



Financial Intelligence Toolkit

2024/25 Subscription

Children's Social Care Report

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

Newtimber

Contents

Summary of Key Points	3
1. Methodology	4
2. Comparator groups	5
3. Expenditure	6
Composition of expenditure	6
Annual change in expenditure	7
Unit cost comparisons	8
Notional savings	11
Detailed expenditure comparisons	12
4. Performance	13
5. Relative 'value for money'	15
6. Workforce statistics	17
Annex A - Denominators and performance indicators	19

Summary of Key Points

- This report examines Newtimber's expenditure and performance on Children's Social Care in 2024/25, relative to its statistical 'nearest neighbours' and the rest of England.



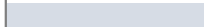
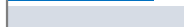


Annual change in spending

- In 2024/25, your authority's expenditure per resident (aged 0-17) increased by 0.8%. This compares to an average increase among its nearest neighbours of 11.4%, and an average England increase of 12.2%.

Change in expenditure per resident		
Your authority	▲	+0.8%
Nearest neighbours	▲	+11.4%
England	▲	+12.2%



Relative expenditure

- In 2024/25, your authority's expenditure per resident (aged 0-17) was 4.0% lower than the nearest neighbour average.
- Its expenditure per client (child in need) was 17.0% lower than the nearest neighbour average.

Expenditure per resident (aged 0-17)			Expenditure per client (children in need)		
Your authority		£1,266	Your authority		£17,505
Nearest neighbours		£1,318	Nearest neighbours		£21,100
England		£1,233	England		£20,799

- 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:  additional expenditure of £14.5m
 - Equal to the **bottom 20%** of authorities in England:  notional savings of £8.4m

Performance

- Performance was measured using a combination of 19 indicators. Each authority's overall performance was based on its average ranking across these indicators.
- Newtimber's overall performance was ranked 12th highest out of 16 nearest neighbours, and 120th highest out of 151 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 8th highest out of 16 nearest neighbours, and 83rd highest out of 151 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	<div><div></div></div> 66.5		<div><div></div></div> 12.3		<div><div></div></div> 3.6
Nearest neighbours	<div><div></div></div> 61.2		<div><div></div></div> 19.1		<div><div></div></div> 3.7
England	<div><div></div></div> 61.4		<div><div></div></div> 17.9		<div><div></div></div> 3.3

1. Methodology

Relative expenditure

- Unit costs are based on budgeted expenditure for 2024/25, taken from the Revenue Account publication.
- Expenditure is deflated by MHCLG's 2024 Area Cost Adjustment (ACA) for children's 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 2023/24, so these have been projected forward one year, in line with population growth (ages 0-17), so that they align with budgeted expenditure in 2024/25.

Relative performance

- Performance is measured using 19 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 (55% weighting), Safeguarding Children and Family Support (37%), Sure Start & Early Years (3%), 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 2024/25 used for chart 1. 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 2024/25 subscription benchmarking reports.

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

Table 1 - Nearest neighbour group

■ Newtimber	■ 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 151. This includes unitaries, London boroughs, metropolitan districts, and county councils (but excluding City of London and Isles of Scilly).

3. Expenditure

Composition of expenditure

In 2024/25, Newtimber had budgeted expenditure on children's services of £108.8m. 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 2024/25

Service Group	Newtimber (£m)	Newtimber (% of total)	NN average (% of total)	England average (% of total)
Children Looked After	64.392	59.2%	58.5%	52.0%
Safeguarding Children's Services	26.810	24.6%	20.5%	24.0%
Family Support Services	9.871	9.1%	12.4%	11.6%
Asylum seekers	3.412	3.1%	1.0%	1.7%
Sure Start and Early Years	1.644	1.5%	2.9%	3.2%
Youth Justice	1.517	1.4%	2.2%	1.9%
Other Children's and Families Services	1.152	1.1%	0.7%	2.3%
Services for Young People	0.000	0.0%	1.9%	3.3%
Total Children's Social Care	108.798	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

