



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Official statistics

Child development outcomes at 2-2½ years (experimental statistics)

2018/19 annual data statistical commentary
(November 2019)

About Public Health England

Public Health England exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. We do this through world-leading science, research, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. We are an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care, and a distinct delivery organisation with operational autonomy. We provide government, local government, the NHS, Parliament, industry and the public with evidence-based professional, scientific and delivery expertise and support.

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Main findings

The proportion of children at or above the expected level in all 5 areas of development in England for 2018/19 is 84.1% (with confidence intervals 83.9% - 84.2%).

The proportion of children at or above the expected level in all 5 areas of development at a PHE Centre level can be published for all PHE Centres.

The proportion of children at or above the expected level in all 5 areas of development can be published for 114 local authorities with complete submissions, and percentages range from 59.1% to 93.9%.

This statistical commentary should be considered alongside the 2018/19 Annual Data Child development outcomes at 2 – 2½ years statistical release, which can be found at www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-development-outcomes-at-2-to-2-and-a-half-years-2018-to-2019.

Please treat the figures with caution: where totals are presented for England and PHE centres, these are aggregate totals of the areas that submitted information and passed initial validation.

Child development outcomes at 2 - 2½ years

Indicator	Quarter 1 2018/19	Quarter 2 2018/19	Quarter 3 2018/19	Quarter 4 2018/19	2018/19 annual data
C6iii: children who were at or above the expected level in communication skills %	90.3% (90.1 - 90.5)	90.0% (89.8 - 90.2)	89.7% (89.5 - 89.8)	88.9% (88.7 - 89.1)	90.0% (89.9 - 90.1)
C6iv: children who were at or above the expected level in gross motor skills %	93.6% (93.4 - 93.7)	93.2% (93.1 - 93.4)	93.4% (93.2 - 93.6)	93.0% (92.8 - 93.1)	93.5% (93.4 - 93.6)
C6v: children who were at or above the expected level in fine motor skills %	94.2% (94.1 - 94.4)	93.8% (93.6 - 93.9)	93.6% (93.5 - 93.8)	93.4% (93.2 - 93.5)	94.0% (93.9 - 94.1)
C6vi: children who were at or above the expected level in problem solving skills %	94.5% (94.3 - 94.6)	94.1% (94.0 - 94.3)	93.9% (93.7 - 94.0)	93.6% (93.5 - 93.8)	94.3% (94.2 - 94.3)
C6vii: children who were at or above the expected level in personal-social skills %	93.3% (93.1 - 93.4)	92.4% (92.2 - 92.6)	92.7% (92.5 - 92.8)	92.4% (92.3 - 92.6)	92.9% (92.8 - 93.0)
C6viii: children who were at or above the expected level in all 5 areas of development %	84.4% (84.1 - 84.6)	84.3% (84.1 - 84.5)	83.6% (83.4 - 83.9)	83.2% (83.0 - 83.5)	84.1% (83.9 - 84.2)

Background

From 2015 all children in England became eligible for a Healthy Child Programme development review, delivered as part of the universal health visitor service, around their second birthday. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3™) was identified through research to be suitable for generating data for a population measure of child development outcomes and from testing with parents and professionals to be acceptable for use in practice.

ASQ-3™ is not a screening tool, but does provide an objective measure of development and allows comparisons to be made helping to identify children who are not developing as expected and supporting decisions on closer monitoring of progress or targeting of services. Dimensions of development which are tested include communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving and personal-social skills.

In October 2015, the responsibility for commissioning children's public health for the 0 to 5 years' population transferred from NHS England to local authorities. To support this transfer, Public Health England established an interim data collection for a number of key performance indicators associated with these services, which it is critical to monitor and report. The strategic reporting solution hosted by NHS Digital, the Community Services Dataset, is collecting relevant data items directly from providers' systems and in time will take on reporting of these indicators. This data, which is intended to support the generation of indicators for the Public Health Outcomes Framework, is continually increasing in coverage and quality.

The information on child development outcomes in this publication has been obtained via the interim reporting system. It was submitted to PHE by local authorities on a voluntary basis. It covers Quarters 1-4 of 2018/19. The full service data can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-development-outcomes-at-2-to-2-and-a-half-years-2018-to-2019.

The data on child development outcomes reported here are from supplementary metrics for the number of health visitor reviews completed at 2-2½ years using ASQ-3™ (Ages and Stages Questionnaire):

- C6iii: percentage of children who were at or above the expected level in communication skills
- C6iv: percentage of children who were at or above the expected level in gross motor skills
- C6v: percentage of children who were at or above the expected level in fine motor skills
- C6vi: percentage of children who were at or above the expected level in problem solving skills

- C6vii: percentage of children who were at or above the expected level in personal-social skills
- C6viii: percentage of children who were at or above the expected level in all 5 areas of development

These metrics are presented as management information and are reported by local authority, PHE centre and England level.

The decision has been taken to publish this information as 'experimental statistics' on the basis that they are new statistics which do not meet the data quality standards required of National Statistics.

Data collection method

An interim reporting system is hosted on the Local Government Association (LGA) website to collect the data on health visiting indicators. The reporting window for revisions of Quarters 1-4 2018/19 data was 19 August to 20 September 2019.

To support local authorities in submitting data, detailed guidance was circulated to explain how analysts and commissioners in local authorities should submit data. This guidance is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-public-health-0-to-5-years-national-reporting.

A dedicated mailbox, interimreporting@phe.gov.uk, was also in place to respond to questions and comments.

Once the collection window closes the data received is centrally collated, validated and reported. This process will be repeated quarterly.

Data quality

The following data relates to the whole of 2017/18 based on refreshed data for Quarters 1-4.

