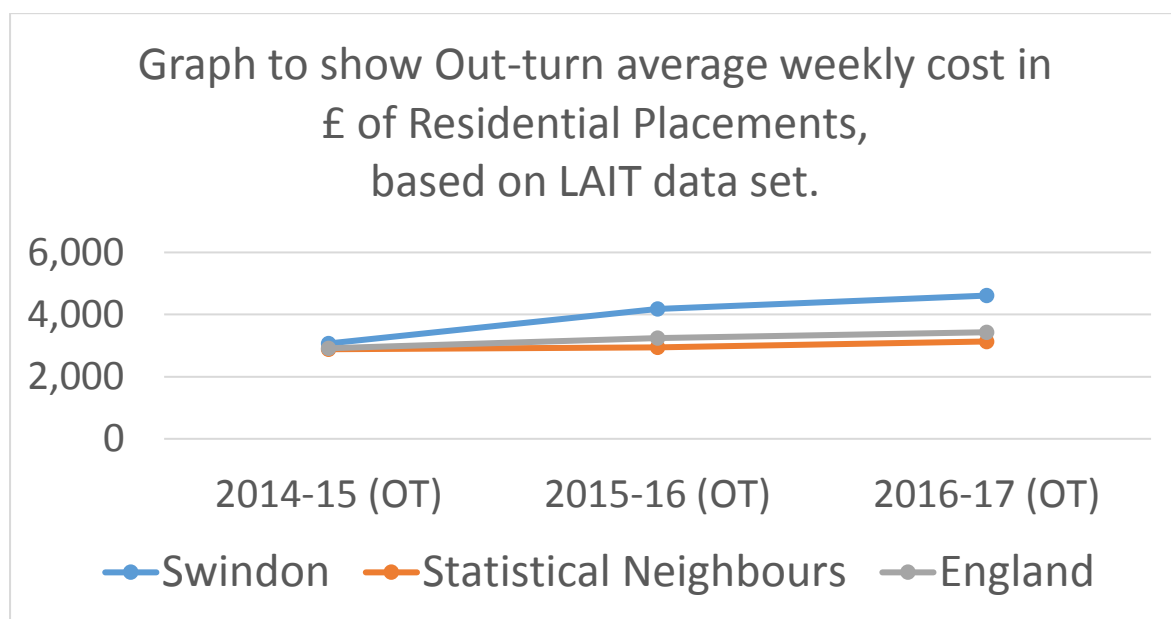
or special guardians. Permanency arrangements through adoption has improved since 2016 but remains lower than the average for statistical neighbours and England overall. However, timeliness of adoption has improved with an average of 569 days between a child coming into care and being placed for adoption.

Care Leavers

The Leaving Care Service is currently working with 170 Care Leavers and providing support to a further 93 young people aged 16 -18.

