



Annual Equality and Diversity Report

A reflection on the 2022-23 Year

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Foreword

Thank you for taking the time to read the council's Equality and Diversity Annual Report.

This report has been produced in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty created by the Equality Act 2010. The purpose of this document is to:

- Provide a range of demographic and socio-economic information. This can be used to better understand the needs of our local communities and those that may be affected by council services, policies and practices, and in order to inform decision-making and policy development.
- Demonstrate how the council has engaged with the community, taken actions to enable better understanding of different customer needs and ways to support them, and considered potential equality and diversity implications prior to making decisions.
- Outline the activities the council has undertaken during 2022-23 to promote equality, diversity and inclusion both amongst its workforce (officers and members) and within the community, and the positive measures that have been taken to remove barriers, improve access to services and increase customer satisfaction.


We hope that you find this document useful and informative. Further information, including the council's related Equality and Diversity Policy, can be found at: <https://folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/your-council/policies-plans-and-documents/equality-and-diversity>

Alternatively you can contact us at: policy@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Mike Blakemore
Cabinet Member for Community and
Collaboration



Dr Susan Priest
Chief Executive



Section 1

Our Achievements and Engagement Activities

Introduction: The council has undertaken numerous projects throughout 2022/23. This section looks in more detail at some of the engagement activities we conducted over the year to promote equality, diversity and inclusion. Our achievements are fully detailed in [2022-23 Annual Performance Report: 'A snapshot of our year'](#).

01 Our Achievements and Engagement Activities

Folkestone & Hythe Housing Service

In 2022-2023 the Housing Service has gone from strength to strength and continues to work towards our vision of: **An excellent, digitally enabled service that is easy to deal with and where tenants (customers) are at the heart of everything we do.** Key areas of work included:

- The Strategic Tenant Advisory Panel (STAP) has been consulted on and influenced our Rechargeable Repairs Policy and Repairs & Maintenance Policy, the review of our Independent Living service, the tenant handbook, and the new cleaning contract for communal areas in council housing blocks. The Chair of STAP also worked closely with the Regulator of Social Housing as part of the pilot consumer regulation project F&HDC took part in. Reviewing the performance of the housing service also forms a key part of STAP's work, and they review performance information and hold to account when they meet every two months.
- Housing Online was launched which is a tenant access sign up portal allowing tenants to carry out a number of functions themselves, such as reporting a repair or making online payments to their account, viewing and downloading rent statements and updating their contact details. Almost 20% of our tenants have so far signed up to Housing Online.
- Our Tenant Engagement Strategy and associated action plan has continued to ensure tenant engagement work develops and increases.
- We spent over £477,000 on aids and adaptations to help council tenants with disabilities to live safely and comfortably in their homes.
- A manager from the Housing Team is a standing member of the F&HDC District Vulnerability Panel, ensuring that any concerns about vulnerable or potentially vulnerable tenants can be promptly raised in a multi-disciplinary setting.
- A re-launch and strengthening of the Independent Living Forum, where tenant representatives of the sheltered (elderly) housing service meet to discuss issues relevant to them.
- Increasing the frequency of printed publications that are sent by post to all tenants from twice a year to quarterly.
- The engagement and involvement of council tenants from all backgrounds is encouraged and enabled by the provision of multiple contact methods including online, by telephone and in person via home visit.
- Staff have access to professional translation and interpretation services.

We have continued to work on delivering homes that meet the needs of our changing population and during the 2022/23 year we have:

- Delivered a total of 103 new affordable homes with partners for rent and shared ownership continuing to boost the supply of much needed homes in the district.

- 308 hospital admissions prevented or hospital discharges accelerated as a result of Private Sector Housing Team and partner intervention.
- Brought 50 long term empty homes within the district back into use.
- Improved 437 private sector homes for local people as a result of enforcement action and the provision of the Disabled Facilities Grant, Winter Warmth and Home Safe loans.
- Awarded a total of 107 disabled facilities grants to support those with disabilities adapt their own homes
- We have invested over £570,000 on disabled aids and adaptations to our council housing stock to help council tenants with disabilities live safely and comfortably in their homes. The following major and minor disabled adaptations work was undertaken during year:

Major Works		Minor Works	
Job Type	Number of Jobs	Job Type	Number of Jobs
FFS/Bathroom Refurbs	39	Grab Rail, Handrails etc.	110
Door Widenings & New Doors (internal & external)	3	Kitchen & Bathroom Alterations	3
Groundwork (ramps, paths, driveways, patios etc.)	2	Door Widenings & New Doors (internal & external)	14
Kitchen Refurb Works	19	Groundwork (ramps, paths, driveways, patios, fencing, permissions etc.)	6
Stairlifts	5	Galvanised Rails	14
		Bathroom alterations	15
		Electrics	6

The Council has continued to implement its Homelessness Prevention Strategy, working closely with our local partners, including the Rainbow Centre and Porchlight, to deliver a range of services to prevent vulnerable people from becoming rough sleepers and, where people are already rough sleepers, provide services to support them to access accommodation and help move to a more settled way of life. The services include:

01 Our Achievements and Engagement Activities

- The provision of outreach services to identify and verify people rough sleeping in the district.
- The provision of emergency accommodation to help people move away from the street.
- Sign-posting to mental health and other support services.
- Support to assist people to access long-term accommodation both within the social and private housing sectors.
- Support services to prevent tenancy breakdown and a potential return to the streets.
- The provision of accommodation services for the most entrenched rough sleepers, including intensive housing support.
- Joint working with other services, in particular the Rainbow Centre and Porchlight, in scoping the development of all year-round accommodation for rough sleepers, pending their move on into secure housing, with the provision of emergency pods for immediate access.

The council provides funding to the Rainbow Centre in Sandgate Road, Folkestone, to enable them to provide a range of support services to vulnerable people with a history of rough sleeping or who are living in insecure accommodation. People assisted through the service during the year are then being helped into longer term accommodation.

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The council also supports the Rainbow Centre to deliver the Winter Shelter project, providing emergency accommodation to vulnerable homeless people during the winter months. The project provides 13 units of accommodation. A total of 21 people were supported through the project over the winter 2022/23. The project also continues to support clients once they move on into longer term accommodation.

Engagement with local Armed Forces Community

The Folkestone & Hythe District has a long tradition of cooperation between its civilian community and the local armed forces. In 2022/23, engagement activities continued to support the local armed forces community which includes those serving, in the regular or reserves, veterans and their families.

The council continues to support the Gurkha veteran community in Cheriton at their community centre on the ground floor of the library building. The centre is run by the Folkestone Nepalese Community (FNC), a charitable incorporated organisation and includes welfare support office, a meeting room, event and socialising spaces, and an IT room.

The council's Armed Forces Lead Officer (AFLO) has attended a range of meetings, briefings, training and events throughout the year, including Kent & Medway Armed Forces Lead Officer meetings, Unit Welfare Officer meetings and the Kent & Medway Civilian Military Partnership board meetings. On 7th June 2022, the district hosted the eighth annual Kent & Medway Civilian Military Armed Forces Covenant Conference at The Leas Cliff Hall in Folkestone. The event was attended by more than 150 people, including the Lord Lieutenant of Kent and Chair of Kent County Council and Col John Baynham of 11 Brigade serving and former personnel from all the services, public sector and other organisations, including service charities. The theme of the day, organised by the Kent & Medway Civilian Partnership Board, was promoting a greater understanding and awareness of the needs of the armed forces community. Service children, housing, homelessness, employment and service charities were all discussed. There was also an update on the new Armed Forces Act and what it means in practice.

The AFLO attended the Armed Forces Network (AFN) conference in Brighton in May. The AFN also delivered training to front line staff on the new Armed Forces Act that came into force in November 2022 and includes a new legal duty for the council to consider the impact on the armed forces community in the provision of public services and in developing policy and procedures.

The AFLO also supported a Second Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles community day at MacKenzie Drive Community Centre for the families who had just arrived from Brunei.

Engagement with the wider community

The council hosted the annual 'Meet the Funders' event on 22nd September 2022. The event attracted over 80 attendees who had the opportunity to hear from funders including the National Lottery Community Fund, Kent Community Foundation, Crowd Fund Kent and Roger De Haan Charitable Trust. Attendees were able to book-15-minute face to face meetings with funders to discuss their project funding needs.

Community networking events were scheduled in July 2022 (Cost of Living Crisis) and November 2022 (Mental Health).

01 Our Achievements and Engagement Activities

Engagement with the wider community (Continued)

Three half-day training sessions were delivered online: 'Setting Up Your Group' in May 2022 and 'Running Your Group' in December 2022—with very positive feedback received on both sessions.

The council continued to support the District Food Network (DFN). The Network is chaired by an independent member of the community working with the Rainbow centre.— The group meets once every two months and has supported delivery of the Community Fridge, the Hythe Pantry and other food-related projects, including supporting the delivery of UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) work. The group also updated the 'Food Resources in Folkestone & Hythe' guide. In February 2023, we supported the Food For Thought workshop at Three Hills which brought together organisations to network and to discuss food poverty reduction initiatives including plans for the mobile foodbank to agree locations etc.

In July 2022, the DFN attended the Hythe Community Fun day (working with the Hythe community hub and NHS). The requirement from health agencies to support with food poverty work and eat well for less promotion was incorporated in this and an additional input was given on food poverty at the NHS's Cancer skin care awareness day at Sunny Sands beach in Folkestone in August 2022.

In May 2022, the White Cliffs Community Rail Partnership (WCCRP) (a partnership with Dover District Council) organised a successful stakeholder event—at Westenhanger Castle attendees heard about the partnership's projects over the last year and plans for the future.

The WCCRP also held four Christmas wreath making events at Folkestone West, Folkestone Central, Dover and Deal stations to promote the partnership.

The council supported the Winter Well event at Folca on 12th November 2022. Led by the NHS, people had the opportunity to engage with various health and wellbeing stallholders and pick up a free winter coat. It was a very successful event for which we won an award for collaborative working from Health watch.

The council organised a Welcome to Ukraine event at Quarterhouse in September 2022.

The council supported the Community Led Housing annual conference in May 2022 which aims to encourage Community Led Housing projects.

Annual Grant Funding

The council has continued to support charities, the voluntary and community sector through grants.

During 2022/23, 168 Ward Grants, totaling over £89,000, have benefitted local charities and community groups, further enhancing the council's involvement with local communities, and assisted with the delivery of efficient and effective projects and services to ward areas.

The council also commenced a partnership with KCC on the Crowd Fund Kent scheme, contributing £30,000 to support local projects that join the scheme.

In the winter of 2022/23, the council successfully applied to UK Power Networks for £27,300 funding to support 4 strategic warm spaces in the district. This funding enabled the 3 community hubs across the District and the Folkestone Nepalese Community Centre to give the community much needed support through the cost-of-living crisis, felt particularly acutely through the winter months. This included distribution of items such as slow cookers and heated blankets (via UK Shared Prosperity Fund funding) and provision of hot drinks and food etc. A cost-of-living summit was held on 20th September 2022 involving many local organisations. Working with the welfare team a cost-of-living booklet was devised as a result. This gave information on a range of support for those struggling to meet the costs of daily life. Some seed funding was provided to churches and other groups to run warm spaces and other organisations supported warm spaces.

In 2022-23 annual grant funding was renewed by the council for the following community organisations. Many have adjusted their activities to deliver online services when the coronavirus lockdown occurred:

- **The Sports Trust:** To provide accessible sports and play-based facilities and activities within the district, focusing on reducing health inequalities and engaging children and young people in order to encourage healthy lifestyles as well as reduced anti-social behaviour. The Sports Trust continues to provide a large variety of sporting experiences across various sites including the Urban Skate Park F51.
- **Folkestone Sports Centre Trust:** To provide accessible sports and wellbeing facilities and activities for all age groups within the district. The trust has been involved in various community-based wellbeing programmes, and in May 2022 embarked on a new pilot project funded by FHDC and in collaboration with a housing provider specialising in rehabilitation of substance misusers. The results were recognised by the Kent and Medway Adult Safeguarding Board in an audit of activity as best practice. Those completing the programme provided feedback stating the programme had given them structure to their days and significantly improved their physical and mental health.

01 Our Achievements and Engagement Activities

Annual Grant Funding (Continued)

- **Active Sport Kent:** To improve access to sports clubs and coaching activities across the district. The partnership ran conferences and webinars and provided support and guidance to sports clubs and leisure providers on how to access funding.
- **Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB):** To deliver debt, legal, housing and consumer advice on the council's behalf and working closely with council teams. The CAB was extremely busy addressing problems of hardship and dealing with residents adversely affected by the cost-of-living crisis.
- **Academy FM:** To support a community radio station which promotes the district, works with young people, aids community interaction and raises awareness of local issues and activities. The station continued to promote local initiatives.
- **Red Zebra:** To support the running of volunteer networking sessions across the district to increase volunteering, support the voluntary and community sector as well as improve health and wellbeing. Red Zebra delivered a number of these sessions online.
- **Folkestone Quarterhouse:** To deliver a programme of visual, performance and musical arts, educational and performance activities to families, schools and hard to reach groups in the district. Although the Quarter House was closed due to the pandemic, Creative Folkestone were able to deliver online services including projects with schools and other organisations. The range of online projects increased and other events took place in the community as services returned back to normal.

In December 2021 the council also agreed to join the Crowdfund Kent scheme that was launched previously by Kent County Council in February 2021 to contribute match funding to local projects that participate via the Spacehive Crowdfunding platform. In early 2022, the details were agreed and a partnership was established with Kent County Council. The Spring 2022 round closed at the end of April 2022 and the district council's contributions were agreed in May/June so will feature in next year's report covering the 2022/23 year.

The council continues to support the Crowdfund Kent scheme that was launched by Kent County Council to contribute match funding to local projects that participate via the Spacehive Crowdfunding platform. Some of the funded projects the council contributed to in 2022/23 include:

- Touchbase Community Garden, providing improvements to an outdoor space for people with disabilities and neuro-diverse conditions, including creating a sensory garden, to improve wellbeing.
- Folkestone Sea Sauna, which aims to promote exercise in the district by making sea swimming more accessible and affordable.

- Tables for Sellindge Sports and Social Club, allowing the club to restart events and activities paused during the pandemic, particularly focusing on encouraging vulnerable people to participate in activities and reduce loneliness.

Folkestone & Hythe Community Safety Partnership (F&H CSP)

During 2022/23 the statutory F&H CSP continued to meet virtually and progress key activity including the administration of Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) funding to deliver projects to vulnerable and diverse communities across the district. These included:

- Ask Angela Safe Spaces - We have worked with Bouverie Place to Develop a safe place for members of the public. This started from a conversation with Bouverie Place to provide safeguarding awareness and support due to it being a risk location for suicides. Shops have joined the scheme and we have created a safe space for people to access for any reason they may need.
- PREVENT Safety Bus - Engaging with young people providing online safety awareness and guidance.
- Year 9 Safety Conference at the Leas Cliff Hall in Folkestone. We engaged with over 900 young people, providing awareness and support from PREVENT, Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), Kent Police, and Domestic Abuse awareness..
- Urban Pastors – continuing to carry out night time sweeps of key locations to address Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and any support needed for vulnerable people they may have come across.
- Ongoing engagement and support to homeless individuals throughout the pandemic and liaising with appropriate agencies.
- Ring door bells to support victims of domestic abuse through working partner relationships with HomeStart and the Rising Sun.
- Collaborative working with Kent Police's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) to support the police with the provision of knife wands (to detect people who may be carrying concealed weapons) for premises such as pubs. In addition to support, education awareness we also regularly monitor and empty the Knife Bins in District.
- Safety in the Night time Economy – Collaboratively working with Kent Police We supported Kent Police with the rollout of the 'Best Bar None' scheme, visiting landlords, providing packs and awareness. Carried out additional nighttime economy joint patrols with Licensing, Police and Community Safety unit teams across the Christmas period of 2022/23.

The Community Safety Unit (CSU) has also continued to help to deliver a number of successes - such as implementing closure orders on premises where antisocial or criminal behaviour is taking place, tracing missing persons and tackling homelessness - through the close partnership working that these meetings enable.

The CSU are also planning to bring back the Local Engagement Meetings starting in April 2023, to engage with Members of the Public. These are held Quarterly across the District where anti-social behaviour trends are discussed and what is being done to resolve the concerns.

01 Our Achievements and Engagement Activities

Napier Barracks

The Use of Napier Barracks continues and partner agencies worked with the managing agents to deal with issues such as littering and Anti-Social Behaviour. The site is largely settled and ongoing education continues. NGO groups provide a range of activities on site and this has included growing of vegetables on site and residents have carried out volunteering in the community through the year including, cleaning, supporting community gardens and cooking at Church venues.

Additional pressure from the use of two hotels to house Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Minors (UASC) continued to be managed. The work to ensure young people were safe and occupied with activities continued. In November 2022 an asylum hotel for adults was opened up in Folkestone and this prompted additional community reassurance work to be carried out. In January 2023 an Asylum webinar on the use of hotels as temporary accommodation was held. The Council hosted a visit from the District Council Network on 22.01.23 to look at the hotels estate in the District and addressed both the National and local challenges this created.

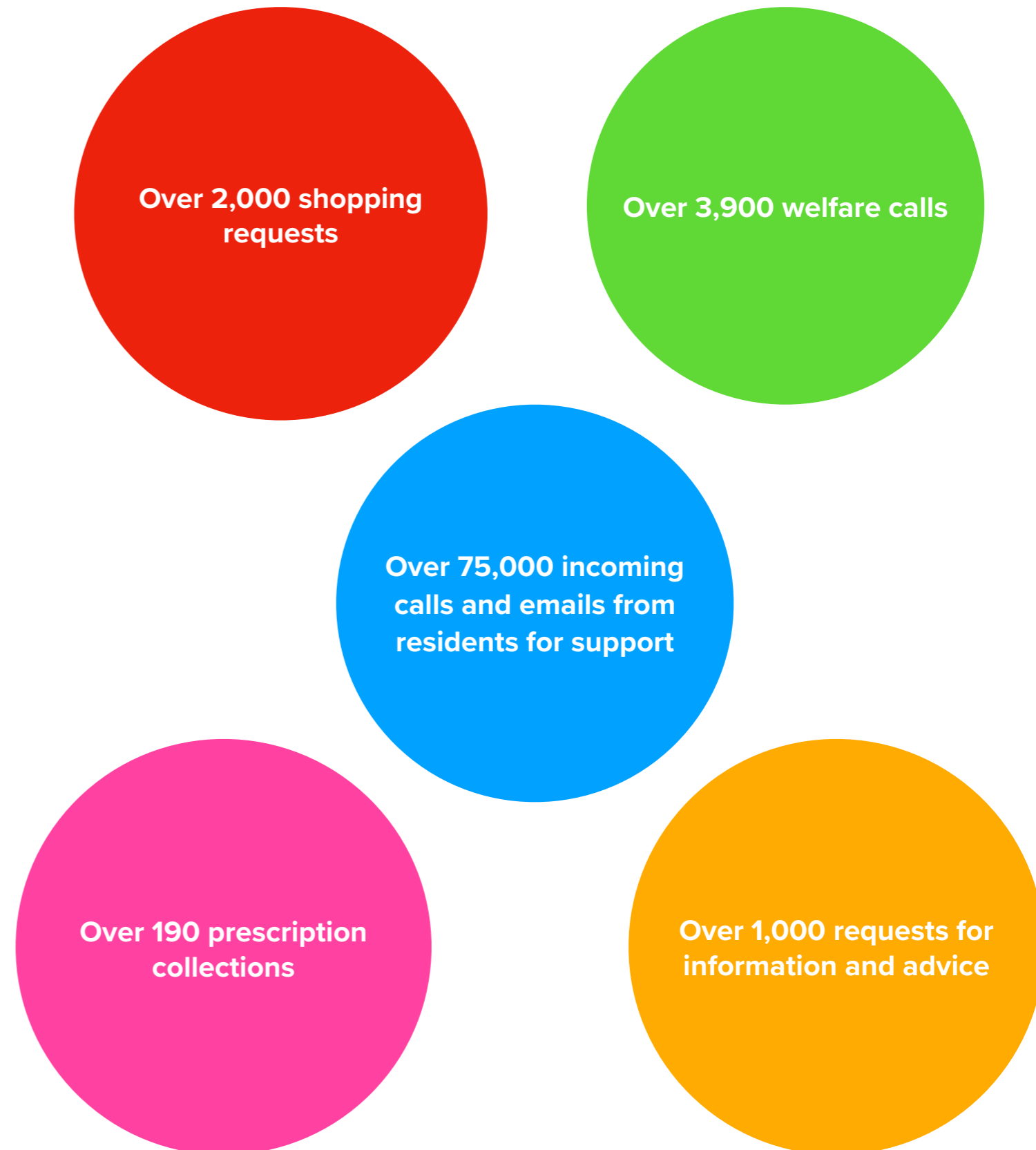
Community Hubs

The three community hubs based at: **Folkestone:** being run by Age UK South Kent Coast; **Hythe:** being run by Age UK Hythe & Lydinge; and Romney Marsh: run by the Romney Marsh Community Hub have continued to provide support to people within the district in a variety of ways, including:

- Hosting partner agencies and events; for example, digital inclusion events, drop-in sessions by Council welfare officers to assist vulnerable people fill in Household Support Fund forms, Dementia Cafes, etc.
- Assisting in the development activities as part of the District Food Network and supporting the delivery of UKSPF projects including distribution of items such as slow cookers from the Home Essentials element of the work (managed by the welfare team).
- Helping with work to support Ukrainian refugees, including continuing with hosting drop-in sessions, and distributing mobile phones and sim cards for the council.
- Providing food and fuel vouchers and other support to vulnerable people through their own funding streams as well as supporting Council initiatives.
- Signposting clients to support with cost-of-living issues and other support (e.g. sign posting to mental health support as well as continuing to build networks to expand focus). The hubs provided emergency support over Christmas 2023 and ran a toy appeal.

- The hubs have been integral to running the warm spaces initiatives.

In 2022/23, the community hubs dealt with:



Section 2

Understanding our Customers

Introduction

In this section we look at the council itself, how we are filling our statutory duties and how we are targeting our services to the particular needs of our residents.

02 Understanding our Customers

Equality Impact Assessments

Under the Equality Act 2010 there is no longer a requirement to produce Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs). However, the council believes it is good practice to have an EIA framework in place in order to fully consider any potential equality implications prior to making decisions. As such, the council is committed to ensuring that EIAs are completed when the council introduces or significantly revises a policy or service and that they are carried out in the correct manner, including, for example, appropriate consultation with affected parties.

EIAs are most often conducted when a new or significantly revised policy or service is set to be considered by elected Members, normally at Cabinet Committee stage. Further information, including copies of reports and associated EIAs, can be found at: <https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/moderngov/uuCoverPage.aspx?bcr=1>

During 2022/23 the council completed the following EIAs:

- **Folkestone – A Brighter Future.**
- **Changes to the Proof of Life Verifications Service**
- **Disabled Adaptations Policy**
- **Housing Decant Protocol**
- **General Fund Revenue Budget 2023/24**

In addition, all reports that are submitted to council Committees or the Corporate Leadership Team require comments on equality implications from the officer leading on equality and diversity. This further ensures that potential implications are considered prior to making decisions.

Understanding Our Customers through Consultation

Consultation provides an important means of understanding the needs of service users and local residents. It also allows the council to assess what impact decisions will have on different groups.

The following public consultations were undertaken during 2022/23:

- **Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**
- **Draft Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule**
- **Draft Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy**
- **Polling District, Places and Stations Review**
- **Zone F extension to include roads in west of Radnor Park, Folkestone.**
- **Zone H extension to include the Trinity/Augusta/Westbourne Gardens Area, Folkestone**
- **New Controlled Parking Zone T- Prospect Road, Hythe**

- **New Controlled Parking Zone - West Parade Area, Hythe - (from Park Road- West Parade) - (scheme dropped after consultations)**
- **Folkestone – A brighter future**

Improving our Customer Experience

Customer Service Excellence

In September 2022, we successfully re-applied for the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation. The accreditation is a government standard developed to offer a practical tool for driving customer-focused change within organisations. The independent assessor continues to be very impressed with our commitment to deliver excellent customer service and awarded us 16 'compliance plus' scores as part of his assessment. This is the highest number of compliance pluses awarded to us in one go.

