

Darlington Borough Council

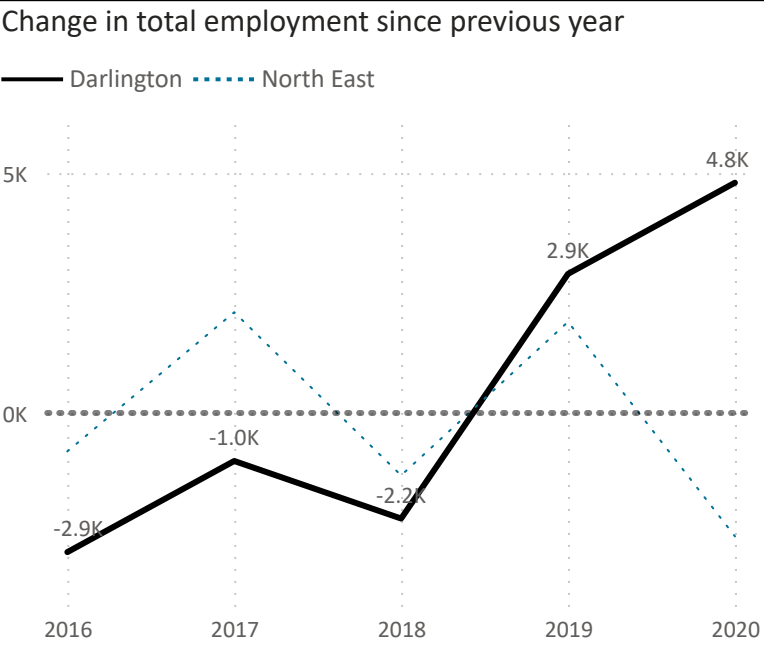
Council Plan Performance Management Report 2021/22

This report outlines council performance up to the end of the final quarter of the 2021/22 financial year.

The performance report is structured around the Council Plan, with:

- A high-level update on progress towards the overarching corporate priorities outlined in the beginning of the Council Plan document to highlight areas of strategic significance:
 - Growing Darlington's Economy (pages 2-14)
 - Maximising the Potential of our Young People (pages 15-17)
 - Working with Communities to Maximise their Potential (pages 18-19)
 - Supporting the Most Vulnerable in the Borough (pages 20-22)
 - Supported by a Dedicated Workforce (page 23)
- Sections on each Cabinet portfolio area highlighting progress against key actions and relevant key performance indicators:
 - Adults (pages 24-26)
 - Children and Young People (pages 27-33)
 - Economy (pages 34-36)
 - Health and Housing (pages 37-42)
 - Local Services (pages 43-45)
 - Resources (pages 46-49)
 - Stronger Communities (pages 50-54)

1.1 Delivering - More sustainable well-paid jobs



This measure shows the difference in total employment (both Public and Private) compared to the same point 12 months previously, in order to show the number of jobs created in Darlington within the last year. As can be seen, the number of new additional employment opportunities increased again in 2020, in contrast to the regional and national picture where job opportunities fell due the initial impacts of the pandemic.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Number of people employed including self-employed

Year	Month	Darlington
2019	June	48,600
	September	49,600
	December	48,700
2020	March	48,800
	June	48,400
	September	48,600
	December	48,900
2021	March	47,900
	June	49,600
	September	49,200
	December	49,900

Despite employment levels fluctuating during the covid pandemic, the number of people employed (including self-employed) now appears to be increasing. In general, business confidence improved during the latter stages of 2021, resulting in investment returning and growth plans commencing. This resulted in demand for new employment increasing.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Number of employees

Year	Month	Darlington
2019	June	42,400
	September	43,500
	December	42,300
2020	March	43,400
	June	43,300
	September	43,300
	December	44,000
2021	March	42,900
	June	44,200
	September	44,100
	December	44,700

The number of employees in Darlington continues to grow. As confidence returns, many employers, large and small, have recruited new staff to cope with increasing service and product demand.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

1.1 Delivering - More sustainable well-paid jobs

Median weekly all residence based earnings

Year	Darlington	England	North East
2012	348	412	374
2013	382	421	382
2014	387	422	387
2015	402	429	395
2016	437	442	405
2017	416	454	416
2018	415	466	420
2019	440	483	438
2020	428	484	439
2021	487	509	463

Darlington resident median weekly incomes increased in 2021. The general long-term trend shows Darlington median weekly earnings for residents are, and continue to be, in line with regional trends.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

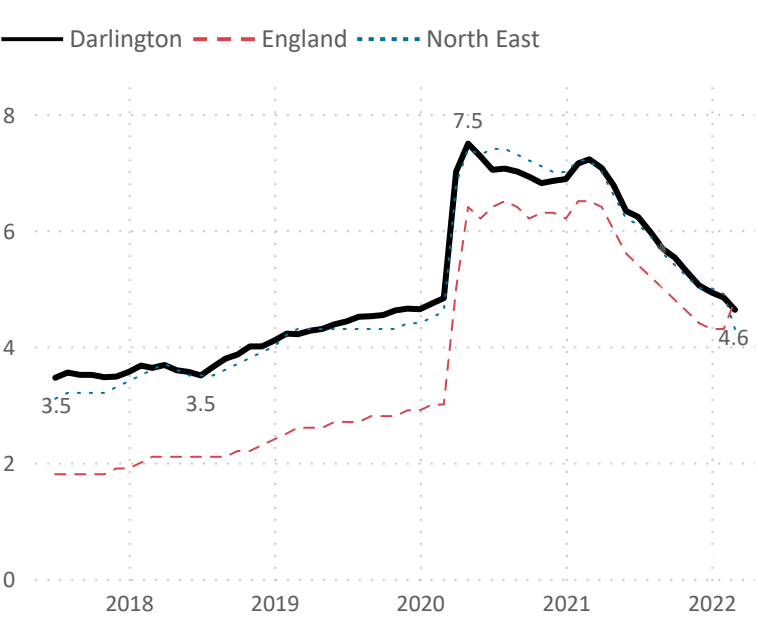
Median weekly all employee based earnings

Year	Darlington	England	North East
2012	366	412	372
2013	330	421	379
2014	422	422	390
2015	437	429	395
2016	435	442	403
2017	423	451	417
2018	433	466	418
2019	454	483	438
2020	435	485	436
2021	457	510	458

Darlington employee median weekly incomes increased in 2021. Whilst Darlington median weekly earnings for employees have increased since 2014, the rate of increase has been slower than elsewhere and so fallen from being in line with the national average, to being in line with neighbouring authority areas.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Monthly unemployed claimant count (%)

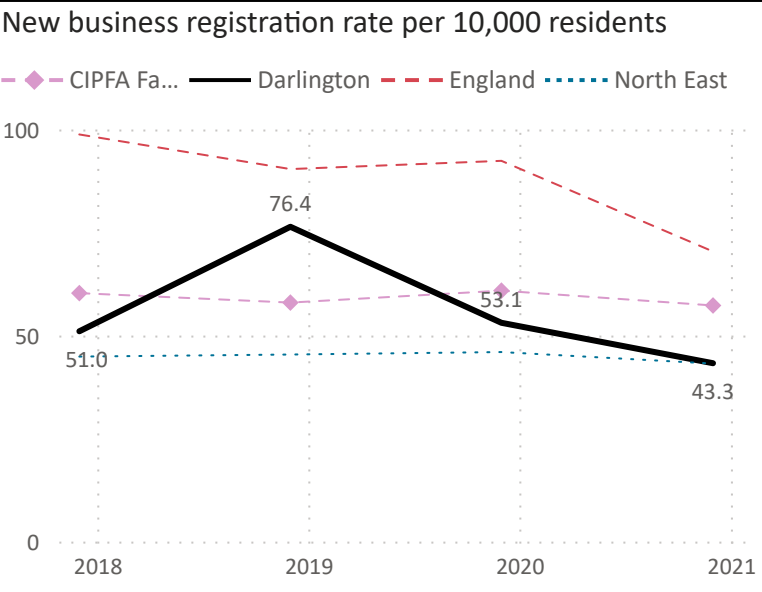


The number of Darlington residents claiming benefits for the reason of unemployment continues to fall – a trend which is mirrored in both regional and national statistics. The reduction in claimant count will be directly influenced by the growth in employment opportunities, as the economy recovers from the impacts of pandemic.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

1. GROWING DARLINGTON'S ECONOMY

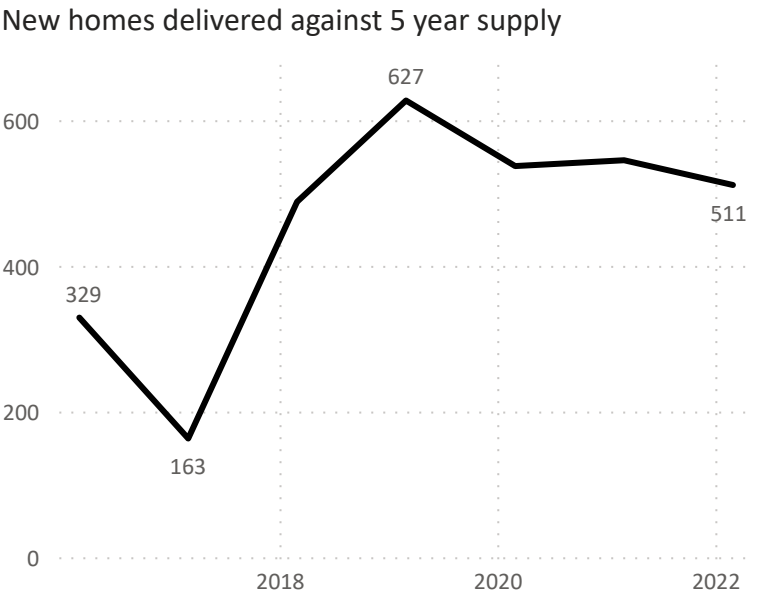
1.2 Delivering - More businesses



New business formation numbers have fallen in Darlington in both 2020 and 2021, due to the impacts of Covid-19 pandemic and resulting limited opportunities for new enterprises. As the economy recovers, numbers of new business formations will increase.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

1.3 Delivering - More homes



The Local Plan was adopted in February. It was hoped this would result in a number of planning applications to promote economic growth. Whilst the number of completions remains high and above Local Plan targets at 511 for the year 2021/22, the Government announced in March 2022 that Darlington was part of the Nutrient Neutrality catchment area of the River Tees. The impact of this is that no new permissions for housing developments can be granted until it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of Natural England that any development would not increase the release of nutrients (Nitrogen) into the River Tees or its tributaries. This will delay the granting of planning permissions which ultimately will impact on housing delivery.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

1.4 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Clean

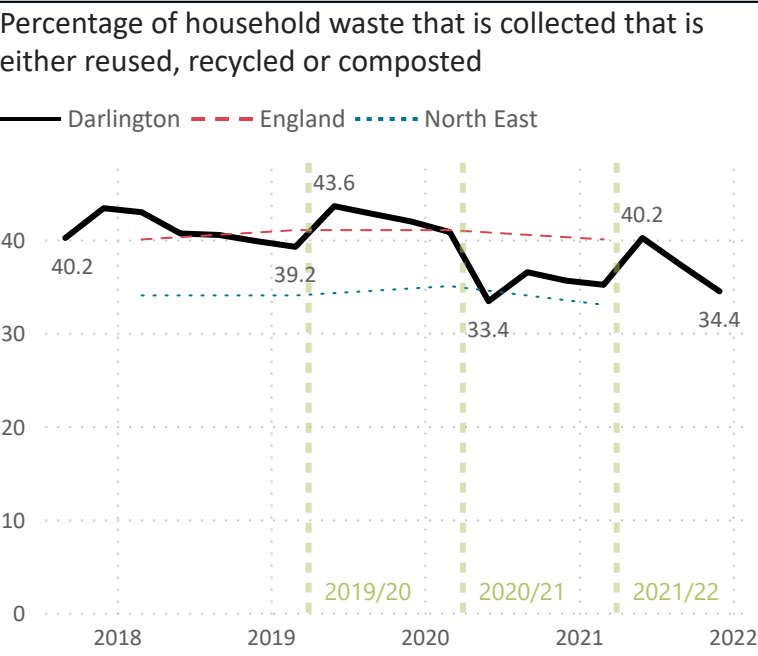
Percentage of complaints about refuse on private land investigated and completed within 42 days (except where there is non-compliance with enforcement action taken)

Year	Month	Darlington
2021	June	91.2%
	September	89.5%
	December	90.0%
2022	March	90.2%

Environmental Health investigate complaints of accumulations of refuse on private land and in financial year 2021/2022 received 354 service requests. In the first instance, for the majority of cases involving refuse accumulations in yards / gardens, a Community Protection Warning is issued requiring disposal of the refuse in a proper manner and these have proved to be successful. For those case where the refuse has not been removed enforcement action is considered prioritising refuse which is causing a public health nuisance e.g., putrescible household refuse. The timescale within the target has been extended from 28 to 42 days to allow a longer period of time to be given to those responsible to dispose of the accumulation of refuse.

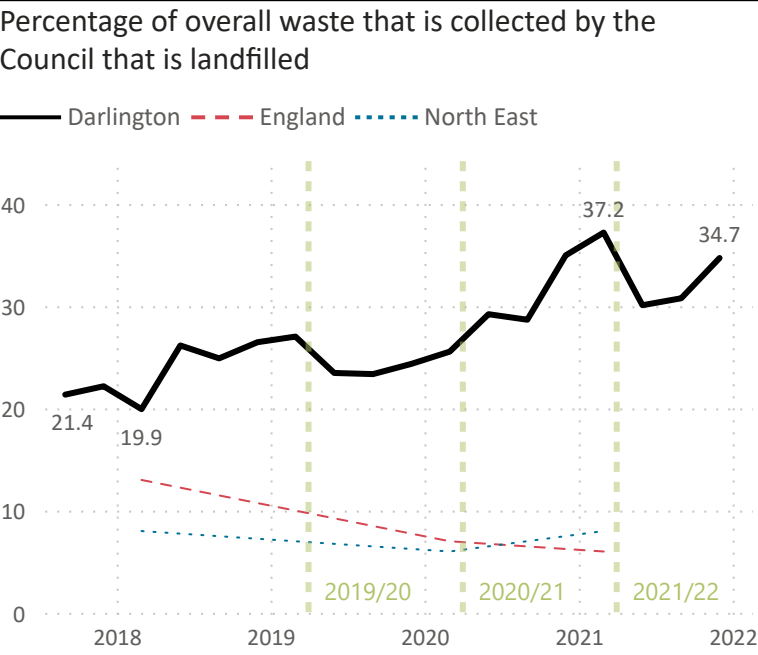
Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

1.4 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Clean



Data for the proportion of local household waste reused, recycled or composted is only available up Quarter 3 of this year, as the information is reported through a national system which has a lag as data is verified. The Quarter 3 data shows a decrease from Quarter 1 from 40.2% to 34.4% for the first 9 months of the year. The reduction is due to some previous errors in reporting that have been picked up as part of the audit process. Significant work continues to be undertaken by the Street Scene and Communications teams to increase recycling rates and reduce contamination by raising residents' awareness of what can be recycled through a variety of channels.

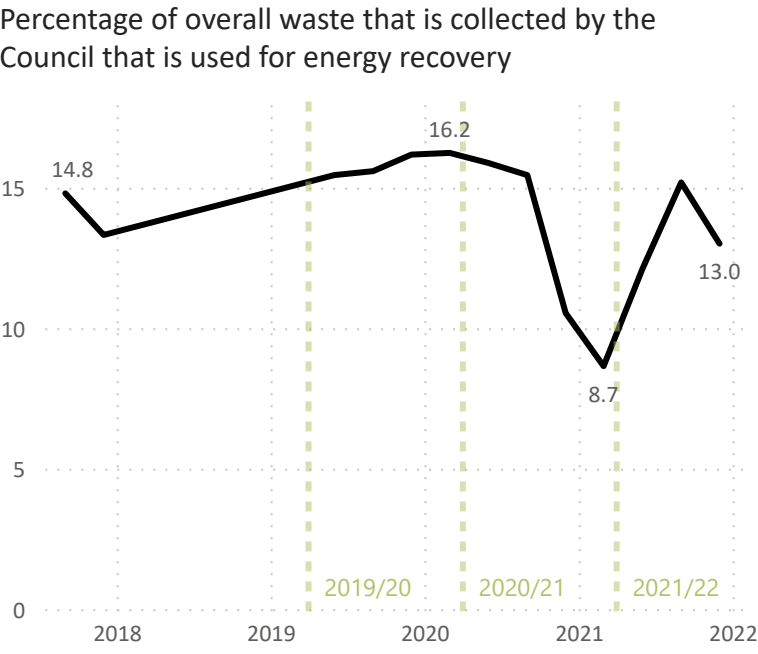
Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services



Data is only available until Quarter 3 due to the lag in data verification through the national system. The percentage of household waste landfilled was 34.7% during the first 9 months of the year.

There are fluctuations over the years as there is a relationship with levels of recycling and waste sent to energy recovery. Darlington Borough Council performs worse than the rest of the North East as the majority of our neighbours send all residual waste to an energy recovery facility with limited waste going to landfill. The increase over the last quarter is a result of less waste going to energy recovery as the plant taking the waste is restricting the amount it can accept.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

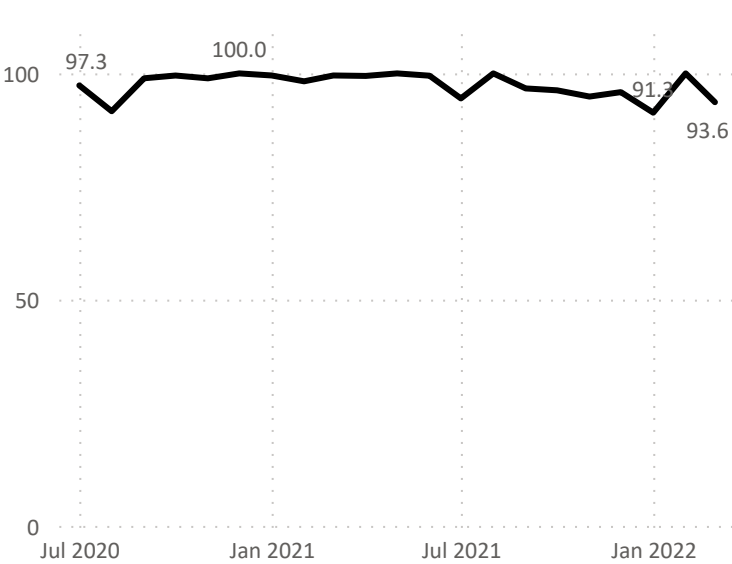


Data is only available until Quarter 3 to due to the lag in the verification process. The percentage of household waste sent to energy recovery at the end of the first 9 months was 13%. This figure will always vary depend on the availability in the markets to send waste to energy recovery post treatment. In Q3 the amount of waste going to energy recovery has reduced significantly due to available capacity at the plant.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

1.4 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Clean

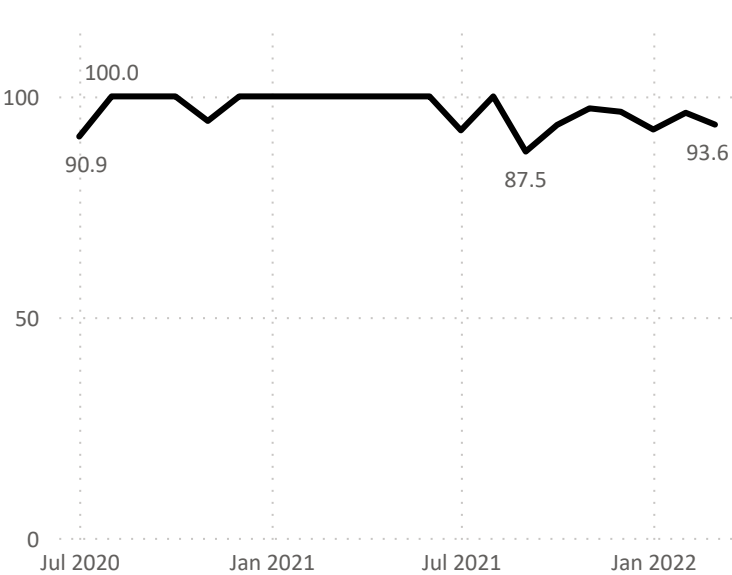
Percentage of small fly tips removed within target time (reported monthly)



Performance of street cleansing teams remains high with an average of 93.6% of small fly tips removed within their target time. With the introduction of the additional back lane crew the majority of fly tips were picked up in less than 5 days, with a significant number of these within 2 days. In addition, the work that has been carried out as part of the back lanes project has made a significant difference in those lanes that have been targeted, with staff regularly receiving positive feedback from residents.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

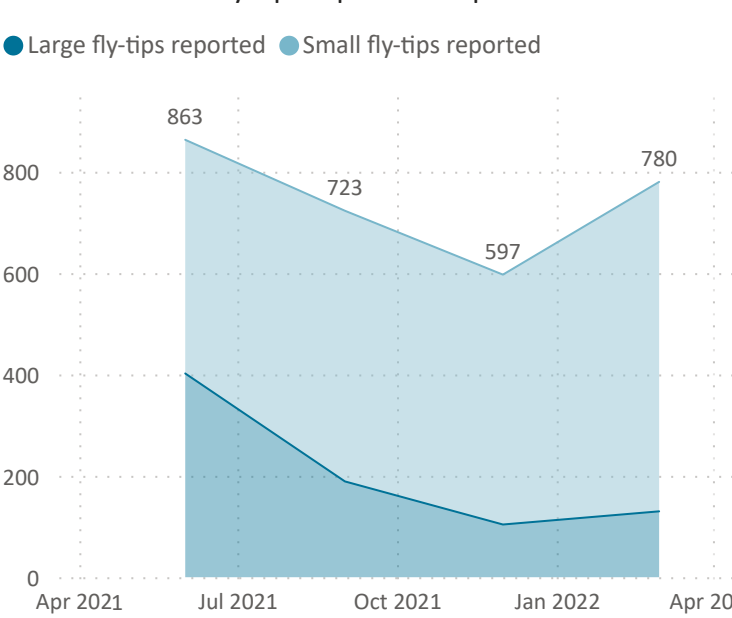
Percentage of large fly tips removed within target time (reported monthly)



Performance of street cleansing teams remains high with an average of 93.6% of large fly tips removed within their target time. The additional back lane crew has made a significant difference to the time fly tips are collected with the majority being collect in under 5 days with a significant number of those in under 2 days.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

Total number of fly-tips reported in quarter



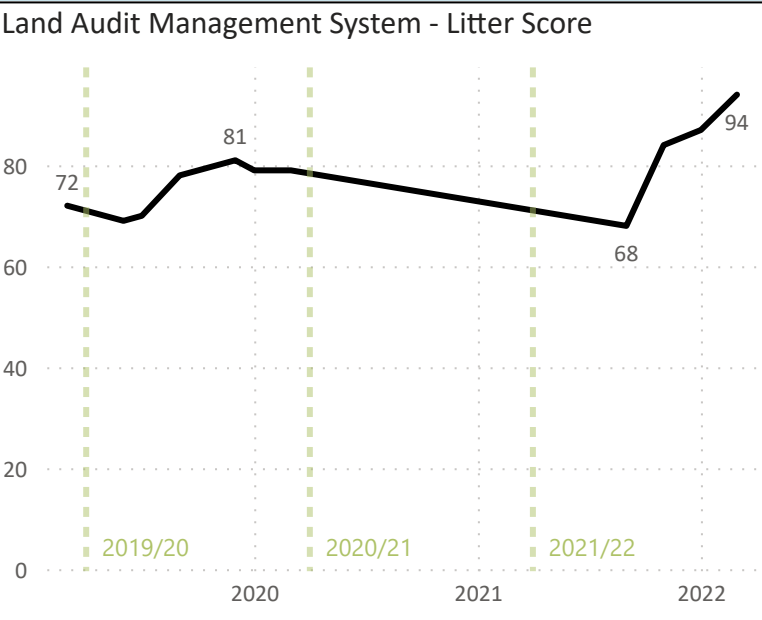
As restrictions have been eased over the year as we come out of lockdown, the number of fly tips is reducing, falling from 3411 combined in 2020/21, down to 2963 combined this year. In addition, the work that has been taking place as part of the back lanes project has also had a positive impact on the amount of side waste left out in back lanes. Please note that in previous years, only total fly tips were reported therefore no comparative data for large and small are available for this year.

This year, 4 fly tipping cases have been taken to court which resulted in 4 successful prosecutions and there are a further 5 waiting for court dates. In addition, 2 fixed penalty notices have been issued for fly tipping.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

1. GROWING DARLINGTON'S ECONOMY

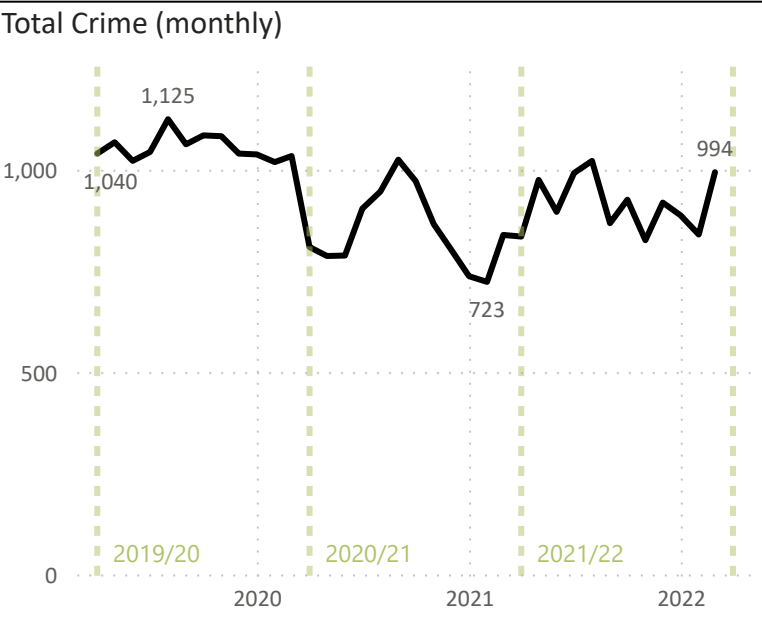
1.4 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Clean



The standard of cleanliness achieved does depend on the location inspected therefore results will vary throughout the year. In Quarter 4, the higher successful pass rate will have been determined by areas subject to less litter; i.e., the majority of inspections in this quarter were rural areas of the borough. Overall, throughout the year, a high standard of cleanliness has been achieved.

