

Item: 4

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 3 April 2019.

Local Government Benchmarking Framework.

Report by Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

1. Purpose of Report

To scrutinise service performance against relevant indications within the Local Government Benchmark Framework for 2017 to 2018, which fall under the remit of the Education, Leisure and Housing Service.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

The performance of the Education, Leisure and Housing Service against the Local Government Benchmark Framework Indicators for 2017 to 2018, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

3. Background

3.1.

The Council has been reporting performance information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Benchmark Framework since 2010 to 2011. This is a statutory function of Scottish local government.

3.2.

The Improvement Service – national improvement service for local government in Scotland – co-ordinates and facilitates the Local Government Benchmark Framework process. Some indicators are reported directly to the Improvement Service, with data for other indicators being gathered by the Improvement Service from various sources, to which all local authorities make annual returns.

3.3.

Local Government Benchmark Framework data is published annually by the Improvement Service in its National Benchmarking Overview Report, although it is almost one year out-of-date at the time of publication. The 2017 to 2018 report was published on 6 February 2019.

4. Response to the Best Value Assurance Report 2017

4.1.

Although the Council has reported its performance in accordance with the Local Government Benchmark Framework requirements for several years, primarily through its Annual Performance Report, it was agreed by Policy and Resources Committee on 17 April 2018 that in 2019 this information would also be reported to service committees for scrutiny.

4.2.

This commitment is part of the Council's response to recommendations in the Best Value Assurance Report, which was published in December 2017, and this has subsequently been incorporated into Council Delivery Plan 2018 to 2023.

5. Performance

5.1.

Appendix 1 sets out the Council's performance against the Local Government Benchmark indicators in 2017 to 2018 which fall under the remit of the Education, Leisure and Housing Service. This includes comparisons with previous years' performance, the Scottish average, and other local authorities in Orkney's benchmarking "family groups". For some indicators, Council officers have also provided some additional context where it is felt this would be beneficial to help explain the Council's performance.

5.2.

For Children's Services, Adult Social Care Services and Housing Services indicators, similar local authorities are grouped by their level of deprivation. For these indicators Orkney's family group includes:

- East Renfrewshire Council.
- East Dunbartonshire Council.
- Aberdeenshire Council.
- City of Edinburgh Council.
- Perth and Kinross Council.
- Aberdeen City Council.
- Shetland Islands Council.

5.3.

For Corporate Services, Economic Development, Environmental Services and Culture and Leisure Services, similar local authorities are grouped by their population density. For these indicators Orkney's family group includes:

- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.
- Argyll and Bute Council.
- Shetland Islands Council.
- Highland Council.
- Scottish Borders Council.
- Dumfries and Galloway Council.
- Aberdeenshire Council.

5.4.

It should be noted that the monitoring periods for some of the indicators may differ. For example, most are for 2017 to 2018, but some maybe for 2015 to 2018 or 2014 to 2018. This is because all the indicators are calculated from national figures and are generated by different organisations for different purposes.

6. Links to Council Plan

6.1.

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan strategic priority theme of Cross-Cutting Priorities.

6.2.

The proposals in this report relate directly to the Priority 'To deliver the actions and targets in the Best Value Assurance Report recommended by the Accounts Commission', and specifically to action 5(b) of the Council Delivery Plan 'Report Local Government Benchmark Indicators to Service Committees'.

7. Financial Implications

All 32 Scottish local authorities pay an annual rate to the Improvement Service for participation in the Local Government Benchmark Framework. In 2017 to 2018 this was £2,032 and this increased to £2,516 for 2018 to 2019. For this, the Improvement Service provides local authorities with data services and co-ordination of family group activity.

8. Legal Aspects

Under the Local Government Act 1992 and Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, the council has been directed by the Accounts Commission to report on information drawn from the Local Government Benchmark Framework.

9. Contact Officers

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James Wylie, Head of Education: Curriculum and Community Learning, extension
2401, Email james.wylie@orkney.gov.uk.

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10. Appendix

Appendix 1: Performance of the Education, Leisure and Housing Service against the
Local Government Benchmark Indicators 2017 to 2018.

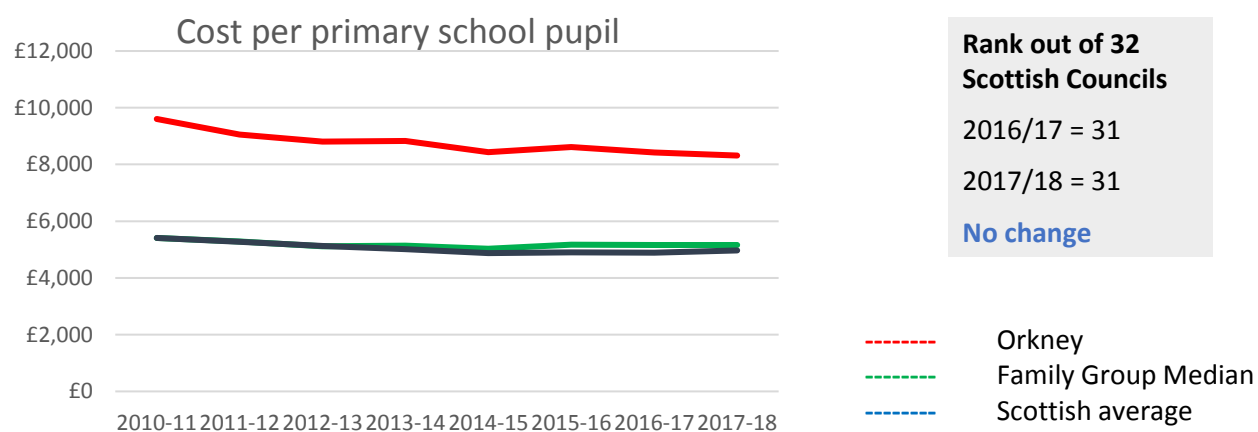
Local Government Benchmark Framework Indicators 2017/18

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CHN1 – Cost per primary school pupil

In 2017/18, the cost per primary school pupil in Orkney was £8,315, which is less than the 2016/17 figure of £8,423, but significantly more than the 2017/18 Scottish average of £4,974.

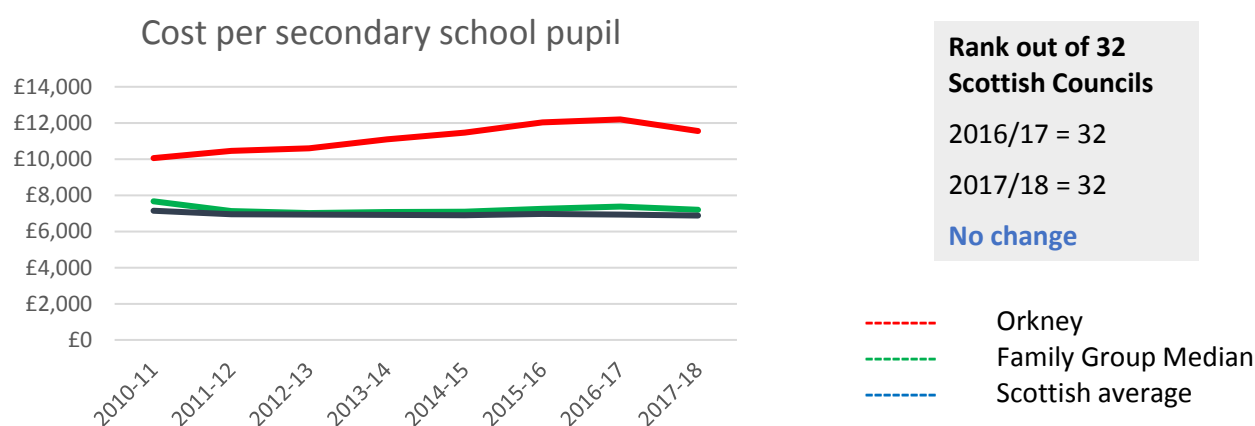
The cost per primary school place in the three island authorities is generally significantly higher than in other areas of the country. This is because providing education in our most remote and rural settings requires additional staff, resulting in increased costs. The cost per pupil in Orkney is lower than in the Western Isles, but higher than in Shetland.



