# Delivering Fair & Responsive Services 2023

# Meeting Our Equality Duty

Medway has a wide range of initiatives across all services that have contributed

towards meeting our equality duty. This section includes examples of these.

## Equality Duty 1: Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment & victimisation

### Multi- Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Members of the public and professionals can contact Medway’s First Response service to report any safeguarding concerns they have about a child. The council has an online contact and referral form for reporting concerns. Once the form has been submitted it will be reviewed and appropriate action will be taken. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) includes key partner agencies including Education, health professionals and the police, who work together to make sure children and young people receive the right support at the right time.

### Healthy Workplace Programme

The Council’s priorities include supporting Medway’s residents to realise their potential. One way of achieving this is by supporting communities to be healthier and more active by using a settings-based approach. A range of advice and support is provided to local organisations through the Workplace Health Programme (WPH). The programme assists Medway businesses in the development of their own wellbeing initiatives which support their staff and foster healthy workplace environments. This includes initiatives to encourage physical activity, healthy eating, sensible drinking and stopping smoking. As part of the workplace wellbeing Bronze award, an organisation’s policies including equality and diversity are assessed. Where appropriate, guidance is issued to eliminate discrimination and create a fairer society.

An unforeseen impact of COVID19 to the WPH programme was its reduced ability to undertake bronze assessments face to face. With restrictions now lifted these can take place in person again but it has been decided to keep them online to increase the number which can be completed.

A theme for the programme moving forward is aiding local business and their staff around the cost-of-living crisis. This includes signposting and raising awareness of tools and services which can assist, as well as offering further support through the core programme for wellbeing-related fall out. This year, to increase equity in delivery of the programme, the workplace health team have been proactively targeting organisations located in the most deprived areas of Medway. Location data for organisations engaged in the programme is now routinely assessed. This ensures broad representation, not just of different employment types such as routine and manual ones, but now also geographically.

### Recruitment and Selection Framework

Medway Council recognises its duty to ensure all recruitment and selection procedures are open, transparent, and fair. The Recruitment and Selection Framework requires all staff with responsibility for recruitment and selection undertake training to ensure that all appointments are based on merit and according to the principles of our equality policy.

### Grievance & Harassment Procedure

The Council is committed to providing a working environment where individuals are treated with fairness, dignity and respect and take all employee complaints seriously. This procedure allows employees to raise genuine workplace grievances and have them dealt with fairly, consistently, promptly, and objectively and aims to achieve an agreed resolution.

### Council’s Disciplinary Policy

All employees of Medway Council are expected to maintain high standards of conduct. This procedure is designed to help and encourage employees to achieve and maintain standards of conduct and aims to ensure fairness, equity, and consistency in the management of employees.

### Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy

The Council promotes the view that abuse against any individual is totally unacceptable and that every employee who is experiencing domestic abuse can raise the issue and be assured that the Council will support him or her. The Council will take seriously cases where its employees are perpetrators of domestic abuse and will investigate such cases as misconduct/gross misconduct in accordance with its disciplinary procedure.

### Learning and development policy

The Council aims to ensure that learning and development actions are aligned with the goals of the organisation as set out in the Council Plan.

People are a key driver for success. The Council is committed to being an employer of choice and aims to demonstrate best practice in training and developing our people.

The Council seeks to develop its employees and Members, so they have the skills and knowledge to do their jobs effectively now and, in the future, to realise potential and continuously improve performance and service delivery.

### Speak Up Policy (formerly known as Whistleblowing Policy)

Council employees, workers, those undertaking work for or on behalf of the council (including volunteers) and members of the public can raise concerns relating to unethical or unprofessional conduct within the council including malpractice and abuse or some policy or action which is contrary to the public interest via the council’s Speak Up Policy. The council has a Response Group made up of the Chief Organisational Culture Officer, the Chief Finance Officer and the Chief Legal Officer which can triage and advise on complex or escalated queries.

### Incorporating equalities into decision making

Equality is at the heart of our decision making. Guidance for Cabinet reports makes clear the requirement to comply with the Equality Act 2010.

### Diversity Impact Assessments (DIAs)

Carrying out Diversity Impact Assessments (DIAs) and making sure decision makers consider the findings of DIAs, demonstrates compliance with our public sector equality duty.

### Community Interpreting Service

The Council’s Community Interpreting Service supports customers whose first language is not English in gaining access to services. This covers not only council services, but extends across a range of public sector bodies, including, but not exclusively, teams within the NHS.

### Disabled Workers’ and Carers Network

The Disabled Workers’ and Carers Network (DWCN) supports staff with all types of disabilities for example: physical, sensory, mental health and learning difficulties, including hidden disabilities such as ME, epilepsy, diabetes and heart conditions. The DWCN is consulted on policies across the breadth of Medway’s activities and is consulted on relevant issues.

## Equality Duty 2: Advance equality of opportunity

### Child-Friendly Medway

Child-Friendly Medway endeavours to provide the best start in life, giving children and young people the means to have their voices heard and responded to.

Child-Friendly Medway provides regular consultation opportunities throughout the year for children and young people, parents, carers and the wider community to work towards making Medway even more child-friendly, with the aim to make Medway one of the best places in the country to grow up.

Child-Friendly Medway provide a range of free events and activities for children, young people, and families in Medway, narrowing the gap and ensuring that the voices of children and young people are heard and responded to. In 2023, Child-Friendly Medway ran/supported over 4,000 events, with an audience of over 91,000.

Seeing is Believing is a universal programme of activities that broadens horizons for children and young people, providing positive and creative events and activities to build confidence and a sense of community. Examples of these events are Super Saturday (30,000+ in attendance) and Dino Day (20,000+), which invited children and young people to take part in trail activities, meet characters and get creative at workshops.

As part of Child-Friendly Medway’s Seeing is Believing programming, which is open to all, SEND-specific events and activities are held and supported to help narrow the gap. For example, a BSL performance of Jack and the Beanstalk Pantomime, Disability Youth Games, Stage and Social Sundays.

For the Love of Reading is an initiative that provides free books and storytelling activities for children and young people. In multiple studies, the presence of books in the home has proved to be the biggest indicator of a child’s future success, it is therefore vital Medway’s children are given the opportunity to own their own book. Soft play and Story Corner, Storytime and Snacks, Book Nooks and Book Trails are some of the events that are run as part of this initiative.

Through the Start for Life programme, Child-Friendly Medway provides activities and events for children aged 0-5 and their parents and carers, including activities such as Pop-Up Messy Play, Soft Play and Story Corner and Baby/Toddler with Parent/Carer Pilates.

### Medway Youth Council

Medway Youth Council is an independent body of young people aged 13-19, supported by Medway Council, to enable young people to influence decisions concerning them.

### Reducing teenage pregnancy rates

High quality relationships and sex education is being supported through the development of the Medway Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) scheme of work, produced by the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) Association for Medway schools and is highlighted nationally as best practice. Over 89% of Schools in Medway are signed up to deliver RSE through the PSHE curriculum and 63 schools are actively engaged in the PSHE network.

Contraceptive and sexual health services are available in several secondary schools, as well as Mid-Kent college. The ‘Get It’ free condom scheme has been integrated into wider sexual health services to increase accessibility. Emergency hormonal contraception is available at pharmacies free of charge for women under 30 years of age.

Sexual health nurses provide contraception and advice in youth settings. Targeted sexual health clinics for young people take place at the Hub in Clover Street, with the remainder being young person friendly. Specialist sexual health outreach nurses provide home visits to vulnerable young people, including children in care (CIC) and young parents.

### Local Offer

Medway's Local Offer is a one-stop shop for everything you need to know and services you might need to access that support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Our Local Offer has been developed with the help of local families. Inspectors looked at the support given to children and young people to help them reach their full potential and found that schools have ‘highly effective systems to identify and support pupils’ with special educational needs

A young person’s disability group was set up to help implement this work. There is a strong link with the Medway Parent Carer Forum, which is a group for parent’s carers who care for children with additional needs such as a disability.

### Dementia Awareness

Medway Council actively supports the Medway Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) which comprises membership from local elected members, residents, businesses, and stakeholders from health and third sector organisations. In consort with the DAA, the Public Health team utilise online resources and existing partnership working opportunities to increase capacity for the delivery of Dementia Friendly campaigns, including “champions” training for individuals and an accreditation process for organisations and workplaces to reach a recognised dementia friendly status. This has increased the accessibility and support for individuals living with or caring for those with Dementia.

### Tobacco control

Local authorities are at the forefront of national efforts to achieve the government’s ambition of being smokefree by 2030. Medway brings together partners and champions that work collaboratively towards achieving this. The team has continued to develop locally responsive approaches to reducing the burden of tobacco on individuals and the community. This has included supporting every smoker to quit, providing specialised services to reduce maternal smoking, supporting smoke-free workplaces, tackling the sale and supply of illicit tobacco, providing education concerning the harms of exposure to second-hand smoke, understanding youth vaping and working towards prevention, and promoting e-cigarettes as an effective quit tool for adults.

The Medway Tobacco Control Alliance’s focus has been to collectively drive down smoking prevalence and reduce the many health, social and economic costs of smoking by implementing ten high impact actions. These include prioritising health inequalities, promoting harm reduction and enabling young people to live smokefree.

In October 2023, the Government released the policy paper “Stopping the Start: Our Strategy for achieving a smokefree generation 2023”. This policy outlines the rationale for intensifying efforts to prevent new smoking addictions, whilst tackling the emerging issue of youth vaping.

The tobacco control team have commissioned a research company to carry out insights and engagement work with young people, parents, and professionals in Medway to better understand vaping behaviour amongst young people, including identifying potential enablers and disruptors. The research began in September 2023, and is due for completion in March 2024. The team will look to implement recommendations from the research in 2024/25.