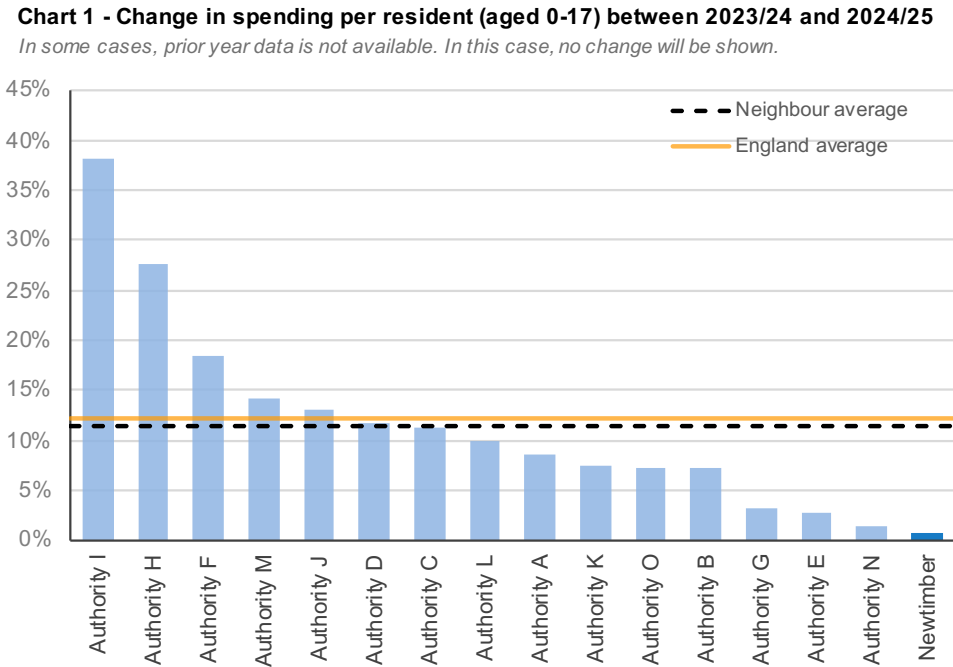
As shown above, Children Looked After accounted for the largest share of Newtimber's budgeted expenditure in 2024/25 (at 59.2% of the total).

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

Annual change in expenditure

Your authority's expenditure per resident (aged 0-17) increased by 0.8% in 2024/25. This compares to an average nearest neighbour increase of 11.4%, and an average England increase of 12.2%.

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



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

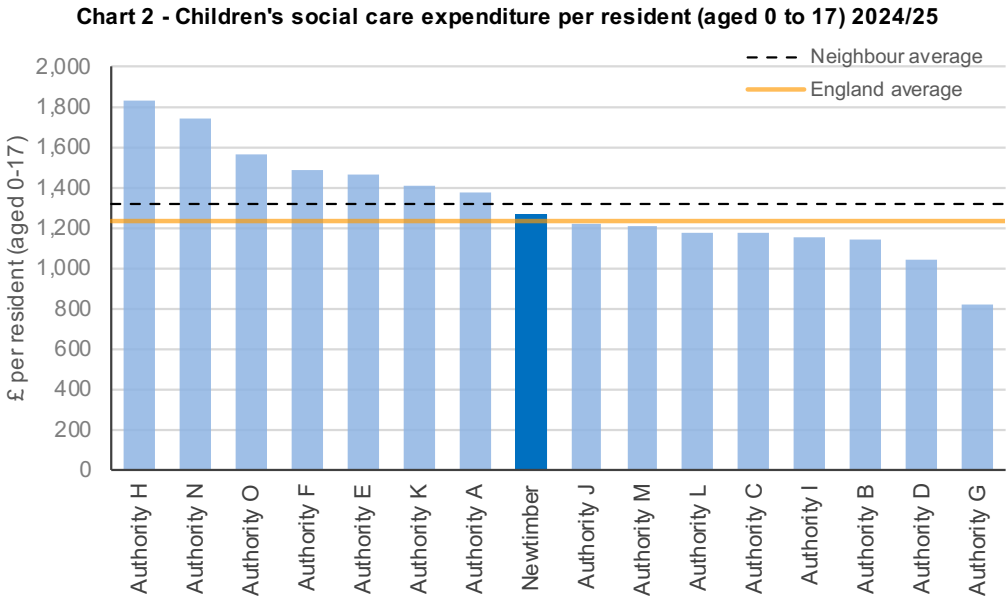
- An increase in budgeted expenditure of 1.7%; and
- An increase in residents (aged 0 to 17) of 0.9%.

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)

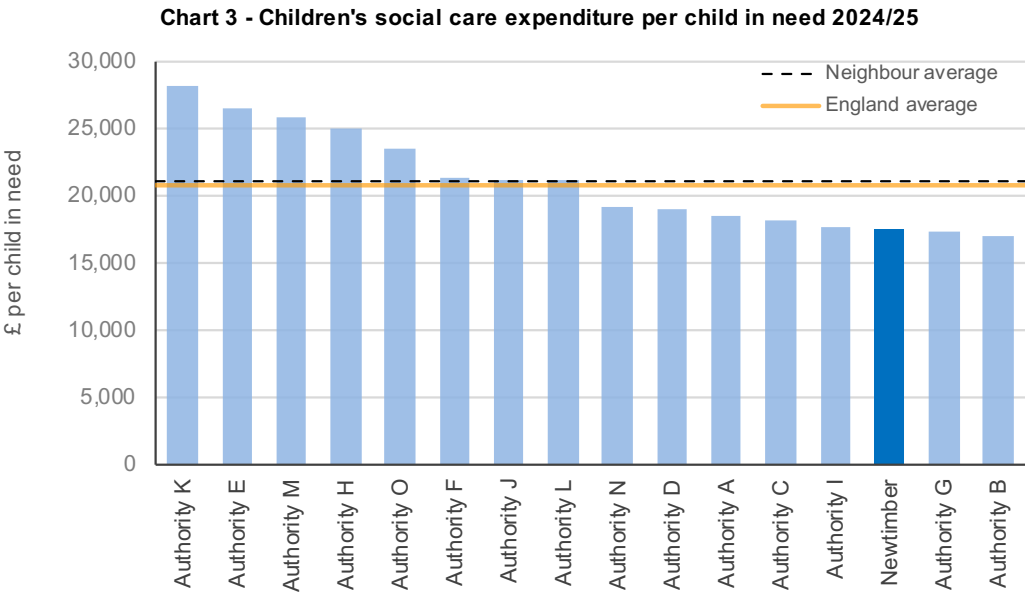
Your authority's expenditure per resident (aged 0 to 17) was 4.0% lower than the nearest neighbour average, and 2.6% higher than the England average. It was ranked 8th highest in the nearest neighbour group, and 56th highest nationally (out of 151 authorities).



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 2024/25, your authority's expenditure per child in need was 17.0% lower than the nearest neighbour average, and 15.8% lower than the England average. It was ranked 14th highest in the nearest neighbour group, and 109th highest nationally (out of 151 authorities).



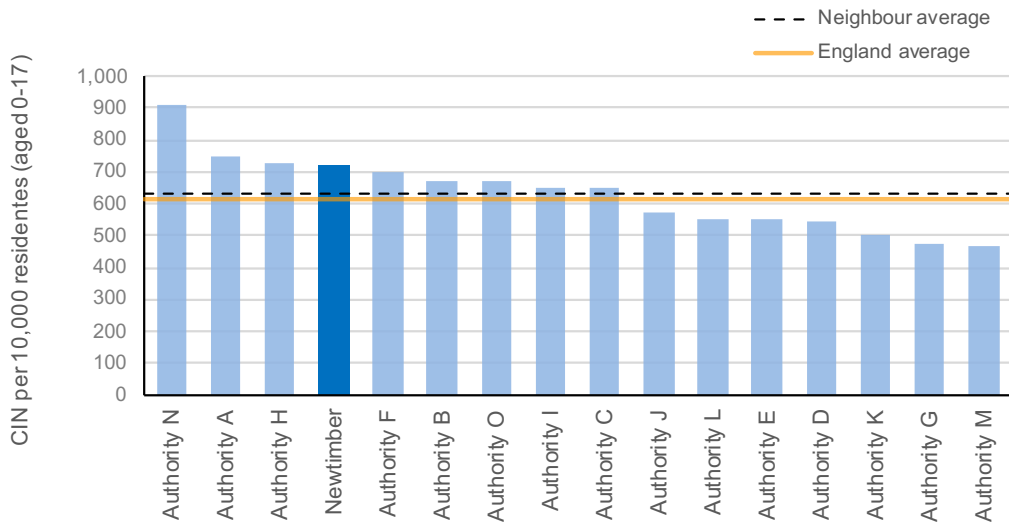
Note that expenditure per child in need could reflect differences in demand management between local authorities. For example, all else being equal, authorities that were more successful at preventing children with marginal needs from entering care could have a client group with more intensive care needs, 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 2024/25, Newtimber is projected to have 14.5% more children in need per 10,000 residents (aged 0-17) than the nearest neighbour average. This difference could reflect a greater-than-average level of need per resident; less restrictive demand management practices; or other factors.

Chart 4 - Projected children in need per 10,000 residents (aged 0-17) 2024/25



Compared to the England average, Newtimber is projected to have 17.7% more 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 within 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 £8.4m. This is shown in the table below. Setting its unit costs to the median would result in additional expenditure of £14.5m.

Table 3 - Notional savings relative to nearest neighbour benchmarks 2024/25

Notional savings  Additional expenditure

Service	Benchmark unit cost				
	Bottom 20%	Bottom 40%	Median	Top 40%	Top 20%
Safeguarding Children's Services	£6.4m	£1.0m	-£0.8m	-£4.1m	-£6.0m
Children Looked After	£3.7m	-£1.0m	-£4.5m	-£9.4m	-£17.4m
Other Children's and Families Services	£1.1m	£0.8m	£0.4m	£0.4m	£0.0m
Sure Start and Early Years	£0.4m	£0.0m	-£1.0m	-£3.2m	-£4.1m
Youth Justice	£0.0m	-£0.2m	-£0.4m	-£0.7m	-£1.2m
Services for Young People	-£1.0m	-£1.8m	-£1.9m	-£2.3m	-£3.2m
Family Support Services	-£2.2m	-£5.7m	-£6.3m	-£6.9m	-£10.6m
Total Notional Savings	£8.4m	-£6.8m	-£14.5m	-£26.2m	-£42.5m

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 17.0% lower than the nearest neighbour average, and 15.8% lower 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 2024/25

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 151)	
Children Looked After	64.392	76,260	85,535	-10.8%	11th	80,572	-5.4%	78th ●	Children looked after
Safeguarding Children's Services	26.810	4,314	4,353	-0.9%	9th	4,930	-12.5%	94th ●	Children in Need
Sure Start and Early Years	1.644	68	144	-52.8%	10th	156	-56.6%	105th ●	Residents (aged 0-4)
Services for Young People	0.000	0	59	-100.0%	16th	102	-100.0%	149th= ●	Residents (aged 13-19)
Family Support Services	9.871	1,588	2,579	-38.4%	14th	2,377	-33.2%	107th ●	Children in Need
Youth Justice	1.517	40	60	-33.1%	13th	50	-19.9%	84th ●	Residents (aged 10-17)
Other Children's and Families Services	1.152	185	147	26.5%	4th	460	-59.7%	59th ●	Children in Need
Asylum seekers	3.412								
Total Children's Social Care	108.798	17,505	21,100	-17.0%	14th	20,799	-15.8%	109th ●	Children in Need

Key:

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

4. Performance

A total of 19 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:

- 12th highest in the nearest neighbour group (out of 16 authorities); and
- 120th highest in England (out of 151 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

A rank of 1st denotes best performance							
Performance indicator	Nature	Your authority	Nearest Neighbour comparison		England comparison		
		Value	Avg.	Your rank	Avg.	Your rank	
Children looked after							
Stability of placements - children in the same placement for 2 or more years (percent)	▲	63.0	68.7	14th= / 16	67.1	118th= / 151	●
Stability of placements - children with 3 or more placements in the past year (percent)	▼	11.0	9.5	13th= / 16	10.5	79th= / 151	●
Children placed outside LA boundary and more than 20 miles from where they used to live (percent)	▼	13.0	18.5	5th= / 16	18.4	40th= / 151	●
Looked after children with at least one fixed term exclusion from school (percent)	▼	15.4	12.0	14th / 16	12.0	130th / 145	●
School sessions missed due to absences for children looked after (percent)	▼	7.6	8.0	9th= / 16	8.5	50th= / 151	●
Care leavers in education, employment or training (percent)	▲	57.0	50.1	2nd / 16	54.5	54th= / 150	●
Care leavers in suitable accommodation (percent)	▲	86.0	87.9	12th / 16	89.1	117th= / 150	●

Continued over page

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

Continued from previous page

Continued from previous page

Performance indicator	Nature	Your authority Value	Nearest Neighbour comparison		England comparison		
			Avg.	Your rank	Avg.	Your rank	
Safeguarding Children & Family Support							
Assessment of children referred to social care services carried out within 45 days (percent)	▲	83.8	80.0	5th / 16	83.9	75th / 150	●
Child protection conferences held within 15 days of initial enquiry (percent)	▲	83.5	79.8	6th / 16	80.0	62nd= / 150	●
Children becoming the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time (percent)	▼	27.2	24.8	11th / 16	24.5	106th= / 150	●
Children with child protection plans that were reviewed within required timescales (percent)	▲	89.3	90.7	11th / 16	91.0	103rd / 150	●
Child protection plans coming to an end which lasted more than two years (percent)	▼	7.1	5.1	8th / 11	4.4	107th / 127	●
Children in Need who are persistently absent from school (percent)	▼	45.7	49.6	6th / 16	48.7	40th / 151	●
Children in Need progress between Key Stages 2 and 4 (no. of grades above/below the England average)	▲	-1.7	-1.6	12th / 16	-1.6	94th= / 151	●
Sure Start & Early Years							
Children achieving a good level of development (percent)	▲	63.3	64.8	11th / 16	67.6	134th / 151	●
Young People's Services							
Young people not in education, employment or training (percent)	▼	3.0	3.8	7th / 16	3.2	75th= / 151	●
Under-18 conceptions, adjusted for deprivation (index)*	▼	113.9	106.0	12th / 16	100.0	106th / 150	●
Youth Justice							
First-time entrants to the youth justice system, ages 10-17, adjusted for deprivation (index)*	▼	81.6	95.4	8th / 16	99.9	49th / 147	●
Proportion of young offenders who re-offend, ages 15-17 (percent)	▼	31.7	31.1	10th / 16	31.1	79th / 151	●
Overall performance (weighted)**				12th / 16		119th / 150	●

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 (55% weighting), Safeguarding Children and Family Support (37%), Sure Start and Early Years (3%), Young People's Services (3%) and Youth Justice (2%).

Overall, Newtimber's performance is estimated as being higher than 21% 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.

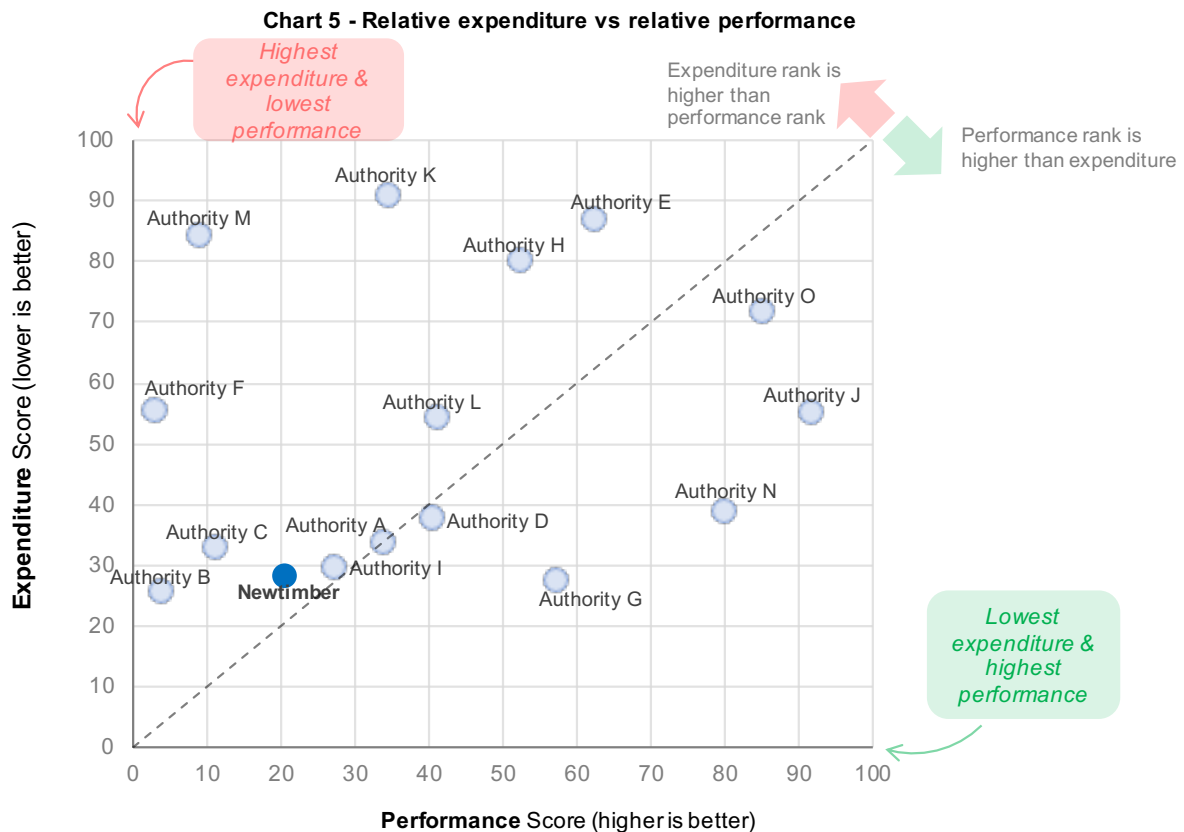
Expenditure and performance rankings

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 28% of all other authorities; and
- Your authority's average performance was higher than 21% 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.



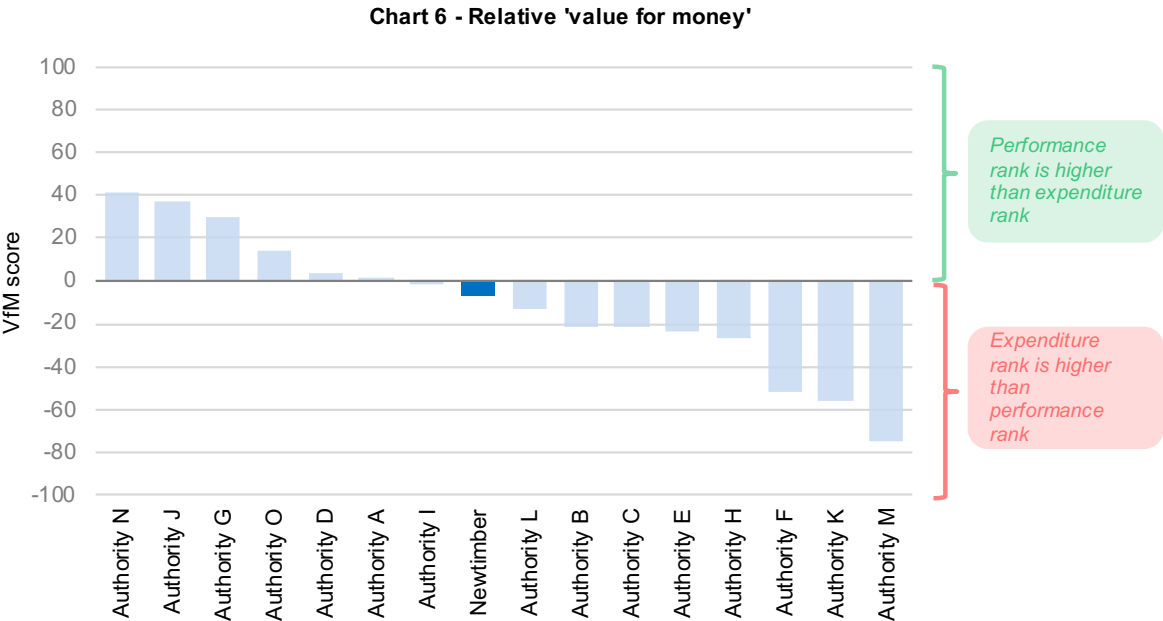
Relative value for money

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:

- 8th highest in the nearest neighbour group (out of 16 authorities); and
- 83rd highest in England (out of 151 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 2024.

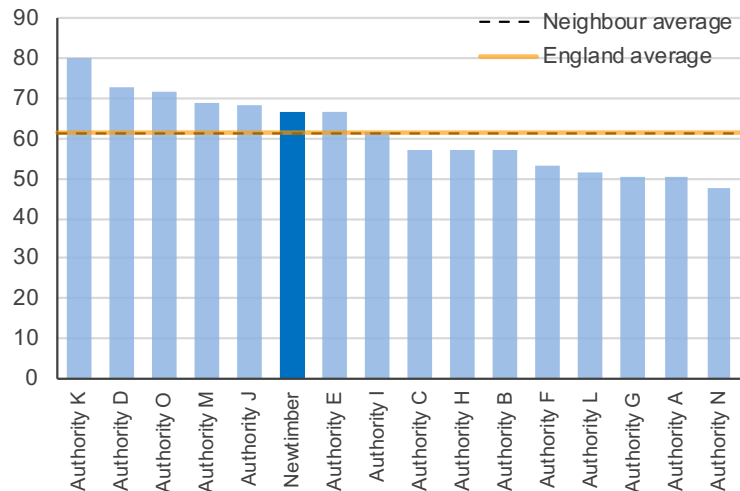
Staffing levels

In 2024, your authority had 66.5 social workers (FTE) per 1,000 children in need, including agency staff. This was higher than the nearest neighbour average of 61.2 social workers. It was ranked 6th highest in the nearest neighbour group, as illustrated in the accompanying chart.

Compared nationally, your authority's ratio was higher than the national average of 61.4 workers, and was ranked 48th highest out of 151 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 2024

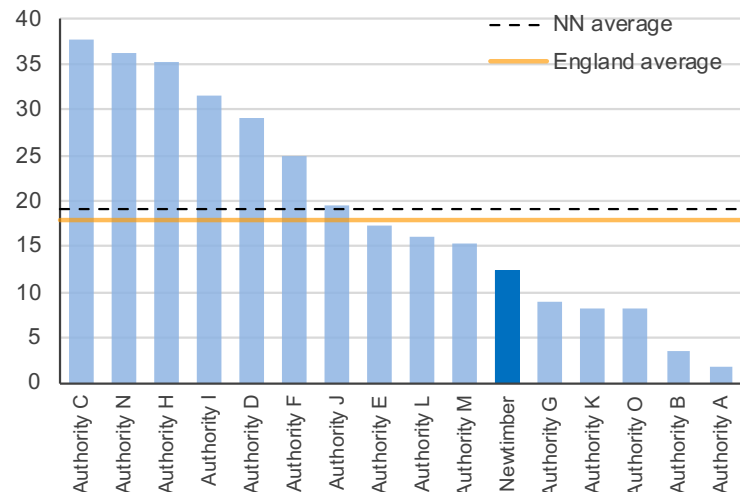


Vacancy rate

Your authority's vacancy rate for children's social care workers was 12.3%, lower than the nearest neighbour average of 19.1%. It was ranked 11th highest in the group.

Its vacancy rate was lower than the England average of 17.9%, and was ranked 103rd highest out of 151 authorities.

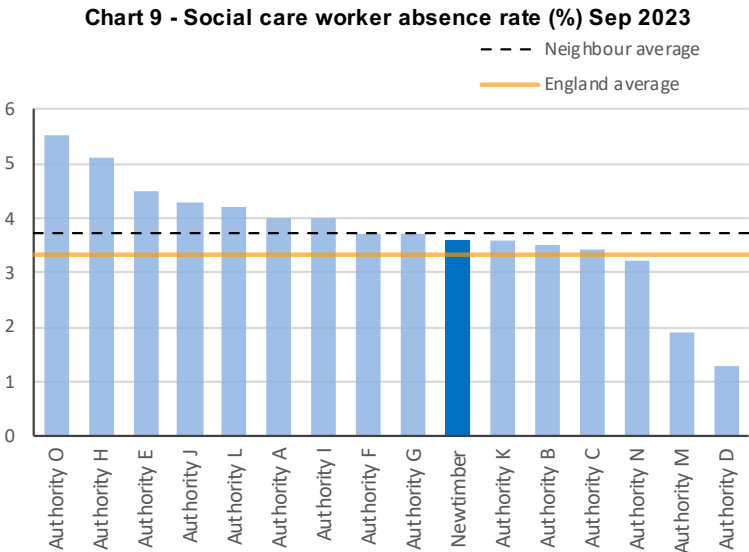
Chart 8 - Social care worker vacancies (%) Sep 2024



Absence rate

Your authority's absence rate for social care workers was 3.6%, lower than the nearest neighbour average of 3.7%. It was ranked 10th highest in the group.

Its absence rate was higher than the England average of 3.3%. It was ranked 49th highest out of 151 authorities.



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 2023/24, projected forward to 2024/25 in line with population growth (aged 0-17)
Children Looked After	Children looked after any time in the year in 2023/24, projected forward to 2024/25 in line with population growth (ages 0-17)
Residents (various age bands)	Projected for June 2024 (2018-based)

Performance Indicators	Latest Data
Stability of placements - children in the same placement for 2 or more years (percent)	At 31 March 2024
Stability of placements - children with 3 or more placements in the past year (percent)	At 31 March 2024
Children placed outside LA boundary and more than 20 miles from where they used to live (percent)	At 31 March 2024
Looked after children with at least one fixed term exclusion from school (percent)	Year ending 31 March 2022
School sessions missed due to absences for children looked after (percent)	Year ending 31 March 2023
Care leavers in education, employment or training (percent)	Year to March 2024
Care leavers in suitable accommodation (percent)	Year to March 2024
Assessment of children referred to social care services carried out within 45 days (percent)	Year to 31 March 2024
Child protection conferences held within 15 days of initial enquiry (percent)	Year to 31 March 2024
Children becoming the subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time (percent)	Year to 31 March 2024
Children with child protection plans that were reviewed within required timescales (percent)	Year to 31 March 2024
Child protection plans coming to an end which lasted more than two years (percent)	Year to 31 March 2024
Children in Need who are persistently absent from school (percent)	As at 31 March 2023
Children in Need progress between Key Stages 2 and 4 (no. of grades above/below the England average)	As at 31 March 2023
Children achieving a good level of development (percent)	Year to March 2024
Young people not in education, employment or training (percent)	March 2024
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 2023
Proportion of young offenders who re-offend, ages 15 -17 (percent)	Year to 31 March 2023