



Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Wednesday, 10 November 2021

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, Level 2, Town Hall Extension

This is a **Supplementary Agenda** containing additional information about the business of the meeting that was not available when the agenda was published

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Membership of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Councillors –

Reid (Chair), Abdulatif, Sameem Ali, Alijah, Bano, Collins, Cooley, Foley, Hewitson, Lovecy, McHale, Nunney and Sadler

Co-opted Members -

Ms Z Derraz, Mr L Duffy, Mrs J Miles and Dr W Omara

Supplementary Agenda

6. **Adoption Counts - Regional Adoption Agency** 5 - 14
Report of the Strategic Director Children and Education Services

In 2015, the Government announced its intention to legislate to ensure that all local authority adoption services have merged with neighbouring services to form larger regional adoption agencies (RAA) the target date set for this was 2020 at the latest. In 2017, the Senior Management Team (SMT), Executive Member for Children's and Education Services and Executive supported a proposal from the Strategic Director of Children's Services for Manchester's adoption service to merge with four other local authorities (Stockport, Trafford, Salford, and Cheshire East) and two voluntary adoption agencies (Adoption Matters and Caritas) to form a regional adoption agency which is known as 'Adoption Counts'.

Stockport were nominated as the host organisation for the regional adoption agency, and it was agreed in 2017 to temporarily second adoption staff from Manchester, Trafford, Salford and Cheshire East into Stockport whilst the RAA was established and developed.

This report seeks approval to formally and permanently transfer staff from Manchester into Stockport Council (host organisation) under TUPE regulations.

8. **COVID-19 in Manchester School-Age Children, and Across Manchester School Settings: a retrospective analysis of academic year 2020/21** 15 - 44
Report of the Director of Public Health

This report offers a data-driven retrospective analysis of the academic year 2020/21 in Manchester. The report explores the impact of COVID-19 on school settings across Manchester, levels of school absence, and confirmed cases in school-age children resident in the City.

Further Information

For help, advice and information about this meeting please contact the Committee Officer:

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This supplementary agenda was issued on **Wednesday, 3 November 2021** by the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit, Manchester City Council, Level 3, Town Hall Extension (Lloyd Street Elevation), Manchester M60 2LA

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Manchester City Council Report for Resolution

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 10 November 2021
Executive – 17 November 2021

Subject: Adoption Counts – Regional Adoption Agency

Report of: Strategic Director Children and Education Services

Summary

In 2015, the Government announced its intention to legislate to ensure that all local authority adoption services have merged with neighbouring services to form larger regional adoption agencies (RAA) the target date set for this was 2020 at the latest. In 2017, the Senior Management Team (SMT), Executive Member for Children's and Education Services and Executive supported a proposal from the Strategic Director of Children's Services for Manchester's adoption service to merge with four other local authorities (Stockport, Trafford, Salford, and Cheshire East) and two voluntary adoption agencies (Adoption Matters and Caritas) to form a regional adoption agency which is known as 'Adoption Counts'.

Stockport were nominated as the host organisation for the regional adoption agency, and it was agreed in 2017 to temporarily second adoption staff from Manchester, Trafford, Salford and Cheshire East into Stockport whilst the RAA was established and developed.

This report seeks approval to formally and permanently transfer staff from Manchester into Stockport Council (host organisation) under TUPE regulations.

Recommendations

1. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is asked to comment on the report and endorse the recommendation to the Executive.
 2. The Executive is recommended to agree the adoption service for MCC to being integrated into the Regional Adoption Agency 'Adoption Counts', approves the transfer of the service and notes that staff who are assigned to the service will transfer to Stockport under TUPE regulations.
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Wards Affected: All

Manchester Strategy Outcomes	Summary of the Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Effective Children and Education Services are critical to ensuring our children are afforded opportunities and supported to connect and contribute to the city's sustainability and growth.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Ensuring children and young people are supported and afforded the opportunity to access and achieve in the City; empowered and supported by the delivery of a strong and cohesive system that works for all children.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Improving education and social care services that are connected to the wider partnership build the resilience of children and families needed to achieve their potential and be integrated into their communities
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Improving outcomes for the children and families across the City, helps build and develop whole communities and increases the livability of the City
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Successful services support successful families who are able to deliver continuing growth in the City

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

The Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) budget for the financial year 2021/22 totals £4.6m. The RAA budget is made up of the costs of the staff which includes both seconded staff from partner local authorities and staff employed by the RAA, as well as running costs. The agreement of the RAA is for each partner makes a proportionate contribution. The Council's contribution totals £1.8m, the contribution to the RAA is based on activity.

In addition to the financial contribution 10.5 full-time employees (FTE) are employed by Manchester City Council and then seconded to the Regional Adoption Agency. Currently the cost of the seconded staff is passed in full to the RAA. Once the TUPE transfer is actioned a recharge of seconded staff will no longer apply contributing to

overall efficiency. There are therefore no financial implications associated with TUPE transfer.

Financial Consequences – Capital

There are no capital financial consequences.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

Establishing a Regional Adoption Agency – Executive May 2017
https://democracy.manchester.gov.uk/Data/Executive/20170517/Agenda/4_Regional_Adoption_Agency.pdf

1.0 Background and Overview

- 1.1 In June 2015 the Government published a national policy paper, 'Regionalising Adoption', which set out their plans for all local authority adoption services to merge into larger regional adoption agencies. In addition, the Government subsequently legislated to provide powers in the Education and Adoption Act 2016 to require local authority adoption services to regionalise where they were not making voluntary plans to do so by 2017.
- 1.2 In line with the Government agenda 'regionalisation', and following approval from the Strategic Management Team, Executive Member for Children's and Education and the Executive, Manchester City Council's Adoption Service merged with four other local authorities and two voluntary agencies to form one regional adoption agency (RAA) in April 2017- Adoption Counts.
- 1.3 The four other local authorities are Stockport, Trafford, Salford, and Cheshire East. The two voluntary adoption agencies are Adoption Matters and Caritas.
- 1.4 Manchester City Council has been part of the regional adoption agency since April 2017. The performance of the agency has been positive, this is detailed in section 5. The Board, who scrutinise monitor and support the work of the RAA, which consists of senior representatives from each organisation and is currently chaired by the Deputy Strategic Director from Manchester, have supported a proposal for staff to be formally transferred into the host organisation (Stockport) to further the identity of the Regional Adoption Agency.

2.0 Objectives of the Regional Adoption Agency

- 2.1 The regional adoption agency is branded as 'Adoption Counts' which is collaborative adoption agency, bringing together the professional expertise and specialist skills of five local authorities to deliver adoption services. The objectives of Adoption Counts is;
 - To provide children with the right adopters at the right time, assessing, approving, and supporting adopters equipped to meet the needs of children waiting.
 - To ensure that adoption is secured for children where it is assessed as in their best interests.
 - To avoid any unnecessary delay and ensure timely matching and placement for all children –working with care planning processes in each local authority to improve early identification / twin track planning and to achieve best practice and consistency across the region.
 - To improve earlier permanency planning using:
 - i) Concurrent Planning
 - ii) Fostering for Adoption

- To take innovative approaches towards placing 'hard to place' children, linking children with adopters from enquiry stage onwards where appropriate, and thoroughly preparing child and family for placement.
- To reduce the likelihood of placement breakdown through timely and improved matching, preparation and adoption support.
- To ensure the service offers value for money over time through economies of scale and a regional approach to inter agency adoption.
- Support all permanence options for children including Special Guardianship Orders.
- Reduce the number of parents who have successive children placed for adoption.

3.0 The Structure of the Regional Adoption Agency

3.1 The structure of the Regional Adoption Agency is based on a 'hub and spokes model' as follows:

- A centralised marketing function.
- A centralised team to receive recruitment enquiries.
- A central register of children and carers.
- A data & performance management function.
- Centralised administration of adoption panels.
- Commissioning of larger contracts from other agencies.
- Centralised tracking of children and carers.
- Centralised linking & matching functions.
- A strategic plan for the delivery of adoption support across the region.

4.0 Reporting and Governance

4.1 The Adoption Counts Board was established in 2017. The RAA Board is the governance body which meets regularly to scrutinise monitor and support the RAA delivery of services and performance against key indicators. The Board is chaired by Manchester's Deputy Strategic Director of Children's Services. The operational group which consists of representatives from the local authorities includes Manchester's Principal Social Worker reports to the board on all operational matters. It is planned the Operations Group will also continue to meet and report to the Adoption Counts Board. This will ensure there is a strong operational and performance link between Manchester Children's Services and the Board.

Both groups will scrutinise Adoption Counts performance monthly on:

- Recruitment activity
- Number of enquiries
- Number of on-going assessments

- Number of new adoptive families approved
- Number of children waiting adoptive families
- Securing adoption and timeliness for harder to place children
- Number of approved families awaiting a match compared to children waiting
- Timeliness – how quickly they match children following a Placement Order
- The extent to which adoption placements outside the RAA are still required
- The number of children who have their plan changed away from adoption because a family cannot be identified
- Number of disruptions in adoption placements
- The extent to which the RAA is linking with and supporting children's social workers to understand the child's adoption journey and to move the child in a timely fashion towards adoption

4.2 The Head of Service for permanence and Heads of Localities within Manchester's Children's Services will continue to monitor and track Manchester children's adoption journey/performance to ensure performance is maintained and improved further. Adoption performance, including the percentage of Manchester looked after children adopted and the timeliness of adoption will be reported and scrutinised within our well-established monthly performance clinics. In addition, adoption performance will continue to be monitored via the Director of Children Services 'Performance Clinic'. Regular reporting to Manchester's Corporate Parenting Cooperative and to the Children's Scrutiny Committee via an annual report will also continue. These governance structures will play a key role in continuing to influence the delivery of the service and the monitoring of outcomes for children.

4.3 Adoption Counts will be expected to lead the family finding function of the Adoption process and therefore the Council will hold Adoption Counts (RAA) to account for the number and percentage of our children with an adoption plan for whom they provide a suitable adoptive family, and the timeliness with which that is achieved.

4.4 In relation to national performance indicators for example, we will be holding the RAA to account for performance on the "A2" measure, the number of days that a child takes on average from being made subject to a Placement Order, to the decision on a match with a family. We expect on average that they will meet the government target of 121 days or less. It should be noted that Manchester's performance currently is 142 days and improving.

5.0 Performance of the Regional Adoption Agency

5.1 The performance of the RAA is scrutinised, supported and challenged via the RAA Board and Operations Group which is detailed in section 4 of the report.

5.2 The performance of the RAA is positive in the context of operating within national adoption challenges and the impact of COVID-19. Since joining the RAA,

Manchester has been able to access an expanded pool of adoptive families spread across the five local authorities which has improved the timeliness of which we support children and young people to become adopted and we have access to a greater range of families which ensures we are better placed to meet the specific needs of our children and young people. Last year's annual performance report evidences that children have been matched, placed and adopted in a timely manner with a high number of children joining their permanent families within / under the recommended thresholds. 44 children were placed during the period with 26 children within the A2 threshold (national performance indicator that measures the time from the making of a placement order to a child being placed with their adoptive parents) and a further 6 children placed within six months of their Placement Order. This is an excellent outcome in a year where we were unable to place children for a period of time due to COVID restrictions. Many children have therefore still been able to gain stability and permanence by joining a family who can meet their needs with minimum delay and at the earliest point possible.