There were several areas of strength identified through the assessment and these included:

- The depth of information the Council has about its customers and potential customers; this was highlighted in the depth of understanding quickly developed about the needs of those coming from the Ukraine.
- There is a very strong sense of staff being one team across the Council, with lots of examples of cross-team working and collaboration across different service areas.
- The concept of the internal customer has become very evident and is helping staff to really understand what colleagues might need and expect from them.
- Consultation processes were seen to be very effective and very varied depending on the issue. A lot of evidence was seen to show very different processes being used for different consultations – e.g. Ship Street and East Cliff – and also imaginative methods employed – for example in the consultation processes around the Otterpool development.
- New and different ways of working have been developed where needed, including taking services out to communities effectively and imaginative work to support people who were impacted by P&O.
- Partnership working continues to grow and develop and to deliver real benefits for local people. Many examples were provided to show how this works in practice – for example the development of community hubs, run by local voluntary groups but supported by the Council's teams.
- There are several areas where Folkestone and Hythe are seen as an exemplar for others (e.g. work with armed forces, recruitment approaches, locally seen as experts in Customer Service and EDI) and they are sharing their good practice effectively with other Authorities.
- External awards and accreditations continue to evidence the good work that is being done – e.g. IRRV awards and short-listings and a positive first time OFSTED inspection.

02 Understanding our Customers

Improving our Customer Experience (continued)

Web Chat Service:

We have various mechanisms to support customers to access services and information, including the customer access point, telephone appointments, translation and British Sign language service on request and a visiting officer service for council tax and benefits.

Our Web Chat service continues to be a popular way to contact us and in 2022-23, 91.03% of customers who rated the service stated they were happy with the service they received.

Feedback for the web chat service is continually monitored and reflects how useful many of our customers find this service.

Some examples of feedback received, includes:

- *I found this chat online very easy the staff are very helpful and sort all your queries and problems out very well. would definitely recommend to anyone"*
- *"Super helpful, took the time to resolve my issue properly. Thanks"*
- *"Excellent service and support as always"*
- *Very knowledgeable and professional service"*
- *10/10 very helpful and understanding!"*
- *Extremely helpful assistant with very quick and effective replies"*
- *"Very helpful solving my problems and being friendly. Pleasant experience."*
- *Lovely staff member who goes above and beyond"*
- *"The agent was very patient and helpful. Good service, much appreciated"*
- *"10 out of 10.VERY VERY VERY HELPFUL"*
- *"The agent I chatted with was very helpful and supportive. It's a good feeling to talk to someone who pays attention to any query and try and help as much as possible. Thanks for your brilliant service."*
- *I'm not the best at explaining myself, so it was great having staff that gave me the time & support."*
- *Very helpful and put my mind at ease Thank you"*

My Account and Website Accessibility:

We have continued to develop our online services to try and make 'digital' the interaction of choice by our customers by making it quicker and easier. This in turn saves processing time for some back-office staff as their systems are automatically

updated avoiding the need to rekey information. MyAccount is regularly promoted on social media channels and is continually improved to incorporate additional online transactions and the take up has remained steady, in addition a lot of work has been undertaken for internal customers to enable them complete online forms as opposed to sending emails to be processed. As at 31/03/23 there were 217 forms available to our customers and at the end of March 2023 69.14% of households had signed up for MyAccount.

The website platform has been replaced and we now use the JADU platform which brought with it improved functionality. One of the key benefits was an improved search capability which makes it easier for the customers to find the information they require avoiding the need to contact the council. The site is constantly reviewed to ensure it meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). A project was initiated, working the service areas, to review their pages for clarity and to ensure that the information on our website was relevant and up to date.

Welfare Team:

The work on identifying vulnerable customers has grown since 2019 and led to the creation of a dedicated welfare team trained to support customers and signpost them appropriately.

During 2022/23 the Council has been administering different Government funding streams to maximize and target support to the most vulnerable qualifying residents. The Council received 551 applications for Discretionary Housing Payments and made 377 awards during the year to a value of £244,238. Due to the demand and reduction in funding the Council utilised elements of Household Support Fund to ensure that support could be offered to households throughout the year as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) funding was not sufficient for demand. On top of this the team also received 895 applications for Financial Support Payments (for Council Tax) and made 567 awards, supporting residents with £252,717 in awards.

Government have also allocated additional funding to Councils to support vulnerable households under a new scheme called the Household Support Fund (HSF). This funding was for the purpose of supporting households who would otherwise struggle to buy food or pay essential utility bills or meet other essential living costs or housing costs. Eligible spend included food, energy and water payment support. It also included essentials linked to energy and water such as sanitary products, warm clothing, soap, blankets, boiler service/repair and purchase of equipment including fridges, freezers, ovens, etc. The first round of this ran in 2021/22.

02 Understanding our Customers

Improving our Customer Experience (continued)

Welfare Team (continued):

The second round of HSF ran from August to September 2022 and the Council received initial funding of £459,669. This scheme had a larger fund but different criteria under national guidance. Therefore, the funding from KCC had to be allocated as listed below:

- £364,150 – To support pensioners with energy bills or equivalent
- £95,519 – To support vulnerable households in accordance with the wider government guidance

To facilitate this the Council aimed to largely pay the pensioner element to qualifying households via payment into residents' bank accounts for this money to then be used to support the payment of increasing fuel prices. This included direct mail shots and telephone calls to identified households.

Food awards were issued in the form of food vouchers that residents could use in their local supermarket of choice. Essential awards were items such as warm clothing and bedding. The Council also continued to support residents with funding new boilers, beds and proving oil and gas to residents living off-grid.

The Council also received additional funding of £45,600 from KCC for HSF2 due to underspends in other areas of the spend outside Folkestone and Hythe. Some of this funding was used to run a carpet project to help fit homes that did not have sufficient flooring, helping with mobility, warmth, and energy costs in those homes. This was delivered to 8 homes that would otherwise not have had this support. As a response to these findings KCC are looking to run a county-wide carpet project using our experience to help guide the project. The breakdown of this support is listed below:

HSF 2 (August to September 2022)		
Awards spilt by household composition	Volumes	Spend
Households with children	336	£55,275
Households with pensioners	885	£360,925
Other households	310	£39,275
Other spend		£49,794
Total	1,531	£505,269

HSF 2 (August to September 2022)		
Awards spilt by category	Volumes	Spend
Energy & Water	850	£321,619
Food	599	£74,650
Essentials linked to food and water	34	£34,400
Wider essentials	30	£14,000
Housing costs	18	£10,806

Round 3 of HSF covered the period December 2022 to March 2023. For this round the Council received initial funding of £207,246. There was a priority for the allocation of food support during the winter months and the Council were also able to offer support through warm clothing.

Due to the reduction in Discretionary Housing Payment funding, elements of HSF3 also supported this scheme by enabling residents to afford their top ups or move to more affordable accommodation.

The Council also received an additional £43,000 in funding. Elements of this funding were allocated to support households in properties that are too large. These residents wanted to move but arrears on their rent accounts were stopping them from being able to move. By supporting these households, the Council has enabled 30 households to be able to move to appropriately-sized homes and free up larger properties for families that need them. The breakdown of this support is listed below:

HSF 3 (December 2022 to March 2023)		
Awards spilt by household composition	Volumes	Spend
Households with children	1,005	£103,707
Households with pensioners	146	£13,900
Households with a Disabled person	304	£55,743
Other households	427	£65,448
Other spend		£11,448
Total	1,882	£250,246

02 Understanding our Customers

Improving our Customer Experience (continued)

HSF 3 (December 2022 to March 2023)		
Awards split by category		
Energy & Water	0	£0
Food	1,320	£142,925
Essentials linked to food and water	0	£0
Wider essentials	294	£18,300
Housing costs	144	£77,573

The Council also operate as an official referral agent to the KCC fuel scheme, referring every application for HSF for further support through the county-wide support scheme.

The Council successfully bid for funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The welfare team administer the element of this funding that focusses on interventions to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change. Elements of this scheme have been developed following smaller projects and demand through previous rounds of HSF such as the bed project, boiler support and provision of white goods. These areas have also been identified when liaising with residents and partner agencies, demonstrating that the scheme is being delivered in response to resident need.

The scheme is individually funded for each year and will close at the end of March 2025. Much like HSF, there is an application process hosted on the Council's website. The Council also uses its own data to potentially identify eligible residents for support.

Folkestone Community Works

The Folkestone Community Works programme area has continued operating to address issues faced by the most vulnerable in the district by funding projects that are working to improve access to services and opportunities for businesses and residents within the Central and East Folkestone wards (as the map in Section 1 shows, these are some of the most deprived areas of the district).

During the year, funded projects provided support to unemployed residents to assist them on their journey into work. This support included a project specifically focussed on young adults. In addition, professional entrepreneurial support was available for residents who decided their route to economic independence was through self-employment, or had a need to supplement their income by creating a 'table top'

business by using a skill or hobby to generate additional income. The easy access to e-commerce through eBay and other social media platforms has opened the door to everyone. This support helps residents to work through their ideas and understand how they could make it a reality by demystifying the process.

Existing businesses were continued to be supported through 1-2-1 advice and grants to navigate and adapt to the unusual and changing environment they are operating within, with the aim to retain and increase the number of employees.

Developing Our Staff

All staff are required to undertake specific equality and diversity e-learning on a regular basis. We also provide safeguarding training to ensure staff know how to support vulnerable people, and we deliver training on preventing extremism (in January 2023 Kent County Council delivered a session on Prevent to staff), which gives our staff an understanding of radicalisation and who can be drawn into it.

We support staff in understanding people with different support requirements and relevant staff members were trained in the following areas: Supporting Customers with addiction (Money Advice Trust); Understanding & Supporting Customers with Serious Illnesses; Self-Harm Awareness; Post-Natal Depression Awareness; Schizophrenia Awareness; Understanding Phobias. All staff were given the opportunity to attend 45 minute development sessions on: Menopause Awareness (October 2022) and Men's Mental Health (November 2022).

We now have 44 Mental Health First Aiders across the Council, including, most recently in our Grounds Maintenance team (c 9% of our workforce) so that we can better support staff and those customers struggling due to the cost of living crisis or other pressures they may be under.

In addition, we run a Management Development Programme on an ongoing basis and offer formal management qualifications that enable our middle managers and team leaders to understand how to further equality and diversity in the workplace and how best to work well with people from a variety of backgrounds. Recognising the demographic profile of our staff we offer a range of flexible development opportunities and put on shorter courses or split over different days to enable part-time staff to attend. We also avoid running training during school holidays to give our staff who are parents the best chance of being able to attend. We record our training and staff briefings to ensure everyone has the opportunity to access this information.

Section 3

Understanding Our Workforce

Introduction

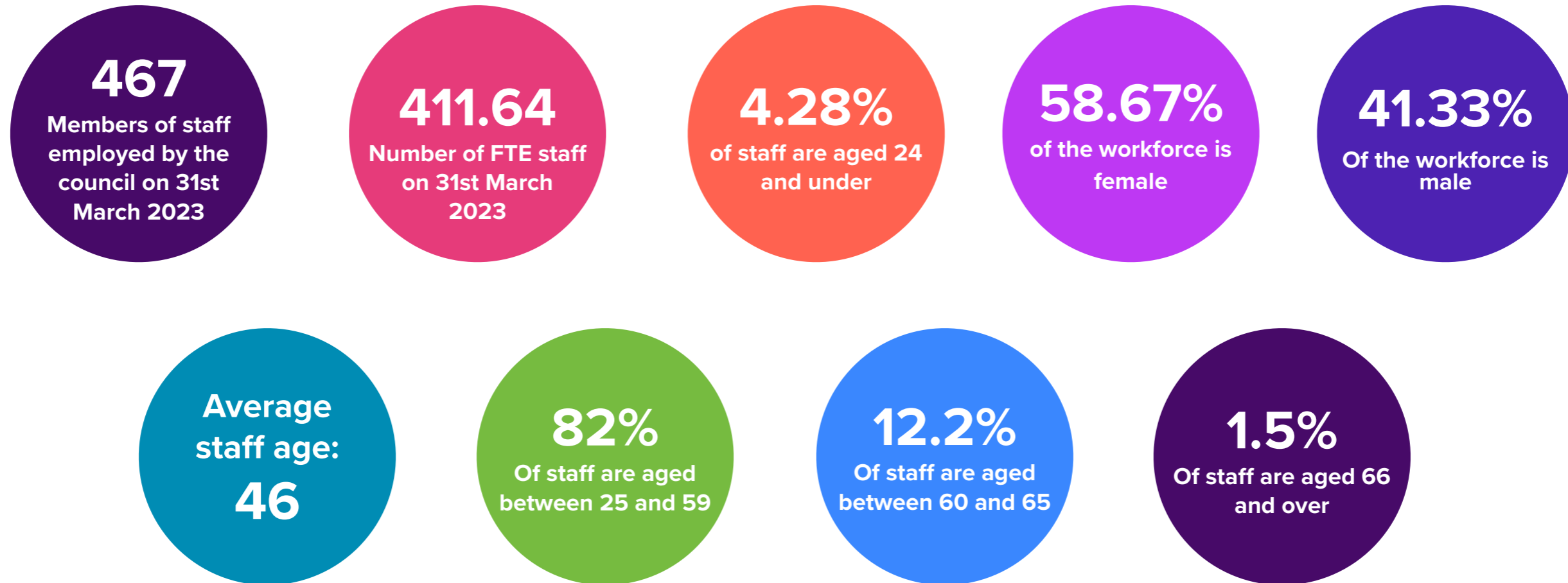
In this section we provide a brief overview of the characteristics of our own workforce.

On 31st March 2023 there were 467 members of staff employed by Folkestone & Hythe District Council. The number of full time equivalent staff was 411.64. Looking at the 2022/23 year as a whole, the average headcount was 468.5 and the average number of full time equivalent staff was 414.93.

03 Understanding Our Workforce

Folkestone & Hythe District Council - Workforce Profile

All figures used in the workforce profile below are as at 31st March 2023 and include staff the council directly employs.



Number of staff by age and sex:

Age	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60	Total
Female	1	25	57	68	89	34	274
Male	4	19	28	48	64	30	193
Total	5	44	85	116	153	64	467

03 Understanding our Workforce

Ethnicity and Disability

- 5.14% of the council's workforce have declared a disability.
- 86.08% of the council's workforce have indicated that they are from white ethnic backgrounds and 6.42% from black and minority ethnic groups. The remaining 7.50% have not declared their ethnicity.

Working Hours and Pay Grade

- 25.27% of the council's workforce are part-time and are contracted to work 36 hours per week or under.
- Analysis shows a correlation between sex and working hours. 77.97% of part-time staff are female. Analysis of sex, working hours and pay can be found on the gender pay gap reporting section of the council's website: [Understanding and reducing the gender pay gap | Folkestone & Hythe District Council \(folkestone-hythe.gov.uk\)](https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/understanding-and-reducing-the-gender-pay-gap)

Turnover

- 76 people left the council's employment during 2022/23. This represents a 'crude' staff turnover rate of 16.22%. The 'crude' turnover figure includes reasons such as redundancy (including voluntary redundancy) and those engaged on a casual, seasonal or short-term basis to, for example, provide maternity cover or support the annual electoral registration canvass. The voluntary turnover rate, which counts resignations and retirements only, was 12.81%.

Staff Grievances

There was one staff grievance raised in 2022/23, which was not equality related.

Year	Total	Equality Related
2015/16	0	0
2016/17	1	0
2017/18	1	0
2018/19	1	0
2019/20	1	0
2020/21	1	1
2021/22	0	0
2022/23	1	0

Policies and Practices

The council is committed to promoting equality and diversity through its employment policies and practices.

- Our robust recruitment processes and associated manager training ensure that employment and promotion practices are fair, non-discriminatory and support equality of opportunity.
- Our job evaluation process ensures we pay our staff fairly and equally through assigning the same pay grade to roles of equal value.
- The council has a People Strategy and Agile Working Framework in place to support our smarter, agile, working culture. Working flexibly is encouraged and supported, with the majority of staff having the ability to work flexible hours and in a range of locations including from home.
- Prior to recruiting externally, or seeking candidates for promotion, if a post is full-time we carefully consider whether it could be undertaken on a part-time or job share basis.
- Working part-time can impact on the ability to attend training courses, which may then impact on career progression. We therefore consider our training programmes carefully and offer a range of flexible development opportunities. When considering our training courses we increase accessibility by putting on shorter courses, split the training over different days, or record sessions so they can be viewed at any time.
- If members of staff have concerns these can be raised with managers, or formally through the council's whistleblowing or grievance procedures. Management training takes place to support equality, diversity and inclusion, and to ensure that any concerns are acted upon swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff undertake specific equality and diversity training when they first join the council and then on a regular basis thereafter. We also have a range of initiatives and learning and development activities aimed at furthering equality, diversity and inclusion. Further information on these can be found in the Developing Our Staff section.

Section 4

Understanding our Communities

Introduction

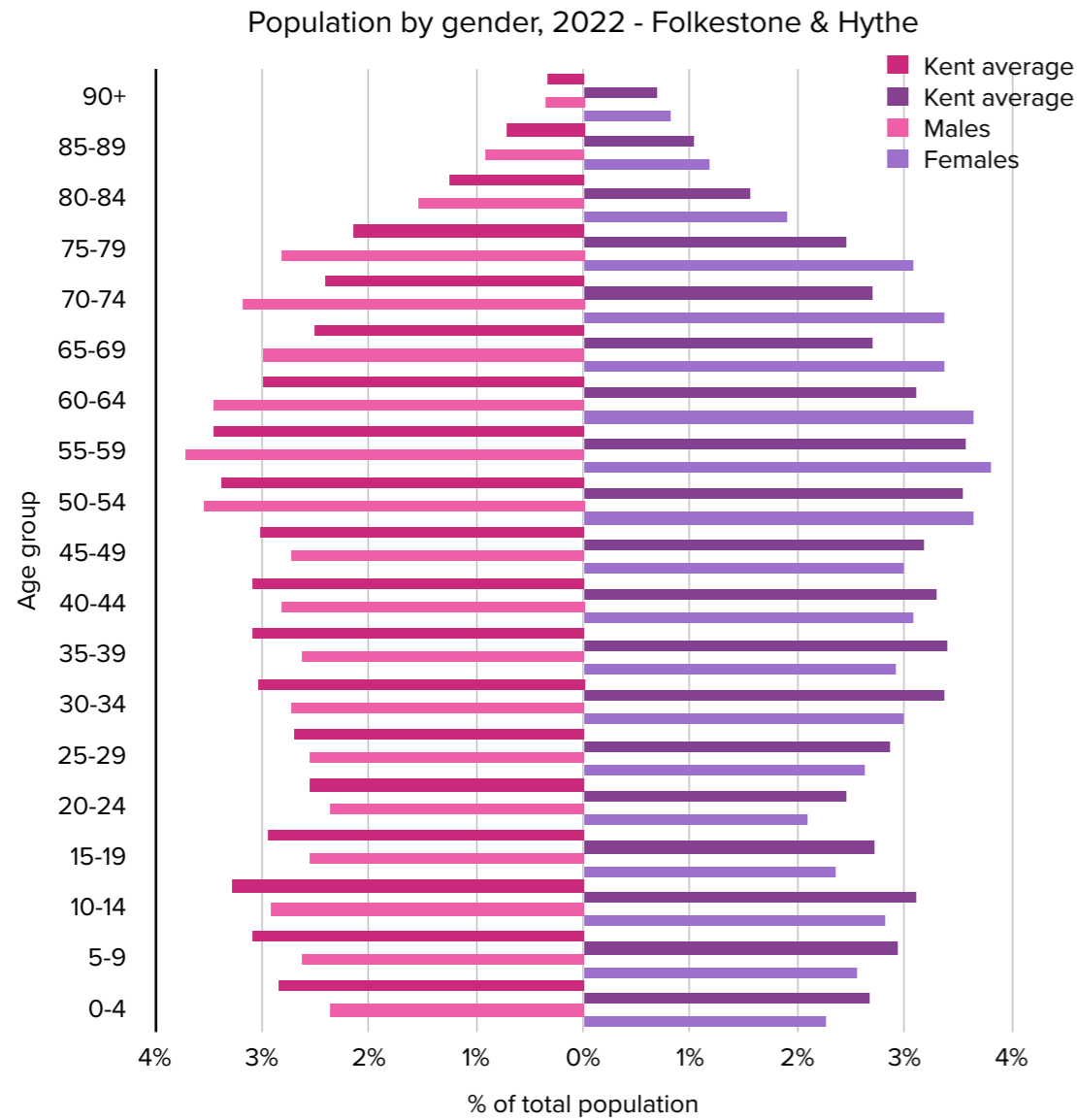
This section provides a brief overview of the characteristics of the district's population and draws comparisons with Kent and the wider South East. We outline the age profile of the district, the proportion of males and females in each age group, and how the population is likely to change over the coming years. We then go on to look at the ethnicity, religion and health of our communities. We finish by considering the economic profile of the district, including employment rates, income and deprivation.

04 Understanding our Communities

Age and Sex:

Overview

In the graph below, blue shows the proportion of males in each age group and peach females. The blocked sections show the Kent average for each age group.

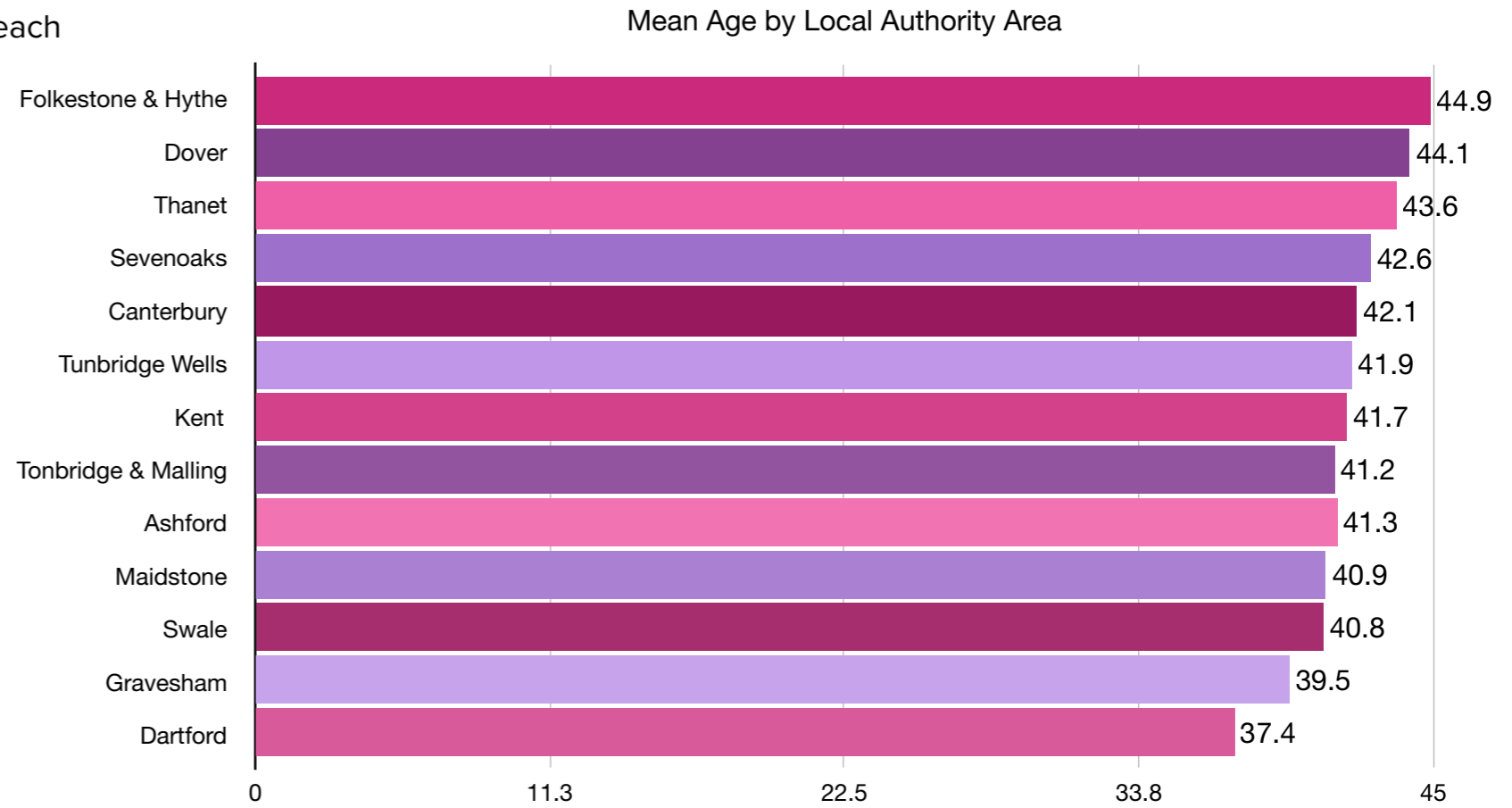


Source: KCC District Profile – ONS Mid Year Estimates - 2022

51.3% of Folkestone & Hythe’s population is female and 48.7% is male. This percentage breakdown is reflective of Kent as a whole.

The male to female ratio changes with age. There are more males under the age of 25 than there are females. From age 25+ there are more females than males.

The average Folkestone & Hythe resident is 44.9 years old, which is the highest in the County when compared to with other local authority areas. The graph below shows the lowest average age to be in Dartford at 37.4 years old.



