

Cabinet

15 January 2025

Quarter Two, 2024/25
Performance Management Report

Ordinary Decision



Report of Corporate Management Team

John Hewitt, Chief Executive

Councillor Amanda Hopgood, Leader of the Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To inform members, senior managers, employees and the public of our progress towards achieving the strategic ambitions and objectives set out in our [Council Plan 2024-28](#).

Executive Summary

- 2 This report contains the most recent performance data available on 30 September 2024, alongside contextual information of activity and events taking place in the second quarter of the 2024/25 financial year (July to September).
- 3 It should be noted that since this report was written, the government has closed the [Office for Local Government](#). A new way of ensuring local authorities are fit, legal and decent, incorporating the benefits of relevant work completed by Oflog to date, is being developed. Therefore, although Oflog's suite of metrics is included in this report (as Oflog was still in operation over the reporting period) we intend to review their inclusion in future reports once clarity is received on the new assurance methodology.
- 4 We are a large organisation providing a broad range of services. Our operating environment, which can be challenging, is heavily influenced by many 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.
- 5 The government presented its [Autumn Statement](#) to Parliament on 30 October. This set out the government's financial plans for this year and next, alongside the estimated impact of changes to tax, welfare and public spending.
- 6 A real term increase in total core spending power was announced, alongside additional funding to reform children's social care and pilot a Kinship

Allowance, implement the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme and improve recycling, support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, extend the Household Support Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments to help vulnerable households, fund Bus Service Improvement and repair potholes.

- 7 Our [provisional finance settlement](#) has now been received and the detail presented to Cabinet in January 2025.
- 8 We continue to show strong performance across our key outcomes.
 - (a) We are showing strong economic performance across the county. Key areas such as jobs, investment, demand for employment land and industrial premises, and employment are all favourable compared to previous years. We continue to exceed targets for securing investment for companies and supporting businesses. Increased attendances have been recorded at all our cultural venues. However, challenges for the council include improving processing times for non-major planning applications and improving occupancy and yield from cinema screenings.
 - (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. We are building, with regional partners, a new 'energy recovery from waste' facility which will meet the future needs of the county. Although we have seen an improvement in the levels of carbon emissions generated from within the county and council activity, significant progress is required to meet our net zero targets. Without further commitments and support from central government, it is very unlikely we will be able to meet either our 2045 or 2030 targets.
 - (c) Statutory demand for children's social care is higher than last year but remains relatively low compared to regional comparators. Improved practice across statutory children's social care has led to a consistently low re-referral rate. Children taken into our care remains relatively high though the rate of increase has slowed through 2024 and our Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy is delivering against its objectives. A prolonged increase in requests for education, health and care plans has resulted in backlogs for educational psychologist advice. We have improved our processes and increased our capacity which have improved timeliness performance but demand continues to be challenging. Referrals into adult social care and Care Act assessments remain stable. The percentage of service users receiving an annual review continues to improve and a high proportion of our care homes are rated either 'good' or 'outstanding'. Performance against homelessness outcomes is improving. Although we perform worse than our benchmarks we are closing the gap. We are continuing to see an increase in people presenting as already homeless. Leisure centres are performing well with increased numbers of visits and memberships to

above target. Our substantial leisure transformation programme and new membership scheme are having a positive impact.

- (d) The overall crime rate in County Durham has fallen and compares favourably with many council areas in the region. Although the number of domestic abuse incidents reported to the police remained static, the number of victims referred to our support services increased. Reports of fly-tipping remain low, environmental cleanliness is high, and more long-term properties are being brought back into use. Bus patronage and punctuality continue to improve. Of the private sector rented properties covered under the selective licensing scheme, 58% are fully licensed or have legal proceedings instigated. Delivery of affordable homes is below target; delivery is dependent on viable sites coming forward for development.
- (e) Our scheme to identify children eligible for free school meals and auto-enrol them directly with their school has been successful - 2,254 more eligible children have been identified, potentially saving parents around £450 a year. This increase in eligibility has a positive impact on the pupil premium available to schools, with an increase in funding of £3 million available to schools across County Durham following the latest census data submission. In addition, schools will also be eligible for additional income through the mainstream funding formula. This is estimated to be at least £2 million. We are continuing to provide strong support to our most vulnerable residents through our financial support schemes - one of only a few authorities which offer support of this type and to this extent. The processing times of housing benefit and council tax reduction requests (both new claims and changes in circumstances) have improved further. More calls are being answered, with all telephone lines answering at least 80% within three minutes (our performance standard). Satisfaction with overall service delivery remains high, the majority of service requests meet (or exceed) their performance standard, and we are receiving fewer complaints. Although more days have been lost to sickness, and our sickness rate is now 0.49 days per full time equivalent employee higher than the same period last year, almost 60% of our employees recorded no sickness.

Recommendation(s)

9 Cabinet is recommended to:

- (a) note the overall position and direction of travel in relation to quarter two performance (July to September), and the actions being taken to address areas of challenge.

Background

- 10 The Council Plan is our principal corporate planning document. It explains how we will effectively deliver our day-to-day services, our longer-term ambitions and contribute to achieving the [County Durham Vision¹](#).
- 11 Our plan is supported by other strategies and service plans. These contain the detail for the actions and projects we will undertake to help achieve our priorities. It also aligns to our Medium-Term Financial Plan which sets out how our priorities will be resourced, and our County Durham Plan which sets out a vision for housing, jobs and the environment until 2035, as well as the transport, schools and healthcare to support it.
- 12 We track progress towards achieving our strategic ambitions and objectives through our performance framework – a collection of key performance indicators contextualised with benchmarking data from similar authorities, and information from our service teams.
- 13 Progress is reported quarterly on an exception basis, using ‘easy to read’ dashboards focusing on trends, direction of travel, benchmarking and performance to target. Key messages are aligned to our five thematic areas (our economy, our people, our communities, our environment, our council) and are grouped into ‘things that are going well’ and ‘issues we are addressing’.
- 14 Our performance management processes align with [statutory guidance²](#) produced by the government. The guidance sets out the ‘characteristics of a well-functioning authority’ and the ‘indicators of potential failure’. In relation to performance management, this includes:

Characteristics of a well-functioning authority

- (a) The corporate plan is evidence based, current, realistic and enables the whole organisation’s performance to be measured and held to account.
- (b) The use of performance indicators to manage risk and to benchmark against similar authorities and manage risk.
- (c) The council has complete, timely and accurate data, and the skills to interpret it, to inform decisions.
- (d) There are clear and effective mechanisms for scrutinising performance across all service areas. Performance is regularly reported to the public to ensure that citizens are informed of the quality of services being delivered.
- (e) Partners and local residents are involved in developing indicators and targets, and monitoring and managing lack of performance.

Indicators of potential failure

- (a) A lack of ‘good quality’ data and insight to understand services.

¹ Developed with our County Durham Together partners, the Vision describes what we want the county to look like over the next decade and beyond.

² [Best Value Standards and Intervention](#)

- (b) A lack of corporate capacity or capability, resulting in a lack of strategic direction, oversight and sense of accountability.
 - (c) Performance management information is not consistently used, does not measure outcomes where relevant and underperformance is not effectively addressed.
 - (d) Data quality is poor and there is a lack of capacity or capability to interpret it to inform decisions.
 - (e) Services data suggests poor performance and outcomes compared to similar local authorities.
- 15 We continue to operate in line with the characteristics of a well-functioning authority, and over the last 18 months we have further strengthened these functions with:
- (a) A higher level, more strategic Council Plan which gives the reader a more immediate sense of the strategic direction of the council and what we are intending to do.
 - (b) A renewed service planning process which simplifies and brings together organisational planning into the strategic planning cycle.
 - (c) A refreshed approach to quarterly performance reporting which provides greater insight into how our services are performing.

Conclusion

- 16 This report informs members, senior managers, employees and the public of our progress towards achieving the strategic ambitions and objectives set out in our [Council Plan 2024-28](#).
- 17 It contains the most recent performance data available on 30 September. Contextual information relates to activity and events taking place in the second quarter of the 2024/25 financial year (July to September). It provides insights into what is going well and the issues we are addressing.

Background papers

- [County Durham Vision](#) (County Council, 23 October 2019)

Other useful documents

- [Council Plan 2024 to 2028](#) (current plan)
- [Quarter One, 2024/25 Performance Management Report](#)
- [Quarter Four, 2023/24 Performance Management Report](#)
- [Quarter Three, 2023/24 Performance Management Report](#)
- [Quarter Two, 2023/24 Performance Management Report](#)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable.

Finance

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

Consultation

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Climate Change

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

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

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

Staffing

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

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

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

Procurement

Not applicable.



Corporate Performance Report

Quarter Two, 2024/25



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- ◆ Main reasons for absence

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Glossary

Executive Summary

- 1 This report shows how we are performing against the priorities set out in our Council Plan 2024-28.
- 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 30 September. Contextual information relates to activity and events taking place in the first quarter of the 2024/25 financial year (July to September).

Our economy

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

Going Well

- 5 As our Inclusive Economic Strategy progresses, we see our overall economic performance remains strong across a range of performance measures, with however some variation within the county and across the region compared to national levels.
- 6 There has been a 9% increase in available jobs across the county since 2014. And demand for employment land, and industrial and office premises of all sizes remains high. Our employment rate is statistically better than the rate 20 years ago and better than the North East average and our unemployment rate is low. Our GVA increased by £1.6 billion between 2020 and 2022.
- 7 We continue to exceed target in securing investment for companies and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Productivity and Growth Programme is now established, and delivery is on track. We are engaging with and supporting more businesses than our target and continue to create or safeguard jobs.
- 8 Although referrals and registrations to our employability programmes were affected by the six-week school holiday period, we are still on track to achieve programme targets by March 2025. The cohort of clients we are working with have multiple barriers and therefore are further away from the labour market. We have developed various community activities to engage target clients.
- 9 We have recorded increased attendances at all our cultural venues, exceeding target, and strengthening our position as the culture county and contributing significantly to the local economy. Our new venue, 'The Story' surpassed pre-launch projections, with the potential to significantly exceed annual targets. The number of library borrowers and digital borrowers continue to grow and performed better than target.
- 10 Average occupancy rate for programmed theatre performances was better than target. Although average yield was worse than target, both were better than the same period last year. Programmed and produced shows at Gala and BATH performed well, however quarter two is the quietest period for the cultural venues. Theatre

performances at the Empire recommenced in October and there is a full programme in place for the remainder of the year.

Issues we are addressing

- 11 Processing times of non-major planning applications are worse than target and latest data shows our performance to be worse than most of the benchmarking groups. Resource issues and resources allocated to clearing a back log of non-major planning applications continues to impact performance. We have now cleared the backlog, so we expect performance to improve.
- 12 The occupancy rate for business floorspace owned by the council is worse than target, impacted by two companies at Jade Business Park and Derwentside Business Centre going into administration in quarter one. Enquiries in the pipeline for these units are expected to complete in quarter three.
- 13 Both average occupancy rate and average yield across all programmed cinema screenings were worse than target and the same period last year. The public lift at Gala was out of service sporadically over five weeks during the quarter, this affected the occupancy and yield due to reduced accessibility for screening which went ahead and as some planned screenings were cancelled. Programmed screenings at BATH continue to be affected by competing demands on the theatre space, however this has improved occupancy and yield for live performance. We anticipate performance to improve in quarter three with additional event cinema being programmed at the Gala and customer levels rapidly returning to normal at the Empire following re-opening, particularly with a strong response to autumn blockbusters.

Our environment

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

Going Well

- 15 Domestic waste diverted from landfill continues to be better than target and performance is improving. We are progressing (with partners) a new energy recovery from waste facility that will meet the future needs of the county - the new plant is expected to be operational in 2028.
- 16 Our contamination rate continues to improve driven by schemes such as Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment, our 'What Goes Where' campaign and the issuing of notices.

Issues we are addressing

- 17 Although we have seen an improvement in both the levels of carbon emissions generated from within the county and council activity, significant progress is required to meet the targets of net zero by 2045 and 2030, respectively. We continue to deliver a range of activities with the Climate Emergency Response Plan 3 to support the

continuing reduction. Without further commitments and support from central government, it is very unlikely we will be able to meet either our 2045 or 2030 targets.

- 18 Although the household recycling rate is slightly better than last year, we remain worse than the national average. We continue to promote recycling to our residents and await further detail on the national standardisation of recycling collections, including the introduction of food waste collections.

Our people

- 19 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

- 20 Family Hub registrations increased every quarter over the last year with more than 10,000 people now registered, of which more than 3,500 registered in quarter two alone. Our Family Hubs deliver a broad range of activity and support.
- 21 Improved practice across statutory children's social care has led to a consistently low re-referral rate. The latest rate 12% is lower than quarter one (20%), and remains better than latest benchmarks for 2022/23. This means fewer children and their families require further support from safeguarding services following a period supported by a social worker.
- 22 We are seeing improvements in the percentage of adult social care service users receiving an annual review. Data for quarter two shows almost 77% of service users had received an assessment or review in the last 12 months. We are continuing to reduce the backlog of overdue annual reviews and expect that performance will continue improve.
- 23 Eighty-eight percent of care homes across the county are rated as good or outstanding. This is better than the North East (85%) and England (77%). We continue to manage the capacity in care homes enabling admissions as required.
- 24 Visits to leisure centres and Thrive Memberships performed better than target and the same period last year, with events, promotions and our new membership scheme contributing to improved performance. Our substantial leisure transformation programme continues to deliver upgraded and new facilities and is having a positive impact.

Issues we are addressing

- 25 To date³, we have supported 8,657 families through the Stronger Families programme. The target for eligible families achieving all sustained outcomes has steadily increased – doubling since the 2022/23 financial year (April 2022 to March 2023). Improvements in outcomes this quarter mean we are back on track to achieve this year's target.
- 26 The proportion of reception aged children who are of a healthy weight has reduced in County Durham over the last three years. In 2021/22 we were similar to the England

³ from its start in 2015 to the end of September 2024

position; we are now statistically worse than the national result. To improve this, Public Health are working with partners to implement a whole school food approach within schools across the county.

- 27 At the end of September, we had 1,187 children in care, slightly fewer than the number recorded at the end of June (1,197). This remains a challenging area as complexity of children's needs has increased, and the market for children's residential care is unable to meet demand and recruiting foster carers remains challenging. Our Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy continues to plan and implement a range of solutions to boost in-house provision and foster carer recruitment.
- 28 Improvements to the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessment process, and short-term Educational Psychologist (EP) capacity has increased the volume of EHCPs we are able to issue. The number of open assessments is reducing and our timeliness figures are improving. In September, 17% of EHCPs were issued within 20 weeks, 10% throughout 2024. We estimate the waiting list and waiting times for EP advice will continue to fall steadily and overall timeliness to steadily improve through to the next financial year.
- 29 During 2023/24, the proportions of approved housing units that met the needs of older people were worse than targets set out in the County Durham Plan (CDP). Some schemes received outline planning permission before adoption, and were therefore required to meet the CDP requirements.
- 30 Following changes to processes and the use of the homelessness prevention grant, performance against homelessness outcomes is improving. Increased numbers of households presenting as already homeless persists, but we continue to review and develop initiatives to improve outcomes across all stages of homelessness. We remain worse than latest regional and national benchmarking averages (January to March 2024) for prevention and relief outcomes. However, as performance has since improved, we are closing the gap and expect this positive trajectory to continue.

Our communities

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

Going Well

- 32 Fly-tipping levels remain low and environmental cleanliness remains high. Long-term empty properties brought back into use and our response times to rectify highway defects are both better than target.
- 33 Bus patronage improved compared to the same period last year. Improved performance by the two main operators has led to punctuality continuing to improve. We continue to work with other councils across the region to implement the North East Bus Service Improvement Plan.

Issues we are addressing

- 34 During 2023/24 delivery of affordable homes was worse than the CDP target, although better than 2022/23. The target is set against identified need and is

extremely challenging to achieve as delivery is dependent on viable sites coming forward for development.

- 35 Of the private sector rented properties covered under the selective licensing scheme, 58% are fully licensed or have legal proceedings instigated.

Our Council

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

Going Well

- 37 Almost 60% of our employees recorded no sickness over the last 12 months.
- 38 The lower in-year collection rate for business rates recorded at quarter one has now reversed, and the in-year collection rate at quarter two (58.6%) is better than the previous two years. This follows a change to the payment process for centrally managed schools which has resulted in their payments being credited in quarter two rather than quarter one.
- 39 New claims and change of circumstances for housing benefit and council tax reduction continue to be processed quicker. This is in spite of high demand. The continued improved performance is due to a combination of factors including upskilling of staff, reduced absence, and processing customer queries as part of an incoming call.
- 40 We continue to provide strong support to our most vulnerable residents through our financial support schemes - one of a few authorities offering this type and extent of support. It costs us £67 million to support residents with their council tax bills, and during quarter two, we provided an additional £265,000 of Discretionary Housing Payments, Daily Living Expenses and Settlement Grants.
- 41 In addition, we have utilised the Household Support Fund to support low-income households and grass root organisations with food, fuel, furniture and white goods, and provide general cost-of-living support. The £1 million secured from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for initiatives during 2024/25 has, to date, rolled out a cost-of-living and debt advice service, opened two new food surplus hubs, and helped fund the welcome spaces programme for 2024/25.
- 42 Our scheme to identify children eligible for free school meals and auto-enrol them directly with their school has been successful - 2,254 more eligible children have been identified, potentially saving parents around £450 a year. This increase in eligibility has a positive impact on the pupil premium available to schools, with an increase in funding of circa £3 million available to schools across County Durham following the latest census data submission. In addition, schools will also be eligible for additional income through the mainstream funding formula. This is estimated to be at least £2 million.
- 43 Over the latest 12 months, we answered more calls within three minutes. This is mainly due to gaining additional resource for telephony when the opening hours of four of our least used Customer Access Points were changed in October 2023. During quarter two, all telephone lines exceeded the performance standard of 80% - the average percentage we answered within three minutes was 96%.

- 44 Around 40% of contact we receive is now received digitally. Digital contact is almost twice the volume recorded pre-pandemic. The proportion of contact that is non-digital continues to steadily decline – five years ago, 78% of contact was non-digital, it is now 60%.
- 45 Satisfaction with our overall service delivery remains high, and of those service requests that can be assessed against a performance standard, 75% met (or exceeded) their performance standard. We are receiving fewer corporate complaints and the proportion reaching the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman remains static.
- 46 Almost 5% of our workforce is enrolled on an apprenticeship. We retain around three quarters of our new apprentices. No apprenticeship levy funds have expired over the last twelve months. This is because we have used more of the levy funds (higher value courses rather than more apprentices), more schools have converted to academies so no longer contribute to the fund and we have made levy transfers to local businesses.

Issues we are addressing

- 47 Our in-year collection rate for council tax has reduced slightly from 54.5% to 54.1%. This is mainly because of higher billing (up £24 million in the current financial year), more households failing to pay (we issued 4,037 more recovery documents compared to last year), and more households choosing to pay their council tax over 12 months (this has had a short-term negative impact on in-year collection).
- 48 A bigger proportion of complaints was upheld at independent investigation stage. Mainly due to time taken to respond, lack of action and not keeping the customer informed of progress.
- 49 Around 25% of our employees have yet to complete our mandatory e-learning programme. Most of these are non-digital staff (those without access to the council's computer network as part of their role). It is difficult to deliver e-learning to this group as training needs to be face-to-face, scheduled into shift patterns or arranged outside working hours. However, completion rates are better than the previous quarter.
- 50 Days lost to sickness during the 12 months ending September increased by 4%, compared to the same period the previous year. Our sickness rate (days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) employee) is now 11.57 - 0.49 days higher than the same period the previous year.
- 51 Recruiting and retaining employees to specific posts remains challenging especially across early help, social care (both adults' and children's) and school crossing patrols. These are national issues.

Risk Management

- 52 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 January and May 2024.

Our Economy

Priority Aims:

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

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

National, Regional and Local Picture

53 Although overall economic performance remains strong across a range of performance measures, there is variation within the county and across the region compared to national levels.

54 There has been a 9% increase in available jobs across the county since 2014. And demand for development land, and industrial and office premises of all sizes remains high. Our employment rate is statistically better than 20 years ago and our unemployment rate is low.

	County Durham	England Average	Statistical comparison
Employment Rate	72.4%	75.7%	similar
Unemployment Rate	3.4%	4.5%	not available

55 Between 2019 and 2020, Gross Value Added (GVA) fell across England and the North East. However, County Durham experienced modest growth. Between 2020 and 2022, the county's GVA increased notably - from £9.1 billion to £10.7 billion.

56 This post-Covid growth was mainly driven by the manufacturing, education and construction sectors, and supported by modest growth in motor and wholesale trades, and the visitor economy. However, sectors such as retail, information and communication technology, and financial services had not recovered by 2022.

57 Our GVA per filled job continues to improve and remains on par with the North East average. However, it is worse than the England average – and the gap with England is getting worse.

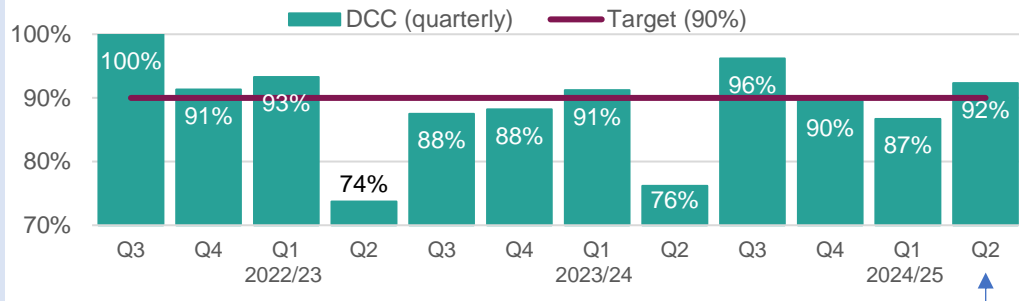
58 More people are achieving higher levels of education and training and moving into better paid jobs. However, we continue to lose many people to urban areas which offer higher wages and a greater choice of private sector jobs.

59 The cost-of-living is a long-term problem, especially for the large numbers of people with health conditions, disabilities, and caring responsibilities.

Economic Growth Dashboard: Planning Applications

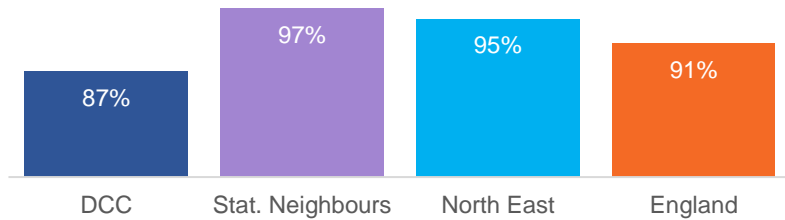
(quarterly data 30 September 2024 / benchmarking data 30 June 2024)

Major planning applications completed within deadline



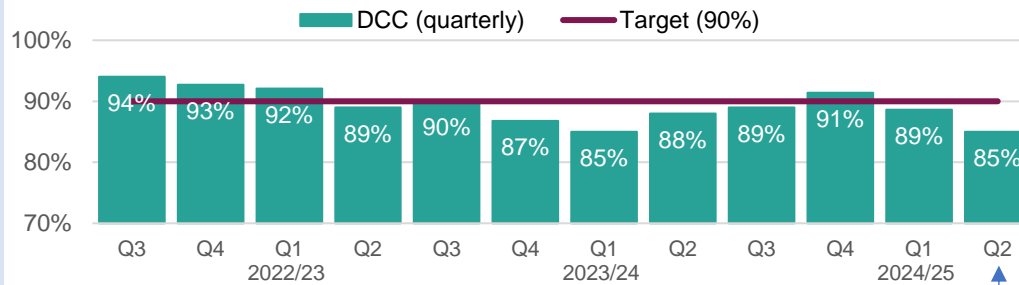
24 of 26 applications completed within deadline.

Major planning applications completed within deadline (data as at June 2024)



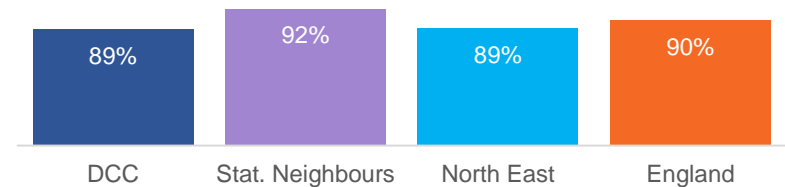
Benchmarking data is at June 2024, 3 month time lag

Non-major planning applications completed within deadline



379 of 444 applications completed within deadline.

Non-major planning applications completed within deadline (data as at June 2024)



Excellent, efficient service as usual
Planning service user

You said: main concern highlighted in planning survey was insufficient or delayed communication. We did: included a commitment in our customer charter to respond to enquiries within specific time frames.
Planning survey respondent.

Planning Applications

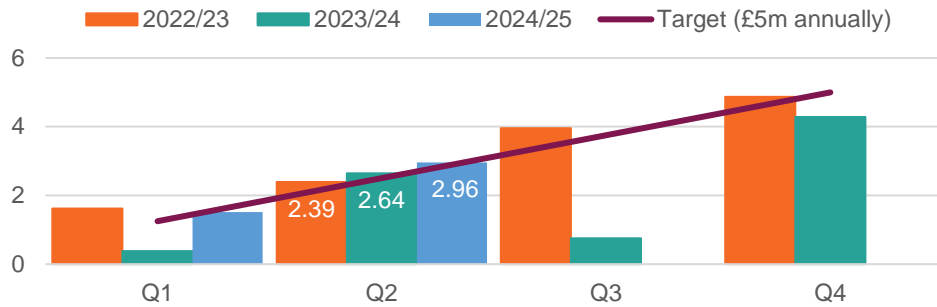
- 60 During quarter two (July to September), we determined 92% of major planning applications within 13 weeks (24 of 26), performance was better than target (90%).
- 61 Although we determined 85% of non-major planning applications within deadline (379 of 444), performance was worse than target (90%). Resource issues and resources allocated to clearing a back log of non-major planning applications continued to impact performance. However, we have now cleared the backlog, so performance is expected to improve.
- 62 Latest benchmarking data (June 2024) shows our performance for major planning applications to be worse than the national average, the North East average and our statistical neighbours. Although performance for non-major applications is on par with the North East average, it is worse than the national average and our statistical neighbours.

Planning application type	Our performance	National average	North East average	Statistical Neighbours
Major	86.7%	91.2%	95.0%	96.6%
Non-major	88.6%	90.0%	88.7%	91.8%

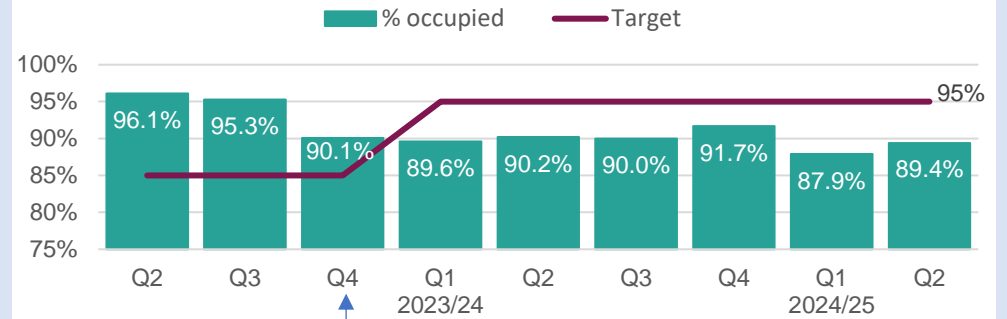
Economic Growth Dashboard: business investments, portfolio and employment land

(year to date ending 30 September 2024 / discrete quarterly data)

Investment secured (£'million)

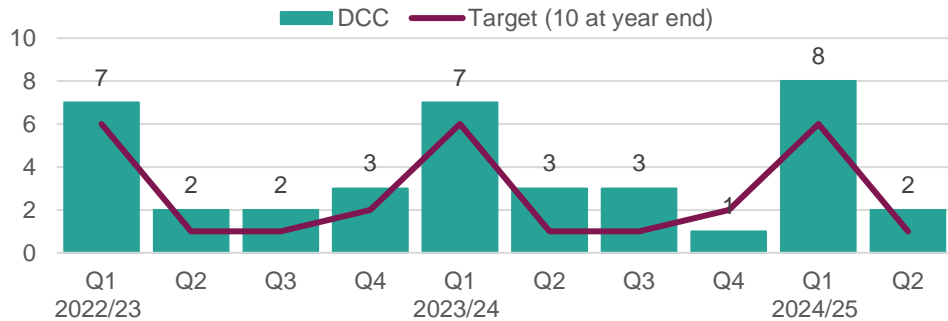


Business Durham Office Space



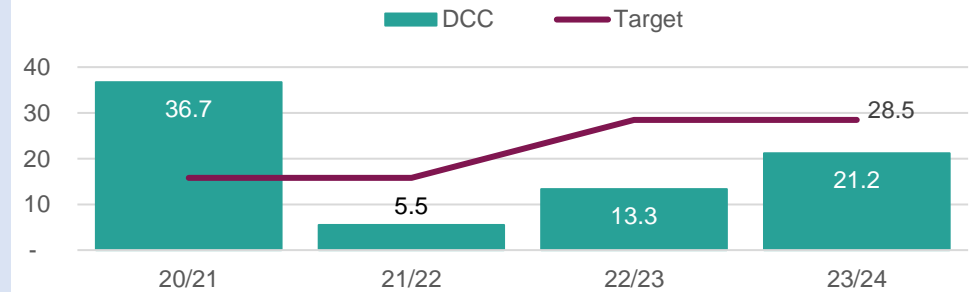
Additional floorspace added to portfolio reduced occupancy rate.

Number of inward investments



over the last two years we have performed better than the annual target of 10 investments

Employment land approved and delivered (hectares)



114.2 hectares of employment land delivered since the start of the County Durham Plan period (2015/16)

Investments

- 63 During quarter two (July to September), we secured just over £1.44 million of investment for companies, bringing the total in the year to date to £2.96 million - better than our profiled target of £2.5 million. Investment included Finance Durham Fund, New Cluster Development Fund, Enterprising Durham and County Durham Growth Fund approved grants.
- 64 Over the same period, we supported two inward investments - achieving our target (2). These were Power Roll (follow on investment) and PervasID.

Business Durham floor space

- 65 At the end of September, our occupancy rate was 89%, worse than target (95%). Occupancy across the property portfolio was impacted by two companies going into administration in quarter one. These companies had occupied a large amount of floorspace at Jade Business Park and Derwentside Business Centre. Enquiries in the pipeline for these units are expected to complete in quarter three. There are also challenges with being able to let vacant offices at Crook Business Centre due to the age of the heating system impacting the EPC rating.
- 66 On a positive note, occupancy of the new units at Station Place has improved, increasing to 73%.

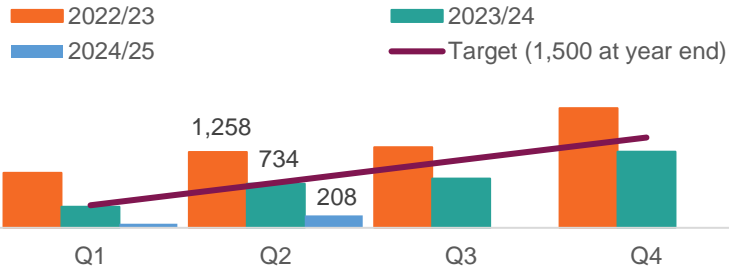
Employment Land

- 67 During 2023/24, 21.2ha of land were developed for employment use. This latest position shows an increase of 7.9ha compared to the previous year. This is mainly due to completion of a large area of the Integra 61 site, as well as Plot C at Aykley Heads. However, performance is worse than the target set out in the employment land trajectory (28.46ha).

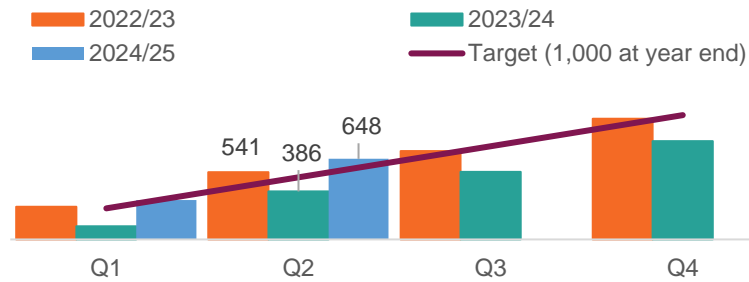
Business Support and Job Creation Dashboard

(year to date ending 30 September 2024 (cumulative) / discrete annual data)

Jobs created or safeguarded by Business Durham

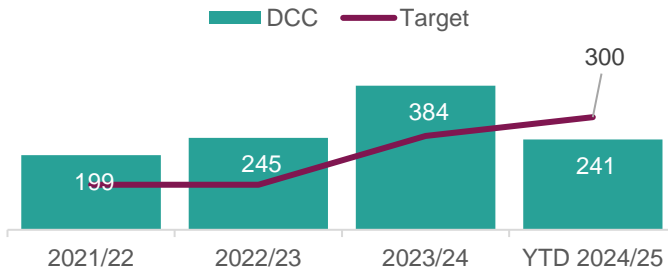


Businesses supported by Business Durham

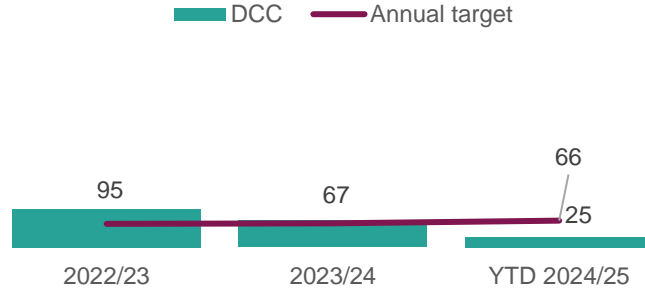


UKSPF Productivity and Growth Programme is now established, and delivery is back on track.

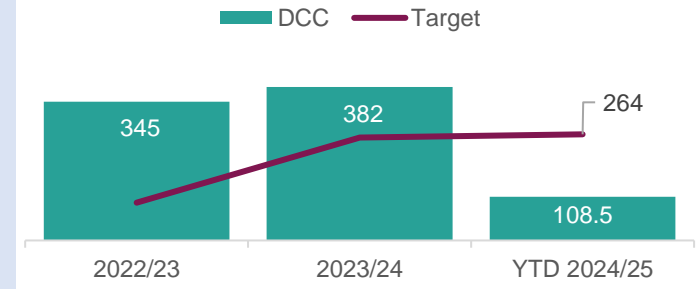
Businesses supported by Community Economic Development Team



Businesses supported by regeneration projects



FTEs created / safeguarded via regeneration projects



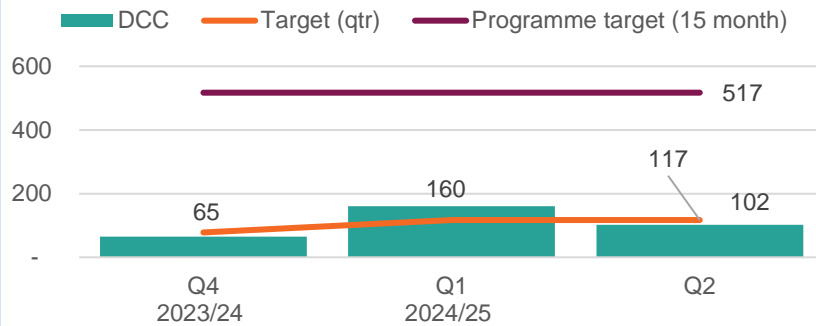
Businesses supported and jobs created/safeguarded

- 68 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Productivity and Growth Programme is now established, and delivery is on track.
- 69 Between July and September, we engaged with 332 businesses, bringing the total in the year to date to 648, better than the target of 500, and created or safeguarded 139 FTE jobs, bringing the total in the year to date to 208. Although jobs created or safeguarded is worse than the target of 750, the target is based on programmes that capture output towards their end, and the success of inward investments, new tenancies and other programmes which are more fluid throughout the year. We are closely monitoring this in relation to achieving target by the end of the financial year.
- 70 Over the same period, we engaged with 99 new retail businesses, better than target (75), and supported 15 businesses through our regeneration initiatives which created / safeguarded 71.5 FTE jobs. A further six schemes are on site, and another 14 businesses in progress, including grants awarded for two historic building schemes. Performance is in line with projections for the year to date and on track to achieve annual targets.

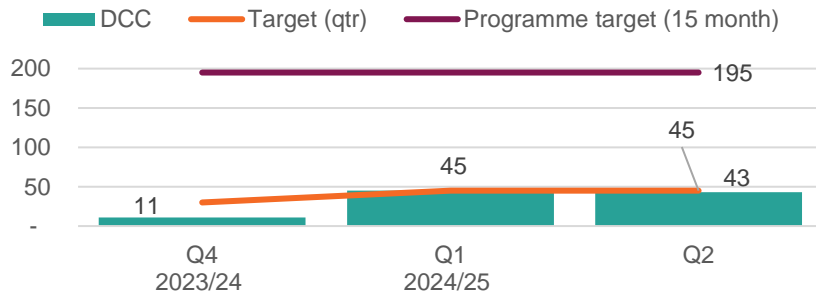
Employability Programmes Dashboard

(July - September 2024)

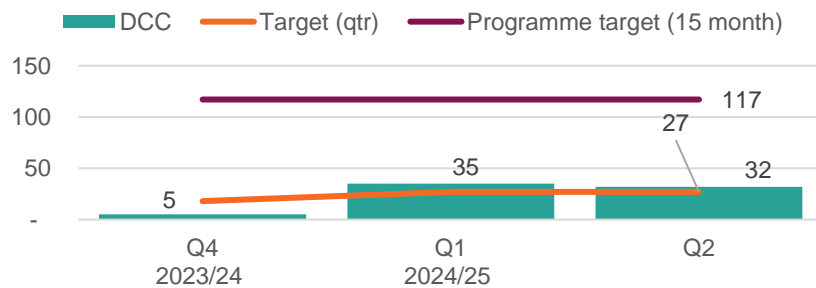
Registrations on employability programmes



Employability programmes: Participants receiving support to help gain employment



Employability programmes: Participants receiving support to sustain employment



Between January and September 2024:

- 327 registrations onto employability programmes
- 99 participants received support to help gain employment
- 72 participants received support to sustain employment

It should be noted that the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) employability programme outcomes are not comparable with the previous European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) ones.

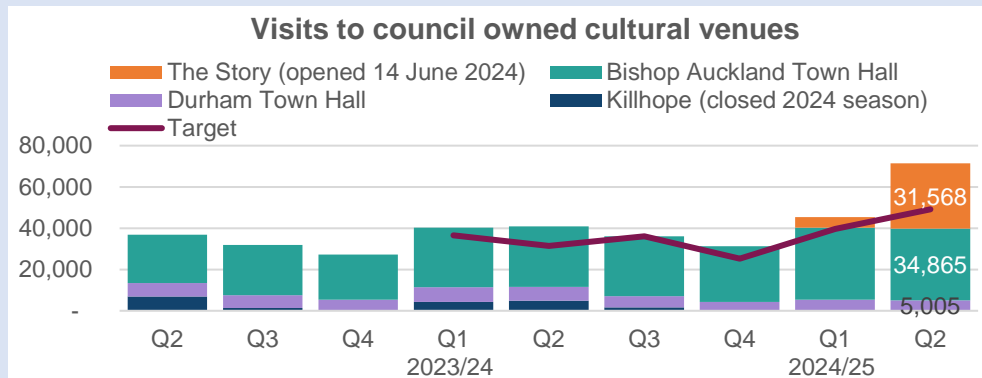
Employability programmes

- 71 Our UKSPF employability programme commenced in January 2024 and runs to March 2025. It helps economically inactive clients gain employment and employed participants in unstable positions to sustain their employment.
- 72 During quarter two (July to September), 102 clients registered onto our programmes, fewer than last quarter (160) and worse than profiled target (117). Referrals and subsequent registrations have been affected by the six-week school holiday period as clients with children did not engage with us.
- 73 However, registrations of economically inactive clients (+55) are still ahead of schedule with numbers expected to increase over the coming months. We are also on track to achieve programme target of 517 registrations by March 2025.
- 74 During this period, 43 clients received support to help gain employment and 32 clients currently employed received support to sustain their employment. This brings the totals since the start of the scheme for these two measures to 99 (target 195) and 72 (target 117) respectively.
- 75 The cohort of clients we are working with have multiple barriers to employment and therefore are further away from the labour market. We have developed various community activities to engage target clients including drop-in sessions, events and short courses.
- 76 We also developed and released educational videos highlighting the support we provide and feedback from clients as part of our Employability Day celebrations.
- 77 Over the coming months we will continue to engage new clients as well as support current clients to improve their interpersonal skills and secure progression opportunities. We will also continue to actively advertise the programme to JobCentre Plus offices and liaise with both internal and external community organisations.

Cultural Offer Dashboard: cultural events, venues and libraries

(30 September 2024 / discrete quarterly data)

Cultural events and venues

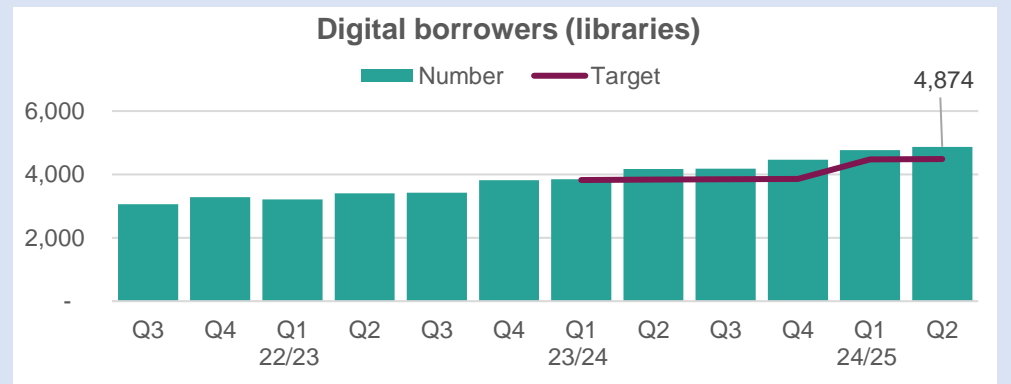
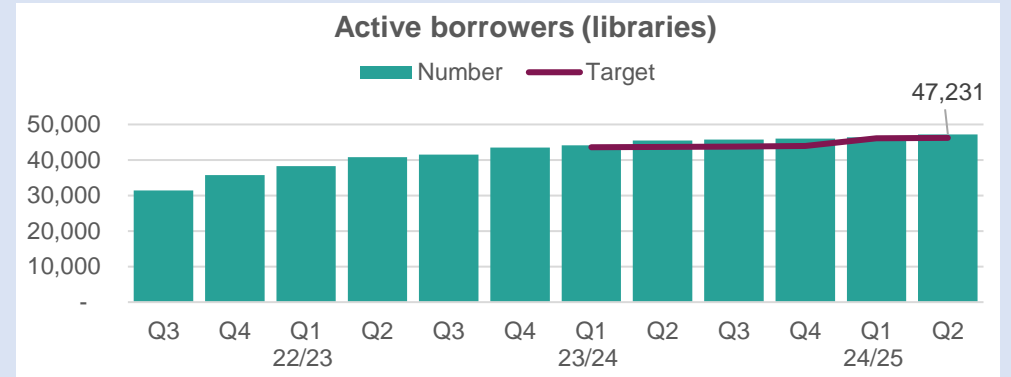


Due to Killhope closure for 2024 season and the opening of The Story (14 June), data is not comparable.
 NB: The Story figures include visits to the County Registrar's office.

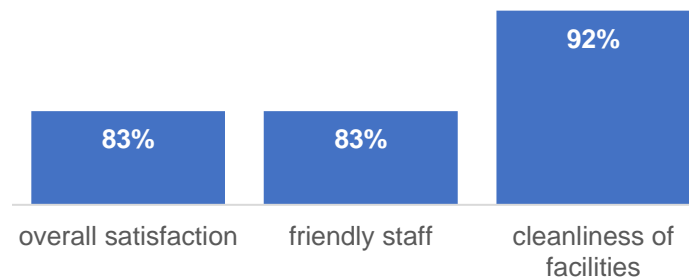
Reporting dates of official figures:

quarter one	quarter two	quarter three
Bishop Auckland Food Festival	BRASS Festival Seaham Food Festival	Durham Book Festival

Libraries



customer satisfaction - culture



Cultural events

78 We continue to invest in our cultural events programme.

- **Seaham Food Festival** - 28,000 people attended the festival in August, an increase of 8,000 visitors compared to 2023. The two-day festival generated a direct economic impact of £405,142, better than last year (increase of £151,500). Great weather and a larger cultural programme, including a dedicated music stage, contributed to the success of this year's festival.

Visitors thought the event atmosphere, range and variety of produce available and overall quality of the event to be standout strengths. 99% of visitors rated the whole experience positively, and 97% of visitors felt the festival was a worthwhile event for the council to support. Parking for the event was rated the lowest at 76%.

Traders also rated the overall event positively. The atmosphere was a stand-out aspect, with the event staff and volunteers and overall quality of the event also prominent. Many anticipate long-term benefits from their involvement and a high majority wish to participate again.

Both visitors and traders strongly agreed that the festival raises the profile of County Durham and has benefits for the regional economy.

Local businesses generally supported the festival and understood the local benefits to the town and its economy. However, the impact of the festival on these businesses was varied, seemingly dependent on the business type.

- **BRASS Festival** - almost 29,000 people attended the festival in September, a decrease of 3,000 visitors compared to 2023. Poor weather, European football fixtures, one cancelled commission and less ticketed events contributed to lower attendance figures this year.

Despite lower attendance, the two-day festival generated a direct economic impact of £874,248, an increase of £272,299 compared to last year. Two sold out headliner gigs, with more possible overnight stays, helped contribute to the increase.

Ninety-eight percent of visitors rated the whole experience positively, and 98% of visitors felt the festival was a worthwhile event for the council to support. Visitors highly rated the quality of performances (99%) and range and variety of performance (96%). Although still very positively perceived, value of tickets scored the least at 91%.

All the artists rated the overall event positively, and felt that taking part will have a positive long-term impact in terms of exposure, networking and increased bookings.

Participating schools were positive about all elements of the event and unanimously agreed the festival gave pupils the opportunity to hear live music. The quality of performances was a standout strength.

Visits to council owned cultural venues

79 Between July and September there were more than 70,000 visits to our cultural venues. Most were to BATH (34,865 visits) and The Story (31,568), both better than target.

80 Performance was achieved through a successful summer gallery exhibition and continued good café and event attendance at BATH.

81 Visits to The Story surpassed pre-launch projections, with the potential to significantly exceed annual targets. This is the first full reporting period for The Story since the venue

opened in June. As such, targets have been pro-rated to reflect the actual reporting period for 2024/25 (14 June to 31 March 2025).

- 82 There were just over 5,000 visits to Durham Town Hall, worse than target (6,500). Increased hire charges for 2024/25 have affected the number of events. Uncertainty around the start date of significant planned repairs also affected performance. The venue is undergoing a wider condition review that may impact targets going forward.

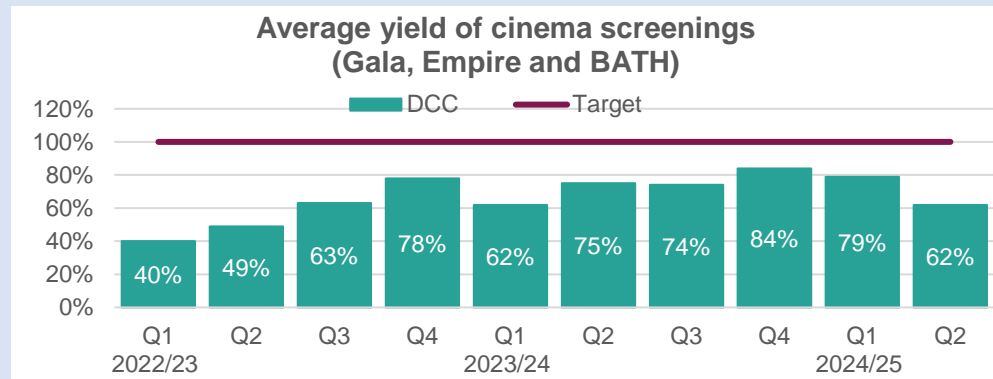
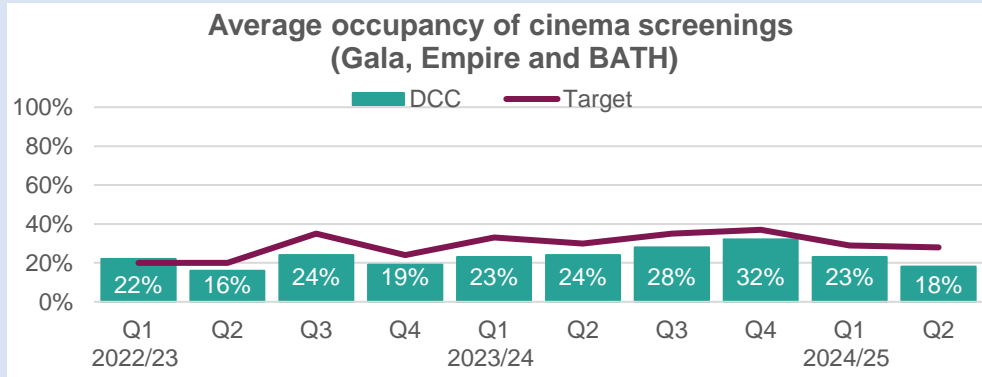
Libraries

- 83 Between July and September there were just over 47,000 active borrowers and 4,800 digital borrowers. Performance is better than target for both measures and active borrowers continue to rise in line with expectations.
- 84 Our online newspaper and magazine offer continues to grow ahead of expectations. We expect this to become even more popular as more local interest items are introduced - The Northern Echo is expected to be available by March 2025.
- 85 We are working to help promote and grow the service. Recent initiatives include:
- **Summer Reading Challenge (Marvellous Makers).** 2,823 children registered, and 2,036 children completed. 2.5% increase compared to 2023 completers. 23 celebration events held.
 - **Library Roadshows.** Three events, 128 people and 34 organisations attended.
 - **Author Events.** Six author events, attended by 86 people. Included children's author event as part of NE Summer Author Tour, and one Northern Bookshelf Live event in partnership with New Writing North.
 - **Heritage Open Days.** Three pop-up library information sessions in partnership with The Story attended by 47 people.
 - **Living Library event for schools.** 25 adults and 77 children attended.
 - **Community Wellbeing (MOVE).** Two scavenger walk and story-based craft events, attended by 27 people.

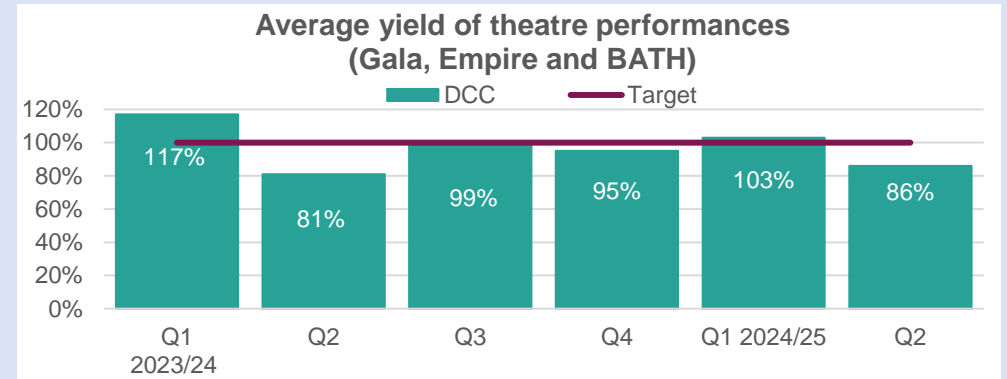
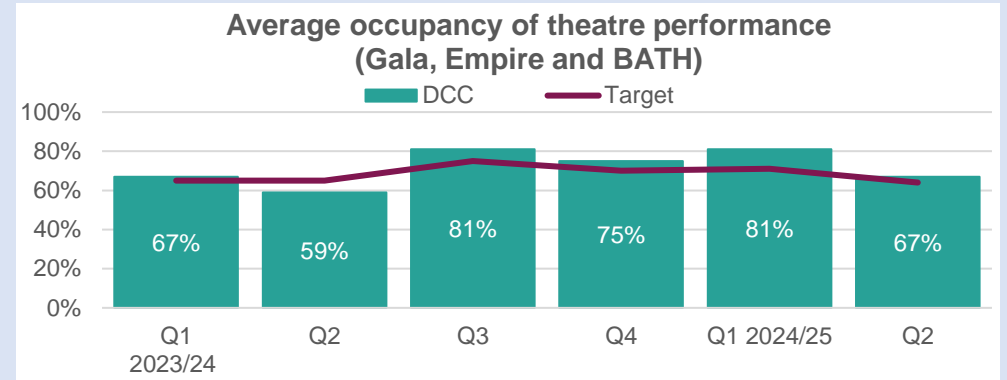
Cultural Offer Dashboard: cinemas and theatres

(discrete quarterly data)

Cinemas



Theatres



Note: Theatre data prior to 2023/24 not comparable due to change in definition

Yield = proportion of target sales amount achieved

Cinemas: Gala, Bishop Auckland Town Hall and Empire

- 86 Both average occupancy rate and average yield across all programmed cinema screenings were worse than target this quarter (July to September) and the same period last year.

	July to September 2023	July to September 2024	Target
Occupancy	24%	18%	28%
Average Yield	75%	62%	100%

- 87 The public lift at the Gala was out of service sporadically over five weeks during the quarter. This affected the occupancy and yield where audiences with accessibility requirements were unable to access the cinema as there was no level access for customers or where screenings with specific accessibility requirements were unable to go ahead such as 'Gala Seniors' and 'Bringing Baby'. The lift was repaired in time for the Durham book festival and to mitigate against the lower performance, in quarter three we have programmed additional event cinema particularly around Christmas and expect both yield and occupancy to overachieve against the quarter three target. Our social media channels have been utilised to promote screenings through activities such as public film votes and linked 'Food & Beverage' offers.
- 88 Programmed screenings at BATH continue to be affected by competing demands on the theatre space. We programmed more live performance at BATH than expected during the quarter which delivers a higher yield and higher revenue. This reduces the space available for screenings, impacting cinema occupancy and yield, however theatre occupancy and yield has improved compared to last year.
- 89 Empire re-opened to the public mid-September following closure for essential roof repairs, affecting the usual number of screenings held during the period. We expect to exceed targets in quarter three as since reopening there has been a quick return to our normal customer levels and a strong response to autumn blockbusters such as the film Wicked.

Theatres: Gala, Bishop Auckland Town Hall and Empire

- 90 Average occupancy rate across all programmed theatre performances performed better than target this quarter (July to September 2024). However, average yield was worse than target by 14 percentage points. Both were better than the same period last year.

	July to September 2023	July to September 2024	Target
Occupancy	59%	67%	64%
Average Yield	82%	86%	100%

- 91 No theatre performances took place at Empire this quarter due to temporary closure to allow for essential works. Following re-opening in September, theatre performances recommenced and there is a full programme in place for the remainder of the year.
- 92 Programmed and produced shows both performed well at Gala and BATH. However, quarter two is the quietest period for the cultural venues as it includes a period of maintenance and the Gala's programme was also limited by the ongoing demolition works taking place on Claypath.

93 This quarter was the first time we marketed school performances, with a week of performances taking place before and during the summer holidays. The newly appointed learning and engagement team began to build relationships with schools to offer engagement opportunities at our venues, for example, tours and workshops. As this work continues it will help boost audience figures for future productions.

Our Environment

Priority Aims:

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

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

National, Regional and Local Picture

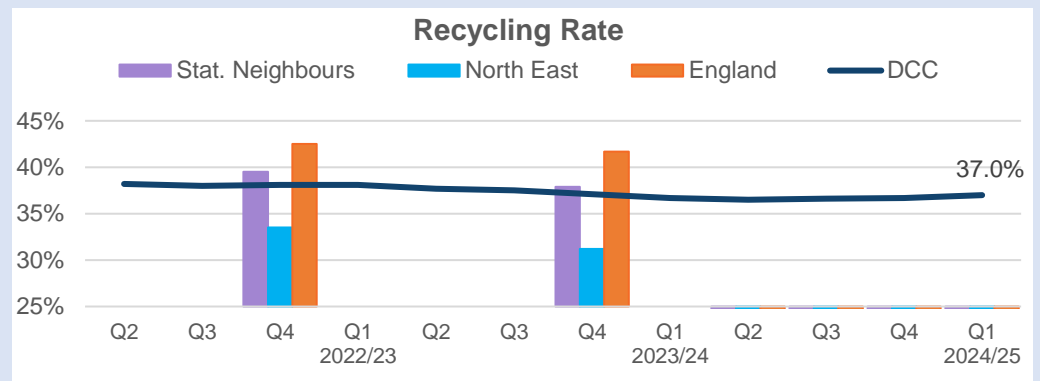
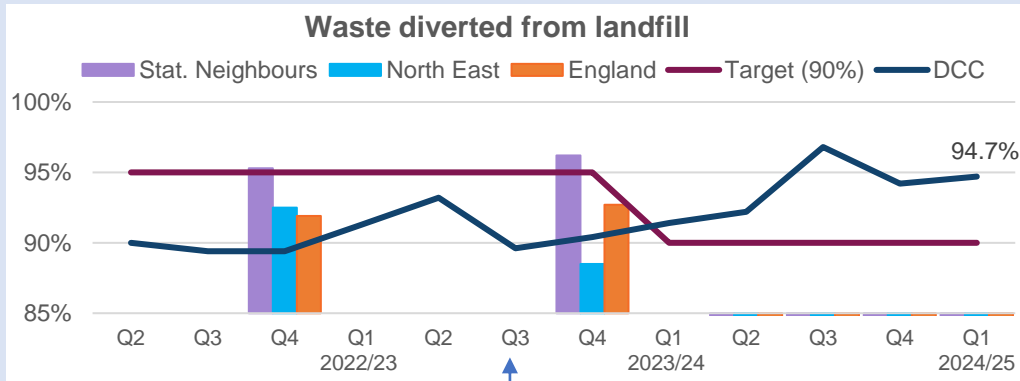
- 94 In 2018, the government set out its ambition to improve the environment with [A Green Future](#), a 25 Year Environment Plan, and committed⁴ to refresh the plan every five years. The first refresh, the [Environmental Improvement Plan 2023](#) is structured around 10 environmental goals. The previous government set out a plan to develop a suite of strategies, plans and programmes to achieve these goals, including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. We will provide updates on the new government's priorities in due course.
- 95 We declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and approved an initial Climate Emergency Response Plan (CERP) in 2020. The CERP set out challenging targets. Then in April 2022, we declared an ecological emergency and approved an action plan in December 2022.
- 96 We adopted the [third phase of the CERP](#) in July 2024 and are now working toward achieving net zero by 2030 and an 80% real carbon reduction to our emissions. We also continue our work with partners to achieve a carbon neutral County Durham by 2045.
- 97 The government is to introduce food waste collections by March 2026 and implement simpler recycling collections and tougher regulation⁵ by March 2027. We are developing plans to comply with this guidance.

⁴ set into law in the Environment Act 2021

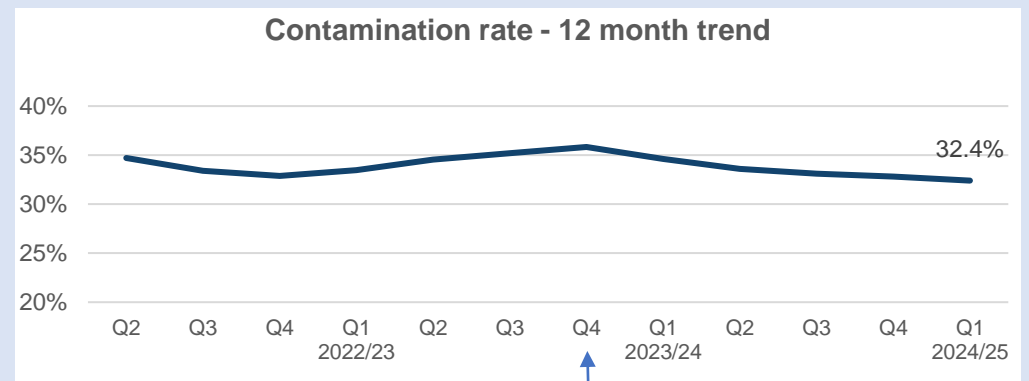
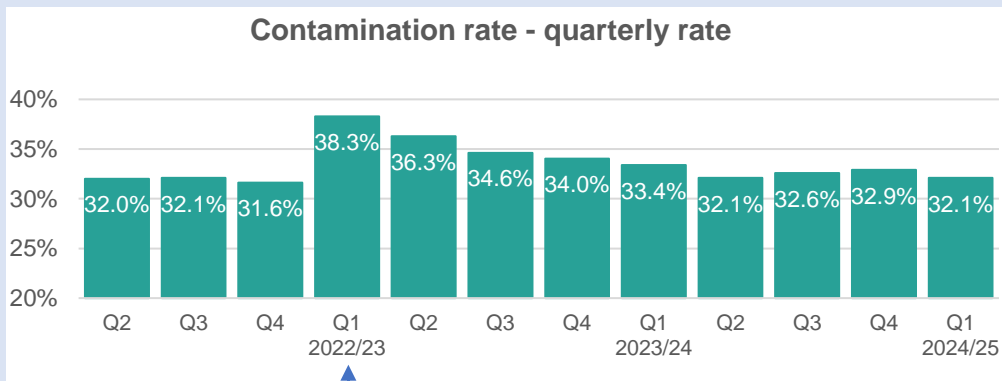
⁵ press release: [simpler recycling collections](#)

Waste Dashboard

(year to date ending 31 March 2024 / discrete annual data)



Issues at regional waste facilities autumn/winter 2022



Consistent improvement since the peak in June 2022.

Consistent improvement since the 12-month peak March 2023.

Customer had a lovely experience with crew who emptied her bins after she had a problem, going above and beyond.

Customer received a calendar which has been printed in colour and large print as she is partially sighted, she is thrilled with it and really pleased.

Customer complimenting crew who wheeled all the bins to the top of the street to empty them and returned them as a car was blocking the entrance.

*Note – waste policies and contract arrangements can vary across councils.

Waste diverted from landfill

- 98 We collected 255,793 tonnes of waste during the last 12 months (July 2023 - June 2024). Sustained performance at the waste processing facilities led to us diverting 94.7% from landfill. This equates to 13,675 tonnes being landfilled. Performance is better than both our target of 90%, and the 91.4% achieved the previous year.
- 99 Along with six other North East councils, we are developing a new energy recovery from waste facility that will meet the future needs of the county. A business continuity plan has been developed and negotiations to extend existing contractual arrangements to ensure residual waste treatment continues until the new plant is operational are taking place. The new plant is expected to be operational in 2028.

Recycling, re-use or composting

- 100 During the last 12 months (July 2023 - June 2024), 37% of household waste we collected was sent for recycling. This is slightly better than the 36.7% recorded during the previous 12 months. Although latest benchmarks (2022/23 financial year) show our performance to be significantly better than the North East average, we are worse than the national average.
- 101 We continue to promote recycling to our residents through our 'What Goes Where' campaign and other initiatives such as:
- Waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE): we have 161 collection points and repair cafés which collect, recycle and repair small electrical and battery-operated items.
 - Schools across the county participated in the Great Cable Challenge as part of a nationwide campaign to recycle old, unwanted cables.
- 102 Our team was shortlisted for an award for Team of the Year (Community Engagement) at the recent National Recycling Awards, although they did not win, being shortlisted shows recognition of the work the team carry out.

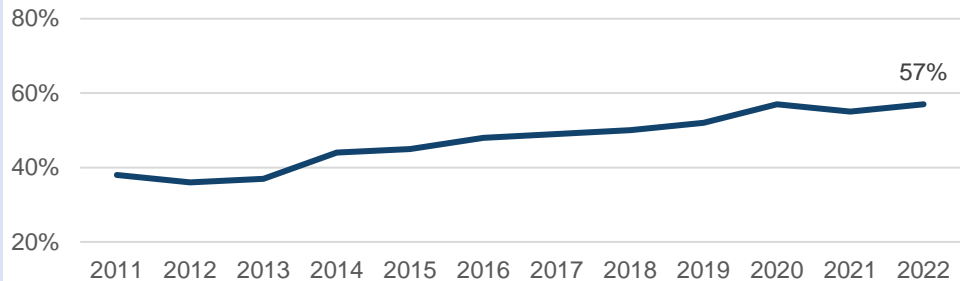
Contamination of recyclate waste

- 103 Our contamination rate continues to improve. During the last 12 months (July 2023 - June 2024), 32.4% of recyclate waste was contaminated, lower than the peak of 38.3% recorded in the 12 months ending June 2022.
- 104 This reduction was driven by schemes such as WEEE, our 'What Goes Where' campaign, and the issuing of 13,653 notices for contaminated blue bins in the year ending September 2024.

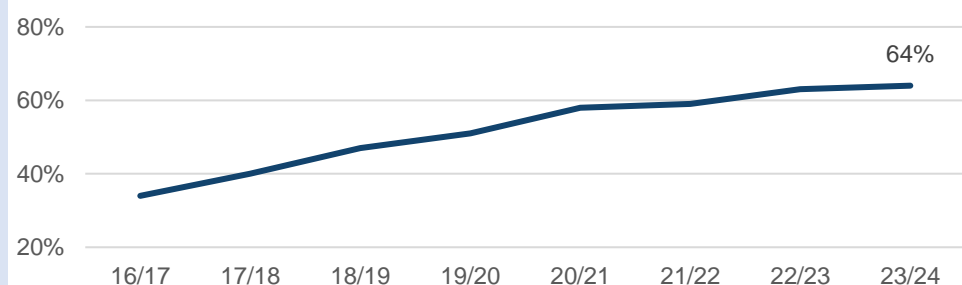
Carbon Emissions Dashboard

(annual data)

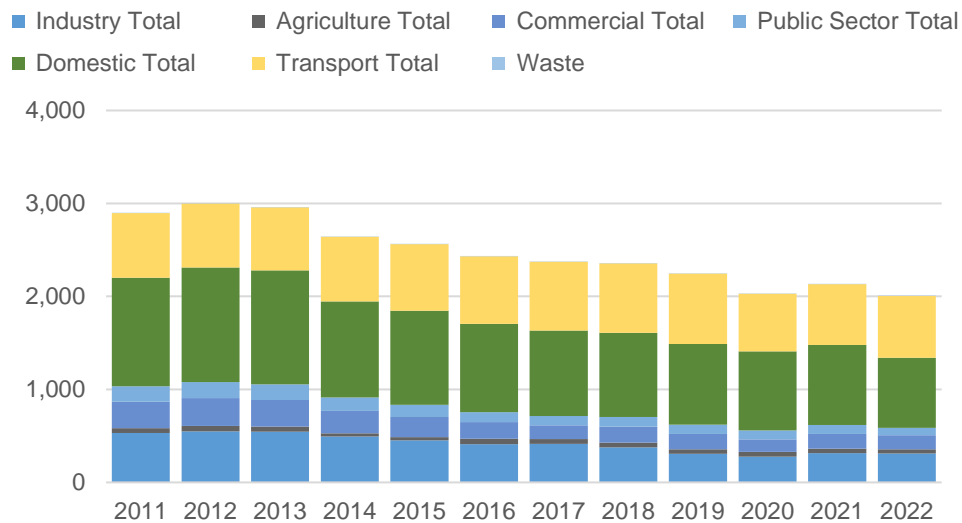
Reduction in carbon emissions (county) target = net zero by 2045



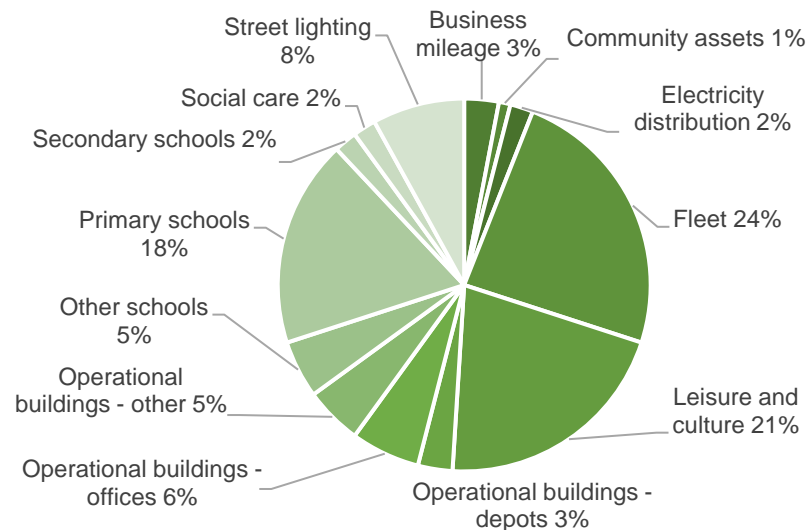
Reduction in carbon emissions (council) target = net zero by 2030



Breakdown of County Durham CO₂e emissions



Breakdown of total Council CO₂e emissions 2023-24



Countywide carbon emissions

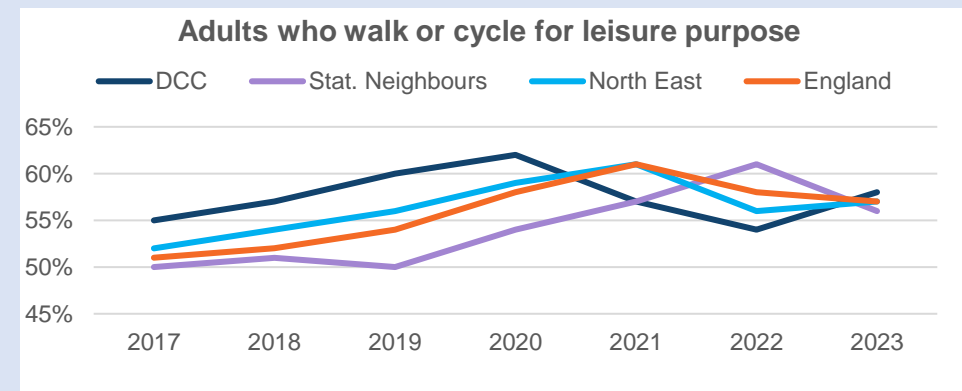
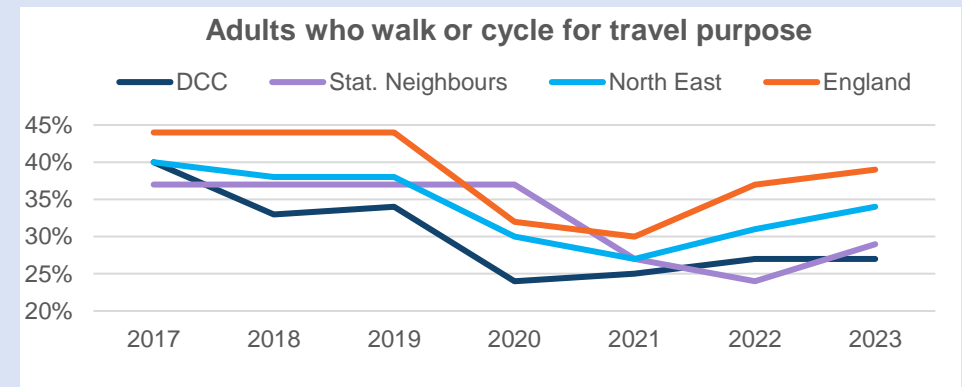
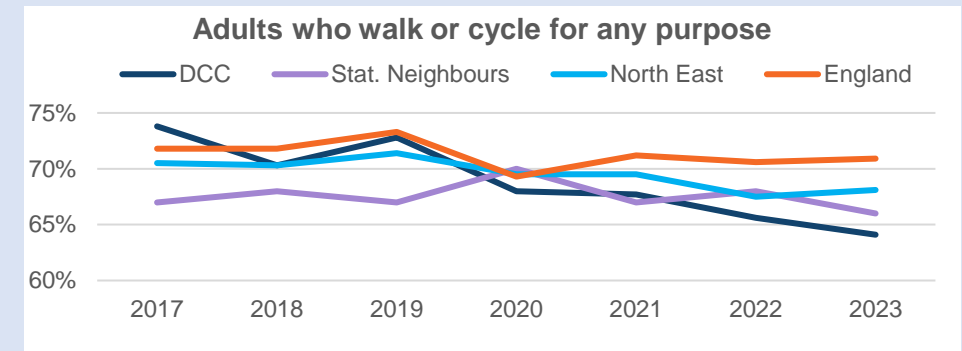
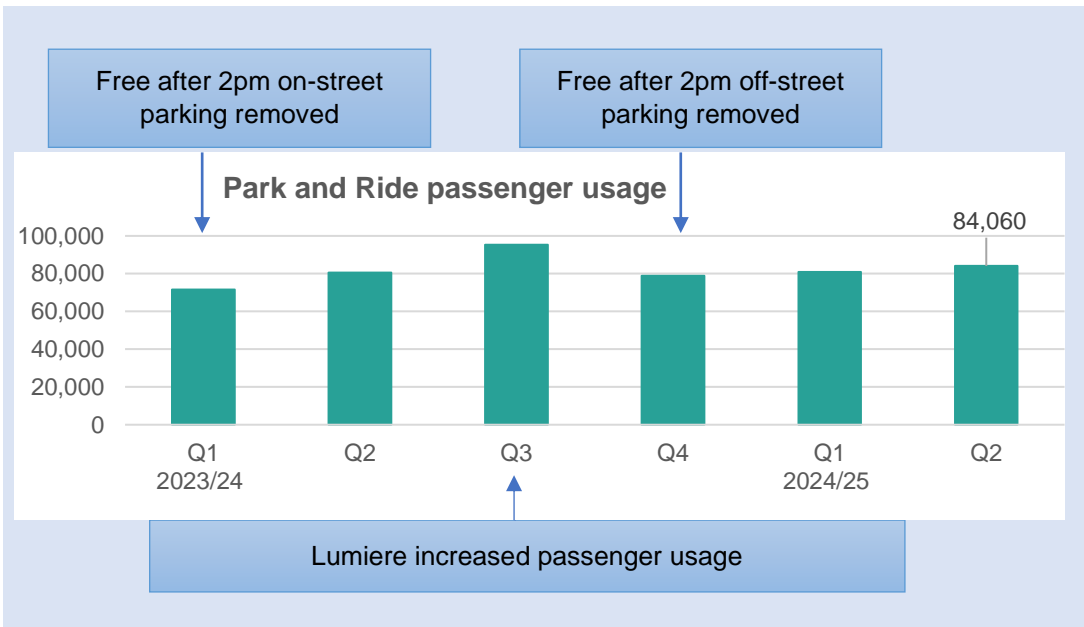
- 105 Latest data (2022) shows that carbon emissions generated from within County Durham have improved. Reducing by 57% from the 1990 baseline. All sectors except for transport show a reduction. Significant progress is required to meet the target for County Durham to be net zero by 2045.
- 106 The recently launched CERP3 identifies a range of activities to support the continuing reduction. We are working with partners to:
- develop plans around how we can more effectively identify and deliver heat networks across the county, building on the work of Seaham Garden Village,
 - identify community assets and helping them towards their transition to net zero.
- 107 Groundwork on the first EV charging points funded through the LEVI has been completed and the charging points are due to go to live in November 2024.
- 108 We have 145 EV charging points available to the public at council sites across the county.

Council carbon emissions

- 109 Latest data (2023/24) shows that carbon emissions generated from council activity has improved. Reducing by 64% from the 2008/09 baseline. Fleet, leisure and culture, and primary schools (non-academies) produce the most emissions across council activity.
- 110 The target for the council is to be net zero by 2030 with an 80% reduction in carbon emissions. A further 16 percentage point reduction is required to meet the target.
- 111 Sourcing funding is challenging, but we continue to decarbonise our buildings where possible with heating projects planned for Cotsford Infants PACC, BATH, Durham Pathways and Spennymoor Education Development Centre. A lighting project has recently been completed at the Louisa Centre.
- 112 Further solar PV installations are being considered, as well as our first wind project at Hackworth Road depot.
- 113 Phase 4 of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme is open for applications. Projects are being developed for submission. Decisions on phase 4 projects are likely to be known early 2025.

Sustainable Transport Dashboard and Active Travel Dashboard

(12 months ending 30 September 2024 / discrete quarterly data)



Park and ride passenger usage

- 114 During quarter two (July to September) 3,533 more passengers used the park and ride service compared to the same period last year. The increase in use is related to the park and ride service now operating all bank holidays (excluding 25, 26 December and 1 January) as well as the Belmont to Sniperley service (PR1) operating on Sundays.

Active Travel

- 115 Latest National Travel Survey data (2023) show that the percentage of adults in County Durham who walk and cycle for any purpose (64.1%) has remained statistically similar to 2022 (65.6%) and is worse than the national and North East averages.
- 116 Those that do so for leisure purpose is similar to the North East and better than England averages, those who walk or cycle for travel purposes is worse than the North East and England averages.

Adults who walk or cycle	County Durham	North East Average	Statistical comparison	England Average	Statistical comparison
for any purpose	64.1%	68.1%	worse	70.9%	worse
for leisure purpose	58.4%	56.8%	similar	57.2%	better
for travel purpose	27.4%	33.5%	worse	39.2%	worse

- 117 The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan scheme designs for priority routes are being prepared and schemes are being delivered in Bishop Auckland and Durham City. In addition, we are currently planning and implementing walking, wheeling and cycling schemes across the county through funded programmes such as Transforming Cities, Capability Funding, Active Travel England, Stronger Towns and Towns and Villages.
- 118 Secure cycle parking is crucial to encouraging active travel. We continue to run a successful ParkThatBike scheme for communities and businesses which includes secure parking hangars.

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

- 119 Latest national data revealed the number of children in care in England at 31 March 2024 was 4.5% higher than in 2020. Key drivers behind the increase in children needing support include mental health concerns and domestic abuse.
- 120 The Local Government Association says the high figures underline the urgent need for the government to use the forthcoming Spending Review to address the funding pressures in children's services.
- 121 The Autumn Budget set out £250 million to continue testing children's social care reforms, including £44 million to pilot a Kinship Allowance and to create more foster placements. Councils have faced spiralling costs and pressures in children's social care, with budgets up by an average of 11% in real terms in the last year alone.

SEND

- 122 In the summer, the council was part of an area SEND inspection of Durham's Local Area Partnership. The inspection was conducted jointly by CQC and Ofsted and included the council and various local partners. Key findings from the inspection [report](#) include;
- Collaborative leadership is strong. Partnership leaders prioritise SEND.
 - Children and young people (CYP) feel valued, visible, included in their communities and listened to.
 - CYP build transferable skills so that they can participate in wider activities.
 - There is improvement in the length of time taken to complete new assessments, the result of the LAP recovery plan.

- Most CYP have their needs identified and met early.
- CYP with SEND have good attendance and this is improving further.
- Persistent absence from school is reducing, preparing young people well in education, training and employment.
- Parents and carers state that their voice is mostly heard well, some have seen improvements to support and services as a result.

123 Inspectors concluded there were four main areas we should make further improvements on over the next three years:

- Intensify work to further improve EHCP quality and assessment timeliness. Ensure that EHCPs consistently and accurately reflect the needs of CYP. Ensure all partner agencies contribute comprehensively with high-quality information, and that all plans detail CYP's voice and needs, aspirations and next steps effectively.
- Continue to strengthen work to further reduce delays to access CAMHS and neurodevelopmental pathways across the age range of CYP.
- Ensure that CYP and their families can access easily identifiable needs-led services. Informed practitioners should direct families to services that provide support, guidance and intervention at the earliest opportunity.
- Further strengthen the monitoring and impact of strategic plans and policies to ensure that support and resources are consistently targeted to the CYP and families that need it most.

124 As a result of the inspection the Durham Local Area SEND Partnership have produced an action plan demonstrating how they will work together to further improve SEND support in County Durham. A new SEND strategy will be developed next year.

125 The Autumn Budget revealed a £1 billion uplift in funding to support work to reform the system for pupils with special educational needs to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable children and to ensure that the system is financially sustainable. This is, however, part of a wider increase to core schools budget of £2.3 billion next year to support our pledge to hire thousands more teachers into key subjects. This £1 billion increase in SEND funding represents around quarter of the deficits that the National Audit Office estimates that local authorities have accumulated and will not cover rising costs.

Adult Social Care

126 The CQC assessed our adult social care service in May 2024 with the [final assessment report](#) published in August 2024. They rated adult social care provision within the council as 'Good'. The majority of areas within the assessment were found to be of a good standard and the report highlighted that the service was performing well and meeting the expectations of the CQC. At the time of publication the council's rating placed it joint third nationally out of 11 published reports.

127 A number of areas within the report were also highlighted as needing improvement and a service improvement plan has been developed to address these, building upon the work that was already in progress and following the development of the self-assessment.

128 The recent [Autumn Budget](#) included some items specifically for adult social care:

- support to local authority services through provision of at least £600 million of new grant funding to support social care (both adult and children's social care).

- an £86 million increase to the Disabled Facilities Grant to support 7,800 more adaptations to homes for those with social care needs to reduce hospitalisations and prolong independence.

- 129 The King's Fund, a think tank working to improve health and care in England, has provided an [assessment](#) of the budget's impact on adult social care. It points out that the additional funding will be welcomed by the adult social care sector. However, the resource is likely to spread thinly as the sector employs as many people as the NHS and will be more exposed to the increased cost pressures also announced in the budget. The analysis also [notes](#) that the 'much promised fundamental reforms for social care remain over the horizon rather than in plain sight from the current policy agenda of this government'.
- 130 Care England, a body representing independent providers of adult social care in England, also stated that the budget 'overlooks the financial pressures⁶ bearing down on the sector'. It highlighted the risk of an increasing number of contracts being handed back to local authorities by providers due to the increased National Insurance contributions⁷. This, in turn, may lead to the closure of services that are no longer financially viable.
- 131 The government has opened a call for evidence to understand the cost of inaction around adult social care reform. This intends to investigate the cost of inaction to individuals, the NHS, local authorities and also to the wider economy. It is focusing not only on the financial cost, but also on the personal costs and on potential benefits that are being missed. The government will provide an update on the findings in the new year.

⁶ [Financial pressures bearing down on the sector](#)

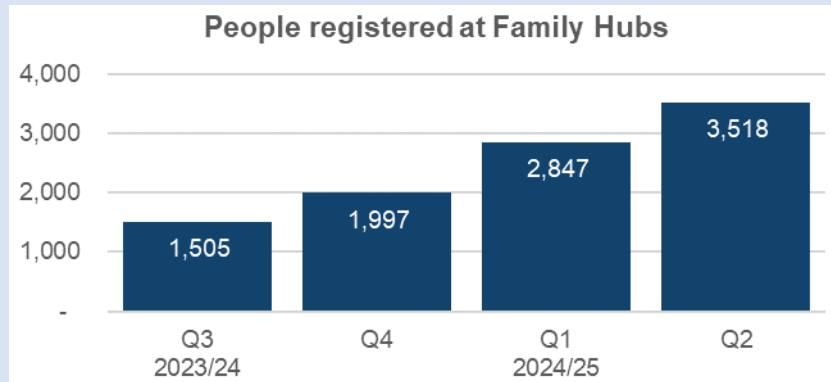
⁷ [Increased NI contributions](#)

Children's Social Care Dashboard: Early Help and Referrals

(12 months ending 30 September 2024 / at 30 September 2024)

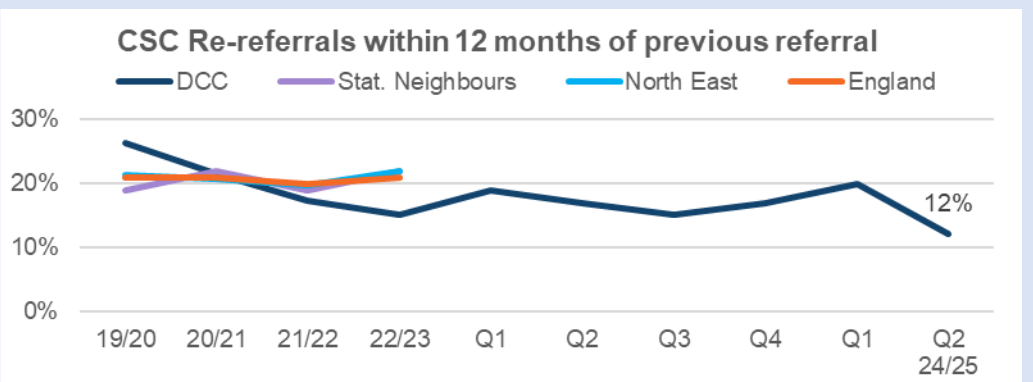
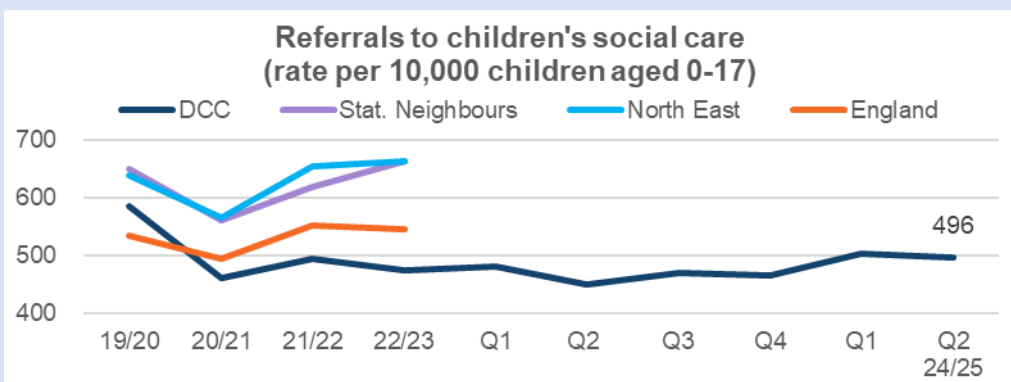
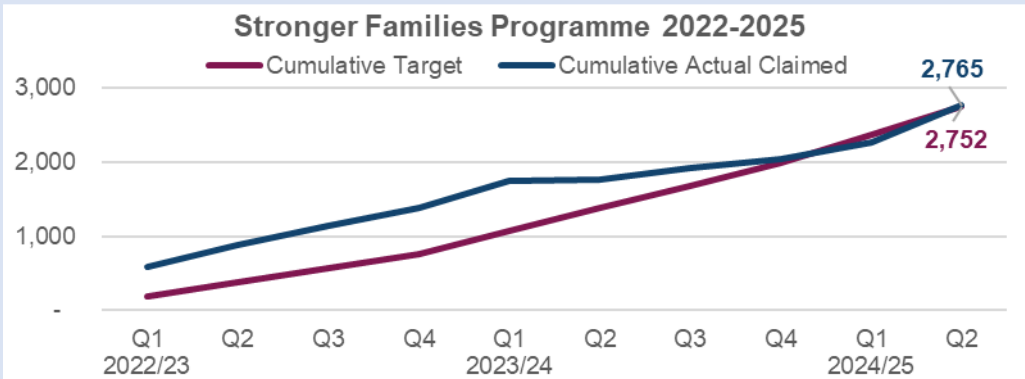
Early Help

- Post-Covid, demand has been at a consistent level, in part due to a change in operating model with more partner led early help assessments.
- In April 2023, 15 Family Hubs were launched to provide 'one stop shop' access to family support (from conception to age 19, or age 25 for children with SEND).
- Between September 2023 and September 2024: more than 10,000 people registered with a Family Hub (3,916 families), including 1,533 children unborn or aged 0-6 months.



Stronger Families Programme

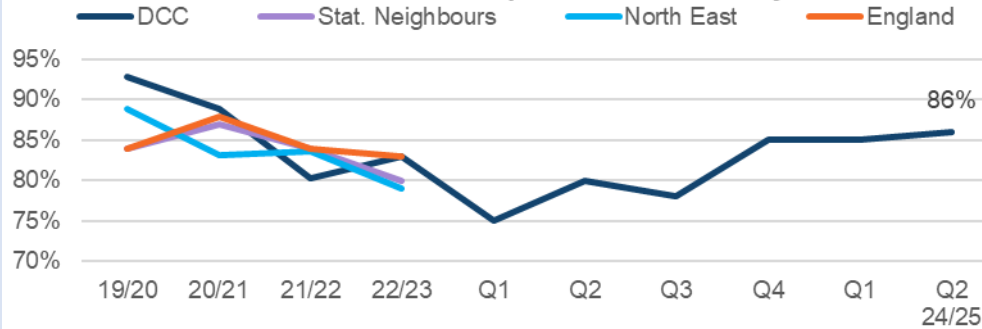
- To date, we have supported 8,657 families through the Stronger Families programme.
- By the end of quarter two, 753 families (49% of the annual target) had been claimed for this financial year.



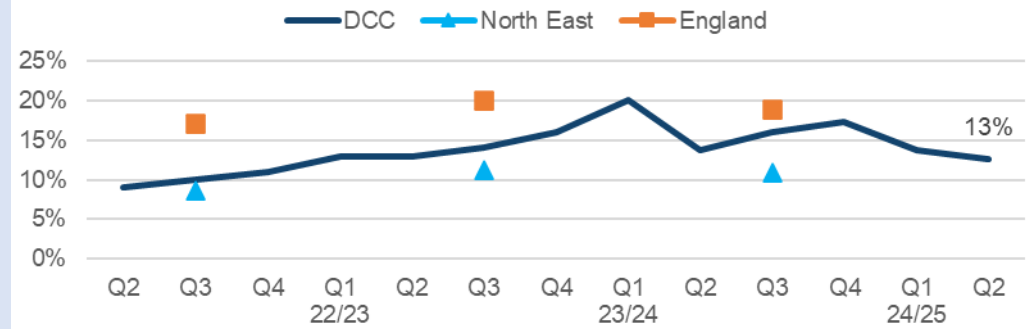
Children's Social Care Dashboard: assessments, protection plans, in need, social worker vacancies

(12 months ending 30 September 2024 / at 30 September 2024)

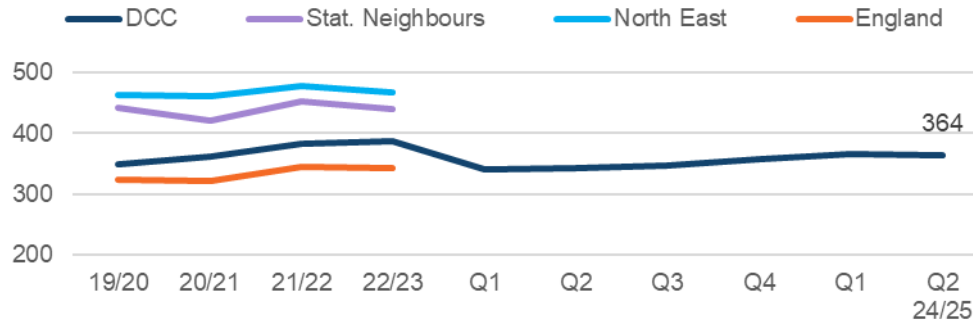
CSC assessments completed within 45 days



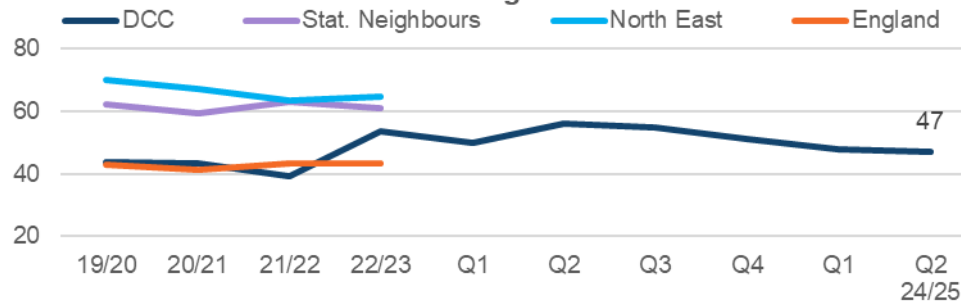
social worker vacancies



Open Children in Need per 10,000 children aged 0-17

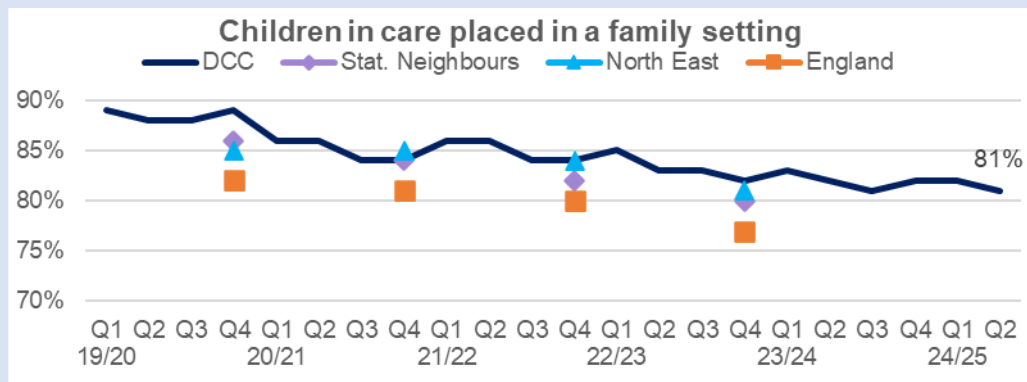
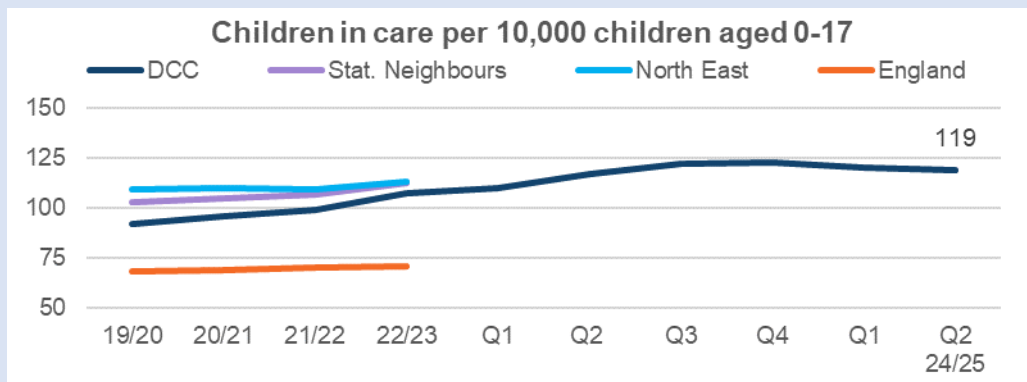


Open Child Protection Plan per 10,000 children aged 0-17

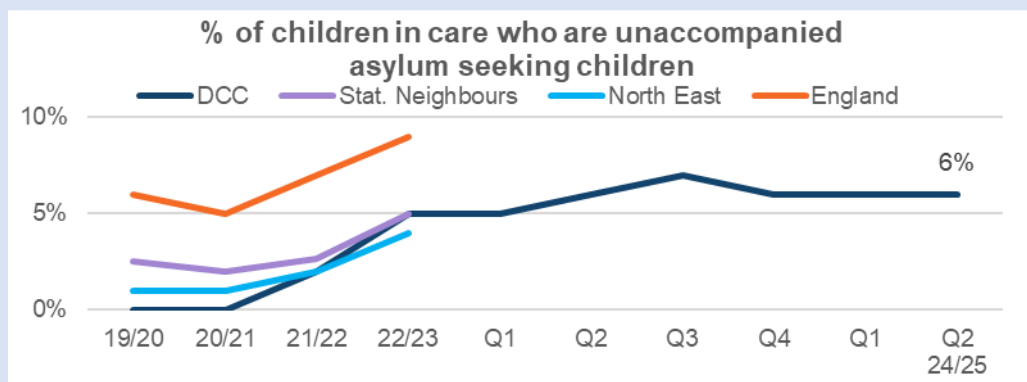


Children's Social Care Dashboard: in care, unaccompanied asylum seeking children

(12 months ending 30 September 2024/ at 30 September 2024)



Slight reduction in the proportion placed in a family setting linked to reductions in placements with friends and family due to Special Guardianship Orders being granted and children in care starting to plateau



Children's Social Care and Early Help

- 132 Overall demand for early help and statutory support remains consistent with previous reports.

Early Help Assessments

- 133 We developed (with key partners, children, young people, parents, and carers) a new Early Help Assessment for partners, based on an existing practice model, it provides a richer picture of early help offered and its impact. Several partners are using the new assessment when a Team Around the Family arrangement is in place. We continue to work with partners who are not engaging with the process, to understand barriers and work with them on a solution.
- 134 Between October 2022 and September 2024, 3,992 forms (assessments and/or Child and Family Plans) were submitted through the Early Help Assessment Portal, of which 691 (17%) were submitted by partners (26% from education and 23% from health organisations) who are leading on support for families as lead professional where there is a Team Around the Family.

Locality Early Help Conversations (LEHCs)

- 135 LEHCs are well established across the county, whereby multi-agency partners focus on the needs of families. Rather than relying on formal referrals into the council's Early Help Service, LEHCs use the collective resource available across the system. Our Family Hubs and Start for Life provide families with the support they need in a more accessible way.
- 136 Between October 2023 and September 2024, we held 397 LEHCs, resulting in 1,141 actions. During quarter two (July to September) we held 40 LEHCs which resulted in 105 actions, including signposting to, and support from, the voluntary and community sector, partner organisations, the One Point service, Family Hub programmes, and support from an Early Help advisor.

Stronger Families Programme

- 137 To date⁸, we have supported 8,657 families through the Stronger Families programme. The target for eligible families achieving all sustained outcomes has steadily increased – doubling since the 2022/23 financial year (April 2022 to March 2023).

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Target	760	1,230	1,522

- 138 During quarter two (July to September), 499 families were claimed, bringing the total for year to date to 753 (49% of annual target achieved). The target for each remaining quarter of the 2024/25 financial year is 385.
- 139 In October 2023, a new national Family Outcome Framework was introduced. It consists of 10 headline outcomes with changes to the eligibility and claim criteria. For example, for a family to be eligible for the programme, three headlines or more of identified need are now required (previously it was two headlines), and all identified needs require an outcome (previously only one was required for some headlines). Consequently, it is more challenging to meet the agreed target, but we are confident of achieving it with the system and operational changes we have made.

⁸ from its start in 2015 to the end of September 2024

140 Upgrading our case management system in 2023 has enhanced operational efficiency. Innovative dashboards and reporting tools have been introduced, and we are working on data cleansing. Embedding these changes will take time but additional staff training is already yielding positive results, with data showing the programme is on the right path.

Family Hubs

141 Family Hub registrations increased every quarter over the last year with now over 10,000 people registered. Our Family Hubs deliver a broad range of activity and support. During quarter two (July to September), this included:

- **Emotional Wellbeing and Behaviour Programme.** 109 children participated in: Chill Kids (83), Teen Zone (17), Staying Cool Teen (5), and Safer Choices (4).
- **Parenting Programmes.** Stepping Stones (SEND) (24), Fear-Less (school avoidance) (3), Incredible Years Baby (8), Toddler (3), Pre-school (4), and School Aged (12).
- **Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities** (a parent-led suite of programmes). Being a parent (16) and Being a parent of an autistic child (8).
- **Baby & Me (under 1s) and Toddler & Me (1–2-year-olds).** 1,418 individuals attended one or more session. Combined attendance was 5,005 (average of just under four sessions each).

142 Between April 2023 and September 2024, we worked with the families of 172 children from the antenatal period until a child is 2½ years old, using our Enhanced Parenting Support Pathway. Early Help Practitioners use Family Hubs to support these families at risk of poor outcomes.

143 Between December 2023 and September 2024, we provided the families of 53 children with pre-birth Family Hub support. This included work around parent child relationships as well as practical skills such as feeding and bathing baby and is based on identified needs in the family through the social worker's assessment.

144 We continue to provide targeted support for domestic abuse, co-delivered with Harbour Support Services. During quarter two, 14 parents attended Inspire, and six mums completed You and Me Mum.

145 Twenty-two young people were referred for Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse support. Of these, 13 progressed onto the Respect Young People's Programme, (of those not progressed to RYPP, seven were referred to Harbour as victims of Domestic Abuse, one family declined support and one was put on hold due to SEN needs).

Customer feedback

146 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. Feedback in quarter two from those working with the service remains positive:

- 95% of parent/carers and 91% of young people are happy or very happy with the support received.
- 92% of parents/carers and 94% of young people felt services worked well or very well together to meet the needs of their family.



Children's Social Care

- 147 Improved practice across statutory children's social care has led to a consistently low re-referral rate. The rate at quarter two (12%) is lower than quarter one (20%), and is still better than latest benchmarks as at 2022/23. This means fewer children and their families require further support from safeguarding services following support.
- 148 Referrals are slightly higher than last year, but lower than 2022/23 benchmarks. The service continue to closely monitor demand and work with partners to ensure children, young people and their families are provided with the right support at the right time. Children and young people receiving intensive support remains relatively high which is indicative of continuing high levels of complexity and a change in the composition of demand.

Children in Care

- 149 At the end of September, we had 1,187 children in care, slightly fewer than the number recorded at the end of June (1,197). The North East has the highest level in England and County Durham is slightly worse than the North East.
- 150 Despite this small reduction the number of children in care has been increasing over time. This is partly due to receiving more unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) as part of national relocation plans. At the end of September, 74 children in our care were UASC which equates to around 6% of the total. This is similar to the number recorded at the end of the 2023/24 financial year (April 2023 to March 2024) but higher than the numbers recorded in previous years.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Number	20	58	79
% of total	2%	5%	6%

- 151 The council's [Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy](#) sets out the council's strategic approach to securing sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of our children in care. The Strategy was reviewed and published in May 2022 and outlines a series of key priorities and actions to improve the council's overall sufficiency of placement provision for children and young people who can no longer live with their family.
- 152 As a result, we have increased foster carer households by nine in 2022/23 and 25 in 2023/24. The recruitment and retention of foster carers continues to be a major priority for the service and we are now part of Fostering North East, working collaboratively across the region to recruit foster carers. The Foster with North East pilot has resulted in a 12% increase in fostering enquiries for County Durham.
- 153 Adoption enquiries had been falling, but at the end of quarter two, there had been 59 enquiries which is an increase of 11 on the same period last year.
- 154 The council is committed to developing a series of smaller and specialist children's home, given the increase in demand, increasing use of external children's homes and rising external placement costs. This will also ensure as many children as possible remain within the county and can maintain links with their schools, friends, families and hobbies.
- 155 The new homes range in size (from one to four places) so that children and young people with more complex needs can be cared for and will increase our bed numbers from 33 to 53 beds. This does not include our short break respite beds for disabled children which will provide a further eight beds
- 156 We have established three new smaller children's homes, creating accommodation for up to six children and young people (Hudson house, Elderhurst and Copeland Barns), with a fourth home due to open in March 2025 providing accommodation for two further children (Lincoln House).
- 157 An Edge of Care home should be open by the beginning of next year; this will offer short breaks and wider support to young people and their families to help them to remain living at home and to prevent them going into care.
- 158 We have secured DfE funding to support the implementation of the Staying Close Pilot Programme. This programme provides much needed support to young people as they transition out of children's homes. Fourteen young people have been supported since the programme was rolled out.
- 159 We have the largest proportion of UASC in the region and to respond to this increasing demand for suitable care and support, we have expanded and developed new provision with providers to meet our needs, including developing block arrangements.
- 160 We have created a dedicated team to case manage our UASC, providing improved capacity. The work of this team was externally validated by Ofsted during a focused visit in November 2023 and described as high quality and culturally sensitive.

Social Worker Caseloads

- 161 We are addressing the capacity issues arising from high caseloads which have been impacting the timeliness of statutory children's social care assessments. During quarter two (July to September) we completed 86% of social care assessments within 45 days. This is our best performance for three years (89% as at 2020/21). Latest performance is also better than the 2022/23 national and regional benchmarks.

- 162 Our social worker vacancy rate has reduced slightly in light of recent NQSW recruitment and some experienced appointments, following ongoing recruitment activity which included increased social media promotion supported by recruitment web pages. We have also successfully attracted and onboarded a number of overseas social workers and are accessing additional support from the British Association of Social Workers to help them acclimatise to the culture of practice in England. Our senior leadership team and our IRO service is now fully staffed.
- 163 National changes for agency social workers appointments coming into force in October 2024 will hopefully encourage more interest in permanent roles. Guidance linked to proposed care reforms that will change the landscape of children's social care will make agency contracts less attractive to social workers. We are, therefore, encouraging social workers employed by us on agency contracts to consider permanent employment. We are also promoting the council as a potential employer for agency workers working elsewhere via social media campaigns and our recruitment webpage.
- 164 Recruiting newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) continues to be our most effective way to maintain or increase our social work workforce, although we also continue to advertise for experienced staff and have seen some increase in external experienced appointments too. Our NQSW Academy established in 2016 provides additional support to social workers in their first (ASYE) and second years of practice (progression to senior social worker). We await guidance from government about the plans for a national five-year early career framework as part of care reforms. Thirty-seven NQSWs will complete their assessed and supported year in 2024 and 37 have started with us this autumn.
- 165 To help us recruit more NQSWs we are continuing 'Grow our own' to invest in supporting social work qualifications through:
- **Social work apprenticeship scheme.** 10 apprentices being supported to qualify while in their previous posts, are expected to graduate between 2024 and 2027.
 - **Social work trainees.** 18 trainees (internal and external recruits) are expected to qualify in 2027. A further 10 are expected to qualify in 2028.
 - **Step Up to Social Work scheme.** Five participants started the programme in spring 2024, expected to qualify in spring 2025.
 - **Partnering with Frontline – Approach Social Work.** We will support nine participants from autumn 2024. These should qualify and join us as NQSWs in autumn 2025. We are exploring having a further 10 participants start in autumn 2025 who would qualify autumn 2026.
 - **Increasing social work training capacity.** By working within our regional partnerships. 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 to progress this work.
- 166 Recruitment and retention of social workers remains a priority for us. We have enhanced pay, career development, progression and non-pay benefits (including wellbeing support) over the last year. Our wellbeing portal gives our employees information on topics such as physical activity, nutrition, remote working, mental health and emotional wellbeing, bereavement, domestic abuse, and substance misuse. Additional support for global majority and our neurodivergent practitioners has also been well received.
- 167 We provide specialist support to employees involved in a traumatic event. De-brief sessions, reflection sessions and commissioned specialist support are designed to

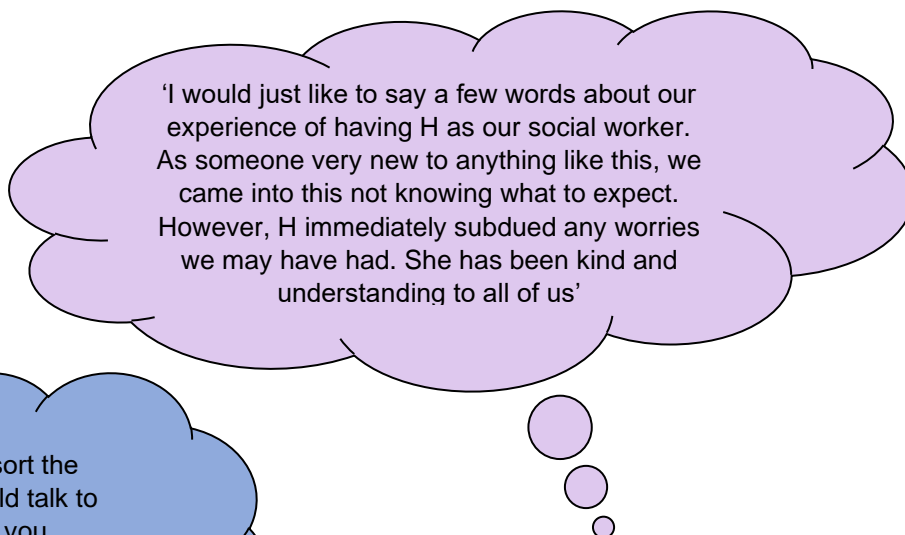
promote reflection and healing. Following a successful pilot, we are encouraging flexible working across our social work teams. This will help practitioners better balance their work and home life, and support those with caring responsibilities to stay in, or return to the workforce.

168 In 2024 there has been significant work to refresh our supervision framework and improve our case recording system co-produced with our practitioners and leaders.

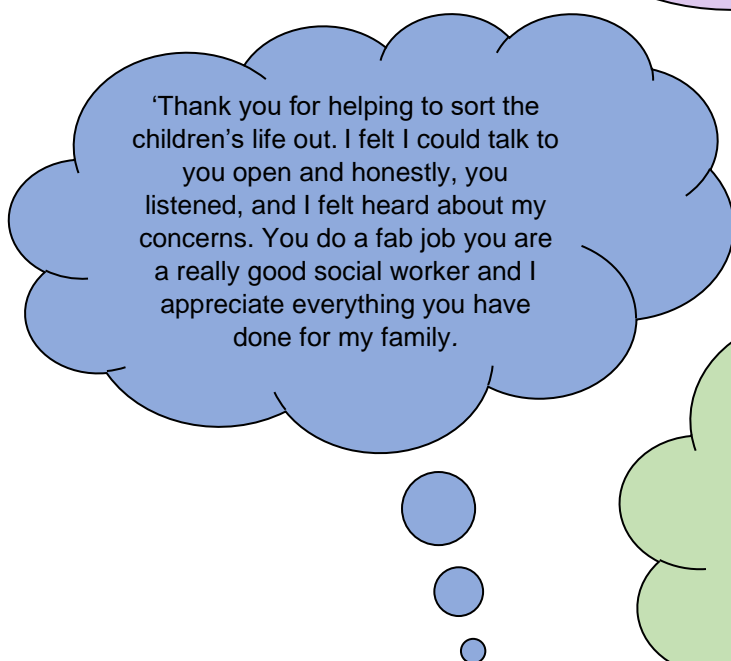
169 We have received some feedback from parents about our social workers.



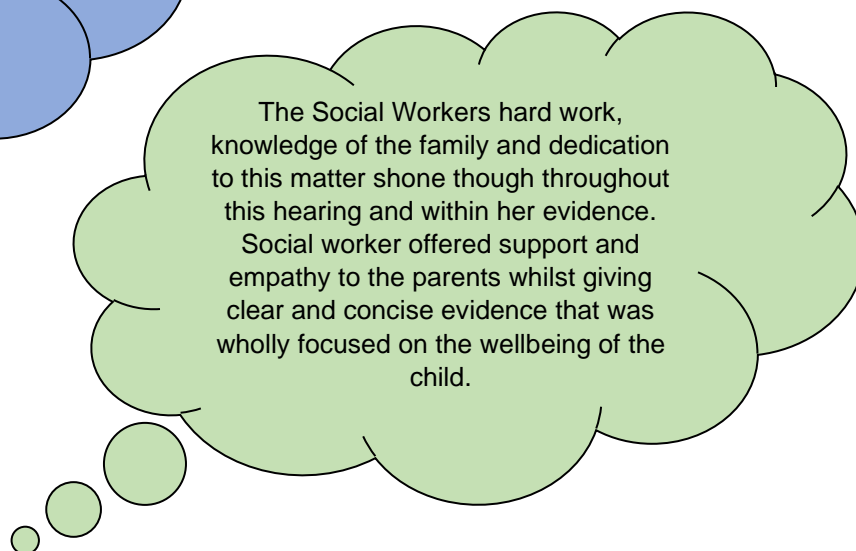
My social worker is mint



'I would just like to say a few words about our experience of having H as our social worker. As someone very new to anything like this, we came into this not knowing what to expect. However, H immediately subdued any worries we may have had. She has been kind and understanding to all of us'



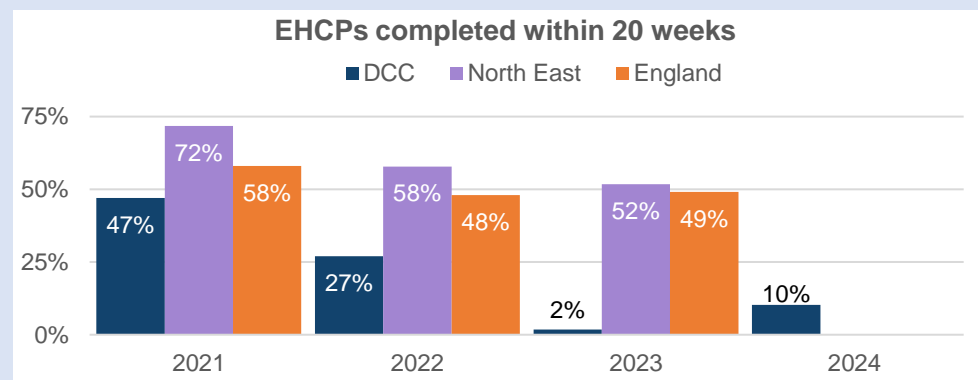
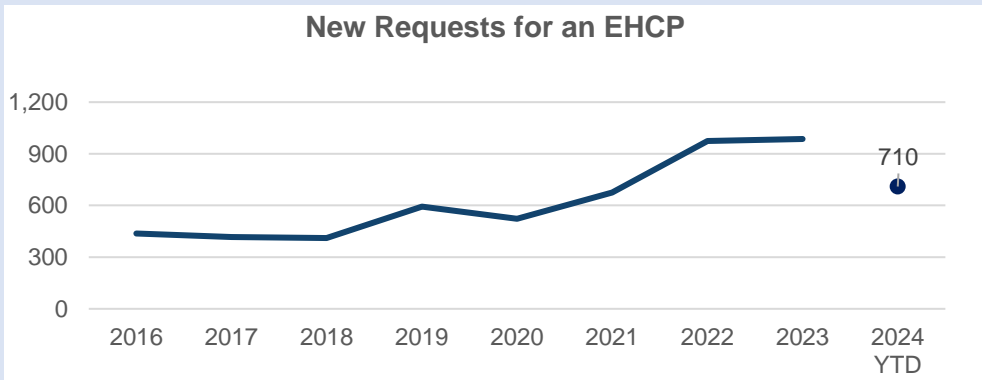
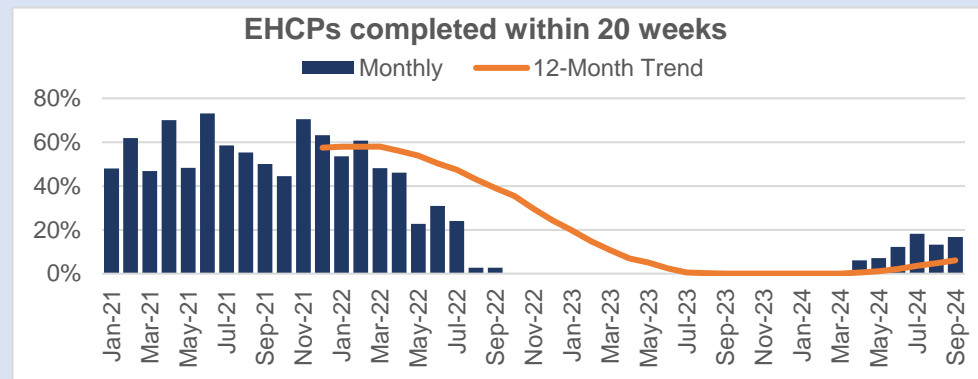
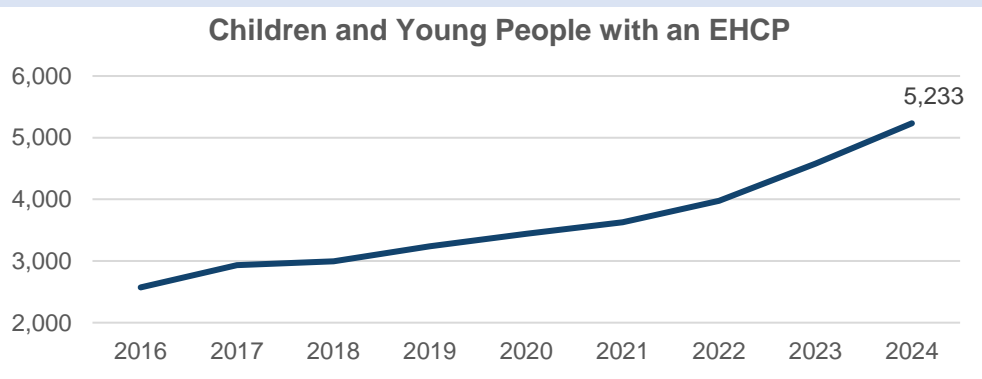
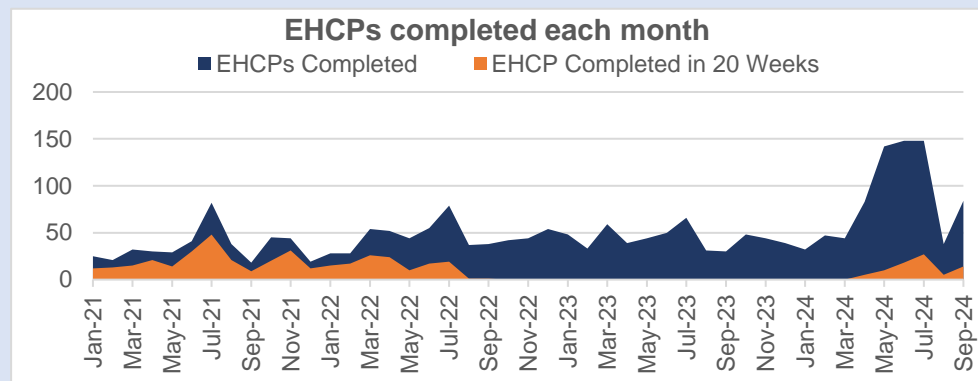
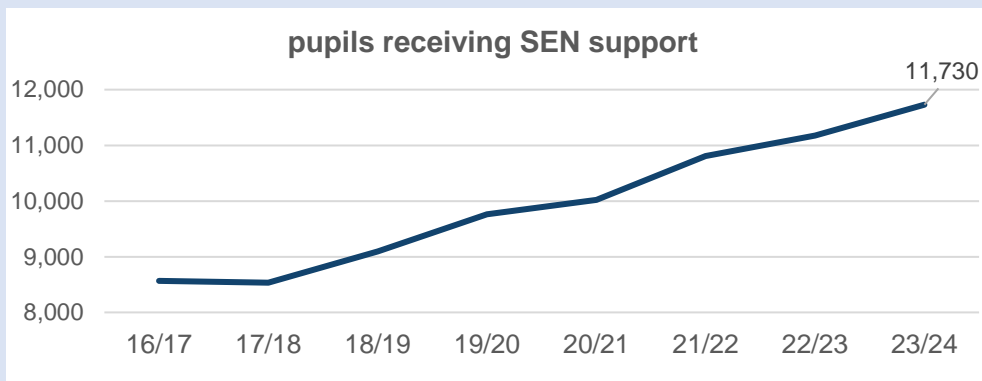
'Thank you for helping to sort the children's life out. I felt I could talk to you open and honestly, you listened, and I felt heard about my concerns. You do a fab job you are a really good social worker and I appreciate everything you have done for my family.'



The Social Workers hard work, knowledge of the family and dedication to this matter shone through throughout this hearing and within her evidence. Social worker offered support and empathy to the parents whilst giving clear and concise evidence that was wholly focused on the wellbeing of the child.

SEND Dashboard

(12 months rolling / annual data)



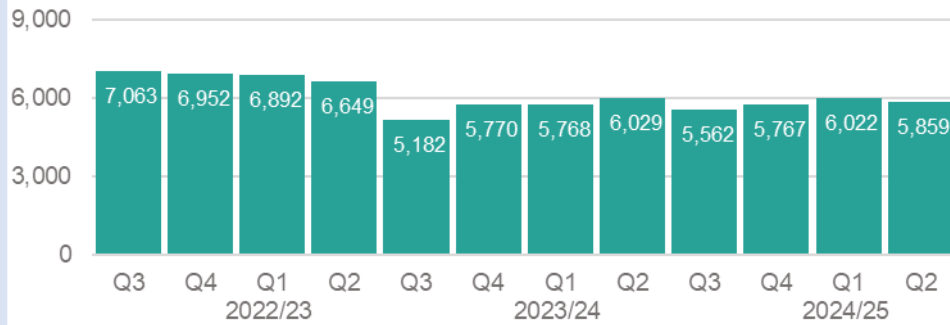
Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

- 170 Requests for new EHCPs have steadily increased in recent years. On average, during 2019, we received 50 requests each month, we now receive around 80. By the end of quarter two, we have received 710 EHCP requests across the calendar year, 6% higher than the same period last year, and considerably higher than pre-pandemic levels.
- 171 The increased demand has impacted the timeliness of EHCPs and a comprehensive action plan is in place to reduce delays, focusing on the backlog for EP advice. Improvements to the EHCP assessment process and short-term EP capacity have increased the volume of EHCPs we are able to issue, and the number of open assessments is reducing and our timeliness figures are improving. In September 17% of EHCPs were issued within 20 weeks, 10% throughout 2024.
- 172 Quarter two, did see the number of plans issued reduce compared to quarter one, but this was expected as the process is impacted by summer school closures. We estimate the waiting list and waiting times for EP advice will continue to decrease steadily and overall timeliness to steadily improve through to the next financial year (April 2025 to March 2026). However, this is dependent upon agencies delivering against agreed contract volumes, in-house EP capacity being maintained, and requests not increasing further.
- 173 Our SEND Local Partnership is developing actions to support and inform families whilst they wait for specialised services. It is working to develop and implement clear policy and guidance in relation to 'waiting well' practices, ensure needs are discussed at the first point of contact and promoting greater understanding of the wider SEND offer.

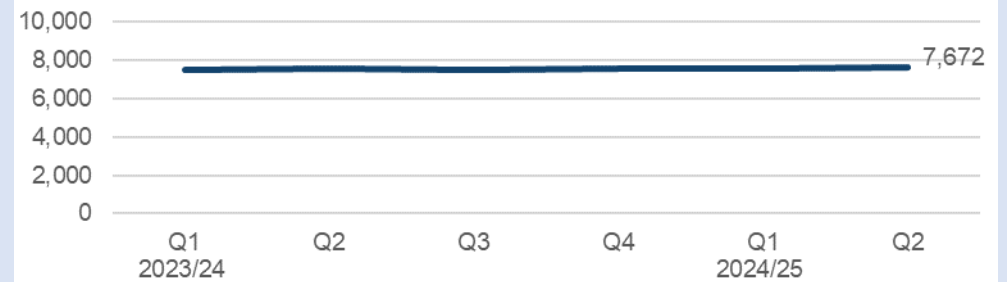
Adult Social Care Dashboard – Referrals, assessments and service users

(quarterly data / as at end of September 2024)

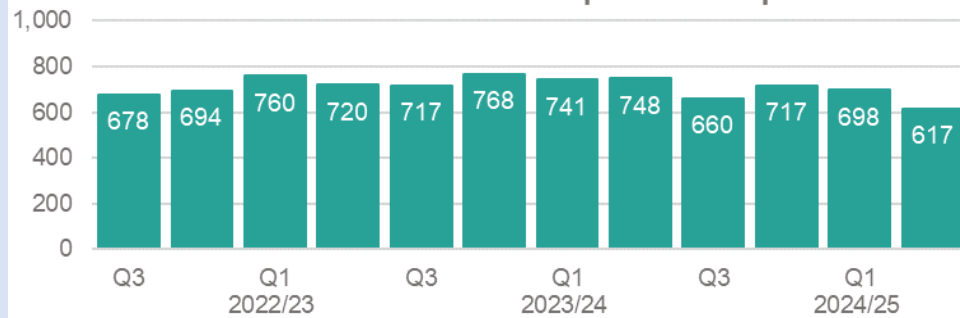
Referrals to Adult Social Care



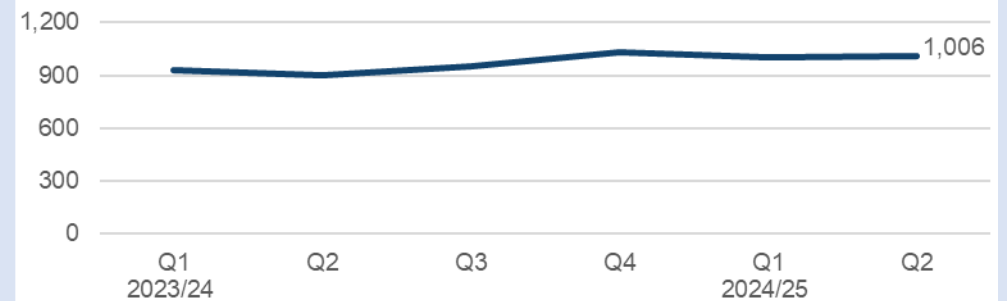
Adult Social Care - open long term service users



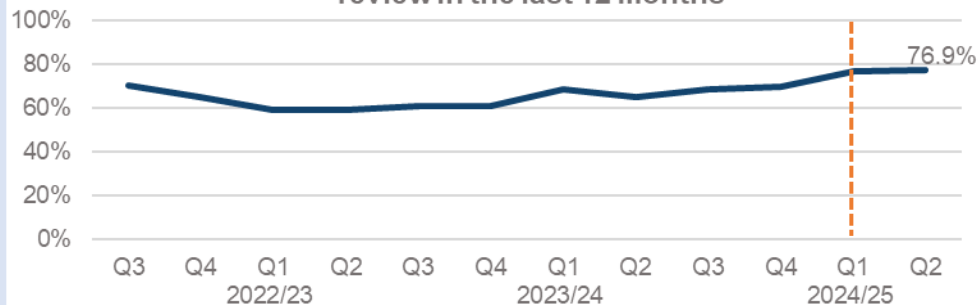
Care Act assessments completed each quarter



Adult Social Care - open short term service users



Service users receiving an assessment or review in the last 12 months



change in methodology from Q1

Referrals to adult social care

174 During quarter two we received 5,859 referrals to adult social care. Referrals into adult social care has remained stable for the last two years.

Care Act assessments completed

175 The number of Care Act assessments completed each quarter has remained stable over the last three years. Small quarterly changes show no longer-term trend.

176 We completed 617 Care Act assessments during quarter two, the lowest quarterly total reported in the last three years. This is also below the expected quarterly variation. One quarter is not enough data to suggest an overall declining trend, so we will continue to monitor this indicator without any further action yet being taken.

177 At present, the number of Care Act assessments completed is not reported nationally so no benchmarking data is available.

Service users assessed or reviewed in the last 12 months

178 The methodology for this indicator changed in April 2024 to ensure that all assessments and reviews are included. The indicator now provides a clear overview of the percentage of service users assessed or reviewed by professional adult social care staff every year.

179 The new methodology shows 76.9% of service users have been assessed or reviewed in the last 12 months. Of the service users not seen within 12 months, most are allocated to service review teams, which have high numbers of people overdue their annual review. We are working to reduce the backlog of overdue annual reviews, and expect performance for this indicator to continue to improve.

Adult Care Caseloads

180 Caseloads is an important indicator of workload and the use of staff resources. Since January 2023, caseloads have been reported weekly to senior managers in adult care through the weekly situation report (SITREP). This is done to ensure adequate management oversight of the caseload size of staff across the various teams and professions in adult care.

181 Data from Azeus was first used to report caseloads across adult care in January 2023. As Azeus holds no data on job roles or FTE hours worked, reporting on caseloads in adult care involves a data matching exercise between Azeus and our HR system Resourcelink. Since January 2023, the methodology for this data matching has been through several different iterations to ensure we are measuring caseloads as accurately as possible.

182 Close working with the service area led to the final changes in methodology being implemented in August 2024. Data reported prior to this date is therefore not comparable to the current indicator.

183 The average caseload across adult care at the end of quarter two was 26.2. Caseloads do vary across the different teams and professions.

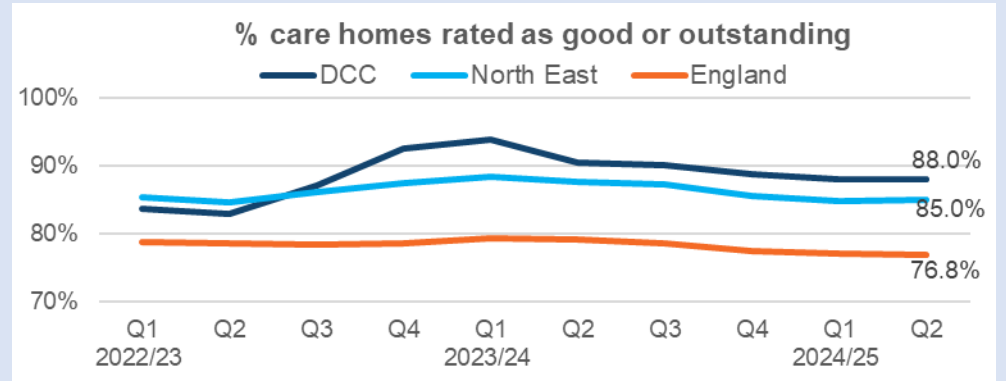
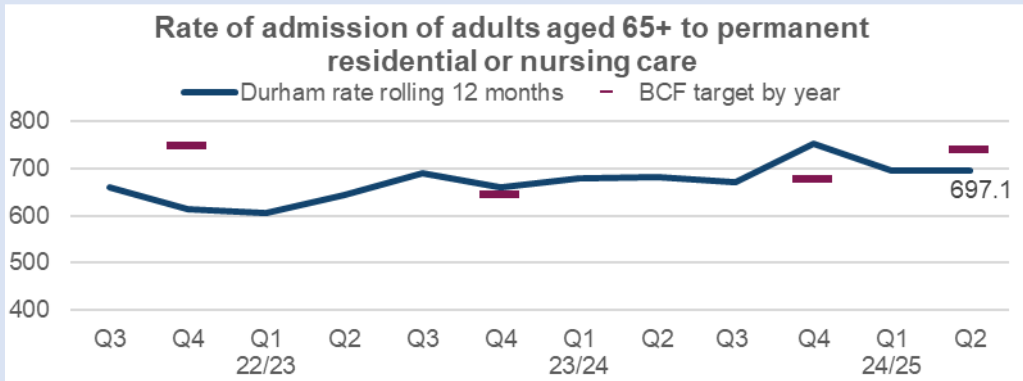
184 All team averages are currently sitting below the high caseload thresholds set by the service area. The number of individual staff whose caseloads increase to above the thresholds set is included in the weekly SITREP to ensure close management of trend.

185 In Locality Teams, the average caseload is 21.2 in Older People and 24.6 in Learning Disabilities.

- 186 In Occupational Therapy teams the average caseload is much higher at 43.2, as Occupational Therapists can manage more clients due to the different nature of the assessments and service provision.
- 187 In Hospital Social Work teams, the average caseload is much lower at 6.9, due to the quicker throughput of service users in this area where assessment to service is often a matter of days to facilitate timely discharge from hospital.
- 188 Caseloads also differ in other teams with dedicated purposes. In Sensory Support the average is 14.8, in the 14-25 Navigation Team it is 28.4, and in the LD Access team it is 22.5.
- 189 In review teams, Reviewing Officers carry a larger caseload and manage the reviews they need to complete annually. In other teams, workers only carry any cases in which they are actively involved. Due to their different working nature, review teams are removed from the calculation of the overall adult care average caseload so it isn't inflated. In the OP review team the average caseload is 199.4, and in the Learning Disabilities / Mental Health review team it is 218.8.
- 190 We do not have a longitudinal view of caseloads due to the changing methodology used over the last 18 months. Benchmarking data is not available as caseloads are not included in any statutory data return. We do know the number of short-term and long-term cases open to us from the new Client Level Dataset (CLD). Data from the CLD shows us to have a steady number of people in receipt of both long-term and short-term services over the last 12 months.
- 191 The number of staff employed in adult care is also available through a statutory data return published by Skills for Care. This shows there were 850 staff employed in County Durham in the local authority sector at the end of 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- 192 Caseloads are an important measure in analysing demand for adult social care, however they need to be considered alongside other indicators to provide a true picture of demand on staff. The complexity of service users presenting has been increasing over time, resulting in more work being required for the average case.
- 193 In the recent [ADASS Spring Survey](#), Directors of Adult Social Care ranked increased costs due to increasing complexity of care needs as the main area of concern in terms of financial pressure for 2024/25.

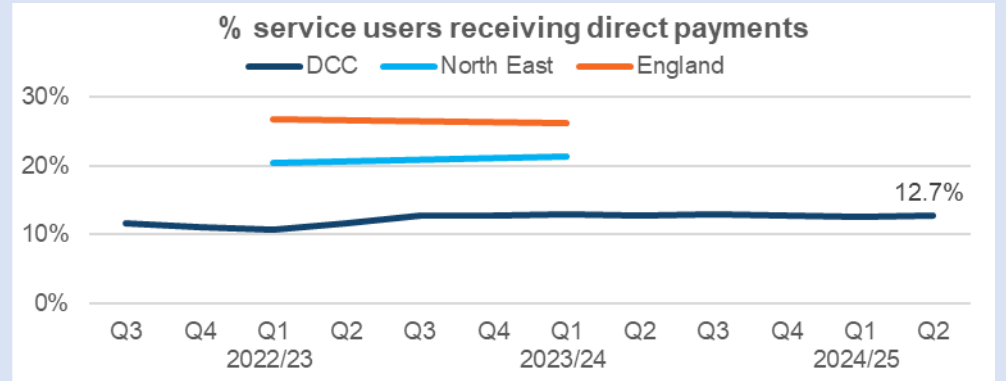
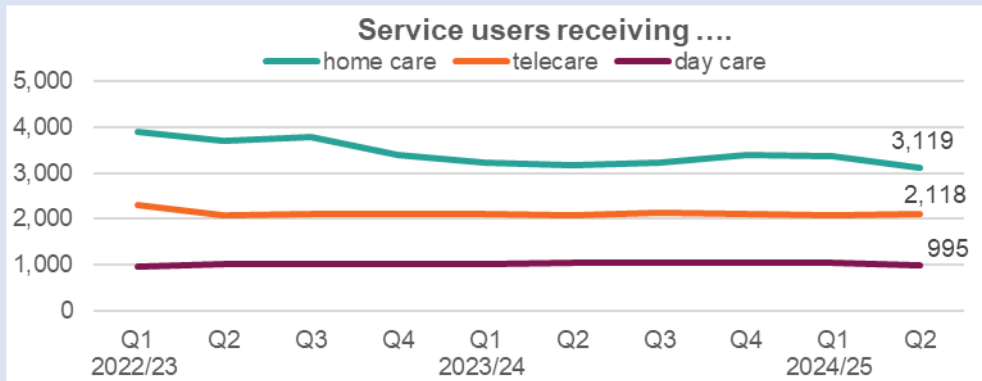
Adult Social Care Dashboard – admissions to permanent care

(12 month rolling / as at end of September 2024)



Adult Social Care Dashboard – services received and outcomes

(as at end of September 2024)



People aged 65+ admitted to permanent residential or nursing care

- 194 Since April 2024, admissions to residential care data are calculated from a 12 month rolling data set rather than cumulative periods during the financial year. This enables easier assessment against the Better Care Fund (BCF) target and provides better trend analysis.
- 195 The BCF plan for April 2024 to March 2025 is to maintain the number of admissions from last year, resulting in a reduced rate per 100,000 population. Latest data (October 2023 to September 2024) shows that we are sustaining a lower rate (697.1 per 100,000 population) compared to the BCF target (739.7 per 100,000 population).

Care home ratings

- 196 Eighty-eight percent of care homes in County Durham are rated as good or outstanding and this performance has been maintained over the last year. Our latest performance is better than the overall ratings for care homes across the North East (85%) and England (76.8%). We continue to closely manage the capacity in care homes ensuring a stable care market.

Services Received

- 197 The number of service users receiving home care has largely been stable since January 2023 with around 3,300 people receiving home care at any point. The latest figure is slightly under the average for the same period (3,119 service users at the end of September 2024), we will monitor the data for any further variances. Waiting lists for home care have been eliminated in County Durham, and continue to be monitored on a weekly basis.
- 198 High CQC ratings for community-based care locations demonstrate the quality of service provided across the home care market. 70% of community care providers in County Durham are rated good or outstanding compared with 55.4% nationally.
- 199 Service users receiving telecare remains stable with approximately 2,000 people using the service during the last two years. We have developed a plan to increase the use of technology to support service users which could result in an increase in the number of people receiving telecare.
- 200 People receiving a day care service has also remained stable with approximately 1,000 people at any point between April 2022 and September 2024.

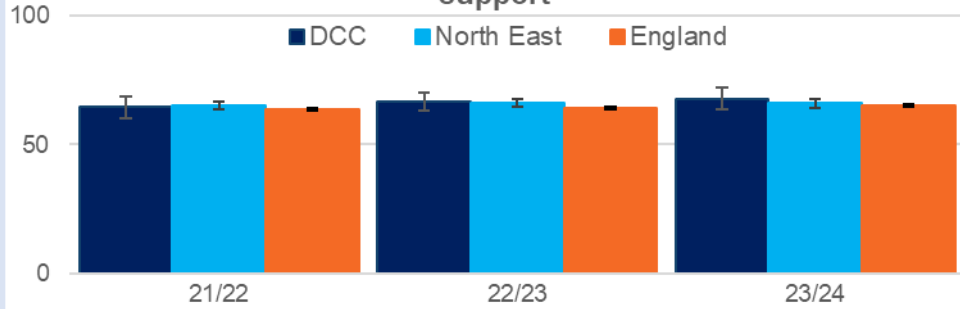
Direct Payments

- 201 In quarter one (April-June 2024) we used a new methodology and data source to calculate the result for this indicator from the new CLD. DHSC has since confirmed that the methodology is subject to change and will be published in March 2025. As a consequence, we have returned to the previous methodology to calculate the indicator for both quarters one and two. The new methodology will be used once published.
- 202 Performance for both quarters (12.6% and 12.7%) is similar to that seen over the last year (between 12.7% and 13.0%).

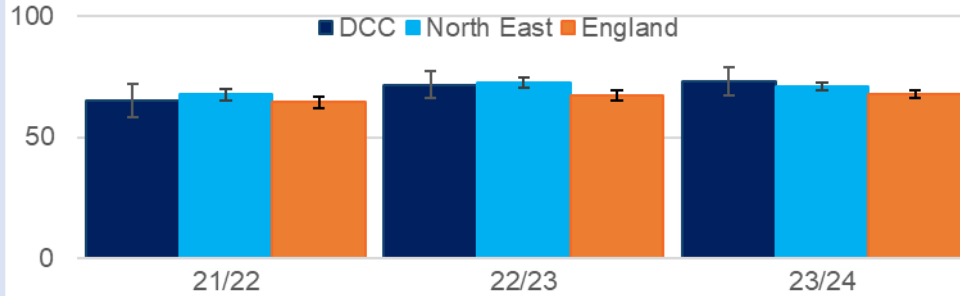
Adult Social Care Dashboard

(annual data to March 2024)

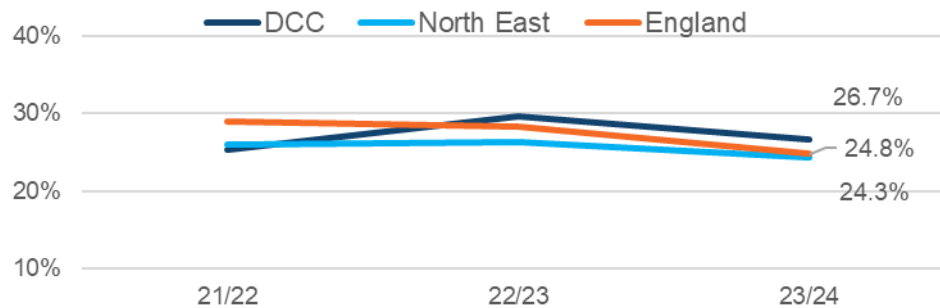
Satisfaction of service users with their care and support



Proportion of people who use services who find it easy to find information about services



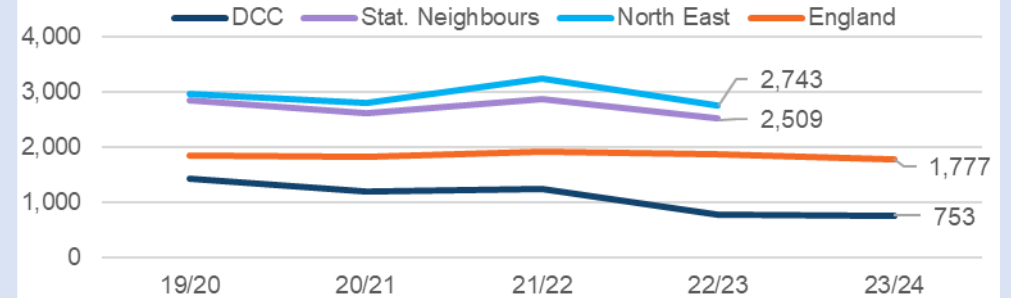
Adult Social Care - workforce turnover



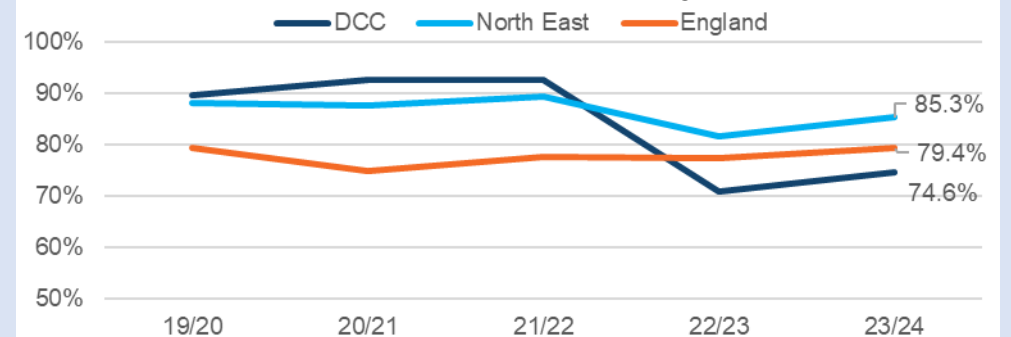
Indicators for adult social care have been updated following the recent publication of the Adult Social Care Survey (ASCS), the Adult Social Care Activity and Finance Report, and the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set.

Following publication of the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) data set in December 2024, all remaining Durham results and benchmarking data will be released.

New requests to adult social care that result in a service per 100,000 population



Outcome of short-term services: sequel to service



Adult Social Care

- 203 The [Adult Social Care Survey](#) seeks the opinions of service users aged 18 and over in receipt of long-term support services funded or managed by social services and is designed to help the adult social care sector understand more about how services are affecting lives to enable choice and for informing service development. It is carried out annually and [results](#) from the 2023/24 survey are now available.
- 204 The survey provides data for the following two indicators:
- **Satisfaction of service users with their care and support.** Our latest performance (67.9%) is comparable to the previous survey (66.8%) and is the highest since the pandemic. Our latest data remains similar to both the North East and England.
 - **Service users who find it easy to find information about services.** Our performance (73.1%) is comparable to the previous survey (71.6%), and we remain in line with regional and national comparators.
- 205 Latest data for staff turnover in County Durham (26.7%) has reduced from the previous year (29.6%) but remains slightly above regional (24.3%) and national (24.8%) results. It is important to recognise that local authority staff play a limited role in this performance due to the much larger number of staff employed in the independent care sector.
- 206 Turnover in the local authority sector is much lower in County Durham at 10.2%, and performing better than the regional (11.6%), and the national (13.0%) results.
- 207 The Adult Social Care Activity and Finance Report is published annually. It provides data taken from the Adult Social Care Finance Return (ASC-FR) and short and long-term (SALT) collection to provide information regarding adult social care activity and finance on councils with adult social services responsibilities in England for 2023/24. This report provides data for two indicators:
- **New requests to adult social care that result in a service.** This indicator suggests that, over the last five years, County Durham has had a consistently lower rate of people whose new request to adult social care resulted in a service. Performance and benchmarking data has previously been extensively investigated with reasons for our performance cited. The 2023/24 SALT return was the last return that national statistics will be produced from, therefore, a decision was made not to change the way our SALT return is compiled. Future work will concentrate on the new CLD set.
 - **Outcome of short term services – sequel to service.** Short-term services aim to maximise the potential independence of people following a serious event such as an admission to hospital before long-term care needs are assessed. Latest data for 2023/24 shows an increase in performance in County Durham to 74.6% (70.9% in 2022/23). This remains below both regional and national benchmarking.

Feedback from service users

- 208 The Adult Social Care Survey includes 'free text' boxes to enable service users to provide opinions on the care they receive. Our internal Operational Practice Survey also offers insight into the views of service users. The following comments provide a positive picture of the care our service users receive.

We could not praise the staff at Cedar Court and everyone involved in arranging rehabilitation strongly enough. In times where there is so much negativity, we were so grateful for all the care and support provided.

My carers are fantastic – could not be better.

Nice to know I will be getting the help to stay safe and independent in my own home.

My social worker was very understanding and compassionate. She took the time to listen to me and is referring me onto the appropriate people to get help with my shower as this is my biggest concern.

It is a very good service. All the teams pull together.

Overall I am happy with any service I receive as it helps improve my life tremendously. Without it I was in a very dark place, dirty and uncared for. Thank you to all who have made my life a bit more manageable.

We were treated respectfully and given good information. The social worker was friendly approachable and helpful.

All of my needs have been met. I have a really good service.

My daughter's service is excellent and meets her needs.

Public Health Focus – Healthy Weight and Physical Activity Dashboard

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

Healthy Weight

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

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

	Period	Durham	North East	England
Reception – prevalence of healthy weight	2023/24	72.7%	74.5%	76.8%
Year 6 prevalence of healthy weight	2023/24	60.9%	60.1%	62.5%
Adults classified as overweight or obese	2022/23	77.7%	70.2%	64.0%

Physical Activity

Children and young people who are physically active in County Durham has increased since last reported. County Durham is now statistically similar to regional and national data.

There is a reduction in the percentage of physically active adults (aged 18+) in the county (from 66.7% in 2021/22). County Durham is now statistically worse than the national result.

	Period	Durham	North East	England
Physically active children and young people	2022/23	45.6%	48.4%	47.0%
Physically active adults	2022/23	62.0%	63.2%	67.1%

Other measures

Indicators can provide an overview as to levels of healthy weight in an area, and our [healthy weight dashboard](#) provides an analysis of these.

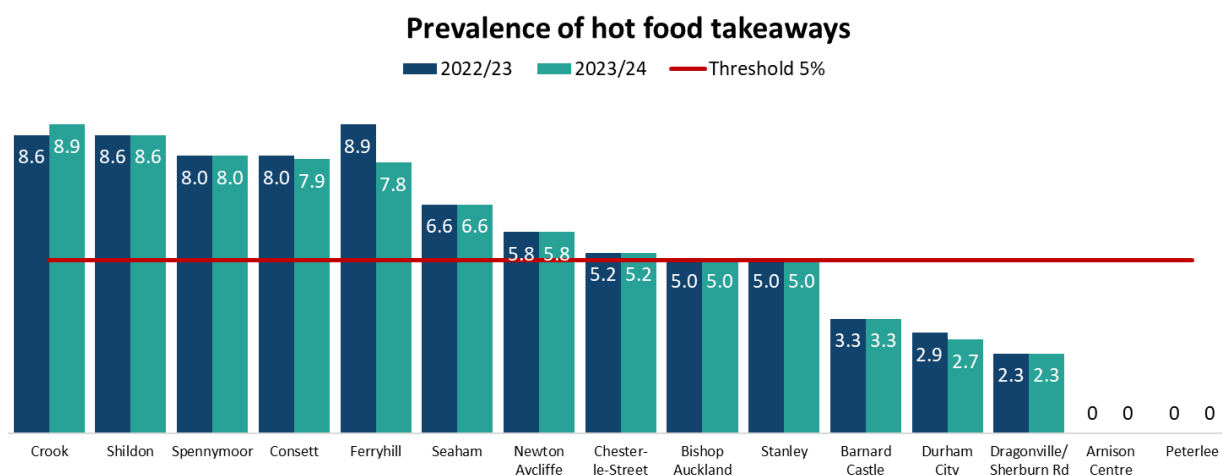
Whilst County Durham has a higher percentage of people meeting the healthy eating recommendation, obesity levels are significantly higher than national average.

This is also reflected in the people reporting a long-term musculo-skeletal problem in the county compared to benchmarking areas.

	Period	Durham	North East	England
Adults 16+ meeting 5-a-day fruit and vegetable consumption recommendation	2022/23	32.4%	28.6%	31.0%
Adults 18+ classified as obese	2022/23	34.0%	32.2%	26.2%
People 16+ reporting a long-term musculo-skeletal problem	2023	25.0%	23.1%	18.4%

Public Health – Healthy Weight and Physical Activity

- 209 Obesity is an enduring public health problem that can lead to Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. It is also associated with an increased use of long-term medication, impaired fertility, musculo-skeletal disorders and negative impacts upon mental health and wellbeing. Children and young people with obesity may experience bullying, which in turn can be associated with shame, depression, low self-esteem, poor body image and suicide.
- 210 Access to foods high in sugar, fat and salt and more sedentary behaviours have contributed to an ‘obesogenic environment.’ The environment in which we live, work, study and socialise, and issues such as poverty and access to healthy, affordable food, make it extremely challenging to maintain a healthy weight.
- 211 Accordingly, ‘enabling healthy weight for all’ is a key priority of the JLHWS 2023-28.
- 212 A further objective of the JLHWS is to ensure that the prevalence of hot food takeaways does not exceed the County Durham Plan threshold of 5% of premises being a hot food takeaway. As of summer 2024, whilst eight out of 15 areas exceed this threshold (noting that seven of these had over 5% threshold when the policy was introduced in 2018/19), the overall numbers of takeaways has decreased since the previous year. It is encouraging to note that in the period 2023/24, rates are either unchanged or have fallen in 14 of the centres compared to 2022/23.



- 213 A review of approaches to healthy weight was conducted in 2022/23. Its recommendations informed the Healthy Weight Action Plan, which was signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board in September 2024. The plan focuses on five key action areas: healthy at place, healthy families, healthy and sustainable food for all, healthy workforce and healthy weight patient care.
- 214 Rates of overweight / obesity and physical activity in children and adults are reported through national indicators:
- Reception and Year 6 children – levels of overweight/obesity
 - Adult levels of overweight/obesity
 - Children and adult rates of physical activity

Healthy Weight and Physical Activity Dashboards

- 215 To complement [‘Moving Together in County Durham’](#) (our new physical activity strategy) and our healthy weight action plan, two new dashboards have been developed on Durham Insight to enable the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board and other

stakeholders (including members of the public) to monitor outcomes for both physical activity and overweight and obesity.

216 Benchmarking against indicators in the healthy weight dashboard for reception age and year 6 children shows in 2023/24:

		County Durham	National
Reception	Healthy weight	72.7%	76.8%
	Overweight or obese	26.7%	22.1%
Year 6	Healthy weight	37.8%	35.8%
	Overweight or obese	60.9%	62.5%

217 Benchmarking for adults shows in 2022/23 in County Durham 77.7% were overweight or obese compared to 64.0% nationally. This represents an increase of 2.5% compared to 2021/22 data.

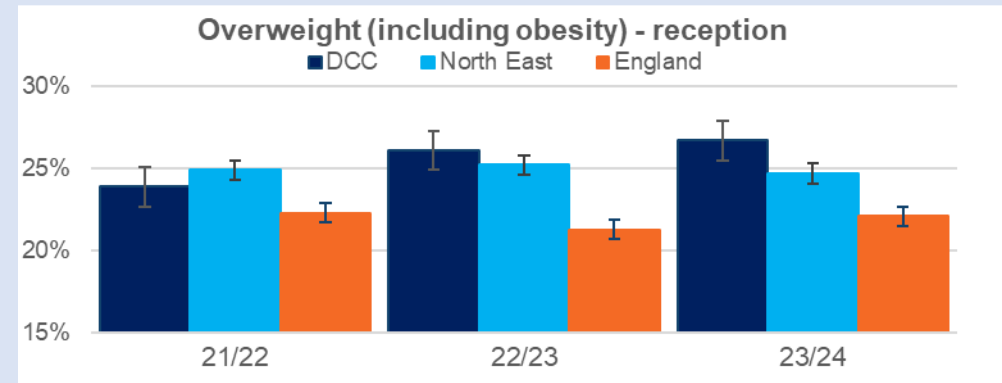
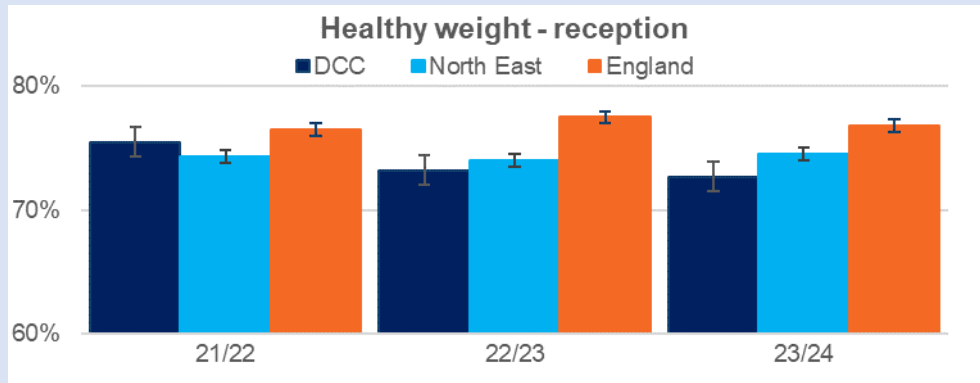
218 For adults aged 16+ who met the 5-a-day fruit and vegetable consumption recommendation during 2022/23, County Durham is 32.4% compared to 31.0% nationally. This represents a decrease of 2.3% compared to 2021/22 data.

219 Similar benchmarking against indicators in the physical activity dashboard shows in 2023/24:

- 45.6% of children were physically active, compared to a national average of 47.0%, representing an increase of 8.7% compared to 2021/22 data.
- 62.0% of adults were physically active, compared to a national average of 67.1%, representing a decrease of 4.7% compared to 2021/22 data.

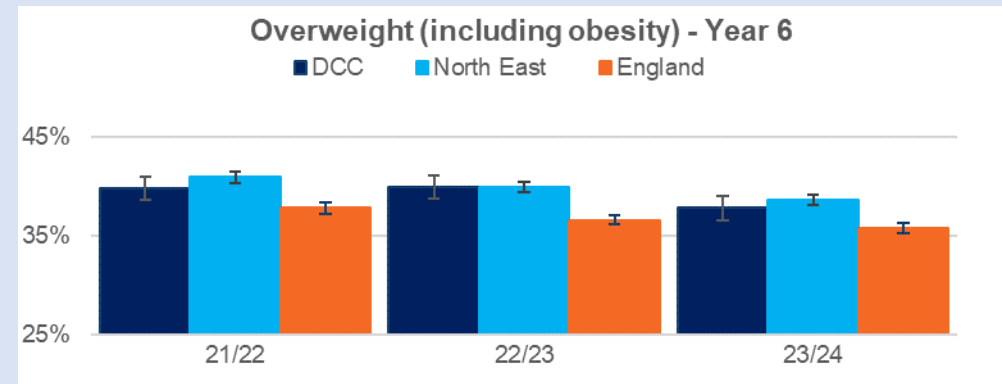
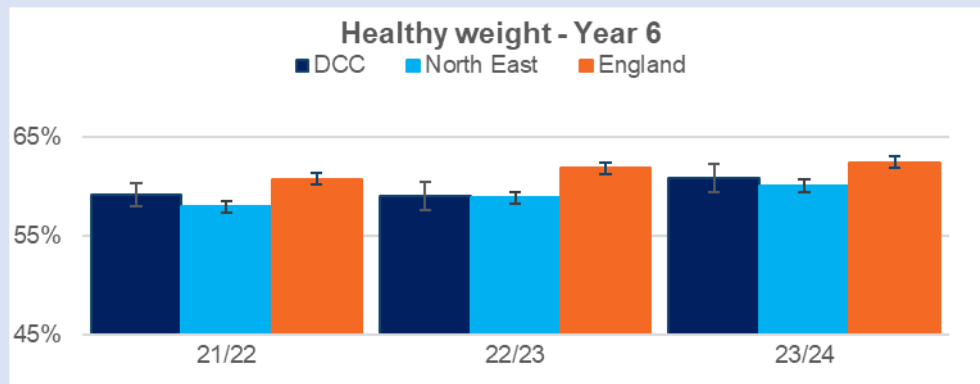
Public Health Focus – Healthy Weight (Children)

(annual data as at 31 March 2024)



Children (aged 4-5 years) of a healthy weight in County Durham has deteriorated since the pandemic and the gap with England has worsened.

In County Durham, around 1 in 4 children aged 4-5 years are overweight or obese. Significantly worse than both the regional and national average.



There is a reduction in children of a healthy weight in reception to those of a healthy weight in Year 6. This is also reflected nationally. However, the rates for County Durham are significantly worse than those seen nationally.

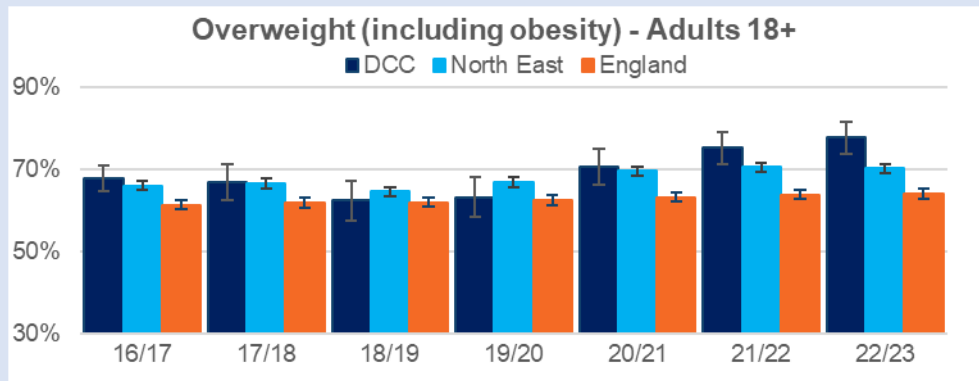
In County Durham almost 4 in 10 children in Year 6 are overweight or obese. Similar to the North East and statistically significantly worse than England.

Public Health – Healthy weight (children)

- 220 Healthy weight in children is very important as it provides them with a healthy base from their early years. County Durham, on average, has around 3,630 (72.7%) classified as being of a healthy weight (2023/24) which is statistically significantly worse than England (77.5%). The percentage of children aged 4-5 years old of a healthy weight in County Durham has deteriorated since the pandemic and the gap with England has worsened.
- 221 Nationally, one in five children are overweight or very overweight when they start school, rising to one in three children when they leave primary school. Not only does this increase the risk of becoming overweight in adulthood, but it increases the risk of ill-health and dying early in adult life.
- 222 On average, in reception there are approximately 1,330 children (26.7% or one in four children) who are living with overweight or obesity in County Durham (2023/24). This rate is significantly worse than both the regional and national average. Prior to the pandemic County Durham rates were similar to England, however, latest data now shows a four-percentage point difference.
- 223 Data shows the clear reduction in children of a healthy weight in reception (72.7%) to those of a healthy weight in Year 6 (60.9%) in County Durham. The reduction is demonstrated nationally with latest data showing 76.8% of reception children are of a healthy weight compared to 62.5% at Year 6. The rates for County Durham are significantly worse than those seen nationally.
- 224 On average, in Year 6, there are around 2,105 children in County Durham living with overweight and obesity. The level of children living with overweight or obesity in Year 6 in County Durham (37.9%) is similar to the North East (38.6%) and statistically significantly worse than England (35.8%).
- 225 School food is one of the most important elements in achieving good nutrition for a large majority of our children and young people. Taking a whole school food approach means that a coherent healthy food education and provision would be standard practice in every school. Local partners are working together to improve these approaches in County Durham schools.
- 226 Public health has produced evidence from wider research and local insights, which has been presented to the council's school food team. A school food task group, whose key objective is to improve the school food offer, has been established and public health has been invited to contribute to this work.
- 227 Northumbria University recently held a healthy eating / food workshop at North Durham Academy that was attended by children and young people, council representatives (including public health), and a range of stakeholders/partners. Findings from this work will be considered by Public Health to inform wider approaches to healthy food choices for children and young people.

Public Health Focus – Healthy Weight (Adults)

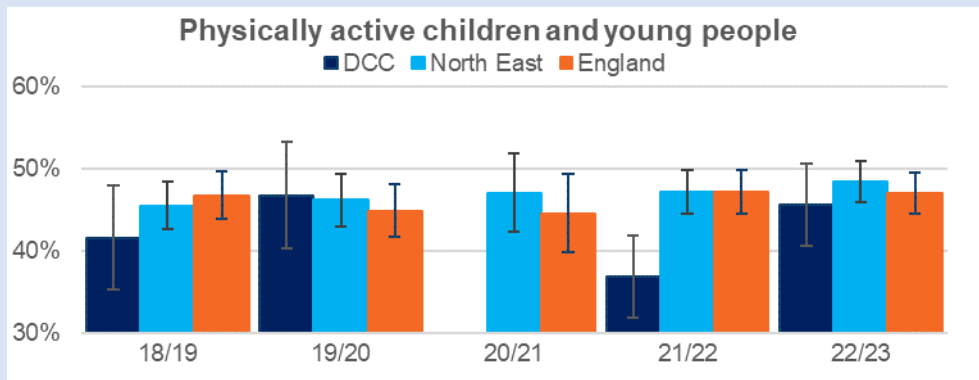
(annual data as at 31 March 2023)



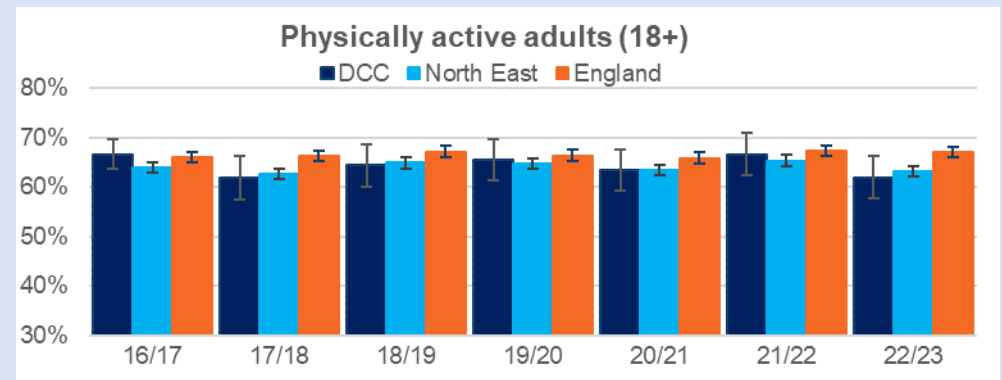
Almost 3 in 4 adults (aged 18+) in County Durham are classified as overweight or obese, statistically significantly worse than both the regional and national position.

Public Health Focus – Physical Activity

(annual data as at 31 March 2023)



Children and young people who are physically active in County Durham has increased. We are now statistically similar to the years prior to the pandemic and to both regional and national position.



Latest data shows a reduction in the physically activity of adults (aged 18+) in County Durham, statistically worse than the national result.

Public Health – Healthy Weight (adults)

- 228 Latest data (2022/23) shows that the percentage of adults (aged 18+) classified as overweight or obese (77.7%) in County Durham is statistically significantly worse than both the regional (70.2%) and national (64.0%) position.
- 229 In accordance with the Healthy Weight Action Plan, work is now underway to further develop a whole systems approach to healthy weight in County Durham. This includes:
- A Healthy Weight Health Professionals task group has been convened to support wider primary care colleagues to facilitate healthy weight conversations with patients and increase knowledge of weight management referral pathways in County Durham. Over the past 12-months this group has produced a suite of resources that will support health care professionals in this respect.
 - The North East Good Food framework and benchmarking programme (led by the Association of Directors of Public Health North East) has been agreed and developed by North East Local Authorities (including DCC) and food partnerships across the region. The aim is to develop and implement a regional public health approach to good food, informed by our community's needs.
 - Since the approval and publication of the 'Moving Together in County Durham' physical activity strategy, work to develop and strengthen partnerships and influence positive change has gathered both pace and momentum. In September 2024, a 'round table' event was held, with key physical activity stakeholders working together to coproduce delivery plans that will achieve our physical activity strategy actions and objectives.
 - Agreement has now been obtained for the council to become a signatory to the Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight. This signifies the council's leadership commitment to increasing healthy weight levels and will be the foundation for countywide collaboration to reduce population level overweight and obesity.
 - A proposed amendment to the National Planning Policy Framework will include specific guidance on promoting healthy and safe communities to support healthy lifestyles, particularly to address identified local health and wellbeing needs. From a healthy weight perspective, this includes access to green infrastructure, sports facilities, healthier food, allotments and layouts that support walking and cycling. These reforms are currently out for consultation.
 - The Wellbeing for Life Service is developing its healthy weight programme, which will be open for referrals from (or on behalf of) those who want to achieve a healthier lifestyle.

Healthy Weight challenges

- 230 Information provided in this report makes clear the challenges that lie ahead. Implementation of the current Healthy Weight Action Plan marks a refreshed, system-wide approach to this enduring public health issue. Monitored by the County Durham Healthy Weight Alliance, the County Durham Healthy Weight Declaration will bring together multiple streams of work to ensure co-ordinated approaches in our communities, schools, workplaces and health and social care providers to achieve healthy population-level weight. This will be reported annually to the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board.

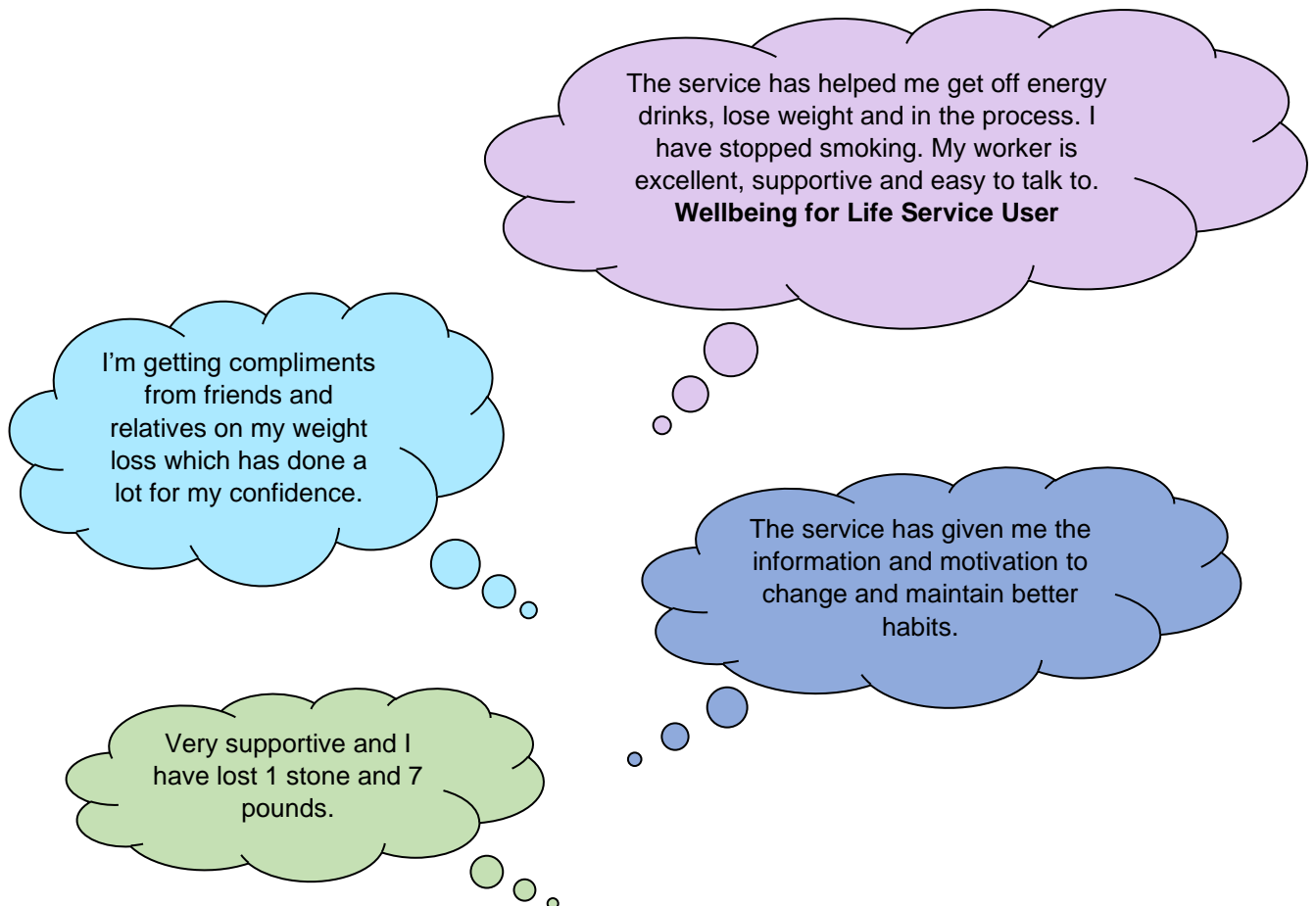
Physical Activity

- 231 Physical activity supports people to maintain a healthy weight. Latest data shows that the percentage of children and young people who are physically active in County Durham has increased since the previous year. County Durham is now statistically similar to the years prior to the pandemic. The percentage of physically active children and young people in County Durham (45.6%) is statistically similar to both the regional (48.4%) and national (47.0%) position.
- 232 Latest data shows a reduction in the percentage of physically active adults (aged 18+) in County Durham (from 66.7% in 2021/22 to 62.0% 2022/23). Over the years the percentage of physically active adults in Durham has been similar to both the regional and national data. Latest data shows that County Durham is now statistically worse than the national result.

Physical Activity challenges

- 233 Whilst physical activity data relating to children and young people is encouraging, challenges remain to ensure that our adult population moves more. The Moving Together in County Durham physical activity strategy (and its action plan) heralds a concerted, system wide collaboration of communities and physical activity stakeholders, whose key aim is to reduce barriers that some people may face in moving more in their daily lives. Actions will be monitored by the County Durham Physical Activity Strategy Committee and reported to the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board.

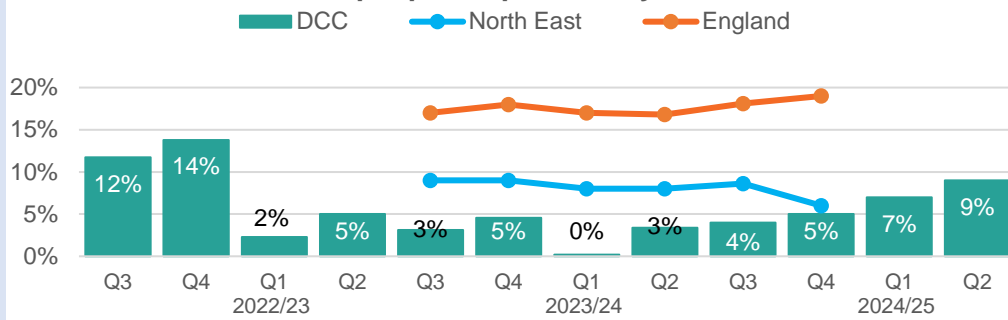
Feedback from service users



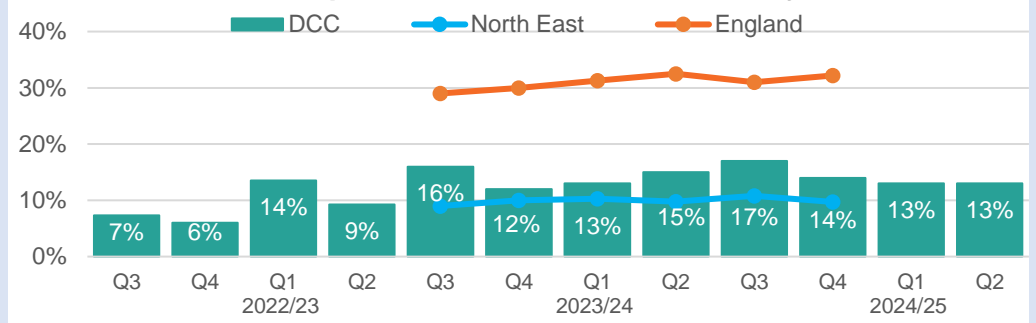
Housing Vulnerable People Dashboard - Homelessness

(discrete quarterly data)

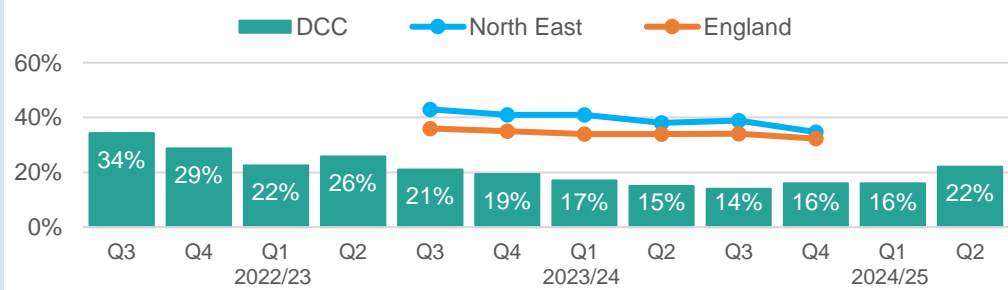
Prevention: people helped to stay in their home



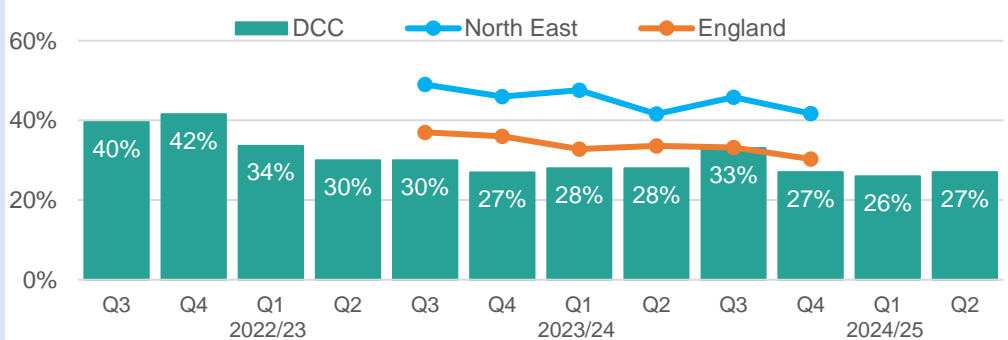
Acceptance of the main homeless duty



Prevention: people helped to move to alternative accommodation



Homelessness relief



Customer raised complaint against our housing service, unhappy with lack of contact and support received within a significant period. We reviewed the case and reassigned it to a different Housing Officer. As a result, further follow up training around case management was identified. Complaint was then turned into a compliment from the customer.

Housing Service User

Pregnant female presented with her one-year-old child after being asked to leave grandparents' home. Client was not open to any services at the time of presentation. Referred into First Contact, but the case initially closed due to being assessed as having no support needs. This was challenged and she has now been allocated a SW and is engaging well. Client has moved into a property with tenancy support

Successful customer interaction

Homelessness

Prevention Duty

- 234 We have a duty to work with people who are threatened with homelessness within 56 days to prevent them from becoming homeless (the prevention duty). The outcomes for households threatened with homelessness and eligible for assistance over the last six months, are shown below.

	April to June %	July to September %	July to September Number
Households helped to remain in their current home	7%	9%	31
Households helped to move to alternative accommodation	16%	22%	79

- 235 Of the 79 households moved to alternative accommodation between July and September; 29 moved to private rented sector (37%), 29 to social housing (37%), 18 to social rented supported housing (23%), and three to other alternative accommodation (3%).
- 236 We continue to support clients to remain in their existing home. Frontline processes have been reviewed and prevention grants aligned to intervene at an earlier stage. We also continue to improve access to private rented sector accommodation.
- 237 A review of the financial thresholds for which the homeless prevention grant can be spent has allowed for increased financial payments to be made to secure accommodation.
- 238 The review of the Durham Key Options Letting Policy is ongoing and will assist with increased allocations to this client group.
- 239 A new IT portal for supported accommodation referrals is now live and streaming operational processes. This, alongside initiatives to increase our housing portfolio, will assist with an increase in preventions into alternative accommodation overtime.

Relief Duty

- 240 If homelessness cannot be prevented within 56 days (the prevention duty) or if an applicant is already homeless, we have a duty to help secure accommodation (relief duty).
- 241 Households (homeless and eligible for assistance) which had their homelessness relieved over the last six months, are shown in the table below:

April to June %	April to June Number	July to September %	July to September Number
26%	228	27%	230

- 242 There continues to be an increase in households presenting as already homeless. We continue to review processes to separate the initial assessments and outcome work to improve outcomes across all stages of homelessness.

Main Housing Duty

- 243 When the relief duty ends and we are satisfied the applicant is eligible for assistance, in priority need for accommodation and not intentionally homeless, we owe them a main

housing duty. Cases where there has been an acceptance of the main homelessness duty over the last six months are shown in the table below:

April to June %	April to June Number	July to September %	July to September Number
13%	117	13%	110

Benchmarking Comparisons

- 244 Latest available benchmarking data (January to March 2024) shows our performance across the four key homelessness measures was worse than all national and regional averages, except the national average for homelessness duty (which we were better than).
- 245 Performance has since improved, closing the gap with the national average. We expect this positive trajectory to continue into quarter three.

Homelessness outcome	DCC	Regional	National
Prevention: stay in their home	5%	6%	19%
Prevention: move to alternative accommodation	16%	35%	32%
Relief	27%	42%	30%
Homelessness Duty	14%	10%	32%

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Delivery Plan

- 246 The Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) funding is in its final year with the next round of funding (April 2025 onwards) is dependent on provision set out in the local government settlement grant.
- 247 The team continue to verify rough sleepers by carrying out sweeps and outreach work. Support is then provided to source and sustain long term accommodation.
- 248 The Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) programme is progressing with specific properties now identified for elements of the programme.
- Works are scheduled to commence in the coming months to provide five apartment hubs at a former children’s home in Tow Law and five at Bishop Auckland Registry Office (as part of the Single Homeless Accommodation Programme (SHAP)).
 - Funding has now been secured from Homes England and MHCLG to provide eight apartments in Spennymoor. Corehaus has been appointed to carry out the works.
 - Work continues to identify and acquire 11 dispersed units and a suitable property to provide a three apartment unit.
 - Following a procurement exercise, special support providers Emmaus (over-25 year old cohort) and Depaul (18-25 year old cohort) have been appointed to deliver support elements of the SHAP programme.
- 249 Since April 2023, we have secured 88 private rented sector tenancies as part of our Accommodation for ex-Offenders initiative (AFEO). Forty-five tenancies have been sustained past six months and have successfully graduated from the scheme. AFEO is in its final year and funding beyond March 2025 is dependent on provision set out in the local government settlement grant.
- 250 The property acquisitions and leasing programme is on track to acquire 40 temporary accommodation properties by March 2025. Thirty-four properties have been acquired

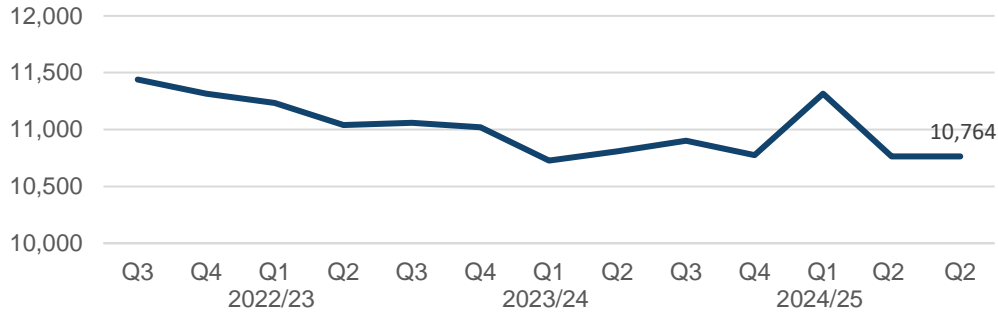
since the start of the scheme and a further six are in the process of acquisition. Beyond this phase, a further programme of acquisitions is in development.

- 251 The review of all 19 supported housing providers within the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) to ensure properties provide the correct level of support to tenants is on track for March 2025. Thirty-nine tenant reviews have taken place in quarter two. Tenant reviews validate housing benefit decisions and ensure tenants are receiving above minimal amount of care, support and supervision.
- 252 Additionally, 43 non-commissioned supported housing properties have been inspected since the start of SHIP (April 2023). Defect reports identifying where property repairs are needed have been sent to providers. The SHIP continues to support housing providers to become registered providers (RPs) or partner with RPs, supporting Housing Benefit subsidy loss.

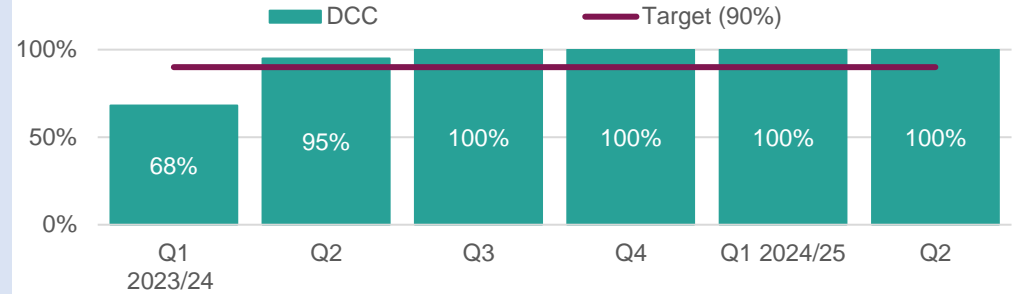
Housing Vulnerable People Dashboard – Care Connect, Disabled Facilities Grants

(discrete quarterly data / as at 31 March 2024 / year to date ending 31 March 2024)

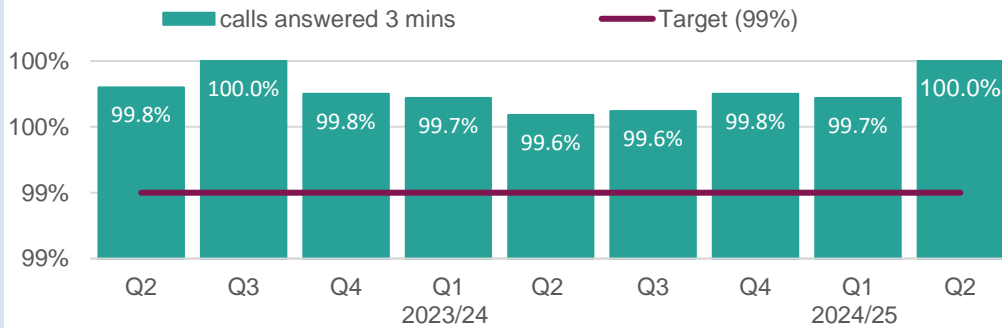
Care Connect Customers



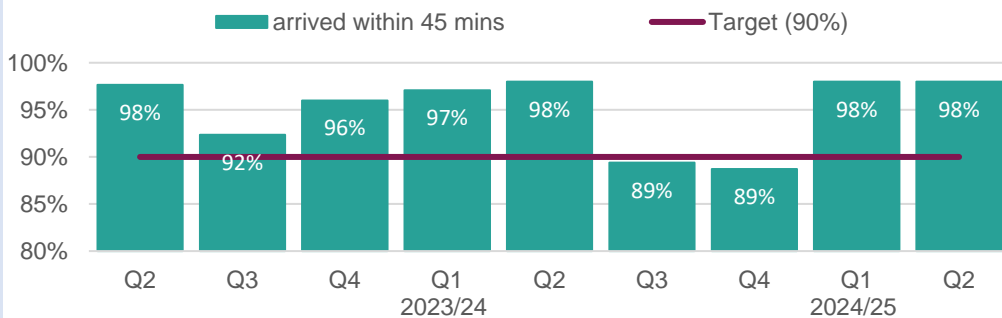
Initial referrals for a Disabled Facilities Grant within three weeks



Care Connect - calls answered within 3 minutes



Care Connect - arriving at property within 45 minutes



Care Connect user's feedback:



Care Connect

- 253 Fewer customers used the Care Connect service during quarter two (July to September) compared to both the previous quarter (April to June) and the same period last year (July to September 2023).

July to September 2023	April June 2024	July to September 2024
10,809	11,315	10,764

- 254 The decrease is due to data cleansing of the current care connect system to ensure smooth transition to the new platform in November 2024.

- 255 We responded to 6,347 emergency calls between July and September, 98% within 45 minutes. This is the same as both the previous quarter and the same period last year.

July to September 2023	April to June 2024	July to September 2024
98%	98%	98%

- 256 During quarter two (July to September), 27 calls were responded to after 60 minutes. This was due to the distance to and location of the properties.

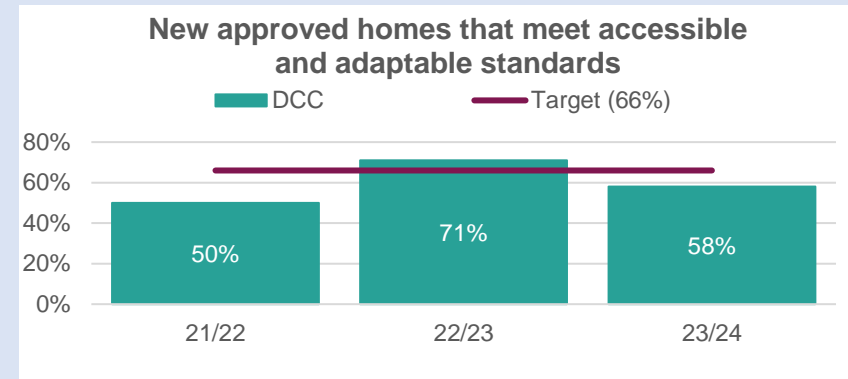
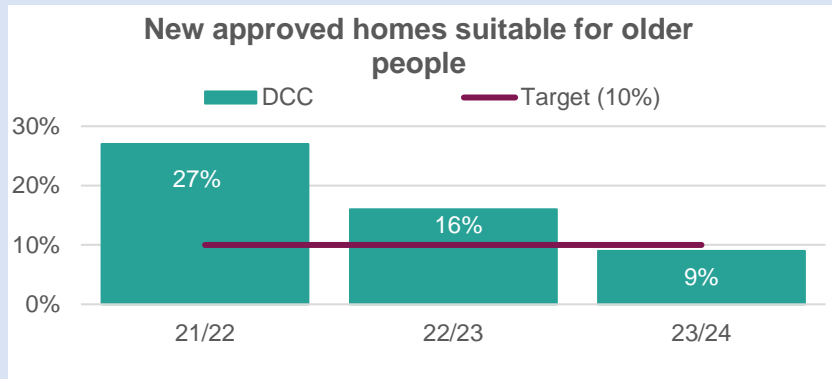
Disabled Facilities Grants

- 257 During quarter two (July to September), 100% of clients were contacted within three weeks of receiving a referral for a Disabled Facilities Grant. This is better than target (90%), and the same as quarter one (April to June).

- 258 Dedicated officers allocated responsibility to deal with first contact continues to have a positive impact on performance.

Housing Vulnerable People Dashboard – Housing Delivery

(as at 31 March 2024)



Housing Delivery

259 We continue to help support older people to live independently for as long as possible by ensuring a proportion of units approved on new housing developments meet their needs.

260 During 2023/24, 9% (136) of units approved on new housing developments of 10 units or more met the specific needs of older people. These consisted of:

Bungalows	Multi-generational homes
105	31

261 This is worse than the 10% target set out in the County Durham Plan (CDP). Some of the schemes approved that year received outline planning permission before the CDP was adopted and were therefore not required to meet the 10% requirement.

262 However, 75 more older persons units were approved in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23 (61) which shows Policy 15 of the CDP to address the housing need for older people is being applied to housing applications.

263 Fifty-eight percent (930) of units approved on new housing developments of five units or more were built to building regulations M4(2) standard (accessible and adaptable) and contribute towards meeting the needs of older people.

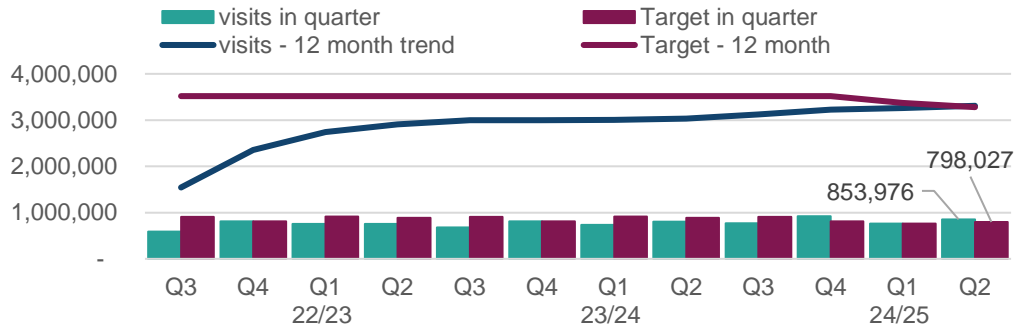
264 This is worse than the 66% target set out in the CDP, again as some of the schemes approved that year received outline planning permission before adoption and were therefore not required to meet the 66% requirement.

265 612 units more were approved in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23 (318). This shows Policy 15 of the CDP is being applied to housing applications.

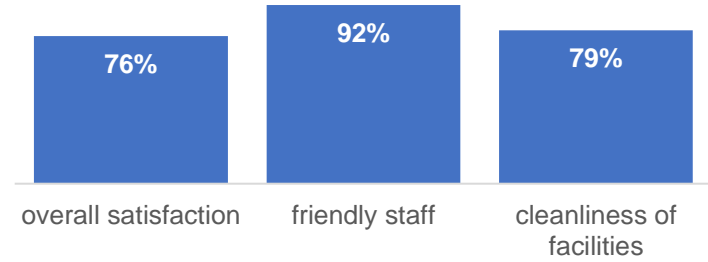
Physical Activity Dashboard

(as at 30 September 2024 / year to date ending 30 September 2024)

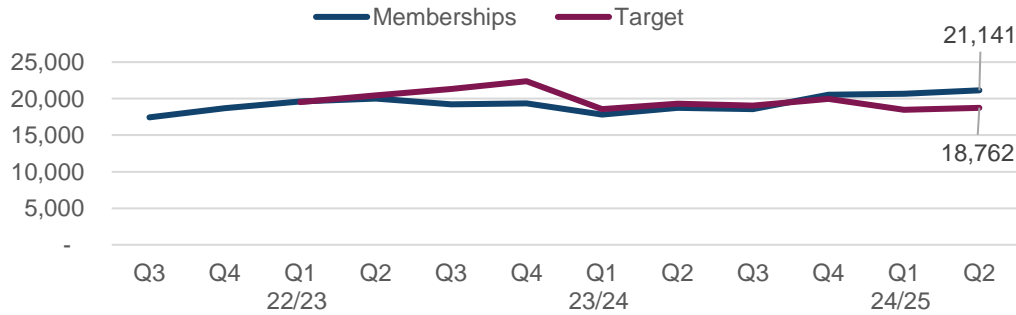
Visits to leisure centres



customer satisfaction - wellbeing sport and leisure



Thrive memberships



Leisure Centre Visits

- 266 During quarter two (July to September), we recorded almost 854,000 visits to our leisure centres, better than both the target (798,027) and the same period last year (802,459).
- 267 Events such as athletics at Shildon, BRASS programme at Newton Aycliffe and our Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme contributed to improved performance this quarter.
- 268 The HAF programme during the summer school holidays offered a range of free sessions at participating leisure centres including water safety camps and sports camps.
- 269 For National Fitness Day in September, activities and promotions were held across leisure centres, including a seven-day free pass to encourage new members.
- 270 Our substantial leisure transformation programme continues across some of our sites. Works at both Teesdale leisure centre and the swimming pool at Spennymoor are to be finished and reopened during quarter three.

Thrive (Leisure) Memberships

- 271 Thrive (leisure) memberships continues to improve and latest performance is better than target.

	September 2023	June 2024	September 2024
Memberships	18,748	20,678	21,141
Target			18,762

- 272 Our new membership scheme, pricing structure, website, app and digital enquiry system continue to have a large influence on sales and retention of members. We have received more than 23,000 enquiries since the system launched (September 2023), 1.3 million website views (since January 2024) and 15,780 app downloads (since April 2024).

Our Communities

Priority Aims:

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

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

National, Regional and Local Picture

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

Land Type ⁹	% of the county	% of the population	People per hectare ¹⁰
Rural	57%	7%	0.3
Rural town and Fringe	32%	37%	2.7
Urban	11%	56%	12.1

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

275 There are approximately 250,000 dwellings¹¹ across the county. Of these, 63% are owner-occupied, 20% are social rented and 17% private rented.

276 Median house prices across the county are consistently lower than those across the North East and the England¹².

	County Durham	North East	England
Median house price <i>Between April 2022 and March 2023</i>	£125,000	£152,000	£290,000

277 Although median house prices across the county have increased by 166% since 2000, from £47,000 to £125,000, there is significant variation.

⁹ [Rural Urban Classification for LSOAs 2011](#)

¹⁰ [Durham Insight - Rural](#)

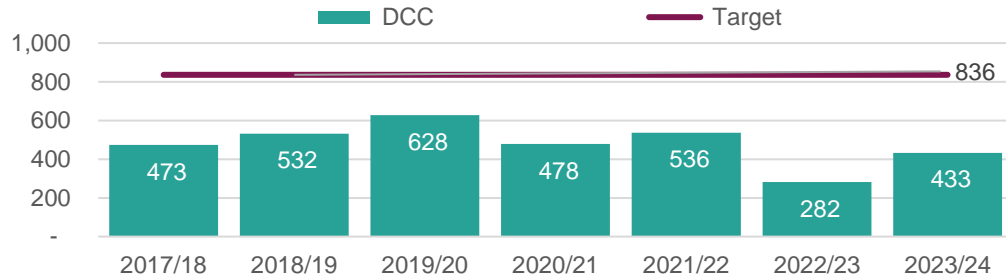
¹¹ [Durham Insight - Housing](#)

¹² [Median House Prices](#)

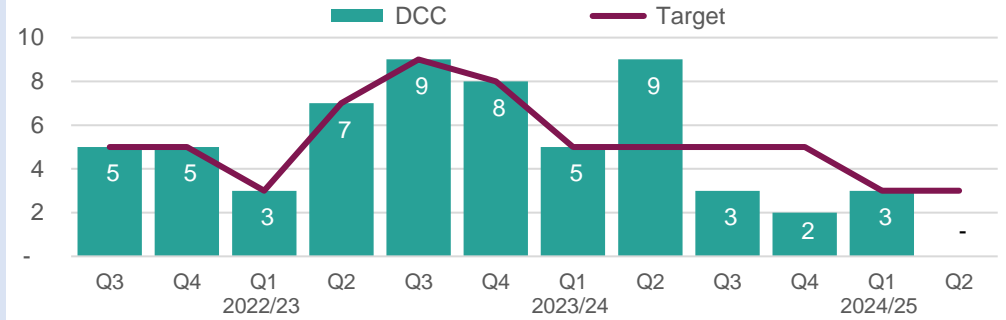
Housing Delivery Dashboard

(At the end of 31 March 2024 / discrete quarterly data)

Affordable housing



Chapter Homes properties sold in quarter



Affordable homes

278 There were 433 affordable housing units were completed in 2023/24. This consisted of:

Via Homes England grant	Via Section 106 Agreement
378	55

279 Performance is worse than target set out in the County Durham Plan to deliver 836 affordable housing units per annum. The target is set against identified need and is extremely challenging to achieve as delivery is dependent on viable sites coming forward for development.

280 However, performance is better than 2022/23, with Section 106 affordable completions increasing by 11 units. This shows that Policy 15 (to meet the need for affordable housing) is now being implemented on sites.

281 Completions through Homes England grants, increased by 140 affordable units compared to 2022/23 and comprised of:

Affordable Rent	Shared Ownership	Social Rent
169	154	55

Chapter Homes

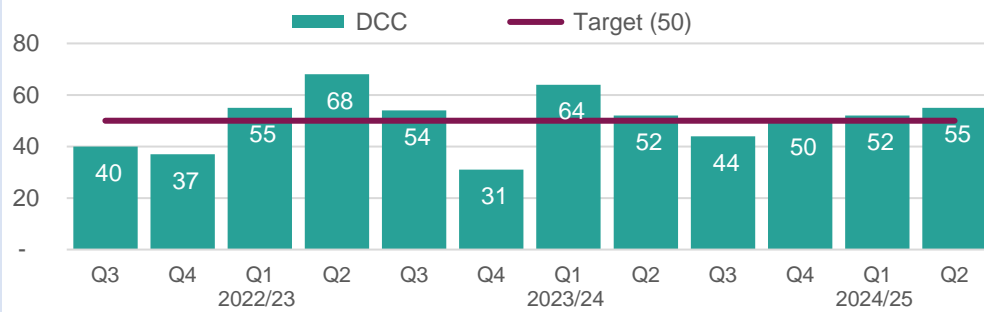
282 No properties sold during quarter two. The four affordable properties due to the sold in the quarter have been reprofiled to complete in quarter three. To allow us to explore additional Homes England funding opportunities and Section 106 commuted sum.

283 Although the quarter two position is not in line with projections, we are still on track to achieve the overall target of 10 properties sold by end of March 2025.

Housing Standards Dashboard

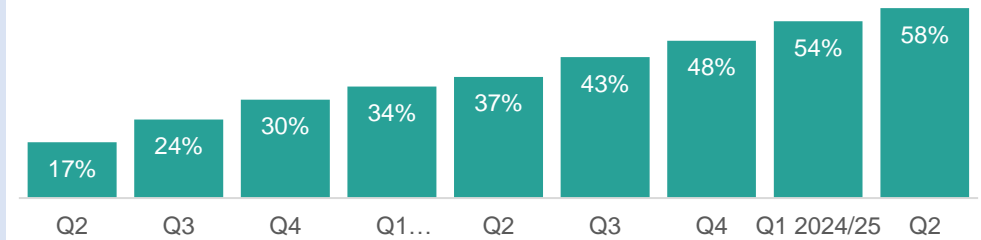
(discrete quarterly data)

Empty homes brought back into use

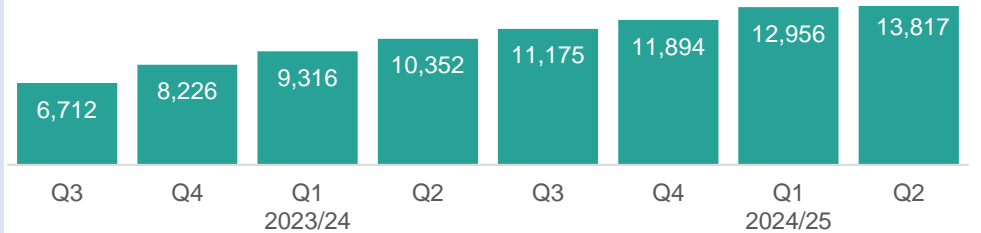


Selective Licensing (Private Rented Sector properties - PRS)

% of PRS properties covered by SL scheme that are fully licenced or legal proceedings instigated (YTD)
Target: 100% by 2027



No. PRS properties covered by SL Scheme that are fully licenced (YTD)
Target: 29,000 by 2027



Empty Homes

- 284 We brought 55 long term empty properties back into use during quarter two (July to September), five better than target (50) and two better than quarter one and the same period last year.
- 285 In most cases, this was achieved through negotiations with owners (43). Other methods included; inspections through Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme (10) and empty homes interest free loan (two).
- 286 There are significant challenges in bringing empty properties back into use which means the process can take considerable time. This can relate initially to difficulties in identifying the owner, that the property is in the process of changing ownership or is currently subject to probate. The owner may not want or be able to do anything with the property, for example, if they are in residential care. Similarly, there may not be an incentive to bring the property back into use because it is located within a low demand area.

Selective Licensing

- 287 Our selective licensing scheme covers an estimated 29,000 privately rented properties, and their status at 30 September was:

Status	Number	% of total
Fully licenced or legal proceedings instigated	16,607	58%
Fully licensed	13,817	48%
Being processed	1,080	4%
Live temporary exemptions in place	12	0%
Family exemptions in place	449	1.5%

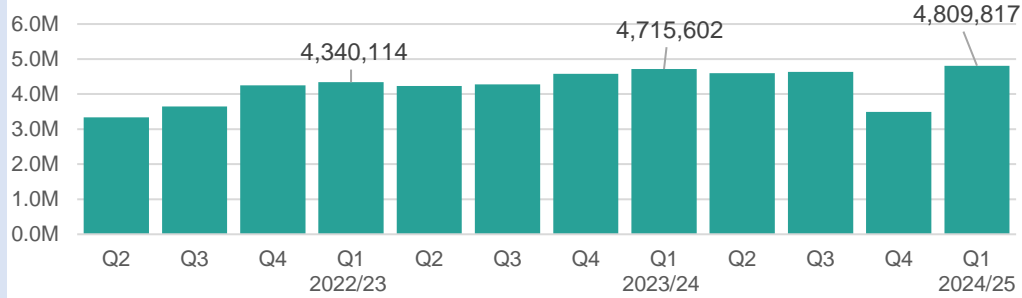
- 288 We have raised a further 918 service cases. These are informal enquiries, requests to licence properties or requests to make repairs (if already licensed). Once the facts have been established, some cases could progress to investigations. However, we would encourage landlords to apply for a licence to avoid legal action.
- 289 We are progressing prosecution files for 22 properties (a further three already successfully prosecuted) and have issued 86 civil penalty notices for not obtaining a licence (relating to 54 properties). 255 properties are no longer private rented sector properties.
- 290 Our recently implemented financial penalty policy continues to assist with enforcement action (as an alternative to prosecution) and encourage unlicensed landlords to apply.
- 291 It requires significant effort and resource throughout the lifetime of a selective licensing scheme to promote the scheme and identify properties subject to licensing. No scheme receives all applications for licences in the first two years. Many schemes do not reach the 100% target by the end of the five years and continue enforcement action beyond the five-year period.
- 292 There are also additional challenges to a vast county wide scheme (split into smaller designations) compared to a complete smaller city or borough scheme which is simpler to administer.
- 293 There is currently no requirement for a person to register their property as privately rented. Therefore, we do not have a complete list of all PRS addresses, which is why the PRS figure was modelled. The team utilise multiple sources of data to identify properties

that may require a licence. Where the owner and/or managing agent is committing an offence, we commence enforcement action. A dedicated team of officers has been assigned to target properties without a licence and has been successful by using a combination of informal measures and pursuing robust enforcement action.

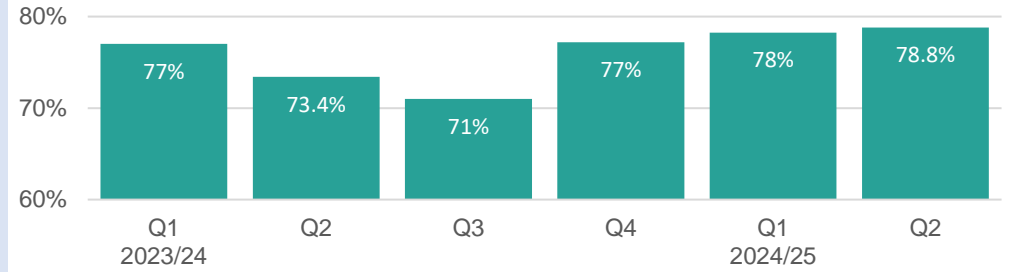
Transport Connectivity Dashboard: public transport patronage and punctuality

(discrete quarterly data / year to date ending 30 June 2024)

Local passenger journeys on the bus network



% of timetabled bus services on time



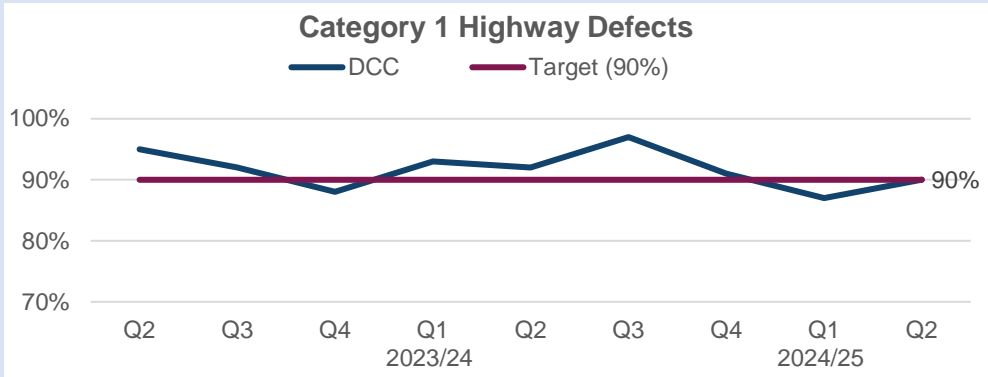
Both patronage and punctuality were impacted as a result of industrial action during quarter three 2023/24.

Public transport patronage and punctuality

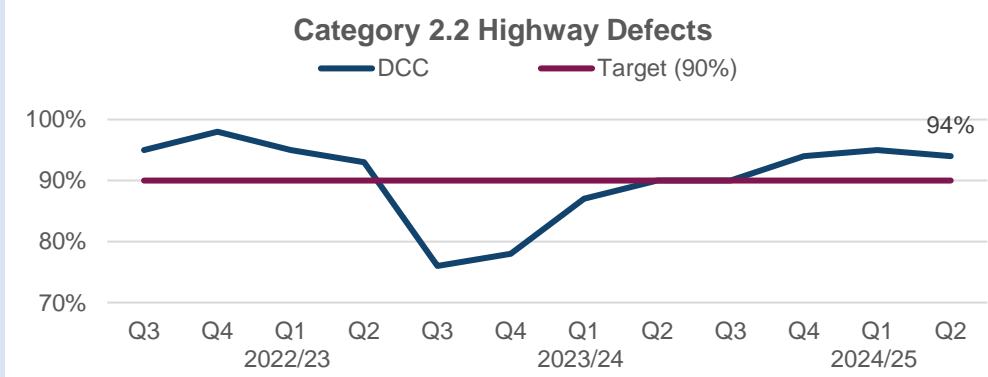
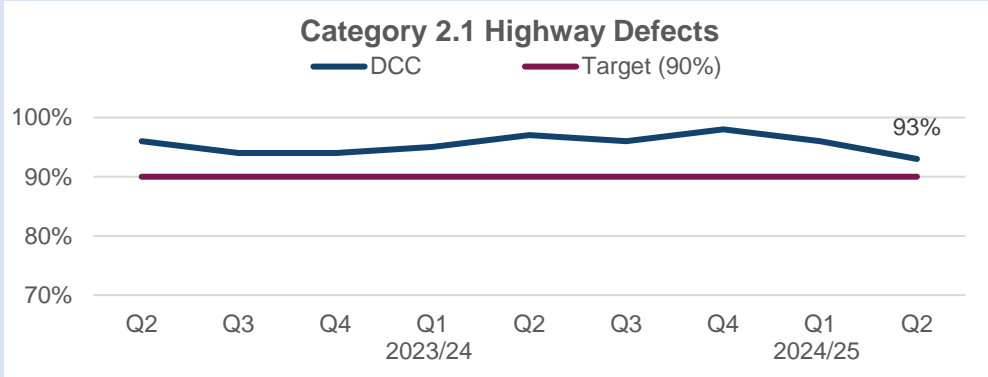
- 294 Bus patronage has slowly increased over the last two years and is back to within 95% of pre-Covid levels.
- 295 Between April to June, there were just over 4.8 million passengers, 2% better than the 4.7 million passengers recorded the last year (April to June 2023). However, the increase masks operational delivery issues of larger operators.
- 296 During quarter two (July to September), punctuality was 79%. Slightly better than last quarter (78%) because of continued performance improvement from the two main operators; Arriva and Go North East.
- 297 We continue to implement the North East Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) in partnership with bus operators and other councils to encourage patronage growth and improve punctuality.

Highway Maintenance Dashboard

(discrete quarterly data)



- ### Highway Maintenance
- Defects are categorised on a risk basis, resources targeted at those likely to pose the greatest risk of harm.
 - Category 2.2 highway defects pose the lowest risk based on footfall and location.



Highways Maintenance

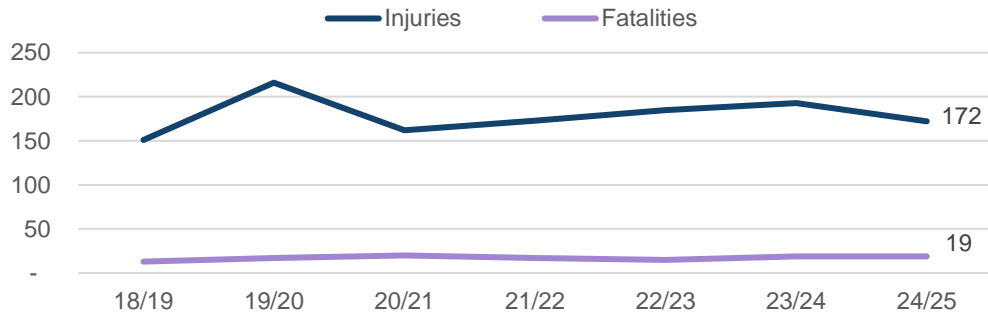
- 298 Highway defects are categorised by risk. Resources are directed toward those with the potential to cause the greatest harm. Category 2.2 defects pose the lowest level of risk to the public based on footfall and location.
- 299 We have committed to repair 90% of all highway defects, regardless of category, within a set time. During quarter two (July to September), we achieved the target for all defect categories.

Defect	90% to be repaired within	July to September 2023	July to September 2024
Category 1	2 or 72 hours	92%	90%
Category 2.1	14 days	97%	93%
Category 2.2	3 months	90%	94%

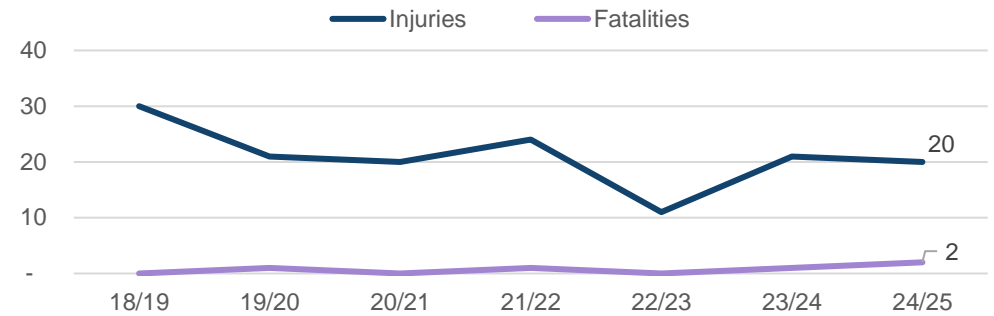
Road Safety Dashboard

(October to September 12 month rolling trend)

Killed or seriously injured - all injuries and fatalities



Killed or seriously injured - children



- 16-20 age group accounted for the most casualties over the last two years.
- Car occupants, motorcyclists and pedestrians account for the most casualties
- Collision hotspot areas tend to be more urban areas

Data for 2023 and 2024 is provisional and subject to change.

Road Safety

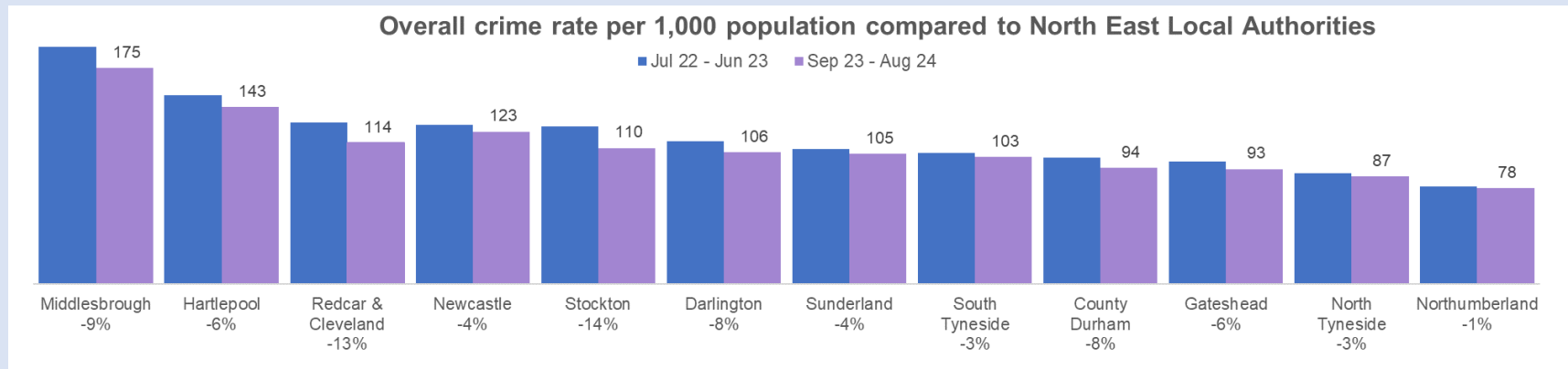
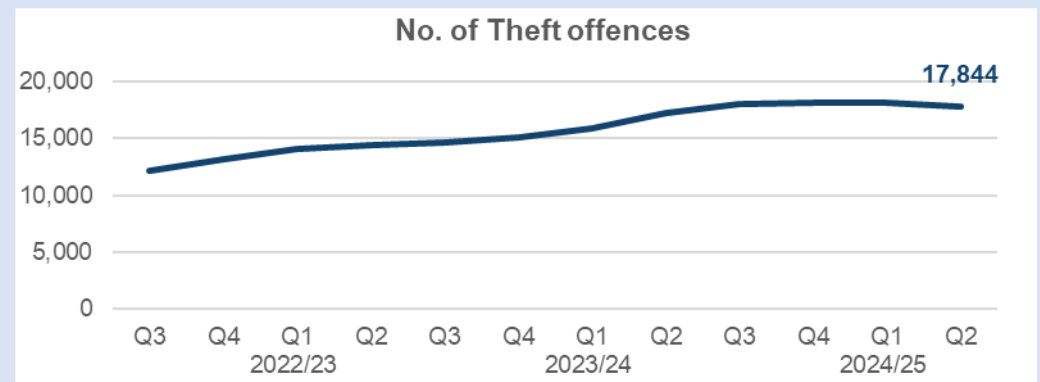
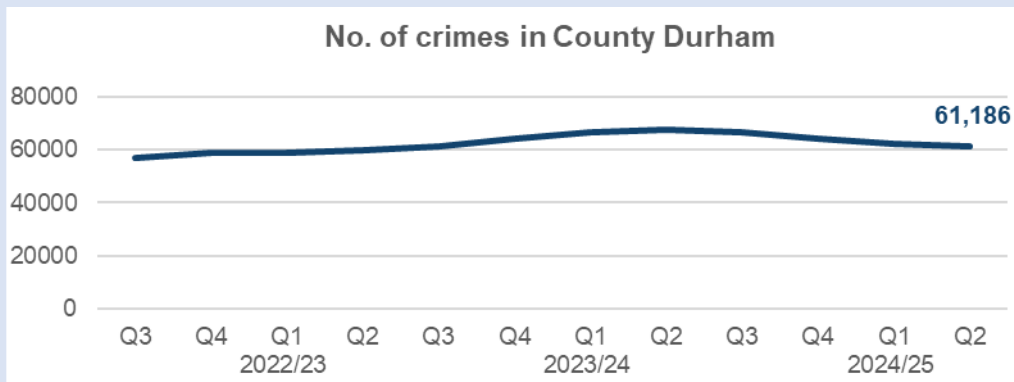
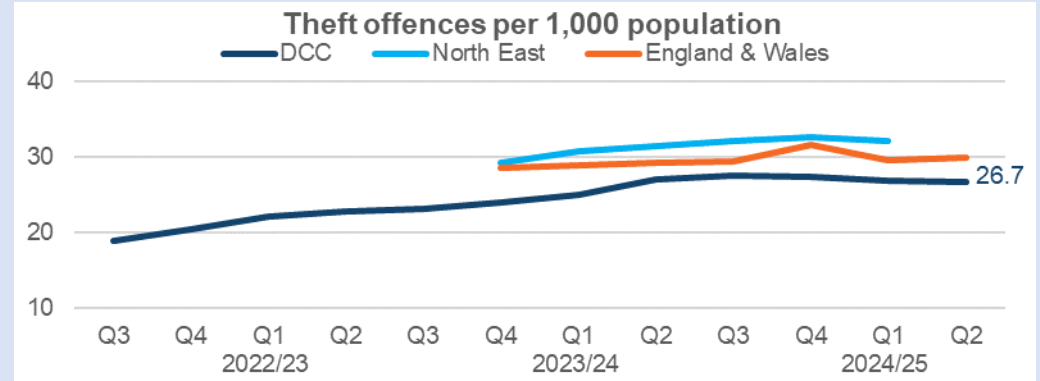
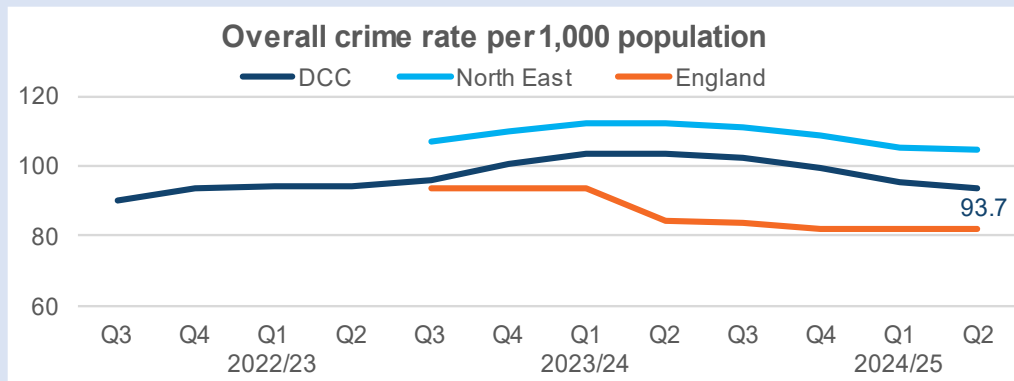
- 300 During the 12 months ending September, 172 people were seriously injured and 19 died in road traffic collisions across the county. There has been no increase in fatalities and a decrease of 22 serious casualties compared to the same period last year (12 months ending September 2023).
- 301 The 16-20 age group accounted for the most casualties over the last two years. Although there were six fewer casualties during the 12 months ending June 2024, compared to the same period last year.
- 302 Car occupants, motorcyclists and pedestrians account for the most casualties. During the two reported years, pedestrians increased by one and pedal cyclists increased by three, however, car occupants decreased by 22.
- 303 Collision hotspot areas tend to be more urban areas, including Durham City, Bishop Auckland, Peterlee, Chester-le-Street, Consett and Stanley.
- 304 We are working to reduce road traffic casualties through education programmes, training courses and road safety campaigns. During quarter two (July to September), we delivered:

Education programmes / training courses	No. of children
Bikeability cycle training	679
Face-to-face visits and activities with children	2,445
Child pedestrian training	273
Young driver and passenger workshop sessions (with Durham Police)	547

- 305 Our campaign work during quarter two (July to September) focused on the Euros Final football drink/drug drive awareness, cyclists and motorbike riders' safety, car maintenance, safe journey planning for summer, back to school and school parking safety, children's (early secondary age) campaign and young drivers project.
- 306 Our road safety Facebook page reached an audience of more than 22,000 people this quarter. Although the audience reached is significantly lower than quarter one, this is due to our corporate social media post and press article on young driver & passenger safety sessions reaching approximately 80,000 people during quarter one.

Crime Dashboard

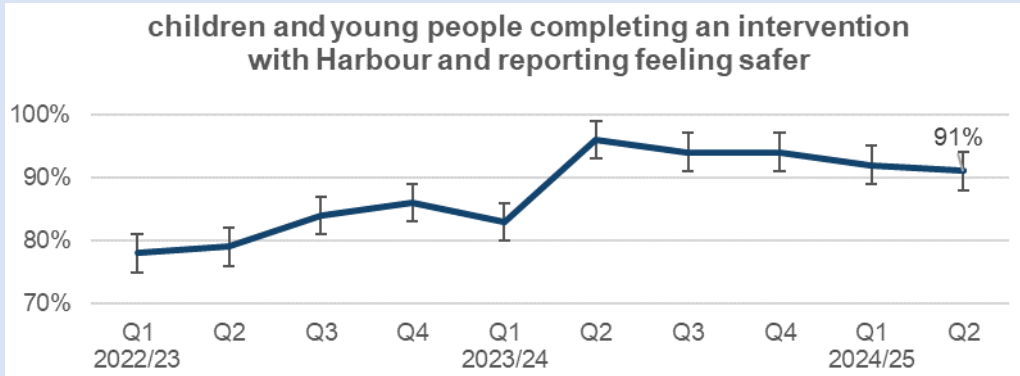
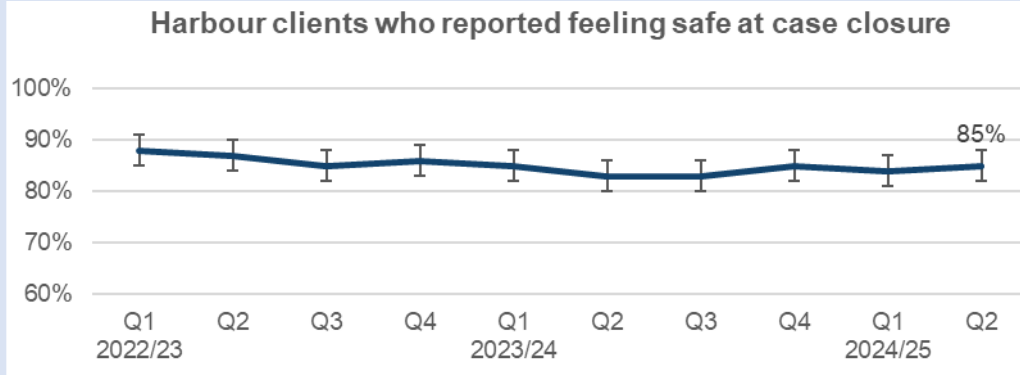
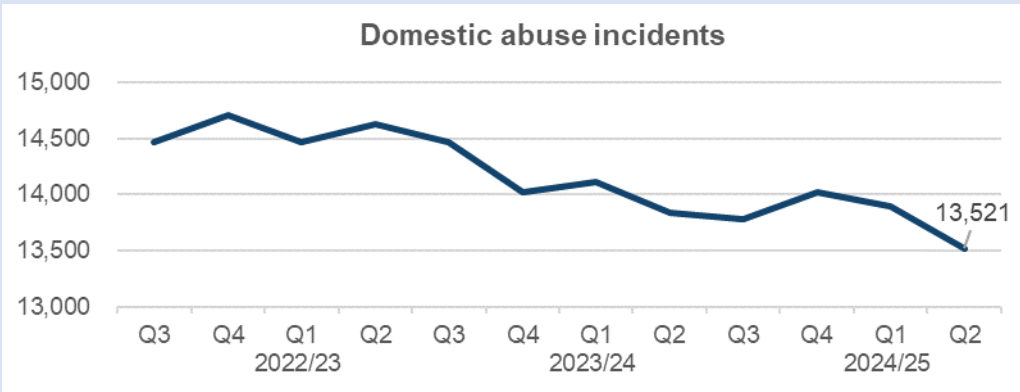
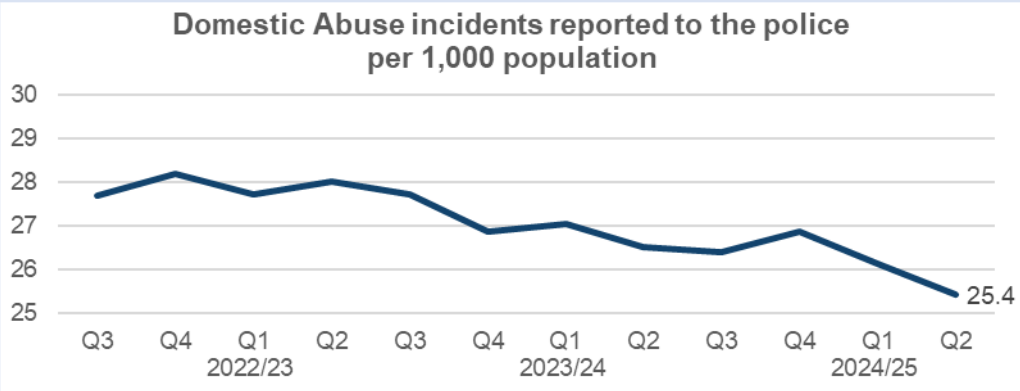
(12 months ending 30 September 2024)



Protecting Vulnerable People from Harm Dashboard

(12 months ending 30 September 2024)

Domestic Abuse Incidents



Crime

- 307 Between 1 October 2023 and 30 September 2024, the overall recorded crime rate was 93.7 crimes per 1,000 population. This is better than the same period last year (103.4 crimes per 1,000 population).
- 308 There has been a steady decrease in overall recorded crime over the last fifteen months. Although most of the underlying crime types have decreased, there have been increases in robbery (up 5% from 184 to 194), miscellaneous crimes against society (up 3%, 1,577 to 1,627), possession of weapons (up 2%, 367 to 373) and theft offences (up 1%, 14,135 to 14,308).
- 309 Between 1 October 2023 and 30 September 2024, there were 26.7 theft offences recorded per 1,000 population. Of these, 20% were solved. This is better than the same period last year when 26.9 theft offences per 1,000 population were recorded and 15% solved. However, it remains higher than previous years.
- 310 Over the latest 12 months, 76% of all theft offences related to shoplifting, burglary or vehicle offences. Compared to the same period the year before, shoplifting decreased by 58 (-3%), burglary by five (-1%) and vehicle offences by 60 (-10%).
- 311 The challenges remain in terms of the difficulties faced by the courts with prisons in England and Wales almost full. Shoplifting offences are quite lenient even with repeat offenders with very few receiving custodial sentences.

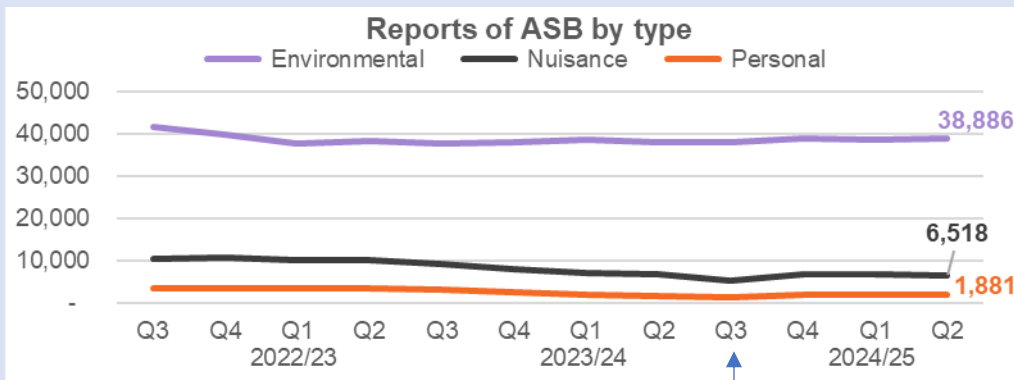
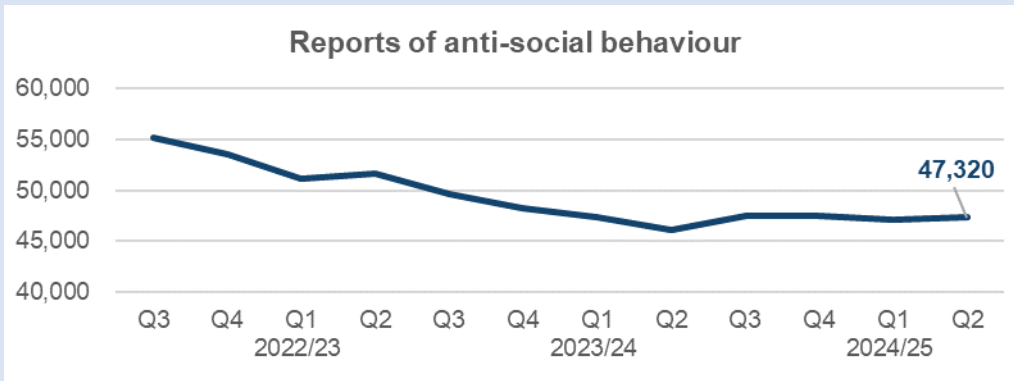
Domestic Abuse

- 312 Although 316 fewer domestic abuse incidents were reported to the police in the 12 months ending September 2024 (compared to the same period the previous year), the number of victims referred to Harbour Support Services increased by 2%.
- 313 On average, a victim will experience domestic abuse for four years before accessing help from Harbour.
- 314 Between July and September 2024, 1,721 domestic abuse adult victims were referred to Harbour. Of these, 69 were considered high risk (4%) and 268 had been referred at least twice in the previous 12 months (16%).
- 315 The proportion of clients who reported feeling safe after involvement with Harbour remains stable at 85%. The proportion of children completing an intervention with Harbour and indicating they feel safer is lower (-5 percentage points) than 12 months ago.

Anti-Social Behaviour Dashboard

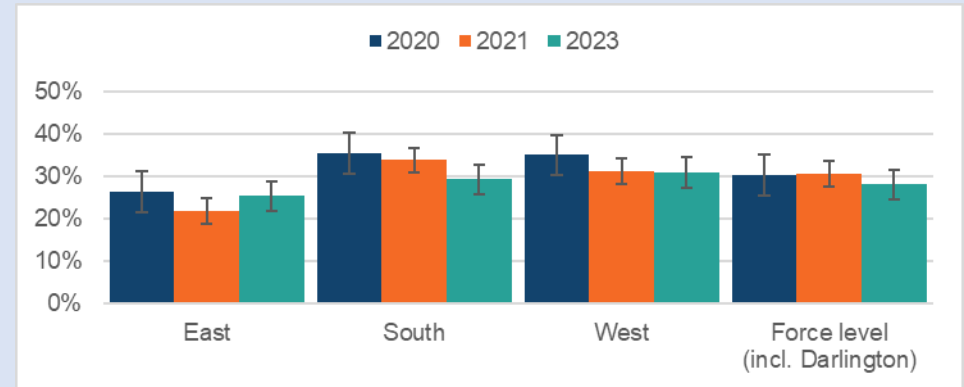
(12 months ending 30 September 2024)

	Last year	This year	change	
Environment ASB	37,730	38,886	+1,156	+3%
Nuisance ASB	6,602	6,518	-84	-1%
Personal ASB	1,547	1,881	+334	+22%
All ASB	45,923	47,320	+1,397	+3%



A change in National Crime Recording Standards has resulted in more ASB incidents being categorised as a crime, leading to a reduction of traditional ASB reports through the Police.

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



No significant change

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

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

Incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

- 316 Following a steady decrease over the last two years, latest data from Durham Constabulary shows a slight increase in ASB reports over the 12 months ending 30 September 2024.
- 317 This increase coincided with a change in National Recording Standards and how ASB incidents were recorded and likely contributed to the increase in incidents as Durham Constabulary adapted to the new process, and also with the Neighbourhood Policing Teams utilising their local social media pages to increase public awareness on how and who to report incidents to, and actively encouraging them to do so.
- 318 This most likely contributed to the slight increase in reports, as public confidence grows in reporting ASB and the Police dealing with ASB. This initial increase can be expected before the data can then be used to target high visibility patrols at specific hotspot locations on days and times that are most likely to reduce and prevent incidents from occurring.
- 319 Operation Trailblazer specifically tackles ASB using this data and provides high visibility patrols to hotspot areas across the county. It provides additional resources to assist in dealing with ongoing issues, supporting the local Neighbourhood Police Teams. In comparison to the slight increase in reports to Durham Constabulary, Operation Trailblazer has seen a 2% decrease in reports in the hotspot areas (compared to the same period last year), and most notably in the last quarter, Operation Trailblazer has seen an 11% reduction in ASB incidents across all hotspot areas.
- 320 Multi-agency operations in Durham City, supported by additional high visibility patrols from Operation Trailblazer, are being utilised by the Neighbourhood Police Teams to specifically target issues of ASB. Ongoing activity like this is being used in conjunction with the recent addition of a public spaces protection order, upgraded CCTV and securing criminal behaviours orders against some of the most persistent offenders to help reduce ASB going forward, and this is starting to be replicated by other areas across the county.
- 321 In the last six months alone more than 6,000 hours of additional high visibility patrols have been provided by Operation Trailblazer, in addition to Neighbourhood Police patrols specifically to target ASB. Use of Section 59 designated areas, Operation Endurance and drone capability continues to see Durham Constabulary actively tackling vehicle related ASB, particularly off-road bikes.

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

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

Community Safety Activity

- 323 Between April and June, we worked with partners and the local community in Newton Aycliffe and actioned 260 pieces of casework, during the quarter:
- we issued 52 legal notices to remedy the defective state of premises and remove noxious matter,

- we identified 32 private empty properties. Of these, 10 are back in use, three are to let, six are for sale/sold and five are being refurbished, and
- we carried out 200 safe and wellbeing visits and 103 arson reduction activities.

324 We undertook five enforcement operations resulting in the seizure of 32,000 cigarettes and 1,651 non-compliant vapes. Three retail premises were the subject of three month closure orders.

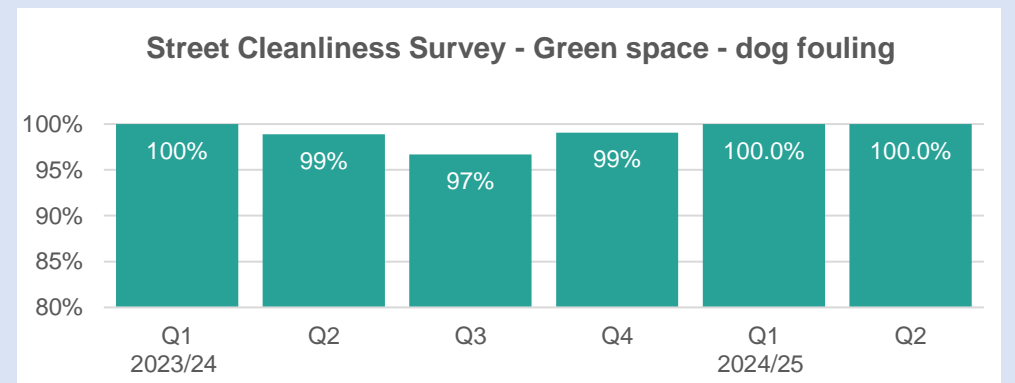
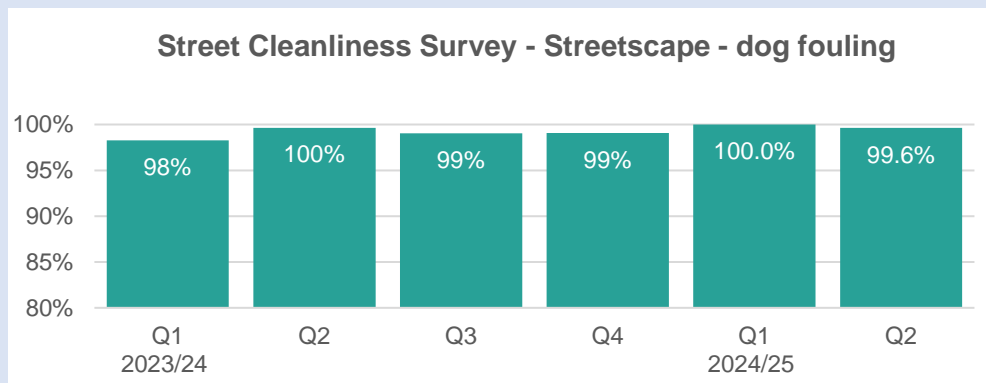
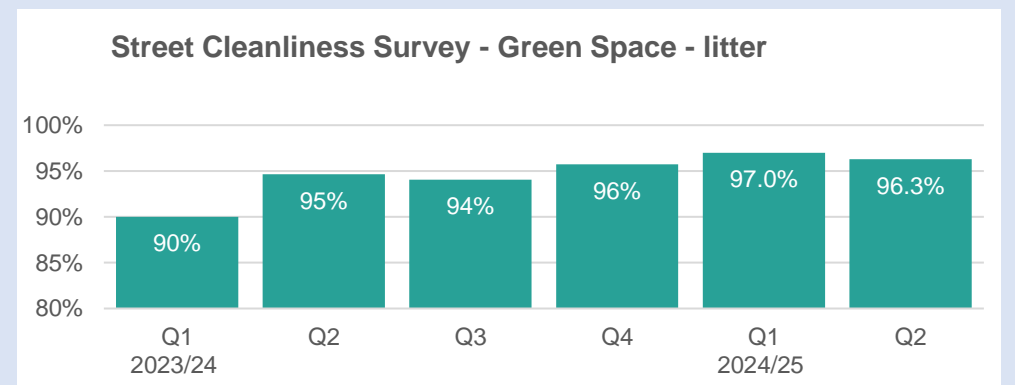
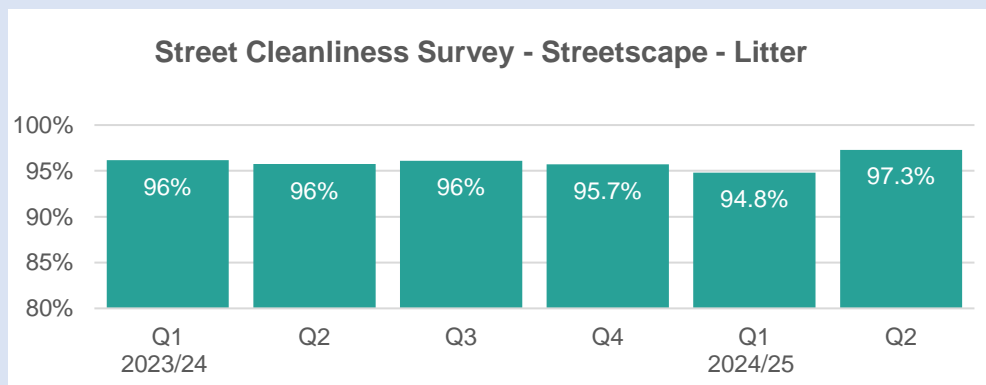
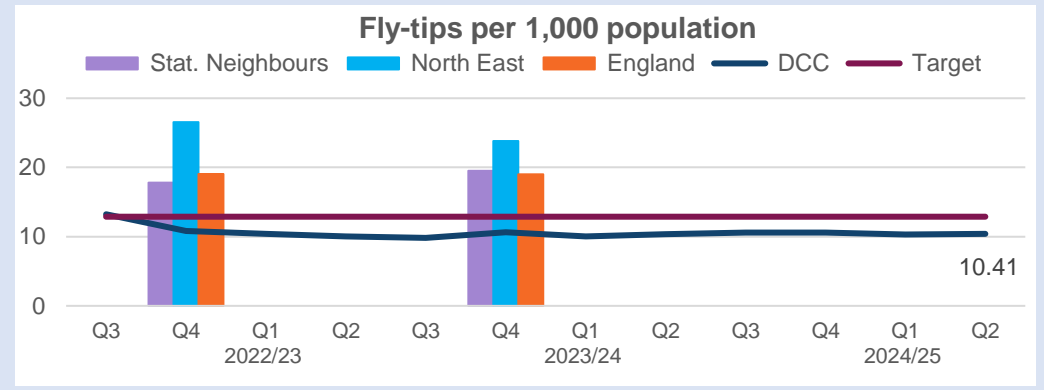
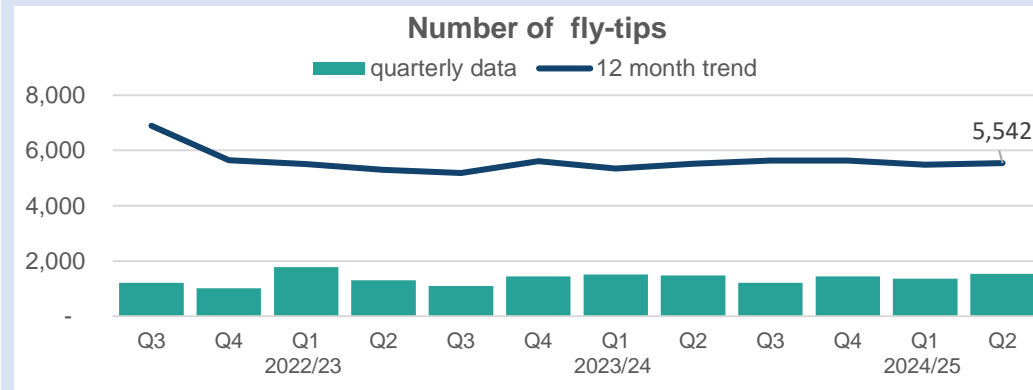
Horden Together Project

325 Twenty-seven clients were accepted on 'Making Every Adult Matter' during quarter two (July to September). This brings the current caseload to 61. The priority areas of engagement has been managing money and managing tenancy and accommodation.

326 During the same period, we investigated reports relating to issues of unauthorised access, drainage, noise, pests, public health, housing and accumulations. We served 80 notices on properties.

Clean and Attractive Communities Dashboard

(12 months ending 31 May 2024 / discrete quarterly data)



Fly-tipping

- 327 During the 12 months ending September 2024, we captured 46 fly-tipping incidents on CCTV and investigated more than 3,500 incidents. Action taken in response includes:

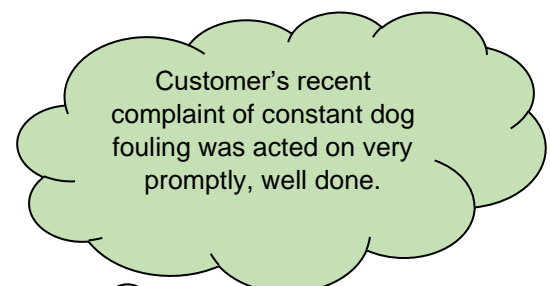
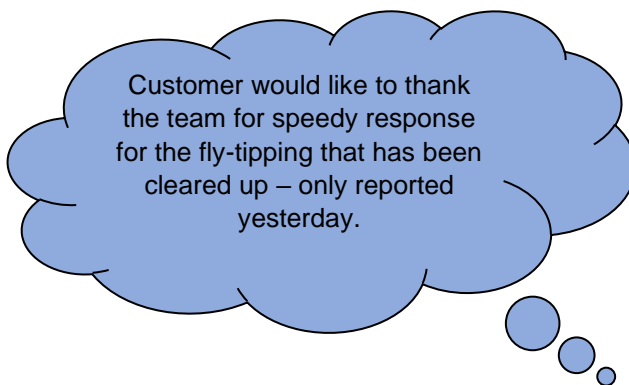
Action	Number
Fixed Penalty Notices (waste carrier offences)	99
Fixed Penalty Notices (fly-tipping offences)	41
Prosecutions	15
Vehicle seizures	9

- 328 Just over 5,500 fly-tips were recorded during the 12 months ending September 2024, on par with the same period last year, and significantly better than during the pandemic when fly-tips peaked at just over 8,000 incidents (April 2020 to March 2021).
- 329 Our fly-tipping rate is 10.4 per 1,000 population (12 months ending September 2024). This is better than the target of 12.9 and is the same rate recorded last year (12 months ending September 2023).

Cleanliness

- 330 Our latest cleanliness surveys commenced in April, they assess both streetscape areas (paths, roads and alleyways) and green scape areas (parks, open spaces and playing fields).
- 331 The surveys found that, of the streetscape and green scape areas inspected, 97% and 96% were acceptable in relation to litter, and 99% and 100% were acceptable in relation to dog fouling.
- 332 We set targets once we have established a longer term trend using this methodology. We will also benchmark against other authorities once more data are available.

Feedback from customers



Our Council

Priority Aims:

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

- manage our resources effectively
- create a workforce for the future
- design our services with service users
- use data and technology more effectively
- work towards a healthy workforce

National, Regional and Local Picture

- 333 The current core spending power of English Councils is around 18% lower than 2010/11 in real terms. Across our council, it is around 19% lower.
- 334 The government presented its [Autumn Statement](#) to Parliament on 30 October. This set out the government's financial plans for this year and next, alongside the estimated impact of changes to tax, welfare and public spending.
- 335 A real term increase in total core spending power was announced, alongside additional funding to reform children's social care and pilot a Kinship Allowance, implement the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme and improve recycling, support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, extend the Household Support Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments to help vulnerable households, fund Bus Service Improvement and repair potholes.
- 336 Our [provisional finance settlement](#) has now been received and the detail presented to Cabinet in January 2025.
- 337 Public sector reform remains a key focus for the government. The system for supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities will be transformed. Data and digital infrastructure will be improved and moved toward more personalised public services that meet need, improve user satisfaction and increase efficiency.
- 338 From Spring 2025, spending reviews will be multi-year. They will take place every two years and cover a three-year period. The one-year overlap gives financial certainty as detailed plans are always available for the next financial year.
- 339 In advance of the Autumn Budget, the Local Government Association (LGA) [surveyed](#) all council chief executives in England to gauge the financial positions of councils. Key findings include:
- 10% of councils reported discussing with the government the possibility of requesting [exceptional financial support](#) (EFS) during the current financial year.
 - 44% of social care councils said they are likely to apply for EFS within the next couple of financial years (compared to 25% of all councils).
 - The five service areas of most concern to social care councils when setting budgets for 2025/26 were children's social care (ranked in the top five by 93% of respondents),

adult social care (90%), special educational needs and disabilities (80%), home to school transport (65%) and homelessness and temporary accommodation (64%).

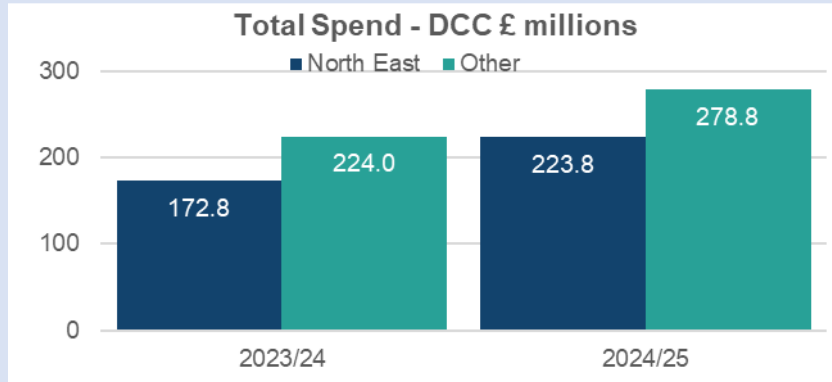
- 66% of relevant councils said parks and green spaces are likely to be negatively impacted by 2025/26 cost savings. 62% said the same of sport and leisure services. 55% said the same of museums, galleries and theatres.
- 79% of social care councils said services supporting disabled adults and/or older people are likely to be negatively impacted by 2025/26 cost savings, with 68% reporting the same about home to school transport and 63% about services and support for children, young people and families.

Business Intelligence Project

- 340 The project continues to progress. The project team is developing an enterprise data platform to deliver analytics and new insight around key service areas. Master data management will be used in the future to provide citizen indexed views (single view of the child, single view of the adult, single view of the family, single view of debt).
- 341 We have recruited to new specialist data and information governance roles to support our plans. Initial training for these roles will be completed by the end of the 2024.
- 342 Three sets of dashboards are now available for senior managers to test – HR, Children’s Social Care and Early Help, and Adult Social Care.
- 343 An additional dashboard providing an overview of data breaches, Freedom of Information requests and Subject Access Requests will go live early November. This will be followed in December by a new education / home to school transport dashboard.

Procurement Dashboard

(October 2023 to September 2024)

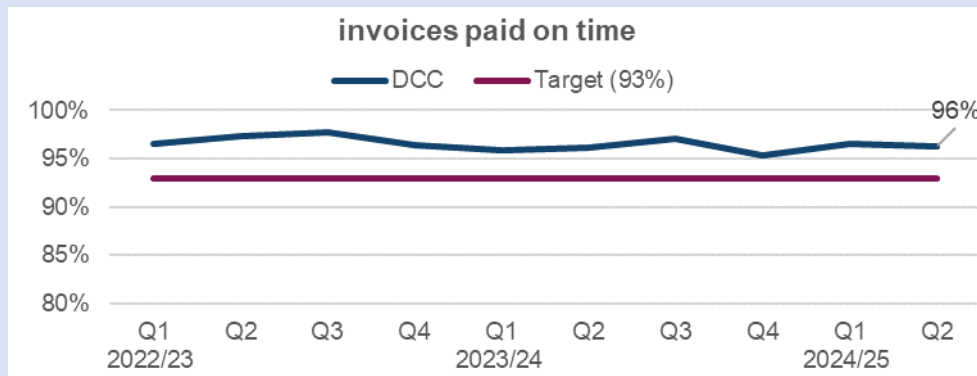


Spend across the council between April and September 2024 came to £502.60m, the highest for at least 14 years. This is an increase of £105.79m (26.66%) from the same period last year.

Savings were made through drop in consultancy costs (-£4.25m) which was mainly due to last year's County Durham Growth Fund.

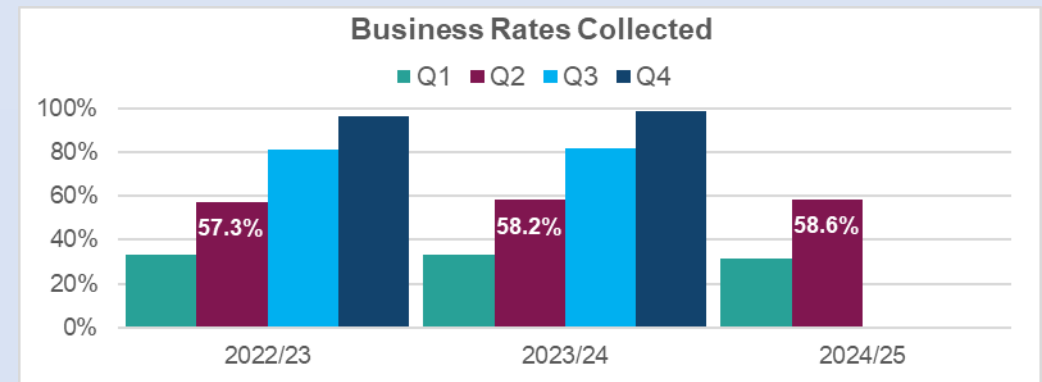
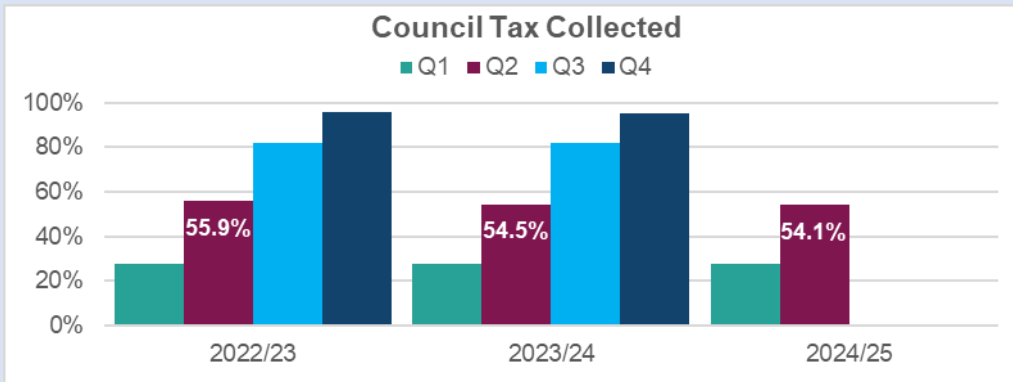
There were significant increases across adult care (driven by an increase in minimum wage in nursing homes), in construction of capital projects, education costs due to Dedicated School Grants, Public Transport due to fuel prices and the Bus Service Improvement Plan funded bus service, Vehicle management due to the car leasing scheme and several big vehicle purchases.

Inflation is affecting all aspects of the council.



Council Tax and Business Rates Dashboard

(year to date 2024/25)

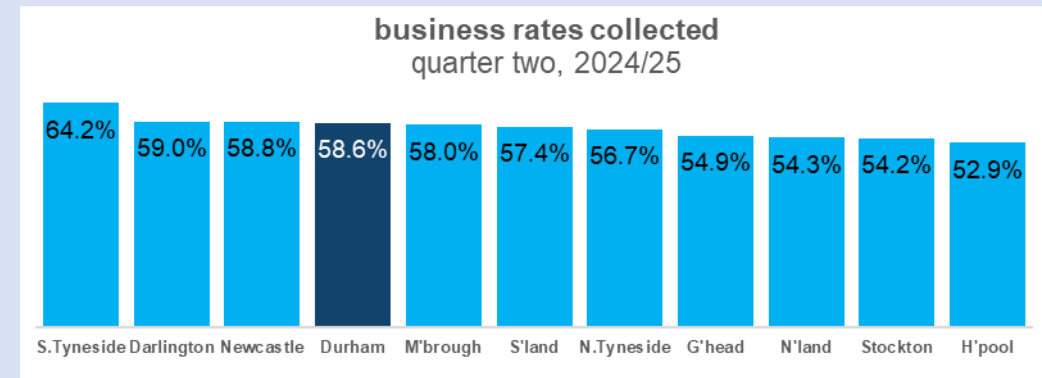
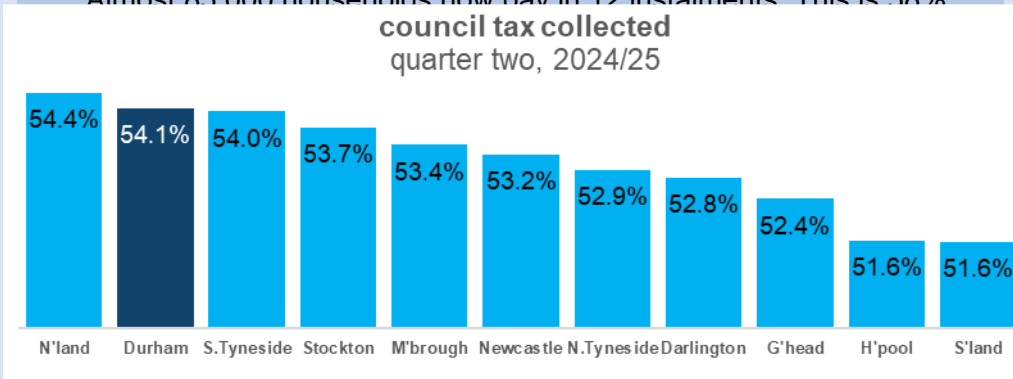


Slight decrease in the in-year collection rate is due to a combination of:

- Billing increasing by around £24 million.**
 Mainly due to changes to Empty Property Premiums (+£7.6 million) and ending our Council Tax Discretionary Reduction Scheme (post-Covid support) (+£1 million).
- More households failing to pay.**
 We issued 4,037 more recovery documents between 1 April and 30 September, compared to the same period last year.
- More households choosing to pay their council tax over 12 months.**
 Almost 85,000 households now pay in 12 instalments. This is 58% more than the same time last year when almost 54,000 households paid with 12 instalments.

Our quarter one collection rate was lower than previous years. This was because the payments from centrally managed schools are now credited at quarter two, rather than in quarter one like previous years.

As these payments were received during quarter two, our collection rate has returned to the expected level. It is slightly higher than previous years.



Council Tax Collection

- 344 Our in-year collection rate has reduced from 54.5% (April to September 2023) to 54.1% (April to September 2024). There are three main reasons for this slight fall.
- Our 2024/25 council tax debit (the amount we bill for council tax) has increased by around £24 million. £7.6 million is due to changes to the Empty Property Premiums¹³ and £1 million due to ending our Council Tax Discretionary Reduction Scheme¹⁴ (post-Covid support).
 - More households are failing to pay their council tax. Between 1 April and 30 September, we issued 4,037 more recovery documents to households for failing to make payment compared to the same period last year.
 - More households are choosing to pay their council tax over 12 months. Almost 85,000 households now pay in 12 instalments, 58% more than the same time last year when 54,000 households paid with 12 instalments. Paying less each month results in a short-term negative impact on in-year collection.

Business Rates Collection

- 345 Our quarter one collection rate was lower than previous years. This was due to payments from centrally managed schools now being credited at quarter two, rather than in quarter one like previous years.
- 346 These payments were received during quarter two. This returned our collection rate to the expected level. The in-year collection rate for April to September is 58.6%. This is better than the rates for the same periods in 2023 (58.2%) and 2022 (57.3%).

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings

- 347 We expect to save £8.1 million during the 2024/25 financial year (April 2024 to March 2025). As of 30 September, we had saved £6.2 million (76% of our projection).

	projected saving £'million	saving achieved £'million	saving achieved %
Review of contractual arrangements / service provision	2.32	2.00	86%
Staff restructures / improved ways of working	1.84	1.64	89%
Income generation	2.13	1.23	59%
Budget reduction	0.95	0.87	92%
Other	0.85	0.41	48%

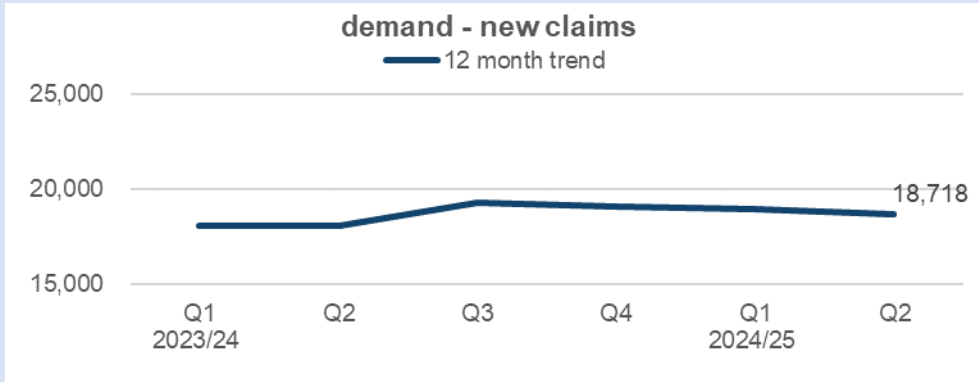
¹³ Council tax for properties unoccupied and unfurnished for more than 10 years increased from 200% to 300%. The time a property can be unoccupied and unfurnished before being charged an additional 100% council tax premium reduced from two years to one year. [Council Tax on empty properties and second homes - Durham County Council](#)

¹⁴ Supported residents who did not qualify for 100% council tax reduction with payments of up to £75.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Dashboard

(12 months rolling)

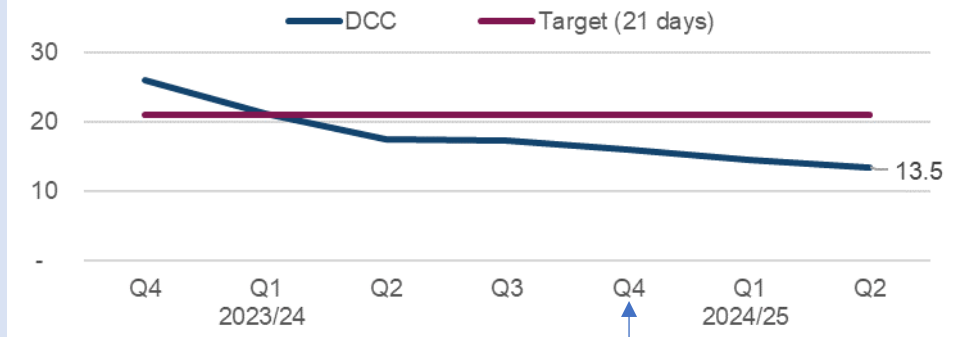
New Claims



Change in Circumstances

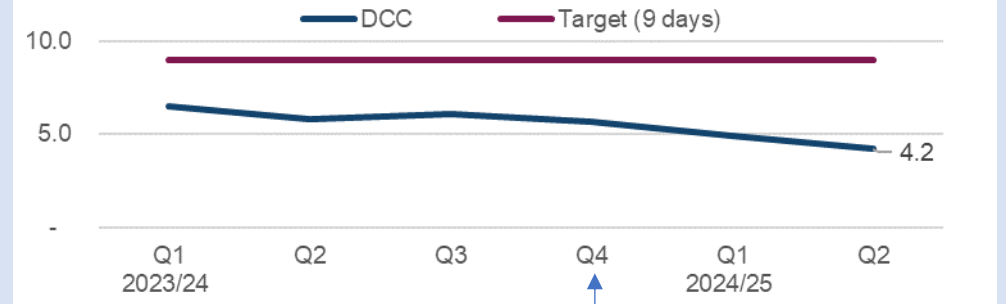


days to process new claims: housing benefit



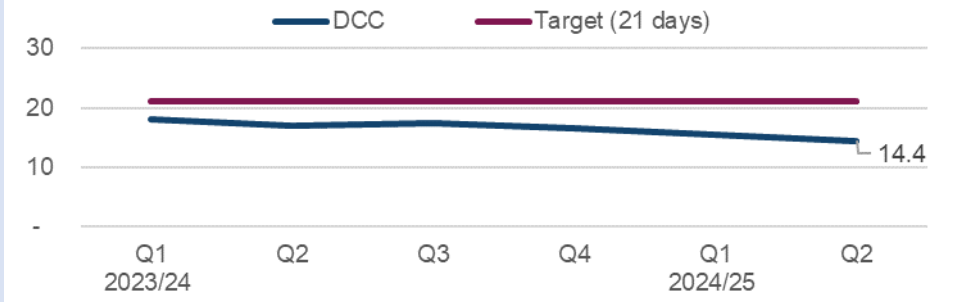
national average: 20 days and North East average: 20 days

days to process change in circumstances: Housing Benefit

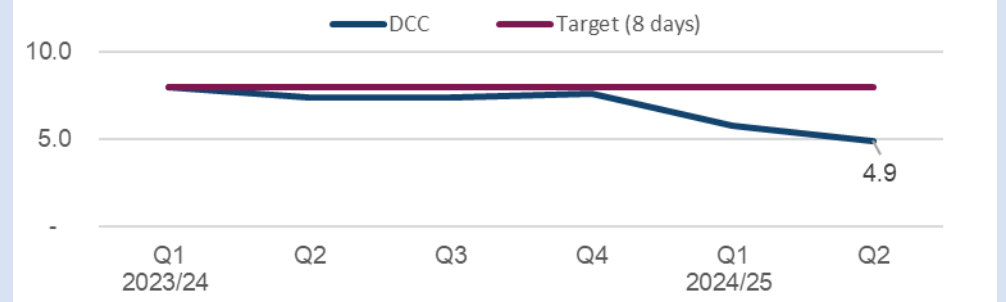


national average: 6 days and North East average: 5 days

days to process new claims: Council Tax Reduction



days to process change in circumstances: Council Tax Reduction



Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction

- 348 Although there has been a slight reduction in the number of claims (both new and change in circumstances), demand remains relatively high because of the cost-of-living crisis.
- 349 We are processing claims quicker than in previous quarters. This is due to a combination of upskilling our staff, reducing staff sickness and processing customer queries as part of an incoming call.

Universal Credit and Managed Migration

- 350 In 2017, the government started processing all new housing benefit claims as Universal Credit. The government also committed to moving existing housing benefit claimants to Universal Credit through managed migration.
- 351 The council administers Housing Benefit whereas the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) administers Universal Credit. Therefore, as Housing Benefit claimants move to Universal Credit, the council's caseload reduces. Throughout quarter two (July to September), just over 1,500 housing benefit claimants migrated to Universal Credit. A further 6,500 claimants will migrate in the coming months.
- 352 We receive a grant to administer housing benefit claims (£1.8 million for this year). But DWP will reduce this grant as claimants migrate to Universal Credit and our caseload falls. We anticipate our grant to reduce by about 25% from April 2025.
- 353 The government has also brought forward the Employment and Support Allowance migration from 2028 to September 2024. This will impact an additional 5,803 residents.
- 354 We expect to see an unintended consequence to managed migration. That is an increase in our local Council Tax Reduction Scheme workload. Claimants to our local scheme make one or two changes in circumstances each year. However, as Universal Credit automatically calculates every month, we could potentially receive a change in circumstances for every claim every month. Previous migrations have driven increases in this area.

Financial Support Schemes

- 355 The Household Support Fund (HSF) continues to provide short-term urgent financial help to residents who are struggling to afford household essentials. The scheme is administered by the council but funded by the government. We received £4.6 million for the latest cycle (October 2024 and March 2025).
- 356 Most of this money will be used to purchase supermarket vouchers for vulnerable households. This includes households receiving free school meals (during school holidays) and pensioners receiving Local Council Tax Reduction but who do not qualify for winter fuel payment¹⁵.
- 357 In addition to providing short-term help, we are continuing to work with organisations to address underlying issues and provide necessary skills (such as budgeting and cooking) and debt advice.
- 358 Most councils only provide financial support through the HSF. But we provide additional support through our own discretionary support scheme. Throughout April to September this included:

¹⁵ following the eligibility change from winter 2024.

- **Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS).** We are the only North East council to have kept council tax support in line with the national Council Tax Benefit scheme which was in place until 31 March 2013. We will continue our current LCTRS into the 2025/26 financial year (1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026).

	2023/24	2024/25	Change
Households helped	54,398	53,800	-598 (-1.1%)
Total cost in £'million	63.3	67.0*	+3.7*
% of pension age	38%	38%	-

*estimated

- **Discretionary Housing Payments¹⁶.** In April 2024, Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates were increased to reflect the cheapest 30% of local rents¹⁷. Prior to this, LHA had been frozen for four years at September 2019 levels. The increase in LHA is the most likely explanation for the continued reduction in the number of claims received – people have more money so fewer need help.

	Q2 2023/24	Q2 2024/25	Change
Number	519	304	-215
Total value	£255,791	£158,027	-£97,764
Average payment	£519	£491	-£28

- **Welfare Assistance Scheme.** There are two types of help:

		Q2 2023/24	Q2 2024/25	Change
Daily Living Expenses ¹⁸	Number	994	256	-738
	Total value	£63,633	£14,435	-£49,198
	Average payment	£64	£56	-£8
Settlement Grants ¹⁹	Number	215	196	-19
	Total value	£102,558	£92,489	-£10,069
	Average payment	£477	£471	-£6

In relation to Daily Living Expenses, we now focus on meeting the needs of our residents through tailored support rather than giving money. We are using the wrap-around support available at food banks, community supermarkets, and community hubs (with referrals ensuring support is always accessible). As there are now more options than cash payments, average spend has reduced.

In relation to Settlement Grants, we have worked with partners to move people into permanent housing and reduce dependency on temporary accommodation. Also, the

¹⁶ extra help for tenants to meet their housing costs.

¹⁷ using rental figures from September 2023

¹⁸ for people, whose circumstances change unexpectedly and they do not have access to money for things such as food, travel or clothing.

¹⁹ for people who need help to stay in their home, or move back into housing, after living in supported or unsettled accommodation (such as leaving care or being homeless). Can help with furniture, bedding, white goods, kitchen equipment, removal costs.

dynamic of claimants has changed year on year from large family households to more single people meaning the average spend has reduced.

- 359 The Poverty Action Steering Group (PASG) received £1 million from the Shared Prosperity Fund. The money is being used during this current financial year (1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025) on projects that reduce food poverty, provide cost-of-living advice and guidance, and deliver fun and food with half term activities. To date, we have:
- Rolled out a cost-of-living and debt advice service in April 2024. It is being delivered by four partners in the community²⁰. To date, 212 residents have been given advice that has led to more than £20,000 of confirmed income gains in increased benefit entitlement.
 - Opened two new food surplus hubs (The Bread and Butter Thing). In Newton Aycliffe and Gilesgate, where 160 more residents can now access low cost weekly food. We are working to identify three more hub locations to be opened by 31 March 2025.
 - Helped fund the 2024/25 Welcome Spaces²¹ programme. Thirty two grant applications have been successful so far (totalling £83,485). These are a mix of new and former applicants. Further details will be provided next quarter.
- 360 The PASG has worked with the Child Poverty Group to auto-enrol school age children onto Free School Meals (FSMs). We used a range of data to identify low income households with school age children who were not receiving FSMs. We contacted those households to give them the option to opt-out of the process, then carried out eligibility checks on those remaining. We identified 2,254 children eligible for FSMs. This could increase the number of children receiving FSMs by almost 10%.
- 361 Most children were auto-enrolled directly with their school. If we couldn't identify the child's school, we provided enrolment letters to their families to pass onto the school. Auto-enrolment potentially saves parents around £450 per child per year. It also has a positive impact on the pupil premium available to schools, with an increase in funding of circa £3 million available to schools across the county following the latest census data submission. In addition, schools will also be eligible for additional income through the mainstream funding formula. This is estimated to be at least £2 million.

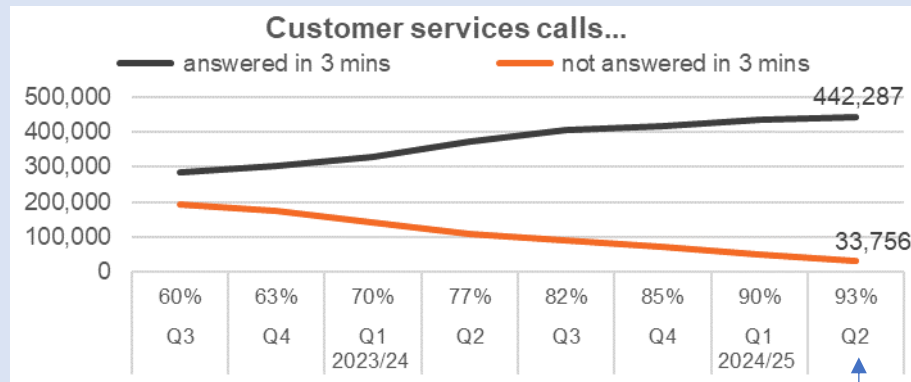
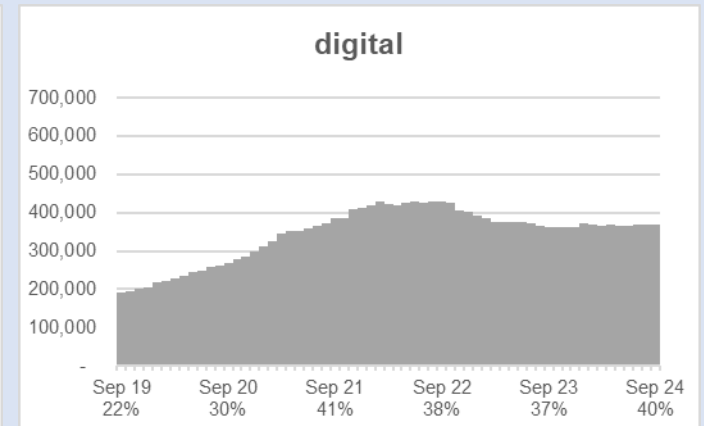
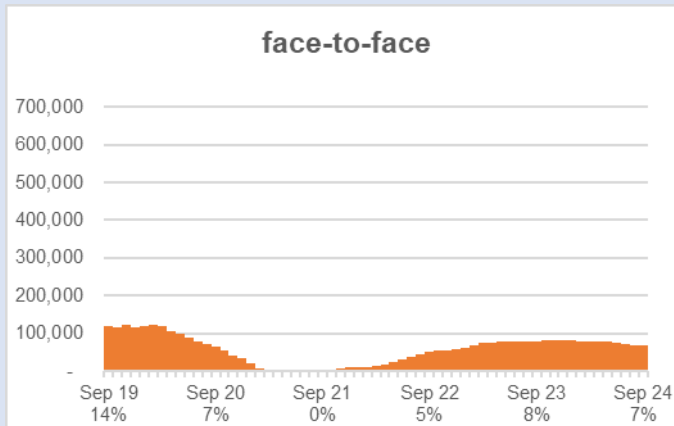
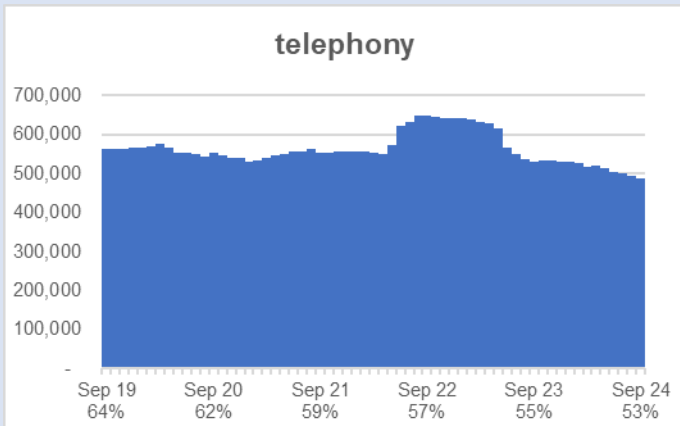
²⁰ Citizens Advice County Durham, Age UK County Durham, Durham Christian Partnership and East Durham Trust.

²¹ Welcome Spaces are places people can go to stay warm, find company, and receive support for issues around money, housing, and mental health and wellbeing.

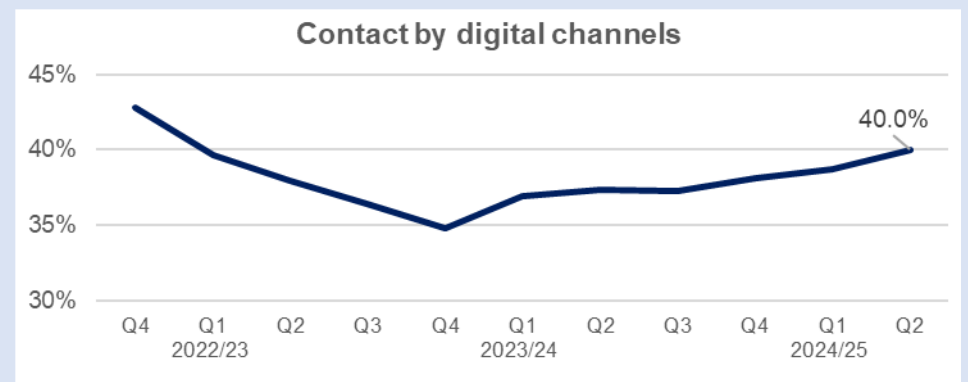
Customer Contact Dashboard

(12 months ending 30 September 2024)

Long-term trends in contact by channel type



93% of calls answered by customer services were answered within 3 minutes, significant improvement on last year

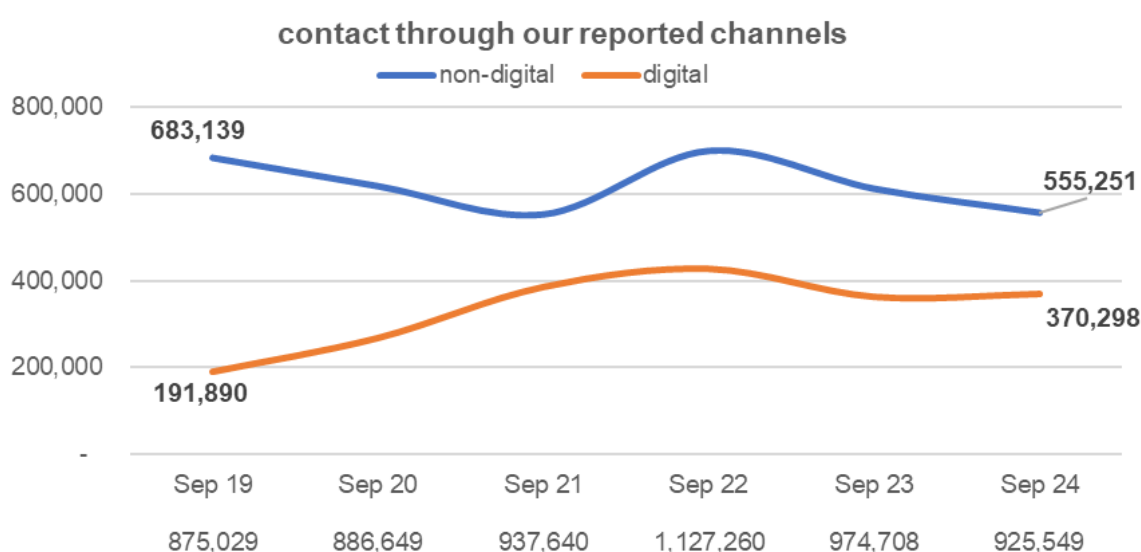


Customer Contact through our reported channels²²

362 Customer contact through our reported channels is around 6% higher than five years ago (50,520 more contacts). However, the way customers contact us is changing.

363 Non-digital contact is reducing. It is now at its lowest level for five years. The 12-month call telephone volume is 14% lower (76,500 fewer contacts) – although the telephone remains the most frequent way of contacting us. Face-to-face contact through our Customer Access Points (CAPs) is 43% lower (51,000 fewer contacts).

364 Digital contact is increasing. It is almost twice the level recorded five years ago (178,000 more contacts). Although it appears that digital contact has declined in recent years, most of the data periods are not comparable. This is due to a number of one-off initiatives put in place to help people, firstly through the pandemic and then through the cost-of-living crisis. The service requests created to administer these initiatives were time-limited and generated high volumes, but are now redundant.



365 Over the last 12 months (October 2023 to September 2024), 60% of contact was received non-digitally. However, five years ago, we received 78% of our contact non-digitally.

	Sep-19	Sep-20	Sep-21	Sep-22	Sep-23	Sep-24
Non-digital contact	78%	70%	59%	62%	63%	60%
Digital contact	22%	30%	41%	38%	37%	40%

366 If we look at non-digital contact in more detail, we can see that both elements of non-digital contact have decreased over time.

	Sep-19	Sep-20	Sep-21	Sep-22	Sep-23	Sep-24
Telephone	64%	63%	59%	57%	55%	53%
Face-to-face	14%	7%	0%	5%	8%	7%

367 To reflect falling demand in face-to-face contact, and following public consultation, we will change the way we deliver services in our Customer Access Points (CAPs) from October

²² telephone calls (customer services only), do-it-online, e-mail, webchat, social media, Customer Access Points

2025. We will move to weekly surgeries at all existing locations, and to improve coverage across the county and reach more customers, we will open two new surgeries at Newton Aycliffe and Peterlee. This change reflects the change in contact channel preference, preserves channel choice for our customers and ensures our provision remains cost effective.

368 It is worth noting that we currently report all contact through our CAPs. This includes checking in visitors and meeting attendees. From January 2025, we will have a new process in place which will filter this contact from the overall total. We are unable to adjust past data so we expect to see a fall in face-to-face contact reported from January.

Telephone calls answered by customer services within three minutes.

369 Although there was slight decrease in calls answered during the 12 months ending September 2024 compared to the same period the previous year, significantly more calls were answered within three minutes,

	12 months ending September 2023	12 months ending September 2024	Change	
Calls Answered	481,213	476,043	-5,170	-1%
Calls Answered in 3 minutes	370,746	422,287	+51,541	+14%
	77%	93%		

370 This is mainly due to gaining additional resource for telephony when the opening hours of four of our least used CAPs were changed in October 2023.

371 During quarter two (July to September), our performance improved further and we answered 111,000 telephone calls, 96% within three minutes. Performance varies across our telephone lines – the following table shows the performance of our four most frequently used telephone lines, which collectively received 92% of calls:

Telephone line	calls answered	% answered within 3 minutes
Enquiries	52,607	95%
Council Tax	32,502	96%
Benefits	8,510	95%
Housing Service	8,337	100%

372 All customer services telephone lines are performing significantly better than our performance standard of 80%.

Performance Standards

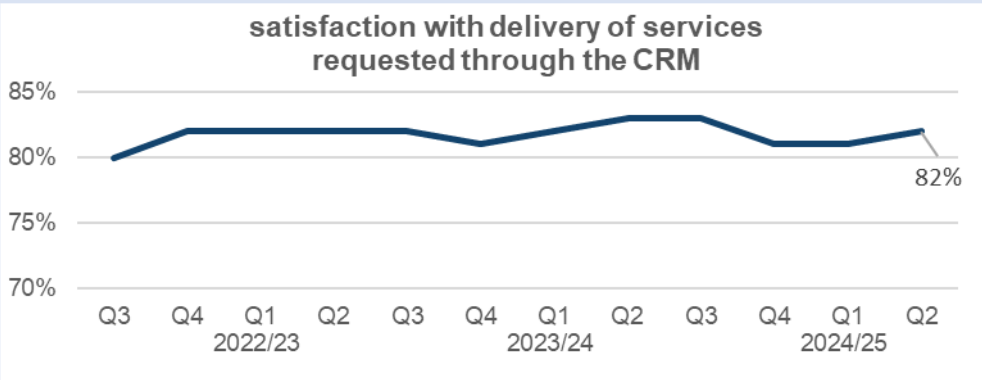
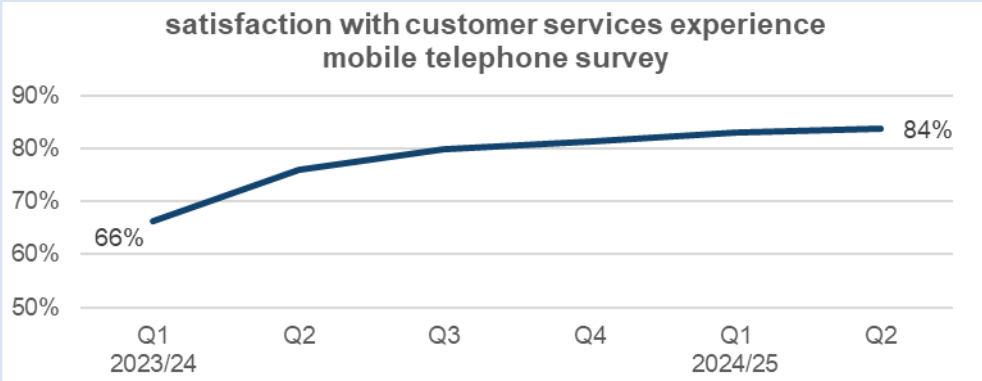
373 Of all the service requests received during quarter two (July to September), 57% can be assessed against a performance standard. Of these, 75% met (or exceeded) their performance standard.

374 Performance standards are in place across 77 distinct service areas. Twenty two (29%) received half of the service requests. Of these, the performance standard was met or exceeded in at least 80% of cases. These service areas included: request help with your bin (100%); waste permits (96%); public rights of way and countryside paths (93%); drainage and flooding (85%) and street lighting (83%).

375 However, 28 service areas met the performance standard for fewer than 50% of requests. These accounted for around 17% of all the requests we received. These service areas included: rubbish in gardens and yards (48%), tree or hedge pruning, removal (44%); bins – waste collections for businesses (44%) manhole and utility covers (44%) and roadworks (35%).

Customer Satisfaction Dashboard

(12 months ending 30 September 2024, mobile telephone (quarterly))



Customer Satisfaction

376 We use customer satisfaction surveys to collect feedback from our customers. During the 12 months ending September 2024,

Respondents who...	Number of respondents	Satisfied with overall customer experience
...contacted our customer services team by mobile phone	42,000	84%
...replied to our CRM satisfaction survey ²³	16,000	82%

377 The most frequent reasons given by our customers for dissatisfaction, regardless of the service requested, remain consistent with previous reports. This included not being able to find somebody who could help them or give an answer to their query, promised call backs that weren't received, jobs that hadn't been completed, or the standard of our work. Many respondents felt it would be helpful to be able to contact someone in the required service team directly. Some customers were frustrated to be transferred to the wrong team or be cut off.

378 The CRM satisfaction survey also asks those customers who contacted us using a non-digital channel to tell us why they did not use a digital channel. During the latest 12 months, 5,230 customers who contacted us using a non-digital channel answered this question. Of these, 91% contacted us using the telephone.

379 The reason most frequently given was 'I prefer to use a different method'. Preferring a non-digital channel can be due to various reasons. This includes familiarity with the method or having a disability which makes contacting us digitally difficult.

380 The second reason most frequently given was 'I thought it would be easier or quicker using another method'. Customers often choose the telephone if their request is more complex and they want to discuss it in more detail and/or seek clarification or further advice before proceeding.

²³ automatically e-mailed to the customer when their service request is closed within the CRM.

Customer Feedback Dashboard

(July to September 2024)

Compliments received from our customers

Thank you for the support with the blue badge application for my mum last week. She found out today that it has been approved. Being able to do the application in person made all the difference. Thank you.

Refuse and recycling team found her bank card and managed to get it back to her via a neighbour and customer would just like to thank the crew as she didn't even know she had lost it. So big thank you for being so kind and getting the card returned to her.

Lovely experience with crew who emptied her bins after she's had some problems with it not being emptied. They were 'lovely', there was 'no huffing or puffing' and they were 'happy and nice' going 'above and beyond' and noticed they acted like there wasn't a problem at all and happy to be at work.

Thank you so much for helping me get my head around it all. Please let your boss or whoever know that I am happy with your service you have provided. Have a lovely day and once again thank you.

Thank you to the garden waste refuse collectors this morning as she forgot to pull her bin out this morning and crew have come into her garden and emptied it and then put it back for her also, is not on assisted collections.

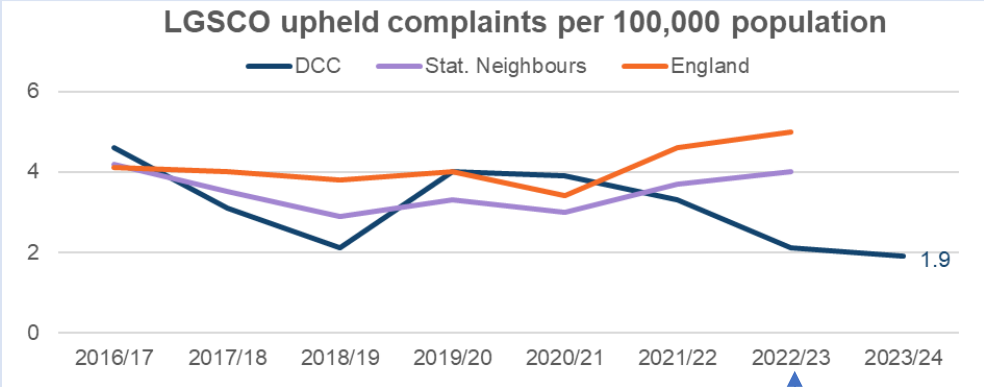
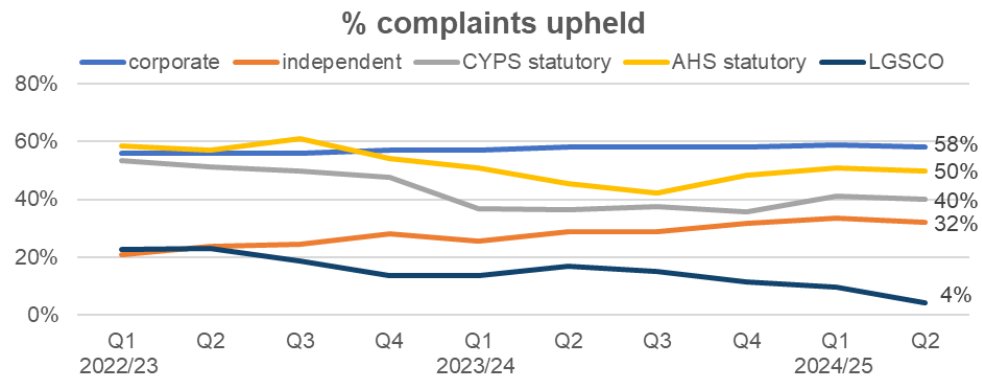
Customer would like to thank crews for outstanding work. Customer noted crew were polite, area is always clear of waste following collections and that crews do excellent work. Customer asked that crew is thanked for service.

Compliment for how service request was handled. Went to Annfield Plain depot this morning to report a spill near his house. He called us to thank staff for handling the request so quickly.

Excellent & polite service from the two guys who collected my waste today - Huge thanks :)

Customer Complaints Dashboard

(12 months ending 30 September 2024)



Performance is better than latest benchmarks for 2022/23 for both England (5.0) and statistical neighbours (4.0)

Customer Complaints

- 381 In the 12 months to September 2024, we received 172 fewer complaints compared to the same period last year (down 7%). Of the complaints investigated, 58% were upheld.
- 382 The decrease in complaints is mainly due to receiving fewer complaints about missed collections - although missed collections remains the most frequent reason for complaint (with some customers disputing our claim the bin was contaminated). We collect around 1 million bins each month.
- 383 More than half of the complaints related to four service areas:

Service Area	Complaints received	% upheld (partially or fully)	Overview
Refuse and Recycling	786 33% of total	82%	Main reasons for complaint: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missed collections - mainly household bins (more than a third). • Bin being incorrectly logged as contaminated (10%) • Issues with the container such as crew not returning container, container not delivered or container damaged by crew (8%).
Clean and Green	243 10% of total	60%	Around two-thirds related to issues with hedges (mainly lack of response but also over-pruning) and grass cutting (mainly lack of response and staff leaving a mess).
Garden Waste	148 6% of total	82%	Over half complaints related to missed collections
Highway Maintenance	141 6% of total	71%	Main reasons for complaint: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance work / road closures (33%) • Drainage work (11%) • Traffic calming measures (9%) • Right of way (9%)

Statutory Complaints – Children and Young People Services

- 384 We received 105 statutory complaints in the 12 months ending September 2024. Of the complaints investigated, 40% were partially or fully upheld. A further 3% remain under investigation and pending outcome.
- 385 Sixty-eight complaints (65%) related to our Families First and Children with Disabilities and Pre-Birth teams. These teams are responsible for children in need, child protection plans, assessments in cases of parental dispute.
- 386 Forty complaints (38%) related to our teams involved with children in care. This includes children's homes, fostering and care leavers and adoption.
- 387 Statutory complaints for children and young people services are complex. Up to three reasons can be recorded for each complaint. Of the 105 complaints, the most frequent reasons for complaints were staff behaviour, communication issues, and disagreement.

Statutory Complaints – Adult and Health Services

388 We received 112 statutory complaints in the 12 months ending September 2024. Of the complaints investigated, 50% were partially or fully upheld. A further five complaints remain under investigation and pending outcome.

389 Forty eight complaints related to older people/physical disabilities/sensory impairment (43%), 23 to learning disabilities/mental health/substance misuse (21%), and 18 to transactional services which deals with financial assessments/charging (16%).

390 During quarter two, in response to complaints received, we:

- reiterated care provider responsibilities in relation to the accurate recording, storage and retention of documents and information.
- Reminded Care Coordinators that meeting minutes should be issued within 10 working days,
- Took steps to improve and simplify charging processes linked to respite provision.

Complaints progressing to Independent Investigation

391 Over the last 12 months (October 2023 to September 2024), around 8% of corporate complaints progressed to independent investigation. This equates to 184 complaints, 26 more than last year.

392 Over the same period, the proportion we upheld increased from 29% to 32%. Mainly due to the time taken to respond, lack of action and not keeping the customer informed of progress.

393 We upheld, fully or partially, 13 of 41 independent investigations completed between July and September (32%).

Complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

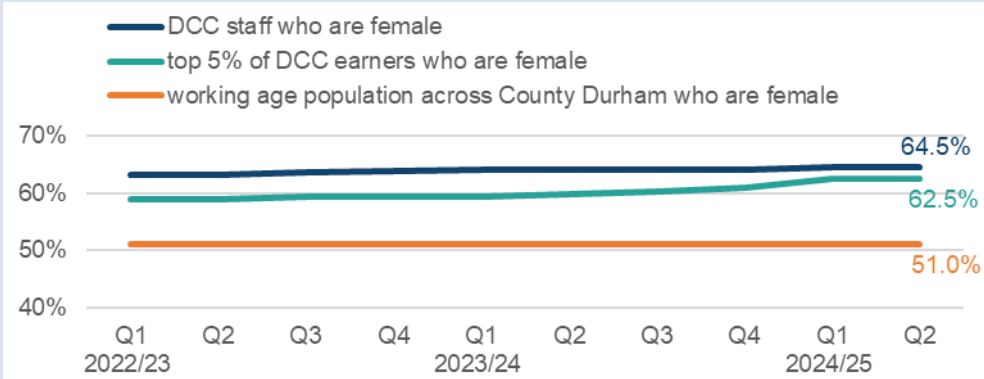
394 During the latest 12 months, around 3% of our complaints reached the Ombudsman. This is consistent with previous years.

395 Between July and September, the Ombudsman made decisions on 19 complaints. None of these complaints were upheld.

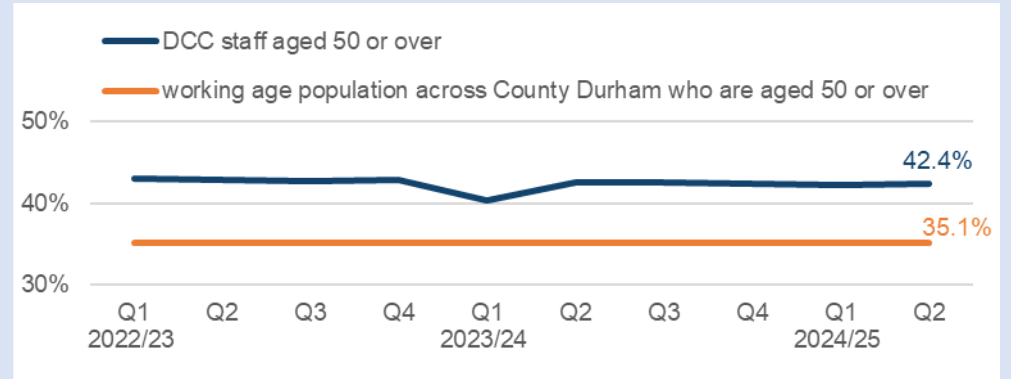
Workforce Equality Profile Dashboard

(quarterly data)

Women in the workplace



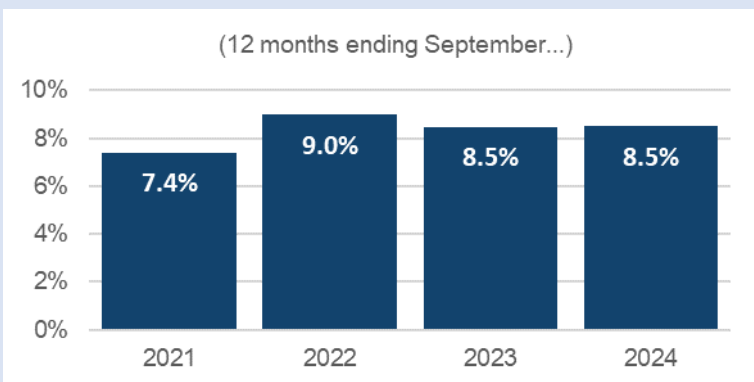
Workforce aged 50 years and over



Recruitment and Retention Dashboard

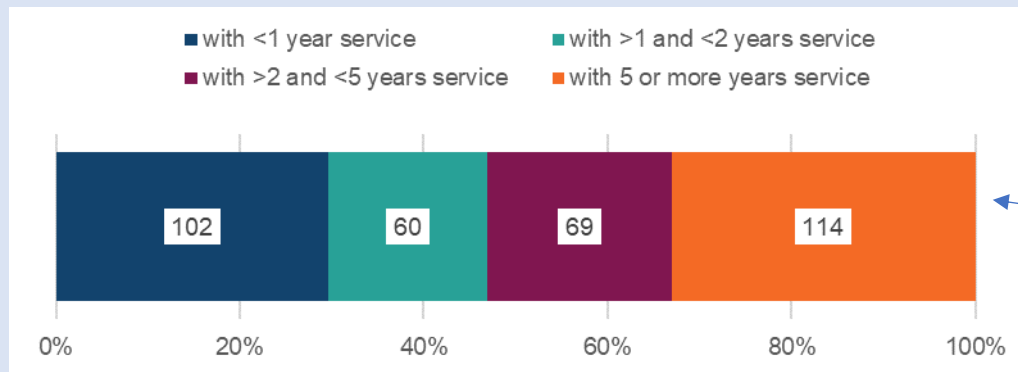
(year to date, except employee turnover which is at 30 September 2024)

Employee Turnover



Leavers who have voluntarily resigned by length of service

(October 2023 to September 2024)



47% of leavers had less than two years' service.

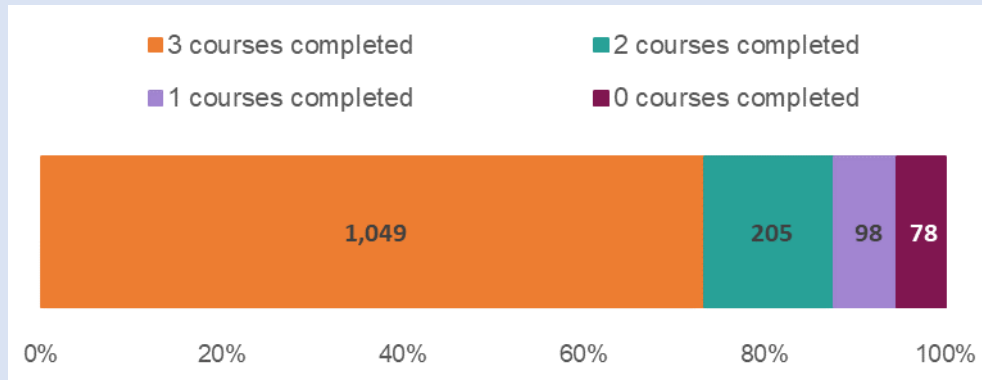
Recruitment and Retention

- 396 Recruiting and retaining staff to specific posts remains challenging. This is a national issue with all public sector organisations experiencing the same issues. In quarter two (July to September), 21% of adverts for our job vacancies are classed as re-adverts.
- 397 The following areas are the most challenging for the council:
- **Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children.** 40% were re-adverts. Three-quarters defined as 'hard to fill' related to Educational Psychologists and Residential Workers.
 - **Children's social care.** 31% were re-adverts, mainly due to a lack of suitable applicants. These roles continue to face national shortages. We are continuing to work with the service to develop innovative solutions that attract more candidates.
 - **Adult social care.** High vacancy levels are in line with other areas of the country – challenges arising from perceived lower pay within the sector, high workload, and limited flexibility in job roles. We are also experiencing shortages across several specialist roles. We are developing career pathways, apprenticeship programmes, and the Think Ahead programme to support routes into adult social work.
 - **School Crossing Patrols (SCP).** These remain difficult to fill due to their part-time nature (between five and seven hours a week), being unable to work multiple SCP roles (all posts have the same working hours) and a small candidate market (usually within the locality of the school). We are continuing to explore initiatives across this area, including promoting through additional media outlets to target passive candidates and reach a wider audience.
- 398 We recently improved our pre-employment processes. This has reduced the average time between issuing a conditional offer and candidate payroll processing from 42 days to 25 days (between June and August, and compared to the same period last year). It has also reduced the number of 'long-standing' candidates (caused by delays in pre-employment checks) from 27 (May) to 5 (August).
- 399 We launched our Jobs and Careers Instagram page in September 2024.

Workforce Development Dashboard

(as at 30 September 2024)

Mandatory manager development programme (Three courses) (1,432 managers)

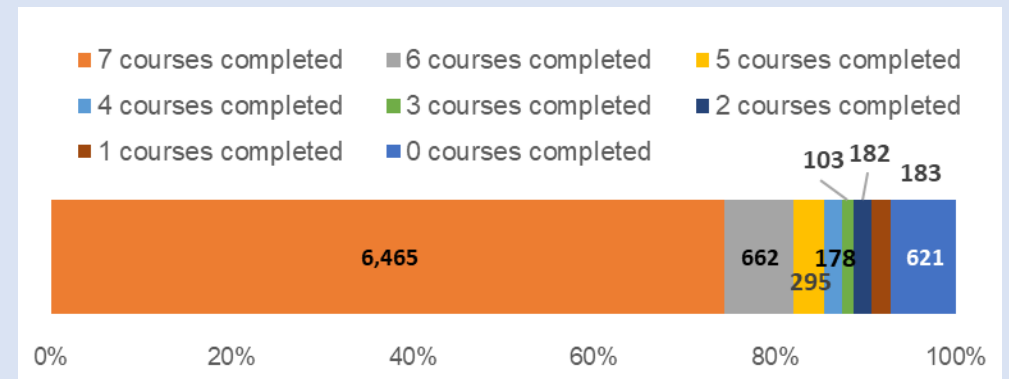


Completion Rate

Course	Last quarter	latest quarter
Employees (leaders and managers)	1,430	1,432
Attendance Management	94%	94%
Recognising and managing stress	83%	84%
Mental health awareness*	78%	78%

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

Mandatory e-learning programme (seven courses) (8,689 employees)



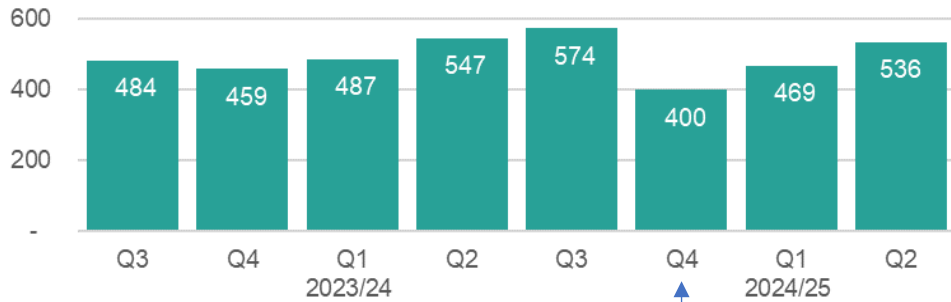
Completion Rate

Course	Last quarter	latest quarter
Employees	8,862	8,689
Information Security	87%	88%
Code of our values, behaviours and conduct	88%	88%
Introduction to GDPR	87%	88%
Harassment and Victimisation	87%	87%
Diversity, equality and discrimination	86%	87%
Climate Change	85%	86%
Action Counter Terrorism: ACT	76%	78%

Workforce Development Dashboard

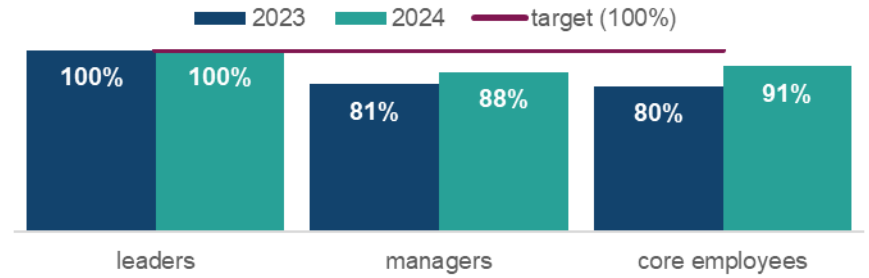
(as at 30 September 2024)

Employees enrolled in the apprenticeship programme



Numbers decreased due to completions and withdrawals, along with a lower intake from the annual recruitment campaign.

Performance Development Review - completed to deadline



Performance Development Reviews (PDRs)

- 400 Our PDR process is an integral part of manager-employee engagement alongside one-to-ones, supervisions, and team meetings.
- 401 All 116 leaders and 88% of managers (1,023 of 1,200) completed the current cycle within deadline.
- 402 To date, 5,436 of our 6,214 core employees have completed the PDR cycle.

Mandatory e-learning programme

- 403 Some of our employees have yet to fully complete the mandatory e-learning programme. For some, this is because they are new to the organisation and are still within their induction period²⁴. But most are non-digital staff.
- 404 Non-digital staff are employees who do not have access to the council's computer network as part of their role. They are mainly employed in our frontline delivery teams such as refuse and recycling, clean and green, highway maintenance, leisure services. Non-digital employees make up about 15% of the workforce.
- 405 Delivering e-learning to this group is challenging. Training needs to be face-to-face, scheduled into shift patterns or arranged outside of working hours. Therefore, the proportion of non-digital staff completing the mandatory e-learning programme tends to be lower than our digital employees.

Course	Digital employees		Non-Digital employees	
	Last quarter	Latest quarter	Last quarter	Latest quarter
Introduction to GDPR	93%	94%	51%	51%
Information Security	95%	96%	46%	47%
Harassment and Victimisation	93%	94%	46%	47%
Diversity, Equality & Discrimination	94%	95%	44%	45%
Code of our values, behaviours & conduct	94%	95%	47%	48%
Climate change	92%	93%	46%	47%
Action Counters Terrorism (ACT)	83%	85%	37%	38%

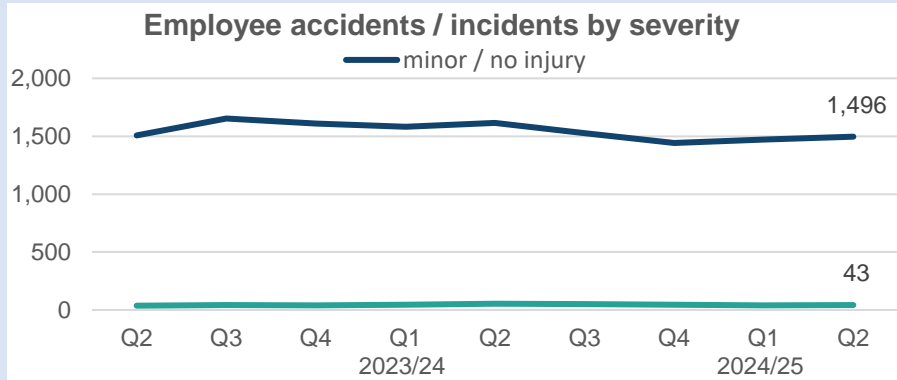
Apprenticeships

- 406 As at 30 September, 4.8% of our workforce (536 employees) was enrolled on an apprenticeship (both new and to upskilling).
- 407 The retention rate for new apprenticeships is 76%, compared to 74% last year.
- 408 Since September 2023, no levy funds have expired. This is due to a combination of using more of the levy funds, fewer schools contributing to the levy fund (due to academisation) and transferring levy funds to local businesses. The apprenticeship levy transfer pledge is therefore paused to new applications and no new transfers have been made in this financial year to date.

²⁴ New employees have three months from their start date to complete any mandatory training.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing of our employees Dashboard

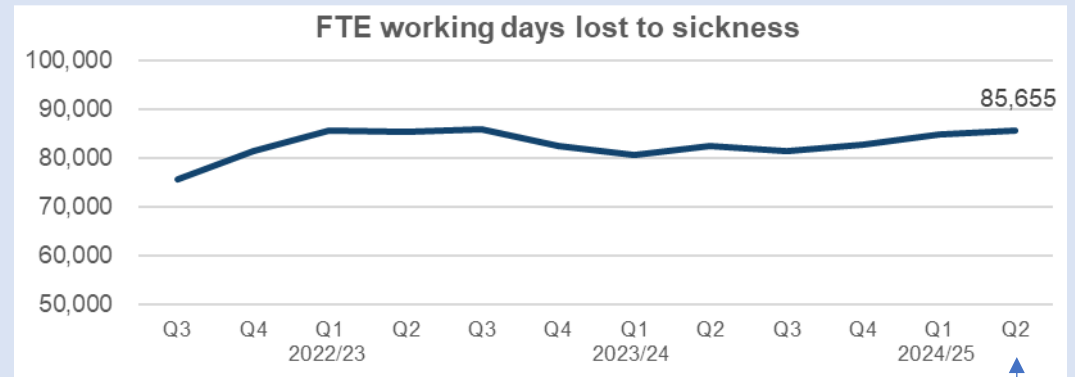
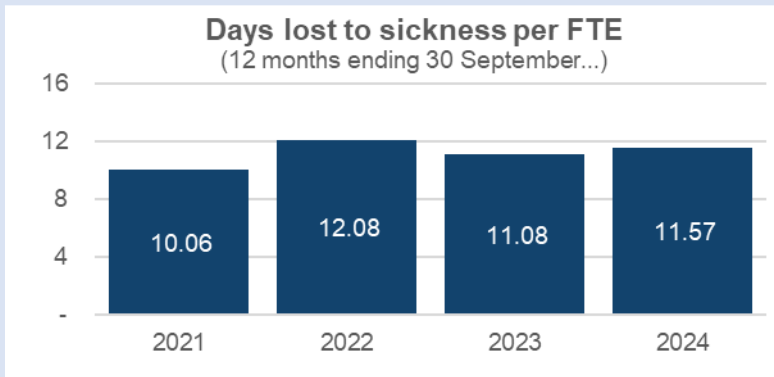
(as at 30 September 2024)



- 378 accidents / incidents / near misses between July and September
- Eight of these were RIDDOR specified injuries, and four were absences of more than seven days.

Sickness Absence (days lost) Dashboard

(12 month trend ending 30 September 2024)

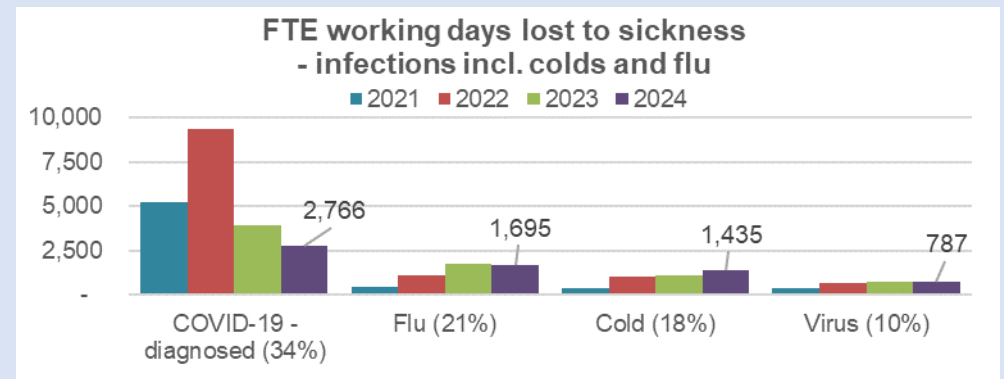
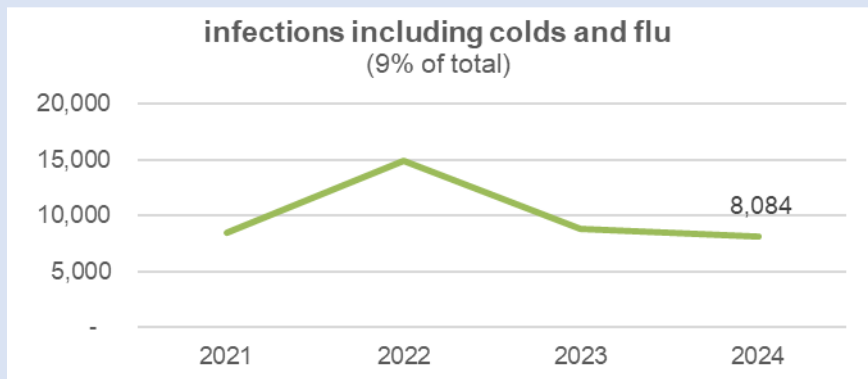
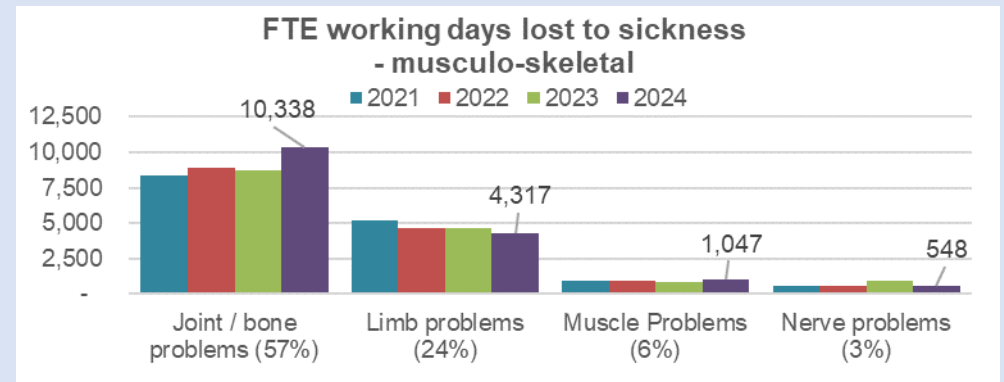
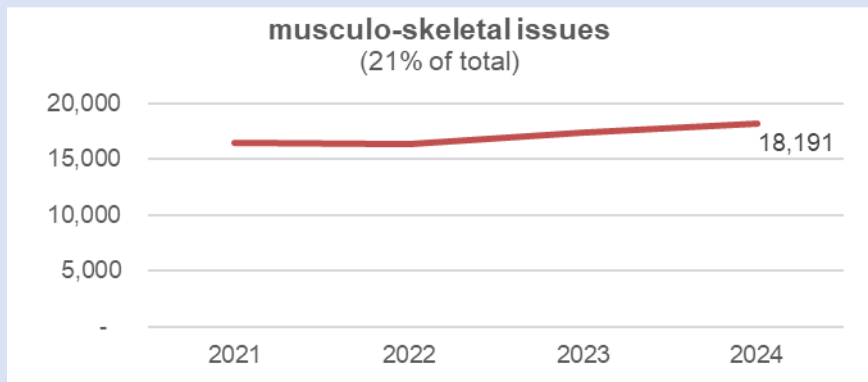
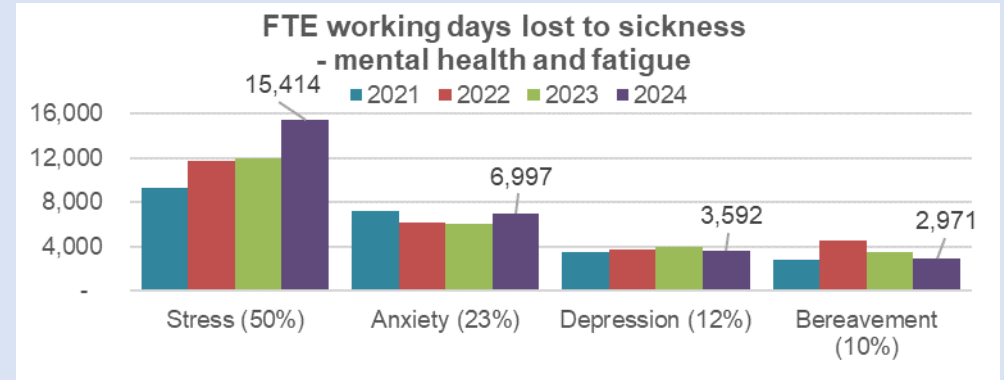
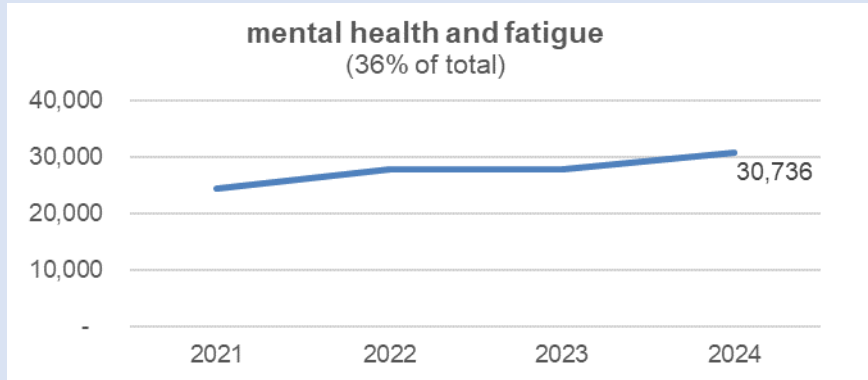


More than 3,000 extra working days lost to sickness compared to last year

Sickness Absence (main reasons) Dashboard

(12 month trend ending 30 September 2024)

Main reasons for sickness absence (three categories make up 66% of all absence)



Employee accidents and incidents

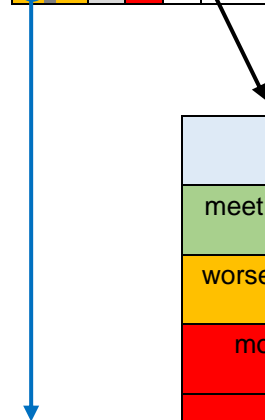
- 409 During quarter two (July to September 2024), there were 378 accidents / incidents / near misses, compared to 383 in the previous quarter. Eight were RIDDOR specified injuries, and four were absences of more than seven days.
- 410 There were also five fire related incidents involving council premises and vehicles. Emergency procedures were used appropriately resulting in no injuries or significant property damage.

Sickness Absence

- 411 We are continuing to focus on improving attendance and robustly and consistently managing absence. An average of 11.57 days per FTE were lost due to sickness in the latest 12 months ending 30 September 2024. This is 0.49 days higher than the same period last year – equating to around 3,000 more days lost.
- 412 Two thirds of sickness was recorded as ‘mental health and fatigue’, ‘musculo-skeletal’ or ‘infections (including colds and flus)’. This is consistent with previous reports.
- 413 Staff groups recording the highest sickness by number of FTE days were ‘residential workers’ and ‘social workers.’ Each contributed almost 6% to the total – with around 5,000 FTE days lost over the 12 month period. ‘Mental health and fatigue’ was the most frequent cause of sickness, accounting for 58% of days lost across residential workers and 46% of days lost across social workers.
- 414 ‘Mental Health and Fatigue’ is the most frequently reported sickness category – making up 36% of all sick days. Most absence (94%) is stress, anxiety, depression or bereavement related sickness. And is most prevalent in our frontline staff, such as social care, residential workers, home care and support workers, family support workers and waste and recycling operatives,
- 415 Musculo-skeletal sickness makes up 21% of all sick days. The vast majority (89%) is due to joint/bone problems, muscle problems, nerve problems and injuries to limbs. This is more prevalent in our frontline teams with a high proportion of manual work, such as residential workers, waste and recycling operatives, home care and support workers and telecare responders.
- 416 Infections (including colds and flu) make up 9% of all sick days. Mostly (83%) Covid-19, flu, cold or a virus infection. Covid-19 is more prevalent in our frontline teams of home care and support workers, social workers and care support.
- 417 We closely monitor all absence over six months. We currently have 27 long term sickness absence cases ongoing.
- 418 Almost sixty percent of our employees recorded no sickness between October 2023 and September 2024.

Data Tables

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



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 AND the gap with England (G) is improving
worse than but within 2% of target	Direction of Travel (D) is worse than the previous year OR the gap with England (G) is deteriorating
more than 2% behind target	Direction of Travel (D) is worse than the previous year AND the gap with England (G) is deteriorating

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

Our Economy: summary data tables

Economic Growth KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Major planning applications determined within 13 weeks	Jul-Sep 24	92.3%	90%	76.2%	Apr-June 24	86.7%	91.2%	95%	Yes
					Non-major planning applications determined in deadline	Jul-Sep 24	91%	90%	85%	Apr-June 24	88.6%	90%	91.8%	Yes
					Major planning applications overturned on appeal	Oct-Dec 22	0%	10%	0%	Jan-Mar 23	0%	1%	0%	No
					Non-major planning applications overturned on appeal	Oct-Dec 22	0.2%	10%	0.2%	Jan-Mar 23	0.3%	1.1%	0.5%	No
					Inward investments secured	Jul-Sep 24	2	2	3					Yes
					Investment secured for companies	Jul-Sep 24	£1,434,257	£1.25 million	£2,639,595					Yes
					Occupancy of Business Durham floor space	Jul-Sep 24	89.4%	95%	90.2%					Yes
					Private sector employments per 10,000 population	2023	2,820	Tracker	2,772	2023	2,820	4,059	3,216	Yes
					Private sector businesses per 10,000 population	2024	270	Tracker	272	2024	270	409	265	Yes
					GVA per filled job	2022	£51,361	Tracker	£50,154	2022	£51,361	£62,751	£51,395	No
					Employment land approved and delivered	2023/24	21.2Ha	28.46Ha	13.32Ha					Yes

Business Support KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Businesses engaged by Business Durham	Jul-Sep 24	332	250	281					Yes
					Businesses supported by regeneration projects	Jul-Sep 24	15	Tracker	not comparable					Yes
					New businesses supported by CED Team	Jul-Sep 24	99	Tracker	not comparable					Yes

Employability and Skills KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Jobs created or safeguarded due to Business Durham activity	Jul-Sep 24	139	375	384					Yes

					Jobs created or safeguarded through regeneration schemes	Jul-Sep 24	71.5	Tracker	not comparable						Yes
					Registrations to employability programmes	Jul-Sep 24	102	117	N/A						Yes
					Number of participants receiving support to help gain employment	Jul-Sep 24	43	45	N/A						Yes
					Number of employed participants receiving support to sustain employment	Jul-Sep 24	32	27	N/A						Yes
					Employment rate for 16-64 year olds <i>Confidence intervals +/-4.1pp</i>	Jul 23-Jun 24	72.4%	Tracker	71.8%	Jul 23-Jun 24	72.4%	75.7%	71.1%		Yes
					Disability employment rate <i>Confidence intervals +/-7.9pp</i>	Jul 23-Jun 24	46.3%	Tracker	44.5%	Jul 23-Jun 24	46.3%	56.9%	46.7%		Yes
					Residents with higher level skills <i>Confidence intervals +/-4.4pp</i>	2023	60.9%	Tracker	59.1%	2023	60.9%	67.4%	62.8%		No
					16-17-year-olds in an apprenticeship	Apr-Jun 23	7.3%	Tracker	8.5%	Apr-Jun 23	7.3%	4.8%	7%		No

Cultural Offer KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					People attending cultural events ran and commissioned by CS&T	Jul-Sep 24	56,901	Tracker	52,000					Yes
					People attending council owned cultural venues (Town Halls and The Story)	Jul-Sep 24	71,438	49,160	Not comparable					Yes
					Average % occupancy of cinema screenings (Gala, Empire & BATH)	Jul-Sep 24	18%	28%	24%					Yes
					Average % yield of cinema screenings (BATH, Gala & Empire)	Jul-Sep 24	62%	100%	75%					Yes
					Average % yield of theatre performances (BATH, Gala & Empire)	Jul-Sep 24	86%	100%	81%					Yes
					Average % occupancy of theatre performances (Gala, Empire & BATH)	Jul-Sep 24	67%	64%	59%					Yes
					Council owned/managed heritage assets classed as 'at risk'	2023	3	Tracker	3					No
					Heritage assets 'at risk' categorised as 'Priority A' and/or in 'very bad condition'	2023	7	Tracker	6					No
					Active borrowers (libraries)	Jul-Sep 24	47,231	46,222	45,519					Yes
					Digital borrowers (libraries)	Jul-Sep 24	4,874	4,487	4,172					Yes

Visitor Economy KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Visitors to the county	2023	20.15m	21.49m	17.91m					No
					Money generated by visitor economy	2023	£1.23bn	£1.25bn	£1.04bn					No
					Jobs supported by the visitor economy	2023	13,178	14,069	11,274					No
					Visitor attractions served by public transport	2023	67%	Tracker	67%					No
					Tourism businesses actively engaged with Visit County Durham	2023	55%	Tracker	27.8%					No

Education KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					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
					Children meeting expected standards in maths and reading at KS2	2024	59%	Tracker	65%	2024	59%	60%	61%	No
					Average grade of achievement within GCSE English and Maths to a Grade 5	2021/22	4.69	5 by 2030	new					No
					Disadvantaged cohorts meeting basic threshold measures in English & Maths	new			new					No
					Young people in education, employment and training	Jun-24	93.6%	above N / NE	93.8%	Jun-24	93.6%	94.7%	93.7%	No

Our Environment: summary data tables

Waste KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Household waste re-used, recycled or composted	Jul 23-Jun 24	37%	Tracker	36.7%	Apr 22-Mar 23	37.1%	41.7%	31.2%	Yes
					Waste diverted from landfill	Jul 23-Jun 24	94.7%	90%	91.4%	Apr 22-Mar 23	90.4%	92.7%	88.5%	Yes
					Residual household waste (kg per household)	2023/24	574	Tracker	565	Apr 22-Mar 23	565	509	596	No

					Contamination rate	Jul 23- Jun 24	32.4%	Tracker	34.6%					Yes
					Contamination rate (all h'hold waste)	2022/23	9.5%	Tracker	10.1%	Apr 22- Mar 23	9.5%		8.4%	No

Sustainable Transport and Active Travel KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Cycling and walking levels – Any purpose <i>(confidence intervals +/-6pp)</i>	2023	64.1%	Tracker	65.6%	2022	64.1%	70.9%	68.1%	Yes
					Satisfaction with cycle routes & facilities <i>(confidence intervals +/-4pp)</i>	2023	50%	Tracker	52%	2023	50%	50%		No
					Park and Ride passenger journeys	Jul-Sep 24	84,060	Tracker	80,527					Yes

Carbons Reduction and Air Quality KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					% reduction in County Durham carbon emissions from 1990 baseline	2022	57%	Tracker	55%					Yes
					% reduction in Council's carbon emissions from 2008/09 baseline	2023/24	64%	Tracker	63%					Yes
					NO ₂ levels within Durham City Air Quality Management Area that are above the govt threshold of 40µg/m ³	2022	13%	0%	35%					No
					Trees planted	2023/24	74,023	65,977	53,000					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
					Early help cases open	at Sep 24	1,186	Tracker	1,210					Yes
					Children's social care referrals per 10,000 population	at Sep 24	496	Tracker	449	2023/24	469	518	599	No
					Children's social care re-referrals	at Sep 24	12%	Tracker	17%	2023/24	17%	22%	22%	No
					Children's social care assessments completed within 45 days	at Sep 24	86%	Tracker	80%	2023/24	82%	85%	82%	No

				Children in need per 10,000 population	at Sep 24	364	Tracker	342	2023/24	412	333	467	No
				Children on a child protection plan per 10,000 population	at Sep 24	47	Tracker	56	2023/24	50	42	66	No
				Children looked after per 10,000 population	at Sep 24	119	Tracker	117	2022/23	107	71	113	No
				Care leavers aged 16-24	at Sep 24	361	Tracker	295					No
				Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children as a percentage of all CiC	at Sep 24	6%	Tracker	6%	2022/23	5%	9%	4%	No
				Social worker vacancies	at Aug 24	13%	Tracker	14%	at Sep 23	14%	18.9%	10.9%	Yes
				Children in care in a family setting	at Sep 24	81%	Tracker	82%	at Mar 23	82%	77%	81%	Yes
				Families on our Stronger Families Programme attaining significant and sustained outcomes	2024/25	753	1,522	983					Yes

Education KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Children in the EYFS 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	2024/25	88.2%	Tracker	84.5%	2024/25	88.2%	89.9%	89.4%	Yes
					Pupils attending a primary school judged 'good or better' by Ofsted	2024/25	94.7%	Tracker	94.3%	2024/25	94.7%	93%	95.5%	Yes
					Pupils attending a secondary school judged 'good or better' by Ofsted	2024/25	79%	Tracker	70%	2024/25	79%	85.9%	81.3%	Yes
					Children - electively home educated	Jan-Apr 24	1,088	Tracker	699					No
					Children eligible for free school meals	2023/24	31.5%	Tracker	30.6%	2023/24	31.5%	24.6%	31.2%	Yes
					Take-up on free school meals	2023.24	24%	Tracker	20.6%	2023/24	24%	19.3%	24.1%	Yes

SEND KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Children & young people with an EHCP	2024	5,223	Tracker	4,538					Yes
					New requests for EHCPs	2023	986	Tracker	974					No
					EHCPs completed within 20 weeks	2023	2%	Tracker	27%	2023	0%	48%	56%	No
					Pupils on SEN support	2023/24	11,730	Tracker	11,174					Yes

Adult Social Care KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Referrals into adult social care	Jul-Sep 24	5,859	Tracker	6,029					Yes
					Care Act assessments completed	Jul-Sep 24	617	Tracker	748					Yes
					Service users receiving an assessment or review within the last 12 months ²⁵	Jul-Sep 24	76.9%	Tracker	64.6%					Yes
					Satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support <i>Confidence intervals +/-4.4pp</i>	2023/24	67.9%	Tracker	66.8%	2023/24	67.9%	65.4%	66.0%	Yes
					Satisfaction of carers with the support and services they receive <i>Confidence intervals +/-5.1pp</i>	2023/24	49.6%	Tracker	40.8%	2023/24	49.6%	36.8%	44.9%	No
					Adults aged 65+ per 100,000 population admitted on a permanent basis to residential or nursing care	Oct 23-Sep 24	697.1	739.7	683.6	Apr 22-Mar 23	697.1 (latest)	560.8	762.8	Yes
					Service users receiving Direct Payments ²⁵	Jul-Sep 24	12.7%	Tracker	12.7%	2022/23	12.9%	26.2%	21.4%	Yes
					Service users receiving home care	Jul-Sep 24	3,119	Tracker	3,179					Yes
					Service users receiving Telecare care	Jul-Sep 24	2,118	Tracker	2,069					Yes
					Service users receiving day care	Jul-Sep 24	1,052	Tracker	995					Yes
					Residential adult social care providers rated good or outstanding by CQC	Jul-Sep 24	88.0%	Tracker	90.4%	Jul-Sep 24	88.0%	76.8%	85.0%	Yes
					Requests resulting in a service – adult social care	2023/24	753	Tracker	774	2023/24	753	1,777		Yes
					Workforce turnover rate – adult social care	2023/24	26.7%	Tracker	29.6%	2023/24	26.7%	24.8%	24.3%	Yes
					People in adult social care – quality of life	2022/23	0.393	Tracker	0.414	2022/23	0.393	0.411	0.415	No
					Carer quality of life – adult social care	2023/24	7.7	Tracker	8.2	2023/24	7.7	7.3	7.7	No
					Short term service provision – adult social care	2023/24	74.6%	Tracker	70.9%	2023/24	74.6%	79.4%	85.3%	Yes
					People using services who found it easy to find information – adult social care	2023/24	73.1%	Tracker	71.6%	2023/24	73.1%	67.9%	71.1%	Yes
					Carers who found it easy to find information about services	2023/24	72.0%	Tracker	67.8%	2023/24	72.0%	59.0%	67.9%	No

²⁵ Methodology for this indicator has changed from Q1 2024-25

Housing Vulnerable People KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Care Connect customers	Jul-Sep 24	10,764	Tracker	10,809					Yes
					Care Connect calls answered in 3 minutes	Jul-Sep 24	100%	99%	99.54%					Yes
					Care Connect calls arriving at the property within 45 minutes	Jul-Sep 24	98.00%	90%	97.86%					Yes
					Potential clients contacted within 3 weeks of initial referral for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	Jul-Sep 24	100%	90%	95%					Yes
					Households prevented from homelessness and helped to stay in their home	Jul-Sep 24	9%	Tracker	3.4%	Jan-Mar 24	5.1%	19%	6%	Yes
					Households prevented from homelessness and helped to move to alternative accommodation	Jul-Sep 24	22%	Tracker	16%	Jan-Mar 24	15.6%	32.3%	34.7%	Yes
					Households where homelessness has been relieved, and the client moved into alternative accommodation	Jul-Sep 24	27%	Tracker	32%	Jan-Mar 24	27%	30.3%	41.7%	Yes
					Households where there has been an acceptance of the main homeless duty	Jul-Sep 24	13%	Tracker	16%	Jan-Mar 24	13.80%	32.2%	9.7%	Yes
					Successful move-ons from Local Lettings Agency accommodation at the end of their licence agreement	2023/24	100%	90%	new					No
					Approvals on new housing sites of 10+ units, minimum of 66% of the total number of dwellings meet accessible and adaptable standards (building Regulations requirements M4(2)).	2023/24	58%	66%	71%					Yes
					Approvals on new housing sites of 10 units or more, a minimum of 10% of the total number of dwellings meet a design and type for older persons	2023/24	9%	10%	16%					Yes

Public Health KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Children aged 4-5 who are a healthy weight <i>Confidence intervals +/-1.2pp</i>	2023/24	72.7%	100%	73.2%	2023/24	72.7%	76.8%	74.5%	Yes
					Children aged 10-11 who are a healthy weight <i>Confidence intervals +/-1.2pp</i>	2023/24	60.9%	100%	59.1%	2023/24	60.9%	62.5%	60.1%	Yes
					Gap in breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks between County Durham and national average	2023/24	21.6pp	Tracker	19.0pp					Yes

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Mothers smoking at time of delivery	2023/24	12.0	0%	14.2%	2023/24	12.0%	7.4%	9.5%	No
					Smoking prevalence in adults (18+)	2023	11.7%	5.0%	15.4%	2023	11.7%	11.6%	11.0%	Yes
					People reporting a low happiness score <i>Confidence intervals +/-2.4pp</i>	2022/23	9.9%	Tracker	11.0%	2022/23	9.9%	8.9%	9.4%	No
					Suicide rate per 100,000 population	2021-23	16.4	Tracker	16.8	2021-23	16.4	10.7	13.8	Yes
					Healthy life expectancy at birth: female	2018-20	59.9 years	Tracker	58.3 years	2018-20	59.9 years	63.9	59.7	No
					Healthy life expectancy at 65: female	2018-20	10.2 years	Tracker	9.0 years	2018-20	10.2 years	11.3	9.8	No
					Gap in female healthy life expectancy at birth: County Durham and England	2018-20	4.0 years	Tracker	5.6 years					No
					Gap in female healthy life expectancy at 65: County Durham and England	2018-20	1.1 years	Tracker	2.3 years					No
					Healthy life expectancy at birth: male	2018-20	58.8 years	Tracker	59.6 years	2018-20	58.8 years	63.1	59.1	No
					Healthy life expectancy at 65: male	2018-20	7.7 years	Tracker	8.3 years	2018-20	7.7 years	10.5	9.2	No
					Gap in male healthy life expectancy at birth: County Durham and England	2018-20	4.3 years	Tracker	3.6 years					No
					Gap in male healthy life expectancy at 65: County Durham and England	2018-20	2.8 years	Tracker	2.3 years					No
					Successful completions of those in alcohol treatment	Mar 23-Feb 24	37.5%	Tracker	34.2%	Mar 23-Feb 24	37.5%	34.5%		Yes
					Successful completions of those in drug treatment: opiates	Mar 23-Feb 24	5.6%	Tracker	5.5%	Mar 23-Feb 24	5.6%	5.2%		Yes
					Successful completions of those in drug treatment: non-opiates	Mar 23-Feb 24	35.3%	Tracker	32.5%	Mar 23-Feb 24	35.3%	29.4%		Yes

Physical Activity KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Visits to Leisure Centres	Jul-Sep 24	853,976	798,027	802,450					Yes
					Leisure memberships	Jul-Sep 24	21,141	18,762	18,748					Yes

Our Communities: summary data tables

Digital Durham KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Properties with access to gigabit-capable broadband	Jul-Sep 24	68.5%	Tracker	65.8%					Yes

Housing Delivery KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Net affordable homes	2023/24	433	836	282					Yes
					Net additional dwellings	2023/24	1,291	1,308	1,551					No
					Chapter Homes properties sold	Jul-Sep 24	0	4	not comparable					Yes

Housing Standards KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Empty homes brought back into use as a result of local authority intervention	Jul-Sep 24	55	50	52					Yes
					Properties covered by Selective Licence Scheme that are licensed, or legal proceedings instigated	Jul-Sep 24	58%	100% (by 2027)	37%					Yes
					ASB incidents per 10,000 population within the Selective Licensing Scheme	2023/24	966	976	962					No

Clean and Attractive Communities KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Fly-tipping resolved rate	Oct 23 – Sept 24	10.4	12.88	10.4	Apr 22-Mar 23	10.3	19	23.8	Yes
					Streetscape with acceptable levels of cleanliness: litter	Jul-Sep 24	97.3%	Tracker	95.7%					Yes
					Streetscape with acceptable levels of cleanliness: dog fouling	Jul-Sep 24	99.6%	Tracker	99.6%					Yes
					Green and open space with acceptable levels of cleanliness: litter	Jul-Sep 24	96.3%	Tracker	94.6%					Yes

					Green and open space with acceptable levels of cleanliness: dog fouling	Jul-Sep 24	100%	Tracker	98.9%						Yes
					Average vacancy rate of town centres	2023	16%	13.9%	16.1%						No

Transport Connectivity KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Satisfaction with ease of access (<i>confidence intervals +/-4pp</i>)	2023	73%	Tracker	73%	2023	73%	71%		No
					Overall satisfaction with bus journey	2023	75%	Tracker	New	2023	75%	80%		No
					Households who can access key service locations using public transport within a 15-mile radius	2023	97.30%	97.73%	97.63%					No
					Households who can access key service locations using public transport within a 5-mile radius	2023	65.50%	67.80%	66.81%					No
					Residents who can access employment sites by public transport	2023	30.18%	32.10%	29.42%					No
					Timetabled bus services no more than 5 min late or 1 min early	Jul-Sep 24	78.80%	Tracker	N/A					Yes
					Local passenger journeys on public transport	Jan-Mar 24	4,664,453	Tracker	4,597,196					Yes

Highways and Footways Maintenance KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					A roads where maintenance is recommended	2023	2.6%	Tracker	3.7%	2023	2.6%	4.0%	3.0%	No
					B & C roads where maintenance is recommended	2023	2.65%	Tracker	3.4%	2023	2.65%	6.0%	3.0%	No
					Unclassified roads where maintenance is recommended	2023	23%	Tracker	25%	2023	23%	17%	22%	No
					'Footways' structurally unsound	2022	30.9%	Tracker	31.3%					No
					Bridge condition: principal roads	2020	82.0%	Tracker	81.1%					No
					Bridge condition: non-principal roads	2020	81.0%	Tracker	80.1%					No
					Category 1 highway defects repaired within 2 or 72 hours (depending on severity)	Jul-Sep 24	90%	90%	92%					Yes
					Category 2.1 highway defects repaired within 14 days	Jul-Sep 24	93%	90%	97%					Yes
					Category 2.2 highway defects repaired within 3 months	Jul-Sep 24	94%	90%	90%					Yes

					Highways Maintenance Backlog	awaiting data		Tracker						No
					Satisfaction with highway maintenance. (confidence intervals +/-4pp)	2023	46%	Tracker	47%	2023	46%	43%		No

Road Safety KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Road traffic accidents: fatalities	Jul-Sep 24	7	Tracker	7					Yes
					Road traffic accidents: seriously injured	Jul-Sep 24	41	Tracker	56					Yes
					Road traffic accidents: fatalities (children)	Jul-Sep 24	1	Tracker	0					Yes
					Road traffic accidents: seriously injured (children)	Jul-Sep 24	2	Tracker	5					Yes
					Road traffic collisions per billion vehicle miles – all	2023	610	Tracker	685	2023	610	132,063	4,018	No
					Road traffic collisions per billion vehicle miles – fatal	2023	22	Tracker	16	2023	22	1,645	68	No

Protecting Vulnerable People from harm KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Domestic Abuse incidents reported to the Police per 1,000 population	Oct 23-Sep 24	25.4	Tracker	26.5					Yes
					Harbour clients feeling more confident on case closure	Jul-Sep 24	79%	Tracker	85%					Yes
					Harbour clients feeling their quality of life has improved on case closure	Jul-Sep 24	80%	Tracker	81%					Yes
					Children and young people completing an intervention with Harbour and reporting feeling safer	Jul-Sep 24	91%	Tracker	96%					Yes
					Children and young people reviewed as at risk to Child Sexual Exploitation			Tracker						No

Crime KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	England and Wales average	NE average	updated
					Respondents who agree that police and LA are dealing with ASB and crime issues that matter to them. <i>(confidence intervals +/-3.5pp)</i>	Sep 23	46.9%	Tracker	28.2%					No
					Crime rate per 1,000 population	Oct 23-Sep 24	93.7	Tracker	103.4	Oct 23-Sep 24	93.7	81.8	104.4	Yes
					Theft offences per 1,000 population	Oct 23-Sep 24	26.7	Tracker	26.9	Jul 23 – Jun 24	26.9	29.8		Yes
					Offenders who re-offend in 12 month period	2021/22	27.9%	Tracker	28.7%	2021/22	27.9%	25.2%	28.1%	No
					Proven re-offending by young people	2021/22	41.5%	Tracker	39.0%	2021/22	41.5%	32.2%	32.6%	No
					First time entrants to the youth justice system aged 10 to 17 per 100,000 population aged 10 to 17	2022	146	Tracker	141					No
					Violent crime incidents which were alcohol related	Jul-Sep 24	34.9%	Tracker	31.6%					Yes

Anti-Social Behaviour KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Reports of anti-social behaviour	Oct 23-Sep 24	47,320	Tracker	46,107					Yes
					Reports of environmental ASB	Oct 23-Sep 24	38,886	Tracker	37,913					Yes
					Reports of nuisance ASB	Oct 23-Sep 24	6,518	Tracker	6,603					Yes
					Reports of personal ASB	Oct 23-Sep 24	1,881	Tracker	1,547					Yes
					ASB alcohol related incidents	Jul-Sep 24	12.5%	Tracker	11.2%					Yes
					ASB enforcement action taken	Jul 22-Jun 23	6,069	Tracker	5,057					No

Our Council: summary data tables

Finance KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	England median	NE average	updated
					Council tax collected	Oct 23-Sep 24	54.1%	Tracker	54.5%	2022/23	95.9%	95.8%		Yes
					Business rates collected	Oct 23-Sep 24	58.6%	Tracker	58.2%	2022/23	96.4%	97.1%		Yes
					MTFP savings achieved (£s)	at 30 Sep 24	£6.2 million	£8 million	-					Yes
					Audit opinion: statement of accounts	2022/23	UQ	UQ	UQ					No
					Non-ringfenced reserves as % of net revenue expenditure	2022/23	44.1%	Tracker	55.4%	2022/23	44.1%	44.9%		Yes
					Non-ringfenced reserves as % of service spend	2022/23	37.4%	Tracker	46.0%	2022/23	37.4%	37.7%		Yes
					Total core spending power per dwelling	2024/25	£2,373	Tracker	£2,205	2024/25	£2,373	£2,373		Yes
					Level of Band D council tax rates	2024/25	£1,934	Tracker	£1,842	2024/25	£1,934	£1,779		Yes
					Council tax revenue per dwelling	2024/24	£1,459	Tracker	£1,385	2024/25	£1,459	£1,530		Yes
					Social care spend as a % of core spending power	2022/23	57.0%	Tracker	56.2%	2022/23	56.2%	67.9%		Yes
					Debt servicing as % of core spending power	2022/23	6.7%	Tracker	6.5%	2022/23	6.7%	8.2%		Yes
					Total debt as % of core spending power	2022/23	94.1	Tracker	107%	2022/23	94.1%	217.7%		Yes

Procurement KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Invoices paid within 30 days	Jul-Sep 24	96.3%	93.0%	96.2%					Yes
					Third party spend (£'million)	2023/24	£828.2	Tracker	£700.6					No
					% North East spend	2023/24	72.7%	Tracker	68.9%					No
					% County Durham spend	2023/24	45.5%	Tracker	44.5%					No
					% SME spend	2023/24	57.7%	Tracker	59.4%					No

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Time to process new housing benefit claims	Oct 23-Sep 24	13.5 days	21 days	17.5 days	2023/24	16 days	20 days	20 days	Yes
					Time to process new council tax reduction claims	Oct 23-Sep 24	14.4 days	21 days	18.0 days					Yes
					Time to process housing benefit change of circumstances	Oct 23-Sep 24	4.2 days	9 days	5.8 days	2023/24	5.7 days	6 days	5 days	Yes
					Time to process council tax reduction change of circumstances	Oct 23-Sep 24	4.9 days	8 days	7.5 days					Yes

Financial Support KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Budget spend: Discretionary Housing Payments	Apr-Sep 24	43%	Tracker	53%					Yes
					Households receiving at least 25% reduction in council tax	Apr-Sep 24	21.2%	Tracker						Yes

Customer Contact KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Customer contact that is digital	Oct 23-Sep 24	40%	Tracker	37%					Yes
					ACD calls answered within 3 minutes	Oct 23-Sep 24	93%	Tracker	77%					Yes
					CRM service requests meeting performance standard	Jul-Sep 24	75%	Tracker	77%					Yes

Customer Satisfaction KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Satisfaction with overall service delivery	Jul 23-Jun 24	82%	Tracker	83%					Yes
					Customers giving four or five stars	2023	86%	Tracker	85%					No

Customer Complaints KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Complaints upheld	Oct 23-Sep 24	58%	Tracker	58%					Yes
					Independent investigations upheld	Oct 23-Sep 24	32%	Tracker	29%					Yes
					Complaints upheld by the Ombudsman	Oct 23-Sep 24	4%	Tracker	17%					Yes
					Complaints upheld by the LGO	2023/24	67%	Tracker	52%	2023/24	67%	79% (similar authorities)		Yes
					Number of upheld Ombudsman complaints per 100,000 residents	2023/24	1.9	Tracker	2.1	2023/24	1.9	4.9 (similar authorities)		Yes
					Data breaches reported to the ICO	Jul 23-Jun 24	22	Tracker	21					Yes

Registration Services KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Births registered within 42 days	Jul-Sep 24	98%	98%	97%	Dec-23	98%	93%		Yes
					Deaths registered within 5 days	Jul-Sep 24	75%	95%	69%	Dec-23	71%	51%		Yes
					Appointments within 5 work days: births	Jul-Sep 24	46%	95%	70%	Dec-23	54%	95%		Yes
					Appointments within 2 work days: deaths	Jul-Sep 24	90%	95%	97%	Dec-23	96%	95%		Yes
					Appointments within 5 work days: marriage / civil partnership	Jul-Sep 24	100%	95%	100%	Dec-23	100%	90%		Yes
					Appointments seen on time	Jul-Sep 24	96%	90%	94%	Dec-23	96%	90%		Yes

Workforce Equality KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Top 5% of earners: female	at 30 Sep 24	62.5%	Tracker	59.8%					Yes
					Workforce aged 50 years or over	at 30 Sep 24	64.5%	Tracker	64.1%					Yes

Recruitment and Retention KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Vacancies which are re-adverts	Oct 23-Sep 24	26.0%	Tracker	19.1%					Yes
					Leavers with <2 years' service	Oct 23-Sep 24	47%	Tracker	no comparator					Yes
					Employee turnover	at Jun 24	8.5%	Tracker	8.5%					Yes

Workforce Development KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					PDRs completed in line with deadline	at 30 Sep 24	88% (managers)	100%	n/a					Yes
					Managers who have completed the managers' training programme	at 30 Sep 24	73%	Tracker	67%					Yes
					Employees enrolled on apprenticeship programme	at 30 Sep 24	4.8%	Tracker	6.5%					Yes
					Apprentice levy utilised as a council (excluding schools)	at 30 Sep 24	128% (129.1% committed)	Tracker	n/a					Yes
					Apprentice retention rate	at 30 Sep 24	76%	Tracker	74%					Yes

Health, Safety and Well-being of our Employees KPIs

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Days lost to sickness absence per FTE (excl. schools)	Oct 23-Sep 24	11.57 days	Tracker	11.08 days					Yes
					Employee accidents / incidents with no / minor injury	2024/25	97%	Tracker	97%					Yes
					Employee accidents / incidents RIDDOR reportable	2024/25	3%	Tracker	3%					Yes
					Incidents of work-related ill-health	2024/25	125	Tracker	198					Yes

Glossary

Term	Definition
ACD	Automatic Call Distribution Telephone calls are received either through our ACD system, which routes calls to groups of agents based on a first-in-first-answered criteria, or directly to a telephone extension (non-ACD). Only calls received via our ACD system are included in our telephone statistics.
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area Geographical area where air pollution levels are, or are likely to, exceed national air quality objectives at relevant locations (where the public may be exposed to harmful air pollution over a period of time e.g., residential homes, schools etc.).
ASB	Anti-social behaviour
ASCOF	Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework Measures how well care and support services achieve outcomes that matter most to people (link)
BATH	Bishop Auckland Town Hall A multi-purpose cultural venue situated in Bishop Auckland. It offers regular art exhibitions, live music, cinema screenings and theatre performances, as well as a library service.
BCF	Better Care Fund A national programme that supports local systems to successfully deliver the integration of health and social care.
Budget	An annual statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the House of Commons that sets out the UK government's planned spending and revenue gathering for the foreseeable future. Two major financial announcements are given in a financial year (the Autumn Budget and the Spring Budget).
CAP	Customer Access Point A location where residents can get face-to-face help and information about council services. There are eight CAPs across County Durham.
CAT	Community Action Team Project team which includes members of our community protection service, planning, neighbourhood wardens and housing teams, who work alongside police and community support officers, fire and rescue teams and residents to tackle housing and environmental issues in a specific area by identifying local priorities and making best use of resources.
CDP	County Durham Plan Sets out the council's vision for housing, jobs and the environment until 2035, as well as the transport, schools and healthcare to support it (link)
CED	Community Economic Development
CERP	Climate Emergency Response Plan A community-wide call to action to help align all sectors on the actions required to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve our resilience to the impacts of climate change.
CLD	Client Level Dataset A national mandatory person-level data collection (to be introduced) that will replace the existing annual Short and Long Term (SALT) Support data collected by councils. CLD will be added to the single data list and will become mandatory for all local authorities.
CNIS	Child Not In School
CPN	Community Protection Notice Can be issued to anyone over the age of 16 to deal with a wide range of ongoing anti-social behaviour issues or nuisances which have a detrimental effect on the local community. There are three stages: the first stage is a written warning (CPW), the second a notice (CPN) the third is an FPN or further prosecution for failure to comply with the previous stages
CRM	Customer Relationship Management system

Term	Definition
CS&T	Culture, Sport and Tourism
CTR	Council Tax Reduction reduces council tax bills for those on low incomes
DCC	Durham County Council
DEFRA	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs A ministerial department, supported by 34 agencies and public bodies responsible for improving and protecting the environment. It aims to grow a green economy and sustain thriving rural communities. It also supports our world-leading food, farming and fishing industries (link)
DHP	Discretionary Housing Payments Short term payments which can be made to tenants in receipt of the housing benefit element of Universal Credit, to help sort out housing and money problems in the longer term.
DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care Supports the government in leading the nation's health and care system.
DLE	Daily Living Expenses Available for those whose circumstances have changed unexpectedly. Payments can be made for up to seven days to help with food, travel and some clothing (restrictions apply).
DoLS	Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Set of checks that are part of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, which applies in England and Wales. The DoLS procedure protects a person receiving care whose liberty has been limited by checking that this is appropriate and is in their best interests.
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme Confidential employee benefit designed to help staff deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting their home or work life, health, and general wellbeing.
EET	Employment, Education or Training Most often used in relation to young people aged 16 to 17, it measures the number employed, in education or in training.
EHCP	Education, Health Care Plan Legal document which describes a child or young person's (aged up to 25) special educational needs, the support they need, and the outcomes they would like to achieve.
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund Funding that helps to create economic development and growth; it supports businesses, encourages new ideas and supports regeneration. Although the UK has now left the EU, under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement, EU programmes will continue to operate in the UK until their closure in 2023-24.
EHE	Elective Home Education A choice by parents to provide education for their children at home or in some other way they desire, instead of sending them to school full-time.
ETA	Extension of Time Agreement An agreement between the council and the customer submitting a planning application to extend the usual deadline beyond 13 weeks due to the complex nature of the application.
FPN	Fixed Penalty Notice Conditional offer to an alleged offender for them to have the matter dealt with in a set way without resorting to going to court.
FTE	Full Time Equivalent Total number of full-time employees working across the organisation. It is a way of adding up the hours of full-time, part-time and various other types of employees and converting into measurable 'full-time' units.
GVA	Gross Value Added Measure of value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy.

Term	Definition
HSF	Household Support Fund Payments support low income households struggling with energy and food costs, or who need essential household items.
ICO	Information Commissioner's Office The UK's independent body's role is to uphold information rights in the public interest (link)
IES	Inclusive Economic Strategy Clear, long-term vision for the area's economy up to 2035, with an overarching aim to create more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy (link)
JLHWS	Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy JLHWS supports vision that County Durham is a healthy place where people live well for longer
KS2	Key Stage 2 The national curriculum is organised into blocks of years called 'key stages.' At the end of each key stage, the teacher will formally assess each child's performance. KS2 refers to children in year 3, 4, 5 and 6 when pupils are aged between 7 and 11.
KS3	Key Stage 3 The national curriculum is organised into blocks of years called 'key stages.' At the end of each key stage, the teacher will formally assess each child's performance. KS3 refers to children in year 7, 8 and 9 when pupils are aged between 11 and 14.
LGA	Local Government Association The national membership body for councils which works on behalf of its member councils to support, promote and improve local government.
LINKCD	Programme that brings together a number of delivery partners to support people with multiple barriers to address these underlying issues and to move them closer to or into the labour market or re-engage with education or training.
LNRS	Local Nature Recovery Strategies Propose how and where to recover nature and improve the wider environment.
MTFP	Medium Term Financial Plan A document that sets out the council's financial strategy over a four year period
MW	MegaWatt is one million watts of electricity
NESWA	North East Social Work Alliance A social work teaching partnership made up of 12 North East councils and six Higher Education Institutes. The Alliance is one of several teaching partnerships across the country which were created to improve the quality of practice, learning and continuous professional development amongst trainee and practicing social workers.
NQSW	Newly Qualified Social Workers a social worker who is registered with Social Work England and is in their first year of post qualifying practice.
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification A work-based qualification that recognises the skills and knowledge a person needs to do a job.
PDR	Performance and Development Review Is an annual process which provides all staff with the valuable opportunity to reflect on their performance, potential and development needs.
PRS	Private Rented Sector This classification of housing relates to property owned by a landlord and leased to a tenant. The landlord could be an individual, a property company or an institutional investor. The tenants would either deal directly with an individual landlord, or alternatively with a management company or estate agency caring for the property on behalf of the landlord.
PSPO	Public Space Protection Order To deal with a nuisance or problem in a particular area that is detrimental to local community.
QoL	Quality of Life

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