

Darlington Borough Council

Council Plan Performance Management Report

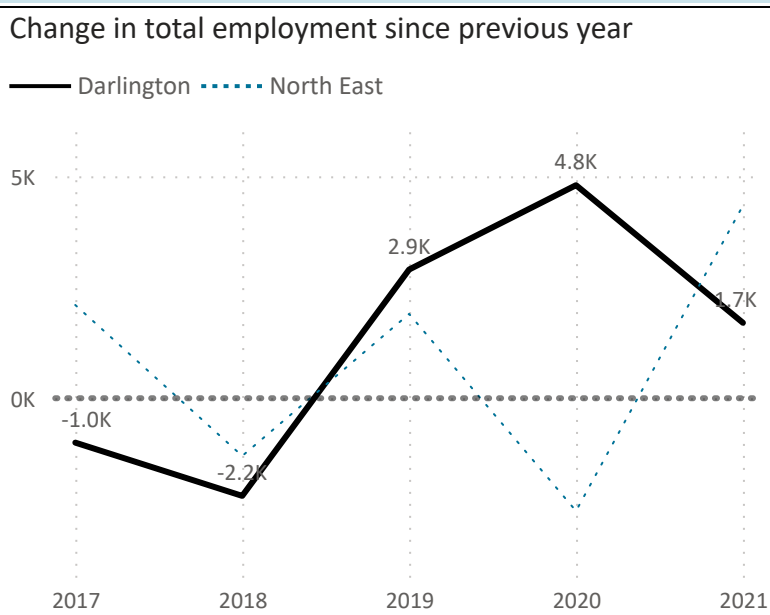
2022/23 Quarter 2

This report outlines council performance up to the end of the second quarter of the 2022/23 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. Despite the on-going challenges presented by the covid pandemic, the number of new additional employment opportunities continued to increase in 2021, although at a slower rate than the regional rate. The rate in Darlington has remained consistently positive for the last 4 years, demonstrating a level of resilience in the local economy

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

Number of people employed including self-employed

Year	Month	Darlington
2019	December	48,700
2020	March	48,800
	June	48,400
	September	48,700
	December	49,100
2021	March	48,100
	June	49,800
	September	49,400
	December	50,100
2022	March	50,200
	June	49,800

The number of people employed (including self-employed) now stands at 49,800 (a slight reduction on the previous quarter). However, the overall trend is showing a gradual increase, as the economy grows from the challenges of the pandemic. This growth is not as rapid as the number of employees indicator, as new firm formation levels and therefore numbers of self employed are not growing at a similar rate to the stand alone number of employees.

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

Number of employees

Year	Month	Darlington
2019	December	42,300
2020	March	43,300
	June	43,300
	September	43,400
	December	44,100
2021	March	43,000
	June	44,300
	September	44,200
	December	44,900
2022	March	45,200
	June	44,800

The long-term trend shows the number of employees in Darlington continues to grow, and in early 2022, recorded more than 45,000 employees in the Borough as post covid confidence returns and demand for goods and services increased.. During Covid, the levels fluctuated in response to the various national restrictions that were in place at different times. The latest figure for June 2022 show a slight reduction to 44,800. This decline could be linked to the wider economic climate.

[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	459	510	459

Darlington resident median weekly incomes increased in 2021. The rate of increase in Darlington between 2020 and 2021 was 7%, higher than the North-East rate (4.5%) and the England rate (5%). This increase reverses the impact of the covid pandemic, where median weekly incomes fell in 2020. The long term trend for this measure projects year-on-year increases.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

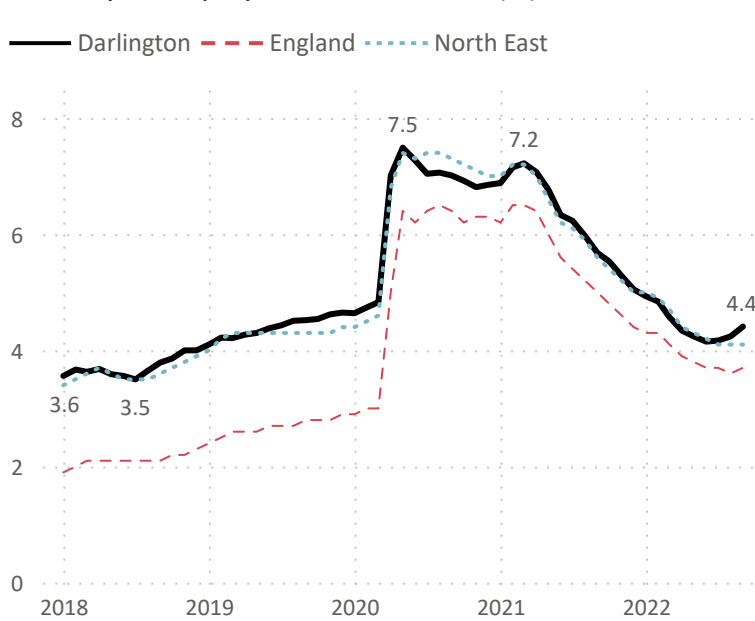
Median weekly full-time employee based earnings

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	502	510	464

Darlington employee median weekly incomes increased from £435 in 2020 to £502 in 2021. The rate of increase in Darlington between 2020 and 2021 was 15.5%, higher than the North-East rate (6%) and the England rate (5%). This demonstrates a significant improvement from 2020, and shows how employee earnings are recovering from the impact of the pandemic. In addition, this improvement reduces the gap between the Darlington and England rates. Darlington employee median weekly incomes are now 98.5% of the England rate, compared to the North East rate of 91%.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Monthly unemployed claimant count (%)

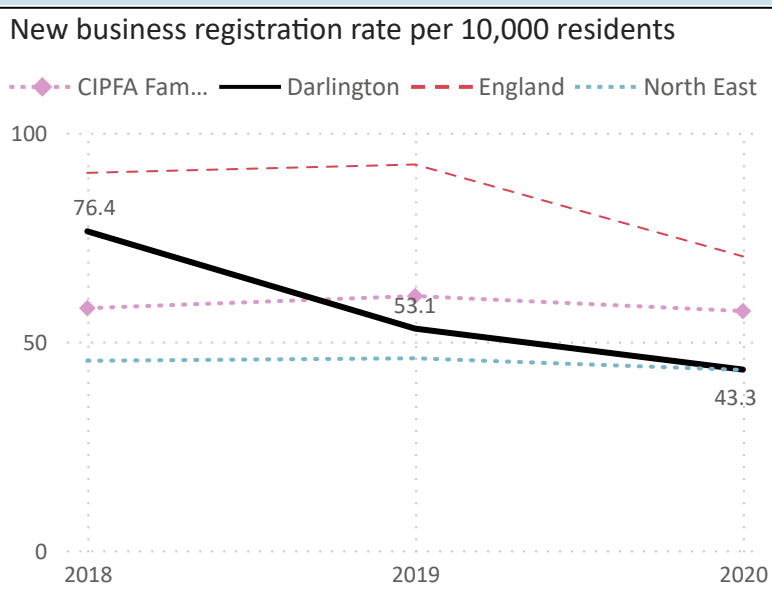


Throughout 2022, the monthly unemployed claimant count has steadily decreased up to July 2022 – a trend which is mirrored in both regional and national statistics. These decreases have reduced the claimant count to a level similar to pre-pandemic rates. Since July 2022, consecutive increases have been recorded, with the claimant count in September 2022 now standing at 4.4%. The claimant count rate will be impacted by the current business environment, where rising costs and low business confidence mean that many businesses are generally stagnating on growth plans, reviewing operating costs and suspending recruitment and taking on new staff.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

1. GROWING DARLINGTON'S ECONOMY

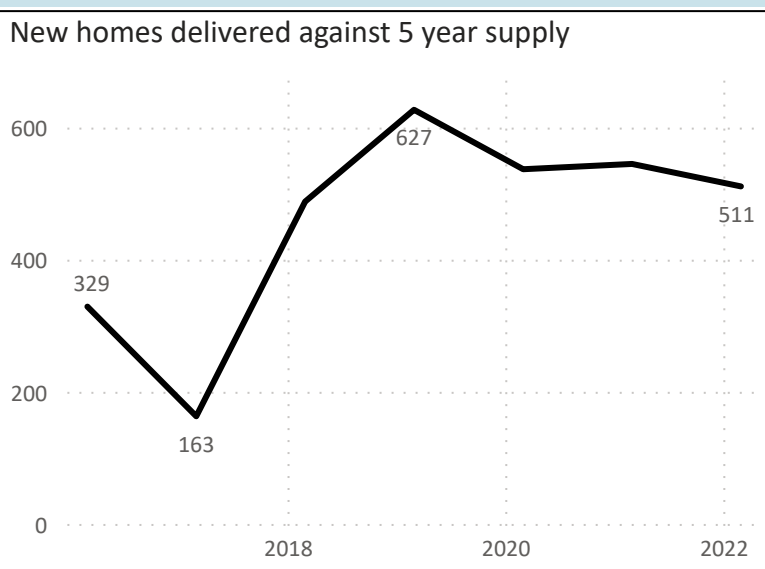
1.2 Delivering - More businesses



New business formation rates have fallen in Darlington since 2018, a trend mirrored by the rate for England. The data shows figures up to 2020. There are mix of local and national reasons for this decline. Nationally, the UK's withdrawal from the EU, political uncertainty, and changing start-up support structures have all had an impact. Locally, the continued growth in alternative employment opportunities will impact the motivation for many new business start-ups. These figures do not take account of the impacts of the pandemic and the rising costs of living.

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. 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 (Nitrates) into the River Tees or its tributaries. This is continuing to 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%
	June	91.8%
	September	89.9%

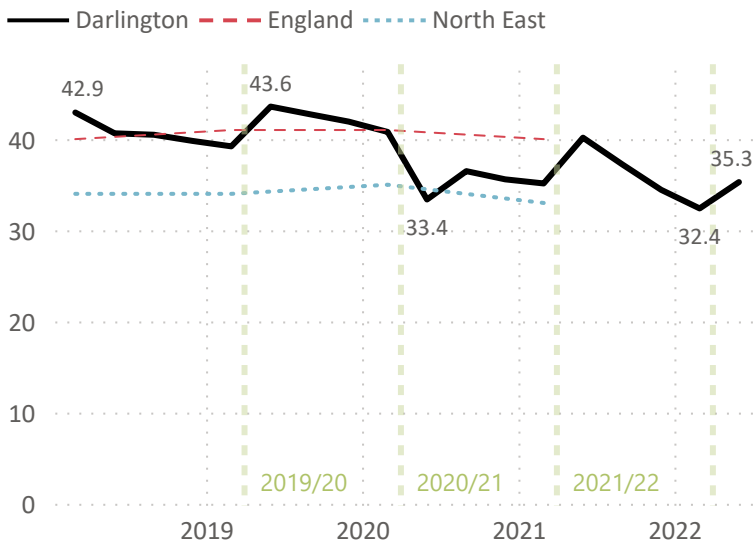
Environmental Health in Q1, Q2 and Q3 2022 investigated 256 complaints of accumulations of refuse on private land. In the first instance, for the majority of cases involving refuse accumulations in yards / gardens, a Community Protection Warning is issued requiring disposal of the refuse in a proper manner and these have proved to be successful. For those cases where the refuse has not been removed enforcement action is considered prioritising refuse which is causing a public health nuisance e.g. household refuse.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

1. GROWING DARLINGTON'S ECONOMY

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

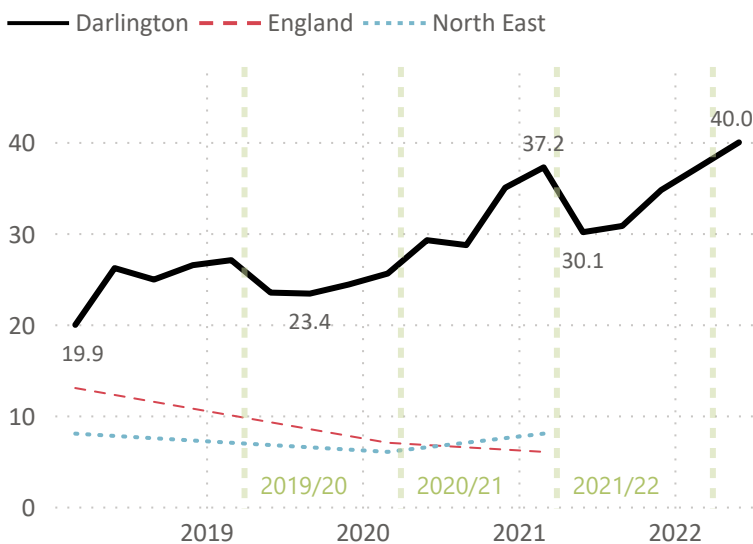
Percentage of household waste that is collected that is either reused, recycled or composted



Data for the proportion of local household waste reused, recycled or composted is only available up Quarter 1 of this year, as the information is reported through a national system which has a lag as data is verified. The Quarter 1 is lower than previous year 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

Percentage of overall waste that is collected by the Council that is landfilled

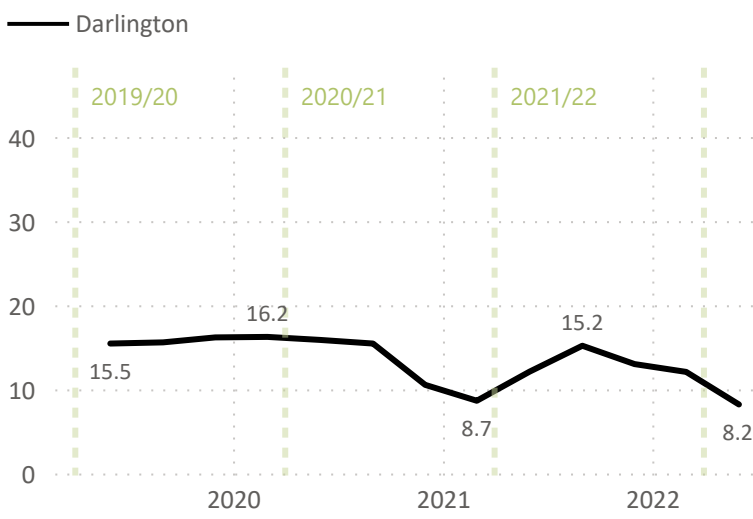


Data is only available until Quarter 31 due to the lag in data verification through the national system. The percentage of household waste landfilled in the first quarter was 40%

There are fluctuations over the years as there is a relationship with levels of recycling and waste sent to energy recovery. The upward trend in landfill since Covid-19 is a result of available markets to send waste to energy recovery therefore remaining residual waste after recycling and composting has to be landfilled.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Percentage of overall waste that is collected by the Council that is used for energy recovery

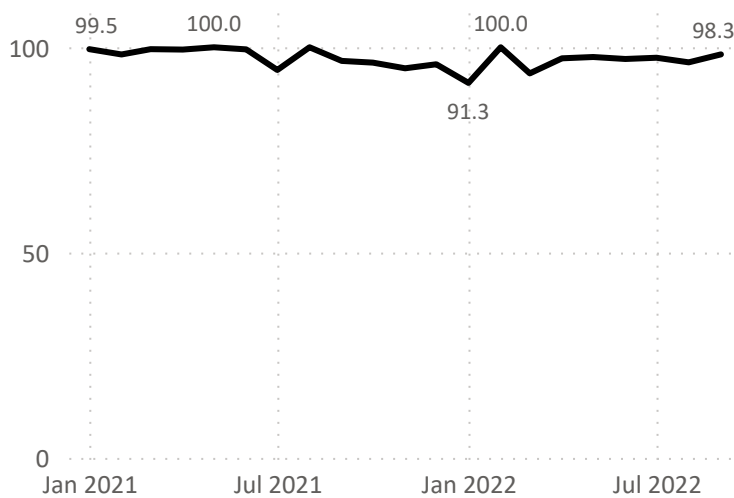


Data is only available until Quarter 1 to due to the lag in the verification process. The percentage of household waste sent to energy recovery in Quarter 1 was 8.2%. This figure will always vary depend on the availability in the markets to send waste to energy recovery post treatment. In Q1 the amount 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

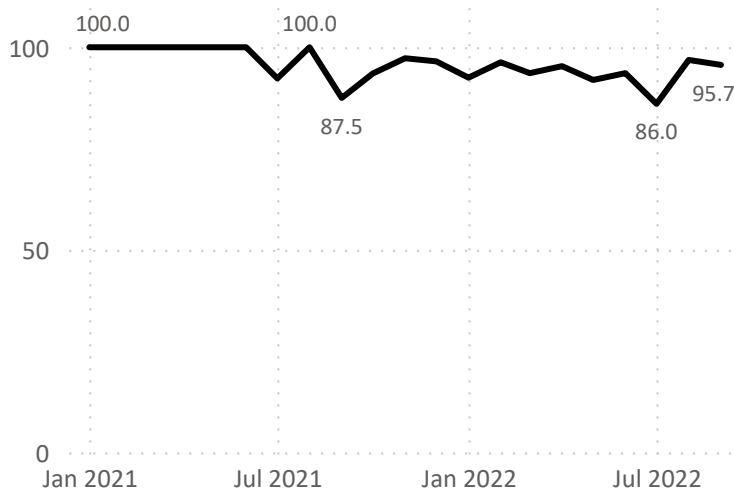
Percentage of small fly tips removed within target time (reported monthly)



The performance of street cleansing teams remains very high with an average since April 2022 of 97.36% of small fly tips removed within their target time. The introduction of an additional back lane crew has made a significant difference to the time fly tips are collected with the majority being collected in under 5 days with a significant number of those in under 2 days.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

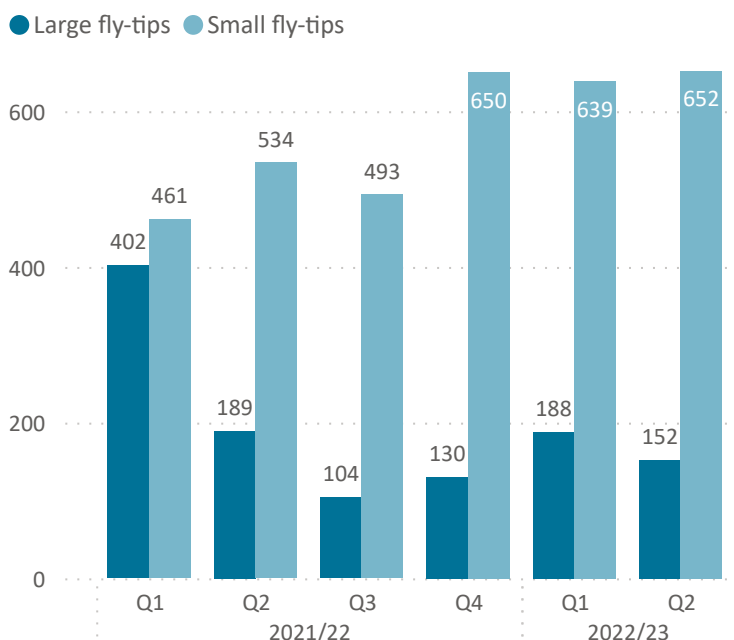
Percentage of large fly tips removed within target time (reported monthly)



The performance of street cleansing teams remains very high with an average of 93.24% of large fly tips removed within their target time. The introduction of an additional back lane crew has made a significant difference to the time fly tips are collected with the majority being collected in under 5 days with a significant number of those in under 2 days.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Number of fly-tips reported in quarter



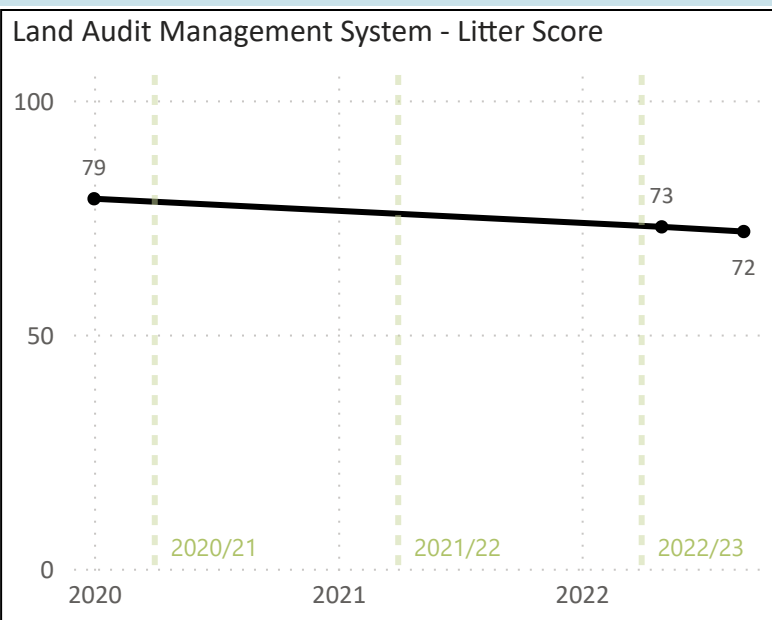
In comparison to Quarter 2 period for 2021/22 the combined number of large and small fly-tips has increased by 11%. The number of large has dropped by 19.6% where as the number of small has risen by 22%. For both quarters in 2022/23 the total number of fly-tips has been above 800 with the number of large fly-tips falling and small fly-tips rising in Quarter 2.

The categories of fly-tips were amended from April 2021 to match those in Fly-capture, a statutory recording system in which DBC reports the number and type of fly-tips to DEFRA and a new recording system was introduced.

