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Foreword

Welcome to Medway's Local Account for Adult Social Care

This report highlights the progress we've made over the past year in supporting people across Medway who need care and support.

We are committed to transparency and accountability. By sharing this report, we invite residents to see how we're delivering on the ambitions outlined in our Adult Social Care Strategy—and to hold us to account.

At the heart of everything we do is a person-centred, strengths-based approach. We aim to empower individuals to live fulfilling lives, and we're proud of the positive impact we've made in our communities.

Looking forward, we know that the voices of people with lived experience must shape our services. Their insights are vital, and we are determined to ensure they are heard and involved in co-producing solutions.

In the coming year, we will continue to work closely with our partners—including the voluntary sector, health services, police, fire and rescue, and other council departments—to deliver high-quality, joined-up care and support.

We hope this report offers meaningful insight into our work, the progress we've made, and the challenges we face. Thank you for taking the time to read it.



Cllr Teresa Murray



Dr Lee-Anne Farach
Director of People &
Deputy Chief Executive

Our Vision

We will promote people's independence and wellbeing to aid the residents of Medway to live full, active lives; to live independently for as long as possible, and to play a full part in their local communities.

Our vision supports the following council priority:

- Delivering quality social care and community services

And its sub priorities:

- Provide effective, targeted support for our most vulnerable residents to enable them to fulfil their potential and improve their quality of life.
- Support people of all ages to live the most happy, healthy, independent life possible, utilising assistive technologies.
- Support all adults, including those living with disability or physical or mental illness to live independently and stay safe.
- People in Medway live independent and fulfilled lives into an active older age.

Our Principles

Our approach is based on four principles:

Prevention:

We will focus on shared learning and build on evidence-based interventions that can help to prevent avoidable demand on statutory health and care services.

Early intervention and recovery:

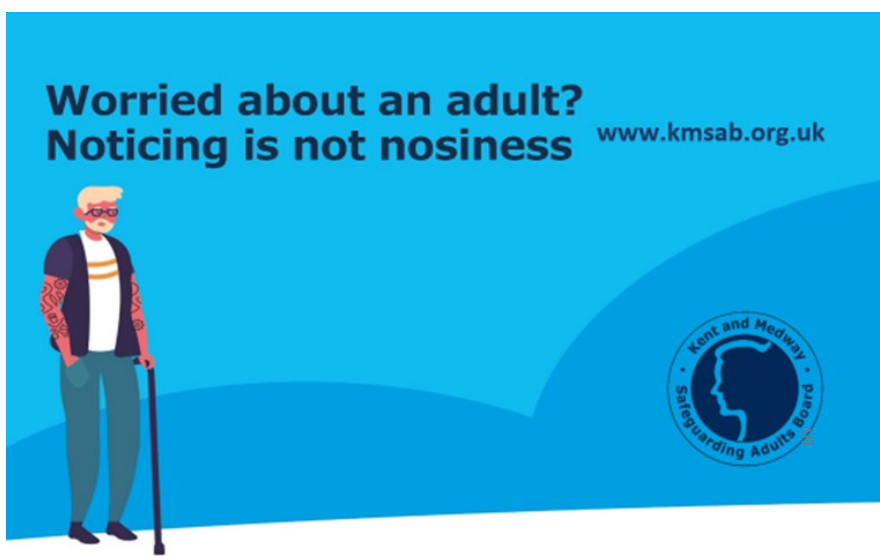
We will proactively work with individuals, families, and other agencies to help people who have experienced ill-health or crisis to recover as quickly as possible, reducing their ongoing needs and helping them return home.

Enablement:

We will work on the assumption that people want to be enabled and supported to live independently at home and access employment, when possible, ensuring that residential care is only used when there is no alternative.

Safeguarding:

We will place the right of all adults to live their lives free from harm, abuse, and neglect at the heart of everything we do.



What is Adult Social Care?

Who do we provide services to?

Adult Social Care (ASC) provides support to adults of all ages, to help them live an independent life.