Source: KCC 2022 Mid-Year Population Estimates: Age and sex Profile

44.9 years old

The age of the average Folkestone & Hythe Resident

Source: KCC District Profile – ONS Mid Year Estimates - 2022

37.4 years old

The average age of a Dartford Resident. The lowest out of all Kent local authority areas

Source: KCC District Profile – ONS Mid Year Estimates - 2022

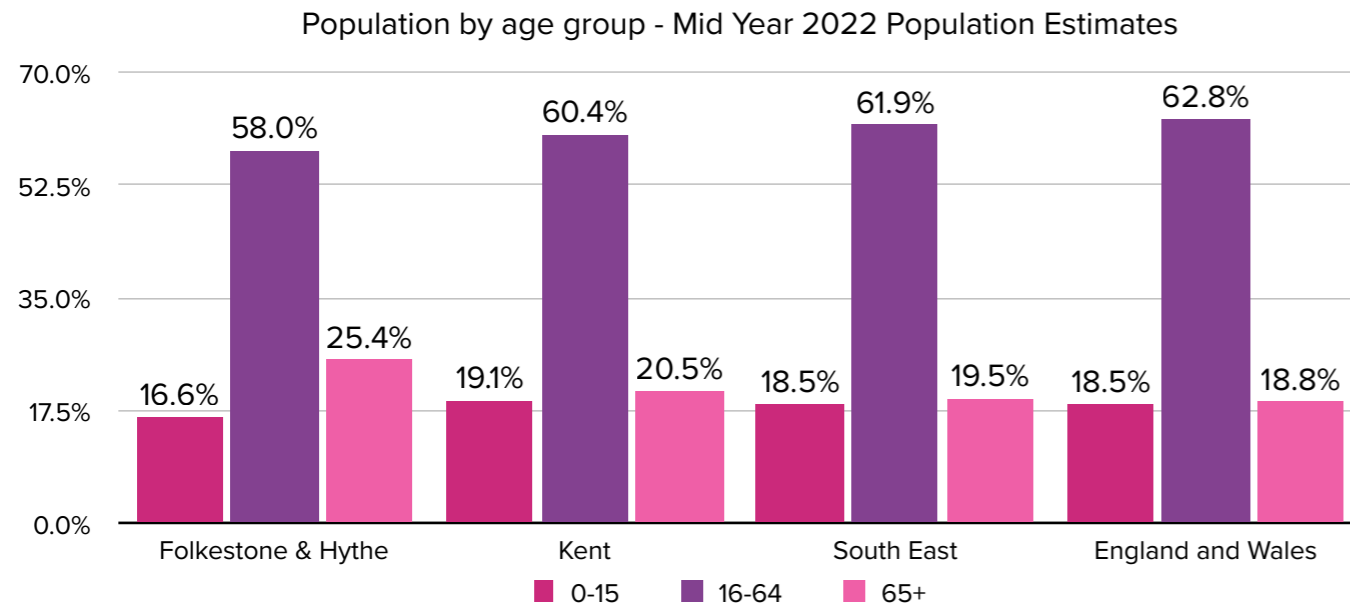
04 Understanding our Communities

Age and Sex (continued):

The average male living in the Folkestone & Hythe district (at 44 years) is younger than the average female (45.9 years).

In comparison with regional and national figures, Folkestone & Hythe has:

- A lower than average proportion of residents aged under 15
- A lower than average proportion of residents of 'working age' between 16 and 64
- A higher than average proportion of residents aged 65 and over



Source: KCC District Profile / ONS, 2022 mid-year population estimates

Children and Young Adults:

Age group	No.	% of Folkestone & Hythe population	% of Kent overall*
0-3 – Early Years Children	4,000	3.6%	5.7%
4-10 – Primary Age Children	8,000	7.2%	5.9%
11-18 – Secondary age children	9,600	8.7%	6.1%

Source: KCC Interactive Population Forecast Toolkit - 2022

Working Age' Population (16-64):

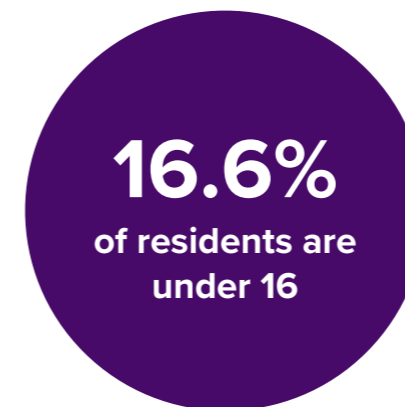
Folkestone & Hythe	Number	%
16-64	64,000	58.0 % of F&HDC residents are 16-64
Female	32,500	57.5% of females in the district are 16-64
Male	31,500	58.6% of males in the district are 16-64

Source: KCC District Profile – ONS Mid Year Estimates - 2022

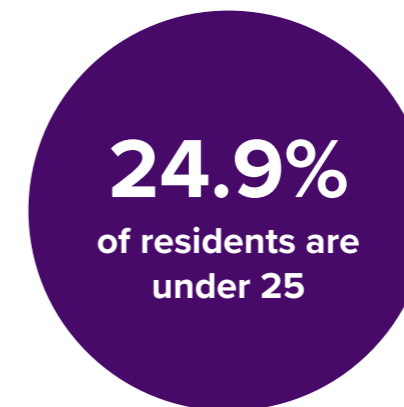
Older Population:

Age Group	Number	% of Folkestone & Hythe Population
65-69	6,900	6.3%
70-74	7,200	6.5%
75-79	6,500	5.9 %
80-84	3,800	3.4%
85-89	2,300	2.1%
90 and over	1,400	1.2%

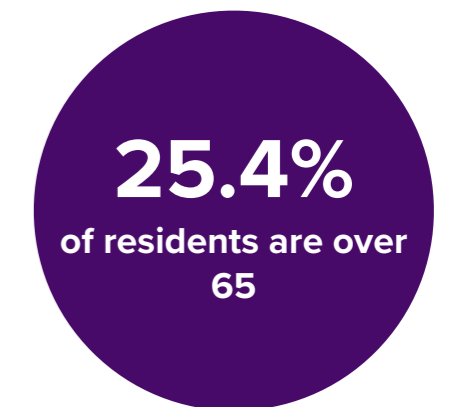
Source: KCC District Profile – ONS Mid Year Estimates - 2022



Source: KCC District Profile – ONS Mid Year Estimates - 2022



Source: KCC District Profile – ONS Mid Year Estimates - 2022



Source: KCC District Profile – ONS Mid Year Estimates - 2022

04 Understanding our Communities

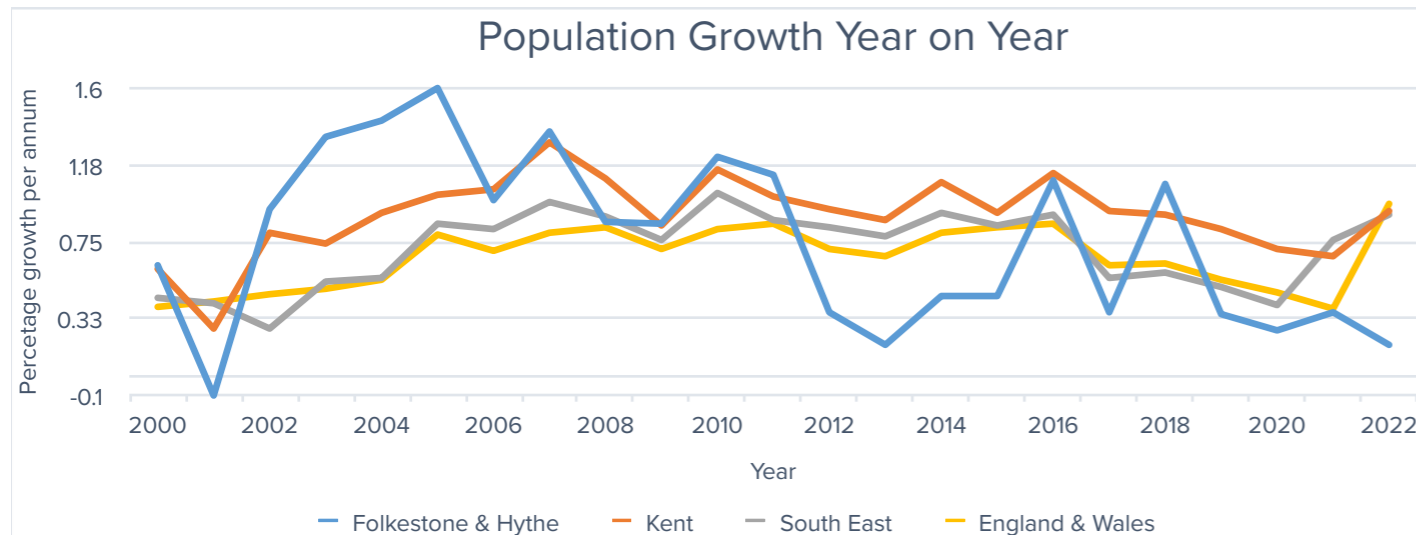
Population Changes and Forecasts

Historical Population Growth

The most recent population figures based on 2021 KCC housing led forecasts estimate that the population of Folkestone & Hythe was 115,300 in 2023. This accounts for 7% of the total population within the Kent County Council area.

In 2013 the population of Folkestone & Hythe stood at 108,800. In the ten-year period between 2013 and 2023, Folkestone & Hythe's population grew by 5.9%. This is, however, below regional and national averages.

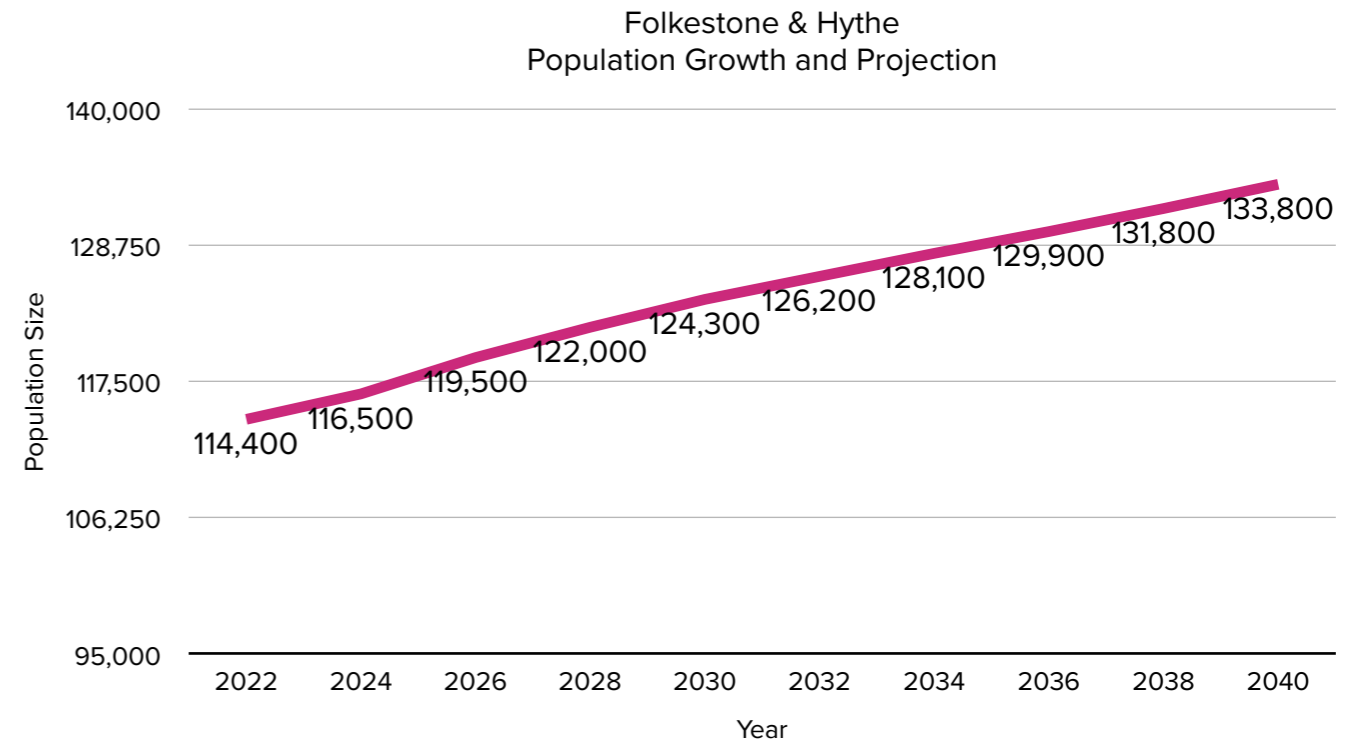
Over the last 10 years (2012-2022) population growth across the south east has risen more quickly averaging 0.74% per annum in comparison to England and Wales, which averaged 0.64% per annum. Kent experiences higher annual growth in comparison, averaging a population increase of 0.77% per annum over the same time period. As a smaller geographical area, population growth in Folkestone & Hythe is much more sporadic, with localised factors a major contributory factor.



Source: KCC Interactive mid-year population estimate toolkit 2021

Population Growth Forecasts

Folkestone & Hythe's population is forecast to rise by nearly 16.9% over the next 18 years, reaching an estimated 133,800 by 2040, while Kent as a whole is expected to grow by 18.1% over the same period. Estimates, however, do not take into account any future developments in the district.



Source: KCC Interactive Population Forecast Toolkit - 2021

Population Changes

Historically, Folkestone & Hythe's population growth has varied between different age brackets. In the 20 year period between 2000 and 2020 the most significant population growth was amongst those aged between 45 and 70, with residents in this age bracket increasing by 39.3%. The number of residents aged under 45, however has remained largely the same over this period, increasing by only 0.73%.

When considering residents over the age of 65 specifically, between 2000 and 2020 there was an increase of 45%, from 19,300 to 28,000 people. It is forecasted that this will increase by a further 14,400 over the subsequent 20 years, a rise of 50.8%. Conversely, the number of residents of 'working age' (between the ages of 16 and 64) are forecast to rise by 9.3% and those under the age of 15 are expected to shrink by 0.52%.

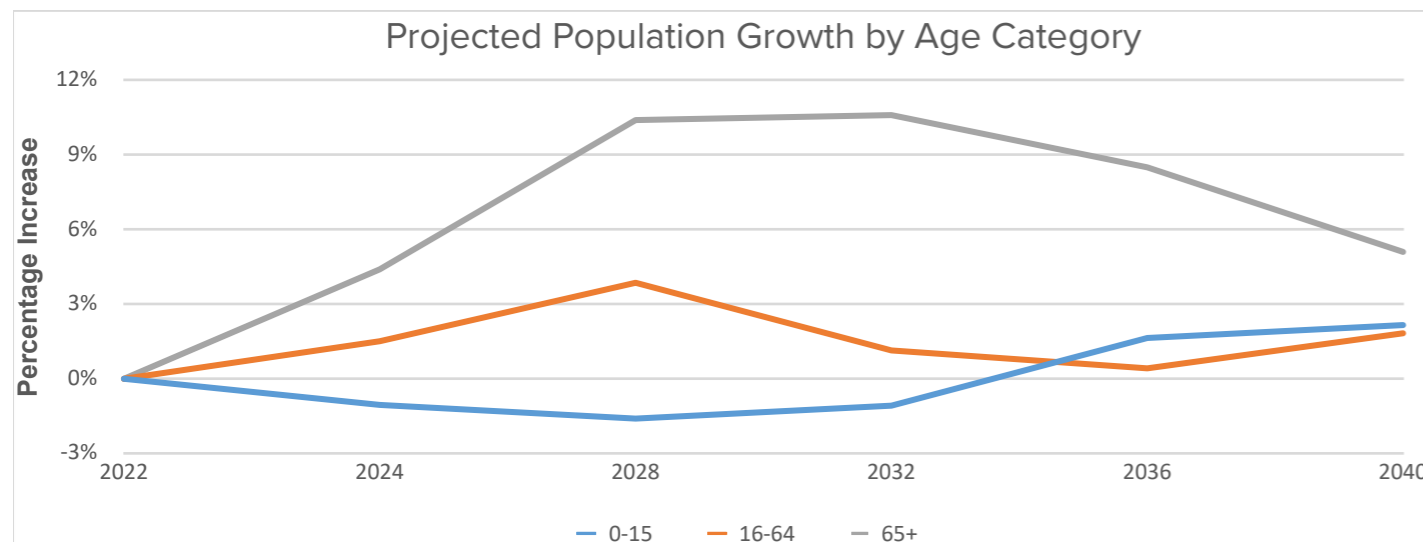
04 Understanding our Communities

Population Changes

Current Population Projections: Folkestone and Hythe (2022-2040):

Year	Total Population	Age Group		
		0-15	16-64	65 and over
2022	114,400	18,900	66,200	29,300
2024	116,500	18,700	67,200	30,600
2028	122,000	18,400	69,800	33,800
2032	126,200	18,200	70,600	37,400
2036	129,900	18,500	70,900	40,600
2040	133,800	18,900	72,200	42,700

Source: KCC Interactive Population Forecast Toolkit - 2021

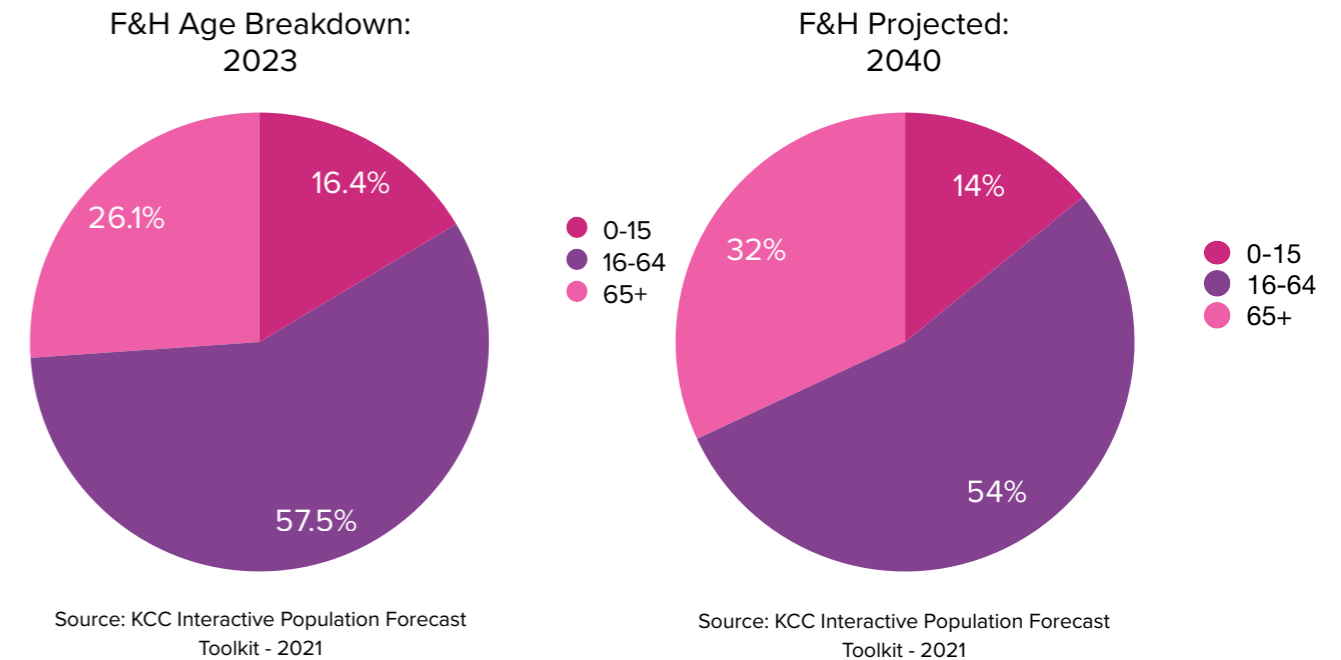


Source: KCC Interactive Population Forecast Toolkit - 2021

Residents over the age of 65 currently account for 25% of Folkestone & Hythe's population. By 2040 this is expected to have increased by 6.9% a more significant increase than the 5.7% anticipated across Kent.

The concept of an 'ageing population' is, of course, not solely confined to the Folkestone & Hythe district and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) forecast continued growth in the proportion of the population aged over 65 across the UK. However, future estimates for Folkestone & Hythe, particularly relating to a proportion

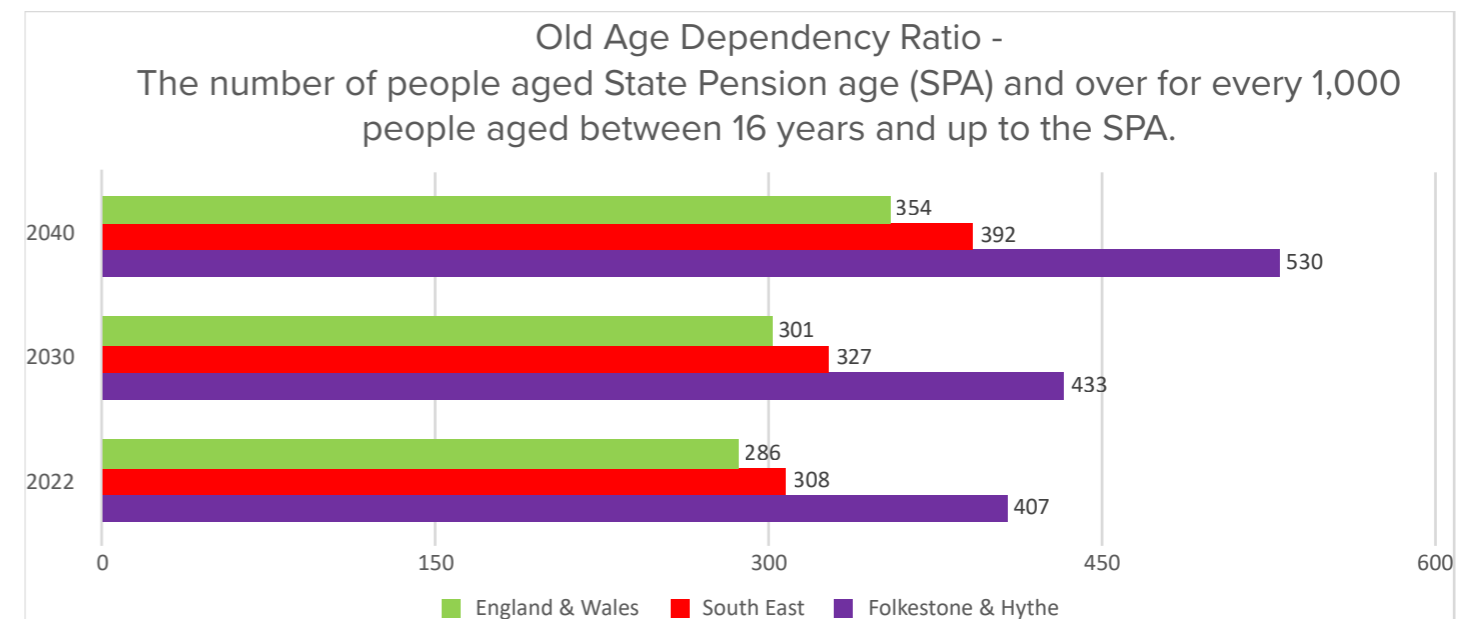
of the population over the age of 85, are notable rising from 4,000 in 2023 to 7,100 by 2040.



Source: KCC Interactive Population Forecast Toolkit - 2021

Source: KCC Interactive Population Forecast Toolkit - 2021

The graph below shows that the number of people aged state pension age (SPA) and over for every thousand people aged 16 years up to the SPA (known as the Dependency Ratio) is projected to grow significantly faster for Folkestone & Hythe from 407 in 2022 to 530 in 2040 than for the South East region and England & Wales.



Source: Census 2021 - Sub national aging tool

04 Understanding our Communities

Population: Household Composition

The 2021 census reported 48,338 households in the Folkestone & Hythe district.

66.6% of households lived in accommodation that was owned (either outright, with a mortgage, or part-owned through a shared ownership scheme), 10.8% lived in homes that were social rented (including through F&HDC) and 22.5% lived in homes that were privately rented. The remaining percentage lived under other arrangements.

