

## CABINET DECISION

Heath and Social Care – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Pauline Beall

# Powering our Future: Supporting People to Live Independently (Phase 2)

## Summary

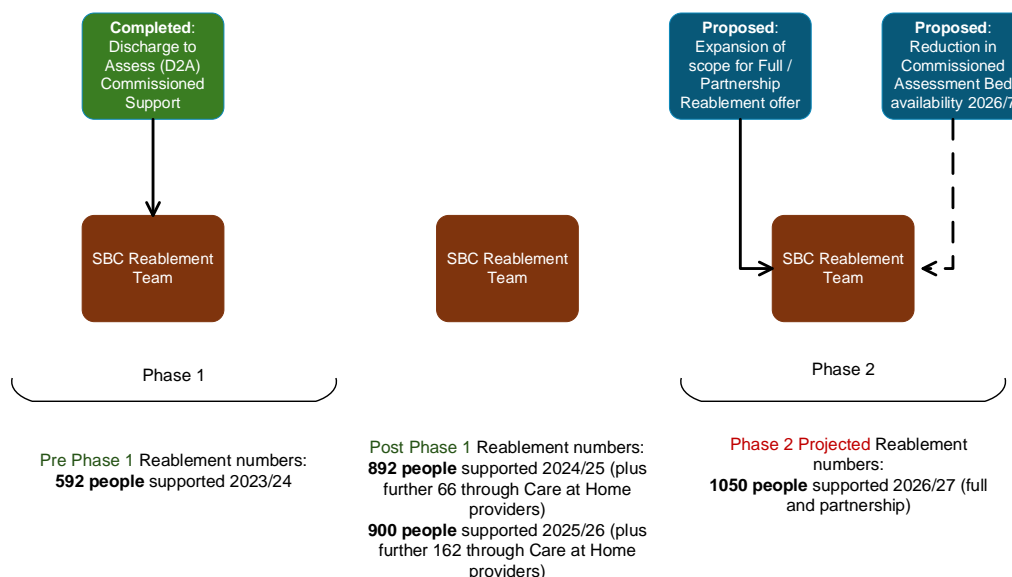
In October 2024, the Council completed the Phase 1 of this Powering Our Future (POF) review with the decommissioning of our contracted Discharge to Assess (D2A)<sup>1</sup> service and the transfer of this capacity into the Council's reablement service. This was fully implemented in 2025/6 and (as illustrated in Figure 1 below), Phase 1 delivered significant growth in the numbers benefiting from reablement support.

Phase 2 was to consider what additional opportunities there were for further development. During 2025/26, the Council worked with Peopletoo (independent consultancy firm with expertise in Adult Social Care & Integrated Health) to look at opportunities for greater reach for the Reablement Service alongside supporting Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) Scrutiny Committee (see Appendix 1) who undertook a scrutiny review of reablement (published December 2025).

Figure 1: Supporting People to Live Independently (Reablement and Assessment beds) – Phase 1 and 2

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<sup>1</sup> Discharge to Assess (D2A) is a system that allows people who are medically fit to leave hospital and continue recovery in a community or care setting while their long-term needs are assessed.



Consistent with the Council’s design principles (reducing inequality and prioritise prevention, having efficient processes and use data and intelligence to inform our decision) we have reflected on the findings from Peopletoo and ASCH and, working with stakeholders (including the NHS) developed an outline plan for Phase 2 that will maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the processes and pathways to support people being discharged from hospital and those living in the community.

A key element of Phase 2 is expanding the scope for the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Reablement service alongside the commissioning of assessment beds. This is intended to strengthen alignment with One Call and commissioned services, reduce reliance on bed-based rehabilitation, and increase our ability to positively impact a greater number of people.

### Reasons for Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)

Changes proposed in the report will ensure current services are optimised to support more people with reablement support in the most suitable location.

### Recommendations

1. Cabinet are asked to agree the direction of travel for the proposed service improvements planned under Phase 2.

### Detail

1. The Supporting People to Live Independently Programme focusses on the support offered to people through D2A hospital discharge (pathways 0 -2)<sup>2</sup> and in those in the community.
2. The focus of the review is to re-able more people at home (or in a residential bed-based setting in some cases) as a short-term, goal-focused approach that helps people regain skills, confidence, and independence in daily activities following illness, injury, or decline.

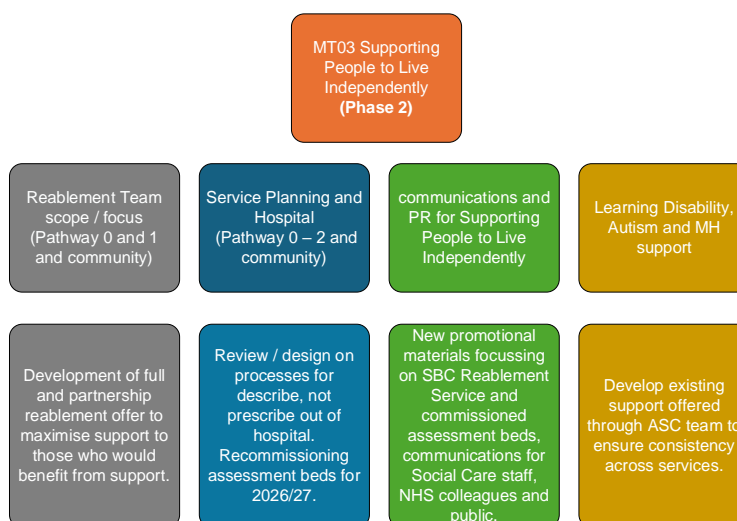
<sup>2</sup>

Pathway	Description
Pathway 0	Independent discharge, returning home without additional health or social care support.
Pathway 1	Discharge home with temporary support and possible reablement services to aid recovery.
Pathway 2	Transfer to a short-term bedded rehabilitation setting with ongoing assessment.

Under the Care Act, local authorities are required to provide or arrange services that contribute to preventing, reducing, or delaying the need for care and support. Reablement services fit this criterion perfectly. By focusing on short-term interventions that help individuals regain essential life skills, these services align with the Act’s objectives<sup>3</sup>.

3. The Council’s Reablement Service and Rosedale Service (bed-based service) have both maintained a “good” rating with the Care Quality Commission. 87% of our commissioned older people care homes (who deliver our assessment bed provision) are rated as good or outstanding by the Care Quality Commission.
4. The integration of a commissioned community D2A service within an expanded reablement offer from October 2024 was the output of phase 1 in developing an improved service offer for the people of Stockton-on-Tees with a commitment for more collaborative working as part of a wider health and social care system, alongside all its key stakeholders. This more inclusive Reablement offer allows more people to be offered a reablement service who would normally have been supported directly by an independent sector care at home provider. This allows people routine access to a period of Reablement (up to 6 weeks depending on an individual’s needs / agreed outcomes).
5. As shown in Figure 1, Phase 1 increased access to reablement services by 50%. Although reablement is not appropriate for everyone, the volume of referrals to Pathways 0 and 1 indicates that the work planned for Phase 2 will further reduce both the level of care-at-home support required and the number of long-term residential care placements. This will be achieved by supporting people to live independently, or with support that is proportionate to their individually assessed needs.
6. Reflecting the Council’s design standards, throughout phase 2 we will develop and use data dashboards as part of the Adult Social Care Performance Framework to better understand and manage the granular detail of performance through this POF review to ensure processes and pathways are effective and people are getting the service that best meets their assessed needs. The focus for Phase 2 is set out in figure 2.

Figure 2: MT03 Phase 2 focus



<sup>3</sup> The Council does not have to offer a reablement service for everyone, only where it is genuinely not appropriate following an assessment of needs.

7. The Council led a multi-agency process mapping event in February 2026 to gain a shared understanding of existing workflows and identify areas for improvement. Building on the work of ASCH and Peopletoo, the MT03 Steering Group have developed an outline work plan, agreed with Corporate Management Team Extra (CMTE) that will address the following key areas as set out below:

Ref.	What	How	Expected impact
1	Improve the quality of information on reablement / Reablement Service to the public and professionals	Improved public and online information. Clearer support and guidance in hospital settings.	More people are directed to a community offer (at home) with clearer expectations of outcomes (with technology) and prevent avoidable bed-based discharges.
2	Expand the community reablement service offer.	Maximise staff capacity and reach by using their time and expertise more effectively.	A reduction in the number of people accessing assessment beds in care homes, alongside a corresponding increase in the number of people supported at home.
3	Ensure there is an accessible reablement “offer” to support people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health needs to maximise their independence.	Develop an enablement offer through the ASC teams for people with a learning disability, autism, or mental health needs.	People (with learning disabilities, autism, or mental health needs) living at home, facing a change in circumstances as well as those discharged from hospital have access to a service tailored to their specific needs.

8. By improving the way decision on appropriate services are made and ensuring services such as commissioned care at home, Community Integrated Assessment Team<sup>4</sup> (CIAT) and SBC reablement team collaborate and work together and optimise efficiency, the review will positively impact on the volume of people accessing care at home and accessing long term residential care.

### Community Impact and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment

9. Each project within the overarching programme “Supporting People to Live Independently (Phase 2)” will have an Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment to inform decisions following a thorough assessment of any significant positive and/or detrimental impact for people with protected characteristics.

### Corporate Parenting Implications

10. N/A.

### Financial Implications

11. The review of reablement eligibility criteria is intended to improve financial sustainability by targeting resources more effectively and ensuring more people benefit from a period of reablement support.

<sup>4</sup> CIAT is a North Tees Foundation Trust service made up of therapists, nurses and therapy assistants that provides people with care, support and rehabilitation within the community.

### **Legal Implications**

12. The Council must comply with its statutory duties under the Care Act 2014. Reviewing the eligibility criteria for the reablement service will not result in the adoption of any blanket restriction or as a substitute for individual assessment and professional judgement. The Council will also have due regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.
13. Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment will be completed to support all decisions for Phase 2.

### **Risk Assessment**

14. The Care at Home providers commissioned to support people living at home compliment the reablement service. Any changes to referral numbers could impact on the markets sustainability so this will need close monitoring as part of the Councils market management duties.

### **Wards Affected and Consultation with Ward/Councillors (refer to Concordat for Communication and Consultation with Members)**

15. The paper reflects a borough wide service and is not ward specific.

### **Background Papers**

16. N/A

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