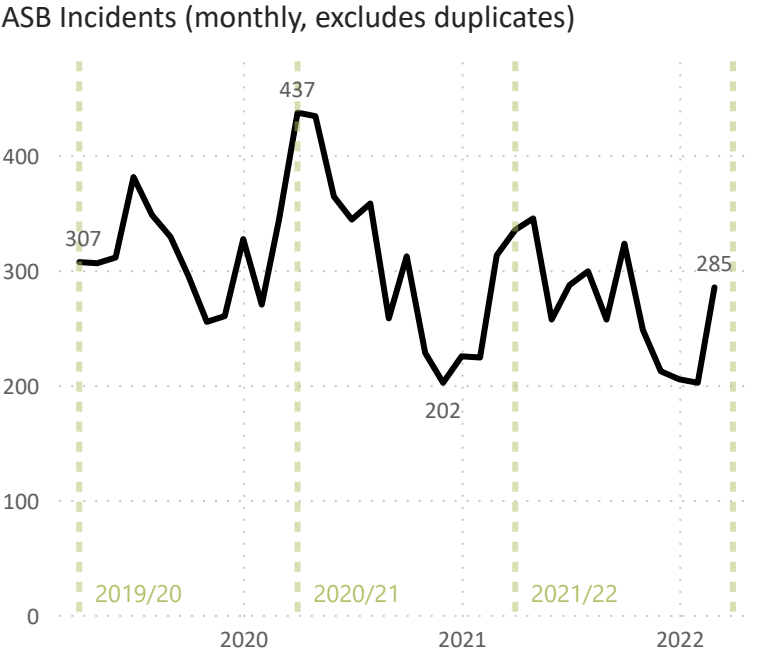
Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

1.5 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Safe



Recorded crime for the last six months of 2021/22 increased 8% from the same period last year. However, it was still 13% lower than the same period pre-pandemic, in 2019/20. The types of reported crime showing increases are largely directly linked to the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, in areas such as violence against the person, for example. The Council are working with Durham Constabulary and other partners to help address these issues and continue monitoring crime rates.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

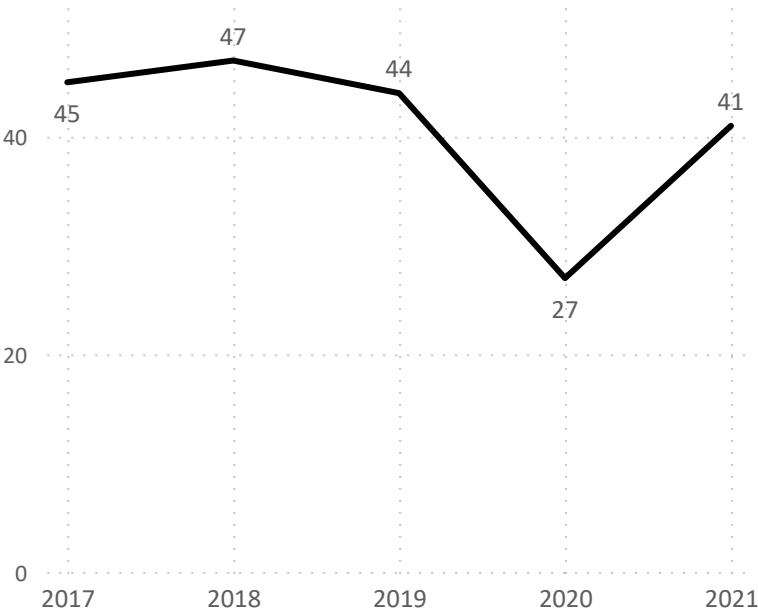


The rate of reported antisocial behaviour (ASB) incidents across the borough has decreased by 12% compared to the same period last year. However, the Council continues to be proactive in addressing issues. Over the past quarter, for example, incidents of youths causing antisocial behaviour around shops and garages in areas to the north of Darlington have been a priority for the Community Safety team, with the Council's Civic Enforcement officers working closely with Durham Constabulary and other partners to identify individuals involved through a series of targeted operations. Several groups have subsequently already been identified and the Civic Enforcement team have issued ABAs (Acceptable Behaviour Agreements) to individuals as part of their ongoing work to address this type of behaviour.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

1.5 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Safe

Number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents (annual)



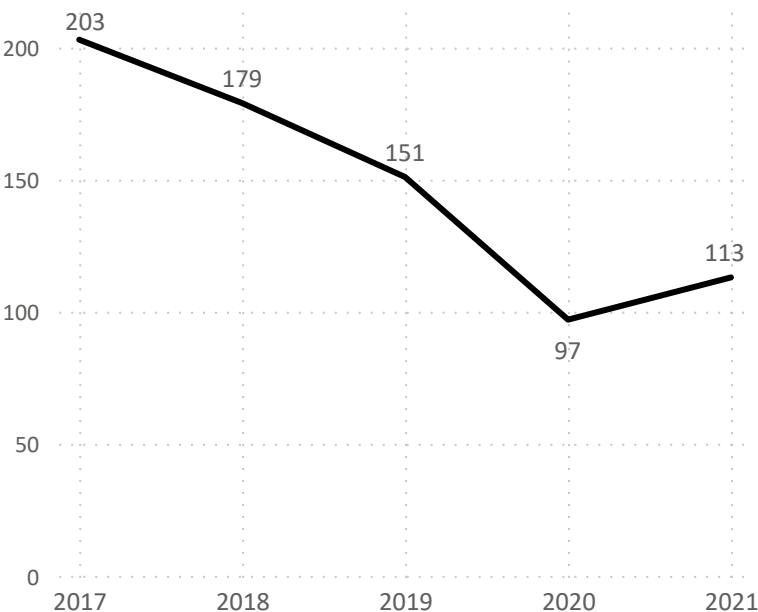
Casualties are monitored annually over a calendar year. The casualty indicators use a five-year average (2010/2014) for their baseline. For killed or seriously injured (KSI), this is 34.2.

2021 shows an increase over 2020. However, 2020 is a statistical outlier due to the impact of Covid-19 on traffic levels (15% of normal traffic levels at its lowest). Based on the years prior to Covid-19, we are still seeing a reduction, however there is still work to do as the level is above the baseline.

We continue to invest in road safety education, publicity and training in partnership with organisations such as the police and fire service. Through our Local Transport Plan, we continue to invest in speed management and casualty reduction schemes.

Anthony Hewitt: Asst Director Transport & Capital Proj

Number of people slightly injured in road traffic accidents (annual)



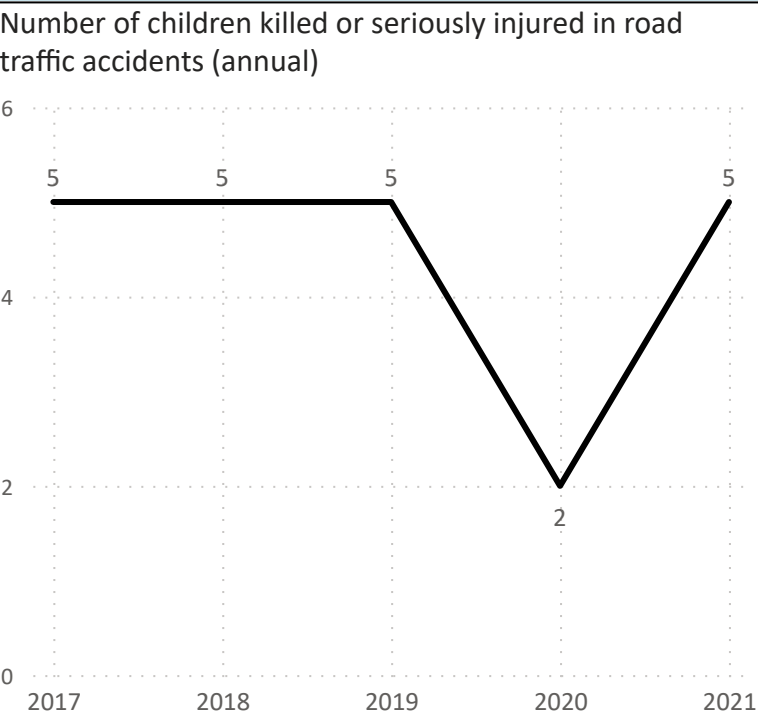
Casualties are monitored annually over a calendar year. The casualty indicators use a five-year average (2010/2014) for their baseline. For slightly injured, this is 297.2.

2021 shows an increase over 2020. However, 2020 is a statistical outlier due to the impact of Covid-19 on traffic levels (15% of normal traffic levels at its lowest). Based on the years prior to Covid-19, we are still seeing a substantial reduction, and this level is significantly below the baseline.

We continue to invest in road safety education, publicity and training in partnership with organisations such as the police and fire service. Through our Local Transport Plan, we continue to invest in speed management and casualty reduction schemes.

Anthony Hewitt: Asst Director Transport & Capital Proj

1.5 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Safe

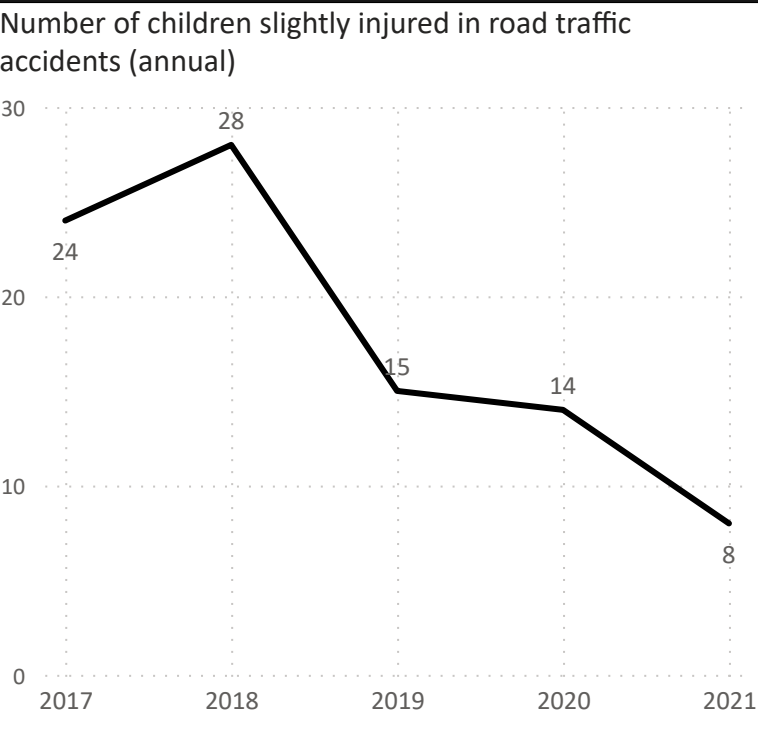


Casualties are monitored annually over a calendar year. The casualty indicators use a five-year average (2010/2014) for their baseline. For children killed or seriously injured (KSI), this is 3.6.

2021 shows an increase over 2020. However, 2020 is a statistical outlier due to the impact of Covid-19 on traffic levels (15% of normal traffic levels at its lowest). Based on the years prior to Covid-19, we are seeing a slight increase, and this remains above the baseline. However, there have been no child fatalities since 2013.

We continue to invest in road safety education, publicity and training in partnership with organisations such as the police and fire service. Through our Local Transport Plan, we continue to invest in speed management and casualty reduction schemes.

[Anthony Hewitt: Asst Director Transport & Capital Proj](#)



Casualties are monitored annually over a calendar year. The casualty indicators use a five-year average (2010/2014) for their baseline. For child slight casualties, this is 34.2.

2021 shows a decrease over 2020 and continues the trend of reduction over the longer term. At 10, this is significantly below the baseline.

We continue to invest in road safety education, publicity and training in partnership with organisations such as the police and fire service. Through our Local Transport Plan, we continue to invest in speed management and casualty reduction schemes.

[Anthony Hewitt: Asst Director Transport & Capital Proj](#)

1.6 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Healthy

Male healthy life expectancy at birth

Year	Darlington	England	North East
2013	63.4	63.2	59.3
2014	62.2	63.4	59.6
2015	61.8	63.4	59.6
2016	61.1	63.3	59.6
2017	60.7	63.4	59.5
2018	60.3	63.4	59.4
2019	58.1	63.4	59.4
2020	59.5	63.1	59.1

There is a two-year lag on this metric. However, the latest data, for 2018-20, shows Darlington’s value of 59.5 years is statistically similar to the North East average of 59.1 years, but statistically worse than the England average of 63.1 years, and falling at a faster rate than elsewhere since 2015-17. This indicator is considered an important summary measure of mortality and morbidity, by showing the years a person can expect to live in good health, rather than with a disability or in poor health. The measure is calculated using contemporary mortality rates and the prevalence of self-reported good health in local areas.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

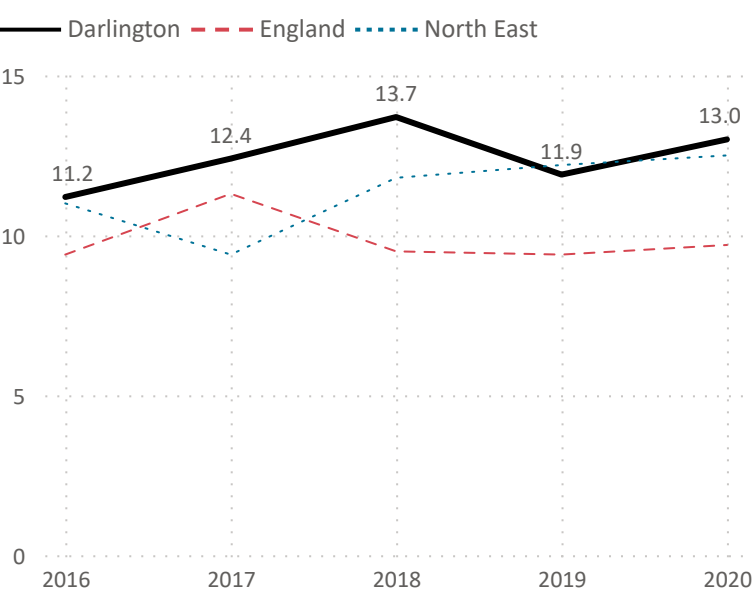
Female healthy life expectancy at birth

Year	Darlington	England	North East
2013	62.9	63.8	60.3
2014	61.7	63.9	59.9
2015	61.4	64.1	60.1
2016	63.4	63.8	60.5
2017	64.3	63.8	60.4
2018	63.3	63.9	59.7
2019	62.2	63.5	59.0
2020	60.6	63.9	59.7

There is a two-year lag on this metric. However, the latest data, for 2018-20, shows Darlington’s value of 60.6 years is statistically similar to the North East average of 59.7 years, but statistically worse than the England average of 63.9 years, and falling at a faster rate than elsewhere since 2015-17. This indicator is considered an important summary measure of mortality and morbidity, by showing the years a person can expect to live in good health, rather than with a disability or in poor health. The measure is calculated using contemporary mortality rates and the prevalence of self-reported good health in local areas.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

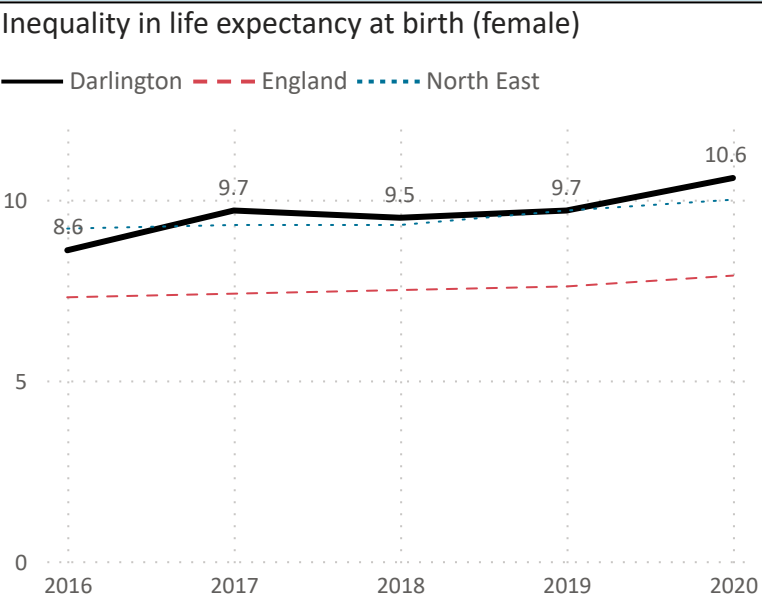
Inequality in life expectancy at birth (male)



This indicator measures inequalities in life expectancy at birth within England as a whole, each English region, and each local authority. It takes account of health inequalities across the whole range of deprivation within each area and summarises this in a single number. This represents the range in years of life expectancy across the social gradient from most to least deprived, based on a statistical analysis of the relationship between life expectancy and deprivation. Inequality in life expectancy at birth for males in Darlington increased in 2020, from 11.9 (2019) to 13.0 years and is now slightly above the North East average of 12.5 years, and remains above the England average of 9.7 years.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

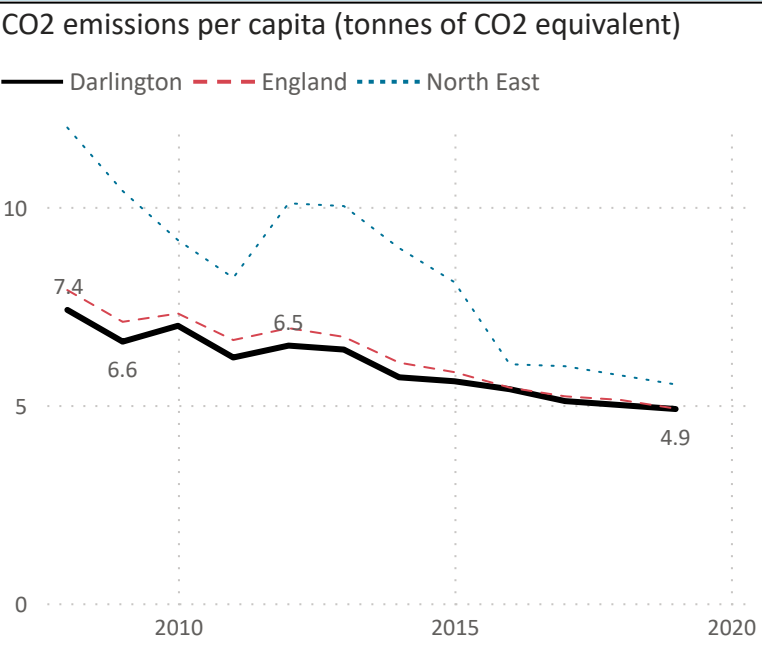
1.6 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Healthy



This indicator measures inequalities in life expectancy at birth within England as a whole, each English region, and each local authority. It takes account of health inequalities across the whole range of deprivation within each area and summarises this in a single number. This represents the range in years of life expectancy across the social gradient from most to least deprived, based on a statistical analysis of the relationship between life expectancy and deprivation. Inequality in life expectancy at birth for females in Darlington increased in 2020, from 9.7 (2019) to 10.6 years, but remains in line with the North East average of 10.0 years and above the England average of 7.9 years.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

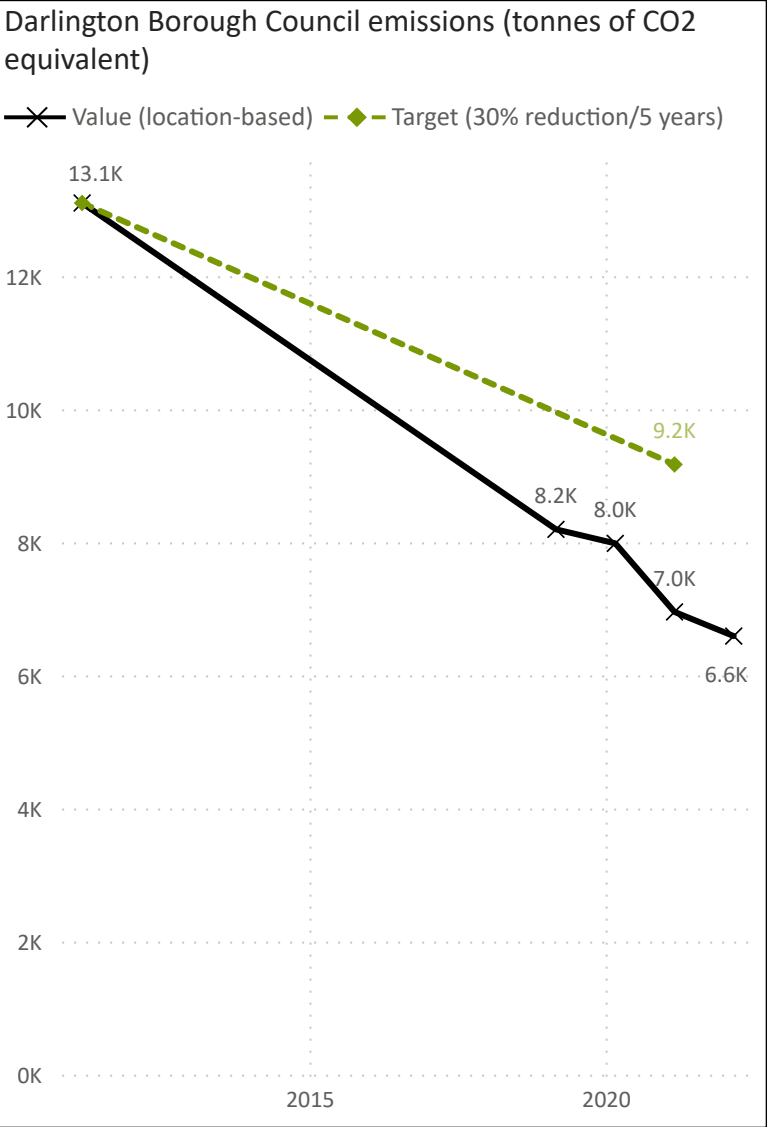
1.7 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Sustainable



Data on Darlington’s emissions for 2020 are published by BEIS and will not be available until August. The graph shows emissions per capita. For Darlington, this is equal to the national average but less than the average for the North East. Emissions for the whole of Darlington, in 2019 were 488,500 tonnes. We continue to work with businesses and are developing the information and advice available to residents. We are working with schools to develop activities and a young people’s page will be added to the Sustainable Darlington page on the Council’s website. This will enable schools to share what they are doing to encourage others and involve pupils in developing age-appropriate messaging.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

1.7 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Sustainable



Milestones for the Council’s climate change action plan have been developed and will provide the basis for our reporting.

The graph shows our progress against our target trajectory. We usually report our electricity emissions using both location-based and market-based reporting as is considered good practice. The target on this graph shows a location-based method, which reflects the average emissions intensity of the electricity grid. A market-based method reflects emissions from electricity tariffs that companies have purposefully chosen. In our case we have chosen a zero-carbon tariff.

Work is continuing to improve the efficiency of our corporate buildings. We have tripled the capacity of the solar panels on the Town Hall roof and improved heating controls in the Town Hall mean that the heating system is more controllable than previously. As we move to blended working, business travel is still reduced as we have become used to online meetings.

Our tree planting commitment is well on the way to being achieved, with more than 15,000 trees planted. A housing and climate change strategy is being developed and we are working with the Tees Valley Combined Authority on both an electric vehicle charging strategy and a bus service improvement plan.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

1.8 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Well planned

The Local Plan was adopted in February; however, the River Tees catchment area was designated as a Nutrient Neutral area in March. This will have a significant impact on future planning applications for development, particularly housing developments. This may have an impact on economic growth. Officers are working with various organisations such as Natural England, Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water to identify solutions.

Officers will pursue the development of new housing and new economic strategies which will then further support and promote economic growth targets and priorities, as well as complement existing strategies including partnership plans at Tees Valley Combined Authority level, to ensure the Council continues to have a comprehensive, robust and deliverable action plan for continued economic growth.

