

STATEMENT OF PROGRESS: 2023-2025

PART 1: POPULATION INDICATORS

CONNECTED **A COMMUNITY PLAN**

for Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough

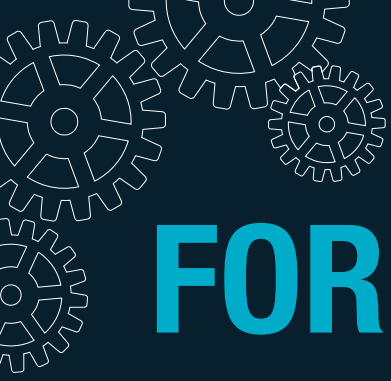






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FOREWORD FROM OUR CHAIR



This two-year period leading up to the publication of this Statement of Progress has been different to other years because the partnership has conducted a mid-point review of Connected, the community plan. We have spent time together reviewing the plan to ensure that it reflects the aspirations for the borough, given the significant events and changes that have occurred since its publication in 2017. We also undertook an extensive public consultation exercise to ensure that the changes meet the expectations of those living in the borough.

As a partnership we remain committed to our 2030 vision:

“We have a happy, healthy and connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning.”

As a result of the review, we have two new outcomes and eleven new population indicators in the plan. The Inclusive Economy outcome was chosen because of the levels of poverty we have been seeing in the borough since Covid and Sustainable Place reflects ambitious regional targets on climate. We have chosen new indicators to reflect these new outcomes and our cross-cutting themes of connectivity, equality and sustainability.

Part 1 of the Statement of Progress reports on progress towards our long-term outcomes through our population indicators. Of the 28 population indicators in the plan, twelve have shown improvement, nine remain unchanged and seven show a decline since their baseline.

Our economic indicators have improved in terms of business survival rates, productivity, employment, and skill levels and

gross domestic household income (GDHI) per head has increased. However, the disability employment gap remains, and we are also concerned about the percentage of children living in poverty and education attainment levels for those children who are entitled to free school meals. We know that many people are still struggling with the cost of living, including the cost of housing and our indicator on social housing shows a fivefold increase in social housing need from the baseline.

Under the Community theme positive shifts include decreases in fear of crime and accidental dwelling fires. Our health indicator of levels of participation in sport has also shown further improvement. Other health indicators, such as preventable deaths, health inequalities and prescription rates for mood and anxiety disorders remain

stalled. We have also seen further worsening of our indicators on those feeling able to influence decisions, a sense of belonging and loneliness and hate motivated incidents.

Progress on our Place outcomes has also been mixed. While town centre vacancy rates and heritage at risk saved are moving in the right direction, we'd like to see town centres perceived as safe and welcoming by more people and more overnight visitors to the borough. Although Greenhouse Gas emissions are decreasing, progress will need to be accelerated to meet regional net zero targets. We would like to see improvements on emissions and in river quality.





During the past two year period our priorities for action have been:

- Promoting Good Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Tackling Poverty & Social Exclusion
- Place
- Shared Leadership & Community Engagement

Part 2 of this Statement of Progress includes links to report cards for the actions being taken forward under the four themes. Many of these actions are now embedded in our work as partners and are having a positive impact on people in the borough. I would like to thank sincerely all partners, especially our action leads, for your continued willingness to collaborate and your dedication to working to improve their quality of life in the borough.

Our revised action plan will be informed by this Statement of Progress and the review of the community plan. We are in the process of revisiting our actions to ensure that we are addressing the need within our borough in a collective and targeted manner.

Part 3 of Statement of Progress looks at the development of our partnership, including our ways of working. We are committed to involving local people in our decisions and we have included details on how we have done that over the past two years. The Community & Voluntary Sector Panel remains integral to our partnership, and I am delighted that we have been able to deliver another two Participatory Budgeting processes during this reporting period. We have identified children and young people as a priority in our engagement strategy. Since the

last Statement we have seen the formation of a Youth Voice for the borough and partners have worked hard to ensure that children and young people have a say in plans and projects.

We have conducted our fourth partnership health check to reflect on levels of participation and satisfaction, along with the impact of the partnership. Over the past two years we have held 51 partnership meetings attended by 145 people from 47 organisations. Compared with the previous Statement we have seen a slight drop in attendance from statutory partners and lower satisfaction levels with how the partnership operates. However, partners do see clear benefits of being a member of this partnership and some would like to see community planning being a higher priority within their own organisations.

One of the strengths of the partnership is our willingness to listen, reflect and act. We will work together to ensure our partnership remains strong and able to deliver for the people in our borough.

As Chair, I deeply value our ethos of shared leadership and the support, kindness, and honesty that each partner brings to our work. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the ABC Council Community Planning Team for their dedication and hard work in supporting this partnership.

Colette Rogers

Head of Health and Social Wellbeing Improvement (South),
Public Health Agency
Chair of ABC Community Planning Strategic Partnership



01

CONNECTED:

A Community Plan for Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough 2017-2030

Community Planning is a process by which organisations who provide public services, business and voluntary groups and local communities work together to improve people's lives.

The community plan sets out the long-term vision and ambition for the borough over a 13-year period and is focused on how the Community Planning Partnership can improve the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of the borough.

"We have a happy, healthy and connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning"

The community plan sets out the long-term outcomes for the borough and the population indicators used to measure progress over time. Community planning partnerships also have a duty to work together on delivery, and our partnership's action plan is currently being revisited in light of the review.



CONNECTED:

A Mid-Point Review

ABC Community Planning Partnership has reviewed the community plan to ensure that it reflects the aspirations for the borough, given the significant events and changes, such as Covid-19, that have occurred since its publication.

The two year period leading up to the publication of the mid-point review of Connected have been different for the partnership, during this time the partnership were able to come together and spend time as a partnership considering the review and the changes required. This also involved extensive public consultation during the review period because important changes to Connected had to be presented and agreed by the residents in the borough.

Council and its statutory partners are required to seek the views of the community, encourage them to express their views, and take their views into account in the community planning process.

The review process included the review of Connected, the community plan and the associated impact assessments and the partnership's actions. Feedback from the consultation will also be used to inform a refresh of the partnership's action plan and this is currently ongoing.

All of this work on the review over the past two years has meant that the Statement of Progress for 2023-2025 is a more condensed version than in previous years but it still gives an insight into what has been achieved through the community planning partnership during this time.

The community planning partnership, its sub-committees and the Community and Voluntary Sector Panel looked at the long-term outcomes and population indicators in the community plan and made some suggested changes. These were the starting point for a series of discussions across the partnership, led by the chairs, about the review of the community plan. This subsequently led to a draft plan being developed and then put out for public consultation.

The scope of the public consultation was:

1. Changes to Connected, the community plan for the borough
2. Updated Equality and Rural Impact Assessments
3. Suggested actions the partnership will take forward

Between October 2024 and January 2025 an online survey was open for the public on the draft plan. There were also a series of public workshops, meetings with government departments and other stakeholders and Section 75 & rural focus groups and meetings. These were delivered both in person and online. In February and March 2025, the write up of the reviewed Connected community plan took place which was then signed off by partners in April 2025 then approved at Community Planning Strategic Partnership meeting in May 2025. During the summer months there was a meeting with the Chairs of the four sub-committees, and individuals meetings took place with CPSP members. On 2nd October an action planning day took place for the whole partnership, followed by sub-committee meetings to further develop the action plan.

The Chairs met in November to consider the action plan and an update was brought to the CPSP. A second sub-committee meeting will take place in December and January for each of the sub-committee's to finalise their actions and in January 2026 the Chairs will come together to agree the final action plan and take it to CPSP for approval.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR CONNECTED REVIEW

DEVELOPMENT PHASE



63
partners from 31
organisations



18
meetings and
workshops

PUBLIC CONSULTATION



151
people from 43 organisations
fed into consultation



25
consultation
events



69
responses to
online survey

**"We have a
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Our 2030 Vision



CROSS CUTTING THEMES

AT THE HEART OF ALL WE DO ARE OUR THREE CROSS CUTTING THEMES:



CONNECTIVITY

We believe connectivity is integral to improving quality of life. Through our plan we will work to transform and connect all areas of our borough physically, digitally and socially through shared collaborative approaches.



EQUALITY

We are committed to promoting equality, good relations and inclusion and believe them to be central to improving quality of life for everyone. A peaceful and inclusive society is vital to ensuring that we have a welcoming, confident and safe community. As part of the review process, we have updated our Equality Impact Assessment on our plan, considering the needs of section 75 categories¹. The updated Equality Impact Assessment is available on our website².



SUSTAINABILITY

We will work to improve everyone's quality of life economically, environmentally and socially, without compromising our future generation's ability to develop, grow and flourish. As part of the review of the plan we are also proposing the inclusion of an outcome on environmental sustainability under the Place theme.

Our cross-cutting themes have been central to the review of the community plan and through the review we have considered how they can be strengthened. We have done this by suggesting changes to our outcomes and population indicators and will continue to ensure that they are central to our actions.

¹ Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities to comply with two statutory duties. The first duty is the Equality of Opportunity duty, which requires public authorities in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between the nine equality categories of persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; men and women generally; persons with a disability and persons without; and persons with dependants and persons without. The second duty, the Good Relations duty, requires that public authorities in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion and racial group.