Work continues to take place on the back lanes project to reduce the amount of side waste left out in back lanes.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

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

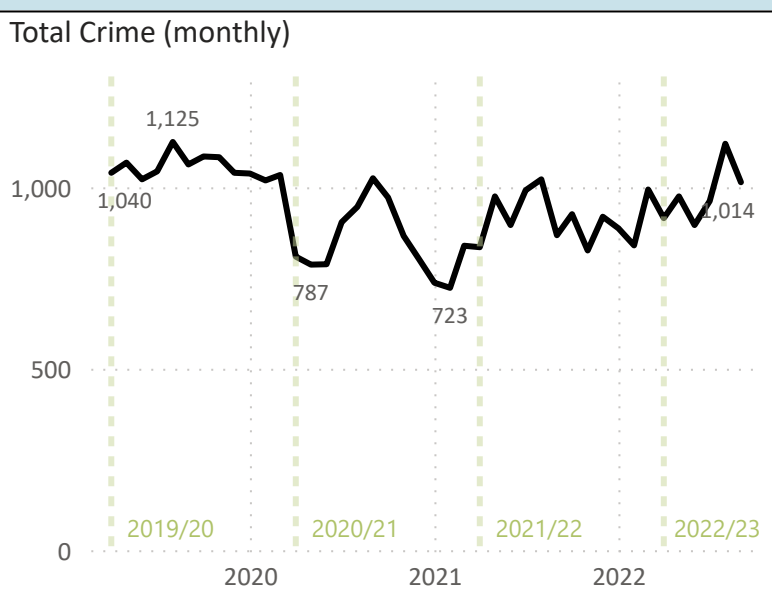


This is a rolling average percentage score of the 40 transects inspected for litter every other month, as defined by the APSE's Land Audit Management System grading system and covering all wards of the borough.

After a several month break due to Covid the Inspections were able to resume in August 2021. The overall average has remained consistent over the first two quarters of 2022/23. Street Scene has continued to assist with the Civic Enforcement back lane project which incorporates litter picking of the front street as well as the back lane.

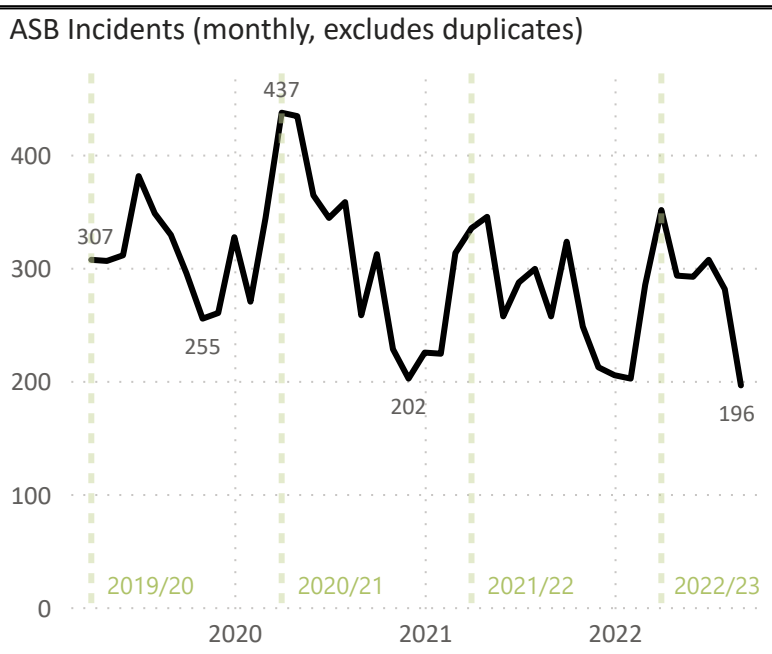
Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

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



Recorded crime for 2022/23 increased 3% from the same period last year. However, it was still 10% lower than the same period pre-pandemic, in 2019/20. The types of reported crime showing increases can be attributed to Theft and Burglary (residential and business). 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

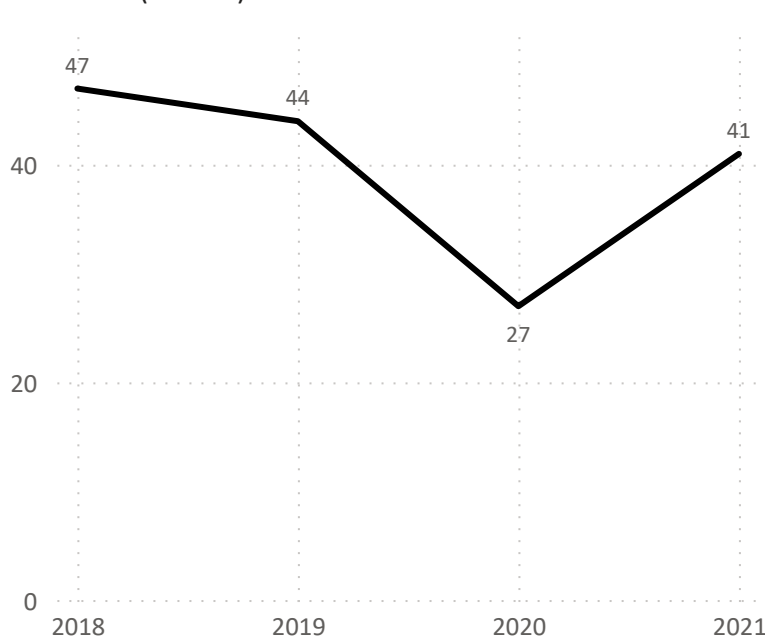


The rate of reported antisocial behaviour (ASB) incidents across the borough has decreased by 6% compared to the same period last year. However, the Council continues to be proactive in addressing issues. Over the past quarter, for example, incidents of youths causing antisocial behaviour, by way of throwing objects at passing vehicles or properties, in areas to the east of Darlington has been the priority for the Community Safety team. Civic Enforcement officers have increased patrols in identified 'hot spot' areas and several youths have been identified. The Civic Enforcement team have issued warnings and if appropriate ABAs (Acceptable Behaviour Agreements) to individuals.

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)



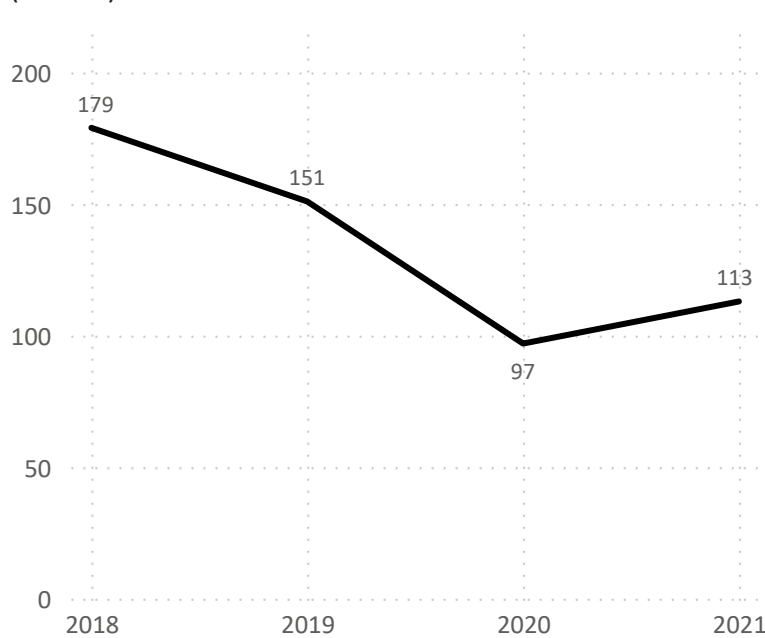
Casualties are monitored annually over a calendar year. The casualty indicators use a five-year average (2010/2014) for their baseline. For killed or seriously injured (KSI), this is 34.2.

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.

Of the 41 Killed or seriously injured on our roads in 2021, there were 0 fatalities.

[Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects](#)

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.

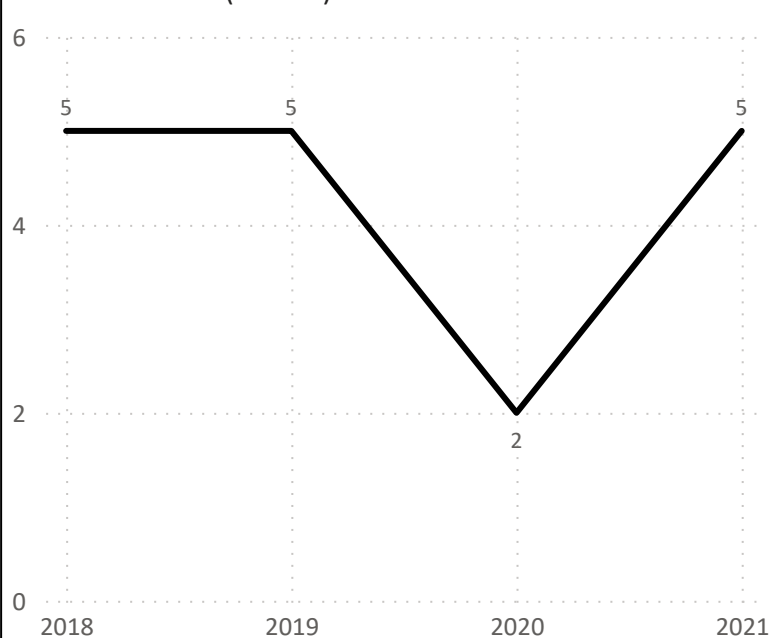
2021 shows an increase over 2020. However, 2020 is a statistical outlier due to the impact of Covid-19 on traffic levels (15% of normal traffic levels at its lowest). Based on the years prior to Covid-19, we are still seeing a substantial reduction which has been sustained over time, and this level is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

We continue to invest in road safety education and through our Local Transport Plan, we continue to invest in speed management and casualty reduction schemes.

[Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects](#)

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

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



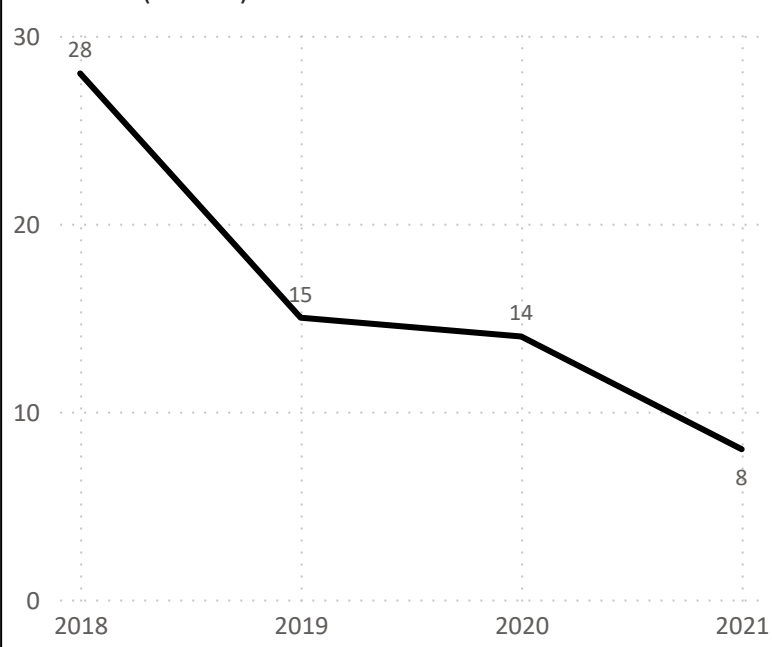
Casualties are monitored annually over a calendar year. The casualty indicators use a five-year average (2010/2014) for their baseline. For children killed or seriously injured (KSI), this is 3.6.

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 at the same level which remains above the baseline. However, there have been no child fatalities since 2013.

Through our Local Transport Plan, we continue to invest in speed management and casualty reduction schemes.

[Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects](#)

Number of children 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 child slight casualties, this is 34.2.

2021 shows a decrease over 2020 and continues the trend of reduction over the longer term. At 8, this is significantly below the baseline and a sustained downward trend.

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: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects](#)

1. GROWING DARLINGTON'S ECONOMY

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

Male healthy life expectancy at birth

Year	Darlington	England	North East
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

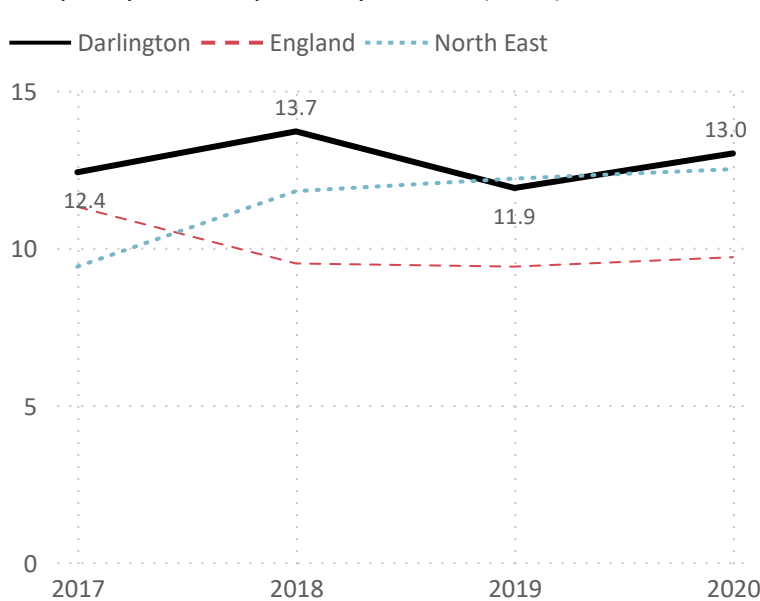
Female healthy life expectancy at birth

Year	Darlington	England	North East
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)

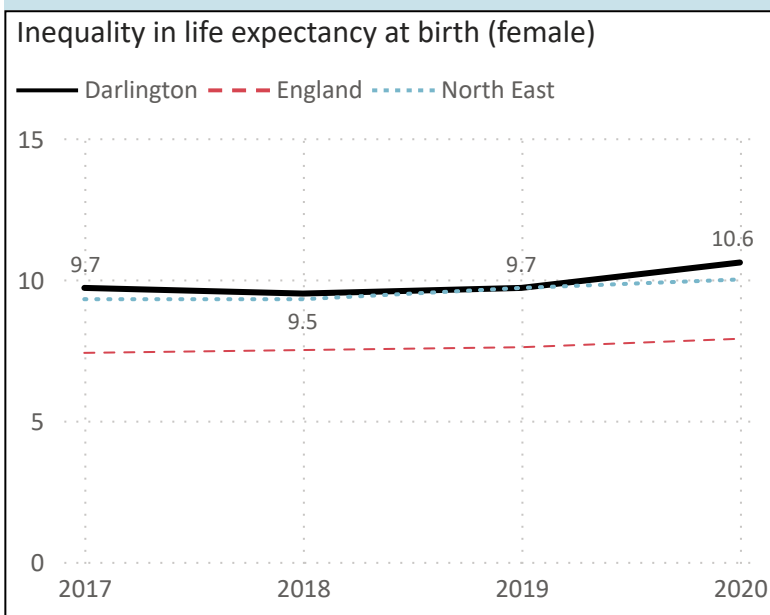


Inequality in life expectancy at birth for males in Darlington has widened in 2020, from 11.9 (2019) to 13.0 years, and is worse than the England. Compared to the North East region Darlington is statistically similar in line with the North East average.

Life expectancy at birth is a measure of the average number of years a person would expect to live based on contemporary mortality rates. This graph shows that a baby boy born in the most deprived area on average can expect to live 13 years less than a girl born into the least deprived area of Darlington. For England this would be a difference of 9.7 years.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

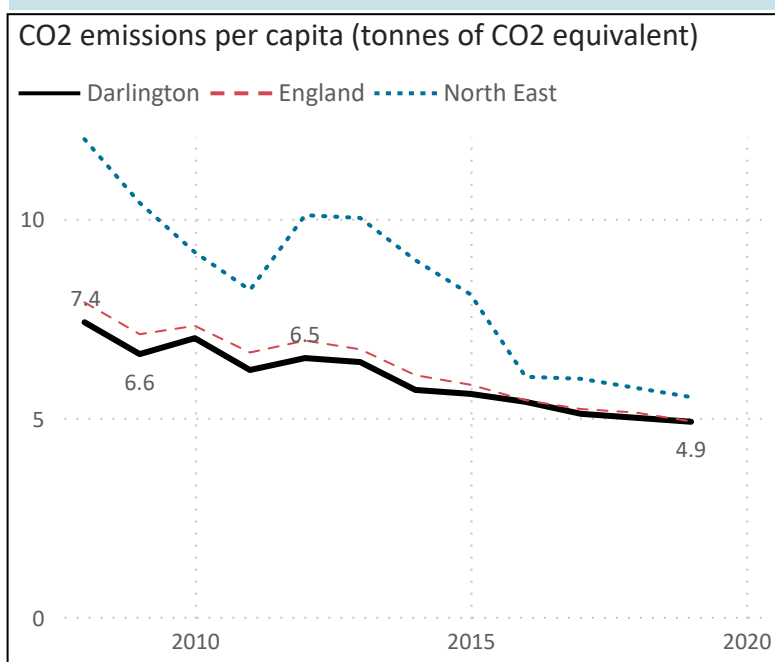
1.6 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Healthy



Inequality in life expectancy at birth for females in Darlington widened in 2020, from 9.7 (2019) to 10.6 years, and is worse than the England. Compared to the North East region Darlington is statistically similar in line with the North East average. Life expectancy at birth is a measure of the average number of years a person would expect to live based on contemporary mortality rates. This graph shows that a baby girl born in the most deprived area on average can expect to live 10.6 years less than a girl born into the least deprived area of Darlington. For England this would be a difference of 7.9 years.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

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

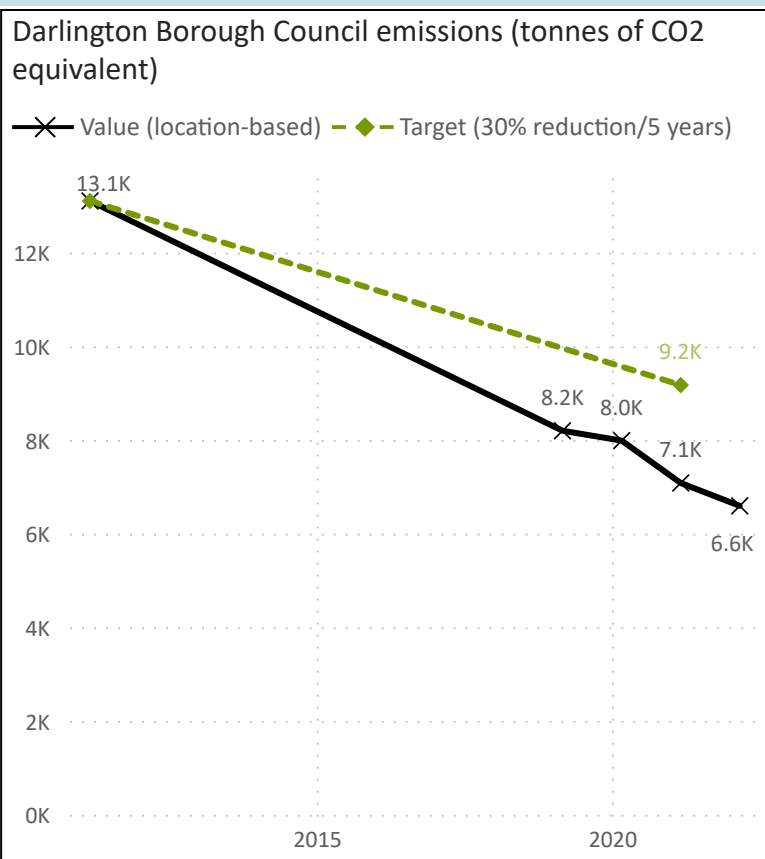


The graph shows emissions per capita. For Darlington, this is slightly below both the national average and the average for the North East. Emissions for the whole of Darlington, in 2019 were 486,000 tonnes. We continue to work with businesses and are developing the information and advice available to residents. An event will be held in the Town Centre in mid-2023, with events for families, information for residents and advice for businesses. A young people's page has been 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. GROWING DARLINGTON'S ECONOMY

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



The graph shows our progress against our target trajectory. We report electricity emissions using both location-based and market-based reporting as is considered good practice. The location-based method reflects the average emissions intensity of the electricity grid. A market-based method reflects that we have chosen a zero-carbon tariff.

Progress is measured against action milestones; the majority of actions in quarter one were on target. We are examining ways of improving our reporting to ease visibility of progress.

Work continues to improve the efficiency of both corporate and residential buildings. Improvements to our council house stock are ongoing.

We have begun developing our adaptation plans, ensuring that the council is future proofed against the impacts of climate change.

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

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

Officers continue to work with Natural England to determine a way forward in which the Council can support developers to meet their Neutral Neutrality obligations.

The required Design Codes have been completed for both Burtree Garden Village (adopted Q2 2022) and Skertingham Garden Village to be presented to Council in February 2023.

The development of a new Housing Strategy has commenced. This strategy will support the ambitions of the adopted Local Plan and set out the types and tenure of housing required in the various agreed development sites within the borough. It will also encompass the need for specialist housing to meet the needs of all communities within the authority.

