

# Q4 Resources and Central Services Performance Report

## Executive Summary

### Going Well

#### Housing Benefit Processing

In quarter 4 the average time to process Housing Benefits new claims was 24.27 days, this is a significant improvement of 19.38 days on the quarter 3 performance of 43.65 days, this improvement is a result of the service having cleared their backlog from the system convergence in quarter 3. Although the current performance is still above the corporate target of 20 days, the service is performing within the 30 day DWP target.

An improvement in performance has occurred from quarter 3 for the average time to process Housing Benefit change of circumstances, in quarter 4 the average processing time was 5.04 days, an improvement of 6.33 days to the quarter 3 average of 11.37 days.

#### Council Tax Reduction Processing

In quarter 4, the average time to process Council Tax Reduction (CTR) new claims was 35.21 days, an improvement of 8.44 days to the quarter 3 average of 40.58 days. The current target for new CTR claims is 23 days. The service continues to ensure claims are processed quickly despite the increased national roll out of the migration of legacy benefits to Universal Credit which prevents a new claim being processed in less than 30 days for all working age claims.

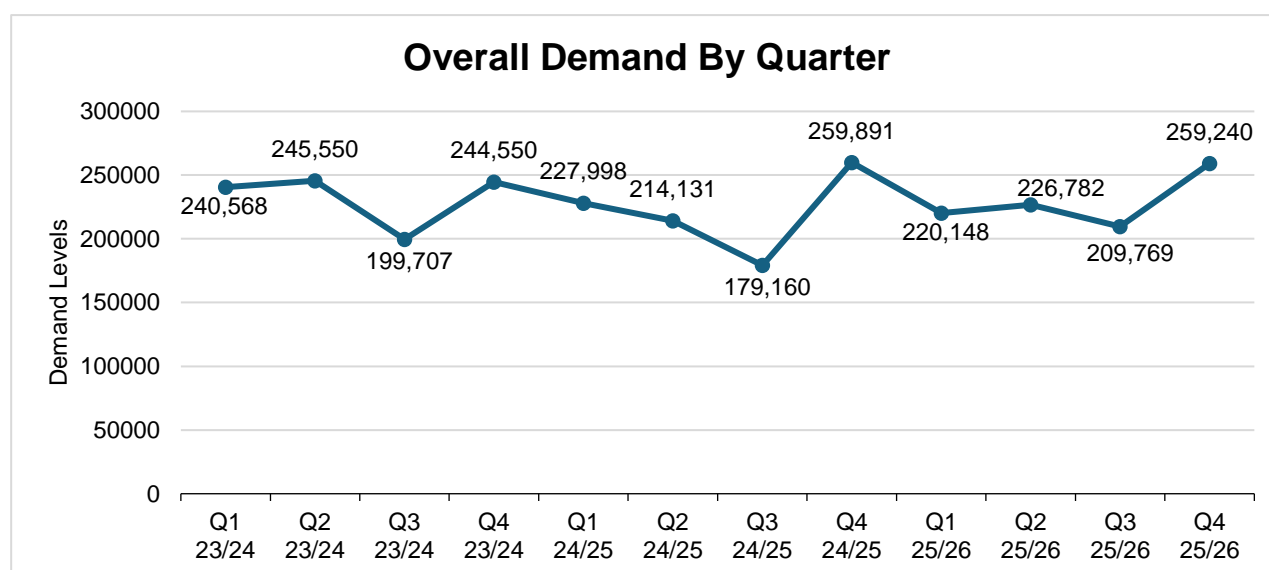
# Resources and Central Services

## Central Services

### Customer, Revenue and Benefits

#### Customer Services

Across all the channels into the Council, there has been an increase in demand in quarter 4 by 24%<sup>1</sup> compared to quarter 3. This was expected given that quarter 3 is the councils quietest quarter of the year. Quarter 4 saw annual billing and Garden waste licences launch which always drives demand, as usual quarter 4 was the busiest quarter this year, which is a typical trend each year given the large-scale business as usual communications that occur.



The top 5 demands for calls into the council in quarter 4 by service area are: -

- Revenues
- Bin's, Recycling and Waste
- Social Care
- Housing and homelessness
- Roads, Parking and Travel

However, the top 5 demands for the customer service function in quarter 4 by service area are: -

- Bin's, Recycling and Waste
- Social Care
- Housing and homelessness
- Roads, Parking and Travel
- Revenues

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<sup>1</sup> Please note social care emails were added to demand from Q4 2024/25, these figures have not previously been reported in the data

- **Bins, recycling, and waste** was the highest demanding service area into customer services, demand significantly increased for the service compared to quarter 3. This is due to the large-scale communication regarding the recommencement of the garden waste licence subscriptions from January; this prompts demand into the call centre for residents to purchase their licence. The service also saw the impact of the storms and severe weather experienced this quarter which impact upon rounds and subsequently missed collections as a result. These are both in addition to the business-as-usual demand for the service.
- **Roads, Parking and Travel** was the fifth highest demanding service area for calls, and the fourth highest demanding service area in customer services, this is always expected when storms and snow and ice occur. This quarter we experienced two storms, and just over a week of snow and ice which all prompt calls for this service especially around winter gritting.
- **Revenues** was the highest demanding service area for calls though the 0300 number, but the fifth highest demanding service area in customer services. The volume of calls into the 0300 number was expected as the service completed one final SMS reminder run prior to the end of the year for collections and also saw annual billing. This always drives calls for the service in March as a result, the service however handles the majority of their calls, which is why the service has reduced to the fifth position in customer service for demand but the top position for overall demand into the council this quarter.

### Customer Demand by Channel

Quarter 4 has seen overall customer demand remain consistent to the same period in 2024/25.

Channel	Q4 2024/25 Demand by Channel	Q4 2025/26 Demand by Channel	% Difference in 2025/26 to 2024/25
Telephony	165,857	173,854	+ 4.8%
E-mail	59,221	52,230 <sup>2</sup>	-11.8%
Face to Face	19,282	18,798	-2.5%
Contact Us On-line Enquiry	15,531	14,358	-7.6%
<b>Total Number of Contacts</b>	259,891	259,240 <sup>2</sup>	-0.3%

In quarter 4, phone demand increased compared to the same period last year with both online and face to face demand decreasing. Due to some missing email data this quarter from two areas, it is likely the extent of the decline in email figures is not as great as reported. These areas have now moved onto the new Netcall system so this will mitigate future missing data in quarterly reports.

The decrease in face-to-face interactions can be linked to a significant decrease in footfall for January compared to the same period last year. This decline can be linked to Benefits footfall, specifically household support fund footfall. Last year Household support fund phase 6 core award was live for the 8 January 2025 – 13 February 2025, whereas in this financial year it was in quarter 3 when the Household Support Fund scheme was live hence the decline in demand. February and March have a similar footfall figure to the previous year.

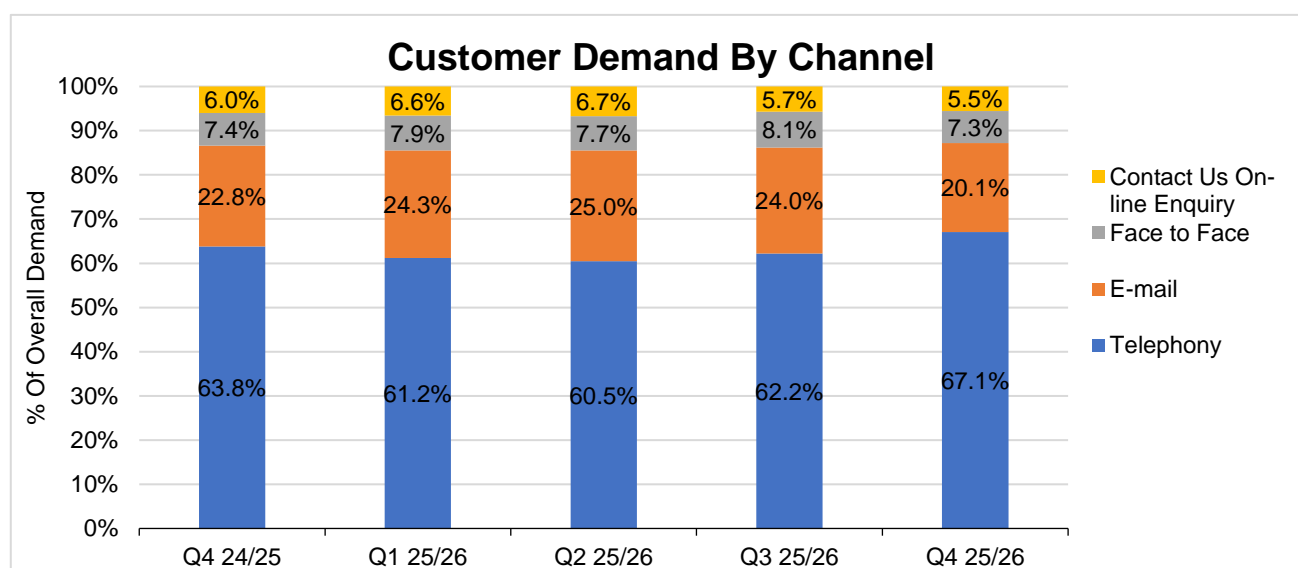
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<sup>2</sup> For two areas there is missing data for emails over some periods, we recognise that further work needs to be undertaken with customer services moving forward to ensure the accuracy of the face to face and email data. In the future the new Customer relationship management system (CRM) will help to mitigate the risk of human error when logging information for emails.

Similar to quarter 3, telephony demand has increased compared to the same period last year, this is the second time in the last seven quarters where this has occurred. It is likely the rise in telephony demand is for a combination of both the bad weather at the start of the year, and this being the first year of annual billing from one system. This is the first time in the last seven quarters where 'Contact Us' online form has not continued to evidence growth compared to the previous quarter, it is unclear why this demand declined compared to the previous year, but last year did see a rise in contact us for second home additional charges, which did not occur to the same extent this year.

As shown in the table above, telephone contact remained the most used channel in quarter 4, with 173,854 interactions. This was followed by online channels (email and web forms) at 66,588, and face-to-face interactions at 18,798. Telephony accounted for 67.1% of total demand—up 4.9% from quarter 3—while face-to-face declined to 7.3 % (down 0.8%) and online channels decreased to 25.6% (down 4.1%).

In quarter 4 of 2024/25 the service saw Household Support Fund phase 6, Revenues reminders, annual billing, Garden waste launch for the year, two storms and one week of snow and ice. This year the service has seen two storms, snow and ice at the beginning of the year, Revenues reminders and annual billing, although the main impact the final two factors was seen within the revenues service due to the change in call routing which was implemented in quarter 2 of 2025/26. The service also implemented a new call system on Monday 16 March, but this change did not impact the customer but was a significant project within the service this quarter.



Overall demand increased compared to quarter 3, the graph above shows that similar to quarter 3 the proportion of telephony demand grew compared to the previous quarter. The face to face proportion of overall demand declined as expected given quarter 3 had a higher proportion of face to face contact for household support fund phase 7. The graph also shows that in quarter 4 of 2024/25, the proportion of call demand was also higher, which could evidence a trend over quarter 4, but this will continue to be monitored. Similar to quarter 3 the graph is evidencing the impact of specific communications to customer channel preference, which has then counteracted the improvement of proportional online demand growth seen in quarter 1 and 2 of this year. The comparison shown in the graph is limited to quarter 4 of 2024/25, as these periods are consistent with the current email reporting, making it the only valid comparison for this quarter's data.

The telephone calls answered in 4 mins (KPI) in quarter 4 2025/26 and the average speed of answer KPI have both seen an improvement in telephone performance compared to quarter 4 2024/25 in the front-line teams.

Performance by month for front line queues- **% of calls answered in 4 mins**

Month	Q4 2024/25 % of calls answered in 4 mins	Q4 2025/26 % of calls answered in 4 mins	% Difference in 2024/25 to 2025/26
January	83.09%	94.31%	+11.22%
February	84.22%	94.24%	+10.02%
March (1 <sup>st</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup> )	76.02%	92.94%	+16.92%
March (16 <sup>th</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup> )	80.90%	93.00%	+12.10%
<b>Q4 Overall</b>	<b>81.94%</b>	<b>94.02%<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>+12.08%</b>

Performance by month for front line queues- Average Speed of Answer  
(- difference is a quicker average, a + difference is a longer average)

Month	Q4 2024/25 % average speed of answer (mm:ss)	Q4 2025/26 % average speed of answer (mm:ss)	% Difference in 2024/25 to 2025/26 (mm:ss)
January	01:38	00:38	- 01:00
February	01:31	00:40	-00:51
March (1 <sup>st</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup> )	02:20	00:48	-01:32
March (16 <sup>th</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup> )	01:54	00:48	-01:06
<b>Q4 Overall</b>	<b>01:45</b>	<b>00:41<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>-01:04</b>

This improvement in performance is likely due to converged services becoming shared calls. Converged services are created when separate services are brought together and delivered as a single, integrated service. In practice, this means all agents are trained and able to handle these call types, increasing the total resource available and reducing waiting times. This is especially prevalent around revenues call demand, where now the service handle most of their demand, whereas last year this was dealt with by some of the former localities, which skewed the data for the quarter as these periods always reduced call performance. This quarter 96.25% of calls were handled, this is compared to 90.66% in quarter 4 2024/25, further evidencing the improvement in call performance from the same period last year.

	Q4 2024/25 Social Care Demand	Q4 2025/26 Social Care Demand	% Difference in 2024/25 to 2025/26
Call Demand	19,090	19,031	-0.31%
Email Demand	16,563	18,200	+9.88%
<b>Total Demand</b>	<b>35,653</b>	<b>37,231</b>	<b>+4.43%</b>

In quarter 4 2025/26 demand for social care has increased compared to the same period in the previous year, call demand accounted for 51% of overall demand, compared to 54% for 2024/25, but the overall call volume was similar to the previous year. Email demand however is higher this year compared to last year which may be a sign of changing behaviours of customers accessing the service, but this will be monitored moving forward as the service have both citizen customers and professional customers, so it may only be a changing behaviour from one of these sections. There was an improvement in call performance compared to the previous year, this trend has been consistent across the last seven quarters which has resulted in the proportion of call work to decline within the service compared to the previous

<sup>3</sup> This figure is for 1 January 2026 to 15 March 2026, due to the system change on Monday 16 March the remaining days of March cannot be combined into the report.

period. It is also important to note that out of hours York social care calls are through a separate queue so have been removed out of the social care call figure from 17 July 2025 so call figures for true North Yorkshire social care are likely higher in quarter 4 of 2025/26 to 2024/25.

### Impacts On Customer Service This Quarter

Customer service has seen multiple factors influence service demand; these are.

**Garden Waste:** Garden Waste licenses launched to residents on Wednesday 14 January 2026. Customer services provided support to the waste service to answer calls from residents for their subscriptions. The service has received 10,296 calls and handled 99.41% of these calls from 14 January 2026 to 31 March 2026. The queue is a shared call queue meaning all staff can handle these calls at first point of contact, and subsequently performance was high for this call type. This was the second year that the service was harmonised across all former areas. Over the same period last year, we received 14,056 calls for garden green waste, and the scheme opened 17 days later last year on 31 January. Therefore, this year there has been a decline in calls for the service by 3,760 calls with handling remaining consistent.

**Revenues:** In quarter 4 the Revenues service issued SMS reminders in February and annual billing in March. Whilst these are both business-as-usual communication within the service, the customer services team handle four call types for the service, with one of these being payments. Therefore, the impact of these communications can be seen in terms of call volumes down the shared customer service council tax queue on the weeks they were issued. However, the impact of these communications is not as great on customer service as in the same period last year as the service now handle the majority of their calls.

In quarter 4 customer services received 9,892 calls for council tax and handled 99.15% of these, this is continuing to highlight the benefit of converging systems for the customer journey as since the convergence in quarter 2, handling in customer services for council tax calls has always been over 99%. This quarter saw a rise of 632 calls for the service into customer services; this rise was expected as annual billing is a communication to every resident.

**Weather:** During quarter 4 there were two named storms: Storm Goretti (8–9 January 2026) and Storm Chandra (26–27 January 2026), bringing snow, strong winds and heavy rain. In addition, widespread snow and ice affected North Yorkshire from 2–11 January 2026, with the main impact in Scarborough, though disruption was felt countywide, including some road closures. Periods of severe weather led to increased demand on customer services, particularly during weekdays. Impacts included disrupted bin collections and higher volumes of calls relating to waste, housing repairs, roads, flooding and fallen trees, both in and out of hours. Snowfall immediately after Christmas caused a significant rise in waste-related calls, as households had increased waste levels and some collections were delayed, extending post-Christmas disruption and further driving call demand.

### Out Of Hours Calls

This quarter Customer Services have continued to take flooding, homelessness, housing repair and BATA calls through the 0300 number out of hours. Customer Service have received 487 homelessness calls, 76 flooding calls, 19 BATA calls and 974 housing repair calls, this is a total of 1,556 calls this quarter for these four out of hours services. From 16 March the BATA calls are coming into the housing repairs out of hours queue. Handling for these four call types out of hours was 94.15%. Compared to quarter 3 there was an additional 37 calls this quarter and handling rates were consistent. These calls are in addition to the social care out of hours calls and out of hours York calls that are handled by the same advisors.

The out of hours York calls were separated into a new call queue from 17 July 2025, and received 1,608 calls this quarter, with a 94.84% handling rate. This is a 10% rise in calls to the previous quarter but handling rates remained consistent.

### New Phone System

During the quarter, Customer Services implemented a new call handling system using Netcall, shared with Revenues and Benefits. The system went live on Monday 16 March at 8am, introducing a consistent way of managing calls and emails across Customer Services. In quarter 1, the aim is for all former locality customer service emails to be fully managed through this system.

The new system includes a callback option, allowing customers to retain their place in the queue, improving the customer experience. Further phases of the project will expand how the system is used. Implementation required service-wide training to ensure staff confidence in handling calls and emails. In quarter 4, Customer Service Officers completed 1,227 hours and 35 minutes of training, supported by additional service capacity.

The project was delivered through a cross-directorate approach involving multiple teams, including Revenues and Benefits. The system was implemented successfully with no negative impact on customers, and the project remains ongoing to support continuous improvement.

## On-line Demand

### Website usage

	Q4 24/25	Q4 25/26
<b>Total page views</b>	4,908,899	4,628,130 (-6%)
<b>Active users</b>	1,037,041	1,063,521 (+3%)

Q4 24/25		Q4 25/26	
Bin collection calendar	345,432	Bin collection calendar	355,506
Location checker	268,607	Road cameras and weather conditions	266,160
Check your bin collection day (look-up)	254,018	Check your bin collection day (look-up)	243,297
Check your bin/recycling collection day	227,244	Check your bin/recycling collection day	171,874
Road cameras and weather conditions	149,270	Garden waste collections	101,848
Garden waste collections	127,876	View/comment on planning apps	88,521
Bins, recycling and waste	96,584	View/comment on local planning apps	87,566
School term and holiday dates	91,279	School term and holiday dates	87,229
Contact us	83,491	Search for a job vacancy	83,654
Council tax	58,491	Council tax	69,725

Web page views were down 6% for quarter 4 when compared with the previous year, having grown by over 10%, year-on-year, for the previous three quarters. The decline this quarter compared to the same period last year is likely as a result of the severe winter weather that occurred in January 2025 pushing page views for that period much higher than usual. Despite page views being down this quarter, active users were up compared with last year, suggesting that use of our site is continuing to grow and the drop in views was as a result of a temporary situation rather than part of a trend.

However, in Q4 2026 there were significantly more views of the road cameras page compared to Q4 2025. While winter weather this year was for a much shorter period, there was more snow, resulting in road closures.

Other pages, such as council tax, planning and jobs, received more views than same period last year, giving confidence that the growth on the site we have seen for the last three quarters is continuing when the impact of the weather is discounted.

### Major work

1,888 updates were completed during quarter 4. While this is for all sites managed by the team, as well as the staff intranet, around 90% of requests relate to the corporate site. Major work during the quarter included:

- updating hundreds of fees across the website ahead of price changes going live on 1 April
- home to school transport content was completely rewritten in time for national offer day
- a major project began to add service area classifications to the meta data of all pages on the website. This will enable the Customer Programme to include the website when reporting across channels as well as help the new AI chatbot more easily find answers for residents
- work continuing on the ongoing transformation of housing content, finalising the affordable homes content and reviewing rough sleeper content
- full rewrite of HWRC content ahead of the new permit scheme launching in April
- full rewrite of the DBS guidance ahead of the new system launch, including walkthrough content for the system, currently still in the process of going live
- Crisis and Resilience Fund content built and launched at short notice, rewriting Household Support Fund content, which this scheme replaced, as well as additional fuel help and crisis payments content

### Feedback

Throughout the quarter we received 1,787 responses to our feedback survey on webpages. February saw the highest levels of feedback during quarter 4 due to the snow, although the increase was quite evenly split between complaints about service disruption and compliments for the work we were doing to help.

Outside of this, the general themes in the remaining feedback across the quarter continue to relate to issues we hope will be handled by ongoing or upcoming transformation projects:

- requests for garden waste dates on the bin calendar which people currently only get access to once they've signed up
- inconsistent offer around what goes in which bin
- difficulties with the planning system (and potential confusion over the location checker)
- reliability / existence of information on the road closure map
- reliability of car parking information

### Household Support Fund (HSF) and Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF)

The seventh phase of Household Support Fund has now concluded at the end of quarter 4. The DWP funded programme aims to support those most in need or crisis with significantly rising living costs in 2025/26. In line with the scheme guidelines and the agreed eligibility framework and delivery plan, 26,270 households across North Yorkshire were identified for a direct award in the form of a £190 shopping voucher to support them over the winter months. The direct award window was live between 8 October 2025 – 12 November 2025, of which 95.4% of the eligible cohort redeemed their voucher, within this phase the eligible cohort criteria was expanded to include residents who received 75% to 100% of council tax reduction as of 1 September 2025. The cohort continues to encompass families, pensioners and working age adult households.

This scheme is delivered in a combined cross directorate approach, where customer service handles all phone calls initially. Customer services help customers redeem their vouchers and answer general queries, but more complex queries are passed through to the Welfare and Benefits Service. This year there has also been a communication campaign promoting Pension Credit uptake within the scheme. This entailed incorporating a Pension Credit leaflet to all household support fund eligible recipients and a more targeted communication to those who identified to be eligible for Pension Credit but not claiming the benefit throughout December and into quarter 4. To ensure the support was available to these residents upon receipt of this communication, the welfare and benefits, customer services and the income

maximisation teams worked together to provide this service. The income maximisation team received over 300 calls, of which 141 customers who rang were eligible for pension credit, as a result 129 residents have claimed for the benefit, and 1 customer is still being worked with. In total this has resulted in an annual figure of £368,294.16 of pension credit being claimed collectively for these 129 residents. In addition to the pension credit impact, the income maximisation team also identified a further 102 benefits not being claimed by residents who called that they were entitled to, further supporting the pension age cohort on lower incomes.

The Household support fund scheme finished on 31 March 2026. The scheme has been replaced by the Crisis and Resilience Fund scheme which will run from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029. This scheme also encompasses what was previously discretionary housing payments, which are now called Housing payments in this scheme. The scheme focusses on supporting low-income households who encounter crisis (financial shock) and providing support to build financial resilience amongst both individuals and communities to prevent future needs for crisis support. An additional amendment was added to help low income households who are dependent on oil to deliver their energy.

## Welfare and Benefits Service

### Housing Benefit Processing

In quarter 4 the average time to process Housing Benefits new claims was 24.27 days, this is a significant improvement of 19.38 days on the quarter 3 performance of 43.65 days, this improvement is a result of the service having cleared their backlog from the system convergence in quarter 3 so are working on their current work. Although the current performance is still above the corporate target of 20 days, the service are performing within the 30 day DWP target.

An improvement in performance has occurred from quarter 3 for the average time to process Housing Benefit change of circumstances, in quarter 4 the average processing time was 5.04 days, an improvement of 6.33 days to the quarter 3 average of 11.37 days. The change of circumstances average for Housing Benefit is slightly skewed in quarter 4 due to the service being notified of annual rent and benefit uprating changes for the new financial year, this occurs in every quarter 4.

Compared to quarter 4 of 2024/25, there was an improvement to the speed of processing new housing benefit claims by 3.32 days but a slight decline in the speed to process change of circumstances by 2.26 days.

The service and the DWP continue to meet regularly to monitor the Housing Benefit performance of the service.

### Council Tax Reduction Processing

In quarter 4, the average time to process Council Tax Reduction (CTR) new claims was 35.21 days, an improvement of 8.44 days to the quarter 3 average of 40.58 days. The current target for new CTR claims is 23 days. The average time to process CTR change of circumstances has also improved from 3.11 days in quarter 3 to 2.6 days in quarter 4, this is under the current target of 6 days. This improvement is as a result of the service entering this quarter with universal credit files up to date following the closedown period of the system convergence, meaning changes and new claims could be worked as they were received. The service continues to ensure claims are processed quickly despite the increased national roll out of the migration of legacy benefits to Universal Credit which prevents a new claim being processed in less than 30 days for all working age claims, the service target for new claims needs to be reviewed for the new year due to the impact of the UC migration.

Compared to quarter 4 of 2024/25, there was a decline to the speed of processing new CTR claims by 6.31 days, this could be contributed to the fact all working age CTR claims are now through UC, but an improvement in the speed to process change of circumstances by 0.75 days.

## Revenues Service

The collection of Council Tax and Business Rates for North Yorkshire Council has a major part to play in the overall financial stability of the Council.

	Q4 2024/25	Q4 2025/26	% Difference in 2025/26 to 2024/25	Q4 2024/25 Collected	Q4 2025/26 Collected
<b>Council Tax</b>	97.56%	96.69%	-0.87%	£553,564,066	£602,885,721
<b>Business Rates</b>	97.93%	96.83%	-1.10%	£209,468,299	£229,223,716

### Council Tax

The total annual Council Tax liability for 2025/26 is £621,975,071, with a collection rate of 96.69% at for the year. This leaves £19,089,350 still to be collected. This year there was an increase of £54,579,151 to be collected compared to the liability for last year, whilst the service has seen a slight decline compared to last year for the yearly collection rate, the service has collected in monetary terms more money than the previous year.

The slight dip in the collection rate from 97.56% for last year is largely due to the successful convergence of seven legacy Revenues and Benefits systems into a single, streamlined platform. As a result of the system being down whilst converging and then a backlog of work which has now been worked through, the service did not do the scale of recovery reminder cycles as they would typically in a year which will have also had an impact on collection rates. The service did however do an SMS reminder run in February to help with collection rates for the year. It is also worth noting that whilst the collection rate being down this year can be partly attributed to the successful system convergence, the cost-of-living impact has also influenced collection rates. Collection rates for 2025/26 from neighbouring authorities, have remained in the region of 91 – 97% which is similar to 2024/25, only one neighbouring authority out of five saw an improvement of collection rates to the previous year.

Despite these short-term adjustments, the new system lays a solid foundation for improved efficiency and consistency in future collection activity. Throughout 2026/27 the service is now in a strong position to recommence a full year's recovery cycle.

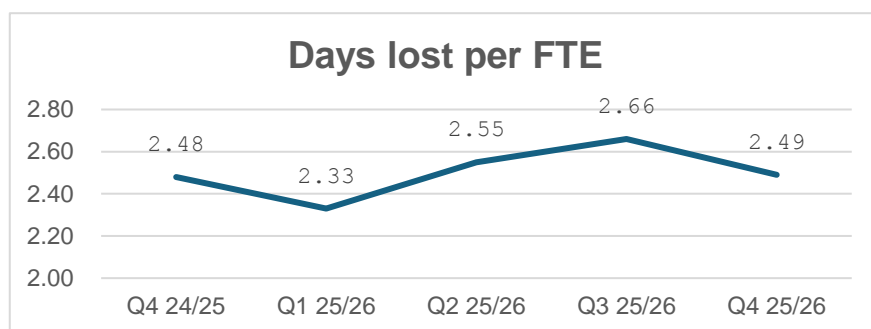
### Business Rates

The total annual Business Rates liability for 2025/26 is £236,671,944, with a collection rate of 96.83% for 2025/26. This leaves £7,448,228 still to be collected. While this is higher than the £4,435,695 outstanding at the same point in 2024/25, it reflects a £22.7 million increase in overall liability—an expected outcome as the tax base continues to grow.

Although the collection rate has dipped slightly from 97.93% for 2024/25, this is largely due to the successful convergence of legacy systems, which temporarily paused recovery cycles and limited the ability to issue reminders. The backlog of work from the system convergence has been addressed and the service are now in an improved position for the new year and to have normal recovery cycles.

It is important to note that Business Rates collection patterns are naturally more variable than Council Tax, as they depend on the payment schedules of organisations with large liabilities. Additionally, changes to rateable values on major assessments can cause fluctuations in collection figures.

## Human Resources

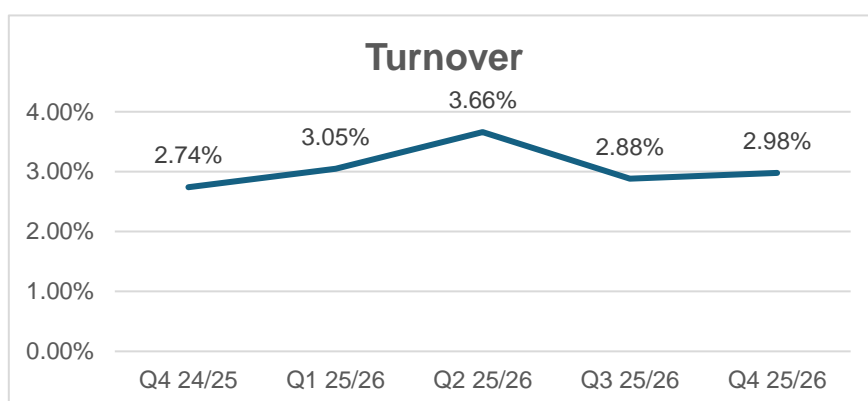


quarters rolling figure (10.01).

The highest number of days lost by absence reason for Q4 are Mental Health (32.7%), Musculoskeletal (23.5%) and Chest and Respiratory (8.9%). Mental health absence remains the highest cause, however, has reduced in days lost from over 7,500 lost days in Q3, to just over 7000 in Q4. There is increasing management focus on sickness absence, both reporting accurately and intervention, which has impacted on absence.

### Turnover

Q4 turnover (316 leavers, 2.98%) is a slight increase on Q3 25/26 (305, 2.88%), and an increase on Q4 24/25 (289, 2.74%). The rolling full year turnover rate 12.6%, a slight increase on the full year turnover for 24/25 (12.1%), but still within a healthy 10-13% range.



### Agency Spend

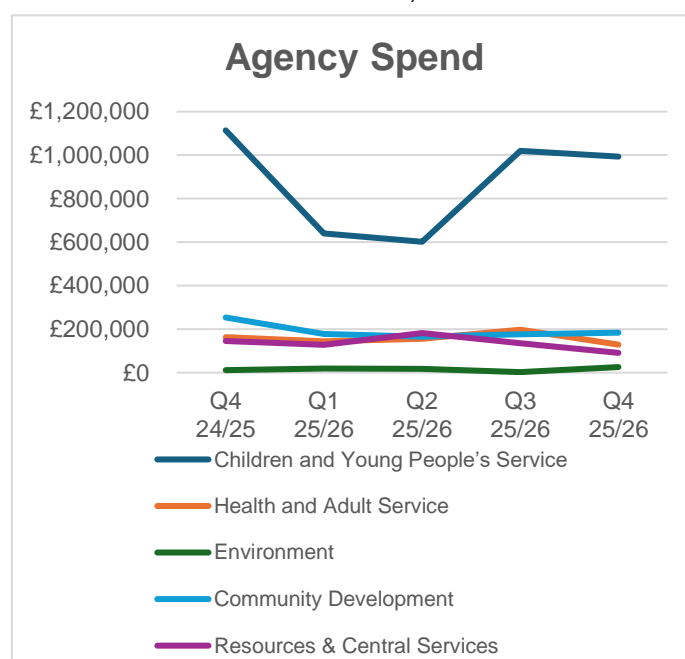
Total agency spend for Q4 25/26 was £1,442,703. A decrease of £88,692 compared to Q3 25/26 (£1,531,395). Compared to Q4 24/25 (£1,687,521) there has been a reduction of £244,818.

Agency spend for Children and Young People's service accounts for 69% of total agency spend. Whilst their total agency spend for the year was £3,253,863, this is a reduction of £650k on the full year figure for 24/25 (£3,901,157). Spend is principally on Education Psychologists, with the continued demand for assessments and national shortage of professionals in this field, Senior Children's Resource Centre Workers and Social Workers.

HAS agency spend has reduced by more than a third this quarter to £128,816 and the service is now fully staffed, with no further care worker agency spend expected. Agency spend has increased slightly in Community to £184,198, with spend in Planning (£115k) and Harrogate Convention Centre (£57k).

### Apprenticeship Update

2025/26 has seen significant reform of apprenticeships and how organisations can use their levy. There has been a clear re-prioritisation of the Apprenticeship Levy towards skills development for younger people, and this continues with the:



### Sickness Absence

Excluding schools, the Q4 days lost per FTE (2.49) is down on Q3 25/26 (2.66) and is comparable to Q4 24/25 (2.48). Including schools the Q4 full workforce figure (2.49) is down on Q3 25/26 (2.65), and up on Q4 24/25 (2.34).

The rolling full year figure is 10.03 days lost per FTE which is a very small increase on the previous

- de-funding of a further 16 apprenticeship standards (many management related standards)
- reduction in time available to spend the funds (down from 24 months to 12)
- Age restrictions for some newly approved apprenticeships
- Introduction of Apprenticeship Units
- Expansion of Foundation Apprenticeships

16 apprenticeships have been identified for de-funding from September this year including Operations Manager, Lead Practitioner in Adult Care and Cleaning Hygiene Operative. Operations Manager will be a particular loss as the starts were steadily increasing, particularly in schools as our school specialist provider embedded the School Leadership NLP qualifications into the apprenticeship. The Government has also limited the number of starts providers are allowed so this will further impact our ability to meet all of our current needs. Existing apprentices will continue to be funded until completion.







We will also have less time available to spend the funds with the expiry limit reducing from 24 months to 12 months which means that we will not only have less to spend our levy funds on but less time to spend them, therefore increasing the amount expired back to Government each month. Over the last 12 months the average expired funds was approx. £57,000 per month. The Administration Assistant L2 Apprenticeship will be available from August this year but will be age restricted and only available to those under the age of 25 at the start. This is the first full apprenticeship to be age restricted from the point of approval.

Apprenticeship Units are short, flexible training courses designed to upskill staff in critical skill areas. They are for existing employees aged 19 and over and can last anything from 1 to 16 weeks. They are currently available in Artificial Intelligence (AI) Leadership (developing AI strategy), Battery Manufacturing, Electric Vehicle Charging Point Installation and Maintenance, Electrical Fitting and Assembly, Permanent Modular Building Assembly, Solar Photovoltaic Installation and Maintenance, Welding (mechanised) and Mechanical Fitting and Assembly. No information is available yet on costs, length or Providers although it is expected that they will mainly be delivered by existing providers. Catering and Hospitality has been added to the existing list of Foundation Apprenticeships but starts are not permitted at the moment as an assessment organisation is not yet in place. We have not utilised them as they heavily overlap with existing Level 2 apprenticeships that we are already successfully completing.




Levy transfer makes up approx. 1/3 of our total annual spend but is also subject to numerous funding changes which are likely to affect our spend going forward. We are currently supporting 110 apprentices through a transfer. From August the Government will now fully fund apprenticeships for young people who work in small businesses, so they are less likely to need a transfer of funds in the future and in conjunction with less apprenticeship available overall we are likely to see a reduction in requests. In our favour we are well known for offering transfers and should still have funds available to transfer, unlike many other employers who have already stopped offering transfers.





## Appendix of KPI's













**RAG** – An indication of the level of performance an indicator is currently achieving in relation to a set target or national benchmarking level for that indicator. While the RAG rating is linked to the two “Improvement since last” markers, it is a standalone measure, measured by performance to either the target or benchmarking.
















	<b>Green</b> - Current performance is on or exceeding target, whether in relation to target or national benchmarking		<b>Red</b> - Current performance is significantly below expected standards, whether in relation to target or national benchmarking.		<b>Baseline</b> - Indicates performance is currently being tracked to inform the benchmarking / target setting process.
	<b>Amber</b> - Current performance is below expected standards, whether in relation to target or national benchmarking		<b>Contextual</b> - These measures present a rounded view of information relevant to the service area although performance may not be within the control of the Council.		<b>In Development</b> - The KPI has been agreed, but data collection is needed to inform performance levels.




**“DoT”** – Current **Direction of Travel** when compared to the last annual or quarterly figures. This is a measure of how the indicator is moving over two periods – Annual and Quarterly. Key:

	Direction of travel is positive compared to the year-end or last quarter figures		Direction of Travel is negative compared to the year-end or last quarter figures		Performance is static to last year's outturn or last quarter's figures	<b>N/A</b>	Data either at a yearly or quarterly level not available
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KPI Code	Primary Indicator	Latest Data	Previous Data	Benchmarking / Target	RAG	DoT		Notes
						Quarter	Year	
<b>Quarterly</b>								
RE1	% Council Tax collected	Q4 96.69%	25/26 Q3 87.72% Q2 60.35% Q1 34%  24/25 Q4 97.56% Q3 89.09% Q2 61.87%			<b>N/A</b>		Cumulative figure
RE2	% Non- domestic rate collected	Q4 96.83%	25/26 Q3 85.93%			<b>N/A</b>		Cumulative figure

			Q2 59.85% Q1 33.5% 24/25 Q4 97.93% Q3 85.93% Q2 62.80%					
RE3	Time to process new Council Tax Reduction claims (days)	Q4 35.21 days	25/26 Q3 40.58 days Q2 69.07 days Q1 29.99 days 24/25 Q4 28.90 days Q3 18.53 days Q2 21.42 days	Target 23 days				In Q4, the average time to process Council Tax Reduction (CTR) new claims was 35.21 days, an improvement of 8.44 days to the quarter 3 average of 40.58 days. The current target for new CTR claims is 23 days. The service continues to ensure claims are processed quickly despite the increased national roll out of the migration of legacy benefits to Universal Credit which prevents a new claim being processed in less than 30 days for all working age claims.
RE4	Time to process new Housing Benefit claims (days)	Q4 24.27 days	25/26 Q3 43.65 days Q2 75.70 days Q1 31.86 days 24/25 Q4 26.06 days Q3 19.43 days Q2 18.65 days	Corporate target 20 days  DWP target 30 days				In Q4 the average time to process Housing Benefits new claims was 24.27 days, this is a significant improvement of 19.38 days on the quarter 3 performance of 43.65 days. Although the current performance is still above the corporate target of 20 days, the service are performing within the 30 day DWP target.
RE5	Time to process Council Tax Reduction changes in circumstances (days)	Q4 2.6 days	25/26 Q3 3.11 days Q2 6.70 days Q1 2.37 days 24/25 Q4 3.35 days Q3 2.69 days Q2 8.48 days	Target 6 days				
RE6	Time to process Housing Benefit changes in circumstances (days)	Q4 5.04 days	25/26 Q3 11.67 days Q2 23.18 days Q1 6.39 days 24/25 Q4 2.78 days Q3 3.68 days	National target 7 days				

			Q2 6.05 days					
RE7	Procurement: % of total council spend with local suppliers	Q4 49%	25/26 Q3 49% Q2 48% Q1 47% 24/25 Q4 53% Q3 54% Q2 51%	Target 50%				Cumulative total 2025/26 - 48%
RE8	Procurement: % of total council spend with SME suppliers	Q4 53%	25/26 Q3 53% Q2 50% Q1 49% 24/25 Q4 52% Q3 46% Q2 46% Q1 54%	Target 50%				Cumulative total 2025/26 - 51%
RE9	Procurement: % of total council spend with the voluntary and community sector	Q4 3%	25/26 Q3 4% Q2 2.86% Q1 3% 24/25 Q4 4% Q3 4% Q2 4% Q1 4%	Target 3%				Cumulative total 2025/26 - 3%
RE10	% of telephone calls answered in 4 minutes	Q4 94.02%	25/26 Q3 92.48% Q2 95.35% Q1 88.15% 24/25 Q4 81.87% Q3 89.90% Q2 90.96%					
RE11	Number of days lost to staff absence (sickness absence) per FTE	Q4 2.49	25/26 Q3 2.66 Q2 2.55 Q1 2.33 24/25 Q4 2.48 Q3 2.58 Q2 2.32					

RE12	Staff turnover rate	Q4 2.98%	25/26 Q3 2.88% Q2 3.66% Q1 3.05% 24/25 Q4 2.74% Q3 2.93% Q2 3.80%			N/A		
RE13	Spend on agency staff	Q4 £1,442,703	25/26 Q3 £1,393,983 Q2 £1,118,728 Q1 £1,108,086  24/25 Q4 £1,687,521 Q3 £1,883,616 Q2 £1,503,299			N/A	