

REPORT TO ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE

21st April 2026

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF ADULTS, HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Adults, Health and Wellbeing Overview Report

Summary

This report gives an overview of the key achievements and challenges in 2025/6 for Adult Social Care.

Key Achievements

1. We successfully achieved a Care Quality Commission rating as “Good”, awarded in October 2025 finding people had access to good, person-centred adult social care services. Leaders recognised the challenges the local population faced, and they had a strong commitment to addressing these to improve people’s health and wellbeing. We are aiming for ‘Outstanding’ next time around. We are waiting on indications from the baseline exercise which is nationally complete to understand what the future programmes look like.
2. In the last year we have completed 10840 assessments, 2900 reviews and supported 6537 people with support services enabling the people of Stockton to live their lives as they choose.
3. We have provided Direct payments to 844 people ensuring that support is self-directed and personalised to individual needs, enabling them to achieve their outcomes in a way that they choose. Our Direct Payment performance is in the highest quartile in the Country.
4. In 24/25 we have completed 855 Carers assessments, offered 100% of carers a direct payment and supported 95 carers through the time out service. This has supported informal carers to continue with their caring responsibilities enabling people to remain in the community. We also know we have more work to do to support Carers and this has been supported by the recent ASCH scrutiny review.
5. We have increased the numbers of people being supported at the front door, reducing the numbers of people relying on long term support. Contacts in January increased by 15%. The contacts that then progressed into a long term team are

showing a 17% decline on the annual trend. This means that people are getting information, advice and support earlier in their journey.

6. We have enabled people to use Assistive Technology to support them to live independently in their own home. We have seen an increase of 60 % in Quarter three from Quarter one. This technology allows the monitoring of people in their own home with minimal intrusion which informs early interventions to provide reassurance to families that loved ones are safe in their own home.
7. We have worked alongside our provider market and continued to improve quality, with 91% of commissioned care homes and 72% of commissioned care at home provision rated as Good or Outstanding by CQC. This supports our commitment to ensuring that people are receiving good quality care when they need it
8. Our staff vacancy levels remain exceptionally low due to strong engagement and recognition of staff through both internal and external awards, promoting professional weeks such as professional carers, social work and occupational therapy week. Our staff health checks continue to show a positive response. Excluding new posts, we had a 5.9% turnover rate in staff over the last year which is lower than the national average turnover rate of 11.3% (2024-25) for adult social care workers. (skills for care data). We continue to work hard to support our staff and ensure they are valued and recognised for the work they do.
9. We have worked alongside our Children's colleagues to establish a transitions team to ensure a seamless transition between childhood and adulthood, supporting young people to live fulfilled lives. This team are working hard to develop and improve the pathways and outcomes for young people.

Challenges

10. We continue to see a particular growth in the demand for Mental Health, Learning disability and residential placements. Nationally requests for care from working age adults have increased by 14% since 2019/20. In Stockton on Tees the increase in requests from this age group has been 59% for the same period.
11. We need to keep developing our Front Door to ensure it continues to be more responsive to people's needs. We are working to simplify and streamline how people initially contact us, understand, and navigate wider information and support. Stockton on Tees has 6.1% of the population requesting social care support which is higher than the England average of 4.24%.
12. We need to ensure that the Reablement service remains fit for purpose and targets the people living in Stockton on Tees who would benefit from receiving the service

and regaining their levels of independence. This approach will build on the recommendations from Adult Social care and Health Select Committee, CQC Assurance report and the findings from Peopletoo review. Phase 1 of our review is completed and we are now working on Phase 2 alongside partners.

13. We need to keep ensuring that people are discharged from hospital into their own homes wherever this is possible, rather than into bed-based support. This involves working with hospital staff to ensure that they are aware of what support can be offered in a person's own home. Stockton-on-Tees is one of the best performing authorities in the region with 93.02% of people returning to their normal place of residence upon discharge to hospital. We are seeing an increasing need from the community for reablement services to support people to remain at home or to prevent an admission to hospital, with a 10% increase in the last 6 months. We need to continue to challenge ourselves and our partners to ensure people are being supported Home First and this will be a priority area for us in 2026/27.
14. Several partners are undergoing reorganisation including the ICB and our Hospital Trust. All statutory partners are under pressure to reduce costs, and it is critical that we continue to work with partners in a wider context, as there is a risk that we all focus too internally to the detriment of the partnership and the Borough. The Stockton on Tees pound should be approached through shared endeavours and a common understanding, and how we collectively make best use of it is at the heart of partnership working now more than ever.
15. Cost of living is a real concern with prices rising due to global challenges and circumstances. This impacts on our residents in several areas and may result in their ability to contribute to care costs. In addition, the price we are paying for goods and services continues to increase whilst funding is shrinking. It is crucial we continue to maintain grip and best value on our budget to ensure we are able to balance our finances.

Changes in Legislation

16. **The Mental Health Act 2025.** The proposed reforms to the Mental Health Act aim to modernise the 1983 legislation by strengthening patient rights, reducing unnecessary detention, and tackling longstanding inequalities.
17. **The Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS)** – the government has announced a public consultation will take place in the first half of 2026 to replace Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) with LPS. The aim of this is to reduce the national backlog of DoLS applications.
18. We have seen a change in legislation with a requirement to publish a supported housing strategy in 2027, and work is in the early stages to start this piece of work. We want to ensure that we have a comprehensive understanding of people's needs and that our strategy is built on a local evidence base.

Emerging Issues

19. We have been successful in being one of 43 places to lead on the Neighbourhood Health Improvement Programme which demonstrates the strength of partnership in the Borough. There is a national drive with the Neighbourhood Health 10 year strategy from central Gov't with a clear direction of travel to be community and resident facing and led. New guidance has been produced in March 2026 and we are working closely with partners to understand what this means for our residents and systems. [Neighbourhood health framework - GOV.UK](#).
20. The Adult Social Care Strategy 2026-30 was approved by Cabinet in March. The strategy will inform our strategic direction over the next 4 years aligned to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Stockton Plan.
21. Nationally and locally, there is a growing recognition of unpaid carers with carers providing more care to loved ones than previously. An All-Age carers strategy is in development for 2027-2030 working in partnership with children's services to ensure that the needs of carers is formally recognised. Furthermore, during 2026/27, Adult Social Care will be working with partners and stakeholders to develop a strategy for people with a Learning Disability and an additional strategy for people living with Neurodiversity.
22. Baroness Louise Casey Independent Commission on Social Care is due to conclude in 2027 with recommendations on the future of Social Care. A significant amount of engagement nationally has been undertaken and we look forward to the Commissions findings.
23. We want to ensure we have a continued emphasis on co-production at all levels within the authority, including commissioning for future services. The Making it Real board has co-produced the local account, provided updates for Stockton news, worked on a co-produced summary of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy for Stockton-on-Tees, started work on co-production of Adult Social Care Strategy. We want to expand our work with communities and those who live in the Borough and ensure we are listening to what people want and need through increasing our co-production approach.

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