

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee

A meeting of the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee was held on Tuesday 18 November 2025.

Present: Cllr Marc Besford (Chair), Cllr Stefan Barnes, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr John Coulson, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Jack Miller, Cllr Vanessa Sewell, Cllr Sylvia Walmsley

Officers: Sarah Bowman-Abouna, Angela Connor, Rebecca Gray, Graham Lyons, Carolyn Nice (A,H&W); Darren Boyd, Laura Johnson, Francesca Magog, Gary Woods (CS)

Also in attendance: Tracey Hamilton (Eastern Ravens Trust); Nicole Chiu (Mobilise)

Apologies: Cllr Nathan Gale (Vice-Chair)

ASCH/46/25 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

ASCH/47/25 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

ASCH/48/25 Minutes

Consideration was given to the minutes from the Committee meeting held on 21 October 2025. Attention was drawn to the following:

- Minutes: Members reiterated the need for the Committee to be kept informed about ongoing developments associated with the Tees Valley Care and Health Innovation Zone in a timely manner. To this end, the Committee Chair would approach relevant Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) officers following this meeting.
- Scrutiny Review of Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service: Members were reminded that responses from the NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) and North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust (NTHFT) relating to queries raised at the October 2025 meeting were relayed via email yesterday (17 November 2025).

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting on 21 October 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

ASCH/49/25 CQC / PAMMS Inspection Results – Quarterly Summary (Q2 2025-2026)

Consideration was given to the latest quarterly summary regarding Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspections for services operating within the Borough (Appendix 1). Four inspection reports were published during this period (July to September 2025)

(inclusive)), with attention drawn to the following Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) contracted providers:

Providers rated 'Good' overall (1)

- The Beeches Care Home was upgraded to 'Good' overall, reflecting an upturn in the 'Safe', 'Effective' and 'Well-Led' domains which were rated as 'Requires Improvement' in the previous report published in October 2022.

Providers rated 'Requires Improvement' overall (2)

- Mandale Care Home was downgraded from 'Good' to 'Requires Improvement' overall due to identified shortfalls in the 'Safe' domain. This latest focused inspection was prompted in part by notification of an incident following which a person using the service sustained a serious injury, and concerns were subsequently found in relation to record-keeping, understanding / managing risk, and systems of accountability for oversight and good governance.
- Ingleby Care Home retained its overall 'Requires Improvement' status despite advances in the 'Effective' and 'Caring' domains (upgraded from 'Requires Improvement' to 'Good'), as well as the 'Well-Led' domain (upgraded from 'Inadequate' to 'Requires Improvement'). Whilst sufficient improvements had been made to meet three of the breaches identified during the previous inspection (published in November 2024), there remained a breach in relation to good governance as the provider had not made sufficient progress in relation to assessing, monitoring and improving the quality of the service.

Following confirmation that the serious incident at Mandale Care Home earlier in 2025 was the primary reason for the CQCs prompt re-inspection of the service after publishing its previous report in January 2025, the Committee asked if Ingleby Care Home was being used as an unregistered setting due to the lack of a Registered Manager since December 2023. The SBC Quality Assurance and Compliance (QuAC) Manager stated that a Registered Manager was now in post, though work was still required to address the home's good governance breach. Members again raised the practice of the best managers being moved between a provider's individual services in order to get a better CQC outcome, though it was noted that the regulator had conducted an organisational check of three T.L. Care Limited premises in recent months (with The Beeches Care Home doing well), and that management of these services had become more stable of late, with a good Area Manager also overseeing the provider's offer.

The remaining report was in relation to a non-contracted provider, with primary medical care service, Identity Dental Care deemed to be meeting regulations in all five inspection domains.

