



Darlington Borough Council

Council Plan Performance Management Report

2022/23 Quarter 4

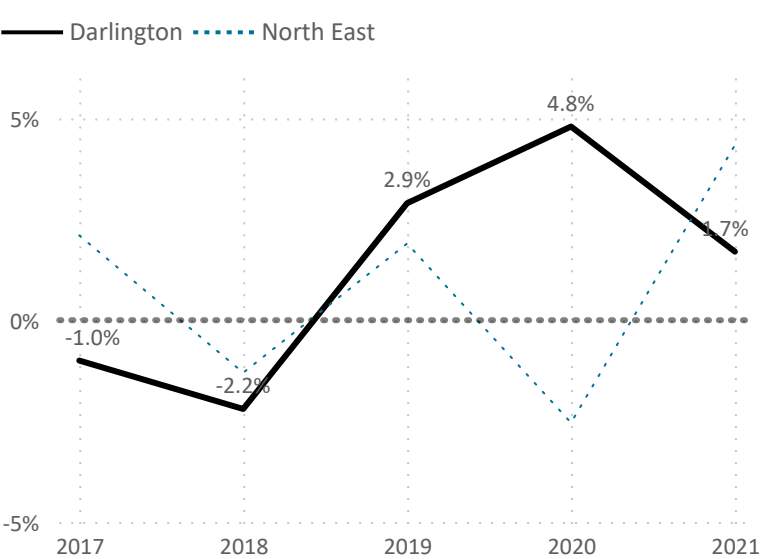
This report outlines council performance up to the end of the second quarter of the 2022/23 financial year.

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

Change in total employment since previous year



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. The number of new employment opportunities continued to increase in 2021, although at a slower rate than the regional rate. The rate of change in Darlington has remained positive for the last 3 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 |
|------|-----------|------------|
| 2020 | June | 48,400 |
| | September | 48,700 |
| | December | 49,100 |
| 2021 | March | 48,100 |
| | June | 49,800 |
| | September | 49,400 |
| 2022 | December | 50,100 |
| | March | 50,200 |
| | June | 49,800 |
| 2022 | September | 50,500 |
| | December | 51,000 |

The number of people employed (including self-employed) now stands at 51,000. 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 |
|------|-----------|------------|
| 2020 | June | 43,300 |
| | September | 43,400 |
| | December | 44,100 |
| 2021 | March | 43,000 |
| | June | 44,300 |
| | September | 44,200 |
| 2022 | December | 44,900 |
| | March | 45,200 |
| | June | 44,800 |
| 2022 | September | 44,700 |
| | December | 45,700 |

The long-term trend shows the number of employees in Darlington continuing to grow, and by the end of 2022, 45,700 employees are in the Borough as post covid confidence returns and demand for goods and services increases. Local evidence shows that many businesses are commencing with growth plans (delayed by the pandemic) and expanding the labour force within these businesses.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

1. GROWING DARLINGTON'S ECONOMY

1.1 Delivering - More sustainable well-paid jobs

Median weekly all residence based earnings

| Year | Darlington | England | North East |
|------|------------|---------|------------|
| 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 | 502 | 510 | 464 |
| 2022 | 482 | 537 | 491 |

Darlington resident median weekly decreased from £502 to £482 in 2022. This was in contrast to both the North East and English trends.. The weekly median all residence based earnings is now £55 less than the England level. The long term trend for Darlington, however, is still increasing. After a few years of closing the gap between Darlington rates and national averages, this reduction has negatively impacted that recovery.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

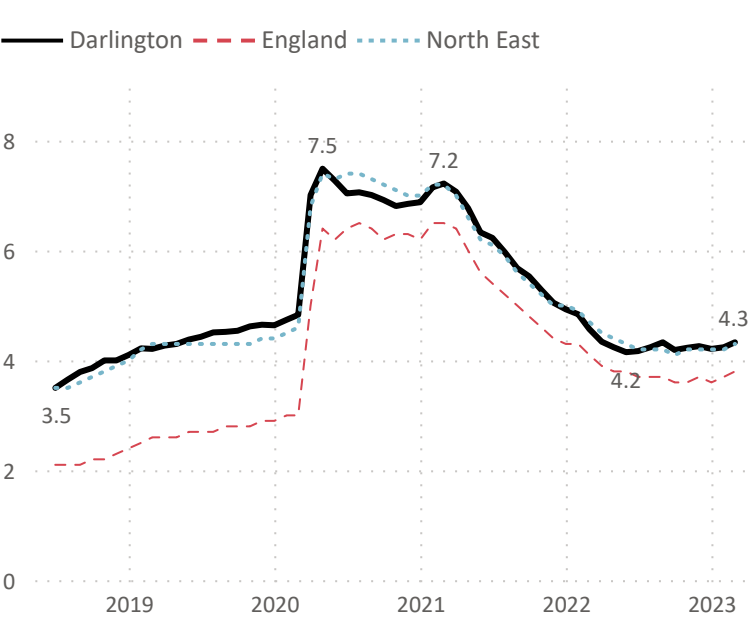
Median weekly full-time employee based earnings

| Year | Darlington | England | North East |
|------|------------|---------|------------|
| 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 | 459 | 510 | 459 |
| 2022 | 492 | 537 | 484 |

The Darlington full-time employee based earnings increased in 2022. The rate of increase in Darlington between 2021 and 2022 was £33 an increase higher than both the North-East at £25 and the England rate at £27. This has closed the gap between Darlington full-time employee based earnings and England full-time employee based earnings. In addition Darlington is now above the North East rate,

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Monthly unemployed claimant count (%)

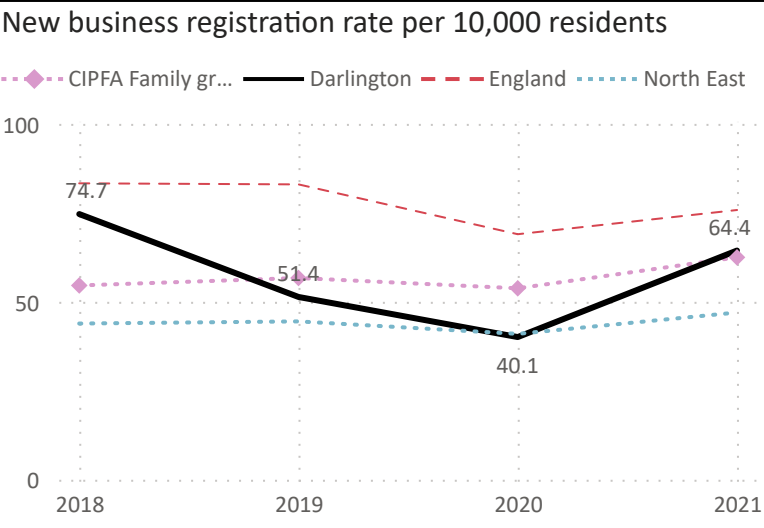


During the latter part of 2022 and early 2023, the monthly unemployed claimant count has remained relatively static - a trend which is mirrored in both regional and national statistics. The claimant count in March 2023 now stands at 4.3%. The claimant count rate will be impacted by the current business 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

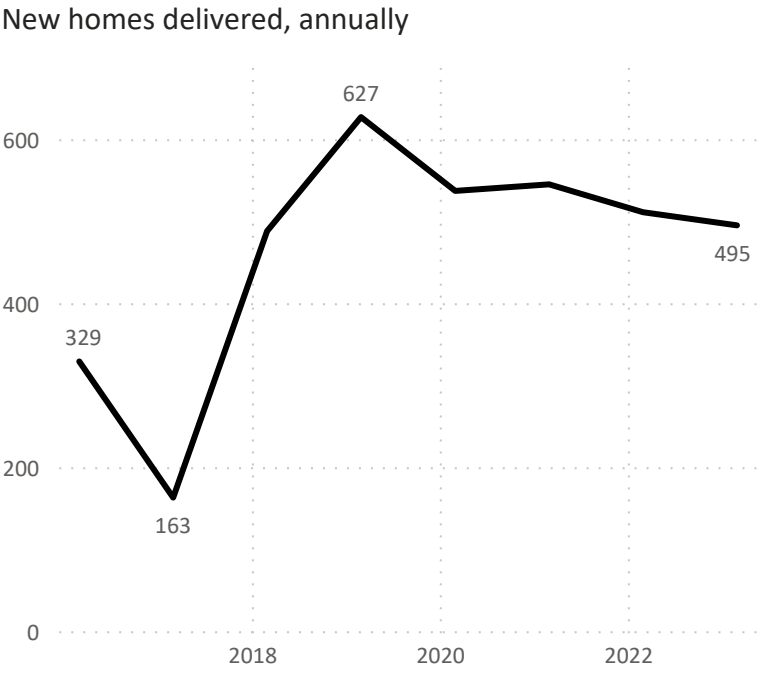
1.2 Delivering - More businesses



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.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

1.3 Delivering - More homes



Housing delivery continues to be strong within the borough despite ongoing challenges with Nutrient Neutrality.

Despite not granting any significant new housing permissions in the past financial year housing completions have still exceeded the annual local plan target.

Options to mitigate Nutrient pollution from new development are emerging and it is anticipated Natural England credits will be issued starting later this month (May 2023) which will hopefully unlock further permissions. Work has been undertaken to better understand the issues around nutrient pollution and council led mitigation solutions are being investigated.

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% |
| | December | 91.3% |
| 2023 | March | 89.8% |

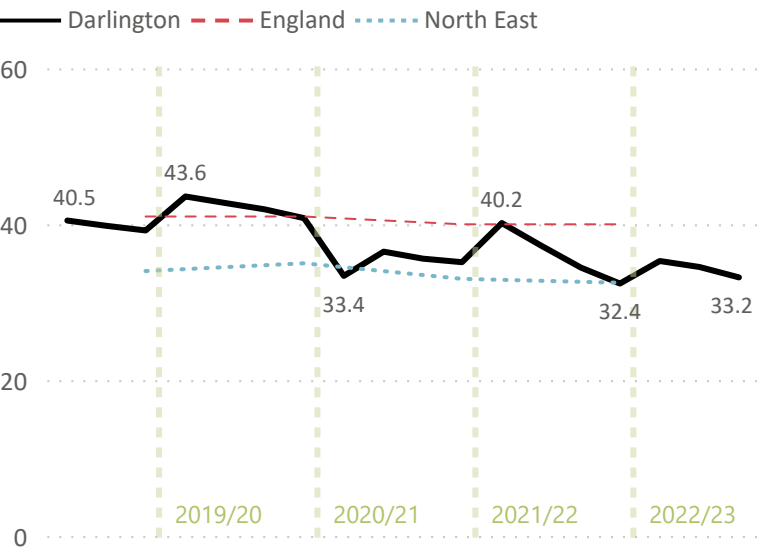
There is an upward trend in the number of complaints received about refuse in private gardens and yards which are investigated by Environmental Health. In the first instance, for the majority of cases involving refuse accumulations in yards / gardens, a Community Protection Warning is issued requiring 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

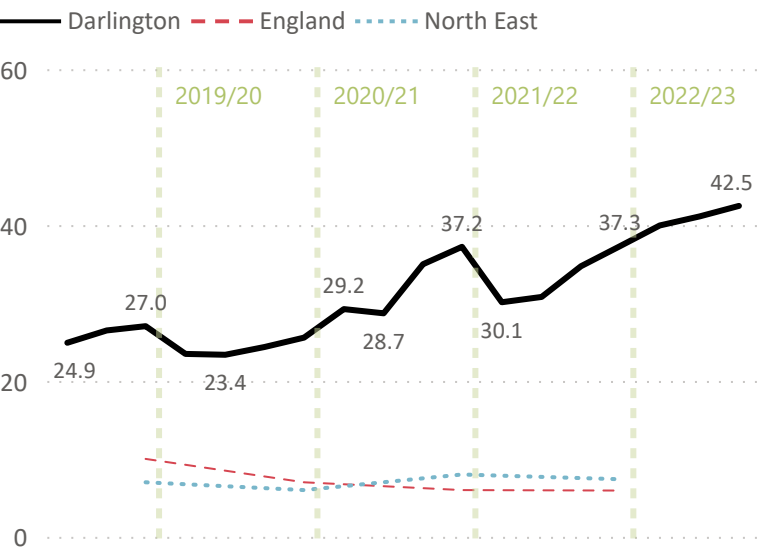
Percentage of household waste that is collected that is either reused, recycled or composted



Data for the proportion of local household waste reused, recycled or composted is only available up to Quarter 3 of this year, due to lag in data is verification. The amount of waste reused, recycled or composted at the end of Quarter 3 is slightly up on end of year performance for 22/23. Performance has fallen since June 2021 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

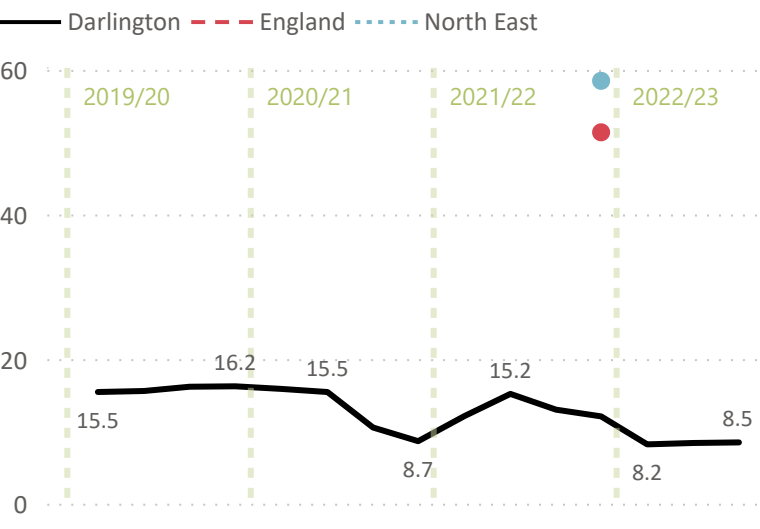


Data is only available up to Quarter 3 due to the lag in data verification through the national system. The percentage of household waste landfilled up to the end of Quarter 3 is 42.5%.

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 Covis-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

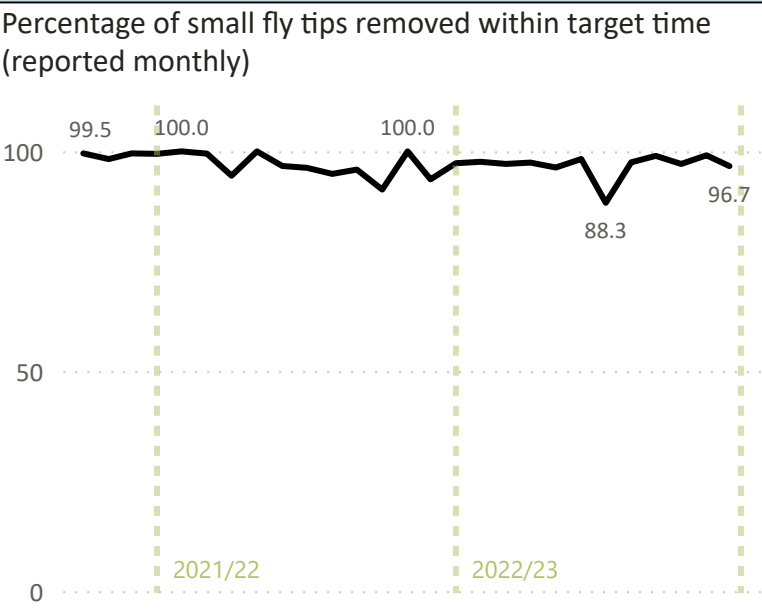
Percentage of overall waste that is collected by the Council that is used for energy recovery



Data is only available until Quarter up to 3 due to the lag in the verification process. The percentage of household waste sent to energy recovery this year up to Quarter 3 was 8.5%. Post Covid there have been limited financially viable options to send the majority of the Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) output to energy recovery which ultimately impacts on the amount of waste landfilled which has increased. A stable outlet has been secured for 23/24 to send waste to energy recovery so performance will improve.

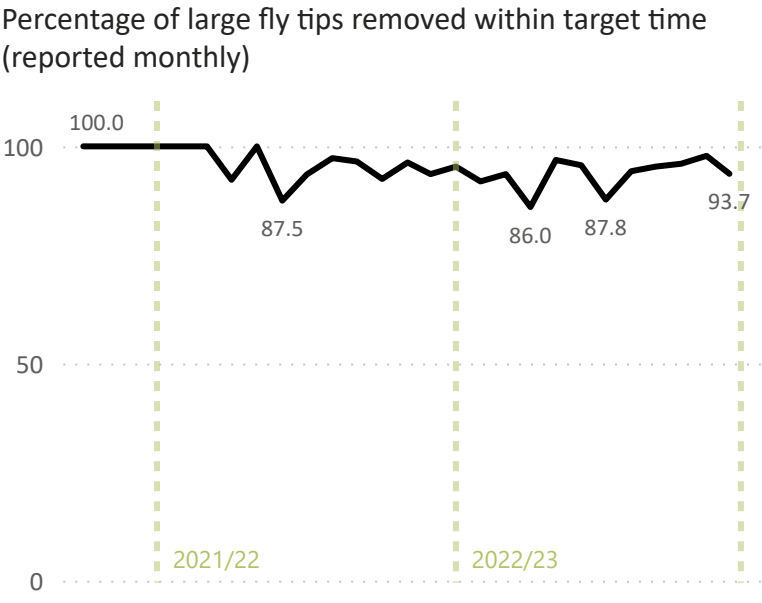
Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

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



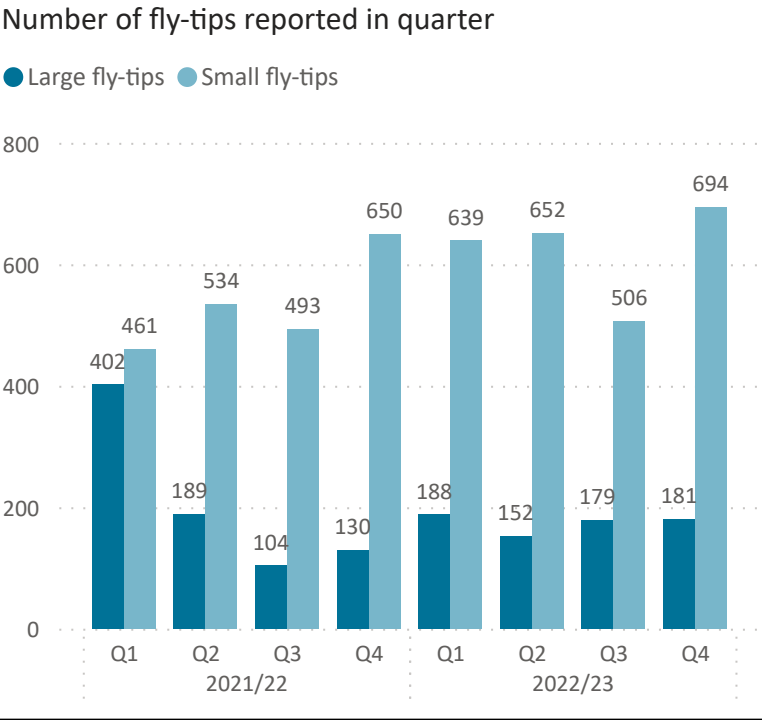
The performance of street cleansing teams remains very high with an average since April 2022 of 96.8% of small fly tips removed within their target time. The introduction of an additional back lane crew has made a significant difference to the time fly tips are collected with the majority being collected in under 5 days with a significant number of those in under 2 days.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services



The performance of street cleansing teams remains very high with an average of 93.69% 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



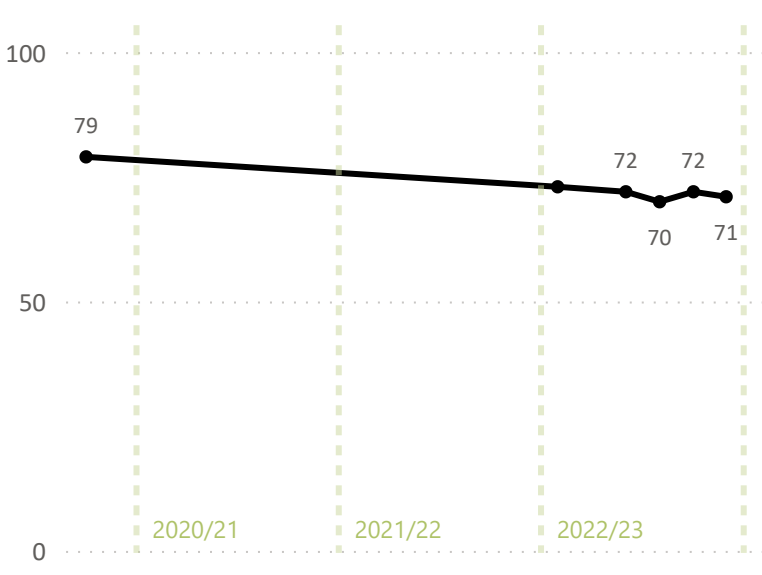
When comparing 2021/22 performance against 2022/23, overall fly tips have increased by 7.6%. While small fly tips (a couple of bin bags) have increased by 16.5% over the period, large fly tips have reduced by 15%. A large proportion of small fly tips is side waste, put out particularly in back lanes at the same time as refuse collection. A significant proportion of these fly tips are being identified by staff as part of the back lanes project, which is achieving great success in the areas it is operating in. The majority of fly tips are collected within 5 days. The larger, more complex incidents that take longer sometimes contain asbestos (or other) and need significant resources to remove.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

1. GROWING DARLINGTON'S ECONOMY

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

Land Audit Management System - Litter Score



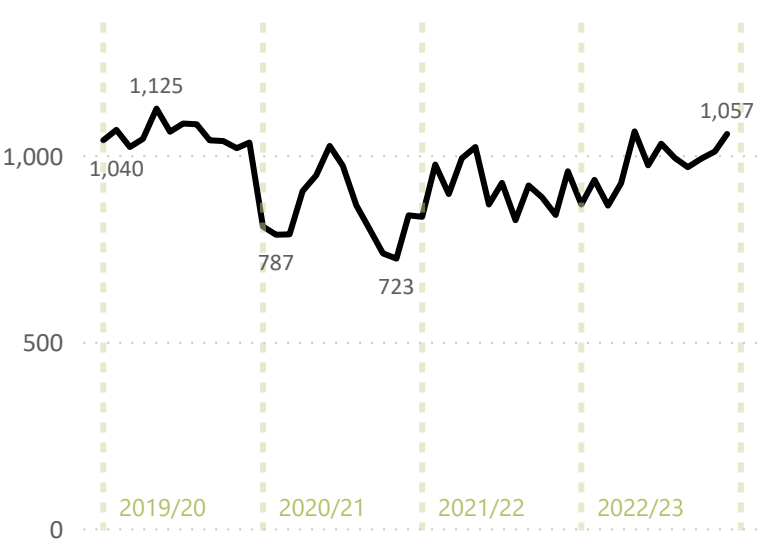
This is a rolling average percentage score of the 40 transects inspected for litter every other month, as defined by the APSE's Land Audit Management System grading system and covering all wards of the borough.

