

## COUNCIL MEETING 30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2023

### STATEMENTS & QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

#### Councillor Statements

1. Cllr Tim Warren - Verges and lack of grass cutting
2. Cllr Eleanor Jackson - Developments in the arrangements for future bus services in NE Somerset
3. Cllr Paul May - Care Leavers' protected status
4. Cllr Shaun Stephenson McGall - Pavement parking
5. Cllr Fiona Gourley - Rural bus service provision discussions with WECA & recent developments with Westlink

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

<b>M</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Councillor Robin Moss</b>
<p>In a recent BaNES newsletter, the leader is quoted “We are providing traditional lights in Combe Down, Weston, Moorland Road and Larkhall as well as working in partnership with the three town councils on lights in Keynsham, Midsomer Norton and Radstock.”. Please can you detail what support Keynsham, Radstock &amp; MSN were given, &amp; what support was offered to Westfield &amp; other parishes &amp; towns?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			<b>Cllr Paul Roper</b>
<p>In 2022 the Council entered into a four year framework contract for the provision of traditional Christmas Lights with Field and Lawn.</p> <p>All installation and removal of lights, testing of infrastructure, electrical switch on support to be provided by the Council’s Highways Electrical contractor (Volker Highways).</p> <p>The three Town Councils were offered the opportunity of receiving lights under this contract. Midsomer Norton Town Council were asked to arrange their own Christmas Tree going forward in line with Radstock and Keynsham. Midsomer Norton and Radstock Town Councils were informed that they would need to make an annual financial contribution from Christmas 2023 onward as well as Keynsham.</p> <p>The number of traditional Christmas Lights in Bath City Centre was reduced – particularly the cross-street displays. The Bath Communities continued to receive lights directly from B&amp;NES. However, Weston had the number of motifs it received reduced from 12 to 6 and Moorland Road’s were reduced from 11 to 6. (Traders in Moorland Road also make their own Christmas lighting arrangements utilising power from private businesses).</p> <p>The parishes of Peasedown St John; Westfield and Whitchurch have street light columns adapted for Christmas Lighting and make their own arrangements. No other communities have street light columns adapted for Christmas Lights, although a number of communities have Christmas trees, displays in shopping areas etc.</p> <p>Annual requests are received from traders and communities for new or additional displays in their areas – they are currently advised that</p>			

they will need to fully fund any additional infrastructure/displays required.

<b>M</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Councillor Chris Dando</b>
----------	-----------	-----------------------	-------------------------------

The council's draft economic strategy reports that in 2021, at 5.8% BNES had the 8th worst rates of 16–17-year-olds not in education, employment or training or whose activity is not known (NEET)

- What measures can the Council take to address this major failing, given young people who fall through the gaps in this way will have impaired life chances?

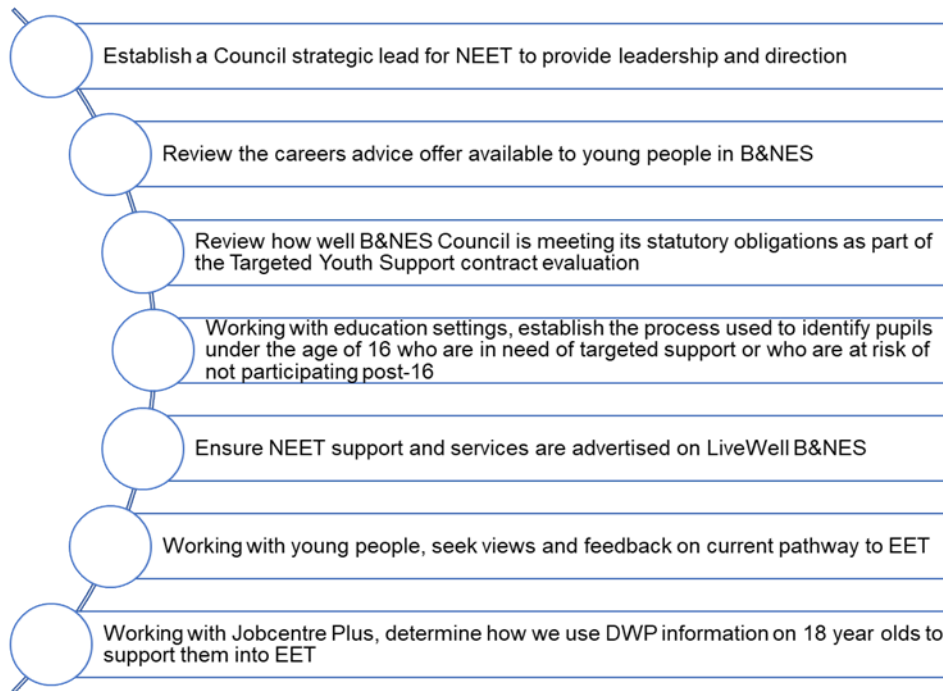
<b>Answer from:</b>	<b>Cllr Paul Roper</b>
---------------------	------------------------

