



## Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date** Thursday 11 July 2024  
**Time** 9.30 am  
**Venue** Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham

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### 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 Special Meeting held on 20 March 2024 and meeting held 26 April 2024 (Pages 3 - 18)
- 4 Declarations of Interest, if any
- 5 Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties
- 6 Annual Update of the Starting Well Partnership:
  - A) Report of the Starting Well Partnership.  
(Pages 19 - 58)
  - B) Presentation by Commissioning Manager for Children's Services, County Durham Integrated Commissioning Team. (Pages 59 - 66)
- 7 Performance Management Report Quarter 4 2023/2024:  
(Pages 67 - 96)  
Report of the Chief Executive.
- 8 Refresh of the Work Programme 2024/25 for the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee: (Pages 97 - 116)  
Report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services.
- 9 CAHMS Waiting Times - Report for Information: (Pages 117 - 120)  
Report of the Tees, Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV) NHS Foundation Trust.

- 10 Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

**Helen Bradley**  
Director of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall  
Durham  
3 July 2024

To: **The Members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor A Reed (Chair)  
Councillor C Hunt (Vice-Chair)

Councillors C Bell, J Cosslett, R Crute, S Deinali, K Fantarrow, J Griffiths, K Hawley, C Lines, L Mavin, D Mulholland, K Rooney, J Scurfield, M Simmons, S Townsend, C Varty, E Waldock and M Walton

**Faith Communities Representatives:**  
Mrs L Vollans

**Parent Governor Representatives:**  
Professor Gosia M Ciesielska and Mr P Debrett-Watson

**Co-opted Members:**  
Ms A Gunn

## DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a Special Meeting of **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 1A , County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 20 March 2024 at 1.30 pm**

**Present:**

**Councillor A Reed (Chair)**

#### **Members of the Committee:**

Councillors J Cosslett, R Crute, S Deinali, L Mavin, K Rooney, J Scurfield, C Varty, E Waldock and J Cairns (substitute for Councillor C Lines)

#### **1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Griffiths, C Hunt, C Lines, M McGaun, M Simmons, M Walton and Mrs L Vollans.

#### **2 Substitute Members**

Councillor J Cairns was substitute for Councillor C Lines.

#### **3 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **4 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties**

There were no items from Co-opted Members or interested parties.

#### **5 Children's Social Care Demand**

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services that provided Members with information on demand for Children's Social Care. Members also received a presentation from the Practice Lead for Safeguarding (for copy of report and presentation slides, see file of minutes).

The Practice Lead for Safeguarding provided a detailed presentation focusing on the composition of social care demand, recruitment and retention activity, the practice model and signs of safety, the Vision and actions achieved.

The Practice Lead for Safeguarding highlighted that referral rates continued to be below benchmarks however the number of open cases had increased due to an increased number of care leavers and a change in the complexity of support children and families required meaning cases were open longer. An improved early offer in Durham that worked with children to offer intervention at the earliest opportunity had also impacted the figures.

The children in need rates were stable in Durham and were lower compared to regional statistics, however the rates for children with a protection plan had increased in recent years.

Since 2019 staffing levels had increased and in 2023 Durham had their highest level of social workers employed. The benchmarking snapshot regarding caseloads were slightly higher than regional averages but lower than the national averages.

With regards to vacancies and recruitment, the vacancy rates in Durham were below the national average but above the regional levels. Recruitment remained a priority and there was a dedicated workstream that focused on recruitment and retention activity and various initiatives including annual allowances and welcome payments to attract people into vacant roles. It was noted that 68% of posts were now eligible for an annual recruitment and retention allowance.

There was an annual recruitment of newly qualified social workers to fill vacancies that were supported by a range of qualifying programmes. It was highlighted that 77% of newly qualified and 70% of experienced social workers recruited in the last 4 years and 46% of Families First Services recruited in the last 6 years remained in Durham which was a huge achievement and indicated that the improvement strategy had made an impact.

With regards to Social Worker feedback and why they stay in Durham was due to flexible working that fitted around family life, support and nurturing from senior management and training and progression opportunities.

The Practice Model and Vision for Durham was based on good strong working relationships with children and their families and to provide a consistent practice model to help support children and young people to remain with their families and networks where they had the potential to care for them safely, and when this was not possible, to provide a secure and stable home and help them to achieve their full potential.

The Practice Lead for Safeguarding provided details of actions achieved with regards to leadership, learning and case studies showing the importance of children connecting with their birth family, repairing relationships and children in care returning home.

Responding to a comment from the Chair regarding the difficult decisions young children in care face with regards to contact with family members, the Practice Lead for Safeguarding explained there had been an evolution in practice and with regards to adoption and there was a drive to ensure there was an opportunity for children to connect with their birth family. From a practice model point of view, she advised that they looked at how to do things creatively within the perimeters of law and difficult decision would have to be made around managing family time safely. She highlighted the importance of understanding family situations and ensuring assessment of family situations were undertaken annually to look at whether there was an opportunity to re-establish relationships and re-connecting to keep networks active moving forward.

Councillor R Crute commented on the three sources of evidence within the presentation that showed the right approach and attitude can provide positive outcomes. He referred to the increase in unaccompanied asylum seekers and queried whether there was a disproportionate impact on the demand for children's social care. The Head of Children's Social Care explained the post pandemic figures had increased with 70% of the increase due to unaccompanied children seeking asylum and there was a 30% increase in new social care demand for children in Durham. Local authorities were mandated through the national transfer scheme and Durham had taken a third of the unaccompanied children quota for the North East creating new demand for placements. It was noted that once the quota had been reached, there would be no more unaccompanied children, unless government revised the scheme. In terms of overall numbers, there were 1123 looked after children and 84 unaccompanied asylum seekers.

The Head of Children's Social Care added that the service had established an unaccompanied asylum seekers team to develop expertise which had enriched the service. Ofsted visited the unaccompanied asylum seeker service as part of the inspection in November 2023 and considered the practice to be excellent. The service continued to look at ways to help unaccompanied asylum seekers feel more settled and part of the community. It was noted that Durham County Cricket foundation had set up a team for asylum seekers who would be coached by Durham County Cricket club at the Riverside and volunteer as part of the T20 series.

Councillor J Scurfield was delighted to see the unaccompanied asylum seeker scheme embedded in the service. She referred to the referral rates and asked how they ensured children were provided with early access to the right level of specialist support. The Practice Lead Safeguarding advised that early help and statutory practices were embedded in the service and dedicated focused audit work was carried out to streamline children's movement, with strong communication lines between both services. Regular early help discussions with partner agencies take place to determine a child needs with regards to early help, statutory services or universal services that schools could lead on. There was a formalised escalation process if any concerns were identified, and the Community Team work to ensure there was a measured understanding around family activity. At each point of a

child's movement within the system, there would be step-up meetings to discuss the needs of the family.

The Practice Lead Safeguarding highlighted that there would be changes nationally around family support and working with different groups of professionals and explained the importance for the same person to remain with the child as they move through the different services. The Head of Social Care added that there had been an increase in SEND diversity nationally. Durham had invested in robust early help services for many years and they were starting to see investment benefits with the introduction of a family hub offer which was effectively working to keep children out of social care system. A more intensive early help offer was being considered to target a cohort of families with complex needs.

Responding to comments from Councillor C Varty regarding a family she was involved with, the Head of Social Care explained that the core business of social care was to create a positive change and provide better opportunities for children and families. She highlighted that training videos of case studies showed families reflections, detailing what had worked well and the changes that the help and support they had received had made on their lives which was very powerful.

Councillor S Deinali referred to budget pressures and queried the plans that were in place to counteract the impact on early help provision. The Head of Social Care advised that she did not have service budget details and would feedback query to the Head of Service.

The Chair noted that 68% of posts were eligible for an annual recruitment and retention allowance, however was concerned that 32% of posts would not receive the allowance. The Head of Social Care explained that the policy allowed them to present business cases for the posts that they were unable to fill which proved to have a direct impact on the function of the service and the areas of the service that had more movement were not eligible.

The Chair thanked the Head of Children's Social Care and the Practice Lead Safeguarding for the presentation and congratulated them on the successful work in attracting and retaining social workers in Durham.

**Resolved:**

That the report and presentation be noted.

## **6 Any Other Business**

The Chair reminded Members that there were still a couple of places available to attend the visit to the MASH on 9 April 2024. Any Members wishing to attend should contact the Overview and Scrutiny Team.

**DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

At a meeting of the **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 26 April 2024 at 9.30 am**

**Present:**

**Councillor A Reed in the Chair**

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors B Coult, R Crute, S Deinali, C Hunt, B Kellett, K Rooney, J Scurfield and C Varty.

**Co-opted Members:**

Prof G Ciesielska

**1 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Cosslett, J Griffiths, C Lines, L Mavin, M Simmons, E Waldock, Ms A Gunn and Mrs L Vollans.

**2 Substitute Members**

Councillors B Coult and B Kellett substituted for Councillors L Mavin and E Waldock respectively.

**3 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**4 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**5 Items from Co-opted Members and other Interested Parties**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised that three questions had been received from Mrs Gunn in relation to the Performance Management report. In relation to recruitment of Educational Psychologists, Mrs Gunn asked how this was going and was it on track to plans proposed at the start of the year?

In relation to Family Hubs, Mrs Gunn noted there were drop-in sessions and asked how they were going, was there good engagement or was there scope to promote more?

The questions would be passed to the service to answer in due course and a copy of the responses would be shared with the wider Committee membership.

## **6 Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Public Health which updated the Committee on the work of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Partnership which was accompanied by a presentation delivered by Andrea Bracewell, Advanced Practitioner in Public Health and Diane Foster, Public Health Practitioner (for copy of report and presentation see file of minutes).

Andrea Bracewell, Advanced Practitioner, informed the Committee that national data indicated that the prevalence of mental health conditions in children and young people was 1 in 5, which compared to 1 in 9, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. She explained the range of socio-economic factors which impact on poor mental health and that County Durham has approximately 1 in 4 children living in relative poverty. These circumstances increase the risk to young people of developing mental health difficulties that can reduce their life opportunities.

Key national headline facts were presented including that having a probable mental health disorder was more common in the 11-16 age range than in younger children. In the 8-16 age group, rates of probable mental health disorder were similar for males and females, however, in 17-25 year olds, rates were twice as high for females than males. More than 1 in 4 young people aged 8 -16 years with a probable mental health disorder were from families unable to afford out of school activities.

The Committee noted that County Durham is within the top 40% of the most deprived local authorities in England, that over 3% of school pupils have additional social, emotional and mental health needs and over 14% of pupils receive support for special educational needs. Developments were underway to improve the landscape, such as the requirement for all schools to have a mental health lead.



An NHS funded programme of support was available to schools through Mental Health Support Teams and the Family Hubs programme provided early help through pregnancy and the early years with a focus on the first 1000 critical days. The offer included supporting parent / infant relationships, infant feeding and help for dads-to-be.

Diane Foster, Public Health Practitioner, outlined the functions of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Partnership, which was a multi-agency partnership, aiming to drive participation and engagement with young people and families, across all aspects of mental health and emotional wellbeing. 'Experts by Experience' ie a parent/carer and a young person, were co-chairs of the partnership and they added value through sharing their lived experiences.

The Committee noted that the work of the partnership was based on the 'Thrive' model and the Advanced Practitioner outlined the five mental health and emotional wellbeing categories within the needs-led approach.

Information was also provided on the support in education settings including the development of 'Anxious About School' guidance, the Piece of Mind Teams and Emotional Health and Resilience Teams who were dedicated teams within the Family Health Service who provide a universal offer to schools to support young people whilst waiting for onward referral. Rainbow Guides were circulated to schools and the wider community as an easy-to-use guide to accessing support for mental health and emotional wellbeing.

In conclusion, the Advanced Practitioner spoke of how the Children and Young People's Mental Health Partnership will continue to promote the support available, with a focus on early intervention, prevention and resilience building. Future work will consider the changing environment and the additional pressures being placed on children and young people, including through social media. Actions will be informed by the views of young people for a person-centred approach and the schools offer will be reviewed to ensure parity across all schools.

Ann Whitton, Overview and Scrutiny Officer, referred the Committee to the Consett Locality Pilot which aimed to improve mental health support from an experience and outcomes perspective, and she informed members that an evaluation of the pilot will be brought to the Committee in due course.

The officers were thanked for their informative presentation and the Chair invited questions and comments.

Councillor Crute thanked the team for breadth of the work and whilst recognising that the key determinants of mental health were complex Councillor Crute, was pleased to see the hard work being undertaken to make progress.

Co-opted member, Prof. Ciesielska welcomed the input of Experts by Experience in the Mental Health Partnership, to ensure first-hand knowledge and experience informs activities going forward. Prof. Ciesielska commented on the links between mental health and socio-economic vulnerability, stating that people often reach out to the voluntary sector and she asked for information on what involvement the partnership had with the voluntary sector. The Public Health Practitioner confirmed that the voluntary sector was represented on the partnership and within its sub groups and she clarified that the partnership encouraged close work with the Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance.

As an example of the work, the Public Health Practitioner referred to the Consett pilot, where extensive work was carried out within the community to ensure the right communication systems were set up to enable all organisations with links to young people to work collaboratively. Lessons learnt and good practice from the pilot will be used to inform future planning. The Public Health Practitioner added that the holistic approach is one the partnership's strengths which will be used to influence the wider determinants. In addition the Experts by Experience group were supported by the voluntary sector.

Councillor Varty remarked on the enlightening data which had been included in the report in respect of the prevalence of mental health conditions in County Durham's children and young people and she requested that the information be included on the School Governor Hub as School Governors were often the first point of contact for parents. The Advanced Practitioner thanked Councillor Varty for the useful suggestion which would be considered.

Councillor Rooney referred to the Piece of Mind Team and asked why the service was available to only 40% of schools in the county. The Public Health Practitioner explained that NHS England funding was limited therefore the roll out of the service had taken a phased approach, however, the Emotional Health and Resilience Team offer, which worked alongside the Piece of Mind Team, was universally available.

Councillor Coult welcomed the expectation that all schools will have a member of staff trained as a Senior Mental Health Lead, however, she highlighted that this could place additional pressure on staff. The Advanced Practitioner acknowledged the concern which had been considered and she clarified that the role was a leadership role and the implementation of the work will be a whole school approach.

Councillor Coult raised concern at the figures relating to young people who self-harm. She recognised the increasing challenges to young people's mental health such as child poverty, peer pressure and the number of young people who access smart phones and social media from an increasingly young age. The Advanced Practitioner shared the concern however she pointed out that social media was a 'double-edged-sword' as it could also be a useful tool to increase the reach of messages.

Councillor Coult stressed the importance of engaging with young people to understand their perspectives and she asked if the work of the partnership considered pupil voice feedback. The Advanced Practitioner confirmed mechanisms were in place to capture student voices as well as feedback from teachers.

A survey was to be carried out in the near future on self-harm, which will provide information from teachers regarding their knowledge and confidence to deal with incidents of self-harm. The Advanced Practitioner explained Student Voice surveys took place in years 7, 9, and 11. In addition, Peer Mentors enabled young people to support each other in schools and the mentors work together in a focus group which then feeds into the work of Investing in Children and Durham Youth Council. In response to a question from Councillor Coult as to whether there were plans to extend the Student Voice survey to other year groups, the Public Health Practitioner clarified that the current practice was to survey the same pupils, biannually, however she would make enquiries as to whether there were plans to extend the survey.

Councillor Deinali asked how the partnership linked with the service provided by the Rapid Response Team. The Public Health Practitioner stated that the Rapid Response Team aimed to support young people who are at risk of being admitted into hospital due to mental health crisis and the Rapid Response Team works with the 'Getting More Help' sub-group of the partnership which focused on accessing the right help at the right time, to avoid crisis situations.

Councillor Deinali echoed previous comments by members of the Committee on the breadth and depth of the work and she requested further information, in due course, on the impact of the actions and services being put in place. The Advanced Practitioner agreed to provide evaluation of data on outcomes, in the future.

Concluding the item, the Chair informed the Committee that the '3 Dads Walking' were passing through the region. The dads, who all lost daughters to suicide were walking 300 miles to raise funds for Papyrus, Prevention of Young Suicide and to highlight the impact of mental health on young people and their families.

## **Resolved:**

The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Acknowledged and endorsed the work of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Partnership.
- b) Noted the contents of the report.

## **7 Children and Young People's Services - Quarter Three Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24**

The Committee received a joint report of the Corporate Director of Resources and the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services which provided details of the forecast outturn position for Children and Young People's Services highlighting major variances in comparison with the budget for the year based on the position at the end of December 2023 (for copy of report see file of minutes).

David Watchman, Finance Manager, presented the report, highlighting key points. He explained that the cash limit overspend of £8.1million represented a 4.7% overspend against the total revised budget, which compared to the quarter two overspend forecast of £6.2million. The forecast outturn against each head of service showed the main pressure was in social care. Details of the main variances were provided, including an increase in the children looked after overspend to £9million in quarter three, with the total number of children looked after increasing by 32 between August and December 2023. The Home to School Transport budget showed a forecast underspend of £0.24million and the quarter three forecast for Aycliffe Secure Centre showed a small surplus position of £70,000. It was reported that it will be necessary for the forecast overspend of £8.1million to be funded corporately, from the general reserve.

In respect of the Dedicated Schools Grant, the Committee noted the improved position from the original budget in that the use of reserves figure will be a net £2.23million which was a reduction of £5.72million against the original budget plans. However, 55% of schools will be drawing on reserves to fund their budgets this year.

Members noted that DfE funding had been utilised to support schools in financial deficits however this was one-off funding and pressure for schools will continue.

The Finance Manager informed the Committee that the forecast outturn position for the Dedicated Schools Grant Centrally Retained budget showed a projected overspend of £1.9million and the main factor was the £2.4million High Needs Block overspend which was attributed to the increase in top-up funding for pupils in mainstream settings aged 0-16. Non-maintained and independent special school provision continued to be an area of pressure.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report and invited comments and questions.

Councillor Scurfield observed that despite the increase in the social care budget there was, nevertheless, an overspend. She highlighted the demand for early intervention services and the high cost of placements which require intensive support and she provided the view that there was more work to be done to provide services earlier, to avoid the need for high cost interventions in the future. The Finance Manager recognised that when budgets are strained, discretionary services, including early help provision, were often the first to face cuts. Jim Murray, Head of Education and Skills, pointed out the increasing amount of young people entering care who have complex needs which require high cost placements.

Councillor Coult expressed her view that she would like to see an increase in the use of in-house provision.

The Chair asked the Finance Manager as to what impact the ongoing overspend was likely to have on the medium term financial plan, in the future. The Finance Manager replied that the children looked after budget continued to be a priority and activity was ongoing to improve the sufficiency strategy and increase in-house provision. In response to a further question from the Chair, the Finance Manager confirmed that, at present, no further financial assistance was available from central government.

**Resolved:**

The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the overall reserve position.

## **8 Quarter Three, 2023/24 Performance Management Report**

The Committee received a report of the Chief Executive which presented 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 (for copy of report see file of minutes).

Stephen Tracey, Corporate Equalities and Strategy Manager was welcomed to the meeting to present the report. The Committee noted that demand for children's social care remained high and an increasing number of young people were entering care with complex needs. In addition, the national transfer scheme had brought additional unaccompanied asylum seeking young people into the county. The Corporate Equalities and Strategy Manager referred to the substantial increase in requests for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) for children with special educational needs and disabilities since 2019, which had led to backlogs for educational psychologist advice. An increase in agency and locum psychologists had seen some improvement in capacity and it was expected the data would reflect the improvement over the coming months.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report and invited comments and questions.

Councillor Hunt asked whether data was available relating to the number children entering care whose parents had substance addictions and, whether the service works with adult services and other interventions to support parents. The Corporate Equalities and Strategy Manager highlighted that care assessments take a whole family approach, child protection procedures require a multi-agency response and the early help model has a 'Team Around the Family' which brings together practitioners from various agencies to work holistically, with families. He added that he would refer to the service for further information on the collaboration of services, to be brought to a future meeting.

Councillor Coult asked for more information on the re-referral rate. The Corporate Equalities and Strategy Manager clarified that re-referrals occur when a young person has been subject to a previous referral within a specified timescale. The figure for re-referrals was approximately 16-17% which compared to the national average of approximately 20%.

Referring to elective home education, Councillor Coult raised concern at the increase and she enquired whether any key drivers had been identified for the increase. The Head of Education and Skills shared the concern and he pointed out that parents were not required to specify a reason why they were electing to home educate, however a number of factors had been identified including behavioural issues, permanent exclusions and relationship breakdown between parents and schools. The Head of Education commented that he would welcome more power for local authorities, within government guidance. On a positive note, an Academy trust was undertaking a pilot exercise to support a family who had removed their child from school. Councillor Coult commented that she would be interested to have more information on the progress of the pilot, in the future.

Councillor Crute spoke of the concerns previously expressed by the Committee with regard to the completion of EHCPs within 20 weeks. He referred to work done to examine social care caseloads and the establishment of a social work academy to build capacity and he added that, should there be an improvement in the completion time for EHCPs through increasing the provision of educational psychologists, he would like to see a similar approach, in order to sustain the improvement. The Corporate Equality and Strategy Manager pointed out that the shortage of educational psychologists was a national issue, however, the service was doing its best to maximise provision.

Councillor Crute welcomed the recent government increase in free child-care provision and he asked what action was being taken to ensure demand could be met. The Corporate Equalities and Strategy Manager confirmed that data relating to early years provision will be reported in future performance reports.

Councillor Crute then referred to a recent meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board where concerns had been expressed at the figures for the healthy weight of children from the ages of 4 to 11 years. Councillor Crute asked whether comparative data was available for school children in years 7 to 11 and he suggested that the issue of the healthy weight of children be an area focus for the Committee in the future workplan. The Advanced Practitioner explained that she was not aware that the comparative data Councillor Crute requested was available, as the National Child Weight Measurement Programme reported only on the height and weight of children in primary schools, in reception year and year 6, however, she would make enquiries within the service.

Kirsty Wilkinson, Strategic Manager for Public Health agreed that the figures around childhood obesity in County Durham were a concern and more work was required to understand the drivers. She highlighted initiatives such as the 'Moving Together' strategy will encourage children and young people, amongst others, to move every day and 'Active 30' which supports schools to encourage every child to participate in 30 minutes of activity, each school day.

The Strategic Manager also referred to work with maternity services to increase breast feeding and promote healthy weight in pregnancy in order to reduce the risk of obesity in childhood. She highlighted the correlation between deprivation and childhood obesity and the increasing availability of convenience foods which were high in fat, salt and sugar. The Committee noted that the Public Health team had a dedicated Advanced Practitioner for Healthy Weight, Dr Kelly Rose, who also chairs the Healthy Weight Alliance and the Chair offered to pass details of the work of Dr Rose to those members who would like further information.

Councillor Deinali spoke of recent media reports regarding the quality of school meals. She also commented on the number of parents providing packed lunches and she questioned whether that was due to the cost and / or quality of school meals. Councillor Deinali commented that processed foods were often more affordable than healthier foods and the impact that had on the weight of children. She asked whether the issues would form part of a review into healthy weight. The Advanced Practitioner advised she would obtain further information on the issues raised.

Stephen Gwilym, Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred to a similar discussion which took place at a recent meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and he informed members that, following that meeting, a letter was sent to the Corporate Director for Children and Young People's Services raising concerns around the Fun and Food Programme and eligibility criteria, quality of school meals and healthy weight concerns. The response, when received, will be shared with both the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**Resolved:**

The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the overall position and direction of travel in relation to quarter three performance and the actions being taken to address areas of challenge.

**9 Such other business**

The Chair reminded members that they were invited to attend the meeting of the Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 9 May, for consideration of an item on Water Fluoridation.

The Chair informed the Committee that she attended Durham's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 9 April, together with Councillors Varty and Waldock, which included a tour of the service. She explained the hub was a central point for gathering, analysing and sharing information about children in County Durham who may be at risk of harm or who may need support services. The MASH links with other key agencies and, in the last year, decisions were made within 24 hours on 19,083 contacts and, of those, over 4,000 progressed to statutory Families First Teams.

Councillor Varty commented that the tour had been extremely informative and she was pleased to see so many different practitioners working together for a common goal, including social workers, police, health and administrative staff.



The Chair noted that whilst many incoming enquiries did not relate directly to the MASH work, the team worked hard to ensure contacts were correctly signposted. She concluded by thanking all the staff for their hard work and good spirits despite the ever increasing workload and she encouraged members to visit the hub, to see for themselves the good work being carried out.

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**Children and Young People's Overview  
and Scrutiny Committee**

**11 July 2024**

**Annual Update of the Starting Well  
Partnership**



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**Report of John Pearce, Chair of the Starting Well Partnership, and  
Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of the report is to update the County Durham Care Partnership Executive on the work of the Starting Well Partnership (SWP) during 2023/24.
- 2 This report will give a brief update on any outstanding work from the last report (2022/23) as well as work undertaken in 2023/24.

**Executive summary**

- 3 As well as the considerable work carried out in the sub-groups of the SWP such as the delivery of the 15 Family Hubs, the Partnership has looked in detail at a number of areas such as Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Children's Mental Health.
- 4 A forward plan for 24/25 will be finalised in July.

**Recommendation**

- 5 The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

Note the content of the report.

## **Background**

- 6 The governance structure of the SWP remains unchanged (see appendix 2) and the four sub-groups remain.
  - a) Best Start in Life (Chair, Dr Rushi Mudalagiri)
  - b) Prevention and Early Help (Chair, Martyn Stenton)
  - c) Supporting young people into adulthood (Chair, Jen Illingworth)
  - d) Service Transformation (Chair, Kathleen Berry)
- 7 The sub-groups report to the Operational Management Group of the SWP in order to support the SWP to discuss pressure areas across the system strategically.

## **Best Start in Life**

- 8 Early in 2023/24, the chair of the Best Start in Life sub-group was taken by Dr Rushi Mudalagiri as the ICB Clinical Lead for Children and Young people.
- 9 The group identified in June that there had been an increase in the Unintentional Injuries activity data reported by County Durham and Darlington NHSFT. The group requested that this be presented to and discussed by the Starting Well Partnership, which happened in November 2023 and January 2024.
- 10 The group initiated and delivered a strategy for Perinatal Mental Health to support the Family Hubs work.

## **Prevention and Early Help**

- 11 The main focus of the Prevention and Early Help sub-group has been the successful delivery of the network of 15 Family Hubs across County Durham.
- 12 The group continues to monitor, evaluate and change (where necessary) the services provided out of Family Hubs to ensure communities' needs are being met.

## **Supporting young people into adulthood**

- 13 This group paused when the previous chair moved on. The group has now been restarted with Jen Illingworth, Director of Children's Transformation as Chair.
- 14 The group has revised its Terms of Reference and developed a workplan to support young people with complex needs who are known to more than one service to have a smooth transition into adulthood.

## **Service Transformation**

- 15 The Service Transformation sub-group has been working to deliver a number of transformational changes including:
- a) The project to update and co-ordinate the purchasing of equipment, Auxiliary Aids and Adaptations by schools is scheduled to complete by 31 March 2024. This will see the purchasing of this equipment for school use much more closely linked to the community equipment service and introduces a scheme for re-use of equipment.
  - b) Investing in Children (liC) support our children and young people to have a voice in the work that we do. We have extended the funding to the organisation to enable us to carry out an integrated service review of all liC commissions across Social Care, Public Health and NENC ICB.
  - c) Valuing Neurodiversity in County Durham is a 3 – 5 year programme of work to move the whole system from a diagnostic focussed approach to supporting neurodiversity to a needs led approach. The work is co-produced with MCT Durham and liC.
  - d) SEND Inspection preparation has been a focus for this group since Q2. The restructure of NENC ICB, known as ICB 2.0 poses a significant risk to the outcome of a potential SEND inspection, should that inspection be called in April 2024 as expected. Officers have been working to mitigate this risk as much as possible.

## **Growing Up in County Durham strategy**

- 16 The SWP is also responsible for the delivery of the Growing Up in County Durham (GUICD) strategy which was co-produced with our children and young people during 2022/23.
- 17 The Partnership received a year-end report in May 2024 which is included at Appendix 3.

## **Partnership Meetings**

- 18 During 2023/24, the Partnership discussed the following topic areas:
- (a) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
  - (b) The SWP received the annual update from the SEND Strategic Partnership. A presentation was also given relating to the Valuing Neurodiversity in County Durham Project. The SWP decided they

would like to receive the SEND update annually. More frequently is not required as the work has its own governance structure.

(c) Mental Health and Crisis

The SWP received a number of presentations including the improvement work being undertaken in TEWVNHSFT to reduce waiting times, the system-wide work undertaken for children and young people at risk of being admitted to a Tier 4 mental health bed, alternatives to crisis, street triage and S136MHA 1983 and the impact of mental health on school attendance. As a result, the police have been linked with the Autism Partnership Strategy Group.

(d) Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

The UASC team presented on their work and the challenges they face. Partners were asked whether a mental health, as well as a physical health, assessment could be included in the Initial Health Assessments these children and young people receive when they first come into the care of the local authority.

(e) Durham Place most pressing issues

For this item, Partners were asked to prepare a presentation for the SWP sharing their most pressing issues which may be resolved through actions possible in the SWP. A summary of these issues is provided in the PowerPoint slides accompanying this report. These slides were shared, as requested, with the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(f) Preparing for adulthood

This was an opportunity for the re-vitalised sub-group to share their Terms of Reference and areas of focus with the SWP for consideration and comment.

(g) Creating a Partnership Data Set

Colleagues from across the system were invited to the SWP to discuss the data requirements of the Partnership so that that they could consider the best way for those to be delivered.

(h) Primary Care Liaise scheme

Primary Care colleagues attended to request suggestions for the Primary Care Liaise scheme. This scheme is the GP practice quality improvement incentive scheme and Partners expressed enthusiasm to have children's items on the scheme. Current

negotiations are centred around the development of SEND Champions in GP practices.

19 A number of ad-hoc updates were also received on the following topics:

(a) Family Assessment Centres

NEC ICB colleagues highlighted to the SWP that a privately run Family Assessment Centre has been opened up in County Durham with a second (run by a different provider) planned. Partners raised concerns about the links made with NHS providers such as the Health Visiting service and local GP practices.

(b) Unintentional injuries data

The SWP was made aware that County Durham's unintentional injuries data suggests that we are an outlier in this area. However, this relates to coding in CDDFT, rather than our activity being significantly more than neighbouring Trusts. There was agreement that the data would be discussed with CDDFT representatives and consideration given to a possible future agenda item to include input from CDDFT.

(c) Primary Care Networks and Integrated Neighbourhood Teams

The SWP was asked to consider how much children's services would like to be involved in Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) which, thus far, have been mainly adult focussed. The suggestion was for some 'touch points' to be developed between INTs and children's services. It was agreed that Family Hubs would be a good starting point to link INTs and children's services.

## **Forward Planning**

20 The May 2024 meeting of the SWP considered areas for the agenda in 2024/25. These include:

(a) Dental access, health, and fluoridation

(b) Preparing for Adulthood

(c) Supporting and improving education attendance

(d) Ensuring provision of help, advice and support at the earliest opportunity.

21 Feedback suggested improvements could be made to the way we work together such as pooling of resources, being more solution focused collaborative working.

- 22 The SWP meeting scheduled for July 2024 will finalise the schedule of work and identify which topics will be discussed at which meetings. A reflection and planning session will again be scheduled for March 2025.

### **Conclusion**

- 23 The SWP plays a key role in bringing Partners together for joint working. The structure of a Partnership meeting for deep dives into specific issues and a separate Operational Management Group ensures best use of time at the SWP and that issues of the highest relevance are discussed in appropriate detail.

### **Author(s)**

Alison Ayres

Email: [a.ayres@nhs.net](mailto:a.ayres@nhs.net)



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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

None

### **Finance**

Any financial implications are considered in relation to the individual projects and transformation programmes.

### **Consultation**

Consultation and co-production is undertaken at an individual project level.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

None

### **Climate Change**

None

### **Human Rights**

None

### **Crime and Disorder**

None

### **Staffing**

None

### **Accommodation**

None

### **Risk**

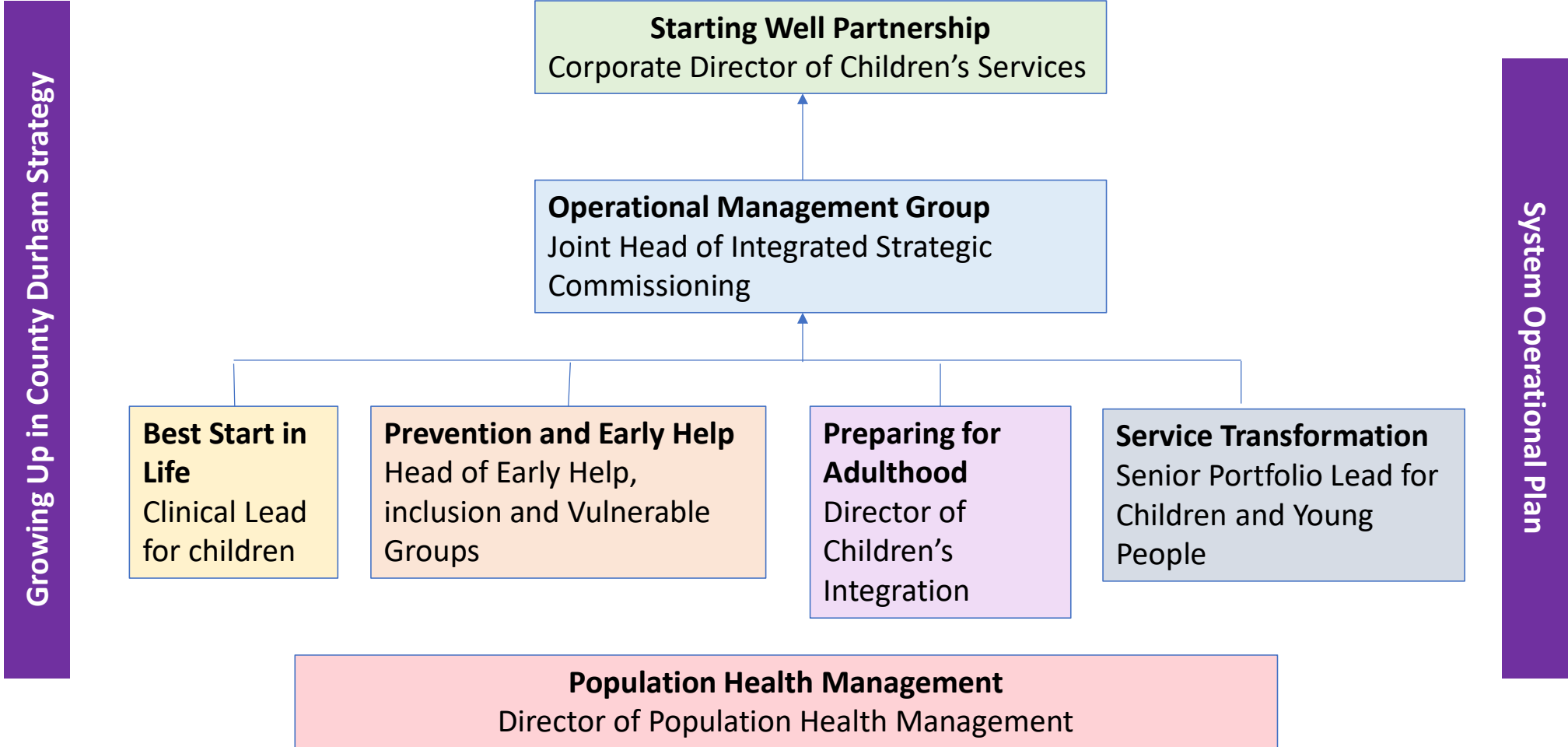
None

### **Procurement**

None

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# Appendix 2 - Structure of the Starting Well Partnership



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Health and Wellbeing Board

April 2024

Growing Up in County Durham  
progress report



## Report of

**John Pearce, Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services**

## Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

## Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to inform the County Durham Care Partnership Executive (CDCPE) of the progress in delivering the Growing Up in County Durham (GUICD) strategy.
- 2 This report covers the period April 2023 – March 2024

## Executive summary

- 3 This report has been co-ordinated by the Operational management Group (OMG) of the Starting Well Partnership (SWP) which has responsibility for delivery of the GUICD strategy.
- 4 The Delivery Plan for the GUICD strategy has 18 actions which will be delivered across the system. There has been significant progress across all areas, with a large number of actions completed and no significant delays.

## Recommendation(s)

- 5 The CDCPE is recommended to receive and approve this report.

## **Background**

- 6 The Growing Up in County Durham (GUiCD) strategy for children, young people and families was approved by Cabinet in November 2022 and runs until 2025. This relatively short time period for a strategy brings updates in line with other key Durham County Council strategies.
- 7 The GUiCD strategy is attached at appendix 2. Appendix 3 is the delivery plan for the strategy which was produced with help from the Youth Council and discussion facilitated by Investing in Children. The delivery plan sets out which groups are responsible for delivery of each part of the strategy. A copy of this update report will be circulated to the Youth Council and Investing in Children with the opportunity to comment and/or discuss offered.
- 8 Responsibility for delivery of the GUiCD strategy lies with the Starting Well Partnership (SWP), although much of the work is carried out by other groups who have their own governance arrangements. This is because the strategy was co-produced and reflects the concerns of our children, young people and families in their daily lives. The Operational Management Group (OMG) of the SWP is responsible for co-ordinating the assurance around delivery of the GUiCD strategy.
- 9 The SWP received a mid-year report of delivery progress in November 2024.

## **Progress against delivery**

### **Vulnerable Groups sub-group of the SWP.**

- 10 Responsible for:
  - (a) Production of a delivery plan for Family Hubs
  - (b) Operationality of Family Hubs by April 2023
  - (c) Review and adjustment of services delivered from Family Hubs to meet need.
- 11 The delivery plan was drawn up and successfully implemented. All 15 Family Hubs were operational from April 2023.
- 12 The County Durham Family Hub and Start for Life programme continues to make good progress against all the programme expectations. We have recently developed and implemented support to better identify and address low to moderate perinatal and infant mental health (PIMH) and in particular therapeutic interventions to strengthen parent-infant interactions. A significant workforce development programme has been delivered which included both maternal and

paternal mental health awareness: IHV Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Awareness Training to help the wider workforce identify concerns relating to PIMH.

- 13 A Specialist Health Visitor and a skill mixed team are now in place offering a range of direct therapeutic work from Family Hubs such as Video Interactive Guidance (VIG) which has a strong evidence base in increasing the attunement between parent and child, and Neonatal Behavioural Assessment Scale (NBAS) to help parents understand the infant's behavioural communication. Family Peer Supporters provide befriending for mothers who are feeling isolated, support them to access the peer group offer, Nurturing Little Minds, which includes semi-structured groups delivering wellbeing walks, baby massage, personal resilience, and the evidence based structured Triple P Baby programme. On completion of the low to moderate interventions families are supported to access the Family Hub universal group offer. Young Dads under the age of 26 can access direct support through the Family Hubs Young Dad's Project and Peer Support Groups are being established for all dads / male carers with a child under 2 years to access. Strong links have been established between the Specialist Perinatal Mental Health team and Talking Therapies to ensure families are stepped up and stepped down seamlessly.
- 14 A significant offer has also been developed and implemented to [support parents with a child with SEND](#). This has been coproduced with parents including Durham Parent and Carer Panel members.
- 15 Work also continues in relation to co-location of LA practitioners, Midwifery and 0-25 Family Health Service staff. The vast majority of 0-25 Family Health staff (0-6 teams) are co-located in Family Hubs and Midwifery Teams are beginning to co-locate in a small number of Family Hubs and where this is not practically possible the delivery antenatal appointments and antenatal education is being roll out from the Family Hubs.
- 16 Footfall across all Family Hubs has significantly increased and will be reported to the DfE and DHSC and the Prevention and Early Help Partnership on a quarterly basis. Work is on-going to refine the offer from each Family Hub and ensure continued delivery of high-quality services, relevant to each local area. For more information on what is on offer from each Family Hub and the developing Start for Life offer: [Help for families - your virtual Family Hub - Durham County Council](#)
- 17 Work with partners within Prevention and Early Help Partnership has also focussed on promoting and supporting school attendance. The PEHP provides a forum for the Attendance Alliance to work closely with partners including schools to work collaboratively to promote good

school attendance and address barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity, especially with children at risk of poor school attendance.

### **Preparing for Adulthood sub-group of the SWP.**

- 18 Responsible for:
- (a) Transitions from children's to adult's statutory services
  - (b) CAMHS transitions
- 19 The group delivering this work delivered a presentation to a special [joint meeting of the Adults and Health, and Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committees](#) in December 2023 setting out the workplan for the group.
- 20 The group is initially looking at transitions for some of our children with the most complex needs who, as a result, are known to more than one service. Initial work is looking at the current offer and understanding how and why this, in too many circumstances, doesn't deliver what our young people need.
- 21 This group will change it's name in 2024/25 to avoid confusion with The Preparing for Adulthood Partnership which is more focussed on the move from education to work.

### **North East Joint Transport Committee**

- 22 Responsible for:
- (a) Network-wide ticketing
  - (b) Improved safety on busses
  - (c) Introduction of capped fares
  - (d) Care Leavers concession
- 23 A £4 all day bus fare has been available to all on any bus service across the North East region from November 2023.
- 24 The majority of north east bus operators have extensive CCTV coverage with fleets fitted with CCTV cameras inside and out. This plays a key role in preventing and reporting crime and anti-social behaviour in the region
- 25 Capped fares have been introduced for all ages with the target being a £2.50 region wide multi-modal cap for children and young people.
- (a) £1 single bus fare for under 22s on any bus service in the region was launched in May 2023.



- (b) £3 all day bus fare for all under 22s on any bus service in the region was launched in September 2023.

26 Free travel for eligible care leavers was launched in January 2024.

### **County Durham Together Board**

27 Responsible for

- (a) Development of a Community Book
- (b) Develop a way to clearly communicate to families what is available in their area to help and support them.

28 The procurement process for 'The Community Book' is underway with the new system scheduled for implementation in April 2025.

29 The Board are working with Family Hubs and the Family Hub Parent Panels to develop health literacy information.

### **Service Transformation sub-group of the SWP**

30 Responsible for

- (a) Delivery of Needs led Neurodiversity Support
- (b) Improved Specialist services including
  - (i) Eating disorders
  - (ii) Paediatric therapies
- (c) Re-procurement of the short break offer

31 In March 2023 the County Durham Care Partnership Executive approved a system-wide programme of work called *Valuing Neurodiversity in County Durham* which has initiated improvements identified by families, children and young people. A presentation was given to the special [joint meeting of the Adults and Health, and Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committees](#) in December 2023 updating on the progress of the work.

32 The Mental health, Learning Disability and Autism Partnership held a Rapid Process Improvement workshop in June 2023 looking at the services available to support families whose children or young people are suffering with an Eating Disorder. This was part of a regional piece of work across the North East and North Cumbria to improve these services. The workshop mapped out the current provision as well as

identifying opportunities and challenges. A number of actions were identified which are being worked through until September 2024.

- 33 A model has been developed to create a more integrated therapeutic way of working between County Durham special schools and our therapy providers. Work has also progressed on a single point of access for children under 5 who require more than one therapy.

### **Durham Sufficiency Board**

- 34 Responsible for
- (a) Expansion of the DCC estate of children's residential homes
- 35 Progress reporting is delivered to the Sufficiency Board regularly. Latest reports show good progress with the majority of the 14 projects underway (new homes, re-purposing existing homes to reflect current need, and refurbishing existing homes) are on track to deliver within agreed timescales. Others have some minor delays but all are due for delivery within 2024.

### **Safer Durham Partnership**

- 36 Responsible for
- (a) Reducing anti-social behaviour
  - (b) Reducing arson and deliberate fires
  - (c) Reducing hate crime and community tension
- 37 The Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2022 – 25 was agreed by the Safe Durham Partnership in January 2023. This strategy sets out its vision 'Improving lives through tackling anti-social behaviour' and guidance principles on how we will work together to identify those issues that have the most impact on residents and visitors within County Durham.
- 38 A draft anti-social behaviour delivery plan was presented to the Safe Durham Partnership in January 2024, with the final ASB delivery plan presented to the Safe Durham Partnership for agreement in March, following further input from partners including the Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February. This will set out how the [Anti-Social Behaviour strategy](#), vision and priorities will be achieved.
- 39 An anti-social behaviour strategic group is in place to provide strategic leadership and direction, co-ordination and oversight for the Safe Durham Partnership's response to anti-social behaviour across County Durham. A weekly tasking group including managers from DCC, Durham Constabulary and Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue

takes place to ensure a co-ordinated response to operational ASB issues, which includes work on reducing arson and deliberate fires. Action relating to this has also been incorporated in the anti-social behaviour delivery plan (see above).

- 40 The Hate Crime action group is currently in the process of being revitalised to ensure it is fit for purpose over the coming years. This will include new terms of reference, objectives, delivery plan, performance indicators and refreshed membership.
- 41 The [Safe Durham Partnership Plan](#) 2021-25 is currently under review. This will be renamed the Safe Durham Partnership Strategy 2024-29, and will be a more streamlined document, with fewer priority areas which are easily understandable to everyone. The draft Safe Durham Partnership Strategy 2024-29 will be approved to go out for further consultation by the Safe Durham Partnership in March. Following this it will go out to public consultation for 4 weeks, with the final version being presented to the Safe Durham Partnership in May 2024 for approval.

### Author(s)

Alison Ayres	a.ayres@nhs.net
Cathy Knight	Cathy.knight@durham.gov.uk
Kirsty Wilkinson	KG.Wilkinson@durham.gov.uk
Lindsey Herring	Lindsey.herring@durham.gov.uk
Kathleen Berry	Kathleen.berry1@nhs.net
Karen Davison	k.davison@durham.gov.uk
Lyndsey Jones George	Lyndseyjones2@nhs.net
David Hand	David.hand1@nhs.net
Julie Bradbrook	Julie.bradbrook@durham.gov.uk
Jennifer Illingworth	jenniferillingworth@nhs.net

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

None.

### **Finance**

None.

### **Consultation**

The GUiCD strategy was co-produced with the children and young people of County Durham.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

During co-production, specific attention was given to ensure all groups were given an equitable opportunity to input into the strategy.

### **Climate Change**

N/a.

### **Human Rights**

N/A.

### **Crime and Disorder**

Some elements of the strategy are delivered by the Safer Durham Partnership.

### **Staffing**

N/A.

### **Accommodation**

N/A.

### **Risk**

N/A.

### **Procurement**

N/A.



# Growing Up in County Durham Strategy 2023-25



## **Introduction**

We have a vision for all children, young people and their families, that creates a view of what we want to achieve in County Durham. Our vision is:

**County Durham supports all children, young people and their families to achieve their goals in life, in an environment that is safe, happy and healthy.**

This strategy is our high-level plan that explains what we are going to do to achieve our vision. It will tell you what our six priority areas are for the next three years and how we have decided these priorities. It will also tell you the high-level actions we will focus on to achieve these priorities, which support the aims of the Children, Young People and Families Partnership Board, and how we will know if we have been successful.

It is designed to be easy for children and young people to understand. We have asked young people from County Durham Youth Council to tell us why this strategy is important, this is what they said:

*‘The children, young people and families’ strategy is vitally important for us as a youth council, and as young people, because it gives us a chance to be informed about what is being done to ensure children, young people and families can grow up in a safe environment, and feel they are involved in the decision-making process that will affect them. The strategy’s aims, being developed using consultation and the opinion of the people the strategy focuses on, reflect how important the strategy is, as it targets the areas that children, young people and families feel are the most important areas to improve in County Durham. Everyone in County Durham deserves to have a say in the development of their local area, and the county, to improve safety, opportunities and health, and this strategy is vitally important to deliver that to children, young people and families.’*

With any strategy it’s important to show the guiding principles we have used when developing it, and to be clear about what is included in it, and what isn’t:

- It is written in a way that makes it easy for a young teenager to understand, and in a format that is accessible to everyone.
- It is based on evidence gathered from consultation with children, young people, their families, carers and professionals.
- It is also based on what the data tells us are the issues children, young people and their families face in County Durham, for example – physical health, mental health, emotional wellbeing, child poverty levels or educational attainment.
- It gives a brief, but clear, overview of what we will be focusing on over the next three years.

- It focuses on adding to what is already being done in the county. It doesn't duplicate the work being carried out by others, but it provides links to their strategies and plans, or the work that people are doing, so you can see what is happening.
- It is designed for all children, young people and their families, irrespective of their personal characteristics or family make up, including for example, those in care, with a disability or from the LGBTQ+ community.
- It takes into account of the experiences and feedback relating to the pandemic, however, many young people wanted to move on, as we are now living with Covid-19.
- It covers the three years from the beginning of 2023 to the end of 2025.
- It doesn't include technical detail or jargon.

We developed the strategy during 2022. We took time to involve people, who will be affected by the strategy, in its development, carrying out engagement activities with lots of children, young people, families, carers and professionals. We worked with a number of community groups and children's groups across the County on the strategy development, with them often carrying out the engagement activities on our behalf. Their responses guided our ambitions and we worked with them to identify the six priority areas outlined in the strategy.

### **Where are we now?**

There are lots of people and organisations that you come into contact with who have worked together to develop the strategy and will work together to deliver it, including the County Council, NHS, Police, Fire Service, Schools, voluntary sector, social enterprises and community groups.

Working in partnership is very important to us and we think that, if we are to be successful, we have to work together to make changes; this includes working with children, young people and adults, in their own communities, to help them to find solutions to their issues.

The Children, Young People and Families Partnership Board are the people who have agreed this strategy, and who are responsible for delivering the high-level actions identified. These high-level actions will support the Board's four strategic aims:

1. Making sure every child has the best start in life – even before they are born.
2. Making sure that all children are supported to be happy, healthy and safe to achieve their potential, and provide additional help when it is needed.

3. Making sure that children and young people with additional needs are supported throughout their childhood, teenage years and as they move into adulthood.
4. Making sure the services we provide are joined up, with children, young people and families/carers at the centre.

These strategic aims provided a starting point to develop the strategy. We then looked at what the data told us about children and young people living in County Durham, and the issues that they face. Examples include:

- There are 115,000 children and young people (aged 0-19) in County Durham
  - 7 out of 10 children achieve a good level of development at the end of reception year in school
  - 10,400 school age children have special educational needs
  - 91% of 16–17-year-olds are in education or training
  - The county’s care leavers are more likely to be in education, employment and training than in other areas both regionally and nationally
- Poverty: 1 in 4 children live in a household which cannot afford all the basics they need such as their food and fuel bills
- Impact of Covid-19:
  - A 20% increase in demand for children and young people’s mental health services is projected over next 5 years
  - 1 in 6 children, aged 5-16 years, identified as having a probable mental health disorder (an increase from 1 in 9 in 2017)
- Healthy start to life:
  - There are almost 4,800 live births annually
  - 1 in 6 women smoke at time of baby’s delivery
  - 1 in 3 are breastfeeding 6-8 weeks after birth
  - 1 in 4 of reception and more than 1 in 3 year 6 pupils are overweight
  - 1 in 4 5-year-olds have tooth decay
  - The number of babies, toddlers and school age children vaccinated is significantly better than the England average

You can see the data in more detail and other data that we have used by visiting the [Children and Young People section of the Durham Insight website](#).

It is important to us that we keep the good things good as well as identifying and seeking to improve areas where improvement is needed.

Based on data, and what people told us, we have identified six priority areas that we are going to focus on:



## **1. Family, friends and community**

- You told us that where you live, both your home and your community is very important. Family relationships in a safe, loving and supportive home environment are key.
- Children and young people have missed out on so much in the two years of the Covid-19 pandemic. National lockdowns allowed families within households to spend more time together, however they also removed opportunities to socialise and develop.
- Having friends and living in a community with good support networks and infrastructure, which you can easily be part of is what you want. Where there are things for children and young people to do, green spaces to play and good access to services and transport links.
- You want us to make sure that all mums, dads and carers have opportunities to access community support, networks and services as family networks continue to change.
- County Durham has many strengths that can support and protect the health of our children, young people and families, such as our communities and our services. Throughout the pandemic communities have worked together and alongside us to both support our existing strengths and develop new ones.
- You said that we need to make the most of the community support groups and facilities available for children and young people, to improve access to local services and activities.
- We are facing some challenges, for example the number of children and young people coming into council care continues to rise and support services, including accommodation, are experiencing high demand.

## **2. Being safe**

- You told us that being and feeling safe at home, at school or college and when you are out and about is important. Having safe spaces to meet and play, both in the real world and online, whether that's websites, gaming or social media sites is part of this. Bullying is a key issue to be addressed both in schools and in the community.
- Making our communities clean and free from anti-social behaviour, where criminal activity is low and where there is mutual trust and respect is what we should be striving for.
- We heard that it is important for people to receive support to keep themselves safe and healthy by making sure key settings such as nurseries, schools and colleges are smoke free and promoting healthy choices with regard to food options and physical activity.

### **3. Breaking down the barriers**

- You said that providing fairer opportunities to access community support and services, by targeting support to those most in need, will help improve prospects for all our children and young people.
- Having good access to healthy food is important to children and young people; helping them to grow up in good health, protected from infectious disease, be a healthy weight, be physically active and enjoying play and social activities.
- You highlighted the importance of how we deal with the many impacts of long-term financial hardship and poverty. These include poorer physical health, mental health and emotional wellbeing and more limited access to learning and leisure opportunities. County Durham has some of the worst physical and mental health inequalities in the country and the proportion of children who live in poverty in the County is significantly higher than many other areas of the country.
- Many more families are struggling to pay their household bills (food, heating, water, rent/mortgage, council tax), due to the current cost of living pressures, and there is increasing demand for money advice services, foodbanks and other community support. Children and young people have told us they are worried about the current challenges and how it will affect them as they grow up.
- When basic needs are met, for example, families have enough money to buy food, appropriate housing, good health, employment and feeling safe, accessing opportunities to succeed becomes easier as barriers are removed.

### **4. Development, learning and skills**

- From birth through to adulthood, childhood development, learning and skills is essential. Developing early childhood skills before the age of 2, such as play and socialising with other children, being ready for school at 5, then secondary school and further education or work are all key to accessing a happy and prosperous future. To enable this to happen a place-based education strategy will be developed.
- You have told us that parent and toddler groups and parenting skills programmes are critical at the start of life. As children get older, you have told us that developing emotional and life skills, such as confidence, citizenship, budgeting and cooking, are important alongside education and careers advice ensuring young people grow up to be resilient and responsible adults able to cope with what life brings them.

- Working alongside schools and settings to ensure that all children and young people can participate in good quality learning and skills opportunities close to where they live is important.

## **5. Physical Health, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing**

- The need for children and young people's emotional wellbeing support services continues to increase. According to a recent parliamentary report, 1 in 6 young people are now likely to experience poor mental health, compared to 1 in 9 pre-pandemic.
- Children and young people have told us that the challenges of lockdown, school studies, exam stress, peer pressure, social media, loneliness, worries about the environment, climate change, cost of living and the war in Ukraine are reasons for their anxiety and stress. There was a feeling that whilst there is some excellent work happening in education settings to support children and young people's mental health, more can always be done to enable young people to be as resilient as they can be, and to promote their emotional wellbeing.
- It has been reported in various studies that children's physical activity levels have reduced as a result of the pandemic. National data shows that more children are overweight than before the pandemic. Support is needed to help children back to pre-pandemic activity levels, both inside and outside school.
- Parental mental health, including pregnant women, new mothers and their babies, was also cited as an important issue by parents and carers.
- Our recent 2022 Student Voice survey also highlighted high numbers of primary and secondary school children getting less than 8 hours sleep per night. Sleeping well helps children to thrive and promotes learning and good emotional wellbeing.
- Covid-19 has also impacted on support services such as mental health support. The reasons are twofold - services were put on hold, or diverted during the pandemic, which has caused a backlog and there has also been an increase in demand for these services as an impact of the pandemic.
- We need to meet the challenge of the increasing need for support at all levels, whether that's the availability of advice and guidance in schools and colleges, and other settings such as youth clubs, through to more focused support for those who need it, from services such as our Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

## 6. Access to community support and services

- You told us that providing children, young people and families including new parents and babies, with access to good quality local services which are shaped round their needs, will support the best outcomes for them. It is also important that we involve you in shaping the services we deliver.
- We also know that providing early enough support to children and young people, who need it, will reduce the need for crisis interventions and improve outcomes for all involved.
- You have told us that being able to navigate often complex systems, delivered by more than one agency, can be confusing. Providing clear information about how to access support and clear information about how that support will be delivered, is important to ensure you can make informed decisions, no matter the circumstances.
- You have also told us about issues where you have had to deal with different people, from different agencies, so providing a consistent source of support is important.
- You mentioned that travel to access opportunities and services is sometimes an issue, due to the large and rural nature of the County, and that services are not always available at a time to suit you, or within your budget.
- You said that we need to make the most of our community support networks to improve access to local services and activities.

### What is already happening?

1. You said safety is important. You can find out more about what we are doing to keep you safe and the support you can get by going to:
  - Keeping children safe - [Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)
  - Community safety, anti-social behaviour etc. - [Safe Durham Partnership](#) and Anti-social Behaviour Strategy (currently being developed – added when strategy is launched)
  - Support for domestic abuse - [Domestic Abuse](#)
2. You said the environment and where you live in is important. You can find out more about what we are doing to protect and improve the environment and where you live by going to:
  - Environment and climate - [Environment and Climate Change Partnership](#) and [Climate County Durham](#)
  - Housing - [Housing in County Durham](#)

3. You said supporting people who need some extra help is important. You can find out more about what we are doing to support people by going to:
  - Supporting children in care – [Corporate Parenting Strategy.pdf](#) and [Investing in Children](#)
  - Supporting young carers - [The Bridge Young Carers Service](#)
  - Supporting adult carers - [Durham County Carers Support](#)
  - Supporting children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) - [SEND Strategy.pdf](#)
  - Children and families affected by poverty - [Poverty Action Plan.pdf](#)
  - Care and support directory of services - [Durham Locate](#)
  
4. You said learning, employment and life skills are important. You can find out more about what we are doing by going to:
  - Schools and education - [Durham Schools and Education](#)
  - Education – Place-Based Education Strategy (currently being developed – added when strategy is launched)
  - Employment and skills – Inclusive Economic Strategy (currently being developed – added when strategy is launched)
  
5. You said supporting people’s physical health, mental health and emotional wellbeing is important. You can find out more about what we are doing to support people by going to:
  - Health and wellbeing - [Health and Wellbeing Board](#) and [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)
  - Mental Health - [Looking After Your Mental Health](#)
  - Physical activity – Physical Activity Strategy for County Durham (currently being developed – added when strategy is launched)
  - Oral Health Strategy - (currently being developed – added when strategy is launched)
  
6. You said having easy access to information about community support and services is important. You can find out more about what is available by going to:
  - Community support - [Advice in County Durham](#) and [Onepoint Family Centres and Hubs](#)
  - Community information - [County Durham Families Information Service](#) and [Durham Locate](#)

## **What are we going to do?**

We have identified ten high level actions, based on what the Children Young People and Families Partnership Board can do, to add to the work that is already being done by other people:

1. Working with the strengths and opportunities in local communities to develop a network of family hubs which can support the delivery of a range of local community support and services to children, young people and families.
2. Ensure every young person, who has health, education and/or care needs, and their family, has access to the right support on their move from children to adult services, when they are old enough to do so.
3. Work alongside schools and settings to ensure that all children and young people can participate in good quality learning and skills opportunities close to where they live.
4. Monitor and evaluate the Bus Service Improvement Plan in relation to benefits brought to young people through concessionary fares and other favourable benefits, allowing young people to have wider access to health, education, leisure, volunteering and other services, and for young people aged 16 and over, work and apprenticeships.
5. Build and promote community, peer to peer support, buildings, people, facilities, and services that are available in communities as a clear offer which is communicated in a way that is easy for children, young people and families to understand.
6. Ensure children, young people and families have an equal role in the development and redesign of the support and services they use.
7. Develop seamless services that support children, young people and families across health, education and social care.
8. Monitor and share good practice for the programmes of work that support families to stay together.
9. Better use of data and intelligence across health, education, social care and other services, so we can focus our resources to buy the right services to build stronger communities and a fairer county for children, young people and families.

10. Challenge and influence other strategies to make sure they prioritise children, young people and families and share our vision.

### **How will we measure our success?**

We will know we have been successful if we have:

1. Created 15 Family Hubs to provide better community-based support and services.
2. Improved children and young people's experience of the move from children to adult's services.
3. Improved attendance levels for all children and young people across all schools and settings.
4. Increased the numbers of young people traveling by bus.
5. Shown how children, young people and families are more involved in developing the support and services they use.
6. Increased the number of children who achieve a healthy development during the first years of their life.
7. Reduced the number of babies going into care to help families stay together.
8. Reduced the number of times children and young people have to go to hospital with unintentional injuries.
9. Developed an online toolkit which will show partners what is happening across the county and where we need to focus our efforts.

We will also monitor the following through existing strategies:

10. Increased the number of mothers who breastfeed.
11. Reduced the number of mothers who are smoking where they are having a baby.
12. Reduced the numbers of children being bullied across all schools.
13. Reduced the numbers of anti-social behaviour incidents in communities.

We will use this strategy to make sure the work we do and the money we spend is focussed on the things we have agreed are important. A detailed action plan which will set out the things we need to do to achieve the actions above, will be developed and delivered by the subgroups of the Children, Young People and Families Partnership Board. This will help us to deliver our Vision for children, young people and their families across County Durham.

We are going to work together to deliver this plan by the end of 2025 when we, working with children, young people and families, will review it in detail to see how we have done.



# Growing Up in County Durham

Delivery Plan

2023 – 2025

Starting Well Partnership Board

We have approved the Growing Up in County Durham strategy to improve services for children, young people and families in County Durham and responsibility for delivery has been delegated to the Children, Young People and Families Partnership Board (CYP&FPB). The CYP&FPB is made up of a number of different organisations including:

- [North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board](#)
- [County Durham and Darlington Constabulary](#)
- [County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust](#)

There are also representatives from differing teams within Durham County Council including:

- Inclusion and Vulnerable Groups
- Education
- Performance
- Children's Social Care
- Children's Safeguarding
- Public Health
- County Durham Care Partnership Integrated Commissioning

To do this, the partnership is divided into 4 sub-groups who each take aspects of the work for delivery. These four sub-groups are;

- Best Start in Life
- Preparing for Adulthood (Transitions)
- Inclusion and Vulnerable Groups
- Service Transformation

## Developing the Strategy

The strategy was developed in co-production with our children, young people and families. There were three stages to this process during 2022:

1. February to 30 April – co-production sessions with children, young people, families and carers via the SDG and the VCS Alliance to establish the vision for the strategy and the priority areas that the strategy should focus on.
2. 22 June to 10 August – wider consultation on the proposed vision statement and priority areas, carried out via an online survey and targeted consultation with stakeholder groups.
3. 5 September to 12 October – further consultation on the proposed strategy document, carried out through an online survey with stakeholder groups, as well as presenting the draft strategy to key stakeholders, giving them the opportunity to comment before final agreement at the Children, Young People and Families Partnership Board. The consultation period has been extended from 2 October to 12 October as promotion of the strategy has been on hold due to the national mourning period.

The result was a strategy with six priority areas;

1. Family, friends and community.
2. Being safe.
3. Breaking Down the Barriers
4. Development, learning and skills.
5. Physical health, mental health and emotional wellbeing.
6. Access to community support and services.

## How will we make sure the strategy is delivered?

Some of the issues raised we have already identified and they are being addressed. The CYP&FPB will seek assurance that this work is delivering for our children and young people and is addressing the areas you identified to us.

The following pages set out the priority areas identified by you for us to improve, where responsibility for this lies, and what is happening to deliver the improvements you need. The number in the box next to the action links the action to those listed on P9 of the Strategy.

We need to know if and when we have succeeded so we need to identify, at the start, how we are going to measure our success. By 2025, when this strategy ends, we will have:

1. Created 15 Family Hubs to provide better community-based support and services.
2. Improved children and young people's experience of the move from children to adult's services.
3. Improved attendance levels for all children and young people across all schools and settings.
4. Increased the numbers of young people traveling by bus.
5. Shown how children, young people and families are more involved in developing the support and services they use.
6. Increased the number of children who achieve a healthy development during the first years of their life.
7. Reduced the number of times children and young people have to go to hospital with unintentional injuries.
8. Developed an online toolkit which will show partners what is happening across the County and where we need to focus our efforts.

Priority area	High level action	Tasks	Timescale	Owner	
<b>Breaking Down the Barriers</b>	Working with the strengths and opportunities in local communities to develop a network of family hubs which can support the delivery of a range of local community support and services to children, young people and families	Production of a delivery plan for Family Hubs in County Durham	Dec-22	Vulnerable groups CYP&FPB sub-group	1
		Family Hubs operational	Apr-23	Vulnerable groups CYP&FPB sub-group	2
		Review and adjust <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What services are delivered from which Hubs?</li> <li>How is that going?</li> </ul> What needs to change?	On-going to March 2025	Vulnerable groups CYP&FPB sub-group	3
<b>Development of Learning and Skills</b>	Ensure every young person, who has health, education and/or care needs, and their family, has access to the right support on their move from children's to adult's services, when they are old enough to do so.	Statutory transitions	New work plan in development	14-25 Transitions CYP&FPB sub-group	4
		CAMHS transitions			5
<b>Access to Community Support and Services</b>	Monitor and evaluate the Bus Service Improvement Plan in relation to benefits brought to young people through concessionary	Network wide ticketing – so one ticket can be used on all busses.	Timescales in Development	North East Joint Transport Committee	6
		Improved CCTV provision to improve safety	Timescales in Development	North East Joint Transport Committee	7

Priority area	High level action	Tasks	Timescale	Owner	
	fares and other favourable benefits, allowing young people to have wider access to health, education, leisure, volunteering and other services, and for young people aged 16 and over, work and apprenticeships.  Build and promote community, peer to peer support, buildings, people, facilities, and services that are available in communities as a clear offer which is communicated in a way that is easy for children, young people and families to understand.	Introduction of capped fares for all ages – target £2.50 region-wide multi-modal cap for CYP.	Timescales in Development	North East Joint Transport Committee	8
		Care Leavers concession	Timescales in Development	North East Joint Transport Committee	9
		Development of a community book	Action plan to be completed March 2023	County Durham Together Board	10
<b>Physical Health, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing</b>	Ensure children, young people and families have an equal role in the development and redesign of the support and services they use	Needs led neurodiversity support	March 2028 with interim goals	Service Transformation CYP&FPB sub-group	11
		Improving specialist services including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eating disorders</li> </ul>	March 2024	Service Transformation CYP&FPB sub-group	12

Priority area	High level action	Tasks	Timescale	Owner	
	Develop seamless services that support children, young people and families across health, education and social care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paediatric therapies</li> </ul>			
		Expand the DCC estate of children's residential homes	March 2024	Durham Sufficiency Board	13
		Re-procurement of the Short Break offer for families who care for children with SEND and complex health needs.	March 2024	Service Transformation CYP&FPB sub-group	14
<b>Family, Friends and Community</b>	Build and promote community, peer to peer support, buildings, people, facilities, and services that are available in communities as a clear offer which is communicated in a way that is easy for children, young people and families to understand.	Actions in this area to come from County Durham Together Board Who and when	Action plan due for completion June 2023	County Durham Together Board	15
<b>Being Safe</b>	Being and feeling safe in the community is one of the 6 strategic priorities set by the Safe Durham Partnership. For the SDP, this area is split	Reducing anti-social behaviour	New strategy recently agreed. Delivery plan in development	Safer Durham partnership	16

Priority area	High level action	Tasks	Timescale	Owner	
	into 5 covering anti-social behaviour, arson, housing, road safety and hate crime with a significant amount of work being undertaken in each area. Children and young people are mentioned specifically in relation to reducing rates of arson and deliberate fires in the SDP plan. This will be delivered through the Multi-Agency Arson Reduction Strategy 2021 - 2024	Reducing arson and deliberate fires	Delivered via Multi-agency arson reduction strategy 2021 - 24	Safer Durham partnership	17
		Hate crime and community tension		Safer Durham partnership	18



Appendix A  
Governance structure



Governance  
structure Jan 2023.p

Appendix B  
Reporting template



sub group  
reporting template.i

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# Annual update from Starting Well Partnership

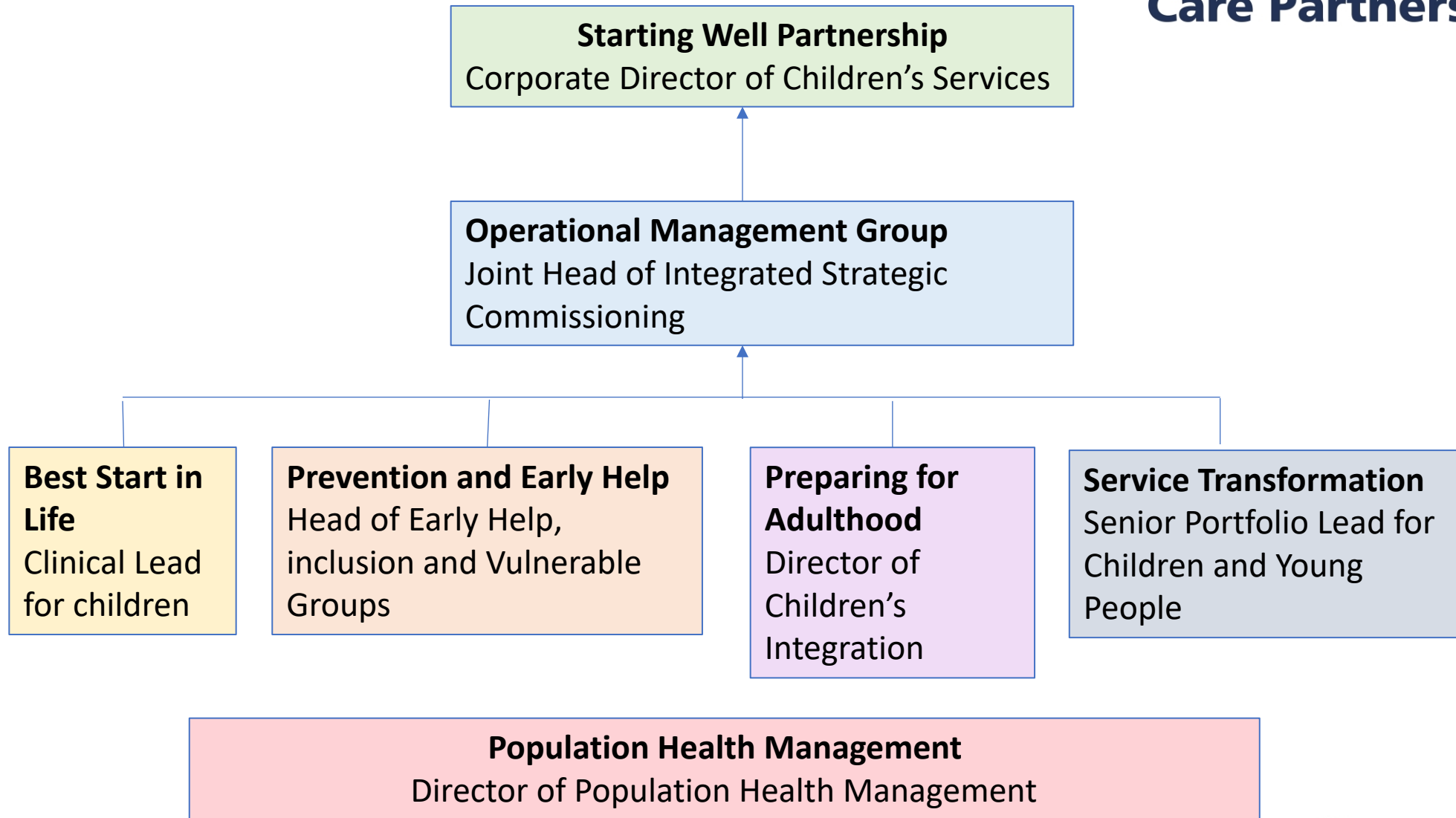
Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee

Alison Ayres, Commissioning Manager  
for Children's Services, County Durham  
Integrated Commissioning Team

# Who are the Starting Well Partnership?

- To work to improve pathways of care and activities for children and young people.
- Whole system working
- Recognising that we all impact on the lives of our children and young people





# Updates from 2023/24

- PAUSE funding
- Mental Health
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking children
- Preparing for Adulthood
- Growing Up in County Durham strategy



# Partnership Priorities for 24/25



Page 63

Working together to help keep the people of  
County Durham happy, healthy and at home

- Dental access, health, and fluoridation
- Preparing for Adulthood
- Supporting and improving education attendance
- Ensuring the provision of help, advice and support at the earliest opportunity

# Operational Management Group delivery in 23/24

- Delivery of GuiCD
- Service Transformation
- Best Start in Life
- Early Help and Prevention
- Preparation for adulthood





# Key Challenges

- Increases in demand for services across the system and increases in complexity and acuity
- Resources across the system
- Workloads and staff capacity





# Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11 July 2024

## Quarter Four, 2023/24 Performance Management Report



### Report of John Hewitt, Chief Executive

#### Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

#### Purpose of the Report

- 1 To share information about our performance with members, senior managers, employees and the public.
- 2 The report tracks our progress towards achieving the strategic ambitions and objectives set out in our 2023-27 council plan. It contains the most recent performance data available on 31 March. Contextual information relates to activity and events taking place in the fourth quarter of the 2023/24 financial year (January to March). It provides insights into what is going well and the issues we are addressing.

#### Executive Summary

- 3 We are a key player within the County Durham Together Partnership and are working with our partners to deliver the [County Durham Vision 2035](#). This vision sets out what we want the county to look like over the next decade and beyond. The overall 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 Our [Council Plan](#) sets out how we will contribute to achieving this vision, while continuing to effectively deliver our day-to-day services.
- 5 We refresh our Council Plan every year. Council has now approved the plan for the forthcoming four years ([Council Plan 2024-28](#)). We will commence reporting performance against our ambitions, objectives and priorities for this plan from 1 April.
- 6 We continue to be a 'well-functioning council' in relation to performance. We operate to the characteristics set out in guidance from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)<sup>1</sup>. And we are continuing to

<sup>1</sup> [Best Value standards and intervention](#)

develop the following through our performance management processes and the wider Corporate Business Intelligence Review:

- (a) A council-wide approach to continuous improvement, with frequent monitoring, performance reporting and updating of the corporate and improvement plans;
- (b) A Council Plan that 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. We regularly report our performance to the public to ensure citizens are aware of the quality of services being delivered.

7 The government has established an Office for Local Government (Oflog). Oflog aims to increase understanding about the performance of local authorities, warn when authorities are at risk of serious failure, and support local government to improve itself.

8 Oflog is bringing together existing data in an informative way through the [Local Authority Data Explorer](#). Their suite of metrics is being continually expanded and will eventually cover all local government responsibilities. The next tranche of data will be added later in the year. We will also add the new metrics to our performance framework and include in our reporting process.

## Context

9 We are a large organisation providing a broad range of services. Our operating environment can at times be challenging, influenced by various interconnected factors including inflationary and demand pressures, demographic shifts and the changing needs of our residents, economic uncertainties, and the ongoing impacts of global events.

- (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 and venues 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 our household recycling continues to come down. It is anticipated that significant national changes to domestic waste collections will improve recycling levels across the country and bring County Durham into line with national recycling rates. Bus patronage for our park and ride scheme is increasing and public bus services have been impacted by industrial action. Work is going on at national, regional and local levels to improve bus services;

- (c) Although statutory demand for children’s social care remains relatively low, children and young people receiving intensive support (children on a Child Protection Plan and taken into our care) remains relatively high. 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. Since 1 January 2024, 4% applications have been processed within the government’s 20-week timescale. This remains a concern. Care Acts assessment timeliness for adult social care clients is improving and remains an area of strong focus for us. Homelessness outcomes are generally improving, although we continue to see an increase in people presenting as already homeless. Overall, our leisure centres are performing well and our leisure transformation programme is having a positive impact, although visits remain below target and are still recovering following the pandemic;
- (d) The overall crime rate in County Durham has fallen and compares favourably with many council areas in the region. Domestic abuse incidents reported to the police remained static, however, the number of victims referred to our support services increased by 15%. 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 or where legal proceedings have been instigated under the selective licensing scheme is now at 48%. Timeliness of repairing all categories of highway defects are better than or near target. Serious casualties from road traffic accidents have increased. We continue to support a reduction in road traffic casualties through road improvements and campaigns;
- (e) Our customer services team is answering a greater proportion of calls within three minutes. Our collection rates remain consistent with previous years. And we are processing housing benefit and council tax reduction requests more quickly (both new claims and changes in circumstances). Satisfaction with our overall service delivery remains high. Our sickness absence rate is 0.33 days per full time equivalent lower than two years ago. We continue to experience recruitment difficulties for specific roles and are developing HR interventions across the posts affected and monitoring the situation.

## **Recommendation**

10 Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (a) note the overall position and direction of travel in relation to quarter four performance (January to March), 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://www.durham.gov.uk/media/34954/Durham-County-Council-Plan-2023-2027/pdf/CouncilPlan2023-2027.pdf?m=638221688616370000>
- Quarter Three, 2023/24 Performance Management Report  
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s186162/Q3%202023-24%20Corporate%20Performance%20Report.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>

## Author

Steve Evans

Contact: [steve.evans@durham.gov.uk](mailto:steve.evans@durham.gov.uk)

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **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 Four, 2023/24





## Contents (blue text links to sections of the report)

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<b>Our Economy</b>	➤ <a href="#">Executive Summary</a>	
	Performance Dashboards	➤ <a href="#">Educational attainment</a>
<b>Our People</b>	➤ <a href="#">Our People Performance Report</a>	
	Performance Dashboards	➤ <a href="#">Early help and referrals</a>
		➤ <a href="#">Assessments, protection plans, in need, social worker vacancies</a>
		➤ <a href="#">Children in care, unaccompanied asylum seeking children</a>
		➤ <a href="#">Education</a>
	➤ <a href="#">SEND</a>	
	➤ <a href="#">Data Tables</a>	

## Executive Summary

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- 1 This report shows how we are performing against the priorities set out in our Council Plan 2023-27.
- 2 We are reporting performance 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.
- 3 We are reporting the most recent performance available as at 31 March. Contextual information relates to activity and events taking place in the fourth quarter of the 2023/24 financial year (January to March).

### Our people

- 4 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

- 5 Demand for children's social care support remains consistent and re-referral rates are low compared to comparators. The new Early Help model is generating more partner-led Early Help assessments strengthening County Durham's system-wide capacity to deliver support to families in need. A wide-ranging programme of activity and support is being delivered in Family Hubs, and other venues with partners.
- 6 School attendance is steadily improving following an increase in absence nationally, regionally, and locally following the pandemic. We are working closely with partners to develop a new Partnership Protocol - "Working Together to Support School Attendance."

### Issues we are addressing

- 7 Requests for new education, health, and care plans (EHCPs) increased substantially between 2019 and 2022, and continued at a very high level in 2023, impacting on the 20-week timeliness performance. A comprehensive action plan is in place driving improvements to the EHCP assessment process and educational psychologist (EP) capacity, which have begun to have an impact on the system. Although, during quarter four, 2% of EHCPs were completed within 20 weeks. We expect the waiting times and waiting list for EP advice to steadily reduce and overall timeliness to steadily improve throughout the next financial year. At the time of writing, 5% of EHCPs were finalised within 20 weeks in April.
- 8 Although statutory demand for children's social care 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. However, both decreased in quarter four, and continue to be closely monitored. The service is reviewing these trends as part of impacts of the Early Help model and implementing the findings of the national Care Review.

- 9 As part of our Placement Sufficiency strategy, we are expanding our provision of children’s homes. We are strengthening our existing provision with more management capacity and a “grow your own” approach to recruit new workers with no experience of residential care to tackle sector shortages. In 2023 we opened a new home and purchased two new buildings, which we will open as homes during 2024. Furthermore, we secured some ongoing capital investment to ensure all our homes continue to be updated, are homely, and fit for purpose.
- 10 The number of children and young people Electively Home Educated increased in quarter four but is likely to be partly a seasonal trend. Latest benchmarking for the autumn term for this academic year places the county in-line with national rates. The service continues 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, and wider children’s services colleagues to consider suitable education and safeguarding of children.

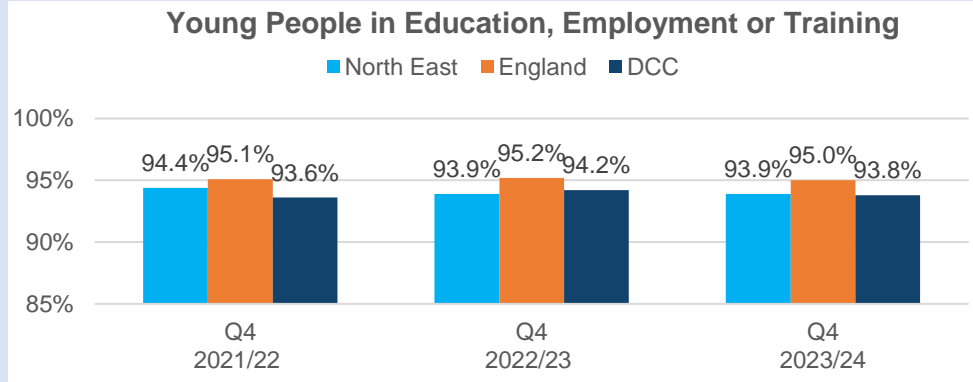
## **Risk Management**

- 11 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 October and December 2023.

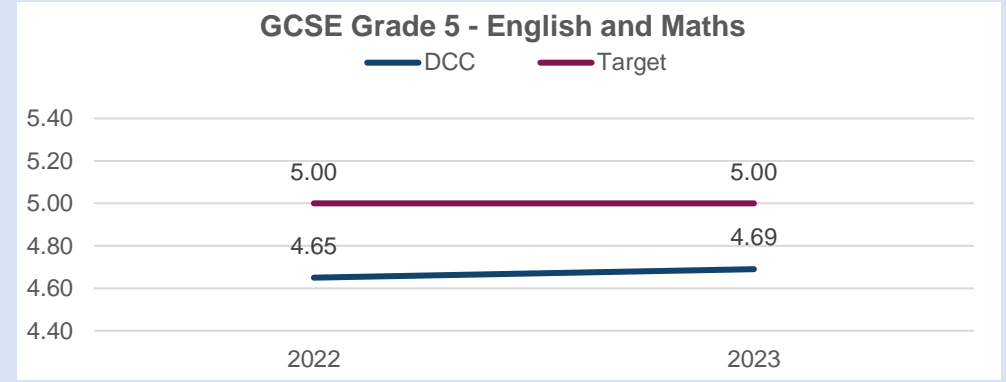
# Education Dashboard

(annual data - provisional)

## Education, employment or training



## GCSE Grade 5 - English and Maths



Due to this metric not being an official statistic published by the DfE, national and regional benchmarking is not available.

## Education

- 12 The proportion of County Durham young people aged 16-17 in Education, Employment and Training is similar to previous years (93.8% in quarter four 2023/24 compared to 94.2% the previous year). We remain slightly below target which is to exceed England (95%) and regional (93.9%) averages.
- 13 2023 average attainment in GCSE English and maths showed a marginal improvement to grade 4.69 from 4.65 in 2022. The target is to reach an average grade of 5 by 2030.
- 14 We continue to work in partnership with schools, academies and trusts ensuring that County 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 County Durham.
- 15 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 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

- 16 [Fighting health inequalities through research excellence and collaboration](#) was published in April 2024 by Health Equity North and highlights higher rates of children in care in the North than the South of England. Key headlines include:
- (a) The North East continues to record the highest overall care rates.
  - (b) The 27% increase in the number of children's homes between 2020 and 2023 disproportionately affected the North of England. There are 1,176 children's homes in the North of England, and just 1,704 in the rest of England.
  - (c) The North accounts for 28% of the child population, but 36% of the children in care.
  - (d) In England, in 2015, children in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods were over ten times more likely to be in care than children in the least deprived 10%. This corroborates analysis previously undertaken on children in care in Durham.
- 17 A [report](#) by Action for Children recommends introducing a single, cohesive code for children exploited into criminal activity. This would include a new offence of child sexual exploitation. It also states the need for coordinated policy and practice at both a local and national level, and more research into what works to learn from best practice.

## **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

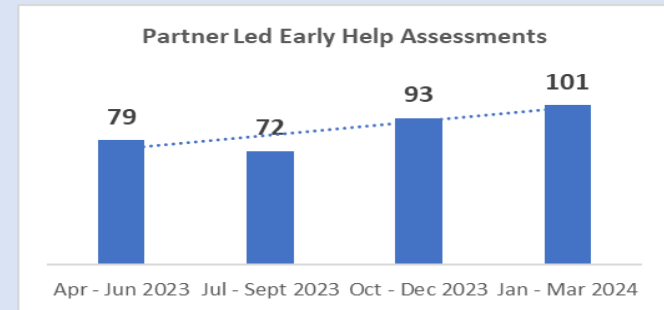
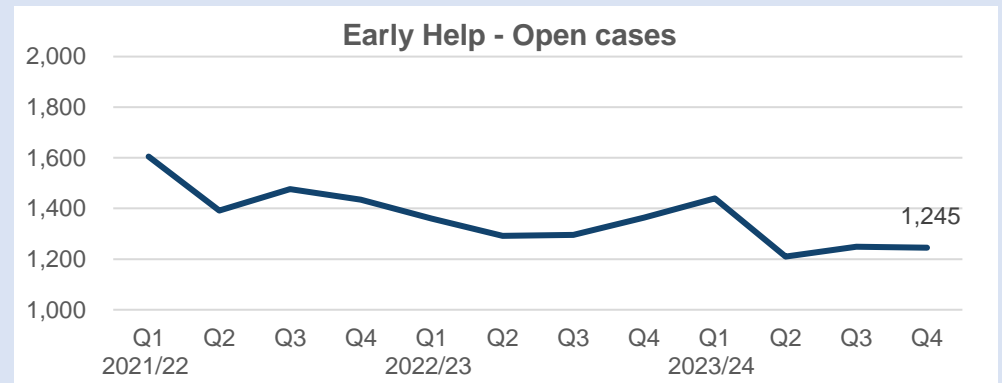
- 18 An annual investment of £850 million is going to councils to create new places for young people with SEND and in Alternative Provision in mainstream and special schools, and to improve the accessibility of existing buildings. However, it is felt that this will not be enough to address pressures in the system.
- 19 This will provide specialist support for children with autism, learning difficulties, mobility difficulties and more to meet their extra needs, including extra encouragement in their learning, help communicating with other children and support with physical or personal care difficulties, such as using the toilet or getting around the school safely.

# Children's Social Care Dashboard: Early Help and Referrals

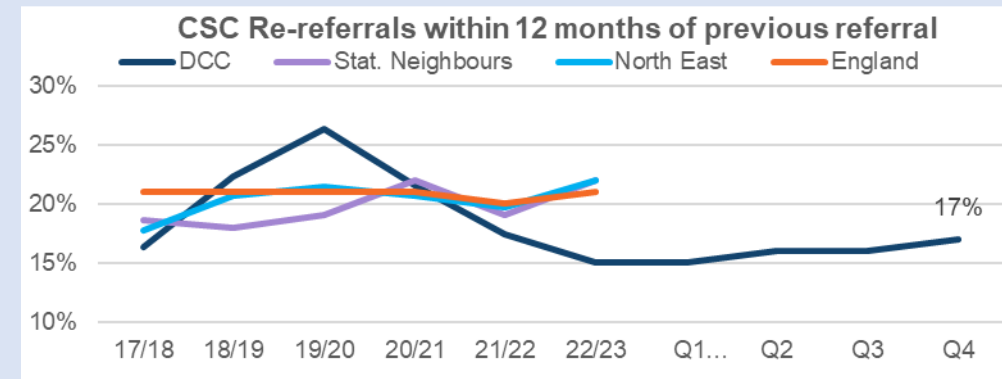
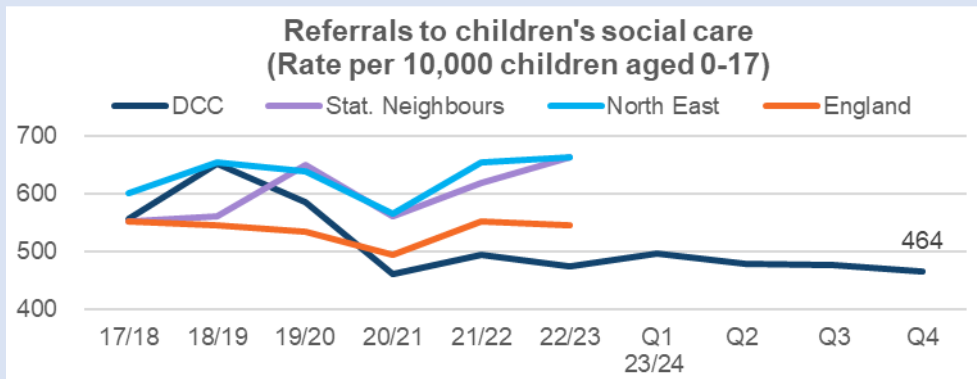
(12 months ending 31 March 2024 / at 31 March 2024)

## Early Help

- Demand reduced post-Covid, partly due to a change in operating model with more partner led early help conversations.
- 15 Family Hubs were launched in April 2023. The hubs provide 'one stop shop' access to family support (from conception to age 19, or 25 years for children with SEND). Between September 2023 - March 2024, 3,698 people registered (1,503 families), including 529 aged 0-6 months.
- Feedback from those working with the service remains positive: 95% of parent/carers, and 94% of young people are happy or very happy with the support received. And 97% of parents/carers and 97% of young people felt services worked well together to meet the needs of the family.
- Since October 2022, 3,062 assessment forms have been submitted through the Early Help Assessment Portal, with 18% (559) from partners who are leading on assessments. The chart shows an upward trend in partner led assessments in 2023/24 (345 in total), three quarters of which are from education (43%) and health (32%) organisations.



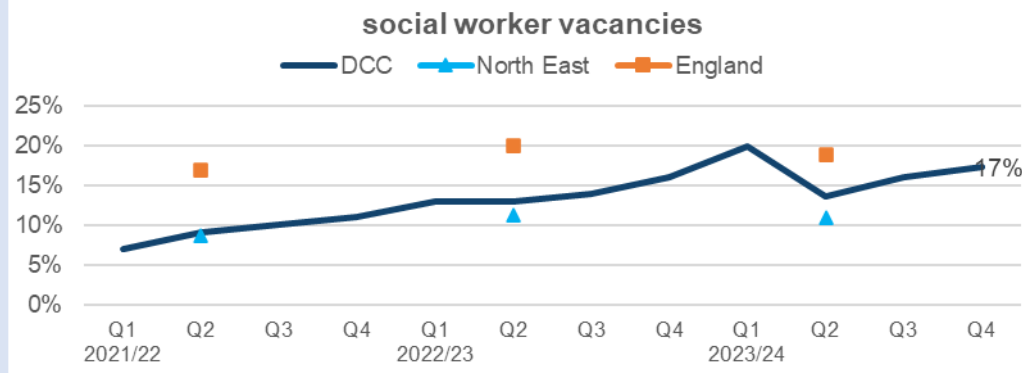
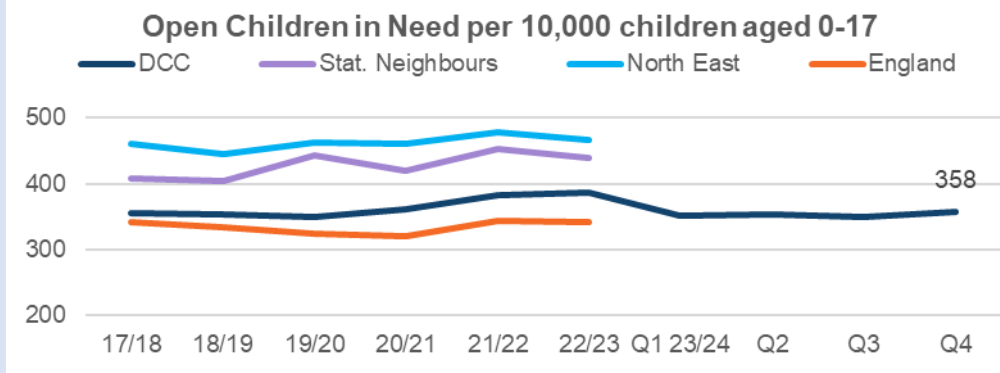
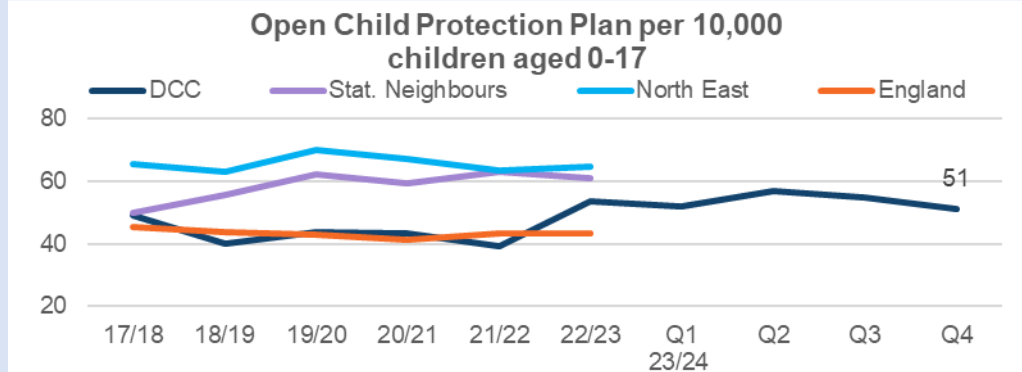
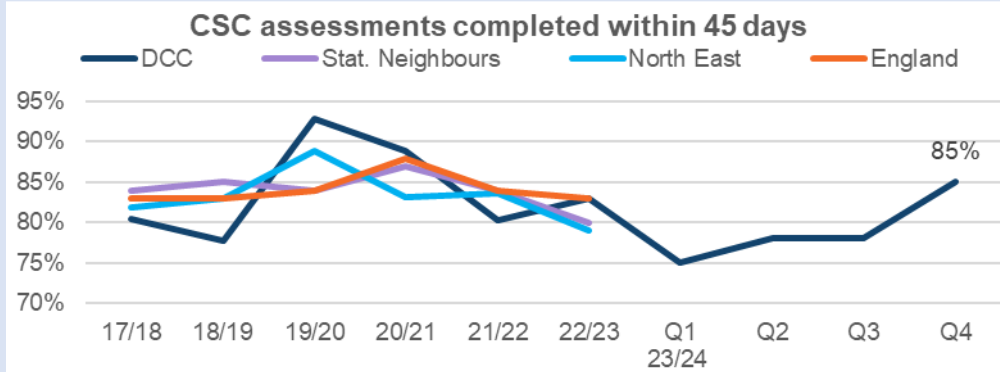
## Referrals





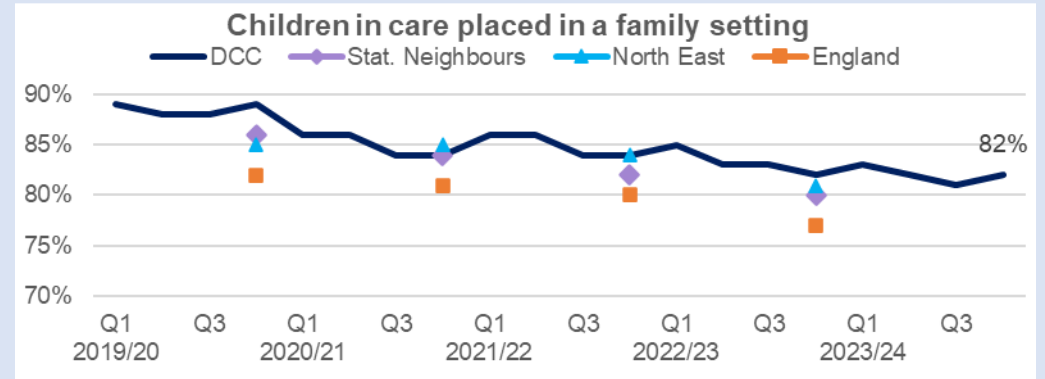
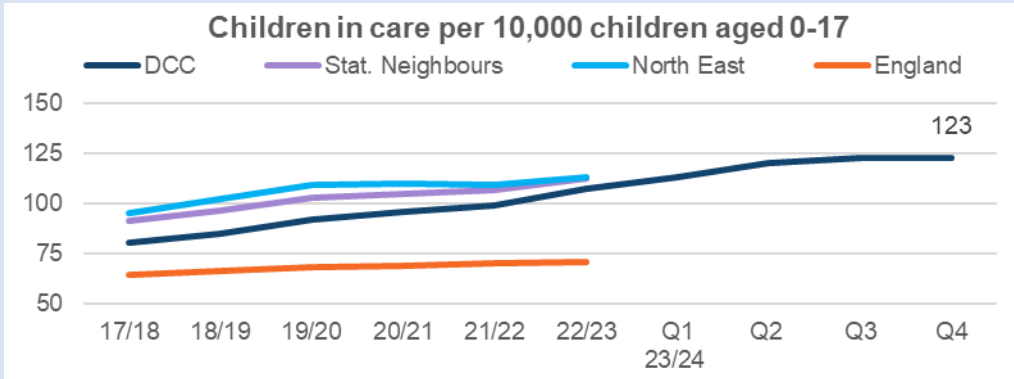
# Children's Social Care Dashboard: assessments, protection plans, in need, social worker vacancies

(12 months ending 31 March 2024 / at 31 March 2024)

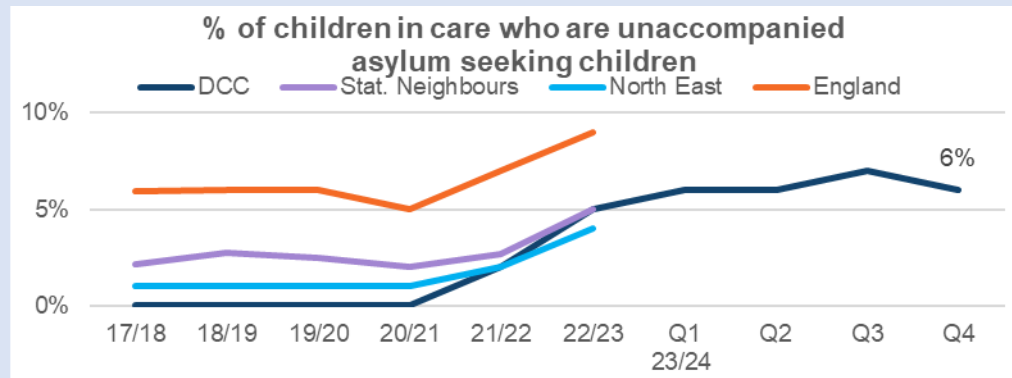


# Children's Social Care Dashboard: in care, unaccompanied asylum seeking children

(12 months ending 31 March 2024/ at 31 March 2024)



Slight increase in the proportion placed in a family setting linked to increases in numbers placed in foster care and children in care starting to plateau



## Children's Social Care and Early Help

- 20 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 County Durham.
- 21 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.
- 22 There are a number of partners who are using the new assessment where a Team Around the Family 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.
- 23 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.
- 24 A wide-ranging programme of activity and support is being delivered in Family Hubs, and at other venues, with partners. Examples of delivery include:

### Emotional Wellbeing and Behaviour Programme (EWB)

- The EWB programme has continued, with children taking part in courses including Chill Kids, Teen Zone, Safer Choices, and Staying Cool Teen. Data is reported on a termly basis, and so data from the spring term will be provided in 2024/25.

### Parenting Programmes

- Triple P: Teen Steppingstones (SEND), Fear-Less (school avoidance), Incredible Years Baby, Toddler and Pre School, and Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities, which is a parent-led suite of programmes.
- All parenting programme data are reported on a termly basis, and so data from the spring term will be provided in 2024/25.

### Universal Programmes

- Between January and March 2024, across all Family Hubs, 320 Baby and Me (for under-1s) / Toddler and Me (for 1-2-years-old) sessions were available for families. These were attended by 954 individuals with a combined attendance of 3,538 (3.7 sessions each on average).
- 25 The target of 1,230 families on our Stronger Families Programme attaining significant and sustained outcomes has been exceeded. 122 families were claimed in quarter four, bringing the total for 2023/24 to 1,264 families (103% of target). Since the start of the programme in 2015, 7,904 families have been supported.

- 26 The 'Enhanced Parenting Support Pathway' offers families a seamless support pathway from the antenatal period until a child is 2½ years old, delivered by Early Help Practitioners within the One Point Service alongside Health Visitors. The aim is to provide additional help and support to families at risk of poor outcomes by providing access to services in Family Hubs, including learning and development, and parenting support and advice. In 2023/24, One Point has worked with the families of 110 children.
- 27 Between December 2023 and March 2024, One Point worked with the families of 35 children following a request for pre-birth Family Hub support. Early Help Practitioners from Family Hub teams working alongside the family Social Worker, provide intensive family support flexible to the needs and strengths of the parent/(s) during the ante-natal and early post-natal period to promote safe and effective parenting.
- 28 The One Point Service manages quality systems and collects feedback to learn and improve services for its users. This includes learning reviews, thematic audits, and service user feedback. Below are some examples of recent comments recorded:
- Respondent comment from quarter three parent/carer survey:  
*"Everything has helped me a lot after what myself and the children have been through the help has made me feel more positive for our future and less like a failure all the time very grateful thank you for the help xx and xx are both amazing."*
  - Respondent comment from quarter three young person satisfaction survey:  
*"Having the support I need made me feel better it encourage me to go to school more often and I know If I need the help I know who I needed to go to."*
- 29 Improved practice across statutory children's social care has led to a consistently low re-referral rate. The rate at quarter four (17%) is slightly higher than quarter three (16%), however it is still better than latest benchmarks. This means fewer children and their families require further support from safeguarding services following support.
- 30 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. However, both have decreased through quarter four and will continue to be closely monitored.
- 31 Overall numbers of children in care are similar to the end of quarter three. Levels had continued to increase in January and February but reduced in March 2024 to 1,213. The North East has the highest level in England and County Durham is slightly worse than the North East. Previously, underlying growth in the number of children in care was accelerating further due to an increased volume of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) as part of national relocation plans. Six percent of children in care are UASC, which has reduced from quarter three, but increased compared to 5% at the end of 2022/23 and just 2% at the end of 2021/22.
- 32 We currently have 12 Children's Homes across the county offering residential care to children and young people. These homes are regularly inspected by Ofsted with one home rated outstanding, seven rated as good and a further three requiring improvement. One further home is not rated at present as it has not been inspected.

- 33 These homes are a key element of our Placement Sufficiency programme and provide support and care for young people who cannot live at home, or short respite breaks when children and young people with disabilities need to have a little time away from their family or carer. There have been many developments across the service, including strengthening the existing management teams, with Deputy managers in post and also a “grow your own” approach to recruit new workers with no experience of residential care. During 2023 we opened a new home and purchased two new buildings which we will open as homes during 2024. Furthermore, we have secured some ongoing capital investment to ensure all our homes continue to be updated, are homely and fit for purpose.
- 34 A number of new children’s homes are being developed to ensure that as many children as possible live within County Durham and are able to maintain links with their schools, friends, families and hobbies. The new homes are different sizes (ranging from one to four places) so that children and young people with more complex needs can be cared for. An Edge of Care home is also being planned; this will offer short breaks and wider support to young people and their families to help them to remain living at home.
- 35 During 2023, 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 four’s performance (85%) is better than national and regional benchmarks and is an improvement against quarter three (78%).
- 36 We frequently need to readvertise social work posts due to a lack of suitable applicants. However, we have continued to release a number of recruitment campaigns to try and address these challenges, including increased social media promotion supported by strong recruitment web pages. In some cases, persistence and a different approach can help to resolve long standing recruitment challenges, our Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) team has been fully staffed this quarter having experienced recruitment challenges for more than two years.
- 37 It remains very difficult to recruit experienced social workers. In anticipation of new statutory guidance which could make it less attractive for social workers to remain on agency contracts, we are encouraging social workers with us on agency contracts to consider permanent employment and aiming to raise awareness of the council as a potential employer for agency workers working elsewhere.
- 38 The recruitment of newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) is the most effective way to maintain or increase our social work workforce. Our Social Work Academy was created in 2016 to allow us to support a greater number of NQSWs through their first year in practice. Our Academy offer remains strong and has recently been extended to provide additional support to social workers in their second year of practice, and there are plans to extend that support into the third year of practice, dependent on guidance from the Department for Education on the anticipated Early Career Framework. We are currently anticipating 23 NQSWs starting with us from summer 2024, but recruitment is ongoing so this could improve.
- 39 To enable us to recruit an increased number of NQSWs we have enhanced our approach to the recruitment of students with us on placement, and continue to invest in supporting social work qualification including:
- supporting the social work apprenticeship scheme, we currently have 10 apprentices who are being supported to qualify while in their previous posts who

are expected to graduate between 2024 and 2027, and 18 social work trainees who are a mix of internal and external recruits expected to qualify in 2027.

- supporting the next cohort of Step Up to Social Work scheme, six participants started the programme in January 2024 and are expected to qualify in spring 2025.
- partnering with Frontline, we expect to support 10 participants on the programme from autumn 2024, who should qualify and join us as NQSWs in autumn 2025.
- working within our regional partnerships to increase social work training capacity. The Department for Education announced in April 2024 that no further funding will be made available for teaching partnerships, so the North East Social Work Alliance is working on proposals for progressing this work in the future.

40 The recruitment and retention of social workers remain a priority for the service and a range of changes to pay, career development, progression and non-pay benefits have been implemented over the last year to retain staff as well as ongoing staff wellbeing support. Wellbeing support for social workers takes a range of forms including a wellbeing portal, which provides information for employees at all levels on a range of issues including physical activity, nutrition, remote working, mental health and emotional wellbeing, bereavement, domestic abuse, and substance misuse to specialist workshops on wellbeing and self-care.

41 In addition, specialist support offers employees or teams who have been involved in a traumatic event to benefit from de-brief sessions, reflection sessions or a commissioned specialist offer designed to promote reflection and healing. Flexible working can have a positive impact on employee engagement and wellbeing, supporting practitioners to better balance their work and home life, and support practitioners with caring responsibilities to stay in, or return to, the workforce. Following a successful pilot, the service is consulting on proposals to further encourage flexible working across social work teams.

# Education Dashboard

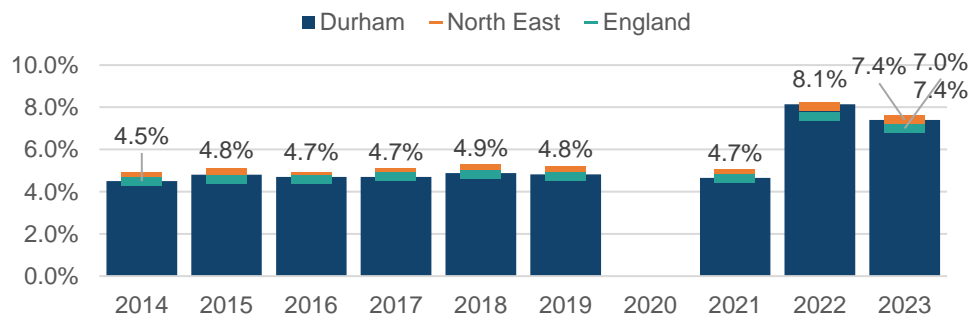
(academic year 2022/23 / as at 31 March 2024)

## 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.

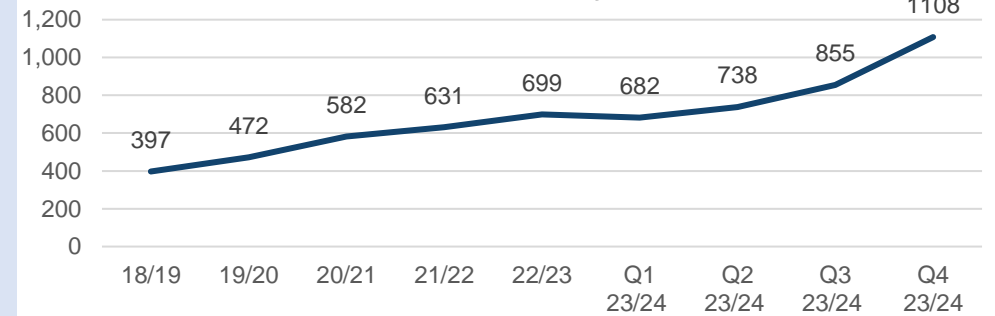
**Total Absence Rates - Authorised and Unauthorised**



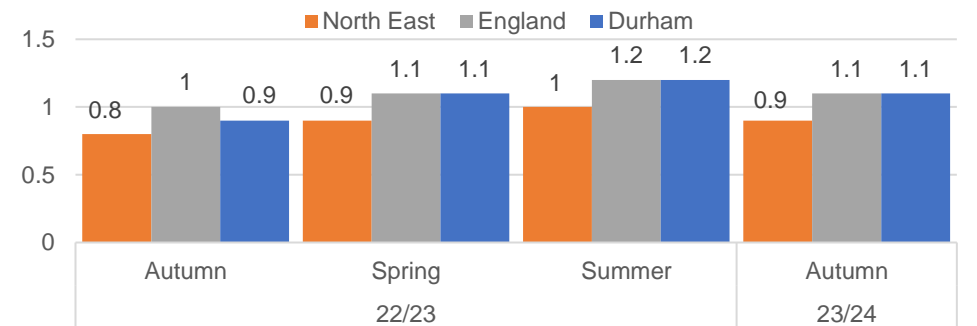
## Elective Home Education (EHE)

Annual data are based on end of academic years and accounts for year 11 leavers and the reason for a dip in quarter one data. This also accounts for Q4 being the peak.

**Children Who are Electively Home Educated**



**Rate of EHE Children**



## **Attendance**

- 42 National data on attendance rates was released in quarter four. Absence rates reduced in County Durham from 8.1% in 2021/22 to 7.4% in 2022/23. Similarly national and regional comparators reduced over that time have falling from 7.8% and 7.9% to 7% and 7.4% respectively. Latest data shows that autumn term 2023/24 attendance has improved further with overall absence at 7%.
- 43 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, regionally and locally have reduced.
- 44 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.
- 45 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.
- 46 We are working closely with partners to develop a new Partnership Protocol - "Working Together to Support School Attendance."

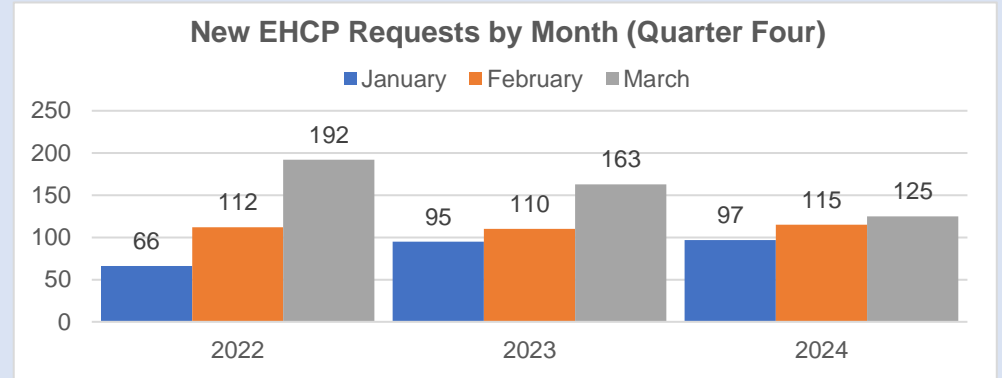
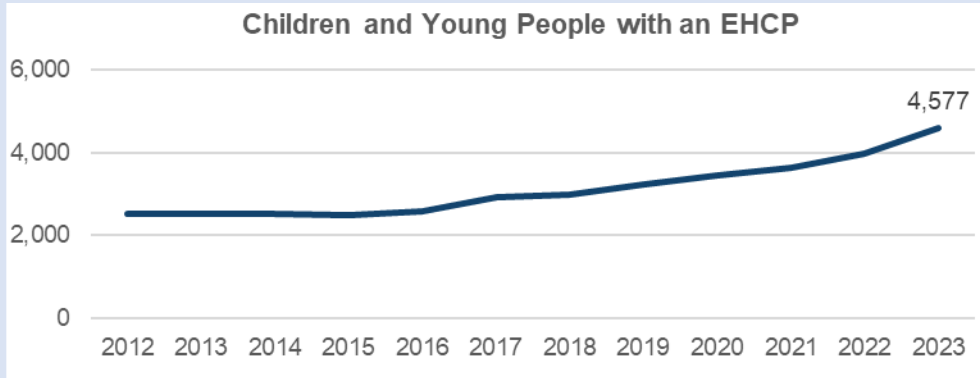
## **Elective Home Education (EHE)**

- 47 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.
- 48 Spring is our highest point in the year for EHE numbers – in two months the Year 11 cohort will move on, and this Year 11 group is large at 317 currently – in June, our numbers will therefore decrease to around 800 again. Our proportion of EHE per pupil population remains low and fluctuates between 0.8% and 1.1% over the academic year and is now around 1.2% to spring – although the numbers do increase year on year mirroring national trends.
- 49 We have had a high number of families moving into the county at the end of the autumn term and into the spring who have decided to home educate which appears to have also impacted on number. Again, the percentage will likely come down to around 0.9% population in June.



# SEND Dashboard

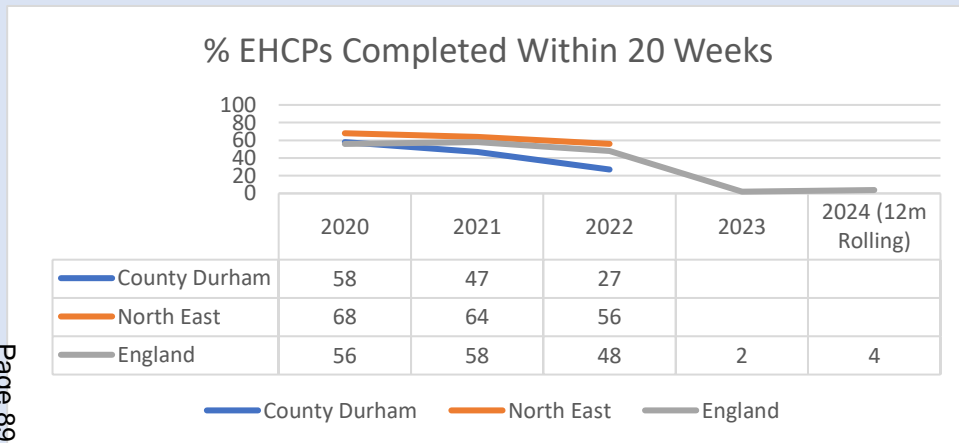
(12 months rolling / annual data)



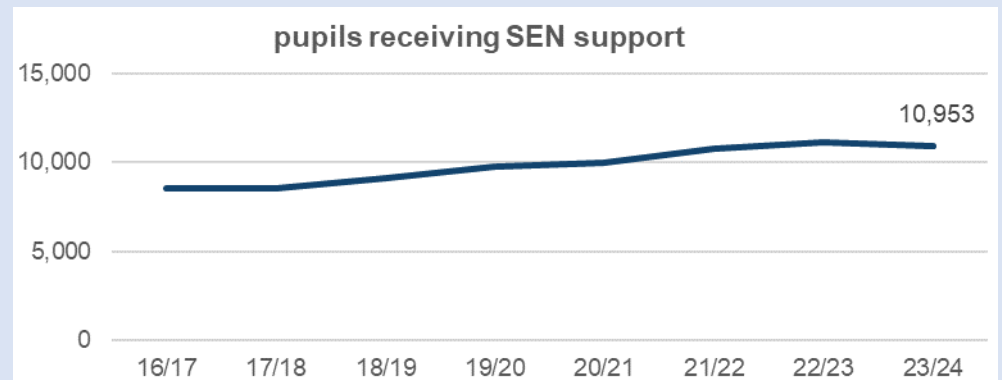
## EHCPs completed in 20 weeks

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 and latest data, albeit provisional shows EHCP timeliness at 6% for April and 7% for May to date. This equates to 4% since 1 January 2024.



## Special Educational Need Support



## Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

- 50 Requests for new EHCPs increased substantially between 2019 and 2022 and continue at a very high level in 2023/24. The assessment process is complex with a number of inputs required from schools, social care and health services in line with the statutory guidance. In 2019 we received an average of 50 requests per month and this has increased to 82.
- 51 Latest data for quarter four show that EHCP requests have fallen off when comparing with the same period from previous years. Between January and March 2024, we received 337 requests for EHCPs, compared to 370 last year and 368 the year before that. Quarter four is the busiest time of year for new requests so a fall-off is hopefully indicative of a reprieve.
- 52 In addition to this increase in demand the underlying causes of the timeliness delays are:
- a national shortage of educational psychologists (EP) needed to undertake the required assessment and;
  - the timeliness of education provider responses to consultation and capacity challenges in providing suitable provision.
- 53 Improvements to the EHCP assessment process and EP capacity have begun to impact on the system, although, in quarter four of 2023/24, no EHCPs were completed within 20 weeks. Following their review of capacity and EHCP process the service are implementing a comprehensive action plan which seeks to address these challenges and reduce delay, particularly in relation to the backlog for EP advice.
- 54 Two contracts for extra EP locum support have been fully in place from January 2024 resulting in increased numbers of completed assessments. Recruitment is also underway for two agency workers in the Business Support team to support pressures created by the increased number of draft EHCPs to be issued and consulted on.
- 55 To reduce wider pressures in the SEND casework team created by increased numbers of assessments, three agency workers have been in place from mid-March 2024 with a focus on drafting EHCPs. Furthermore, the service 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.
- 56 These changes are driving improvements in EP throughput reducing unallocated cases within the EP service and the average time taken to allocate, reducing from nine weeks, in autumn of 2023 to two weeks in February 2024. Reducing time to allocate greatly reduces delays to EP advice being finalised and should improve timeliness overall.
- 57 However, overall performance remains unacceptable. Timeliness performance was 1.8% for 2023 and while we know that these pressures are not unique to County Durham, this is likely to be low compared to the majority of local authorities when national comparator information is published in the summer of 2024.
- 58 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 and overall timeliness to steadily

improve through the next financial year. 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 and at the time of writing, 8% of EHCPs were finalised within 20 weeks in April and 5% for May. This equates to 4% of EHCPs issued with timescales since 1 January 2024.

- 59 A new case management system was introduced in January 2024 which will impact on data quality and reporting over the next few months but will improve process administration and recording in the long-term.
- 60 SEND Inspection preparation continues with partners across health and education. We have developed an assurance programme and multi-agency self-evaluation development informed by learning from other areas being inspected.
- 61 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. The group meets every three months, latest progress includes:
- More services are developing clear written policy and guidance for staff in relation to Waiting Well practices.
  - Waiting Well needs are discussed at the first point of contact in more services than previously.
  - More services routinely gather Waiting Well feedback at the end of involvement.
  - More service improvement plans include details of how the workforce is enabled to understand the wider SEND offer.

# 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	Meeting or better than target	meeting or 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 <b>AND</b> the gap with England (G) is improving
worse than but within 2% of target	Direction of Travel (D) is worse than the previous year <b>OR</b> the gap with England (G) is deteriorating
more than 2% behind target	Direction of Travel (D) is worse than the previous year <b>AND</b> the gap with England (G) is deteriorating

More detail is available from the Strategy Team at [performance@durham.gov.uk](mailto:performance@durham.gov.uk)

# Our Economy: summary data tables

## 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
					16-17-year-olds in an apprenticeship	Apr-Jun 2023	7.3%	Tracker	8.5%	Apr-Jun 23	7.3%	4.8%	7%	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
					Uptake of free early education entitlement for 3-4-year-olds	2024	95.4%	Tracker	93.7%	2024	95.4%	93.7%	98.6%	No	No
					Children meeting expected standards in maths and reading at KS2	2024	59%	Tracker	65%	2024	59%	60%	61%	No	No
					Average grade of achievement within GCSE English and Maths to a Grade 5	2021/22	4.69	5 by 2030	new					No	No
					Disadvantaged cohorts meeting basic threshold measures in English and Maths	new			new					No	No
					Young people in education, employment and training	Dec 2023	93.8%	above N / NE	94.2%	Dec 2023	93.8%	95%	93.9%	Yes	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	at Mar 2024	1,245	Tracker	1,364					Yes	No
					Children's social care referrals per 10,000 population	at Mar 2024	464	Tracker	437	2022/23	473	545	663	Yes	No
					Children's social care re-referrals	at Mar 2024	17%	Tracker	15%	2022/23	15%	21%	22%	Yes	No
					Children's social care assessments completed within 45 days	at Mar 2024	85%	Tracker	76%	2022/23	83%	83%	79%	Yes	No
					Children in need per 10,000 population	at Mar 2024	358	Tracker	334	2022/23	387	343	467	Yes	No
					Children on a child protection plan per 10,000 population	at Mar 2024	51	Tracker	52	2022/23	54	43	65	Yes	No
					Children looked after per 10,000 population	at Mar 2024	123	Tracker	105	2022/23	107	71	113	Yes	No
					Care leavers aged 16-24	at Mar 2024	466	Tracker	290					Yes	No
					Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children as a percentage of all children in care	at Mar 2024	6%	Tracker	5%	2022/23	5%	9%	4%	Yes	No
					Social worker vacancies	at Feb 2024	17%	Tracker	15.5%	Sep-23	14%	18.9%	10.9%	Yes	No
					Children in care in a family setting	at Mar 2024	82%	Tracker	82%	as at Mar 23	82%	77%	81%	Yes	No
					Families on our Stronger Families Programme attaining significant and sustained outcomes	2023/24	1,264	1,230	581					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
					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%		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%		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%		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%		No
					Children who are electively home educated	Jan-Apr 2024	1088	Tracker	699						No
					Children eligible for free school meals	2023/24	32.4%	Tracker	30.6%	2023/24	32.4%	24.8%	14.8%		No
					Take-up on free school meals	2022/23	23%	Tracker	20.6%	2022/23	23%	18.6%	23.8%		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	4,748	Tracker	3,975						No
					New requests for EHCPs	2023	986	Tracker	974						No
					EHCPs completed within 20 weeks	2023	2%	Tracker	27%	2023	2%	48%	56%		No
					Pupils on SEN support	2023/24	10,953	Tracker	11,174						No

## Public Health KPIs

96	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%	No	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%	No	No
					Gap in breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks between County Durham and national average	2022/23	19.0pp	Tracker	18.7pp					No	No



**Children and Young People's  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**11 July 2024**



**Refresh of the Work Programme  
2024/25 for Children and Young  
People's Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee**

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**Report of Helen Bradley, Director of Legal and Democratic Services**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

None

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To provide the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CYP OSC) with an updated work programme for 2024/2025.

**Executive summary**

- 2 CYPOSC review their work programme each year to reflect the objectives and associated outcomes and actions identified within the Council Plan and in the context of the County Durham Vision 2035.
- 3 The proposed CYPOSC work programme has been framed around the shared County Durham Vision 2035 which has been developed with partners around three strategic ambitions – 'more and better jobs', 'long and independent lives' and 'connected communities.
- 4 Overview and scrutiny work programmes are designed to be flexible to accommodate items which may arise throughout the year. This flexibility is particularly important as we have an extensive work programme and we must ensure we are able to accommodate issues that may arise during the term of the work programme.

**Recommendations**

- 5 Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- a) Receive and comment on the proposed CYPOSC work programme for 2024/2025.
- b) Agree the work programme for 2024/2025 as attached at appendix 2 and the flexibility it offers to respond to emerging issues.
- c) Identify a topic for in-depth or light touch review activity.

## **Background**

- 6 Scrutiny committees adapted to the change during the pandemic and some of those adaptations have become a part of business as usual for the committee such as briefing reports being used to provide information to members of the committee. The CYPOSC work programme is refreshed annually and takes into consideration the priorities of the Committee and areas identified by the service.
- 7 The overview and scrutiny committee's work programmes are informed by:
  - Council Plan
  - County Durham Vision 2035
  - Cabinet's Notice of Key Decisions
  - Partnership Plans and Strategies
  - Performance and Budgetary control data
  - Changes in government legislation
  - Key questions for improving performance.
- 8 The County Durham Partnership agreed a Vision for County Durham 2035 which sets out our strategic direction and what we would like to achieve over the next 15 years and is written around three broad ambitions for the people of County Durham:
  - More and better jobs
  - People live long and independent lives
  - Connected communities
- 9 Each ambition contains a number of objectives together with some council specific objectives. Following the refresh of the Council Plan in February 2024, it is now structured around five themes which reflect our contribution towards achieving the three ambitions within the Vision for County Durham as well as the council's own improvement agenda:
  - Our Economy
  - Our People
  - Our Communities

- Our Environment
- Our Council

## **Council Plan 2024– 2028**

- 10 The Council Plan is the primary corporate planning document for the county council and details Durham County Council’s contribution towards achieving the objectives set out in the Vision for County Durham 2035 together with its own change agenda. It aims to provide a readable and accessible summary for members, partners and the public of our priorities for the county and the main programmes of work of work that we will undertake to help achieve these priorities. The Plan will now be refreshed each year to reflect the integration of corporate and financial planning.
- 11 Both the Vision for County Durham and the Council Plan are structured around the three ambitions for the county and our own improvement agenda. The ‘our council’ theme captures the corporate initiatives the council has identified and wants to undertake to achieve the ambitions within the vision:
- a) Our resources will be managed effectively.
  - b) Create a workforce for the future.
  - c) Design our services with service users.
  - d) Use data and technology more effectively.
  - e) We will build an inclusive and welcoming employee culture.
- 12 The key themes which apply to the CYP OSC are ‘Our Economy’ and ‘Our People’ with the relevant ambitions detailed below:
- Our Economy**
- a) Young people will have access to good quality education, training and employment.
- Our People**
- a) Children and young people will enjoy the best start in life, good health and emotional wellbeing.
  - b) Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities will achieve the best possible outcomes.
  - c) All children and young people will have a safe childhood.

## **Current Work Programme**

- 13 During 2023/2024 the CYPOSC prioritised items to be considered at formal meetings due to the size of the work programme. Reports on other items were circulated via email to members. The committee has also undertaken budgetary and performance monitoring and considered overview and progress monitoring reports and presentations in relation to the following:

### **Areas of Overview and Monitoring Activity**

- Update on the Starting Well Partnership
- Holiday Activities with Healthy Food Programme
- Child Poverty
- Home to School Transport Outcomes
- Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report
- Family Hubs
- Support for Children and Families on the Edge of Care
- Pre Birth Intervention Update
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Overview
- School Attendance and Inclusion
- Schools Ofsted Update and Educational Attainment
- Elective Home Education Update
- Children's Social Care Demand
- Third Party Payments and Sufficiency - Informal Information Session
- Think Autism - Briefing Report
- Universal Youth Work - Briefing Report
- Stronger Families - Briefing Report
- Support for Young Carer's - Briefing Report
- Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report
- Director of Public Health Annual Report
- Health and Wellbeing Board Annual Report.

### **Budgetary and performance monitoring:**

- Quarterly budgetary monitoring for the Children and Young People's Service Grouping.
- Quarterly corporate performance monitoring for the Children and Young People's Service Grouping.

14 In addition, the CYP OSC has also considered the following areas which cut across objectives in the Council plan or cut across the remit of other Overview and Scrutiny Committees including:

- 0-25 Family Health Services Update
- Best Start in Life
- Preparation for Adulthood
- Valuing Neurodiversity in County Durham
- Children and Young People and Vaping – Update on the Evidence Base
- Sexual Health Strategy
- Support for Young People who are Not in Education, Employment or Training - Briefing Report

### **Areas for Consideration in the CYP OSC Work Programme**

- 15 Members of the CYP OSC are asked to agree the proposed work programme for 2024/25 that has been prepared and is attached at appendix two. The work programme is very comprehensive drawing on topical areas across the remit of the committee and it should be noted that it is also flexible. The draft work programme can be found appended to this report at appendix 2
- 16 Paragraphs 13 and 14 of the report identifies the activity undertaken by the committee during 2023/24. The committee is asked to consider areas for inclusion in the draft work programme for 2024/25 considering the current Council Plan and the Vision for County Durham 2035. It is also important that members receive information on OFSTED inspections and the results of recent inspection reports are factored into the draft work programme.

## Conclusion

- 17 The work programme identifies areas of work that fall within the remit of CYP OSC and is flexible in its delivery.

## Background papers

- [Council Plan 2024-28](#)
- [County Durham Vision 2035](#)

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<b>Authors:</b>	Ann Whitton	Tel: 03000 268143
	Stephen Gwilym	Tel: 03000 268140

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

Not applicable

### **Finance**

Not applicable

### **Consultation**

Not applicable

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

Not applicable

### **Human Rights**

Not applicable

### **Climate Change**

Not applicable

### **Crime and Disorder**

Not applicable

### **Staffing**

Not applicable

### **Accommodation**

Not applicable

### **Risk**

The Overview and Scrutiny work programme is an important element of the Council's governance and risk management arrangements.

### **Procurement**

Not applicable

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## Appendix 2

<p><b>Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2024/2025</b></p> <p><b>Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b></p> <p><b>Lead Officer:</b> Stephen Gwilym</p> <p><b>Overview and Scrutiny Officer:</b> Ann Whitton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More and better jobs.</li> <li>• People live long and independent lives.</li> <li>• Connected communities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Note:</b></p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Review – A systematic six-monthly review of progress against recommendations/action plan</p> <p>Scrutiny/Working Group – In-depth review/light touch review</p> <p>Overview/progress – Information on an issue; opportunity to comment, shape, influence, progress with a scrutiny review</p> <p>Informal Information Sessions - Presentation via Teams on areas that fall within the remit of the committee</p> <p>Briefing Reports – Reports for information on areas within the remit of the work programme</p> <p>Performance/Budget – Ongoing quarterly monitoring performance reports/budgets</p>
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<b>Item</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Comment</b>
	(Subject to confirmation of OSC meeting arrangements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal Committee</li> <li>• Circulated electronically as a briefing report</li> </ul>			

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Informal Information Session</b></li> </ul>			
Overview and Scrutiny Review					
New area for focused review TBC	The committee will need to consider and determine an area for focused review.	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>Overview/Progress</b>					
Partnership Priorities	11 July 2024	Report to Committee	Sarah Burns/Kathleen Berry	Members will be aware of the partnership's priorities and how their work aligns to the committee's.	The Committee will receive information on the work of the Partnership and their priorities for the year ahead.
CAMHS Waiting times Data	11 July 2024	Report for information to CYPOSC	James Graham	Report for Information	Members will receive information relating to waiting times for ASD, ADD and ADHD Services

Schools Energy Support Programme	20 September 2024 Members of ESCOSC invited to attend	Report to Committee	Rich Hurst	Members will receive information on the schools' energy support programme in County Durham.	Members will be aware of the work taking place in schools to ensure their buildings are energy efficient.
SEND Update	20 September 2024	Report to CYPOSC	Martyn Stenton / Paul Shadforth	Members will be aware of the work being done regarding sustainability of the High Needs Block and other SEND areas	The committee will receive information on how the service is addressing the challenges associated with High Needs Block funding
Home to School Transport Update	20 September 2024	Report to Committee	Keith Forster	Members will be aware of the progress of the proposals being put into action.	Members will receive updated information on the proposals going forward and those that have been implemented.
CAMHS Waiting times Data	20 September 2024	Report for information to CYPOSC	James Graham	Report for Information	Members will receive information relating to waiting

					times for ASD, ADD and ADHD Services
Review of Children's Social Care	Special Meeting (Oct 24) TBC	Report to Special CYPOSC	Rachel Farnham/ Siobhan Davies  Martyn Stenton	Members will be aware of the four parts of the Review of Children's Social Care and its impact on County Durham Children.	Members will receive information on the four parts of the review of Children's Social Care
Vaccinations	8 November 2024  Members of AWHOSC invited to attend	Report to CYPOSC	Michelle Baldwin	Members will be aware of the vaccination take up for children both in school and infancy.	Members will receive information on the take up of children's vaccination programmes including in school vaccinations
Best Start in Life	8 November 2024  Members of AWHOSC invited to attend	Report to CYPOSC	Michelle Baldwin	Members will receive information on programmes that address areas such as breastfeeding; smoking in pregnancy.	Members will continue to monitor and scrutinise the Best Start in Life Programmes.

0-25 Family Health Services	8 November 2024  Members of AWHOSC invited to attend	Report to CYPOSC	Michelle Baldwin/ Amanda Smith	Members will receive information from HDNHSFT in relation to the contracts they provide to DCC such as health visiting and school nurse.	Members will scrutinise the projects within the programme and gain an understanding of their performance.
Child Poverty	7 January 2025	Report to Committee	Martyn Stenton	Members will be aware of the work being done by DCC to support families who are experiencing poverty.	Members will continue to monitor and scrutinise the various projects and schemes to address child poverty in County Durham and comment accordingly.
Sufficiency Strategy Update	7 January 2024	Report to CYPOSC	Bernie Toomey/Paul Rudd	Members will receive updated information regarding placement sufficiency for our children looked after	Members will be aware of current placement sufficiency and of the future plans of the service.

CAMHS Waiting times Data	7 January 2025	Report for information to CYPOSC	James Graham	Report for Information	Members will receive information relating to waiting times for ASD, ADD and ADHD Services
Early Help	Special Meeting January 2025	Report to Committee	Martyn Stenton	Members will receive an overview of the service area including Family hubs on the support they give to statutory services	Members will be aware of the expanse work of the service especially their role in supporting families.
Evaluation of Multi Agency Pilot	Special Meeting (Feb) TBC Members of AWHOSC invited to attend	Report to CYPOSC	Jennifer Illingworth	Members will be aware of the early findings of the pilot.	Members will receive information regarding the early findings of the Multi Agency Pilot that took place in Consett to improve access to services

<p>CYP Mental Health, emotional wellbeing and resilience</p>	<p>Special Meeting (Feb) TBC  Members of AWHOSC invited to attend</p>	<p>Report to CYPOSC</p>	<p>Kirsty Wilkinson</p>	<p>Members will receive information on the various programmes to support children and young people with mental health and emotional wellbeing issues.</p>	<p>Members will Continue to monitor and scrutinise the number of programmes on offer to CYP both in school and in Members will Continue to monitor and scrutinise the number of programmes on offer to CYP both in school and in them.</p>
<p>Children's Healthy Weight</p>	<p>Special Meeting February 2025 (TBC)</p>	<p>Report to Committee</p>	<p>Kelly Rose</p>	<p>Members will receive information on the work done to support families maintain a healthy weight.</p>	<p>Members will be aware of the programmes and projects helping and supporting families to maintain a healthy weight.</p>

School Attendance Update	7 March 2025	Report to CYPOSC	Clare Nicholls	Members will be updated on attendance levels in county Durham schools and the work being done with schools and families to address this.	The Committee will receive updated data on the levels of school attendance in County Durham and how the service is working with schools to provide support.
Educational Attainment and School Ofsted Update	7 March 2025	Report to CYPOSC	Jim Murray	Members will receive information relating to educational attainment across all key stages of a child/young person's development.	Members will be aware of the educational attainment of children and young people in County Durham.
CAMHS Waiting times Data	7 March 2025	Report for information to CYPOSC	James Graham	Report for Information	Members will be updated of children's waiting times for ADD ADS and ADHD assessments
<b>Informal Briefing Sessions</b>					



Support for Young People who are Not in Education, Employment or Training	September 2024 pm (TBC)	Informal Information Session  EEOSC members invited to attend.	Helen Radcliffe	Members will be aware to the support provided to help young people into education, employment and training.	Members will receive and update on the projects and programmes supporting young people into education, employment and training.
Holiday Activities with Healthy Food Programme (Fun with Food) in County Durham	October 2024 (TBC)	Informal Information Session	Lyndsey Davison	Members will have an understanding of the work being done to help families during holiday periods and promotion of events taking place over the school holidays.	The Committee will receive detail of how the Fun with Food Programme has impacted on the lives of families and promotion of upcoming events taking place
Pre Birth Future Hope	March 2025 (TBC)	Informal Information Session	Jac Tyler	Members will be aware of the success of these interventions in supporting very young children.	Members will receive updated information relating to the progress of the pre

					birth and future hope
<b>Briefing Reports</b>					
Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report	July 2024	Circulate Electronically	Jayne Watson	Members will be aware of the work undertaken by the Corporate Parenting Panel during 22/23 and their plans for the future.	Report for information
Early Years	November 2024	Briefing Report to be circulated electronically	Helen Nixon	Members will receive information on the number of child care placements available in the County following the additional 15 hours of childcare for 3 – 4 yr olds being rolled out over a phased period.	
Relationship Based Social Work Practice	February 2025	Briefing Report to be circulated electronically	Bernie Toomey	Members will understand the capacity within the	Members will receive information updating them on social worker

				service and training undertaken..	training, recruitment and retention
Stronger Families Programme	March 2025	Briefing Report circulated electronically	TBC	Members will receive information on how many families lives have been turned around by the focussed help and support of the programme.	Members will continue to monitor the programme, the targets and performance to date.
Director of Public Health Annual Report	TBC	Circulated Electronically	Director of Public Health	Members will receive the annual report	Report for information
HWB Annual Report	TBC	Circulated Electronically	Julie Bradbrook	Members will receive the annual report	Report for Information
Durham Safeguarding Children Annual Report	TBC	Circulated electronically	Chair of DSCP/ Paula Mather	Members will receive the annual report	Report for information
<b>Performance/Budget</b>					
<b>Performance</b>	11 July 2024	Report to CYPOSC	Stephen Tracey	To provide Members with progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the	Summary information to Members
Quarterly reporting	8 November 2024				

	7 March 2025		(Chief Executive Services)	council's corporate performance framework.	
<b>Budget Outturn Report</b> Quarterly reporting -	20 Sept 2024 (Q4 & Q1) 7 Jan 2025 7 March 2025	Report to CYPOSC	David Watchman  (Resources)	Detail of budget	Summary information to Members

**Children and Young People's  
Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee**



**11 July 2024**

**TEWV CAMHS Waiting Time  
Information**

**Report of James Graham, General Manager – Durham and Tees  
Valley Community CAMHS**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of the report is to provide members of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee with information on Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services waiting times.

**Background**

- 2 As at 28/06/2024 there are 84 patients waiting for a mental health assessment.
  - a. 38 of these waiting between 0-1 month
  - b. 27 of these waiting 1-2 month
  - c. 7 of these 2-3 months
  - d. 10 of these 3-6 months
  - e. 3 of these 6months+
- 3 These waiting time compare favourably with national benchmarking data for CAMHS services.
- 4 Of the 3 cases waiting over 6 months; DNA/was not brought and patient/family choice are factors in the length of wait.
- 5 Between Jun 2023-May 2024 (12 months) 4,338 referrals to the service were made within County Durham.
  - a. Average of 362 per month
  - b. 7,073 internal referrals happened in the same period (transfers to different teams/pathways)
  - c. 2,128 patients were discharged from service in this period

- 6 The County Durham service-wide caseload snapshot is 9,024 young people.
- a. An increase of over 700 from 12 months ago
  - b. 4,982 are waiting for autism and/or ADHD assessment
  - c. 2,508 are receiving support from a Getting More Help team (complex MH needs requiring MDT input)
  - d. 453 are receiving support from the Getting Help team (10-12 sessions of therapeutic intervention for mild-moderate MH needs)
  - e. 419 are currently having their needs screened and/or assessed by the single point of access (SPA) team
  - f. 211 are receiving support from the learning disabilities teams
  - g. 265 are receiving 1:1 or group support from the Piece of Mind, school-based teams
  - h. 77 are receiving support from the SARC service (victims of sexual assault)
  - i. 65 are receiving support from the specialist eating disorders team
  - j. 13 young people are receiving support from an out of area team (choice, or LAC placed out of area)
  - k. 17 young people are receiving support from crisis/intensive home treatment (IHT)
  - l. 4 young people are receiving specialist assessment from the forensic team
- 7 Note: the above is a 'unique' patient count. A significant number of the cases above will have periods of care when they are open to more than 1 team for 'co-working'. E.g., approx. 50% of the total caseload that is waiting for an autism/ADHD assessment is, or has been, open to another team for MH needs. The team the YP is 'counted' against is the team it was uniquely open to first.
- 8 Over 90% of YP who are urgently referred to the crisis team are seen within 4 hours.
- 9 The eating disorders service is compliant with national access standards (routine referrals treatment start within 4 weeks, and urgent refers seen within 1 week).
- 10 For neurodevelopmental assessments; there are 5,297 County Durham young people are waiting post-referral (difference to number quoted at 5(a) due to the 'coworking' issue described at 7)
- a. The average length of wait is 489 days
  - b. The maximum wait is 1,398 days
  - c. 313 YP waiting over 3 years
  - d. 1,066 YP waiting 2-3 years
  - e. 1,817 YP waiting 1-2 years
  - f. 494 YP waiting 9-12 months
  - g. 551 YP waiting 6-9 months
  - h. 621 YP waiting 3-6 months
  - i. 155 YP waiting 2-3 months

- j. 264 YP waiting 1-2 months
  - k. 166 YP waiting 0-1 month
- 11 Significant distress remains within Neurodevelopment waiting lists and access to assessments nationally and across the NENC ICB footprint. This is due to excessive demand for these assessments that far out-exceeds commissioned capacity. This is resulting in excessive waits for completion of assessments and we continue to work with all stakeholders within the ICB to explore system-wide strategic solutions to this national issue.
- 12 Further action is being taken across all system partners within Durham, to strengthen the current recovery actions and improve alternatives to assessment, support for those already waiting and reduce waiting time for assessment for those that have waited the longest. This includes the piloting of a new clinical protocol, commissioning of additional diagnostic capacity for assessments and further extend local improvements to make support more needs led and reduce overall demand upon services.

## **Conclusion**

- 13 This report describes the position with regards to access to CAMHS services. Access to mental health support for needs ranging from mild-moderate-complex are generally reasonable and compare favourably with national benchmarking data.
- 14 There is a concern with regards to the capacity to meet, and demand for, neurodevelopmental assessments. Work is taking place locally and regionally to explore all possible options at improving this position.

## **Background papers**

None

## **Authors**

James Graham, CAMHS General Manager

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