

Cabinet

9 April 2025

**Quarter Three, 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 31 December 2024, alongside contextual information of activity and events taking place in the third quarter of the 2024/25 financial year (October to December).
- 3 We continue to frame the council's performance within the wider national context. We are a large organisation providing a broad range of services. Our operating environment continues to be influenced by political, global and economic factors and remains challenging. These factors include inflationary and demand pressures, demographic shifts and the changing needs of our residents, economic uncertainties and the cost-of-living crisis, recruitment and retention issues, government policy, and the impact of global events such as the ongoing war in Ukraine.
- 4 We recently completed the annual refresh of our Council Plan and the [2025-29 plan](#) has been approved by Council. The refreshed plan continues to be structured around five thematic areas which, along with the objectives they contain, remain unchanged. Our priorities, key programmes of work and associated performance management arrangements for the forthcoming four years are set out within the refreshed plan and our performance framework is now being adjusted accordingly. The new framework will form the structure of this performance report from quarter one, 2025/26.

- 5 The government has published the provisional local government finance settlement for England for 2025/26. Our financial position remains very challenging despite the additional government grant funding being provided next year ([budget 2025/26 – report to County Council](#)).
- 6 Alongside the funding announcements, the Government launched [consultation](#) on longer term funding reforms for local government (closed 12 February). The reforms will be implemented through a multi-year settlement, beginning in 2026/27. Spending reviews 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.
- 7 However, we continue to show strong performance across our key outcomes.

(a) For **Our Economy**;

- i. An update of the Economic Review has been undertaken to provide a more detailed assessment of economic changes across a number of measures in recent years. This shows that the economy has largely recovered from Covid-19, and in some parts of the economy, such as employment levels and productivity, pre-Covid levels of performance have been exceeded. Between 2020 and 2022 the county's economy grew by more than 16% to £10.7 billion and around 8,000 more residents are in employment now than before the Inclusive Economic Strategy (IES) was adopted, in 2022.
- ii. The number of available jobs across the county has steadily increased in recent years to almost 190,000, an all-time high. Job growth has increased at a faster rate than the North East and England.
- iii. We continue to exceed targets for securing investment for companies and supporting businesses.
- iv. More people are visiting our cultural venues and leisure centres. More people are borrowing from our libraries. More people are members of our gyms. The occupancy rate and average yield at our cinemas and theatres are all better than last year.
- v. But some of our targets remain challenging. Our autumn theatre programme was less popular than we anticipated, and issues with the Gala's public lift impacted screenings with specific accessibility requirements (the lift is being replaced).

(b) For **Our Environment**;

- i. We are diverting a larger proportion of waste from landfill. And are building, with regional partners, a new 'energy recovery from waste' facility which will meet the future needs of the county.

- ii. Our contamination rate, which has steadily declined from its peak in March 2023, is now the second best recorded rate for three years. 27 of the 28 sites within the Durham City Air Quality Management Area are better than the threshold for NO₂ levels.

(c) For **Our People**;

- i. Statutory referral demand for children's social care has increased significantly compared to last year. However, improved practice across statutory children's social care has led to a consistently low re-referral rate and despite higher demand performance remains strong.
- ii. Children taken into our care remains relatively high though the rate of increase has slowed significantly throughout 2024 and our Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy is delivering against its objectives.
- iii. Improved processes and increased capacity which have improved timeliness performance Education Health and Care Plans.
- iv. Referrals into adult social care and Care Act assessments remain stable and the percentage of service users receiving an annual review has now met our compliance target
- v. Performance against homelessness outcomes is improving and we are closing the benchmarking gaps. But more people are presenting as already homeless. We are aware that some councils are relocating their homeless residents across our county. The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has written to all councils to remind them of their legal responsibilities.

(d) For **Our Communities**;

- i. Although domestic abuse incidents reported to the police have steadily decreased in recent years, more victims are being referred to our support services.
- ii. Of the private sector rented properties covered under the selective licensing scheme, 59% are fully licensed licences in progress, exempt or have legal proceedings instigated.
- iii. Reports of fly-tipping remain low, environmental cleanliness is high, and more long-term properties are being brought back into use, however the average town centre vacancy rate is lower than the national average.
- iv. Bus patronage continues to improve, though punctuality has been impacted this quarter by road works on the network.

(e) **For Our Council;**

- i. Through the work of the Poverty Action Steering Group, we continue to provide significant financial support to our most vulnerable residents - one of a few authorities offering this type and extent of support. Almost 53,000 low income households (38% of pension age) benefit from our Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. And during quarter three, we helped 634 vulnerable residents with £193,000 of Discretionary Housing Payments, Daily Living Expenses or Settlement Grants.
- ii. In addition to these 'core' mechanisms, we have also drawn on national funding sources to sustain existing work and develop new programmes. This includes £4.6 million received through the Household Support Fund (HSF) and £1 million received through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)
- iii. These programmes cover a wide range of projects. This includes supermarket vouchers for vulnerable households, a new cost-of-living and debt advice service, four new food surplus hubs, continuation of the Welcome Spaces programme, two new Financial Inclusion Support Officers helping families across 12 schools and one college, auto-enrolment of children eligible for free school meals and increasing the take-up of pension credit.
- iv. The processing times of housing benefit and council tax reduction requests (both new claims and changes in circumstances) have improved further.
- v. During the 12 months ending December 2024, we answered more than 470,000 telephone calls - 93% within three minutes. Satisfaction with overall service delivery remains high and we are receiving fewer complaints.
- vi. During the reporting period, almost 60% of our employees recorded no sickness. However, more days have been lost to sickness, and our sickness rate is now 0.33 days per full time equivalent employee higher than the same period last year.

Recommendation(s)

8 Cabinet is recommended to:

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

Background

- 9 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 Vision](#)¹.
- 10 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.
- 11 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.
- 12 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.
- 13 Our performance management processes align with [statutory guidance](#)² 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

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](#)

- (a) A lack of 'good quality' data and insight to understand services.
 - (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.
- 14 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

- 15 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](#).
- 16 It contains the most recent performance data available on 31 December. Contextual information relates to activity and events taking place in the third quarter of the 2024/25 financial year (October to December). 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 Two, 2024/25 Performance Management Report](#)
- [Quarter One, 2024/25 Performance Management Report](#)
- [Quarter Four, 2023/24 Performance Management Report](#)
- [Quarter Three, 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 Three, 2024/25



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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 31 December. Contextual information relates to activity and events taking place in the third quarter of the 2024/25 financial year (October to December).

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 An update of the Economic Review has been undertaken to provide a more detailed assessment of economic changes across a number of measures in recent years. This shows that the economy has largely recovered from Covid-19. Across some parts of the economy, such as employment levels and productivity, pre-Covid levels of performance have been exceeded. Between 2020 and 2022 the county's economy grew by more than 16% to £10.7 billion and around 8,000 more residents are in employment now than before the Inclusive Economic Strategy (IES) was adopted in 2022. There has been a 9% increase in available jobs across the county since 2016. And demand for employment land, and industrial and office premises of all sizes remains high. Our employment rate is statistically better than 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.
- 6 Year to date we have secured £4.26 million of investment for companies exceeding our target and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Productivity and Growth Programme is well underway, and delivery is on track. We are engaging with and supporting more businesses than our target and continue to create or safeguard jobs.
- 7 Processing times of major and non-major planning applications have improved and are better than target. The back log of non-major applications was cleared at the end of quarter two improving performance, however, there remains significant staffing capacity issues.
- 8 Registrations to our employability programmes were affected by a greater number of referrals received during the period being ineligible or not subsequently engaged. As it was recognised that we were unlikely to achieve programme targets in relation to registrations and clients receiving support to gain employment, revised targets have been agreed with our contract manager. The cohort of clients we are working with have multiple barriers and therefore are further away from the labour market. UKSPF transition funding for 2025/26 has been confirmed and we await our new funding allocation.
- 9 We have recorded better than target attendances at all our cultural venues, strengthening our position as the culture county and contributing significantly to the local economy. Our

new venue, 'The Story' surpassed pre-launch projections, overachieving on the pro-rata target for 2024/25 in the first six months. 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. Average yield was better than the same period last year but did not meet target. Panto at both Gala and Empire performed well. However, other shows in the autumn programme across all venues were less popular.

Issues we are addressing

- 11 At the end of December, just under 90% of business floorspace owned by the council was occupied. The main reason for not meeting the 95% target was that a unit at Jade Business Park was left vacant by a business going into administration. A new tenant will move into the vacant unit in April and return Jade Business Park occupancy to 100%. We expect to meet the 95% target during quarter one.
- 12 Average occupancy rate and yield across programmed cinema screenings were better than the same period last year but did not meet target. There was a strong response to autumn blockbuster films and programmed event cinema. But the Gala's public lift was out of service and this impacted screenings with specific accessibility requirements such as 'Gala Seniors' and 'Bringing in baby'. A new lift is being installed and works will be completed in April.

Our environment

- 13 The aim of this priority is to protect our natural environment, including biodiversity and healthy ecosystems. In 2019, the council declared a climate emergency with a commitment to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2030 and contribute towards a carbon neutral county by 2045. In April 2022, the council declared an ecological emergency and committed to address ecological decline wherever possible. Our county is of significant landscape value and supports unique combinations of plant and animal species.
- 14 **Going Well**
- 15 27 of the 28 sites within the Durham City Air Quality Management Area are better than the NO₂ level threshold. Only Gilesgate Bank was lower than the threshold of 40µg/m³ – at 42.5µg/m³
- 16 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.
- 17 Our contamination rate has steadily improved from its peak in March 2023 and is now the second lowest recorded rate for three years. This improvement has been driven by our Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) scheme, our 'What Goes Where' campaign and our enforcement activity.

Issues we are addressing

- 18 The household recycling rate is better than last year and just below the national average. We continue to promote recycling to our residents and are preparing to introduce food waste collections to our trade waste customers in April 2025.

Our people

- 19 This priority aims to help all children and young people to enjoy the best start in life, have a safe childhood and those with additional needs are supported. In addition our residents are to live long and independent lives remaining 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 Demand for statutory children's social care increased substantially in quarter three but despite increased workloads performance has continued at previous levels and the re-referral rate remains consistent. Newly Qualified Social Workers recruited this quarter will help manage future demand.
- 21 Process improvements and continued investment in Education Psychologist capacity have improved the timeliness of EHCPs despite the volume of requests remaining at all-time highs.
- 22 We have continued to see improvements in the percentage of adult social care service users receiving an annual review. Data for quarter three shows that we have exceeded our compliance target of 80% for the first time in over three years. We are continuing to reduce the backlog of overdue annual reviews and expect that performance will continue to improve.
- 23 Almost 87% of care homes across the county are rated as good or outstanding. This is better than the North East (83.5%) and England (75.7%). We continue to manage the capacity in care homes enabling admissions as required.
- 24 Latest data for self-reported wellbeing shows that less than 4% of people surveyed in County Durham have reported that they suffer from low satisfaction. This is a reduction from the previous survey and we are now significantly better than the national result.
- 25 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, though various challenging local market conditions have led to unmet income targets.

Issues we are addressing

- 26 The number of children in care remains high and a strategic priority for Durham. Over the last year increase children in care has slowed and plateaued. The increase in complexity remains a challenge but the council's [Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy](#) sets out the council's plan for addressing these challenges.
- 27 Our plan for admissions to permanent care is to maintain the number of admissions from last year which would result in a reduced rate per 100,000 population. Latest data shows an increasing number of admissions over the last three quarters – if this continues into quarter four, we will exceed our target for 2024/25. The dataset used to identify permanent admissions into residential or nursing care is currently being scrutinised to ensure its accuracy.

- 28 Suicide mortality rates per 100,000 people are significantly higher in County Durham than the national levels. Over the last five years the rate of suicide in County Durham has increased by 26.0%. This contrasts to a regional increase of 21.9% and a national increase of 11.9%. A Suicide Prevention Conference, held on 18 February 2025, included key partners considering action already undertaken and exploring what can be done to prevent future suicides in County Durham.
- 29 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.

Our communities

- 30 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

- 31 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. The overall condition of our classified network is within target and is better than the national average demonstrating the level of investment over previous years.

Issues we are addressing

- 32 Our county is following national trends with the decline of town centres and online and out of town centre shopping being the most popular options. The average town centre vacancy rate is lower than the national average and is lower than last year.
- 33 Road works on the network impacted on bus punctuality within the quarter, however, it remains better the same period last year. Work is planned to identify pinch points and potential schemes to address this issue. Bus patronage continues to improve.
- 34 Of the private sector rented properties covered under the selective licensing scheme, 59% are fully licensed, have licences in progress, are exempt or have legal proceedings instigated.
- 35 £2.5 million investment in 2023/24 has reduced the percentage of unclassified roads that requires improvement. Although this is in line with the national average it is below target.
- 36 Anti-social behaviour (ASB) has shown a further increase this month. But this has followed increased activity by partner organisations in areas identified as ASB hotspots. This included more than 4,000 hours of additional patrols which led to a range of interventions including 43 arrests.

Our Council

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

Going Well

- 38 Sixty percent of our employees recorded no sickness over the last 12 months.
- 39 Our in-year collection rate for business rates has improved slightly from 82.0% to 82.2%.
- 40 We continue to process both new claims and change of circumstances quickly (for both housing benefit and local council tax reduction). We have cleared all backlogs. And award accuracy has improved. This is in spite of high demand.
- 41 Through the work of the Poverty Action Steering Group, we continue to provide significant financial support to our most vulnerable residents - one of a few authorities offering this type and extent of support. Almost 53,000 low income households (38% of pension age) benefit from our Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. And during quarter three, we helped 634 vulnerable residents with £193,000 of Discretionary Housing Payments, Daily Living Expenses or Settlement Grants.
- 42 In addition to these 'core' mechanisms, we have also drawn on national funding sources to sustain existing work and develop new programmes. This includes £4.6 million received through the Household Support Fund (HSF) and £1 million received through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)
- 43 These programmes cover a wide range of projects. This includes supermarket vouchers for vulnerable households, a new cost-of-living and debt advice service, four new food surplus hubs, continuation of the Welcome Spaces programme, two new Financial Inclusion Support Officers helping families across 12 schools and one college, auto-enrolment of children eligible for free school meals and increasing the take-up of pension credit.
- 44 Over the latest 12 months, we answered significantly more calls within three minutes. During quarter three, all telephone lines exceeded the performance standard of 80% - 93% of answered calls were answered within three minutes.
- 45 The way customers contact us is changing. Just over 40% of contact we receive is now received digitally. It is much higher than that recorded pre-pandemic (165,000 more contacts). The proportion of contact that is non-digital continues to steadily decline – pre-pandemic, 77% of contact was non-digital, it is now 59%.
- 46 Satisfaction with our overall service delivery remains high. We are receiving fewer corporate complaints and the proportion reaching the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman remains static.
- 47 Almost 5% of our workforce is enrolled on an apprenticeship. We retain around three quarters of our new apprentices. We are committed to using all our apprenticeship levy funds – none of which has expired over the last twelve months.

Issues we are addressing

- 48 Our in-year collection rate for council tax has reduced slightly from 81.8% to 81%. This is mainly because of higher billing (up £24 million in the current financial year), more households failing to pay on time (more recovery documents and reminders 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).
- 49 More complaints were upheld at independent investigation stage compared to last year. Mainly due to time taken to respond, lack of action and not keeping the customer informed of progress.

- 50 Around 44% of our employees have yet to complete our mandatory e-learning programme, as a large proportion of our staff need to recertify their GDPR training – once complete, we expect the proportion of staff with outstanding training to drop to around 25%. However, completion of the programme by non-digital staff remains lower than we would like. 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 continue to improve quarter to quarter.
- 51 Days lost to sickness during the 12 months ending December increased by 4%, compared to the same period the previous year. Our sickness rate (days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) employee) is now 11.48 - 0.33 days higher than the same period the previous year.
- 52 Recruiting and retaining employees to specific posts remains challenging especially across adult care and school crossing patrols. These remain national issues.

Risk Management

- 53 The government's statutory guidance for best value authorities sets out the characteristics of a well-functioning authority. This details the arrangements that councils should have in place for robust governance and scrutiny including how risk awareness and management should inform decision making. The latest [Strategic Risk Management Progress Report](#) provides an insight into the work carried out by the Corporate Risk Management Group between June and December 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, 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

- 54 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.
- 55 In Quarter three, an update of the Economic Review was undertaken to provide a more detailed assessment of economic changes across a number of measures in recent years. This shows that the economy has largely recovered from Covid-19, and in some parts of the economy, such as employment levels and productivity, pre-Covid levels of performance have been exceeded. Between 2020 and 2022 the county's economy grew by more than 16% to £10.7 billion and around 8,000 more residents are in employment now than before the Inclusive Economic Strategy (IES) was adopted, in 2022.
- 56 The number of available jobs across the county has steadily increased in recent years. The rate of increase is better than both the North East and England averages.

	2016 to 2023 (latest data)		
	County Durham	North East average	England average
Increase in available jobs	+9%	+5.3%	+7.3%

- 57 There are now around 188,899 available jobs across the county³. This is the highest number published by the Office of National Statistics. ONS estimate over 230,000 County Durham residents are employed. This is equivalent to a 71.1% employment rate. It has been over 70% for around the last eight years, prior to then, the rate was regularly under 70%, often significantly. Durham's employment rate tends to track regional trends which are lower than the England average. To close the gap and achieve national levels of employment in County Durham, an additional 15,300 people of working age in County Durham would need to enter employment.

	County Durham	North East	England
Employment Rate	71.1% (± 4.1%)	71.0% (±1.2%)	75.7% (±0.3%)

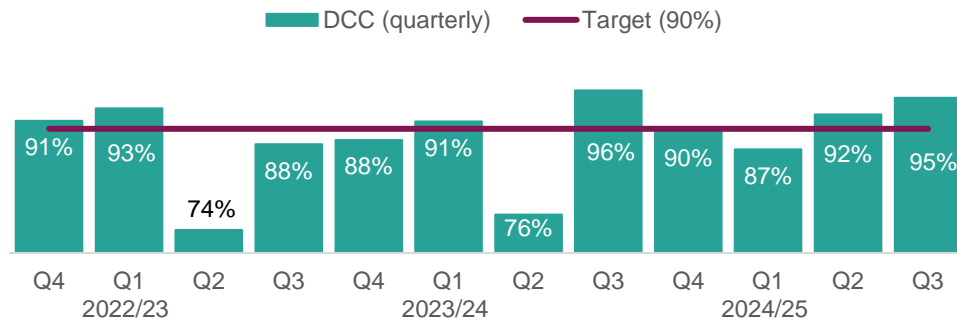
³ Business Register and Employment Survey 2016 to 2023 (latest data)

- 58 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.
- 59 This post-Covid growth was mainly driven by the manufacturing, education and construction sectors, and supported by modest growth in the 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.
- 60 Our GVA per filled job continues to improve and remains on par with the North East average. However, it is below than the England average – and the gap with England is getting wider.
- 61 Demand for development land, and industrial and office premises of all sizes remains high.
- 62 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.
- 63 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

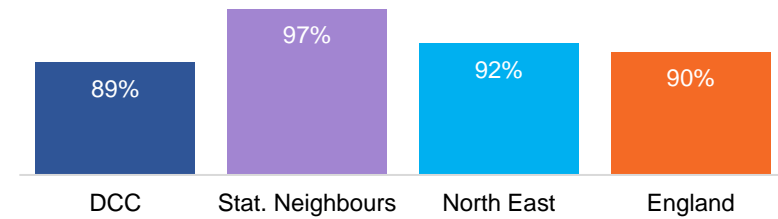
(quarterly data 31 December 2024 / benchmarking data 30 September 2024)

Major planning applications completed within deadline

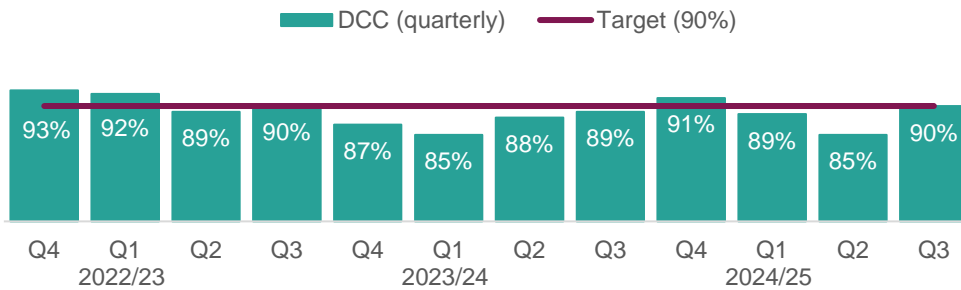


19 of 20 applications completed within deadline.

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

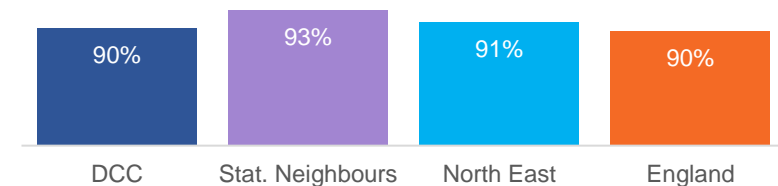


Non-major planning applications completed within deadline



226 of 383 applications completed within deadline.

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



“Good communication both online and a face-to-face meeting”

Planning service user

Respondents to our planning service survey described the service as ‘fair’, ‘efficient’ and ‘helpful’.

Planning survey respondents

Planning Applications

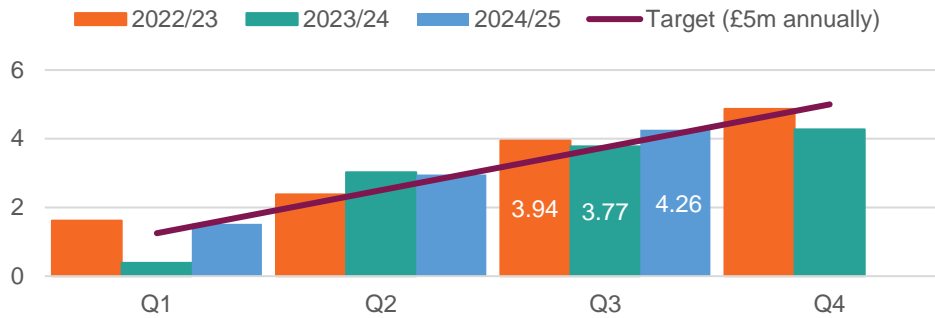
- 64 During quarter three (October to December), we determined 95% of major planning applications within 13 weeks (19 of 20), performance was better than target (90%).
- 65 In the same period, 90% of non-major planning applications were determined within deadline (226 of 383), achieving target (90%). The back log of applications previously affecting performance was cleared at the end of quarter two and therefore as resource allocation to this was no longer required performance has improved. However, there remains significant staffing capacity issues which continue to impact on resources.
- 66 Latest benchmarking data (September 2024) shows our performance for major planning applications to be slightly below the national average, and performance for non-major applications is better than the national average

Planning application type	Our performance	Statistical Neighbours	North East average	National average
Major	88.5%	97.4%	91.7%	90.3%
Non-major	90.3%	93.4%	91.3%	89.7%

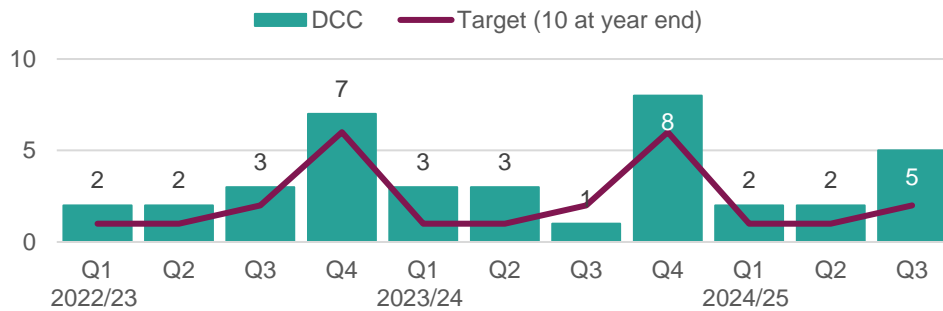
Economic Growth Dashboard: business investments, portfolio and employment land

(year to date ending 31 December 2024 / discrete quarterly data)

Investment secured (£'million)



Number of inward investments



Investments

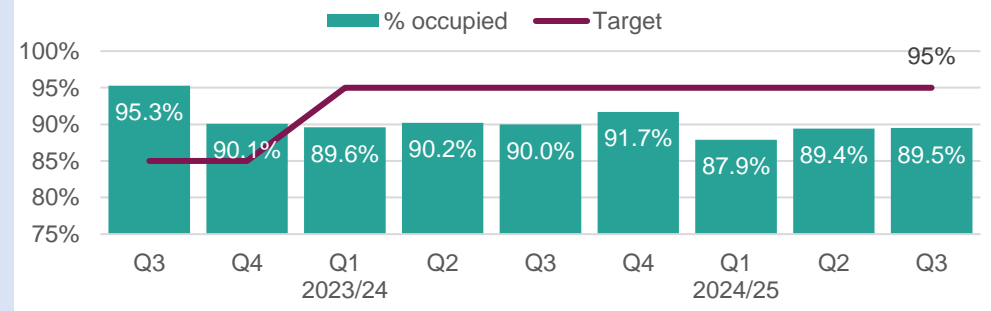
Between October and December, we secured over £1.27 million of investment for companies, bringing the total in the year to date to £4.26 million - better than our profiled target of £3.75 million. Investment was secured for businesses via the New Cluster Development Fund (Space sector), Enterprising Durham Framework and Durham Business Growth programme.

Over the same period, we supported five inward investments better than our target (2) and are on track to meet our annual target (10).

Business Durham floor space

At the end of December, our occupancy rate was 89.5%, below target (95%), largely due to the vacant unit on Jade Business Park. A new tenant will move into that vacant unit in April which will return occupancy on Jade Business Park to 100%. Enquiries for other vacant units across the portfolio are increasing, with several expected to complete in quarter four.

Business Durham Office Space

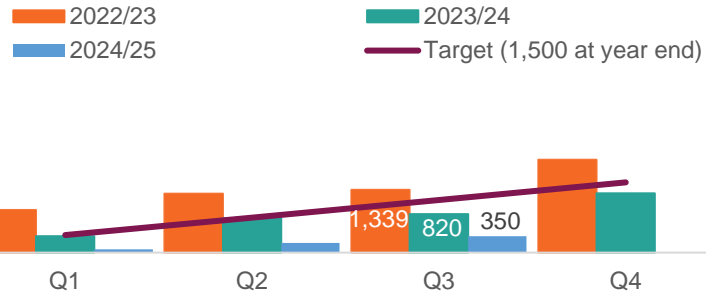


Additional floorspace added to portfolio reduced occupancy rate.

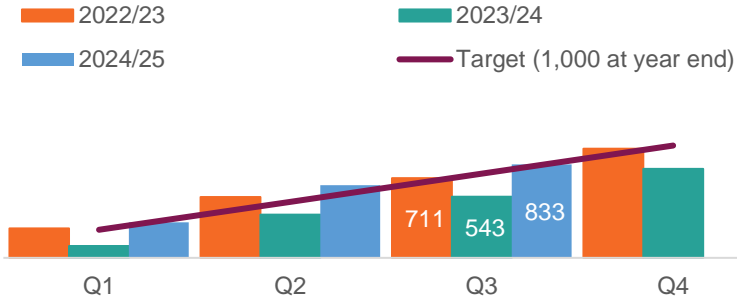
Business Support and Job Creation Dashboard

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

Jobs created or safeguarded by Business Durham (cumulative)

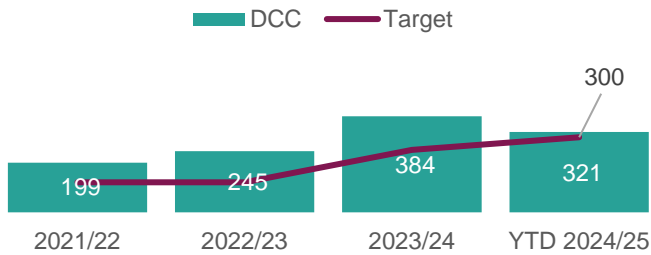


Businesses supported by Business Durham (cumulative)

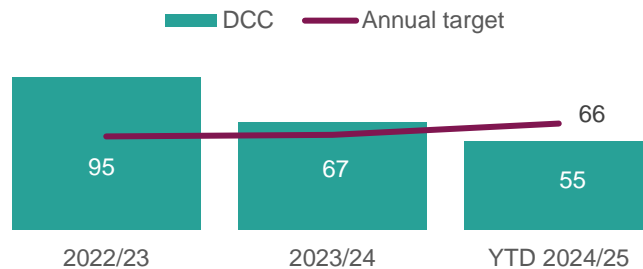


UKSP Productivity and Growth Programme is well underway, and delivery is on track.

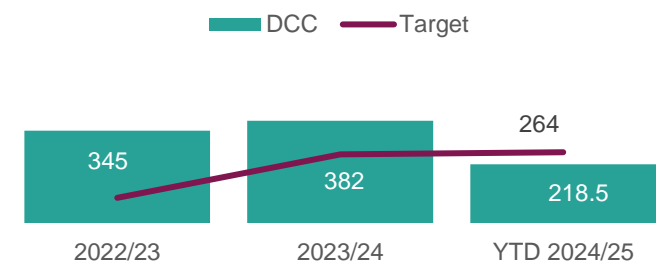
Businesses supported by Community Economic Development Team



Businesses supported by regeneration projects



FTEs created / safeguarded via regeneration projects



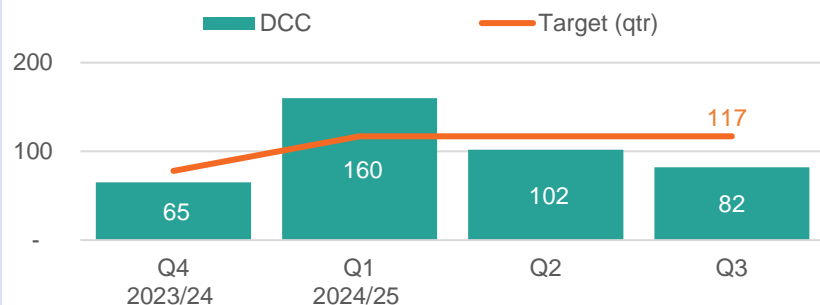
Businesses supported and jobs created/safeguarded

- 67 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Productivity and Growth Programme is well underway, and delivery is on track.
- 68 Year to date (December 2024) we engaged with a total of 833 businesses, better than target (750) and created or safeguarded 350 FTE jobs, below target for this point in the year. The data is based on programmes that capture outputs at the end of their delivery, in particular the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programmes Durham Business Growth and Enterprising Durham Framework.
- 69 We are closely monitoring the target, but due to the challenging business environment it is likely that the end-of-year target for the number of jobs created or safeguarded will not be met.
- 70 Over the same period, we engaged with 321 retail businesses, better than the annual target (300). We supported 55 businesses through our regeneration initiatives which created / safeguarded 218.5 FTE jobs. Performance in the year to date is in line with projections and on track to achieve annual targets.

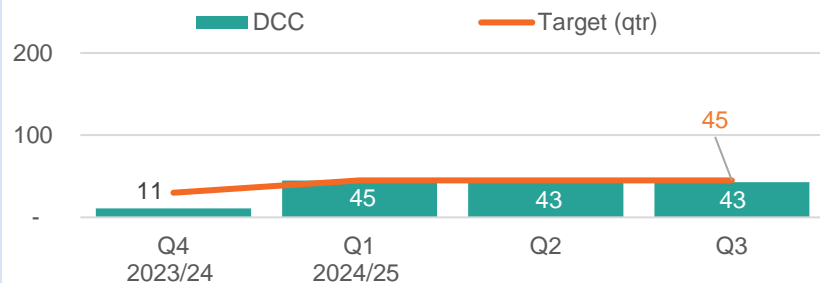
Employability Programmes Dashboard

(October - December 2024)

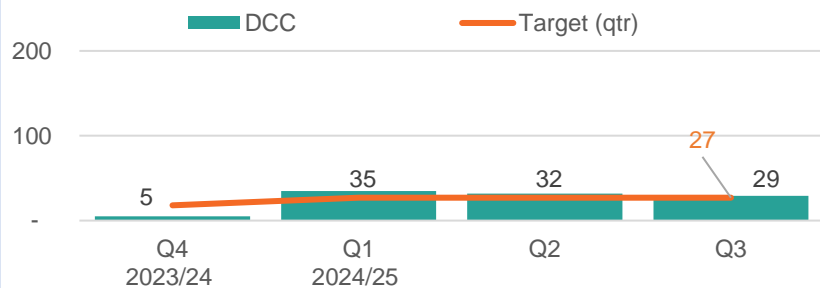
Registrations on employability programmes



Employability programmes: Participants receiving support to help gain employment



Employability programmes: Participants receiving support to sustain employment



Between January and December 2024:

- 409 registrations onto employability programmes
- 142 participants received support to help gain employment
- 101 participants received support to sustain employment

Revised programme targets were agreed with our contract manager in January 2025 in relation to registrations and clients receiving support to gain 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.

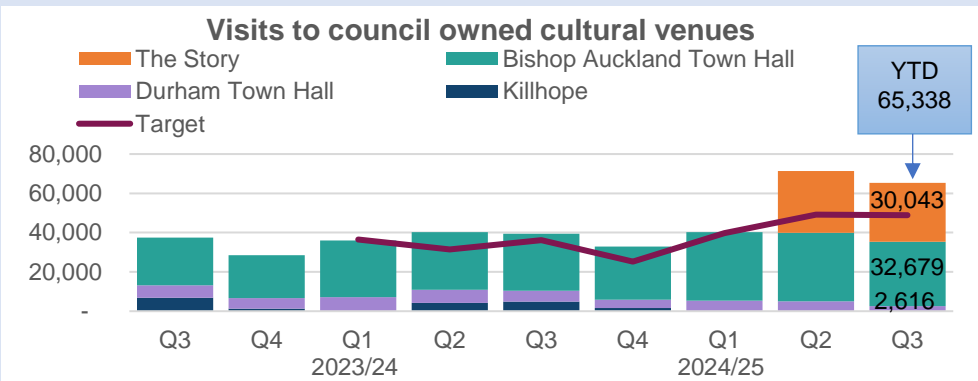
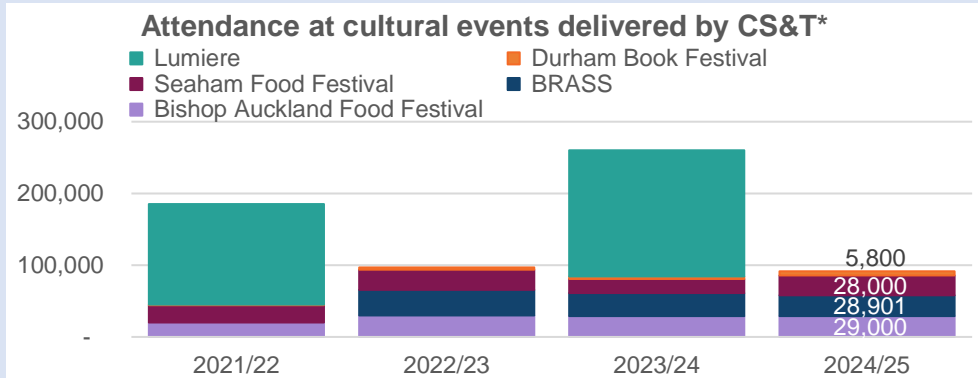
Employability programmes

- 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 three (October to December), 82 clients registered onto our programmes, fewer than last quarter (102) and below the profiled target (117). A greater number of referrals received during the period have been ineligible or have not subsequently engaged. The Christmas closure period also reduced the available amount of time for engagement.
- 73 During this period, 43 clients received support to help gain employment and 29 clients currently employed received support to sustain their employment. Both below profiled targets (45 and 32, respectively).
- 74 The cohort of clients we are working with have multiple barriers to employment and therefore are further away from the labour market. The short length of the programme can prove challenging to both support clients to overcome these barriers and support them to gain employment.
- 75 Since the start of the scheme, we have received 409 registrations and supported 142 clients to help gain employment and 101 to sustain employment. It was recognised that we were unlikely to achieve programme targets in relation to registrations and clients receiving support to help gain employment. In January 2025, revised targets were agreed with our contract manager as follows:
- 475 registrations on our employment programmes (from 517)
 - 160 participants receiving support to gain employment (from 195).
- 76 In addition to the 409 registrations to date we have an additional 18 clients awaiting verification, and another 32 participants pending registration. This places us on track to achieve our revised target of 475 registrations on the programme by the end of March.
- 77 Over the coming months we will continue to engage clients to improve their interpersonal skills and secure progression opportunities.
- 78 The government has confirmed UKSPF transition funding for 2025/26. We await our new funding allocation which will determine the level of support and outcomes we are able to deliver after March 2025.

Cultural Offer Dashboard: cultural events, venues and libraries

(31 December 2024 / discrete quarterly data)

Cultural events and venues



Due to Killhope closure for 2024 season and the opening of The Story on 14 June, data is not comparable.

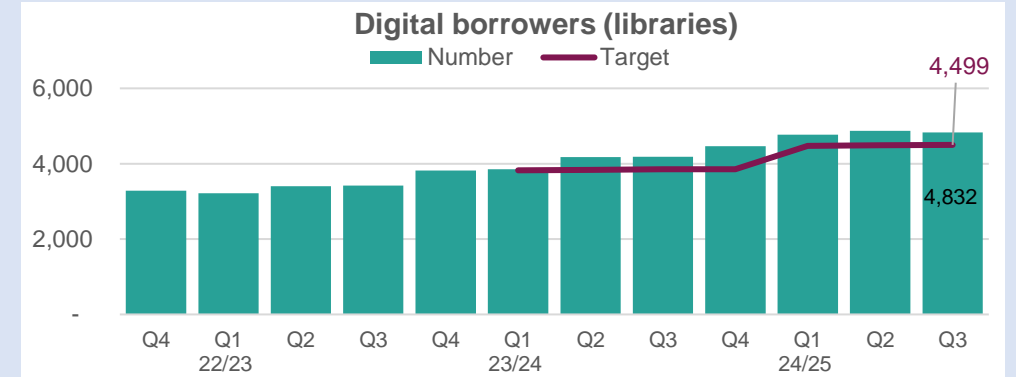
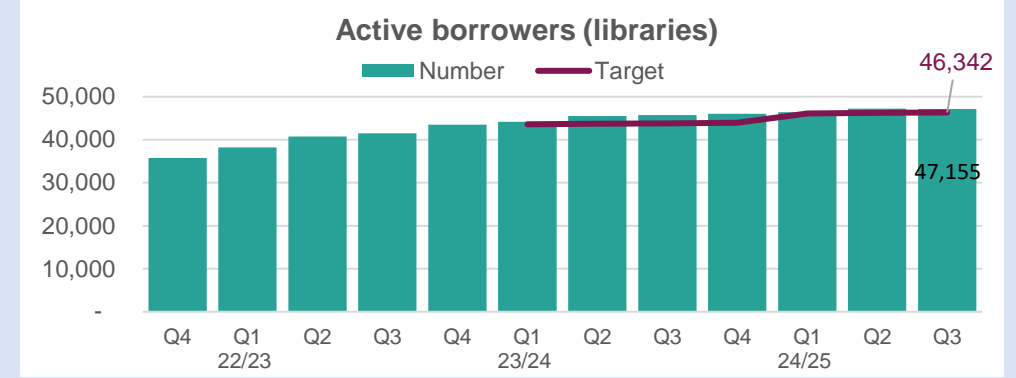
NB: The Story figures include visits to the County Registrar's office.

Reporting dates of official figures:

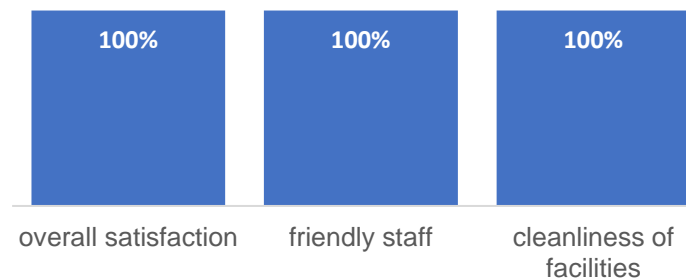
quarter one	quarter two	quarter three
Bishop Auckland Food Festival	BRASS Festival Seaham Food Festival	Durham Book Festival

*Culture, sport and tourism

Libraries



customer satisfaction - culture



Cultural events

79 We continue to invest in our cultural events programme.

- **Durham Book Festival** – held in October 2024, was the most successful in the last four years. 5,800 people attended, 2,474 more than 2023. The four-day festival generated a direct economic impact of £92,790, better than last year (increase of £46,156). Driven by an increase in attendance and spend from non-County Durham residents. The strong programme this year included high profile/popular authors which attracted people from outside of the county.

98% of visitors rated the whole experience positively, and 99% of visitors felt the festival was a worthwhile event for the council to support. Visitors thought the atmosphere at venues and the range and variety of the events were standout strengths. The festival was also perceived highly by authors, with communication and support from event organisers, and the on-site event staff / volunteers being commended.

The festival has positive social and place impacts. Those who attended largely felt the event had a positive impact on their health and wellbeing, that it is good for Durham's image and profile and feel a sense of pride that it takes place in their home county.

Visits to council owned cultural venues

80 Between October and December there were more than 65,000 visits to our cultural venues. Most were to BATH (32,679 visits) and The Story (30,043), both better than target.