The overall average has remained consistent between 70 and 72 since the inspections re-started after the break due to Covid. 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

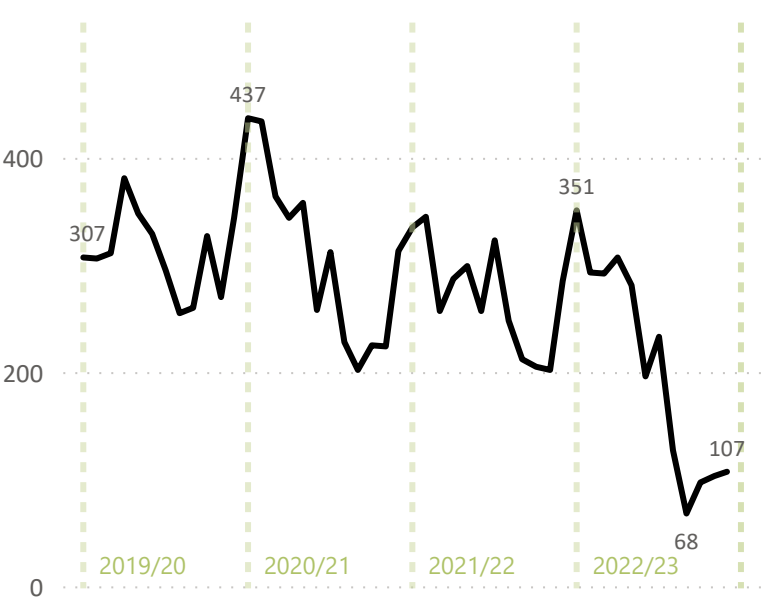
Total Crime (monthly)



Recorded crime for 2022/23 (11,679) increased 6.7% from 2021/22 (10,973). However, it was still 7.8% lower than the same period pre-pandemic 2019/20 (12,661). The types of reported crime showing increases can be attributed to Shoplifting 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

ASB Incidents (monthly, excludes duplicates)



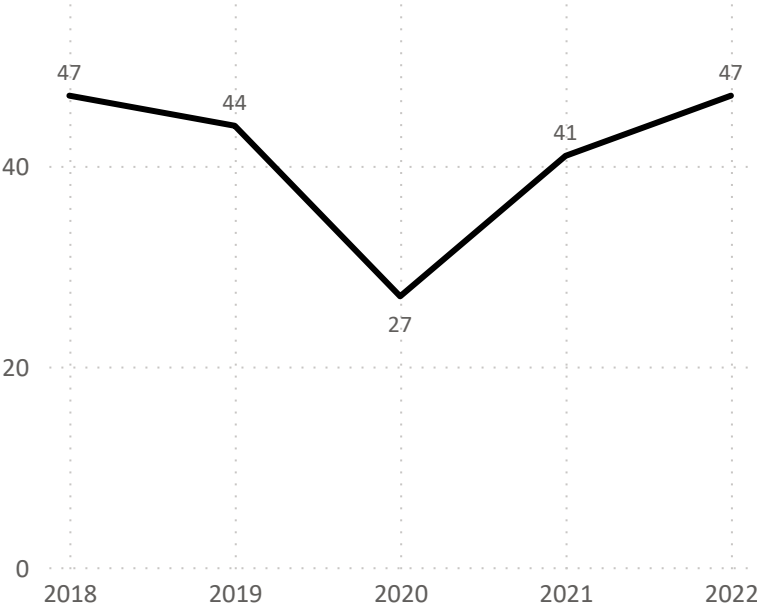
The number of reported antisocial behaviour (ASB) incidents across the borough for 2022/23 (2,455) has decreased by 24.6% compared to 2021/22 (3,255). The decrease can be partly attributed to the proactive measures in place. Civic Enforcement continue to issue warnings and ABAs (Acceptable Behaviour Agreements) to individuals.

However there has been changes earlier this year in recording standards and where previously ASB incidents that have any element of harassment or public order are now being crimed by Durham Constabulary, This has seen a significant decrease in ASB reports recorded by Durham Constabulary.

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)



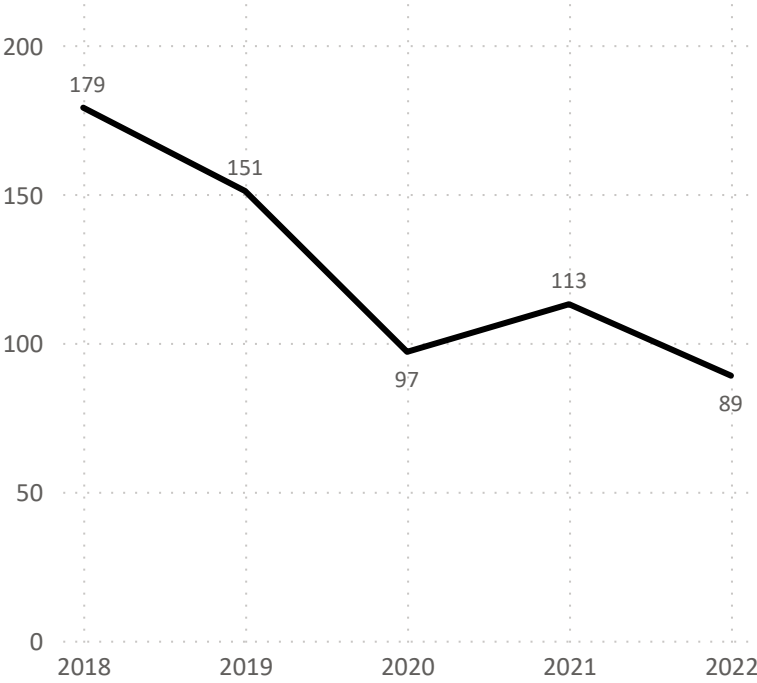
Casualties are monitored annually over a calendar year. The casualty indicators use a five-year average (2018/2022) for their baseline. For killed or seriously injured (KSI), this is 41.2.

2022 shows an increase over 2020-21. However, 2020-21 is a statistical outlier due to the impact of Covid-19 on traffic levels (15% of normal traffic levels at its lowest). Since 2020 traffic levels have recovered to similar volumes to that recorded in 2019 prior to Covid-19 (within approximately +/- 2% overall)

Of the 47 Killed or seriously injured on our roads in 2022, there were 4 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 (2018/2022) for their baseline. For slightly injured, this is 125.8.

2022 shows a decrease over 2021 despite traffic volumes recovering to similar levels to that recorded in 2019 prior to Covid-19 (within approximately +/- 2% overall).

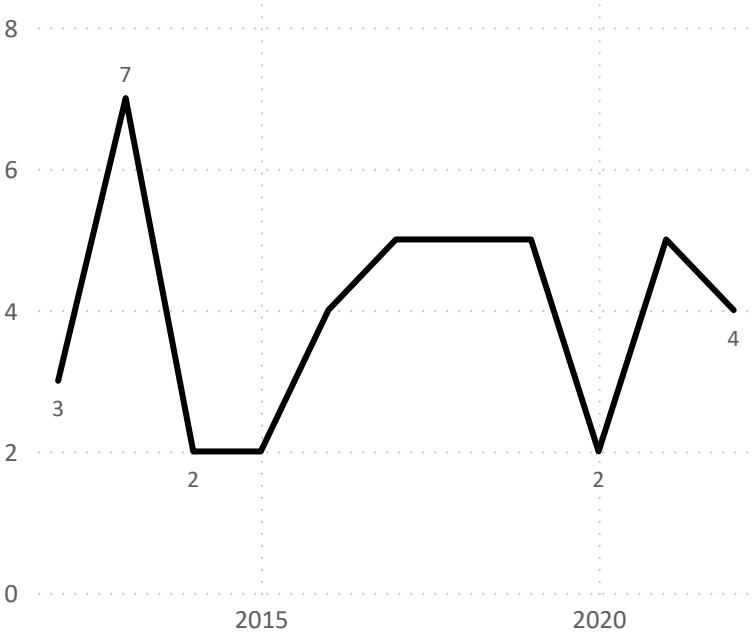
Based on the years prior to Covid-19, we are still seeing a substantial reduction with accidents halving, and this level is significantly below the baseline.

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 (2018/2022) for their baseline. For children killed or seriously injured (KSI), this is 4.2.

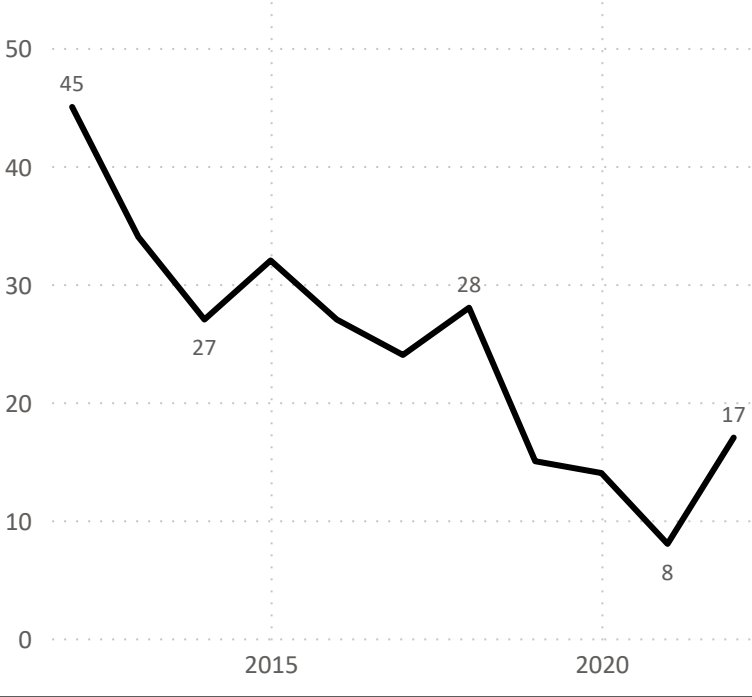
2022 shows a decrease over 2021 despite traffic volumes recovering to similar levels to that recorded in 2019 prior to Covid-19 (within approximately +/- 2% overall).

Based on the years prior to Covid-19, we are at a slightly lower level which falls marginally below 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 (2018/2022) for their baseline. For child slight casualties, this is 16.4.

2022 shows an increase over 2020-21 which goes against the recent trend of reduction over the longer term. At 17, this is now marginally above the baseline. It should be noted that the long term trend shows significant reductions from the 45 child slight casualties recorded in 2012.

However, 2020-21 is a statistical outlier due to the impact of Covid-19 on traffic levels (15% of normal traffic levels at its lowest). Since 2020 traffic levels have recovered to to similar volumes to that recorded in 2019.

[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

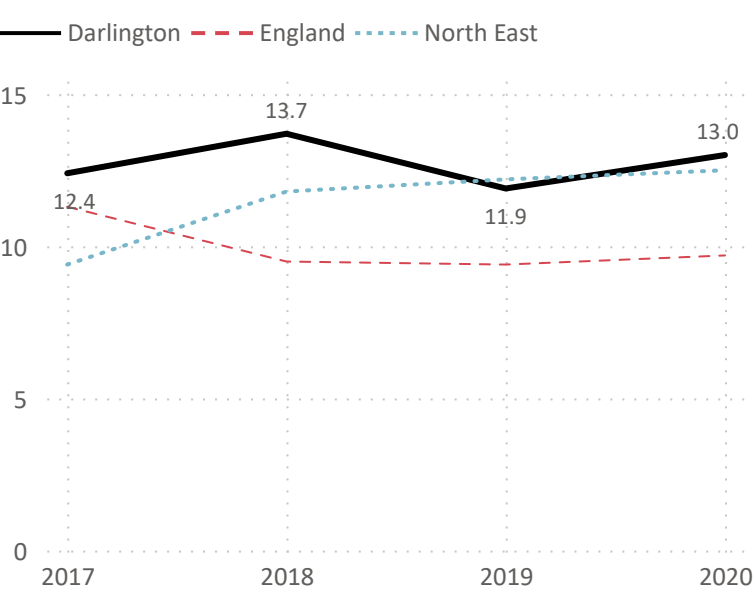
Female healthy life expectancy at birth

| 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

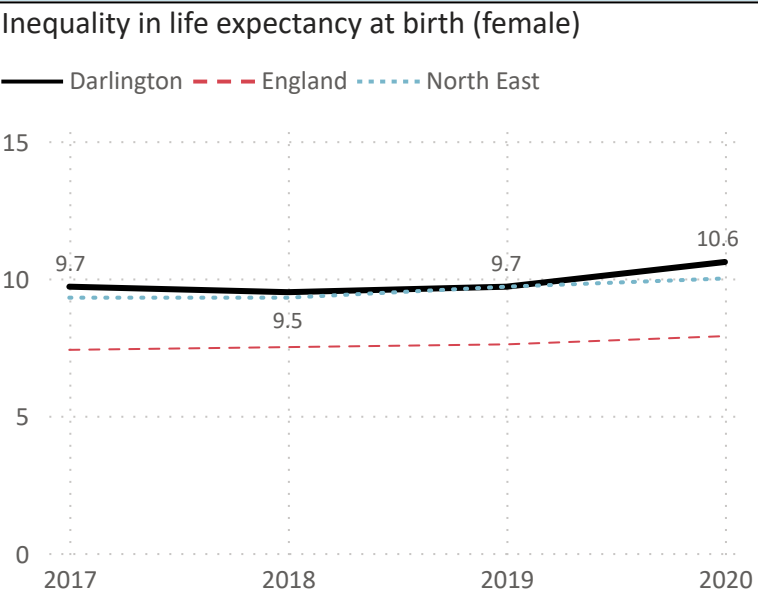
Inequality in life expectancy at birth (male)



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 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 boy 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

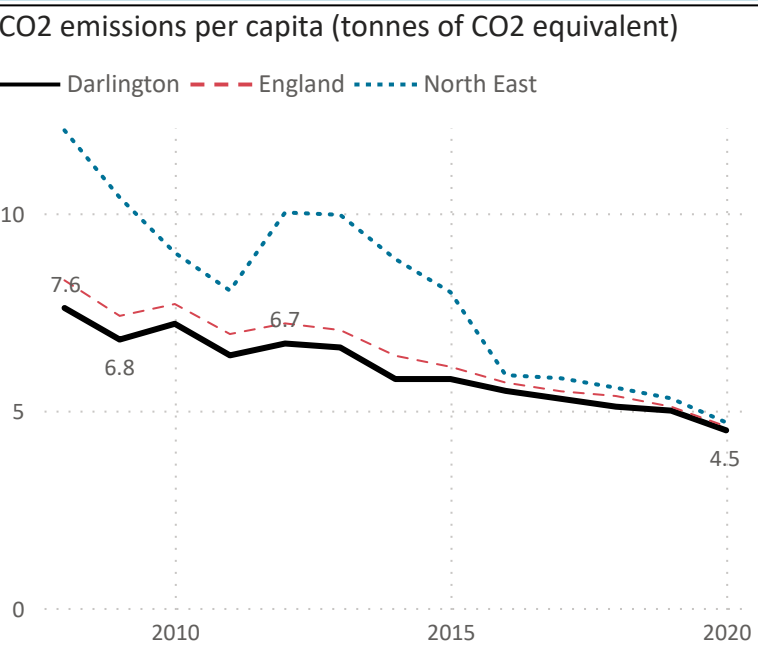


Inequality in life expectancy at birth for females in Darlington widened in 2020, from 9.7 (2019) to 10.6 years, and is worse than England. Compared to the North East region Darlington is statistically similar in line with the North East average.

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



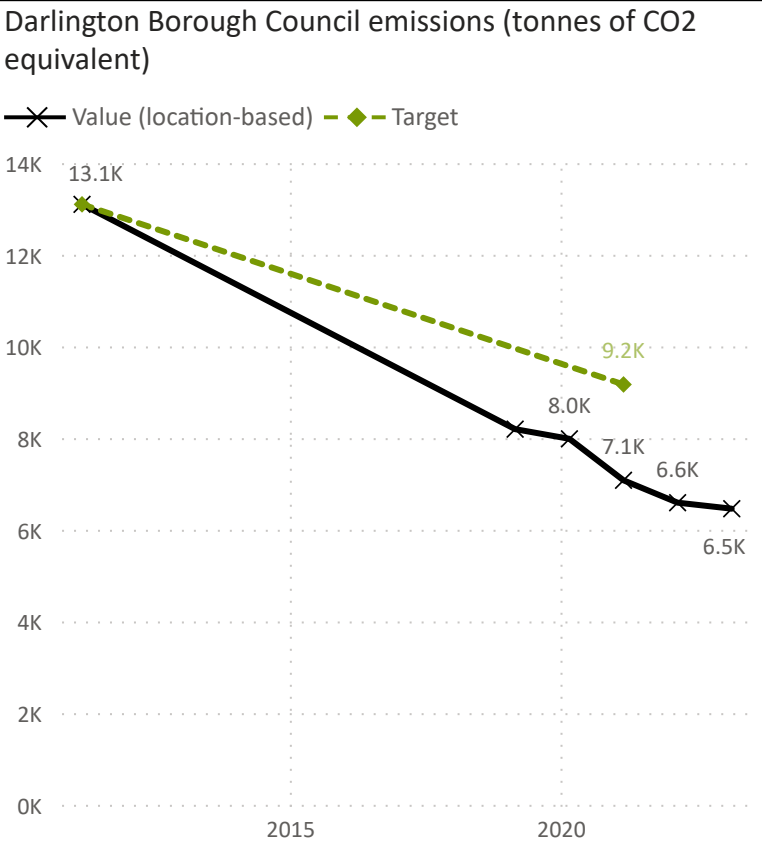
Data is not published until June.

We have updated the website with information and advice for residents, including a new infographic for communities. The businesses pages include links for advice and information.

Our young people's page includes learning resources and things to do. A sustainability event on 2 and 3 June in the Town Centre will provide a forum for businesses to share learning and good practice. There will be local produce stalls and plenty of activities for families.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

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



The graph shows our progress against our target trajectory. We report 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 electricity tariff.

Progress is measured against action milestones; 95% of actions for 2022/23 are complete or on target. For next year, we will have an improved reporting system which will enable better oversight of progress.

We have developed 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

A new housing strategy for the boroughs being prepared and the first draft will be shared for comment with members in July 2023. Nutrient Neutrality has been a challenge for developers in 2022/23 however the new credits scheme and advice now shared by Natural England has set a way forward.

The design code for Skerningham Garden Village (SGV) is yet to be adopted and is planned to be presented to Cabinet in June 2023. The developers associated with SGV will be finalising the masterplan which will be subject to consultation in summer 2023.

A planning application was received from Homes England for the first phase (750 properties) of the development. Determination of this application is anticipated in July 2023.

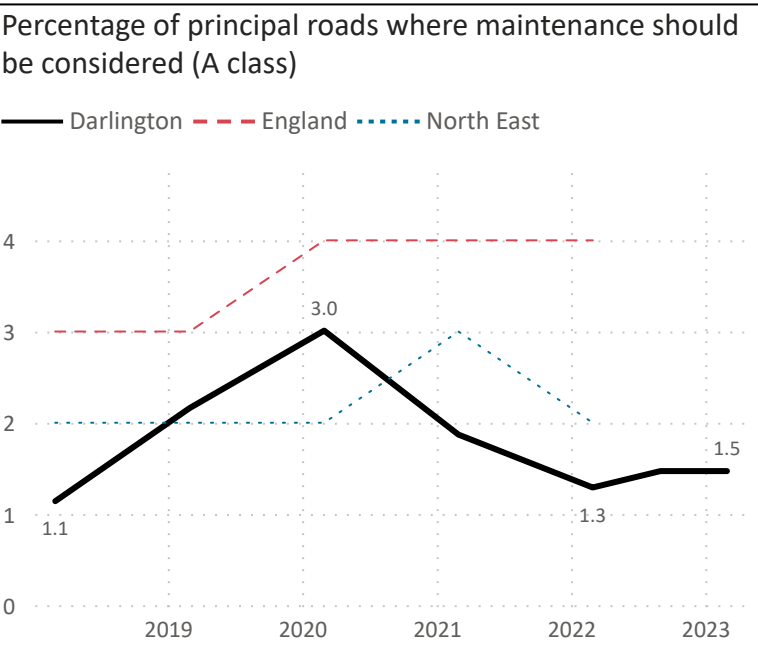
Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

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.