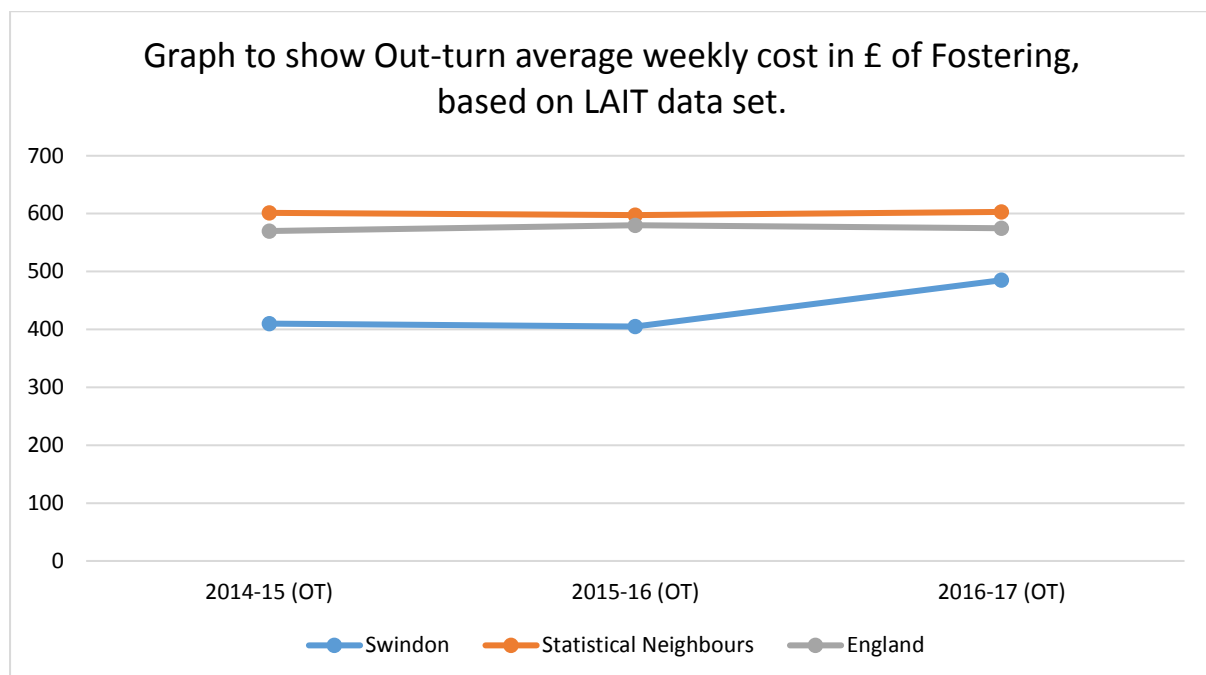
Financial Benchmarking

Residential Costs



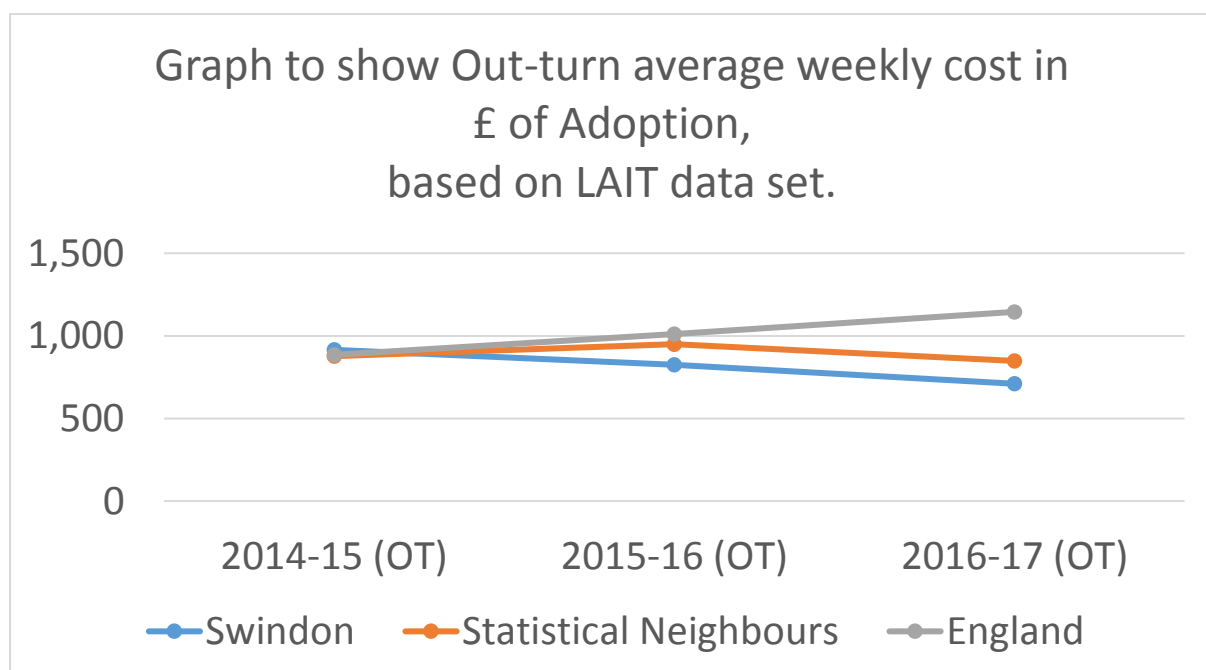
Swindon is an outlier for residential care weekly unit costs compared to both England average and statistical neighbours. For 2016/17, Swindon's costs were 12th highest compared to all authorities at £4,610 per week, England average was £3,430 and South West average was £3,685.

Fostering costs



Swindon is one of the lowest in the South West and is lower than the average for England for weekly unit cost for fostering (includes in-house and external fostering).

Adoption Costs



Swindon is at the lower end for adoption weekly unit cost when compared to the average for England and statistical neighbour.