

# Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Supplementary agenda no.1

**A meeting of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held on:**

**Date:** 12 August 2026

**Time:** 6.30pm

**Venue:** St George's Centre, Pembroke, Chatham Maritime, Chatham ME4 4UH

## Items

- |           |                                                                    |                           |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>5a</b> | <b>Adoption Partnership South East - Annual Report - 2025/2026</b> | <b>(Pages<br/>3 - 8)</b>  |
|           | Presentation to the report.                                        |                           |
| <b>5b</b> | <b>Annual Fostering Report 2025-2026</b>                           | <b>(Pages<br/>9 - 16)</b> |
|           | Presentation to the report.                                        |                           |

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**Date:** 11 August 2026

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## APSE Annual Report 2025/26

- Timely Adoption Care Planning
- Diverse Adopter Recruitment
- Stronger Support
- A Growing Community

Annual Report



2025/26

By  
your  
side

## 4 Timely Progress of Children's Adoption Plans

Activity across the year shows a steady flow from decision-making through to placement and Adoption Order.



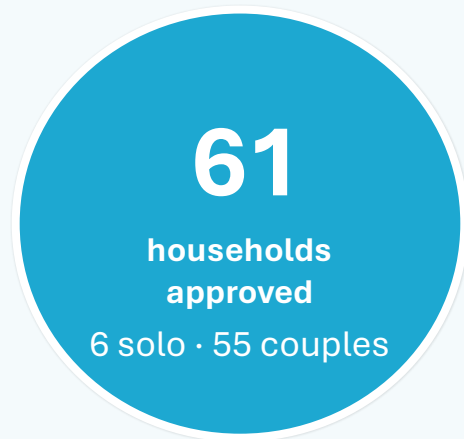
### Time to permanence



**Medway remained faster than national averages • 5 children placed through Early Permanence, up from 2 children last year**

# Diversity of Approved Adopters

Approved adopter households in 2025/26



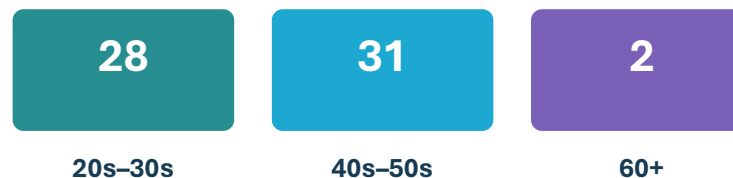
## Ethnicity



## Sexual orientation



## Age profile



A broader adopter profile increases choice and supports matching that reflects children's needs and identity.

## Support That Stays Alongside Families

29

**Advice Line contacts**

10

**Short Interventions**

22

**Initial Assessments**

41

**Review Assessments**

*Medway figures shown for 2025/26*

### Adoption Support: Key Messages

#### Earlier support, when families need it

APSE continued to develop a more responsive adoption support offer, helping families access advice, therapeutic support and intervention earlier to prevent difficulties escalating.

#### A clear pathway to the right support

During 2025/26, parents of 271 children accessed the Support and Advice Line, with support tailored to need through advice and guidance, short interventions or full assessments.

#### Strengthening therapeutic support

The Adoption Support Pilot enabled APSE to test new approaches, including therapeutic workshops, targeted advice and opportunities for families to connect with others who understand adoption.

#### Keeping families connected

A new programme of Catch-up Calls provided regular contact points for adoptive families, supporting 31 children and ensuring support remained accessible as needs changed over time.

#### Working alongside families for the long term

APSE's approach combines therapeutic practice, peer support and strong partnerships to provide ongoing support before and after an Adoption Order.

**Early advice, proportionate intervention and therapeutic support help families access the right response at the right time.**

# Connection, Belonging and Lived Experience

APSE's community offer brings families and young people together and creates routes for lived experience to shape services.



Community groups across the region



**Nearly 300**

families supported through Peer Connection

**32**

volunteer Peer Connectors

**116**

children attended 12 activity days

**11**

young people regularly attend the Adoptables Council

Community groups, participation events and adopter-led support help families feel understood, while giving children, adopters and birth families meaningful ways to influence the service.

## ∞ Building on progress in 2026/27

01

### Increase adopter sufficiency

Recruit more diverse and resilient families for siblings, older children and children with complex needs.



02

### Develop Year Two of the support pilot

Extend early help and needs-led support, underpinned by strong multidisciplinary working.



03

### Grow community and connection

Expand adopter-led groups, explore post-order peer support and develop catch-up calls.



## Any questions?



# Medway Annual Fostering Report 2025-2026

## KEYNOTE

"Steady progress against a challenging national backdrop, with improvements in recruitment, permanence planning, kinship support and placement stability."

Agenda Item 5b



# Key Achievements 2025-2026

## Delivering Improvement

- ✓ 14 new fostering households approved
- ✓ 81 approved fostering households supporting 128 children
- ✓ Increased permanence planning and matching activity
- ✓ Expanded Mockingbird support model
- ✓ Permanent Agency Decision Maker appointed
- ✓ Selected as 1 of only 7 national DfE Kinship Allowance Pilot authorities
- ✓ 100% statutory compliance in Private Fostering visits and reviews

### HIGHLIGHT

The service has strengthened capacity, governance and permanence outcomes whilst responding to increasing demand.



# Fostering Sufficiency & Recruitment

## Recruitment activity

- 212 enquiries received
- 14 new approvals
- Positive pipeline of prospective carers progressing through assessment

## Current position

- 81 approved households
- 128 children supported

## Continuing challenge

- Insufficient placements for:
  - Teenagers
  - Sibling groups
  - Children with complex needs

## Priority 2026-27

Increase local fostering capacity and reduce reliance on external placements.



# Kinship Care & Family Networks

## Kinship activity

- 112 viability assessments completed
- Approximately 206 Special Guardianship families supported
- Supporting 286 children

## Major development

- Medway selected for the national Kinship Allowance Pilot

## Benefits

- Greater support for kinship carers
- Improved stability within family networks
- Family Network Meetings and Family Network Support Packages helping to prevent escalation and support permanence

## HIGHLIGHT

Medway is helping shape National Kinship Care Reform.



# Private Fostering & Safeguarding

## 2025 – 2026

- 30 notifications received
- All children seen within statutory timescales
- 100% compliance with required visits
- No safeguarding failures identified

## Awareness raising

- Continued engagement with schools
- Community organisations
- Health and partner agencies

## Strong Statutory Performance

Strong safeguarding oversight and compliance arrangements remain in place.



# Looking Ahead 2026-2027

## Priorities

1. Increase fostering sufficiency and recruitment
2. Strengthen foster carer retention and support
3. Expand Mockingbird provision
4. Improve permanence outcomes for children
5. Embed Kinship Allowance Pilot and Family Network Support Packages
6. Respond to National Reforms and Regional Care Cooperatives



# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



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