



Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Date Monday 8 April 2024
Time 9.30 am
Venue Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham

Business

Part A

Items which are open to the Public and Press
Members of the public can ask questions with the Chair's agreement,
and if registered to speak.

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Substitute Members
- 3 Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2024 (Pages 3 - 10)
- 4 Declarations of Interest
- 5 County Durham Partnership Update - Report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change (Pages 11 - 42)
- 6 2023-24 Q3 Resources Revenue and Capital Budget - Report of the Corporate Director of Resources (Pages 43 - 54)
- 7 2023-24 Q3 Chief Executive's Revenue and Capital Budget - Report of the Corporate Director of Resources (Pages 55 - 64)
- 8 Q3 Performance Management Report - Report of the Chief Executive (Pages 65 - 238)
- 9 Appointment of Non-Statutory, Non-voting Co-optees to Overview and Scrutiny Committees - Report of the Corporate Director of Resources (Pages 239 - 248)

- 10 Update in relation to Petitions - Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Pages 249 - 254)
- 11 Notice of Key Decisions - Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Pages 255 - 264)
- 12 Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

Helen Bradley
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
27 March 2024

To: **The Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board:**

Councillor R Crute (Chair)
Councillor C Lines (Vice-Chair)

Councillors V Andrews, A Batey, J Charlton, J Cosslett, B Coult, S Deinali, J Elmer, K Hawley, P Heaviside, L Hovvels, M Johnson, P Jopling, L Maddison, C Marshall, C Martin, J Miller, B Moist, E Peeke, A Reed, K Shaw, M Stead, A Sterling, A Surtees and R Yorke

Contact: Jackie Graham Tel: 03000 269 704

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 15 February 2024 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor R Crute (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors V Andrews, A Batey, J Blakey (Substitute) (substitute for A Reed), J Cosslett, B Coult, S Deinali, J Elmer, P Heaviside, L Hovvels, M Johnson, C Lines (Vice-Chair), C Marshall, C Martin, J Miller, B Moist, E Peeke, K Shaw, M Stead, A Surtees, D Sutton-Lloyd (Substitute) (substitute for P Jopling) and A Watson (Substitute) (substitute for J Charlton)

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Charlton, P Jopling, A Reed, A Stirling and R Yorke.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor A Watson as substitute Member for Councillor J Charlton, Councillor D Sutton-Lloyd as substitute Member for Councillor P Jopling and Councillor J Blakey as substitute Member for Councillor A Reed.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2024 were conformed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred to Paragraph 3 on Page 8 of the Minutes regarding student accommodation business rates.

Councillor Stead referenced making representations to government on this issue and for clarification this had already been done following a debate in Council, following which a letter was sent to the Secretary of State by the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council. The minute should therefore read in the past tense rather than the present tense.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Report on the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 - Quarter 3 - 2023/2024

The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which provided information about the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 during the period 1 October 2023 and 31 December 2023 to ensure that it was being used consistently with the Council's policy and that the policy remained fit for purpose (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

- (i) That the quarterly report on the Council's use of RIPA for the period covering quarter 3 2023/2024 be received.
- (ii) That the powers were being used consistently with the Council's policy and that the policy remained fit for purpose.

6 Medium Term Financial Plan (14) 2024/25 to 2027/28 and Revenue and Capital Budget 2024/25

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided an update on the development of the Budget 2024/25 and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) (14) 2024/25 to 2027/28 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Attached to the report was a report considered by Cabinet on 14 February 2024 Cabinet report which provided comprehensive financial information to enable Cabinet to agree the 2024/25 balanced revenue budget, an outline Medium Term Financial Plan MTFP(14) 2024/25 to 2027/28 and a fully funded capital programme to be recommended to Council on 28 February 2024.

The Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services provided the Board with an update to the information presented to the meeting held on 23 January 2024.

Following intense lobbying on 24 January 2024 the Government announced an additional £600m of funding to be made available in 2024/25. The £600 million included an additional £500 million allocation to the Social Care Grant, £15 million for the Rural Services Delivery Grant and a forecast £85 million for an increase in the Funding Guarantee from 3% to 4%. Durham County Council would only benefit from the increase in the Social Care Grant and was forecast to receive an additional £5.880 million in 2024/25, beyond the

sums announced in the provisional local government settlement. Although this additional sum was welcome and had reduced the reliance on reserves to balance the budget next year to £3.720 million, the council still faced significant uncertainty and pressure on the revenue budget beyond 2024/25, which also reduced its capacity to invest in the capital programme.

The new additional funding came with some conditions. Local authorities were to be requested to produce productivity plans which would set out how they would improve service performance and ensure every area was making best use of taxpayers' money. The Government would monitor these plans, and funding settlements in future years would be informed by performance against these plans. The Government was to establish an expert panel to advise the Government on financial sustainability in the sector which would include the Office for Local Government and the Local Government Association. No further information on these requirements was currently available.

The Final Local Government Finance Settlement was announced on 5 February 2024 and this confirmed that the majority of government grant funding would be in line with the provisional settlement but there was an announcement of an increase in the Services Grant of £10.5 million with Durham County Council receiving an additional £0.078 million. The increase in Services Grant resulted from less funding being required for the Funding Guarantee than was previously forecast.

In addition to the recovery of £10 million use of the Medium Term Financial Plan Support Reserve to balance the 2023/24 budget, there was provision for £51.8 million of unavoidable base budget pressures in 2024/25, resulting from pay and price inflation (£14.9 million) – including £3.7 million to offset the 2023/24 pay award shortfall; increased costs of children's services (£12 million) and adults' social care (£12.6 million); increased Home to School Transport (£2.5 Page 24 million); expenditure in relation to specific grants (£2.9 million), additional demand / income loss pressures in service groupings (£4.8 million), the impact of a loss of housing benefit subsidy linked to temporary accommodation and supported housing (£2.6 million); a loss of investment income as cash balances continue to decline (£1.1 million); offset by a saving from a review of the council's minimum revenue provision policy (£0.7 million) and savings from a reduction in the general contingency budget and the unwinding of the impact of the pandemic grant funding in the collection fund (£1 million).

New additional MTFP(14) capital schemes were proposed for the period 2024/25 to 2025/26 which totalled £90.003 million. These proposals also produced a pre commitment of £2.880 million for 2026/27 taking total additional capital schemes to £92.883 million. This resulted in total investment from 2024/25 to 2027/28 being £513.656 million.

Capital investments in MTFP(14) included the MTFP(13) pre commitment of £10 million to bring the Greenfield School scheme budget to over £20 million, investment of the £14.8 million Local Transport Plan (LTP) government grant in highways maintenance, supplemented with an additional £5 million from the council; additional funding of £7.5 million provided to fund the forecast £10 million demolition of County Hall, a 23% increase in the Leisure Transformation Programme, with a further £10 million of capital investment added to the £43.2 million of budget already made available, a £5 million budget to repair bridges and structures across the county and an additional £2 million allocation for building investment to enable the council to meet its Net Zero targets.

A range of savings options were presented to Cabinet on 12 July and 11 October 2023 and subject to consultation which if implemented could help support balancing budgets across the MTFP(14) period. These were augmented with further savings totalling £0.910 million that had been developed subsequently and included in the Cabinet report on 17 January 2024. Additional savings of £0.119 million were also included in this report. After taking into account the feedback in the consultation alongside the addition of the further savings considered in the January report and this report, the savings recommended for approval were £8.083 million for 2024/25 with £16.360 million across the MTFP(14) period.

A 2.99% increase in relation to the base council tax referendum limit and a necessary increase in the adult social care precept of 2.0% in 2024/25 was proposed to help meet the significant cost pressures in the budget, giving a total overall increase of 4.99% which was expected by the Government as part of their Core Spending Power calculations and assumptions.

Although savings of £8.083 million were recommended for 2024/25 and a 4.99% council tax increase was proposed, there would still be a requirement to utilise £3.720 million of the MTFP Support Reserve to balance the 2024/25 budget. The use of the MTFP Support Reserve could only be a short-term solution to buy time to develop sustainable base budget savings to balance the 2025/26 budget, where the council faced a significant challenge and would be required to deliver £16.789 million of further savings that year based on the budget forecasts, which will be a significant challenge for the council.

Councillor Crute thanked the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services for his update report. Councillor Crute expressed disappointment that the government had opted to utilise their £20bn of 'fiscal headroom' to provide tax cuts and provide business incentives to stimulate the economy rather than provide improved local government settlements. The additional £600m of funding announced by government on 24 January 2024 while

welcomed was nowhere near enough to recognise the cost pressures facing local government. Durham County Council would not qualify for any of the additional funding of £15m for the Rural Services Delivery Grant. Additionally, there was concern that the future 1% uplift may be less. Comments made by the Board would be reported to Council on 28 February and those comments previously made by the Board remained relevant.

Councillor Watson referred to the cap on a 5% Council tax increase which was the maximum permissible without a referendum. Councillor Crute clarified that this comprised an increase of 2.99% to core council tax and a 2% increase for social care. Although councils were permitted to increase council tax by more than this rate this would require a referendum at a considerable cost to local councils. Additionally, such an increase would also place considerable burden on council tax payers at a time when many were experiencing financial difficulties.

Councillor Surtees expressed concern at how the County Council would take the hit of the imposed cuts. She referred to the future of the household support fund on which no decision had yet been made and if this was cut then the perception would be that it was a county council decision rather than government decision, which would bring with it reputational damage. Councillor Surtees also expressed concern about future funding for welfare rights, welfare assistance and the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which if cut, would start to lose the community focus element of the council.

Councillor Moist referred to the capital programme which had massively increased and needed to be re-examined. There had been additional costs of £5m for the DLI project, £7.6m for the bus station/ The Story. Leisure revenue was decreasing. While the proposed new leisure centres for Seaham and Chester le Street had been halted, the one for Woodhouse Close was proceeding, which Councillor Moist considered to be a political decision. There was a need for Members to put politics to one side and do what was right. Councillor Moist considered that Cabinet should be strongly advised to make savings in the capital programme.

Councillor Deinali expressed concern at pressures on the budget in children's services. New legislation had been introduced for early years but there was a lack of provision and recruitment. There was a significant and increasing High Needs budget deficit position which was a serious concern for the council and many other local authorities. The exceptional accounting override that allowed councils to exclude these deficits from their main council general revenue funding position was due to end in 2025/26, at which point the deficit may need to be funded by council resources requiring a significant call on reserves and further annual budget pressures that were not factored into the current MTFP(14) forecasts.

Councillor A Batey referred to the leisure transformation programme and noted that an additional £10 million capital investment had been identified in 2025/26 and ring fenced to Seaham and Chester le Street. Councillor Batey expressed her frustration at the ongoing delay in the leisure transformation programme report being considered by Cabinet and also by Overview and Scrutiny. The Council had recently agreed its joint health and well-being strategy and one of the key priorities within that was the importance of promoting health and well-being and physical activity and Councillor Batey questioned how these elements of this strategy could be delivered against given continued delays in the leisure transformation programme. Councillor Batey referred to the financial allocation the DLI project and suggested that funding should be concentrated on more immediate priorities. Councillor Batey considered that decisions made on leisure centres had been done so on political grounds.

Councillor Batey referred to the establishment of a Culture Trust and asked how the operation of this Trust including the benefits to be delivered by way of the availability of increased funding streams could be examined by scrutiny.

Councillor Marshall considered that the underlying problem was that the funding formula was not working. The impact of this and other cuts were the root causes of poverty in County Durham. The Council must cut its cloth to suit and had good financial management but over the last three years the Cabinet and Council had made the financial position worse. The council had borrowed more and spent more than it could afford and had poured more money into the capital programme. In the last three years the council had used more of its reserves than any similar sized authority. Councillor Marshall believed that the current administration was saddling the Council with debt for the future. The proposed budget contained unfunded projects which would make future budget decisions more difficult.

Councillor Marshall referred to spending on leisure centres and considered this had been done on a political basis. Abbey Sports Centre refurbishment had been delivered first and the second project was in Teesdale. However, in his opinion, a vote for the budget would be a vote for new no leisure centre for Chester le Street.

Councillor Marshall referred to the new HQ building at The Sands which was a project delivered by the previous administration and which was an invest to save project. The building was completed and sold to the University by the current administration for a sum of £70m and Councillor Marshall asked where this money had gone. The new HQ building would have brought with it significant revenue savings and this was an example of a decision made which had made the budget worse.

Councillor Hovvels sought clarification on whether leisure centres and the arts were statutory or discretionary services. The Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services replied that leisure services were a discretionary service, libraries were a statutory service.

Councillor Coult disagreed with the points raised by Councillor Marshall. Abbey Sports Centre had been identified as the first to be refurbished by the previous administration and the rebuild of Belmont school which was in the capital programme from the previous administration was not funded.

Councillor Crute reminded Members that scrutiny was not political and that comments made should be on the report before them. The sufficiency of the budget report would be reported by the Council's s151 officer.

The Democratic Services Manager reminded Members that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services had circulated advice that there was provision to submit budget amendments up to noon on Friday 23 February 2024. Any amendments after this deadline would only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Councillor Lines considered that the budget had been built in a pragmatic way and was compassionate, with investment proposed in education, business and culture which was important and protected services and supported the vulnerable. Additionally, he considered that the budget demonstrated ambition.

Councillor Crute raised the issue of consultation which had taken place on the budget with some areas of the budget attracting up to 95% opposition. There was a need to recognise these pockets of real opposition to some parts of the budget.

Councillor Shaw asked what the purpose of consultation was when the subject being consulted upon, parking charges, were already built into the budget for next year.

Resolved:

That the Board considered and noted the contents of the report and that comments received be forwarded to Council for consideration at its meeting on 28 February 2024.

7 Council Plan 2024-2028

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive which presented the draft refresh of the Council Plan covering the four year period 2024-2028 for consideration before being submitted to Council for approval (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Corporate Policy and Performance Manager informed the Board that the Council Plan aligned to both the MTFP and the County Durham Plan. The refreshed Plan was a shorter, sharper document and the format had been reviewed to make it more understandable. More detail had been added about plans and strategies and hyperlinks to appropriate documents included. An appendix had also been added to the Plan detailing performance measures used by the Council together with links to the relevant quarterly reports.

Councillor Crute considered that the refreshed Plan was an improvement, especially the format of it. This was a live document which was reviewed annually.

Resolved:

- (i) That the responses summarised in the report and in Appendix 2 be noted;
- (ii) That the refreshed Council Plan be considered for approval by Council on 28 February 2024.

8 Update in relation to Petitions

The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which provided for information the quarterly update in relation to the current situation regarding various petitions received by the Authority (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Democratic Services Manager advised that the schedule provided a list of those petitions that were active, and those that were to be closed and which would be removed from the list prior to the next update.

Since the last update two new e-petitions had been submitted both of which were ongoing and collecting signatures via the website. One new paper petition had been submitted however could not be dealt with under the petitions scheme.

The schedule provided a list of those petitions that were active, and those that were to be closed which would be removed from the list prior to the next update.

Resolved:

That the report be noted

**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

8 April 2024

County Durham Partnership Update



Report of Corporate Management Team

**Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and
Climate Change**

Councillor Amanda Hopgood, Leader of the Council

**Councillor Elizabeth Scott, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economy
and Partnerships**

Electoral division affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to update COSMB on issues being addressed by the County Durham Partnership (CDP), which includes the CDP Board, Forum, Thematic Partnerships and Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) across the county.

Executive summary

- 2 This report is in two parts, firstly it outlines the work of the **County Durham Partnership** and is supplemented by work of other partnerships dealing with cross cutting issues.
- 3 Secondly, the work of our thematic partnerships is framed under the County Durham Vision 2035 three strategic ambitions:
 - (a) More and Better jobs
 - (b) People live long and independent lives
 - (c) Connected communities

This is further illustrated by wider partnership work and local examples from our AAPs.

- 4 Our partnership boards continue to deal effectively with a wide range of strategic issues affecting the county and our **Area Action Partnerships** are an important way of working with our local communities. AAPs

address issues identified in their communities and show the significant progress made at a local level is improving outcomes for our local people.

- 5 This report covers the period September 2023 to February 2024 and areas of work to highlight include the following.
- 6 In terms of the work of the County Durham Partnership Board and partnerships dealing with a range of cross cutting issues, highlights of the projects implemented include the following.
- 7 On 17 November 2023 the **County Durham Partnership's Annual Event** celebrated 10 years of Public Health within the Local Authority and 10 years of Health and Wellbeing Boards. 135 people from a range of organisations attended the event to celebrate our successes and focus on the future for improved health and wellbeing in our communities.
- 8 At that event, the **County Durham Together Community Champions** based on a model co-designed by Champions was relaunched to get public health information to people who otherwise might not access it.
- 9 **Lumiere** took place from 16 to 19 November 2023. The UK's light art biennial is a global event with artists from 15 different countries exhibiting their artwork completely free for the public.
- 10 Following the provision of the Warm Spaces Network project last winter, the initiative was relaunched as **Welcome Spaces**.
- 11 The **fun and food programme** has continued to develop, and over the summer holidays, 225 projects have been delivered across the County, running 1,982 sessions, and providing 72,982 meals over the 6-week Summer holiday period.
- 12 Partnerships also undertook a range of projects, detailed under the vision ambitions, including the following.
- 13 The **UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)** allocation for County Durham is £30,830,613 with an additional £2,803,077 to fund Multiply - a new adult numeracy programme to help transform the lives of adults across the UK, by improving their functional numeracy skills.
- 14 The **Health and Wellbeing Board** provided its full support to the Government's "Stopping the Start" plan to create a smokefree generation and raise the legal age for tobacco sales.

- 15 An application was successfully made in September to renew the Gold Award level accreditation that the County Council holds for the **Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme**.

Recommendation

- 16 COSMB is recommended to:
- (a) note the contents of this update.

Background

- 17 The **County Durham Partnership** including the board and forum (which bring together the board and local communities), five partnerships (**Health and Wellbeing Board, Safe Durham Partnership, Economic Partnership, Environment and Climate Change Partnership** and **County Durham Together Partnership**), **Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership** and the **Durham Safeguarding Adults Partnership, Better Together VCS Forum** and all **Area Action Partnerships** lead on key initiatives being carried out in partnership across the county.

County Durham Partnership board and forum

- 18 The **County Durham Partnership** Board met in September, November and January.
- 19 At the September meeting, partners shared their financial outlook, plans and pressures, to enable partners to understand each other's savings and efficiency plans and their impact. It is important that partners work together to reduce duplication in services and estates and eliminate cost shunting, where possible. It was agreed that all partners would continue to use the **County Durham Together approach** to make sure partners are making changes, understanding the wider impact on individuals, partners and the county as a whole.
- 20 At the November meeting, the thematic focus was the **Environment and Climate Change Partnership (ECCP)** who have reviewed and refreshed their ways of working and will focus on supporting the three workstreams to deliver on their areas of work, enabling collaboration across the workstreams and with other thematic partnerships, and influence decision making locally, regionally and nationally.
- 21 The **ECCP** will aim to 'Inform, Influence and Amplify' the environmental agenda, with the challenge to all partnerships to consider how they can best support each other's agendas across all our work.
- 22 At the January meeting, the thematic focus was on the **Economic Partnership (CDEP)**, and the Delivery Plan for the Inclusive Economic Strategy (IES). The IES is owned by all partners across the county and will be delivered in partnership, with governance through the Delivery Improvement Group, a subgroup of the CDEP.
- 23 The CDP Board also received an update on North East Devolution progress, proposals and portfolios, and an overview of preparations for CQC assurance of our adult social care services.

County Durham Partnership event

24 On 17 November 2023 the **County Durham Partnership's Annual Event** celebrated 10 years of Public Health within the Local Authority and 10 years of Health and Wellbeing Boards. 135 people from the wider County Durham Partnership, Board members, VCS organisations, statutory services, and AAPs came together to celebrate our successes and focus on the future for improved health and wellbeing in our communities.

25 Our keynote speaker was Professor Dame Carol Black, the Government's independent advisor on drug misuse, Chair of the British Library, the Centre for Ageing Better and Think Ahead, the Government's fast-stream training programme for Mental Health Social Workers. Carol's work around drug treatment provides a positive example of working as a whole system to address health inequalities and was well received alongside contributions on the new Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the County Durham Together approach.



Dame Carol Black speaking at the County Durham Partnership Annual Event

26 Professor Peter Kelly CBE, Regional Director for Public Health and Office for Health Improvement and Disparities provided us with a call to action focused upon narrowing health inequalities through giving every child the best start in life, improving health and wellbeing in older age and creating a smoke free County Durham.

27 Delegates attended workshops where they talked about new ways of working in partnership with communities to improve health outcomes through homes and neighbourhoods, work, culture, learning and the climate.

28 The event also saw the relaunch of the County Durham Together Community Champions based on a model co-designed by Champions. Community Champions are local people from across County Durham who care about health and wellbeing and are trusted voices within their community who help to get public health information to people who otherwise might not access it. Community Champions help to:

- (a) keep their local communities informed so that people can make informed decisions to help them stay healthy, safe and well and

- (b) share their, local insights, knowledge and experiences with us.
- 29 The programme utilises a network of recruited volunteer champions from across County Durham to share information, address barriers and improve connections between services and communities. Durham County Council have a [County Durham Together Community Champions](#) webpage where you can watch an animation and find out more.

Lumiere

- 30 Lumiere took place from 16 to 19 November 2023. Fourteen years after Lumiere debuted in Durham, and more than one million visitors later, the UK's light art biennial is a global event with artists from 15 different countries exhibiting their artwork completely free for the public. It is estimated that around 176,000 people attended this event.
- 31 For the first time, Bishop Auckland joined the Lumiere spectacle with four works interacting with a façade, building or public space, transforming the heart of the town.
- 32 Lumiere is produced by leading arts producers Artichoke and commissioned and funded by Durham County Council. Lumiere receives additional support from Arts Council England, Durham University, County Durham Community Foundation, and many other supporters. Spotlight on Bishop Auckland is produced in partnership with The Auckland Project and supported by the Stronger Towns Fund.
- 33 Proposals and plans are already being developed for Lumiere 2027, alongside an Economic Impact Assessment, which will be considered by Cabinet later this year.

Advice in County Durham

- 34 Advice in County Durham took the lead in preparation of the Universal Credit Migration which began its rollout in County Durham at the end of July 2023.

35 123 delegates attended a conference in September around Universal Credit Migration to prepare key partners and stakeholders. The conference consisted of both national speakers and local providers to inform and highlight potential issues to support stakeholder partners around how the migration process will affect the residents of County Durham.



Delegates at the Universal Credit Migration conference

36 The workshops included:

- (a) Managed migration - the challenges
- (b) Tax Credits and Universal Credit - 5 key differences
- (c) Preparing Tenants for Universal Credit
- (d) DWP & Help to Claim - Support for the Claim Process

37 The event ended with a panel of experts in the field including the keynote speaker and the workshop hosts with a Q&A session.

38 The key focus was as always to ensure that by working collaboratively all key partners can support individuals in getting the right support and advice through the 'No Wrong Door' ethos, which will be key during this challenging transitional period.

Poverty Action Steering Group

39 Over the last year the **Poverty Action Steering Group's** work has concentrated on protecting our most vulnerable communities through the cost-of-living crisis. Initiatives have focused on mitigating the impact of food and fuel poverty, ensuring access to welfare advice and guidance services, promoting financial inclusion, and supporting vulnerable groups. Progress has also been made on projects to enhance access to data and intelligence and determine key measures that will enhance the council's understanding of our residents and their financial issues, as well as supporting the development of mechanisms to assess the impact and outcomes of **Poverty Action Steering Group**.

- 40 Activity to increase awareness and maximisation of benefit entitlements and the council's 'first point of contact' offer has been extended to include more detailed conversations to help those in financial difficulty as well as the continued provision of training to local Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to enable them to identify residents in need of financial support and signpost them to appropriate help.
- 41 A detailed annual report describing the poverty issues across the county, the support that exists for vulnerable households, the progress of the council and partners in addressing and alleviating poverty, and the priority actions to be progressed during 2024/25, was presented to Cabinet in February 2024. The report highlighted the risks presented by the ongoing uncertainty regarding the continuation of the Household Support Fund, when the existing scheme ends on 31 March 2024, and the contingency planning that is taking place to mitigate these risks including a review of the council's Welfare Assistance Scheme and work with third sector partners to determine what support will be available without the Household Support Funding.
- 42 The group continues to work in partnership with a wide range of organisations to provide a joined-up cohesive approach to tackling issues, including:
- (a) with private and social landlords to understand issues in the housing market, and support rough sleepers, ex-offenders, and vulnerable people into accommodation;
 - (b) educational settings to understand the scale and impact of poverty on young people and 'cut the cost of the school day'; and
 - (c) NEFirst Credit Union to provide interest free loans to families in need of financial assistance.
- 43 NEFirst Credit Union were funded by **Chester le Street and District AAP** to deliver financial surgeries to engage and encourage residents to get support and advice around finances. The Credit Union promoted services and the support available via a targeted leaflet drop to residents as well as engaging a wide number of partners and providing them with promotional literature to distribute to those individuals most in need of financial support and advice.
- 44 Information surgeries held at community centres raised the visibility of NEFirst as an ethical, financial organisation, enabling financial inclusion for all. Accessibility enables residents to reach out to save and lend responsibly. The project supports residents in taking control of finances and building financial resilience, leading to improved health and wellbeing. Residents can avoid high credit lending such as illegal

lending and access interest free loans through local and government funded initiatives.

- 45 A further focus of the **Poverty Action Steering Group** has been building on the success of the previous initiative last winter, the 'warm spaces' project which has been relaunched as **Welcome Spaces**.
- 46 Feedback highlighted that a range of additional support was provided on matters ranging from finance, housing, mental health and wellbeing to drugs and alcohol. As a result, the initiative was relaunched as Welcome Spaces, with funding provided both by Durham County Council and the County Durham Community Foundation to groups and organisations that can help.
- 47 Those that receive funding are offered training on a range of topics, including basic mental health, food safety and safeguarding, with grants able to cover a range of expenses such as utility bills, volunteer expenses or staff time, equipment and furniture. Key information including the organisations providing a Welcome Space, opening times, accessibility, and any other facilities available, such as the offer of hot drinks or wi-fi, are included on Locate to ensure people can access their nearest space.
- 48 **East Durham Rural Corridor AAP** funded The Rose Cottage Community Interest Company for The Wellbeing Project. The project provides a warm, welcoming space where local people can access healthy and hot, low cost or free meals. Not only do people have access to a warm space, hot drinks and food they are able to socialise in a welcoming environment. Community meals bring the community together, giving those in food insecurity dignified access to food.
- 49 The funding paid for one part time staff member as the primary person making the food; volunteers to complete food hygiene training; paying towards the cost of the meals, and management of the project. Volunteers are used to assist in the running of the project, with a view to getting them trained fully to be able to run it without a staff member in the future.
- 50 A further focus of the **Poverty Action Steering Group** has been supporting the expansion of the 'The Bread and Butter Thing' food hub network to 15 hubs which support around 1,200 families each week with low-cost food and access to advice and support.

51 With funding from **Bishop Auckland and Shildon AAP**, Woodhouse Close Church and Community Centre has built an extension to allow for additional space that will house the food bank element of the crisis intervention project.

52 Food donations with long shelf-life dates will be stored within a purpose-built room that will also provide facilities to pack the bags and store the made-up bags ready for those visiting.

53 The extension will enable existing space/rooms to be reconfigured i.e., a small break out room for 1-1 meetings will be created, the vestry will be increased in size for much needed office space as well as additional meeting area space.



Checking in on the new extension at Woodhouse Close Church and Community Centre

Humanitarian Support programme

54 The **humanitarian support team** continues to support refugee families across County Durham, delivering government humanitarian support programmes including resettlement support. The current focus is on assisting the government to deliver support to resettle eligible Afghans who supported the UK's presence in Afghanistan, including Afghan families facing deteriorating conditions in third countries.

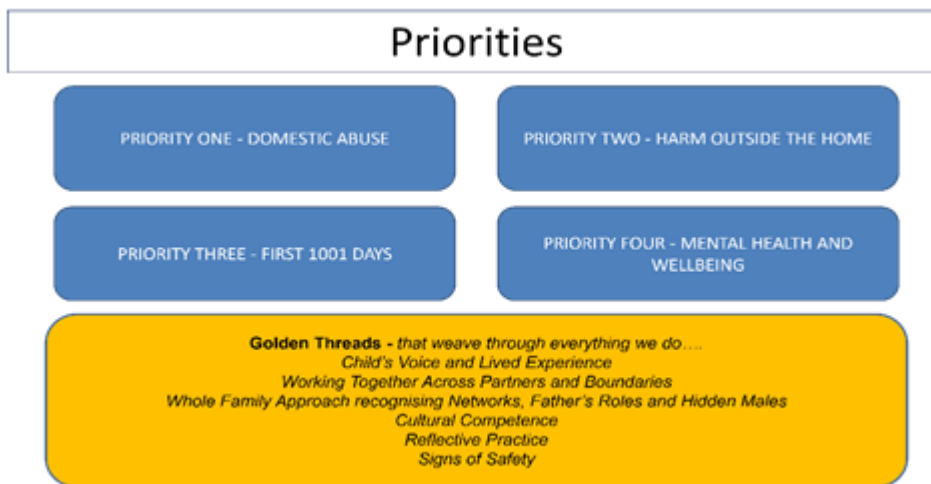
55 The largest single programme is the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme, an emergency programme developed at pace, which has seen residents of County Durham offering accommodation and sponsorship to individuals affected by the invasion of Ukraine who wish to come to the UK. Through the scheme the council has supported more than 670 guests and over 300 sponsor households to welcome families to the County.

56 It's a fast-changing and complex area of work, requiring the council to respond to new and emerging policy developments. This includes collaboration with partners and services to inform the local authority's response to the government consultation on "safe and legal routes" to the UK under the Illegal Migration Act.

57 The Team continues to work with partners to engage in the government’s full dispersal asylum accommodation programme, ensuring allocation is in line with the agreed regional plan. Activities include the co-ordination of responses to property requests and working with our new arrivals pathway partner, Communities Together Durham, and other voluntary and community sector organisations, to provide a support infrastructure for individuals seeking asylum who are located to the area under a private housing contract.

Safeguarding

58 The **Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP)** continue to manage their three-year business plan (2023-2026) which outlines a clear set of priority areas and golden threads which will influence the work of the DSCP in the coming months/years.



59 Within the last six months, work under priority one has been completed, which looked at Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA) and the impact this intervention has upon children and families in County Durham. An outcome of this work has been to develop an action plan to help raise awareness, improve recording, and improve communication. The DSCP have also designed and shared a practitioner briefing about this work which has been shared on the website and across the partnership.

60 The DSCP are currently completing work looking at Harm Outside the Home, with the Key Line of Enquiry being around the partnerships’ understanding of early warning indications of exploitation. Priority briefings will be completed and distributed following each piece of work to promote learning around key safeguarding issues across County Durham.

61 The DSCP continuously strives to ensure and embed a learning culture at the heart of what they do and will, where appropriate, take all

opportunities to review circumstances in order to identify and learn from good practice and areas where practice could be strengthened. A number of ways the Partnership has done this over the past six months includes:

- (a) Developed a “Think Tank” model to look at performance data.
- (b) Coordinated a referral for learning pathway, this allows partners to refer in both positive practice cases and learning from practice cases for discussions and oversight.
- (c) Created and distributed learning briefings
- (d) Provided practitioner briefings on what the DSCP does and how we can support practice in County Durham.

62 As a result of this work, there has been an increase in the number of partners accessing the DSCP website. From April 2023 to December 2023, the partnership website recorded in excess of 66,210 visits, this compares positively to the full year figures for 2022-2023 of 22,544. The number of subscribers to Me-Learning (training site) has also significantly increased in 2023. The number of new registrations were recorded between April 2023 to December 2023 to be at 4,069, in 2022 the numbers of new subscribers was 2,933. The DSCP are now sending out monthly newsletters with over 1000 subscribers, the partnership also uses Twitter to communicate and are looking at developing further social media platforms.

63 The partnership published its annual report, the reports can be accessed via the DSCP website [Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2022/2023 \(durham-scp.org.uk\)](https://www.durham-scp.org.uk).

64 The **Durham Safeguarding Adults Partnership** continues to share and raise awareness of key information and messages related to the prevention and protection from abuse and neglect for adults in its area.

65 In the six months from April 2023 to September 2023, the partnership website recorded in excess of 23,988 visits, this compares positively to the full year figures for 2022-2023 of 32,783. In addition, 18 ebulletins have been issued across a range of statutory and relevant partners and wider provider and voluntary community sector organisations.

66 The partnership published its annual report suite, which includes a report on a page, easy read report and report in video format, all reports can be accessed via the [Durham Safeguarding Adults Partnership](https://www.durham-scp.org.uk) dedicated website.

- 67 Working in close connectivity to the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership, a joint Safeguarding Week took place during November 2023. The week was opened by the Chairs of the respective partnerships and offered a range of learning opportunities open to professionals, practitioners, and volunteers. Both partnerships reporting upon the impact of the week in line with their individual reporting arrangements. Key highlights include over 500 attendances across the week's events, with a 48.2 per cent response rate for evaluations, and an average rating of 4.67 out of 5 stars for events accessed.

Fun and Food programme

- 68 The **fun and food programme** has continued to develop, and over the summer holidays, 225 projects have been delivered across the County, running 1,982 sessions, and providing 72,982 meals over the 6-week Summer holiday period.
- 69 The range of activities can be seen in the Summer Fun and Food Video [Fun and Food videos - Durham County Council](#). 21,819 children were engaged in these sessions, and of these, 4,574 children had additional needs.
- 70 During the October half term holiday, 81 projects were delivered across the county, and partners continue to offer wonderful creative projects, engaging children and young people in experiences and opportunities they wouldn't ordinarily be able to access. 2,810 children engaged, and of these, 723 had additional needs.
- 71 During the Christmas holidays 69 projects were delivered across the county by a variety of partner agencies including VCS, schools, leisure services, and family hubs. Enriching activities include performing arts, choir singing, outdoor activities and sports/physical activities and much more. 2620 children and young people engaged and of these, 719 had additional needs.

Vision 2035: More and better jobs

- 72 In 2022, the County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy (IES) was adopted by the council and the **County Durham Economic Partnership (CDEP)**. The strategy set an ambitious vision for the county's economy to 2035, providing a long-term focus which will drive strategic projects that aim to make a transformational improvement to the county's underlying economic conditions.
- 73 The Delivery Plan aligns with the strategy and sets out how the actions we take over the coming years will support the achievement of the strategic ambitions. The Delivery Plan was been developed between March and September 2023 with strong engagement from **CDEP**

partners. With support from DCC, the **CDEP** will oversee the implementation of the Delivery Plan, track outcomes, and oversee the modification of the approaches and actions taken.

- 74 The Delivery Plan is organised around the four core themes of the IES, People, Productivity, Place and Promotion, with the fifth cross-cutting theme of Planet. The actions in the Delivery Plan are identified using a 'logic chain' approach which ensures the actions relate to an ambition, have a lead, resources, and timescales identified where possible, and show linkages to other actions. The Delivery Plan will evolve over the coming years to capture more project details and align project outcomes with data from national sources. It will be a live document so that it can adapt to respond to changing economic conditions.
- 75 The Delivery Plan is accompanied by a performance framework which identifies aspects of the county's economy that are below regional and national performance. It will be used to track and report overall changes in these conditions as well as improvements in economic inclusivity. It includes targets for 2035 which align with the overall principal to try to close the gap with national average levels of economic performance, setting out what success of the Inclusive Economic Strategy looks like.
- 76 The Inclusive Economic Strategy and Delivery Plan are also informing the development of a new Investment Plan which will be used to promote major projects and investment opportunities to prospective public and private sector investors.
- 77 The **County Durham Pound Project** has continued to build on the social value work undertaken by the Council, with the principles, practices and procurement processes now adopted by the partners of the project within their respective organisations.
- 78 The drive on including a social value assessment within procurement activity linked to the local needs analysis and reflective of strategies like the Inclusive Economic Strategy has provided increased opportunities for local based businesses to provide goods, works and services (either directly or indirectly through the supply chain) to the County Durham Pound Partners.
- 79 A leading example of good practice, national interest in the project continues and locally, the move from transactional social value to transformational social value, including expanding the project's reach to include the Private and Third Sector is the next phase in our growth.
- 80 The **UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)** allocation for County Durham is £30,830,613 with an additional £2,803,077 to fund Multiply - a new adult numeracy programme to help transform the lives of adults across the UK, by improving their functional numeracy skills. All the

funding has now been allocated, and 16 projects have been formally approved so far including:

- (a) **Durham Business Growth Programme:** An integrated programme to boost productivity and support growth in County Durham businesses. Led by Business Durham with UMi and the Regional Technology Centre as core delivery partners. £8.16m total programme value (of which £4m is for business grants, including £1.6m from Rural England Prosperity Fund).
- (b) **Innovating Together in the North East (In-TUNE):** Durham University was awarded £4.75m UKSPF funding secured for £5.08m In-TUNE programme until March 2025. It is a collaboration between Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria and Sunderland Universities plus the Centre for Process Innovation. It includes two existing programmes, the Northern Accelerator – supporting commercialisation of University Intellectual Property through Spin-Outs and Arrow – Rolling Out Innovation support to Small and Medium Sized Enterprises.
- (c) **DurhamEnable Supported Employment Service:** A Supported Employment service, initially funded by £3.6m of European Social Fund and match funding from February 2021 to December 2023. Then further funded by UKSPF until March 2025.
 - (i) The scheme is a multi-agency approach to tackling the historically low employment rate for adults with Learning Disabilities and Autistic people in County Durham.
 - (ii) Target Group: 18+ eligible for Adult Social Care support, Learning Disability and/or Autism, Disability – physical/sensory, Mental Health difficulties, previously held an Education, Health and Care Plan/Statement.
- (d) **Multiply & Communicate:** County Durham has highest number of people with low essential skills (75,557). Multiply delivers innovative interventions to support adults to develop their numeracy skills for life home and work. There is £2.8 million to deliver this project until 31st March 2025.
 - (i) 50% of population do not have minimum literacy skills to cope with everyday life. Communicate is a new project that is funded by UKSPF People and Skills funding that will work together with Multiply to support people to develop literacy skills. £800k of funding until March 2025 will be utilised to improve functional health literacy, interactive health literacy and critical health literacy. Learners will take part in a range of activities which will enable them to improve their ability to

understand and use information to make decisions about their health and care and the health and care of those in their care such as children. This will include developing the skills needed to effectively use and respond to spoken and written communication. The strongest correlation to ill health – stronger than education level, deprivation, age or ethnicity – is health literacy.

81 County Durham has a shortage of new industrial units which is restricting the growth of new and existing local companies wanting to set up or grow a business. County Durham’s Inclusive Economic Strategy sets a vision for the area’s economy up to 2035 that includes developing employment land for improved infrastructure, providing better facilities and opportunities for businesses in the area.

82 £1.8 million has been approved in principle from the UKSPF as part of the estimated £8.5 million capital cost to develop additional much-needed business units at South Church Enterprise Park, Bishop Auckland. This could see some 45,000 square foot of units built for new and young small businesses needing space.

83 Furthermore, circa £1,000,000 to deliver additional initiatives with a focus on food poverty alleviation, the provision of cost-of-living advice and guidance, and fun and food with half term activities has been secured through UK Shared Prosperity funding with projects planned for delivery through 2024/25.

84 **Durham AAP** has supported a local organisation, EMPOWHer, to give young women the practical skills to get employment in the beauty business. The young woman aged between 17 and 25 have all had a baby recently or are pregnant and the training gives them very practical, accredited training that will help them either become self-employed or work in a salon. The young women involved also look at business planning skills and after the course has finished there is ongoing support from the delivery team. The first course has just finished with two more planned.



Learning business planning skills

- 85 The new Durham Bus Station opened to the public on 7 January. The new bus station has been designed to increase the overall space for passengers and has improved facilities including segregated toilets, a Changing Places toilet, improved information displays and upgraded seating in the passenger waiting area.
- 86 Providing high quality facilities, the station will serve as a major transport hub for both the city and the county. It is hoped it will help attract both shoppers and tourists to the city, supporting our independent businesses and our cultural attractions and will encourage people to make more journeys by bus rather than car, promoting more sustainable travel.
- 87 **Teesdale Action Partnership (TAP)** has provided funding along with Durham County Council Regeneration Fund and The Witham itself, to boost the Witham's profile. Funding has been allocated to light up the exterior of the popular arts venue and provide acoustic improvements to the music hall. The scheme will also help enhance the Highstreet making it a more vibrant place.

Vision 2035: People live long and independent lives

- 88 Smoking continues to be a key priority for the **Health and Wellbeing Board**, and it provided its full support to the Government's "Stopping the Start" plan to create a smokefree generation and raise the legal age for tobacco sales.
- 89 Smoking remains the largest single cause of preventable deaths and is one of the largest causes of health inequalities in England. The harm of smoking falls on everyone within our society. The cost of smoking isn't just on the individual but on the wider economy, such as health and social care costs, fire brigade call outs, and loss to the economy due to people being unwell and unable to work.
- 90 A motion to full council welcoming the consultation on the "Stopping the Start" plan was moved by Cllr Cathy Hunt and received cross-party support. Endorsement of proposed new measures to tighten the promotion, packaging, branding and pricing of vapes to reduce their appeal to children and young people was also agreed.
- 91 Work is taking place to improve **health literacy**, which is a crucial element of us achieving the priorities in the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This is about ensuring that people have the skills, knowledge, understanding and confidence to access, understand, use and navigate health and social care information to maintain good levels of wellbeing.

92 The aim is to empower people to take control of their own health and wellbeing and improve shared decision making and personalised care. This will help people to access the right services at the right time, reduce crises and reduce inappropriate appointments.

93 People with limited health literacy are more likely to use emergency services and less likely to successfully manage long-term health conditions - as a result, incurring higher health and social care costs.

94 Collaboration between the **Health and Wellbeing Board** and the **County Durham Economic Partnership** is taking place on health literacy.

95 The County Durham Care Partnership (a subgroup of the **Health and Wellbeing Board**) which facilitates improved collaborations between health and social care teams, aimed at giving residents better, connected health services, closer to home, has been recognised as a national model for collaboration. The Government's representatives said they were particularly struck by County Durham Care Partnership's culture of continuous improvement, and the teams' commitment to improve the system even further.



96 The **Health and Wellbeing Board** supported the development of a Carers Plan on a Page which has been written together with carers and those providing support to carers. The Carers Plan on a Page addresses areas highlighted in the recent strategic review of carer support as needing focused support or attention, such as young adult carers, male carers and working age carers. The plan has been developed around four key areas which provides a framework for targeting and developing support to carers in County Durham.

- (a) **Be seen** - identification of carers
- (b) **Be well and healthy** - improving physical and mental health
- (c) **Be connected** - providing support to carers
- (d) **Be heard** - capturing the carers voice

97 The Carers Plan on a Page will be published on the Durham Carers Infopoint www.durhamcarers.info which provides a range of information, advice and guidance to unpaid carers.

98 **Spennymoor AAP** has allocated funding to provide supplementary support with the running costs of the Sing for Life Community Choir which is a thriving community choir that takes place at Croxdale Community Centre. The choir is an inclusive space that engages with participants of all different ages, abilities, and backgrounds. The choir supports combatting social isolation in the older generation and ensuring accessibility to participants with disabilities of all ages and improving overall health and wellbeing through the positive physiological benefits of singing.

99 The **Health and Wellbeing Board** agreed the 'Think Autism in County Durham' Autism Strategy for Children, Young People and Adults 2023 – 2026. The strategy is completely aligned to the National Strategy for Autistic Children, Young People and Adults 2021-26 and includes an increased focus on criminal justice and is also aligned to Tees Esk and Wear Valley's Autism Strategy Framework. The strategy has six aims to achieve the vision that **"in County Durham all autistic people live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them. They can access advice and support if they need it, and they can depend on mainstream public services to treat them fairly as individuals, helping them make the most of their talents."**



Think Autism in County Durham
Autism Strategy for Children, Young People
and Adults
2023 - 2026



100 **Great Aycliffe and Middridge AAP (GAMP)** supported the North East Autism Society to run a series of youth clubs for autistic children and young people at Woodham Community Centre based in Newton Aycliffe. Sessions are run by staff members, with volunteer support for children aged 5 to 10, and 11 to 19. These youth club sessions provide a range of activities for autistic and neurodiverse children/young people, in a safe and understanding environment, designed by and for its members.

101 The project continues to be on track and is making excellent progress. All participants have integrated into the youth club well - participating in play with other autistic children; improving their communication/social skills; and stimulating their sensory experience.

- 102 Feedback from families continues to be very positive; where some say it is a lifeline for their child to mix with other young people away from school and enjoy some social time away from the family, allowing them some freedom and independence without parental supervision. The parents are also using this free time to good effect and strong support and friendships are forming.
- 103 The **Derwent Valley AAP** is supporting a Community Garden Wellbeing Programme which will enable the Friends of Blackhill and Consett Park to employ skilled tutors to develop the community garden for activities that can help address social isolation and improve mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- 104 The aim is to extend the opening hours of the community garden, and the range of activities to attract new and existing participants. The project will offer:
- (a) a gardening programme to enable local people to grow their own food and learn about organic growing.
 - (b) cooking activities using the garden's bread oven.
 - (c) traditional crafts, e.g., whittling, basket making.
 - (d) creative arts such as watercolour painting, drawing and photography.
 - (e) woodworking activities such as making troughs and planters, re-building the raised beds, bird and bat boxes.
 - (f) hosting family activities during school holidays/after school.
- 105 The project will benefit 118 users and aims to improve mental health and wellbeing whilst promoting a more attractive and sustainable environment.
- 106 Working with a specialist Mental Health nurse to support those in the Dales who are currently experiencing low mood, **Weardale AAP** is currently developing a “menshed” – a safe place for men to come together – that will be underpinned by relevant referral and support services.
- 107 **Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV)** is where the employees of an organisation take paid time off to volunteer during work hours. Employees can choose to use their volunteering time to support a charity or community group of their own choice, or to take up an opportunity provided by their organisation. ESV is key in promoting a

better work-life balance and a having a positive impact on health and wellbeing.

- 108 ESV opportunities are seen by many employers as contributing to an attractive employment package to prospective job applicants, with organisations able to show a direct correlation between their ESV schemes and staff engagement scores.
- 109 The recent workforce survey highlighted that only 20.9% of the Council's workforce currently volunteer but it also highlighted that 63.8% would volunteer if they had more time.
- 110 An ESV Coordinator has been appointed and taken up post who will ensure the effective implementation and ongoing development of the Employer Supported Volunteering Scheme, engage with relevant stakeholders and build relationships with partner organisations. In collaboration with relevant stakeholders, the postholder will take primary responsibility for developing the ESV to support widening participation and will also be responsible for the marketing, promotion and evaluation of the ESV, ensuring both DCC employees achieve the best possible outcomes from their volunteering journey.
- 111 The scheme is for Durham County Council employees to be supported to volunteer for a maximum of 24 hours per year and will be launched in April 2024.
- 112 The County Council have committed to fund the two-armed forces outreach workers based within the Housing Team on a permanent basis. The **Armed Forces Outreach Service**, in partnership with Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council and Believe Housing, provide support and advice to veterans and those leaving the armed forces and their families, with two full time posts within the County Durham area. The assurance to fund on a permanent basis further demonstrates the Council's pledge to the **Armed Forces Covenant** and our commitment to work with other partners in the local region to support our armed forces community.
- 113 An application was successfully made in September to renew the Gold Award level accreditation that the County Council holds for the [Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme](#). This award recognises the positive role that the County Council plays in supporting the Armed Forces community.
- 114 The **Better Together VCS Forum** held its 10th Policy Forum meeting in October, bringing together a broad range of VCS organisations and colleagues from Public Health and Durham University to consider whether there is an evidence base in County Durham informed by all sectors to support the wider determinants of health of our communities.

A report on the conference and reports from other regular meetings of the Forum can be found [here](#).

- 115 Our series of Breakfast Seminars which bring together elected members, officers, partners, and individuals from **faith and community groups** in roundtable conversations have hosted Seminars October and January. The October Seminar looked at how partners can work together to explore the possibility of encouraging community-led housing projects in the County. The January Seminar looked at the incremental breakdown of the NHS through the privatisation of health care services, with a keynote speech by Professor Peter Kelly CBE.

Vision 2035: Connected communities

- 116 Anti-social behaviour and protecting vulnerable people are key priorities for the **Safe Durham Partnership**.
- 117 Round 5 of the Safer Streets funding runs from 1 November 2023 to March 2025. This round maintains the same focus as Round 4, aiming to reduce levels of neighbourhood crime, Violence Against Women and Girls in public spaces and Anti-Social behaviour.
- 118 For the first time, funding has been directly awarded to Police and Crime Commissioners as opposed to competed, although Police and Crime Commissioners were still required to submit funding proposals to confirm that they meet the requirements of the fund.
- 119 Funding is allocated to the following projects:
- (a) **Left Behind Towns/ASB hotspot areas:** Interventions include CCTV, More officers, Off road bike barriers, crime prevention equipment.
 - (b) **Rural crime:** Interventions include Ruralwatch coordinators, intelligence analyst, and administration support officer from National Farmers Union, Crime Prevention Equipment, body cams, Aerial Surveillance-Drones and pilot licenses and Rural Vehicles
 - (c) **Violence against women and girls (VAWG) in Durham City:** Interventions include Public Space CCTV and deployable cameras, VAWG engagement officer
- 120 A “Spotlight on coercive control” conference took place virtually in November 2023 as part of our wider work on the White Ribbon agenda (working together to end men’s violence against women).

- 121 Over 500 people attended the conference and the agenda for the day reflected a blend of research, lived experience and expertise that helped create greater recognition of the indicators of coercive control, greater understanding of the risks associated with coercive control and increase awareness of the impact that the many different tactics of coercive control, used by those causing harm, have on both adult and child victim/survivors.
- 122 A highlight of the event were the personal stories that were shared by two speakers which were so powerful to the audience.
- (a) Luke Hart talked about his lived experience of growing up in a household governed by Coercive Control which tragically led to the killing of his mother and his sister, at the hands of his father.
 - (b) Aged 14, Georgia Hooper witnessed her mother being shot dead by her stepdad. Georgia shared about what life was like for her living in a rural farmhouse with her mother and abusive stepfather, her stepfathers use of Coercive Control and the events leading up to the tragic death of her mother.
- 123 274 evaluations were received, all of which were extremely positive. Comments included **“The conference has given me deeper insight of coercive control and has bettered me in being able to teach the meaning to the young people I support”** and **“Hearing from survivors was so impactful, I will never forget this and will do my best to support those affected”**.
- 124 A number of AAPs have responded to local need with a range of community safety projects.
- 125 **East Durham AAP** continues to support the Safer Homes project, which is targeting those who are at risk of theft, burglary and personal attack. Items such as alarms and locks are being distributed through the local neighbourhood police teams.
- 126 **4 Together AAP** has funded ICT equipment for the “Positive Change Through Sport” project delivered by Seconds Out at Ferryhill Sports and Education Centre. Focusing on young people who are entering into the youth justice system this group provides an opportunity to engage in both physical and wellbeing related activity, alongside developing life skills and employability tools. The equipment is used to analyse and enhance physical performance, CV development, research and signposting as well as improving general IT skills.
- 127 **Stanley AAP** organised an event at Tanfield school where representatives from the Air Cadets, Army Cadets, police, and fire service came together to demonstrate the cadet opportunities that are

available in the region and the potential for these experiences to pave the way for future careers within the respective services.

- 128 Over 160 Year 8 pupils took part in the event and experienced a range of activities including:
- (a) hands on experience using flight simulators, experiencing a virtual reality glider flight, and took part in leadership exercises under the guidance of Air Cadet staff.
 - (b) With the Army Cadets staff, they learned the basics of personal camouflage with fieldcrafts and took part in fitness and teambuilding activities. They also had a taste of the ration packs and an overview of how to save lives with first aid.
 - (c) The fire service taught pupils drills with fire hoses and how to work in pairs to rescue a small dummy from a smoke tent.
 - (d) The police brought along an Armed Response Vehicle, long lens camera and an e-bike. The children were taught how to use riot gear, handcuffs and surveillance equipment, and learnt how the police's drone is deployed to support those in need and detect crime.
- 129 To end the day everyone gathered to watch the fire service carry out a live demonstration of how they deal with a road traffic collision, by cutting out and rescuing two budding Air Cadets employees from a car.
- 130 The deputy headteacher of Tanfield School, said: "This was a fantastic opportunity for our students. As a school our mission is to get every student into their dream job. We talk a lot about careers and aspirations, but bringing this experience into school takes it to another level.
- 131 "Many of our students were left in awe at what some of the services do and it has certainly inspired some of them to think about careers in this sector. The day was informative and motivational, and we cannot thank the services involved enough for giving up their valuable time."
- 132 The **Environment and Climate Change Partnership (ECCP)** reviewed and refreshed its structure in September 2023. The meetings moved from sharing information, to focus on:
- (a) supporting the three work streams to effectively deliver on their agendas;
 - (b) enabling collaboration across the workstreams and with other thematic partnerships; and
 - (c) influencing decision making locally, regionally, and nationally.

- 133 The ECCP aims to deliver the vision of ‘A better County Durham: sustainable communities, resilient to climate change, richer in nature’ by informing on, influencing, and amplifying the environmental agenda.
- 134 In March, an annual ECCP Emergency Summit, which provides all members of the ECCP with the opportunity to share information, plan for the future and network with partners will take place.
- 135 The Climate Emergency Workstream have written the third **Climate Emergency Response Plan 2024 – 27 (CERP3)**. Partners have made significant progress since the first plan was agreed in 2020, and are working closely with private industry, other local authorities, and the voluntary and community sector to support wider decarbonisation initiatives. Following consultation, nine new themes have been agreed:
- (a) Buildings
 - (b) Transport and Connectivity
 - (c) Sustainable Energy
 - (d) Business, Green Economy and Skills
 - (e) Waste and Resources
 - (f) Agriculture and Food
 - (g) Natural Environment
 - (h) Adaptation
 - (i) Engagement, Education and Behavioural Change
- 136 CERP3 will be launched in April 2024.
- 137 Partners from the ECCP’s Climate Emergency Board – Durham University, Durham County Council and Kromek – completed a joint research study in December to understand the viability of using liquid desiccant (usually used in air conditioning) as thermal batteries. The project assessed the feasibility of recovering ultralow-grade heat sources using the desiccant technology and identified the optimal design to increase the performance of the storage system. The research was supported with £50,000 worth of funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council Impact Acceleration Account. It aimed to move the technology closer to commercialisation by testing and demonstrating it in live conditions, specifically heating and dehumidification at indoor swimming pools, using DCC’s Freeman’s Quay pool as a test venue. It was found that a significant reduction in energy consumption and costs could be

achieved by using the liquid desiccant technology, however it was also concluded that the desiccant solution was better suited to providing dehumidification and heating to a facility that required it at lower temperatures and unfortunately it was not suitable for Freeman's Quay, however, research will be undertaken for alternative applications that are able to benefit from this technology.

138 Hamsteels Community Centre Sustainability Improvements in Esh Winning invited the council's Business Energy Efficiency Project team to undertake an audit of the building in terms of its energy efficiency and where it can take steps to improve this as a way of negating rising energy monthly energy bills which were forecast to exceed the Centre's income.

139 The community centre had undertaken some measures that were easily achieved and practical (low cost) including monitoring energy use, using curtains and blinds to regulate light and temperature, improved heating and hot water controls and marking switches to make it clear what they were for.

140 **Mid Durham AAP** provided funding to add solar panels at the Centre and also improve the lighting within the building to make a much greater economic, carbon and sustainability difference. A solar panel was installed to supply sufficient power to meet the greater part of current use which would result in a saving of around 50% on electricity costs. In terms of lighting, the main hall is the most used space and currently lit by 10 floodlights. A linear LED lighting scheme has been designed to reduce running costs, offer more control (e.g., lighting only half the hall for smaller groups) and with adjustable brightness to be used to suit.



The new energy efficient LED lighting scheme

141 The ECCP Ecological Emergency Workstream have been working on the development of the **Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)**. The initial focus was on two areas of work:

- (a) Working alongside regional partners and the Environmental Records Information Centre to map the current position, collate baseline data and identify any gaps.
 - (b) Set up working groups to identify priority areas and develop an outline LNRS for County Durham.
- 142 Meetings have been held between the regional Local Authority Ecologists, the Wildlife Trusts, and Tees Valley Local Nature Partnerships to discuss the LNRS across the region and how best to ensure cross boundary co-ordination of the LNRS. This grouping has formed the basis of a cross boundary group tasked with ensuring that each LNRS is cognisant of each other, and linkages are made between the mapping and biodiversity priorities.
- 143 A wide-ranging consultation exercise is taking place to support the development of the LNRS. The consultation aims to engage with all the residents of County Durham alongside identified specialist organisations and individuals with an interest in the LNRS. The consultation is in two stages:
- (a) The first stage, which went live in February 2024, was designed to inform the writing of the LNRS and a final consultation on the draft LNRS.
 - (b) The second stage, which will begin in autumn 2024, will consult on the final draft LNRS.
- 144 The target date for the competition of the LNRS is Spring 2025. A dedicated [LNRS webpage](#) which holds background information on the LNRS and supports the consultation process has been developed.

145 **3 Towns AAP** supported the Crook Winter Light Parade (CWLP) which was co-created with the community taking inspiration from northeast folklore, featuring mythical creatures, fairies and a Celtic 'King and Queen' all with an environmental focus using recycled materials to create a carnival parade by, with and for the people of Crook and the surrounding area.



Children enjoying Crook Winter Light Parade

- 146 Inspired by a cultural trip for members of Jack Drum Arts Social Prescribing group to the Museum of British Folklore's exhibition 'Making Mischief' the project supported professional arts workshops for:
- (a) Adults from the social prescribing group to create large Celtic-inspired puppets working with a skilled professional artist.
 - (b) School children to create folkloric costumes using recycled materials working with skilled creative practitioners.
 - (c) Families to create lanterns with folkloric symbols linked to the environment working with skilled creative practitioners.
 - (d) Adults from an open callout across the 3 Towns Area to create costumes working with a skilled costume designer.
 - (e) Local young people worked with professional performance artists to create contemporary circus and folk dance and Jack Drum Arts community band worked with professional folk musicians to create new music to complement existing repertoire.
- 147 This work culminated in a spectacular outdoor parade in Crook on 26 November 2023, attended by over 3,500 people celebrating folk traditions unique to the northeast supporting the development of a vibrant cultural community in the 3 Towns area. The event also played an important part in bringing people of all ages, backgrounds, and interests together, building civic pride and contributing to a greater sense of togetherness and wellbeing of all those who took part and joined on the streets to be an audience member.
- 148 Feedback collected from members of the public who attended CWLP included "The energy of the music, dancing, acting, performing, costumes, lighting all Intermingling beautifully together. Such a magical sense of community spirit bringing so much love and light through the town." and "Every age group was included in the parade, and this crossed over into the crowds of people who attended. Young, old, families all together for a few hours outside and not watching on TV. The atmosphere was friendly and uplifting. The Marshalling of the event was first class and did not block and spoil the event."

Conclusion

149 As we continue to support and protect our most vulnerable communities through the challenges of the cost-of-living crisis, there has been significant progress in partnership working both at a strategic level and on the ground. Our 14 AAPs have made significant progress in supporting their communities and the golden thread of strategic partnership level work and what takes place in our communities is clear. This report only shows a flavour of the many projects that are taking place across the county at a community level that support our communities.

Background papers

- None.

Other useful documents

- None.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None.

Finance

Area and neighbourhood budgets are utilised and delivered through the 14 AAPs and ensure the Council (and AAPs) receive improved information on the outputs achieved through use of locality budgets.

Consultation

The County Durham Partnership framework is a key community engagement and consultation function of the Council and its partners. The recommendations in the report are based on extensive consultation with AAP partners.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The actions set out in this report aim to ensure equality and diversity issues are embedded within the thematic partnerships and the working practice of AAPs.

Climate Change

This is recognised throughout partnership activities.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a statutory duty on local authorities to form a Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to tackle crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment and to reduce re-offending. In County Durham, the CSP is the Safe Durham Partnership.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.

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**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

8 April 2024



**Resources – Quarter 3 December 2023:
Forecast of Revenue and Capital
Outturn 2023/24**

Ordinary Decision

Report of Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide details of the updated forecast revenue and capital outturn budget position for the Resources service grouping, highlighting major variances in comparison with the budget based on the position to the end of December 2023.

Executive Summary

- 2 The quarter 3 forecast position shows that the service is forecasting a cash limit underspend of £1.434 million against a revised budget of £27.328 million.
- 3 The Resources cash limit balance carried forward at 31 March 2024 is forecast to be circa £2.460 million. Other earmarked reserves under the direct control of Resources Management Team (RMT) are forecast to total £5.701 million at 31 March 2024.
- 4 The revised Resources capital budget is £4.746 million for 2023/24, with a total expenditure to 31 December 2023 of £3.096 million (65.2%).

Recommendation(s)

- 5 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is recommended to note the forecast of outturn position.

Background

6 County Council approved the Revenue and Capital budgets for 2023/24 at its meeting on 22 February 2023. These budgets have subsequently been revised to account for grant additions/reductions, corporate savings/adjustments, budget transfers between service groupings and budget profiling between years. This report covers the financial position for the following major budget areas maintained by the Resources service grouping:

- Revenue Budget - £27.328 million (original £25.082 million)
- Capital Programme - £4.746 million (original £8.400 million)

7 The original Resources General Fund budget has been revised in year to incorporate a number of budget adjustments as follows:

	<u>£,000s</u>
Quarter 1:	
Transfer to CEO – Design Services	28
Transfer to CEO – Corporate Policy Planning & Performance	(1,932)
Transfer to CEO – Corporate Affairs & Management	(299)
Transfer from CEO – Web Team	134
Quarter 2:	
Transfer from REG – Business Support Posts	48
Transfer from Contingencies – Customer Relations Manager	49
Transfer from Contingencies – Loss of Diocese school SLA income	132
Transfer from CEO – Corporate Affairs & Management	(16)
Transfer from AHS – Business Support Posts	26
Quarter 3:	
23-24 Pay award	4,076
TOTAL	<u>2,246</u>

The revised General Fund Budget for Resources is £27.328 million.

8 The summary financial statements contained in the report cover the financial year 2023/24 and show:

- The approved annual budget;
- The actual income and expenditure as recorded in the council's financial management system;

- The variance between the annual budget and the forecast outturn;
- For the Resources revenue budget, adjustments for items outside of the cash limit to take into account such items as redundancies met from the strategic reserve, capital charges not controlled by services and use of / or contributions to earmarked reserves.

9 The service is forecasting a cash limit underspend of £1.434 million (5.2%) against a revised budget of £27.328 million.

10 The tables below compare the actual expenditure with the budget. The first table is analysed by Subjective Analysis (i.e. type of expense), and the second by Head of Service.

Type of Expenditure (Subjective Analysis) (£000's)

	2023/24 Budget £000	YTD Actual £000	QTR3 Forecast of Outturn £000	(From) / To Reserves £000	Items Outside Cash Limit £000	Cash Limit Variance £000	Memo Item: Q2 Cash Limit Variance £000
Employees	70,315	51,947	68,789	-	418	(1,108)	(373)
Premises	2,212	779	2,076	-	37	(99)	(130)
Transport	647	366	518	-	-	(129)	(124)
Supplies and Services	17,909	17,889	20,315	-	-	2,406	817
Third Party Payments	51	6,174	87	-	-	36	1
Transfer Payments	819	822	822	-	-	3	-
Central Support and Capital	12,649	652	12,635	(990)	(133)	(1,137)	(1,391)
Gross Expenditure	104,602	78,629	105,242	(990)	322	(28)	(1,200)
Income	(77,274)	(25,075)	(78,680)	-	-	(1,406)	274
Net Expenditure	27,328	53,554	26,562	(990)	322	(1,434)	(926)
HB Transfer payments	103,426	84,810	118,923	-	(3,200)	12,297	-
HB Central Support and Capital	300	-	300	-	-	-	-
HB Income	(103,726)	(93,164)	(116,023)	-	-	(12,297)	-
HB Net Expenditure	-	(8,354)	3,200	-	(3,200)	-	-
Total Net Expenditure	27,328	45,200	29,762	(990)	(2,878)	(1,434)	(926)

By Head of Service (£000's)

	2023/24 Budget £000	YTD Actual £000	QTR3 Forecast of Outturn £000	(From) / To Reserves £000	Items Outside Cash Limit £000	Cash Limit Variance £000	Memo Item: Q2 Cash Limit Variance £000
Corporate Finance & Commercial Services	3,794	3,753	3,721	(44)	(35)	(152)	(182)
Digital Services	15,977	9,935	15,261	(220)	-	(936)	(424)
HR & Employee Services	4,919	3,842	5,439	(277)	(48)	195	184
Internal Audit & Insurance	1,212	840	1,131	(46)	-	(127)	(49)
Legal & Democratic Services	9,222	7,292	9,162	(65)	(50)	(175)	(234)
Pensions	83	1,207	83	-	-	-	-
Procurement Sales & Business Services	18,600	14,883	18,476	65	-	(59)	(32)
Resources Central Establishment Recharges	(38,665)	-	(38,665)	-	-	-	-
Resources Management / Central Charges	990	173	953		455	418	-
Transactional & Customer Services	11,196	11,629	11,001	(403)	-	(598)	(189)
Net Expenditure Excluding HB	27,328	53,554	26,562	(990)	322	(1,434)	(926)
Housing Benefit	-	(8,354)	3,200	-	(3,200)	-	-
Total Net Expenditure	27,328	45,200	29,762	(990)	(2,878)	(1,434)	(926)

- 11 The table below provides a brief commentary on the variances against the revised budget analysed by Head of Service. The table identifies variances in the core budget only and excludes items outside of the cash limit (e.g. redundancy costs) and technical accounting adjustments (e.g. capital charges):

Head of Service	Service Area	Description	(Under) / Over Budget £000	(Under) / Over Budget £000
Resources Central Establishment Recharges	Central Establishment Recharges	No material variances	0	0
Resources Management / Central Charges	Central Charges	£418,000 transferred to corporate contingencies for pay award relating to vacant posts	418	418
Corporate Finance & Commercial Services	Corporate Management	(£54,000) under budget on employees	(54)	
	Management Priority	No material variances	1	
	Financial Systems	£10,000 over budget due to unachieved staff turnover savings	10	
	Financial Management	No material variance	3	
	Strategic Finance	(£76,000) under budget on employees due to vacant posts in advance of planned MTFP 14 savings £13,000 over budget due to treasury management software (£50,000) overachieved income from the Pension Fund in advance of planned MTFP 14 savings	(112)	
Procurement Sales & Business Services	Procurement	(£49,000) under budget on employees due to a vacant post within the Corporate Procurement team (£20,000) under budget on subscriptions. Plus other minor variances	(59)	(59)
Digital Services	Digital and Customer Services	(£1,135,000) under budget due to vacant posts for impending service restructure and planned MTFP savings (£81,000) under budget on premises due to reduction in service charge at EDC and electricity at the Data Centre (£22,000) under budget on transport due to a reduction in car allowances and staff travel (£392,000) under budget on consumables due to reduced ad-hoc work.		

Head of Service	Service Area	Description	(Under) / Over Budget £000	(Under) / Over Budget £000
		(£248,000) under budget due to a 22-23 related recharge not being processed until 23-24 £388,000 under achieved Income on Schools SLAs due to loss of customers and academisation £371,000 under achieved income on recharges to other bodies. £191,000 under achieved Income on Non-SLA work due to lower ad-hoc work expected	(936)	(936)
Pensions	Pensions	No material variance	0	0
HR & Employee Services	Advice & Guidance	(£49,000) under budget on employees due to vacant posts. £68,000 under achieved income due to loss of school SLAs, which is partly offset by £36,000 generating other business. Plus other minor variances	16	195
	Head of HR & Employee Services	No material variance	3	
	Payroll & Employee Services	(£12,000) under budget due to reduced printing £189,000 under achieved income mainly due to loss of school SLAs	180	
	Occupational Health	(£44,000) under budget due to flexible retirement and temporary vacant post (£10,000) under budget due to increased telephone counselling rather than face to face counselling £45,000 under achieved income due to loss of school SLAs	(4)	
Transactional & Customer Services	Customer Relations	(£80,000) under budget on employees due to vacant posts in advance of planned MTFP 13 savings (£130,000) under budget on employees due to vacant posts. (£17,000) under budget on car allowances and staff traveling. (£39,000) under budget on telephony and computer software. (£28,000) under budget due to rent no longer required at CLS CAP.	(277)	

Head of Service	Service Area	Description	(Under) / Over Budget £000	(Under) / Over Budget £000
		£17,000 under achieved rechargeable income.		
	Service Management	£21,000 over budget on employees.	21	
	Revenue & Benefits	(£224,000) under budget on employees due to vacant posts and other minor variances. (£30,000) under budget on staff travel due to new ways of working (£39,000) under budget due to reduction in subscriptions (£23,000) over achieved income due to £270,000 unbudgeted New Burdens funding, £62,000 additional Council Tax Court Fees, offset by a loss of £290,000 enforcement fees.	(342)	(598)
Internal Audit and Risk	Insurance and Risk	(£25,000) under budget on employees due to vacancies throughout the year (£100,000) unbudgeted recharge to the Insurance Fund (£7,000) over achieved income on SLA's.	(137)	
	Internal Audit	(£25,000) under budget on employees due to vacancies during the year (£10,000) under budget in advance of planned MTFP 13 savings £17,000 unachieved income due to loss of SLAs.	(25)	
	Corporate Fraud	£10,000 over budget due to unachieved staff turnover savings £6,000 over budget due to NFI subscription £5,000 under achieved income on recharging other bodies	21	(127)
Legal and Democratic Services	Corporate and Democratic Core	(£63,000) under budget on employees due to vacant posts in Committee Secretariat. (£57,000) under budget due to reduction in travelling and conferences. (£16,000) overachieved income due to unbudgeted Election income.	(134)	

Head of Service	Service Area	Description	(Under) / Over Budget £000	(Under) / Over Budget £000
	Legal and Other Services	(£223,000) under budget on employees due to vacant posts. £77,000 over budget due to solicitor and professional fees. £93,000 under achieved income for land charges. £50,000 unbudgeted recharge to the insurance fund. (£15,000) overachieved income in the Registration Service.	(42)	(175)
TOTAL				(1,434)

- 12 In summary, the service grouping is on track to maintain spending within its cash limit.

Capital Programme

- 13 The original Resources capital programme was £8.400 million, and this has been revised for additions, reductions, budget transfers and budget profiling. The revised budget remains at £4.746 million.
- 14 Summary financial performance to the end of December 2023 is shown below:

	Original Annual Budget 2023/24	Revised Annual Budget 2023/24	Actual Spend 31/12/2023	Remaining Budget 2023/24
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Digital & Customer Services	8,387	4,729	3,079	1,650
Corporate Finance & Commercial Services and Finance & Transactional Services	13	17	17	-
Total	8,400	4,746	3,096	1,650

- 15 The revised Resources capital budget is £4.746 million with a total expenditure to 31 December 2023 of £3.096 million (65.2%). A full breakdown of schemes and actual expenditure to 31 December 2023 is given in Appendix 2.

- 16 At year end the actual outturn performance will be compared against the revised budgets and at that time service and project managers will need to account for any budget variance.

Background papers

- County Council Report (22 February 2023) – [Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2026/27 and Revenue and Capital Budget 2023/24](#)
- Cabinet Report (13 September 2023) – [Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24 - Period to 30 June 2023](#)
- Cabinet Report (15 November 2023) – [Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24 - Period to 30 September 2023](#)
- Cabinet Report (13 March 2024) - [Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24 - Period to 31 December 2023](#)

Other useful documents

- Previous Cabinet reports / None

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The consideration of regular budgetary control reports is a key component of the Council's Corporate and Financial Governance arrangements. This report shows the forecast spend against budgets agreed by the Council in February 2023 in relation to the 2023/24 financial year.

Finance

Financial implications are detailed throughout the report which provides an analysis of the revenue and capital outturn position alongside details of balance sheet items such as earmarked reserves held by the service grouping to support its priorities.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable.

Climate Change

Not applicable.

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable.

Staffing

Not applicable.

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

The consideration of regular budgetary control reports is a key component of the Councils Corporate and Financial Governance arrangements.

Procurement

The outcome of procurement activity is factored into the financial projections included in the report.

Appendix 2: Resources Capital Programme 2023/24 – Detailed Monitoring Statement to 31 December 2023

Resources	Revised Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Remaining Budget
	2023/24	31-Dec-23	2023/24
	£000	£000	£000
Applications and Development	253	188	65
Design and Print	233	72	161
Technical Services	3,743	2,667	1,076
Digital Durham	457	118	339
Digital Engagement	43	34	9
ICT Services Include Design and Print Total	4,729	3,079	1,650
Migration of HR/Payroll Functionality	17	17	-
Financing Resources Total	17	17	-
RES Total	4,746	3,096	1,650

**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

8 April 2024



**Chief Executive's Office – Quarter 3
December 2023: Forecast of Revenue
and Capital Outturn 2023/24**

Ordinary Decision

Report of Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide details of the updated forecast revenue and capital outturn budget position for the Chief Executive's Office (CEO) service grouping, highlighting major variances in comparison with the budget based on the position to the end of December 2023.

Executive Summary

- 2 The quarter 3 outturn position shows that the service is forecasting a cash limit underspend of £0.769 million against a revised budget of £4.323 million.
- 3 The CEO cash limit balance carried forward at 31 March 2024 is forecast to be circa £0.829 million. Other earmarked reserves under the direct control of CEO are forecast to total £1.200 million at 31 March 2024.
- 4 The revised CEO capital budget is £1.892 million for 2023/24, with a total expenditure to 31 December 2023 of £0.691 million (36.52%).

Recommendation(s)

- 5 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is recommended to note the forecast of outturn position.

Background

6 County Council approved the Revenue and Capital budgets for 2023/24 at its meeting on 22 February 2023. These budgets have subsequently been revised to account for grant additions/reductions, corporate savings/adjustments, budget transfers between service groupings and budget profiling between years. This report covers the financial position for the following major budget areas maintained by the CEO service grouping:

- Revenue Budget - £4.323 million (original £0.00 million)
- Capital Programme - £1.892 million (original £0.00 million)

7 The original CEO revenue budget has been revised in year to incorporate a number of budget adjustments as follows:

	<u>£,000s</u>
Quarter 1:	
Transfer from RES – Design Services	(28)
Transfer from RES – Corporate Policy Planning and Performance	1,932
Transfer from REG – Comms and Marketing	1,935
Transfer from RES – Corporate Affairs and Management	299
Transfer to RES – Web Team	(134)
Quarter 2:	
Transfer to RES – Corporate Affairs and Management	27
Transfer from AHS – 2 x Business Analyst posts	99
Quarter 3	
23-24 Pay Award	192
TOTAL	<u>4,323</u>

The revised General Fund Budget for CEO is £4.323 million.

8 The summary financial statements contained in the report cover the financial year 2023/24 and show:

- The approved annual budget;
- The actual income and expenditure as recorded in the Council's financial management system;
- The variance between the annual budget and the forecast outturn;
- For the CEO revenue budget, adjustments for items outside of the cash limit to take into account such items as redundancies met

from the strategic reserve, capital charges not controlled by services and use of / or contributions to earmarked reserves.

- 9 The service is forecasting a cash limit underspend of £0.769 million (17.79%) against a revised budget of £4.323 million.
- 10 The tables below compare the forecast of outturn with the budget. The first table is analysed by Subjective Analysis (i.e. type of expense), and the second by service.

Type of Expenditure (Subjective Analysis) (£000's)

	2023/24 Budget £000	YTD Actual £000	QTR3 Forecast of Outturn £000	(From) / To Reser ves £000	Items Outside Cash Limit £000	Q3 Cash Limit Variance £000	Q2 Cash Limit Variance £000
Employees	4,584	3,221	4,237	-	18	(329)	(291)
Premises	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Transport	12	2	4	-	-	(8)	(4)
Supplies and Services	748	614	688	-	-	(60)	(32)
Third Party Payments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer Payments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Central Support and Capital	7	(1)	7	(352)	-	(352)	(238)
Gross Expenditure	5,351	3,838	4,936	(352)	18	(749)	(565)
Income	(1,028)	(750)	(1,048)	-	-	(20)	17
Net Expenditure	4,323	3,088	3,888	(352)	18	(769)	(548)

By Service (£000's)

	2023/24 Budget £000	YTD Actual £000	QTR3 Forecast of Outturn £000	(From) / To Reserves £000	Items Outside Cash Limit £000	Q3 Cash Limit Variance £000	Q2 Cash Limit Variance £000
CEO Management	485	438	493	-	18	26	(8)
Corporate Policy Planning and Performance	2,086	1,383	1,944	(249)	-	(391)	(304)
Comms and Marketing	1,752	1,267	1,451	(103)	-	(404)	(236)
Net Expenditure	4,323	3,088	3,888	(352)	18	(769)	(548)

- 11 The table below provides a brief commentary on the variances against the revised budget analysed by service. The table identifies variances in the core budget only and excludes items outside of the cash limit (e.g. redundancy costs) and technical accounting adjustments (e.g. capital charges):

Service	Service Area	Description	Variance (under) / over budget £000	Variance (under) / over budget £000
CEO Management	Management	£29,000 transferred to corporate contingencies for pay award relating to vacant posts	26	26
Corporate Policy Planning and Performance	Equality & Strategy	(£75,000) under budget on vacant employee posts deleted in advance of MTFP(13) savings. (£91,000) under budget on employees due to vacant posts. (£6,000) underbudget on printing and postage costs	(174)	
	Research & Intelligence	(£49,000) under budget on employees in advance of future MTFP (15) savings	(49)	
	Transformation	(£110,000) under budget on employees due to a vacancy and secondment (£23,000) unbudgeted income from Delivering Better Value fund		

Service	Service Area	Description	Variance (under) / over budget £000	Variance (under) / over budget £000
		(£33,000) unbudgeted income from Family Hubs	(168)	(391)
Communications and Marketing	Communications and Marketing	(£160,000) under budget on vacant employee posts deleted in advance of MTFP14 savings (£162,000) under budget on vacant employee posts which have recently been filled (£50,000) under budget on general supplies (£20,000) under budget on Durham County News (£30,000) unbudgeted advertising income. £20,000 under achieved income relating to internal design works.	(404)	(404)
TOTAL				(769)

- 13 In summary, the service grouping is on track to maintain spending within its cash limit.

Capital Programme

- 14 The original CEO capital programme was £0.000 million, and this has been revised for additions, reductions, budget transfers and budget profiling. The revised budget now stands at £1.892 million.
- 15 Summary financial performance to the end of December 2023 is shown below:

	Original Annual Budget 2023/24	Revised Annual Budget 2023/24	Actual Spend 31/12/2023	Remaining Budget 2023/24
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Policy, Planning & Performance – Equality	0	476	57	419
Policy, Planning & Performance	0	1,416	634	782
Total	0	1,892	691	1,201

- 16 The revised CEO capital budget is £1.892 million with a total expenditure to 31 December 2023 of £0.691 million (36.52%). A full breakdown of schemes and actual expenditure is given in Appendix 2.
- 17 At year end the actual outturn performance will be compared against the revised budgets and at that time service and project managers will need to account for any budget variance.

Background papers

- County Council Report (22 February 2023) - [Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2026/27 and Revenue and Capital Budget 2023/24](#)
- Cabinet Report (13 September 2023) –[Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24 - Period to 30 June 2023](#)
- Cabinet Report (15 November 2023) –[Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24 - Period to 30 September 2023](#)
- Cabinet Report (13 March 2024) - [Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24 - Period to 31 December 2023](#)

Other useful documents

- None

Author(s)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The consideration of regular budgetary control reports is a key component of the Council's Corporate and Financial Governance arrangements. This report shows the forecast spend against budgets agreed by the Council in February 2023 in relation to the 2023/24 financial year.

Finance

Financial implications are detailed throughout the report which provides an analysis of the revenue and capital outturn position alongside details of balance sheet items such as earmarked reserves held by the service grouping to support its priorities.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable.

Climate Change

Not applicable.

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable.

Staffing

Not applicable.

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

The consideration of regular budgetary control reports is a key component of the Councils Corporate and Financial Governance arrangements.

Procurement

The outcome of procurement activity is factored into the financial projections included in the report.

Appendix 2 Chief Executive's Office Capital Programme 2023/24 – Detailed Monitoring Statement to 31 December 2023

Chief Executive's Office	Revised Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Remaining Budget
	2023/24	31-Dec-23	2023/24
	£000	£000	£000
Corporate Business Intelligence System	1,416	634	782
Changing Places – non DCC Properties	175	57	118
Changing Places – Hardwick Park Toilet Facilities	184	-	184
Changing Places – Teesdale Leisure Centre	80	-	80
Changing Places – Dunes Café Crimdon	37	-	37
CEO Total	1,892	691	1,201

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

8 April 2024

Quarter Three, 2023/24 Performance Management Report

Ordinary Decision



Report of John Hewitt, Chief Executive

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present an overview of progress towards delivery of the key priorities within the Council Plan 2023-27 in line with the council's corporate performance framework.
- 2 The report covers performance in and to the end of quarter three, 2023/24, October to December 2023.

Executive Summary

- 3 The County Council is a key partner within the County Durham Together Partnership. Collectively partners work towards delivering a shared plan - the [County Durham Vision 2035](#). The vision document was developed with partner organisations and the public. It sets out what we would like the county to be like over the next decade and beyond. The vision is for:

a place where there are more and better jobs, people live long, and independent lives and our communities are well connected and supportive.

- 4 We have set out how the council will effectively deliver its services and its contribution to achieving this vision in our [Council Plan](#). The Council Plan is structured around five thematic areas: our economy, our environment, our people, our communities, and our council. We monitor our success through a suite of Key Performance Indicators (our corporate performance framework), which forms the basis of this report.
- 5 The [Council Plan](#) is undergoing its annual refresh and the plan for 2024-28 will be considered by Council on 28 February 2024. Subject to Council approval, it will continue to be structured around five thematic areas which, along with the objectives they contain, will remain unchanged. Our priorities, key programmes of work and associated performance management arrangements for the forthcoming four years are set out within the refreshed plan and our performance framework is now being adjusted accordingly. The

new framework will form the structure of this performance report from quarter one, 2024/25.

- 6 We are a well-functioning council in relation to performance, and continue to set our performance against characteristics of well-functioning councils as set out by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)¹ Best Value Standards and Intervention Draft Guidance. We will continue to develop the following through our performance management processes and the wider Corporate Business Intelligence Review:
 - (a) An organisational-wide approach to continuous improvement, with frequent monitoring, performance reporting and updating of the corporate and improvement plans.
 - (b) A corporate plan which is evidence based, current, realistic and enables the whole organisation's performance to be measured and held to account.
 - (c) Clear and effective mechanisms for scrutinising performance across all service areas. Performance is regularly reported to the public to ensure that citizens are informed of the quality of services being delivered.
- 7 In July 2023, the Office for Local Government (Oflog) was established as a new performance body for local government. Its purpose is to provide authoritative and accessible data and analysis about the performance of local government, and support its improvement.
- 8 Oflog's initial focus is to bring together existing data in an informative way through the [Local Authority Data Explorer](#). The first tranche of metrics, uploaded to the Data Explorer in July 2023 and incorporated within this performance report, is being expanded to cover a wider range of local government responsibilities. A second tranche of metrics is now being released and a third tranche will follow in the spring of 2024. These metrics will be incorporated into future reports as and when appropriate.

Context

- 9 The council is a large organisation providing a broad range of services, and our operating environment can at times be challenging, due largely to inflationary and demand pressures.
 - (a) We are showing strong economic performance in the county with a range of measures such as the employment rate and unemployment being favourable compared to previous years. Cultural events are well attended with local businesses enjoying their economic impact. A current challenge for the council is transitioning from European funding to national schemes such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for employment initiatives.
 - (b) Key measures around waste collection and disposal show that we are diverting a smaller proportion of waste to landfill, and contamination of

¹ [Best Value standards and intervention](#)

our household recycling continues to come down. Carbon emissions from council operations is falling but we need to accelerate our programme if we are to meet our targets. Bus patronage for our park and ride scheme and for public bus services has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. Work is going on at national, regional and local levels to help mitigate against these losses.

- (c) Demand for children's social care remains high. Processing times and re-referral rates demonstrate the effectiveness of social care provision. Care Acts assessment timeliness for adult social care clients is improving and remains an area of strong focus for us. We have experienced a substantial increase in requests for education, health and care plans for children with special educational needs and disabilities since 2019 leading to backlogs for educational psychologist advice. No applications have been processed within the government's 20-week timescale. This remains a concern. The proportion of people accessing homeless services where we have accepted the statutory duty of homelessness has increased.
- (d) The overall crime rate in County Durham has fallen and compares favourably with many council areas in the region. However, there has been a steady increase in referrals of domestic abuse to our support services. Fly-tipping reports to the council remain at an all-time low due to the proactive approach. The number of eligible private sector rented properties which are fully licensed under the selective licensing scheme is now at 43%. Timeliness of repairing all categories of highway defects are better than target. Fatalities from road traffic accidents is worse than comparators. Retail vacancies are higher than national levels although there is a varied picture across our centres.
- (e) The employee sickness absence rate is falling and is now at 11.15 days per full-time equivalent. The council continues to experience recruitment difficulties in certain occupational categories with some positions being advertised multiple times.

Recommendation

- 10 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is recommended to:
- (a) note the overall position and direction of travel in relation to quarter three performance, and the actions being taken to address areas of challenge.

Background papers

- County Durham Vision (County Council, 23 October 2019)
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s115064/Draft%20Durham%20Vision%20v10.0.pdf>

Other useful documents

- Council Plan 2023 to 2027 (current plan)
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s168768/Council%20Plan%20Refresh%20Appendix%203.pdf>
- Quarter Two, 2023/24 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s183015/Q2%202023-24%20Corporate%20Performance%20Report.pdf>
- Quarter One, 2023/24 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s178933/Q1%202023-24%20Corporate%20Performance%20Report%20-%20Cabinet%2013.09.23.pdf>
- Quarter Four, 2022/23 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s174900/Item%204%20Q4%202022-23%202%201.pdf>
- Quarter Three, 2022/23 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s166398/Corporate%20Performance%20Report%20Q2%202022-23%20v2.1.pdf>

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable.

Finance

Latest performance information is being used to inform corporate, service and financial planning.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Equality measures are monitored as part of the performance monitoring process.

Climate Change

We have declared a climate change emergency and consider the implications of climate change in our reports and decision-making.

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

A number of performance indicators and key actions relating to crime and disorder are continually monitored in partnership with the Safe Durham Partnership and its sub-groups.

Staffing

Performance against a number of relevant corporate health indicators has been included to monitor staffing issues.

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

Reporting of significant risks and their interaction with performance is integrated into the quarterly performance management report.

Procurement

Not applicable.



Corporate Performance Report

Quarter Three, 2023/24



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Executive Summary

- 1 This performance report covers the third quarter of the 2023/24 financial year (October to December 2023). It sets out our progress towards delivering the key priorities set out within our [Council Plan 2023-27](#).
- 2 Performance is reported on an exception basis with key messages structured around the five thematic areas of, our economy, our environment, our people, our communities, and our council.

Our economy

- 3 The aim of this priority is to create an inclusive economy with more and better jobs, major employment sites which cement our position as a premier place in the region to do business, a good tourism base and cultural offer, and employability support programmes which help people back into jobs or to start their own business. Our children and young people will receive the education and training required to access opportunities.

Going Well

- 4 Employments levels are within the highest levels for 20 years and unemployment remains low.
- 5 There is a growing demand for jobs and the balance within the labour market is starting to shift with more people achieving higher levels of education and training. Average wages for residents within the county are growing.
- 6 Processing times for major planning applications are now better than target following a dip last quarter.
- 7 The proportion of planning applications overturned on appeal remain well within the government's criteria.
- 8 Both the amount of investment secured for companies and the number of inward investments attracted to the county are on track to achieve their annual targets.
- 9 We have recorded increased attendances at all our cultural events strengthening our position as the culture county and contributing significantly to the local economy.

Issues we are addressing

- 10 Non-major planning applications are slightly worse than target, but work is ongoing to address this, for example, by utilising the extension of time agreements where needed.
- 11 Occupancy rates for council owned business floorspace are worse than target. This is due to new units being established but not yet let. Demand remains high and we expect the units to be occupied soon and performance to achieve target.
- 12 The transition from European Regional Development Fund to UK Shared Prosperity Fund Productivity and Growth Programme has resulted in fewer businesses being engaged as funded schemes come to an end.

Our environment

- 13 The aim of this priority is to protect our natural environment, including biodiversity and healthy ecosystems. In 2019, the council declared a climate emergency with a commitment to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2030 and contribute towards a carbon neutral county by 2045. In April 2022, the council declared an ecological emergency and committed to address ecological decline wherever possible. Our county is of significant landscape value and supports unique combinations of plant and animal species.

Going Well

- 14 Domestic waste diverted from landfill continues to be better than target and performance is improving. Kilograms of waste collected per household is reducing and contamination of recycle collection continues to fall following targeted education and enforcement activity.

Issues we are addressing

- 15 Latest data show countywide carbon emissions and those from council operations continue in a downward trajectory. Although this is positive, we need to accelerate our programme if we are to meet our council 2030 carbon target of a maximum of 21,158 tonnes each year, which equates to a reduction of approximately 3,200 tonnes per year. Recent government policy decisions including the relaxation of the phasing out of petrol/diesel vehicles together with a lack of any new major funding for councils for carbon reduction has resulted in a slowing of progress.
- 16 Household recycling rates are positive in comparison to North East authorities but remain worse than national and statistical nearest neighbours' averages. The council awaits further detail on the national standardisation of recycling collection, including the introduction of food waste collections. In places like Wales this has had the effect of increase overall recycling rates and narrow the gap between the worst and best performing councils.
- 17 Park and ride patronage remains worse than pre-pandemic levels following the systemic change in working patterns after lockdown restrictions were lifted, and people returned to work on a hybrid working pattern. A scheme to extend Sniperley Park and Ride is being progressed which will safeguard increased demand from future development in the city and help to reduce congestion and greenhouse gas emission within the historic centre itself.

Our people

- 18 This priority aims to help our residents live long and independent lives and remain in good health for as long as possible. We will protect and improve health by tackling the leading causes of illness and early death, inequalities and the challenges around mental health. We will ensure a sustainable high-quality care market and invest in a multi-million pound programme to transform our leisure centre venues.

Going Well

- 19 Demand for early help and statutory support for children and families remains consistent with previous trends. Improved practice has led to a consistently low re-

referral rate for statutory children's social care. This means fewer children and their families require further support from safeguarding services following support.

- 20 Timeliness of completion of Care Act assessments has increased by more than 10 percentage points since quarter two, from 54.2% to 65.2% and is the highest for over two years. This remains a key area of focus for the service.
- 21 In the latest quarter, more than two thirds of adult care service users received an annual assessment or review in the previous year. This has been a key area of improvement for the service and this quarter's result is the highest recorded performance for over two years and demonstrates the impact of the new review teams established early in 2023. This remains a key area of focus.

Issues we are addressing

- 22 Although overall statutory demand for children's social care remains consistent, the number of children and young people receiving intensive support (on a Child Protection Plan and taken into our care) is relatively high. The service is reviewing these trends and learning will feed into strategic placement sufficiency work and preparation for the implementation of the Care Review proposals.
- 23 Requests for new Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) increased substantially between 2019 and 2022 and have continued at a very high level in 2023, which is impacting on capacity in the service to achieve timely assessments. A comprehensive action plan is in place which seeks to address these challenges and improve timeliness rates, particularly in relation to the backlog for educational psychologist advice, this will continue to cause a timeliness issue until the backlog of requests has been cleared.
- 24 Percentage of children of a healthy weight in County Durham has reduced since the pandemic and the gap with England has widened. The percentage of adults who are overweight or obese has also increased over the same period. 'Enabling a healthy weight for all' is a priority of the County Durham [Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28](#) and a new physical activity strategy 'Moving Together in County Durham' will be launched in spring 2024.
- 25 The number of people discharged into reablement demonstrates little change over the last three years and is low when compared historically. A review of reablement services has been undertaken to help to understand change in demand to the service as well as staff turnover and local market capacity. Outcomes for older people that do receive reablement/rehabilitation services remain strong and better than target.
- 26 The proportion of homelessness cases where statutory homelessness duty has been accepted has increased this quarter due to the housing team significantly reducing the number of lost contact cases. We have secured government funding to acquire support and additional temporary accommodation and bedspaces.
- 27 High levels of staff sickness and vacancies resulted in a reduction in response times from our Care Connect service to below target. Work is ongoing to fill vacancies and address sickness absence.

Our communities

- 28 The aim of this priority is to ensure our communities are well connected and supportive of each other, with vibrant and accessible towns and villages which are well-used, clean, attractive and safe. We will support our most vulnerable residents, particularly those isolated or financially vulnerable. We will maintain a strong focus on tackling poverty throughout the cost-of-living crisis.

Going Well

- 29 The time to repair highways maintenance defects across all categories are better than or near target.
- 30 The overall crime rate for County Durham has fallen and is lower than the majority of comparators in the North East region.
- 31 We continue to see lower levels of fly-tipping following a proactive approach towards perpetrators.

Issues we are addressing

- 32 Forty-three percent of private rented sector properties covered by the selective licensing scheme are now licensed. Our enforcement team continues to target properties not yet licensed.
- 33 On average 16% of town centre retail units in the county are vacant, compared to 13.9% nationally. Vacancy rates are significantly higher in Bishop Auckland, Newton Aycliffe and Peterlee. We continue to offer support through council led initiatives such as the Towns and Villages Programme, the Targeted Business Improvement Scheme and town centre masterplans. Additionally, the government identified Bishop Auckland as eligible for funding from their £3.6 billion Towns Fund.
- 34 Public bus patronage remains lower than pre-Covid levels and is not likely to return in the medium-term. The government extended its £2 bus fare cap and we continue to work in partnership with other regional councils to implement the North East Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- 35 Fatalities from road traffic accidents have increased. We continue to support a reduction in road traffic casualties through a range of education programmes and campaigns.
- 36 Although fewer incidents of domestic abuse are being reported to police, there has been a steady increase in referrals to Harbour Support Services.

Our Council

- 37 The aim of this priority is to be an excellent council with effective governance arrangements, a good grip on our performance and finances, a workforce fit for the future making best use of the latest technology to provide an effective service and that listens to the views of our residents and service users.

Going Well

- 38 The decreasing trend in our sickness absence rate experienced over the last four quarters has continued into quarter three. Sickness is now 11.15 days per full-time

equivalent (FTE), 0.9 days per FTE lower than the same period last year. This is mainly due to fewer Covid-19 absences.

- 39 Over the last 12 months, 62% of employees recorded no sickness.
- 40 Quarter three collection rates for council tax and business rates remain consistent with previous years, but below pre-pandemic levels due to the cost-of-living pressures. Latest benchmarking data suggests our performance is in line with other councils across the North East.
- 41 However, council tax collection is becoming more difficult with household finances under greater pressure as mortgage and rent payments increase. To support those residents who 'can't pay' rather than 'won't pay', sustainable payment arrangements are available, but lower instalment amounts over a longer period will impact collection rates in the short to medium-term.
- 42 We are also maintaining strong support through our financial support schemes. Almost 54,000 residents are receiving support towards council tax bills of more than £63 million (council tax reduction scheme) and a further £1.6 million has been spent supporting those who do not qualify for 100% reduction.
- 43 £9.3 million has been allocated through the Household Support Fund (HSF) including support for families claiming free school meals (£150 per child during the financial year to date). Payments of almost £1 million for Discretionary Housing, £187,000 for Daily Living Expenses (DLE), and £340,000 in Settlement Grants have been made since April.
- 44 We expect demand for financial support (particularly DLE and HSF) to increase once the government's cost-of-living payments cease. However, at the time of writing, the council has yet to receive any update regarding the future of the HSF (current scheme ends on 31 March 2024) or the continuation of the cost-of-living payments into 2024/25.
- 45 Due to the uncertainty, we are now planning for the switch from this additional support and are working with third sector partners to determine what support will be available without the Household Support Fund funding. We have secured circa £1,000,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to deliver additional initiatives with a focus on food poverty alleviation with projects planned for delivery during 2024/25.
- 46 New claims (housing benefit and council tax reduction) continue to increase but the time taken to process benefit payments continues to be better than target across all measures. Improved performance is particularly noticeable across new claims for housing benefit, 87% received in the last nine months were processed within 14 days, compared to 62% for the same period last year.
- 47 During the 12 months ending 31 December, 82% of telephone calls answered by customer services were answered within three minutes (better than the 77% reported in quarter two). During quarter three, 91% of telephone calls answered by customer services were answered within three minutes. Although there was variation between telephone lines, performance was never lower than 90% except for one line (welfare assistance answered 76% within three minutes, better than the 63% reported in quarter two).

- 48 The proportion of contact that is digital has been increasing over the last few quarters and is now 37%. It is lower than the proportion recorded two to three years ago, but this is mainly due to a drop in CRM service requests post-pandemic – of which around 70% are requested digitally. This reduction mainly relates to those service requests created at the beginning of the pandemic which are now redundant.
- 49 Forty-three percent of service request types, equating to around 59% of service requests received during quarter three, can be assessed against a performance standard. 78% met the performance standard during quarter three, compared to 72% during quarter two. However, 29 service areas (equating to 6,619 service requests or 12%) did not in more than half of cases.
- 50 Satisfaction with overall service delivery remains high - 83% for those responding through our emailed survey and 80% for those responding through our newly introduced text survey. 76% of customers who gave us a star rating system, rated us as five star – the highest proportion since star ratings were introduced.
- 51 Over the last two years, the number of corporate complaints has steadily decreased and is now 12% lower (350 fewer complaints). This is mainly due to receiving fewer complaints about missed collections. The service receiving the most corporate complaints continues to be refuse and recycling, mainly due to not emptying the customer's bin (with some customers disputing our claim the bin was contaminated). Complaints reaching the Local Government Ombudsman remains static at around 3% (around 77 each year).
- 52 We continue to be one of the highest performing councils in the country for registering births and deaths. During December 2023, we registered 98% of births and 71% of deaths in line with the national target, the national average was 93% and 51% respectively.
- 53 More of our employees are enrolling on an apprenticeship and our retention rate for new apprentices has increased to 76%. To date, 36 employers across the county have applied for an apprenticeship levy transfer - 12 applications have been accepted and approved.

Issues we are addressing

- 54 Although there has been a slight decrease in the proportion of complaints progressing to independent investigation, the proportion upheld has increased from 24% to 29%. The main reasons they were upheld were time taken to respond, not keeping the customer informed of progress, and lack of communication.
- 55 Recruiting and retaining employees remains challenging with specific posts difficult to recruit to (such as social work, culture, sport and tourism, residential workers, and planning and environmental health). We continue to promote the council as an employer of choice, support services with dedicated recruitment campaigns, and additional measures have been put in place to help address recruitment challenges.

Risk Management

- 56 The government's statutory guidance for best value authorities sets out the characteristics of a well-functioning authority. This details the arrangements that councils should have in place for robust governance and scrutiny including how risk awareness and management should inform decision making. The latest [Strategic Risk](#)

[Management Progress Report](#) provides an insight into the work carried out by the Corporate Risk Management Group between June and September 2023.

Our Economy

Priority Aims:

County Durham has a thriving and inclusive economy with more and better jobs and fewer people suffering from the hardships of poverty and deprivation. We are continuing to,

- deliver a range of employment sites across the county
- deliver a strong, competitive economy where County Durham is a premier place in the North East to live and do business
- ensure a broader experience for residents and visitors to the county
- ensure young people will have access to good quality education, training and employment
- help all people into rewarding work
- ensure fewer people will be affected by poverty and deprivation within the county
- improve employment opportunities for disabled people

National, Regional and Local Picture

- 57 Although there is strong economic performance across a range of performance measures, there is variation within the county and across the region compared to national levels.
- 58 There has been strong demand for development land as well as industrial and office premises of all sizes - jobs have increased 3.7% in the county since 2010. Employment is significantly higher (70.8%) than 20 years ago and unemployment is low (3.5%), which reflects national trends (75.9% and 3.9% respectively).
- 59 Our manufacturing sector, which has remained strong during the last few challenging years, is innovating, driving green growth and supporting a range of other sectors such as logistics and business services. With rising energy costs, businesses have invested to reduce energy usage, costs and carbon emissions. However, the last few years have been particularly challenging for the retail, hospitality and public sector.
- 60 There is a growing demand for workers in the county and the balance of jobs is starting to shift with more people achieving higher levels of education and training, and moving into better paid jobs. We continue to lose many people to urban areas which offer higher wages and a greater choice of private sector jobs.
- 61 Although average wages in the county are growing (£29,537, 2023), they remain low compared to the national level (£35,106) and the cost-of-living is a long-term problem, especially for the large numbers of people with health conditions, disabilities, and caring responsibilities.

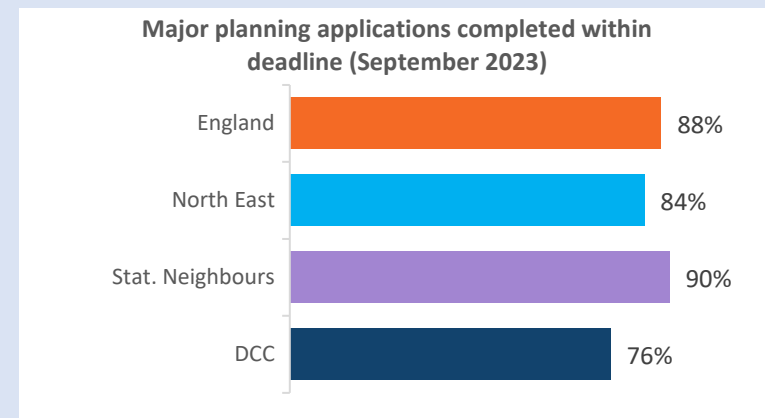
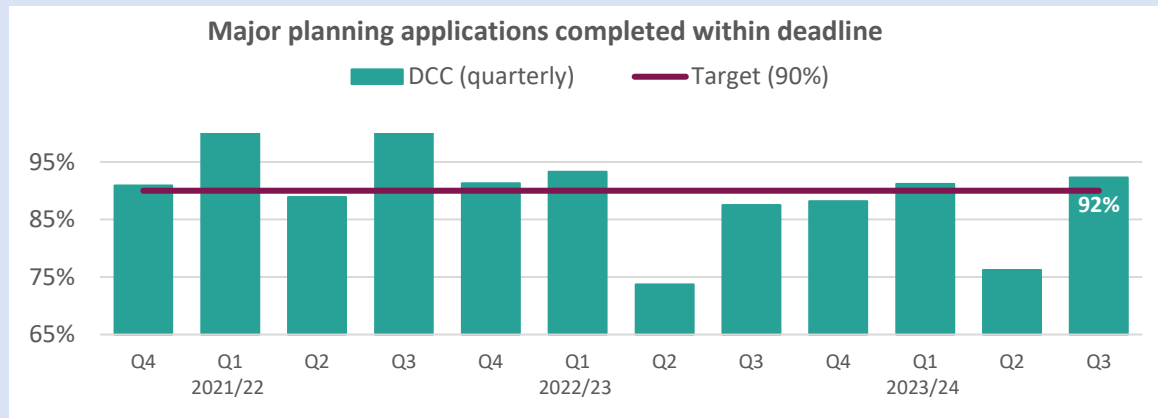
Economic Growth Dashboard: Planning Applications

(Oflog measures)

(discrete quarterly data / benchmarking data 30 September 2023)

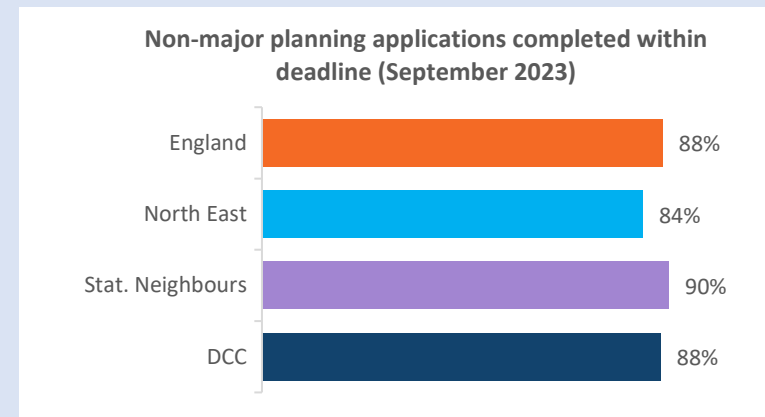
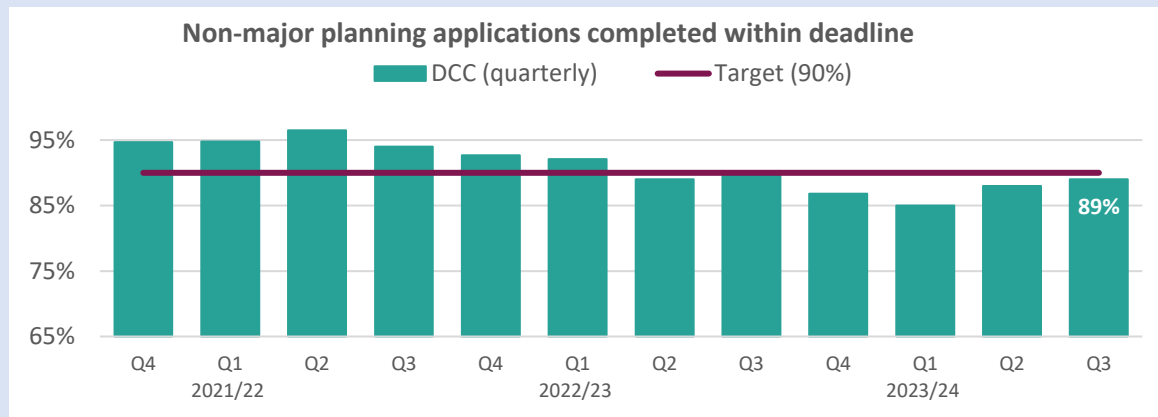
Major Planning Applications

- 92.3% (25 out of 27) determined in deadline.
- Processes now embedded to ensure Extension of Time agreements are in place where it is not possible to complete a consideration within the deadline.



Non-major Planning Applications

- 89% (431 out of 482) determined in deadline.
- We will continue to utilise the Extension of Time agreements process to ensure decisions are in deadline.



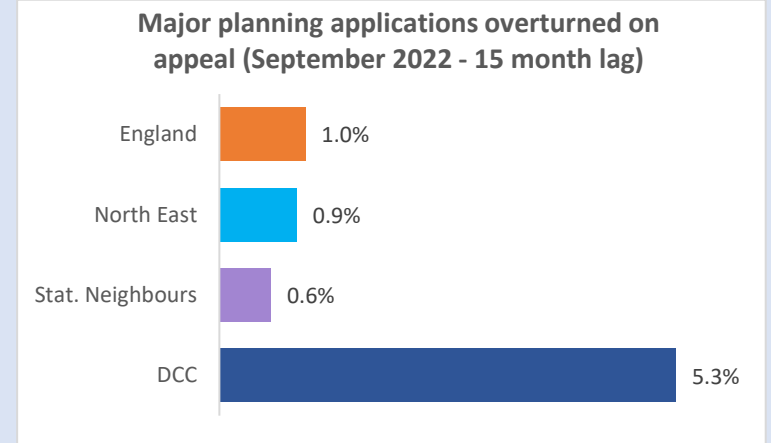
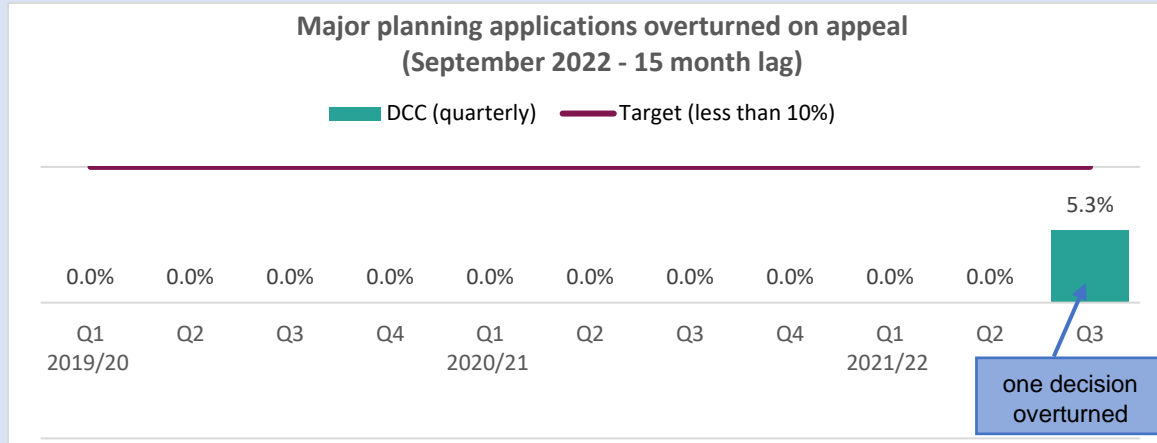
Economic Growth Dashboard: Planning Application Appeals

(Oflog measures)

(discrete quarterly data / benchmarking data 30 September 2022)

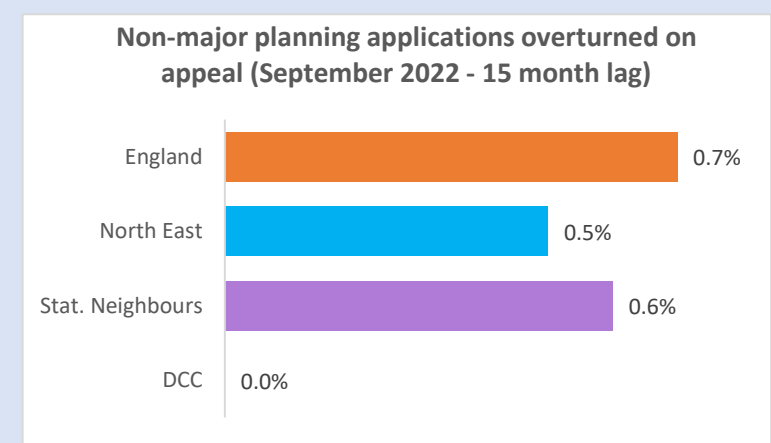
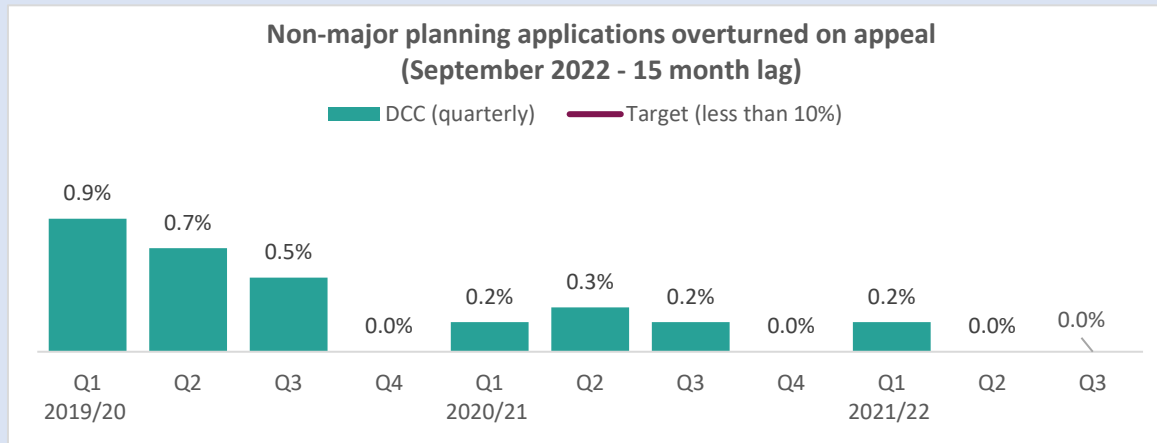
Major planning applications overturned on appeal

- One of 19 decisions was overturned (5.3%).



Non-major planning applications overturned on appeal

- Of the 464 decisions none were overturned.



Planning Applications

- 62 Various measures relating to planning (processing of applications, appeals and the date our local plan was adopted) are now included in Oflog's [Local Authority Data Explorer](#).
- 63 During quarter three, 92% of major planning applications were determined within 13 weeks (25 of 26 applications). Although performance is better than quarter two and the 90% target, the most recent benchmarking data (September 2023) shows our performance is worse than the national average, North East average and our statistical neighbours. To further improve performance, we are ensuring officers request Extension of Time Agreements where it is not possible to complete a consideration within the deadline.
- 64 During the same period, 89% of non-major applications were determined within deadline (431 of 482). Performance was marginally worse than the 90% target and although the most recent benchmarking data (September 2023) shows our performance to be worse than the national average and our statistical neighbours, it is better than the North East average. We continue to monitor officer workloads to ensure decisions are made in deadline as well as utilising the Extension of Time agreements process.
- 65 There is a significant data lag on planning applications overturned on appeal. This is because applicants are allowed nine months following a decision to submit an appeal, and the Planning Inspectorate has six months to make a decision. Latest data (July 2022 to September 2022) shows our performance, for both major and non-major applications, is better than the government's designation criteria of less than 10%.
- 66 The most recent benchmarking data (September 2022) shows our performance for major planning applications overturned on appeal was worse than all our benchmarking groups (North East, nationally and statistical neighbours). However, this relates to only one appeal being overturned out of 19 decisions made (5.3%).
- 67 Over the same time period, none of the 465 decisions for non-major applications were overturned and we performed better than all our benchmarking groups.

Investments

- 68 Business Durham secured £750,000 of investment for companies during quarter three, bringing the year-to-date figure to £3.7 million. Although quarter three performance was worse than the profiled target of £1.25 million, performance remains on track to achieve the annual target of £5 million.
- 69 Investment included Finance Durham Fund investment of £500,000 for one company, along with grants paid out through the County Durham Growth Fund.
- 70 Business Durham supported two inward investments during quarter three (Oracle Drive Systems Ltd and Landmark Power Holdings Ltd). This is in line with the projected target (two), meaning we remain on track to achieve the annual target (10).

Business Durham floor space

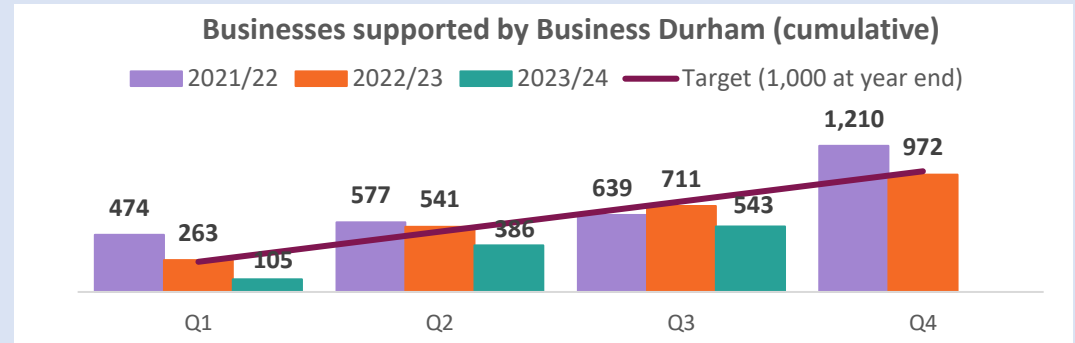
- 71 Floorspace of Business Durham's office and industrial portfolio has increased with new units at Station Place and two new offices at the Durham Dales Centre. The additional floorspace has reduced the occupancy rate to 90%, worse than the target of 95%. However, demand remains high and we expect these to be occupied soon.

Business Support and Job Creation Dashboard

(year to date ending 31 December 2023)

Business support through Business Durham

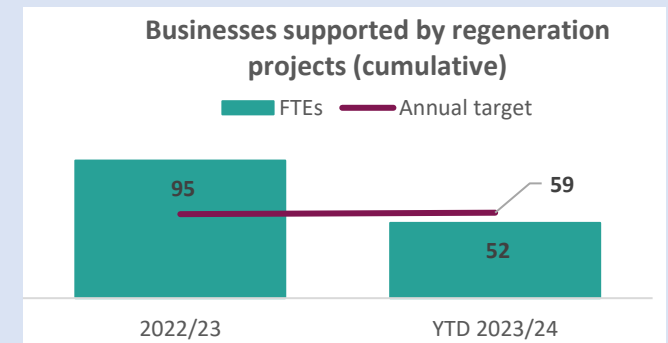
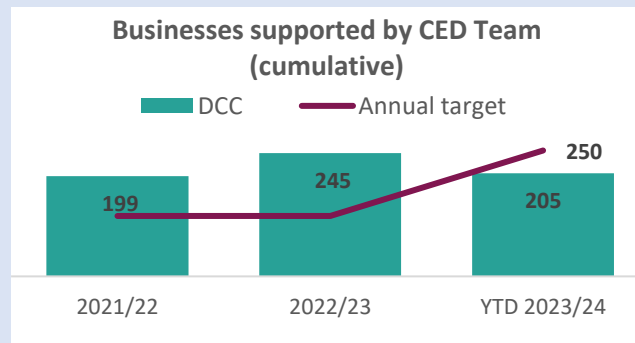
- In quarter one, fewer businesses were supported as most ERDF funded schemes ended and there was a transition period to the new UKSPF Productivity and Growth Programme.
- Engagement in the third quarter was delivered through networking events, conferences, direct one to one and support through funded programmes.



Business support through regeneration

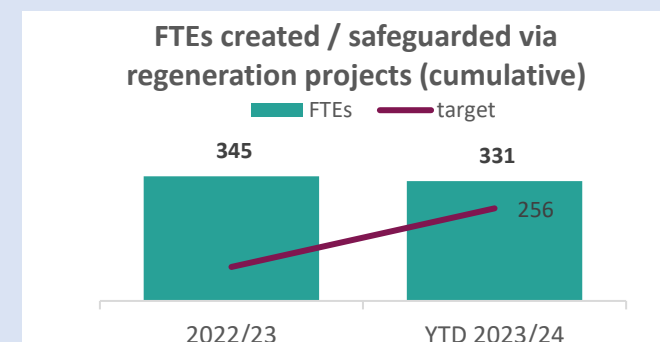
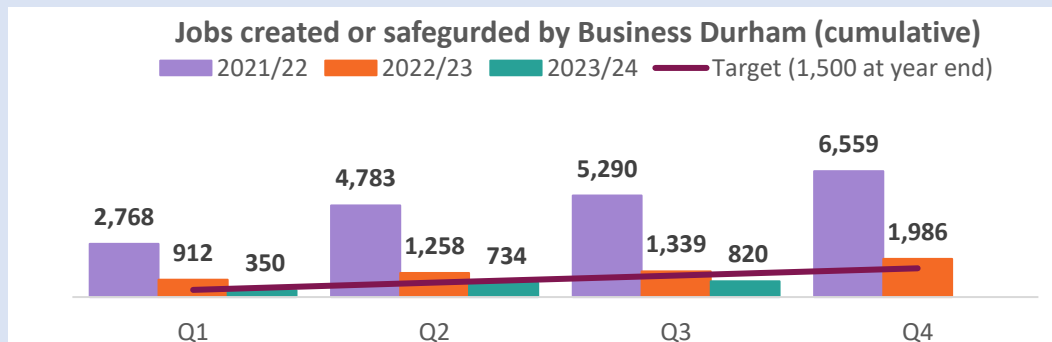
On track to achieve annual targets for businesses supported in 2023/24 through our regeneration projects and the Community Economic Team (CED). During quarter two we supported:

- 68 new retail businesses via CED Team.
- 20 businesses via regeneration scheme.
- A further four schemes currently on site.



Jobs created/safeguarded

It is anticipated the annual target will be achieved by year-end. Target has already been achieved for regeneration projects.



Businesses supported and jobs created/safeguarded

- 72 Between April and December 2023, we recorded 543 engagements, delivered using a range of methods including networking events, conferences and direct one-to-one support through funded programmes. Performance is worse than the target of 750 engagements due to schemes funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) coming to an end and the transition to the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Productivity and Growth Programme.
- 73 During quarter three, 157 businesses were engaged (including 26 intensively assisted), worse than the profiled target of 250. Although 86 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs were created or safeguarded as a result (86 created and 0 safeguarded) this was worse than the period target of 375.
- 74 We also engaged with 68 new retail businesses, and through our regeneration schemes supported 20 businesses² creating or safeguarding 161 FTE jobs. All schemes are progressing as expected, with the year to date position on track to achieve annual targets for businesses supported. 311 jobs have been created or safeguarded so far this year, already better than the annual target of 256.

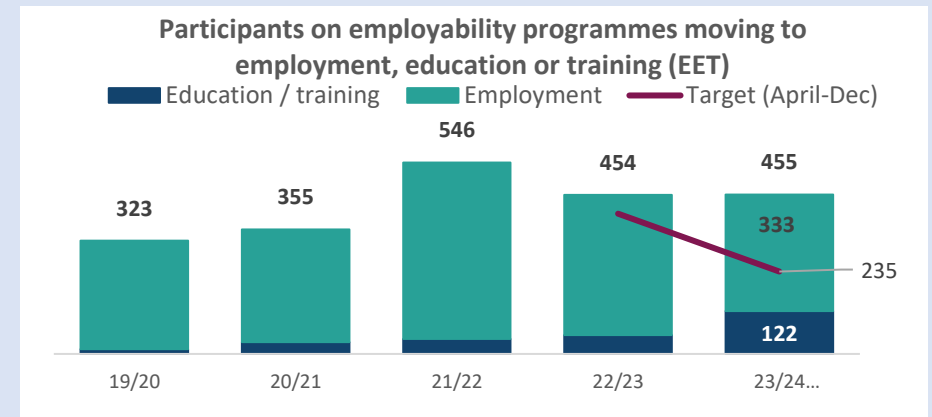
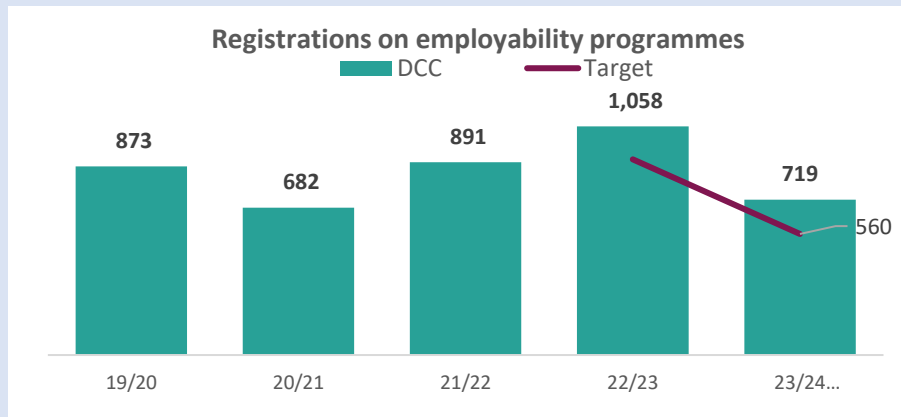
² two via Targeted Business Improvement Schemes; 12 via Towns & Villages Programme; three via Seaham Townscape Heritage Programme (with a further four currently on site); two via Conservation Area Grant Scheme; one via Property Re-use Scheme

Employability and Skills Dashboard

(year to date ending 31 December 2023)

Employability programmes

- European funding ended December 2023 with outputs for the final year (April-December 2023) exceeding annual targets.
- Employability team and delivery partners worked closely with clients in the final quarter to secure positive outcomes before funding ended.
- UK Shared Prosperity funding in place to deliver programmes from January 2024 to March 2025 and arrangements in place to report outputs from quarter four.



