

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."



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

