



Surveillance as a Strategic Lever in Immunisation Planning.

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Introduction

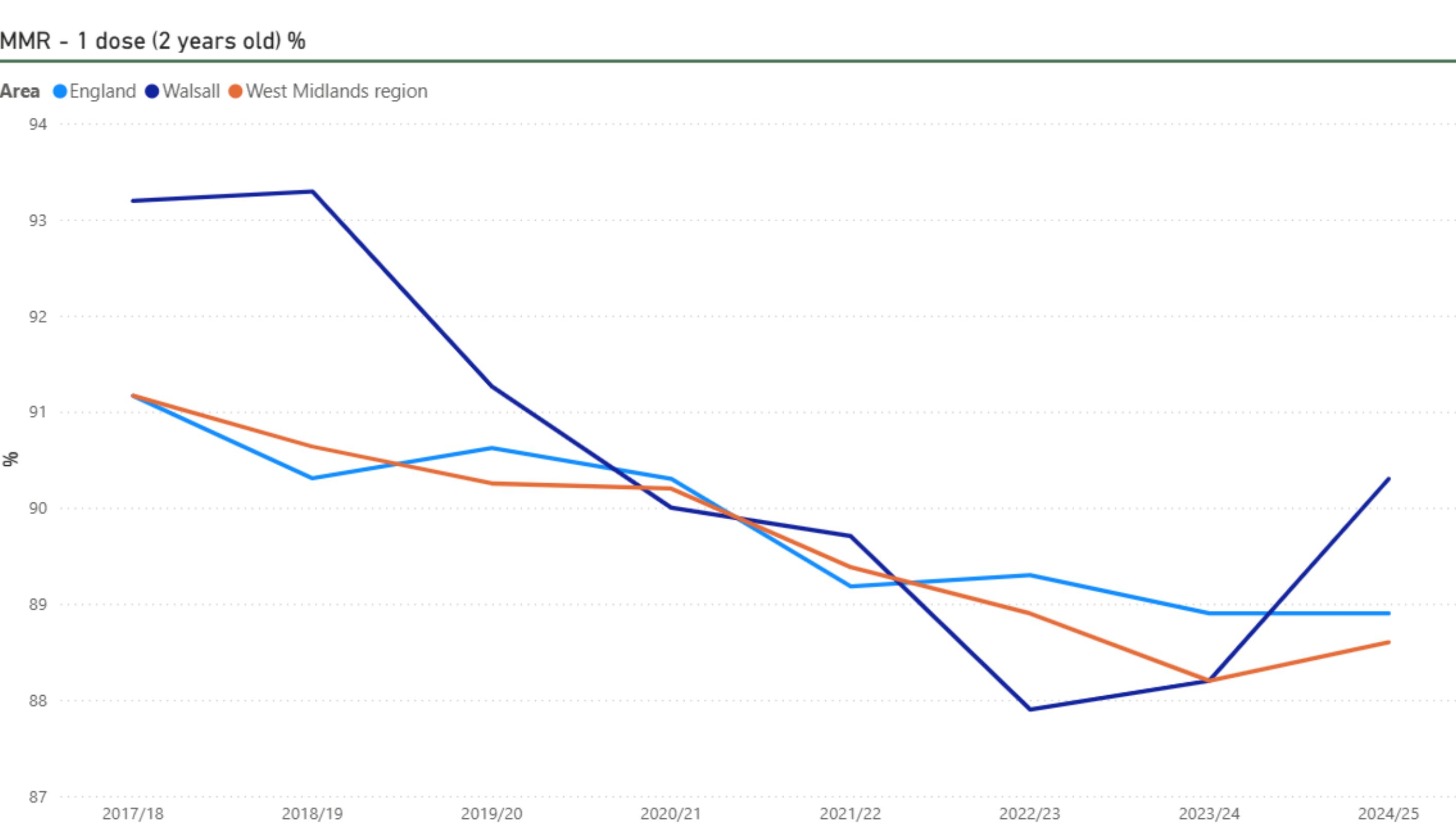
Particularly as health systems brace for seasonal surges in the incidence of communicable diseases, timely surveillance of local immunisation uptake and coverage data is emerging as a critical asset in shaping health service planning. In Walsall, the integration of immunisation intelligence, spanning MMR, DTaP, flu, pertussis, and COVID, has informed targeted interventions across primary care, maternity services, and community outreach. The Walsall Immunisation Support Group has been instrumental in coordinating efforts across NHS commissioners, providers, and local authority teams, using surveillance dashboards developed by Walsall Council's Business Insights team to visualise uptake trends at locality and practice level.