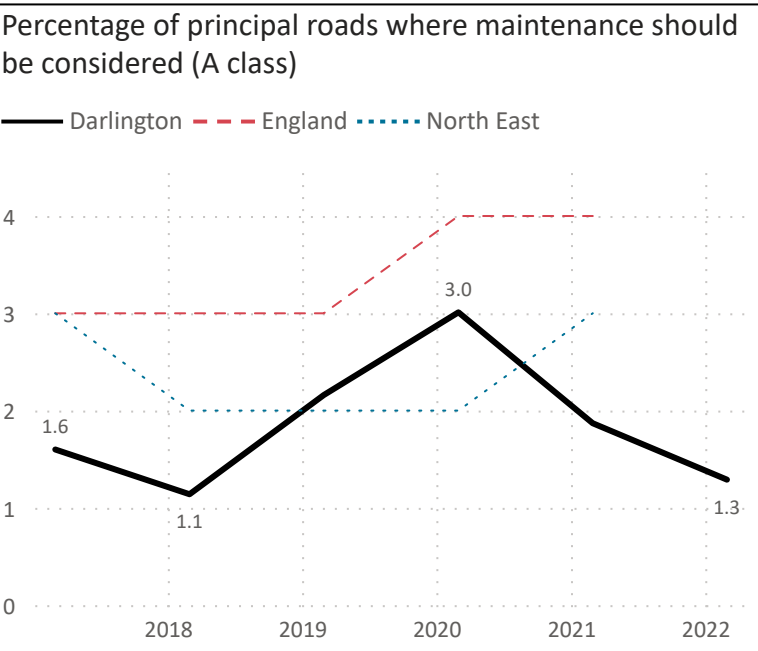
Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

1.9 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - On the move

The Council continues to work in partnership with TVCA and the other Tees Valley local authorities to deliver the joint Strategic Transport Plan. This work is crucial in supporting the council plan's principal ambition of economic growth and work has continued on Darlington Station improvements, bus improvement corridors and the establishment of the Bus Enhanced Partnership, development of Demand Responsive Transport, travel behaviour programmes, upgraded Urban Traffic Management and Control System, Wheels to Work, Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan investment and electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

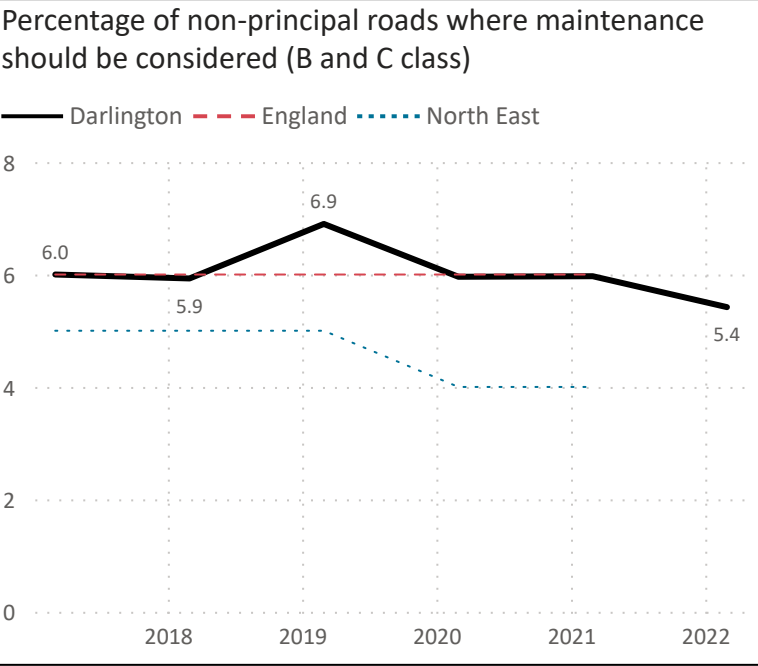
We participate in the National Highways Transportation Survey each year, and the results of this inform our investment decision in our transport infrastructure.

Anthony Hewitt: Asst Director Transport & Capital Proj



During Quarter 4, our programme of A-road resurfacing schemes was completed, with the final scheme being the A68 duals at junction 58. Our continued investment in road maintenance has seen an overall improvement in the A-road network, with the percentage of the A-road network which needs to be considered for maintenance falling to 1.3%, significantly below the national and North East averages.

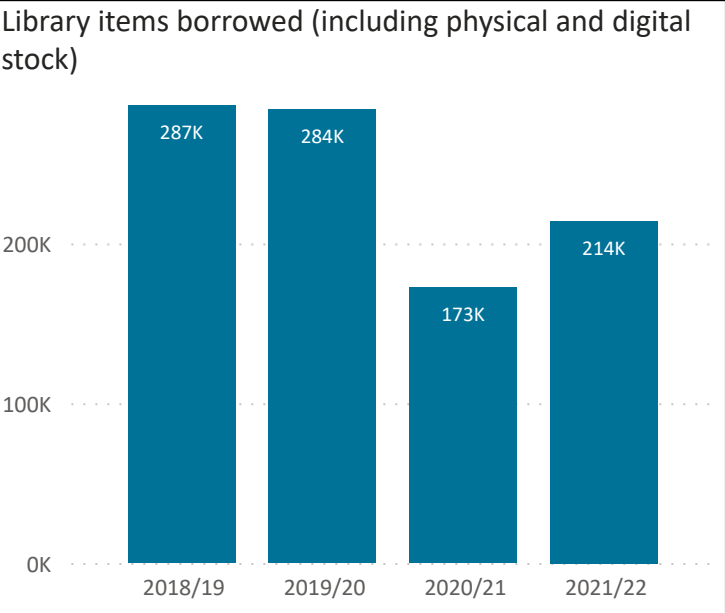
Anthony Hewitt: Asst Director Transport & Capital Proj



Our continued investment into maintenance of B- and C- class roads has resulted in an improvement in the quality of the highway network. The percentage of non-principal roads (B + C) where maintenance should be considered is now at 5.4%, which as an improvement over 2021 and better than the national average.

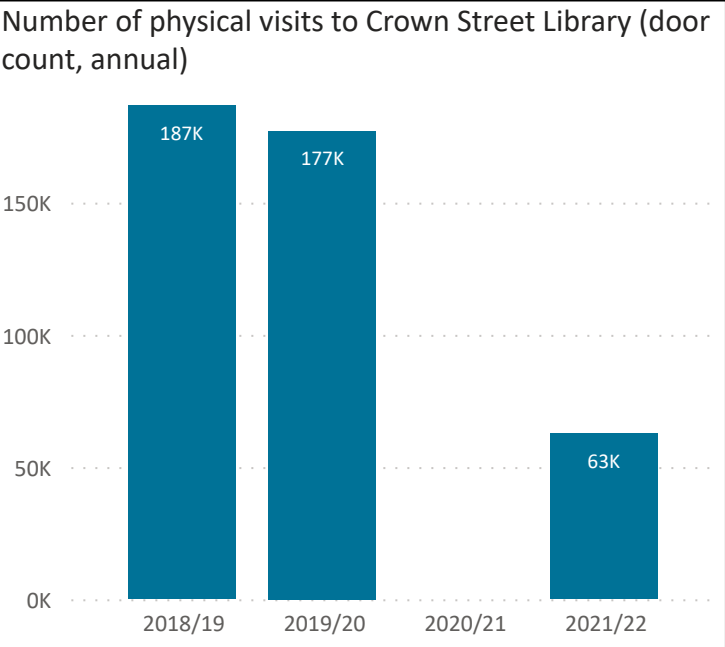
Anthony Hewitt: Asst Director Transport & Capital Proj

1.10 Whilst - Valuing our heritage and culture



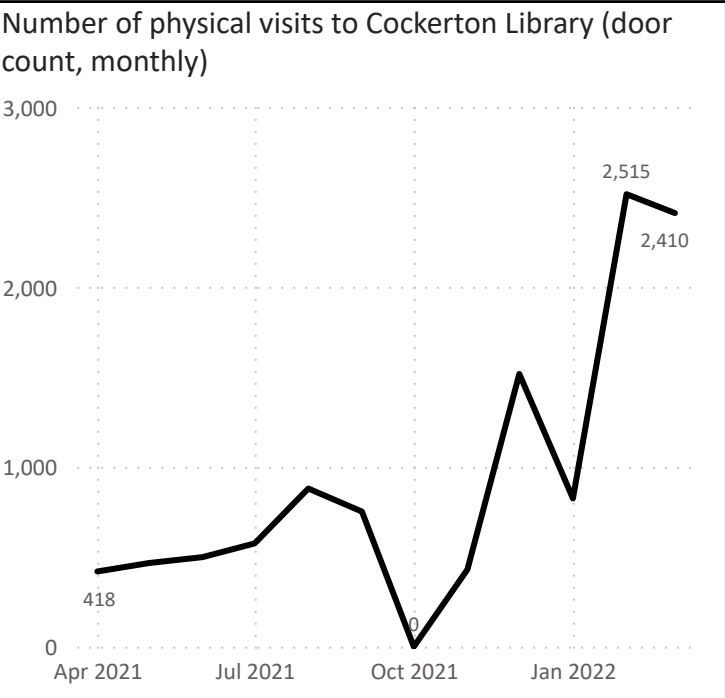
Major refurbishment works are underway at Darlington Library and services are operating on a much smaller scale, which is reflected. However, all stock is available to select from our website, app, over the telephone or in person at the central or branch library. Digital stock is available to members 24 hours a day. We offer a free Home Delivery Service to those aged 60 and over and we offer schools boxes of specially selected stock for delivery and loan. We create and promote different initiatives to encourage borrowing across different ages and demographics. Once the refurbishment works are complete, we will be promoting the new modernised services and hope to see similar success to that at Cockerton Library following the investment.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services



Major refurbishment works are underway at Darlington Library and services are operating on a much smaller scale. However, the full catalogue of stock is available via the free Select and Collect service. The Centre for Local Studies remains open, offering research and study space. Limited browsing is available alongside a modest offering of public use PC's. Children's activities are taking place, but the accessibility is via a temporary platform lift and this, coupled with the compromised environment, is likely to affect footfall. We still offer a free home delivery service to those aged 60 and over and have recently begun a reading group for teens and young people. Once the refurbishment works are complete, we will be promoting the new modernised services and hope to see similar success to that at Cockerton Library following the investment.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services



Cockerton Library is thriving, following modest refurbishment in November with a new, dedicated staff. The refurbished space includes a central area with feature lighting for children's stock and activity. The team are actively engaging with the community to encourage use from local schools, groups and residents.

Schools are making regular visits, and a weekly Story and Craft, and a Lego Club is underway. Next, we will implement after school activity for primary children to help to close the gap created by at home learning during the pandemic, and the subsequent decrease in scientific and digital learning. In addition, we aim to establish a group for older people to socialize and enjoy activity.

Book stock is being mindfully displayed in all areas to encourage borrowing and staff are promoting services across the board.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

2. MAXIMISE THE POTENTIAL OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE BY

2.1 Working with partners to maximise educational achievement

The Ofsted profile of Darlington schools continued to improve in this period. 82% of pupils now attend a Good or Outstanding school. The percentage of Good or Outstanding schools in Darlington now stands at 83% for primary and 75% for secondary.

Four Darlington secondary schools were included in the Department for Education’s One Vision schools initiative. These schools were partnered with high-performing institutions and given bespoke support to raise standards. Three of these schools have been inspected since being part of the One Vision initiative and all have moved from a Requires Improvement to a Good judgement.

Tony Murphy: Asst Director Education & Inclusion

2.2 Working to remove barriers to young people reaching their potential

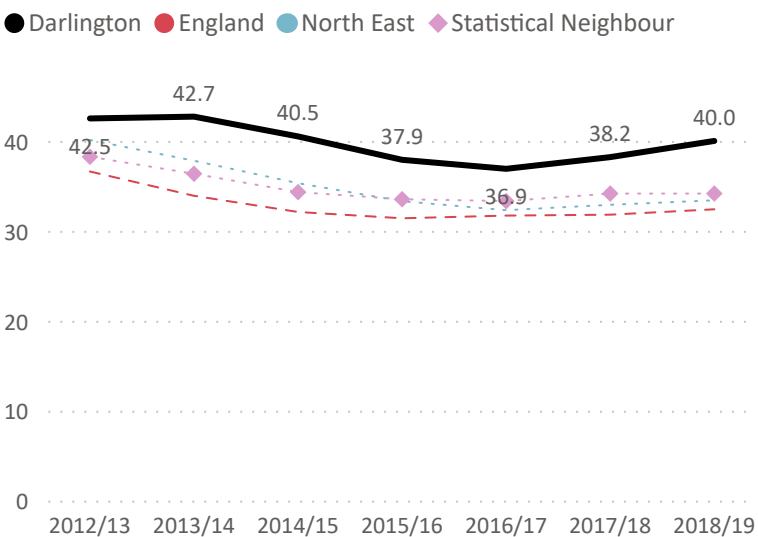
Child development: percentage of children achieving a good level of development at 2-2½ years

School year	Darlington	England	North East
2017/18	80.9	83.3	85.6
2018/19	91.8	84.1	87.6
2019/20	93.9	83.3	87.4
2020/21	93.9	82.9	87.2

The percentage of children achieving a good level of development at 2-2½ years, defined as the proportion of children who received a review who were at or above the expected level in all five domains, remains statistically better than the England and the North East averages, at 93.9% in 2020/21. The national average for this measure is 82.9%.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

Percentage inequality gap in achievement across all the Early Learning Goals



The percentage of children in Darlington schools achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception has been stable for the last 3 years reported (2017-2019), at around 72%. This is in line with national, regional and statistical neighbour comparators, which are around 71%. The percentage for children who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and achieving a good level of development has been the same or higher than national, regional and statistical neighbour comparators since 2014/15. In the latest available data (2018/19), the difference in percentage points between FSM and non-FSM children achieving a good level of development in Darlington (13) was a narrower gap than regional (18), national (17) and statistical neighbour (21.7) comparators.

Tony Murphy: Asst Director Education & Inclusion

2. MAXIMISE THE POTENTIAL OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE BY

2.2 Working to remove barriers to young people reaching their potential

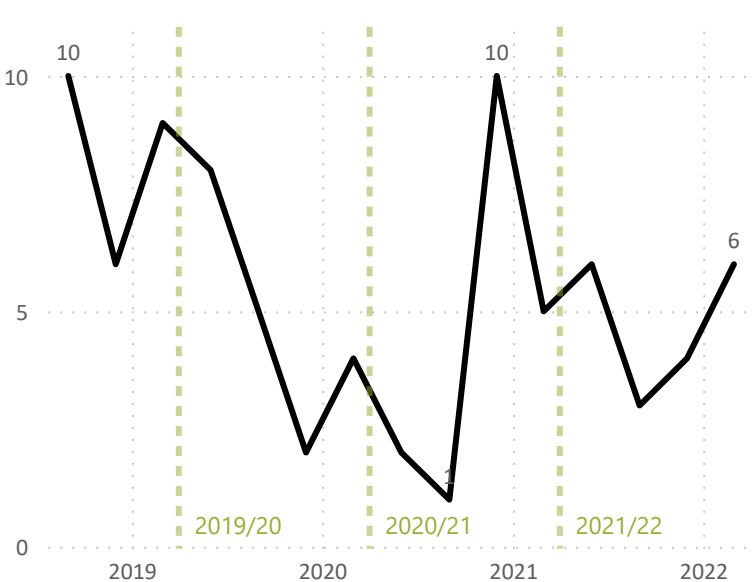
School Readiness: all children achieving a good level of development at the end of reception as a percentage of all eligible children (Early Years Foundation Stage profile)

School year	Darlington	England	North East	Statistical Neighbour
2012/13	49.4	51.7	45.2	44.1
2013/14	55.3	60.4	55.8	56.1
2014/15	66.3	66.3	63.1	63.4
2015/16	69.6	69.3	68.4	67.3
2016/17	72.2	70.7	70.7	68.7
2017/18	72.6	71.5	71.5	70.0
2018/19	71.7	71.8	71.8	70.4

The key stage attainment data collections were cancelled for 2019/20 and 2020/21 due to the pandemic, resulting in 2018/19 being the last academic year where data is available. The 2018/19 results show that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has increased significantly since 2013/14 and, at 71.7%, remains in line with the national average (71.8%), those of statistical neighbours (70.4%) and North East local authorities (71.8%).

Tony Murphy: Asst Director Education & Inclusion

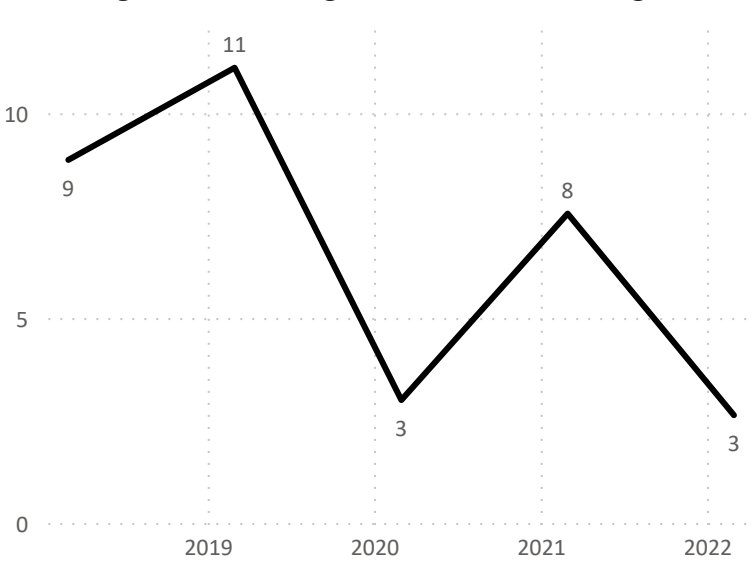
Number of First Time entrants to the Youth Justice System (quarterly)



The number of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System in Darlington remains comparable to comparator areas in both 2019/20 and 2020/21. This continued positive performance reflects the good work of Council services and partners in early identification of young people in need of support, as well as impressive engagement levels with the Council's Young Peoples Engagement and Justice Service (YPEAJS) team.

Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

Percentage of reoffending rate of clients receiving a PCD

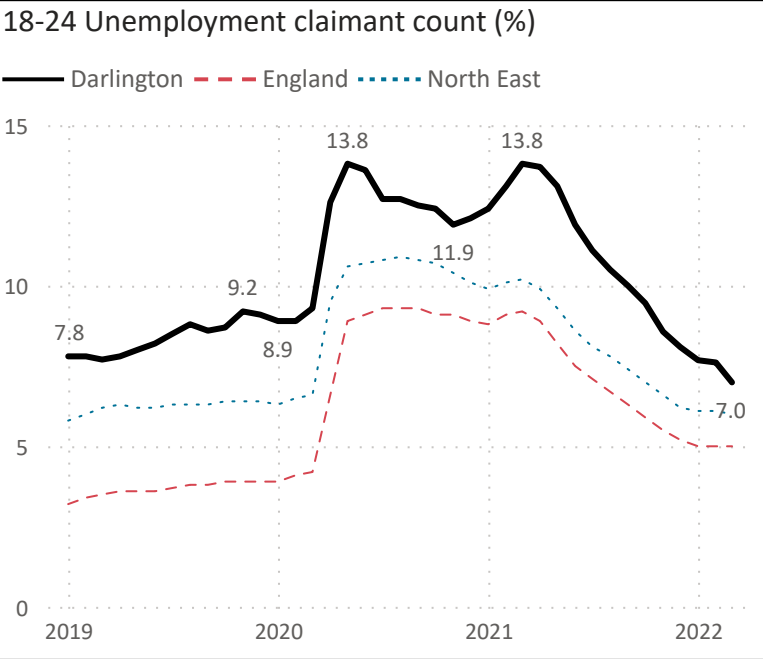


The Council's Young People's Engagement and Justice Service (YPEAJS) had 37 young people referred to the service for diversionary disposals i.e., Pre-Caution Disposals in 2021/22. Over the same period, the team has achieved a 97% success rate in terms of young people not reoffending following engagement with the service.

Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

2. MAXIMISE THE POTENTIAL OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE BY

2.3 Working at a Tees Valley level to match jobs with skills and training



The 18-24 year old claimant count in Darlington continues to fall, now standing at 7%. As the economy recovers from the impacts of pandemic, combined with an array of new jobs in the local economy, such as Amazon, Student Loans Company and the hospitality sector generally, young people now have improved opportunities to find employment.

Tony Murphy: Asst Director Education & Inclusion

3. WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES TO MAXIMISE THEIR POTENTIAL

3.1 Maximising the benefits of a growing economy for all communities

Percentage of workers earning the real living wage			
Year	Darlington	England	North East
2016	81.1	79.5	76.1
2017	77.7	80.5	77.1
2018	78.0	79.9	75.8
2019	77.3	82.4	78.1
2020	75.8	82.8	79.2
2021	80.3	85.2	81.3

The proportion of in-work Darlington residents earning the real living wage, calculated by the Resolution Foundation as being £9.50 an hour in 2021, increased to 80.3% but remained below the regional average of 81.3% and England average of 85.2%.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

3.2 Targeting services where most needed

The council continued to provide targeted COVID support where it was most needed. Business grants were distributed at pace, vaccine clinics were organised for the homeless community, and the COVID bus continued to visit communities making it more convenient for people to get vaccinated.

The ‘Let’s do digital’ initiative (loan of iPads and distribution of refurbished PC’s, tablets, and phones) continues to develop with a steady flow of old devices being donated, refurbished, and distributed. Work is underway with some schools to help identify people in most need of the devices, and some care leaves have been provided with phones. August 2022 marks the first full year of the two-year initiative, at which point a mid-term appraisal of the project will be carried out.

The School Uniform shop continues to see a growth in demand as more people become aware of the service. During the winter there was a targeted campaign for winter coats, hats, scarves, gloves and wellies. 775 customers visited the school uniform shop between October 2021 and March 2022, with a total of 2,597 items being given out. In the same period, just over 3,000 items of uniform, coats and shoes were donated from the community of Darlington.

Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Comm

3.3 Working with partners

The Council has a long history of working well with partners to effectively address local priorities, which has continued during the course of the pandemic. Having recognised a need for affordable food in local communities, for example, Darlington Borough Council collaborated with Cummins and Darlington Building Society to bring the charity, ‘The Bread and Butter Thing’ to Darlington, which now operates from 7 community hubs located in areas identified as in greatest need across the borough. During 2020, it became apparent that some families were going to struggle to buy uniform for their children's return to school. DBC worked with businesses through Darlington Cares to open a Uniform Exchange Scheme. DBC has established a Public Sector Executives Group which brings together the public sector agencies in Darlington to address shared concerns.

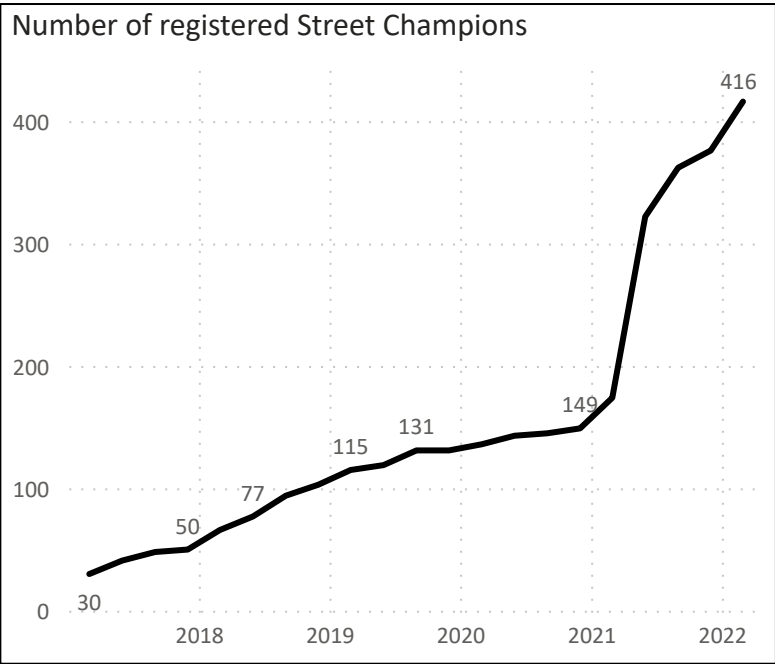
Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Dton Partnership

3. WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES TO MAXIMISE THEIR POTENTIAL

3.4 Working with communities

The Council is considering how it can generate activity to complement the national Levelling Up programme, ensuring that national investment generates the greatest prosperity for the people of Darlington. The focus would be on ensuring that residents of Darlington, no matter where in the borough they live, have the same access to opportunities to make the best of their talents and live a healthy and happy life, as in any other part of the UK. In-depth engagement with local communities would be a core principle of activity. The Council is leading a multi-agency programme in Northgate which is acting as a testbed for how focused activity can help residents access opportunities. The Towns Fund presents an opportunity to create an adult learning facility to improve skills for work. In addition, the Council is conferring with partner agencies to consider how all young people in Darlington can be supported to maximise their employment potential. Cabinet approved the development of a Levelling Up Darlington Plan at its meeting in February.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Dton Partnership

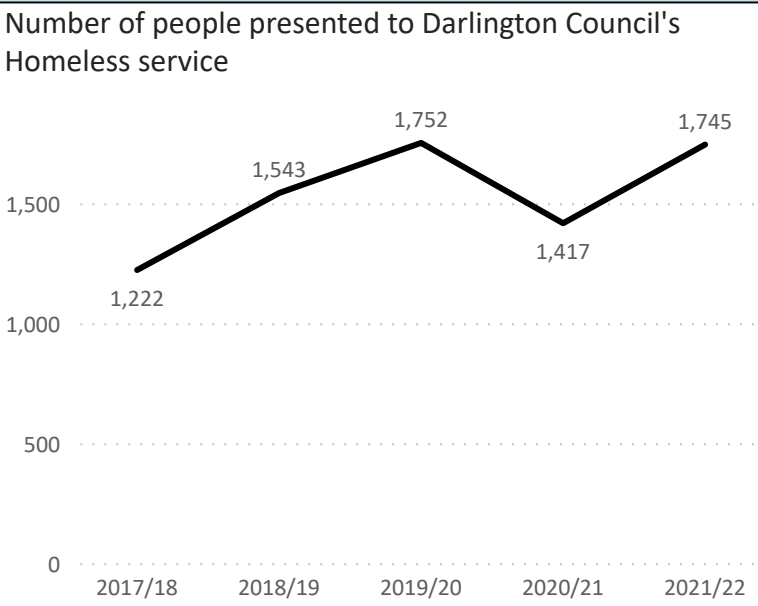


The number of active street champions continues to rise steadily; we have 416 registered in March 2022. The return of Litter Free Durham & Darlington’s Big Spring Clean 2022 campaign saw a spike in people registering and joining the community litter picks which took place from the 21st Feb to 4th April; during the campaign over 690 bags of rubbish were collected. The voluntary work carried out by local Street Champions is critical in helping to maintain a clean borough and so support the work of Street Scene. This helps to achieve the Council's primary ambition of supporting economic growth by ensuring Darlington is an attractive place to live, work and play.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

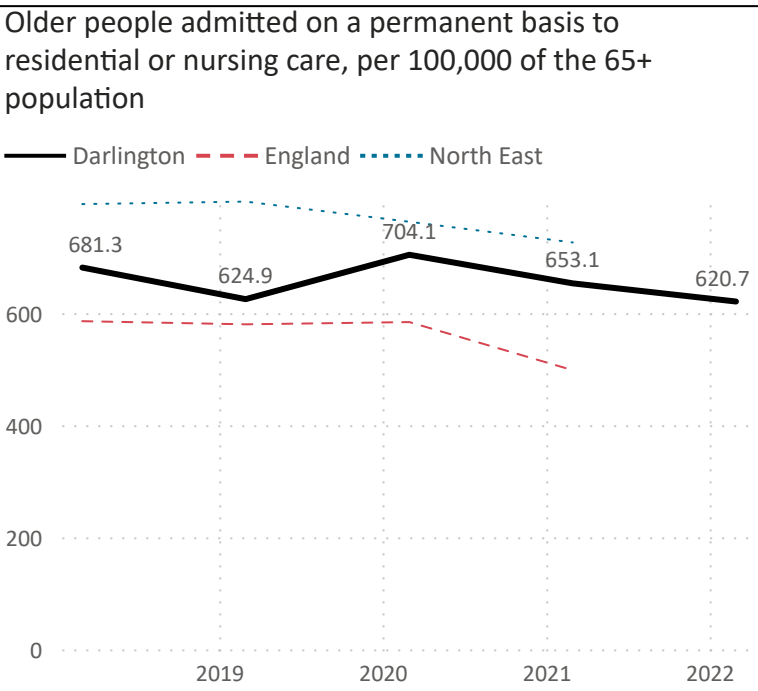
4. SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE IN THE BOROUGH

4.1 Providing care and support when needed



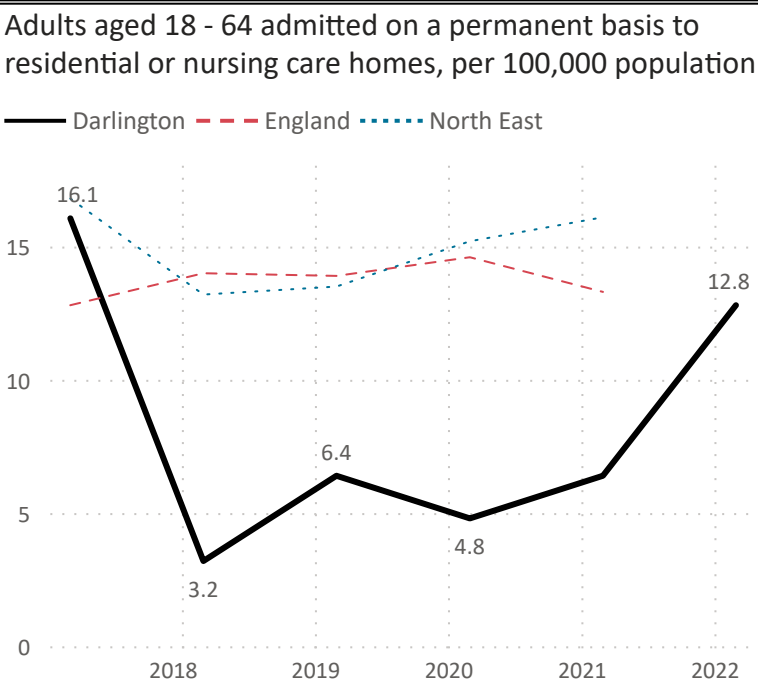
The number of people presenting to the Council's Homelessness services remains high as a result of the ongoing pressures due to the Covid pandemic. Presentations in 2021/22 have increased by 23% compared to the previous year. To cope with the additional demand, we have increased the number of temporary accommodation units by 36%, from 11 to 15, as well as purchasing and refurbishing 4 empty properties to provide 8 new units of accommodation. Officers have also successfully bid for additional funding through the government's Rough Sleeper Initiative to recruit 4 additional staff to deliver a range of support and advice services to homeless people.

Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director (Housing and Reven...



The aim within this indicator is to see a lower number of people entering long term/permanent residential care as we are actively working toward people remaining in their own homes with support for longer. DBC are consistently performing high in the region, ranking 5th out of the 12 Local Authorities for 2020/21 in achieving this goal. Since April 2021, the number of older people admitted to residential or nursing care was 134 (620.7 per 100,000 population). The number of permanent admissions during the same period last year was 141 (653.1 per 100,000 population), and significantly below the pre-pandemic comparable figure from 2019-20 of 152 (704.1 per 100,000 population). Out of the 134 older people placed into permanent residential or nursing care, 109 came from short breaks stays, this is 81.3% of the total number. The service is working with partners (hospital, community teams), families and people to actively enable individuals to return to homes with appropriate support, working alongside care homes to promote independence and reablement during a short break.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

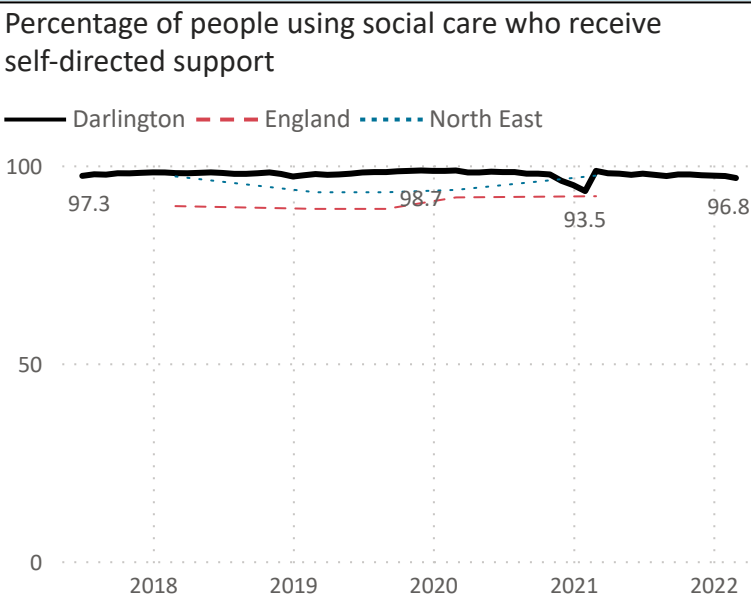


Since April 2021, 8 working aged individuals (12.8 per 100,000 population) were admitted permanently into residential or nursing care homes. People who have entered permanent residential care were mainly people nearing 65 and with significant care needs including dementia. This is a small but significant increase for adult social care due to longevity of the permanent care can have an impact on resources. Therefore, a robust assurance process was undertaken by Team Managers and the Council's Validation Panel to ensure that clients only enter permanent care when necessary, with clients helped to live independently with support wherever this is possible.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

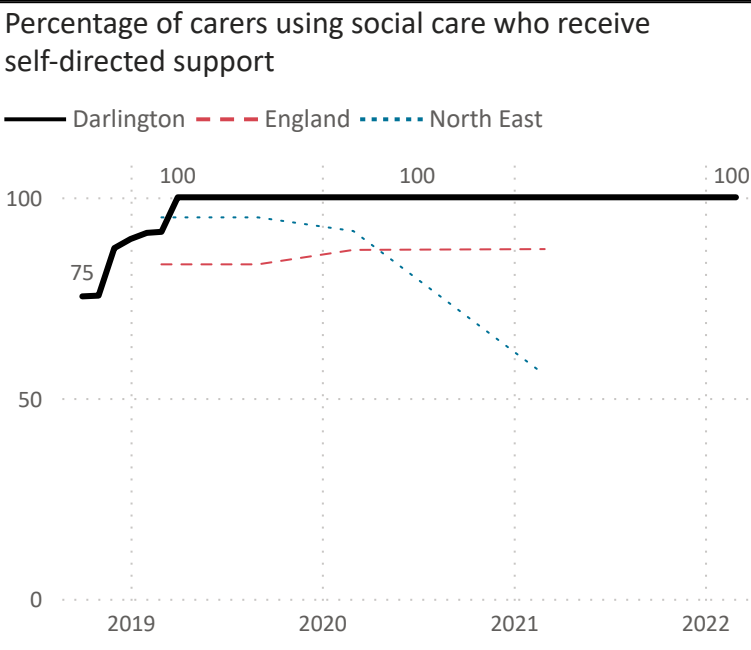
4. SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE IN THE BOROUGH

4.1 Providing care and support when needed



As of the end of March 2022, 96.8% of 759 clients using social care were receiving self-directed support. Darlington typically exceeds both the national and regional averages for this measure, reflecting the strong ethos of the Council’s Adult Social Care team of taking a strengths-based approach to support residents in need. We maximise service users’ choice and control over the services they receive, to ensure these best suit peoples’ particular needs and preferences. The reduction in the number of people using self-directed support this year, from 792 to 759, is largely due to a change in care needs.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care



As of the end of March 2022, 100% of 94 carers using social care received self-directed support. This data, which shows Darlington exceeds both the national and regional average for this metric, reflects how all carers, who are in receipt of a commissioned service, now have a personal budget. This enables them to maximise their independence and choice, to support their wellbeing and ensure they are able to access the support that best suits their needs.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

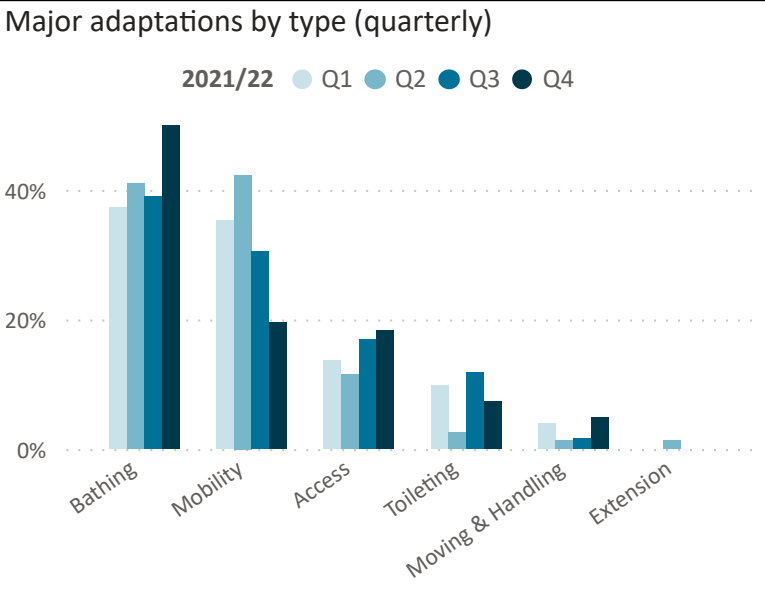
4.2 Working with people to build on their strengths to maximise their potential

The Council's Adult Social Care team provides care and support to the most vulnerable adults in the community. This includes adults with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, sensory impairments, and older people with long term conditions. The majority of what we do is governed by the Care Act 2014 and associated regulations and guidance. We actively seek to promote the wellbeing of the people that we work with and take a personalised approach to providing support. We also work closely with the NHS and other partners. As a service we take a 'Strength Based' approach to practice and assessment. This means that we support people to become more resilient in meeting their care needs by developing their networks and personal strengths. We take this approach because it is the right thing to do and it is also consistent with our duty to 'prevent, delay or reduce' the need for formal support. Support plans focus on the abilities of the person, what resources and support they currently have and what they can access in their local community. The teams will encourage the use of aids and adaptations to ensure people remain as independent as possible for as long as possible.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

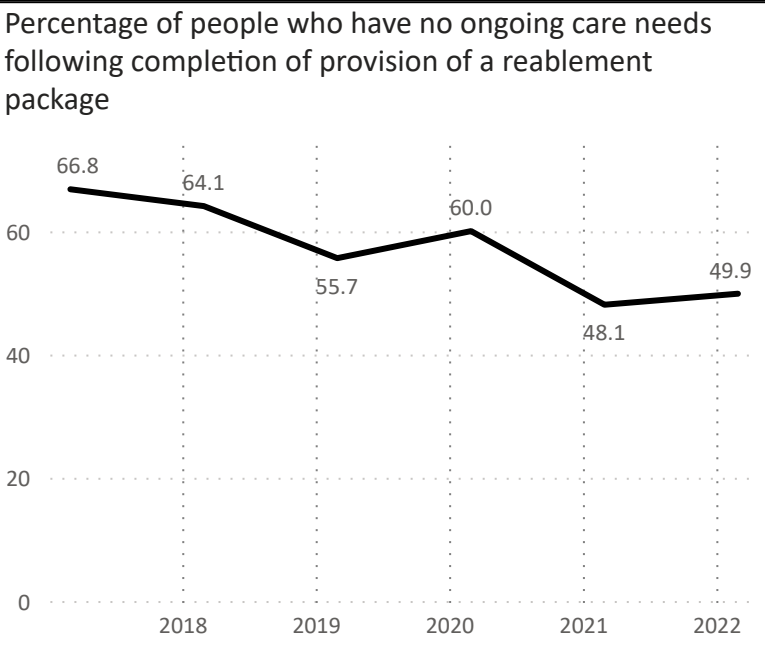
4. SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE IN THE BOROUGH

4.2 Working with people to build on their strengths to maximise their potential



This graph indicates the types of major adaptations provided via our disabled grant funding. There was a significant increase in the percentage of individuals receiving a bathing adaptation during Quarter 4, 2021/22. This increase was due to the lifting of Covid restrictions, improving the availability of contractors and materials which had previously caused a backlog of cases. The percentage of mobility adaptations has fallen noticeably since last reported. This is because many individuals began to see a decline in their mobility during the first lockdown, requiring more need for stairlifts/through floor lifts at that time. There is a continued pressure of supplies and escalating costs for adaptations.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care



Of the 415 individuals who completed a reablement package since April 2021, 207 had no ongoing care needs. This current performance of 49.9% is an improvement from the same period in 2020/21 (48.1%). As we emerge from the pandemic, we aim to support more people to regain their independence and confidence to remain at home for longer periods after a period of reablement. We will encourage the use of technology in their homes and continue to explore and deliver adaptations in people's homes.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

4.3 Working with partners

In 2019, the Council brought together a 'Third Sector Steering group' to advise on how a limited amount of discretionary funding should be used at local community level to improve the wellbeing of young people, people with disabilities and the elderly. The focus of the group was to provide small amounts of money to community organisations, to enable them to make their services more available and/or pilot new approaches to addressing priority issues, including nine social isolation projects, support for the School Uniform Exchange to help low-income families and a discretionary fund for schools to improve attendance. The steering group was chaired by Inclusion North, a regional organisation focused on developing local projects which increase the opportunities for people to participate. Following allocation of grants, the Council is now discussing with the group how it could become a more formal engagement body between the public and third sector in Darlington, enabling greater collaboration and advising the Council and its partners on third sector concerns.

Christine Shields: Asst Director-Commission Perform Trans

5. SUPPORTED BY

5.1 A dedicated workforce who are proud to serve the borough and an accessible, effective and engaged council

Darlington Borough Council's workforce is committed to delivering success for Darlington; we have a proud and dedicated workforce, who want the borough to flourish and grow, with over 64% of the workforce living in Darlington. We employ over 2,000 people across a vast range of services and welcome approximately 200 new starters each year. It is important that we ensure that all staff are motivated, have the right skills and are flexible and customer focused. The workforce strategy and plan, 'Working Together to Deliver Success' was rolled out from the autumn and outlines how the Council will develop, support and motivate our staff to meet our business and community priorities. Priorities within the plan that have been delivered include commencement of the new agile working processes, supporting staff's wellbeing and mental health. Monitoring of the success of the strategy is continuing, with the first annual update due in the summer. The results of the 2021 employee survey were very positive with most areas where comparison was possible, improving on the previous survey result.

[Brett Nielsen: Assistant Director - Resources](#)

A1. Continue to implement initiatives that tackle social isolation

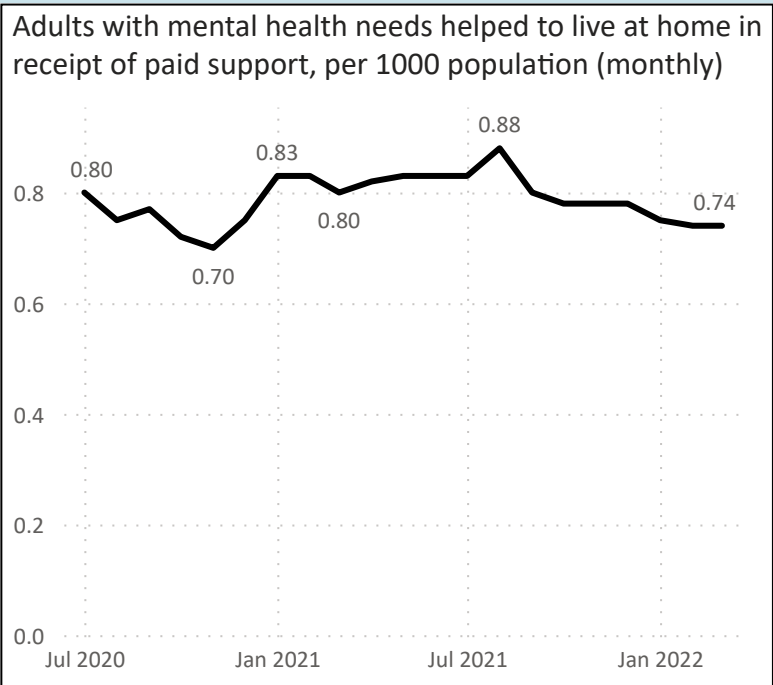
Since 2019, a partnership group, coordinated by Inclusion North, has been commissioning and monitoring a number of pilot projects being delivered across the borough by the local voluntary and community sector (VCS). Outcomes from these projects have been overwhelmingly very positive and, pre-pandemic, work was underway with partners to secure future funding to enable these initiatives to continue and to develop new projects aimed at alleviating social isolation.

Following a pause, due to the pandemic, this work with Inclusion North regarding vulnerable groups has now resumed, and the group's scope and priorities are being reviewed. They will be reset in light of the new local health & well-being priorities agreed by the Darlington Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) and the need to:

- re-target the work to address the changed local landscape
- sense check with local communities what is needed in the post-pandemic environment.

Christine Shields: Asst Director-Commission Perform Trans

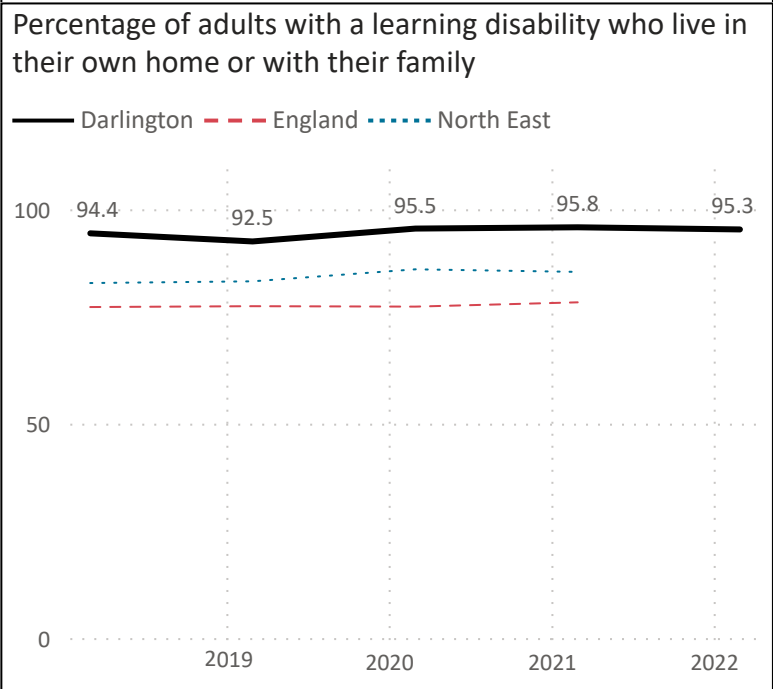
A2. Work with individuals to maximise independence and reduce demand on services



This indicator is primarily focused on supporting adults with mental health needs to remain independent and living in their own home.

The Mental Health team, within Adult Social Care, work closely with the local Trusts and the Primary care Network/GPs to prevent escalation or reduce the need for intervention. They support people, minimise escalation and maintain high levels of wellbeing and support in order to delay or prevent admission into hospital. We also have several support workers who support rehabilitation, reablement and recovery. This successful working relationship and support system is illustrated in the low number of people (46) with mental health needs requiring long term paid support.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care



The 2021/22 figure is significantly above national and regional averages. Darlington has one of the highest figures in the North East for individuals living in their own home.

This measure relates to working age individuals with a primary need of learning disability, which equates to 298 of Darlington residents. Of these, 284 (95.3%) were living either in their own home or with family at the end of 2021/22, down from 95.8% the year before. This is due to several individuals needing to go into short break stays whilst their provision of care was being amended.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

A3. Continue to deliver modern transformed Adult Social Care that results in positive outcomes

Adult Social Care in Darlington continues to deliver services which are focused on preventing and reducing need, improving people's independence and providing care and support where needed.

Teams have a range of responsibilities, including to:

- o Provide information and advice including signposting to other resources and / or agencies
- o Deliver Occupational Therapy including screening, advice, signposting and provision of low-level equipment
- o Maximise independence by undertaking a strengths-based assessment, involving the person/carer/advocate to identify the individual's strengths and capabilities and their wider support networks
- o Carry out assessments in accordance with the Care Act (2014) eligibility criteria
- o Support individuals to undertake a self-assessment if they choose to do so
- o Provide short-term support and provide urgent social care support in a crisis
- o Formulate support plans with individuals to meet their needs and work towards clearly defined outcomes
- o Undertake carers assessments/support planning
- o Undertake Mental Capacity assessments
- o Ensure the safeguarding of adults at risk of abuse and in need of care and protection
- o Maintain significant and strong relationships with the voluntary sector, the Foundation Trust and Community Nursing to support and promote admission avoidance, discharges from hospital and home care where required
- o Build on the use of assistive technology to promote and support people's independence within their own home

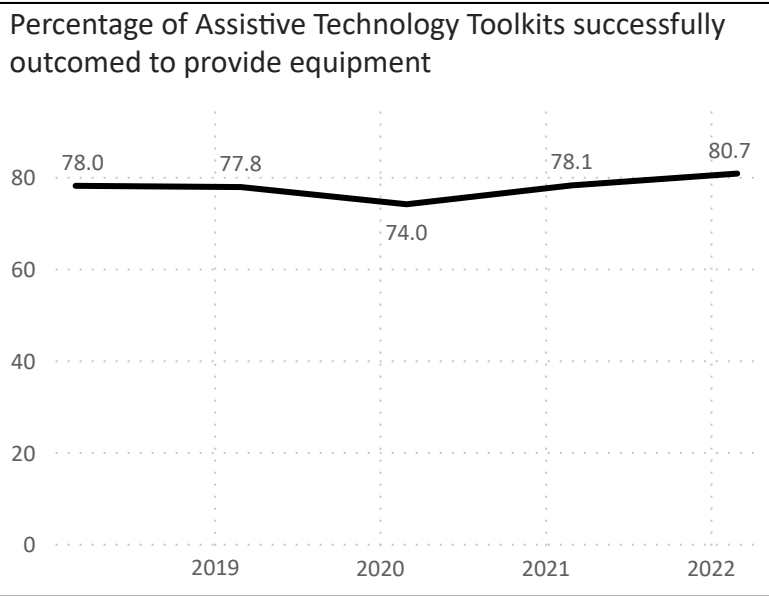
Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

A4. Promote and increase the use of assistive technology

Adult services continue to actively promote the use of assistive technology within Darlington. We are currently undertaking a review of the sensory services and Vane House whilst we make improvements to the infrastructure and install Wi-Fi. We are also in the process of updating computers and software that is now available as well as other suitable equipment that would be helpful for individuals with a visual or dual sensory impairment. Rehabilitation assessments are still taking place, but they are either offered by telephone or in-person in the community. We are looking to be able to offer mobility training in the future, but this is currently outsourced as is the long cane training. We have also arranged for dual sensory loss training to be rolled out to all social work teams, which will enable a greater level of specialist knowledge to be available to individuals with a dual sensory impairment.

Adult Social Care was also successful in receiving some grant funding to distribute to care homes and care services in Darlington. The purpose of the funding is to enable providers to purchase IT equipment/licenses to support interaction with people living with dementia in care home/extra care/day care settings and people with complex learning disabilities in care home/day care settings.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care



Since April 2021, 234 out of 290 (80.7%) Assistive Technology Toolkit Referrals assigned to Lifeline resulted in equipment being provided. This is above the equivalent figures for the past two years (78.1% in 2020/21 and 73.9% during 2019/20). It is a consistent increase and demonstrates people's confidence in the system, in the use of the assistive technology and mirrors the number of people wanting to remain independent within their own homes.

Lifeline continues to work closely with the Adults Social Care Team and promotes assistive technology, through attending regular team meetings as well as providing training during the induction of new ASC staff.

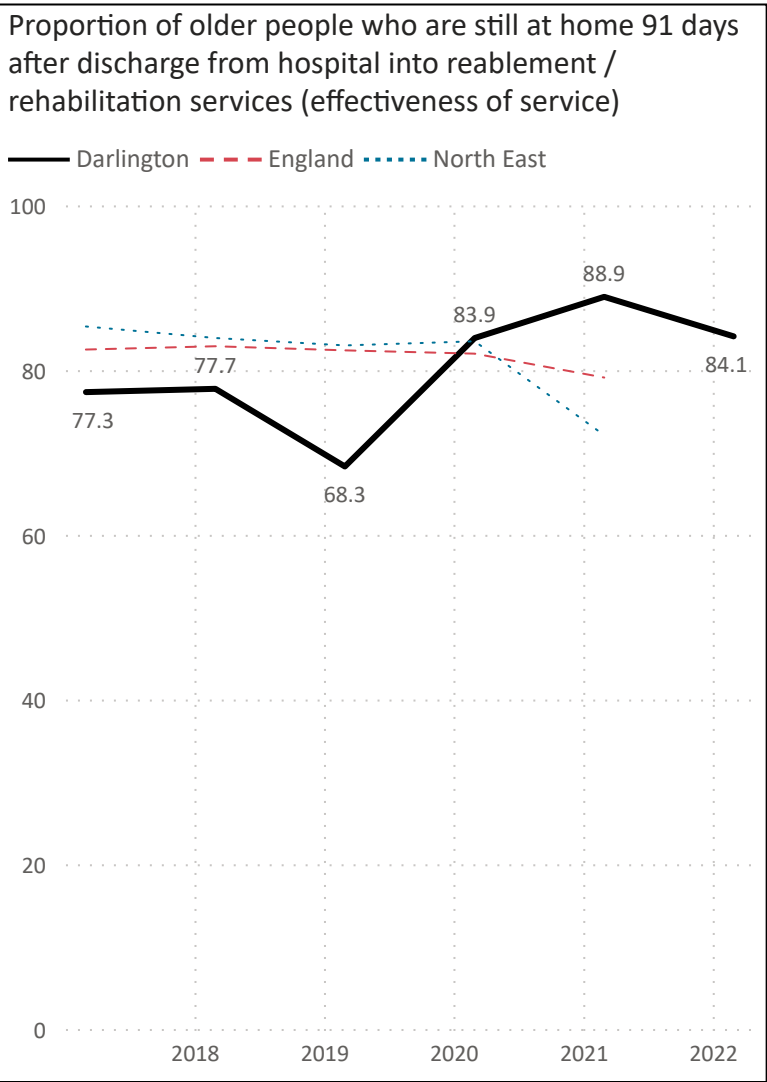
Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

A5. Maintain significant and strong relationships with the voluntary sector, foundation trust and community nursing to support and promote admission avoidance, discharges from hospital and homecare where required

Adult Social Care continues to benefit from strong established relationships across management and practitioners with both Voluntary Sector and Health colleagues. These relationships enable us to support Darlington residents in preventing admission and expediting discharge. Social Workers work alongside health colleagues in all the Teams and are co-located in terms of RIACT (Responsive Integrated Assessment Care Team). This joint approach to assessment, provision and support, enables us to identify the best solutions to people’s assessed needs and, along with community and voluntary sector provision, deliver effective outcomes in keeping people in their own homes and independent as long as possible. Adult Social Care staff understand the importance of connectedness and as we move to a more integrated approach we are well positioned to respond collectively to the needs of our residents.

Adult Social Care work closely with Commissioning colleagues within the People Group and the Clinical Commissioning Groups with care providers and care homes to direct, develop and support services to respond to people’s needs, as well as promoting independence living. There is a strong, open dialogue and good working relationships through provider forums, regular monitoring and shared training and learning.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care



Adult social care has undergone significant transformation within the last few years, with the aim of delivering a strength-based approach to support people to remain at and/or return to their own homes following periods of ill health or hospital stays.

This graph illustrates that since April 2021, the proportion of older people who are still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services was 84.1%. The teams have continued to work hard to maintain this consistently high rate and work closely with both the hospital and community services to achieve this. Our performance continues to be higher than both the regional and national average for this metric. In 2020/21, Darlington ranked 2nd out of the 12 councils in the North East.

It needs to be acknowledged that the pandemic has impacted on people’s health and therefore the slight decrease of 4.8% in this performance from last year's figure of 88.9% may be due to re-admissions for routine operations and interventions and/or infection rates. We will continue to monitor, to ensure the service is effective and people maintain their independence for as long as possible.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

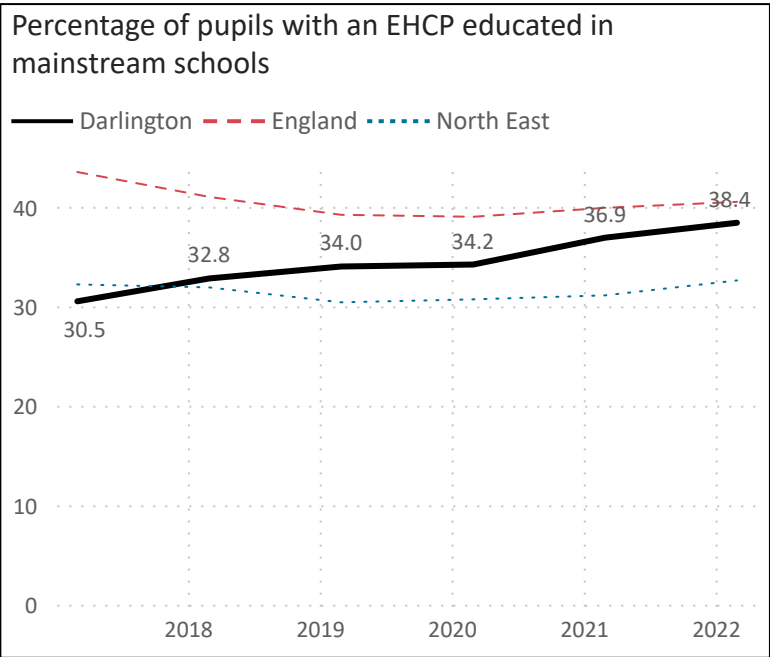
C1. Provide excellent services for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) - implement a new SEND strategy, increase the number of SEND places in schools and work to raise SEND funding levels from central government

Compliance with the statutory timeline for Education, Health and Care Plans assessment continues to be a strength in Darlington. The rate of EHC plans, excluding exceptions, issued within the 20-week statutory timeline in Darlington in 2021 was 92.1%, compared to a national average of 59.9% and a North East average of 71.8%.

The joint Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection was carried out over five days in January. It looked at how providers across Darlington – including council, NHS and schools – have implemented SEND reforms from 2014 to the present day. Inspectors spoke to children and young people with SEND as well as their parents and carers, visiting a range of settings. Inspectors have published a report on the services provided to children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in Darlington – highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.

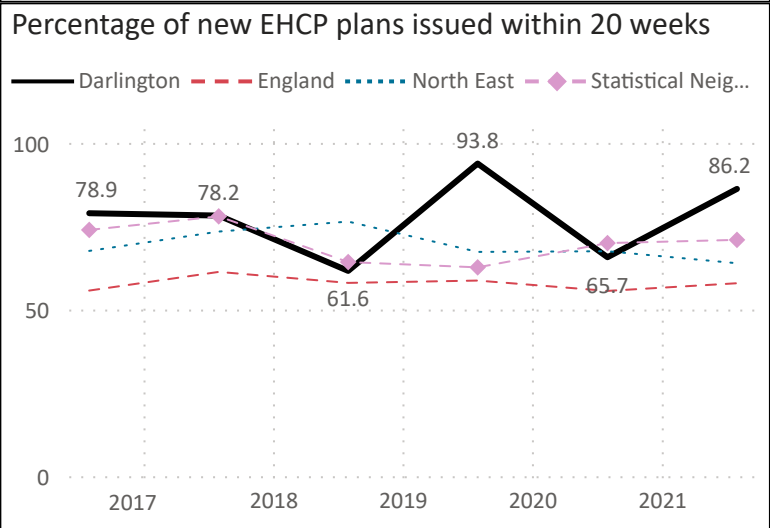
The Department for Education has now published High Needs Provision Capital Allocations (HNPCA) for financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24. This funding is to support local authorities deliver new places and improve existing provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities or who require alternative provision. Darlington’s allocation is £500,000 for 2021-22, £1,249,033 for 2022-23 and £846,140 for 2023-24. Following the outcome of the national SEND review and the outcome of the Local Area SEND inspection, the LA will begin a consultation on the use of this funding.

Tony Murphy: Asst Director Education & Inclusion



The Darlington local area SEND Strategy emphasises that children and young people with SEND should, where possible, be educated in their local community with the right support that they need. The data shows increasingly more children with SEND are attending Darlington mainstream schools. The proportion of Darlington pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) attending mainstream school settings in the borough has been steadily increasing since 2016/17 and are now significantly above average for neighbouring authorities but remains below the national average. A large proportion of pupils with an EHCP attend Beaumont Hill and Marchbank schools, which are the two special schools in Darlington and work continues to expand the number of SEND places available in the borough.

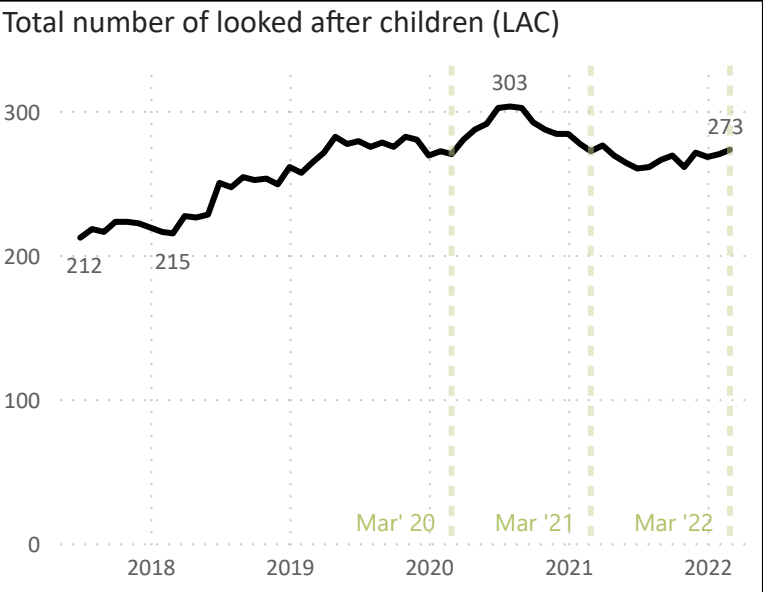
Tony Murphy: Asst Director Education & Inclusion



The percentage of new Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) issued by Darlington within twenty weeks (including exceptions) has consistently been above the national average since 2015. In 2021, the Darlington-published percentage for this timeliness measure, which excludes exceptions, was 86.2%, above the regional (63.9%), statistical neighbour (70.9%) and significantly above the national average of 57.9%.

Tony Murphy: Asst Director Education & Inclusion

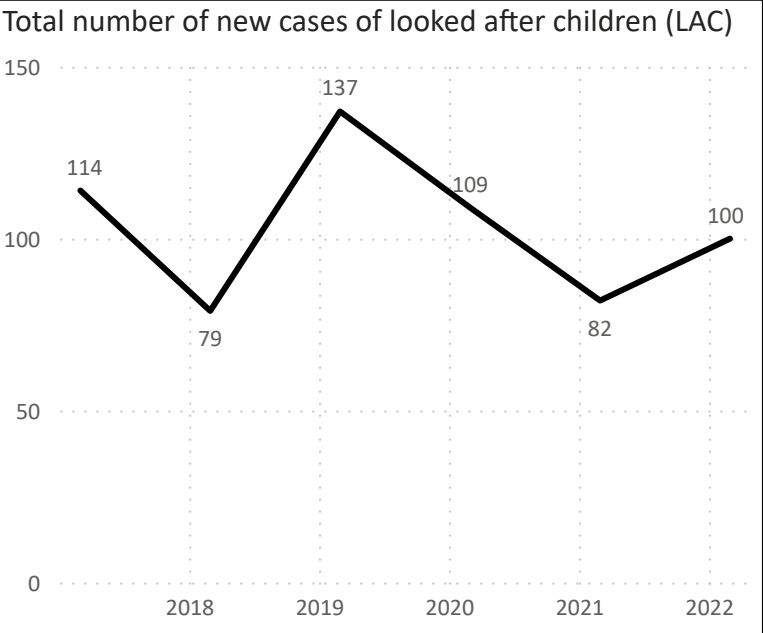
C2. Reduce the need for looked after children placements through effective implementation of the Darlington Strengthening Families programme



273 children were in care as of March 2022, 1% of which are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

The rate of coming into our care is similar to that at the end of March 2021 but has been consistently lower each month when compared to 2020/21.

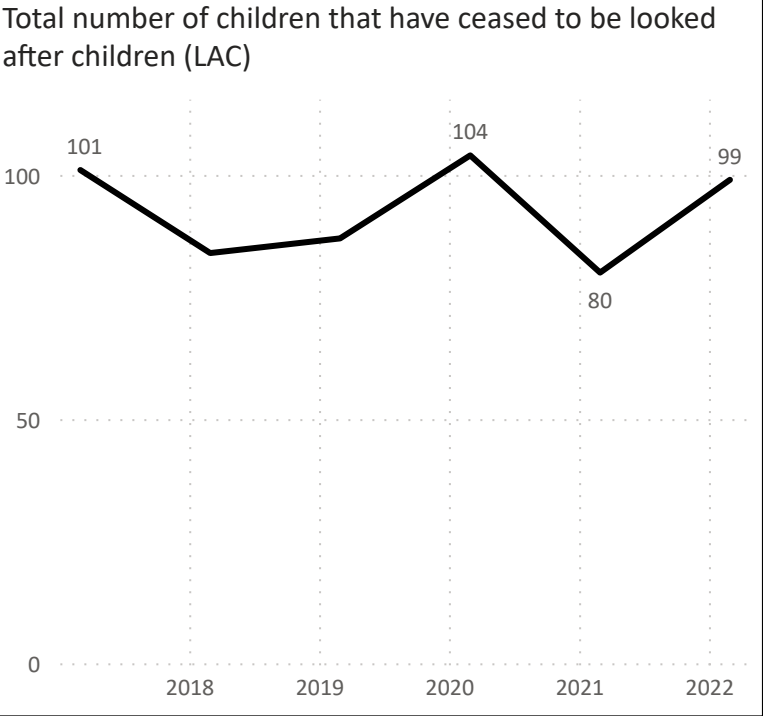
Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services



100 children from 70 families came into care in 2021/22. This is an increase when compared with the 82 children who came into care in 2020/21, but a decrease from 2019/20 (109 children) and 2018/19 (134 children). 2.0% of the young people coming into care during 2021/22 were accepted from the home office as UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child).

Over the last 9 months, the Strengthening Families, Protecting Children programme has continued to be embedded across Darlington Borough Council's Children's Services, utilising relational practice to ensure timely interventions, which support families to stay together and reduce the need for children to come into care.

Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services



99 children and young people ceased to be in care in 2021/22. This is an increase when compared with the 80 children who ceased in 2020/21, a small decrease from 2019/20 (102 children) and an increase on 2018/19 (86 children).

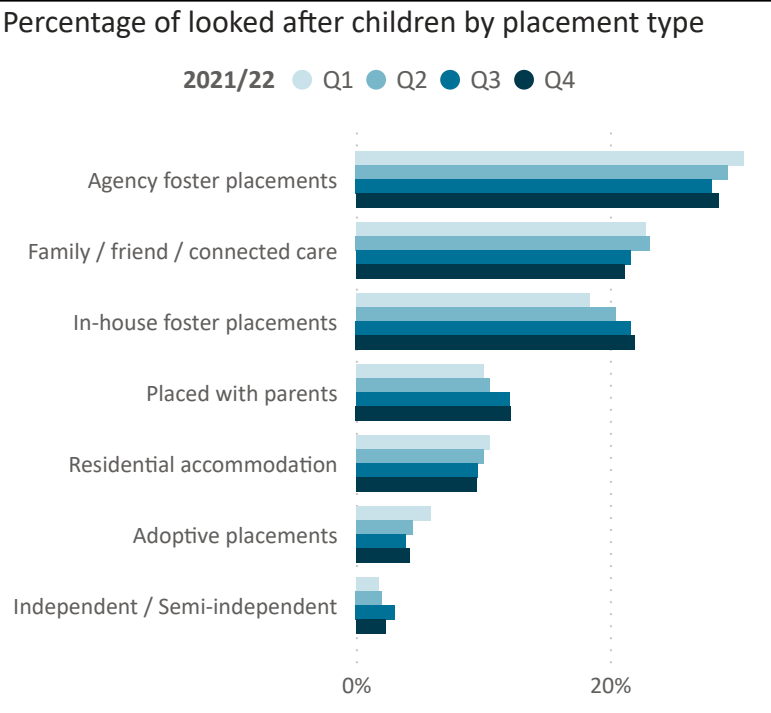
Of the children and young people who did cease to be in care:

- 34.3% had a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) / Child Arrangement Order (CAO) granted to a relative.
- 28.3% returned home to their parent.
- 19.2% due to turning 18 and becoming a care leaver.
- 15.2% were adopted.
- 3.0% for other reasons.

The proportion of children who either returned home to their parent or had an SGO/CAO granted, is similar to that in 2020/21.

Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

C2. Reduce the need for looked after children placements through effective implementation of the Darlington Strengthening Families programme



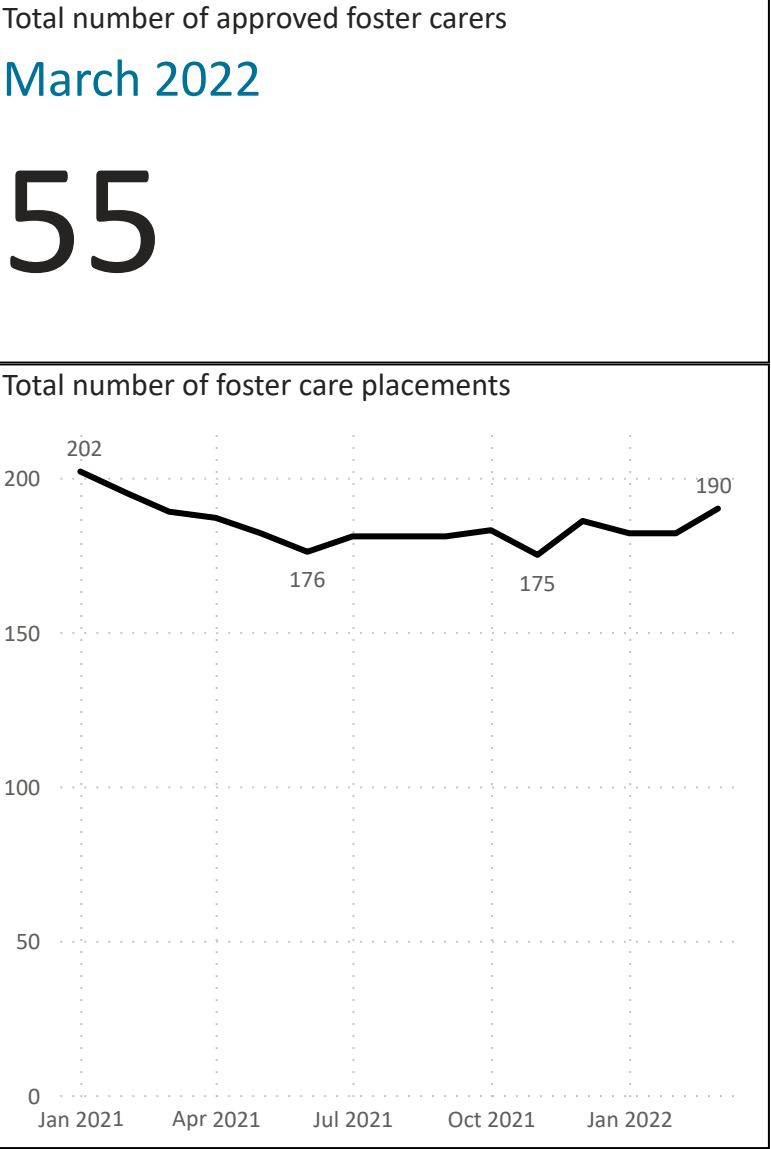
The majority of Darlington children in care at the end of March 2022 were in foster placements (190), 36 were placed with parents, 35 were living in supported residential accommodation and 12 were placed for adoption.

All placements have been confirmed as appropriate for the child, enabling them to have the best support either with family links or specialised care. The proportion of children placed for adoption or with in-house foster carers has been positively increasing.

Currently, 74% of our children in care aged under 16 (who have been looked after for at least 2.5 years) have been in their current placement continuously for at least 2 years. This is higher than the percentage compared with March 2021 (72%).

[Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services](#)

C3. Continue to increase the number of in-house foster carers to reduce the need for independent placements



There are currently 55 approved foster care families and we have recruited a further 9 foster care families during the year. We have 7 sets of temporary approved connected carers with children in place and 10 families are going through the foster carer assessment requested within court proceedings.

Nationally, there are difficulties in the recruitment of new carers and the impact of Covid-19 has meant fewer people being available, for health reasons. Work continues to improve on our website, social media, and recruitment campaigns to raise the foster caring profile in Darlington. Over the past 12 months, we have seen our foster carers working hard to maintain a great level of service, being creative and using networks, resulting in minimal disruption to children's placements during Covid.

[Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services](#)

At the end of March 2022, 190 children and young people were placed with a foster care family. 44% of the children were with an agency foster carer, 33% were with an in-house foster carer and 23% were with a friend, relative or connected carer. Nearly half (87) of all foster placements were long-term.

It is anticipated that the number of placements available will further increase as new families are approved to be registered foster carers.

[Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services](#)

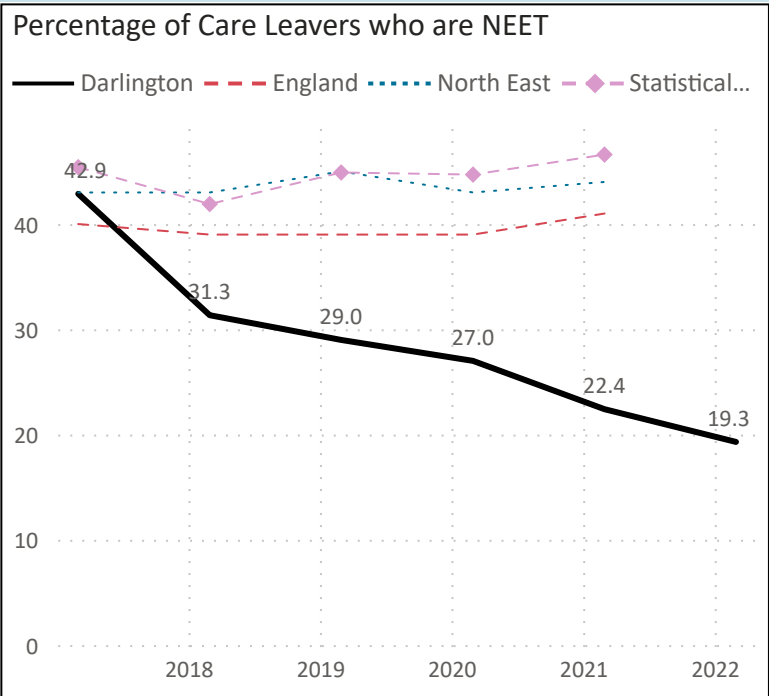
C4. Review in-house residential care and consider the council’s place in providing services

A comprehensive marketing and recruitment campaign for the fostering service has been designed and signed off via the Corporate Parenting Panel. This is a multi-faceted approach designed to promote the service with the general public, boost numbers of residents expressing an interest in becoming a foster carer and providing greater choice of placements and homes for children who need them.

The re-purposing of our existing children’s homes remains ongoing, with a plan to move one of our existing homes into a new property by the Autumn and re-purpose the existing property to provide earlier targeted support and so avoid escalating pressures and support needs. This service will support young people and work with the whole family in a relational way to address emerging needs and pressures and so reduce the risk of family breakdown.

Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

C5. Improve employment opportunities for looked after children and care leavers

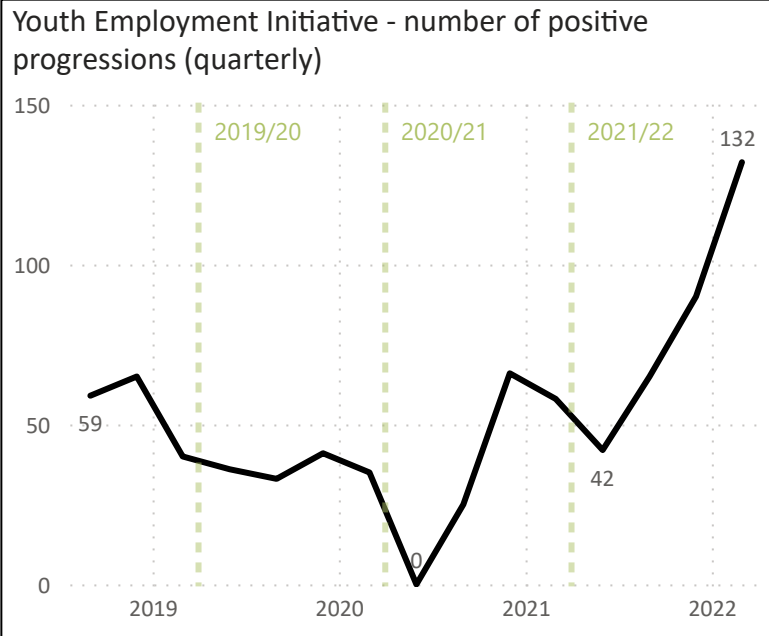


The proportion of Darlington care leavers Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) has positively remained low with 19.3% at the end of 2021/22, which is below the most recently available national and regional averages. This low number of NEET care leavers is particularly inspiring given the impact of Covid-19, which has generally led to increases in NEETs nationally, and reflects the considerable work undertaken by the Care Leavers service, including Job Centre Plus and businesses in Darlington to increase opportunities.

6 young people are engaged in further education and 34 young people are in employment. The team link with Learning and Skills officers to understand all school leaver destinations so further learning, training, and/or employment opportunities can be encouraged.

Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

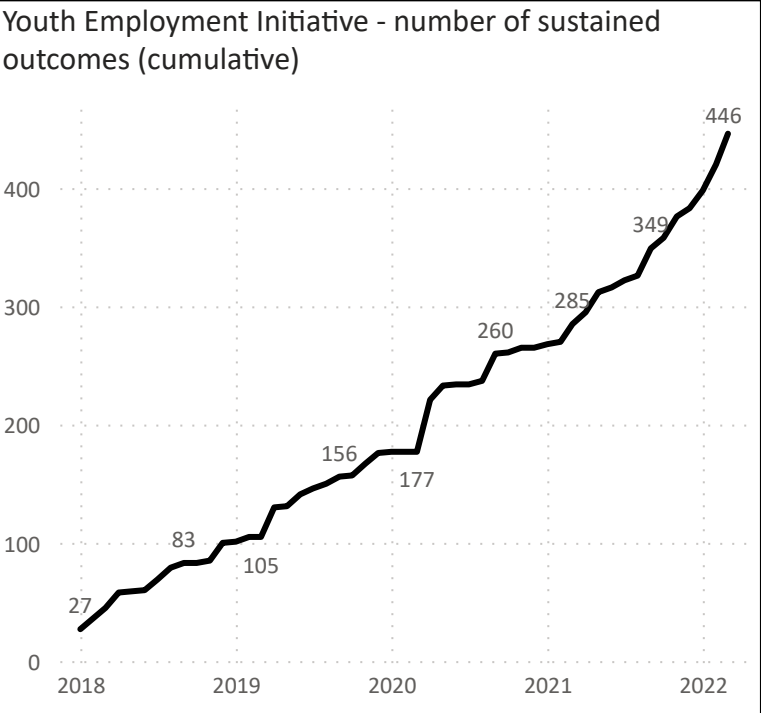
C6. Work with partners to reduce youth and long-term unemployment, by increasing the opportunity for retraining and apprenticeships leading to gainful employment



Referrals to the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) have continued to grow, month on month during 2021/22 with young people continuing to move into education, employment, and training. Having an embedded Job Centre Plus Youth Adviser within the service is working well, helping increase client numbers over the period with local employment opportunities also rising.

Tony Murphy: Asst Director Education & Inclusion

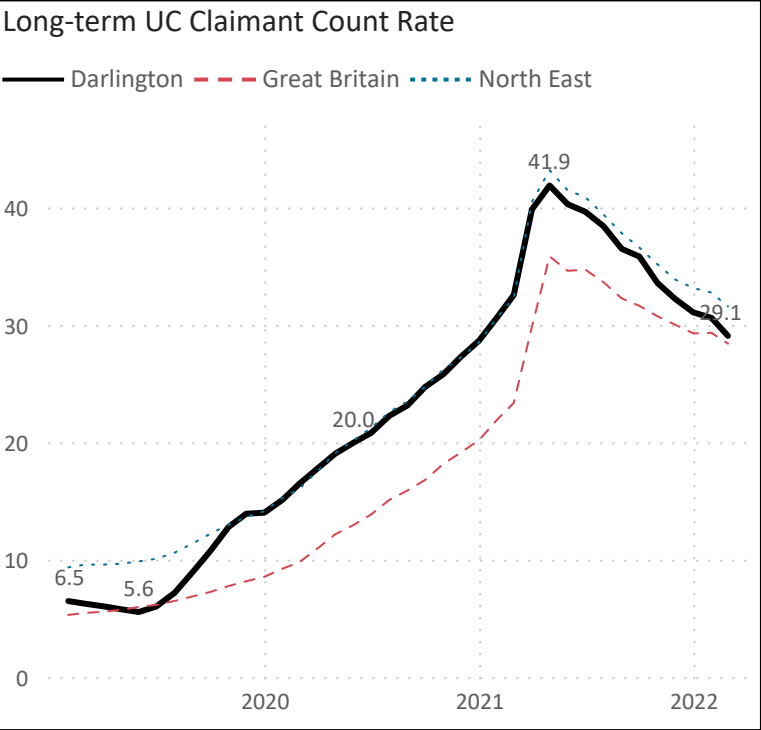
C6. Work with partners to reduce youth and long-term unemployment, by increasing the opportunity for retraining and apprenticeships leading to gainful employment



Young people using the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) service have continued to see positive progression in education, employment, or training over the past 12 months, exceeding our expected target. Sustained outcomes are an important indicator that highlights the determination the young people and YEI service have and is showcased by the year-on-year increase in sustained education, employment, or training.

At times we are unable to contact some young people at the six-month sustained point or obtain timely evidence from employers, so the true number achieving sustained employment is considered likely to be higher than recorded.

Tony Murphy: Asst Director Education & Inclusion



The long-term Universal Credit claimant count in Darlington continues to fall. As the economy recovers from the impacts of pandemic, new job opportunities emerge as consumer confidence increases. The availability of local employment opportunities has been considerably improved, providing opportunities for long-term claimants to return to the labour market.

Tony Murphy: Asst Director Education & Inclusion

C7. Work with schools and the Regional Schools Commissioner to increase educational achievement across the borough and, in particular, for young people from deprived backgrounds

Percentage of schools judged good or outstanding by Ofsted (of schools inspected)

March 2022

79%

Inspection outcome	Number of schools
Outstanding	1
Good	26
Requires Improvement	7
No Ofsted rating	7

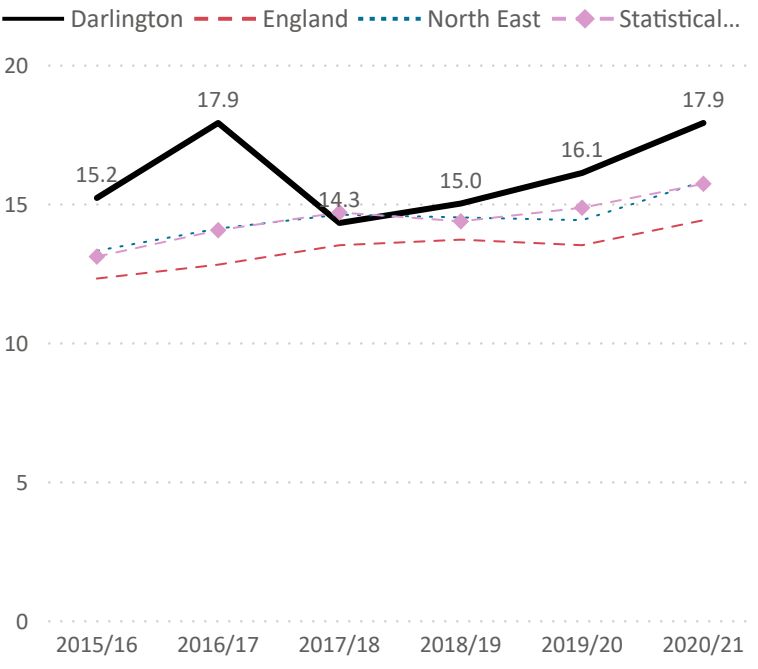
Although the percentage of Darlington schools rated as Good or Outstanding has been below the national and regional averages since 2017, the gaps have been narrowing since 2018.

79.4% (27) of our schools in Darlington, that have recently been inspected, are rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. 83% of primary schools and 75% of secondary schools are now rated Good or Outstanding.

Four secondary schools in Darlington have taken part in the Department of Education’s One Vision initiative and given bespoke support to raise standards. Three of these schools have moved from Requires Improvement to Good following inspection.

Tony Murphy: Asst Director Education & Inclusion

Inequality gap between the average Attainment 8 score of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils at KS4



Attainment 8 is a measure of a pupil’s average grade across a set of eight subjects. A high attainment 8 score indicates a pupil did well across a range of subjects, including English and Maths. As GCSEs were awarded through centre assessed grades rather than direct examination during the pandemic, caution should be applied when making comparisons with previous years and other parts of the country. The inequality gap between average scores for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils has widened from 15.0 in 2018/19 to 17.9 in 2020/21, which is wider than the gap for national, regional and statistical neighbours comparators. However, Darlington’s average score per pupil has been higher than national, regional and statistical neighbour comparator scores for the last 3 years, increasing from 46.6 in 2018/19 to 50.7 in 2020/21. This trend is mirrored in the average scores for non-disadvantaged pupils, which has risen from 51.0 in 2018/19 to 55.9 to 2020/21.

Tony Murphy: Asst Director Education & Inclusion

C8. Deliver and review the In2 Project to support disadvantaged children to participate in Arts, Leisure and Culture to maximise their potential

Between January and April, the In2 cohort participated in a social music-making project, alongside a working brass street band, Back Chat Brass. Over a ten-week period, the pupils learned how to play colourful plastic instruments ("pBones" and "pTrumpets"), eventually performing alongside the band for peers, teachers and parents. On alternate weeks, the participants watched a series of specially commissioned films which explained the building blocks of a song - harmony, melody, beat etc. Each film ended with three examples of the musical element for the pupils to choose from, so allowing them to create a new song with the band. This song will be performed at their leavers' assemblies in July.

The teachers also participated in a CPD (Continuing Professional Development) session with the band, and an instructional film and resource pack have been created to ensure the plastic instruments can continue to be used in schools after the end of the In2 project. This was funded by our research partners, Durham University School of Education.

During the same period, the participants worked with Tees Valley artists, Bloominart, to experience a number of different visual and creative artforms, including marbling, embroidery, and block printing. All of the artistic outputs are currently being digitised and turned into flags for the Jubilee celebrations.

The groups have now moved onto a literacy project involving self-portraiture, collage, poetry writing, song writing and filmmaking. At the end of the summer term, the pupils will have created a yearbook, a new song and a filmed performance.

[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services](#)

C9. Look for innovative ways to try and deliver school homework clubs and holiday enrichment activities

The Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme funded by the Department for Education, is now firmly established at multiple settings across Darlington and is thriving. The aim of the programme is to support children to eat more healthily, be more active over the school holidays and have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition, as well as being more engaged with school and other local services.

DBC officers have developed and delivered the content of the HAF programme, with a whole range of partners from across the Town to maximise engagement. Firthmoor and District Community Association have played a primary role here, supporting the development of the catering offer and activity programme.

630 children were directly engaged in the 8 x 3-day programmes over the Easter School holidays at West Park Academy, Eastbourne Sports Complex, Firthmoor CC, Redhall, Longfield Academy, Skerne Park Academy and Middleton St George. Special sessions were also delivered at the 4motion Bike centre at West Park.

Specific consultation was undertaken with Beaumont Hill school and the Darlington Parent/Carer Forum to engage children with SEN (Special Educational Needs) within the programme. This has enabled a more inclusive approach to planning and delivery across sites in the town, with 11% of children who attended at Easter having SEN requirements.

Planning is complete for the School Summer vacation, following consultation with children, adults and a range of stakeholders. There will be 5 weeks of provision delivered in at least 5 different locations per week. New venues for the summer include Mount Pleasant school, Northwood School, Heighington Village Hall and Corporation Road School. An exciting programme has been developed, including Dolphin Centre and Hippodrome visits, STEAM Science workshops, Dance, Drama, Circus skills, Outdoor Activities and much more.

[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services](#)

E1. Work with Market Asset Management to deliver a refurbished and vibrant covered market and successful outdoor market

The first phase of the improvement to the market opened in August 2021 and a great deal of positive feedback has already been received on the current offer to residents and visitors. Phase 2 includes improvements to the entrance to the trading area and to the layout of market stalls, new public toilets and new refurbished venues on the west elevation of the building. In addition, a new hospitality venue will be developed in the vaults areas to add to the growing offer around the market square. This work is due to commence in early June 2022 and will be complete by late October 2022. Phase 3 (the building of a temperate garden), however, is being delayed due to issues in gaining vacant possession of one of the existing units and the escalating construction costs.

MAM continues to promote and support both the weekly outdoor market and specialized markets. In addition, the Food Festival in early May and the monthly Little Bird Cage markets have proved to be extremely successful.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

E2. Deliver the Town Centre Strategy leading to a diversified and successful town centre

The Government Property Agency continues to invest in Feethams House to accommodate HMT. It is expected that the first cohort of officials will be relocating into the building in early June 2022.

Work on the Northern Echo building continues with architects appointed to work with client departments (Darlington College and DBC Learning and Skills) to develop Adult Skills Hub on the ground floor. This is anticipated to be open in 2023.

The Towns Fund continues to deliver in its objectives and work has been completed in the various yards along Skinnergate. Engagement work and consultation (carried out by Groundwork) on proposals to improve Skinnergate and Coniscliffe Road have proved extremely successful with the proposals coming to cabinet for agreement in the summer.

The former Sports Direct site is being demolished to make way for the development of a residential scheme.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

E3. Develop key economic sites to be investor ready at Central Park, Ingenium Park and Faverdale

Progress against this action continues to be strong.

At Central Park, construction of the new Innovation Central development continues on programme with completion set for August 2022. Plans for landscaping and remediation of the site continue to be developed, with materials from the historic railway sidings now removed and the planning application for hard and soft landscaping submitted. These final works will ensure the remaining plots are ready for active marketing.

At Ingenium Park, drainage works are underway with Phase 1 now complete and Phase 2 due to commence in the summer. Completion of phase 2 will complete infrastructure works to enable initial phases of plots to be actively marketed or alternative strategy to accelerate economic growth to be considered.

Faverdale Business Park has now been actively advertised to the market.

Anthony Hewitt : Asst Director Transport & Capital Projects

E4. Encourage new investment in the Borough and maximise employment opportunities for Darlington residents

The Council has commenced the marketing of commercial land at Faverdale to identify a development partner. The 46-acre site will provide premium commercial accommodation for either existing businesses expanding or new business relocating to the area. If this approach is successful, the Council may adopt a similar approach for the development of Ingenium Park in the autumn.

We are also receiving a great deal of enquiries into the availability of land and buildings for business expansion and relocating. One particular development which may assist in meeting this demand is the current application for the development of circa. 300,000 sq.ft of commercial space.

The GPA has concluded its exercise in identifying a permanent location for the Darlington Economic Campus. A vacant site at Brunswick Street has been chosen as the preferred site and discussions with the developers, architects and the council's planning department has commenced on the proposals for 110,000 sq.ft grade A office building.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

E5. Work with indigenous companies to identify and attract further job creating investment

Officers, together with elected members and partners, are currently organising Darlington Business Summit for autumn 2022. This will replace the former Darlington Business Week and aims to be more interactive with various opportunities for local businesses to promote both their services and goods.

Various activities continue in the business support area, from guidance and support on marketing and finance, together with identifying appropriate accommodation for growing businesses and start-ups.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

E6. Successful adoption of the Local Plan

The Local Plan was successfully adopted in February 2022. Our new Local Plan sets out what the opportunities are for development in the area, and what types of development will and will not be permitted and in which locations.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

E7. Create the conditions to deliver hundreds of new homes each year, ensuring sufficiency of affordable homes

The Council are still working closely with the promoters of Burtree Garden Village and Skerningham Garden Village to be in a position where an application can be submitted and determined. A Design Code has been produced and consulted on for Burtree and working is on-going on a Design Code for Skerningham. The designation of the River Tees catchment area as a nutrient neutral area may impact on the ability of the Council to determine applications in these locations and may delay delivery.

Overall, the latest monitoring data shows 511 housing completions in 2021/22 which is a reduction of 35 from the previous year but housing starts are at 465 for 2021/22 which is only 1 below the previous year.

The designation of Darlington as part of the Nutrient Neutral area will have an impact on the number of planning applications received.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

E8. Develop the council's response to the agreed Climate Change Emergency and begin delivery of the agreed plan

Milestones for the action plan have been developed with the responsible lead officers and these will be used to monitor progress going forward.

A feasibility study into a prospective District Heating Network has been completed and we have been asked by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to take part in their heat network zoning pilot project. We are one of 28 pilots across the country and are helping to test the government's approach to designating zones where heat networks are the lowest cost, low carbon option.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

E9. Develop the Darlington Station project and regeneration opportunities for the surrounding areas including Victoria Road, the cattle market and Neasham Road areas

Darlington Borough Council continue to work in partnership with Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), the Department for Transport (DfT), Network Rail and train operators to drive this project forward.

In January 2022 a public inquiry was held into the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) of land required for the project. Although the inquiry found in favor of the order being made, DBC have continued to progress acquisition by agreement where possible.

In addition to planning permission being granted for the East and West Transport Interchanges, permission has now been granted for the cattle market site to be used as a temporary car park whilst the station project is delivered.

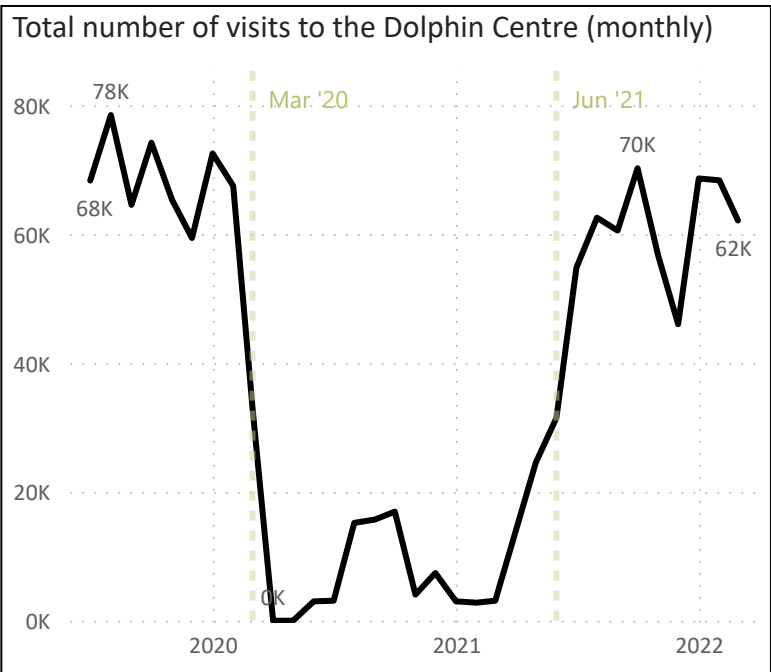
Full Business Case for the project will be submitted to government in Summer 2022.

Anthony Hewitt : Asst Director Transport & Capital Projects

H1. Review the vacant space within the Dolphin Centre to improve the leisure offer and so maximise income

Visitor numbers to the Dolphin Centre have continued to grow throughout the year, following the reopening of facilities and the recovery of the business post Covid-19 restrictions. Hospitality and Soft Play have experienced high numbers and the new addition of the bowling alley in May 21, that replaced the original squash courts, has welcomed a new footfall to the centre. Quarter 4 has seen a large increase in the events programme and reengagement of on-site partners, including the introduction of new partners. The gym and Dolphin Centre memberships have also continued to rise during this quarter. There has been a real focus on working with primary schools in the town to improve swimming abilities, following the two-year gap presented by the pandemic and the impact from this. Further work has taken place, and continues, around the use of space within the Dolphin Centre to maximise income potential and keep the offer current and fresh for residents.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services



Visitor numbers have continued to grow throughout the year, following the reopening of facilities and the recovery of the business post Covid-19 restrictions, with monthly numbers going from 14,000 in April 2021, rising to 62,000 in March 2022 and peaking at 70,000 in October 2021. Hospitality and soft play have experienced high numbers and the new addition of the bowling alley in May 2021 has welcomed a new footfall of customers into the Dolphin Centre.

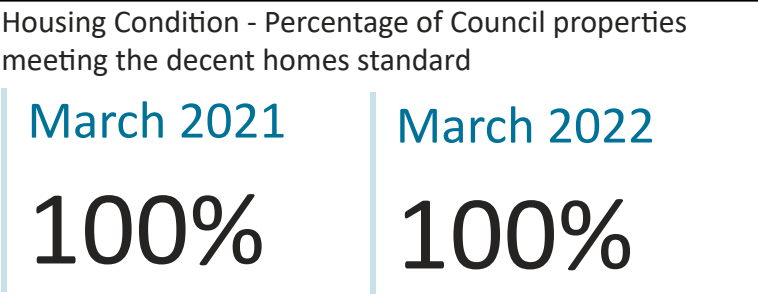
Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

H2. Work to, and continue to review the Local Outbreak Plan for Coronavirus

The Local Outbreak Plan was initially developed in June 2020 and a review was undertaken in February 2021. The Health Protection Board no longer meets regularly, with the removal of restrictions and the reductions in cases rates. The local Outbreak Control meetings continue to operate as required to continue to deliver the Local Outbreak Plan. All actions including contact tracing and testing has now been withdrawn and stood down. Support remains to monitor local case numbers and provide support to the most vulnerable sectors, including schools and care home settings.

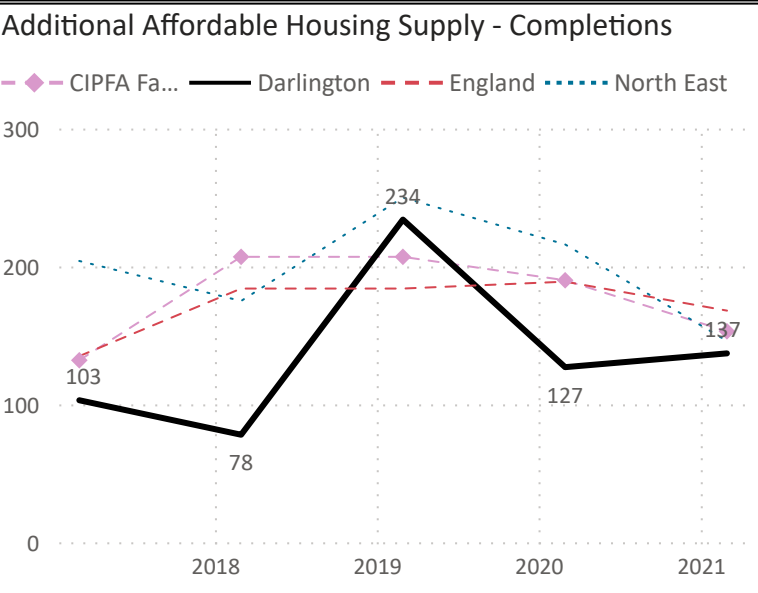
Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

H3. Continue to build new council houses and ensure the existing council housing stock is maintained to a high standard and environmentally friendly



All of Darlington Borough Council’s social housing stock continued to meet the Decent Homes Standard in 2021-22, demonstrating the ongoing commitment and good work of the Housing and Building Services teams over the course of the Covid pandemic.

Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director (Housing and Revenues)



The Council's Housing new build programme was significantly disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, with very few properties completed in 2021/22. However, work had continued on the Allington Way phase 3 site, which will deliver 56 Council properties in 2022/23. In addition, work commenced on the Sherborne Close phase 3 site, which will deliver 14 properties. Work will also commence in 2022-23 on the Skinnergate site (15 properties) and Neasham Road (150 properties).

Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director (Housing and Revenues)

H4. Maximise rental and service charge income from council tenants to ensure we are able to provide them with a comprehensive range of good quality housing management and support services

Rent collected as a proportion of rents owed on HRA dwellings

Year	Quarter	Value
2019/20	Q4	97.5%
2020/21	Q1	96.1%
	Q2	96.6%
	Q3	97.1%
	Q4	101.6%
2021/22	Q1	98.1%
	Q2	97.4%
	Q3	96.3%
	Q4	97.5%

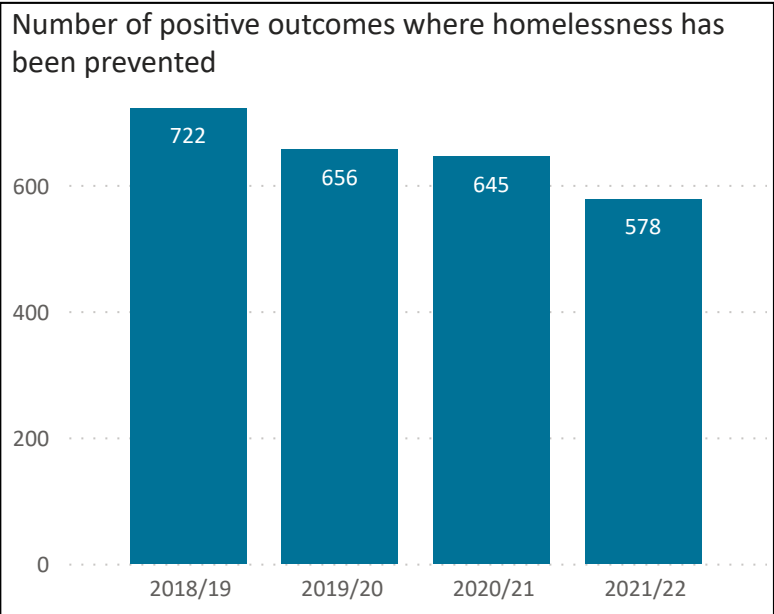
Rent collection rates for Council housing in 2021-22 is slightly below target and performance in the previous year. However, over £25.5 million was collected and rent arrears remain within expected levels. Housing officers continue to promote help and guidance to tenants needing support, make affordable repayment plans with customers, and assist with benefit claims and budgeting skills. The number of tenants, at 1,750, in receipt of Universal Credit (UC) is at its highest level since UC was introduced, however average rent arrears for tenants receiving UC is lower than the regional average.

Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director (Housing and Revenues)

H5. Review the Darlington Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Progress against the new strategy is good, with 19 of the 28 actions already completed. Of the remaining actions, only 2 are currently not on track to meet their target timescales for completion, mainly due to the Covid pandemic. The number of homeless people placed in emergency accommodation by the Council in 2021/22 decreased slightly by 7% compared to the previous year but this is still 23% higher than pre-covid levels. However, despite these challenges we have increased the number of temporary accommodation units by 36%, from 11 to 15, as well as purchasing and refurbishing 4 empty properties to provide 8 new units of accommodation. Officers have also successfully bid for additional funding through the government's Rough Sleeper Initiative to recruit 4 additional staff to deliver a range of support and advice services to homeless people, including a specialist mental health Housing Options Officer and an outreach support worker to deliver street support and prevent people from rough sleeping. In addition, the Housing Options Team have been recognised by the NEPACS Ruth Cranfield Award for their outstanding dedication to housing and success in tackling homelessness during the pandemic.

Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director (Housing and Revenues



Despite ongoing challenges and restrictions related to the Covid pandemic during 2021-22, our Housing Options team continued to achieve a high level of positive outcomes for homeless customers, although performance has decreased by 10% compared to the previous year. Positive outcomes included negotiating with landlords, friends and family and support providers to find sustainable accommodation for customers in need of support with housing. In addition, we have increased the number of temporary accommodation units to house homeless customers and successfully bid for additional funding through the government's Rough Sleeper Initiative to recruit 4 additional staff to deliver a range of support and advice services to homeless people.

Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director (Housing and Revenues

H6. Maintain oversight and offer challenge to health and care services that support individuals to achieve good mental, physical and emotional health as identified in a wide range of partnership plans such as Best Start in life, autism awareness, alcohol plan, suicide prevention, healthy workforce, and ageing well

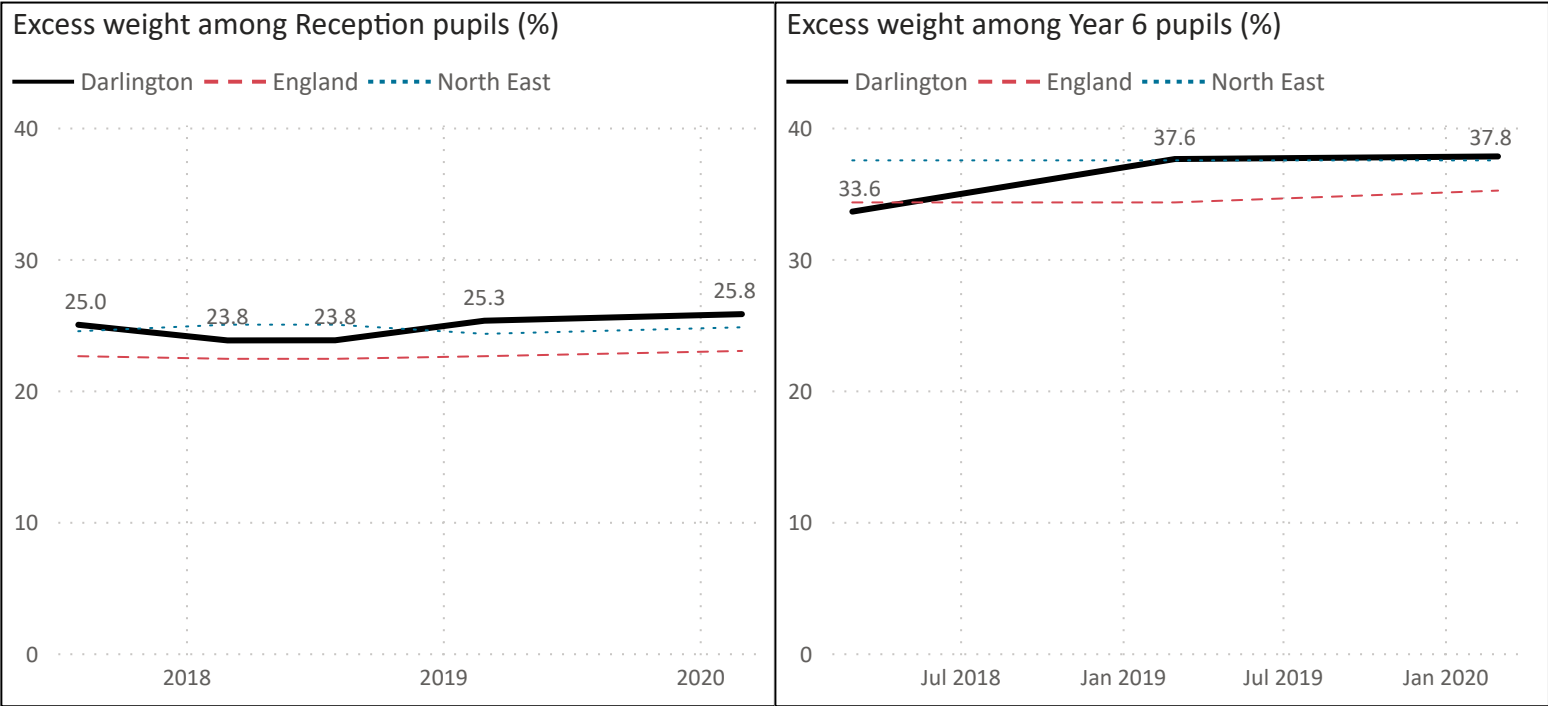
- The Council's Public Health team have continued this work during Covid, including:
- o Secured suicide prevention funding to promote 'Postvention' work with partners and distributing information and training across the borough.
 - o Coordinating a local Mental Health prevention funding opportunity
 - o 'Make Every Contact Count' training to frontline services and partners across the borough, using a train the trainer approach, and developing a range of toolbox talks to support delivery
 - o Delivery of the Healthy Lifestyle Survey to 8,400 local pupils, across 32 Darlington schools, including a new section on Covid-19 impacts
 - o Beginning work to re-procure the 0-19 Service.
 - o Continuing to develop a joint application for a local Mental Health Prevention Concordat
 - o Successfully gain the Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant (SSMTR) to expand the number of treatment places for substance misuse for both adults and young people

Penny Spring Director of Public Health

H7. Implement the Darlington Child Healthy Weight Plan with partners

- The Darlington Child Healthy Weight Plan has begun to deliver on a number of its objectives, including:
- o Launched a Healthy Families catering award
 - o Developing and delivered a healthy schools meal standard and training
 - o Trained foster families in healthy meal options
 - o Encouraging utilisation of green spaces by supporting health campaigns and signage and delivering a town centre treasure hunt
 - o Produced a children’s home food policy, guidance and workable menus, and training children’s home staff using a young people’s nutrition toolkit
 - o Produced and piloting a new Healthy Early Years Toolkit with three nursery settings and an initial 10 childminders
 - o Developed, with the Learning and Skills team, an online Darlington School Food Award module to support individual schools to achieve school food standards.
 - o Working in partnership with the Cornmill Centre to display ‘Change4life’ weaning and healthy lifestyle messages in the form of posters and vinyls, and to implement a ‘Play on the way’ initiative with the use of a colourful hopscotch to share simple messages on why physical activity is good for children

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health



The prevalence of overweight (including obesity) amongst Reception and Year 6 pupils rose slightly in Darlington in 2020. The rise is not statistically significant and Darlington is in line with the regional average for these measures.

The Darlington Childhood Healthy Weight Plan has identified a number of evidence-based interventions that are now being delivered with partners to systematically address some of the underlying causes of obesity in children and young people in Darlington, with some recent new work including activity with schools and local commercial food premises to develop a healthy catering standard to ensure a consistent and healthy food offer for children and their families across the borough.

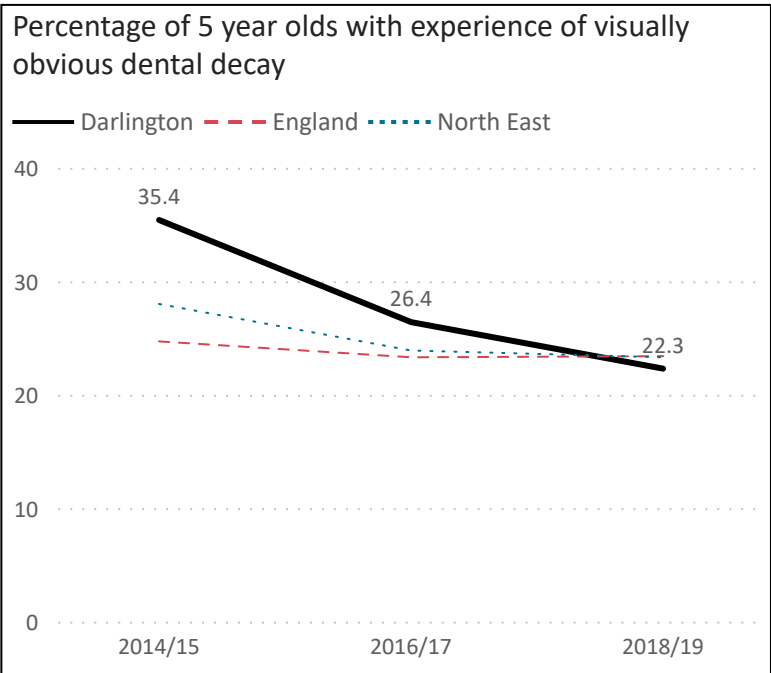
Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

H8. Implement the Darlington Oral Health Plan 2017-2022 with partners

The Darlington Oral Health Plan is to be refreshed by Council's Public Health team to capture the impact on oral health from the pandemic and recent changes to legislation and will be, subject to consultation and agreement by Members, in place by the end of 2022. Meanwhile, recent work against the existing plan includes:

- o Re-establishment of the toothbrushing scheme in reception and primary schools
- o Commissioned of a joint oral health needs assessment, in conjunction with neighbouring Tees Valley local authorities

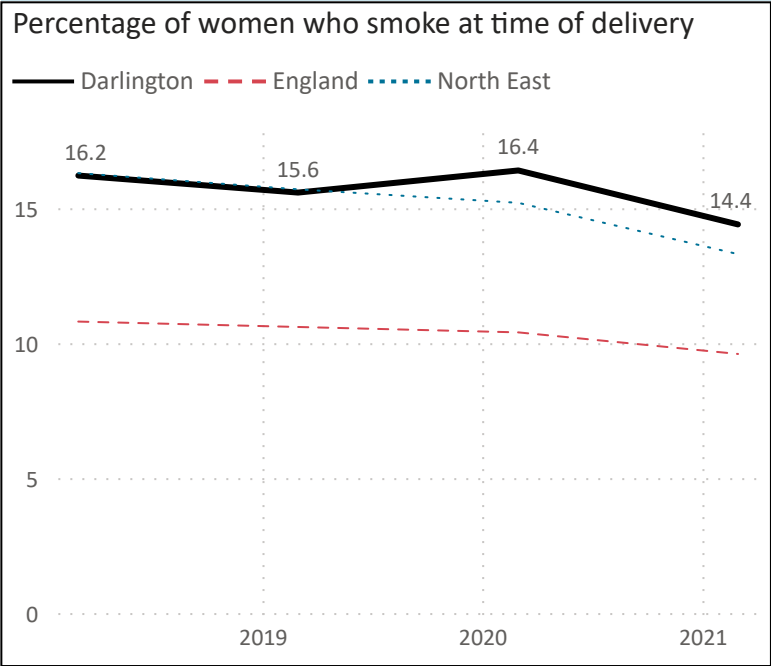
Penny Spring: Director of Public Health



The percentage of Darlington 5-year-olds with experience of visually obvious dental decay is statistically similar to both the England and North East averages, at 22.3% in 2018/19, and the proportion has been reducing for the past 3 years of data.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

H9. Continue the reduction in smoking to achieve a smoke free Darlington (i.e. just 5% of total population smoking) by 2030

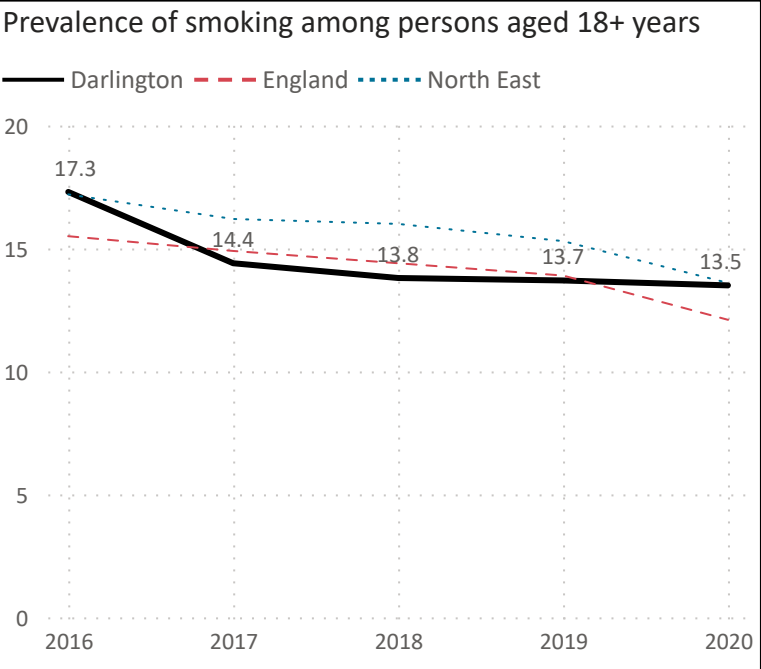


The proportion of Darlington women smoking at the time of delivery of their baby fell by two percentage points in 2020/21, from 16.4% to 14.4%.

Darlington remains statistically similar to our neighbouring North East authorities for this measure, and work continues with local maternity services, midwives and health visitors through the Council's commissioned Stop Smoking Service to continue supporting and encouraging residents, including pregnant mothers, to quit smoking at every opportunity.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

H9. Continue the reduction in smoking to achieve a smoke free Darlington (i.e. just 5% of total population smoking) by 2030



The prevalence of smoking among persons aged 18 years and over is slightly above the England average of 12.1% (2020) and slightly below the North East average of 13.6% (2020) averages, at 13.5% (2020).

The trend is also continuing to reduce in line with elsewhere, and it is anticipated that further falls may be recorded going forward as the increase in people giving up smoking during the Covid-19 pandemic feeds through into the data.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

H10. Continue to deliver the Lifeline services and increase promotion and take up

Number of clients receiving a Lifeline service

Year	Value
2015/16	3,062
2016/17	3,129
2017/18	3,313
2018/19	3,369
2019/20	3,369
2020/21	3,326
2021/22	3,340

The Lifeline service continues to record consistent take up of new customers, with a slight increase in overall numbers in 2021/22 compared to the previous year. Due to the nature of the service, the total numbers of service users tends to stay fairly steady as the growth in new clients requesting support is counteracted by other users not requiring the service anymore, due to moving into a care environment or passing away.

Feedback amongst service users remains positive and the service provides excellent value for money, with over 9,380 emergency response call-outs to elderly and vulnerable customers in 2021/22.

Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director (Housing and Revenues

L1. With the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), plan the 2025 celebrations for the Stockton and Darlington Passenger Railway

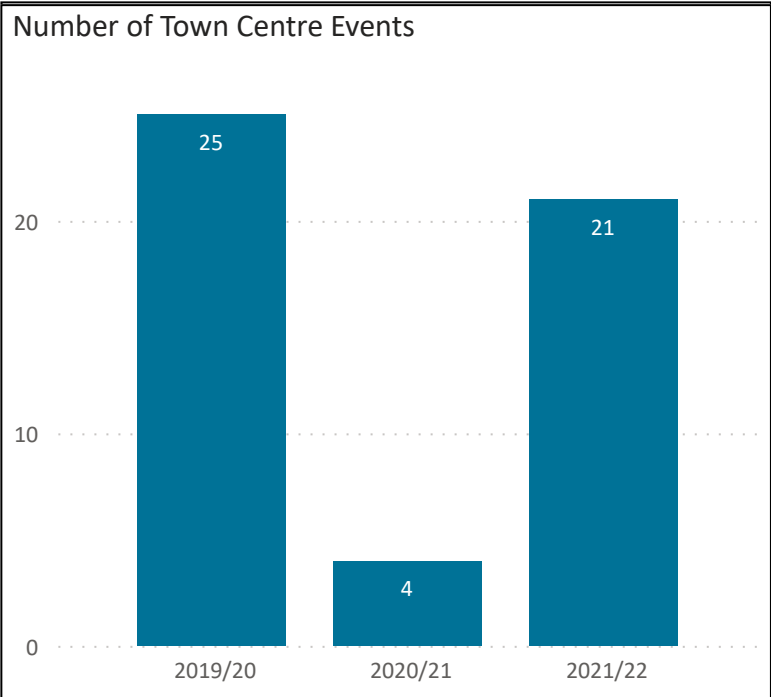
Through the period, work has continued with partners to develop the 2025 celebrations programme. The partnership is seeking to deliver a core programme for 2025, built around the following core elements:

- o Live steam and motive power
- o Exhibitions of early steam locomotives
- o Education and school projects
- o Knowledge sharing and conferences
- o Community events
- o Large-scale outdoor arts and street theatre

DBC have allocated £1m to the Bicentenary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway and £500K for the restoration of Locomotion No.1 replica. Stockton Borough Council and Tees Valley Combined Authority have also allocated similar funds for the Bicentenary programme.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

L2. Ensure the town centre is clean, animated, and vibrant with an extensive range of events and festivals



Following a very busy summer season of events in 2021 and the relaxation of social distancing and covid measures, the town centre team has continued to programme more events, including Halloween, two Ice sculpture weekends in December, the very popular Christmas lights switch-on and, with support from the Welcome Back ERDF funding, the town centre hosted an ice rink and Victorian Carousel for visitors, which were very well received.

For 2021/22, the events programme has returned to full capacity. The events bring significant numbers of visitors into the town centre, with the following footfalls in 2021/22 (and the increase compared to the previous week): Christmas Lights Switch On, 49,067 (+ 21,943); Ice Sculpture Trail, 57,976 (+ 14,761); Food Festival, 76,446 (+ 23,998).

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

Town Centre cleaning - % pass rate of the 33 transects inspected for litter across the Town Centre

Year	Month	Value
2021	July	100%
	August	97%
	September	100%
	October	100%
	November	94%
	December	97%
2022	January	100%
	February	97%
	March	100%

Overall, the cleanliness of the town centre has continued to remain at a very high standard during the second half of 2021/22. For most months, a 100% pass rate was achieved and where this was not the case, well above a 90% pass rate was achieved.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

L3. Finalise plans for the Rail Heritage Quarter and initiate implementation of the plans together with partners

This year, work has continued on developing and finalising the proposals for the Darlington Rail Heritage Quarter project, putting in place all the approvals, including planning and Cabinet, for a start in early May 2022.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

L4. Deliver the refurbishment and modernisation of the Crown Street Library service

Work has commenced on the refurbishment of the library, which will include repairs to the roof and structure of the building, upgrading the mechanical and electrical installations, as well as restoration of the interior of the library. It is anticipated that the refurbishment will be completed by July 2023.

The outcome will be a refurbished and restored library, undertaken in a sympathetic way to reflect its heritage, but also bring new technology and improvements to the service and building.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

L5. Review and deliver a revised car parking strategy

The town centre parking offers remain in place to support the town centre's recovery from Covid-19. Following the adoption of the Tees Valley Strategic Plan, a new Darlington Transport Plan is being developed; this will include a new parking strategy and a Town Centre Transport Strategy. The strategies will specifically consider transport and parking in the town centre to support recovery and align with the town centre strategy.

The draft plans have been developed in preparation for consultation and consultation will take place during summer 2022 ahead of adoption by the end of 2022.

Anthony Hewitt: Asst Director Transport & Capital Projects

L6. Work with TVCA to deliver improved transport links within Darlington and the Tees Valley

The Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan has now been agreed and a prospectus was submitted to Government which has secured £310m in transport investment in the next 5 years from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). This funding will see the biggest investment in sustainable transport ever seen in the Tees Valley and will assist in delivering climate change objectives across the region. There is strong governance and partnership working in place between Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), the local authorities and the national agencies to deliver the programme of improvements.

Key updates of the programme are:

- o Continued lobbying and development of key road projects including New Tees Crossing, Darlington Northern Link Road, A689. Development work on the A68 corridor also continued, looking at all modes of transport.
- o Development and delivery of Darlington, Middlesbrough and Hartlepool station projects that will unlock national and local capacity issues. Feasibility is continuing on rail freight to improve access to and from TeesPort without having to utilise Darlington Station.
- o Work towards entering an Enhanced Partnership with bus operators to aim to secure improved services and customer experience across the region.
- o Further development of walking and cycling schemes, including consultation and engagement on the Duke Street and Woodland Road Phase 2 Schemes, with work underway on Woodlands Road Phase 1.
- o Feasibility of electric vehicle charging, with a planned investment of over £2m in the region expected to commence this financial year.

[Anthony Hewitt: Asst Director Transport & Capital Proj](#)

L7. Modernise Darlington's crematorium service

Work commenced in April on the refurbishment of the cremators and associated building works. Delivery of the new chapel was delayed due to evidence of newts on the adjacent allotments site, with work accordingly only commencing in early June. Further delays have been experienced due to Covid and resources, both labour and materials. The Crematorium will be completed in Quarter 1 of 2022/23 and the chapel in Quarter 2.

The outcome will be a new modern chapel facility and crematorium that meets current environmental requirements. The project will also create capacity for further burials in West Cemetery.

[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services](#)

L8. Work with TVCA to develop a sustainable Teesside International Airport

TVCA continues to invest into the Teesside International Airport. TVCA have now relocated to the airport and the Council have supported the development of the airport through the granting of various planning approvals to facilitate its continued development.

[Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth](#)

R1. Deliver a balanced Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and a positive Value for Money (VFM) outcome

The 2021-25 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is expected to show an improved position from the original plan at the year end, this is despite in-year pressures from Covid-19 and inflationary increases.

The MTFP for 2022-26 was approved by Council in February 2022 and provides a balanced budget for the life of the plan. This plan allows investment in Darlington and in its residents of over £100 million per year, capital investment of £157 million, and creates the conditions and opportunities for growth.

The Council accounts are scrutinised annually by Ernst and Young and have consistently delivered a positive Value for Money outcome.

[Brett Nielsen: Assistant Director - Resources](#)

R2. Oversee the successful completion of existing house building joint venture companies

The Council has invested in six joint ventures for house building to date, with all sites progressing well. Three of the projects, at Eastbourne, Heighington and Middleton St George, are completed with the investment repaid and dividends received. The West Park joint venture, which is part of a larger scheme and will be completed over a seven year period, is progressing well with sales buoyant and only six of the properties available in 2022 left to sell. The Neasham Road joint venture has commenced with infrastructure works in progress on site, all properties available for sale in 2022 are sold. The Council's out-of-borough joint venture with Esh Group is still in its infancy; however, all properties available for sale in 2022 are sold.

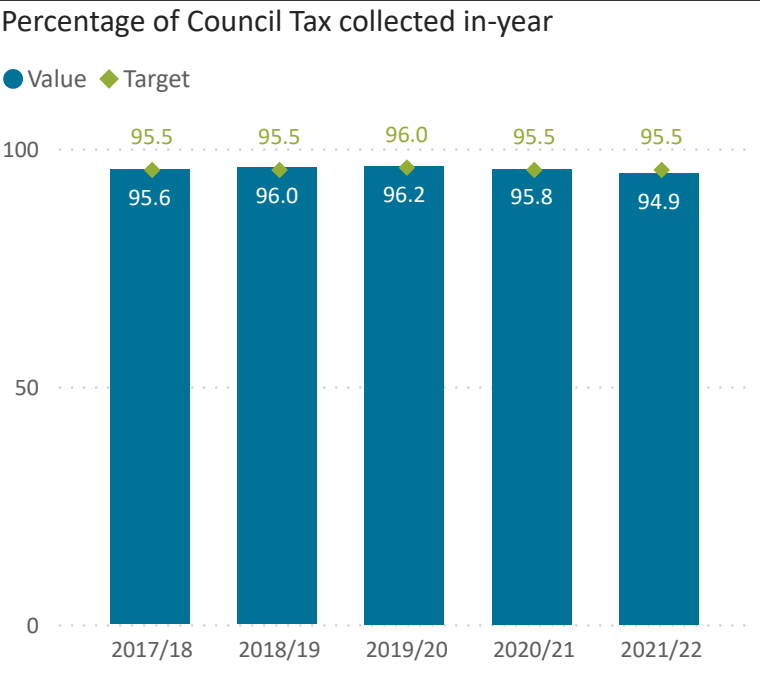
[Brett Nielsen: Assistant Director - Resources](#)

R3. Maximise the council's income from the council's Investment Fund, including further joint venture housing companies

The Investment Fund provision of £50m is being utilised for Joint Venture (JV) and economic regeneration initiatives. Returns on JVs are anticipated to be over £6m and three of the schemes have completed with the investment fully repaid and recycled back into the fund. The agreed Investment Fund of £50m has a commitment against it of £33.78m, leaving a balance of £16.22m uncommitted. Officers are actively looking at schemes which, subject to approval, could utilise the fund to provide returns to the Council and wider economic benefits to the borough.

[Brett Nielsen: Assistant Director - Resources](#)

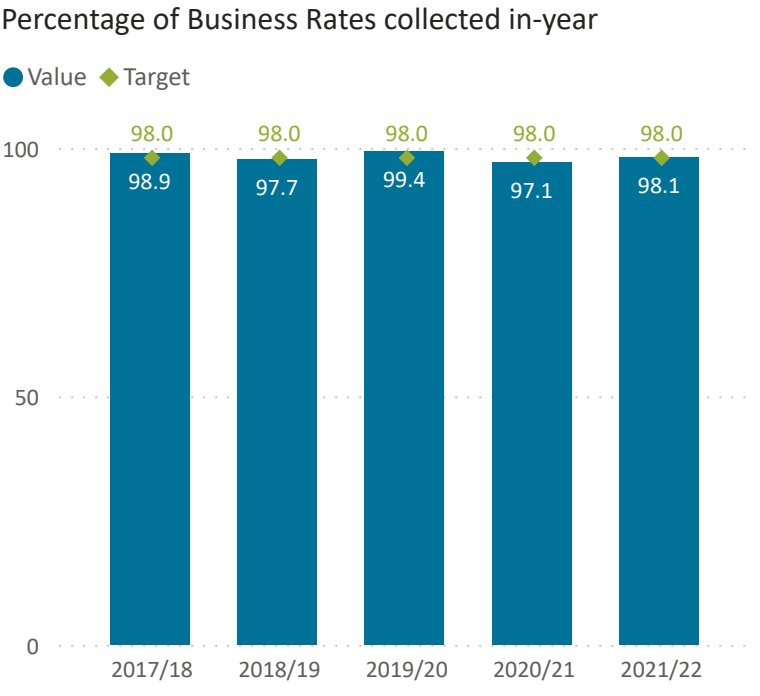
R4. Maximise council tax and business rate income through robust income collection processes



The percentage of Council Tax collected in-year in 2021-22 was slightly below the Council’s target of 95.5%. However, £66.0 million was collected in 2021-22 by Revenues and Benefits officers, exceeding the amount collected for the previous year by £5.5 million. The overall collection rate of 99% is still on course to be met.

Year	Darlington	England
2017/18	95.6	97.1
2018/19	96.0	97.0
2019/20	96.2	96.8
2020/21	95.8	95.7
2021/22	94.9	95.9

Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director (Housing and Revenues



The percentage of Business Rates collected in-year in 2021-22 was slightly above the Council’s target of 98.0%. £26.8 million was collected in 2021-22 by Revenues and Benefits officers, exceeding the amount collected for the previous year by £9.7 million. The overall collection rate of 99% is still on course to be met.

Year	Darlington	England
2017/18	98.9	98.4
2018/19	97.7	98.3
2019/20	99.4	98.0
2020/21	97.1	93.0
2021/22	98.1	95.5

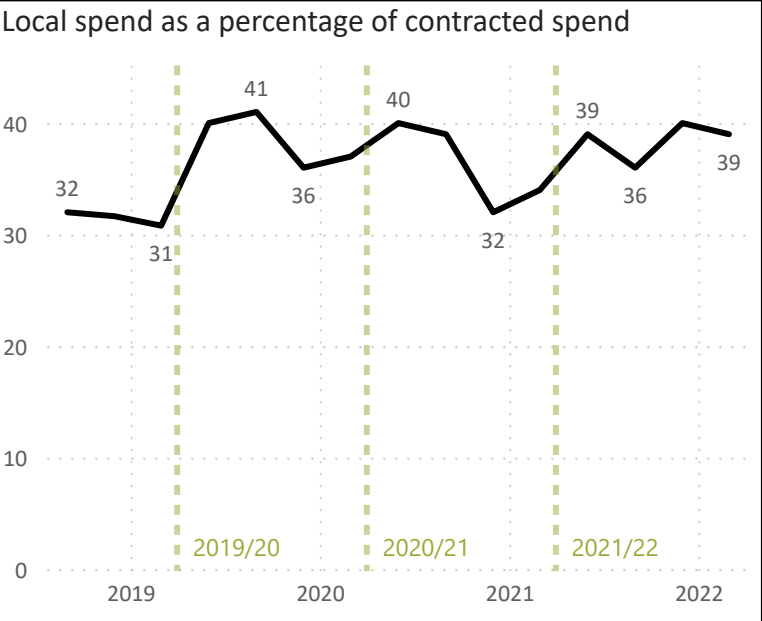
Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director (Housing and Revenues

R5. Adopt a local wealth building approach to council procurement and work with the wider public sector in Darlington to do the same

The Public Sector Executives Group continues to be well attended and acts as a useful forum for public sector agencies to share information and collaborate. Information contained in the Darlington Profile Report was considered by the group and welcomed by other agencies who found it a valuable resource. The group also provided views on the Levelling Up Darlington Plan and endorsed the emerging priorities.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Dton Partnership

R5. Adopt a local wealth building approach to council procurement and work with the wider public sector in Darlington to do the same



The spend with Darlington-based suppliers has increased from Quarter 2 by 3% and remained stable through Quarter 3 and 4, which equates to £33.2M for the 12-month period.

Compared to 2021 the figure has risen from 34% to 39%.

This reflects the continued engagement with the local supply chain, advertising opportunities via the Councils website and social media.

Luke Swinhoe: Assistant Director - Law & Governance

R6. Increasing the availability of council services online

Number of transactional services available via the corporate website

September 2021

108

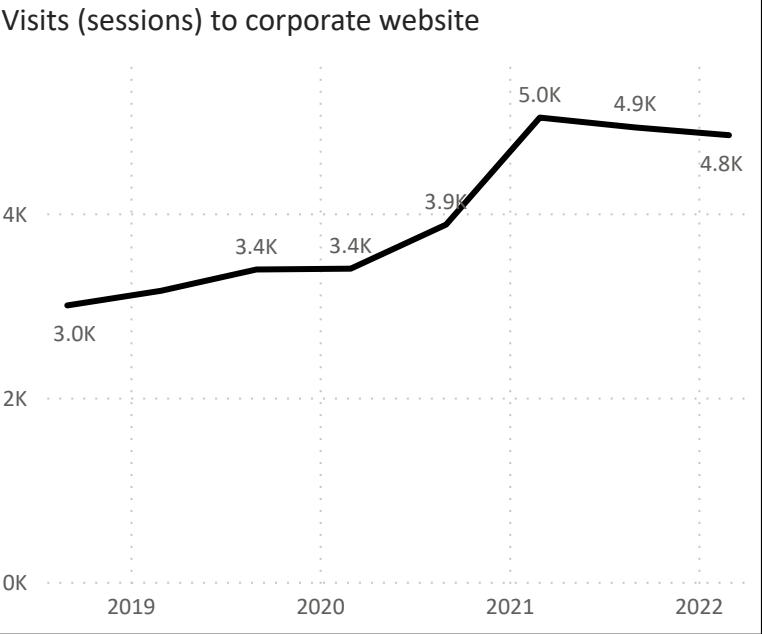
March 2022

176

The large increase in services is due to using a more robust method of detecting links to our online services that are run via third party software. We're now confident we have detected all current links to online services so this figure will act as the baseline.

The new baseline figure includes several additional Council Tax and Benefits forms, a number of 3rd party complete solutions such as Resident Parking Permits, the Library and the Housing Tenant's portals. This number now also includes all in-house built services such as Garden Waste and Childcare checkers.

Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Comm



Average daily visits are down slightly on the previous 6 months, as Covid takes more of a background seat, so fewer people are coming to our site to view the local restrictions. Average visits are still up by over 1,000 a day compared to pre-pandemic levels. Popular page trends are now shifting away from Covid related pages and back to more traditional pages such as Refuse collections, the Dolphin Centre and Job Vacancies. In the last 6 months, desktop usage has increased by just over 6% and taken it back to pre-pandemic levels. This coincides with more people returning to working in offices.

Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Comm

R7. Review and refresh the council's workforce strategy

The Council's new Workforce Strategy and Plan was agreed in July 2021, with rollout commencing in October 2021. Briefings have taken place to ensure that the strategy is promoted and that the core values are embedded into everyday working practices. Additional promotional activities, including a video, are soon to be launched to all staff, with further developments planned regarding the communication of the strategy in recruitment and corporate induction. Monitoring and evaluation of the success of the strategy have commenced with some early positive signs coming through staff feedback. The Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) and chief officers will shortly receive an update on the impact of the strategy as we approach the one-year anniversary.

[Brett Nielsen: Assistant Director - Resources](#)

S1. Utilise the skills and resources of businesses to increase volunteering and corporate social responsibility primarily through Darlington Cares

In the last quarter of the year, Darlington Cares rapidly recovered from the limitations faced through Covid. The existing programme continued to reboot whilst the Board explored other areas it could focus on. In particular, it is exploring how it can join forces with the Council and other agencies to help planting trees and other biodiversity action. A well-attended networking event, celebrating 10 years of Darlington Cares, was held on 24th March. From that and increased awareness of Darlington Cares, four new members have been recruited, including Amazon.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Dton Partnership

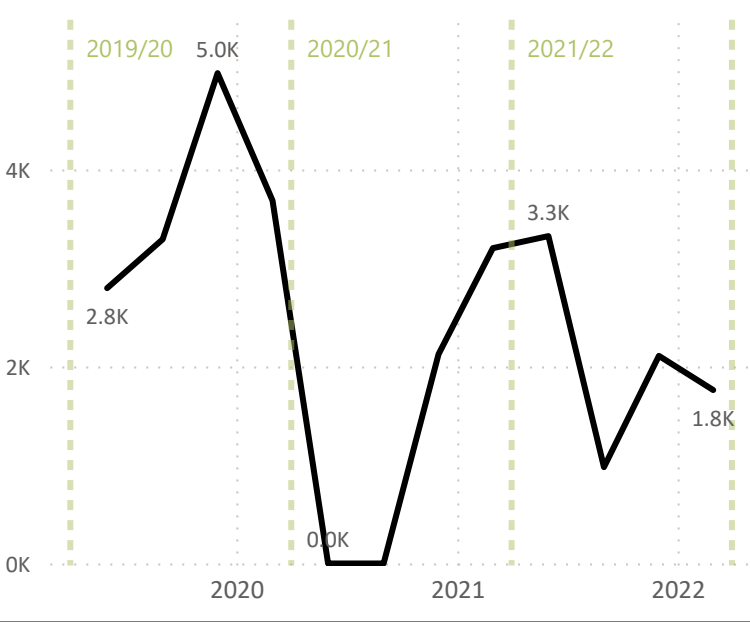
Number of Darlington Cares members

Year	Month	Value
2020	March	24
	June	24
	September	24
	December	24
2021	March	24
	June	26
	September	26
2022	March	30

Whilst in and out of lockdown, Darlington Cares members were unable to allow their staff to volunteer due to the restrictions and health and safety concerns. This resulted in new membership stalling. However, as all restrictions have now been lifted, we were able to arrange a networking event for new members and have face to face meetings with potential members. This has resulted in a huge increase in membership and the biggest increase we have seen since the programme began.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Dton Partnership

Number of Darlington Cares volunteer hours (quarterly)



Since all restrictions have been lifted, all members have now been able to release their staff which has seen a steady increase in the amount of volunteer hours undertaken. We have slowly been able to get all previous projects back up and running and even have plans for new ones.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Dton Partnership

S2. Produce, deliver and appraise a pilot for a local neighbourhood renewal scheme including reviewing the approach to private sector landlord operations to ensure residents are best supported and protected

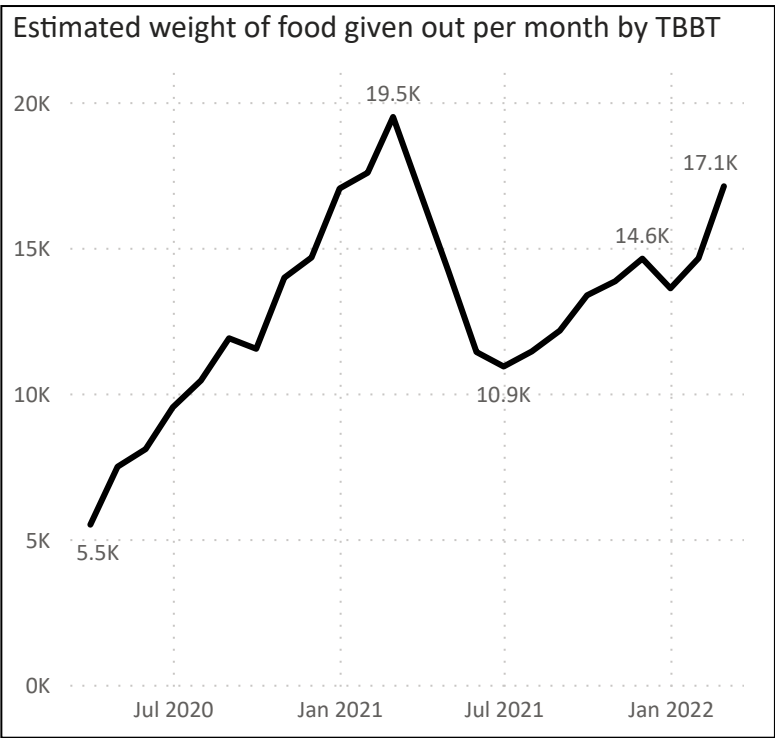
The Northgate Initiative continues to evolve and deliver. A data dashboard is in the final stages of development which provides insight into areas where Northgate performance is out of line with the rest of Darlington and nationally. It being used by workstreams to inform the focus of their actions which are being compiled in a live action plan. The dashboard will also allow progress over time to be tracked.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Dton Partnership

S3. Work with partners to address food instability

The Bread and Butter Thing (TBBT) continues to deliver effectively across Darlington with each of its hubs at, or nearing, capacity. This is an ever more important resource as the cost of living rises.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Dton Partnership



TBBT has gone from strength to strength over the past year, with eight hubs now operating across Darlington. A strong team of volunteers, with a working total of 4850 volunteer hours, have supported the growth of the scheme which has been critical to families in making life affordable.

As of March 2022, TBBT have given out 24,487 bags, which equates to 294,000kg of food or 700,000 meals. The popularity of TBBT is steadily on the increase, with plans of opening an additional two satellite hubs in smaller communities over the coming months.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Dton Partnership

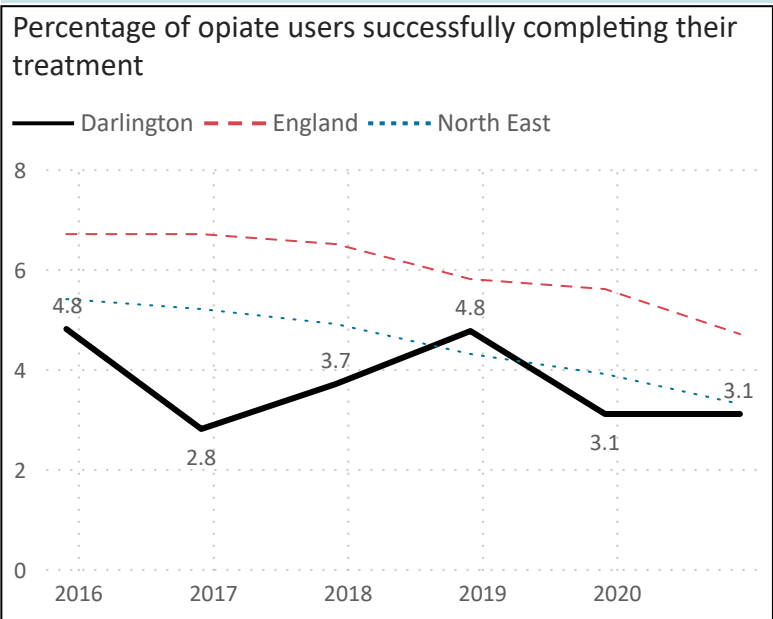
S4. Embed the new Community Safety service and review its effectiveness and priorities

A review of the Civic Enforcement team's priorities was carried out at the beginning of 2021, to inform a refreshed service plan. Ongoing management of the service's resources versus priorities is being kept under review with the portfolio holder. Following the review, the Civic Enforcement team continues to focus on three key areas of work: anti-social behaviour, environmental crime and parking enforcement, and there has been a particular focus in recent months on back lanes and environmental crime.

Working in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) office and the police, a number of successful funding bids to rounds 1, 2 and 3 of Safer Streets will be bringing in additional resources. These resources will address specific areas of concern, those caused by geographical areas and the implementation of the initiative to make the town safer for women and girls.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

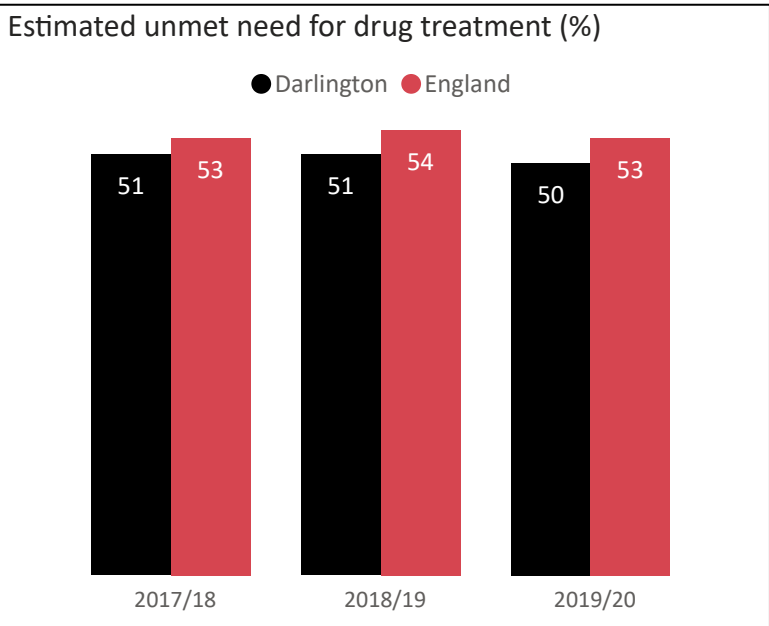
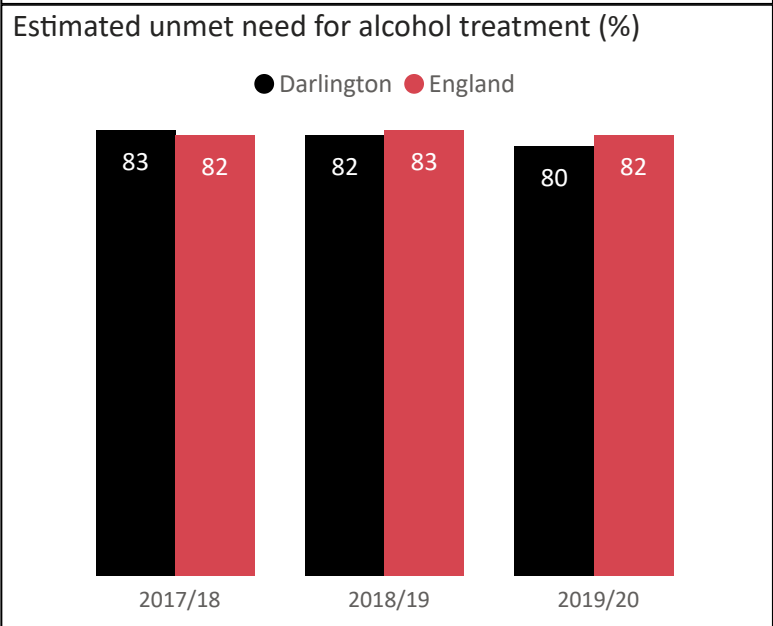
S5. Work with Durham Constabulary and other key partners to improve our collective response to dealing with drug and alcohol issues



Darlington remains statistically similar to our neighbouring North East authorities for the proportion of opiate users successfully completing drug treatment, despite a small drop in the overall number of individuals who are successfully completing treatment.

The slight fall follows a period of sustained increase over the previous two years and occurred during a period of change where local services in Darlington were reprocured through a competitive tendering process. Performance issues have been identified and are being tackled by the service's providers and it is hoped this will lead to further increases for this measure going forward.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health



The estimated proportions of adults in need of alcohol and/or drugs (opiates and/or crack) treatment that are estimated not to be in it is lower in Darlington than the England averages and have been falling.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

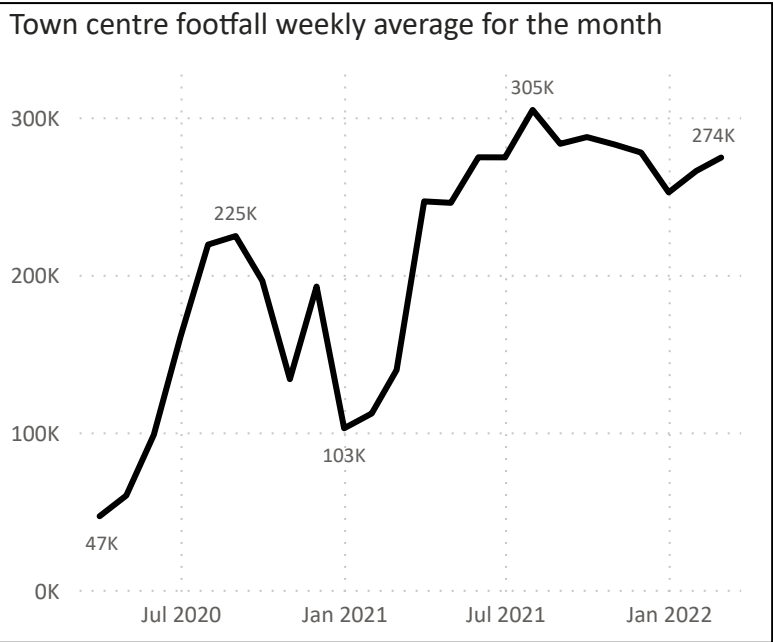
S6. Support the development of the town centre economy by putting appropriate measures in place and demonstrating it is a safe place to visit

Purple flag re-accreditation was successful, demonstrating that Darlington Town centre is safe and vibrant, with a well-managed and supported night-time economy. Both crime and Anti-Social Behaviour were down on pre-Covid levels within the town centre. The community safety team continue to work closely with the town centre team and wider town centre partners.

The public space protection order (PSPO) for the town centre ended in February 2022 and consultation took place during March and April 2022 with regard to renewing the PSPO, which will be considered by cabinet in June 2022.

We are developing a Hub on Skinnergate to provide a place of safety, primarily for women and girls but also for vulnerable people. It will be open between 9pm and 3am on Friday and Saturday evenings and should be open from early July.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services



Using the information provided by the Springboard footfall counters, the footfall in Darlington has increased in comparison to 2020/21 figures and continues to follow this trend for the 2021/22 period. Some restrictions with face masks were reintroduced in November and December 2021. The events team have continued to schedule a variety of events and town centre animation to encourage visitors to the town centre. We will continue to review and monitor the footfall data. Darlington has welcomed a number of new independent retailers to the town centre and the continued works programme with the Towns Fund is improving shop fronts within the Skinnergate and Yards areas.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

S7. Review our approach to the use of CCTV in supporting community safety and work with partners to enhance the service further

One of the outcomes of the initial work carried out was to review the public space CCTV cameras and transmission system. This has been carried out resulting in a proposal to replace 74 of the 122 cameras, which are the older analogue cameras, where the quality is poor and the images are a lot softer than the newer cameras available today. The review also recommended introducing a wireless network to replace the leased fibre circuits.

Cabinet will consider a report on the replacement programme in June 2022 and, subject to their approval, the CCTV cameras will be updated in 22/23.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director Community Services

S8. Oversee the implementation of the council’s equality policy

Percentage of staff who have completed equality and diversity training

March 2022

54.1%

The 2-year training programme commenced in January 2020. COVID significantly delayed a lot of the training, but to date it has been delivered to over 1,000 current staff plus casual staff. Over 100 people who have now left the organisation also received the training.

Following the easing of COVID restrictions towards the end of this reporting period, the proportion of in-person sessions, as opposed to online training, has increased. This has provided the opportunity to train staff who have little or no access to the corporate ICT network, many of whom are based within the community services area of the council. Sessions are being arranged to fit in with the working patterns of different teams, including outside of normal office hours, to help increase participation and completion. Several managers have requested full team training sessions which will further help with uptake. The percentage of current staff trained has increased from 51.5% since the last period, however the calculation has been adjusted to reflect the percentage of the current workforce and no longer includes people who have been trained but subsequently left the organisation.

Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Comm

Percentage of elected members who have completed equality and diversity training

March 2022

76.0%

Online training sessions have been offered to all councillors, both during the day and in the evening to fit around scheduling needs. The indicator, which has increased from 68%, includes members who have completed at least one of two distinct and bespoke training sessions on equality and diversity on offer.

Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Comm

S9. Work with partners to assess flood risk for Darlington and develop solutions

Strong partnership and project teams are in place, developing two studies that will inform and assist future planning, investment and bidding opportunities. Operational meetings occur on a regular basis between the Environment Agency and council officers. Indicative funding of £6m has been allocated for delivery of projects. The two studies that are taking place are:

- The Darlington Northumbria Integrated Drainage Partnership (NIDP) study. This is assessing all areas across the north and south Darlington catchments to determine risks and issues in relation to flood for the Environment Agency (EA), Northumbrian Water Limited (NWL) and the Council. The outcome will be evidence for a plan of interventions for the highest priority locations to inform bids to secure funding.
- Flood Asset Risk Study. This is looking at the risks and impact associated with the possible failure or blockage of key assets such as bridges and culverts to determine investment and maintenance strategies to minimise the risk of flooding. The outcome of the study will be evidence to inform bids to secure funding or re-prioritise existing resources.