

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
between
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
and
Middlesbrough Council

1. Background

1.1. In December 2025, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ('MHCLG') announced a £55.8m multiple disadvantage programme. This programme is named Changing Futures and will run for three years, from financial year 2026/27 to 2028/29. For clarity, this builds on a preceding five-year programme of the same name.

1.2. For the purposes of the programme, 'multiple disadvantage' describes combinations of experience that include homelessness, substance misuse, domestic abuse, mental ill health and contact with the criminal justice system – particularly where this drives repeated contact with crisis response services.

1.3. Middlesbrough Council has been selected to receive an allocation of £3,114,939 under this programme, based on the locality's ranking in the 2025 Indices of Multiple Deprivation. This allocation is profiled as below:

2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total
£1,038,313	£1,038,313	£1,038,313	£3,114,939

2. Purpose of the MoU

2.1. This Memorandum of Understanding ('MoU') sets out the terms, principles and practices that will apply to the working relationship between MHCLG and Middlesbrough Council ('the Council') (collectively 'the Parties') regarding the administration and delivery of the Changing Futures programme.

2.2. This MoU is not legally binding, and no legal obligations or legal rights shall arise between the Parties from the provisions of the MoU. The Parties enter into the MoU intending to honour all their obligations.

3. Purpose of funding

3.1. The goals of the funding are to:

3.1.1. help to stabilise and improve health, safety, wellbeing and access to support for local cohorts of adults experiencing multiple disadvantage, to include the provision of direct support to a minimum of 280 beneficiaries over the funding period

3.1.2. promote greater integration and collaboration across local services alongside increased use of person-centred, trauma-informed approaches, and in the long-term, reduce demand on services

3.1.3. promote strong multi-agency partnerships, governance and better use of data so that local strategy and commissioning better responds to and prevents multiple disadvantage

3.2. Delivery of the programme is underpinned by principles set out in the prospectus, which are:

3.2.1 to work in partnership across local services and the voluntary and community sector, building strong cross-sector partnerships at a strategic and operational level that can design and implement an improved approach to tackling multiple disadvantage.

3.2.2 to promote coordinated support, and better integrate local services that support adults experiencing multiple disadvantage to enable a 'whole person' approach.

3.2.3. to create flexibility in how local services respond to adults experiencing multiple disadvantage, taking a system-wide view with shared accountability and ownership leading to better service provision across statutory and voluntary organisations and a 'no wrong door' approach to support.

3.2.4. to involve people with lived experience of multiple disadvantage in the design, delivery and evaluation of improved services and in governance and decision making.

3.2.5. to take a trauma-informed approach across local system, services and in the governance of the programme.

3.2.6. to commit to driving lasting systems change, with long-term sustainable changes to benefit people experiencing multiple disadvantage and commitment to sustain the benefits of the programme beyond the lifetime of the funding.

3.3. The Council agrees to spend the funding in pursuit of the goals at 3.1. and in accordance with the principles at 3.2.

3.4. The Council agrees to develop and maintain strong partnership working structures at both strategic and operational levels, to include at minimum representation from Adult Social Care, Public Health, Housing, Policing, Probation, NHS and Voluntary and Community Sector partners.

4. Programme delivery

4.1. The Council agrees to:

4.1.1. develop and maintain a live delivery plan to an MHCLG template, which will serve as a reference for understanding local activity over the course of the programme.

4.1.2. engage in good faith with a quarterly reporting cycle to MHCLG, to include a written update on delivery against the local plan, confirmation of the number of beneficiaries supported to date, and participation in a quarterly call with MHCLG officials to expand and reflect upon local learning and delivery.

4.1.3 coordinate a partnership self-assessment of system maturity on a six-monthly basis, based on a maturity framework provided by MHCLG.

4.1.4. nominate or appoint as appropriate persons to take the following key roles in relation to the programme per paragraph 22 of the prospectus:

A local political lead

A senior responsible officer

A partnership/programme lead

A system change lead

A lived experience lead

A data and digital lead

4.1.5. engage with MHCLG and other Governmental departments to identify and resolve national-level policy barriers and issues that affect people's experience of multiple disadvantage.

4.2. The Changing Futures team at MHCLG agree to:

4.2.1. provide a prospectus that makes clear the purpose and objectives of the programme.

4.2.2. supply evidence-based support and guidance on effective models of delivery.

4.2.3. facilitate and promote cross-area learning and networking.

4.2.4. support local flexibility in how the local programme delivery direct support and systems change, recognising the variability of local context across the programme areas.

4.2.5. appoint and oversee the work of a Lived Experience support provider and a Learning and Delivery support provider to assist areas in delivering a successful programme.

4.2.6. work collaboratively with local programme teams on co-design of further guidance, monitoring and evaluation elements.

5. Evaluation

5.1. MHCLG will commission a robust national evaluation to understand the programme's impact, build the national evidence base and inform cross-government policy as it pertains to multiple disadvantage.

5.2. The structure of the evaluation remains under development, but we anticipate that participation will entail:

5.2.1. collation of high-level beneficiary metrics on a quarterly basis (per 4.1.2.), likely by the nominated data or programme lead.

5.2.2. collation of a basic set of systems metrics alongside the Systems Maturity Framework self-assessment every six months (per 4.1.3.).

5.2.3. six-monthly collection of information relating to beneficiary circumstances and support journeys, likely by frontline caseworkers. A standardised survey platform and questionnaire will be provided.

5.2.4. participation in qualitative interviews by programme staff, caseworkers and a small subset of beneficiaries, to provide a qualitative underpinning to the quantitative data. These interviews will be conducted by the evaluation contractor with support from trained peer researchers.

5.2.5. work to ensure compliance with data protection standards, likely by the nominated data lead.

5.2.6. contribution to smaller ad-hoc evaluation projects, which may entail interviews with programme staff, caseworkers or local stakeholders.

5.3. The Council agrees to participation in the evaluation.

5.4 The Council agrees to share data with MHCLG - including beneficiary personal identifiers - for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation and agrees to collaborate on appropriate governance before data collection begins.

6. Financial arrangements

6.1. The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has determined under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 that a grant of £3,114,939 should be paid to Middlesbrough Council.

6.2. The maximum amount of grant payable for the funding period between date of agreeing this MoU and 31/03/2029 is £3,114,939. MHCLG expects the Council to spend all grant funding by the end of the financial year 2028/29.

6.3. The grant covers revenue expenditure relating to the employment of staff – whether direct or via external commission – to deliver in accordance with the goals at 3.1., and additional activities including but not limited to facilitation of partnership events, production of learning and communication materials, travel and subsistence costs associated with participation in national learning events and local evaluation.

6.4. The funding will be paid in annual instalments at or near to the start of each financial year.

6.5. MHCLG will provide grant funding subject to the Council hereby agreeing to full transparency open book working on all matters relating to the project, including project proposals, project expenditure, quarterly reports and evaluation returns.

6.6 The Council agrees to complete an end of grant report in March 2029 which will confirm total grant expenditure. MHCLG reserves the right to quality assure this return.

6.7. Upon signed return of this MoU, MHCLG will send the Council a Grant Determination letter which sets out the financial terms and conditions under Section 31 grants.

7. Duration

7.1. This MoU applies until 31/03/2029.

7.2. This MoU will come into effect upon signature by the Parties. It may be extended by the written agreement of the Parties.

8. Assurance and risk management

8.1. The Council is expected to have the necessary governance and assurance arrangements in place and that all legal and other statutory obligations and consents will be adhered to, which may include, but not solely, state aid/subsidy control, equalities duties, procurement, health and safety and fraud.

8.2. Ownership of risk will be transferred to the Council. Councils will be responsible for mitigation of any risks that arise throughout the delivery of the programme.

8.3. The Council will complete their own Fraud Risk Assessment to ensure the safe administration of grants and that appropriate measures are put in place to mitigate against the risk of both fraud and payment error.

8.4. The Council will inform MHCLG should there be any changes to their project delivery.

8.5. The Council will undertake corrective action if the quality of work does not meet expected standards.

9. Marketing and branding

9.1. The Council agrees that UK Government should be acknowledged in all marketing and promotional material as the funding source.

9.2. MHCLG may publish relevant data and use it to inform public statements.

9.3. MHCLG will ensure that any information published will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the data protection legislation.

10. Procurement

10.1. The Council will be responsible for ensuring that any third-party partnership arrangements or procurement activities related to delivery of the Fund comply with Procurement Law and any relevant Council procurement procedures.

10.2. "Procurement Law" includes, but is not restricted to, the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, Concession Contracts Regulations 2016, Defence Security Public Contracts Regulations 2011, the Utilities and Contracts Regulations 2016 and The Procurement Act 2023 and any secondary legislation (such as regulations) and/or other Law made pursuant to the Procurement Act 2023, together with their amendments, updates and replacements from time to time.

11. Due Diligence

11.1. The Council will be responsible for undertaking due diligence checks on all third-party organisations, including community groups, suppliers and subcontractors, receiving funding and/or involved in delivery of the Fund. Evidence may be required of due diligence on community groups chosen to work with.

12. Resolution of Disputes

12.1. Any dispute that may arise as to the interpretation or application of this MoU will be settled by consultation between the Parties.

13. Legal Enforcement

13.1. This MoU is not legally enforceable. It describes the understanding between both Parties for administration and delivery of the programme.

14. Amendment of this Memorandum of Understanding

14.1. The arrangements under this MoU will be kept under review by MHCLG and the Council and can be amended upon securing written agreement between both parties.

Signed on behalf of Middlesbrough Council by:

Name:

Date:

Duly authorised to sign for Middlesbrough Council (by Chief Executive/Section 151 Officer)

Signed on behalf of MHCLG by:

Name:

Date: