



**Financial Intelligence Toolkit**

**2023/24 Subscription**

**Children's Social Care Report**

Potential Savings, Unit Costs,  
Performance and Value for Money Analysis

**Newtimber**

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## Summary of Key Points

- This report examines Newtimber's expenditure and performance on Children's Social Care in 2023/24, relative to its statistical 'nearest neighbours' and the rest of England.

### Annual change in spending

- In 2023/24, your authority's expenditure per resident (aged 0-17) increased by 13.8%. This compares to an average increase among its nearest neighbours of 14.7%, and an average England increase of 13.7%.

Change in expenditure per resident		
Your authority	▲	+13.8%
Nearest neighbours	▲	+14.7%
England	▲	+13.7%

### Relative expenditure

- In 2023/24, your authority's expenditure per resident (aged 0-17) was 9.9% lower than the nearest neighbour average.
- Its expenditure per client (child in need) was 8.7% greater than the nearest neighbour average.

Expenditure per resident (aged 0-17)			Expenditure per client (children in need)		
Your authority		£1,058	Your authority		£20,563
Nearest neighbours		£1,174	Nearest neighbours		£18,921
England		£1,061	England		£17,422

- Note that an authority may have higher costs *per child in need* if it restricts services to children with more complex needs; for example, through more restrictive demand management practices.

### Notional savings

- The report estimates the impact of setting Newtimber's unit costs (£ per child in need) to the following benchmark levels:
  - Equal to the **median** for all authorities in England: notional savings of £43.2m
  - Equal to the **bottom 20%** of authorities in England: notional savings of £104.4m

### Performance

- Performance was measured using a combination of 22 indicators. Each authority's overall performance was based on its average ranking across these indicators.
- Newtimber's overall performance was ranked 8th highest out of 16 nearest neighbours, and 104th highest out of 145 authorities in England.

### Value for money

- Relative 'value for money' was estimated by comparing your authority's overall performance rank to its expenditure rank (using £ per child in need).
- Based on this metric, Newtimber's value for money was ranked 14th highest out of 16 nearest neighbours, and 133rd highest out of 145 authorities in England.

### Workforce statistics

- The following are key statistics for the children's social care workforce, as of 30 September 2023:

	Care workers per 1,000 children in need	Vacancy rate (%)	Absence rate (%)
Your authority	16.4	26.7	4.7
Nearest neighbours	44.7	16.6	4.0
England	71.6	19.3	3.2

## 1. Methodology

### Relative expenditure

- Unit costs are based on budgeted expenditure for 2023/24, taken from the Revenue Account publication.
- Expenditure is deflated by DLUHC's Area Cost Adjustment (ACA) for social services. In general terms, this controls for differences in local authorities' expenditure that are due to geographical variations in wage and salary costs.
- Expenditure is then divided by the number of 'clients' for each service, where clients include children in need (CIN), looked after children (LAC), or the projected population within the relevant age band. The client group applied to each service is specified in relevant tables of the report.
- The latest available CIN and LAC figures relate to 2022/23, so these have been projected forward one year, in line with population growth (ages 0-17), so that they align with budgeted expenditure in 2023/24.

### Relative performance

- Performance is measured using 22 indicators. We have sought to include the widest range of indicators that are relevant to children's services, which are comparable across local authorities, and which local authorities could be expected to have some degree of control over. Please note that, in some cases, performance data may be missing for your authority, e.g. if suppressed for privacy reasons.
- Overall performance is based on your authority's average rank across various performance indicators. Performance indicators belong to groups which are weighted based on past expenditure shares. These groups are Children Looked After (53% weighting), Safeguarding Children and Family Support (38%), Sure Start & Early Years (4%), Young People's Services (3%) and Youth Justice (2%).

### Value for money

- 'Value for money' (VfM) is estimated by comparing an authority's expenditure rank (using £ per child in need) with its performance rank, relative to all authorities in England.
- Ranks are standardised using scores, which range from 0 (corresponding to the lowest ranked unit costs or lowest performance) to 100 (the highest ranked unit costs or performance).
- The 'value for money' score represents the difference between your authority's performance score and its expenditure score, i.e.:

$$\text{VfM score} = \text{Performance Score} - \text{Expenditure Score}$$

- This means that the higher your authority's VfM score, the higher is its performance ranking is, relative to its expenditure ranking. The VfM score enables a comparison of an authority's relative expenditure and performance rankings to those of its nearest neighbours.

## 2. Comparator groups

For benchmarking purposes, two sets of comparator groups are used in this analysis: (a) Newtimber's nearest neighbour group, and (b) all comparable authorities across England. These comparator groups are explained below.

### Nearest neighbour group

Please note that some authorities did not submit budgeted expenditure (RA) data in 2022/23 or 2023/24. In cases where data is missing for your authority's nearest neighbours, these have been replaced by the next closest authorities from LG Futures' nearest neighbour model.

To enable a like-for-like comparison, this analysis makes use of LG Futures' statistical 'nearest neighbours' groups. These identify councils with similar economic and social characteristics and groups them on a statistical basis. These groupings were last updated for the 2023/24 reports.

Newtimber's nearest neighbour group is shown in the table below:

**Table 1 - Nearest neighbour group**

■ <b>Newtimber</b>	■ Authority H
■ Authority A	■ Authority I
■ Authority B	■ Authority J
■ Authority C	■ Authority K
■ Authority D	■ Authority L
■ Authority E	■ Authority M
■ Authority F	■ Authority N
■ Authority G	■ Authority O

### National comparator group

Your authority is also compared with all authorities in England that provide personal social services, of which there are 145. This figure includes unitaries, London boroughs, metropolitan districts, and county councils (but excluding City of London and Isles of Scilly), and excludes six authorities that did not complete the necessary government returns to complete the report.

### 3. Expenditure

#### Composition of expenditure

In 2023/24, Newtimber had budgeted expenditure on children's services of £310.7m. The composition of this expenditure, relative to its nearest neighbours and other authorities in England, is illustrated below.

**Table 2 - Composition of budgeted expenditure in 2023/24**

Service Group	Newtimber		NN average (% of total)	England average (% of total)
	(£m)	(% of total)		
Children Looked After	161.413	52.0%	53.0%	51.2%
Safeguarding Children's Services	81.862	26.3%	22.2%	24.3%
Family Support Services	40.533	13.0%	9.6%	12.2%
Services for Young People	8.853	2.8%	1.9%	3.2%
Youth Justice	8.686	2.8%	2.2%	2.0%
Other Children's and Families Services	5.718	1.8%	6.4%	2.1%
Asylum seekers	2.874	0.9%	1.6%	1.5%
Sure Start and Early Years	0.735	0.2%	3.1%	3.6%
<b>Total Children's Social Care</b>	<b>310.674</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

As shown above, Children Looked After accounted for the largest share of Newtimber's budgeted expenditure in 2023/24 (at 52.0% of the total).

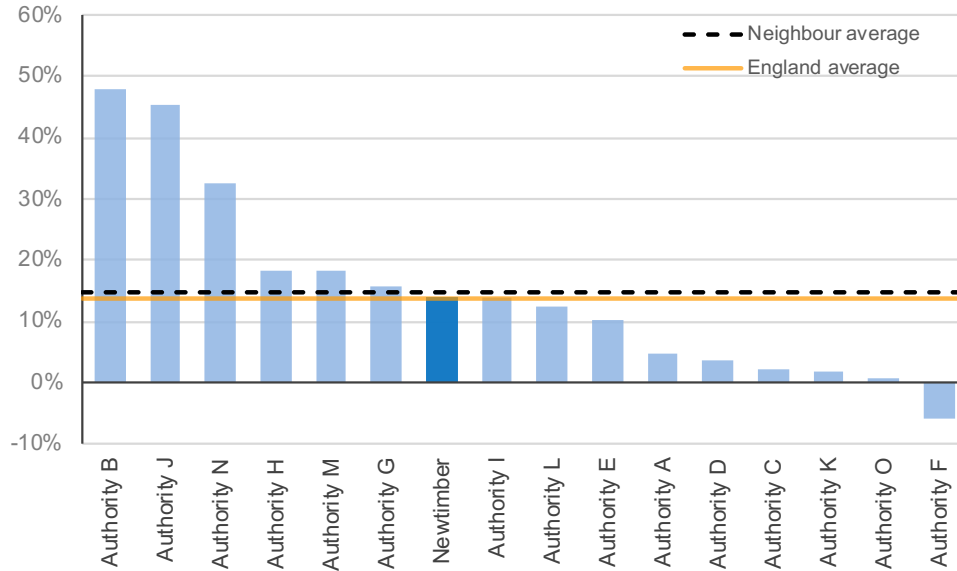
Relative to its nearest neighbours, the biggest difference in Newtimber's expenditure was for Other Children's and Families Services.

## Annual change in expenditure

Your authority's expenditure per resident (aged 0-17) increased by 13.8% in 2023/24. This compares to an average nearest neighbour increase of 14.7%, and an average England increase of 13.7%.

Newtimber's relative change in expenditure per resident (aged 0-17) is shown below:

**Chart 1 - Change in spending per resident (aged 0-17) between 2022/23 and 2023/24**  
*In some cases, prior year data is not available. In this case, no change will be shown.*



This estimated change in Newtimber's expenditure per resident reflects:

- An increase in budgeted expenditure of 13.7%; and
- A decrease in residents (aged 0 to 17) of 0.1%.

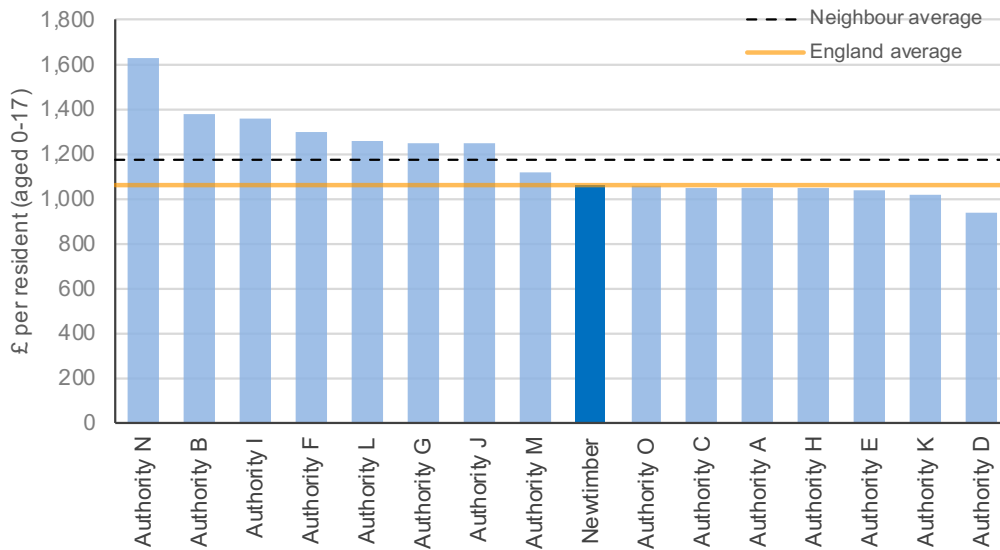
## Unit cost comparisons

This section presents two unit costs for children's services: (1) expenditure per resident aged 0 to 17, and (2) expenditure per child accepted by the local authority as being 'in need'. (1) therefore compares based on population size, whereas (2) considers cost per 'child in need'.

### Expenditure per resident (aged 0 to 17)

Your authority's expenditure per resident (aged 0 to 17) was 9.9% lower than the nearest neighbour average, and 0.3% lower than the England average. It was ranked 9th highest in the nearest neighbour group, and 60th highest nationally (out of 145 authorities).

Chart 2 - Children's social care expenditure per resident (aged 0 to 17) 2023/24

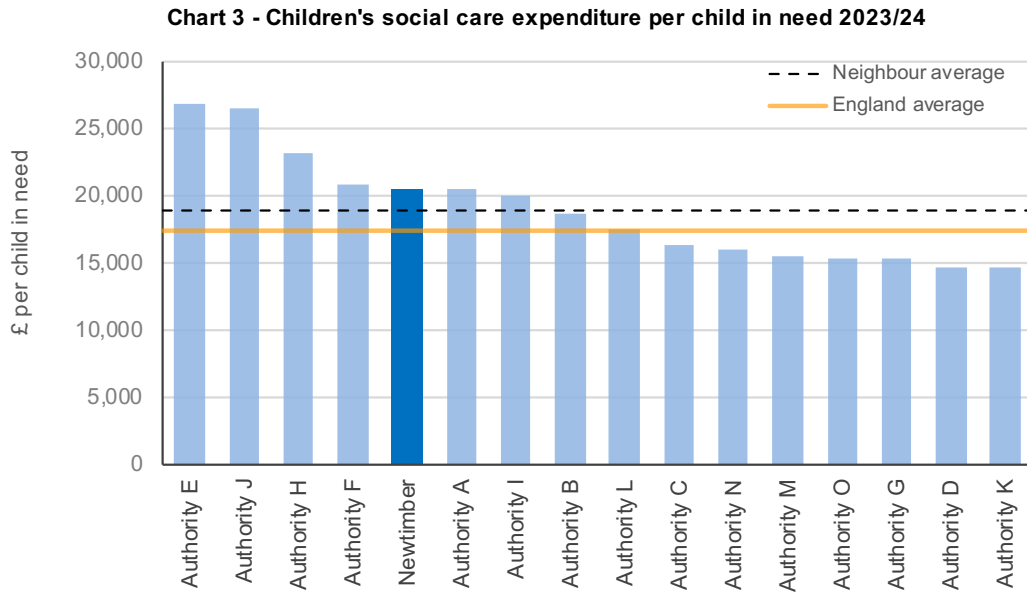


Expenditure per resident (aged 0 to 17) does not control for differences in local authorities' relative need, based on the service requirements of children in the local area. The next section considers expenditure per child who is assessed as being in need, which partially controls for some of these differences.



### Expenditure per child in need

In 2023/24, your authority's expenditure per child in need was 8.7% higher than the nearest neighbour average, and 18.0% higher than the England average. It was ranked 5th highest in the nearest neighbour group, and 25th highest nationally (out of 145 authorities).



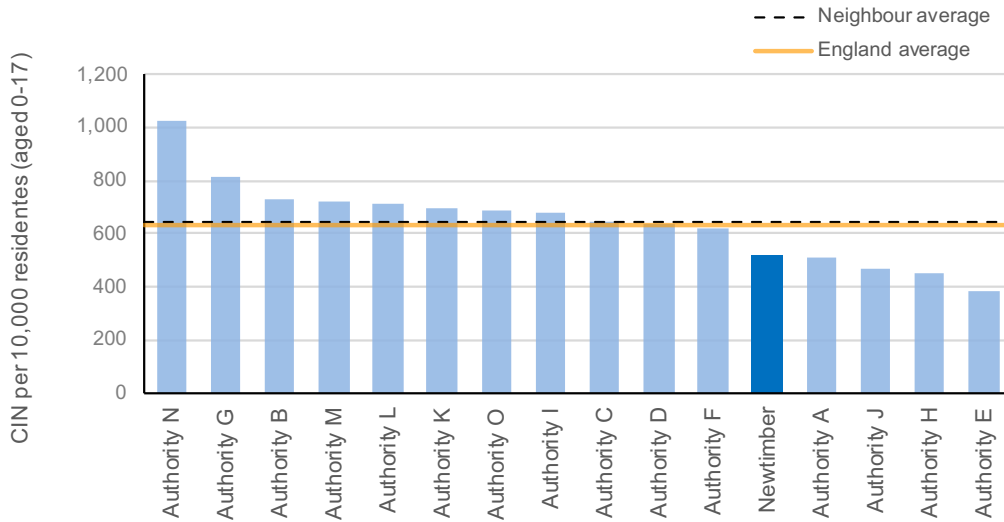
Note that expenditure per child in need could reflect differences in demand management between local authorities. For example, all else being equal, authorities that were more successful at preventing children with marginal needs from entering care could have a client group with more intensive care needs, and therefore higher unit costs than average. Conversely, those authorities least able to control demand could have children with less intensive needs in their client group, and therefore lower average unit costs.

### Children in need per 10,000 residents (aged 0 to 17)

This section examines the number of children in need relative to the number of all children in the local authority.

In 2023/24, Newtimber is projected to have 20.1% fewer children in need per 10,000 residents (aged 0-17) than the nearest neighbour average. This difference could reflect a lower-than-average level of need per resident; more restrictive demand management practices; or other factors.

**Chart 4 - Projected children in need per 10,000 residents (aged 0-17) 2023/24**



Compared to the England average, Newtimber is projected to have 18.6% fewer children in need per 10,000 residents (aged 0 to 17).

## Notional savings

This section considers the notional savings that could theoretically be achieved by setting your authority's Children's Social Care unit costs (£ per child in need) to certain benchmark levels. For example, what would be the impact on your authority's expenditure if its unit costs were at the bottom 20% of local authorities?

Benchmark unit costs are defined as the cut-off points for the bottom 20% of authorities, the bottom 40% of authorities, the median, the top 40% of authorities, and the top 20% of authorities.

Benchmarks are set relative to Newtimber's nearest neighbour group.

It is estimated that setting Newtimber's unit costs to the bottom 20% of its nearest neighbours would result in notional savings of £104.4m. This is shown in the table below. Setting its unit costs to the median would result in notional savings of £43.2m.

**Table 3 - Notional savings relative to nearest neighbour benchmarks 2023/24**

Notional savings  Additional expenditure

Service	Benchmark unit cost				
	Bottom 20%	Bottom 40%	Median	Top 40%	Top 20%
Children Looked After	£35.5m	£18.1m	£10.9m	£0.8m	-\$7.2m
Safeguarding Children's Services	£27.9m	£23.3m	£20.8m	£12.9m	-\$0.4m
Family Support Services	£26.8m	£15.5m	£14.0m	£9.5m	£0.0m
Services for Young People	£6.1m	£3.2m	£2.5m	£1.3m	-\$0.8m
Other Children's and Families Services	£5.7m	£5.1m	£3.6m	£3.2m	£2.4m
Youth Justice	£3.8m	£1.7m	£1.0m	£0.5m	-\$3.4m
Sure Start and Early Years	-\$1.5m	-\$7.9m	-\$9.5m	-\$11.6m	-\$17.3m
<b>Total Notional Savings</b>	<b>£104.4m</b>	<b>£59.0m</b>	<b>£43.2m</b>	<b>£16.7m</b>	<b>-\$26.6m</b>

Negative figures indicate increased expenditure. This will be the case if your authority has unit costs that are currently below the benchmark level. Benchmarks are based on expenditure per child in need.

## Detailed expenditure comparisons

As described above, your authority's expenditure per child in need was 8.7% higher than the nearest neighbour average, and 18.0% higher than the England average. Its unit costs for each sub-service are presented in the table below, along with a comparison with the nearest neighbour and England averages.

Table 4 - Unit costs relative to other authorities 2023/24

Expenditure category	Your authority		Nearest neighbours			All authorities			Units
	Budget (£m)	Unit cost (£)	Average unit cost (£)	Difference	Rank (of 16)	Average unit cost (£)	Difference	Rank (of 145)	
Children Looked After	161.413	57,360	50,281	14.1%	6th	55,527	3.3%	63rd ●	Children looked after
Safeguarding Children's Services	81.862	5,418	4,270	26.9%	5th	4,224	28.3%	31st ●	Children in Need
Sure Start and Early Years	0.735	9	124	-92.6%	15th	146	-93.7%	132nd ●	Residents (aged 0-4)
Services for Young People	8.853	74	54	38.4%	5th	86	-13.6%	65th ●	Residents (aged 13-19)
Family Support Services	40.533	2,683	1,858	44.4%	4th	2,096	28.0%	38th ●	Children in Need
Youth Justice	8.686	66	58	14.4%	5th	45	48.4%	26th ●	Residents (aged 10-17)
Other Children's and Families Services	5.718	378	969	-60.9%	2nd	341	10.9%	29th ●	Children in Need
Asylum seekers	2.874								
<b>Total Children's Social Care</b>	<b>310.674</b>	<b>20,563</b>	<b>18,921</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>17,422</b>	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>25th ●</b>	<b>Children in Need</b>

## Key:

Unit costs: bottom 20% of authorities in England ●●●● top 20% of authorities in England

## 4. Performance

A total of 22 indicators were used to assess each authority's relative performance in Children's Social Care. These were averaged together using a rank-based scoring system.

Newtimber's overall performance was ranked:

- 8th highest in the nearest neighbour group (out of 16 authorities); and
- 104th highest in England (out of 145 authorities)

The following table (over two pages) provides details of the individual performance indicators that were used to estimate Newtimber's relative performance. The values used are based on the latest published information.

**Table 5 - Performance indicators**  
A rank of '1st' denotes best performance

Performance indicator	Nature	Your authority Value	Nearest Neighbour comparison		England comparison	
			Avg.	Your rank	Avg.	Your rank
<b>Children looked after</b>						
Stability of placements - children in the same placement for 2 or more years (percent)	▲	71.0	69.5	4th = / 16	68.4	40th = / 145 ●
Stability of placements - children with 3 or more placements in the past year (percent)	▼	9.0	9.3	8th = / 16	10.2	41st = / 144 ●
Children placed outside LA boundary and more than 20 miles from where they used to live (percent)	▼	12.0	13.9	7th / 16	17.3	37th = / 145 ●
Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (days)	▼	443.0	393.4	13th / 16	364.4	124th = / 139 ●
Average time between LA receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match (days)	▼	205.0	193.9	10th / 16	177.8	103rd / 138 ●
Looked after children with at least one fixed term exclusion from school (percent)	▼	10.7	9.1	14th / 16	10.0	84th / 137 ●
School sessions missed due to absences for children looked after (percent)	▼	7.8	7.9	9th / 16	7.9	74th = / 145 ●
Care leavers in education, employment or training (percent)	▲	56.0	56.9	8th = / 16	56.0	63rd = / 144 ●
Care leavers in suitable accommodation (percent)	▲	83.0	89.4	14th = / 16	88.9	122nd = / 143 ●

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**Key:**

Performance: top 20% of authorities in England ●●●●● bottom 20% of authorities in England

▲ Higher values indicate better performance

▼ Lower values indicate better performance

NA Missing data

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Performance indicator	Nature	Your authority Value	Nearest Neighbour comparison		England comparison		
			Avg.	Your rank	Avg.	Your rank	
<b>Safeguarding Children &amp; Family Support</b>							
Assessment of children referred to social care services carried out within 45 days (percent)	▲	84.7	78.4	5th / 16	82.1	59th / 145	●
Child protection conferences held within 15 days of initial enquiry (percent)	▲	82.7	75.8	4th / 16	78.8	54th / 145	●
Children becoming the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time (percent)	▼	23.8	24.6	8th / 16	23.5	73rd= / 143	●
Children with child protection plans that were reviewed within required timescales (percent)	▲	82.3	84.1	11th / 16	88.3	113th / 145	●
Child protection plans coming to an end which lasted more than two years (percent)	▼	3.6	5.6	4th / 15	4.4	49th= / 119	●
Children in Need who are persistently absent from school (percent)	▼	50.6	50.6	10th / 16	48.3	97th= / 144	●
Children in Need progress between Key Stages 2 and 4 (no. of grades above/below the England average)	▲	-1.6	-1.7	7th / 16	-1.6	63rd= / 143	●
<b>Sure Start &amp; Early Years</b>							
Children achieving a good level of development (percent)	▲	65.1	63.0	2nd / 16	67.1	107th= / 145	●
Achievement gap between bottom 20% of children and the mean, adjusted for deprivation (index)*	▼	38.9	37.4	13th / 16	33.0	137th / 145	●
<b>Young People's Services</b>							
Young people not in education, employment or training (percent)	▼	2.6	3.5	6th / 16	2.9	67th= / 145	●
Under-18 conceptions, adjusted for deprivation (index)*	▼	20.2	18.5	13th / 16	13.8	137th / 145	●
<b>Youth Justice</b>							
First-time entrants to the youth justice system, ages 10-17, adjusted for deprivation (index)*	▼	206.8	194.3	13th / 16	158.1	137th / 145	●
Proportion of young offenders who re-offend, ages 15-17 (percent)	▼	27.0	30.4	6th / 16	31.6	40th / 144	●
<b>Overall performance (weighted)**</b>				8th / 16		104th / 145	●

**Key:**

Performance: top 20% of authorities in England ●●●●● bottom 20% of authorities in England

▲ Higher values indicate better performance

▼ Lower values indicate better performance

NA Missing data

\* These are indices which control for differences in deprivation affecting children. An index value of 100 corresponds to the average rate for a local authority given its level of deprivation. For example, for under-18 conceptions, an index of 115 would mean the authority's conception rate was 15% higher than the national average, after controlling for its relative level of deprivation.

\*\* The overall performance rank is based on the average for each group of indicators in the table above, weighted by their share of expenditure. The groups are Children Looked After (53% weighting), Safeguarding Children and Family Support (38%), Sure Start and Early Years (4%), Young People's Services (3%) and Youth Justice (2%).

Overall, Newtimber's performance is estimated as being higher than 29% of other authorities in England. This was used to estimate its Value for Money score, as presented below.

## 5. Relative 'value for money'

This section examines each authority's relative performance and expenditure. It also reports its relative 'value for money', which is based on a comparison of its performance and expenditure rankings. This is only one way that value for money could be measured, and is intended as indicative, rather than definitive.

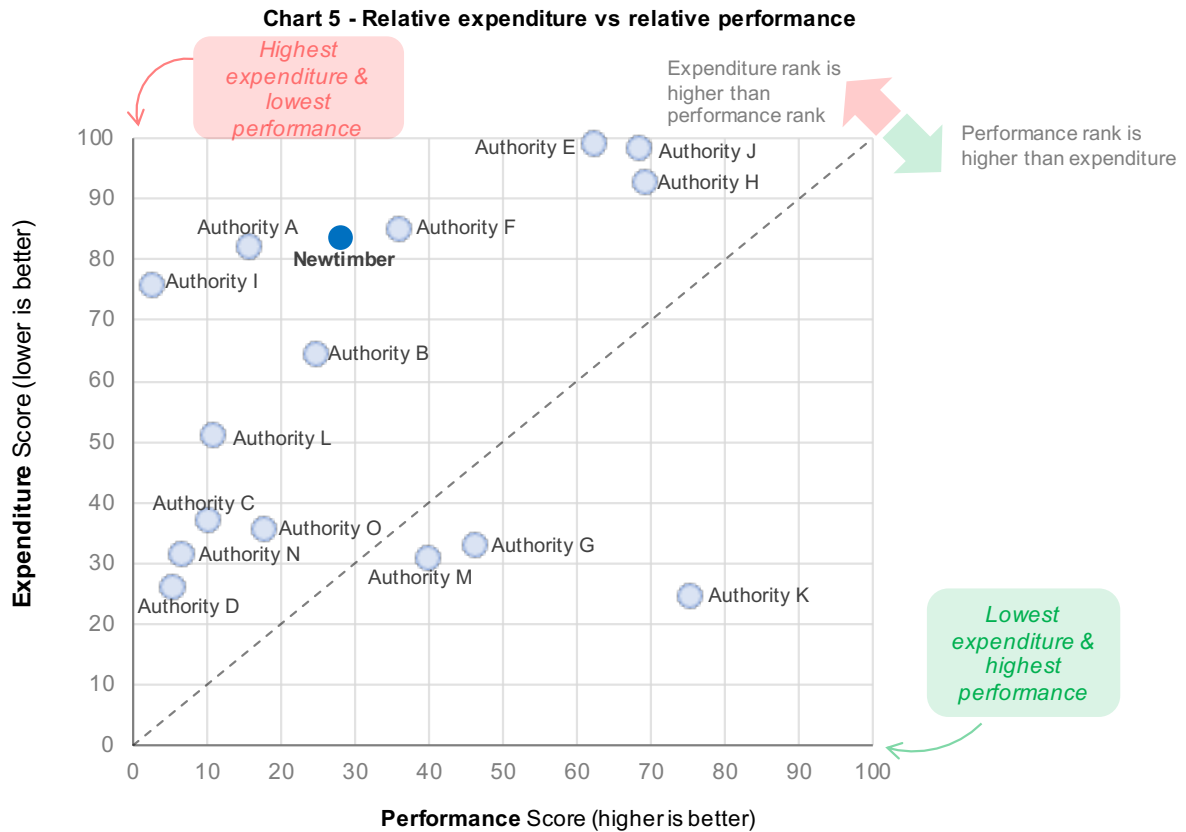
### Expenditure and performance rankings

**Caveat:** Expenditure ranks are based on expenditure per *child in need*. It is important to note that higher unit costs could partly reflect different demand management practices, if this resulted in a smaller number of children accepted as being in need (with more intensive care needs) than similar authorities.

Based on the methodology used in this report:

- Your authority's unit costs (£ per child in need) were higher than 83% of all other authorities; and
- Your authority's average performance was higher than 29% of all other authorities

Your authority's position relative to its nearest neighbours is shown in the chart below. Note that each authority's expenditure and performance has been assigned a score, based on its rank, ranging from 0 to 100. A value of 0 corresponds to the lowest expenditure or performance in England; and value of 100 corresponds to the highest ranked expenditure or performance.



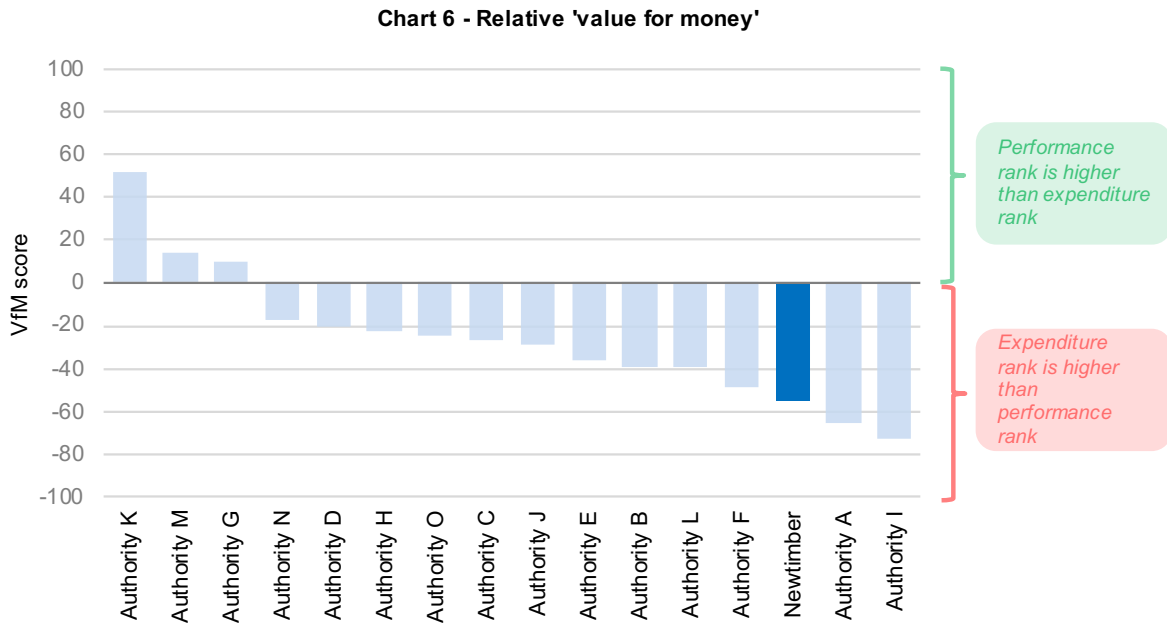
## Relative value for money

Relative **value for money (VfM)** is estimated by comparing an authority's performance rank with its expenditure rank. Specifically, its VfM score is calculated as its performance score minus its expenditure score.

Based on this metric, Newtimber's relative VfM was ranked:

- 14th highest in the nearest neighbour group (out of 16 authorities); and
- 133rd highest in England (out of 145 authorities)

The chart below illustrates relative VfM for each member of your authority's nearest neighbour group.





## 6. Workforce statistics

This section presents statistics on Newtimber's children's social care workforce, for the year ending 30 September 2023.

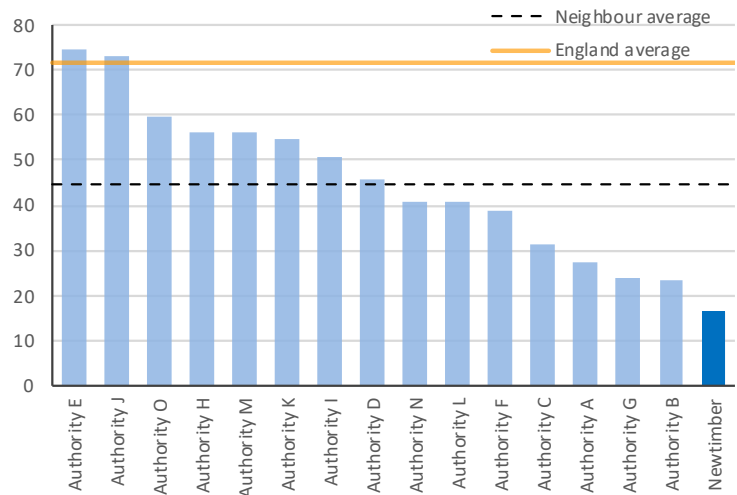
### Staffing levels

In 2023, your authority had 16.4 social workers (FTE) per 1,000 children in need, including agency staff. This was lower than the nearest neighbour average of 44.7 social workers. It was ranked 16th highest in the nearest neighbour group, as illustrated in the accompanying chart.

Compared nationally, your authority's ratio was lower than the national average of 71.6 workers, and was ranked 143rd highest out of 145 authorities.

Note that this measure of the social care workforce includes managerial positions, even if they do not directly manage cases.

**Chart 7 - Social workers (FTE) per 1,000 children in need Sep 2023**

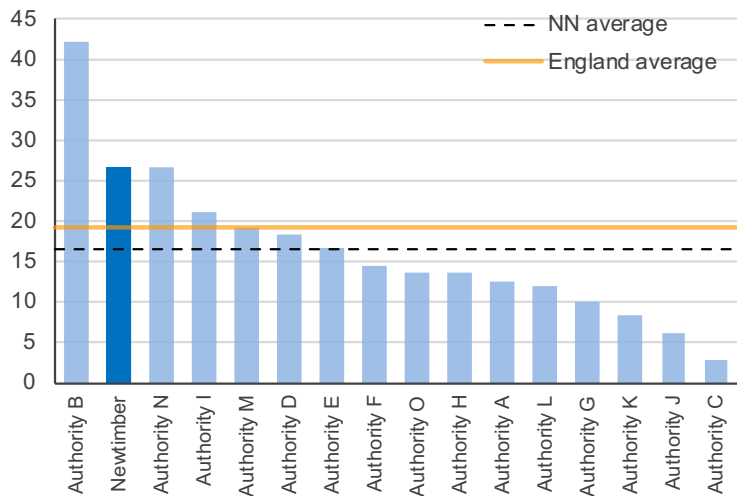


### Vacancy rate

Your authority's vacancy rate for children's social care workers was 26.7%, higher than the nearest neighbour average of 16.6%. It was ranked 2nd highest in the group.

Its vacancy rate was higher than the England average of 19.3%, and was ranked 39th highest out of 145 authorities.

**Chart 8 - Social care worker vacancies (%) Sep 2023**

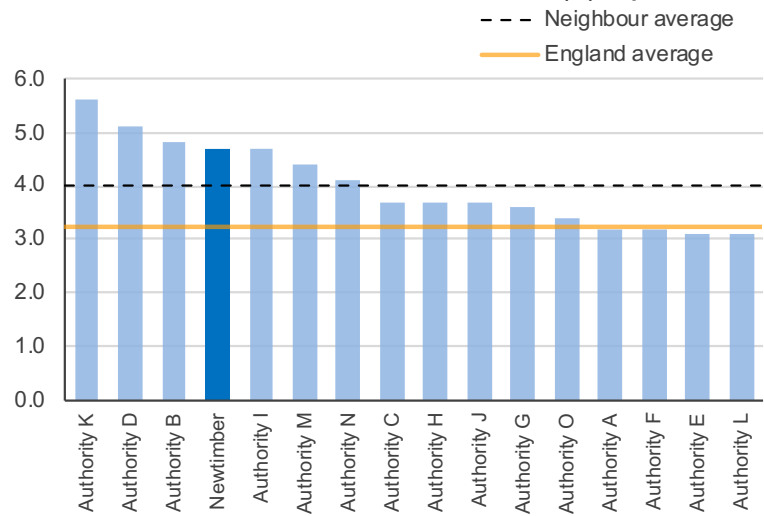


## Absence rate

Your authority's absence rate for social care workers was 4.7%, higher than the nearest neighbour average of 4.0%. It was ranked 4th highest in the group.

Its absence rate was higher than the England average of 3.2%. It was ranked 16th highest out of 145 authorities.

**Chart 9 - Social care worker absence rate (%) Sep 2023**



## Annex A - Denominators and performance indicators

The table below provides information on the performance indicators used in this report. The report uses the latest data available at the time of publication.

Denominators / Units	Latest Data
Children in Need	Children with an episode of need during 2022/23, projected forward to 2023/24 in line with population growth (aged 0-17)
Children Looked After	Children looked after any time in the year in 2022/23, projected forward to 2023/24 in line with population growth (ages 0-17)
Residents (various age bands)	Projected for June 2023 (2018-based)

Performance Indicators	Latest Data
Stability of placements - children in the same placement for 2 or more years (percent)	At 31 March 2023
Stability of placements - children with 3 or more placements in the past year (percent)	At 31 March 2023
Children placed outside LA boundary and more than 20 miles from where they used to live (percent)	At 31 March 2023
Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (days)	Three years to March 2020
Average time between LA receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match (days)	Three years to March 2020
Looked after children with at least one fixed term exclusion from school (percent)	Year ending 31 March 2021
School sessions missed due to absences for children looked after (percent)	Year ending 31 March 2022
Care leavers in education, employment or training (percent)	Year to March 2023
Care leavers in suitable accommodation (percent)	Year to March 2023
Assessment of children referred to social care services carried out within 45 days (percent)	Year to 31 March 2023
Child protection conferences held within 15 days of initial enquiry (percent)	Year to 31 March 2023
Children becoming the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time (percent)	Year to 31 March 2023
Children with child protection plans that were reviewed within required timescales (percent)	Year to 31 March 2023
Child protection plans coming to an end which lasted more than two years (percent)	Year to 31 March 2023
Children in Need who are persistently absent from school (percent)	As at 31 March 2022
Children in Need progress between Key Stages 2 and 4 (no. of grades above/below the England average)	As at 31 March 2022
Children achieving a good level of development (percent)	Year to March 2023
Achievement gap between the lowest attaining 20% of children and the mean (percent), adjusted for deprivation	Year to March 2019
Young people not in education, employment or training (percent)	March 2023
Under-18 conceptions (per 1,000 females aged 15-17), adjusted for deprivation	Year to 31 December 2021
First-time entrants to the youth justice system (per 100,000 residents ages 10-17), adjusted for deprivation	Year to 31 December 2022
Proportion of young offenders who re-offend, ages 15 -17 (percent)	Year to 31 March 2022