CHN2 – Cost per secondary school pupil

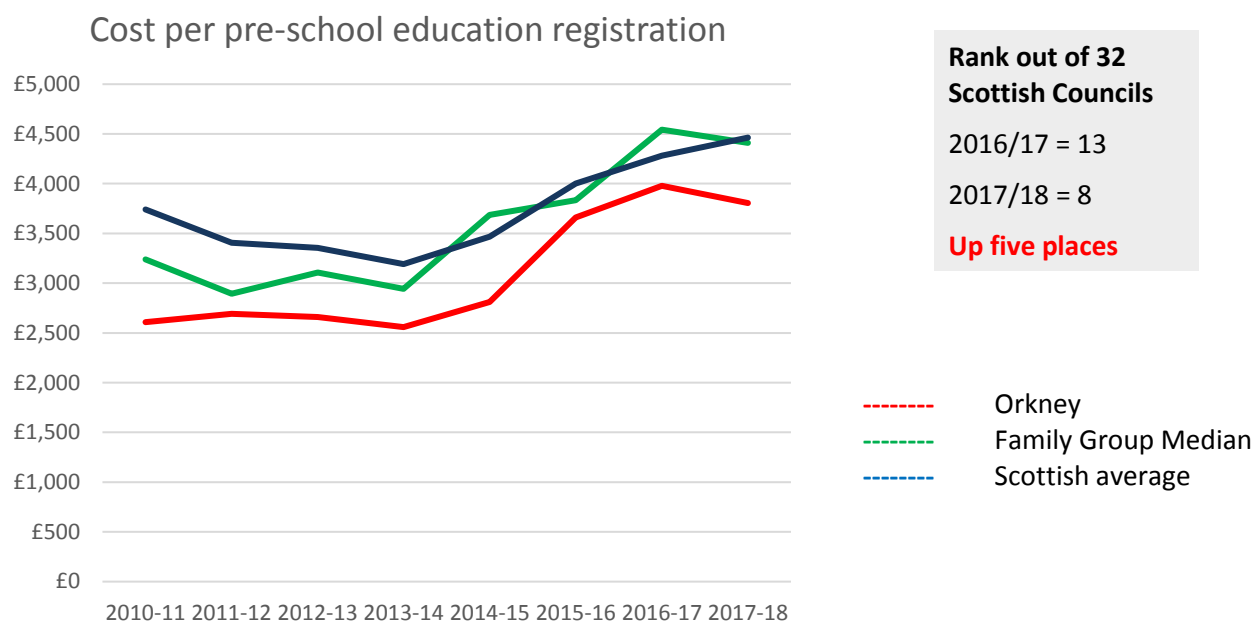
In 2017/18, the cost per secondary school pupil in Orkney was £11,559, which is less than the 2016/17 figure of £12,196, but significantly more than the 2017/18 Scottish average of £6,879.

The cost per secondary school place in the three island authorities is generally significantly higher than in other areas of the country. This is because providing education in our most remote and rural settings requires additional staff, resulting in increased costs. The cost per pupil in Orkney is higher than in the Western Isles and Shetland.



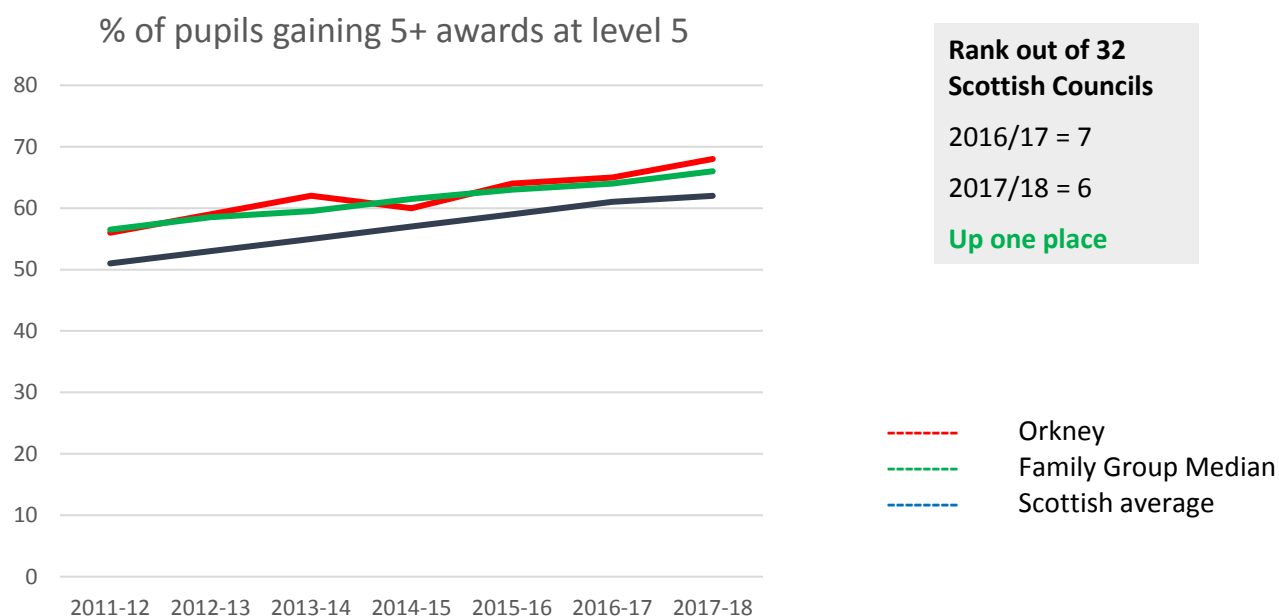
CHN3 – The cost of pre-school education registration

In 2017/18, the cost per pre-school registration in Orkney was £3,805, which is less than the 2016/17 figure of £3,978, and the 2017/18 Scottish average of £4,463.



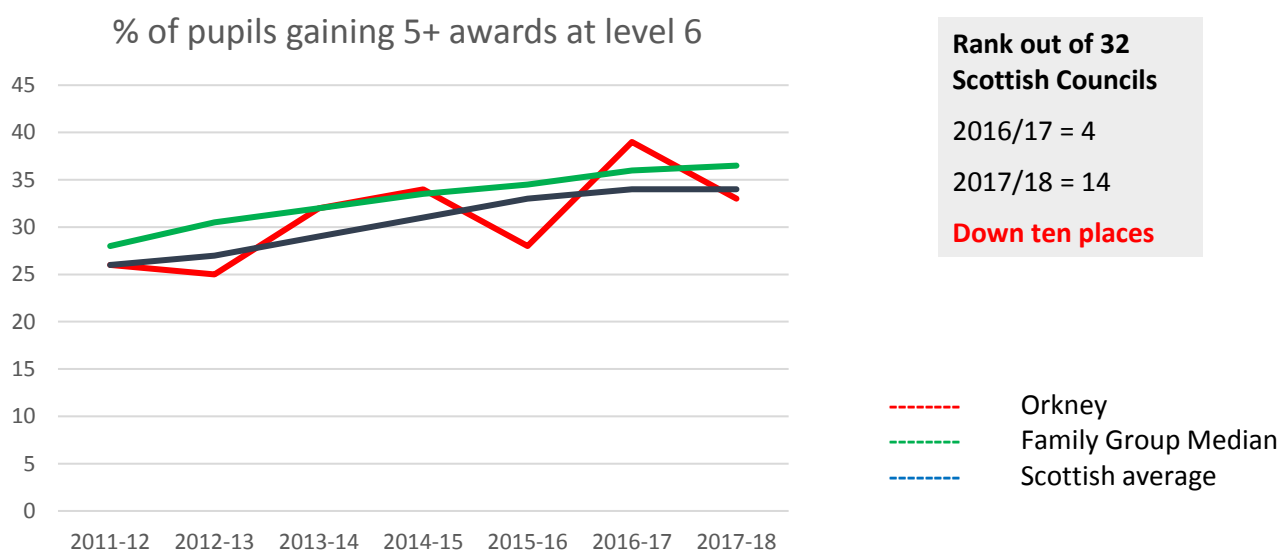
CHN4 – Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 5

In 2017/18, 68% of secondary pupils in Orkney gained 5+ awards at level 5, which is better than the 2016/17 figure of 65%, and the 2017/18 Scottish average of 62%.