Acronyms

- MMR – Measles, Mumps and Rubella
- DTaP – Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
- IPV – Polio (inactivated polio vaccine)
- Hib – Haemophilus influenza (childhood meningitis and pneumonia)
- HepB – Hepatitis B

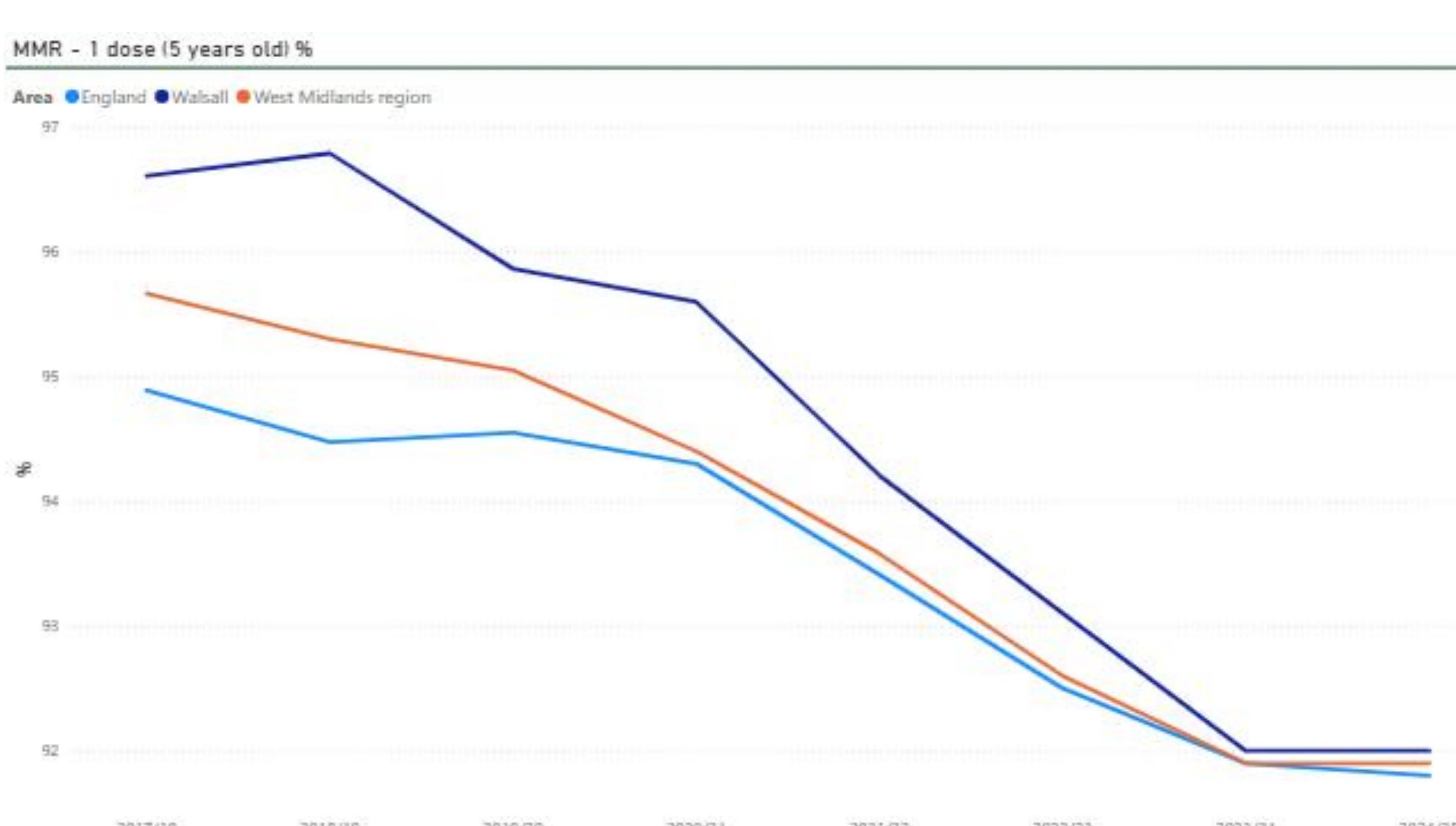
Results

Figure 1. MMR 1 Dose (2 year old) %.



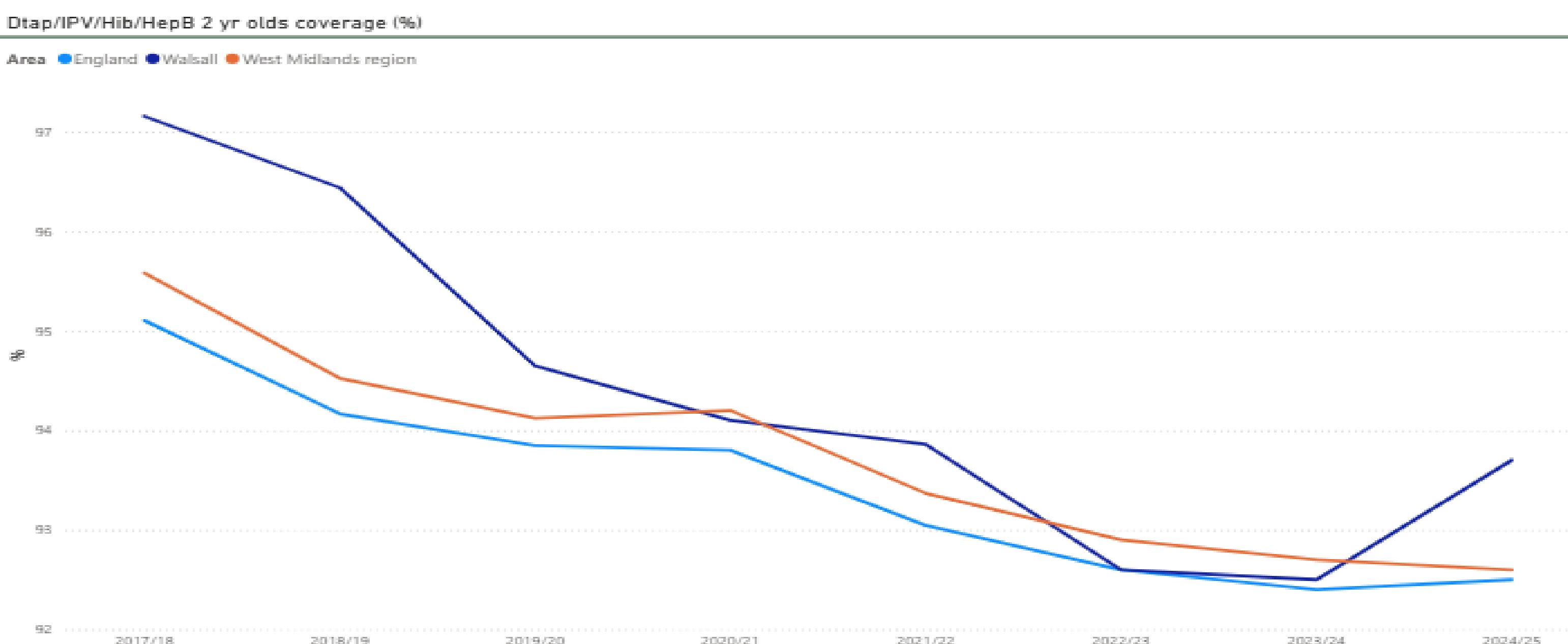
- Walsall consistently outperformed both the regional and national averages for most years, with its coverage peaking at 93.3% in 2017/18 and remaining above 90% until 2021/22.
- A gradual decline in vaccination rates is observed across all areas from 2017/18 to 2023/24. Walsall's rate dropped from 93.2% to 88.2% over this period, while England and West Midlands region also saw decreases, though their rates remained closely aligned and slightly lower than Walsall's for most years.
- In 2022/23 and 2023/24, the gap between Walsall and the other areas narrowed significantly, with all three areas converging around 88-89%. Notably, Walsall's rate rebounded to 90.3% in 2024/25, surpassing both England and West Midlands region again.

Figure 2. MMR 1 Dose (5 years old) %.



- From 2017/18 to 2024/25, the percentage of 5-year-olds receiving the first dose of the MMR vaccine has declined across all areas shown. Walsall consistently maintained higher coverage rates compared to both the West Midlands region and England overall throughout the period. The decline is gradual but persistent. For example, Walsall's coverage dropped from 96.6% in 2017/18 to 92% in 2024/25, while England's rate decreased from 94.9% to 91.8% over the same period. The West Midlands region followed a similar trend, ending at 91.9% in 2024/25.

