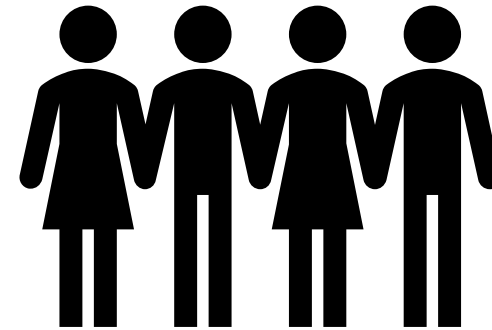


Durham County Council Poverty Action Strategy

Annual Highlight Report
Period: April 2024- March 2025



Presentation Overview

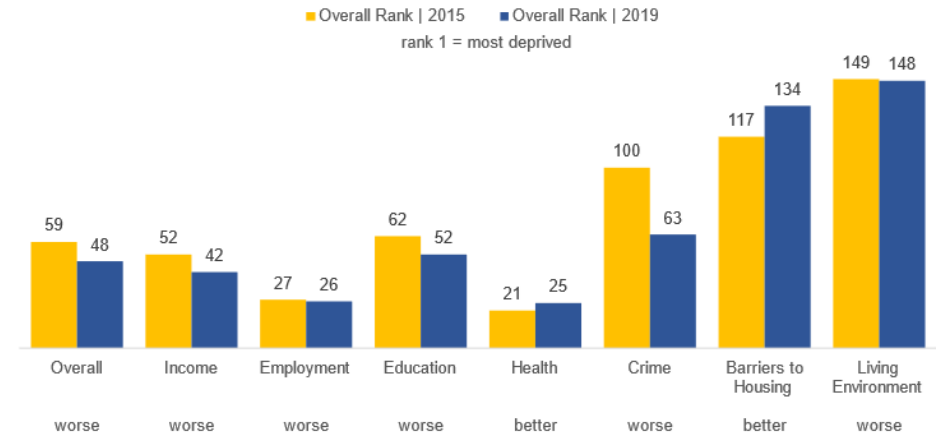
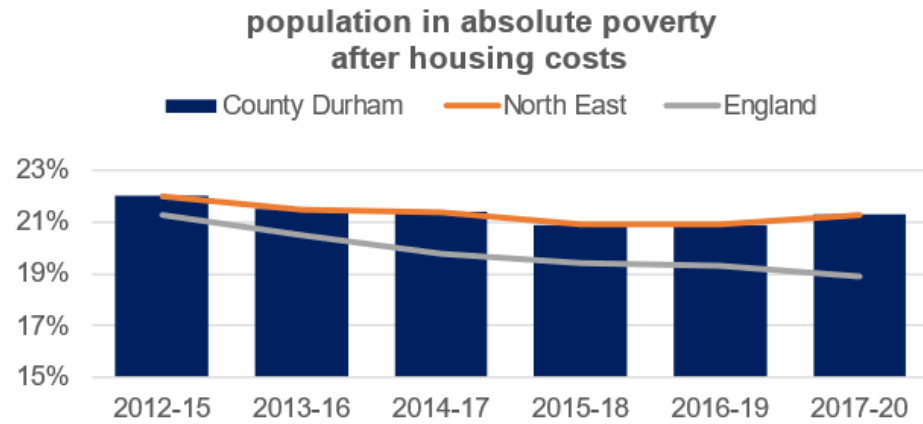
The most recent welfare, economic and poverty indicators for the county

Core expenditure (funded by both central government and from council budgets)

Progress of the council and partners in addressing and alleviating poverty

Priority actions to be progressed during 2025/26

Welfare, Economic & Poverty Indicators



- We estimate that just over 112,000 of our residents (21.3%) live in absolute poverty^[1] after housing costs.
- County Durham is ranked the 48th most deprived area in England (from 151 upper tier local authorities)
- 42nd most deprived for income and 26th most deprived for employment.

Welfare, Economic & Poverty Indicators

Latest data for the North East region suggests that around 56% of working-age adults with relative low income are living in households where at least one adult works.

One in five people are claiming Universal Credit in County Durham

The most recent data (2022) suggests 26,600 (11.5%) estimated households across the county are in fuel poverty. North East 10.9% ; England 13.1%.

Government Funding

Household
Support Fund

Department for
Education

UK Shared
Prosperity Fund
(UKSPF).