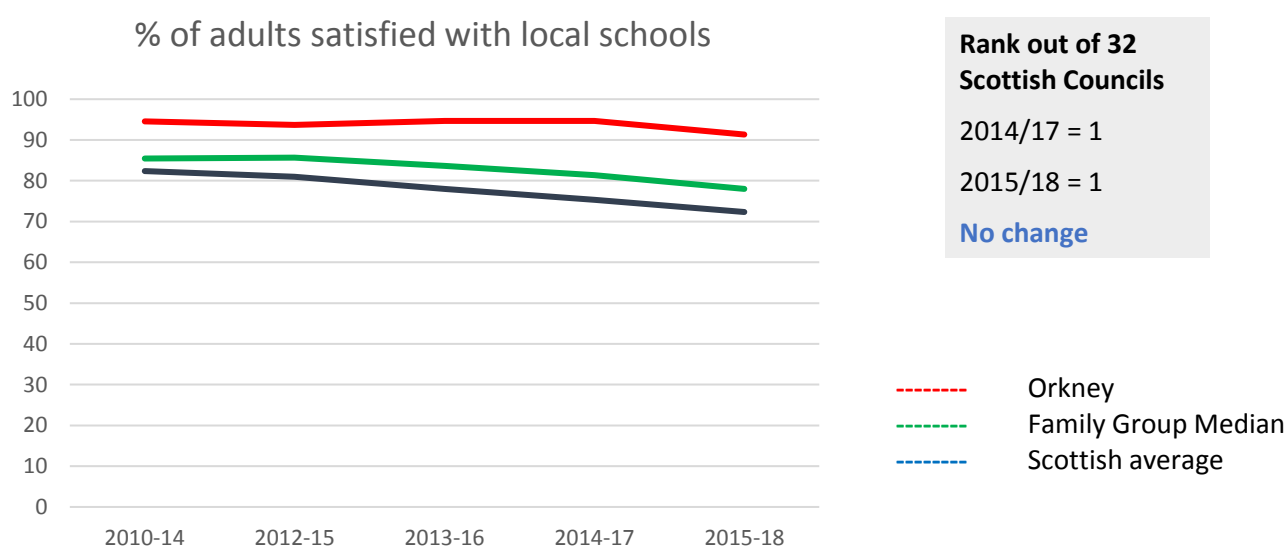
CHN5 – Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 6

In 2017/18, 33% of secondary pupils in Orkney gained 5+ awards at level 6, which is not as good as the 2016/17 figure of 39%, or the 2017/18 Scottish average of 34%.



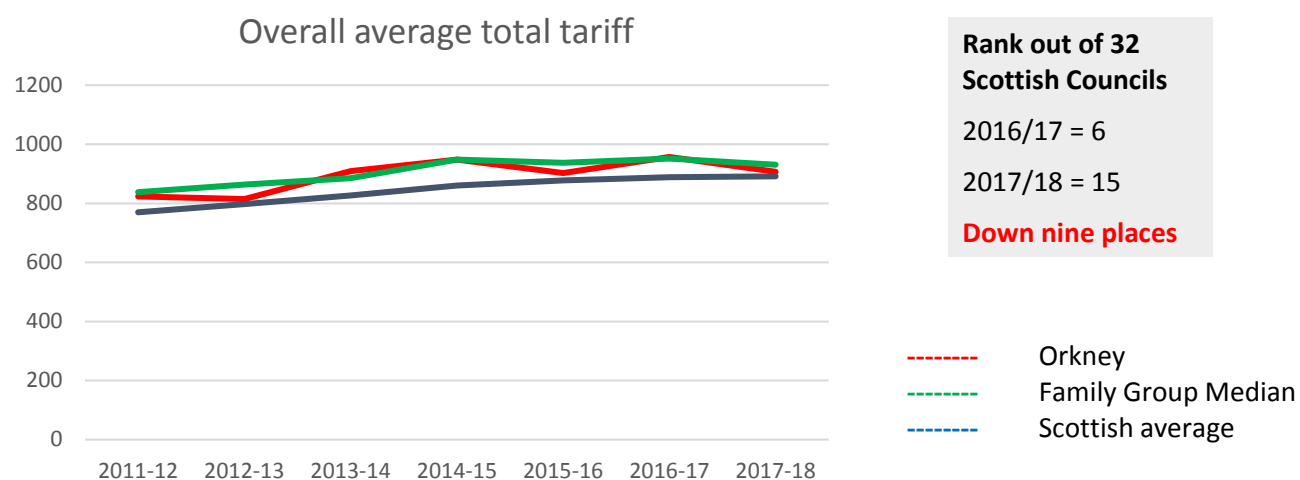
CH10 – The percentage of adults satisfied with local schools

In 2015/18, 91.33% of adults were satisfied with local schools, which is not as good as the 2014/17 figure of 94.67%, but better than the 2015/18 Scottish average of 72.33%.



CHN12a – The overall average total tariff

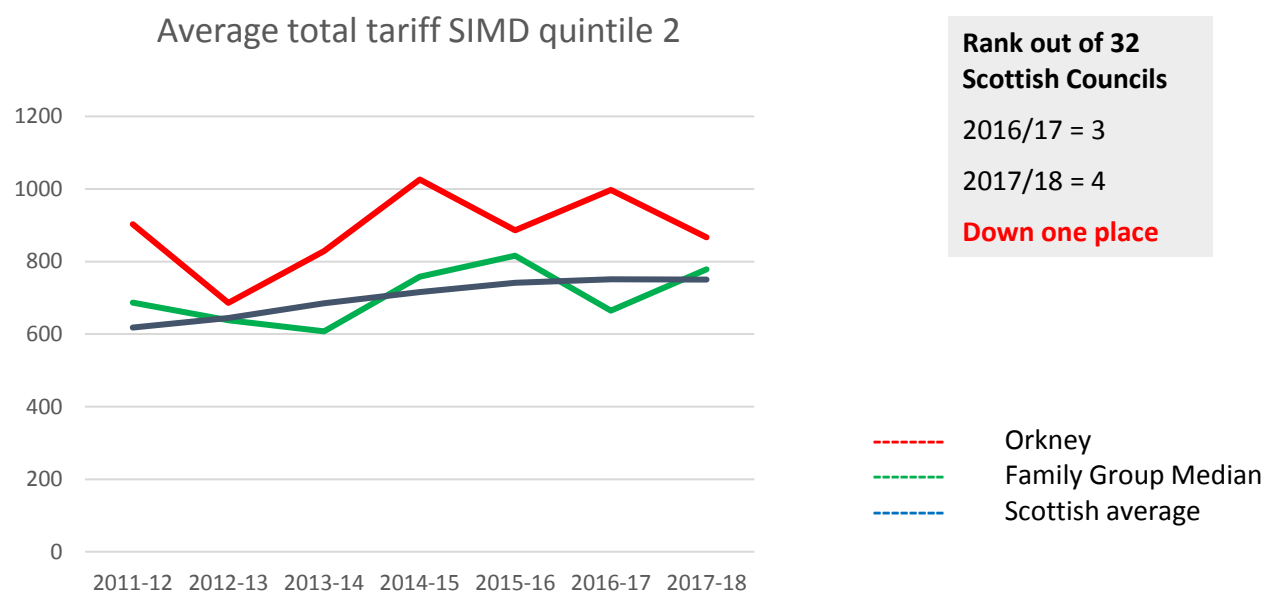
In 2017/18, the overall average total tariff* for Orkney pupils was 907, which is not as good as the 2016/17 figure of 957, but better than the 2017/18 Scottish average of 891.



*The tariff score for a learner is the total number of tariff points for the awards they achieve, taking account of only their latest and best attainment in each subject. This means that, for example, if a pupil has a National 5 and a Higher in Mathematics, it is the points for the Higher award which are counted.

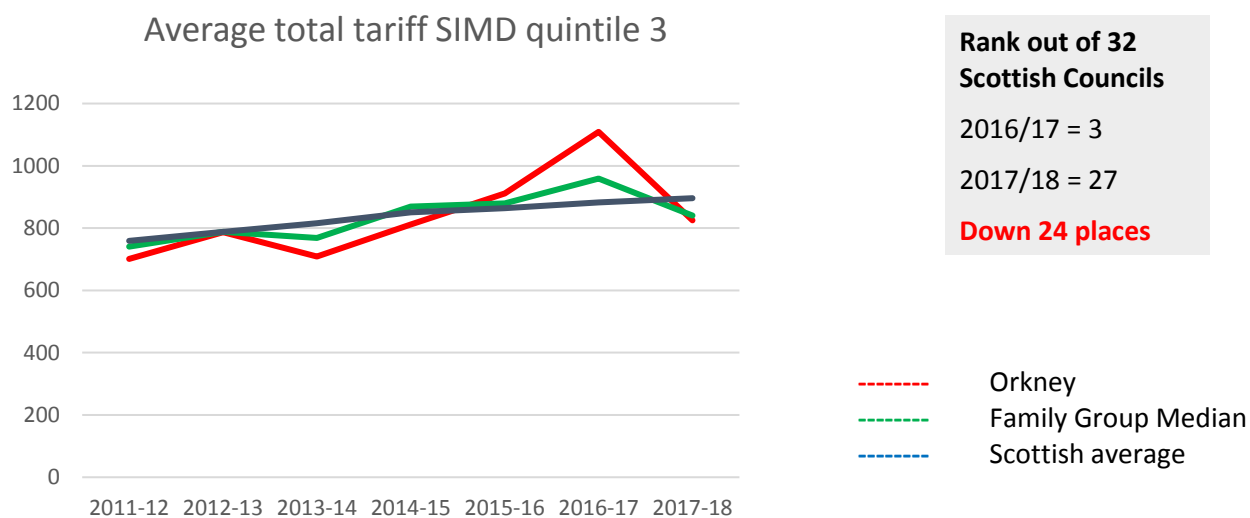
CHN12c – The average total tariff SIMD quintile 2

In 2017/18, the average total tariff for Orkney pupils in SIMD quintile 2 was 867, which is not as good as the 2016/17 figure of 997, but better than the 2017/18 Scottish average of 750.



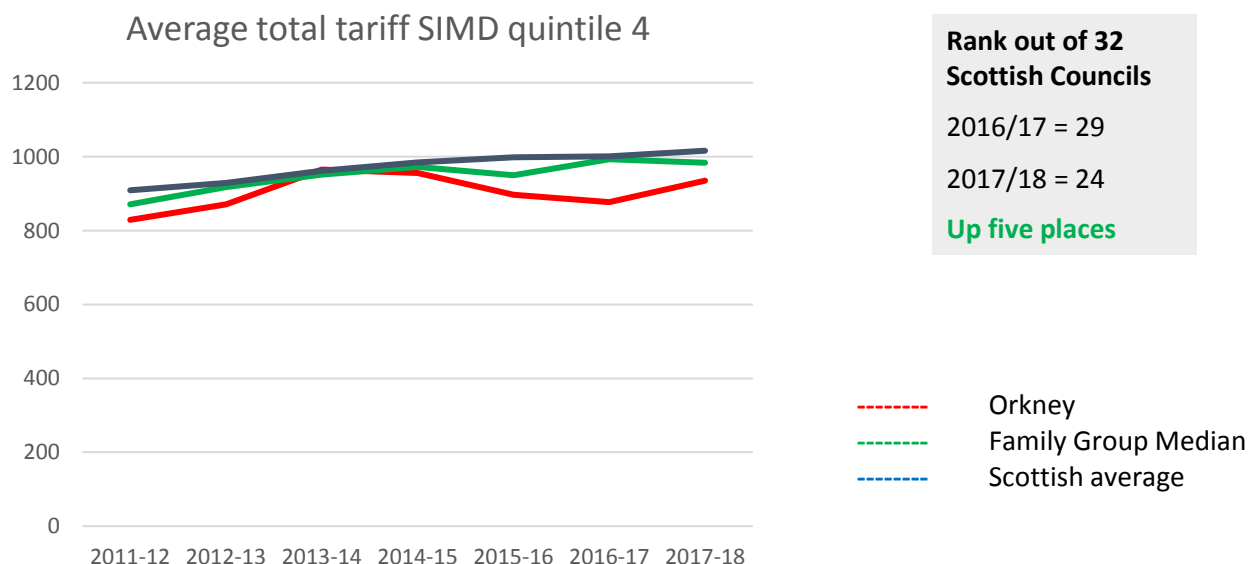
CHN12d – The average total tariff SIMD quintile 3

In 2017/18, the average total tariff for Orkney pupils in SIMD quintile 3 was 825, which is not as good as the 2016/17 figure of 1,109, or the 2017/18 Scottish average of 896.



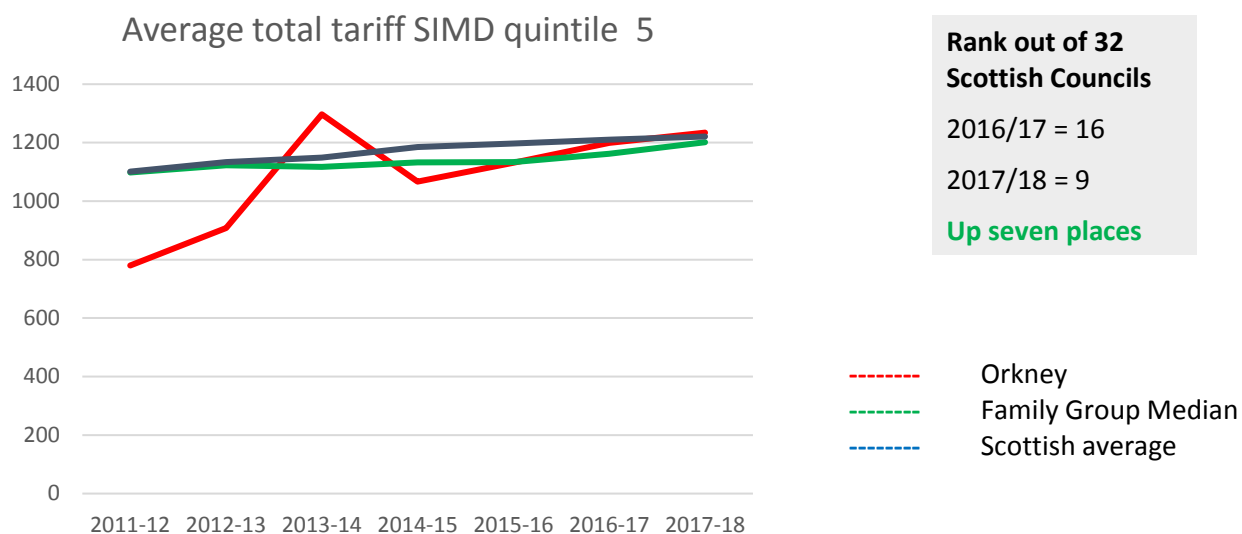
CHN12e – The average total tariff SIMD quintile 4

In 2017/18, the average total tariff for Orkney pupils in SIMD quintile 4 was 953, which was better than the 2016/17 figure of 877, but not as good as the 2017/18 Scottish average of 1,016.



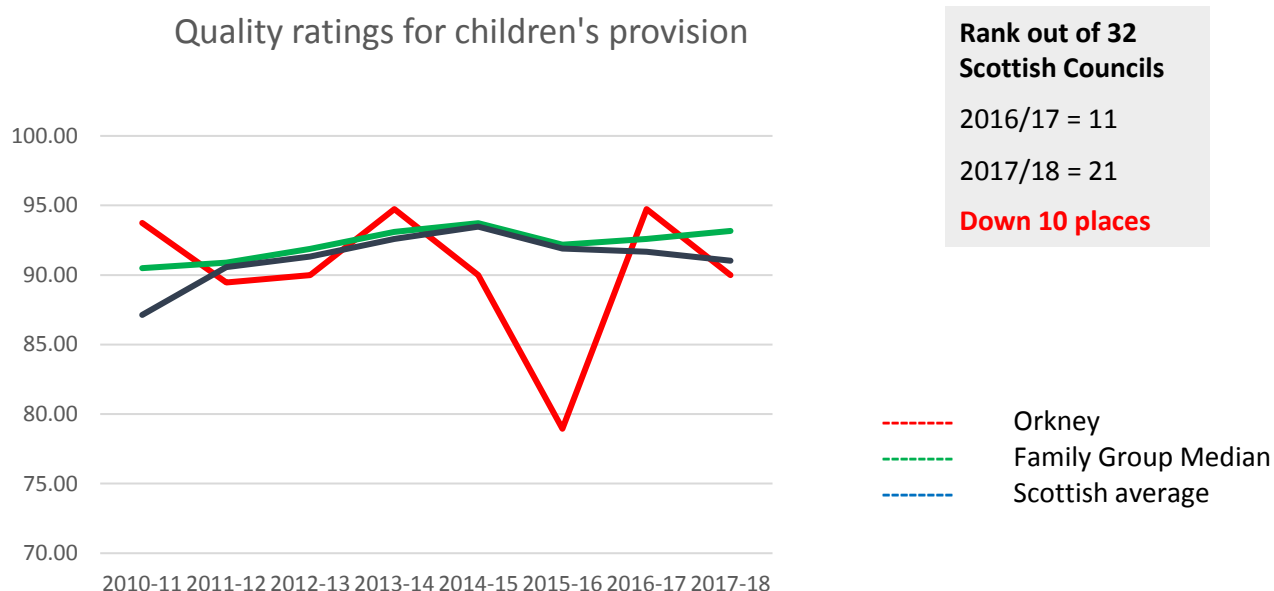
CHN12f – The average total tariff SIMD quintile 5

In 2017/18, the average total tariff for Orkney pupils in SIMD quintile 5 was 1,234, which was better than the 2016/17 figure of 1,199, and the 2017/18 Scottish average of 1,221.



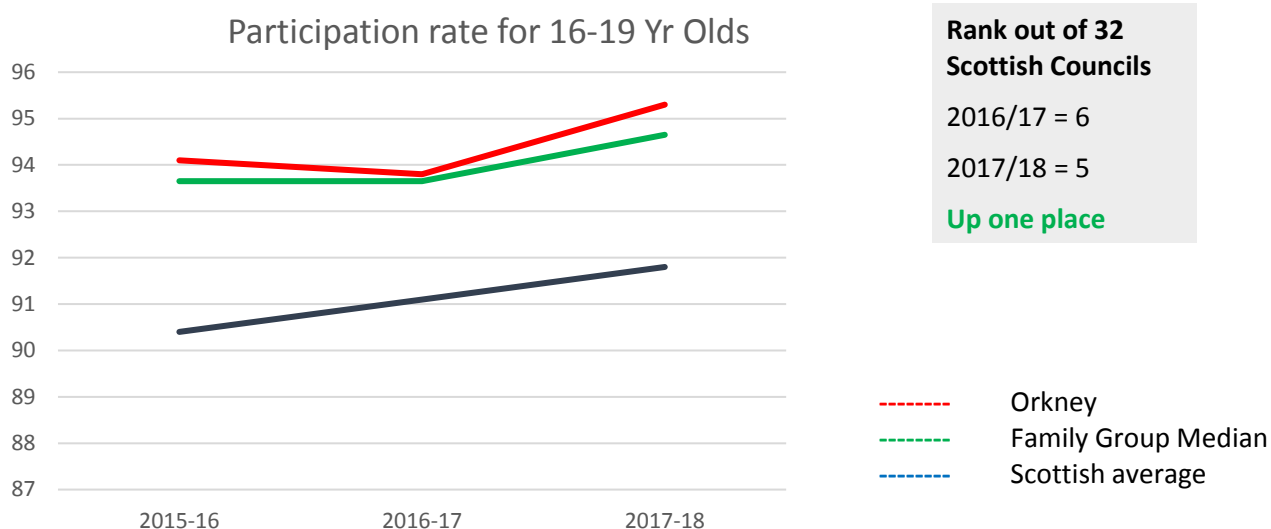
CHN18 – The percentage of early years provision which is graded good or better

In 2017/18, Orkney’s funded early years provision which was graded good or better was 90%, which is not as good as the 2016/17 figure of 94.74%, or the 2017/18 Scottish average of 91.03%.



CHN21 – Participation rates among 16 to 19-year-olds (per 100)

In 2017/18, participation in learning, training or work among Orkney’s 16 to 19-year-olds was 95.3%, which is better than the 2016/17 figure of 93.8%, and the 2017/18 Scottish average of 91.8%.

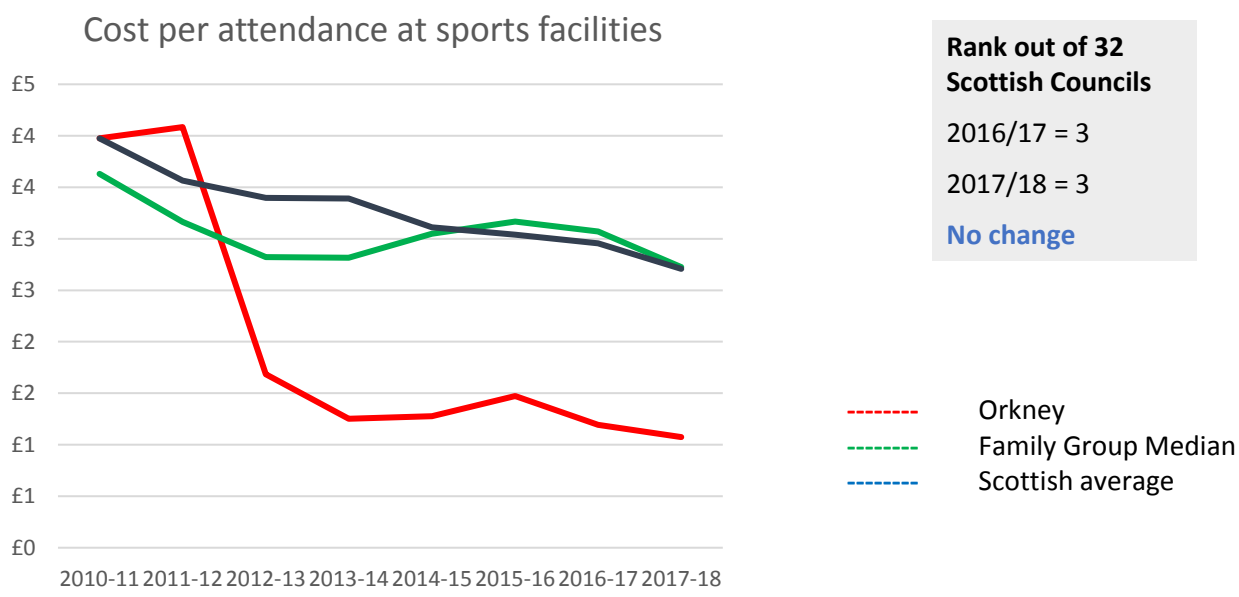


Rank out of 32 Scottish Councils
 2016/17 = 6
 2017/18 = 5
Up one place

CULTURE AND LEISURE SERVICES

C&L1 – Cost per attendance at sports facilities

In 2017/18, the cost per attendance at sports facilities in Orkney was £1.07, which is less than the 2016/17 figure of £1.19, and the 2017/18 Scottish average of £2.71.

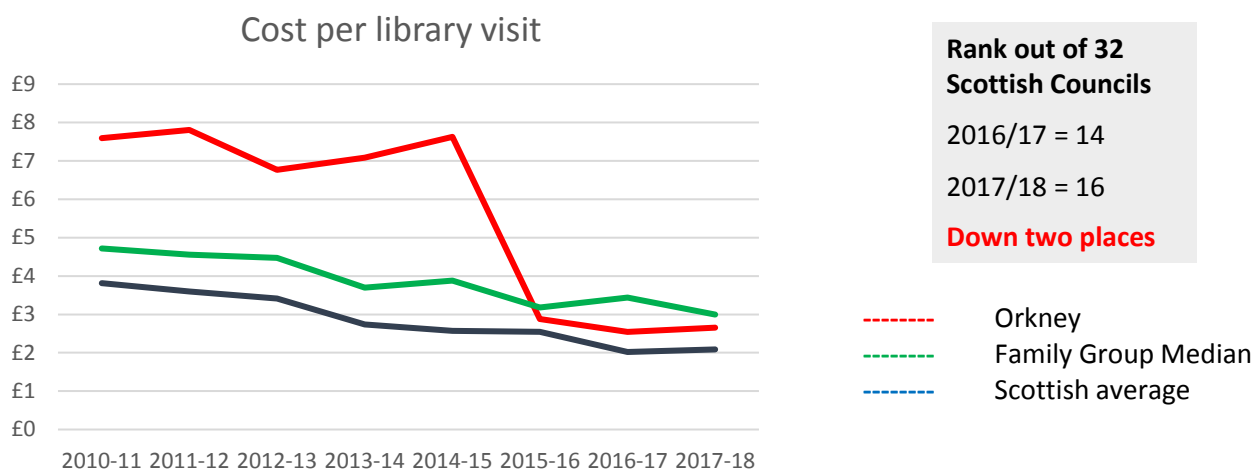


Rank out of 32 Scottish Councils
 2016/17 = 3
 2017/18 = 3
No change

C&L2 – Cost per library visit

In 2017/18, the cost per library visit in Orkney was £2.65, which is more than the 2016/17 figure of £2.54, and the 2017/18 Scottish average of £2.08.

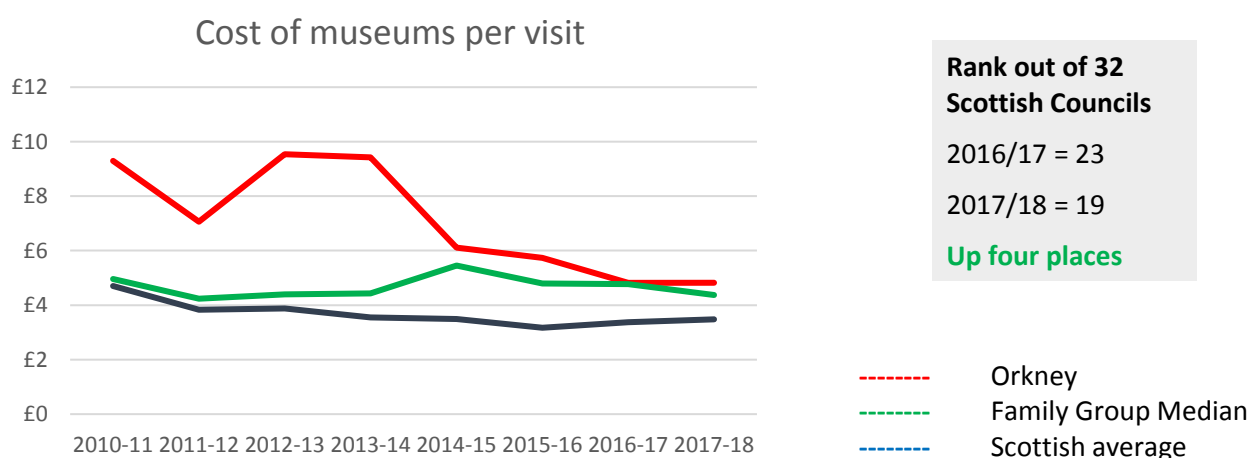
Our higher costs are due in part to our combined library and archive service, rather than just a library service, and in part to Orkney's lower population and hence lower number of library visits. However, the cost per visit is lower than in other remote and rural areas such as Shetland and the Western Isles.



C&L3 – Cost of museums per visit

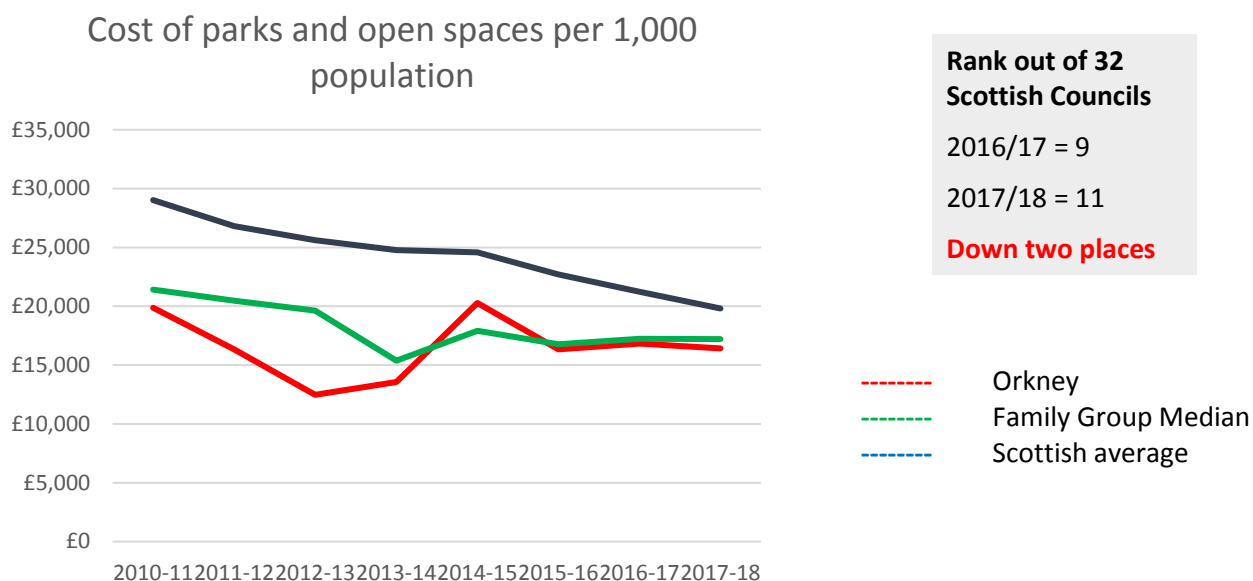
In 2017/18, the cost of museums per visit in Orkney was £4.82, which is the same as the 2016/17 figure, but more than the 2017/18 Scottish average of £3.49.

Our higher costs are due in part to Orkney's museums, with our small resident population, providing similar levels of service to some larger Scottish Mainland sites. Orkney's museums have seen visitor numbers at key sites increasing significantly as a result of volume tourism, which contributes towards reducing the cost per museum visit.



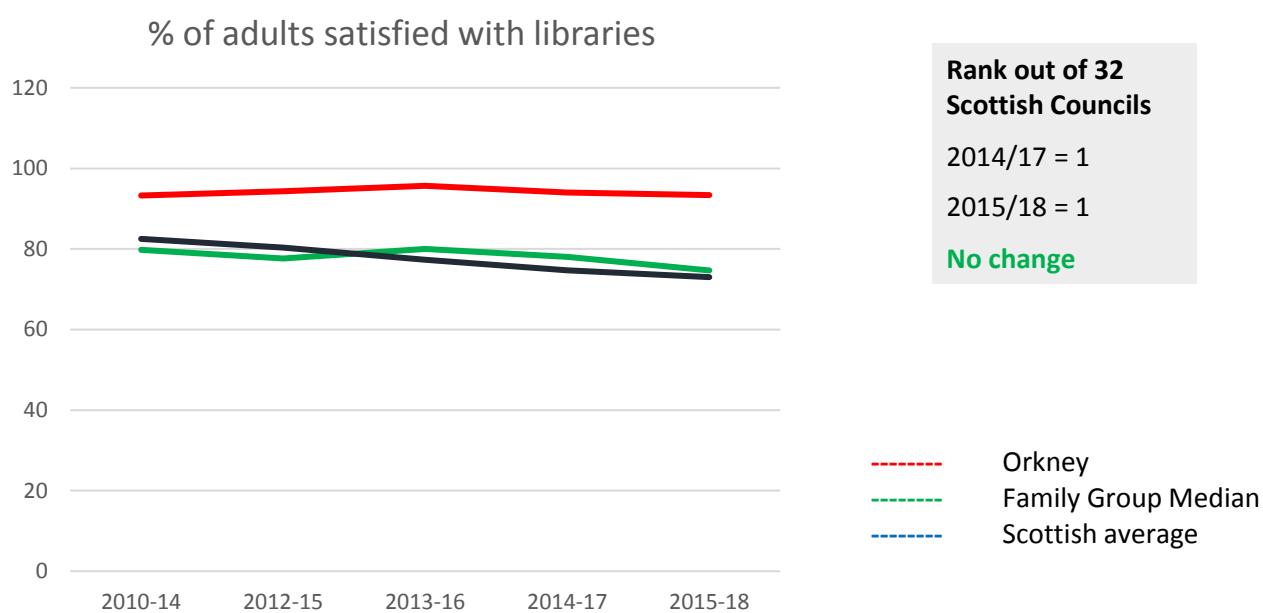
C&L4 – Cost of parks and open spaces per 1,000 population

In 2017/18, the cost of parks and open spaces per 1,000 population in Orkney was £16,409, which is less than the 2016/17 figure of £16,835, and the 2017/18 Scottish average of £19,814.



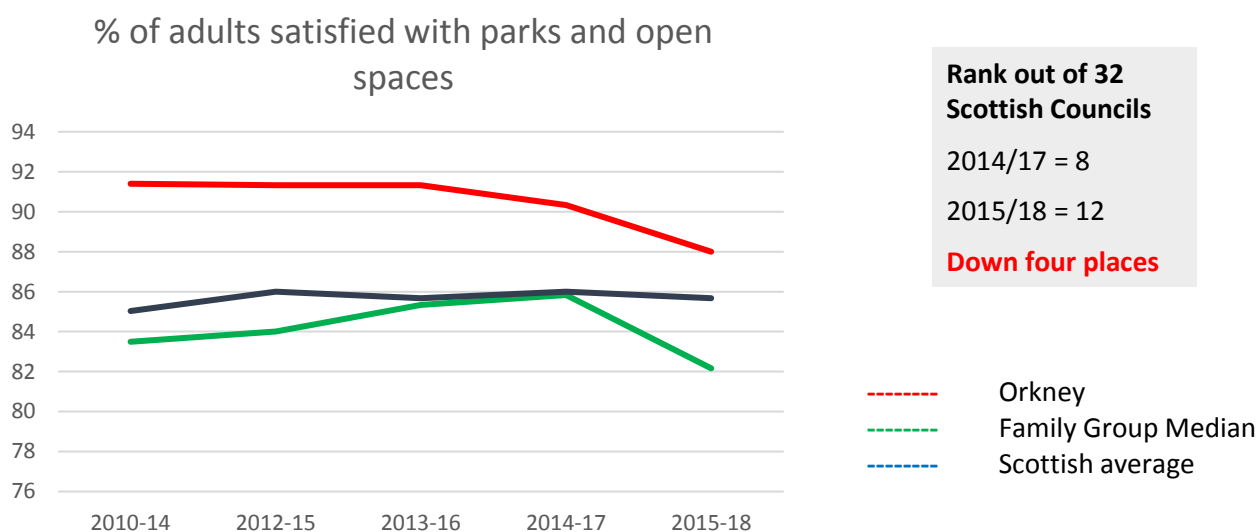
C&L5a – Percentage of adults satisfied with libraries

In 2015/18, 93.33% of adults in Orkney were satisfied with libraries, which is not quite as good as the 2014/17 figure of 94%, but better than the 2015/18 Scottish average of 73%.



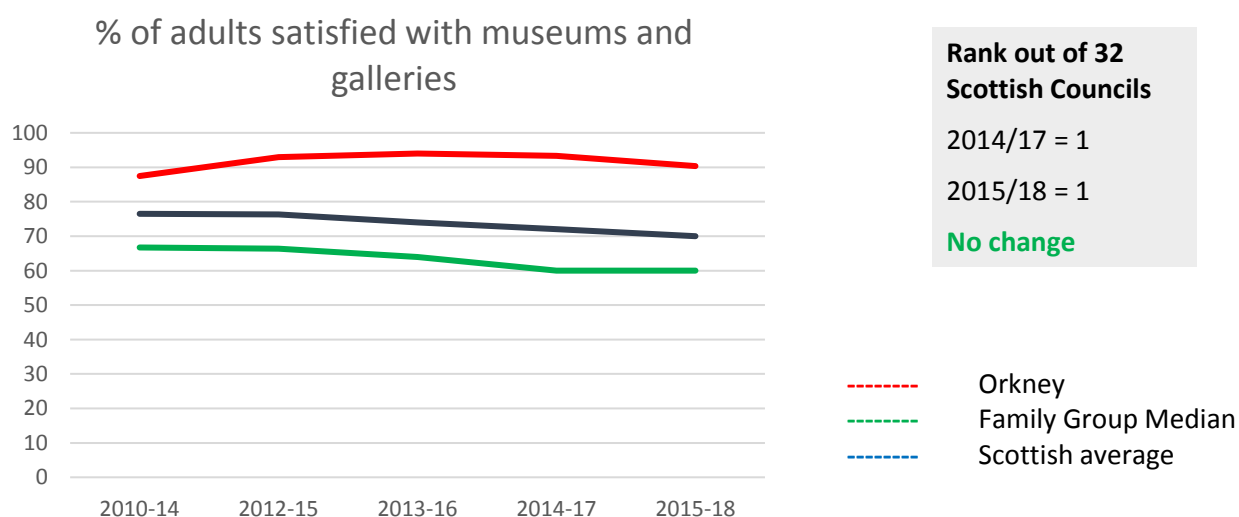
C&L5b – Percentage of adults satisfied with parks and open spaces

In 2015/2018, 88% of adults in Orkney were satisfied with parks and open spaces, which is not as good as the 2014/17 figure of 90.33%, but better than the 2015/18 Scottish average of 85.67%.



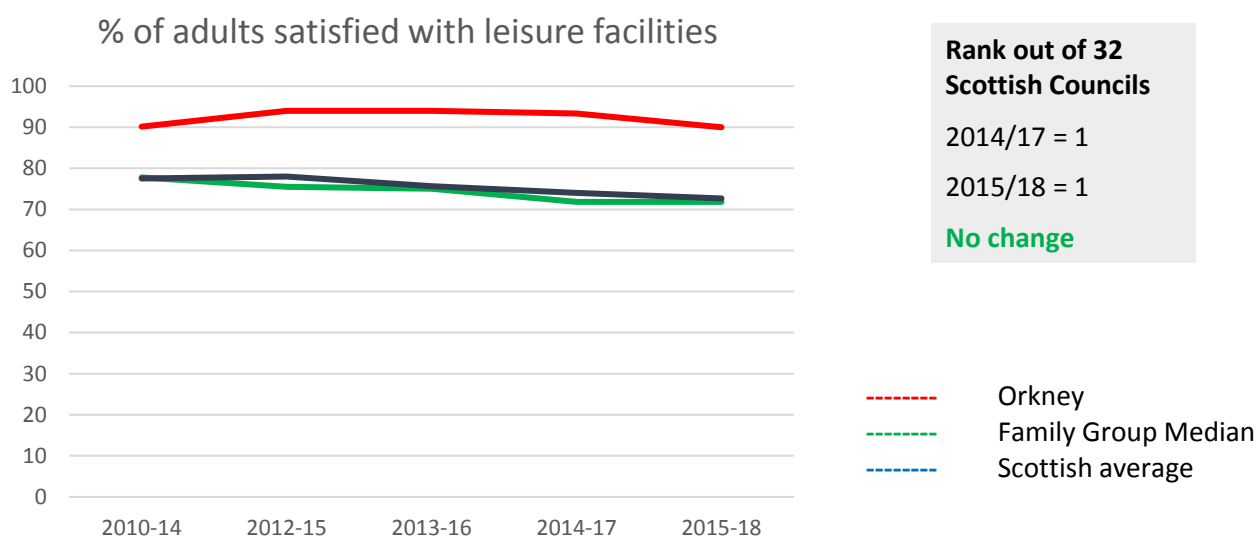
C&L5c – Percentage of adults satisfied with museums and galleries

In 2015/18, 90.33% of adults in Orkney were satisfied with museums and galleries, which is not as good as the 2014/17 figure of 93.33%, but better than the 2015/18 Scottish average of 70%.



C&L5d – Percentage of adults satisfied with leisure facilities

In 2015/18, 90% of adults in Orkney were satisfied with leisure facilities, which is not as good as the 2014/17 figure of 93.33%, but better than the 2015/18 Scottish average of 72.67%.

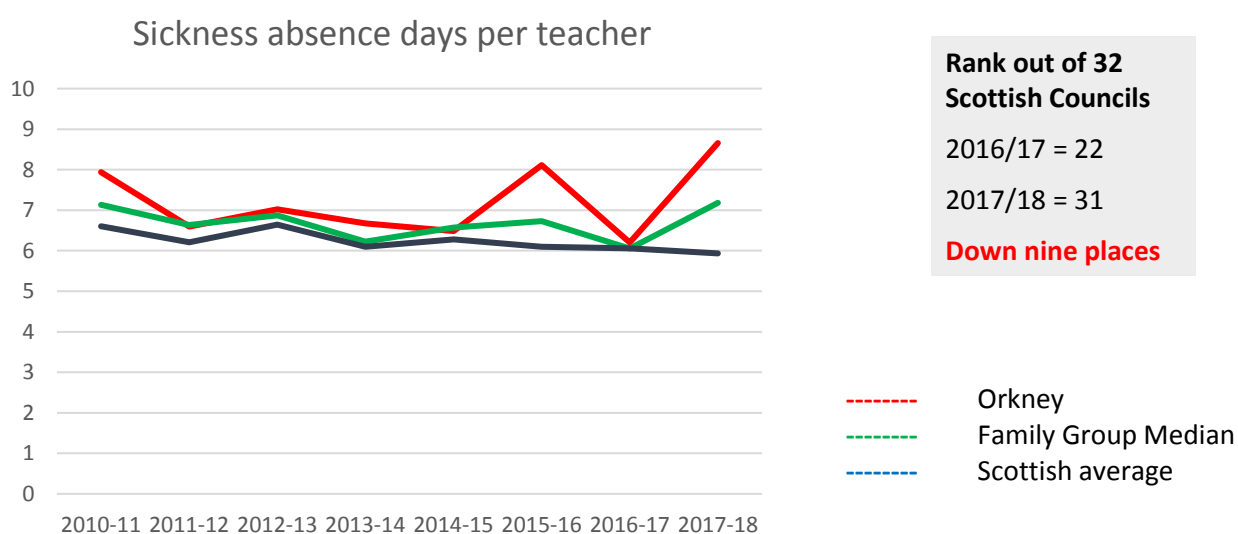


CORPORATE SERVICES

CORP6a – Sickness absence days per teacher

In 2017/18, an average of 8.66 days per teacher were lost due to sickness absence in Orkney, which is more than the 2016/17 figure of 6.2 days, and the 2017/18 Scottish average of 5.93 days.

Reducing the rate of sickness absence among our teaching staff is a priority for the Education Service, and the senior management together with Human Resources are leading a review of the reasons behind the higher rates reported and putting in place management actions to address this.

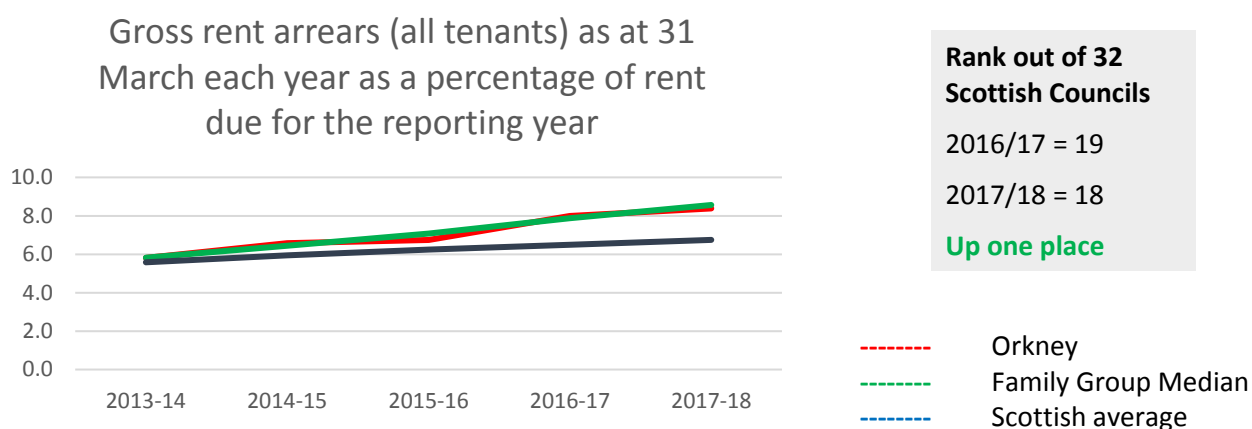


COUNCIL HOUSING

HSN1b – Gross rent arrears as at 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year

In 2017/18, the level of council house rent arrears was 8.38%, which is more than the 2016/17 figure of 7.99%, and the 2017/18 Scottish average of 6.75%.

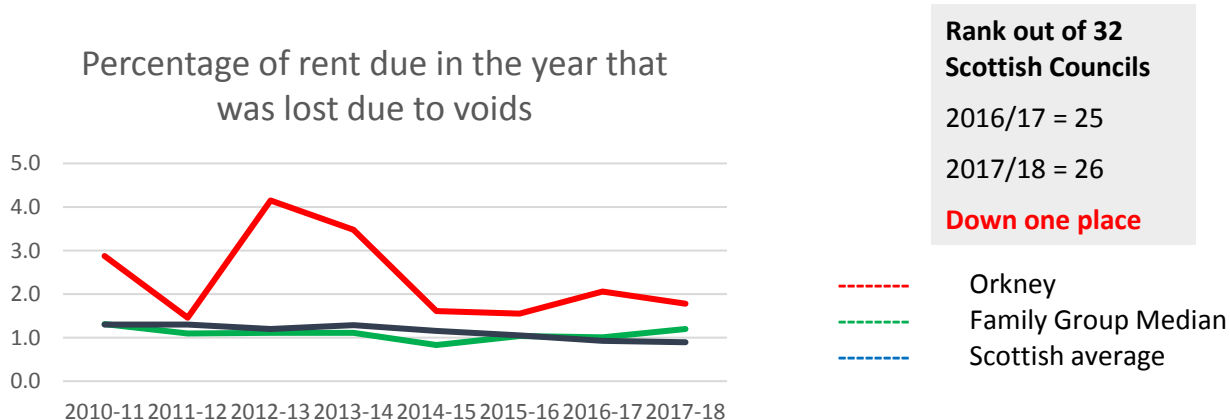
The figure includes both current and former tenant arrears both of which continue to be actively pursued. The Council continues to operate a prudent approach to writing off Council house tenant arrears making a commitment to collecting the debt rather than writing off debt.



HSN2 – Percentage of rent due in the year that was lost due to voids

In 2017/18, 1.78% of council house rent due was lost due to properties being unoccupied, which is less than the 2016/17 figure of 2.06%, but more than the 2017/18 Scottish average of 0.89%.

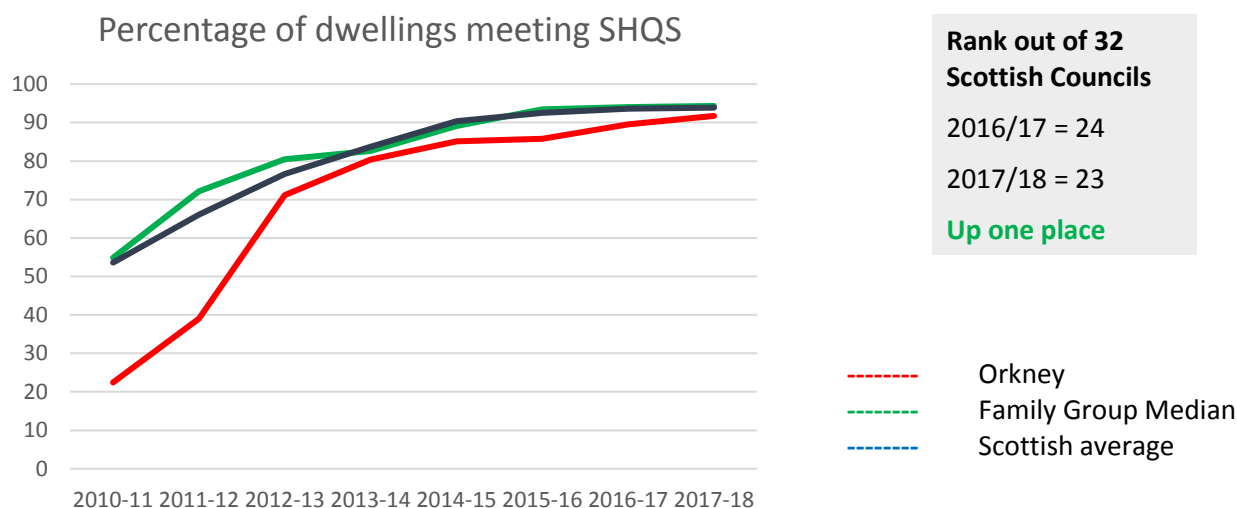
We continue to work closely with our maintenance contractors and have highlighted to them the need for improved performance. In addition, we continue to implement new systems to monitor and report on performance and have implemented a new asset management system linked to our main Measured Term Orkney's geography has an impact on our ability to let Council houses in some areas. The number of properties which are vacant in areas of low demand including some island areas, varies from year to year, where re-letting the properties may be challenging. In order to reduce the level of rent loss due to properties being unoccupied, we are currently introducing new procedures.



HSN3 – Percentage of dwellings meeting Scottish Housing Standards

In 2017/18, 91.75% of council housing in Orkney met the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, which is better than the 2016/17 figure of 89.51%, but not as good as the 2017/18 Scottish average of 93.89%.

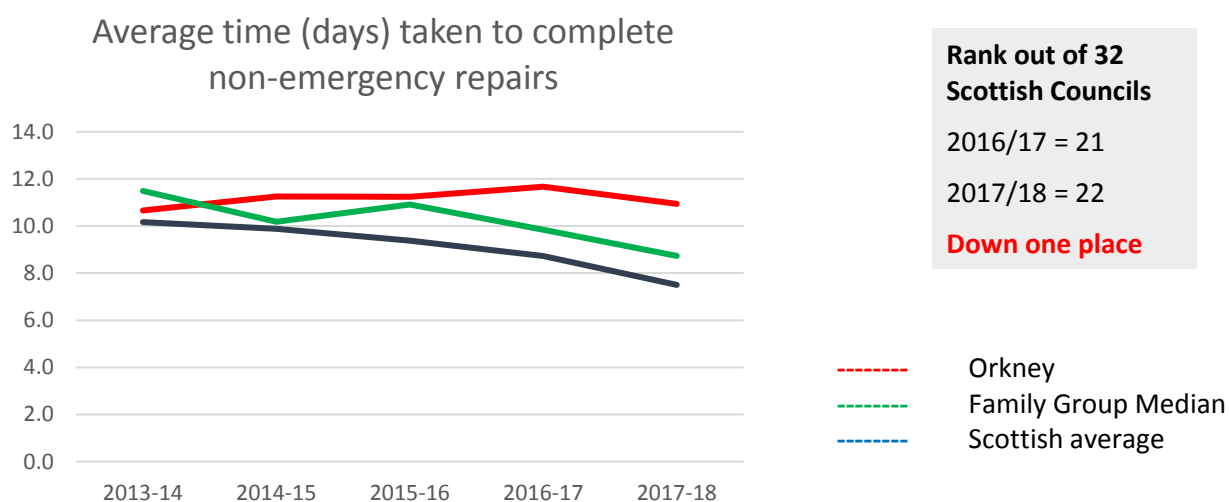
There has been an improvement in Scottish Housing Quality Standard passes in 2017/18. We will continue to undertake works to properties that are exempt or in abeyance when the opportunity arises.



HSN4b – Average number of days taken to complete non-emergency repairs

In 2017/18, it took an average of 10.94 days to complete non-emergency repairs to council housing in Orkney, which is better than the 2016/17 figure of 11.67 days, but not as good as the 2017/18 Scottish average of 7.5 days.

A contractor is to provide a more efficient system. While this will take a period to become fully established, in the longer term will provide a better service for our tenants.



HSN5 – Percentage of council dwellings that are energy efficient

In 2017/18, 94.15% of council houses in Orkney were energy efficient, which is better than the 2016/17 figure of 91.98%, but not as good as the 2017/18 Scottish average of 97.15%.

While progress is being made the main challenges are meeting the requirements for insulating traditional properties and installing appropriately efficient heating systems, since mains gas is not available. We have therefore focussed on a range of modern technologies to deliver the required standards.

