



Hartlepool
Borough Council

Adult Services & Public Health Committee Minutes and Decision Record

5 March 2026

Meeting commenced

Time: (5:00pm)

Location: (Council Chamber)

Present:

Councillor: Gary Allen (In the Chair)

Councillors: Moss Boddy and Ged Hall

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2 Councillor Rachel Creevy was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Aaron Roy

Officers: Jill Harrison, Executive Director of Adult Services and Public Health
Chris Woodcock, Interim Director of Public Health
Angela Lucas, Principal Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer
Jo Stubbs, Principal Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer

25. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were submitted by Councillors Fiona Cook. Ed Doyle, Sue Little and Aaron Roy

26. Declarations of Interest

None

27. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2026

Minutes received

28. Adult Social Care Charging Policy (*Executive Director of Adult Services and Social Care*)

Type of Decision

Key

Purpose of Report

To seek approval for a new Adult Social Care Charging Policy, following public consultation.

Issue(s) for consideration

In December 2025 Members approved a number of amendments to adult social care charging arrangements as follows:

- The automatic inflationary uplift of all contributions in April each year rather than at the point of a person's annual review. This would be in line with published pension and benefit rises and CPI for private income
- The removal of the disregard of the overnight element of higher rate Attendance Allowance and/or Personal Independence Payment. It was estimated this would increase the contribution of those affected by up to £36.50 per week.
- The introduction of fees for the Council to act as appointee.

The new policy incorporating these changes was appended to the report.

Decision

That the Adult Social Care Charging Policy be approved.

29 Domestic Abuse Strategy 2026-2029 (*Director of Public Health*)

Type of Decision

Key

Purpose of Report

To present the final Domestic Abuse Strategy 2026-2029 and to seek approval to support implementation

Issue(s) for consideration

The Domestic Abuse Strategy 2026-2029 had been developed in collaboration with services, people with lived experience and wide partners and as part of a wider public consultation. The priority areas are supporting victims, recognising children as victims and pursuing perpetrators. An action plan would be developed in partnership and governance would be provided through the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board.

The Interim Director of Public Health confirmed that support was available to male victims and those in same sex relationships who experienced domestic abuse. The Chair referenced the number of partners working with the Council on this issue including Harbour, Hart Gables and Changing Futures. Information was available on the Council website and in the Community Hubs and he urged anyone affected to seek out support. GPs were also able to signpost victims to these services confidentially.

Decision

That the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2026-29 be endorsed.

30. Patient Group Directions Policy (*Director of Public Health*)**Type of Decision**

Non-key

Purpose of Report

To agree the adoption of the Patient Group Directions (PGDs) Policy for Hartlepool Borough Council

Issue(s) for consideration

PGDs are intended for situations where individual prescribing is not feasible, allowing healthcare professionals to administer or supply medicines to predefined patient groups without a GP prescription. The example was given of the stop smoking service whereby those taking part could be prescribed medication without having to make a GP appointment. PGDs must be appropriate and legal and the Director of Public Health is responsible for overseeing the process to ensure that it is safe and beneficial for patient care.

The draft PGD policy was appended to the report. Part of the policy was the requirement to establish a PGD Approval Group to demonstrate PGDs are developed in line with legal requirements. This would consist of the public health senior management team and a public health pharmacist.

Decision

That the adoption of the PGD policy and establishment of the PGD Approval Group be approved.

31. Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Update (*Director of Public Health*)

Type of Decision

For information

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the efforts to support a reduction in suicides across Hartlepool and improve mental health and wellbeing.

Issue(s) for consideration

Data shows Hartlepool has higher-than-average rates for depression, anxiety and related issues when compared to both regional and national rates. Nearly 1 in 4 adults in Hartlepool have depression or anxiety and over 19% aged 16 and over have a common mental health disorder. Between 2019-2021 there were 14.7 suicides per 100,000 residents, more than three-quarters being men.

The report gave details of a number of initiatives aimed at improving mental health and wellbeing and reducing suicide. These included the following:

- Development of the Tees Suicide Strategic Plan 2024-2029
- Ongoing development of a public mental health plan
- Development of the Men's Health Strategy in November 2025
- Public Health funding of additional mental health support through Tees, Esk and Wear Valley and Alliance
- Mental Health First Aid Training and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training due to be rolled out in April 2026
- Completion of a needs assessment on gambling related harms
- Funding of Togetherall with adult social care, a safe accessible intervention moderated by licensed mental health professionals which improves access to mental health and peer support services. 607 Hartlepool residents had so far signed up for this.
- Commissioning of a Tees Suicide Prevention Coordinator, jointly funded by the Tees Valley Local Authorities

- Establishment of a Tees Suicide Prevention Partnership group to ensure a collaborative approach to implementation of the 8 priority areas across Tees Valley
- Provision of a regional services supporting those bereaved or affected by suicide 'If you care share'.
- Promotion of a local directory of services

The Interim Director of Public Health confirmed that males were less likely to seek out mental health support despite being three times more likely than females to take extreme steps. Further discussions were needed with partners around the reasons for this and ways to improve take up of services. Those most in need were often the least likely to access these services although they may access other services not detailed in this report.

Decision

That the information within the report and the work to reduce suicides and support the wider mental health and wellbeing of residents be noted.

7. Any other business which the Chairman considers urgent

The Chair noted that this was the last meeting of the Committee for this municipal year. He thanked everyone who had attended and provided input to meetings in the previous year, referring to the positive inclusion of Public Health into the remit of the Committee. Members praised the informed content of the public health reports in particular.

The meeting concluded at: 17:45pm

H MARTIN

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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