

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER:** Executive Member for Public Health

**DATE OF MEETING:** 10 September 2025

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members on areas of activity within my portfolio including performance against strategic priorities.

### COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES

*A healthy place:*

- *Improve life chances of our residents by responding to health inequalities*
- *Promote inclusivity for all*
- *Reduce poverty*

### 1. HIGHLIGHTS

#### Healthy Environments

##### ***1.1 Development of the Tees Urban Nature Network (TUNN)***

- Middlesbrough Council, in partnership with Redcar and Cleveland Council, Stockton Council, the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, and other partners, have been successful in securing the Government's Nature Towns and Cities revenue grant of £649,000 over three years ring-fenced for the delivery of the project. The Partnership was one of only 38 successful applicants from 276 bids.
- This investment will nurture collaboration between Local Authorities, communities, nature organisations, education establishments, businesses, and community groups. It will unite and empower communities to lead change and work towards unlocking innovative new finance models to reimagine and sustain green and blue spaces in our urban areas.

##### ***1.2 Managing Undernutrition South Tees (MUST): Elderly Care Homes***

- The MUST Team continues to provide dedicated support to all elderly care homes across South Tees, with a strong focus on raising nutritional standards and improving resident outcomes. Since the introduction of the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Standards in Middlesbrough care homes, we have observed a marked improvement in audit outcomes and overall.
- In the year prior to implementing these new standards, 421 Resident Audit Feedback items were identified. Following implementation, this number dropped significantly to 261. This reduction highlights the positive impact of the new framework—not only in terms of audit performance but also improving the experience and wellbeing of residents.

- Importantly, ALL care homes in Middlesbrough are now either working towards or exceeding national expectations for nutrition in care homes. This achievement highlights our commitment and the hard work the care homes have delivered to improve nutritional standards for all residents.

### ***1.3 Managing Undernutrition South Tees (MUST): Disability and Mental Health Care Homes***

The MUST Team are continuing the roll out and implementation of service into disability and mental health care homes, with 88% of residents in Middlesbrough now receiving nutritional screening. Full implementation into all care homes across South Tees is expected to be completed by the end of December 2025. Of those care homes who have completed their annual audit, 80% are achieving a Gold nutritional stand award. Within the first year of implementation of the service, the following positive changes in BMI were seen:

- Residents lost on average 4.85% of their bodyweight
- No. of residents with a BMI in the healthy weight range increased from 34% to 46%
- No. of residents with a BMI in the overweight range decreased from 21% to 10%
- No. of residents with a BMI in the obese range decreased from 20% to 14%
- No. of residents with a BMI in the overweight range decreased from 12% to 10%

This evidences that the whole care home approach to healthier lifestyles care homes have implemented with the support of the service has had a positive outcome for residents.

### ***1.4 You've Got This (YGT)***

- YGT is the Sport England funded programme that aims to support the least active to become more active. The original funding for the Local Delivery Pilots ceases this year, however the Team were successful in their "Deepening" proposal to Sport England, which ensures a further £1.96m funding to March 2028. The new Middlesbrough Local Plan includes significant input from YGT, acknowledging the importance of the physical environment in helping people to be more active. The Local Plan includes a Health and Wellbeing policy and a Health Impact Assessment Toolkit to ensure all future developments consider their impact on promoting activity.

### ***1.5 Eat Well***

- The Eat Well Schools award has recently been reviewed and will launch formally in September 2025. During a trial period of the new criteria Macmillan Academy achieved the bronze award.
- The Eat Well Early Years award has also been under review in line with the new government Early Years Foundation stage nutrition guidance that comes into effect in September 202. Currently engaging with a number of settings to pilot the new criteria.

## **2. Vulnerabilities**

### ***2.2 Changing Futures***

- We have a Changing Futures staff member who is available Monday to Friday based at Middlesbrough House to provide walk in support. Staff can support people who present and are seeking help for their current situation. In quarter 1, 219 people presented at Middlesbrough House, most (196) were not known to the CF team.

- Reasons for presenting included: housing needs; support with paperwork; Tees Valley Home Finder drop-in service; financial support; foodbank vouchers and substance use issues.