Social care services are available to a diverse group, including young people transitioning to adulthood, working-age adults, and older people.

This encompasses people with learning or physical disabilities, mental health conditions, neurodiverse individuals, those living with dementia, and others with long-term conditions, such as frailty.

Care and support encompass a broad range of activities aimed at promoting wellbeing, independence, and safety.

Our key statutory duties

As a local authority, we are classed as a statutory organisation. This means we have a legal responsibility to do something, and our role and powers are defined in law.

Our responsibilities are defined in the Care Act 2014. Specific duties that we are responsible for relate to:

- Provision of social care (assessment of individuals' and carer's needs)
- Providing care and support plans. A duty to meet the needs of someone assessed as eligible for care and support
- Promoting wellbeing
- Preventing the need for care and support through providing information and advice
- Protecting adults from abuse and neglect (safeguarding)
- Promoting health & care integration
- Market shaping (quality, choice, ensuring we have enough resources to provide services).

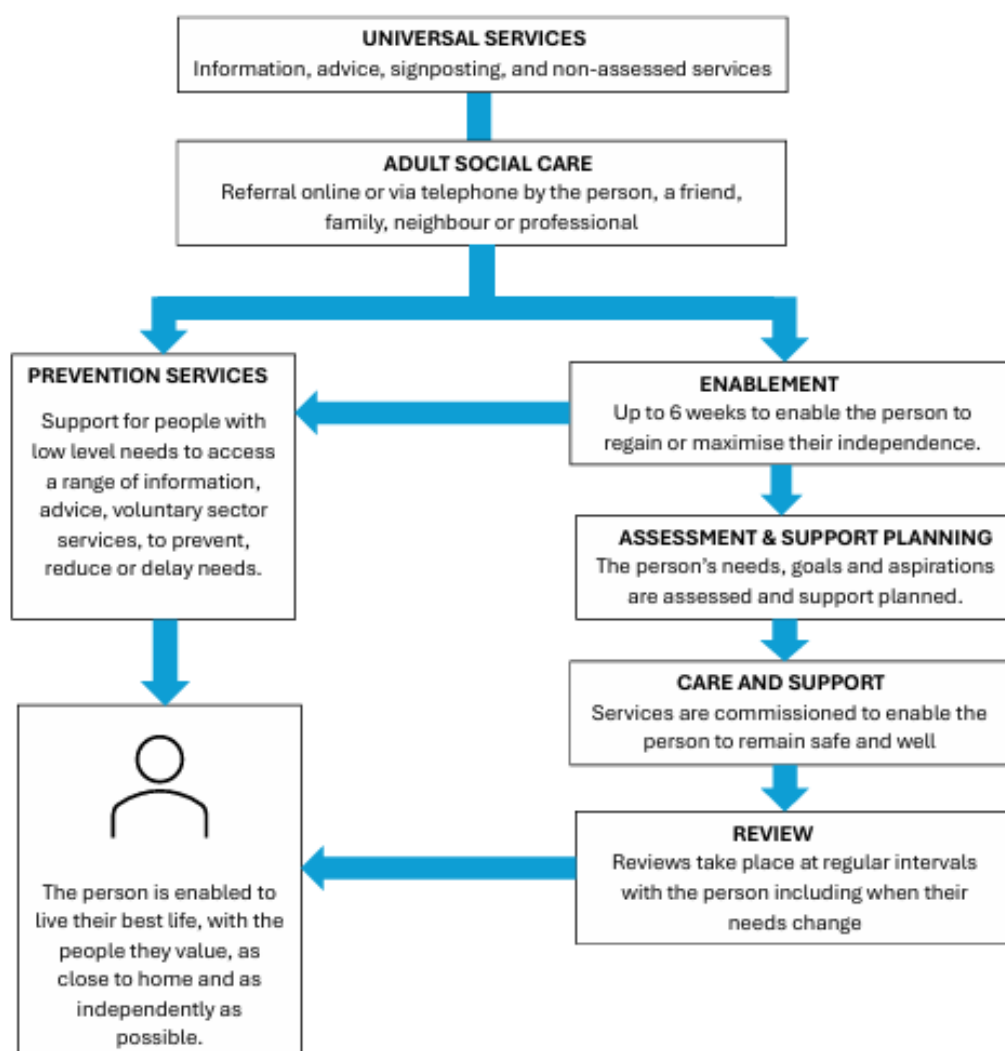


How we meet people's needs

The **Care Act 2014** sets out our responsibilities as a local authority for understanding and meeting people's needs. Support can be delivered in a variety of ways including our in-house services, services that we buy from other social care providers, the voluntary & community sector, or by support from family and friends providing informal care.

Many people directly employ individuals ('personal assistants') to provide their care and support, funded using a direct payment from the council instead of receiving care from a council appointed care provider as a matter of choice.

We are responsible for making sure that people can choose how their support is provided, that it meets their needs, is well coordinated and effective. We have a duty to ensure that there is support available in Medway to meet the needs of local people. Some people may have to pay for all the support they need or part of it, depending on their financial circumstances.

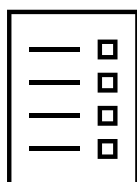


Our Key Achievements Over the Past Year



14,864

Initial contacts with Medway Adult Social Care



2,063

Care Act and Occupational Therapy Assessments for our residents



3,267

Safeguarding concerns received and 846 safeguarding enquiries undertaken



610

Safeguarding risks removed or reduced



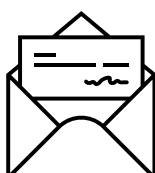
276

Carers Assessments completed



2,943

Residents receiving long term support – 2,048 in their own home and 895 in a care home



471 in receipt of a Direct Payment,

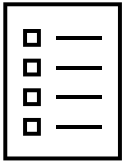
Which is 23.3% of residents receiving long term support



4,024

Hospital discharges supported

Our Key Challenges



Waiting lists

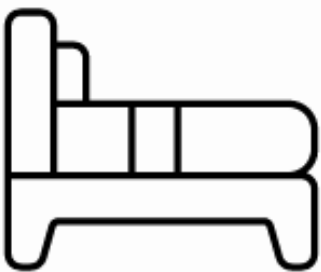
Increasing care costs & the uncertainty of long-term funding of Adult Social Care



Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers

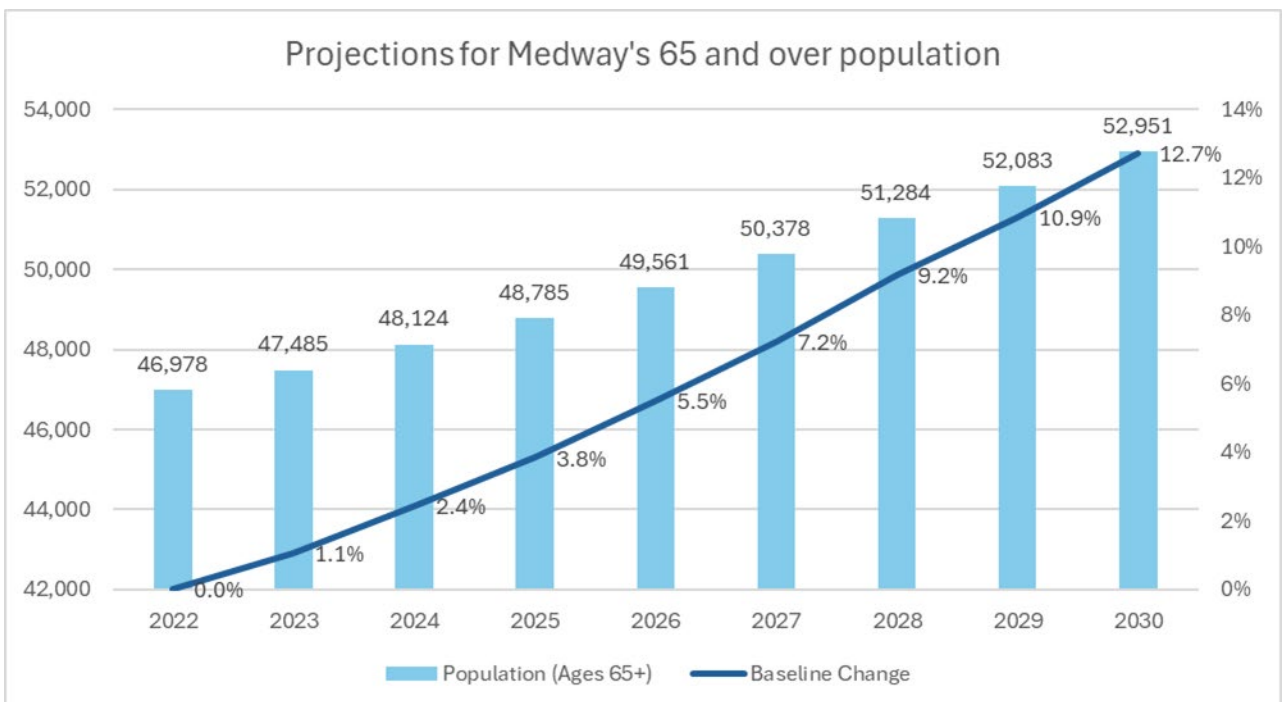


Demand on the NHS leading to pressures in Social Care



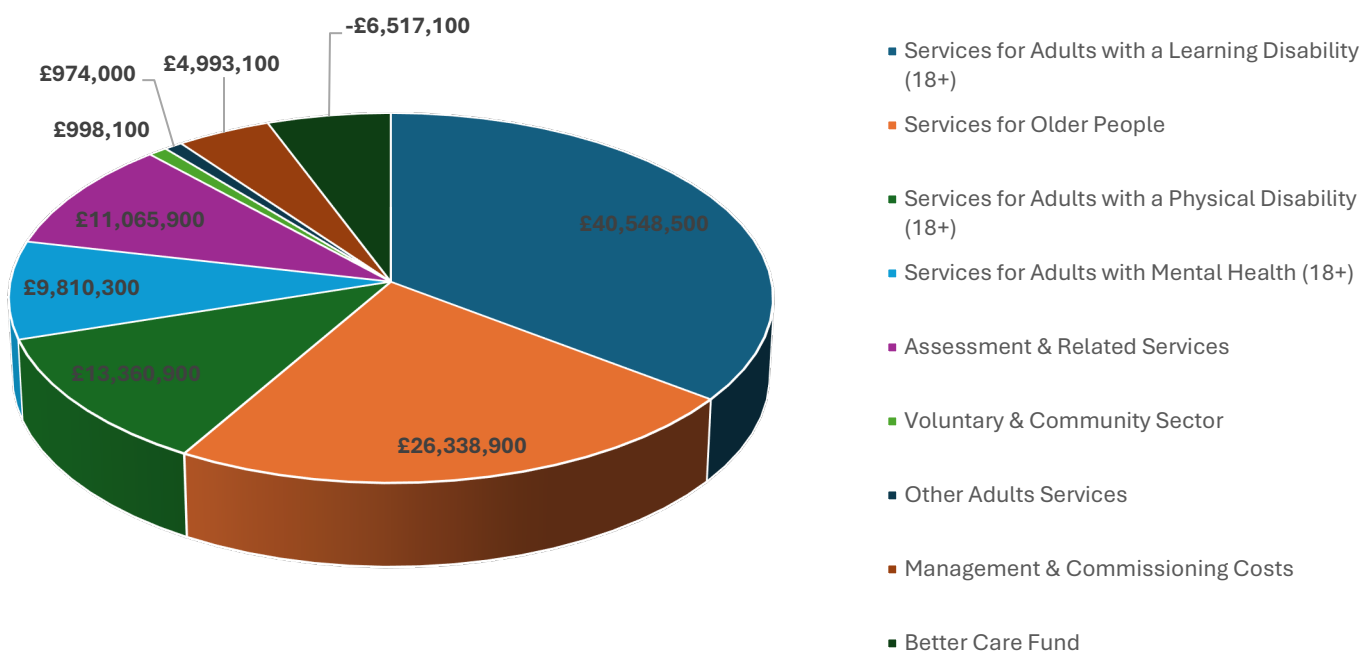
Lack of care home beds available to meet demand.

Population Projections for Medway's over 65 population



How we spend our money

The Adult Social Care budget for 2024/25 was **£101,572,600**.



Costs are rising. We know that the costs of delivering care and support are rising. In the last 5 years in Medway:

- Supported Living costs have increased by **186%**
- Residential & Nursing Care costs have increased by **77%**
- Mental Health Care costs have increased by **178%**

Adult Social Care in Medway’s actual expenditure in 2024/25 was **£108,714,988** which was **£7,142,465** more than budgeted.

CQC Assessment

The **Care Quality Commission** (CQC) assessment rated our services as “Requires Improvement” with a score of 59%, just four percentage points short of a “Good” rating.



This assessment reflects both the challenges we face and the progress we’ve made.

It recognised strengths in areas such as:

- Supporting people to lead healthier lives
- Partnerships and communities
- Safe pathways, systems and transitions

However, we must continue to improve in key areas including:

- Assessing needs
- Safeguarding
- Governance

Long wait times and staffing pressures remain significant issues, but our ongoing transformation work is laying the foundations for sustainable improvement.

To support our improvements, we have introduced our Transformation and Improvement Service. Its sole focus is on enhancing our work and ensuring that everyone’s voice is heard to help shape Adult Social Care, through the Engagement Team.

In February 2025, we launched a major programme to improve Adult Social Care services. Our goal is to make sure people who use the services get improved support, while also making the way we work more efficient and effective.

The programme helps us meet national standards, save money, and build a culture where we are always looking for ways to improve.

We are focusing on six key areas to guide our work:

Setting a Clear Direction

- We are updating our strategy to reflect what people will need in the future. This includes strong leadership and a clear, ambitious plan to improve services

Creating Reliable, High-Quality Services

- We are working to make care services more stable and responsive. That means modernising how we manage finances and contracts, and making sure services are centred around the person receiving the care

Supporting People and Communities

- We want people to have more choice and control over their care. This includes better support for carers, more flexible payment options, and services that are inclusive and easy to access

Investing in our Workforce

- We are building a team that is skilled, motivated, and well-supported. This means improving how we hire and keep staff, supporting their wellbeing, and encouraging ongoing learning and innovation

Working Together Better

- We are strengthening partnerships with health services and community organisations. By working more closely together, we can make sure people get smoother support, especially when moving between services

Using Technology and Data Wisely

- We are using digital tools and data to improve how services are delivered, and decisions are made. This will help us to respond more quickly, and make sure people get the right support, at the right time.

Our Engagement Work

The role of the Engagement Team is to focus on strengthening how we work with people who draw on care and support, their families, carers, and our wider communities. Our overall aim is to ensure that we listen to and learn from a wide range of voices to shape the future of Adult Social Care in a meaningful and inclusive way.

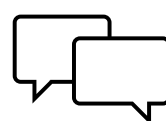
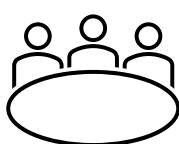
We are also aiming to take that further, moving into co-production to work in equal partnership with people who have lived experience, to design and improve services.

In addition to this, the team is responsible for driving internal engagement and co-production across Adult Social Care, as well as with our partner organisations, fostering collaborative approaches that bring together diverse perspectives to improve outcomes and experiences.

The team have created various ways in which people can feedback on our service and are aiming to develop this further across digital and in-person formats.

The team will be holding regular face-to-face sessions with people who have lived experience of social care across Medway. Creating a panel of people with lived experience will help to shape services within the council, whilst building a strong network of individuals, families, carers, professionals, and community groups.

If you would like to be part of our change together network to help shape our service and for more details of future opportunities to have your say, please email changetogether@medway.gov.uk.



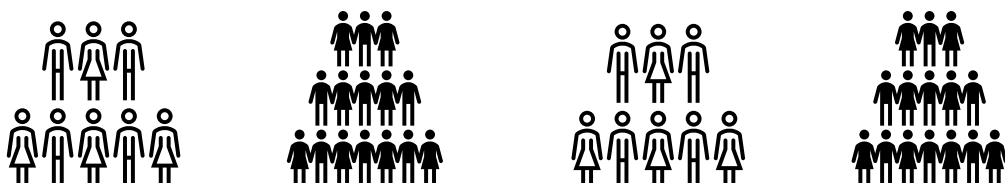
Our New Structure

Staff feedback made it clear: our previous structure wasn't working. Teams strongly supported the creation of two distinct services - **Early Help & Prevention (First Response)** and **Long-Term Care & Support** to improve clarity and effectiveness.

In February 2025, we implemented a new structure with increased staffing, alongside new pathways and processes to drive consistency and smarter working.

This change brings several key benefits:

- **Proactive support:** Early intervention helps prevent escalation, improving outcomes and reducing reliance on long-term care.
- **Clear service focus:** First Response supports short-term, community-based care to promote independence; Long-Term Care provides sustained support for ongoing needs.
- **Smarter resource use:** Early help is often more cost-effective, helping us manage budgets while delivering better care.
- **Improved outcomes:** Dedicated teams enable quicker recoveries and more consistent long-term support.
- **Better coordination:** Clear service boundaries enhance communication and ensure individuals receive the right care at the right time.



Medway Intensive Support Team (MIST)

The MIST team primarily supports individuals with:

- Hoarding
- Enduring Self Neglect
- Cuckooing/Home Invasion
- Repeat Housing Difficulties/Periods of Homelessness
- Enduring mental health with dual diagnosis
- Alcohol and Substance Misuse

Their work includes:

- Coordinating and attending multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings to support clients.
- Providing intensive support to prevent hospital admissions and help with hospital discharge, particularly for people coming out of mental health hospitals.
- Managing high-risk clients with complex needs, including those with mental health issues, substance misuse, cognitive impairments, and self-neglect.
- Developing strategic plans for clients to ensure coordinated, trauma informed and strength-based care through a shared understanding among professionals.
- Supporting clients with housing, personal care packages, and safeguarding concerns.
- Working closely with other services such as mental health, community outreach teams and brokerage to provide holistic support.
- Encouraging and facilitating client engagement with services, including arranging personal assistants (PAs) and care packages.
- Providing supervision and development for team members to build confidence and expertise.
- Using cost avoidance and savings data to demonstrate the impact of their work.

Overall, the MIST team acts as a key community resource to keep vulnerable individuals safe, supported, and as independent as possible, while preventing unnecessary hospital stays or institutional placements.

How are we doing?

Compliments

We received 32 compliments between April 2024 – March 2025. Some of the main reasons for the compliments included;

Staff going the extra mile, caring, compassionate and professional staff.

Here are a few quotes from some of our compliments:

“T is a complete credit to Medway she was extremely attentive + helped us a lot with Mum's condition very informative + understanding + prompt T was truly an amazing colleague. All questions answered + Mum is more than happy with her new chair”

“We cannot thank M enough she went above and beyond and is an asset to the council services. She made the awfully stressful process of getting dad to his happy home so much better for me and my mother also . M was so helpful and understanding putting my Mum, my Dad and me and my sisters at ease through this difficult time . My Mum said M is an angel sent to help her bless her .I just wanted to let you know how hard she worked to help us all and make this happen . M is one in a million and we will always be forever grateful to her and appreciate all her hard work , kindness and understanding.”

“My Mum has just told me the GREAT NEWS that funding has been sorted for my Dad. On behalf of myself and family I would like to say a BIG THANK-YOU, after thinking it's never going to happen as been told can have so much different help and never comes to anything again THANK-YOU X”

How are we doing?

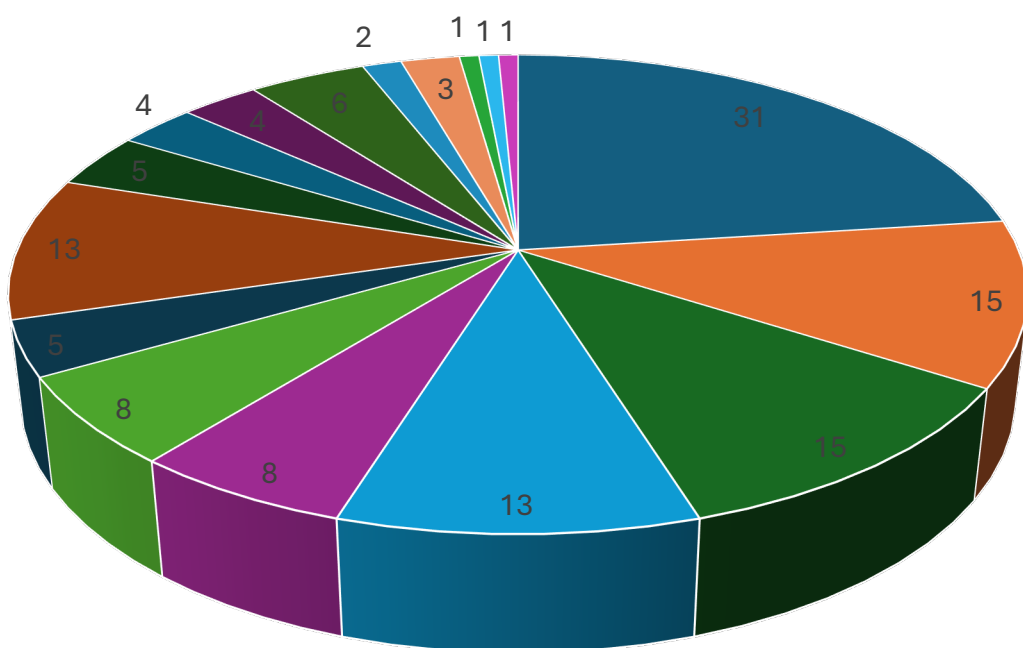
Complaints

April 2024 – March 2025, we received 106 complaints. Some of the main reasons for the complaints included:

- Communication issues
- Financial
- Delays

The outcome of complaints received were that 90 were upheld or partially upheld and 45 not upheld.

*** This figure is greater than the total complaints responded to as complaints may involve more than one team.**



- Lack of communication / information
- Delay in providing a service
- Lack of support
- Financial
- Disagreeing with a financial assessment
- Incorrect invoice
- Delay in referring to Direct Payments
- Service provided
- Attitude and behaviour of staff
- Delayed in completing a carer's assessment.
- Standard of home care
- Disagreeing with a decision re service provided
- Delay in hospital discharge
- Standard of care in a care home
- Delay in delivering equipment
- Direct payments stopped
- Safeguarding investigation

Changing the Narrative: A Story of Resilience

For much of his life, this individual's story was defined only by crisis. He lost his primary caregiver at a young age, a trauma that left him without stability or security. Growing up without that consistent support made it extremely difficult for him to navigate life, to trust others, or to feel safe in the world.

As he reached adulthood, the challenges compounded. He lived with a learning disability, post-traumatic stress disorder, and traits linked to autism and emotionally unstable personality disorder. Everyday situations that others might find manageable often felt overwhelming to him. When he felt unsafe, his distress could trigger self-harm or behaviours that others misinterpreted as aggression. These responses closed doors, led to stigma, and reinforced the idea that he was "hard to help."

Over time, this cycle drew him into more than thirty prison sentences. Alongside this, he battled alcohol and drug use, often as a way to cope with trauma and the absence of consistent care. Services tried to step in, but many approaches focused only on managing risk, rather than understanding his history and communication needs. Housing placements collapsed. Mental health interventions were brief. Supported living was offered again and again but left him feeling controlled and unsafe.

A Turning Point: Trauma-Informed Practice

In October 2023, the Medway Multiple Disadvantage Network (MMDN) began embedding a trauma-informed approach. For him, this was a critical shift. Instead of being defined by his behaviours, professionals began to ask, "What has happened to him? What helps him feel safe?"

Part of this new way of working included developing a strategic plan to ensure joint coordination of consistent support which aligned with support needs, strength-based practices and a communication passport — a practical tool capturing how he communicates, what triggers distress, and what helps him manage. This gave staff and partner agencies a consistent way of understanding his needs, reducing the risk of misunderstanding and helping him to feel more secure.

MIST: A New Kind of Support

The Medway Intensive Support Team (MIST) built on these principles, working differently from services he had known before. Instead of prescribing another placement, MIST worked alongside him to design support that promoted both safety and independence.

The plan included:

- Daytime support from a personal assistant to help with life skills, communication, and building confidence in daily routines.
- Evening and weekend on-call support, giving him the reassurance that help was there if he felt unsafe, without removing his autonomy.
- Use of the communication passport across services, so that all professionals responded consistently to his needs and triggers.

This combination changed his experience. He no longer felt forced into environments that didn't fit. Instead, he felt listened to, supported, and safer.

Approaching 50: What It Looks Like Now

As he approaches his 50th birthday, life looks very different:

He holds his own tenancy in a shared house, not in 24-hour supported living.

He has consistent, trusted daytime support, with clear communication strategies that work for him.

He can access evening and weekend help if he feels unsafe, preventing crises from escalating.

His drug use has reduced, and he is developing healthier ways to cope with distress.

Most importantly, he is beginning to see himself not as a problem to be managed, but as someone capable of resilience and change.

Challenges remain - early trauma, the loss of a caregiver, and the impact of multiple disadvantages cannot be undone. But now, setbacks are met with support rather than rejection. Services remain steady, communication is clearer, and the focus is on building strengths, not just managing risks.

His story shows what it means to change the narrative: to see the person behind the behaviours, to value communication and consistency, and to believe that even after decades of difficulty, it is never too late to rebuild.

Supporting Carers: Making It Easier to Get Help

We are making it simpler for unpaid carers to access support. This includes clearer referral routes, better awareness of the support available for carers, and more peer support. We are also working with carers to design services that meet real needs and exploring new ways to offer help through trusted professionals and digital tools.

We invest in Carers. We commission a dedicated support service for Carers in Medway, delivered by Carers First, offering a holistic range of advice and support, as well as statutory carer assessments for Young Carers.

Inclusion for Everyone: Services That Work for All

We are making sure our services are fair and inclusive. That means listening to under-represented communities, improving how we assess needs, and gathering and using better data. Staff are receiving more training on cultural awareness, and the lived experiences of people are helping to shape future services.

Digital First: Easier Access to Care Through Technology

We are using smart technology to make care easier to find and use. New digital tools will help people get support and navigate services. We are making sure information is available in different formats and working with communities to co-design digital solutions that work for everyone.

Recommissioning Residential and Nursing Care for Older People (Aged 65+): Shaping Local Care

We are developing a sustainable model that not only encourages and maximises resident's independence but embeds the Public Health prevention agenda for older people in care home services. We aim to standardise services across Medway Council and KCC and create a clearer understanding about the services commissioned through alignment of specifications, in terms of quality and performance. This considers the Local Government Reorganisational proposals.

We hope that you have found our local account to be useful. We would welcome any views on what you think of it and what we could do to improve it in the future.

If you have any views or feedback on any of the above, please let us know your views by contacting the Adult Social Care Engagement Team using any of the following methods;;

Website: www.medway.gov.uk/changetogether

Email: changetogether@medway.gov.uk

A heartfelt thank you to all our staff and partners for the incredible progress we achieved together in 2024–25.

We are truly proud of what we delivered over the past year. These accomplishments were only possible because of the shared commitment, collaboration, and hard work of everyone involved.

Thank you for everything you do.