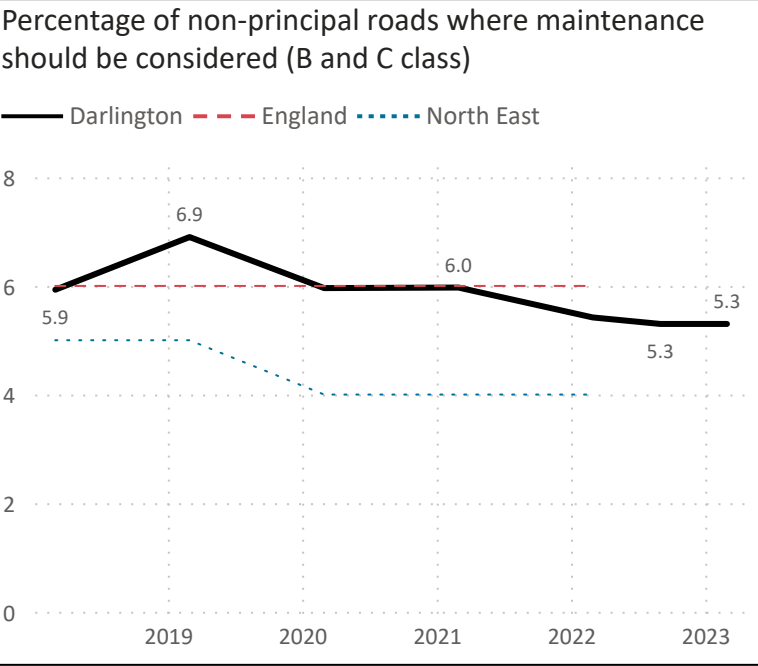
We participate in the National Highways Transportation Survey each year, and the results of this, along with evidence from investigations, statutory testing and surveys, asset management planning, other data sources and Government and local policies inform our investment decisions in our transport infrastructure.

Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects



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. This is still significantly below the national and the North East averages. Inflation is impacting on the service by reducing the amount of work which can be undertaken for the available budget. This will impact on our ability to improve road condition.

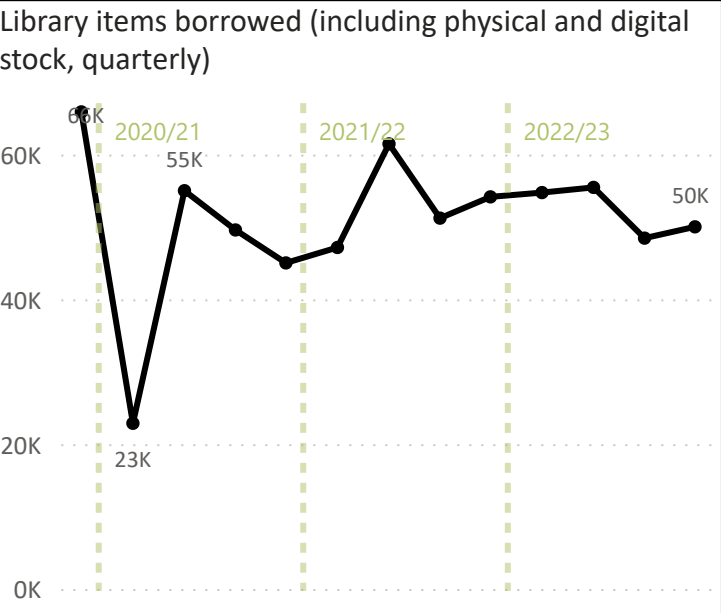
Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects



This is a yearly data set with Q2 being the most up to date and as follows (copied from Q2): 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

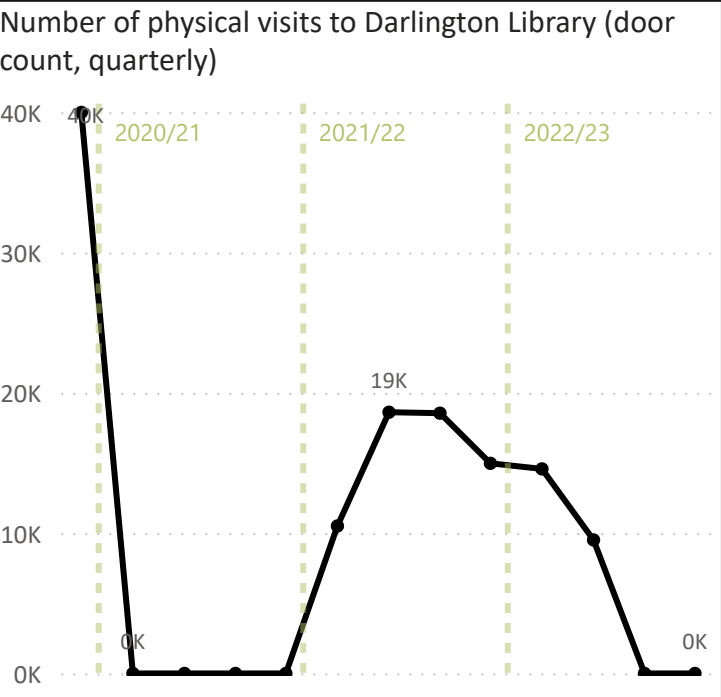


These figures include physical books, audio books and digital stock (eBooks, eAudio, digital magazines, newspapers.)

There is only a slight drop of 2.5% in our annual borrowing figures compared to 2021/22, which factoring in the current closure at Darlington Library, reflects the dedication of the library team to keep services as accessible as possible during this time.

In particular, Cockerton Library has gone from strength to strength since its modest refurbishment late in 2021 and in part due to more extensive and wide ranging activity programming. Borrowing figures from Cockerton Library are now higher than they were pre-pandemic with 76,931 physical items issued during 2022/23.

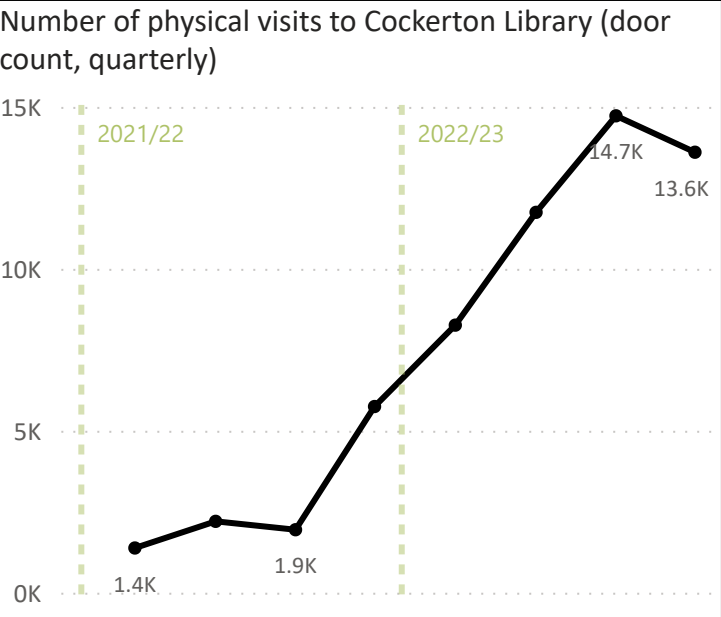
Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services



The doors are currently closed as work progresses on Darlington Library.

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



Visitor numbers to our branch library have increased and are at the highest recorded since 2016. The team strive to engage a diverse range of audiences through a varied activity programme, whilst providing knowledge on books and support with computers.

Physical visits to Cockerton Library are monitored using a door counter and we note that on occasion the battery has died, as such the recorded figures are likely to be under our actual visitor numbers.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

2. MAXIMISE THE POTENTIAL OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE BY

2.1 Working with partners to maximise educational achievement

2021-22 saw a return to formal assessment in primary schools and external examinations and accreditation in secondary schools. The performance data must be treated with caution. Baseline data from previous years is not directly comparable. At a primary level, the data suggests that overall attainment and progress is lower than we would have expected compared to regional and national indicators. This comes at a time when the number of children in primary schools is falling and schools are under greater financial pressure. Schools also report that the effects of the pandemic on younger children, in particular, is being felt.

Overall, there was less variation between performance in the secondary schools than in previous years prior to the pandemic. Darlington performance for Attainment 8 was slightly higher than the regional and national averages. However, the average Progress 8 score for pupils in Darlington was lower than the national average but higher than the regional average. Our understanding of the position and the ongoing challenges schools are facing post-pandemic will develop through the year. Awarding bodies warn that further adjustments will be made nationally in the 2023 round of GCSEs.

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

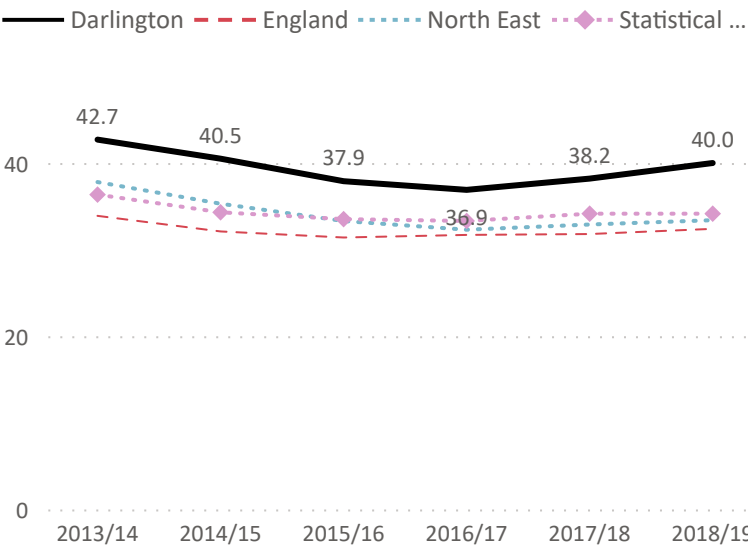
| School year | Darlington | England | North East |
|-------------|------------|---------|------------|
| 2017/18 | 80.9 | 83.3 | 85.6 |
| 2018/19 | 91.8 | 84.1 | 87.6 |
| 2019/20 | 93.9 | 83.3 | 87.4 |
| 2020/21 | 93.9 | 82.9 | 87.2 |
| 2021/22 | 95.3 | 81.1 | 83.8 |

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 95.3% in 2021/22.

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



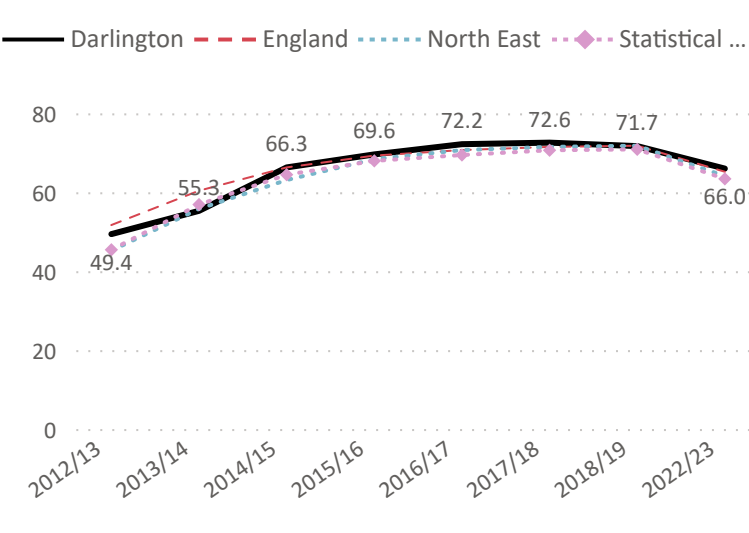
The percentage of children in Darlington schools achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception has been stable for the last 3 years reported (17-19), at around 72%. This is in line with comparators. The percentage of children who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and achieving a good level of development has been the same or higher than national, regional and statistical neighbour comparators since 14/15. In the latest available data (18/19) the next update due Nov 23, the difference in percentage between FSM and non-FSM 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

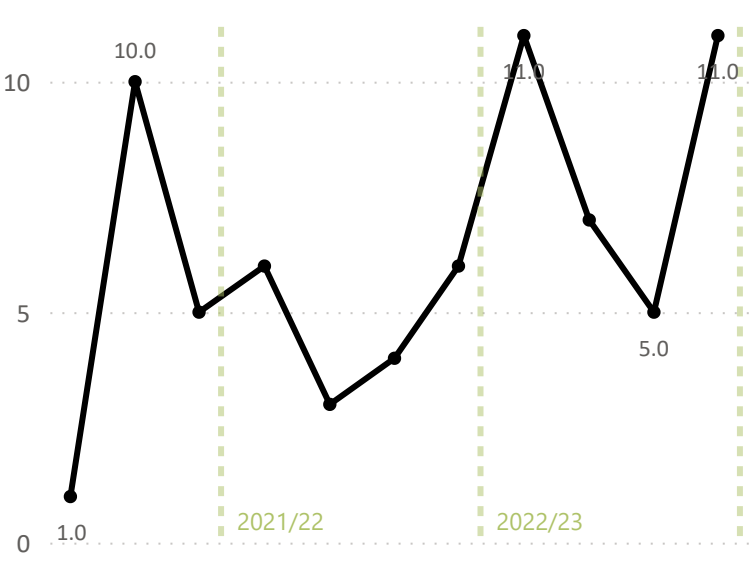
School Readiness: all children achieving a good level of development at the end of reception as a percentage of all eligible children (Early Years Foundation Stage profile)



The key stage attainment data collections were cancelled for 19/20 and 20/21 due to the pandemic, resulting in 18/19 being the previous academic year where data is available before 22/23. The 22/23 results show that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has decreased since 18/19 from 71.7% to 66.0%. This remains in line with the national average (65.2%), those of statistical neighbours (63.4%) and North East local authorities (64.1%).

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

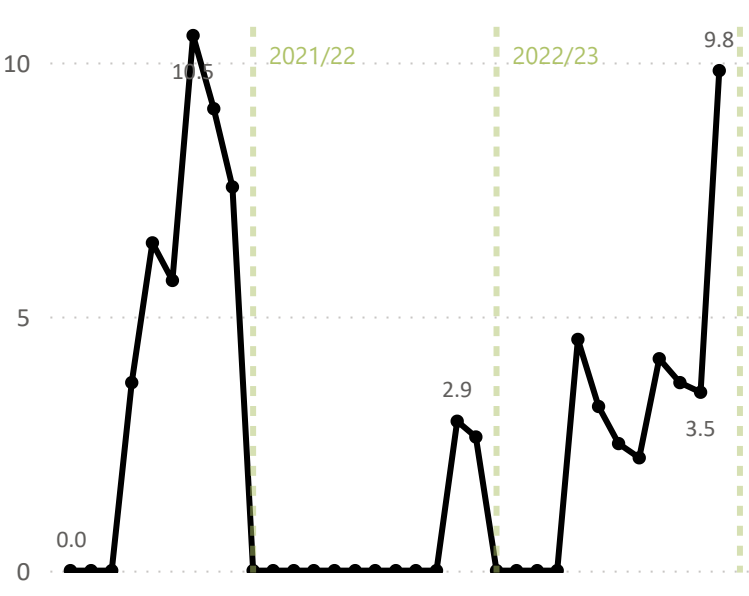
Number of First Time entrants to the Youth Justice System (quarterly)



The number of First Time Entrants into the Youth Justice System has risen by 79% in 2022/23 when compared with 2021/22. The service have seen 34 young people enter the statutory provision and received a formal disposal compared with 19 last year. This is linked to the gravity of some offences leading young people straight to court and not being eligible for an out of court disposal and there is a high proportion who have had previous diversionary disposals and have gone on to commit further offences therefore have entered the formal disposal provision.

Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

Percentage of reoffending rate of clients receiving a PCD

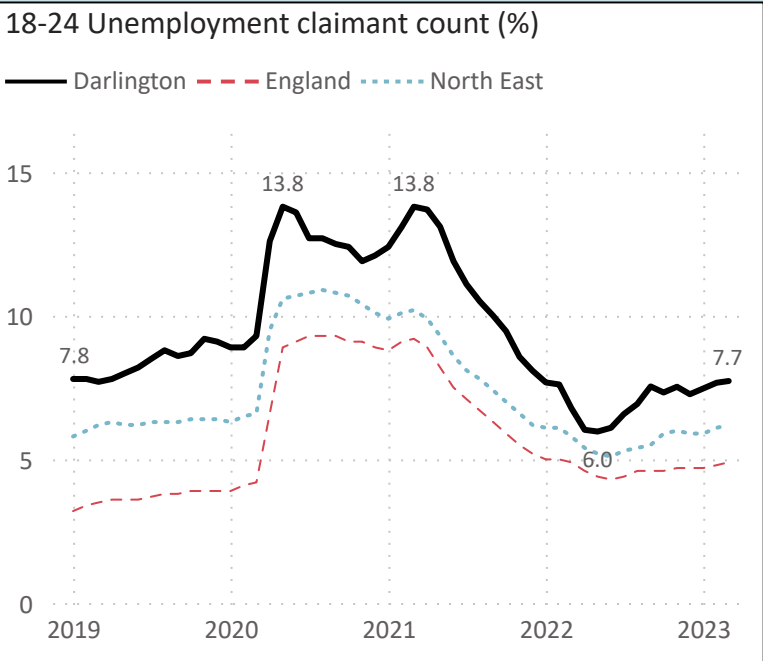


In April 22 to March 2023 the Young People's Engagement & Justice Service has seen 61 young people referred to the service for diversionary disposals (46 of those are Male and 15 are Female). There is a 90% success rate in terms of young people not going on to reoffend. Six young people have reoffended and have committed a further 11 reoffences.

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 unemployment claimant rate has gradually risen since a low in May 2022 when it was 6.0% in Darlington, a trend mirrored in the North-East and England figures. In March 2023, in Darlington, it stood at 7.7%, still well below the recent high of 13.8% from March 2021. Darlington at 7.7% is still higher than North East average (6.2%) and England average (4.9%).

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 |
| 2022 | 82.0 | 87.3 | 84.9 |

The proportion of in-work Darlington residents earning the real living wage, calculated by the Resolution Foundation as being £10.90 an hour in 2022-23, increased to 82% but remained below the regional average of 84.9% and England average of 87.3%. The overall trend shows gradual improvements in the percentage of workers earning the real living wage or above. In Darlington, less than 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

Darlington BEAT is a service funded by Darlington Borough Council and delivered by CAB. It helps people boost their income by supporting them to apply for and maximise benefits they are eligible to receive. During 2022/23, just under £1.8m of benefits were identified for Darlington residents aged 15+ across all wards. Support covered a range of benefits such as Universal Credit (£359k), housing and council tax (£55k), personal independence payments (£1.133m), disability living allowance (£97k), and pension credits (£35k). Given the current cost of living pressures, the contract with CAB has been extended to 31 March 2024.

A number of jobs and careers fairs took place during Q3 and Q4, with over 1,500 people and over 70 organisations attending the event at the Dolphin Centre in February 2023.

Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Communications

3.3 Working with partners

At the inaugural meeting of the Stronger Communities Board The Council published a Levelling Up Darlington Plan. The plan aims to outline a collective approach to addressing local inequalities and how we will complement action being taken nationally to ensure that all local residents can benefit from it. The plan brings partners, stakeholders and the voluntary sector together around a long-term vision addressing inequalities in health, opportunities and income. It will ensure Darlington's residents, already facing inequality, will be actively considered at the heart of this strategy. Taking a preventative approach it will seek to minimise the likelihood falling into needing emergency support.

3. WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES TO MAXIMISE THEIR POTENTIAL

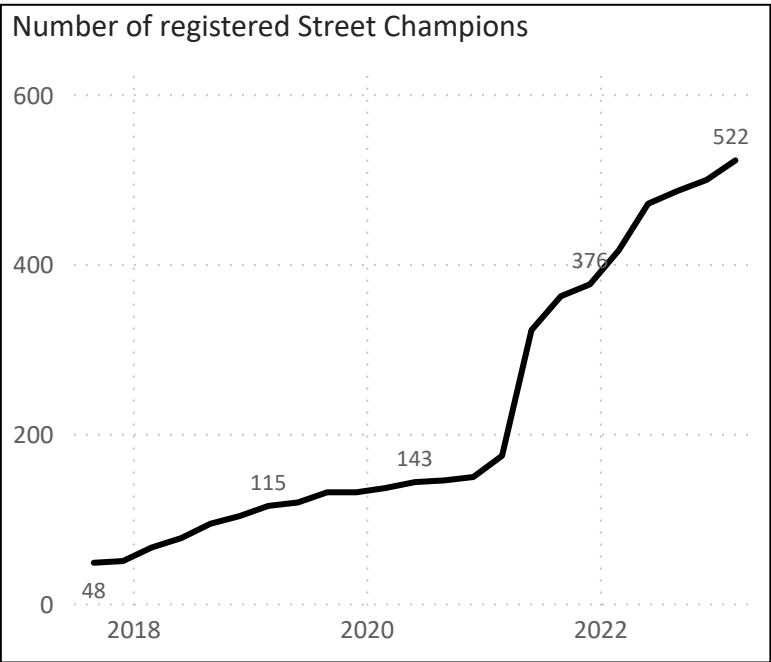
3.4 Working with communities

The Levelling Up Darlington Plan was launched at the inaugural meeting of the Stronger Communities Board on November 16th 2022. Focusing on three areas, Youth Opportunities, Unemployment and Health Inequalities. Representatives from Youth Employment UK, DBC Economic Growth, Darlington College and Primary Healthcare Darlington provided short presentations to demonstrate the work which will be undertaken to deliver the plan.