Prior to validation, a process of estimation was applied to any local authority data where numerical data were submitted for only 3 quarters in 2017/18. An annual numerator and denominator were estimated from 'scaling up' the 3 supplied numerators and denominators.

Validation rules

Local authorities submitting a nil return will be classed as a non-submission.

Areas which submit DK (don't know) for any metric are classed as incomplete submissions and are excluded from the relevant metric.

All complete submissions are included in their respective PHE centre and the England aggregated calculations.

A comprehensive breakdown of the results following the application of the validation can be found in the publication at www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-development-outcomes-at-2-to-2-and-a-half-years-2018-to-2019.

Summary of 2018/19 annual data

Indicator C6iii: percentage of children who were at or above the expected level in communication skills

The aggregate percentage of children at or above the expected level in communications skills (indicator C6iii) for England for 2018/19 is 90.0% (with confidence intervals of 89.9% – 90.1%). This is higher than 2017/18, based on final figures published in October 2018.

Values for percentages of children at or above the expected level in communications skills were published for all PHE centres for 2018/19. Values ranged from 86.4% to 94.4%.

The percentage of children at or above the expected level in communications skills were published for 116 local authorities with complete submissions. Values ranged from 71.6% to 99.6%, with the majority (112) reporting between 80% and 100%.

Indicator C6iv: percentage of children who were at or above the expected level in gross motor skills

The aggregate percentage of children at or above the expected level in gross motor skills (indicator C6iv) for England for 2018/19 is 93.5% (with confidence intervals of 93.4% – 93.6%). This is higher than 2017/18, based on final figures published in October 2018.

Values for percentages of children at or above the expected level in gross motor skills were published for all PHE centres for 2018/19. Values ranged from 89.5% to 96.2%.

The percentage of children at or above the expected level in gross motor skills were published for 116 local authorities with complete submissions. Values ranged from 70.3% to 99.6%, with the majority of areas with complete submissions (112) reporting between 80% and 100%.

Indicator C6v: percentage of children who were at or above the expected level in fine motor skills

The aggregate percentage of children at or above the expected level in fine motor skills (indicator C6v) for England for 2018/19 is 94.0% (with confidence intervals of 93.9% – 94.1%). This is higher than 2017/18, based on final figures published in October 2018.

Values for percentages of children at or above the expected level in fine motor skills were published for all PHE centres for 2018/19. Values ranged from 89.7% to 98.1%.

The percentage of children at or above the expected level in fine motor skills were published for 116 local authorities with complete submissions. Values ranged from 73.4% to 99.5%, with the majority of areas with complete submissions (112) reporting between 80% and 100%.

Indicator C6vi: percentage of children who were at or above the expected level in problem solving skills

The aggregate percentage of children at or above the expected level in problem solving skills (indicator C6vi) for England for 2018/19 is 94.3% (with confidence intervals of 94.2% – 94.3%). This is higher than 2017/18, based on final figures published in October 2018.

Values for percentages of children at or above the expected level in problem solving skills were published for all PHE centres for 2018/19. Values ranged from 90.1% to 97.4%.

The percentage of children at or above the expected level in problem solving skills were published for 116 local authorities with complete submissions. Values ranged from 74.2% to 99.5%, with the majority of areas with complete submissions (113) reporting between 80% and 100%.

Indicator C6vii: percentage of children who were at or above the expected level in personal-social skills

The aggregate percentage of children at or above the expected level in personal-social skills (indicator C6vii) for England for 2018/19 is 92.9% (with confidence intervals of 92.8% – 93.0%). This is higher than 2017/18, based on final figures published in October 2018.

Values for percentages of children at or above the expected level in personal-social skills were published for all PHE centres for 2018/19. Values ranged from 89.0% to 96.7%.

The percentage of children at or above the expected level in personal-social skills were published for 116 local authorities with complete submissions. Values ranged from 72.8% to 99.5%, with the majority of areas with complete submissions (112) reporting between 80% and 100%.

Indicator C6viii: percentage of children who were at or above the expected level in all five areas of development

The aggregate percentage of children at or above the expected level in all five areas of development (indicator C6viii) for England for 2018/19 is 84.1% (with confidence intervals of 83.9% – 84.2%). This is higher than 2017/18, based on final figures published in October 2018.

Values for percentages of children at or above the expected level in all five areas of development were published for all PHE centres for Quarter 4. Values ranged from 78.4% to 87.9%.

The percentage of children at or above the expected level in all five areas of development were published for 114 local authorities with complete submissions. Values ranged from 59.1% to 93.9%, with the majority of areas with complete submissions (89) reporting between 80% and 100%.

Data quality notes

When making a submission, local authorities have the opportunity to enter comments in a free text box to explain any issues with reporting. During the submission of revised Quarters 1-4 data comments were received from 8 local authorities related to child development outcomes, of collective interest:

Two local authorities reported they knew, or suspected, that they had made an incomplete submission. This may include receiving confirmation of nil returns from neighbouring authorities or issues with change of provider.

Three local authorities expressed perceived difficulties with the copyright for ASQ-3™ and will require further guidance from Public Health England and the Department of Health and Social Care.

Four local authorities reported that reconfiguration of IT systems or systems not yet adapted to deal with ASQ-3™ prevented submission of data due to difficulties with recording, extraction or reporting.

Four local authorities submitted data which is not internally consistent, such as data for sub-indicators C6iii-C6vii but no data for indicator C6viii, or data for indicator C6viii but missing data for one or more sub-indicators.

Data quality has improved in 2018/19 compared to 2017/18. 117 local authorities submitted sufficient quarterly data to calculate at least one annual indicator in 2018/19, compared to 79 in 2017/18.