DERBYSHIRE County Council

Performance Report Year End 2025 to 2026

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Introduction

Welcome to the council's performance report on the Council Plan for year end 2025-26. The Council Plan sets out the direction of the council and what we are working to achieve on behalf of our residents. At the heart of our Plan is ensuring we provide maximum value for money for the council tax our residents pay, by delivering the most efficient and effective services we can. We have set out below key areas where we have worked, in partnership, to achieve our outcomes during 2025-26.

Outcome 1 - Empowered communities where people live safe, happy, healthy and independent lives

- The Stronger Families Team has successfully supported families to stay together or reunite where safe, helping prevent children entering care and saving over £3m in the last financial year.
- Derbyshire's children's residential provision continues to perform strongly providing safe and stable environments for our children in care. 11 of Derbyshire's 12 children's homes have been inspected by Ofsted with 9 judged good or better.
- The Council has expanded its fostering capacity, with 16 new foster carers approved, bringing the total to 203 active fostering households.
- The Families First Partnership is transforming how services support children, young people and families, with a stronger focus on early help, prevention and more joined-up working.
- A new primary school in South Derbyshire will open in September, increasing local school capacity and supporting growing communities.
- Through employment support, the Council has helped more than 130 young people into apprenticeships or employment, improving life chances and supporting independence.
- Our Disability Employment Service has helped over 280 people to achieve their employment objectives and 88 people have been supported into paid employment.
- Through our Household Support Fund, we have delivered over 33,300 grocery vouchers to families with children in receipt of Free School Meals, low-income families with children in nursery, care leavers living independently and foster carers to help with the cost of living.
- We provided vital support through the Derbyshire Discretionary Fund, awarding 14,957 payments to Derbyshire residents in crisis, totalling £1,997,320.

- Through Live Life Better Derbyshire (LLBD), we exceeded expectations by completing health and wellbeing MOTs for over 9,900 people.
- We supported a record number of residents to quit smoking, with over 3,700 quit dates set through the LLBD programme.
- We supported over 5,000 people through our short-term home care offer, helping them to regain stability, independence and control.
- Over 7,100 carers accessed support through Derbyshire Carers Association (DCA). In 2025, DCA were awarded the nationally recognised Carers Trust Excellence for Carers Quality Standard in 2025.
- This year, we supported 8 colleagues to complete their Social Work Apprenticeship. Following completion and qualification, all of these colleagues have now registered with Social Work England and been appointed to qualified Social Worker roles within Adult Social Care. This has reduced the number of vacancies in registered social work posts and has contributed to reduced expenditure on agency workers.
- We started the roll out of Recap, this is a co-designed digital tool to support our Social Care workforce have quality conversations with Derbyshire residents and reduce the administrative burden of note taking.

Outcome 2 - Place: Prosperous, green and sustainable places with opportunities for all

- The Council is investing more capital than ever in maintaining and improving the highways network. In 2025/26, total investment was £61.5m, a 62% increase on the previous year and the largest single investment ever. This has enabled additional investment in carriageway maintenance, retaining walls, and landslip repairs, as well as feasibility work to develop future programmes.
- Derbyshire continues to work with EMCCA and has secured £72.9m in grant funding to support growth in the county. A part of the funding secured has enabled significant business support activity in 2025–26, supporting 475 entrepreneurs; more than double the original target; facilitating the creation of 60 new businesses against a target of 40, and delivering 112 jobs, exceeding the initial target of 30.
- More than 130 young people have been supported to move into apprenticeships or employment as part of the Youth Employment Support (YES) Derbyshire programme
- The Invest in Derbyshire campaign has been launched to attract inward investment and promote a pipeline of development opportunities worth billions of pounds.
- The Council has continued to tackle high street criminality by seizing £40,000 of illegal tobacco and vapes, and has worked with landlords to close four shops selling illegal goods
- The natural environment has been enhanced through:
    - Approximately 80,000 trees planted across 47 sites as part of the Heartwood Community Forest

    - Publication of the Council's first Biodiversity Report, Forest Plan and Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- A £3.81m programme to tackle ash dieback disease has been delivered, helping to protect road users and landscapes across Derbyshire.
- Communities benefited from cultural investment through the delivery of around 100 events across six towns as part of the Derbyshire Makes festival, while businesses were supported to grow through targeted initiatives, including the Derbyshire Makes Advanced Manufacturing Support Programme.

Outcome 3 - The Council: A resident focused, efficient and effective organisation delivering value for money

- The Council has delivered £35.172m of savings in 2025-26 (93.8% of the target).
- The 2026/27 budget has been set without reliance on reserves, with reserves strengthened to £35m, an improvement from £25m the previous year.
- Financial performance has improved significantly, with a revenue underspend of £2m, compared to significant overspends in previous years.
- A major transformation programme is underway to redesign the Council's operating model, improve efficiency and reduce costs, with forecast savings of £19.2m to £42.7m by 2028 and beyond.
- A proposal has been submitted for local government reorganisation, setting out plans for a single unitary council to achieve efficiency, accountability and value for residents.

Council Plan Strategic Objectives Progress Overview 2025-26

SO-02	Deliver improved outcomes for those with special educational needs and disabilities through timely analysis of need and support services in collaboration with stakeholders
SO-12	Deliver a safe, effective, efficient and innovative highways service including the completion of the full transformation of the Highways Service itself
SO-18	Improve Derbyshire County Council's customer experience and journeys through our ways of working and community engagement leading to transformational change and continuous improvement of our services
SO-20	Deliver our four year budget savings programme to achieve financial sustainability with a focus on delivering £37.5m savings in 2025-26 (year 1 to be refreshed annually)
SO-21	Build a skilled, resilient and flexible workforce that can support the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives and priorities

Key to Performance Rating

Rating	Strategic Objective
Complete	Strategic Objective has been completed and outcomes achieved
Good	On schedule and outcomes as expected
Review	Some risk to achieving timetable and/or outcomes
Action	Unlikely to achieve timetable and/or to deliver required outcome
Blank	Awaiting Update

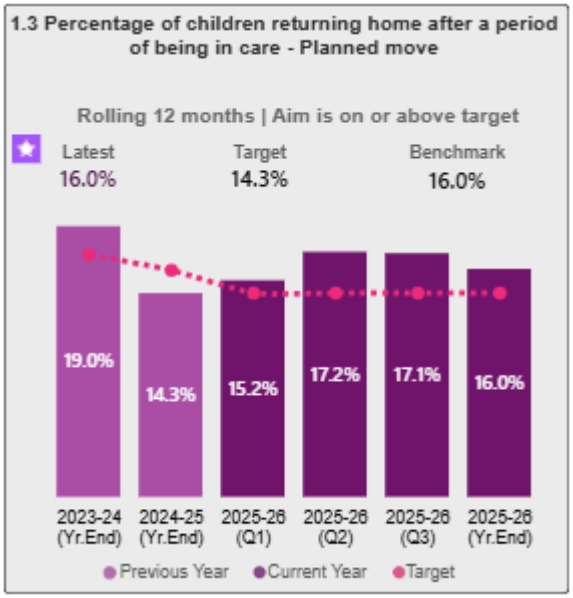
Progress tables in the report show a rating based on an assessment against the planned progress for the quarter. Comments in the report will focus of Strategic Objectives and measures that are review or action and provide information on the underlying issues and resultant actions. Where Strategic Objectives are rated as good or have been completed then there will be summary information on the progress made or outcomes achieved.

Performance against Target	Measures
Strong	More than 5% better than target (2% better than target if the target is greater than 95%)
Good	Between 5% better or 2% worse than target
Review	More than 2% worse than target
Action	More than 10% worse than target
Grey	No target

The report includes graphics for key measures in support of the strategic objectives. Read left to right and top to bottom, these show:

- Measure name prefixed with a reference number as used in the commentary
- Performance icon based on the ‘Performance against Target’ key above
- An explanation of how the data is aggregated for the year
    - Cumulative from 1 April (latest quarterly column is total for the year so far)
    - Rolling 12 months & Rolling 12 months
    - Annual & Annual – Academic Year
    - Snapshot
    - Latest Month

  More specific details are included as a foot note to graphs where required



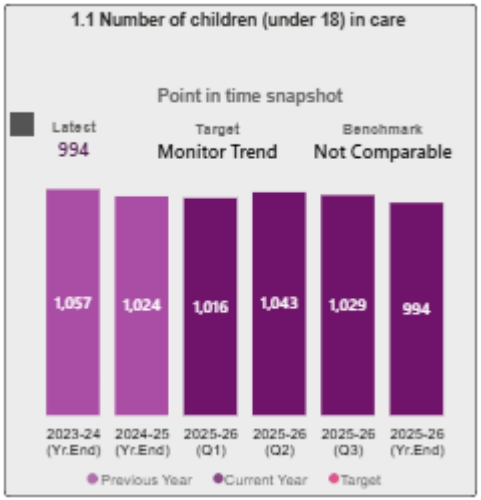
- An indicator of whether performance is expected to increase, decrease, or stay stable, e.g. “Aim is on or above target”
- The latest available data
- The latest target figure or an indication of how performance is being monitored
- The latest published benchmark, this may be from a previous year
- A bar chart with the available previous year end data (light purple) and the current year’s data for each quarter (dark purple)
- A line is shown on the graph where a target has been set

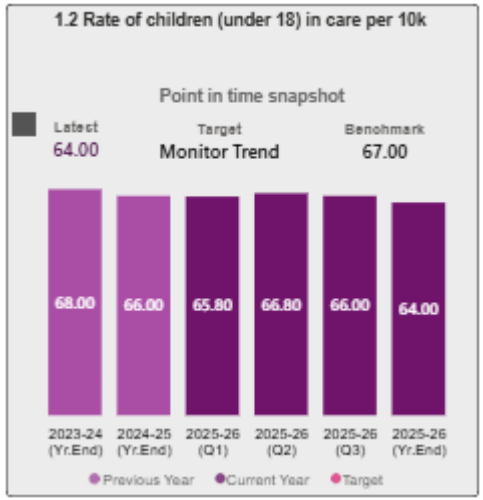
The scale for each graph is set based on the data for the individual measure and therefore different graphs are not visibly comparable

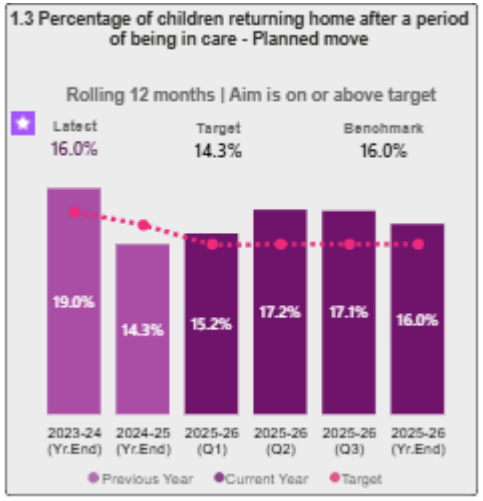
People: Empowered communities where people live safe, happy, healthy and independent lives

