

Local Account 2025 - 2026



Contents

1. Front Page
2. Contents
3. Foreword
4. Our Goal
5. Our Mission
6. Our Commitments
7. What is Adult Social Care
8. How We Meet People's Needs
9. Our key achievements over the past year
10. Our Key Challenges
11. How we Spend Our Money
12. CQC Assessment
13. Our Transformation Programme
14. Change Together Medway
15. How Are We Doing – Compliments
16. How Are We Doing – Complaints
17. Case Study
18. What are we doing in 26/27
19. Feedback?

Foreword

Welcome to Medway's Local Account for Adult Social Care, which highlights the progress we have made over the past year in supporting adults across Medway who need care and support.

We are committed to being open, transparent and accountable to our residents. By sharing this report, we want to provide an honest reflection of our achievements, the challenges we have faced, and how we are continuing to improve our services.

At the heart of everything we do is a person-centered, strengths-based approach that supports people to live safe, independent and fulfilling lives.

The voices of people with lived experience continue to shape our services and help us understand what matters most. We remain committed to working alongside residents, carers, community groups and our partners to ensure support is responsive, accessible and focused on helping people achieve the outcomes that matter to them.

Our workforce is our greatest asset. The dedication, professionalism and compassion shown by our staff every day make a real difference to the lives of local people. We remain committed to investing in workforce development, wellbeing and leadership, ensuring our staff have the skills and confidence to meet the changing needs of our communities.

Looking ahead, we will continue to focus on prevention, early intervention and continuous improvement, helping people to live safely, stay independent for longer and access the right support when they need it. Together with our residents, staff and partners, we remain committed to delivering high-quality care and support that makes a positive difference to people's lives.

We hope this report provides a meaningful insight into our work, the progress we have made, and our priorities for the year ahead. Thank you for taking the time to read it.



Cllr Teresa Murray
Portfolio Holder for
Adult Social Care &
Deputy Leader



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

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.

We are 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 also 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



Our Commitments

Our approach is based on five commitments:

Being bold and open to new ideas:

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.

Improving how we work and think together:

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.

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.

Listening, sharing and working together:

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.

Being fair, prepared and focused on prevention:

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.

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).

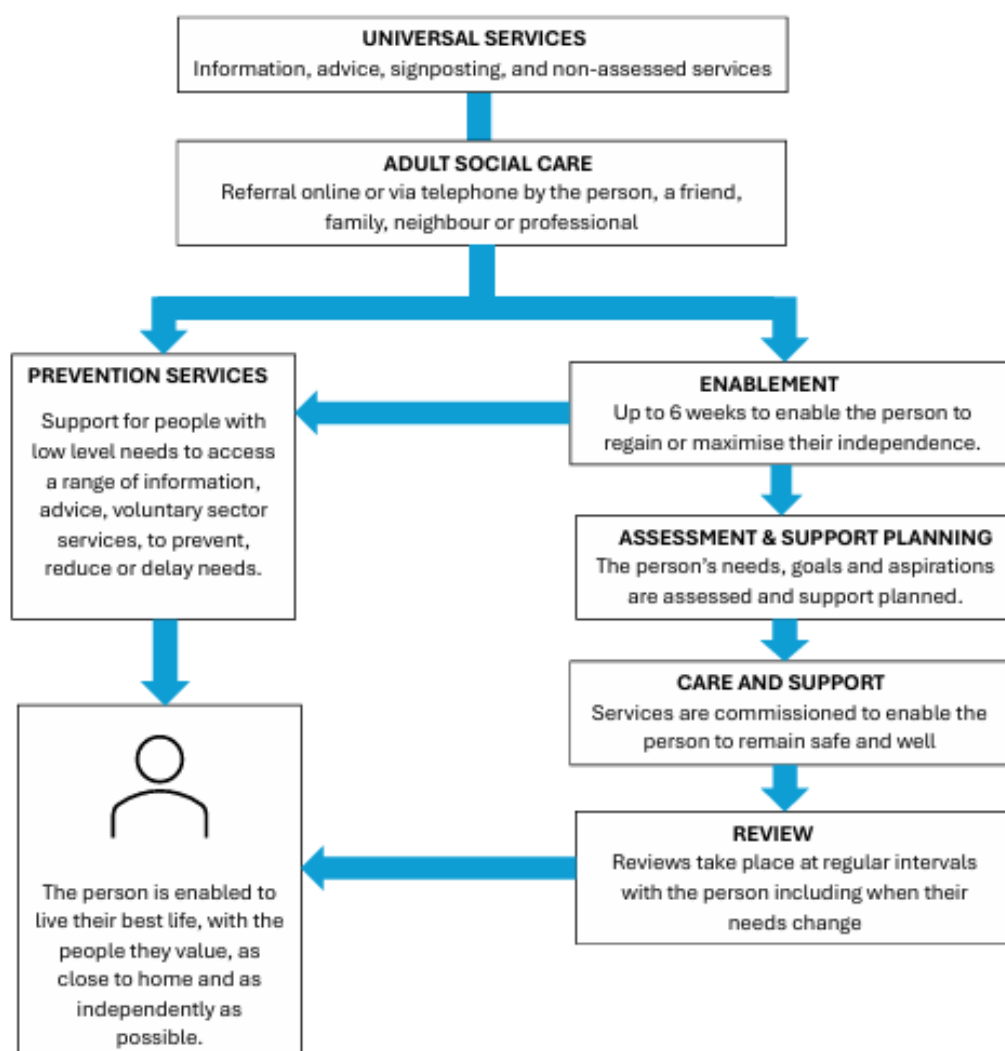


How we meet people's needs

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.



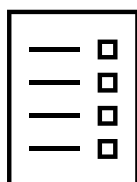
Our Key Achievements Over the Past Year

Appendix 1



15,125

Initial contacts with Medway Adult Social Care



5,189

Care Act and Occupational Therapy Assessments for our residents



4,431

Safeguarding concerns received and 1155 safeguarding enquiries undertaken



979

Safeguarding risks removed or reduced



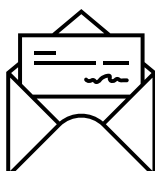
249

Carers Assessments completed



3,018

Residents receiving long term support – 2,139 in their own home and 897 in a care home



482 in receipt of a Direct Payment,

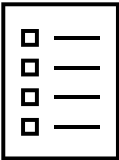
Which is 22.5% of residents receiving long term support in the community



3,303

Hospital discharges supported

Our Key Challenges



Waiting lists

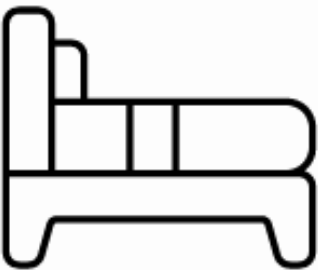
Increasing care costs & the uncertainty of long-term funding of Adult Social Care



Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers

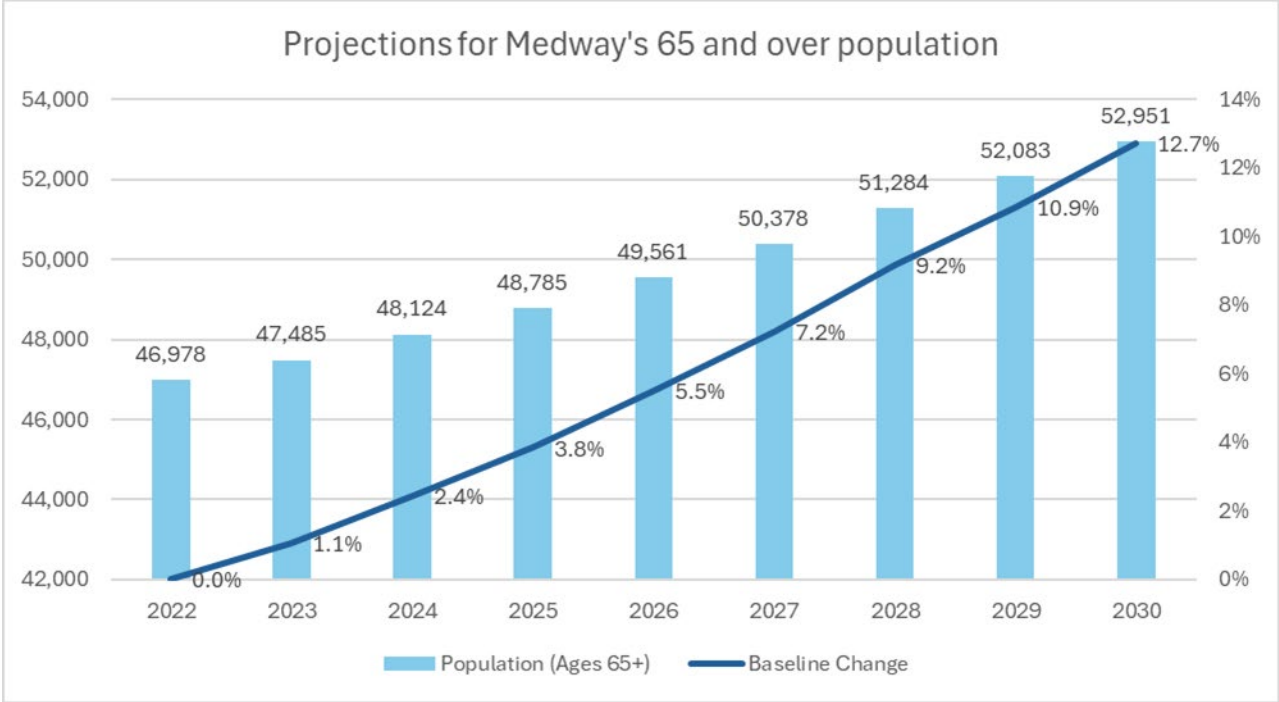


Demand on the NHS leading to pressures in Social Care



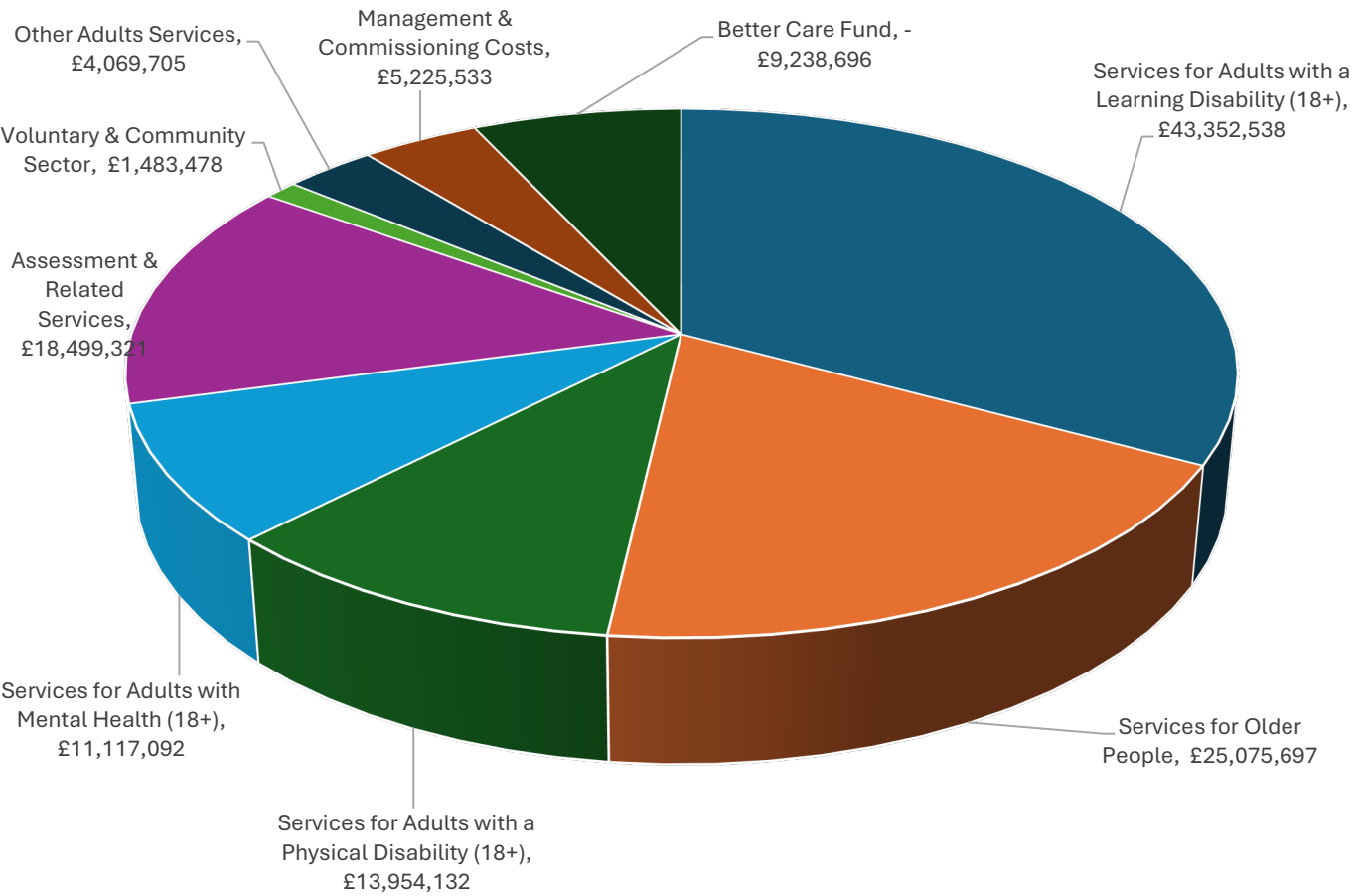
Lack of care home beds available to meet demand.

