

## Appendix A

**Sefton MBC**

# **Corporate Performance**

## **Summary Performance Report 2023-24 Quarter 4**

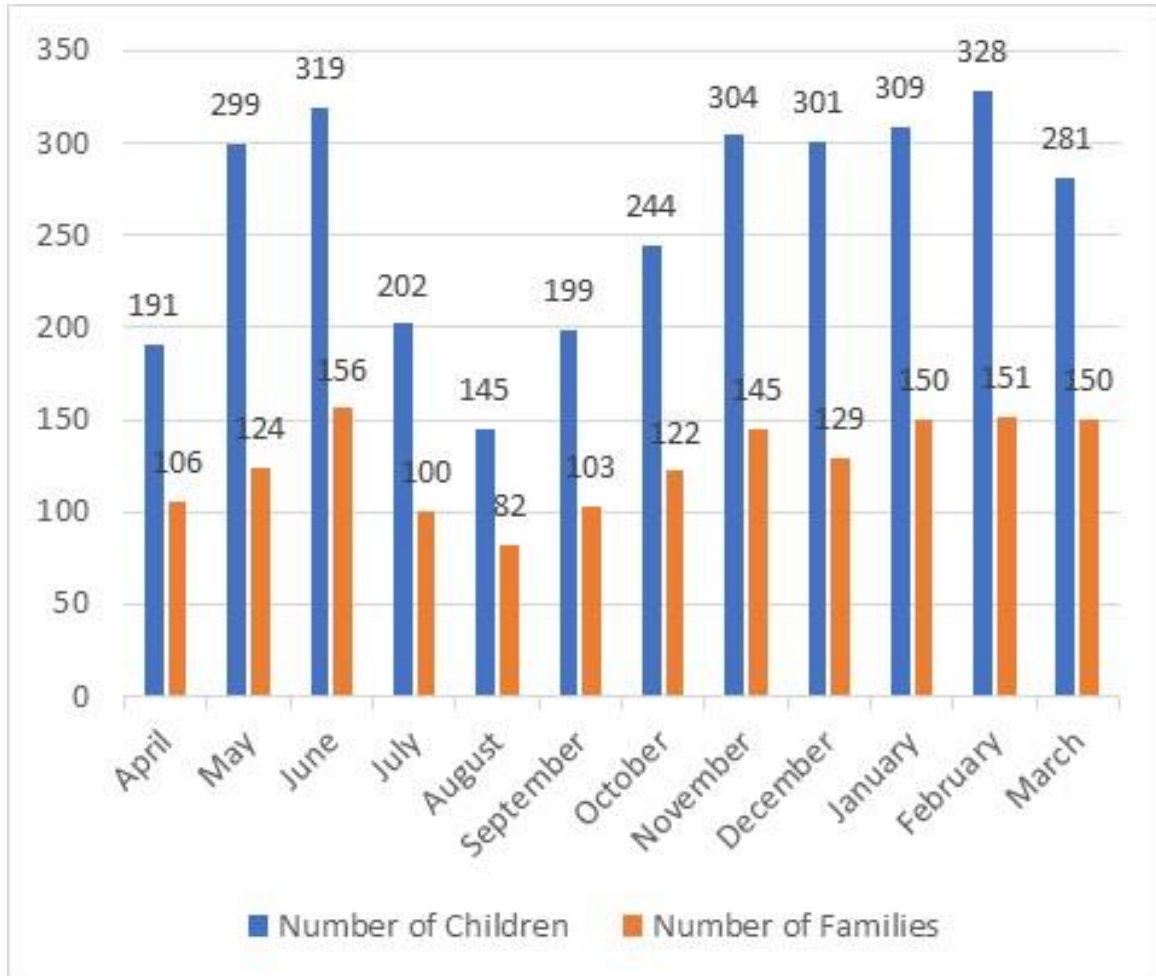
Strategic Support  
Policy, Performance & Business Intelligence.

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## Children & Young People – “Improving outcomes for children and their families.”

### Early Help (EH) cases open

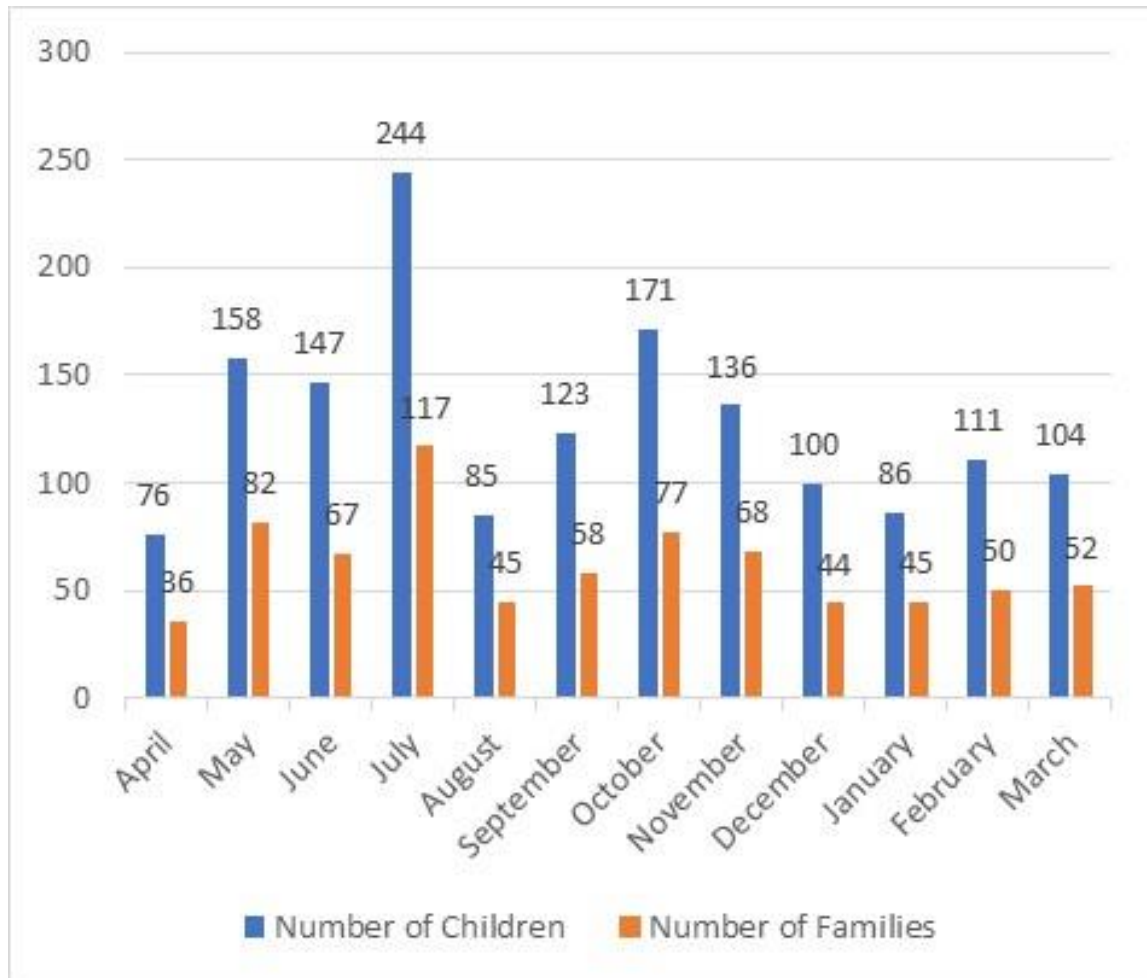


Between January and the end of March 2024 (Q4), our Early Help Service opened the cases for 918 children (448 families). 70% of cases were held at the Family Wellbeing Centres, 10% in Team Around School, 13% MASH & TFS and the remaining 7% were commissioned or held in schools.

Top 3 reasons for opening cases were: Parenting Support (43%), Social & Emotional Difficulties (29%) and Behaviour Difficulties (16%).

Between January and the end of March 2023 (Q4), there were 4940 contacts received through the Integrated Front Door, which represents on average 1647 contacts per month.

### Early Help (EH) cases closed with positive outcome(s) achieved

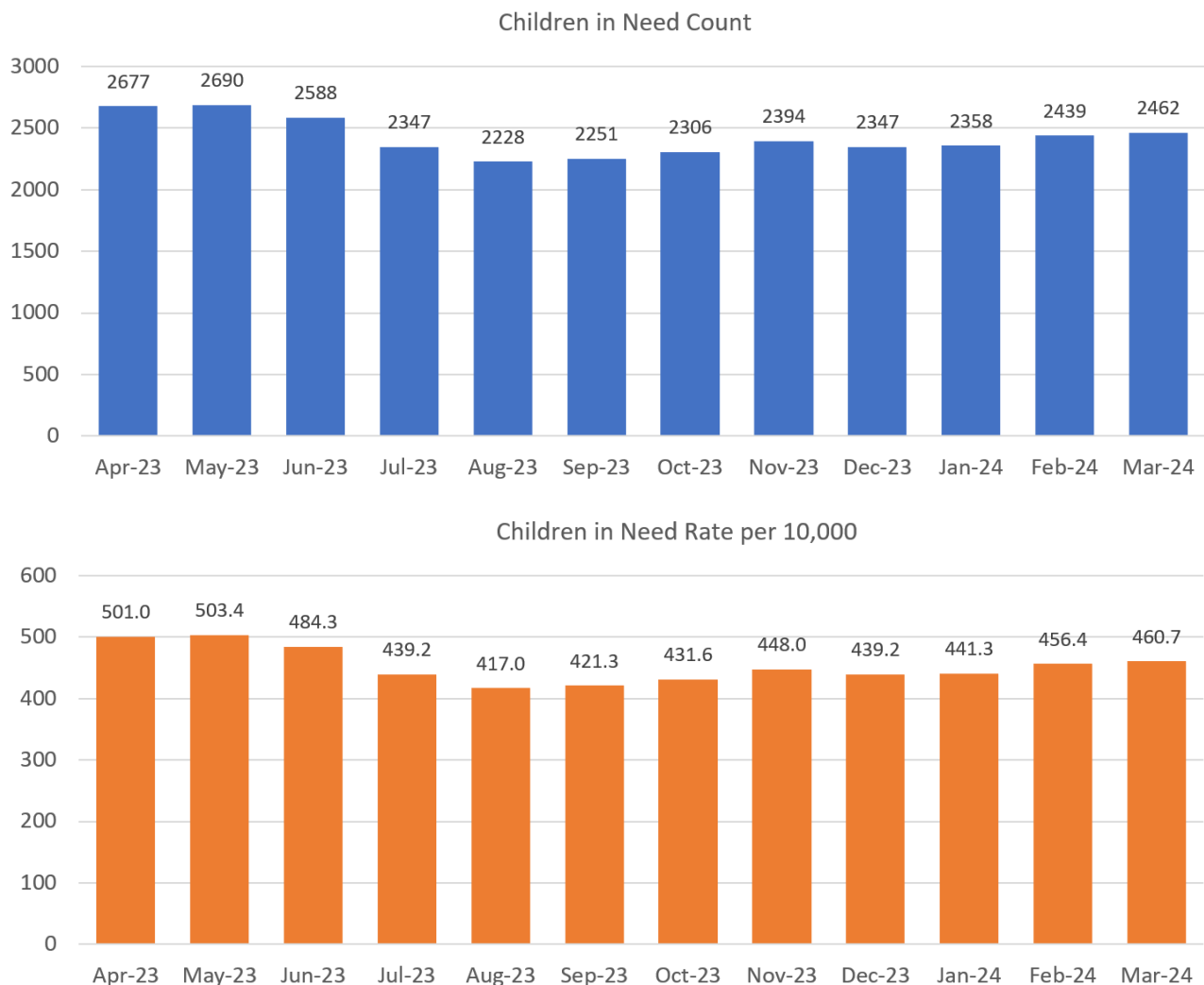


Between January and the end of March 2023 (Q4), our Early Help Service closed cases for 819 children (381 families), which resulted in a positive outcome. 38.6% of families reported that they achieved all the outcomes set by the family to address all their identified needs/difficulties/challenges. The remaining 61.4% of our families reported that early help, support and interventions had significantly helped to address most of their needs.

The service continues to promote the Council’s Early Help Strategy and the whole family approach, which encompasses all stakeholders working with children and families. This includes Health, Police, Education, Children’s Social Care, Local Authority Early Help, Voluntary Community and Faith organisations and the wider public. The new Team around the school (TAS) initiative is now being piloted across 5 clusters of schools, with multiple agencies working together to support families at the earliest opportunity in a way that empowers families, builds on their strengths and develops their resilience, supporting families with parenting, child development, attendance, sleep, health concerns, speech and language, money worries, emotional health and wellbeing, managing behaviour and drug or alcohol misuse. It is not anticipated that the TAS initiative will reduce the demand for Early Help; it may increase demand and recorded involvement with families. However, it should contribute positively to improving the reported satisfaction of outcomes.

The reconfiguration of Early into our multi-agency based and virtual hubs is online to launch in July of 2024. The Family Hubs will be an accessible and community based and virtual provision for those families who require support outside of statutory services. The aim of these hubs is to bring multi-agency services to families as and when they need them and reduce the need for acute services.