In April 2022, the service saw the launch of its first e-cigarette pilot in collaboration with social housing. This project presented the opportunity to engage vulnerable clients from the most deprived communities. This included those who may not have previously had access to such support due to financial or other barriers. The Core stop smoking service launched their universal vape offer in September 2023. Nationally, Central Government have launched a ‘swap to stop’ scheme. This is to promote vaping as an effective quit tool for adult smokers. Medway has successfully bid for a portion of vape starter kits to support identified groups to quit smoking, including maternal smokers and military personnel.

### Mental health promotion

Public mental health and mental health promotion have continued to remain a priority, particularly due to the impact of the cost-of-living increase. In 2023, Medway Council committed to delivering the actions within the Kent and Medway Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health, an ICS level agreement. A new two year contract for delivery of Men in Sheds was awarded to Sunlight Development Trust from April 2023 with additional shed provision for specific areas of deprivation included in the service specification.

Investment continued to support the Release the Pressure helpline. A campaign to promote the Five Ways to Wellbeing across Medway was launched in Feb 2023 with new creative design and resources, and existing mental health promotion resource Unwind with a Healthy Mind was updated. Mental Health and Wellbeing training continued through the workforce development team and was available to anyone living or working in Medway. Partnership work has continued to support Livewell service to link with the local communities, VCS and A Better Medway services, and to drive referrals from deprivation Quintiles 1 and 2. Higher risk groups such as LGBTQ and middle-aged men have been targeted for mental health promotion and suicide prevention work via the K&M Suicide Prevention programme. Focus has continued on convening cross system action to improve the physical health outcomes of people with Serious Mental Illness and reduce health inequalities for this population group.

### Children and Young People’s Mental Health

The Thrive framework is being embedded into the wider system to ensure all children and young people can access appropriate services and support in a timely manner. The Thrive framework led to the implementation of the I-thrive directory, which allows professionals across Medway to be able to navigate mental health and emotional wellbeing support for Children and Young People (CYP).

In addition, services and support are promoted through the Child Mental Health Flow Chart as well as the Kent and Medway Local Children’s Partnership Groups. There are a variety of services commissioned to support CYP in Medway. Kooth is a digital online platform free for CYP to access which provides online counselling as well as peer support and resources for CYP aged 10-25. QWELL furthermore supports young adults aged 18+.

In addition, Medway Emotional Support Teams (EST) are working in over 33 schools in Medway supporting CYP with low to moderate needs. Any school that doesn’t have Medway ESTs can access Medway Community Healthcare’s Emotional Wellbeing Service. This ensures equality across the Medway footprint. In addition, North East London Foundation Trust’s Medway Young Persons’s Wellbeing Service provide specialist mental health support, as well as diagnostic assessments and prescribing for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (over 11’s) and ASD (over 11’s). Under 11’s are able to access assessments and medication through Medway Community Healthcare. Other specialist and targeted services are commissioned for Specialist Bereavement, LGBTQ+, peer and parenting support for Special Educational Needs, and evidence-based interventions for our children in care and care leavers.

The Kent and Medway Local Transformation Plan details the key priorities and ambitions in focus and ensures equality across all areas. The Medway Local Transformation Plan Board have oversight of the mental health and emotional wellbeing for Children and Young People in Medway and work collaboratively with health, social care and education partners.

### A Better Medway

This programme disseminates public health knowledge out into the community and targets recruitment to front line healthy lifestyle programmes. The focus of the service is where the greatest impact on reducing health inequalities can be made. It seeks to engage agencies working with hard to reach and vulnerable groups to try to ensure that all Medway residents have access to high quality advice about a range of health issues. A Better Medway has a strong social media presence with daily activity on Facebook, Instagram and X, engaging with residents on a range of public health messages.

Since the COVID19 pandemic, the service has been forced to adapt, which it has done effectively. This year has also seen an even greater focus on communities that have been hardest hit by COVID19. Examples include a greater emphasis on uptake from under-represented groups on our NHS Health Check programme, prioritisation work within our stop smoking service and targeted work for tier two weight management service. The Healthy Way programme has been working collaboratively with several community and voluntary sector groups to reach residents who are underrepresented in weight services.

### Health Visiting and Supporting Young and Vulnerable Parents

Health Visitors and School Nurses in Medway deliver the national Healthy Child Programme (HCP), which is the prevention and early intervention public health programme. This programme lies at the heart of the universal service for children and families and aims to:

• Support parents at this crucial stage of life.

• Promote child development.

• Improve child health outcomes.

• Support transitions through key life stages and into specialist health services.

• Ensure that families at risk are identified at the earliest opportunity.

• Offer additional support and packages of care to young and vulnerable families via a bespoke pathway.

Health visitors and School Nurses are part of the integrated Child Health service for Medway allowing more joined-up working. This means families only have to tell their story once. The teams are co-aligned to the four early help hubs to ensure better integration between health and social care. The 0-19 service focuses on providing families with a programme of screening, immunisation, health and development reviews, supplemented by advice around health, wellbeing, and parenting. Due to its universal reach, the HCP provides an invaluable opportunity to identify those families that need additional support and those children who are at risk of poor outcomes.

Health visiting and school nursing are universal services. This means that all families in Medway can access and obtain the services they need, regardless of circumstances, as part of the HCP.

A bespoke programme and package of care is available to young & vulnerable parents and their families as part of the Vulnerable Parents Pathway. Families requiring additional support (e.g., Children in Care, Care Leavers, parents aged under 18, parents with learning difficulties) are identified through a range of channels including the maternity service safeguarding hub, universal health visitor contacts and school referral. The work is led by the member of the health visiting or school nursing team and is shaped by the needs of the family. Families receive additional support from a range of specialist interventions and packages of care that can support their needs.

The service has a representative based in the Medway Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This representative ensures health is considered as part of all referrals into social care and links in all the other local health providers (GPs, Hospital, Mental Health etc).

A new service contract is being mobilised (starting January 2024). This service is working with Medway’s Public Health Intelligence Service to devise more sophisticated ways of monitoring geographical and demographic trends of those taking up the offer to ensure that no communities are unfairly disadvantaged.

### Medway Adult Education

Medway Adult Education (MAE) aim to provide inclusive, welcoming programmes and spaces to help all residents reach their potential and thrive.

MAE work across Medway, currently with 27 active partners- as part of the strategy to reach people distanced from taking part in lifelong learning.

This includes working with food poverty charities, disability groups, schools in deprived wards and cultural and ethnicity specific organisations.

All qualification courses are provided fully funded to those on benefits or low incomes.

MAE has a referral process in place for employability services including JCP and REED.

Online learning options are available for those who cannot attend in person, long-term or short-term.

The service has a long-standing Supported Learning programme for adults living with learning difficulties or disabilities. All learners are assessed for their specific needs to ensure high level support is in place to give them enjoyable and successful learning experiences.

MAE is delivering Medway’s part of the national Multiply programme-which seeks to improve adult confidence with numbers- this provides free courses including budgeting, work-skills numeracy sessions and well-being.

This is currently being used in several schools – to help support and build confidence in parents who have been out of work for some time.

The service runs weekly drop-in Tai Chi courses for those with mental or physical conditions that prevent them from enrolling for longer periods.

Dementia-Friendly Gardening and Tai Chi classes are held weekly and include an emphasis on the importance of social interaction.

MAE is a key partner in the ‘Medway Non-Visible Disabilities Initiative’.

MAE regularly monitor demographic data, including to inform programme planning- devising new approaches to under-represented groups.

### Community Hubs and Library Service

The development of community hubs is a key driver in increasing access to council and agency services. Community hubs and libraries offer free WiFi, PCs for public use, access to support services and groups alongside activities for all age groups. Currently the Council has six Community Hubs.

The Community Hub and Library Service provides a service to over 220 housebound residents throughout Medway. By working with volunteer couriers, books are delivered to these residents in their own home. Books are also delivered to over 20 Medway residential homes. Alongside this over a 100 Medway visually impaired residents to receive spoken word cd’s through the post.

A whole range of free events and activities supporting residents to engage in a healthy lifestyle and avoid isolation are provided.

### Stop Smoking Service

Medway Stop Smoking Service offers several free initiatives to support local people in their fight to kick the habit. Our stop smoking team can provide one-to-one advice and support. They recognise that every smoker is different and will work closely with each smoker to agree a date to quit smoking and prepare them for their stop smoking journey to give them the best chance to quit.

The service offers community-based sessions in both Gillingham and Strood and has a Smokefree Advice Centre in Chatham town centre that is open Monday to Saturday. Medway residents are also able to access Text to Quit support using a text messaging service as well as phone support.

### ‘Get it’ condom distribution scheme

The “Get It” condom scheme is a free and confidential service for young people aged 13 – 24 years-old, offering access to sexual health advice and condoms in a range of non-clinical settings across Medway. It is delivered as part of the Integrated Sexual Health Service. As the service is primarily web based it has been largely unaffected by COVID-19 related changes to services. Young people under 16 or other vulnerable young people are still required to register face to face with a professional.

To support those digitally excluded or for whom an online service is not appropriate, condoms are available through Medway youth services and other relevant partner organisations.

### Integrated Sexual Health Service

The Integrated Sexual Health Service opened in October 2016. It offers all forms of contraception, sexual health screens, treatments, and advice. The service is supplemented with a strong self-managed care offer via the internet and telephone. There has been an increase in online and remote consultations which has made them easier to access for many people. Home sampling kits have simplified sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing.

STI testing includes the Chlamydia Screening Programme that seeks to reduce the impact on young people’s reproductive health. It is available to young people aged 16-24.

Outreach work targets those who are at high risk and includes targeted services for young people, men who have sex with men, black and minority ethnic group communities. The service also engages with sex workers and attends the Ladies Night event.