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

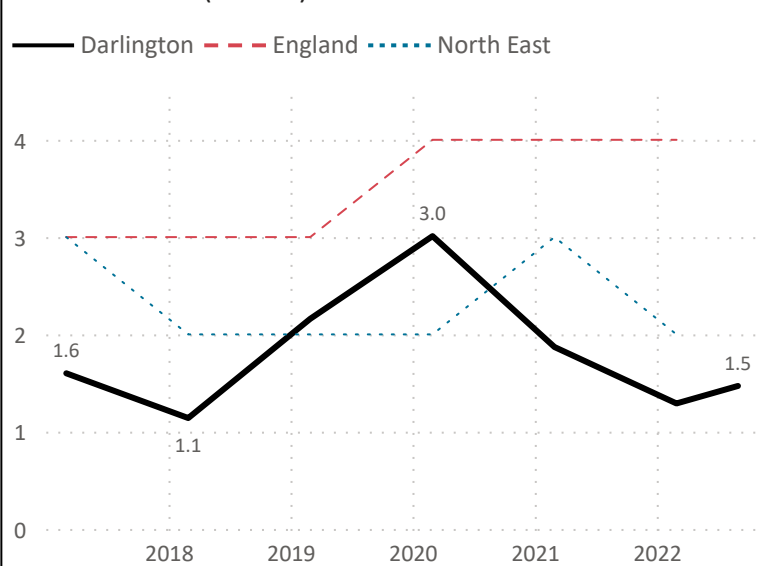
1.9 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - On the move

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, along with evidence from investigations, statutory testing and surveys, asset management planning, other data sources and Government and local policies inform our investment decisions in our transport infrastructure.

Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects

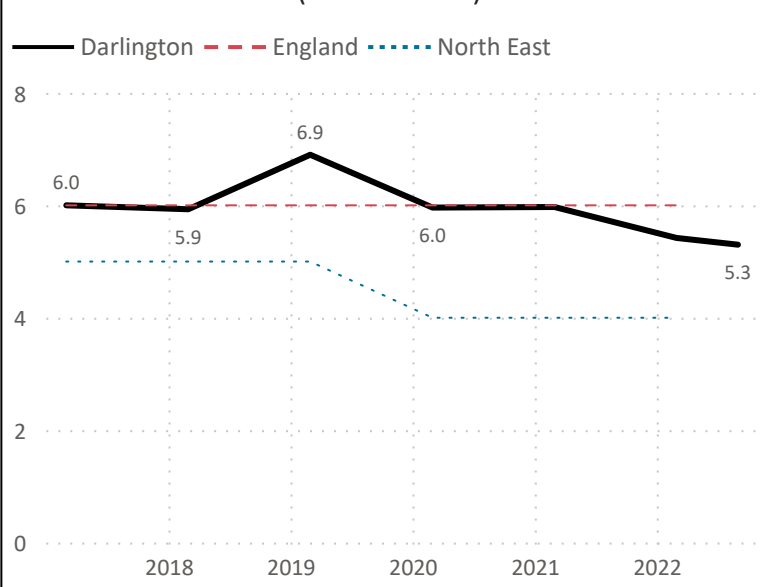
Percentage of principal roads where maintenance should be considered (A class)



We have continued with our investment in road maintenance however this year has seen a slight fall in the condition of the A-road network, with the percentage of the A-road network which needs to be considered for maintenance now being 1.47%, from 1.3% the previous year which however this is still significantly below the national and the North East averages.

Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects

Percentage of non-principal roads where maintenance should be considered (B and C class)

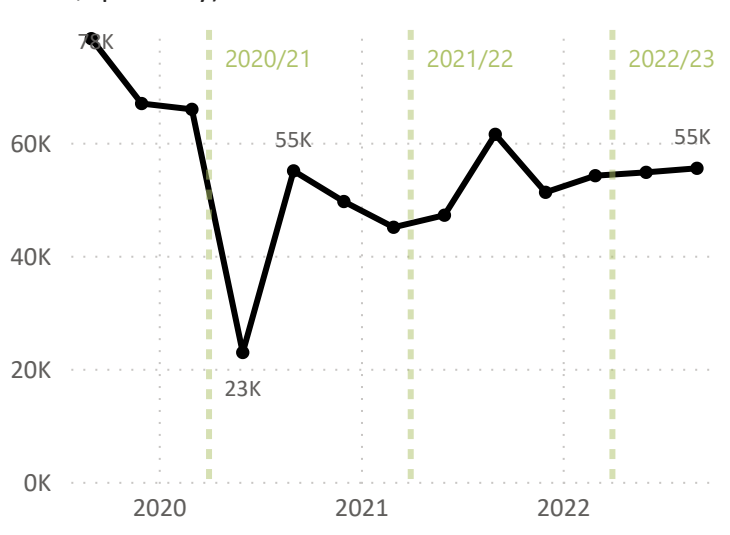


We continue to invest in B & C class roads and this has seen a slight improvement in the quality of the network. The percentage of B & C class roads where maintenance should be considered has improved and is now at 5.3%. This is an improvement on the previous year and is better than the national average. However, this remains above the north east average.

Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects

1.10 Whilst - Valuing our heritage and culture

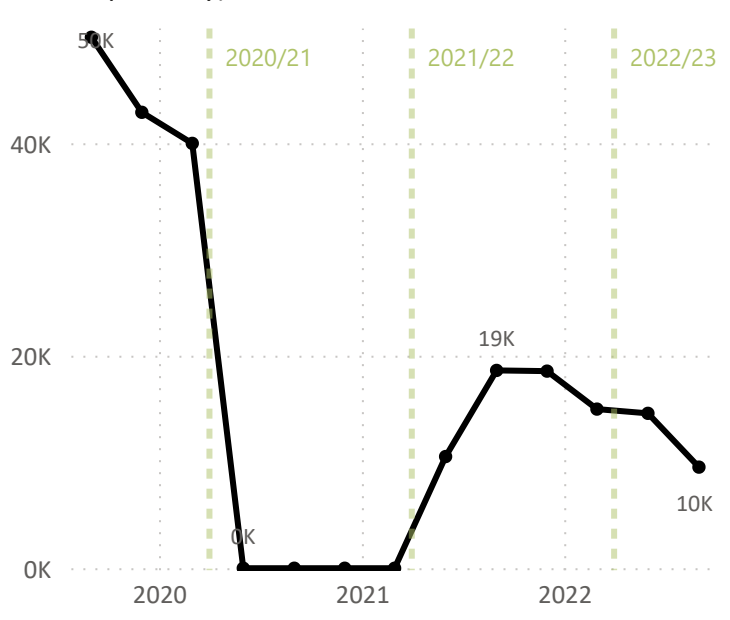
Library items borrowed (including physical and digital stock, quarterly)



The figures follow a similar level to during the pandemic, however as we would expect whilst our central library has limited access, the data tells us that more borrowing has taken place at Cockerton Library, and less at Darlington. Borrowing remains steady in part due to strategies including the Home Delivery Service, our offer to schools and nurseries, and Select and Collect.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Number of physical visits to Darlington Library (door count, quarterly)



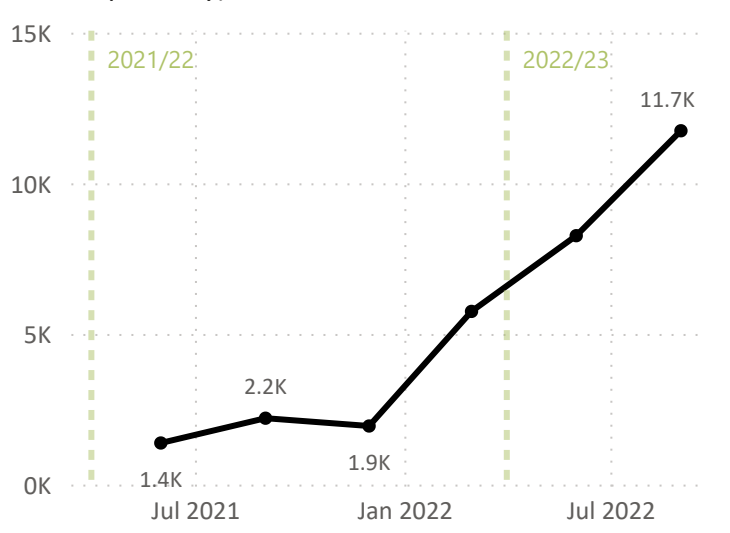
Our central library is going through major restoration works including mechanical and electrical improvements throughout the building, works to the full roof, and redecoration throughout which has included much work to restoring functional and decorative plaster to walls and ceilings.

During a period of extreme wet weather, it became unviable to continue with open access for members of the public.

Whilst staff remain working between the branch at Cockerton and the town library where resources are stored, we have opened a temporary library location point at The Dolphin Centre and offered access to additional services via telephone, email, and at our branch library in Cockerton, striving to meet the needs of our customers as best we can during this time.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Number of physical visits to Cockerton Library (door count, quarterly)



Cockerton Library remains popular, and during opening hours sees a mix of ages visiting to borrow, enjoy a school visit, a story, craft, or Lego activity, or take part in our group specifically for older people. Whilst closed, we make use of the space by offering a host of speech and language activities for young children, a watercolour group for adults, and whilst the town library is inaccessible, our Centre for Local Studies customers can visit for help with research and study. It is almost a year since we refurbished here and customers regularly report on the pleasant welcome and environment experienced at our branch.

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 has continued to improve in this period. 82.9% of pupils now attend a Good or Outstanding school. The percentage of Good or Outstanding schools in Darlington now stands at 86.2% for primary and 75% for secondary.

2021-22 saw a return to formal assessment in primary schools and external examinations and accreditation in secondary school. Partnership activity has continued this year. The Education Partnerships team facilitates communication across the sector, promotes the sharing of good practice, manages partnerships and networks across a wide range of aspects and initiates and delivers specific projects to support the quality of education. Of particular note this year has been the work to support transition between primary and secondary education through curriculum development in English and Science. In Early Years, the team was selected by DfE to deliver a pilot 'Experts and Mentors' training programme for providers.

Tony Murphy: Assistant 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

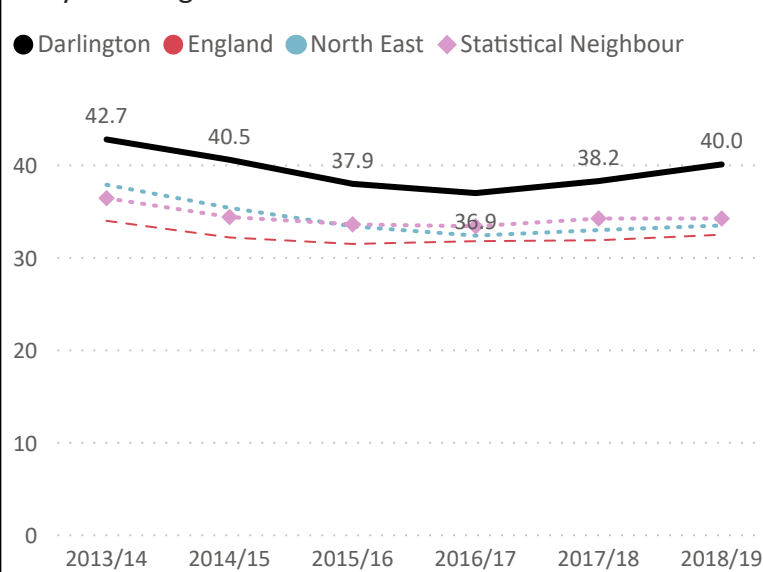
School year	Darlington	England	North East
2017/18	80.9	83.3	85.6
2018/19	91.8	84.1	87.6
2019/20	93.9	83.3	87.4
2020/21	93.9	82.9	87.2

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%

The Health Visiting service provides surveillance and monitors develop of children with their families during the mandated visits from birth. The service will also provide extra support and/or referral for any child who is perceived to be missing key developmental goals.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

Percentage inequality gap in achievement across all the Early Learning Goals



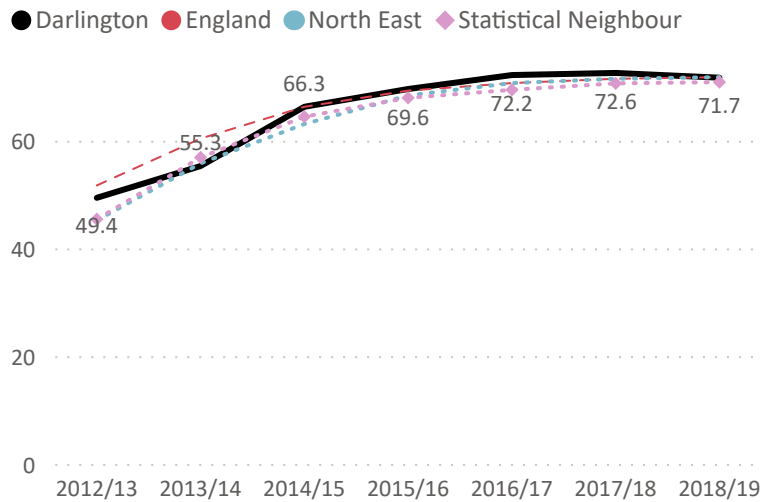
The percentage of children in Darlington schools achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception has been stable for the last 3 years reported (2017-2019), at around 72%. This is in line with comparators. The percentage of children who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and achieving 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 narrower than regional (18), national (17) and statistical neighbour (21.7) comparators.

Tony Murphy: Assistant 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)



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 (70.9%) and North East local authorities (71.8%).

Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

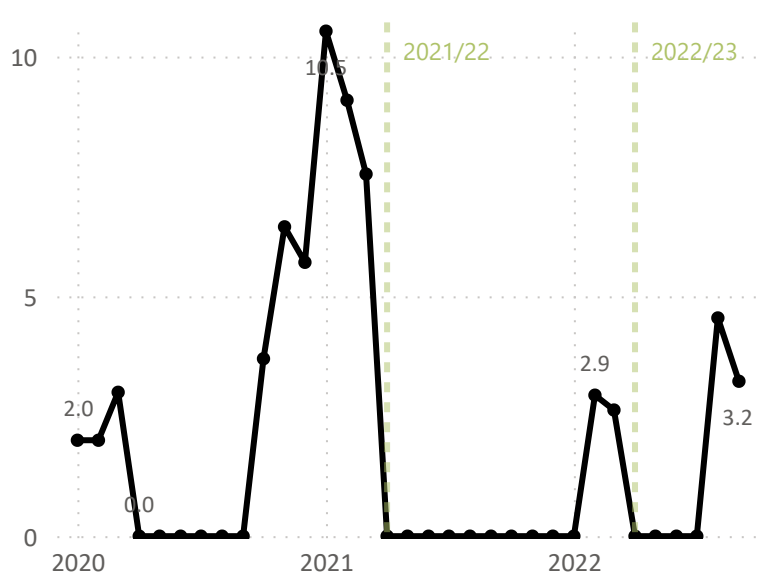
Number of First Time entrants to the Youth Justice System (quarterly)



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

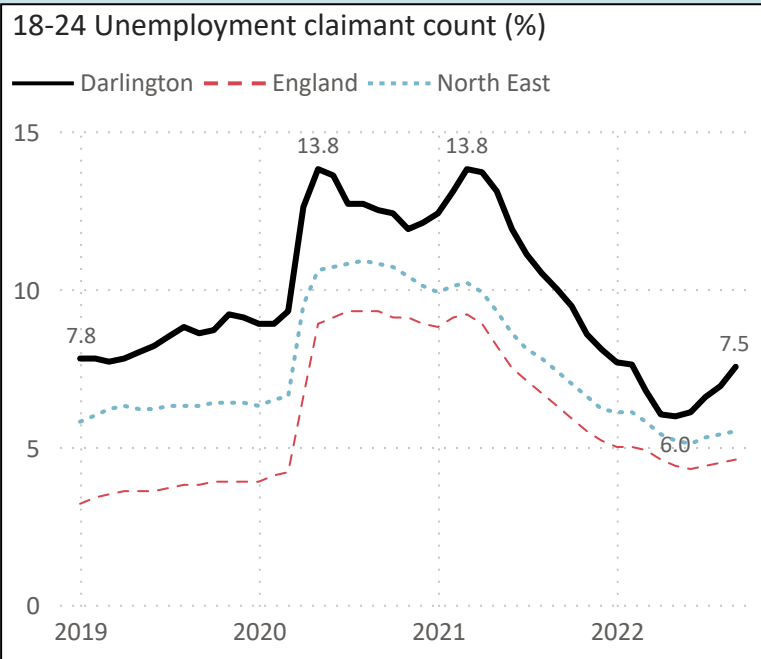


The council's Young People's Engagement & Justice Service (YPE&JS) had 31 young people referred to their service for diversionary disposals i.e. Pre Caution Disposals and Restorative Justice Disposals in the first 6 months of 2022/23. Over the same period, the team has achieved a 97% success rate in terms of those young people not going on to reoffend 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 Claimant Count now stands at 7.54%, slightly higher than 12 months ago. Throughout the early months of 2022, this claimant count continued to fall, but with recent increasing business costs such as energy, businesses have had to find ways in reducing operating costs, and this has typically been labour costs. This has had a significant impact on the 18-24 workforce, hence the recent increase.

Tony Murphy: Assistant 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%. The overall trend shows gradual improvements in the percentage of workers earning the real living wage or above. In Darlington, 1 in 5 workers are now earning less than the Real Living wage.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

3.2 Targeting services where most needed

The Household Support Fund benefitted 7,945 households during this reporting period, to a value of £909,160. 4,285 households who qualify for free school meals received food vouchers worth £135 each over the school holiday periods (£578,530). 123 care leavers received food vouchers worth £100 each (£12,300). 3,537 pensioners on low incomes and receiving Council Tax Support received a payment of £90 each to help with utilities (£318,330).

Supporting the Government scheme, council tax rebates totaling £7 million were swiftly distributed to over 50k households during Q1 and Q2 helping people cope with rising energy and living costs. Furthermore, money advice was collated and published on the council's website (www.darlington.gov.uk/moneyadvice) which included information from both the council and local organisations.

Pre-established initiatives to support local people such as The Bread and Butter Thing, the School Uniform Shop, the benefits advice collaboration with CAB, and 'Let's do digital' continued to be delivered. Some of the initiatives launched during this reporting period include a youth employment project, a summer activities programme for young people, and provision of nutritious meals for eligible children. The community also came together on a number of occasions to celebrate what Darlington has to offer with three notable examples being winning numerous Northumbria in Bloom awards, very successful pride events celebrating inclusion and diversity, and numerous Jubilee celebrations.

Initiatives planned for Q3 include a jobs and careers fair and a winter pressures advice event.

Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Communications

3.3 Working with partners

The Council has a well established group, the Public Sector Executive Group which brings together the chief officers of the major public sector agencies operating in Darlington. This group is currently focused on how agencies contribute to the Levelling Up Darlington Plan

Strong working relationships are currently being forged with the voluntary sector. A third sector liaison group has been established. To date it has provided advice on the Levelling Up Darlington plan and will be the mechanism through which a plan to deliver the priority of the Council Plan, 'Supporting the Most Vulnerable' will be co-written. Of practical importance, the group has fostered a collaboration of voluntary sector organisations which will be delivering a programme of a value of £200,000 as part of the Household Support Fund.

The Stronger Communities Board is to be launched on November 16th. Led by the Council, it will bring together civic leaders from across public, private and voluntary sectors to address the opportunities and challenges facing Darlington. The Board will also launch the Levelling Up Darlington Plan.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership

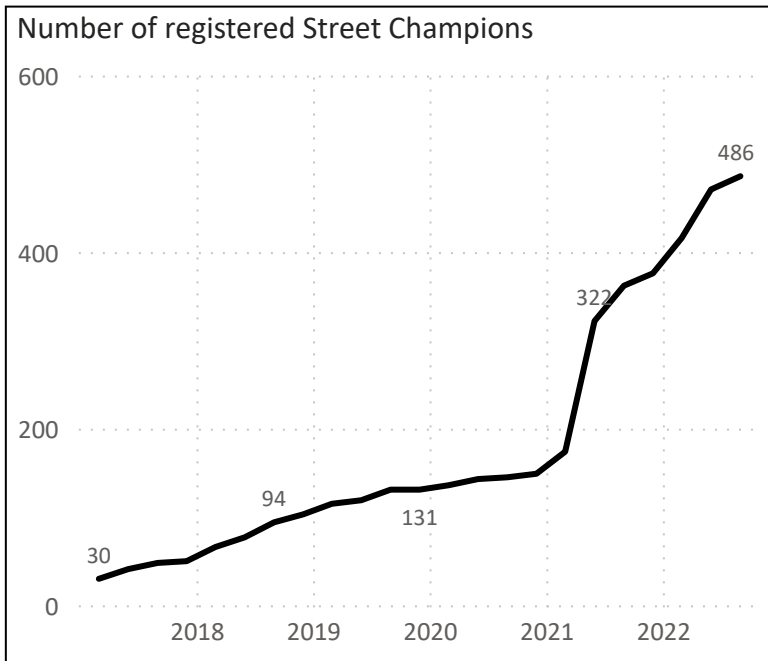
3. WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES TO MAXIMISE THEIR POTENTIAL

3.4 Working with communities

The Council has launched a plan to complement the national Levelling Up programme, ensuring that national investment generates the greatest prosperity for the people of Darlington. The focus is 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 will be a core principle of activity. The Levelling Up Darlington Plan is to be launched at the inaugural meeting of the Stronger Communities Board on November 16th.

