

ASC Scrutiny

Subject Title: Directorate Improvement Plan Update

Date: 13 April 2026

BACKGROUND

- CQC Assessment resulted in Middlesbrough being rated 'Requires Improvement'.
- Triggered development of formal Improvement Plan aligned to CQC themes.
- CQC Report was published Feb 2025.
- Improvement plan is monitored via the Improvement Programme Board and Scrutiny Panel
- Requirement to submit progress updates to the DHSC quarterly which have resulted in de-escalation from formal monitoring

Governance

- Wrap-around governance with PMO
 - Programme Manager works closely with PMO lead to ensure the programme is aligned to corporate requirements
- Monthly reporting to Programme Board
 - Programme Board is chaired by Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration
- Risk & performance monitored via project plans
 - Risks and issues are monitored by the programme manager with the relevant project leads
- Closure reports and case studies for evidence are developed as items are complete and closed for evidence

Key Focus Areas

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) report identified critical areas that required focused improvement

These were:

- Having a **clear vision and strategy** for the Directorate
- Improving **support for unpaid carers**
- Developing a **robust workforce strategy** with a clear emphasis on **equality, diversity and inclusion**
- Tackling **digital exclusion** to ensure residents can access services effectively
- Enhancing the **promotion and visibility of services** to the community
- Embedding **co-production** so that people who use services have a genuine voice in shaping them
- Undertaking a deep dive review of the ACT model to **address homelessness and related vulnerabilities.**

These priorities formed the foundation of our improvement programme and have been translated into formal projects with clear governance and delivery plans to ensure sustainable change.

Key Focus Areas - Projects

Key Focus Area	Update
Vision and Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved & published
Unpaid Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilise – targeting hidden carers to continue DASS in Redcar and Middlesbrough to co-chair carers forum Pilot in planning for Redcar carers together to complete carers assessments Draft bridging plan developed
Workforce Strategy <i>(inclusive of Equality, Diversity and Inclusions)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy approved Working group meeting Care Academy launch 1st May – over 100 applications for apprentices Development of a recruitment mirco-site

Key Focus Areas – Projects

Key Focus Area	Update
Tackling Digital Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan in delivery with 4 Key workstreams developed (Digital Champions Programme, Volunteers Programme, Front Door and Community Hubs Digital Offer, Community Digital Support Model) • The project has seen early successes with 24/25 digital champions appointed; Drop in digital sessions established; Partnership with refurb ICT established – some delay following absence of lead
Promotion of Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working group established • Revisions in place to website • Celebration of social work week
Co Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan in delivery with a Directorate wide co-production framework now developed • Healthwatch have been appointed as our co-production delivery partner with the lead due to be appointed mid December
Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Housing Solutions, Prevention and Support recruited. • Plans for move to Broadcasting house

Other Key Initiatives

Key Focus Area	Update
Performance Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New performance framework developed for 26/27 – to be brought to future scrutiny
Magic Notes (transcription tool)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magic Notes Transcription in place - has resulted in social workers having the ability to have more quality conversations with the people they are supporting and subsequently more accurate and detailed recording
Conversational Approach to Wellbeing and Care Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This change in practice and culture is being led by the principal social worker • Roll out across the department – now working in Access & Safeguarding along side the review of the front door.
Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in areas of focus • Service Director – Adult Social Care appointed • Growth in review team / audit and practice/ DOLS signatory • Review of the front door model in progress

Next Steps

- Continue Identifying Improvement Opportunities
 - Investment in continuous improvement- post recruited – to undertake review of reablement
- Form a cross-functional group to explore AI and automation solutions aimed at improving capacity, reducing administrative burden, and supporting frontline staff.
- Develop a Cost Avoidance Impact Model
 - Work ongoing to create a framework to measure and evidence where key initiatives have delivered cost avoidance—linking these outcomes to budget requirements while demonstrating person-centred benefits.
- Strengthen Collaboration with ICT and Corporate Centre
 - Embed regular engagement sessions to align improvement and transformation initiatives with wider organisational digital strategies, ensuring scalability and sustainability.