

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

26 April 2023

**Quarter Three, 2022/23
Performance Management Report**

Ordinary Decision



Report of John Hewitt, Chief Executive Officer

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present an overview of progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the council's corporate performance framework and highlight key messages to inform strategic priorities and work programmes.
- 2 The report covers performance in and to the end of quarter three, 2022/23, October to December 2022.

Executive Summary

- 3 This report is structured around a performance framework which reflects our current [Council Plan](#) (2022-2026), and its format has been developed to provide greater focus on how the council is contributing to achieving the people's vision.
- 4 The performance report is structured around two main components.
 - (a) State of the County indicators to highlight areas of strategic importance and reflected in both the [County Durham Vision 2035](#) and the [Council Plan](#).
 - (b) Performance of council services and progress against major initiatives as set out in the [Council Plan](#).
- 5 Performance is reported on an exception basis with key messages against the five thematic areas within the Council Plan 2022-2026: our economy, our environment, our people, our communities, and our council. It is broken down into national, regional and local picture, things that are going well, areas which require attention and other areas to note.
- 6 The [Council Plan](#) has undergone its annual refresh and the plan for 2023-2027 was approved by Council on 22 February. The performance

framework is now being adjusted accordingly and will form the structure of this performance report from quarter one, 2023/24.

Context

- 7 The legacy of COVID-19 can still be seen in both our performance reporting and within our services. Performance data relating to the last two financial years are not representative for many areas so, wherever possible, we have compared current performance against pre-pandemic data.
- 8 However, the greatest challenge for our residents, local businesses and the council is the current cost-of-living crisis which has steadily worsened over the last 12 months. High inflation, currently at 10.5%¹, has largely been driven by the rise in the cost of fuel and energy bills, which is being impacted significantly by world events, including the war in Ukraine.
- 9 The cost-of-living crisis is having a triple impact.
 - (a) Impact on our residents. High inflation is outstripping wage and benefit increases, so income is falling in real terms. This is driving demand for services which support people facing financial hardship or who are in crisis, as well as services provided to vulnerable people such as social care for children and adults.

We are receiving more contact from households seeking financial assistance, and we are continuing to see high volume of applications for Welfare Assistance and Discretionary Housing Payments. We are continuing to support residents through the crisis with various initiatives and funds.

- (b) Increased costs for the council. Premises and transport costs have increased in line with higher energy costs and fuel prices, most noticeably across service areas such as waste and Home to School Transport. Contract prices are also being affected, and more contracts are reflecting changes in demand.

We have created a £10 million Budget Support Reserve to assist with inflationary pressures within 2022/23.

- (c) Reduced income for the council. Users of council services may seek to save money resulting in a fall in income from discretionary services such as leisure centres and theatres. We estimate that during 2022/23 our income will be under budget by £1.47 million.

¹ UK Consumer Price Index for 12 months to December 2022. Indicative [modelled consumer price inflation estimates](#) suggest that the CPI rate would have last been higher in October 1981, where the estimate for the annual inflation rate was 11.2%.

- 10 £78.9 million of budget pressures are expected during 2023/24, mainly driven by inflationary and service demand pressures. Partly financed by the additional £56.5 million received from the final Local Government Settlement and from council tax and tax base increases. Savings of £12.4 million will be found from savings with the residual £10 million being funded from the MTFP Support Reserve.
- 11 However, our £778 million capital programme is the most ambitious the council has ever agreed and supports the council's ambition to use its resources to improve education, transport, housing and economic growth.

Recommendation

- 12 That Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the overall position and direction of travel in relation to quarter three performance, the impact of COVID-19 pandemic recovery and the external international factors driving inflation and cost-of-living on the council's performance, and the actions being taken to address areas of underperformance including the significant economic and well-being challenges because of the pandemic.

Analysis of the Performance Report

- 13 The areas identified in this section are contributory indicators linked to the priorities of the Council Plan. Performance is reported on an exception basis with key messages against the five thematic areas within the Council Plan 2022-2026.

