



**Review of Connected: A Community Plan for Armagh
City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough**

Background Paper

THEME: ECONOMY

May 2024

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

Connected is the first community plan for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough for the period 2017-2030. Its purpose is to improve the **wellbeing** of the Borough. Wellbeing is about everyone having what they need to live well now and, in the future¹. Looking after the wellbeing of all citizens - our collective wellbeing - is a powerful way of creating a society where everyone can live well together. Carnegie UK Trust believes that collective wellbeing happens when social, economic, environmental, and democratic wellbeing outcomes are seen as being equally important and are given equal weight². If wellbeing is the goal, then we need to move away from measuring inputs to outcomes. An outcomes-based approach starts with the aspiration we want to achieve and works back to what needs to be done to realise it. A wellbeing approach means that we measure the effect a policy or programme has on people's lives, rather than simply how much we spent on a policy or a programme.

Community planning takes an outcomes-based approach. *Connected* is made up of nine long-term outcomes that we want to realise together by 2030 and the population statistics that we will use to measure progress over the long-term. We will also measure and report on the impact of what we do, answering the question, is anyone better off as a result?

Cross Cutting Themes

Throughout the development of the community plan, there were three things that were so important that they could not sit on their own and these are the cross-cutting themes of the plan:



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.

Sustainability

We will work to improve everyone's quality of life economically, environmentally and socially, without compromising our future generations' ability to develop, grow and flourish. We will screen our plan to ensure our outcomes and actions are sustainable.

¹ [Wellbeing - what's in a word? - Carnegie UK Trust](#)

² [Carnegie-UK-strategy-for-change-2021-1.pdf \(d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net\)](#)

Statement of Progress

Community Planning Partnerships are required to produce a Statement of Progress every two years on outcomes achieved and actions taken through the implementation of the community plan. To date, the partnership has produced 3 Statements of Progress in 2019, 2021 and the most recent which was published in November 2023.

As noted above, the Community Plan adopted an outcomes-based approach which encourages a focus on the end goals and what we want our area to be like in 2030. We have three strategic themes – Community, Economy and Place – and each theme has three long-term outcomes. These outcomes are aspirational statements which set out what we want for our residents. To help measure progress towards these outcomes, Connected identified 19 population indicators. These indicators are relevant and useful and by monitoring them we can demonstrate progress towards the outcomes³ which will help make our 2030 vision for our community a reality.

However, as the Partnership continues to advance its Data Development Agenda, the Community Planning Strategic Partnership decided to include an additional three population indicators in the more recently published Statement of Progress, two of which are related to poverty and one to mental health and emotional wellbeing which are two of the Partnerships four priorities for action in the Covid19 Response and Recovery Plan.

This mid-way review of Connected looks at each of the outcomes and the indicators we have used to measure progress towards achieving the outcome. We look at the relevance of the outcomes and consider additional outcomes which have become increasingly important in recent years and we look at the indicators to ask the question, are they the best way to measure the outcome we want to achieve.

We will have three separate reports, one for each theme – Community, Economy and Place. Each report will have three parts; Part 1 will present an update on the outcomes and indicators as they currently sit in the Connected Community Plan while Part 2 will present any proposed changes including information on new indicators which could potentially be used as a measure for our outcomes. Any proposed changes should relate to or incorporate the cross-cutting themes of connectivity, equality and sustainability which should be at the heart of all we do. Part 3 will present the partnership actions with a breakdown of the sub-committees and the actions that align to each outcome under the Economy Theme and the proposed new outcome along with any regional strategies that the actions deliver upon.

³ This approach is known as ‘Outcomes Based Accountability’.

PART 1

CONNECTED: Summary of Outcomes and Population Indicators

CONNECTED: Summary of Outcomes and Population Indicators

OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS
COMMUNITY	
Confident Community: Everyone has opportunities to engage in 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"> • % of people who feel that they have an influence when it comes to any of the local decisions made in their neighbourhood. • % of people who feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood.
Healthy Community: People are making positive lifestyle choices. They are more resilient and better equipped to cope with life's challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of preventable deaths per 100,000 population. • Gap in life expectancy between the most deprived areas and the borough overall. • % of people who participate in sport or physical activity on at least one day a week.
Welcoming Community: Our borough is a safe, respectful and peaceful environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of people reporting that fear of crime has a minimal impact on their quality of life. • % of people who see town centres as safe welcoming places for people of all walks of life. • No. of accidental dwelling fires
ECONOMY	
Enterprising Economy: Our borough is a centre for entrepreneurship, innovation and investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses. • Business birth rates. • Survival rates of newly born businesses.
Skilled Economy: People are better equipped to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the dynamic economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of the workforce in employment qualified to level 1 and above, level 2 and above, level 3 and above, and level 4 and above. • Employment rate (age 16-64).
Tourism Economy: Our borough is the destination of choice for international visitors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of overnight trips made by visitors from outside Northern Ireland.
PLACE	
Creative Place: Our borough is an inspirational and creative place offering quality, inclusive arts and cultural experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of people (aged 16+) engaging with arts/cultural activities in the past year.
Enhanced Place: Our rich and varied built heritage and natural assets are protected, enhanced and expanded for current and future generations to enjoy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of buildings at risk saved. • No. of high quality parks/green spaces (those holding Green Flag Award Status®)
Revitalised Place: Our distinctive 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

Enterprising Economy

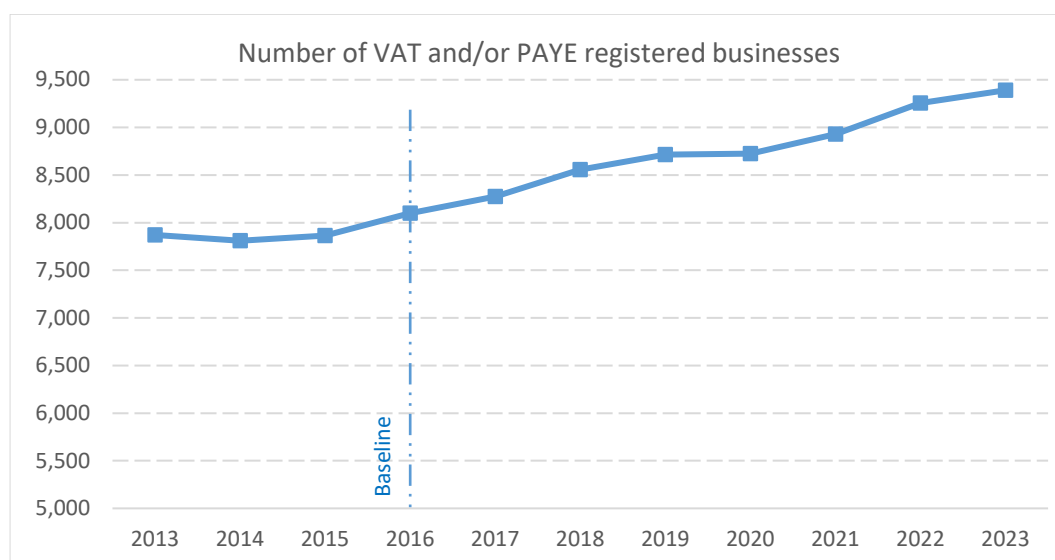
LONG TERM OUTCOME:

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

What we currently report on:

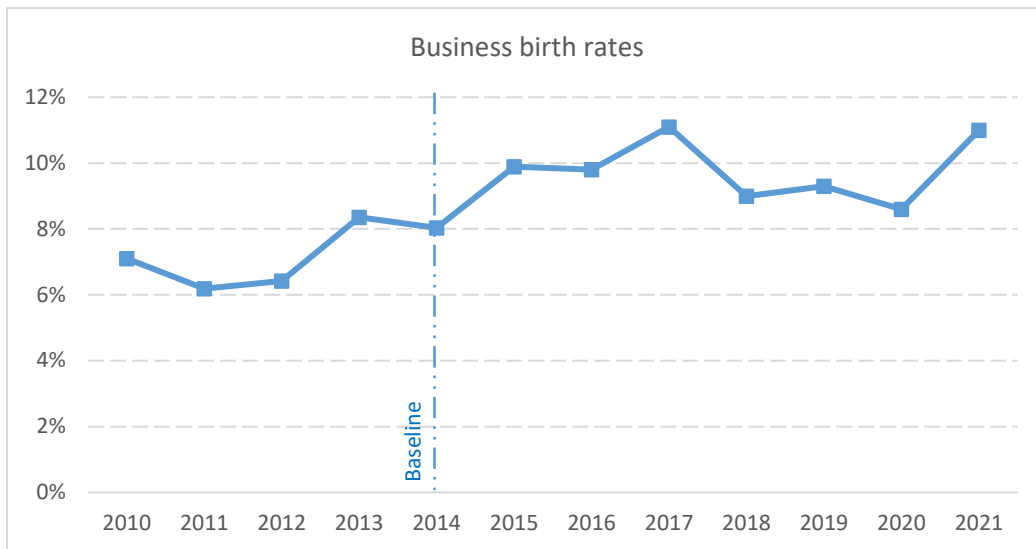
- No. of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses.
- Business birth rates
- Survival rates of newly born businesses.

No. of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses.



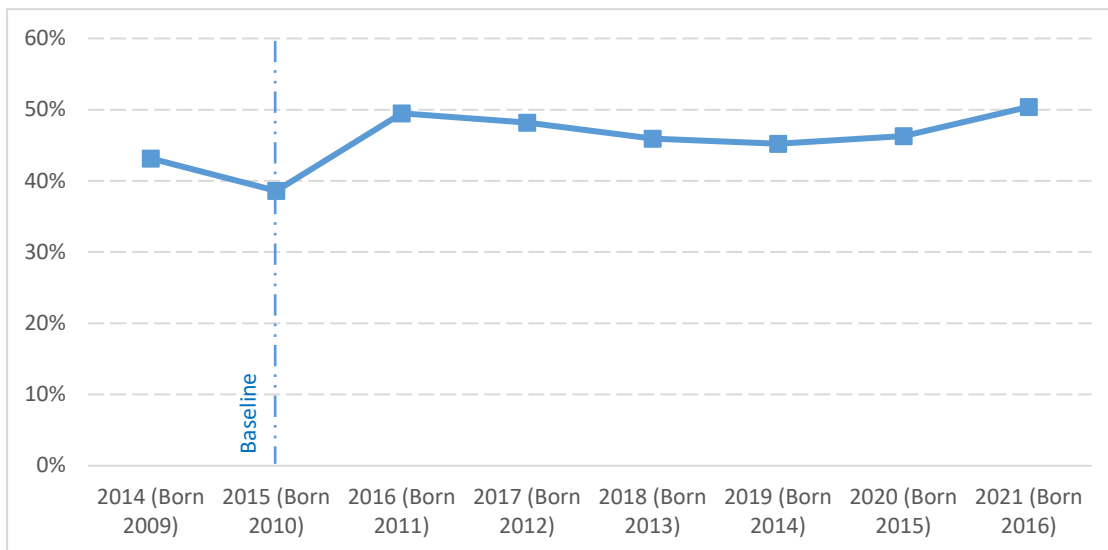
In March 2023, there were 9,390 businesses operating in the Borough. Since the baseline in 2016, this represents an increase of 1,290 businesses. The growth in the borough has been proportionate to the increase in Northern Ireland overall.

Business birth rates.



In 2021, the business birth rate in the Borough was 11%⁴ which is the first time the birth rate in the Borough has been above the NI average (10%).

Survival rates of newly born businesses.



In 2021, the five year survival rate for businesses born in 2016 was estimated to be 50.4% in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough which is 3.1 percentage points higher than the Northern Ireland average and approximately 11 percentage points higher than the Borough average for the baseline year.

⁴ The birth rate is calculated using the number of births as a proportion of the active businesses.

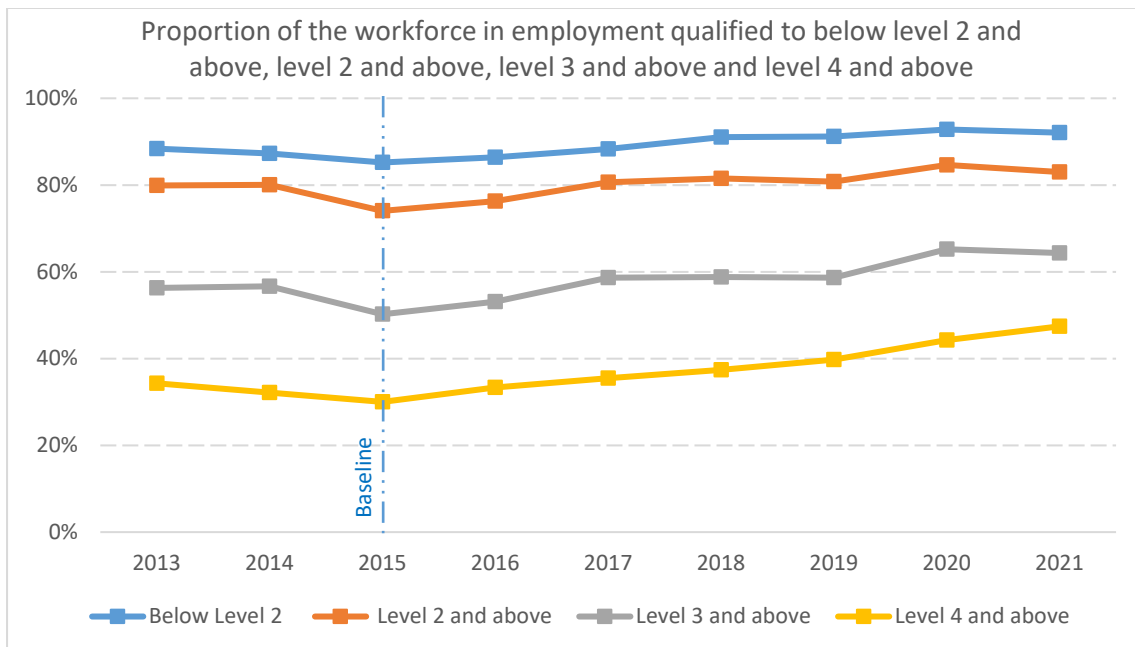
Skilled Economy

LONG TERM OUTCOME:
People are better equipped to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by our dynamic economy.

What we currently report on:

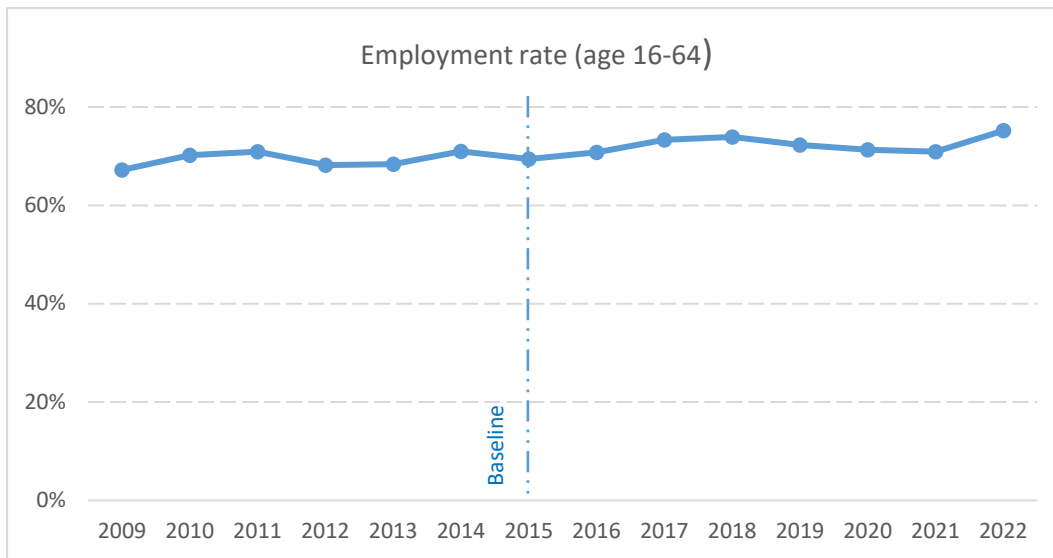
- Proportion of the workforce in employment qualified to level 1 and above, level 2 and above, level 3 and above, and level 4 and above.
- Employment rate (age 16-64)

Proportion of the workforce in employment qualified to level 1 and above, level 2 and above, level 3 and above, and level 4 and above.



The proportion of the workforce in employment and qualified to all levels has improved greatly since the baseline in 2015. The largest increase has been in the proportion of the workforce in employment and qualified to level 4 and above which has increased by 17.4 percentage points between 2015 and 2021. However, this still remains below the NI average.

Employment rate (age 16-64)



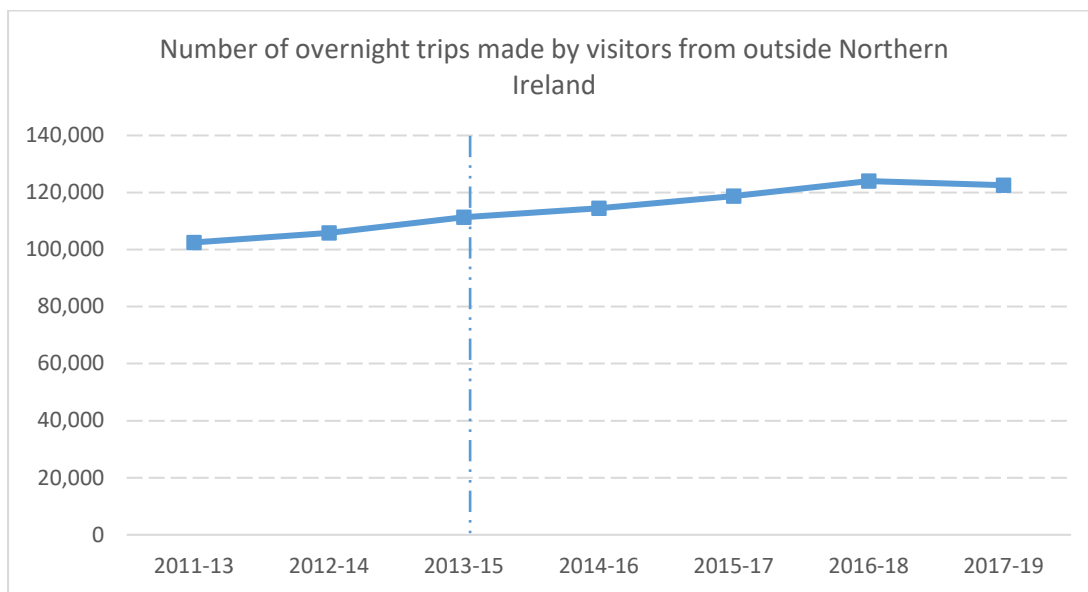
In 2022, the employment rate in the Borough was 75.2% which is 3 percentage points above the Northern Ireland average of 72%. Between 2021 and 2022, the employment rate in the Borough increased by 4.3 percentage points (the largest annual change) and at 75.2%, the employment rate in the Borough is currently the highest of the years presented. The employment rate in the borough has been consistently above the Northern Ireland average over the period presented.

Tourism Economy

LONG TERM OUTCOME:
Our borough is the destination of choice for international visitors.

What we currently report on:

- **Number of overnight trips made by visitors from outside Northern Ireland**



Tourism data is derived from a variety of sources and the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant effect on these sources. As a result, the most recent local government district tourism statistics published were for 2019 which were reported in the last Statement of Progress. At this time, the number of overnight trips made by visitors from outside Northern Ireland was just over 120,000 which accounted for just 4% of the Northern Ireland total. This proportion has been relatively unchanged over the period presented.

PART 2

Proposed revisions to Outcomes and Population Indicators

The table below presents a summary of the proposed changes to the outcomes and indicators within the Economy Theme.

ECONOMY	
<p>Enterprising Economy: Our borough is a centre for entrepreneurship, innovation and investment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses. • Business birth rates. • Survival rates of newly born businesses. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity – Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked.
<p>Skilled Economy: People are better equipped to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the dynamic economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of the workforce in employment qualified to level 1 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 means (FSME) (this was included in the 2021-23 Statement of Progress)
<p>Inclusive Economy: Everyone has a decent minimum living standard.</p> <p>Tourism Economy: Our borough is the destination of choice for international visitors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of children (aged under 16) living in relative low-income families (this was included in the 2021-23 Statement of Progress) • Economic Inactivity Gap (excluding students) by disability. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of overnight trips made by visitors from outside Northern Ireland.

Enterprising Economy

LONG TERM OUTCOME:

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

- **No. of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses.**
- **Business birth rates.**
- **Survival rates of newly born businesses.**

As we have seen, the Borough economy appears to be performing relatively well. Business numbers are increasing, business birth rates are increasing, and the five-year survival rate of businesses is now over 50%.

However, we also know that crisis support needed in the borough is increasing. While average earnings may be increasing, the median gross weekly pay in the Borough is still below the Northern Ireland average which is still 8% below the UK average so earnings are still too low to enable many to enjoy a comfortable standard of living. With this in mind, there may be another side to the economy which we aren't capturing here.

An article published by the London School of Economics (LSE) found that "UK productivity growth has been pitiful over the last 14 years, and this has been a major cause of low average wages"⁵. Taking this into consideration, the following indicator may also be considered for inclusion.

⁵ [Wages of typical UK employee have become decoupled from productivity \(lse.ac.uk\)](https://www.lse.ac.uk/Research/Research%20Centres/Institute%20of%20Social%20Economics/Pages/Wages-of-typical-UK-employee-have-become-decoupled-from-productivity.aspx)

Indicator 1: Productivity – Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked.

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

Released: Annually

Current availability: 2004-2021

Labour productivity is defined as the quantity of goods and services produced per unit of labour input, for example, per hour worked or per filled job. It is one of the most widely used measures of economic performance of a nation or an area. GVA per hour worked and GVA per filled job can both be used as measures of labour productivity - GVA per hour worked divides GVA by the total hours worked by the workforce in the subregion; while GVA per filled job apportions GVA to the number of jobs in the subregion.

GVA per hour worked is considered a more comprehensive indicator of labour productivity and the preferred measure at subnational level. This is because GVA per filled job does not take into consideration regional labour market structures or different working patterns, such as the mix of part-time and full-time workers, industry structure and job shares⁶.

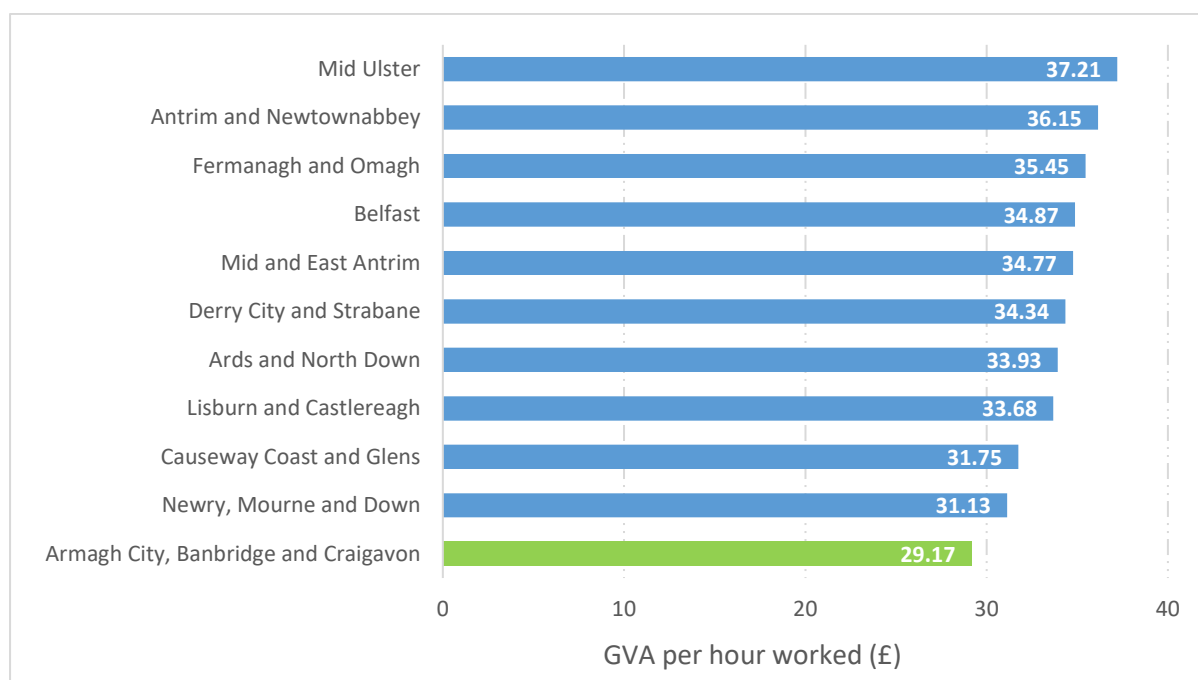


Figure 1: GVA per hour worked by local government district, 2021. Source: Subregional productivity in the UK, ONS.

GVA per hour worked in 2021 is presented in figure 1 above. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough has the lowest GVA per hour worked of the 11 LGDs in Northern Ireland. At £29.17, this is 6% below Newry, Mourne and Down which has the next lowest GVA per hour worked and 21.6% below Mid Ulster which has the highest GVA per hour worked. It is also worth noting that all LGD's are below the UK average of £38.33.

⁶ [Subregional productivity in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

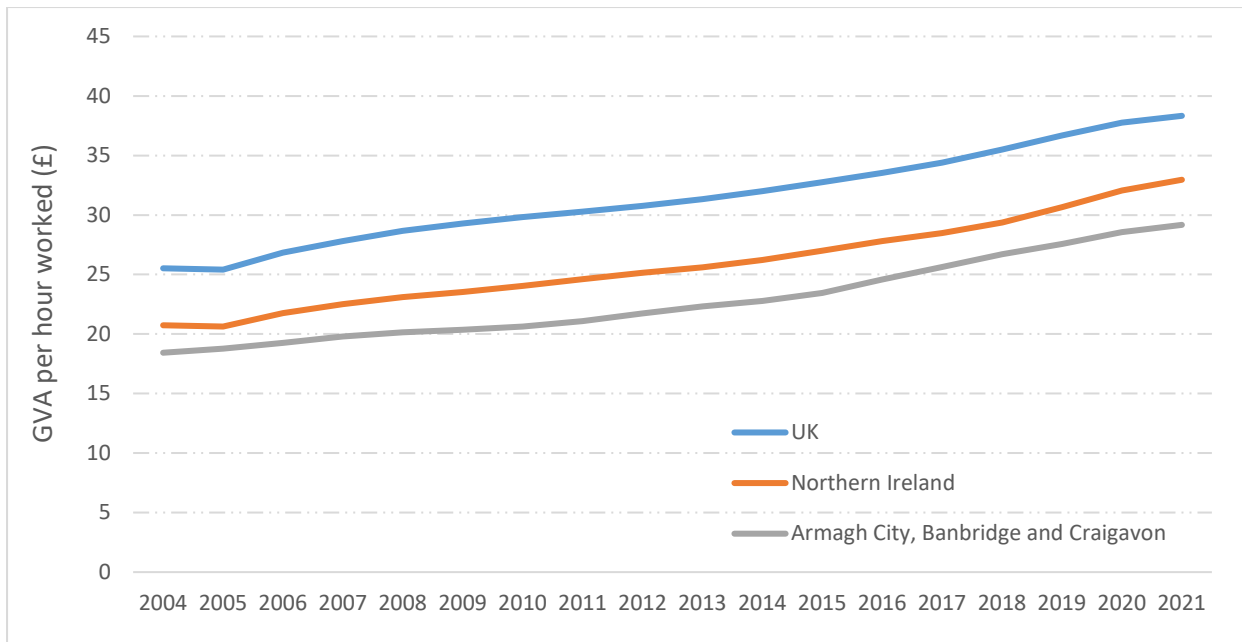


Figure 2: GVA per hour worked in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, Northern Ireland and UK Average, 2004-2021. Source: Subregional productivity in the UK, ONS.

Figure 2 presents the GVA per hour worked in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough compared with the Northern Ireland and UK average from 2004-2021. While labour productivity has been increasing over time, the UK average has been consistently above the average for Northern Ireland with the average for the Borough even lower again.

Q: Does this tie in with the current long-term outcome?

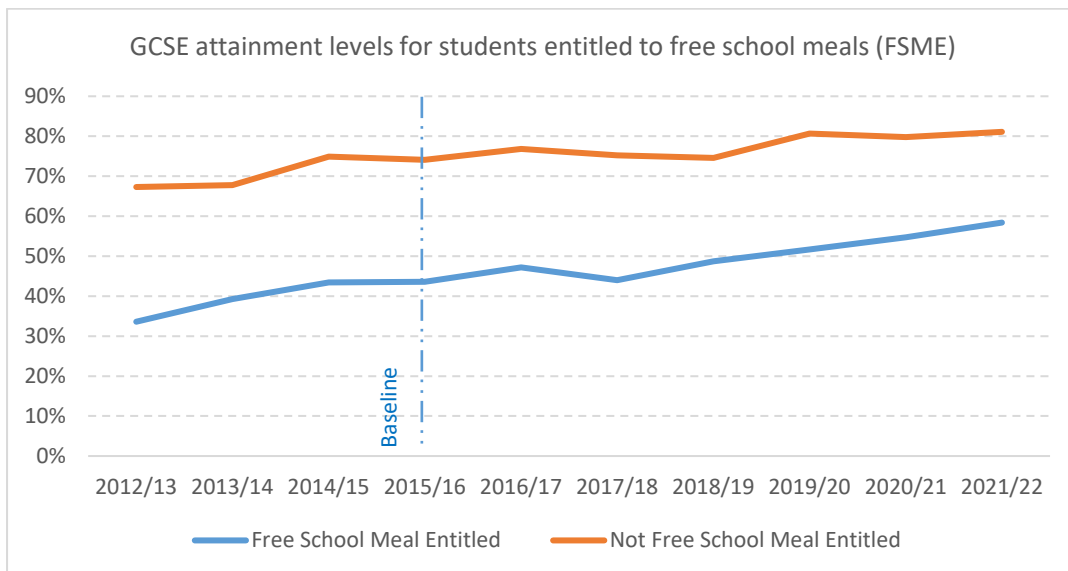
Skilled Economy

LONG TERM OUTCOME:

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

- Proportion of the workforce in employment qualified to level 1 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)

The GCSE attainment levels for students entitled to free school meals (FSME) was included under this outcome in the 2021-23 Statement of Progress and we are recommending that it is included in the Community Plan going forward.



In the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough in the academic year 2021/22, 81.1% of school leavers not entitled to free school meals achieve 5+ GCSE grades A*-C including GCSE English and Maths. However, for those children entitled to free school meals, just 58.4% of leavers achieve 5+ GCSE grades A*-C including GCSE English and Maths. The attainment rate for FSME students in the borough is below the Northern Ireland average.

Inclusive Economy

LONG TERM OUTCOME:

Everyone has a decent minimum living standard.

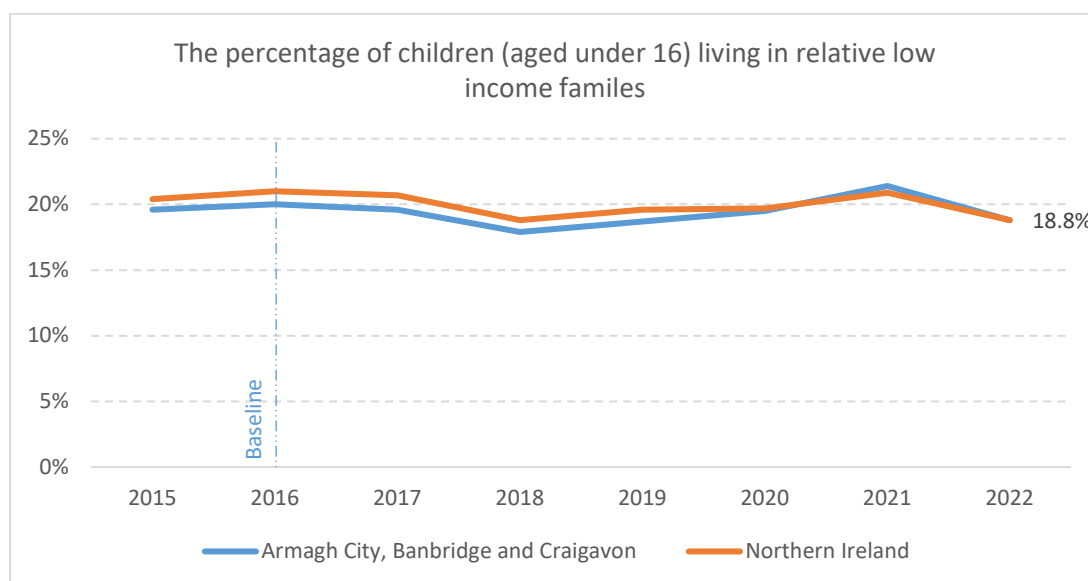
An inclusive economy is an economic system that includes everyone, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, educational attainment, personal background, disability status, or any other traits⁷. An inclusive economy will work for everyone with more opportunities for more people, especially those who have typically faced barriers and haven't been able to take advantage of these opportunities before.

McKinsey & Company report that "economic inclusion is a concept that will always be tied to the reduction of poverty. Generally, economic inclusion happens when someone moves out of poverty, but it's not just that. Economic inclusion also means moving toward adequate health and well-being, education, affordable essentials, and sustainable communities"⁸.

We propose to include the following indicators as a measure for this outcome:

- **Percentage of children (aged under 16) living in relative low-income families.**
- **Economic Inactivity Gap (excluding students) by disability.**

Percentage of children (aged under 16) living in relative low-income families (this was included with Healthy Community for the 2021-23 Statement of Progress)



The chart presents the percentage of children aged 16 and under living in relative low income families in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon and the NI average from 2015-2022. Following a gradual decrease between 2016 and 2018, the percentage had been increasing again in the borough and in 2021 was the highest of the years presented. Provisional figures for 2022 show a decrease and the percentage of children in relative low income families in the borough is now the same as Northern Ireland overall.

⁷ [How Do You Define an Inclusive Economy? - The Aspen Institute](#)

⁸ [What is economic inclusion? | McKinsey](#)

Indicator: Economic Inactivity Gap (excluding students) by disability.

Source: Labour Force Survey

Released: Annually

Current availability: 2016-2022

Local Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs) have been established in each of the 11 LGDs in Northern Ireland (NI) to develop a range of new employability provisions that address the specific labour market needs and challenges of the local areas. The NI local Labour Market Insight (LMI) dashboard has been developed to assist LMP's in identifying these challenges and opportunities at the LGD level, and therefore help inform the development and monitoring of their targeted action plans and interventions.⁹ The LMP's provide an opportunity to better integrate support for local economies, social enterprises, and area interventions with employment training and work-readiness.

Social enterprises are businesses which trade for a social or environmental purpose and contribute to reducing economic inequality, improving social justice and to environmental sustainability. Like any other business, social enterprises seek to make a profit and succeed commercially but how they operate, who they employ, how they use their profits and where they work is transforming lives and communities¹⁰. There are several successful social enterprises in the borough and several support employment and training opportunities for people with a disability.

Data is provided on the economic inactivity (excluding students) number and rate¹¹ by disability and a 'disability economic inactivity gap' is calculated.

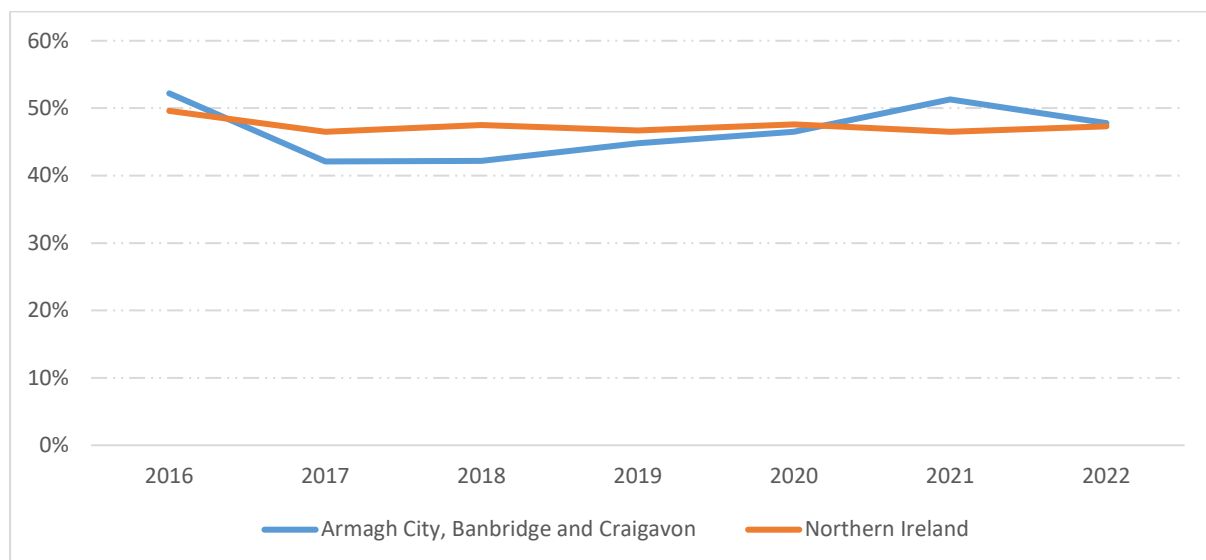


Figure 1: Economic Inactivity gap by disability in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon and Northern Ireland, 2016-2022. Source: Department for Communities, Local Labour Market Insight Dashboard.

⁹ [Northern Ireland Local Labour Market Insight dashboard | Department for Communities \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](https://communities-ni.gov.uk)

¹⁰ [All about Social Enterprise | Social Enterprise UK](https://www.socialenterpriseuk.org/)

¹¹ The disability economic inactivity rate is where the person self-reports that they are not in or looking for work.

In 2022, the disabled economic inactivity rate for persons aged 16-64 (excluding students) in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough was 52.5% compared to the economic inactivity rate for non-disabled people which was just 4.7%. This results in a disability economic inactivity gap of 47.8%.

The disability economic inactivity gap in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough was less than the Northern Ireland average between 2017 and 2020. However, in 2021, the disability economic inactivity gap in the Borough increased to 51.3% which was 4.8 percentage points above the Northern Ireland gap. In 2022, the gap increased slightly in Northern Ireland but fell in the Borough to reduce the gap between the Borough and Northern Ireland to just 0.5 percentage points.

Figure 2 below compares the 2022 disability economic inactivity gap in the Borough with the other LGD's and Northern Ireland overall. In 2022, Lisburn and Castlereagh had the lowest disability economic inactivity gap at 29.9% while Newry, Mourne and Down had the highest at 56.2%. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough is ranked mid-table with a disability economic inactivity gap of 47.8% which implies that disabled people are 47.8% more likely to be economically inactive. Reducing this gap is crucial for promoting equal opportunities and improving the employment prospects of disabled individuals.

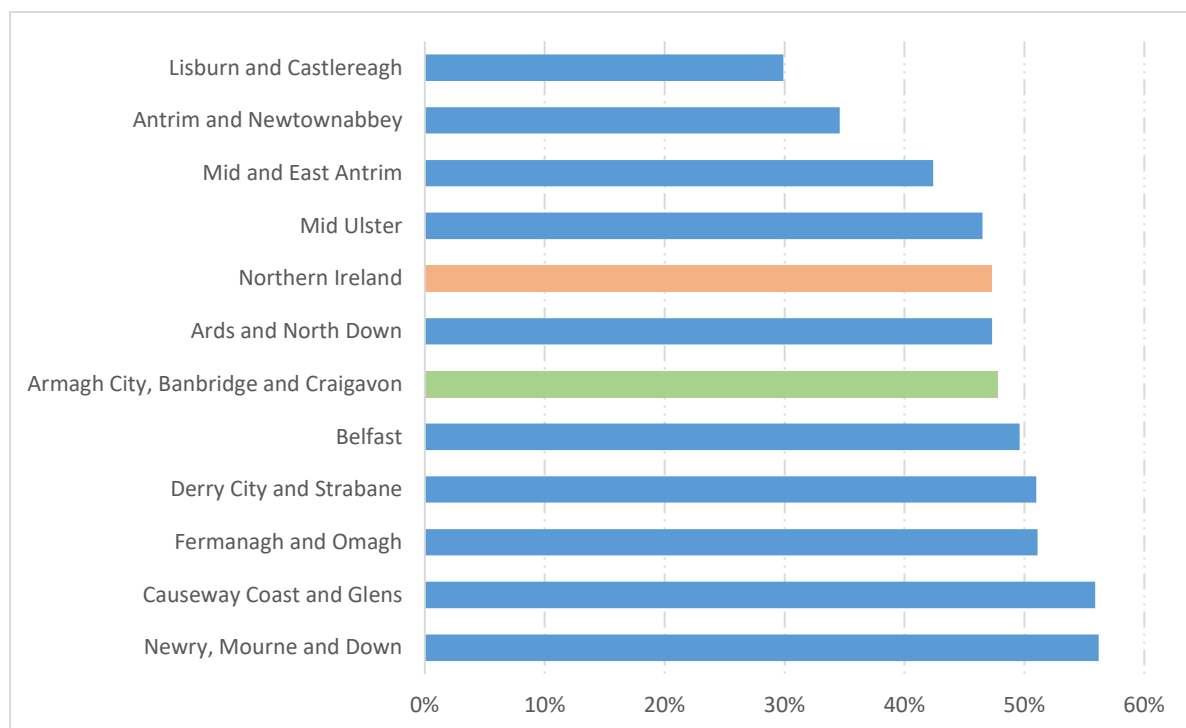


Figure 2: Economic Inactivity gap by disability by LGD and Northern Ireland, 2022. Source: Department for Communities, Local Labour Market Insight Dashboard.

The following indicators have also been considered.

Indicator 1: Percentage of applicants in housing stress

Source: Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Released: Annually

Current availability: 2014 – 2023

The levels of social housing need are assessed and monitored by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). Social Housing is housing that is provided at an affordable rent by the Housing Executive and registered housing associations; that is, housing associations that are registered and regulated by the Department for Communities (DfC) as a social housing provider.

The five-year assessment for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough for 2022-27 shows a need for an additional 1,101 units over this period.

The NIHE waiting list can be used to determine the pressure for social housing in an area. NIHE holds data on all housing applications and allocations ('the waiting list') made through the Common Selection Scheme in their Housing Management System.

As at March 2023, there were 3,712 applicants on the waiting list in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough.

Of these applicants, 2,311 (or 62.3%) were in housing stress (where they have 30 or more points under the Common Selection Scheme.) While the number of applicants on the waiting list has decreased slightly, the number in housing stress has increased slightly in the Borough over the past year.

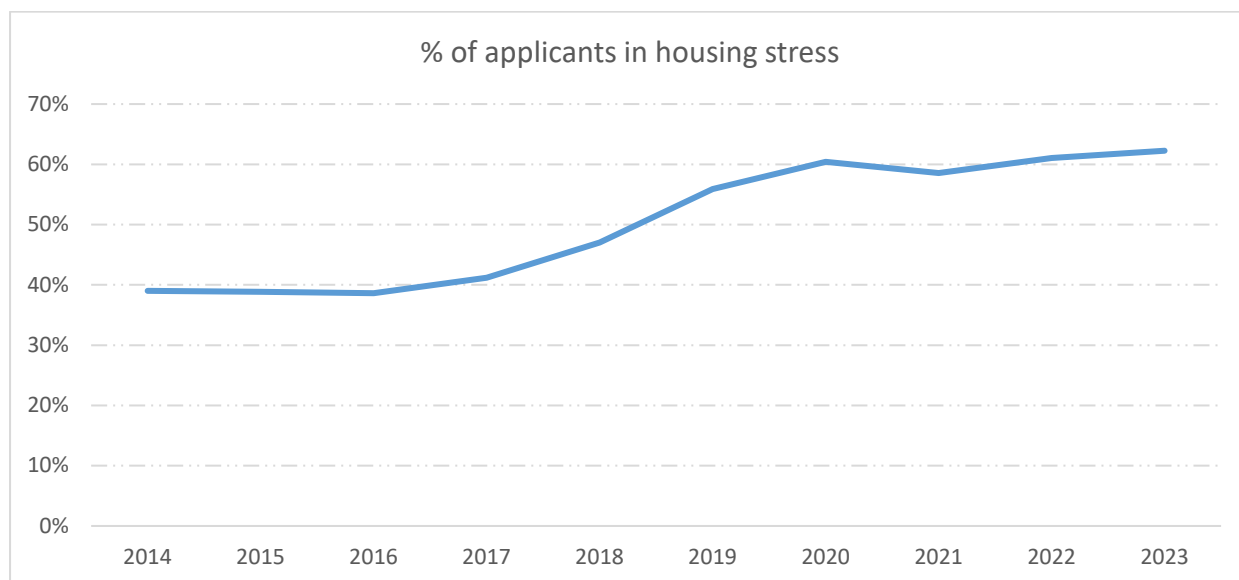


Figure 1: Percentage of applicants on the waiting list that were in housing stress in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, 2014-2023. Source: Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Indicator 2: Gross Disposable Household Income.

Source: Office for National Statistics

Released: Annually

Current availability: 1997 – 2021

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) has recently released annual estimates of regional gross disposable household income (GDHI) for the UK and the countries and regions within for the period 1997-2021.

GDHI is the amount of money that all the individuals in the household sector have available for spending or saving after they have paid direct and indirect taxes and received any direct benefits. GDHI is a concept that is seen to reflect the “material welfare” of the household sector¹².

GDHI per head estimates are then divided by the resident population of a country, region, or area to give a value per head. This is a useful way of comparing regions of different sizes, however, it should be noted that it includes the entire population of an area, including children and retired people.

Countries and regions of the UK	Population (million) ¹	GDHI per head (£) ²	GDHI per head index (UK=100)	Total GDHI (£ million)	Share of the UK population (%)	Share of UK total GDHI (%)
United Kingdom	67.0	21,679	100.0	1,453,047	100.0%	100.0%
England	56.5	22,213	102.5	1,255,871	84.3%	86.4%
North East	2.6	17,663	81.5	46,749	4.0%	3.2%
North West	7.4	18,864	87.0	140,015	11.1%	9.6%
Yorkshire & The Humber	5.5	18,363	84.7	100,657	8.2%	6.9%
East Midlands	4.9	18,956	87.4	92,505	7.3%	6.4%
West Midlands	6.0	18,566	85.6	110,549	8.9%	7.6%
East of England	6.3	22,337	103.0	141,800	9.5%	9.8%
London	8.8	31,094	143.4	273,521	13.1%	18.8%
South East	9.3	24,623	113.6	228,844	13.9%	15.7%
South West	5.7	21,221	97.9	121,233	8.5%	8.3%
Wales	3.1	18,038	83.2	56,015	4.6%	3.9%
Scotland	5.5	19,630	90.6	107,572	8.2%	7.4%
Northern Ireland	1.9	17,636	81.3	33,588	2.8%	2.3%

Table 1: Gross disposable household income by UK and constituent countries and regions, UK, 2021. Source: Office for National Statistics – Regional gross disposable household income (GDHI)

In 2021, Northern Ireland had a GDHI per head of £17,636. This was the lowest of all the countries and regions within the UK. London had the highest at £31,094 while the average for the UK was £21,679.

¹² [Regional gross disposable household income, UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

Within Northern Ireland, the Borough had the fourth lowest GDHI per head of population in 2021. At £17,216, this was also below the Northern Ireland average.

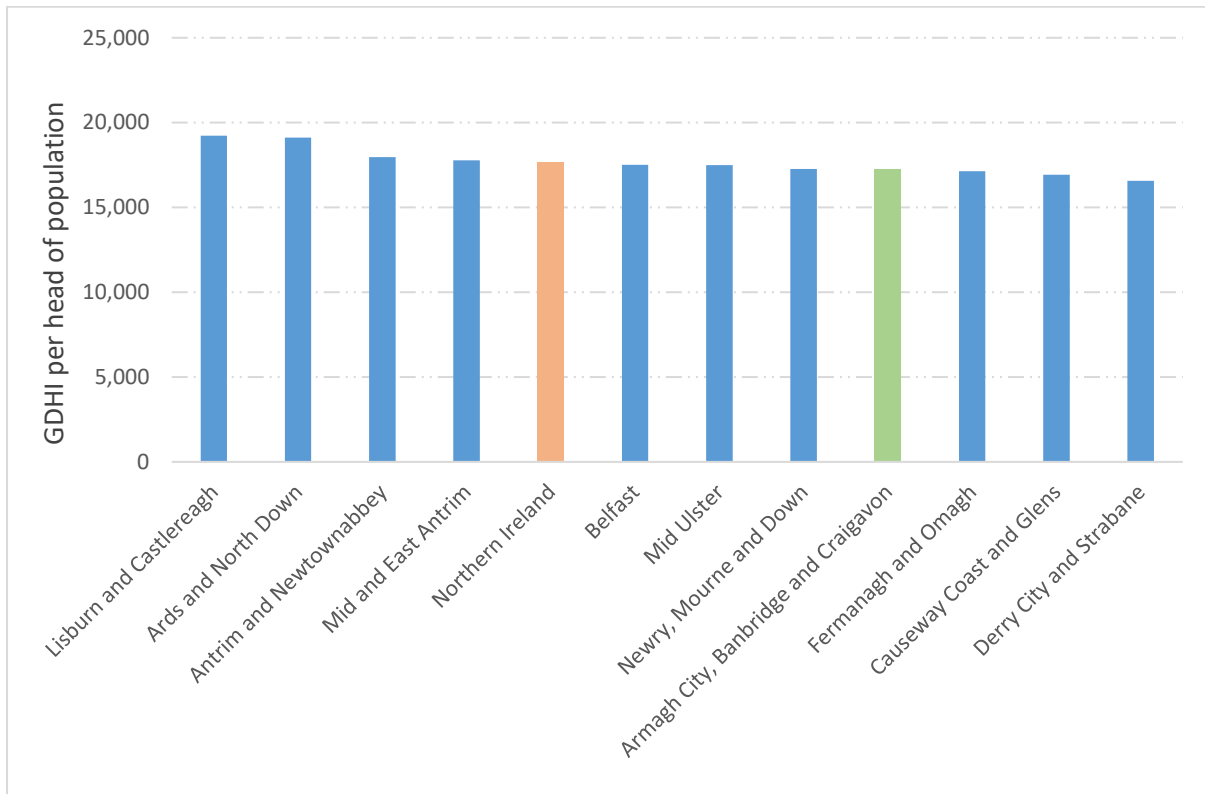


Figure 1: Gross disposable household income by LGD in Northern Ireland, 2021. Source: Office for National Statistics – Regional gross disposable household income (GDHI)

Figure 2 presents GDHI per head between 2011 and 2021. As can be seen, GDHI per head has been gradually increasing in the Borough and Northern Ireland overall, however, GDHI per head in the Borough has remained below the Northern Ireland average since 2016.

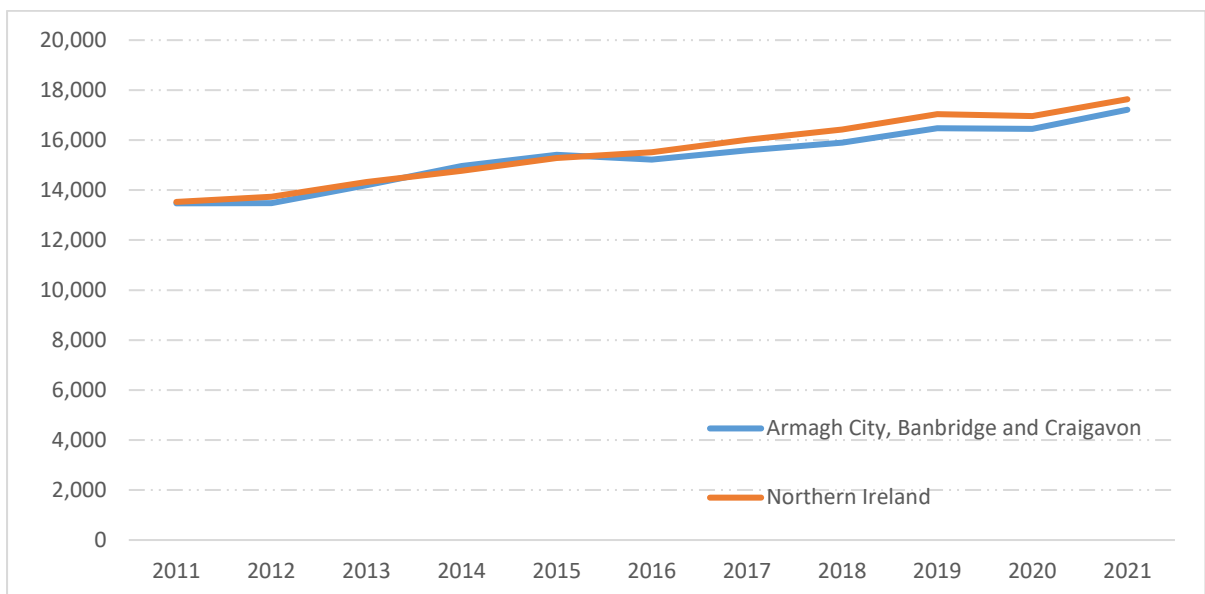


Figure 2: Gross disposable household income per head in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland, 2011-2021. Source: Office for National Statistics – Regional gross disposable household income (GDHI)

Indicator 3: Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

Source: NI School Census, Department of Education, NI

Released: Annually

Current availability: 2009/10 – 2022/23

Free school meals are available to children from families meeting certain eligibility criteria, for example if they receive particular benefit entitlements, or meet other criteria such as having a statement of educational need and requiring a special diet, or where a school believes a child may be in need. Free school meal entitlement (FSME) is a widely used proxy indicator for deprivation in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales¹³.

While there are advantages of using this proxy indicator, there are some concerns about its robustness for reasons including: it is likely to under-report deprivation as some eligible parents may choose not to apply for free school meals and those families whose income is just above the threshold (i.e. the 'working poor') will not be eligible but may be in need¹⁴. However, a recent research report undertaken by Ulster University and published by the Department for Education found that "FSME can broadly be considered equal to or superior to most other commonly used proxies of household/school-level deprivation"¹⁵.

The data below is taken from the NI School Census and shows that of a total of 41,766 students enrolled in schools in the borough in 2022/23, almost 22%, more than one in five students, are entitled to free school meals. In Primary schools, 22.7% of students were entitled to free school meals. However, there are 90 primary schools in the borough in which the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals ranges from 2.5% to 44%. In the 23 post-primary schools in the borough, the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals ranges from 4.1% to 43.6% with the average at 19.9%.

	Total Enrolments	FSME	% pupils entitled to free school meals
Primary	22,663	5,142	22.7%
Post-Primary	18,594	3,697	19.9%
Special	509	189	37.1%
Total	41,766	9,028	21.6%

Table 1: Total enrolments and FSME entitlement in schools in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. Source: NI School Census 2022/23, Department of Education, NISRA Data Portal.

The totals are presented in Figure 1 where we can see a higher percentage of children in special schools are entitled to free school meals, however it may be the case that the caring responsibilities of the parents limits their ability to find suitable employment. These schools only account for 1.2% of the total schools in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough.

¹³ [April 2009 \(niassembly.gov.uk\)](https://niassembly.gov.uk)

¹⁴ [April 2009 \(niassembly.gov.uk\)](https://niassembly.gov.uk)

¹⁵ [FSME research report .pdf \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](https://education-ni.gov.uk)

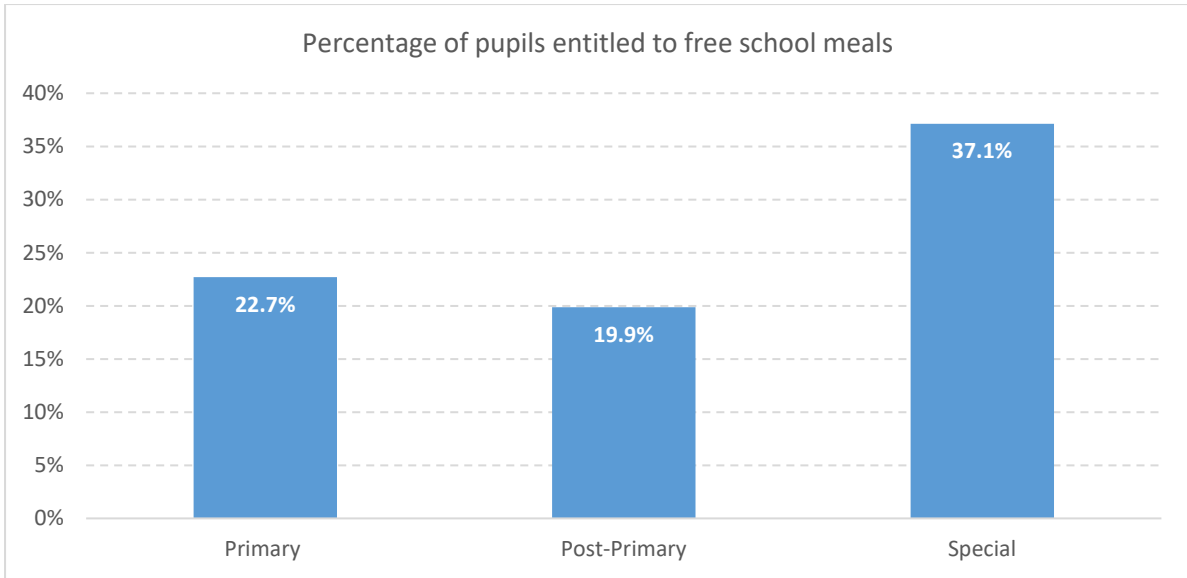


Figure 1: Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. Source: NI School Census 2022/23, Department of Education, NISRA Data Portal.

Figure 2 presents the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals in Primary and Post-Primary schools in each LGD in 2022/23. Belfast had the highest number of pupils at each level entitled to free school meals followed by Derry City & Strabane and then Causeway Coast and Glens. Lisburn and Castlereagh had the lowest percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon had the fifth lowest percentage of primary pupils entitled to free school meals and the third lowest percentage of post-primary pupils. The rates for both primary and post-primary were more than half the rate for Belfast.

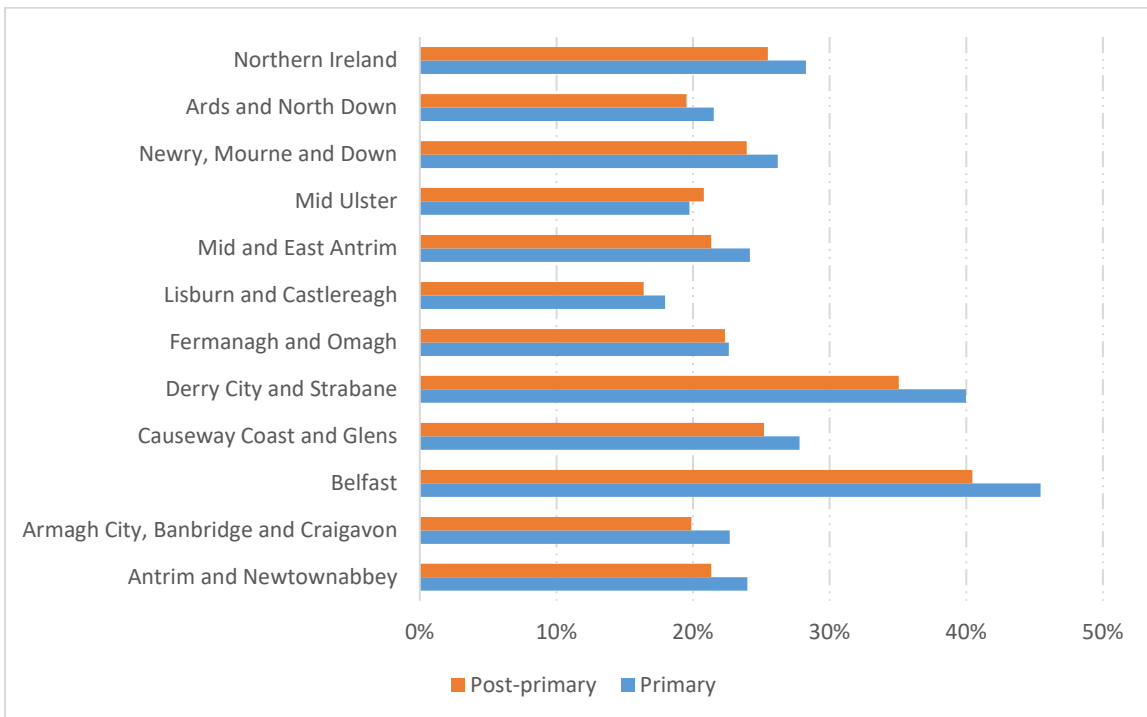


Figure 2: Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals in Primary & Prep and Post-Primary Schools by LGD. Source: NI School Census 2022/23, Department of Education, NISRA Data Portal.

Indicator 4: Homeless presenters by local government district

Households accepted as homeless by LGD

Total households discharged by LGD

Source: Northern Ireland Homelessness Bulletin (July – December 2023)¹⁶

The Northern Ireland Homelessness bulletin is a biannual publication which contains information on a range of areas relating to homelessness. The report is currently divided into three sections - Homeless Presenters; Homeless Acceptances; and Temporary Accommodation.

Released: Biannually

Current availability: 2018-2023

What is meant by ‘homelessness’?¹⁷

Becoming homeless can happen to anyone. A person may be homeless if they are:

- staying with friends or family
- staying in a hostel
- staying in a bed and breakfast
- living in very overcrowded conditions
- at risk of violence if they stay in their home
- living in poor conditions that are damaging their health
- living in a house that is unsuitable for them
- rough sleeping

A homeless **‘presenter’** is a household that is undergoing a homelessness assessment by the Housing Executive. This assessment consists of four legislative tests including: eligibility; homelessness; priority need and; intentionality. Even households who currently have somewhere to live that may be unsuitable can apply to be considered legally homeless.

In order to be **“accepted”** as statutorily homeless a household must meet the four tests of: eligibility; homelessness; priority need; and intentionality. Any household that meets these four tests will be accepted as a **“Full Duty Applicant”** (FDA) and will be owed a full housing duty. The full housing duty includes ensuring that accommodation is made available for the household as well as the provision of temporary accommodation where necessary and assistance with the protection of the household’s belongings.

To become **‘duty discharged’** an applicant who has been awarded full duty status must either: be rehoused; refuse three reasonable offers of housing; or re-house themselves/no longer require help from the Housing Executive.

Poverty is seen to be one of the biggest factors behind homelessness and poverty and homelessness are severe social issues in almost every part of the world. Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that ‘housing forms an important part of people’s material living conditions and contributes to their life chances’. The study concludes by saying the ‘significance of the links between housing, poverty and material deprivation deserves greater recognition in policy’¹⁸.

¹⁶ All of the information in this section can be found in the NI Homelessness Bulletin (July - December 2023).

¹⁷ [Northern Ireland Homelessness Bulletin July - December 2023 | Department for Communities \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁸ [The links between housing and poverty | JRF](#)

Between July and December 2023, there were a total of 8,183 presenters in Northern Ireland overall, of which 611 were in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. As presented in Figure 1, the number of presenters per 1,000 population is relatively low in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. At 2.9 per 1,000 population, this is well below the NI average of 4.5 and the third lowest of the eleven local government districts. Nonetheless, there are still more than 100 people presenting as homeless in our borough each month and this is what we need to draw attention to.

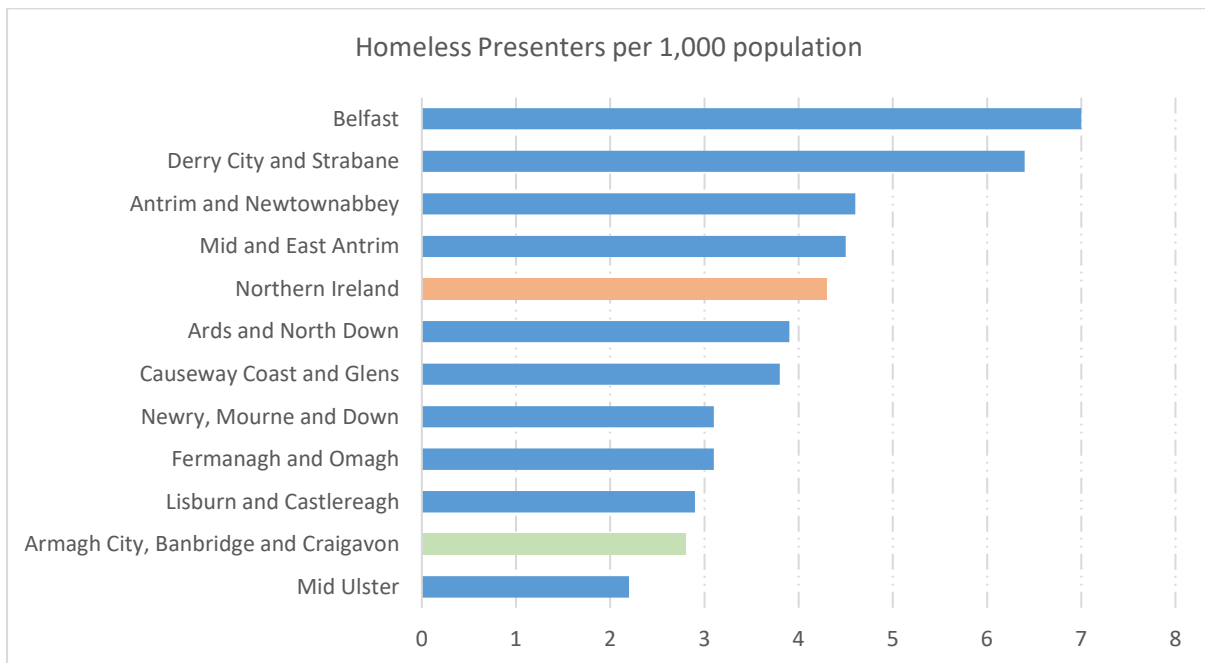


Figure 1: Presenters per 1,000 population by LGD and Northern Ireland, July - December 2023. Source: NI Homelessness Bulletin, NIHE.

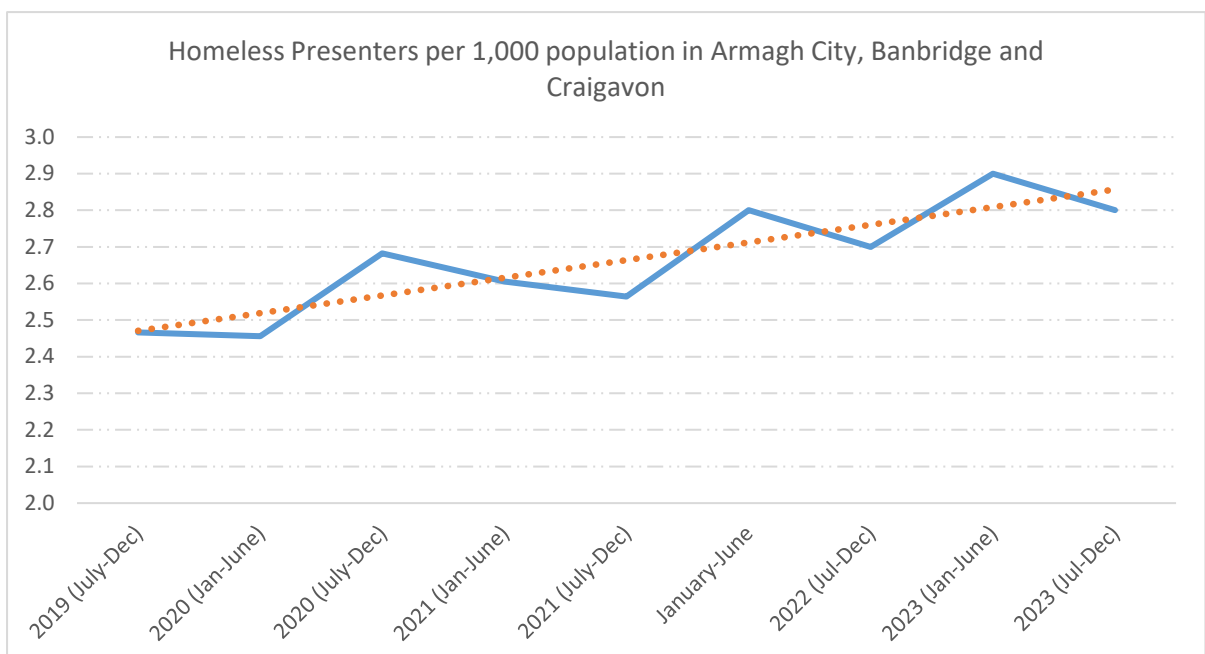


Figure 2: Presenters per 1,000 population in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. Source: NI Homelessness Bulletin, NIHE.

Data presented in Figure 2 show the number of presenters per 1,000 of the population in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough between July 2019 and December 2023. While the number

of presenters is relatively low in the borough compared to other LGD's, it is important to note that the number is still rising in the borough. Table 1 below presents the total number of presenters over the period.

	Total presenters
2019 (Jul - Dec)	528
2020 (Jan - Jun)	531
2020 (Jul - Dec)	580
2021 (Jan - Jun)	566
2021 (Jul - Dec)	557
2022 (Jan - Jun)	614
2022 (Jul-Dec)	581
2023 (Jan-Jun)	631
2023 (July-Dec)	611

Table 1: Total presenters in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. Source: NI Homelessness Bulletin, NIHE.

Between July and December 2023, a total of 5,316 households (65% of presenters) in Northern Ireland were accepted as homeless (Table 2). Of those accepted, 344 (6.5%) were in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough area. This equates to approximately 57 households per month. Approximately 56% of the total presenters in the borough between July and December 2023 were accepted as statutorily homeless in the same period.

	2023 (July - December)	% of NI Total
Antrim and Newtownabbey	470	8.8%
Ards and North Down	497	9.3%
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	344	6.5%
Belfast	1,453	27.3%
Causeway Coast and Glens	401	7.5%
Derry City and Strabane	624	11.7%
Fermanagh and Omagh	243	4.6%
Lisburn and Castlereagh	276	5.2%
Mid and East Antrim	421	7.9%
Mid Ulster	224	4.2%
Newry, Mourne and Down	363	6.8%
Northern Ireland	5,316	100%

Table 2: Households accepted as homeless by local government district, July - December 2023. Source: NI Homelessness Bulletin, NIHE.

The total number of households discharged, by local government district, is presented in Table 3. The figures differ from the presenters and accepted data as they refer to the financial year. These figures also include households who presented before the start date of the period. Between 2018 and 2023, a total of 1,855 households have been discharged in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon borough. The numbers discharged increased significantly in the borough between 2019/20 and 2020/21 and increased again in 2021/22 before falling slightly in 2022/23.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Antrim and Newtownabbey	417	573	461	683	942
Ards and North Down	849	812	681	741	702
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	209	199	496	516	435
Belfast	2,859	2,449	1,958	1,924	2,489
Causeway Coast and Glens	391	338	323	408	508
Derry City and Strabane	1,274	831	761	909	982
Fermanagh and Omagh	247	217	138	237	231
Lisburn and Castlereagh	447	447	419	340	616
Mid and East Antrim	800	740	681	730	650
Mid Ulster	286	304	281	322	320
Newry, Mourne and Down	702	548	417	537	546
Northern Ireland	8,481	7,458	6,616	7,347	8,421

Table 3: Total Households discharged by local government district, 2018/19 to 2022/23. Source: NI Homelessness Bulletin, NIHE.

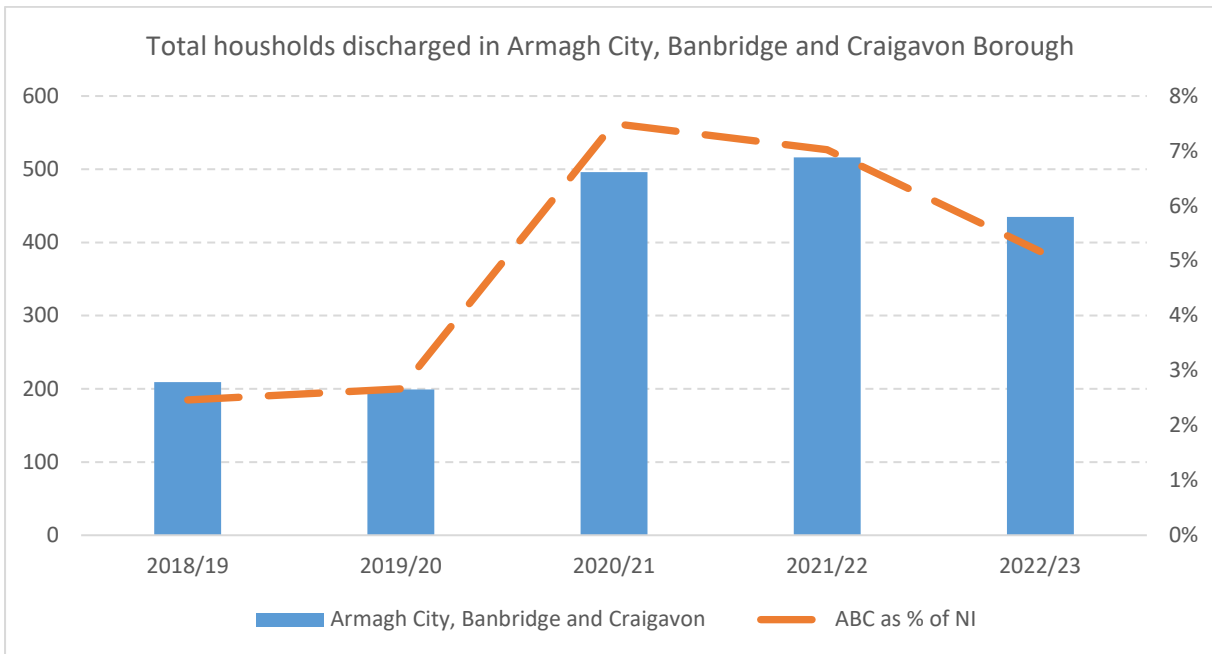


Figure 3: Total households discharged in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. Source: NI Homelessness Bulletin, NIHE.

Indicator 5: Economic Inactivity Gap (excluding students) by sex.

Source: Labour Force Survey

Released: Annually

Current availability: 2016-2022

Local Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs) have been established in each of the 11 LGDs in Northern Ireland (NI) to develop a range of new employability provisions that address the specific labour market needs and challenges of the local areas. The NI local Labour Market Insight (LMI) dashboard has been developed to assist LMP's in identifying these challenges and opportunities at the LGD level, and therefore help inform the development and monitoring of their targeted action plans and interventions.¹⁹

Data is provided on the economic inactivity (excluding students) number and rate by sex and a 'sex economic inactivity gap' is calculated.

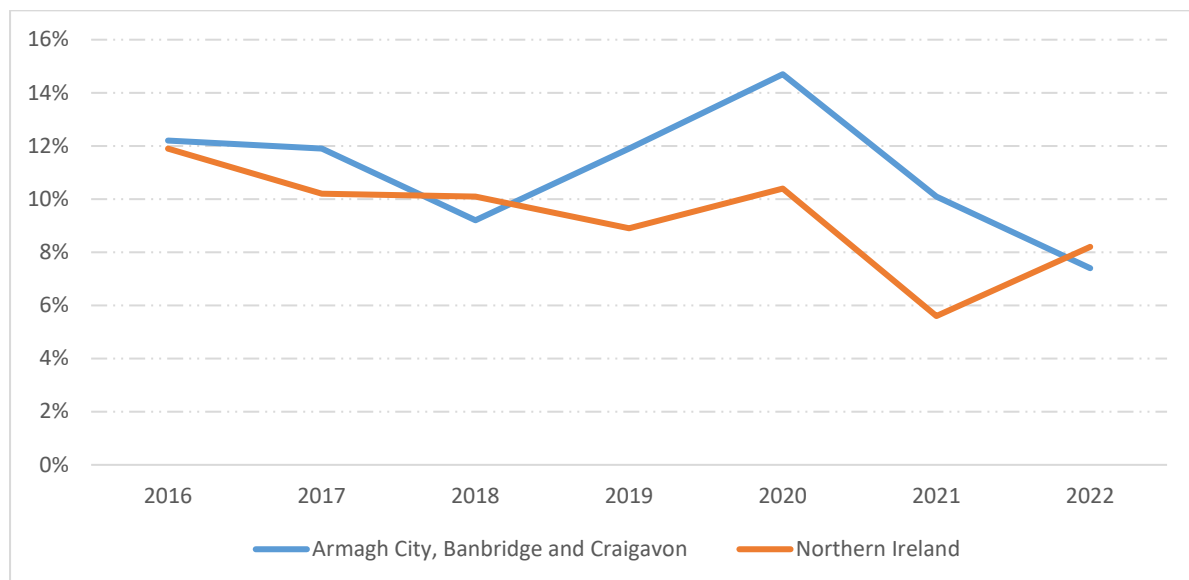


Figure 1: Economic Inactivity gap by sex in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon and Northern Ireland, 2016-2022. Source: Department for Communities, Local Labour Market Insight Dashboard.

The sex economic inactivity gap has declined in both Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland since 2016. However, between 2019 and 2021, the gap in the borough was greater than Northern Ireland by as much as 4.5 percentage points. Since reaching a high of 14.7% in 2020, the sex economic inactivity gap has declined in the Borough and in 2022, the gap was lower than in Northern Ireland overall for only the second time since 2016.

Figure 2 below compares the 2022 sex economic inactivity gap in the Borough with the other LGD's and Northern Ireland overall. In 2022, Mid and East Antrim had the lowest sex economic inactivity gap at 4.9% while Causeway Coast and Glens had the highest at 14.7%. Armagh City, Banbridge and

¹⁹ [Northern Ireland Local Labour Market Insight dashboard | Department for Communities \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](https://communities-ni.gov.uk)

Craigavon Borough had the fifth lowest of all LGD's in Northern Ireland. At 7.4% this implies that, females are 7.4% more likely to be economically inactive.

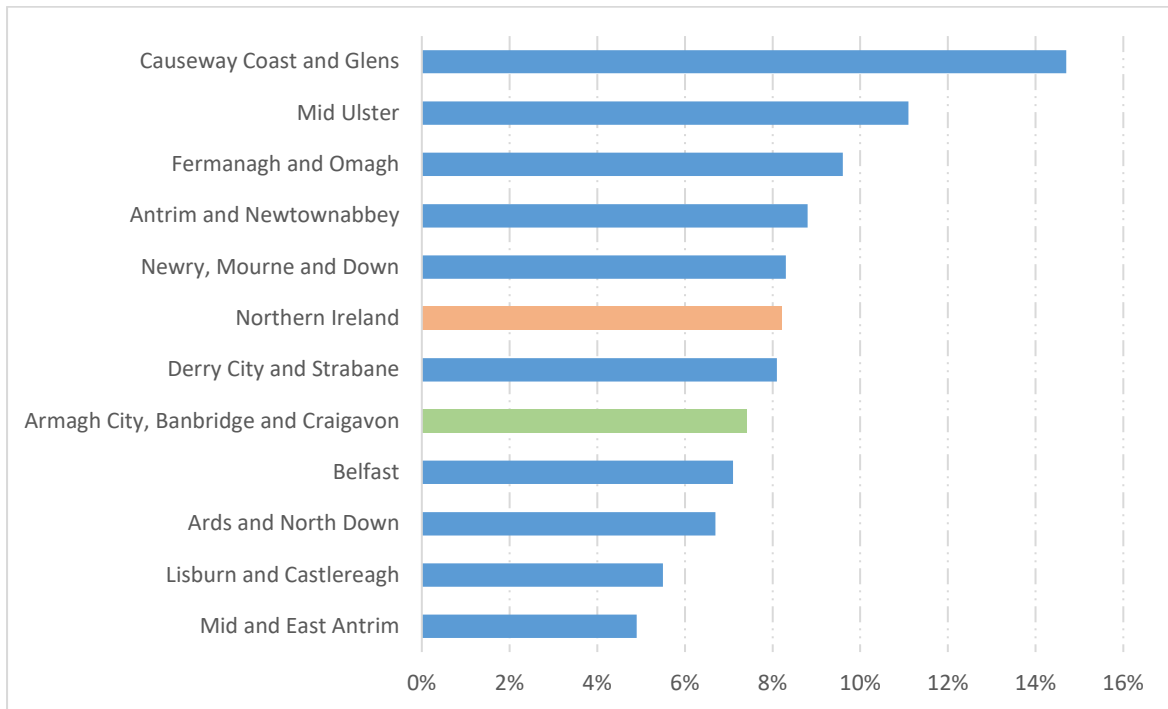


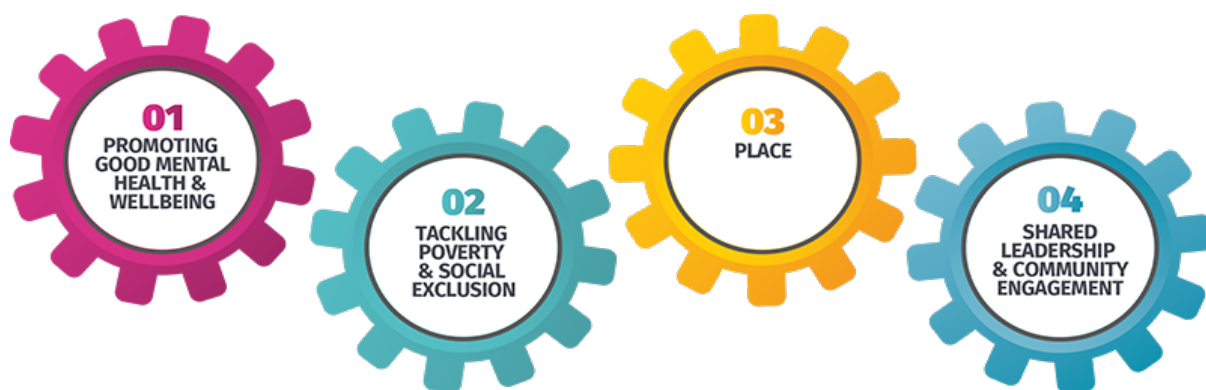
Figure 2: Economic Inactivity gap by sex by LGD and Northern Ireland, 2022. Source: Department for Communities, Local Labour Market Insight Dashboard.

PART 3

Community Planning Partnership Actions

Community Planning Partnership Actions : Covid-19 Response and Recovery Action Plan 2022-2023

The Community Planning Partnership for the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough have a statutory duty to take forward actions that contribute to the outcomes in their community plans. Our community plan is called *Connected* and all community planning partners share an equal responsibility for the implementation and delivery of the plan. A refresh of the Community Planning Partnerships actions was undertaken as a result of the research and engagement undertaken as part of the Partnership's Statement of Progress 2019-2021. This Covid-19 Response and Recovery action plan is a multi-agency and cross sectoral response which builds on the extensive community action and partnership working that we saw during the pandemic and has continued into the current cost of living crisis. The four priority themes for action in the Covid-19 Response and Recovery Action Plan are-



The Community Planning Partnership has established four sub-committees to deliver the Covid-19 Response and Recovery Action Plan. There are 21 actions in the Covid-19 Response and Recovery Action plan and these are delivered through the four sub-committees- Promoting Good Mental Health and Wellbeing, Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion, Place and Shared Leadership and Community Engagement.



Sub-Committee’s and Actions

Each of the four sub-committee has broad membership from across the Community Planning partnership including action leads from the CPSP and the CVSP and during the past two years there has been further development with partners being supported to step into chair and vice-chair roles in the sub-committees. The Community & Voluntary Sector Panel are integral to the leadership of the partnership and this sector is crucial to the wellbeing of the Borough as their work is critically important in terms of responding quickly to any local crisis and for early intervention and prevention.

The actions in the Community Plan, which all align with the Draft Programme for Government 2021, are delivered by 27 action leads from 4 statutory organisations and 4 from community & voluntary sector organisations. Fourteen of the 21 actions are led or joint led by Council. In the last Statement of Progress 2021-2023, 90% of these actions were on track which is testament to the hard work of the sub-committee’s in their delivery of these actions. The partnership health check undertaken as part of the Statement of Progress highlighted that 11 partners are in Chair and Vice-Chair roles across these sub-committee’s and 7 of these roles are held by 5 statutory partners and 4 are held by Community & Voluntary sector partners. In light of the review of Connected the partnerships actions will be revisited in the Autumn time to ensure that our collective efforts are targeted to where we can make the most difference.

This summary table below looks at the actions that align to each outcome under Economy and the proposed new outcome along with any regional strategies that the actions deliver upon.

PARTNERSHIP ACTION	CONNECTED OUTCOME	REGIONAL STRATEGIES
TACKLING POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION		
Labour Market Partnership Implement the LMP scheme	Enterprising Economy Skilled Economy Tourism Economy or Inclusive Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximizing potential: A review of labour market outcomes for people with disabilities in Northern Ireland ULSTER University, Economic Policy Centre 2022 • 10X Economy: An economic vision for a decade of innovation – Dept for Economy 2021 • Employment Outcomes and challenges for the Disabled in N. Ireland Dept for Communities 2021 • NI Skills Barometer, Dept for Economy • Supporting People, Work and Health – Dept for Communities Operational Strategy 2020-2025
Housing Enhance mix of tenure, and improve accessibility and affordability across the Borough’s housing	Inclusive Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Decade New Approach and the draft Programme for Government Outcomes Framework • Ending Homelessness Together 2022- 2027 strategy.-N I Housing Executive • Older People’s Housing Strategy 2021/22- 2026/27-NI Housing Executive • Irish Travellers Accommodation Strategy-NIHE • Draft Housing Supply Strategy, Dept for Communities ,
Emergency Need Continue to provide food, energy and wraparound support to people experiencing poverty	Inclusive Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting People, Work and Health – Dept for Communities Operational Strategy 2020-2025 • Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework, Dept for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs • New Decade New Approach and the draft Programme for Government Outcomes Framework
People and Place Strategy Create a Borough that is welcoming, accessible and friendly for people of all ages	Inclusive Economy Skilled Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and Place – A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal- Local Co-Design process for review of People & Place Strategy -Dept for Communities • 10X Economy: An economic vision for a decade of innovation – Dept for Economy 2021

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting People, Work and Health – Dept for Communities Operational Strategy 2020-2025
PARTNERSHIP ACTION	CONNECTED OUTCOME	REGIONAL STRATEGIES
PEACEPLUS Delivery of the ABC Community PEACE action plan	Enterprising Economy Skilled Economy Tourism Economy Inclusive Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Decade New Approach² and the draft Programme for Government Outcomes Framework Together: Building a United Community Strategy
PLACE		
Place Plans Implement, develop and roll out Place plans across the Borough	Enterprising Economy Skilled Economy Tourism Economy Inclusive Economy	A range of regional strategies focused on social, economic and environmental wellbeing
SHARED LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT		
Further Embed the Partnership's Community Engagement Strategy	Way of working that contributes to all outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Decade New Approach Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030, Dept for Education
Use of data and evidence	Way of working that contributes to all outcomes.	

ABC Community Planning Partnership Approach

Community planning requires ways of working that include shared leadership, close collaboration and integration; evidence informed policies and programmes; and involving local people in decision-making and action. These ways of working overlap with each other and our partnership has adopted them as an approach to our work.

