

Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2024 - 2025

Nicoleta Stangu – April 2026

Our Children in Care and Care Leavers



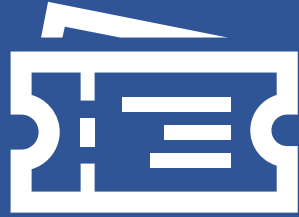
Increase in Children in Care

Medway saw a rise to 495 children in care, with a notable increase in unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

At the end of March 2026 there were 548 children in care.



Our Children in Care and Care Leavers



Care Entry and Exit Trends

Fewer children entered care in 2024-25 compared to previous years, with abuse or neglect remaining the main reason for entry. 11.2% of children left care via adoption and 13% via SGO; 15 adoption orders were granted for Medway children in 2024-25 and 14 children were placed for adoption. 43 children returned to live with parents.



Our Children in Care and Care Leavers



Increase in Care leavers

The numbers of care leavers have increased slightly during the year, from 178 in March 2024 to 202 at the end of March 2025.

Of the 202 eligible young people, 15 are former (over 18) UASC. At the end of March 2026 there were 215 care leavers.



Our Children in Care and Care Leavers



Education, Employment and Training

The levels of care leavers in education, training or employment were at 56.3%, almost restoring the level seen in 2022-23 following a drop to 50% last year.

At the end of March 2026, 74% of care leavers were in employment, education and training.



Our Children in Care and Care Leavers



Suitable accommodation

There has been a fall in the level of care leavers aged 18-21 in suitable accommodation, sitting at 84.4%. Of this cohort, 36.9 % were living independently, 15.6% lived with parents or relatives, 10.6% were living in transitional accommodation, and 8.8% remained with former foster carers. At the end of March 2026, 90% of the care leavers cohort lived in suitable accommodation.

8 Key Priorities for 2024–2025

Strengthen your voice and influence. By listening and engaging with you, we will use your experience to help us shape future services

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Support you to **live somewhere where you feel safe, and have a secure, long-term relationship** with your carers, can get the most out of life, and have a sense of your identity and your history

Provide enough caring family homes in Medway for you so you can stay close to places which are important to you, as long as it is safe to do so

Improve your health and well-being by making sure you can access high quality health services

Be aspirational to help you to achieve your potential and have the same opportunities to achieve at school, university, or college as your peers. Support you when you leave care to be in employment, education, or training

Support you to **develop your independence skills** to enable you to thrive into adulthood

Provide you with opportunities to pursue your interests and hobbies

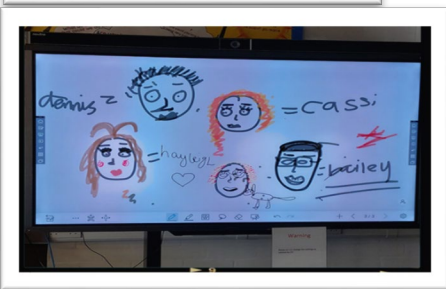
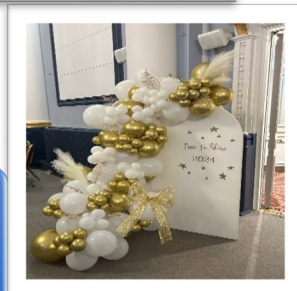
Participation and Engagement

Youth Participation-MCYPC members actively share experiences at Corporate Parenting Board meetings, influencing policy decisions.

Reverse Buddy Scheme-This initiative fosters understanding by connecting care-experienced youth with board members for regular conversations.

Mind of My Own App-The app enhances youth engagement by allowing continuous expression of views to social workers for support.

Celebratory Events-Events like Summer BBQ and Time to Shine Awards recognize youth achievements and build community spirit.



Health and Wellbeing

1

Health Assessment Performance-Initial Health Assessments improved to 61%, with review assessments at 95% and dental checks at 88%, showing steady progress. Compliance regarding IHA has remained a focus in 2025-2026, given issues around children not having their initial health assessment within statutory timescales. Joint work was carried out to tackle this issue and understand what else could be done.

2

Mental Health Access and Support-NELFT provided timely mental health assessments with urgent cases seen within 5 days and non-urgent within 10 days. SIT (short intervention therapy) remained available to children in care and care leavers- 1:1 and group work.

3

Emotional Wellbeing Monitoring-The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire monitors wellbeing, with 97.8% completion and 46.8% scoring in concern range in March 2025. SIT referrals as a route to accessing timely support.

4

Care Leavers Support Pathway- A care leavers pathway provides ongoing support until age 19 through collaboration with local healthcare services.

5

Medway Therapeutic Alliance- launched in April 2026, offers, early emotional well being and mental health support for children and young people across Medway, with specific pathways for children in Care, care leavers and children supported by the youth justice service.

Staying Together Safely and Supporting Positive Outcomes

Safe, Stable and Permanent Homes

- Children are only looked after when necessary, with a strong focus on family-based support and early permanence planning.
- Family Group Conferences strengthen wider family networks and support safe care at home.
- 43 children returned home between March 2024 and April 2025, guided by the NSPCC Reunification Framework.
- Long-term permanence continues to strengthen, with 22 children matched in 2024–25 and 47 in 2025–26, overseen through bi-weekly Permanency Panels.
- The Adoption Partnership South East (RAA) supports timely, high-quality adoption planning.



Staying Together Safely and Supporting Positive Outcomes

Education, Employment, Training and Independence



- Targeted educational support through the Virtual School using Personal Education Plans (PEPs).
- An Aspirations Officer supports progression into education, training and employment.
- Stable pathways to adulthood, including support for higher education (13 young people at university), tenancy training, financial support, and planned move-on through multi-agency panels.
- Young Inspectors help assure the quality and safety of supported accommodation

Key Objectives for 2025-26



Reviewed **Corporate parenting strategy for 2025- 2027**. This underpins the activity of the Corporate parenting board with focus on the following areas/ priorities.



Ensuring children, young people and care leavers are **safe from harm, experience stability** of care through stable placements and excellent carers.



Ensuring our young people will be prepared for **independent living, work and to become active members of society** to the best of their ability.



Ensuring we will support and encourage our children and young people to **live a happy and healthy lifestyle**, by ensuring that professionals work together to devise needs-led services so our children and young people's health needs are met.



Ensuring we will be there for our children and young people, will support them to **achieve their potential and have the same opportunities** to achieve at school, university, or college as their peers.



Ensuring that we will **strengthen children and young people's voice and influence**; by listening and engaging with our children and young people, we will use their experience to help us shape future services



Responding to National Reforms by strengthening kinship care, supporting care leavers and placing children closer to home.

Questions

