

ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 SEPTEMBER 2025

Performance Indicators QTR 4 2024/25

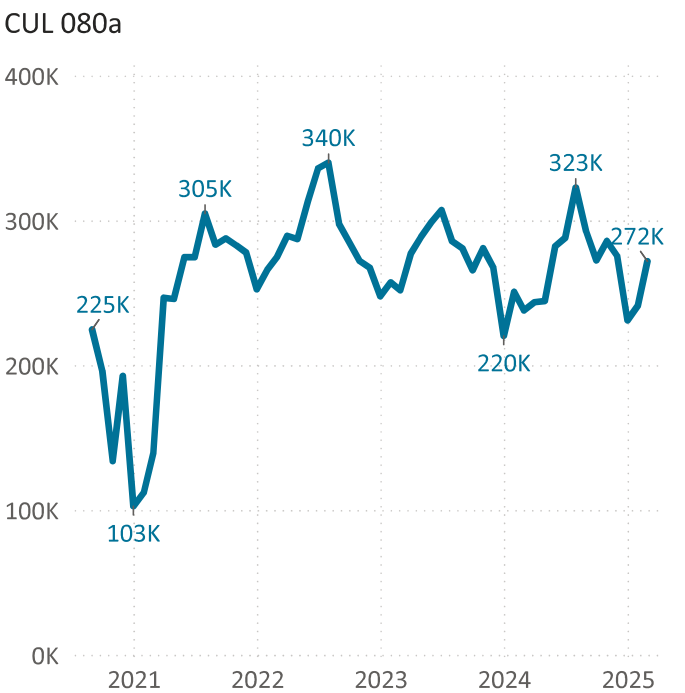
Appendix 2

Town centre footfall weekly average for the month

Footfall in Darlington is following consistent trendlines, with a peak of 322,650 recorded in August 2025. The traditional dip in January was less pronounced compared to 2024. March 2025 footfall also exceeded 2024 levels, reflecting positive momentum and increasing visitor confidence.

Occupancy rates across the town centre are stable at around 85%, supported by the opening of several new businesses, adding to the vibrancy and offer of Darlington.

Ongoing town centre animation and a calendar of events continue to drive increased footfall. These initiatives are designed to encourage visitors to dwell longer, explore a wider range of locations, and enjoy an enhanced overall experience, further boosting activity across Darlington.



Lead Officer: Mike Crawshaw: Head of Culture & Heritage

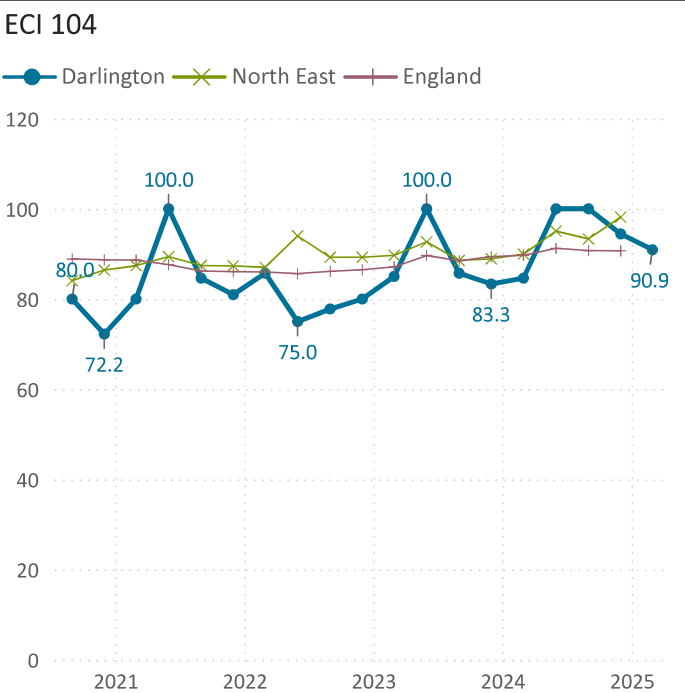
Service Area: Culture

Percentage of major planning applications decided within 13 weeks or within agreed time

The percentage of major planning applications decided within 13 weeks has dropped slightly from the previous quarter result of 94.4% to 90.9%. However, this equates to only one of the total of four major applications decided this quarter.

For the year to date there have been 20 major applications decided within 13 weeks, out of the total of 22.

This represents a slight drop in performance but is still above the latest national performance figures available for England.



Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

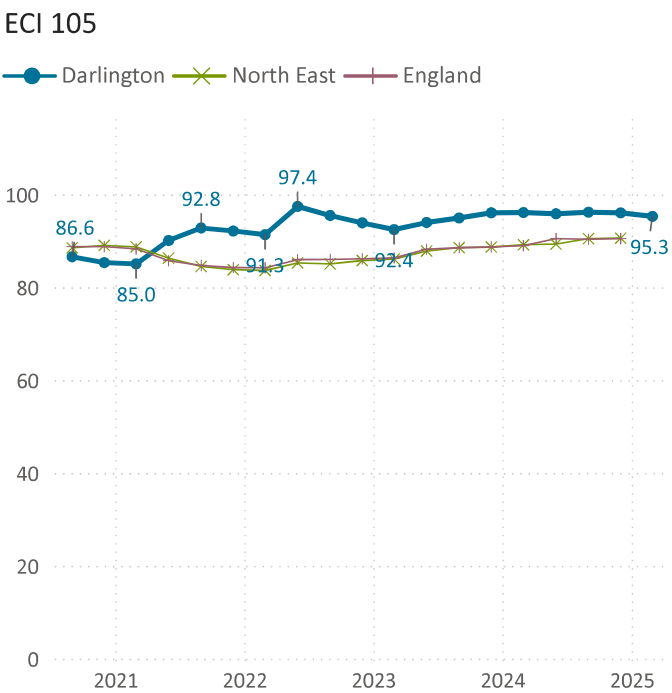
Service Area: Planning

Percentage of non-major planning development decisions within 8 weeks or within agreed time

The percentage of non-major planning applications decided within 8 weeks is 95%, which continues to be above the latest available England average of 90.5% and North East average of 90.6%.

A total of 302 non-major applications were decided within 8 weeks, from the cumulative total of 317.

The department continues to monitor the performance with only five decisions not meeting the deadline.



Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

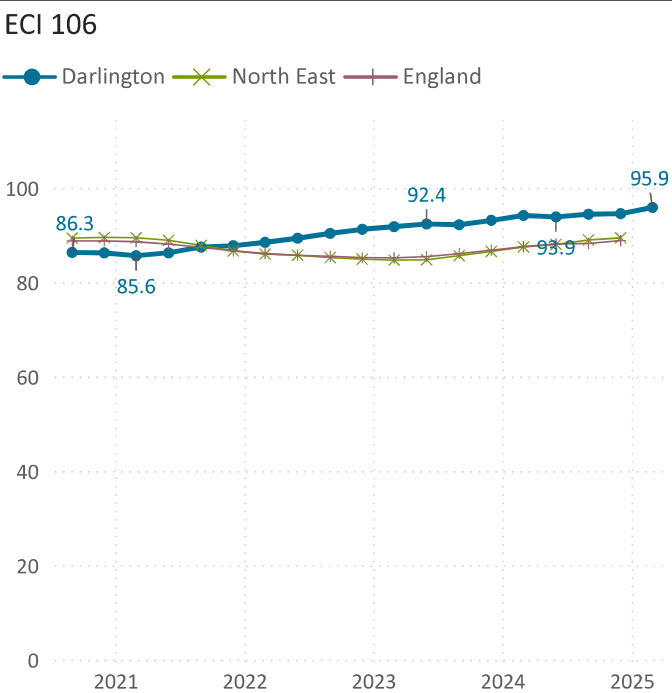
Service Area: Planning

Percentage of non-major planning development decisions within 8 weeks or within agreed time (24 months to date)

The 24 month rolling percentage of non-major planning applications decided within 8 weeks has improved to 95.9%.

Darlington's percentage has been above the England and North East averages since December 2021. The latest averages available show England at 88.8% and the North East at 89.4%.

The 28 applications which were not decided within the target were delayed due to various issues, with some caused by Nutrient Neutrality issues and some by missing Extension of Time targets.

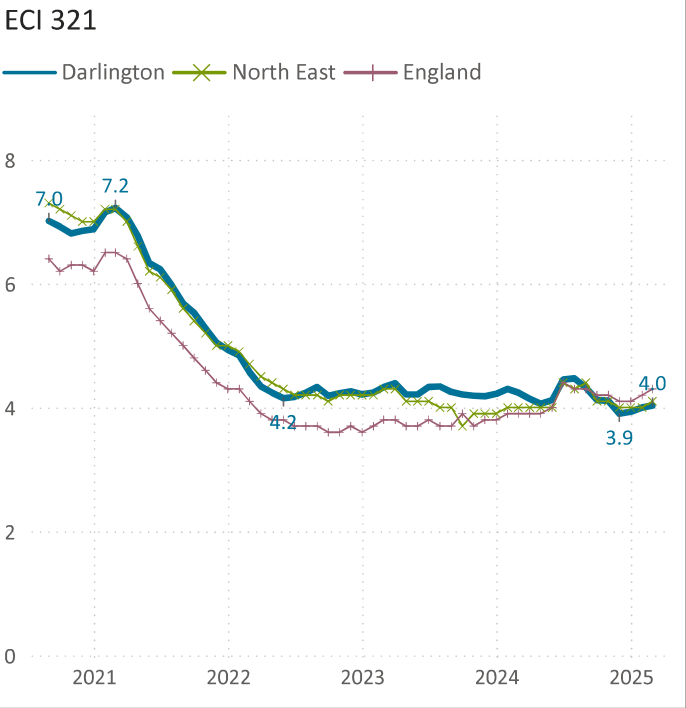


Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Service Area: Planning

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 and regional statistics. The claimant count in March 2025 now stands at 4.0%. The rate in Darlington is slightly below both the regional (4.1%) and national (4.3%) rates. The static nature of this measure can be attributed to several factors, including economic inactivity, post-pandemic labour market mismatches and economic uncertainty.



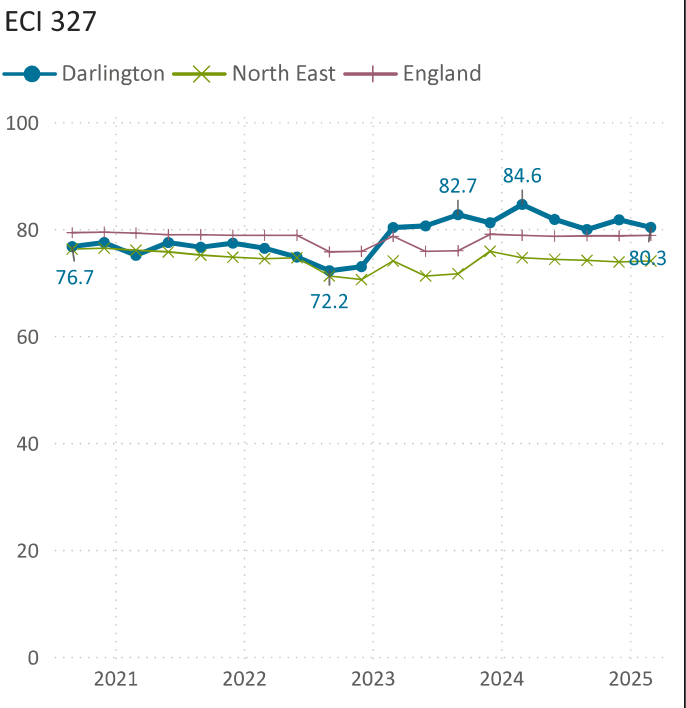
Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Service Area: Economic Growth

Percentage of working age adults who are economically active

The Darlington economically active rate (employed and unemployed) is the same as it was in March 2023. The percentage of working age adults who are economically active in Darlington now stands at 80.3% (March 2025). Meanwhile the rates for both the north east (74.0%) and England (78.8%) remain lower than Darlington.

Working-age economically inactive people have various reasons for not looking for and/or being able to start work. eg students, sickness, caring and family responsibilities and early retirement. Higher economic activity rates are generally influenced by demographic changes and improved labour market conditions.

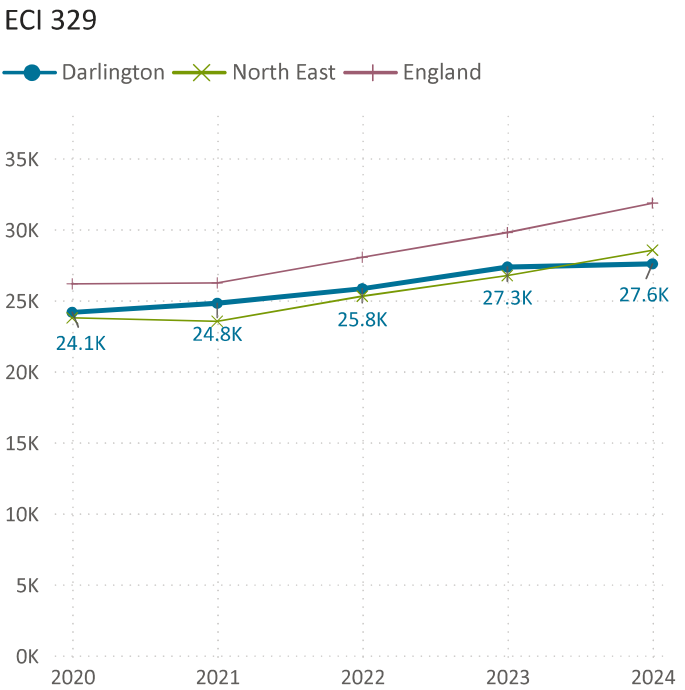


Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Service Area: Economic Growth

Average (median) annual income: Darlington residents

Darlington residents average (median) annual income has risen for the 6th year in succession to £27,559. This is lower than both the figure for the north east region (£28,526) and the England average £31,840. Between December 2023 and December 2024, Darlington residents average (median) annual income increased by just 1%, a rate that is lower than the England and north east rates of 7% and 6.7% respectively.

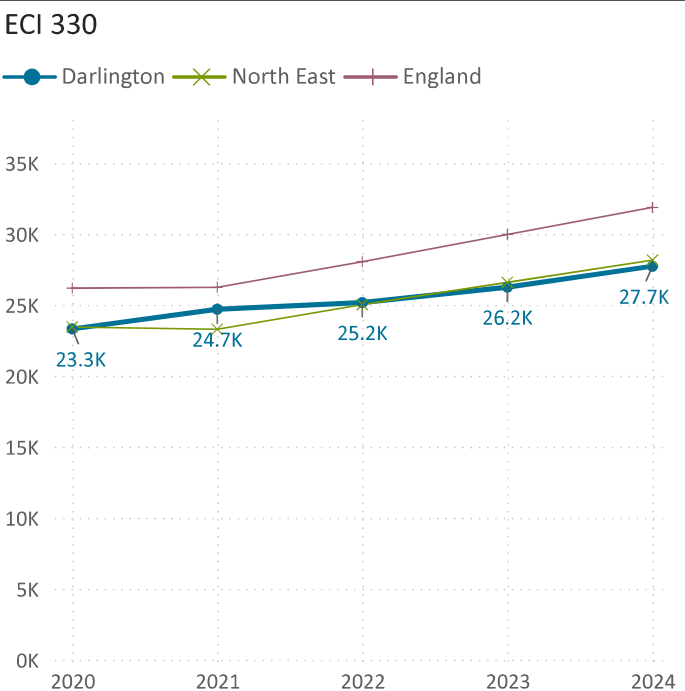


Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Service Area: Economic Growth

Average (median) annual income: Darlington employees

Employees average annual income in Darlington has increased in 2024 to £27,712 (5.6% increase on 2023) - this represents five years of year on year increases. The income level is similar to the north east average at £28,153, and below the England figure of £31,857. Residents who live in Darlington now have a similar annual average income to those employees who work in the borough.



Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

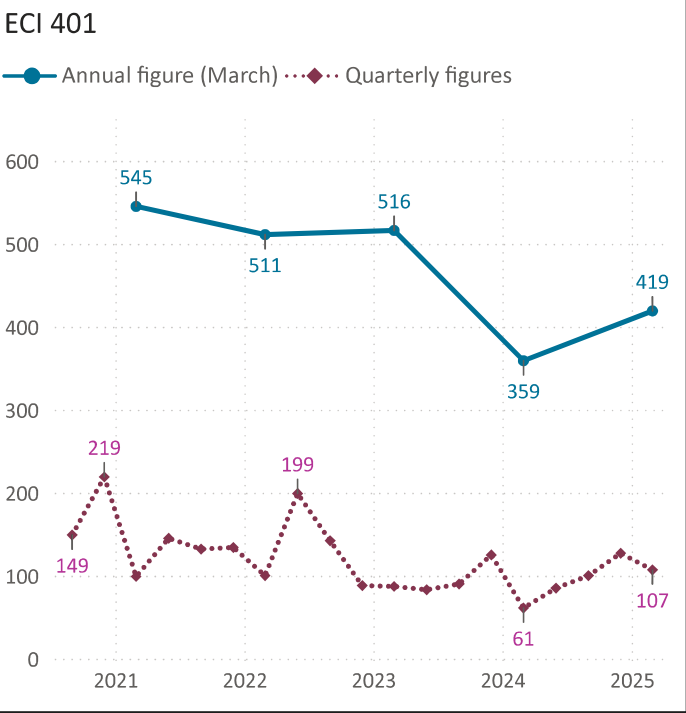
Service Area: Economic Growth

New homes delivered, annually

Housing delivery has seen a significant recovery since the 2023/24 financial year. The previous fall in delivery can be directly attributed to 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.

Latest monitoring indicates this recovery trend will continue. Q4 period of 2024/25 saw more construction than in the same quarter in 2023/24. In Q4 of 2024/25, 145 starts were made and 107 units were completed, in Q4 of 2023/24, 74 starts were made and 61 units were completed which represents a significant increase.

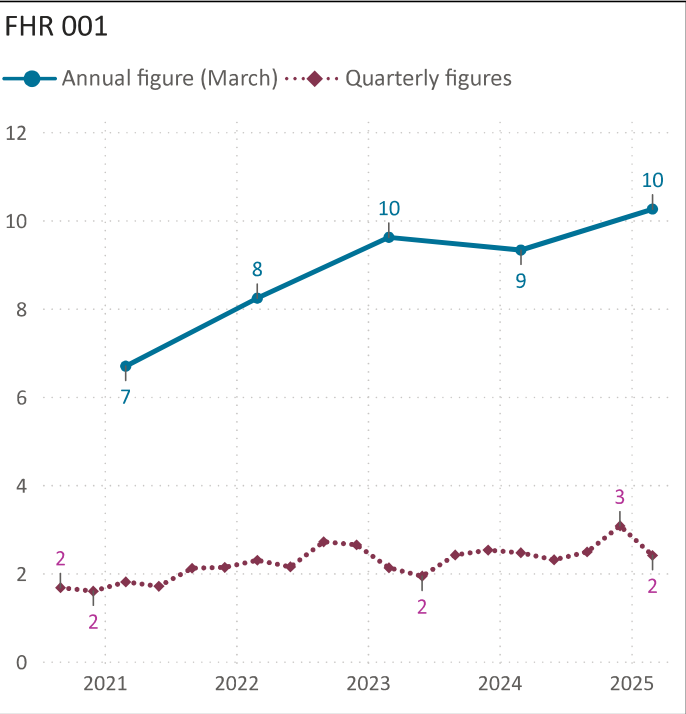


Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Service Area: Economic Growth

DBC number of working days per FTE lost due to sickness (excluding schools)

The final number of days lost to sickness absence per Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) in 2024/25 was 10.24, an increase of 0.92 days per FTE compared to 2023/24, however the final quarter did see an improvement from the previous quarters. Sickness absence continues to be managed through the Council's sickness management policies by managers at all levels with support from officers in Human Resources. The Wellbeing programme and other initiatives, for example the My Journey process, continue to produce benefits to assist with absence across our workforce. We continue to review all aspects of the Wellbeing programme to benefit and support all our employees.



Lead Officer: Brett Nielsen: Assistant Director - Resources

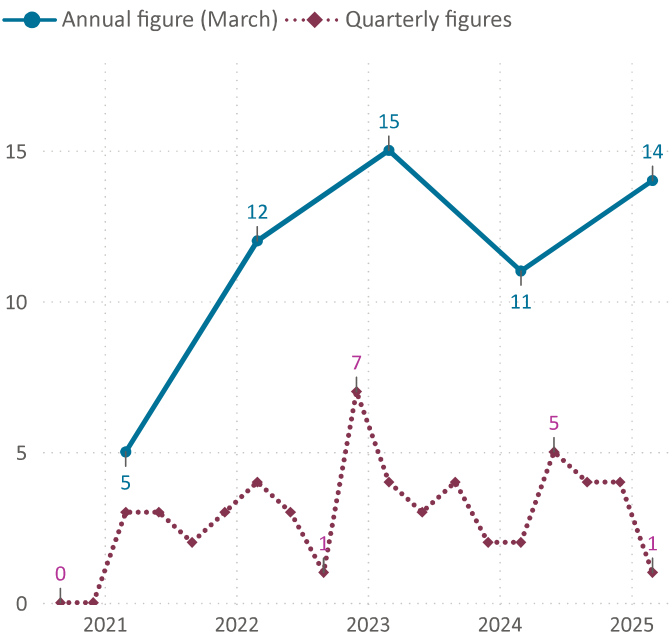
Service Area: Human Resources

Number of reportable employee accidents / ill health

14 reports were made to the Health and Safety Executive as required by the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulation at Quarter 4 in 2024/25, including two diagnosis of work related occupational disease/ill health.

All accidents and ill health reports are investigated by management and the Health and Safety Team to establish the causes, to identify issues or trends and make recommendations to prevent reoccurrence. Health and safety is a key priority for the Council at all levels and is promoted through all working practices.

FHR 003



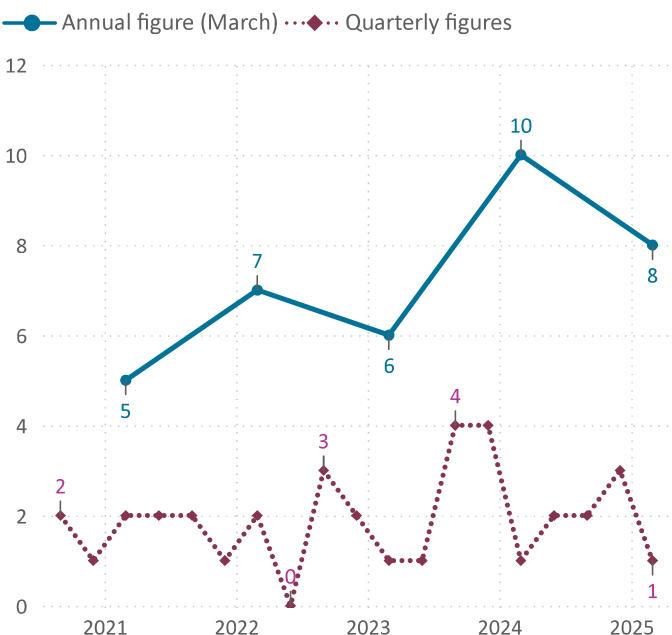
Lead Officer: Brett Nielsen: Assistant Director - Resources

Service Area: Health & Safety

Number of complaints upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman/Housing Ombudsman

The number of complaints upheld by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman/Housing Ombudsman decreased to eight from 10 in 2023/24. Three of the complaints upheld by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman related to Adult Services, one to Finance (Adults), one to Lifeline and one to Environmental Protection. The complaints upheld by the Housing Ombudsman related to Tenancy Enforcement. No trends have been identified that would lead the Council to implement additional measures to those identified by the Ombudsmen, and the organisational learning identified as a result of these complaints will assist in ensuring there is not a re-occurrence.

FHR 008

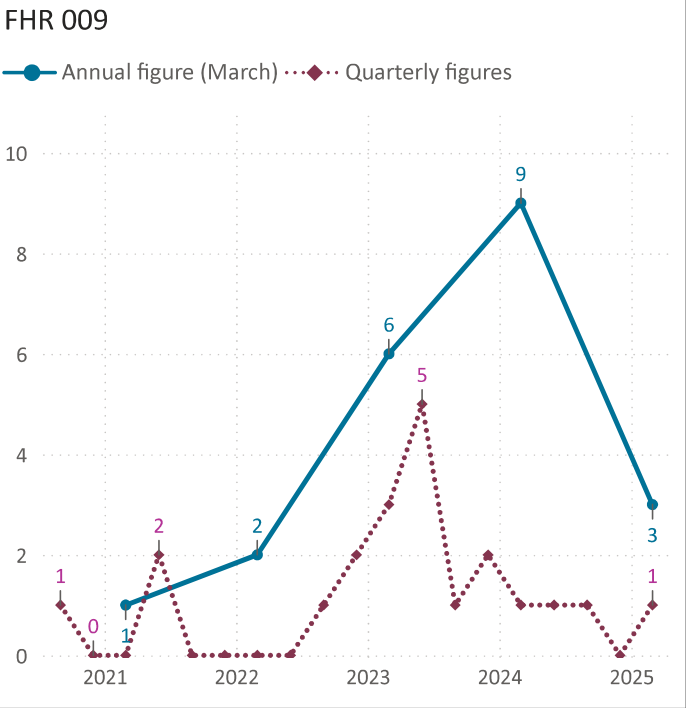


Lead Officer: Amy Wennington: Assistant Director - Law & Governance

Service Area: Complaints & Information Governance

Number of complaints upheld by the Information Commissioner's Office

There was an decrease from nine to three upheld complaints, compared to 2023/24. One of the upheld complaints related to a delay in responding to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request, one to a delay in responding to a Subject Access Request (SAR) and one to a data breach in Children's Services; where a protected address was disclosed. Risk of enforcement action from the Information Commissioner' Office (ICO) in relation to delays in responding to SARs remains on the Council's Risk Register, and work is ongoing to reduce that risk.

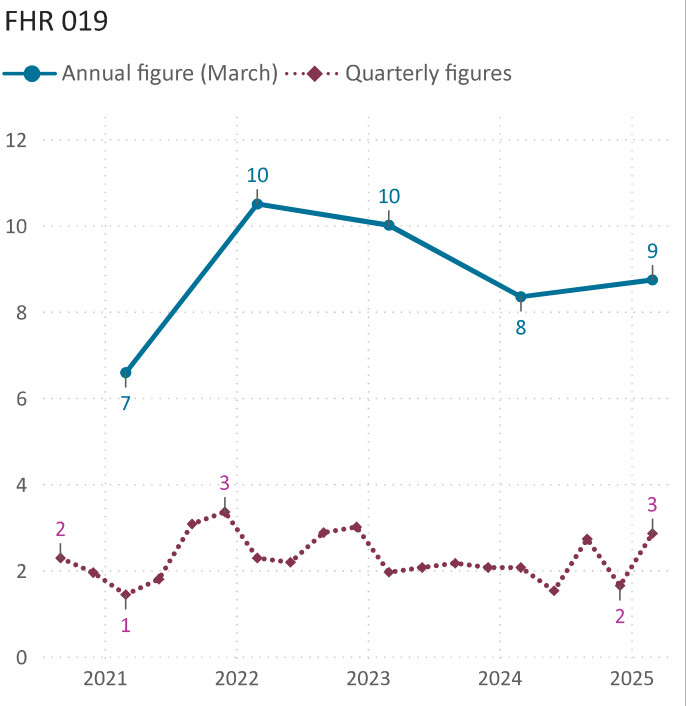


Lead Officer: Amy Wennington: Assistant Director - Law & Governance

Service Area: Complaints & Information Governance

Staff turnover - Voluntary Leavers (Divided by average number of staff in period)

The number of voluntary leavers was higher in 2024/25 than in 2023/24 (187 v 167) equating to an 8.7% turnover rate. Exit surveys and interviews are undertaken to understand why employees leave the Council and to inform improvement and retention where appropriate. Of the completed surveys, 88% of employees stated they would work for the Council again. The My Journey process includes aspirations and succession planning sections, this and other employee benefits / schemes will help our employee offer, to ensure we attract and retain the best talent for all roles across the Council.



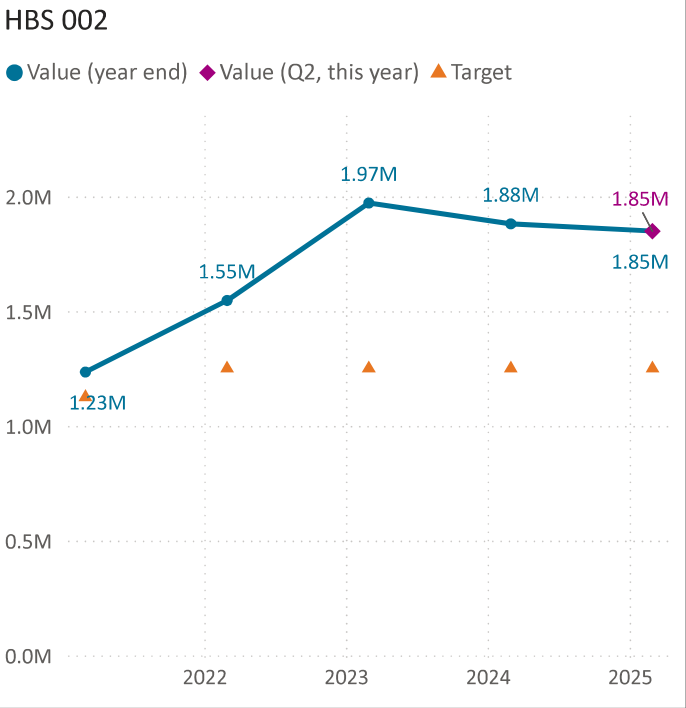
Lead Officer: Brett Nielsen: Assistant Director - Resources

Service Area: Human Resources

Amount of Council Tax arrears collected (£)

The amount of Council Tax arrears collected in quarter 4 has exceeded the target, with £1.85 million collected in 2024/25 which is comparable to the previous years collection rate.

This is a positive result as the team are still dealing with arrears resulting from the pandemic and the current cost of living crisis. The amount of outstanding arrears is £4.4 million at the end of quarter 4 in 2024-25 and all debts are being pursued line with our Recovery Strategy.

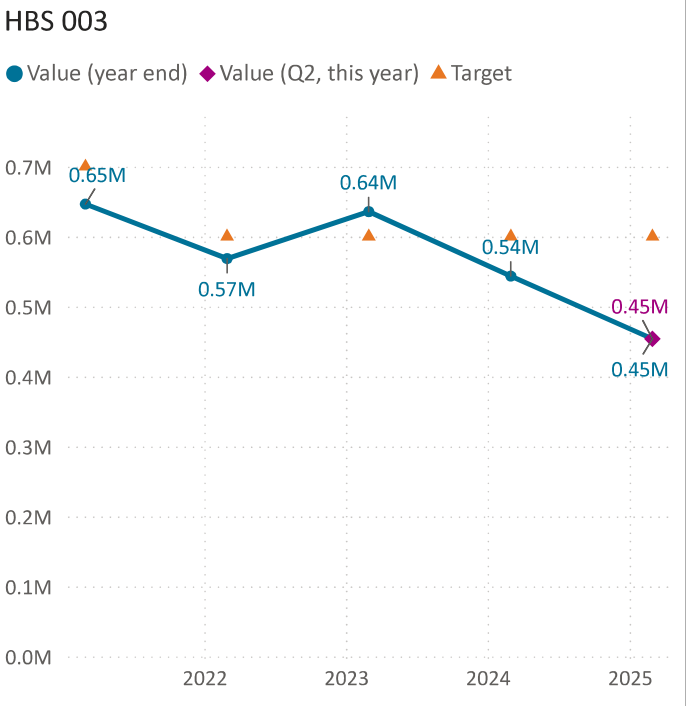


Lead Officer: Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing & Revenues

Service Area: Housing & Revenue

Amount of Housing Benefit overpayments recovered (£)

The amount of Housing Benefit overpayments collected is reducing each quarter and will continue to do so as Housing Benefit Claimants transfer to the Universal Credits (UC) system. In 2024-25 £454k of overpayments were collected compared to £544k for 2023-24. With the Managed Migration to UC the amount of Housing Benefit overpayments created (and therefore the amount collected) will continue to decrease. Notwithstanding this the collection rates are 106% of the new overpayment debt created (£429k) and the overall outstanding debt of £1.19m is decreasing.

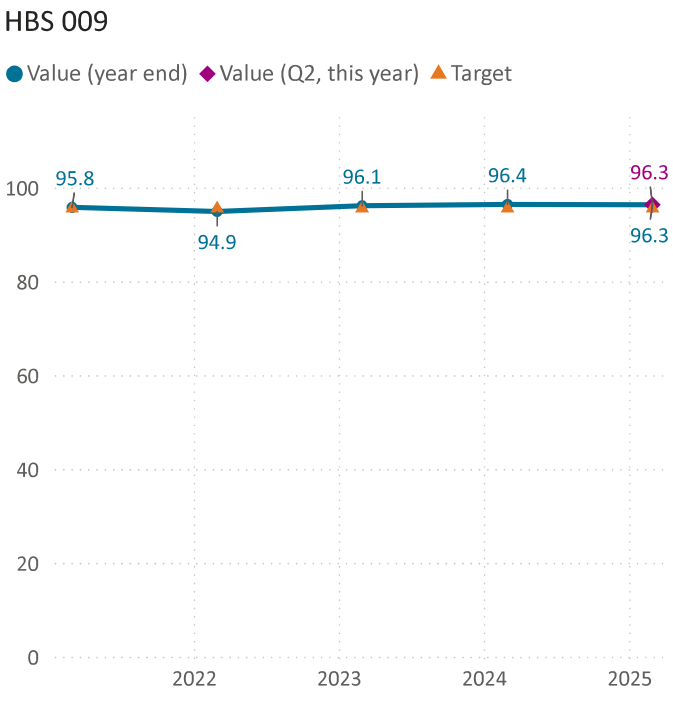


Lead Officer: Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing & Revenues

Service Area: Housing & Revenue

Percentage of Council Tax collected in-year

The percentage of Council Tax collected in the 2024-25 financial year has exceeded the target for quarter 4, with 96.32% of Council Tax collected which is in line with previous year collection rates. The overall amount collected by quarter 4 in 2024-25 was £77.3 million, an increase of £4.8 million or 6.6% on the 2023-24 collection figure of £72.5 million.

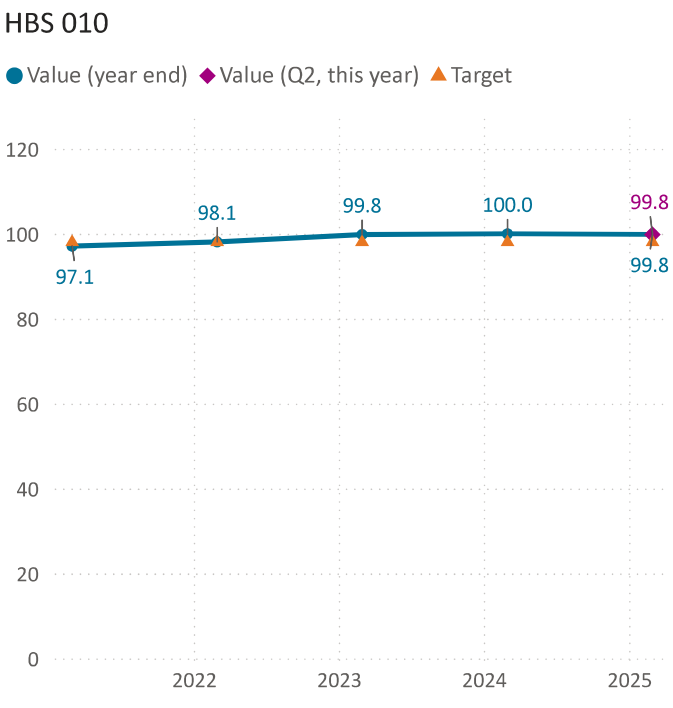


Lead Officer: Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing & Revenues

Service Area: Housing & Revenue

Percentage of Business Rates collected in-year

The percentage of Business Rates collected exceeded the target for quarter 4, with 99.82% of Business Rates collected, compared to 99.97% at the end of quarter 4 of 2023-24. Our collection rates for Business Rates continues to be one of the best performers both regionally and nationally. The overall amount collected by quarter 4 was £33.8 million compared to £31.2 million by quarter 4 of 2023-24, an increase of £2.6 million or 8.3%.



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

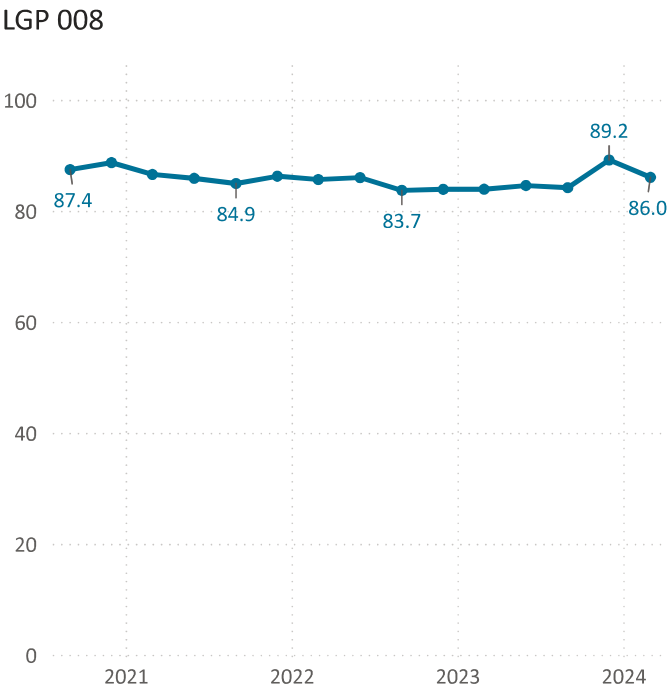
Service Area: Housing & Revenue

Contracted spend as a percentage of total non-salary spend

Following the migration of the Contracts Register to the new E-Tendering system Open, the Procurement section were advised that some of the data was corrupt.

The data has now been updated, but is not showing in the correct format in the Open system. It therefore does not link to the Prospend system as it previously did. The Prospend system collates the data and generates the figures for the performance indicator.

The Procurement section are working with IT and Agresso on generating reports from the clean data. This indicator will be updated to the committee in the report for the Performance Indicators 2025/26 Quarter 2.

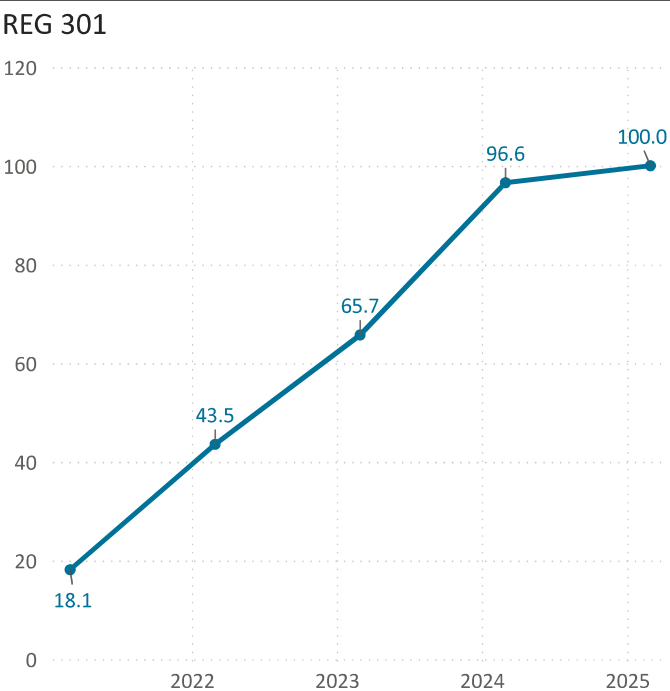


Lead Officer: Amy Wennington: Assistant Director - Law & Governance

Service Area: Procurement

Percentage of food premises which are inspected within the year in which they are due

We are currently on track with food hygiene inspections, however to do this we have been using a contract inspector to help us complete this legal requirement due to a number of historical vacancies in the team. We have finally managed to recruit suitable inspectors but as they are new to the profession they will need a period of training and familiarisation. There is a national shortage of qualified Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) and to help with future proofing we have employed a student EHO to mitigate against future shortages.

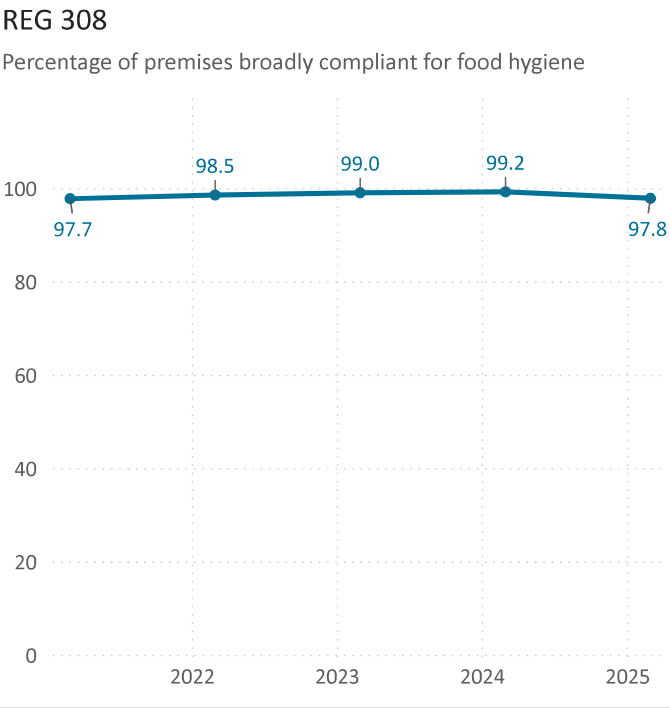


Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Service Area: Environmental Health

Percentage of premises broadly compliant for food hygiene

Premises within the Borough have shown a consistently high level of compliance year on year. This is due to a robust, consistent, and proportionate advice, inspection, and enforcement regime by officers. Inspectors have worked extremely hard to ensure that standards are maintained. This indicator illustrates the continued high level of compliance of food premises within the Borough of Darlington which is dependant on regular visits by a statutory service.

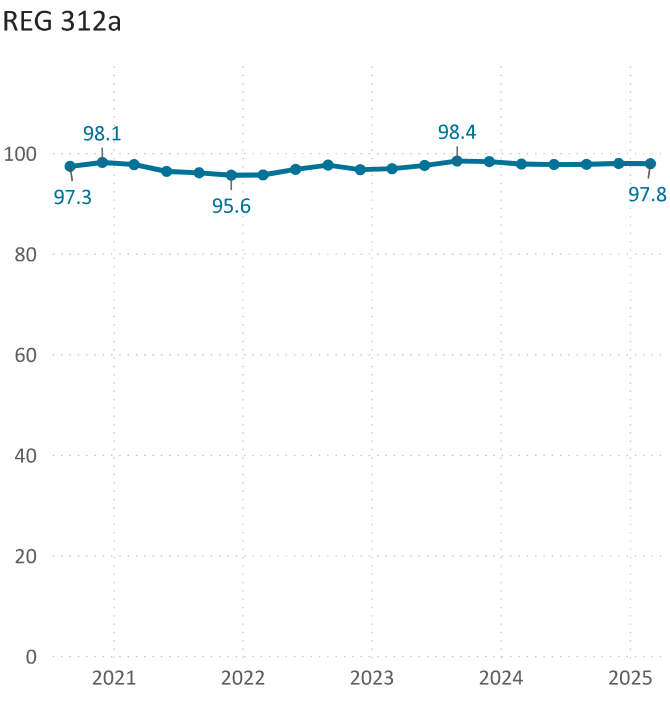


Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Service Area: Environmental Health

Percentage of noise complaints investigated and completed within 6 weeks of the date of receipt (except where diary sheet returned)

Environmental Health continues to consistently meet this performance indicator. The number of noise complaints about barking dogs has risen over recent years and now equates to 40% of all the noise complaints received. Most noise complaints are resolved by giving advice and work is currently being carried out to educate dog owners on how to reduce barking including a recent article in One Darlington and the use of social media.



Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Service Area: Environmental Health