



Darlington Borough Council

Council Plan Performance Management Report

2024/25 Quarter 2

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Core Principle: Addressing inequalities

Darlington is a wonderful place to live and work and we want opportunities to be accessible to everyone. We will have a long-term focus on understanding and addressing the causes of inequality ensuring our communities are safe and can thrive.

Develop a cross-council approach based on an in-depth understanding of inequalities and their causes, with a focus on local communities experiencing disadvantage

Preparation of a report analysing inequality to be discussed with the Council's Policy Team with an option paper to be presented to the Council's Chief Officers Board and Chief Officers Executive. The report would consider approaches taken by other local authorities and include consideration of 'poverty proofing' Council services, how collaboration with voluntary, public and business partners could be focused to address inequality, and how discretionary funding, such as the Long Term Plan for Towns, may be deployed.

Lead Officer: Seth Pearson: Darlington Partnerships Director

Core Principle: Addressing inequalities

Ensure all new strategies and plans consider inequalities, starting with the development of an inclusive growth strategy and a review of the health and wellbeing strategy

Following consultation the final version of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy was agreed at the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board on 5th December 2024. The development of the strategy has been underpinned by a consideration of health inequalities, building upon the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the recommendations of the Marmot Review. The thematic priorities to be taken forward will explicitly include consideration of inequalities, for example by understanding the difference in outcomes across wards in Darlington (where the data is available) and targeting actions to those population groups or geographical areas where need is greatest.

The council has been taking an active role as a member of the North East Child Poverty Commission to inform lobbying on key issues for the national Child Poverty Strategy. This has included taking part in themed roundtables, a workshop specifically organised for Tees Valley partners, and ensuring representation from the voluntary and community sector.

Lead Officer: Seth Pearson: Darlington Partnerships Director

Core Principle: Addressing inequalities

Strengthen partnership working with key stakeholders and the voluntary and community sector with a long-term focus on opportunity and addressing the causes of inequality and short-term focus on reducing the burden of the cost of living. We will work with communities to understand first-hand the challenges they face

Household Support Fund (HSF) Round 6 is being delivered through voluntary and community organisations and will provide:

- Vouchers during holiday period for children currently in receipt of Free School Meals
- Support for Care Leavers
- 1000 households identified by the Low Income Family Tracker as living in food and fuel poverty will be contacted directly and offered a one off payment of £175.00
- 550 pensioners identified by the Low Income Family Tracker as eligible but not claiming pension credit or those who miss out on pension credit by up to £1000 annually will be contacted directly and offered a one off payment of £175.00
- Elderly residents will be offered support in energy proofing their homes via Age UK
- Darlington-based foodbanks will be supported with food provision.

A new element this year is an online application for those experiencing financial crisis. Residents can apply for up to £100 via Citizens Advice. This is open to anyone but residents need to meet set criteria to be eligible.

A further round of HSF has been announced for 2025/26. A continued focus will be given to supporting benefit take up which has a sustained positive impact on households' income.

Lead Officer: Seth Pearson: Darlington Partnerships Director

Core Principle: Addressing inequalities

Core Principle: Tackling climate change

The changing climate impacts all our lives now and we know this is particularly important to our younger residents. One of the first things we did when we came to office was bring forward by 10 years, to 2040, the Council's commitment to being carbon neutral.

Deliver the climate change action plan to make Darlington Borough Council carbon neutral by 2040

The climate change action plan is reported on twice a year to Cabinet and Council. An annual report is also published on the Council's website. The Council has made progress on the actions within the plan and are following the trajectory of 40% reduction in the council's carbon emissions every five years. The Council is over half way towards the carbon neutral target.

Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Core Principle: Tackling climate change

Involve all parts of the council in a cross-council approach to sustainability and climate change

The Council's Climate Change commitment is a cross-council ambition, with actions in our action plan from directorates across the Council.

This year has seen the second year of the popular Eco Fair held in June 2024. This year more than 5,000 people passed through the marquee to engage with hands on crafts, science demonstrations and interactive theatre shows, while also exploring various eco-friendly products and services.

The Council held a Members' seminar and invited representatives from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and the Association for Public Sector Excellence.

The Council recently begun work on a trial for the Department for Food and Rural Affairs to report it's adaptation activities. It required the authority to risk assess it's activities against those identified by the Climate Change Commission in its last climate change risk assessment. Officers from across the Council have been involved in this piece of work, which will help ensure we are resilient to future climate change.

Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Core Principle: Tackling climate change

Work alongside our business community collaborating with groups such as the Darlington Employers Environmental Partnership to transition to net zero

The Council continues to be an active member of the Darlington Employers Environmental Partnership and also sit on the Steering Group for the partnership.

The Council's Business Development Team newsletter carries information and articles relevant to Darlington businesses, including sources of help and funding to support the business community transition to net zero.

The Council's Communications Team creates content to showcase what businesses have been able to achieve and use it's own successes to inspire and encourage. The climate change pages of the website also have sources of advice and information for businesses.

Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Core Principle: Tackling climate change

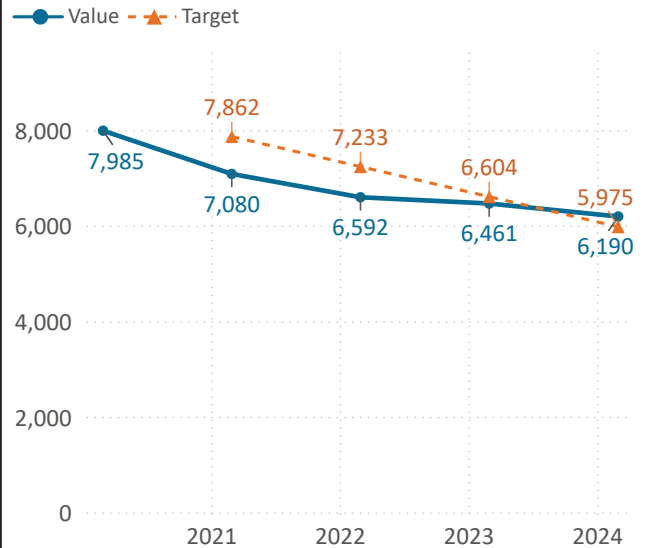
Work with partners, government, public and private sectors and residents for a resilient Darlington so we are able to respond and adapt to change.

Darlington Employers Environment Partnership (DEEP) was set up in 2023. It brings together likeminded local businesses to generate more sustainable outcomes from products, services and approaches. In September it held a network and learn event at the North East Net Zero Innovation Centre. As a consequence, two DEEP members were able to engage in Net Zero research projects being delivered by the Centre.

Lead Officer: Seth Pearson: Darlington Partnerships Director
 Core Principle: Tackling climate change

Darlington Borough Council emissions (tonnes of CO2 equivalent)

Overall carbon emissions for the council continue to fall. The year 2023/24 saw us at 6,190 tonnes. We are slightly above our projected trajectory because the electricity grid used more natural gas generation than renewables, so the conversion factor we use to convert energy use to carbon emissions was higher than previous years. We continue to take actions to reduce our energy and fuel use.



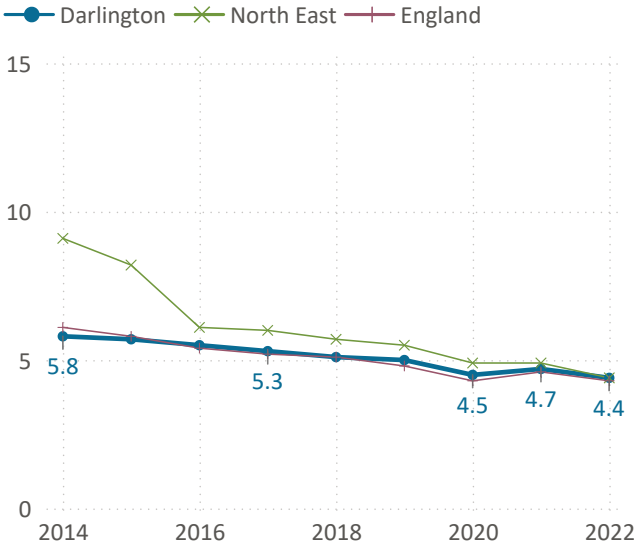
Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth
 Core Principle: Tackling climate change
 Key Deliverable: Deliver the climate change action plan to make Darlington Borough Council carbon neutral by 2040

CO2 emissions per capita (tonnes of CO2 equivalent)

Data for this indicator is published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, two years in arrears. Therefore the latest data is for 2022. The data shows a drop in per capita emissions to 4.4kt/person. This is equal to the north east per capita emissions and just 0.1 above England emissions.

We are continuing to push social media and communications messages to residents, young people and businesses to encourage action from everybody. Our Eco Fair in June 2024 saw more than 5,000 people attending the event.

We are supporting the Darlington Employers Environmental Partnership and its efforts to reach out to businesses across Darlington.



- Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth
- Core Principle: Tackling climate change
- Key Deliverable: Work alongside our business community collaborating with groups such as the Darlington Employers Environmental Partnership to transition to net zero

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

We will remain focussed on the financial sustainability of the council, ensuring good governance and delivering the best services possible, with the resources we have, for our residents, communities, and businesses.

Deliver a balanced Medium Term Financial Plan and positive Value For Money outcome

Council approved the 2024/25 - 2027/28 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) at their meeting in February 2024. The quarter 2 revenue budget management report identified a projected decline in the MTFP during 2024/25 of approximately £1.36m mainly due to national pressures in Homeless and Adult Services. All services continue to scrutinise their budgets to assist with the current and future years budget.

The Council is currently in the process of preparing the next MTFP for 2025/26 - 2028/29 which will be presented to Full Council in February 2025 for approval.

The latest audit report of the Council accounts undertaken by our external auditors EY has not identified any significant weaknesses in the arrangements to secure value for money in the use of Council resources.

Lead Officer: Brett Nielsen: Assistant Director - Resources

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

Deliver high quality governance and decision making

Statutory officers met to review the Local Code of Corporate Governance and work progress on 8 March, 2 September and 9 December 2024.

The Constitution was reviewed with updating changes approved by Council on 28 November 2024. In July 2024 a Member Working Group began to review Council Decision Making and the role of Scrutiny Committees.

The Audit Committee received reports on Ethical Governance and Member Standards on 8 April 2024 and 4 November 2024.

Complaints reports and Ombudsman decisions were considered by Cabinet on 10 September 2024 for transparency and to assist with organisational learning.

Training been ongoing during 2024 on a range of topics including; Code of Conduct, Procurement, Governance and Political Awareness. A number of Deputy Monitoring Officer training sessions were held in Nov and Dec 2024.

Council Cabinet and Committee papers have been reviewed throughout the year for compliance and delegated decisions review meetings have also been held.

The Register of gifts and hospitality has been updated throughout the year.

Staff and member coms have been circulated during the year, including topics such as the pre election period, Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act and Whistleblowing.

A Corporate Governance Newsletter was produced in December 2024 highlighting a range of issues.

Lead Officer: Luke Swinhoe: Assistant Director - Law & Governance

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

Review and refresh the Asset Management Plan

An Asset Management Plan has been developed over a period of time. The completion of the Asset Management Plan was delayed while completion of the Council Plan was adopted to ensure that each of these corporate documents were aligned. The Asset Management Plan is now complete and a report will be presented to a Cabinet meeting in early 2025 for Council agreement.

Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

Review and refresh the Procurement Strategy

The Council spends millions of pounds every year and we want to use money effectively and achieve value by purchasing and procuring what we need at the right price and quality.

The Council Plan prioritises growing the local economy and procurement activity can help in delivering this goal.

Whenever possible we want our spending to have positive social, economic and environmental impacts that benefit the well-being of local people.

We are working on a refreshed Procurement Strategy which will be finalised after the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023 in 2025.

Lead Officer: Luke Swinhoe: Assistant Director - Law & Governance

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

Build on the Capital Project Management process by introducing an enhanced ICT system to improve efficiency and effectiveness

In order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Capital Project delivery, the Capital Projects team have worked alongside the Xentrall team to develop a bespoke project management system within Microsoft Teams. This system will allow more efficient flow and recording of information and will feed into the Project Position Statement which is reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. The system is currently undergoing final testing before full use can begin in 2025.

Lead Officer: Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

Review and deliver the workforce strategy

We have commenced the refresh of the new Workforce strategy with key stakeholders. This has included meetings with the Senior Managers Network, Engagement Ambassadors, Trade Union Consultative Group, Joint Consultative Committee and Human Resources department.

Frameworks underpinning the proposed Workforce strategy pillars which provide detail on how strategic aims will be achieved and measured are also being designed in association with Public Health and other key stakeholders.

Lead Officer: Brett Nielsen: Assistant Director - Resources

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

Maximise income through new joint venture companies, increase levels of business rates by growing the local economy; and maximise grant opportunities

The Council continues to work effectively with ESH Homes Ltd to deliver a number of housing sites in the Borough. These developments include Blackwell (Havelock Park) and Neasham Road. A reserved matters planning application is being finalised for 300 homes on Burtree Garden Village. Construction work on the 4 commercial units along Tornado way nears completion which will provide circa 500,000 sqft of commercial space which, when occupied, will contribute significantly to business rates income.

Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

Explore opportunities to exploit digital assets to create efficiencies and increase productivity, including online delivery

A draft Digital Darlington Strategy has been produced in preparation for consultation. It will help the council be more efficient and productive through the use of technology. Work to improve the content and functionality of the corporate website, and to maximise the benefits available from our back office systems is ongoing. A campaign to raise awareness and use of our online services instead of other channels that cost the council more has been developed and will be rolled out in the Autumn. We are exploring how artificial intelligence and other technology such as Alexa skills can be of benefit to the council and its customers, and the governance controls that need to put in place first.

Lead Officer: Elizabeth Davison: Group Director of Operations

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

Continue to build strong relationships with partners, residents and communities.

The Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement Group continues to be an effective way for the Council to engage with the sector. Following the disturbances over the summer, the Community Safety manager was able to discuss community cohesion with the group and develop better communication processes should they be needed in any future incidents.

The Public Sector Executive Group continues to provide a means for the Chief Executive to meet with his counterparts in the other public sector agencies. A project exploring how agencies could work together more effectively was discussed at its last meeting in September.

Lead Officer: Seth Pearson: Darlington Partnerships Director

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Building a strong sustainable economy and highly skilled workforce with opportunities for all

Develop and deliver an inclusive economic growth strategy to create the conditions for businesses and the economy to thrive and provide good work opportunities for residents

An Inclusive Growth Strategy is being developed as part of the Economic Growth Strategy for Darlington. There are a number of large scale investments which will present real opportunities for people within the Borough to gain employment. In addition these investments offer opportunities for local businesses to be included within the various tiering of procurement levels to provide services and goods.

Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Establish a place-based partnership to support the continued renewal of the town centre delivering more jobs and more homes

A new place based partnership with stakeholders will form part of the Long Term Plan for Towns. This will include representatives from retail, hospitality and other businesses within the town centre, including Darlington Economic Campus, and other employers in sub-centres including Cockerton. The new partnership will be chaired by an independent representative with the overall objective to increase business activity and employment within the town centre.

Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Ensure that the borough is safe, clean and maintained to levels that support the economy and encourage inward investment

Prevention and education measures are used to intervene in problems, with enforcement a tool that can be used to when appropriate to help protect the appearance of the town, damage to the environment and public health issues. In quarters 1 and 2, 2,297 environmental cases were reported, of which 76 resulted in some form of enforcement action (1 in 4 cases).

Street Scene continues to sustain levels of cleanliness to the highest standard within the constraints of available resources. Overall cleanliness of the area following independent auditing confirms an average score of 85% which falls within the 'excellent' category.

Lead Officer: Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Work with employers, national and local employability providers, and TVCA to promote good jobs and career opportunities for all, particularly young people and those with barriers to work, to access good employment outcomes.

The Council continue to work with employers in the local area to develop good job and career opportunities. Working with individual or clusters of local businesses, they are encouraged to develop their skills pipeline and invest in recruiting and sustaining talent by helping identify the support and or training they need. The Council also continue to host the Darlington Jobs Fair, with the last event in October 2024 attracting almost 1000 jobseekers. At the event around 100 employers and support organisations helping people find work, and support in overcoming any barriers to employment.

Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Provide more education and skills opportunities for residents by delivering the Adult Skills Centre and collaborating with providers and Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA)

It is anticipated that the Adult Skills Centre based in the Northern Echo Building will be open in July 2025. Agreement between Darlington Council Learning and Skills and Darlington College has been made. In addition further discussions with other providers including the Department of Work and Pensions and the voluntary sector have commenced with the aim of establishing an holistic service provision for learning and skills.

Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Work with Market Asset Management to deliver improvements to the historic indoor market

Market Asset Management successfully completed phase 3 of the market refurbishment project in July 2024. The new trading area has begun to attract new traders including a florist, various delicatessens, jewellery stalls and retro clothes store. In addition there has been established a stall which sells goods manufactured by various small scale producers. The market hall is now viewed as a community hub used by various organisations and corporate businesses.

Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Accelerate the delivery of key sites to the market to attract private sector investment, including Darlington Science Park, Ingenium Parc and Symmetry Park

Two key sites which include Symmetry Park are being developed by private sector investors. Overall approximately 500,000 sqft of commercial space will be delivered by mid 2025. The occupier for one of the buildings has indicated that this will create approximately 150 new jobs. Working with partners from CPI and Teesside University a new marketing and promotion of the remaining sites at Darlington Science Park (formally known as Central Park) has commenced.

Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Deliver the Towns Fund projects, including the refurbishment of the Northern Echo building to secure new business occupiers

The Town Fund Programme continues to deliver real tangible improvements to the town centre. The refurbishment of the Northern Echo Building is in progress with the Adult Skills Hub planned to be opened in July 2025. The refurbishment of the upper floors into high quality office accommodation will be complete in early 2026. Improvements to shops and public realm along Skinnergate and the Yards together with improvements along Victoria Road continue. The redevelopment of Coniscliffe Road commenced in October 2024 which will provide permanent outdoor seating for hospitality businesses together with public realm improvements. Two key buildings along Northgate have gained planning permission for redevelopment, 156 Northgate to be developed into quality office accommodation and an element of the historic home of Edward Pease into a home for Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR). Conversations with the owners of Northgate Tower are continuing.

Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Work effectively with Darlington Economic Campus to fully realise the opportunities this investment presents to the town and its communities

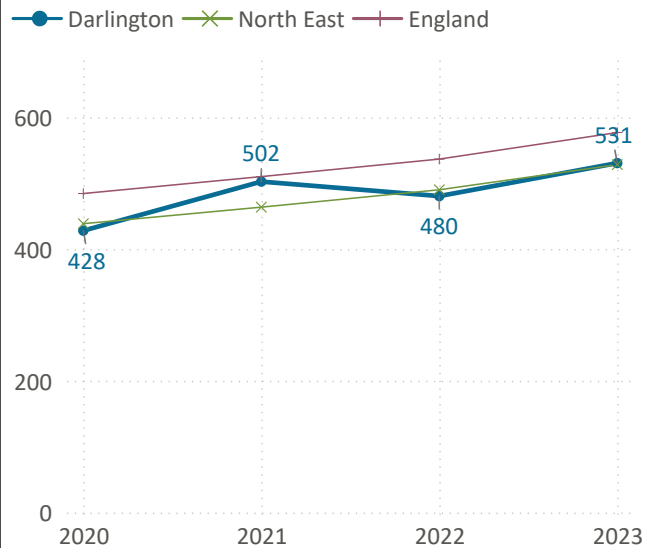
Close working arrangements with officers from Darlington Economic Campus (EDC) continues. The DEC have played a pivotal role in the recent job fairs where they have effectively promoted various roles and careers that are currently available within the civil service in Darlington. Officers have worked with Government Property Agency to finalise designs for the permanent DEC building on Brunswick Street. It is anticipated that work will commence in early 2025 with local construction firms being invited to submit bids for work.

Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Median weekly all residence based earnings

Darlington resident median weekly earnings increased by 10.6% to £531 in 2023. This annual increase was greater than both the North East figure (7.7%) and the England figure (7.5%). The weekly median all residence based earnings is now £46 less than the England level and £3 more than the North East level. The long term trend projection for Darlington shows gradual increases.



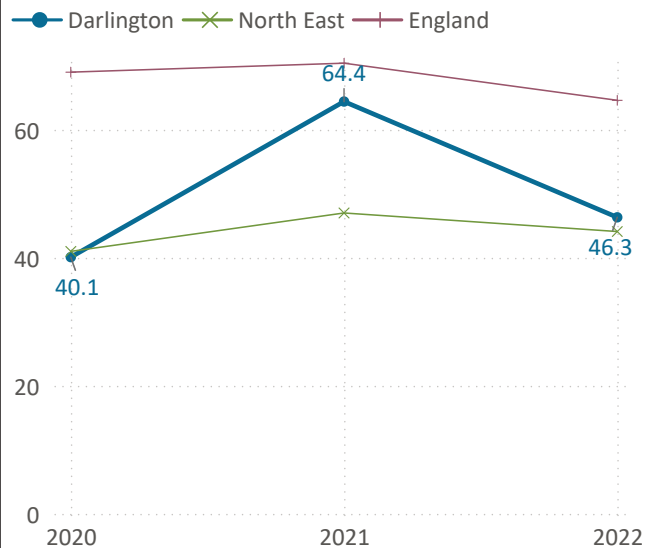
Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Key Deliverable: Develop and deliver an inclusive economic growth strategy to create the conditions for businesses and the economy to thrive and provide good work opportunities for residents

New business registration rate per 10,000 residents

New business formation rates have fallen in Darlington since 2018, an overall trend mirrored by both the rates for the North East and England. The data shows figures up to 2022 and are significantly impacted by the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2022, the number of new business registrations per 10,000 residents in Darlington was 46.3, significantly lower than the England rate of 64.6



Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Key Deliverable: Develop and deliver an inclusive economic growth strategy to create the conditions for businesses and the economy to thrive and provide good work opportunities for residents

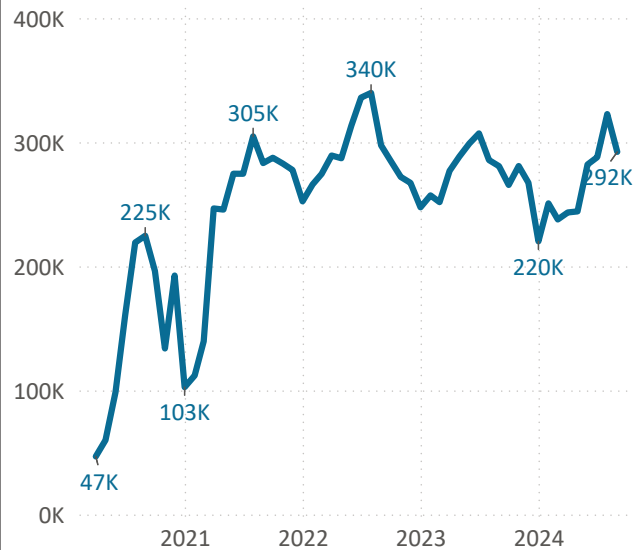
Town centre footfall weekly average for the month

The trendline for town centre footfall continues to follow a similar trendline, August (+12.97%) and September (+4.1%) have been higher than 2023 figures.

The redevelopment of the covered market is well advanced, with another 5 new retailers across a variety of food and retail are now trading on the market floor this has added increased interest and footfall into the market hall building.

Town centre animation and events attract increased numbers into the town centre aimed at encouraging visitors to dwell for longer in Darlington and move around different locations.

Occupancy rates continue to sit at 88% with a number of new businesses opening in units that had become vacant.



Lead Officer: Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Key Deliverable: Establish a place-based partnership to support the continued renewal of the town centre delivering more jobs and more homes

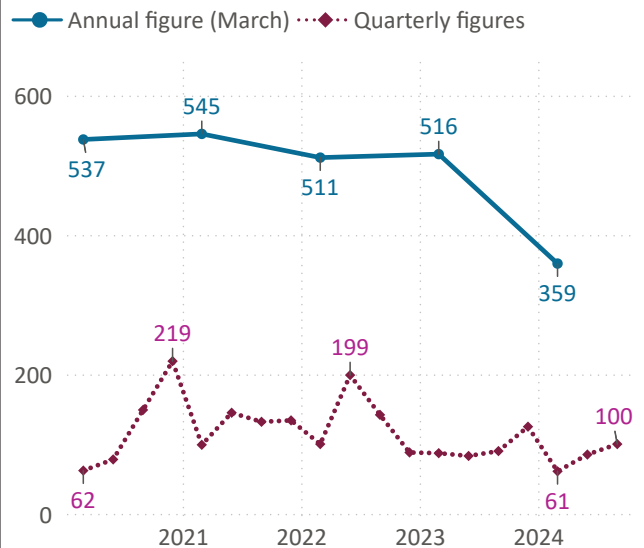
New homes delivered, annually

Housing delivery has seen a drop in the 2023/24 financial year largely due to the delayed 'lag' effect as a result of the Nutrient Neutrality (NN) designation affecting the whole Tees Catchment.

Applications are now progressing and gaining consent largely due to the Natural England NN credit scheme. The Borough has fared well in the proportion of credits allocated to developments in Darlington.

Looking at the latest monitoring data on housing starts this lag in delivery may continue for the current financial year 2024/25 but will hopefully recover beyond that with the permissions currently being granted likely to have started.

There were 100 completions in Q2 of 24/25. This is slightly up from 90 completions at Q2 of last year.



Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Economy

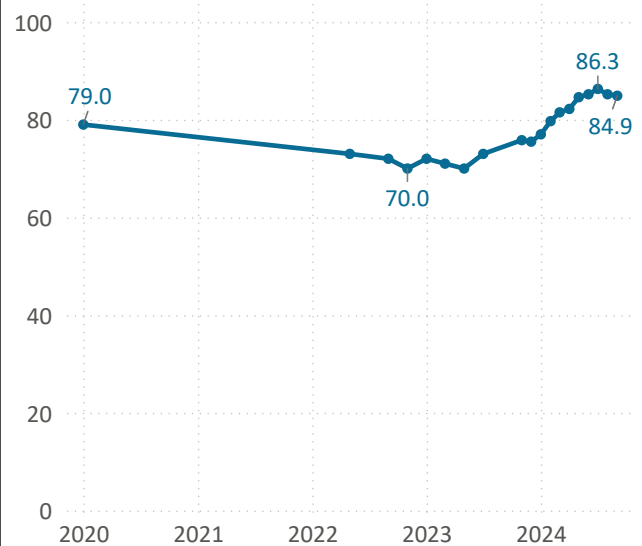
Key Deliverable: Establish a place-based partnership to support the continued renewal of the town centre delivering more jobs and more homes

Land Audit Management System - Litter Score (Environmental Quality Survey)

This is a rolling average percentage score of the 40 transects inspected for litter every month. Two wards are covered each month in which twenty areas of the ward are inspected. Each ward is covered once within a twelve month period. The system of inspection, based on the grading system of the Association For Public Service Excellence Land Audit Management System, scores cleanliness of an area. The average pass rate over the last 12 months for litter is 84.9%.

As well as litter the inspections include detritus, weeds, dog fouling, grass, shrubs & hedges, flowerbeds and overflowing public bins. The 12 month average pass rate for all is 82.2%.

Street Scene continues to assist with the Civic Enforcement back lane project which incorporates litter picking of the front street as well as the back lane.



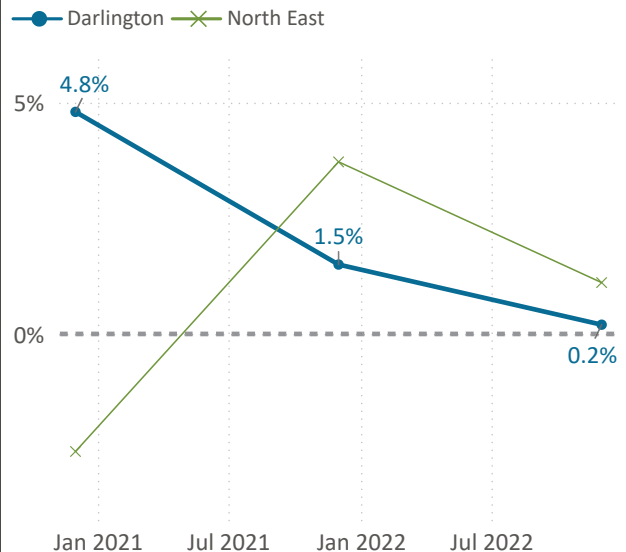
Lead Officer: Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Key Deliverable: Ensure that the borough is safe, clean and maintained to levels that support the economy and encourage inward investment

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 shows a slight increase in 2022, although at a slower rate than the regional rate. Over the last three years, the rate of growth in total employment has decreased, and it now stands at 0.2% in Darlington.



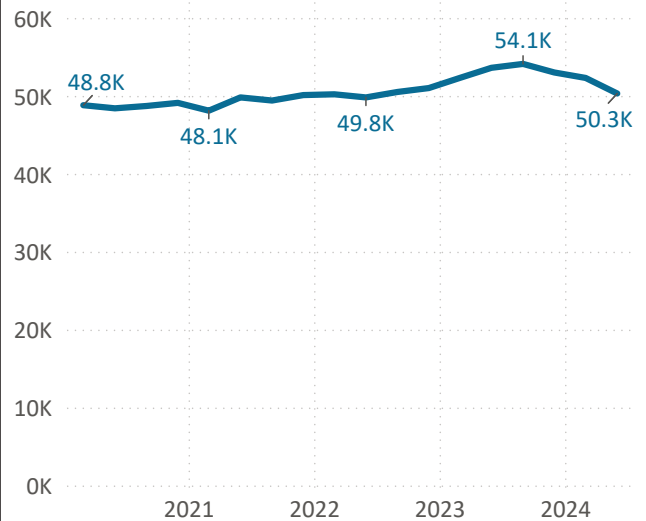
Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Key Deliverable: Work with employers, national and local employability providers, and TVCA to promote good jobs and career opportunities for all, particularly young people and those with barriers to work, to access good employment outcomes.

Number of people employed including self-employed

As of June 2024, the total number of people employed (including both employees and self-employed individuals) now stands at 50,300. This is a decrease of 3,300 on the same time 12 months previously. There's no stand out reason for this decline, and it could be due to a variety of factors such as national economic challenges, shifts in local industries, or broader regional trends. Nevertheless, the long-term trendline demonstrates a gradual increase.



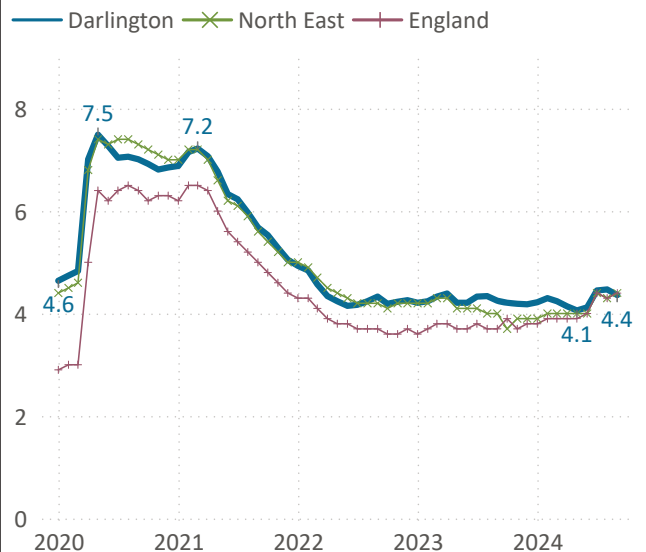
Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Key Deliverable: Work with employers, national and local employability providers, and TVCA to promote good jobs and career opportunities for all, particularly young people and those with barriers to work, to access good employment outcomes.

Monthly unemployed claimant count (%)

Since mid-2022 to date, the monthly unemployed claimant count in Darlington has remained relatively static - a trend which is mirrored in national statistics. The claimant count in September 2024 now stands at 4.4%. The rate in Darlington (4.4) is identical to both the North East and England rates. The static nature of this measure can be attributed to several factors, including economic inactivity, post-pandemic labour market mismatches and economic uncertainty.



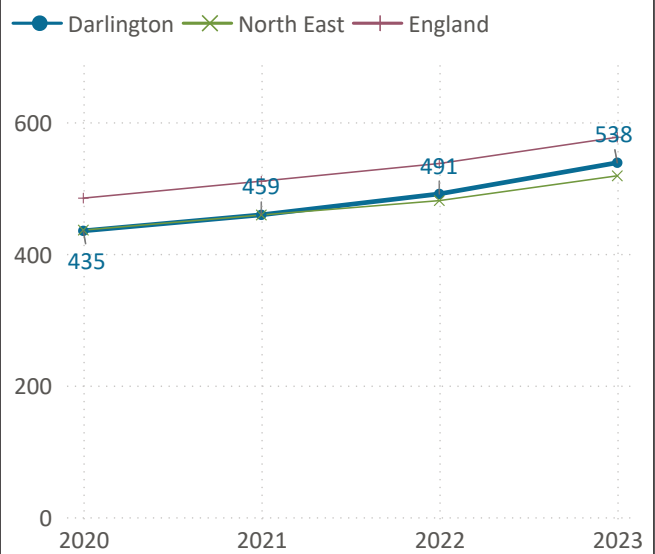
Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Key Deliverable: Work with employers, national and local employability providers, and TVCA to promote good jobs and career opportunities for all, particularly young people and those with barriers to work, to access good employment outcomes.

Median weekly full-time employee based earnings

The Darlington full-time employee weekly based earnings increased between 2022 and 2023 from £491 to £538. This increase of £47 (9.6%) was higher than both the England rate of 7.4% and the North East rate of 7.9%. This has closed the gap between Darlington full-time employee weekly based earnings (£538) and England full-time employee weekly based earnings (£577). In addition, Darlington is now increasing the gap with the North East rate (£519).



Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Key Deliverable: Work with employers, national and local employability providers, and TVCA to promote good jobs and career opportunities for all, particularly young people and those with barriers to work, to access good employment outcomes.

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Affordable and secure homes that meet the current and future needs of residents

Review and refresh the preventing homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, working with partners to ensure the provision of the right support and services to help people avoid homelessness and support those who are

A new Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2025-30 is currently being developed with our partners and stakeholders and is due for public consultation in November 2024. The strategy will then be considered by Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee in January 2025, before approval by Cabinet and publication in February 2025. Our key priorities being proposed for the strategy will be:

- Working in partnership with charities and voluntary organisations, other social housing providers, Public Health and other statutory agencies to prevent homelessness.
- Tackling rough sleeping by implementing our agreed Rough Sleeper Plan.
- Increasing the amount and improving the quality of temporary accommodation.
- Addressing homelessness faced by particular groups of people, including those presenting with multiple or complex needs.
- Improving move on accommodation provision, including specialist housing and support provision.
- Securing funding to increase accommodation and resources.

Lead Officer: Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Review our approach to empty homes across the borough so more quality homes are available

According to Council Tax data (October 2024) there were 1869 empty properties on the database. This equates to approximately 3% of all properties registered.

The Council does not have a dedicated resource to deal with empty homes, service requests are currently received from several sections of council using various pieces of legislation. While planning and environment legislation have been used on several occasions the complexity of the housing legislation has been less employed.

The use of legislation may address a particular problem in time it does not necessarily address the fundamental issue of the property being vacant.

A review of empty homes and the legislation used by each section of the Council will be carried out and a report will be produced to detail developing a council approach to empty homes and the resources required for recommended changes.

Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Support the delivery of more social houses and supported accommodation by building more council homes and working with other social landlords and charities

Our Council housing new build site at Neasham Road will deliver 150 new homes, including 130 affordable rented properties, 19 rent to buy properties and one property for Children's Services. The first 22 homes have already been completed and tenants moved in, in September 2024. Further phases will be released during 2024 and 2025, with the site due for completion by the end of next year. The scheme has been partly funded by Homes England, with a grant of £7.35 million.

Our Council housing new build site at Sherborne Close (phase 2) commenced in July 2024 and will deliver 14 new homes, including 11 affordable rented properties, 2 rent to buy properties and one property for Children's Services. Completion of the site is due in August 2025. The scheme has been partly funded by Homes England, with a grant of £0.91 million.

Our Council housing site at Skinnergate is due to commence in 2025, following demolition of the existing commercial buildings. The site will deliver new shops and 16 new homes, all of which will be affordable rented properties, and is due to complete in 2026. A bid for Homes England funding is currently being made and we are expecting a grant of £1.12 million to help fund the project.

Further Council housing new build schemes are currently being worked up to increase the availability of social housing in Darlington to help meet additional demand, with over 2,000 households currently registered on our waiting list.

Lead Officer: Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Develop and deliver a new homes strategy, to address housing need, including ensuring social and affordable homes across the borough, in accordance with the Local Plan

Work is underway on a Housing Strategy, we are currently involved in engagement with various interested parties and there will be a meeting in the near future to update Members with progress. It was agreed to delay progress until the Council Plan was agreed.

The Housing Strategy will now be progressed in the coming months and will hopefully be in a position to present to Cabinet in the New Year.

Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Continue to improve the quality of housing through healthy home design principles and ensuring developers create greater energy efficiency in new homes

The Council is awaiting the Governments consideration on Future Homes Standards and changes to Building Regulations as it is still not clear how Planning Authorities can exceed Building Regulation requirements. The Council will continue to monitor Government announcements and advise Members when the situation is clear. The Council may be able to alter planning policy in a subsequent review of the Local Plan depending on Government advice.

Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Continue investment in Council housing to ensure quality and greater energy efficiency

Improving the energy efficiency of our Council homes is a key priority for Housing Services and work is ongoing to achieve the Government targets of all properties rated as Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C or above by 2030 and net zero carbon by 2050, as set out in our approved Housing Services Climate Change Strategy.

The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) wave 1 has already scheme delivered external and cavity wall insulation, Air Source Heat Pumps, loft insulation and solar panels to 23 Council homes using £0.24 million of Government funding and £0.28 million of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital expenditure.

SHDF wave 2 commenced in September 2024 and is due to complete in June 2025. The scheme will deliver external and cavity wall insulation, solar panels, loft insulation, double glazing, and low energy lighting to 130 Council homes using £1.27 million of Government funding and £1.27 million of HRA capital expenditure.

A bid for SHDF wave 3 is currently being prepared and is due to be submitted by the end of November 2024. If successful, the scheme will deliver upgrades to over 1,600 Council homes, over a three year period, using £8.9 million of Government funding and £10.3 million of HRA capital expenditure. Delivery of SHDF wave 3 is expected to significantly increase the percentage of Council homes rated as EPC C or above, which is currently 52%.

Lead Officer: Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Ensure effective use of the Disabled Facilities Grant to enable people to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible.

The Disabled Facilities Grant process has been reviewed this quarter. the process has been streamlined with management of the applications, communication and approvals transferred to Adult Services. The contract oversight with the HIA remains within the commissioning team. The process has been adaptable to include a risk prioritisation tool to ensure those in most urgent need of the grant due to risk are prioritised within the application process and timescales. This will be monitored through bi-monthly meetings. an EIA was completed with no adverse impacts as individuals waiting for grant applications will be provided with appropriate advice or support.

Lead Officer: Christine Shields: Assistant Director - Commissioning, Performance & Transformation

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Introduce additional licensing for homes of multiple occupation, a voluntary landlords charter and work towards the introduction of selective licencing in areas with a high number of private rented sector homes

Office of National Statistics data indicates that Darlington’s private rented stock is at 20.77%, higher than the national average and the highest in the Tees Valley region.

The regulation of rented properties and property management is carried out by several organisations. Following a review of existing and proposed legislation the following schemes will be investigated -

- A voluntary landlords charter
- The introduction of additional licensing for homes of multiple occupation
- Introduction of selective licencing in areas with a high number of private rented sector homes

A report will be produced to detail the development of the Council’s approach to its responsibilities for property management in line with the introduction of the Renters’ rights bill. This report will detail the resources required for the recommended changes.

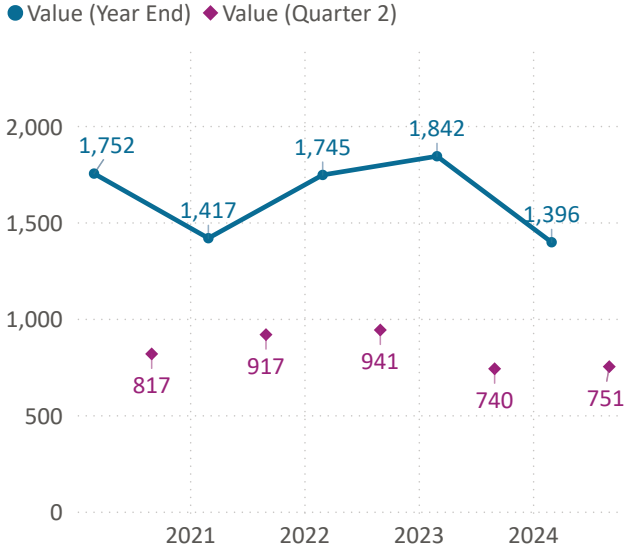
Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Number of people presented to Darlington Council's Homeless service

The number of homeless presentations to the Housing Options Service by quarter 2 of 2024-25 has increased slightly to 751 compared to 740 for the same period in 2023-24.

Additional staffing for the Housing Options Team, funded through The Rough Sleeper Initiative, has enabled a dedicated rough sleeper co-ordinator, a navigator, and an outreach worker, to be embedded within the team, delivering effective early intervention and prevention work. This enables referrals from other organisations to be managed and acted upon, to plan where applicants can go when released from hospital or prison. For those applicants served with eviction notices in the private rented sector, the team work with landlords and applicants to proactively look for accommodation before their tenancy comes to an end.

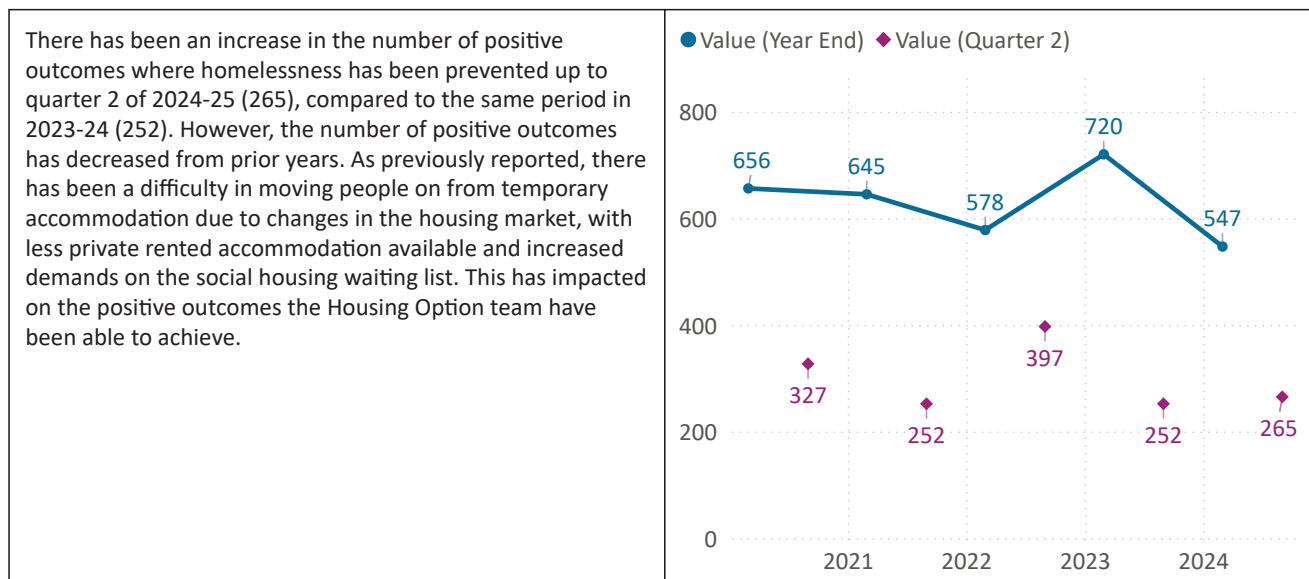


Lead Officer: Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Key Deliverable: Review and refresh the preventing homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, working with partners to ensure the provision of the right support and services to help people avoid homelessness and support those who are

Number of positive outcomes where homelessness has been prevented

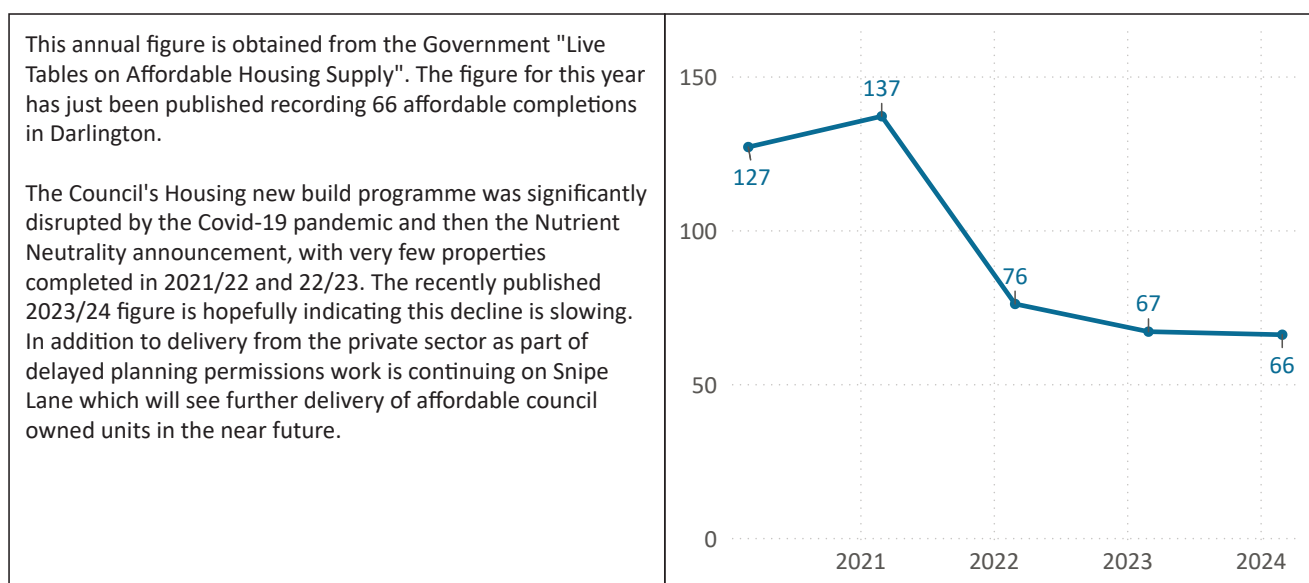


Lead Officer: Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Key Deliverable: Review and refresh the preventing homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, working with partners to ensure the provision of the right support and services to help people avoid homelessness and support those who are

Additional Affordable Housing Supply - Completions



Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Key Deliverable: Develop and deliver a new homes strategy, to address housing need, including ensuring social and affordable homes across the borough, in accordance with the Local Plan

Council Plan Priority: Living well

A healthier and better quality of life for longer, supporting those who need it most

Continue to develop joint working with the NHS and key partners to support people to lead healthier lives, stay in their homes for longer and reduce hospital stays

Adults and Commissioning Teams continue to work with the Integrated Care Board and with the Foundation Trusts to develop, maintain and deliver joint approaches to health and social care for people with care and support needs in Darlington. In this quarter we have established a task and finish group to review the intermediate care offer. We have held the second quarterly collaboration meeting with Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV).

Lead Officer: Christine Shields: Assistant Director - Commissioning, Performance & Transformation

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Health and Wellbeing Board to agree and deliver a new strategy to improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities, and lead the creation of a health and wellbeing network

The draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been developed and shared with the Health and Wellbeing Board, Health and Housing OSC and other stakeholders. Feedback is being reviewed and a final version of the Strategy will be taken to the December meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Strategy takes a life course approach, underpinned by a number of thematic priorities.

Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Progress continues to be made in developing the public health approach to tackling health inequalities, including through the development of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Physical Activity Strategy and Healthy Weight Plan, all of which are in draft form and at different stages of being agreed. Development of the strategies and plans have been informed by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which provides a summary of the local health needs in Darlington, including an understanding of health inequalities.

Strategic priorities and actions on domestic abuse and sexual violence continue to be driven through the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG), which is a partnership board. The Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy is currently being refreshed in partnership with Durham County Council. The review of the needs assessment is to be completed.

Local plans for drugs and alcohol are monitored through the governance arrangements of the Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Partnership. The additional funding available through the Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant to support expansion of local service delivery is only in place until end of March 2025. A decision is awaited on any future funding allocation from April 2025 onwards.

Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Widen participation in recreation and leisure facilities including the Dolphin Centre and Eastbourne Sports Complex

After significant structural works and refurbishment, the full pool complex reopened at the Dolphin Centre in August 2024. Visitor numbers have seen an increase with new toddler pool facilities proving very popular with families. New and returning partners have accessed the site, such as the Canoe Club and Dinkies, who provide swimming lessons for 0-4 years. Dolphin Centre swimming lessons are currently accommodating over 900 children to swim, the highest number since 2019.

Memberships are currently at an all time high and the partnership with Darlington College is encouraging real growth in student memberships. A student discount card has proven to be popular with nearly 600 active accounts using the facilities (gym, pool, sports hall, bowling) during off peak times. The relationship with Darlington College has proven successful, with another year of funding from the college for students to use the pool and gym for free during term time for their curricular activity.

Events and hospitality have welcomed significant footfall, thanks to new and returning events such as the prestigious BBC Make a Difference Awards in Central Hall with over 200 people from all over the region attending and United Dance Organisation Dance Competition in the main hall with over 600 spectators attending from all over the country.

Eastbourne Sports Complex capital project is now complete, and the new state of the art facilities and investment has seen a significant increase in visits to the site with new partner clubs, and substantial growth in women and girls participation. The team are now exploring potential football foundation applications for a new clubhouse on the new artificial grass pitch and funding to improve the wider grass pitches that would support a further increase of visits to the site.

Lead Officer: Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Deliver the key aims of the adult social care transformation plan to prevent, reduce and/or delay the need for care by supporting people to manage their own independence and wellbeing.

The work of the transformation plan is ongoing. In this quarter Adult Services have introduced Netcall within the Adult Contact team to ensure timely, effective and efficient referral pathways for people contacting Adult Services. It also enables calls to be recorded and ensure complaints/issues are resolved in a timely way. The new Support Plan review process has been implemented within the teams and will be monitored through next quarter. The purpose of the new process is to undertake a proportionate review of support plan and needs, ensuring a timely review process.

Lead Officer: Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Shape a sustainable and accountable care market which delivers support focussed on promoting, regaining and maintaining people’s independence and wellbeing

The Commissioning, Contract and Brokerage team are responsible for shaping and sustaining the local care market. They have worked with operational colleagues and partners across health, housing and the VCSE sector to develop a Market Position Statement and Commissioning Strategy with an associated Accommodation with Care and Support Needs Strategy (Adults) and a Sufficiency Statement (Children). These documents provide information about the care market in Darlington which will enable providers to understand the local context, how this is likely to change over the next couple of years and where development opportunities might arise in the future particularly those which support us to prevent, reduce, and delay care and support needs. The documents are for both existing and prospective providers and will support the delivery of both the Council Plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Government grant funding has been allocated to care and support providers with the aim of addressing key pressures and challenges.

Outcome based contracts have been relet or retendered across key areas of service provision including homecare, residential care and supported living.

Lead Officer: Christine Shields: Assistant Director - Commissioning, Performance & Transformation

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Develop an Adult Social Care engagement strategy to ensure people requiring care and support, and their carers, are involved in service development and commissioning activity

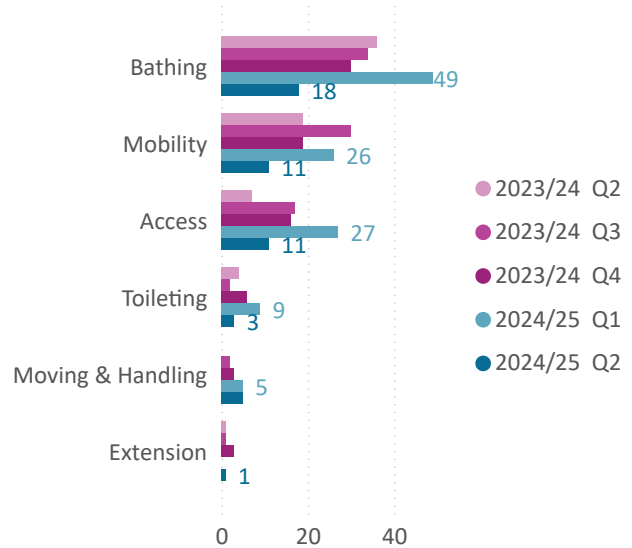
Adult Services have developed the engagement and co-production strategy. This strategy has been shared with local groups including Disability Action Darlington, with an agreement to develop co-produced activities and specific plans. The first project will establish a revised direct payments guidance document, with a co-produced training plan for social work teams. In addition the Quality Assurance Team have delivered awareness training workshops on co-production and engagement with teams and further training on asset based community development is in train for November and December 2024.

Lead Officer: Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Major adaptations by type (quarterly)

There has been a significant increase in referrals for major adaptations in 2024. Currently for the first 2 quarters there has been 165 major works completed. Due to the increase in requests, we have introduced a risk prioritisation approach to support assess the urgency of need. This may result in a delay for some applications but this will be closely monitored.



Lead Officer: Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

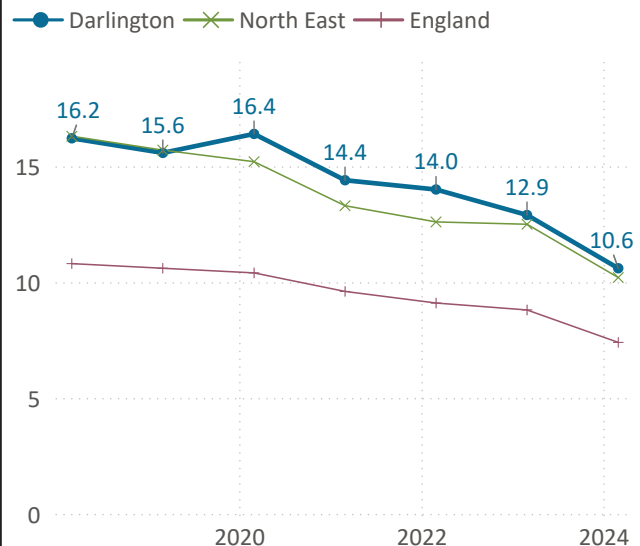
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Continue to develop joint working with the NHS and key partners to support people to lead healthier lives, stay in their homes for longer and reduce hospital stays

Percentage of women who smoke at time of delivery

The data (from 2023/24) shows that 10.6% of mothers are known to be smokers at time of delivery, the recent trend is decreasing and getting better. Darlington is statistically similar to the North East and statistically worse than England. The gap between Darlington and the North East and England has narrowed since 2020.

The NHS provides stop smoking support through local maternity services. The Local Authority commissions a specialist stop smoking service that supports women to stop smoking before and after being pregnant. The authority works with partners to encourage all residents, including pregnant mothers, to quit smoking at every opportunity.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

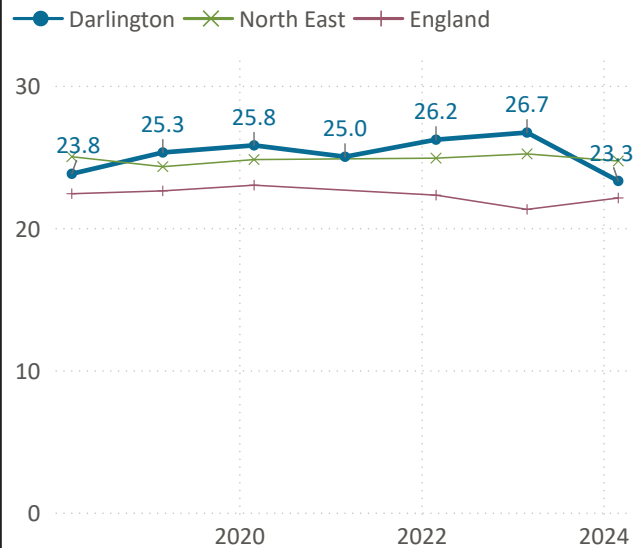
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Excess weight among Reception pupils (%)

This data (from 2023/24) shows a reduction in the rate for Reception prevalence of overweight (including obesity). 23.3% of reception children aged 4-5 years were classified as overweight or obese. Darlington is now 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.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

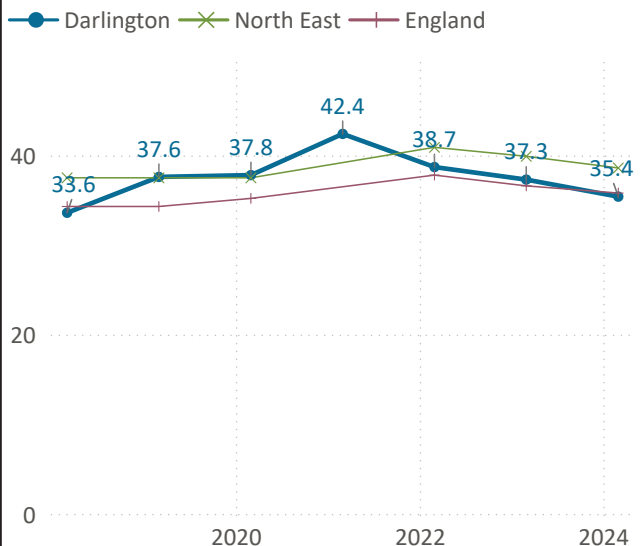
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Excess weight among Year 6 pupils (%)

This data (from 2023/24) shows that 35.4% of year 6 children aged 10-11 years were classified as overweight or obese and is trending down since 2021 Darlington is statistically better than the North East and statistically similar to 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.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

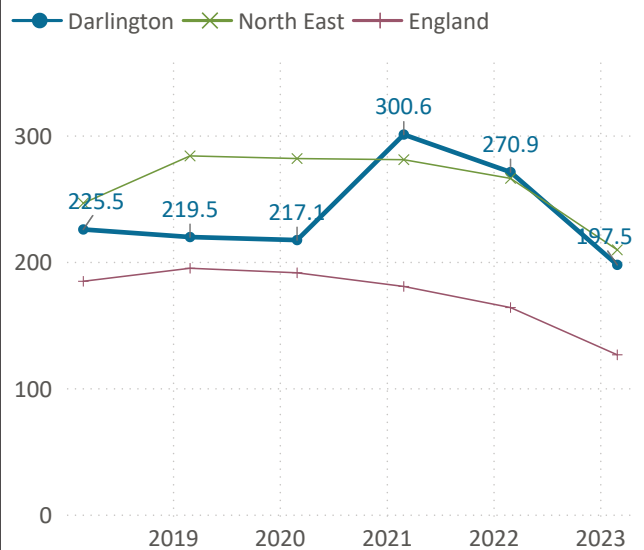
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Emergency Hospital Admissions for Intentional Self-Harm (per 100,000 population)

The latest data shows a decreasing trend for Darlington at 197.5 per 100,000 which is statistically similar to the North East and statistically worse than England. The Darlington trend now mirrors the North East and England.

Self harm is a complex and poorly understood act with varied reasons for a person to harm themselves irrespective of the purpose of the act. There is a significant and persistent risk of future suicide following an episode of self harm. This indicator is a measure of intentional self harm events severe enough to warrant hospital admission and not a measure of the actual prevalence of severe self harm.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

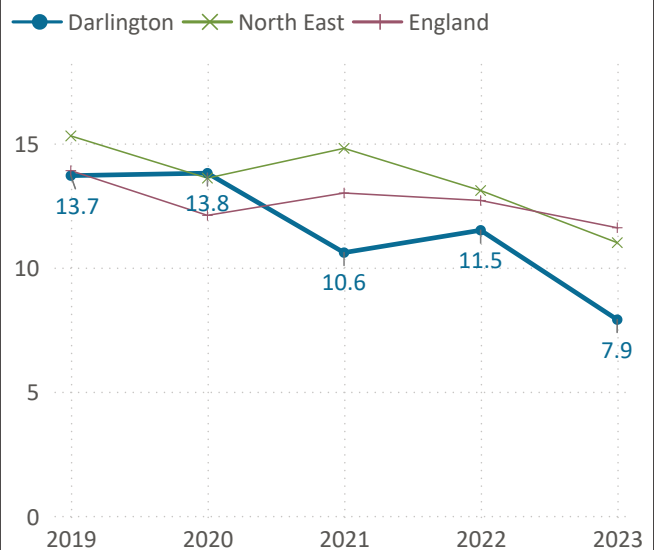
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Prevalence of smoking among persons aged 18+ years

This latest data from the 2023 Annual Population Survey (APS) shows that 7.9% of those who responded aged 18+ self-reported themselves as smokers in Darlington. This is the 4th year with a reduction from a peak of 13.8% in 2020. Darlington is statistically better than the North East and England.

There is now an established downward trend with fewer people in Darlington identifying themselves as smokers. It is expected that this reduction will be sustained due to the impact of new and existing measures to reduce smoking in the community including new legislation and extra funding to increase access to stop smoking interventions.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

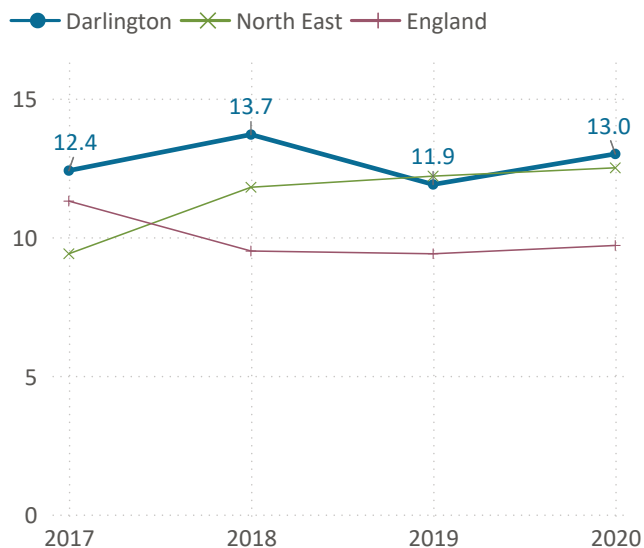
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

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 to 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.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

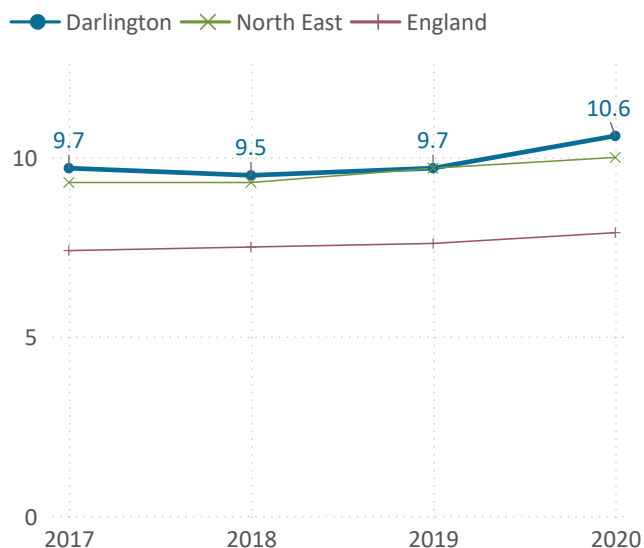
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Inequality in life expectancy at birth (female)

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



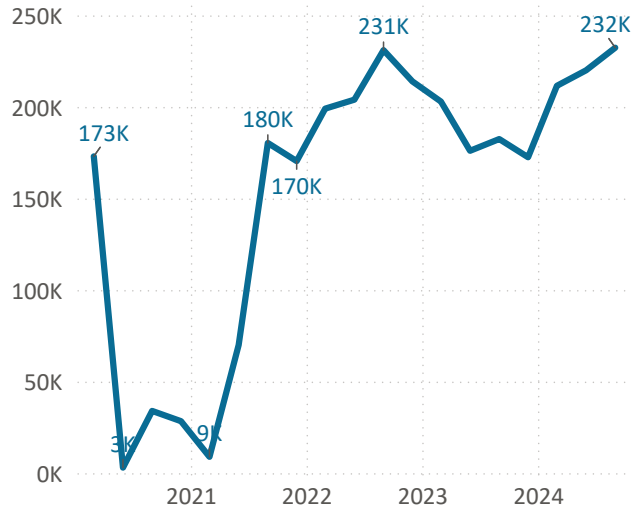
Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Total number of visits to the Dolphin Centre (quarterly)

The Dolphin Centre has seen a substantial increase in visits compared to the same quarter in 23/24, this is a reflection of the popularity of the swimming pool following the reopening of all facilities. The main pool reopened in January 2024 with the slides and toddler pool reopening in August 2024. In the first week of the full pool facilities being opened the complex experienced the equal highest number of swimmers in the history of the Centre. Hospitality continues to attract high numbers and memberships continue to break our own record numbers. Swimming lessons and classes again are welcoming higher number than the same quarter last year.



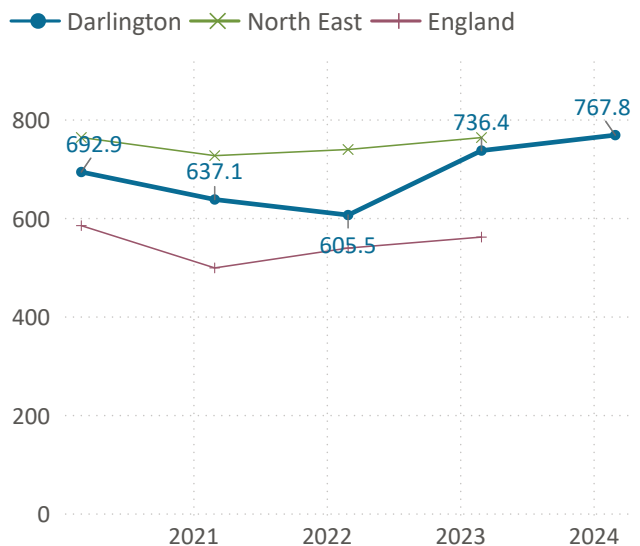
Lead Officer: Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Widen participation in recreation and leisure facilities including the Dolphin Centre and Eastbourne Sports Complex

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

The Council acknowledge that there is an increase in residential care by older people. Demand, complexity and need are the contributory factors for this increase. The Council are actively working to reduce reliance on residential care through our strength based practice approach and where possible ensuring a home first approach for people being discharged from hospital. The Council will continue to monitor this trend.



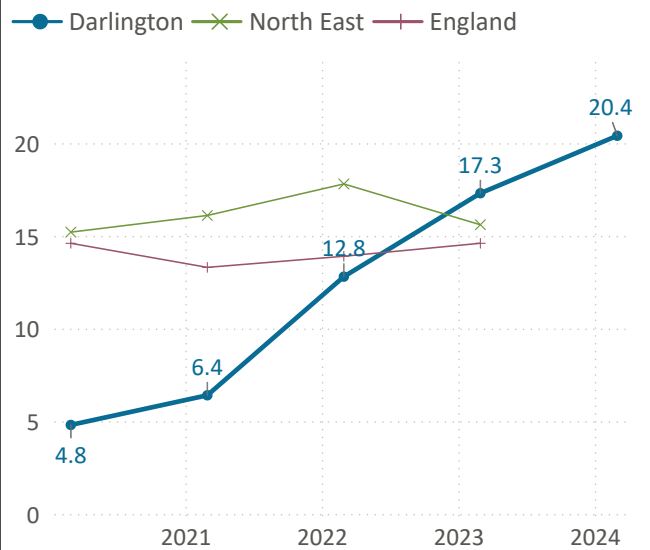
Lead Officer: Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Deliver the key aims of the adult social care transformation plan to prevent, reduce and/or delay the need for care by supporting people to manage their own independence and wellbeing.

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

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 are working with commissioning to address the issue of capacity in the provider market and explore market development.



Lead Officer: Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

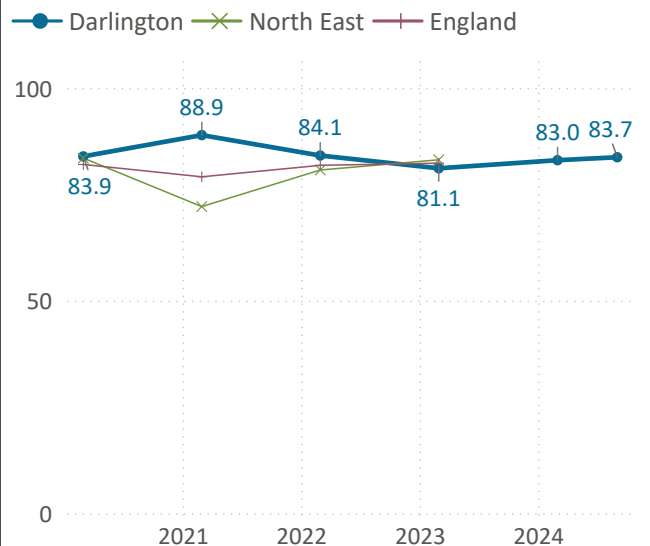
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Deliver the key aims of the adult social care transformation plan to prevent, reduce and/or delay the need for care by supporting people to manage their own independence and wellbeing.

Proportion of older people who are still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement or rehabilitation services

This data indicated the service provides to support people to return home following discharge from hospital, through assessment, support planning and short term reablement offer.

This graph illustrates that at the end of September 2024, the proportion of older people who are still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services was 83.7%. This indicator has slightly increased since 2023 and remained fairly static throughout 2024.



Lead Officer: Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

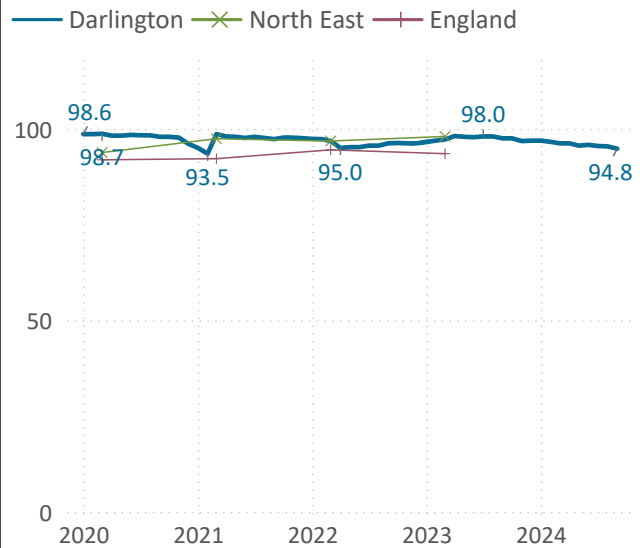
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Deliver the key aims of the adult social care transformation plan to prevent, reduce and/or delay the need for care by supporting people to manage their own independence and wellbeing.

Percentage of people using social care who receive self-directed support

As at the end of Sept 2024, 94.8% of people using social care were receiving self directed support. This remains a relatively static level.

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. The Council maximise service users' choice and control over the services they receive, to ensure these best suit peoples' particular needs and preferences. The Council continue to commission Darlington Association on Disability (DAD) to provide the direct payments support service which promotes people to manage their own personal support budgets.



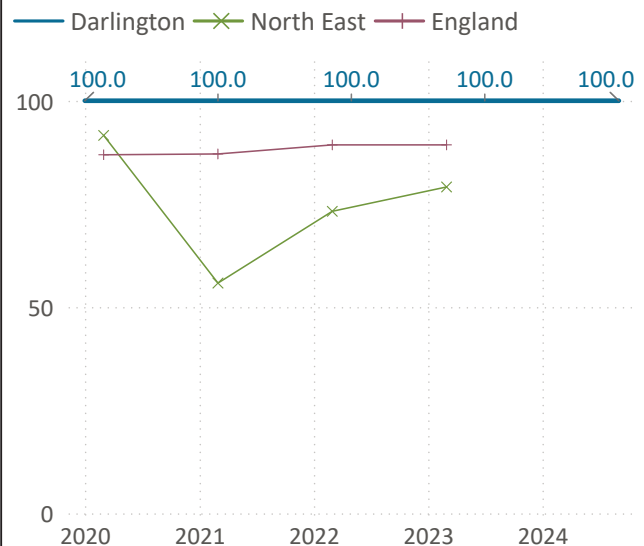
Lead Officer: Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Deliver the key aims of the adult social care transformation plan to prevent, reduce and/or delay the need for care by supporting people to manage their own independence and wellbeing.

Percentage of carers using social care who receive self-directed support

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. The Council continues working with carers and carers support groups to listen to the needs of carers. The Council has established Carers Champions within the service, and report on the Carers Action quarterly to the Commitment to Carers Strategy group.



Lead Officer: Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Deliver the key aims of the adult social care transformation plan to prevent, reduce and/or delay the need for care by supporting people to manage their own independence and wellbeing.

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Supporting the best start in life, realising potential and raising aspirations

Provide a safe and supportive living environment for children cared for by the council by increasing the number of children placed in council foster care and, when appropriate, council-run residential homes.

There are currently 64 approved Foster Carer Households, which is an increase from 50 Foster Carer households at the same period in 2023.

This has resulted in 19.9% of Children in Care being cared for by Local Authority Foster Carers, compared with 15.5% at the same period in 2023.

Short term placement instability has reduced to 9.2%, compared with 15.5% in the same period in 2023.

Work with multi-academy trusts and schools to develop a high quality and inclusive education sector in Darlington

In line with the Council Plan priorities on inclusion in schools the Education Strategy Group has developed the Darlington Inclusion Charter which was launched at an all-schools event on 21st June 2024. To support the delivery of the Inclusion Charter Darlington Local Authority (LA) has submitted a successful proposal to the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to set up an Evidence Exploration Partnership. This Partnership will be facilitated by the EEF, a Research School based in the North East and the LA. Senior school leaders will be involved via the Darlington Education Strategy Group (ESG). It offers a structured and collaborative approach to data gathering and analysis, identifying potential priorities and solutions. The Inclusion Charter exemplifies key characteristics of inclusive practice that all schools in Darlington can sign up to. This was informed by shared challenges relating to attendance, suspensions and more complex Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). The ESG has carefully considered the potential of an Evidence Exploration Partnership to support its work over the coming year. It is anticipated that the Inclusion Charter will provide a helpful starting point for the Evidence Exploration Partnership which will support the LA and schools to develop evidence-informed practices and strategies to embed this commitment to inclusion.

Lead Officer: Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Work with the Department for Education and the successful academy trust sponsor to ensure the free school for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is developed on schedule, providing vital additional specialist capacity in Darlington

To complement our existing provision, the Council have identified the need for a secondary provision for those pupils with a primary need of Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The new special free school will provide 48 full time places for pupils aged 11-19 with autism, who would benefit from a specific environment and staff dedicated to a holistic approach. The capital funding for the new school will be provided from the Government’s Free School Programme. Our local specialist provider Education Village Academy Trust (EVAT) have been confirmed as the preferred sponsor and the Council are working closely with the Department for Education and the Trust to ensure the earliest possible opening. A local governing board has been established to ensure local planning and estates issues are identified and addressed at the earliest point.

Lead Officer: Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Develop more meaningful services by ensuring children and young people are involved in service development and commissioning activity

A number of projects/groups undertake work which enable young people to be involved in service development and commissioning activity, for example Darlington Youth Partnership, Darlo Care Crew, the Care Leavers Forum Youth Healthwatch, HumanKind and the YMCA.

A Young Darlington Advisors (YDA) project has been established to bring this work together and to enable it to happen on a wider scale. YDA aims to capture the voice and experience of children and use this to shape future services/projects. Local children aged 13 - 19 years (or up to 25 for care leavers or those with an EHCP/SEN plan) can express an interest to join the YDA Board. Also invited to attend the YDA Board, will be young people who are part of existing youth groups with specific knowledge or experience in relation to a service or support already being provided by the Council or partner organisations. Members of the Board receive training which includes:

- Understanding the role of a commissioner
- Communication skills
- Boundaries and confidentiality
- Evaluation and assessment skills

YDA could be engaged by a Service/Team/Organisation to work on the following areas;

- Training
- Commissioning
- Consultation
- Recruitment

Once engaged by a Service, a selection of young people from the YDA Board or partner organisations with a specific interest in that Service area, would be selected to work on the project.

To date 6 children have been identified to form the YDA Board and training is currently underway.

Lead Officer: Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Widen access of eligible children to the Holiday Activities and Food Programme which focusses on health, wellbeing and raising aspirations

HAF (Holiday Activity and Food) programme provides free holiday club places to primary and secondary aged children on benefits-related free school meals, as well as other vulnerable children, giving them a chance to enjoy extracurricular activities and healthy meals during the school holidays. The Move More Team deliver activity weeks at numerous community venues with a wide geographical spread across the town, so children are given the greatest opportunity to participate in the programme in their relative local ward and community. In the summer holidays, over 5,000 places were booked for children aged 5-16 years of age, 1,032 free school meal children attended with 21% SEND children. Future funding will see further development to engage more eligible children into the programme.

Lead Officer: Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Work in partnership with the early years sector and health services to promote school readiness and the delivery of the expansion of funded childcare entitlement

The announcement of expansion of the national childcare offer in the Spring 2023 budget signalled significant reforms to childcare which aim to remove barriers to work for parents with a child under 3. The phased changes are as follows:

- (a) From April 2024, the introduction of 15 hours of free childcare for working parents of 2-year-olds
- (b) From September 2024, the introduction of 15 hours of free childcare for working parents of babies from 9 months up to 2 years old
- (c) From September 2025, the introduction of 30 hours of free childcare for working parents of babies from 9 months up to 3 years old (where eligibility will match the existing 3-4 year-old 30 Hours offer)

The April 2024 and September 2024 roll out of expanded entitlement has progressed well in Darlington with no current evidence of unmet demand.

Lead Officer: Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Refresh and deliver the Children and Young People’s Plan working with services across the council, key stakeholders, and children and young people in Darlington

The Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP) is the key delivery plan for children within the Council Plan. It identifies what key actions will be taken to deliver the agreed priority for children – the best start in life, realising potential and raising aspirations. It is a partnership plan which shows how organisations and agencies in Darlington will work together to improve outcomes for children. The plan for 2024 – 2027 takes the form of a video and poster which have been designed and produced by local children. Extensive data analysis and engagement activity with children, young people and key stakeholders identified five priorities which will form the basis of the plan: Health; Education; Family and Carers; Employment, and Community. The CYPP will be launched in November 2024 with updates on progress being posted on the Council website every six months.

Lead Officer: Christine Shields: Assistant Director - Commissioning, Performance & Transformation

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Continue the successful management of the Safety Valve plan for the education budget to improve outcomes for young people with SEND, eliminate the historic deficit on funding and deliver a financially sustainable system

The Department for Education (DfE) as part of its wider Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reforms, initiated the 'Safety Valve' intervention programme. The DfE recognises that over recent years, pressures on high needs budgets have contributed to many local authorities accruing deficits on their Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Darlington, in common with many areas, built up a deficit on the high needs block element of the DSG. If a local authority can demonstrate sufficiently that their DSG management plan creates lasting sustainability, including reaching an in-year balance as quickly as possible, then the department will enter into an agreement with the authority (subject to Ministerial approval). Darlington entered into an agreement in March 2023.

The plan has been progressing well with Darlington achieving an in year balance on the high needs block in 2022/23 and 2023/24. The combined deficit reduction work along with the contributions through the Safety Valve Agreement has reduced the deficit to circa 1.8million and the council is currently on track to have eliminated the deficit within the terms of the agreement which is due to end in 2026/27. This will enable the council and partners to proceed with driving improvements in a financially sustainable way.

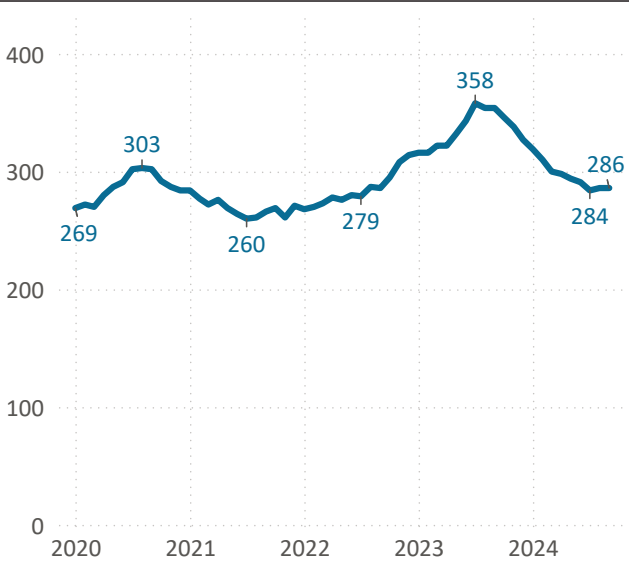
Lead Officer: Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Total number of looked after children (LAC)

286 children are being supported in the Council's care at the end of September 2024, 6.3% of which have come into the Council's care after being accepted by the Home Office as UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child).

This equates to a 20% reduction in the number of children (excluding those needing care as UASC) that were in the Council's care when compared to the end of September last year.

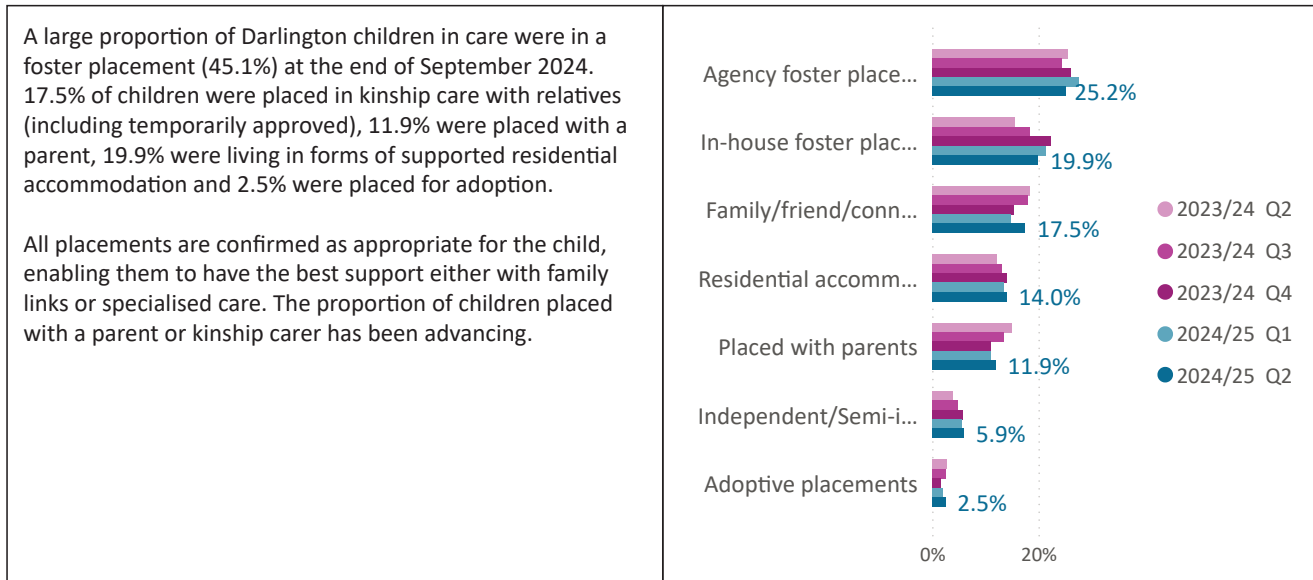


Lead Officer: Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Key Deliverable: Provide a safe and supportive living environment for children cared for by the council by increasing the number of children placed in council foster care and, when appropriate, council-run residential homes.

Percentage of looked after children by placement type

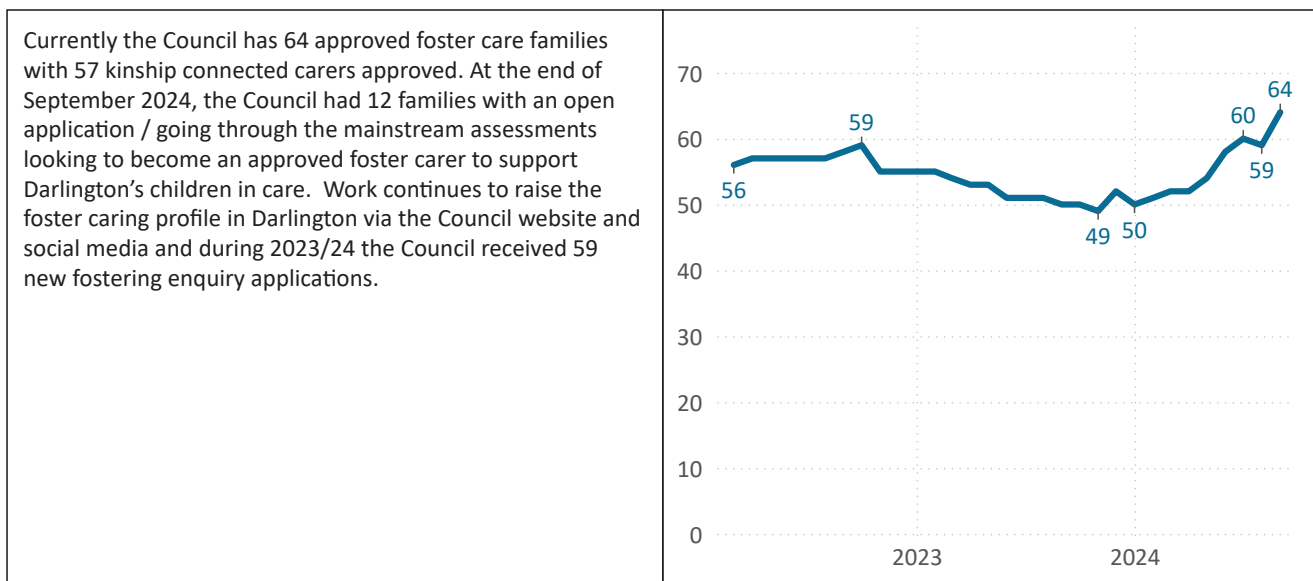


Lead Officer: Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Key Deliverable: Provide a safe and supportive living environment for children cared for by the council by increasing the number of children placed in council foster care and, when appropriate, council-run residential homes.

Total number of approved foster carers



Lead Officer: Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

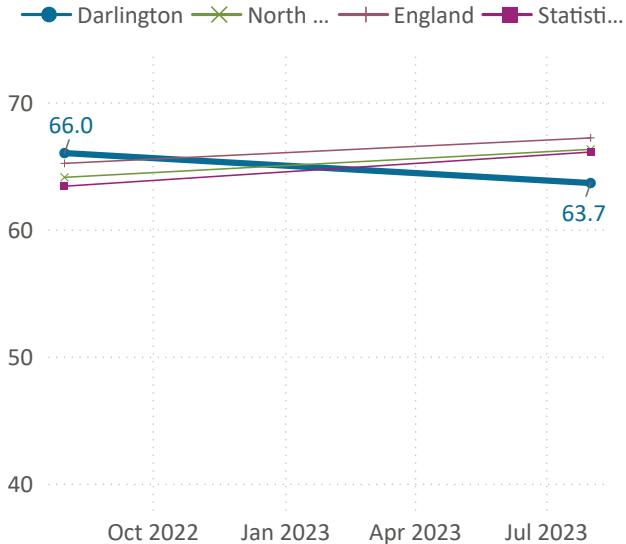
Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Key Deliverable: Provide a safe and supportive living environment for children cared for by the council by increasing the number of children placed in council foster care and, when appropriate, council-run residential homes.

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 graph shows that children achieving the expected standard across all early learning goals have decreased by a few percentage points since 2021/22 while on the contrary our comparators have increased in the same period.

However, data not shown in the graph, indicates children achieving a good level of development has increased since 2021/22, at a slower rate than comparators but still remaining in line.



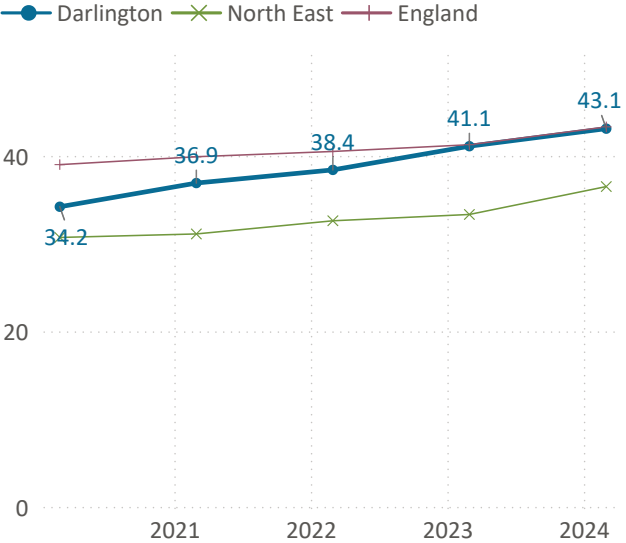
Lead Officer: Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Key Deliverable: Work in partnership with the early years sector and health services to promote school readiness and the delivery of the expansion of funded childcare entitlement

Percentage of pupils with an EHCP educated in mainstream schools

With the support of mainstream schools and continued partnership working Darlington's percentage of pupils with Education Health and Care Plans educated in mainstream settings has risen from 34.2% in 2020 to 43.1% in 2024, higher than the North East average of 36.5%. The Darlington performance is now in line with the England average of 43.3%. There has been a year on year increase in pupils supported in mainstream settings since 2020.