The plan was well received by CEOs and Chairs of Governing Bodies/Trusts from across Darlington, the next meeting is planned for early summer. The incoming administration will be consulted on any revisions required to the board.

A detailed action plan is in development which will outline how the priorities will be achieved.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership

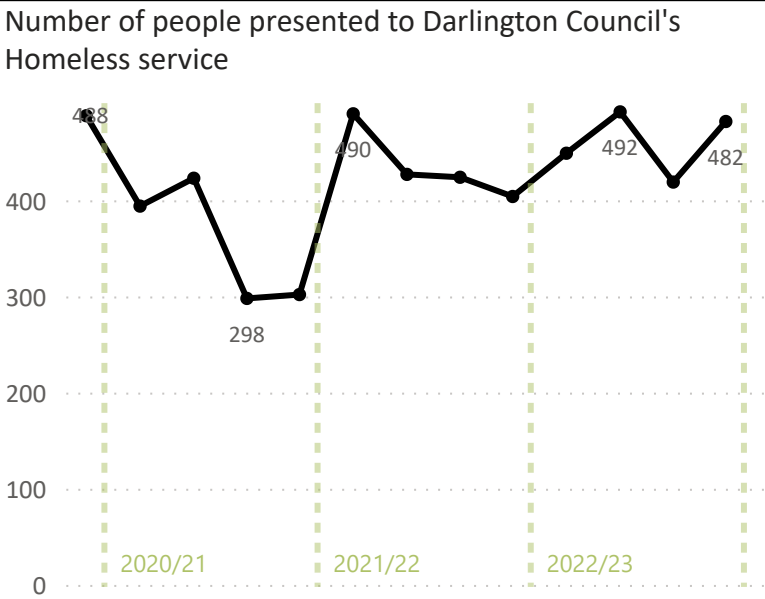


The number of street champions continues to rise steadily. There are 522 active street champions, the Big spring clean 2022 campaign was a success again and saw more volunteers sign up off the back of an organised litter pick. The scheme has also encouraged other groups to set up a regular litter picking event to improve with mental health / wellbeing for individuals who became self-isolated during lock downs.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

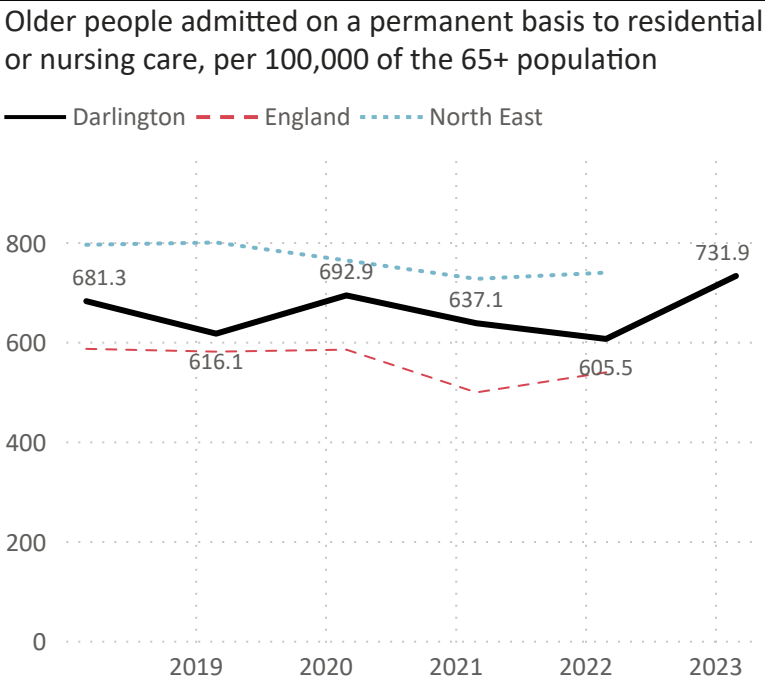
4. SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE IN THE BOROUGH

4.1 Providing care and support when needed



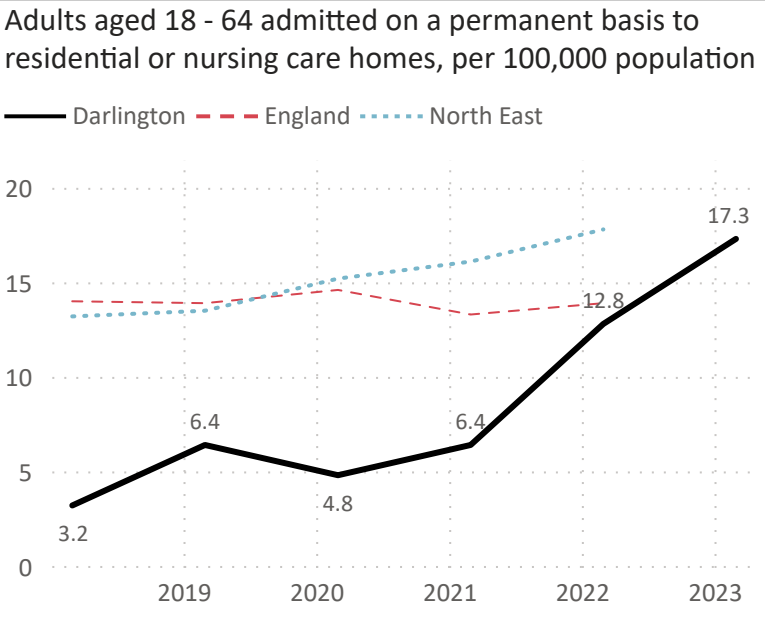
The number of people presenting to the Council's Homeless service continues to remain high in 2022-23. As well as the pressures created since the Covid-19 pandemic, the lifting of the ban on section 21 ("no fault") evictions in June 2021 has also created an increase in homeless presentations and requests for housing advice. However, Housing staff have proved typically resilient in dealing with these issues and ensuring that people who find themselves homeless or at the risk of homelessness continue to receive an excellent service.

Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues



The number of individuals who move to permanent care is 163 which is higher than the previous 2 years. The lack of options available for individuals requiring long term support may be having an impact on the increase in the number moving to permanent care. This can be evidenced by the increase in the percentage of those moving straight to permanent care from short break stays. During 2022-23 91% of individuals who moved to permanent care came straight from a short break stay, an increase from the same period last year where the figure was 83%. We continue to work with families and people to 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

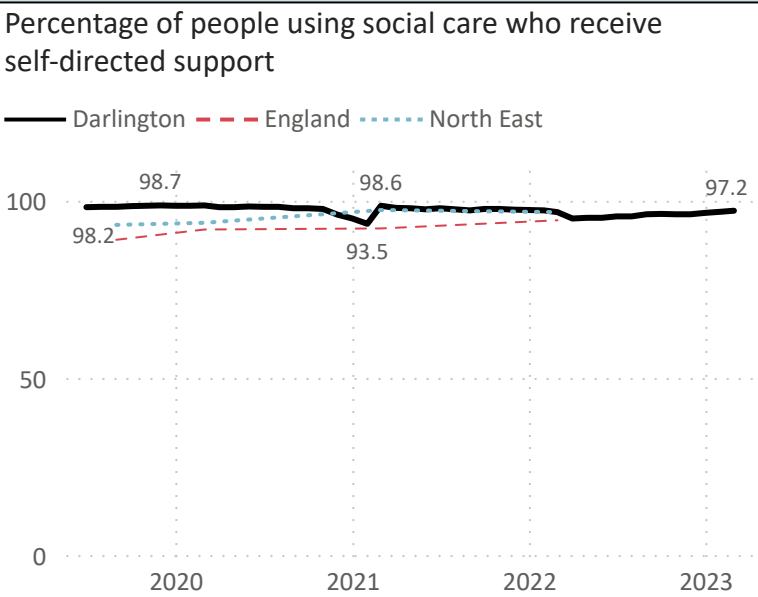


Since April 11 individuals have moved to permanent care aged 18-64. This is a significant increase when compared to the previous 3 years. Of the 11, 6 are open to Ongoing Assessment and Intervention Team, 4 individuals were eligible for funded health care which reflects the levels of complexity, 3 open to Adult Learning Disability and 2 open to Mental Health. Where a community placement would have been appropriate all options were explored, however due to market capacity it was not possible to find suitable placements. Market development has been a key issue and has been identified as a key objective for development with commissioning colleagues. Operational staff will be working with commissioning to address the issue of capacity in the provider market.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

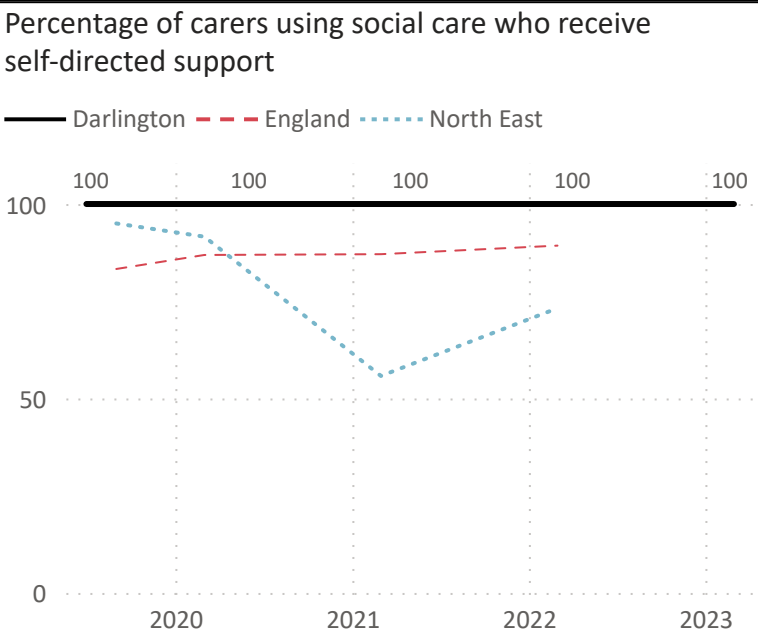
4. SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE IN THE BOROUGH

4.1 Providing care and support when needed



As at the end of March 2023, 96.8% of 724 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



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

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

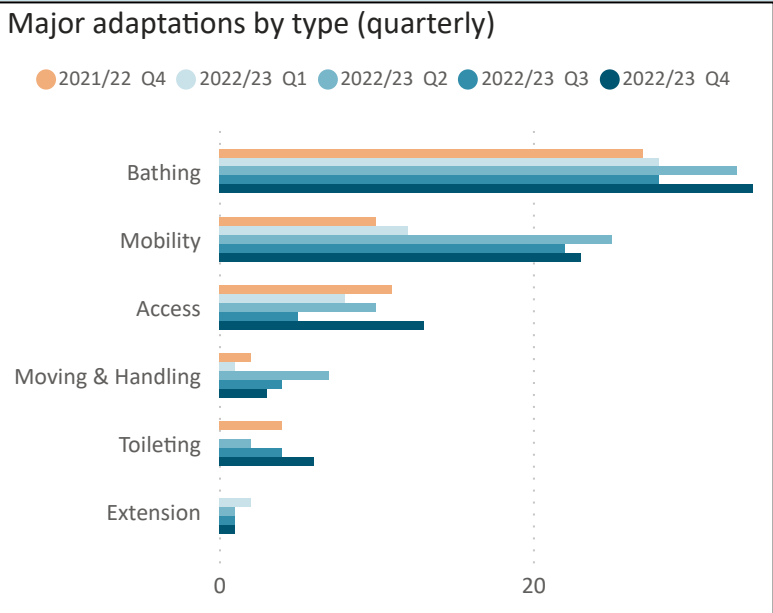
4.2 Working with people to build on their strengths to maximise their potential

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 continue to work closely with partners and providers including the NHS to promote and support independence. In a recent adult social care survey 84% of people said that care and support services help them in having control over their daily lives.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

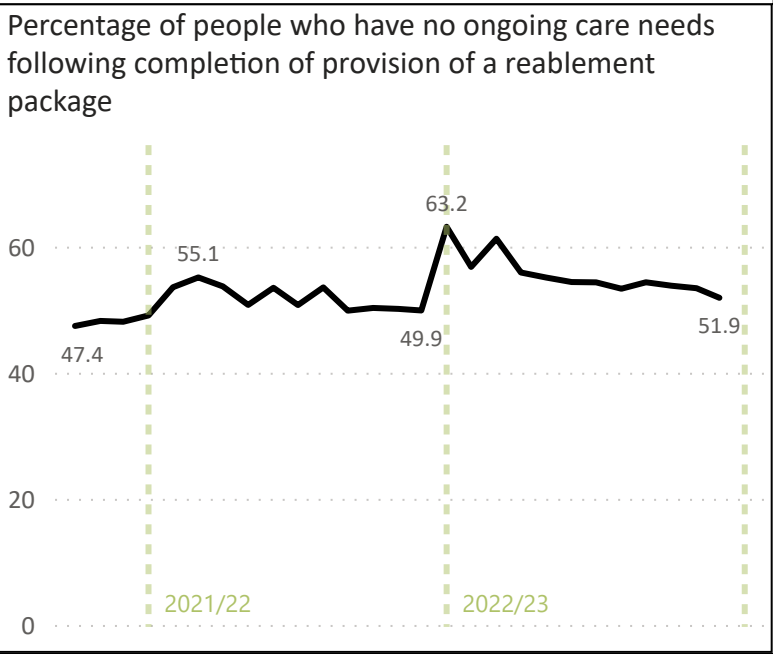
4. SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE IN THE BOROUGH

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 are increases in the number of individuals receiving the majority of adaptation types during quarter 4 compared to the same period last year, this is reflective of the changes to the Disabled Facilities Grant to enable a simpler approval system for the grant to enable more rapid responses to referrals. The Occupational Therapy team continue to provide support at the point of initial referral as well as supporting longer term assessment and support.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care



Of the 476 individuals who completed a reablement package since April 2022, 247 had no ongoing care needs. Of the remaining individuals who completed a reablement package 24.4% had decreased needs, 17.6% needs had increased and 6.1% stayed the same.

The number of clients being referred to RIACT as part of a hospital discharge has continued to increase year on year. The total number of hospital discharges between April - March 23 was 1013, whilst for the same period during 2021-22 the total was 766. Although not all of these referrals then progress to receive a service, it does demonstrate the increase the service area is currently experiencing.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

4.3 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 have 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 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 has delivered a programme to a value of £200,000 as part of the Household Support Fund (HSF). The collaboration will continue to deliver for the Council in the next round of HSF.

The Stronger Communities Board was 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.

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 workforce of over 2,000 people, a large percentage of whom live in the borough, who are dedicated, proud to serve and want Darlington to flourish and grow. The Council provides a vast range of services, with staff working in many different disciplines. It is essential that all staff are motivated, have the right skills, are flexible and customer focused to ensure that service provision meets the expectations of the Council, our businesses and our residents. The workforce strategy "Working Together to Deliver Success" outlines how the Council will develop, support and motivate our staff, to ensure we meet the priorities of businesses and the community. Priorities within the plan that have been delivered to align to our core values include, the management development programme, the implementation of flexible and agile working, and supporting staff wellbeing to promote and maintain a healthy and safe workforce. We continue to monitor the implementation and embedding of the strategy and Council values, through the employee surveys, wellbeing statistics, customer feedback, workforce performance and development of staff communication.

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

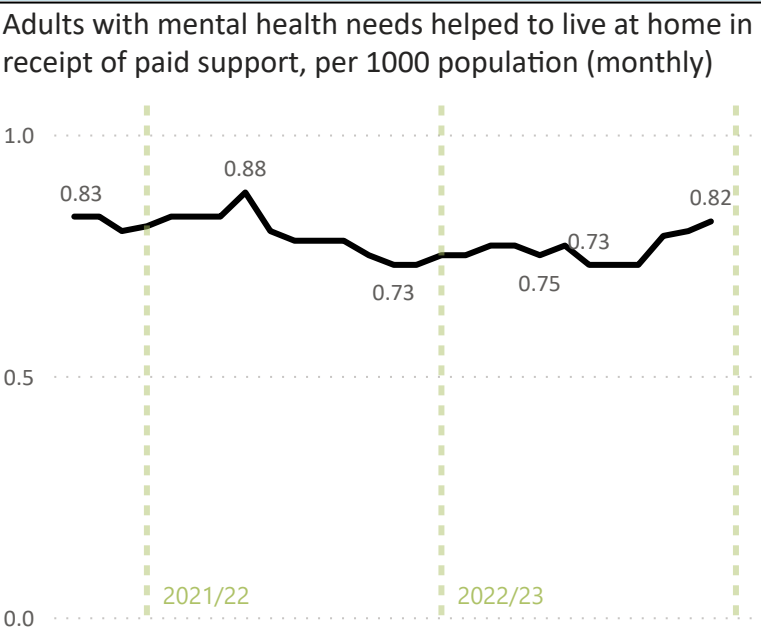
A1. Continue to implement initiatives that tackle social isolation

Strong working relationships have 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' is being co-written. Isolation and loneliness are recognised as a key trigger of vulnerability and will be featured prominently in the emerging strategy

Of practical importance, the group has fostered a collaboration of voluntary sector organisations which has delivered a programme to a value of £200,000 as part of the Household Support Fund. The collaboration will continue to deliver for the Council in the next round of HSF

Christine Shields: Assistant Director - Commissioning, Performance & Transformation

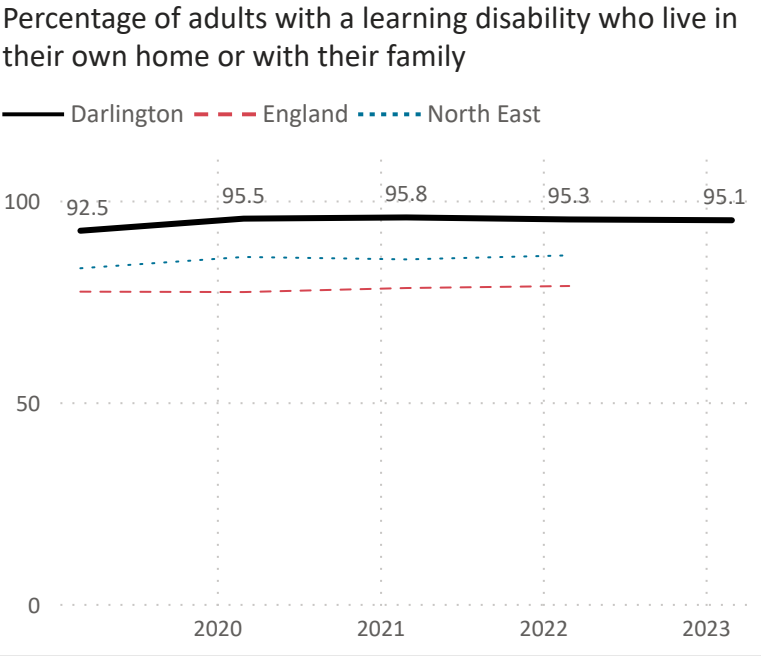
A2. Work with individuals to maximise independence and reduce demand on services



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

The Mental Health team, within Adult Social Care, work closely with the local Trusts and the Primary care Network/GPs to prevent escalation or reduce the need for intervention. They support people, minimise escalation and maintain high levels of wellbeing and support 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 (52) with mental health needs requiring long term paid support.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care



The 2022/23 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 288 of Darlington residents. Of these, 274 (95%) were living either in their own home or with family at the end of 2022/23.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

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

We have refreshed our Strength based Practice Model to maintain our approach to supporting people to maintain, retain or regain their independence as much as possible.

We are developing a transformation strategy and plan for the next 3 years to support our aim to deliver transformed adult social care services.

We are continuing to review our digital offer to ensure information, advice and guidance is easy to access and understand.

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 through attendance at support groups. We have commissioned Health watch to undertake an independent survey with people who use services to ensure we are delivering on our aims and supporting people to have positive outcomes.

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 developing a digital strategy to support our knowledge and understanding of new technology that is available.

