

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 MAY 2026

ASC Front Door Business Case/Options Appraisal

Summary

This report outlines plans to redesign the Adult Social Care (ASC) “Front Door” to improve how residents access help and support.

The current model creates delays for residents by routing them into formal assessment processes when their needs could be met through more timely, proportionate support.

A more responsive model focused on early, flexible intervention will enable people to receive the right support at the right time, improving outcomes and reducing demand on formal assessment pathways.

A new, integrated approach is proposed to:

- Improve access and response times
- Strengthen prevention and early intervention
- Reduce unnecessary demand on statutory services
- Provide better outcomes for the residents if Stockton-on-Tees

This change is informed by both the CQC inspection (2025) and the LGA Peer Review (2024), which highlighted the need to improve access, reduce handoffs, and strengthen early support.

Detail

Why change is needed

Demand for Adult Social Care is increasing, and needs are becoming more complex.

The current Front Door:

- Passes many people into assessment processes
- Creates delays and multiple handoffs
- Limits opportunities to support people earlier
- Places avoidable pressure on services

The CQC inspection (Published October 2025) highlighted that people’s experience of accessing services is mixed, with challenges in navigating the system and getting timely support.

The LGA Peer Review (July 2024) identified that the Front Door has multiple handoff points, requires people to repeat their story, and in some areas was described as “struggling to meet demand” and not consistently connecting people to timely prevention support.

Doing nothing would increase these pressures and risks to service delivery.

The preferred model is an integrated Front Door, bringing professionals from different disciplines together in one place and supported by better digital access.

This will:

- Resolve more enquiries at first contact
- Provide quicker, more coordinated support
- Improve access to information and community services
- Reduce duplication across teams

Benefits

The new model is expected to deliver:

- A better experience for residents
- Faster and more joined-up responses
- Greater focus on prevention and independence
- Reduced demand on statutory services
- More efficient use of resources

Overall Position

The proposed redesign will modernise the ASC Front Door, improve outcomes for residents and support a more sustainable service.

Discussions have taken place with staff/residents and other professionals to determine what works well and where improvements can be made.

The Committee is asked to note the direction of travel and the rationale for change.

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