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.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership



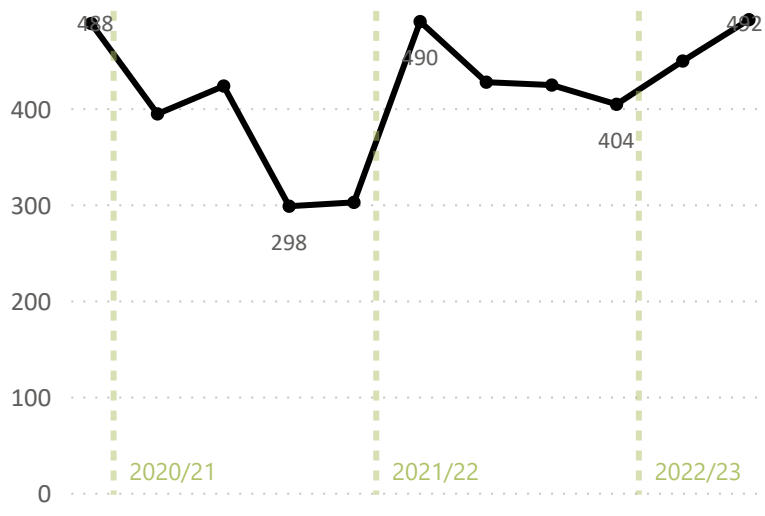
The number of street champions continues to rise steadily. There are 486 active street champions, the Big spring clean 2022 campaign was a success again and saw more volunteers sign up off the back of an organised litter pick. The scheme has also encouraged other groups to set up a regular litter picking event to improve with mental health/ wellbeing for individuals who became self-isolated during lock downs.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

4. SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE IN THE BOROUGH

4.1 Providing care and support when needed

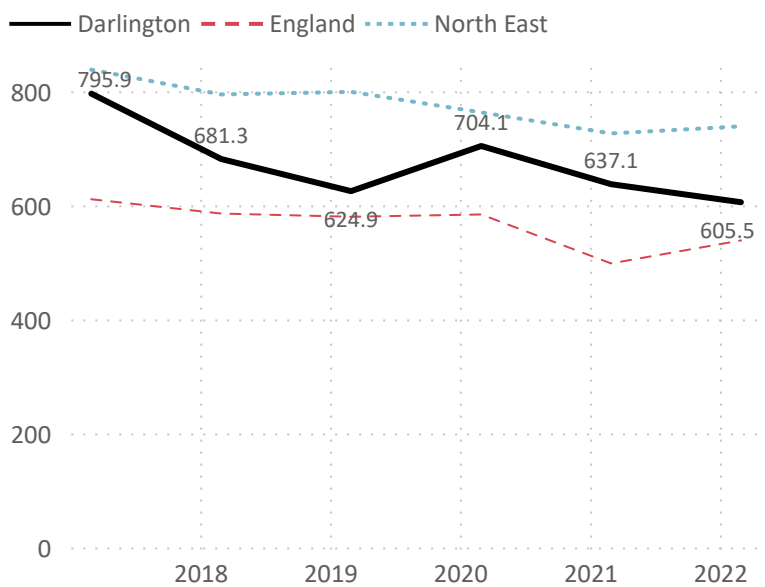
Number of people presented to Darlington Council's Homeless service



In Q2, there were 43 more clients that presented as homeless than in Q1. This is a 10% increase. There has been a rise in private landlords selling their properties and individuals being unable to afford their accommodation, resulting in becoming homeless. This is continuing to put our Housing Options service under significant pressure.

Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues

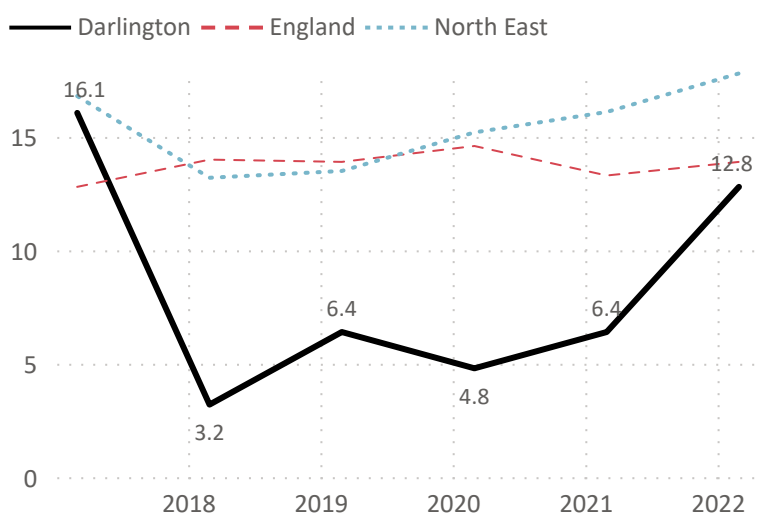
Older people admitted on a permanent basis to residential or nursing care, per 100,000 of the 65+ population



Since April 2022, the number of older people admitted to residential, or nursing care was 77 (347.9 per 100,000 population). The number of permanent admissions during the same period last year was 73 (328.9 per 100,000 population), and for 2020-21 the number was 61 (245.5 per 100,000 population). Out of the 77 older people placed into permanent residential or nursing care, 71 came from short breaks stays, this is 92% of the total number. This is an increase from the same period last year where the figure was 79%. However we are still performing well across the North East and remain on a downward trajectory of people entering long term residential care. The services are continuing to work with providers, families and people to actively reduce the number of people needing long term care and enable individuals to return to homes with appropriate support.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

Adults aged 18 - 64 admitted on a permanent basis to residential or nursing care homes, per 100,000 population

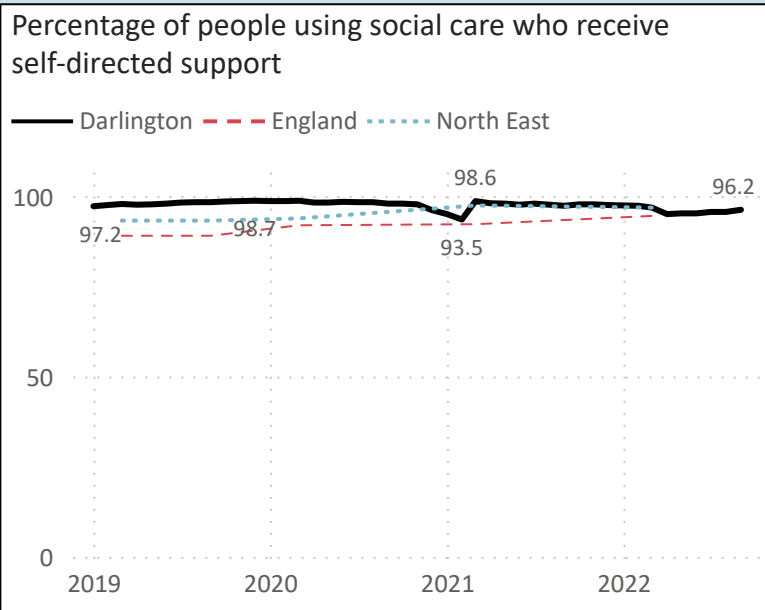


Since April 2022, one working aged individual (1.6 per 100,000 population) has been admitted permanently into residential or nursing care homes. A robust assurance process continues to be undertaken by Team Managers and the Council's Validation Panel to ensure that clients of working age only enter permanent care, when deemed necessary, with clients helped to live independently with support wherever this is possible.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

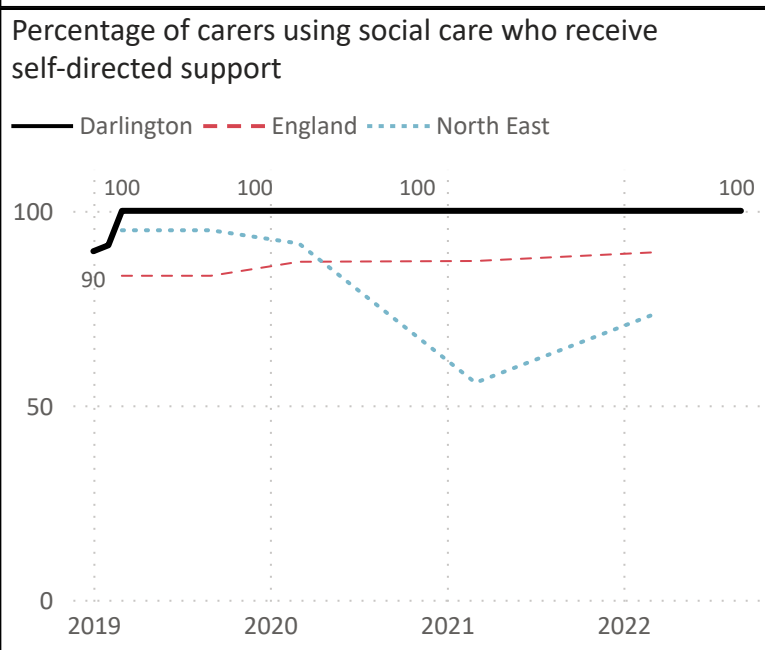
4. SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE IN THE BOROUGH

4.1 Providing care and support when needed



As of the end of September 2022, 96.2% of 768 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.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care



As of the end of September 2022, 100% of 88 carers using social care received self-directed support. Since September 2021, 6 individuals stopped receiving self-directed support as they were no longer carers. 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 can 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

We continue to deliver care and support to the most vulnerable adults in the community.

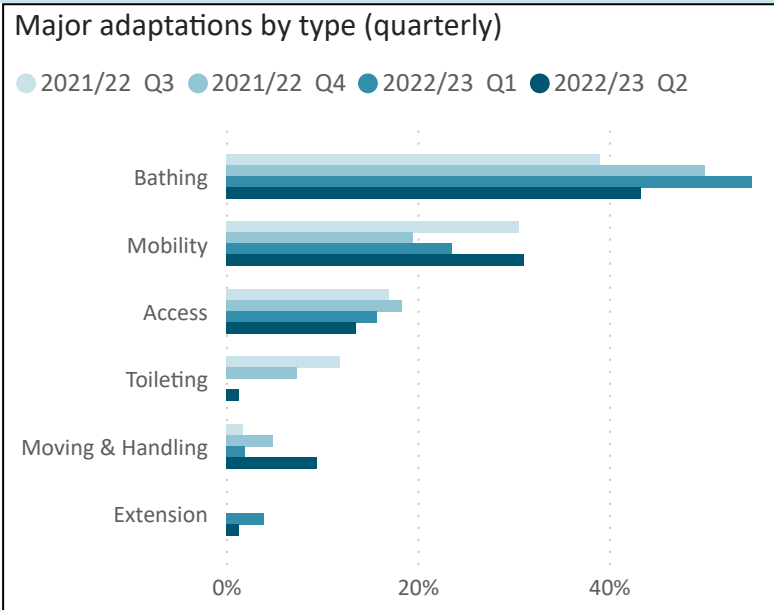
As a service we take a 'Strength Based' approach to practice and assessment. This means that we support people to become more resilient in meeting their care needs by developing their networks and personal strengths. We take this approach because it is the right thing to do and it is also consistent 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.

We work closely with partners, providers including the NHS to promote and support independence. We are also aiming to strengthen our online offer through the opportunity for people to use self assessments and on line financial calculations to understand what support is available to them. We are also strengthening our links to social prescribing - to support health, well being and support when managing long term conditions

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

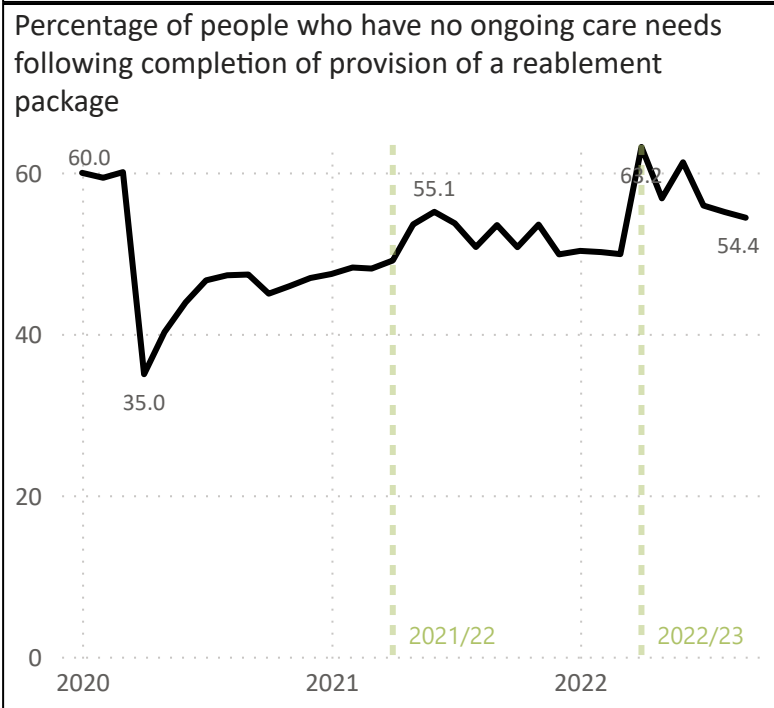
4. SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE IN THE BOROUGH

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 moving and handling adaptations during Quarter 2, 2022/23. 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.

[Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care](#)



Of the 228 individuals who completed a reablement package since April 2022, 124 had no ongoing care needs.

This current performance of 54.4% is an improvement from the same period in 2021/22 (53.5%).

The team work closely with the County Durham and Darlington Foundation trust and local providers to deliver a responsive service both within the hospital (we have social workers on site) and on discharge. Demand is increasing as we enter the winter period and we continue 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 home, including the lifeline and telecare options and continue to explore and deliver adaptations in people's homes.

[Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care](#)

4.3 Working with partners

Strong working relationships are currently being further developed with the voluntary sector with a third sector liaison group having been established. To date the group has provided advice on the Levelling Up Darlington plan and will act as the mechanism through which a plan to deliver the priority of the Council Plan, 'Supporting the Most Vulnerable' priority will be co-written. More recently the group has also pulled together a collaboration of voluntary and community sector organisations which will be delivering a specific programme of support for vulnerable people and families utilising an allocation of £200,000 from the Household Support Fund.

[Christine Shields: Assistant Director - Commissioning, Performance & Transformation](#)

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, a large percentage of who live in Darlington and who want the borough to flourish and grow. We employ over 2,000 people across a vast range of services. 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 last year 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 to align to our core values include, the management programme, the agile working processes and supporting staff's wellbeing, to promote and maintain a safe and healthy workforce. The first annual update of the strategy was provided in the summer and monitoring continues. To support implementation and embedding of the strategy and Council values, we will continue to monitor progress through the 2023 employee survey, the agile working pilot review, development of staff communication, wellbeing statistics, customer feedback and workforce performance.

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

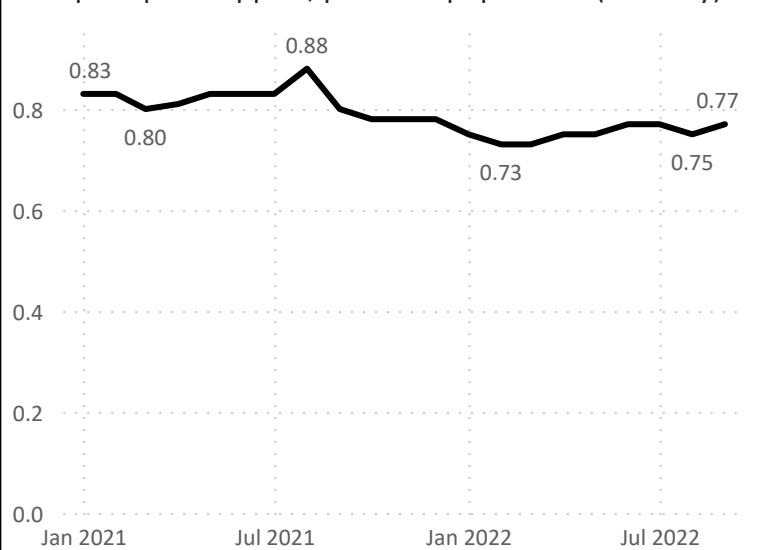
A1. Continue to implement initiatives that tackle social isolation

In 2019, a voluntary and community sector partnership group, coordinated by Inclusion North, was responsible for commissioning and monitoring a number of pilot projects across the borough with a focus on prevention of social isolation and supporting vulnerable families with children. Outcomes from these projects have been very positive and work continues with partners to secure future funding to enable these initiatives to continue. The group's scope and priorities are currently being reviewed and will be reset in light of the new local health & well-being priorities agreed by the Darlington Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB). A specific piece of work has also been initiated aimed at supporting vulnerable individuals and families who are struggling as a result of cost of living pressures.

Christine Shields: Assistant Director - Commissioning, Performance & Transformation

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

Adults with mental health needs helped to live at home in receipt of paid support, per 1000 population (monthly)

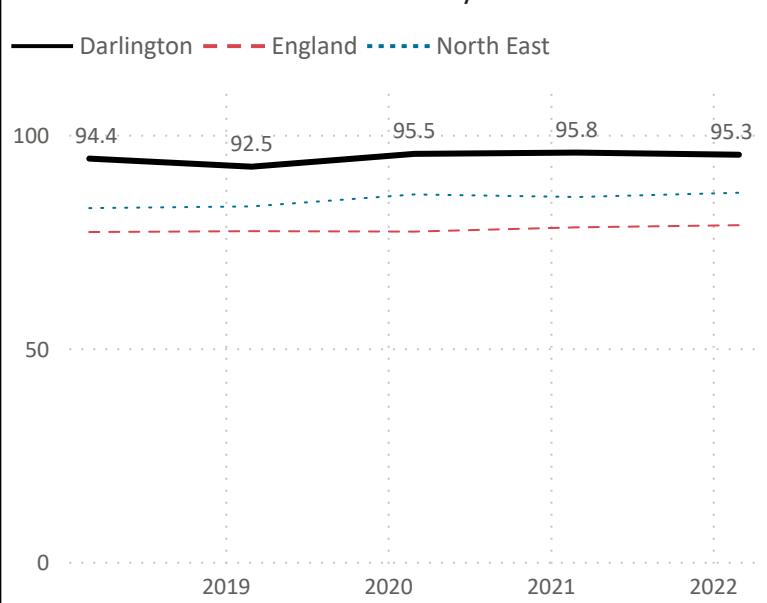


This indicator is primarily focused on supporting adults with mental health needs to remain independent and living in their own home.

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 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 (48) with mental health needs requiring long term paid support.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

Percentage of adults with a learning disability who live in their own home or with their family



This is an annually recorded indicator so the narrative is taken from 2021/22 performance. 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

The teams continue to provide care and support delivered through a strength based approach supporting people to maintain, retain or regain their independence as much as possible.

We are currently exploring how to develop the digital offer to ensure people can self assess where they want too. we are working closely with Social Prescribers and developing an offer through health and well being coaches.

We continue to have positive outcomes through all our teams and in particular through the Reablement and discharge from hospital offer.

We aim to learn from people who use our services by developing our feedback mechanisms, including listening sessions, participation in the learning Impairment group and building stronger relationships with carers.

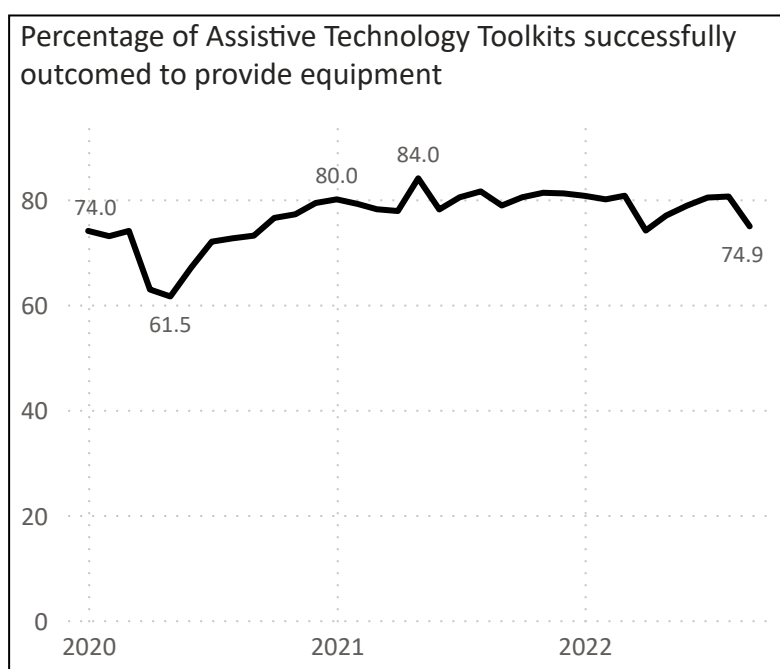
Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

A4. Promote and increase the use of assistive technology

We continue to ensure that through conversations and support planning we offer assistive technology as an offer. We are currently exploring how we can build the knowledge and understanding of our teams in relation to new technology that is available. We are looking at participating in a project called the Virtual House; this is an interactive tour showing examples of Occupational Therapy, Assistive Technology and Sensory aids, equipment and solutions that may be helpful to people or a family member to do daily activities around the home. Teams will undergo training on the Virtual House over the next few months.