Focus turned to the section on Provider Assessment and Market Management Solutions (PAMMS) inspections (Appendix 2), of which there were nine reports published during this period (July to September 2025 (inclusive)):

- Windsor Court Residential Home, Ayresome Court, Millbeck, Highfield (Stockton), Piper Court, Reuben Manor, and Primrose Court Nursing Home maintained an overall rating of 'Good' – the same grading all seven services achieved following their previous inspections. Ayresome Court was deemed 'Excellent' in the 'Involvement and Information' domain (upgraded from 'Good' when last inspected), though Reuben Manor saw its 'Safeguarding and Safety' domain downgraded to

'Requires Improvement' (this was previously rated 'Excellent' when its last report was published in August 2024).

- Roseworth Lodge Care Home was upgraded to 'Good' overall following the 'Requires Improvement' judgement it had received after its previous inspection (published in August 2024). All domains were now deemed to be of a 'Good' standard.
- Churchview Nursing and Residential Home had been downgraded to an overall rating of 'Requires Improvement' due to identified shortfalls in both the 'Involvement and Information' and 'Personalised Care / Support' domains. Issues were found with care planning (also raised during the service's previous inspection in December 2024), where improvements made since the turn of the year had not been sustained.

Thanking SBC officers for the latest update, the Committee noted several references to 'resident of the day' and asked what this entailed. In response, it was stated that the term involved a specific personal focus on an individual within a setting to ensure their information (e.g. care plan) was still accurate / relevant.

The item concluded with the SBC QuAC Manager highlighting the continuing positive trend of PAMMS inspection outcomes across the Borough, with more services receiving improved ratings as a result of the work of the QuAC Team. Following this, the Committee's attention was drawn to a recent BBC investigation which revealed that many care homes in England rated as inadequate or requiring improvement were not being re-inspected for over a year (raising concerns about the effectiveness of the CQCs inspection processes).

AGREED that the CQC / PAMMS Inspection Results – Quarterly Summary (Q2 2025-2026) report be noted.

ASCH/50/25 Scrutiny Review of Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service

The third evidence-gathering session for the Committee's review of Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service considered submissions from Eastern Ravens Trust and Mobilise.

EASTERN RAVENS TRUST

Recognising the Borough's young carers and the importance of their transition into adult support services, Eastern Ravens Trust (a local charity supporting young carers within Stockton-on-Tees) was asked to contribute to this review. The Trust Manager gave a presentation which covered the following:

- Eastern Ravens Trust – Supporting Young Carers (timeline): Following the commencement of action research within the Borough in 1998, the first young carers group was launched on 1 April 2000, with Eastern Ravens Trust commissioned to work with 30 young carers per year. In October 2023, the Trust became a strategic partner to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) for young carers support, and between November 2024 and October 2025, assisted nearly 300 young carers.

- Young Carers Definition: The term 'young carer' included children and young people under 18 who provided regular and ongoing care and emotional support to a family member who was physically or mentally ill, disabled, or misused substances.
- Stockton-on-Tees Context – Unpaid Care: 2021 census data indicated that there were 1,500 young carers under the age of 25 locally – of these, 725 carried out their caring role for under 19 hours per week, 350 for 20-49 hours per week, and 175 for 50 hours or more per week (the remainder did not specify the time). It was felt that the number of young carers identified via the census did not reflect the actual total (which could potentially be four times as many) as some were hidden and others did not want to identify themselves as a carer.
- Reasons for Caring Roles: The main factors leading to the onset of caring responsibilities were physical illness and / or disability, mental health illness, sensory / hearing loss, alcohol / drug dependency, and learning difficulties. Young people were sometimes carrying out multiple caring roles, taking on numerous additional tasks that went beyond what was considered 'normal' for their age-range.
- What do Young Carers do?: Young carers were involved in practical tasks (e.g. cooking, housework, shopping), providing emotional support, giving / reminding about medication and collecting prescriptions / accompanying to medical appointments, managing finances (e.g. family budgeting, collecting benefits, banking), and interpreting. Assistance with physical (lifting, transferring) and personal (dressing, washing, toileting) care was also given, and there was sometimes a need to look after a younger sibling. All things considered, it was remarkable what some young people were doing across the Borough.
- Impacts of Caring: Young people could be adversely affected as a result of their caring roles in a variety of ways. In terms of education, reduced attendance, lateness, struggling to cope within lessons and / or completing homework, worry, not having the correct uniform, and lower attainment (decreasing future life chances) were potential possibilities. Socially, young carers could experience loneliness and isolation, become victims of bullying, and have increased risk of criminal and child sexual exploitation. Personally, their wellbeing may suffer (e.g. poor mental health, worry, stress and anxiety, lack of sleep, reduced time for exercise, shame, challenging behaviour), as might their physical health (injury, illness, developmental delay, lack of opportunities for exercise, healthy eating).