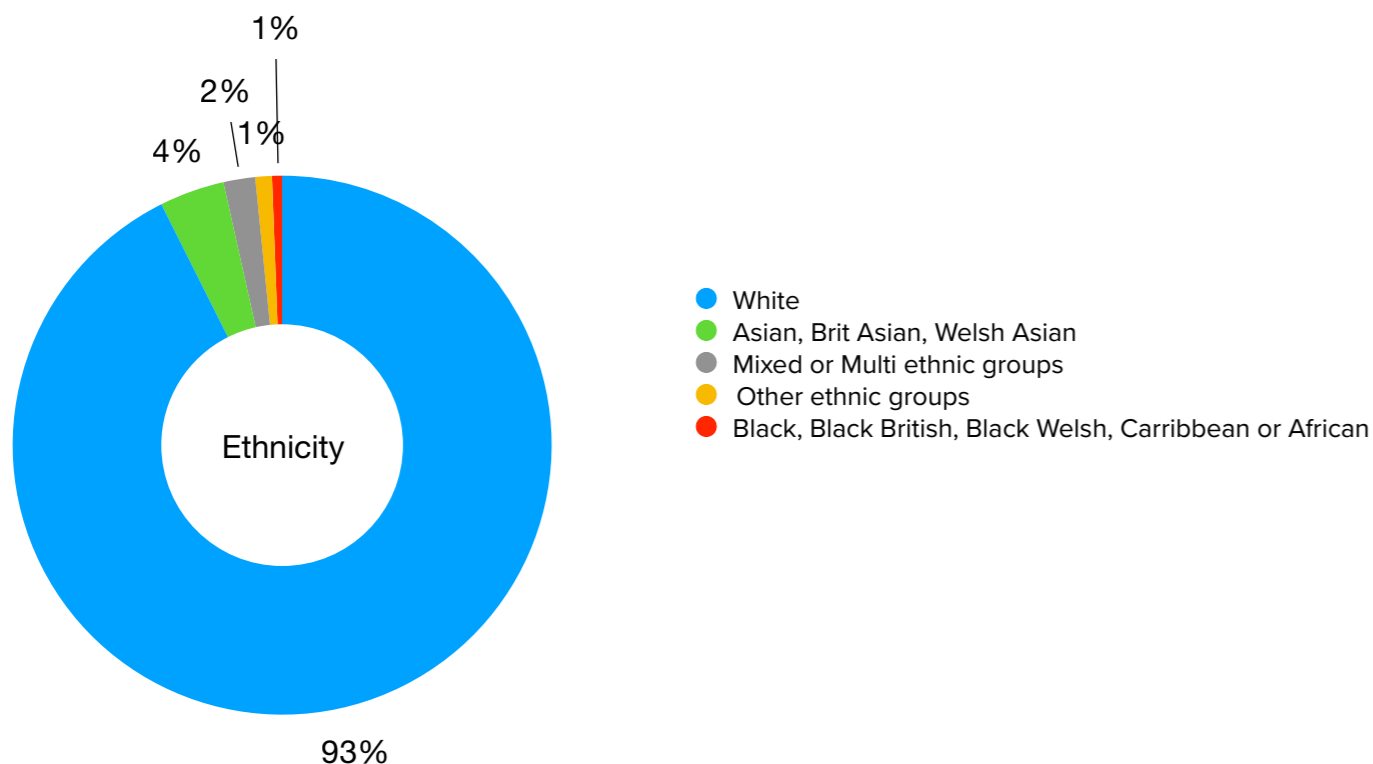
Nearly 70% of all households in the district were composed of one or two people.

Of the 48,338 households in the district, a third were one-person households. 45% of those that lived on their own were aged over 65.

The majority (61.8%) were single family households. The 2021 census classified these by the “type of family” (married, same-sex civil partnership or cohabiting couple family, or lone parent), by the number of dependent children, or recorded that all occupants were over the age of 65. 32.5% of households were one person households and 5.7% were classed as other household types. Source: 2021 Census.

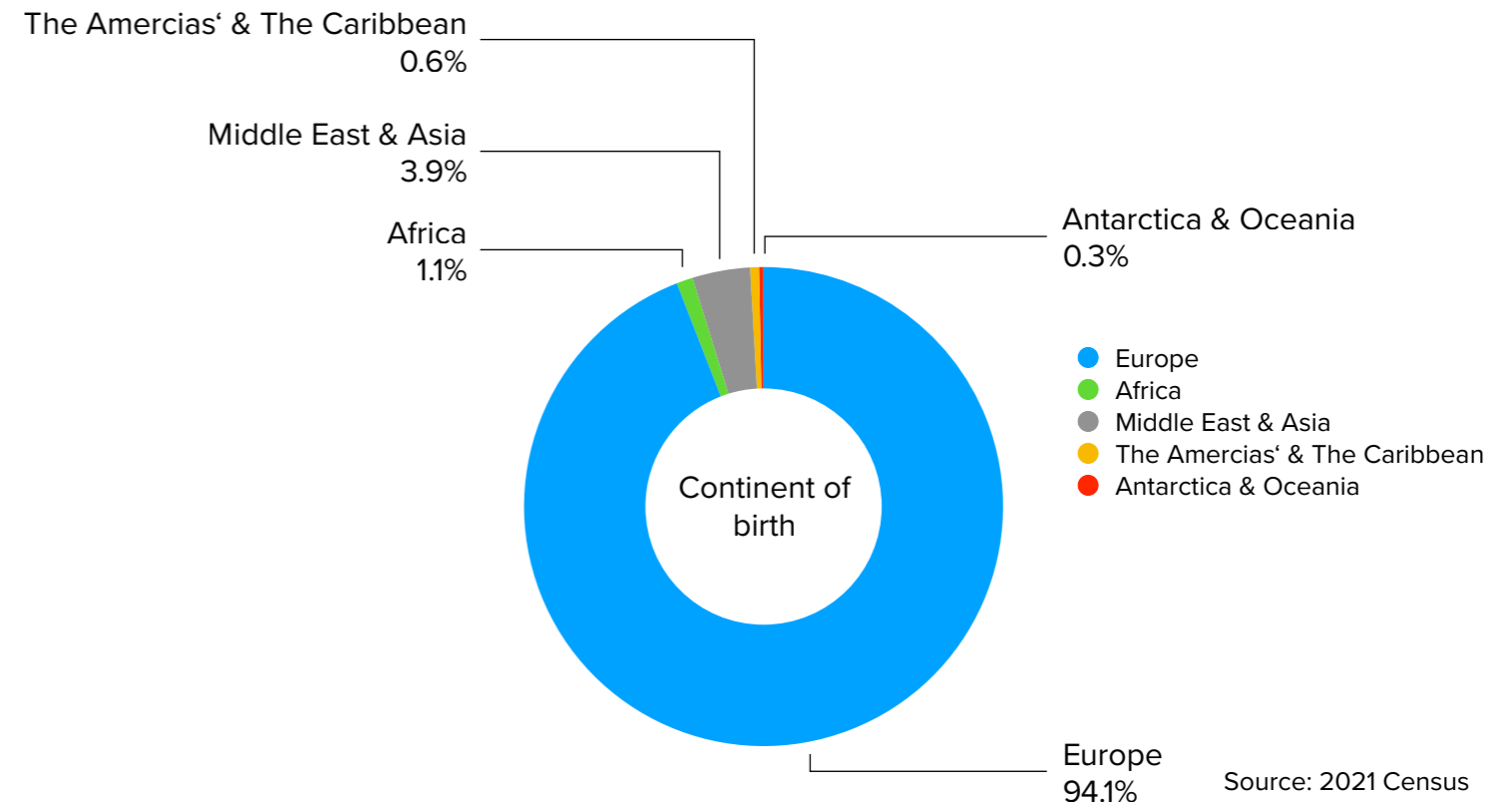
Ethnicity

The 2021 census shows that 92.6% of Folkestone & Hythe’s population are from white ethnic backgrounds followed by Asian, British Asian or Asian Welsh (3.9%), Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (1.9%), Other ethnic groups (1.0%) and Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African (0.6%), as defined by census category.



10.5% of Folkestone & Hythe residents were born outside the UK. 7% of those born outside the UK have been resident in the UK for over 10 years. The chart below shows the continent of birth for the district’s residents:

Folkestone & Hythe Residents: Continent of Birth



2.3% of households in Folkestone & Hythe do not contain any people that have English as their main language. This is lower than the national average (7.1%). Source: 2021 census

In 2021/22 a total of **1,657** households approached the council as homeless and made applications under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. 1,345 (92%) applicants stated they were from white ethnic backgrounds and 25 (2%) from Asian ethnic backgrounds, 1% were from Black ethnic backgrounds, 2% from mixed ethnicity backgrounds and 16% did not state their ethnicity.

On 31st March 2022, there were 1,464 applications on the housing waiting list. Of these, 1,345 (92%) stated they were from white ethnic backgrounds, 25 (2%) from Asian ethnic backgrounds, 18 (1%) from Black ethnic backgrounds, 34 (2%) from mixed ethnicity backgrounds, 2 (0.1%) from Arab backgrounds and 41 (16%) did not state their ethnicity.

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A total of 308 applicants were housed in 2021/22. Of those housed, 288 (94%) were from white ethnic backgrounds and 7 (2%) from Asian backgrounds, 2 (0.6%) from black backgrounds, 1 (0.4%) from an Arab background. 4 (1%) were mixed ethnicity and 6 (2%) declared no ethnicity.

Religion

Of all residents in the district, the largest proportion (48%) declared that they were Christian in their religion. However, a significant proportion (41.8%) declared that they had no religion. Other faiths were less represented in the district population: 1.5% of residents declared that they were Hindu, 2% Buddhist, 1% Muslim and 0.1% Jewish.'

Source: 2021 Census

Health

Overview

6.5% of Folkestone & Hythe residents describe their health as bad or very bad. This is slightly higher than the national average (England 5.2%).

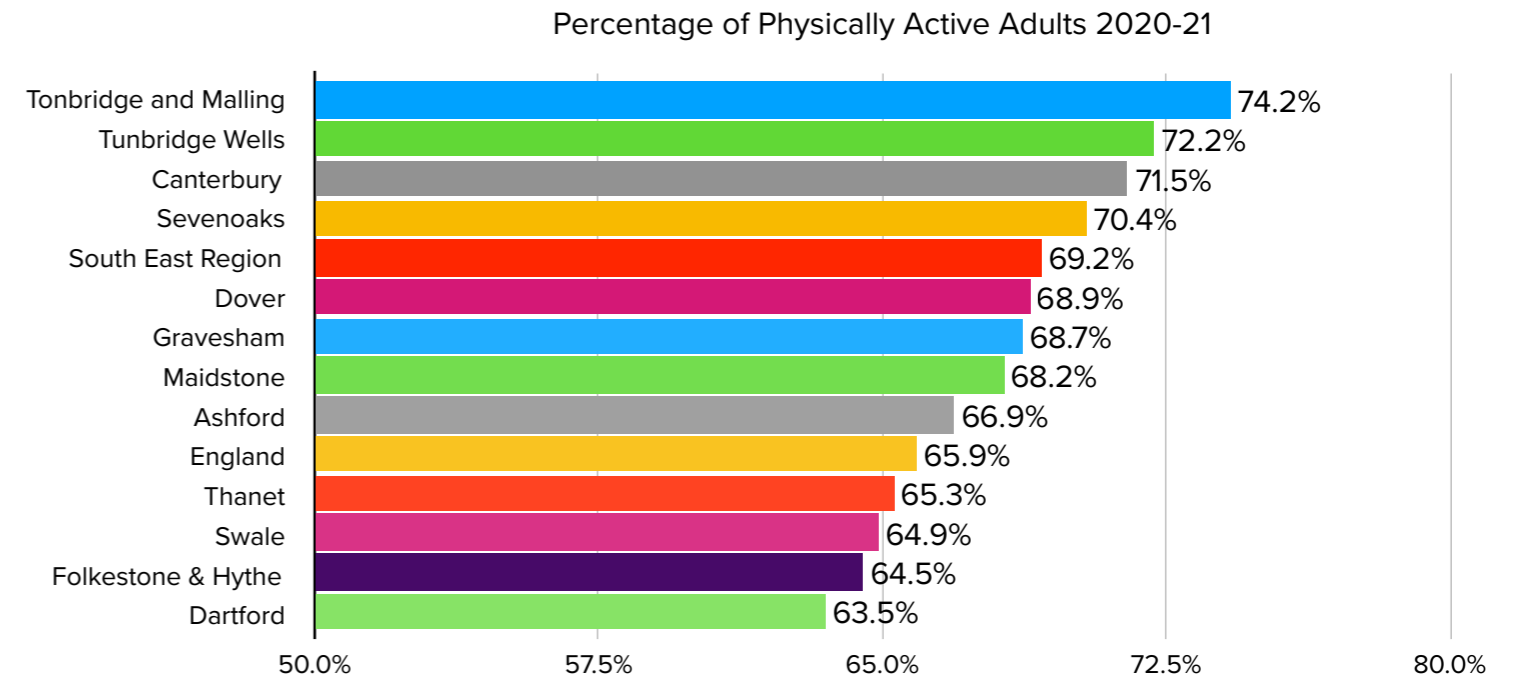
Over 20% of those that live in the district are recognised as disabled under the Equality Act. This is higher than Kent (18%), south east (16%), and national (England: 17%) comparisons.

Source: KCC District Profile: 2021 Census

The data on physical fitness, obesity, alcohol-related hospital admissions, self-harm and smoking prevalence set out on, were sourced from the latest Public Health England's - Public Health Outcomes Framework:

Physical Fitness

In 2020-21 64.5% of Folkestone & Hythe adults were classed as 'physically active' below the English national average. The following graph sets out how Folkestone & Hythe compares with other Kent Local Authority areas:

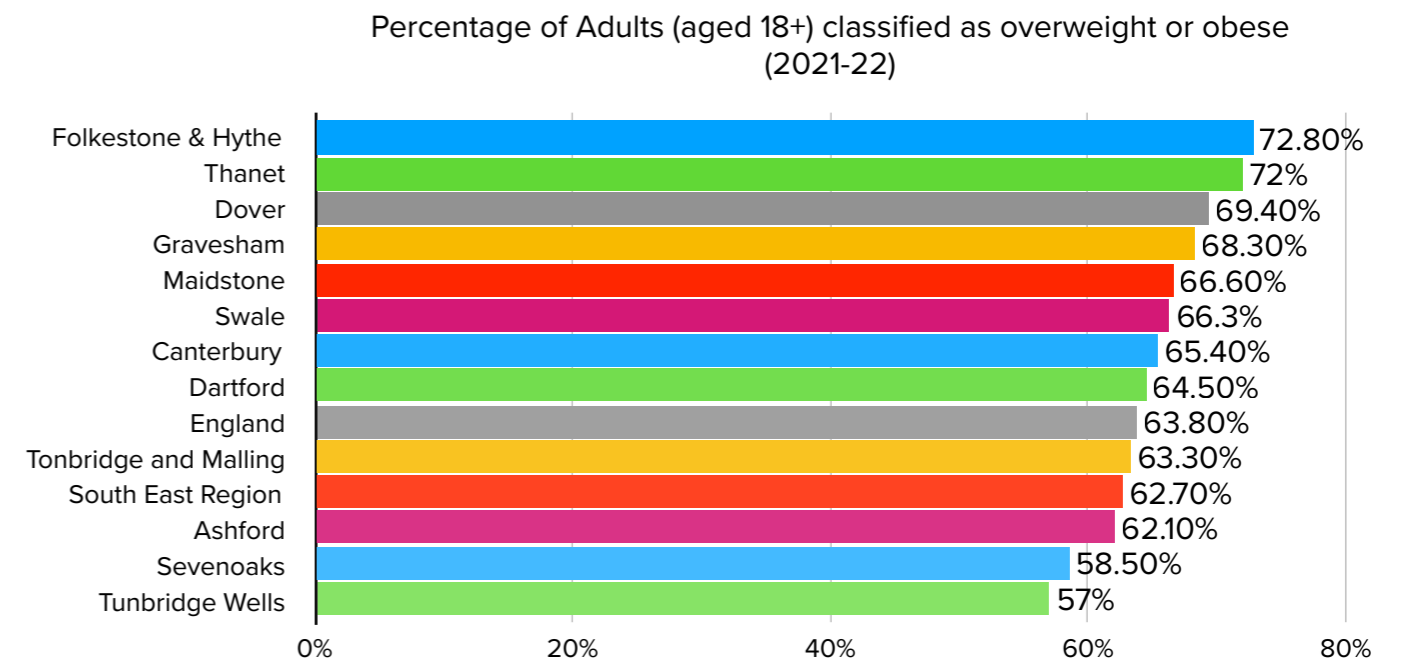


Source: Public Health England: Public Health Outcomes Framework

Obesity

In 2021-22, 72.80% of adults in the district were classified as overweight and the latest data from 2022/23 shows 37.4% of 10-11 year olds (Year 6 school age) were classified as obese. Both figures are above the South East and national averages.

The graphs below set out how Folkestone & Hythe compares with other Kent Local Authority areas for obesity in both adults and Year 6 school age children:

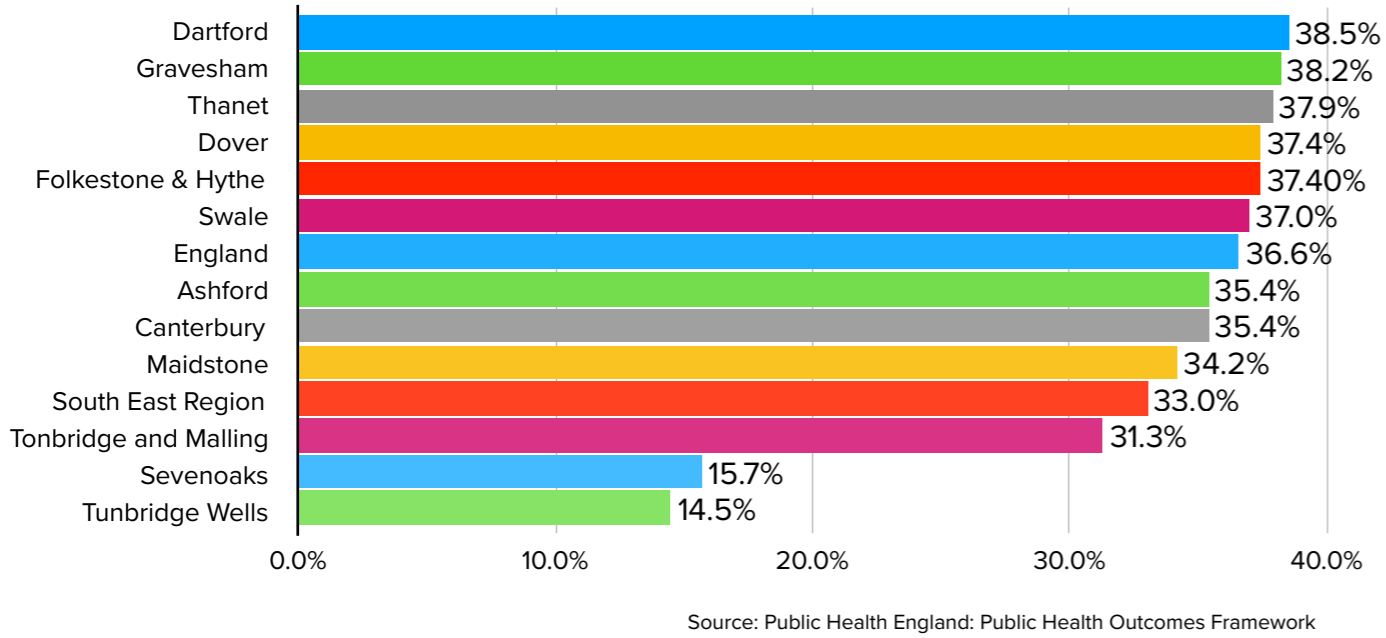


Source: Public Health England: Public Health Outcomes Framework

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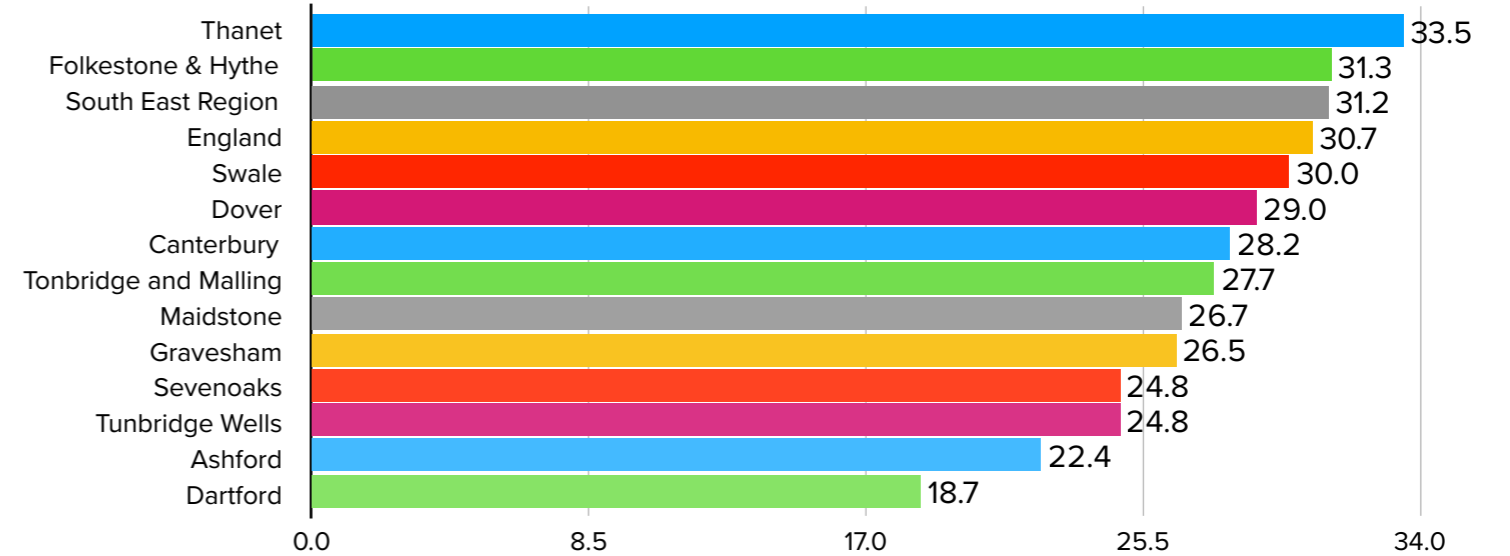
Obesity (Continued)

Prevalence of overweight Year 6 children (Including obesity) (2022/23)



However, the rate of alcohol-specific hospital stays among under 18s in the district is above the average across England with 31.3 per 100,000 recorded, compared with 30.7 per 100,000 nationally. The graph below sets out how Folkestone & Hythe compares with other Kent Local Authority areas:

Hospital Stays for alcohol specific conditions per 100,000 - Under 18s (2017-19)

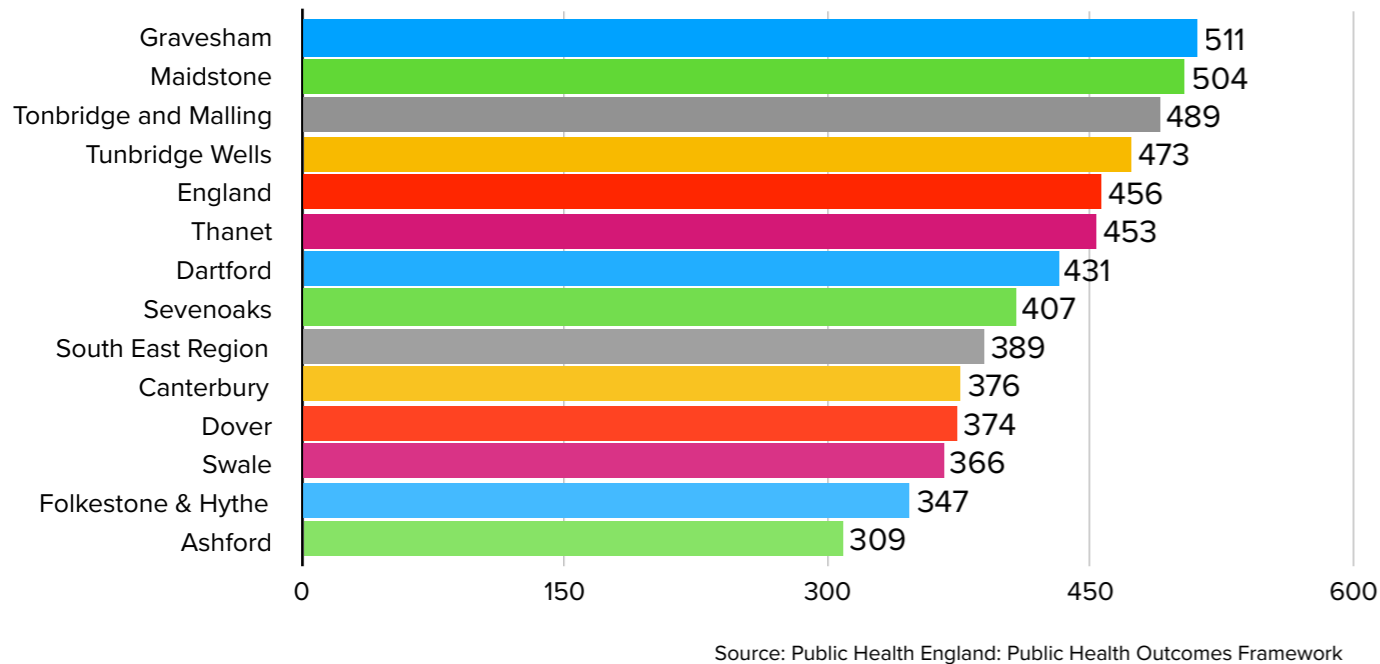


Caption

Alcohol-related hospital admissions

The rate of alcohol-related harm hospital admissions for adults is better than the average across England with 347 per 100,000 recorded in the district during 2020-21, compared with 456 per 100,000 in nationally.

