

Medway Council Strategic Housing Services Temporary Accommodation Needs Assessment and Delivery Plan (2026-31)

1. Executive Summary

This document sets out Medway Council's Strategic Housing Services assessment of anticipated demand for temporary accommodation (TA) and establishes a long-term plan to deliver sufficient, good-quality provision.

The approach reflects:

- Increasing homelessness pressures across Medway.
- Rising complexity of need, aligned with the Medway Supported Housing Strategy
- The need to reduce reliance on costly and unsuitable accommodation.

The Council will:

- Shift provision toward Council Owned, Leased and Managed, high-quality TA.
- Expand supported pathways for residents with additional needs.
- Reduce reliance on nightly-paid accommodation.
- Strengthen prevention, data use, and move-on arrangements.

2. Strategic Context in Medway

Medway continues to experience:

- Sustained and increasing demand for homelessness services.
- Increased private rented sector (PRS) insecurity.
- Growth in households presenting with complex or multiple needs.
- Pressure on Adult and Children's Social Care accommodation and budgetary provision.
- Local property stock with the potential of TA or move on accommodation. being used by London Boroughs, other Kent Authorities and Home Office.
- Budgetary pressures relating to the provision of temporary accommodation.
- Budgetary pressures relating to the provision of Adults and Children's Social Care services.

Medway identifies the following priority cohorts:

- Single parents with Children and/or pregnant.
- Individuals with Health Needs – Mental and Physical Health.
- Survivors of Domestic Abuse.

- Leaving Institutions – Hospital or Prison.
- People with multiple disadvantage and complex needs.

These groups account for a growing proportion of households requiring temporary accommodation, influencing both demand levels and the type of provision required.

3. Current Accommodation Profile (Baseline 2025-26)

3.1: TA supply by Type

Type of TA	Households (EoY)	Key Characteristics
Nightly Paid TA	516	High cost, variable quality
Medway Council General Fund TA (Block, Dispersed and Corp TA)	85	Preferred option 1, limited supply, high quality, no HB recharge
HRA TA	64	Preferred option 2, limited supply, good quality, no furnishings or flooring
Hotel – B&B	0	Primarily for single households, emergency only, high cost

3.2: Move on supply by Type:

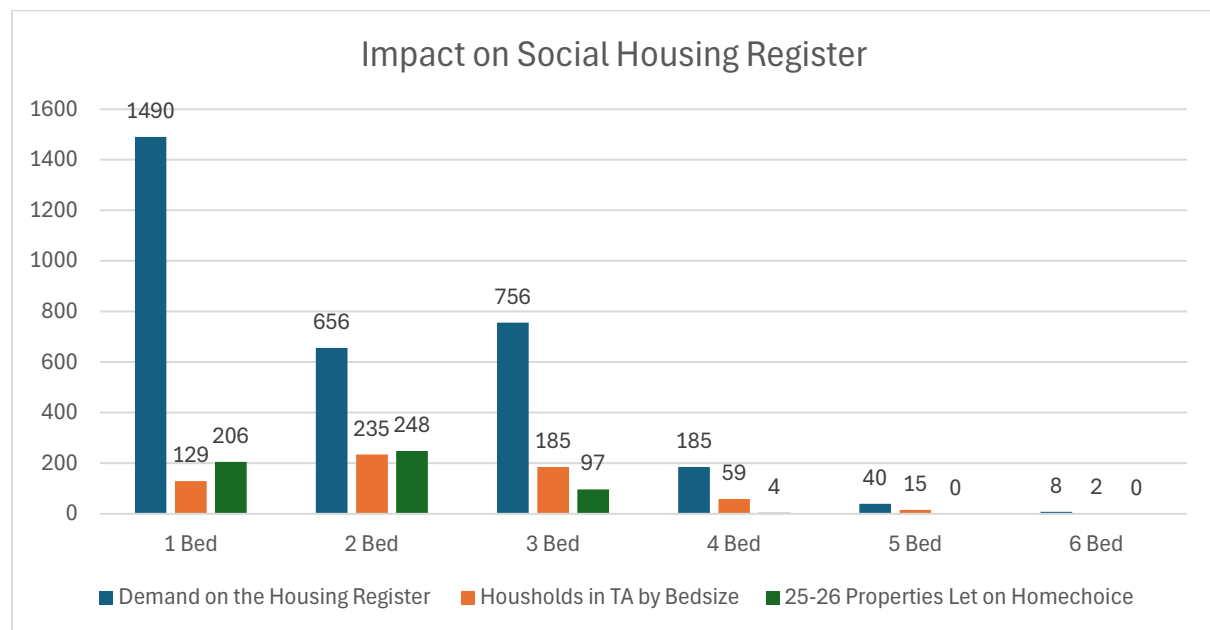
TYPE	Description
Private Rented Sector (PRS)	The PRS refers to housing that is owned by private individuals or companies and rented out to tenants, rather than being owned by the government (social housing). It includes a wide range of properties—such as houses, flats, and shared accommodation, with rent paid directly to a private landlord or letting agent. The sector plays a key role in providing flexible housing options, especially for people who are not able to buy a home or access social housing.
One Medway Lettings (OML)	OML is the lettings service used by Medway Council to assist households to search for available properties in the private rented sector. OML works with landlords to tenant find and provides management of households once a property is occupied.
Social Housing Register	The Social Housing Register is the system used by local authorities to record and manage applications from people seeking social housing.