Our Economy

Areas which require attention

- 14 Key Stage 2 data for 2022 is now available - the first data set since the pandemic. 73% of children across the county reached the expected standard in reading - lower than comparators but similar to 2019 levels. 71% reached the expected standard in maths – lower than 2019 performance of 80%. However, the decrease in maths performance reflects the national and regional trend, nationally performance has fallen from 79% in 2019 to 71% in 2022, and from 81% to 72% regionally.
- 15 In 2021/22, 45% of Key Stage 4 pupils achieved a 9-5 pass in English and maths, which is slightly lower than our statistical neighbours (48%), England (47%) and the North East (46%).
- 16 The levelling up white paper 2022 has identified 55 education investment areas (EIAs) which includes County Durham. These EIAs are the third of local authorities in England where educational outcomes were the weakest based on sustained low performance across Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in 2017 to 2019.

- 17 The Department for Education (DfE) is prioritising a package of activity in EIAs to support improving attainment in Durham, set out in the Schools White Paper, for EIAs to achieve the fastest progress until 2030 by helping 90% of pupils meet the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined at Key Stage 2, with an increase of over a third in the lowest performing areas.
- 18 Schools within County Durham have accessed a range of support to improve individual pupil outcomes including:
- (a) The Enhanced Trust and School Improvement Offer which is enabling a placed based approach to increase the proportion of pupils in good and outstanding schools.
 - (b) For schools within the geographical areas of North Durham, Durham City, and Sedgefield area they have accessed up to six days of system leader time complimented by a further funded trust partnership which has provided access of up to £10,000 to individual schools to address underperformance.
 - (c) In addition, schools within these identified locations have accessed the DfE's curriculum reading review. Recommendations from the reviews have identified areas where individual schools can benefit from one of two available funded offers provided by the DfE. These offers were aimed at supporting the effective implementation of phonics or improving Key Stage 2 reading outcomes. The DfE provided funding to Durham County Council to support this process. Schools were allocated up to £6k per school for training, resources and supply cover as required for either the phonics or the Key Stage 2 reading offers.
 - (d) A further £7k was identified per school to help re-stock school and class library provision.

Our people

Going Well

- 19 In the nine months ending 31 December 2022, 1,134 families were turned around via the Stronger Families programme. 1,039 attained significant and sustained outcomes and 95 maintained continuous employment. We have exceeded the annual 2022/23 target.
- 20 Referral levels to children's social care are in line with the last two years and below benchmarks. Our continued low re-referral rate positively impacts upon this, with fewer children requiring children's social care support for a second or subsequent time. We have not experienced a post-pandemic increase like some of our neighbouring authorities so are undertaking an audit to ensure we are receiving the right referrals at the right time from our partner organisations.

Areas which require attention

- 21 We continue to see an increasing trend in children in care (1,042). Although high for County Durham, the rate of 102 per 10,000 0-17 population remains lower than in our regional and statistical neighbours. We continue to experience placement pressures and are focusing on increasing capacity within our in-house children's homes, recruiting more foster carers, and working with children and their families to prevent them entering care.
- 22 Some of our children's social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers have higher caseloads than we would like. This is due to more children being supported in statutory safeguarding services². Increasing complexity and improved practice over the last few years has improved performance in key areas such as our re-referral rate, which has reduced from 28% (one of the top 20 highest in the country in 2019-20) to 16% in the year to date, consistently below our national (22%), regional (21%) and statistical neighbours (20%). Recruitment and retention of social workers is a key area of focus for us.
- 23 Requests for assessments for education, health and care plans (EHCP) have increased by 43% over the last year (966 from 676) and by 63% since 2019 (594). This has impacted upon our ability to complete EHCPs within the 20 week statutory timescale. We are currently working on our statutory SEN2 data return and national comparative performance data will be published later this year.
- 24 Significantly more requests for EHCP assessments across special education needs and disability services (SEND) are being received, which reflects the national picture. Pressure is compounded by high levels of demand in partner organisations, such as health who are a key part of the assessment process. We have invested in and restructured our SEND Casework Teams and Educational Psychologists, however, there are national shortages for this specialist role.

Risk Management

- 25 Effective risk management is a vital component of the council's agenda. The council's risk management process sits alongside our change programme and is incorporated into all significant change and improvement projects. The latest report can be found [here](#).

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

² children in need, child protection, children in care and care leavers

- Council Plan 2022 to 2026 (current plan)
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=56529>
- Quarter Two, 2022/23 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s166398/Corporate%20Performance%20Report%20Q2%202022-23%20v2.1.pdf>
- Quarter One, 2022/23 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s161902/Corporate%20Performance%20Report%20Q1%202022-23%20Revised.pdf>
- Quarter Four, 2021/22 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s157533/Year%20End%20performance%20report%202021-22.pdf>
- Quarter Three, 2021/22 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s152742/Performance%20Report%202021-22%20003.pdf>

Author

Steve Evans

Contact: steve.evans@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable.

Finance

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

Consultation

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Climate Change

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

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

A number of performance indicators and key actions relating to crime and disorder are continually monitored in partnership with Durham Constabulary.

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.



Durham County Council Performance Management Report Quarter Three, 2022/23



1.0 Our Economy: National, Regional & Local Picture

- 1 The first set of post covid Key Stage 2 data were published in December allowing comparative analysis against national and regional and nearest neighbour benchmarks. In 2022, 73% of County Durham Key Stage 2 children reached the expected standard in reading lower than comparators and lower but similar to 2019 levels. In maths, the proportion reaching the expected standard reduced considerably to 71% from 80% in 2019. This decrease is also evidenced in our comparators (71% from 79% nationally and 72% from 81% regionally).
- 2 The 2021/22 academic year saw the return of the summer exam series, after they had been cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, where alternative processes were set up to award grades (centre assessment grades, known as CAGs, and teacher assessed grades, known as TAGs). As part of the transition back to the summer exam series adaptations were made to the exams (including advance information) and the approach to grading for 2022 exams broadly reflected a midpoint between results in 2019 and 2021. Given the unprecedented change in the way GCSE results were awarded in the summers of 2020 and 2021, as well as the changes to grade boundaries and methods of assessment for 2021/22, caution should be used when considering comparisons over time, as they may not reflect changes in pupil performance alone. In 2021/22, 45% of Key Stage 4 pupils in County Durham achieved a 9-5 pass in English and maths slightly lower than statistical neighbours (48%), England (47%) and the North East region (46%).
- 3 The levelling up white paper 2022 has identified 55 education investment areas which includes County Durham. These EIAs are the third of local authorities in England where educational outcomes were the weakest based on sustained low performance across Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in 2017 to 2019.
- 4 The DfE is prioritising a package of activity in EIAs to support improving attainment in Durham, set out in the Schools White Paper, for EIAs to achieve the fastest progress until 2030 by helping 90% of pupils meet the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined at Key Stage 2, with an increase of over a third in the lowest performing areas.
- 5 Schools within County Durham have accessed a range of support to improve individual pupil outcomes including:
 - The Enhanced Trust and School Improvement Offer which has enabling a placed based approach to increase the proportion of pupils in good and outstanding schools.
 - For schools within the geographical areas of North Durham, Durham City, and Sedgefield area they have accessed up to six days of system leader time

complimented by a further funded trust partnership which has provided access of up to £10,000 to individual schools to address underperformance.

- In addition, schools within these identified locations have accessed the DfE’s curriculum reading review. Recommendations from the reviews have identified areas where individual schools can benefit from one of two available funded offers provided by the DfE. These offers were aimed at supporting the effective implementation of phonics or improving Key Stage 2 reading outcomes. The DfE provided funding to Durham County Council to support this process. Schools were allocated up to £6k per school for training, resources and supply cover as required for either the Phonics or the Key Stage 2 reading offers.
- A further £7k was identified per school to help re-stock school and class library provision.

2.0 Our People: National, Regional & Local Picture

6 In the year to date we have received almost 20,000 contacts for early help and children’s social care at First Contact, the children’s services front door. This is similar to the last two years. In addition, we launched an electronic children’s partner portal in October, where our partner organisations can manage and request early help assessments. There have been almost 500 recorded so far.

7 Almost 3,700 statutory children’s social care referrals have been received in the last 9 months. This is similar to the last two years. The rolling annual rate per 10,000 children (488, n=4,980) is lower than in our benchmarks (England: 538, SN: 608 and NE: 644).

8 The rates of children in need, children on a child protection plan and children in care (per 10,000 children) remain higher than national averages but below our regional and statistical neighbours.

	Q3 22/23	2021/22		
	County Durham	England	Statistical Neighbours	North East
Children in need	386	334	445	471
Children on a child protection plan	52	42	62	63
Children in care	102	70	107	110

9 The latest data from the National Child Measurement Programme has been released which demonstrates that the percentage of children in Reception who are of a healthy weight has increased from two years ago (last available data) by 0.9 percentage points. Children in Year 6, of a healthy weight has, however, decreased by 2.3 percentage points over the same period. A decrease was expected due to

reduced physical activity over the pandemic period, however, neither the changes in Reception nor Year 6 children are significant.

2.1 Council Activity: Going Well

Children's Social Care

10 In children's social care, referral rates per 10,000 0-17 year olds remain similar to the last two years and below benchmarks. Improved practice over the last few years has led to better performance in key areas such as our re-referral rate, which has reduced from 28% and in the top 20 highest in the country in 2019-20 to 16% in the year to date and this is now consistently below our national (22%), regional (21%) and statistical neighbours (20%). This means fewer children and their families require further support from safeguarding services following support. As we haven't seen an increase following COVID like some of our neighbouring local authorities a multi-agency audit is ongoing, led by the Durham Safeguarding Children's Partnership, to assure ourselves that we are receiving the right referrals at the right time from our partner organisations.

Stronger Families Programme

11 Between April and December 2022, 1,134 families were turned around via the Stronger Families programme 1,039 attained significant and sustained outcomes and 95 maintained continuous employment. We have already surpassed our annual national target of 760 families turned around.

2.2 Council Activity: Areas which require attention

Children's Social Care

- 12 Some of our children's social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers have higher caseloads than we would like due to higher numbers of children being supported in statutory safeguarding services throughout children in need, child protection, children in care and care leavers. There were 48 social work vacancies at the end of December 2022; recruitment and retention of Social Workers is a key area of focus for us.
- 13 Despite increasing caseload pressures, we are assured our social workers continue to see children in line with statutory timescales through regular performance monitoring and our managers have oversight of children's cases.
- 14 We continue to see an increasing trend in children in care (n=1042), and whilst this is high for County Durham the rate of 102 per 10,000 0-17 population remains lower than in our regional and statistical neighbours. We continue to experience placement

pressures and are focusing on increasing capacity within our in-house children's homes, recruiting more foster carers, and working with children and their families to prevent them entering care.

- 15 The national transfer scheme for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) continues with 29 of our children in care having a UASC status; this will further increase over the rest of the year, as we take UASC into the care of the council in line with national Home Office targets.
- 16 More children in care continues to impact upon placement and financial pressures (which are also reflected both regionally and nationally). We continue to implement our transformation plans with the aim of increasing capacity within our in-house children's homes, recruiting more foster carers, and early work with children and their families to prevent them entering care.

SEND

- 17 In Special Education Needs and Disability Services (SEND), we continue to see sustained growth in requests for EHCP assessments with significant increases over the last few years which are also evidenced nationally. Pressure is compounded by high levels of demand in partner organisations, such as health who are a key part of the assessment process. We have invested in and restructured our SEND Casework Teams and Educational Psychologists, however there are national shortages for this specialist role.
- 18 This year we have seen an 43% increase in requests for assessments for Education, Health and Care Plans in the last year alone (966 from 676) and an 63% increase since 2019 (594). This significant increase in demand has impacted upon our ability to complete EHCPs within the 20-week statutory timescale. We are currently working on our statutory SEN2 data return and national comparative performance data will be available when this is published later this year.

3.0 Data Tables

Key to Symbols

Performance against target and previous performance		Performance against comparable groups		Direction of Travel	
✓	meeting or exceeding	✓	Performance is better than national or north east	↑	higher than comparable period
■	within 2%	×	Performance is worse than national or north east	→	static against comparable period
×	more than 2% behind			↓	lower than comparable period

NB: oldest data in left column

Types of indicators

There are two types of performance indicators throughout the report:

1. Key target indicators – targets are set as improvements can be measured regularly and can be actively influenced by the council and its partners; and
2. Key tracker indicators – performance is tracked but no targets are set as they are long-term and / or can only be partially influenced by the council and its partners.

National Benchmarking (N)

We compare our performance to all English authorities. The number of authorities varies according to the performance indicator and functions of councils, e.g., educational attainment is compared to county and unitary councils, however waste disposal is compared to district and unitary councils.

North East Benchmarking (NE)

The North East comparator is the average performance from the authorities within the North East region - County Durham, Darlington, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton-on-Tees, South Tyneside, Sunderland.

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

Our Economy

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
% uptake of free early education entitlement for 3-4-year-olds	93.7% (2022)	Tracker -	92.8% ✓	96.1% x			→	↑	↓	↑	No
Improve the proportion of children achieving expected standards in maths and reading at KS2 in line with 2030 ambitions ³	65% (2018/19)	Tracker -	67% x	65%			n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	No
Improve the average grade of achievement of all our pupils within GCSE English and Maths to a Grade 5 (in line with 2030 ambitions)	new PI	5 by 2030	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
Improve the educational attainment of our most disadvantaged cohorts to meet basic threshold measures in English and Maths	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
Increase proportion of young people in education, employment and training to be consistently higher than regional and national levels	87.4% (Jun 2022)	above N / NE ✓	85.3% ✓	85.6% ✓			↑	↓	↑	n/a	No

Our People

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieving a good level of development (reported as academic year)	64.5% (2021/22)	Tracker -	N/A	-			↓	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes
% of pupils attending an Ofsted judged 'good or better' school – all	86.5% (at 16 Jan 23)	Tracker -	n/a	-	x	✓	↑	↑	↑	n/a	Yes

³ Not reported for 2019/20 or 2020/21 academic years as no Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) or Key Stage 2 (KS2) assessments took place

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
% of pupils attending an Ofsted judged 'good or better' school – primary	94.3% (at 16 Jan 23)	Tracker -	n/a	-	✓	✓					Yes
% of pupils attending an Ofsted judged 'good or better' school – secondary	75.3% (at 16 Jan 23)	Tracker -	n/a	-	✗	✓					Yes
No. of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan	4,234	Tracker	3,978	3,496	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
	(Dec 2022)	-	-	-							
No. of Children Looked After per 10,000 population	102.2 [1,042] (at 31 Dec 22)	Tracker -	93 [2020/21]	-	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
No. of Children in Need per 10,000 Population	386 [3,939] (at 31 Dec 22)	Tracker -	361 [2020/21]		-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
% of Children Looked After placed within 20 miles of their home address	85% (at 31 Mar 22)	Tracker -	87% [2020/21] ■	89% ✗	✓	✓	↓	↓	→	↑	No
No. of families on our Stronger Families Programme attaining significant and sustained outcomes	1,134 (Apr-Dec 22)	760 [2022/23] ✓	693 ✓	311 ✓	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
Increase the % of children aged 4-5 who are of a healthy weight ⁴ <i>Confidence intervals +/-1.2pp</i>	75.5% (2021/22)	90% ✗	Not reported	74.6% ■	■	■	-	-	-	→	Yes
Increase the % of children aged 10-11 who are of a healthy weight <i>Confidence intervals +/-1.2pp</i>	59.2% (2021/22)	79% ✗	Not reported	61.5% ■	■	■	-	-	-	→	Yes

⁴ National Child Measurement Programme ceased March 2020 when schools closed due to the pandemic, therefore, north east and nearest neighbour comparators should be treated with caution due to missing data from some LAs. Whilst the data for the academic year 2020/21 has been published, local authority data is not available as only a 10% sample of data was recorded.

Other relevant indicators

Performance Indicator	Latest data (period covered)	Performance compared to:					Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated
		Period target	12 months earlier	Pre-COVID	N	NE					
Increase the % of 16-17-year-olds in an apprenticeship	5.6% (Jun 2022)	Tracker -	5.5% ✓	6.8% x			↑	↓	↓	n/a	No
Reduce % point gap in breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks between County Durham and national average	18.8pp (2021/22)	Tracker -	17.4pp x	20.2pp ✓	-	x	↑	↑	↓	↑	Yes
% of mothers smoking at time of delivery	13.7% (Jul -Sep 22)	0% x	13.9% ✓	15.2% ✓	x	x	↑	↑	↑	↓	Yes