Lead Officer: Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Key Deliverable: Continue the successful management of the Safety Valve plan for the education budget to improve outcomes for young people with SEND, eliminate the historic deficit on funding and deliver a financially sustainable system

Council Plan Priority: Communities

Working together for safer, healthier and more engaged communities

Support communities to remain safe and resilient by working with key agencies and communities to address anti-social behaviour and crime issues in the community

Since the last reporting period officers have continued to tackle problems associated with fly-tipping and waste in back lanes, the figures below provide an overview of activity:

118 environmental crime cases were received (of which 102 closed). A range of actions were taken including:-

- a) 3 Fixed Penalty Notices issued (all for S34 waste duty of care offences).
- b) 10 Prosecutions environment offences, totalling £4300 fines.
- c) One prosecution for breach of a Community Protection Notice, £458 fines, costs and victim surcharge.

Number Forty supports anybody who needs assistance during an evening in Darlington. It has been open for more than 1300 hours with a total of 1197 people coming through it for various reasons and support during the night. Volunteers do a great job in providing support at No.40.

The Shopwatch network continue to exchange information and intelligence. There are currently 167 members. There is work ongoing to ensure all retail/businesses in the town have a means of communication outside of the 'shopwatch membership'. The Council contributes to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner 'Safer Businesses Group'.

The begging figures for July – September 2024 shows a 36% decrease, when compared to same period last year. There is a cohort of around 16 people continuing to beg with partners constantly engaging with them offering all available support mechanisms.

Lead Officer: Darren Ellis: Acting Head of Community Safety

Council Plan Priority: Communities

Work with partners to reduce the burden of the cost of living, with a focus on food and fuel insecurity

Household Support Fund (HSF) Round 6 is being delivered through voluntary and community organisations and will provide:

- Vouchers during holiday period for children currently in receipt of Free School Meals
- Support for Care Leavers
- 1000 households identified by the Low Income Family Tracker as living in food and fuel poverty will be contacted directly and offered a one off payment of £175.00
- 550 pensioners identified by the Low Income Family Tracker as eligible but not claiming pension credit or those who miss out on pension credit by up to £1000 annually will be contacted directly and offered a one off payment of £175.00
- Elderly residents will be offered support in energy proofing their homes via Age UK
- Darlington based foodbanks will be supported with food provision

A new element this year is an online application for those experiencing financial crisis. Residents can apply for up to £100 via Citizens Advice. This is open to anyone but residents do need to meet set criteria to be eligible.

A further round of HSF has been announced for 2025/26. A continued focus will be given to supporting benefit take up which has a sustained positive impact on household's income.

Lead Officer: Seth Pearson: Darlington Partnerships Director

Council Plan Priority: Communities

Support and strengthen partnership working with voluntary and community groups with a focus on addressing the causes of inequality, financial inclusion, social exclusion, and vulnerable families with children and young people

Largely as a result of the strong relationships with the voluntary sector that have emerged through the work of the Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement Group (VCSE), the Household Support Fund programme is being delivered through the sector as third party providers.

The group has established three working groups looking at social exclusion, financial exclusion and children and families. It has recently supported the establishment of a Youth Partnership which held it's inaugural meeting on September 26th.

Lead Officer: Seth Pearson: Darlington Partnerships Director

Council Plan Priority: Communities

Support a strong Community Safety Partnership to ensure the issues affecting the safety and security of our communities are addressed collectively, including addressing hate crime

Hate Crime incidents for September (18) show a level lower than previous levels following the summer disorder. There were twelve race related incidents; five involved behaviour towards emergency services staff, with single reported incidents within a licensed premises, a retail outlet and a restaurant.

As part of the recovery phase following the summer disorder Future Pathways have held the first of three community events in Eastbourne Community arena where sporting and intergenerational activities between DBC staff, Police and young people were well received.

'North Road and North Gate Community Cohesion Panel' has been set-up focusing upon geographical areas and behaviours in the area. Partner, and particularly resident uptake is encouraging and financial support is in place to support locally driven community based initiatives, which will address issues negatively affecting those communities. Problem Solving techniques and co-ordinated partner approaches to those initiatives will be evaluated with lessons learned and best practice helping future work Borough wide.

Safer-streets (Rural Crime) initiative is progressing with equipment bought, rural crime co-ordinators appointed and support offered to Darlington's rural areas. More drones have been purchased and pilots trained.

Lead Officer: Darren Ellis: Acting Head of Community Safety

Council Plan Priority: Communities

Ensuring business activity is regulated, licensed and enforced effectively to protect the health and wellbeing of residents, visitors and businesses.

Environmental Health is responsible for the enforcement of Government regulations relating to commercial businesses in the Borough. The Environmental Health team works hard to protect and improve the public's safety and health, safeguarding where you work, what you eat and the environment around you. The Council do this by carrying out routine inspections, checking on employee safety, food hygiene, allergen labelling and the sampling of food which has the primary purpose of protecting the public from ill health. A programme of inspections based on risk is carried out to identify non-compliance with hygiene and safety laws. Additional visits will also be carried out to deal with complaints, investigations and sampling as well as advice and promoting good practice. Last year the Council carried out 533 routine inspections of food premises and investigated 776 complaints.

Multiple purchases are made from shops and businesses in Darlington every day. Officers from Trading Standards ensure that trading is safe and fair to consumers and businesses by seizing or recalling products that are deemed to be unsafe, preventing sale of counterfeit goods and carrying out test purchases of age restricted products. The wellbeing of residents and visitors to pubs and clubs are protected by the licensing of premises for the sale of alcohol and entertainment preventing crime, disorder and public nuisance whilst maintaining public safety.

Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Communities

Work with the voluntary and community sector to develop a strategy for informal volunteering which empowers people to volunteer and directs volunteering to areas of greatest need, including working with Darlington Cares to deliver an enhanced volunteering programme

A draft strategy framework has been produced for internal consultation in advance of a discussion at the Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement Group. It proposes a focus on:

- structured volunteering
- employer supported volunteering
- community volunteering.

After describing the positive messages to be promoted to encourage volunteering, it then outlines a series of action that the Council could take to positively support the growth of each type of volunteering.

Lead Officer: Seth Pearson: Darlington Partnerships Director

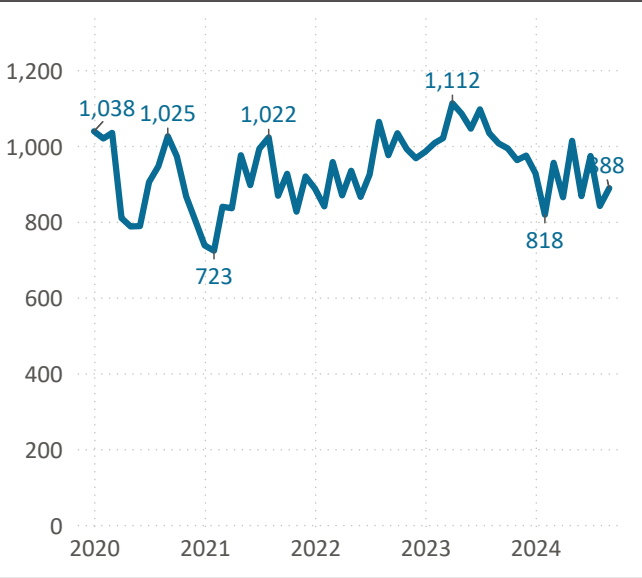
Council Plan Priority: Communities

Total Crime (monthly)

The combined total of incidents for second quarter, crime down by 16% and Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) up by 13%, has reduced by a total of 505 incidents when compared to the previous quarter. Whilst crime figures have declined burglary, vehicle crime and shoplifting are areas being monitored and targeted.

The ASB trailblazer project focuses activity across the eight hotspot areas. From the 1 July 2024 until 22 October 2024, 575 patrols were undertaken.

There were reductions in the North Road (-34%) and Cockerton/East (-33%). However, the Town Centre increased (+35%), this increase is linked to a gathering of youths in Tommy Crooks Park moving into the Town Centre.



Lead Officer: Darren Ellis: Acting Head of Community Safety

Council Plan Priority: Communities

Key Deliverable: Support communities to remain safe and resilient by working with key agencies and communities to address anti-social behaviour and crime issues in the community

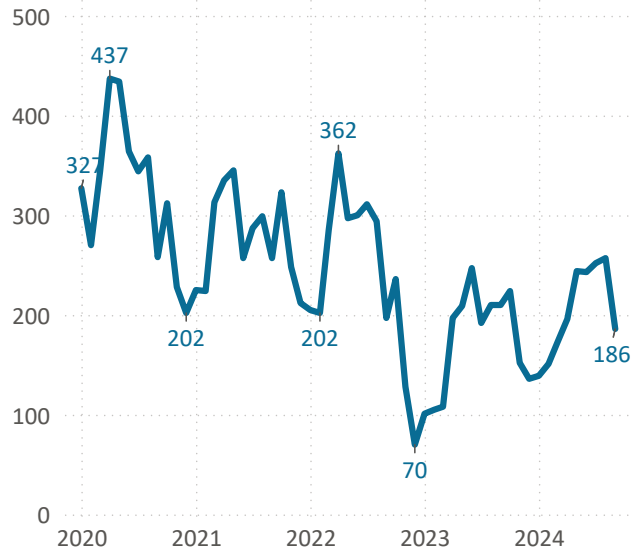
ASB Incidents (monthly, excludes duplicates)

During the reporting period the Young People’s Engagement & Justice Service have received 27 referrals into the Early Intervention & Prevention Pathway from the Civic Enforcement Team.

Future Pathways Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) evening sessions have completed the 2nd Cohort with a total of 26 young people referred and 17 active referrals successfully completing the programme.

Following the summer disorder Future Pathways have held the first of three community events in Eastbourne Community arena where sporting and intergenerational activities between DBC staff, Police and young people were well received.

In the reporting period 17 young people received first warnings for ASB/21 young people received acceptable behaviour agreements.



Lead Officer: Darren Ellis: Acting Head of Community Safety

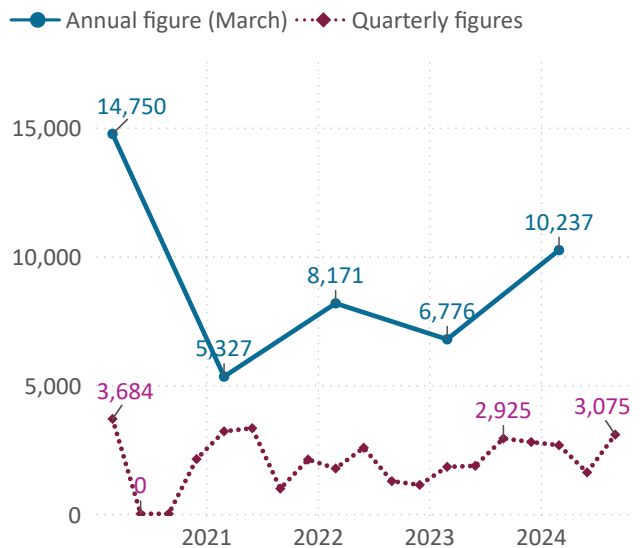
Council Plan Priority: Communities

Key Deliverable: Support communities to remain safe and resilient by working with key agencies and communities to address anti-social behaviour and crime issues in the community

Number of Darlington Cares volunteer hours

Darlington Cares volunteering continues to grow as does its membership. The programme of activities delivered under the three areas of focus, environment, education and social justice, attract growing numbers of company volunteers.

The Darlington Cares Board at its last meeting considered how it could increase its impact and contribution of its members to Darlington with a particular interest in the ambitions of young people. Proposals are to be considered at its next meeting.



Lead Officer: Seth Pearson: Darlington Partnerships Director

Council Plan Priority: Communities

Key Deliverable: Work with the voluntary and community sector to develop a strategy for informal volunteering which empowers people to volunteer and directs volunteering to areas of greatest need, including working with Darlington Cares to deliver an enhanced volunteering programme

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

A well-connected, clean and sustainable borough

Enable improvements in transport systems by working in partnership with TVCA and public transport operators to deliver the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme, including the improvement of bus facilities and the reliability of services

Work is progressing on the delivery of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme across the Tees Valley. In Darlington this means investment in the Bank Top station project, development of walking and cycling schemes and improvements to key bus corridors. The walking and cycling and bus corridor schemes are currently at feasibility stage and will move to detailed design in early 2025. Construction works will commence later in 2025 subject to business cases demonstrating value for money.

Lead Officer: Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Work with local stakeholders and businesses to promote a diverse and accessible programme of events that maximises footfall in the town centre and has a positive impact on the local economy

The town centre partnership team works closely with the high street businesses to ensure a programme of events is planned to encourage movement around the town centre to increase dwell time in Darlington. The annual events are designed to attract visitors into the town centre to visit, enjoy and revisit. There is a variety of types of events, ranging from specialist events e.g. Misfits Market organised by a local independent retailer, animation days like a Dinosaur Day for families to explore the town, to smaller trails and large scale music events like the Rhythm and Tunes Weekend.

The quantity and variety of events ensures the attraction of visitors from across the region by offering free, welcoming activity for people to enjoy. The events team listen and adapt events to develop and improve the results and help ensure businesses in the town centre also benefit from the programme.

Lead Officer: Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Introduce food waste collections and support residents to increase overall recycling rates to move towards the national average

The Council has been working with the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) on various options to introduce weekly food waste collections, from simply adding a food waste service to existing arrangements, to also introducing a weekly dry recycling service alongside weekly food waste, to improve overall recycling rates. The challenge the Council has regardless of the option implemented, is the capital received from government through new burdens funding is currently insufficient and therefore the assumption is that the transitional and operational funding from government will also be insufficient, therefore it is extremely difficult for the Council to make a decision when the level of funding is unknown. The Council, via the Chief Executive, has written to the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for clarification on the matter and the Member of Parliament for Darlington has also written to the Minister for clarification.

Work continues to finalise the options developed and subject to a favourable response from DEFRA, Cabinet will consider implementation of a weekly food waste collection service in late 2024/early 2025.

Lead Officer: Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Celebrate the opening of Hopetown and deliver a successful 2025 festival programme that helps to promote Darlington as a destination for visitors and investment

Hopetown Darlington, the North's newest visitor attraction, opened to the public on 16 July 2024 and welcomed more than 55,000 visitors in the first 10 week period. A carnival style programme throughout the summer holidays ensured broad engagement from residents across Darlington and a much broader reach throughout the UK and beyond. The wonderful site was officially opened by the The Worshipful the Mayor of Darlington, Councillor Bob Donoghue on 27 September, the 199th birthday of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR).

The Autumn season has a strong focus on Halloween and Christmas festivals as key engagement points for visitors, with a bespoke schools offer during the term time. The arrival of the restored Locomotion No.1 replica will provide a standout centrepiece for a five week Christmas programme in the 1853 Carriage Works building.

The S&DR 200 Festival was launched to the national media at Darlington Hippodrome on 19 September. The 9-month international festival will get underway in March 2025 and Hopetown will be central to a number of key events, including two major exhibitions and an international piece of outdoor theatre that will parade from the town centre through Northgate to arrive at Hopetown on 20 September. The pinnacle of the festival year will be focussed on the 27 September, the 200th birthday of the S&DR, when the working replica of Locomotion No.1 will cross Darlington's Skerne Bridge to recreate the first day journey.

Lead Officer: Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Work with statutory bodies to progress studies of flood risk in Darlington and enable funding to be sought to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Strong partnerships and project teams are in place, developing two studies that will inform and assist future planning, investment and bidding opportunities. The two studies that are taking place are:

* The Darlington Northumbria Integrated Drainage Partnership (NIDP) study. The initial study is complete and a priority scheme has been identified which covers the West Beck and Cocker Beck watercourses, including Cockerton area. The current outline programme is for the stage 1/2 report to be complete by the end of 2025, development of the business case for Government Grant in Aid (GiA) funding to take place in 2026-27, with construction from 2028 onwards (subject to successful business case and support from NRFCC).

* Flood Asset Risk Study. This is looking at the risks and impact associated with the possible failure of blockage of key assets such as bridges and culverts to determine investment and maintenance strategies to minimise the risk of flooding. A high level study identified a number of locations where further investigation was warranted due to the impact that a blockage or partial blockage of the Chanel or culvert would cause to properties. The main scheme identified was on West Beck , which was incorporated into the NIDP scheme. Another scheme has been identified at Killerby and costed options have been drawn up. The Council are continuing to assess the business case for this scheme.

Lead Officer: Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Deliver revised supplementary planning documents that guide better design in new developments and contribute to a sense of pride in place

Whilst the Council has Design Codes adopted for Burtree Garden Village and Skerningham Garden Village, the Council is also looking at reviewing the Design Supplementary Guidance. The Government is currently out for consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework, which will advise the work. It is expected that the revised National Planning Policy Framework will be issued prior to Christmas. The Council will update it's Members in due course.

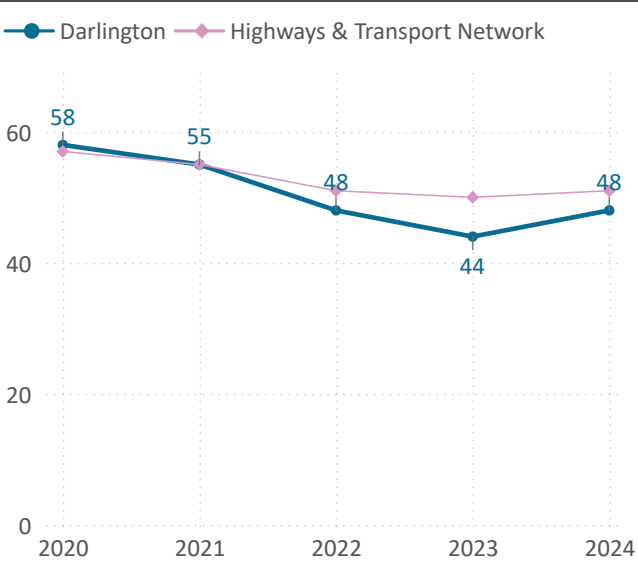
Lead Officer: Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Overall Public Satisfaction with Public Transport Theme (National Highways and Transport Survey)

The satisfaction survey results are taken from a survey conducted by the National Highways and Transport Network, an organisation who provide a range of benchmarking services to Local Authorities. The overall public satisfaction with public transport has increased from 44% in 2023 to 48% in 2024. This is below the Highways and Transport Network average of all the authorities taking part of 51%.

Tees Valley Combined Authority are the Local Transport Authority responsible for public transport and the Council will continue to work in partnership to steer investment into public transport in Darlington to improve satisfaction levels.



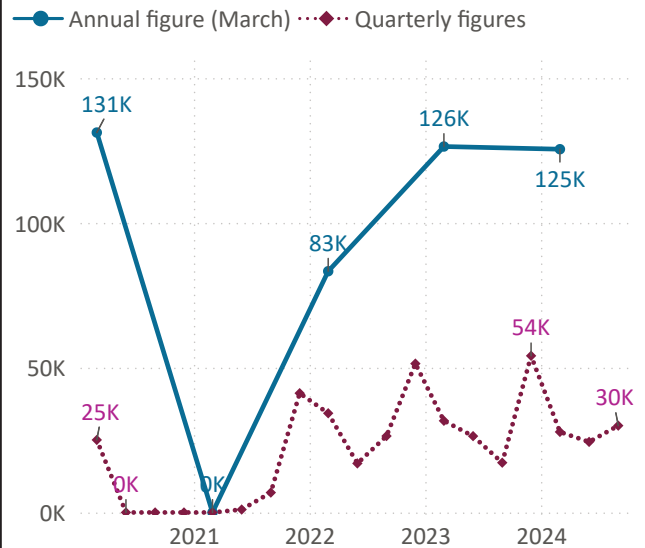
Lead Officer: Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Key Deliverable: Enable improvements in transport systems by working in partnership with TVCA and public transport operators to deliver the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme, including the improvement of bus facilities and the reliability of services

Number of individual attendances at theatre shows

At the same time last year there had been a total of 43,541 attendances at theatre shows. This year there have been 54,340 attendances; performance to date shows a strong improvement when compared to the same time last year.



Lead Officer: Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

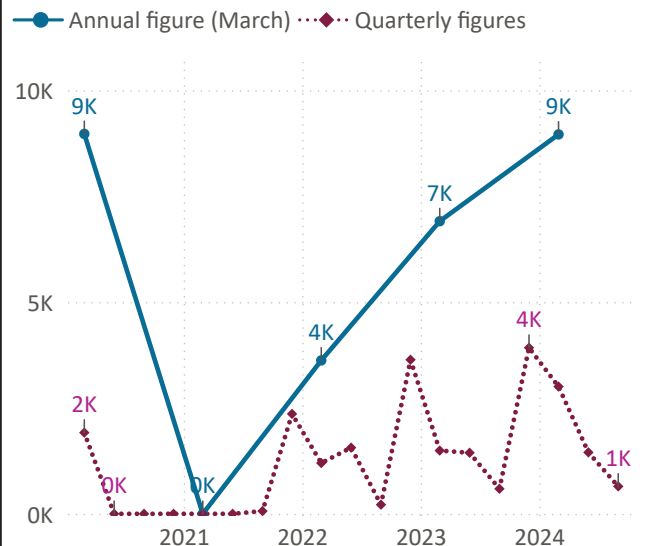
Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Key Deliverable: Work with local stakeholders and businesses to promote a diverse and accessible programme of events that maximises footfall in the town centre and has a positive impact on the local economy

Number of individual attendances at Hullabaloo shows

Total attendance for this period is at 2,097, with average attendance at over 100 per performance at Hip @ The Hullabaloo shows, it is clear that the content of the programme is attracting good sized audiences. Comedians during this period have attracted the largest audiences supporting the venue to also meet the secondary spend targets.

Broadening the Hipp @ the Hullabaloo programme over the next 6 months will attract new attendance and increase the average occupancy.



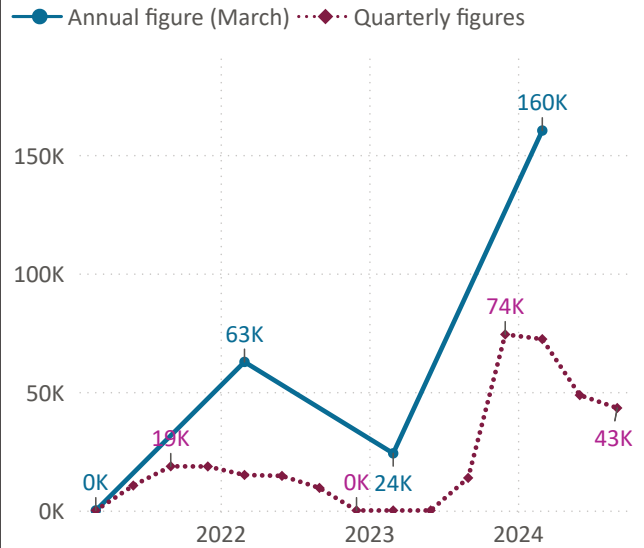
Lead Officer: Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Key Deliverable: Work with local stakeholders and businesses to promote a diverse and accessible programme of events that maximises footfall in the town centre and has a positive impact on the local economy

Number of physical visits to Darlington Library (door count)

After the reopening, many people visited to view the new spaces and facilities, without dwelling as they do now. The library also had increased activity (including out-of-hours) funded by Arts Council England. Visitor numbers remain above those we saw pre-closures, averaging 15,300 visitors each month this year. Due to closures for the pandemic/restoration, it is unsurprising to see footfall is higher than previous years. There is a slight reduction in visitor numbers this quarter, however it is noted that visitors are dwelling longer in the spaces, with The Study being frequently used by a variety of audiences for computer-use, reading, and working. More adults are taking part in activities within the library than before, with The Hive being a place for all ages to learn and explore.



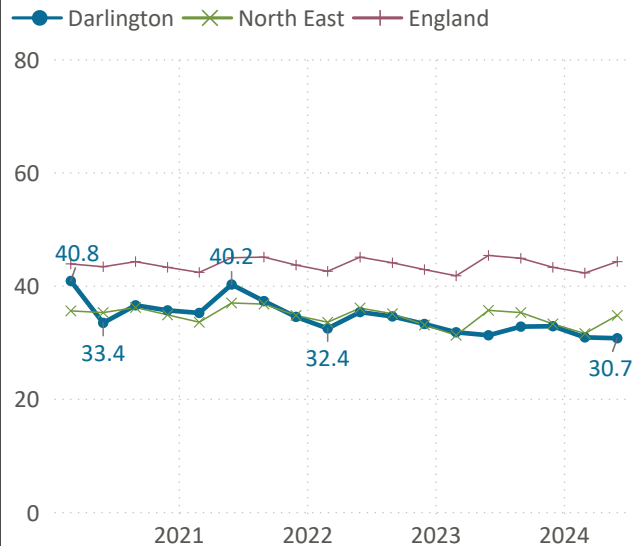
Lead Officer: Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Key Deliverable: Work with local stakeholders and businesses to promote a diverse and accessible programme of events that maximises footfall in the town centre and has a positive impact on the local economy

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

The amount of waste that is recycled, composted or reused has fallen in recent years, the Council's performance up to the end of June (30.7%) and is currently slightly below with the North East (34.7%) average, but below the England (44.2%) average. Work continues to be undertaken by Street Scene and communication teams to increase recycling and reduce contamination. Cabinet will consider a report in the new year with regard to options to introduce a food waste collection services which will increase overall recycling rates

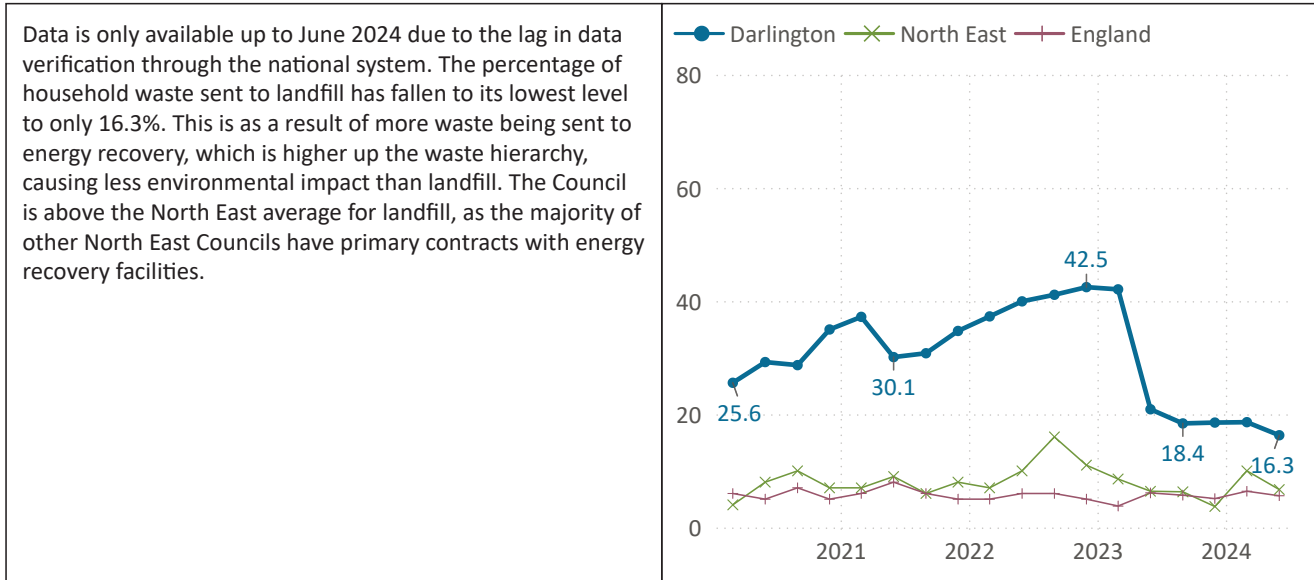


Lead Officer: Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Key Deliverable: Introduce food waste collections and support residents to increase overall recycling rates to move towards the national average

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

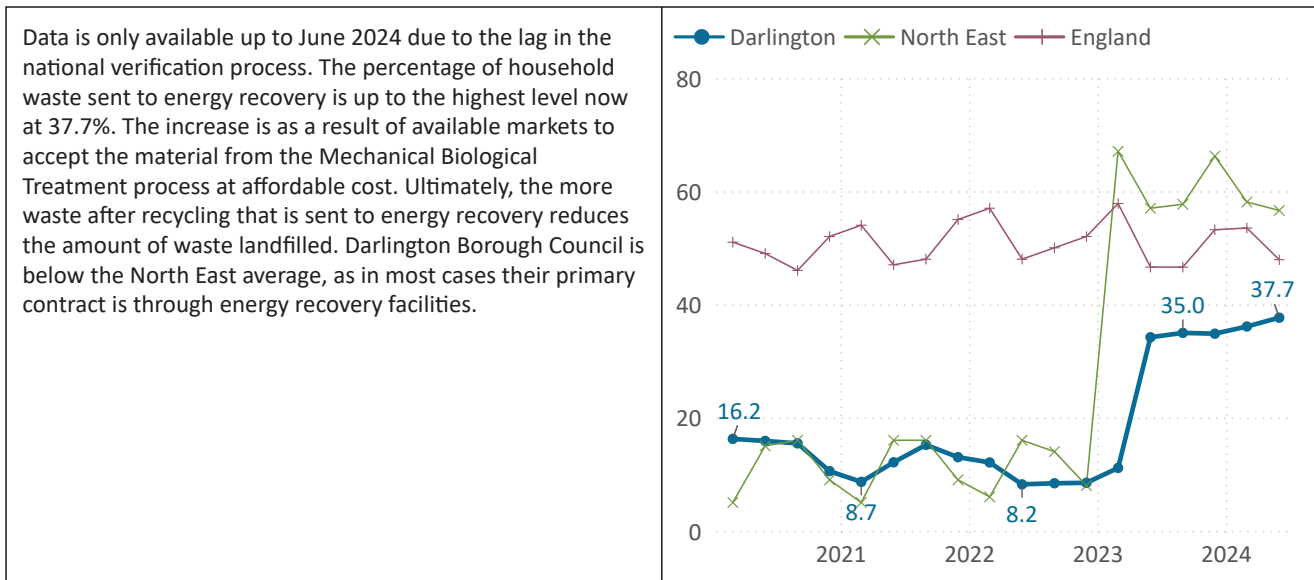


Lead Officer: Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Key Deliverable: Introduce food waste collections and support residents to increase overall recycling rates to move towards the national average

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



Lead Officer: Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Key Deliverable: Introduce food waste collections and support residents to increase overall recycling rates to move towards the national average