81 Visits to The Story have surpassed pre-launch projections. Overachieving on the pro-rata target for 2024/25 (50,640) in the first six months with 66,738 visits between 14 June and 24 December.

82 Visits to Durham Town Hall (2,616) were below target (6,200) due to the venue closing for repairs in late November. Events at the venue were limited before closure due to uncertainty over the repair works start date. Reopening is planned for spring/summer 2025.

Libraries

83 Between October and December there were just over 47,000 active borrowers and 4,800 digital borrowers. For both measures performance is better than target (46,342 and 4,499, respectively).

84 Active borrowers remains strong compared to footfall, meaning that visitors are converting to borrowers on a consistent basis. Digital borrowers are starting to plateau now that the online offer is consistent, and content is now stable across quarters. Plans to introduce a new library management system will help launch a new offer to borrowers and improve the digital offer making it more accessible and attractive to a wider audience.

85 We are working to help promote and grow the service. Recent initiatives include:

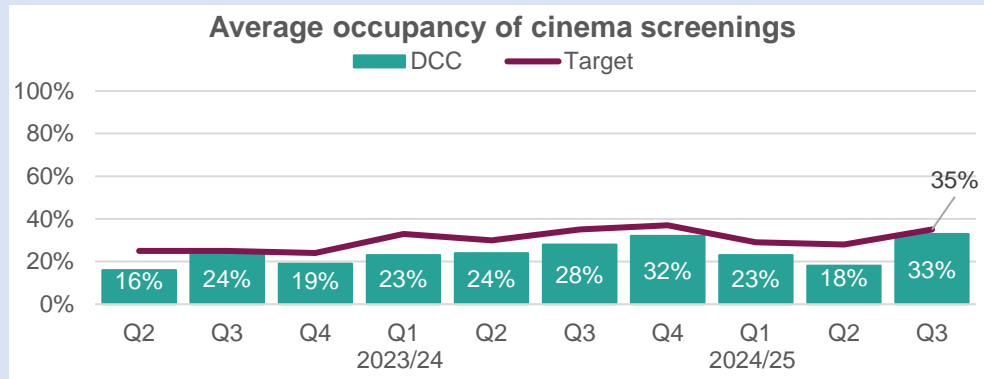
- **National Libraries Week.** Three "book to art" workshops attended by 34 adults.
- **Durham Book Festival.** Seven events at Clayport Library, attended by 119 adults and children. 'Little Reads' events at four libraries, attended by 114 adults and children.

- **Northern Children's Book Festival.** Four authors at five primary schools, attended by 718 children.
- **Author events.** Held in four libraries with local authors Susan Gray, Mark Turnbull, Kaz Hawes and Cait Stott. Attended by 86 people.
- **Kohima poetry workshops in partnership with The Story.** 65 people attended.
- **Partnership events with Gala Theatre and Bishop Auckland Town Hall theatre.** Six events attended by 99 people.
- **Durham Christmas Festival stories in different languages.** Partnership event with Durham University School of Modern Languages. 32 people attended.

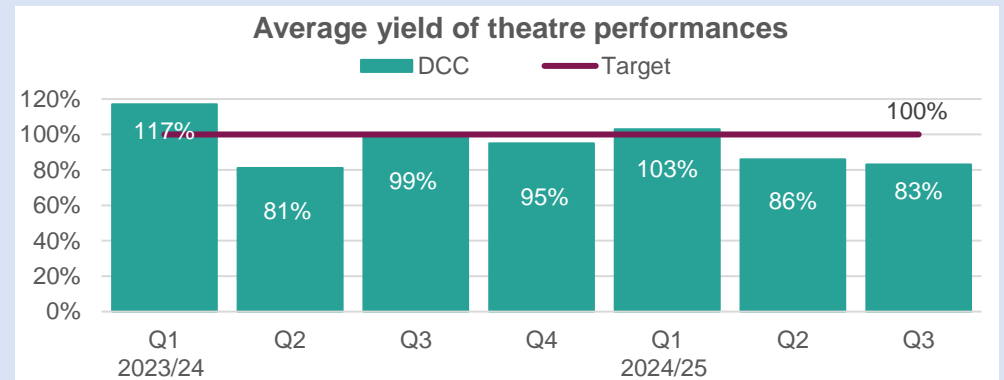
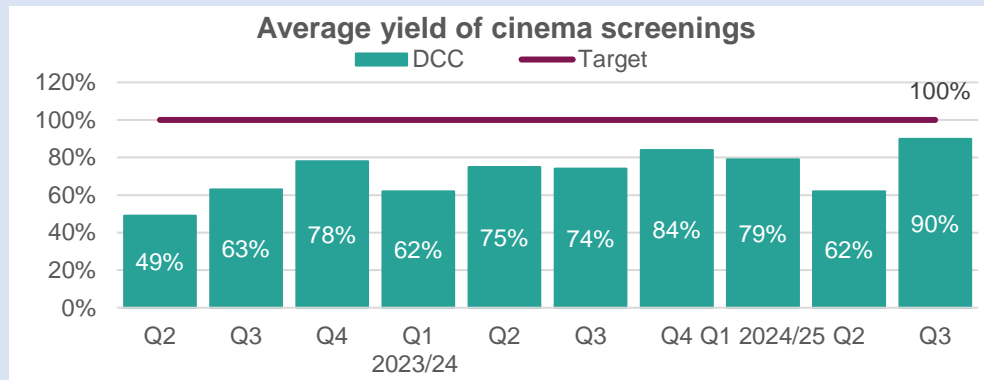
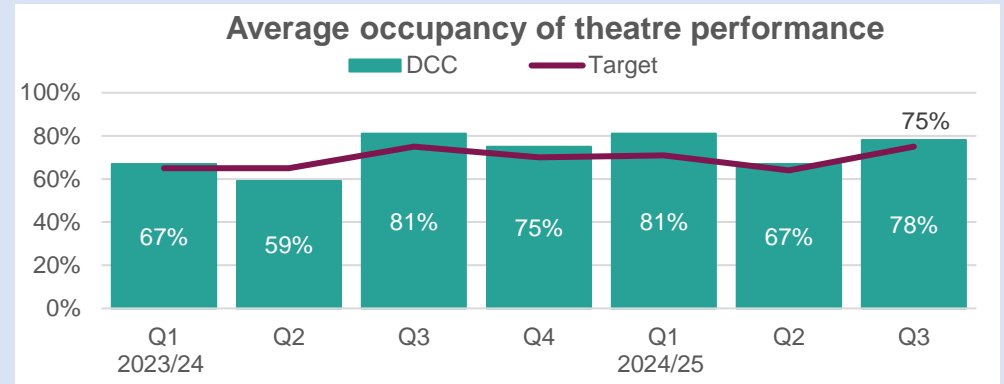
Cultural Offer Dashboard: cinemas and theatres

(discrete quarterly data)

Cinemas (Gala, Empire and BATH)



Theatres (Gala, Empire and BATH)



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

Occupancy = proportion of possible ticket sales achieved (based on venue capacity)
 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 below target this quarter (October to December) but better than the same period last year.

	October to December 2023	October to December 2024	Target
Occupancy	28%	33%	35%
Average Yield	74%	90%	100%

- 87 Improved performance on last year was due to a strong response to autumn blockbusters such as the films *Wicked*, *Paddington in Peru* and *Moana 2*.
- 88 Additionally, programmed event cinema particularly around Christmas proved popular, particularly at Gala with some films selling out.
- 89 The public lift at the Gala is out of service. This has impacted screenings with specific accessibility requirements such as 'Gala Seniors' and 'Bringing in baby'. A new lift is being installed and works will be completed in April.

Theatres: Gala, Bishop Auckland Town Hall and Empire

- 90 Average occupancy rate across all programmed theatre performances performed better than target this quarter (October to December). However, average yield was below target by 17 percentage points. Both were below the same period last year.

	October to December 2023	October to December 2024	Target
Occupancy	81%	78%	75%
Average Yield	99%	83%	100%

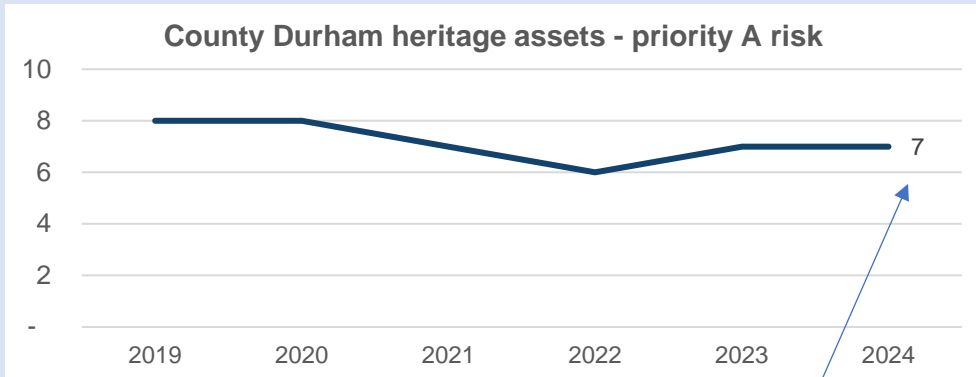
- 91 Panto at both Gala and Empire performed well. However, other shows in the autumn programme across all venues were less popular, impacting on the average occupancy and yield for the quarter.
- 92 Gala's produced Christmas show 'Breadcrumbs' at BATH sold 31% average capacity despite this being the fourth year of this show at the venue. BATH's theatre programme requires a review, particularly ahead of next Christmas. The audience development we expected regarding the Christmas show and other family audience targeted work did not translate into sales.

Cultural Offer Dashboard: heritage assets

(annual data released October 2024)

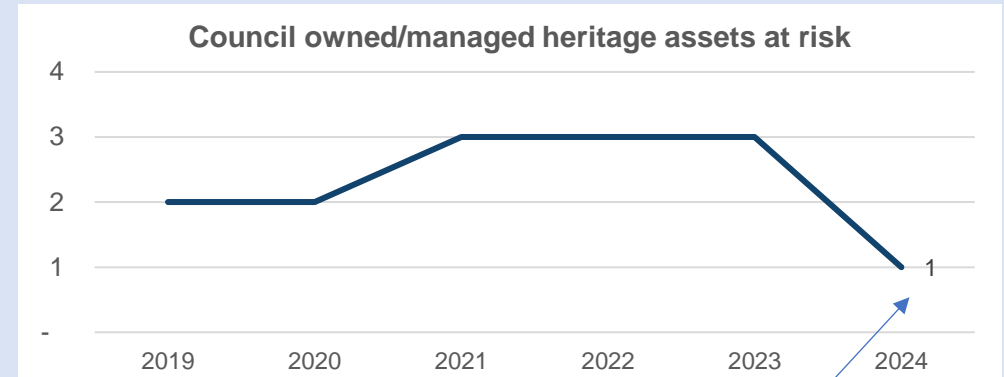
Heritage Assets – at risk

- The latest Historic England Heritage at Risk register for County Durham, released in October 2024, shows that there are 50 entries in the county. An overall reduction of one site from the 2023 register.
- Two sites have been removed, the Coal Drops, Shildon and the Grange and Chapel at Bearpark.
- One asset was added, the Locomotion One public house and east platform, Heighington Lane, Aycliffe.



The assets meeting the worst risk criteria (Priority A):

- Hedleyhill Colliery cokeworks
- Former Junior seminary chapel, Ushaw College
- Sherburn House bridge
- Middle level lead mine, Stanhope
- Harperley Working Camp
- Ushaw Home Farm
- Church of St Anne, Market Place, Bishop Auckland



Park Level Lead Mine, Killhope Burn - is the council owned/managed asset at risk.

Visitor Economy Dashboard

(annual data as at 31 December 2024)

Tourism Business Engagement

- Raising the profile of Durham as a premier county tourism destination is key to a strong and competitive economy and it is important that tourism related businesses and organisations work together for the success of our county and to grow the visitor economy.
- Latest data (December 2024) shows that there are 930 core tourism businesses across the county, the majority of which are accommodation providers (627).
- Fifty-four percent (503) of core tourism businesses are actively engaged with Visit County Durham (VCD) via our paid for partnership scheme, a deterioration compared to 2023 (56%, 520). This is primarily due to a loss of accommodation providers as a result of a local self-catering agency leaving the partnership and the natural churn of businesses owners retiring or ceasing to trade.
- Broader active engagement extends to all tourism businesses through local business support programmes and national initiatives targeted at the visitor economy. VCD also works with 42 supplier partners who provide B2B products and services to our tourism businesses. B2B refers to selling products and services directly between two businesses as opposed to between businesses and customers.

Tourism businesses in County Durham



Tourism businesses engaging with Visit County Durham



Note: Data prior to 2023 for engagement and core tourism businesses is not comparable due to change in methodology in relation to self-catering businesses.

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

- 93 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.
- 94 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.
- 95 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.
- 96 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. An update to the Simpler Recycling policy has been issued by Defra. Further modelling work is being undertaken to assess the implications.

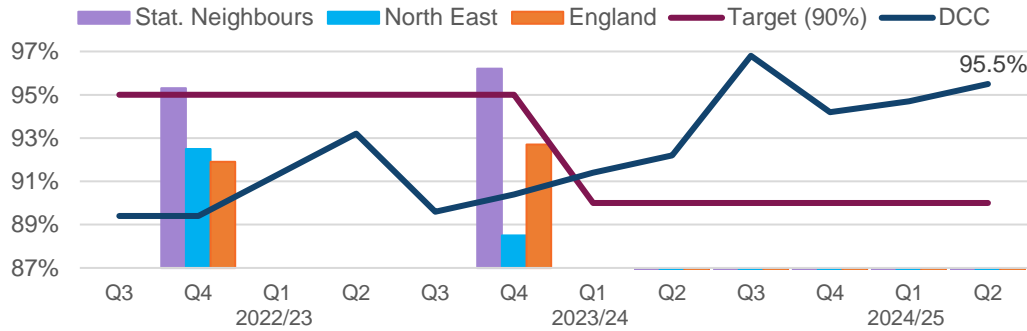
⁴ set into law in the Environment Act 2021

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

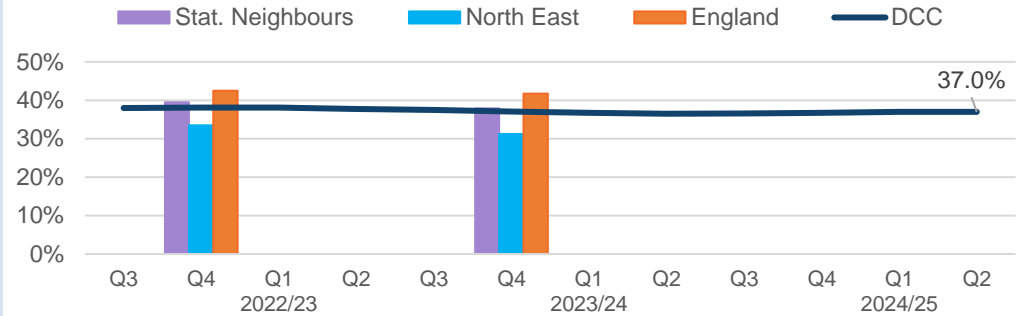
Waste Dashboard

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

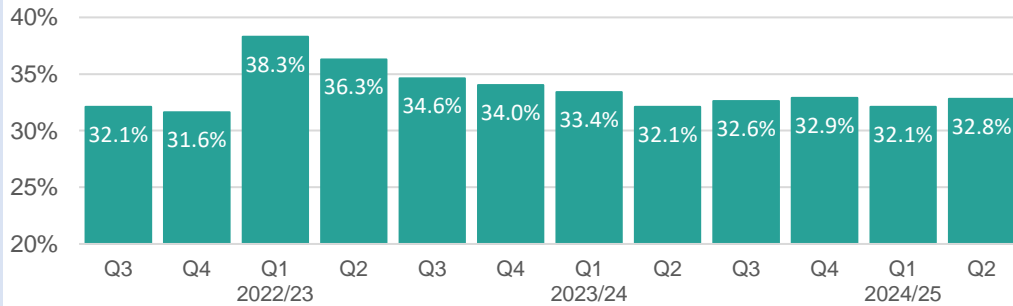
Waste diverted from landfill



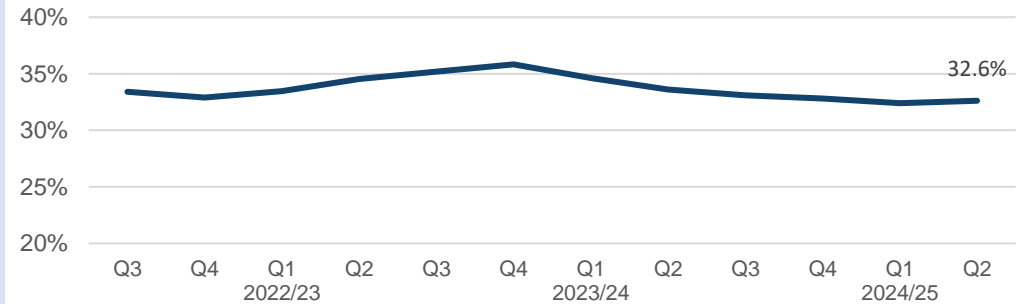
Recycling Rate



Contamination rate - quarterly rate



Contamination rate - 12 month trend



Bin was missed because they couldn't get into the street - however they came back every day until they could collect the bins and customer wanted to pass along her thanks for their persistence for emptying them.

Bin was damaged after last collection and without her even having to ring and report the crew arranged for the bin wheel to be repaired, she would like to commend the crew for their swift action.

Waste diverted from landfill

- 97 We collected 256,421 tonnes of waste during the last 12 months ending September 2024. Sustained performance at the waste processing facilities led to us diverting 95.5% from landfill. This equates to 11,660 tonnes being landfilled. Performance is better than both our target of 90%, and the 92.2% achieved last year.
- 98 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. 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

- 99 During the last 12 months (October 2023-September 2024), 37% of household waste we collected was sent for recycling. This is slightly better than the 36.5% recorded during the previous 12 months. Recycling of WEEE and vapes and at our Household Waste Recycling Centres has increased. However, the wetter spring and poorer summer seasons in 2024 reduced the quantity of material available for composting.
- 100 Latest benchmarks (2022/23 financial year) show our performance to be significantly better than the North East average, we are lower than the national average.
- 101 We continue to promote recycling to our residents through our 'What Goes Where' campaign and other initiatives such as:
- 163 collection points for Waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE);
 - repair cafés which recycle and repair small electrical and battery-operated items;
 - 77 vape collection points; and,
 - events including supporting Recycle Week with visits to primary schools and "Green Move In" encouraging 'live out' university students in Durham City to recycle.
- 102 Food waste collections for trade waste customers are due to commence in April 2025. Vehicles have been ordered to handle this additional waste stream and contract preparation is underway for the disposal of this waste.

Contamination of recyclate waste

- 103 During the 12 months (October 2023-September 2024), 32.6% of recyclate waste was contaminated. This is better than the previous year (33.6%, October 2022-September 2023) and lower than the peak of 35.8% recorded in the 12 months ending March 2023. Quarterly contamination rates have stabilised at around 32% over the past 15 months.
- 104 This reduction was driven by schemes such as WEEE, our 'What Goes Where' campaign, and the issuing of 14,268 notices for contaminated blue bins in the year ending December 2024.

Air Quality Dashboard

(annual data)

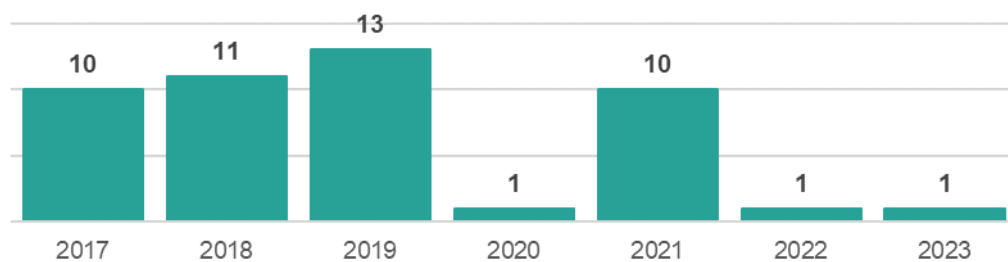
Durham City Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)

Within the Durham City AQMA there are 28 monitored sites.

Only one, Gilesgate Bank, is above the government threshold of $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Latest data shows it to be $42.5\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

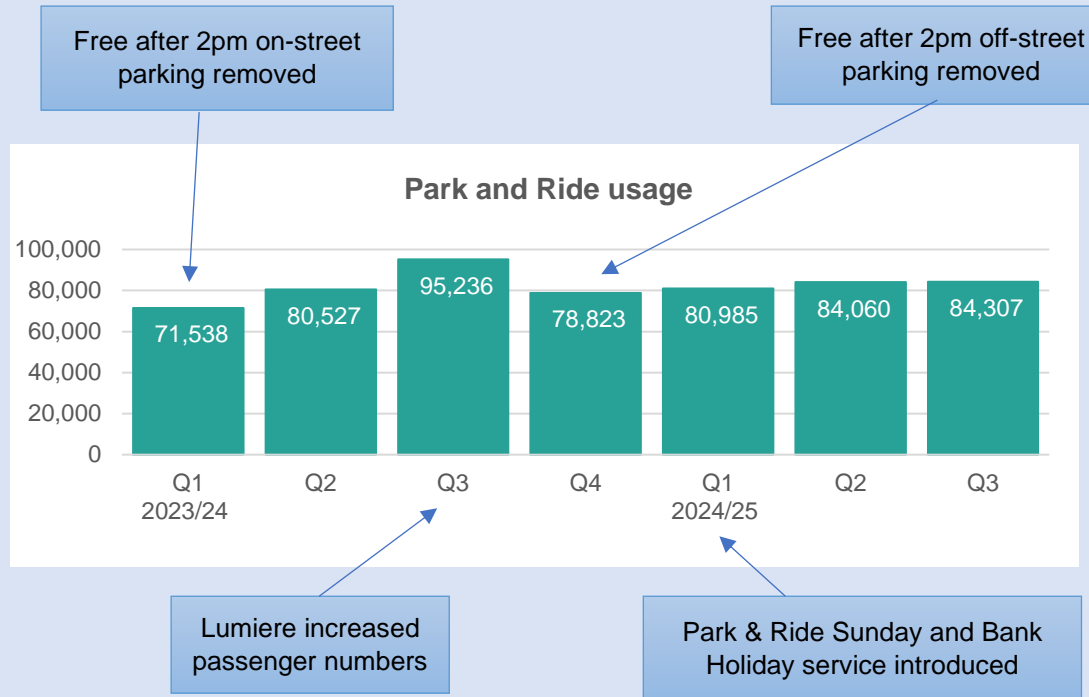
Planned actions to further improve air quality across the Durham City AQMA include expanding the city's Park and Ride sites and encouraging the uptake of Electric Vehicles (EVs) by providing more EV charging and EV filling stations.

Durham City Air Quality Management Area
Sites with NO_2 levels above the govt threshold of $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$



Sustainable Transport and Active Travel Dashboard

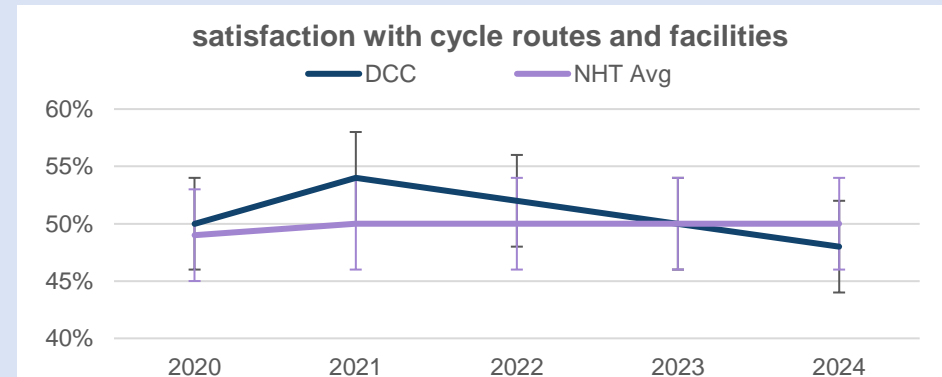
(12 months ending 31 December 2024 / discrete quarterly data)



Satisfaction with cycle routes

National Highways and Transport Survey (NHT Survey)

- Latest data shows satisfaction with cycle routes and facilities is in line with the national average (within confidence intervals +/- 3 percentage points).
- We continue to improve cycling and walking routes to make them more usable and safer for people, including new or improved cycle routes, space for pedestrians, quality surfaces, better crossing and junctions and direct and connected routes.



Park and ride usage

- 105 Between October and December 2024, 84,307 passengers used our park and ride, 11% less than the same period last year. The main reason for the decrease is due to Lumiere taking place in November 2023. Data prior to 2023/24 is unavailable to enable a more accurate comparison to a non-Lumiere year to be made.
- 106 The park and ride metric has changed from passenger journeys recorded by the operator to individual passengers verified through electronic payments which has improved data quality.
- 107 Since the park and ride Sunday and Bank Holiday service was introduced In April 2024 there has been approximately 4,000 Sunday/bank holiday passengers per quarter.

Satisfaction with cycle routes

- 108 Latest data shows satisfaction with cycle routes and facilities is in line with the national average (within confidence intervals +/- 3 percentage points).
- 109 To improve cycle routes, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) have been adopted in Bishop Auckland, Chester-le-Street, Consett, Crook, Durham City, Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee, Seaham, Spennymoor, Shildon and Stanley.
- 110 LCWIP scheme designs are being prepared for priority routes within each of our 11 adopted LCWIPS.
- 111 We are also planning and implementing walking, wheeling and cycling across the county through funded programmes such as Transforming Cities in Durham City and through the Spennymoor Towns Fund award.
- 112 We are delivering behaviour change initiatives to promote a positive mode shift onto active modes with our partners, including Love to Ride, Park that Bike, Recyke Y'Bike and Borrow a Bike
- 113 Active Travel Schemes completed with accessible facilities and wide, high quality surfaces for pedestrians, cyclists, and wheelchair and pushchair users include:
- Section of the C2C at Blackhill Consett
 - The Auckland Way – Spennymoor to Bishop Auckland
 - South Hetton to Pesspool Wood
 - Hurworth Burn Reservoir
 - Seaham to Wynyard
 - Ryhope to Seaham.

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

- 114 The [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill](#) is progressing through parliament. It introduces significant changes aimed at improving the education system and safeguarding children in the UK.
- 115 One of the key provisions is the requirement for parents of certain children to obtain local authority consent before withdrawing them from school for home education. Local authorities will also be mandated to maintain a register of children not in school and can issue School Attendance Orders if they believe a child is not receiving suitable education. This move is intended to ensure that all children receive appropriate education and care, with a higher burden placed on parents to justify home-schooling.
- 116 In terms of school admissions, the Bill requires schools and local authorities to cooperate more closely. Local authorities will have the power to direct academies to admit children, aligning the rules for maintained schools and academies. This change is part of a broader effort to streamline the education system and ensure consistency in educational standards. Additionally, academies will be required to teach the National Curriculum, and academy trusts will have the authority to direct pupils off-site to improve behaviour. The Bill also repeals the duty to make an Academy Order for 'Schools Causing Concern,' giving the Secretary of State discretionary power to address such issues.
- 117 The Bill addresses the financial burden of school uniforms by limiting the number of branded items schools can require, which aims to ease the pressure on families. Furthermore, it mandates that schools provide free breakfast clubs for pupils up to the age of 12, including childcare and breakfast, to support children's well-being and readiness for learning.

- 118 Phase nine of the [ADCS Safeguarding Pressures research](#) was published in January 2025 which draws on quantitative data from 124 local authorities, qualitative survey returns from 86 local authorities plus interviews with over 34 senior leaders of children's services.
- 119 The trend across most domains of safeguarding activity, from initial contacts, referrals and children in need to child protection plans and care entrants, remains broadly on an upwards trajectory over the duration of this research from 2007 to date.
- 120 Some changes in safeguarding activity which have not previously been seen, or not seen to this extent, include:
- The lasting **impact of Covid-19** on children and young people's lives and on their outcomes is increasingly visible in growing levels of mental health need among children plus their parents and carers, via heightened inequalities, deteriorating behaviour in schools resulting in rising exclusions as well as social and developmental delays in younger children.
 - Multiple **housing** concerns were raised in terms of children and families being unable to access good quality housing, overcrowding, the growing use of temporary accommodation and the unaffordability of housing contributing to family distress and breakdown against the backdrop of a cost-of-living crisis.
 - A range of **health challenges** were flagged in the research, from the impact of delayed access to assessment or treatment plans for children and for parents and carers, particularly for alcohol and substance misuse as well as for mental health.
- 121 Other notable trends included poverty, placements for children in care, pressures in the SEND system, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, assessments for child sexual exploitation, trafficking and gangs and children's online activity.

Adult Social Care

- 122 The government has set out a plan to [transform adult social care](#) and to support the workforce. This includes improving the use of care technology to support older people to live independently at home for longer, through improving data sharing between the NHS and social care organisations, as well as improved career pathways for care workers and new national standards to ensure providers and families use the best care technology.
- 123 These plans include supporting care workers to take on further duties to deliver health interventions, such as blood pressure checks, meaning people can receive more routine checks and care at home without needing to travel to healthcare settings. The national career structure for care staff will also be expanded, ensuring there are opportunities for career progression and development pathways. It is expected that this will increase worker morale and the retention of care workers, alongside improved outcomes for patients.
- 124 The government will develop a shared digital platform to allow up-to-date medical information to be shared between the NHS and care staff, including when someone last took their medication, to ensure people receive the best possible care.
- 125 It is hoped that these changes will support the adult social care sector to give people the best possible care in the most appropriate place. It will also deliver on the government's [Plan for Change](#) by reducing the amount of time patients spend in hospital.

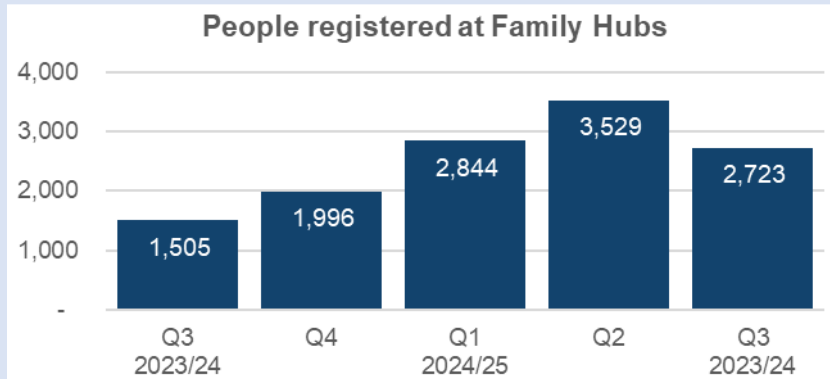
- 126 The government also announced an additional £86 million to the Disabled Facilities Grant for the current financial year. This will allow more disabled and elderly people to make improvements to their home which should allow them to live independently at home for longer.
- 127 An independent commission into adult social care has been launched by the government. Chaired by Baroness Louise Casey, it will work with service users, families, staff, private and third sector organisations to make clear recommendations for how to rebuild the adult social care system to meet the current and future needs of the population.
- 128 The commission will work across two phases; initially to identify the issues facing adult social care and to set out recommendations for effective reform and improvement in the medium term. A report on this phase will be published in 2026. The second phase, reporting by 2028, will make longer-term recommendations with a focus on the model of care needed to address our ageing population, how services should be organised to deliver this, and how to best create a fair and affordable adult social care system.
- 129 The [Better Care Fund policy framework](#) has been published setting out the objectives, conditions and funding arrangements for 2025/26. This will support local systems to deliver integrated health and social care in a way that supports patients and delivers better outcomes. The objectives reflect the government's commitment to reform via a shift from sickness to prevention and from hospital to home.

Supporting Children, Young People and Families Dashboard: Early Help and Statutory Demand

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

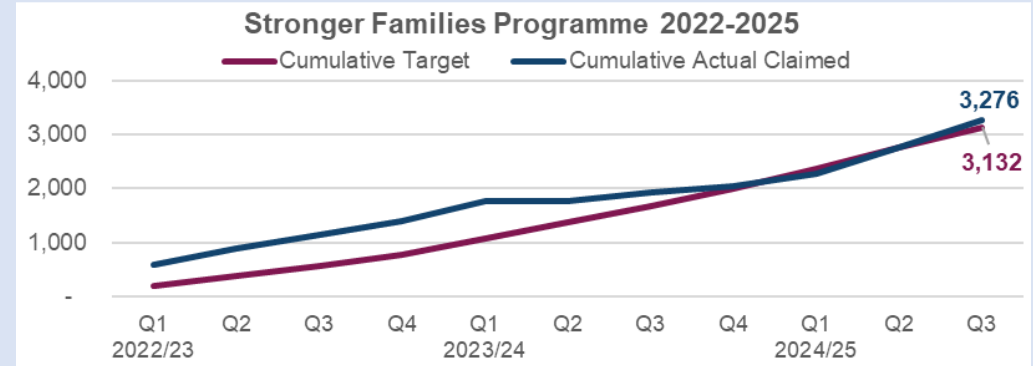
Early Help

- Demand has remained consistent, in part due to a change in operating model with more partner led early help assessments.
- Between September 2023 and December 2024: 12,742 people had registered with a Family Hub (4,900 families), including 1,898 children unborn or aged 0-6 months.

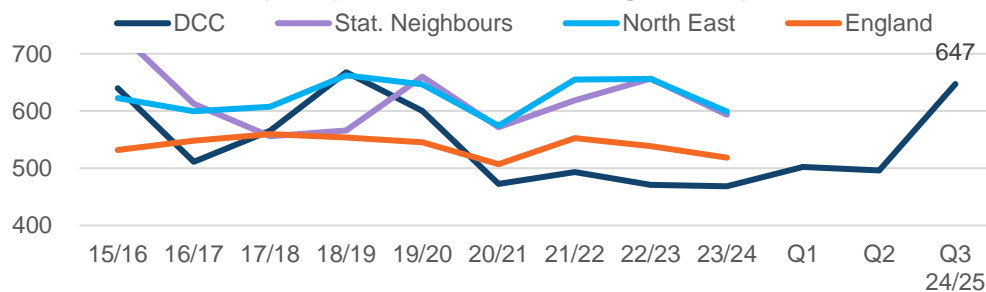


Stronger Families Programme

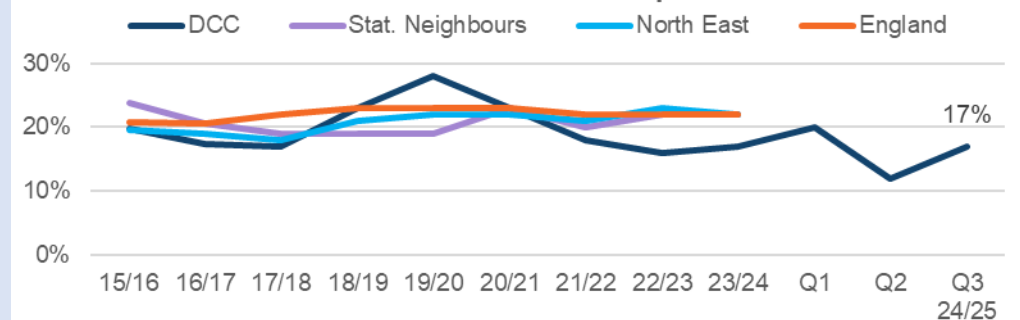
- To date, we have supported 9,168 families through the Stronger Families programme since it started.
- By the end of quarter three, 1,264 families (83% of the annual target) had successfully achieved outcomes for this financial year, equating to 3,276 since April 2022.



Referrals to children's social care (rate per 10,000 children aged 0-17)



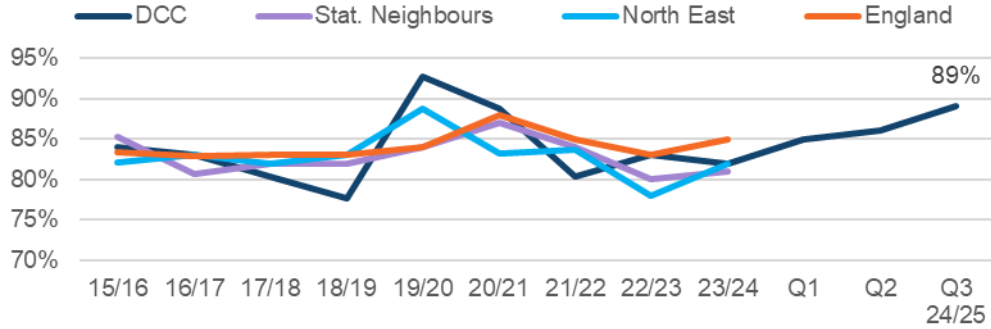
CSC Re-referrals within 12 months of previous referral



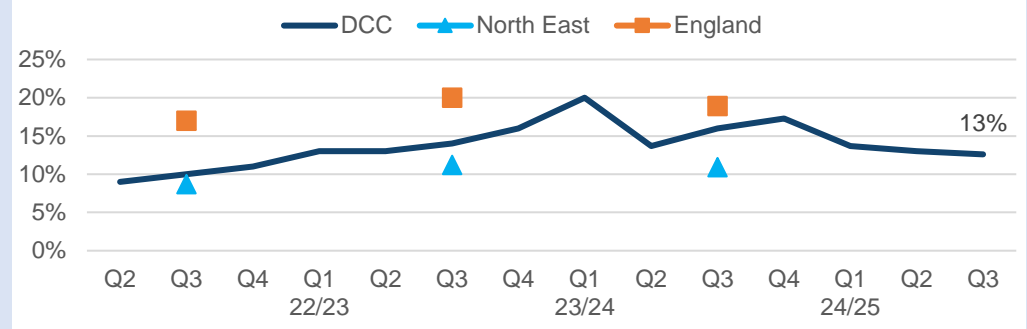
Children's Social Care Dashboard: assessments, protection plans, in need, vacancies

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

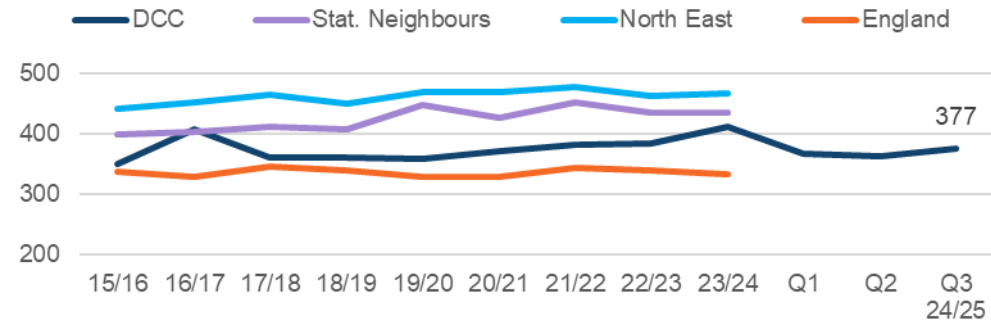
CSC assessments completed within 45 days



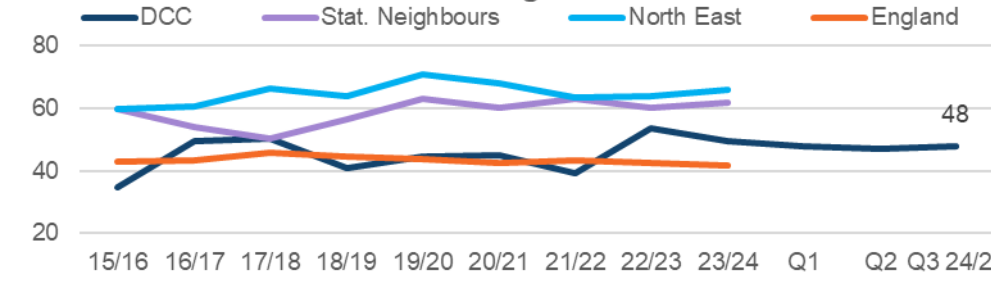
social worker vacancies



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

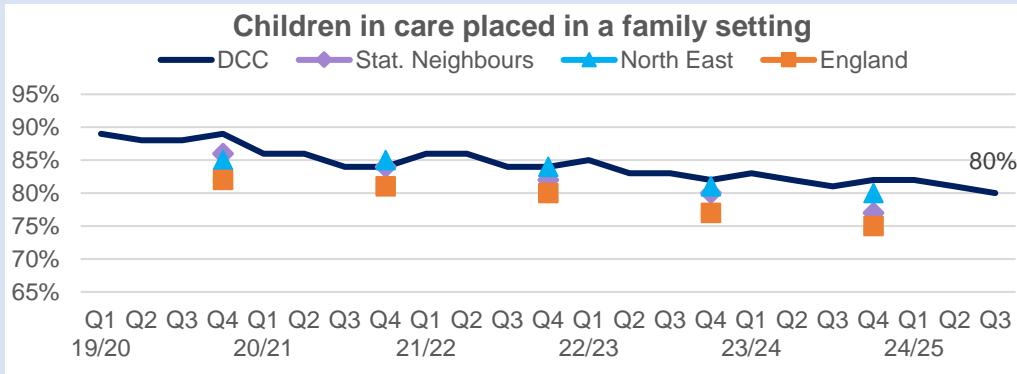


Open Child Protection Plan per 10,000 children aged 0-17

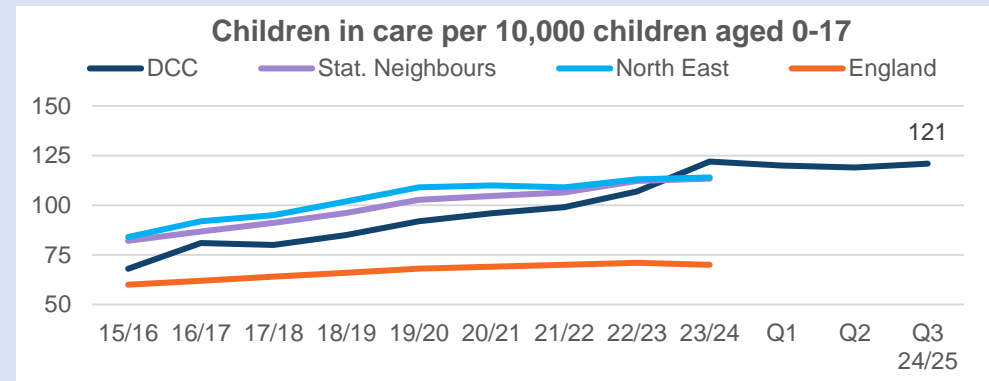
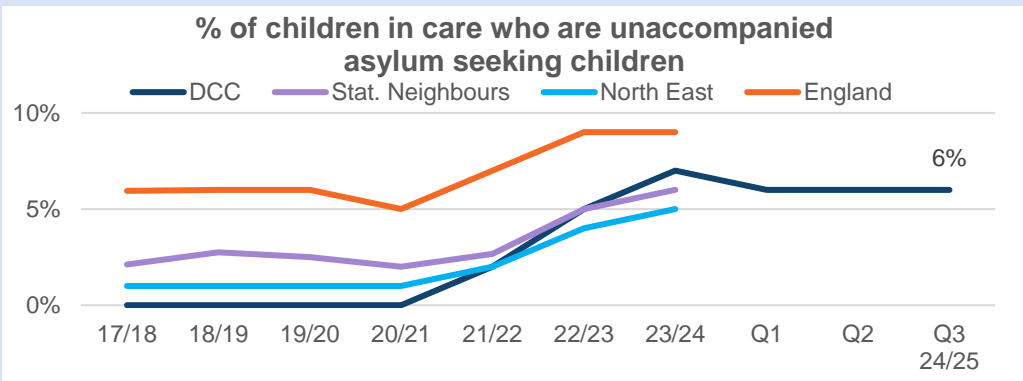


Children's Social Care Dashboard: in care, unaccompanied asylum seeking children

(12 months ending 31 December 2024/ at 31 December 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

130 Overall demand for early help has remained consistent however we experienced an increase in statutory social care referrals in quarter three.