Population Projections for Medway's over 65 population



How we spend our money

The Adult Social Care Budget for 2025/26 was £113.54m



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 **135%**
- Residential & Nursing Care costs have increased by **44%**
- Mental Health Care costs have increased by **109%**

Adult Social Care in Medway’s actual expenditure in 2025/26 was **£128,234,061** which was **£14,695,261** more than budgeted.

CQC Assessment

In February 2025, the **Care Quality Commission** (CQC) rated Medway Adult Social Care “Requires Improvement”, with a score of 59%, just four percentage points short of a “Good” rating.



Since then, we have delivered a comprehensive improvement programme to strengthen services and address the areas identified by CQC.

What we have done

- Improved assessment pathways, staff training and support for unpaid carers
- Strengthened safeguarding, with enhanced oversight, audits, learning, and provider engagement
- Expanded quality assurance, improving provider support and market oversight
- Increased co-production and engagement, including Community Involvement Groups and the Making It Real Board
- Enhanced governance and performance management, supported by new dashboards, audits, and workforce planning
- Embedded innovation and continuous improvement, including digital tools, feedback mechanisms, and workforce development

Our direction of travel is positive, but we know there is more to do. We remain focused on reducing waiting times, improving assessment and review timeliness, sustaining our workforce, and demonstrating how these changes are improving people’s experiences and outcomes.

Our Transformation Programme

Since launching our Transformation Programme in February 2025, we have brought together CQC improvement activity, financial improvement, service redesign, community engagement, and innovation into a single programme of change. The programme coordinates improvement activity across all areas of Adult Social Care, helping us improve outcomes for residents, modernise services, and prepare for future challenges. In the past year, we have delivered the following across our six key focus areas:

Area of Focus	What we've delivered
Setting a Clear Direction	Developed a new Adult Social Care Strategy and Workforce Strategy to guide future improvement and transformation
Creating Reliable, High-Quality Services	Reviewed and redesigned services to improve efficiency, sustainability, and resident outcomes
Supporting People	Launched Community Involvement Groups and the Making It Real Board, and expanded our engagement, giving residents and carers a stronger voice
Investing in our Workforce	Introduced a new Workforce Strategy and expanded learning, leadership and development opportunities
Working Together Better	Strengthened partnerships with health, housing, providers, and community organisations to deliver joined-up support
Using Technology and Data Wisely	Expanded digital innovation, technology enabled care, and data-driven decision making across Adult Social Care

While improvement remains an ongoing journey, these changes are helping us build a more preventative, sustainable, and person-centred Adult Social Care system that is better equipped to meet the needs of Medway residents now and in the future.

Change Together Medway

Change Together Medway has been developed by the Adult Social Care Engagement Team to ensure voices are heard, listened to and acted on.

We work with people to ensure that lived experience is at the heart of everything we do in Adult Social Care. Whether that's internally with our staff or externally with members of the public and our partners.