However, whilst the impact of having caring responsibilities tended to be negative, there were some positives in relation to enhanced family belonging / relationships and personal resilience. Indeed, young carers across Stockton-on-Tees had very strong characters, with the older cohort currently supported by Eastern Ravens all in either education, employment or training (a trend that had been observed for some time).

- Current Service Provision: Currently supporting 141 young carers aged between five and 18 years-old (and, on occasion, beyond 18), Eastern Ravens offered a flexible / bespoke approach which covered whole family working, one-to-one assistance, respite breaks, and school holiday programmes. Referrals were received from a variety of sources including family members, schools, social workers, the SBC Early Help service, and other charities, and it was vitally

important to have a 'no wrong door' policy to ensure timely access to the service. Eastern Ravens was also trying to build capacity and raise awareness of the importance of identifying and supporting young carers with schools (something that had become an Ofsted requirement).

- Young Carers Transitions: The 2014 Care Act placed a duty on Local Authorities to provide young carers with a 'transition assessment' before they turned 18 years-old (this duty was delegated to Eastern Ravens in the service specification in 2023). The Trust's transition assessments involved conversations with young carers to obtain their views, wishes and feelings (as opposed to form-filling / paperwork), though this approach may change moving forward.
- Stockton Adult Carers Service & Stockton Young Carers Service: Eastern Ravens had a very positive working relationship with the local Adult Carers Support Service which involved regular communication and the exchange of carer-related information and good practice. The Trust undertook an initial whole family assessment when support was requested for a young carer, with a referral made to the adult service should an adult within a household also be identified as having a caring role. Transition discussions took place between the two services, with targeted awareness-raising initiatives, joint events (e.g. Carers Week), and co-production of a forthcoming e-learning staff training module on carers further examples of this partnership.
- Young Carers Feedback: Young carers who were coming up to, or had just turned, 18 years-old were asked for their views on the cessation of support from Eastern Ravens and the use of the adult service. Feedback highlighted concerns about dealing with change, how appropriate the local Adult Carers Support Service was for young adults, and a lack of knowledge of such an offer after they had reached adulthood. Ultimately, it was an individual's choice to be referred to the adult service.
- The Future: Several factors were proposed when considering future provision for those transitioning into adult carer services, including the creation of a dedicated young adult carers service for 18-25 year-olds, and an offer that was open to all irrespective of caring for a sibling or an adult. Other important features were the inclusion of social opportunities at appropriate times, life-skill projects (e.g. managing money / cooking on a budget), and wellbeing support. Identifying unknown young adult carers should be a further priority.

Concluding the presentation, a video was shown to the Committee which demonstrated the support provided by Eastern Ravens and the extent to which young carers across the Borough valued its offer.

Welcoming the information provided by Eastern Ravens, the Committee queried why a change in the approach to transition assessments was being considered, particularly given the stated reluctance for young people to complete paperwork. In response, Members were informed of the need to establish a framework around carer identification / referrals.

The Committee asked what could be implemented to further strengthen the partnership between the young carers and adult carers services. The Trust Manager highlighted the ongoing development of the co-produced e-learning training module for staff – this would be made available to both the adults and children's workforce, and

needed to be promoted to increase awareness of carers and the caring role (SBC officers stated that this training would be part of future staff induction requirements). Members requested that the e-learning package be rolled out to all Councillors, too.

