

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council CQC Report

ASCH Next Steps
Good to Even Better
December 2025

Rating and Scoring

Stockton-on-Tees received a rating of GOOD with a score of 64 (October 2025)

Theme 1

Assessing Needs : 2

Supporting People to Live Healthier Lives: 3

Equity in Experience and Outcomes: 2

Theme 2

Care Provision, Integration and Continuity : 3

Partnerships and Communities : 3

Theme 3

Safe Systems, Pathways and Transitions : 2

Safeguarding : 3

Theme 4

Governance, Management & Sustainability : 3

Learning, Improvement & Innovation : 2

Celebrating our Success



What is next?

Good to Even Better!

We are not complacent. There were no surprises for us in our report, and we were already on our journey of development. The CQC LA Assessment Report has given us validation of where we have been and further direction for where we go next.

We celebrated our success and now we are back to work to make it even better!

Assessing Needs

Strengths

- Range of advice, information and signposting options that staff could provide for immediate & low-level needs and Care Act assessments
- Pathways & processes ensured support co-ordinated across agencies & services
- Processes in place to manage risk while people were waiting
- Commitment to improving Carers' support

Areas for Development

- Simplify front door arrangements (work underway) and reduce the number of people waiting for assessments and reviews
- Increase understanding and support offer for self-funders
- Better identification of young carers
- Develop capability to gather more granular data on financial assessments
- Increase advocacy capacity and options, working with VCSE and community groups to develop other options including peer advocacy

Supporting People to Live Healthier Lives

- Partnership working to provide wide range of services, facilities and resources to promote independence
- Joined-up approach across ASC, wider services and partners to identify and target vulnerable groups
- Improved outcomes data much higher than national average at 91%
- Direct Payments uptake and example of "positive action to increase the equity of their DP offer and make use of community assets to reach people"

- Better connect people with their communities for informal wellbeing and support, with information about what resources and support are available.
- Continue work to increase support offer and access to information and advice for unpaid Carers
- Improve information about preventative offer for seldom heard communities and/or those not already in receipt of services or engaged with the Council in other ways

Equity In Experience and Outcomes

- Clear, ongoing, and multi-agency ambition to better understand and tackle inequalities and barriers to social care and "...rapid introduction and rapid implementation of the EPIA highlighted the local authority's commitment to reducing inequalities in the borough".
- Commitment to workforce diversity through WRES, recruitment processes and expansion of staff EDI networks

- Support staff to better understand the needs & diversity of our population.
- Improve access to transport – transport links and cost are barriers
- Alignment of initiatives to efficiently target and address systemic health inequalities

Care Provision, Integration and Continuity

Strengths

- Diverse range of services available in the community
- Significant investment into Carers' services. Carer satisfaction higher than national average
- Clear arrangements to monitor quality and impact of commissioned care and support services
- Robust approach to upskilling the ASC workforce

Areas for Development

- Plans to develop capacity in MH and LD provision in the Borough
- Continue to develop performance data to strategically plan for services
- Continue to develop information flows to better understand self-funding market
- Improve the offer for Carers
- Further consideration of risk to sustainability of VCS services to ensure alignment with building community capacity via Prevention & early support transformation programme

Partnerships and Communities

- Commitment to working in partnership to address inequalities and improve outcomes for people – Team Stockton & Coalition of the Willing
- Strong voice at all levels
- Arrangements for partnership working with VCSE “mostly effective”
- Measuring & evaluation of impact of partnerships used to drive service improvements e.g. hospital discharges, Well-Led Programme

- Mixed feedback about voluntary partner involvement in strategic decision-making
- Some VCSE organisations felt engagement was consultative, not co-produced

Safe Systems, Pathways and Transitions

Strengths

- Understood risks to people across their care journeys - community safety prioritised
- Robust systems in frontline teams to manage risk
- Cross-agency functions in place and safety process aligned with partners involved in people's care journeys
- Contingency planning in place

Areas for Development

- Feedback that significant improvement needed to support young people transitioning from children's to adult services.
- People's experience of transitions between care homes was mixed. Hospital transitions were rapid, but more focus needed to understand and improve people's experience of transitioning from hospital to home
- National data on people's safety was slightly lower than national average

Safeguarding

- Timely screening at the front door (despite low staffing levels)
- Strong voice in Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB), with learning from SARs
- 99% people's outcomes from completed Section 42 enquiries were either partially or fully met

- Strengthen capacity at the front door (work already underway)
- Safeguarding Adults training rates slightly lower than national average
- Feedback on Making Safeguarding Personal was mixed
- Ongoing review underway to address lack of wrap-around support for young people in transition with no settled accommodation

Governance, Management & Sustainability

Strengths

- Leadership had good insight into strengths and areas for development, with a strong commitment to addressing challenges
- Good progress with data dashboards
- Clear vision and strategy for Adult Social Care

Areas for Development

- Outcomes of transformation work to be realised (work is in progress i.e. front door and Transitions)
- Communicate parity of esteem & value amongst professional groups
- Refresh Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Learning, Improvement & Innovation

- Supported CPD with access to range of training – positive staff feedback
- Desire to work collaboratively to promote & support working innovatively
- Strong commitment to co-production
- Local Authority shared learning and best practice with peers and system partners to influence and improve how care and support was provided (e.g. joint Safeguarding training and the Well-Led Leadership programme)

- Extend co-production beyond Making It Real board - some voluntary and community sector (VCS) groups said they felt excluded from co-production
- Embed co-production across all areas of design and development work, extending the range of people involved beyond the MIRB to be reflective of our communities

Learning from Feedback

- Low number formal complaints...less need for people to use a formal process
- Formal feedback was listened to and acted on
- Various routes for staff feedback and feeding this back to frontline staff

- No formal process for recording compliments - Leaders recognised the need for a formalised process by which to share examples of good practice across the directorate and an action to develop a process to analyse this data was included in the Workforce Development Plan

What we have done since the visit

Clarify front door arrangements, making better use of our resource. Provide clear & accessible information		Through Powering our Future we're already working on our front door so people can access the right care and support at the right time, with better digital & non-digital information and more staff in First Contact.
We need to reduce the number of people waiting for assessments and reviews, and how long they are waiting.		Introduced performance dashboards and performance clinics for better understanding and a plan in place to reduce waiting lists and times. CQC acknowledged our plans in the report.
Connect people more with their communities for informal wellbeing and support, with information about what resources and support are available.		We have a plan in place through our Powering our Future Supporting People to Live Independent Lives Transformation programme.
Identify more young and adult unpaid carers, and understand their needs better. Better working between children's and adult services so that young people have a better experience when they are moving into adult social care services.		Carers will be a strategic priority for this year, with a scrutiny review of Carers' Services and an action plan to implement the recommendations. Through our Powering our Future programme, we have a new Children's/Adults Transitions Team for a more co-ordinated approach.
Build co-production into all of our processes, working with our partners to extend co-production reach so that we truly include people's voices.		We're co-producing an Adult Social Care Strategy with the Making It Real Board, setting out plans for co-production across services and with partners. We'll identify opportunities for partnership working to shape and develop services, always in partnership with people accessing services.
Ensure there are enough specialist commissioned services in Stockton-on-Tees to meet people's needs.		We will manage our market through our Market Position Statement, in collaboration with partners, to inform our commissioning of services
Support our staff to better understand the needs and diversity of our population.		We have signed up to the Social Work Race Equality Standards and we are already reviewing our Equality Diversity and Inclusion training, with a plan to support staff.
We need to have a better way of capturing all kinds of feedback, good and bad so we can learn from this.		We have a new process for recording and learning from formal complaints and a plan in place to incorporate other feedback and new ways of gathering this to inform our service development. We are formalising our compliments process.

Action Planning

- We are finalising our detailed action plan based on the feedback from CQC, feedback from the people we support, learning from complaints and compliments, scrutiny review and engagement with partners.
- This detailed plan of development will align with Powering our Future programme, Transformation and improvement plans, Adult Social Care Strategy and our Local Account.
- Progress tracked via Adult Social Care Business Planning Steering Group, Adults Health and Wellbeing Senior Management Team Corporate Management Team, Lead Member oversight, and ASCH.
- Checks and Balances on progress via Staff Making It Happen Group, Performance Reporting including performance reporting monthly to Chief Executive, Leadership forums, Deep Dives, Sector Led Improvement and Peer Challenge.

Thank You

Questions