We will also be undertaking a review of the impact of the funding provided to care homes and Care services in Darlington for interactive equipment.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care



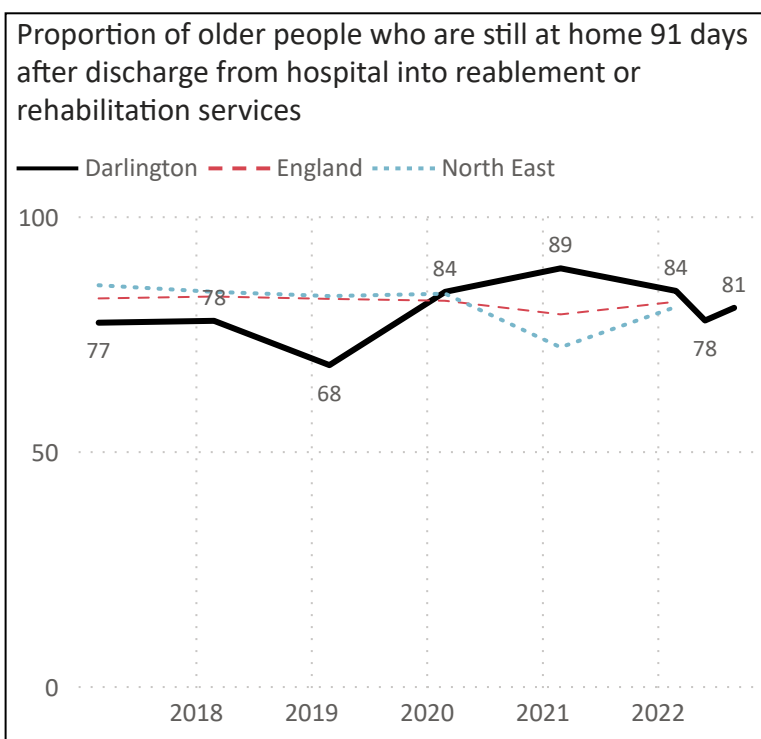
Since April 2022, 140 out of 187 (74.8%) Assistive Technology Toolkit Referrals assigned to Lifeline resulted in equipment being provided. This is below the equivalent figures for last year, but higher than 2020/21 figure (78.8% in 2021/22 and 73.1% during 2020/21). Lifeline continues to work closely 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 Adult Social Care 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

We continue to build strong and positive relationships with the voluntary sector, partners and providers. The Head of Practice and Quality attends the learning impairment group meetings and has feedback suggestions on how to develop further our easy read offer to support communication with people. We hold regular meetings with Age UK exploring how to strengthen our working together. The Adult Contact Team are working with the Social prescribers through the Living Well Team to explore how together we can provide advice, signposting and support to people with long term conditions. The RIACT and Reablement team continue to support hospital discharges working alongside hospital staff in Darlington Memorial Hospital.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care



The adult social care teams work with the the NHS to support people to return home following discharge from hospital, through assessment, support planning and short term reablement offer.

This graph illustrates that at the end of September 2022, the proportion of older people who are still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services was 81%. Recent ASCOF figures (2021-22) show our current performance is comparable to the regional average (80.7%) and slightly lower than the national average (81.8%).

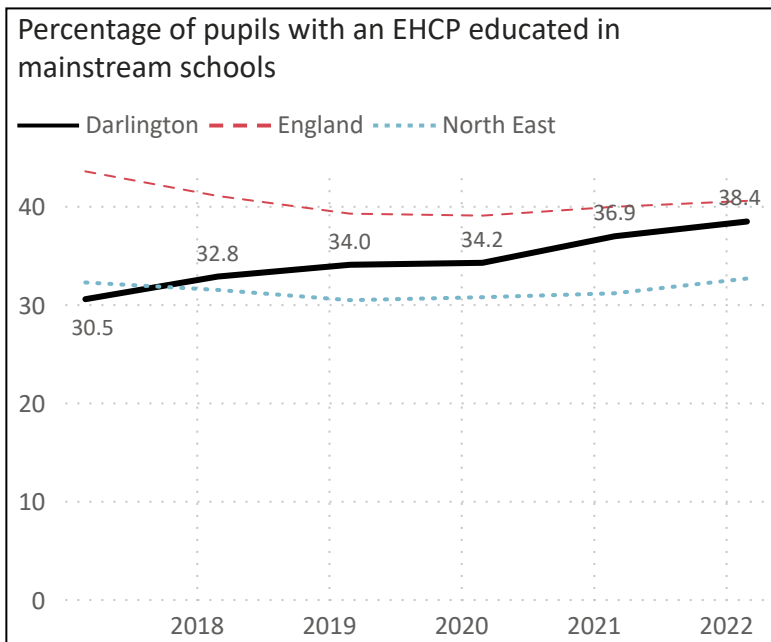
Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

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 is was 92.9% above regional and national comparators.

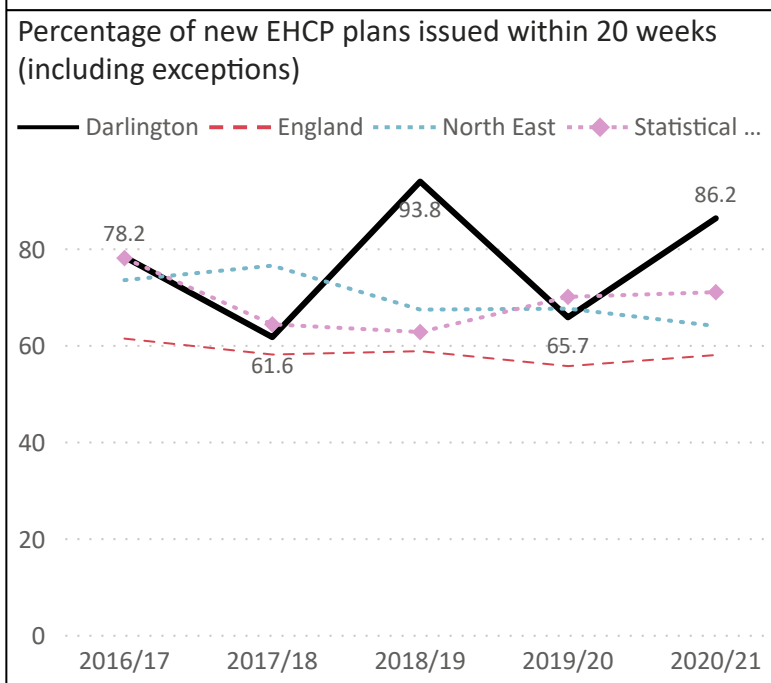
The council continues to apply robust and transparent decision making processes and regular attendance at the Multi agency placement panel (MAPP) by school colleagues ensures an understanding of the thresholds and information to support a request for assessment. Procedures for the annual review of EHC plans have been strengthened with the SEND service now consistently issuing LA decision letters, following an annual review in line with statutory obligations.

[Tony Murphy: Assistant 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 and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) attending mainstream school settings in the borough has risen from 32.8% in 2018 to 38.4% in 2022. The proportion is now above the regional average of 32.5% but below the national average of 40.5%. A large proportion of pupils with an EHCP attend Beaumont Hill and Marchbank school, which are our special schools in Darlington.

[Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion](#)

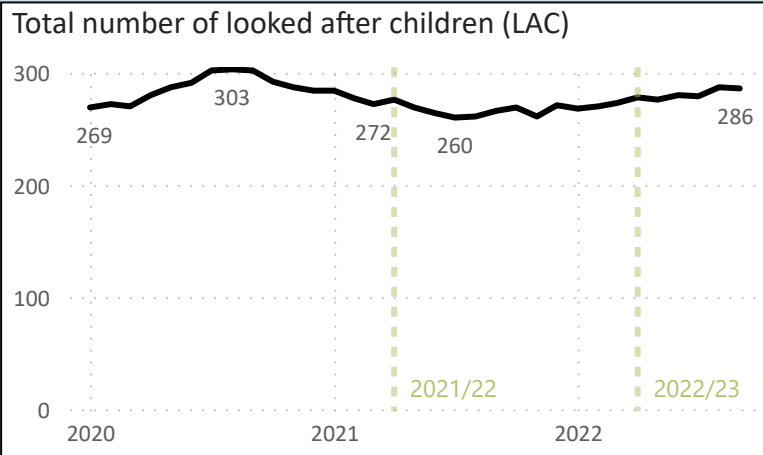


The percentage of new Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) issued by Darlington within 20 weeks (including exceptions) has consistently been above the national average since 2015. It was 86.2% in 2021, compared to regional, statistical neighbour and national averages of 63.9%, 70.9% and 57.9% respectively.

In 2021, the percentage of EHCPs issued by Darlington within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions) was 92.1%. This was above the regional, statistical neighbour and national averages of 71.8%, 78.4% and 59.9% respectively.

[Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion](#)

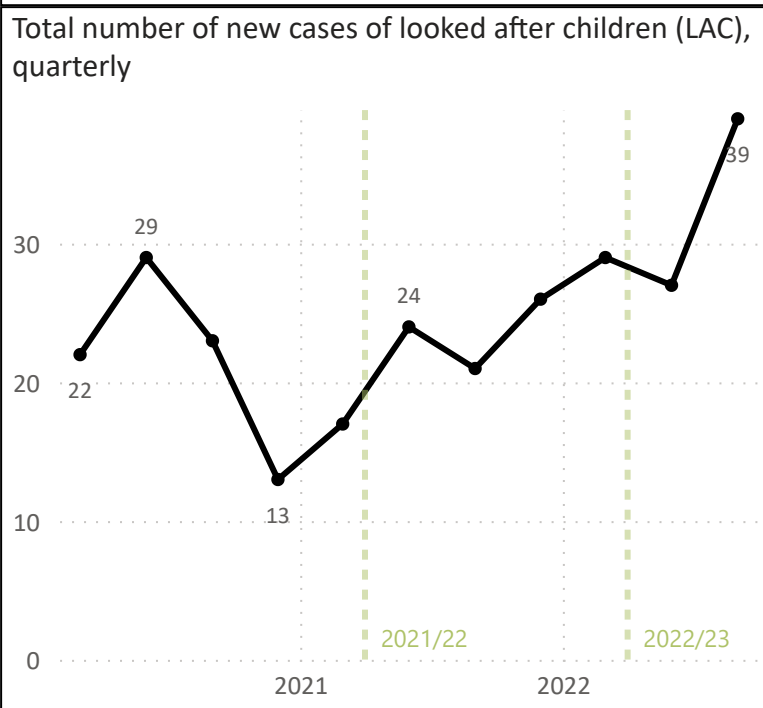
C2. Reduce the need for looked after children placements through effective implementation of the Darlington Strengthening Families programme



286 children were in care at the end of September 2022, 4.5% of which have come into our care after being accepted by the Home Office as UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child).

The rate of children coming into our care, per 10,000 population, is just above that at the end of September 2021 and September 2020 but significantly lower than pre pandemic at the end of September 2019 and September 2018.

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

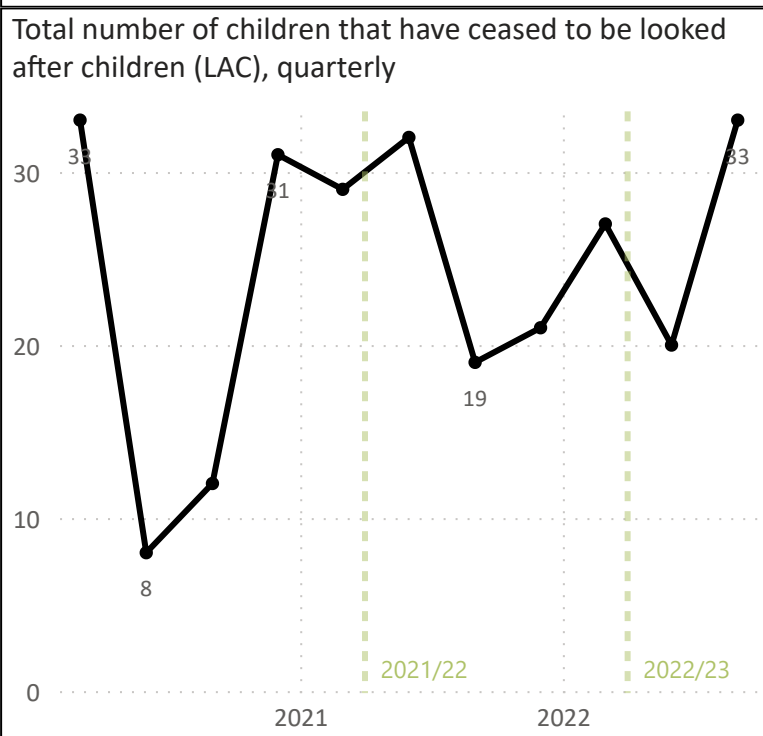


66 children and young people came into care between April and September 2022, 15.2% of which were young people coming into care after being accepted by the Home Office as UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child).

The Strengthening Families KFT team works with families across Darlington Borough Council's Children's Services. The team utilise relational practice to ensure timely interventions, which support families to stay together and reduce the need for children to come into care.

During the past 6 months, 90% of the families the team worked with have engaged in the interventions and continued successfully to stay together safely as a family unit.

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



53 children and young people ceased to be in care between April and September 2022. This is an increase when compared with the 51 children who ceased to be in care between April and September 2021 and 20 children between April and September 2020.

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

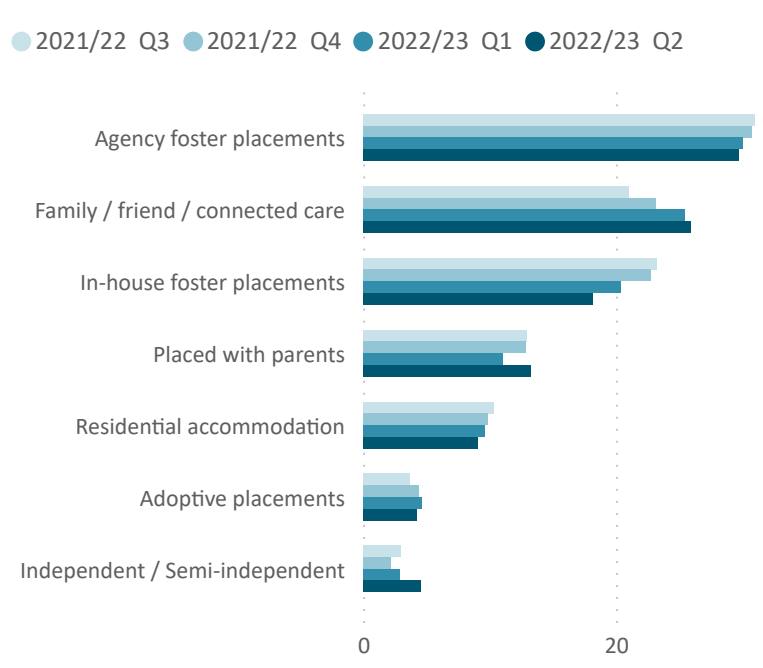
- 34.0% had a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) / Child Arrangement Order (CAO) granted to a relative.
- 20.8% returned home to their parent.
- 22.6% due to turning 18 and becoming a care leaver and supported by that service.
- 20.8% were adopted.
- 1.8% for other reasons.

The proportion of children who returned home to their parent is similar to that in September 2021.

[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

Percentage of looked after children by placement type



A large proportion of Darlington children in care were in a foster placement (47.9%) at the end of September 2022. 18.9% of children were placed in kinship care with relatives, 13.3% were placed with a parent, 15.7% were living in forms of supported residential accommodation and 4.2% were placed for adoption.

All placements are 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 with a parent or kinship carer has been advancing.

[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

Total number of approved foster carers

Date	Number
March 2022	56
April 2022	57
May 2022	57
June 2022	57
July 2022	57
August 2022	57
September 2022	58

Currently we have 58 approved foster care families, a further 4 families have been recruited during the year. We have 19 kinship connected carers approved with a further 17 families that have temporary approval with children in place.

9 families are going through assessments that were requested within court proceedings, 5 families are going through the mainstream assessments to become approved foster carers to support Darlington's children in care.

Nationally, there are difficulties with recruitment. The impact of Covid-19 has meant fewer people being available due to health reasons. Work continues to raise the foster caring profile in Darlington via our website, social media, and on TV.

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

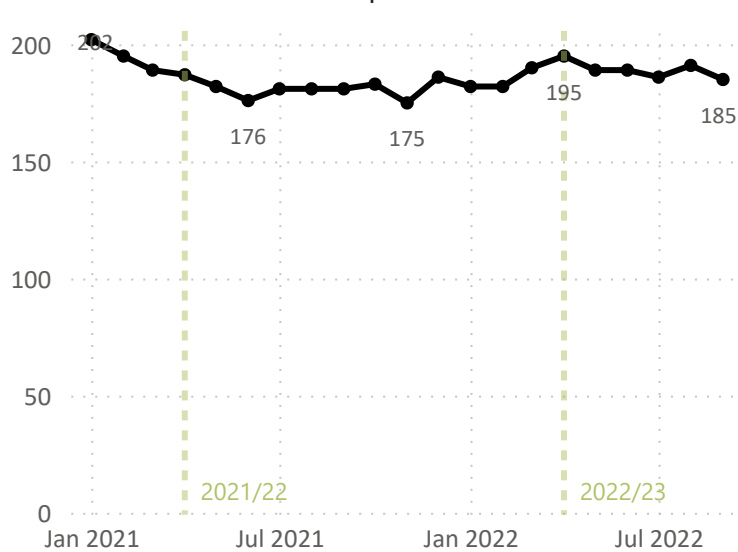
At the end of September 2022, 185 children and young people were placed with a foster care family.

29.7% of the children were with an agency foster carer, 18.2% were with an in-house foster carer and 18.9% were with a kinship connected carer. Almost half (43.8%) of all foster placements were long-term.

Encouragingly we have seen an increase with children being able to be placed with a parent whilst being supported by our care team.

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

Total number of foster care placements



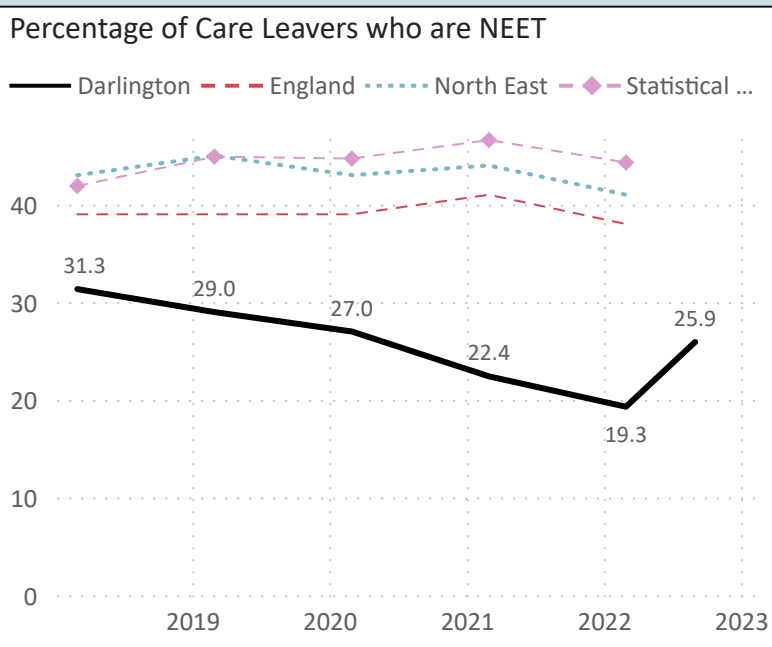
C4. Review in-house residential care and consider the council’s place in providing services

The re-purposing of our existing children’s homes remains ongoing, with the keys having been accepted for the new property which will facilitate a move for our Young People to a new property. Furnishing of the home is taking place in readiness for Young People to move in. OFSTED registration is required for the home to operate, an application for this has been lodged and is with OFSTED currently and a planned move will be actioned once OFSTED registration is provided.

Once the home move happens the planned re-purpose of the existing Childrens Home will take place 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

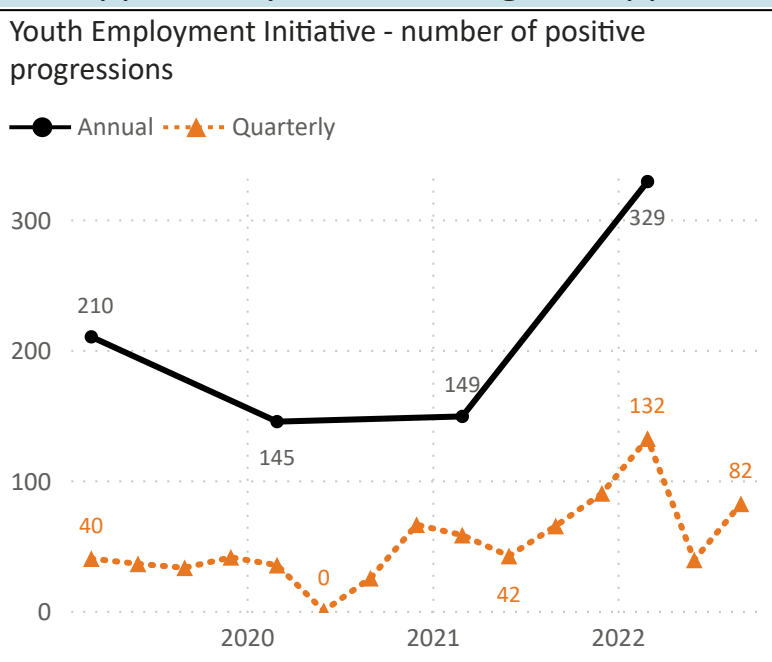
C5. Improve employment opportunities for looked after children and care leavers



The proportion of Darlington care leavers Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) at the end of September 2022 was 25.9%, which outperformed the most recently available published 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 to increase opportunities. 22.2% of our care leavers are engaged in further education and 51.9% of the young people are in employment. There is an excellent relationship with our Learning and Skills officers to understand all school leavers destinations to promote and encourage further learning, training, and/or employment opportunities.

Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

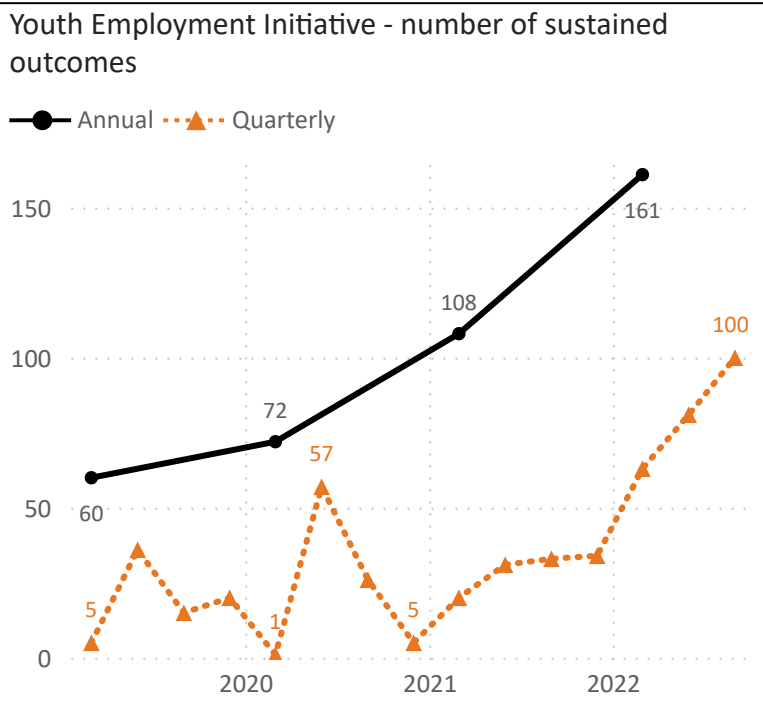
C6. Work with partners to reduce youth and long-term unemployment, by increasing the opportunity for retraining and apprenticeships leading to gainful employment



Youth Employment Initiative - Number of Positive Progressions:
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 Jobcentre Plus Youth Adviser within the service is working well, helping increase client numbers over the period with local employment opportunities also rising.

Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

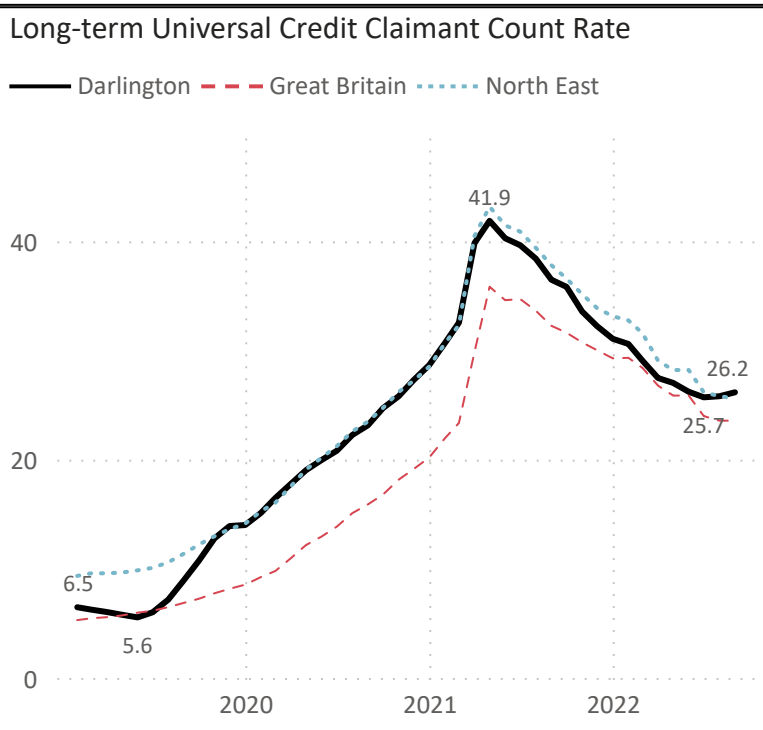
C6. Work with partners to reduce youth and long-term unemployment, by increasing the opportunity for retraining and apprenticeships leading to gainful employment



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: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion



The long-term Universal Credit claimant count in Darlington continues to fall. However, in recent months, the trend has stagnated, and in September 2022 recording a slight increase since May 2021. This change will be influenced by the recent increases in business operating costs, particularly energy costs. Many businesses have had to find ways in reducing operating costs, and in many cases, this has been focussed on labour costs, with businesses delaying growth and recruitment.

Tony Murphy: Assistant 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)

September 2022

80.6%

Inspection outcome	Number of schools
Outstanding	2
Good	27
Requires Improvement	6
No Ofsted rating	6

Percentage of schools judged good or outstanding by Ofsted :

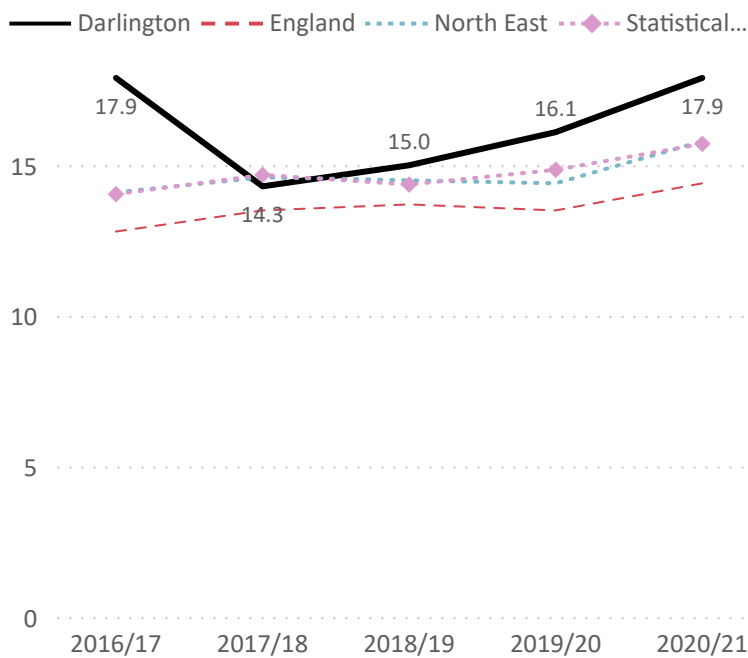
At the end of September 2022, 80.6% (29) of schools in Darlington with an Ofsted rating are rated Good or Outstanding.

69.0% of inspected primary schools (20/29) and 57.1% (4/7) of inspected secondary schools are now rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.

As at 31st December 2021, Eighty-seven per cent of all schools nationally are rated as good or outstanding.

[Tony Murphy: Assistant 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. The inequality gap between KS4 Attainment 8 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 neighbour comparators. However, Darlington's average score per pupil has been higher than national, regional and statistical neighbour comparators 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 have risen from 51.0 in 2018/19 to 55.9 in 2020/21.

[Tony Murphy: Assistant 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

During the summer term (April - July) the pupils took part in a project about self-identity. They worked with writers, poets, theatre producers, and an illustrator to create written and visual self-portraits, which were turned into yearbooks. They also worked with a songwriter and musician to write the music and turn some of the written work into lyrics for four news songs, which were filmed as 'pop videos'. The yearbooks and videos were shared at a celebration event at the end of term with the rest of the school and parents.

A new cohort of 130 Year 6 pupils joined the programme at the start of the September term. They started with a trip to the Hippodrome to see a performance of the Demon Dentist and then had two sessions with Zest Theatre to discuss their thoughts and concerns about their immediate family and community, as well as global issues, which were turned into giant artworks and have been shared on the railings outside the schools. One of the schools also produced 'Ted Talks' from their discussions.

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

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

Darlington's HAF programme was further extended for Summer 2022, delivering in communities throughout the Borough. More than 800 children engaged with 62 different programmes at 18 sites across Darlington during the 6 week summer school holiday. Total number of attendances exceeded 1000 with over 10% of children with SEND. The programme is incredibly diverse in content with Sports, Arts, Cookery, Life skills, adventure play and much more plus a hot meal for all children each session.

There is now an established referral into the programme by Social Workers and new partners include Parent Carer Forum, Age UK and Forum Music centre.

[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 new Street Food section of the market continues to be successful with 3 new vendors ensuring the offer remains new, fresh and interesting. This part of the market hall has become a popular venue for local performances and various events including specialist markets.

In Q2 phase 2 of the refurbishment development programme commenced and will be complete by the end of November 2022. This phase includes the development of a new hospitality venue in the vaults area of the market. A new entrance to the traditional trading area of the market hall and extensive improvements to the outside area with new signage and decoration, in addition to new public toilets. These improvements will ensure the market hall is an attractive venue to shop and visit.

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

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

The officials from Darlington Economic Campus are now occupying Feethams House. The Council continues to work closely with the Government Property Agency (GPA) with the delivery of the permanent DEC location on Brunswick Street. Several meetings on the proposed design for the new building have been held between the developers and the Council's planning officers. It is anticipated that the building will be completed in late 2025.

The Town Fund has acquired additional properties in the town, including 156 Northgate which will be refurbished and transformed into office space. A procurement exercise to identify a partner to design, build and manage the three upper floors as high quality office space has commenced. It is anticipated that this process will be finished in early 2023 with the building refurbishment completed by September 2024.

Negotiations with the owners of Northgate House have continued. A reasonable offer has been made to the owners which has been rejected. If a negotiated agreement for the building cannot be achieved the Council will commence compulsory purchase process.

[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.

Work is progressing at Central Park to deliver improved landscaping and accessibility to plots with the remaining works to complete by end of March 2023. Innovation Central was completed and opened in October 2022 offering 45 Grade A offices and five labs, all designed as flexible spaces where businesses can grow.

On Ingenium Park, the last phase of major drainage related enabling works to the site will be complete by end of December 2022. This supplements a substantial length of access road which is already in place.

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

[Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects](#)

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

The tendering and marketing exercise of land at Faverdale has proved unsuccessful mainly due to the impact of the changes in the money market experienced in September 2022. It is planned to await to see if the market changes over the forthcoming months. The Council has received some strong enquiries in relation to land at Ingenium Park. Officers will continue to work with these businesses to bring forward investment.

Planning approval is due to be granted for 300,000 sq. ft of commercial space along Tornado Way adjacent to Lingfield Point. Officers are working closely with landowners and investors for the development of a commercial site at Faverdale Business Park. In the adjacent site the new Lidl supermarket is nearing completion.

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

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

Hundreds of businesses and local job seekers took advantage of the first ever Darlington Business Summit held at the Dolphin Centre from Wednesday 5 until Friday 7 October.

Organised by Darlington Borough Council, and in conjunction with Darlington Business Club, the three-day event gave local business people, and those who are thinking of starting a business, the chance to network with others and to find out more about the help and support available across the borough and the wider Tees Valley.

Darlington Business Summit kicked off with DL Expo 2022, Darlington Business Club's flagship networking event, providing an opportunity to celebrate the diverse business base in Darlington. The event offered a showcase for businesses, large and small, and presented an opportunity for local businesses to connect with the local community. DL Expo 2022 provided a platform for exhibitors and delegates to network, promote their businesses and make those all-important new connections. Hosted by Darlington Business Club, DL Expo featured a wide-range of businesses exhibiting their products and services whilst attendees were able to access a wealth of information on local businesses

[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. Officers continue to monitor the delivery of sites identified in the Local Plan. In addition the necessary changes to SPDs will be carried out including Design/Conservation, Planning Obligations, Garden Village SPDs. These changes will be fully consulted upon as part of the statutory requirements.

[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.

It is anticipated that the planning application for 750 homes on phase one of Burtree Garden Village will be submitted by the end of the calendar year.

The Council has recorded 119 starts for Q2 of 2022-23, over 33 active sites. At the same point last year we had recorded 125 starts, so fairly balanced in comparison. Cumulatively, at this point last year we had 318 starts, compared to 293 this year.

The Council has recorded 140 completions for Q2 of 2022-23. This figure is just higher than last years Q2 completion figure of 132, again showing a balanced comparison to last year. Looking cumulatively again, at this point last year we had 277 cumulative completions, compared to 339 this year. This is quite a notable comparison, due to stronger Q1 completion figures in 2022-23.

[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 actions in the current time period have been developed and are being reported against. The majority are on target. We are working on next year's milestones and ensuring timescales for actions are still appropriate. We are also looking at using the corporate plan reporting program for our climate change actions. This will make it easier to report and clearer for Senior Officers and Members to monitor progress.

Corporate Plan action ECI701 demonstrates our progress to date. We are below the emissions trajectory we have set ourselves and are developing an offsetting strategy to close the gap between where our actions will take us and carbon neutral.

[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.

Planning permission has been gained for both the Station East (Neasham Rd) and Station West Gateway (Victoria Rd and Cattlemarket) schemes. A number of properties to demolish have been acquired by agreement and demolition works have commenced on the Eastern side. Works to Victoria Road are also subject to demolition work which has been tendered and awarded to a contractor.

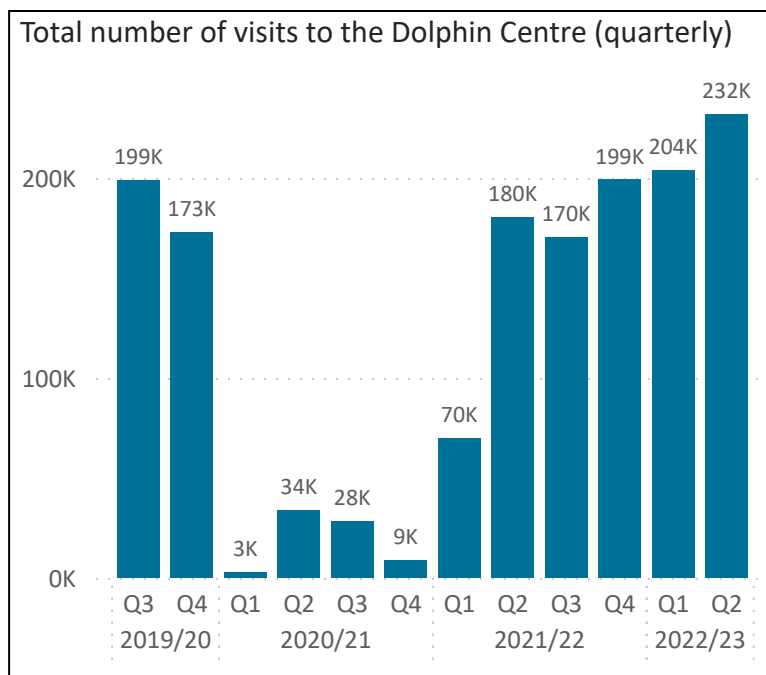
On the Cattlemarket site, work to provide a temporary car park has commenced and will continue in to 2023.

[Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects](#)

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

Business levels at the Dolphin Centre continue to be very positive. Following the recent refurbishment of the Dolphin Centre gym, membership numbers have now returned to pre covid levels and are demonstrating a pattern of further growth engaging more residents in keeping active and healthy. Soft play and bowling are performing very well and contributing to the overall hospitality budget. Catering performance has been at a record high with greater numbers using the facilities including South Park which even moving towards the winter months is celebrating excellent visitor number. Water education capacities are around 90% of the programme demonstrating a real commitment from resident’s to support their children and give them the best start to their water education journey. The winter events season is vibrant with additional demand to expand Christmas programmes from residents wanting to attend. Various options around underutilised space is currently being investigated to maximise income potentials and on site partners.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services



Visitor numbers for quarter 2 (22-23) have increased significantly by 51,443, compared to the same quarter in 21-22. Visitors in July were the highest monthly total since reopening following lockdown, with 84,000 visits. The centre had lots of visitors over the summer holidays with additional events and activities put on to celebrate 40 years of The Dolphin Centre being open.

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.

The Director of Public Health is working with stakeholders to develop a new plan to manage future public health risks and outbreaks in Darlington.

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

Housing Condition - Percentage of Council properties meeting the decent homes standard

March 2021

100%

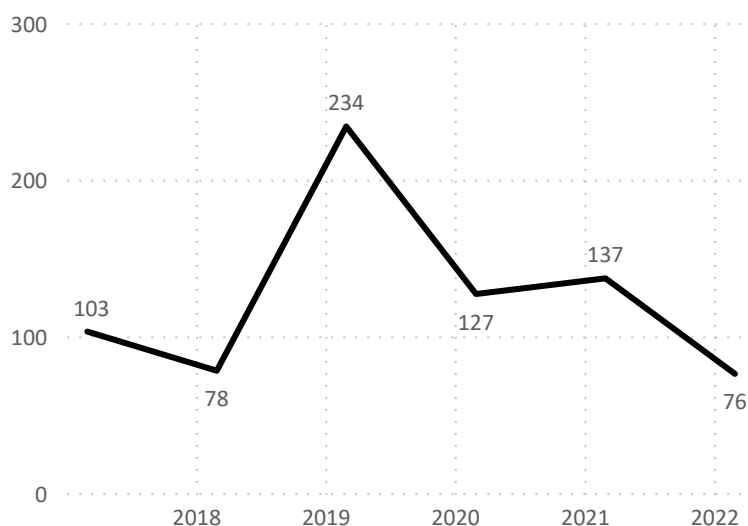
March 2022

100%

All of Darlington Borough Council's social housing stock meets 100% of the decent homes standard. We are currently updating our stock condition data and improving data capture to ensure a proactive approach should properties fall below the standard within the year. This demonstrates the Council's ongoing commitment to provide excellent quality social housing and reflecting the good work of the Housing and Building Services teams.

[Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues](#)

Additional Affordable Housing Supply - Completions



The Council's Housing new build programme was significantly disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, with very few properties completed in 2021/22 (Data is not yet available for 2022/23). However, work has concluded on 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 13 properties. Work has commenced on Neasham Road (150 properties in total) some of which may complete in 2022/23.

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

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
2020/21	Q3	97.1%
	Q4	101.6%
2021/22	Q1	98.1%
	Q2	97.4%
	Q3	96.3%
	Q4	97.5%
2022/23	Q1	96.2%
	Q2	97.3%

Collection rates have increased in Q2 compared to Q1 levels and are similar to year end collection rates for 2021-22 standing at 97.29% in Q2, compared to 96.24% in Q1.

Over 1,880 Council tenants are now in receipt of some element of Universal Credit (UC) and have the 5 week wait prior to first payments being received, however average arrears for UC customers remains under 5 weeks average rent.

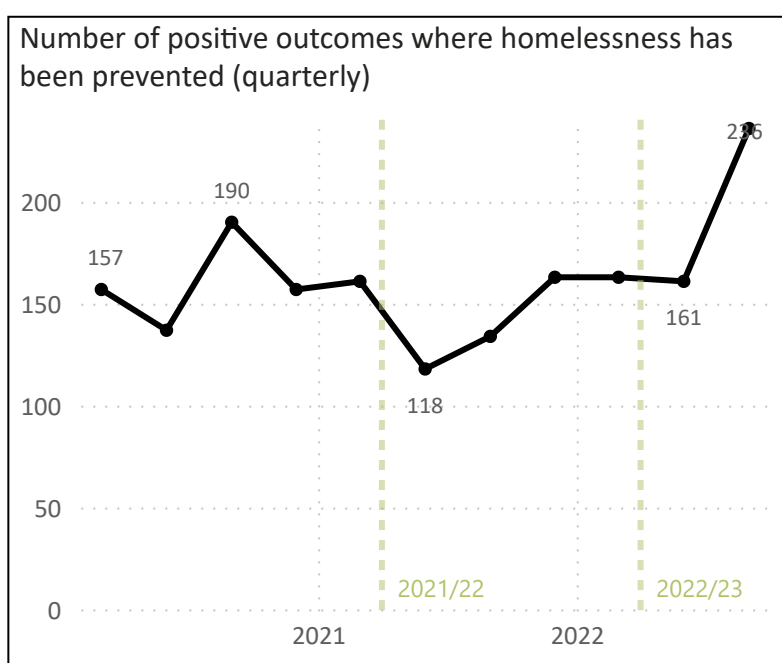
The Housing Income team continue to promote help and guidance and making affordable repayment plans with customers throughout their tenancy.

[Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues](#)

H5. Review the Darlington Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

The outstanding actions in the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy are now complete, although pressures on the Housing Options service are ongoing due to the increase in homeless presentations. However, despite these challenges the Council has increased the number of positive outcomes for clients by 47%. In addition, officers have also successfully bid for additional Government funding to recruit additional staff to deliver a range of support and advice services to homeless people, including specialist mental health and domestic abuse Housing Options Officers. The Government has also recently published a new strategy to "end rough sleeping for good" and in light of this, our Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will be refreshed for 2023-24.

Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues



Despite the increasing challenges of finding alternative accommodation, the Housing Options team managed to secure 236 positive outcomes for clients in Q2. This is an increase of 47%. The Housing Options team are working extremely hard in building up relationships with new landlords coming into the housing market as well as maintaining the existing relationships with landlords in the town

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 Director of Public Health continues to work with partners and stakeholders on specific programmes and projects including :

- Implementing with the NHS and voluntary sector the 'Postvention' programme with the distribution of information and offer of support to those affected by suicide across the borough.

- Working with local partners and service users in the implementation and evaluation of a Weight Management programme designed for adults with a Learning Disability

- Continue to expand and roll out the Making Every Contact Count (MECC) training to a range of different internal and external services and partners across the borough, using a train the trainer approach, and developing a range of toolbox talks to support delivery

- Undertaking the delivery, analysis and reporting of the Healthy Lifestyle Survey to 8,400 local pupils, across a number of primary and secondary Darlington schools,

- Have agreed a long term plan with Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust to secure the development of the 0-19 Service which includes the Health Visiting and School Nursing teams

- Implementing the agreed partnership plans (SSMTR) to expand the number of treatment places for substance misuse for both adults and young people.