## Children in Need



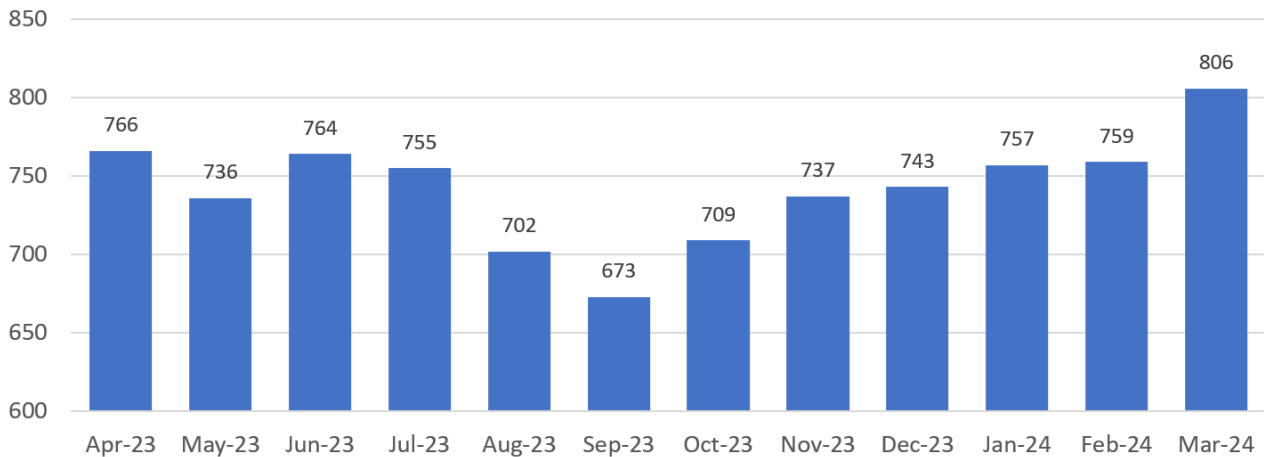
A child in need is one assessed by Children’s Services as needing services, including family support and Early Help Services as set out in Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. The latest government national annual data published in October 2023 identifies that in 2023, over 403,000 children were classed as in need, a rate of 342.7 Children in need per 10,000 children. Rates per 10,000 children are calculated based on ONS (Office for National Statistics) mid-year population estimates for children aged 0 to 17 years. As of March 2023, the comparable Northwest rate was 386.8 Children in need per 10,000 children and the statistical Neighbour comparable rate was 390.15 Children in need per 10,000 children, whilst Sefton’s rate was 516.8 Children in need per 10,000 children, higher than national, regional, and statistical Neighbours.

The Children in need rate for Sefton (460.7/10,000) at the end of March 2024 has decreased by 10% compared to 516.8/10,000 in March 2023. Sefton’s latest rate remains

25% higher than Northwest (369/10,000 from the RIG Q3 23/24) and 34% higher than the national rate (343/10,000).

The launch of Family Hubs in Sefton is expected to support families outside statutory services and will bring our numbers of Child in Need cases in line with regional and national figures.

### Number of Children on a Child in Need Plan



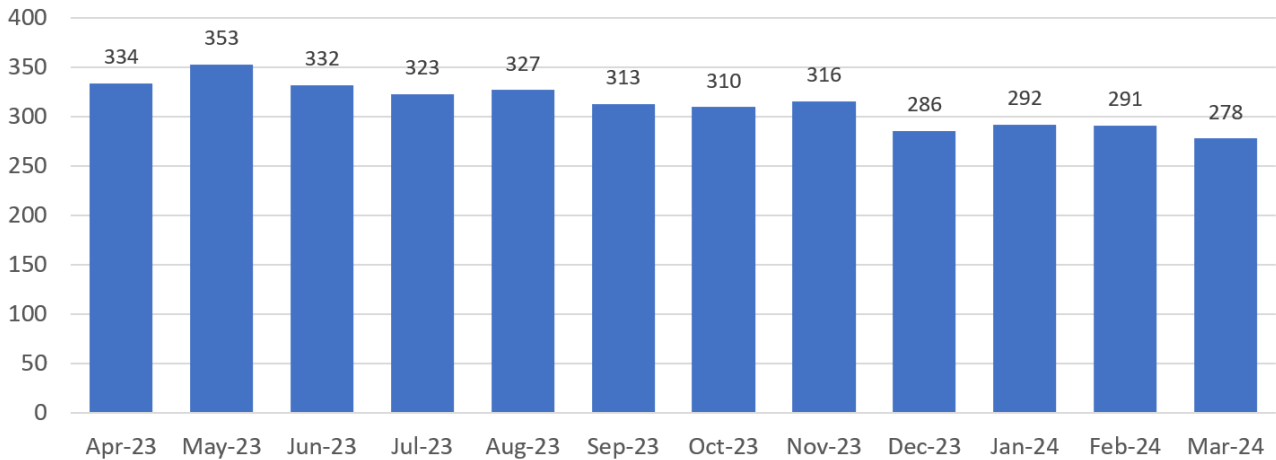
At the end of March 2024, there were 806 children in Sefton open to Child in Need (CiN) services, support, and interventions, with a plan, which represents a rate of 151/10,000 children (0-17). This is higher than the comparators for England, a rate of 90/10,000 children, Northwest, a rate of 95/10,000 and statistical Neighbours, a rate of 95/10,000 (Data-to-Insights/RIG).

There has been an increase from September to March 2024 in the number of children in need (0-17yrs) with a child in need plan. The current rate of children subject to CiN planning is 5% higher compared to last year. The reductions have been caused by an increasing number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan or with an episode of Care ending and being subject to Child in Need plan instead.

The conversion rate of contacts to referrals remains at 20% from the last quarter, which is in line with the regional figure. With the number of front door contacts static at approximately 1250 per month, the lower conversion rate means approximately 100 fewer young people access social care and instead they are accessing Early Help Services from the partnership or signposting to relevant resources to support families.

Children in Need also includes those children who receive services due to their complex needs. The introduction of our care package review hub aims to offer services for those families who do not wish to be under statutory procedures such as having an allocated Social Worker or regular visits and reviews. As we continue to develop this offer, we expect more of our children with complex needs to receive services in the care package review hub and therefore we will see a further reduction in our CIN numbers.

## Number of Children on a Child Protection Plan

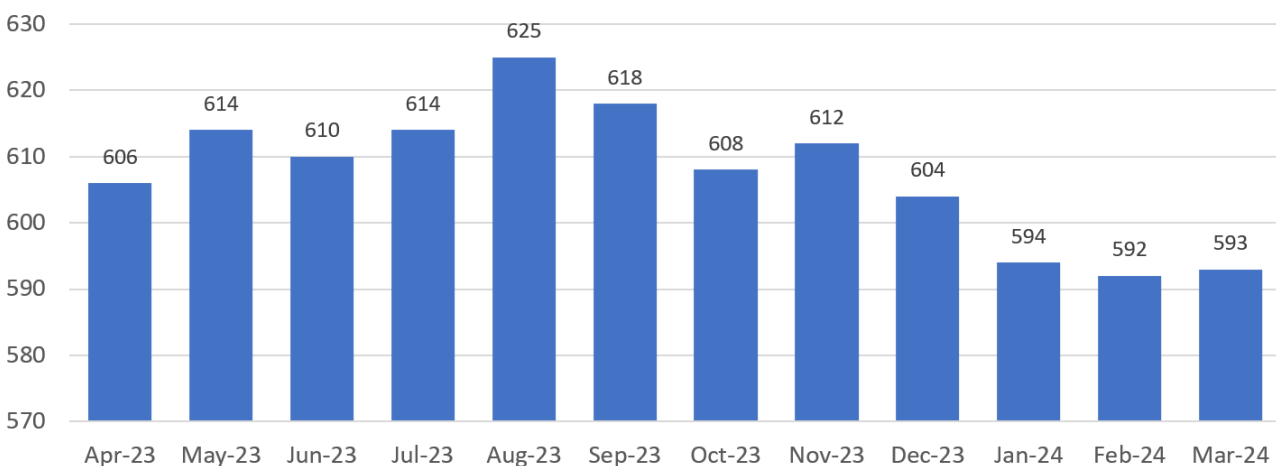


At the end of March 2024, 278 children were subject to a Child Protection Plan, a rate of 52/10,000 children aged 0-17yrs in Sefton.

The number of children subject to child protection planning continues to fall to a rate approaching the national figure. In comparison to the latest RIG Q3 (23/24) data, Sefton is currently 2% above the Northwest (51/10,000 children), and 21% above the England (43/10,000 children) figures. Additional scrutiny for the children who have been subject to CP Plans for more than 15 months supported to ensure the plans are purposeful and reduced drift and delays.

Increased management oversight of CP plans, supported by improved performance management scrutiny has gone some way to improve the quality of our practice for the children subject to CP Plans. There is also increased oversight of those plans where a decision to end at an early (3 month) stage is taken. This oversight is a direct response to the findings of earlier Ofsted monitoring visits. Improved quality of practice and a range of new services means that the needs of families and children can now be met through voluntary support rather than state intervention.

## Open Episodes of Cared for Children



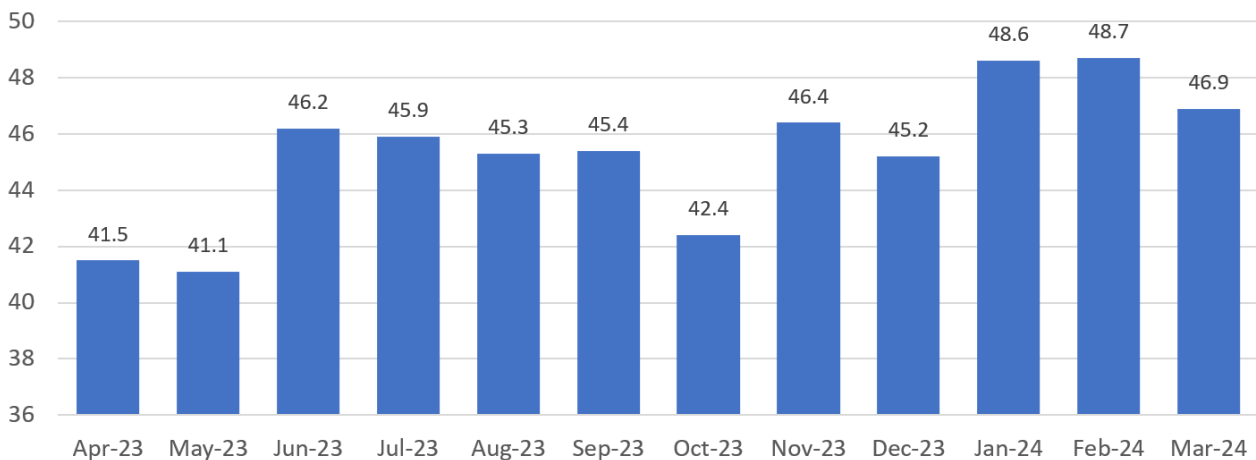
As with other part of the service Sefton’s numbers of children in care, when compared both regionally and nationally, is high. At the end of March 2024 there were 593 cared for children (CLA) with an open episode of care, which represents a rate of 111/10,000 children under 18yrs in Sefton. Since 2020, the rate of children cared for in Sefton has been above the Northwest and statistical neighbours and significantly above the national rate. The current rate of 111/10,000 children are 18% above the Northwest rate, and 59% above the England rate (RIG Q3 23/24).

The rate of cared for children has remained broadly static, with the number fluctuating between 600 - 620 for the period year. However, the number of children has been consecutively below 600 in the last three months. By comparison, were Sefton at the regional rate of approx. 97/10,000 children, the cared for population would stand at approximately 500 children.

We are seeing a steady decrease in these numbers and work is underway to cease inappropriate or ineffective care orders.

Improvement in Social work practice and a greater range of services to families, included the targeted early help initiative, is helping to support more children to remain safely at home.

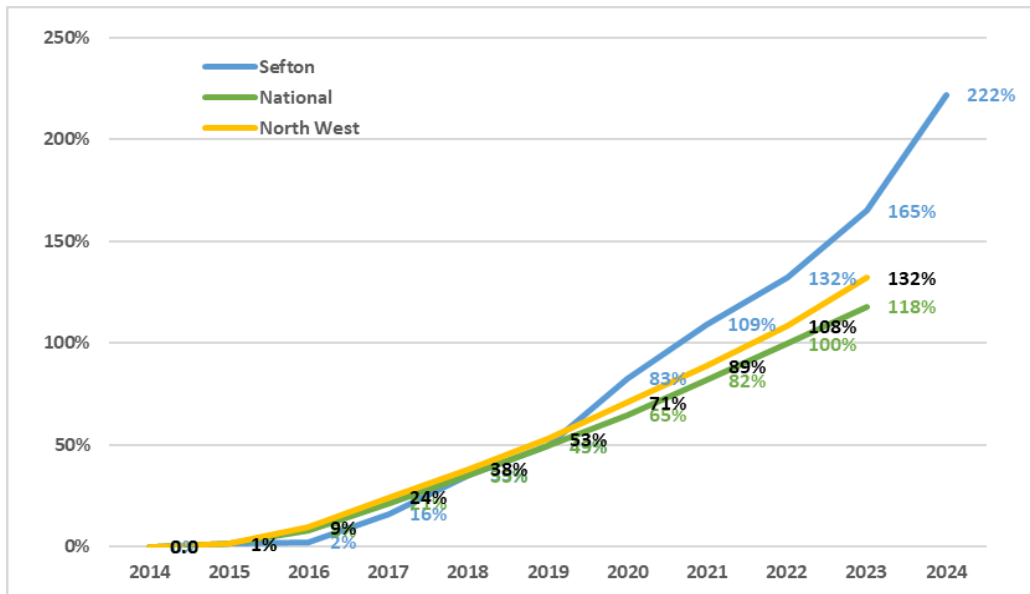
### % of Care Experienced Young People in Education



At the end of March 2024, there were 228 young people identified as Care Experienced aged 17 to 21 (with a Relevant and Former Relevant eligibility status). 107 of the cohort (46.9%) are in Education, Employment or Training (EET). The percentage of Care Experienced in EET aged 19 to 21 remain stable at 46% throughout the Q4 period. The EET cohort aged 17 to 18 has remained at 50% at the end of Q3 and Q4, a significant increase compared to 35% in April 2023. EET provisions includes Further Education courses at sixth form colleges or vocational colleges (e.g. Hugh Baird or Southport Colleges), and apprenticeships.