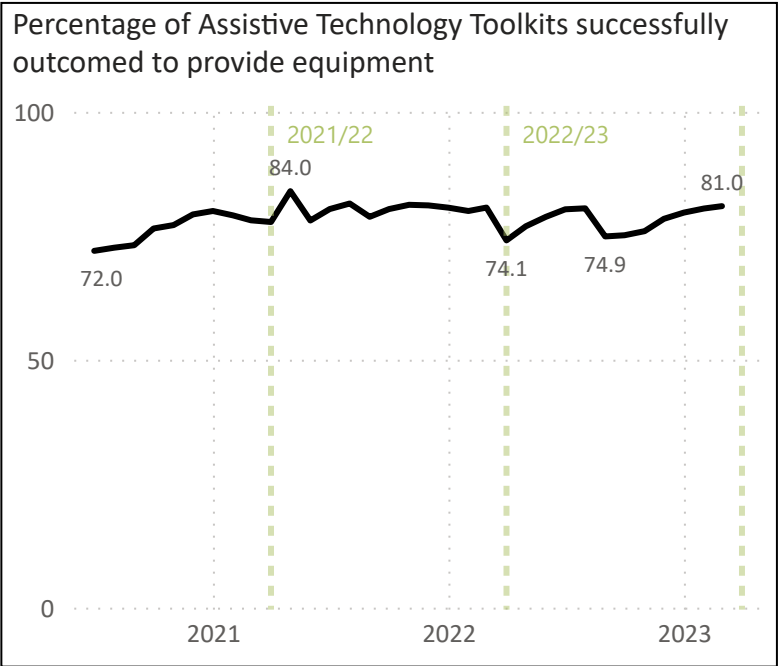
We are actively participating in a project called the Virtual House; this is an interactive tour showing examples of Occupational Therapy, Assistive Technology and Sensory aids, equipment and solutions that may be helpful to people or a family member to do daily activities around the home. Teams have been undergoing training on the Virtual House.

We have invested in new equipment for Vane House- our sensory learning environment, and long cane training for staff. We have secured additional resources to build the capacity of the sensory team.

The introduction of interactive equipment provided to a number of care services in Darlington has delivered positive experiences for people.

Our Occupational Therapy team work alongside the Adult Contact team to provide equipment or minor works for people to prevent and reduce the number of people requiring long term support

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care



Since April 2022, 315 out of 389 (81%) Assistive Technology Toolkit Referrals assigned to Lifeline resulted in equipment being provided. This is higher the equivalent figures for last 3 years.

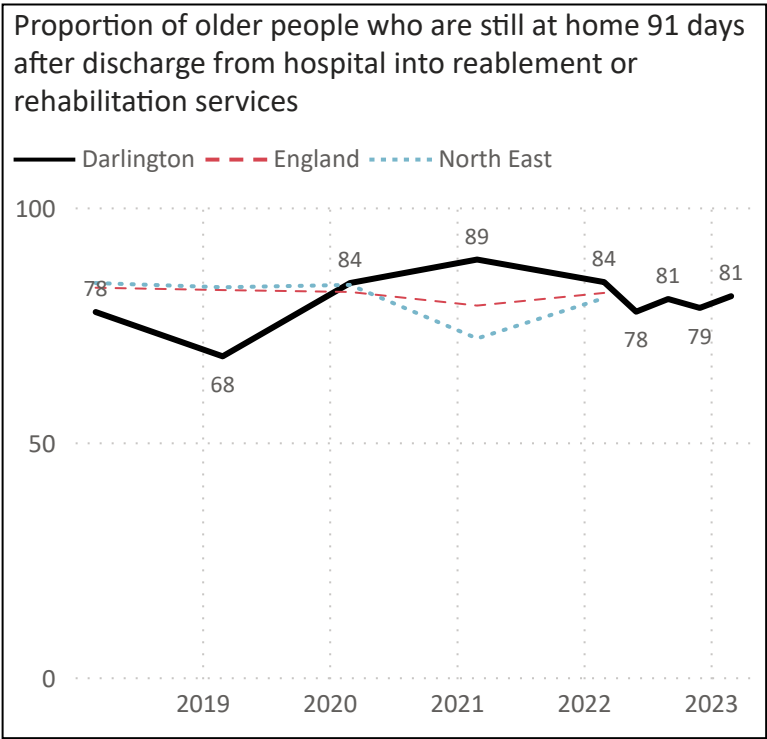
This upward trend is indicative of the objective to support people to remain independent in their own homes. Teams continue to promote this offer at the point of referral to adult social care as well as at reviews. Lifeline continues to work closely with the Adults Social Care Team and promotes assistive 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. We actively participate in the Learning Impairment Network. We meet regularly with the Parent Carers Forum, DAD, Age UK, Healthwatch and the Carers Support Service. Our commissioning team work closely with care providers to consider demand, capacity and market development. We are developing an engagement strategy to share with people to strengthen our engagement and co-production plans. We work closely with the Director of Place and the ICB, with the development of shared visions and plans. We continue to work with CDDFT and TEWV, with some co-located teams and social workers present on wards with 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 March 2023, the proportion of older people who are still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services was 81%. This is a consistent level of outcome for people. Recent ASCOF figures (2021-22) show our current performance is higher than the regional average (80.7%) and comparable with the national average (81.8%)

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

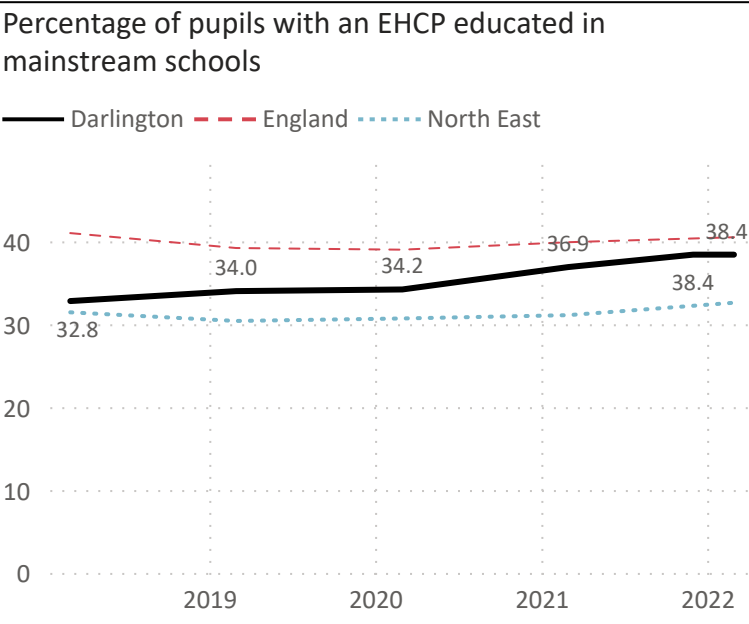
C1. Provide excellent services for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) - implement a new SEND strategy, increase the number of SEND places in schools and work to raise SEND funding levels from central government

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 89.5% 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.

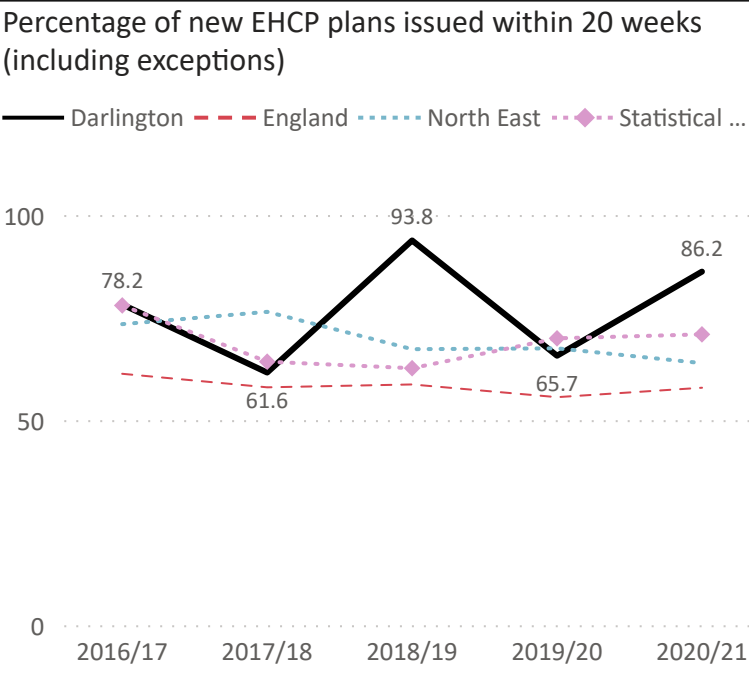
The council's bid for a special free school in 2023 was successful and work has begun with the Department for Education to identify a sponsor trust to run the school.

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. The data shows increasingly more children with SEND are attending Darlington mainstream schools. The proportion of Darlington pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) attending mainstream school settings in the borough has risen from 32.8% in 2018 to 38.4% in 2022. The proportion is now above the regional average of 32.6% 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.

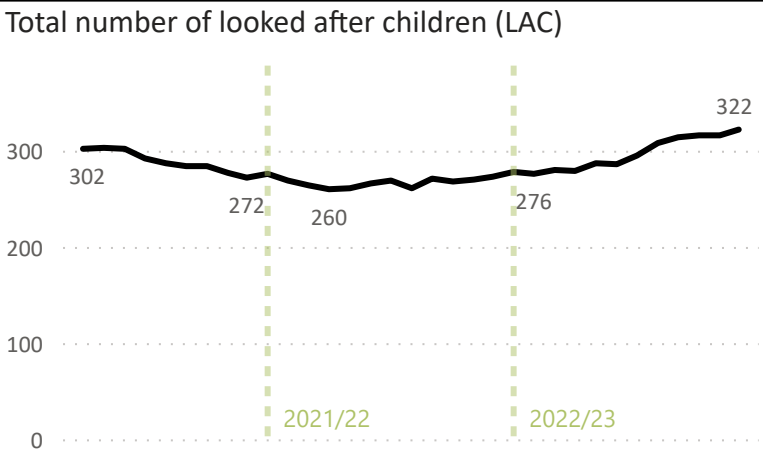
Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion



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 2016. 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. Updated data will be available following national government statistical release in 2023.

Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

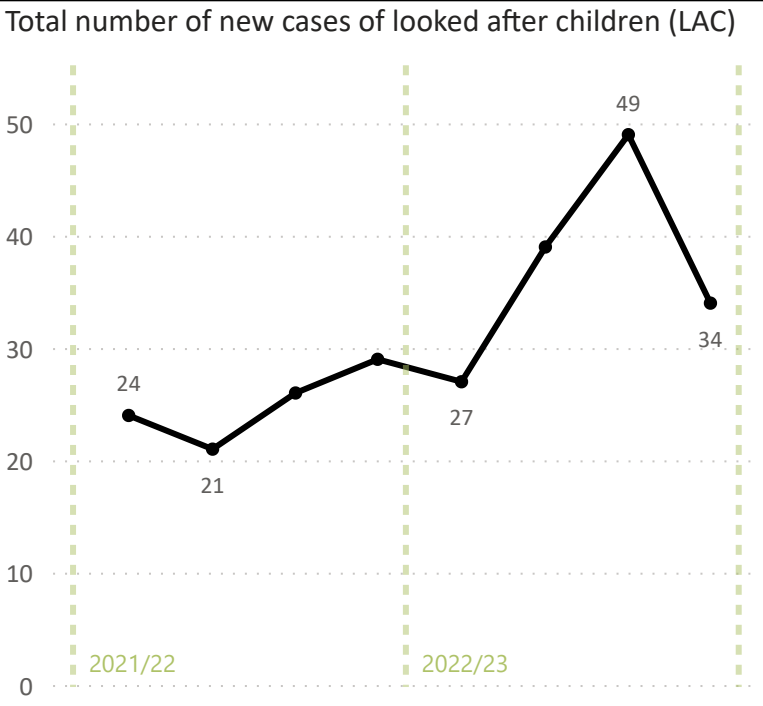
C2. Reduce the need for looked after children placements through effective implementation of the Darlington Strengthening Families programme



322 children are being supported in our care at the end of March 2023, 5.3% of which have come into our care after being accepted by the Home Office as UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child).

This equates to 305 children, excluding UASC, that were in our care at the end of March 2023, a 12.9% increase from around 270 which was seen at the end of the reporting years 2021/22, 2020/21 and 2019/20.

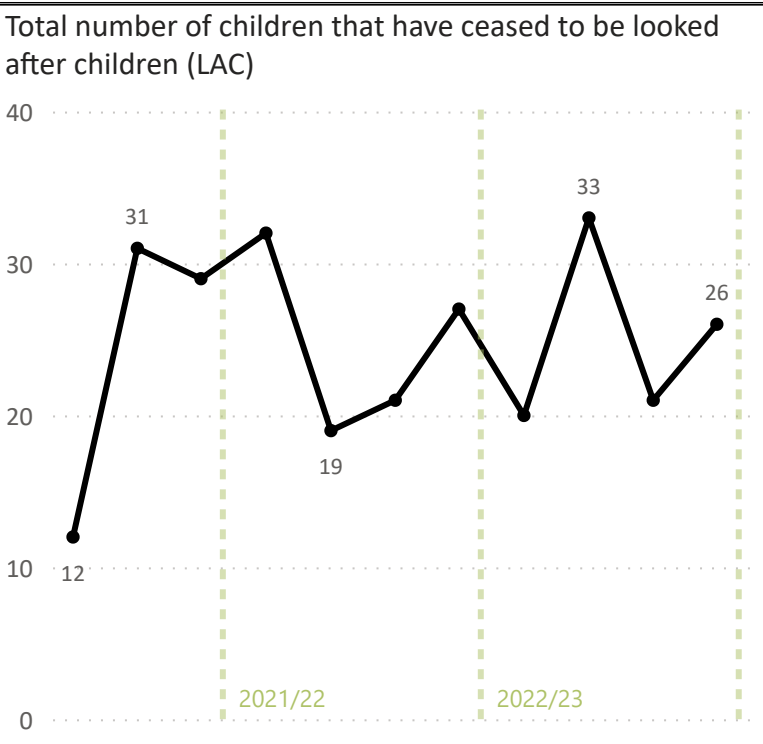
Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services



126 children from 86 families came into care in 2022/23, a further 18 young people came into care after accepted by the Home Office as UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child) .

The primary and secondary presenting reasons for the children coming into our care are predominantly due to, neglect, parental alcohol and substance misuse, domestic violence and physical abuse towards the child.

Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services



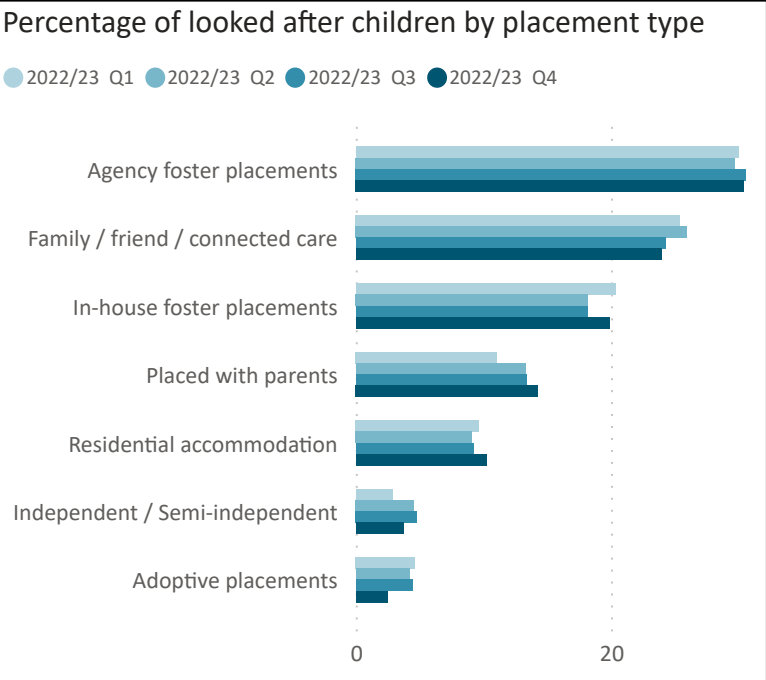
100 children and young people ceased to be in care during 2022/23. This is a small increase in the number of children who ceased to be in care in 2021/22 (99) and 2020/21 (80), and in line with pre Covid 19 numbers in 2019/20 (102).

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

- 39.0% had a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) / Child Arrangement Order (CAO) granted to a relative.
- 21.0% returned home to their parent.
- 21.0% due to turning 18 and becoming a care leaver and supported by that service.
- 17.0% were adopted.
- 2.0% for other reasons.

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



A large proportion of Darlington children in care were in a foster placement (50.3%) at the end of March 2023. 23.9% of children were placed in kinship care with relatives, 14.3% were placed with a parent, 14.0% were living in forms of supported residential accommodation and 2.5% 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

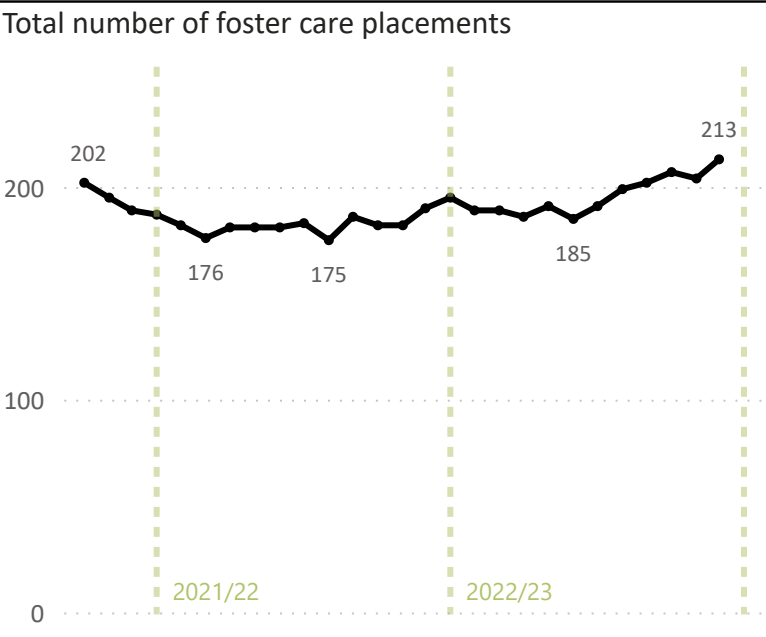
Total number of approved foster carers

| Date | Number |
|----------------|--------|
| March 2022 | 56 |
| June 2022 | 57 |
| September 2022 | 58 |
| December 2022 | 55 |
| March 2023 | 54 |

Currently we have 54 approved foster care families with 24 kinship connected carers approved with a further 14 families that have temporary approval with children in place. At the end of March 2023, we had 6 families 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. There has been 62 new fostering enquiry applications this year.

Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services



At the end of March 2023, 213 children and young people were placed with a foster care family. 46.0% of the children were with an agency foster carer, 30.0% were with an in-house foster carer and 24.0% were with a kinship connected carer. 36.6% of all foster placements were long-term.

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

Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

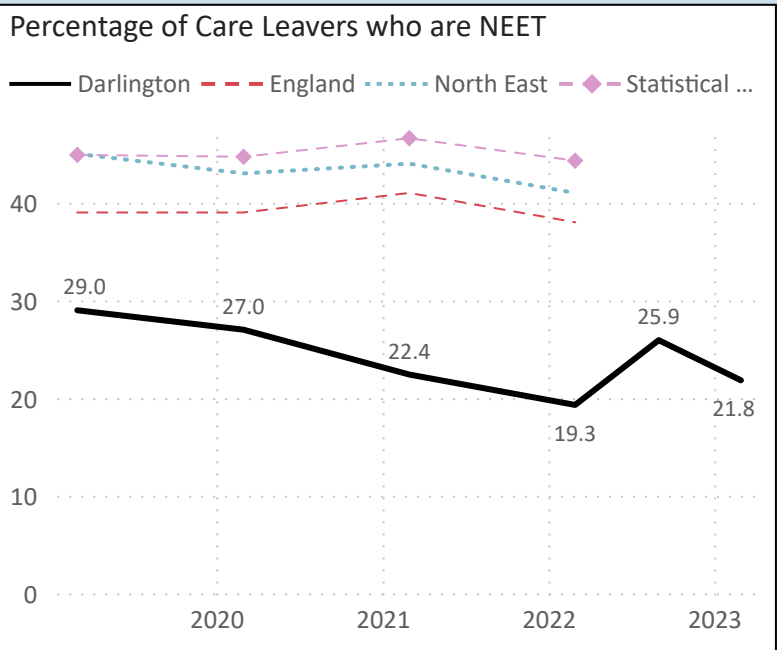
C4. Review in-house residential care and consider the council’s place in providing services

The re-purposing of our existing children’s homes remains ongoing, with a planned visit from OFSTED to secure registration of the new home planned for 18th May 2023. Following this the children will move from our existing home at Eldon into their new home.

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

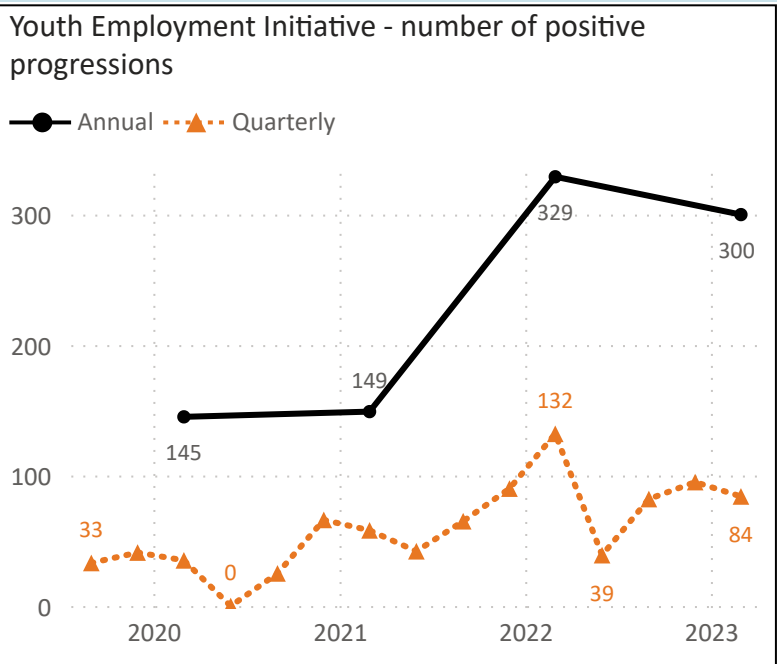


The proportion of Darlington care leavers (DfE measure aged 19-21) Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) at the end of March 2023 was 21.8%, which outperformed the most recently available published national and regional averages. This low number of NEET care leavers continues to inspire and is evidence of the commitment our young people give to their personal development.