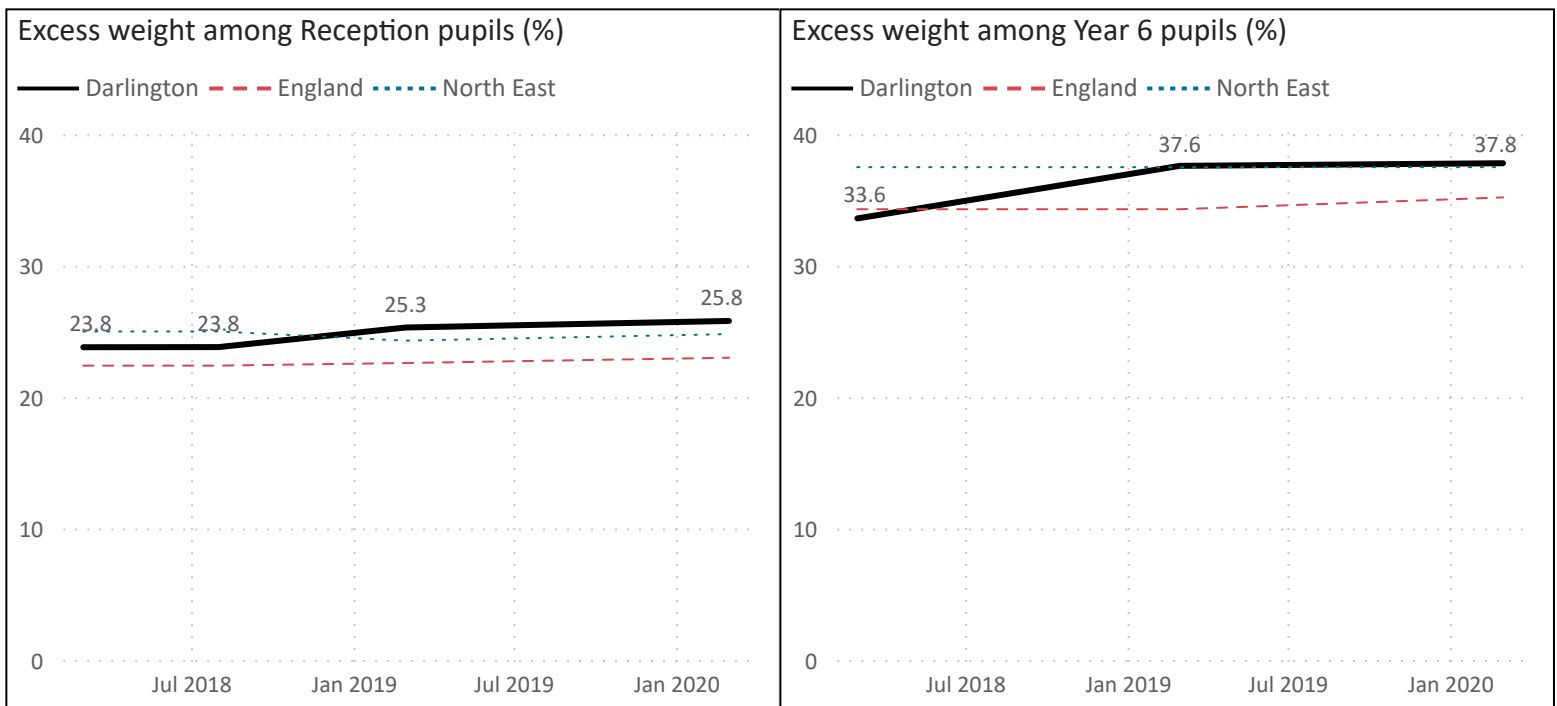
Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

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 Implementing the Healthy Families catering award
- o Delivered a healthy schools meal standard and training
- 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 a new Healthy Early Years Toolkit with three nursery settings and 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 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 address some of the underlying causes of obesity in children and young people. Recent work includes 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.

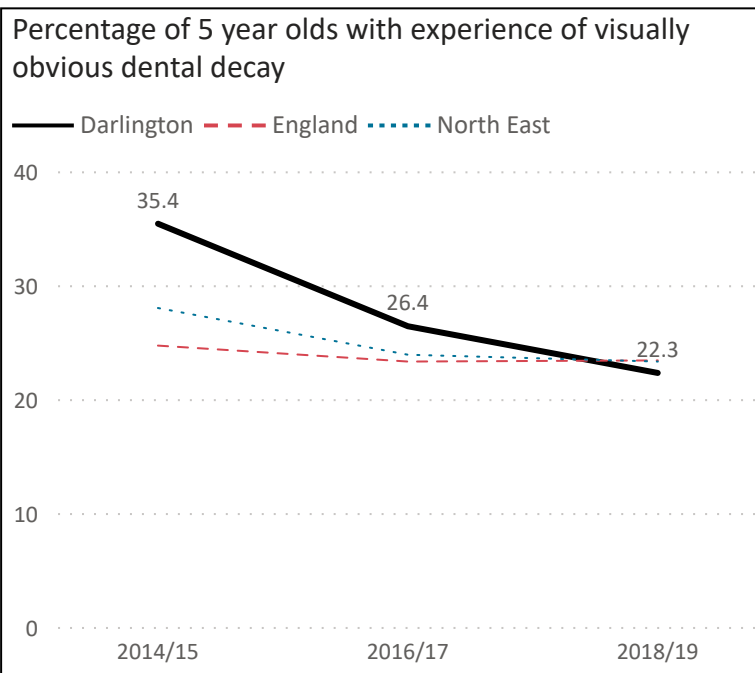
[Penny Spring: Director of Public Health](#)

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. The Director of Public Health continues to work to implement the current recommendations of the plan with recent work includes:

- o Re-establishment of the toothbrushing scheme to support children and staff to improve habits in cleaning teeth in targeted reception and primary schools
- o Commissioned of a joint oral health needs assessment, in conjunction with neighbouring Tees Valley local authorities

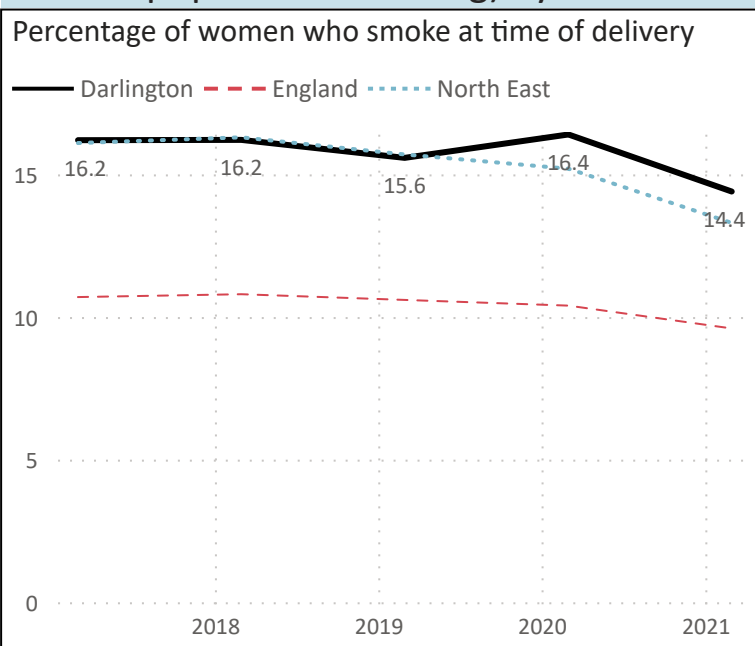
Penny Spring: Director of Public Health



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. The Childhood Healthy Weight Plan for Darlington includes actions such as reducing sugar and fizzy drinks in settings such as schools, working with families in healthy weaning for babies to help reduce dietary sources of sugar.

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

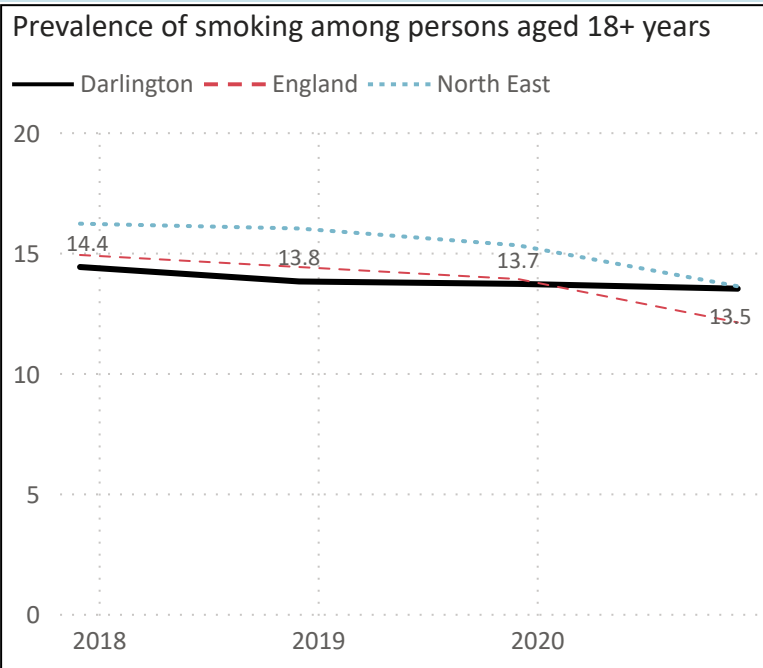


The proportion of Darlington women smoking at the time of delivery of their baby fell by two percentage points in 2020/21, from 16.4% to 14.4%.

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 due to the ongoing impact of measures to reduce smoking in the community such as increased prices and smoke free places. The NHS is also now offering stop smoking interventions for those people currently receiving hospital treatment.

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	Quarter	Darlington
2020/21	Q3	3,363
	Q4	3,326
2021/22	Q1	3,369
	Q2	3,404
	Q3	3,365
	Q4	3,340
2022/23	Q1	3,367
	Q2	3,388

The Lifeline service continues to record consistent take up of new customers, with a slight decrease in overall numbers in quarter 2 of 2022-23 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 4,500 emergency response call-outs to elderly and vulnerable customers in the first 2 quarters of 2022-23.

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

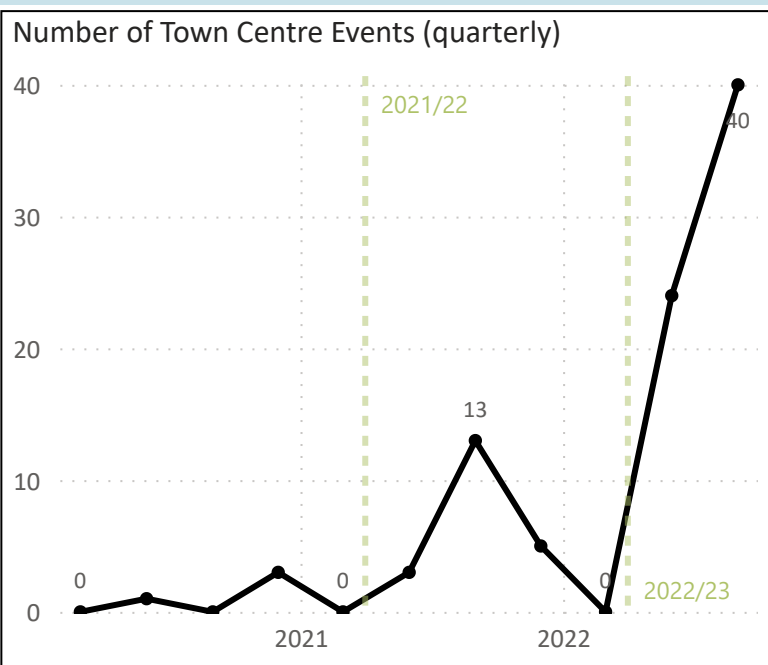
Work has continued with partners to develop the 2025 celebrations programme. The partnership is seeking to deliver a core programme for 2025, built around the following core elements:

- 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

Locomotion No1 replica is currently being restored and will be completed in Autumn 2024. DBC are working with Beamish on the production of Chaldron wagons and a directors coach which will be used as part of the celebrations and on site post 2025 as part of the event 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



2022 has been an exceptional programme of events starting with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. The reaction from visitors has been excellent and offering these large scale free events has attracted thousands of visitors to Darlington town centre. The Events programme caters for all people, is fully accessible and free for everyone to enjoy. We continue to develop existing events like Darlington by the Sea and Darlington 10K plus extra new events and pop up entertainment have also proved popular. The team are adapting and refreshing to create exciting experiences for our visitors, with plenty of free activities for people to learn and enjoy. Some footfall figures for the town centre at key event dates shows how these events attract extra footfall into Darlington. Footfall Data from Springboard - the figure represents footfall in the whole town centre on the event date.

Emergency Services Day 70,808, GOLD Tea Dance (midweek) 53,525, Vintage Vehicle Rally 75,565, Darlington 10K 51,238, Pride 79,310, Dinosaur Day (midweek) 58,623.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Overall, the cleanliness of the Town Centre in relation to litter, has continued to remain at a very high standard during the period from March to September 2022. For the vast majority of months, a 100% pass rate was achieved and where this was not the case, other than on one occurrence in June, a score of greater than 90% pass rate was accomplished.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

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

Year	Month	Darlington
2021	March	100%
	June	100%
	September	100%
	December	97%
2022	March	100%
	June	82%
	September	97%

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

Work started on site in May on phase 1 for the new build rail shed which the A 1 Steam Locomotive Trust will relocate to from the carriage works once complete, work also started in October on the 1861 rail shed which Darlington Railway Preservation Society and North East Locomotive Preservation Group will relocate to as well as storage for Locomotion No1 replica.

Phase 2 works will commence in January 2023 with building work initially starting in the Goods Shed and the Head of Steam then rolling out later in the year to the carriage works, Lime Cells, play area and outdoor spaces.

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

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

Work continues 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.

Whilst the building is closed due to the refurbishment work the library service is being provided as follows:

- An alternative town centre location for customers to visit at the Dolphin Centre where customers can borrow and return books, select, and order titles for collection
- Cockerton Library,
- Home Delivery Scheme. for residents who are unable to access library services.
- Support to schools and nurseries with regular deliveries of books for enjoyment and education.

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

L5. Review and deliver a revised car parking strategy

Following the adoption of the Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan and the subsequent approval of the Darlington Transport Plan framework by Cabinet in March 2021, officers have worked to develop the Darlington Transport Plan, Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan and the Darlington Parking Strategy. These plans and strategies were consulted on throughout the summer of 2022 and have now been approved by both Cabinet and Council at meetings in November of 2022. Work will now progress on implementing the measures identified in the plan.

[Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & 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 the Darlington Northern Link Road.
- o Development and delivery of Darlington station project
- o An Enhanced Partnership with bus operators to aim to secure improved services and customer experience across the region has been entered into.
- o Further development of walking and cycling schemes with work complete on Woodlands Road Phase 1 and underway on Duke Street.
- o Installation of electric vehicle charging points in car parks throughout Darlington.

[Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects](#)

L7. Modernise Darlington's crematorium service

Work has continued to modernise Darlington's crematorium service. The new cremators have both now been operating since December and the building completed and handed over to bereavement in July who now operate the bereavement service from west cemetery.

Following delays experienced due to evidence of newts on adjacent allotment sites, the Chapel and burial ground extension is due to be completed by December 2022 with the new Chapel opening in February 2023.

The outcome will be a new modern chapel facility that can facilitate larger gatherings and a 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

Teesside Airport has applied to the Food Standards Agency to become a Border Control Post (BCP). In short this is required to allow the importation of food from Third Countries eg the Africa continent. Officers from the Council have worked closely with staff from the airport to ensure that they can meet the statutory requirements of a BCP.

The Council has received a planning application for the expansion of aviation related engineering works at the airport. Planning officers have worked closely with the applicant to develop the application. It is anticipated that this expansion and investment could create circa. 200 high calibre jobs in the aviation industry.

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

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

The MTFP for 2022-26 was approved by Council in February 2022 and provided a balanced budget for the life of the plan. The projected in year position at the end of quarter 2 is a decline in the original estimated position for 2022-23 by £1.351 million, which has resulted from a combination of demand pressures in children's social care, utility price increases, a larger than estimated pay award and other inflationary pressures in line with the current national economic picture. The decline in financial position is currently funded by unused reserves, however officers are working through a number of initiatives to bring down the estimated in year deficit position.

The MTFP for 2023-27 is currently being put together and will follow the usual approval process, before being considered by Council in February 2023.

The Council's accounts are scrutinised by our auditors 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 and on target to provide profits as expected. 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 all of the properties available in 2022 either sold or reserved, with reservations made against the 2023 release. The Neasham Road joint venture has commenced with all properties available for sale in 2022 sold or reserved, and reservations made against the 2023 release. The Council's out-of-borough joint venture with Esh Group is still in its infancy; however, the majority of properties available for sale in 2022 are sold or reserved, with reservations made against the 2023 release.

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

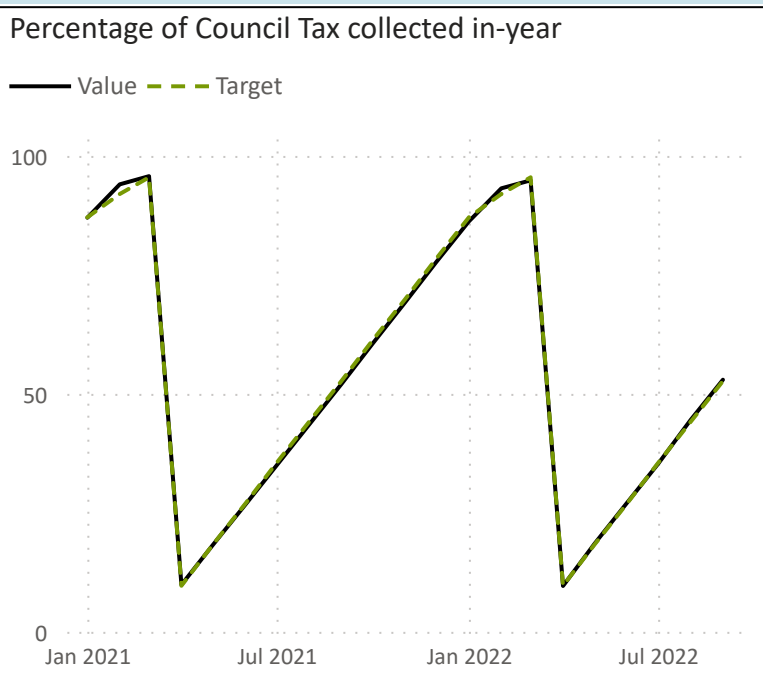
R3. Maximise the council's income from the council's Investment Fund, including further joint venture housing companies

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 number of regeneration and joint venture commitments against it totalling £33.48m, leaving a balance of £16.52m uncommitted and available for further schemes. 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](#)

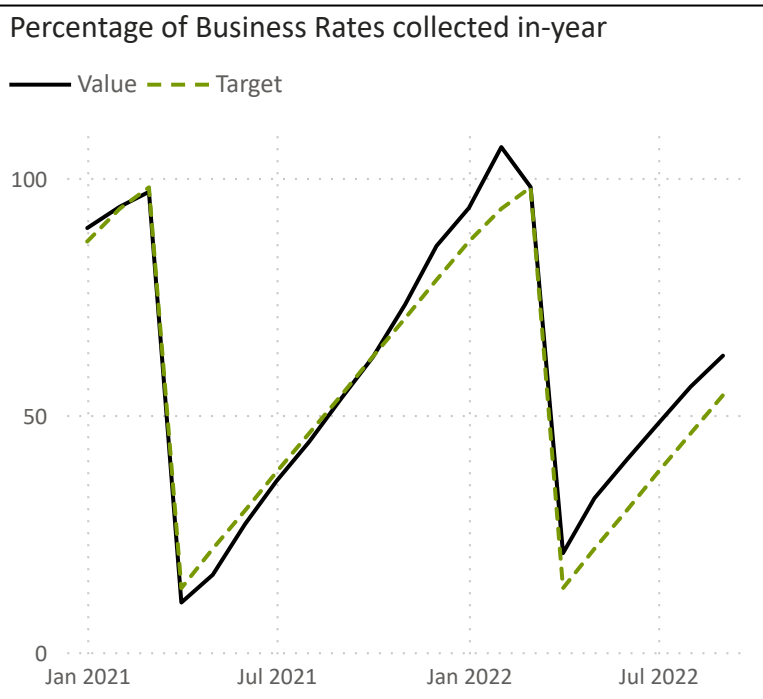
R4. Maximise council tax and business rate income through robust income collection processes



The percentage of Council Tax collected is slightly above the target for quarter 2, with 53.0% of Council Tax collected. The overall amount collected by Revenues and Benefits Officers by quarter 2 was £39.1 million compared to £36.4 million by quarter 2 in 2021-22, an increase of £2.7 million or 7.4%. The overall collection rate of 99% is still on course to be met.

Year	Darlington	England
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 exceeded the target for quarter 2, with 62.5% of Business Rates collected, compared to 53.5% in quarter 2 of 2021-22. The main reason for this increase in performance was due to the continuing award of Covid Additional Relief being awarded in quarter 1, significantly reducing the amount of Business Rates to pay. The overall amount collected by quarter 2 was £16.9 million compared to £16.8 million by quarter 2 of 2021-22.