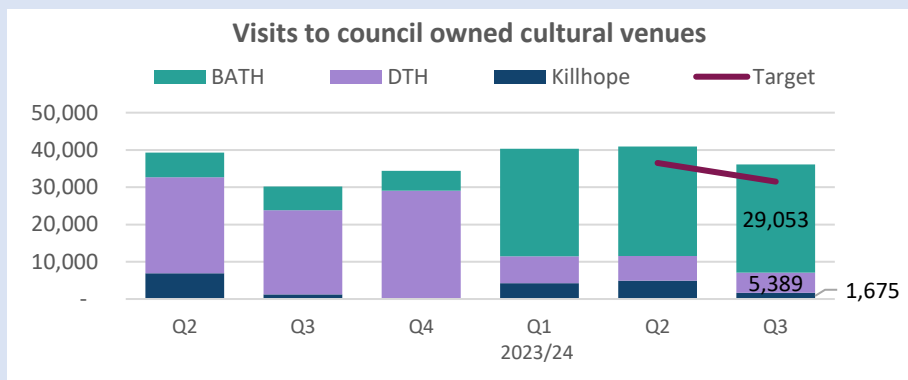
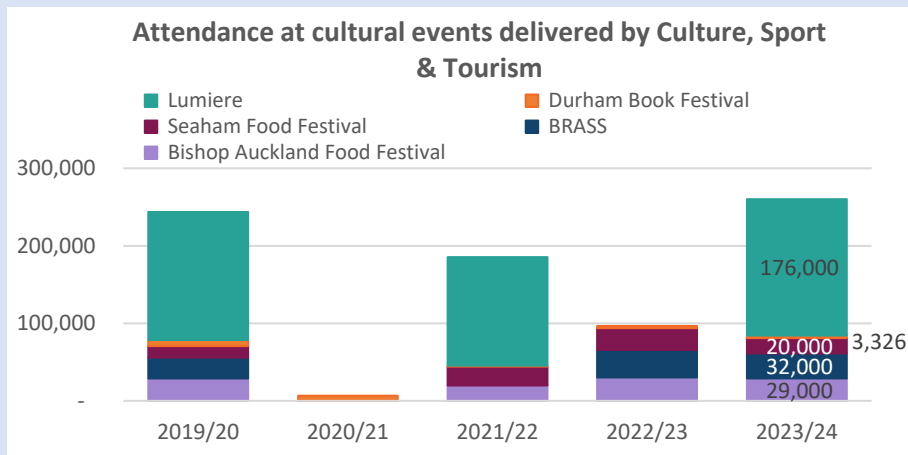
Employability programmes

- 75 European funding to deliver employability programmes ended 31 December 2023. Performance (April-December 23) exceeded targets, with 719 registrations (against a target of 560) and 455 clients moving into employment (against a target of 235). The employability team and delivery partners worked closely with clients in the final quarter to secure positive outcomes before funding ended.
- 76 Within these programmes, Durham Advance and L!NKCD initiatives were five-year programmes and over this time successfully supported 2,172 individuals and 1,486 individuals respectively to overcome the barriers that prevented them from re-entering the labour market. Of those supported through Durham Advance, 1,016 moved into employment, better than programme target of 992, and 556 moved into employment via the L!NKCD programme, also better than target of 337.
- 77 Recent funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) has extended delivery of employability programmes beyond December 2023 to March 2025; delivery of the new programme commenced in January 2024. The main focus of the UKSPF is to support economically inactive clients to move closer to the labour market and transition them into employment.

Cultural Offer Dashboard: cultural events, venues and libraries

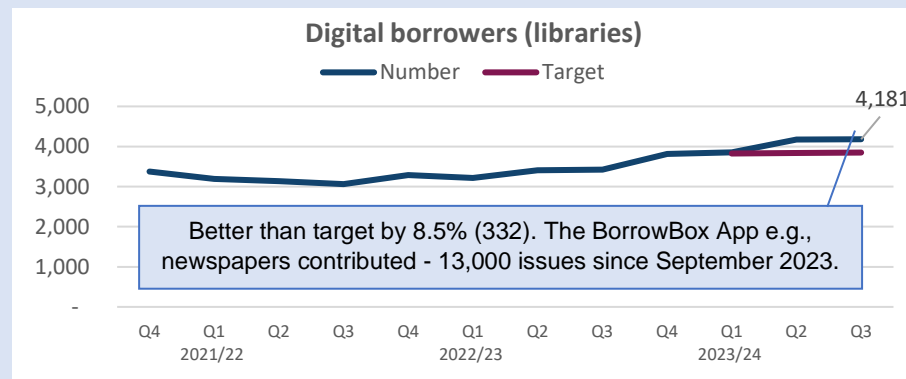
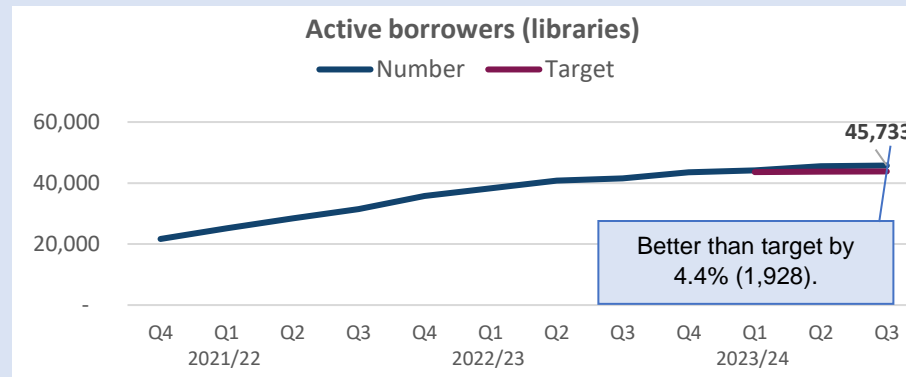
(year to date ending 31 December 2023 / discrete quarterly data)

Cultural events and venues



- Fewer cinema screenings at Bishop Auckland Town Hall (BATH) due to broken projector and scheduled closures at Durham Town Hall (DTH) contributed to reduced visitor figures.
- Killhope better than target for 2023 season (April-October) by 9% (911), with 10,911 visits. Killhope opened for an extra week during half term, with extra events and good weather increasing visitors.
- Capital works are ongoing to improve access to Killhope.

Libraries



Reporting dates of official figures:

Quarter two	Quarter three
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bishop Auckland Food Festival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BRASS Festival • Seaham Food Festival • Durham Book Festival • Lumiere (biennial)

Note - Durham Town Hall was under-reported in 2022/23, issues now rectified.

Cultural events

- 78 Our continued investment in our cultural events programme strengthens Durham's position as the 'culture' county and demonstrates the council's ongoing commitment to culture-led regeneration.
- 79 Our 2023 festivals and events programme was attended by 260,236 people, 41% more than 2021 (75,014). However, there was no BRASS festival in 2021 due to Covid so if we adjust the figures to account for the 32,000 attendees to BRASS in 2023, a more accurate comparison would be an increase of 23% (43,014).
- 32,000 people attended the week-long BRASS festival in July 2023. This is more than last year (24,202) despite unfavourable weather conditions affecting some of the outdoor events.

Direct economic impact when held in 2022	Direct economic impact when held in 2023	Council investment
£257,179	£602,427	£120,000

As part of the education programme for the festival, BRASS engaged with around 15,000 children and young people across 63 schools.

100% of artists and 97% of visitors rated the whole experience positively, and 98% of visitors felt the festival was a worthwhile event for the council to support. Visitors to the festival thought the quality of performances was a standout strength, and the performing artists themselves valued the opportunity to play alongside other brass musicians.

- 20,000 people attended the two-day Seaham Food Festival in August 2023. Impacted by heavy rainfall, attendance was worse than last year (28,120).

Direct economic impact when held in 2022	Direct economic impact when held in 2023	Council investment
£347,831	£253,642	£75,000

100% of visitors and traders rated the whole experience positively and 96% felt it was a worthwhile event for the council to support. Event staff and volunteers, and the overall quality of the festival were both identified as standout features of the festival.

- 3,326 people attended the two-day Durham Book Festival in October 2023. The festival offered 35 events and more than 40 authors. A full evaluation will be available in quarter four.
- 176,000 visitors attended Lumiere, the County's biennial light art festival, in November 2023. This is 36,000 more than 2021 when Lumiere was last held. The programme was the biggest yet, featuring more than 40 light installations and extending beyond the city to Bishop Auckland. A full evaluation will be provided at quarter four.

Visits to council owned cultural venues (BATH, Durham Town Hall, Killhope)

- 80 During quarter three, 36,117 people visited our cultural venues. This is slightly worse than target (-1.6%, -583) but better than the same period last year (+13.4%, +4,260).

- 81 During quarter three, visits were affected by a broken projector at Bishop Auckland Town Hall which reduced cinema screenings, and planned temporary closures at Durham Town Hall for refurbishment works (no bookings accepted during this period). However, works were postponed due to resource issues and are being rescheduled. The planned works were not considered when setting targets as they had not yet been scheduled into the work programme.
- 82 Killhope lost 31 trading days to inclement weather during the 2023 season (April-October). However, visits were better than target, mainly due to the site remaining open for an extra week at the end of the season to take advantage of half term. Although the site is now closed until 29 March, when the 2024 season commences, works are ongoing to improve access to the site.

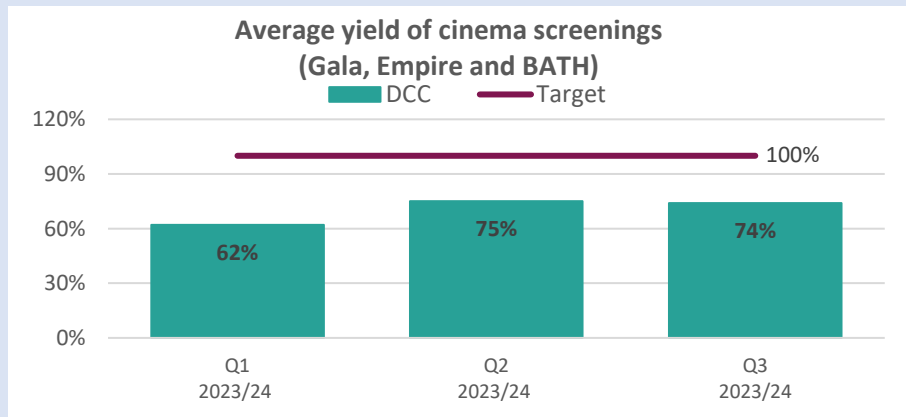
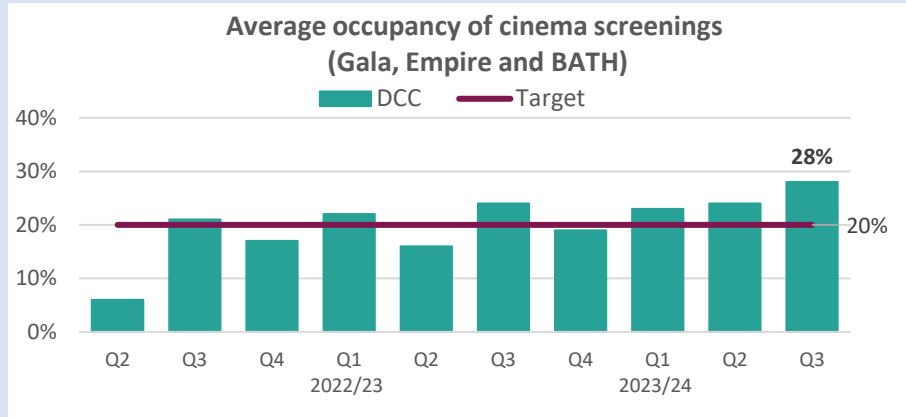
Libraries

- 83 Both active borrowers and digital borrowers performed better than target again this quarter, with 45,733 (+4.4%, 1,928) and 4,181 (+8.6%, 332) borrowers, respectively.
- 84 Active borrower numbers are still not back to pre-Covid levels but continue to follow an upward trend quarter on quarter.
- 85 The increase in digital borrowers is mainly due to an increased digital offer, which includes the addition of newspapers to the BorrowBox App which has driven over 13,000 issues since September 2023.

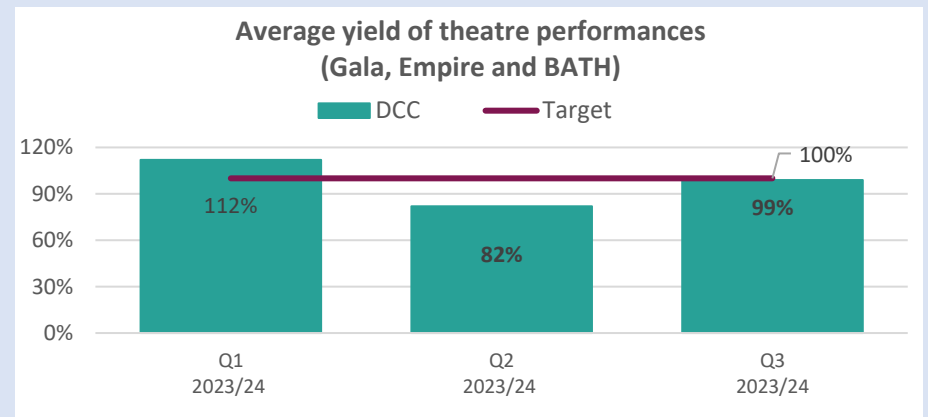
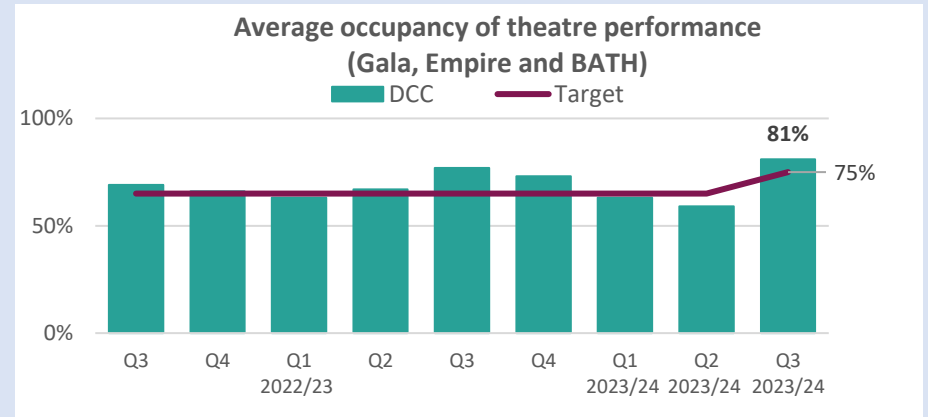
Cultural Offer Dashboard: cinemas and theatres

(discrete quarterly data)

Cinemas



Theatres



* yield = proportion of potential income achieved

Cinemas: Gala, Bishop Auckland Town Hall and Empire

- 86 Although special cinema screenings at the Gala and Empire for Christmas resulted in average occupancy rates being better than target during quarter three, average yield is worse than target.
- 87 Although we continued to develop event cinema (supported by our new marketing strategy) at the Gala and Empire, a broken projector at Bishop Auckland Town Hall (BATH) reduced cinema screenings (and impacted ticket sales). Promotion of the BATH cinema offer will resume once the issue with the projector is resolved.

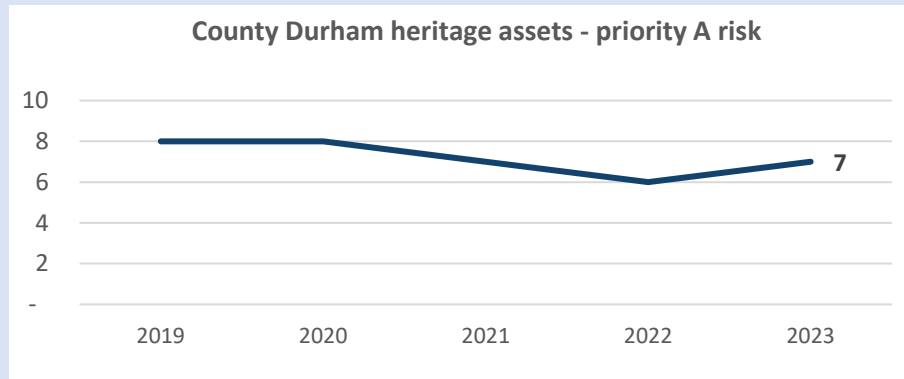
Theatres: Gala, Bishop Auckland Town Hall and Empire

- 88 During quarter three, the average occupancy rate across all theatre performances was 81%, better than target (75%) and better than the same period last year. A successful Christmas season at both the Gala and Empire contributed to the increase with two pantomimes at 80% and 85% capacity and a children's Christmas show at 96% capacity.
- 89 Average yield across all theatre performances was strong, with 99% of tickets sold (slightly worse than the 100% target) and ticket sales better than the same period last year. The ongoing development of the programme at BATH impacted overall ticket sales this quarter, however, we continue to work with the new Audience Development Manager to better understand our customer base and develop more focused programming.

Cultural Offer Dashboard: Heritage Assets

(annual data as at October 2023)

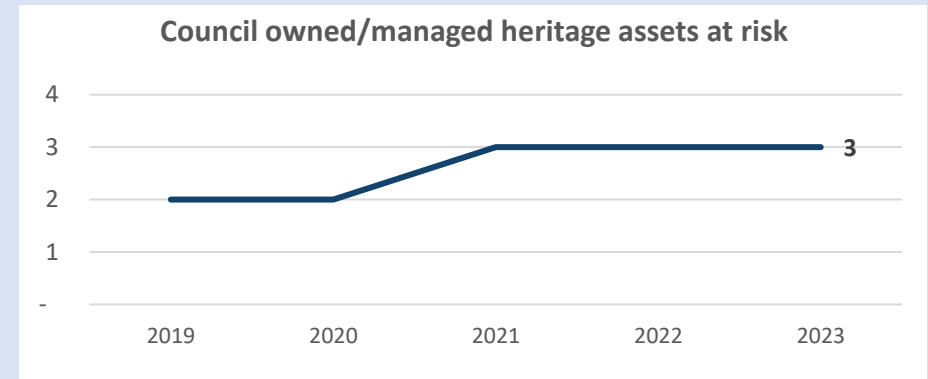
County Durham Heritage Assets



- 51 heritage assets on the 2023 Heritage at Risk register
- Seven are identified as Priority A

A site that has been identified as Priority A is at immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric and there is no solution agreed.

Heritage Assets owned or managed by the council



- Three heritage assets are listed on the Heritage at Risk register:
 - The coal drops at Shildon
 - The grange and chapel at Bearpark
 - The park level lead mine at Killhope Burn

Historic England produce The Heritage at Risk Register annually, it includes historic buildings and sites that are at risk of loss through neglect, decay or development, or are vulnerable to becoming so

Heritage Assets

- 90 Fifty-one heritage assets within County Durham are included on the heritage at risk register, three more than the previous year. One asset was removed and four added - all connected to sections of the Stockton to Darlington railway.
- 91 Of these assets, seven are priority A – one more than the previous year. The addition is the church of St Anne in Bishop Auckland market place.
- 92 Of the 51 identified assets, the Council owns or manages three. These are:
- [Shildon Coal Drops](#) which has improved from poor to fair condition,
 - [The Grange and Chapel, Bearpark](#) which is generally satisfactory with significant localised problems and vandalism but is declining.
 - [Park Level lead mine with ore works on Killhope Burn](#) which is also generally satisfactory with significant localised problems and is declining.

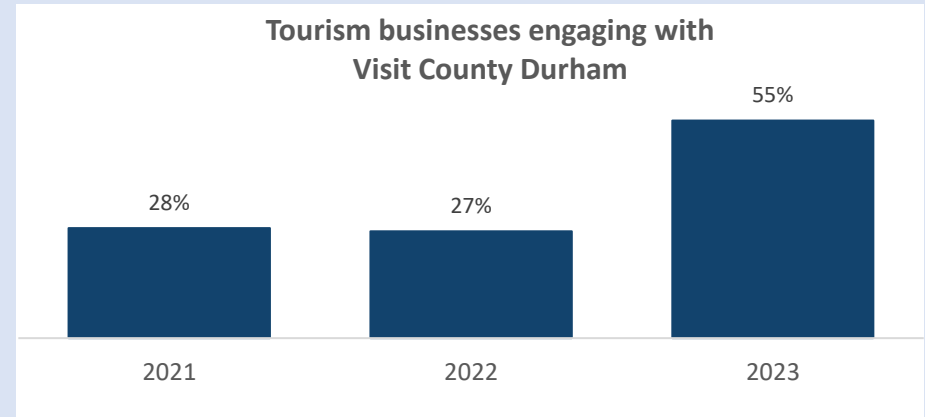
Visitor Economy Dashboard

(annual data as at 31 December 2023)

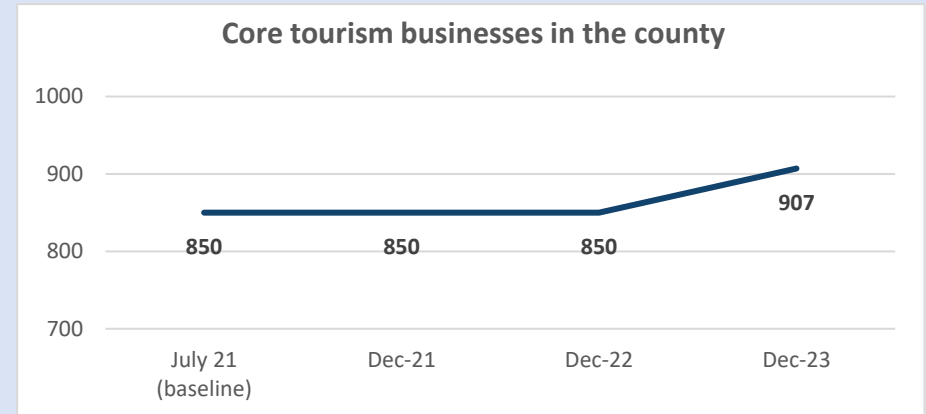
Tourism Businesses

- Visit County Durham (VCD) actively engages with 55% (498) tourism businesses via our paid for partnership scheme.
- 2023 is not comparable to previous years due to re-calculation of self-catering engagement through self-catering agencies and attractions and their relationship with VCD.
- Broader engagement extends to 90% out tourism businesses through local business support programmes and national initiatives targeted at the visitor economy.
- VCD also works with 42 supplier partners who provide B2B* products and services to our tourism businesses.

* B2B (business to business) refers to selling products and services directly between two businesses as opposed to between businesses and customers



Note: Previous years' engagement not comparable due to re-calculation of self-catering engagement with VCD in 2023.

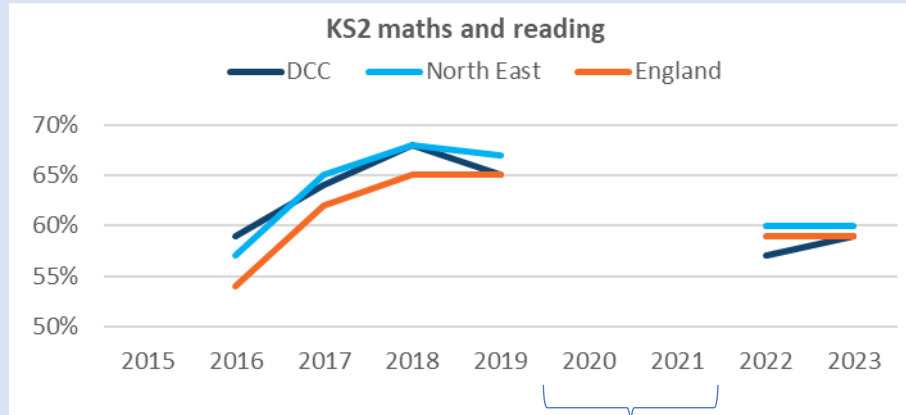


Tourism Business Engagement

- 93 As at 31 December 2023, there were 907 core tourism businesses across the county, compared to 850 in 2022. The increase is due to more self-catering establishments being identified or opening.
- 94 Through our paid for partnership, 498 (55%) tourism businesses are actively engaged with Visit County Durham (VCD). Although this is an increase of 268 on the previous year, the increase is mainly due to a recalculation of self-catering engagement through Self-Catering Agencies and Attractions and their relationship with VCD and therefore not comparable. The new calculation counts individual businesses in the VCD Partnership engaged through a Self-Catering Agency as we work with and promote each business separately.
- 95 Broader active engagement extends to over 90% of tourism businesses through local business support programmes and national initiatives targeted at the visitor economy. VCD also works with 42 supplier partners who provide B2B products and services to our tourism businesses. B2B refers to selling products and services directly between two businesses as opposed to between businesses and customers.

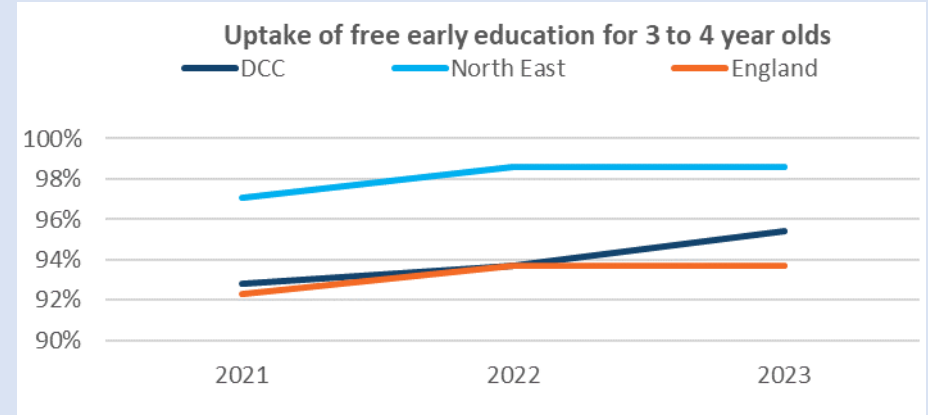
Education Dashboard

(annual data - provisional)



2020 and 2021 assessments suspended due to Covid-19

- The proportion of Key Stage 2 children (11 year olds) achieving 'expected' standards in maths and reading at Key Stage 2 improved from 57% in 2022 to 59% in 2023 eliminating the gap with England.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, 73% of pupils met the expected standard in reading, which is in-line with national and a decrease of 0.5% on 2022. In 2023, 71% of pupils met the expected standard in writing which is an increase of 1.5%. 72.1% of pupils met the expected standard in maths which is an increase of 1% since 2022.



- In 2023 95.4% of three to four year olds were benefiting from free early education, improving uptake since 2021 (93%).
- This latest data is better than the England average (94%) but worse than the North East average (98%).

Education

- 96 More children are benefiting from free early childcare in Durham with more than 95% of three to four year olds taking increasing from 93% in 2021.
- 97 All parents and carers of 3-4 year olds are entitled to 15 hours a week childcare support with registered childcare providers. Eligible working parents and carers of 3-4 year olds can also get an additional 15 hours' childcare support, bringing their total up to 30 hours a week. Starting from April 2024, existing childcare support will be expanded in phases. By September 2025, most working families with children under the age of five will be entitled to 30 hours of childcare support.
- 98 Key Stage 2 outcomes improved in 2023 eliminating the gap with England but remain lower than pre-pandemic results, a trend that is reflected regionally and nationally. Challenges persist, particularly regarding disparities in achievement among different pupil groups. While some individual schools have shown above national outcomes, others require and are receiving planned targeted support across the Key Stages. Moving forward, prioritising Education Durham strategies to close attainment gaps whilst enhancing the support and development offer for schools and subject leaders, is crucial in achieving equitable outcomes for all pupils within the local authority.
- 99 We continue to work in partnership with schools, academies and trusts ensuring that Durham young people have access to high quality teaching and learning. We also support parents and carers in driving improved school engagement for all pupil groups which contributes to better attainment outcomes for pupils in Durham.
- 100 Children young people service support local attainment outcomes through their ongoing Education Review which aims to deliver a sustainable school system in County Durham including addressing the current financial and projected budgetary position, sufficiency of school places, quality and stability of leadership, current condition of buildings and accessibility and suitability of schools and settings to provide outstanding learning. The Education Review has the following objectives:
- **Economy:** Ensuring Children and young people have the best possible outcomes.
 - **Environment:** Maintaining and strengthening schools' capacity to meet community needs.
 - **People:** Ensuring that all children access a good or better education and every child having the option of attending a local school.
 - **Communities:** Exploring new education partnerships which maintain high quality provision in every locality.
 - **Council:** Develop, evolve, and integrate a service delivery model to secure future opportunities.

Our Environment

Priority Aims:

County Durham has taken action to tackle the climate emergency, reduce the impact of pollution and waste on our county and protect, restore and sustain our natural environment. We are continuing to,

- create a physical environment which will contribute to good health
- work with others to achieve a carbon neutral county by 2045
- reduce the impact of waste and pollution on our environment
- protect, restore and sustain our natural environment for the benefit of future generations

National, Regional and Local Picture

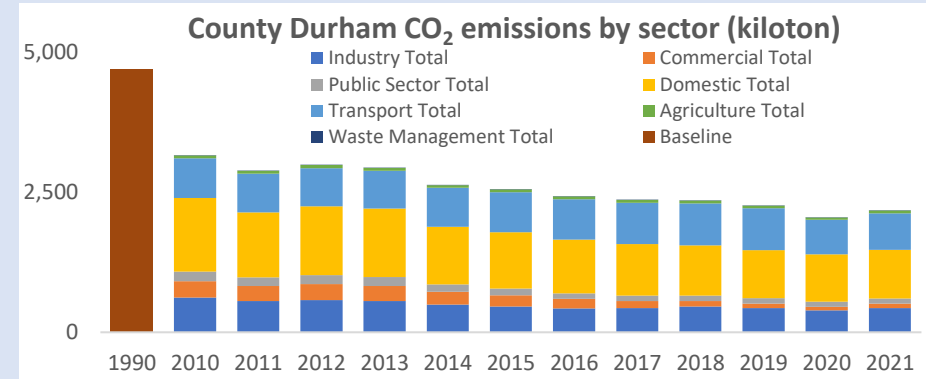
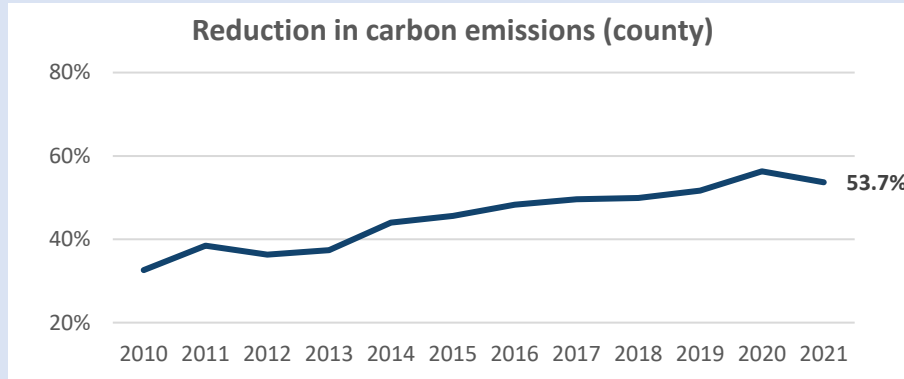
- 101 The government's ambition to improve the environment is set out in the [25 Year Environment Plan](#) (2018) and subsequent [Environmental Improvement Plan 2023](#). The improvement is set out in 10 environmental goals and the government is developing a suite of strategies, plans and programmes to achieve these. This includes rolling out Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
- 102 In response to recently announced government proposals which include the implementation of [simpler recycling collections and tougher regulation](#) by March 2027, and the introduction of food waste collections by March 2026, we are undertaking financial modelling to assess the impact for the council, residents and local businesses.
- 103 Countries that have introduced mandatory food waste collections such as Wales, which has some of the best household waste recycling rates in the world have seen a narrowing of the gap between best and the worst performing local authorities in terms of recycling rates.
- 104 We are developing, with other councils across the region, plans for a new energy recovery from waste facility that will meet the future needs of the county.
- 105 The council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and approved an initial Climate Emergency Response Plan (CERP) in 2020 which set out challenging targets. The [second phase of the CERP](#) was approved in 2022 and has committed the council to achieving net zero by 2030 and an 80% real carbon reduction to our emissions. We will work with partners to achieve a carbon neutral County Durham by 2045.
- 106 The council declared an ecological emergency in April 2022 and approved an Ecological Emergency Action Plan in December 2022. A Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be developed following the release of government guidance.

Carbon Reduction Dashboard

(annual data)

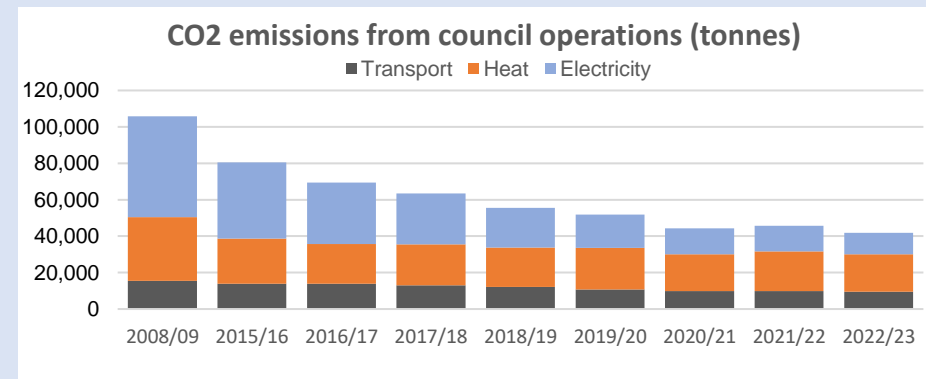
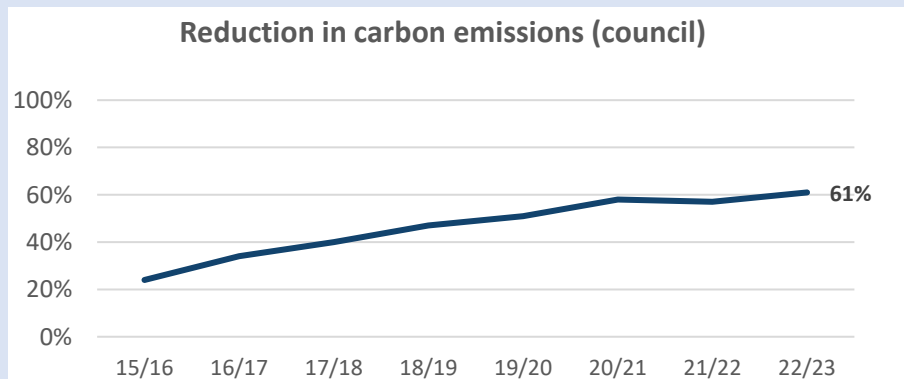
CO₂ emissions in County Durham

- Continue to increase awareness and drive behavioural changes to reduce emissions to help achieve our target of net zero target by 2045.
- Emissions from transport are lower than 2019, potentially linked to the change to hybrid working.



CO₂ emissions from council operations

- Continue efforts to achieve net zero by 2030 and reduce emissions within council operations through decarbonisation works and initiatives.
- Council's emissions reduced by 61% compared to 2008/09 baseline, with 17% reduction in electricity from buildings, 4% reduction in heating emissions and 5% decrease in fleet/transportation emissions in the last year.



CO₂ emissions in County Durham

- 107 Renewable energy capacity within the county has increased from 231.1 megawatts in 2021 to 236.8 megawatts in 2022. Although most capacity is generated from wind, photovoltaics has increased the most and will include a 158 acre solar farm at Cockfield.
- 108 We are continuing to install electric vehicle charging points across the county and have appointed a contractor to deliver the £1.25 million local electric vehicle infrastructure project. This project will result in faster on-street charging points, larger charging hubs and additional charging points, particularly in rural areas.

CO₂ emissions from council operations

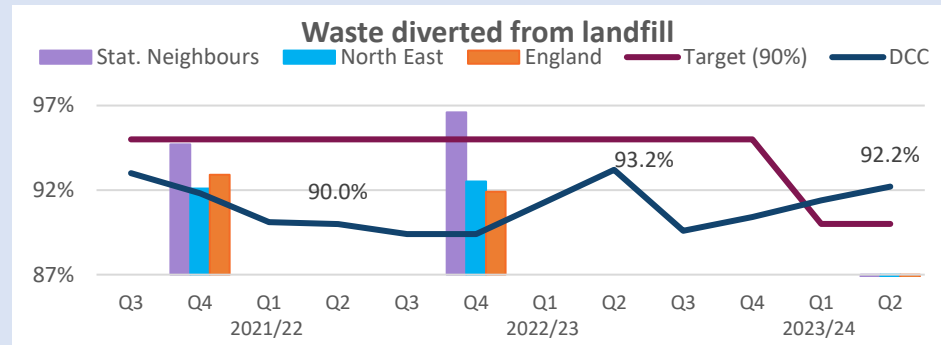
- 109 We continue to reduce carbon emissions across the council's operations by:
- Making our buildings as energy efficient as possible. Decarbonisation works at Peterlee, Teesdale and Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centres are now complete.
 - Implementing a new building energy management system at Freemans Quay in Durham City.
 - Installing wind turbines at Hackworth Road Depot (planning permission submitted).
 - Completing heating improvement works at Bishop Auckland Town Hall, Durham Pathways, Spennymoor Educational Development Centre, Cotsford Infant school and Stanley Customer Access Point (dependent upon funding from the Public sector Decarbonisation Scheme – decision expected March 2024).

Waste Dashboard

(12 months ending 30 September 2023)

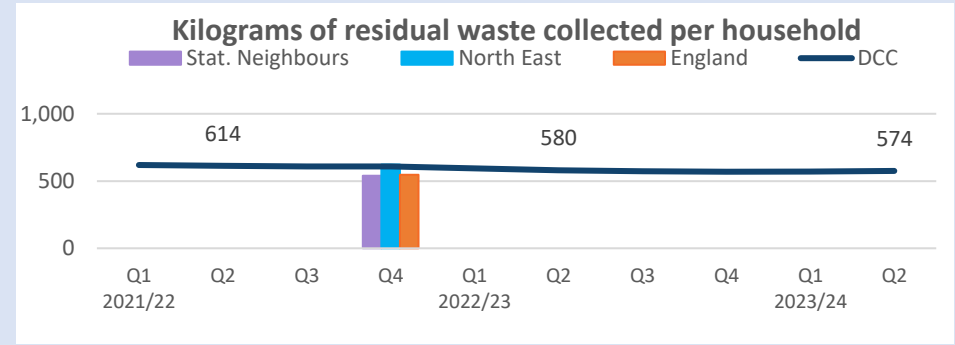
Waste diverted from landfill

Positive improvement in the amount of waste we handle and send for processing. Compared to the most recent benchmarking, performance is better than national average but lower than regional and statistical neighbour averages.



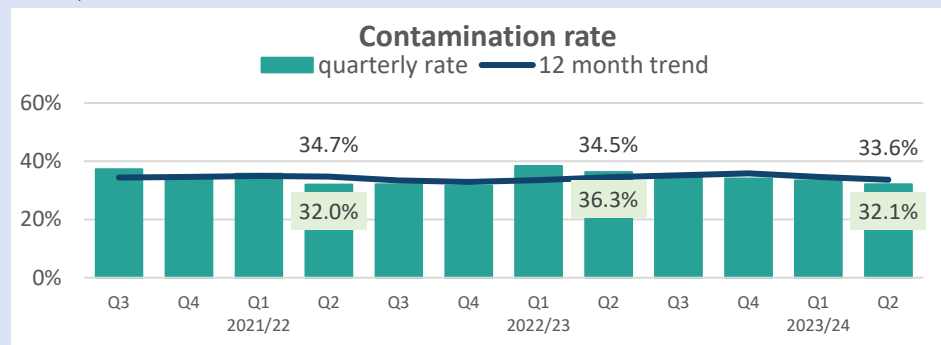
Kilograms of residual waste collected

Reduction in household waste collected positively impacting on residual waste per household. Compared to the most recent benchmarking, performance is better than the regional average but worse than the national and statistical neighbour averages.



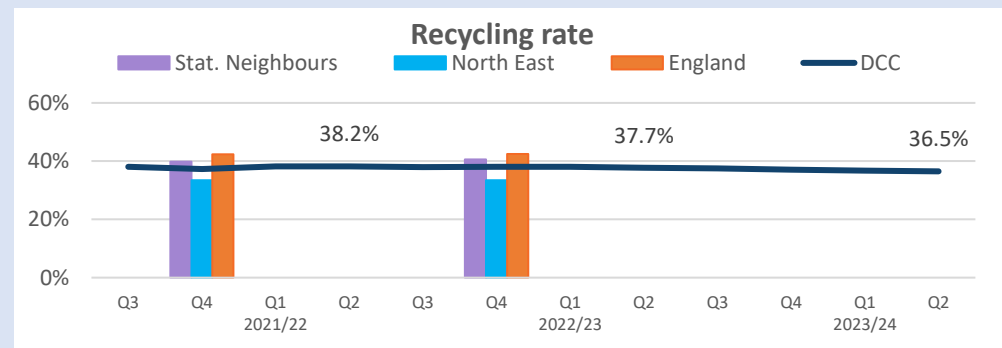
Contamination Rate

- Positive impact of our escalated contamination campaign resulting in the quarterly contamination rate falling again and this is having a positive effect on the 12-month rolling figure.
- Fifth quarter in a row that the contamination rate has fallen from high of 38.3% to 32.1%
- 27,997 contamination notices issued in last 12 months.



Recycling Rate

- Continued promotion of recycling, re-use and composting schemes and campaigns
- 12 months rate has remained relatively static for last two years.
- Compared to the most recent benchmarking, performance is better than the regional average and is amongst the top performing of the North East authorities



Waste diverted from landfill

- 110 The total amount of waste that we handle and send for processing continues to reduce with 252,453 tonnes collected in the last 12 months (Sept 23), a reduction on the previous 12 months of 7,207 tonnes (259,660 tonnes). This reduction together with the sustained performance at the waste processing facilities has seen a diversion rate for the 12 months ending September 2023 of 92.2% against a target of 90%, this is slightly worse than the same period 12 months ago (93.2%) but it is anticipated that performance will continue to show improvement in the next reporting period as the operational issues at North East recovery facilities that occurred during Oct-Dec 2022 will no longer be included in the 12 month calculations.

Kilograms of residual waste collected per household

- 111 There has been a reduction in the amount of household waste collected. 227,165 tonnes was collected (Oct 2022-Sep 2023), 2.6% less than the previous 12 months (233,110 tonnes). This is also reflected in residual household waste per household, which stands at 574kg for the 12 months to end of September 2023 from 580kg in the previous 12 months.

Contamination of recyclate waste

- 112 We issued 3,928 notices for contaminated recycling bins during October to December 2023, bringing the 12-month total to 27,997. A significant increase on the 10,017 notices issued in the previous 12 months. Recycling assistants continue to engage with bin crews, the public and provide community engagement in relation to 'What Goes Where'.
- 113 There has been a decrease in the quarterly contamination rate to 32.1% (September 2023), from the peak of 38.3% (June 2022), a fall for the 5th quarter in a row. The 12-month rolling figure continues to improve as the more positive performance in recent quarters takes effect. The 12-month rate is 33.6% (September 2023), an improvement on the previous 12 months of 0.9pp (34.5%, September 2022).

Recycling, re-use or composting

- 114 We continue to promote recycling and re-use through:
- Our award-winning Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) collection campaign for the recycling of small electrical and battery-operated items. As part of a spin-off to this project, repair cafés are also operating in various locations across the county allowing residents to bring broken electrical items and our volunteers fix them where possible. Training events have been run to allow community volunteers to become qualified PAT testers and to set up and run their own repair cafes.
 - the 2024 garden waste collection scheme has opened for residents to sign up.
 - the countywide plastics campaign has continued with external partner RECOUP with communications continuing with more social media content.
- 115 During the 12 months ending September 2023, 36.5% of household waste was sent for recycling, reuse or composting, worse than the same period last year (37.7%). The waste streams that we handle and process have been impacted by lasting behavioural change as a result of the pandemic and its restrictions, the post-covid

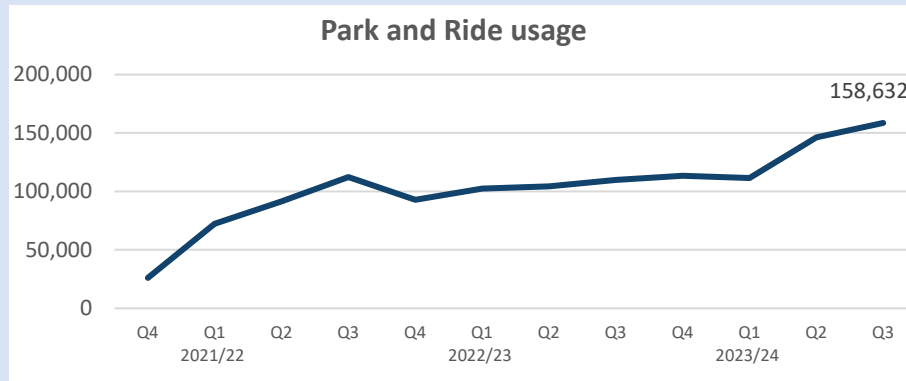
transition, recent economic impacts and weather conditions. The teams will continue to advise and encourage residents to recycle through the What Goes Where campaign and the active promotion of campaigns and initiatives.

Sustainable Transport and Active Travel Dashboard

(discrete quarterly data)

Park and Ride Usage

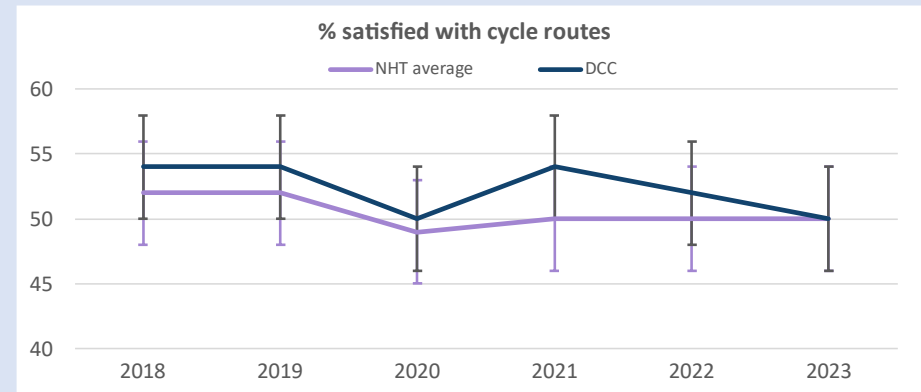
- Following the removal of free after 2pm on-street parking in April 2023, usage of park and ride increased.
- Off-street free after 2pm parking was removed from 1 January 2024. It is envisaged that this will encourage usage of park and ride and public transport.
- Quarter three usage increased with events such as Lumiere and Christmas Markets, and the return of students for the new academic year.



Satisfaction with cycle routes

National Highways and Transport Survey (NHT Survey)

- Latest data shows satisfaction with cycle routes and facilities is in line with both last year and the national average (within confidence intervals +/- 4 percentage points).
- We continue to improve cycling and walking routes to make them more usable and safer for people, including new or improved cycle routes, space for pedestrians, quality surfaces, better crossing and junctions and direct and connected routes.



Park and Ride Usage

- 116 Park and ride usage improved during quarter three (158,632 passengers) due to Lumiere, Christmas Markets, the return of students for the new academic year and the removal of free after 2pm on-street parking.
- 117 Although quarter three performance is better than the same period last year (109,898 passengers), it remains worse than pre-Covid levels mainly due to commuters (the main users of the service) moving to hybrid working following the pandemic.
- 448 The temporary 'free after 2pm' off-street parking in Council car parks across the county (including Durham City, Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland and Chester-le-Street) implemented following the removal of COVID restrictions to encourage a return to the high street, was removed on the 1 January 2024. It is envisaged that this will encourage greater usage of park and ride and public transport.
- 119 Following approval at Highways Committee in February 2024, we will be implementing park and ride provision on Sundays at Belmont and Sniperley from the 7 April 2024. A scheme is also being progressed to extend the number of parking bays at Sniperley. This will provide more parking availability to safeguard increased demand from future development in the city; reduce congestion and greenhouse gas emissions within the historic city centre itself, and also along a key road leading into the city.

Satisfaction with cycle routes

- 120 To improve cycle routes, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) have been adopted in Bishop Auckland, Chester-le-Street, Consett, Crook, Durham City, Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee, Seaham, Spennymoor, Shildon and Stanley.
- 121 LCWIP scheme designs are being prepared for priority routes and schemes are being delivered in Bishop Auckland and Durham City.
- 122 We are also planning and implementing walking, wheeling and cycling across the county through funded programmes such as Transforming Cities, Stronger Towns and Towns and Villages.
- 123 Active Travel Schemes completed with accessible facilities and wide, high quality surfaces for pedestrians, cyclists, and wheelchair and pushchair users include:
- Newton Hall to Rivergreen - a shared pedestrian/cycle route
 - National Cycle Network 1 (Dawdon to Haswell and Haswell to Wynyard) - two multi-user routes,
 - Waskerley Way - a multi-user route,
 - Sedgefield to Hardwick Park: pedestrian link,
 - Pity Me Carrs – Old Tub Line: pedestrian/cycle link.

Durham Bus Station

- 124 The new bus station in Durham City opened to the public on 7 January 2024. It is a modern transport hub offering a welcome and safe space, promoting more sustainable travel and attracting more people into the city.

125 The improved facilities include a Changing Places toilet, improved information displays and upgraded seating in the waiting area. More space for buses to reverse and the exit on to North Road has improved visibility for pedestrians and buses.

Our People

Priority Aims:

County Durham is a place where people will enjoy fulfilling, long and independent lives. We aim to,

- ensure children and young people will enjoy the best start in life, good health and emotional wellbeing
- ensure children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities will achieve the best possible outcomes
- ensure all children and young people will have a safe childhood
- promote positive behaviours
- better integrate health and social care services
- tackle the stigma and discrimination of poor mental health and build resilient communities
- people will be supported to live independently for as long as possible by delivering more home to meet the needs of older and disabled people
- support people whose circumstances make them vulnerable and protect adults with care and support needs from harm
- protect and improve the health of the local population, tackling leading causes of illness and death

National, Regional and Local Picture

Children's Social Care

- 126 In November 2023, Ofsted carried out a focused visit looking at our arrangements for care-experienced young people - specifically the quality of preparation for adulthood, the quality and suitability of accommodation and care leavers with specific needs. [Feedback](#) was positive and identified that “leaders have a detailed understanding of the strengths of this area of service and where further improvements can be made. Senior leaders have further developed and improved services for care-experienced young people”.
- 127 In December 2023 new statutory guidance was released on the principles behind children's social care. A new [Children's Social Care National Framework](#) brings together the purpose, principles, enablers, and outcomes that should be achieved in children's social care, and linked to this new framework are plans for a new [children's social care dashboard](#).
- 128 Updated statutory guidance, [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#), sets out new child protection standards and advocates for a multi-disciplinary workforce to support the diverse needs of children and families when safeguarding children. A [data strategy](#) outlines plans to transform children's social care data, including improved information sharing through research and evaluation and a children's social care dashboard to consolidate data in one place.
- 129 An advice document, [Improving practice with children, young people and families](#), offers support and guidance to key partners in implementing and embedding the Children's Social Care National Framework and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. Together this framework and guidance clarifies existing statutory

duties, sets national direction for practice and sets the expectations for multi-agency working across the whole system of help, support and protection for children and their families.

- 130 The service is reviewing the detail and implications of this new framework and will embed in practice, strategic policy development and local improvement priorities.

Adult Social Care

- 131 The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is progressing with new local authority assessments which will give independent assurance to people of the quality of care in their area. Five pilot local authority assessments, which test their assessment framework, methods and processes, have been completed.
- 132 These pilots assess how well CQC is carrying out the assessments, provide assurance that the methods are effective and providing the evidence needed to make a judgement on how well councils are discharging their adult social care duties against the Care Act, and identify early indications of outcomes.
- 133 Implementing a new national inspection framework is a complex task. Feedback from the pilots indicated some parts of the process were intensive and time consuming, and more guidance would have been beneficial (particularly to better understand how judgements were made and how those related to the final scoring model). However, on the whole, the councils involved felt the process helped re-affirm their existing areas of improvement.
- 134 Following the pilots, the CQC assessment framework is now in place with all 153 councils to be assessed once during a two-year period. Councils will receive an overall rating on the same four-point scale Ofsted uses for children's services and the CQC uses for care providers: 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate'. Ratings will be based on a more detailed framework score of 1 to 4 for each of nine quality statements: assessing needs; supporting people to live healthier lives; equity in experiences and outcomes; care provision, integration and continuity; partnerships and communities; safe systems, pathways and transitions; safeguarding; governance, management, and sustainability; and learning, improvement and innovation.
- 135 Evidence sources will include feedback from people who receive care and support (including self-funders), carers, voluntary and community groups, and staff (including the principal social worker, director of adult social services and social workers). Other sources include analysis of performance data, surveys of staff, carers and people accessing care and support, and case studies.
- 136 Following the pilot assessments, on 30.01.24 Durham County Council received notification that we are going to be one of the first councils to be considered under the full local authority assessment.
- 137 As part of the assessment, an information return is to be provided to the CQC three weeks from notification and the service is currently working to collate this. The return makes available to the CQC key documents, information and data prior to the onsite visit which could take place six months after the original notification letter. Following submission of the return and prior to the onsite visit the CQC will be undertaking analysis of the return. We will receive a period of 6-8 weeks' notice of the site visit.

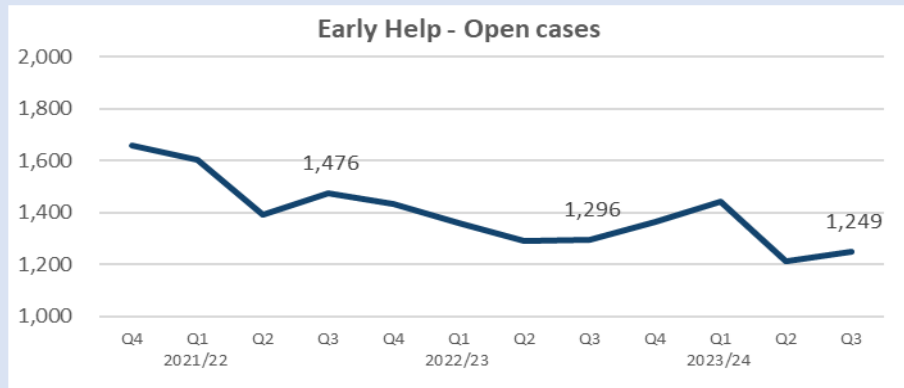
- 138 Following the site visit the CQC will draft a report including scores for all the quality statements and an overall rating. As the CQC is undertaking an internal benchmarking exercise, to review and calibrate the scores and ratings for those local authorities assessed in the early round of the full formal assessments, it is likely that there may be a short delay before we receive the final report.
- 139 Nationally, official statistics from the new Client Level Dataset (CLD) has been delayed for a year. Indicators from the 2023/24 CLD submission will be badged as experimental statistics, and used to quality assess data and indicators against previous returns. The sourcing of the new Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) indicators from CLD has also therefore been delayed until 2024/25.
- 140 The current ASCOF (2023/24) indicators will continue to use the national short and long-term data return for Adult Social Care. Measures which were initially proposed for removal have, as a consequence, been brought back for one final year, such as self-directed support and rehabilitation services indicators. Discussions are ongoing within the Adult Care service to consider the production of the 2023/24 Short and Long Term (SALT) data return for County Durham, and to ensure quality checking against the new CLD data that will be used from next year.
- 141 National benchmarking for some adult social care indicators, for example, referrals and timeliness of assessments, is unavailable as there are no national data submissions that contain comparable data. Once CLD has been implemented comparative data may be available for these indicators if access is made available by the Department of Health and Social Care.

Children's Social Care Dashboard: Early Help and Referrals

(12 months ending 31 December 2023 / at 31 December 2023)

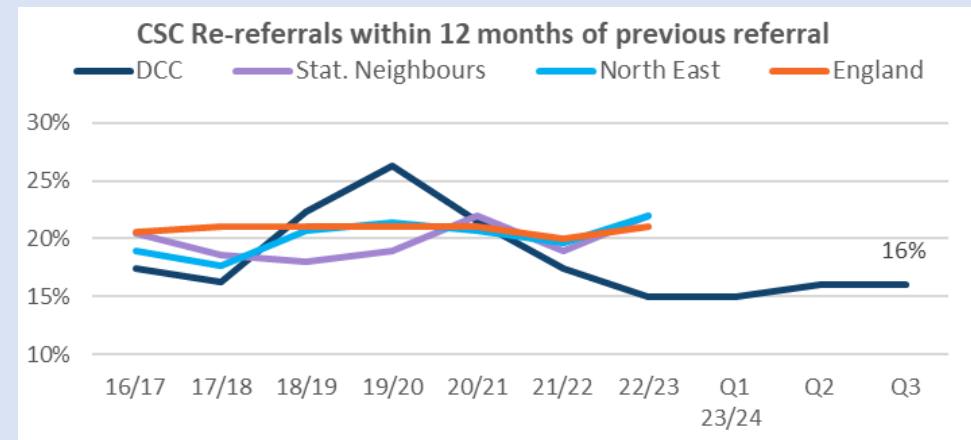
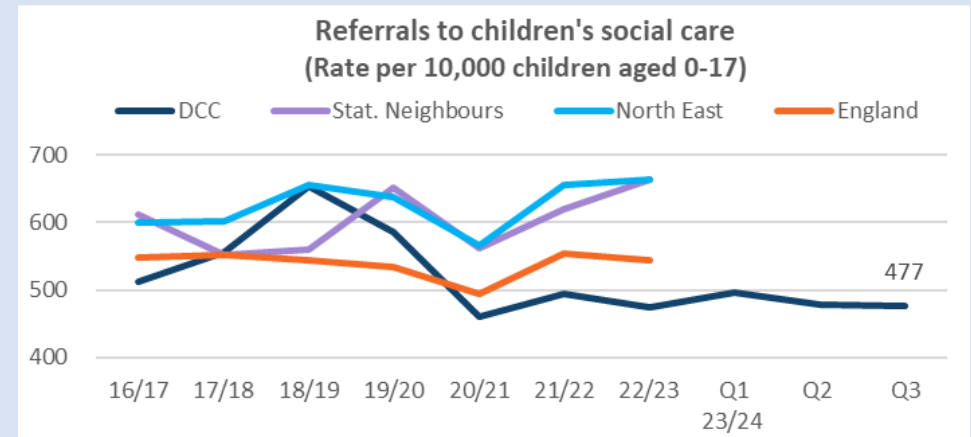
Early Help

- Early help overall covers the work of council teams and a range of partners. After changing our delivery model and strengthening earlier support to families we saw a reduction in cases lead by DCC early help teams and increased levels of support to partners to do more early help work.
- 15 Family Hubs were launched from April 2023. The hubs provide 'one stop shop' access to family support (from conception to age 19, or 25 years for children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities). 2,139 people have registered with Family Hubs, including 201 children aged 0-6 months.
- Feedback from families and young people using the council's Early Help service continues to be positive: 90% of parent/carers, 87% of children and 88% of young people are happy or very happy with the support they received.



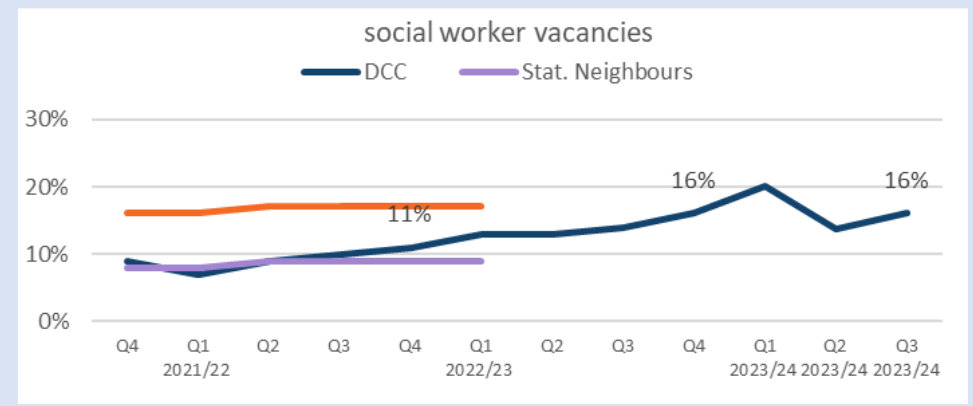
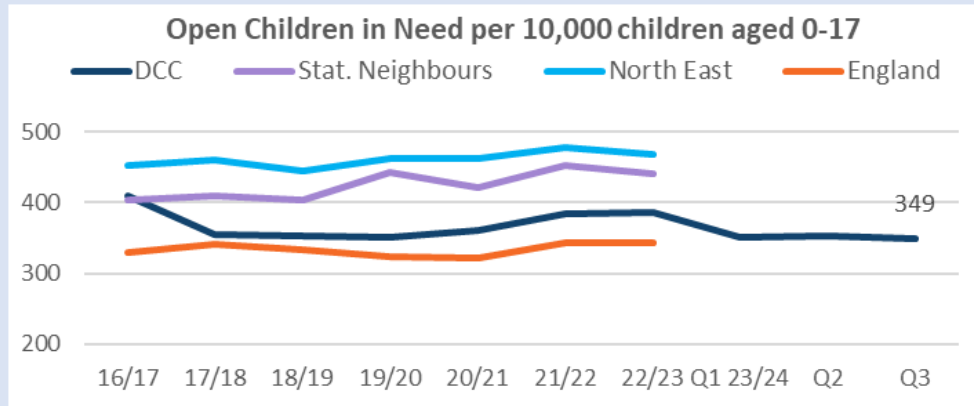
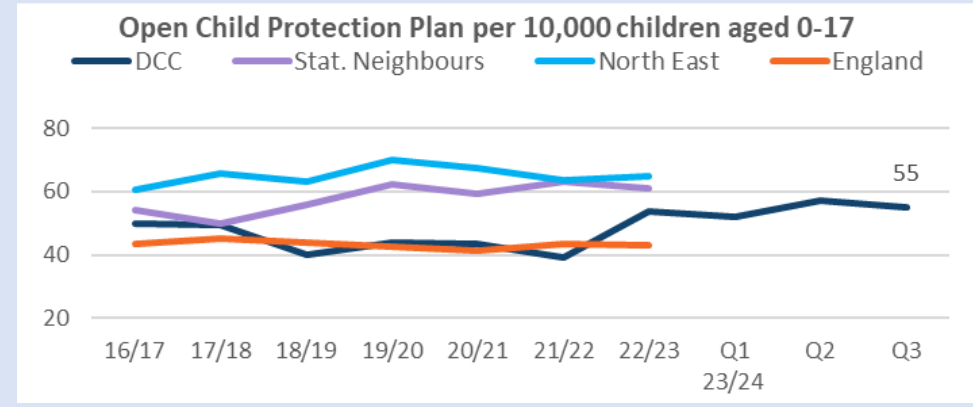
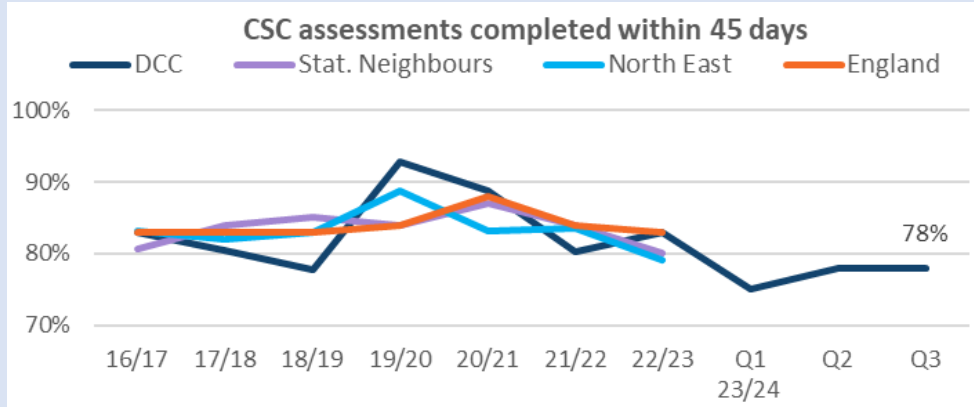
Note: These data are early help cases where we are the lead professional and does not include family hub activity, group work with children and families, cases supported by early help where the worker is not the lead professional or early help cases lead by other partners

Referrals



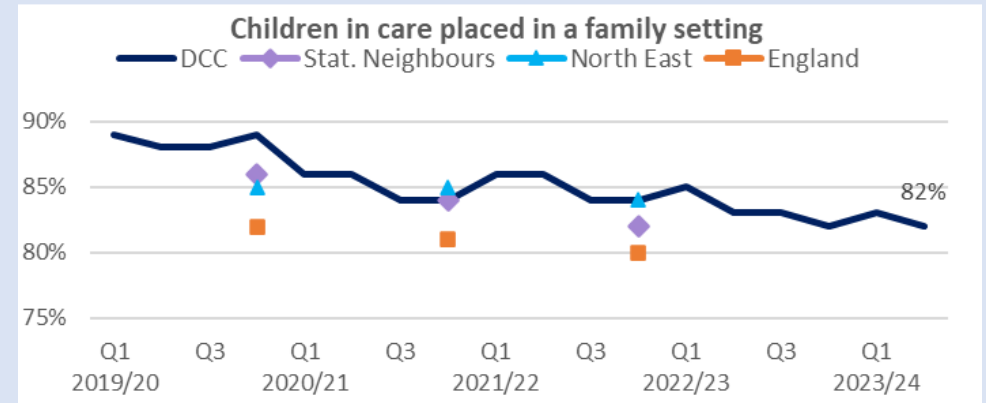
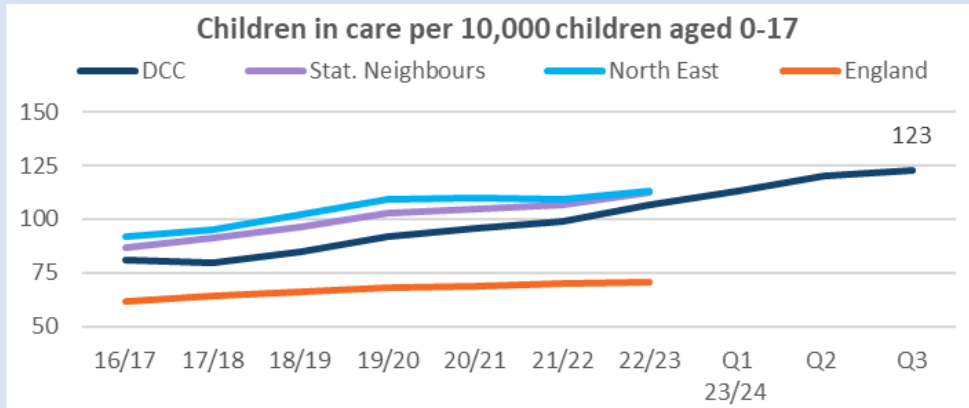
Children's Social Care Dashboard: assessments, protection plans, in need, social worker vacancies

(12 months ending 31 December 2023 / at 31 December 2023)

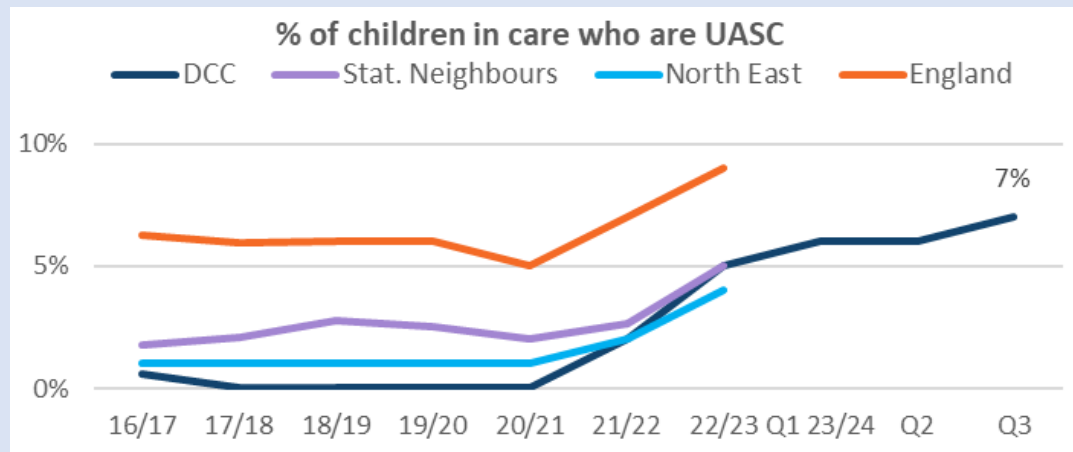


Children's Social Care Dashboard: in care, unaccompanied asylum seeking children

(12 months ending 30 September 2023 / at 30 September 2023)



More children are in care and this is driving the reduction in the proportion living in a family setting.



Children's Social Care and Early Help

- 142 Overall demand for early help and statutory support remains consistent with previous reports. The recent reductions in cases open to Early Help should be seen within the context of a transformed Early Help model in Durham.
- 143 The service has worked with key partners, children, young people, parents and carers to develop a new Early Help Assessment for partners based on Durham's Signs of Safety practice model, this was launched in October 2022. The purpose being to provide a richer picture of early help offered and the impact on children, young people and families across County Durham.
- 144 There are a number of partners who are using the new assessment where a Team Around the Family (TAF) arrangement is in place. The Prevention and Early Help Partnership continue to work with partners who are not engaging in this process to understand barriers and work with them on a solution focussed approach. This will then provide a much more accurate picture of the early help support to families delivered across the system.
- 145 Locality Early Help Conversations are well established within County Durham. When a child's needs cannot be met by universal services alone, quality conversations strengthen and improve decision making and joint working to provide the right help at the right time for families. These conversations often identify that family's needs can be met without a formal referral into the LA Early Help Service (OPS) and so the collective resource from across the system is utilised. The establishment of the Family Hub and Start for Life Offer provides families with the support they need that is much more accessible.
- 146 A wide-ranging programme of activity and support is being delivered in Family Hubs, and at other venues, with partners. Examples of delivery include:
- 166 children and young people have taken part in the EWB programme (Emotional Wellbeing and Behaviour), with courses including Chill Kids, Teen Zone, Safer Choices, and Staying Cool Teen. 125 completed a course with 105 reporting a positive outcome.
 - 72 people started Parenting Programmes such as Fearless, Stepping Stones, Strengthening Families, Triple P Teen, Incredible Years Baby, and Incredible Years. 51 completed a course with 47 reporting a positive outcome.
 - Universal programmes Baby and Me and Toddler and Me were attended by 475 and 254 parents, respectively.
 - 144 people attended Growing Healthy drop-in sessions.
 - 50 people attended infant feeding sessions.
 - Weekly Victim Survivor groups are hosted at Family Hubs in Stanley and Durham and run by Harbour. On average, four to five women attend each session.
 - In quarter three, 20 families were referred to the RYPP (Respect Young People's Programme). 45 families were engaged, and 13 families completed the programme. 13 families did not complete the programme, with some being offered wider support by Harbour.
 - In quarter three, three families completed the DART programme (Domestic Abuse, Recovering Together). A further two families were offered wider support after it was

determined the programme was not appropriate for their needs. A holistic and intensive pre-assessment process, including the completion of a readiness assessment, is provided by Harbour.

- 147 Improved practice across statutory children's social care has led to a consistently low re-referral rate. The rate at quarter three (16%) is in line with quarter two (16%) and is better than latest benchmarks. This means fewer children and their families require further support from safeguarding services following support.
- 148 Although statutory demand remains low, children and young people receiving intensive support (children on a Child Protection Plan and taken into our care) remains relatively high. This is indicative of ongoing high levels of complexity and a change in the composition of demand.
- 149 Specifically, children in care continues to increase. The North East has the highest level in England and County Durham is slightly worse than the North East. Underlying growth in the number of children in care is continuing but is accelerating further due to an increase in unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) placed in the county as part of national relocation plans. Seven percent of children in care are UASC, compared to 5% at the end of 2022/23 and just 2% at the end of 2021/22.
- 150 The number of children in care who are residents of the county is also increasing. We are reviewing these trends and learning will feed into our strategic placement sufficiency work and preparation for the implementation of the Care Review proposals.
- 151 Over the summer, we have been addressing the capacity issues arising from high caseloads which have been impacting the timeliness of statutory children's social care assessments. Quarter three's performance (78%) is in line with national and regional benchmarks. The service continues to monitor.
- 152 Our first newly qualified social worker recruitment process of the year is now complete. Fourteen people are expected to join in the summer. Our next recruitment drive is expected to commence soon.

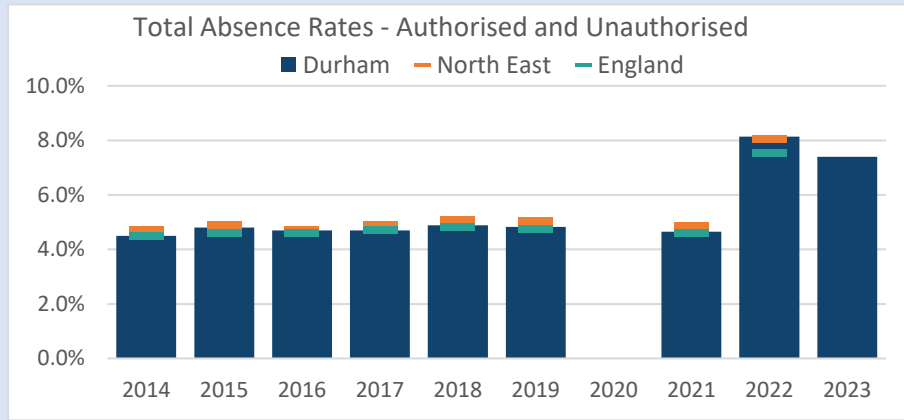
Education Dashboard

(academic year 2022/23 / as at 30 September 2023)

Attendance

School Attendance improved in the autumn term of the 2023/24 academic year but remains worse than pre-pandemic levels

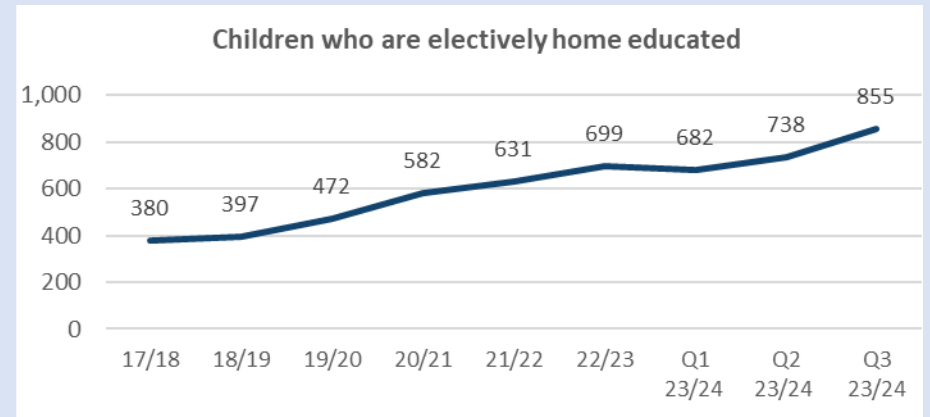
Unauthorised absence makes up one-third of all absences in the 2023/24 academic year.



schools closed due to Covid-19

Elective Home Education

Annual data is based on end of academic years and accounts for year 11 leavers and also the reason for a dip in Q1 data.



Attendance

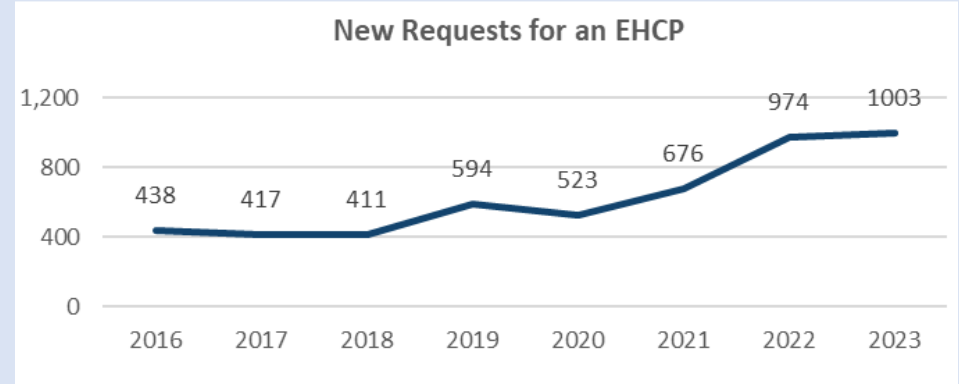
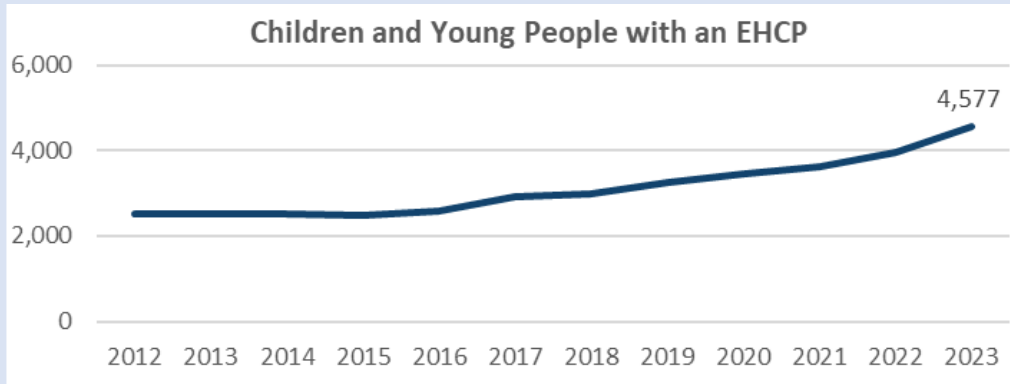
- 153 The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex and are often specific to individual pupils and families. These barriers were exacerbated by the pandemic and school attendance rates nationally, locally and regionally have reduced. Latest data for the autumn term 2023/24 shows that attendance improved with overall absence rates reducing to 7% in the autumn term of the current academic year from 8% in the previous academic year.
- 154 High attendance levels are essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance compared to those with the lowest attainment.
- 155 The service has a strategic approach to improving attendance delivered through the School Attendance Team. This team works with all schools to reduce or remove barriers to attendance and provide opportunities for schools to share support and best practice. Specifically, this includes holding regular conversation with schools offering support to identify, discuss and signpost to services for pupils who are, or who are at risk of becoming, persistently absent from school.

Elective Home Education

- 156 Children being home educated continues to rise locally, regionally and nationally. However, the proportion of children and young people electively home educated in County Durham remains low (fluctuating between 0.9% and 1.2%).
- 157 We continue to have strong multi-agency Education at Home operational and strategic groups that are well established, meet half termly with wide service representation including health, SEND and inclusion, education and skills, wider children's services colleagues to consider suitable education and safeguarding of children.

SEND Dashboard

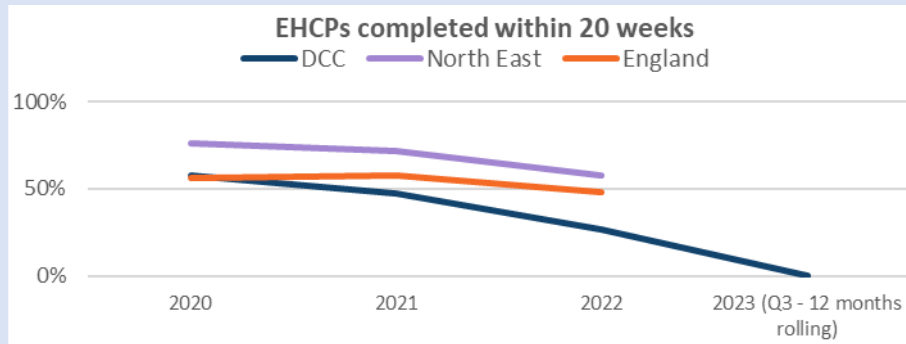
(12 months rolling / annual data)



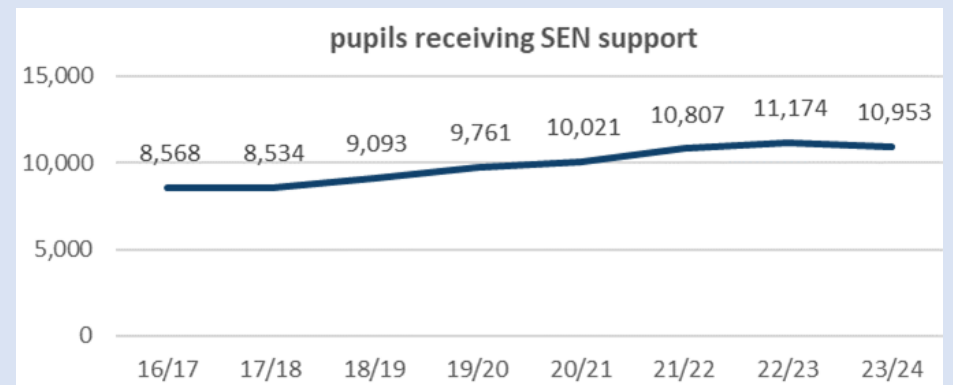
EHCPs completed in 20 weeks

Higher demand alongside a national shortage of educational psychologists (EP) and the time it takes to commission and agree suitable provision has meant no new EHCPs were fully completed and agreed within the expected 20-week timescale during the quarter.

Work continues to improve this, including managing demand through our graduated offer and increasing our EP advice capacity.



Special Educational Need Support



Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

- 158 Requests for new EHCPs increased substantially between 2019 and 2022 and continue at a very high level in 2023. The assessment process is complex with a number of inputs required from schools, social care and health services in line with the statutory guidance.
- 159 Some key points in the process are currently causing timeliness delays. The first is a national shortage of educational psychologists (EP) needed to undertake the required assessment, the timeliness of education provider responses to consultation and capacity challenges in providing suitable provision.
- 160 A comprehensive action plan is in place which seeks to address these challenges and improve timeliness rates, particularly in relation to the backlog for EP advice which will continue to cause a timeliness issue until the backlog of requests has been cleared.
- 161 A web page, developed to promote working in the service, is now live [Working as an Educational Psychologist in County Durham](#). National and regional social media promotion commenced in November 2023 and is being continued in the North East through promoted posts via Facebook. Some overseas recruitment through agencies is underway, resulting in recruitment of two EPs and further interviews to take place.
- 162 In addition to increasing core team capacity, the service has been working with two agencies to add significant temporary support to bolster local capacity and help reduce waiting times. New contracts are in place from quarter three and agencies are working to build their own capacity to deliver against their contract outcomes. Increased capacity is already having an impact as the number of children awaiting allocation to an EP has reduced significantly in recent months.
- 163 During 2024, if agencies deliver against their agreed contract volumes, in-house EP capacity is maintained, and demand does not increase further, we expect the waiting times and waiting list for EP advice to steadily reduce. However, as EP advice is only part of a complex process it will take time for this to impact on the overall 20-week EHCP target. This area is being regularly reviewed with enhanced operational performance monitoring.
- 164 The service has reviewed their allocation processes and after an equality impact assessment process, have introduced the ability to prioritise cases based on complexity of need, the educational stage in relation to key transitions, and the potential increased risk of harm as a result of delay, ensuring those most in need get support at the earliest opportunity. The revised processes now ensure there are no delays for children and young people identified as a priority.
- 165 The SEND Local Partnership has recognised the potential impacts on families waiting for services and established a “Waiting Well” group to develop a range of responses to ensure families are supported and informed whilst they wait for specialised services. Work is now being undertaken by all partners to ensure:
- All services develop clear policy and guidance on supporting parents/carers and young people to Wait Well.
 - Waiting Well should be a consideration from the first point of contact with a parent or carer, and draft questions to support dialogue have been discussed with Making Changes Together our parent carer forum.

- All services establish an approach to gathering feedback that informs practice development over time.
- There is a sustainable approach to workforce development that ensures a good level of understanding of the support available and how to navigate it for/with families.
- That services improve the quality and use of digital resources.

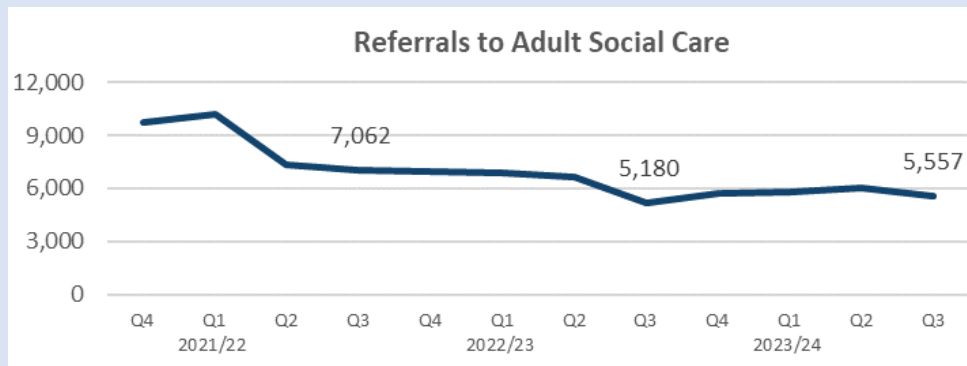
166 Work through our Delivering Better Value programme also seeks to reduce the need for new EHCP requests and support more children through our graduated offer of support.

Adult Social Care Dashboard – Referrals and Assessments

(discrete quarterly data)

Referrals to Adult Social Care

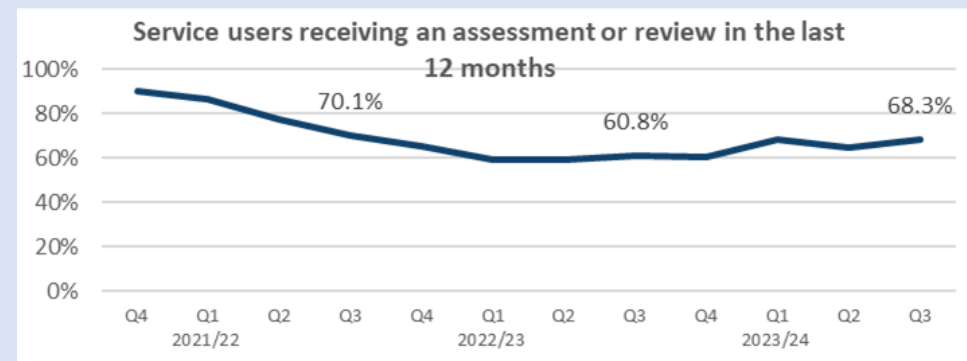
We are continuing to examine contacts and referrals into Adult Social Care to increase our understanding of client requirements within the system. This will also support work aiming to understand the reduction in referrals since 2021/22.



Service users receiving an assessment or review in last 12 months

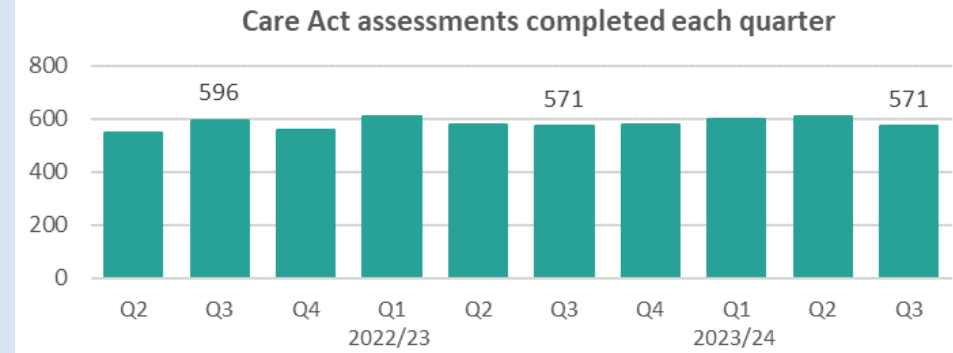
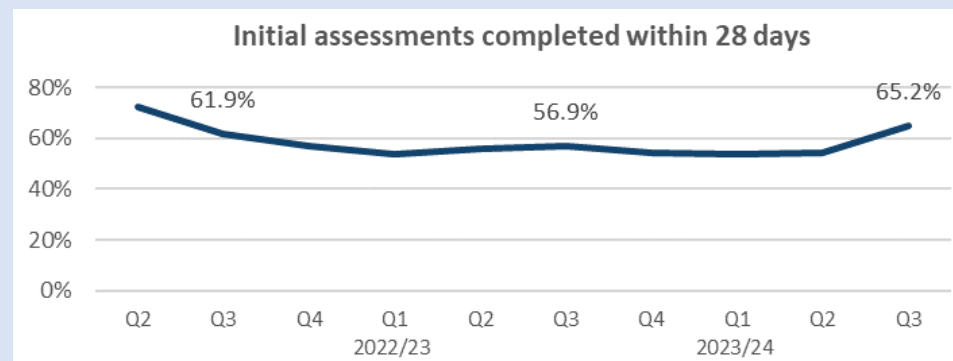
Improved performance followed the establishment of specific review teams in Spring 2023.

A working group has been created to consider recent performance and to investigate different ways of undertaking reviews across adult social care.



Care Act assessments completed and timeliness

An impact assessment is considering reasons for the reduction in timeliness over the last two years and latest data suggests that a clear focus on improving timeliness is working. The introduction of mobile technology to social workers over the next two years is likely to drive further improvement.



Benchmarking data for these indicators is not available as this is local data that is not reported nationally. The implementation of the national Client Level Data set should produce viable benchmarking within 12-18 months.

Referrals to Adult Social Care

- 167 Referrals into Adult Social Care have been stable over the last year, an average of 5,768 per quarter. Whilst referrals in quarter three are lower than quarter two, the reduced number is comparable with the same period last year.
- 168 Work is ongoing to understand the longer-term reduction in referrals over the last two to three years. This work is reviewing internal and external contacts and referrals, as well as those between services to recognise changing demand for adult social care.
- 169 As referral data is not reported nationally, benchmarking for this data is unavailable. The new national Client Level Data set will start recording referrals / requests for services from 2024/25 and could provide viable quarterly benchmarking once fully implemented if data is made available by the Department of Health and Social Care.

Care Act assessment timeliness

- 170 Timeliness of completion of Care Act assessments has increased from 54.2% in quarter two to 65.2% in quarter three, the highest for more than two years. However, this is lower than the timeliness at the start of 2021/22 (72.3%).
- 171 The service continues to focus on improving timeliness, and an ongoing impact statement is reviewing causes of and potential options to support the prompt completion of these assessments. New technology to support staff to complete assessments in a timely manner is being introduced via a phased approach in service teams over a period of two years. It is expected that timeliness rates will further improve once the new technology is embedded in the service.
- 172 The indicator is being reviewed to ensure that all initial assessments are included in this performance metric. The definition of an initial assessment is being reworked and is likely to lead to further indicators which will provide comprehensive performance management of both assessments and reviews.
- 173 Currently, both the number and timeliness of Care Act assessments are not reported nationally. Further development at the national level will be required to enable the reporting of timeliness through the national CLD return, we will continue to monitor developments.

Annual Reviews of Service

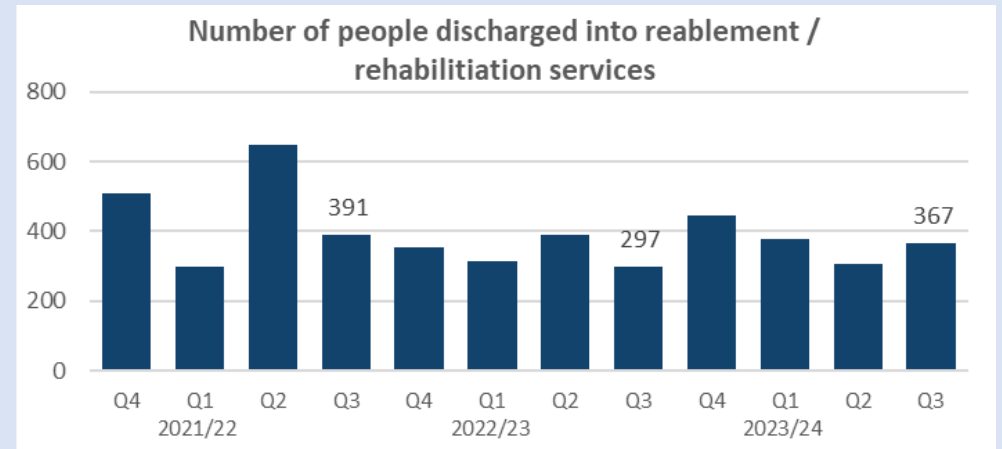
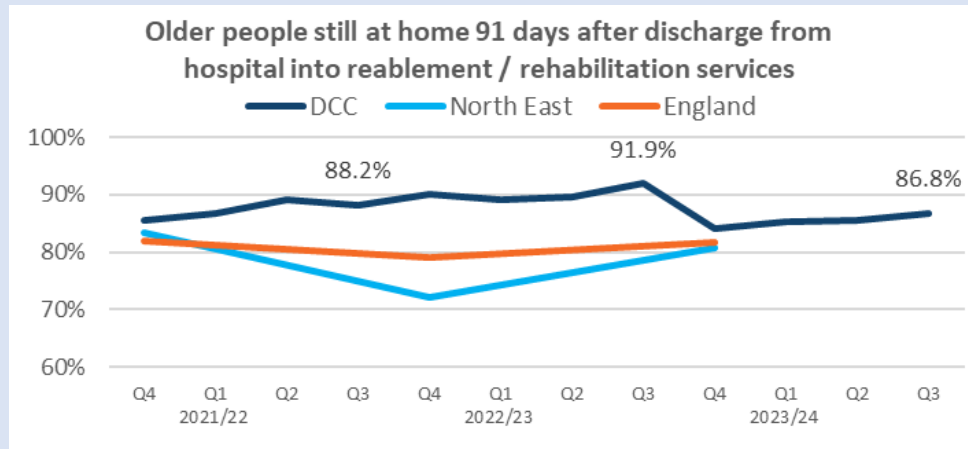
- 174 Latest data shows 68.3% of service users received an annual assessment or review in the last 12 months. This is the highest recorded performance for more than two years and demonstrates the impact of the new review teams established in early 2023. Performance remains lower than that seen three years ago, however, recent initiatives are closing the performance gap.
- 175 A working group meets regularly to oversee the first year operation of the new teams whilst performance is reported monthly to the service management teams. A report is to be provided to Adult Care Management Team at year-end outlining progress made.
- 176 Whilst some data is available nationally on reviews of long-term care packages through the SALT return, production of the return data is not in line with our locally reported measure, so benchmarking is not available.

Adult Social Care Dashboard – Reablement and rehabilitation services

(discrete quarterly data)

Discharges into reablement / rehabilitation services

- Although the number has largely been stable over the last three years (average of 392 people per quarter) this is fewer than the pre-pandemic (average of 590 people per quarter was typically seen for the period 2017/18 to 2019/20).
- We have completed a service review to understand changing demand for the reablement service. Findings are to be considered prior to any changes being implemented.



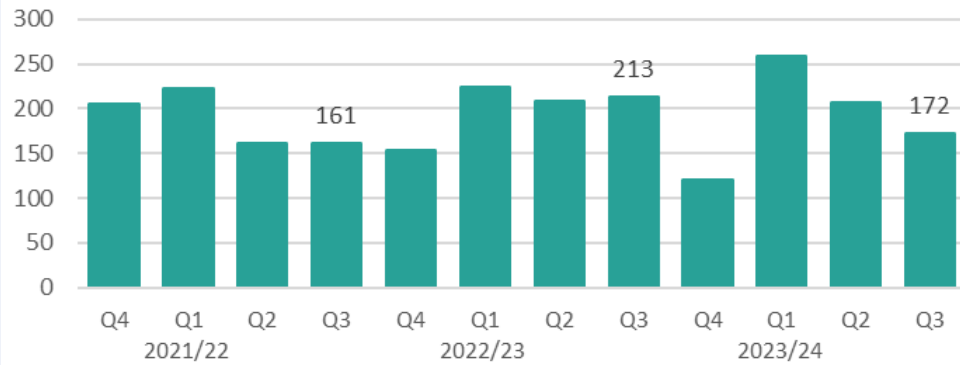
Discharge into Reablement and Rehabilitation Services

- 177 The percentage of older people still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement / rehabilitation services (86.8% in the latest quarter) is the highest since the same period last year (91.9%) and within one percentage point of the three-year average. Latest performance is better than our Better Care Fund target of 84%, and regional and national benchmarking.
- 178 The number of people discharged into reablement demonstrates little change over the last three years, however, when compared to more historical data, a reduction is clear. In the latest three-year period, an average of 392 people were discharged each quarter. This is much lower than the three-year period covering 2017/18 to 2019/20, when an average of 590 people each quarter were discharged into reablement or rehabilitative services.
- 179 A review of reablement services has been undertaken to understand changing demand to the service as well as staff turnover and capacity of the service. The final report is to be considered by Adult and Health Services Management Team and will feed into the re-procurement of the service.

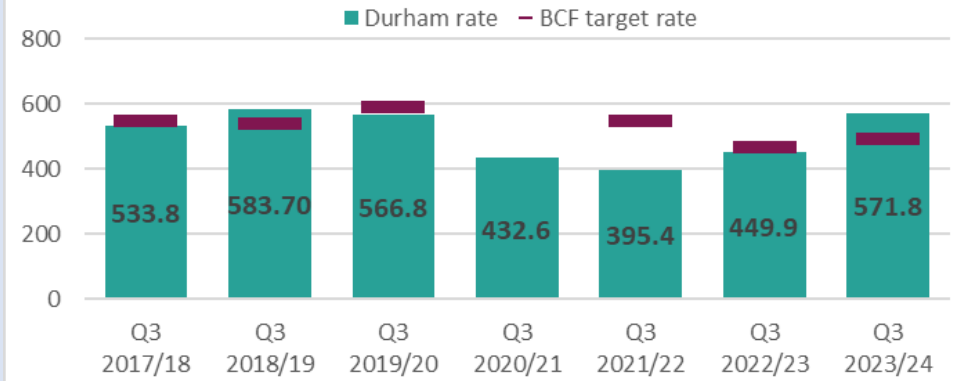
Adult Social Care Dashboard – Admissions to permanent care

(discrete quarterly data)

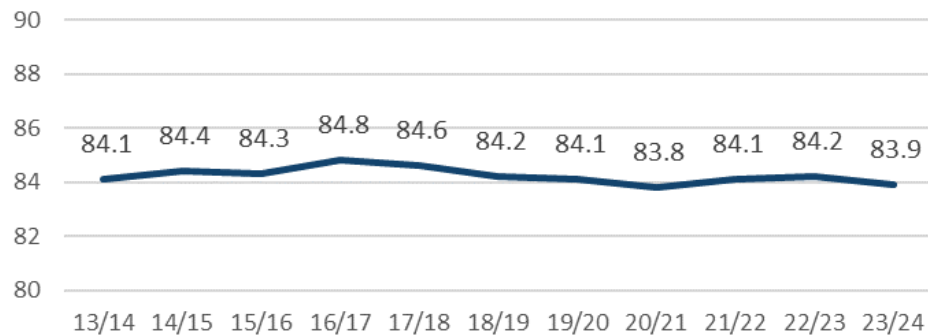
Adults aged 65+ admitted permanently to residential or nursing care



Rate of admission of adults aged 65+ to permanent residential or nursing care



Average age of admission to permanent care

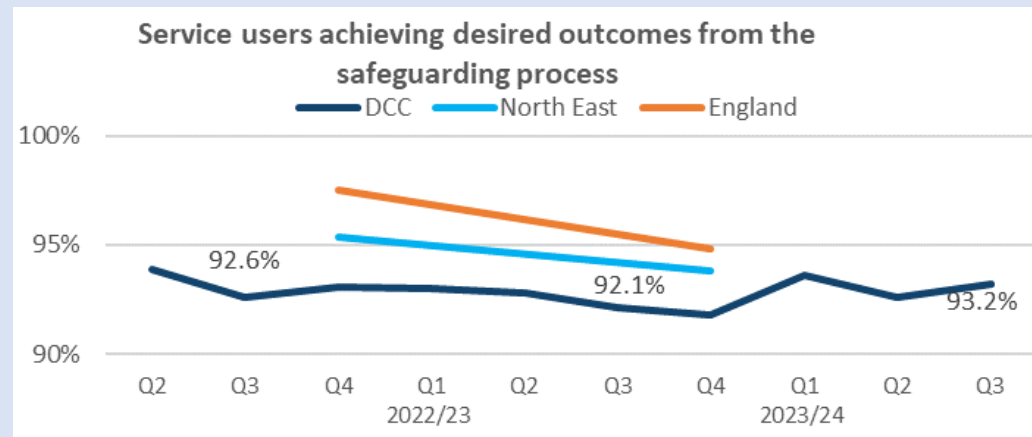
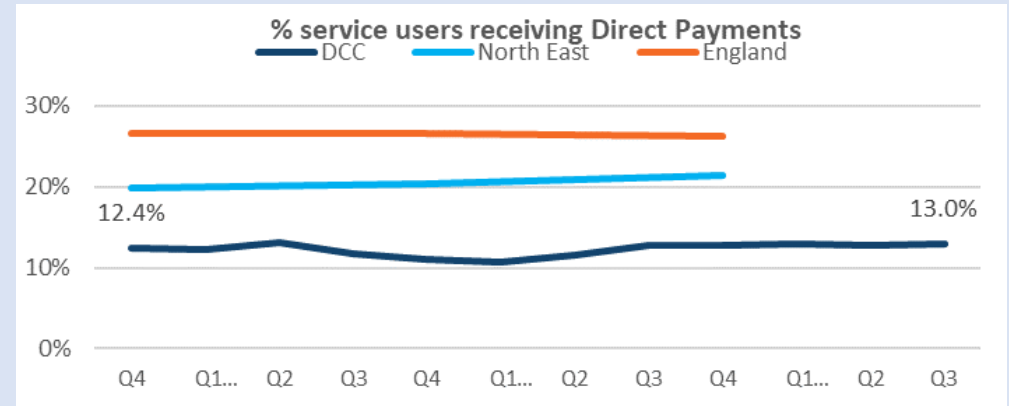
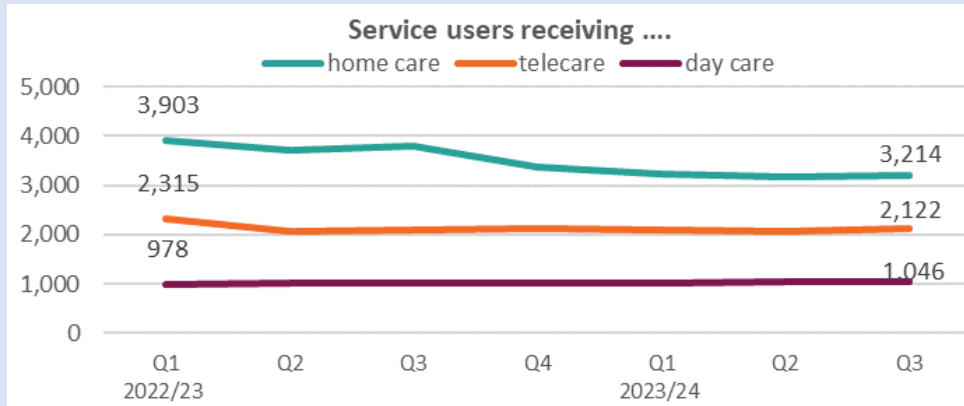


Admissions to Care

- 180 The rate of adults aged 65+ per 100,000 population admitted on a permanent basis to residential or nursing care has risen over the last three years, from the lowest rate during the pandemic to a rate that is now comparable with that seen pre-pandemic. We are performing worse than our Better Care Fund target and have been for two consecutive quarters. Whilst admissions fluctuate on a quarterly basis, we are monitoring this as projections suggest we will also be worse than target at year end.
- 181 The average age of those entering permanent care has remained static over the last ten years (average age - 84.2 years).

Adult Social Care Dashboard – services received and outcomes

(discrete quarterly data)



The methodology has been reviewed and from quarter three has been aligned to the methodology used for the national Safeguarding Adults Collection Return.

Services Received

- 182 The number of service users receiving home care remains high, with more than 3,000 people receiving the service. Whilst numbers have largely been stable over the last 12 months, they have reduced since the pandemic; this was a result of care homes being closed to new admissions and a consequent increase in home care usage. The recent reduction in home care usage was an expected change as care homes opened up to admissions and our care delivery model returned to being able to give the right kind of care at the right time.
- 183 Service user numbers receiving telecare continues to be largely stable with approximately 2,000 people using the service. The Commissioning Service has developed a plan of increasing the use of technology to support service users which could result in an increase in the number of people receiving telecare equipment.
- 184 The number of people receiving day care service has remained static over the last 12 months (approximately 1,000 people).
- 185 Over the last two years the number of people using Direct Payments to pay for at least part of their care has increased very slightly. Latest data show 684 people used a Direct Payment in quarter three, up from 677 in quarter two. Percentage of people using Direct Payments has also largely remained static over the last two years and take-up remains lower than both regional and national averages. A previous impact statement found no difference between our Direct Payment policy and that of other councils. The service continues to explore opportunities to develop Direct Payment take-up in the county.

Safeguarding – desired outcomes

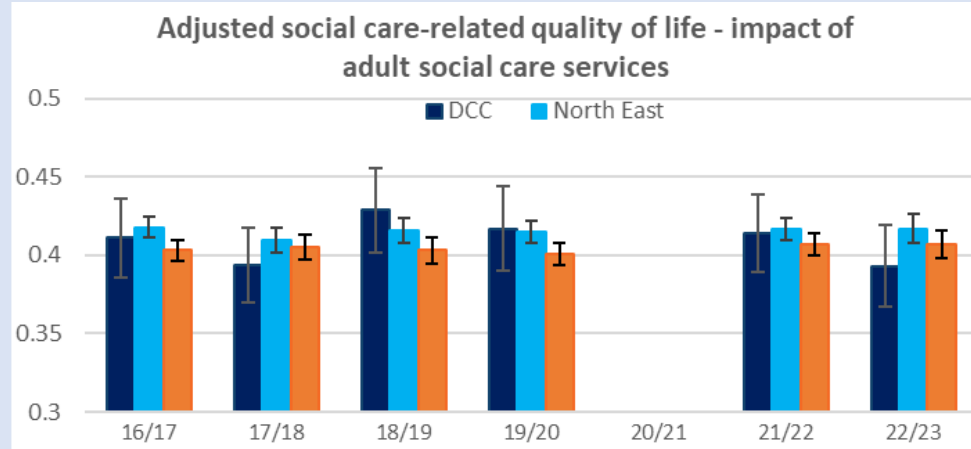
- 186 The percentage of individuals achieving their desired outcomes during the safeguarding process has increased to 93.2% during quarter three and we are now comparable to performance in the North East (93.8%). We continue to be worse than the England position (94.8%).
- 187 The methodology for this indicator was reviewed and, from quarter three, we align with the methodology for the national Safeguarding Adults Collection Return.

Adult Social Care Dashboard – Oflog Measures

(annual data as at 31 March 2023)

Quality of life – impact of adult social care services

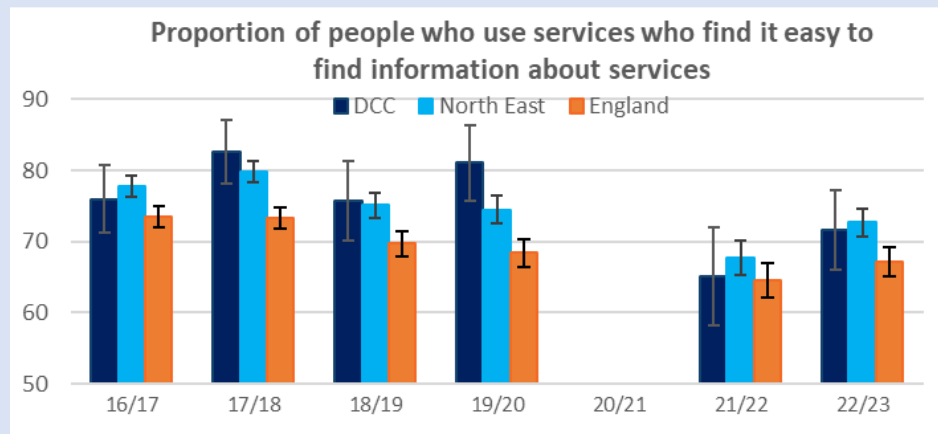
There remains no statistically significant difference between performance in Durham and comparators.



The Oflog measures for Adult Social Care were reported in the quarter two Corporate Performance Report and are updated annually. The following indicators have been updated with benchmarking data for the North East and England performance (previously unavailable).

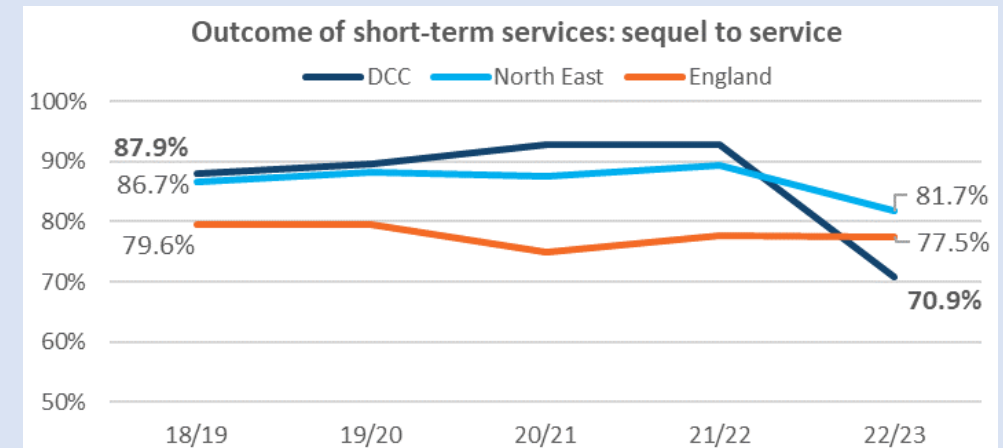
Easy to find information about services

Nationally over the last five years, it has become increasingly difficult to find information about services and this is reflected in answers provided by adult social care service users in Durham. Whilst reductions have been experienced Durham performs in line or above regional and national comparators.



Outcome of short-term services

Latest data for services in Durham (2022/23) demonstrates a clear reduction in people not requiring a longer term service following an intensive short term care package. Whilst this has also reduced in the North East, overall Durham is below both regional and national benchmarking.



Adult social care related quality of life – impact of adult social care services

188 The impact of adult social care services on service users' quality of life in County Durham has largely been in line with and above regional and national comparators since it was first reported in 2016/17. Data released for 2022/23, however, demonstrates a reported reduction in social care related quality of life. 2022/23 comparator data was released in December 2023. Whilst the North East and England show little change to the previous data reported (2021/22) there remains no statistically significant difference between performance in County Durham and comparator areas.

Ease of finding information

189 Service users in County Durham have reported increasing difficulty in finding information about services. This is a steady trend over the last five years and is reflected both regionally and nationally. Despite the reported reductions in ease of access, County Durham still performs in line with or above regional and national comparators for both indicators.

Outcome of Short-term Services

190 Short-term services aim to maximise the potential independence of people following a serious event such as an admission to hospital before long-term care needs are assessed. This indicator aims to provide evidence of a good outcome in delaying dependency or supporting recovery - short-term support which results in no further need for long-term services.

191 In 2021/22, the proportion of those that received short-term service, where no further request was made for ongoing long-term support afterwards, or support of a lower level, for County Durham was 92.7%, above both regional and national comparators.

192 Latest data for 2022/23 shows a reduction in performance in County Durham to 70.9%. Whilst this has also reduced in the North East, overall Durham is now below both regional and national benchmarking.

193 Data is taken from the national SALT data return for Adult Social Care which, for the first time in Durham in 2022/23, was entirely composed of data from Azeus, the service case management system. The change in recording practice between different systems will have been an influencing factor in the change in performance reported. The 2023/24 SALT return is the last SALT return to be reported, before it is replaced by the new Client Level Dataset (CLD) for 2024/25. The service is aware of the changes in performance, and a meeting has been scheduled to consider the benefits of re-addressing the way the SALT return is produced for 2023/24. Work is also to commence to assess Durham's performance in new experimental statistics measures derived from the CLD, which are proposed to replace the current measure as official statistics from the 2024/25 reporting year on.

Public Health Focus – Healthy Weight and Physical Activity Dashboard

- The UK has the third highest obesity rate in Europe (almost one in three adults, an increase from one in 10 adults in 1970).
- Higher consumption of fast food, inactivity and levels of obesity-related hospital admissions around 2.5 times higher in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived.
- The new Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28 prioritises supporting healthy weight with a focus on physical activity.

Healthy Weight

Maintaining a healthy weight has many health benefits, including improved health-related quality of life and a reduced risk of health conditions including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, liver disease and some cancers.

A summary of key indicators for healthy weight demonstrates significant differences between Durham and the national average. Durham has statistically lower rates than England for healthy weight in children whilst also experiencing higher rates for adults who are overweight / obese.

	Period	Durham	North East	England
Reception prevalence of healthy weight	2022/23	73.2%	74.0%	77.5%
Year 6 prevalence of healthy weight	2022/23	59.1%	58.9%	61.9%
% of adults classified as overweight or obese	2021/22	75.2%	70.5%	63.8%

Physical Activity

- Significantly lower rates of physically active children and young people in Durham compared to benchmarking areas.
- For physically active adults, however, there are similar levels in Durham compared to the national average.

	Period	Durham	North East	England
% of physically active children and young people	2021/22	36.9%	47.2%	47.2%
% of physically active adults	2021/22	66.7%	65.4%	67.3%

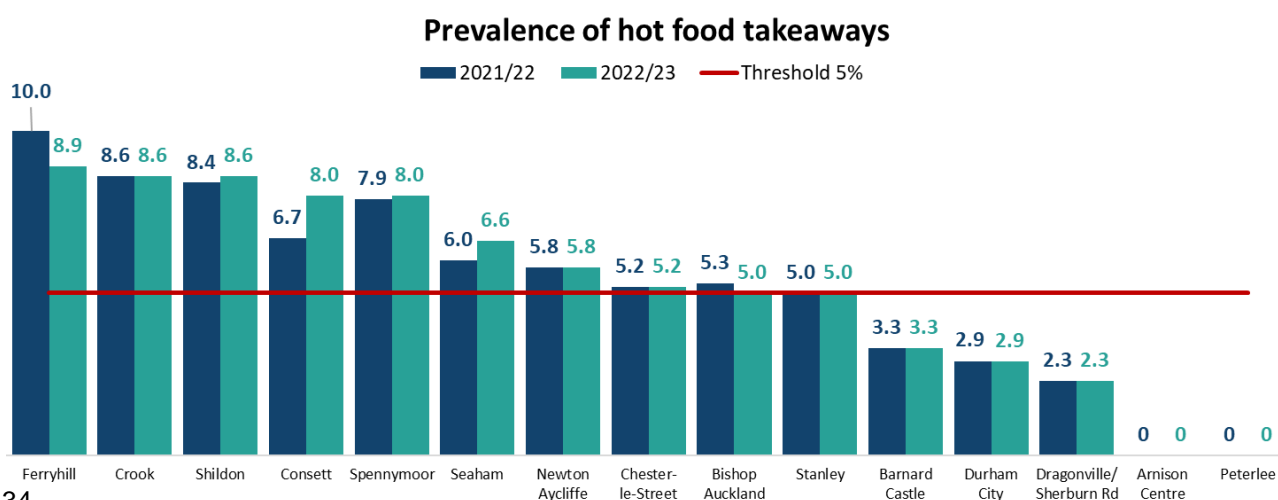
Other measures

Indicators can provide an overview as to levels of healthy weight in an area, and the Durham Insight [healthy weight dashboard](#) provides an analysis of these. The table summarises some of these and provides a brief comparison between Durham and regional and national benchmarking. Whilst Durham has a higher percentage of people meeting the healthy eating recommendation, obesity levels in Durham are significantly higher than the national average. This is also reflected in the hospital admission rates where obesity is the primary diagnosis.

	Period	Durham	North East	England
% of adults aged 16 meeting the '5-a-day' fruit and vegetable consumption recommendation	2021/22	34.1%	30.6%	32.5%
% of adults (18+) classified as obese	2021/22	34.2%	32.4%	25.2%
Hospital admission episodes with a primary diagnosis of obesity	2019/20	53.0 per 100,000	46.0 per 100,000	19.7 per 100,000

Public Health – Healthy Weight and Physical Activity

- 194 Obesity is a population health and inequalities challenge which has profound long-term consequences for health and wellbeing. Obesity and inactivity can increase the risk of many potentially serious health conditions including type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and other cardiovascular diseases. Furthermore, this can affect quality of life and contribute to mental health problems such as depression.
- 195 Rates of overweight/obesity and physical activity in children and adults are reported through national indicators:
- Reception and Year 6 children – levels of overweight/obesity
 - Adult levels of overweight/obesity
 - Children and adult rates of physical activity
- 196 Within County Durham there is a strong history of good partnership working around mental health led by the Mental Health Strategic Partnership (MHSP), which provides the strategic co-ordination and leadership for our Mental Health Strategic Plans. It is also responsible for ensuring the system works effectively to initiate prevention and early intervention approaches and engage, consult and involve mental health service users and carers to support the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 197 A priority of the County Durham [Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28](#) (JLHWS) is ‘Enabling a healthy weight for all’. The Healthy Weight Alliance was refreshed in 2023 to comprise key representation from across the system, including health, academic and voluntary and community sector partners. This maximises stakeholder engagement and collaboration – which is a key outcome of the JLHWS.
- 198 The JLHWS includes a number of key objectives with performance metrics where appropriate under the priority ‘Enabling a healthy weight for all’. As well as improving stakeholder engagement there is a clear focus on increasing both healthy weight and physical activity. The national indicators (above) are used to measure progress in County Durham and are discussed in more detail in the following dashboards.
- 199 A further objective of the JLHWS is to ensure that the prevalence of hot food takeaways does not exceed the County Durham Plan threshold of 5% of premises being a hot food takeaway. As of summer 2023, eight out of 15 areas exceed this threshold – noting that seven of these had over 5% threshold when the policy was introduced in 2018/19. It is encouraging to note that in the period 2022/23, rates are either unchanged or have fallen in 11 of the centres compared to 2021/22.



200 During 2023, a review was undertaken that focussed on our approaches to achieving healthy weight in County Durham. This considered progress that has been made in developing a whole systems approach to overweight and obesity and made a set of recommendations that will inform our approaches to achieving healthy weight going forward.

201 In 2023, the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board signed off a new physical activity strategy for 2023-28 entitled 'Moving Together in County Durham'. This strategy was co-produced with local partners and members of the public. The action plan focusses on four key priority action areas: children and young people, inclusive communities, active environments, and health and social care settings. The strategy will be launched in spring 2024.

Healthy Weight and Physical Activity Dashboards

202 To complement our new physical activity strategy and review of healthy weight approaches in County Durham, two new dashboards have been developed on Durham Insight to enable the Health and Wellbeing Board and other stakeholders (including members of the public) to monitor outcomes for both physical activity and overweight and obesity.

203 Benchmarking against indicators in the healthy weight dashboard shows in:

- 2022/23, 73.2% (n=3,625) of reception age children were of a healthy weight (77.5% national average). This reduces to 59% (n=3,295) by Year 6 (61.9% national average)
- 2022/23, 26.1% (n=1,290) of reception age children were either overweight or obese (21.3% national average). This increases to 39.9% (n=2,225) by Year 6 (36.6% national average)
- 2021/22, 75.2% of adults were either overweight or obese (63.8% national average)
- 2021/22, 34.1% of adults aged 16+ met the 5-a-day fruit and vegetable consumption recommendation (32.5% national average).

204 Similar benchmarking against indicators in the Physical Activity dashboard shows in:

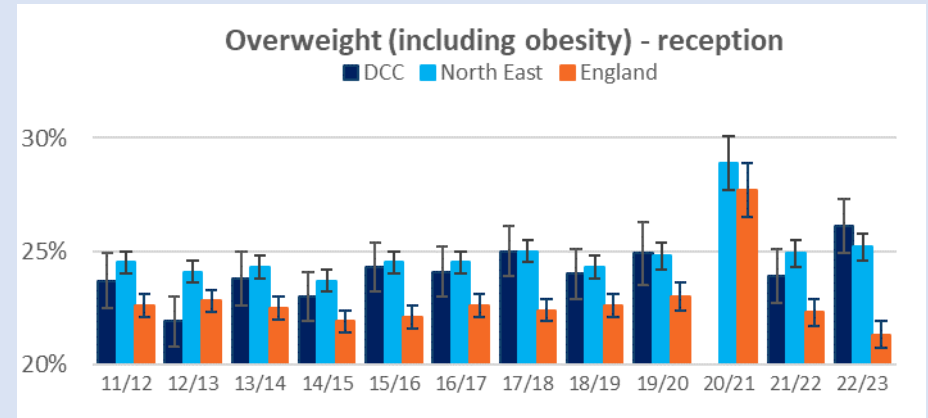
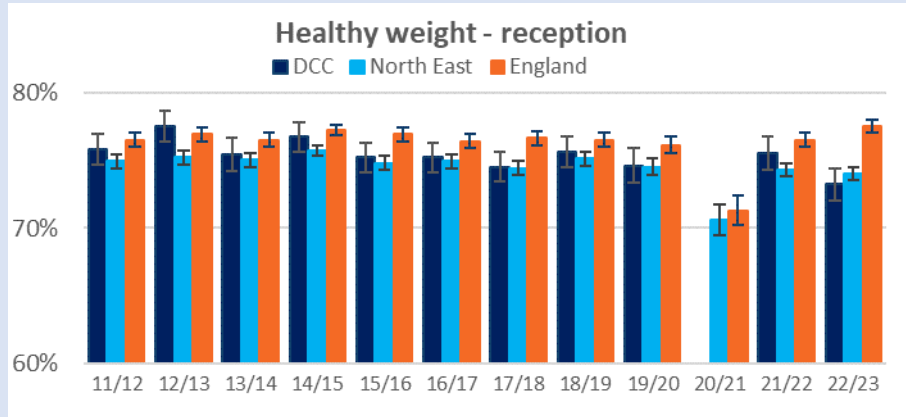
- 2021/22, 36.9% of children were physically active (47.2% national average)
- 2022/23, 66.7% of adults were physically active (67.3% national average).

Public Health Focus – Healthy Weight (Children)

(annual data as at 31 March 2023)

Rates of healthy weight / overweight in Reception children (aged 4-5)

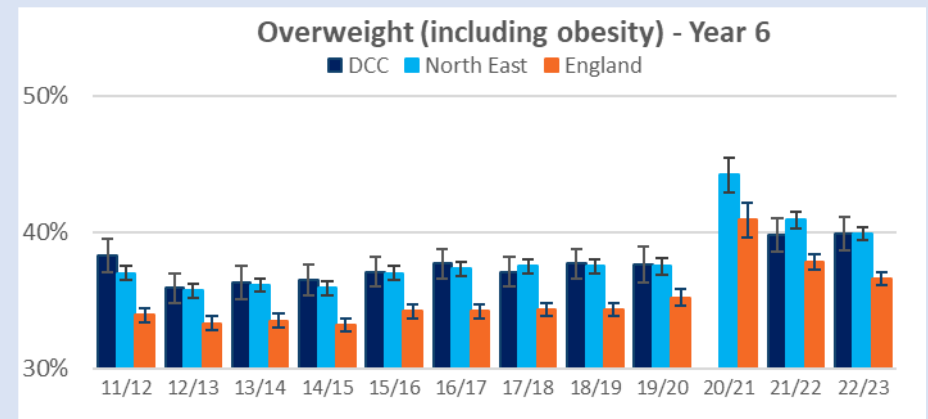
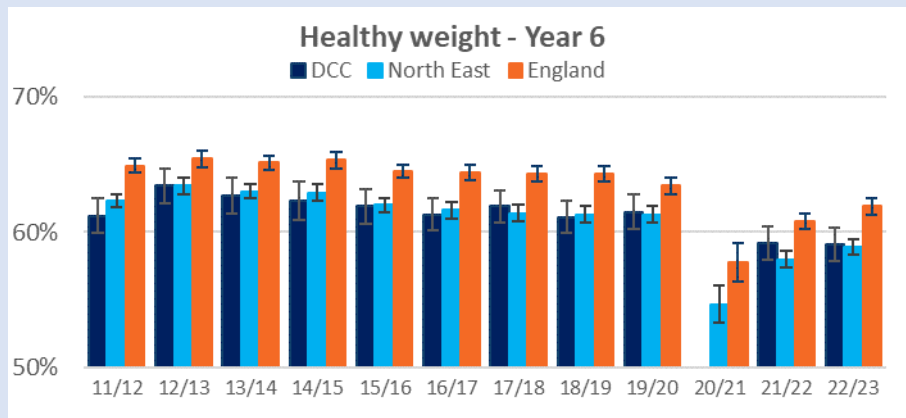
Percentage of children aged 4-5 years old of a healthy weight in Durham has deteriorated since the pandemic. Whilst similar to the North East rate, there is a statistically significant gap between Durham and the higher England average.



Post-pandemic the percentage of children aged 4-5 years old who are overweight or obese in Durham has increased. Again, the rate is similar to the North East. Pre-pandemic rates in Durham were also similar to those seen in England, however, latest data shows a five percentage point difference between these areas.

Rates of healthy weight / overweight in Year 6 children (aged 10-11)

Percentage of children of a healthy weight is seen at Year 6 is lower compared to those of reception age. This is demonstrated nationally with latest data showing 77.5% of reception children are of a healthy weight compared to 61.9% at Year 6. Levels in Durham, however, are significantly lower than those seen nationally.



Nationally we have seen increasing levels of children who are overweight or obese since the pandemic. Similar to the reduction seen for Year 6 children of a healthy weight compared to reception aged children, more children are overweight at Year 6 compared to their reception. Levels in Durham continue to be higher than the national average.

Public Health – Healthy weight (children)

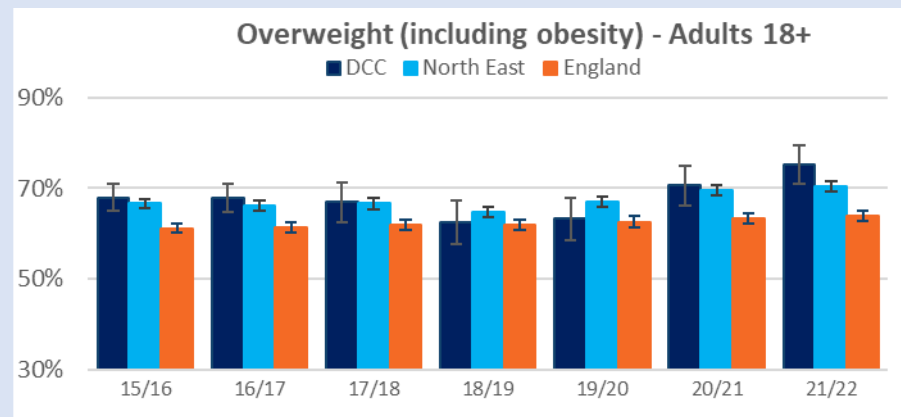
- 205 Healthy weight in children is very important as it provides them with a healthy base from their early years. County Durham, on average, has around 3,625 (73.2%) classified as being of a healthy weight (2022/23) which is statistically significantly worse than England (77.5%). The percentage of children aged 4-5 years old of a healthy weight in Durham has also deteriorated since the pandemic and the gap with England has widened.
- 206 Nationally, one in five children are overweight or very overweight when they start school, rising to one in three children when they leave primary school. Not only does this increase the risk of becoming overweight in adulthood, but it increases the risk of ill-health and dying early in adult life.
- 207 The percentage of children aged 4-5 years old who are overweight or obese in Durham has increased post-Covid. On average, in reception there are approximately 1,290 children (26.1% or one in four children) who are living with overweight or obesity in Durham (2022/23). This rate is similar to that seen in the North East, however, is significantly worse than England. Prior to the pandemic Durham rates were similar to England, however, latest data now shows a 5-percentage point difference.
- 208 Data shows the clear reduction in children of a healthy weight in reception (73.2%) to those of a healthy weight in Year 6 (59.1%) in Durham. The reduction is demonstrated nationally with latest data showing 77.5% of reception children are of a healthy weight compared to 61.9% at Year 6. These rates for Durham are significantly worse than those seen nationally, however, are similar to regional trends.
- 209 Nationally we have seen increasing levels of children who are overweight or obese since the pandemic. On average, in Year 6, there are around 2,225 children in Durham living with overweight and obesity. The level of children living with overweight or obesity in Year 6 in Durham (39.9%) is similar to the North East (also 39.9%) and statistically significantly worse than England (36.6%).

Public Health Focus – Healthy Weight (Adults)

(annual data as at 31 March 2022)

Overweight or obese adults

- Percentage of adults who are overweight or obese has increased following the pandemic.
- Whilst data demonstrates a reducing percentage up to 2019/20 recent data (2021/22) is the highest percentage of overweight adults recorded.
- Previously the level of overweight adults in Durham was similar to both regional and national benchmarking. Whilst just about remaining statistically similar to the North East recent data show that that levels are now significantly higher in Durham compared to the national average.



Public Health – Healthy Weight (adults)

- 210 Latest data (2021/22) shows that the percentage of adults (aged 18+) classified as overweight or obese (75.2%) in Durham is statistically significantly worse than both the regional (70.5%) and national (63.8%) position.
- 211 The percentage of adults who are overweight or obese has increased following the pandemic. Whilst data demonstrates a reducing percentage up to 2019/20, recent data (2021/22) is the highest percentage of overweight adults recorded. Previously the level of overweight adults in Durham was similar to both regional and national benchmarking.

Health Weight challenges

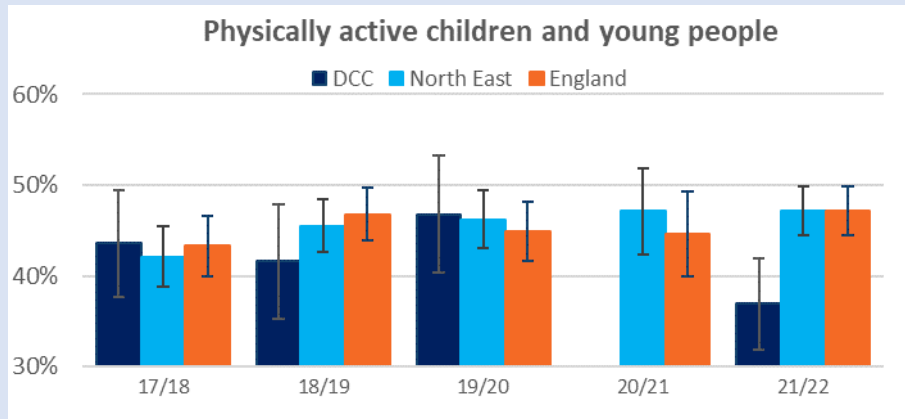
- 212 Whilst prevalence of overweight and obesity in children at reception age and year 6 is similar to our regional neighbours, it is significantly worse than the national average. Prevalence of overweight and obesity in our adult population is worse than both regional and national averages. To address these issues, a review of approaches to achieving healthy weight in County Durham has been completed. This has yielded a suite of recommendations that will form a multi-agency action plan. Progress will be reported to, and monitored by, the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Public Health Focus – Physical Activity

(annual data as at 31 March 2022)

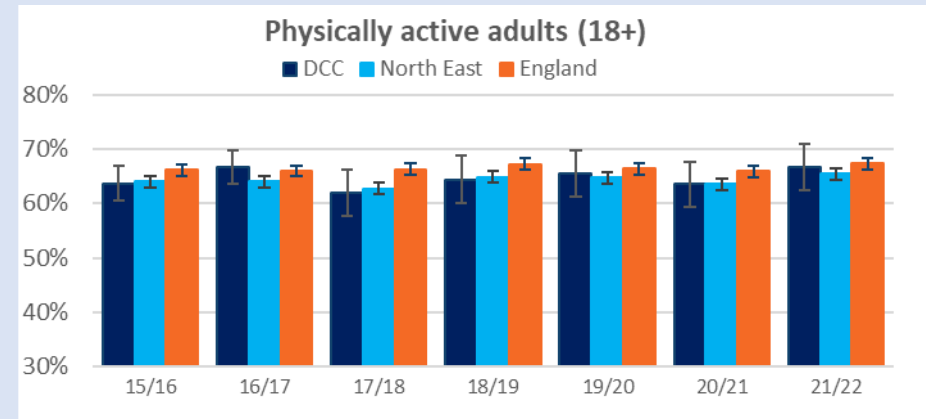
Physically active children and young people

- Latest data for children and young people who are physically active in Durham has deteriorated since the pandemic.
- Percentage of physically active children and young people in Durham (36.9%) is statistically significantly worse than both the regional (47.2%) and national (47.2%) position.



Physically active adults (18+)

- Over the last few years there has been little change in the percentage of physically active adults (aged 18+). The percentage of physically active adults in Durham (66.7%) is similar to both the regional (65.4%) and national (67.3%) data.



Public Health – Physical Activity

- 213 Physical activity supports people to maintain a healthy weight. Latest data for children and young people who are physically active in Durham has deteriorated since the pandemic. The percentage of physically active children and young people in Durham (36.9%) is statistically significantly worse than both the regional (47.2%) and national (47.2%) position.
- 214 Over the last few years there has been little change in the percentage of physically active adults (aged 18+). Since 2021/22, however, the percentage of physically active adults in Durham has increased by 3.2 percentage points. Latest data show that the percentage of physically active adults in Durham (66.7%) is similar to both the regional (65.4%) and national (67.3%) data.

Physical Activity challenges

- 215 Whilst children and young people in County Durham are now less active than they were during the period 2019/20, levels amongst adults have remained relatively static. Spring 2024 will see the launch of 'Moving Together in County Durham', our new, local physical activity strategy that has been produced with County Durham Sport. Increasing movement in our children and young people is a key priority action area of this strategy and Durham County Council is now working in close collaboration with a range of local stakeholders to increase levels of physical activity at home, within educational establishments and in our communities. Progress will be monitored by the Physical Activity Strategy Committee, reporting annually to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

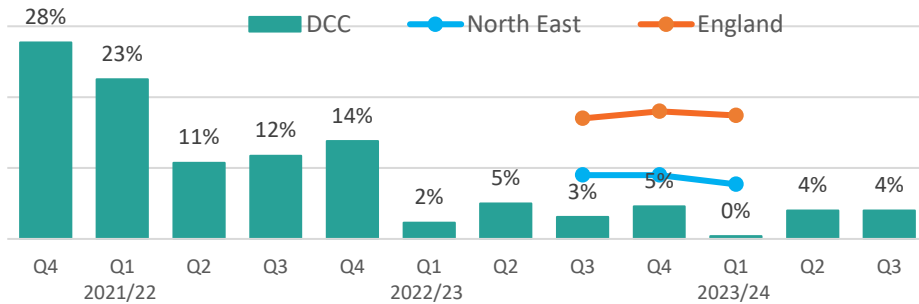
Housing Vulnerable People Dashboard - Homelessness

(quarterly data as at 31 December 2023)

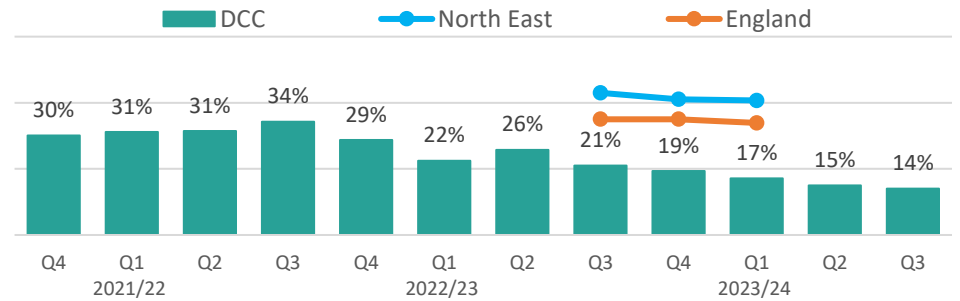
Homelessness

- Households helped to stay in their home this quarter is on par with quarter two due to continued proactive preventative work by two new Visiting Officers.
- Less households moved into alternative accommodation this quarter, -1pp compared to quarter two. The team are working on a Private Landlord Insurance initiative to increase access to private rented sector properties.
- 232 homeless cases were resolved at relief stage, a 1pp increase (+8 households) compared to quarter two.
- Increase in acceptances of the main homelessness duty compared to quarter two due to the team significantly reducing lost contacted cases which has resulted in a higher number of cases requiring a main duty decision in quarter three.
- Latest benchmarking data (June 2023) shows that we performed worse than the national and regional average for prevention and relief outcomes and worse than the regional average for main duty acceptances, but significantly better than the national average.

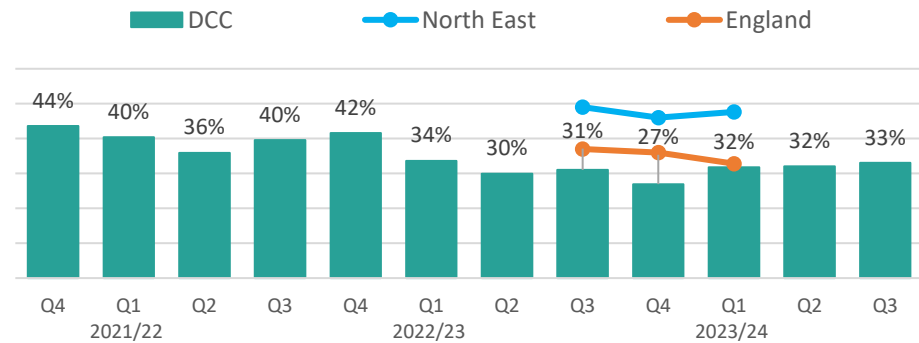
Homelessness prevention: people helped to stay in their home



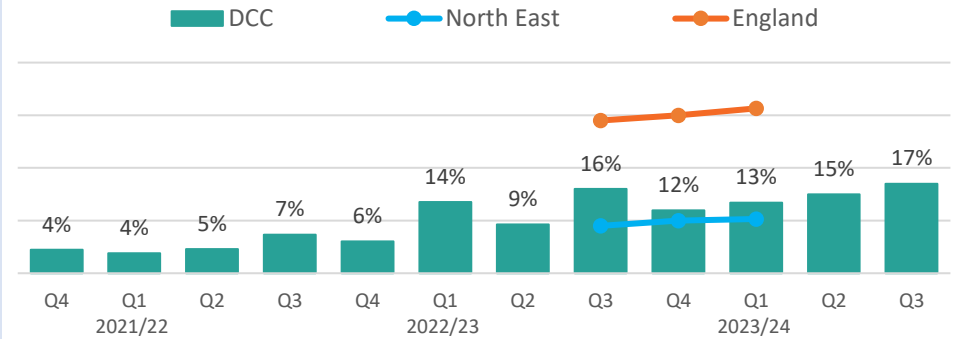
Homelessness prevention: people helped to move to alternative accommodation



Homelessness relief



Acceptance of the main homeless duty



Homelessness

- 216 The proportion of households prevented from homelessness and helped to remain in their current home is on par with quarter two, with 4% assisted (11 households). Positive outcomes are set to continue following the appointment of two full-time visiting officers to assist with preventative work into existing accommodation.
- 217 The proportion of households where homelessness was prevented and the households helped to move to alternative accommodation has decreased by 1pp, with 14% securing alternative accommodation (35 households). Out of the 35 households assisted, 43% (15) households moved into social rented supported housing, 31% (11) into private rented sector accommodation, 20% (7) into social housing with the remaining households moving in with family and friends/other.
- 218 To increase access to the private rented sector we have completed a tender process for a Private Landlord Insurance policy which will mitigate risks to private landlords of damage and arrears.
- 219 The proportion of households where homelessness has been relieved (where homelessness was not prevented within 56 days or the household was already homeless) has increased by 1pp (+8 households) in quarter two to 33% (232) in quarter three.
- 220 Latest benchmarking data (June 23) shows that we are performing worse than the national and regional averages for these three homelessness prevention measures.
- 221 The proportion of cases where there has been an acceptance of the main homeless duty (where relief duty has ended, and the client is not intentionally homeless and in priority need) has increased this quarter, with 17% (120) of households requiring a main duty decision, 2pp higher than quarter two (+12 households). The team have significantly reduced lost contacted cases since quarter two which has resulted in this higher number of cases requiring a main duty decision in quarter three.
- 222 Latest benchmarking data (June 2023) shows that we are performing significantly better than the national average for main duty acceptances, but slightly worse than the regional average.
- 223 We continue to secure suitable accommodation for our most vulnerable clients and have been successful in securing £4.42m from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to deliver the Single Homeless Accommodation Programme (SHAP). Funding will be used to purchase 32 bedspaces for rough sleepers or people at risk of sleeping rough and procure 24/7 wrap around support. The objective of SHAP is to increase supply of high-quality accommodation with accompanying support for adults and younger people aged 18 to 25 years who are either rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping.
- 224 We have also been awarded £675,000 from Homes England to secure 15 temporary accommodation properties for clients owed a homeless duty, with a further bid for £1.5m submitted January 2024 to secure funding for a further 25 properties. Thirteen properties have already been purchased, with a further 10 projected for completion in quarter four. The remaining properties are projected for delivery in quarter one 2024/25.

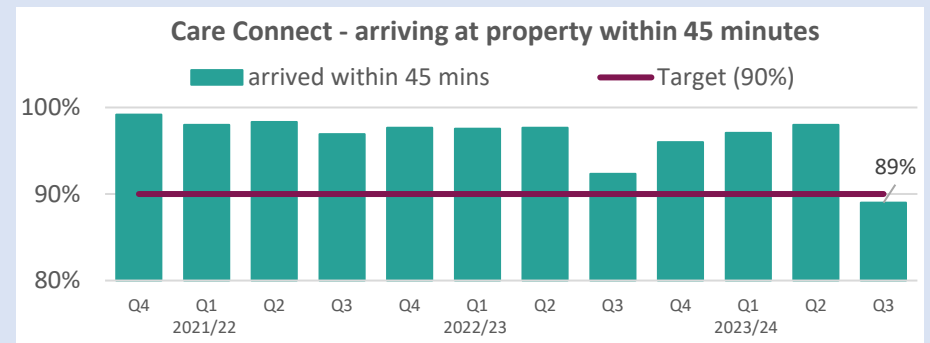
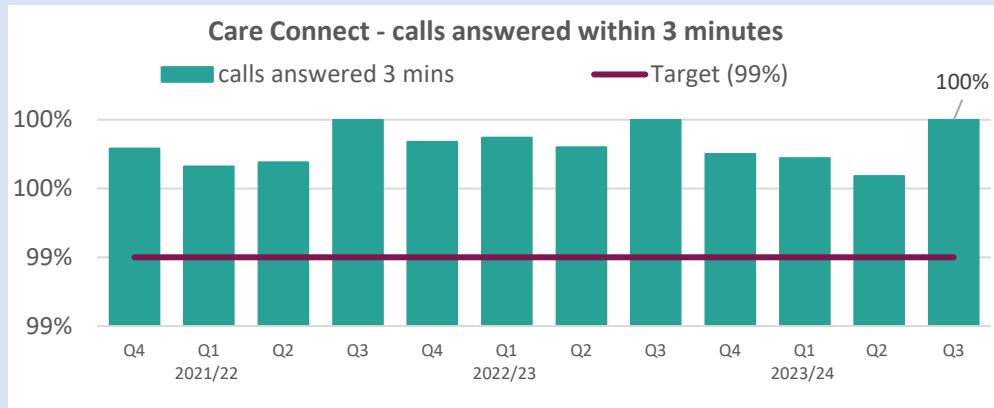
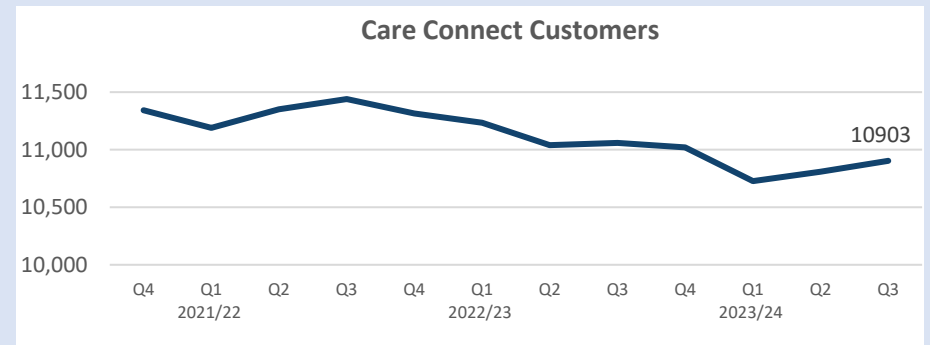
225 We are in the second year of our three years of Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding. This money continues to fund our Somewhere Safe to Stay provision, rough sleeper team and our complex needs accommodation project, Jigsaw. In November we were allocated an additional £26,841 of RSI funding. This money will go towards creating an 'arrears clearance fund' to help those whose primary reason for homelessness is financial hardship. It will also help fund a tenancy sustainment service for those going into accommodation which does not provide support, and moving in packs to help clients settle in their new properties.

Housing Vulnerable People Dashboard – Care Connect and Disabled Facilities Grants

(quarterly data at 31 December 2023)

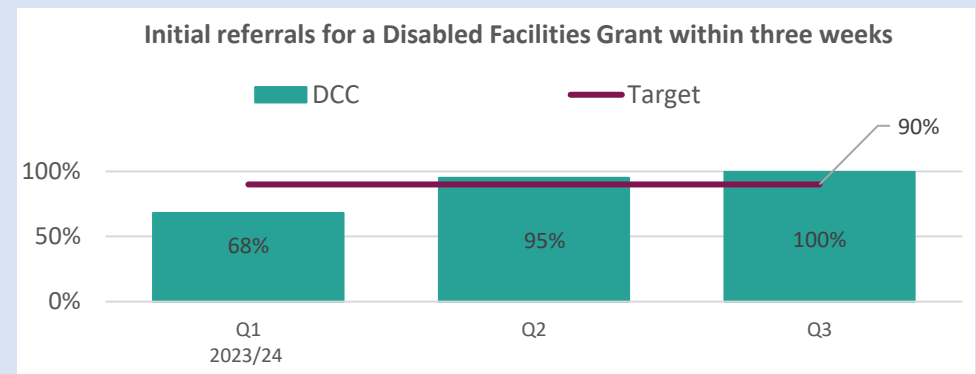
Care Connect

- Winter offer of a free installation fee gained 256 new customers over November and December.
- Staff responded to 7,483 emergency calls this quarter, 7,201 were responded to within 45 mins.
- Annual Survey indicates that 97% of respondents agreed that the services they had received so far left them either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied'



Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)

New processes implemented during quarter two, including allocating responsibility to dedicated team members for first contact, continue to increase performance.



Care Connect

- 226 The December Offer of free installation fee worked well with 256 new customers taking up the Connect service during November and December.
- 227 Of the 7,483 emergency calls staff responded to this quarter, 89% (7,201) were responded to within 45 minutes, worse than the last quarter (98.9%) and the same period last year (92.3%). This was mainly due to high levels of sickness and staff vacancies. 22 were responded to after 60 minutes due to location of properties.
- 228 Care Connect has completed their annual survey with the following initial feedback, the full report will be available in early 2024:
- 97% of respondents agree that the services they received so far left them either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied'.
 - 100% would recommend Care Connect to family or friends if they needed it.
 - 100% agreed that the service helps to provide reassurance to their family or carers.
 - 98% agreed that the service helps them to remain independent at home.
 - 97% said that the overall impression of the services Care Connect provided were 'very good' or 'good'.

Disabled Facilities Grants

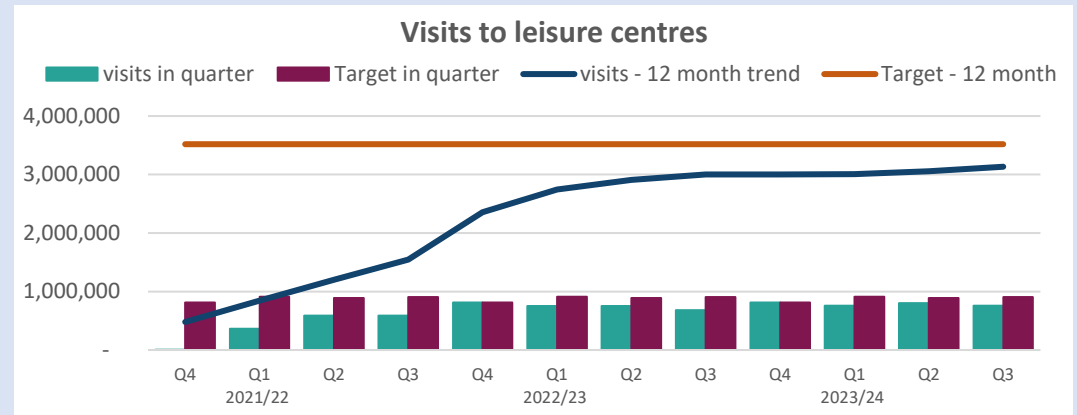
- 229 During quarter three, 100% of potential clients were contacted within three weeks of their initial referral for a Disabled Facilities Grant, which is 10 percentage points better than target and a five percentage points increase compared to quarter two. New processes implemented during the quarter, including allocating responsibility to dedicated team members for first contact, continues to increase performance.

Physical Activity Dashboard

(quarterly data at 31 December 2023)

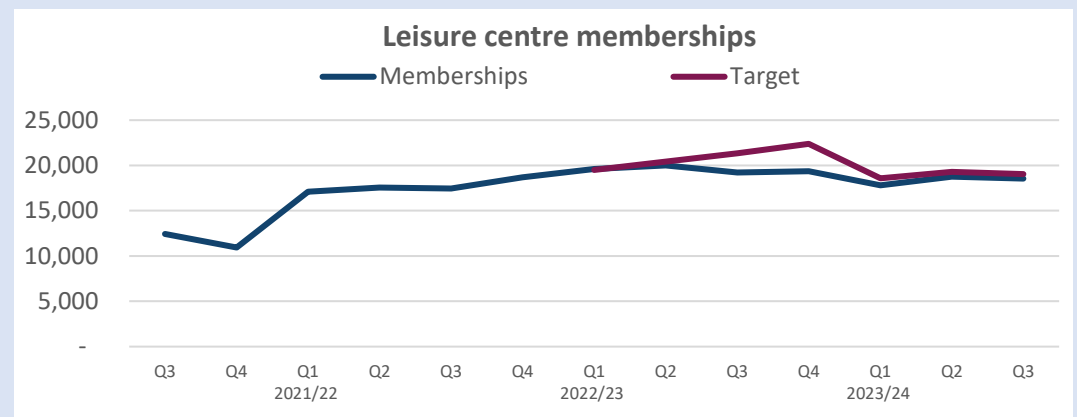
Leisure centre visits

- 758,564 visits this quarter, worse than target by 16% (-146,076).
- Visits continue to be affected by transformation works across several of our facilities and temporary disruptions to service.
- Target to be reviewed in 2024/25 to better reflect the ongoing disruption to some sites and positive impact following our improvement works.



Leisure memberships

- Sales of memberships are increasing, including at the newly reopened Abbey Leisure Centre.
- 18,551 members this quarter, lower than target by 2.7% (510) but expected to increase with January being a key month for sales.
- We continue to work with the marketing team and partners to promote sales.
- Work continues on the membership cleanse, with 90% of memberships transferred onto the new membership and pricing in November 2023, with the remaining transferred by 1 April this year.



Leisure Centre Visits

- 230 Our substantial leisure transformation programme continues to deliver upgraded and new facilities; however, this means a temporary drop in visits to our leisure centres, with 758,564 visits this quarter which is 16% (-146,076) worse than target (904,640). Visits are also down on quarter two (-5.5%, 43,895) and down on the same period last year (-11.4%, 77,827).
- 231 Visits continue to be affected by transformation works across several of our facilities. Despite Peterlee leisure centre re-opening its new service 30 October 2023, the pool is still closed, and this will also impact quarter four.
- 232 Commencement of transformation works at Louisa leisure centre continues to cause disruption to service.
- 233 Consett main swimming pool was temporarily closed during the reporting period due to essential repair works.
- 234 Teesdale works have been confirmed and the site will be closed during quarter four.
- 235 As targets are based on a fully operational service this will be reviewed in 2024/25 to better reflect the ongoing disruption at some sites and the positive impact following our improvement works.

Leisure Centre Memberships

- 236 Sales of memberships have started to increase in recent months, including at the newly reopened Abbey Leisure Centre. We have revised our pricing structure, continue to introduce new equipment and work with our marketing team and partners to promote sales. Although membership numbers remain slightly below target by 2.7% (510) this quarter, with 18,551 members at the end of December, we anticipate this will increase in quarter four with January being a key month for sales and the re-opening of Peterlee Leisure Centre in October following improvement works.
- 237 Data cleansing work commenced in quarter one continues, with 90% of memberships transferred onto the new membership and pricing in November 2023, with the remaining to be transferred by 1 April 2024.

Our Communities

Priority Aims:

Durham is a great county in which to live, with flourishing communities which are connected and supportive of each other. We aim to,

- ensure standards will be maintained or improved across County Durham's housing stock
- have towns and villages which are vibrant, well-used, clean, attractive and safe
- ensure people will have good access to workplaces, services, retail and leisure opportunities
- ensure communities will be able to come together and support each other
- deliver new high-quality housing which is accessible and meets the needs of our residents
- ensure our rural communities will be sustainable whilst maintaining those characteristics which make them distinctive
- narrow the inequality gap between our communities
- build inclusive communities

National, Regional and Local Picture

238 Of the approximate 250,000 dwellings³ across the county, 63% are owner-occupied, 20% are social rented and 17% private rented.

239 Median house prices across the county (£125,000 between April 2022 and March 2023) are consistently lower than those across the North East (£152,000) and the England (£290,000)⁴. Although median house prices across the county have increased by 166% since 2000, from £47,000 to £125,000, there is significant variation.

240 County Durham is a large and diverse county with some of the lowest population densities in the country: of 300 recognised settlements, only 23 have a population of 5,000 or more.

Land Type ⁵	% of the county	% of the population	People per hectare ⁶
Rural	57%	7%	0.3
Rural town and Fringe	32%	37%	2.7
Urban	11%	56%	12.1

241 Accessing opportunities across the county continues to be priority. The county has good North-South connectivity both by road and rail, and the improved A66 connects east to west. However, some areas have limited public transport or major roads, especially in more rural areas. Our large, rural geography means residents are often reliant on cars for commuting. 80% of those surveyed for the [Inclusive Economic Strategy](#) said they travel to work by car, compared to 5% who use public transport.

³ [Durham Insight - Housing](#)

⁴ [Median House Prices](#)

⁵ [Rural Urban Classification for LSOAs 2011](#)

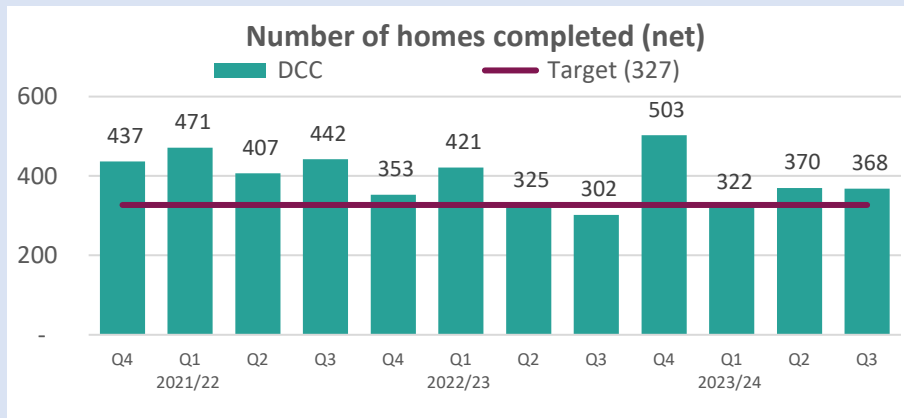
⁶ [Durham Insight - Rural](#)

Housing Delivery Dashboard

(quarterly data as at 31 December 2023)

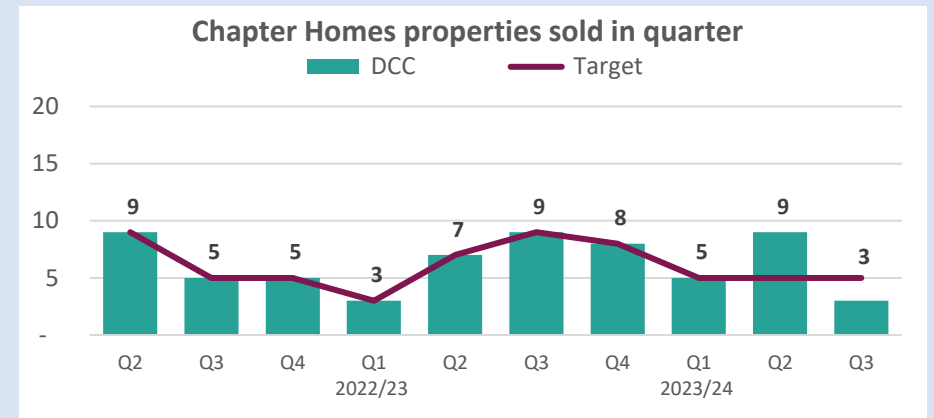
Net homes completed

- The County Durham Plan policies support the delivery of housing to meet identified need and ensure the right type of housing.
- With 1,038 completions year-to-date, we expect to meet the annual target of 1,308.
- Several large sites across the county continue to see high completion rates.



Chapter Homes

- Despite wider increases in both the cost-of-living and interest rates, 17 sales have been achieved year to date,
- Performing better than the projection of 15.



Net homes completed

- 242 The County Durham Plan policies support the delivery of housing to meet identified need and ensure the right type of housing.
- 243 During quarter three, 368 homes were completed, 41 better than the profiled target, due to high completion rates at several larger sites across the county. This brings year to date completions to 1,060 which is on track to meet the annual target of 1,308.

Chapter Homes

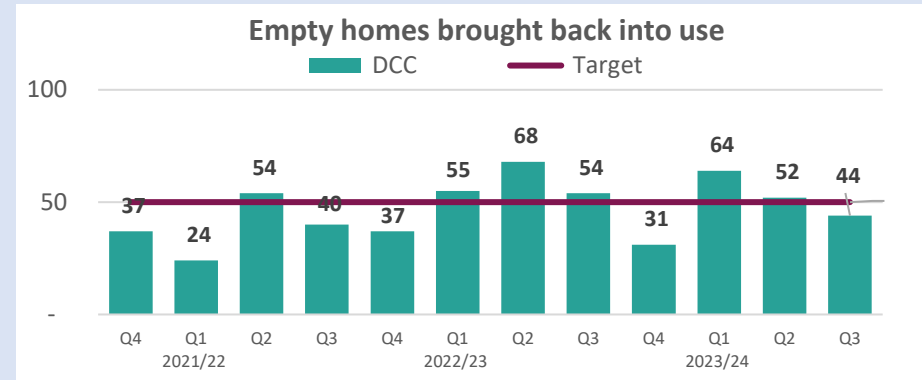
- 244 Three sales were completed during quarter three bringing year to date sales to 17. A further six sales are expected by the end of March 2024 which will increase sales for this financial year to 23, three better than target. Despite wider economic issues of both cost-of-living and mortgage interest rates, sales are expected to exceed target due to the provision of well-designed homes and a focus on ensuring advertising is fully maximised.

Housing Standards Dashboard

(discrete quarterly data)

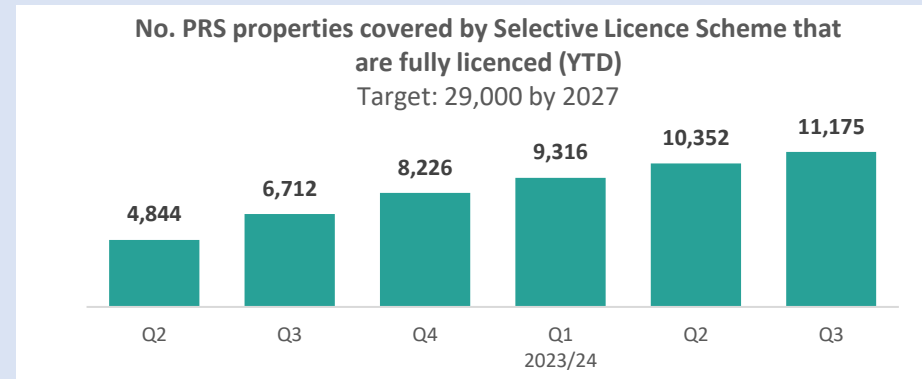
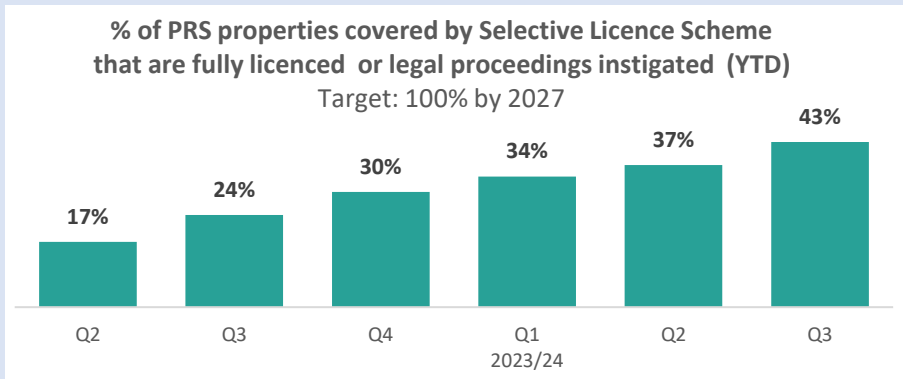
Empty Homes

- We continue to address empty homes through negotiation, advice, financial assistance, working with registered social landlords and interventions through Local Lettings Agency and Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme.
- Quarter three performance was slightly below target due to staff absence. But we remain on track to bring 200 empty homes back into use by the end of the financial year.



Selective Licensing (Private Rented Sector properties - PRS)

- 11,175 properties are fully licenced. A further 1,108 applications are being processed.
- 289 exemptions in place.
- 142 enforcement cases have either started or in process of being actioned. One has led to a successful prosecution.
- A new Financial Penalty policy is now in place (as an alternative to prosecution) to encourage landlords with any unlicensed properties to apply for licences.



Empty Homes

- 245 In the year to date, 160 properties have been brought back into use putting us on track to achieve the annual target of 200 properties. Within the quarter, 44 empty homes have been brought back into use.
- 246 During quarter three, various methods were used to bring Empty Homes back into use: negotiation, advice and support (33); empty homes loans (three); Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme (eight).

Selective Licensing

- 247 Of the estimated 29,000 private sector properties covered by the selective licensing scheme, 11,175 are now fully licenced (39%) and, as at 31 December, a further 1,108 applications were being processed. Twelve live temporary exemptions and 277 family exemptions are in place.
- 248 A further 122 properties are under investigation for not having a licence. Four prosecution files, relating to 14 properties, are being progressed. During quarter three, there was one successful prosecution, one retrial arranged for quarter four, and six civil penalties issued. 12,470 of private rented sector properties covered by the licence scheme that are either fully licenced or legal proceedings instigated (43%).
- 249 The enforcement team continue to target all private rented properties not yet licenced and a new Financial Penalty Policy is now in place (as an alternative to prosecution) to encourage landlords with unlicenced properties to apply for licences.

ASB in Selective Licensing Areas

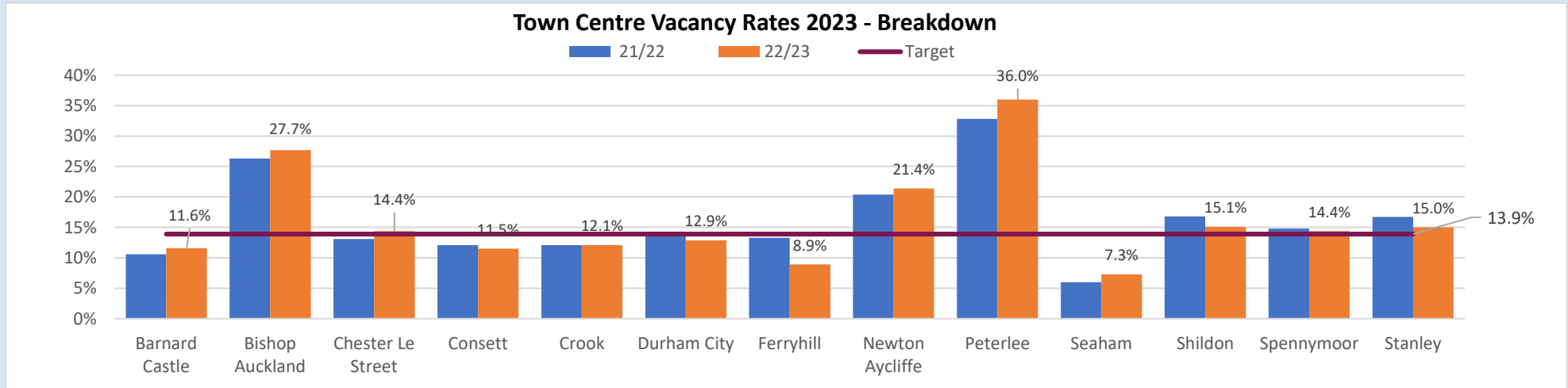
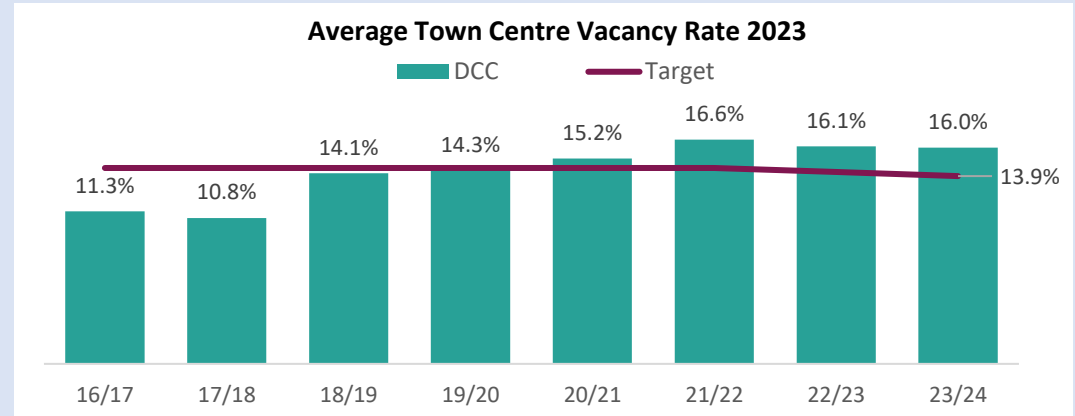
- 250 We are continuing to experience issues with our ASB recording system so are unable to provide an update in relation to this indicator. We are working to resolve the issue.

Vibrant Communities Dashboard

(12 months ending 31 December 2023 / quarterly data / as at 31 December 2023)

Town Centre Vacancy Rates

- An average of 16% of retail units in our town centres are vacant which is worse than the national average of 13.9%.
- Seven town centres have vacancy rates worse than the national average and six better.
- Six town centres show signs of improvement since 2022 and one remains unchanged. However, six town centres show an increase in vacancy rates since last year.



- Peterlee has the highest vacancy rate due to a limited non-retail offer.
- Bishop Auckland has the second highest vacancy rate but is undergoing significant investment through the Stronger Towns Fund and Future High Street Fund that is expected to increase new retail and hospitality opportunities in the town.

Town Centre Vacancy Rates

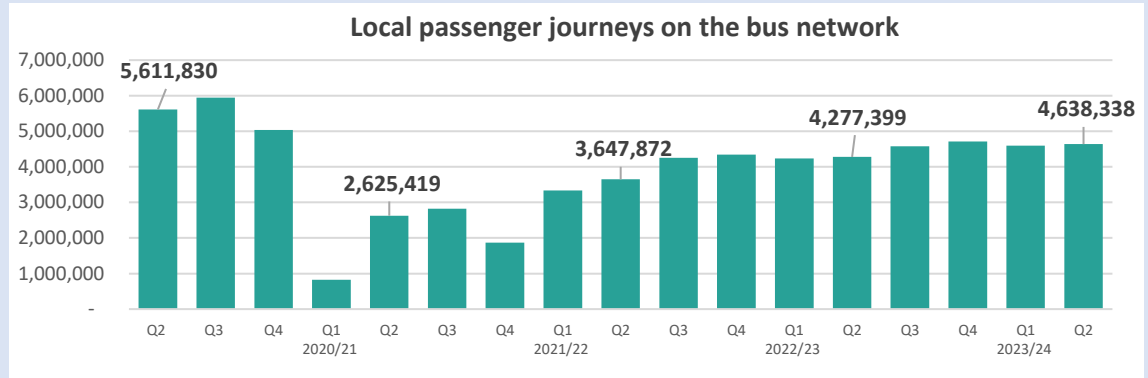
- 251 Town centres are key drivers of our economy, and it is important they remain viable. Surveys are carried out each year to identify vacancy levels of retail units in our town centres. The latest survey (July 2023) shows the average vacancy rate for retail units across all our town centres is 16%. This is worse than the national average (13.9%) but on par with 2022 (16.1%).
- 252 Of the 13 town centres surveyed, seven have vacancy rates worse than the national average whilst six are better than the national average. Six have vacancy rates worse than last year whilst six show signs of improvement and one remains unchanged.
- 253 Of the seven worse than the national average,
- Peterlee has the highest vacancy rate. At 36% it is worse than both the national average (13.9%) and the rate recorded last year (32.8%). Despite being anchored by national food retailer Asda and other retailers such as M&M and Boots, the non-retail offer within the town is limited resulting in high vacancy rates.
 - Bishop Auckland has the second highest vacancy. At 27.7%, it is worse than both the national average (13.9%) and the rate recorded last year (26.3%). However, the town is undergoing change and is receiving significant investment (Stronger Towns Fund and Future High Street Fund) that is expected to create new opportunities for the retail and hospitality sectors in the town.
 - Newton Aycliffe has the third highest vacancy rate. At 21.4%, it worse than both the national average (13.9%) and the rate recorded last year (20.4%). Despite the town being anchored by national food retailers Tesco and Adli, the limited non-retail offer within the town means vacancy rates remain high.
 - Shildon (15.1%), Stanley (15%) and Spennymoor (14.4%) are all better than the vacancy rate recorded last year, but are worse than the national average (13.9%).
 - Chester-le-Street (14.4%) is worse than both the vacancy rate recorded last year (13.1%) and the national average (13.9%).
- 254 Of the six towns centres with vacancy rates better than the national average (13.9%):
- Seaham had the fewest unoccupied retail units (7.3%) although the vacancy rate is worse than last year (6.0%). The town is anchored by Asda, and also home to other national retailers in Byron Place shopping centre, as well as many independent cafes, bars and restaurants resulting in low vacancy rates.
 - Ferryhill had the second lowest vacancy rate (8.9%). Unlike the other town centres, Ferryhill is not anchored by a large food store but serves a local function and is home to a co-op store and other independent retailers.
 - Three town centres are either on par with last year or better. They are Consett (11.5%), Crook (12.1%) and Durham City (12.9%)
 - Barnard Castle (11.6%) is worse than last year (10.6%).
- 255 We continue to support our town centres through various initiatives, including the Towns and Villages Programme, Targeted Business Improvement Scheme and our town centre masterplans that provide a blueprint for future investment and development in town centres.

Transport Connectivity Dashboard

(discrete quarterly data)

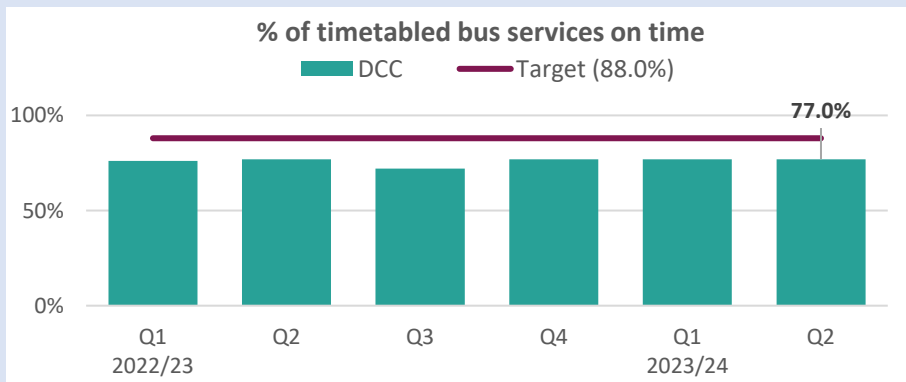
Public Transport Patronage

- Bus patronage remains lower than pre-Covid levels.
- We continue to work in partnership at a regional level with bus operators and other councils to implement the North East Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).
- In November, more affordable day ticket were introduced.



Bus punctuality

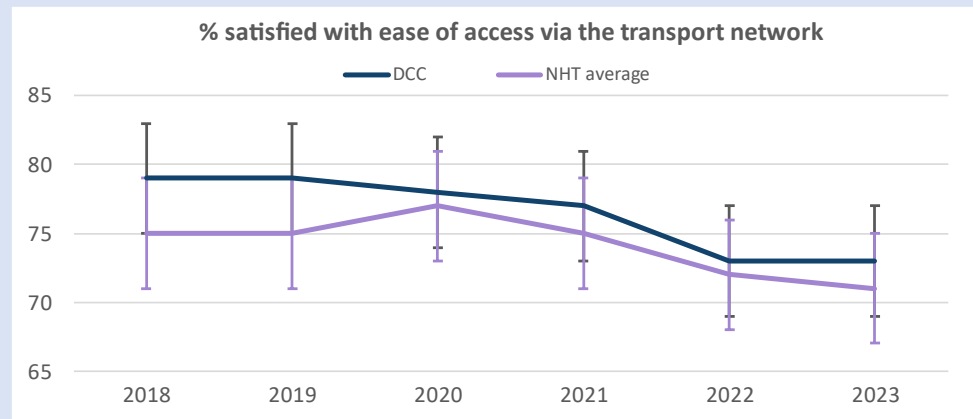
- BSIP initiatives to be developed include bus service improvements, bus priority measures to improve bus punctuality and journey times and updating bus stops and stations that have safety or accessibility issues.
- Operators continue work to recruit and retain driving staff to improve reliability, alongside analysis of route and network performance.



Satisfaction with ease of access by any form of transport

(National Highways and Transport Survey)

satisfaction relating to the ease of travelling to work, school/college or local services remains within the confidence intervals (+/- 4pp) of the survey so performance remains in line with the national average and previous years.



Public Transport Patronage

- 256 Bus patronage continues to be worse than pre-Covid levels and is not likely to return to those levels in the medium term. However, we continue to work in partnership at a regional level with bus operators and other councils to implement the North East Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to encourage patronage growth.
- 257 From 5 November 2023, new more affordable day tickets were made available for adults across the region, with many tickets offering a major cost-saving when compared to the existing product.
- 258 This builds on a range of improvements launched across the region using North East BSIP funding, including a flat £1 bus fare for young people aged 21 and under and a region-wide multi-modal day ticket introduced in September.

Bus punctuality

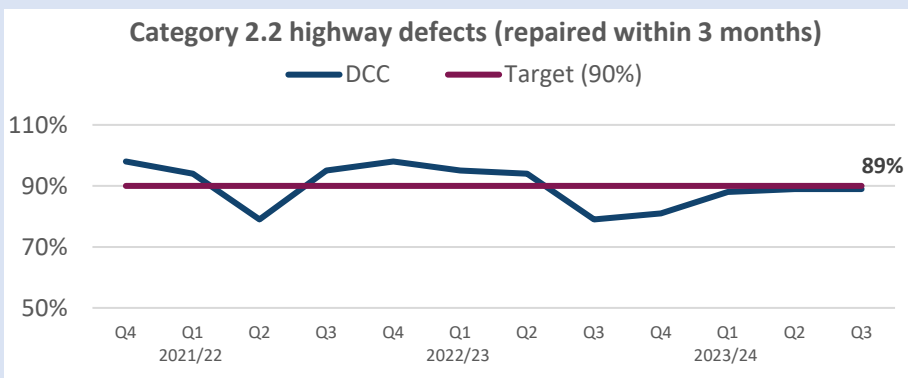
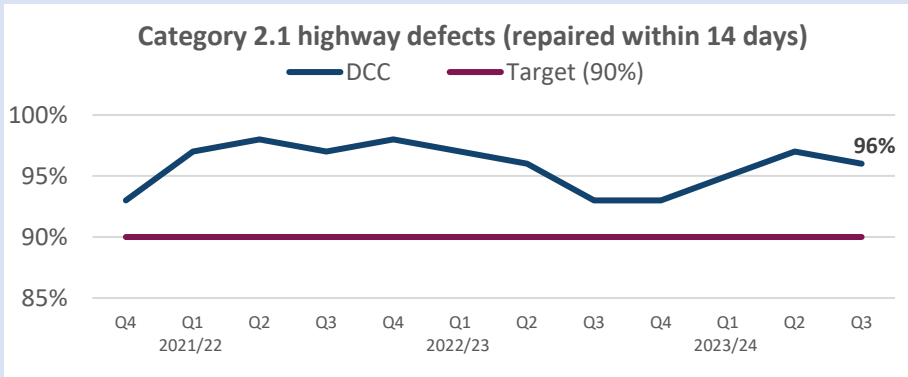
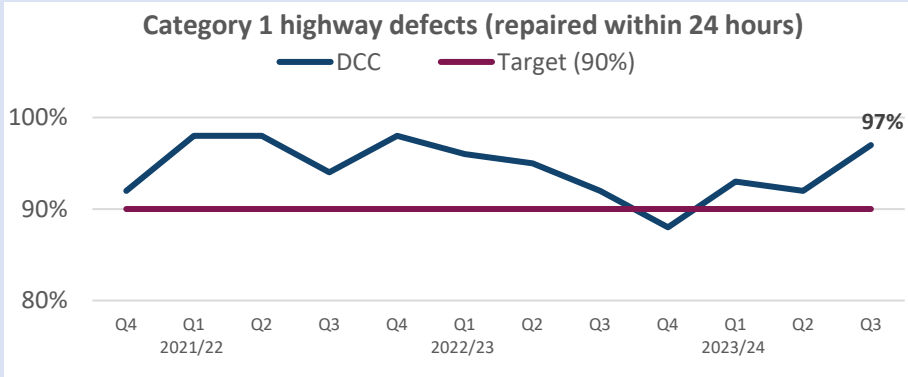
- 259 Other initiatives within the BSIP yet to be developed include bus service improvements, bus priority measures to improve bus punctuality and journey times and updating bus stops and stations that have safety or accessibility issues.
- 260 Work is also being undertaken by operators to recruit and retain driving staff to improve reliability, alongside ongoing operator analysis of route and network performance.

Highway Maintenance Dashboard

(discrete quarterly data)

Highway Maintenance

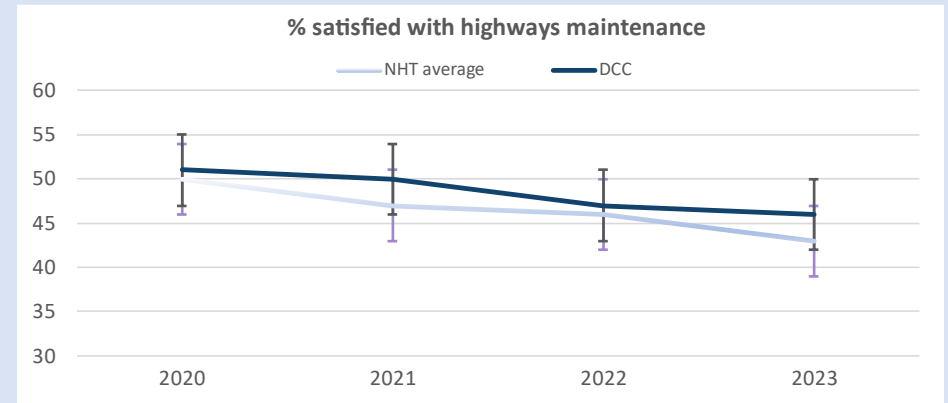
Defects across all risk categories are either above or have almost met target.



Satisfaction highways maintenance

(National Highways and Transport Survey)

satisfaction relating to highways maintenance remains within the confidence intervals (+/- 4pp) of the survey so performance remains in line with the national average and previous years.



Highways Maintenance

- 261 Highway defects are categorised on a risk basis and where there is a high number of defects over all categories, resources must be targeted at those safety defects likely to pose the greatest risk of harm. Category 2.2 highway defects pose the lowest level of risk to the public due to their hierarchy within the network based on footfall and location.
- 262 Following a downward trend last year, Category 2.2 highway defects (within 3 months) continues to improve, quarter three (89%) is close to target (90%).
- 263 Performance for maintenance of Category 1 (within 24 hours) (97%) and Category 2.1 highway defects (within 14 days) (96%) continue to be better than target (90%).

Highways Asset Management Plan

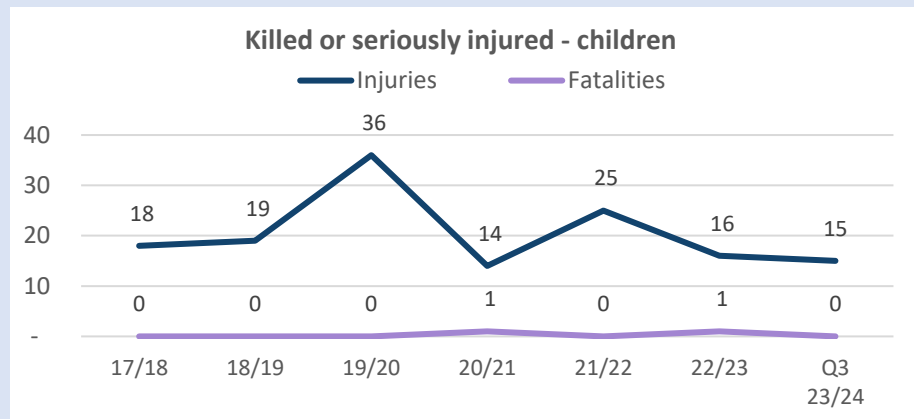
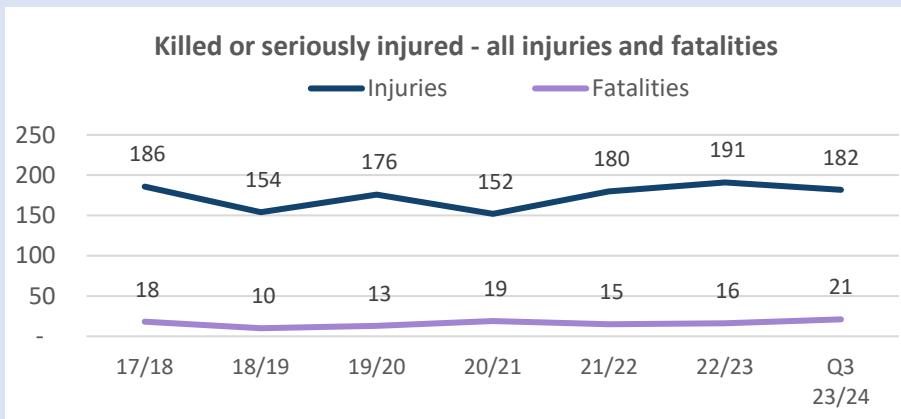
- 264 We are currently updating the Highways Asset Maintenance Plan using the most up to date condition data and treatment costs. This will enable an accurate highways maintenance backlog to be reported in quarter four. Early indications are that the backlog will have increased significantly driven by inflation which is outside of our control. However, it is anticipated that highway conditions will have shown an improvement due to targeted investment.

Road Safety Dashboard

(12 month rolling trend)

Road Safety

- 2022 and 2023 data is provisional and subject to change. Once the provisional data is confirmed, causation factors will be reported.
- We continue to work to reduce road traffic casualties through education programmes, training courses and road safety campaigns.
- Targeted road safety education in schools and communities include:
 - Bikeability cycle training
 - Child pedestrian training
 - Face-to-face visits and activities alongside 'travel safely' sessions
- Campaign work, with partners, during quarter three has focused on dark nights, Halloween, car maintenance, tyre safety, 'Brake Road Safety Week', 'Fatal Four' weather and drink & drug driving.

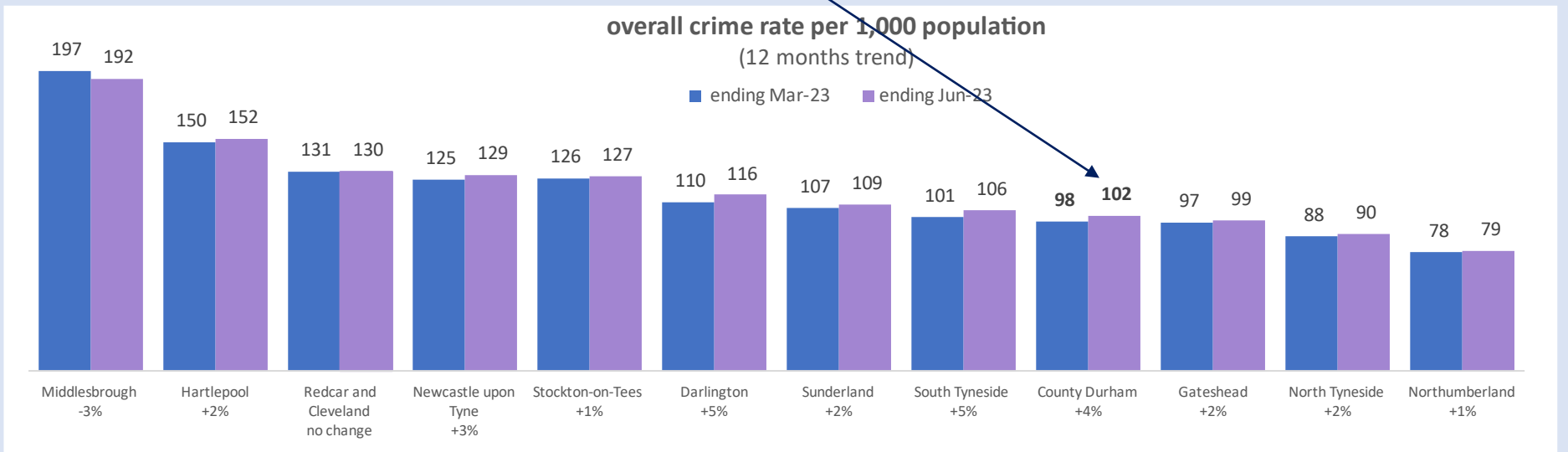
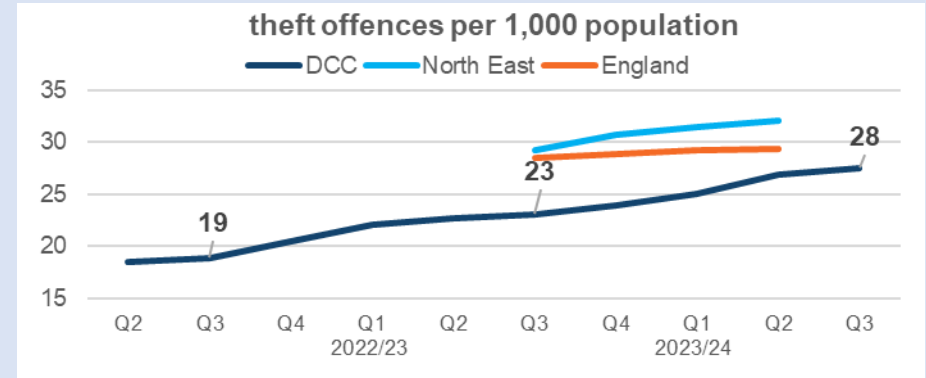
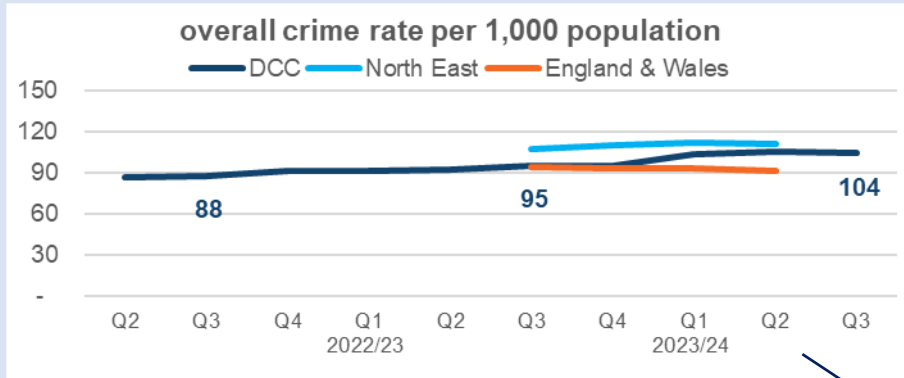


Road Safety

- 265 Comparing 2022 to 2023 casualty data (January-December) indicates an increase in fatal casualties (+5) but a reduction in those seriously injured (-9). However, both the 2022 and 2023 data is provisional and subject to change. Once the provisional data is confirmed, causation factors will be reported.
- 266 Age groups with the highest number of casualties were 16 to 20 and 21 to 25 year olds. Collision hotspot areas are linked to more urban areas including Bishop Auckland, Peterlee, Chester-le-Street, Consett and Stanley.
- 267 In relation to children (0 to 15 years) between 2022 and 2023, there has been a slight reduction in the overall number of casualties and severity, with the highest number falling into the 11 to 15 age group.
- 268 In terms of road user groups, across all casualties, increases were seen in car occupants (+10) and cyclists (+5), with reductions in all other road user groups. Similarity, in relation to children, there was a slight increase in car occupants (+3) and reductions in all other road user groups.
- 269 We continue to support the reduction of road traffic casualties through a series of education programmes, training courses and road safety campaigns. During the first term of the new academic year:
- 931 Bikeability cycle training places were delivered,
 - 5,394 children received face-to-face visits and activities,
 - a further 245 pupils completed Child Pedestrian Training sessions,
 - 916 Year 7 pupils in their transition term from primary to secondary school have benefited from 'travel safely' sessions-
- 270 Campaign work during quarter three, which compliments and supports the work undertaken by our local and regional road safety partners, focused on dark nights, Halloween, car maintenance, children/pedestrian safety, tyre safety, 'Brake Road Safety Week', 'Fatal Four', weather and drink & drug driving.
- 271 In addition, our Road Safety Facebook Page continues to grow, with 56 posts, reaching an audience of 14,755. A post featuring a School Crossing Patrol and the valuable role they provide saw individual audience views of over 84k.

Crime Dashboard

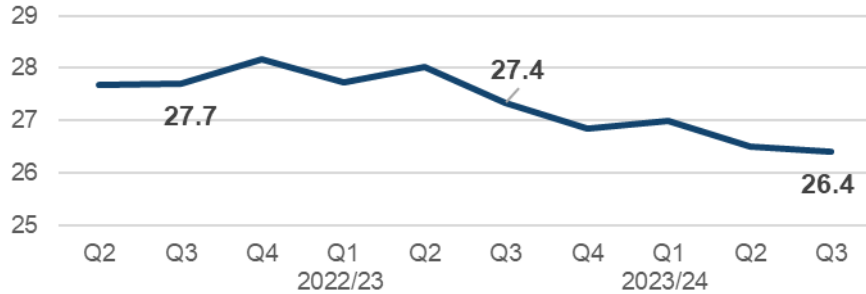
(12 months ending 31 December 2023)



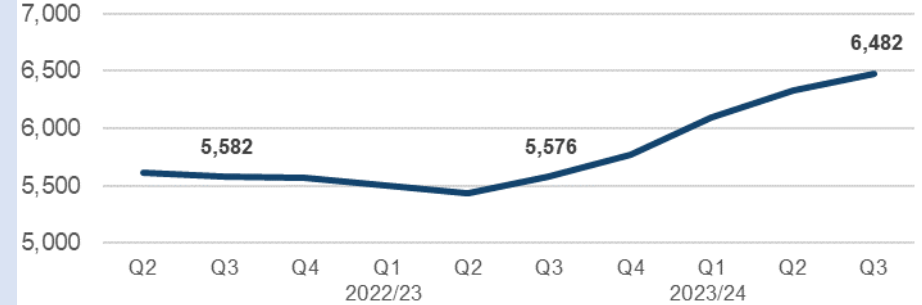
Protecting Vulnerable People from Harm Dashboard

(12 months ending 31 December 2023)

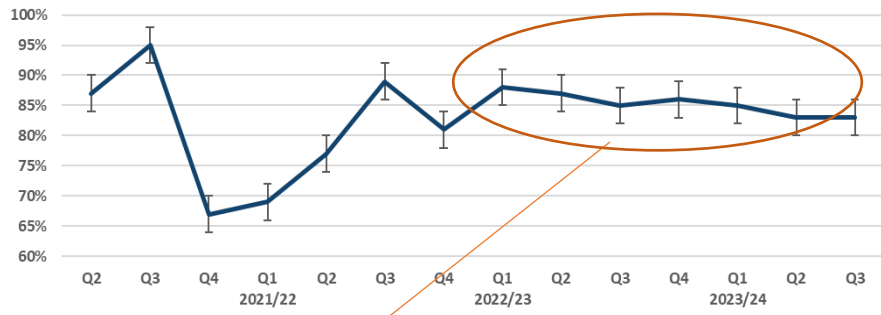
Domestic Abuse incidents reported to the police per 1,000 population



Adult victims referred to Harbour

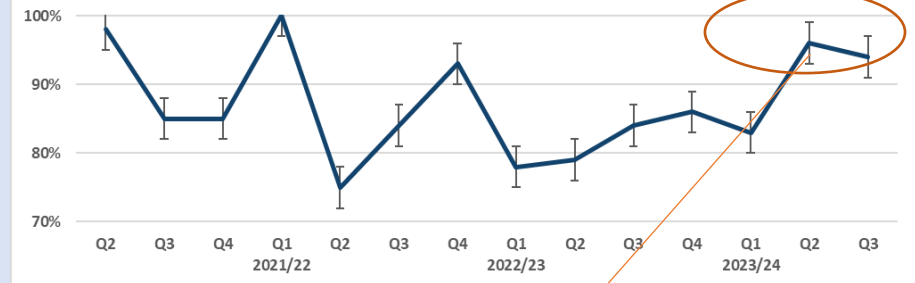


Harbour clients at case closure who reported feeling safe



Statistically similar proportion

% of children and young people completing an intervention with Harbour and reporting feeling safer



Statistically better than the previous five quarters

Crime

- 272 Whilst 18 of 43 forces nationally have seen an increase in all recorded crime volume (12 months ending October 2023), Durham records the highest percentage increase in the country (12% compared to the most similar forces rise of 4%).
- 273 Theft offences observe a notable increase in crime rate driven by increases in recorded shoplifting, residential burglary and vehicle crime.
- 274 Theft of motor vehicle and theft from motor vehicle both observe increases in crime rate since June 2023. Between April and December 2023, Durham recorded an increase of 26% for vehicle crime. Despite this, both maintain a crime rate lower than national. Vehicle crime continues to be a national issue with keyless car technology being the vulnerability that is targeted. Devices can be acquired online that circumvent the vehicles complex security system. Second hand cars are highly desirable, on average more than 30% more expensive than two years ago. Often, they are used by criminals as currency. The technology of keyless cars continues to improve; however, criminals are advancing their own tactics in response.
- 275 With regards to shoplifting, there has been a notable increase in recorded crime volumes which has received attention nationally. Whilst linking this to the pressures of cost-of-living is one possible reason, Durham Constabulary in-house research has also pointed to a surge in vulnerable adults with 'drug-dependency' issues to partially explain this increase. There is also a suggestion that organised criminality, as distinct from organised crime groups, is playing a part. Retailers who have experienced the greatest overall volume of crime has been the focus for intervention following implementation of a problem profile to address the issue. Neighbourhood crime and shop theft continue to be monitored at the daily leadership meetings, local accountability meetings, operational performance meetings and force performance levels when deemed necessary.
- 276 In August 2022, a new process was adopted in the police force in order to comply with national crime recording standards relating to ASB. As a result, there was an increase in the number of recorded crimes.

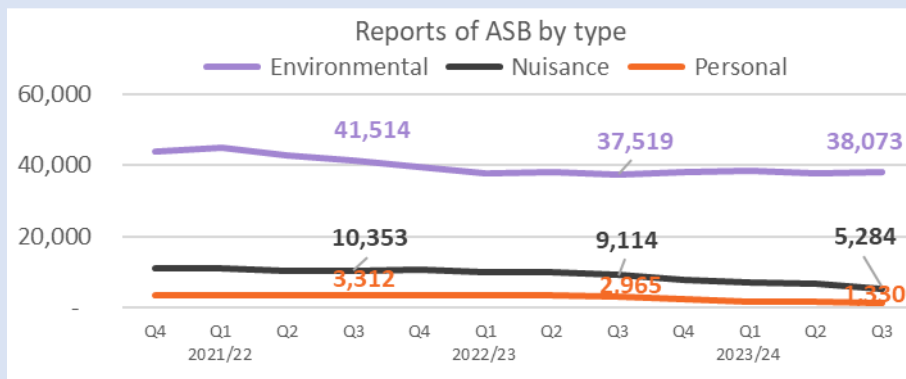
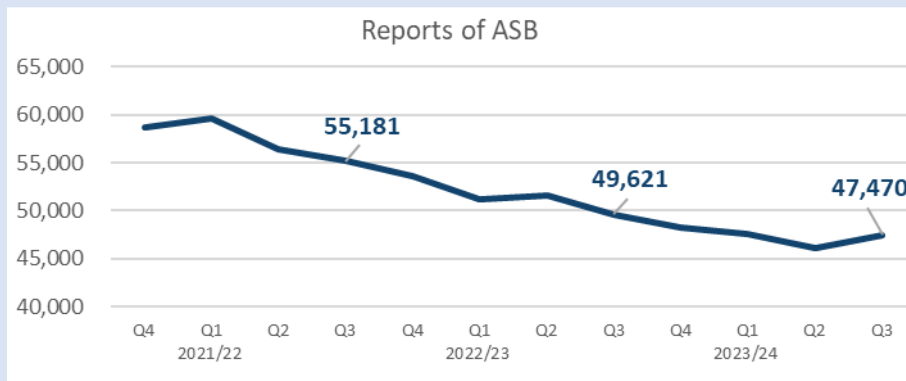
Domestic Abuse

- 277 Although fewer domestic abuse incidents were reported to the police in the 12 months ending December 2023, 11% more victims were referred to Harbour Support Services.
- 278 During quarter three of the 1,597 domestic abuse victims referred to Harbour Support Services, 74 of these were considered at a high risk and 239 had been referred to Harbour at least twice in the last 12 months.
- 279 On average, a victim experiences domestic abuse for four years before accessing help from Harbour.

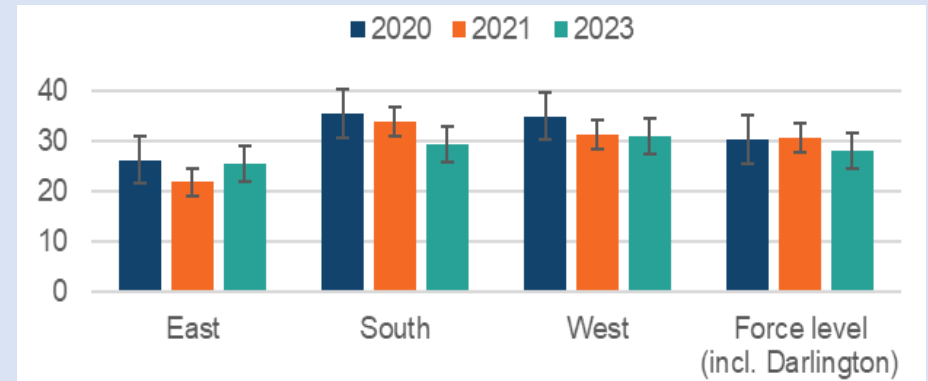
Anti-Social Behaviour Dashboard

(12 months ending 31 December 2023)

	Last year	This year	change	
Environment ASB	37,519	38,073	+554	+1.5%
Nuisance ASB	9,114	5,284	-3,830	-42%
Personal ASB	2,965	1,330	-1,635	-55%
All ASB	49,621	47,470	-2,151	-4%



Proportion of respondents who agree that the police and local authority are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter to them



Q: What do you feel is the single, biggest issue, negatively impacting on your local community at this time?

The main theme was ASB (including youth-related and drug-related). The top three issues identified as having the greatest negative impact on individuals were speeding and driver related ASB, general negative view of the police and police behaviour, and off-road bikes.

Incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

280 Decreases in Police ASB incidents are because of improved compliance with National Crime Recording Standards, with ASB incidents increasingly categorised as a crime, leading to a reduction of traditional ASB data indicators. Essentially, reports that were previously categorised as an ASB incident are now being categorised as a crime, for example harassment or public order, and therefore do not appear in ASB incident data statistics.

Public confidence that the Police and Local Authorities are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter to them

281 Data from the most recent survey shows a smaller proportion of respondents agree that the police and the council are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter to them. However, the rate is an estimate from a sample survey and as it is within the estimated confidence intervals of +/-3.5pp it is possible the decrease is due to random sample variation.

282 East, South and West are the three police localities that make up County Durham. With the exception of the East in 2021, there has been no significant difference between each of these areas over the last three years.

283 The latest survey also asked residents, 'What do you feel is the single, biggest issue, negatively impacting on your local community at this time?'. The main themes identified at force level were ASB, youth-related ASB and drug-related ASB. However, the top three issues identified as having the greatest negative impact on individuals were speeding and driver related ASB, general negative view of the police and police behaviour and off-road bikes.

Community Action Team (CAT) and Community Safety Teams

284 To respond to issues of anti-social behaviour in Cockton Hill, Bishop Auckland, utilising community engagement and partner intelligence, the CAT prioritised dealing with rubbish accumulations in gardens, on streets and on waste ground; dog fouling and anti-social behaviour. Our response included:

- 163 pieces of casework were actioned following resident reports and proactive walkabouts – 14 are ongoing
- 74 legal notices were issued on 22 properties to remedy defective state of premises and for the removal of noxious matter
- Neighbourhood Wardens issued 12 Community Protection Warnings, 10 Community Protection Notices, 10 Fixed Penalty Notice and one Household Duty of Care notice and increased patrols for fly tipping and dog fouling.
- The Empty Homes team liaised with property owners with 8 properties being returned to occupation
- Fire safety undertook Safe and Wellbeing Visits to 80 properties
- Focused activity from Public Health including signposting to local drug and alcohol support and advice
- Other actions undertaken included focused weekly walkabouts, community litter picks, school visits, recycling assistants liaised with residents on contaminated

recycling bins, the Police issued 2 Community Protection Notices in relation to the use of vehicles in an anti-social manner.

- 285 Our community safety teams have also been in local communities addressing residents' concerns about a range of anti-social behaviour issues or concerns. Liaising with residents and partners, issues have included dealing with reports of fly-tipping and fires; liaising with property owner re abandoned house and cars; responding to concerns of uninsured firework displays and speeding vehicles; carrying out work to limit access to off-road bikes and deal with access to empty properties; responding to incidents of unauthorised encampments; supporting vulnerable people; tension monitoring; providing advice to residents re illegal money lenders; responding to concerns of rough sleepers.
- 286 In response to environmental offences in the last 12 months our wardens have issued 2,030 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) including:
- 1,093 for littering
 - 493 Community Protection Notices for untidy yards and gardens and
 - 223 for failure to comply with the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO).

Untidy yards and gardens

- 287 We continue to address the issues caused by the build-up of rubbish and noxious material in yards and gardens. With a dedicated clearance team and the use of additional legislative powers, in the last 12 months we have:
- cleared 2,321 incidents.
 - issued 1,633 Community Protection Warnings (CPW),
 - issued 848 Community Protection Notices (CPN),
 - 404 Fixed Penalty Notices,
 - 131 prosecutions.

Horden Together

- 288 The Horden Together project, which is a place-based partnership project aiming to improve public safety by offering support with a broad range of issues, including emotional health, crime, anti-social behaviour, housing, drugs and alcohol and environmental issues.
- 289 Through Making Every Adult Matter 18 clients have been accepted in the quarter bringing the current caseload to 39, poor housing is the primary presenting issue.
- 290 We have responded to a range of reports of properties being open to access, drainage issues, noise, accumulation of needles, housing and other accumulations. As a result of further investigations during the quarter we have issued 11 notices served on properties.
- 291 Due to the previous sustained enforcement work, there has been an increase during the quarter in the compliance of Notices served with owners taking responsibility and undertaking the work specified in the Notice, reducing the amount of work needing to be carried out in default. 18% of notices were completed in default during October-December 2023 from 40% in July-September 2023.

292 Through the Horden Together Community Activator Grants, in partnership with the East Durham Trust, a number of projects are being supported including:

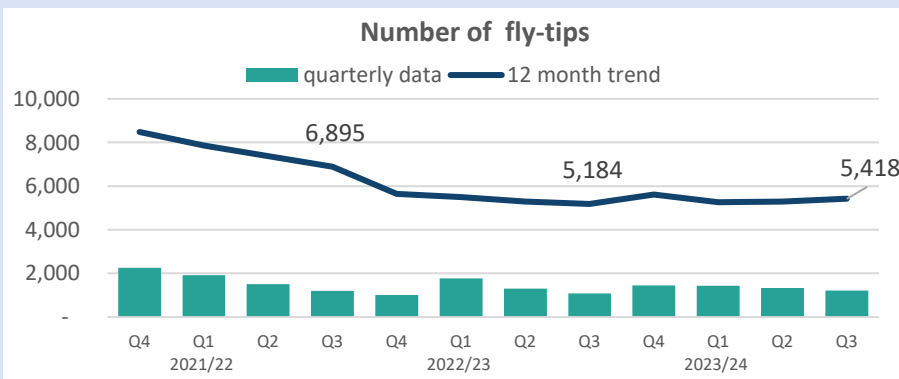
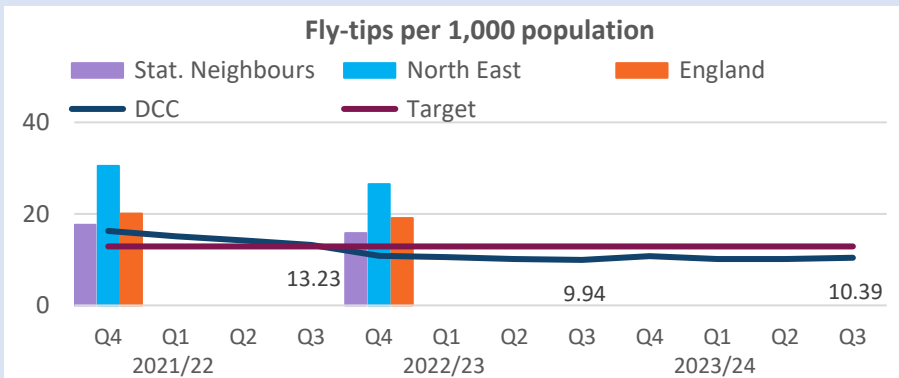
- Groundwork and Move County Durham – youth sessions, including games and multi-sports for 11-17 years;
- The Ark/Victory Church – purchase of musical instruments to form a youth band (4-18 years);
- Humankind Recovery Centre - Development of a Community Garden and holistic space;
- Horden CWFC – contribution towards operational running costs in providing and delivering football training and coaching sessions for children, young people and adults.

Clean and Attractive Communities Dashboard

(12 months ending 31 December 2023 / quarterly data / as at 31 December 2023)

Fly-tipping (lower is better)

- We continue to tackle fly-tipping through pro-active action against perpetrators including through prosecutions, vehicle seizures, issuing of fixed penalty notices and further investigations
- As a result of this incidents of fly-tipping have reduced following the peak during the pandemic and remain low and better than regional and national comparators. As a result of this incidents of fly-tipping have reduced following the peak (over 8,000 incidents) during the pandemic and remain low and better than regional and national comparators.
- The fly tipping rate is below target and is significantly better than the England, North East and Statistical Neighbour averages



Cleanliness

- The methodology for the cleanliness survey data has changed from April 2023.
- New APSE methodology looks at streetscape areas such as paths, roads and alleyways as well as green space areas such as parks, open spaces and playing fields; and will allow us to benchmark with other councils in the future.
- Once a longer-term trend has been established using this methodology, targets will be set to assist us in driving improvement.

	Litter			Dog Fouling		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q2	Q3
Streetscape	96.2%	95.7%	96.1%	98.3%	99.6%	99%
Green spaces	90.0%	94.6%	94.1%	100%	98.9%	96.7%

Fly-tipping

- 293 We continue to address fly-tipping, in the last 12 months we have continued to take a proactive approach against perpetrators, this has included:
- carried out 18 prosecutions
 - caught 69 incidents on CCTV
 - seized four vehicles
 - issued 38 fixed penalty notices for fly-tipping offences
 - issued 53 fixed penalty notices for waste carrier offences
 - carried out 2,815 further investigations of incidents.
- 294 The positive results of this drive to lower levels of fly-tipping can be seen in both the numbers of incidents and in the rate per 1,000 population.
- 295 As well as being better than target (12.88), the 12 months rate of fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 population (10.39) is in line with the last reporting period (10.16) but higher than the previous 12 months (9.94). It is also significantly better than our statistical comparator groups.
- 296 Following the peak during the pandemic, to over 8,000 incidents of fly-tipping in quarter four 2020/21, the amount of fly-tipping remains low with 5,418 incidents in the last 12 months, however it is higher than the last reporting period (5,294) and the previous 12 months (5,184).

Cleanliness

- 297 The new cleanliness survey methodology which we started in April, looks at street scape areas such as paths, roads and alleyways as well as green scape areas such as parks, open spaces and playing fields. The results for quarter three show that as a result of our ground maintenance services there is a high level of cleanliness across County Durham. In relation to litter, 96.1% of the street scape areas inspected were acceptable and 94.1% of green spaces. For dog fouling, 99% of the street scape areas inspected were acceptable and 96.7% of the green spaces.
- 298 Once a longer term trend has been established using this methodology, targets will be set to assist us in driving improvement. We will also seek to benchmark against other authorities once more data is available.

Our Council

Priority Aims:

Durham County Council has a reputation for listening to its residents, being well-managed and getting things done. We are continuing to,

- manage our resources effectively
- create a workforce for the future
- design our services with service users
- use data and technology more effectively
- build an inclusive and welcoming employee culture

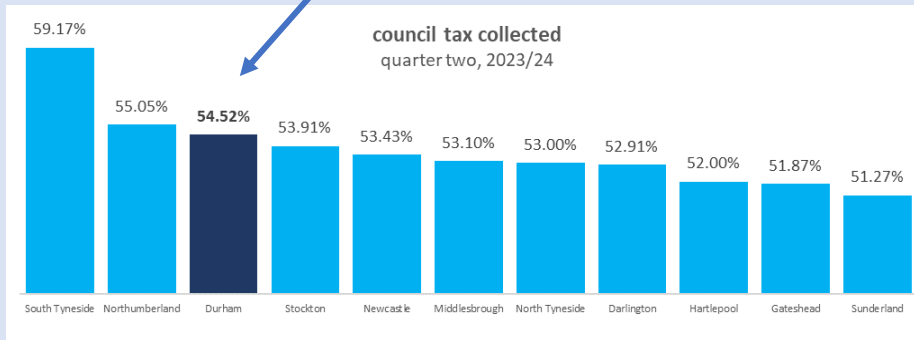
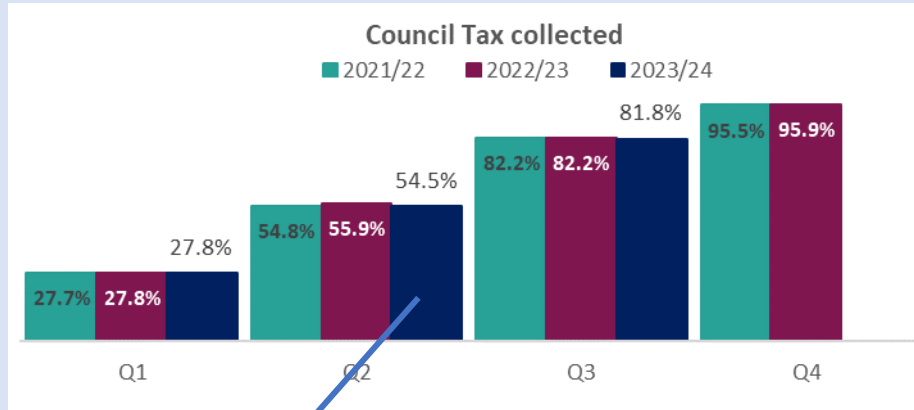
National, Regional and Local Picture

- 299 During December 2023, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced the provisional local government settlement for 2024/25, confirming the government will provide no additional funding beyond that already planned. The County Councils Network (CCN) stated that with the absence of additional funding, an increasing number of councils will struggle to deliver a balanced budget next year.
- 300 Councils across the region are finding that council tax collection is becoming more difficult, as high food and energy prices combined with increases in housing costs place greater pressure on household budgets (anecdotally, rents have increased by an average of £170 a month, whilst mortgages have increased by an average of £330 a month). This is, in turn, increasing demand on financial support schemes provided by councils.
- 301 Workforce issues remain a national problem with more than nine in 10 councils experiencing staff recruitment and retention difficulties. This issue spans a wide range of skills, professions and occupations within councils, which are all struggling to find and to keep the staff needed to provide services. Although government funding is being provided to boost the social care workforce, it does nothing to help other service areas.

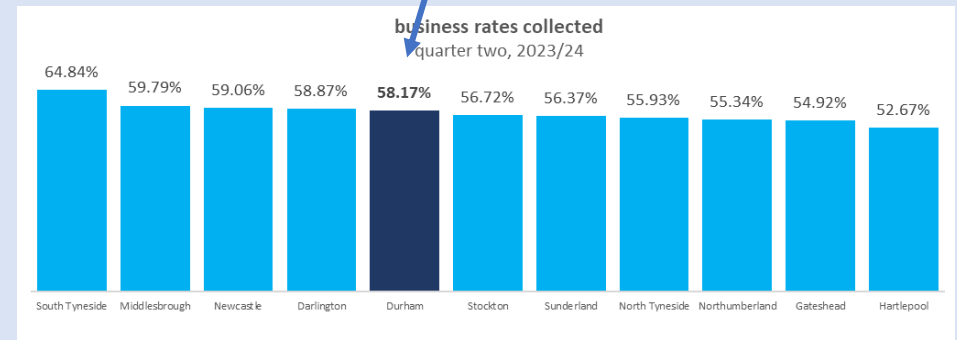
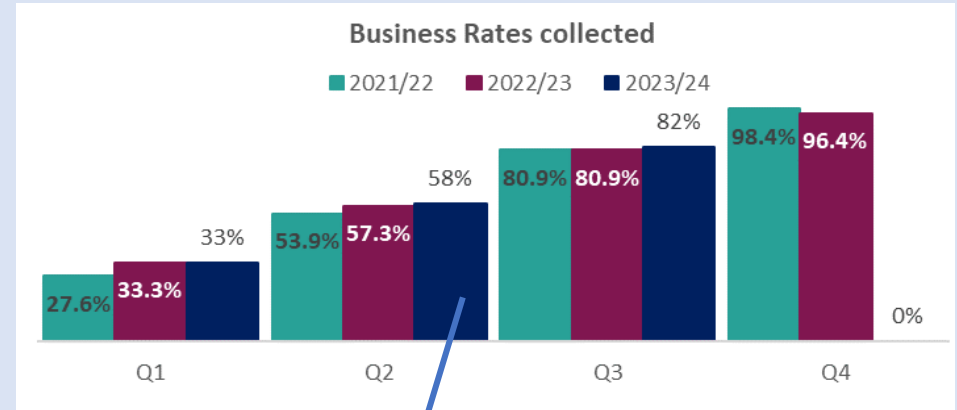
Finance Dashboard

(financial year to date)

Council Tax Collection



Business Rates Collection



Note: this year's council tax data is not directly comparable to last year's data because in September 2022, £3.7 million of unclaimed energy rebate payments were credited to council tax accounts and are showing as payments received.

However, if we adjust the data and remove these energy rebate payments, the collection rate for 2023/24 remains consistent with previous years.

MTFP savings

Projected Saving
£12.4 million

Achieved to date
£11.1 million (89.5%)

Main areas of MTFP savings to date:

Budget Reductions	£5.17 million	47% of total
Review of contractual arrangements	£1.36 million	12% of total
Restructure / staff savings	£1.49 million	13% of total
Income Generation	£2.21 million	20% of total

Council Tax Collection

- 302 Councils across the region agree that council tax collection is becoming more difficult. High food and energy prices combined with increases in housing costs are all impacting household finances (anecdotally, rents have increased by an average of £170 a month, whilst mortgages have increased by an average of £330 a month).
- 303 We continue to offer focused support those residents who 'can't pay' rather than 'won't pay'. Sustainable payment arrangements are available, however lower instalment amounts over a longer period will impact collection rates in the short to medium-term.

Business Rates Collection

- 304 The Business Rates working group is continuing to work with Business Durham to support local business, and is targeting proactive recovery actions to encourage engagement. Debts in respect of larger multi-national/national businesses have been prioritised. These actions have helped increase our year-to-date collection rate from 80.9% last year to 82% this year.

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings

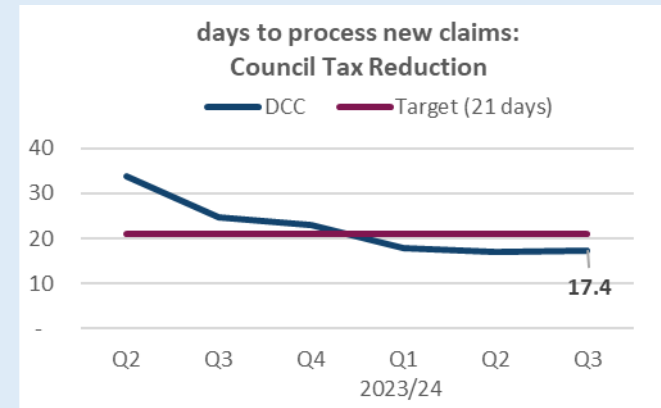
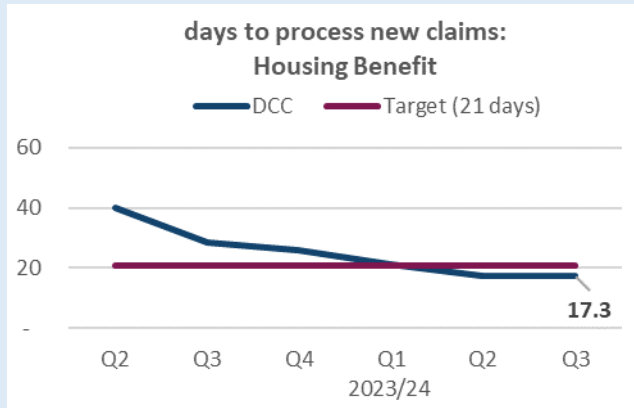
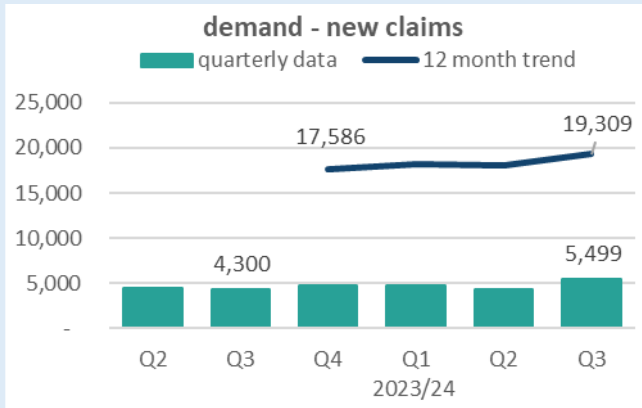
- 305 Although almost 90% of the forecast savings for 2023/24 have been achieved, the following three savings have been identified as being at risk /unachievable:
- Daytime café offer at the Empire Theatre (£13,000). The proposal was withdrawn by Cabinet.
 - Library Transformation: Seven Hills lease (£75,000). The saving, based on internal recharging which has not yet materialised, has now been flagged as a budget pressure.
 - Planning Income (£350,000). We are receiving fewer planning applications, which is in line with national trends and reflects ongoing economic conditions. However, higher planning application charges from December 2023 (introduced earlier than anticipated) will help to mitigate the shortfall for 2023/24.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Dashboard

(12 months ending 31 December 2023)

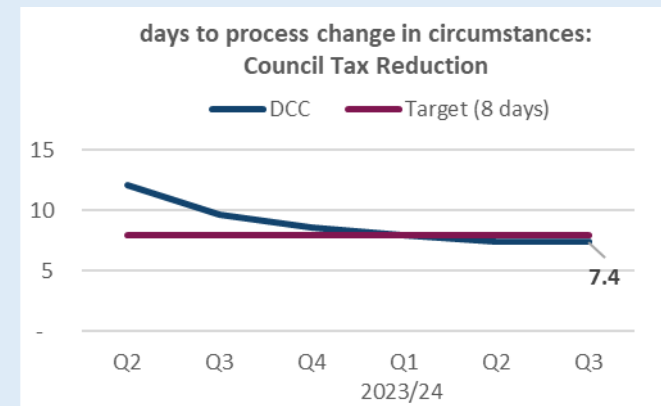
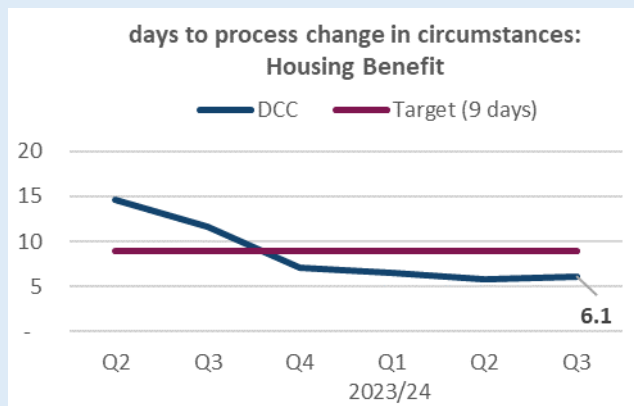
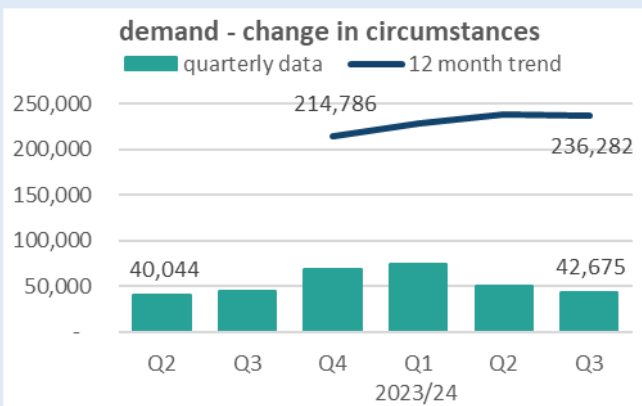
New Claims

NE average = 20 days
England average = 21 days



Change in Circumstances

NE average = 5 days
England average = 5 days



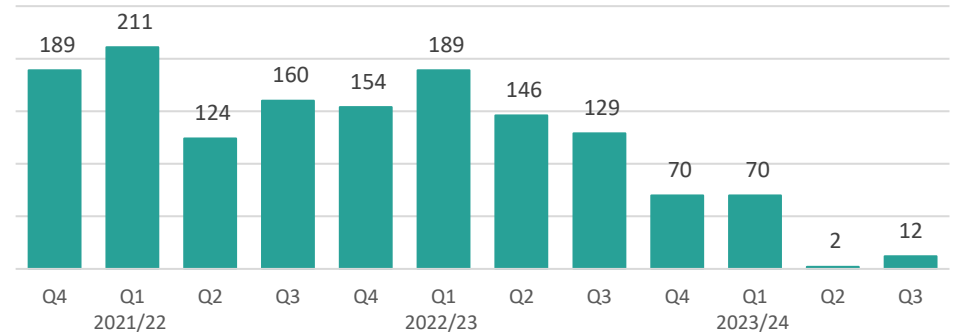
Managing Money Better (MMB) Dashboard

(October to December 2023)

Households receiving energy advice from MMB

- 12 households received energy advice, better than quarter two (+10), but fewer than the same period last year (-117).
- Recent staffing issues have been resolved, with recruitment finalised and specialist training provided. Staff are now able to carry out home visits and provide advice to customers by telephone.

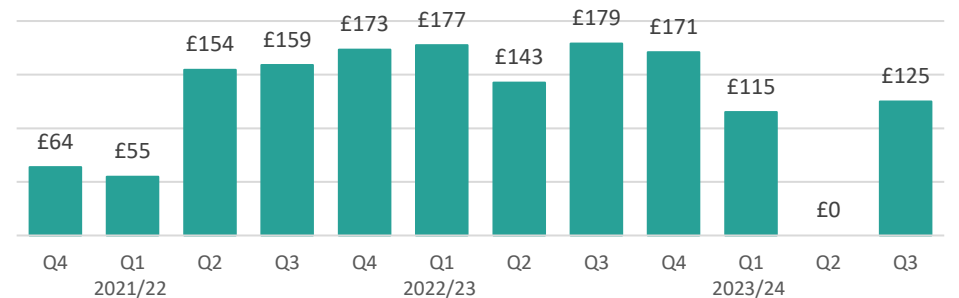
Households receiving energy advice from MMB



Money saved as a result of energy advice from MMB

- £125 saved per household this quarter, better than quarter two, but lower than last year (-£54).
- General advice was provided to households, there were no tariff switching opportunities available and no referrals due to issues with fuel debt.
- To further raise awareness of the scheme, and to drive-up referrals, social media communications and a Warm Homes newsletter were published.

Money saved by households receiving energy advice from MMB



Housing benefit and council tax reduction

- 306 New claims received continue to increase but the time to process those claims remains consistent with the previous quarter. The time to process a new claim is just over 17 days, almost four days better than the target of 21 days, and almost three days better than the England average.
- 307 The continued strong performance in the time to process both new claims and change in circumstances (both remain better than target) is particularly noticeable across housing benefit. More than 87% of new housing benefit claims received in the last nine months were processed within 14 days, an increase on 62% for the same period last year.
- 308 This improved performance has been possible due to an increase in available resource over the last twelve to fifteen months, as short-term government-led work decreased. The amount of resource needed to deliver the government-led initiatives, which included the implementation of cost-of-living payments and Covid-related support schemes, has had a long-term impact on the 'day to day' work, and has only recently stabilised and is now allowing our teams to focus on the 'day job' rather than other initiatives.
- 309 During quarter three, the government made further cost-of-living payments - £300 to those on means tested benefits (such as Universal Credit or Pension Credit) or who are claiming tax credits, and between £150 to £300 to those receiving winter fuel payments. These payments are helping people with their daily expenses and has reduced the need for wider support through the council's financial support schemes.
- 310 However, our financial support schemes continued to help residents:
- **Council Tax Reduction (CTR)** provides a discount on council tax bills for those on low incomes. At the end of quarter three, more than 53,500 residents were receiving support towards council tax bills of more than £63.2 million. Although the caseload remains relatively stable, there has been a slight 0.6% decrease in the number of residents receiving this support. Some residents who don't qualify for 100% council tax reduction are eligible for an additional payment of £75 - to date, more than 31,000 payments have been made equating to almost £1.6 million, with an additional 4,900 residents receiving this extra support in quarter three.
 - **Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs)** are short-term payments which can be made to tenants in receipt of the housing benefit element of Universal Credit, to help sort out housing and money problems in the longer term.

The council committed to spending all the 2023/24 Discretionary Housing Payment Budget (£819,274 for 2023/24) between April and December. However, further funding has been received from the Household Support Fund and we anticipate, a further £150,000 will be provided in DHPs by the year-end.

	2022/23 (Apr to Dec)	2023/24 (Apr to Dec)	Change
Number	1,225	1,616	+391
Total value	£789,195	£932,278	+£143,083
Average payment	£644	£577	-£67

- **Daily Living Expenses (DLE)** are available for people whose circumstances have changed unexpectedly. Payments can be made for up to seven days to help with food, travel and some clothing (restrictions apply).

	2022/23 (Apr to Dec)	2023/24 (Apr to Dec)	Change
Number	4,361	2,821	-1,540
Total value	£443,969	£186,951	-£257,018
Average payment	£102	£66	-£36

Demand for DLE has been influenced by schemes funded by the Household Support Fund and the various cost-of-living payments issued by the government which helped people with their daily expenses and reduced the need for wider support through the council's financial support schemes. With the uncertainty over the future of the cost-of-living payments from the government and the Household Support Fund, demand is expected to return to historic levels in subsequent years. Once these payments cease, we expect demand for this support to increase.

- **Settlement Grants (SGs)** help people stay in their home, or move back into housing after living in supported or unsettled accommodation (such as leaving care or being homeless). They provide help towards furniture, white goods, flooring, curtains, bedding, kitchen equipment, removal costs, etc.

	2022/23 (Apr to Dec)	2023/24 (Apr to Dec)	Change
Number	514	660	+146
Total value	£256,562	£339,189	+£82,627
Average payment	£499	£514	+£15

- **Household Support Fund (HSF)** payments, funded by government, support low income households struggling with energy and food costs, or who need essential household items.

The process for administering the HSF varies year-on-year. The 2022/23 scheme had a total value of £4.6 million and awarded vouchers to individuals over a six month period (April to September 2022). It is not possible to directly compare this scheme with the 2023/24 scheme which covers a 12 month period (April 2023 to March 2024), has a total value of £9.3 million and makes payments to households.

	2023/24 (Apr to Dec)
Number	115,375
Total value	£5.8 million
Average payment	£50

Most of the money (£4.5 million) was issued in food vouchers to those who receive free school meals during June/July and November/December. Each child

claiming free school meals was awarded a £75 voucher – a total to £150 per child over the two periods.

The remaining budget has been awarded as follows:

Supporting households with children with food and fuel. Includes Safe Sleeping arrangements, a direct allocation to schools for those not eligible for free school meals but on low incomes, kinship carers and care leavers.	£1.1 million
Providing food and fuel. Includes support to 26 grass root organisations and two further anchor organisations (Durham Carers and Age UK).	£1.7 million
Delivering direct support to individuals. Demand for furniture and white goods has been particularly high.	£1 million
Supporting individuals at risk of homelessness.	£50,000
Supporting increased demand for crisis support and settlement grants (Welfare Assistance Scheme).	£133,000
Supporting adults within the Adult Social Care Service, in receipt of Housing Benefit only and who are not eligible for the DWP cost-of-living payments. Also supporting those on low income struggling with costs during the colder periods – could include furniture/white goods and/or food/fuel where they are not eligible for other mainstream grants.	£270,000
Supporting The Bread-and-Butter Thing with fuel.	£100,000

▪ **Managing Money Better (MMB)**

During quarter three, 12 households received energy advice from MMB, better than quarter two (+10), but fewer than last year (-117). Energy advice provided saved households an estimated £125, better than quarter two (£0), but lower than the same period last year (-£54). General advice was provided to households, there were no tariff switching opportunities available and no referrals due to issues with fuel debt.

More households received advice this quarter, however, referrals into the service remain low. The recent staffing issues have been resolved, with recruitment finalised and specialist training provided. Staff are now able to carry out home visits and provide advice to customers by telephone. To further raise awareness of the scheme, and to drive-up referrals, social media communications and a Warm Homes newsletter were published.

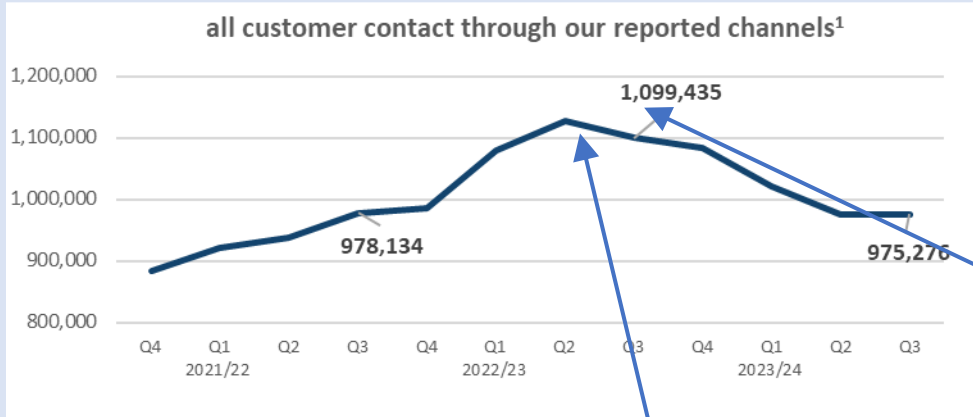
311 At the time of writing, the council has yet to receive any update from the government and the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) regarding the future of the Household Support Fund when the current scheme ends on 31 March 2024.

- 312 As well as being a vital source of additional income through food and fuel vouchers, it has also allowed the Discretionary Housing Payment fund to be allocated an additional £150,000 for further support, which has allowed an overspend of the fund. If the Household Support Fund scheme does not continue, or is significantly reduced, this would not be able to continue.
- 313 There has also been no confirmation of a continuation to the cost-of-living payments into 2024/25 which, alongside the cessation of the Household Support Fund, could lead to the withdrawal of two avenues of additional support for people struggling with the continued increased cost of food and fuel from 1 April 2024.
- 314 Due to the current uncertainty, planning for the switch from this additional support is now underway and work will continue with third sector partners over what support will be available without the Household Support Fund funding.
- 315 Furthermore, circa £1,000,000 to deliver additional initiatives with a focus on food poverty alleviation, the provision of cost-of-living advice and guidance, and fun and food with half term activities has been secured through the UK Shared Prosperity Funding with projects planned for delivery during 2024/25.
- 316 A detailed report which describes the poverty issues across the county, the support that exists for vulnerable households, the progress of the council and partners in addressing and alleviating poverty, and the priority actions to be progressed during 2024/25, will be presented to [Cabinet in February 2024](#).

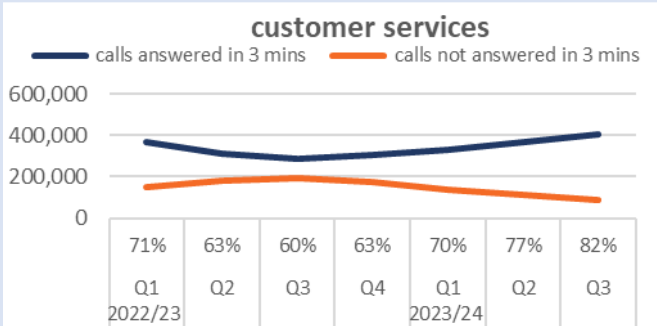
Customer Contact Dashboard

(12 months ending 31 December 2023)

12 months ending Dec...	Contact	Change	
2021	978,107		-0.3%
2022	1,099,435	-11%	
2023	975,276		



Last year's volume was artificially high as it included contact relating to one-off government initiatives linked to Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis.

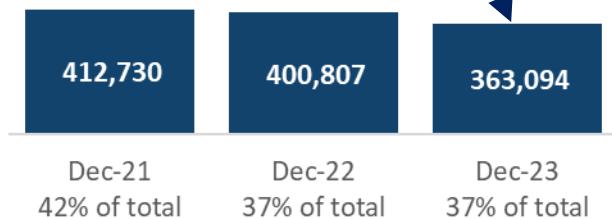


The welfare assistance lines performance were absorbed within customer services without any growth in the operating model. The increasing demand for welfare support and discretionary housing payments required a shift in the workflow to release capacity in the back office teams to process these emergency payments.

¹ telephone calls (customer services only), do-it-online, e-mail, webchat, social media, Customer Access Points

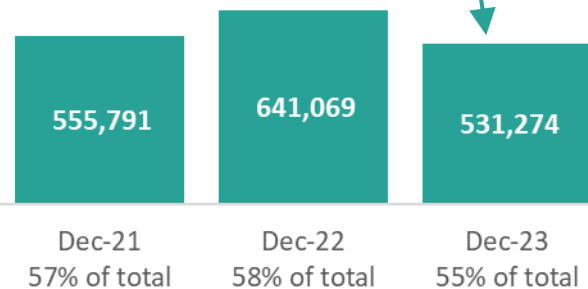
Digital (e-mail, online, social media, webchat)

Down 9% on last year.
Do-it-online down 5%, web chat down 14%, email down 21% and social media down 20%.



Telephone

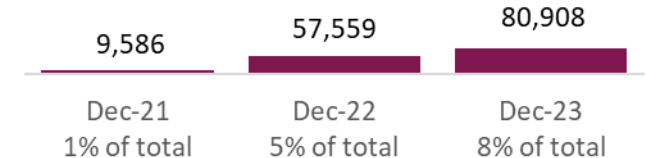
Down 17% on last year.



Face to Face

CAPs partially closed during the year.

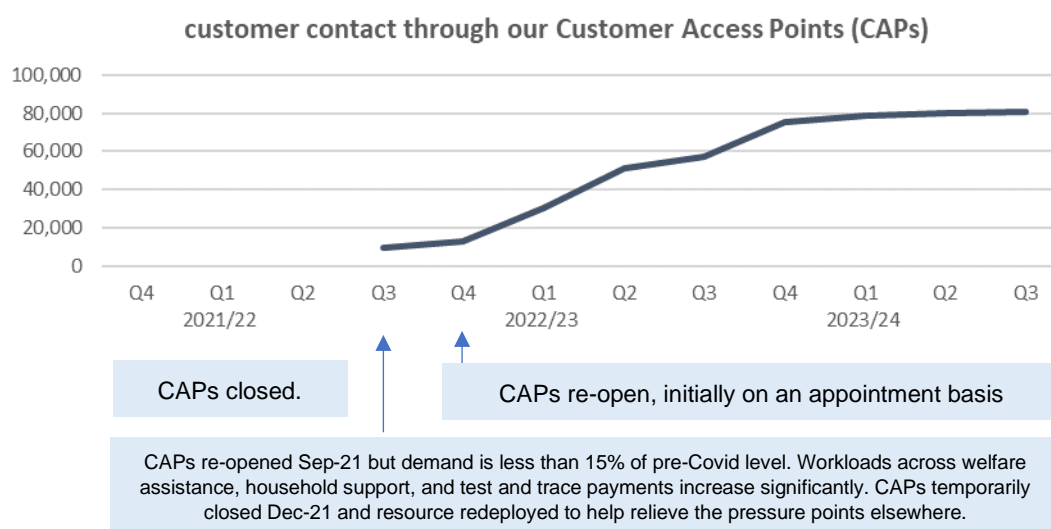
up 41% on last year



Customer contact through our reported channels⁷

Non-digital contact (63% of all contact)

- 317 The telephone continues to be the most frequently used method for contacting us, making up 55% of all contact. Although we received fewer telephone calls than the same period last year, this is mainly because last year's volume was unusually high, driven by resident queries linked to government initiatives to help people through the cost-of-living crisis.
- 318 Contact through our Customer Access Points (CAPs) appears to have increased by 41% compared to last year. However, as our CAPs were closed for three months during 2022, this is neither a like-for-like comparison nor a true reflection of demand.



- 319 Contact through our Customer Access Points (CAPs) over the last 12 months can be categorised into three distinct areas:
- 70,930 contacts (87%) related to reception services / signposting.
 - 6,605 contacts (8%) related to a service request, general enquiry or document submission. Of this contact, 67% related to one of six specific areas.

Area	count	% of total
Document receipt	2,546	39%
Bulky Waste	637	10%
Waste Permit	490	7%
Bin (new, replacement, repair)	369	6%
Homelessness	205	3%
Bin (not emptied)	188	3%

⁷ telephone calls (customer services only), do-it-online, e-mail, webchat, social media, Customer Access Points

- 3,373 contacts (4%) related to an appointment. Of these 80% related to one of nine specific areas.

Area	count	% of total
Council Tax: discuss account	544	16%
Blue badge - support	441	13%
Bus pass - application/renewal	352	10%
Housing Benefit - new claim/enquiry	330	10%
Housing Benefit - ongoing claim / progress update	246	7%
Housing Benefit - change in circumstances	240	7%
Council Tax Reduction - application	203	6%
Benefits - general advice	184	5%
Council Tax – general advice	152	5%

Telephone calls answered by customer services within 3 minutes.

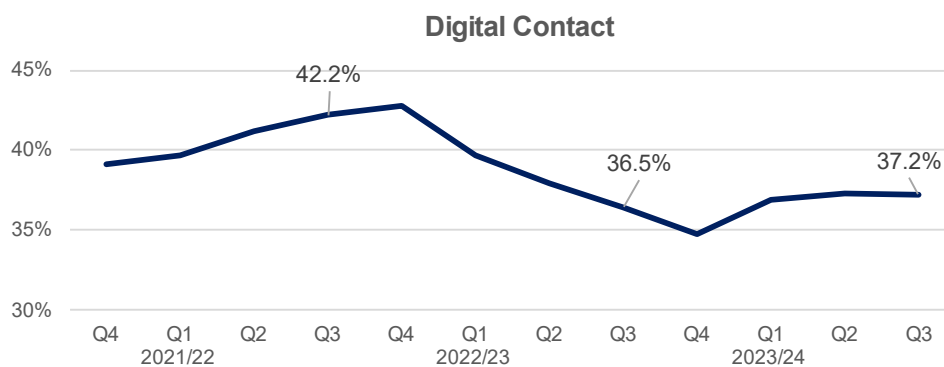
- 320 During the 12 months ending 31 December, 82% of the 496,000 telephone calls answered by customer services were answered within three minutes.
- 321 During quarter three, 91% of the 108,000 telephone calls answered by customer services were answered within three minutes. 87% of these calls were received on one of the following four lines:

Telephone line	calls answered	% answered within 3 minutes
Enquiries	45,714	90%
Council Tax	30,439	91%
Benefits	9,393	93%
Housing Solutions	8,020	100%
TOTAL	93,566	92%

- 322 Although there was variation between telephone lines, the percentage answered within three minutes was never lower than 90% except for one line (welfare assistance which answered 76% within three minutes).
- 323 At quarter two, we reported that the welfare assistance line had answered 63% of calls within three minutes. However, having recruited additional staff and re-deployed those impacted by changes to opening times at four of our CAPs to support contact in this area, performance has now improved to 76%.

Digital Contact (37% of all contact)

- 324 The number of households with a do-it-online account has remained broadly static at 175,048 (a net increase of eight during quarter three) and 37% of contact through our reported channels is now digital. Although this is an improvement over the last few quarters, it is lower than higher proportions recorded two to three years ago.



325 Digital contact is around 12% lower than two years ago (about 50,000 fewer contacts). This is mainly due to a drop in CRM service requests post-pandemic – of which around 70% are requested digitally. This reduction mainly relates to those service requests created at the beginning of the pandemic and are now redundant.

Performance Standards

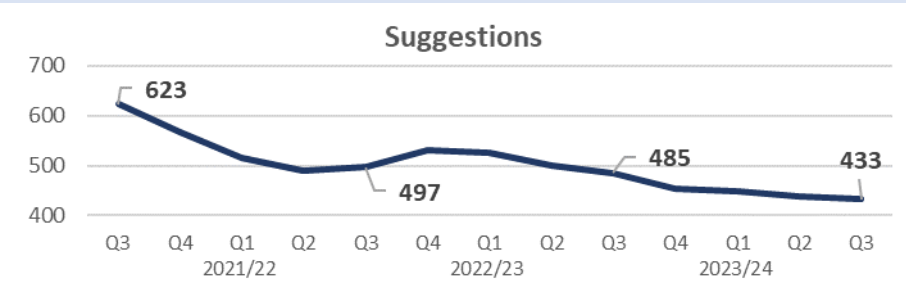
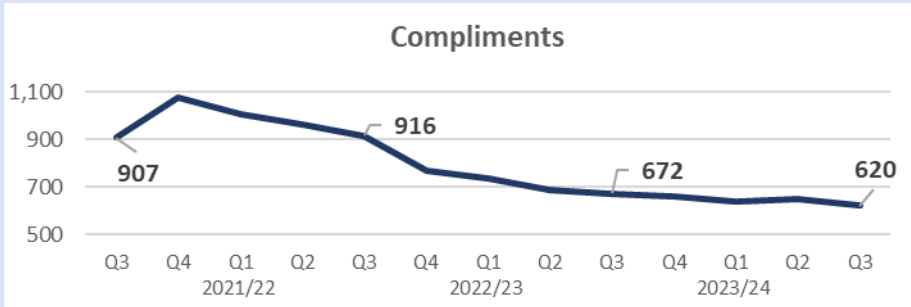
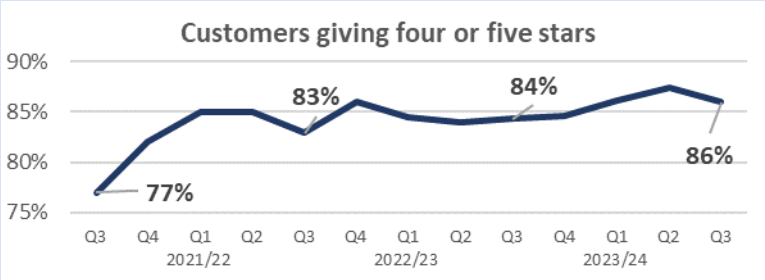
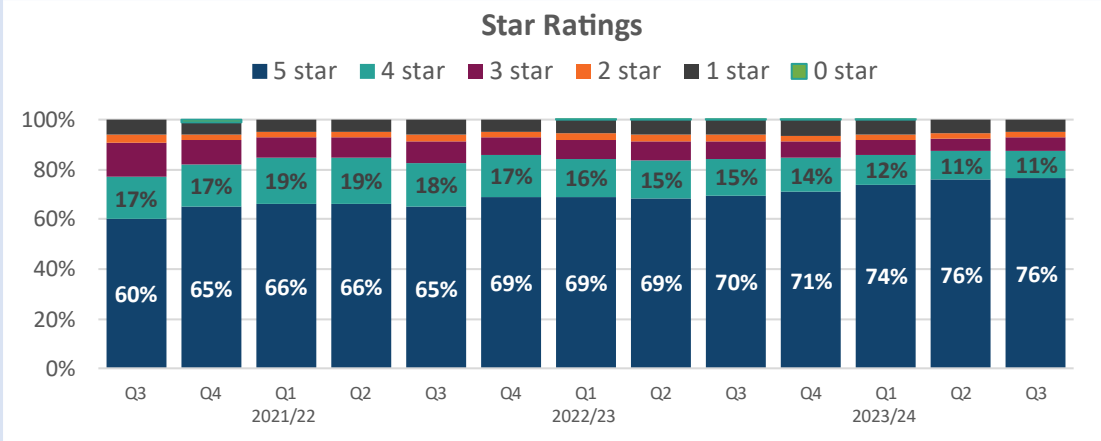
326 During quarter three, we were able to assess 77 service request types against a performance standard. This equates to 59% of service requests recorded in our CRM system during the quarter. Of these, 78% met their performance standard.

327 Thirty-three service request types (around 43%) met their performance standard for more than 80% of requests. This included: request help with your bin (99%); salt bins (99%); waste permits (96%); garden waste – join the scheme (91%); street lighting (87%).

328 However, 29 service request types (34%) met the performance standard for fewer than 50% of requests. This included: tree or hedge pruning / removal (45%); bins – waste collection for businesses (42%); rubbish in gardens and yards (40%).

Customer Feedback Dashboard

(12 months ending 31 December 2023)



Since the pandemic, compliments have fallen across all service areas except Care Connect.

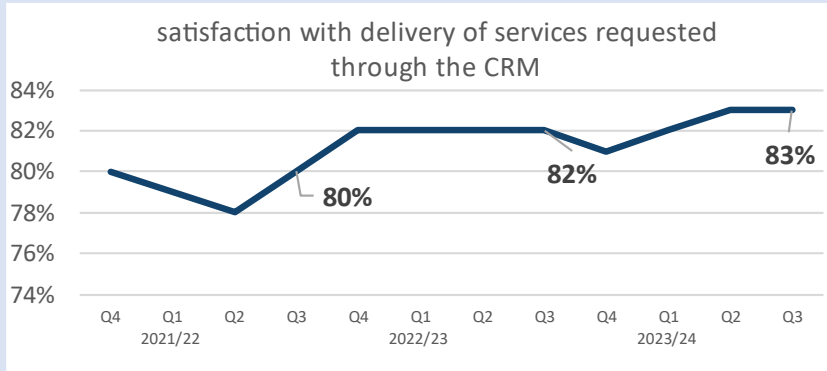
Over the last three years (2021 to 2023), Care Connect received an average of 140 compliments each year – compared to 80 over 2018 to 2020.

Star Rating

- 329 Star ratings reflect our customers' experiences of using the do-it-online system. Over the last 12 months, the proportion to customers rating their experience as five stars has further improved. It is now better than the same point last year (76% compared to 70%), as is the proportion rating their experience as one star or two stars (7% compared to 9%).
- 330 Those who rated their experience as five stars during quarter three provided positive feedback that the process was both straightforward and quick, and the website easy to navigate. Whilst those who rated their experience as one or two stars provided negative feedback that the process was overly complex, the website slow, unresponsive and difficult to navigate, and the system glitchy and prone to crashing.

Customer Satisfaction Dashboard

(12 months ending 31 December 2023)



Examples of services with high satisfaction levels for overall service delivery

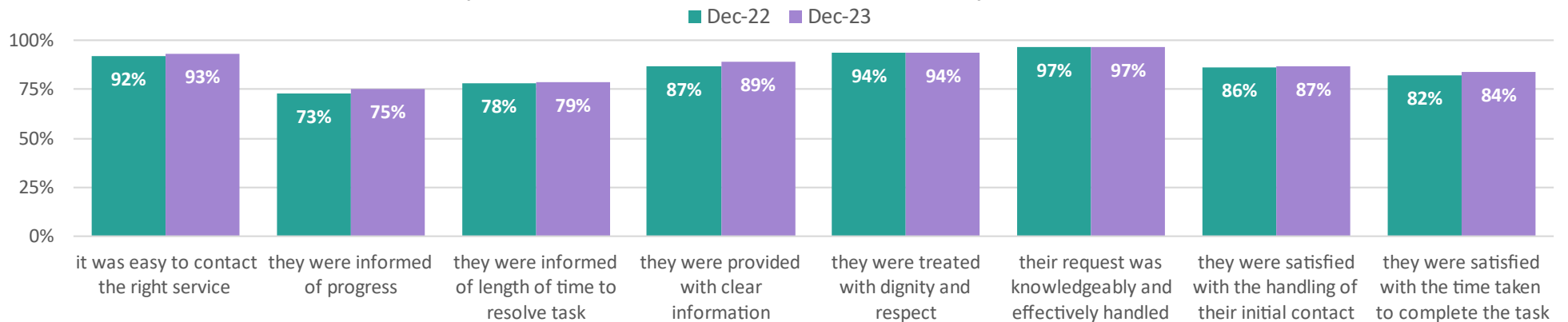
- Customer services appointment (99%)
- Birth, death or marriage certificates (98%)
- Pest control – domestic (97%)
- Bulky waste, white goods collection (97%)
- Waste permit (96%)
- Garden waste – join the scheme (96%)

Examples of services with less than 70% satisfaction with overall service delivery

- Dog Bins / litter bins (68%)
- Drainage and flooding (67%)
- Dog fouling (65%)
- Planning enforcement (65%)
- Generic enquiry (64%)
- Bins – waste collections for businesses (61%)
- Tree or Hedge pruning / removal (58%)
- Noise Complaint (54%)
- Complaints (47%)
- Bin – new, replacement, repair (40%)

Dissatisfaction continues to be due to not keeping customers informed of progress, not explaining our decision making, taking too long to complete tasks, and not resolving the issue long-term.

Respondents to the CRM satisfaction survey who stated..



Satisfaction remains high but is more positive at first point of contact than later stages of the journey.

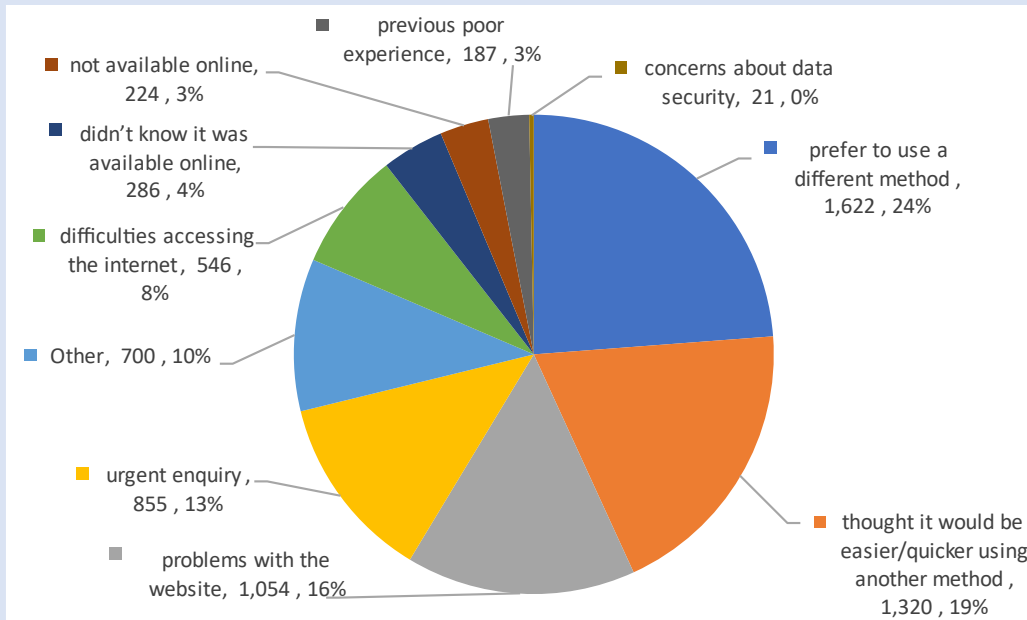
Customer Satisfaction Dashboard

(12 months ending 31 December 2023)

CRM satisfaction by channel



We also asked respondents why they chose a non-digital channel to contact us. During quarter three, the responses were:



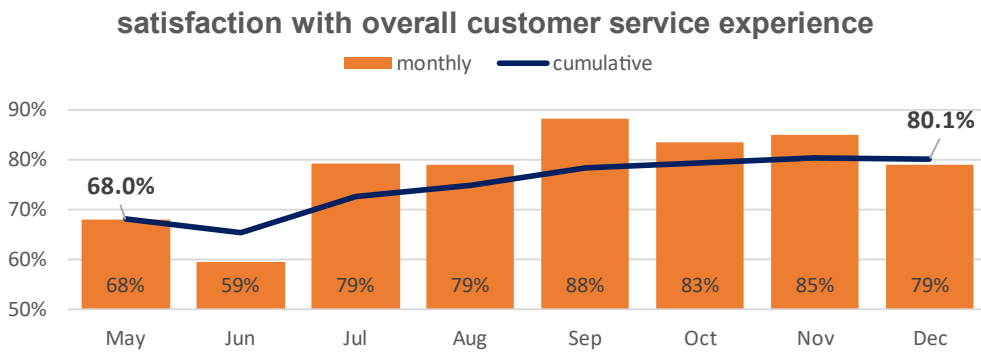
Residents who contact our customer services team by mobile phone will receive a text message containing a link to a satisfaction survey after their call is complete.

Responses May to December are shown below:

% of respondents satisfied with...	
our agent's ability to understand them and answer their questions	82.2%
the polite and friendly service from the customer service advisor	85.5%
the clarity of the information or advice received during their call	80.0%
the overall customer service experience received	80.1%

Customer Satisfaction

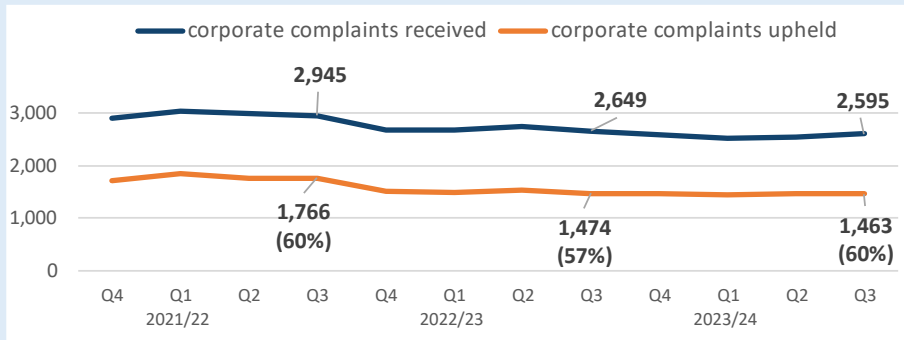
- 331 In May 2023, we started gathering customer feedback from residents who contacted our customer services team by mobile phone. Once their call is complete, the customer receives a text message containing a link to a satisfaction survey.
- 332 Almost 22,000 customers have responded to the survey over the eight months since it was introduced. Over time, as more customers participated and more data was collected, the satisfaction rate steadily increased. It is currently just over 80%.



- 333 In addition, 83% of the 19,194 customers who responded to our satisfaction survey (which is automatically e-mailed to the customer when their service request is closed within the CRM) stated they were satisfied with overall service delivery.
- 334 This survey also asks those customers who contacted us using a non-digital channel, why they did not use a digital channel. We use this data to inform system enhancements as well as marketing campaigns.

Customer Complaints Dashboard – Corporate (stage 1)

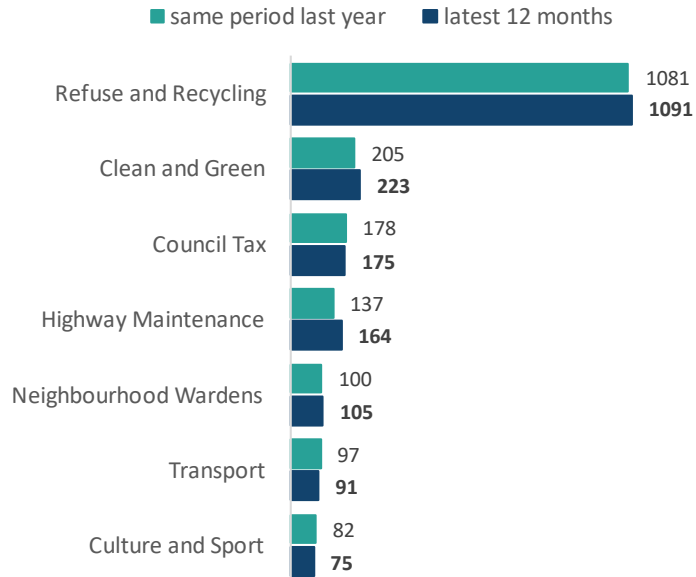
(12 months ending 31 December 2023)



79% of complaints related to seven service areas:

Service Area	Complaints received	% upheld (partially or fully)	Overview
Refuse and Recycling	1,091 45% of total	79%	Around half related to missed collections (mainly bins) and around half of these were incorrectly logged as contaminated
Clean and Green	232 9% of total	69%	Two thirds were issues with hedges (mainly lack of response but also over-pruning) and grass cutting (mainly lack of response and staff leaving a mess)
Council Tax Services	175 7% of total	24%	Around one third related to account handling, and another third to enforcement decisions / action.
Highways Maintenance	164 7% of total	56%	issues with highways maintenance / road closures (mainly noise at unsociable hours and accessibility issues)
Neighbourhood Wardens	105 4% of total	17%	Two main reasons - pest control and the way we handled situations (including issuing of fixed penalty notices)
Transport	91 4% of total	57%	Around half related to bus pass applications and bus services.
Culture and Sport	75 3% of total	53%	93% related to issue within our leisure centres: timetable changes, contact issues, difficulties cancelling memberships, accessing swimming lessons.

most frequent areas of complaint change from last year

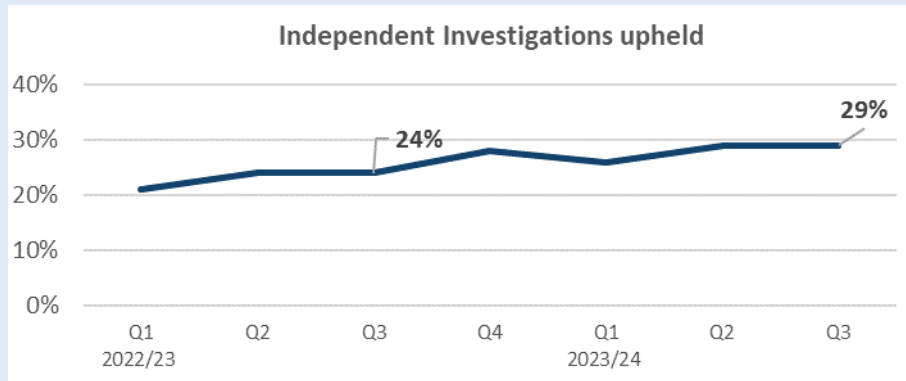


81% of stage one complaints were responded to within ten days. This is consistent with the 80% reported for the same period, last year.

Customer Complaints Dashboard – Corporate (independent investigation and Ombudsman)

(12 months ending 31 December 2023)

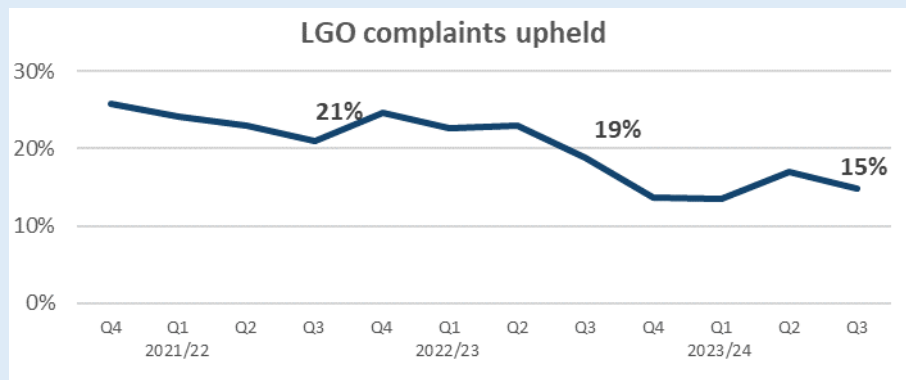
Independent Investigations



Of the 38 independent investigations completed during quarter three, 11 were upheld (five fully, six partially).

The reasons these were upheld were mainly: the time taken to respond, not keeping the customer informed of progress, and lack of communication.

Local Government Ombudsman



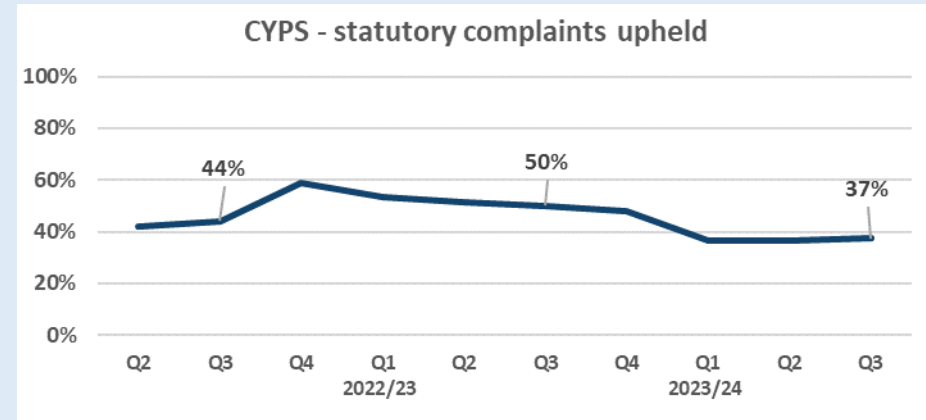
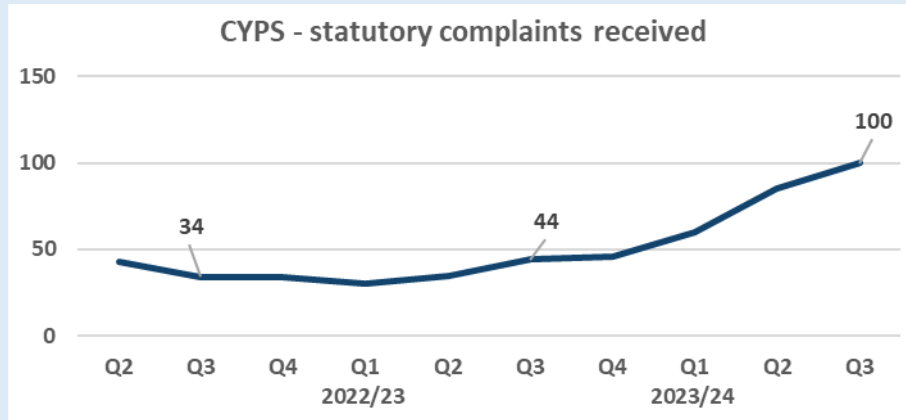
Of the 23 decisions made during quarter three, one complaint was upheld.

The reason for the complaint being upheld was the council caused an injustice to the complainant, which they need to remedy and then provide evidence of the remedy to the LGO.

Customer Complaints Dashboard - Statutory

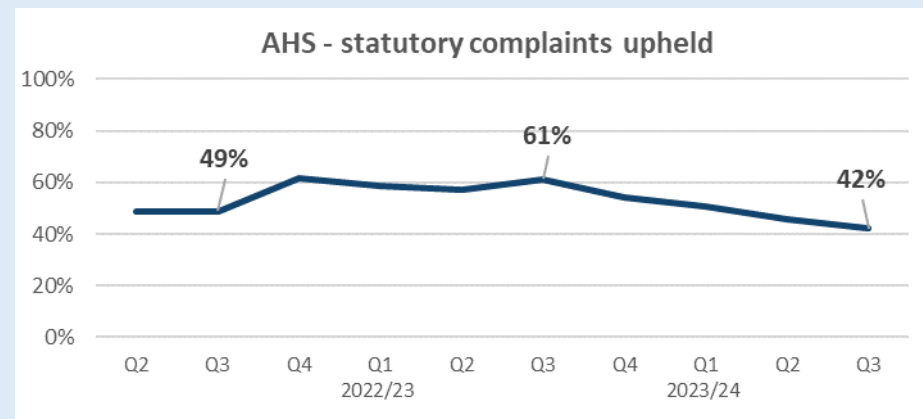
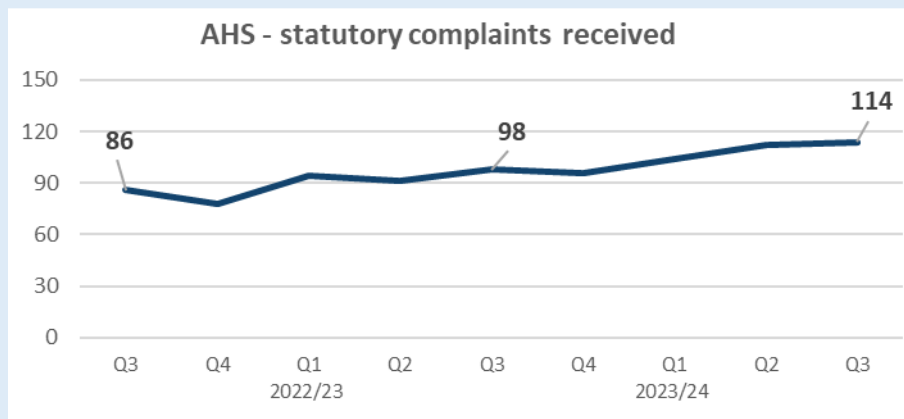
(12 months ending 31 December 2023)

Children and Young People - Statutory Complaints



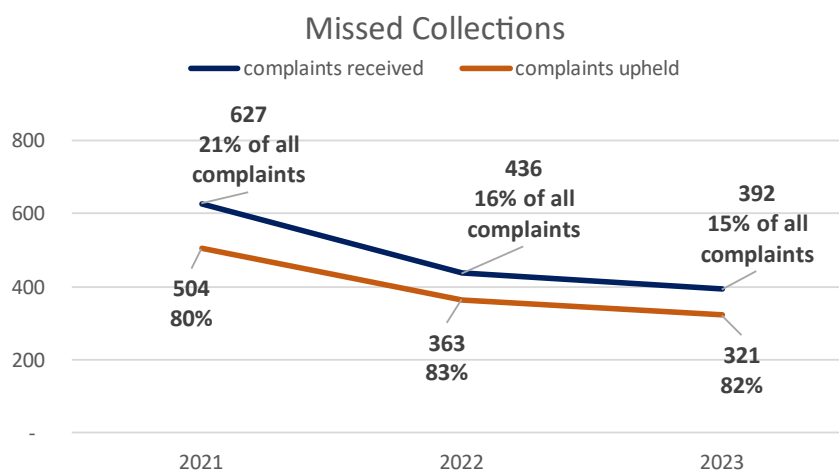
Latest data for the 12 months ending 31 December, shows that although the number of statutory complaints are increasing across both CYPS and adult social care, there are fewer complaints being upheld.

Adult and Health Services - Statutory Complaints



Customer Complaints

- 335 Over the last two years, the number of corporate complaints has steadily decreased and is now 12% lower (350 fewer complaints). This is mainly due to receiving fewer complaints about missed collections.



- 336 Overall, regardless of the number of complaints received, the proportion of complaints upheld has remained relatively consistent, hovering between 57% and 60% over the last two years. However, there is variation across service areas. Over the last 12 months, 79% of refuse and recycling complaints were upheld, compared to 17% of neighbourhood warden complaints.
- 337 There has been a slight decrease in the proportion of complaints progressing to independent investigation (5.7% over the last 12 months compared to 6.2% the previous year) but the proportion upheld has increased from 24% to 29%. The main reasons the complaints being upheld were the time taken to respond, not keeping the customer informed of progress, and lack of communication.

Complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

- 338 The proportion of complaints reaching the Ombudsman remains static at around 3%. The Ombudsman made decisions on 23 complaints during quarter three - one complaint was upheld.

Complaint	Decision
The council failed to provide the care and support it assessed the client as needing. This caused distress and put unreasonable pressure on their partner.	The council will pay £1,000 in recognition of the distress caused. It will also review the care and support plan with the complainant to ensure their personal budget is sufficient to meet all their needs, commission the care and support assessed as needed, and identify action which will ensure officers understand the council's duties under the Care Act 2014.

Statutory Complaints – Children and Young People (CYPS)

- 339 Of the 100 statutory complaints received in the 12 months ending 31 December 2023, 31% were partially or fully upheld. (Note: a further 17% were 'pending' at the time of writing).
- 340 Most complaints related to either the Families First Teams which are responsible for children in need, child protection plans, assessments in cases of parental dispute, children with disabilities, and pre-birth (65 complaints, 65%), or teams involved with children in care including children's homes, fostering and care leavers (30 complaints, 30%).
- 341 Statutory complaints for CYPS are complex and up to three reasons can be recorded for each. Of the 100 complaints, the most frequent reasons for complaint included staff behaviour, communication issues, and disagreement.
- 342 We continue to feed learning from complaints into practice.

Statutory Complaints – Adult and Health Services (AHS)

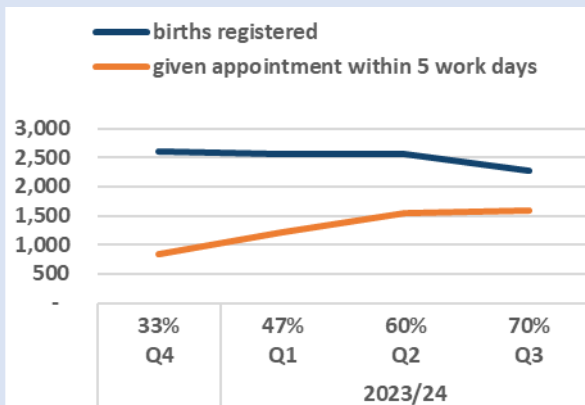
- 343 Of the 114 statutory complaints received in the 12 months ending 31 December 2023, 42% were partially or fully upheld. A further five complaints remain under investigation and pending outcome.
- 344 Most complaints related to one of the following three areas: older people/physical disabilities/sensory impairment (46 complaints, 40%), Transactional Services which deals with financial assessments/charging (30 complaints, 26%), and learning disabilities/mental health/substance misuse (20 complaints, 18%).
- 345 During quarter three, action taken in response to complaints included, advising a care provider to update their website to make it explicitly clear how people can raise a concern as well as make a compliment, comment or complaint, and reminding social workers of the need to notify the billing team of new care packages so invoices can be issued promptly.

Registration Services Dashboard

(12 month trend ending 31 December 2023)

Births: appointments within 5 work days

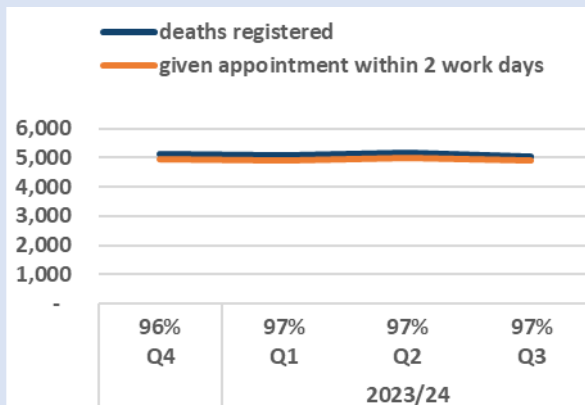
National target = 95%



During busy periods, priority is given to death registrations and ceremonies.

Deaths: appointments within 2 work days

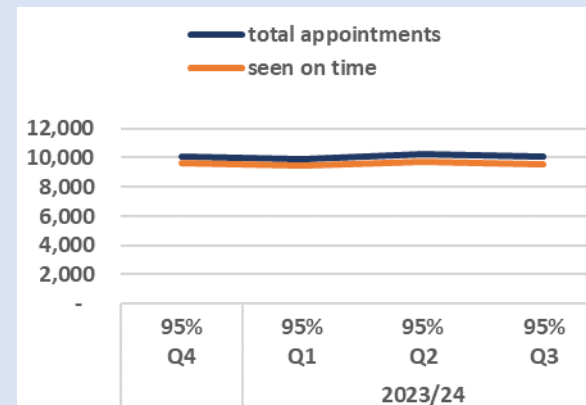
National target = 95%



Appointments seen on time (excluding ceremonies)

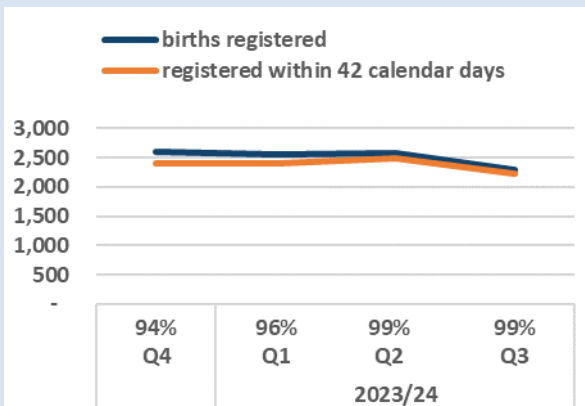
(excluding ceremonies)

National target = 90%



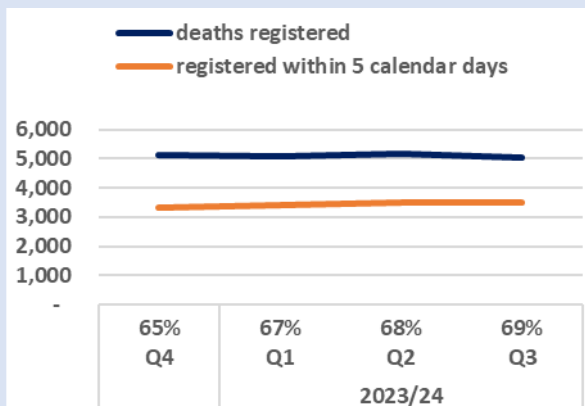
Births Registered within 42 calendar days.

National target = 98%



Deaths Registered within 5 calendar days.

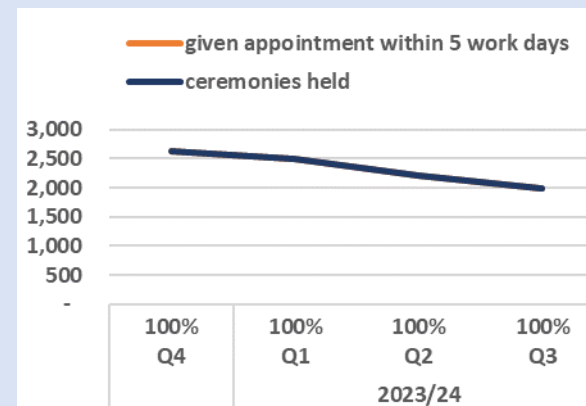
National target = 90%



Timescales start on the day of death so includes time to issue a death certificate.

Ceremonies: appointments within 5 work days)

National target = 90%



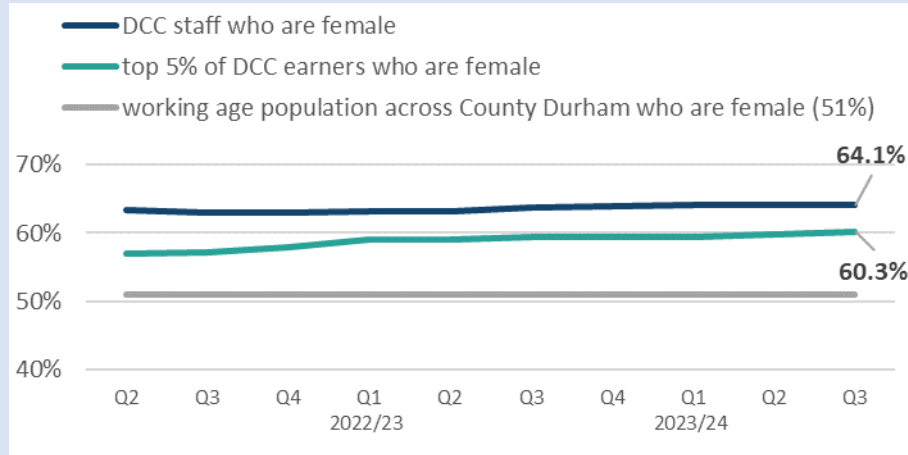
It appears fewer are being held. But previous quarters were artificially high following Covid-19 as ceremonies rolled into later years.

Births and Deaths Registered

- 346 We continue to be one of the highest performing councils in the country for registering births and deaths. Latest data (December 2023) shows we registered 98% of births and 71% of deaths in line with the national target. Meeting the national target for deaths is difficult as timescales begin on the day of death so includes the time taken to issue a death certificate. However, our performance remains better than the national average for quarter two of 93% for births and 51% for deaths.

Workforce Equality Profile Dashboard

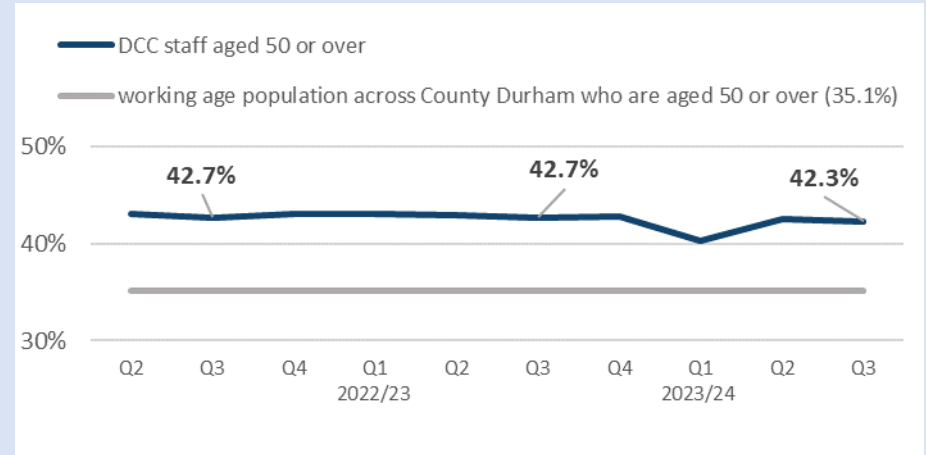
(quarterly data)



Reducing barriers experienced by women in the workplace with family friendly policies, hybrid working patterns, and jobs open to part-time work or job share.

Longer-term actions include developing our apprenticeship programme (including attracting more women into traditionally male dominated roles), staff networks and coaching frameworks, and implementing support and initiatives which improve health and well-being such as menopause, domestic abuse and gender based violence.

% of the workforce aged 50 years and over



Staff networks

Our staff networks continue to grow and meet regularly to share and discuss experiences, help shape the working environment, arrange events and offer support to other staff.

Staff Networks	No. of members
LGBT+	46
Disability	60
Race Equality and Diversity	20
Armed Forces	34
Carers	76
Menopause	196

Recruitment and Retention Dashboard

(year to date, except employee turnover which is at 31 December 2023)

Re-ad rate

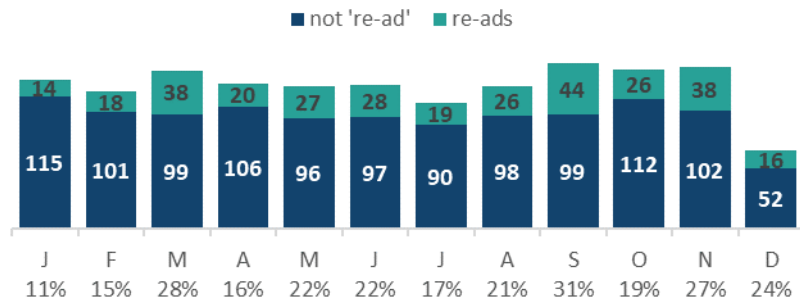
1,481 vacancies
314 re-adverts

21% are re-ads
(Jan-Dec 23)

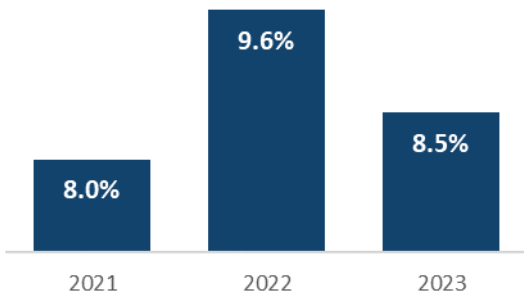
School crossing patrol posts have always been difficult to fill. Post holders tend to be very local to the post location, often retired people, and/or who have children at the school. We continue to promote the role and during quarter four are introducing a simplified application form.

Service area	Re-ad rate	re-ad / vacancies	% of re-ads
School crossing patrols	67%	86 / 129	27%
Children's social care	27%	55 / 201	18%
Adult social care	26%	42 / 164	13%

There is a national shortage of social workers and baseline pay is not being sufficiently competitive. Additional measures have been put in place to help address these recruitment challenges. We continue to release a number of recruitment campaigns, including additional advertising via Indeed, increased social media promotion and website development, and attendance at job fairs



Employee Turnover (12 months ending December...)



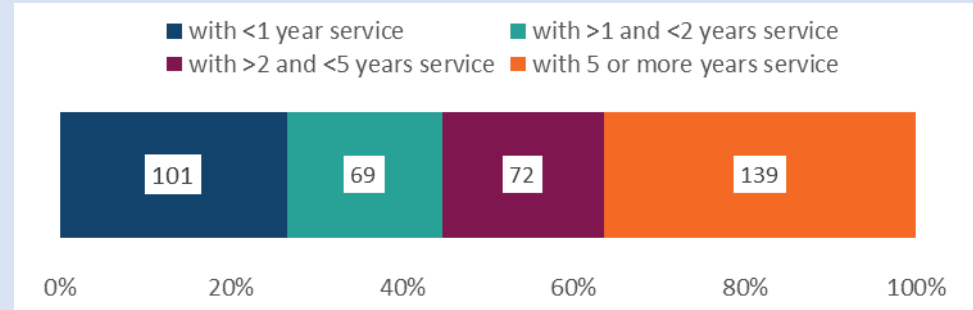
Leavers by length of service^

(January to December 2023)

381 employees have voluntarily resigned in the last year.

45% had less than two years' service (170 employees).

^Leavers who have voluntarily resigned from a permanent post



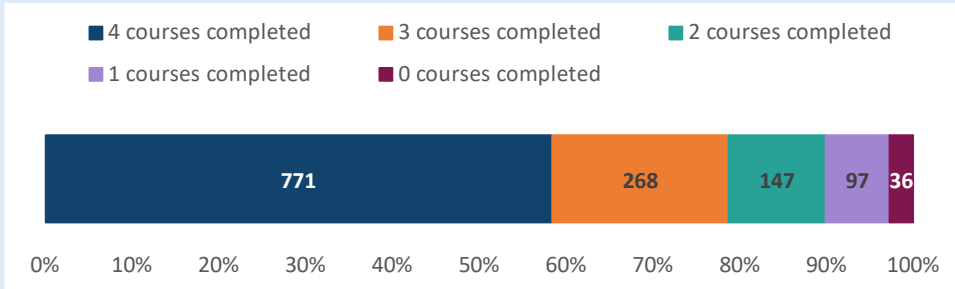
Recruitment and Retention

- 347 Recruiting and retaining employees remains challenging. Although turnover is lower than last year at 8.5%, it is higher than two years ago (8.0%). Our performance is linked to the national and regional recruitment crisis.
- 348 During quarter three, 72 employees voluntarily left the council. Of these, 53% had less than two years' service. Areas impacted by relatively high turnover rates and / or are difficult to recruit to include:
- Children's social care. A national shortage of social workers combined with a competitive local market means it is difficult to recruit and retain Social Workers. Recruitment and retention allowances are in place across the workforce due to these significant challenges.
 - Culture, sport and tourism. Although there is no pattern in relation to job role, the service has many job roles that attract students and young people, and this contributes to high turnover. We continue to work closely with this service area to support recruitment campaigns to ensure we can continue to attract candidates to open positions.
 - Cleaning positions. We are hoping to launch a recruitment campaign to attract a more diverse workforce to help support recruitment/retention.
 - Residential Worker positions - mainly in Aycliffe Secure Centre. This is challenging environment to work in and posts are difficult to recruit to. Career pathways are in place, as is support from dedicated recruitment agencies and recruitment/retention allowances. Ongoing challenges are expected.
 - Planning and Environmental Health.
- 349 During quarter three, 23% of adverts for vacancies across the council were classed as re-adverts. However, the rate increased to 69% in the Transport and Contract Services team, largely due School Crossing Patrol (SCP) vacancies which remain hard to fill. Factors affecting SCP recruitment include the part-time nature of the role (approx. 5-7 hours per week), and being unable to work multiple SCP roles due the roles having the same working hours across all school sites. Research suggests that these roles have a small candidate market, usually limited to the catchment area/locality of the school. To try and address this, we are launching a reduced application form in quarter four specific to SCP roles, and reviewing our marketing approach to try and target passive candidates, including additional advertising in community centres and libraries.
- 350 Re-adverts were also high in the Children's Social Care team (37%), mainly due to a national shortage of social workers. We have continued to release a number of recruitment campaigns to try and address these challenges, including additional advertising via Indeed, increased social media promotion and website development, and attendance at job fairs.

Workforce Development Dashboard

(as at 16 January 2024)

Mandatory manager development programme (four courses) (1,319 managers)

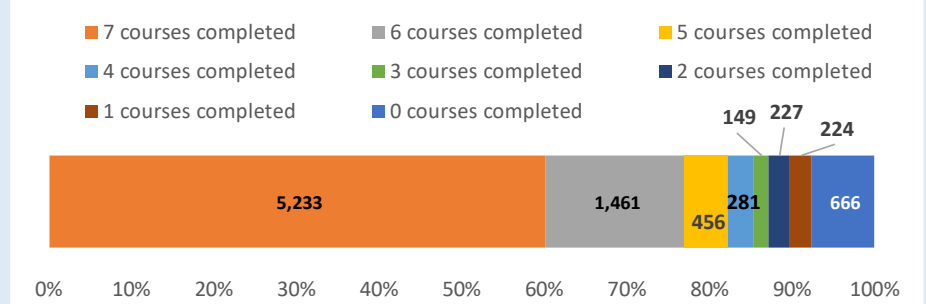


Completion Rate

Course	last quarter	this quarter
Attendance Management	97%	97%
Recognising and managing stress	81%	84%
Mental health awareness*	77%	78%
Coaching as a management style*	61%	66%

*these courses are classroom based and places are restricted to maximum course numbers. Additional courses have been scheduled for quarters three and four to ensure we remain on target for managers to complete this training associated with our delivery plan. New starters are required to complete this training within their induction period.

Mandatory e-learning programme (seven courses) (8,697 employees)



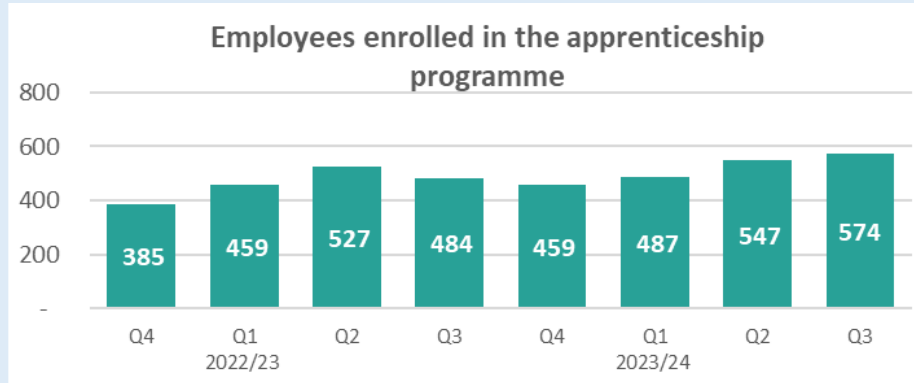
Completion Rate

Course	last quarter	this quarter
Introduction to GDPR	82%	86%
Information Security	85%	87%
Harassment and Victimisation	81%	84%
Diversity, equality and discrimination	82%	86%
Code of our values, behaviours and conduct	82%	85%
Climate Change	78%	82%
Action Counter Terrorism: ACT	-	64%

Workforce Development Dashboard

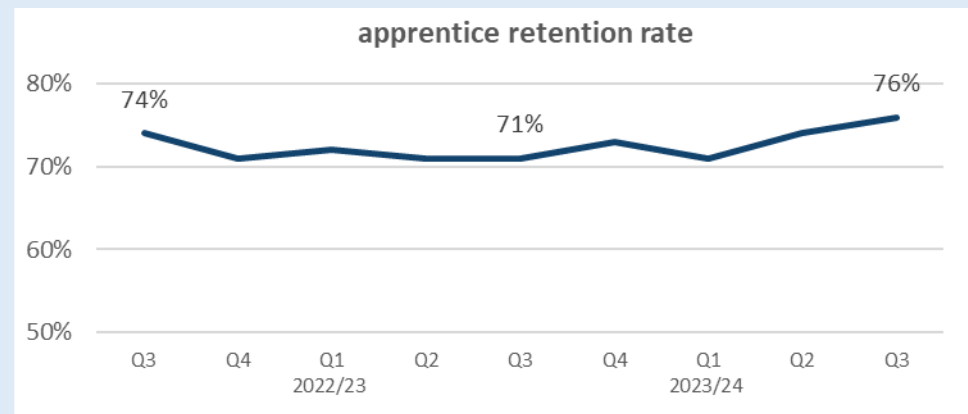
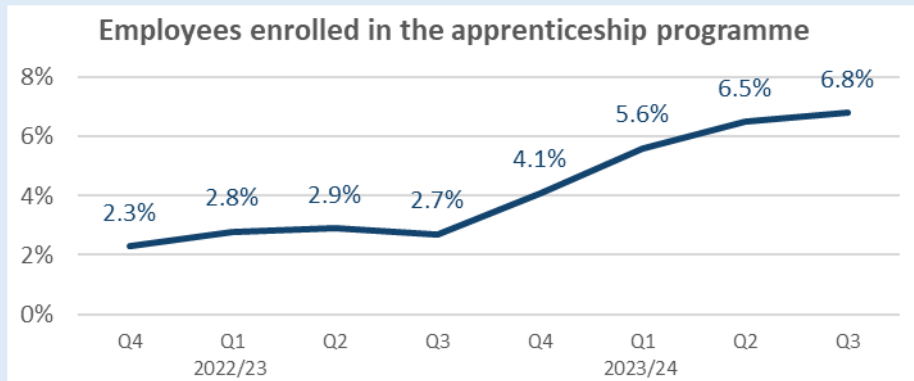
(as at 31 December 2023)

Apprenticeship Programme



Performance Development Reviews (PDRs)

100% of Leaders PDRs have been completed



Levy Transfer (financial year to date)

- 36 requests received.
- 24 rejected as they did not meet the necessary criteria.
- Twelve approved: six in care sector, three in engineering, one in transport, one in protective services and one in construction.
- Almost £143,000 committed.

Performance Development Reviews

- 351 The new cycle of personal development reviews launched on 1 October 2023, the completion rates for leaders is now 100%.

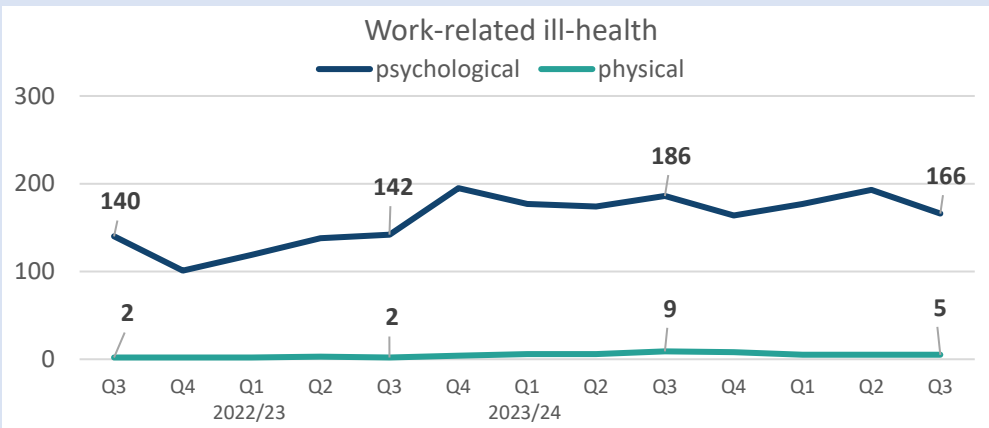
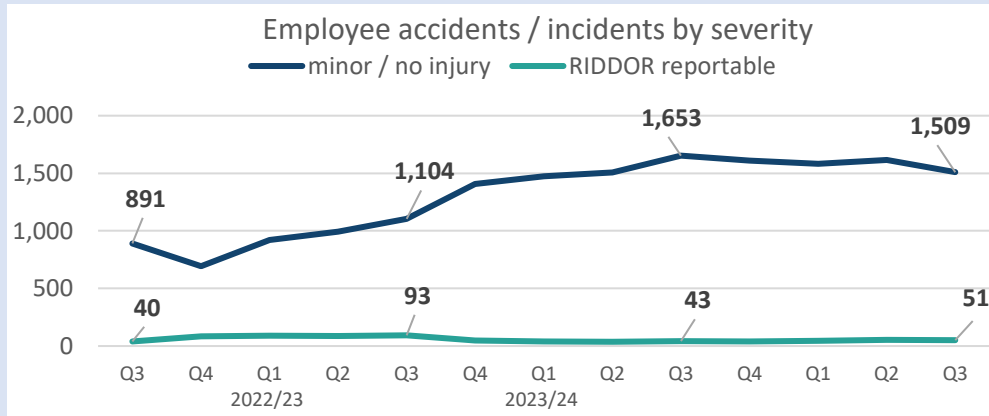
Apprenticeships

- 352 574 of our employees are currently enrolled on an apprenticeship (6.8% of the workforce) compared to 2.7% of our workforce at the same time last year (figures are now service based apprentices only whereas the previous year included school workforce numbers). Latest data includes new apprentice starters from the 2023 annual corporate recruitment campaign, as well as employees upskilling and who have started academic courses in September.
- 353 Although we have been unable to use all our levy funds within the mandatory 24 months of being deposited in our account, mainly due to schools not utilising the money, we can now transfer the levy to local businesses. During quarter three, a further seven requests for an apprenticeship levy transfer were received from interested employers via the digital account. Four applications were approved: two in care services, one in protective services, and one in transport. Three were rejected due to not meeting the eligibility criteria (they were outside of County Durham, not a partner organisation or part of the supply chain). A further £47,786 was committed during the quarter.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing of our Employees Dashboard

(as at 31 December 2023)

Employee Accidents / Incidents



Employee Accidents / incidents

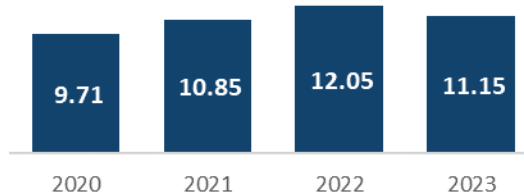
- 354 During quarter three, there were 417 accidents / incidents / near misses, compared to 348 in the previous quarter. Three were RIDDOR specified injuries, and 14 were absences of more than seven days.
- 355 There were also two fire related incidents. These occurred at an operational depot and a children's home. Although there were no injuries and limited damage to equipment and property, a range of recommendations were made in relation to safe working procedures, training and risk assessment.
- 356 We completed 143 audits and inspections - the compliance rate was 92.7%. Most non-compliance were of a low priority and almost 500 opportunities for improvement were identified.
- 357 All council property stock has now been surveyed for reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC). The result was a zero return regarding the presence of RAAC.
- 358 During quarter three, the radon testing assurance programme continued. All buildings within the scope of phase one assessments had measuring devices placed within them during the quarter. Results are expected to be available in February 2024.

Sickness Absence Dashboard

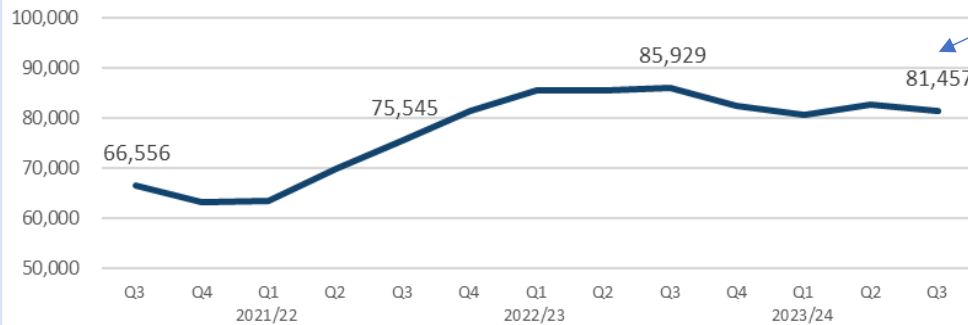
(12 month trend ending 31 December 2023)

Working days lost to sickness

Days lost to sickness per FTE
(12 months ending 31 December...)



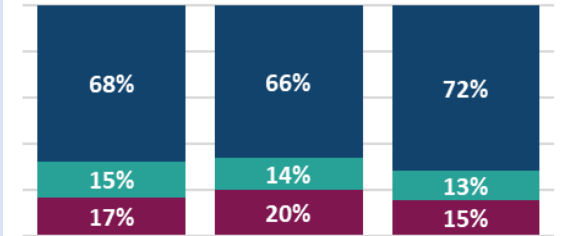
FTE working days lost to sickness



Almost 4,500 fewer FTE working days lost to sickness compared to last year

length of absence

■ short term ■ medium term ■ long term



24 months ago 12 months ago latest data

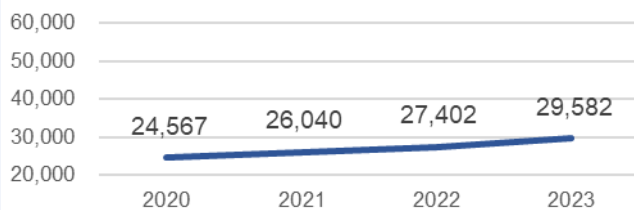
Short term absence is 7 days or fewer, medium term 8 to 19 days, long term is 20+

We closely monitor all long term absence over 6 months. As at 31 December 2023, there are 29 long term sickness absence cases ongoing (0.3% of the workforce).

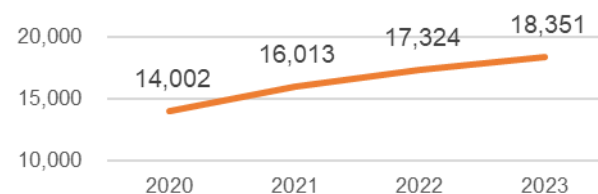
FTE working days lost to sickness.

Three categories make up 68% of total.

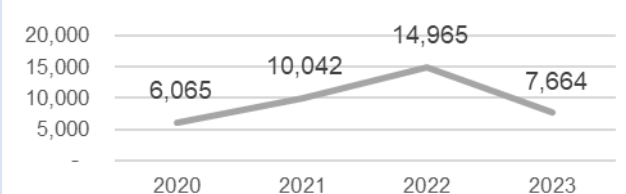
mental health and fatigue
(36% of total)



musculo-skeletal issues
(23% of total)



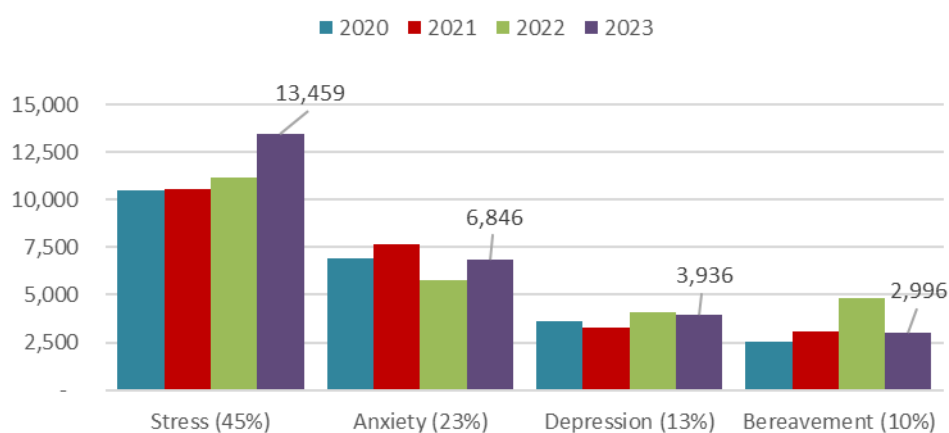
infections including colds and flu
(9% of total)



Attendance Management

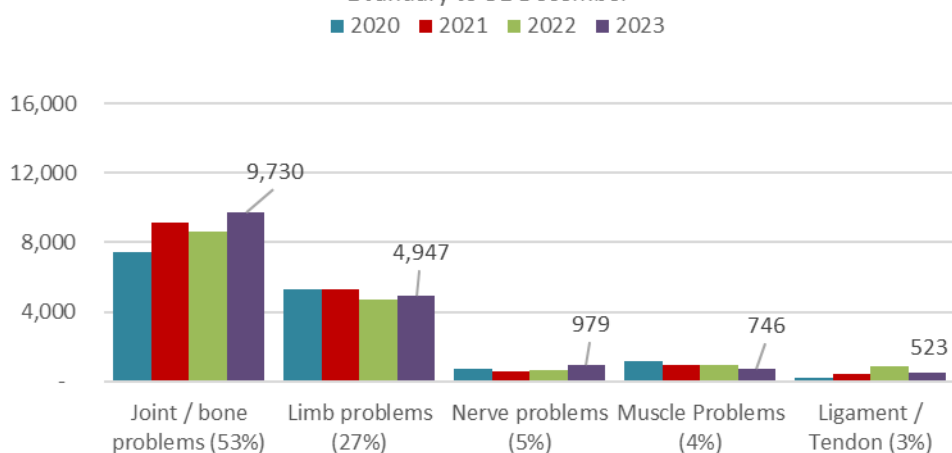
- 359 During the last 12 months, 81,457 FTE working days were lost to sickness. This is the equivalent to 11.15 days per full-time employee and is 0.9 days lower than last year's rate of 12.05 days per FTE. However, the current rate is higher than historical trends.
- 360 Mental health and fatigue, musculo-skeletal issues and infections (which includes colds and flus) continue to be the most frequently reported sickness categories. Over the last 12 months, they collectively made up two thirds of all sick days. This remains consistent with previous reports.
- 361 Mental Health and Fatigue, the most frequently reported sickness category, makes up 36% of all sick days. And within the category, 91% is due to stress, anxiety, depression or bereavement.

FTE working days lost to sickness - mental health and fatigue
1 January to 31 December

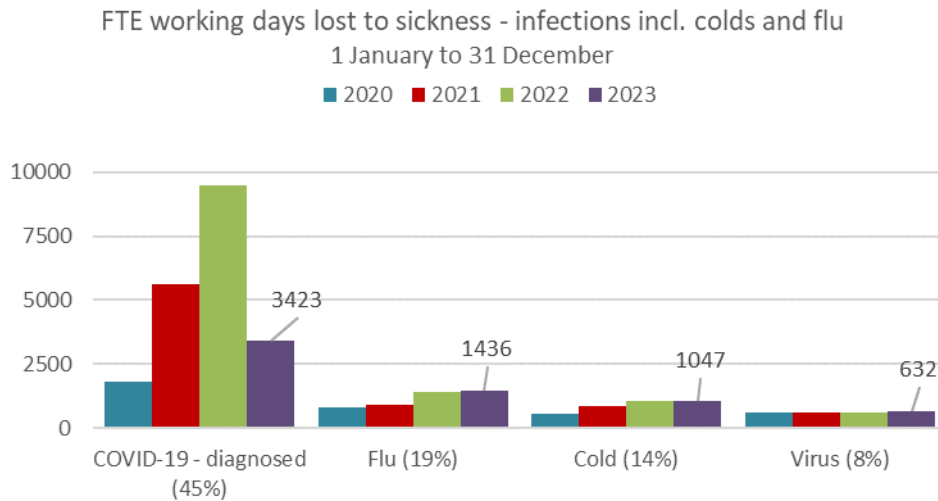


- 362 Services experiencing high and/or increasing levels of stress, anxiety or depression tend to be our frontline teams which includes children's social care, planning and housing and, culture, sport and tourism.
- 363 The musculo-skeletal category makes up 22% of all sick days, and within this category, 92% is due to joint/bone problems, muscle problems, nerve problems, injuries to limbs or ligament injuries.

FTE working days lost to sickness - musculo-skeletal
1 January to 31 December



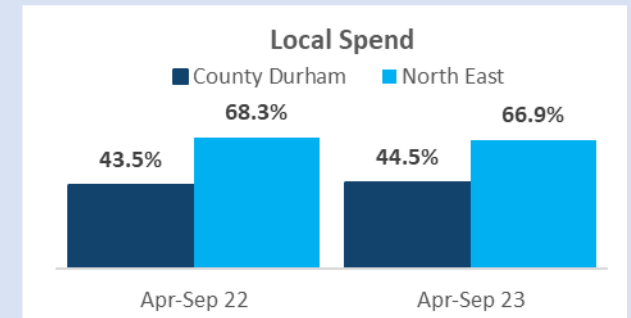
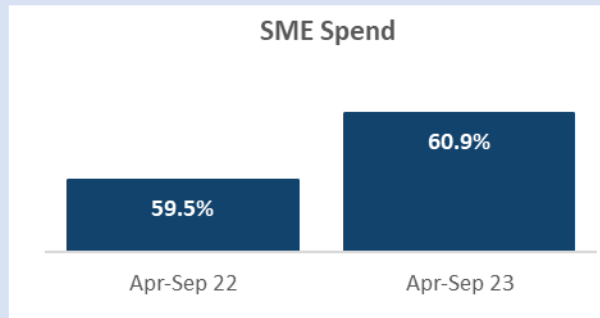
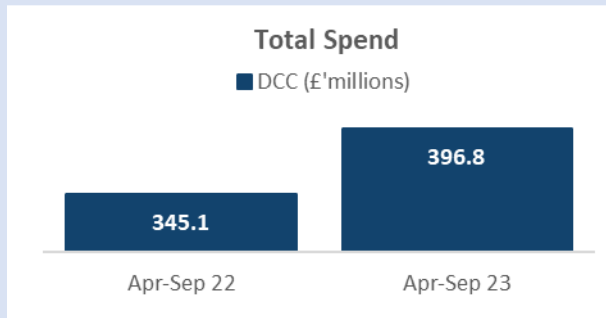
- 364 Services showing high and/or increasing levels of musculo-skeletal issues tend to be our frontline teams which have a high level of manual work. These include environment, early help, children’s social care, planning and housing, and highways.
- 365 The infections (including colds and flu) category makes up 9% of all sick days, and within this category, 86% is due to Covid-19, flu, cold or a virus infection.



- 366 We closely monitor all absence over 6 months. As at 31 December 2023, there are 29 long term sickness absence cases ongoing (0.3% of the workforce).
- 367 Preventative interventions and initiatives to drive a healthy workforce, preventing ill health and as far as possible sickness absence are continuing to be implemented.

Procurement Dashboard

(April to September 2023)



Total Spend

Spend across the council has increased 15% (+£51.7 million). Savings realised in energy efficiency (£11 million) due to the Morrison Busty refurbishment and Warmer Homes scheme. However, adult care and healthcare have increased significantly (particularly due to increases in minimum wage in nursing homes). Inflation is having a huge effect everywhere.

County Durham Spend

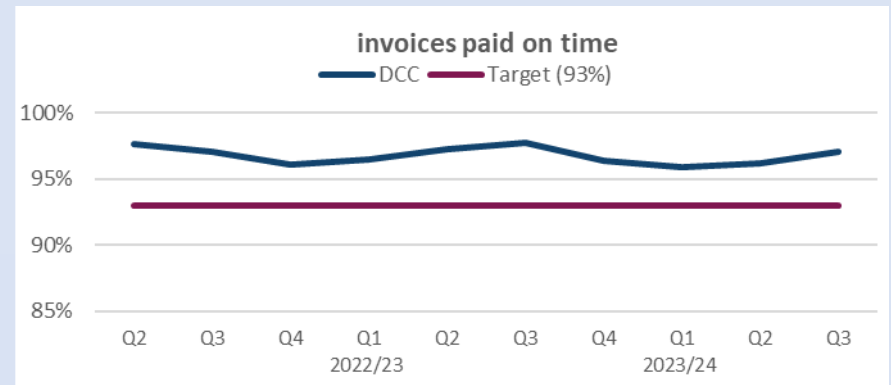
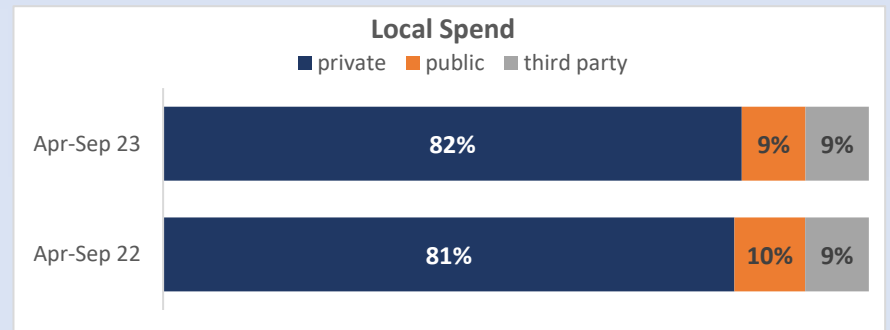
£26.4 million increase - mainly due to rises in public transport and social care.

North East Spend

although proportionally lower than last year, North East spend has increased by approximately £30 million (due to a £51 million increase in total spend). Rises in public transport and adult social care are the main contributors.

SME Spend

SME spend is at a 12 year high. £36 million increase is mainly due to rises in public transport and adult social care.



Procurement

- 368 Over the last six months, work across procurement has been challenging due to inflationary pressures, and the high cost of energy and materials.
- 369 We are continuing to support our local supply base and contribute to local wealth creation by driving social value through our tendering processes and developing the County Durham pound to deliver local initiatives to the community. The social value initiative has delivered, with the County Durham Pound partners, £300 million in community based spend.
- 370 Having implemented a more locally focused procurement route, we will begin to monitor specific procurement exercises directly influenced by the County Durham Pound Agenda. This will determine where the council has sufficient local industry supply and where it is lacking – which will inform future strategy. System changes linked to the quick quote exercise now automatically invites County Durham based organisations to submit tenders.

Data Tables

D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
				Household waste re-used, recycled or composted	Oct 22 – Sep 23	36.5%	Tracker	37.7%	April 21 – March 22	38.1%	42.5%	33.5%	Yes	Yes

D = Direction of Travel	T = compared to target	C = compared to England average	G = Gap between our performance and England average
meeting or exceeding the previous year	better than target	Better than the England average	The gap is improving
worse than the previous year but is within 2%	Worse than but within 2% of target	Worse than the England average but within 2%	The gap remains the same
more than 2% worse than the previous year	more than 2% behind target	Worse than the England average	The gap is deteriorating

This is the overall performance assessment. Its calculation is dependent upon whether the indicator has an agreed target.

Key Target Indicator	Key Tracker Indicator
targets are set as improvements, can be measured regularly and can be actively influenced by the council and its partners. When setting a target, the D, C and G have already been taken into account.	no targets are set as they are long-term and / or can only be partially influenced by the council and its partners. Therefore, D, T, C and G are used to assess overall performance
better than target	Direction of Travel (D) is meeting or exceeding the previous year AND the gap with England (G) is improving
worse than but within 2% of target	Direction of Travel (D) is worse than the previous year OR the gap with England (G) is deteriorating
more than 2% behind target	Direction of Travel (D) is worse than the previous year AND the gap with England (G) is deteriorating

More detail is available from the Strategy Team at performance@durham.gov.uk

Our Economy: summary data tables

Economic Growth KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Major planning applications determined within 13 weeks	Oct-Dec 23	92.3%	90%	87.5%	Jul-Sep 23	76%	88%	84%	Yes	Yes
					Non-major planning applications determined in deadline	Oct-Dec 23	89%	90%	90%	Jul-Sep 23	87.8%	88.2%	84.1%	Yes	Yes
					Major planning applications overturned on appeal	Jul-Sep 22	5.3%	10%	0%	Jul-Sep 22	5.3%	1%	0.9%	Yes	Yes
					Non-major planning applications overturned on appeal	Jul-Sep 22	0%	10%	0.2%	Jul-Sep 22	0%	0.7%	0.5%	Yes	Yes
					Inward investments secured	Oct-Dec 23	2	2	3					Yes	No
					Investment secured for companies	Oct-Dec 23	£750,000	£1.25 million	£3.95 million					Yes	No
					Occupancy of Business Durham floor space	Oct-Dec 23	90%	95%	95.3%					Yes	No
					Private sector employments per 10,000 population	2022	2,827	Tracker	2,795	2022	2,827	4,133	3,212	No	No
					Private sector businesses per 10,000 population	2023	272	Tracker	274	2023	272	417	269	No	No
					GVA per filled job	2021	£47,046	Tracker	£45,361	2021	£47,046	£61,310	£48,828	No	No
					Employment land approved and delivered	2022/23	13.32Ha	28.46Ha	5.51Ha					No	No

Business Support KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Businesses engaged by Business Durham	Oct-Dec 23	157	250	170					Yes	No
					Businesses supported by regeneration projects	Oct-Dec 23	20	Tracker	40					Yes	No
					New businesses supported by CED Team	Oct-Dec 23	68	250 (annual target)	40					Yes	No
					Organisations involved in the Better Health at Work Award	Dec 2023	131	Tracker	76					Yes	No

Employability and Skills KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog	
					Jobs created or safeguarded due to Business Durham activity	Oct-Dec 23	86	375	81					Yes	No	
					Jobs created or safeguarded through regeneration schemes	Jul-Sep 23	161	Tracker	95					Yes	No	
					Registrations to employability programmes	Apr-Dec 23	719	560	N/A					Yes	No	
					Participants on employability programmes who progressed to employment / education or training	Apr-Dec 23	455	235	N.A					Yes	No	
					Employment rate for 16-64 year olds <i>Confidence intervals +/-3.2pp</i>	Oct 22-Sep 23	70.8%	Tracker	74.3%		Oct 22-Sep 23	70.8%	75.9%	71.6%	Yes	No
					Disability employment rate <i>Confidence intervals +/-6.9pp</i>	Oct 22-Sep 23	42.4%	Tracker	45.7%		Oct 22-Sep 23	42.4%	57.2%	47.6%	Yes	No
					Residents with higher level skills <i>Confidence intervals +/-5pp</i>	2022	59.1%	Tracker	52.5%		2022	59.1%	66.4%	60.4%	No	No
					16-17-year-olds in an apprenticeship	Apr-Jun 23	7.3%	Tracker	8.5%		Apr-Jun 23	7.3%	4.8%	7%	No	No

Cultural Offer KPIs

2023/24	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					People attending cultural events ran and commissioned by CS&T	Apr-Dec 23	260,326	Tracker	185,312 (2021 Lumiere year)					Yes	No
					People attending council owned cultural venues (Killhope & town halls)	Oct-Dec 23	36,117	Tracker	31,857					Yes	No
					Average % occupancy of cinema screenings (Gala, Empire & BATH)	Oct-Dec 23	28%	20%	24%					Yes	No
					Average % yield of cinema screenings (BATH, Gala and Empire)	Oct-Dec 23	74%	100%	63%					Yes	No
					Average % yield of theatre performances (BATH, Gala and Empire)	Oct-Dec 23	99%	100%	81%					Yes	No
					Average % occupancy of theatre performances (Gala, Empire & BATH)	Oct-Dec 23	81%	75%	77%					Yes	No
					Council owned/managed heritage assets classed as 'at risk'	2023	3	Tracker	3					No	No
					Heritage assets 'at risk' categorised as 'Priority A' and/or in 'very bad condition'	2023	7	Tracker	6					No	No
					Active borrowers (libraries)	Oct-Dec 23	45,733	43,805	41,481					Yes	No
					Digital borrowers (libraries)	Oct-Dec 23	4,181	3,849	3,423					Yes	No

Visitor Economy KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Visitors to the county	2022	17.91m	17.085m	15.77m					No	No
					Money generated by the visitor economy	2022	£1.04b	£760.5m	£826.68m					No	No
					Jobs supported by the visitor economy	2022	11,724	10,191	10,063					No	No
					Visitor attractions served by public transport	2022	67%	Tracker	new					No	No
					Tourism businesses actively engaged with Visit County Durham	2023	55%	Tracker	27.8%					Yes	No

Managing Money Better (MMB) KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Households receiving energy advice from MMB Initiative	Oct-Dec 23	12	Tracker	129					Yes	No
					£s saved per household as a result of energy efficiency advice provided by MMB initiative	Oct-Dec 23	£125	Tracker	£179					Yes	No

Education KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Uptake of free early education entitlement for 3-4-year-olds	2024	95.4%	Tracker	93.7%	2024	95.4%	93.7%	98.6%	Yes	No
					Children meeting expected standards in maths and reading at KS2	2024	59%	Tracker	65%	2024	59%	60%	61%	Yes	No
Page 213					Average grade of achievement within GCSE English and Maths to a Grade 5	2021/22	4.65	5 by 2030	new					No	No

Page 214				Disadvantaged cohorts meeting basic threshold measures in English and Maths	new			new					No	No
				Young people in education, employment and training	Jun 2023	93.8%	above N / NE	94.2%	Jun 2023	93.8%	95%	93.9%	Yes	No

Our Environment: summary data tables

Waste KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Household waste re-used, recycled or composted	Oct 22-Sep 23	36.5%	Tracker	37.7%	Apr 21-Mar 22	38.1%	42.5%	33.5%	Yes	Yes
					Waste diverted from landfill	Oct 22-Sep 23	92.2%	90%	93.2%	Apr 21-Mar 22	89.4%	91.9%	92.5%	Yes	No
					Residual household waste (kg per household)	Oct 22-Sep 23	574	Tracker	580	Apr 21-Mar 22	609	547	623	Yes	Yes
					Contamination rate	Oct 22-Sep 23	33.6%	Tracker	34.5%					Yes	Yes

Sustainable Transport and Active Travel KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Cycling and walking levels	2022	65.6%	Tracker	67.7%	2022	65.6%	70.6%	67.5%	Yes	No
					Satisfaction with cycle routes & facilities (<i>confidence intervals +/-4pp</i>)	2023	50%	Tracker	52%	2023	50%	50%		Yes	No
					Linear kilometres of appropriate design standards for Active Mode Routes		new		new					No	No
					Park and Ride passenger journeys	Oct-Dec 23	158,632	Tracker	109,898					Yes	No

Carbons Reduction and Air Quality KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					% reduction in County Durham carbon emissions from 1990 baseline	2021	53.7%	Tracker	56.3%					No	No
					% reduction in Council's carbon emissions from 2008/09 baseline	2022/23	61%	Tracker	57%					No	No
					NO ₂ levels within Durham City Air Quality Management Area that are below the govt threshold of 40µg/m ³	2022	96%	100%	65%					No	No
					Trees planted	2021/22	53,000	93,333	40,414					No	No

Our People: summary data tables

Childrens' Social Care KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Early help cases open	as at Dec 23	1,249	Tracker	1,296					Yes	No
					Children's social care referrals per 10,000 population	as at Dec 23	477	Tracker	473	2022/23	473	545	663	Yes	No
					Children's social care re-referrals	as at Dec 23	16%	Tracker	15%	2022/23	15%	21%	22%	Yes	No
					Children's social care assessments completed within 45 days	as at Dec 23	78%	Tracker	83%	2022/23	83%	83%	79%	Yes	No
					Children in need per 10,000 population	as at Dec 23	349	Tracker	387	2022/23	387	343	467	Yes	No
					Children on a child protection plan per 10,000 population	as at Dec 23	55	Tracker	54	2022/23	54	43	65	Yes	No

Page 216				Children looked after per 10,000 population	as at Dec 23	123	Tracker	107	2022/23	107	71	113	Yes	No
				Care leavers aged 16-24	as at Dec 23	311	Tracker	283					Yes	No
				Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children as a percentage of all children in care	as at Dec 23	7%	Tracker	5%	2022/23	5%	9%	4%	Yes	No
				Social worker vacancies	Oct-Dec 23	16%	Tracker	14%	Jan-Mar 22	11%	17%		Yes	No
				Children in care in a family setting	Oct-Dec 23	81%	Tracker	83%	Jan-Mar 22	84%	80%	84%	Yes	No
				Families on our Stronger Families Programme attaining significant and sustained outcomes	2023/24	983	1,230	581					No	No

Education KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieving a good level of development	2022/23	66.2%	Tracker	64.5%	2022/23	66.2%	67.2%	66.3%	Yes	No
					Pupils attending a school judged 'good or better' by Ofsted	2023/24	84.5%	Tracker	83.1%	2023/24	84.5%	88.1%	87%	Yes	No
					Pupils attending a primary school judged 'good or better' by Ofsted	2023/24	94.3%	Tracker	94.3%	2023/24	94.3%	91.6%	94.6%	Yes	No
					Pupils attending a secondary school judged 'good or better' by Ofsted	2023/24	70%	Tracker	75.3%	2023/24	70%	83.8%	76.8%	Yes	No
					Children who are electively home educated	Oct-Dec 23	855	Tracker	699					Yes	No
					Children eligible for free school meals	2023/24	32.4%	Tracker	30.6%	2023/24	32.4%	24.8%	14.8%	Yes	No
					Take-up on free school meals	2022/23	23%	Tracker	20.6%	2022/23	23%	18.6%	23.8%	No	No

SEND KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Children and young people with an EHCP	2023	4,577	Tracker	3,975					Yes	No
					New requests for EHCPs	2023	986	Tracker	974					Yes	No
					EHCPs completed within 20 weeks	Jan-Dec 2023	0%	Tracker	27%	2023	0%	48%	56%	Yes	No
					Pupils on SEN support	2023/24	10,953	Tracker	11,174					Yes	No

Adult Social Care KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Referrals into adult social care	Oct-Dec 23	5557	Tracker	5,180					Yes	No
					Initial assessments for Adult Social Care completed within 28 days	Oct-Dec 23	65.2%	Tracker	56.9%					Yes	No
					Care Act assessments completed	Oct-Dec 23	571	Tracker	571					Yes	No
					Service users receiving an assessment or review within the last 12 months	Oct-Dec 23	68.3%	Tracker	60.8%					Yes	No
					Individuals who achieved their desired outcomes from adult safeguarding	Oct-Dec 23	93.2%	Tracker	92.1%	Jan-Mar 23	91.8%	94.8%	93.8%	Yes	No
					Satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support <i>Confidence intervals +/-4.3pp</i>	2022/23	66.8%	Tracker	64.5%	2022/23	66.8%	64.4%	66.4%	No	No
					Satisfaction of carers with the support and services they receive <i>Confidence intervals +/-5.1pp</i>	2021/22	40.8%	Tracker	51.2%	2021/22	40.8%	36.6%	42%	No	No
					Hospital discharges receiving reablement	Oct-Dec 23	367	Tracker	297					Yes	No

Page 218	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Older people still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement / rehabilitation services	Jan-Dec 2023	86.8%	84.0%	91.9%	Apr 22-Mar 23	84.1%	81.8%	80.7%	Yes	No
					Average age people can remain living independently in their own home	2023/24	83.9 years	Tracker	84.6 years					No	No
					Adults aged 65+ per 100,000 population admitted on a permanent basis to residential or nursing care	Oct-Dec 23	571.8	490.1	449.9	Jan-Mar 22	513.3	538.5		Yes	No
					Service users receiving Direct Payments	Oct-Dec 23	13%	Tracker	12.8%	Apr 22-Mar 23	12.7%	26.2%	21.4%	Yes	No
					Service users receiving Direct Payments	Oct-Dec 23	684	Tracker	694					Yes	No
					Service users receiving home care	Oct-Dec 23	3,214	Tracker	3,789					Yes	No
					Service users receiving Telecare care	Oct-Dec 23	2,122	Tracker	2,103					Yes	No
					Service users receiving day care	Oct-Dec 23	1,046	Tracker	1,025					Yes	No
					Requests resulting in a service – adult social care	2022/23	774	Tracker	1,229	2022/23	774	1,860	2,743	No	Yes
					Workforce turnover rate – adult social care	2022/23	29.6%	Tracker	25.3%	2022/23	29.6%	28.3%	26.4%	No	Yes
					People in adult social care – quality of life	2022/23	0.393	Tracker	0.414	2022/23	0.393	0.411	0.415	Yes	Yes
					Carer quality of life – adult social care	2021/22	8.2	Tracker		2021/22	8.2	7.3	7.7	No	Yes
					Short term service provision – adult social care	2022/23	70.9%	Tracker	92.7%	2022/23	70.9%	77.5%	81.7%	Yes	Yes
					People using services who found it easy to find information – adult social care	2022/23	71.6%	Tracker	65.1%	2022/23	71.6%	67.2%	62.7%	Yes	Yes
					Carers who found it easy to find information about services	2021/22	67.8%	Tracker	77.3%	2021/22	67.8%	57.7%	64.7%	No	Yes

Housing Vulnerable People KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Care Connect customers	Oct-Dec 23	10,903	Tracker	11,059					Yes	No
					Care Connect calls answered within 3 minutes	Oct-Dec 23	100%	99%	100%					Yes	No
					Care Connect calls arriving at the property within 45 minutes	Oct-Dec 23	89%	90%	92.4%					Yes	No
					Potential clients contacted within 3 weeks of initial referral for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	Oct-Dec 23	100%	90%	new					Yes	No
					Households prevented from homelessness and helped to stay in their home	Oct-Dec 23	4%	Tracker	3%	Apr-Jun 23	0.4%	17.4%	8%	Yes	No
					Households prevented from homelessness and helped to move to alternative accommodation	Oct-Dec 23	14%	Tracker	21%	Apr-Jun 23	17%	34%	41%	Yes	No
					Households where homelessness has been relieved, and the client moved into alternative accommodation	Oct-Dec 23	33%	Tracker	31%	Apr-Jun 23	32%	33%	48%	Yes	No
					Households where there has been an acceptance of the main homeless duty	Oct-Dec 23	17%	Tracker	16%	Apr-Jun 23	13%	31%	10%	Yes	No
					Successful move-ons from Local Lettings Agency accommodation at the end of their licence agreement	2022/23	80%	90%	new					No	No
					People aged 65+ with aids and assistive technologies in their homes		new		new					No	No
Page 219					Approvals on new housing sites of 10 units or more, a minimum of 66% of the total number of dwellings meet accessible and adaptable standards (building Regulations requirements M4(2)).	2022/23	71%	66%	new					No	No

Page 220	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Approvals on new housing sites of 10 units or more, a minimum of 10% of the total number of dwellings meet a design and type for older persons	2022/23	16%	10%	new					No	No

Public Health KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Children aged 4-5 who are a healthy weight <i>Confidence intervals +/-1.2pp</i>	2022/23	73.2%	100%	75.5%	2022/23	73.2%	77.5%	74%	Yes	No
					Children aged 10-11 who are a healthy weight <i>Confidence intervals +/-1.2pp</i>	2022/23	59.1%	100%	59.2%	2022/23	59.1%	61.9%	58.9%	Yes	No
					Gap in breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks between County Durham and national average	2022/23	19.0pp	Tracker	18.7pp					Yes	No
					Mothers smoking at time of delivery	Jul-Sep 23	11.9%	0%	13.7%	Jul-Sep 23	11.9%	8.0%	10.5%	Yes	No
					Smoking prevalence in adults (aged 18+)	2022	15.4%	5.0%	16.2%	2022	15.4%	12.7%	13.1%	Yes	No
					People reporting a low happiness score <i>Confidence intervals +/-2.4pp</i>	2021/22	11.0%	Tracker	8.8%	2021/22	11.0%	8.4%	9.9%	No	No
					Suicide rate per 100,000 population	2020-22	16.8	Tracker	15.8	2020-22	16.8	10.3	13.5	Yes	No
					Admissions under the Mental Health Act	Oct-Dec 23	207	Tracker	200					Yes	No
					Healthy life expectancy at birth: female	2018-20	59.9 years	Tracker	58.3 years	2018-20	59.9 years	63.9	59.7	No	No
					Healthy life expectancy at 65: female	2018-20	10.2 years	Tracker	9.0 years	2018-20	10.2 years	11.3	9.8	No	No

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Gap in female healthy life expectancy at birth: County Durham and England	2018-20	4.0 years	Tracker	5.6 years					No	No
					Gap in female life expectancy at 65: County Durham and England	2018-20	1.1 years	Tracker	2.3 years					No	No
					Healthy life expectancy at birth: male	2018-20	59.9 years	Tracker	58.3 years	2018-20	59.9 years	63.9	59.7	No	No
					Healthy life expectancy at 65: male	2018-20	8.7 years	Tracker	8.3 years	2018-20	8.7 years	10.5	9.2	No	No
					Gap in male healthy life expectancy at birth: County Durham and England	2018-20	5.1 years	Tracker	3.6 years					No	No
					Gap in male life expectancy at 65: County Durham and England	2018-20	1.8 years	Tracker	2.3 years					No	No
					Successful completions of those in alcohol treatment	Jul 22-Jun 23	34.1%	Tracker	32.7%	Jul 22-Jun 23	34.1%	35.1%	30.1%	Yes	No
					Successful completions of those in drug treatment: opiates	Jul 22-Jun 23	5.9%	Tracker	5.6%	Jul 22-Jun 23	5.9%	5.0%	4.0%	Yes	No
					Successful completions of those in drug treatment: non-opiates	Jul 22-Jun 23	33.2%	Tracker	31.7%	Jul 22-Jun 23	33.2%	31.4%	27.2%	Yes	No

Physical Activity KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Visits to Leisure Centres	Oct-Dec 23	758,564	904,640	680,737					Yes	No
					Leisure memberships	Oct-Dec 23	18,551	19,061	19,229					No	No

Our Communities: summary data tables

Digital Durham KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Properties with access to gigabit-capable broadband	Oct-Dec 23	58.7%	Tracker	52.5%					Yes	No

Housing Delivery KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Net affordable homes	2022/23	282	836	536					No	No
					Net delivery of new housing	Oct-Dec 23	368	327	302					Yes	No
					Chapter Homes properties sold	Oct-Dec 23	3	5	9					Yes	No

Housing Standards KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Empty homes brought back into use as a result of local authority intervention	Oct-Dec 23	44	50	54					Yes	No
					Properties covered by Selective Licence Scheme that are licensed, or legal proceedings instigated	Oct-Dec 23	43%	100% (by 2025)	24%					Yes	No
					ASB incidents per 10,000 population within the Selective Licensing Scheme	Jul 22-Jun 23	212.97	224.28	287.7					No	No

Clean and Attractive Communities KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Fly-tipping resolved rate	Jan-Dec 2023	10.39	12.88	9.94	Apr 21-Mar 22	10.83	19.07	26.53	Yes	No
					Land with acceptable levels of cleanliness: litter	Oct-Dec 23	96.1%	Tracker	new					Yes	No
					Land with acceptable levels of cleanliness: dog fouling	Oct-Dec 23	99.0%	Tracker	new					Yes	No
					Green and open space with acceptable levels of cleanliness: litter	Oct-Dec 23	94.1%	Tracker	new					Yes	No
					Green and open space with acceptable levels of cleanliness: dog fouling	Oct-Dec 23	96.7%	Tracker	new					Yes	No
					Average vacancy rate of town centres	2023	16%	13.9%	16.1%					Yes	No

Transport Connectivity KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Satisfaction with ease of access (<i>confidence intervals +/-4pp</i>)	2023	73%	Tracker	73%	2023	73%	71%		Yes	No
					Satisfaction with bus operators (<i>confidence intervals +/-4pp</i>)	2019	92%	92%	92%					No	No
					Households which can access key service locations using public transport		new		new					No	No
					Residents who can access employment sites by public transport		new		new					No	No
					Timetabled bus services no more than 5 min late or 1 min early	Jul-Sep 23	77.0%	88.0%	72.2%					Yes	No
					Local passenger journeys on public transport	Jul-Sep 23	4,638,338	Tracker	4,277,399					Yes	No

Highways and Footways Maintenance KPIs

Page 224	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					A roads where maintenance is recommended	2022/23	2.6%	Tracker	3.7%	2022/23	2.6%	3	1	Yes	Yes
					B & C roads where maintenance is recommended	2022/23	2.65%	Tracker	3.4%	2022/23	2.65%	4	3	Yes	Yes
					Unclassified roads where maintenance is recommended	2022/23	23%	Tracker	25%	2022/23	23%	16	20	Yes	No
					'Footways' structurally unsound	2022	30.9%	Tracker	31.3%					Yes	No
					Bridge condition: principal roads	2020	82.0%	Tracker	81.1%					No	No
					Bridge condition: non-principal roads	2020	81.0%	Tracker	80.1%					No	No
					Category 1 highway defects repaired within 24 hours	Oct-Dec 23	97%	90%	92%					Yes	No
					Category 2.1 highway defects repaired within 14 days	Oct-Dec 23	96%	90%	93%					Yes	No
					Category 2.2 highway defects repaired within 3 months	Oct-Dec 23	89%	90%	79%					Yes	No
					Highways Maintenance Backlog	Awaiting data		Tracker						No	No
					Satisfaction with highways maintenance. <i>(confidence intervals +/-4pp)</i>	2023	46%	Tracker	47%	2023	46%	43%		Yes	No
					Footway maintained and repaired over and above the core programme		new	Tracker	new					No	No

Road Safety KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Road traffic accidents: fatalities	Oct-Dec 23	6	Tracker	4					Yes	No
					Road traffic accidents: seriously injured	Oct-Dec 23	44	Tracker	55					Yes	No
					Road traffic accidents: fatalities (children)	Oct-Dec 23	0	Tracker	0					Yes	No
					Road traffic accidents: seriously injured (children)	Oct-Dec 23	3	Tracker	2					Yes	No
					Road traffic collisions per billion vehicle miles – all	2022	186.86	Tracker	204.5	2022	186.86	352.07	255.65	Yes	No
					Road traffic collisions per billion vehicle miles – fatal	2022	5.90	Tracker	4.42	2022	5.90	4.86	4.36	Yes	No

Protecting Vulnerable People from harm KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Domestic Abuse incidents reported to the Police per 1,000 population	2023	26.4	Tracker	27.7					Yes	No
					Harbour clients feeling more confident on case closure	Oct-Dec 23	88%	Tracker	87%					Yes	No
					Harbour clients feeling their quality of life has improved on case closure	Oct-Dec 23	84%	Tracker	83%					Yes	No
					Children and young people completing an intervention with Harbour and reporting feeling safer	Oct-Dec 23	94%	Tracker	84%					Yes	No
					Children and young people reviewed as at risk to Child Sexual Exploitation			Tracker						No	No

Crime KPIs

2026	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	England and Wales average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Respondents who agree that police and LA are dealing with ASB and crime issues that matter to them. <i>(confidence intervals +/-3.5pp)</i>	2023	28.2%	30.7%	30.7%					No	No
					Crime rate per 1,000 population	2023	103.91	Tracker	95.42	Oct 22-Sep 23	106	92		Yes	No
					Theft offences per 1,000 population	2023	27.52	Tracker	22.96	Oct 22-Sep 23	27	29		Yes	No
					Offenders who re-offend in a 12 month period	Apr 21-Mar 22	27.9%	Tracker	28.7%	Apr 21-Mar 22	27.9%	25.2%	28.1%	Yes	No
					Proven re-offending by young people	Apr 21-Mar 22	41.5%	Tracker	39.0%	Apr 21-Mar 22	41.5%	32.2%	32.6%	Yes	No
					First time entrants to the youth justice system aged 10 to 17 per 100,000 population aged 10 to 17	2022	146	Tracker	141					No	No
					Violent crime incidents which were alcohol related	Oct-Dec 23	34%	Tracker	30.9%					Yes	No

Anti-Social Behaviour KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Reports of anti-social behaviour	Jan-Dec 2023	47,470	Tracker	49,621					Yes	No
					Reports of environmental anti-social behaviour	Jan-Dec 2023	38,073	Tracker	37,159					Yes	No
					Reports of nuisance anti-social behaviour	Jan-Dec 2023	5,284	Tracker	9,114					Yes	No
					Reports of personal anti-social behaviour	Jan-Dec 2023	1,330	Tracker	2,965					Yes	No
					Anti-social behaviour incidents which were alcohol related	Jan-Dec 2023	10.56%	Tracker	10.63%					Yes	No

				ASB enforcement action taken	Jul 22- Jun 23	6,069	Tracker	5,057					No	No
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Our Council: summary data tables

Finance KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	England median	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Council tax collected	Apr-Dec 23	81.8%	Tracker	82.2%	2022/23	95.9%	95.5%		Yes	Yes
					Business rates collected	Apr-Dec 23	82.0%	Tracker	80.9%	2022/23	96.4%	97.1%		Yes	Yes
					MTFP savings achieved (£s)	as at 31 Dec	£11.1 million	£12.4 million by year-end	-					Yes	No
					Audit opinion: statement of accounts	2022/23	UQ	UQ	UQ					No	No
					Non-ringfenced reserves as % of net revenue expenditure	2021/22	55.4%	Tracker	55.0%	2021/22	55.4%	54.9%		No	Yes
					Non-ringfenced reserves as % of service spend	2021/22	46.0%	Tracker	45.4%	2021/22	46.0%	44.6%		No	Yes
					Total core spending power per dwelling	2023/24	£2,194	Tracker	£1,989	2023/24	£2,194	£2,207		No	Yes
					Level of Band D council tax rates	2023/24	£1,842	Tracker	£1,755	2023/34	£1,842	£1,688		No	Yes
					Council tax revenue per dwelling	2023/24	£1,385	Tracker	£1,307	2023/24	£1,385	£1,436		No	Yes
					Social care spend as a % of core spending power	2021/22	56.2%	Tracker	54.2%	2021/22	56.2%	66.4%		No	Yes
					Debt servicing as % of core spending power	2021/22	6.5%	Tracker	6.3%	2021/22	6.5%	9.0%		No	Yes
					Total debt as % of core spending power	2021/22	106.5%	Tracker	106%	2021/22	106.5%	226.7%		No	Yes

Procurement KPIs

Page 228	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Invoices paid within 30 days	Oct-Dec 23	97.1%	93.0%	97.8%					Yes	No
					Third party spend (£'million)	Apr-Sep 23	£396.8	Tracker	£345					Yes	No
					% North East spend	Apr-Sep 23	60.9%	Tracker	68.3%					Yes	No
					% County Durham spend	Apr-Sep 23	44.5%	Tracker	43.5%					Yes	No
					% SME spend	Apr-Sep 23	60.9%	Tracker	59.5%					Yes	No

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Time to process new housing benefit claims	Jan-Dec 2023	17.3 days	21 days	28.6 days	2022/23	24 days	20 days	20 days	Yes	No
					Time to process new council tax reduction claims	Jan-Dec 2023	17.4 days	21 days	24.7 days					Yes	No
					Time to process housing benefit change of circumstances	Jan-Dec 2023	6.1 days	9 days	11.7 days	2022/23	7 days	6 days	5 days	Yes	No
					Time to process council tax reduction change of circumstances	Jan-Dec 2023	7.4 days	8 days	9.7 days					Yes	No

Financial Support KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Budget spend: Discretionary Housing Payments	Apr-Dec 23	100%	Tracker	94.4%					Yes	No
					Households receiving at least 25% reduction in council tax	Apr-Dec 23	21.4%	Tracker						Yes	No

Customer Contact KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Customer contact that is digital	Jan-Dec 2023	37.2%	Tracker	36.5%					Yes	No
					ACD calls answered within 3 minutes	Jan-Dec 2023	82%	Tracker	60%					Yes	No
					CRM service requests meeting performance standard	Oct-Dec 23	79%	Tracker	72%						No

Customer Satisfaction KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Satisfaction with overall service delivery	Jan-Dec 2023	83%	Tracker	82%					Yes	No
					Customers giving four or five stars	Jan-Dec 2023	86%	Tracker	84%					Yes	No

Customer Complaints KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Complaints upheld	Jan-Dec 2023	60%	Tracker	57%					Yes	No
					Independent investigations upheld	Jan-Dec 2023	29%	Tracker	24%					Yes	No
					Complaints upheld by the Ombudsman	Jan-Dec 2023	15%	Tracker	19%					Yes	No
					Complaints upheld by the Ombudsman (annual KPI)	2022/23	52%	Tracker	55%	2022/23	52%	72% (similar authorities)		Yes	No
					Number of upheld Ombudsman complaints per 100,000 residents	2022/23	2.1	Tracker	3.2	2022/23	2.1	4.7 (similar authorities)		Yes	Yes
					Data breaches reported to the ICO	Oct-Dec 23	16	Tracker	13					Yes	No

Registration Services KPIs

230	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Births registered within 42 days	Jan-Dec 2023	98%	98%	96%	Dec-23	98%	93%		Yes	No
					Deaths registered within 5 days	Jan-Dec 2023	71%	90%	66%	Dec-23	71%	51%		Yes	No
					Appointments within 5 work days: births	Jan-Dec 2023	54%	95%	28%	Dec-23	54%	95%		Yes	No
					Appointments within 2 work days: deaths	Jan-Dec 2023	96%	95%	97%	Dec-23	96%	95%		Yes	No
					Appointments within 5 work days: marriage / civil partnership	Jan-Dec 2023	100%	90%	100%	Dec-23	100%	90%		Yes	No
					Appointments seen on time	Jan-Dec 2023	96%	90%	95%	Dec-23	96%	90%		Yes	No

Workforce Equality KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Top 5% of earners: female	at 31 Dec 23	60.3%	Tracker	59.4%					Yes	No
					Workforce aged 50 years or over	at 31 Dec 23	42.3%	Tracker	42.7%					Yes	No

Recruitment and Retention KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Vacancies which are re-adverts	Jan-Dec 2023	23.2%	Tracker	no comparator					Yes	No
					Leavers with <2 years' service	Jan-Dec 2023	45%	Tracker	no comparator					Yes	No
					Employee turnover	at 31 Dec 23	8.46%	Tracker	9.6%					Yes	No

Workforce Development KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					PDRs completed in line with deadline	at 31 Dec 23	100% (leaders)	100%	n/a					Yes	No
					Managers who have completed the managers' training programme	at 31 Dec 23	59%	Tracker	n/a					Yes	No
					Employees enrolled on apprenticeship programme	at 31 Dec 23	6.8%	Tracker	2.7%					Yes	No
					Apprentice levy utilised as a council (excluding schools)	at 31 Dec 23	64.6% (100.6% committed)	Tracker	n/a					Yes	No
					Apprentice retention rate	at 31 Dec 23	76%	Tracker	71%					Yes	No

Health, Safety and Well-being of our Employees KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated	Oflog
					Days lost to sickness absence per FTE (excl. schools)	Jan-Dec 2023	11.15 days	Tracker	12.05 days					Yes	No
					Employee accidents / incidents with no / minor injury	Jan-Dec 2023	97%	Tracker	97%					Yes	No
					Employee accidents / incidents RIDDOR reportable	Jan-Dec 2023	3%	Tracker	3%					Yes	No
					Incidents of work-related ill-health	Jan-Dec 2023	171	Tracker	195					Yes	No

Glossary

Term	Definition
ACD	<p>Automatic Call Distribution</p> <p>Telephone calls are received either through our Automatic Call Distribution system, which routes calls to groups of agents based on a first-in-first-answered criteria, or directly to a telephone extension (non-ACD). Only calls received via our ACD system are included in our telephone statistics.</p>
AQMA	<p>Air Quality Management Area</p> <p>A geographical area where air pollution levels are, or are likely to, exceed national air quality objectives at relevant locations (where the public may be exposed to harmful air pollution over a period of time e.g., residential homes, schools etc.).</p>
ASB	<p>Anti-social behaviour</p>
ASCOF	<p>Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework</p> <p>measures how well care and support services achieve the outcomes that matter most to people (link)</p>
BATH	<p>Bishop Auckland Town Hall</p> <p>A multi-purpose cultural venue situated in Bishop Auckland market place. It offers regular art exhibitions, live music, cinema screenings and theatre performances, as well as a library service.</p>
BCF	<p>Better Care Fund</p> <p>A national programme that supports local systems to successfully deliver the integration of health and social care.</p>
B2B	<p>Business to Business</p> <p>B2B refers to selling products and services directly between two businesses as opposed to between businesses and customers.</p>
CAP	<p>Customer Access Point</p> <p>A location where residents can get face-to-face help and information about council services. There are eight CAPs across County Durham.</p>
CAT	<p>Community Action Team</p> <p>A project team which includes members of our community protection service, planning, neighbourhood wardens and housing teams, who work alongside police and community support officers and fire and rescue teams and residents to tackle housing and environmental issues in a specific area by identifying local priorities and making best use of resources.</p>
CDP	<p>County Durham Plan</p> <p>Sets out the council's vision for housing, jobs and the environment until 2035, as well as the transport, schools and healthcare to support it (link)</p>
CED	<p>Community Economic Development</p>

Term	Definition
CERP	<p>Climate Emergency Response Plan</p> <p>A community-wide call to action to help align all sectors on the actions required to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve our resilience to the impacts of climate change.</p>
Changing Places toilet	<p>Toilets meet the needs of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well as people with other physical disabilities such as spinal injuries, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis. These toilets provide the right equipment including a height adjustable adult-sized changing table, a tracking hoist system, adequate space for a disabled person and carer, a peninsular WC with room either side and a safe and clean environment including tear off paper to cover the bench, a large waste bin and a non-slip floor.</p>
CLD	<p>Client Level Dataset</p> <p>A national mandatory person-level data collection (to be introduced) that will replace the existing annual Short and Long Term (SALT) Support data collected by councils. CLD will be added to the single data list and will become mandatory for all local authorities.</p>
CNIS	Child Not In School
CPN	<p>Community Protection Notice</p> <p>Can be issued to anyone over the age of 16 to deal with a wide range of ongoing anti-social behaviour issues or nuisances which have a detrimental effect on the local community. There are three stages: the first stage is a written warning (CPW), the second a notice (CPN) the third is an FPN or further prosecution for failure to comply with the previous stages</p>
CRM	Customer Relationship Management system
CS&T	Culture, Sport and Tourism
CTR	<p>Council Tax Reduction</p> <p>Reduces council tax bills for those on low incomes</p>
DCC	Durham County Council
DEFRA	<p>Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs</p> <p>A ministerial department, supported by 34 agencies and public bodies responsible for improving and protecting the environment. It aims to grow a green economy and sustain thriving rural communities. It also supports our world-leading food, farming and fishing industries (link)</p>
DHP	<p>Discretionary Housing Payments</p> <p>Short term payments which can be made to tenants in receipt of the housing benefit element of Universal Credit, to help sort out housing and money problems in the longer term.</p>
DHSC	<p>Department of Health and Social Care</p> <p>The DHSC supports the government in leading the nation's health and care system.</p>

Term	Definition
DLE	<p>Daily Living Expenses</p> <p>Available for those whose circumstances have changed unexpectedly. Payments can be made for up to seven days to help with food, travel and some clothing (restrictions apply).</p>
DoLS	<p>Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards</p> <p>A set of checks that are part of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, which applies in England and Wales. The DoLS procedure protects a person receiving care whose liberty has been limited by checking that this is appropriate and is in their best interests.</p>
EAP	<p>Employee Assistance Programme</p> <p>A confidential employee benefit designed to help staff deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting their home or work life, health, and general wellbeing.</p>
EET	<p>Employment, Education or Training</p> <p>Most often used in relation to young people aged 16 to 24, it measures the number employed, in education or in training.</p>
EHCP	<p>Education, Health Care Plan</p> <p>A legal document which describes a child or young person's (aged up to 25) special educational needs, the support they need, and the outcomes they would like to achieve.</p>
ERDF	<p>European Regional Development Fund</p> <p>Funding that helps to create economic development and growth; it gives support to businesses, encourages new ideas and supports regeneration. Although the United Kingdom has now left the European Union, under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement, EU programmes will continue to operate in the UK until their closure in 2023-24.</p>
EHE	<p>Elective Home Education</p> <p>A term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home or in some other way they desire, instead of sending them to school full-time.</p>
ETA	<p>Extension of Time Agreement</p> <p>An agreement between the council and the customer submitting a planning application to extend the usual deadline beyond 13 weeks due to the complex nature of the application.</p>
FPN	<p>Fixed Penalty Notice</p> <p>Is a conditional offer to an alleged offender for them to have the matter dealt with in a set way without resorting to going to court.</p>
FTE	<p>Full Time Equivalent</p> <p>Total number of full-time employees working across the organisation. It is a way of adding up the hours of full-time, part-time and various other types of employees and converting into measurable 'full-time' units.</p>

Term	Definition
GVA	Gross Value Added <i>The measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy.</i>
HSF	Household Support Fund Payments support low income households struggling with energy and food costs, or who need essential household items.
ICO	Information Commissioner's Office The UK's independent body's role is to uphold information rights in the public interest (link)
IES	Inclusive Economic Strategy Sets a clear, long-term vision for the area's economy up to 2035, with an overarching aim to create more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy (link)
JLHWS	Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy The Strategy (2023-28) supports the vision that County Durham is a healthy place where people live well for longer (link)
KS2	Key Stage 2 The national curriculum is organised into blocks of years called 'key stages'. At the end of each key stage, the teacher will formally assess each child's performance. KS2 refers to children in year 3, 4, 5 and 6 when pupils are aged between 7 and 11.
KS3	Key Stage 3 The national curriculum is organised into blocks of years called 'key stages'. At the end of each key stage, the teacher will formally assess each child's performance. KS3 refers to children in year 7, 8 and 9 when pupils are aged between 11 and 14.
LGA	Local Government Association The national membership body for councils which works on behalf of its member councils to support, promote and improve local government (link).
L!NKCD	A programme that brings together a number of delivery partners to support people with multiple barriers to address these underlying issues and to move them closer to or into the labour market or re-engage with education or training.
LNRS	Local Nature Recovery Strategies Propose how and where to recover nature and improve the wider environment across England.
MMB	Managing Money Better A service offered by the council which involves visiting residents' homes to carry out a free home energy assessment. In addition to providing advice on energy bills, the service can provide financial advice through referrals to benefits advice or help with a benefits appeal and other services for advice on benefit entitlements.

Term	Definition
MTFP	Medium Term Financial Plan A document that sets out the council's financial strategy over a four year period
MW	MegaWatt is one million watts of electricity
NESWA	North East Social Work Alliance A social work teaching partnership made up of 12 North East councils and six Higher Education Institutes. The Alliance is one of several teaching partnerships across the country which were created to improve the quality of practice, learning and continuous professional development amongst trainee and practicing social workers.
NQSW	Newly Qualified Social Workers a social worker who is registered with Social Work England and is in their first year of post qualifying practice.
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification The NVQ is a work-based qualification that recognises the skills and knowledge a person needs to do a job.
Oflog	Office For Local Government The vision for Oflog is for it to provide authoritative and accessible data and analysis about the performance of local government, and support its improvement. Oflog is part of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities .
PDR	Performance and Development Review Is an annual process which provides all staff with the valuable opportunity to reflect on their performance, potential and development needs.
PRS	Private Rented Sector This classification of housing relates to property owned by a landlord and leased to a tenant. The landlord could be an individual, a property company or an institutional investor. The tenants would either deal directly with an individual landlord, or alternatively with a management company or estate agency caring for the property on behalf of the landlord.
PSPO	Public Space Protection Order Are intended to deal with a nuisance or problem in a particular area that is detrimental to the local community.
QoL	Quality of Life
RIDDOR	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations A RIDDOR report is required for work-related accidents which result in a reportable injury. The definition of a reportable injury can be found here
RQF	Regulated Qualifications Framework The RQF helps people understand all the qualifications regulated by the government and how they relate to each other. It covers general and vocational in England, and vocational in Northern Ireland. Link

Term	Definition
SALT	<p>Short and Long Term</p> <p>Relates to the annual Short and Long Term (SALT) Support data collected by councils. It is to be replaced by a national mandatory person-level data collection (Client Level Data).</p>
SEN	<p>Special Educational Needs</p> <p>The term is used to describe learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for children to learn than most children of the same age. Children with SEN are likely to need extra or different help from that given to other children their age.</p>
SEND	<p>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities</p> <p>SEND can affect a child or young person's ability to learn and can affect their;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ behaviour or ability to socialise (e.g., they struggle to make friends) ▪ reading and writing (e.g., because they have dyslexia), ▪ ability to understand things, ▪ concentration levels (e.g., because they have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) ▪ physical ability
SG	<p>Settlement Grants</p> <p>Help people stay in their home, or move back into housing after living in supported or unsettled accommodation (such as leaving care or being homeless). They provide help towards furniture, white goods, flooring, curtains, bedding, kitchen equipment, removal costs etc.</p>
SME	<p>Small to Medium Sized Enterprise</p> <p>A company with no more than 500 employees.</p>
Statistical nearest neighbours	<p>A group of councils that are similar across a wide range of socio-economic.</p> <p>Durham County Council uses the CIPFA nearest neighbours model which compares us to Northumberland, North Tyneside, Barnsley, Rotherham, Wakefield, Doncaster, Redcar and Cleveland, Wigan, St Helens, Cornwall, Sefton, Sunderland, Wirral, Plymouth and Calderdale</p>
UASC	<p>Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children</p> <p>Children and young people who are seeking asylum in the UK but who have been separated from their parents or carers. While their claim is processed, they are cared for by a council.</p>
UKSPF	<p>UK Shared Prosperity Fund</p> <p>Part of the government's Levelling Up agenda that provides funding for local investment to March 2025. All areas of the UK receive an allocation from the Fund to enable local decision making and better target the priorities of places within the UK that will lead to tangible improvements to the places where people work and live.</p>
WEEE	<p>Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment</p> <p>Any electrical or electronic waste, whether whole or broken, that is destined for disposal. The definition includes household appliances such as washing machines and cookers, IT and telecommunications equipment, electrical and electronic tools, toys and leisure equipment and certain medical devices.</p>

Term	Definition
Yield	Proportion of potential income achieved

**Corporate Overview and
Scrutiny Management Board**

8 April 2024

**Appointment of Non-
statutory, Non-voting
Co-optees**



Report of Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To request that the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board re-appoint the current serving non-statutory, non-voting co-optees for a further two-years.

Executive summary

- 2 Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee (AWH, S&S, E&E, ESC and C&YPs) excluding the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) can appoint up to two non-statutory, non-voting co-optees. These co-optees bring specialist knowledge and an element of external challenge to the Overview and Scrutiny process.
- 3 Non-statutory, non-voting co-optees are appointed in accordance with a protocol which stipulates the application, interview and appointment process to be followed. The current serving co-optees were appointed in accordance with the requirements of the protocol in early June 2022 for two years.
- 4 The term of appointment for the current serving co-optees will come to an end in June 2024 and therefore the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in accordance with paragraph six of the attached protocol is requested to extend the term of appointment for co-optees for a further two years. A full review of non-statutory, non-voting co-optee membership would then be undertaken in 2026.

Recommendations

- 5 Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are recommended to:
 - (a) Agree the extension of the term of appointment of existing non-statutory, non-voting co-optees for a further two years in accordance with paragraph six of the attached protocol (Appendix 2).
 - (b) Agree that a full review of non-statutory, non-voting co-optee membership is undertaken in 2026.

Background

- 6 In June 2022 an extensive recruitment exercise was undertaken to fill the ten non-statutory, non-voting co-optee vacancies. The recruitment process included publicising the vacancies via the Area Action Partnerships (AAPs), DCC website and social media. This resulted in 21 applications applying for the ten vacancies with formal interviews held in June 2022.
- 7 The successful applicants were appointed for a two-year period with their term of appointment coming to an end in June 2024. In order to keep continuity of expertise it is recommended that the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in accordance with paragraph six of the attached protocol extend the term of appointment for a further two years.
- 8 It is planned that a full review of non-statutory, non-voting co-optee membership will be undertaken in 2026 which will involve publicising the vacancies via social media and a formal interview process prior to appointment.
- 9 Should the extension to the term of appointment be agreed by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board then the current serving non-statutory, non-voting co-optees would be contacted to ascertain whether they are interested in serving for a further two years. Those non-statutory, non-voting co-optees who do wish to serve for a further two years would then automatically be re-appointed.
- 10 Where current serving co-optees have not been attending meetings of the respective Overview and Scrutiny Committee they will be contacted to clarify whether their personal circumstances have changed since their appointment, and they will be advised that if they can no-longer commit to

attending meetings of the respective Overview and Scrutiny Committee then they will be required to resign from their role as a co-optee. Arrangements will then be made for the resulting vacancy on the committee to be filled.

- 11 Should any current serving non-statutory, non-voting co-optees resign then it is proposed that any resulting vacancy would be publicised via AAPs, the Council's website and social media with any subsequent appointments made by the formal interview process in accordance with the attached protocol (Appendix 2).

Conclusion

- 12 The committee will have extended the term of appointment of non-statutory, non-voting co-optees for a further two years with a full review of membership to be undertaken in 2026. In addition, it provides the opportunity for those current serving co-optees who can no-longer commit to attending meetings to resign with any resulting appointments made in accordance with the protocol.

Background papers

- Protocol for the co-option of non-statutory, non-voting co-optees (Appendix 2)

Other useful documents

- None

Contact:	Diane Close	Tel: 03000 268141
	Stephen Gwilym	Tel: 03000 268140

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable

Finance

Not applicable

Consultation

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable

Climate Change

Not applicable

Human Rights

Not applicable

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable

Staffing

Not applicable.

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

Not applicable

Procurement

Not applicable



Durham County Council

Protocol for the co-option of non-statutory, non-voting
scrutiny members.

Introduction

- 1 The purpose of establishing a protocol for the co-option of non-statutory, non-voting scrutiny members is as follows:
 - To formalise the appointment of representatives
 - Ensure that as many overview and scrutiny members as is practical are involved in the appointment process
 - Appointments meet the requirements of the person specification
 - Formal induction, training and on-going support is available to the appointed non-voting co-optees
 - Appointment for a two-year period provides an opportunity for non-voting co-opted members to stand down if they wish to and provides overview and scrutiny with the opportunity to refresh membership and seek representatives with different experience and skills
- 2 For the purposes of this protocol, the term 'co-opted members/co-optees' refers to co-opted non-statutory, non-voting scrutiny members.

Co-opted members

- 3 The majority of members on scrutiny committees are elected members of the council although provision is available for the appointment of up to two co-optees on each committee.
- 4 Each co-optee will be subject to the formal appointment process as detailed below.
- 5 Co-optees will have no voting rights.
- 6 Each co-opted member will be appointed for a period of two years with an option to extend for a further two-year period subject to the agreement of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB). At the end of the two-year extension co-optees will be given the opportunity to apply for a further period of service however this is subject to the formal appointment process.
- 7 Up to two co-optees may serve on a scrutiny review group including cross cutting and light touch reviews.
- 8 Review groups may appoint individuals with expert and or specialist knowledge for the duration to the review, in addition to the co-optees.
- 10 Employees of Durham County Council are excluded from applying to be a co-optee.

Appointment process

- 11 Notice of any co-optee vacancies will be given on the council's website, social media and circulated to the Area Action Partnerships.
- 12 Expressions of interest are to be sent to the scrutiny team.
- 13 All existing co-optees will be invited to express an interest in applying for vacancies.
- 14 All those expressing an interest in applying will be sent:
 - Information on the role of overview and scrutiny and co-opted members
 - Protocol for co-opted non-statutory non-voting members
 - Application form
- 15 Applicants will be required to
 - Complete a short application form giving their contact details
 - Indicate which scrutiny committee they would like to be appointed to
 - Provide a statement of no more than 400 words explaining why they would like to be involved in the scrutiny process and what they can contribute to the role
- 16 The chair and vice chair of COSMB, the chair and vice chair of the appropriate committee and a relevant scrutiny officer will identify suitable candidates. An assessment against the role description and person specification will be made for each application.

Interview

- 17 Selected applicants will be invited for interview.
- 18 The interview panel is likely to be comprised of the chair and vice chair of COSMB, and the relevant chair and vice chair of the appropriate scrutiny committee together with a member from that committee (minority party representative) and a scrutiny officer. A set of prepared questions will be supplied to the panel.
- 19 The chair of COSMB, or if not present, the chair of the appropriate scrutiny committee will have the casting vote in the event of a tied vote. All applicants will be notified by email or letter of the decision of the appointment panel.
- 20 The interview will last for approximately 20 minutes.
- 21 The successful applicants will be contacted to arrange an induction to the overview and scrutiny function.

- 22 Those who have been unsuccessful can ask to join a pool of unsuccessful applicants which can be drawn upon should co-optee vacancies arise during the two-year appointment period.

Term of office

- 23 Co-opted members will be appointed for a term of two years with an option for a further two-year period subject to the agreement of COSMB.
- 24 At the end of the further two-year period of office, each scrutiny committee will ask the co-opted members if they wish to continue. If they do want to continue, they will be subject to the appointment process outlined above.
- 25 Scrutiny committees benefit from the experience that co-optees accumulate during their term of office but recognise that some may wish to stand down. Having a fixed term of office also allows scrutiny committees to refresh their membership with different skills and experience.
- 26 The cumulative term of office for a co-optee should not exceed four years unless the co-optee has gone through the formal appointment process or where the agreement of COSMB is sought.
- 27 Co-optees may terminate their membership by giving one month's notice to Helen Bradley, Head of Legal and Democratic Services should their circumstances change and they can no longer fulfil their commitments as a co-optee. In addition, should a current serving co-optee no-longer be fulfilling their commitments as a co-optee then the respective Overview and Scrutiny Committee can request that they resign with the resulting vacancy filled in accordance with this protocol.

Code of Conduct

- 28 All co-optees are required to sign the council's code of conduct which sets out the standards of behaviour expected.
- 29 Co-optees must also sign a declaration of interest form identifying any interests which an individual may have which require recording. Advice will be provided on these requirements.

Induction, training and ongoing support

- 30 Co-optees will receive an individual induction following appointment and prior to attending their first scrutiny meeting.

- 31 The induction will involve meeting with the chair and vice chair of the committee they are joining and the scrutiny officer responsible for the committee.
- 32 All co-optees will have access to in-house training opportunities relevant to the remit of the committee they are appointed to which will increase their knowledge and expertise.
- 33 Co-optees are voluntary positions but the council will make payments to cover expenses whilst fulfilling their duties i.e. travel and subsistence allowance.

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**Corporate Overview and
Scrutiny Management Board**

8 April 2024



Update in relation to Petitions

Report of Corporate Management Team

Helen Bradley, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide for information the quarterly update in relation to the current situation regarding various petitions received by the Authority.

Recommendation(s)

- 2 Members are requested to note the update report on the status of petitions and e-petitions received by the Authority.

Background

- 3 Following the introduction of The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 all of the petitions that have been received by the Authority are processed by democratic services in line with its petitions process.
- 4 The Board have received update reports on petitions since September 2008.
- 5 From the 15 December 2010, the Authority has provided a facility for members of the public to submit e-petitions on the Council's website.

Current Petitions

- 6 Since the last update two new e-petitions have been submitted, both are ongoing and collecting signatures via the website.
- 7 One new paper petition has been submitted and as the Council had no direct control over the issue, the lead petitioner has been advised and

the appropriate organisation has been made aware of the concerns raised. A list giving details and current status of all active petitions is attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

Contact: Michael Turnbull

Tel: 03000 269714

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None.

Finance

None.

Consultation

Petitions which refer to a consultation exercise are reported to committee for information and forwarded to the relevant officer for consideration

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.

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Petition Table – Active Petitions

Appendix 2

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
Petition 449 Speed outside school - Cotherstone Primary E-Petition Received 25.1.24 No. of signatures 12	REG	Petition asking the Council to lower the speed limit by Cotherstone Primary School, Cotherstone. E-Petition ran from 25.1.24 – 7.3.24	Awaiting response from service
Petition 450 Save Leazes Footbridge, Durham City E-Petition Received 4.2.24 No. of signatures	NCC	Petition asking the Council to further explore the repair and replacement options for Leazes Footbridge, until a workable solution is found, and to make a functioning footbridge a top priority.	E-Petition to run from 6.2.24 – 14.6.24
Petition 451 Bus Routes Shildon E-Petition Received 15.2.24 No of signatures	REG	Petition asking for the Council to reinstate the bus routes in Shildon.	E-Petition to run from 15.2.24 – 28.3.24
Petition 453 Child Friendly Village E-Petition Received 17.3.24 No. of signatures	REG	Petition asking the Council to make Hutton Henry a safe place for school children and residents.	E-Petition to run from 17.3.24 – 3.6.24

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
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**Corporate Overview and
Scrutiny Management Board**



8 April 2024

Notice of Key Decisions

Report of Corporate Management Team

Helen Bradley, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To consider the list of key decisions that is scheduled to be considered by the Executive.

Recommendation(s)

- 2 The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny management board is recommended to give consideration to items listed in the notice.

Background

- 3 New rules in relation to Executive decisions were introduced by The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, which came into force on 10 September 2012.
- 4 The regulations took away the requirement for the Executive to produce a Forward Plan of key decisions, however introduced that the decision maker cannot make a key decision unless a document has been published at least 28 clear days before the decision is taken, unless either a general exception or special urgency requirements have been met. The document which has to be published must state:
 - a) that the key decision is to be made on behalf of the relevant local authority
 - b) the matter in respect of which the decision is to be made

- c) where the decision maker is an individual, that individual's name and title if any and where the decision maker is a decision making body, its name and list of its members
 - d) the date on which or the period within which the decision is to be made
 - e) a list of the document submitted to the decision maker for consideration in relation to the matter of which the key decision is to be made
 - f) the address from which, subject to any prohibition or restriction on their disclosure copies of, or extracts from any document listed as available
 - g) that other documents relevant to those matters may be submitted to the decision maker
 - h) the procedure for requesting details of those documents (if any) as they become available.
- 5 The requirements also apply to an exempt matter as previously it did not strictly have to be included in the Forward Plan. Now a publicity document must contain particulars of the matter, but may not contain any confidential exempt information or particulars of the adviser or political adviser or assistant.
- 6 Notices of key decisions that are being produced meet the legal requirements of publication, as well as continuing to provide information for a four month period. Members will therefore be able to consider key decisions as previously for the four month period.

Current Notice of Key Decisions

- 7 The notice of key decisions that is attached to the report at Appendix 2, is the latest to be published prior to the papers for the Board being dispatched to members. The notice complies with the requirements for Cabinet to take key decisions at its meeting to be held on 17 April 2024. It also contained information on those key decisions that are currently scheduled to be considered by the Executive up to 31 July 2024.

Contact: Michael Turnbull

Tel: 03000 269714

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet. To publish the notice of key decisions in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Finance

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Consultation

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Climate Change

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Human Rights

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Crime and Disorder

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Staffing

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Accommodation

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Risk

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Procurement

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

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SECTION ONE - CORPORATE

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information	Scrutiny Involvement
CORP/R/2024/001	10/07/24	Medium Term Financial Plan and Review of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024/25		Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader Portfolio Holder for Finance		Jeff Garfoot, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services Tel: 03000 261946	Scrutiny members will consider this as part of the Scrutiny of the MTFP through COSMB Meetings

SECTION TWO - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information
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SECTION THREE - ADULT AND HEALTH SERVICES

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information
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SECTION FOUR - REGENERATION, ECONOMY AND GROWTH

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information
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SECTION FIVE - NEIGHBOURHOODS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information
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