Targeted early help for children and young people aged 13-19 years (up to 25 with SEND) is commissioned via the Targeted Youth Support (TYS) Service which is run by Youth Connect South West. The TYS Service seeks to improve outcomes for those with complex needs in order to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities by:

- Helping young people overcome barriers in order to fully engage in education, employment or training
- Providing support and interventions that will engage and challenge vulnerable young people to help them develop their resilience and make a positive difference to their lives and communities

One of the five overarching service outcomes is to ensure young people are in education, employment or training. The service also undertakes statutory returns on the Councils behalf – tracking and reporting the number of young people participating in education, employment and training, those who are not in education, employment or training and those whose current activity is unknown, all of which will be submitted to the National Client Caseload Information System in accordance with DfE guidance.

A 2022 B&NES Public Health and Prevention report (Participation of Young People: education, employment and training) highlighted the following areas of development:



The Business and Skills team are working endlessly trying to bring in additional funding into B&NES to support various residents including NEETs so we can look to offer additional services outside what is already commissioned.

Our ambition as a team is to set up a NEET network which will help us produce a NEET strategy for B&NES as we don't hold one. Recently we have been awarded UKSPF funding which we have partnered up with Bath Rugby Foundation and Little Lost Robot, our approach is to present a unique opportunity to engage young people through non-conventional routes into education and sector skills training, alongside confidence building and mental health support.

The breadth of the project spanning both sports engagement and arts and culture combined with young person led, collective design and support for young people creates new and game-changing support for young people in Bath and NE Somerset.

Both Arts and Sports sectors are spaces where young people who struggle in a school environment often thrive, supporting team building,

growth in self-discipline and group working, reducing social isolation, building confidence and creating new routes into FE, HE and employment for young people.

Both Sports and Arts and Culture offer unique opportunities to improve self-worth, make friends for life and create safe spaces to talk and share complicated feelings. This work is vital, particularly post pandemic where young people are increasingly struggling with complex mental health challenges, combined with an increased lack of options.

**M 03**

**Question from:**

**Councillor Chris Dando**

The same draft strategy reports that since 2010, while the UK economy has grown at a rate of 21.8%, BNES has only grown by a staggeringly low 3.8%. It also reports that BNES' 'gross value added' (GVA) – its hourly output value - is more than £10 lower than the England average at £28.45.

- When did BNES first begin to diverge from the English averages for GVA and economic growth, and to what do you attribute this gap?
- What measures in the draft economic strategy are intended to address this shortfall over the period concerned

**Answer from:**

**Cllr Paul Roper**

**When did B&NES begin to diverge from English averages and what do we think is happening in B&NES?**

Divergence from the English GVA growth trends began in 2003, after which GVA growth in B&NES has been sluggish. For example, by 2019, the economy in B&NES has grown by just 7% since 2001, whereas the South West and English growth in the same time period was 28% and 40% respectively. The below is based on our review of the Strategic Evidence Base, however we think this is an issue which could be explored at a WECA level to undertake further research to understand drivers of slow growth.

**1. Workplace wages are lower than England average and the gap is widening**

The largest sectors for employment are Health, Education, and Accommodation & food services, these have also grown quickly in the past 10 years for employment (health +20%, education + 9%, Accommodation & food +43%). If these jobs are lower paid (or have seen slower pay increases/freezes in the last decade) this will also translate into slower GVA growth. Resident wages are slightly higher, suggesting people may be commuting out of B&NES for higher wage jobs (and their contribution to GVA will therefore be calculated in places like Bristol or South

Gloucestershire stats). However it should be noted that both workplace and resident wages declined between 2019 and 2021, which is counter to the national average.

## **2. The sectors which are most prevalent in B&NES and that are growing are lower value add.**

See above for the growth in the top 3 sectors by employment. Alongside this, in the decade to 2019 two higher productivity sectors saw slight declines in GVA – Manufacturing & Professional, scientific & technical activities. There's a question to think about the sector mix in B&NES. There are opportunities to encourage the growth of both productive service industries and manufacturing. Professional & Financial, and Service Industries will benefit from the developments on the Quays and the Innovation Corridor.

We also have a significant manufacturing history with Cross, RPI and global companies Rotork and Horstman. Many of these companies want to stay and grow in B&NES. We have over 60 industrial sites in B&NES. We have lost some to other uses, but are continuing to look at ways of strengthening protections, not just for strategic sites but also for smaller ones typically overlooked that are in neighbourhood and village locations, close to where people live.

We have opportunities to increase and attract manufacturing and R&D by the protection of employment land and by supporting our key manufacturers and pressing ahead with significant new land allocations for manufacturing, with allocations being proposed at Hicks Gate, Peasedown St John, Keynsham and Somer Valley.

## **3. Proportion of working age residents**

B&NES has seen an increase of 17.5% in people aged 65+, and an 8.2% increase in people aged 15-64 which suggests that the population is still growing particularly older residents. Lower age group growth is likely driven by the student population, who are transient. Lower % of working age residents means less people available for work, which can have a negative impact on GVA. There's a high employment rate, which can be a positive, however it may also suggest a future shortage of workers. There are also a higher number of part time workers than in other areas.

What measures in the draft economic strategy are intended to address this shortfall over the period concerned?

The updated strategy calls for a new approach to local economic development, which draws on Doughnut Economics principles to deliver balanced action that ensures the future B&NES is one which operates in the safe space between the social floor (whereby the needs of all our residents are met) and the ecological ceiling to ensure we do not overshoot our planetary boundaries. As part of this we have developed

a holistic set of Key Performance Indicators to measure our success which look beyond GVA. However, the priorities and actions in the have been designed to address the drivers of slow growth as shown in the table below;

Factor	Relevant priority
Lower than average workplace wages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good work – support businesses to be good employers (including encouraging the employers who pay the Real Living Wage) and residents to access inclusive skills and training opportunities</li> <li>• Resilient businesses – to diversify and grow businesses in B&amp;NES which can pay higher wages and which create the types of jobs that match to the highly skilled residents who may be commuting out</li> <li>• Creativity &amp; innovation – translating university strengths into new high value businesses and jobs</li> <li>• Stronger places – recognising that B&amp;NES is part of a wider economy and should continue to improve and invest in regional connectivity to ensure residents and businesses can access those economic opportunities in the wider subregion</li> </ul>
Sectoral composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity and innovation - changing B&amp;NES sector mix through the resilient businesses and creativity &amp; innovation themes</li> <li>• Supporting all sectors to become more productive, in particular the focus on the visitor economy in Stronger Places and the foundational economy in Creativity and Innovation</li> <li>• Resilient businesses - invest in the infrastructure businesses need (employment space, digital) to attract and retain the business base</li> </ul>
Proportion of working age residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable housing – to ensure that current and future residents can afford to live in B&amp;NES</li> <li>• Stronger places – ensuring that all parts of B&amp;NES flourish and create places people want to live and visit</li> <li>• Good work – support everyone who wants a job to access opportunities through inclusive live long learning offer</li> </ul>

<b>M</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Councillor Eleanor Jackson</b>
<p>Given the financial difficulties in which Somerset Council finds itself, and with the 'school run' 404 from Grovewood Road, Haydon to Frome via Writhlington School having already been cut, what contingency plans is Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council making so that cross border, outside WECA, community subsidised buses can continue? In March at Full Council, Westfield Waterside's Mrs Harrington addressed council on the plight of the passengers of the 82 Paulton to Tynning, Radstock, supported by representatives of the 140 daily 82 bus passengers. Has the Council made any progress on my suggestion to combine the two services 414/82, as is done on Saturday already, under a BANES/Somerset contract which still has two years to run?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>		<b>Cllr Sarah Warren</b>	
<p>We acknowledge the significance of Service 82, as we recognise that it serves areas in great need of connection by public transport, contributing significantly to social amenity. The proposal to replace it with service 414, sharing costs with Somerset County Council, is included in a proposal that B&amp;NES council has presented to the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) for consideration. WECA is our transport authority and is in receipt of £57.5m from the Department for Transport specifically for the purpose of enhancing bus services.</p> <p>B&amp;NES continues to emphasise to WECA the vital importance to our communities of supported bus services such as the 82. Indeed, B&amp;NES Council Leader Cllr Kevin Guy proposed an amendment to the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) paper at the WECA Committee meeting of 6th October 2023, supported by the leader of S Gloucestershire council and the Bristol Mayor, proposing to spend an underspend on the BSIP budget on these important services. However, the WECA Mayor chose to use his veto to overrule this amendment and to prioritise instead enhancements to routes which are already well served, and an extension to the failing Westlink Demand Responsive Transport service, over the restoration of vital links to our smaller towns.</p> <p>I want to assure you that the 82/414 proposal remains an extremely high priority for B&amp;NES, and this council will continue to fight for the restoration of vital service to all of our communities.</p>			
<b>M</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Councillor Eleanor Jackson</b>
<p>Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council has enthusiastically embraced the Active Travel policy, and expended much officer time and money on cycle routes, yet when a virtually totally blind Westfield resident complains that he cannot get past hedges stretching almost the entire width of the pavement on both sides of a pothole strewn road, Highways officers allegedly refuse to enforce, beyond writing to the owners of the hedges. Why doesn't council policy include clearing pavements and filling potholes so that the disabled can safely walk, to the benefit of their</p>			



physical and mental health?

**Answer from:**

**Cllr Manda Rigby & Cllr Sarah Warren**

All publicly maintainable highways are routinely inspected and any safety issues found within intervention levels on the road or footpath are instructed for repair. Where private vegetation is found to obstruct or encroach significantly upon the highway. The Council as local highway Authority will write to the relevant owners under section 154 of The Highways Act 1980. The Council can if required, after expiry of a notice, intervene and seek to recover costs incurred.

**M**

**06**

**Question from:**

**Councillor Liz Hardman**

How many residential places did the council provide, in how many sites and in which wards, in 2015, 2019, 2022, and how many does it expect to provide in each of the next ten years?

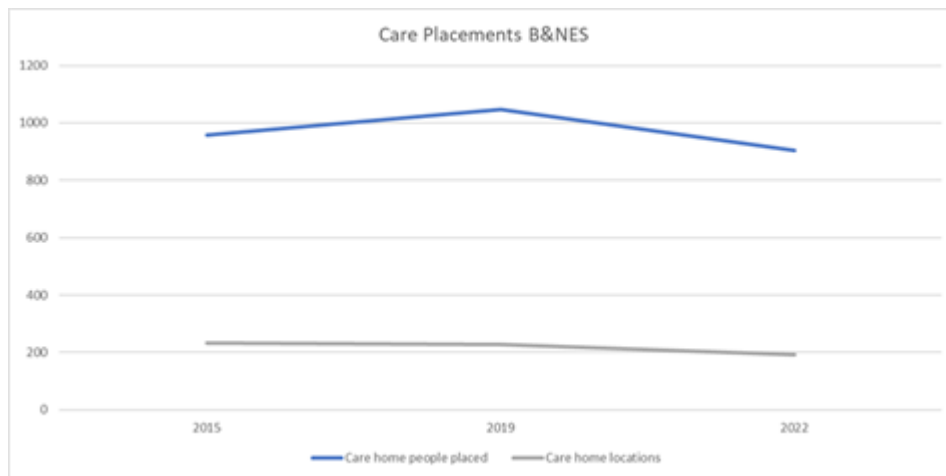
**Answer from:**

**Cllr Alison Born**

The council has collated the available information in response to the Cllr Hardman's question:

Figure 1. Residential care places provided by B&NES

Ward	Column Labels					
	2015		2019		2022	
	Sum of People	Sum of Locations	Sum of People	Sum of Locations	Sum of People	Sum of Locations
Bathavon North	38	5	18	2	13	1
Bathwick	40	6	54	7	41	3
Chew Valley	32	3	2	2	1	1
Combe Down	7	2	8	2	0	0
High Littleton	7	1	0	0	0	0
Keynsham East	0	0	1	1	0	0
Keynsham North	1	1	2	2	1	1
Keynsham South	0	0	3	2	2	2
Kingsmead	80	26	119	18	66	13
Lambridge	3	1	0	0	0	0
Lansdown	1	1	0	0	0	0
Mendip	24	3	2	2	9	2
Midsomer Norton Redfield	34	10	34	11	30	5
Moorlands	40	4	16	4	8	4
Newbridge	0	0	10	3	18	2
Odd Down	26	7	25	4	31	3
Oldfield Park	1	1	3	3	2	2
Out of area/unknown	439	112	556	117	537	118
Paulton	1	1	3	3	2	2
Publow & Whitchurch	41	1	1	1	0	0
Radstock	3	3	2	2	3	3
Saltford	18	5	63	8	43	4
Southdown	18	3	41	4	26	3
Timsbury	26	8	21	5	21	4
Twerton	32	8	25	7	22	6
Walcot	1	1	0	0	0	0
Westfield	18	10	11	8	8	3
Weston	20	9	23	9	15	7
Widcombe & Lymcombe	7	2	4	2	4	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>958</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>1047</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>903</b>	<b>191</b>



*This data is for all adults as no age was specified.*

### Reflections

There is a notable impact in the number of placements made in 2022 compared to 2019. This reflects data related to the impact of Covid and the reduction in number of placements needed for the older demographic in the direct post pandemic. The data suggests that numbers of placements in 2023 and 2024 is expected to return to pre pandemic levels and the figures seen in 2019.

Placements in care settings reflect the increase in population of older people within the B&NES authority area as well as the increasing numbers of people reported to experience frailty.

Placements across wards reflect where care homes are located, where there is availability, as well as those homes most suited to identified needs as often care homes offer specialist services.

We anticipate a 10-year projection to reflect the increasing ageing demographic and numbers of frail older people although there are broad and complex factors that may influence this projection of placements. For example, size, number, and type of care homes will vary over a 10-year period across wards. Given the 15% increase of 65+ population projected by 2042 in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment a broad brushstroke of a 15% increase over the next 10 years would be suggested as an authority level figure but would need further consideration at ward level.

**Caveats to response**

The Business Intelligence team have been able to draw together the data presented in figure 1, although reference to the data should consider the following key points:

- 2015 was prior to the migration to B&NES current system, so the data migration issues may mean that the figures are under-reported.
  - Ward-level information relies on matching postcodes to address details for service provision currently held in the system; changes in service provision addresses since the earlier reporting years (2015 and 2019) may impact on the accuracy of the ward-level reporting.
  - Some people were recorded as being in more than one location in the year in question. The totals in bold at the bottom of the table reflect the unique count of individuals and may be less than the sum of the rows above.
  - Out of Area placements are confirmed as placed with genuine providers and the data is affected by source of funding (council/CHC).
- In addition, some data errors may occur where postcodes have not been matched to designated wards within the system. Given the timescale for this request it has not been possible to investigate this data further.

**M 07****Question from:****Councillor Liz Hardman**

How many (a) individuals (b) families with dependents in BNES who are in work, have used food banks in each quarter since 2018, and what estimates or calculations have you made of projected use figures for the next 5 years?

**Answer from:****Cllr Alison Born**

Research by the Trussell Trust estimates that 1 in 5 people using their food banks are in working households and that insecure work is correlated with food insecurity. The employment status of people using food banks is not systematically recorded by Trussell Trust affiliated food banks in the UK.

The employment status of people being referred to food banks in B&NES by Welfare Support or Citizens Advice is recorded on individual case notes however it is not recorded as an identifiable status on each record and therefore not easily accessible on local systems. In B&NES there are three Trussell Trust affiliated food banks operating from 10 venues in Bath, Keynsham and the Somer Valley. The table below show trends in their activity since 2017/18. Please note that these figures represent the number of parcels distributed rather than the number of individuals receiving them. Also note that data provided by the Trussell Trust on food bank usage is published by financial year rather than by quarter.

Period	Total number of food parcels given out	Number of parcels for adults	Number of parcels for children
April 2017 – March 2018	6870	4240	2630
April 2018 – March 2019	7755	4885	2870
April 2019 – March 2020	9935	5978	3975
April 2020 – March 2021	9706	6232	3474
April 2021 – March 2022	7106	4431	2675
April 2022 – March 2023	9028	5950	3078

The trend in Trussell Trust food bank usage in B&NES from April 2017 to March 2023 has been increasing overall, with a fall in 2021/22 likely due to Government financial support available during this period.

Figures from the Trussell Trust cannot be used to fully explain the scale of food bank use across the UK or locally as they do not include independent food aid providers and community groups also providing emergency food.

Food bank usage is sensitive to Government policy on social security and is therefore difficult to predict in the long term. B&NES food bank usage is estimated to remain high over the short to medium term.

<b>M</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Councillor Liz Hardman</b>
----------	-----------	-----------------------	-------------------------------

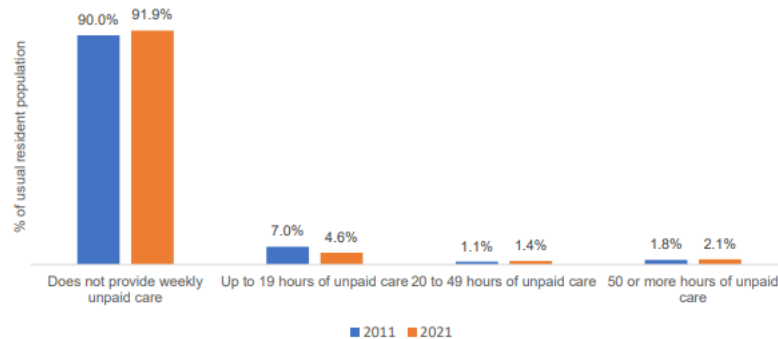
As the council's draft economic strategy emphasises, an estimated 19% of our children live in relative poverty and 42% of those claiming Universal Credit are in work. What plans has the council developed to ensure that our most vulnerable residents – often hungry, in unsafe and insecure homes, with associated physical and mental health implications – will be (a) safely housed (b) have equal and fair access to education and community services (c) nutritiously fed?

<b>Answer from:</b>	<b>Cllr Paul Roper</b>		
<p>GS Housing contribution:  The Council provides a range of interventions to help ensure that our most vulnerable residents are safely housed. It is not possible to fully detail these here but as examples they include rigorously enforcing housing standards, ensuring that nominations to social housing are prioritised to those in greatest need; offering a range of grants and assistance to low-income, disabled and otherwise vulnerable residents to undertake essential repairs &amp; adaptations; providing advice and assistance to those who are homeless or about become homeless and delivering a range of supported housing for those in greatest need. The Council is drafting a Housing Plan which will bring together and articulate these workstreams more fully.</p>			
<b>M</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Cllr Lesley Mansell</b>
<p>The 2021 census shows that across Britain, 9% of people provide unpaid care. All but ten of B&amp;NES' wards are at this level or higher. Every single week, almost 4,000 people (3,848) in B&amp;NES provide over 50 hours unpaid care work. Another 11,120 spend between 9 - 49 hours a week caring, unpaid.</p> <p>By ward and gender (female/male) how many B&amp;NES residents have you calculated will provide more than 16 hours unpaid care a week in each of the next ten years?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>	<b>Cllr Alison Born</b>		
<p>This information (below) has been taken from the latest Strategic Evidence Base for B&amp;NES available in full here <a href="https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk">https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk</a> Projections of the numbers of unpaid carers for the next ten years are currently not available. We are working with B&amp;NES unpaid carers to develop a new Carers Strategy which would include projections of the numbers of unpaid carers based on national and local data.</p>			

[Back to Section Contents](#)[Back to Main Contents](#)

# Unpaid Care

Proportion of the B&NES population by hours of unpaid care provided, Census 2011 and 2021



Unpaid care	B&NES (2021)
Provides no unpaid care	169,418
Provides 9 hours or less unpaid care a week	6,485
Provides 10 to 19 hours unpaid care a week	2,085
Provides 20 to 34 hours unpaid care a week	1,282
Provides 35 to 49 hours unpaid care a week	1,269
Provides 50 or more hours unpaid care a week	3,849
Total	184,388

- In the 2021 census, **8.1%** of the usual resident population of B&NES reported providing **unpaid care**, an overall **decrease** from 2011 (9.9%).
- The largest decrease was seen in those providing up to 19 hours of unpaid care per week, down from 7.0% in 2011 to 4.6% in 2021.
- A slight increase was recorded in those providing 50 or more hours of unpaid care per week at 2.1%, up from 1.8% in 2011.
- **6,485** usual B&NES residents report providing 9 hours or less of unpaid care per week in 2021, representing **43%** of all unpaid care provision reported in B&NES.

#### Data Notes:

- Census 2021 was undertaken during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This may have influenced how people perceived and managed their provision of unpaid care, and therefore may have affected how people chose to respond.
- Caution should be taken when making comparisons between 2011 and 2021 because of changes in question wording and response options.
- Census 2021 question text asked: "Do you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems relating to old age? (Exclude anything you do as part of your paid employment)".

#### Sources:

1. ONS Unpaid Care Census 2021 Local Authority dataset <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/healthdisabilityandunpaidcarecensus2021inenglandandwales>
2. ONS NOMIS Unpaid Care Census 2011 dataset <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/ks301uk>

<b>M</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Question from</b>	<b>Cllr Lesley Mansell</b>
<p>The South-West has the some of the country's highest rates of in-work benefit claimants. Among the highest for B&amp;NES are in North East Somerset. (Source: Department for Work and Benefits Sept 2023)</p> <p>This month's autumn statement announced a cancellation of free NHS prescriptions for benefit claimants who don't engage with the work-seeking process. The process for in work benefit claimants insists they must attend appointments at given times or risk being refused benefits, when they may be at another place of work or, providing unpaid care. This now include losing free NHS prescriptions.</p> <p>By ward and gender (female/male) how many B&amp;NES residents claim in-work benefits, and what work has been done to understand the overlap between people who are in-work claimants and those who are providing unpaid care, and what are the findings?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>		<b>Cllr Alison Born</b>	
<p>Current claimant count data is published by the Department for Work and Pensions on a monthly basis. Claimant counts for October 2023 broken down by ward and sex are attached.</p> <p>From a statistical perspective, whilst the Council holds data on those providing unpaid care who have made themselves known to services, this information cannot be linked to out of work benefits data. That data is held by the Department for Work and Pensions and is not available to the authority at a person level. The 2021 census collected information surrounding provision of unpaid care and economic activity status, this data is being reviewed as part of the carer's strategy.</p> <p>We are working with B&amp;NES unpaid carers on developing a new Carers Strategy. As part of this work, we would explore the relationship between the caring role and in-work benefits and would use these findings to inform the strategy.</p>			
<b>M</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Question from</b>	<b>Cllr Lesley Mansell</b>
<p>B&amp;NES 2021 census data shows women in Westmoreland are expected to live 10.1 years longer than women in Publow and Whitchurch, while men in Midsomer Norton North live 6.5 years longer than men in Twerton.</p> <p>What specific interventions are being put into place to 'level up' quality of life, reduce health inequalities and when are they projected to deliver statistically significant improvements?</p>			



**Answer from:**

**Cllr Alison Born**

Life expectancy varies across B&NES. In general, the least deprived areas have higher life expectancy and the most deprived areas have lower life expectancy, with a gradient seen between them.

All of the work of the Council, the NHS and the third sector, not to mention local business and higher education, plays a role in improving the quality of life of people across our district, whichever area they live in. However, the Council's Corporate Strategy and the B&NES Health and Wellbeing Strategy set out plans that will reduce health inequalities and the conditions that contribute to them by focusing more support to communities or areas who currently have worse health and wellbeing outcomes. On top of the business as usual work some more specific interventions include:

- Improving intensive educational support for children eligible for free school meals, who are Looked After, who have special educational needs or are from minority ethnic groups.
- Working with B&NES social housing providers to provide low carbon affordable warmth for existing social housing to help prevent damp and mould, and cold related illnesses
- Delivering the new model of integrated neighbourhoods to provide more equal access for people to physical and mental health services for all ages
- Delivering the Community Wellbeing Hub with its accessible approach for people to find support for debt, housing advice, low cost food, support for mental health problems, etc.
- The B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care System published an Inequalities Strategy in 2023. To deliver against this, the Integrated Care Board has allocated £357,000 of funds to B&NES (with an intention that this becomes recurrent funding, subject to future budget pressures). It is overseen by the Director of Public Health as part of the B&NES Integrated Care Alliance. Starting in April 2024, the funding will go to a number of agreed projects and services that are specifically targeting our most deprived areas and excluded groups.

**When are they projected to deliver statistically significant improvements?**

This is a very good question but one that is difficult to answer. We expect to see programmes mentioned above being implemented over the coming 1-3 years. And these should have positive impacts on people's daily lives and health and wellbeing, which will be monitored. However, measuring how this work will have impacts on life expectancy is difficult. Partly because it takes a long time to influence an outcome such as life expectancy. And partly because many of these programmes contribute indirectly to life expectancy and so are hard to demonstrate their impact on that outcome. We also need to be honest about the scale of the task required to level up our communities and

opportunities in life, especially against a backdrop of national cuts to funding of public services which unfortunately drives outcomes in the opposite direction.