16.4% of our care leavers are engaged in further education and 61.8% 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

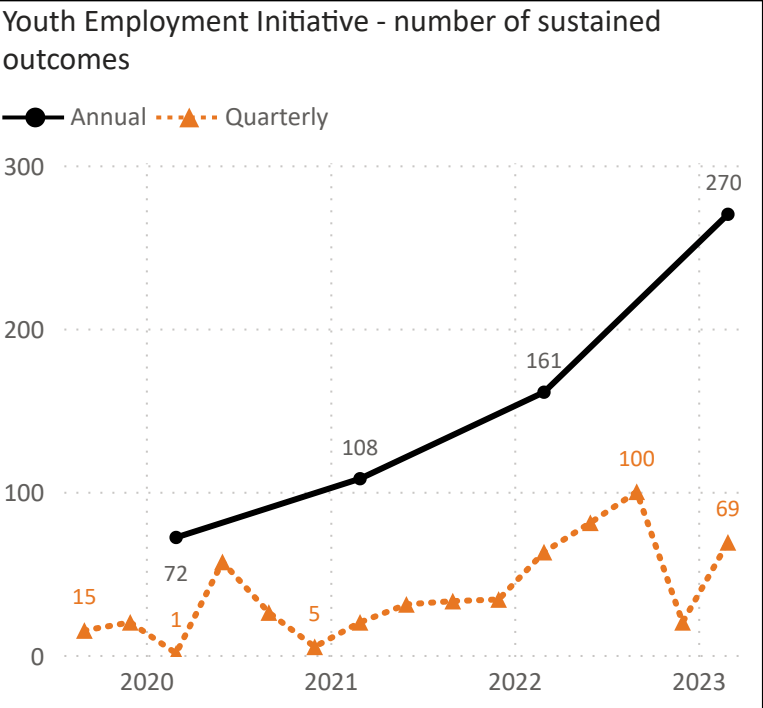


Youth Employment Initiative - Number of Positive Progressions:

Referrals to the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) has remained steady, month on month during 2022/23 with young people continuing to move into education, employment, and training. YEI continues to perform well and has exceeded the academic year end (project end) targets already. YEI will continue to run as a DBC funded programme from 1 August 2023 to 31 March 2024. To date the programme had supported 1,338 young people with 97.6% (1,263) of completers moving into employment or training and 58.0% (751) still in that setting at the 6 month point.

Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

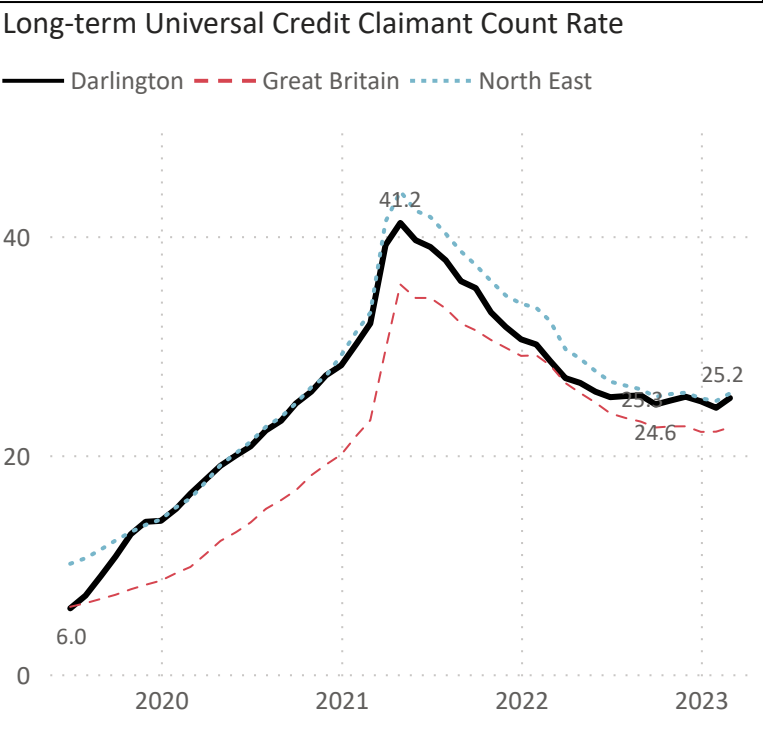
C6. Work with partners to reduce youth and long-term unemployment, by increasing the opportunity for retraining and apprenticeships leading to gainful employment



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 has been falling though has shown a slight increase in recent months. This change will be influenced by both business confidence and 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)

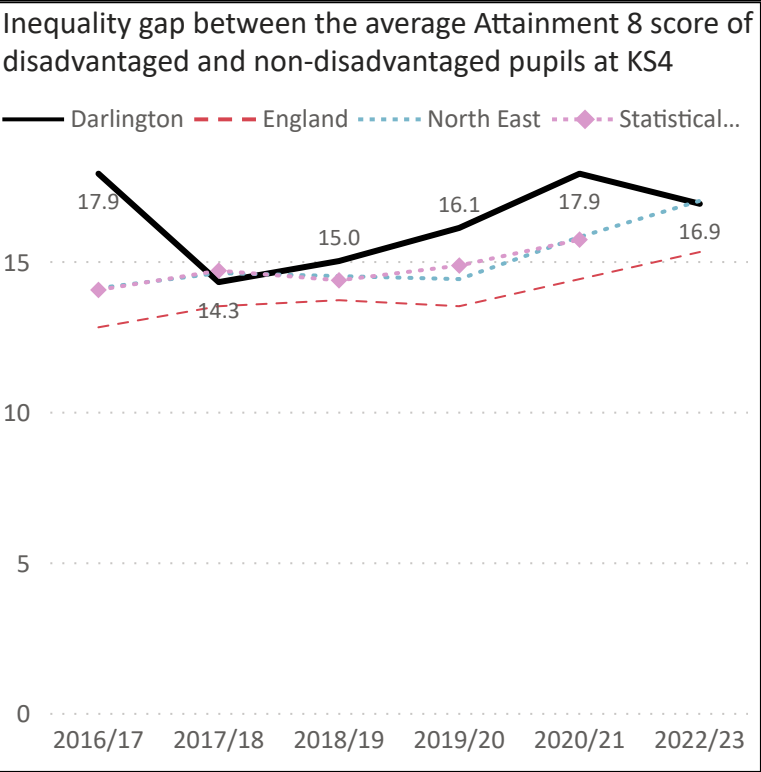
| Date | Percentage |
|----------------|------------|
| March 2022 | 75.7% |
| September 2022 | 75.7% |
| March 2023 | 81.1% |

The percentage of schools judged good or outstanding by Ofsted :

At the end of March 2023, 81.1% (30 out of 37) schools in Darlington with an Ofsted rating are rated Good or Outstanding. This is an increase on previous figures from March 2022 (75.7%) and September 2022 (75.7%).

*The data provided includes Darlington's mainstream primary and secondary school settings only, excluding nurseries, special schools and the PRU.

Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion



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 decreased from 17.9 in 2020/21 to 16.9 in 2022/23, which is lower than the North East (17.0) but higher than the national comparator (15.3). Darlington's improved performance on this measure contrasts with a widening gap at regional and national level.

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

The pupils worked with a brass street band to learn how to play plastic trumpets and trombones, building towards a performance in school at the end of term for parents and peers.

The children also worked with a songwriter and music producer to write three new songs about moving from primary to secondary school. This involved creating beats and melodies, writing the lyrics, recording the final songs, and performing in a pop video. They also recorded the brass parts for the songs.

The videos have been shared with 'Make Music, Make Friends' which will see the schools twinned with schools in America, Australia, Canada, and India.

The number of Children attending the programme was 139

57 - Northwood Primary

44 - Firthmoor Primary

38 - Corporation Road Primary

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

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

Darlington's Holiday Activity Fund (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 weeks holiday. Total number of attendances exceeded 1,000 with over 10% of children with SEND.

The HAF Christmas programme 2022 was delivered at over 16 venues and engaged with more than 1,000 children with 22% of the children secondary age. The activities over the Christmas period included pantomimes, STEAM, Arts & Crafts, Ice Skating, life skills, sports and much more and a hot meal was provided for every child at each session.

As well as established links with social workers and SEN charities, new links have been made with AGE UK, The Forum Music Centre and Family Help Darlington.

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

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

Phase 1 of the refurbishment of the indoor market continues to provide an exciting offer to the towns evening economy. Phase 2 is now complete with the opening of the Vaults bar in a long standing vacant unit. Two new businesses will be opening in June in vacant units on the western side of the indoor market.

Phase 3 of the refurbishment market will commence in summer 2023. The objective of this phase is to install modern market stalls to attract new traders with exciting projects which will add to current traditional market.

Market Asset Management (MAM) continue to organise events including the Food Market (May 2023), the Miss Fits Market, Pease Pudding Market (once per month) and a Vegan Market in June 2023.

The outdoor market, while experiencing a small increase in traders, continues to be a challenge and is an area MAM are focussing upon.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

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

The Town Fund programme continues to progress and a number of notable achievements have been secured including the improvements to the Yards, enhancements to Victoria Road and support for businesses along North Road. The Council acquired the Northern Echo Building (NEB) in 2022 and a procurement process has begun to refurbish the building into an Adults Skills Hub on the ground floor and high quality office accommodation on the upper floor. It is anticipated that work will commence in October 2023.

The requirement for quality office space to meet growing demand is now quite acute. In order to meet this demand officers are carrying out a feasibility study to develop a circa 25,000 sqft. grade A office complex on the former sports direct site.

An important element of the Town Centre Strategy is to increase the number of residential units in the town. Work continues to deliver 16 units along Skinnergate with demolishing work due to commence in 2023.

Negotiations with the owners of Northgate House have continued. A reasonable offer has been made to the owners which has been rejected. The Council has now commenced the preparation of a 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.

Landscaping works to Central Park are now complete which included the installation of bespoke art pieces and an off highway pedestrian route. The remaining undeveloped plots on Central Park are now available and a new access road has also recently been installed. A number of interpretation panels are being procured to give visitors a better understanding of the artwork and history of the area.

On Ingenium Parc the contractor is due to return shortly to complete the topsoiling and landscaping works associated with the new drainage installations with a view to have these works complete for end of August 2023.

The first phase of Faverdale Business Park has been completely let with a number of businesses now operating from the site. Further plots are also being offered for sale.

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 proposed to review the documents and reconsider the approach in identifying a partner.

The development of a logistics operation at Ingenium Parc is currently been progressed. This will occupy approx. 6 acres of the land available and will create approx. 200 jobs.

The council has received 2 planning applications for the development of large scale commercial buildings on Symmetry Park. Further details will be forthcoming if planning consent is obtained.

Enquiries for quality office space continues to be healthy. The council is therefore looking to provide office space at 156 North Road, the Northern Echo Building and on the former sports direct site.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

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

The council successfully delivered a jobs fair at the dolphin centre in February 2023, Darlington Jobs Fair was bigger and busier than ever before with a record turnout of 1500 visitors meeting and connecting with over 75 local employers and support organisations. There were hundreds of job vacancies in a wide range of sectors available at different entry levels and employers were impressed by the variety and quality of the applicants. Employers included EE, Aldi, Cummins, Tekmar, Nobia, Lidl, Darlington College, Teesside University, Darlington Building Society, Student Loans and Darlington Economic Campus. March 2023. Local schools and Colleges brought students along to gain valuable careers advice and employers were able to showcase the careers available to Darlington Borough's present and future talent. The event was part of National Apprenticeship Week and many employers also offered apprenticeship opportunities.

In June 2023 we will be running a follow jobs fair which is already attracting a huge amount of interest.

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 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) 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. Officers will commence a review of conservation area appraisals in 2023/24, in addition to the development of a new housing strategy

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

Housing delivery continues to be strong within the borough despite ongoing challenges with Nutrient Neutrality.

Despite not granting any significant new housing permissions in the past financial year housing completions have still exceeded the annual local plan target.

Options to mitigate Nutrient pollution from new development are emerging and it is anticipated Natural England credits will be issued starting later this month (May 2023) which will hopefully unlock further permissions. Work has been undertaken to better understand the issues around nutrient pollution and council led mitigation solutions are being investigated.

Building of 145 new Council houses on Neasham Road has commenced and a further 120 affordable homes has been identified in phase 1 of Burtree Garden Village

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 1.7 (And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Sustainable) on pages 11 and 12 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

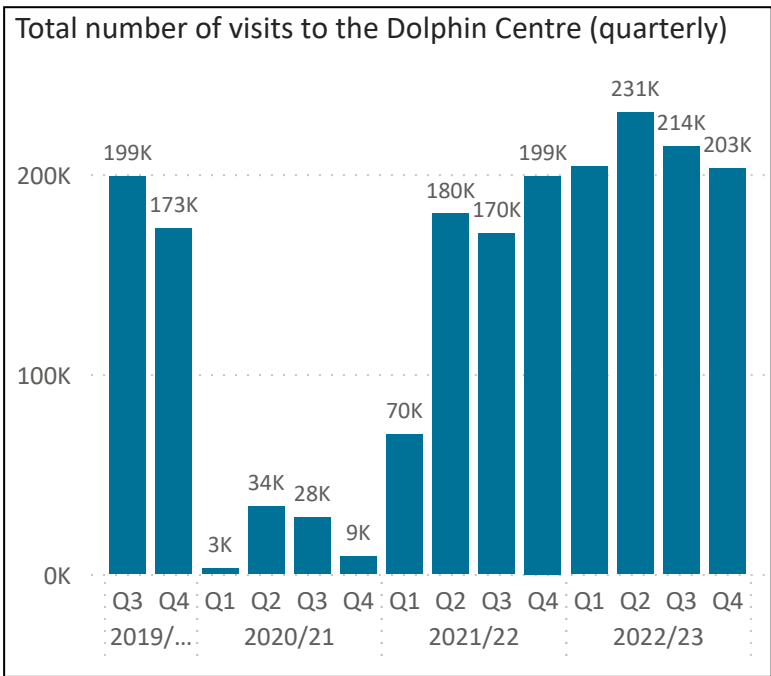
The Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) are now taking the lead on the delivery of the Bank Top Station project. However, Darlington Borough Council will continue to provide support where required and will attend board level Project meetings with the Tees Valley Combined Authority, Department for Transport and LNER.

The demolition phase on the Eastern side is well underway and is nearing completion. On the western side the Cattlemarket temporary car park was operational from the 26th of April, demolition is complete on the former public house site, and discussions are continuing with TVCA on the remaining extent of the Western gateway works.

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. Despite the closure of the main pool in January 2023 for essential structural works, the remaining pool complex has continued to facilitate 1500 children every week for their water education along with lane swimmers, water-based fitness classes and limited family provision. Memberships are currently at the highest level in the history of the Dolphin Centre and the gym continues to expand its service offer to G.P. referral clients and our newly launched cancer rehabilitation service. DC Bowl and soft play have demonstrated a pattern of increased usage in comparison to last year and our hospitality service within the centre is still performing very well. There has been an introduction of new partners on site and business planning is currently underway to expand the entertainment and hospitality offer further along with product development relating to the health and fitness offer provided by the centre.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services



Visitors to The Dolphin Centre in quarter 4 are up, compared to the same quarter in 21-22 which is very positive given the main pool has been closed since January for maintenance. The annual total has seen a 230,000 rise compared to 21-22 with business areas continuing to be popular, the return of large scale events and areas such as memberships reaching the highest ever membership total all contributing to the increase in footfall.

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. With the removal of restrictions the Local Outbreak Control Plan has been superseded by the Living with COVID guidance. The testing programme has been discontinued and COVID is now managed in the same way as any other respiratory infection in health and social care settings. There is no longer any routine reporting or monitoring of local case numbers. 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

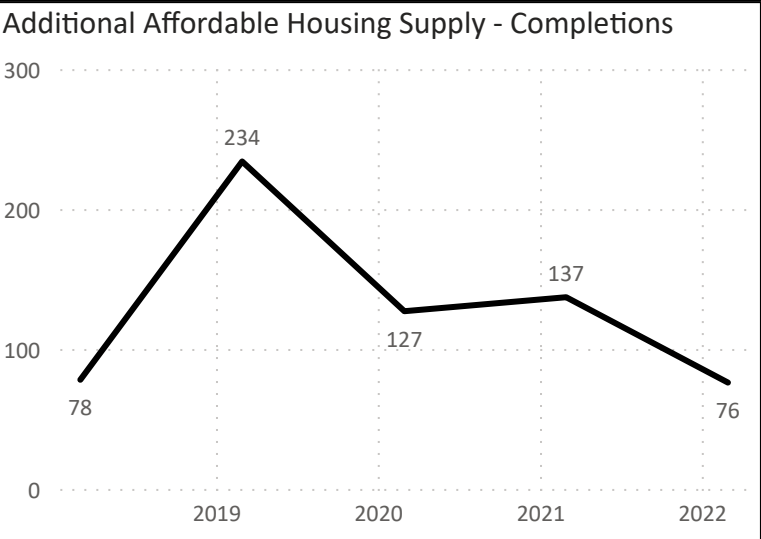
Housing Condition - Percentage of Council properties meeting the decent homes standard

| Year | Value |
|---------|--------|
| 2018/19 | 100.0% |
| 2019/20 | 100.0% |
| 2020/21 | 100.0% |
| 2021/22 | 100.0% |
| 2022/23 | 100.0% |

100% Darlington Borough Council’s social housing stock meets the current 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.

The Decent Homes Standard is currently under review by the Regulator of Social Housing which should be announced late 2023.

Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues



This 2022/23 annual figure is obtained from the Government "Live Tables on Affordable Housing Supply". These figures will be published in late 2023. 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 is due to commence on the Sherborne Close phase 2 site, which will deliver 13 properties and on Neasham Road site, which will deliver 150 properties in total.

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 |
|---------|---------|-------|
| 2021/22 | Q1 | 98.1% |
| | Q2 | 97.4% |
| | Q3 | 96.3% |
| | Q4 | 97.5% |
| 2022/23 | Q1 | 96.2% |
| | Q2 | 97.3% |
| | Q3 | 96.4% |
| | Q4 | 95.9% |

Collection rates have slightly decreased in Q4 compared to earlier quarters, with levels standing at 95.85% for Q4.

Over 1950 Council tenants are now in receipt of some element of Universal Credit and have the 5 week wait prior to first payments being received, however average arrears for UC customers remains under 5 weeks average rent.

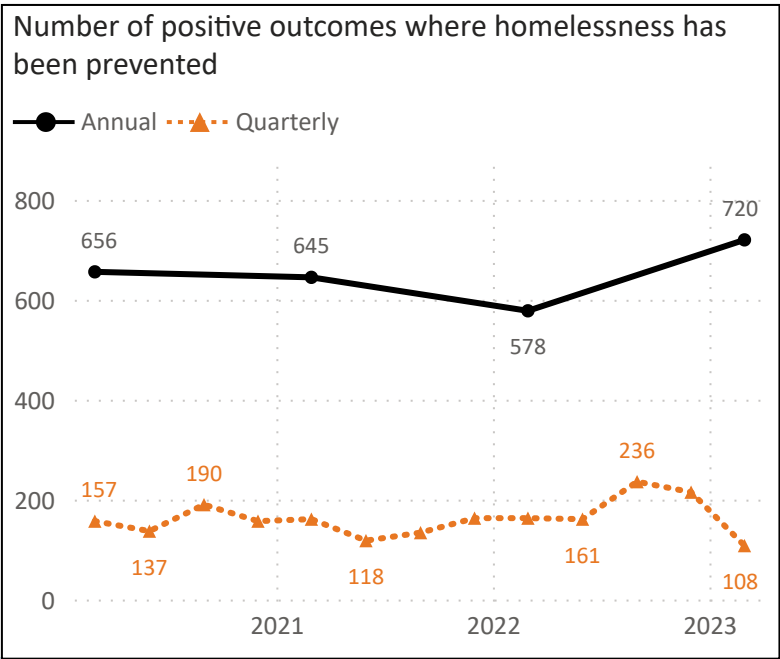
The Income team continue to promote help and guidance and making affordable repayment plans with customers throughout their tenancy, only taking court and enforcement action where all other efforts have failed.

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 25%. 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 has been refreshed for 2023-24 and will be reviewed by Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee in November 2023.

Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues



Positive outcomes where homelessness has been prevented have increased from 578 in 2021/22 to 720 in 2022/23, an increase of 24.5% This reflects the continuing high demand for Homelessness and Housing advice services, due to the current housing crisis and that cases are now open for longer, due to delays in finding alternative accommodation. Despite the pressures, there was an increase in positive outcomes with higher than usual quarterly figures in quarters 2 and 3 this year.