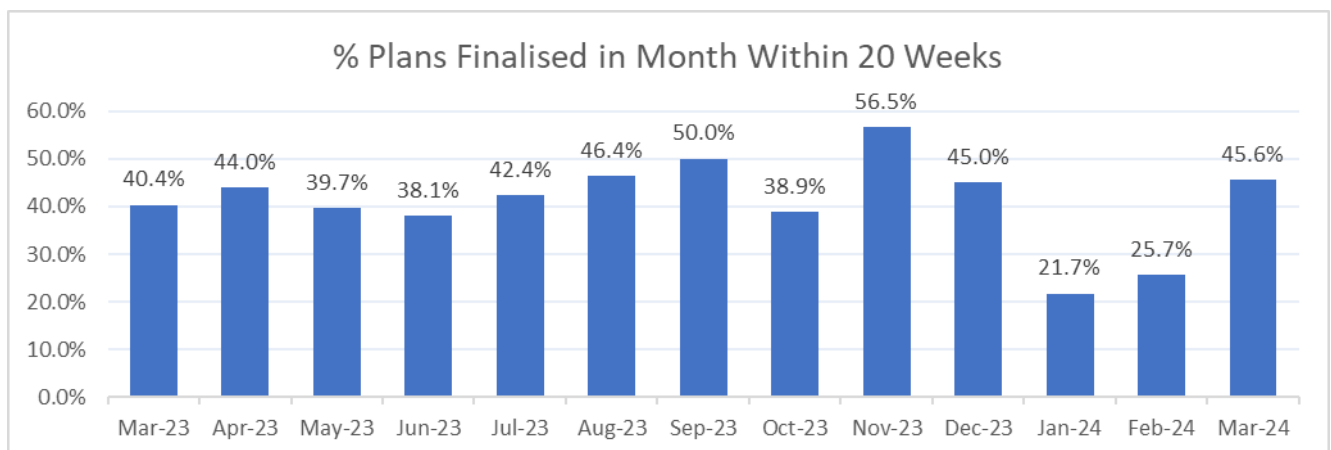
## SEND Education, Health & Care Plans



Demand for education, health and care plan assessment continues to increase. In the 2023-24 period, the local authority has received a total of 846 assessment requests up to the end of Q4 (April 2023 to March 2024). This total increased by 213 further assessments solely in Q4 which is almost identical to the 211 requests during Q4 of 2022-23 and a 7% decrease from Q3's total of this year (230).

According to Census 2021, Sefton had a resident population of 279,239 people, with 57,904 children and young people in Sefton (age 0-19) and 74,281 children and young people in (age 0-25). The number of education, health and care plan plans maintained by the local authority, continues to increase in-line with the increase in demand for assessments, as reflected in the graph above. In January 2024 3,317 Children & Young People had an EHC Plan maintained by the local authority (4.2% of the populous), representing a growth approximately 116% since 2019. By January 2023, this number had increased by 14.4% to 2,565 (4.2% of the populous). At the end of Q4, there are now 3,280 Children & Young People had an EHC Plan maintained by the local authority which accounts to 4.5% of the 0-25yr population in the borough and an increase of 21.8% from January 2023's figure.

## SEND Education, Health & Care Plan % Plans completed in 20 weeks.



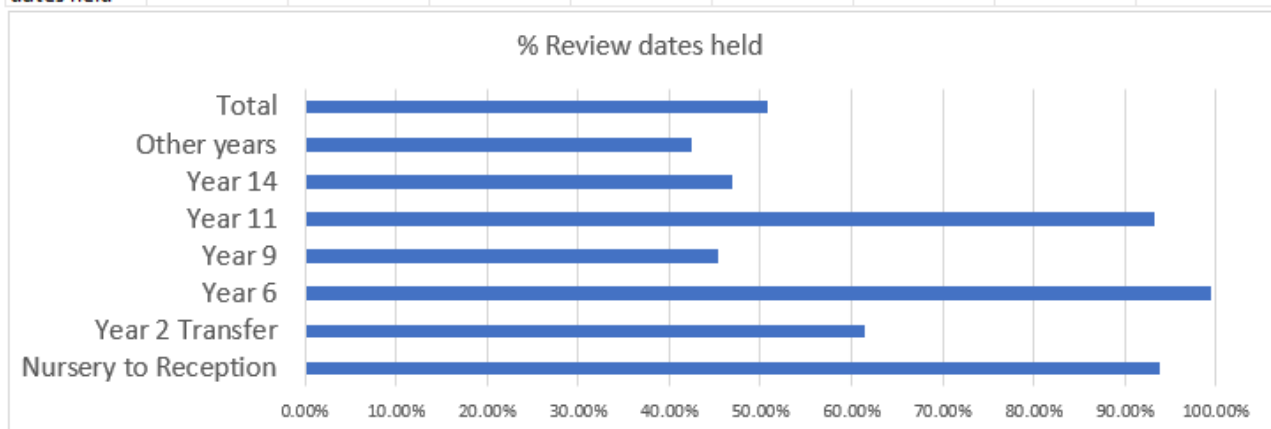
At the end of March 2024 (Q4), the percentage of new Education Health and Care Plans completed with the statutory 20-week timescale was at 45.6%, which represents an overall improvement from 30% at the beginning of 2023 and a 5.2% improvement from March 2023, whilst November 2023 saw the highest performance, at 56.5%. The overall 12-month average performance of the 2023-24 period was 40.8%, and although the National and regional comparators have not been published by the Department for Education yet, this represents an improvement of over 49% when compared with annual average taken at the end of December 2022. Although the comparative performance target for 2023 are still to be released by the Department for Education (DfE), the aspiration is to increase performance to a level at least comparable to other England LAs (which in 2022 was 50.7% on new plans issued within the 20-week time limit, northwest average 62.7% and SN 67.24%), and plans are being developed to achieve a stretched target of 60%. To improve performance the following steps are being taken:

1. Interim Service Manager now in post to operationally manage the team’s performance.
2. Weekly meetings in place with Senior Casework Officer to prioritise cases. Managing those in the backlog and those that can be finalised in 20 weeks.
3. SEND team will be at capacity for staffing by the end of May 2024.

**SEND Education, Health & Care Plans % Reviews Held for 22/23 academic year ending 31/08/2023.**

The following table shows the percentage of education, health and care plans reviewed in the 2023/24 academic up to the end of Q4.

	Nursery to Reception	Year 2 Transfer	Year 6	Year 9	Year 11	Year 14	Other years	Total
% Review dates held	93.75%	61.54%	99.45%	45.29%	93.24%	46.90%	42.44%	50.88%

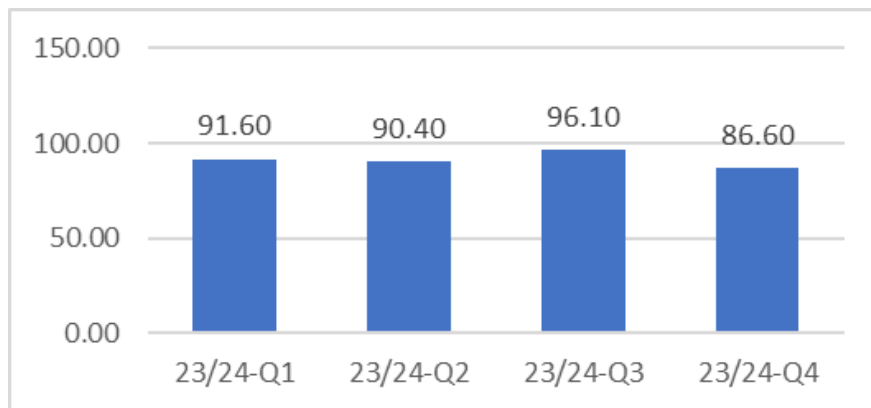


There are no published national or regional performance comparators, and although the overall percentage of reviews completed in-time was 50.88%, the percentages for the key educational transition points (Nursery to Reception, KS2 and KS4) are very close to or above the 94% mark. This is a target that has now been set for reviewing EHCPs for those children in the 2023/24 academic cohort for key stage transitions. Furthermore, the review

of EHCPs for children and young people aged 16+ will also be a priority moving forward, as it is anticipated that this may support a reduction in the overall number of EHCPs being maintained by the local authority where needs have already been met and support may no longer be required.

## Adult Social Care – “Empowering people to live an independent life, exercise choice and control, and be fully informed.”

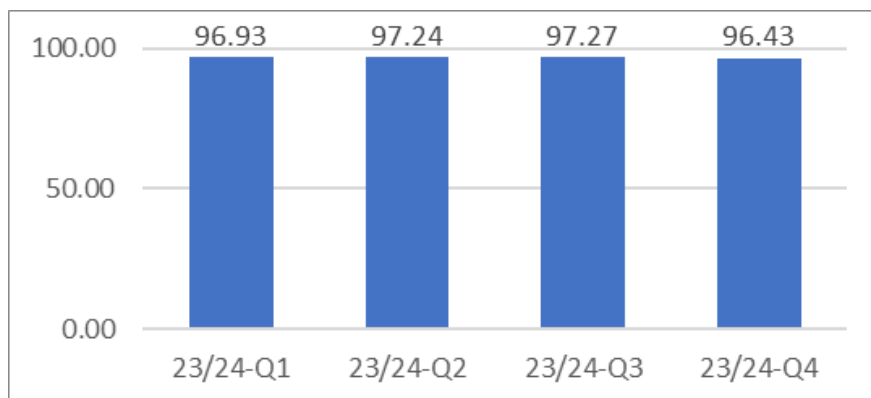
**Proportion of older people 65 and over who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services effectiveness of the service (2B1) (%)**



The Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) measures nationally how well care and support services achieve the outcomes that matter most to most people. Supporting people to return home and regain their independence after a period in hospital is a key area of work for Adult Social Care. Upon leaving hospital individuals are supported at home receiving reablement and rehabilitation services who help people get back to their optimum so they can regain their confidence and independence.

Performance on this metric across 23/24 has been consistently good. Q4 saw a drop to 87% of people remaining at home, however we remain above the median score in England, the North West and our statistical neighbours.

**Proportion of Adult Social Care Safeguarding Enquiries concluded where people's preferred stated outcomes were fully or partially met (%)**

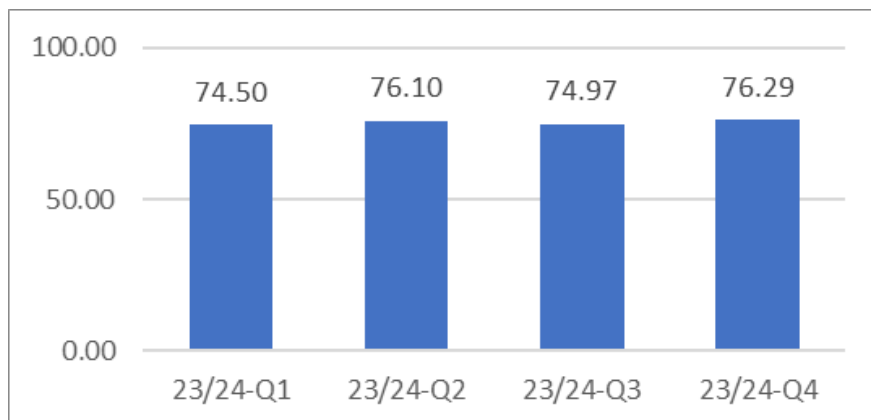


Adult Social Care Services has a responsibility to safeguard vulnerable people who have care and support needs. Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) is a national initiative aiming to encourage an outcome focused and a person-centred approach in safeguarding work. We ask those involved in a safeguarding episode what their preferred outcome would be. MSP

indicates the percentage of people who had their preferred outcome fully or partially met. Whilst specific circumstances may mean that it is not always possible for an individual's desired outcomes to be achieved, this is a key aspect of the local authority's safeguarding work.

Our performance against making safeguarding personal has been good across 23/24 with at least 96% of individuals having their preferred outcomes at least partially met.

### Proportion of people whose initial service was short term who did not go on to long term services (%)

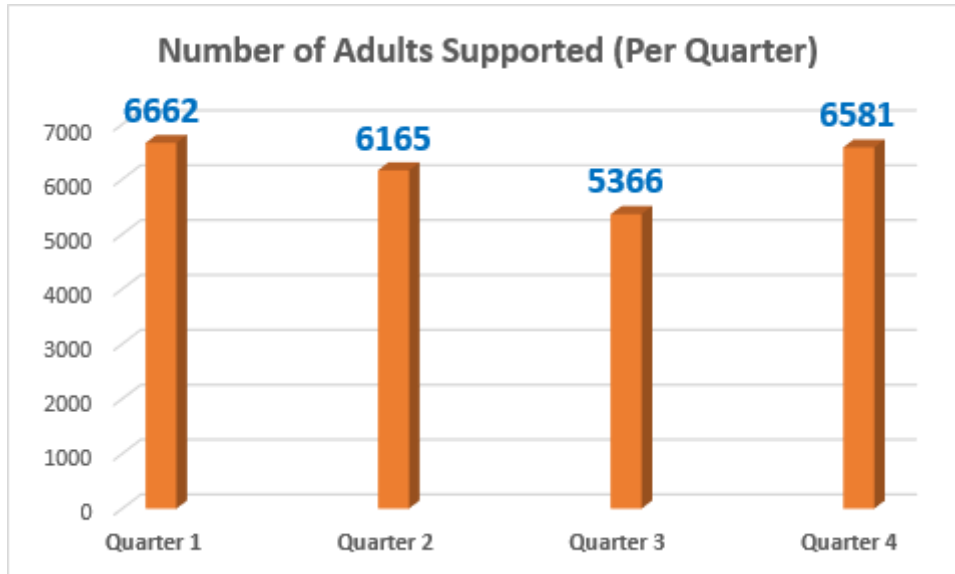


Adult Social Care Services aim to support people to be as independent, wherever possible, living at home and having strong links with their communities. Whilst it is recognised that some people may need long-term services, this measure specifically shows the proportion of people whose short-term service resulted in a reduced, or no ongoing, need for support. A key responsibility of Adult Social Care Services is to ensure early help and intervention, helping people to delay the need for long-term services.

Throughout 23/24 three quarters of people who received a short-term intervention did not go on to receive a long-term service. This performance is in-line with England and the North West (approximately 75% respectively), but marginally below the performance of our statistical neighbours, at almost 80%.

## Health & Wellbeing – “Improving the health and wellbeing of everyone in Sefton and reduce inequality.”

### Access to adult based targeted Active Sefton Services

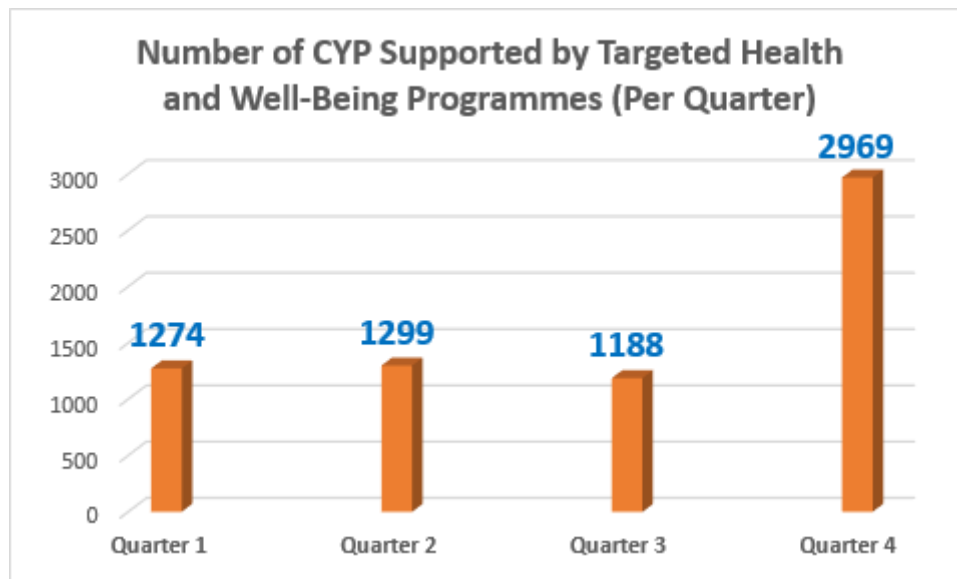


The numbers above represent access to:

- Active Lifestyles (GP Referral and Weight Management) - a 12 week supported programme of physical activity and 6-week Weight Management Programme (Weigh Forward), which aims to provide residents who are above a healthy weight and/or suffer with/are at risk of developing coronary heart disease (CHD) the opportunity to live a more active and healthier lifestyle.
- NHS Health Checks - a statutory programme delivered by the Active Lifestyles team to eligible adults aged 40-74, which is designed to detect early signs of stroke, heart and kidney disease, type II diabetes and dementia.
- Active Ageing Falls Service – a 12-week strength and balance programme for residents over the age of 60 who are at risk of falling or have fallen. The service also incorporates support for social isolation and loneliness.
- Active Workforce - a workplace wellbeing programme, aimed to improve the health and wellbeing of employees by breaking down all barriers leading to improved physical and mental wellbeing.

There has been an increase in referrals between Q3 to Q4 as on trend with the time of year and building back up from the expected drop in Q3. A number of new companies have come on board with the Active Workforce programme which has also supported the increase in numbers once again.

## Number of children and young people supported by targeted health and wellbeing programmes.



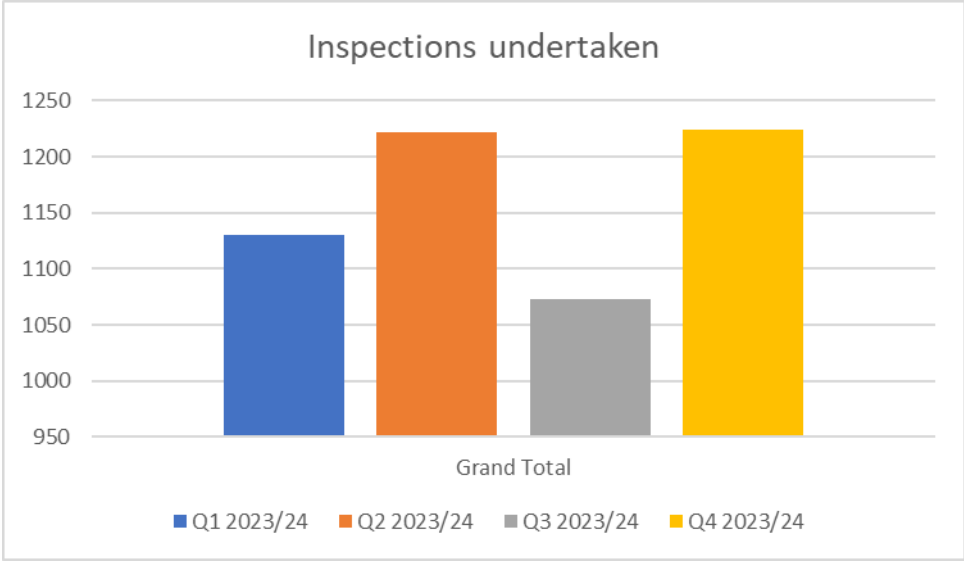
The numbers above represent access to MOVE IT (Weight Management), 1-2-1 Programme (mental wellbeing) and Active Schools Service. There was a further 318 attendances through the February half-term delivery of Be Active and Park Night sessions.

The increase in Q4 is due to a staffing change allowing greater flexibility and support for the programme. Also, the demand from schools in one geographical area peaked significantly. We expect this increase to plateau going forward.

### Public Protection - Inspections Undertaken

The Public Protection service undertakes a range of Food Safety, Health and Safety, Pollution Control, Trading Standards and Licensing inspections. These inspections enable us to monitor businesses, provide them with advice and guidance on legal requirements, and to take enforcement action when necessary. The Inspection programmes are an important activity for maintaining standards and ensuring that people are protected from harm and protect good businesses from unfair competition by those who try to cut corners with compliance.

The Food Hygiene and Standards inspections programme is determined by The Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the risk rating of the premises. We have successfully completed the 23/24 FSA inspection programme with all category A-D (the higher risk premises) food hygiene inspections undertaken in line with the programme. The reduced number of inspections undertaken in Q3 was due, in the main, to officers carrying out a targeted health and safety project promoting gas safety in catering businesses.

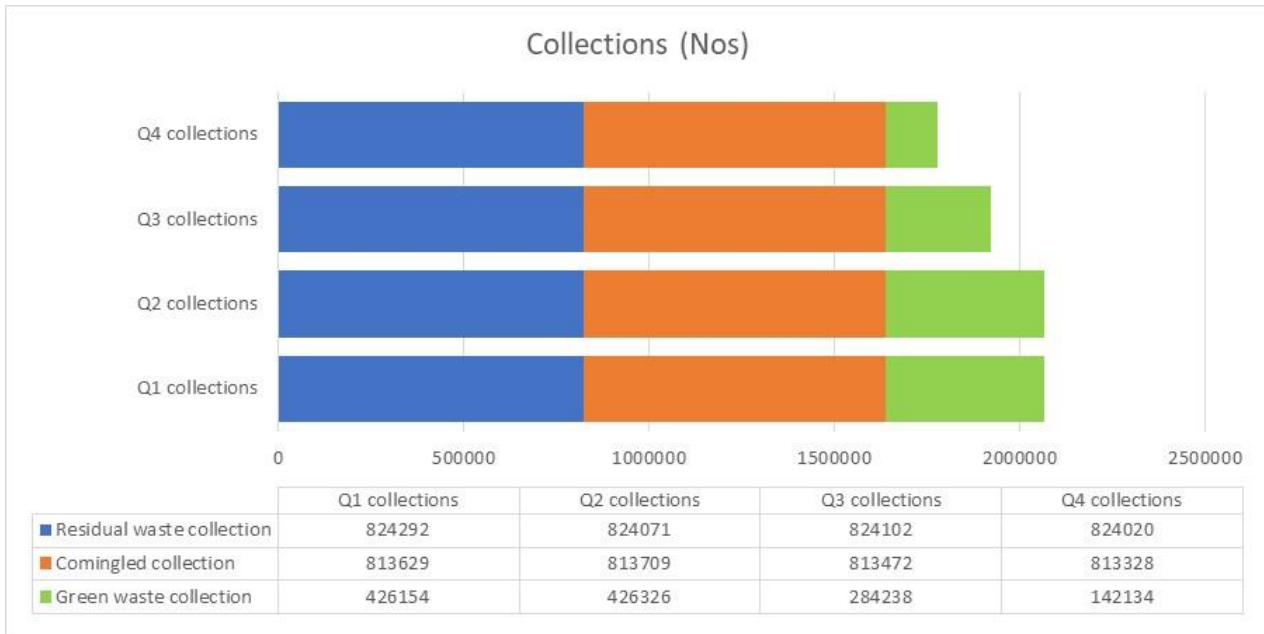


Animal Feed Surveillance inspections of feed product entering the country through the Port of Liverpool has remained consistent ensuring successful monitoring and prevention of unsafe product entering the food chain. All targets for the Regional Animal Feed Delivery Programme have been achieved and funding secured for 24/25.



**Working for Our Communities Every Day – “Working together to deliver affordable services which achieve the best possible outcomes for our residents.”**

**Bins Collected**



The Waste Management Service continue to deliver a high-quality service provision for the collection of all waste streams from residential properties. It is essential that comingled bins contain the correct recyclable items to prevent contamination once the load reaches the transfer station for onward sorting.

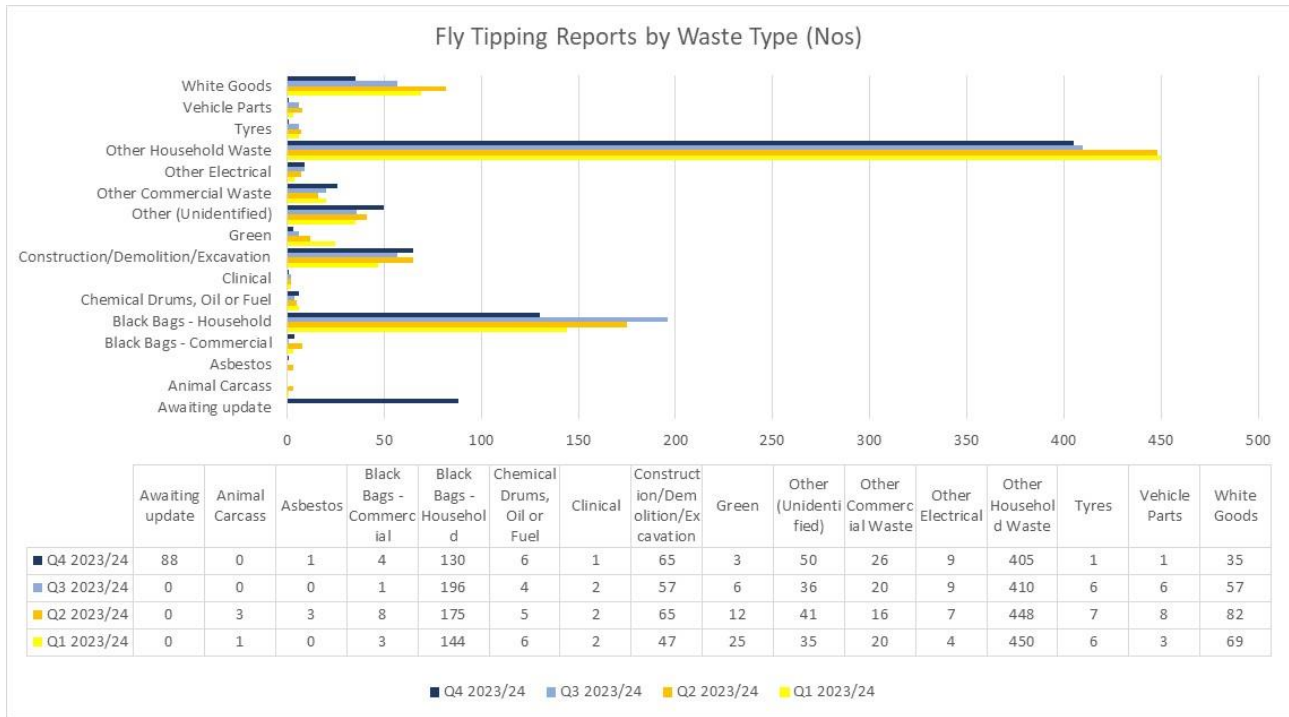
Q3 and Q4 incorporate periods when the cessation of the green waste collection commenced for the winter period. Q3 also includes the Christmas period when a reduced waste collection service was operated due to the Council’s corporate shutdown arrangements and this model of operation often invites an increase in complaints to the service. In Q4 a total of 1.92 million collections were made compared to around 2.06 million collections made in Q1 and Q2. Only 1,815 collections were missed in Q4, which represents 0.1% of all collections in the period.

These statistics are shared with the operational supervisory team through the team meeting process to inform their monitoring activities moving forward.

**Fly Tipping**

Fly tipping is defined as "the illegal deposit of any waste onto land that does not have a licence to accept it" as defined by the Keep Britain Tidy Group. Fly-tipping can be a public health hazard and environmental risk, not to mention despoiling the local environment and being an eyesore. It can cause unpleasant smells, attract pests, and create a dangerous environment for children, pets, and wildlife. In its more serious forms, illegally deposited waste can release pollution into the ground, groundwater, any nearby watercourses and into the air, and it can damage soil quality. According to latest government statistics, over 1,000,000 fly-tipping

incidents are dealt with by councils each year – the equivalent of 114 every hour. Two-thirds of reported incidents involve household waste, and around a third were of a vanload or less. Within Sefton, fly tipping continues to be an on-going issue and a blight on the Borough.



In Q4 a total of 825 fly tipping incidents were responded to with black bags and household waste being the highest volumes (130 and 405 respectively). The 2023/24 total was 3,332 incidents or just over 9 a day, demonstrating that the illegal dumping of waste and/or rubbish (typically dumped to avoid correct, safe disposal or disposal costs) is an ongoing problem.

There is a collaborative work approach being developed between the Street Cleansing Service and Environmental Enforcement colleagues to reduce levels of fly tipping through behaviour change and future communication campaigns, also highlighting land ownership and responsibilities where the land is not owned by the Council. Further education is required to assist members of the public to act correctly when disposing of waste correctly.

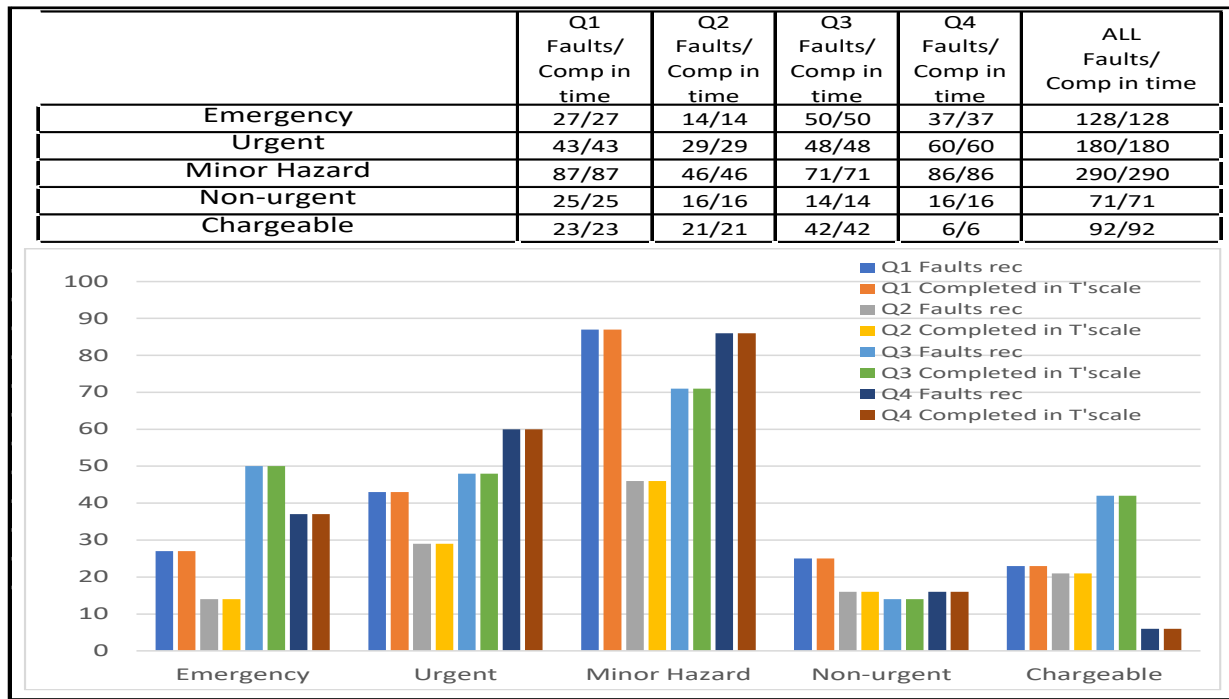
The Council offer a Bulky Household Waste Collection Service at a competitive rate for residents to utilise for the correct disposal of household waste. Members of the public can report incidents of fly tipping via the Council’s website at <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling/bins-and-recycling/litter-and-fly-tipping/fly-tipping/>

Fly tipping is a national problem and the government publish data regarding the volume of fly tipping incidents. Latest figures are available at [Fly-tipping statistics for England, 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fly-tipping-statistics-for-england-2021-to-2022)

Fly-tipping is a crime, which carries serious penalties. In the Crown Court, the maximum penalty is 5 years jail and/or an unlimited fine. In the magistrates’ court, persons convicted of fly-tipping can be fined an unlimited amount, jailed for 12 months, or sent to The Crown Court for more severe penalties. The legislation creating the offence is section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. A fly tipping prosecution, brought by the Environmental Enforcement Team, was successfully concluded in Q3 with the defendant pleading guilty to

11 counts of the offences under s.33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The defendant was instructed to pay a total of £8,802.25, consisting of a Fine (£1,166), Victim Surcharge (£466), staff/legal costs (£1,105.25) and Clean-up costs (£6,065).

**Urban traffic control – response to notified faults.**



Urban Traffic Control (UTC) refers to our connected network of Traffic Lights and signal-controlled pedestrian crossings. Keeping these working well is essential for keeping people safe and the highway network flowing. When we are notified of faults, we assess the urgency of repair (e.g. emergency; urgent; minor hazard etc.) allocate a target time for repair and pass it on to our appointed Contractor. We then monitor their performance against the targets. The contract includes Key Performance Indicators and financial penalties that can be applied if they fail to meet the required level of performance.

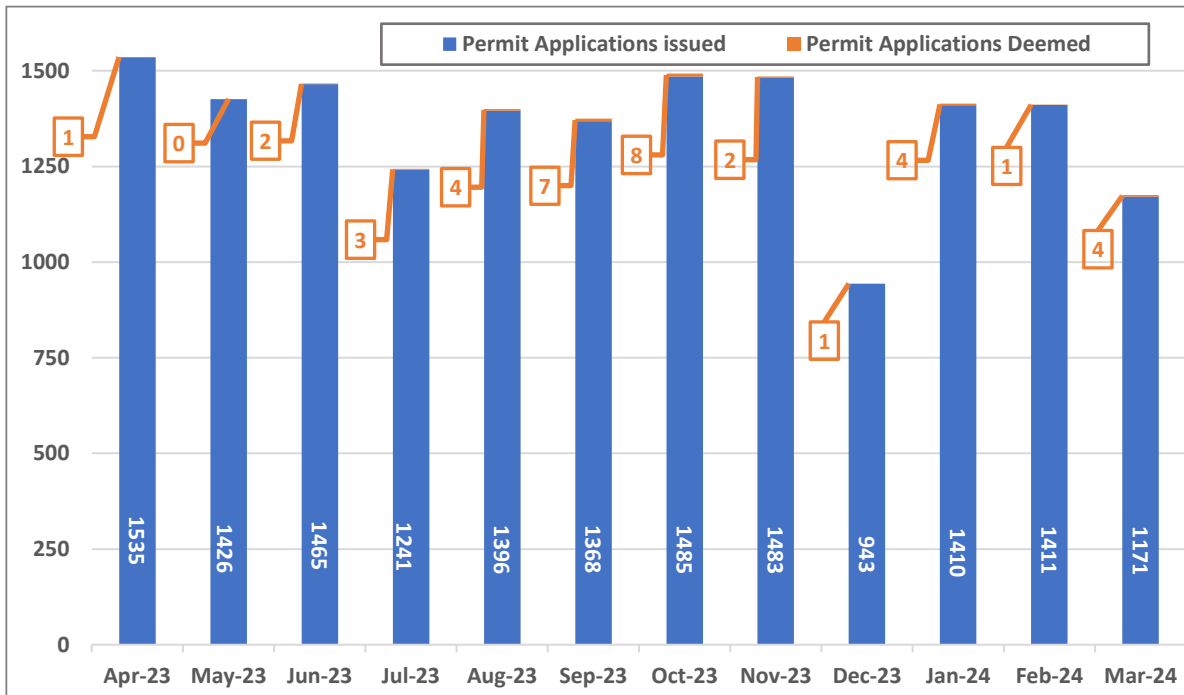
In respect of targets for 2023/24, the KPIs are set in the Contract, which in the case of UTC is a Merseyside-wide contract. The KPI is based on rectifying a set proportion of faults on time in each urgency category, as follows: Emergency 99%, Urgent 80%, Minor Hazard 75% and Non-Urgent 70%. Any non-compliance within a category can result in a 5% financial penalty for that category expenditure, if any group falls below 60% the 5% can be increased to 10% of the total monthly demand works. Sefton’s performance is shown in the table within the above chart and when benchmarked, compares favourably with other authorities using the same contract.

In respect of what is going well in relation to this target, we work well with the contractor across the maintenance contract and a £1.2 million LED retrofit Lamp change programme. We have also been successful in a bid for Green Light Funding of £500k, to provide smarter traffic lights across the Borough.

In respect to improvement, we are one of few authorities with a full recent asset review which we can use to support bids for future funding. UTC is a specialist area and we have struggled

to recruit. We are currently exploring an alternative approach, including potentially a graduate apprenticeship approach.

### Network Management Permit Approvals

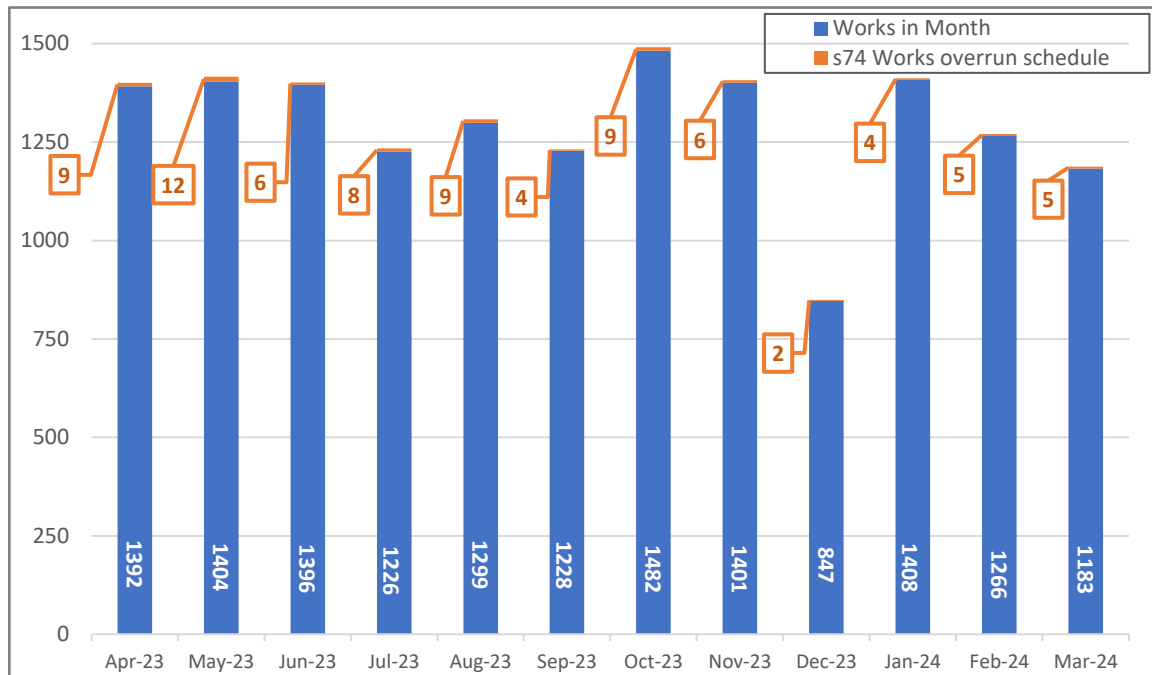


Minimising disruption caused by works on the highway is important for managing the network and keeping traffic moving. For this reason, anyone wishing to excavate part of the highway requires permission and a permit for the work. We have a set time to deal with requests (the time differs depending upon the length of time the works will take) and either accept, challenge, or amend the permit requested. If we do not deal with these requests in time, the permission is automatically granted (a Deemed Permit). This data shows how effectively we manage this important function. Ideally there would be zero Deemed Permits, but we occasionally receive permits for roads that are not our responsibility (e.g. a Trunk Road or an unadopted road), and these show as deemed permits because we cannot give permission for those works.

In respect of targets for 2023/24, ideally there would be zero Deemed Permits, but we occasionally receive permits for roads that are not our responsibility (e.g. a Trunk Road or an unadopted road), and these show as deemed permits because we cannot give permission for those works. In respect of what is going well in relation to this target, there are a minimal number of deemed permits (single figures for all months except May), all of which were out of our control.

In respect to improvement, we are challenging the durations requested in permit applications, to reduce occupancy where possible, and following the roll-out of Visual Impairment Awareness Training for staff, we are placing much greater emphasis on ensuring that the layout and management of the works ensure appropriate pedestrian access, taking into account people with disabilities such as visual impairment.

## Network Management Permit Overruns



Anyone wishing to excavate part of the highway requires permission and a permit for the work. When we issue a permit, it allows a set time to complete the works and remove the obstruction. We monitor compliance with the permits and charge companies if they overrun the time allowed. This helps to minimise disruption and ensure that the works are dealt with efficiently.

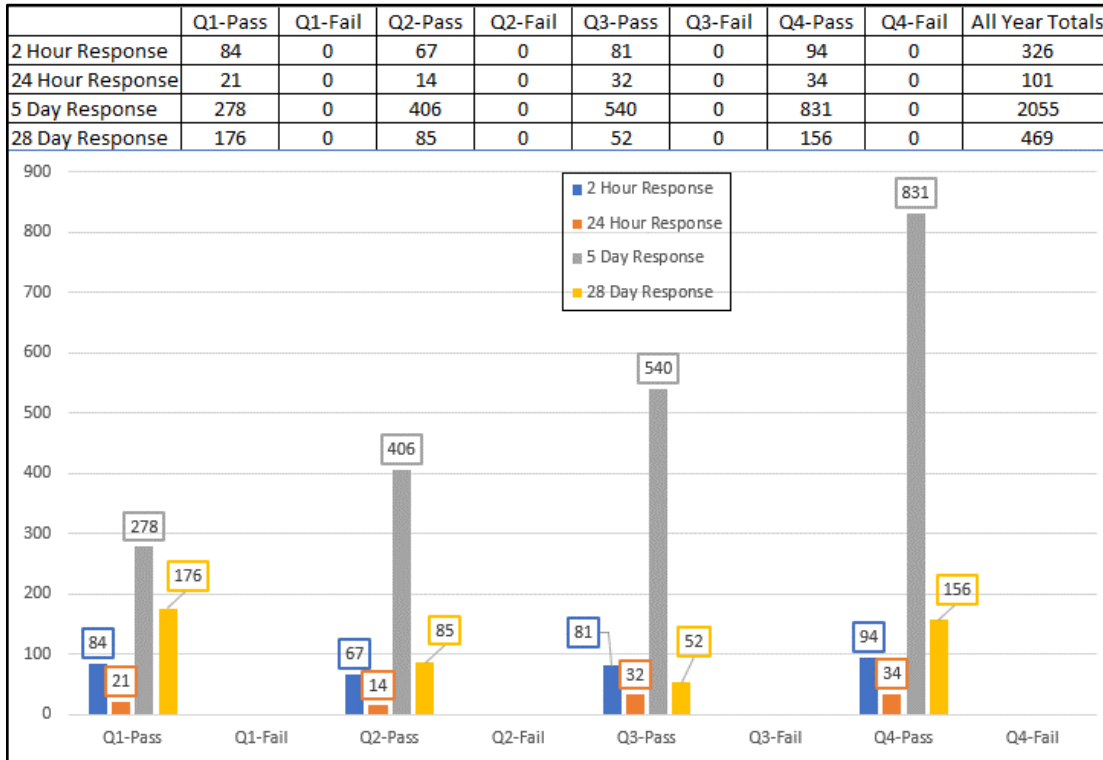
In respect of targets for 2023/24, we have not defined a specific target and it is not benchmarked against other Authorities. Ideally there would be no overruns, but this is beyond our control.

In respect of what is going well in relation to this target, there are a minimal number of overrunning works (0.51% in the last twelve months and 0.36% in the last quarter) which indicate that the works are being managed effectively.

In respect to improvement, this measure is outside our control, as it is dependent upon the performance of the utility companies and contractors undertaking the permitted work. We are reviewing this and intend to replace this measure with a more meaningful one for 2024/25, a measure of the number of permitted works inspected against a target number.

## Street lighting – response to notified faults.

The Council has approximately 37,000 streetlights on its highways and recognises the importance of keeping them working well. When we are notified of faults, we assess the urgency of repair (e.g. 2-hours; 24 hours, 5 days etc.) allocate a target time for repair and pass it on to our appointed Contractor. We then monitor their performance against the targets. The contract includes financial penalties that can be applied if they fail to meet the required level of performance.



In respect of targets for 2023/24, the KPIs are set in the Contract and are based on rectifying a set proportion of faults on time in each urgency category, as follows: Emergency 2hr 99%, Urgent 24hr 99%, 5-day response 95% and 28-day Response 95%. Any non-compliance within a category can result in a financial penalty for that category expenditure and is assessed on a rolling three-month period. The number of faults dealt with in time (pass) and out of time (fail) is shown in the table within the chart above.

In respect of what is going well in relation to this target, excellent collaboration between Sefton, the Contractor and component suppliers has helped to manage performance across the maintenance contract and the £14m Street Lighting Asset (LED Retrofit) project in the face extremely challenging circumstances (e.g. rising costs, workforce shortages, supply chain issues due to Covid, Brexit and war in Ukraine). In 2023, the programme was successfully re-programmed to target highest energy lanterns and thereby reduce in-year budget pressures by reducing highest energy usage more quickly.

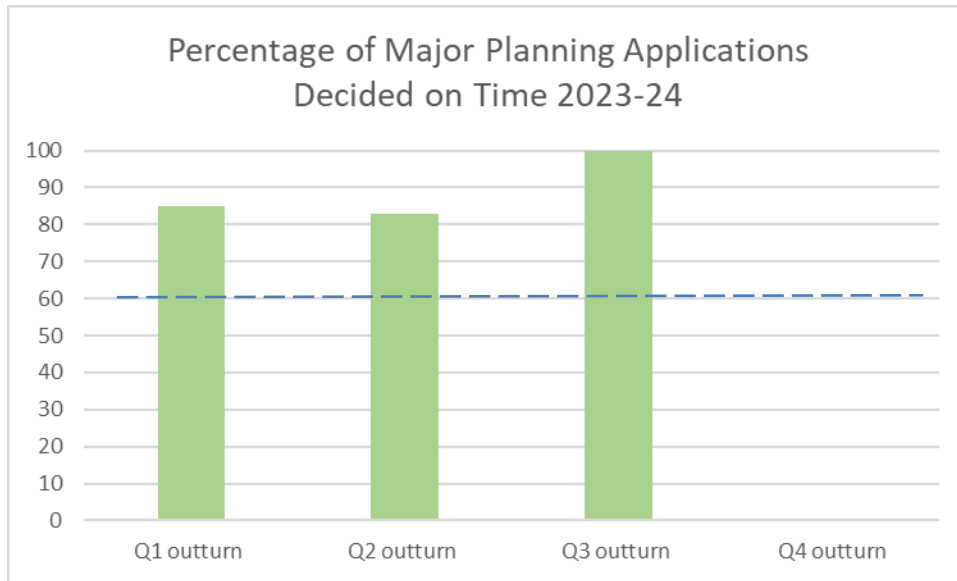
In respect to improvement, this is one of our most highly developed service areas, with a high standard of asset management, financial monitoring, and fault rectification evidence. The Street Lighting Asset project will reduce faults and maintenance costs.

## Inclusive Growth – “Creating more and better jobs for local people.”

Planning, Business Growth & Investment, Employment & Learning, Tourism, Housing and Regeneration.

### Planning

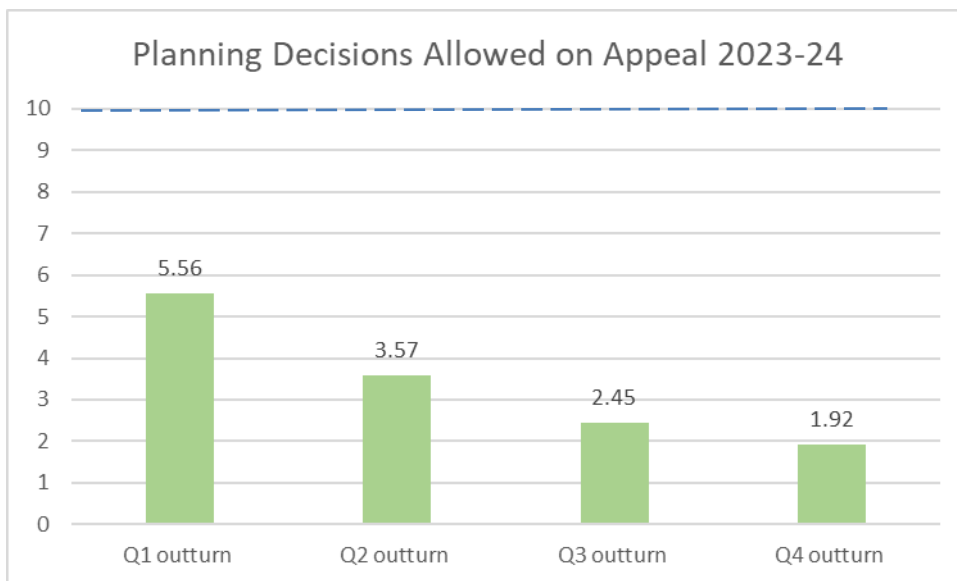
#### Speed of decision making



No major applications were determined in Q4

National Target is 60% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks

#### Quality of Decision Making



National target is a maximum of 10% of Council’s decision making on major applications by appeal over a 2-year period + 9 months

The targets for next year will not change, although depending on the changes to the planning system, the local target for speed may be brought in line with the national 60%.

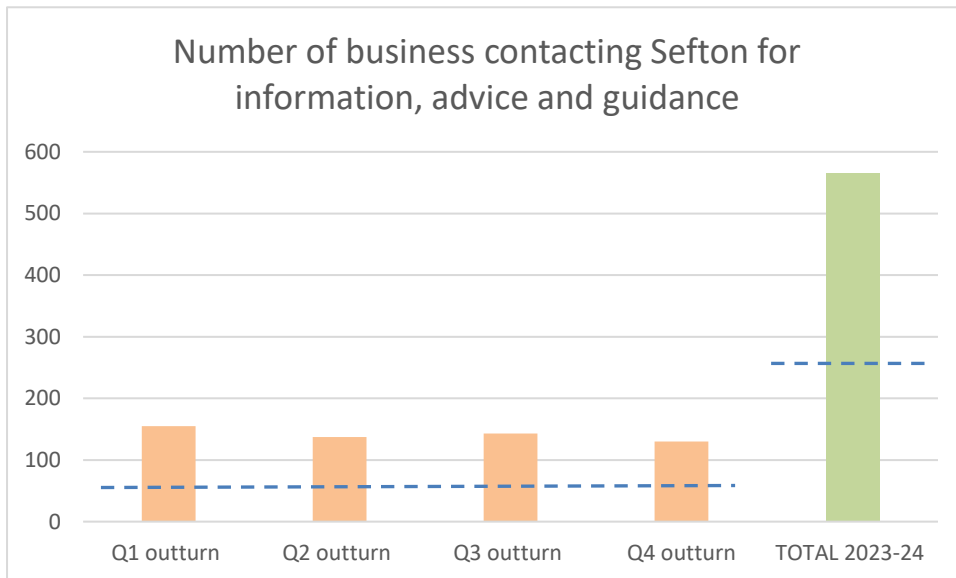
What is going well is that with extensions of time, we are exceeding this target.

We are focusing on increasing the use of preapplication advice and planning performance agreements to help front load the system, which will help reach more decisions in the allotted time frame.

Expedient decision making in planning, consistency of advice and support around the development of project proposals is critical to securing growth and investment, employment, business rates and council tax, infrastructure and social value. We have established a corporate Planning Clinic to help determine Council projects on time.

## Business Growth & Investment

### Contact with Businesses

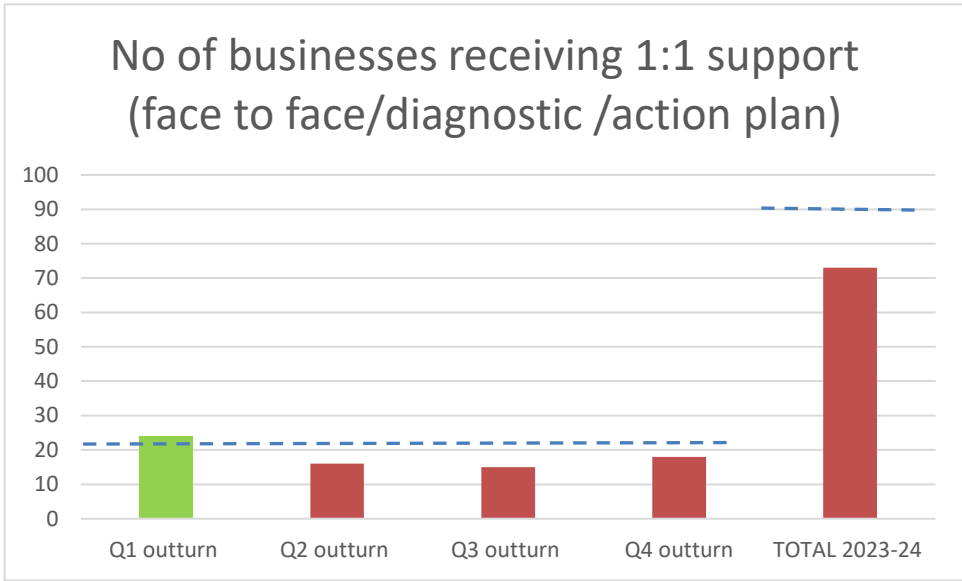


Local target of 250 contacts per annum (62.5 per quarter)

Target provided is conservative. Based on previous contractual targets given to InvestSefton by funders such as Growth Hub. We are on track to exceed this target as InvestSefton delivers outward engagement activities such as events and workshops that are promoted borough wide and therefore continue to grow awareness of the InvestSefton brand and which in turn helps encourage enquiries to the service. On average InvestSefton receives between 15 – 25 enquiries per week. Not all enquiries go on to receive guidance, some are purely signposted.



**Businesses receiving 1:1 support**

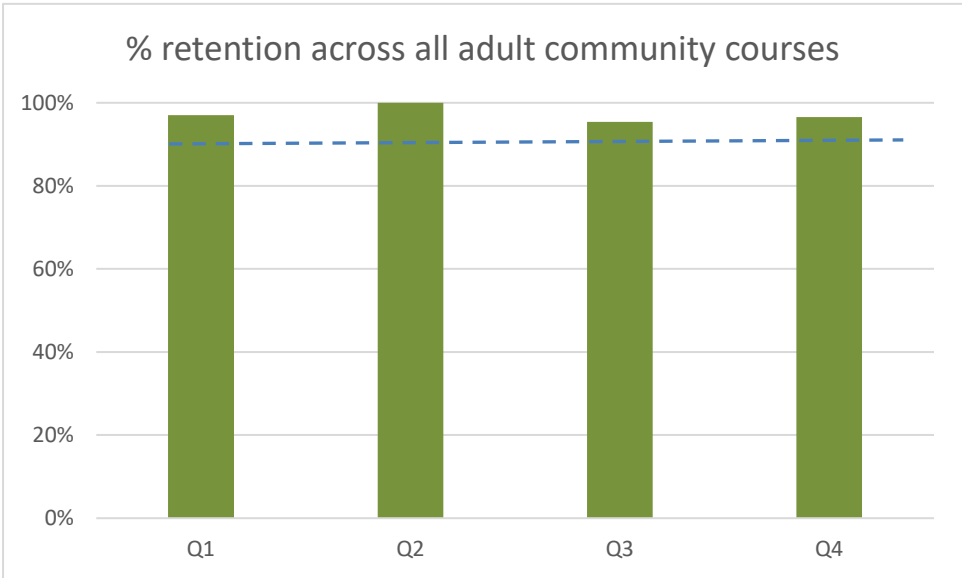


Local target of 90 businesses receiving support per annum (22.5 1:1 support per quarter)

Target based on demand and resource within team, 2 full time business advisers (eqv) and 2 growth hub officers who are business facing and provide 1:1 support. The shortfall in 2023-24 was due to sickness absence within the team, however this is a local target and determined by historic support numbers. Going forward we will reduce our local target in line with demand to 80 assists which include a time intensive 360 diagnostic, action plan and tailored 1:1 to support, this support is not light touch and requires considerable time spent by Advisers supporting the business.

**Employment & Learning**

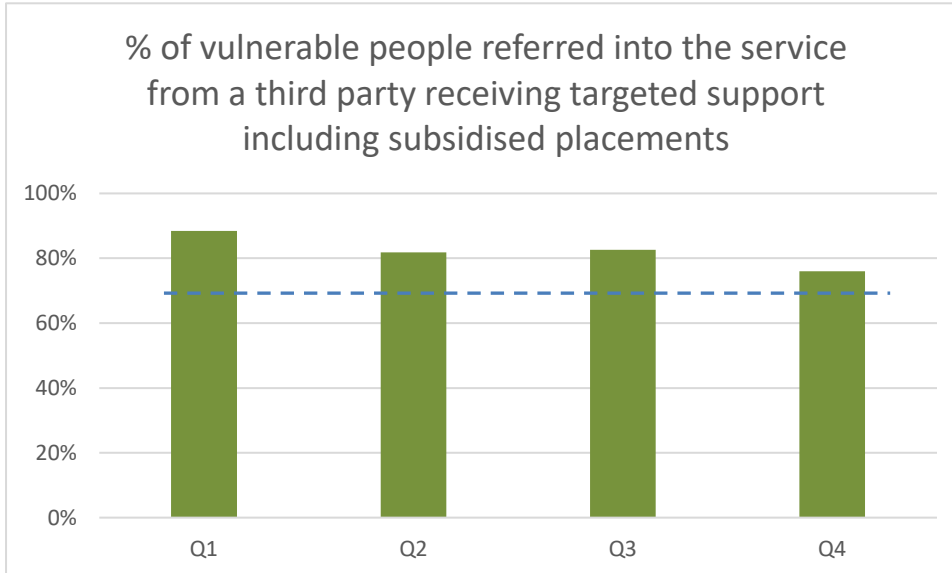
**% Retention across all Adult Community Learning Courses**



Local target is 91% per quarter. A contractual target to indicate best practice across a range of Adult Education contracts.

Where we are ahead of targets our focus is to maintain our current delivery level across all parts of the service.

### Vulnerable People Transferred into the Service



Local target is 72% per quarter.

A local target developed from contractual requirements to ensure that we are meeting our outputs and outcomes.

Where we are ahead of targets our focus is to maintain our current delivery level across all parts of the service

### Performance against other authorities

We aim to ensure we remain in the top performing quartile for 16-18 year olds

Our target is to maintain our current ranking year on year across Liverpool City Region, regionally and nationally. **We are currently ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 151 Local Authorities and 1<sup>st</sup> in the LCR.**

### Tourism

Our aim is a swift recovery back to 2019 levels of tourism volume and visitor expenditure. The measure for this is the number of visitor per year. We aim to increase visitor numbers of 2% year on year (both day and staying). The target for 2023/24 is 5,882,340 visitors. The figures for 2023/24 are not yet available and will be reported in due course.

### Regeneration

#### Externally Funded Projects

Our target is to ensure 100% of expenditure verified for projects which are externally funded. **We met this target for 2023-24.**

There are a number of significant Growth and Strategic Investment Projects are external funding and require auditing and checks to ensure funding spend is compliant with the Councils governance

and assurance. Projects such as Crosby Lakeside, Cambridge Road, Southport Town Deal and Bootle LUF/CRP are typical examples where all spend has to be verified before claiming it.

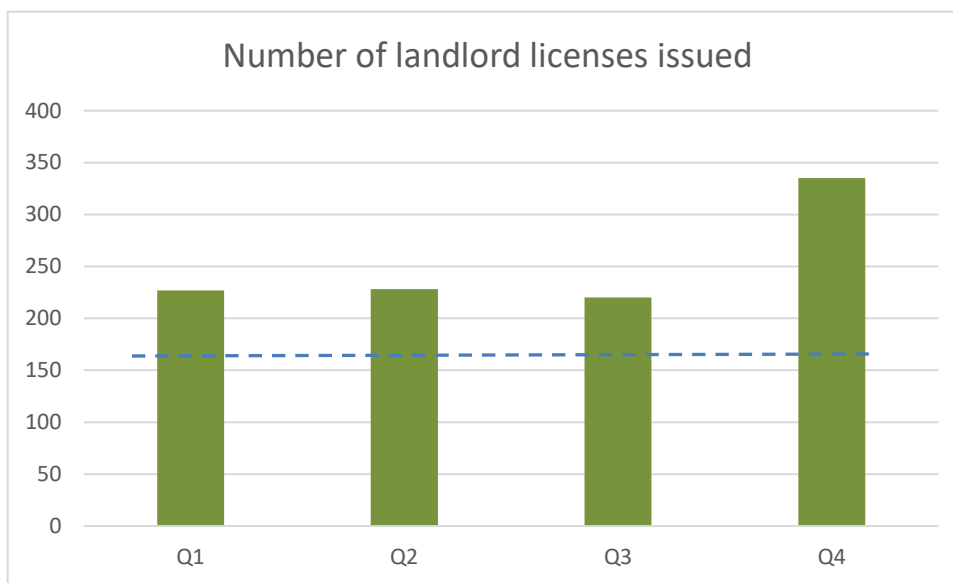
### Funding Claims

**Our target is to ensure that 90% of all claims completed and submitted on time to Audit. We met this target for 2023-24.**

Funding claims are in arrears based on evidenced expenditure ie after the money has been spent it can form part of the claim. The claim has to be compiled and approved by audit who check it has been compiled properly and all expenditure claimed is legitimate. Due to the time this takes most claims are submitted on time, but some can take longer to be approved. Eg queries or longer term retention payments to be claimed after the project has completed.

### Housing

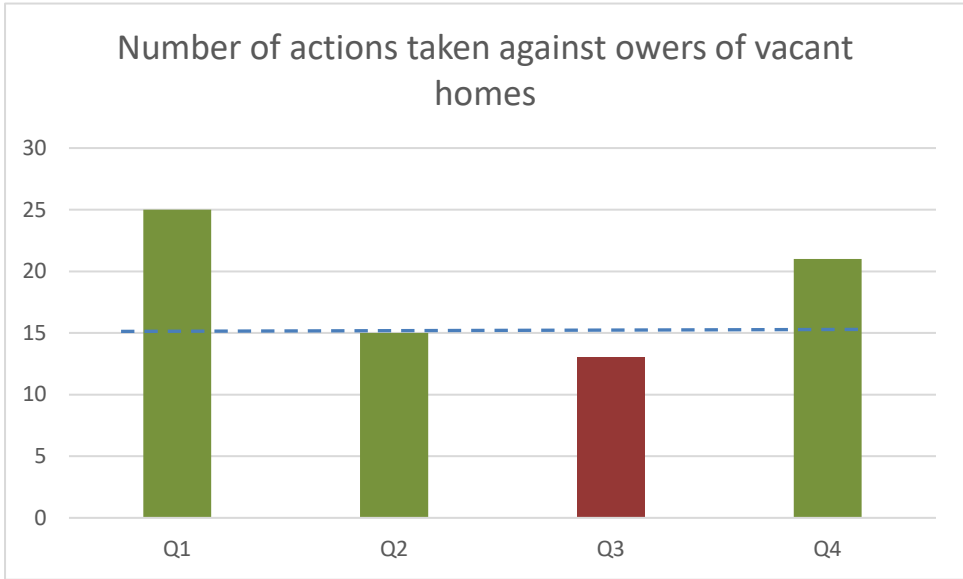
#### Number of Landlord Licenses Issued



Local target is 160 per quarter.

1,010 Private Landlords registered on Sefton’s Accreditation scheme in 23/24. 158% above the 640 annual registration target. This figure is not benchmarked against other LAs, as not all LAs run schemes and if they do, they vary in size. The target was set to be reasonable and achievable within staff resources.

**Vacant Homes**

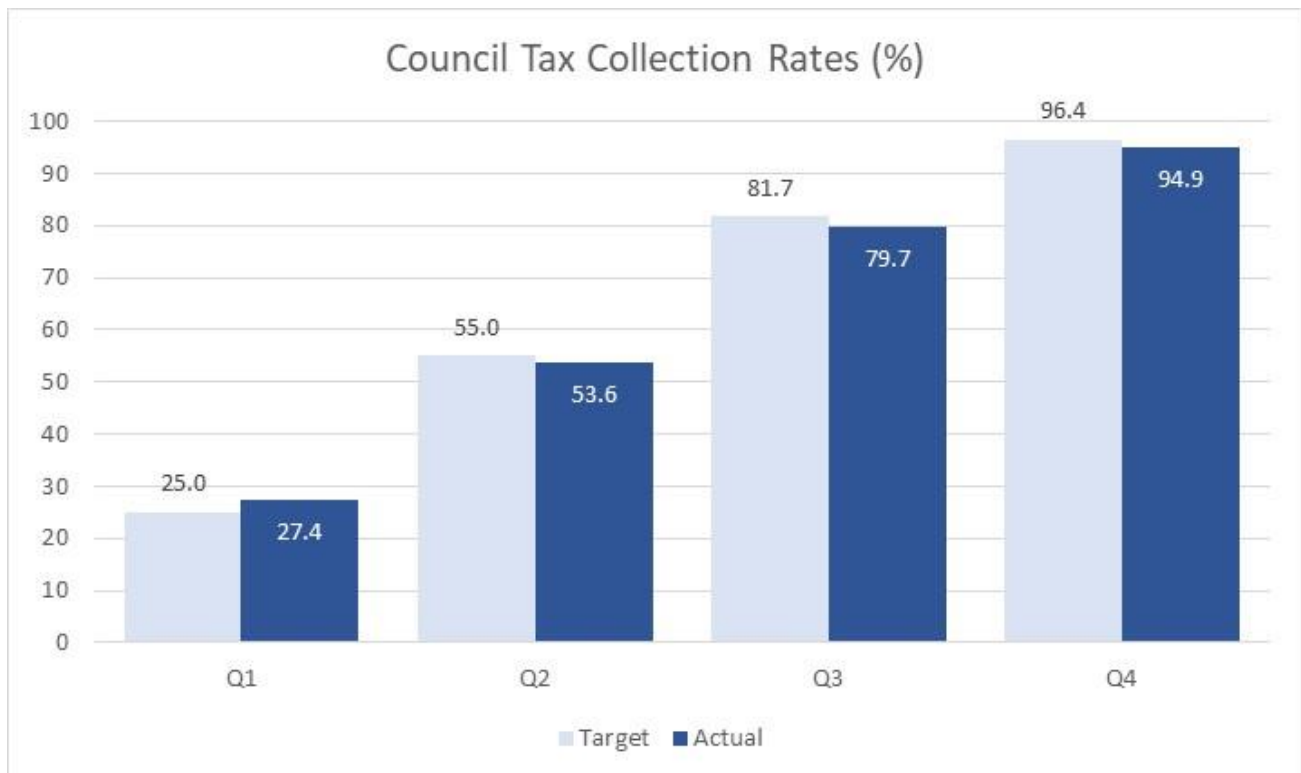


Local target is 15 per quarter.

74 actions taken against owners of vacant homes in 23/24. Above annual target of 60 actions taken.

**Working for Our Communities Every Day – “Working together to deliver affordable services which achieve the best possible outcomes for our communities.”**

## Council Tax



Council Tax collection is currently volatile across the country however the position in Sefton has remained stable over the last 18 months. The Q4 position shows a slight adverse variance against target. Targets reflect previous collection rates, although it should be noted that the targets are higher than the rates achieved during 2022/23. It should be noted that collection performance for Q4 2023/24 is indicative and will be confirmed by the end of June 2024 following publication of national collection data.

The Council will continue to benchmark itself against other Metropolitan Councils, including others in the Liverpool City Region using the annual Government published national collection data.

The Council continues to be pro-active in its management, engagement, collection, and enforcement activities. The Service is continually looking for ways to improve service delivery to ensure residents receiving timely, accurate bills so they know what they should pay when, e.g. increasing automation through use of technology to reduce delays, more web-based information and advice, thereby maintaining collection performance.

## Business Rates

Business Rates collection has met its target for Q4.

It should however be noted that the figure is indicative and will be confirmed by the end of June 2024 following publication of national collection data.

The Council will continue to benchmark itself against other Metropolitan Councils, including others in the Liverpool City Region using annual Government published national collection data.

As for Council Tax, the Council continues to be pro-active in its management, engagement, collection, and enforcement activities.



### Emergency Limited Assistance Scheme

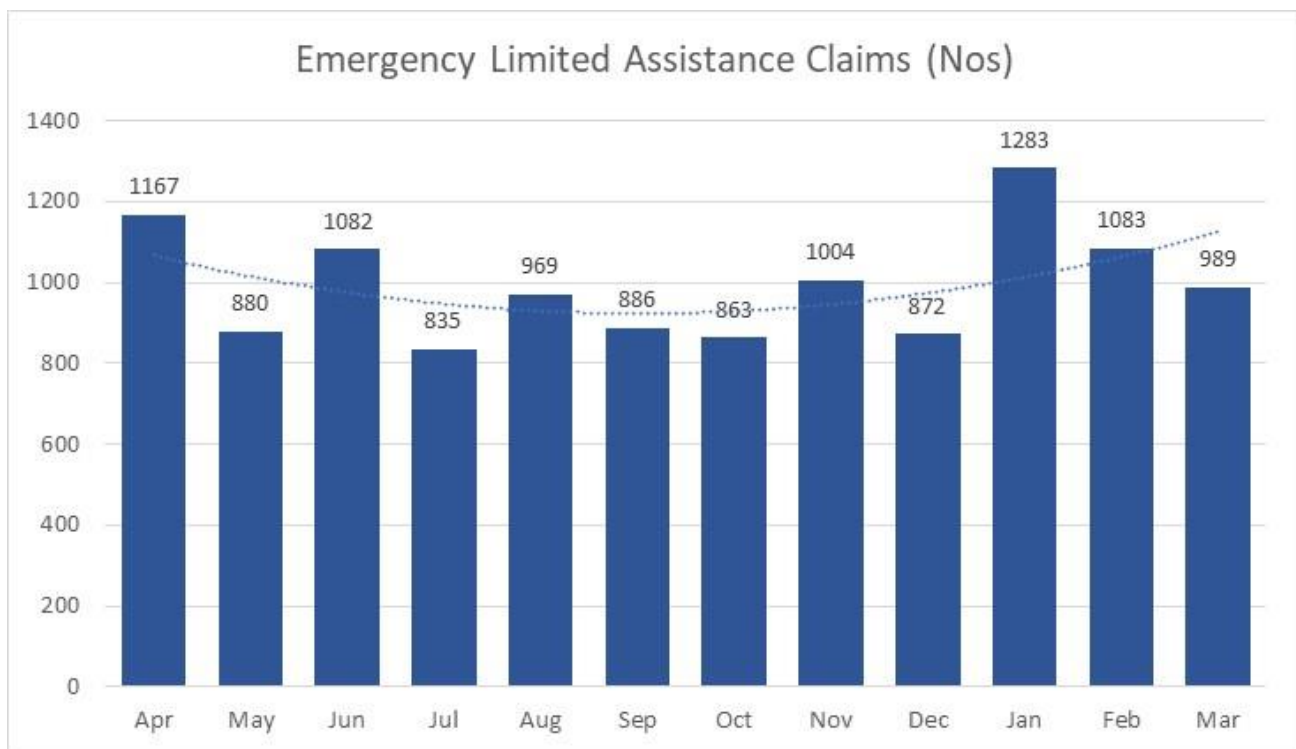
Many local authorities offer a form of local welfare assistance schemes (LWASs), also known as local welfare provision (LWP) or crisis support, where they may be able to help people secure items of furniture, as well as helping with other issues, such as debt advice, food, and fuel poverty. Most local authorities with a scheme only help with the most essential items such as a cooker, fridge/freezer, and bed. Some will also provide a washing machine, sofa, and wardrobe. Many schemes also provide other support beyond furniture, such as help with utility bills and food. Not all councils have these schemes, and some do not provide help with furniture and white goods, which can make benchmarking (demand, volume, core funding and offer) against other local authorities challenging. However, Sefton does collaborate with other local authorities across the Liverpool City Region (LCR) to ensure consistency in provision, share best practice and informing the universal offer across the Merseyside geography. Although the schemes across the LCR are all different, they all have similar application processes, and despite the difference in volumes, the seasonal volumes in demand for support follow a similar pattern.

Sefton's Emergency Limited Assistance Scheme (ELAS) is well established and continues to support local people experiencing severe hardship, a disaster or emergency. Consistently

since 2013, the local authority has responded to more than 10,000 applications per annum. In Q4 there were over 3,300 applications for support, and by the end of Q4 the number of applications received in the year 2023/24 is 11,913 to the end March 2024 compared to 15,978 received at the same point last year. However, the relative fall in demand is attributed to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Open Access Household Support Fund (HSF) providing some applicants with an alternative route for support rather than ELAS.

In respect of the ELAS scheme, there have been 4,180 food vouchers provided, compared to 5,206 provided at the same point last year and there have been 5,329 utility awards, down on the 8,111 the previous year.

The second phase of the Open Access HSF scheme was live from April 2023 through to February 2024 when it was agreed that it should close to new applicants as funding was exhausted. In total 11,500 applications were received with £1.7 Million spent/committed through the Post Office Pay Out Service.



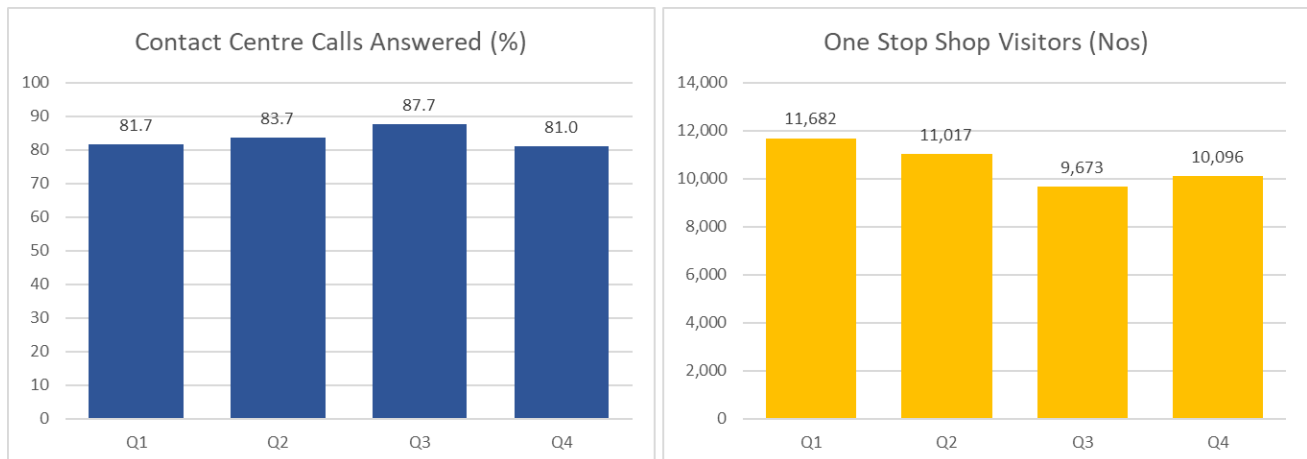
### Customer Services

Customer Services experienced a high volume of calls into the Contact Centre and visits to the One Stop Shops throughout Q4 – especially during March following the dispatch of annual Council Tax bills for 2024/25. In addition, the resumption of the green bin collections started in early March, however there was some confusion with calendar dates displayed online. While this was quickly rectified, the Contact Centre did have to deal with a steady influx of calls. A message confirming the correct collection dates was then prepared and relayed to customers, helping to reduce call volumes.

The exceptionally wet winter weather has also resulted in areas of flooding across the borough, impacting on cleansing crews unable to drive through roads to make daily bin

collections. There were also various reports of outage of lights around Bridle Road and Switch Island with families not having access to any electricity for a number of hours.

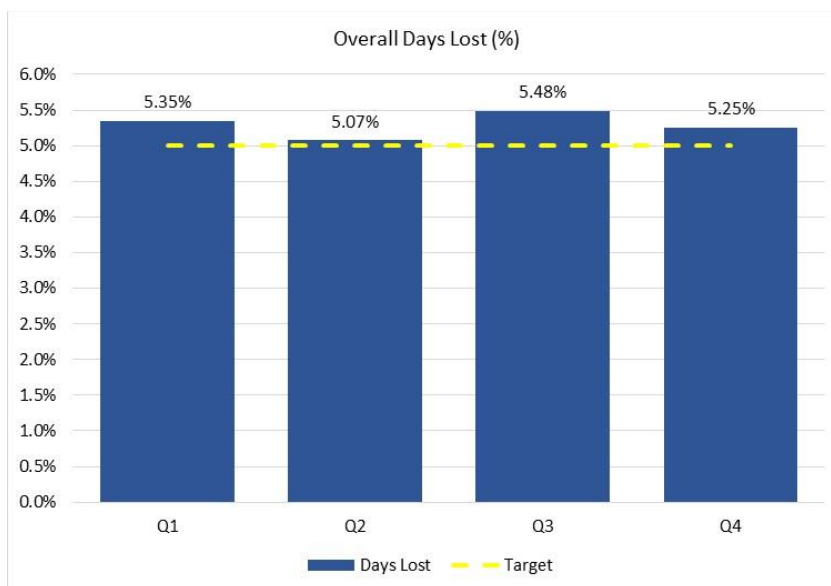
One Stop Shops continue to manage a high volume of enquiries for Taxi-Licensing, Council Tax, and benefits/ financial support as well as general Council related information and advice.



### Sickness Absence

Different local authorities use different methodologies for calculating sickness absence, making it challenging to benchmark and directly compare performance across local authorities in England.

The Office for National Statistics Sickness absence in the UK labour market: 2022, reported that the average sickness absence rate (the percentage of working hours lost because of sickness or injury) in the UK labour market was 2.6%. In the same period sickness absence rates of NHS Hospital and Community Health Services (HCHS) staff working in NHS Trusts and other core organisations and NHS Support Organisations and Central Bodies was 4.9%, dropping to 4.5% in April 2023, but 5.4% in the Northwest region.



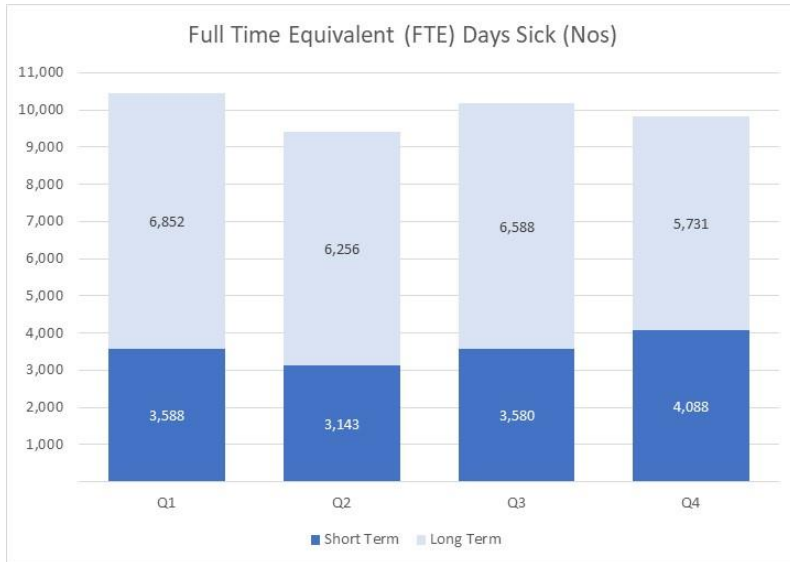
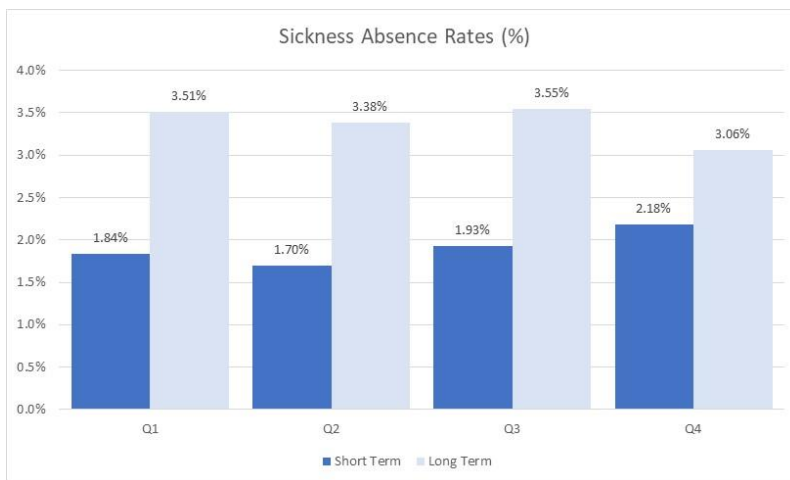
The current overall sickness absence target of 4% for the local authority is indicative, aiding to monitor levels on a quarterly and annual basis across the workforce, and there are naturally



differences in expected sickness levels in individual services, affected by the nature of work in those service areas. An annual target of 5% for 2023/24 could be more realistic baseline considering the external evidence and data.

Short term sickness absence is defined as 20 days or under, and long terms as over 20 days. The calculation for sickness absence is Total Days Sick / Total FTE Days available in a period.

At Q4 the short term sickness absence rate was higher than the previous three quarters. However, this was offset by Q4 also representing the lowest proportion of long-term sickness over the last year.



The Council continues to monitor sickness absence and work with employees to ensure a healthy return to work. In response to the levels of sickness absence each service and the Executive leadership team receive regular, detailed information about short-term, long-term, and overall sickness absence levels, including information about the groups with highest sickness absence rates, and ranked reasons for sickness absence. Managers are routinely provided with clear guidance and support as to how staff can be supported, including the increasing offer of wellbeing assistance programmes for all staff, plus the consistent application of the process to be followed to maximise that support and reduce sickness absence, which should lead to increased attendance and improved performance.