### Mpox

In 2022/23, the Integrated Sexual Health Service responded to Mpox by providing targeted communication and vaccination clinics for groups identified by the UK Health and Security Agency. Most of this cohort are men who have sex with men (MSM). The service administered over 250 vaccinations and provided Saturday and pop-up clinics in the community. Ongoing work and monitoring has continued this year.

### METRO Stand Out Group

Work is taking place to design and deliver peer-led groups in schools to support LGBTQ+ young people that builds on the work that had been achieved by the StandOut youth group. StandOut stopped due to changes in staffing and engagement by the young people.

### Virtual Head Teacher

The Virtual Head Teacher oversees the education of looked after children in care ensuring each child/young person has a personal education plan to meet their individual needs. They also support care leavers on to higher education and employment.

### Medway Fostering Services

Our foster carers are trained and supported to offer therapeutic care to children and young people from different backgrounds. They help children feel valued, reach their full potential, and recover from early adverse experiences.

The fostering service in Medway has been reviewed and refreshed with a new fee structure and improved support to carers and their families to ensure they have the tools they need to parent children in care and are rewarded for the good care provided to them.

### Extra Care Scheme

Extra Care Housing is a type of sheltered housing that has a permanent care team in the building to meet the needs of the people that live there. It can help people over 55 to live independently in their own homes within a community setting.

It can help people who:

• may need to leave their home because of life changes or health problems.

• have had an assessment and have identified a need for care.

• want privacy and independence but need some help with day-to-day living.

Extra care housing offers self-contained apartments, communal spaces, support services and care staff that are always on site.

### Parks and Open Spaces

The Council maintains parks and open spaces for the enjoyment of all. The estate covers 1900ha (equivalent to 13 Hyde Parks) and comprises 148 urban parks, two country parks and 48 countryside areas that are managed for their wildlife and conservation value. Medway has over 125 play areas, skate parks and multi-use games areas, offering a wide range of activities for children and teenagers. The Council works to maximise the use of Medway’s green spaces for sporting and other healthy activities throughout the year.

### Walkin’ ‘N’ Wheelin’ Challenge

The launch of our new Walkin ‘N’ Wheelin competition took place in May 2023 to support national walk to school week. We saw 10 Medway Primary schools compete, which resulted in 11,235 active travel journeys recorded over the event. The school ranking first was St Margaret’s at Troy Town Primary in Rochester, who had an overall 76.3% of pupils travelling to school actively during the event. A prize of £500 Halfords was rewarded to them, which they spent on balance bikes for their Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to promote cycling from a young age.

### Little Trekkers and Striders

Two new walking campaigns were launched by Medway for Primary and Secondary schools, in support of International walk to school month. Across both campaigns, participation doubled to 16 schools compared to last year’s competitions. A total of 32,227 active travel journeys were made by those schools who took part, with prizes rewarded to the top 3 ranking schools in each category. New Road Primary School won Little Trekkers, with 79.8% of their pupils getting to school by active travel. Thomas Aveling was also presented with the top prize for the secondary school category, for taking part in the competition.

### Walk on Wednesday (WOW)

18 schools in Medway participated in the Active WOW (walk once a week) initiative run by KM charity in the academic year 2022 to 2023, with over 5,300 children taking part. Despite KM Charity ceasing operation shortly into the new year, schools continued to record their active journeys, resulting in 34,234 being reported by the participating Medway schools. Medway has since appointed the national organisation Living Streets to run a similar walk to school once a week (WOW) campaign. Currently 15 schools have been funded through the capability fund to take part.

### Bikeability

During the 2022 to 2023 academic year, Bikeability level 1 and 2 has been delivered to 493 pupils across Medway. Of the schools eligible to take part, 33% engaged in the Bikeability programme and took part in at least 1 course. The course is designed to improve practical cycling skills and safety awareness on the road, giving pupils the confidence to use this active mode of travel for future journeys.

### Home First Scheme

Patients are being provided with more health support outside of hospital than ever before. We have worked closely with NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB) to reduce patients’ length of stay in hospital by commissioning specialist health care outside of the hospital. Subsequently, the waiting time on transfer of care has seen a significant reduction in Medway.

Patients who no longer need acute care but require some additional support at home are discharged under the Home First scheme. The scheme allows patients to continue their recovery in the comfort of their own home with the additional support they may need. Patients who have completed their medical treatment but are not fully fit to go home will have their care and reablement transferred to a specialist community facility. This subsequently frees up beds at Medway Maritime Hospital for those most in need of hospital care and ensures people are being supported throughout their care.

The Intermediate Care and Reablement Service (ICRS) was an integral part of the response to COVID19 and the lessons learnt influenced the recommissioning of this service in 2023.

### Medway Skills Board

The Council has established Medway Skills Board and skills development programme for residents. This skills board comprises of Officers’ and Members’ Boards. The Officers' Skills Board chaired by the Chief Executive meet regularly alongside the Members Board, overseeing the development and delivery of the Skills and Employability Plan. There is also an independently chaired skills stakeholder board.

The Skills & Employability Plan for Medway is for all people and all skill levels, it incorporates the 16 to19 strategy. Delivery began in 2019 and the plan was refreshed in 2022.

Projects are designed to support those who need it, with a focus on those who are disadvantaged, examples include the 50+ employment programme and the Supported Internship forum.

### Library Service

The Library Service provides a service to over 200 housebound residents throughout Medway. By working with volunteer couriers, books are delivered to these residents in their own home. Books are also delivered to over 15 Medway residential homes. Alongside this over a 100 Medway visually impaired residents to receive spoken word cd’s through the post.

Libraries provide a whole range of stock for residents with additional needs, these include

* Large print
* Audio books
* eBooks with accessibility functions
* Clear Visions stock of books in grade 1 or grade 2 braille for young people
* ‘Quick reads’ stock for under-confident readers
* ‘Reading Well’ collections to support mental health
* Barrington Stokes stock for under-confident and dyslexic young people.

As well as this they also free Computer use and access to free Wi-Fi.

A whole range of free events and activities supporting residents to engage in a healthy lifestyle and avoid isolation are provided.

Libraries provide the public face of the Council in every Medway community.

### Free Health Checks

Eligible residents aged 40 to 74 can have a free NHS Health Check at the Smokefree Advice Centre in Chatham, an accessible shop on Chatham High Street.

As people get older, they have a higher risk of developing health problems. The NHS Health Check aims to spot the early signs which may lead to kidney disease, heart disease, strokes, type two diabetes, and dementia. The initiative offers residents one to one consultations with fully trained staff, tailored advice, and ongoing support to help them make small changes to lead a healthier lifestyle.

By having a health check, residents can reduce their risk of developing serious health problems in the future. A health improvement co-ordinator will ask residents simple questions about their lifestyle and family history and check their weight, blood pressure and cholesterol levels. They will then receive instant results and personalised advice to address any health problems, as well as tips on how to improve their diet and signposting to lifestyle services such as Stop Smoking and River. Wider health messages have been included in the NHS Health Check template locally, such as raising awareness of flu and COVID19 vaccinations, to support residents to make informed choices about their health.

In addition to age, there are other demographics that increase risk of developing health conditions such as cardiovascular disease (CVD), including certain ethnicities and deprivation status. These health inequalities have been exacerbated by the COVID19 pandemic and to address this, a proportionate universalism (PU) approach is used to prioritise the most at risk groups. Approaches to PU include targeted invitations, targeted marketing, and outreach work.

The NHS Health Check Outreach Project aims to take the service out into the different communities within Medway so that it is more accessible for those who may be less likely to take up an invitation from the GP practice. Barriers to taking up an invitation include, but are not limited to, location and travel, language, and awareness of the programme. Residents have so far been offered information on Public Health Services, NHS Health Checks and blood pressure checks at their place of work, place of worship and within local community settings.

### Military Covenant and Medway Council

Medway Council have made a commitment to supporting the armed forces community by signing up to the Armed Forces Covenant. Public Health plays an essential role in supporting this community.

Medway Council works closely with the Armed forces community supporting personnel based at Brompton Station and resident locally to improve their health and wellbeing. Action is taken to support civilian staff, veterans, families, and military personnel. Activities include Health Fairs and inputs at other events including Armed Forces Day. For example, the Public Health team delivered a wide range of health interventions at the Armed Forces Day in June. A mini Health Fair was delivered in November 2022, where over 300 soldiers were supported and provided with health information and educational stands.

The Public Health team are looking to deliver Making Every Contact Count (MECC) Training to local Military Veterans.

There is regular contact and dialogue with the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to enable veterans to receive appropriate care and support when leaving the forces.

### COVID19 Surveillance, Support and Vaccinations

Routine COVID19 surveillance ceased in March 2023.

The testing approach for the highest risk residents potentially eligible for COVID19 treatments remains in place. For these residents, a positive test result is assessed by their GP and antiviral medication prescribed as required.

The 2023/24 national COVID19 booster vaccination programme targeted care home residents, health and social care staff as well as other risk groups. The programme started earlier than planned due to concerns of a new COVID19 variant circulating.

Medway Council have worked closely with Kent and Medway NHS to plan and deliver COVID19 booster vaccines and flu vaccines through delivery programmes in care homes and sign posting to services in GPs practices, community pharmacies and hospitals. Roving and pop-up clinics improved access and availability. These attended care homes and other community settings.

Vaccine ambassadors supported outreach plans by improving vaccine confidence in areas of low uptake. The NHS COVID19 health and Wellbeing bus offered health screening and proactive health management alongside COVID19 booster vaccines.

## Equality duty 3: Foster Good Relations

### Domestic Abuse

Re-accreditation of the White Ribbon Local Authorities award for 2022 was achieved in November 2022 in recognition of our continued commitment to support the White Ribbon Campaign (WRC). The WRC aims to engage men and boys and prevent Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). The White Ribbon Campaign was held as a standing agenda item across numerous partnership groups to ensure a sustained focus around VAWG.

This year, the White Ribbon Campaign focused on ‘making the change’ and a webinar was delivered on becoming an active bystander. The session was centered on safely intervening directly or indirectly in incidents of violence against women and girls.

We continued our joint Kent and Medway 16 days of action Campaign this year to raise awareness of domestic abuse. This was focused on various community groups within the campaign to improve accessibility and visibility of services for victim/survivors (V/S). The campaign included 10 webinars, covering various topics such as the impact of domestic abuse on children, a toolkit, social media assets and downloads for both professionals and those experiencing abuse.

The Kent and Medway Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Steering group has worked with partners to conduct a full review of the MARAC process and has created a new MARAC model. The MARAC manager is now in post and the Hub is due to go live next year. It will work to significantly improve the response to high-risk victims as well as provide a more streamlined approach for professionals.

This past year, we have continued to improve pathways for those experiencing multiple barriers, such as homelessness, mental health issues and domestic abuse, when accessing support services. For example, the Blue Light Project has continued to focus on improving outcomes for this client group via multi-agency working, both operationally and strategically.

Significant consultation with both the public, those with lived experience and professionals took place across the year to inform the draft of the new domestic abuse strategy. The new strategy will work to focus on three key areas; early intervention and prevention, immediate needs, and recovery, and is due to be published early 2024.

### Active Medway Cycle Scheme

The Active Medway Cycle Scheme was the first in the country to design and pioneer a “let’s ride” programme aimed at including all levels of cycling, especially new cyclists. Routes are risk assessed. Approved routes must include a minimum of 90% of the ride on cycle paths, shared paths, cycle lanes, recognised cycling areas and National Cycle Network routes. The programme has been tailored to help build confidence in a participant’s ability to cycle. The programme also offers non-cyclists an opportunity to learn to cycle with an accredited British cycling coach through the “on your bike” programme. Additionally, our “Revival Bikes” programme has supplied over 20 recycled bicycles to families living in areas of deprivation and we are planning further targeted activity with underserved communities to encourage cycling as a means of transport and great way of being physically active. The cycling programmes were paused during COVID19 lockdown but have since returned to full capacity. The Cycle programmes align with our whole systems obesity approach priorities relating to promoting the benefits of physical activity and reducing sedentary behaviour.

### Medway’s annual free festival and events programme

The festivals and events team directly produce one of the largest free outdoor events and festivals programme in the country reaching over 500,000 residents and visitors. The programme brings people together, celebrating Medway’s communities and heritage whilst supporting the local economy and putting Medway on the map. Events include:

* Armed Forces Day
* Rochester Sweeps Festival
* Royal Engineers Corp Memorial
* Rochester Christmas Markets
* Rochester Dickensian Christmas

And a range of community event commissions

The service supports a series of development programmes including ‘Make Waves’ a young Producers programme and ‘Events Uncovered’ Medway’s free events management course for the community.

The refreshed approach to festivals and events showcases Medway’s creative producers, organisations, and businesses. It places our diverse communities at the heart of Medway’s cultural offer and ensure the festivals and events programme continues to positively impact on the wellbeing of our residents.

### Breast Feeding campaign

Beside You is a campaign to normalise breastfeeding in Medway, support mums to initiate breastfeeding and continue for as long as the mother and baby wish. Breastfeeding rates in Medway are below the national average and almost half of mums stop breastfeeding before their baby is six weeks old. Data also shows that there is some significant variation in initiation rates across different population groups in Medway with age, ethnicity and deprivation level, and skin to skin contact influencing this. Breastfeeding continuation shows similar patterns.

The campaign normalises breastfeeding in Medway, raises awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding, supports and empowers women to breastfeed, reduces the stigma associated with the feeling of being judged for breastfeeding in public and works with local businesses to help them provide a safer environment for breastfeeding women.

Beside You was launched across Kent in January 2020 with the development of a new website. Beside You has a large social media presence. Its virtual content has been watched for 80,000 minutes since March 2020. Our page followers have increased from 5,010 as of December 2022 to 6,459 as of December 2023, evidencing that the content has been supportive to breastfeeding mothers. It has a strong social media presence with over 70% of all followers breastfeeding, 11% pregnant and 10% health professionals.

In 2023, breastfeeding insights work was carried out as part of the Infant Feeding Strategy refresh. The insights from this as well as literature reviews helped to shape the new direction for Beside You Medway to reflect Medway’s local needs. Funding from the Start4life project was received to support the development of a Medway Beside You website and new brand. This has meant dividing with Kent to form two separate ‘Beside You’ brands. The new brand and website were launched fully in October 2023 with refreshed website content that is reflective of all aspects of a mother’s or father’s journey from pregnancy, birth and beyond. The new site also covers more information on Grow My Brain, a campaign to support brain development in the first 1000 days and mental health.

With a new interactive map, the website shows families or professionals what support is on offer in Medway and also signposts to various venues that are extra welcoming to breastfeeding mothers. A new venue sticker campaign has launched at the same time to help families identify venues that are extra supportive of the agenda. A new business toolkit has also been created to ensure businesses are aware of their legal obligations to support mothers to breastfeed and what support we can offer them in regard to training or advice on improving their venue.

To support the relaunch of Beside You, a photoshoot and videography were run with local breastfeeding women and their families, to normalise breastfeeding in public. Photographs in familiar locations help to provide diversity and authenticity of Beside You within the community.

Through the rebrand and relaunch we have worked closely with Medway Foundation Trust and Medway Community Healthcare to create content that is easy for families to access and information and support that they need through those early days and weeks, which we know is essential in improving our continuation rates past 6 to 8 weeks. We continue to work with our partner in midwifery and infant feeding to ensure the campaign remains relevant and reactive to what they are seeing in person with breastfeeding mums and most importantly consistent and accurate.

As well as the messaging service on offer on Facebook, face to face peer support and Beside You Socials are run in the community to allow mums an opportunity to meet a professional or to get support from other mothers on their breastfeeding journeys. Beside You continues to promote face-to-face services such as Hello Baby.

Beside You is working closely with other teams such as the Healthy Pregnancy Team to ensure good signposting to the Beside You website at their Bump Club sessions and to the face to face services on offer in Medway such as Hello Baby.

We continue to work with Beside You Kent to support breastfeeding and normalisation across the county.

### Personal, Social, Health Education (PHSE)

High quality relationships and sex education (RSE) is being supported through the development of the Medway RSE scheme of work, produced by the PSHE Association for Medway schools and highlighted nationally as best practice. Over 92% of schools in Medway are signed up to deliver RSE through the PSHE curriculum and 71 schools are actively engaged in the PSHE network.

The Medway RSE scheme of work has been updated to include key stage four materials and has been shared with all secondary schools in Medway. Covering topics from healthy relationships, puberty and consent to contraception, pornography and breaking up, these lessons will help teach some of the most complex RSE topics safely and effectively in an inclusive and differentiated way.

The primary scheme of work has been updated and the series of 13 lesson plans supports pupils to recognise and develop positive, healthy relationships, and prepare them for the physical and emotional changes that take place as they grow, including those that happen during puberty.

Following the pilot and evaluation of PSHE for Parents programme, it was found to be too resource-intensive for schools and parents. Therefore, a new programme of individual workshops has been developed and is currently being rolled out to parents and carers across Medway.

Contraceptive and sexual health services are available in several secondary schools plus Mid-Kent college. The ‘Get It’ free condom scheme has been integrated into wider sexual health services to increase accessibility. Emergency hormonal contraception is available at pharmacies free of charge for women under 30 years of age.

Sexual health nurses provide contraception and advice youth settings. Targeted sexual health clinics for young people take place at the Hub in Clover Street, with the remainder being young person friendly. Specialist sexual health outreach nurses provide home visits to vulnerable young people, including children in care and young parents.

Face to face appointments are now available for all young people with a specialist service for young people aged up to 25 years.

### Young Driver Education

Medway Council delivers a range of initiatives all year round to teach children and young people about road safety. Nationally, young drivers, those aged 24 and under, make up 25 per cent of all drivers killed or seriously injured, despite only making up eight per cent of licence holders.

During 2021, the Road Safety Team were gifted KCC’s Young Driver Course. The course comprises of four sessions and is designed for in-house school delivery, being teacher led.

Session 1 covers “driving and seeing”, to provide students with understanding as to crash causation.

Session 2 covers “speed & force”, to give students an idea of how speed relates to stopping distance.

Session 3 covers “impairment”, to discuss how alcohol and drugs can impact upon awareness and how impairment can affect driving.

Session 4 discusses “impulse & control”, to help students appreciate potential risks and problems when driving.

The course has been offered to all secondary schools in Medway, three have expressed an interest to date, this academic year. Furthermore, the KSRP are working towards introducing a fifth multiagency session to provide additional support to this vulnerable road user.

### Road Safety Education

The Road Safety Team offer a Primary School Road Safety Education menu to all Medway schools, visiting schools throughout the year to teach children pedestrian skills and make them aware of the potential dangers on the road. Officers also visit pre-schools and nurseries to introduce children to basic road safety skills, including the road environment, holding their grown-ups’ hand and to stop, look, listen and think. We also offer an interactive lesson delivered in Term five, to reinforce the importance of wearing a seatbelt whilst a passenger.

In preparation for the start of academic year 2023/24, the Road Safety Team expanded upon their KS3 & 4 lessons, filling current identified gaps to offer continued life-long support to years 8-11. These lessons cover the importance of speaking up in a dangerous situation, the assumptions about road safety and the impact of distractions, behaviour as a pedestrian or passenger, and looking at the consequences of a crash.

During the 2022/23 academic year, Road Safety education has been delivered to 3,147 primary school children and 1,570 secondary school children. Scooter Skills sessions have been delivered to 720 children in Key Stage 1 over the same duration. Under 5’s education was delivered to 1,535 children.

### ‘Tri For You’ Programme

The Medway Council public health team runs the Tier two Tri for You programmes for children and young people. These include TriMini for children aged 5–7 years, TriClub for children aged 8–12 years, FitFix for young people aged 13-17 years and Tri Taster, a programme run for pupils in partnership with schools. These programmes support families to make changes in their lifestyle behaviours to improve their activity levels, while gaining knowledge and awareness about making healthier choices.

Through the range of courses and sessions, families can learn how making small changes can lead to a healthier lifestyle and can share tips and advice for each other on how they have done this. Families are directed to various information sources that can support these changes, which include NHS Healthier Families and Sugar Smart. These consist of various activities and recipes while encouraging a reduction in sugar consumption, which is very important for health improvement. These courses also aim to improve the self-confidence and esteem of the attendees as changes are made and maintained.

The Tier Two Child Weight Management Team are planning a pilot programme reducing the taught element of the current programmes from 12 weeks to six. The families will then be invited to attend an enrichment programme, such as cookery or family exercise, for another six weeks to offer them a more bespoke programme with a wider range of specialised professionals. The pilot is due to start in January 2024 and be completed by the end of Q1 2024-2025 depending on the enrichment course chosen by families.

The team priorities are to continue encouraging participation of programmes to minority groups, the most deprived and families on the peninsula that have limited access to services.

Obesity levels in year R and year 6 have dropped for a second year running since COVID19, year R dropping below 2017-18 levels.

### Air Quality Strategy

Air pollution is associated with several adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions. There is also often a strong correlation with equalities issues because areas with poor air quality are also often the less affluent areas.

The annual health cost to society of the impacts of particulate matter alone in the UK is estimated to be around £16 billion. Medway Council is committed to reducing the exposure of people in Medway to poor air quality to improve health.

The impact of air quality upon health is unquestionable and has been a major driver in national and international attempts to reduce levels of air pollution. Pollutants such as NO2, ozone, benzene, sulphur dioxide (SO2) alongside PM10 and PM2.5 and other chemicals or compounds by both chronic and acute exposure are linked to increased mortality and morbidity. Through their association with the development of cardiovascular disease, lung cancer, aggravation of asthma and other allergic illnesses, reduced quality of life and contribution to low birthweight.

The distribution of harm from poor air quality is not even. Poor air quality is evidenced to impact those who reside in areas of deprivation to a greater extent and is also recognised as a contributor to widening health inequalities. In Medway rates of long-term illness, emergency hospital admissions and death are higher in those who are more disadvantaged. Health outcomes are not only worse in those who are the most disadvantaged; the inequalities follow a gradient and as such the response also needs to follow a gradient. This means that interventions and measures should be made available to all, with increasing effort needed for those who are increasingly disadvantaged.

Medway Council takes action to protect its residents’ health from potential harm emanating from poor air quality in a variety of ways. This includes partnership work with colleagues in planning to mitigate potential for air quality related harm related to developments. As well as proactively through communication initiatives identified in the Medway Air Quality Communications Strategy. Such as undertaking targeted information campaigns to increase community awareness of means by which individuals can reduce their exposure and contributions to poor air quality or manage their long-term health conditions which may otherwise leave greater susceptibility to harm from poor air quality. Such initiatives underpin priority actions of the Joint Health and Wellbeing strategy (2018-2023) to encourage self-management of long-term conditions and shape the environment to make healthy choices easier.

The implementation of Medway’s Air Quality Communications strategy continues with the promotion of the air forecast alerts to vulnerable members of the community and promotion of the KentAir website, http://www.kentair.org.uk/, which advises people on the causes of air pollution and encourages individual and collective effort to change behaviours to help improve air quality. KentAir was refreshed in 2021 and contains a range of supporting information and tools to assist with increasing awareness.

A revamped Medway carshare scheme (Kent and Medway Journey Share) was developed in 2019, widening the links across Kent whilst also aiming to increase patronage for those living and working in Medway.

Medway is a sponsor of the KM Green School Awards. Public Health and the Environmental Protection Team are working in partnership with the KM Charity to promote initiatives within schools to improve air quality #CleanAirforSchools.

Medway also tackles air quality in the air quality management areas through the 2015 and 2022 air quality action plans that contain a range of measures aimed at reducing road transport emissions and improving public health.

### Climate Change Action Plan

Inclusive climate action acknowledges that climate change and the responses to it are often unfairly balanced, with impacts varying among different groups. Medway’s most vulnerable communities are likely to be the most impacted by climate change. Marginalised groups and communities may also struggle to have their voices heard. The following steps have been taken for a more inclusive approach to climate action and this will continue to be a priority in 2024:

* A revised Communication and Engagement Strategy has been published to support the delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan. It sets out the approach for engaging with Medway’s communities, residents, businesses, and schools. The Strategy will be further developed in 2024 to accompany the refresh of the Climate Change Action Plan and will consider under-represented and vulnerable communities.
* A Community Climate Working Group has been established, with representation from varying sectors across Medway including faith groups, health and education sectors, young people, disability networks, rural committee and third sector. The intention is that the group will provide opportunities for climate action across a range of communities.
* A member led Climate Change Working Party has been set up with the aim of supporting and encouraging local climate action within their communities and networks. A Climate Action Ward Improvement Plan template has been developed to support each member. Members will be signposted to Medway’s Health and Wellbeing profiles so that they can consider who is most vulnerable to climate impacts within their ward and choose an action to support that group.
* The Climate Response Team has worked with the Culture Team on a theatre led project to hear from young people on the climate agenda. The intention is for their spoken words to appear as graphic public art at locations in Medway in 2024.
* The Sustainable Warmth Officer has continued to promote grants which support low income and vulnerable households to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.
* The Climate Response Team has continued to attend a range of events to engage with Medway’s communities on the Climate Change Action Plan including the Over 55’s event, Medway Matters Live Event, Medway Creative Schools, Medway Adult Education Open Day, Medway Pride, Wild About Capstone, Medway Food Partnership annual event, Rochester Eco Hub Fair and the Rochester Town Centre Forum.

The Climate Response Team also continue to promote key messages via the Climate Change newsletter, social media and Medway Matters.

# Delivering Fair & Responsive Services 2021

# Community & Workforce Equality Data

It is vital that we have a good understanding of who our customers are so we can deliver services that are targeted to meet their needs. This section contains information about the people who make up the rich and diverse Medway communities.

We have used the Census 2001, 2011, and 2021, English indices of deprivation 2019 produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year population estimates for the UK in 2012 and 2022 and the ONS’ sub national population projections for 2032 to get an up-to-date picture of what our communities look like and how they are changing.

## Medway Community: Key changes

Population increased

Medway’s population increased by 14,568 people from 268,144 in 2012 to 282,703 in 2022, a 5.4% increase.

(Mid-Year Population Estimates 2012 and 2022)

Ageing population

Medway’s population profile is getting older.

The proportion of Medway’s population aged 0-18 has remained static, it was 24.2% in both 2012 and 2022.

The proportion of the population aged 19-64 has decreased to 59.1% in 2012, this is down from 61.1% in 2012.

There has been a continued increase in the population aged 65 and over, up from 14.6% in 2012 to 16.6% in 2022.

Medway’s average age is younger than Kent, the South-East and England & Wales.

### More ethnically diverse

Medway has become more ethnically diverse since 2001. The population from non-white ethnic minority groups has increased from 5.4% in 2001 to 10.4% in 2011 and now stands at 15.7% in 2021.

Medway’s ethnic minority population is lower than England and Wales.

White British is still the largest ethnic group, 78.3% of the population; followed by White Other 6%, and Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh groups 5.9%.

Medway’s Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African population has more than doubled between 2011 and 2021.

### Limiting long term illness increase

The percentage of people with a Limiting Long-Term Illness has increased from 16.4% in 2011 to 17.4% in 2021. The proportion of the population whose day-to-day activities are limited in some way is like England and Wales, 17.7%.

### Unpaid carers increase

The number of unpaid carers decreased from 9.5% in 2011 to 8.6% in 2021.

### Continued increase in those stating no religion

Since 2001 there has been a 27-percentage point reduction in the number of residents identified themselves as Christian: 45% in 2021, 58% in 2011, and 72% in 2001.

The number of residents stating no religion has increased by an equivalent amount, with a 26-percentage point increase from 17% of the population in 2001, to 30% in 2011 before reaching 43% in 2021.

The proportions of residents stating their religion as Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Sikh, or other religion have stayed static between 2011 and 2021. The proportion of residents identifying as Muslim increased by 0.7 percentage points from 2% in 2011 to 2.7% in 2021.

### Increase in deprivation

Medway is ranked 93rd most deprived Local Authority of 317 (1st being the most deprived) in England in the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation. This is a relatively more deprived than the 2015 index, when Medway was ranked 118th most deprived of 325.

## Medway Community: Profile

### 5 urban areas

Medway is made up of five urban centres: Chatham, Gillingham, Rochester, Strood and Rainham. It also includes an extensive rural area on the Hoo Peninsula and the area of Cuxton and Halling to the west of M2.

### Increasing population

Between 2012 and 2022, the population has grown by 14,568 people, up to 282,702.

### Includes areas of deprivation

Medway is ranked 93rd most deprived Local Authority of 317 (1st being the most deprived) in England in the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). This is a relatively worse position than the index in 2015, when Medway was ranked 118th most deprived of 326.

The main domains in the IMD where Medway is relatively more deprived than other areas are ‘crime’ (ranking 27 out of 317 Local Authorities in England), and ‘education, skills and training’ (which ranks 68 out of 317).

### Around a third of households have dependent children

The proportion of households with dependent children has remained almost the same between the censuses – in 2011 32.3% of households had dependent children, compared to 32.2% in 2021.

The ONS classifies a dependent child as any person living in a household who is either: aged 0 to 15 years old, or aged 16 to 18, in full-time education and lives in a family with their parent(s) or grandparents(s). Therefore, a person over the age of 18 living with their parent(s)/grandparent(s) will not classify as a dependent child, even if they are still financially dependent.

### Fewer unpaid carers

The number of unpaid carers decreased from 9.5% in 2011 to 8.6% in 2021.

### More overcrowded households

In Medway, 66.8% of households are under-occupied, and 4.5% are overcrowded. Overcrowding is up slightly from 2011, and is also higher than other comparison areas, in particular wider Kent and the South East.

### Increase in occupied households

As of 2011, there were 106,209 occupied households this increased by around 5% to 111,458 in 2021.

### Significant decrease in economic activity

The proportion of Medway’s residents who are economically active has decreased significantly between 2011 and 2021, by 8 percentage points, while economic inactivity has increased.

In 2021, most residents aged 16 or over where economically active in (63.1%). Medway has a slightly higher percentage of economically active residents than Kent (60.2%), the South-East (62.2%) and England & Wales (60.6%).

There were 140,571 residents who were economically active in 2021; most economically active residents (excl. full-time students) were in paid employment for an individual or organisation as an employee (76.8%). However, 15.5% of residents (excl. full-time students) were self-employed (i.e., they own/operate their own business or professional practice, either by themselves or shared with a business partner).

A greater number and percentage of economically active residents are self-employed in 2021 than in 2011, the number of residents who are self-employed has increased by 29.2% in 10 years. Just 5.7% of Medway’s non-student residents were unemployed and either waiting to start a job or seeking employment at the time of the census.

In Medway, 36.9% of all residents aged 16 and over were economically inactive at the time of the 2021 census, up from 28.9% in the 2011. This change in percentage of economically inactive residents is mainly driven by an increase in the number and proportion of retired residents; in 2011 there were 24,738 retired residents in Medway, which composited 44.0% of all economically inactive residents, and this number has increased by 76.2% over the last 10 years to 43,599 residents. As of 2021, over half of all economically inactive residents were retired. Medway’s economic inactivity profile is broadly similar to other comparison areas.

### More highly qualified

As of Census 2021 77.7% of Medway’s residents held a Level 1 qualification or above, this is slightly lower than Kent (79%), the South-East (82%) and England & Wales (79%).

Around a quarter (25.6%) of Medway residents held a Level 4 qualification and above, this is lower than Kent (30.5%), the South-East (35.8%) and England & Wales (33.8%).

Both the proportion of residents with a Level 1 or higher and Level 4 or higher qualification have increased since 2011.

### Above average households’ own home

64.7% of households owned their own home, either with a loan, mortgage or outright; this is a decrease of 3 percentage points since 2011. Medway’s level of ownership is still above the national average percentage of 61.6%. (Census 2021)

### Increase of cars and vans available for use

The proportion of households with access to at least 1 car or van in households increased slightly from 78.1% in 2011 to 80.8% in 2021.

## Medway Community: Sex and age

### Sex

There has been a small change within Medway’s sex breakdown. Females accounted for 51% of Medway’s population in 2022, up from 50.5% in 2012. Males have decreased from 49.5% in 2012 to 49% in 2022.

### Age

Medway’s population is slightly younger than the South East or England.

Medway’s population aged 18 and under increased from 65,131 in 2012 to 68,585 in 2022 (+5.3%). Despite this increase the overall proportion of the population aged 18 and under has remained static since 2012, reflecting the rapidly increasing older population.

In 2022, the population aged 19 to 64 was 167,139. Although higher than the 163,861 people in this age group in 2012, the proportion of the population in this age group has declined since 2012.

Medway’s population is ageing at a faster rate with more people now aged 65 and over since 2012. This age group accounted for 46,978 people in 2022. This is an increase of 20% since 2012.

Table 1 below shows changes as a proportion of the population in each of the three age groups. The proportion of 0 to 18 year olds has remained static since 2012, whilst the rate of 19 to 64 year olds has fallen and the population aged 65 and over group has continued to increase.

Table 1 Population by age group in 2001, 2012 and 2022

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age group** | **Proportion population 2001** | **Proportion population 2012** | **Proportion population 2022** |
| 0-18 | 26.6% | 24.5% | 23.9% |
| 19-64 | 60.7% | 61.5% | 59.6% |
| 65 and over | 12.6% | 14.3% | 16.5% |

Source: Census 2001, Mid-Year 2012 and 2022

Table 2 below shows Medway’s population over different age groups, and the split by sex for mid-year population estimates 2022.

Table 2 – Proportion of Medway’s population by 5-year age bands and sex (Mid-Year 2022)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Age group | Male % | Female % | Total % |
| 0-4 | 3.1 | 3.0 | 6.1 |
| 5-9 | 3.3 | 3.2 | 6.6 |
| 10-14 | 3.4 | 3.3 | 6.7 |
| 15-19 | 3.0 | 2.9 | 5.8 |
| 20-24 | 2.8 | 2.7 | 5.4 |
| 25-29 | 3.1 | 3.3 | 6.4 |
| 30-34 | 3.5 | 3.9 | 7.3 |
| 35-39 | 3.4 | 3.6 | 7.0 |
| 40-44 | 3.3 | 3.5 | 6.8 |
| 45-49 | 3.1 | 3.1 | 6.2 |
| 50-54 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 6.6 |
| 55-59 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 6.6 |
| 60-64 | 2.8 | 2.9 | 5.7 |
| 65-69 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 4.6 |
| 70-74 | 2.0 | 2.3 | 4.3 |
| 75-79 | 1.7 | 1.9 | 3.6 |
| 80-84 | 0.9 | 1.2 | 2.2 |
| 85-89 | 0.5 | 0.8 | 1.2 |
| 90+ | 0.2 | 0.5 | 0.7 |
| *Grand total* | 49.0 | 51.0 | 100.0 |

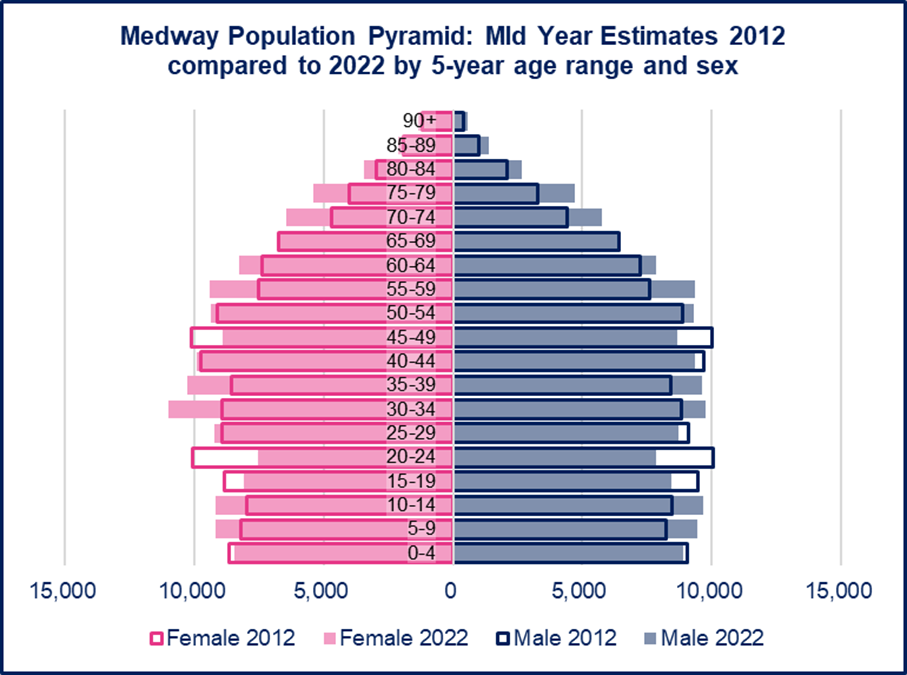


Figure 1 – Population pyramid 2012 and 2022

Sources: ONS mid-year population estimates 2012 and 2022

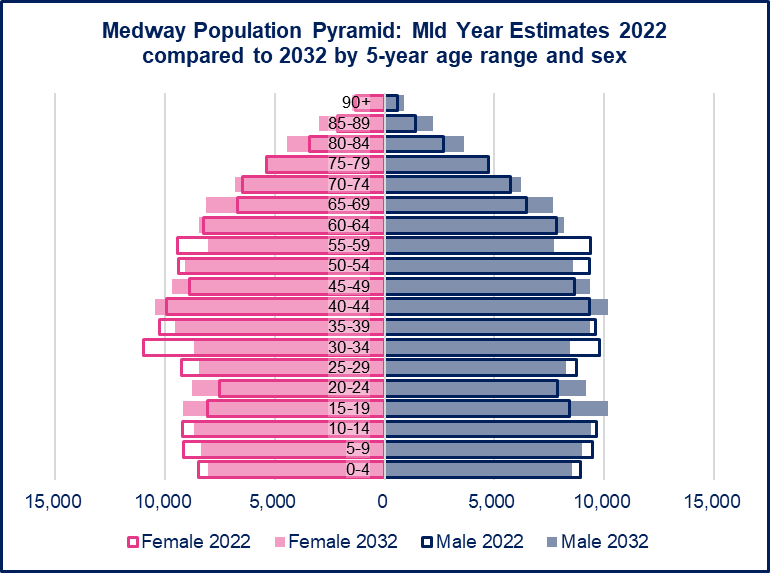
Figure 1 above shows the age and sex profile of Medway’s population in 2022 compared to 2012. It shows that overall, since 2012, the population aged 0 to 14 has increased; although both males and female populations aged 0 to 4 are showing decreases. During the same period those aged 15 to 24 have seen notable decreases, whereas the number of young adults aged 25 to 39 has increased, and the number of adults aged 40 to 49 has reduced.

Overall, the number of adults aged over 50 has increased in every age group. With notable increases in both the male and female populations in all age groups aged 70 and over.

The median age of Medway residents in 2022 was 38.9, lower than the England & Wales median age of 40.6 and the South-East, 41.9.

Figure 2 below shows that Medway’s population is projected to still be growing in 2032 increasing to around 286,200 (Figure 2). There are projected to be notable increases in the 15 to 24 and 35 to 44 age groups, as well as those aged 65 and over. There are smaller falls in the population aged 10 to 14, with more significant falls in the population aged 25 to 34 and 50 to 59.

Figure 2 - Population 2022 and 2032



### Medway Community: Sexual Orientation

Census 2021, for the first time, asked respondents aged 16 and over to provide details of their sexual orientation. Table 3 below shows most of Medway’s population (90.5%) stated their sexual orientation as ‘straight or heterosexual’, with 2.7% identifying with another sexual orientation. Amongst this group the majority stated they were ‘gay or lesbian’ (1.3%), followed by ‘bisexual’ (1.1%) and ‘other sexual orientation’ (0.3%). As this was a voluntary question, some people (6.7%) chose not to answer.

Table 3 Sexual Orientation, Census 2021

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sexual Orientation | Medway 2021 |
| Straight or Heterosexual | 201,694 (90.5%) |
| Gay or Lesbian | 2,979 (1.3%) |
| Bisexual | 2,528 (1.1%) |
| All other sexual orientations | 674 (0.3%) |
| Not answered\* | 14,881 (6.7%) |

## Medway Community: Gender Reassignment

### Gender Identity

The Census 2021 was the first to ask respondents to provide details of their gender identity. The question asked was “Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?”. Respondents did not have to answer this question, as it was voluntary, and this question was only asked to people aged 16 and over.

Around 19 in every 20 Medway residents responded that the gender they identify with is the same as their sex registered at birth, and 5.3% chose not to answer the question. Nearly 1,100 Medway residents have a gender identity different from their registered sex at birth; about 0.5% of the population.

About half of these individuals (511) chose not to disclose a specific identity, though 225 individuals identified as trans women, and 214 identified as trans men. 145 individuals identified as a different gender identity from the aforementioned.

### Gender reassignment

Information on the numbers of people who may have reassigned their gender is not collected to enable a profile for Medway to be included in this report. Press for Change (the UK’s leading experts in transgender law) and the Gender Trust (an organisation supporting all those affected by gender identity issues) have produced statistical estimates of 25 per 100,000 population based on research into the numbers of people who have undergone gender reassignment procedures.

Based on the above estimate, Medway would expect to have around 70 residents who would have reassigned their gender or be undergoing the process of having their gender reassigned. Although this would be a very small section of the community it is important to remember that this section of the community can face significant obstacles in being accepted.

## Medway Community: Marriage and Civil Partnership

Table 4 below shows Medway ranks quite low both nationally and regionally in terms of the proportion of people who are married. Conversely, Medway ranks quite high for people whose marital status is divorced. In respect of single people who have never married, Medway’s proportion is the higher than both Kent and the South-East but is similar to England & Wales.

Despite the number of married people remaining virtually the same 97,510 (Census 2021) compared to 97,095 (Census 2011). The proportion of the population who are married has fallen from 46.1% in 2011 to 43.8% in 2021. Most marriages are for opposite sex couples (43.5% or 96,857), with 653 people (0.3%) in a same sex marriage.

There are 365 people living in a registered civil partnership, there is an almost even split between same sex (180 people) and opposite sex (185 people) partnerships (Census 2021).

Cohabiting couples account for 13% of Medway’s population compared with the England & Wales level of 11.6%. (Census 2021)

The number of people who are divorced or had their civil partnership dissolved increased between 2011 to 2021, but the proportion of the population remained static. The number of people who are separated, but still married/civil partners or widowed/surviving partner from civil partnership both saw falls in the number of people and the proportion of the population who were in these categories.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Medway 2011** | **Medway 2021** | **Kent (excl. Medway) 2021 %** | **South East 2021 %** | **England & Wales 2021 %** |
| Population aged 16 or over | 210,511 | 222,756 | - | - | - |
| Never married or registered as civil partners (single) | 72,899 (34.6%) | 84,139 (37.8%) | 34.6% | 34.8% | 37.9% |
| Married | 97,095 (46.1%) | 97,510 (43.8%) | 46.6% | 47.4% | 44.4% |
| Registered civil partnership | 359 (0.2%) | 365  (0.2%) | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.2% |
| Separated, but still married/civil partners | 6,608 (3.1%) | 5,949  (2.1%) | 2.3% | 2.1% | 2.2% |
| Divorced, civil partnership dissolved | 20,142 (9.6%) | 21,715 (9.7%) | 9.7% | 9.3% | 9.1% |
| Widowed/surviving partner from civil partnership | 13,408 (6.4%) | 13,081 (5.9%) | 6.5% | 6.1% | 6.1% |

Table 4 Legal partnership status comparing Medway, the South East of England and England and Wales Census 2021

## Medway Community: Disability

### Health

Census 2021 asked respondents how they considered their health, for Medway residents:

* 82.1% described themselves as being in good or very good health.
* 12.8% described themselves as in fair health.
* 5.1% described themselves as being in bad or very bad health.

Compared to England and Wales, Medway had slightly more people reporting good and very good health (+0.4 percentage points) and fewer in fair health (-0.3 percentage points) and bad or very bad health (-0.6 percentage points).

### Carers

8.6% of residents provided unpaid care for someone with an illness or disability, a decrease of 0.9 percentage points compared to the 9.5% of residents in 2011.

Similar changes were seen in England and Wales with the number of carers decreasing.

Potential reasons for this include coronavirus restrictions, fewer individuals sharing caring responsibilities with another person, higher deaths leading to reduced caring demand, and changes to wording between the 2011 and 2021 censuses.

### Disability

Census 2021 asked people to assess whether their day-to-day activities were limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, those who felt their activities were limited are considered disabled. In 2021, 17.4% (48,572) of Medway residents were considered as disabled; up 1 percentage point (or around 5,000 people) from the 2011 Census.

Medway’s proportion of residents with a disability is similar to England and Wales (17.7%).

## Medway Community: Ethnicity and National Identity

Medway has become more ethnically diverse since 2001. In 2011 ethnic minority communities made up 10.4% of Medway’s population, up from 5.4% of the population in 2001. White communities (White British, White Irish, White Gypsy and Irish Traveller, White Roma and White Other) made up 84.3% of the population in 2011, down from 89.6% in 2011. Table 5 below shows the breakdown of Medway’s population by their ethnic group and how this has changed between 2011 and 2021.

Table 5 Medway’s population by their ethnic group

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ethnic Group | 2011 Census % | 2021 Census % | 2021 number |
| White | 89.6 | 84.3 | 235,747 |
| Mixed | 2.0 | 2.8 | 7,589 |
| Asian | 5.2 | 5.9 | 16,484 |
| Black | 2.5 | 5.6 | 15,723 |
| Other | 0.7 | 1.4 | 3,960 |
| All Groups | 100 | 100 | 279,773 |

Source: Census 2011 and 2021

When breaking down the ethnic groups further, the 2011 Census shows that White British represented the majority of the community (78.3%) with White Other being the second highest (6%), followed by Asian (5.9%).

Between 2011 and 2021 the White population has remained static in terms of numbers, however, there have been some significant changes within the groups that make up this population. White Other increasing from 3.4% of the population in 2011 to 6% in 2021, whilst White British fell from 85.5% to 78.3%.

The Asian, Mixed and other ethnic groups all saw increases in the number of people and as the proportion of the population living, all having seen a 0.7 percentage points from 2011 to 2021. Black communities saw a significant rise in the proportion of the population, increasing from 2.5% of the population in 2011 to 5.6% in 2021. Most of this change was driven by the Black African population increasing from 1.8% to 4%.

Table 6 below shows that the ethnic minority population in Medway in 2011 and 2021 was greater than the South East, but smaller than England & Wales as a whole.

Table 6 Non-white ethnic minority population in Medway, South East and England

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Ethnic Minority  Population | 2011 Census  % | 2021 Census  % |
| England & Wales | 14 | 18.3 |
| South East | 9.4 | 13.7 |
| **Medway** | **10.4** | **15.7** |

Source: Census 2011 and Census 2021

Between 2011 and 2021 there was an increase in Medway’s population born in the UK, however, the population born outside the UK has increased at a faster rate meaning the proportion of Medway’s population born in the UK fell. In 2021, 38,654 people living in Medway were born outside of the UK, up from 10.4% (27,336) of residents were born outside the UK in 2011. In terms of arrival in the UK, 35.8% of all those born outside the UK arrived, between 2011 and 2021, a further 31.9% between 2010 and 2001, and 32.2% arriving before 2001. The greatest increases were from populations from Africa, Europe and the Americas and Caribbean.

The most common languages, other than English, spoken in the Medway community are shown in table 7 below.

Table 7 Languages – other than English – most spoken in Medway (Census 2021)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Main Language Spoken | Number of speakers |
| Romanian | 2064 |
| Polish | 1802 |
| Panjabi | 1623 |
| Bulgarian | 1325 |
| Lithuanian | 856 |
| Russian | 657 |
| Bengali | 570 |
| Portuguese | 533 |
| Slovak | 519 |
| Tamil | 513 |
| Turkish | 487 |
| Urdu | 470 |
| Nepalese | 385 |
| Spanish | 365 |
| Malayalam | 329 |
| Chinese | 323 |
| Latvian | 315 |
| Italian | 308 |
| French | 295 |
| Tagalog/Filipino | 262 |

## Medway Community: Religion and Belief

Table 8 below shows Christianity remains the largest religion or belief that Medway residents identify with. However, since 2001 there has been a 27 percentage point reduction in the number of residents who identified themselves as Christian: 45% in 2021, 58% in 2011, and 72% in 2001.

The second largest group recorded is those stating that they have no religion. Having a 26 percentage point increase from 17% of the population in 2001, to 30% in 2011 before reaching 43% in 2021.

The proportions of residents stating their religion as Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Sikh, or other religion have stayed static between 2011 and 2021. The only other group to see a notable increase was those residents identifying as Muslim, having increased by 0.7 percentage points from 2% in 2011 to 2.7% in 2021.

Table 8 Religions in Medway

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Religion and Belief | 2011  % | 2021  % | 2021  Number |
| Christian | 57.8 | 45.8 | 126,097 |
| Buddhist | 0.4 | 0.4 | 999 |
| Hindu | 1 | 1.1 | 3,172 |
| Jewish | 0.1 | 0.1 | 217 |
| Muslim | 2 | 2.7 | 7,636 |
| Sikh | 1.5 | 1.6 | 4,363 |
| All Other religions | 0.5 | 0.6 | 1,705 |
| No religion | 29.9 | 43 | 120,309 |
| Religion not stated | 6.8 | 5.5 | 15,273 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **279,771** |

## Medway Council workforce: Profile

The council is committed to providing equal opportunities and access to all, and its employment policies aim to ensure that no employee is discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, or victimised on the grounds of their race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, marital or civil partnership status, any stage of gender reassignment or any other protected characteristic as stated under the under the Equality Act 2010.

The council’s commitment to equalities and its *Be Yourself at Work* campaign strives to enable employees to feel comfortable to be themselves at work. This is not only good for the employee, but it is accepted that those who can be themselves at work perform better. The council undertook an anonymous voluntary employee engagement survey in September 2022 and achieved a 58% response rate. There were questions about how engaged people felt within the organisation this showed an employee engagement level of 63% amongst those who responded. The survey included several questions relating to equalities and the culture of the council.

When asked whether respondents felt comfortable to be themselves at work without fear of discrimination, a positive 82% either agreed or strongly agreed that they could. discrimination.

Medway Council employs 2,992 people (as of 1 January 2024, excluding staff based in schools). The People directorate is the largest employing 1242 staff followed by the Place directorate employing 1171, the Business Support Department employing 579 staff.

Women represent 74% of the council workforce (excluding staff based in schools). In terms of ethnicity, most staff classify themselves as White (78%) with 14% Minority Ethnic, and 8% for whom the information is incomplete or has been refused.

### Medway Council workforce: Sex (non-schools’ staff)

Table 9 Medway Council – Sex

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sex – Jan 2023 | Business Support Department | People directorate | Place directorate | Medway Council | Medway Community (Aged 16 to 64) |
| Women | 73.2% | 83.5% | 65.4% | 74.4% | 51.0% |
| Men | 26.8% | 16.5% | 34.6% | 25.6% | 49.0% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Source: Medway Council HR Services (data as of 1 January 2024) and Census 2021.

Table 9 above shows that males are underrepresented in the workforce with 25.6% compared to 49.0% in the community.

### Medway Council workforce: Disability (non-schools’ staff)

Table 10 Medway Council – disability

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Disability – Jan 2024 | Business Support Department | People directorate | Place directorate | Medway Council | Medway Community (aged 20 to 64) |
| Yes | 5.2% | 5.4% | 5.2% | 5.3% | 13.0% |
| No | 58.0% | 51.7% | 54.3% | 53.9% | 87.0% |
| Not Stated /Refused | 36.8% | 42.9% | 40.5% | 40.8% | 0.0% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Table 10 above displays the percentage of non-school based employees who have declared that they have a disability. These figures would appear to show that this minority are underrepresented within the council’s workforce when compared with the Medway community (the community figures are from age 20 as 2021 Census data about this characteristic is only available in 5-year age groups).

However, it should be noted that employees with disabilities may choose not to declare their disability to their employer for several reasons. This can be demonstrated within the results of the 2022 anonymous employee engagement survey. When asked to declare whether they had a disability, 20% of all respondents stated they had compared to 5.3% who had declared a disability on the HR system.

The council is continually striving to increase the percentage of disabled staff within the workforce and to encourage employees to declare their disability. The ‘*Be yourself at work’* campaign aims to encourage employees to complete their personal details on the HR MyView system. Further initiatives are being arranged to raise awareness of why the council needs equalities data and details of this can be found in the final paragraph ‘Pro-active measures toward an inclusive workforce’.

The council is signed up to the ‘Disability Confident’ scheme which replaced the ‘Two Ticks Positive about Disability Scheme’ in 2016. Disability Confident aims to help employers make the most of the opportunities provided by employing disabled people. It is voluntary and has been developed by employers and disabled people’s representatives. More information about the scheme can be found at [www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/disability-confident-how-to-sign-up-to-the-employer-scheme.)

Working as a Disability Confident employer and displaying the Disability Confident symbol, reinforces the council’s commitment to those with disabilities and gives the council the opportunity to regularly review, build upon and celebrate best practice in the employment arena. In doing so, the council provides evidence that it meets a number of commitments.

### Medway Council workforce: Age

The council has an ageing workforce. This is reflected in table 11 below, which shows an increasing proportion of staff across the 30 to 59 age groups.

The council has regard to the age profile of its current staff and the under-representation of those within the 16-19 age range. Due to this, the council has agreed within its Age Discrimination Policy (July 2012) to reserve the right to take positive action measures to assist with its workforce planning to attract into its service younger people.

Table 11 Medway residents and Medway Council (non-school based staff)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Age Group | Medway Council Staff  (Jan 24) | Medway Residents  (Aged 16 to 64, 2021) |
| 16-19 | 4.1% | 5.8% |
| 20-24 | 5.2% | 5.7% |
| 25-29 | 7.9% | 6.6% |
| 30-34 | 8.0% | 7.3% |
| 35-39 | 10.3% | 7.0% |
| 40-44 | 11.5% | 6.6% |
| 45-49 | 11.1% | 6.3% |
| 50-54 | 11.7% | 6.8% |
| c55-59 | 12.0% | 6.7% |
| 60-64 | 10.2% | 5.6% |
| 65 and over | 8.1% | - |

Source: Medway Council workforce monitoring January 2024 and Census 2021

Some of the positive measures undertaken to increase this demographic include a graduate scheme and apprenticeships which could lead to permanent employment, as well as an internship programme for students.

### Medway Council workforce: Ethnicity

Table 12 Medway residents and Medway Council (non-school based staff) ethnicity structure

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Medway Council Staff  (Jan 24) | Medway Residents  (Aged 16 to 64, 2021) |
| White British, Irish, other | 77.88% | 84.3% |
| Multi ethnic | 1.5% | 2.8% |
| Asian or Asian British | 4.8% | 5.9% |
| Black or Black British | 6.9% | 5.6% |
| Other | 0.7% | 1.4% |
| Not Given or Refused | 8.2% | N/A |

Source: Census 2021 and Medway Council workforce monitoring January 2024

Table 12 above shows that the White (British, Irish and other White) community is very similar in the council and in the community, and the Black ethnic group is slightly overrepresented among the council workforces. On the other hand, the Asian ethnic group is underrepresented among the council workforces.

### Other protected characteristics

Due to low declaration levels on the HR MyView system, data relating to the other protected characteristics such as sexual orientation and religion is not sufficient to enable any meaningful analysis. However, these figures are gradually increasing because of proactive measures that have been undertaken. These are highlighted in the section below.

## Medway Council Staff: Key differences compared with the Medway community profile.

26% of the workforce (non-school) are male compared to 49% of the community (taking into consideration males between 16 and 64).

74% of the workforce (non-school) are female compared to 51% of the community.

Only 5.3% of the council’s non-school staff has reported a disability, and there are 13% of residents who have reported a disability.

Percentages of council’s staff in age brackets from 16 to 24 are lower than in the community. The larger difference is in the age group 16-19, which includes 5.8% of the community, compared to only 1.99% of the council’s non-school-based staff. All other age brackets are over represented in council staff.

While the white and multi-ethnic populations are very similar in both – council and community – environments, there are some significant differences when comparing Asian and Black ethnicities.

Black ethnic groups are slightly overrepresented among the council workforce, with 6.9% of Black workforce versus 5.6% of Black population in the Medway community. On the other hand, the Asian ethnic group is underrepresented, with Asian staff making up 4.8% of the council’s workforce compared to 5.9% of the community.

## Proactive Measures toward an inclusive workforce

The council is taking pro-active measures toward building a supportive and inclusive workforce, some examples are as follows:

1. We use data from the bi-annual employee survey to help inform policy and process changes and shape future equality related initiatives.
2. The Medpay performance related pay scheme seeks to reward those who are actively engaged in equality work over and above their normal duties (providing all normal targets have been met).
3. The Make a Difference employee recognition awards scheme, through the Inclusion and Diversity Award recognises excellence in those who have demonstrated how they have improved the access, participation, achievements, or life chances for the communities we serve and for the employees of Medway Council.
4. Employees are offered a comprehensive training facility on equality and diversity via e-learning.
5. Employees are offered support via the Disabled network group.
6. In 2017 we became ‘Disability Confident’ – replacing the previous Positive About Disability scheme the Disability Confident scheme aims to help employers make the most of the opportunities provided by employing disabled people. It is voluntary and has been developed by employers and disabled people’s representatives.
7. We commit to working toward the principles of the Mindful Employer Charter for employers who are positive about mental health.