

EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Julia Rostron - Executive Member for Adult Social Care

DATE OF MEETING: 26 November 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
- Safe & Resilient Communities

1. HIGHLIGHTS

Update:

- 1.1 On the 12th November 2025 Executive approved the delivery of Health respite at Levick Court. Levick Court is a 16 bed respite scheme for adults with learning disabilities. It was originally purpose built for the delivery of health and social care respite, however health services withdrew from the scheme just prior to its first opening. It does therefore, have the majority of facilities needed to accommodate a health respite service. Demand for social care respite has reduced following covid, and it is estimated we require on average 8 beds, therefore we have sought an agreement with the ICB (Integrated Care Board) for Health respite to be delivered in the remaining 8 beds. Clinical support to this service will be provided by TEWV (Tees Esk & Wear Valley Trust). The mobilisation phase will now be progressed with a projected opening date of April 2026. Families and carers have been involved and kept updated throughout the process. This will ensure the efficient use of our resource, and also provide reassurance that both social care and health respite for adults with a learning disability will be retained locally, prevent families from having to travel out of area.
- 1.2 The 2025 annual rough sleeper count was carried out on the morning of 12th November 2025. This date was agreed across the region so there was a clear snapshot of need. Staff and volunteers met at Stages Academy at 3:30am ready for the count to take place between 4am and 6am. This was followed by a 30 minute debrief. 13 people supported the annual count including the Mayor, Councillor Morish, MBC staff and two members of staff from Depaul. Four teams of three people covered four key areas across Middlesbrough. These areas had been identified as places where it was known that there was a high concentration of people rough sleeping and where previous annual counts had covered so we had an accurate basis of comparison to previous years. No other areas were covered as there had been no recent reports of rough sleeping from our weekly sweeps. During the count, 23 people were found rough sleeping. Of these, 20

were male and 3 were female. The areas covered and the number of people found were as follows:

- St. Hildas and surrounding area – 14 people
- Central Middlesbrough – 4 people
- Linthorpe Cemetery & Newport - 0
- Linthorpe Road & Albert Park – 5 people

All rough sleepers were directed to DePaul drop-in on the morning of the sweep for additional support and food. No major incidents reported during the count. My thanks go to all the volunteers who participated in this year annual count.

For context annual Count numbers for Middlesbrough over the last three years are:

2023 - 19

2024 - 25

2025 – 23

Middlesbrough Council is in the processing of setting up a scheme with DePaul for further outreach support, to help build relationships and deliver further support to anyone sleeping rough in the town.

1.3 In November we have seen the start to the new commissioning model for the provision of homecare across the Borough. This model brings a new approach, establishing geographical working in four distinct clusters with eight partner provider organisations. This work aims to support the work of the neighbourhood model by working on a locality basis. This is the culmination of over 18 months in planning and procurement processes, impact to individuals has been minimal with existing clients retaining the same provider if they choose to do so, however as we move forward over subsequent years providers will start to form that geographical footprint with the aim of connecting into community assets and building understanding across the communities in which they operate.

Veterans Community Initiative – Supporting Local Need

1.4 Middlesbrough Council's Staying Included service has launched the Veterans & Armed Forces Community Club, a monthly breakfast group designed to bring together veterans and serving personnel in a welcoming, social environment. The initiative was developed by Staying Included Officer Linda Ford in response to feedback highlighting the need for local peer support and opportunities to connect. The first meeting attracted over 20 attendees and received overwhelmingly positive feedback, with future sessions scheduled into 2026. Supported by partners including The Royal British Legion and Help for Heroes, the club provides a safe space to share experiences, build friendships, and access information on services and support.

1.5 This initiative demonstrates the Council's commitment to addressing community needs and reducing isolation among veterans. By creating a regular, accessible forum, the Staying Included service is helping to strengthen local networks and improve wellbeing for those who have served. The club also aligns with the Council's Armed Forces Covenant obligations, ensuring veterans feel valued and supported within their community. Early success suggests the group will continue to grow, offering practical advice, social connection, and a sense of belonging for Middlesbrough's armed forces community.

Link to a recent Gazette article that highlighted the new provision:-

[New veterans community club in Middlesbrough off to a flying start - Teesside Live](#)

1.6 On the 18th November an event took place at the Town Hall “Our Place, Our Say”. This event was for people with learning disabilities and autistic people, families, friends and supporters with the following aims:

- Meet staff from local organisations whom provide support and advice
- Find out what can help people and their families
- Find out about local health and community services
- Encourage people to have their say, tell us what they think about health and care near them

The event included stalls and activities, workshop, crafts and live entertainment and was well attended.

1.7 Week commencing 17th November was Adult Social Care Safeguarding week, with a focus on prevention. This was a time for ourselves and our partners to join forces to raise awareness of key safeguarding issues, start important conversations about safeguarding, learn how to recognise signs of abuse and neglect and develop confidence in recording and reporting safeguarding themes. There was a full programme of activities during the course of the week including how engagement with local communities can help, investment in trauma informed practice and videos for users with lived experience on the difference effective safeguarding made to their lives.

1.8 On the 24th November we formally launched the revised guidance for Adults and Children services on effective working together to support domestic abuse victims, survivors and their children. This follows an in dept internal audit report with subsequent recommendations on areas for improvement. The launch will be attended, and is supported by providers of specialist domestic abuse support services and sexual violence services.

1.9 Working with Healthwatch Middlesbrough, two podcasts have been completed promoting the valuable work of IRIS (Identification and referral to improve safety) project in Middlesbrough. The IRIS Programme provides training, support, referral, and advocacy model to support General Practice to better support their patients affected by domestic abuse. To listen to the podcasts click the following link:

[Podcasts | Healthwatch Middlesbrough](#)

2. THE TIME AHEAD

Update:

2.1 Following the completion of our domestic abuse needs assessment, our Domestic Abuse Strategy will be presented to executive in December outlining the areas of focus and the commissioning plan for support services locally.

2.2 Work is progressing with the Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC) to de-escalate the monitoring of Middlesbrough Council following the “Requires Improvement” rating from the Care Quality Commission earlier in the year. Indications are that the improvement work has progressed sufficiently well and DHSC are

confident that this will continue, as such quarterly monitoring arrangements are no longer required. Formal confirmation of this is expected in December.