



EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE TO COUNCIL

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

DATE OF MEETING: 14 January 2026

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. Update:

- 1.1 On the 3rd December 2025 Executive approved the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-2028, along with the proposed delivery plan for recommissioning of support services. Middlesbrough Council have a statutory duty under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to assess the need for accommodation based domestic abuse support in their area every three years, to develop and publish a strategy for the provision of support having regard to the needs assessment, and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.
- 1.2 Domestic Abuse strategies play a critical role in preventing abuse, protecting victims and co-ordinating support services within local communities. The strategy identifies partnership work delivered to date and sets out the key strategic objectives required moving forward. The Middlesbrough Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-28 was developed by the Middlesbrough Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership Board (DASP). The strategy builds on the strong foundations established vis the Preventing Domestic Abuse Strategy 2019 and the Domestic Abuse safe Accommodation Strategy 2021. The strategy has been developed taking into account the following:
 - Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment
 - Option Appraisal regarding future model for Safe Accommodation
- 1.3 As a result of the Needs Assessment, the DASP has also identified gaps in support services locally. A number of recommissioning developments have been identified focussing on the following:
 - **Safe Accommodation** (Refuge, Sanctuary, Dispersed, Complex need)
 - **Community Based Provision** (Referral and Response, Independent Domestic Violence Advisers, Therapeutic support and counselling, Parenting support)
 - **Prevention** (Work with schools and Colleges, Community Engagement, Domestic champions, and support with employers)

- **By and For Specialist Service** (Services working with protected characteristics)
- **IRIS Programme** (Working with Primary care to identify and respond to domestic abuse effectively)
- **Immigration Advice** (For victims and their children who are fleeing domestic abuse with insecure immigration status)

The link below will provide information on both the Domestic Abuse needs assessment and the associated strategy.

[Domestic abuse needs assessment | Middlesbrough Council](#)

- 1.4 In December I attended Overview & Scrutiny Board to provide details regarding my time as Executive member for this portfolio, and the work I have been doing in addition I outlined progress to date in regard to our CQC improvement plan, alongside some service pressures.
- 1.5 There has been press interest in the development of Levick during the month. A BBC article and radio interview with a potential family member has highlighted the valuable service this will offer. A link for the article and radio interview are provided below.

[Middlesbrough respite centre to replace closing facilities - BBC News](#)

[BBC Radio Tees - BBC Radio Tees, 'Those 33 nights are our golden days'](#)

2. HIGHLIGHTS

Update:

2.1 National Health Homes Awards 2025

The Staying Put Team were shortlisted for the Disabled Facilities Grant major Adaptation Service of the year award. These awards are held in high regard within the home Improvement Agency sector. Whilst the team did not win this prestigious award on the accession they were singled out for a Commendation of Excellence, in recognition of the excellent service the agency provides to the residents of Middlesbrough. This award is considered one of the “big 3” within the Home Improvement agency sector alongside the HIA of the year and the Handy person Service of the year – Middlesbrough Staying Put Agency have now won, or been highly commended in all three awards. I would like to congratulate and express my thanks to all the staff in the Staying Put agency for their hard work to deliver such continued success.

3. THE TIME AHEAD

Update:

3.1 The mental Health Bill has now received royal Assent to modernise outdated mental health legislation and improve care for seriously ill patients. The new Mental Health Act will ensure patients have stronger rights and greater control over their treatment

through new statutory care and treatment plans. Families and carers will have more involvement in decisions around treatment, giving them a real say in supporting their loved ones. As the detail of the new Act is considered it is likely there will be implications for Adult Social Care, due to a likely increase in demand for more robust community services. Work will now be progressed alongside statutory partners to begin to understand the full implications and plan for commissioning activity to ensure the community infrastructure can meet the future demands as a result of the legislative change.

- 3.2 During the festive season Adult Social Care have been promoting Togetherall – this is an anonymous online community to support mental well-being 24/7, 365 days per week, as a free service. While the holiday season can represent joy, gratitude and togetherness, it can also be associated with family and financial pressure, loneliness, anxiety and stress. These feelings can be difficult to cope with. Therefore Togetherall was commissioned to provide any resident of Middlesbrough a little extra support for their mental health, we have actively promoted this service, ensuring anyone can go to togetherall.com and register for free with their Middlesbrough postcode. As the service is available 24/7 and is a safe place to air concerns, and connect with others that may be experiencing similar feelings, it can offer valuable support when other services have limited availability.