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

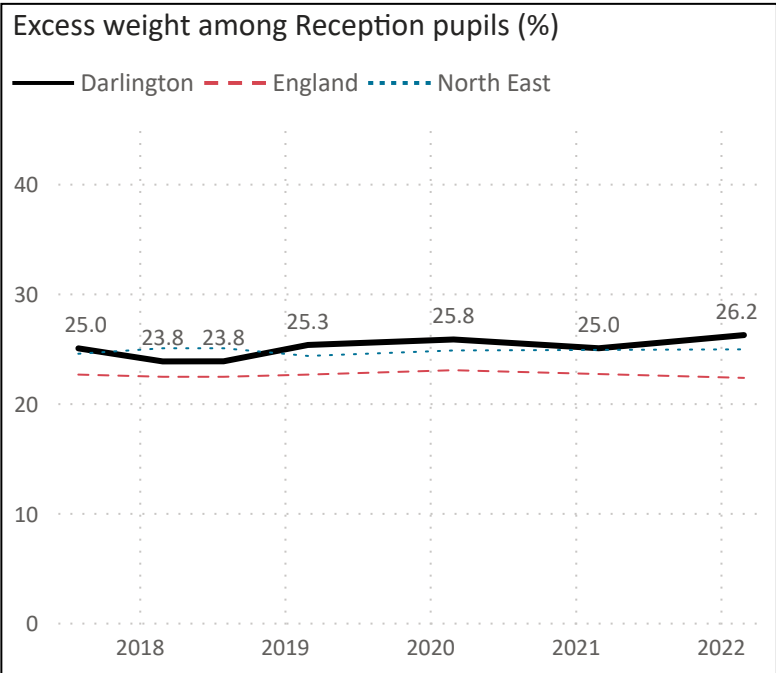
H7. Implement the Darlington Child Healthy Weight Plan with partners

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.

Work with key stakeholders and partners is underway to review this plan to assess the impact of the pandemic on obesity in the borough with a view of producing a whole population plan.

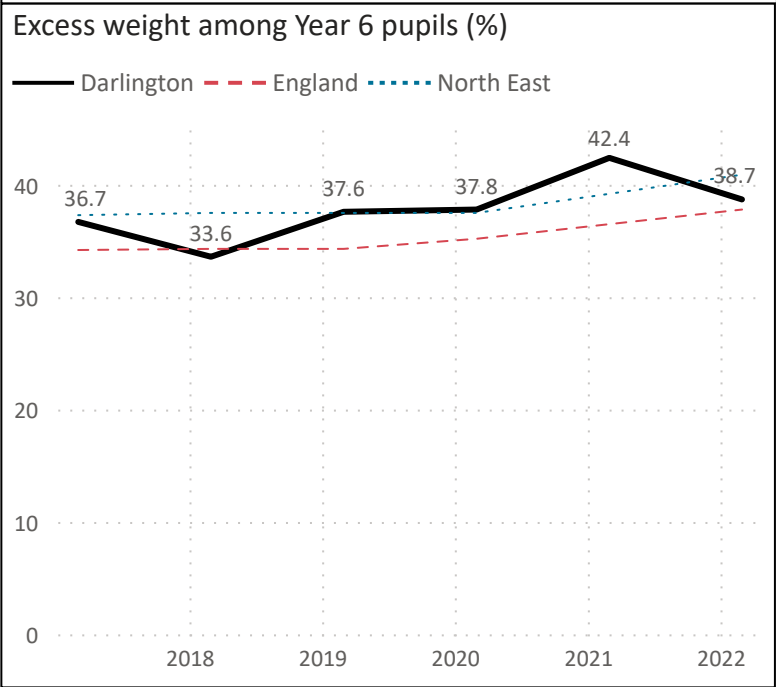
Penny Spring: Director of Public Health



This data (from 2021/22) shows that that there is no significant change to the trend for Reception prevalence of overweight (including obesity). 26.2% of reception children aged 4-5 years were classified as overweight or obese. Compared to our North East neighbours Darlington is ranked 3rd. Statistically similar to the North East and statistically worse than England.

The Darlington Childhood Healthy Weight Plan identified evidence-based interventions delivered with partners to address underlying causes of obesity in children and young people. Work includes activity with schools and local commercial food premises to develop a healthy catering standard for a healthy food offer.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health



This data (from 2021/22) shows that the trend compared to the baseline is increasing and getting worse for year 6 prevalence of overweight but reduced from its peak in 2021. 38.7% of year 6 children aged 10-11 years were classified as overweight or obese. Compared to our North East neighbours Darlington is ranked 10th. Statistically similar to the North East and England.

The Darlington Childhood Healthy Weight Plan identified evidence-based interventions delivered with partners to address underlying causes of obesity in children and young people. Work includes activity with schools and local commercial food premises to develop a healthy catering standard for a healthy food offer.

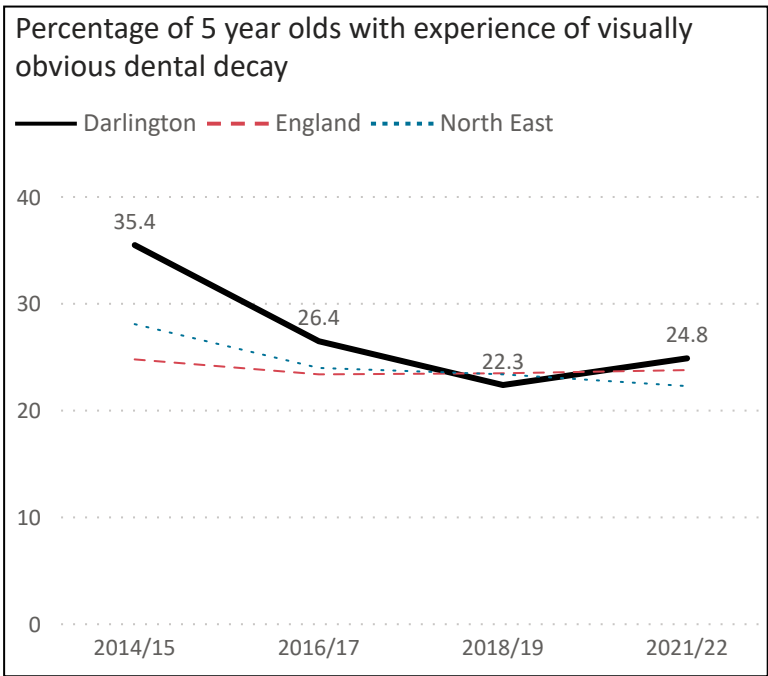
Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

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 2024. The Director of Public Health continues to work to implement the current recommendations of the plan with recent work including:

- 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

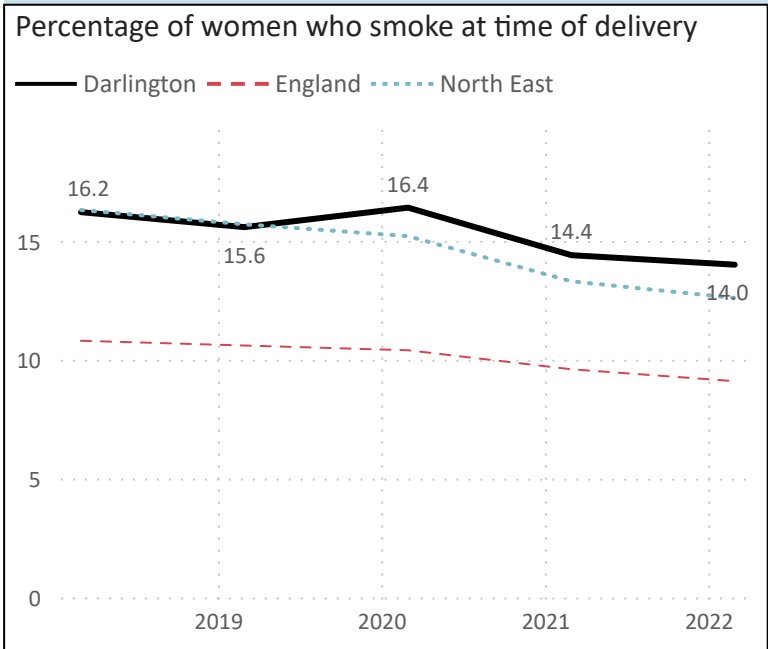
Penny Spring: Director of Public Health



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 24.8% in 2021/22. 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

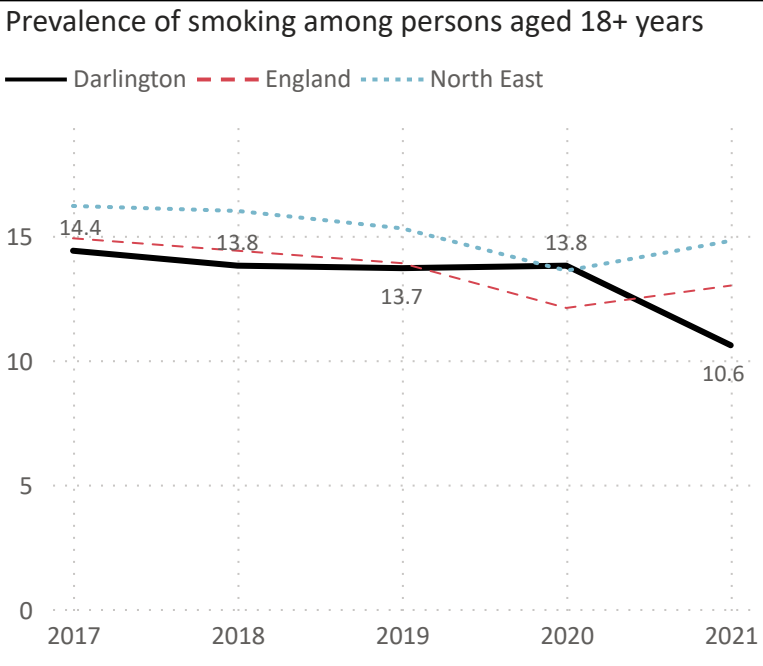


The data (from 2021/22) shows that there is no significant change to the trend for women who smoke at time of delivery. 14.0% of mothers are known to be smokers at time of delivery. Compared to our North East neighbours Darlington is ranked 7th. Statistically similar to the North East and statistically worse than England.

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



This data (from 2021) 10.6% of persons aged 18 + self-reported themselves as smokers in the Annual Population Survey (APS). Compared to our North East neighbours Darlington is ranked 12th and is statistically better than the North East and statistically similar to England.

The trend is also continuing to reduce 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 |
|---------|---------|------------|
| 2021/22 | Q1 | 3,369 |
| | Q2 | 3,404 |
| | Q3 | 3,365 |
| | Q4 | 3,340 |
| 2022/23 | Q1 | 3,367 |
| | Q2 | 3,388 |
| | Q3 | 3,414 |
| | Q4 | 3,425 |

Over the last 4 quarters, there has been a consistent increase in users of the Lifeline Service. These are people who live in their own home and have either self-referred for the service or have equipment installed to meet there social care need, following an Adult Social care or health assessment. We have seen an increase of Adult Social Care and health referrals over the last 2 quarters and continue to work closely with social care, hospital discharge and reablement services.

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:

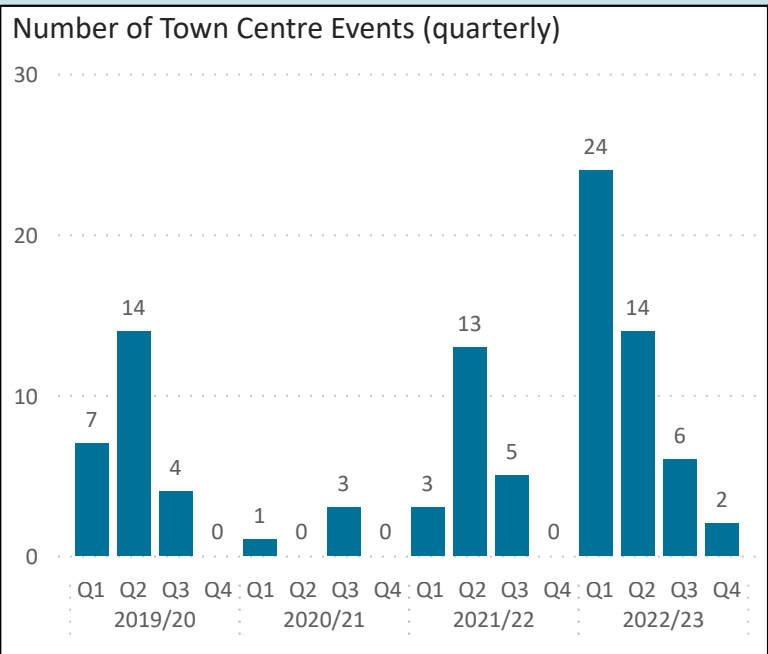
- o Live steam and motive power
- o Exhibitions of early steam locomotives
- o Education and school projects
- o Knowledge sharing and conferences
- o Community events
- o Large-scale outdoor arts and street theatre

The Festival Director has been appointed who will now drive the development of the programme working with all partners.

The restoration of Loco No1 replica and the production of Chaldron wagons and coach is continuing to make good progress.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

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



The winter season is slightly quieter in the events programme but the team continued to programme and deliver a number of events to help attract visitors into the town centre. Halloween activities were programmed in half term for families to come and enjoy. Launching Christmas with the Lights Switch On attracted thousands of people to the town centre. The timing of this event feeds many customers into restaurants both before and after the event takes place. 61,686 footfall was counted on the first weekend of ice sculpture trails, an average of 45,000 for a Saturday shows a good increase people visiting the town centre. An ice rink was programmed in the week before Christmas offering over 600 spaces to come and skate in the market square. Winter characters visited the town centre the week before Christmas for families coming into the town centre. 56,965 footfall is a high number for a Friday. After Christmas we welcomed Chinese Lions to celebrate Chinese New Year and offer some cultural experiences for Darlington visitors. The programme is now being confirmed and building for 2023-24 season.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

The monthly programme of 33 transect within the town center being inspected to monitor the cleanliness standard was only completed up to October 2022 due to limited staffing resources. Up to October the overall average cleanliness pass rate for this year was 93%. The overall cleanliness of the town center continues to remain at a high standard. Inspection will recommence in May 2023.

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 | 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 2022 on phase1 for the new build rail shed which the A 1 Steam Locomotive Trust which will be complete in May 2023. The 1861 rail shed will be complete by September 2023 at which point DRPS and NELPG will relocate.

Phase 2 work commenced in February 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. Good progress is being made with an anticipated completion of June 2024

[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 includes 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. Work continues to progress well with the focus now on the original part of the building with the remaining anticipated to be complete by end of July 2023. Library staff will then start to prepare the building for opening in early September 2023.

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

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

L5. Review and deliver a revised car parking strategy

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.

The objectives of the Parking Strategy are to offer a balanced, fair and well managed, safe and convenient, and modern service.

[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 is now complete for the modernisation of Darlington's crematorium service. The new cremators have both now been operating since December 2022 and the building completed and handed over to the bereavement team in July who now operate the bereavement service from West Cemetery.

The new Chapel and burial ground extension was complete in April 2023 opening later in the month. Early indications are that the Chapel has been well received providing a new modern chapel that can facilitate larger gatherings and a crematorium that meets current environmental requirements. The project has also created capacity for further burials in West Cemetery.

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

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

Planning approval was granted for a state-of-the-art Jet Centre and Aviation Village led by Willis Lease Finance Corporation (WLFC). The £25million investment has the potential to bring 250 to 300 jobs to the region. The Aviation Village is set to include five hangars for aircraft Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) and painting operations, as well as a Fixed Base Operation (FBO) building for Business Aviation – the Jet Centre. The FBO is anticipated to drive up to 20 aircraft movements per day at the Airport – and access to the new centre would be via St George Way near the airport car park entrance.

[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 2023-27 was approved by the Council in February 2023 and provides a balanced budget until 2025/26. Work is ongoing through the usual budget setting processes to identify how the budget will be brought into balance from 2026/27 onwards. The final budget outturn position for 2022/23 is a decline of £0.119m on the original 2022-26 MTFP, therefore an improvement of £0.497m on the Q3 projected position and on the opening balance for the 2023-27 MTFP.

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 to build houses 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 remaining strong from the 2023 release. The Neasham Road joint venture, Elder Brook Park, has commenced and with sales progressing well from the 2023 release.

The Council's out-of-borough joint venture with Esh is now in the second year of releasing properties, with sales progressing well from the 2023 release. Sales at all three of the joint ventures are expected to be on target at the end of the year.

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

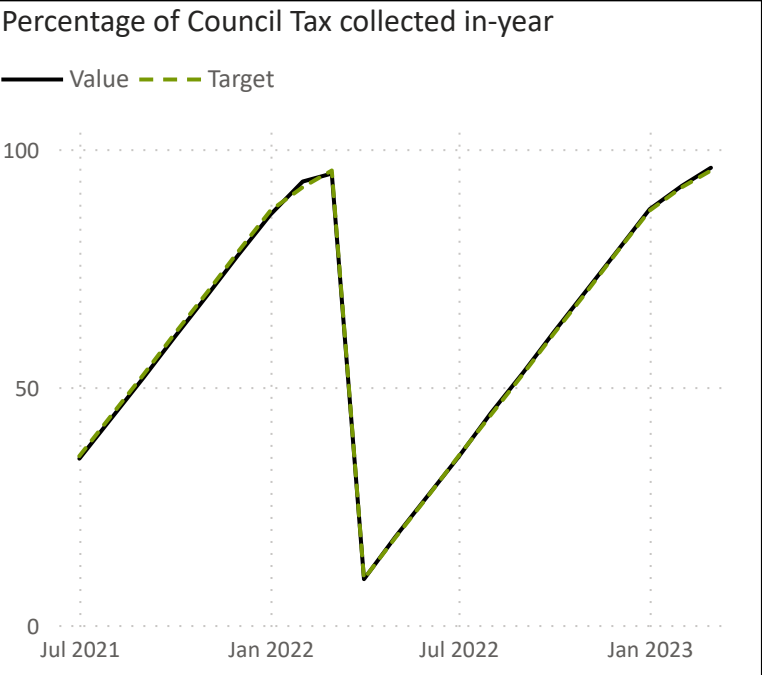
R3. Maximise the council's income from the council's Investment Fund, including further joint venture housing companies

The Investment Fund provision of £50m is being used for Joint Venture (JV) and economic regeneration initiatives. Returns on JVs are anticipated to be over £6m and three of the six schemes approved to date are 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 £30.86m, leaving a balance of £19.14m uncommitted and available for further schemes. Officers from Economic Development and Finance teams are actively looking at schemes, which subject to approval, could utilise the uncommitted fund to provide returns to the Council and wider economic benefits to the borough.

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

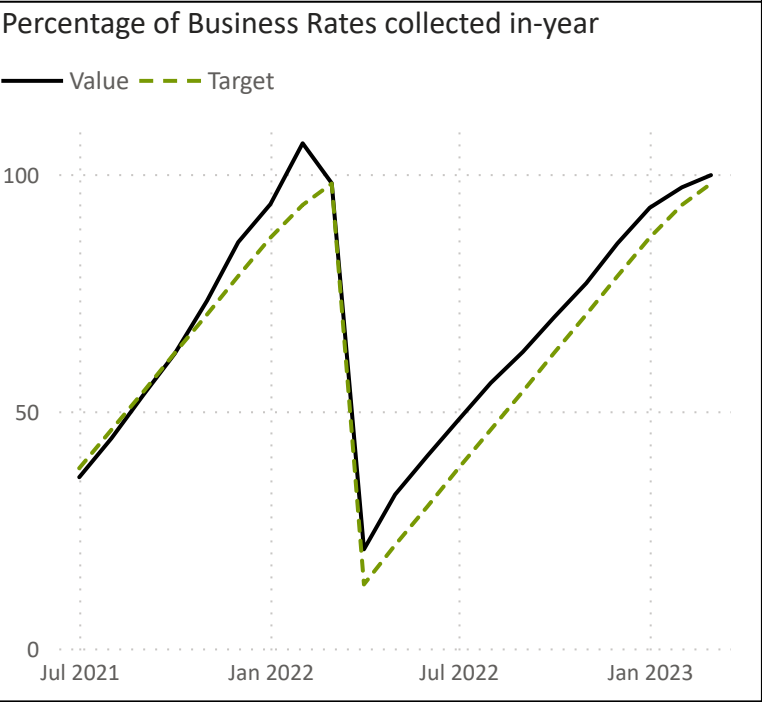
R4. Maximise council tax and business rate income through robust income collection processes



The percentage of Council Tax collected exceeded the target for quarter 4, with 96.1% of Council Tax collected. The overall amount collected by quarter 4 was £71.2 million compared to £66.7 million by quarter 4 in 2021-22, an increase of £4.5 million or 6.7%. The overall Council Tax collection rate of 99% is still on course to be met.

| Year | Darlington | England |
|---------|------------|---------|
| 2019/20 | 96.2 | 96.8 |
| 2020/21 | 95.8 | 95.7 |
| 2021/22 | 94.9 | 95.9 |
| 2022/23 | 96.1 | |

Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues



The percentage of Business Rates collected exceeded the target for quarter 4, with 99.8% of Business Rates collected, compared to 98.1% in quarter 4 of 2021-22. The overall amount collected by quarter 4 was £29.9 million compared to £31.1 million by quarter 4 of 2021-22. The reason for this difference is due to the amount of retail relief awarded in 2022-23.

| Year | Darlington | England |
|---------|------------|---------|
| 2019/20 | 99.4 | 98.0 |
| 2020/21 | 97.1 | 93.0 |
| 2021/22 | 98.1 | 95.5 |
| 2022/23 | 99.8 | |

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

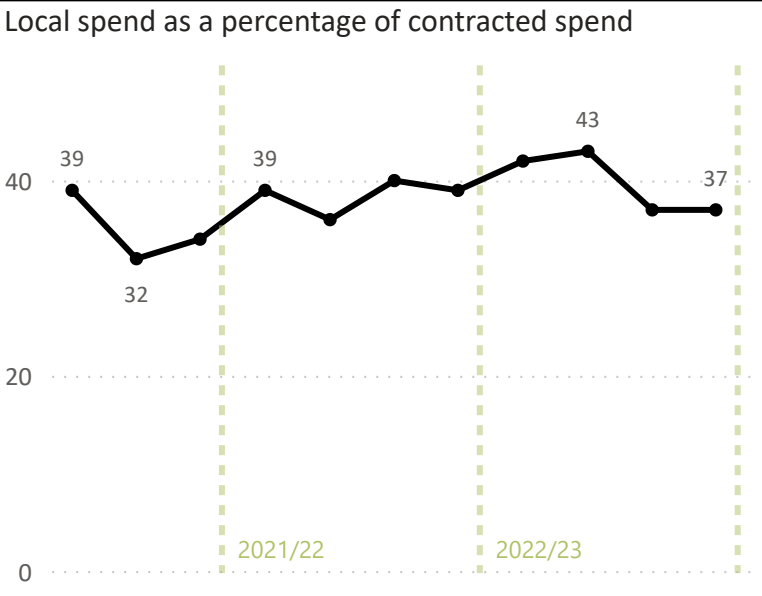
The Public Sector Executives Group continues to provide an opportunity for positive collaboration for public sector agencies, including more recently the treasury.