## **2.3 Substance Misuse**

There has been a lot of work to review performance against all set targets. The service has developed improvement plans against the targets with some really successful pathways implemented, including:

- Enhanced reengagement pathway for people who were at risk of dropping out, which was impacting on the wait for other clients. We have seen at least 30 people who would have disengaged came back into treatment through this with 12 of those successful completion.
- There is a presence in the Multi-Agency Children's Hub (MACH) each day screening referrals for adults and children, to identify people who may need support from the service.
- Established a pathway with Thirteen to support their referring into treatment, now working to change screening to earlier on in their processes
- Worker based in Police custody to identify frequent flyers and engage them in treatment where needed.
- We are supporting the Intense Support Court that can compel engagement with services through the criminal justice system and have had good feedback from courts and probation on work being done with people and expertise of workers. We have had good results in getting people to rehab or successfully completing treatment.
- The night clinic that was set up to support vulnerable women and those sex working has been really successful in supporting people out of hours, and has created a safe space and a community in the night clinic where the women come together, eat together, chat and engage with whichever part of the clinic they need in that moment. So far the clinic has achieved some significant results with some of the most vulnerable people in Middlesbrough:
  - 20 vulnerable women or sex workers are now in structured treatment
  - An additional 28 have been supported through the night clinic
  - 8 have been supported into accommodation from being street homeless
  - 4 have gone to detox and rehab with a further 3 on the pathway
  - 2 no longer sex work as they no longer need to buy heroin due to being in treatment
  - We have administered naloxone four times in the night clinic. These women may have died if out on the streets when this occurred. One of our women recognised an overdose in someone else and ran to the clinic to get our help and naloxone and she stated that was from us talking to her every week about overdose and naloxone.

## **3. Best Start in Life**

### **3.1 Oral Health**

- We have secured funding from the NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) to support the delivery of a targeted fluoride varnish programme in schools, to improve the oral health of children. Commissioning is underway with local dental practices across South Tees, with the aim of awarding contracts in September 2025. We have received free Colgate resources from central government for the South Tees Supervised Toothbrushing Programme. The free resources will be utilised by the Supervised Toothbrushing

Programme along with other services working with 3- to 5-year-olds in our most deprived neighbourhoods.

### **3.2 Healthy Weight**

- We are working with Middlesbrough 0-19 service (health visiting and school nursing) to develop the Growing Well, Growing Healthy programme in Middlesbrough, replacing the previous HENRY programme. This will provide healthy weight programmes and messages from antenatal, under 5's and 5–16-year-olds. We are also working with University College London (UCL) on the SHINE research programme (Studying Happiness, self-Image, Nutrition and Eating in children) across South Tees. Currently recruiting schools to participate in this research programme.

### **3.3 Infant Feeding**

- The “Mamazing” breastfeeding campaign, a collaborative project involving colleagues from Public Health, Family Hubs, Marketing and Communications, Maternity Services and the Middlesbrough 0-19 team was developed, recruiting six local mothers in Middlesbrough from a competition which was held in January 2025. The six mothers have featured across the campaign in various promotional materials on billboards, bus stops, buses, digital screens, video, social media and print materials.
- The aim of the campaign is to increase breastfeeding rates, encouraging mothers to breastfeed for longer, and normalising breastfeeding. The campaign contributes towards Middlesbrough becoming a Breastfeeding Borough and the Start for Life offer with the Middlesbrough Family Hubs.

## **4. III Health Prevention**

### **4.1 Stop Smoking Service (SSS)**

- SSS continues to see increases in referral numbers due to implemented referral pathways with James Cook University Hospital, educational settings, the Ambulance Service and primary care providers. In addition to the agreed pathways, we have seen an increase in self-referrals through the implementation of the 25/26 marketing strategy for the service all of which includes referral links and QR codes.
- Since SSS became the first and only local authority in the northeast to implement Varenicline as a standard quit aid in addition to Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) and vaping products we have seen a predicted shift in preferred quit routes. Varenicline tablets can only be issued as a sole product, and this has resulted in a reduction of those requesting either dual NRT or combination NRT/vapes. The next steps are to continue to increase access points with an emphasis on under-represented groups identified through the recent Health Equity Audit.

### **4.2 Healthy Heart Checks**

- All South Tees GPs have signed up to the new service specification for the next 3-5 years and we are working with ELM GP Federation to develop the community delivery element with a targeted delivery plan to target the areas with low assessment numbers in key deciles. Plans are in place to train our substance misuse nurses to deliver Healthy Heart checks to increase the general health offer alongside current support for substance misuse issues.