2025/26 Key Highlight

- This Year the team have expanded from one member to six
- Established Community Involvement Groups across all Medway towns; Rochester, Gillingham, Rainham, Chatham, Strood and the Peninsula.
- Attended 450+ community events to build relationships and trust
- Delivered quarterly community events with 200+ attendees per event
- Engaged 100+ residents, carers and partners and 300+ staff to refresh the Adult Social Care Strategy
- Developed the Change Together Medway network, newsletters and feedback opportunities
- Published an Engagement Framework and Engagement Toolkit
- Launched the Making It Real Co-Production Board and Co-Production Champions

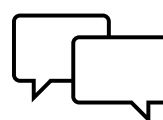
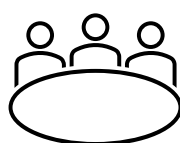
What People Told Us

“I feel listened to.” “Every concern has been heard and actioned.”
“It is brilliant that the council are making themselves accessible.” “I feel like I finally have a voice.”

Looking Ahead

- Continue growing Community Involvement Groups
- Strengthen co-production and expand the Making It Real Board
- Increase feedback and engagement opportunities
- Prepare for the launch of Adult Friendly Medway (April 2027)

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 changetogetthey@medway.gov.uk.



How are we doing?

Compliments

We received 36 compliments between April 2025 – March 2026. Some of the main reasons for the compliments included;

Staff going the extra mile, being professional whilst still showing care and compassion and providing individuals with outstanding support.

these are a few quotes from some of our compliments:

“Just thought I would drop a line and let you know that your install team was just brilliant. Thank you so much again. Modifications are in today and have already made a difference. Thank you so much for all of your help and assistance in this it will change my daily life for sure. Please also pass up the chain how professional and just really nice people.”

“I just wanted to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for the outstanding support I’ve recently received from both my occupational therapist (who visited last week) and the gentleman from Medequip who came to my home today. Both individuals treated me with such genuine kindness, dignity, and respect that I was honestly moved to tears. I felt truly heard, validated, and cared for. My occupational therapist took the time to understand my needs and made me feel like I mattered. They are both an absolute credit to adult social care, and I’m incredibly thankful for the difference they’ve made in such a short time.”

“Myself and my family would like to thank H, who acted as social worker for my Mum. they professional and kind approach has really made the transition to having morning carers and rest bite carer so much easier. H has always responded to my queries very promptly, with so much kindness and knowledge, often calling me back to suggest other options that may have helped. they personal and professional manner helped us to adjust and get used to the changes, having a helper in the home. If we get another social worker like H, we will be very happy!”