² [EQIA-for-review-of-community-plan-1.pdf](#)

02 SUMMARY TABLE OF NINE OUTCOMES

LONG TERM OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS
COMMUNITY	
Connected Community: Everyone has opportunities to contribute to community life and shape decisions – we have a strong sense of community belonging and take pride in our area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of people who feel they have an influence when it comes to any of the local decisions made in their neighbourhood • Percentage of people who feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood • Percentage of people who feel lonely at least some of the time
Healthy Community: People are making positive lifestyle choices. They are more resilient and better equipped to cope with life’s changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of preventable deaths per 100,000 population (age standardised preventable mortality rate) • Gap in life expectancy between the most deprived areas and the borough overall • Percentage of people who participate in sport or physical activity on at least one day a week • Number of people prescribed medication for mood and anxiety disorders per 1,000 population
Welcoming Community: Our borough is a safe, respectful and peaceful environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of people reporting that fear of crime has a minimal impact on their quality of life • Number of accidental dwelling fires • Number of hate motivated incidents
ECONOMY	
Enterprising Economy: Our borough is a centre for entrepreneurship, innovation and investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business birth rates • Survival rate of newly born businesses • Productivity – Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked
Inclusive Economy: Everyone has a decent minimum living standard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of children (aged under 16) living in relative low-income families • Gap in the employment rate for people with disabilities • Gross disposable household income (GDHI) per head
Skilled Economy: People are better equipped to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the dynamic economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of the workforce in employment qualified to below level 2 and above, level 2 and above, level 3 and above, and level 4 and above • Employment rate (age 16-64) • GCSE attainment levels for students entitled to free school meals (FSME)
PLACE	
Creative Place: Our borough is an inspirational and creative place offering quality, inclusive arts, cultural and heritage experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of people (aged 16+) engaging with arts/cultural activities in the past year • Number of heritage at risk saved
Revitalised Place: Our distinctive, inclusive and vibrant urban and rural areas are at the heart of community and economic life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City and town centre vacancy rates • Level of social housing need • Percentage of people who see town centres as safe welcoming places for people of all walks of life • Number of overnight trips made by visitors from outside Northern Ireland
Sustainable Place: We value and protect our climate, biodiversity and natural assets. People understand the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and our borough is on track to become net zero by 2050.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household concern for the environment • River Quality – Soluble Reactive Phosphorus (SRP) in rivers • Per Capita Greenhouse Gas Emissions

03 PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES SUMMARY

The Connected Community Plan uses a total of 28 population indicators to monitor progress towards achieving outcomes.

COMMUNITY	Influencing decisions	▼	Decrease in the % of people who feel they have an influence on decisions made in their neighbourhood to 19% in 2022-2024 from 32% in 2013-2015.
	Sense of belonging	▼	Decrease in the % of people feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood to 79% in 2022-24 from 90% in 2013-2015.
	Loneliness	▼	Increase in the % of people who feel lonely at least some of the time from 17.3% in 2017/18 to 22.3% in 2023/24
	Preventable deaths	—	At 162 preventable deaths per 100,000 population for the period 2019-23, this is slightly higher than the base year.
	Health inequalities - females Health inequalities -males	—	The gap in life expectancy between those living in the most deprived areas increased slightly from 1 year in 2012-14 to 1.1 years in 2021-23. The gap in life expectancy between those living in the most deprived areas has decreased slightly from 3.3 years in 2012-14 to 3.4 years in 2021-23.
	Sport & physical activity	▲	The percentage of people who participate in sport on at least one day per week has increased from 45% in 2012/13-2014/15 to 54% in 2023/24.
	Mental Health	—	The standardised prescription rate for mood and anxiety disorders has increased slightly from 21.1% in 2016 to 21.8% in 2023.
	Fear of crime	▲	In 2023/24, 77% of people report that fear of crime has a minimal impact on their quality of life, up from 69% in 2015/16.
	Accidental dwelling fires	▲	There were fewer accidental dwelling fires (64) in 2024 than in 2016 (86).
	Hate Motivated Incidents	▼	The number of hate motivated incidents in the borough has increased from 197 in 2013/14 to 254 in 2023/34
ECONOMY	Business survival rates	▲	The five-year business survival rate has increased from 38.6% for businesses born in 2010 to 50.4% for businesses born in 2018
	Business birth rates	—	At 8.2% in 2023, business birth rates are much the same as they were in the base year (8% in 2014).
	Productivity	▲	GVA per hour worked has increased from £22.20 in 2013 to £33.75 in 2023
	Poverty	—	At 23.1%, the percentage of children living in relative low-income families is just slightly lower than the base year (24.9%) having increased for the last 3 years.
	Employment gap for disabilities	▲	The disability employment gap has fallen from 50.6 percentage points in 2016 to 42.8 percentage points in 2024
	GDHI	▲	GDHI per head of population has increased from £15,382 in 2015 to £20,019 in 2023.
	Skill levels	▲	The percentage of the workforce in employment and qualified at all levels has increased since 2015
	Employment rate	▲	The percentage of the workforce in employment increased from 69% in 2015 to 79% in 2024
Educational attainment	—	The percentage of FSME school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSE grades A*-C including GCSE English and Maths is relatively unchanged since the base year, 43.2% in 2023/24 compared to 43.6% in 2015/16.	
PLACE	Arts and cultural participation	—	The percentage of people (aged 16+) engaging with arts/cultural activities in the past year is the same as the base year at 86% (2023/24).
	Heritage at risk	▲	The total number of buildings at risk saved has increased from 21 in 2016 to 35 by 2024.
	Social housing need	▼	The level of social housing need has increased to 1,622 units for the period 2024-29 which is more than five times the need estimated for the period 2015-20.
	City & town centre vacancy rates	▲	City and town centre vacancy rates decreased in all centres except Craigavon where they increased although remained lower than all other town/city centres in the borough.
	Town & city centre safety	▼	The % of people who saw town and city centres in NI as safe & welcoming for people from all walks of life decreased to 47% in 2022-2024 from 71% in 2014-2016.
	Overnight trips	—	The number of overnight trips made by visitors from outside NI has increased slightly since the base year to 113,674 in 2024, although when expressed as a % of total trips to NI this has fallen slightly.
	Household concern for the environment	▼	The level of public concern about environmental issues has fallen from 66% in 2015/16 to 63% in 2024/25.
PLACE	River Quality	—	Average SRP in Rivers in NI has increased slightly from 0.059mg/l in 2015 to 0.065mg/l in 2024
	Greenhouse gas emissions	▲	Per capita greenhouse gas emissions have fallen from 11.4t CO2e in 2015 to 9.3t CO2e in 2023

Relative to baseline: ▼ Negative Shift ▲ Positive Shift — No Change

04

POPULATION INDICATORS: TIME SERIES

The CPSP is committed to achieving our vision for the Borough. In the Connected Community Plan we have outlined three strategic themes - Community, Economy and Place - and at the heart of each theme are three cross cutting themes - connectivity, equality and sustainability. These themes have been central to our recent review.

The plan takes an outcomes-based approach and each theme has three long-term outcomes. These nine outcomes are aspirational statements which set out what we want for our residents and the population indicators help measure our progress towards realising these outcomes.

Originally, the Connected Community Plan had identified 19 population indicators. In the last statement, in line with our data development agenda, we introduced a further 3 indicators and our most recent revised Community Plan reports on a total of 28 indicators. For those indicators that are new to the plan we have assumed a base year similar to the other indicators in the plan.

All of the indicators are relevant and useful and by monitoring them we can demonstrate progress towards achieving the outcomes which will help make our 2030 vision for our community a reality.

This report examines each theme in turn, outlining progress against the relevant indicators. It is important to note that, for some indicators, changes in methodology mean that data may not be directly comparable over time. Nevertheless, the figures remain valuable for providing indicative insights into overall trends and patterns.



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Our 2030 Vision



CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Connected Community:

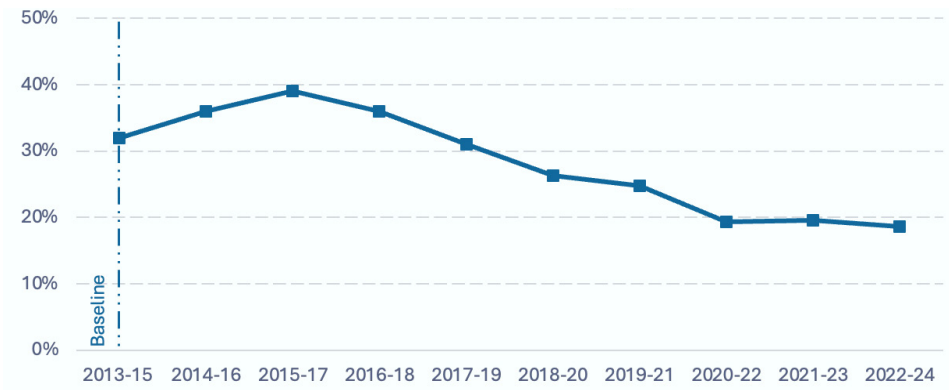
Everyone has opportunities to contribute to community life and shape decisions - we have a strong sense of community belonging and take pride in our area.

Indicators:

- Percentage of people who feel they have an influence when it comes to any of the local decisions made in their neighbourhood
 - Percentage of people who feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood
 - Percentage of people who feel lonely at least some of the time
-



Percentage of people who feel they have an influence when it comes to any of the local decisions made in their neighbourhood



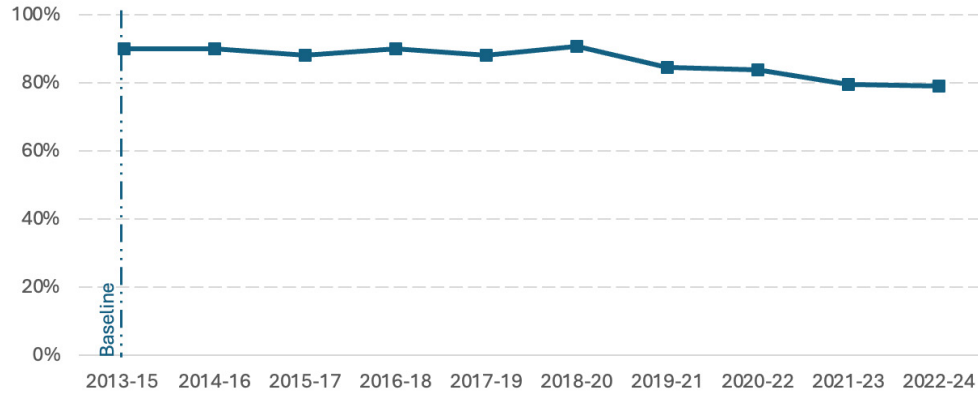
Baseline 2013-15		Where we were 2020-22		Where we are now 2022-24	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
32%	29%	19%	20%	19%	20%

Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (ARK)



CONNECTED COMMUNITY

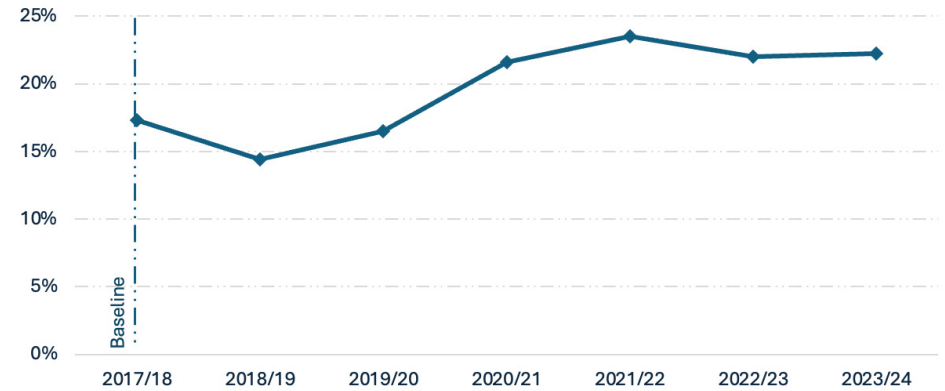
Percentage of people who feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood



Baseline 2013-15		Where we were 2020-22		Where we are now 2022-24	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
90%	86%	84%	82%	79%	82%

Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (ARK)

Percentage of people who feel lonely at least some of the time



Baseline 2017/18		Where we were 2020/21		Where we are now 2023/24	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
17%	17%	22%	20%	22%	18%

Source: Continuous Household Survey (CHS), NISRA.



HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Healthy Community:

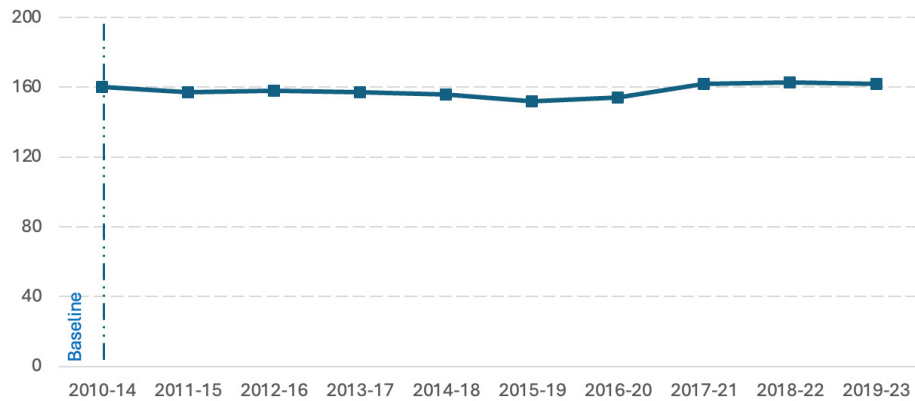
People are making positive lifestyle choices. They are more resilient and better equipped to cope with life's challenges.

Indicators:

- Number of preventable deaths per 100,000 population (age standardised preventable mortality rate)
- Gap in life expectancy between most deprived areas and the borough overall
- Percentage of people who participate in sport or physical activity on at least one day per week
- Number of people prescribed medication for mood and anxiety disorders per 1,000 population



Number of preventable deaths per 100,000 population (age standardised preventable mortality rate)



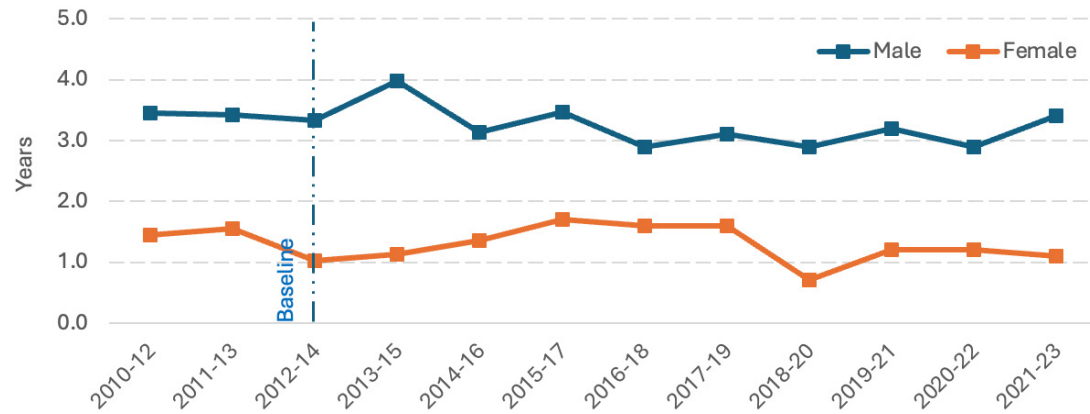
Baseline 2010-14 ⁴		Where we were 2017-21		Where we are now 2019-23	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
160	173	162	178	162	177

Source: NI Health and Social Care Inequalities Monitoring System, Department of Health

⁴ Please note, the Baseline figures presented in the table above have been revised since the publication of the Connected Community Plan following an update to the mortality definition which was proposed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and adopted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in 2020. Recently COVID-19 has been added to the definition in the new category "Provisional assignment of new diseases."



Gap in life expectancy between most deprived areas and the borough overall



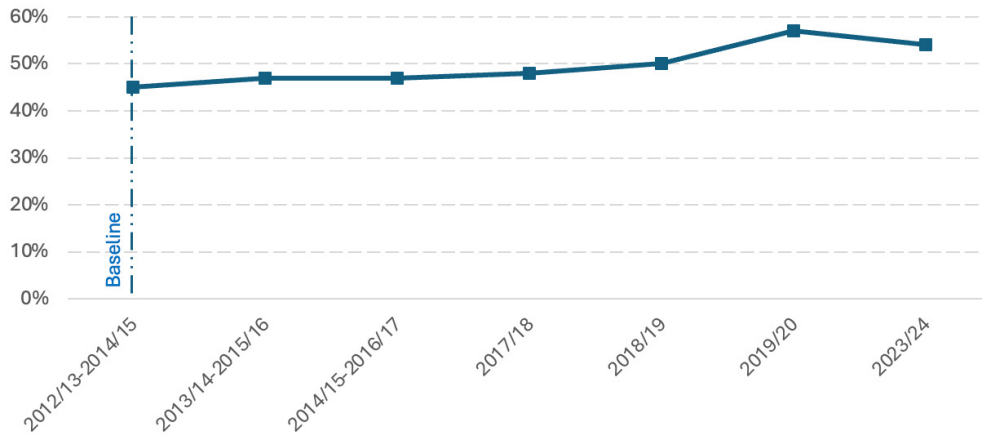
Baseline 2012-14		Where we were 2019-21		Where we are now 2021-23	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
Male 3.3 yrs	Male 4.2 yrs Female 2.6 yrs	Male 3.2 yrs Female 1.6 yrs	Male 4.1 yrs Female 2.9 yrs	Male 3.2 yrs Female 1.3 yrs	Male 4.5 yrs Female 3.1 yrs

Source: Northern Ireland Health Inequalities Annual Report, Department of Health



HEALTHY COMMUNITY

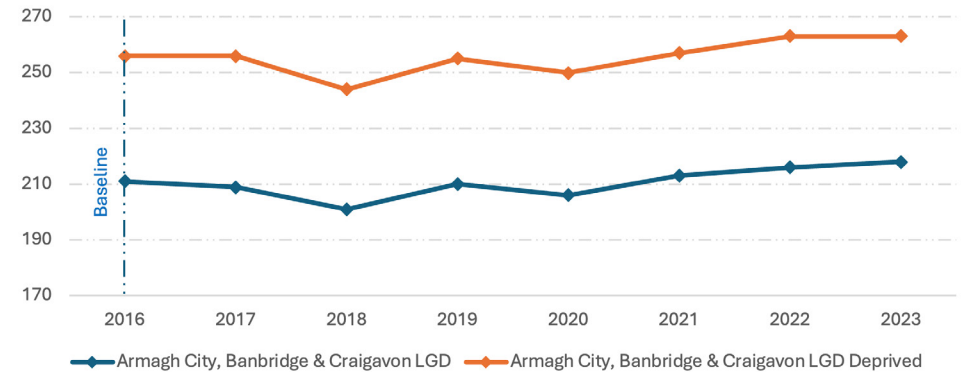
Percentage of people who participate in sport on at least one day a week



Baseline 2012/13-2014/15 ⁵		Where we were 2019/20 ⁶		Where we are now 2023/24	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
45%	48%	57%	52%	54%	48%

Source: Continuous Household Survey, Department for Communities

Standardised Prescription Rate - Mood and Anxiety (persons prescribed per 1,000 population)



Baseline 2016		Where we were 2021		Where we are now 2023	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
211	215	213	221	218	228

Source: Health Inequalities Report, Department of Health, Northern Ireland. Note: Figures in the table refer to the number of persons prescribed per 1,000 population

⁵ It is important to note that comparisons should not be made across the earlier years presented in the chart due to overlapping samples.

⁶ The CHS is a NI wide household survey of approximately 9,000 random addresses with a target response rate 55%. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the change from face-to-face to telephone survey mode, the achieved response rate for the 2020/21 survey was just 17% and as a result no LGD level analysis was published. LGD level analysis is not available for 2021/22 as due to the reduction of the size of the questionnaire, the days per week question was not included for 2021/22. However, it has since been re-instated.



WELCOMING COMMUNITY

Welcoming Community:

Our borough is a safe, inclusive, respectful and peaceful place.

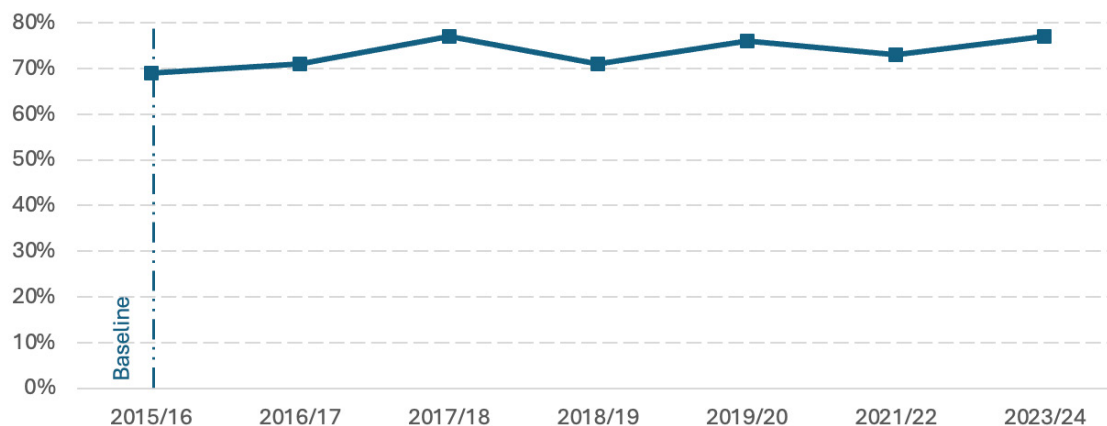
Indicators:

- Percentage of people reporting that fear of crime has a minimal impact on their quality of life
- Number of accidental dwelling fires
- Number of hate motivated incidents



WELCOMING COMMUNITY

Percentage of people reporting that fear of crime has a minimal impact on their quality of life



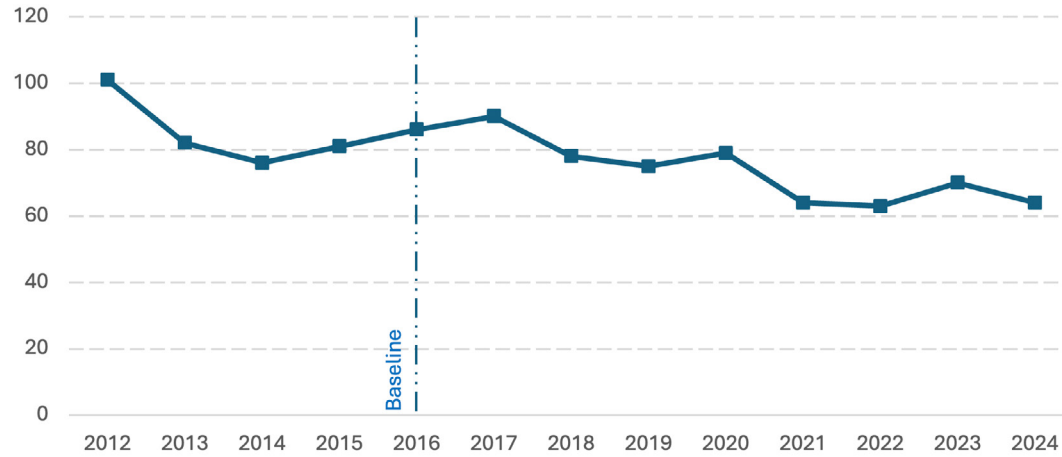
Baseline 2015/16		Where we were 2021/22 ⁷		Where we are now 2023/24	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
69%	73%	73%	73%	77%	76%

Source: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey (previously known as the Northern Ireland Crime Survey), Department of Justice

⁷As a result of the COVID19 pandemic, the NI Safe Community Survey moved to telephone interviews. In 2020/21, this move resulted in lower response rates and as a result, no LGD level results were published. The 2021/22 survey was still a telephone survey and the number of achieved interviews was higher.



Number of accidental dwelling fires



Baseline 2016		Where we were 2022		Where we are now 2024	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
86	840	63	715	64	634

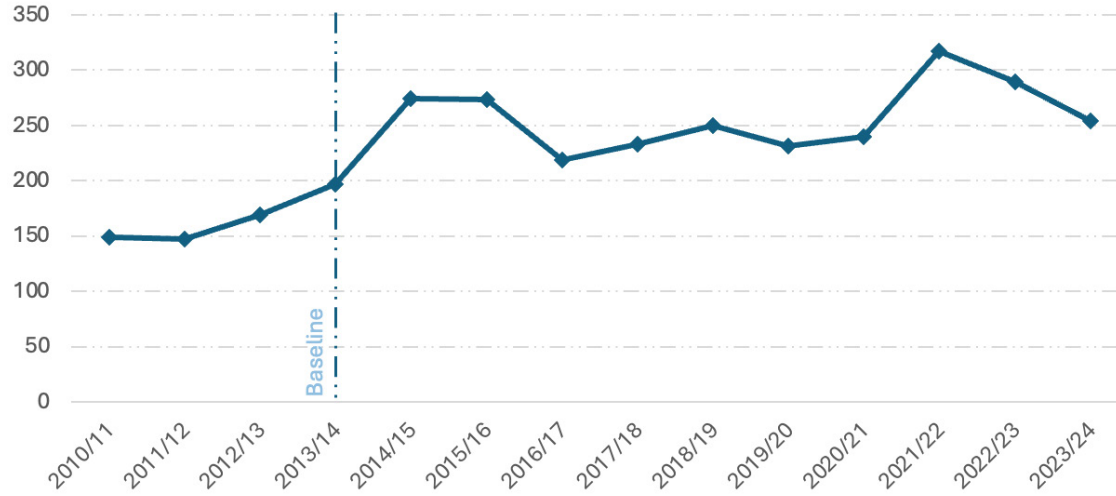
Source: Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Services (NIFRS)



WELCOMING COMMUNITY



Number of hate motivated incidents



Baseline 2013/14		Where we were 2021/22		Where we are now 2023/24	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
197	2,703	317	3,121	254	3,070

Source: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey (previously known as the Northern Ireland Crime Survey), Department of Justice

	Racist	Sectarian	Homophobic	Disability	Transphobic	Faith / Religion	Total Hate Motivated Incidents
2013/14	79	84	26	7	0	1	197
2023/24	102	104	25	8	13	2	254



ENTERPRISING ECONOMY

Enterprising Economy:

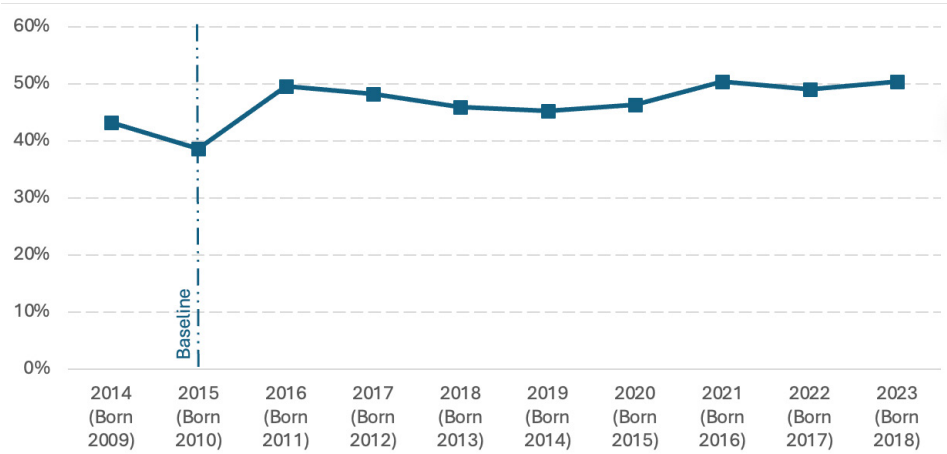
Our borough is a productive centre of excellence for entrepreneurship, innovation and investment.

Indicators:

- Survival Rates of newly born businesses
- Business birth rates
- Productivity – Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked



Survival Rates of newly born businesses

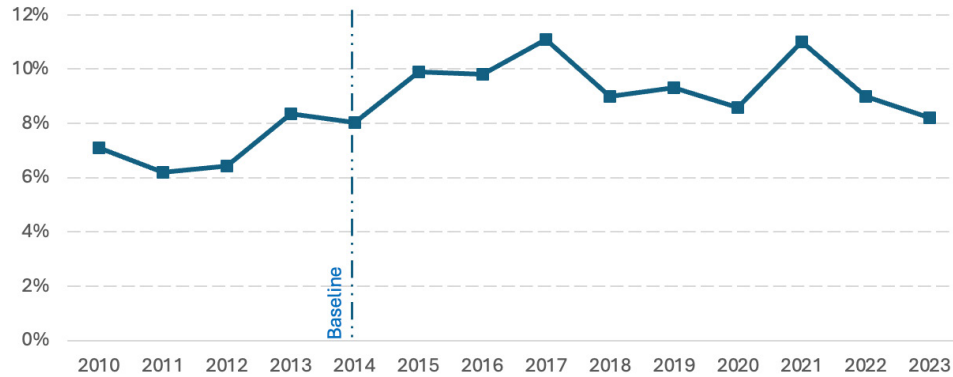


Baseline 2015 (Born 2010)		Where we were 2021 (Born 2016)		Where we are now 2023 (Born 2018)	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
Armagh 36% Banbridge 43% Craigavon 38% ABC Avg 39%	39%	50.4%	47.3%	50.4%	47.7%

Source: Inter-Departmental Business Register, Business Demography NI, 2021, NISRA. Please note, the estimates in the chart for businesses born between 2009 and 2014 have been calculated internally as a weighted average using the number of businesses in each of the three former council areas.



Business birth rates

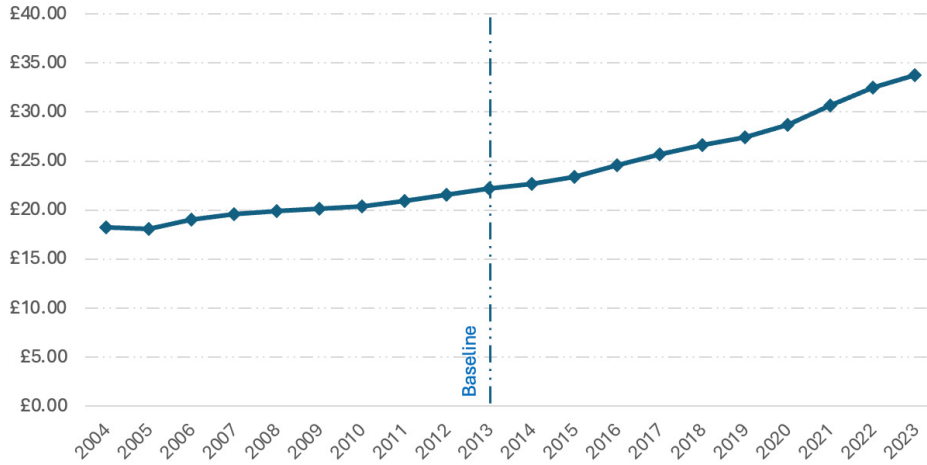


Baseline 2014		Where we were 2021		Where we are now 2023	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
8%	9%	11%	10%	8.2%	8.3%

Source: Inter-Departmental Business Register, Office for National Statistics and NISRA. Please note, figures for 2010-2014 for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon are an aggregation of the 3 former council areas.



Productivity – Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked



Baseline 2013		Where we were 2021		Where we are now 2023	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
£22.20	£25.59	£30.65	£34.33	£33.75	£36.88

Source: Subregional Productivity in the UK, Office for National Statistics (ONS)



INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

Inclusive Economy:

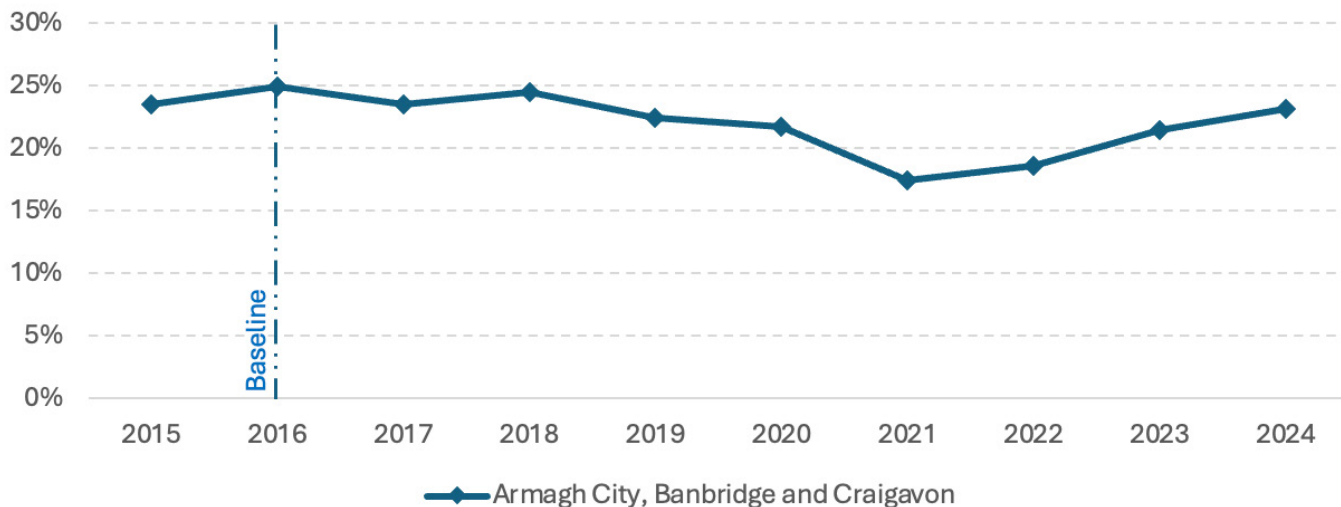
Everyone has a decent minimum living standard

Indicators:

- Percentage of children (aged under 16) living in relative low-income families
- Gap in employment rate for people with disabilities
- Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) per head



Percentage of children (aged under 16) living in relative low-income families



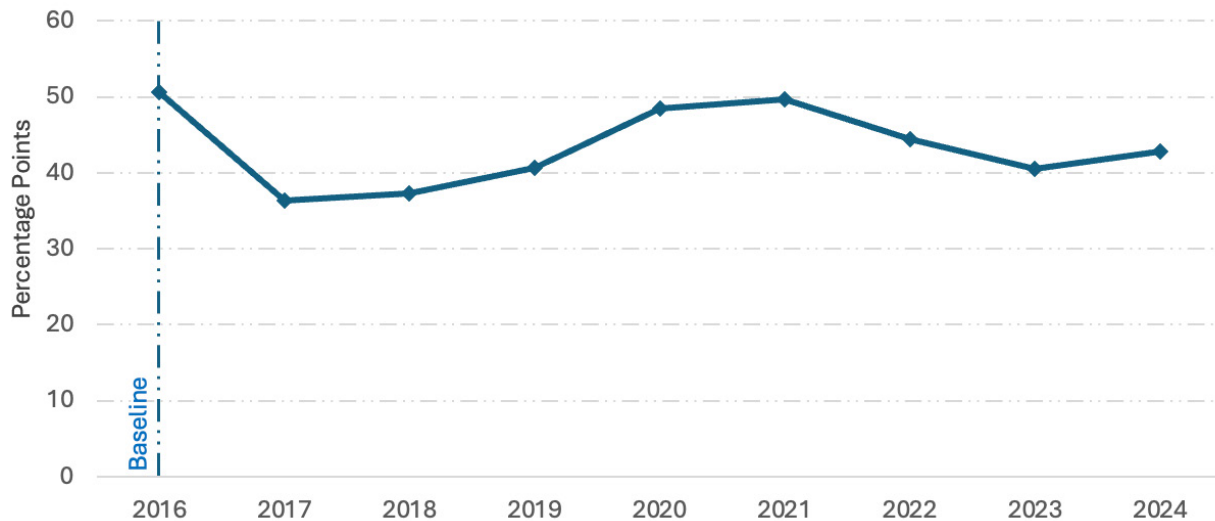
Baseline 2016		Where we were 2022		Where we are now 2024	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
24.9%	26.5%	18.6%	18.6%	23.1%	22.7%

Source: Children in low-income families: local area statistics, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)⁸.

⁸ This release of statistics calibrates figures to HBAI single-year UK estimates (not regional estimates) and so there are revisions to the back-series at UK, regional and local area level.



Gap in employment rate for people with disabilities

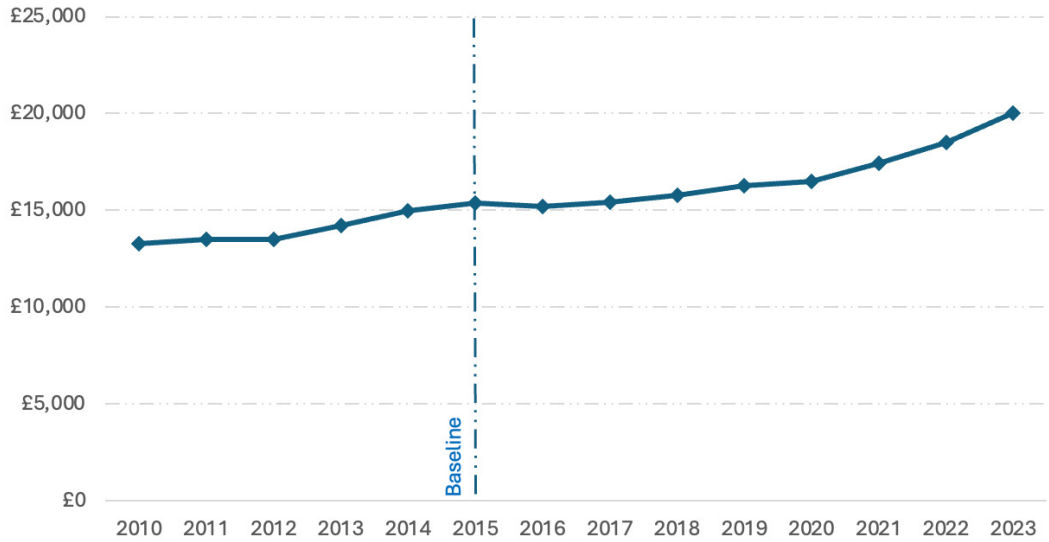


Baseline 2016		Where we were 2022		Where we are now 2024	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
50.6	44.8	44.4	42.4	42.8	39.2

Source: Local Labour Market Insight Dashboard, Department for Communities, Northern Ireland.



Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) per head



Baseline 2015		Where we were 2021		Where we are now 2023	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
£15,382	£15,245	£17,449	£17,807	£20,019	£20,403

Source: Regional gross disposable household income, Office for National Statistics (ONS).



SKILLED ECONOMY

Skilled Economy:

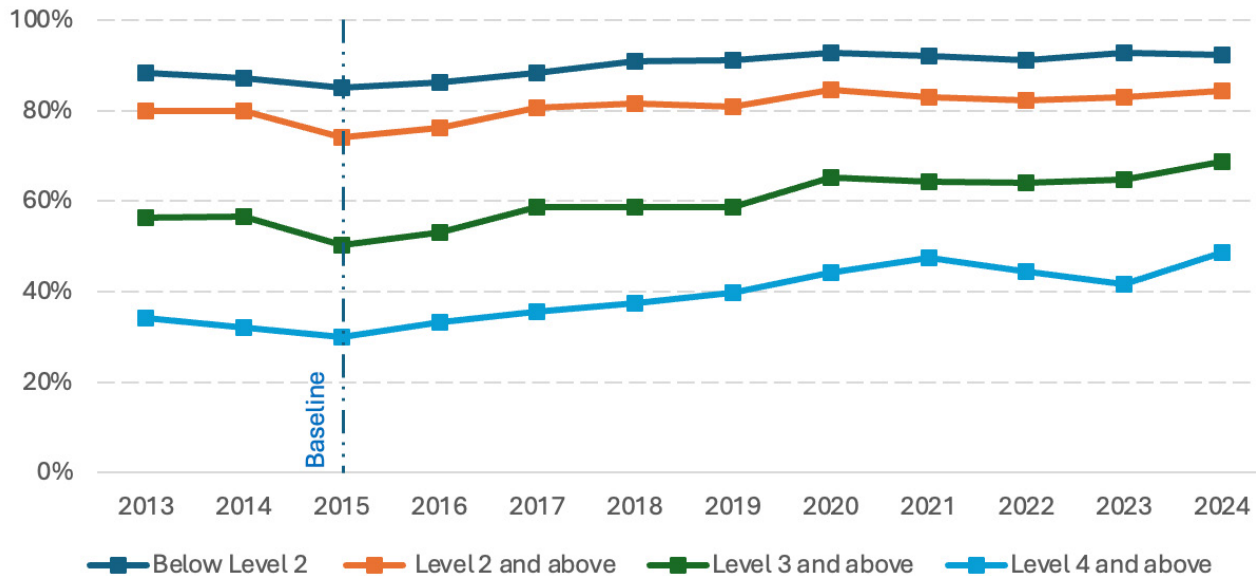
People are better equipped to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the dynamic economy.

Indicators:

- Proportion of the workforce in employment qualified to below level 2 and above, level 2 and above, level 3 and above and level 4 and above
- Employment rate (age 16-64)
- GCSE Attainment Levels for students entitled to free school meals (FSME)



Proportion of the workforce in employment qualified to below level 2 and above, level 2 and above, level 3 and above and level 4 and above



Source: Labour Force Survey, NISRA. Note: There was a review of the methodology in 2020 which changes how certain qualifications are assigned to levels and treatment of responses which are unable to be classified into levels (including don't know responses)⁹. In addition, LFS responses published from 15 July 2021 have been reweighted to new populations using growth rates from HMRC Real Time Information (RTI). This is to allow for different trends during the coronavirus pandemic. The reweighting gives improved estimates of both rates and levels. All figures in the table are based on the revised methodology and weighting so figures may differ slightly from those published in the previous Statement of Progress.

Baseline 2015		Where we were 2021		Where we are now 2025	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
Below Level 2+ 85%	Below Level 2+ 88%	Below Level 2+ 92%	Below Level 2+ 89%	Below Level 2+ 92%	Below Level 2+ 89%
Level 2+ 74%	Level 2+ 77%	Level 2+ 83%	Level 2+ 85%	Level 2+ 84%	Level 2+ 85%
Level 3+ 50%	Level 3+ 56%	Level 3+ 64%	Level 3+ 69%	Level 3+ 69%	Level 3+ 68%
Level 4+ 30%	Level 4+ 37%	Level 4+ 47%	Level 4+ 51%	Level 4+ 49%	Level 4+ 48%

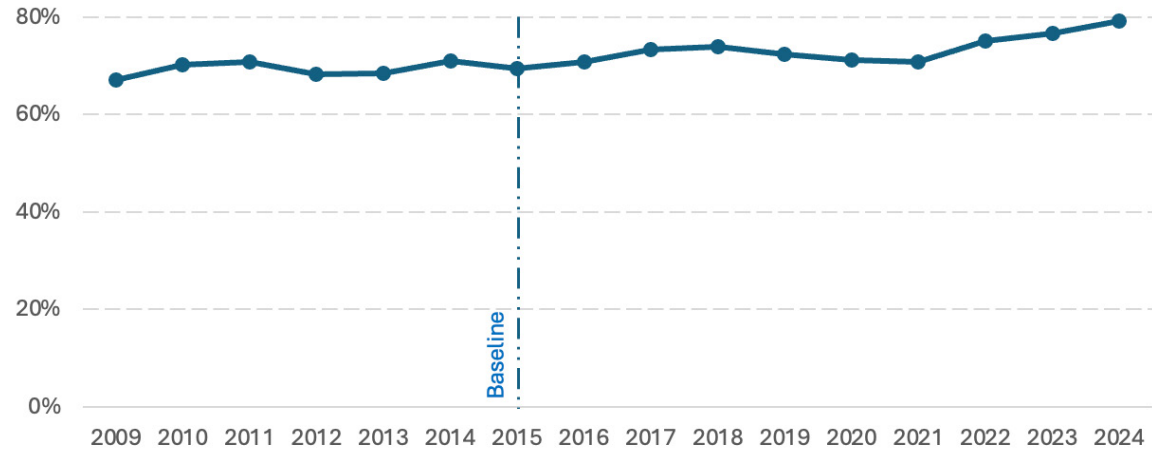
⁹A methodology document on Highest Qualification Levels is available on the LFS background and quality page, which provides a fuller explanation of methodology and more detail on qualifications included in all levels.

Qualification levels are broadly equivalent to:
 Below Level 2: O-level, GCSE grade A*-C - less than 5
 Level 2: O-level, GCSE grade A*-C - 5 or more
 Level 3: A-level - more than 1
 Level 4 to 5: Foundation degree, HNC/HND/BTEC higher
 Levels 6+: First or higher degrees

Responses of Don't Know, or that were unable to be classified have been excluded.



Employment rate (age 16-64)

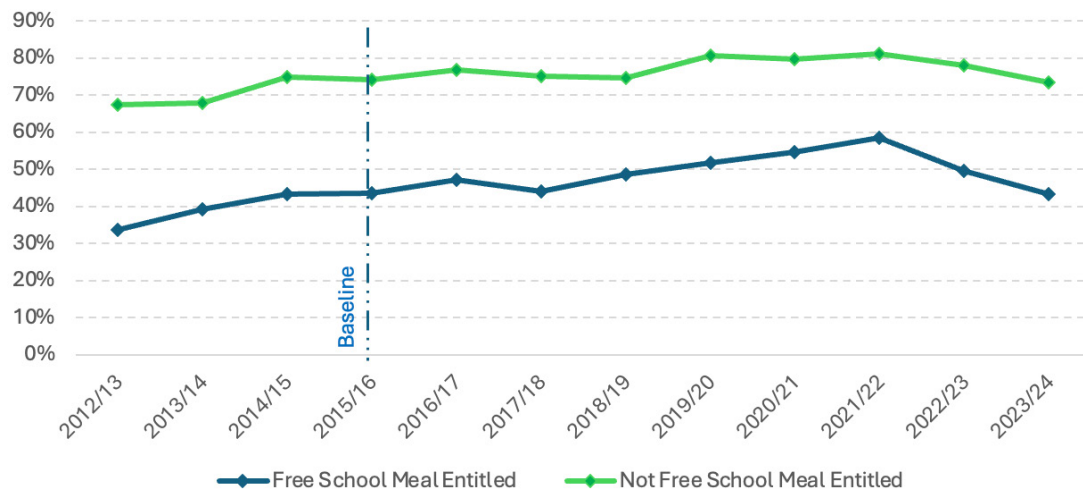


Baseline 2015		Where we were 2022		Where we are now 2024	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
69%	68%	75%	72%	79%	74%

Source: Labour Force Survey, NISRA.



GCSE attainment levels for students entitled to free school meals (FSME)



Baseline 2015/16		Where we were 2021/22		Where we are now 2023/24	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
44%	45%	58%	59%	43%	52%

Source: School Leavers Survey – Attainment, Department of Education, NISRA Data Portal.



CREATIVE PLACE

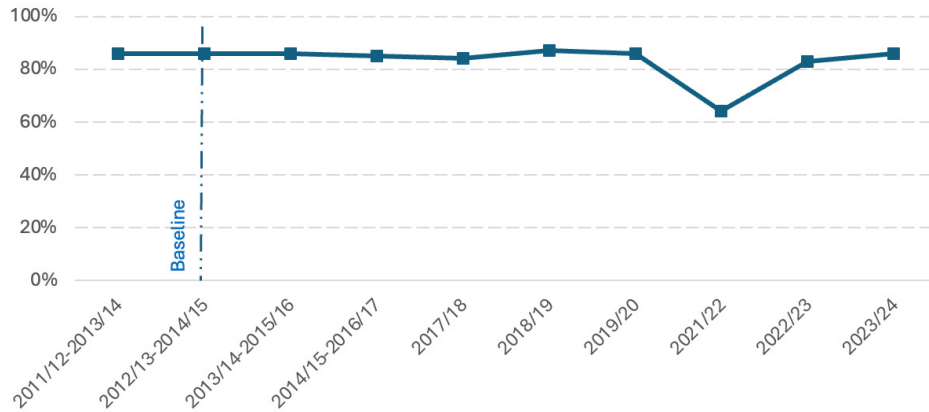
Creative Place:

Our borough is an inspirational and creative place offering quality, inclusive arts and cultural and heritage experiences.

Indicators:

- Percentage of people (aged 16+) engaging with arts/cultural activities in the past year
- Number of heritage at risk assets saved

Percentage of people (aged 16+) engaging with arts/cultural activities in the past year



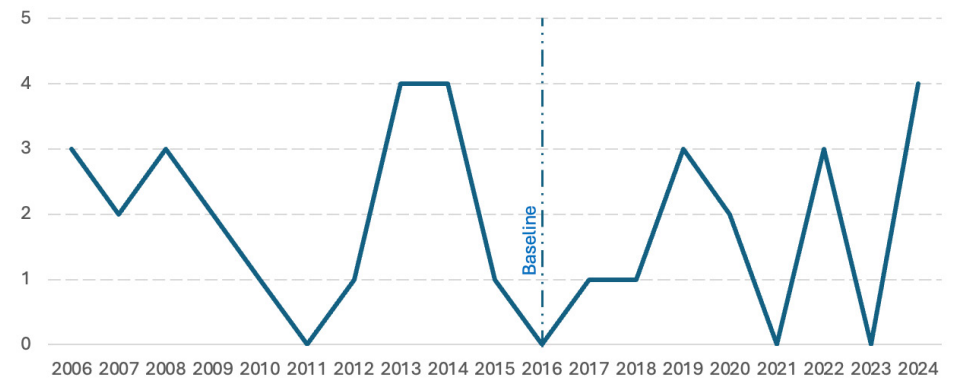
Baseline 2012/13 - 2014/15		Where we were 2021/2022		Where we are now 2023/2024	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
86%	87%	64%	62%	86%	83%

Source: Continuous Household Survey, Department for Communities^{10,11}

¹⁰ It is important to note that comparisons should not be made across the earlier years presented in the chart due to overlapping samples.

¹¹ Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the change from face-to-face to telephone survey mode, the achieved response rate for the 2020/21 survey was just 17% and as a result no LGD level analysis was published. There was also a reduction in the number of questions between 2020/21-2022/23. As a result, the figures from 2020/21 onwards are not directly comparable to previous years due to the significant changes to the survey in terms of methodology and content.

Number of heritage at risk assets saved



Baseline 2016		Where we were 2022		Where we are now 2024	
ABC	Total to date	ABC	Total to date	ABC	Total to date
0	21	3	31	4	35

Source: Ulster Architectural Heritage, Buildings at Risk Register Northern Ireland, Department for Communities (at 31st December 2024).



REVITALISED PLACE

Revitalised Place:

Our distinctive, inclusive and vibrant urban and rural areas are at the heart of community and economic life.

Indicators:

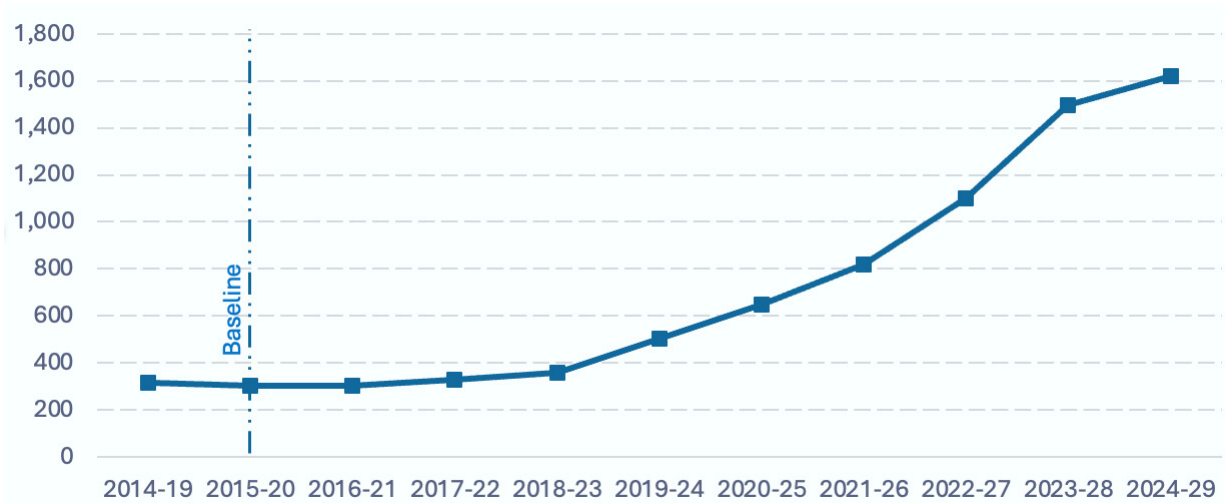
- Level of social housing need
- City and town centre vacancy rates
- Percentage of people who see town centres as safe and welcoming places for people of all walks of life
- Number of overnight trips made by visitors from outside Northern Ireland



REVITALISED PLACE



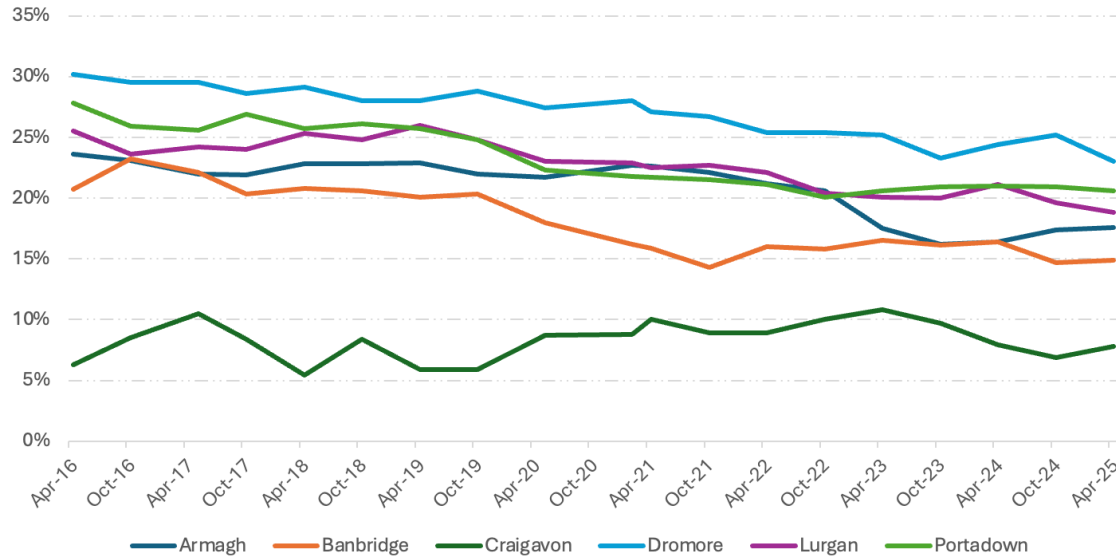
Level of social housing need



Baseline 2015-20	Where we were 2022-27	Where we are now 2024-29
ABC	ABC	ABC
302	1,101	1,622

Source: Northern Ireland Housing Executive

City and town centre vacancy rates



Baseline 2016		Where we were 2023		Where we are now 2025	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
Armagh 24%	25%	Armagh 18%	22%	Armagh 18%	23%
Banbridge 21%		Banbridge 17%		Banbridge 15%	
Craigavon 6%		Craigavon 11%		Craigavon 8%	
Dromore 30%		Dromore 25%		Dromore 23%	
Lurgan 26%		Lurgan 20%		Lurgan 19%	
Portadown 28%		Portadown 21%		Portadown 21%	

Source: Town Centre Database (30th April 2025), Department for Communities

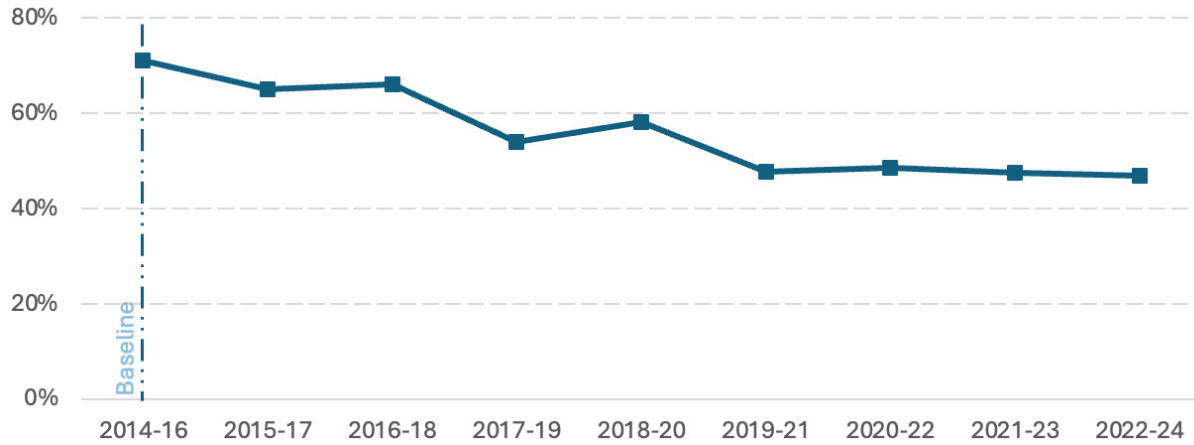
¹² In the original community plan we included the vacancy levels for the three main hubs of Armagh City, Craigavon Urban Area (Portadown, central Craigavon and Lurgan) and Banbridge as recognised by the settlement hierarchy in the existing Area Plans. In this Dromore is one of 6 local towns. Vacancy levels are available for the 41 urban towns in Northern Ireland, using NISRA's default classification of population of over 5,000, so figures are also available for Dromore. For this reason, we have included the estimates for Dromore in our revised Community Plan and will report on Dromore in the Statement of Progress going forward.



REVITALISED PLACE



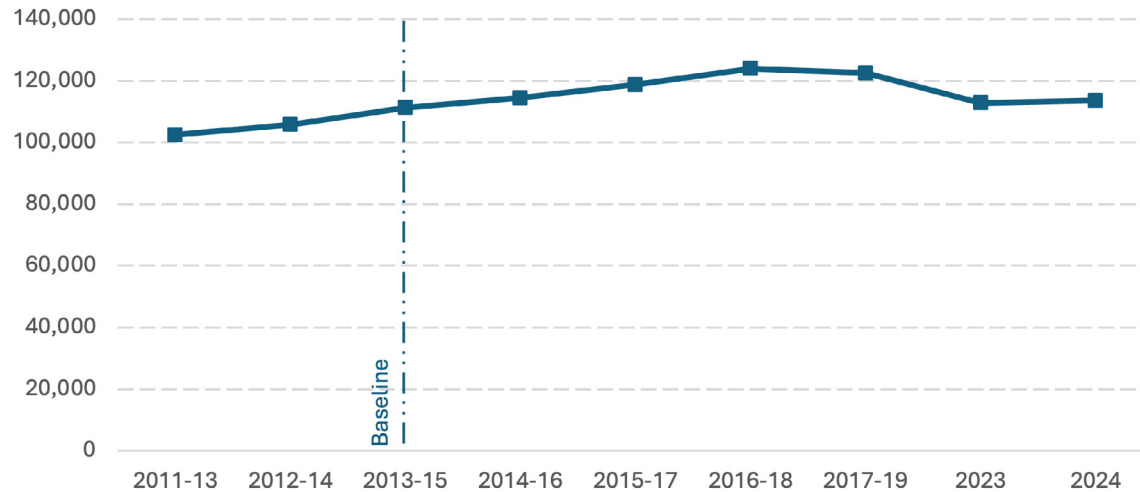
Percentage of people who see town centres as safe



Baseline 2014-16		Where we were 2020-22		Where we are now 2022-24	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
71%	58%	49%	49%	47%	43%

Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (ARK)

Number of overnight trips made by visitors from outside Northern Ireland



Baseline 2013 – 2015		Where we were 2017-19		Where we are now 2024 ¹³	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
111,300	5% of NI	122,600	4% of NI	113,674	4% of NI

Source: Tourism Statistics, NISRA

¹³ Due to changes in methodology, data published from 2023 onwards should not be compared to pre-COVID data. However, NISRA is currently carrying out further analysis on this. More information can be found in the Background Quality Report



SUSTAINABLE PLACE

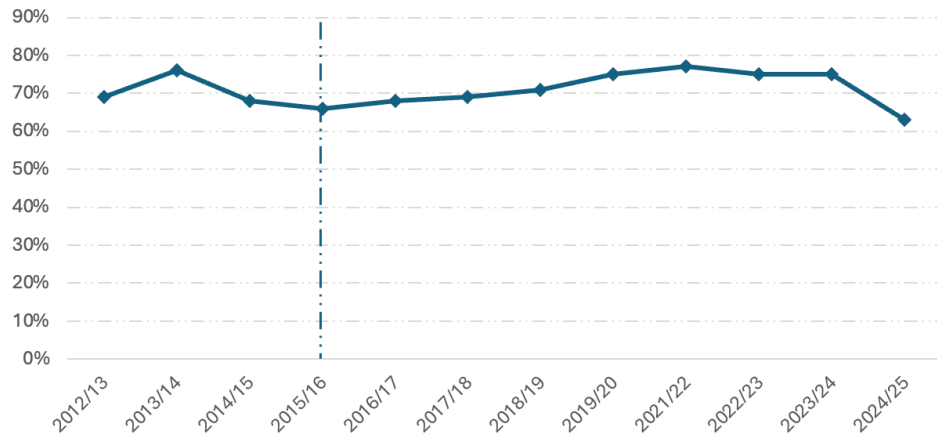
Sustainable Place:

We value and protect our climate, biodiversity and natural assets. People understand the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change and our borough is on track to become net zero by 2050.

Indicators:

- Household concern for the environment
- River Quality – Soluble Reactive Phosphorus (SRP) in rivers
- Per Capita Greenhouse Gas Emissions

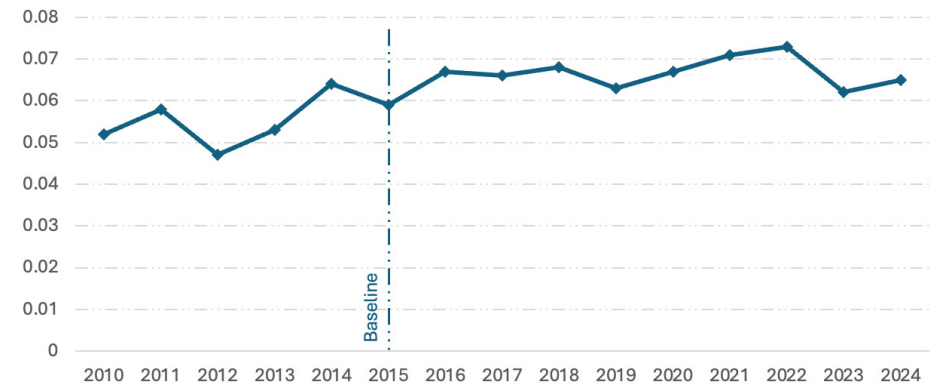
Household concern for the environment



Baseline 2015/16		Where we were 2021/22		Where we are now 2024/25	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
66%	67%	77%	81%	63%	73%

Source: Continuous Household Survey, NISRA Data Portal

River Quality – Soluble Reactive Phosphorus (SRP) in rivers¹⁴

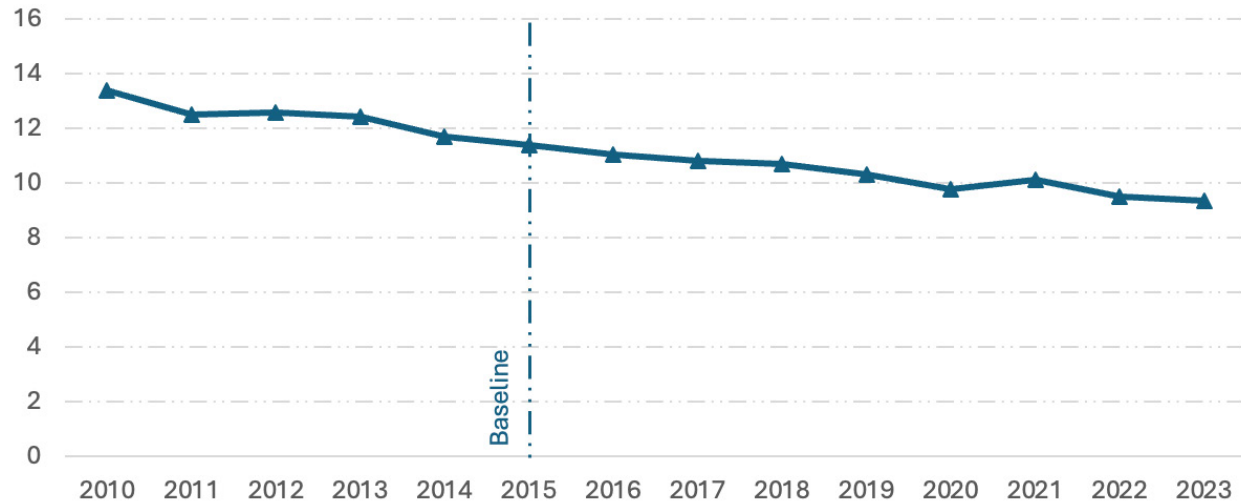


Baseline 2015	Where we were 2022	Where we are now 2024
Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland
0.059mg/l	0.073mg/l	0.065mg/l

Source: Northern Ireland Environment Statistics Annual Report, DAERA

¹⁴ This information is available for Northern Ireland only.

 **Per Capita Greenhouse Gas Emissions**



Baseline 2015 (t CO2e)		Where we were 2021 (t CO2e)		Where we are now 2023 (t CO2e)	
ABC	NI	ABC	NI	ABC	NI
11.4	11.1	10.1	9.9	9.3	9.1

Source: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Local Authority territorial greenhouse gas emissions estimates



05 SUMMARY

The Community Plan adopted an outcomes-based approach which encouraged a focus on the end goals and what we want our area to be like in 2030. Our revised Community Plan is still based around the three strategic themes – Community, Economy and Place – each with a long-term outcome setting out what we hope to achieve. Our indicators help us to quantify our success and are used as a measure of whether or not we are achieving our outcomes. Progress is measured using the 28 population indicators reported on in this chapter.

The table below summarises the number of indicators and shows how many have improved,

declined, or remained unchanged since the base year. It is important to note that these indicators represent long-term summary measures. Establishing a baseline and tracking progress over time allows us to ask relevant questions and develop targeted action plans for areas needing attention. However, we cannot directly attribute changes in population indicators to the actions of our Partnership. Additionally, due to methodological changes in data collection and processing, some data series are not directly comparable over time. Despite this, they remain valuable for providing indicative insights into general trends and patterns.

Of the 28 indicators currently reported, nine remain unchanged from the base year, seven show a decline, and twelve demonstrate improvement. It is encouraging to see progress across many indicators, particularly within the economy theme, where gains have been recorded in business survival rates, productivity, employment, and skill levels. The disability employment gap has narrowed, and gross domestic household income (GDHI) per head has increased. While the percentage of FSME school leavers achieving at least five GCSE grades A–C has remained relatively unchanged since the base year, it has fallen by approximately 15 percentage points since we last reported on it so this may be an area requiring further attention.

Within the community theme, compared with the base year, fewer people feel they can influence local decisions, fewer feel a sense of belonging, and more report feeling lonely at least some of the time. There has also been an increase in the total number of hate motivated incidents in the borough since the base year particularly for transphobic, racist and sectarian incidents. These are all areas requiring renewed focus and collaborative effort.

Theme	No. of Indicators	Better	Worse	Same
Community	10	3	4	3
Economy	9	6	0	3
Place	9	3	3	3
Total	28	12	7	9

The health-related measures have remained relatively stable, with little change since the base year and on a more positive note, participation in sport and physical activity has increased, fear of crime has fallen, and accidental dwelling fires in the borough have decreased.

Within the place theme, three indicators have improved, three have remained relatively unchanged and three have worsened since the base year. In terms of improvements, more buildings have been saved from the heritage at risk register, city and town centre vacancy rates have generally decreased and per capita greenhouse gas emissions have fallen showing some progress in reducing our environmental impact. Engagement with arts and cultural activities has remained largely unchanged over the years, with results for 2023/24 matching the base year level. The only notable variation occurred in 2021/22 when engagement in activities would have been impacted by closures due to Covid-19. The number of overnight trips to the borough by visitors from outside Northern Ireland has risen slightly; however, as a proportion of all trips to Northern Ireland, it has declined.

With regards river quality, SRP levels have increased very slightly although the increase is considered small and so doesn't necessarily represent a worsening of conditions. An increase in nutrient (particularly phosphorus) concentrations can result in vigorous and excessive growth of algae which can reduce light penetration below the water's surface and this in turn negatively impacts the appearance, quality and use of the water. While government guidance recommends that rivers shouldn't have more than 0.1mg of phosphate per litre of water, this limit isn't strict enough for certain types of rivers as the phosphate concentration does not offer protection to rivers which are very clean, with low nutrients and high oxygen (Oligotrophic), or those which have a moderate amount of nutrients (Mesotrophic rivers). For these rivers, a much lower phosphate level between 0.02 and 0.06 mg/l is recommended to keep them healthy. Therefore, while the desire is to see the overall SRP trend decreasing over time, it is important to consider the overall health of the river ecosystem.

The variables experiencing a negative shift include the need for additional social housing units which has been increasing steadily in recent years. The five-year assessment for the period 2015-2020

estimated a need for 302 units while the most recent five-year assessment for the period 2024-2029 estimates a need for 1,622 units. The increase in social housing need is driven by factors such as rising property prices, benefit cuts and the rising cost of living. Ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing in the borough will require a whole system approach and many of the key actors are represented in the partnership. The proportion of people who see town and city centres in Northern Ireland as safe and welcoming for people from all walks of life has been falling steadily over the years and is now 24 percentage points lower than it was in the base year. Finally, the level of public concern about environmental issues has fallen slightly from 66% in 2015/16 to 63% in 2024/25 in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough.

While we can be encouraged by the improvements we have seen for several of our indicators, there are areas identified as requiring further attention for the partnership. Overall, these results help provide a balanced picture of our progress to date, enabling us to identify areas of success that we can build upon and the more challenging areas that require more targeted action.

15 defra-stats-observatory-indicators-d33-120224.pdf

INTERESTED IN COMMUNITY PLANNING

in the Armagh City,
Banbridge and
Craigavon Borough
Council area?

Please contact the Community Planning, Policy
& Research Department at Armagh City,
Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

- ☎ 0300 0300 900
- ✉ communityplanning@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk
- 🌐 armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/communityplanning
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