

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	
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Report of:	Annabel Bates - Executive Director of Children's Services
Relevant Executive Member:	Cllr Philippa Storey - Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Education and Culture
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	3 December 2025
Title:	SHiFT Programme Progress Update
Report for:	Information
Status:	Public
Council Plan priority:	Safe and resilient communities
Key decision:	No
Why:	Report is for information only
Subject to call in?	No
Why:	Report is for information only

Proposed decision(s)
That the Executive: NOTES the information contained within this report.

Executive summary
The report provides an update on the partnership work between SHiFT and Middlesbrough Council since the last report to Executive on 5 March 2025. SHiFT is a national charity that aims to shift practice to improve outcomes for children and young people who are involved in, or at risk of, involvement in crime. The report requests the Executive notes the progress made in relation to our partnership working with SHiFT and the impact that it has had on our children and young people.

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions.

- 1.1 To update the Executive on our three-year partnership with SHiFT, which is a national systems change charity working alongside Middlesbrough Children's Services. The partnership began in June 2024 with the first of two 18-month programmes with children and young people caught up in, or at risk of, cycles of crime and exploitation.
- 1.2 To share with the Executive that the costs of the partnership are supported by the sum of £600,000 which SHiFT secured from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, alongside match funding of £600,000 from the Council, invested over three financial years.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	SHiFT provides a pivotal role in advocating for children across social care, youth justice, education, and police services to ensure we deliver our ambitions around this theme.
A healthy Place	One of SHiFT's core values is promoting inclusivity in its work with children to ensure pathways are in place to improve life chances of children.
Safe and resilient communities	SHiFT practice is grounded in systemic change for children and young people caught up in, or at risk of, cycles of crime and exploitation. This is a key priority for SHiFT which can contribute towards the priority of reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.
Delivering best value	Robust governance is provided by the Local SHiFT Partnership Board, meeting on a quarterly basis in order to ensure value for money.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Executive notes the information contained within this report.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

- 3.1 Founded in 2019, SHiFT has a track record of delivering exceptional outcomes that break the destructive cycle of children and young people caught up in, or at risk of involvement in, crime.
- 3.2 SHiFT Middlesbrough provides 1-1 intensive support for twenty-seven of the most vulnerable children and young people in Middlesbrough. Children and young people identified for SHiFT cohort one were those for whom, despite the efforts of other professionals, 'business as usual' responses had not been able to make the difference needed and concern about their wellbeing was high and escalating.
- 3.3 At the start of SHiFT's work, over a quarter of the children were accommodated in high-cost placements, which were often a long way from home and not having an

impact on improving children's circumstances. At the time of writing this report three children have successfully returned home to reside with family, two children have returned to Middlesbrough and reside in supported accommodation and the others continue to be supported out of area.

- 3.4 From the 27 children and young people who were identified and invited for SHiFT support as part of cohort one in June 2024, most of these children and young people have engaged well, building trusting relationships with their SHiFT Guide. A recent End of Programme Report has been presented to the local SHiFT Board evidencing the positive impact on safety and wellbeing as a result of this work, including a reduction of missing episodes and a reduction in arrests compared to the 12 months prior to SHiFT involvement. Scoping for cohort two is underway and work will begin with 27 new children and young people in January 2026.
- 3.5 The total cost of the partnership to Middlesbrough Council is approximately £11k per child for an 18-month programme of intensive individual support, which includes working with everyone who is identified as important in that child's world. This represents good value for money given the highly complex needs of this vulnerable group, and the intensity and expertise of the work SHiFT is delivering.

4. Background and relevant information

- 4.1 SHiFT has a strong and growing track record of strong practice that is breaking cycles of crime with and for the most vulnerable children. Headlines from SHiFT's national evidence of impact to date, for children with a SHiFT Guide 12-18 months include:
- 41% reduction in offences
 - 58% reduction in reported missing episodes
 - 51% reduction in arrests
- 4.2 Economic analysis of SHiFT's work conducted in 2022 shows that for each child considered, costs avoided in the next five years by breaking cycles of crime ranged from £1.8m to £164k. For every £1 spent on SHiFT £8 is saved over 5 years.
- 4.3 The SHiFT programme contributes to Safe and Resilient Communities within the council plan through a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour and through the promotion of new ideas and community initiatives.
- 4.4 SHiFT practice is delivered via a small group of highly skilled professionals who are closely supported and challenged to work in 'the SHiFT way' by SHiFT's national team and multiagency local governance. Each guide works intensively and consistently with six children, with the lead guide working with three children.
- 4.5 The annual partnership review was presented to the Local SHiFT Board in October 2025 and noted that SHiFT practice closely monitors progress for children and families as part of SHiFT's Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework. Guides share monthly child level survey data, which is analysed alongside baseline data (the year prior to SHiFT) to track change and impact.

- 4.6 The annual review highlighted the work of SHIFT Guides who have worked with children in a variety of ways, often going over and above to provide support to the children they are working with. Activity has included support with access to education, training, and employment by arranging for children to attend open days, assisting with their applications, and taking them to interviews. Attending the Police Station and/or Court to assist with interviews and court processes, maintaining contact with children placed out of area often travelling significant distances on a regular basis to maintain a positive relationship with the child.
- 4.7 Data presented in the annual review shows a 68% decrease in suspensions, permanent exclusions, and managed moves, a 50% decrease in reported missing episodes, 9% decrease in arrests and 22% of children in the cohort closing to Children's Social Care or Early Help.
- 4.8 The learning from cohort one has been fundamental to assisting with the shaping of the strategic objectives for cohort two which are in the final stages of development, ready to begin work with this new group of children in January 2026.

5.0 Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

5.1 Not applicable.

6.0 Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended.

6.1 There are no alternative recommendations in this update report.

7.0 Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including procurement and Social Value)	The total cost of the partnership with SHIFT is approximately £1.2m over three financial years from April 2024, with £0.6m of funding from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, alongside match funding of £0.6m from the Council. This is funded as a transformation initiative from Flexible Use of Capital Receipts over three financial years. Specific cost savings targets of £0.4m per annum from 2024/25 were included for the SHIFT Project (CC06) in the 2024/25 approved budget by Council. However, it has since been determined that the purpose of the SHIFT programme is primarily to drive service improvements rather than budgeted cost savings. The Executive approved, as part of the 2024/25 Revenue and Capital Outturn report to Executive on 11 June 2025, that the savings would be merged with the Review of Placements (CC02) savings targets. These are now monitored as part of the Preventing Care Starts and Placement Sufficiency project at the monthly Children's Thematic Transformation

	Board, alongside broader impact data, and on a quarterly basis through Middlesbrough's Local SHiFT Board.
Legal	No new legal considerations.
Risk	In relation to risk that practice does not deliver benefits as intended, the Partnership Agreement provides for termination of the partnership on notice, or without notice in exceptional circumstances. Key mitigations in relation to operational risk to children/families and associated reputational risks include regular oversight through the Local SHiFT Board chaired by the Executive Director of Children's Services. The Board ensures that the programme is delivered as intended and any emerging issues are swiftly addressed. SHiFT meets all Charity Commission governance requirements, with a Board of Trustees (who meet quarterly) and specialist sub-Committees. SHiFT has a clear, regularly reviewed and communicated safeguarding policy and Critical Incident Notification Process. Continued implementation of the SHiFT project is relevant to the following strategic risks and impacts positively on them: - SR02 – Volatility in the demand, complexity and cost of children's social care - SR01 – Failure to maintain a balanced budget and MTFP - SR13 – Failure to deliver transformation successfully
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty, and Community Cohesion	There are no human rights, equality or community cohesion issues arising because of the recommendations in this report. The SHiFT programme's impact on reducing crime and improving behaviour and engagement in school is likely to correlate to improvements in community cohesion in the longer term.
Reducing Poverty	Improving access to and engagement with education and partner services for vulnerable children within the cohort can support them to achieve better educational outcomes. This is linked to increased employability skills that reduce the likelihood of experiencing poverty as adults.
Climate Change / Environmental	There are no climate change / environmental issues arising as a result of the recommendations in this report.
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	SHiFT is working with children and young people, some of whom are care experienced, to improve their outcomes and mitigate risk factors. Continued delivery of the programme will positively impact on those children in scope. Learning from it will also be applied to the wider

	cohort of children that the Council works with, supporting work to improve outcomes.
Data Protection	A Data Protection Information Agreement is in place to ensure a compliant framework for sharing Council data with SHiFT.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Further update required on progress	Executive Director of Children's Services	September 2026

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
SHiFT Initial Executive report	SHiFT Executive Report	20 December 2023

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