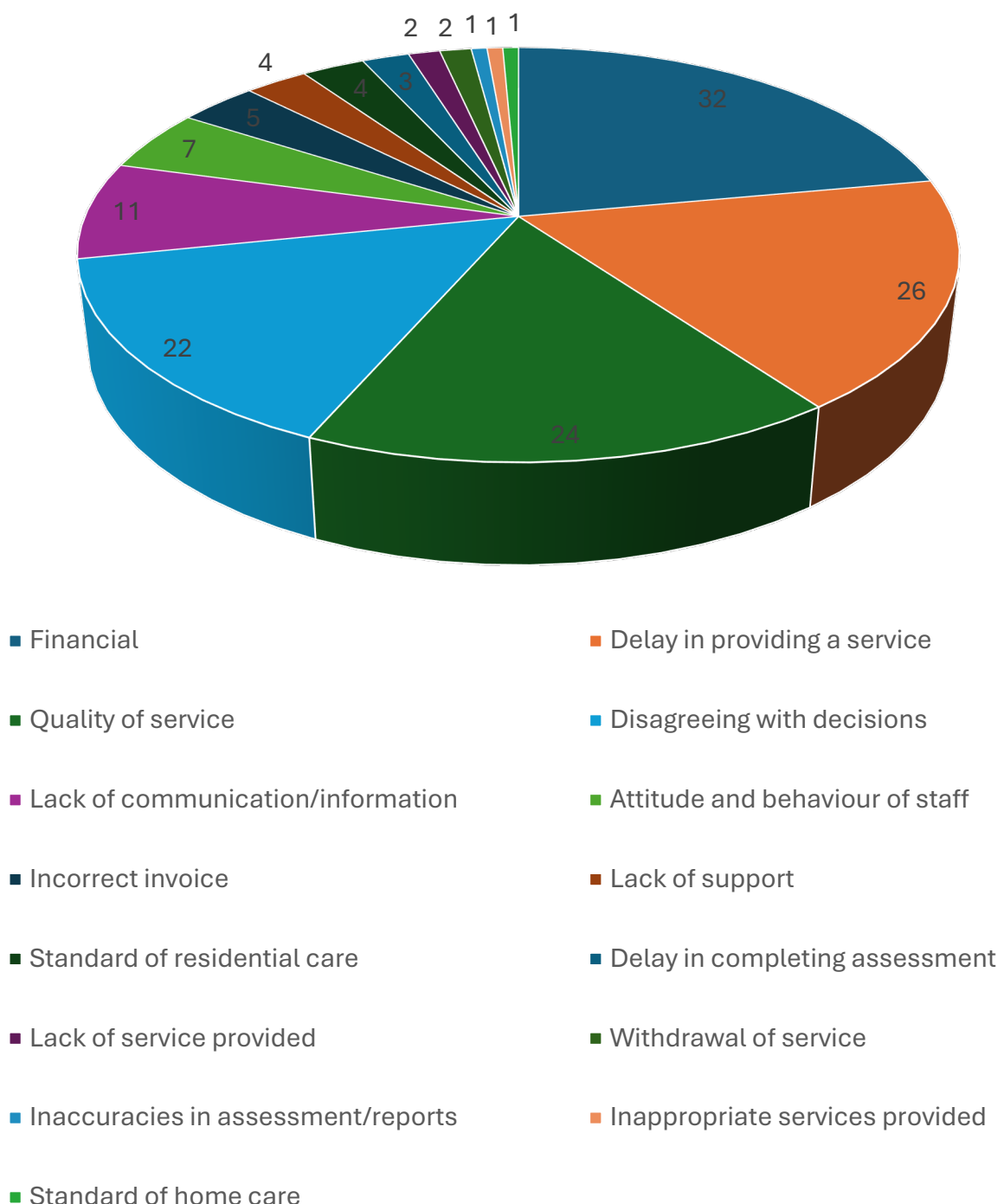
How are we doing? Complaints

April 2025 – March 2026, we received 122 complaints. Some of the main reasons for the complaints included:

- Disagreement with decisions
- Financial
- Quality of service
- Delays

The outcome of complaints received were that 80 were upheld or partially upheld, and 42 not upheld.

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



Case Study

Beyond Intervention: The Power of Human Connection

For many years, this individual's story was marked by isolation, vulnerability, and repeated missed opportunities for support.

Living with schizophrenia and mild learning disabilities, they found it increasingly difficult to manage both their mental and physical health without the support of family or trusted relationships. Over time, as their mental health deteriorated, the family home they had lived in for many years became overwhelmed by clutter and infestation, eventually becoming unsafe and uninhabitable.

The absence of meaningful social connections left them profoundly isolated. Seeking companionship and a sense of belonging, they spent much of their time on the high street, often engaging with strangers. At times, they slept rough, exposing themselves to significant risks of exploitation, physical harm, self-neglect, and financial abuse. Although safeguarding concerns were regularly raised by the police and other agencies, professionals often struggled to locate them. When workers visited their home, they were frequently elsewhere, and referrals were repeatedly closed due to an inability to engage.

As the years passed, the risks escalated. Their rough sleeping increased, their home environment continued to decline, and mental health services found it difficult to re-establish treatment and medication. What emerged was a cycle in which the very circumstances that made them vulnerable also prevented them from accessing the support they needed.

A Turning Point: The Power of Relationship-Based Practice

When they were referred to Medway Intensive Support Team (MIST), the approach was different. Rather than focusing on the barriers to engagement, the team focused on building a relationship. Instead of accepting that they could not be found, workers remained persistent and flexible, recognising the level of risk they were living with and the importance of maintaining contact.

Through consistent engagement and the effective use of self, trust began to develop. Workers spent time finding them in the places where they felt most comfortable, often on the high street rather than at home. The team listened, offered practical support, and demonstrated reliability in ways that many services had previously struggled to achieve.

This relationship became the foundation for change. As trust grew, they became more willing to accept support. MIST worked collaboratively with the Rough Sleepers Team, Mental Health Services, Housing, their GP, and other professionals to ensure that opportunities for engagement were not missed. When they were identified sleeping rough, information was shared quickly, allowing professionals to coordinate their responses and provide support at critical moments.

Practical barriers were also addressed. When their benefits stopped, support was provided to help them access essential appointments, leading to the reinstatement of their income. During periods of hardship, immediate needs such as food and drink were not overlooked, helping to maintain both their wellbeing and the trusting relationship that had been established.

Case Study

Creating the Conditions for Change

As professionals developed a better understanding of their circumstances, it became clear that lasting change would require more than short-term intervention. Through persistent advocacy and coordinated multi-agency working, plans were developed to address the underlying issues contributing to their vulnerability. MIST worked closely with Housing Services to secure a move from the property that had become associated with years of trauma, self-neglect, deterioration, and risk.

Although achieving this outcome required significant advocacy and challenge across agencies, the move was eventually approved. Alongside this, referrals were made to the Financial Appointee Service to support the management of their finances and reduce the risk of exploitation.

Throughout the transition, support remained relationship-focused. Rather than expecting them to navigate complex systems independently, workers walked alongside them through the process, helping them adjust to significant changes while maintaining a sense of safety and trust.

A Different Story

Today, their story looks very different. They are living in accommodation that better meets their needs, including access to facilities that support their independence and personal care. The risks associated with rough sleeping and self-neglect have significantly reduced. Mental health professionals are now able to visit them at home, administer medication, and provide ongoing reviews. Housing services remain actively involved, ensuring their home environment is maintained, while a Personal Assistant provides continued support to help sustain the progress they have made.

Most importantly, they now have a network of professionals who understand their needs and work together to support their wellbeing.

Key Learning: The Use of Self

This case demonstrates how meaningful change can be achieved through persistence, compassion, and relationship-based practice.

The greatest barrier was never a lack of services. It was the absence of a trusting relationship that could connect the individual to those services. By remaining consistent, responsive, and willing to meet them wherever they were, both literally and emotionally, MIST was able to create the conditions for engagement and change. A key learning from this work is that the use of self is not only about communication. It is about being present, demonstrating reliability, meeting immediate practical needs when necessary, and maintaining belief in a person's ability to achieve positive outcomes, even when previous interventions have been unsuccessful.

What had once been a story of repeated case closures, uncertainty, and escalating risk became a story of stability, engagement, and hope. The relationship built through the use of self was the catalyst that transformed years of unsuccessful intervention into lasting positive change.

What are we doing in 26/27

Supporting Carers

We continue to invest in carers through our commissioned support service, delivered by Carers First, which provides a holistic range of information, advice and support, alongside statutory assessments for young carers. In 2026/27, Carers First will pilot the delivery of Care Act assessments for adult carers, enabling us to test a more integrated approach to carer support. Subject to the outcomes of the pilot, we anticipate extending this arrangement.

Increasing Engagement

We want people who use services, carers and local communities to play a greater role in shaping Adult Social Care. Alongside our ongoing Community Information Groups, which provide valuable insight and feedback from residents, we have launched a Making It Real Board to support co-production and continuous improvement. By listening to lived experience and involving people in decision-making, we are ensuring services remain relevant, inclusive and focused on delivering the outcomes that matter most.

Financial Sustainability

We are committed to ensuring Adult Social Care in Medway remains sustainable for the future. This means making the best use of our resources, investing in prevention and early intervention, and supporting people to remain independent for as long as possible. We are continuing to review how services are delivered, embracing innovation and technology, and working with partners to identify more effective ways of meeting people's needs. By focusing on the right support at the right time, we can improve outcomes for residents while ensuring services remain financially sustainable for future generations.

Supporting Independent Living

We are working with Housing to develop a broader range of accommodation options and support more people to move into mainstream housing where appropriate. This approach promotes independence, increases choice and helps people live as part of their local communities, with support tailored to their individual needs. 19

Feedback

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/changetogetthey

Email: changetogetthey@medway.gov.uk

A heartfelt thank you to all our staff and partners for the incredible progress we achieved together in 2025–26.

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.