The group will be key in developing the upcoming Profile Report and new Council Plan. Whilst continuing to monitor the implications of the rising cost of living, on individual organisations and across the town as a whole, building on a more joined up approach to supporting the most vulnerable residents of Darlington.

Within the structure of the Stronger Communities Board it is the way public sector agencies are engaged. The group is proving a useful vehicle for chief executives to share their objectives and issues of concern.

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



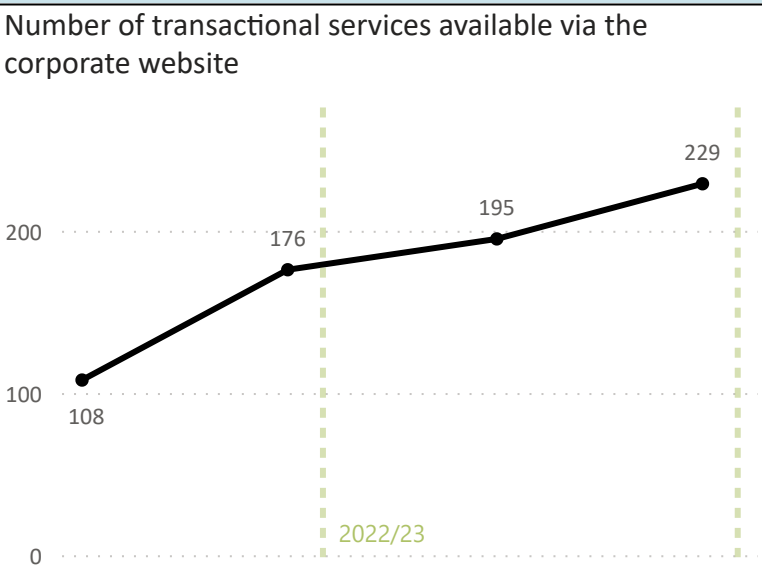
The spend with Darlington-based suppliers has slightly decreased from September 2022 (43%) to March 2023 (37%) a decrease of 6%. This 6% decrease equates to £600,000.00 for this period.

In comparison to the 39% annual figure for 21/22 the 37% for 22/23 represents a reduction of 2%.

The procurement team continue to engage with the local supply chain, prior to any new or reoccurring procurement activity.

Luke Swinhoe: Assistant Director - Law & Governance

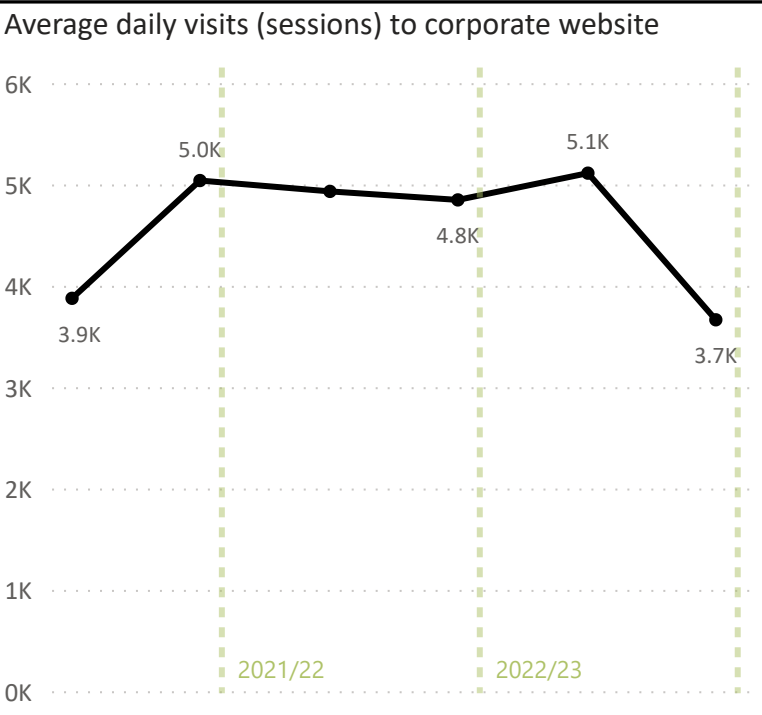
R6. Increasing the availability of council services online



There have been 34 additional online service go live in the last reporting period. These are primarily self service forms that include several types of blue badge applications and a large number of Taxi licence payment forms.

The taxi payment forms were part of a larger content project on darlington.gov to make it easier for taxi drivers to self serve via the 'Taxi Shop'.

Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Communications



During the reporting period we saw increases in web traffic to some sections of the website due to the annual launch of the garden waste service, the promotion of school holiday activities, and people checking their bin collection days over the Christmas period.

The recorded number of daily visits is showing a reduction because more people are choosing to disallow tracking cookies when they first visit the website, an option we are legally required to offer. An updated version of the system we use to track visits, Google Analytics, is being release in July and we are yet to understand if this will resolve the tracking constraints and provide us with more accurate visitor information.

Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Communications

R7. Review and refresh the council's workforce strategy

The Council's latest workforce strategy and plan were agreed in July 2021, with roll out commencing in October 2021. Briefings have taken place to ensure the strategy is promoted and that the core values are embedded into every day working practices. Monitoring and evaluation of the success of the strategy have commenced with positive signs coming through in the 2021 Employee and 2023 Wellbeing surveys as well as the successful implementation of agile working. The Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) and chief officers have received an annual update and will receive a further progress report later this summer. We are continuing to monitor progress through a number of metrics, including the next employee survey due later this year, 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 has been reboot and the Board explored other areas it could focus on. An initiative called 'The Great Park Auction' was first held in 2018. The last scheme delivered 3,600 hours of volunteering in Darlington's parks. A fresh auction was held on March 1st. More than 3,600 hours of volunteering hours were pledged by five companies to reinvigorate The Denes, Stanhope Park, Eastbourne Park and Fryers Field.

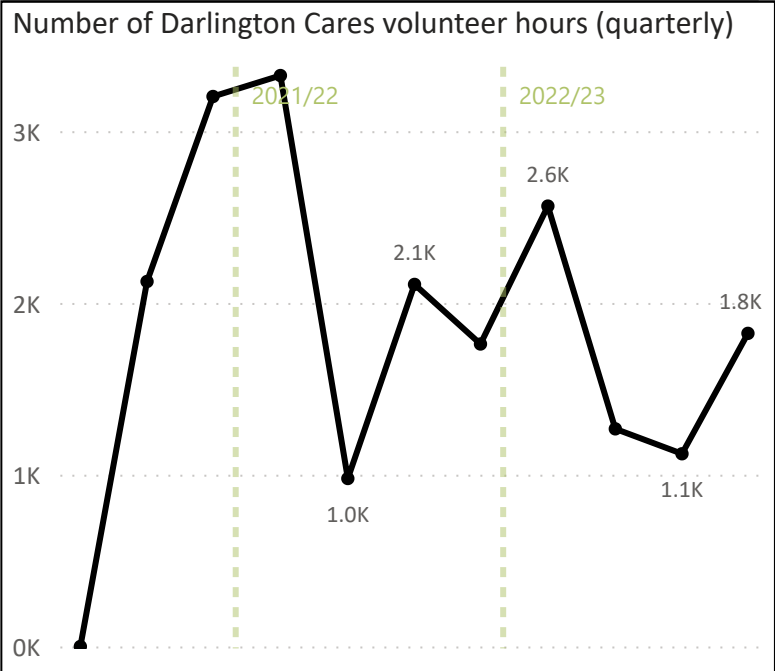
Membership has been growing significantly. The procurement team have been directing suppliers to Darlington Cares to explore how they can deliver their social value commitment by becoming a member with very positive results.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership

| Number of Darlington Cares members | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Year | Month | Value |
| 2020 | December | 24 |
| 2021 | March | 24 |
| | June | 26 |
| | September | 26 |
| 2022 | March | 30 |
| | June | 30 |
| | September | 30 |
| | December | 30 |
| 2023 | March | 30 |

There has been a significant increase in membership, the biggest rate of increase we have seen since the programme began. Notable recent joiners are Amazon, Redde Northgate and Carvers estate agents. The Procurement team have been directing suppliers to Darlington Cares as a way they can fulfil their social value commitment. Once introduced, suppliers quickly see the benefit and sign up

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 it tree planting ambition. In addition, a further round of 'The Great Park Auction' was held resulting in 3,600 additional hours being pledged 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

Work has been ongoing to refresh the Northgate Initiative. Whilst progress has been made in some workstream areas there has been little delivery in others. The data dashboard has been updated accordingly to reflect the new targets and to provide much more focused data capture, to demonstrate progression, areas for additional action and evidence KPIs.

Discussions have been held with workstream leads at affirm direction going forward and in the case of the Health workstream to agree a new lead.

A 'community hub' based at Corporation Road School was launched on March 1st. The aim of the hub is to provide residents with easy access to services available to them. A rota of agencies attend at different times during the week. Take up will be closely monitored as it is hoped the hub could be a useful model for other areas of town to adopt.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership

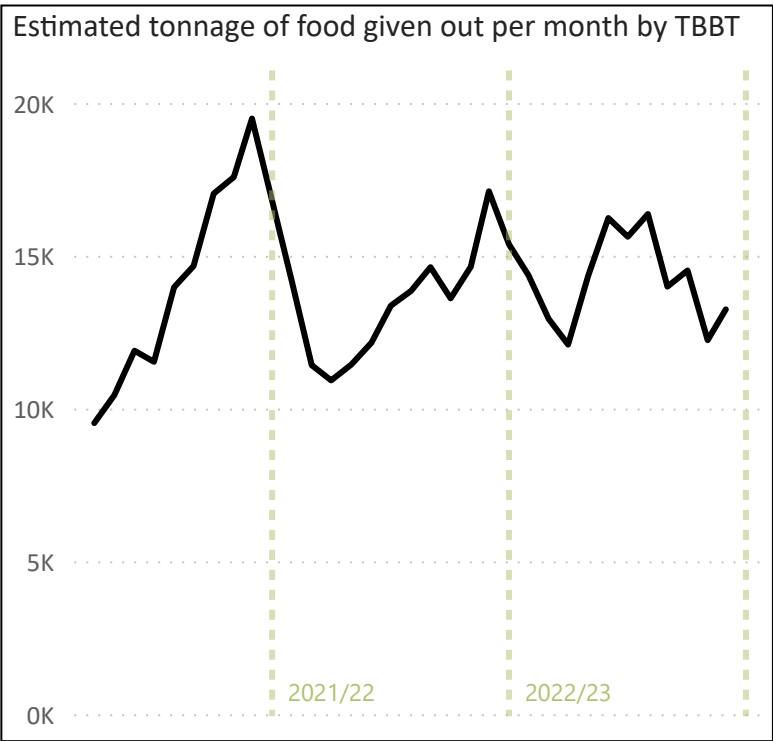
S3. Work with partners to address food instability

The Bread and Butter Thing now holds 9 hubs on a weekly basis across Darlington giving out a total of 14,279 bags in this financial year, an even more valuable resource for residents under the current cost of living crisis.

The warm spaces which ran throughout the winter months have now been turned into Social Spaces where residents can simply arrive before collection time to socialise with other local residents.

TBBT delivered the Household Support Fund Round 3 through the distribution of fuel vouchers to residents, and through the provision of food for all Darlington based foodbanks, who have all been impacted by the rise in the cost of living. Both these aspects will continue into Round 4.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership



The Bread and Butter Thing now has 9 hubs in Darlington across the working week, with all hubs based in identified areas of deprivation. The number of customers has remained constant as the initiative supports families through the current cost of living crisis.

Since the 1st September 2022 to 31st March 2023, The Bread and butter Thing have given out 7,166 of bags which equates to 85,992kg of food. Overall for this financial year 2022-2023, 14,279 bags have been given out with an overall total weight of 171,346kg of food.

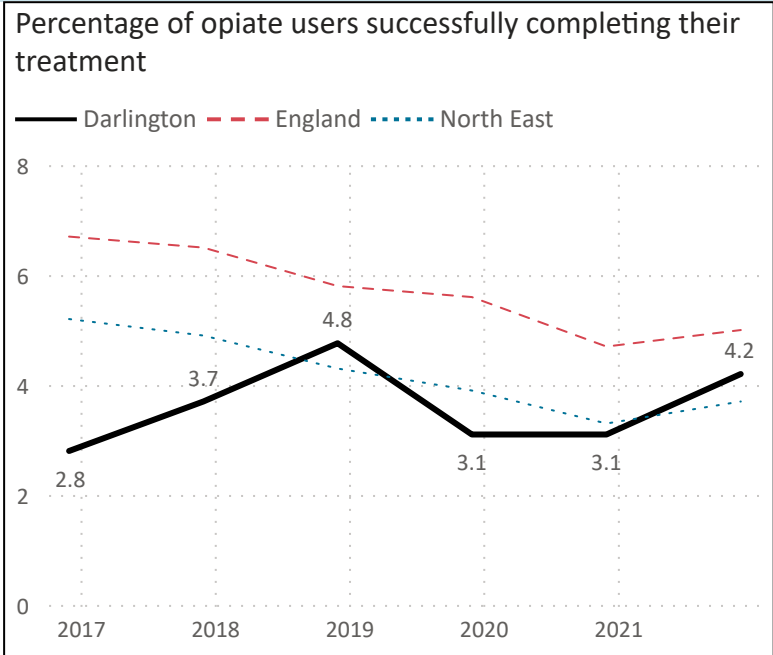
Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership

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

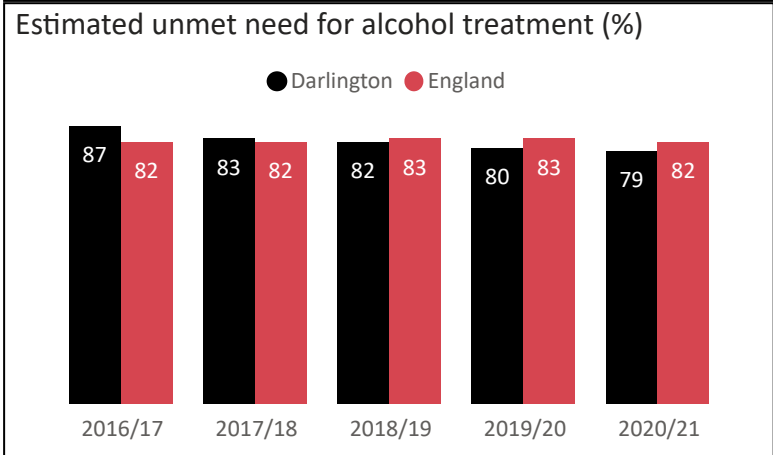
S5. Work with Durham Constabulary and other key partners to improve our collective response to dealing with drug and alcohol issues



This data (from 2021) shows that that there is no significant change to the trend for Successful completion of drug treatment – opiate users. 4.2% of opiate users successfully (free of drug(s) of dependence) who do not then re-present to treatment again within 6 months. Compared to our North East neighbours Darlington is ranked 4th. Statistically similar to the North East and England.

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

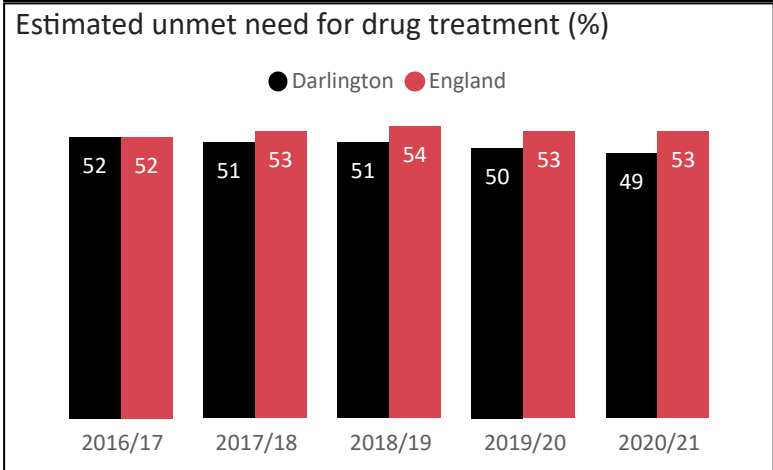
Penny Spring: Director of Public Health



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

Number Forty, a safe space in the night time economy, located on Skinnergate, is open Friday and Saturday evenings (9pm and 3am). The hub is staffed by two volunteers, SIA door staff and two medics.

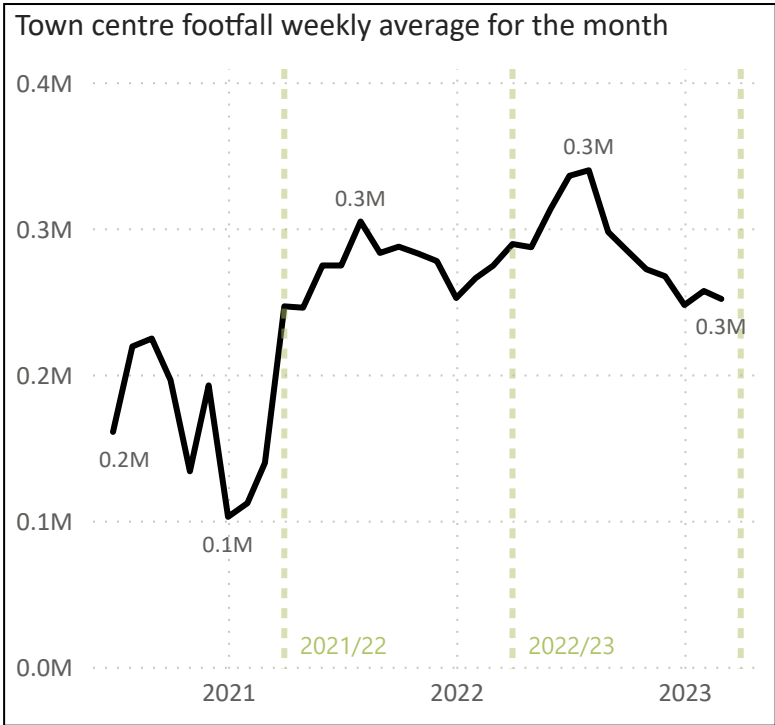
Number Forty has 30 volunteers including 12 “Street Friends” who patrol the night-time economy to support vulnerable people.

Since opening on 2nd September 2022, Number Forty has dealt with 334 incidents.

DBC Community Safety has delivered various safety measures including a Counter Terrorism Awareness Event, checks of licensed premises / traders, taxi marshals and improved CCTV systems.

The Purple Flag Working Group continue to work on town centre improvements to support reaccreditation in October 2023.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services



Footfall continues to follow a regular trend pattern. More new businesses have opened and attract new customers however a number of closures have also happened. The majority of have attracted a replacement business but a few buildings have remained empty, Darlington has retained the main High Street bank branches compared to other towns nationwide. The High Street Task Force report highlighted some areas to develop which are currently being addressed; overall feedback was positive. The Towns Fund programme continues to regenerate shop fronts. Highways works are in place along Duke Street however this street is currently at 100% occupancy. These works aim to be completed within 12 months.

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.

The specification for the new cameras and network has been developed and following a procurement process the contract has been awarded and it is anticipated that the cameras will be installed and operating by October 2023.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

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

Percentage of staff who have completed equality and diversity training

March 2023

78.6%

The total number of current staff who have attended a half day session of training is 1415. Over 175 people who have now left the organisation also received the training. Since the last update the headcount of the council has increased, meaning the percentage has not risen as quickly.

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

March 2023

76.0%

This indicator includes members who have completed at least one of two distinct training sessions on equality and diversity on offer. There has been no change in this indicator since the last report as training for new members will run after the elections on May. In addition to the training, individual members are provided with equality, diversity, and inclusion advice throughout the year as required.

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.

Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects