

Provision for Vulnerable Adults, Children & Young People in Middlesbrough Consultation

www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/supportingpeopleconsultation

Consultation closes 24 February 2019

This consultation

Middlesbrough Council is consulting on proposed changes to services that support people with needs around homelessness, domestic abuse, sexual violence and abuse across the Borough. This document explains what those proposals are and how you can get involved.

If you want to share your views on the proposals outlined in this document, please visit the consultation page http://consult.middlesbrough.gov.uk/portal/consultation_questionnaire where you can fill in the online questionnaire.

Alternatively, there is a paper version of the questionnaire that you may want to complete instead, which can be downloaded from the website or are available to collect from:

Middlesbrough Council
PO Box 504
Civic Centre
Middlesbrough
TS1 9FY

Alternative formats may also be made available upon request by emailing supportingpeopleconsultation@middlesbrough.gov.uk

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1. Background

Government funding for local government as a whole has fallen substantially since 2010. Since changes were made to the Local Government Finance System in 2013/14 Middlesbrough Council has suffered a significant reduction in Government funding. In order to address the savings requirements for 2019/20, a number of transformational efficiency initiatives have been proposed with associated savings targets.

Middlesbrough Council currently spends £2.4 million on commissioned services for homelessness, domestic abuse (DA) and sexual violence (SV). These services are commissioned individually, which we have determined is not always cost effective and sometimes means they are disconnected.

The Council intends to reduce the budget for homelessness, domestic abuse and sexual violence by £400,000 by March 2020 but would continue to spend £2 million on those services. The proposal is to prioritise this funding to directly meet the needs of the most vulnerable individuals in Middlesbrough, using a new collaborative approach to commissioning which focuses on buying services that meet the needs of the most vulnerable and reduce funding for services where there is duplication or specific support that can be provided by other services.

There are four main types of Middlesbrough Council funded support services for vulnerable people with needs around homelessness, domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse.

Supported Accommodation: where support is provided within a specific housing scheme or address; people have to live at this address to receive this type of support.

1. **Floating Support:** which is delivered to people, wherever they are, to support them to gain / maintain a tenancy, prevent eviction, claim benefits, access other support services
2. **Homeless Prevention and Advice Service:** the Council has a statutory duty to prevent and relieve homelessness in Middlesbrough. This includes assessing whether someone is homeless or threatened with homelessness; providing advice and assistance on housing issues which may lead to homelessness such as being served with an eviction Notice; developing personal housing plans and providing emergency temporary accommodation for anyone with a priority need.
3. **Specialist Services:** a range of services are incorporated into specialist Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services which have a unique ability to address domestic abuse and work effectively with victims and children.

The current Middlesbrough Council contracts that support people with needs around homelessness, domestic abuse and sexual violence contracts are due to end in October 2019. This provides us with an ideal opportunity to review and improve services, to take into account local need and ensure good levels of access and provision across Middlesbrough.

2. What is provided now?

Middlesbrough Council has some statutory responsibilities that it has to meet for vulnerable individuals, so we have to ensure any new services will meet those. It is also paramount that we continue to fund support provision to meet our wider strategic aims as a Council.

Supported Accommodation

Currently there are 9 individual contracts for supported accommodation services for adults and young people commissioned by Middlesbrough Council; of these:

- 1 service for general hostel accommodation with 48 units
- 1 service for veterans with 20 units of accommodation
- 1 service for families with 14 units of accommodation, including 1 emergency unit
- 2 services for vulnerable women with 18 units, including 1 emergency unit
- 3 services are for young people with 72 units of accommodation
- 1 service for people with an offending history with 13 units, including 1 emergency unit.

Supported accommodation provides a safe place to live and support is being offered to aid people in their journey to independence and recovery from homelessness. Lengths of stay in supported accommodation vary by scheme dependent upon the needs of the individual. Once people have gained the skills they need to live independently they are supported to move on to more permanent accommodation. The intended maximum stay in supported housing is 12 months.

Floating Support

The Floating Support service offers practical and emotional support to vulnerable adults. The support is available for a specific period of time, and is delivered in the community to vulnerable people at risk of homelessness or people who are homeless. The service can also help people to settle into a new tenancy.

Homeless Prevention and Advice Service

This statutory service completes an assessment to determine whether an applicant is homeless or at risk of homelessness, and then produce a personal housing plan. The service is aimed at preventing homelessness and they will put in place measures to do this. Advice on homelessness and housing is available to all residents in Middlesbrough.

Specialist Services

A range of services are incorporated into specialist DA services which have a unique ability to address domestic abuse and work effectively with victims and children. The services needs to balance prevention, early intervention, needs and trauma informed responses to ensure effective victim support, maximise opportunity for engagement, identifies and meets needs, ensure swift access to safe accommodation and offers support facilities through crisis, support and recovery. This includes;

Independent Domestic Violence Advisers which address the safety of victims at high risk of harm to secure their safety and safety of their children. IDVAs work with victims at point of crisis to assess the level of risk. They discuss with victims a range of suitable options leading to creation of a safety plan. IDVA role in multi-agency settings is to keep the clients perspective and safety at centre of proceedings. They provide criminal and civil legal advice and support a victim through court process. IDVAs support and work over the short to medium term to put victims on the path to long term safety.

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Counselling forms is an integral part of long term recovery from abuse. Counselling helps a victim build resilience and develop coping strategies to deal with impact of abuse and which may present as anxiety, depression, stress, low self- esteem and confidence, loss, trauma, suicide ideation and/ or self-harm. There is 1 service for women recovering from domestic abuse and 1 service for males and females age 14 plus who are recovering from sexual violence and abuse.

Sanctuary Scheme aims to enable victims at risk of domestic abuse to remain in their households safely. Victims are offered a tailored package of support incorporating practical safety adjustments to the property.

Specialist Black Minority Ethnic (BME) support for Forced Marriage (FM), Honour based violence (HBV) and Female genital mutilation (FGM) providing support and advocacy to BME victims of FGM, FM and HBV. Providing emergency help for victims who may need help to obtain a safe place to live, immigration advice, gain police protection and court ordered protection.

Therapeutic support for **Children and Young People** affected by Domestic Abuse. In the form of one to one and group work intervention trained workers provide support to children from age of 3-18, who have experienced domestic abuse.

Refuge & Outreach provision includes a refuge which provides temporary accommodation for women and children and forms part of a national refuge network. The refuge has 14 Purpose built refuge unit with self- contained flats and provides safe house for women and their children over 18 years, with 24 hour support (Support workers/ children workers) & concierge from 9pm until 9am. The outreach offers 65 hours support per week (family support/ adult) male and female victims, providing practical and emotional support in crisis and recovery. Standard to Medium Risk. Male and female.

3. Intentions for the future

Previously the Council's approach to contracting and funding services individually has meant that services are not always joined up and it can be difficult for vulnerable people to move between them. Sometimes individuals have to go through multiple referrals and assessment processes, which can delay the time it takes to start receiving support, and have to repeat their story to a number of professionals. This increases the risk of them 'slipping through the cracks' and not being able to access support because they aren't seen quickly enough or do not know how to get the help they need.

Services have told us that it isn't always clear what services are available for vulnerable people and how to refer people into them; this can result in duplication of effort in some cases, and in others the absence of much needed support.

The numbers of people who are homeless and rough sleeping have increased in recent years; this is supported by government figures¹, demand for services is increasing and the needs of the people these services support are becoming more complex. Figures published by Homelessness Link² show that 80% of homeless people report a mental health issue

¹ [Homelessness Statistics](#) - Department of Communities and Local Government

² [The unhealthy state of homelessness 2014](#) – Homelessness Link

and that 39% state they misuse drugs or alcohol. 73% report a physical health problem and 35% report attending Accident and Emergency departments. Many people become homeless as a result of trauma such as violence or abuse. This means that people need much more support than they did before.

The intention is to bring all these services together, through a new approach to commissioning to ensure that they wrap-around the person and work for them to address their recovery from homelessness and unique needs, rather than funding individual services which aren't always linked together. By joining up services and ensuring better communication and streamlined process, the Council anticipates better outcomes for people and more efficient service delivery.

There is also an opportunity for innovation to align other services for vulnerable people within this new approach, primarily Substance Misuse services, in collaboration with Public Health.

4. The proposed areas of savings

The proposals below set out options for potential savings of £400,000 and how we will redistribute funding to ensure we can meet demand across all provision. We have had to make some difficult decision and have carefully considered where those savings should be made, that will have the least impact on vulnerable people.

It is proposed that Middlesbrough Council will make the following changes to homelessness services:

1. Supported Accommodation for people with an offending history

The proposal is to no longer commission specific services for people with an offending history, however there will be a requirement, written into the future tender documents and service specification, for provider(s) to provide inclusive service that will also meet the needs of people with an offending history. Specific support for vulnerable people with offending backgrounds will be available through a number of dispersed accommodation schemes with floating support, delivered in partnership with the Durham and Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company, National Probation Service and local housing providers.

These proposed changes to the supported accommodation for people with an offending history could achieve £151,000 of savings and contribute to the £400,000 proposed budget reduction.

2. Rent Bond Guarantee Scheme (Floating Support)

Middlesbrough Council currently commissions a Rent Bond Guarantee Scheme. This vulnerable socially excluded adult's access good quality affordable accommodation in the private rented sector and then continue to work with the individuals to help them to live independently.

The proposal is to no longer commission a Rent Bond Guarantee Scheme as the support is offered within other areas of provision:

- The Homelessness prevention, support and advice service
- An Independent Living Worker was appointed by Middlesbrough Council in October 2018

- The support element of this scheme will be picked up as part of the assertive outreach contract within the proposed new commissioning approach
- There is another scheme in Middlesbrough that offers a Rent Bond Guarantee Scheme for young people
- Five Lamps funding will be used for rent bonds on an interest free loan basis

These proposed changes to the Rent Bond Guarantee Scheme could achieve £122,000 of savings and contribute to the £400,000 proposed budget reduction.

3. Vulnerable Women's Supported Accommodation

The proposal is to redesign the accommodation support service to become one combined service.

These proposed changes to Vulnerable Women's supported accommodation could achieve £34,896 of savings and contribute to the £400,000 proposed budget reduction.

4. Young Person's Supported Accommodation

The proposal is to redesign the young person's supported accommodation service and reduce the number of units from 72 to 65. In previous years the services were not running at full capacity.

These proposed changes to Young Person's supported accommodation could achieve £25,669 of savings and contribute to the £400,000 proposed budget reduction.

It is proposed that Middlesbrough Council will make the following changes to Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and abuse services:

5. Perpetrator Programme

Middlesbrough Council currently commissions an accredited behaviour change programme for Perpetrators of domestic abuse.

The proposal is to no longer fund the programme as other programmes have recently been commissioned by another partner which has impacted on this contract. The perpetrator programme was funded by a number of sources of funding which are no longer available.

These proposed changes to the Perpetrator programme could achieve £55,000 of savings that address in increase in demand in other domestic abuse services.

6. BME Service

The proposal is to reduce the funding for the BME service because currently it is disproportionate based on the total number of Middlesbrough residents accessing the service.

These proposed changes to the BME service could achieve £25,536 of savings that address in increase in demand in other domestic abuse services.

7. Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Counselling

The DA counselling service is seen as a national example of best practice so investing in this will bring additionality for the service and a more scalable offer that

works in a more holistic way. Provision will result in better outcomes for victims and there is significant evidence of need for trauma informed therapeutic intervention. Increasing the funding will enable us to redevelop the service and ensure that it could be delivered across a number of locations, including within the refuge.

The NHS have pledged to offer a lifetime of mental health care under a new NHS pledge. All survivors will be promised guaranteed access to trauma care, including counselling, so this should eventually replace the need for the Council to provide additional support. Not all Tees Valley Council's provide an SV Counselling service, but still refer into it.

The proposal is to remodel to and provide a single domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse counselling service.

These proposed changes will increase the funding to the Counselling services which will strengthen the provision.

8. Refuge & Outreach

The proposal is to commission the Refuge as part of the vulnerable women and families supported accommodation contract and to remodel outreach service in line with another advice and support contract.

These proposed changes to the Refuge and Outreach service will not achieve a saving but will be reinvested to strength provision.

9. Independent Domestic Violence Advisor

The proposal is to increase funding for the IDVA as there has been an increase in demand for this service.

These proposed changes to the IDVA service will increase the funding but will be balanced by the savings made from other domestic abuse services.

Middlesbrough Council would work with service providers to plan the transition to any new arrangements and ensure that people who may be affected by any changes are provided with clear information regarding alternative support services and how to get help for homelessness, domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse in the future.

5. The proposed new approach to commissioning services

The current system for supporting vulnerable adults is a mismatch between an increase in demand and a decrease in available funding. Services are disjointed with multiple professionals often supporting the same individual, on related issues leading to inefficiency, duplication and an unsatisfactory outcome for the end user. In addition to this, due to the lack of a centralised system of referral and case management with relevant services, our capacity as a local authority to truly understand the needs of customers and track their journey is limited and which in turn limits our ability to measure outcomes or respond effectively to address these needs before it hits crisis

The above is not to say that existing services are not performing well; measures are in place to monitor progress and hold providers to account for the services which are delivered. Similarly data is gathered by individual providers and reviewed by Middlesbrough Council on a regular basis. There is however substantial room for

improvements to be made to the way in which we approach all aspects of commissioning and to better meet the needs of people in Middlesbrough.

By bringing together a range of services, service users would receive consistent standards of support and it would be possible to identify areas of good practice and roll this out across all areas, to drive up performance and quality where necessary.

A single point of access and assessment, in collaboration with commissioned and non-commissioned providers, would be developed to identify risk and support needs and divert service users to the most appropriate element of the service for them. This will give service users and referring professionals the benefit of a single access route into support. It would eliminate the current arrangements where service users often have to undergo multiple referrals and assessments in order to access the support they need. A 'no wrong door' approach would allow people to present at any area of the service and be assured that they will benefit from the full range of support available to them, with simpler administrative processes. They will not be passed between multiple service providers, as has been the case previously.

Collaboration and partnership working will eliminate fragmentation in services and deliver improved pathways for those that use services, using a clear, single referral route. This option would also put services on a more sustainable footing, with provision secured for the duration of the contracted period.

6. The Future Vision for Services

Our vision is to improve the lives of people with needs around homelessness, domestic abuse, sexual violence and Substance Misuse, through remodelling and reviewing services by joining up provision to:

- a) Promote system change to ensure an improved offer for vulnerable people with clear integrated support pathways, to ensure seamless and effective service provision regardless of the entry point. .
- b) Services work in partnership, using a collaborative model of support which is responsive and flexible reducing duplication between services.
- c) Assess the level of service user, providing the right support at right time, to respond quickly, to crisis periods and to encourage movement towards greater independence and stability
- d) Services will build on and nurture peoples internal and external resources reducing their longer term need to draw on public resources
- e) Create a contractual environment where providers share responsibility for achieving outcomes and are mutually supportive, ensuring decisions are based on the best outcome for the service user rather than the service.
- f) Develop the workforce to build resilience and skills across the partnership to ensure a more consistent approach across services that are better able to cope with demand and which enables specialist services to be more targeted.
- g) Prevention and early intervention is at the heart of services ensuring that care and support is offered before crisis.

Through a more integrated model, with service providers working collaboratively, we can develop coordinated community response to homelessness, domestic abuse, sexual violence and abuse across Middlesbrough. This would allow vulnerable people and their families to benefit from joined up support to recover and live successfully within their local communities.

They would benefit from flexible, tailored, trauma informed provision(s), which is responsive to need and risk.

The Council recognises the potential impact that this could pose to smaller voluntary and community services and plans to mitigate against this impact through mandating collaborative and partnership working.

The tender process will have a clear focus on local knowledge and the capacity to network well and build strong partnerships. The Council recognises that this is needed to ensure that the specialist knowledge and expertise of local organisations is not lost and that these organisations are supported and have the opportunity to be involved in the new approach.

Bringing together a number of services would also minimise the administrative burden on service providers and reduce the costs to the Council in contract management. This will enable more of the resources available to be used on front line support of service users, rather than lengthy and costly 'back office' functions.

7. The Consultation and Engagement approach

Conversations with key stakeholders, including service providers, Council departments, criminal justice agencies, voluntary organisations and healthcare agencies, began in November 2018. Events were held in November 2018 and January 2019 to discuss a new approach for meeting needs in Middlesbrough, inform providers of the savings and the potential redesign of commissioned services. Further discussions with stakeholders will be held in January and February 2019, as part of the consultation. Workshops / focus groups and meetings are scheduled during the consultation period so service users can contribute and providers & stakeholders can feed in their views. We will also offer service users affected by the savings a drop in/ workshop which will be facilitated by Council staff. We have also published an online questionnaire for members of the public, providers and service users which can be accessed via the link http://consult.middlesbrough.gov.uk/portal/consultation_questionnaire

A paper based version is also available to collect and return from the reception:

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Those who attended the first event in November 2018 were invited to feedback to us afterwards. This feedback has been used to ensure that proposals have been developed in partnership with key stakeholders from the very start, with all views captured and incorporated where possible.

A number of workshops are being planned as part of the consultation and dates for these will be available on **www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/supportingpeopleconsultation**

After the formal consultation has closed, all responses will be analysed by the Council and the feedback will be used to decide how to progress with the new approach to commissioning homelessness, domestic abuse, sexual violence & abuse support services. The future services will be tendered, to ensure the establishment of a quality, value for money offer which meets the needs of local people.

An update on the outcome of this consultation will be published on **www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/supportingpeopleconsultation**