Early Help Assessments

- 131 We have developed (with key partners, children, young people, parents, and carers) a new Early Help Assessment for partners. It is based on an existing practice model and provides a richer picture of early help offered and its impact.
- 132 From its launch in October 2022 until December 2024, 4,559 forms have been submitted through the Children’s Services Portal. Of these, 3,493 forms (77%) were from partners who had initiated an assessment and were requesting a review from the Early Help Triage team, and 730 (16%) were from partners informing us they were leading on support for families as Lead Professional where there is a Team Around the Family (TAF). Of the 3,493 forms, 53% were from education and 27% were from health organisations.
- 133 During quarter three (October to December), 567 forms were submitted through the Children’s Services Portal. Of these, 505 forms (89%) were from partners who had initiated an assessment and were requesting a review from the Early Help Triage Team, and 39 forms (7%) were from partners informing us they were leading on support for families as Lead Professional where there is a TAF. Of the 505 forms, 54% were from education and 29% were from health organisations.

Locality Early Help Conversations (LEHCs)

- 134 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.
- 135 During quarter three (October to December) we held 84 LEHCs which resulted in 203 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

136 To date⁶, we have supported 9,168 families through the Stronger Families programme. The target for eligible families achieving all sustained outcomes has steadily increased – doubling since 2022/23.

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

137 In October 2023, a new national Family Outcome Framework was introduced. It now 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 or more headlines of identified need are now required (was previously two), and all identified needs require an outcome (previously only one was required for some headlines). Consequently, it is more

⁶ from its start in 2015 to the end of December 2024

challenging to meet the agreed target, but we are confident of achieving it with the system and operational changes we have made.

- 138 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 achieving targets.
- 139 During quarter three (October to December), 511 families were claimed, bringing the total for the financial year to 1,264 (83% of annual target achieved). The target for the last remaining quarter (January to March) of the financial year is 258, at which point the Stronger Families Programme will come to an end and this metric will no longer be reported
- 140 From March to December 2024, 298 families were supported to make successful welfare benefit applications, free school meal applications, and benefit appeals and tribunals, totalling £126,669. A further £52,600 was awarded to families where benefit awards were incorrect or hadn't been paid from the correct assessment period.

Family Hubs

- 141 Our Family Hubs deliver a broad range of activity and support. During the 2024/25 autumn term (September to December), this included:

Emotional Wellbeing and Behaviour Programme: 118 children completed a programme:

Parenting Programmes: 66 people completed a programme:

Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities (a parent-led suite of programmes):

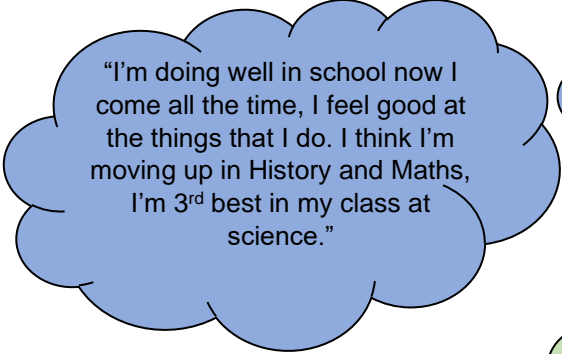
- 142 During quarter three (October to December) 1,222 individuals attended one or more **Baby & Me (under 1s) and Toddler & Me (1–2-year-olds) sessions**. The combined attendance of these sessions was 4,525 (average of just under four sessions each).
- 143 From April 2023 to December 2024, we worked with the families of 222 children from the antenatal period until a child is 2½ years old, using our Enhanced Parenting Support Pathway (EPSP). Early Help Practitioners use Family Hubs to support vulnerable families. During quarter three (October to December), this service worked with the families of 38 children.
- 144 From December 2023 to December 2024, we provided the families of 61 children with pre-birth Family Hub support. This includes 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 Workers assessment. During quarter three (October to December), this service worked with the families of 12 children.
- 145 We continue to provide targeted support for domestic abuse, co-delivered with Harbour Support Services. During quarter three (October to December), 19 parents attended Inspire, and seven mums completed You and Me Mum (YAMM). Three mothers and three children completed the Domestic Abuse Recovering Together (DART) programme.
- 146 During quarter three (October to December), 33 children, young people, and their parent / carer were referred for Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA) support. Of these, 21 were offered Respect Young People's Programme in response to CAPVA, and 12 were provided alternative support for CAPVA and wider domestic abuse issues.

147 A total of 412 children, aged 2 and 3 years old, were vaccinated at flu vaccination clinics held in Family Hubs across the county.

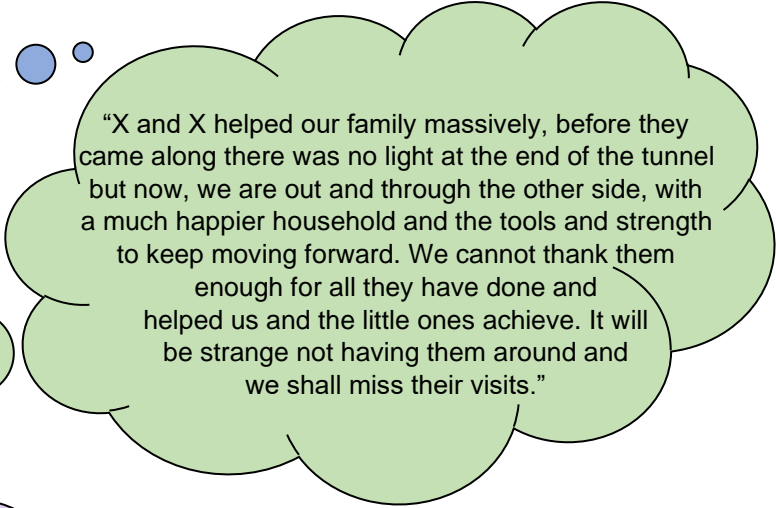
Customer feedback

148 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 three from service users remains positive:

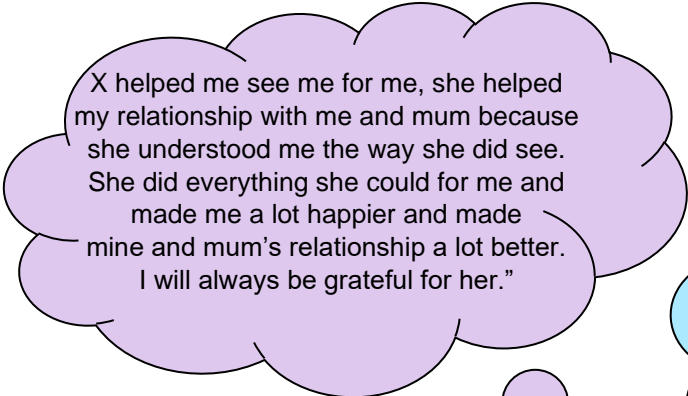
- 100% of parent/carers and 98% of young people are happy or very happy with the support received.
- 99% of parents/carers and 98% of young people felt services worked well or very well together to meet the needs of their family.



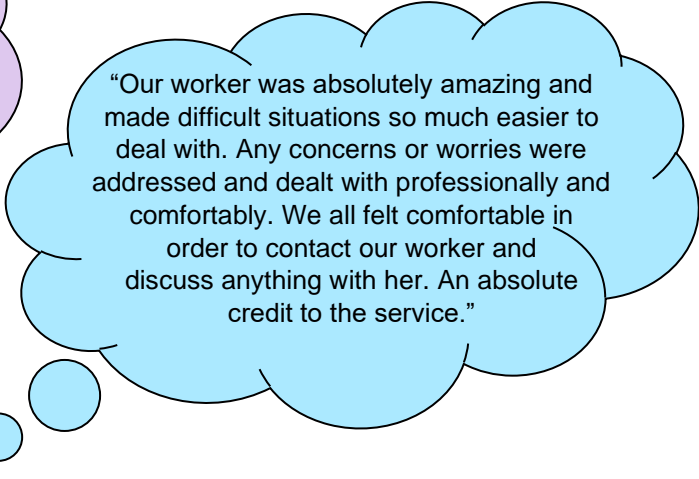
"I'm doing well in school now I come all the time, I feel good at the things that I do. I think I'm moving up in History and Maths, I'm 3rd best in my class at science."



"X and X helped our family massively, before they came along there was no light at the end of the tunnel but now, we are out and through the other side, with a much happier household and the tools and strength to keep moving forward. We cannot thank them enough for all they have done and helped us and the little ones achieve. It will be strange not having them around and we shall miss their visits."



X helped me see me for me, she helped my relationship with me and mum because she understood me the way she did see. She did everything she could for me and made me a lot happier and made mine and mum's relationship a lot better. I will always be grateful for her."



"Our worker was absolutely amazing and made difficult situations so much easier to deal with. Any concerns or worries were addressed and dealt with professionally and comfortably. We all felt comfortable in order to contact our worker and discuss anything with her. An absolute credit to the service."

Children's Social Care

149 Referrals increased in quarter three. Late autumn tends to be the busiest time for statutory care referrals but this year's demand for support has been the highest since 2019. Many areas within Durham experienced an increase in demand but the referrals increased most in the south of the county.

150 Further analysis of the source of referral shows that while the number of referrals from the police increased since last year increases in other categories were greater. This led to a proportional increase in referrals from Health Services and Schools and a decrease in Police referrals.

Referrals by Source

	Oct-Dec 2023	Oct-Dec 2024
Police	484 (41%)	558 (35%)
Health Services	178 (15%)	294 (18%)
Schools	133 (11%)	273 (11%)

- 151 The service continues 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. Further analysis will be undertaken through the First Contact and MASH Partnership.
- 152 Despite the increase in referrals resulting in some caseloads being higher than we would like, other performance indicates the system is working well, with strong performance in re-referrals, visiting, Section 47 and assessment timeliness. 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.
- 153 Improved practice across statutory children's social care has led to a consistently low re-referral rate. Although increased in quarter three (17%) this remains better than latest benchmarks and sits alongside a high number of referrals. This means fewer children and their families require further support from safeguarding services following support.

Children in Care

- 154 At the end of December, we had 1,208 children in care, slightly higher than the number recorded at the end of September (1,187) but numbers have been stable at around 1,200 for the last year. The North East has the highest rate in England and County Durham is slightly higher than the latest North East average.
- 155 The number of children in care has been increasing over time but over the last year the increase has plateaued. Care is complex and there are several factors influencing this change in trend. Throughout 2024/25 the number of children entering has reduced compared to last year's high and the number of children leaving an episode of care has increased slightly.
- 156 During 2023/24 we also reached our allocation for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) as part of national relocation plans which means referrals have slowed. At the end of December, 68 children in our care were UASC which equates to just under 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 of UASC in Care	20	58	79
% of total	2%	5%	6%

- 157 While growth in the overall number of children in care has plateaued, it should be noted that this area remains a challenging and a strategic priority. More children in care with complex needs has resulted in more high-cost placements. 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. A Sufficiency Statement is being developed as part of refreshed Corporate Parenting Strategy which is due to get final sign off at Cabinet in the Autumn.

- 158 Work is underway to refresh and renew the work programme and governance through the Durham Cares board with a continued focus on;
- supporting children and young people to live outside of care through our Edge of Care and family reunification work,
 - increasing sufficiency of family based homes through growing our in-house fostering capacity and reducing placement breakdowns,
 - improving sufficiency, mix and quality of local residential children's homes through creating our own provision, including an edge of care home,
 - looking for opportunities to make the cost of care more sustainable through working with independent fostering agencies and independent residential children's homes providers.
- 159 This new framework continues the council's commitment 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.
- 160 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 32 to 53 beds. This does not include our short break respite beds for disabled children which will provide a further eight beds.
- 161 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).
- 162 An Edge of Care home should be open in 2025; 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.
- 163 We have secured Department for Education 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.

Recruitment

- 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.
- 165 The majority of our NQSWs start their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) in autumn each year. This year we welcomed 37 NQSW and are already mid recruitment for more.
- 166 Our NQSW's have a protected caseload within the first 12 months and a comprehensive programme of CPD assessed by portfolio.

- 167 We held our annual ASYE celebration in December celebrating with 36 Social workers. The 2023/24 cohort completing their programme and undertaking section 47 training.
- 168 National changes for agency social workers appointments came into force in October 2024 to 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, continuing to encourage 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.
- 169 Where we have social workers who have qualified overseas, we are able to offer them the BASW overseas coaching and development programme and we have two people accessing this at present.
- 170 We await guidance and consultation from government about the plans for a national five-year early career development programme, the two-year social work induction programme and the refreshed post qualifying standards as part of care reforms.
- 171 To help us recruit more NQSWs we are continuing 'Grow our own' to invest in supporting social work qualifications through:
- Social work apprenticeship scheme. Ten 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 and recruitment is underway for the next cohort
 - Partnering with Frontline – Approach Social Work. We have nine participants from autumn 2024. These should qualify and join us as NQSWs in autumn 2025. We are recruiting for 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.
- 172 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 and continues
- 173 We have developed two new practice lead roles to support practice – one focussing on anti-racist practice and another focussing on domestic abuse.
- 174 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.

- 175 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.
- 176 The leadership academy programme this year has created space for managers to explore onboarding, leaving well and the needs of neurodivergent staff.
- 177 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. We continue to review this and have commissioned a new clinical supervision training offer for managers.
- 178 We have received some feedback from parents about our social workers.

"GW is an amazing social worker and helped us hugely. We had the best relationship and always felt at ease in her presence she always went above and beyond and is a massive credit to your team".

From a parent

"I am just emailing as I wanted you both to know how brilliant we found working alongside L.

L was fantastic to work with, she had brilliant communication and was extremely approachable and supportive.

KA had a positive relationship with L, and this shone through during her visits."

From a carer

Ms Ws' devotion to J has shone through and it is my view that J's positive progress is a testament to the thoughtfulness and support offered by Ms W throughout."

From a solicitor

'She was mint and I will miss her'

From a child

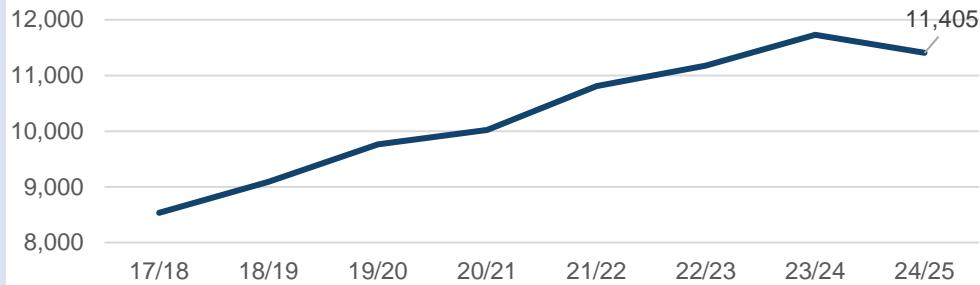
'Our social worker KT has been brilliant throughout as has all those we have come in to contact with, you all do an amazing job and such a valuable one.

Just to reiterate how incredible our social worker KT was. We will never forget her support, professionalism, friendship and kindness.' **From a parent**

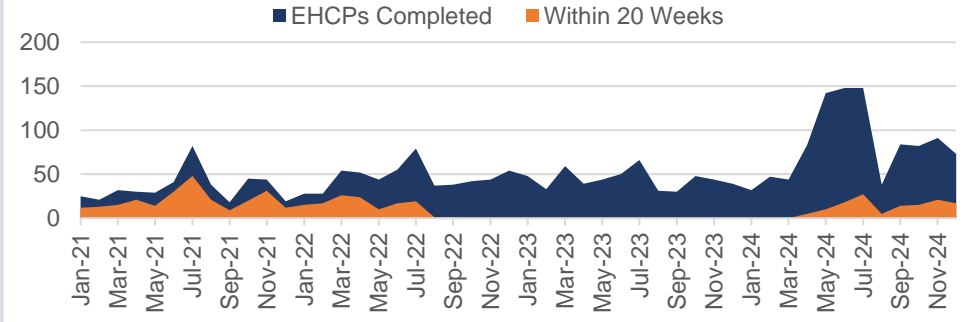
SEND Dashboard

(12 months rolling / annual data)

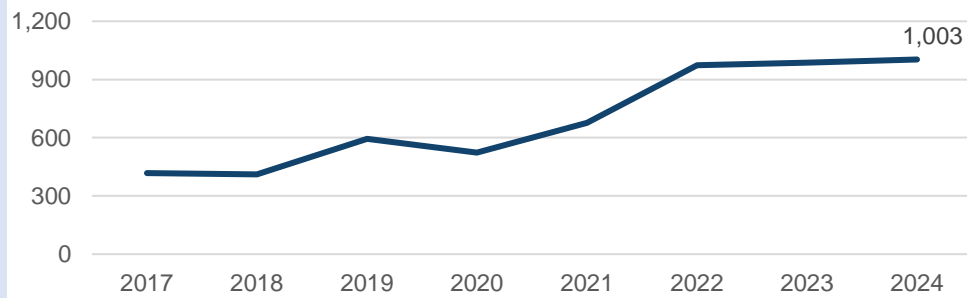
Pupils receiving SEN support



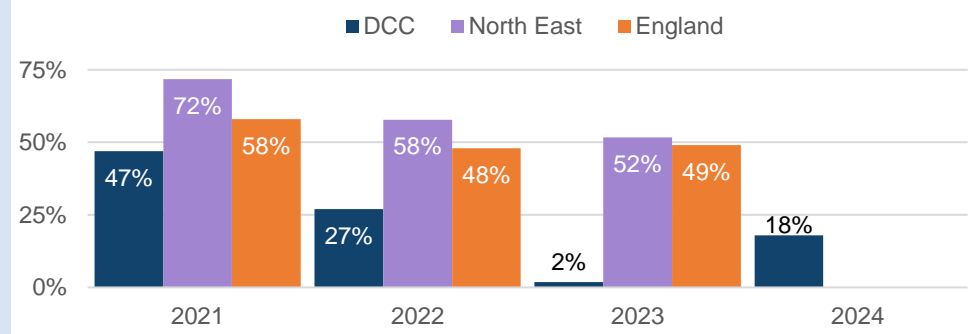
Number of EHCPs Completed Each Month



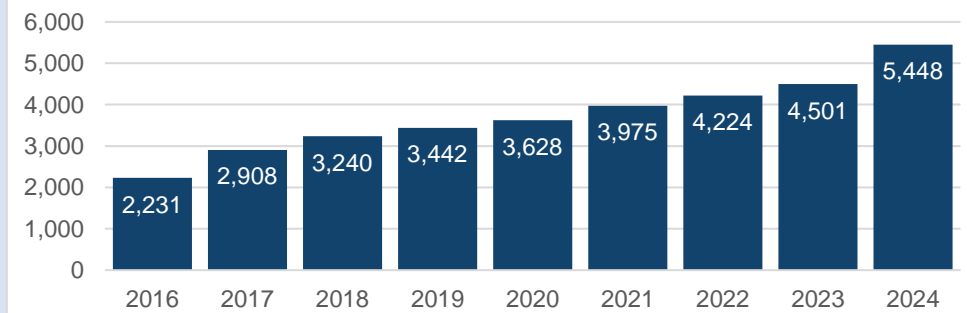
New Requests for an EHCP



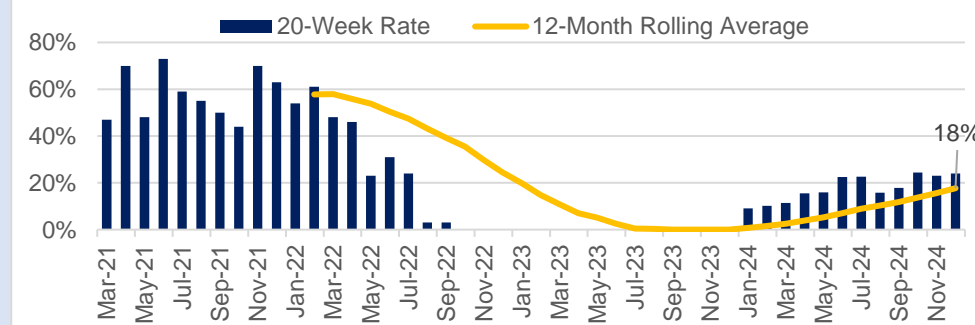
EHCPs completed within 20 weeks



Total EHCPs by Year



20-Week EHCP Timeliness

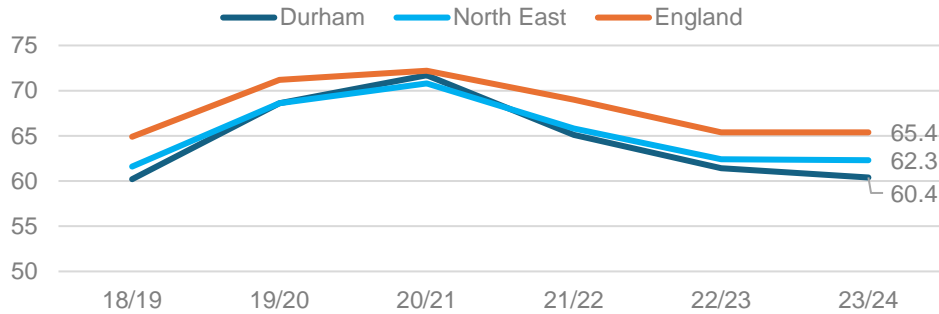


Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

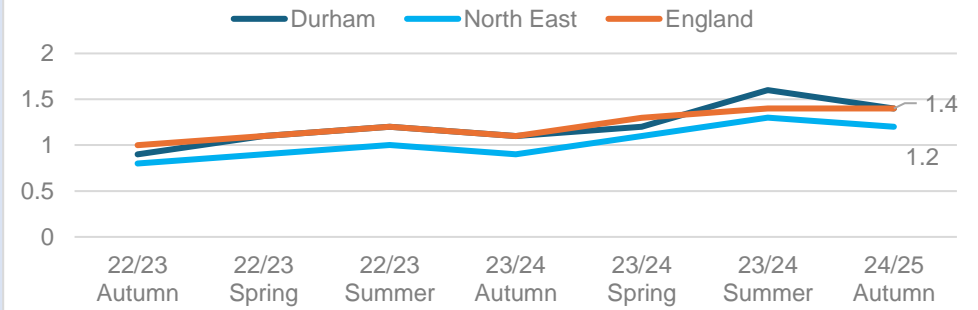
- 179 Requests for new EHCPs have significantly increased in recent years. On average, during 2019, we received 50 requests each month, we now receive over 80. By the end of quarter three, we have received 1,003 EHCP requests across the calendar year, 6% higher than the same period last year, and considerably higher than pre-pandemic levels.
- 180 Detailed analysis has identified that demand in the typical age phase, aged 8-9 and 10-11 years, has remained relatively constant. The rise in requests is from a new age phase where requests for assessment are being made for children aged 3 to 6 years. Work with schools to revisit the graduated approach to meet needs earlier has helped to reduce school requests for assessment, however parent requests for assessment have increased significantly.
- 181 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, the number of open assessments is reducing, and our timeliness figures are improving. In December, 23% of EHCPs were issued within 20 weeks, 18% throughout 2024.
- 182 Quarter three saw the number of plans issued increase compared to quarter two as expected. 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.

Education Dashboard

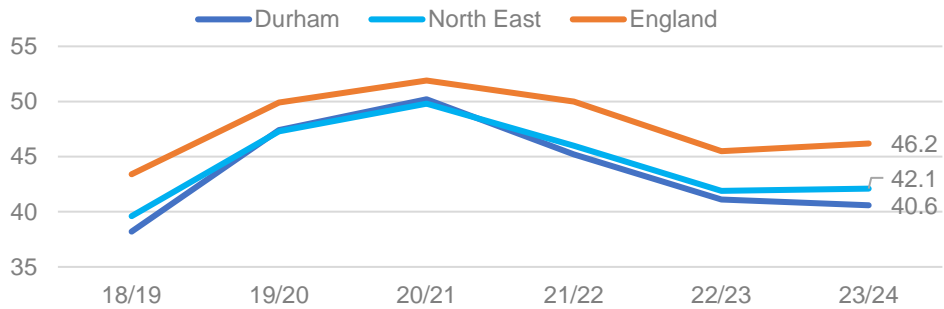
Percentage Grade 4+ English & Maths KS4



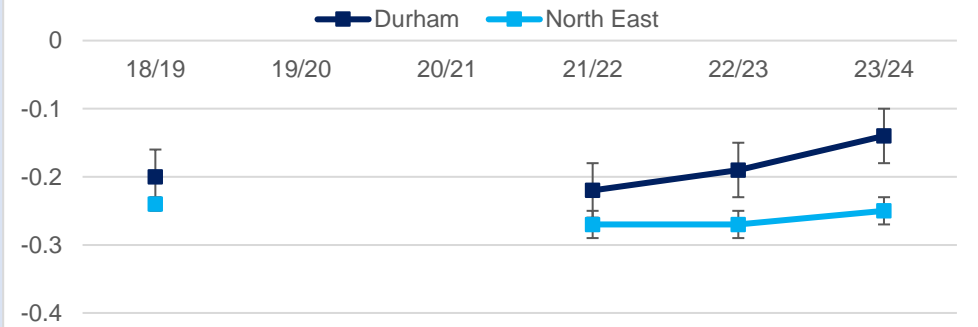
EHE Rate by Population



Percentage Grade 5+ English and Maths



KS4 Progress 8



Attainment

- 183 Overall GCSE outcomes for those students achieving 4+ and 5+ grades in English and Mathematics reduced slightly compared the previous academic year. Latest data shows 40.6% of Durham students achieved a grade 5 or higher in both English and maths in the academic year that ended in July 2024, down from 41.9% from the previous year. Similarly, 60.4% of Durham students achieved a grade 4 or higher in both English and maths in the academic year that ended in July 2024, down from 61.4% from the previous year. On both those measures but we remain similar to but slightly below the North East average.
- 184 However, GCSE outcomes alone fail to tell the wider story about attainment in Durham. Progress 8 scores for Durham show continued improvement in distance travelled when compared on a like for like basis with national cohorts. Durham outperforms the North East average on this wider measure.
- 185 Progress 8 is complex but broader measure of attainment used to evaluate the progress students make from the end of primary school (Key Stage 2) to the end of secondary school (Key Stage 4), based on their GCSE results. It compares students' GCSE scores across eight subjects to the national average of students with similar prior attainment, providing a value-added assessment of school performance. This measure encourages a broad curriculum and focuses on the progress of all students, not just those on grade boundaries.
- 186 We continue to work in partnership with schools, academies and trusts ensuring that Durham young people have access to high quality teaching and learning. We also support parents and carers in driving improved school engagement for all pupil groups which contributes to better attainment outcomes for pupils in Durham.
- 187 Children and young people service support local attainment outcomes through their ongoing Education Review which aims to deliver a sustainable school system in County Durham including addressing the current financial and projected budgetary position, sufficiency of school places, quality and stability of leadership, current condition of buildings and accessibility and suitability of schools and settings to provide outstanding learning.

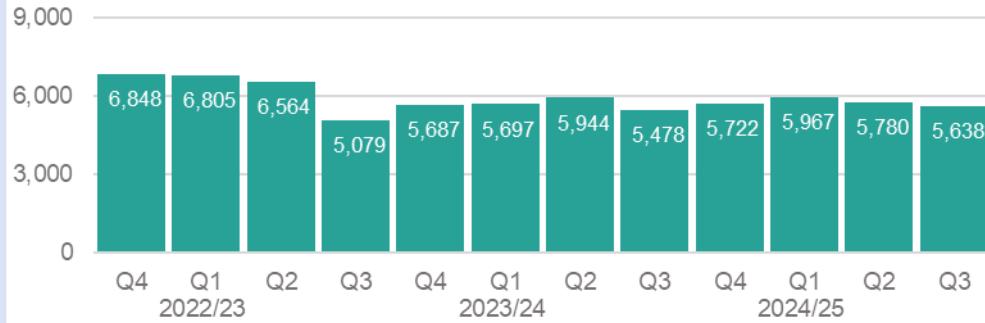
Elective Home Education (EHE)

- 188 At the end of the 2024/25 autumn term 990 children and young people were being electively home educated in County Durham. This equates to a 20% increase compared to the previous year (2023/24 Autumn Term).
- 189 Latest published data by the Department for Education indicates County Durham has a similar amount of EHE children (proportional to population) as the whole of England. Rates are increasing nationally, regionally and across all our statistical neighbours as councils respond to recent national policy initiatives. This is set to continue as the emerging [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill](#) makes further provisions for council's in this area.
- 190 We continue to have strong multi-agency Education at Home operational and strategic groups that are well established, meet half termly with wide service representation including health, SEND and inclusion, education and skills, wider children's services colleagues to consider suitable education and safeguarding of children.

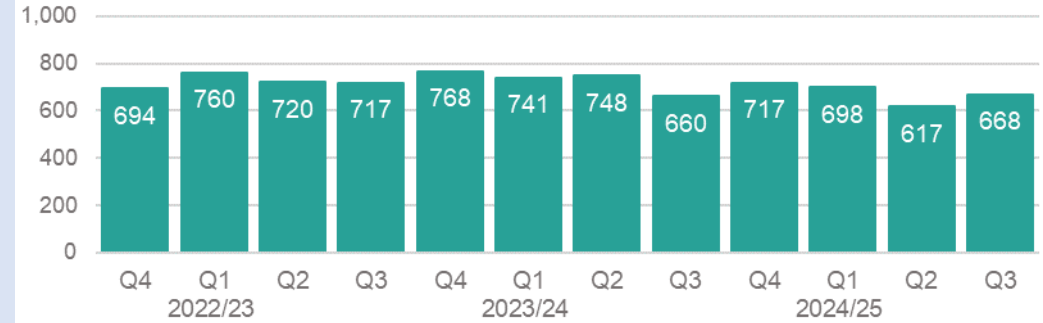
Adult Social Care Dashboard – Referrals and assessments

(quarterly data / as at end of December 2024)

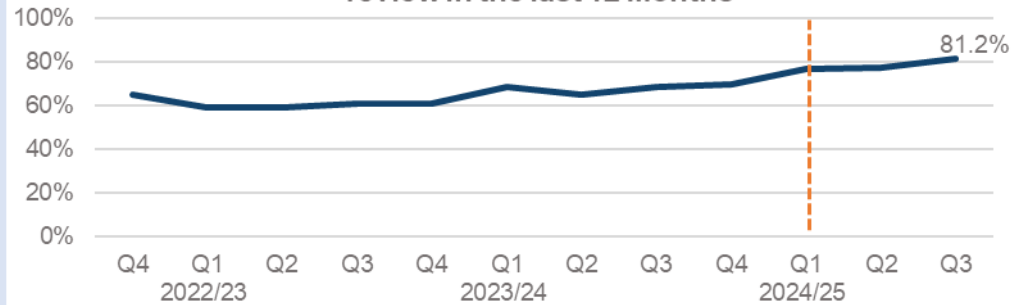
Referrals to Adult Social Care



Care Act assessments completed each quarter



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



change in methodology from Q1 2024/25

Referrals to adult social care

- 191 In quarter three, 5,638 referrals were received by adult social care. Referrals into adult social care has remained stable for the last two years.

Care Act assessments completed

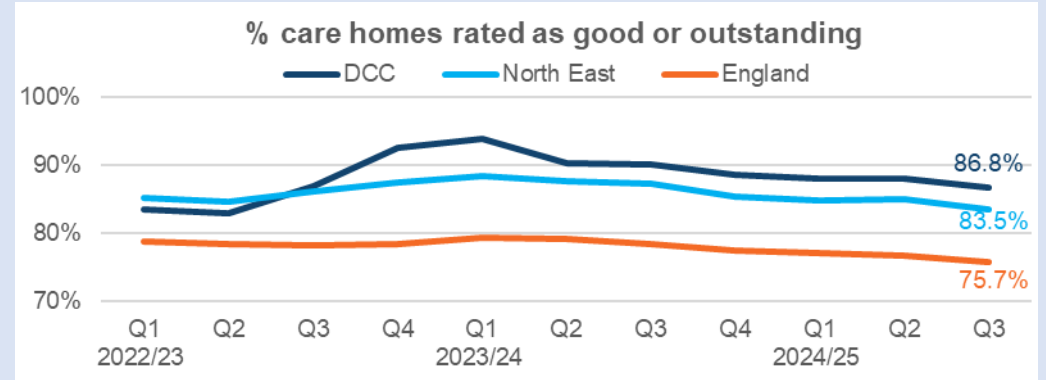
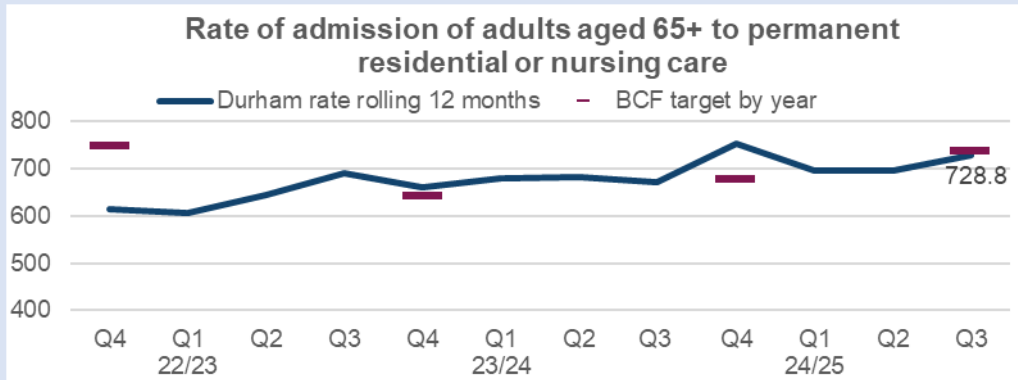
- 192 The number of Care Act assessments completed each quarter has largely remained stable over the last three years. Small quarterly changes show no longer-term trend. In the latest quarter, 668 Care Act assessments were completed. This is slightly under the three-year average of 709 assessments per quarter.
- 193 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

- 194 This indicator shows 81.2% of service users have been assessed or reviewed in the last 12 months. This indicator has an 80% compliance target. The quarter three result is the first time this indicator has hit target in the three years of data shown. This achievement is a result of the hard work of reviewing officers, and the additional resource allocated to review those most overdue. Work continues to further reduce the waiting list of overdue annual reviews, and we expect performance for this indicator to continue to improve.

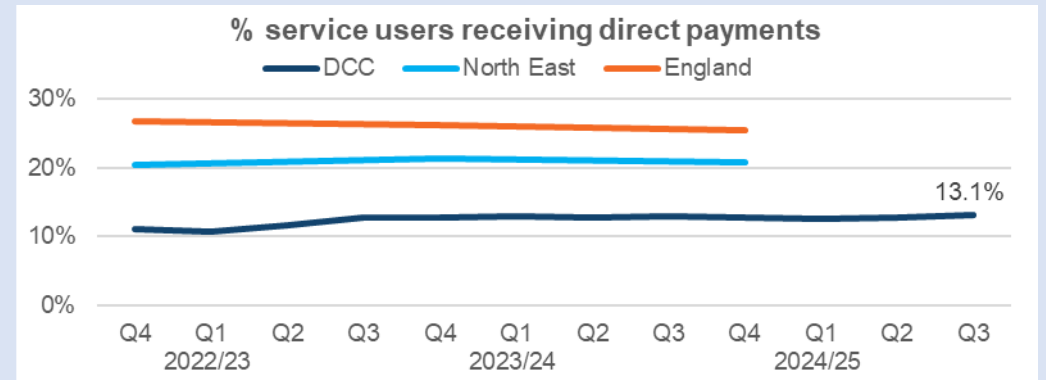
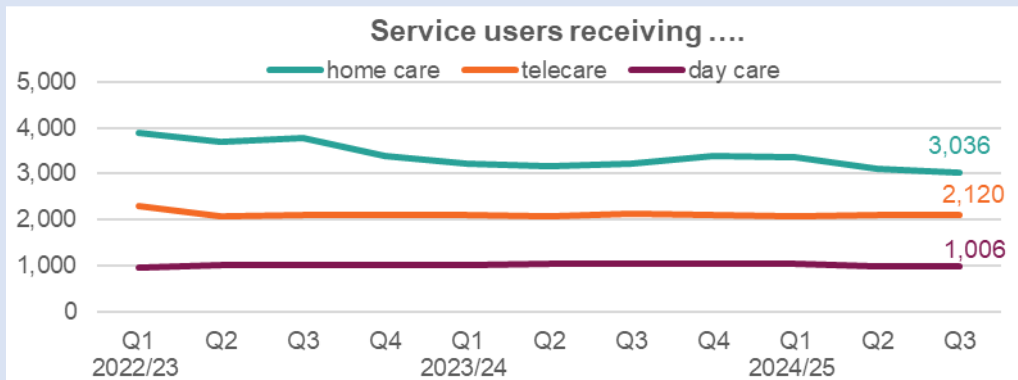
Adult Social Care Dashboard – admissions to permanent care

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



Adult Social Care Dashboard – services received and outcomes

(as at end of December 2024)



People aged 65+ admitted to permanent residential or nursing care

- 195 The Better Care Fund (BCF) plan for April 2024-March 2025 is to maintain the number of admissions from last year, resulting in a reduced rate per 100,000 population. Latest data (January to December 2024) shows a rate of 728.8 per 100,000 population, better than the BCF target (739.7). January to March is historically a period of high admissions, and if 2025 is similar to previous years, it is likely that we will exceed the BCF target for 2024/25. The dataset used to identify permanent admissions into residential or nursing care is currently being scrutinised to ensure its accuracy.

Care home ratings

- 196 In December 2024, the Care Quality Commission had rated 86.8% of care homes in County Durham as good or outstanding. This is the lowest seen since quarter two 2022/23 (July-September 2022) and continues a reduction in those rated as good or outstanding that commenced in April-June 2023. Both regional and national results have reduced since the same period and our latest performance is better than the overall ratings for care homes across the North East (83.5%) and England (75.7%). We continue to closely manage capacity and occupancy in care homes, ensuring a stable care market.

Services Received

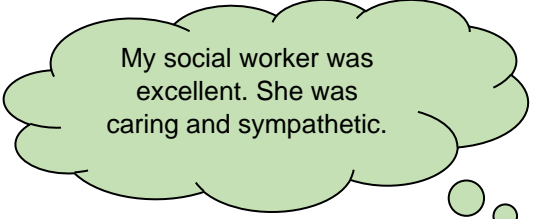
- 197 The number of service users receiving home care has largely been stable since January 2023. We have, however, seen a slight reduction over the last six months (July to December). The latest figure - 3,036 home care service users at the end of December, is lower than the two-year quarterly average of 3,238. Waiting lists for home care packages 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 in County Durham. 70% of our community care providers are rated good or outstanding, compared with 54.7% nationally.
- 199 The number of 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 being in receipt of day care at any point between April 2022 and December 2024.

Direct Payments


- 201 The percentage of people receiving direct payments has remained stable over the last three years (January 2022-December 2024). A new methodology to calculate this indicator is being developed by DHSC. It is expected that we will be able to use the methodology from April 2025.

Adult Social Care - Feedback from service users

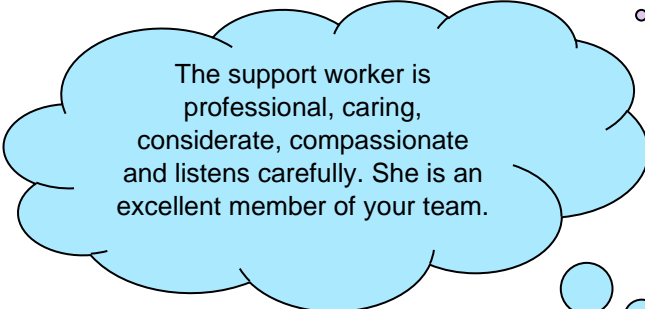
202 Our internal Operational Practice Survey was launched in July 2024 and offers insight into the initial views of service users following an assessment or review of service. The following comments provide a positive picture of the care our service users receive:



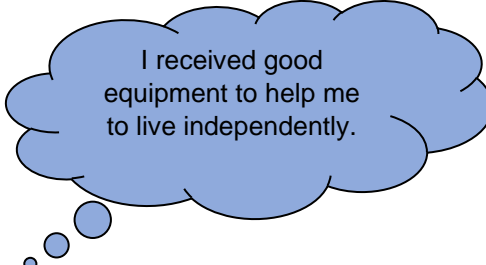
My social worker was excellent. She was caring and sympathetic.



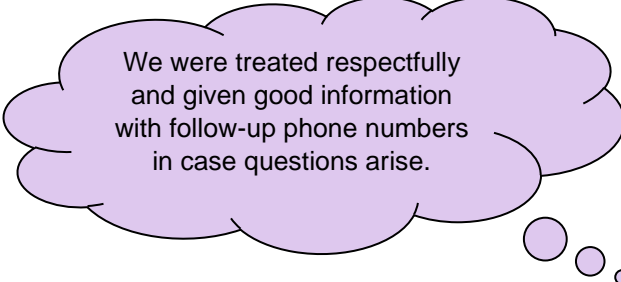
Staff were really helpful and listened to me



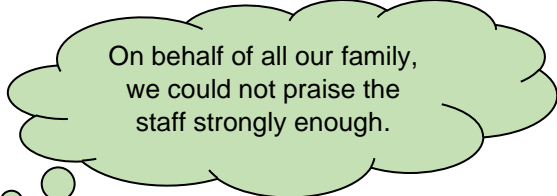
The support worker is professional, caring, considerate, compassionate and listens carefully. She is an excellent member of your team.




I received good equipment to help me to live independently.



We were treated respectfully and given good information with follow-up phone numbers in case questions arise.



On behalf of all our family, we could not praise the staff strongly enough.



The worker listened to our concerns as daughters. We were impressed with how things were handled.

Public Health Focus – Mental Health and Wellbeing Dashboard

Mental health and wellbeing underpins an individuals' ability to cope with the normal stresses of life, ensuring they can work productively, and are able to contribute to their community of interest. Mental health is of universal benefit, underpinning our health and functioning throughout life, and circumstances change so does our mental health.

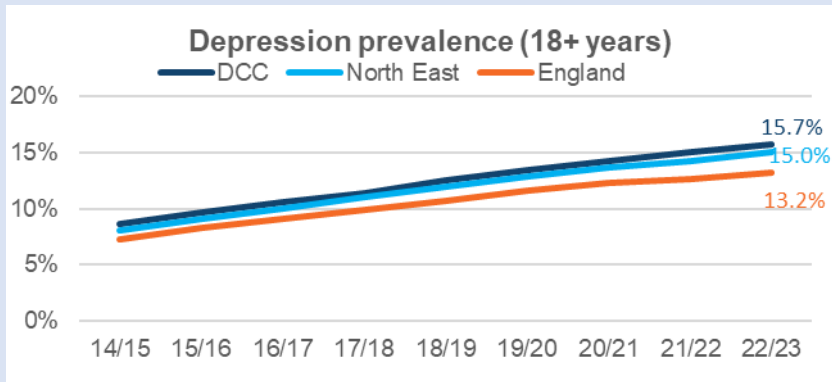
Mental health and wellbeing in Durham is monitored through several indicators. Self-reported wellbeing and suicide rates are reported through the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28 and a dashboard examines each. This page briefly considers other measures providing a broad overview of mental health and wellbeing.

Indicators of mental health	Period	Durham	North East	England
Mental Health: QOF % prevalence (all ages – those diagnosed with a mental health disorder)	2023/24	1.03%	0.99%	0.96%
% of school pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs	2022/23	3.6%	3.6%	3.3%
Hospital admissions as a result of self-harm (10-24 years) Rate per 100,000 population	2022/23	276.0	461.2	319.0
Hospital admissions for mental health conditions (<18 years) Rate per 100,000 population	2022/23	135.6	98.8	80.8

Prevalence of people with a diagnosed mental health disorder in Durham is higher than both regional and national results.

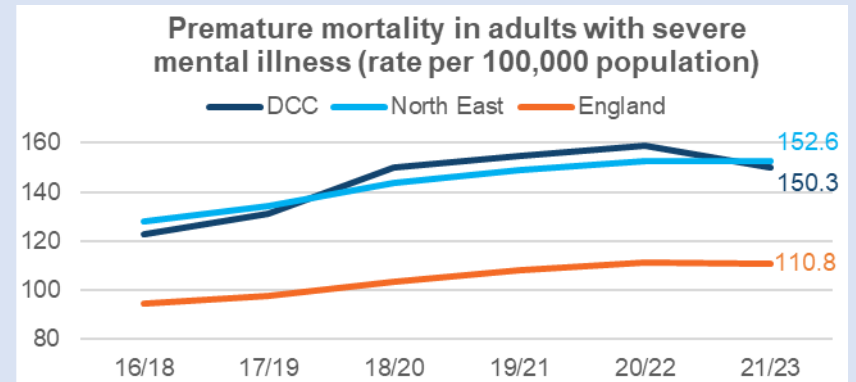
There is a higher percentage of pupils with social, emotional, and mental health needs identified in Durham compared to the national average.

Hospital admissions for young people with mental health conditions in Durham is also significantly higher than national figures, however, rates of self-harm in young people have reduced and, in 2022/23, were lower than regional and national rates.



Prevalence of depression has increased over time at the local, regional, and national level with rates in Durham above comparators.

The **premature mortality rate** in Durham has also increased and is higher than the national rate.



Resilience

Protective factors are influences that make it less likely that individuals will develop a mental health problem. These include biological, psychological, and social factors in the individual, family or community. Indicators of school readiness, physical activity and employment are some of the measures that demonstrate resilience in an individual.

Indicators of resilience	Period	Durham	North East	England
School readiness (% of children achieving a good level of development at the end of reception)	2022/23	66.2%	66.3%	67.2%
% of physically active adults	2022/23	62.0%	63.2%	67.1%
% of people in employment	2023/24	74.2%	71.3%	75.7%

Public Health – Mental Health and Wellbeing

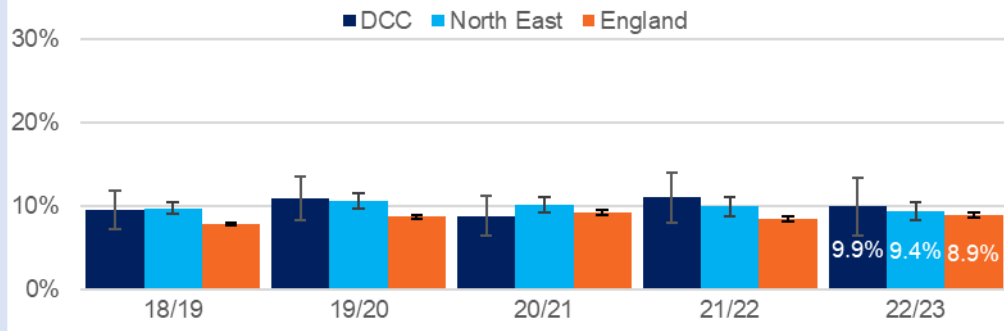
- 203 Good mental health and resilience is the foundation for wellbeing and the effective functioning of individuals and communities. It impacts on how individuals think, feel, communicate and understand, and is fundamental to physical health, relationships, education, work, and to achieving potential.
- 204 Within County Durham there is a strong history of good partnership working around mental health led by the Mental Health Strategic Partnership (MHSP), which provides strategic co-ordination and leadership for our Mental Health Strategic Plans. It is also responsible for ensuring the system works effectively to initiate prevention and early intervention approaches and engage, consult and involve mental health service users and carers to support the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 205 The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy outlines six key mental health priorities:
- Mental health of children and young people.
 - Suicide prevention.
 - Urgent and emergency mental health care.
 - Dementia.
 - Resilient communities (also embedded into County Durham Together).
 - Transformed models of care for adults with serious mental health issues.
- 206 Key areas of activity have been developed and delivered to promote mental health and wellbeing in the general population. For Durham County Council, this includes:
- A review and recommission of Public Health commissioned children and young people's mental health support for preventative and early help provision in schools and from the Family Hubs.
 - A review of the Children and Young People's Partnership to ensure the governance arrangements are right to turn strategic delivery into on the ground delivery.
 - Community and education events delivered to showcase best practice taking place within our communities and also to increase awareness of support available to children and young people around their mental health.
 - Establishing a Men's Suicide Prevention Network.
 - Completed suicide prevention improvements at a high frequency location and incorporating suicide prevention measures into planning.
 - Targeted communication - particularly of the Now You're Talking campaign which includes images relevant to men, veterans and young people.
 - Work in high frequency community locations to make sure local people know about services available to support them i.e. Wellbeing for Life.
 - Supporting the developments of alternatives to crisis, building on happiness hubs.
 - Supporting the development and embedding of new models of integrated community care for adults with severe mental illness.
 - Supporting developments of a physical mental health hub in Seaham and Bishop Auckland and working closely with partner to develop similar hubs in other areas such as Chester-le-Street.

- Supporting ongoing improvements to 'no wrong door' pathways and step up and step down of support arrangements for people who have mental health issues.
- The Big Arts Project was delivered across County Durham. This initiative used culture and arts to promote good mental health, wellbeing and resilience. It culminated in various displays during the week of World Mental Health Day 2024. It saw more than 30 projects supported, over 1,000 people involved, over 700 children and young people and 3,500 beneficiaries.
- Work has been undertaken to increase referrals from primary care and memory services to the Dementia Advisor Service. We have seen an increase from previous years; primarily from Social Prescribing Link Workers and Care Coordinators working in GP practices.
- A Dementia Health Needs and Asset Assessment was completed in early 2024 to inform the development of the integrated dementia action plan in 2024/25.
- Reminiscence Interactive Therapy Activities' (RITA - all-in-one touch screen solution which offers digital reminiscence therapy) available in 74 care homes and five extra care sites.

Public Health Focus – Self-reported wellbeing

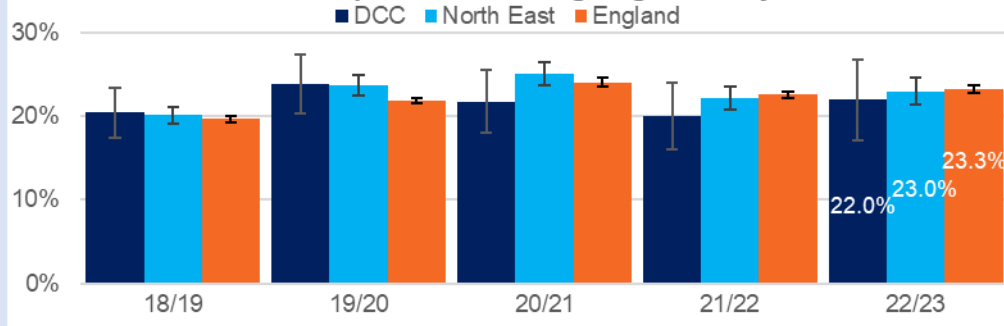
(annual data as at 31 March 2023)

Self-reported wellbeing: low happiness



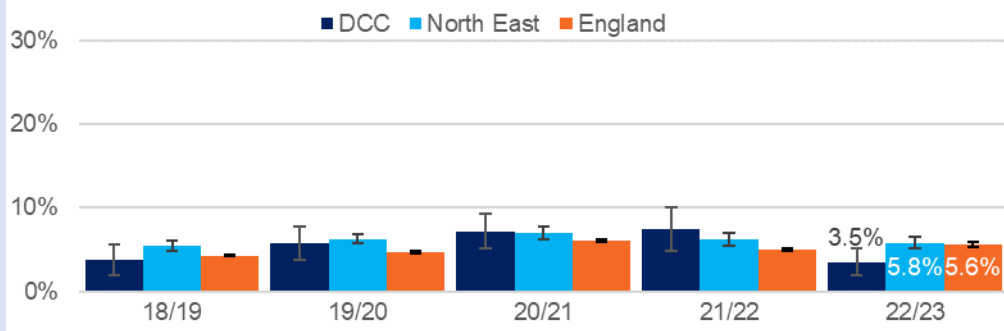
People reporting low happiness has largely remained stable over the last five years and is similar to reported levels both regionally and nationally.

Self-reported wellbeing: high anxiety



People reporting high levels of anxiety is also unchanged over the five year period. It is also similar to regional and national rates.

Self-reported wellbeing: low satisfaction



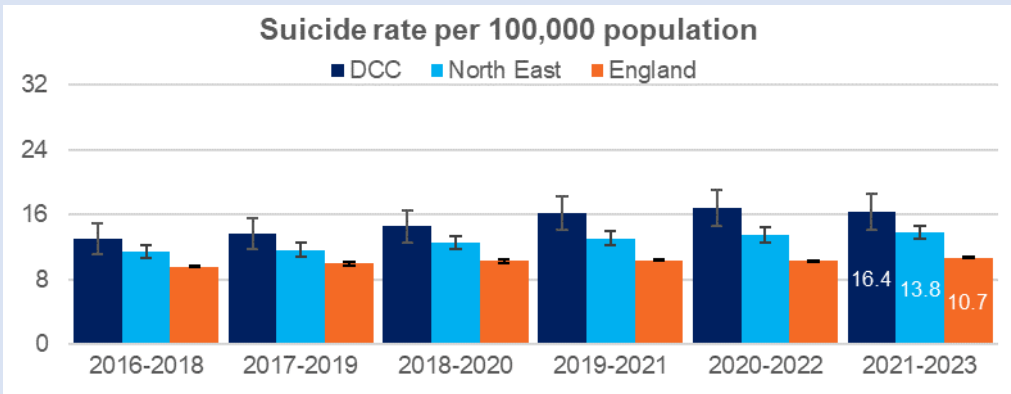
People reporting low satisfaction has reduced in the latest data. The latest rate for Durham is significantly lower than both regional and national results.

Public Health – Self-Reported Wellbeing

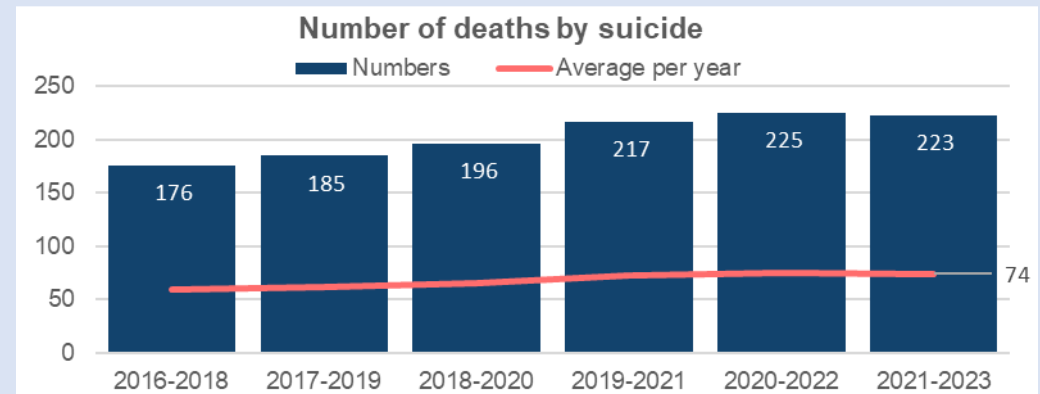
- 207 Mental health and wellbeing refer to a combination of feeling good and functioning effectively. The concept of feeling good incorporates not only the positive emotions of happiness and contentment but also emotions such as interest, engagement, confidence and affection. People with higher wellbeing also typically have lower rates of illness, recover more quickly and for longer, and generally have better physical and mental health.
- 208 Wellbeing is monitored through several key indicators taken from the Annual Population Survey. Data measures individual or subjective wellbeing based on three questions within this survey which examine levels of satisfaction, happiness and anxiety.
- 209 The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28 (JLHWS) aims to improve self-reported wellbeing and to reduce levels of anxiety in County Durham. These measures are to be reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board on an annual basis.
- 210 In County Durham, the percentage of people reporting low happiness has largely remained stable over the last five years. Latest data for the county is not statistically significantly different to levels reported regionally and nationally.
- 211 Levels of reported high anxiety across the country are relatively high in comparison to reported low happiness and low satisfaction (typically 22% compared to 9.9% and 3.5% respectively). Latest data demonstrates a generally static trend for local, regional, and national scores over the last five years. Latest data for County Durham, is similar to both regional and national results.
- 212 People reporting a low satisfaction score in County Durham has reduced in the latest data. It is now significantly lower than results for both regional and national comparators.

Public Health Focus – Rate of Suicide

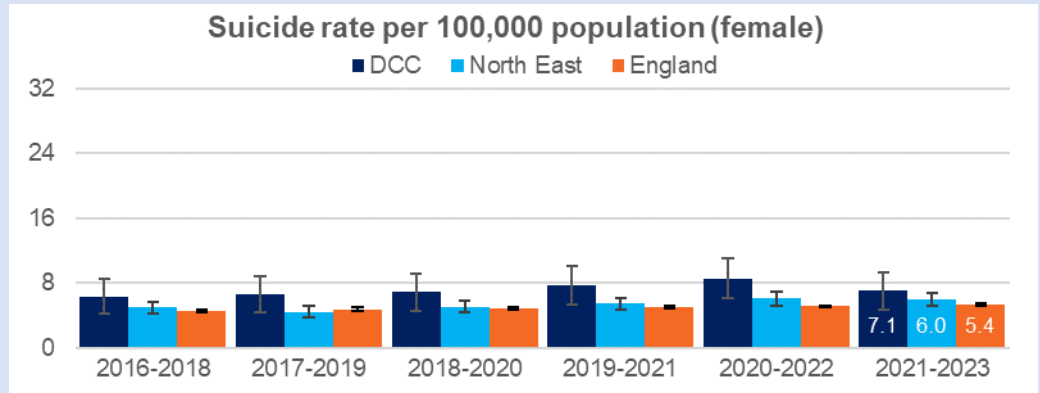
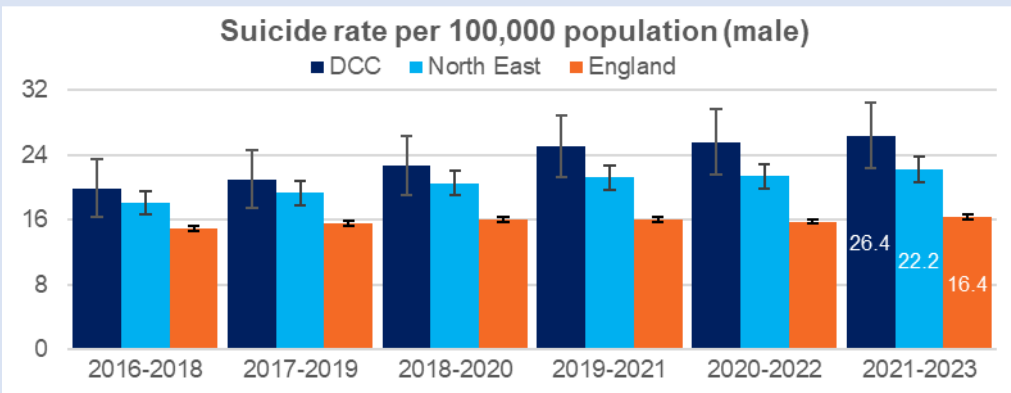
(three years cumulative data to 31 December 2023)



Latest data for suicide mortality rates per 100,000 people in County Durham are statistically significantly higher than England.



On average there were 59 annual deaths by suicide in 2016-18 compared to an average of 74 annual deaths for the latest data.



Male suicide rates remain statistically higher than the national rates whereas female suicide rates are comparable with both regional and national results.

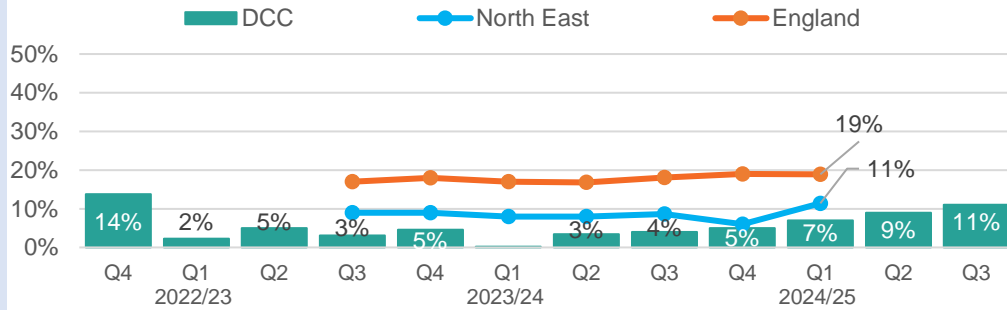
Public Health – rate of suicide

- 213 Suicide is a significant cause of death in young adults and is seen as an indicator of underlying rates of mental ill-health. Suicide is a major issue for society and a leading cause of years of life lost. It is, often the end point of a complex history of risk factors and distressing events, however, there are many ways in which services, communities, individuals and society as a whole.
- 214 It is important to note national evidence suggests two-thirds of all people who die by suicide are not in contact with mental health services 12-months prior to their death, therefore, key areas for action relating to suicide prevention include a wider population level approach designed to reduce the escalation of mental health and social care crisis. These approaches include:
- reducing the risk of suicide in key high-risk groups
 - tailoring approaches to improve mental health in specific groups
 - reducing access to the means of suicide
 - improving responses and provide better information and support to those bereaved or affected by suicide
 - supporting the media in delivering sensitive approaches to suicide and suicidal behaviour
 - supporting research, data collection and monitoring
 - addressing the impact of COVID-19 on the wider determinants of mental health
 - reducing self-harm.
- 215 The County Durham Suicide Prevention Alliance delivers a multi-agency approach to preventing suicide by implementing the actions recommended by the national Suicide Prevention Strategy. Actions include the development of a Real Time Data Surveillance system, community prevention initiatives including those at high-profile locations, development of postvention referrals for families and communities at risk and a small grants scheme promoting anti stigma and discrimination initiatives.
- 216 A reduction in suicide rates is a key aim of the JLHWS. Latest suicide mortality rates per 100,000 people in County Durham are statistically significantly higher than England.
- 217 Over the last five years, the rate of suicides in County Durham has increased by 26.0%. This is compared to an increase of 21.9% in the North East and an increase of 11.9% in England.
- 218 Latest data shows that male suicide rates remain statistically higher than the national rates whereas female suicide rates are comparable with both regional and national results.
- 219 The latest publication of Office of National Statistics indicates on average there were 59 annual deaths by suicide in 2016-18 in County Durham compared to an average of 74 annual deaths by suicide in 2021-23.

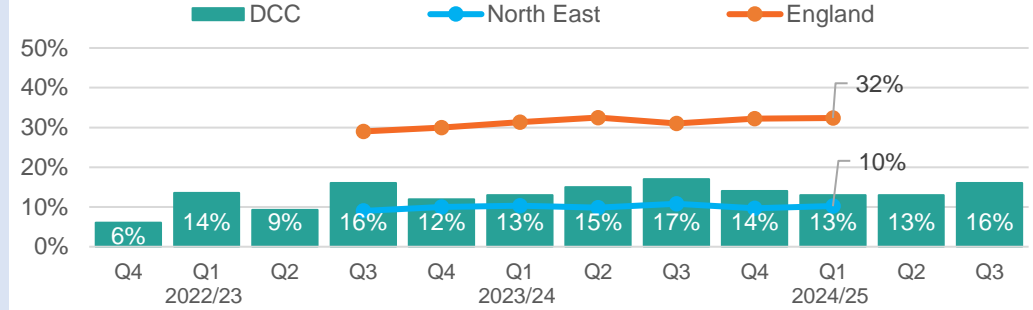
Housing Vulnerable People Dashboard - Homelessness

(discrete quarterly data)

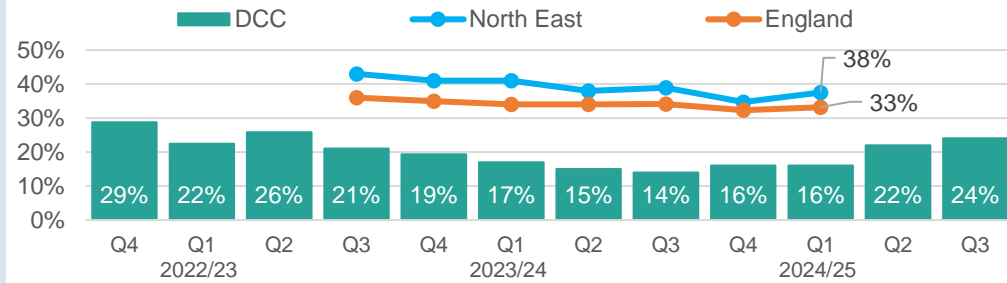
Prevention: people helped to stay in their home



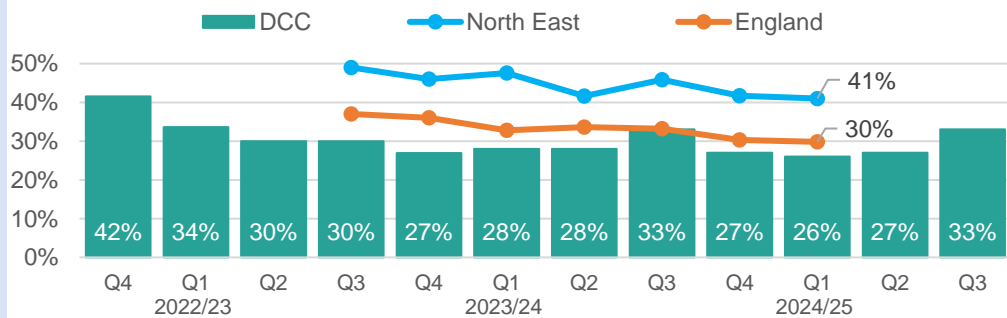
Acceptance of the main homeless duty



Prevention: people helped to move to alternative accommodation



Homelessness relief



Customer raised complaint against our housing service, unhappy with lack of contact which resulted in delay in financial assistance to secure a suitable property. We reviewed the case and allocated a different Housing Officer who worked with client to secure an alternative property via Positive Directions.

Housing Service User

Testimony regarding selective licensing key worker: "she loves the new house, the smile on her face at present is priceless you will never understand how grateful we are for all the help and support to me - you have helped save my daughter's life. With your help you made a massive difference"

Mum of client

Homelessness

- 220 The council has a legal duty to help all eligible applicants who are threatened with homelessness (prevention duty) or who are homeless (relief duty).
- 221 Between April and June 2024 (most recent nationally published data) the proportion of households threatened with homelessness across the county was 1.36 per 1,000 households. This is better than both the regional average (1.86 per 1,000 households) and the England average (1.54 per 1,000 households).
- 222 During this same period, the proportion of households assessed as homeless across the county was 2.67 per 1,000 households. This is higher than both the regional average (2.29 per 1,000 households) and the national average (1.90 per 1,000 households).

Prevention Duty

- 223 The council must take reasonable steps to help prevent any eligible person threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless (prevention duty).
- 224 This means we must either help them to stay in their current accommodation or help them to find a new place to live before they become homeless. The prevention duty continues for 56 days unless it is brought to an end by an event such as securing accommodation, or by becoming homeless.
- 225 During quarter three (October to December 2024), 11% of applicants were helped to stay in their current home and a further 24% were helped to move to alternative accommodation.
- 226 We are helping more people stay in their current home. This follows our review of frontline processes and resources, and alignment of the prevention grant so we can intervene at an earlier stage. In addition, our frontline staff are more experienced – most have now been in post for more than a year – with an increased understanding of housing pathways available.
- 227 Of those 93 households which we helped move to alternative accommodation: 48 moved to private rented housing (52%), 28 to social housing (30%), 13 to social rented supported housing (14%), and four to other alternative accommodation (4%). The amended financial thresholds for utilising the Homeless Prevention Grant has helped secure alternative accommodation for applicants. Our new IT portal for supported accommodation referrals is embedded and streamlining operational processes. And longer term, an increase in the council's portfolio will further help.
- 228 We are reviewing (with our partners) the Housing Allocations Policy. This policy sets the criteria for who gets access to social housing. Phase one of the consultation runs until 12 March. It asks people to share their views of some key issues that we must consider as part of the review. This includes reviewing how people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are prioritised.
- 229 Once the consultation closes, all feedback will be reviewed and used to draft an updated policy. This will undergo a second phase of consultation later in 2025.

Relief Duty

- 230 If the applicant becomes homeless despite activity during the prevention stage (or is already homeless), we will take reasonable steps to secure accommodation. This relief

duty lasts for 56 days unless ended in another way. If the applicant is eligible for assistance and has a priority need, they must be provided with interim accommodation.

231 Improved staffing stability has allowed us to focus more on relief casework. This has improved move on outcomes. Officer caseloads remain high but we have implemented additional monitoring and audit processes to ensure outcomes are delivered in a timely manner.

232 During quarter three (October to December 2024), 33% of households classed as homeless and eligible for assistance had their homelessness relieved.

Main Housing Duty

233 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. A suitable offer of a settled home (whether accepted or refused by the applicant) would bring the main housing duty to an end.

234 During quarter three (October to December 2024), the proportion of cases where there was an acceptance of the main homelessness duty was 16%. This is a higher proportion than in previous quarters. It was caused by an increase in cases received during quarter four 2023/24 (January to March 2024). Due to the timescales involved at each stage, these cases reached the end of the relief duty stage between April and July, and therefore required a main housing duty decision.

Benchmarking Comparisons

235 Latest available benchmarking data (April to June 2024) shows our performance was lower than the regional average for all key homelessness measures. It also shows we were below than the national average for all key measures except homelessness duty.

236 Our performance in relation to prevention and relief outcomes has since improved, and we hope the next data set will show we are closing the gap with the national average.

Homelessness outcome	DCC	Regional	National
Prevention: stay in their home	7%	11%	19%
Prevention: move to alternative accommodation	15%	38%	33%
Relief	26%	41%	30%
Homelessness Duty	13%	10%	32%

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Delivery Plan

237 The government has confirmed 2025/26 funding for the Rough Sleepers Initiative and Accommodation for ex-Offenders Initiative. This means we are continuing with both initiatives.

238 We have identified specific properties for elements of the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme:

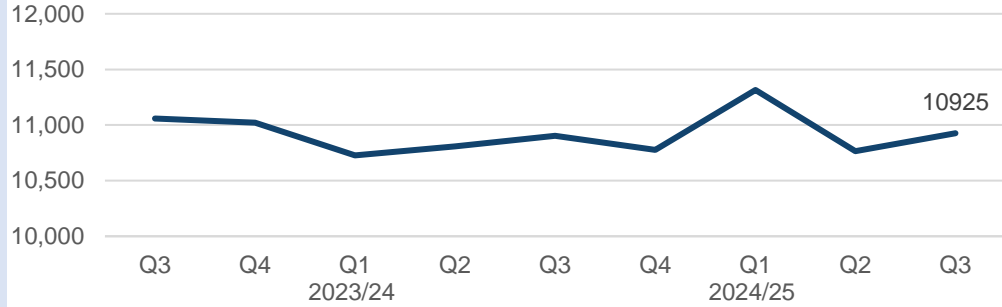
- Survey and investigation works have started on five apartment hubs at a former children's home in Tow Law.
- Planning consent has been received to convert Bishop Auckland Registry Office into five units. Works are due to start.
- A planning application is under consideration for eight units in Spennymoor.

- Work continues to identify and acquire 15 dispersed with two complete, five offers accepted and two under offer.
- 239 Our programme to acquire 40 temporary accommodation properties by March 2025 is back on track. We have acquired 36 properties since the start of the scheme and a further four have offers accepted.
- 240 The review of all 20 supported housing providers to ensure properties provide the correct level of support to tenants (Supported Housing Improvement Programme) is on track for March 2025. Since the scheme started in April 2023:
- 336 tenant reviews have taken place. Tenant reviews validate housing benefit decisions and ensure tenants are receiving above minimal levels of care, support and supervision.
 - 129 support plans, records of contact and referral forms have been scrutinised to ensure contact with the tenants is taking place.
 - 168 properties have been inspected. 154 failed the first inspection, of which 83 have since been brought up standard and five have been returned to the landlord. Work ongoing with providers to improve standards in remaining properties
- 241 A charter has been developed with providers and signed by those we have worked with to date.

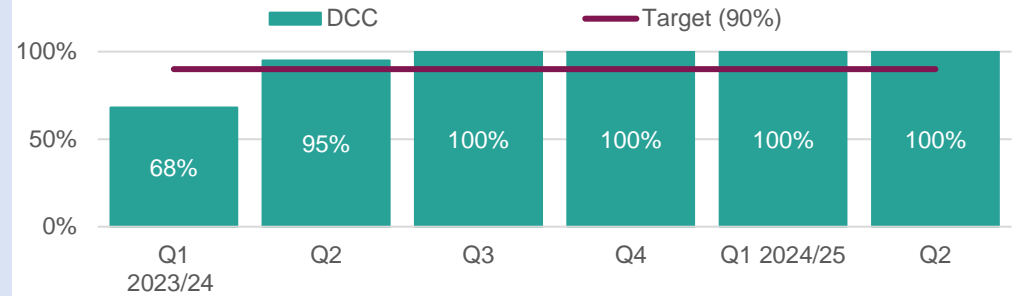
Housing Vulnerable People Dashboard – Care Connect, Disabled Facilities Grants

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

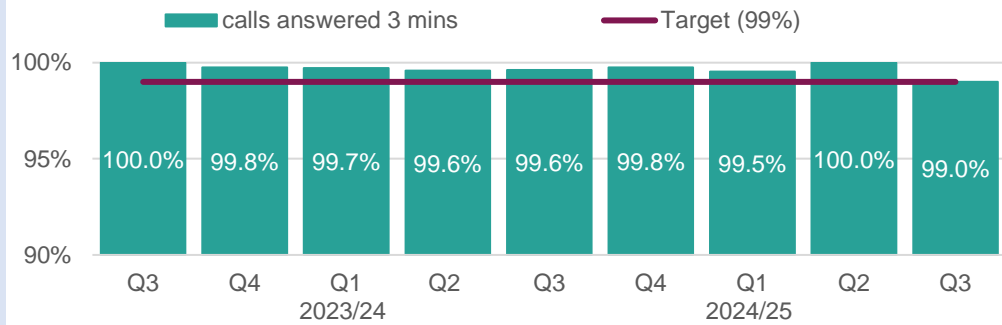
Care Connect Customers



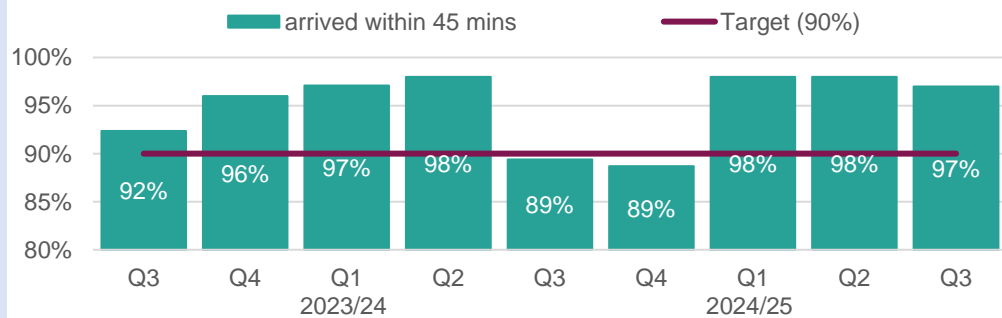
Initial referrals for a Disabled Facilities Grant within three weeks



Care Connect - calls answered within 3 minutes



Care Connect - arriving at property within 45 minutes



Care Connect user's feedback:

Fabulous service. Without them we would never have been able to keep my lovely dad at home for as long as we did. Also attended to help when mam had a fall and was stuck on the floor. Has to be the best service for vulnerable elderly in County Durham.

Thank you for the help and care given; Wardens were brilliant.

We can't thank the Wardens enough for the support and service provided, they were lovely and couldn't have been more helpful.

Care Connect

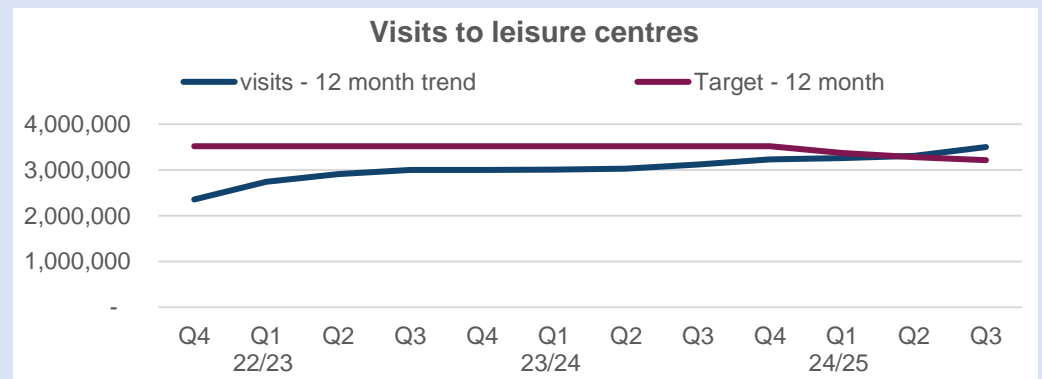
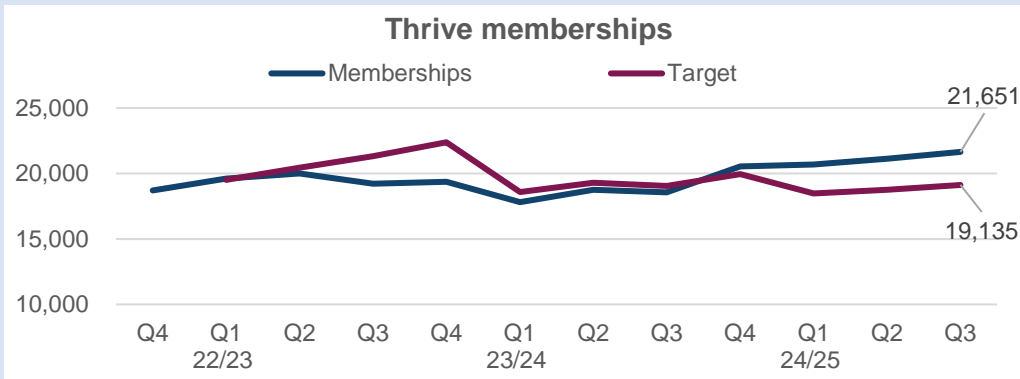
- 242 We continue to see positive performance in relation to Care Connect.
- 243 Customers using the Care Connect service during quarter three (October to December) increased (10,925) compared to both the previous quarter (10,764) (July to September) and the same period last year (10,903) (October to December 2023).
- 244 The increase can be equated to a rise in self-paying customers which has increased by 5.26% since April 2024 as a result of service promotion across council and external partners.
- 245 We responded to 6,065 emergency calls between October and December, 97% within 45 minutes. This is better than target (90%) and the same period last year (89%) but slightly lower than the previous quarter (98%).
- 246 During quarter three (October to December), 33 calls were responded to after 60 minutes. This was due to staffing levels and location of the properties.

Disabled Facilities Grants

- 247 We continue a sustained high level of performance in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants.
- 248 During quarter three (October to December), 100% of clients were contacted within three weeks of receiving a referral for a Disabled Facilities Grant. This is better than target (90%).
- 249 Dedicated officers allocated responsibility to deal with first contact continues to have a positive impact on performance.

Physical Activity Dashboard

(as at 31 December 2024 / year to date ending 31 December 2024)



Leisure Centre Visits

- 250 During quarter three (October to December), visits to leisure centres performed better than target (838,633) and the same period last year (772,902), with events, promotions and our new membership scheme contributing to improved performance.
- 251 We continue to host large events. During this period swimming galas, gymnastics events and dance events took place at Chester-le-Street Leisure Centre, Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre, Freemans Quay leisure Centre and Woodhouse Close Leisure Complex.
- 252 As part of the transformation programme Teesdale Leisure Centre reopened on 18 November which was a welcome reintroduction to our leisure and wellbeing offer, and Spennymoor Leisure Centre swimming pool reopened on the 14 October and has proved successful in attracting more visits to the facility.
- 253 Our substantial leisure transformation programme continues to deliver upgraded and new facilities and is having a positive impact, though various challenging local market conditions have led to unmet income targets.

Thrive (Leisure) Memberships

- 254 Thrive (leisure) memberships (21,651) continue an upward trend and latest performance is better than target (19,135).
- 255 Our new membership scheme, pricing structure, bespoke website, app and digital enquiry system continue to have a positive influence on sales and retention of members. As they were only implemented in September 2023, we continue to monitor performance closely to see how they impact on our normal product trends.
- 256 The opening of two new Move gyms at the Louisa Centre and Teesdale Leisure Centre, complementing the Move gym at Abbey Leisure Centre, are also having a very positive impact on membership number growth.

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

257 County Durham is a large and diverse county with some of most sparsely populated areas in the country. Of 300 recognised settlements, only 23 have a population of 5,000 or more.

Land Type ⁷	% of the county	% of the population	People per hectare ⁸
Rural	57%	7%	0.3
Rural town and Fringe	32%	37%	2.7
Urban	11%	56%	12.1

258 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.

259 There are approximately 255,000 dwellings⁹ across the county. Of these, 63% are owner-occupied, 20% are social rented and 17% private rented.

260 Median house prices across the county are consistently lower than those across the North East and the England¹⁰.

	County Durham	North East	England
Median house price <i>Between April 2022 and March 2023</i>	£125,000	£152,500	£290,000

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

⁷ [Rural Urban Classification for LSOAs 2011](#)

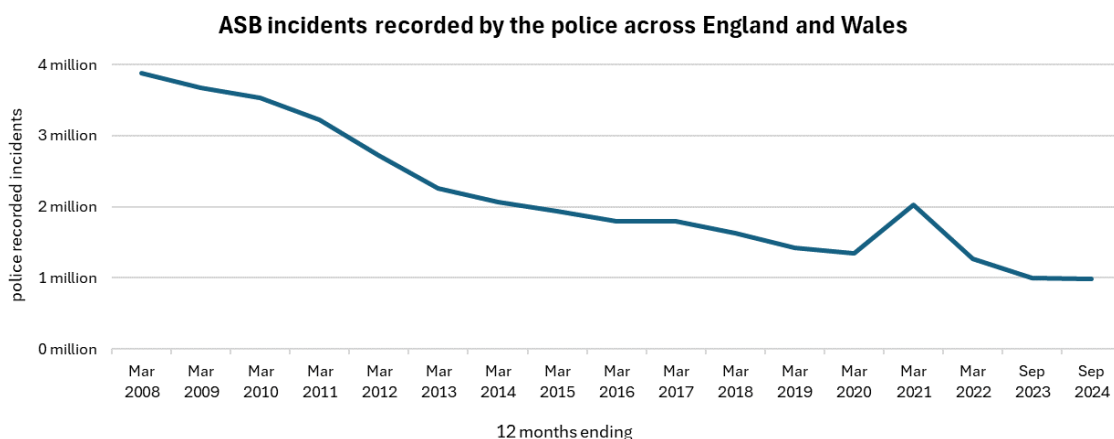
⁸ [Durham Insight - Rural](#)

⁹ [Durham Insight - Housing](#)

¹⁰ [Median House Prices](#)

262 In December, as part of the new National Planning Policy Framework, the government published new house building targets. This increases County Durham targets from 1,309 to 2,011 houses per year. However, this will only come into force once the County Durham Plan reaches five years old in October 2025.

263 There has been a steady decline in incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) recorded by the police across England and Wales. This trend is mirrored locally. It is partly due to changes to police recording. Public order offences, which have increased in recent years, are no longer being recorded as ASB.



264 The pandemic caused the spike recorded in March 2021. Staying local meant people had more time to notice and report issues within their local community. Also, the pandemic caused people to be less tolerant and situations escalated more quickly.

265 However, there is evidence of a growing gap between the ASB people are suffering, and what they report to the police¹¹. This suggests that people are either increasingly unwilling to report ASB or are unaware of what constitutes ASB. This gap is further supported by data (1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024) that shows:

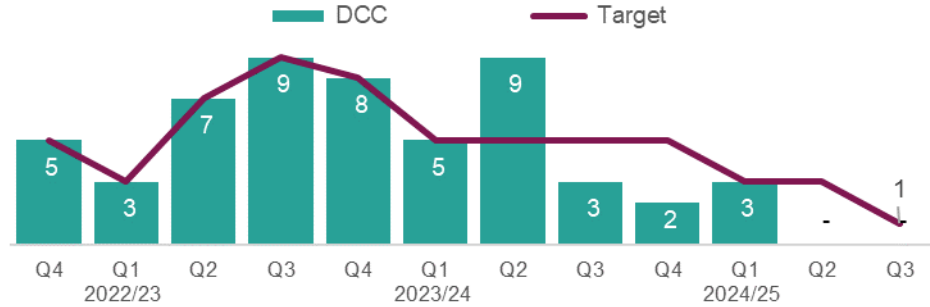
Respondents (aged over 16) who...	England and Wales average	Durham Police Area
... experienced or witnessed some type of ASB	36%	43%
...perceived ASB to be a fairly or very big problem in their local area	24%	30%
...felt that their local area had a high level of ASB	8%	6%

¹¹ from the crime survey for England and Wales.

Housing Delivery and Housing Standards Dashboard

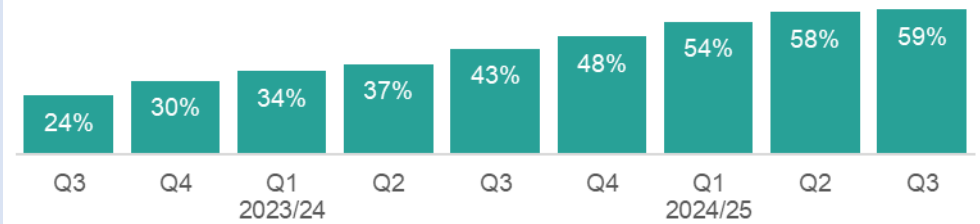
(discrete quarterly data)

Chapter Homes properties sold in quarter

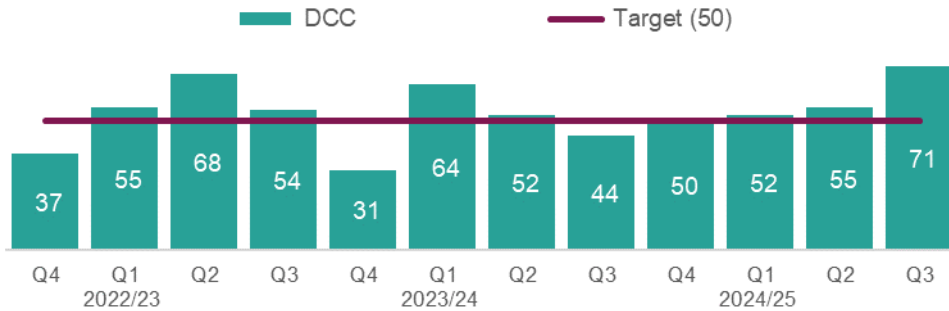


Selective Licensing (Private Rented Sector properties - PRS)

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



Empty homes brought back into use



No. PRS properties covered by SL Scheme that are fully licenced (YTD)

Target: 29,000 by 2027



Chapter Homes

- 266 Due to delays in the approval process, no properties were sold during quarter three. The four affordable homes due to be sold, have been re-profiled for completion by the end of March 2025.
- 267 Although the latest position is not in line with projections, interest in the properties continues. We are closely monitoring progress against the overall target of 10 properties sold by end of March 2025.

Empty Homes

- 268 Between October and December, we brought 71 long-term empty properties back into use, better than target (50).
- 269 This was mostly achieved through negotiations with owners (50). Other methods included: providing advice, assistance, and support to owners (17) and empty homes interest-free loans (four).
- 270 In addition to responding to reports and enquiries on empty homes, we have proactively targeted specific areas. During the quarter, several long-term complex cases were resolved and homes brought back into use. The longest property being empty for more than 12 years.
- 271 There are significant challenges in bringing empty properties back into use; the process can take considerable time. This can relate initially to difficulties in identifying the owner, the property being in the process of changing ownership or being 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

- 272 Our selective licensing scheme covers around 29,000 privately rented properties. As at 31 December 2024, 17,187 of these properties (59%) were fully licensed, in progress of being licensed, exempt or subject to enforcement / legal proceedings.

Status - as at 31 December	Number	% of total
Fully licensed	14,372	50%
Being processed	1,031	4%
Live temporary exemptions in place	15	0%
Family exemptions in place	591	2%
Open service cases	1,088	4%

- 273 We are progressing prosecution files for 19 properties (a further six have already been successfully prosecuted). And we have issued 93 civil penalty notices (relating to 60 properties) for not obtaining a licence.
- 274 We continue to undertake enforcement action if an owner and/or managing agent is committing an offence. We have a dedicated team of officers which target properties without a licence. They have successfully used a combination of informal measures and robust enforcement action, including our recently implemented financial penalty policy.

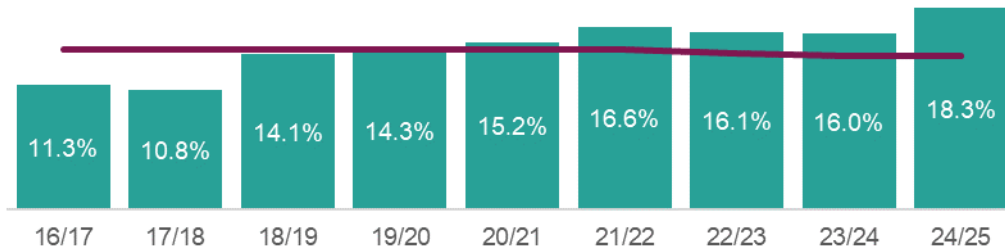
- 275 There are various challenges to a scheme such as ours. It is a vast countywide scheme, split into smaller designations. It is therefore more difficult to administer than small city or borough schemes.
- 276 There is currently no requirement to register a property as privately rented. Therefore, we do not have a complete list of all private rented sector addresses. This is why our private rented sector figure was modelled and is an estimate. Our review of the scheme in 2025 will include a re-modelling exercise. We will use numerous data sources to identify all private rented sector properties that have not yet been licensed (as well as properties which are no longer rented and so no longer need a licence).
- 277 Even with significant effort to identify properties and promote a licensing scheme, no scheme receives all licence applications within its early years of operation. Many schemes remain below 100% at the end of the scheme and continue enforcement action beyond the five-year period.

Vibrant Communities Dashboard

(as at December 2024)

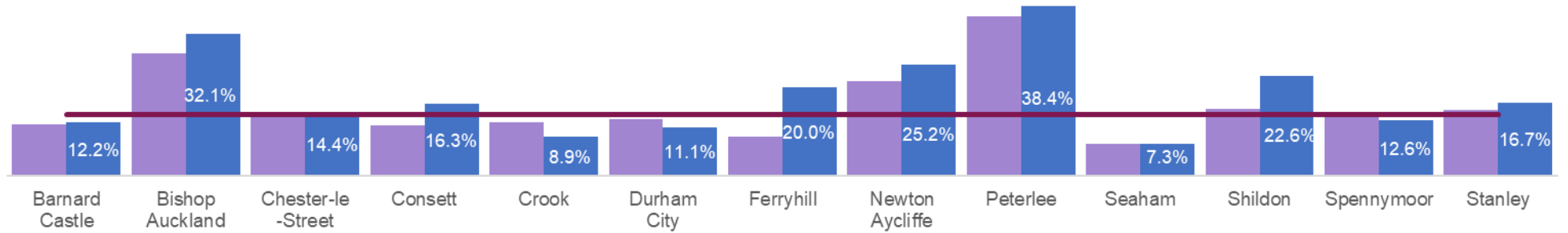
Average Town Centre Vacancy Rate

DCC Target (13.9%)



Town Centre Vacancy Rates 2024

22/23 23/24 Target (13.9%)



Town Centre Vacancy Rates

- 278 Town centres are key drivers of our economy, and it is important to ensure our town centres remain viable. To help support this we carry out annual town centre surveys to identify vacancy levels of retail units in our town centres.
- 279 The latest survey was carried out during June-July 2024, shows the average vacancy rate for retail units across all our town centres is 18.3%, higher than 2023 (16%) and the national average (13.9%). Town centres in County Durham are following national trends with the decline of town centres and changes in retail habits, with online and out of town centre shopping being the more popular options.
- 280 Of the 13 town centres surveyed, five are better than the national average vacancy rates, and the remaining eight are higher. When compared to last year, two remain unchanged, three show signs of improvement, and eight have vacancy rates which have risen.
- 281 Of the eight above than the national average:
- **Peterlee** - highest vacancy rate. At 38.4% it is higher than the national average and last year. Despite being anchored by national retailers Asda, B&M and Boots, the non-retail offer is limited. An additional 46 units became vacant in 2024.
 - **Bishop Auckland** - at 32.1% it is higher than both the national average and above last year. However, the town is currently undergoing change and is receiving significant investment (Stronger Towns Fund and Future High Street Fund) that is expected to create new opportunities for the retail and hospitality sectors in the town.
 - **Newton Aycliffe** - at 25.2% it is above the national average and higher than last year. Despite being anchored by national food retailers Tesco and Aldi, the limited non-retail offer within the town means vacancy rates remains high.
 - **Shildon** (22.6%), **Ferryhill** (20%), **Stanley** (16.7%) and **Consett** (16.3%) have vacancy rates higher than the national average and last year. These are relatively small town centres with lower numbers of retail units. It therefore only takes a small change in vacancies to significantly increase the percentage.
 - **Chester-le-Street** – at 14.4% is above the national average, but has remained the same as last year.
- 282 Of the five towns centres with vacancy rates better than the national average:
- **Seaham** - fewest unoccupied retail units (7.3%) and remains unchanged from last year. Anchored by Asda, and home to other national retailers in Byron Place shopping centre, as well as many independent cafes, bars and restaurants.
 - **Crook** - at 8.9% it is better than national average and the last year. The town is anchored by national food retailers Aldi and Lidl and is also home to several independent retailers, pubs and bars.
 - **Durham City** (11%) and continues to evolve as a popular destination. Whilst the number of retail units has reduced, the number of vacant units has also fallen, improving the vacancy rate compared to last year. Durham City centre has the highest percentage of restaurants and cafes in the county along with the second highest percentage of drinking establishments.
 - **Spennymoor** (12.6%) has a vacancy rate better than the national average and last year. As well as being anchored by national food retailers Asda, Aldi and Lidl, it is

also home to Festival Walk. Located in the heart of Spennymoor town centre, it has been redeveloped to include a free to use town centre car park on the former Kwik Save site alongside a new Aldi store.

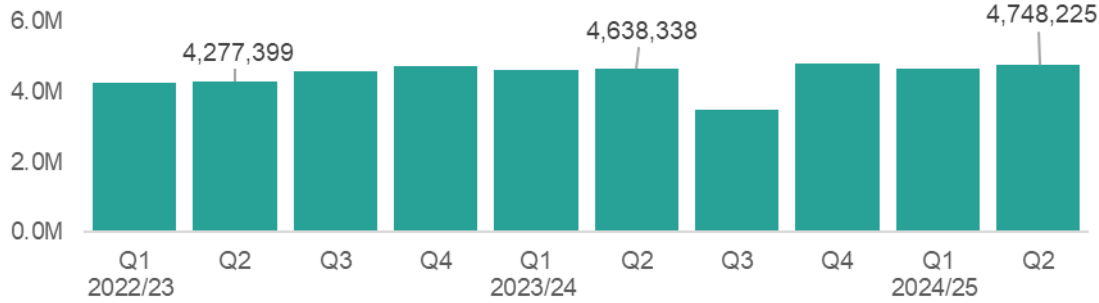
- **Barnard Castle** (12.2%) has vacancy rate better than the national average and similar to last year. The town is anchored by national food retailer Morrisons. It also has a good mix of independent retailers, cafes and restaurants making it a popular and attractive place to visit.

283 We continue to support increased vibrancy of our town centres through various initiatives, including the Towns & Villages Programme and Targeted Business Improvement Scheme. Our strategic place plans will provide a blueprint for future investment and development in town centres shaped by local communities.

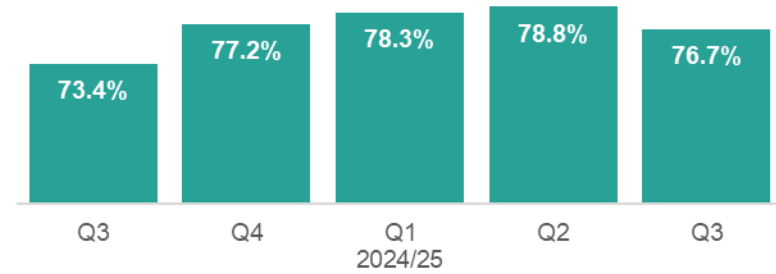
Transport Connectivity Dashboard: public transport patronage and punctuality

(discrete quarterly data / year to date ending 31 December 2024)

Local passenger journeys on the bus network



% of timetabled bus services on time



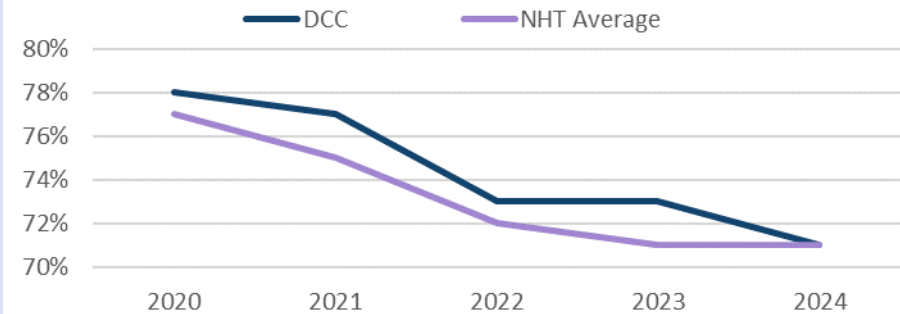
Both patronage and punctuality were impacted as a result of industrial action during quarter three 2023/24.

Satisfaction with ease of access by any form of transport

(National Highways and Transport Survey)

Satisfaction relating to the ease of travelling to work, school/college or local services in 2024 is in line with the national average.

Satisfaction with ease of access by any form of transport



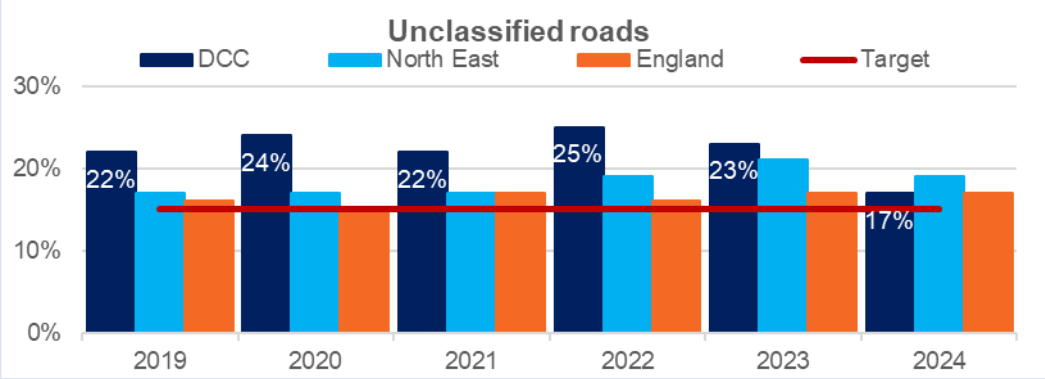
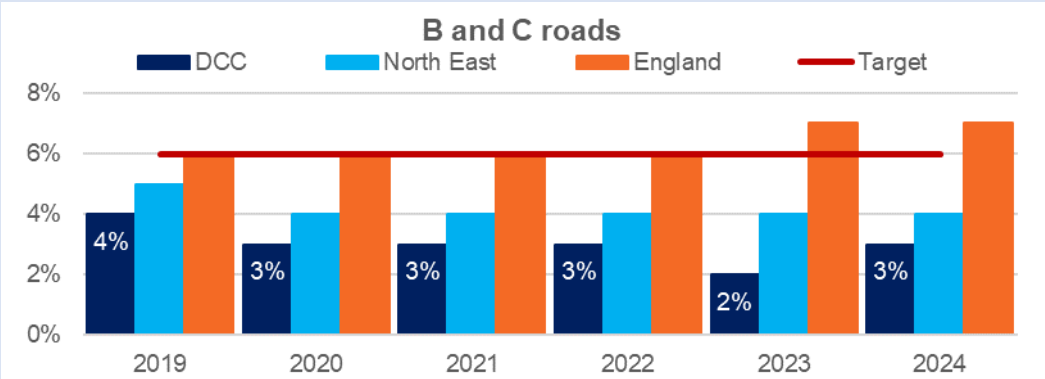
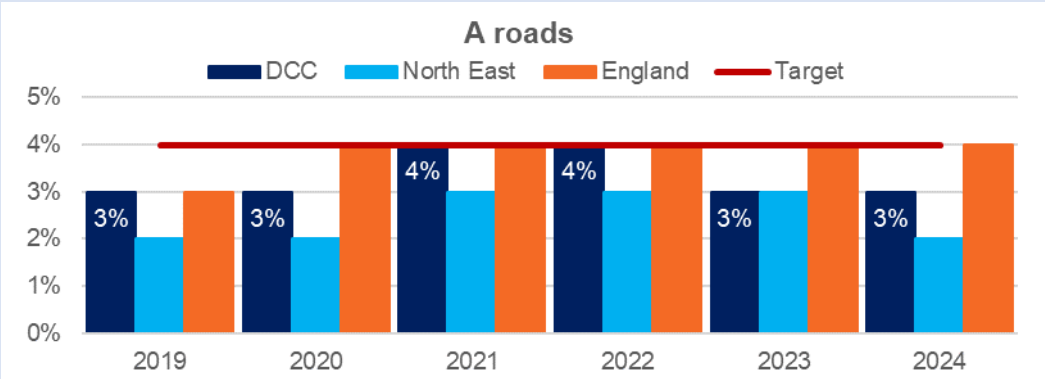
Public transport patronage and punctuality

- 284 Bus patronage has slowly increased over the last two years and is back to within 95% of pre-Covid levels. Between July and September, there were over 4.7 million passengers using buses in Durham, 2.3% more passengers than the same period last year.
- 285 During quarter three (October to December), punctuality was 76.7%. Slightly below last quarter (78%) due to the impact of road works on the network. Work is planned to identify pinch points and potential schemes to address this issue.
- 286 Satisfaction relating to the ease of travelling to work, school/college or local services in 2024 is in line with the national average with performance in previous years remaining within the confidence intervals (+/- 3pp) of the survey and the national average.
- 287 We regularly monitor the number of bus services in operation in County Durham and feedback on any proposed revisions to operators. We also routinely engage with operators through quarterly meetings on areas including performance, service delivery, punctuality and reliability.
- 288 Services have seen improvements through the North East Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) including six enhanced and 11 new contracts.
- 289 Cancellations at short notice are provided by the larger bus operators through their social media channels and websites.

Highway Maintenance Dashboard: Network condition

(year to date ending 31 December 2024)

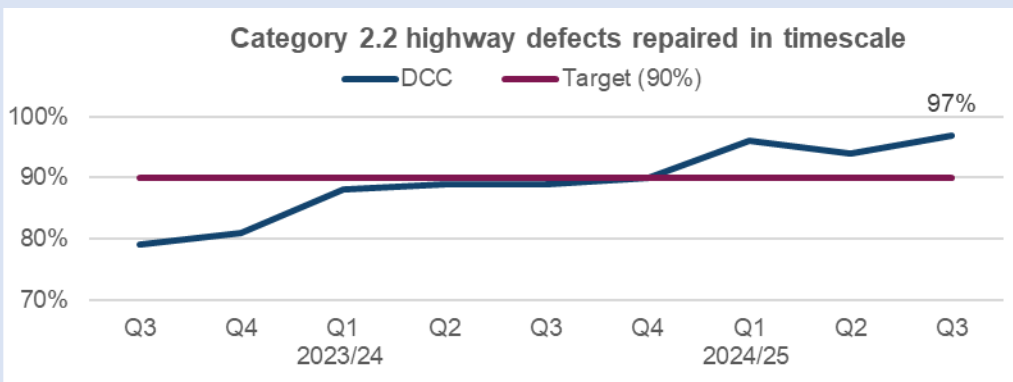
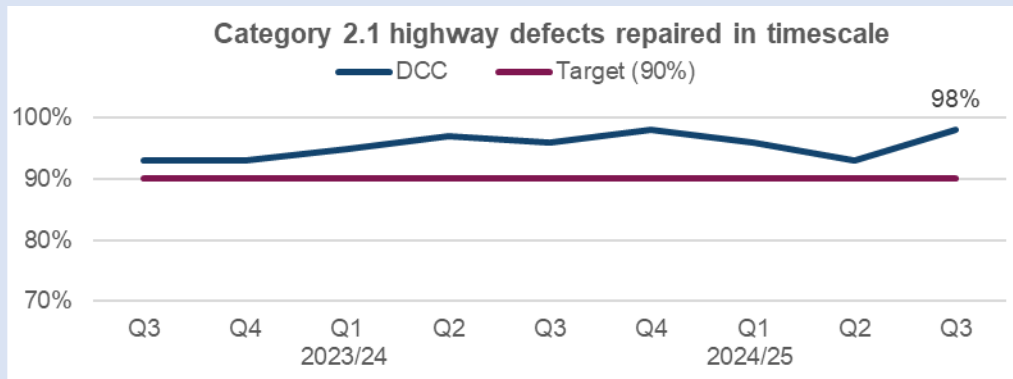
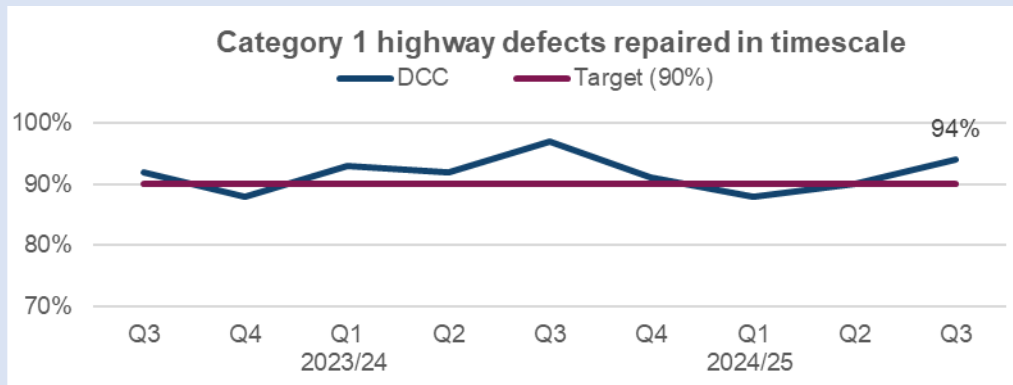
Percentage of roads where maintenance should be considered...



Highway Maintenance Dashboard: defects & satisfaction

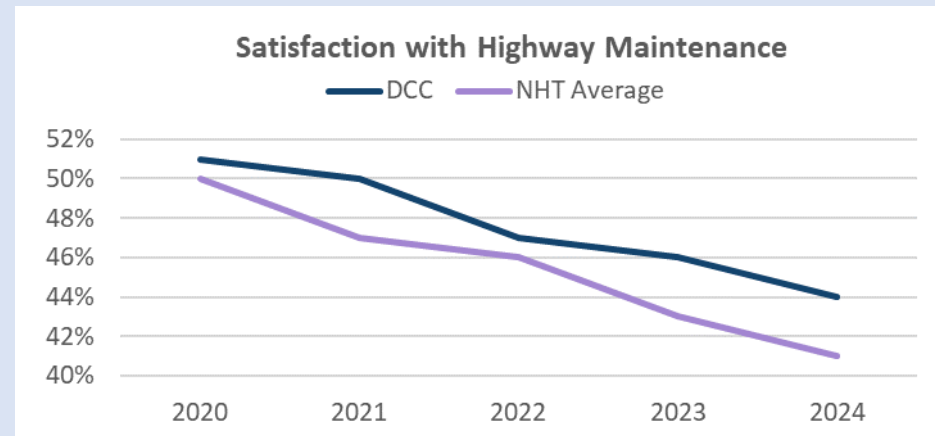
(discrete quarterly data)

Highway Maintenance



- Defects are categorised on a risk basis.
- Resources are 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.

Satisfaction with highway maintenance (National Highways and Transport Survey)



Highways Asset Management Plan

- 290 The Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) 2023/24 sets out the long-term plan for managing our highway network. The [HAMP condition and funding update](#) was agreed at Cabinet in November 2024.
- 291 The overall condition of our classified network is within target and is better than the national average demonstrating the level of investment over previous years.
- 292 The condition of A Roads remains in a steady state when compared to last year but is better (3%) than both the target and national average (4%). The B and C road network is much better (3%) than the target (6%) and the national average (7%).
- 293 Due to unchanged funding and hyperinflation the condition of the classified network has deteriorated slightly.
- 294 Our priority has been to improve the condition of unclassified roads, which are below target (15%) but in line with the national average (17%). The Unclassified Road Fund provided an additional £8.8 million of investment into the unclassified network over a three-year period; in year £2.5 million supported improvements in this area.
- 295 This investment has reduced the percentage of network that requires improvement from 23% in 2023 to 17% in 2024, and this trend is expected to continue.
- 296 A recent benchmarking exercise with all seven regional North East Combined Authorities (NECA) has confirmed the condition of County Durham's unclassified network is better than all but one of its counterparts.
- 297 Investment into footway capital improvement projects has been paused following the announcement of the government's 'digital rollout programme'. Extensive broadband installation continues to impact on the footway network and until this programme nears completion footway funding has been reallocated to other areas, including the unclassified network. Safety critical footway repairs have continued to ensure public safety, however, in the longer-term additional investment will be required when the capital footway maintenance programme is reintroduced. Once the digital rollout programme nears completion, footway improvement schemes will be reintroduced utilising existing highway capital budget.
- 298 Structures overall are generally in 'fair' condition; however, a number of structures are coming to the 'end of their design life'. Additional capital funding has been secured for development of feasibility, detailed design and estimated cost packages which will be used to inform future investment.
- 299 We are currently using the most up to date condition data and treatment costs to enable an accurate highways maintenance backlog to be reported in quarter four. Early indications are that the backlog will have increased significantly driven by inflation which is outside of our control.

Highways Maintenance

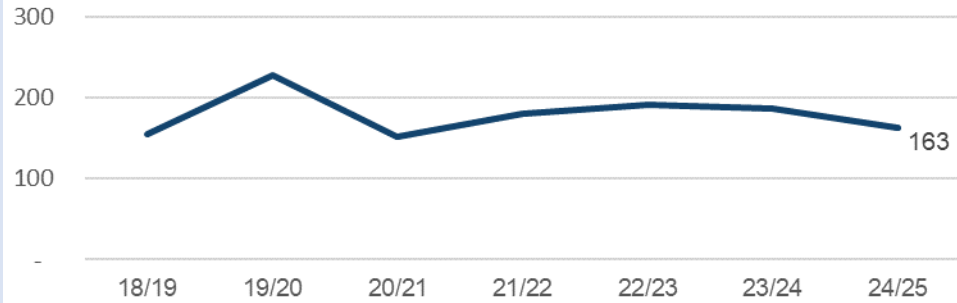
- 300 Highway defects are categorised by risk. Resources are directed toward those with the potential to cause the greatest harm.
- 301 We have committed to repair 90% of all highway defects, regardless of category, within a set time. During quarter three (October to December), we achieved the target for all defect categories.

- 302 Category 1 defects (90% repaired within 2 or 72 hours depending on severity) was better than target, but below (94%) the same period last year (97%). Category 2.1 defects (90% repaired within 14 days) were better than the target and better (98%) than the same period last year (96%). Category 2.2 defects (90% repaired within 3 months) were better than the target and better (97%) than the same period last year (89%).
- 303 The improved performance has been driven by a number of factors including the introduction of new IT systems, improved products and repair techniques.

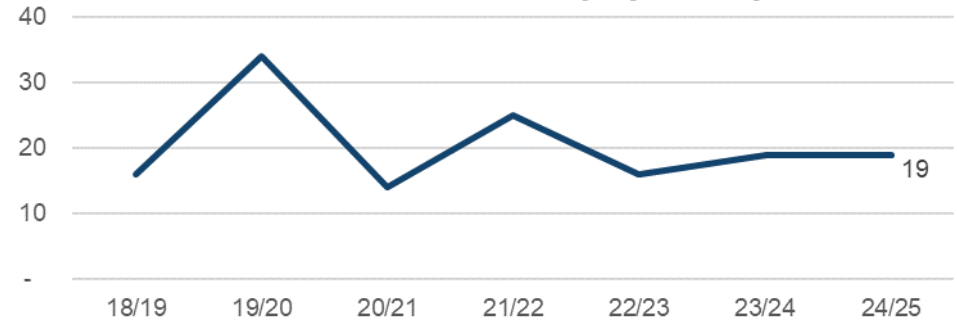
Road Safety Dashboard

(January to December 12 month rolling trend)

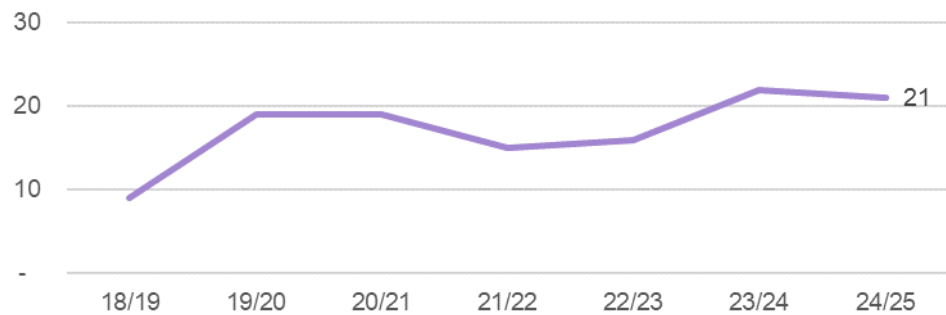
Killed or seriously injured - injuries



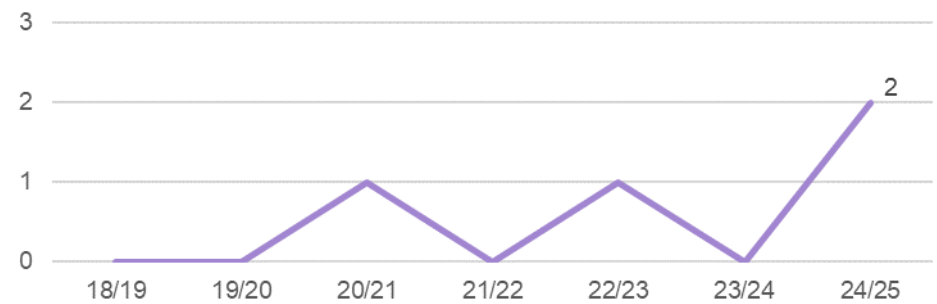
Children - killed or seriously injured - injuries



Killed or seriously injured - fatalities



Children - killed or seriously injured - fatalities



Road Safety

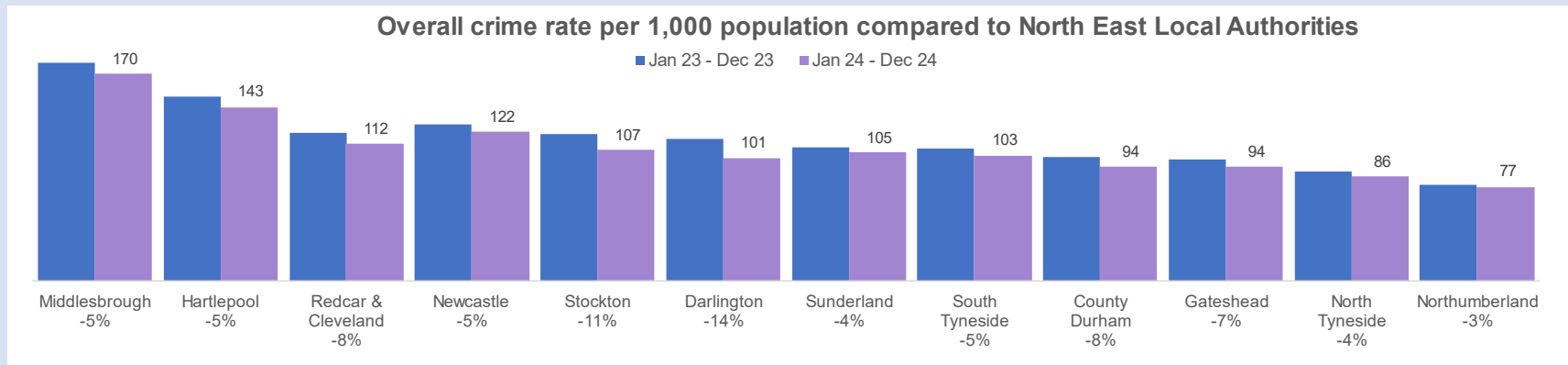
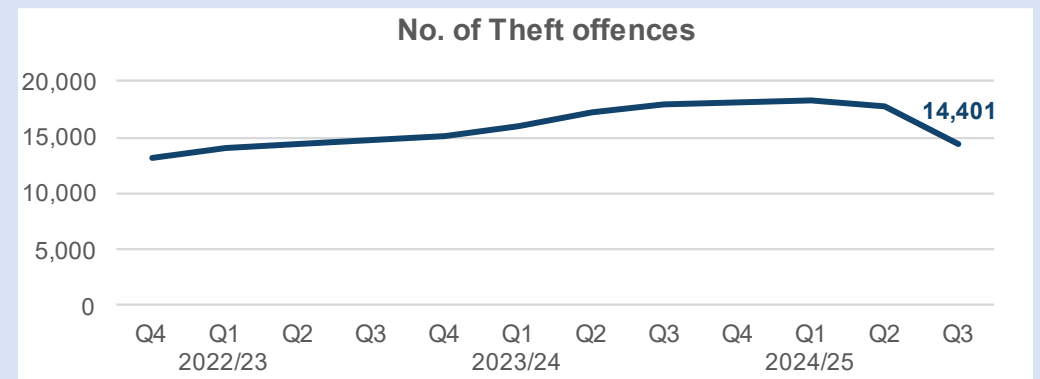
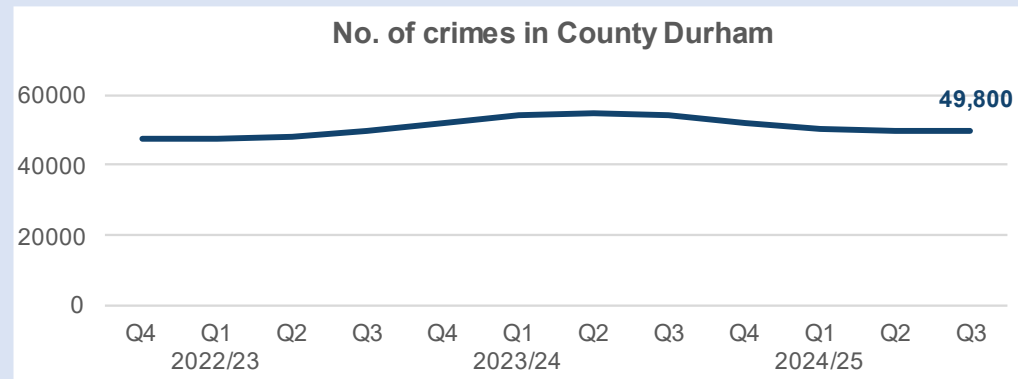
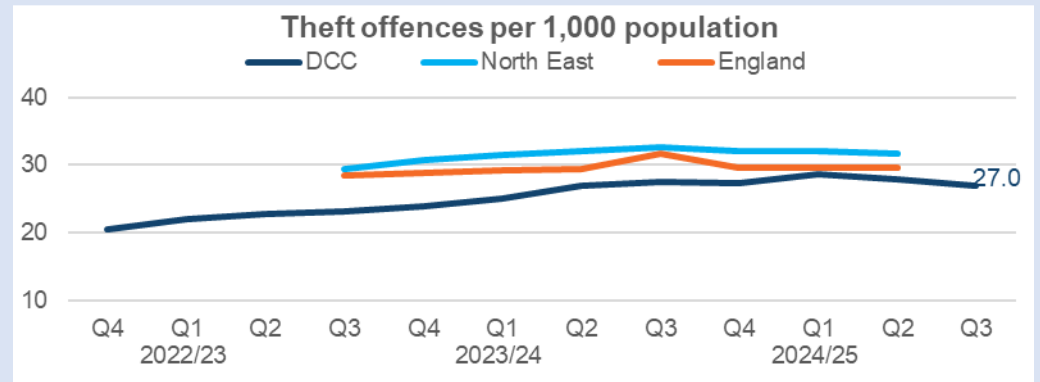
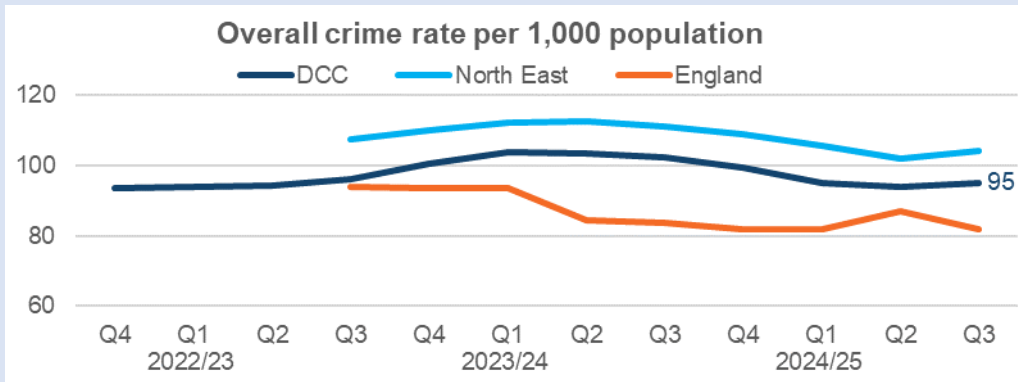
- 304 During the 12 months ending December, 163 people were seriously injured and 21 people died in road traffic collisions across the county. A decrease of one fatality and 24 serious casualties compared to the same period last year.
- 305 The 21-25 and 31-35 age groups account for the most casualties over the last 12 months - 40 casualties between the two groups, compared to 37 during the 12 months ending December 2023.
- 306 Within the 16-20 age group casualties have decreased by 19 within the last 12 months, while casualties have increased by five in the 11-15 age group.
- 307 Car occupants, motorcyclists and pedestrians account for the most casualties in both 2023/24 and 2024/25. However, both motorcyclists and pedal cyclists increased by two, and car occupants and pedestrians decreased by 31 and one, respectively.
- 308 Collision hotspot areas tend to be more urban areas, including Durham City, Bishop Auckland, Peterlee, Chester-le-Street, Consett and Stanley.
- 309 We are working to reduce road traffic casualties through education programmes, training courses and road safety campaigns. During quarter three (October to December), we delivered:

Education programmes / training courses	No. of children
Bikeability cycle training	975
Face-to-face visits and activities with children	4,726
Child pedestrian training	315
Young driver and passenger workshop sessions (with Durham Police)	1,747

- 310 Between October and December, our campaign work focused on teenage/child pedestrian training, car maintenance, dark nights and Halloween, drink and drug driving and weather-related road risks.
- 311 We have also promoted national road safety campaigns from National Highways, TyreSafe and Brake, The Road Safety Charity including Brake Road Safety Week which took place in November.
- 312 During quarter three, we also delivered partnership engagement sessions reaching 215 Neighbourhood Police Officers from across the Constabulary area, focusing on 'safer school gate parking'.
- 313 Our road safety Facebook page reached an audience of almost 15,000 people this quarter.

Crime Dashboard

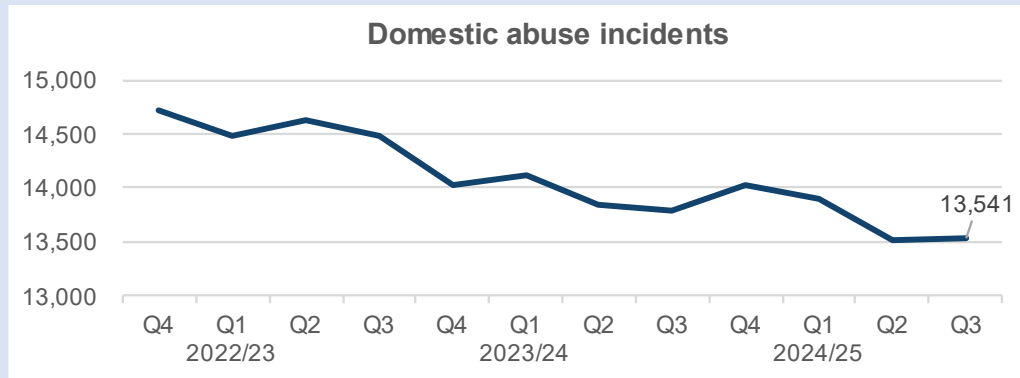
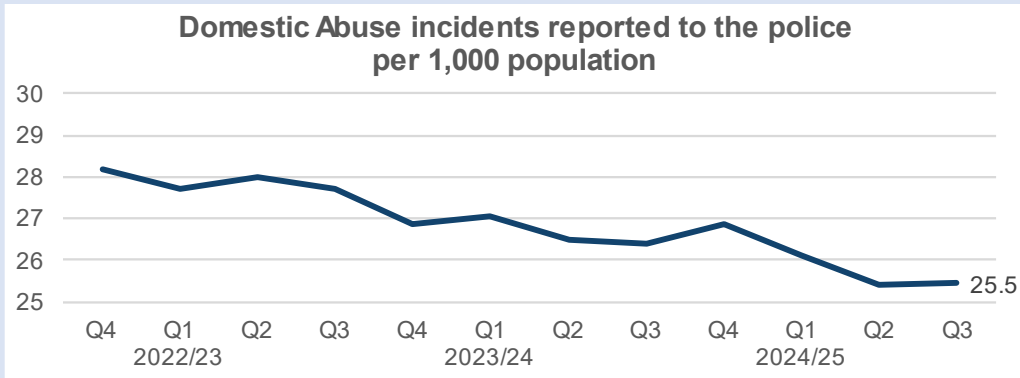
(12 months ending 31 December 2024)



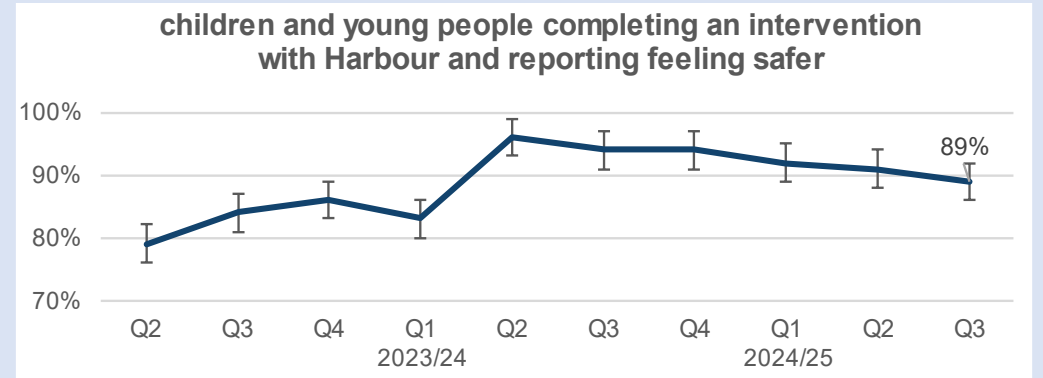
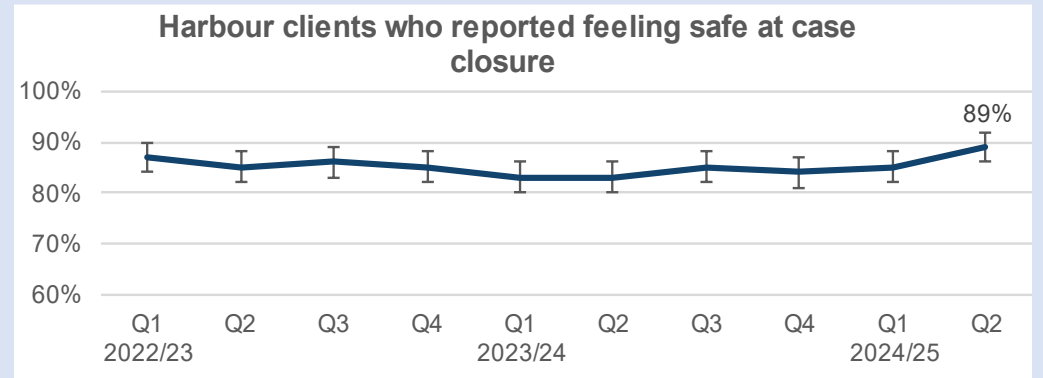
Protecting Vulnerable People from Harm Dashboard

(12 months ending 31 December 2024)

Domestic Abuse Incidents



Harbour Support Services



Crime

- 314 Between 1 September 2023 and 30 June 2024, our overall crime rate increased. The rate declined over the following eighteen months and is now broadly back in line with where it was two years ago.
- 315 Latest data (1 January to 31 December 2024) shows it to be 95 crimes per 1,000 population. This is higher than the England average of around 80 crimes per 1,000 population.
- 316 Although the overall crime rate is in line with previous years, theft offences remain relatively high. The rate of theft offences per 1,000 population remains higher than in previous years, but better than the regional and national rates. Retail crime offences (shoplifting) has seen an increase local and nationally with a peak in October 2024. In response to this Durham constabulary have added specific focus to this crime type and as a result has seen an increase in the number of positive outcomes.
- 317 Prisons across England and Wales remain almost full and this continues to present difficulties for courts. Shoplifting offences rarely lead to custodial sentences, even for repeat offenders.

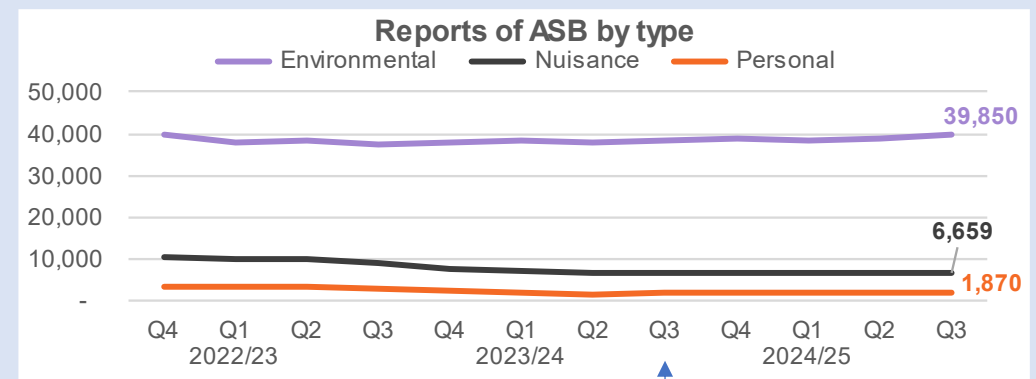
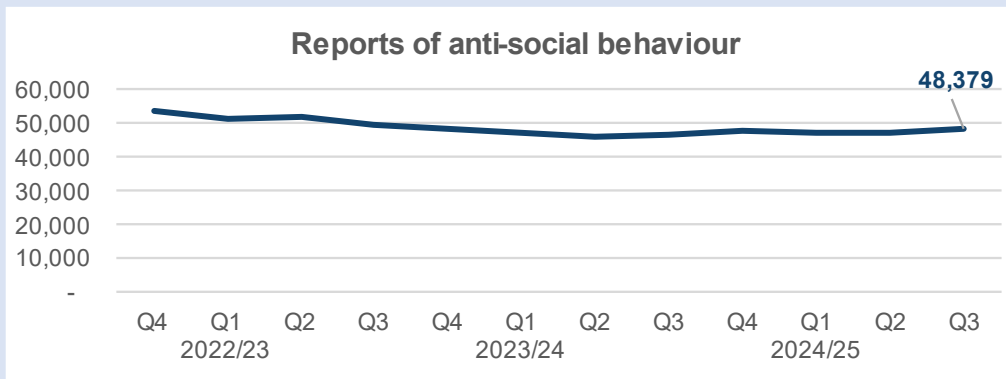
Domestic Abuse

- 318 Domestic abuse incidents reported to the police have steadily decreased in recent years. This is partly due to initiatives such as:
- Operation Trinity: officers can obtain civil orders to safeguard victims,
 - Operation Nightingale: body maps injuries to provide better evidence for charging decisions and court cases,
 - Domestic Violence Protection Orders: allow partnership intervention if domestic abuse is present.
- 319 Throughout quarter three (October and December), 1,631 adult domestic abuse victims were referred to Harbour. This is more than the same period last year. Although there were fewer referrals compared to previous quarters, this reflects patterns from previous years as reporting of domestic abuse is historically lower during the Christmas period.
- 320 Of the victims referred, 88 were considered high risk (5%) and 283 had been referred at least twice in the previous 12 months (17%). The increase in victims considered high risk is linked to the increase in independent domestic violence advisor (IDVA) referrals via multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC). Harbour now has six IDVAs working with high-risk domestic abuse cases.
- 321 The proportion of clients who reported feeling safe after involvement with Harbour remains stable at 89%. The proportion of children completing an intervention with Harbour and indicating they feel safer is also in line with 12 months ago.

Anti-Social Behaviour Dashboard

(12 months ending 31 December 2024)

	Last year	This year	change	
Environment ASB	38,312	39,850	+1,538	+4%
Nuisance ASB	6,625	6,659	+34	+1%
Personal ASB	1,703	1,870	+167	+10%
All ASB	46,680	48,379	+1,699	+4%



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.

Incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

- 322 We co-ordinate our efforts to tackle ASB through a sub-group of the Safe Durham Partnership – the ASB Strategic Group. The group meets every two months and is attended by representatives from partner organisations such as the police, fire service, council, health, probation, and housing. The group is focused on delivering key priority actions, including time limited projects.
- 323 Two key projects are the Hotspot Response and the Immediate Justice Programme.
- 324 During quarter three (October to December), operational groups identified 34 hotspot locations with high levels of ASB (either reported or non-reported). Ten of the hotspots were also serious violence hotspots. During this period, more than 4,000 hours of additional patrols were carried out by partner organisations across these locations. The patrols involved police officers, community safety officers, neighbourhood wardens, ASB prevention officers, and environmental crime officers.

Action	Q1	Q2	Q3	Year to date
Hours of additional patrols	5,254	4,554	4,060	13,868
Arrests	53	35	43	131
Stop and Search	32	15	5	52
Informal Warnings	64	115	129	308
Community Protection Warnings	9	10	11	30
Community Protection Notices	6	4	6	16
Dispersal Notices	1	5	2	8
PSPO enforcement actions	42	79	62	183
Fixed Penalty Notices	51	36	34	121

- 325 The hotspot response is creating referrals into the Immediate Justice Programme. Work is underway to combine the two projects.
- 326 The new Immediate Justice hub listens to the victims of ASB and provides meaningful ways for offenders of ASB to visibly repay the community for harm caused. Between April and December, 84 people (72 children and 12 adults) were referred to the programme across County Durham and Darlington.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Year to date
Darlington Youth Justice	12	10	11	33
Durham Youth Justice	12	13	14	39
Adults	4	1	7	12
Total	28	24	32	84

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

- 327 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.
- 328 This survey will no longer be carried out. There is no alternative indicator to report. Therefore, this indicator will be deleted from future reports.

Community Safety Activity

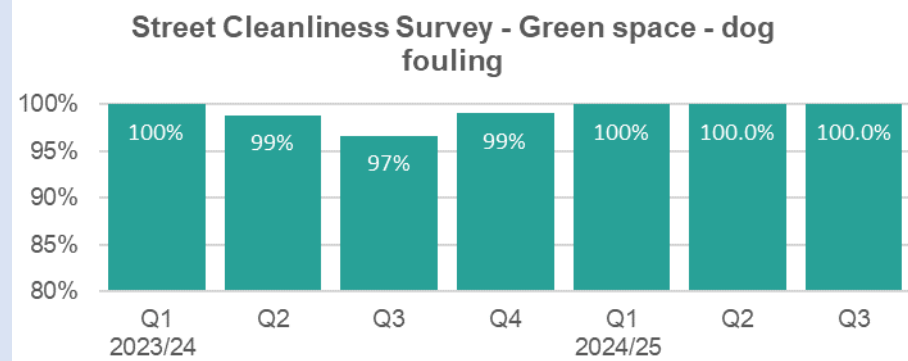
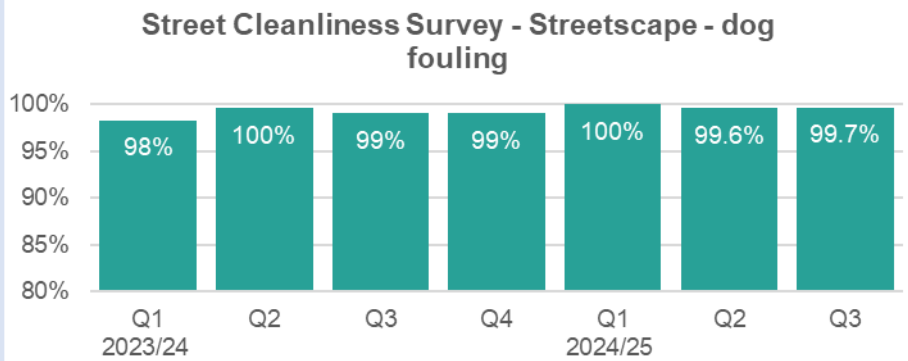
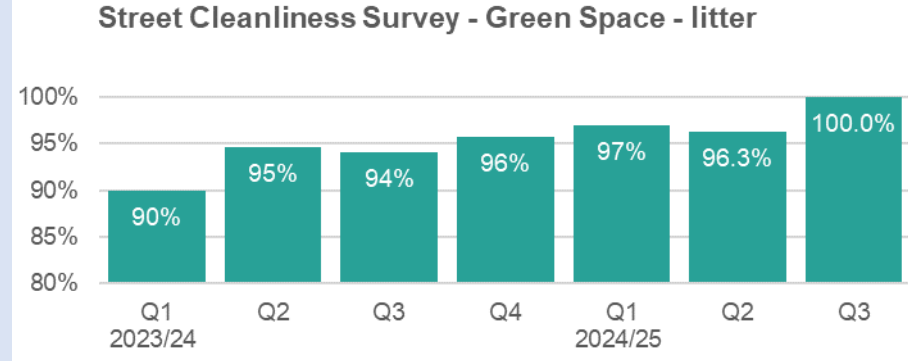
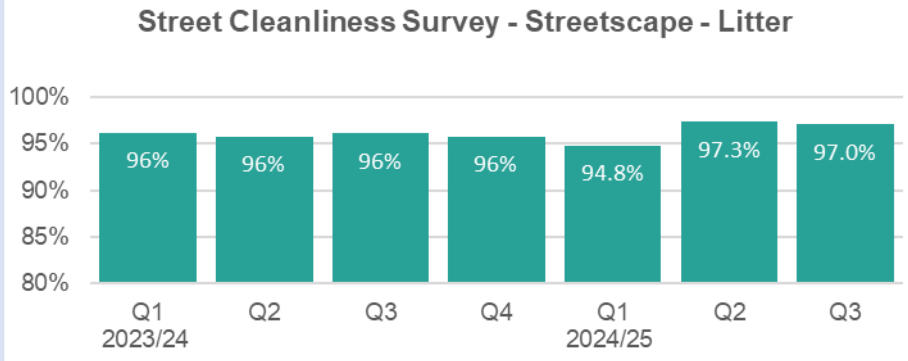
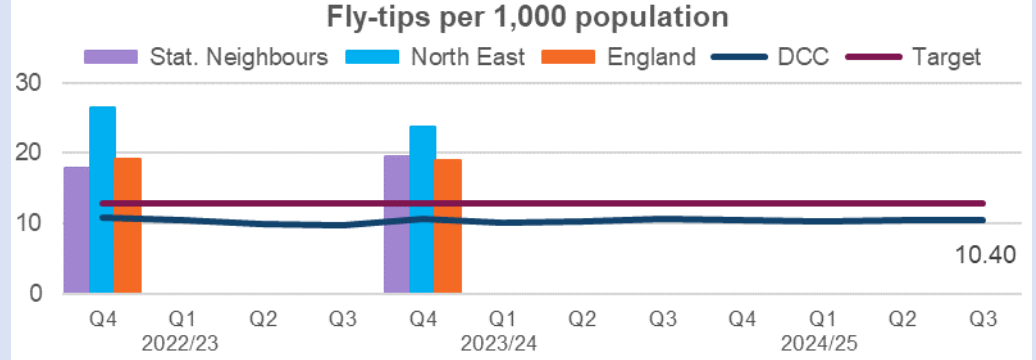
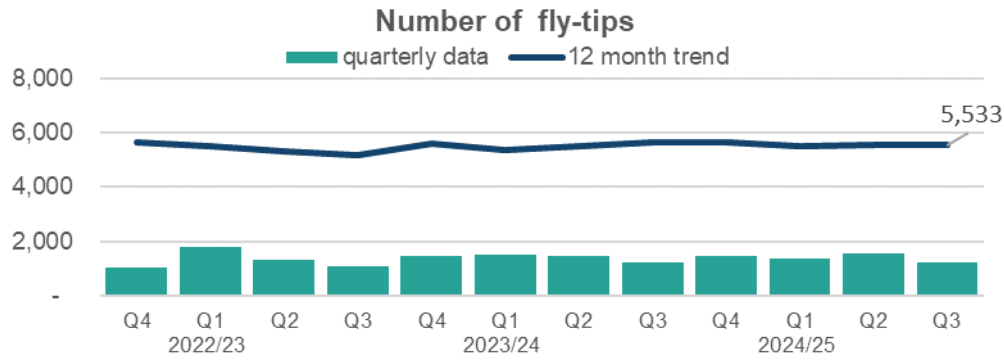
- 329 Throughout quarter three (October to December), we worked with our partners and the local community of Trimdon Station and Deaf Hill. We actioned 260 pieces of casework. This included:
- Issuing 51 legal notices to 18 properties to remedy the defective state of premises and remove noxious matter and vermin,
 - Identified 90 empty properties. We are working with the owners to bring the properties back into use, and
 - Carrying out 58 safe and wellbeing visits and 26 fire reduction activities.
- 330 We carried out three enforcement operations. 25,000 cigarettes and 1,433 non-compliant vapes were seized. Three retail premises were the subject of three month closure orders (in Annfield Plain, Framwellgate Moor and Peterlee).
- 331 A further four matters were taken to court. These cases covered a range of offences included:
- a builder failed to complete work for customers. The result was a fine and a 240 hour community order;
 - a shop selling non-compliant vapes (despite previous warnings). This resulted in a fine and the vapes were destroyed;
 - a shop selling illegal counterfeit tobacco and non-compliant vapes. This resulted in a six-month suspended custodial sentence and the goods were destroyed; and
 - three individuals involved in the sale of unlicensed dogs and money laundering. They pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing.

Horden Together Project

- 332 During quarter three (October to December), 19 clients were accepted on 'Making Every Adult Matter' – bringing the current caseload to 55. The priority areas of engagement were self-harm intervention, food and housing.
- 333 During the same period, we investigated reports relating to issues of unauthorised access, noise, pests, public health and noxious matter and rubbish accumulations. We served 61 notices on properties.

Clean and Attractive Communities Dashboard

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



Fly-tipping

334 During the 12 months ending December 2024, we captured 64 fly-tipping incidents on CCTV and investigated more than 3,750 incidents. Action taken in response includes:

Action	Number
Fixed Penalty Notices (waste carrier offences)	95
Fixed Penalty Notices (fly-tipping offences)	44
Prosecutions	8
Vehicle seizures	8

335 Just over 5,500 fly-tips were recorded during the 12 months ending December 2024, an improvement on the same period last year (5,638), and significantly better than during the pandemic when fly-tips peaked at more than 8,000 incidents (April 2020 to March 2021).

336 Our fly-tipping rate is 10.4 per 1,000 population (12 months ending December 2024). This is better than the target (12.9) and the same period last year (10.6, 12 months ending December 2023).

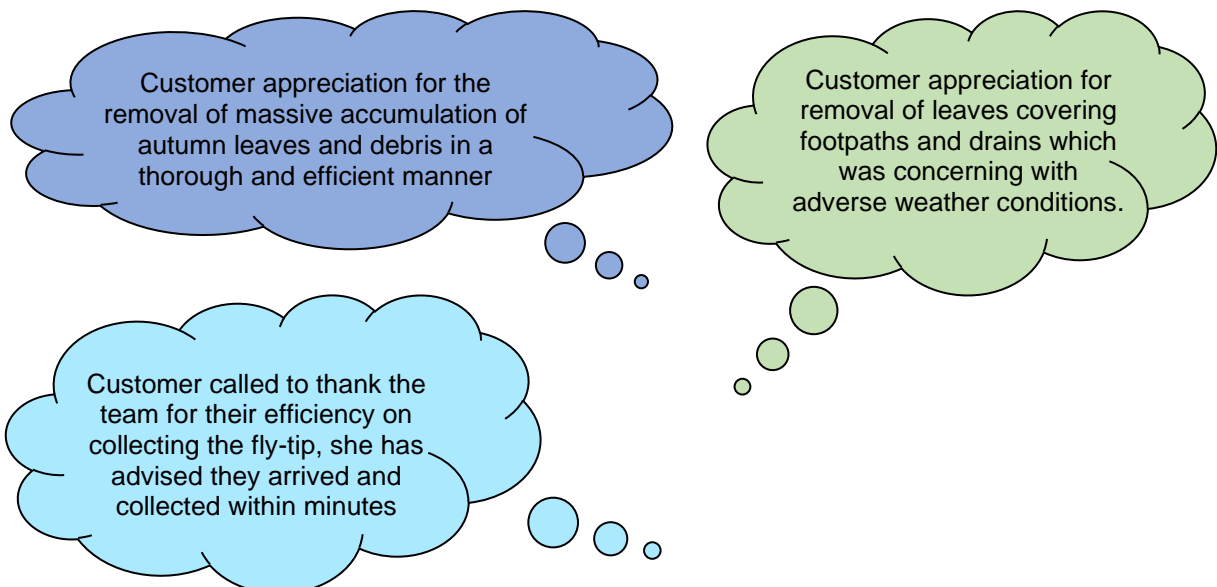
Cleanliness

337 Our latest cleanliness surveys assess both streetscape areas (paths, roads and alleyways) and green space areas (parks, open spaces and playing fields).

338 The surveys found that, of the streetscape and green space areas inspected, 97% and 100% were acceptable in relation to litter, and 99.7% and 100% were acceptable in relation to dog fouling.

339 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

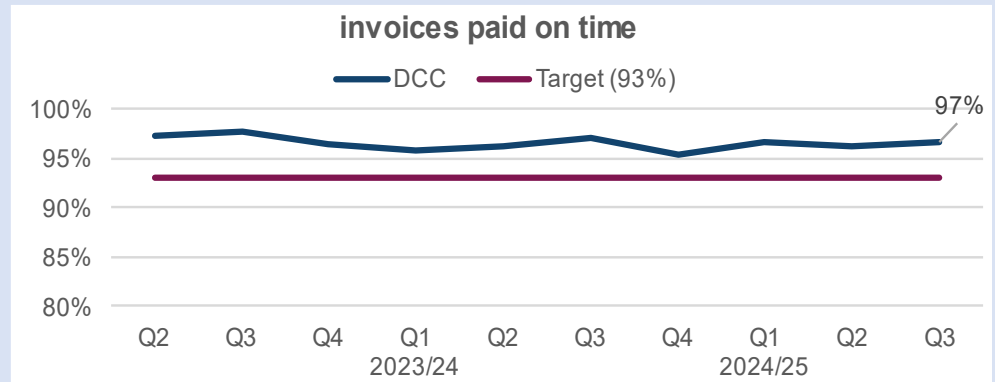
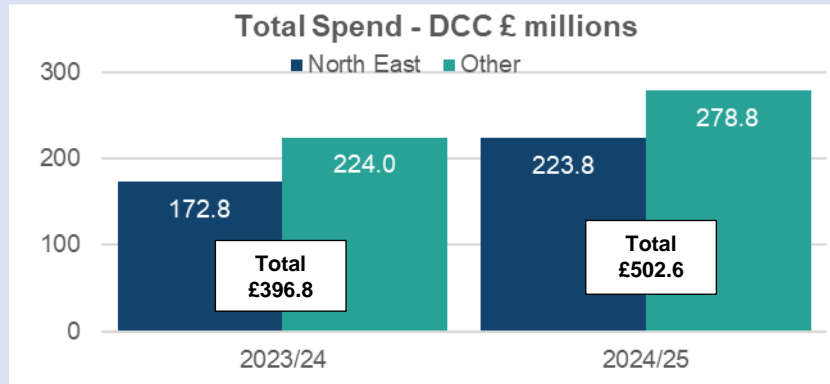
- 340 The government has published the provisional local government finance settlement for England, 2025/26. Our financial position remains very challenging despite the additional government grant funding being provided next year ([budget 2025/26 – report to County Council](#)).
- 341 Alongside the funding announcements, the Government launched [consultation](#) on longer term funding reforms for local government (closed 12 February). The reforms will be implemented through a multi-year settlement, beginning in 2026/27. Spending reviews 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.
- 342 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. And Artificial Intelligence (AI) is to be integrated into council operations to enhance efficiency, improve service delivery and reduce costs.

Business Intelligence Project

- 343 We have developed an enterprise data platform to deliver analytics and new insight across our key service areas. And we intend to use master data management to provide citizen indexed views (single view of the child, single view of the adult, single view of the family, single view of debt). We are currently focused on developing a single view of the adult, which we hope to complete by mid-February.
- 344 We have completed initial accelerator dashboards for HR, Children's Social Care and Early Help, and Adult Social Care. Since the last report, we have launched the following dashboards: Education, Home to School Transport, and Freedom of Information, Subject Access Request and data breach compliance. Our next focus will be a Revenues and Benefits Dashboard.
- 345 A Data Protection Impact Assessment for the Business Intelligence Programme has been agreed. And we have completed a review of the Analytics Platform, which will be verified by Microsoft in February. The plan, which will take several months to implement, will change the platform setup but will increase efficiency and reduce cost.

Procurement Dashboard

(Total Spend: April to September 2024, Invoices: 12 months ending 31 December 2024)



Council spend during April and September 2024 was the highest for 14 years. Almost £106 million more (+27%) than the same period last year.

This was mainly due to:

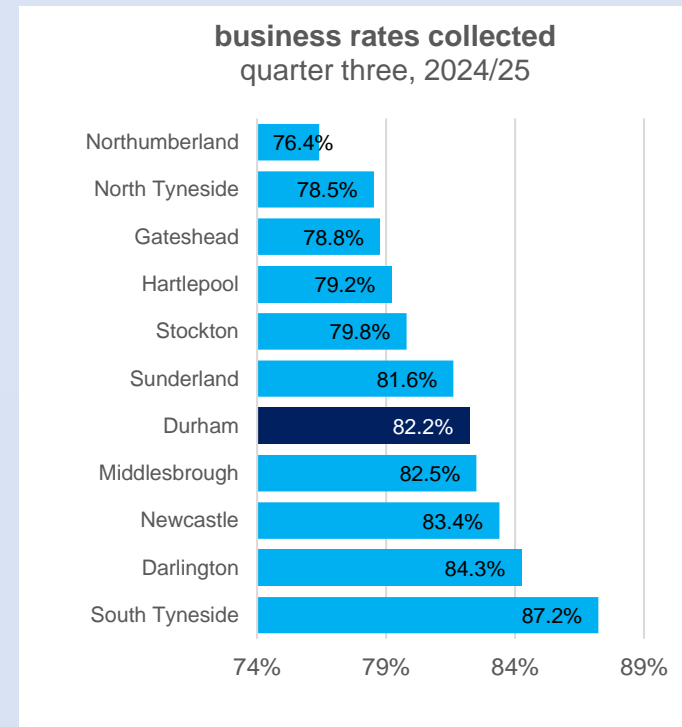
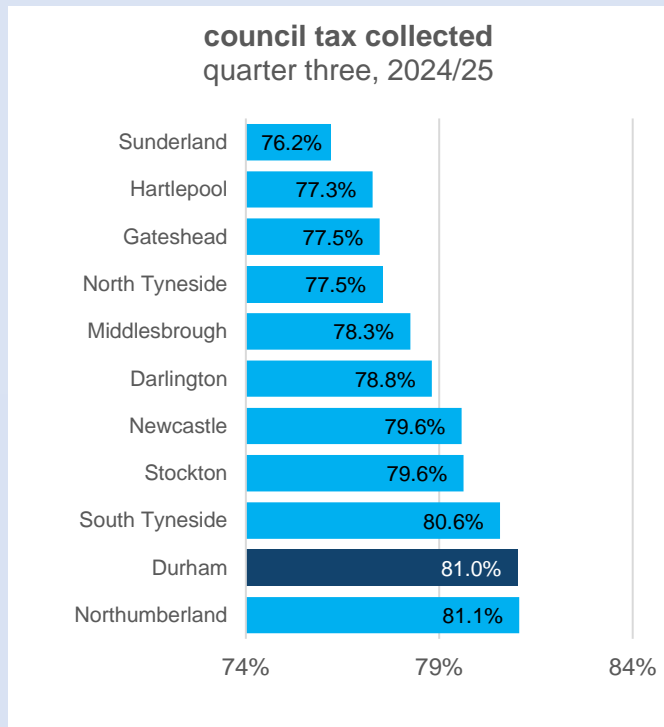
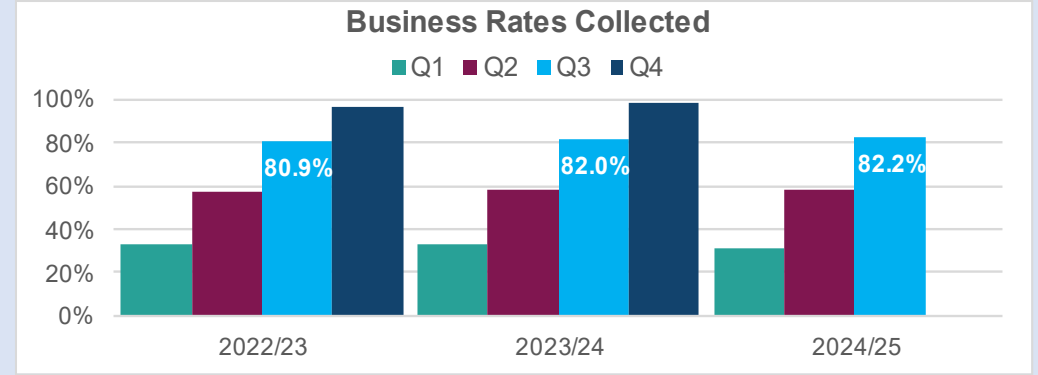
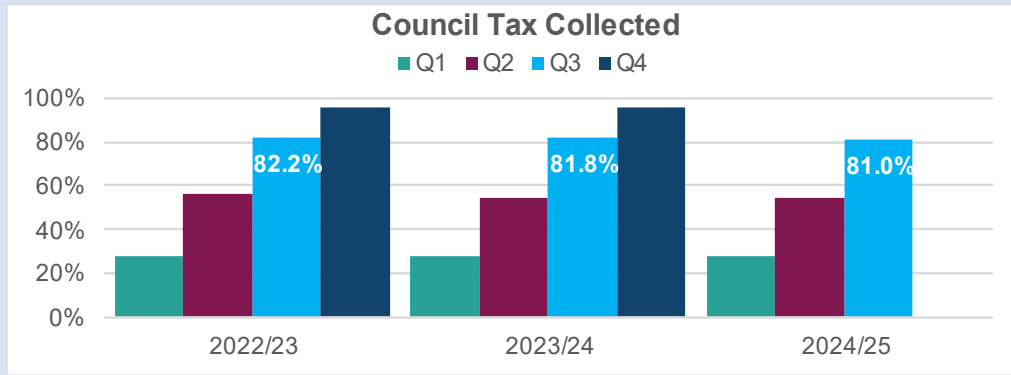
- Inflation. Affecting all aspects of the council.
- An increase in the minimum wage. Impacting Adult Care.
- More spend on capital projects such as those in the table below.

Project	Apr to Sep 2023 £'million	Apr to Sep 2024 £'million
Spennymoor Primary School	2.7	4.0
Belmont Comprehensive	3.5	14.2
NETPark Infrastructure	0.8	26.9
A19 Corridor Works	1.2	10.0
	8.3	55.1

- The government extending the 30 hours childcare entitlement to children aged from nine months to three years (subject to eligibility criteria). The Dedicated School Grant (and spend) has increased accordingly.
- The cost of placements for Looked After Children.
- Increase in fuel prices and a grant to fund our elements of the [Bus Service Improvement Plan](#).

Council Tax and Business Rates Dashboard

(year to date 2024/25)



Council Tax Collection

- 346 Our year-to-date collection rate is 81% (April to December 2024). This is the second best rate of all the North East councils.
- 347 However, our year-to-date collection rate is slightly lower than at the same time last year (81.8%). This is due to a combination of:
- An increase in total billing by around £24 million. Mainly due to changes to Empty Property Premiums (+£7 million) and our Council Tax Discretionary Reduction Scheme (post-Covid support) (+£1 million).
 - More households failing to pay their council tax. We have issued more recovery documents (up 2% on the same period last year) and more reminders (up 11%). But people are bringing their accounts up to date after missing one or two instalments. Consequently, the number of summons and liability orders remain broadly consistent with last year.
 - More households paying over 12 months rather than 10. More than 64,000 households (around 5,500 more than last year) pay their final instalments in March rather than January. This results in a short-term negative impact on in-year collection.

Business Rates Collection

- 348 Our year-to-date collection rate of 82.2% is slightly better than at the same time last year (82%). And our performance is better than most North East local authorities (ranked fifth of 11 councils).
- 349 We have issued 14% more recovery documents to business rates accounts compared to last year. There is a pattern of early defaulters who then bring their accounts up to date. The number of accounts where we have taken court action has dropped by 4%.

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings

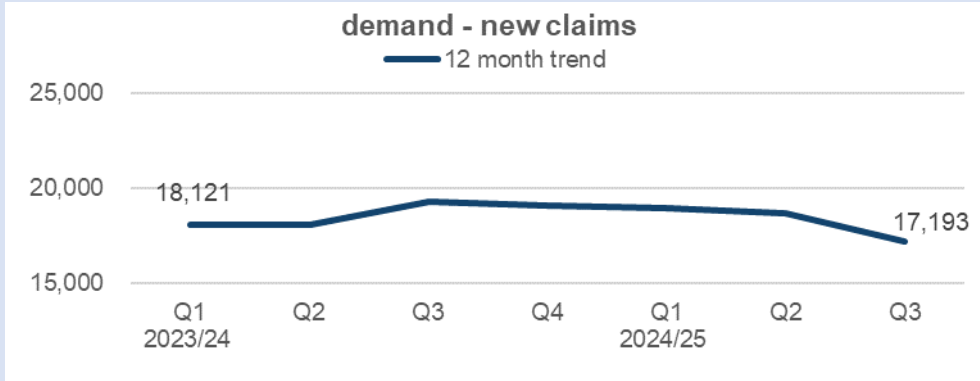
- 350 We expect to save £8.1 million during the 2024/25 financial year (April 2024 to March 2025). As of 31 December, we had saved £6.7 million (82% of our projection).

	projected saving £'million	saving achieved £'million	saving achieved %
Income generation	2.2	1.5	67%
Amending contracts / service provision	1.7	1.6	91%
Staff restructures / better ways of working	1.7	1.6	96%
Other	1.3	0.9	68%
Budget reduction	1.2	1.1	95%

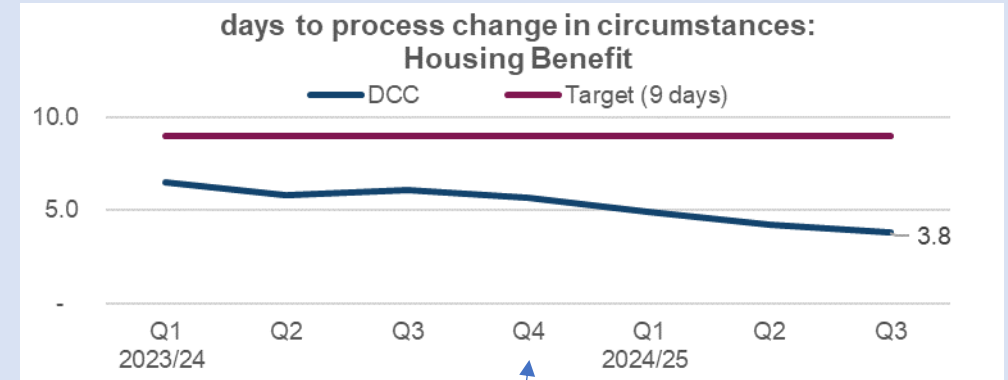
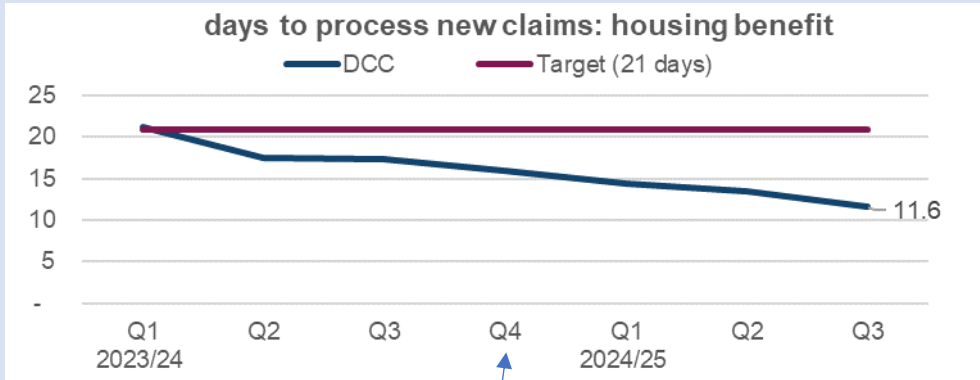
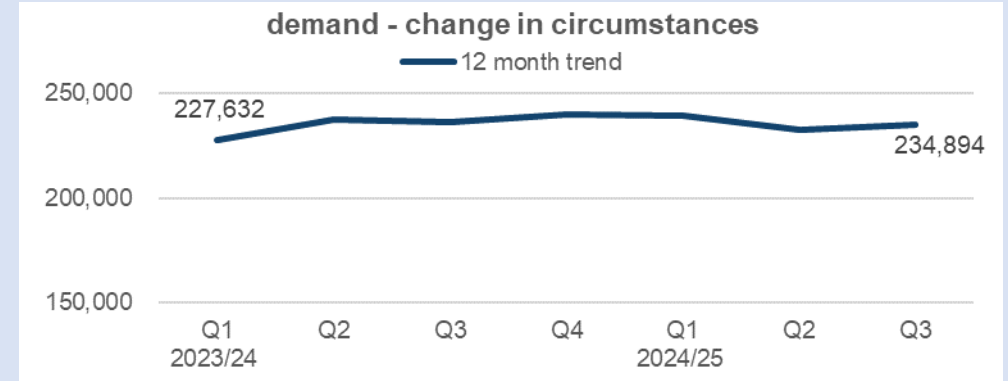
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Dashboard

(12 months rolling)

New Claims

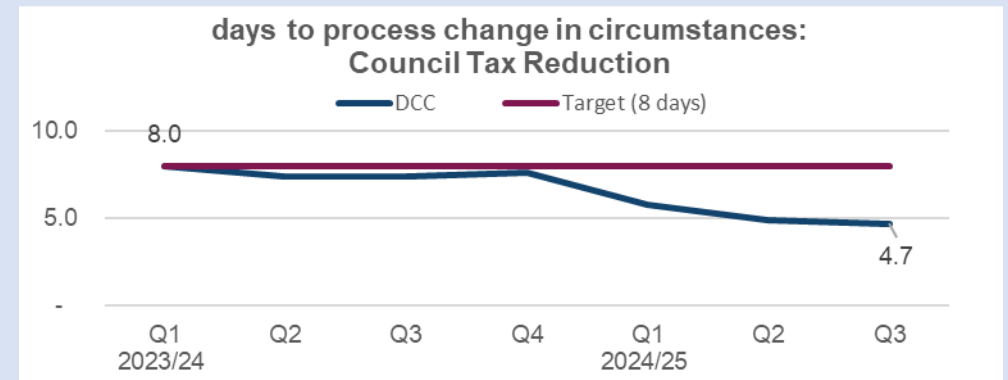
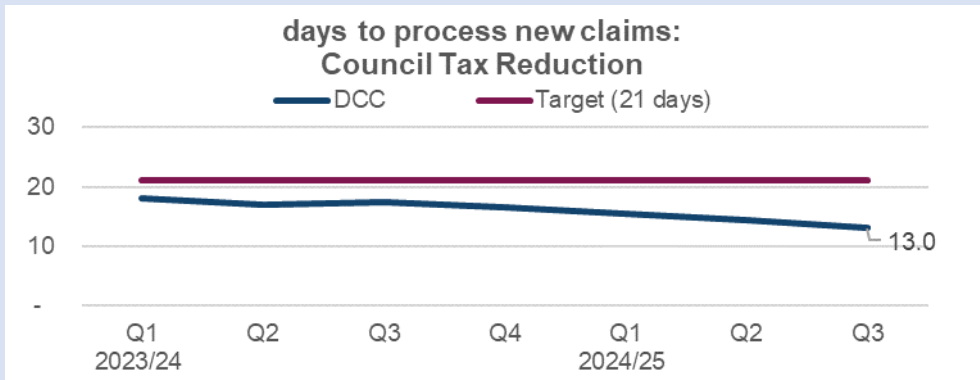


Change in Circumstances



Latest benchmarking (23/24) for new housing benefit claims – we performed better (16 days) than both national (20 days) and regional (20 days) averages. During 2024/25 we have further improved our processing times to 11.6 days.

Latest benchmarking (23/24) for housing benefit change in circumstances claims – we performed better (5.7 days) than national (6 days) but below regional (5 days) averages. Since then, processing times have improved



Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction

- 351 The time taken to process both new claims and change in circumstances continues to fall and we continue to perform better than target.
- 352 The increase in new claims for housing benefit can be linked to an increase in claims relating to supported / temporary accommodation properties. These properties are not within the council's control.
- 353 The increase in change of circumstances (for both housing benefit and local council tax reduction) followed the government's decision to transfer £1.5 billion¹² to the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme, resulting in former mineworkers across the UK receiving an increase to their pensions. This means we had to process more changes in circumstances - each change having to be actioned manually. Despite the increases in demand, we continue to perform well.

		Jan to Dec 2023	Jan to Dec 2024	No.	Change %
Housing Benefit	New claims	2,920	3,300	+380	+13%
	Change in Circumstances	55,377	57,097	+1,720	+3%
Council Tax Reduction	New claims	15,735	13,893	-1,842	-12%
	Change in Circumstances	169,021	177,797	+8,776	+5%

Universal Credit and Managed Migration

- 354 Since 2017, the government has been processing all new housing benefit claims as Universal Credit. The government has also committed to moving existing housing benefit claimants to Universal Credit through managed migration. This will impact both our housing benefit and council tax reduction workload in different ways.
- 355 The Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) administers Universal Credit. The council administers housing benefit claims. As housing benefits claimants migrate to Universal Credit, the council's caseload reduces. During quarter three (October to December) a further 1,200 housing benefits claimants migrated to Universal Credit. It is expected a further 5,300 claimants will migrate throughout 2025.
- 356 We receive a grant from DWP to administer housing benefit claims (£1.8 million grant received for 2024/25). So, as claimants migrate to Universal Credit and our caseload reduces, the grant we receive also reduces. We estimate our grant will reduce by around 25% from April 2025.
- 357 The government has brought forward the Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) migration to Universal Credit from 2028 to September 2024, although to date no residents in County Durham have been impacted. This will impact an additional 5,803 residents during 2025, however, as yet we are unsure whether this will be in one batch or in a staggered approach as part of the larger national move.
- 358 An unintended consequence to managed migration is an increase in our local council tax reduction scheme workload. On average, claimants to our local scheme, make one or two changes per year. However, Universal Credit automatically calculates every month. This could potentially lead to us receiving a change in circumstances for every claim every

¹² [£1.5 billion to mineworkers' pension scheme](#)

month. Previous migrations have driven increases in this area. We noticed a small impact in quarter three, however, it is expected that this will increase further throughout 2025.

Financial Support Schemes

359 The council continues to provide effective 'core' financial support mechanisms to low-income households. Mainly through our Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS), Welfare Rights Support, our Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) scheme, and our Welfare Assistance Scheme (WAS) for those in crisis.

- **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	53,460	52,932	-528 (-0.9%)
Total cost in £'million	63.2	67.0*	+3.7*
% of pension age	38%	38%	-

*estimated

- **Discretionary Housing Payments¹³.** In April 2024, Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates were increased to reflect the cheapest 30% of local rents¹⁴. 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.

	Q3 2023/24	Q3 2024/25	Change
Number	694	247	-447
Total value	£183,339	£92,000	-£91,339
Average payment	£264	£373	+£109

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

		Q3 2023/24	Q3 2024/25	Change
Daily Living Expenses ¹⁵	Number	876	199	-677
	Total value	£57,118	£11,182	-£45,936
	Average payment	£65	£56	-£11
Settlement Grants ¹⁶	Number	245	188	-57
	Total value	£123,816	£89,927	-£33,889
	Average payment	£505	£478	-£27

¹³ extra help for tenants to meet their housing costs.

¹⁴ using rental figures from September 2023

¹⁵ for people, whose circumstances change unexpectedly and they do not have access to money for things such as food, travel or clothing.

¹⁶ 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.

In relation to Daily Living Expenses, we now focus on meeting the needs of our residents through tailored support rather than allocating cash. 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 dynamic of claimants has changed year on year from large family households to more single people meaning the average spend has reduced.

- 360 In addition to these 'core' mechanisms, we have also drawn on national funding sources to sustain existing work and develop new programmes. This includes £4.6 million received through the Household Support Fund (HSF) and £1 million received through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)
- 361 We continue to use the HSF to provide short-term financial help to residents who are struggling to afford household essentials. This includes allocating supermarket vouchers to vulnerable households such as those receiving free school meals (during school holidays) or pensioner households which qualify for Local Council Tax Reduction but not for winter fuel payment¹⁷.
- 362 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.
- 363 In relation to the UKSPF funding. The Poverty Action Steering Group (PASG) is delivering projects which 'wrap around' government schemes and broader council strategies. The projects focus on mitigating food and fuel poverty, ensuring access to welfare advice and guidance services, and promoting financial inclusion and pathways out of poverty. The projects include:
- A new cost-of-living and debt advice service. Delivered by four partners in the community^[6], it has, to date, given advice to 975 residents which has led to more than £144,000 of confirmed income gains in increased weekly benefit entitlement.
 - Four new food surplus hubs (The Bread and Butter Thing). Newton Aycliffe and Gilesgate opened during quarter two (July to September). Blackhall and Burnopfield opened in the current quarter (October to December). A final hub will open in March 2025 in the Trimdon area. This will bring our food surplus hubs total to 20. Each hubs helps 160 residents with low cost food each week.
 - Helping to fund the 2024/25 Welcome Spaces^[7] programme. We have approved thirty two grant applications so far (totalling £83,485). These are a mix of new and former applicants. We will evaluate the programme once it ends (31 March 2025) to determine whether it has met its aims. An overview of this evaluation will be included in a future edition of this report.
 - Recruiting two new Financial Inclusion Support Officers. Working with 12 secondary schools and one college, the officers have, to date, processed 289 referrals. The referrals covered a wide range of issues such as accessing school uniforms, free

¹⁷ following the eligibility change from winter 2024.

^[6] Citizens Advice County Durham, Age UK County Durham, Durham Christian Partnership and East Durham Trust.

^[7] 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.

school meals, welfare benefit checks, assistance with benefit applications and fuel poverty advice.

- Identifying 2,254 children eligible for free school meals and auto-enrolling them directly with their school. This will save parents around £450 a year and increase the funding available to schools by £3 million. Schools will also be eligible for additional income through the mainstream funding formula – this is estimated to be at least £2 million.

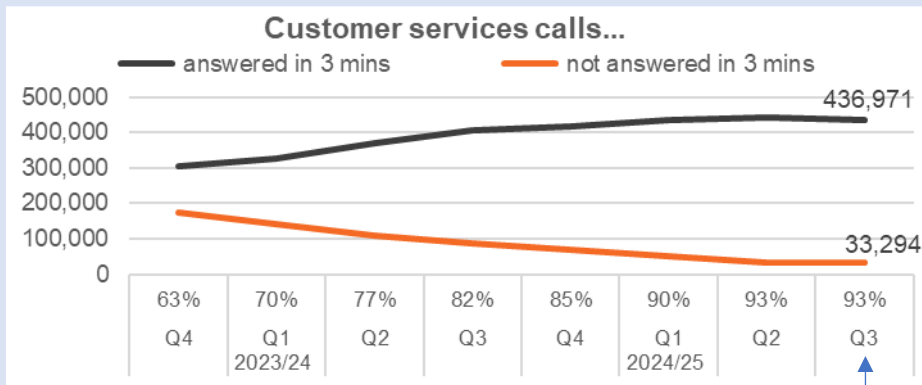
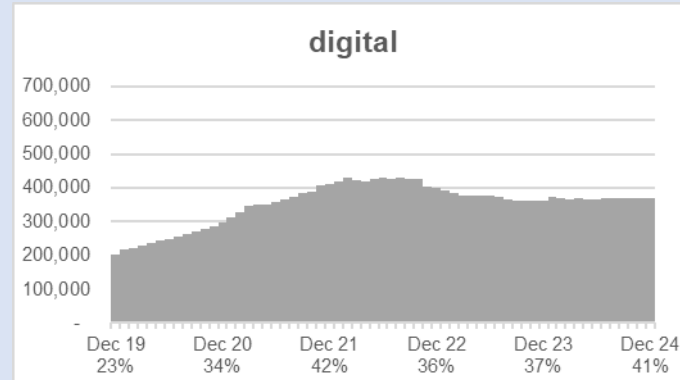
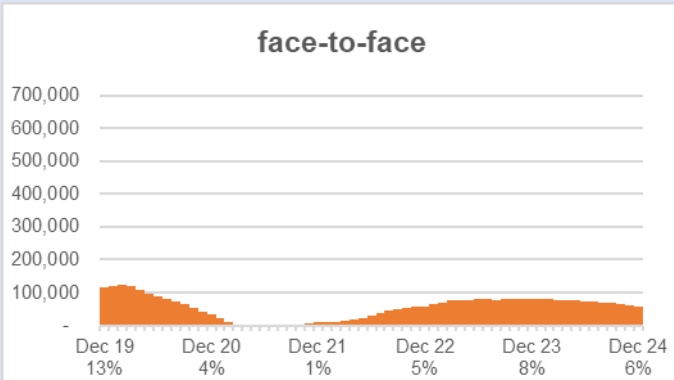
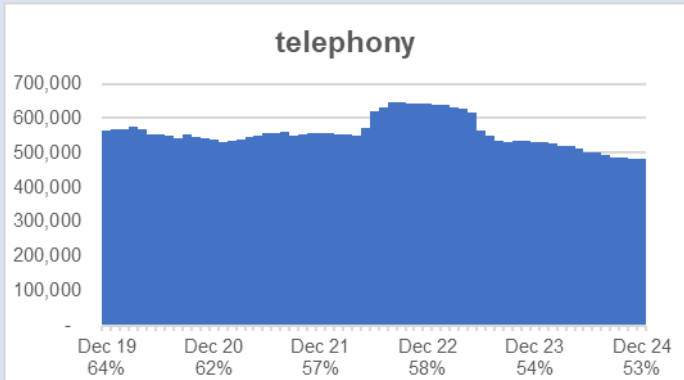
364 The PASG recently carried out a campaign (in two parts) to increase the take-up of Pension Credit. We used a range of data to identify and contact residents who could potentially be eligible (part one). We also identified areas with a low take-up rate for pension credit and distributed leaflets across those areas (households, libraries, GP surgeries and community centres) (part two). We will complete a full evaluation of the campaign in late February / early March. And include details in the next performance report (quarter four). However, initial analysis suggests that of the 1,346 pensioners who were considered as potentially eligible to claim based on their circumstances, 51% are now successfully in receipt of Pension Credit. This equates to around £2.9 million in extra financial support per year for pensioners.

365 We are now looking at campaigns that could potentially increase the take-up of social tariffs for utilities such as water and broadband. Details will be provided in later reports.

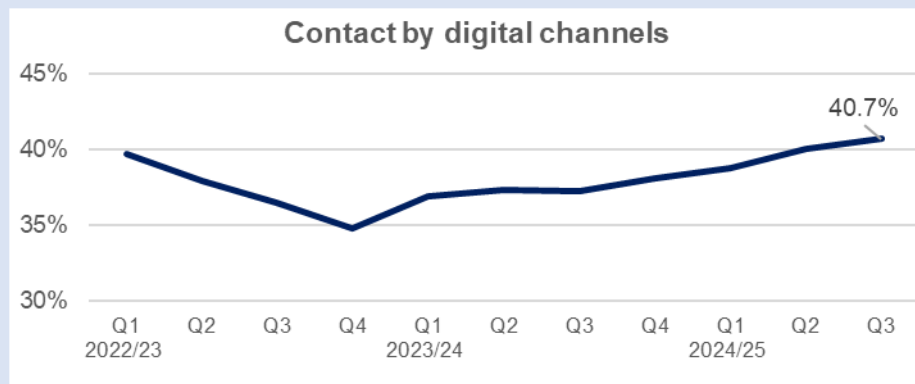
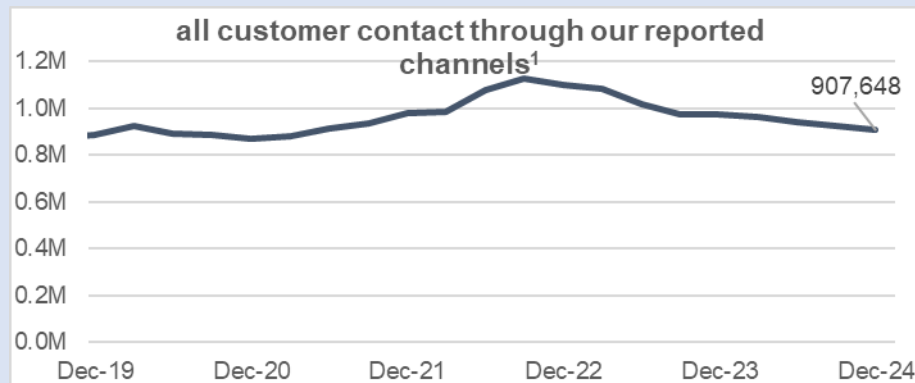
Customer Contact Dashboard

(12 months ending 31 December 2024)

Long-term trends in contact by channel type

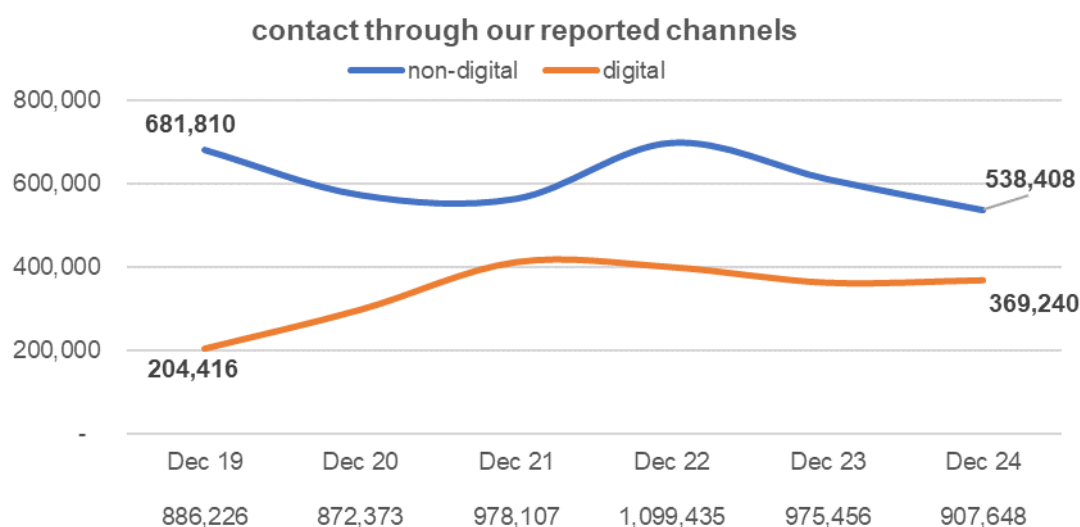


93% of calls answered by customer services were answered within 3 minutes. A significant improvement on last year



Customer Contact through our reported channels¹⁸

- 366 Customer contact through our reported channels is around 2% higher than five years ago (21,400 more contacts). However, the way customers contact us is changing.
- 367 Non-digital contact is reducing. It is now at its lowest level for five years. The 12-month telephone call volume is 15% lower (83,100 fewer contacts) – although the telephone remains the most frequent way of contacting us. Face-to-face contact through our Customer Access Points (CAPs) is 49% lower (60,300 fewer contacts).
- 368 Digital contact is increasing. It is much higher than that recorded pre-pandemic (165,000 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.



- 369 Over the last 12 months (January to December 2024), 59% of contact was received non-digitally. However, five years ago, we received 77% of our contact non-digitally.

	Dec-19	Dec-20	Dec-21	Dec-22	Dec-23	Dec-24
Non-digital contact	77%	66%	58%	64%	63%	59%
Digital contact	23%	34%	42%	36%	37%	41%

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

	Dec-19	Dec-20	Dec-21	Dec-22	Dec-23	Dec-24
Telephone	64%	62%	57%	58%	54%	53%
Face-to-face	13%	4%	1%	5%	8%	6%

- 371 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 type of contact from the overall total. Therefore, face-to-face contact reported from January will be lower – but more accurate in terms of customer contact. However, we can't adjust the past data so expect to see an artificial

¹⁸ telephone calls (customer services only), do-it-online, e-mail, webchat, social media, Customer Access Points

decrease in face-to-face contact from January. Therefore, care should be taken when comparing post-January data with previous time periods as the results will be misleading.

Telephone calls answered by customer services within three minutes

372 In the 12 months ending December 2024, customer services answered 93% of calls within three minutes, better than the same period last year (82%). Although fewer calls were answered compared to last year, significantly more calls were answered within three minutes.

	12 months ending December 2023	12 months ending December 2024	Change	
Calls received	531,274	481,531	-49,743	-9%
Calls answered	495,855	470,265	-25,590	-5%
	93%	98%		
Calls answered in 3 minutes	406,627	436,971	+30,344	+7%
	82%	93%		

373 During quarter three (October to December) we answered 102,000 telephone calls, 91% 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 86% of calls:

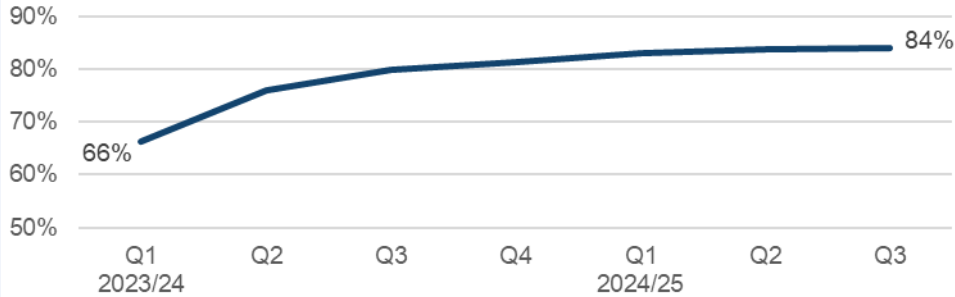
Telephone line	calls answered	% of total calls answered	% answered within 3 minutes
Enquiries	44,117	99%	96%
Council Tax	30,458	95%	82%
Housing Service	7,896	99%	100%
Benefits	7,444	98%	93%

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

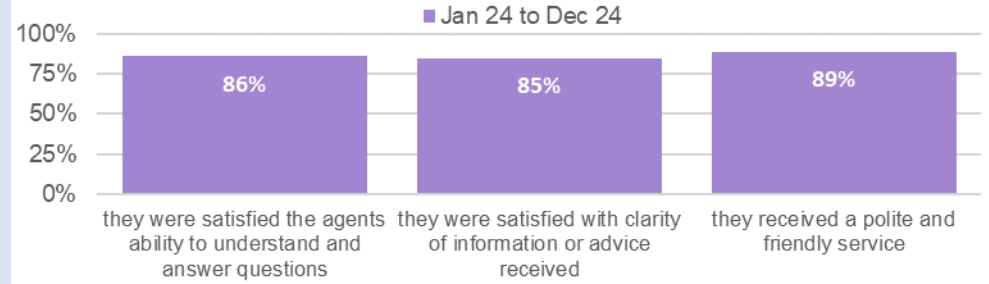
Customer Satisfaction Dashboard

(12 months ending 31 December 2024)

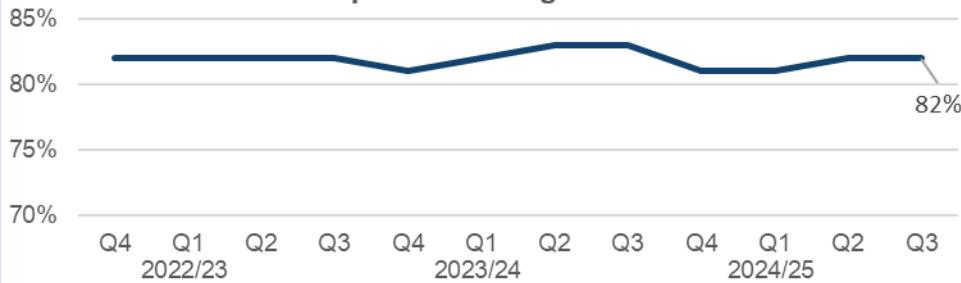
satisfaction with customer services experience
mobile telephone survey



Respondents to phone satisfaction survey who stated..



satisfaction with delivery of services
requested through the CRM



14,461

customers replied to our CRM satisfaction survey*.

(January to December 2024)

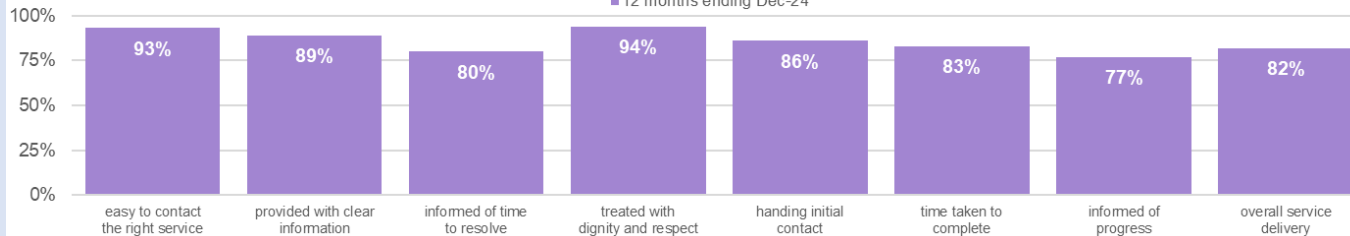
35,715

Customers who contacted our customer services team by mobile phone replied to our survey.

(January to December 2024)

CRM satisfaction survey

■ 12 months ending Dec-24



*Automatically e-mailed to the customer when their service request is closed within the CRM.

Customer Satisfaction

- 375 We want to continue improving the ways customers can contact us and maintain high satisfaction levels for the services we deliver. To do this, we need to understand why some of our customers are unhappy and take action to rectify any problems.
- 376 During quarter three (October to December) we analysed every response received through our CRM Satisfaction Survey where customers stated they were dissatisfied. We focused on contact and service delivery.
- 377 Customers gave two main reasons for dissatisfaction with contacting us.
- Difficulty finding the right option for their issue. Some could not identify the correct service (notably complaints and tree /hedge pruning /removal). Others could not find the correct category from the available list within the service request (e.g. complaint category or waste type). Some were unhappy they could not cancel their bulky waste collection (although this is possible if done by 12pm the day before collection). Consequently, some customers used our generic enquiries option to report their issue.
 - Frustration at not being able to speak to the service area directly. This was notable across customers reporting a missed bin or customers who had a more complex query.
- 378 Customers also gave two main reasons for dissatisfaction with overall service delivery.
- Having to contact us about something we should have got right first time. Service requests relating to complaints and missed bins received the highest levels of dissatisfaction for this reason.
 - Being unhappy that we closed a service request which they felt had not been resolved. This can arise when the customer disagrees with a decision we have made or an action we have or haven't taken, if the request was only partially completed (e.g. only collected part of the fly-tip, did not clean up after the job was done) or although we resolved the specific request, we did not resolve the problem long-term so the customer has to regularly contact us about a recurring issue (e.g. environmental issues such as fly-tipping, dog fouling etc.).
- 379 Around a third of survey respondents originally contacted us using a non-digital channel. We asked these customers why they did not use a digital channel. The two reasons most frequently given for using a non-digital channel were:
- Prefer to use a different method. This could be due to various reasons, including familiarity with the method or having a disability which makes contacting us digitally difficult.
 - 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.

Customer Feedback Dashboard

(October to December 2024)

Sample of compliments received from our customers.

Thanks to Refuse Collectors.

Last week we forgot to put our bin out. When I rushed out one of the lads had actually come into the yard and took the bin out for us to empty it, then brought it back in. I just wanted to let you know how thoughtful and hardworking your staff are on our route. I thought it was such a kind thing to do.

Praise for local Neighbourhood Warden.

He always responds really quickly to any issues and deals with them efficiently. He always contacts us to update us on the issue too. It is so nice to deal with someone so polite and someone who clearly really cares about his job. He should be held out as an example to others who work for the council.

Compliment for Care Connect.

Absolute brilliant service a perfect help nothing a problem

Thanks to Welfare Rights.

The customer is receiving an extra £110.00 per week and is very grateful.

Praise for Leisure Centre staff.

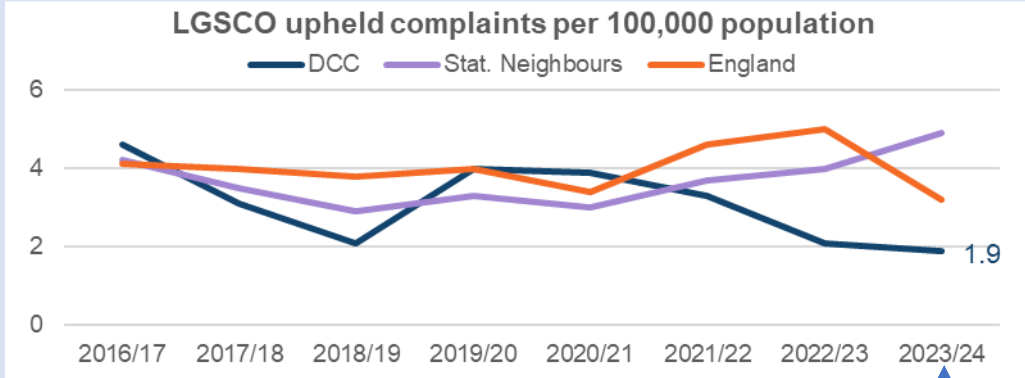
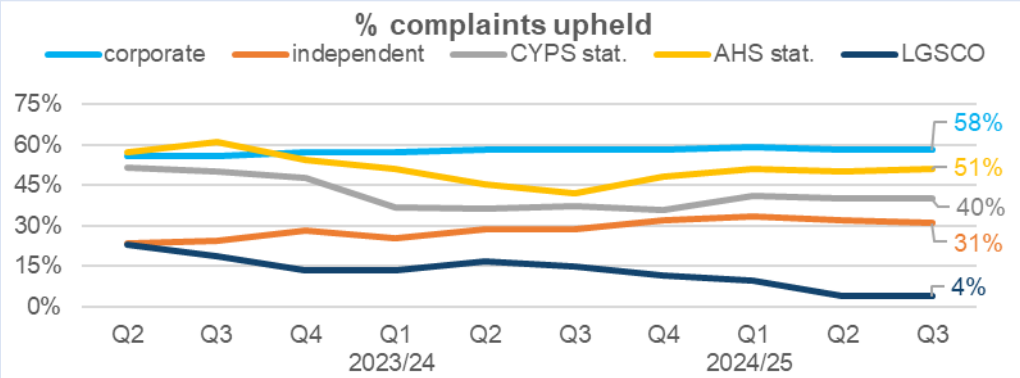
thanks to the team on duty at for their speedy action when she suffered a stroke. If it had not been for them and their quick response the outcome would definitely not be as bright.

Thanks to the Emergency Duty Team.

I am a local GP. I rang on Friday afternoon regarding a patient who was fleeing domestic violence. The person I spoke to was professional, courteous and helpful at an incredibly stressful time for our patient. Finding this woman housing over the weekend when this was her one chance to escape a situation where she felt very scared will have made all the difference to her.

Customer Complaints Dashboard

(12 months ending 31 December 2024)



Performance is better than latest median benchmarks for 2022/23 for both England (4.9) and statistical neighbours (3.2)

Customer Complaints

- 380 Within this document there are two types of complaint; statutory complaints that arise from our duties as a local social services authority and corporate complaints that cover all other complaints. As each complaint type is subject to its own processes and policy, they are reported separately.
- 381 The first stage in the corporate complaints process encourages service areas to resolve the issue in the first instance. Should the customer remain dissatisfied with the service response they can escalate to the Customer Feedback Team, who will either progress with an independent investigation, or advise the service user to contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (the Ombudsman). Independent investigation of statutory complaints is arranged by the statutory complaint teams.
- 382 We received fewer first stage complaints during the most recent reporting period (January to December 2024) compared to the same period last year. But independent investigations increased. Fewer complaints were upheld at all stages of the corporate complaint process. We feed lessons learnt from upheld complaints into service development and improvement.

Corporate Complaints

- 383 We received 216 fewer complaints compared to the same period last year (down 8%). Of the complaints investigated, 58% were upheld.
- 384 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).
- 385 More than half of the complaints related to three service areas:

Service Area	Complaints received	% upheld (partially or fully)	Overview
Waste Collection	892 39% of total	82%	<p>Main reasons for complaint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missed collections – refuse, recycling and garden waste bins (36%), • Bin being incorrectly logged as contaminated (9%), • Issues with the container such as crew not returning container, container not delivered or container damaged by crew (6%).
Clean and Green	228 10% of total	56%	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).
Council Tax Services	142 6% of total	20%	Around one third related to enforcement decisions / action and 12% related to account handling

Statutory Complaints – Children and Young People Services

- 386 We received 104 statutory complaints in the 12 months ending December 2024. Of the complaints investigated, 40% were partially or fully upheld.
- 387 Sixty-four complaints (62%) 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.
- 388 Forty complaints (38%) related to our teams involved with children in care. This includes children's homes, fostering and care leavers and adoption.
- 389 Statutory complaints for children and young people services are complex. Up to three reasons can be recorded for each complaint. Of the 104 complaints, the most frequent reasons for complaints were communication issues, staff behaviour, and disagreement.

Statutory Complaints – Adult and Health Services

- 390 We received 113 statutory complaints in the 12 months ending December 2024. Of the complaints investigated, 51% were partially or fully upheld. A further five complaints remain under investigation and pending outcome.
- 391 Fifty complaints related to older people/physical disabilities/sensory impairment (44%), 36 to learning disabilities/mental health/substance misuse (32%), and 19 to transactional services which deals with financial assessments/charging (17%).
- 392 During quarter three, in response to complaints received, we:
- reminded staff to inform families of any significant event affecting their loved one;
 - modified practice in relation to genealogy searches used when a service user passes away and their finances are managed by the council;
 - worked with a care provider to improve their practice in relation to logging changes onto their systems.

Complaints progressing to Independent Investigation

- 393 Over the last 12 months (January to December 2024) around 9% of corporate complaints progressed to independent investigation. This equates to 207 complaints, 58 more than last year.
- 394 Over this period, we upheld 31%. This is a higher proportion than the previous year when we upheld 29%. The main reasons for upholding the complaints were the time taken to respond, lack of action and not keeping the customer informed of progress.
- 395 Although fewer corporate complaints were received, independent investigations have increased. Escalations occur for various reasons including the customer not getting the outcome they hoped for, a poor response from the service (such as not addressing the entire complaint), and potentially serious, unresolved or complex issues that require a higher level of attention.
- 396 We have reviewed those complaints escalated across 2023 and 2024. We concluded that around a quarter of these escalations could have been avoided if the initial service investigation and response had been more thorough.

397 We have now started a review of escalations and learning outcomes to identify opportunities to reduce the volume of independent investigations. An update will be provided through this report once the review is complete.

Complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

398 Our latest data (12 months ending March 2024) shows the LGSCO upheld 1.9 complaints per 100,000 population. This is better than both the England average (4.9) and our statistical neighbours (3.2).

399 During the 12 months ending December 2024, around 3% of our complaints reached the LGSCO. This is consistent with previous years.

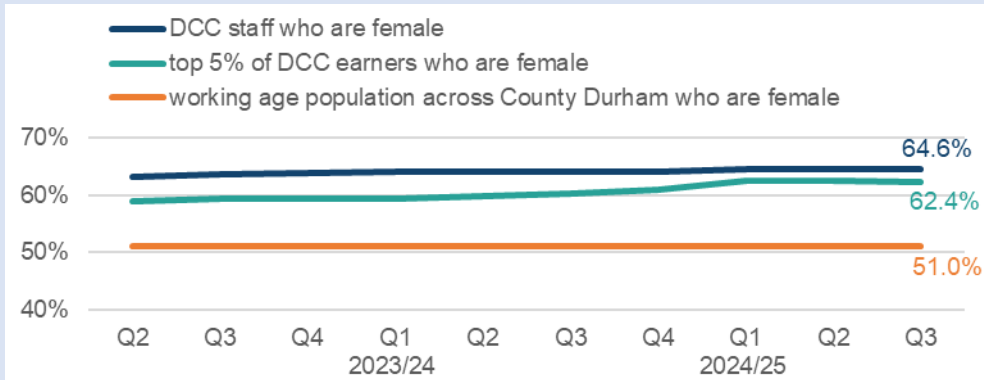
400 Between October and December, the LGSCO made decisions on 20 complaints. Of these, one was upheld.

Complaint	Outcome
The council failed to provide suitable educational provision for a term.	We should apologise and pay £1,500 to reflect the loss of educational provision.

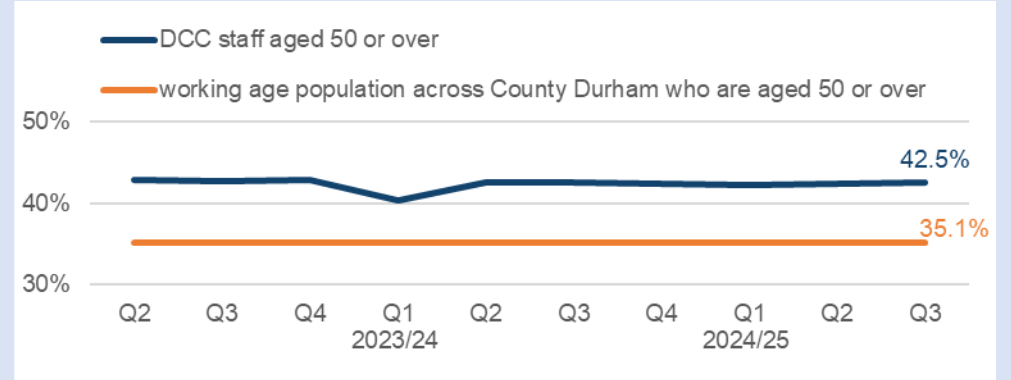
Workforce Equality Profile Dashboard

(quarterly data)

Women in the workplace



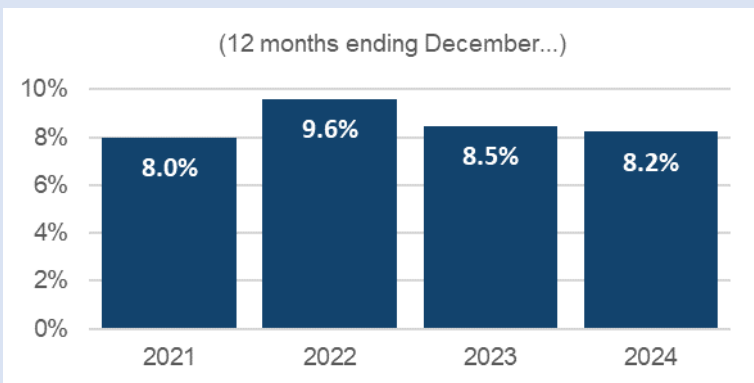
Workforce aged 50 years and over



Recruitment and Retention Dashboard

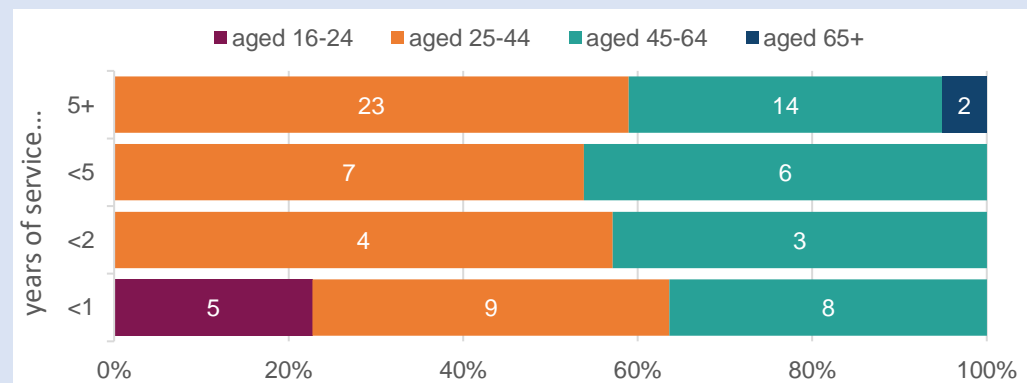
(year to date, except employee turnover which is at 31 December 2024)

Employee Turnover



Leavers who have voluntarily resigned by length of service and age group

(January 2024 to December 2024)



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

Although 100% aged 16-24 left in less than one year, they only account for 6% of leavers.

Workforce Equality and Diversity

- 401 During quarter three, we launched a new online e-learning module to help our staff communicate with people who have hearing loss. The module was developed by members of the disability staff network. To date, 325 employees have completed the training.

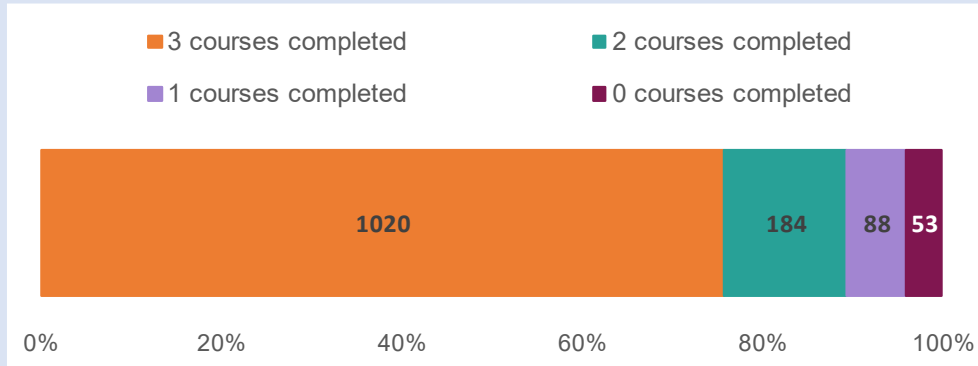
Recruitment and Retention

- 402 Whilst we are successfully appointing to a range of difficult to fill posts, we continue to experience challenges in some areas, such as adult and health services and school crossing patrols, where due to the nature of the roles, posts need to be advertised more than once before a suitable candidate is appointed. During quarter three (October to December), 27% of our job vacancies were 're-adverts'.
- 403 We are working to improve this situation. We are reviewing job descriptions and person specifications so they closely reflect the role and responsibilities of the advertised post – to help attract suitable candidates in the first instance. We have incorporated skills tests and/or practical exercises in the interview process – to better assess the key competencies of the role. And we are reviewing our Recruitment and Selection Training modules - to ensure interviewers are well-trained in competency-based interviewing.
- 404 We are also 'growing our own talent' with career pathways designed to help with skills shortages. This includes apprenticeships and the Think Ahead Programme which supports routes into adult social work.

Workforce Development Dashboard

(as at 31 December 2024)

Mandatory manager development programme (three courses) (1,345 managers)

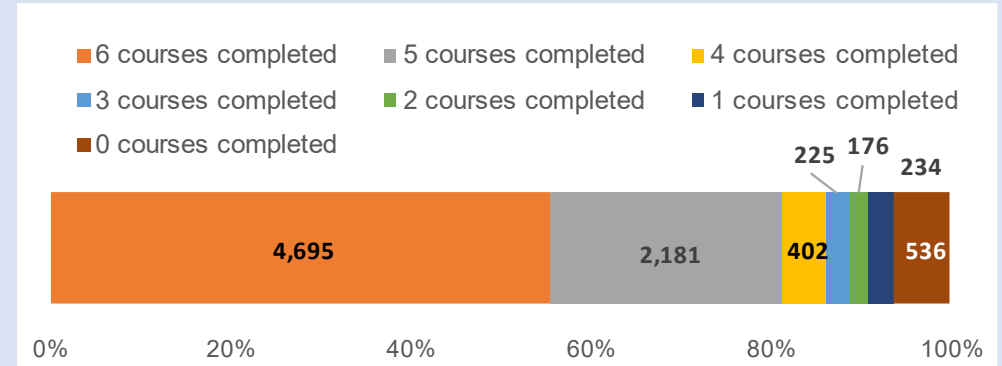


Completion Rate^

Course	Last quarter	latest quarter
Employees (leaders and managers)	1,432	1,345
Attendance Management	94%	95%
Recognising and managing stress	84%	86%
Mental health awareness*	78%	80%

*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 (six courses) (8,449 employees)



Completion Rate^

Course	Last quarter	latest quarter
Employees	8,689	8,449
Code of our values, behaviours and conduct	88%	97%
Introduction to GDPR	88%	*59%
Harassment and Victimisation	87%	89%
Diversity, equality and discrimination	87%	87%
Climate Change	86%	86%
Action Counter Terrorism: ACT	78%	83%

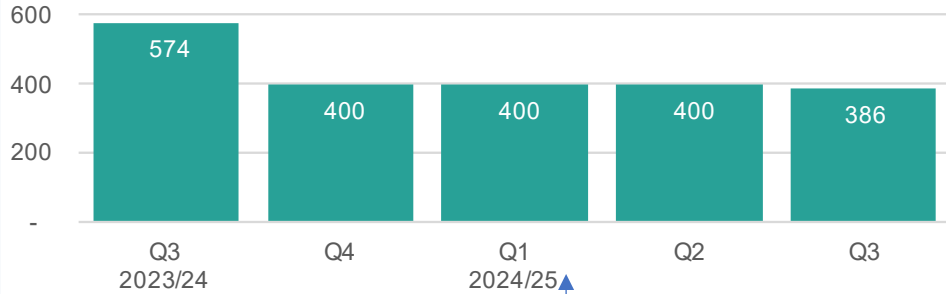
*Employees must re-certify their GDPR course every 24 months – unless they work in social work then it is every year.

^ new employees have three months from their start date to complete any mandatory training.

Workforce Development Dashboard

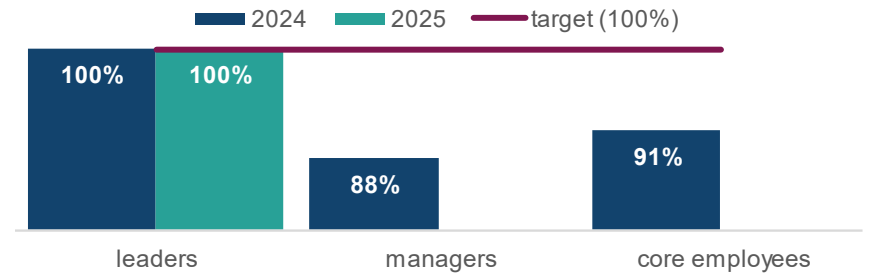
(as at 31 December 2024)

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



Deadline for managers to complete PDR is 31 March
Deadline for core employees to complete PDR process is 30 June

Performance Development Reviews (PDRs)

405 Our PDR process is an integral part of manager-employee engagement alongside one-to-ones, supervisions, and team meetings.

406 All 117 leaders completed the current cycle within deadline.

Mandatory e-learning programme

407 Those employees who have yet to fully complete their mandatory e-learning programme are mostly employed in non-digital roles. This means they 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.

408 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	94%	*64%	51%	*35%
Harassment and Victimisation	94%	95%	47%	52%
Diversity, Equality & Discrimination	95%	94%	45%	50%
Code of our values, behaviours & conduct	95%	96%	48%	62%
Climate change	93%	94%	47%	50%
Action Counters Terrorism (ACT)	85%	90%	38%	45%

*Employees must re-certify their GDPR course every 24 months – unless they work in social work then it is every year.

409 We are continuing to encourage compliance through our regular staff communications. And we are helping staff in non-digital roles complete their training using offline workbooks, toolbox talks or alternative delivery methods (such as video) if there is a clear rationale.

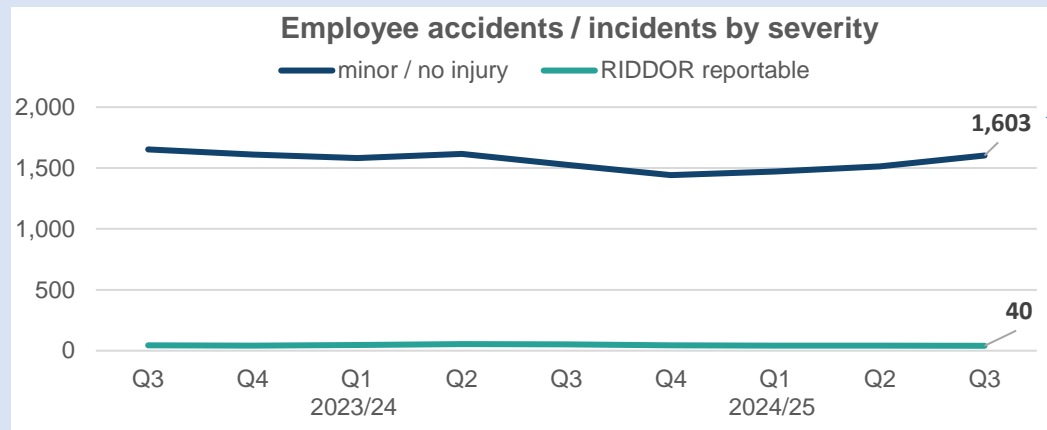
Apprenticeships (excluding schools)

410 As at 31 December, 4.7% of our workforce (386 employees) was enrolled on an apprenticeship (both new and upskilling).

411 The retention rate for new apprenticeships is 74%, compared to 76% last year.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing of our employees Dashboard

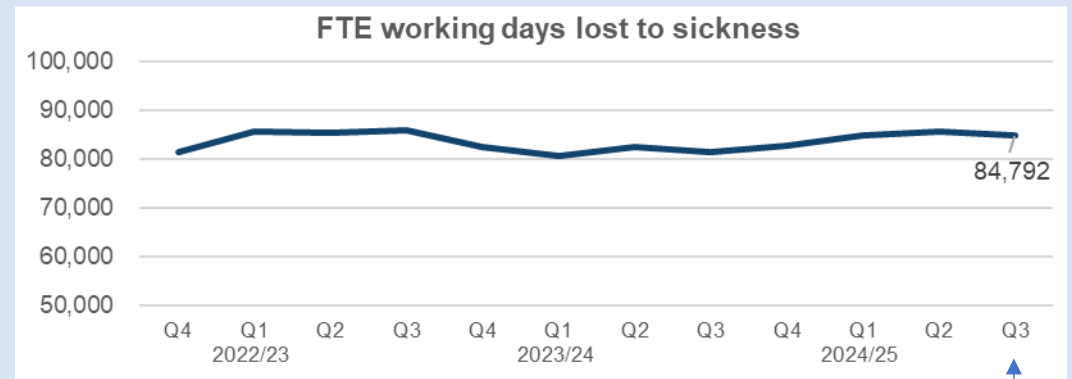
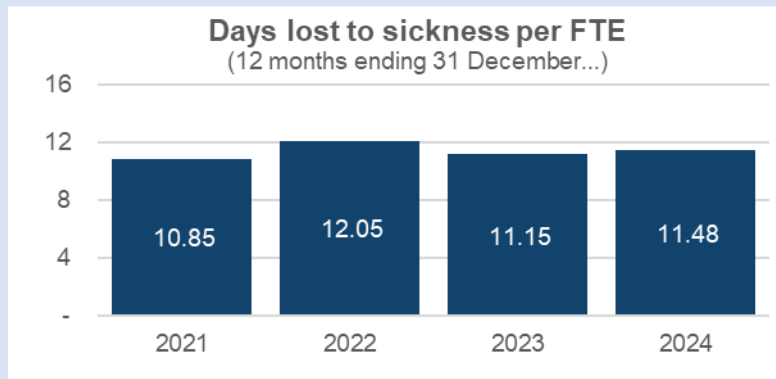
(12 months trend ending 31 December 2024)



- Between October and December, there were 537 accidents / incidents / near misses.
- Five were RIDDOR specified injuries, and ten were absences of more than seven days.

Sickness Absence (days lost) Dashboard

(12 month trend ending 31 December 2024)

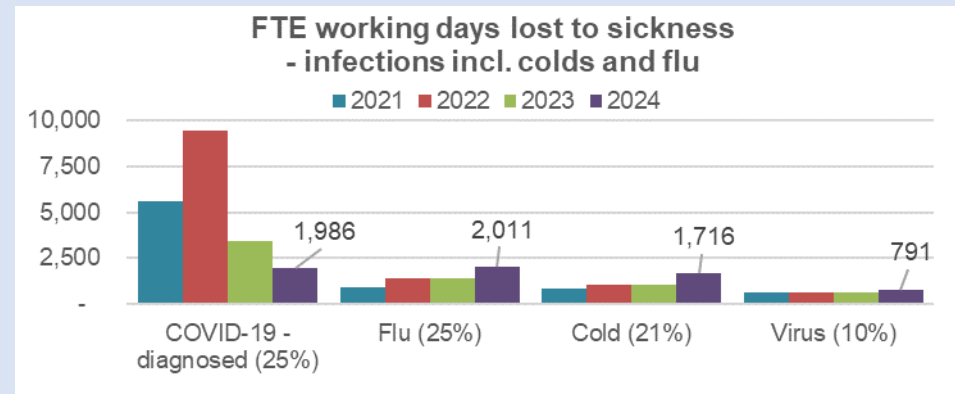
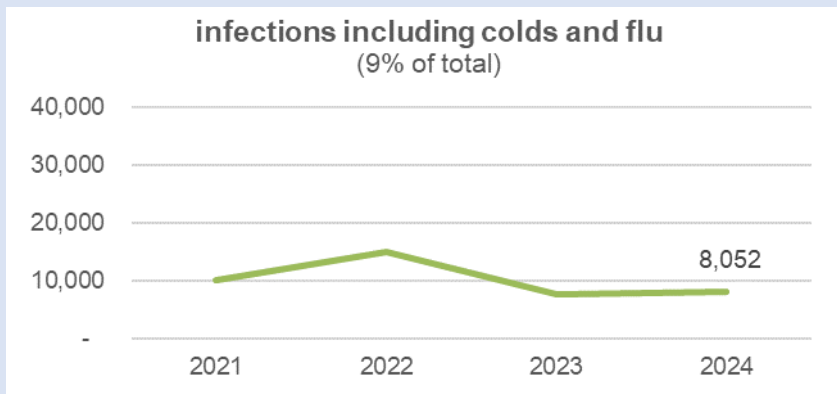
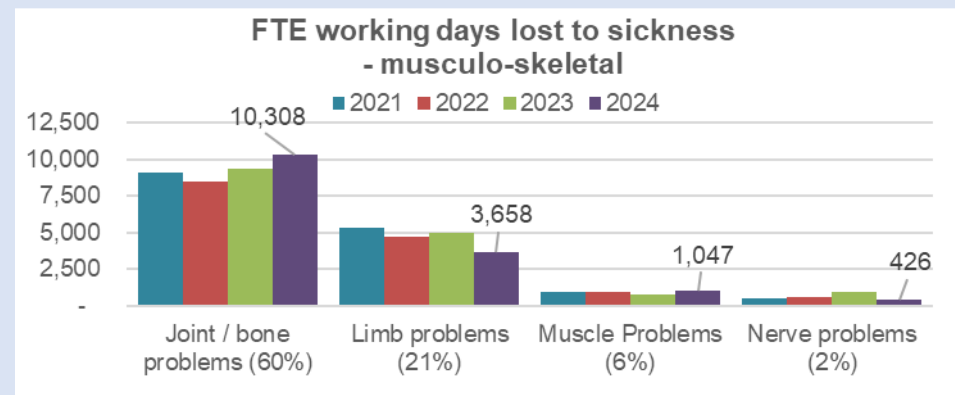
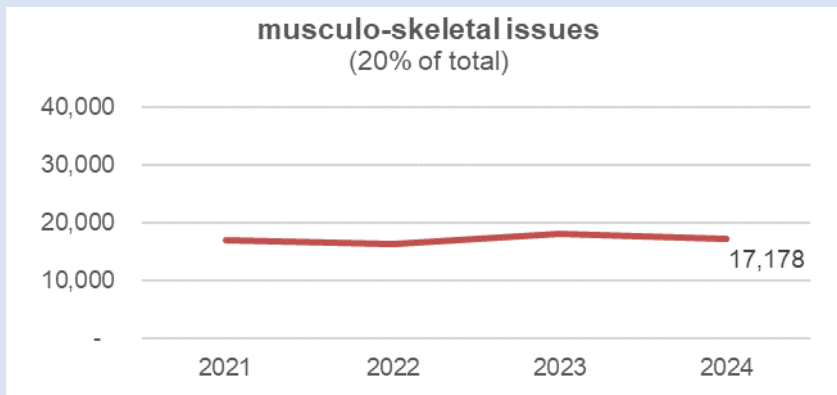
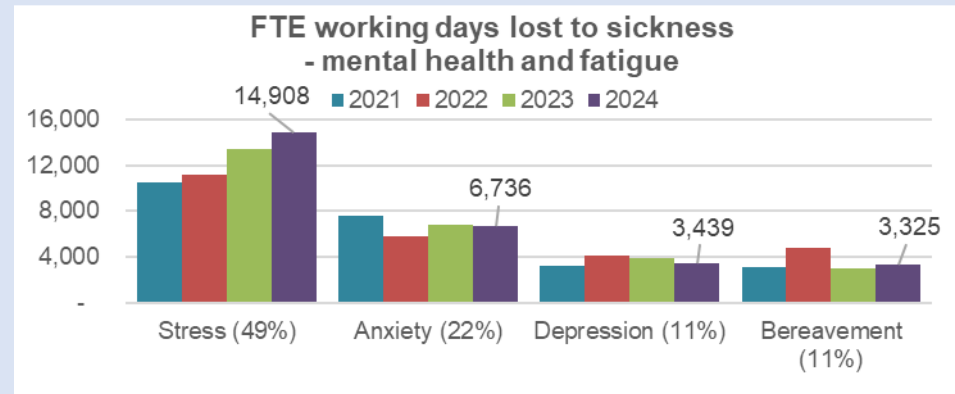
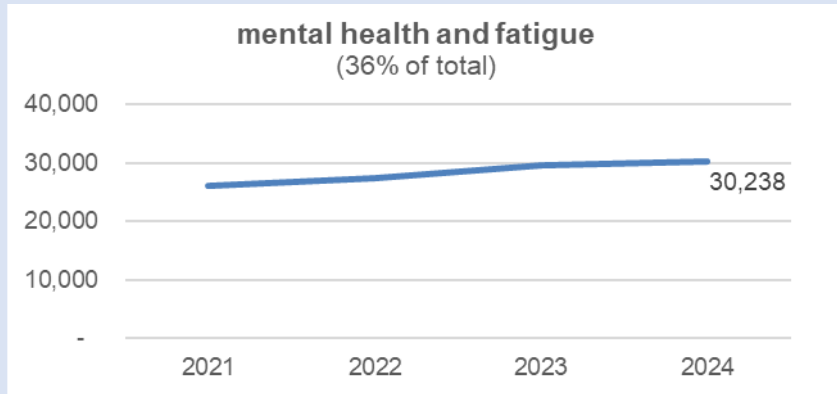


3,300 more working days lost to sickness compared to last year

Sickness Absence (main reasons) Dashboard

(12 month trend ending 31 December 2024)

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



Employee accidents and incidents

- 412 During quarter three (October to December 2024), there were 537 accidents / incidents / near misses, compared to 431 in the previous quarter. Five were RIDDOR specified injuries, and ten involved absences of more than seven days.
- 413 There were also seven fire related incidents. A trend of fires in refuse and recycling vehicles continues with three incidents reported as a result of discarded batteries in waste. Emergency procedures were used appropriately resulting in no injuries or significant property damage.

Sickness Absence

- 414 Between 1 January and 31 December 2024, we recorded an average of 11.48 sick days per Full Time Equivalent (FTE). This is 0.33 days higher than the same period last year – equating to around 3,300 more days lost.
- 415 Over the same period, 60% of our employees recorded no sickness and 79% recorded five days or less.
- 416 'Mental Health and Fatigue' is the most frequently reported sickness category and is most prevalent across social care, residential work and home care and support workers.
- 417 Musculo-skeletal sickness is most prevalent in our frontline teams with a high proportion of manual work, such as HGV sweeper drivers, telecare responders, gardeners, residential workers and culture assistants.
- 418 Infections (including colds and flu) is most prevalent in our frontline teams of home care and support workers and social workers.
- 419 We closely monitor all absence over six months. We currently have 21 long term sickness absence cases ongoing.

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	Oct-Dec 24	95%	90%	96.2%	Jul-Sep 24	88.5%	90.3%	91.7%	Yes
					Non-major planning applications determined in deadline	Oct-Dec 24	90%	90%	89.4%	Jul-Sep 24	90.3%	89.7%	91.3%	Yes
					Inward investments secured	Oct-Dec 24	5	2	2					Yes
					Investment secured for companies	Oct-Dec 24	£1,279,201	£1.25 million	£750,000					Yes
					Occupancy of Business Durham floor space	Oct-Dec 24	89.5%	95%	90.0%					Yes
					Private sector employments per 10,000 population	2023	2,820	Tracker	2,772	2023	2,820	4,059	3,216	No
					Private sector businesses per 10,000 population	2024	270	Tracker	272	2024	270	409	265	No
					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					No

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	Oct-Dec 24	185	250	157					
					Businesses supported by regeneration projects	Oct-Dec 24	30	Tracker	not comparable					Yes
					New businesses supported by CED Team	Oct-Dec 24	80	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	Oct-Dec 24	142	375	86					Yes
					Jobs created or safeguarded through regeneration schemes	Oct-Dec 24	110	Tracker	not comparable					Yes

					Registrations to employability programmes	Oct-Dec 24	82	117	N/A						Yes
					Number of participants receiving support to help gain employment	Oct-Dec 24	43	45	N/A						Yes
					Number of employed participants receiving support to sustain employment	Oct-Dec 24	29	27	N/A						Yes
					Employment rate for 16-64 year olds <i>Confidence intervals +/-4.1pp</i>	Oct 23 - Sep 24	71.1%	Tracker	70.8%	Oct 23 – Sep 24	71.1%	75.7%	71%		Yes
					Disability employment rate <i>Confidence intervals +/-4.4pp</i>	Oct 23 - Sep 24	36.6%	Tracker	42.4%	Oct 23 – Sep 24	36.6%	25.8%	31%		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%		

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	Oct-Dec 24	5,800	Tracker	179,326					Yes
					People attending council owned cultural venues (Town Halls and The Story)	Oct-Dec 24	65,338	48,860	Not comparable					Yes
					Average % occupancy of cinema screenings (Gala, Empire & BATH)	Oct-Dec 24	33%	35%	28%					Yes
					Average % yield of cinema screenings (BATH, Gala & Empire)	Oct-Dec 24	90%	100%	74%					Yes
					Average % yield of theatre performances (BATH, Gala & Empire)	Oct-Dec 24	83%	100%	99%					Yes
					Average % occupancy of theatre performances (Gala, Empire & BATH)	Oct-Dec 24	78%	75%	81%					Yes
					Council owned/managed heritage assets classed as 'at risk'	2024	1	Tracker	3					Yes
					Heritage assets 'at risk' categorised as 'Priority A' and/or in 'very bad condition'	2024	7	Tracker	7					Yes
					Active borrowers (libraries)	Oct-Dec 24	47,155	46,342	45,733					Yes
					Digital borrowers (libraries)	Oct-Dec 24	4,832	4,499	4,181					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	2024	54%	Tracker	55%					Yes

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	94.4%	above N / NE	94.5%	Jun-24	94.4%	93.8%	93%	Yes

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	Oct 23 - Sep 24	37%	Tracker	36.5%	Apr 22 - Mar 23	37.1%	41.7%	31.2%	Y
					Waste diverted from landfill	Oct 23 - Sep 24	95.5%	90%	92.2%	Apr 22 - Mar 23	90.4%	92.7%	88.5%	Y
					Residual household waste (kg per household)	2023/24	574	Tracker	565	Apr 22 - Mar 23	565	509	596	N
					Contamination rate	Oct 23 - Sep 24	32.6%	Tracker	33.6%					Y

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%	2023	64.1%	70.9%	68.1%	No
					Satisfaction with cycle routes & facilities <i>(confidence intervals +/-3pp)</i>	2024	48%	Tracker	50%	2024	48%	50%		Yes
					Park and Ride usage	Oct-Dec 24	84,307	Tracker	95,236					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%					N
					% reduction in Council's carbon emissions from 2008/09 baseline	2023/24	64%	Tracker	63%					N
					NO ₂ levels within Durham City Air Quality Management Area that are above the govt threshold of 40µg/m ³	2023	4%	0%	4%					Y
					Trees planted	2023/24	74,023	65,977	53,000					N

Our People: summary data tables

Children's 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 Dec 24	1,105	Tracker	1,249					Yes
					Children's social care referrals per 10,000 population	at Dec 24	647	Tracker	470	2023/24	469	518	599	Yes
					Children's social care re-referrals	at Dec 24	17%	Tracker	15%	2023/24	17%	22%	22%	Yes
					Children's social care assessments completed within 45 days	at Dec 24	89%	Tracker	78%	2023/24	82%	85%	82%	Yes
					Children in need per 10,000 population	at Dec 24	377	Tracker	347	2023/24	412	333	467	Yes
					Children on a child protection plan per 10,000 population	at Dec 24	48	Tracker	55	2023/24	50	42	66	Yes

				Children looked after per 10,000 population	at Dec 24	121	Tracker	122	2023/24	122	70	114	Yes
				Care leavers aged 16-24	at Dec 24	405	Tracker	316					Yes
				Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children as a percentage of all CiC	at Dec 24	6%	Tracker	7%	2023/24	7%	9%	5%	Yes
				Social worker vacancies	at Aug 24		Tracker		at Sep 23	14%	18.9%	10.9%	
				Children in care in a family setting	at Dec 24	80%	Tracker	81%	at Mar 24	82%	75%	80%	
				Families on our Stronger Families Programme attaining significant and sustained outcomes	2024/25	1,264	1,522	983					

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	2023/24	66.1%	Tracker	66.2%	2023/24	66.1%	67.7%	66.8%	Yes
					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%	No
					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%	No
					Pupils attending a secondary school judged 'good or better' by Ofsted	2024/25	79%	Tracker	70%	2024/25	79%	85.9%	81.3%	No
					Children - electively home educated	Jan-Apr 24	990	Tracker	740					Yes
					Children eligible for free school meals	2023/24	31.5%	Tracker	30.6%	2023/24	31.5%	24.6%	31.2%	No
					Take-up on free school meals	2023/24	24%	Tracker	20.6%	2023/24	24%	19.3%	24.1%	No

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	2025	5,497	Tracker	5,075					Yes
					New requests for EHCPs	2024	1,055	Tracker	986					Yes
					EHCPs completed within 20 weeks	2024	13%	Tracker	2%	2023	2%	48%	56%	Yes
					Pupils on SEN support	2024/25	11,405	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	Oct-Dec 24	5,638	Tracker	5,478					Yes
					Care Act assessments completed	Oct-Dec 24	668	Tracker	660					Yes
					Service users receiving an assessment or review within the last 12 months ¹⁹	Oct-Dec 24	81.2%	80%	68.3%					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%	No
					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	Jan - Dec 24	728.8	739.7	671.7	Apr 23- Mar 24	728.8 (latest)	566.0	710.1	Yes
					Service users receiving Direct Payments ¹⁹	Oct-Dec 24	13.1%	Tracker	13.0%	2023/24	13.1%	25.5%	20.7%	Yes
					Service users receiving home care	Oct-Dec 24	3,036	Tracker	3,214					Yes
					Service users receiving Telecare care	Oct-Dec 24	2,120	Tracker	2,132					Yes
					Service users receiving day care	Oct-Dec 24	1,006	Tracker	1,046					Yes
					Residential adult social care providers rated good or outstanding by CQC	Oct-Dec 24	86.8%	Tracker	90.1%	Oct-Dec 24	86.8%	75.7%	83.5%	Yes
					Carer quality of life – adult social care	2023/24	7.7	Tracker	8.2	2023/24	7.7	7.3	7.7	No
					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%	No
					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

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	Oct-Dec 24	10,925	Tracker	10,903					Yes
					Care Connect calls answered in 3 minutes	Oct-Dec 24	99%	99%	100%					Yes

¹⁹ Methodology for this indicator has changed from Q1 2024-2025

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					Care Connect calls arriving at the property within 45 minutes	Oct-Dec 24	97%	90%	89%					Yes
					Potential clients contacted within 3 weeks of initial referral for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	Jul-Sep 24	100%	90%	95%					
					Households prevented from homelessness and helped to stay in their home	Oct-Dec 24	11%	Tracker	4%	Apr-Jun 24	6.9%	18.9%	11.4%	Yes
					Households prevented from homelessness and helped to move to alternative accommodation	Oct-Dec 24	24%	Tracker	14%	Apr-Jun 24	15.3%	33.2%	37.5%	Yes
					Households where homelessness has been relieved, and the client moved into alternative accommodation	Oct-Dec 24	33%	Tracker	33%	Apr-Jun 24	25.5%	29.8%	41.0%	Yes
					Households where there has been an acceptance of the main homeless duty	Oct-Dec 24	16%	Tracker	17%	Apr-Jun 24	13.0%	32.4%	10.2%	Yes
					Successful move-ons from Local Lettings Agency accommodation at the end of their licence agreement	2023/24	100%	90%	new					
					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%					
					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%					

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%	No
					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%	No
					Gap in breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks between County Durham and national average	2023/24	21.6pp	Tracker	19.0pp					No
					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%	No

	D	T	C	G	Performance Indicator	Period	Performance	Target	12 months earlier	Benchmark period	DCC	National average	NE average	updated
					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	No
					Healthy life expectancy at birth: female	2021-23	56.8 years	Tracker	58.6 years	2021-23	56.8 years	61.9	57.7	Yes
					Healthy life expectancy at 65: female	2021-23	9.3 years	Tracker	9.4 years	2021-23	9.3 years	11.2	9.6	Yes
					Gap in female healthy life expectancy at birth: County Durham and England	2021-23	5.1 years	Tracker	4.2 years					Yes
					Gap in female healthy life expectancy at 65: County Durham and England	2021-23	1.9 years	Tracker	2.0 years					Yes
					Healthy life expectancy at birth: male	2021-23	56.5 years	Tracker	57.5 years	2021-23	56.5 years	61.5	56.9	Yes
					Healthy life expectancy at 65: male	2021-23	8.4 years	Tracker	8.5 years	2021-23	8.4 years	10.1	8.7	Yes
					Gap in male healthy life expectancy at birth: County Durham and England	2021-23	5.0 years	Tracker	4.8 years					Yes
					Gap in male healthy life expectancy at 65: County Durham and England	2021-23	1.7 years	Tracker	1.7 years					Yes
					Successful completions of those in alcohol treatment	Dec 23 - Nov 24	36.5%	Tracker	34.6%	Dec 23 - Nov 24	36.5%	34.9%		Yes
					Successful completions of those in drug treatment: opiates	Dec 23 - Nov 24	5.7%	Tracker	5.7%	Dec 23 - Nov 24	5.7%	5.2%		Yes
					Successful completions of those in drug treatment: non-opiates	Dec 23 - Nov 24	31.9%	Tracker	36.9%	Dec 23 - Nov 24	31.9%	29.5%		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	Oct-Dec 24	964,332	838,633	772,902					Yes
					Leisure memberships	Oct-Dec 24	21,651	19,135	18,551					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	Oct-Dec 24	72.2%	Tracker	58.7%					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					No
				Net additional dwellings	2023/24	1,291	1,308	1,551					No
				Chapter Homes properties sold	Oct-Dec 24	0	1	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	Oct-Dec 24	71	50	44					Yes
				Properties covered by Selective Licence Scheme that are licensed, or legal proceedings instigated	Oct-Dec 24	59%	100% (by 2027)	43%					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	Jan-Dec 24	10.4	12.88	10.6	Apr 22-Mar 23	10.3	19	23.8	Y
				Streetscape with acceptable levels of cleanliness: litter	Oct-Dec 24	97%	Tracker	96.1%					Y
				Streetscape with acceptable levels of cleanliness: dog fouling	Oct-Dec 24	99.7%	Tracker	99.1%					Y
				Green and open space with acceptable levels of cleanliness: litter	Oct-Dec 24	100%	Tracker	94.1%					Y
				Green and open space with acceptable levels of cleanliness: dog fouling	Oct-Dec 24	100%	Tracker	96.7%					Y
				Average vacancy rate of town centres	2024	18.3%	13.9%	16%					Yes

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 +/-3pp</i>)	2024	71%	Tracker	73%	2024	71%	71%		Yes
					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	76.7%	Tracker	77.0%					Yes
					Local passenger journeys on public transport	Jul-Sep 24	4,748,225	Tracker	4,638,338					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	2024	3%	Tracker	3%	2024	3%	4%	2%	Yes
					B & C roads where maintenance is recommended	2024	3%	Tracker	2%	2024	3%	7%	4%	Yes
					Unclassified roads where maintenance is recommended	2024	17%	Tracker	23%	2024	17%	17%	19%	Yes
					'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)	Oct-Dec 24	94%	90%	97%					Yes
					Category 2.1 highway defects repaired within 14 days	Oct-Dec 24	98%	90%	96%					Yes
					Category 2.2 highway defects repaired within 3 months	Oct-Dec 24	97%	90%	89%					Yes
					Highways Maintenance Backlog	awaiting data		Tracker						No
					Satisfaction with highway maintenance. (<i>confidence intervals +/-3pp</i>)	2024	44%	Tracker	46%	2024	44%	41%		Yes

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	Oct-Dec 24	9	Tracker	7					Yes
				Road traffic accidents: seriously injured	Oct-Dec 24	38	Tracker	49					Yes
				Road traffic accidents: fatalities (children)	Oct-Dec 24	0	Tracker	0					Yes
				Road traffic accidents: seriously injured (children)	Oct-Dec 24	6	Tracker	7					Yes
				Road traffic collisions per billion vehicle miles – all	2023	166	Tracker	188	2023	166	-	241	No
				Road traffic collisions per billion vehicle miles – fatal	2023	8	Tracker	6	2023	8	-	5	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	Jan - Dec 24	25.5	Tracker	26.4					Yes
				Harbour clients feeling more confident on case closure	Oct-Dec 24	88%	Tracker	87%					Yes
				Harbour clients feeling their quality of life has improved on case closure	Oct-Dec 24	84%	Tracker	87%					Yes
				Children and young people completing an intervention with Harbour and reporting feeling safer	Oct-Dec 24	94%	Tracker	84%					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. (confidence intervals +/-3.5pp)	Sep 23	46.9%	Tracker	28.2%					No
				Crime rate per 1,000 population	Jan - Dec 24	95	Tracker	102.1	Jan - Dec 24	95	81.8	104.1	Yes

					Theft offences per 1,000 population	Jan - Dec 24	27	Tracker	27.5	Oct 23 – Sep 24	27.8	29.51	31.6	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%	Tracker	34%					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					
				Reports of environmental ASB	Oct 23 - Sep 24	38,886	Tracker	37,913					
				Reports of nuisance ASB	Oct 23 - Sep 24	6,518	Tracker	6,603					
				Reports of personal ASB	Oct 23 - Sep 24	1,881	Tracker	1,547					
				ASB alcohol related incidents	Jul-Sep 24	12.5%	Tracker	11.2%					
				ASB enforcement action taken	Jan-Dec 24	3,484	Tracker	4,169					Yes

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	Sep - Dec 24	81%	Tracker	81.8%	2023/24	95.4%	95.3%		Yes
				Business rates collected	Sep - Dec 24	82.2%	Tracker	82%	2023/24	98.7%	97.2%		Yes
				MTFP savings achieved (£s)	at 31 Dec 24	£6.7 million	£8 million	-					Yes
				Audit opinion: statement of accounts	2022/23	UQ	UQ	UQ					No

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	Oct-Dec 24	96.7%	93.0%	97.1%					Yes
					Third party spend (£'million)	2023/24	£502.6	Tracker	£396.8					Yes
					% North East spend	2023/24	73.1%	Tracker	67%					Yes
					% County Durham spend	2023/24	42.9%	Tracker	44.5%					Yes
					% SME spend	2023/24	53%	Tracker	60.9%					Yes

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	Jan-Dec 24	11.6 days	21 days	17.3 days	2023/24	16 days	20 days	20 days	Yes
					Time to process new council tax reduction claims	Jan-Dec 24	13.0 days	21 days	17.4 days					Yes
					Time to process housing benefit change of circumstances	Jan-Dec 24	3.8 days	9 days	6.0 days	2023/24	5.7 days	6 days	5 days	Yes
					Time to process council tax reduction change of circumstances	Jan-Dec 24	4.7 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-Dec 24	78.3%	Tracker	111%					Yes
					Households receiving at least 25% reduction in council tax	Apr-Dec 24	50.1%	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	Jan-Dec 24	40.7%	Tracker	37.2%					Yes
					ACD calls answered within 3 minutes	Jan-Dec 24	93%	Tracker	82%					Yes
					CRM service requests meeting performance standard	Oct-Dec 24	82%	Tracker	78%					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	Jan-Dec 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	Jan-Dec 24	58%	Tracker	58%					Yes
					Independent investigations upheld	Jan-Dec 24	31%	Tracker	29%					Yes
					Complaints upheld by the Ombudsman	Jan-Dec 24	4%	Tracker	15%					Yes
					Complaints upheld by the Ombudsman	2023/24	67%	Tracker	52%	2023/24	67%	79% (similar authorities)		No
					Number of upheld Ombudsman complaints per 100,000 residents	2023/24	1.9	Tracker	2.1	2023/24	1.9	4.9 (similar authorities)		No
					Data breaches reported to the ICO	Oct 23-Sep24	22	Tracker	21					No

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	Oct-Dec 24	95%	98%	98%	Dec-23	98%	93%		Yes
					Deaths registered within 5 days	Oct-Dec 24	77%	95%	71%	Dec-23	71%	51%		Yes
					Appointments within 5 work days: births	Oct-Dec 24	58%	95%	54%	Dec-23	54%	95%		Yes
					Appointments within 2 work days: deaths	Oct-Dec 24	98%	95%	96%	Dec-23	96%	95%		Yes
					Appointments within 5 work days: marriage / civil partnership	Oct-Dec 24	100%	95%	100%	Dec-23	100%	90%		Yes
					Appointments seen on time	Oct-Dec 24	95%	90%	96%	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 Dec 24	62.4%	Tracker	60.3%					Yes

					Workforce aged 50 years or over	at Dec 24	42.5%	Tracker	42.5%						Yes
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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	Jan - Dec 24	25.2%	Tracker	20.3%					Yes
				Leavers with <2 years' service	Oct - Dec 24	42%	Tracker	45%					Yes
				Employee turnover	at Dec 24	8.2%	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 31 Dec 24	100% (Leaders)	100%	n/a					Yes
				Managers who have completed the managers' training programme	at 31 Dec 24	76%	Tracker	58%					Yes
				Employees enrolled on apprenticeship programme (excluding schools)	at 31 Dec 24	4.7%	Tracker	6.8%					Yes
				Apprentice levy utilised as a council (excluding schools)	at 31 Dec 24	84.73% (132.9% committed)	Tracker	n/a					Yes
				Apprentice retention rate (excluding schools)	at 31 Dec 24	74%	Tracker	76%					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)	Jan-Dec 24	11.48 days	Tracker	11.15 days					Yes
				Employee accidents / incidents with no / minor injury	2024/25	98%	Tracker	97%					Yes
				Employee accidents / incidents RIDDOR reportable	2024/25	2%	Tracker	3%					Yes
				Incidents of work-related ill-health	2024/25	124	Tracker	177					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
CS&T	Culture, Sport and Tourism

Term	Definition
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
Homelessness: Legislation	<p>Prevention Duty</p> <p>We must take reasonable steps to help prevent any eligible person (regardless of priority need status, intentionality and whether they have a local connection) who is threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless.</p> <p>This means either helping them to stay in their current accommodation or helping them to find a new place to live before they become actually homeless. The prevention duty continues for 56 days unless it is brought to an end by an event such as accommodation being secured for the person, or by their becoming homeless.</p> <p>Relief Duty</p> <p>If the applicant is already homeless, or becomes homeless despite activity during the prevention stage, reasonable steps will be focused on helping to secure accommodation. This relief duty lasts for 56 days unless ended in another way.</p> <p>If we believe the applicant is eligible for assistance and has a priority need, they must be provided with interim accommodation.</p> <p>Main Housing Duty</p> <p>If homelessness is not successfully prevented, we will owe the main housing duty to those who are eligible, have a priority need for accommodation and are not homeless intentionally.</p> <p>A suitable offer of a settled home (whether accepted or refused by the applicant) would bring the main housing duty to an end.</p>
HSF	<p>Household Support Fund</p> <p>Payments support low income households struggling with energy and food costs, or who need essential household items.</p>
ICO	<p>Information Commissioner's Office</p> <p>The UK's independent body's role is to uphold information rights in the public interest (link)</p>
IES	<p>Inclusive Economic Strategy</p> <p>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)</p>
JLHWS	<p>Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy</p> <p>JLHWS supports vision that County Durham is a healthy place where people live well for longer</p>
KS2	<p>Key Stage 2</p> <p>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.</p>
KS3	<p>Key Stage 3</p> <p>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.</p>
LGA	<p>Local Government Association</p> <p>The national membership body for councils which works on behalf of its member councils to support, promote and improve local government.</p>
LINKCD	<p>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.</p>
LNRS	<p>Local Nature Recovery Strategies</p> <p>Propose how and where to recover nature and improve the wider environment.</p>
MTFP	<p>Medium Term Financial Plan</p> <p>A document that sets out the council's financial strategy over a four year period</p>
MW	<p>MegaWatt is one million watts of electricity</p>

Term	Definition
NESWA	<p>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.</p>
NQSW	<p>Newly Qualified Social Workers a social worker who is registered with Social Work England and is in their first year of post qualifying practice.</p>
NVQ	<p>National Vocational Qualification A work-based qualification that recognises the skills and knowledge a person needs to do a job.</p>
PDR	<p>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.</p>
PRS	<p>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.</p>
PSPO	<p>Public Space Protection Order To deal with a nuisance or problem in a particular area that is detrimental to local community.</p>
QoL	Quality of Life
RIDDOR	<p>Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations A RIDDOR report is required for work-related accidents which result in a reportable injury.</p>
RQF	<p>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.</p>
SALT	<p>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).</p>
SEN	<p>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.</p>
SEND	<p>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities SEND can affect a child or young person's ability to learn and can affect their;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ behaviour or ability to socialise (e.g., they struggle to make friends) ▪ reading and writing (e.g., because they have dyslexia), ▪ ability to understand things, ▪ concentration levels (e.g., because they have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) ▪ physical ability
SG	<p>Settlement Grants Help people stay in their home or move back into housing after living in supported or unsettled accommodation (such as leaving care or being homeless). They provide help towards furniture, white goods, flooring, curtains, bedding, kitchen equipment, removal costs etc.</p>
SME	<p>Small to Medium Sized Enterprise A company with no more than 500 employees.</p>
Statistical nearest neighbours	<p>A group of councils that are similar across a wide range of socio-economic. Durham County Council uses the CIPFA nearest neighbours model which compares us to Northumberland, North Tyneside, Barnsley, Rotherham, Wakefield, Doncaster, Redcar and Cleveland, Wigan, St Helens, Cornwall, Sefton, Sunderland, Wirral, Plymouth and Calderdale</p>

Term	Definition
UASC	<p>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.</p>
UKSPF	<p>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.</p>
WEEE	<p>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.</p>
Yield	Proportion of potential income achieved