Emphasising the importance of selling the local Adult Carers Support Service offer to young carers (something relevant SBC managers could promote by going along to Trust events to engage with young people), the Committee noted the appreciation from young people within the video (which followed the presentation) of the 'fun' / 'exciting' service provided by Eastern Ravens – it was therefore clear that the adult carers offer needed to foster similar feelings / enthusiasm.

A final question was raised on the number of referrals received by Eastern Ravens from schools. The Trust Manager commented that schools were currently the fourth-highest referrer (this changed from year-to-year), though it was anticipated that referral rates would increase given the work being undertaken to support schools with their responsibilities around young carers. The Committee was informed that young people with caring roles often had exemplary school attendance records as their educational setting offered a safe space and a break from their home environment (they also had a tendency to 'coast' and were reluctant to 'raise their head above the parapet').

MOBILISE

Mobilise was an online business led by carers, for carers, which provided weekly digests of carers' top tips, community support and a space to connect with people in similar positions. It had been working with SBC since 2024 to provide a range of free online services to support local carers and was therefore approached to provide views on this scrutiny topic. The respective Account Manager presented the organisation's submission, key features of which included:

- About Mobilise: Mobilise helped Councils engage unpaid carers (aged 18+) earlier and more effectively – preventing, reducing and delaying the need for intensive adult social care. It did this through digital innovation (AI tools, targeted web ads, and a 24/7 online peer community), scalable / light-touch support (information, advice and guidance available anytime), and human connection (lived experience carer support team for one-to-one help). The Mobilise offer complemented existing services, reached / identified hidden carers, addressed Care Quality Commission (CQC) priorities, and supported the NHS plan for community-focused preventative carer support.
- Core Principles: The organisation had three core principles – focusing on upstream prevention (finding carers early and giving them support / guidance as and when they needed it), technology to bring people together, and mobilising carer knowledge / wisdom / expertise.
- Identification and initial engagement: Online adverts allowed carers to sign-up to Mobilise's personalised guide to caring (Facebook), whilst a variety of caring topics and the carer's allowance tool was accessible via internet searches. The Mobilise app had a range of features to help carers, including the Mobilise Assistant (answering questions and signposting), an online community (safe and moderated space for emotional and peer support), online events, data and insight (understanding needs / trends of carers within the Borough), and digital resources.

Alongside these online options, the Carer Support Team was also available if a person-to-person conversation was required / preferred.

- Mobilise and ARF: The North East and North Cumbria Mobilise Digital Carer Service was developed through the Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF) to address the gap in accessible and proactive support for unpaid carers. Many carers across the 13 Local Authorities reported limited knowledge of available services, with 81% having never accessed support for their caring role before.
- Mobilise and the North East: During the November 2022 – March 2024 period, successful pilots were completed across four North East Local Authorities (Durham, Middlesbrough, Northumberland, and South Tyneside). After this, directors of 13 Local Authorities committed to a strategic digital carer service through a partnership with Mobilise and £990,000 of ARF money – this was a two-year (April 2024 – March 2026) regional initiative for identification and support of unreached carers across the Integrated Care Board (ICB) region, with a view to business-as-usual sustainability post-ARF. The North East Councils supported by Mobilise would exceed targets and reach over 150,000 carers, with 30,000+ new carers registered by March 2026.
- So far in Stockton: Mobilise had engaged carers 2,667 times through actions or tools (e.g. e-support subscription), supported carers 1,507 times with deeper actions like its personalised guide to caring, and enabled unpaid carers to apply for over £500,000 in eligible carers allowance support (via the online calculator). Mobilise had also developed heat-maps of identified carers across the Borough to potentially assist targeted support / action.
- In Stockton-on-Tees we know: During engagement with local carers, Mobilise had found that 82% had not previously accessed support before, 79% cared for over 35 hours a week, 66% were of working age, 64% used Mobilise services outside of working hours, and 29% of Mobilise users were male.
- Signposting to Local Support to Carers: The Mobilise website, its social media platforms, and its newsletter all highlighted and provided links to the local Adult Carers Support Service.
- Future in Stockton-on-Tees: Currently, the future of Mobilise across the North East ICB region was being discussed at director, commissioner and carers lead level within each Local Authority. Mobilise had presented a discounted model to each Local Authority based on population size, and was committed to working closely with adult social care teams to ensure that carers were informed and empowered to choose the support they needed at the right time. Using paid digital marketing techniques, Mobilise had been able to register nearly 2,000 carers in 18 months (using carer-led data to target carers at home) and, over the past 18 months, had provided detailed insights and impact from real carers across Stockton-on-Tees.
- Existing Challenges to be Considered: Identifying carers earlier in their journey (particularly those who did not self-identify or who were balancing work, family and caring responsibilities) remained a key challenge, with early identification allowing for lighter-touch, preventative support before carers reached crisis. In addition, Mobilise would welcome opportunities to collaborate on measuring outcomes for carers, not only in terms of service uptake, but also wellbeing, confidence and sustainability in caring roles.

In terms of the future service, developing a hybrid offer (which balanced digital accessibility with in-person intensity where needed) would benefit carers who felt empowered through community, peer-learning and having access to knowledge they could control, as well as those requiring structured, face-to-face interventions (particularly those in crisis or with complex caring situations). Mobilise's national experience showed that a blended model enhanced choice, increased reach, and promoted self-sustaining carer networks.

With one-in-seven employees juggling work and care, there was also a need to support carers in less traditional ways. Mobilise's 24/7 digital carers service could support Stockton-on-Tees' ambitions to help carers remain in work – this was particularly important given the local economic cost of carers leaving employment. Furthermore, using a co-production approach (involving carers in shaping what 'good' looked like) would ensure that future developments in the Borough's carers offer remained meaningful and data-informed.

- Summary: Since May 2024, Mobilise had supported 1,780 unpaid carers in Stockton-on-Tees with 4,174 actions, 82% of whom had not accessed support before. This had been done through paid media advertisement to allow carers to receive 24/7 digital support. Mobilise was working closely with adult social care to create a seamless transition of the carers most in need, giving carers the choice to access more formal in-person support. Whilst the contract was set to end in April 2026, Mobilise celebrated the successes in partnership with adult social care, and endeavoured to support the Council's strategic priorities around unpaid carers.

Regarding the data provided on the number of Stockton-on-Tees carers that Mobilise had engaged with thus far (2,667), it was stated that further detail could be provided around engagement (if required) following a Committee query on whether this represented the amount of individual carers or the total number of times Mobilise's services had been used (i.e. a single individual may have accessed the offer on multiple occasions).

Whilst being a digitalised service, Members asked if Mobilise was able to support individuals on a face-to-face basis. It was confirmed that Mobilise was fundamentally a digital offer, though the organisation did work with in-person services and could go into these to highlight its own support platforms. Although some people were cautious around using technology, Mobilise was able to help them access its services where required.

Continuing the theme of digital reluctance / exclusion, the Committee drew attention to those carers not accessing information online and questioned how contact with the local Adult Carers Support Service was being promoted. In response, Members heard that a portal had been developed where a carer could get in touch with the Council's offer. Assurance was given that the portal was secure / data protected.

Switching focus back to those who preferred digital means of support, the Committee felt that services such as Mobilise's were vital for assisting those carers who did not want to reveal themselves to social care at this point. When thinking about future provision in relation to local carers, it therefore seemed prudent to ensure both digital and in-person help was available.

SCOPE AND PROJECT PLAN

The final evidence-gathering session for this review was scheduled for the next Committee meeting in December 2025 – this was expected to feature further feedback from those with experience of using the local adult carers service, along with information on other approaches to supporting carers from outside of the Borough, and a reflection on carers-related feedback following recent external scrutiny of SBC adult social care.

AGREED that information provided by Eastern Ravens Trust and Mobilise for the Committee's Scrutiny Review of Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service be noted.

ASCH/51/25 SBC Director of Public Health Annual Report 2024-2025

The Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Director of Public Health was in attendance to present their latest Annual Report which, under the Health and Social Care Act (2012), they had a duty to prepare (with the Local Authority having a duty to publish it). The report was not prescriptive (nor was it necessarily a reflection on the previous year) and had the flexibility to focus on any public health-related matter which the Director wished to raise.

The first draft of the SBC Director of Public Health Report 2025 (*'Building Healthy Communities – connecting people and place'*) had been provided to the Committee and outlined the opportunity to bring work on healthy communities and healthy places together, to improve health and wellbeing, and address inequalities. The report highlighted existing examples of good practice and proposed actions that supported delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Stockton-on-Tees Plan, as well as aligning with the Council's *Powering Our Future* (POF) initiative. Key messages were outlined as follows:

- Communities are the heart of places – both geographic places and the places where people feel 'at home' with others they identify themselves with (which can be many things).
- If we start with communities and build flexible approaches and systems, we are more likely to have meaningful partnerships with communities, understand what is important to them, develop joint solution to meet people's needs, and get better outcomes for all our communities (addressing inequality).
- How do we do this? Through a framework that builds collective aims, enablers and resourced plans, that links working with communities, to developing local places and neighbourhood approaches.
- This needs to be about more than our 'service offer'; rather it needs to use a system-wide approach, building on evidence, intelligence and partnerships, and maximising the opportunity for health creation.
- There are examples of local work that we can build on to help us with our approach; and a self-assessment tool to support us with where to start.
- The report identifies suggested actions to take the work forward. It also reviews progress on the actions identified in last year's report (this would be added to the final version under Appendix 2).

The local Health and Wellbeing Board would consider the final report in December 2025, with a view to presenting this to SBC Cabinet in January 2026. It was also being proposed to publish the report on the Council's website (with accompanying

links to further relevant information), with hard-copies being available on request. The Committee was reminded that the report was primarily aimed at partners / professionals.

AGREED that the SBC Director of Public Health Report 2025 be noted.

ASCH/52/25 Health and Wellbeing Board - Previous Minutes (March, April & July 2025) & Updated Terms of Reference

Consideration was given to the minutes of previous Health and Wellbeing Board meetings which took place in March, April and July 2025.

It was noted that all three meetings included Better Care Fund (BCF) updates, with the July 2025 agenda also involving a discussion on the Board's structured programme of development to review and reflect on its purpose, role, responsibilities, and overall effectiveness – this had culminated in the production of a revised Terms of Reference for the Board which was included with the papers for this Committee meeting (along with an accompanying report which was presented to full Council on 24 September 2025).

AGREED that the minutes of Health and Wellbeing Board meetings which took place in March, April and July 2025, as well as the Board's revised Terms of Reference, be noted.

ASCH/53/25 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme 2025-2026

CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair asked for congratulations to be passed onto staff within the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Adults, Health and Wellbeing directorate following the recently published Care Quality Commission (CQC) report which saw the Council's adult social care services graded 'Good' overall.

Thanks was also given to those Committee Members who visited the LiveWell Dementia Hub in Thornaby last week as part of the ongoing Scrutiny Review of Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service.

WORK PROGRAMME 2025-2026

Consideration was given to the Committee's current work programme. The next meeting was due to take place on 16 December 2025, where agenda items would include the latest Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) Annual Report (2024-2025), the next (and final) evidence-gathering session for the Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service review, and a new Stockton-on-Tees Independent Complaints Advocacy Annual Report. Members would also be receiving a presentation on the outcomes of the recently published CQC report following the late-2024 inspection of SBC adult social care services.

AGREED that the Chair's Update and Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee Work Programme 2025-2026 be noted.

Chair: