



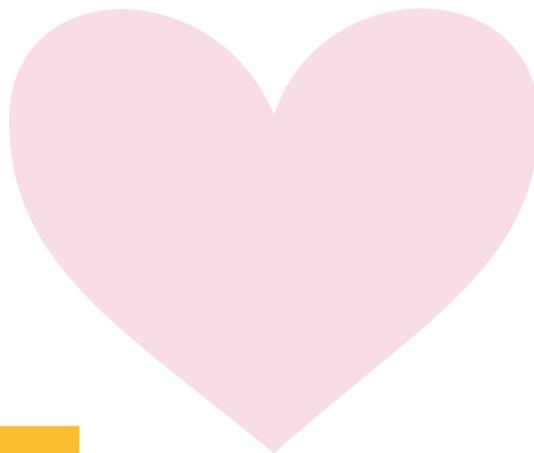
Adult Social Care

Strategy 2026-2028



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**Foreword from Councillor Murray,
Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio
Holder for Health and Social Care**

Our new, refreshed strategy for Adult Social Care in Medway embodies the council's own values and reflects the hard work and financial investment into Right Sizing this critical service over the past year. We are determined to ensure Medway Council has sufficient capacity to offer residents who need it the modern, high standards of care and support that meet their individual needs and enables them to live well and independently in their own homes for as long as possible.

There is a renewed emphasis on training and development to support our staff in the provision of consistently good quality care as well as stronger financial control and commitment to value for money across all aspects of our service. The strategy focusses on prevention too using expertise and resources from across the council to help residents maintain healthy lifestyles and access support from a wide range of advice and activities to do so.

The strategy shows that we value our partners in the Care sector and are determined to support them in providing services that match our ambitions and high standards so that wherever someone receives care they can be assured of a safe environment, well trained staff and a compassionate approach.

I know that Adult Social Care touches the lives of many families in Medway who deserve our commitment to making sure that their loved ones will receive the very best care we can deliver. I am proud of the new strategy which confirms our intention to make this happen.



**Foreword from Michelle Horlock,
Principal Social Worker**

As we move forward together in Adult Social Care, I want to take a moment to share our commitment to making a real difference in people's lives. This strategy is all about putting people first – making sure that care is joined-up, respectful, and truly centred around each person's needs, wishes, and dignity.

We know the challenges are real – from supporting an ageing population to meeting the wide range of needs across our community, but I believe in the power of working together. By building strong partnerships between health services and community groups, we can create a support system that helps people feel more confident, connected, and in control of their lives.

A big part of this is making sure our staff feel supported too. The care we provide is only as good as the people delivering it – and we're lucky to have such dedicated teams. That's why we're investing in training and development, so our workforce has the skills, tools, and confidence to provide the very best care. We want our staff to feel proud, valued, and inspired every day.

Our goal is simple: to help every person live a full and meaningful life. That means more than just care – it's about opportunities to learn, connect with others, and have a voice in shaping the services they receive. We're listening closely to individuals and families, and their experiences will guide everything we do.

This is a journey we're on together. With compassion, respect, and a shared commitment to doing what's right, I truly believe we can build a brighter future for adult social care. Thank you for being part of it.

Goal: Help people live safely, stay independent, and be treated with dignity and respect, through open, responsive, and person-centred care

Our five commitments



Be Bold and Open to New Ideas



Improving How We Work and Think Together



Building Strong Partnerships



Listening, Sharing and Working Together



Fair, Prepared and Focused on Prevention

The Local Context

Adult Social Care in Medway is shaped by the people we serve, the communities we work with, and the challenges we face together. The following data provides a snapshot of our local context, highlighting who receives support, why they need it, and how we are responding. This information helps us to understand current needs and plan for the future, and we have used it to support the creation of our goal, mission, and commitments for the coming years, ensuring that our strategy is grounded in the lived realities of Medway's residents.



Estimated total adult population in Medway for 2024/25:

223,299

(174,514 aged 18-64 and 48,785 aged 65+)

Total number of Medway Council Long Term care service users:

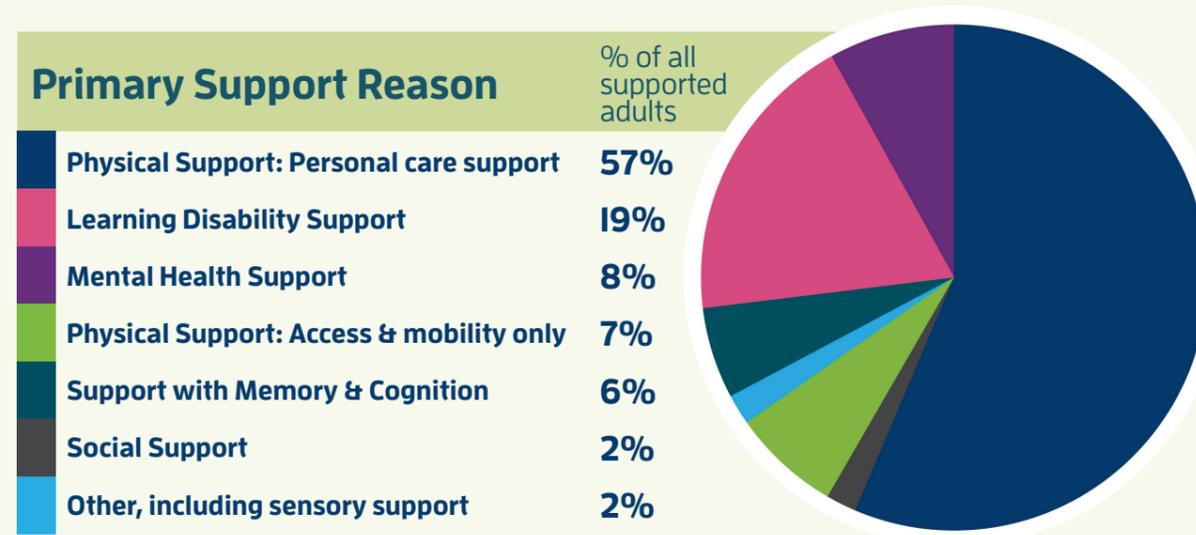
3,038

(as of June 2025)

1 in 74

adults supported by Medway Council who have a long-term health condition or disability

The main reasons people receive support from ASC



Number of people receiving support from ASC

Then broken down to gender, and 65+ / <65

Our Adult Social Care Strategy fits closely with the council's Financial Improvement and Transformation Plan.

Every action within this strategy is designed to contribute to tackling financial challenges through

prevention, early help, and innovative models of care, ensuring resources are used wisely and sustainably. Our strategy supports the delivery of high-quality care throughout preparations for Local Government Reorganisation, so that residents experience continuity and stability during any changes.

Total number of people receiving support from ASC:

AGE BAND	MALE	FEMALE
95 and above	23	131
85 to 94	229	503
75 to 84	319	515
65 to 74	230	235
45 to 64	295	262
25 to 44	222	126
18 to 24	52	34

Long Term Adult Service users by age and gender



Which aggregated to older people and working age is:

AGE BAND	MALE	FEMALE
65 and above	801	1384
18 to 64	569	422

Population Projection for Medway's 65+

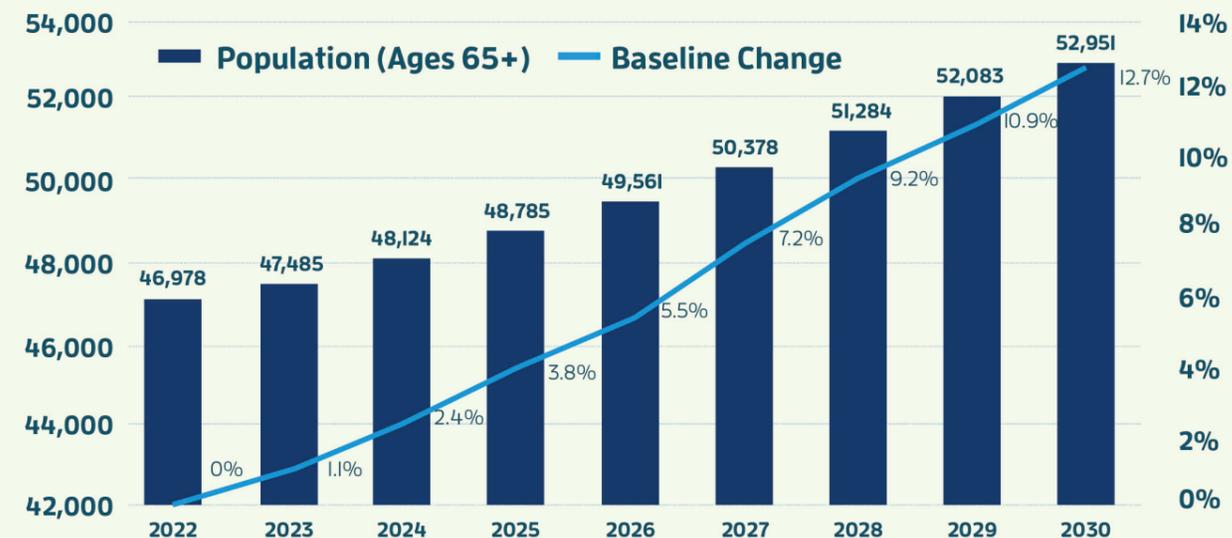
We recognise that people want greater clarity about how adult social care is funded and what financial contributions may be expected. Adult Social Care in Medway is funded through a combination of national and local resources.

Some services are means-tested, meaning individuals may be asked to contribute based on their financial circumstances. More information can be found in our Charging and Financial Assessment Policy.

This policy outlines:

- The legal basis for charging under the Care Act 2014
- How financial assessments are carried out
- What types of care and support may be chargeable or exempt
- How contributions are calculated, including income, capital, and disability-related expenditure
- The rights of carers and the approach to charging for carer support
- How people can appeal or request a light-touch assessment

Projections for Medway's 65 and over population



Our Commitment to Quality and the CQC Framework

The Health and Care Act 2022 gave the Care Quality Commission (CQC) new powers to independently assess how well local authorities deliver adult social care. These assessments look at how councils meet their legal duties under the Care Act 2014, which include supporting people's wellbeing, assessing care needs, providing financial assessments, and ensuring safe, high-quality care.

In April 2023, the CQC introduced a new national assurance framework for adult social care. This framework sets out what good care should look like and places people's experiences at the heart of the assessment. It focuses on four key areas:

- **Working with people:** How we assess needs, support healthier lives, and ensure fairness
- **Providing support:** How care is delivered, integrated, and sustained through partnerships
- **Ensuring safety:** How we keep people safe and manage transitions
- **Leadership:** How we govern, manage resources, and drive improvement

Medway Council was assessed under this framework in 2024, and the CQC published its findings in January 2025. We were rated 'Requires Improvement' overall, with three areas rated 'Good' and six rated 'Requires Improvement'. Our score was 59%.

This feedback is important. It helps us understand where we are doing well and where we need to improve. In response, we have developed a CQC Improvement Plan to address the areas identified in the assessment, and implementation of this plan is already underway. Our strategy has been aligned with these findings to ensure that the improvements required are embedded in our approach and that we continue to strengthen the quality and safety of adult social care services.

Our Adult Social Care Leadership Structure

We want to be transparent about who leads adult social care in Medway and how decisions are made. Our leadership team ensures services are safe, effective, and focused on helping people live well.

The **Director of Adult Social Services (DASS)** is a statutory post holder with overall accountability for leadership, governance, and assurance of adult social care in Medway, ensuring statutory duties are met and that services are safe, effective, and well-led.

Supporting the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) is the **Assistant Director of Adult Social Care**, who holds strategic operational responsibility for the delivery of adult social care services, ensuring effective governance, performance oversight, and continuous improvement, in line with statutory duties and the council's strategic priorities.

The leadership team focuses on key areas of care and support:

- **Head of Early Help and Prevention:** Leading work to help people stay independent and well for as long as possible
- **Head of Long Term Care and Support and Integrated Discharge Team:** Overseeing services for people who need ongoing care and support

- **Head of Specialist Services and Safeguarding:** Ensuring the vulnerable adults are protected and safeguarding responsibilities are met
- **Head of Business Operations and Provider Services:** Responsible for financial processes, direct payments, and council-run services
- **Head of Adult Partnership Commissioning:** Working with partners to commission high-quality services that meet local needs
- **Head of Transformation and Improvement:** Driving innovation and improvement across adult social care
- **Principal Social Worker:** Providing professional leadership for social workers and promoting best practice
- **Principal Occupational Therapist:** Provides professional leadership for occupational therapists, ensuring best practice and high standards in supporting independence and wellbeing

Together, this team leads our improvement work, including responding to CQC findings, and ensure that adult social care in Medway continues to improve for the people who use our services.



Budget spent on ASC

(i.e. £1 in every £5)

Medway Council's total budget for 2024/25

£438,569,000

Medway's Adult Social Care budget for 2024/25 was £101,572,600

The actual expenditure was

£108,714,988

which was £7,142,465 more than budgeted

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%**

People receiving support from an ethnic minority group

For June 2024 – June 25: 3176

Ethnic Group	People receiving LT support	% of Group *
Asian/ Asian British	94	2.96%
Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British	97	3.05%
Mixed/ multiple ethnic group	30	0.95%
Other Ethnic Group	26	0.82%
Undeclared or Not known	111	3.50%
White	2818	88.73%



Our Goal

Medway wants to improve adult social care so that people who may require support can live safely, stay independent wherever possible, and are always treated with dignity and respect. We are committed to being open and transparent in everything we do, and to delivering responsive services that reflect what matters most to each individual.

Our strategy is focused on achieving better outcomes for people who use our services, enhancing wellbeing and quality of life, and supporting those who live with or care for adults needing support. We recognise the vital role of Carers, and the Medway Joint Carers' Strategy sets out how their needs are addressed.

Medway's Adult Social Care Strategy supports the NHS 10-Year Plan by promoting joined-up, person-centred care that helps people stay safe, independent, and well. We will continue to work closely with health partners to prevent crisis, reduce hospital admissions, and deliver support that is timely, effective, and tailored to each person's goals and circumstances.

Our Mission

Adult Social Care in Medway supports and engages with people and communities to live safe, independent, and fulfilling lives. We are committed to being inclusive, responsive, and guided by feedback and evidence to make the right decisions at the right time.

We will focus on:

- Providing early help and finding solutions before needs escalate
- Working in partnership with individuals, families, carers, and communities
- Empowering people to feel confident, safe, and in control of their lives
- Listening to people to make choices together about the support they receive
- Always striving to ensure people get the right support, at the right time, in the right way
- Delivering tailored support that reflects each person's unique circumstances, strengths, and aspirations



Commitment 1 Being Bold and Open to New Ideas

We will use our resources wisely to provide early help and respond to challenges before they grow. We will try new ideas in how we work, support staff to keep learning and improving, and use technology in ways that make care more accessible, personalised, and centred around people's needs. Our decisions will be guided by what matters most to local people.

We are committed to delivering support that is timely and consistent, before, during, and after assessment. While we embrace innovation, we will also retain and improve non-technological ways of accessing support for those who are not comfortable with digital tools, while offering help for those who wish to use them.

The use of technology will be focused on enabling staff to spend more meaningful time with the people they support. We will continue to uphold our safeguarding responsibilities and work in partnership to keep people safe.

Key activities:

- **Attract and retain dedicated staff by making Medway's Adult Social Care service a great place to work**
- **Develop a clear plan that supports staff to do their jobs confidently and professionally**
- **Use new technology to make care easier to find and better to use, while maintaining inclusive access for all**
- **Learn from each other and from what people tell us**
- **Provide ongoing high-quality, relevant training so staff can keep learning**
- **Think ahead and work more closely with the NHS and care providers to keep people safe and uphold safeguarding responsibilities**
- **Promote consistency of care alongside innovation, ensuring people receive the right support at the right time**



Commitment 2 Improving How We Work and Think Together

People working in adult social care will be kind, confident, and listen to you. Support will be available to meet your needs and help you live well and stay independent. We will work with local people, charities, and community groups to make sure care is inclusive, respectful and right for everyone.

As Medway's population grows and changes, we will adapt how we work to reflect the evolving needs, backgrounds, and expectations of our communities, ensuring that care remains relevant, responsive, and inclusive.

We will:

- **Make care personal and focused on what matters to you**
- **Keep care high-quality through oversight, learning, and professionalism**
- **Adapt our support for people with more complex needs**
- **Build a learning culture that values safeguarding, safety, new ideas, and evidence from experience and feedback**
- **Continue to support staff to feel confident, provide kind and respectful care**



Commitment 3 Working Together to Build Strong Partnerships

We will work with care providers, local services, and community organisations to make sure support is high-quality, safe, safeguarding-aware, and meets people's needs. People will have available options and a say in their care. All partners will work together in local communities to make care more joined-up and responsive.

What we will do:

- Plan long-term care with care providers, charities, and community groups to meet local needs
- Build strong partnerships across Medway
- Make sure services are flexible, high-quality, and person-centred
- Support care providers to try new ideas and keep improving
- Listen to people and use their ideas to shape future services
- Plan for future needs as our population grows



Commitment 4 Listening, Sharing and Working Together

We want everyone to understand adult social care and know how to find support when they need it. We will share clear, easy-to-read information and reduce stigma around asking for help. We will listen to people and work with them to shape and improve services through ongoing community engagement and co-production.

We are committed to building trust in adult social care by ensuring that information is accessible to different audiences, including people with varying communication needs, languages, and digital confidence. Inclusive engagement and feedback loops will be embedded as part of our safeguarding culture, helping us to identify risks early and respond in ways that protect and empower individuals.

What we will do:

- Work with people who use services, carers, and communities to develop adult social care together
- Make sure our information is accessible, clear, and easy to understand and find for everyone
- Involve people from different background, cultures, and experiences
- Make advice and guidance easy to find and use, in both digital and non-digital formats
- Show how feedback leads to real changes and better teamwork, through transparent and continuous feedback loops



Commitment 5 Being Fair, Prepared and Focused on Prevention

We want to help people earlier, so they can stay well and live their lives the way they choose. Services will work together to give fair and timely support. We will be open and treat everyone with respect and equity recognising that some people may need more support than others.

We will give people the opportunity to find their own solutions where they wish to and support them to make informed decisions about their care. We recognise the vital role of families, carers, and support networks, and will work alongside them to promote wellbeing and independence.

We will:

- Make sure services and staff promote fairness, inclusion and diversity
- Strengthen early help and prevention for adults, including safeguarding, so support is available before needs grow
- Work together to support people with complex or less visible needs
- Use feedback and evidence to find and fix inequality in services, and to share success stories that celebrate positive outcomes and build trust
- Design services that reflect different communities and respond to local changes



Delivery Plan

The Adult Social Care Strategy delivery will be driven through our Adult Social Care Transformation and Improvement Programme, which includes our CQC Improvement Plan and aligns with our overarching goals for better outcomes, stronger partnerships, and a more responsive, person-centred service.



STAGE 1

LISTENING AND LEARNING

- **What we did:** Consultation with people, carers, communities, and partners
- **What we heard:** Feedback themes, and what good Adult Social Care looks like
- **What we built:** A strategy shaped by lived experience

STAGE 2

ALIGNING AND PLANNING

- **CQC Improvement Plan:** Actions to meet statutory requirements
- **Transformation Programme:** Strategic objectives and governance

STAGE 3

DELIVERING CHANGE

Key focus areas:

- Early help and prevention
- Workforce development
- Technology and data
- Co-production and engagement
- Market shaping and provider support

LINKED PROJECTS

Accessible Information and Digital Inclusion:

Improving how people access adult social care information, digitally and non-digitally. This includes making the website fully accessible, offering self-assessment tools, and ensuring our communications meet Accessible Information Standards

Why it matters: Helps people find support independently, reduces confusion, and ensures inclusion for those with limited access

Recruitment and Workforce Development:

A focused effort to recruit and retain staff across key roles and improve training. Includes agile worker models and consistency in assessments

Why it matters: Improves timeliness, quality, and consistency of care. Supports staff wellbeing and job satisfaction

Carers Offer and Support: Strengthening support for unpaid carers through improved assessments, awareness campaigns, and partnerships

STAGE 3

Why it matters: Recognises carers as key partners in care, reduces strain, and improves wellbeing for both carers and those they support

Front Door and Early Help: Expanding preventative services and reablement options, improving referral pathways, and reducing reliance on long-term care

Why it matters: Prevents crisis, promotes independence, and ensures people get the right support at the right time

Practice Development and Safeguarding: Embedding strengths-based practice, improving safeguarding systems, and ensuring staff are trained and supported to deliver safe, person-centred care

Why it matters: Ensures safety, dignity, and empowerment for people using services, and builds public trust in adult social care

STAGE 4

MEASURING IMPACT

How we'll know it's working

- Measurement against the "What will success look like" statements
- Feedback loops and engagement
- Improved outcomes and reduced inequalities
- KPIs for specific Adult Social Care Strategy areas, and from the CQC Improvement Plan

STAGE 5

SUSTAINING IMPROVEMENT

- **Embedding change:** Moving from project delivery to business as usual
- **Continuous improvement:** Through an improved learning culture, peer reviews, and ongoing innovation
- **Annual reviews:** Strategy and programme refreshed based on progress and feedback

What will success look like

We will know our strategy is working when the people who use our services, those within our communities, and our partners including care providers, the NHS, and the voluntary and community sector, tell us it is.

Through consultation we've gathered powerful statements that reflect what good adult social care looks and feels like from the perspective of those who matter most. These statements will help us measure success not just by data, but by lived experience.

These voices will continue to guide us as we deliver, evaluate, and improve adult social care in Medway.

Success will look like:

"I will enjoy equal citizenship with those who do not receive care"

"I would be prevented from experiencing crises in relation to my care"

"I would be allowed to have a quality of life and my wellbeing considered"

"My care would be responsive to my needs, is available and accessible, and empowers me"

"I will be treated as an individual, with a service that prioritises the human focus first"

"Open communication from the service to individuals. Provide feedback and make actual change"

"I will be empowered through self-directed care"

"Less strain for families and carers"

"Success would look like better partnerships, better communication and sharing what partners are doing within the community"

"Stronger collaboration, better communication with partners and providers"

"I will feel valued as an individual"

"I would be less stressed about my care"

"I will feel like I am contributing to society as a citizen"

"Better relationships for families and carers, able to contribute to the individual's life as family rather than as a carer"

"I would be engaged with regarding my care and have open, honest conversations with the service"

"I will receive care that focuses on preventing problems before they arise"

"I would have better choice and control over the care I receive"

"Staff feeling like they have made a difference"

How to get involved

Change Together Medway is about hearing the voices of people that use our care and support services, including their families or carers to help us change, shape and improve the services we provide.

We want to ensure:

- we hear directly from people with lived experience to learn from you to help us improve our services
- you're involved and can make informed decisions around your care or the care of your loved ones
- we strengthen relationships, work together and provide opportunities for people to express their views and influence decisions, where possible.

For information on upcoming engagement opportunities, ways to contribute your views, and how to get involved in shaping adult social care, please visit: www.medway.gov.uk/ChangeTogether

