

EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE TO COUNCIL

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

DATE OF MEETING: 15 July 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 Launch of Middlesbrough's Adult Social Care Academy

1.1.1 In May we launched our new Adult Social Care Academy, the academy aims to strength our workforce capability, improve practice quality and embed continuous learning across Adult Social Care. Its founding principle is "from potential to practice – growing our own" in which we aim to nurture internal talent, build sustainability and reduce reliance on external recruitment.

1.1.2 The curriculum of the academy includes:

- Foundations of Adult social Care – induction, review of core legislative components
- Professional Practice Development – legal literacy, assessment, prevention, defensible recording, reflective practice
- Specialist and Leadership strands – mental health, workforce skills, leadership and management
- Community Data & Personalisation - co-production, and specialist pathways

1.1.3 This is delivered through blended learning models which includes e-learning, workshops, action learning sets and workplace coaching.

1.1.4 We are now progressing our first cohort through the academy and will be running a "summer school" of refresher events for staff training. An evaluation will be concluded after cohort 1 to understand any lessons and improvements needed before progressing to the next cohort.

2. HIGHLIGHTS

Update:

2.1 Learning Disability Week

- 2.1.1 Week commencing 15th June 2026 was Learning Disability Week, Middlesbrough Council celebrated the achievements, contributions and voices of people with learning disabilities, while promoting greater awareness, inclusion and understanding across the community. The week provided opportunities for residents, service users, carers and partner organisations to come together through a range of activities, events and conversations focused on reducing barriers and ensuring people with learning disabilities can live fulfilling, independent lives. The council used the week to highlight the importance of choice, equality and accessibility, reinforcing its commitment to working with local people to create a more inclusive Middlesbrough where everyone is valued, respected and supported to reach their full potential.
- 2.1.2 As part of this celebration, staff from our Community Bridge project developed the following inspirational video:

[Reflecting on Learning Disability Week](#)

2.2 Adult Social Care Job Fayre

- 2.2.1 On the 10th June 2026 Adult Social Care hosted a jobs fayre at the Town hall, where Middlesbrough residents could attend to find out more about a career in adult social care. Those attending were able to find out more about the different careers, training and development opportunities available at Middlesbrough Council and the wider sector. Staff from our amazing teams were on hand to give real life stories and advice, and to help individuals get started with their applications. Over 100 people attended the fayre, and this was a start of more events to promote the valuable values of working in this field.

2.3 Carers Week

- 2.3.1 National Carers week was held on the 8-14th June 2026. A carer is anyone who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, mental health concern or addiction. During carers week we aimed to raise awareness, acknowledge the vital contributions of unpaid carers and encourage people to identify as carers and seek support if they need to. The theme for 2026 was “**Building Carer Friendly Communities**”. The theme’s purpose was to raise awareness and bring people together to ensure that communities, businesses and organisations understand, recognise and empower unpaid carers. At Middlesbrough we fully recognise the contribution made by our unpaid carers and the daily challenges they may experience. A programme of events locally took place throughout the week including meet-ups, drops-in, training, coffee mornings and a regional event in Newcastle to sign our commitment to carers.
- 2.3.2 As part of National Carers Week, we shared Mary’s story to highlight the support on offer in Middlesbrough. We have changed her name to protect her identity.

- 2.3.3 For the past 11 years, Mary has been caring for her 93 year old mum, Elsie, supporting her with all aspects of daily life, including cooking, cleaning, personal care and keeping her safe.
- 2.3.4 Mary's sister, Louise, recently suffered a fall and fractured her hip. Mary now cares for her sister as well as her mother.
- 2.3.5 Although Mary is in her 70's, she was working until recently as a veterinary nurse – a job she loved. However, due to the caring demands placed upon her Mary was unable to continue working as it was increasingly difficult to find enough hours in the day.
- 2.3.6 Mary was finding life stressful and isolating and it was difficult for her to switch off.
- 2.3.7 Mary reached out to our Adult Social Care team, where she had a conversation with an adult social care worker about her caring role and the help she could get. After hearing about her circumstances, adult social care adjusted the amount and frequency of support Elsie received at home from her domiciliary carers who now visit four times daily to assist with personal care and tasks around the home.
- 2.3.8 We also provided support for Mary's sister, Louise, who had returned home following a period of rehabilitation. We arranged for occupational therapists to visit who were able to arrange for aids for both Elsie and Louise.
- 2.3.9 Mary also received support from the welfare right service regarding benefits and finances.
- 2.3.10 We put Mary in touch with local carers support groups, so that she could discuss her concerns with people in similar situation. Mary is keen to join a local carers walking group. Mary now feels more able to continue in her caring role and found discussing her situation with a social care worker invaluable.
- 2.4.11 Having someone who will listen and offer both practical and emotional support really helped. Knowing there is someone to call with any problems, who will be available when needed has been invaluable for her.
- 2.4.12 She said, "My involvement with adult social care was a really positive experience, and I would encourage other carers to get in touch with the team to see how they can be supported."

3 THE TIME AHEAD

Update:

3.1 Deprivation of Liberties – Supreme Court judgement

- 3.1.1** On 2 June the Supreme Court published a judgement changing the definition of deprivation of liberty. These changes applied with immediate effect and extended across the UK. As a result of the change in law the Deprivation of Liberties team has had to respond swiftly to significantly amend operational

process and practice and roll out revised training to our Best Interest Assessors. In summary the changes overturn significant case law known as “Cheshire West” in which an “acid test” was developed to determine if someone was deprived of their liberty. The Cheshire West 2014 judgment concluded that someone is confined if they are under continuous supervision and control and are not free to leave. It proceeded on the basis that, if someone lacks mental capacity to consent to their care and living arrangements under Mental Capacity Act 2005, they cannot give valid consent to their confinement. The latest judgement concludes that Cheshire West was incorrect. Instead of relying on a single acid test, it introduces a new multi-factorial test. As this change occurred with immediate effect national guidance is still being developed and therefore, we have had to use our professional experience and take a proportionate and considered approach in how we respond. In the long term these changes are likely to reduce significantly the number of deprivation of liberty authorisations.

- 3.1.2** The Care Quality Commission are now engaged in the second round of inspections of Local Authority Adult Social Care teams, and their compliance with the Care Act 2014. The inspection framework has been revised from the first round, and now mirrors that of the OFSTED inspection process, whereby annual conversations, thematic inspections and full-service inspections will be undertaken. Focus will be on case tracking and talking with front line staff. Whilst we have no confirmed timeframe for Middlesbrough Adult Social care inspection, it is likely that we will feature early in the inspection programme.