Temporary Accommodation Demand Assessment and Delivery Plan (2026-31)

	It includes households who have applied for council or housing association properties, with applicants assessed and prioritised based on their housing need, such as homelessness, overcrowding, or medical conditions.
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3.2a: Social Housing availability:

There is a lack of availability on the Social Housing Register with property demand outstripping availability.



*Stats 2025/26

3.2b: Supported Housing availability (commissioned):

	Units Available	Referrals Accepted
Young people (16-25)	97	48
General Needs (18+)	79	41
Ex-offenders	41	26

TOTAL Referrals	557
Referrals Rejected Needs to High	126

*Stats 2025/26

3.3: Key Challenges

- Reliance on nightly-paid accommodation to meet on the day TA requirements.
- Increases in nightly paid accommodation costs
 - April 2024 = £50.22 per night average
 - April 2025 = £56.78 per night average
 - April 2026 = £59.64 per night average
- Mixed quality of nightly paid accommodation.
- Insufficient levels of accessible accommodation.
- Limited supported housing and high levels of referral rejections or TA for complex needs.
- Supported Housing Strategy review due to be published March 2027.
- Supported Housing provision due to be re-commissioned March 2027.
- Increasing numbers in TA due to restricted move-on options.
- Projected national increase in homelessness and use of TA of 12% to 25% over 2026/27-2027/28.
- Medway previous year's total TA increase:

2023	359	
2024	501	39.55%
2025	569	13.57%
2026	627	10.19%

2-year Average	11.88%
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4. Demand Drivers in Medway

Analysis of local data highlights:

Driver	Local Trend	Impact
PRS evictions	Increasing	Primary cause of homelessness – inc parental eviction
Domestic abuse	Rising demand	Need for safe, self-contained TA
Hospital and prison discharge	Rising demand	Need for safe, self-contained TA
Cost of living pressures	Ongoing	Increased presentations
Complex needs	Increasing	Longer stays, higher support requirements, lack of suitable step down from supported housing
TA nightly costs	Increasing	Further budget pressures

Social Housing need	Increasing	Social Housing limits hampering move on options

5. Forecast Demand (2026–2031)

Medway anticipates:

- Continued upward pressure on TA demand without intervention
 - Short term (next 2 years):
 - Expect increases
 - Medium term (3–5 years):
 - Most likely: gradual rise, then plateau;
 - Best case: slow reduction;
 - Worst case: continued sharp increase.

Medway TA estimates based on anticipated TA pressure:

		Increase
Year 1	648	
Year 2	726	12%
Year 3	798	10%
Year 4	846	6%
Year 5	880	4%

- A need to reconfigure TA provision rather than expand nightly paid TA supply.

Projected Requirement by 2031

Accommodation Type	Likely Direction of Travel
Nightly Paid TA	Significant reduction required to achieve budget targets
Medway Council General Fund TA (Block, Dispersed and Corp TA)	Substantial increase required (current target total 187)
Medway Council long lease TA (10+1 year)	Substantial increase required (current target total 44)
HRA TA	Maintained at maximum use level (80)
Hotel – B&B	Maintained at minimum use level (>1)
Supported Housing	Re-commissioning, development of step-down accommodation, ASC support commitment
Social Housing	Sustained shortage of Social Housing and increased applications for the Register

6. Strategic Objectives

Medway Council will:

1. Reduce reliance on unsuitable and expensive TA, particularly nightly-paid TA.
2. Increase supply of Medway Council Owned and Managed TA (long lease 10+1 year).
3. Align TA provision with supported housing pathways.
4. Reduce length of stay through effective move-on.
5. Strengthen homelessness prevention activity.
6. Develop an improved partnership approach to handling TA needs with other Kent Authorities via Kent Housing Group.
7. Development of a TA procurement framework.
8. Improved relationships with Social Housing providers.
9. Improved relationships with Housing Developers.
10. Improve internal partnership with Council Adults and Children's Social Care services.

7. Delivery Plan

7.1: Increasing Supply of Good-Quality TA

The Council will deliver a mixed supply programme:

- Increase TA Acquisition programme (General Fund)
 - Focus on 2 and 3 beds.
 - Focus on larger units.
- Development of long-term TA Leasing Options (10+1)
 - Focus on quality, value, and location within Medway.
 - Expansion of the MDC relationship.

Target: 80 to 100 additional units over 5 years

- Increase of HRA TA total number
- Target: increase 20 units to 100 units over 5 years
- Maintain conversion of HRA TA placement to Social Housing tenancies
 - Maintaining a target of 100 HRA units for use as TA.
- Target: 5 conversions per month
- Develop Supported Housing pathway
 - Improvement of referral pathways.

- Step down accommodation.
- ASC Support commitment.

Target: 40 NET Increase of supported housing use to exit from TA

- Improvement to NET move on from TA
 - Via OML, Move on team.

Target: 40 NET increase move on from TA.

- Develop pathways for accommodation units and provision for more complex needs and multiple disadvantage households, including:
 - Survivors of domestic abuse;
 - Leaving Institutions – Hospital or Prison.
- Use of modular/temporary build solutions
 - Rapid delivery of self-contained homes.

7.2: Quality Improvement

All TA will:

- Meet or exceed the Decent Homes Standard.
- Provide more accessible TA units.
- Be located within Medway wherever possible.
- Include access to appropriate support services.

A TA Quality Framework will be introduced, supported by regular inspections.

8. Reducing Reliance on Nightly-Paid and Poor-Quality TA

The Council will implement a phased reduction:

Target Reduction in Nightly Paid TA provision

- 20% reduction within 2 years
- 50% reduction within 5 years

Current	516	
Increase		
Year 1	516	
Year 2	578	12%
Year 3	579	10%
Target reduction 20%	463	
Year 4	491	6%
Year 5	510	4%
Target reduction 50%	255	

Key Actions

- Restrict use of nightly-paid placements.
- Replace supply with council-controlled or leased units.
- Strengthen procurement and quality standards.
- Drive a reduction in the average nightly charging rate.

9. Prevention and Early Intervention

Medway will adopt a prevention-first approach:

Key Measures

- Earlier engagement with households facing eviction
- Development and expansion of:
 - Tenancy sustainment support;
 - Financial assistance schemes;
 - Landlord mediation.

Private Rented Sector Offer

- Development of One Medway Lettings.
- Development of the Move On team.
- Deposit holding schemes.
- Landlord incentives.

10. Data, Planning and Performance Management

The Council will enhance its use of data to drive decision-making:

New Capabilities

- Improve live TA dashboard monitoring:
 - Occupancy;
 - Cost;
 - Length of stay;
 - Void levels.
- Consolidate/improve system interactions (Huume, NEC, MetaStreet).
- Forecasting to anticipate demand.
- Identification of households at risk of long stays.
 - Use of Low-Income Family data (LIFT).

11. Stock Management and Void Reduction

Strategic Approach

- Active management of TA portfolio.

- Identification of underused or void stock.
- Faster turnaround processes.
- Improved repairs and maintenance contractor relationship.

Target

- Void rate below 3%.

12. Supporting Move-On into Settled Accommodation

Move-On Priorities

- Increased access to:
 - Social Housing (through Social Housing Allocations).
 - PRS move-on options.
 - OML move-on options.
- Stronger pathways into supported housing.

Key Interventions

- Development of dedicated Move-On team.
- Targeted use of new build housing.
- Partnership working with Social Housing Providers.

13. Integration with Supported Housing and Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy

This plan supports Medway Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy by:

- Using Information to Prevent Homelessness
 - To reduce the risk of homelessness by using data to understand its causes in Medway, so we can provide or advocate for the most appropriate support and accommodation.
 - To find and implement best practice from elsewhere – what has been proven to work?
 - To work with communities and wider statutory bodies and stakeholders to identify those at risk of homelessness, before they get to the point of tenancy failure.
- One Medway Approach
 - To maximise the impact of joint work, minimise duplication of effort and deliver the best outcome possible for residents.
 - To make sure the voices of the experts by experience are heard across Medway.
 - To continue to develop partnership networks and share what we know.

- To work toward a ‘tell us once’ approach so people don’t have to repeat their story.
- Solution Focused Support
 - All Medway Council Housing Services will continue to develop a needs led approach to homelessness and rough sleeping.
 - To ensure homelessness prevention and rough sleeping services are delivered in a compassionate and respectful way.
 - To use creative approaches to working with people with complex needs.
 - To ensure our approach is tailored to Medway resident’s needs.
- The Right Accommodation
 - To understand the needs of Medway residents and provide accommodation options that match these needs.
 - To maximise use of government funding to increase the quality and provision of supported housing to meet the needs of Medway residents.
 - To maximise use of government funding and the central budget to increase opportunities for people to stay in their current homes.
 - To explore the use of Medway’s existing stock, and other social housing stock, to see how a better level of suitable accommodation can be delivered.
 - To work with Medway landlords to improve standards where required and provide information to tenants to help them understand their responsibilities.
 - To explore and enhance move-on options for those in temporary accommodation and supported accommodation.

14. Outcomes and Targets (2026–2031)

Medway Council will aim to:

- Reduce nightly-paid TA by over 50% (from 2025/26).
- Increase proportion of General Fund TA and Long Lease TA to over 70% of total TA.
- Reduce average length of stay by at least 25% (from 2025/26).
- Reduce numbers of children in TA 20% by 2031.
- Improved management of complex needs in supported housing.
- Improved referral pathways into supported housing.
- Reduce repeat homelessness.

15. Governance and Review

Delivery will be supported by:

- Quarterly reporting to senior leadership.

- Annual review of TA demand and supply.
- Alignment with:
 - Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy.
 - Supported Housing Strategy.
 - Budget planning and review processes.

16. Conclusion

Medway Council recognises that temporary accommodation plays a critical role in the homelessness system but must be:

- High quality.
- Cost-effective.
- Part of a wider housing pathway.

This plan sets out a clear and achievable route to:

- Reduce reliance on unsuitable accommodation.
- Improve outcomes for residents.
- Deliver a sustainable, data-driven TA model.