Supported
Housing
Improvement
Programme (SHIP)

Council Response

Local Council Tax
Reduction
Scheme (LCTRS)

Discretionary
Housing
Payments (DHP)
scheme

Daily Living
Expenses and
Settlement
Grants

Welfare Support,
advice, and
Guidance

Council Tax
Exemptions
(Care Leavers)

DCC Employee
Support

Poverty Action Strategy and Plan

01

Objective 1: Use intelligence and data to target support to low-income households.

02

Objective 2: Reduce the financial pressures on people facing or in poverty.

03

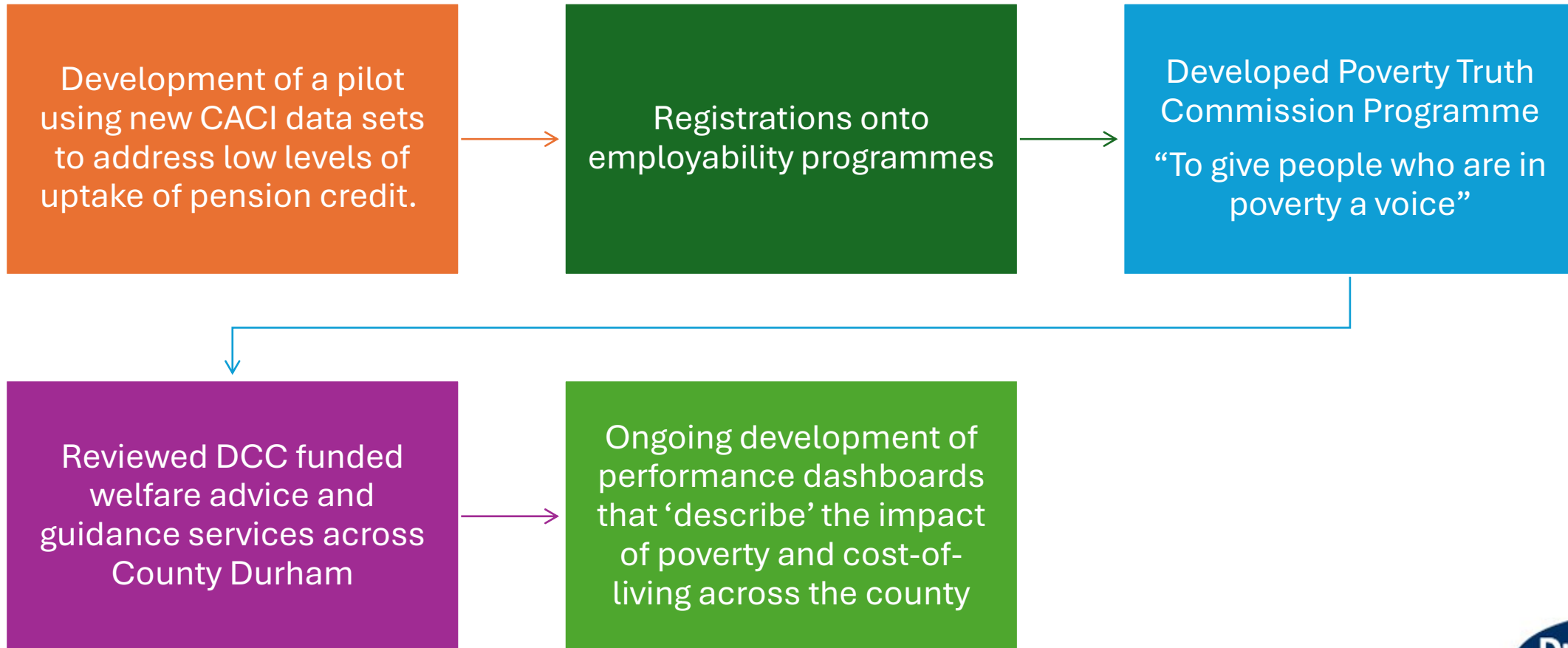
Objective 3: Increase individual, household and community resilience to poverty.

04

Objective 4: Reduce barriers to accessing services for those experiencing financial insecurity.

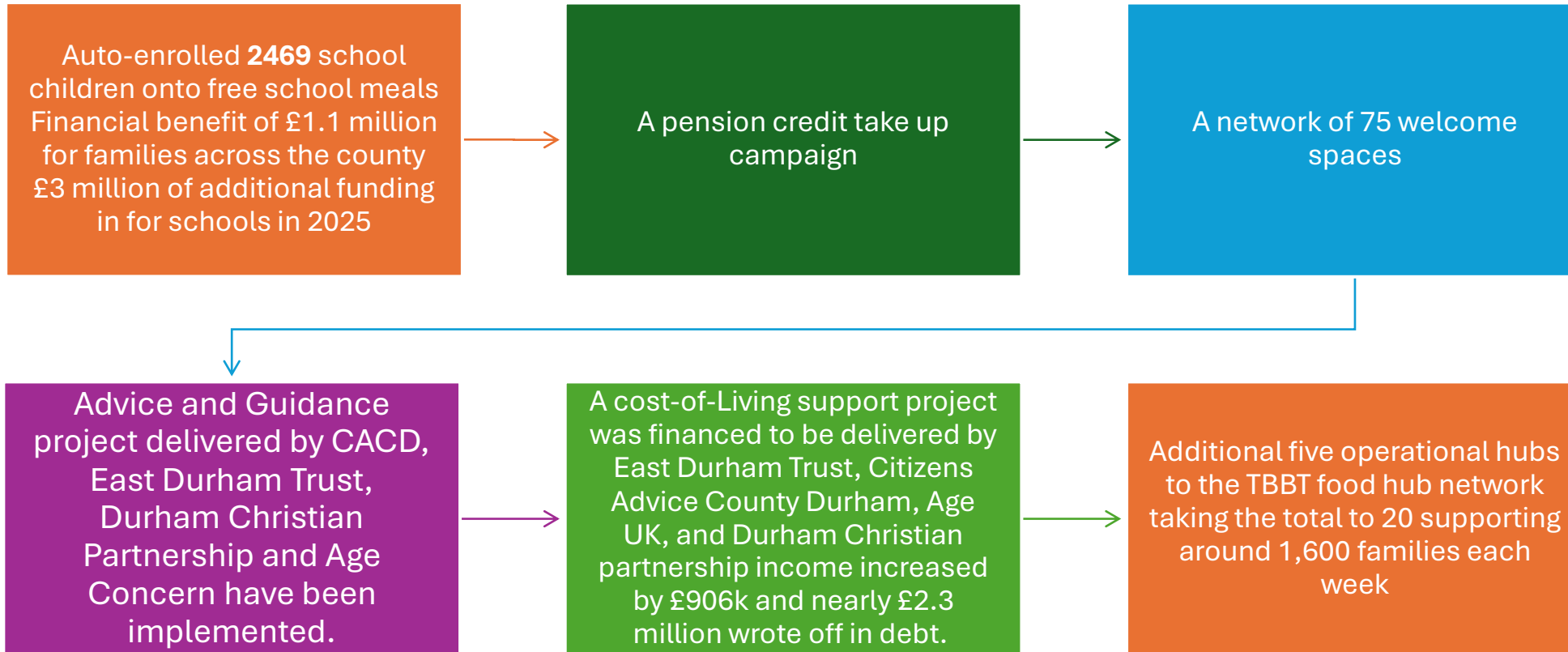


Using Intelligence and Data



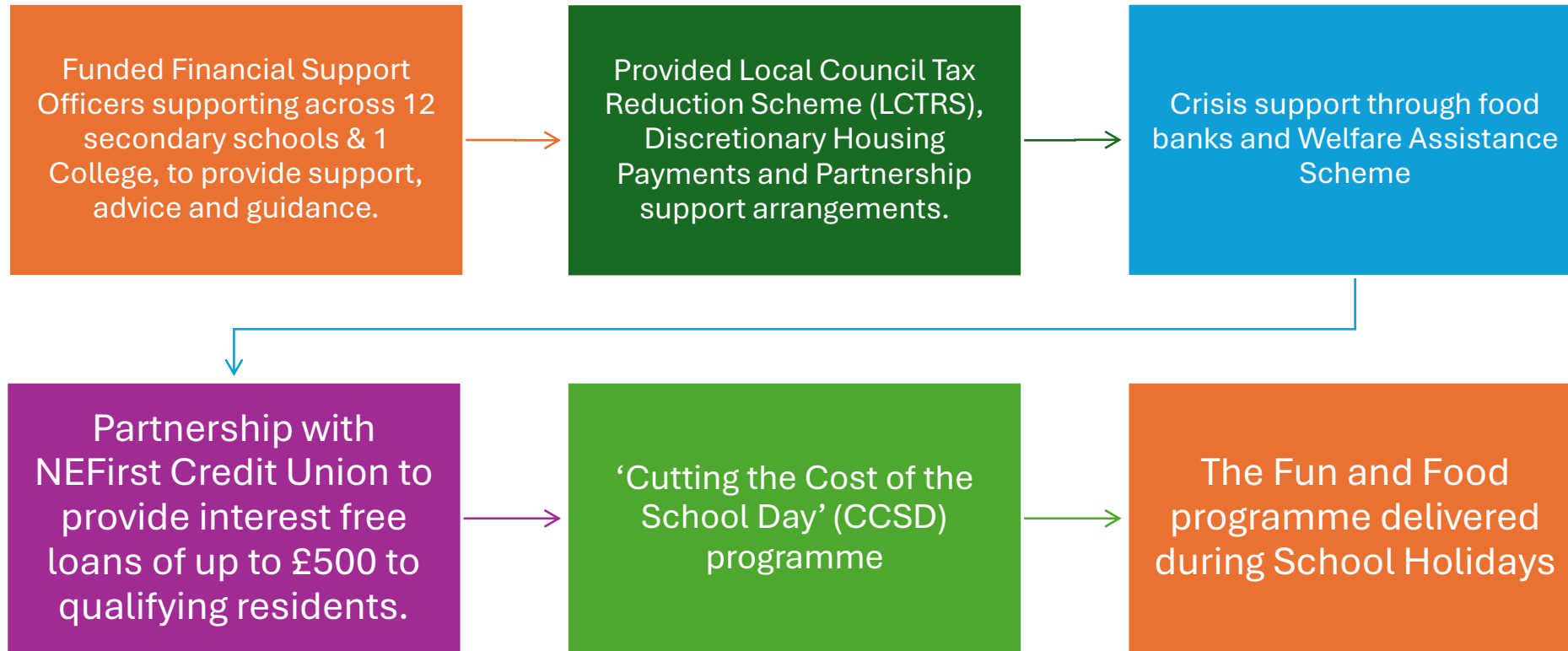


Reducing Financial Pressures



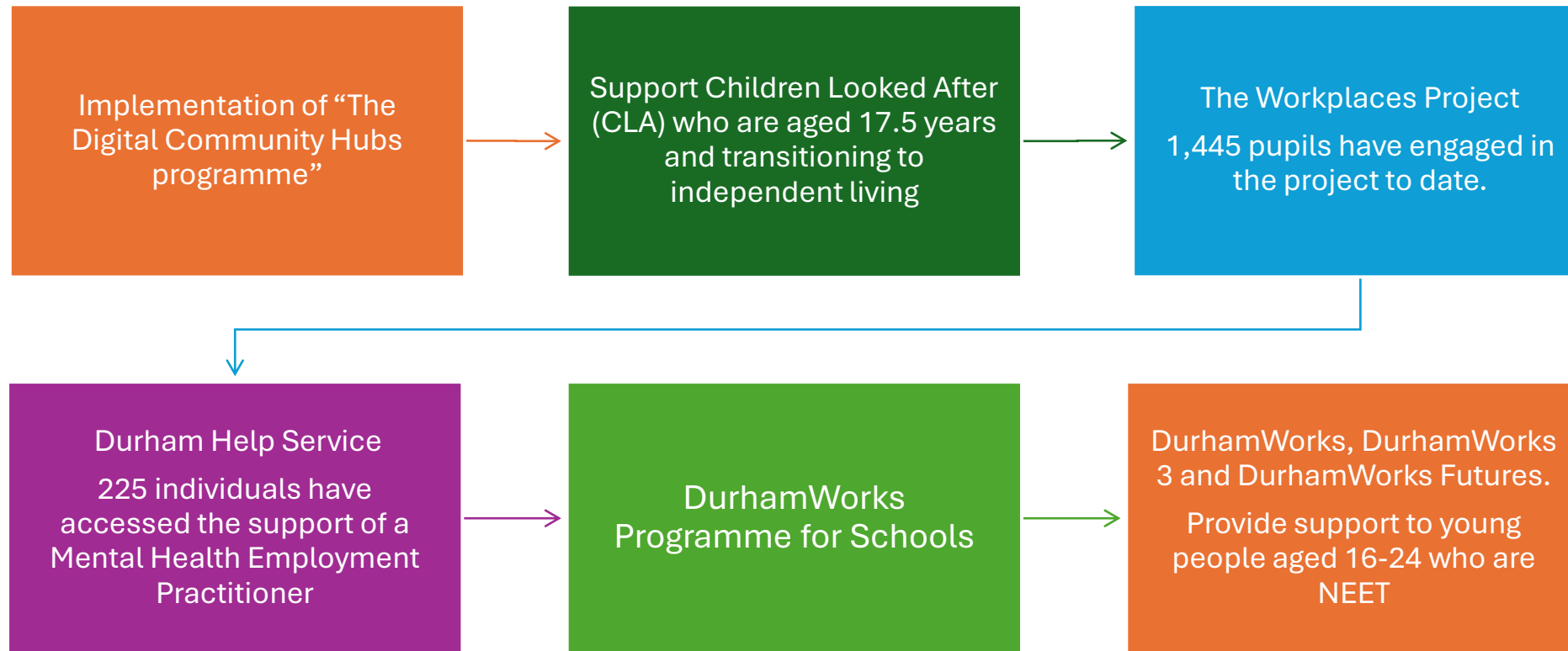


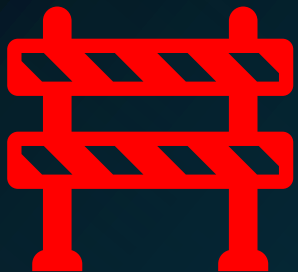
Continued- Reducing Financial Pressures



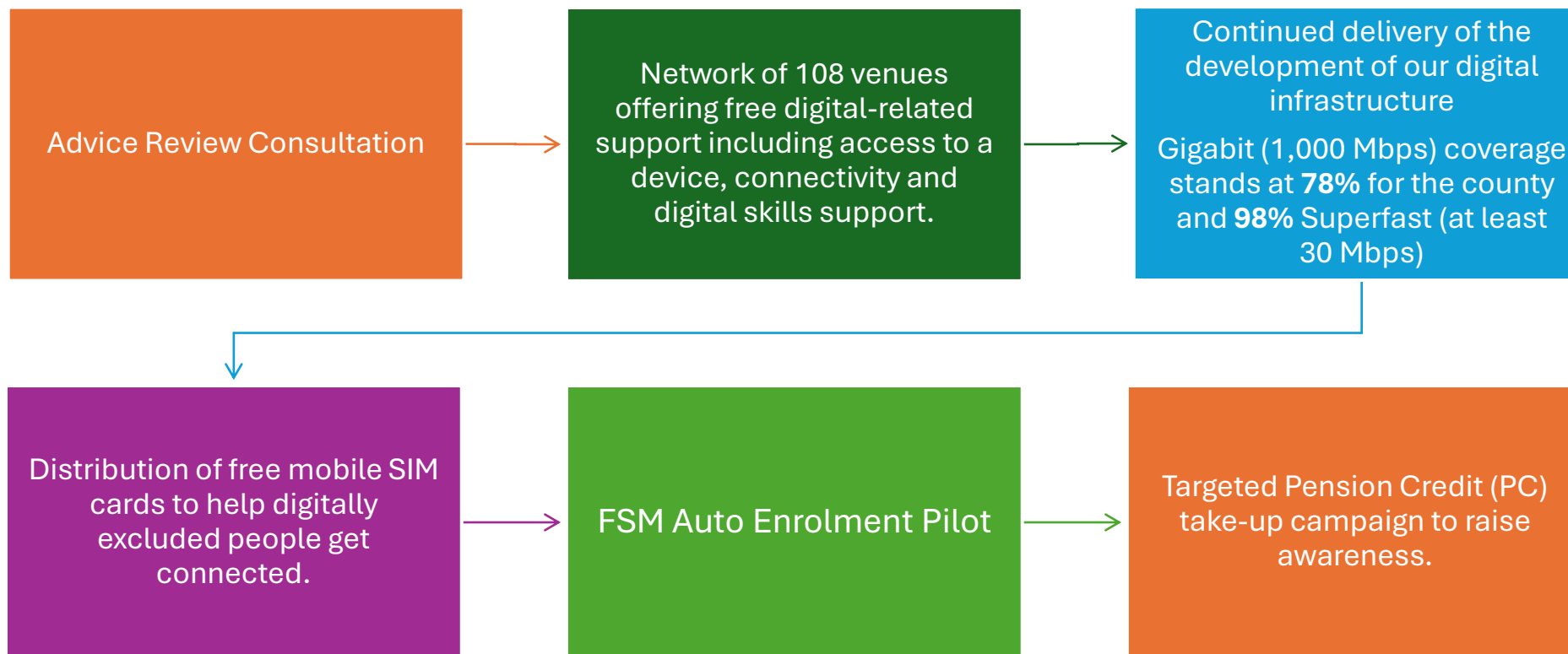


Increasing Individual, Household and Community Resilience to Poverty.





Reducing Barriers to Accessing Services For Those Experiencing Financial Insecurity



Using Intelligence and Data - Priority Actions 2025-2026



IMPROVE DATA
CAPTURE AND
INTELLIGENCE



DEVELOP AN
APPROACH FOR
USING
CONFIDENTIAL
DATASETS



USE NATIONAL AND
LOCAL DATA TO
INFORM INITIATIVES
AND PROJECTS



CONTINUE
DELIVERY
PROGRAMME OF
TARGETED
CAMPAIGNS



EXPLORATION OF A
PROJECT TO SHARE
DATA WITH
FOODBANKS AND
CRISIS SUPPORT

Reducing Financial Pressures - Priority Actions 2025-2026

Free school meals auto-enrolment 'way forward'



DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

Very few households chose to opt out of the scheme, the council said

- Implement Free School Meals (FSM) Auto enrolment part of business as usual.
- Test the feasibility and impact of an auto enrolment system for post 16 students with a college to improve take-up of free school meals.

Increase Individual, Household and Community Resilience to Poverty. - Priority Actions 2025-2026



EXPANSION OF FISO INTO
PRIMARY SCHOOLS



INVESTIGATE THE POSSIBILITY
OF EXPANDING/DUPLICATING
THE MENTAL HEALTH HOSPITAL
DISCHARGE SCHEME



EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES
FOR MORE POVERTY
ALLEVIATION WORK WITH
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Reduce Barriers to Accessing Services For Those Experiencing Financial Insecurity. - Priority Actions 2025-2026



- Continued delivery of the Digital Durham programme
- Deliver Digital Hub, Digital Inclusion and device gifting programmes
- Explore the use of QR codes to streamline access to resources and reduce the stigma or complexity for financially insecure households.

The Positive Impact – Access to Food

My son had an amazing time. Was really comforting having other parents and children there in a similar situation. Didn't have to worry about other kids staring or picking on my son. We really enjoyed it and met some lovely parents.

It was nice to get them out to an activity that wasn't too crowded as they don't deal well with big groups. It helped a lot. Gave us a much quieter, understanding environment.

19
Durham Hubs
The Bread and Butter Thing
Impact for 2024

11,986 members
&
8,510 volunteering opportunities
Totalling over 25,530 volunteer hours

52,670 shops
equivalent to this many meals
1,629,610

80%
of a Bread and Butter shop is made up of fruit, veg and chilled produce, delivering maximum nutritional benefit and improving diet diversity every week.

By shopping with The Bread and Butter Thing residents have made a cumulative saving of over....
£1,316,750
"I am so excited when it comes to the collection day. Wondering what is on those bags. A great selection every time. This saved me so much money. That then makes my life so much easier."
Bullion Hall member

The bread and butter thing.
IMPACT SUMMARY
Our food clubs give access to nutritious and affordable food taken into the heart of communities starved of money, food and resources. This weekly shop provides essential produce for family eating.



The Positive Impact – Pension Credit Campaign



Are you over **State Pension age**, or know someone who is?

Could you or someone you know, be missing out on **Pension Credit** worth on average **£75 per week**?

Don't miss out, check your eligibility: online at gov.uk/pension-credit or by calling **0800 99 1234** (freephone)



Combining both Pension Credit and Winter Fuel Payment, the campaign has facilitated an estimated **£2,871,800 in extra financial support per year for pensioners in County Durham.*

Contact:
Tel:
email:
Our ref:



Name
Address line 1
Address line 1
Address line 1
Postcode

Date

Dear Sir/ Madam

Are you missing out on money you are entitled to?

Our records suggest that you might be missing out on Pension Credit - a Pension Service benefit which is designed to ensure that people of pension age have enough income to meet the costs of day-to-day living.

Pension credit also enables the recipient to further support such as the winter fuel allowance.

If you would like to find out if you are eligible to:

- A Pension Credit top-up your pension income
- More help towards paying your rent / council tax
- money to help you with your fuel bills
- a free TV licence

Then please visit www.gov.uk/pension-credit or by calling 0800 99 1234.

If you can't complete the form for yourself, then perhaps a family member, friend or neighbour can help. If you would rather, then simply ring our Age UK team on 0191 386 3856 and we will arrange for someone discuss things with you and help you make a claim.

Durham County Council want to ensure that people are not missing out on valuable extra income.

Yours sincerely

Jenna Worthington

Poverty Action Lead



The positive Impact – FSM Auto Enrolment



CLLR ALAN SHIELD
CABINET MEMBER FOR EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Some 11% of our children who are entitled,

The positive Impact – Financial Support

Durham County Council's Post



We are providing £500,000 to Citizens Advice County Durham to continue supporting its work to help residents dealing with a range of issues.

A further £100,000 has been pledged from our UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation to help residents affected by the 'cost of living crisis'.

A similar project, delivered in 2023 by Age UK County Durham, Citizens Advice County Durham, Durham Christian Partnership and East Durham Trust, resulted in those supported being a total of £3.2 million better off thanks to additional benefits and debt management solutions.

The funding is part of a raft of support we provide to the voluntary and charity sector in recognition of the invaluable services it offers to residents. Other recent grants include:

- £80,000 to Durham Christian Partnership to provide debt advice to residents.
- £83,600 to Age UK County Durham to support with activities linked to cost of living.
- £36,400 to East Durham Trust to provide financial wellbeing and debt advice.



Parent Financial Support

Free financial support and advice!

Greenfield Academy are delighted to be working alongside the Local Authority to offer free financial support and advice to our parents/carers.

Anna will be based in school on a Wednesday morning, and will be operating on an appointment only basis. If you would like a free consultation with Anna, please contact her directly on: FISO@durham.gov.uk or call her on 07385 223 741.



The positive Impact – Welcome Spaces

MEDOMSLEY PARISH CHURCH COUNCIL: A PLACE FULL OF LOVE



Local residents enjoying chat and free refreshments in the heated church meeting room

Medomsley Parish Church Council, located in the village church dedicated to St Mary Magdalene offer a warm welcome to all.

Reminiscing the past:

A local man who lives alone and is socially isolated was persuaded to come to the Welcome Space.

He felt embarrassed about coming the first week as the food and drinks were free. It was suggested that he could make a small donation to our playground refurbishment project if he wanted to.

When he came, he realised that he knew a few people. This gave him the confidence to come back again.

He has since brought two of his friends to the group, who were also socially isolated.

This man is quite well known as he has lived all his life in the village. His parents were also well known so there have been lots of conversations and reminiscing about the past between him and others attending.

Making a Difference

PACT House Stanley's Welcome Spaces made a positive difference in the lives of people who visited by offering more than practical support. Here are some personal stories highlighting this positive change:

Luke's journey:

Luke, a young man who had recently moved into supported housing with no friends or family in the area, found a lifeline in the Welcome Space. Initially visiting the foodbank and café, Luke soon began volunteering. He shared: "I make brews and talk to people – it's been great for my mental health. It's made me think about my life. At 23, I was going nowhere and had no plans; I'm now trying to join the army."

Andrew's story:

Andrew, who recently moved to the area and was struggling with his mental health, found solace and discovered a community of like-minded people who shared similar interests:

"It's been great. I found people interested in Dungeons & Dragons and have joined their gaming group."

Bernie's experience:

Bernie found comfort in the simple act of sharing a cup of tea and chatting with others at the café. Reflecting on his experience, Bernie said, "I called in as and when, grabbed a cuppa and had a chat with the people in the cafe, it was good to talk to people, I have joined the photography group now."