6.0 Workforce Implications

- 6.1 Currently, staff are seconded from Manchester City Council to Stockport Council via a secondment agreement. Whilst on secondment, the staff remain employees of Manchester City Council. This arrangement was always subject to review and the secondment agreements include the provision for Manchester to exercise the following options: extend secondment agreements (which is not recommended to be a long-term arrangement within employment law) TUPE transfer to the host authority or termination of secondment agreement and revert to the original authority.
- 6.2 The day-to-day management, leadership and operation of Manchester's adoption staff is currently undertaken by Adoption Counts who are in turn supported by Stockport Council as the host organisation. The proposal to formally transfer the staff into the host organisation is expected to further improve management support and oversight, organisational performance, organisational identity and relationships as all the staff working in the RAA will become part of a single organisation and no longer have to experience a set of temporary organisational arrangements.
- 6.3 The formal transfer of the service from Manchester City Council to Stockport Council will result in, if agreed by Committee, a transfer of staff under TUPE regulations.
- 6.4 There are 10.5 (FTE) staff currently employed by Manchester that are working for the Regional Adoption Agency and are therefore likely to be in-scope to transfer under TUPE regulations.

- 6.5 Staff that are in-scope of the transfer will have their terms and conditions of employment protected indefinitely in-line with TUPE regulations.
- 6.6 The Deputy Director of Children's Services has engaged with staff and Trade Unions to inform them of Manchester's proposal and whilst these discussions have been cordial, formal consultation with staff and Trade Unions will commence following approval from the Executive.

7.0 Legal Implications - Contractual Arrangements

- 7.1 Each organisation that contribution to the RAA entered into an Integrated Services Agreement (ISA) and a linked Services Contract to establish the integrated 'Adoption Counts' service from 2017 to 2020.
- 7.2 The draft ISA and Services Contract for 2020 to 2023 have been amended to account for the transfer of staff under TUPE from the individual Authorities to the Adoption Counts Service and incorporate new legislative requirements.
- 7.3 The ISA and Services Contract set out the roles and responsibilities of the participating Authorities in relation to the continuance and governance of the RAA. Under the contract, the organisations are required to cooperate with and contribute to the leadership/governance arrangements. It should be noted these arrangements have been productive and successful since the inception of Adoption Counts; it is therefore reasonable to expect this to continue.
- 7.4 It should be noted the ISA makes provision for members of the RAA/Adoption Counts to withdraw from the Agreement at will at any time, on 12 months written notice. If the provision of the RAA were to become inadequate and could not be rectified, Manchester City Council would reevaluate its membership and options. A potential outcome of this would be the Authority could withdraw from Adoption Counts and seek an alternative arrangement for the provision of its Adoption Service.

8.0 Information Technology

- 8.1 Staff deployed to Adoption Counts are using equipment supplied by Stockport Council, along with Microsoft accounts provided by Stockport Council, who are the Adoption Counts IT provider. As a result, there isn't any IT work associated with the transfer; staff may have MCC email account (as they are currently employees) and therefore arrangements should be made for them to be removed with licenses redeployed.
- 8.2 Adoption Counts staff will continue to access Manchester City Council's Children's Social Care System and there is a well-established process and arrangement in place for partners and commissioned services to access such systems.

- 8.3 The Deputy Strategic Director for Children's Services is responsible for ensuring that Adoption Counts use MCC's Children's Social Care System in accordance with our requirements (that this is the system for recording), and that any staff with access to the system, that leave Adoption Counts, are removed from MCC systems to mitigate any data breaches.

9.0 Commissioning

- 9.1 In respect of any commissioning activity, Adoption Counts will undertake its own commissioning via Stockport Council's commissioning and procurement arm, which is also a member of the GM procurement arrangements. For example, Adoption Counts may commission specialist adoption support services or IT systems. The costs of any commissioned services and commissioning and procurement costs and risks will be managed by Stockport MBC and met from Adoption Counts core funding from the four local authority partners.

10.0 Risks/Mitigation

- 10.1 As noted in section 4 of this report, there are robust governance arrangements in place to monitor the performance of the RAA however, there is an exit clause in the integrated services agreement which enables the Council to exit the RAA with 12 months' notice should performance become unsatisfactory.

11.0 Financial Implications

- 11.1 In 2021/22 the total RAA budget is £4.6m. Manchester's 2021/22 financial contribution to the RAA in 2021/22 is £1,808,471 in total. This is made up of the costs of the staff that are in scope for transferring to the RAA, running costs, the inter-agency adoption placements budget and the cost of adoption support services. In years one and two of the agency, funding was based on the amount that each participating authority had spent on adoption services prior to integration. The overall budget is set by the Board. For determining the split of local Authority contributions (to fund the budget requirement) in 2019/20 an activity-based model replaced the previous historic budgets approach.
- 11.2 Currently the cost of the seconded staff is recharged in full to the Regional Adoption Agency. Once the staff have TUPE this recharge will no longer be required. There are no financial implications associated with TUPE transfer.
- 11.3 Being able to place more children for adoption within the RAA will reduce the need to purchase adoption placements from other local authority or voluntary adoption agency services. The increased efficiency and expanded pool of adoptive families has enabled the service to place Manchester children for adoption without increasing our inter-agency placement budget, as otherwise would likely be required.

12.0 Summary

- 12.1 The Regional Adoption Agency is well-established since its creation in 2017 and we expect that the organisation will continue to improve with the formal transfer of staff under TUPE regulations.
- 12.2 We remain positive about the benefits of a regional adoption agency, and this is in line with the Government agenda. There is a very strong steer from central Government that all local authorities should regionalise their adoption services by 2020. As indicated in section 1 above, the Government has legislated to provide powers in the Education and Adoption Act 2016 to 'require' local authority adoption services to regionalise where they are not making voluntary plans to do so with those plans aimed at regionalisation by 2020, and the Government has said that they will consider using these powers. (Adoption: A Vision for Change, DfE, March 2016)
- 12.3 Furthermore, not participating in the formal transfer of staff with the other partner organisations after over 4 years will diminish the pool of prospective adoptive carers. Not joining the RAA and instead remaining as a stand-alone service will mean competing in the recruitment of adoptive families with surrounding regional adoption agencies, who are likely to have gained a competitive advantage from becoming larger regional agencies. This may negatively impact on our ability to recruit adoptive families, which would necessitate the need to purchase more inter-agency placements (placements from other providers) creating additional budget pressures.

13.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 13.1 We believe that there is more benefit to Manchester's children and the adoptive parents to be part of the Adoption Counts RAA. The reasons for this are, it is a larger specialist organisation with significant reach and greater *attraction* to prospective adoptive carers, the organisation has developed a good reputation supported by strong performance against national performance indicators and is in a better place to meet the needs of Manchester's children who require adoption. We believe this success could potentially be compromised should the ongoing complex and fragmented staffing arrangements that currently exist continue.
- 13.2 In conclusion it is recommended Manchester City Council Adoption Service remains a member of the Regional Adoption Agency and participates in the formal transfer of staff under TUPE regulations in-line with the partner organisations.

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee – 10 November 2021

Subject: COVID-19 in Manchester School-Age Children, and Across Manchester School Settings: a retrospective analysis of academic year 2020/21

Report of: Director of Public Health

Summary

This report offers a data-driven retrospective analysis of the academic year 2020/21 in Manchester. The report explores the impact of COVID-19 on school settings across Manchester, levels of school absence, and confirmed cases in school-age children resident in the City.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to consider the report and note the conclusions.

Wards Affected: All

Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable)

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	

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Background documents (available for public inspection): none

1.0 Introduction

This report offers a data-driven retrospective analysis of the academic year 2020/21 in Manchester, exploring the following:

- 1.1 **The impact of COVID-19 on school settings and school absence.** To do this, we have used data collected as part of our local Manchester Test and Trace case reporting arrangements, principally via a dedicated notification form for educational settings
- 1.2 **The impact of COVID on school age children resident in Manchester,** considering patterns and characteristics in young people who tested positive. To do this, we have used the confirmed cases dataset provided by PHE.

2.0 Background

2.1 National Context

This report considers the impact of COVID-19 on school settings and school age residents over the academic year 2020/21. The following timeline offers a snapshot of national policy and restrictions over this time period, alongside term dates for Manchester.

Timeline for schools: March 2020 to July 2021



MARCH 2020

20 March – Nurseries, schools and colleges close, only staying open for vulnerable children and children of key workers. The Education Secretary further announced GCSE and A-level exams are cancelled.

10 May – Prime Minister announced plans for schools to begin reopening in stages, beginning with nursery, reception, Year 1 and Year 6 as key transition years, from 1 June. Plan was for all children to be back in primary school for a month if feasible before the summer holidays.

19 May – in light of case rates being so high, Greater Manchester's Councils raise concerns over the June 1 date.

1 June – Schools begin reopening, beginning with nursery, reception, Year 1 and Year 6 as key transition years.

9 June – Government drops its plan to have all children back before summer.

1 September – Schools open for 2020/21 year

17 September – Government set up a new helpline for schools to report COVID cases, which aimed to 'free up the health protection teams to deal with more complex cases or outbreaks where there was more than one confirmed case'.

23 October – half term holiday

18 December – Government agreed for an additional inset day to avoid school staff having to deal with contact tracing over the festive break

13 November – Manchester Test & Trace takes leadership over contact tracing in school settings

2021

3 January – Government urged parents to send their children into school the following day, with the Prime Minister declaring 'there is no doubt in my mind that schools are safe'.

18 December – Festive break

4 January – The Government announced schools would close immediately as England entered another lockdown. All but the children of key workers and vulnerable children would have to stay at home.

12 February – half term holiday

March – Most children returned to schools. Secondary school pupils asked to wear masks in class as well as when walking around. Pupils and staff were tested on site in the first two weeks back at school, and then were asked to carry on testing twice a week from home.

1 April – Easter break

May – Despite masks being scrapped in schools elsewhere, pupils across Greater Manchester were told they would have to keep wearing them in class after the break.

28 May – half term holiday

21 July – Schools close for the summer

3.0 Manchester Test & Trace

- 3.1 In line with a *locally led, GM-supported* model of contact tracing and outbreak management, on Monday 16 November 2020 Manchester Test and Trace took responsibility for the oversight, management and tracing of cases in early years and educational settings. Prior to this, contact tracing was managed by the Greater Manchester Integrated Contact Tracing Hub. Settings began notifying our local Team directly of cases across their children, teaching staff and non-teaching staff, and visitors. This notification process was completed via an online form, which both standardised and increased the level of data received by the local Team.
- 3.2 From the launch of the notification form on 13 November to the end of the academic year on 22 July, a total of 4,756 cases were reported by school settings across Manchester. This outstanding level of engagement and partnership working facilitated the early identification of clusters of cases and subsequent rapid response. Our local Test & Trace Specialist Nurses reviewed all cases reported via the form as and when they came in and were available seven days a week for schools to call with any clinical or complex questions related to COVID-19 and contact tracing. This support reinforced the work of the Senior School Quality Assurance Officers (SSQAs), who continued to be the first port of call for school leaders throughout the year. The 'one Team' approach between MCC's Education Team and Manchester Test and Trace enabled a robust pathway to respond to every reported case in a school.
- 3.3 Where an outbreak of COVID was suspected or confirmed, the Community Health Protection Team (CHPT) led the response, utilising their expertise in infection control and immense experience of working with educational settings. Where required Outbreak Control Team (OCT) meetings were held, typically bringing together leaders from the school, Consultants in Health Protection working for the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA, formerly PHE), City Council Health and Safety colleagues and MCC Education Team as well as Manchester Test and Trace. The OCT supports the management of an outbreak and will recommend additional control measures, for example, enhanced testing to identify asymptomatic positive cases using Mobile Testing Units (MTUs) stationed on school grounds. Over 25 OCTs were held during the academic year 2020/21.
- 3.4 Outside of the reporting and management of cases in schools, over the academic year Manchester Test and Trace supported educational settings in the following ways:
- Provided regular communications, including guidance on infection prevention and control, accessing support, template letters and tools for use with parents/carers
 - Offered all schools the option of using the Manchester Test and Trace service to contact parents and carers of contacts identified during the Christmas break and February half term break to ease the burden on school leaders

- Supported schools with setting up on site asymptomatic testing using lateral flow tests – providing a model risk assessment and access to training at a community testing site
- Reviewed risk assessments with the City Council's Health and Safety Team
- Attended weekly meetings with colleagues from across Greater Manchester to understand the picture of COVID in schools across the City Region.