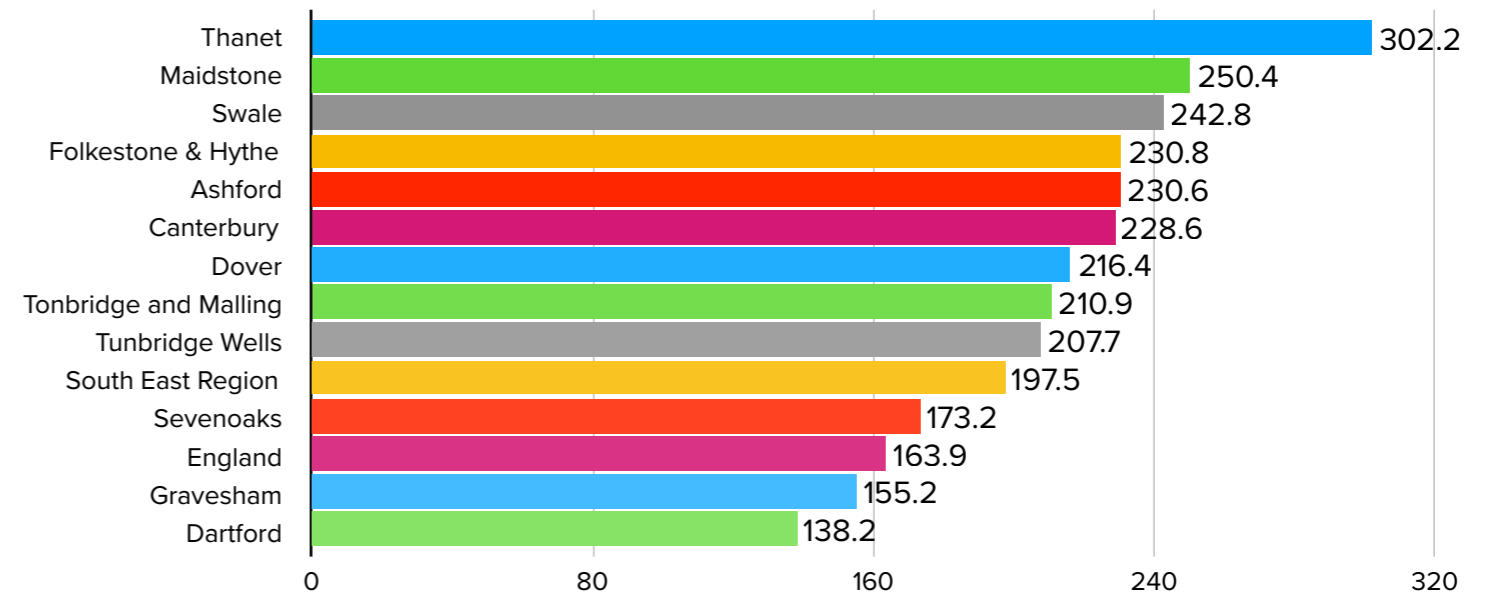
Alcohol Related Harm - Hospital admissions per 100,000 (2020-21)



Emergency Hospital Admissions for intentional Self-Harm

The number of emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm in the district in 2021/22 was 230.8 per 100,000, which is above both the regional and national average. The graph below sets out how Folkestone & Hythe compares with other Kent Local Authority areas:

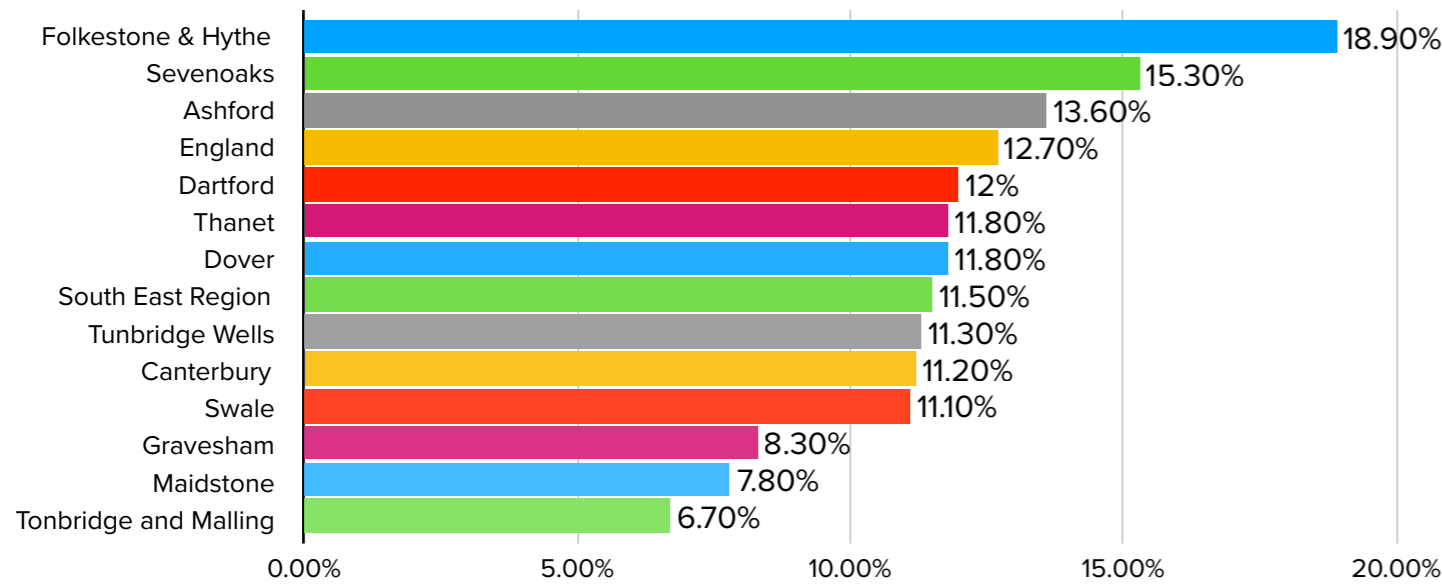
Emergency Hospital Admissions for intentional Self-Harm per 100,000 (2021-22)



04 Understanding our Communities

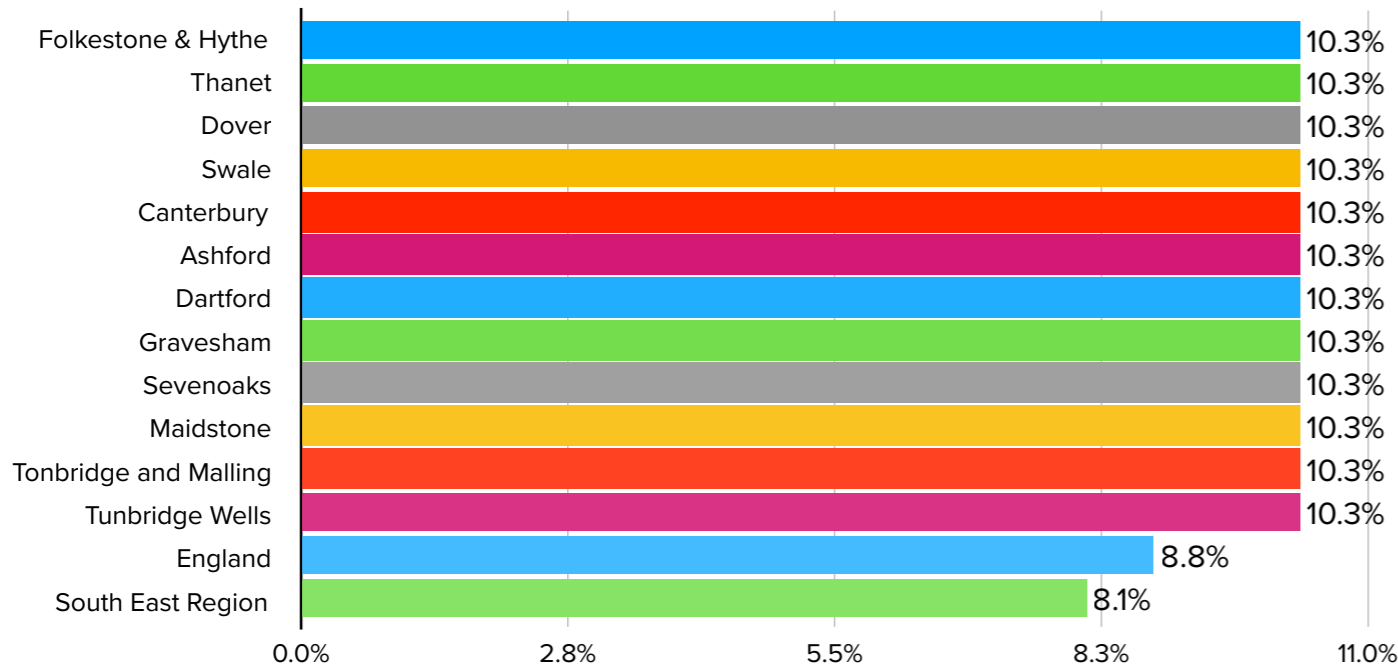
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 of those over the age of 18 are smokers - this is significantly higher than the other Kent authority areas, the national average and the average for south-east England. In addition, percentage of those smoking at the time of delivery (a determinant of child health) is notably higher in Folkestone & Hythe district than in other areas of Kent.

Smoking Prevalence in Adults (18+) 2022



Source: Public Health England: Public Health Outcomes Framework

Smoking status at time of delivery (2022/23)

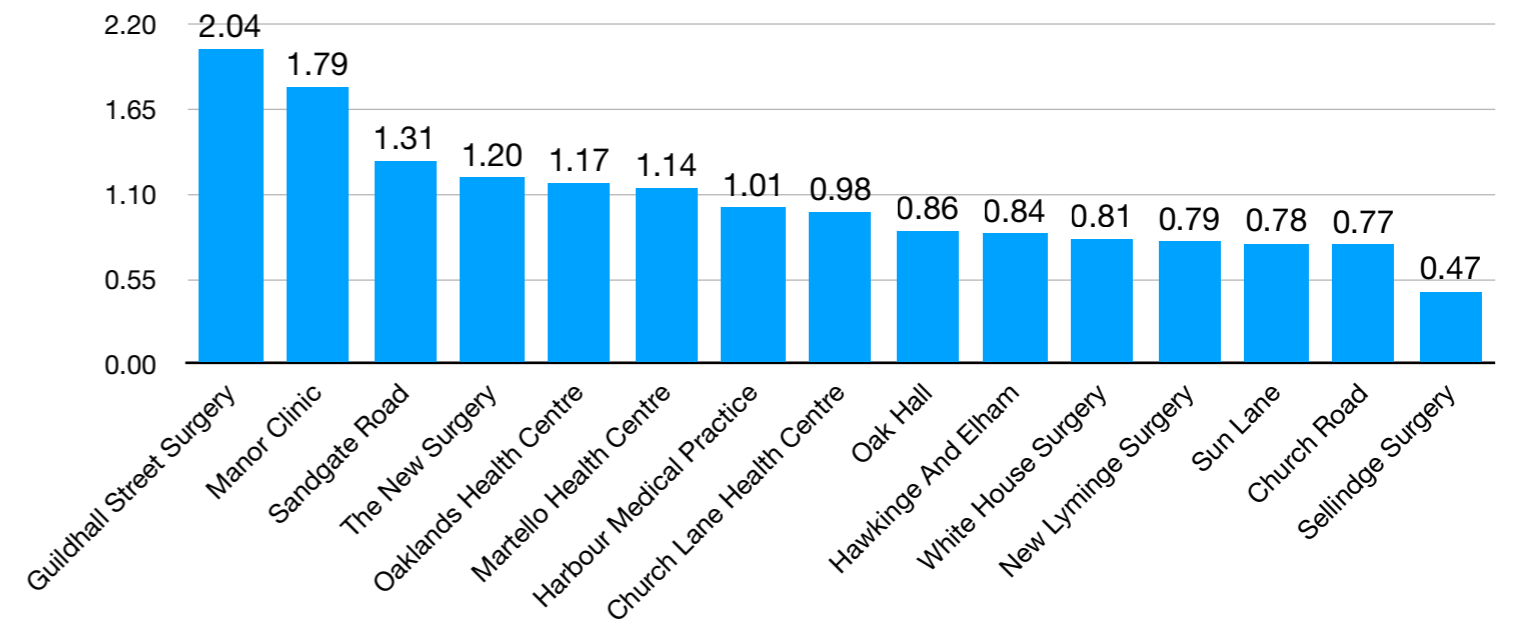


Source: Public Health England: Public Health Outcomes Framework

Mental Health and Suicide

The prevalence of mental health conditions in 2022-23 by GP practice in the graph below shows Guildhall Street Surgery (Folkestone) as recording the highest prevalence (2.04%) and Sellindge Surgery recording the lowest (0.47%) on the register of their patients:

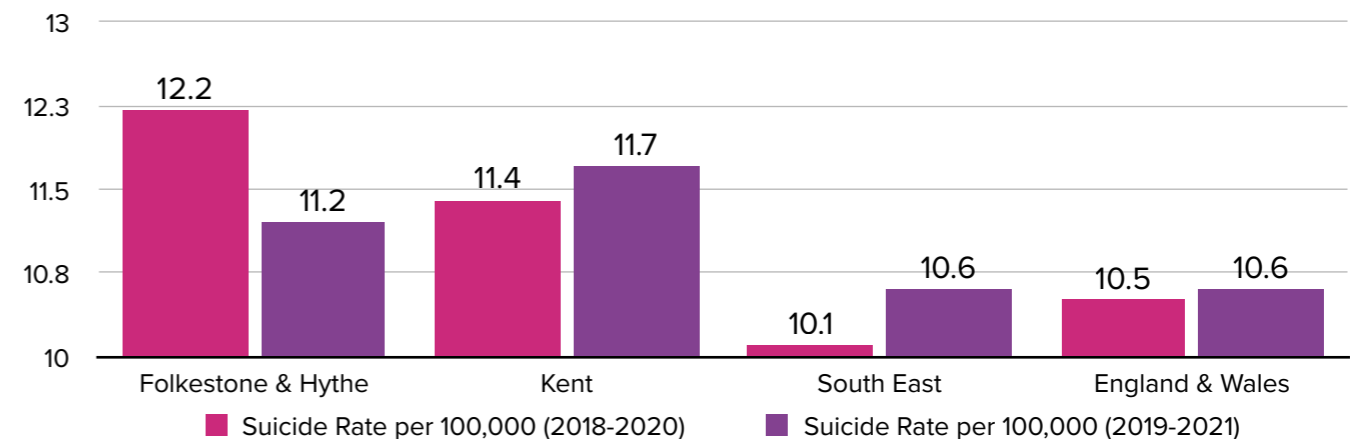
Recorded Prevalance of Mental Health Conditions by GP Practice
 % of patients recorded on GP QOF registers as having a mental health condition- 2022-23



Source: NHS Digital: Quality of Outcomes Framework (2022/23)

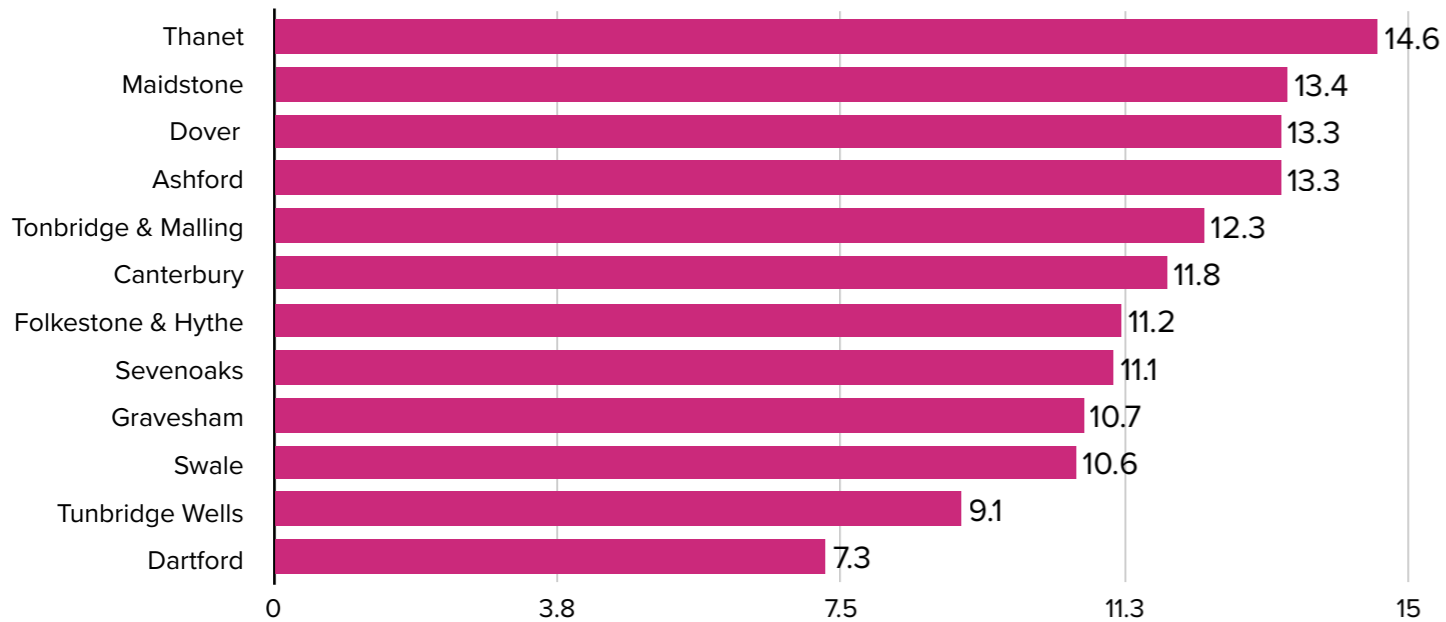
The suicide rate in the district is above the average for Kent, the South East and England & Wales as a whole. Data for the period from 2019 to 2021 recorded by the ONS shows the rate at 11.2 per 100,000 of the population, the seventh highest amongst the Kent districts. The rate across Kent overall was 11.7, 10.6 in the South East and 10.6 nationally (England & Wales).

Suicide Rate per 100,000 Folkestone & Hythe vs County, Regional and National



04 Understanding our Communities

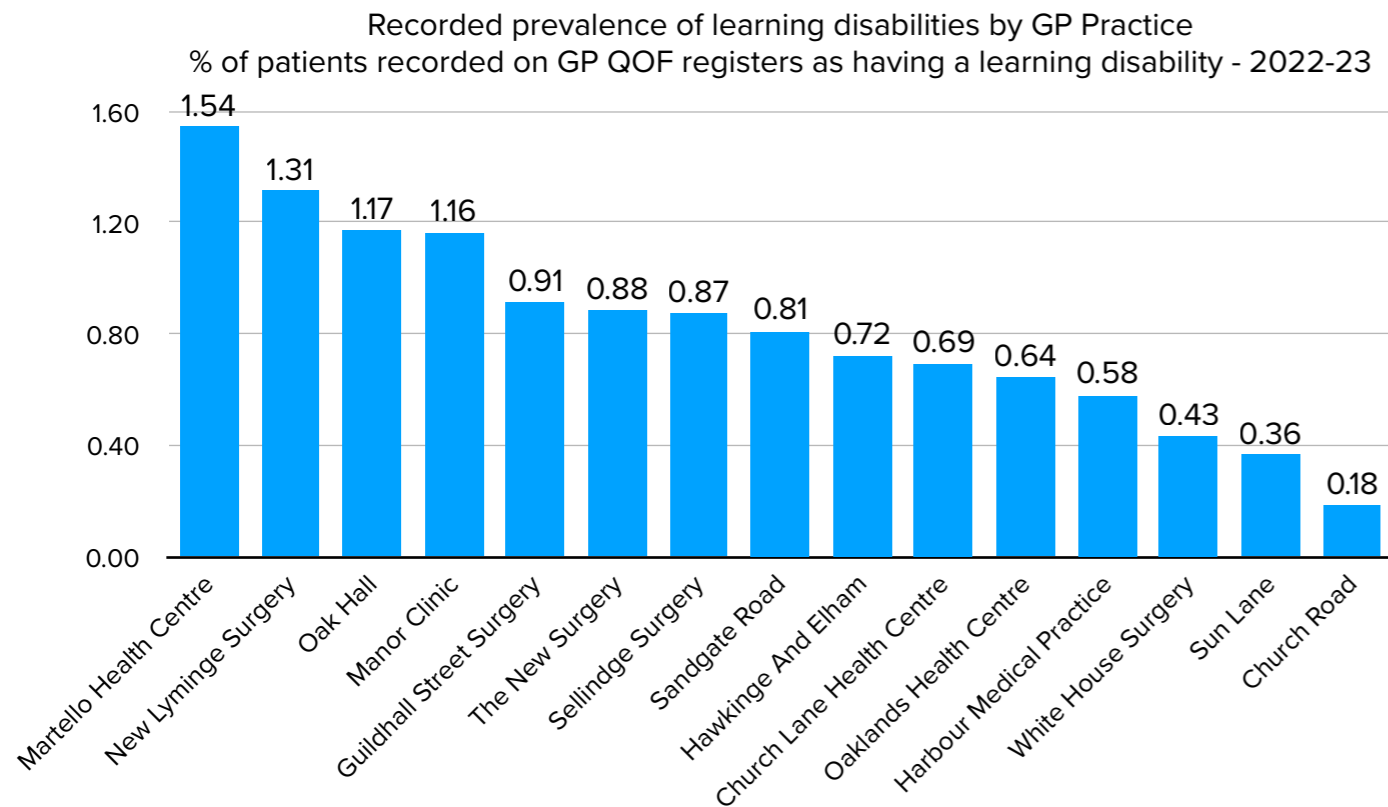
Suicides per 100,000 of population by Kent Local Authority Area (2019-21)



Source: ONS Suicides in England and Wales by Local Authority (2022)

Learning Disabilities

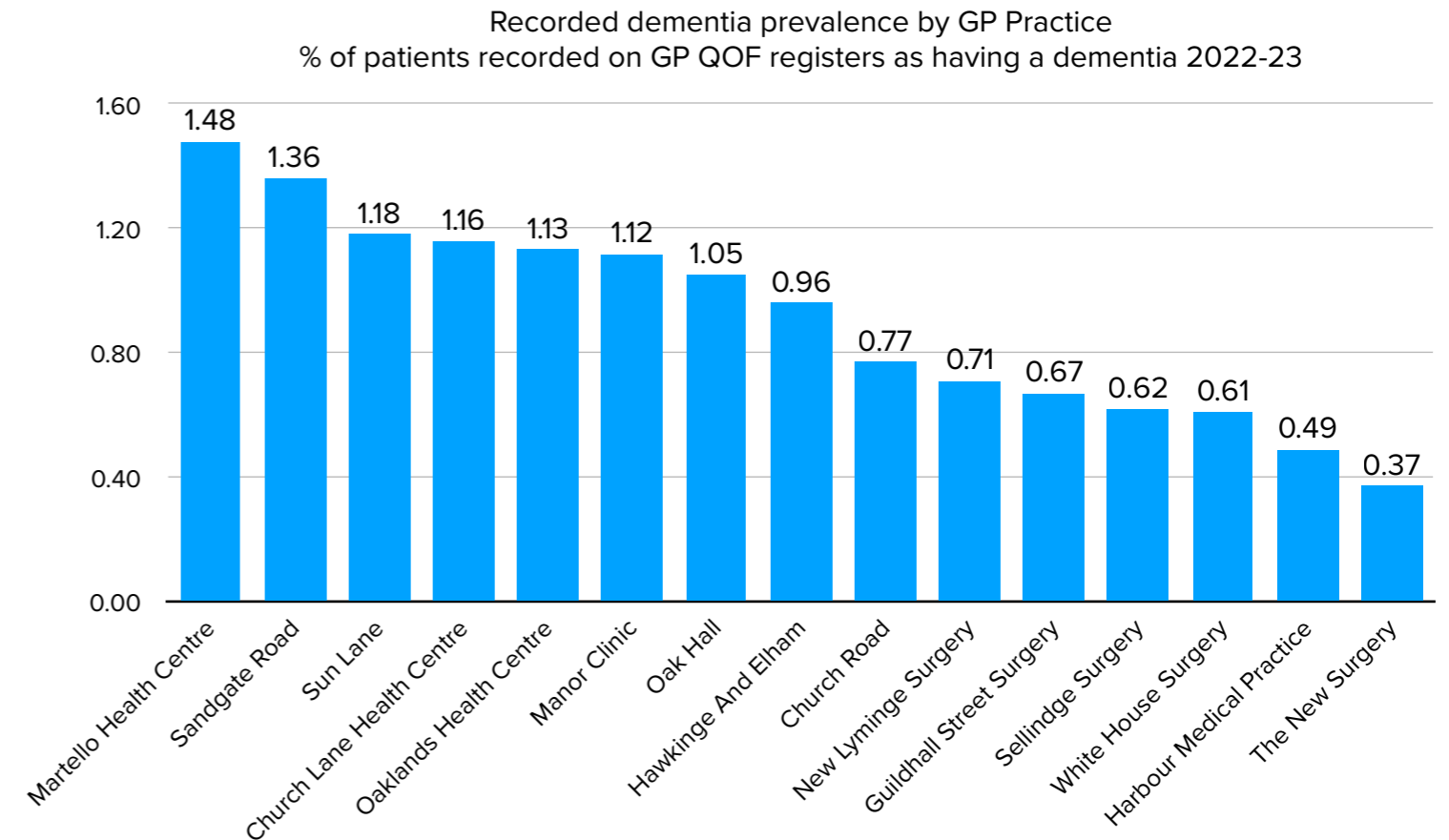
The latest figures recorded in 2022/23 on the prevalence of learning disabilities by GP practice show a variance across the district with the highest at Martello Health Centre in Dymchurch (1.54%) and the lowest at Church Road Surgery in Lyminge (0.18%).