## **5. Health Protection**

### **5.1 Environmental**

- In June 2025 the South Tees Clean Air Strategy was reviewed and updated with progress reports from partners.
- Middlesbrough Council submitted their annual status report (ASR) for air quality to DEFRA. The ASR provides a summary of air quality across a local authority area and provides an opportunity for the local authority to update on the progress with air quality improvement measures.

### **5.2 Communicable Disease**

- The Outbreak Management Plan and Infection Prevention Control Policy have now been signed off and adopted.
- Exercise Pegasus is a national-level exercise involving ministerial participation and Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms [COBR] activation) scheduled between September and November 2025. The key purpose is to simulate a realistic pandemic scenario, and is the first of its kind in nearly a decade.
- To support local preparation for Exercise Pegasus, Exercise Solaris took place in April 2025, to exercise multi-agency pandemic response arrangements and plans at a local and regional level in preparation for Exercise Pegasus. Following this a Tees subgroup has been developed to test local Council pandemic preparedness plans. A workshop was held in August to test the plans and make any local amendments prior to Pegasus.

### **5.3 Mobilisation of new Tees Sexual Health Services**

- A consortium consisting of University Hospitals Tees (UHT, lead), ELM GP Federation (south Tees) and H&SH GP Federation (north Tees) are delivering sexual health services across Tees from August 2025 following successful mobilisation. Teeswide clinical services will be delivered by the UHT with the two community contraception contracts delivered by the two GP Federations.

## **6. Emotional Health and Wellbeing**

### **6.1 Dementia Friendly Care Homes Project**

- The Dementia Friendly Care Home guide has been highlighted in CQC reports as an example of best practice for Care Home providers to promote independence and social interaction as well as improving the experience of residents. However, public health training and support capacity to support multiple care homes is limited.

### **6.2 HeadStart**

- The HeadStart service is now fully funded from the Public Health grant, and that funding certainty has facilitated a restructure of the team to shift to a South Tees model and strengthened management capacity. Work is also underway on a new delivery model which will be implemented from September 2025. The new model will maintain an element of universal delivery but will shift capacity to a more targeted approach in secondary settings to better contribute to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy mission recommendations. Working closely with education colleagues this will focus on supporting improved attendance.

- Quarter 1 also sees a shift in school delivery as the team focus on year 6 transition. All schools receive classroom resources which include pupil workbooks and teacher resources. 27 primary schools in Middlesbrough received targeted support with 1,074 year 6 pupils supported.
- The new parenting model (Investing in Play (liP)) has now completed the first tranche. liP has been adopted across the Children & Young People mental health system by Public Health, VCS partners and TEWV. Evaluation has been very positive and additional staff across the partners will commence training in January to make the delivery model more resilient.
- The army of HeadStarters (mental health champions) across South Tees continues to grow. Updates to the content of the pathway has seen a focus being placed on skills for future education, training and employment. Links have been established with 'Skills Builder' and 'The Key Fund' to give participating pupils a real opportunity to develop and deliver projects and access funds to do this. Work is also underway with HDRC to upskill HeadStarters to become health researchers.
- The team are supporting the newly opened Hope provision – a specialist provision for primary pupils requiring a short-term placement for SEMH difficulties. This includes participation on the assessment panel and parental support sessions.

### **6.3 Suicide Prevention**

- In this Quarter we have developed an improved information sharing agreement with Cleveland Police so our Tees Preventing Suicide Public Health Practitioner, having completing vetting and training, now has access to police internal information system (NICHE) and open access to Middlesbrough police station, improving the early understanding and action following suspected suicides.
- In addition to improved information sharing arrangements with drug and alcohol recovery services to enhance understanding of drug and alcohol usage in suspected suicide deaths we also now receive record of inquests directly from the Coroner's Office, which we have not had access to for many years. This will help us to identify deaths by suspected suicide that have not been through the real time surveillance and allow us to have clarity on deaths where there has been uncertainty (such as self-poisoning [drug-related deaths] or suicide).

### **6.4 South Tees Wellbeing Network**

- The Network continues to grow its active membership and in Q1 has grown in multiple aspects, from content submitted to members joining. The Network has grown steadily and there are now 985 active members.
- The Network has successfully created thousands of actively engaged content pages on a range of collaborative programmes, including the Wellbeing Pathway Steering Group with 23 members representing a broad selection of stakeholders from multiple sectors and areas of wellbeing, including lived experience representations; Loneliness and Social Isolation Event with network members and books for wellbeing through library services.