4.0 COVID-19 Situational Awareness Explorer

- 4.1 The COVID-19 Situational Awareness Explorer is the vehicle through which PHE (now part of the new UK Health Security Agency) has made COVID-related data and other associated analytical and modelling tools available to local authorities. The system includes individual record level data relating to new cases of COVID-19 in Manchester residents, as well as positive, negative and void tests (both PCR and LFD) and details of contact tracing activities with cases and contacts.
- 4.2 The Public Health Knowledge and Intelligence Team has made (and continues to make) extensive use of the data within the COVID-19 Situational Awareness Explorer to monitor the trends and patterns of COVID-19 within the school age population living in Manchester. For the purposes of this work, the primary and secondary age population has been defined as follows:
- Primary school age: Children between 5 and 10 years of age
 - Secondary school age: Children between 11 and 16 years of age
- 4.3 Between 1 September 2020 and 31 July 2021, there were a total of 8,846 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in school age children living in Manchester - a rate of 108.0 per 1,000 population. Put another way, around 10.8% of the estimated number of school age children living in Manchester were infected with COVID-19 at least once over the course of the school year. This excludes children who exhibited symptoms but did not take a test to confirm the presence of COVID as well as any children who were unfortunate enough to be reinfected with the virus at some point after their first positive test.
- 4.4 Overall, around 62% of the total number of new confirmed cases of COVID-19 were in secondary school age children and 38% were in primary school age children (rates of 124.5 per 1,000 population and 88.8 per 1,000 population respectively).
- 4.5 Rates of COVID in school age children were highest in the early and late stages of the school year (early September to mid-December and late-May to the end July) when whole school testing was in operation at the beginning of the school year and again in June and July in response to outbreaks in school settings. Rate were lower during and after the closure of schools as part of national restrictions.

5.0 Findings

Manchester Test and Trace

COVID-19 across Manchester school settings and in Manchester school-age children: a retrospective analysis of academic year 2020/21

To consider:

School settings

1. Reported cases in school settings over the year: considering use of the local Manchester Test & Trace notification form, and levels of engagement
2. Who needed to self-isolate from school as a reported case? A descriptive analysis
3. Who needed to self-isolate from school as a contact (including geographical patterns)?
4. What role did COVID play in school absences over the year?

School age-children resident in Manchester

1. Epidemiological analysis of school age children who tested positive for COVID; considering age bands, geography, ethnicity and deprivation

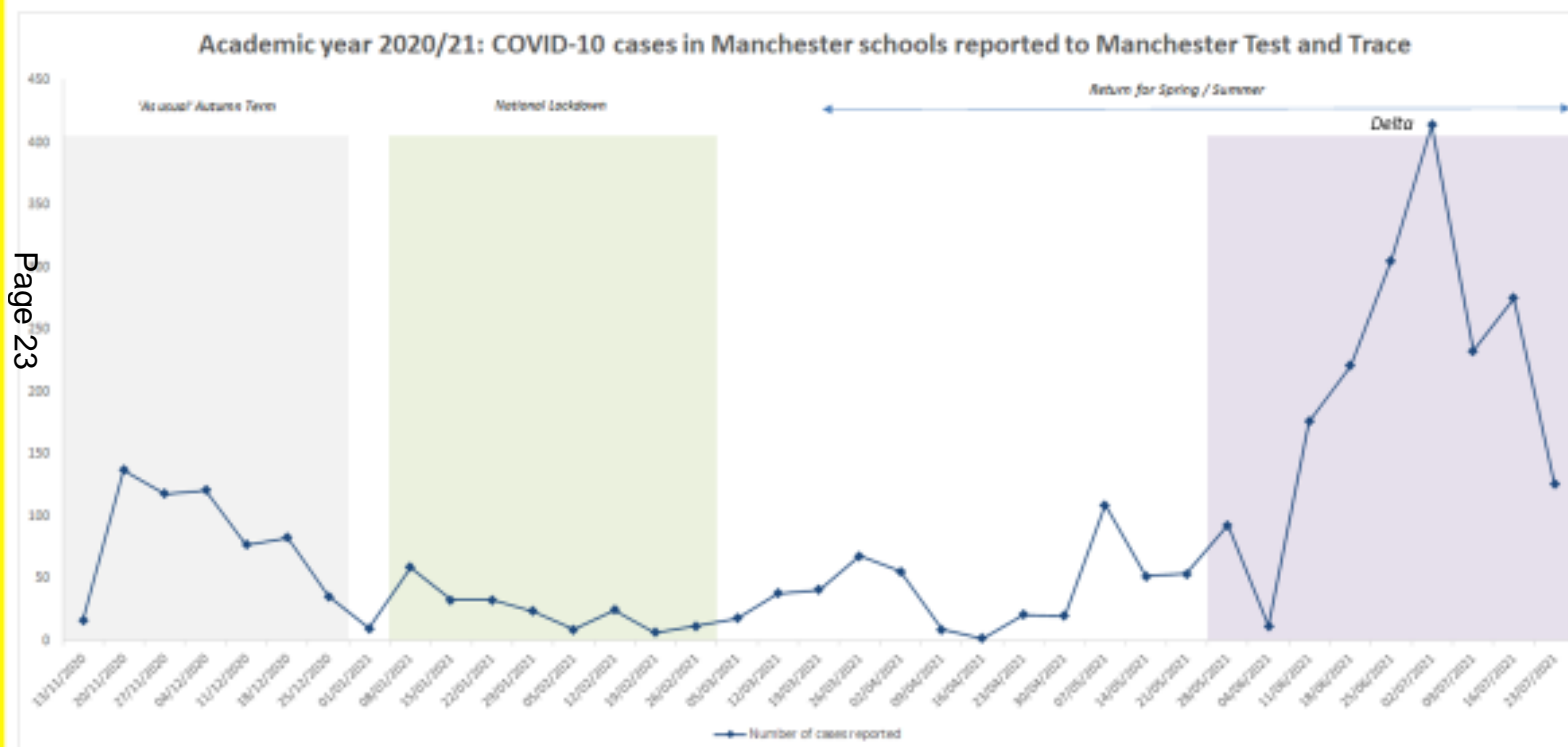
Sources of data

Analysis in this presentation is based on two sources of data available to Manchester Test and Trace - *Reported* and *Confirmed* cases. The scope of each data set is described.

Reported cases (MCC)	Confirmed cases (PHE / UKSHA)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on cases voluntarily reported to Manchester City Council by schools in Manchester through the online notification form • Includes cases in staff and students reported by schools located within the Manchester City Council boundary, including cases in individuals living outside of Manchester • Geographical distribution of reported cases based on location of school • Trends based on date the case was reported by the school • Demographic characteristics of cases (age, gender, ethnicity etc.) based on information submitted by schools using their knowledge of the individual (rather than by the individuals themselves). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on cases identified through formal testing activities of any type (PCR or LFD) • Includes all children resident within the Manchester City Council boundary, including children attending a non-Manchester school or an independent school outside of local authority control • Education stage (primary or secondary) based on age of child • Trends based on date the test / specimen was taken • Demographic characteristics of cases (age, gender, ethnicity etc.) based on self-reported information at time of registering a test • Area of residence based primarily on the postcode supplied at time of registering a test

An overview of reported cases over time

- During the period 13th November – 23rd July, Manchester Test and Trace's local notification form was used 1,981 times for a total of 3,144 reported cases in children
- On average, each time a school used the form they were notifying 1.6 reported cases in children
- There were an average of 89 submissions per week, every one of which our local specialist tracing team reviewed and risk assessed, with support from Manchester's Community Health Protection Team where situations were complex.



The policy for schools and educational settings was not static over the academic year; following a national rise in cases over in late 2020, a national lockdown was announced for 4th January. From 4th January, the majority of teaching was delivered on-line (face-to-face teaching was available for the children of key workers and children deemed to be vulnerable).

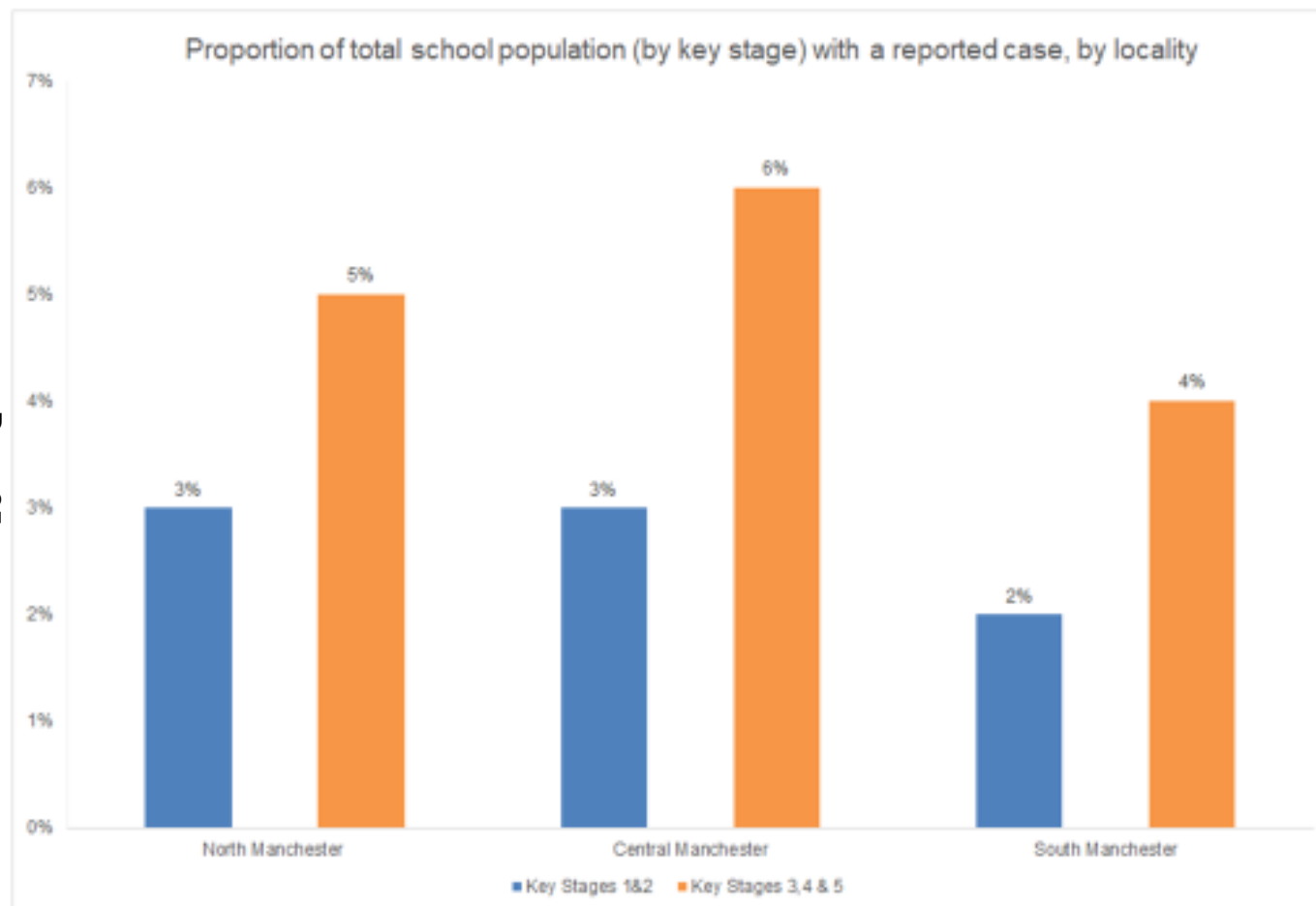
This had an associated impact on the numbers of reported cases. In the summer term of 2021, Delta became the dominant variant.

Levels of engagement with schools throughout the year – How was the Manchester Test & Trace notification form used?

Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 98% of primary schools in Manchester reported cases via the notification form. This equates to 138 of the 141 primary schools (this does not include special primary schools). • Primary schools used the form almost daily during term time to notify Manchester Test and Trace of reported cases (average time between notification was 0.8 days) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of secondary schools in Manchester reported cases via the notification form (this does not include special secondary schools). • Secondary schools used the form almost daily during term time to notify Manchester Test and Trace of reported cases (average time between notification was 0.1 days)
Both primary and secondary schools notified Manchester Test and Trace of the case within a maximum of 48 hours of the child testing positive.	

The Manchester Test and Trace notification form was received well and used by the majority of Manchester schools. Engagement was strong throughout the academic year. This suggests that this reporting mechanism was effective for schools to communicate with Manchester Test and Trace.

What proportion of pupils tested positive or were identified as contacts in school?



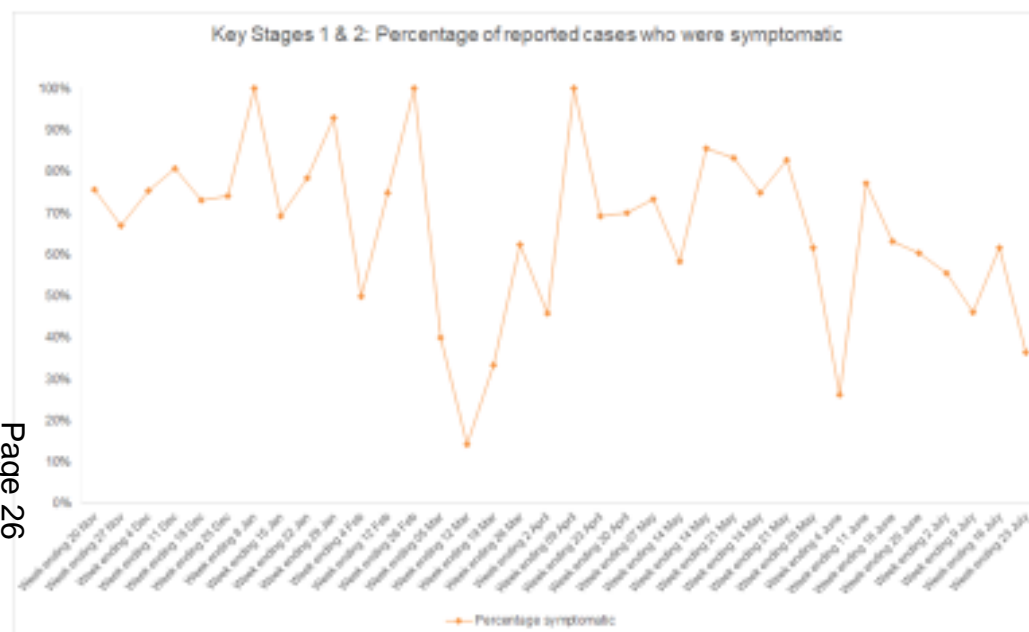
Analysis of reported cases to Manchester Test and Trace against total school population indicates that a greater proportion of the secondary school population in Central had a reported case. Due to the association between testing and reported cases, this may be due to targeted school testing.

Primary and Secondary schools in South had the smallest proportion of their whole-school population with a reported case.

Stand-alone sixth-form colleges, and special primary and secondary schools are not included

Tracking symptoms over time

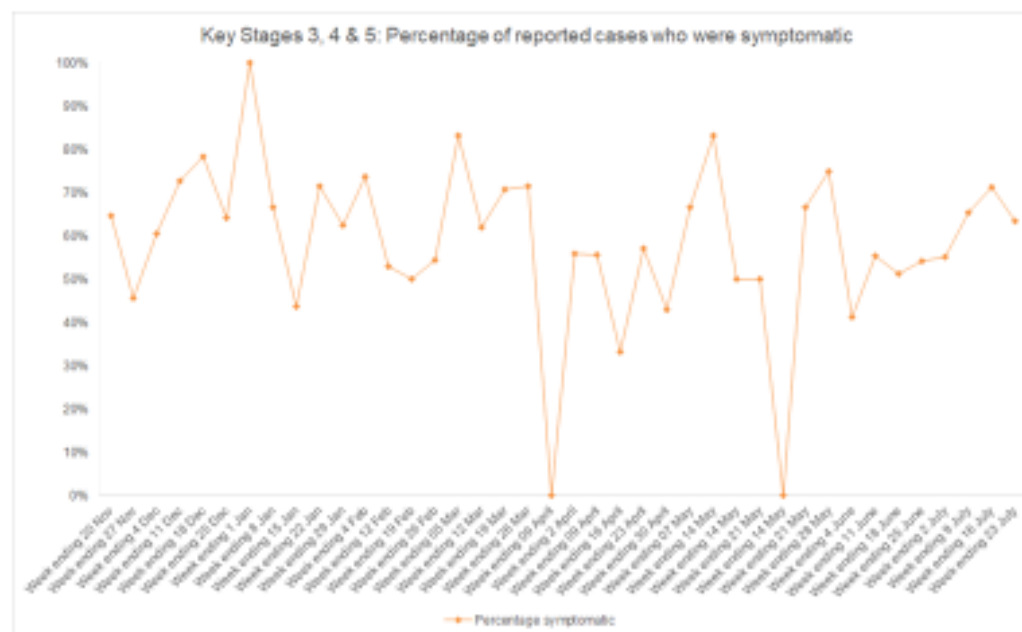
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Key Stages 1&2

There did not appear to be a change over time in the proportion of reported cases from Key Stages 1&2 (aged between 5 – 10 years old) who declared symptoms

- Term 1 (Sept to Dec): 62% were symptomatic
- Term 2 (Jan to March): 64% were symptomatic
- Term 3 (April to July): 60% were symptomatic

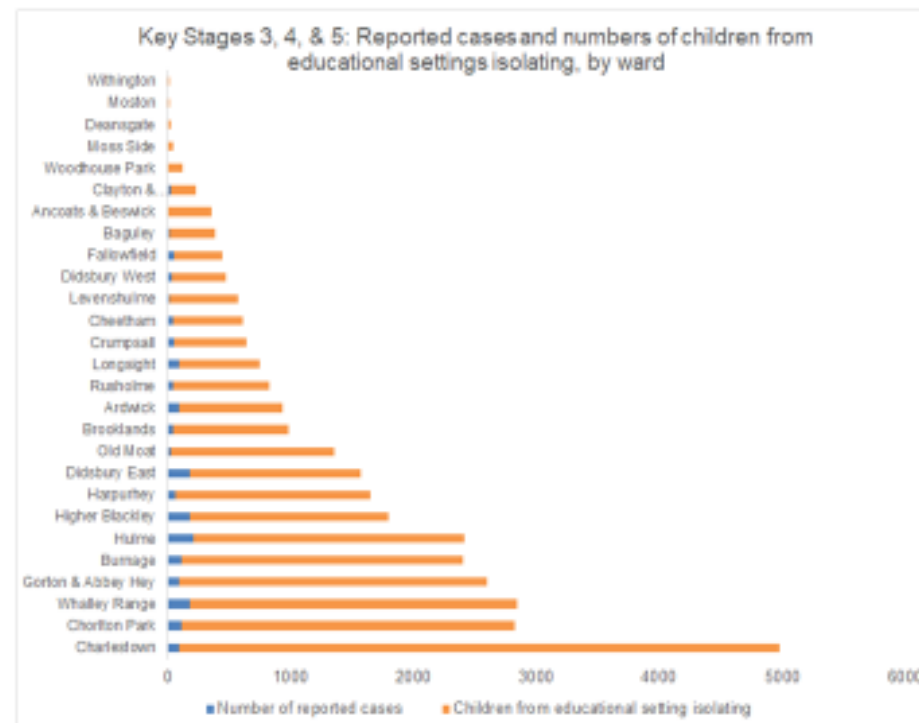
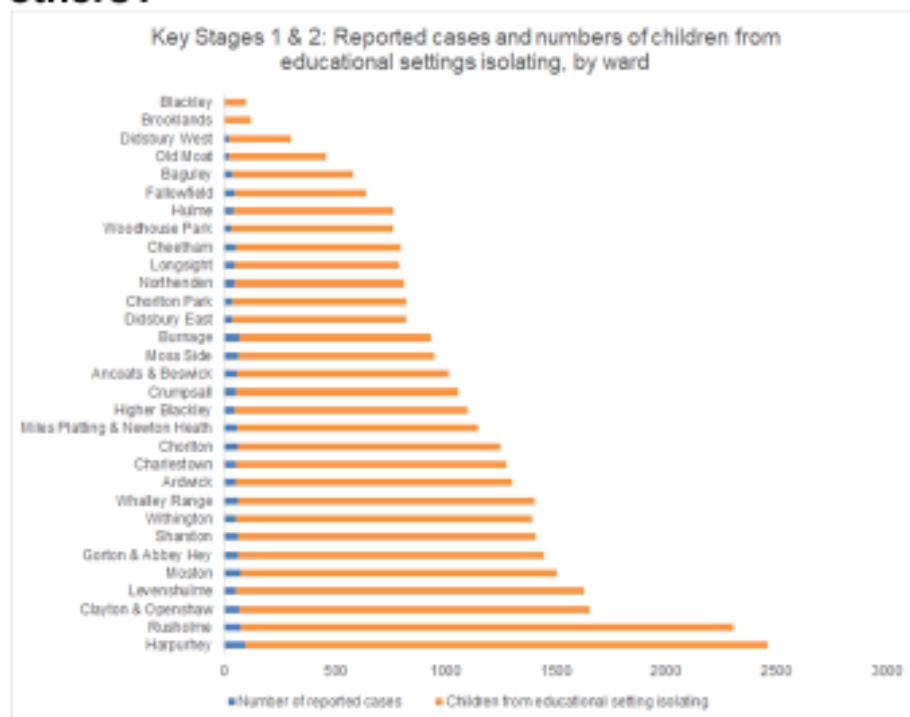


Key Stages 3, 4 & 5

Children and young adults from Key Stages 3, 4 & 5 (11 – 17) reported a greater proportion of symptomatic cases during the Autumn term (Sept – Dec 2020)

- Term 1 (Sept to Dec): 74% were symptomatic
- Term 2 (Jan to March): 58% were symptomatic
- Term 3 (April to July): 58% were symptomatic

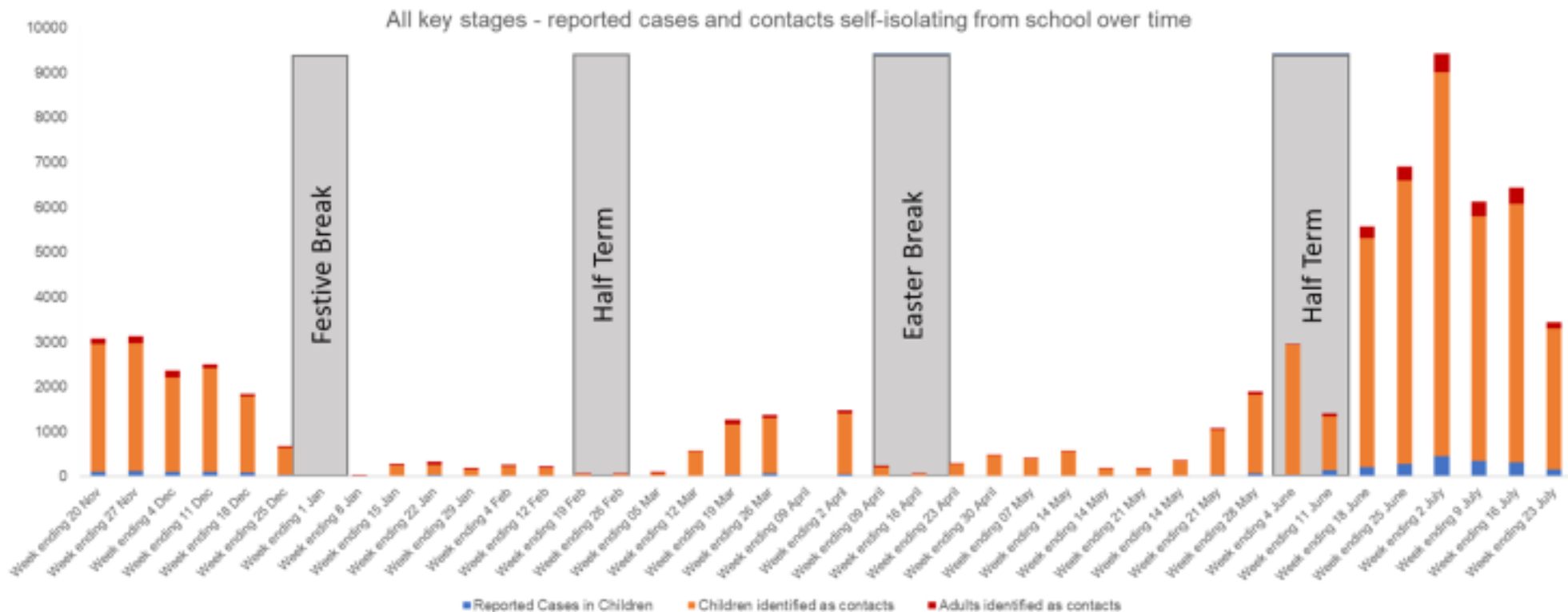
Did educational settings in some wards identify more contacts who needed to self-isolate than others?



- Across key stages 1 & 2, a mean average of 22 contacts were identified per reported case.
- The ward with the highest *proportion* of contacts per case in KS1&2 was Blackley, where there were 48 isolated children from school per case. Blackley, however, had the lowest number of reported cases.
- The ward with the lowest proportion of cases to contacts was Burnage with 13 contacts identified per case.

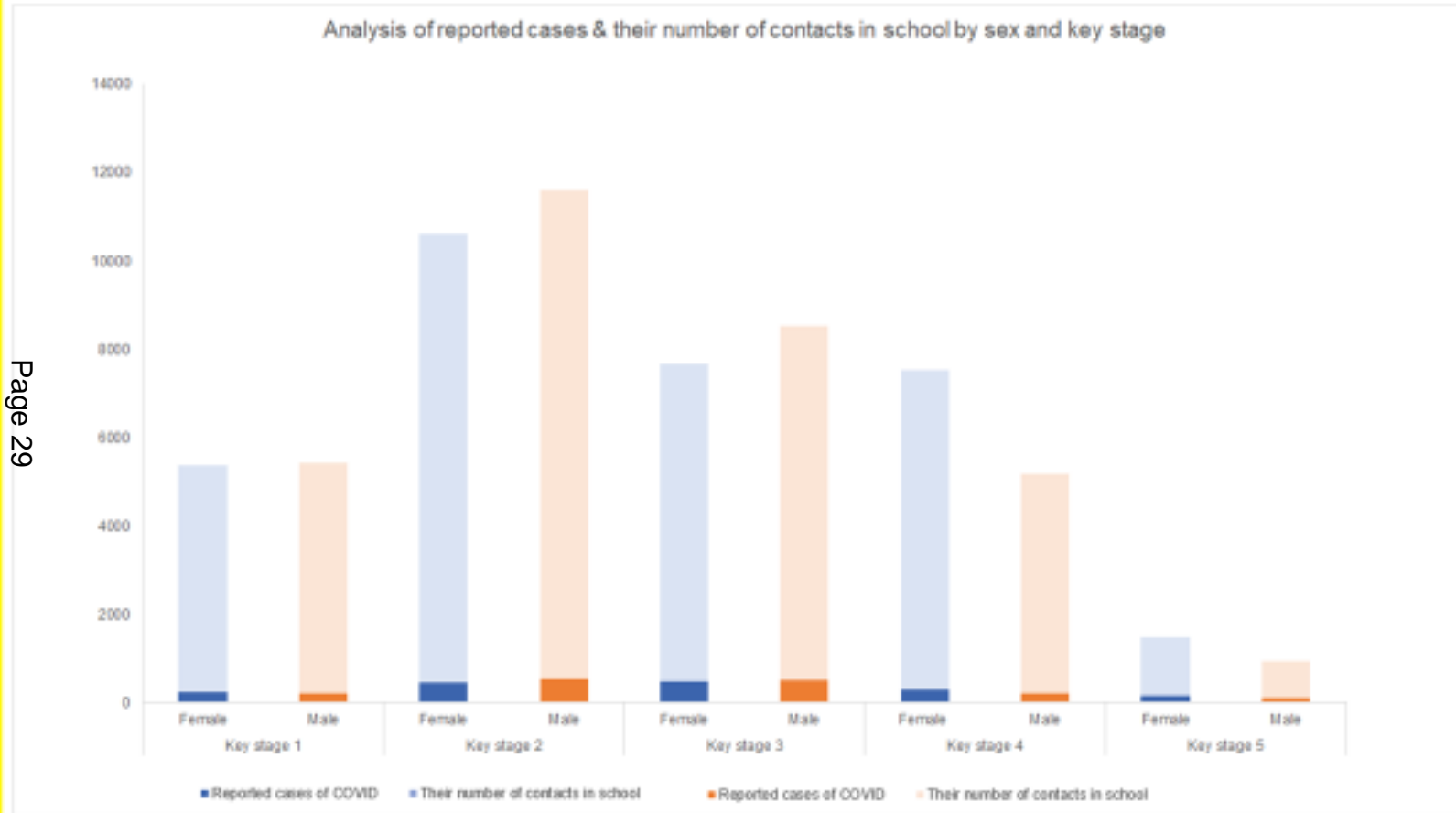
- Across key stages 3,4 & 5, a mean average of 22 contacts were identified per reported case.
- The ward with the highest *proportion* of contacts per case in KS 3,4,5 was Charlestown, where there were 52 contacts amongst children from school per case.

How did the number of people self-isolating from school settings change over time?



The differing numbers of contacts in school reflects the relative attendance in school linked to restrictions, the impact of half term mixing, and the rise in Delta cases.

Who was more likely to have contacts in school?



Females in Key Stage 4 had the highest number of contacts per case – 26 contacts for each female reported case

The largest disparity between average contacts was also found in Key Stage 4, with 26 contacts for each female case and 22 contacts for each male case

However, considering cases across all key stages, there is a minimal difference; on average females and males both had 19 contacts per reported COVID-19 case

What impact did COVID-19 have on lost face-to-face teaching time across Manchester Schools?

On average, each school age child in Manchester lost 43 days of face-to-face teaching during 2020/21

This has been calculated using data schools submitted to the Department for Education on non-attendance.

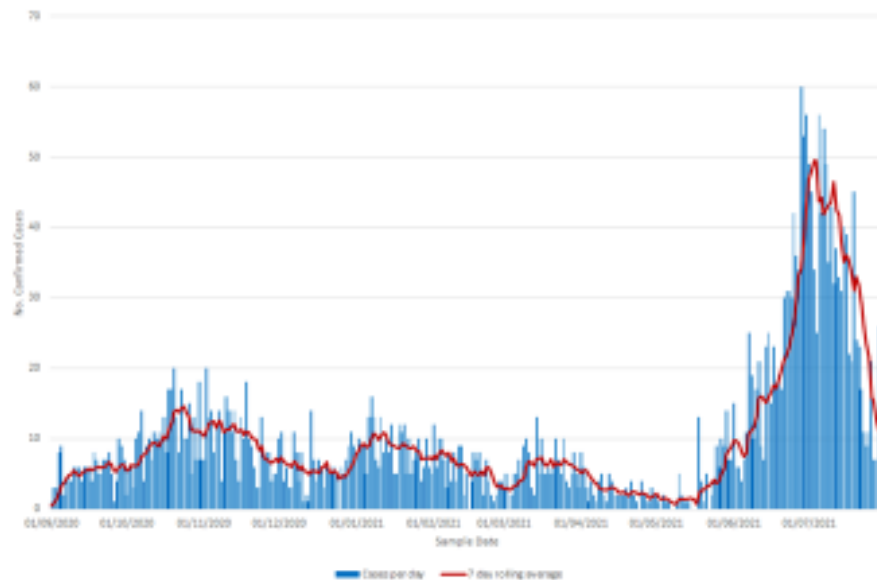
The figure includes hours of face-to-face teaching lost during periods of national lockdown, and also includes those who were unable to attend school settings because they were:

- Isolating because they tested positive
- Isolating because they were symptomatic
- Isolating as household, social or community contacts
- Isolating as school contacts
- Shielding
- Quarantining due to travel

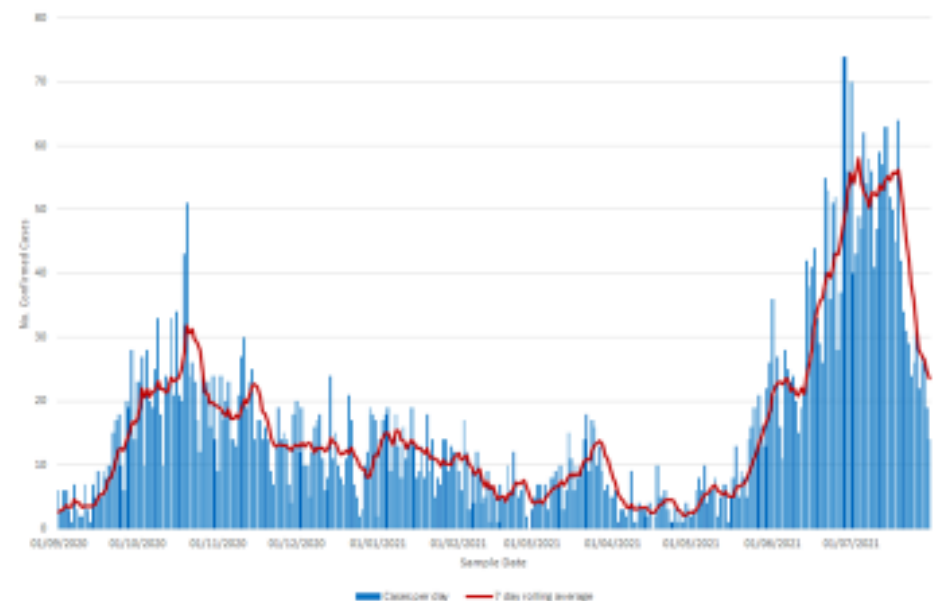
This considerable impact of the pandemic on time spent in school only stresses the importance and timeliness of '2022 Our Year' - Manchester's upcoming year-long campaign focusing on children and young people that also supports our ambition to being recognised by UNICEF as a child-friendly city

How did confirmed cases of COVID-19 in school age children living in Manchester change over the course of the 2020/21 academic year (1 September 2020 to 31 July 2021)?

Primary school age children (5-10 years)



Secondary school age children (11-16 years)



The broad trend of confirmed cases over time in primary and secondary school age children followed similar epidemic curves. The spring / summer peak (coinciding with the emergence of the new Delta variant) in secondary school-age children was greater. The trends broadly mirror the patterns of testing.

How did confirmed cases of COVID-19 in school age children living in Manchester change over the course of the 2020/21 academic year (1 September 2020 to 31 July 2021)?

Rate per 100,000 population based on ONS Mid-2000 Population Estimate



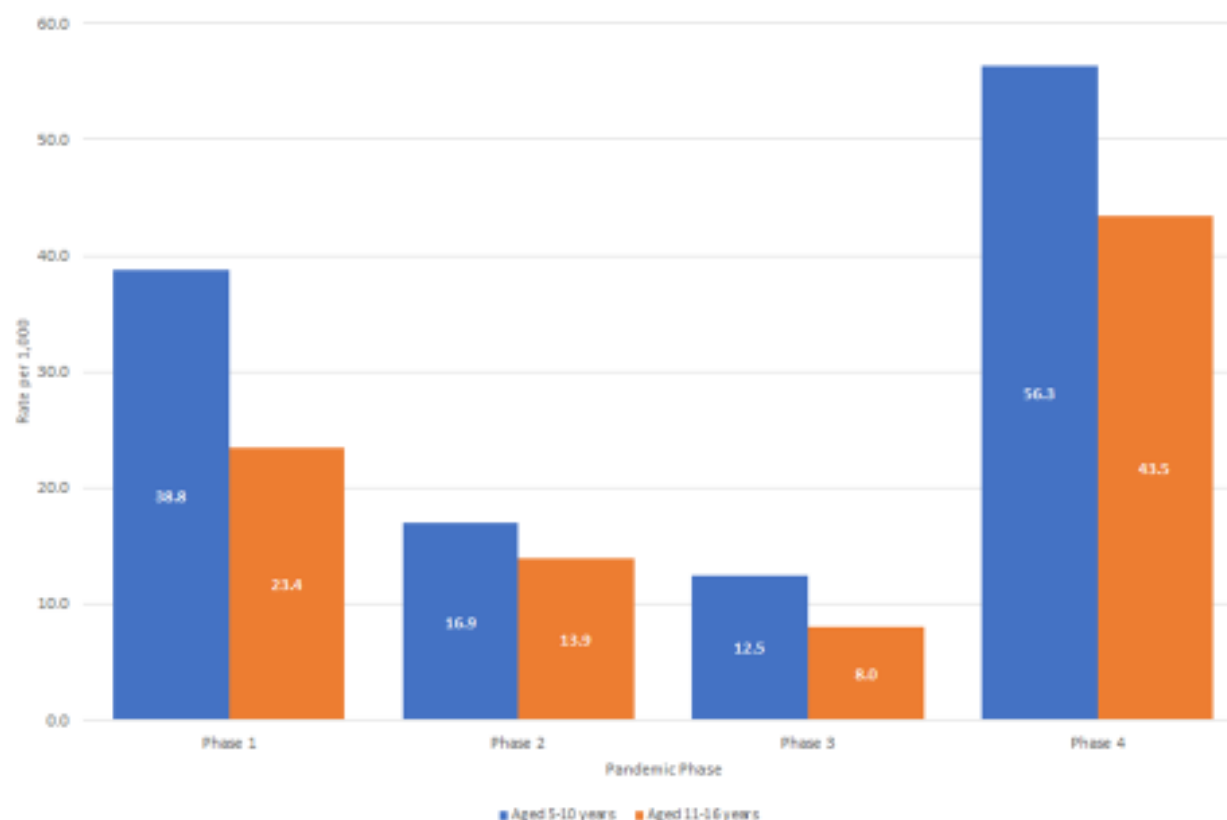
The case detection rate (number of new confirmed cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 resident population) has consistently been higher in secondary school age children compared with primary school age children, particularly at the beginning and end of the academic year when whole school testing took place in secondary schools.

Cases rose in May-July following the growth of the Delta variant.

This chart includes all children living in Manchester irrespective of the location and type of school attended.

How did confirmed cases of COVID-19 in school age children living in Manchester change over the course of the 2020/21 academic year (1 September 2020 to 31 July 2021)?

Rate per 1,000 population based on ONS Mid-2000 Population Estimate

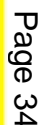


The trend of confirmed cases during the academic year 2020/21 can be broken down into 4 distinct time phases based on variant prevalence and national measures, specifically:

- Early September to mid-December (Autum term and emergence of Alpha variant)
- Mid-December 2020 to early March 2021 (Christmas break and second national lockdown linked to Alpha variant)
- March to May (recovery)
- Late-May to end July (end of Spring terms and emergence of Delta variant).

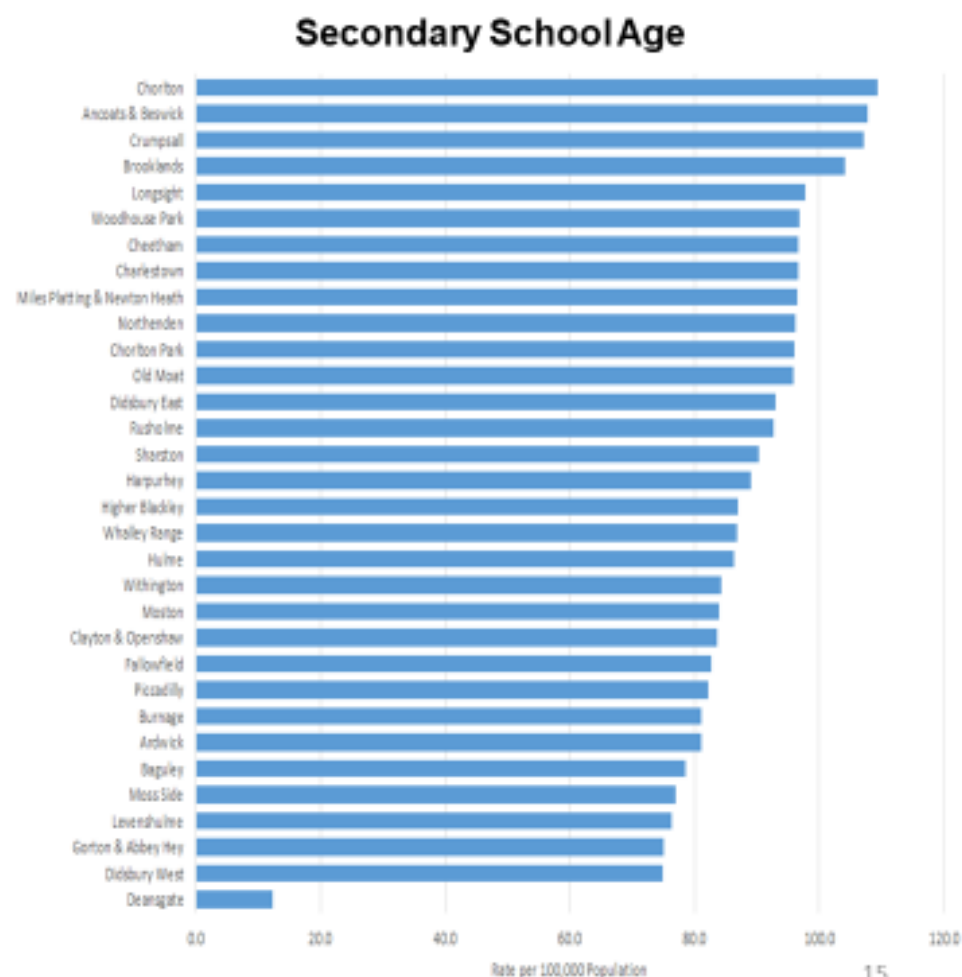
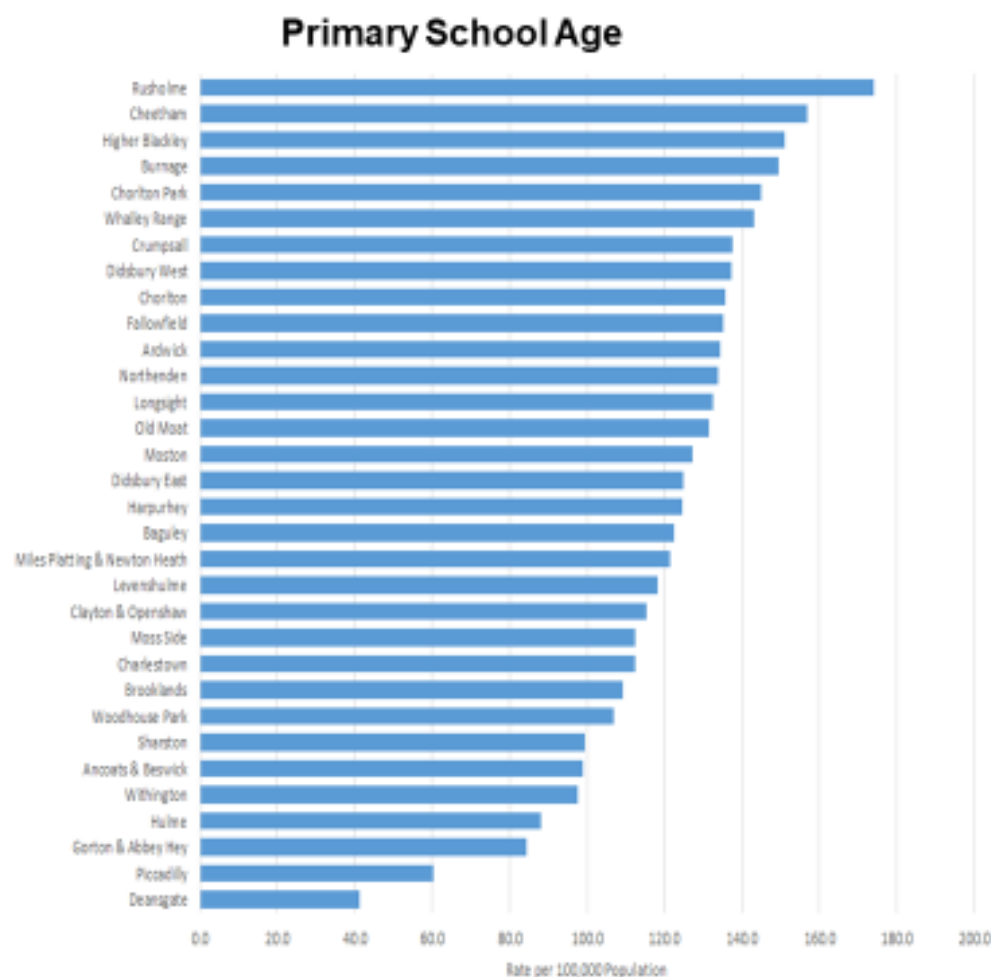
Rates of COVID in school age children were highest in Phase 1 and 4 of the pandemic when whole school testing was in operation at the beginning of the school year and again in June and July in response to outbreaks in school settings. Rates were lower during and after the closure of schools as part of national restrictions.

Manchester Test and Trace



In part, this reflects the larger family sizes and greater number of children living in these wards.

Manchester Test and Trace



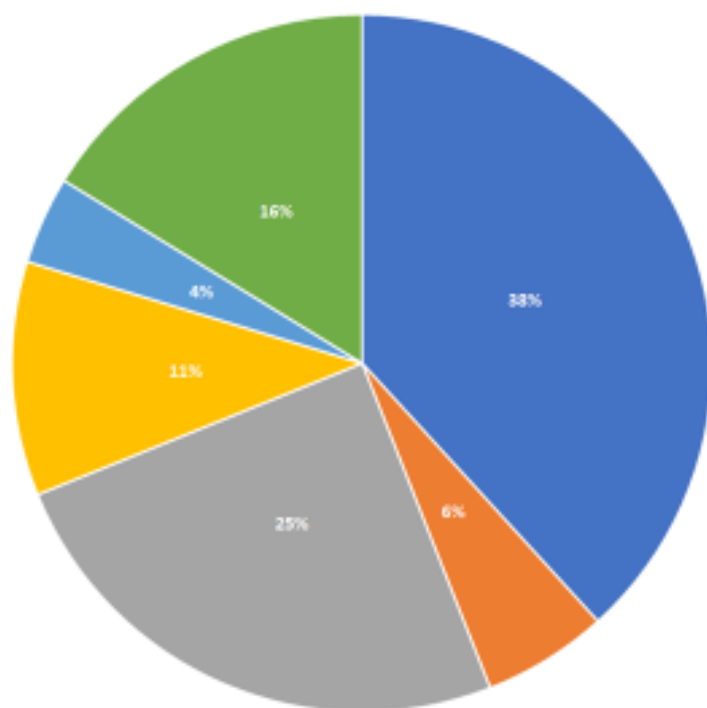
Age of Child	Male	Female
5	202	198
6	221	204
7	258	268
8	298	293
9	344	342
10	381	349
11	426	402
12	452	450
13	452	505
14	484	515
15	453	504
16	377	431

Overall, there were more cases in girls than boys, particularly in secondary school age children.

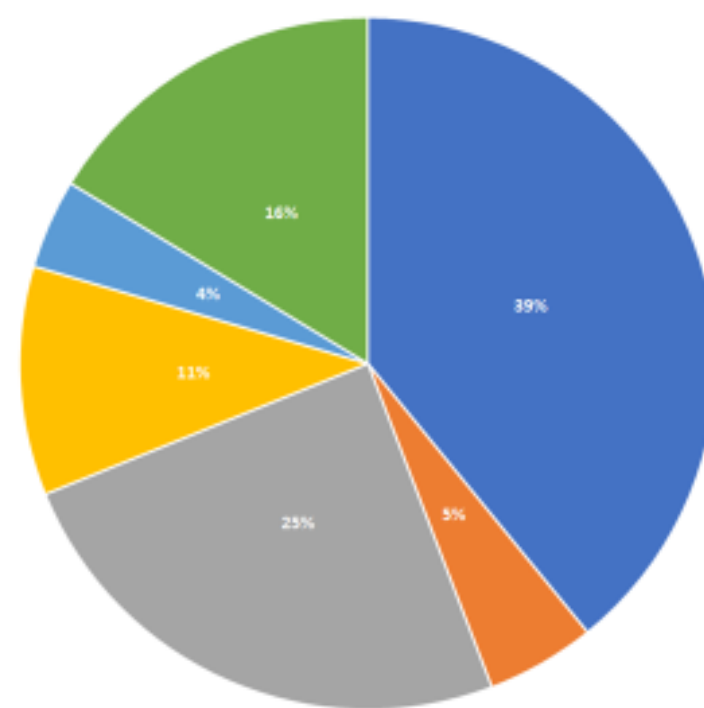
In primary school age children, the gender split was more equal.

Percentage of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in school age children resident in Manchester by broad ethnic group, 2020/21 academic year (1 September 2020 to 31 July 2021)

Primary School



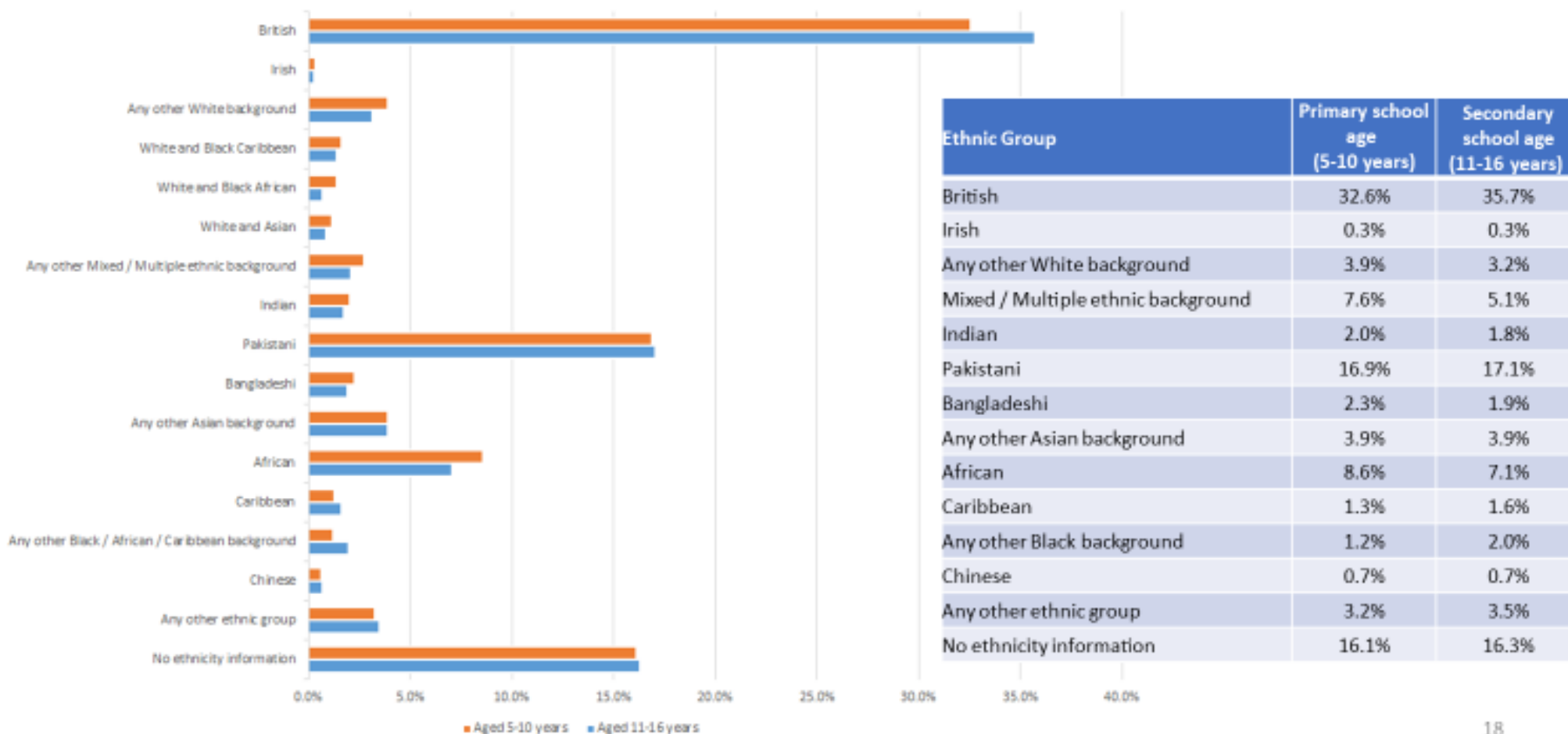
Secondary School



- White
- Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups
- Asian or Asian British
- Black or Black British
- Other ethnic group
- Unknown

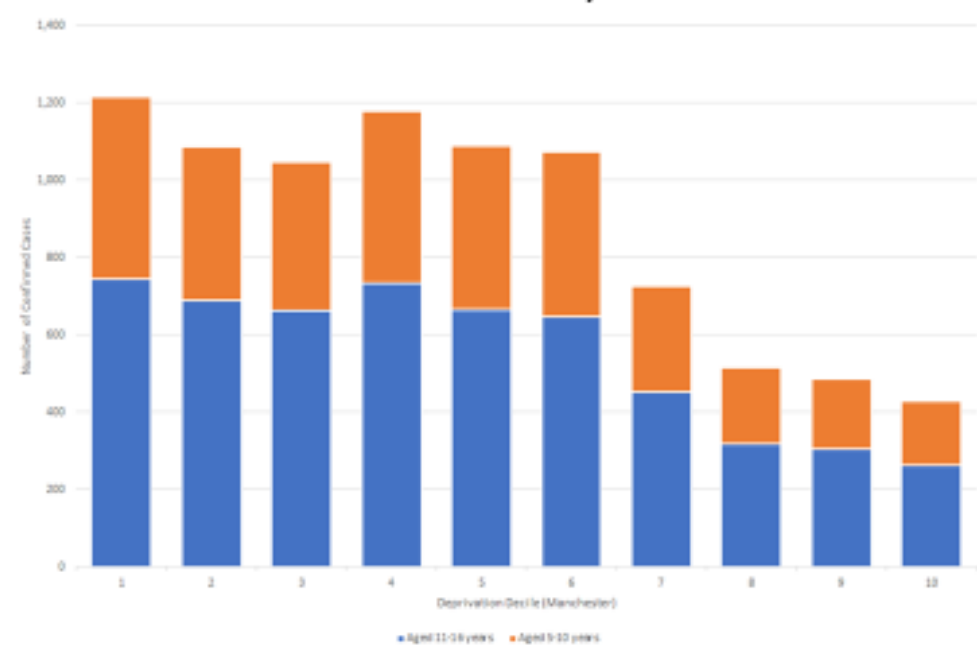
The pattern of confirmed cases of COVID-19 by broad ethnic group was similar in primary and secondary school aged children.

Percentage of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in school age children resident in Manchester by ethnic group, 2020/21 academic year (1 September 2020 to 31 July 2021)

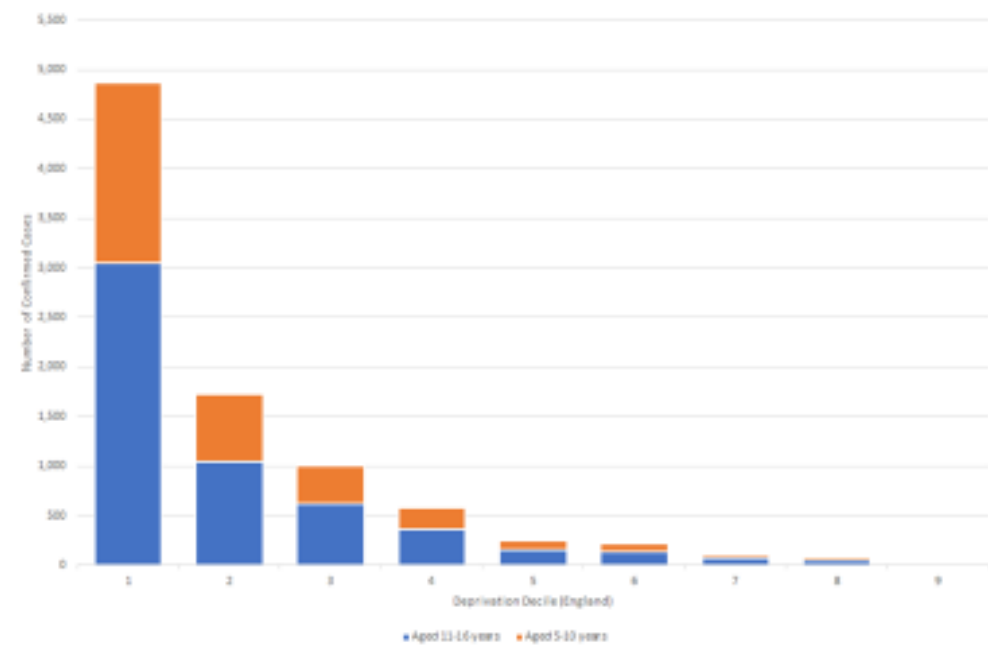


Confirmed cases of COVID-19 in school age children resident in Manchester by deprivation decile based on IMD 2019, 2020/21 academic year (1 September 2020 to 31 July 2021)

Local deprivation deciles (where 1 is most deprived 10% of LSOAs in MANCHESTER)

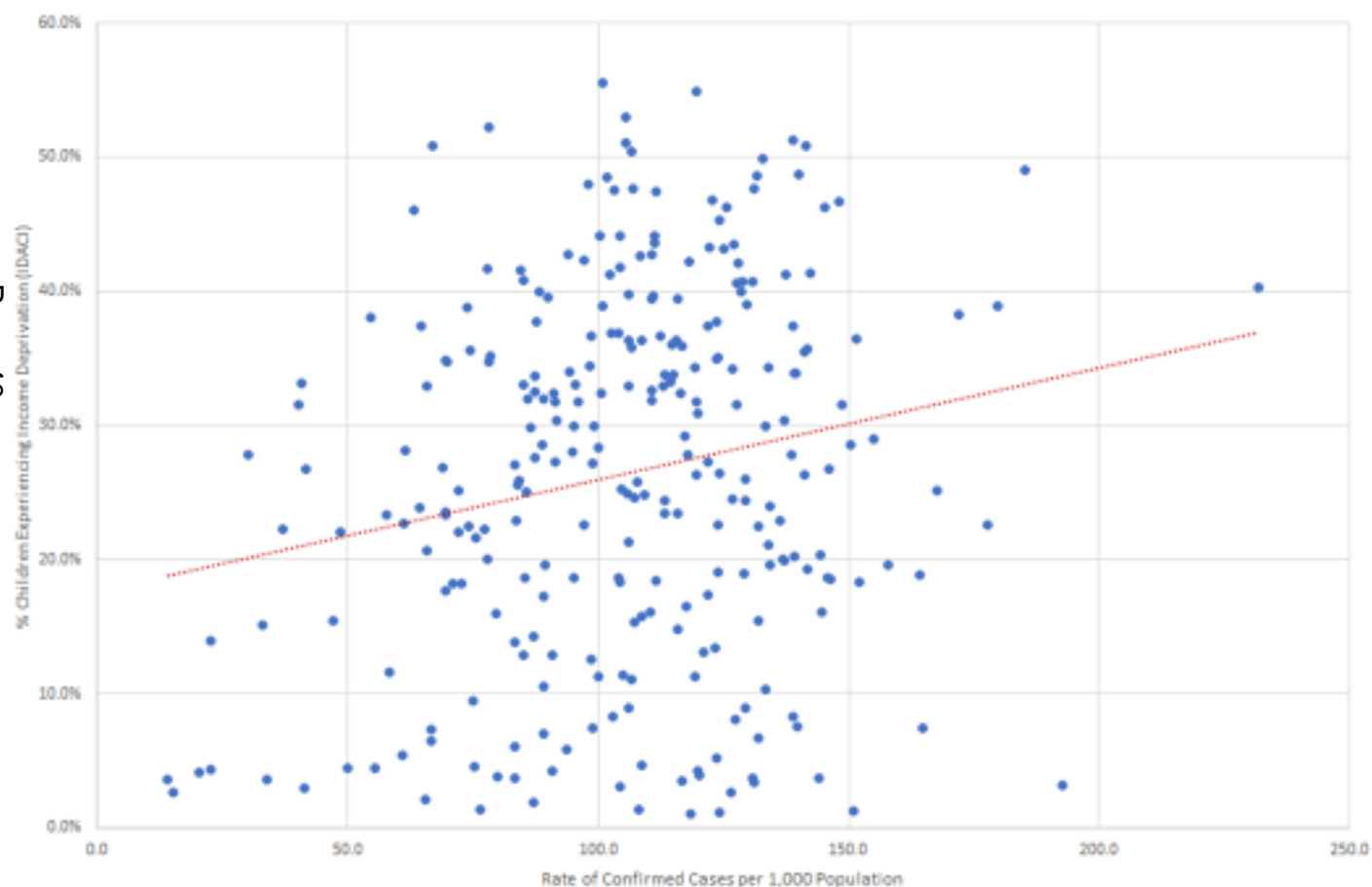


National deprivation deciles (where 1 is most deprived 10% of LSOAs in ENGLAND)



Have children experiencing deprivation been more likely to catch COVID?

Rate of confirmed cases of COVID-19 per 1,000 population and percentage of children experiencing income deprivation (IDACI 2019) by LSOA, 2020/21 academic year (1 September 2020 to 31 July 2021)



There is a moderate link ($r^2 = 0.0374$) between the rate of COVID-19 in school age children and the proportion of children experiencing income deprivation at LSOA level.

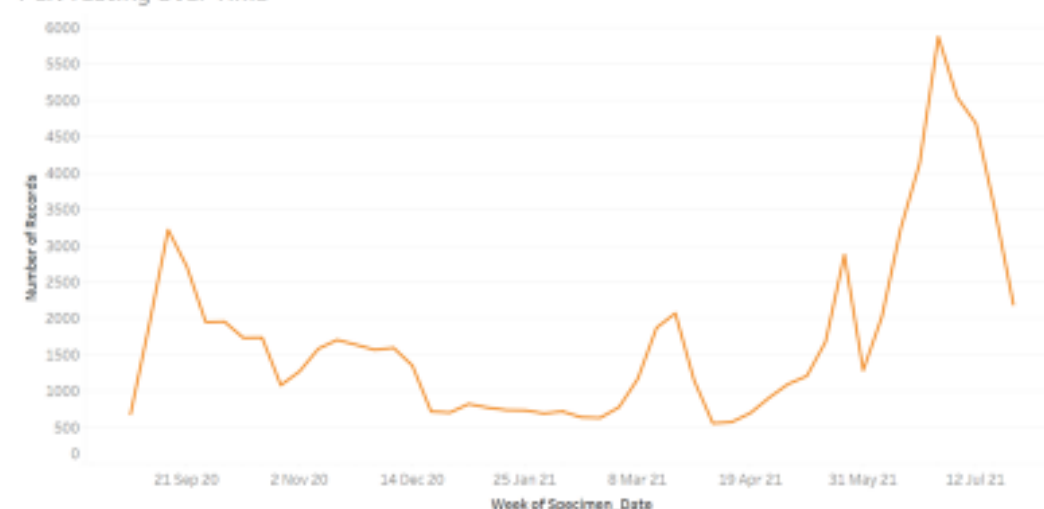
This illustrates that deprivation is only one of a number of factors that impacts on the risk of infection. Other risk factors include living in larger, multi-generational households and in households where family members are employed in higher risk occupations.

What were the testing patterns over time?

LFD Testing Over Time



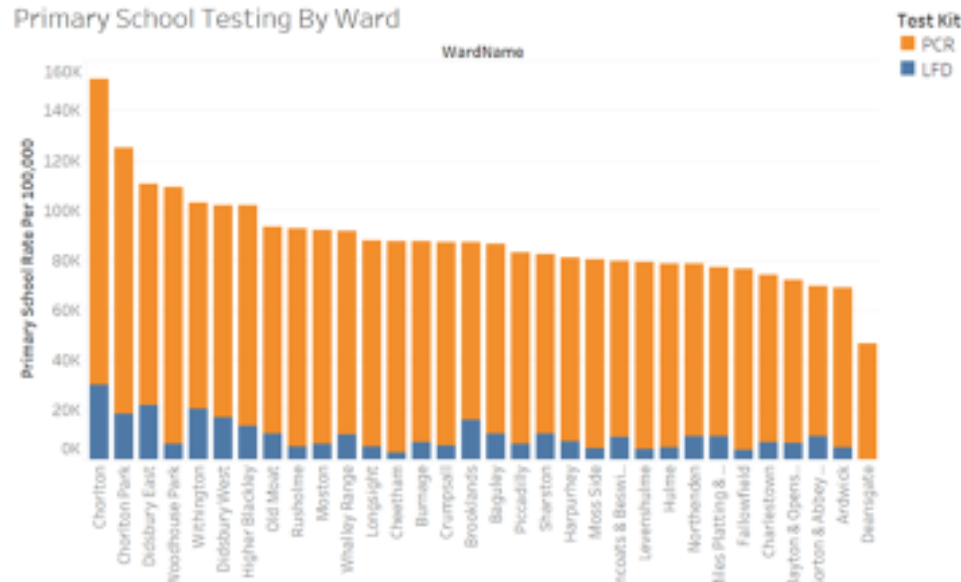
PCR Testing Over Time



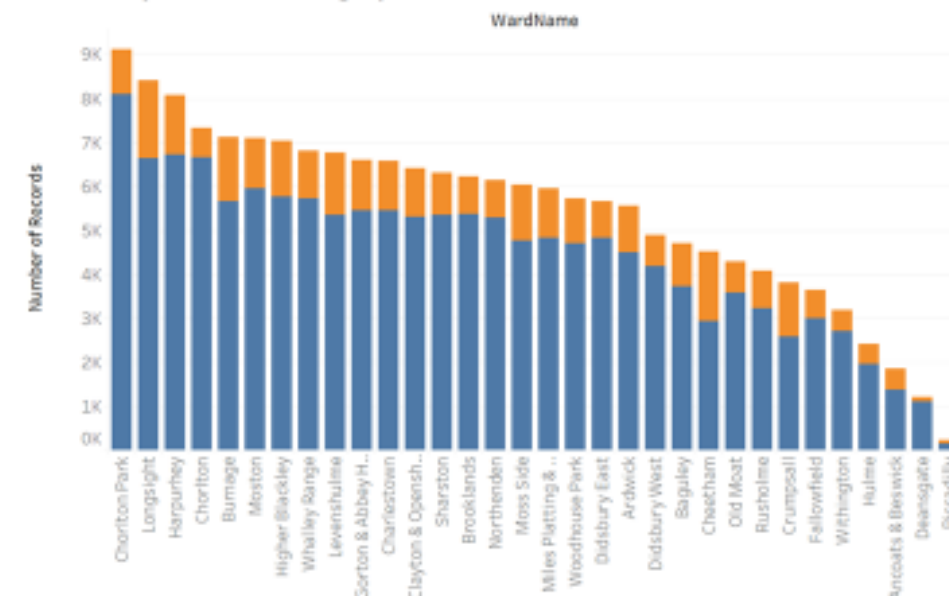
Testing patterns in school-age children were influenced by the regulations requiring lateral flow device tests (in the Winter term) and by targeted school testing as a result of the increasing cases from Delta (particularly in the Summer term).

How have testing patterns varied by ward?

Primary School Testing By Ward



Secondary School Testing By Ward



When looking at both types of COVID-19 Test (lateral flow test devices (LFD)) and PCR (polymerase chain reaction) across primary and secondary schools, there is variation in the propensity of schools in wards to engage with COVID-19 testing.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 Schools and school-age children across Manchester have been adversely affected during the Coronavirus pandemic, losing a notable number of face-to-face teaching hours.
- 6.2 Analysis of confirmed cases in school-age children and school-based testing clearly demonstrates the association between focused testing activities and COVID-19 case detection. This has the result of 're-balancing' usual testing patterns: Manchester's least deprived wards have demonstrated increased engagement with and propensity to test.
- 6.3 The majority of reported cases across both primary (Key Stages 1 & 2) and secondary (Key Stages 3, 4 & 5) throughout the academic year were symptomatic; this suggests that maintaining and promoting awareness of Coronavirus symptoms is important for reducing transmission.
- 6.4 Analysis of confirmed cases indicates that confirmed cases in school age children are affected by similar socio-economic and demographic factors to adults (i.e. income deprivation, living in large, multi-generational households, and living with family members who work in high-risk occupations). Communications raising awareness of these factors should include children in their content.
- 6.5 School children in Key Stage 4 (aged 12 – 15) experienced the highest number of confirmed cases over the academic year: females aged 12 – 15 had both the highest number of confirmed cases and the highest average number of contacts. Given requirements for both cases and contacts to self-isolate this will have adversely impacted their time spent in face-to-face education. There may be a need to focus 'catch-up' resources on this cohort in particular and to deliver focused communications / awareness-raising.
- 6.6 Confirmed cases were higher in the Summer 2021 term in both Primary and Secondary age school-children. It may be prudent to consider prioritizing material covered in this term in particular when focusing 'catch-up' efforts.
- 6.7 This analysis has informed local guidance that will support schools through the autumn and winter months in preventing the transmission of COVID-19. The Director of Public Health and Director of Education will be writing to school leaders following the October half-term.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 The Committee is asked to consider the report and note the conclusions.

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