Source: NHS Digital: Quality of Outcomes Framework (2022/23)

Dementia

The latest data recorded in 2022/23 for prevalence of dementia by GP surgeries shows a variance across the district with the highest number being recorded at Martello Health Centre in Dymchurch (1.48%) and the lowest at The New Surgery in Folkestone (0.37%).



Source: NHS Digital: Quality of Outcomes Framework (2022/23)

Births & Deaths

In the recent past there have generally been more deaths per year in the district than births. This trend has continued with the latest figures from 2022 showing 953 live births and 1,127 deaths. This is in contrast with the picture for Kent as a whole, where the live birth rate is higher than the death rate

Source: ONS, Births in England and Wales: Summary Tables, 2022

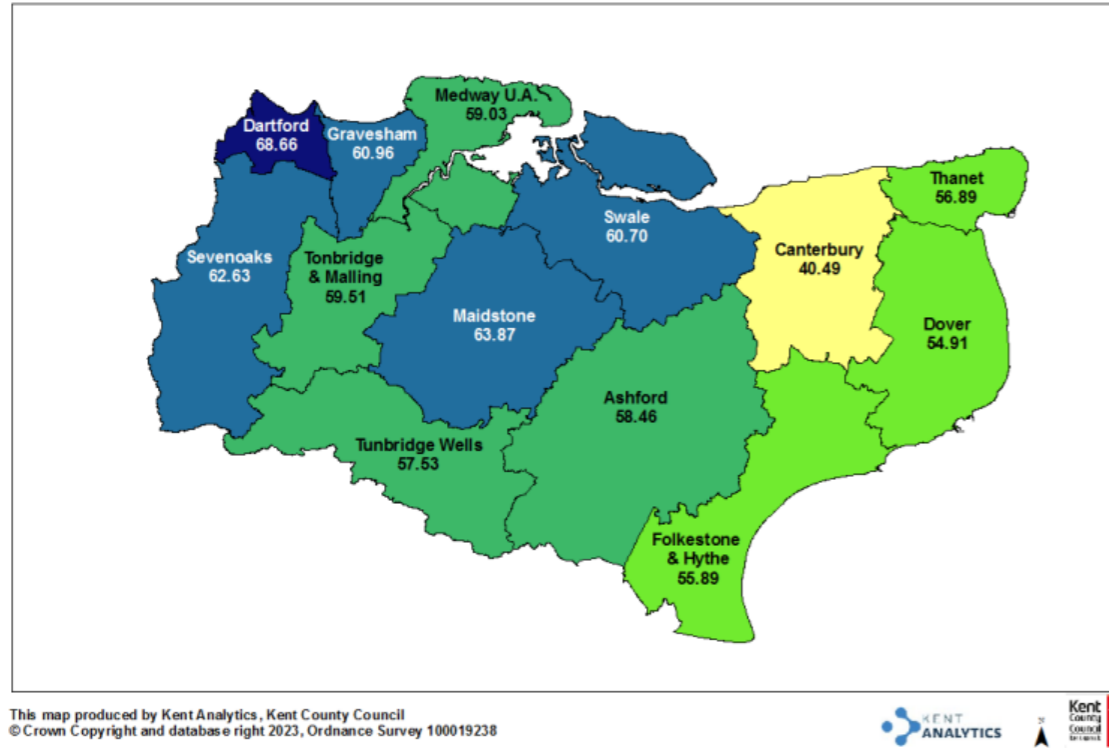
ONS: Deaths registered monthly in England and Wales, 2022

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General Fertility Rates

The General Fertility Rate (GFR) is the number of live births per 1,000 females aged between 15 and 44

2021 General Fertility Rate: Local Authority Areas in Kent



The latest data for 2021 shows the GFR for Folkestone & Hythe was measured at 55.89. This is the second lowest rate when compared with other Kent local authority areas in the County map above,

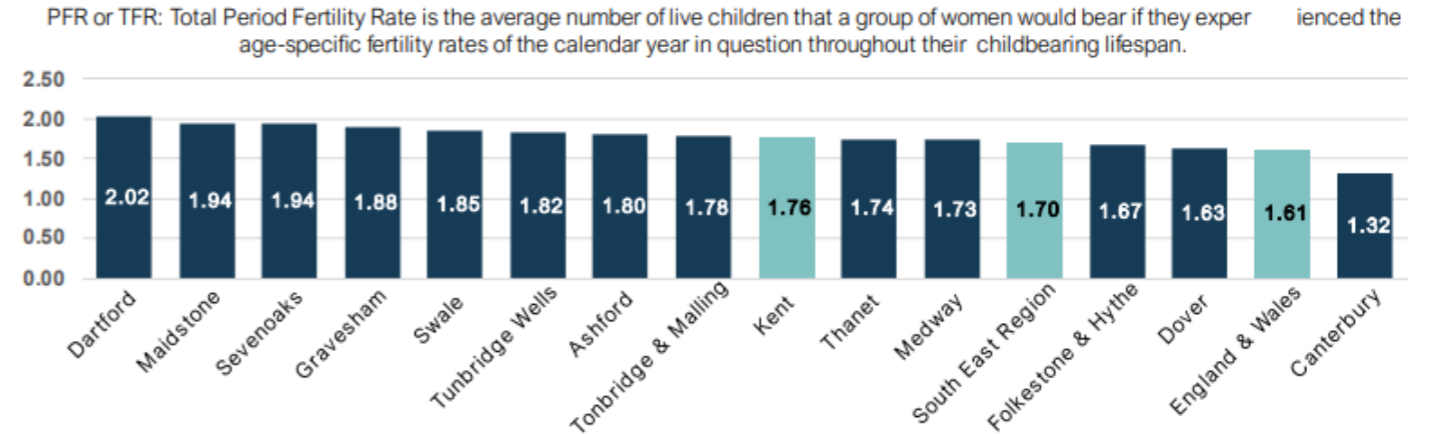
Source: KCC Strategic Commissioning Statistical Bulletin – Births & Deaths in Kent 2021

Total Fertility Rates

The total fertility rate is defined as ‘the average number of live children that a group of women would bear if they experienced the age-specific fertility rates of the calendar year throughout their childbearing lifespan’.

Folkestone & Hythe has the third lowest total fertility rates (1.67) in 2021 compared with neighbouring East Kent local authority areas. The following graph shows the total period fertility rate for the district to be below the Kent average (1.76), as well as the South East Region average (1.70), but above the England and Wales (1.61) average.

2021 TFR: Total Fertility Rate

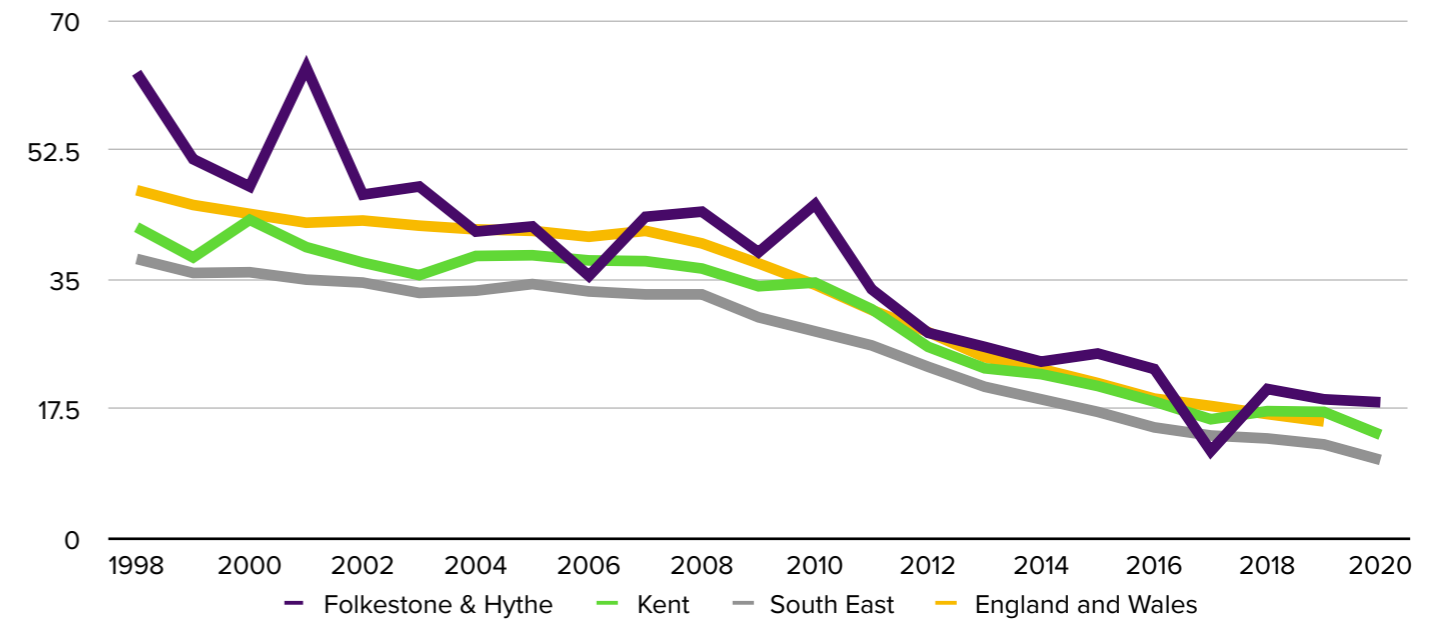


Source: KCC Strategic Commissioning Statistical Bulletin – Births & Deaths in Kent 2021

Teenage Pregnancies:

Under 18 conception rate – An Historical Comparison:

Under 18 Conceptions (Per 1,000 population) 1998-2020

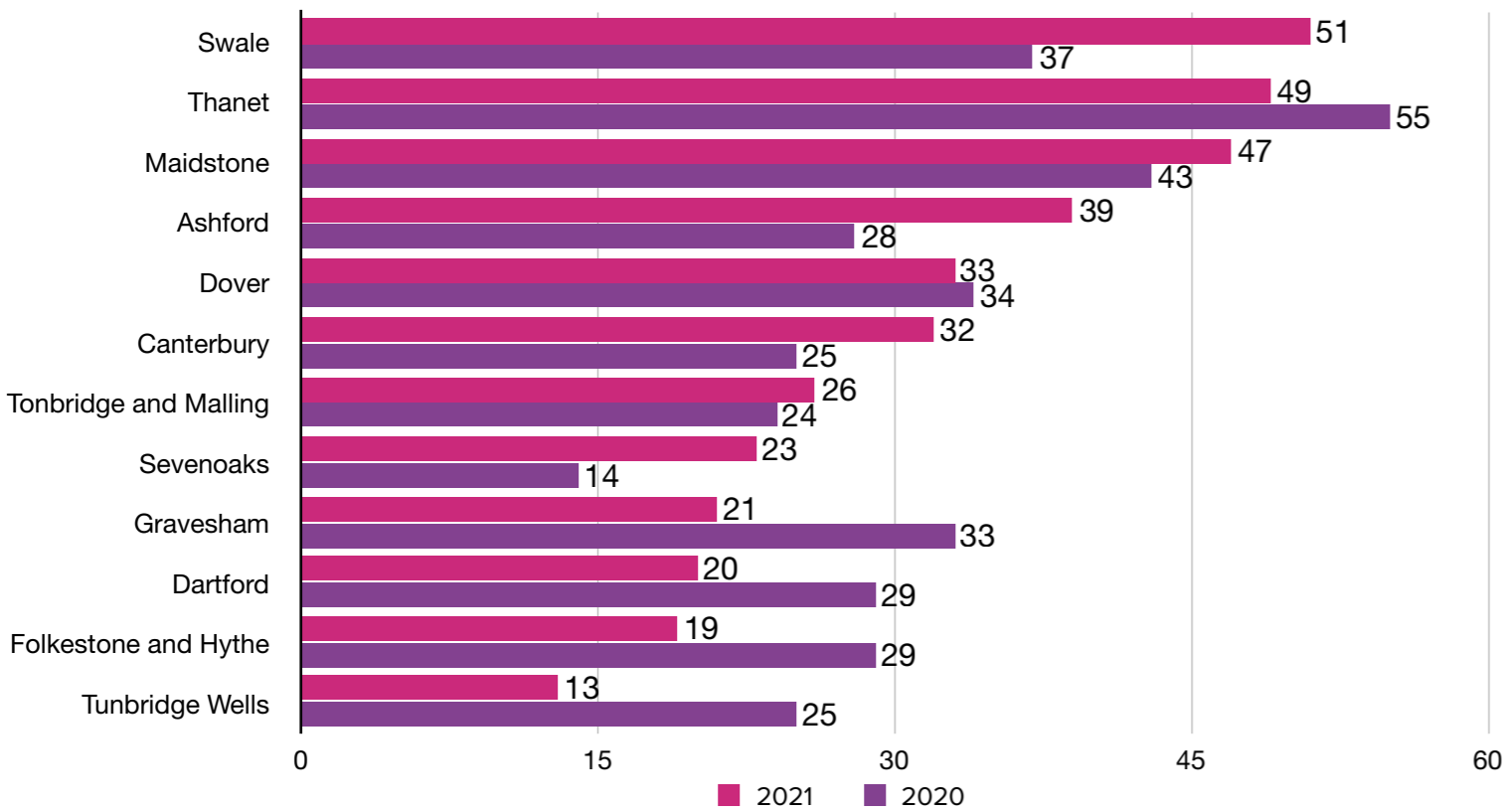


Source: ONS Conception Statistics 2020

04 Understanding our Communities

Teenage Conceptions: A Kent Comparison

Number of under 18 conceptions by Kent local authority area in 2020 vs 2021



Source: ONS Conception Statistics 2021

The latest ONS data on conceptions from 2021 in the above graph shows all Kent local authorities ranked from highest to lowest in terms of under 18 conceptions. Swale was recorded as having the highest number in 2021 with 51 conceptions, previously Thanet was the highest in 2020. Folkestone & Hythe, previously recorded a total of 29 conceptions in 2020, which decreased to 19 in 2021. Tunbridge Wells recorded the lowest number within the County in 2021.

Life Expectancy

The latest available data from the 2018-2020 period shows the average life expectancy of a Folkestone & Hythe resident to be similar to the national average:

	Folkestone & Hythe	Kent	South East	England
Female	82.9	83.2	84.1	83.1
Male	78.3	79.6	80.5	79.6

Source: ONS: Life expectancies for local areas of the UK: Between 2001-03 and 2018-20

At the age of 65 years, the average female in the Folkestone & Hythe District lives for a further 21.3 years, with the average male living for a further 18.6 years.

Source: ONS: Life expectancies for local areas of the UK: Between 2001-03 and 2018-20

Disability Benefits

11.5% of Folkestone & Hythe residents claim disability benefits, defined as including Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payments or Attendance Allowance. Across all Kent authorities, Thanet (at 13.1%) has the highest percentage of disability benefit claimants. The table below shows the proportion of each age bracket claiming disability benefits and how this compares with county, regional and national figures.

	Folkestone & Hythe	Kent	South East	England & Wales
Overall	12.4%	9.3%	7.6%	9.2%
0-15	7.9%	6.9%	5.4%	5.4%
16-64	9.3%	6.7%	5.3%	6.7%
65+	22.8%	19.5%	16.8%	21.5%
Young People (24 and under)	8.2%	6.8%	5.2%	5.3%

Source: KCC District Profile/ DWP, November 2022

There are a number of reasons why people may claim disability benefit and people may claim for more than one condition. Looking at why people in Folkestone & Hythe district claimed the benefit, figures show that 63.2% of disability benefit claimants in the district claim due to a physical disability, and in addition 18.6% of the total also claimed for a mental health condition, and 14.2% of the total due to a learning difficulty.

People Providing Unpaid Care

Age Range	Percentage
65 and over	26.7%
16-64	70.6%
0-15	2.7%

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Percentage of age groups claiming carers allowance

Age Range	Folkestone & Hythe	Kent	Great Britain
16-24	1.0%	0.7%	0.7%
25-64	3.7%	3.0%	2.8%
65 and over	2.7%	2.4%	2.8%

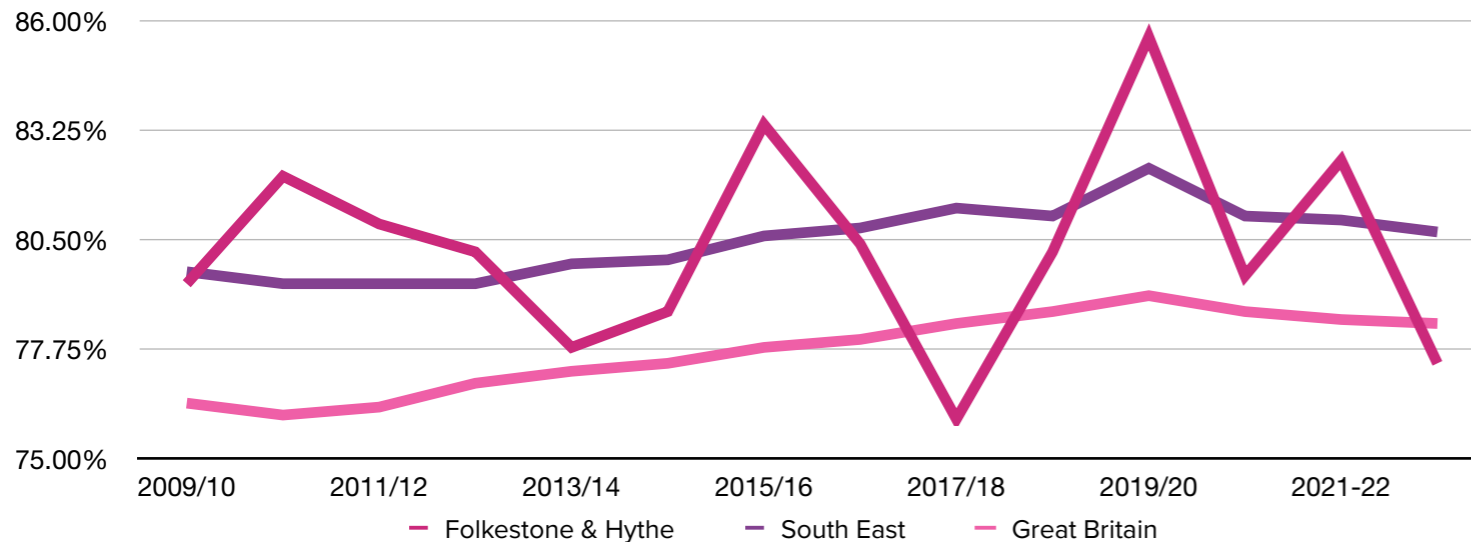
Source: KCC District Profile/ DWP Longitudinal Study, November 2022

Economic Profile

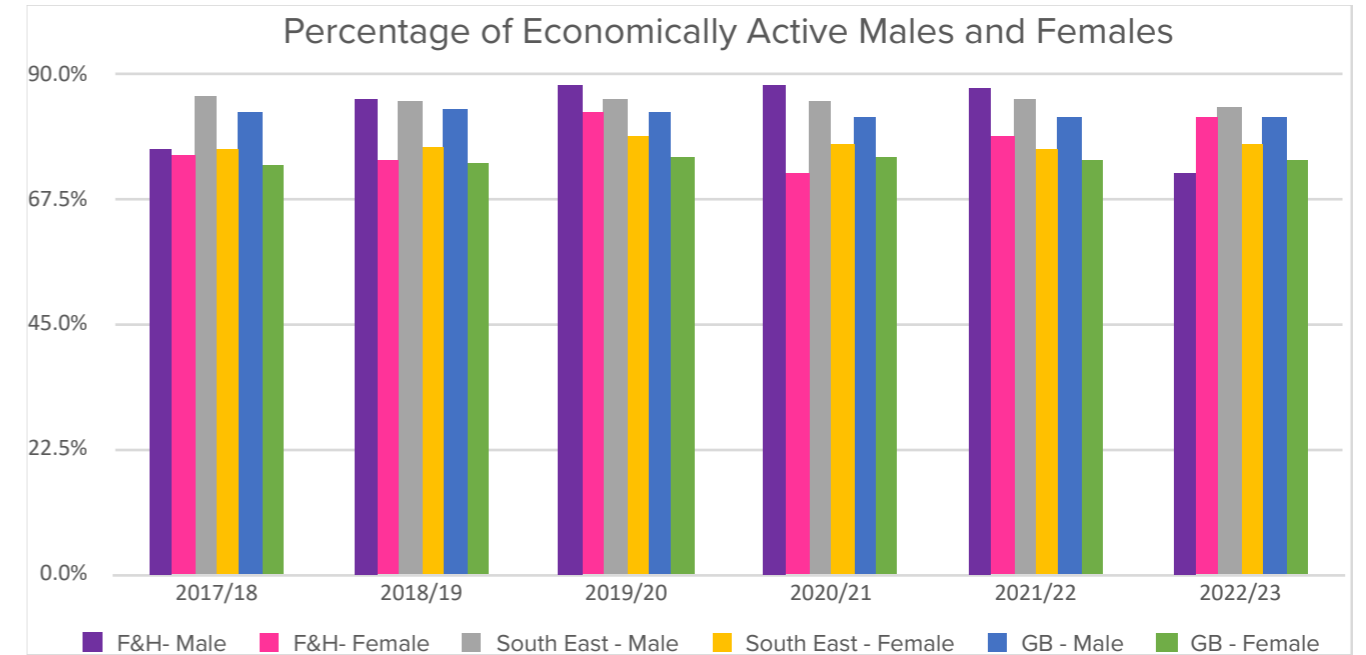
Labour Supply & Economic Activity

In 2022-23, 77.4% of those aged between 16 and 64 were 'economically active', defined as 'either in employment or unemployed and available for and actively seeking work' compared with 82.5% in 2021-22.

Economically Active Population
2009/10-2022-23

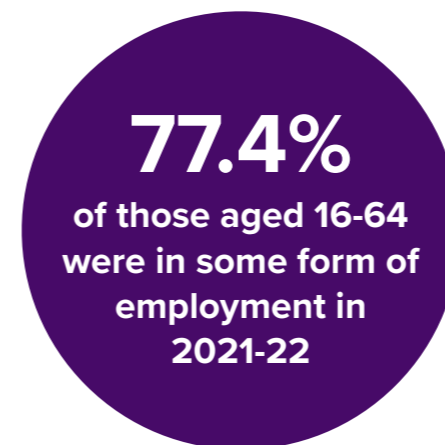


There has historically been some differential between the proportion of economically active men and women. In 2016/17 for example, 85.9% of males were economically active in comparison to 74.8% of females. In 2022-23, the proportion of economically active females increased to 82.2% and the proportion of economically active males decreased to 72.2%. The graph below shows the trend for the previous five years:

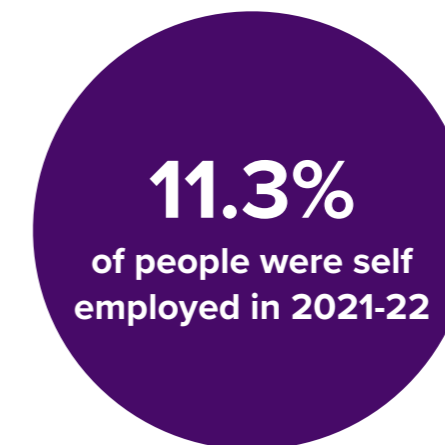


In 2022/23, 77.4% of those aged 16-64 were in some form of employment. The majority of people aged 16-64 who were classed as employees has fallen from 67.1% in 2021/22 to 60.5% in 2022/23. The number of those classed as self-employed has decreased from a high of 20.8% in 2019/20 to 11.9% in 2020/21 as a likely result of the pandemic. In 2022/23, the figure has continued to decrease to 11.3%.

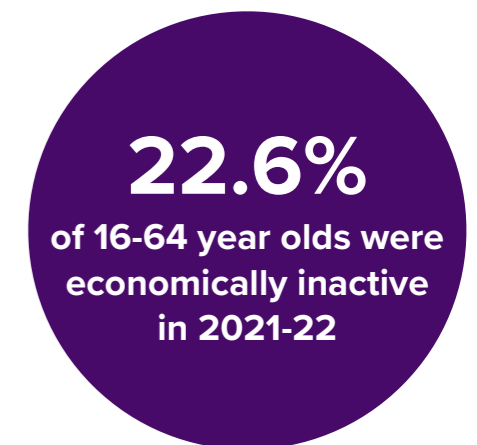
The proportion of residents classed as 'economically inactive' has shown an increase for the monitoring year - in 2022/23 22.6% of those aged 16-64 were unavailable to work compared with 17.5% in 2021/22. The figure for 2022/23 is now above the average when compared to the southeast (19.3%) and Great Britain as whole (21.6%).



Source: NOMIS



Source: NOMIS



Source: NOMIS

04 Understanding our Communities

Employment by Occupation: Proportion of those in Employment in 2022

	Folkestone & Hythe	South East	Great Britain
Soc 2010 major group 1-3	55.3%	57.0%	52.2%
1 Managers, directors and senior officials	#	12.7%	10.7%
2 Professional occupations	28.3%	28.3%	26.8%
3 Associate professional & technical	19.4%	15.7%	14.5%
Soc 2010 major group 4-5	19.2%	17.7%	18.5%
4 Administrative & secretarial	#	9.4%	9.6%
5 Skilled trades occupations	#	8.2%	8.9%
Soc 2010 major group 6-7	16.4%	12.9%	14.2%
6 Caring, leisure and Other Service occupations	#	7.4%	8.0%
7 Sales and customer service occs	#	5.4%	6.1%
Soc 2010 major group 8-9	#	12.4%	15.1%
8 Process plant & machine operatives	#	4.2%	5.5%
9 Elementary occupations	#	8.1%	9.5%

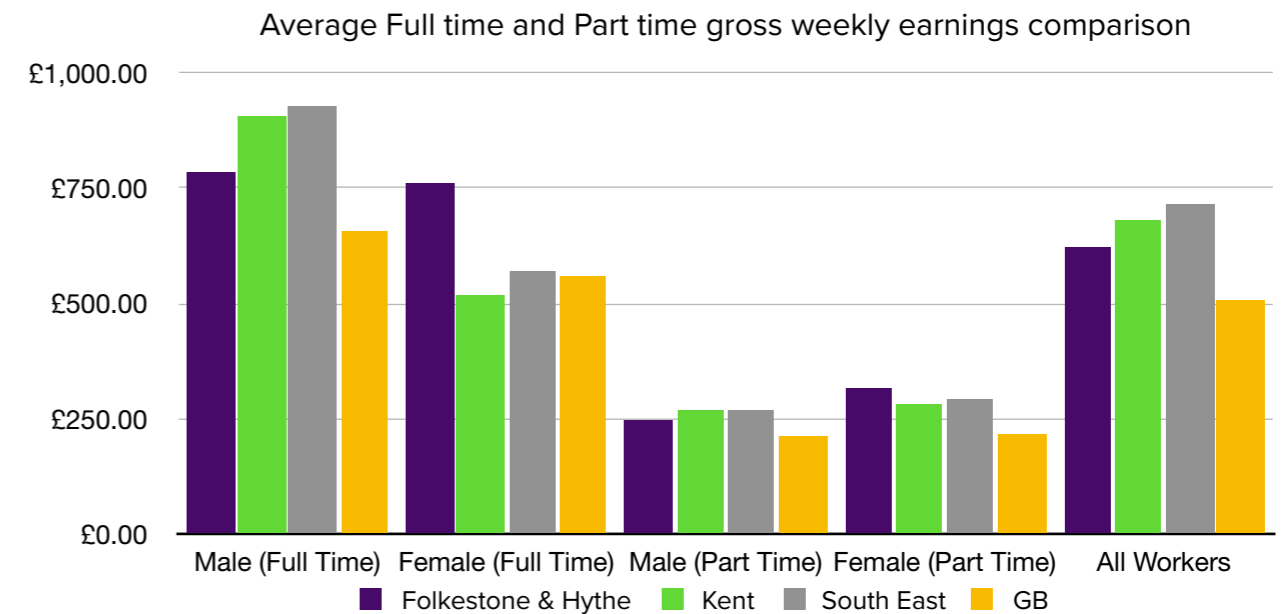
Source: NOMIS

Earnings and Income

The average gross earnings for a Folkestone & Hythe resident in 2022/23 was £620.50 per week which is lower than those for the average Kent resident (£680.50 per week), the south east (£714.30 per week) and Great Britain as a whole (£669.10 per week).

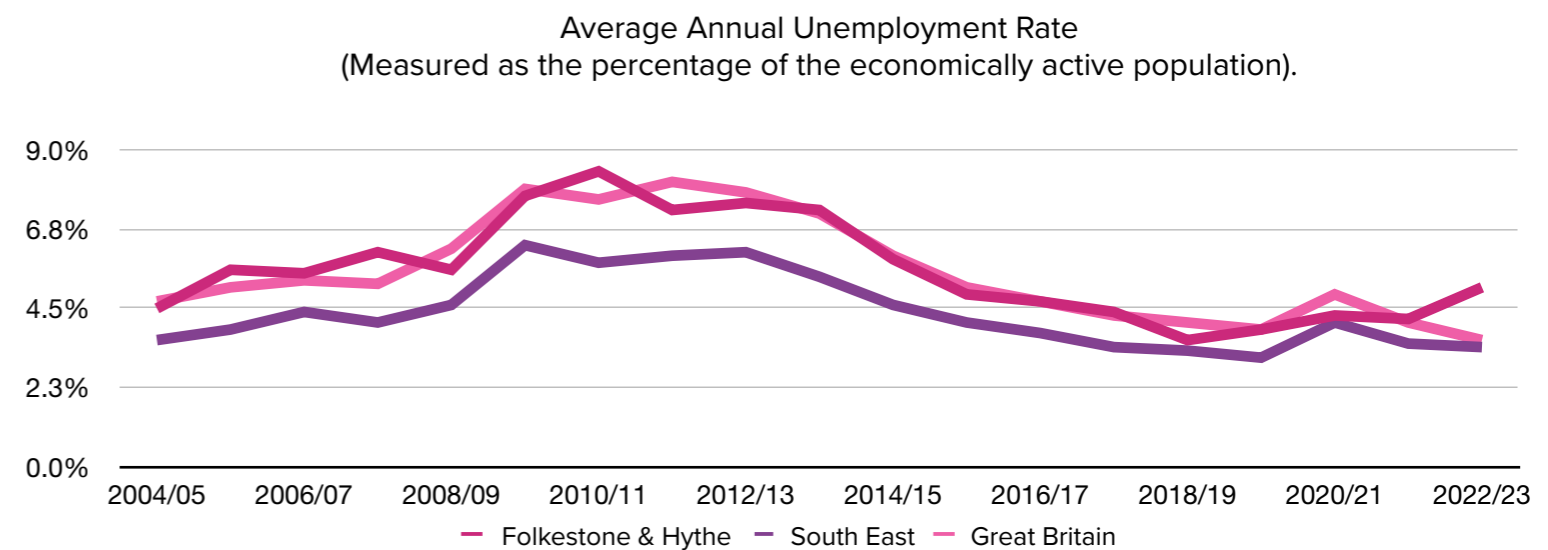
Source: NOMIS, Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings, 2023

There are, however, variations between the earnings of men and women, and those in full time and part time employment. The graph below sets out these earnings:



Unemployment and Working Age Benefits

The unemployment rate in the district has increased from 4.2% in [date?] to 5.1% in 2022/23 and is above the southeast (3.4%) and Great Britain (3.6%) averages. The graph below shows the average unemployment rate from 2004/05 to 2022/23:



04 Understanding our Communities

Unemployment and Working Age Benefits (continued)

The 'claimant count' is the proportion of those aged 16-64 claiming benefits principally for the reason of being unemployed.

At the end of 2022/23 the claimant count recorded a decrease within the district from 4.8% in March 2022 to 4.0% in March 2023. The current count is still higher in comparison to the south east (2.8%) and national average (3.7%).

When we consider claimant count by age, there appears to be a higher claimant count amongst 18-21 year olds.

Age Range	Folkestone & Hythe	South East	Great Britain
16+	4.0%	2.8%	3.7%
16-17	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%
18-24	6.6%	3.7%	4.9%
(of which 18-21)	7.0%	3.7%	5.0%
25-49	4.6%	3.2%	4.2%
50+	2.8%	2.1%	2.7%

Deprivation

Source: NOMIS 2023

Folkestone & Hythe is a diverse district. Not dissimilar to other local authority areas in East Kent, it has areas that are within the most deprived 10% of England and areas that are within the least deprived 10%.

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), 2019

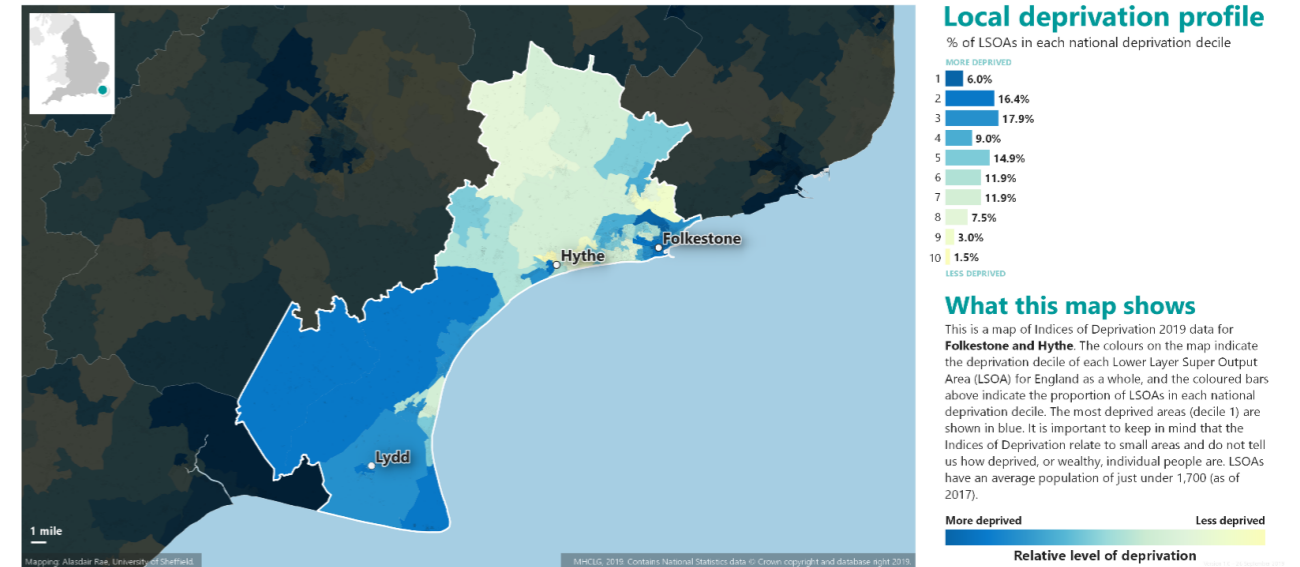
The map below shows the latest indices of multiple deprivation (2019) based on combined data from income, employment, education, skills and training, health deprivation and disability, crime, barriers to housing and services as well as living environment deprivation. The darkest blue areas show the worst deprivation. Data is split into areas generated by the Office for National Statistics based on population size called Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) rather than by electoral ward.

LSOA Definition: Lower-Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are small areas designed to be of a similar population size, with an average of approximately 1,500 residents or 650 households. There are 32,844 Lower-layer LSOAs in England. LSOAs are a standard statistical geography produced by the Office for National Statistics for the reporting of small area statistics.

English Indices of Deprivation 2019

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE



Above: Map of Folkestone & Hythe showing a 2019 profile of deprivation. Darker coloured areas on the map represent the more deprived areas and lighter coloured areas least deprived.

The table below shows how Folkestone & Hythe compares to other Kent local authority areas in an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD):

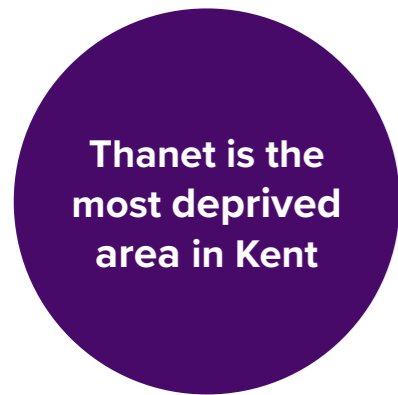
Local Authority	IMD - Rank of average score* (Out of 317 local authorities in England)	Ranking for Deprivation in Kent
Thanet	30	1
Swale	56	2
Folkestone & Hythe	90	3
Dover	113	4
Gravesham	123	5
Dartford	154	6
Ashford	158	7
Canterbury	179	8
Maidstone	185	9
Tonbridge and Malling	234	10
Sevenoaks	251	11
Tunbridge Wells	274	12

Source: Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), 2019

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Table Notes

***IMD - Rank of average score:** The average score summary measure is calculated by averaging the Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) scores in each larger area after they have been population weighted. The resultant scores for the larger areas are then ranked, where the rank of 1 (most deprived) is given to the area with the highest score.



Source: MHCLG 2019



Source: : MHCLG 2019



Source: MHCLG 2019

Seven Domains of Deprivation:

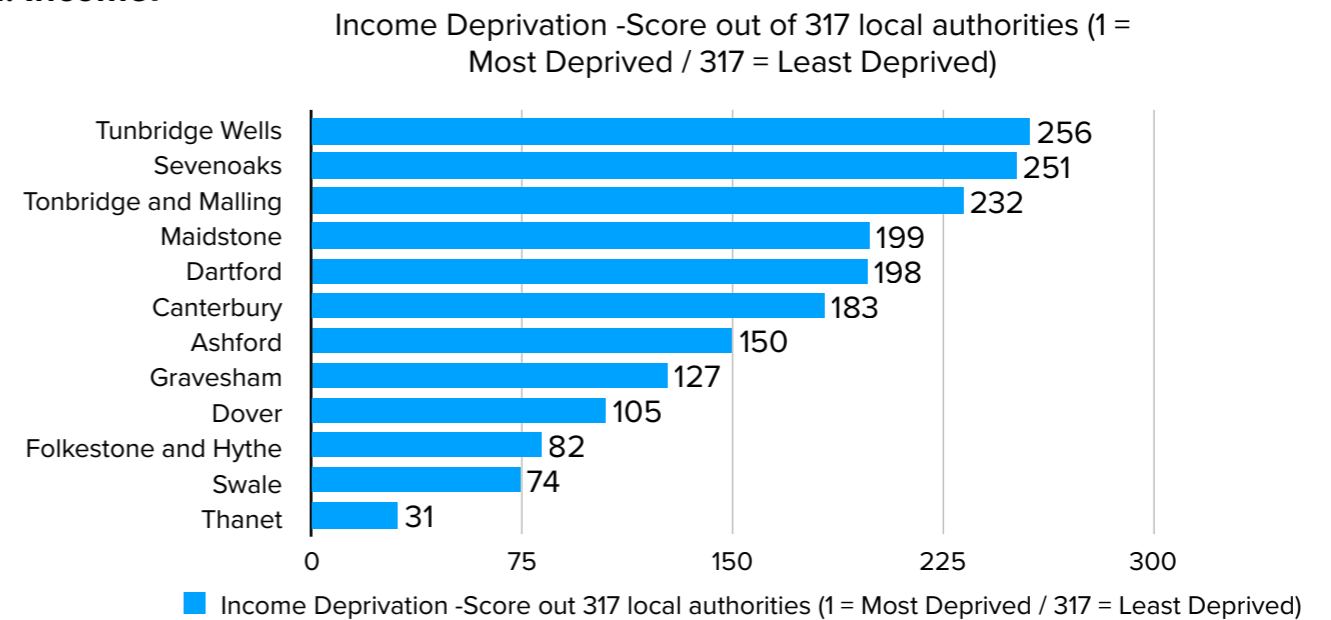
The rank of average score provided to an area is calculated using an area's individual scores across the seven Domains of Deprivation (DoDs):

1. Income
2. Employment
3. Education
4. Health
5. Crime
6. Barriers to housing and services
7. Living environment

Each of the above domains is based on a suite of indicators that are used to calculate an overall ranking for each local authority area.

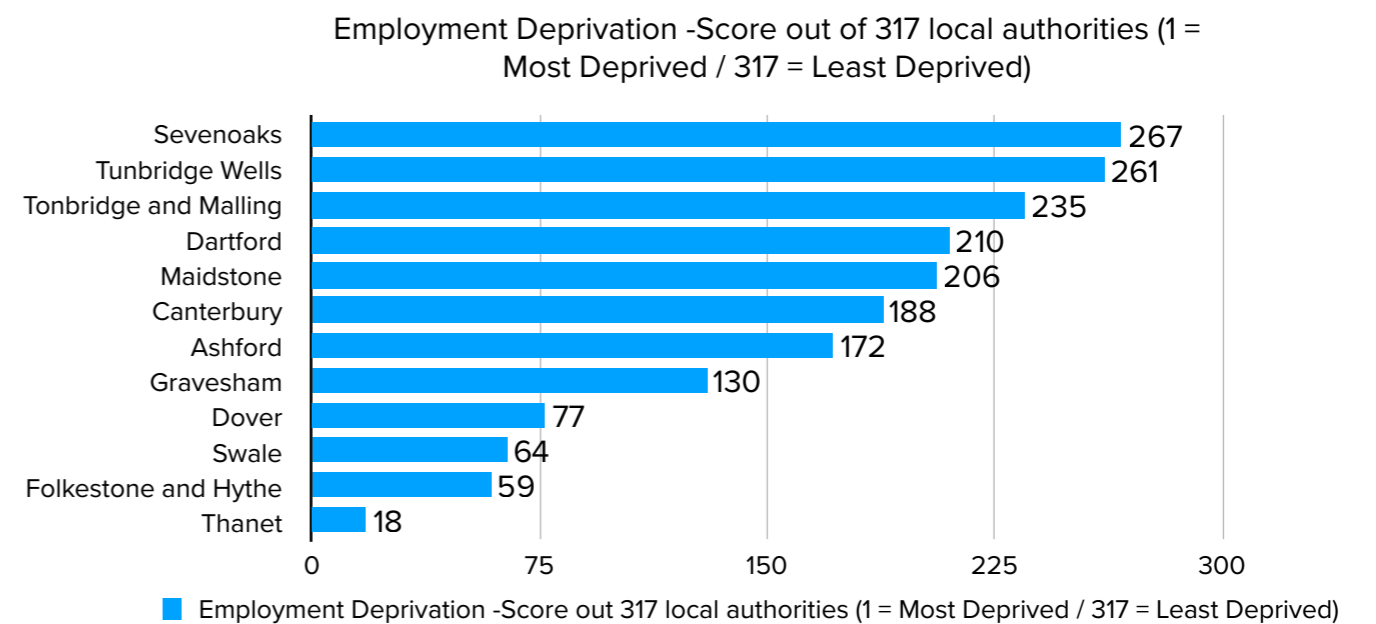
The following graphs show how the district compares with other Kent local authority areas on the Seven DoDs, where the ranking of 1 is classed as 'most deprived' and 317 'least deprived'.

1. Income:



The above graph shows Tunbridge Wells to be the least income deprived and Thanet to be the most income deprived. Folkestone & Hythe is ranked as the third most deprived for income out of the twelve Kent local authority areas.

2. Employment:

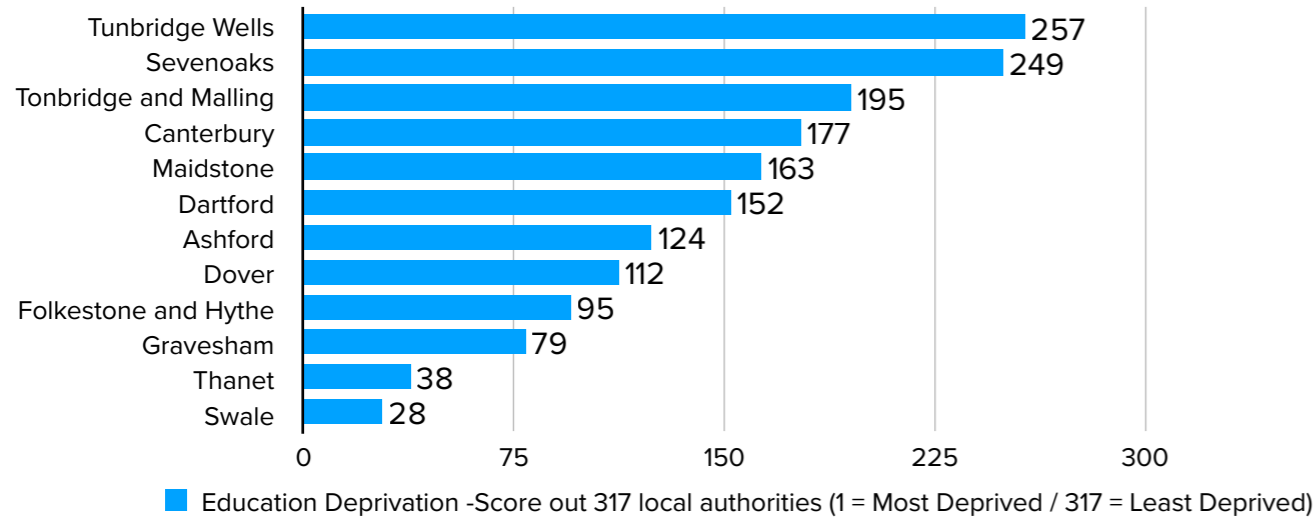


The above graph shows Sevenoaks to be the least employment deprived and Thanet to be the most employment deprived. Folkestone & Hythe is ranked as the second most deprived for employment out of the twelve Kent local authority areas.

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3. Education:

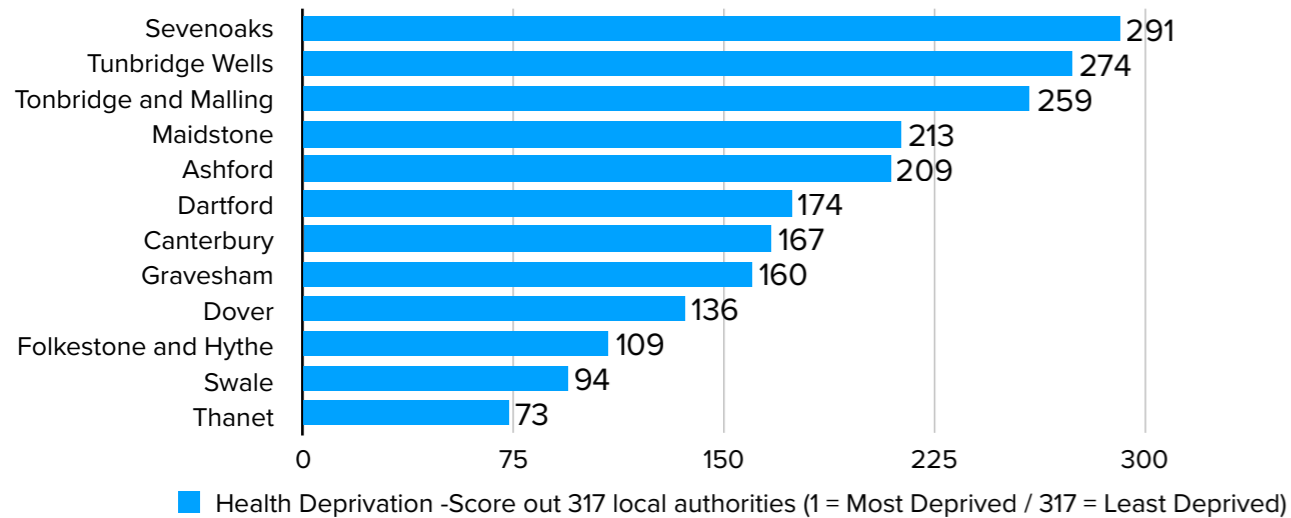
Education Deprivation -Score out of 317 local authorities (1 = Most Deprived / 317 = Least Deprived)



The above graph shows Tunbridge Wells to be the least education deprived and Swale to be the most education deprived. Folkestone & Hythe is ranked as the fourth most deprived for education out of the twelve Kent local authority areas.

4. Health:

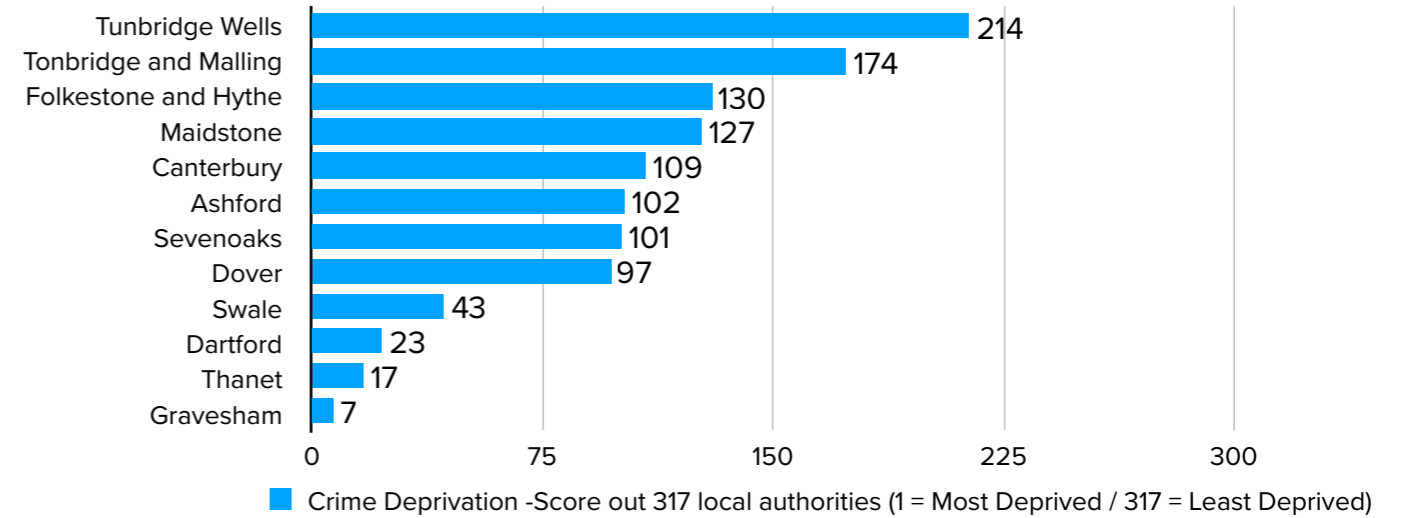
Health Deprivation -Score out of 317 local authorities (1 = Most Deprived / 317 = Least Deprived)



The above graph shows Sevenoaks to be the least health deprived and Thanet to be the most health deprived. Folkestone & Hythe is ranked as the third most deprived for health out of the twelve Kent local authority areas.

5. Crime:

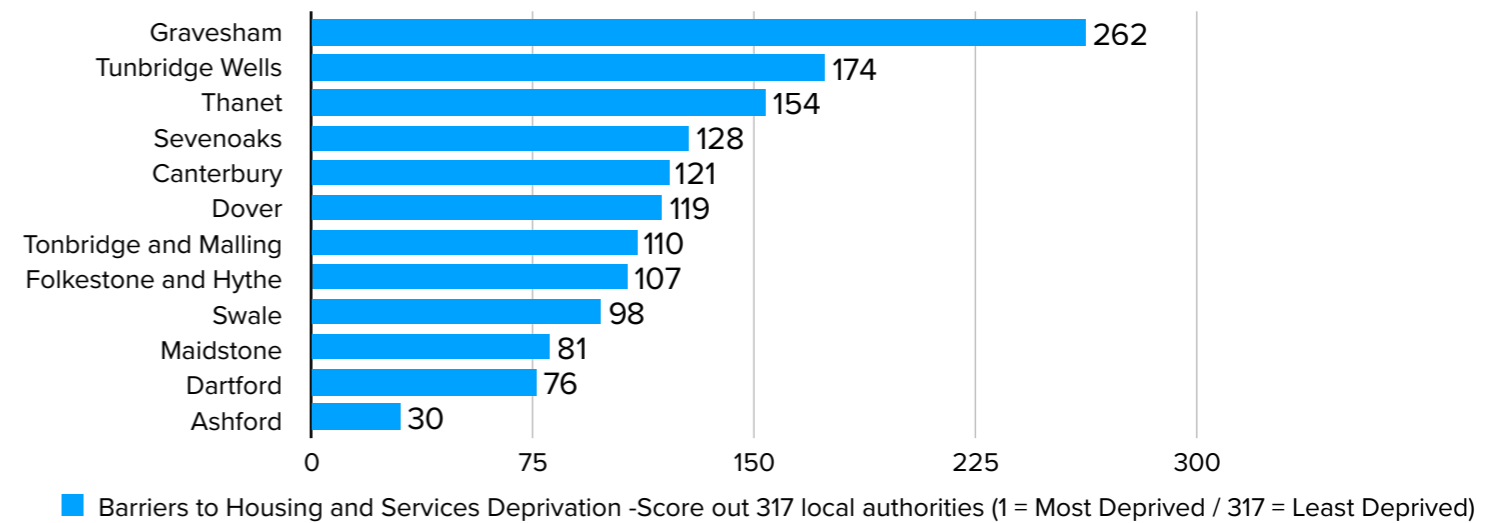
Crime Deprivation -Score out of 317 local authorities (1 = Most Deprived / 317 = Least Deprived)



The above graph shows Tunbridge Wells to be the least crime deprived and Gravesham to be the most crime deprived. Folkestone & Hythe is ranked as the third least deprived for crime out of the twelve Kent local authority areas.

6. Barriers to Housing Services

Barriers to Housing and Services Deprivation -Score out of 317 local authorities (1 = Most Deprived / 317 = Least Deprived)



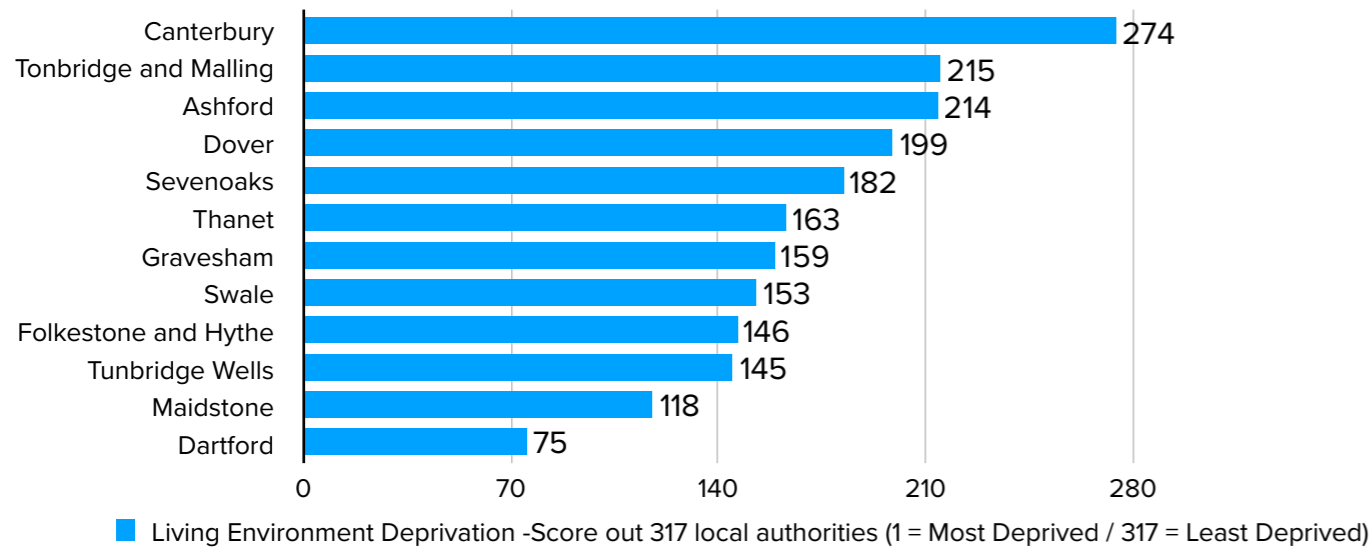
The above graph shows Gravesham to be the least deprived in relation to barriers to housing and services and Ashford to be the most deprived in this area. Folkestone & Hythe is ranked as the fifth most deprived for barriers to housing and services out of the twelve Kent local authority areas.

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Seven Domains of Deprivation (continued):

7. Living Environment:

Living Environment Deprivation -Score out of 317 local authorities (1 = Most Deprived / 317 = Least Deprived)



The above graph shows Canterbury to be the least deprived in relation to Living Environment and Dartford to be the most deprived in this area. Folkestone & Hythe is ranked as the fourth most deprived for living environment out of the twelve Kent local authority areas.

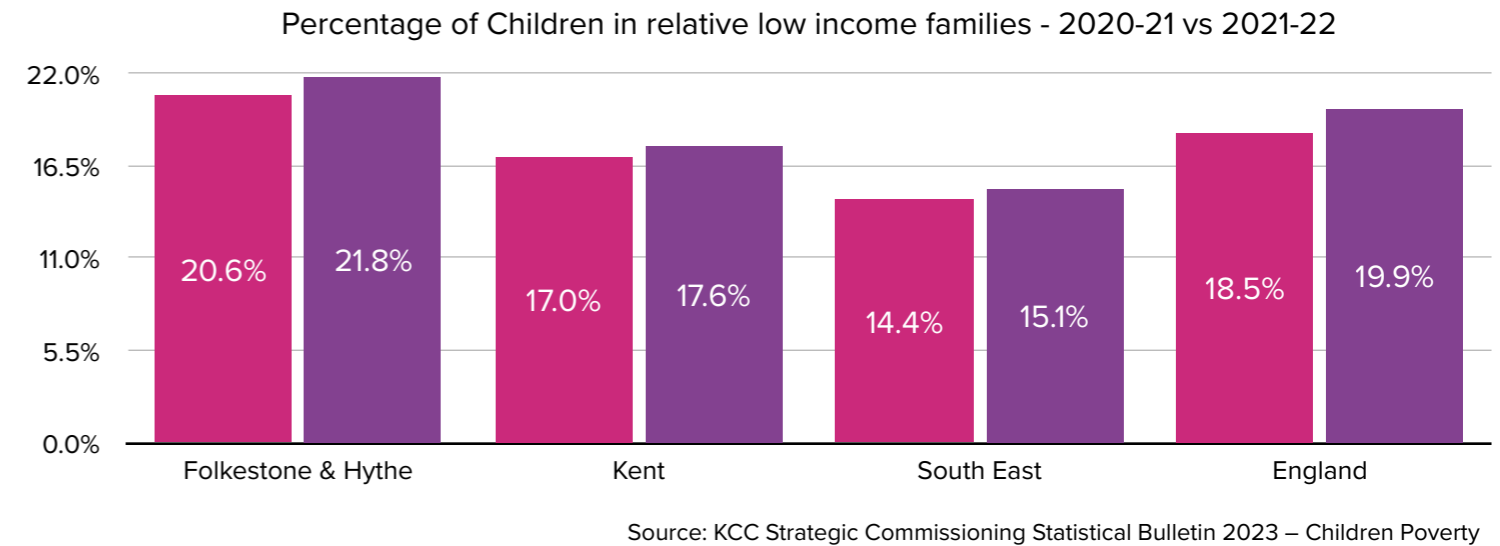
Child Poverty:

Child poverty figures show the proportion of children living in relative low income families.

Relative low income is defined as a family in low income before housing costs in the reference year.

The latest data from 2021/22 shows that 21.8% of children are in relative low income families in Folkestone & Hythe and this is “significantly worse” than the average across Kent and the South East.

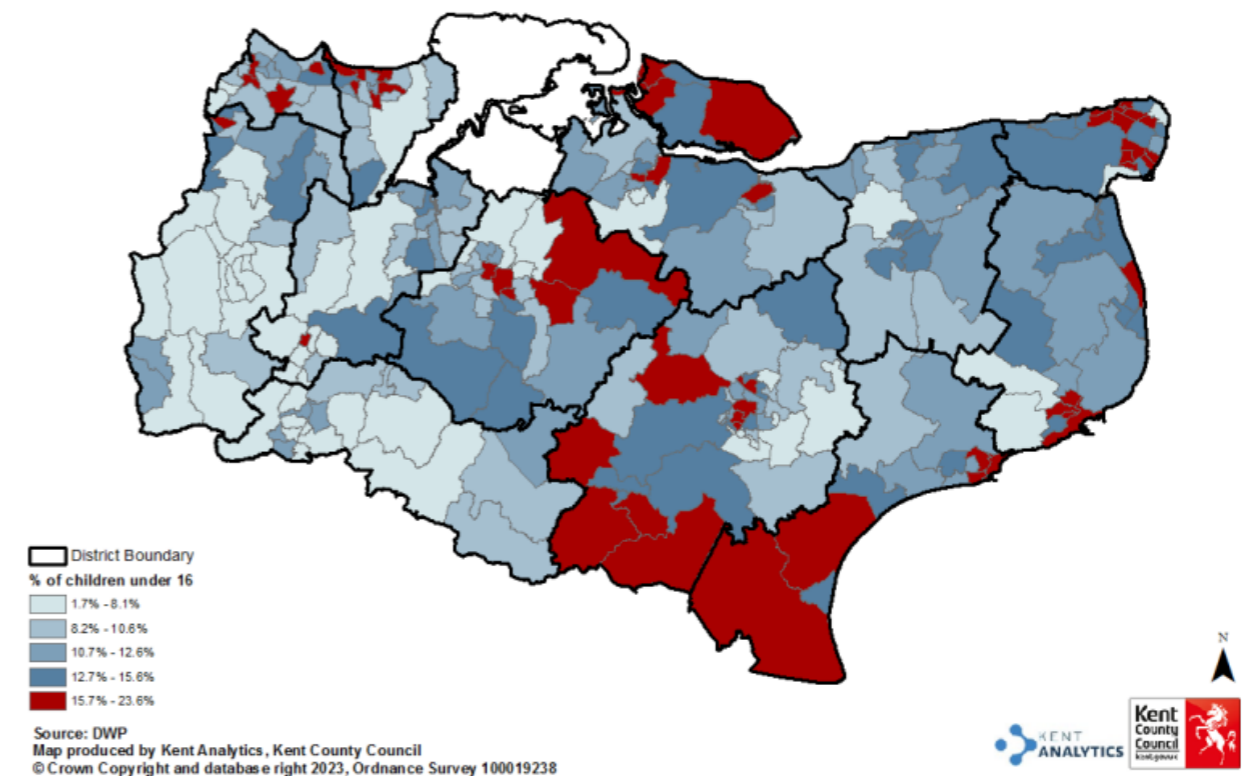
The following graph provides a comparison between the 2020/21 and 2021/22 years.



The heat map below shows the percentage of children living in relative low income families across Kent wards in 2020/21. In Folkestone & Hythe, the map shows the highest proportion of children living in relative low income families (shaded in dark red) to be situated in the Folkestone Central, East and Harbour wards as well in the Romney Marsh and Walland and Denge Marsh wards in the western part of the district.

Map 1: Percentage of children living in absolute low-income families

Percentage of children in absolute low-income families 2021/22



04 Understanding our Communities

Data Sources:

The most up-to-date data at the time of publication has been utilised when compiling this demographic and socio-economic information. Further information can be found at the following sources:

General:

The 2021 district profile, published by Kent County Council's Strategic Business Development & Intelligence Unit on 8th December 2023, contains data from the ONS mid-2022 population estimates as well as the 2021 census:

[Area profiles - Kent County Council](#)

Population:

Census 2021 (Interactive Maps) - [Census Maps - Census 2021 data interactive, ONS](#)

KCC Interactive mid-year population estimate toolkit: provides access to population estimates by gender and single year of age for all 12 Kent local authority districts and Kent County as a whole back to 2000: https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/excel_doc/0009/12879/Interactive-mid-year-population-estimates-toolkit.xlsm

KCC Housing Led Forecasts Interactive population toolkit (2021): https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/excel_doc/0019/12880/Interactive-population-forecast-toolkit.xlsm

ONS: Births in England and Wales: Summary Tables (2022) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/livebirths/datasets/birthsummarytables>

ONS: Deaths Registered monthly in England and Wales (2022) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/monthlyfiguresondeathsregisteredbyareaofusualresidence>

ONS: Conception Statistics – England and Wales (2019) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/conceptionandfertilityrates/datasets/conceptionstatisticsenglandandwalesreferencetables>

ONS: Population of State Pension age and working age, and old age dependency ratios, for local authorities and regions in England: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/populationofstatepensionageandworkingageandoldagedependencyratiosforlocalauthoritiesandregionsinengland

[datasets/](#)

[populationofstatepensionageandworkingageandoldagedependencyratiosforlocalauthoritiesandregionsinengland](#)

ONS: Life expectancy for local areas of the UK: between 2001 to 2003 and 2018 to 2020 [Life expectancy for local areas of the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandlifeexpectancy/lifeexpectancyforlocalareasoftheuk)

KCC Births and Deaths in Kent - 2020

https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/13827/Births-and-deaths-bulletin.pdf

Labour market profiles of the district are constantly updated by the ONS National Online Manpower Information System (NOMIS): <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/Imp/la/1946157318/printable.aspx>

NOMIS: annual survey of hours and earnings (2023)

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/asher>

Health:

Public Health England's [Public Health Outcomes Framework \(Folkestone & Hythe\) - at a glance summary \(phe.org.uk\)](#)

[KCC Strategic Commissioning Statistical Bulletin 2023 – Children Poverty](#)

[Suicides in England and Wales by local authority \(2022\) - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

[Quality and Outcomes Framework, 2022-23 - NHS Digital](#)

Deprivation: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) - English indices of multiple deprivation 2019

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

Section 5

Compliments, Feedback and Complaints

Introduction

In this section we provide an outline of the comments we have received from customers relating to equality and diversity matters.

The council records compliments, feedback and complaints received from customers. These are categorised, analysed and reported on so that improvements can be made to services.

Further information can be found at: <https://folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/your-council/council-information/make-a-complaint-or-compliment>

05 Compliments, Feedback and Complaints

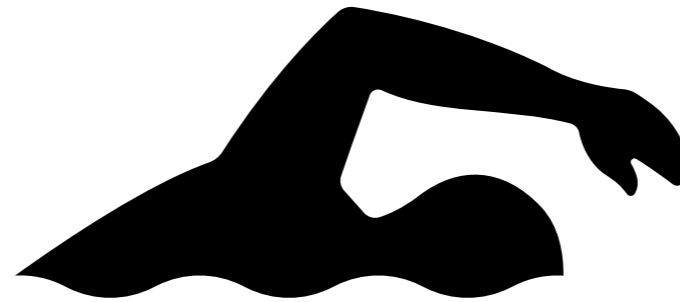
Compliments, Feedback and Complaints - Overview in 2022-23:

During 2022/23 the council received 270 complaints and 147 compliments. Of the 270 complaints received: :



Stage One complaints are investigated and responded to by the complaints investigator or a specialist of the relevant service area. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response their complaint will be progressed to Stage Two, where it is investigated by the lead officer of the service area to which the complaint relates.

Of the 270 complaints received, 1 was related to equality and diversity issues. The nature of the complaint related to:



Complaint regarding Hythe Pool and suitable swimwear

All complaints are investigated thoroughly, and each complainant was formally written to with a detailed explanation of the findings. Where appropriate the council apologised and indicated how it would improve service delivery in the future.

Section 6

Equality Objectives

Introduction

In this Annual Equality and Diversity Report we have given an overview of the issues affecting the district, the policies and procedures the council has in place and the work we are doing, on our own and with our partners to address these issues.

The Equality and Diversity Policy (2021-25) guides this work and has an associated action plan. The final section provides an update on these actions.

06 Equality Objectives

	Action	Lead Function	Deadline	2022-23 Update
1.	Ensuring Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are completed where they are required (i.e. where the council introduces a new policy or service, or where there is a significant revision to an existing policy or service) and that they are carried out in the correct manner (e.g. with appropriate consultation with affected parties).	Performance and Improvement Specialist	Ongoing	EIAs are documented as part of the service planning process annually and managers complete EIAs when a policy or service is introduced or revised. The EIAs undertaken during the year have been documented in section 2 of this report.
2.	To introduce a dedicated complaints report that will focus on equality related issues that arise under the council's corporate complaints policy and will reported to the Corporate Leadership Team on a six month basis to assist with identifying and addressing any equality related issues within a council service.	Case Management	Ongoing	All complaints with an equality and diversity element are logged with a specific suffix for reporting purposes. Any subsequent actions taken and lessons learnt are recorded and monitored through Salesforce to ensure completion of any actions. Lessons learnt and actions taken are published in the annual complaints report.
3.	Involving services users and local communities (including people with protected characteristics) in the design of council services.	All Service Leads	Ongoing	<p>We have asked community hubs to continue with warm spaces as they have been found helpful by the local community.</p> <p>We have listened to views of the community on closure of KCC youth facilities and advocated on their behalf by responding to KCC consultations to help shape future services.</p> <p>Polling review consultation included communications being sent to over 900 community contacts which included those charities and groups that also help people with protected characteristics.</p> <p>Questionnaires relating to the design of parking schemes were sent to disability groups etc. for feedback</p>
	All managers undertaking stage 2 EIA exercise will consult appropriately and publish the results.	All Service Leads	As required	No Stage 2 EIAs required to be completed during the year.

06 Equality Objectives

	Action	Lead Function	Deadline	2022-23 Update
4.	<p>Routinely publishing the result of consultation exercises on the council website and disaggregating the results (where possible) for different equality groups.</p>	All Service Leads	As required	<p>During the year, the council undertook the following public consultations to encourage local people to have their say helping to assess what impact proposed decisions will have on different groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) • Draft Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule • Draft Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy • Polling District, Places and Stations Review • Folkestone – A brighter future
5.	<p>Run training for staff on the particular issues faced by minority and vulnerable groups to support them to deliver appropriate services to ALL customers (e.g. Dementia awareness).</p>	Organisational Development	Ongoing	<p>Given the increased prevalence of mental health issues in the population at large, we have continued to focus on developing staff understand of this broad area.</p> <p>This includes training for relevant staff in 2022-23 on: Men’s Mental Health (Best me in 45)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Customers with Addiction (Money Advice Trust) • Self-Harm Awareness • Post-Natal Depression Awareness • Schizophrenia Awareness • Understanding Phobias <p>We have expanded our Mental Health First Aider group to include members of the Grounds Maintenance team, and now have a total of 45 Mental Health First Aiders (c9% of our workforcel).</p> <p>We have also provided training on Menopause Awareness, and Understanding & Supporting Customers with Serious Illnesses.</p>

06 Equality Objectives

	Action	Lead Function	Deadline	2022-23 Update
6.	To ensure councillors and staff receive regular updates on Prevent, Safeguarding vulnerable people and partnership working as part of the council's wider role.	Community Safety Specialist Health, Wellbeing & Partnerships Senior Specialist	Ongoing	This work has been undertaken in various ways including Cllr meetings to look at PREVENT and safeguarding. The Safeguarding policy reviews allows members to also receive updates. Information is cascaded to key staff. Management meetings and staff briefings have also allowed for sharing of information.
7	Equality and diversity training is part of our induction and for all staff to undertake a mandatory refresh e-learning module every 3 years.	Organisational Development	Ongoing	We continue to require regular EDI training. As at December 2023, 80% of staff were up to date with their EDI e-learning. In January we will be pushing for further completion.
8.	Increase options for customers to connect and transact with us online to help focus resources on supporting customers who are not able to go online as defined within the council's Customer Access Strategy.	All Service Leads	Ongoing	The Community hubs have helped support the KCC led digital champions work, which aims help those unable to get online (either because of lack of devices or lack of knowledge). The hubs host drop in sessions where people can go to learn how to use their devices to get online. The MyAccount has been redesigned during the year to make it more mobile friendly. An Additional 48 online forms created. Website reviewed in accordance with accessibility standards and improvements made. Most of the parking services applications such as those for disabled bays, controlled parking zones, suspensions, and permits have now been made available online. A few residents who are unable to access the online facilities are sent paper applications by post.

06 Equality Objectives

	Action	Lead Function	Deadline	2022-23 Update
9.	Produce a ‘Resident Involvement Strategy’, ensuring that involved residents reflect the diversity of the council’s tenants and leaseholders.	Housing Operations Lead Specialist	March 2021	The Tenant Engagement Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 14 th April 2021.
10.	We will continue to evaluate our resourcing strategies, maximise accessible development opportunities, and promote flexible working approaches to support equality and diversity in our workforce.	Human Resources	Ongoing	<p>The council has an agile working framework in place alongside a set of principles to better enable flexible working approaches. The council’s People Strategy also supports a culture that, amongst other things, supports smarter agile and flexible working. In 2022-23 the council enhanced this further by joining a shared workspaces programme that enables staff to work from other local government offices across Kent.</p> <p>The review and development of our recruitment and retention strategies is also a theme within our People Strategy.</p> <p>Recording of training sessions has advanced accessibility as they can be viewed as any time. The development of hybrid training sessions has further advanced this.</p> <p>Specific management training on recruitment and selection strategies and practices took place in May 2022.</p>



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