

Housing in Medway

Medway's Children and Families placed in temporary accommodation in Medway – Rebecca Wilcox, Chief Housing Officer

Care leavers accommodation- Nicoleta Stangu, Head of Corporate Parenting and Youth Justice

Children's commissioning QA processes of children's places and young inspectors- James Harman, Head of Children's Services Commissioning

Housing theme – current picture

- Households in interim and temporary accommodation with dependant children – 482 (79% of households in TA – this is higher than the national average – 63.3%)
- 83% (400) of these households are placed in Medway with the remaining households placed in Kent. 84.4% of households are main duty
- 999 dependant children are living in TA
- Average stay in TA 1 year & 11 days
- Less than 5 care leavers in TA
- No use of B&B for more than 6 weeks



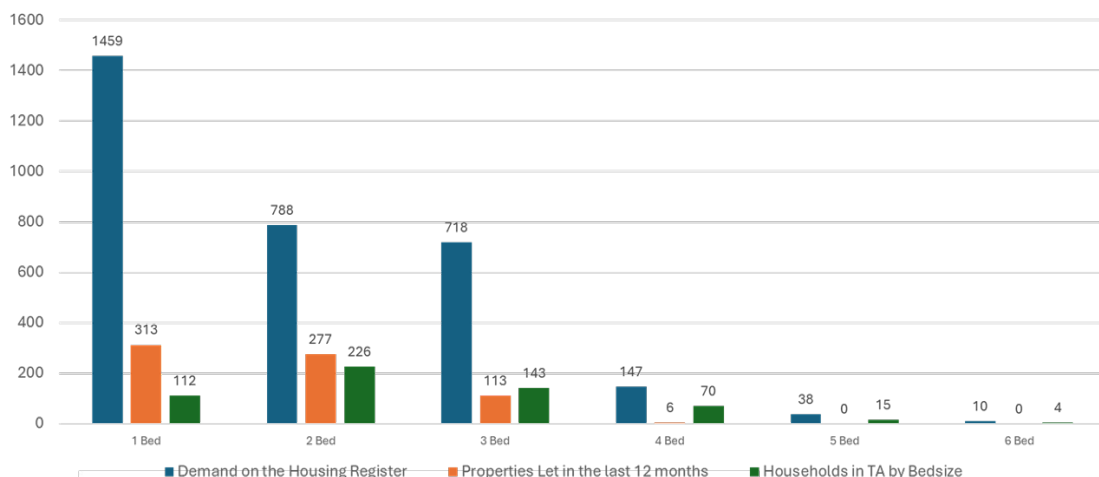
Housing theme – analysis, advice & action

■ Prevention

- Increase in front line resources in the housing options team
- Cross directorate training – including the Joint Housing Assessment (JHA)
- Opening our front door – June 2025
- Specialist housing advisor within 16+ team
- Joint housing & young peoples meeting to discuss complex cases

■ Move on

- Newly created move-on team
- One Medway Lettings
- Local Lettings Plans
- Sunrise Foyer
- Limited availability of social housing



Care leavers accommodation and support

202 open young people entitled to care leavers service as of April 2025.

Accommodation options include staying put, shared lives, supported accommodation, supported homes, private/social housing tenancies, and returning to family/friends.

25 care leavers in supported accommodation funded by Children's Services (as of March 2025).

Specialist housing advisor supports young people as part of the 16+ service.

Independence booklet used to prepare young people for tenancy and independent living.

Setting up home grant available for care leavers to purchase essential items.

Council tax exemption for care leavers up to age 25 with a tenancy.

96% of care leavers are in suitable accommodation (March 2025).



Areas of continuous focus and next steps

Areas of continuous focus:

Ensuring stability and suitable accommodation for care leavers.

Addressing accommodation needs of young people with complex needs.

Supporting young people to return to Medway and be supported to secure and maintain suitable accommodation as housing outside Medway continues to offer some difficulties for our care leavers.

Next Steps

Continued partnership with housing, finance, and commissioning colleagues.

Monthly meetings to discuss and prepare 'move on plans' for young people.

Increased use of in-house Supported Homes and Staying Put arrangements.

Advocacy for young people to ensure they are housed in suitable accommodations.

Young Inspectors project to quality assure supported accommodations.

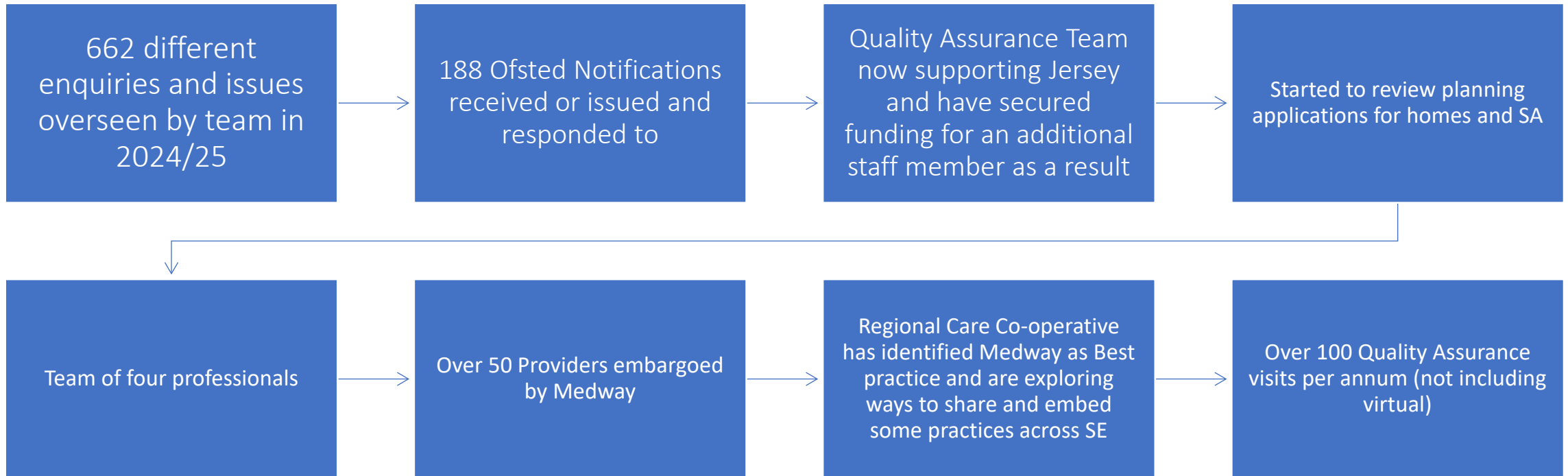


Quality Assurance – What is it

- **Monitoring** of the overarching performance and quality standards for all commissioned services Robust tracking of all QA Activity, monitoring trends and activity across all services, risk rating concerns and safeguarding matters to ensure effective and prompt responses to issues.
- Overseeing and implementing **Provider sanctions** list of all known and unknown providers located in Medway and out of area, to support risk management and wider mapping of services operating in Medway.
- **Support Improvement and Learning** - Provide help and guidance for providers who want to work with medway Young people or who are on an improvement journey
- **Holding providers to account** where practice has been poor, and support providers to improve in quality.
- **Partnership Working** with key professionals (attending strategy meetings, professionals meeting, LADO meetings etc). Conduct joint visits with professionals to support wider service improvement.
- **Collating and tracking key intelligence** to provide a holistic overview of services, including monitoring of all Ofsted alerts, Planning Requests, Out of Area placement, LADO cases, public disorder incidents and Member enquiries.



Quality Assurance – Key Facts



Young Inspectors Programme

Purpose - strengthening the QA inspection process and oversight of supported accommodation for looked-after children and care leavers aged 16-18. The initiative aligns with Medway's QA framework and Ofsted regulations to ensure high-quality provisions and promoting the voices of young people in care.

Tasks:

1. **Assess quality:** Evaluate the standard of services and living conditions provided by supported accommodation.
2. **Give feedback:** Offer constructive feedback on how providers can improve their services to better meet the needs of YP in care.
3. **Amplify voices:** Ensure the voices of Medway's YP are heard, particularly those in care, in decisions that directly affect them.
4. **Promote positive change:** Help drive improvements in care services by highlighting strengths and identifying areas of development.

Pilot – 4 Medway Care Leavers now trained, and first visits happen this month.