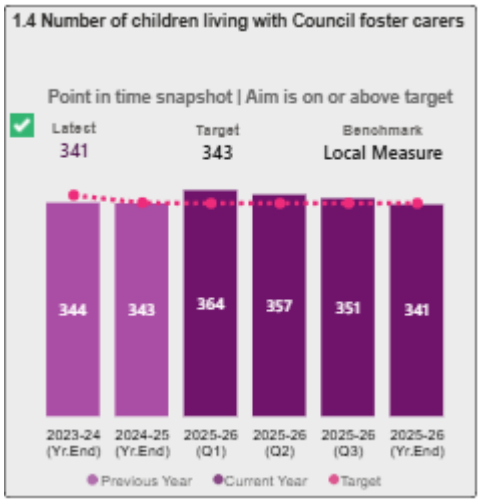
No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-01	Achieve sufficiency of accommodation to ensure children are cared for in the right home at the right time	Apr 2027	**Good**

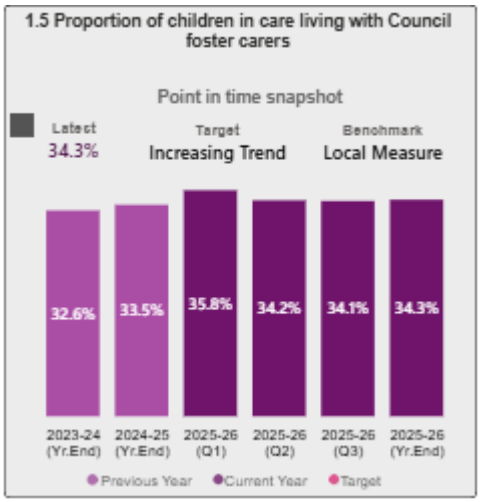
Over the course of 2025–26, significant progress has been made in strengthening the strategic and governance framework underpinning placement sufficiency. A comprehensive Placement Sufficiency Strategy has been finalised and published, supported by the establishment of clearer senior decision-making forums and improving data intelligence to drive strategic and operational oversight. The development of a holistic Children in Care data dashboard is improving forecasting, visibility of demand and month-to-month tracking of placement pressures, enabling more informed and timely decision-making. Senior oversight has been further strengthened through the establishment of the Derbyshire Homes and Belonging Panel, complementing existing Right Home, Right Time arrangements and ensuring more consistent alignment across fostering and residential provision. Despite these developments, the authority has not yet been able to achieve improvements in sufficiency at the pace required to secure longer-term financial sustainability. This reflects enduring national and local challenges, including provider market pressures, workforce constraints and demand continuing to outstrip local placement availability. Positively, the year has seen a reduction in the number of children in care in Derbyshire and strengthened placement performance, but some children remain in higher-cost external provision, continuing to drive cost pressures. The direction of travel is positive, with robust foundations now in place. However, placement sufficiency remains a key strategic risk that will require sustained focus, investment and innovation during 2026–27.

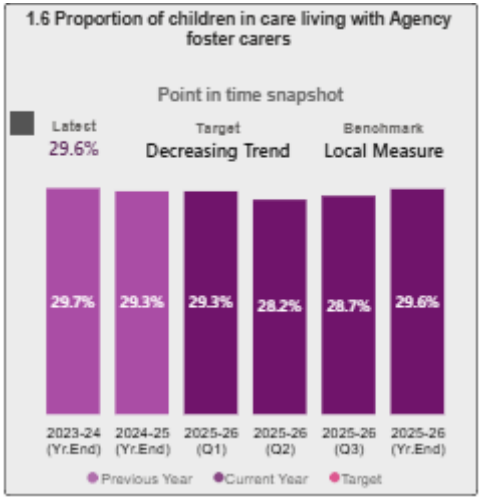


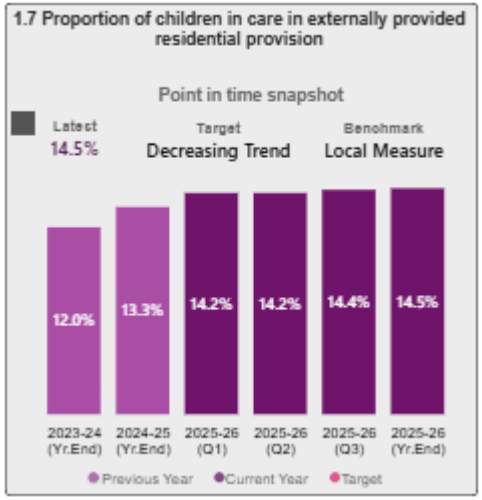


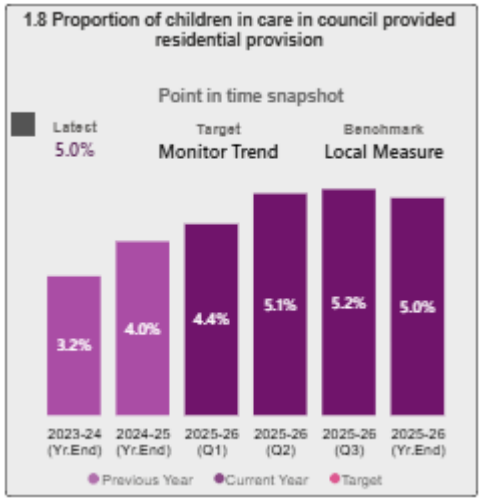

1.3 Percentage of children returning home after a period of being in care - Planned move
Rolling 12 months | Aim is on or above target
Latest 16.0%
Target 14.3%
Benchmark 16.0%
19.0%
14.3%
15.2%
17.2%
17.1%
16.0%
2023-24 (Yr.End)
2024-25 (Yr.End)
2025-26 (Q1)
2025-26 (Q2)
2025-26 (Q3)
2025-26 (Yr.End)
Previous Year
Current Year
Target

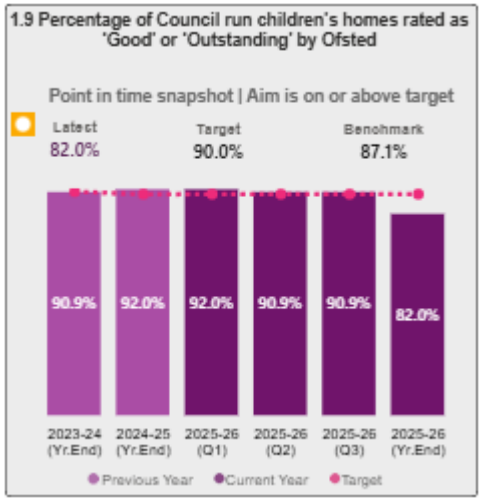

1.4 Number of children living with Council foster carers
Point in time snapshot | Aim is on or above target
Latest 341
Target 343
Benchmark Local Measure
344
343
364
357
351
341
2023-24 (Yr.End)
2024-25 (Yr.End)
2025-26 (Q1)
2025-26 (Q2)
2025-26 (Q3)
2025-26 (Yr.End)
Previous Year
Current Year
Target


1.5 Proportion of children in care living with Council foster carers
Point in time snapshot
Latest 34.3%
Target Increasing Trend
Benchmark Local Measure
32.6%
33.5%
35.8%
34.2%
34.1%
34.3%
2023-24 (Yr.End)
2024-25 (Yr.End)
2025-26 (Q1)
2025-26 (Q2)
2025-26 (Q3)
2025-26 (Yr.End)
Previous Year
Current Year
Target


1.6 Proportion of children in care living with Agency foster carers
Point in time snapshot
Latest 29.6%
Target Decreasing Trend
Benchmark Local Measure
29.7%
29.3%
29.3%
28.2%
28.7%
29.6%
2023-24 (Yr.End)
2024-25 (Yr.End)
2025-26 (Q1)
2025-26 (Q2)
2025-26 (Q3)
2025-26 (Yr.End)
Previous Year
Current Year
Target

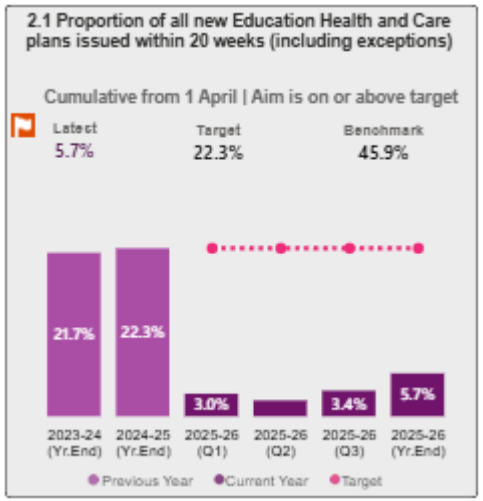

1.7 Proportion of children in care in externally provided residential provision
Point in time snapshot
Latest 14.5%
Target Decreasing Trend
Benchmark Local Measure
12.0%
13.3%
14.2%
14.2%
14.4%
14.5%
2023-24 (Yr.End)
2024-25 (Yr.End)
2025-26 (Q1)
2025-26 (Q2)
2025-26 (Q3)
2025-26 (Yr.End)
Previous Year
Current Year
Target

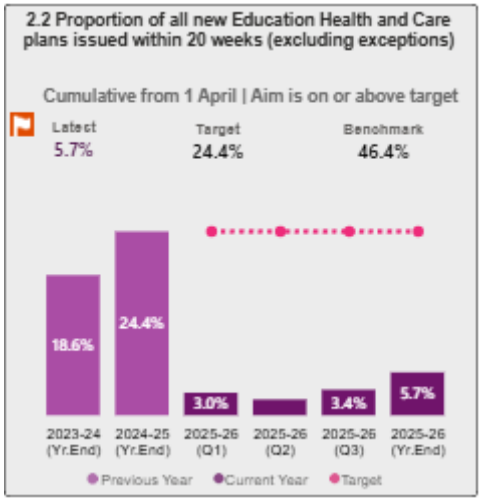

1.8 Proportion of children in care in council provided residential provision
Point in time snapshot
Latest 5.0%
Target Monitor Trend
Benchmark Local Measure
3.2%
4.0%
4.4%
5.1%
5.2%
5.0%
2023-24 (Yr.End)
2024-25 (Yr.End)
2025-26 (Q1)
2025-26 (Q2)
2025-26 (Q3)
2025-26 (Yr.End)
Previous Year
Current Year
Target

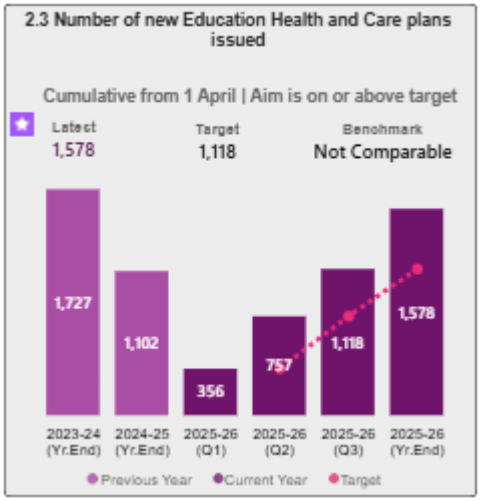

1.9 Percentage of Council run children's homes rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted
Point in time snapshot | Aim is on or above target
Latest 82.0%
Target 90.0%
Benchmark 87.1%
90.9%
92.0%
92.0%
90.9%
90.9%
82.0%
2023-24 (Yr.End)
2024-25 (Yr.End)
2025-26 (Q1)
2025-26 (Q2)
2025-26 (Q3)
2025-26 (Yr.End)
Previous Year
Current Year
Target

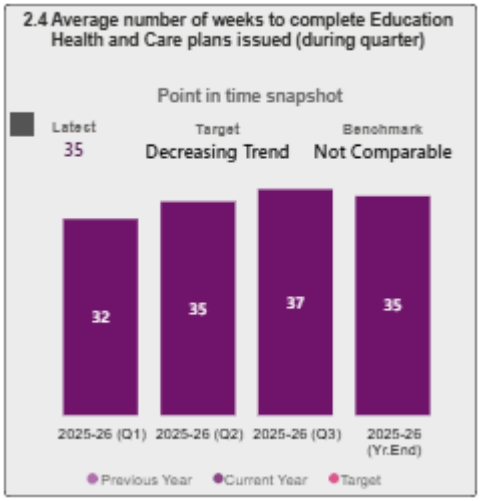
No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-02	Deliver improved outcomes for those with special educational needs and disabilities through timely analysis of need and support services in collaboration with stakeholders	Mar 2028	**Action**

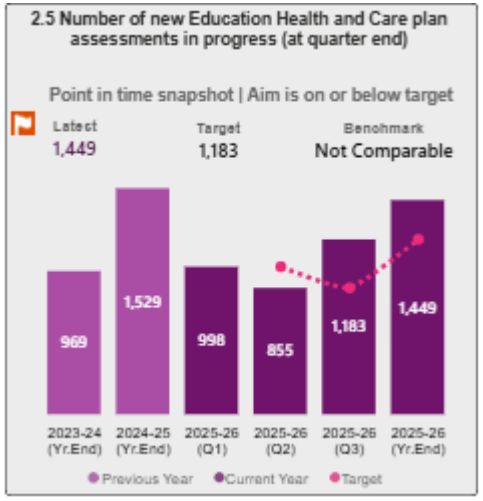
The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement and Assurance Board continues to ensure robust governance of this critical area of partnership improvement work. The SEND Financial Recovery Plan includes the application of £1.3million investment provided by the Council at the end of 2025 to support improved adherence to statutory timeframes and reduce backlogs. Additional Educational Psychologist locums continue to be onboarded and it is planned that the backlog of Educational Psychologist advice will be removed by the end of this academic year. This has impacted delivery due to the increased demand for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP's). The overall proportion of EHCP's issued within timescale remains below target at 5.7% (Graphs 2.1 & 2.2) with 87 final plans issued within 20 weeks during this financial year. Timeliness has however improved through the year and more assessments have been finalised during quarter 4 than all previous quarters. Demand for EHCP assessments continues to be increasingly challenging outstripping the partnership's ability to respond effectively with the number of new EHCP assessments in progress increasing from 998 plans at the end of Quarter 1 to 1,449 plans at the end of Quarter 4 (Graph 2.5). For EHCP assessments in progress at the end of quarter 4, the average time ongoing was 26 weeks, a marked improvement on previous quarters (Graph 2.6).

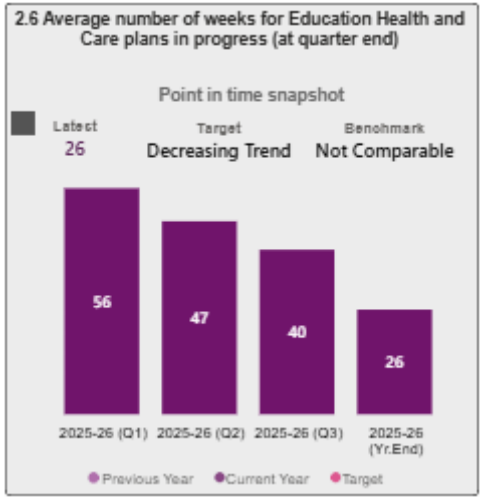


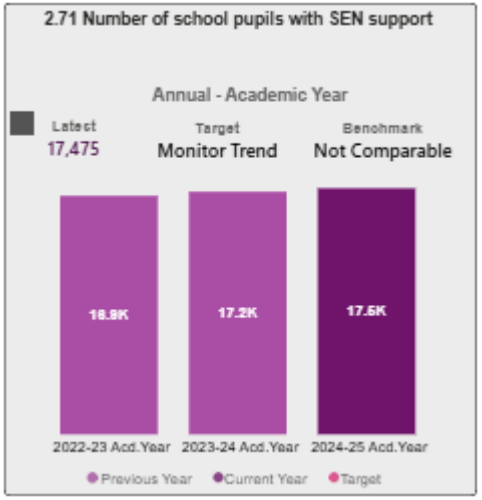


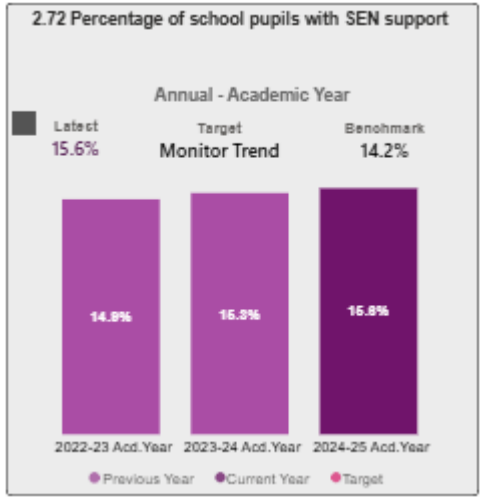


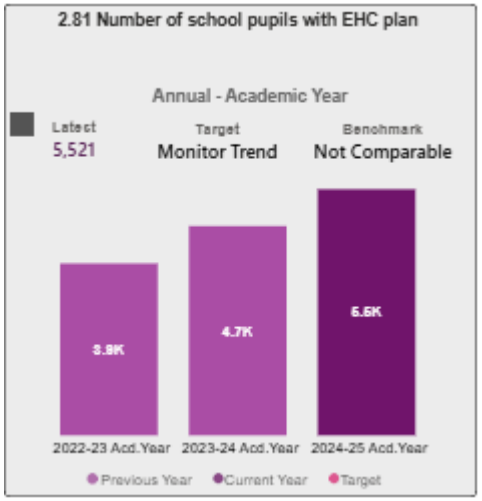


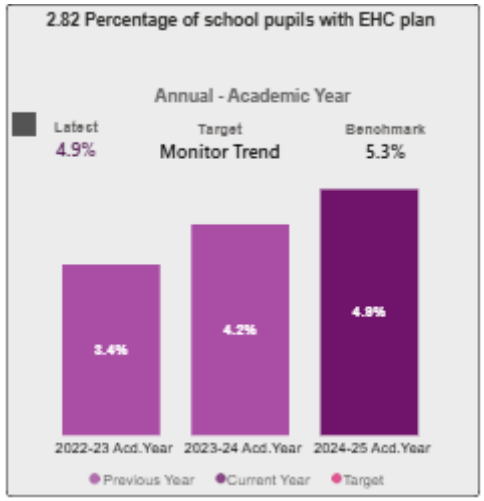

2.5 Number of new Education Health and Care plan assessments in progress (at quarter end)
Point in time snapshot | Aim is on or below target
Latest 1,449
Target 1,183
Benchmark Not Comparable
969
1,529
998
855
1,183
1,449
2023-24 (Yr.End)
2024-25 (Yr.End)
2025-26 (Q1)
2025-26 (Q2)
2025-26 (Q3)
2025-26 (Yr.End)
Previous Year
Current Year
Target

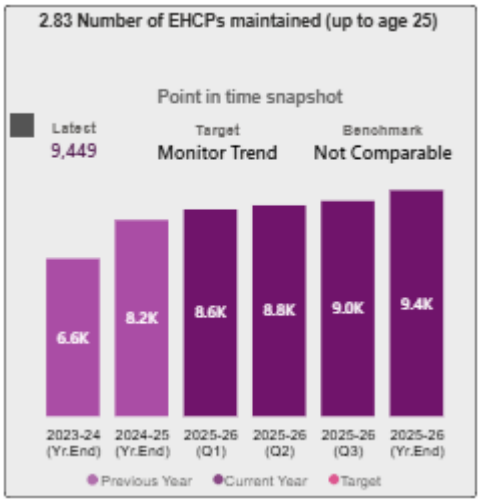

2.6 Average number of weeks for Education Health and Care plans in progress (at quarter end)
Point in time snapshot
Latest 26
Target Decreasing Trend
Benchmark Not Comparable
56
47
40
26
2025-26 (Q1)
2025-26 (Q2)
2025-26 (Q3)
2025-26 (Yr.End)
Previous Year
Current Year
Target


2.71 Number of school pupils with SEN support
Annual - Academic Year
Latest 17,475
Target Monitor Trend
Benchmark Not Comparable
16.9K
17.2K
17.5K
2022-23 Acd.Year
2023-24 Acd.Year
2024-25 Acd.Year
Previous Year
Current Year
Target


2.72 Percentage of school pupils with SEN support
Annual - Academic Year
Latest 15.6%
Target Monitor Trend
Benchmark 14.2%
14.9%
15.3%
15.8%
2022-23 Acd.Year
2023-24 Acd.Year
2024-25 Acd.Year
Previous Year
Current Year
Target


2.81 Number of school pupils with EHC plan
Annual - Academic Year
Latest 5,521
Target Monitor Trend
Benchmark Not Comparable
3.9K
4.7K
6.6K
2022-23 Acd.Year
2023-24 Acd.Year
2024-25 Acd.Year
Previous Year
Current Year
Target


2.82 Percentage of school pupils with EHC plan
Annual - Academic Year
Latest 4.9%
Target Monitor Trend
Benchmark 5.3%
3.4%
4.2%
4.9%
2022-23 Acd.Year
2023-24 Acd.Year
2024-25 Acd.Year
Previous Year
Current Year
Target

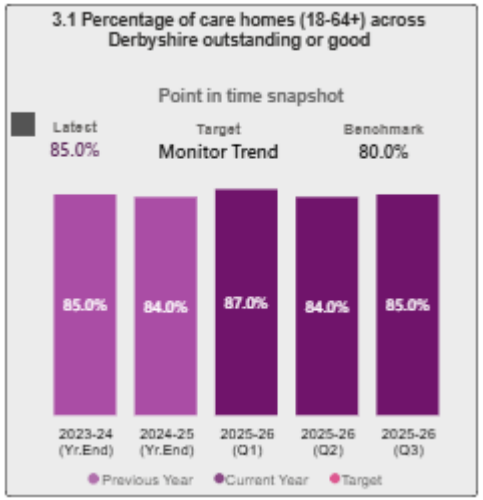

2.83 Number of EHCPs maintained (up to age 25)
Point in time snapshot
Latest 9,449
Target Monitor Trend
Benchmark Not Comparable
6.6K
8.2K
8.6K
8.8K
9.0K
9.4K
2023-24 (Yr.End)
2024-25 (Yr.End)
2025-26 (Q1)
2025-26 (Q2)
2025-26 (Q3)
2025-26 (Yr.End)
Previous Year
Current Year
Target

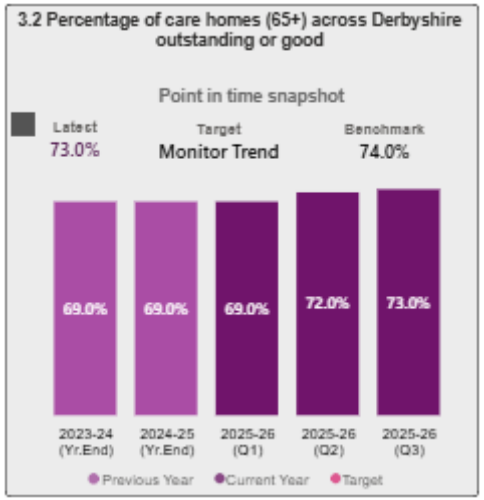
No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-03	Ensure there is a good choice of affordable Adult Social Care support available across the county with a focus on people's experiences and improving quality	Mar 2027	**Good**

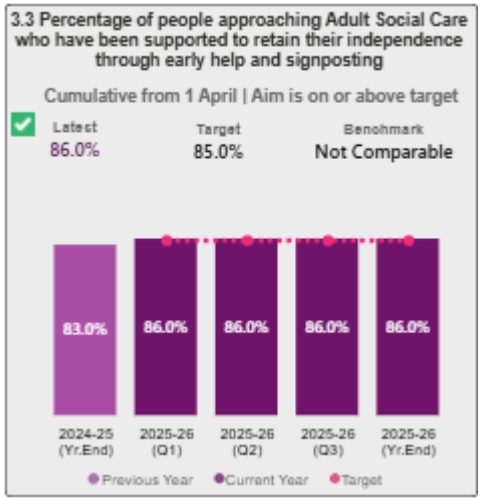
We continue to work to make sure people across the county have a good range of affordable Adult Social Care support, now and in the future. A key aim of this work is to make services sustainable, so they can continue to meet people's needs over the long term.

Over the last year, we have been moving into the final stages of changes to how some of our council-run services operate. This includes Residential Care Homes, Day Services and Community Care Centres. These changes were based on previously agreed recommendations to help ensure services are modern, effective and financially sustainable.

As part of this process, some residential care homes for older adults were put up for sale. The outcome of discussions was that the sale could not progress any further, therefore these services are now ceasing to operate, as per the initial recommendations.







No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-04	Support people to live their best lives independently at home, connected to the community and local resources, stepping in with more help where needed	Mar 2028	**Good**

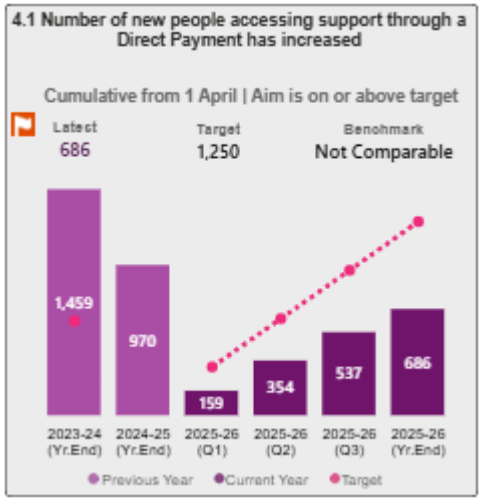
Strengths-based practice is a collaborative way of working that focuses on what people can do for themselves, with support from their family, friends and community, rather than focusing only on their needs or limitations. Direct Payments support this approach by giving people the choice to arrange and pay for their own care and support, instead of the council arranging it for them. This gives people greater control and flexibility over how their support is provided.

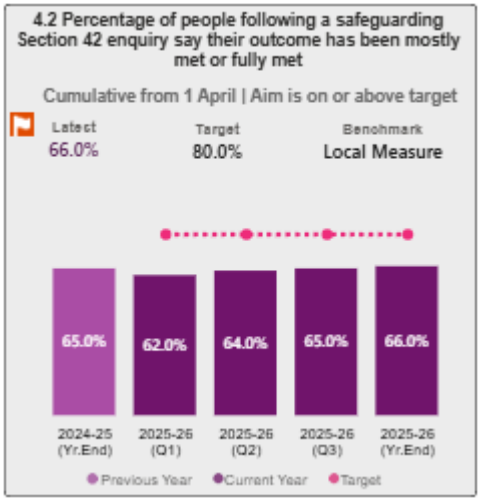
This quarter, 149 people accessed a Direct Payment for the first time. This is a reduction compared to the previous quarter and brings the total for the year to 686, which is significantly below our target of 1,250 (Graph 4.1). We continue to see a declining trend in Direct Payments, linked to changes to our Charging Policy and a wider national decline in uptake.

Increasing the use of Direct Payments is a key operational priority for 2026/27. We will do this by strengthening our strengths-based practice, ensuring staff consistently discuss Direct Payments as the first option during assessments and reviews, and clearly explain the benefits to people and their families. We will also improve staff training, provide clearer information and support to help people understand and manage Direct Payments, and identify and remove barriers that prevent people from choosing this option.

Progress will be monitored through the departmental Quality Assurance Board, using data and case reviews to ensure improvements are being embedded in practice.

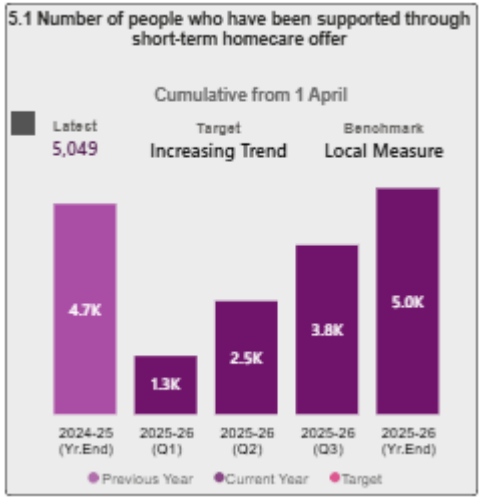
The percentage of people who felt that their outcomes had been mostly or fully met following a Section 42 enquiry increased, with a year-end figure of 66%. While this shows improvement, it remains below the target of 80% (Graph 4.2).

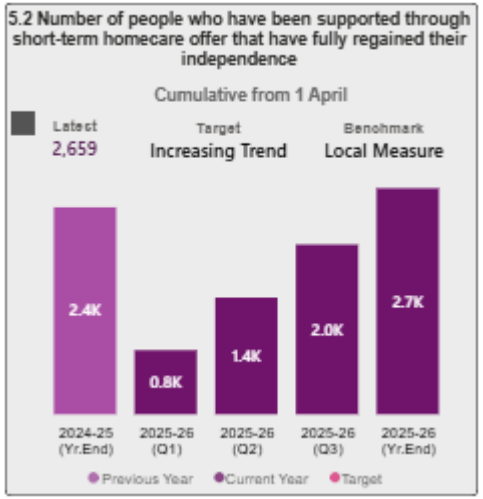




No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-05	Support people to recover and regain stability, independence and control following a personal crisis or illness	Mar 2028	**Good**

We continue to improve our home-based enablement service, focusing on increased capacity and effectiveness. We continue drawing on specialist support as part of the community transformation programme. Numbers of people supported through short-term homecare and those that have then fully regained independence have exceeded last year's performance by an additional 224 people (Graphs 5.1 & 5.2).





No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-06	Work across the Health and Social Care system with partners, carers and residents to provide support in a safe, supportive homelike setting	Mar 2028	**Good**

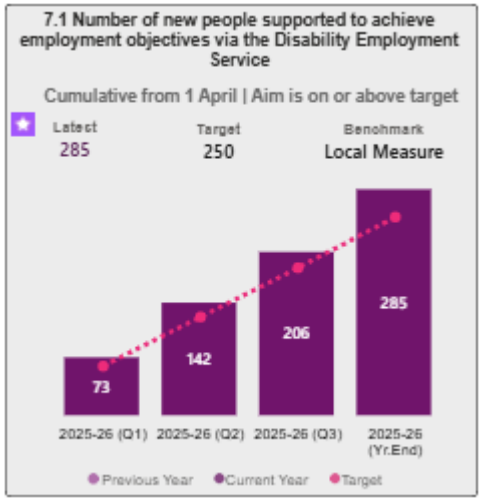
After asking local people for their views, we agreed to explore working more closely with Derbyshire Community Health Services. This would be done through a formal partnership arrangement called a Section 75 agreement. During this year, work has continued to prepare for this partnership, which we expect to be formally in place by summer 2026.

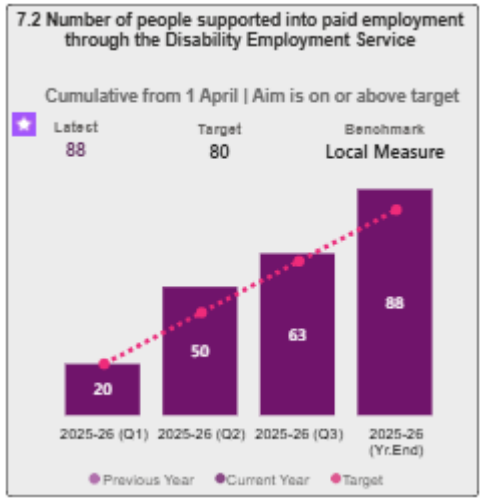
During 2025–26, we have focused on improving our Community Support Beds (Our Bedded Enablement Service). These beds combine health and social care support to help people regain their independence after an illness or an accident, so they can return home safely.

We have also started working with local health and care partners on plans to improve community services through as Community Transformation programme, making sure people can get the right help, at the right time, in the right place.

No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-07	Support financial wellbeing by maximising income, supporting good work and addressing poverty, reducing demand across council services	Mar 2027	**Good**

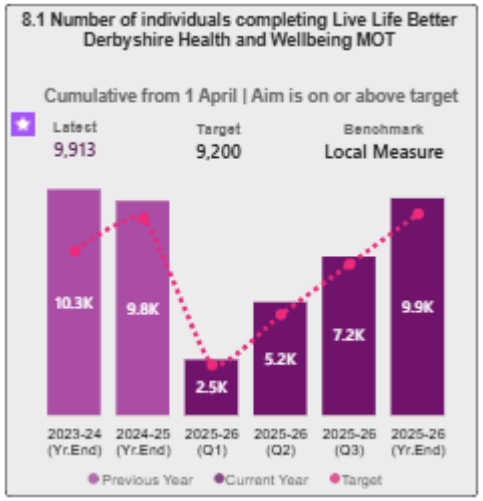
In Quarter 4, the Household Support Fund (HSF) delivered over 33,300 grocery vouchers to families with children in receipt of Free School Meals, low-income families with children in nursery, care leavers living independently and foster carers to help with the cost of living. Throughout the year the Derbyshire Discretionary Fund (DDF) has made 14,957 awards for crisis payment releasing £1,997,320. The Welfare Rights Service has supported 22,367 people regarding benefit maximisation and supported 6,845 benefit claims and appeals. The Disability Employment Service (DES) exceeded annual targets supporting 285 people to achieve employment objectives (Graph 7.1) and 88 people supported into paid employment (Graph 7.2).

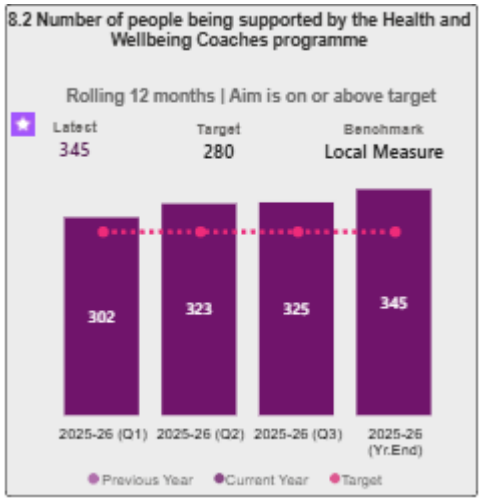




No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-08	Promote good mental health, prevent early deaths, and improve healthy life expectancy by tackling health inequalities and addressing the key risk factors of health through preventative activity	Mar 2029	**Good**

Throughout the year, Live Life Better Derbyshire (LLBD) exceeded its target, completing 9,913 health and wellbeing MOTs (Graph 8.1). In addition, the LLBD stop smoking programme supported a record number of people to attempt quitting, with over 3,700 quit dates set. Between Quarter 1 and Quarter 3, 513 individuals undertook a Fibroscan liver test at Chesterfield Royal Hospital, 350 of these were identified as potentially alcohol dependant and 172 accepted a referral to specialist alcohol services. The Derbyshire Self-harm and Suicide Prevention Strategic Framework 2026-30 was launched. The Health and Wellbeing Board undertook early scoping work to consider its future role within the emerging Neighbourhood Health Framework under the NHS 10 Year Plan, focusing on understanding expectations, strategic oversight responsibilities and Board development priorities. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), which provides evidence on the health and wellbeing needs of Derbyshire's population to inform planning and decision making, recorded 1,900 active users by 19 March 2026 in Quarter 4. It published key topic summaries for all District and Boroughs of Derbyshire, strengthening its role as a shared evidence base. Throughout 2025-26 the Health and Wellbeing Team have had 246 new introductions and are meeting and exceeding the shared agreement target of 60%, currently for Quarter 4, the number of introductions that have a shared agreement is 77%. The team continue to effectively coach the people of Derbyshire allowing them to achieve their good life goal.





No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-09	Enable the best start in life by working across the Council and with partners to enable families to thrive	Mar 2027	**Good**

During Quarter 4, the Derby and Derbyshire Healthy Pregnancy campaign was launched to raise awareness and promote consistent messages to support healthy pregnancies. Access to the infant feeding training package was extended to enable health visitors to undertake the training, strengthening workforce knowledge and confidence in supporting families. Following its launch earlier in the year, the Emergency Infant Formular Pathway was accessed by a number of professionals supporting families in need. Derbyshire Family Help continued to deliver targeted interventions in line with expectations. In 2025-26 the implementation of the 0-19 Public Health Nursing Service transformation programme remained a key focus, with progress made in preparing and embedding new ways of working. Other key developments included the development and launch of the preconception toolkit, alongside ongoing work to develop the Best Start in Life Plan and mobilise Family Hubs.

Place: Prosperous, green and sustainable places with opportunities for all

No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-10	Support the development of energy security, energy efficiency and clean energy through the activities of the Council	Dec 2032	**Good**

The Council remains committed to delivering and supporting initiatives that improve energy efficiency and generate cost savings for the Council, as well as for Derbyshire's residents, communities, and local economy. This includes improving the energy performance of Council buildings, supporting the generation and use of clean energy across the county, and working with partners to enhance the energy efficiency of homes.

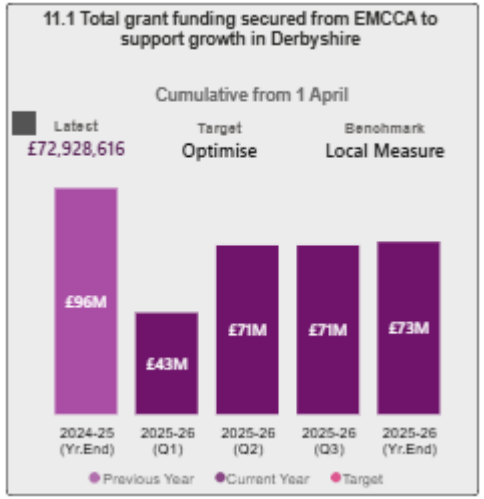
As part of this work, the Council also supports practical measures that help people travel more efficiently and sustainably, including public transport and active travel, which can reduce energy use while supporting health and wellbeing.

Although the Council does not have responsibility for energy generation, transmission, or distribution, it continues to work collaboratively with providers to support the delivery of secure and sustainable energy supplies.

During 2025–26, this work included projects supported by GB Energy at two school sites and the development of a clean energy facility at the former Williamthorpe Colliery site. The Council also contributed to the East Midlands Councils Retrofit Strategy and continues to work with neighbouring authorities to deliver improvements in home energy efficiency across the region.

No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-11	Work with East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) to drive a higher quality of life through investing in the Derbyshire economy, including the creation of a new regional transport organisation	Mar 2029	**Good**

The Local Growth Fund allocation of £107m was agreed for the EMCCA region over 2026/27 - 2029/30. This is the funding to deliver the Local Growth Plan priority sectors and is a mixture of revenue and capital. Derbyshire is continuing to work with EMCCA, and the total amount of secured grant funding from EMCCA to support growth in Derbyshire is £72,928,616 (Graph 11.1). This has ensured that Derbyshire County Council has been able to extend the delivery of the Business Start-up for 2025-26, supporting 474 entrepreneurs, creating 60 businesses and 112 jobs. The Council has delivered a range of inward investment activities, including a promotional campaign, an inward investment event, and updated marketing materials ahead of the event held at Toyota. The Council also sent a delegation to the UK Real Estate and Infrastructure Investment Forum (UKREiiF) in May 2026 to promote Derbyshire's opportunities. In addition, the funding has supported the development of new active travel routes, which will enhance connectivity and contribute to the growth of the visitor economy, a key sector for Derbyshire.



Significant progress has been made in improving public transport across Derbyshire during the year, alongside the successful transfer of the Public Transport function to the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) on 1 February 2026.

The Bus Service Improvement Programme has delivered a range of tangible benefits for passengers. This includes bus priority measures now in place at 123 out of 130 junctions, alongside 37 highway improvement schemes to support more reliable services. A roadwork notification system has also been rolled out to all operators, helping to minimise disruption.

Access and affordability have been strengthened, with a 196% increase in young people's travel following the introduction of a £1.50 flat fare through the b-line card scheme. In addition, 601 Companion Bus Passes have been issued, and use of the Wayfarer multi-operator ticket has grown significantly, with trips increasing to over 15,000.

Passenger information and engagement have also improved. A new Travel Derbyshire website has been launched, 471 real-time information displays are now active, and Bus Champions have engaged with over 10,600 residents at 164 events, providing personalised travel advice to many users.

Bus patronage has continued to recover, reaching 18.7 million journeys, and overall passenger satisfaction remains high at 91%, outperforming national and comparable semi-rural areas.

EMCCA and Derbyshire County Council continue to work closely together to complete remaining projects, ensuring that residents benefit from further improvements to public transport in the coming year.

No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-12	Deliver a safe, effective, efficient and innovative highways service including the completion of the full transformation of the Highways Service itself	Mar 2026	**Review**

The County Council is investing more capital than ever in maintaining and improving the highways network. Funding from the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) has enabled additional investment in carriageway maintenance, retaining walls, and landslip repairs, as well as feasibility work to develop future programmes. Delivery outturn for 2025/26 totals £61.5m which is a 62% increase on the previous year. Our professional services partner is supporting the service with specialist skills and additional capacity.

This increased investment has allowed a full review of preventative workstreams and the introduction of a clearer, three-tier approach to carriageway defect response. This has strengthened our ability to address high-priority defects by ensuring we apply the right fix first time. Throughout 2025-26, overall performance has continued to improve although there was a decrease in our response times during the winter months (Graphs 12,1, 12.2 and 12.3). This was expected as resourcing is deployed to winter maintenance and work is impacted by the weather conditions. Monthly trends show more defects being reported in January and February also impacting on response times. The data further shows that during winter, we continue to prioritise the most urgent issues, focusing on defects that need fixing within 32 hours or 9 days, whilst during the summer months more repairs are completed. (Defects completed by category graph).

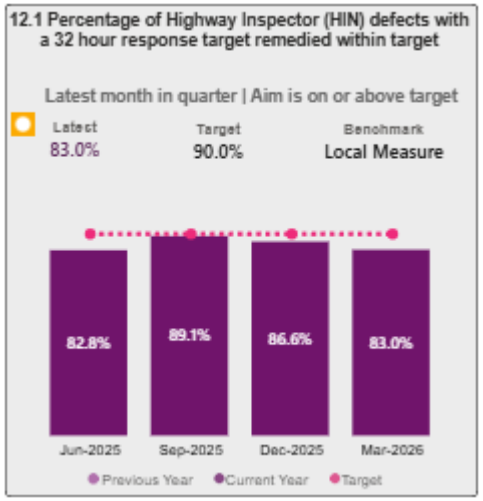
The total number of potholes repaired in quarter 4 increased (16,010 in quarter 3 to 18,842 in quarter 4), and a review of the annual position for total repairs shows an improvement on the previous year; 2025-26 at 66,784 compared to 51,021 in 2024-25 which is an increase of around 31%. This improvement is also reflected in the total metres squared of roads that have been resurfaced which shows an increase in the total from 820,000 metres^2 in 2024-25 to 930,000 metres^2 in 2025-26 (Graph 12.8). The work undertaken on the road network during the year has started to show in the results of the annual condition surveys which all show the percentage of roads where maintenance should be considered being within target (Graphs 12.5, 12.6 and 12.7). In the annual National and Highways transportation survey carried out during summer 2025 Derbyshire residents satisfaction increased slightly to 48% however this remains below the target and benchmark of 50%. (Graph 12.4)

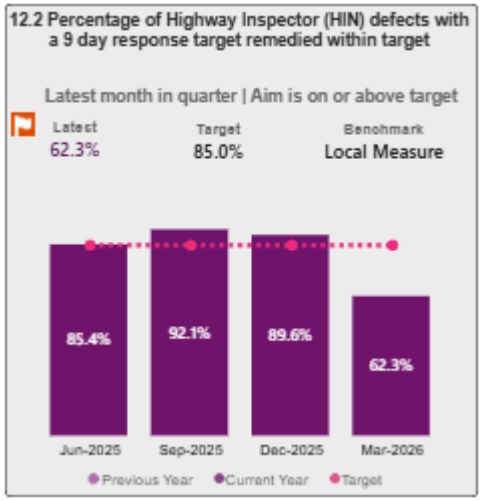
Road safety delivery remains an area of focus. Work with the Derbyshire Road Safety Partnership will include a review of the 2030 casualty reduction target during 2026.

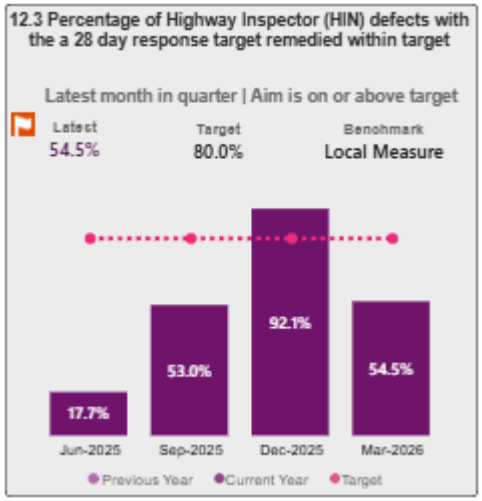
Highways transformation work is progressing, with new processes and ways of working becoming embedded and supporting overall service efficiency.

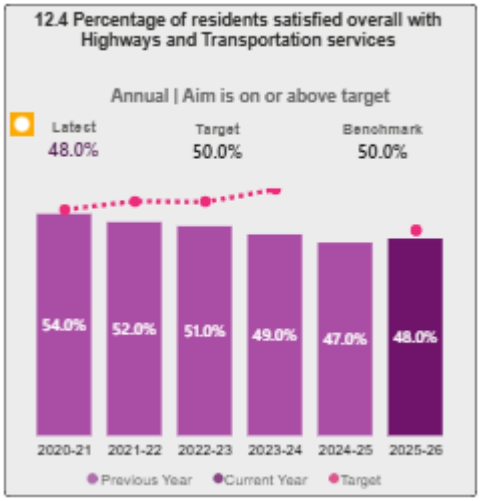
These improvements build on the wider service transformation journey. The external peer review in October 2024 rated the service 'satisfactory' across all areas - an improvement from 'requires improvement' in 2021 - with a projected trajectory to 'good' by 2026-27.

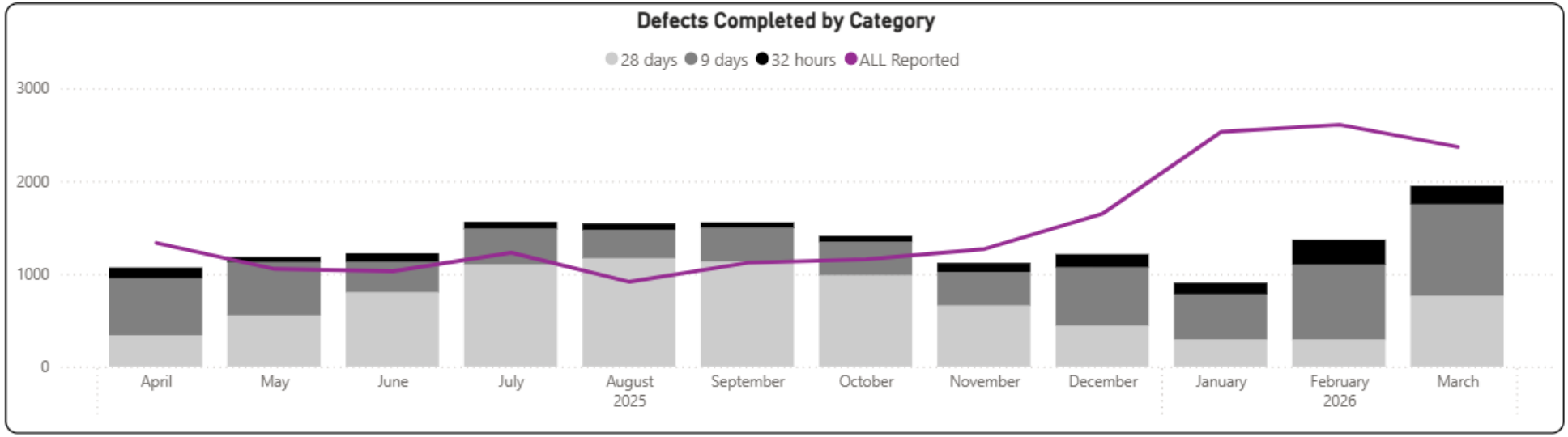
To summarise, performance continues to improve, with a significant increase in pothole repairs and resurfacing compared to last year. The service is also benefiting from specialist support and ongoing transformation, helping to drive efficiency and better outcomes.

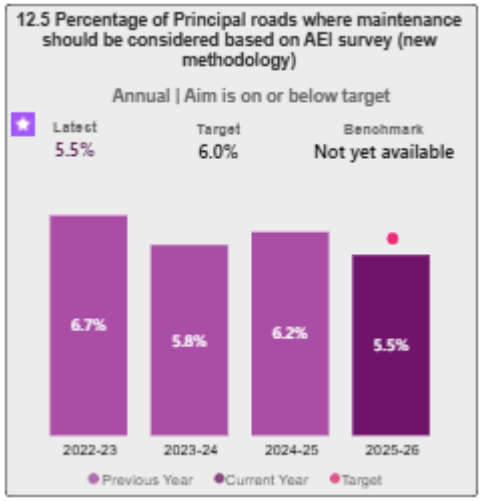


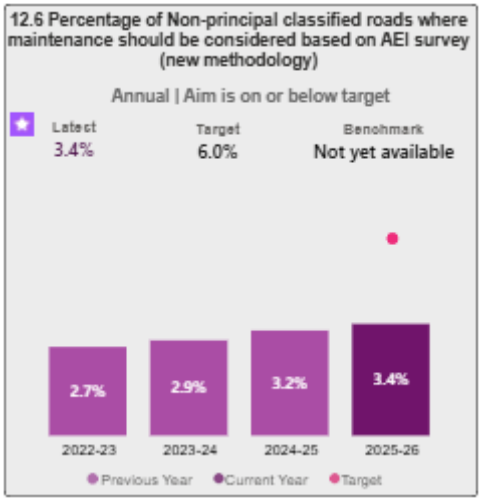


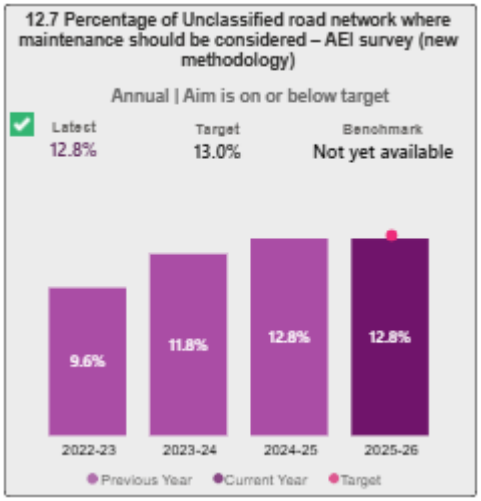


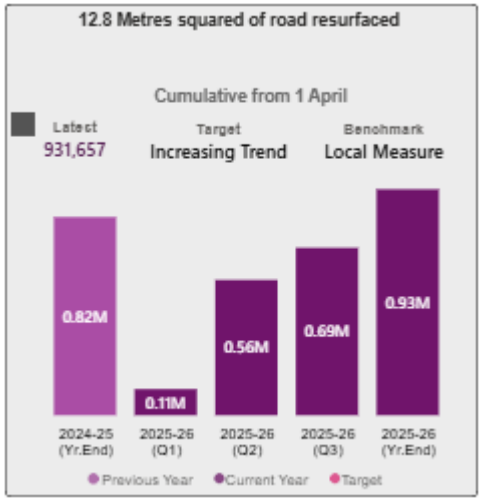



Defects Completed by Category
28 days
9 days
32 hours
ALL Reported
3000
2000
1000
0
April
May
June
July
August 2025
September
October
November
December
January
February 2026
March


12.5 Percentage of Principal roads where maintenance should be considered based on AEI survey (new methodology)
Annual | Aim is on or below target
Latest 5.5%
Target 6.0%
Benchmark Not yet available
6.7%
5.8%
6.2%
5.5%
2022-23
2023-24
2024-25
2025-26
Previous Year
Current Year
Target


12.6 Percentage of Non-principal classified roads where maintenance should be considered based on AEI survey (new methodology)
Annual | Aim is on or below target
Latest 3.4%
Target 6.0%
Benchmark Not yet available
2.7%
2.9%
3.2%
3.4%
2022-23
2023-24
2024-25
2025-26
Previous Year
Current Year
Target


12.7 Percentage of Unclassified road network where maintenance should be considered – AEI survey (new methodology)
Annual | Aim is on or below target
Latest 12.8%
Target 13.0%
Benchmark Not yet available
9.6%
11.8%
12.8%
12.8%
2022-23
2023-24
2024-25
2025-26
Previous Year
Current Year
Target


12.8 Metres squared of road resurfaced
Cumulative from 1 April
Latest 931,657
Target Increasing Trend
Benchmark Local Measure
0.82M
0.11M
0.56M
0.69M
0.93M
2024-25 (Yr.End)
2025-26 (Q1)
2025-26 (Q2)
2025-26 (Q3)
2025-26 (Yr.End)
Previous Year
Current Year
Target

No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-13	Leading the stewardship of the natural and built environment and delivering national policy and regulatory requirements relating to waste, nature recovery and heritage	Dec 2029	**Good**

Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

Good progress has been made in putting the right foundations in place for delivering the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Recruitment for a dedicated LNRS Officer was completed in Quarter 4 and, this role will be key to driving the next phase of delivery.

Looking ahead, recruitment of an LNRS Chair is planned to provide challenge and drive forward delivery. Draft terms of reference for the LNRS Steering Group have also been developed and will be finalised with stakeholders once these key roles are in place, ensuring a strong and coordinated approach.

Once established, the LNRS will help deliver tangible benefits for Derbyshire communities, including improved biodiversity, better access to nature, and wider environmental benefits such as improved air and water quality. This work will also support community wellbeing and contribute to creating more resilient and sustainable places to live and work.

Library Strategy

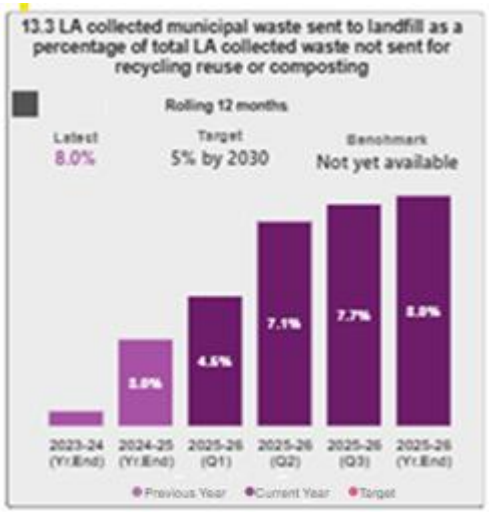
All of the actions and savings targets linked to Year 2 of the Library Strategy have been implemented and successfully completed in line with its programmed timescales. Notably, savings have been over-achieved in 2025-26, with the target of £156,000 being exceeded by £94,862. The savings are recurring and will contribute to reduce the net pressure on the Council's finances. Quarter 4 works regarding the purchase of new mobile libraries and the recasting of the outreach services will continue into 2026-27.

Waste

Food waste has been successfully tendered and the contract award ahead of services commencement. Separate collections of food waste are in place for five of the eight Districts and Boroughs with the remaining three rolling out over the course of the year. Participation levels remain a key driver for reducing cost and improving performance and will be monitored over the course of the year.

13.1 Percentage of all LA collected Household waste actually recycled, reused or composted
Rolling 12 months
Latest
47.4%
Target
55% by 2030
Benchmark
Not yet available
2023-24 (Yr.End)
2024-25 (Yr.End)
2025-26 (Q1)
2025-26 (Q2)
2025-26 (Q3)
2025-26 (Yr.End)
Previous Year
Current Year
Target

13.2 Percentage of all Household waste delivered to HWRCs that is recycled, reused or composted
Rolling 12 months
Latest
62.8%
Target
70% by 2030
Benchmark
Not yet available
2023-24 (Yr.End)
2024-25 (Yr.End)
2025-26 (Q1)
2025-26 (Q2)
2025-26 (Q3)
2025-26 (Yr.End)
Previous Year
Current Year
Target


13.3 LA collected municipal waste sent to landfill as a percentage of total LA collected waste not sent for recycling reuse or composting
Rolling 12 months
Latest
8.0%
Target
5% by 2030
Benchmark
Not yet available
7.1%
7.7%
2023-24 (Yr.End)
2024-25 (Yr.End)
2025-26 (Q1)
2025-26 (Q2)
2025-26 (Q3)
2025-26 (Yr.End)
Previous Year
Current Year
Target

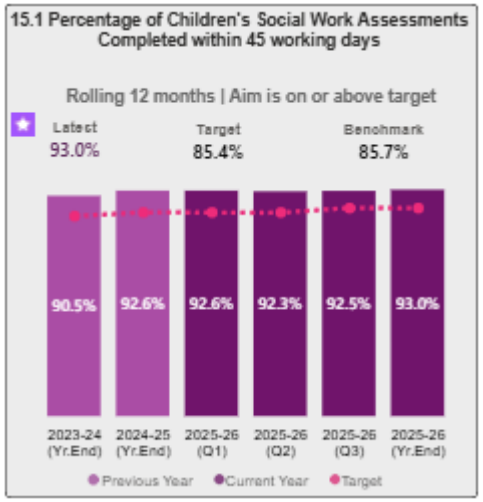
The Council: A resident focused, efficient and effective organisation delivering value for money

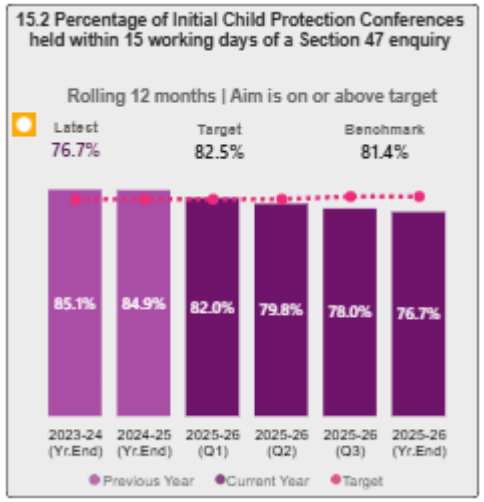
No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-14	Develop new operating models to provide enhanced services to children and families, strengthen workforce development and explore commercial opportunities	Apr 2027	**Good**

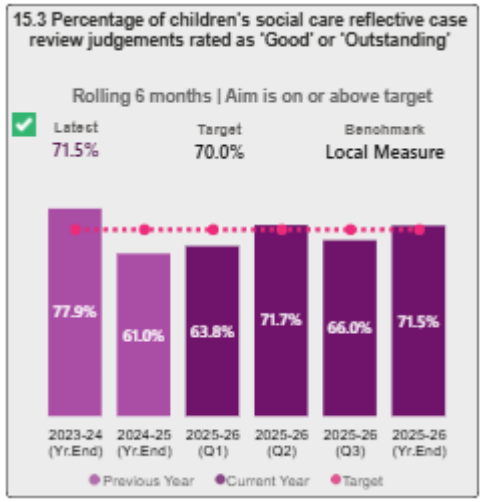
Good progress has been made throughout the year in mobilising and delivering the Families First Partnership Programme, representing a significant reform to service delivery across Family Help, safeguarding and wider partnership arrangements. Although workforce pressures remain, the foundations for a more stable and responsive fostering service are now firmly in place going into 2026-27. The new strengthened and co-produced Inclusion Framework is now complete and will be rolled out to schools in September 2026. Consultation on the proposed new Transport Policy has now taken place. This is due to be considered by Cabinet in May 2026. Good progress has been achieved this year with detailed scoping on some areas of our traded services including the Council's catering service and adult education with the intention being for delivery of the changes agreed following consultation by September 2026. There has been a strong focus on leadership succession planning, workforce planning, and workforce development across priority areas including Children’s Homes, Social Care and SEND services.

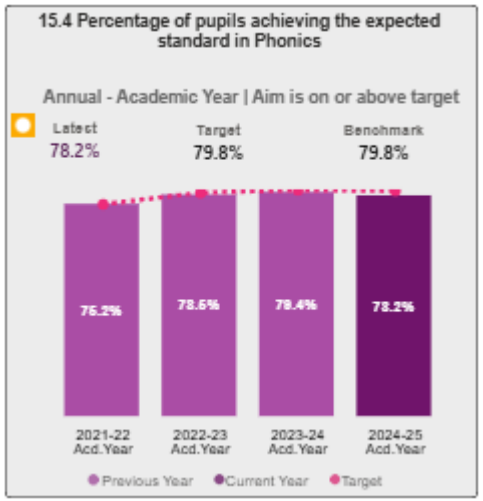
No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-15	Strengthen the effectiveness of strategic partnerships to drive improved outcomes for children	Apr 2028	**Good**

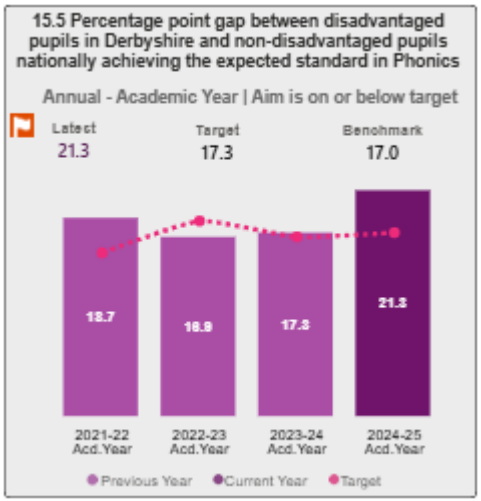
Strong progress has been made in strengthening strategic partnerships across Children's Services. The Families First Partnership Programme has provided a unifying framework for collaboration, underpinned by robust governance, shared priorities and clear accountability. Significant developments include the enhanced Corporate Parenting Strategy, strengthened Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) partnership governance through SEND Improvement and Assurance Board (SIAB), improved education partnership structures and continued progress in Early Years/Best Start strategic collaboration. These improvements collectively provide stronger system leadership, greater coherence across partners and improved conditions to deliver better outcomes for children and families. In March, we held our annual engagement meeting with Ofsted. This was a positive and constructive conversation, recognising the progress being made across Children's Services and the strength of our Family Help and Children's Social Care journey. The discussion reflected the hard work taking place across all teams and Derbyshire's commitment to improving outcomes and experiences for children, young people and families. We continue to focus on supporting all children and young people to achieve well regardless of their starting points.

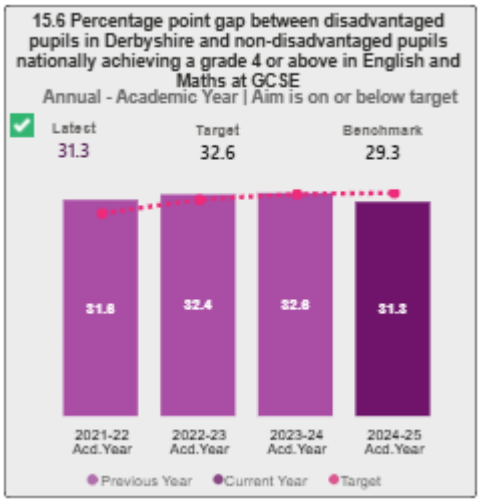






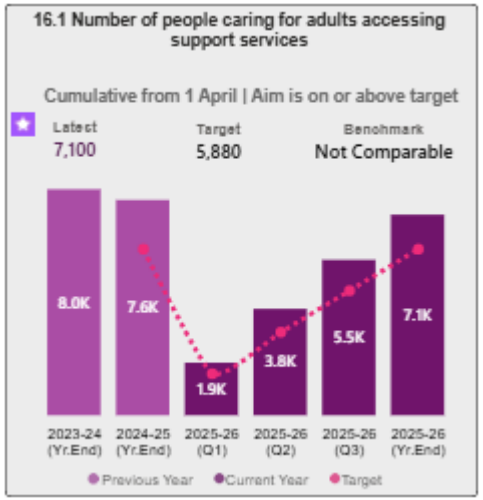






No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-16	Recognise and value carers and our social care workforce and the contribution they make	Mar 2026	**Good**

This year, we have supported our Social Care workforce by utilising digital innovation to support with note taking and transcriptions. It is anticipated that this will reduce the admin time requirements on our workforce and improve the quality of conversations with Derbyshire residents. In March, we celebrated the latest apprenticeship qualifications across both Adults and Childrens to recognise the hard work and contribution of our apprentices. This quarter 1,598 carers have accessed support through the Derbyshire Carers Association. Overall, in 2025/26, 7,100 people access these services. This is significantly higher than our target of 5,880 by 1220 people (Graph 16.1). Derbyshire Carers Association, who deliver our commissioned All Age Carers Service, were awarded the prestigious Carers Trust Excellence for Carers Quality Standard in 2025. This is a nationally recognised benchmark that celebrates outstanding support for unpaid Carers.



No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-17	Embed coproduction to strengthen true partnership between people who use Adult Social Care services, carers and professionals to deliver better outcomes	Mar 2027	**Good**

We have continued to work closely with colleagues from IMPACT (Improving Adult Care Together) in partnership with the University of Birmingham. This work is helping us better understand what makes the biggest difference to people's experiences of Adult Social Care, using research, evidence and the views of people with lived experience.

Through this programme, we are testing new ways of working with practitioners and local people, including using real-life case examples, reflective learning and co-design activities. The learning from this work is already influencing how we think about service improvement, helping us design support that is more personalised, strengths-based and focused on what matters most to people.

The outcomes from the IMPACT programme will continue to inform how we improve our services and how we involve people, families and carers more meaningfully in shaping them. A key focus is ensuring that services are designed with people, rather than for them.

Alongside this, we continue to review research and evidence from national bodies to identify new approaches that address the power imbalance that can exist in our interactions with people who have lived experience. This includes improving how we listen to people, share information, and involve them as equal partners in decisions about their support and care.

No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-18	Improve Derbyshire County Council's customer experience and journeys through our ways of working and community engagement leading to transformational change and continuous improvement of our services	Mar 2027	**Review**

Work to understand and improve the customer experience has been put on hold until a partner is appointed for the Council's Operating Model Efficiency Programme. This work is now expected to take place in 2026–27. It will focus on improving how customers move from first contact (through the call centre or website) to the teams that deliver services, such as highways maintenance.

Call handling scripts for Adult Services have been reviewed and updated, with work planned to review Children's Services next. These changes have contributed to a reduction in average handling times.

Complaints handling has been centralised, and work is underway to create a single, clear point of entry for complaints, making it easier for residents to contact the council and improving consistency in responses.

No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-19	Fully explore and implement the opportunity to create a unitary structure for Derbyshire through Local Government Reorganisation as set out in the English Devolution Bill	Apr 2027	**Good**

Following the Council's submission in November 2025 the Council has been undertaking LGR preparation work, which consists of activities which can be undertaken before a government decision is made. This includes working with Derbyshire Councils on joint governance structures, data cleansing, data sharing and data management and agreeing to interim programme support from external providers.

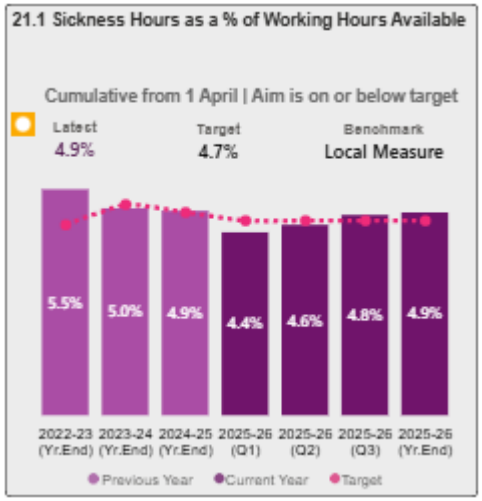
No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-20	Deliver our four year budget savings programme to achieve financial sustainability with a focus on delivering £37.5m savings in 2025-26 (year 1to be refreshed annually)	Mar 2026	**Review**

- The Council has delivered £35.172m of savings in 2025-26 (93.8% of the target).
- The 2026/27 budget has been set without reliance on reserves, with reserves strengthened to £35m, an improvement from £25m the previous year.
- Financial performance has improved significantly, with a revenue underspend of £2m, compared to significant overspends in previous years.
- A major transformation programme is underway to redesign the Council's operating model, improve efficiency and reduce costs, with forecast savings of £19.2m to £42.7m by 2028 and beyond.
- A proposal has been submitted for local government reorganisation, setting out plans for a single unitary council to improve efficiency, accountability and value for residents.

No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-21	Build a skilled, resilient and flexible workforce that can support the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives and priorities	Mar 2029	**Review**

Work to check and confirm the Council's staffing structure is almost finished. This has given us a clearer and more reliable picture of how many staff we have and where they sit in the organisation. The aim is to make sure HR and financial information match properly, so the Council can plan its workforce more effectively ahead of Local Government Reorganisation.

The proposed pay strategy was not progressed because it could not be afforded at this time and needs to be considered in the context of wider local government reorganisation once new structures are confirmed.



The HR team has worked closely with senior leaders to support major changes, including bringing services together and improving efficiency. This has been done in a collaborative way with trade unions, focusing on practical solutions that consider the needs of staff.

A new Sickness and Absence Management Policy has been introduced to help managers and employees understand how the Council supports staff to return to work where possible, while also reducing the impact of absence on services for residents. At the end of the year, sickness levels were 4.9%, which is slightly above the target and higher than the previous quarter. However, this remains an improvement on earlier years (5% in 2023–24 and 5.5% in 2022–23) (Graph 21.1).

Accident rates remain low compared to similar organisations. Work is ongoing to make it easier for staff to report accidents, near misses and other incidents.

No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-22	Improve efficiency and integration across the Council through the centralisation and redesign of performance, contracts and procurement and digital and financial transformation	Dec 2027	**Good**

The Council continues to make good progress on its work to become more efficient and improve how it operates.

Work on the One Council Transformation and Efficiency Programme has moved forward, and the process to appoint a partner to help deliver the Operating Model Efficiency Programme is nearly complete. Bids are currently being assessed, and, subject to final checks, a successful partner is expected to be chosen in the first quarter of 2026–27.

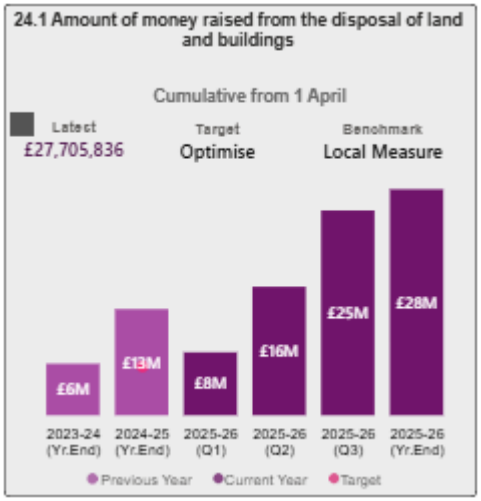
The Finance Transformation Programme has also made good progress, particularly by simplifying financial processes. At the same time, the Digital Transformation Programme continues to deliver strong improvements, helping services work better and strengthening how the Council operates.

No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-23	Support and deliver increased efficiency and effectiveness through best value service reviews of non-statutory charged for services to achieve service improvement, redesign and/or different delivery models including opportunities for digitisation and automation	Mar 2027	**Good**

Early work on this strategic objective is moving forward and is on track to deliver benefits by March 2027. A Design and Implementation Partner will support the Council's Operating Model Efficiency Programme (SO-22) and will lead a series of Best Value Service Reviews as part of this work. These reviews are expected to start in the first quarter of 2026–27 with improvement plans implemented subsequently.

No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-24	Transform the Council's property portfolio, so that it is affordable, sustainable and consists of only those assets required to deliver council priorities	Dec 2029	**Good**

The new Asset Management Strategy approved by Cabinet retains a focus on challenging the reason for holding every asset and disposing of assets no longer aligned to the council's strategic objectives. At year end 32 assets have been disposed of, resulting in capital receipts of £27.7m (Graph 24.1). Pro rata savings from disposed of assets amounts to £215k, with the full value anticipated in excess of £500k in 2026-27. Savings from closed buildings, including lease exits and mothballed assets amount to £997k in year. Work is ongoing to consolidate staff into the new Heanor hub. The industrial portfolio has been disposed of, relieving the Council of a high risk legacy portfolio.



No.	Strategic Objective	Expected Completion	Progress
SO-25	Redesign and implement a more efficient Business Services model to align with our more effective and efficient 'One Council' operating model and achieving £2.6m savings	April 2027	**Good**

A lot of progress was made on this objective in the final quarter of 2025–26. The first improvement cycle, which focused on bringing data together and managing vacancies more effectively, has been completed and delivered £1 million in savings, as planned.

The second improvement cycle, which looked at having a more consistent approach to services and simplifying management structures, completed its design stage and moved into implementation. This work has now finished and is expected to deliver the remaining £1.6 million of savings in the first quarter of 2026–27.

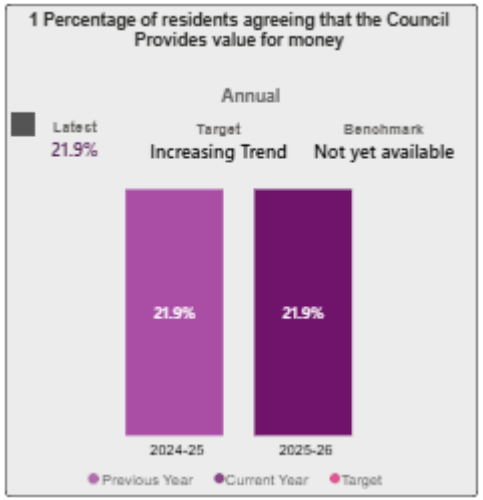
Attention will now move to the third and final improvement cycle in 2026–27. This will focus on simplifying Business Services processes, starting with the introduction of themed teams to handle common tasks in the first quarter of 2026–27.

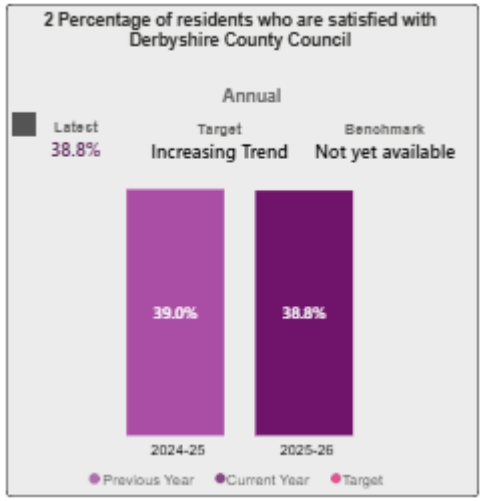
Significant progress has taken place on delivering this objective during 25/26. The new centralised Business Services function has introduced a new streamlined leadership and management model, which creates consistency of offer across the council, enables the foundation for an improved agile and flexible support offer aligned to our ‘One Council’ approach, and releases efficiencies for the Council of 2.6m.

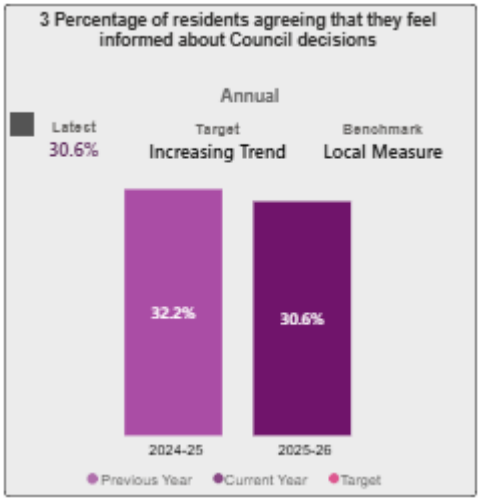
Overarching Measures

The Council's Annual Your Council Your Voice (YCYV) Survey was carried out during June - August 2025. Results from key measures from this survey are set out below and show that residents' views have remained fairly consistent over the past two years. In 2025/26, 21.9% of respondents felt the Council provides value for money, 38.8% were satisfied with the Council overall, and 30.6% said they feel informed about Council decisions. These figures are broadly similar to last year, with only small changes. Also consistent from the previous year is that a significant proportion of residents are undecided, selecting "neither agree nor disagree".

While this shows some stability, the results are not yet where the Council wants them to be. Significant focus is being placed on transforming how the Council operates to improve customer experience and efficiency. Alongside this, priority programmes are underway to improve services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and to improve road conditions, two areas that are of key concern to residents. As set out in this report, early improvements are beginning to be seen in both these priority areas.







Note that whilst these questions were asked in surveys prior to 2024-25, new methodology was introduced from this date therefore data from previous years is not comparable.