Figure 3. Dtap/IPV/Hib/HepB 2 yr olds coverage (%)



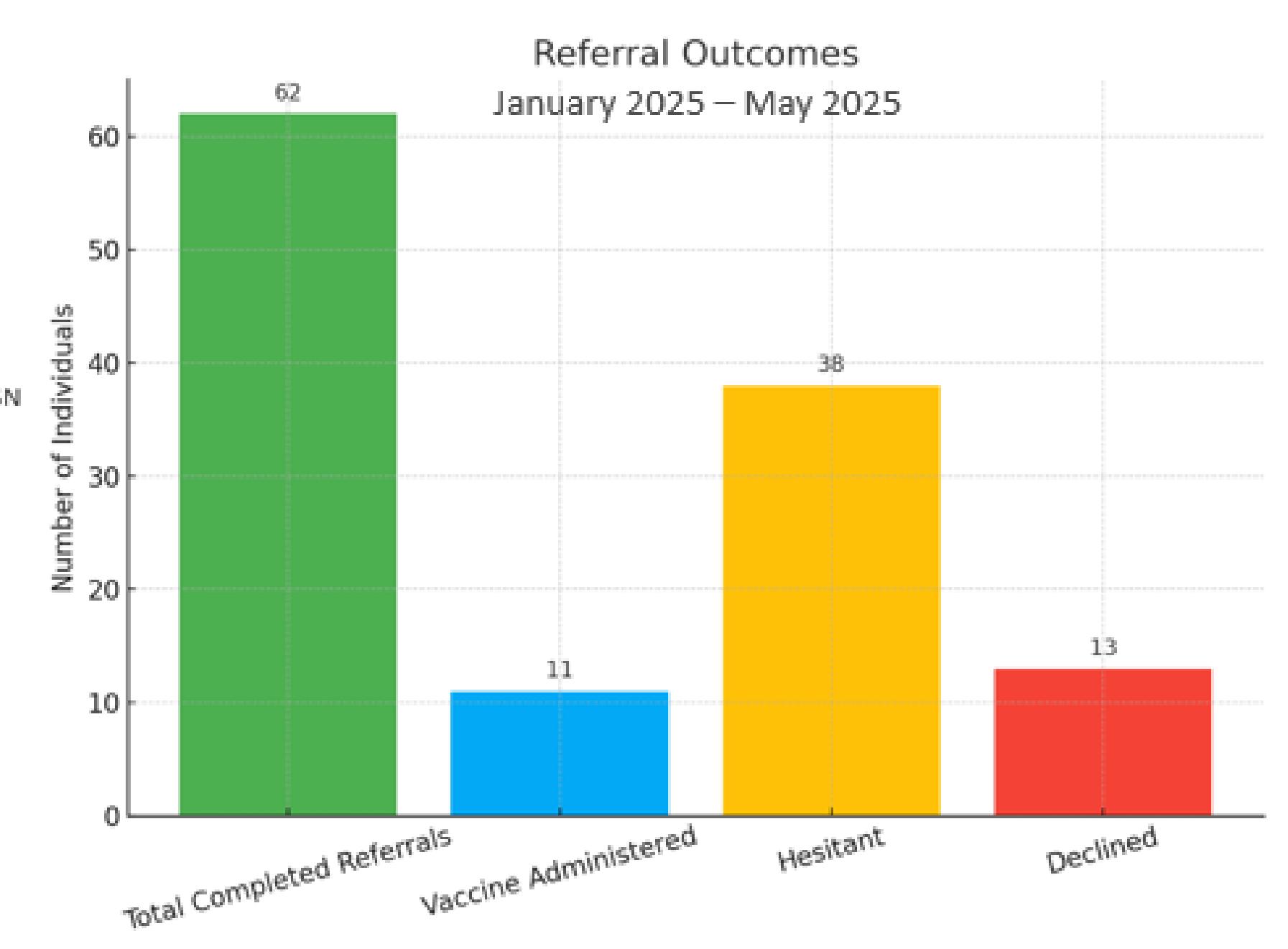
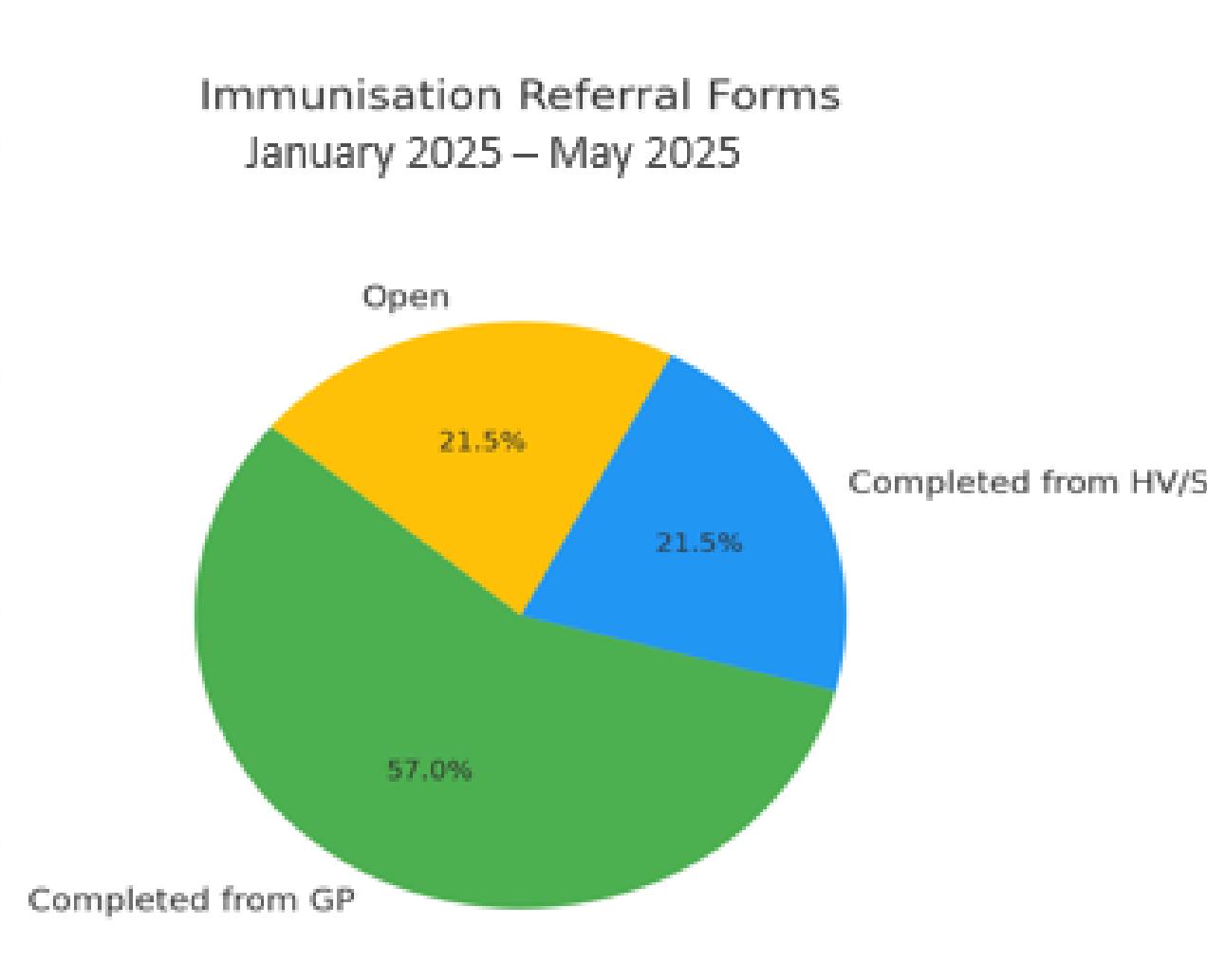
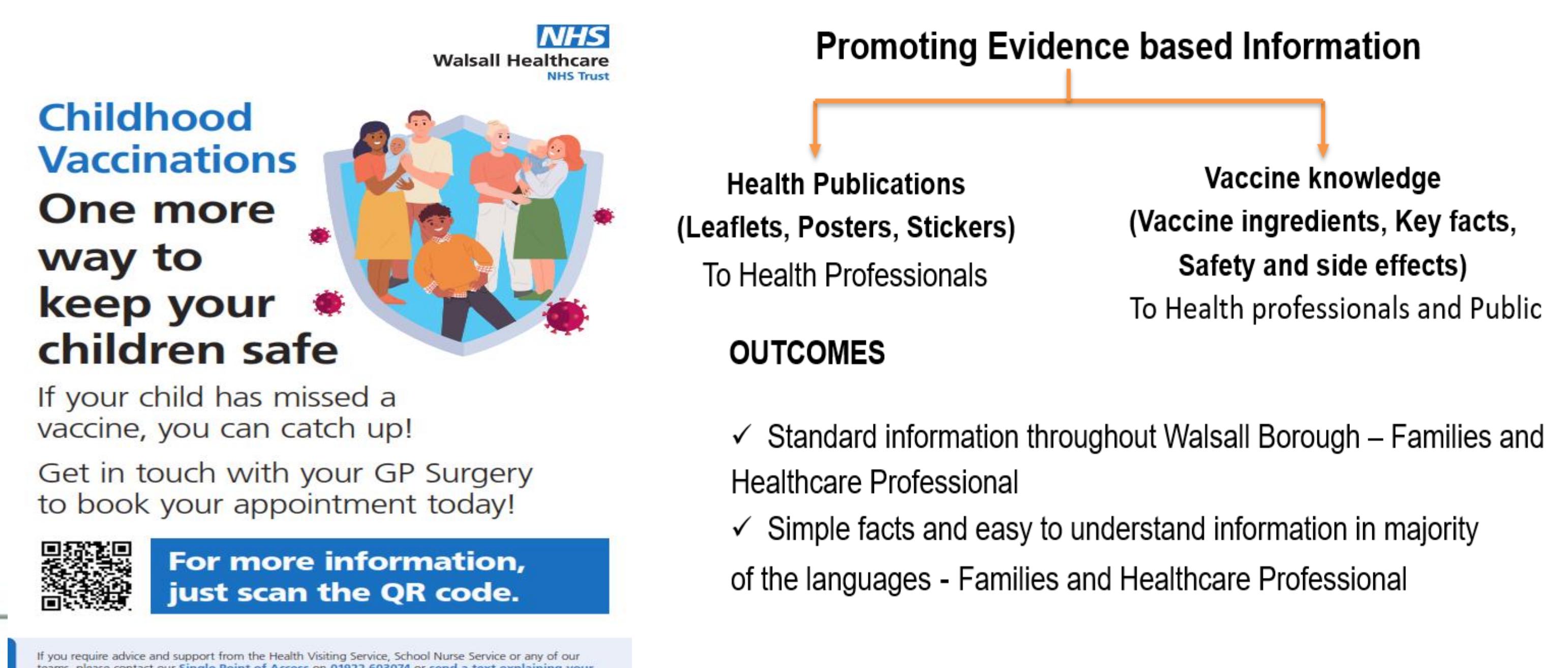
- Coverage rates for the Dtap/IPV/Hib/HepB vaccine among 2-year-olds have shown a gradual decline across all areas from 2017/18 to 2023/24, with a slight uptick in 2024/25. Walsall consistently maintained higher coverage than both England and the West Midlands region throughout the period.
- Walsall started at 97.2% in 2017/18 and, despite the overall downward trend, ended at 93.7% in 2024/25. England's coverage decreased from 95.1% to 92.5%, while the West Midlands region moved from 95.6% to 92.6% over the same period.
- Walsall had the highest total and average coverage values among the three areas, indicating stronger immunization uptake. The most notable pattern is the persistent, gradual decline in coverage, with no sharp drops or spikes observed.
- The gap between Walsall and the other areas narrowed slightly over time, but Walsall remained the leader in coverage rates throughout the observed years.

A Vaccination Initiative in Walsall

As part of ongoing public health initiatives, Walsall Council Public Health has collaborated with the Healthy Child Programme to introduce the specialist role of Immunisation Senior Worker, who focuses on improving vaccination uptake and reducing health inequalities across the borough by; Promoting vaccination awareness and reinforcing evidence-based information across the community

- Supporting PCNs, schools, and nurseries in areas of lowest vaccine uptake, with a focus on MMR and DTaP, and other routine childhood immunisations
- Supporting vulnerable communities and new entrants through targeted engagement.

These initiatives have contributed to maintaining a steady improvement in vaccination uptake across Walsall and enhanced preparedness against vaccine-preventable diseases.



Supporting Vaccine Uptake

- Data-Led Targeting.
- Referral pathways have been introduced - EMIS-based standard referral form.
- A dedicated immunisation team email address - wht.immunisation@nhs.net
- A Direct liaison with practice nurses/GP, health visiting/ school nursing teams, and locality hubs.
- Direct Family Engagement and Support.

Side effects Concerns

- Non-verbal child communication concerns – 2 cases
- Concerns about blood-brain barrier – 1 case
- Misconceptions about outdated vaccines – 4 cases
- ADHD/Autism-related hesitancy – 6 cases
- Family history of genetic conditions – 1 case
- Nasal flu vaccine reaction (nosebleed) – 1 case
- Swelling in hands following vaccination – 1 case
- Refusal of combined 6-in-1 or 4-in-1 vaccines – 3 cases