Year	Darlington	England
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](#)

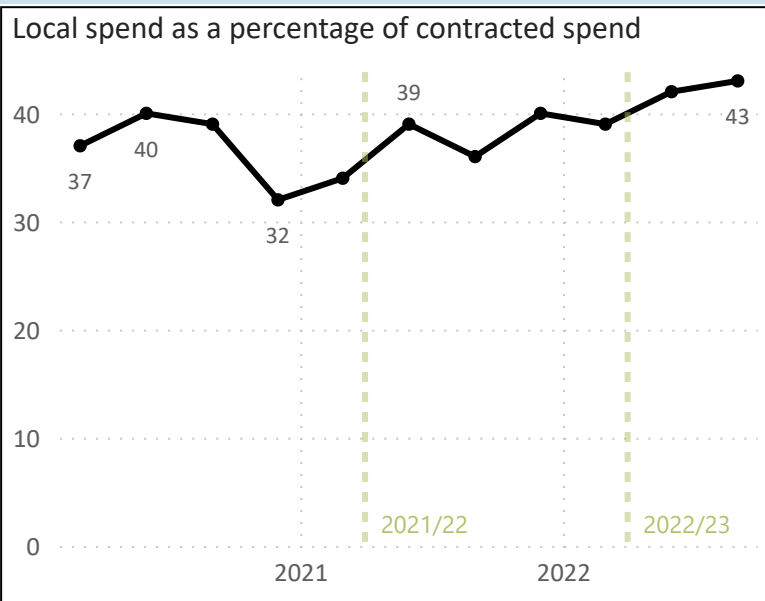
R5. Adopt a local wealth building approach to council procurement and work with the wider public sector in Darlington to do the same

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.

The group is also considering the implications of the rising cost of living, sharing impacts that are being seen on individual organisations and agreeing how collaboration could avert risks and support particularly the most vulnerable residents of Darlington

[Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington 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 the last financial year, in the first two quarters by 4%.

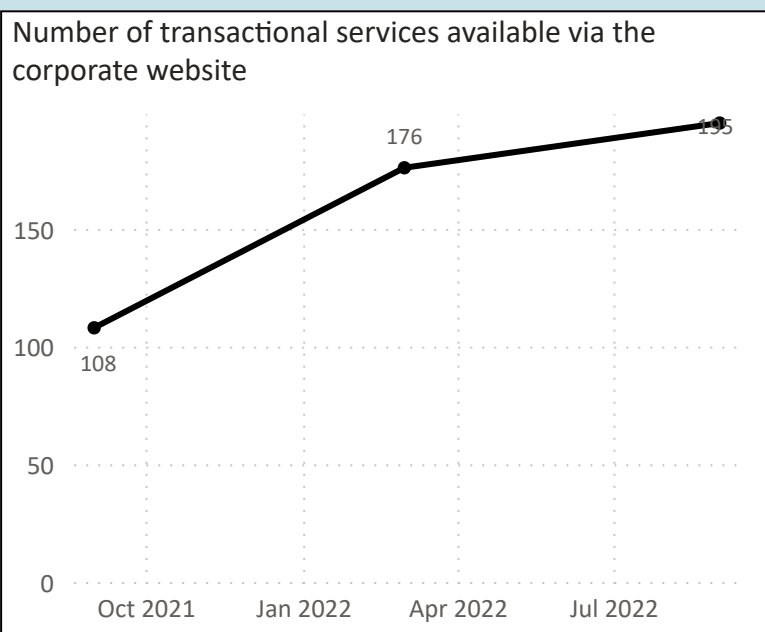
Compared to 2021/22, the figure has risen from 39% - 43%.

The spend in this period has risen by £3m, from the same period for 21/22.

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

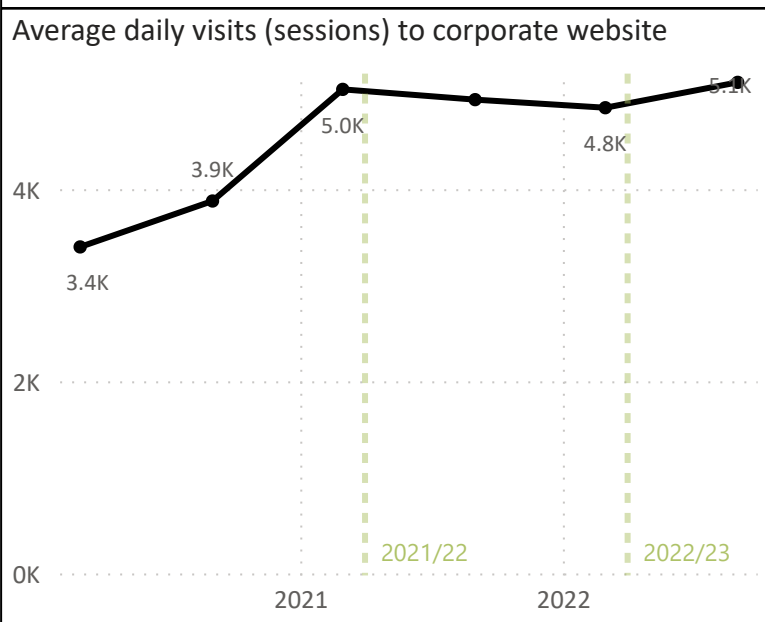
Luke Swinhoe: Assistant Director - Law & Governance

R6. Increasing the availability of council services online



There has been a net increase (+19) of transactional functions since the previous reporting period. Several forms such as expired consultation feedback forms have been removed, and some of the new features including contact forms, customer services appointment bookings, and trading standards report it forms have been made available. There are currently 195 of transactional functions available via the council's websites, all of which need to be managed and maintained.

Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Communications



There has been a modest increase in the daily visits to our website since the last reporting period (4.8k to 5.1k) taking us to our highest reported 3 month average to date. It is difficult to determine the precise reason(s) for the increase but there was a 2 week period at the end of June when revenue and benefits pages had some spikes in traffic that were mainly due to the council tax energy rebate.

Work continues to convert the site's content into plain English with approximately 60% of the web pages now complete.

Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Communications

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. Promotional activities, including a video, are 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 and the 2021 employee survey. The Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) and chief officers have received an update on the impact of the strategy following the one-year anniversary of its launch and will receive further updates annually. To support implementation and embedding of the strategy and Council values, we will continue to monitor progress through the 2023 employee survey, the agile working pilot review, development of staff communication, wellbeing statistics, customer feedback and workforce performance.

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

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

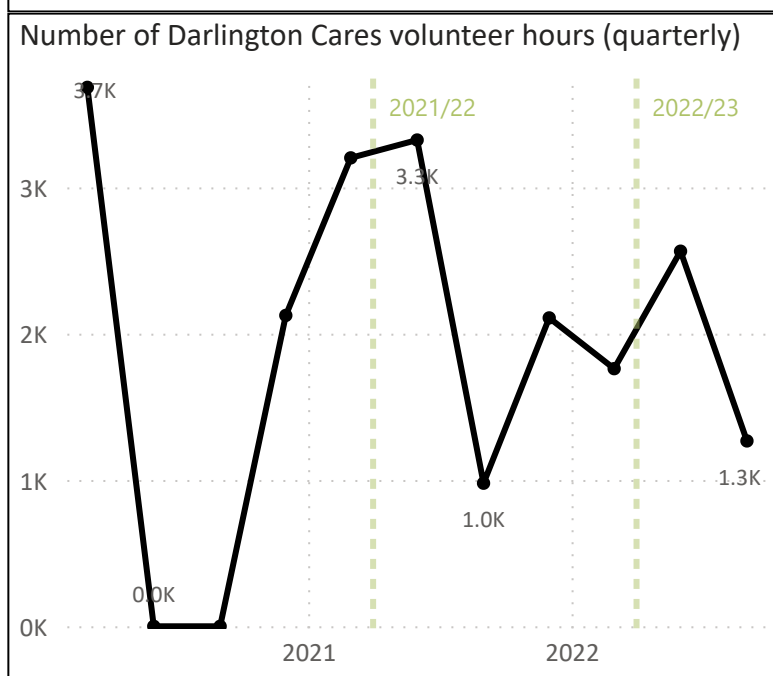
Darlington Cares rapidly recovered from the limitations faced through Covid. The existing programme continued to reboot whilst the Board explored other areas it could focus on. In particular, it is exploring how it can join forces with the Council and other agencies to help planting trees and other biodiversity 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. A further successful networking event was held on October 27th. Plans are being developed to re-run in 2023 a successful initiative, 'The Great Park Auction' held in 2018. The last scheme delivered 3,600 hours of volunteering in Darlington's parks.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership

Year	Month	Value
2020	September	24
	December	24
2021	March	24
	June	26
	September	26
2022	March	30
	June	30
	September	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. Notable recent joiners are Amazon, Redde Northgate and Carvers estate agents

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership



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. Darlington Cares is supporting the Council with its tree planting ambition. In addition a further round of 'The Great Park Auction' is planned for 2023

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington 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

In January 2022 the Steering Group agreed to set up a Data Dashboard to help analyse the impact of the Northgate Initiative and to identify any gaps where work needed to be increased or new actions be implemented to improve life of the Northgate residents. As a direct result of the implementation of the dashboard the focus and targets have changed slightly within each workstream to reflect the real needs of the area. This 'real-time' tool of analysing progression will create greater impact on the success of the initiative longer term.

A persistent issue in Northgate is, whilst there are a wide range of support available for residents, take up of these services is low. To raise awareness and improve access a 'Family Hub' has been established at Corporation Road school which will host a range of support services available to parents and other members of the community on a rota.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership

S3. Work with partners to address food instability

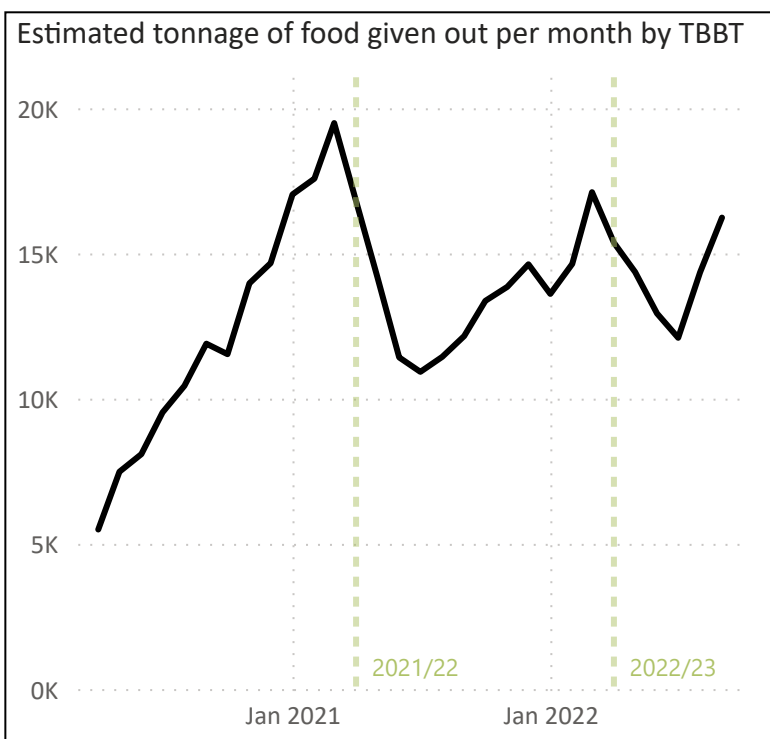
The Bread and Butter Thing (TBBT) continues to deliver effectively across Darlington with each of its hubs at, or nearing, capacity. This is an ever more important resource as the cost of living rises.

Work is underway to make the service available in the Albert Hill area.

Meanwhile TBBT are working with the community venues they operate from to create warm spaces during their service.

TBBT are also one of the agencies helping deliver the Household Support Fund. having developed a clear and simple process for people to access them, they will be providing 3,600 fuel vouchers to Darlington resident. DBC will help them target those most in need and voluntary sector organisations in Darlington will also make referrals.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership



The Bread & Butter thing has continued to support families across Darlington in making life more affordable especially at a time when families need it most. 8 hubs currently serve the town with plans for the ninth hub to be fully operation by the end of 2022.

Since the 1st April 2022 TBBT have given out 16,431 bags of food which equates to 145,066kg of food. Not only supporting families but preventing good food from being wasted or placed into landfill.

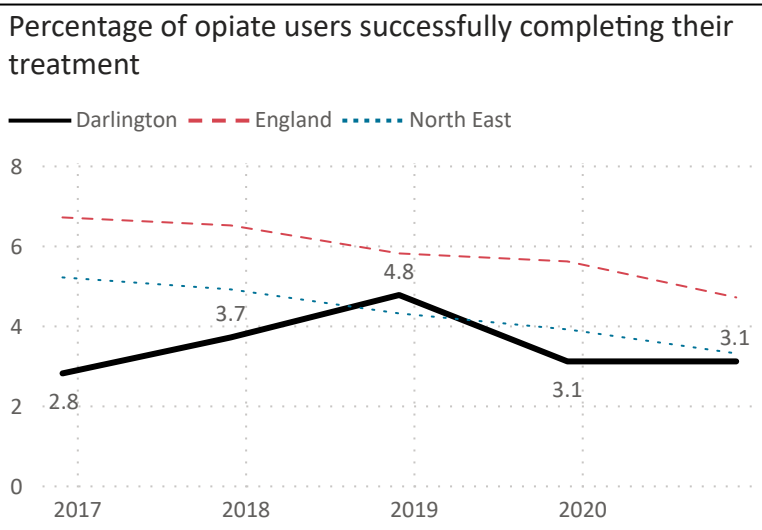
Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership

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

A review of the Civic Enforcement team's priorities and work 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 working in partnership with other agencies as required. Resources are allocated to the three areas based on priorities at the time and the intelligence available to help maximise the effectiveness of the team and partner resources.

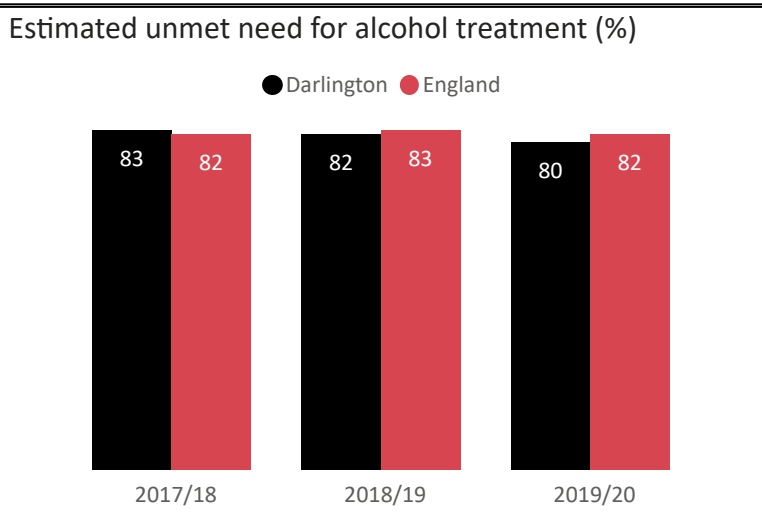
[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services](#)

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, This rise reflects the work that the provider of substance misuse services in Darlington has been undertaking to increase access to treatment and improve the numbers who are in treatment. They are also implementing evidence based interventions such as optimising prescribing to ensure that treatment is optimised and effective.

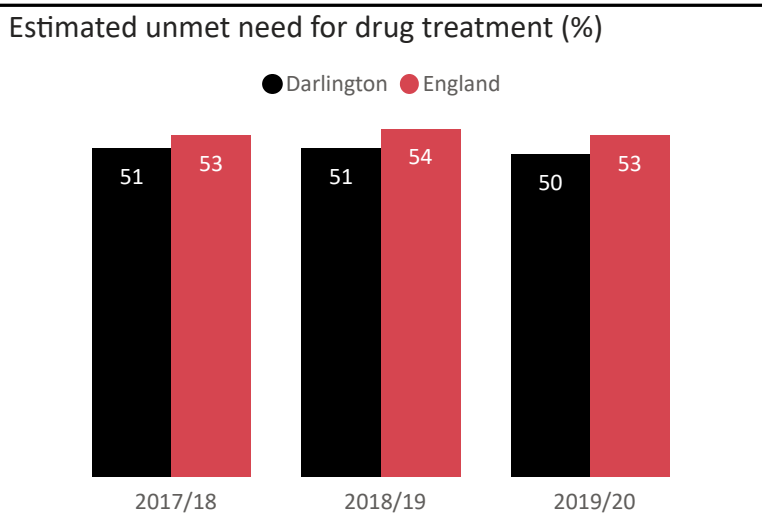
[Penny Spring: Director of Public Health](#)



The estimated proportions of adults in need of alcohol treatment that are estimated not to be in treatment. It is lower in Darlington than the England averages and have been reducing.

Numbers of people seeking treatment has increased in STRIDE the local treatment service and work is underway to work with partners including the A&E at DMH and local GPs to increase early identification and referral of hazardous drinkers.

[Penny Spring: Director of Public Health](#)



The proportion of estimated unmet need for drug treatment in Darlington is lower than the England average. This proportion has remained stable for the last 4 years.

Work is underway using the recent SSMTRG funding from the home office to make services more accessible and reach those using substances who are not in treatment to give them the support they need to get into treatment.

[Penny Spring: Director of Public Health](#)

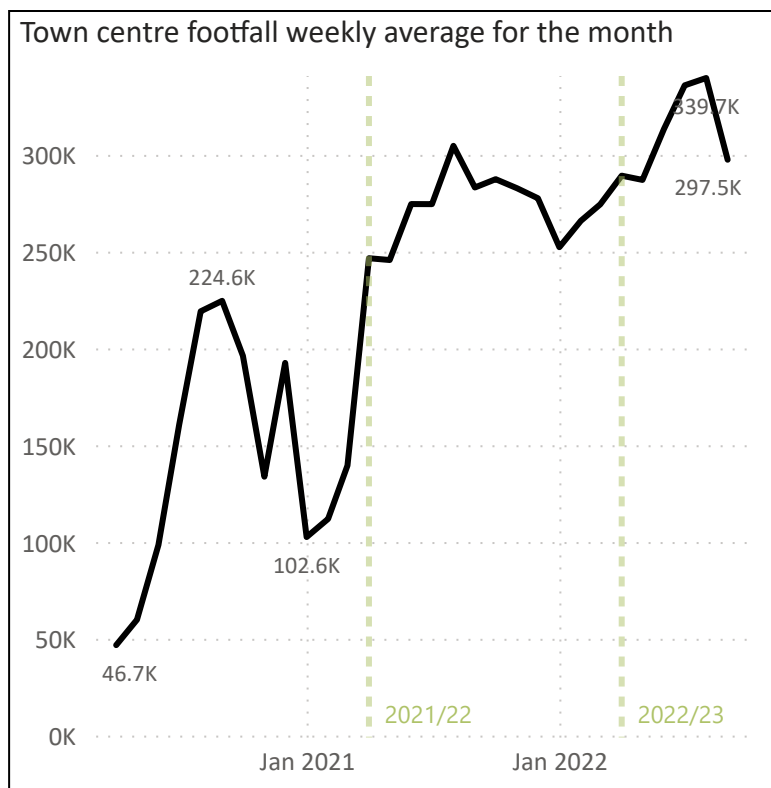
S6. Support the development of the town centre economy by putting appropriate measures in place and demonstrating it is a safe place to visit

Purple flag interim assessment was submitted in October with the outcome in December which will demonstrate that Darlington Town centre is safe and vibrant, with a well-managed and supported night-time economy. Both crime and Anti-Social Behaviour within the town centre are on the increase on last year however for a significant period in 2021 Covid restrictions were still in place. The community safety team continues to work closely with the town centre team and wider town centre partners.

The renewed public space protection order (PSPO) for the town centre came into effect in July.

The Hub on Skinnergate which provides a place of safety, primarily for women and girls but also for vulnerable people opened in September and is proving to be a well used valuable resource to support the late night economy.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services



Footfall has continued to increase year on year in Darlington since 2020.

The programming of events throughout 2022 continues to attract new visitors to Darlington with some fantastic feedback.

Darlington has continued to welcome 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.

Darlington has been part of the High Street Task Force initiative and awaiting reports and feedback for further development opportunities to enhance and continue to look at methods to improve the town centre and attract more businesses, residents and visitors to Darlington.

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. The work was completed at the end of 2021 resulting in a proposal to replace the remaining 74 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 approved the replacement programme and work will commence later this year early next on installing the new CCTV cameras. The police and crime commissioner has also supported the replacement programme by contributing £25,000 annually.

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

September 2022

71.5%

The total number of current staff who have attended a half day session of training is 1259 people. An additional 185 people have attended more than one session. Over 150 people who have now left the organisation also received the training.

There is an ongoing programme of in person sessions being delivered at Allington Way to reach operational staff who do not have access to teams. This programme will be delivered into February 2023 to meet the needs of the service. Work has been undertaken with PAs to identify areas where low numbers of staff have attended training to either get individuals booked onto sessions, or offer bespoke training where that is required in the service area.

[Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Communications](#)

Percentage of elected members who have completed equality and diversity training

September 2022

76.0%

This indicator includes members who have completed at least one of two distinct training sessions on equality and diversity on offer. The next sessions booked in for members are after the local elections in May and will be offered to all members. Sessions are offered at a variety of times, both during the day and in the evening, to meet the scheduling needs of members. In addition to the training, individual members are provided with equality, diversity, and inclusion advice throughout the year.

[Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Communications](#)

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. 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.

In addition we are also working with local land owners to reduce the risk of flooding in Killerby.

[Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects](#)