



**Medway Council's
Children and Young People's Plan
2009-11**



Every child
deserves to be
safe and loved,
and to have a
happy and
healthy childhood



OUR promise

Medway Children's Trust wants children and young people in Medway to:

- **be safe and cared for;**
- **succeed in learning;**
- **thrive.**

What is a children's trust?

Children's trusts bring together organisations responsible for services for children, young people and families. Children's trusts make sure they work together to provide the best services possible to improve your life. For more information see page 10.

Safe and cared for

We know you need to feel safe from harmful people, places or behaviour.

We are working together to protect you from accidents and bullying. We want to make sure you feel welcome in the neighbourhood you live in. We know that fewer young people are suffering harm or neglect and we're getting better at protecting those who might be at risk, but there's more to do because you've also told us that:

- you can feel scared when you see large groups of teenagers;
- you get fed up with the damage caused to parks and open spaces;
- you'd rather not see groups drinking, smoking and taking drugs in public spaces, and this is a worry because you don't know what they will do next.

To keep Medway's young people safe and cared for Medway Children's Trust is already:

- improving how quickly and well we help young people who are at risk of being hurt;
- ensuring our plans to tackle bullying fit with what you've told us you're most worried about;
- bringing in the ContactPoint system to link up and see when you need more help (see page 5 for more information);
- doing more work with young people in danger of getting into trouble as well as those already causing lots of problems so that you can feel safer on the streets;
- making sure that all young people who can't live with their families have their own social worker;
- training more professionals to use CAFs (see page 11 for more information) and using the information we get to make sure the right services are in place to meet the needs of young people who want a little extra help.





What is ContactPoint?

ContactPoint is a contacts list for people who work with children and young people. It will list the name and contact details for all children and young people up to the age of 18, and the professionals and services working with them.



Succeed in

To achieve the very best you can, you want to enjoy learning in school and out of school and your development is as important to us as it is to you and your families.

More young people are in employment, training or further and higher education when they leave school, but there's more to, because you've told us that:

- your biggest worry is exams;
- you want to start thinking much earlier about training and work opportunities;
- you want after-school activities to include work and career skills;
- you want schools to be friendly places where you enjoy learning.



What's a children's centre?

Children's centres are places where children under five years old and their families can go to get services in their local area. They offer a huge range of support including childcare, parenting, family support services and much more. For more information: www.medwayfisd.com.

n learning



To help young people succeed in learning we're going to:

- help children have the best start in life by having a children's centre in each community;
- give teachers the help they need so they can do an even better job;
- make sure schools have good buildings and the right equipment;
- make sure pupils who are finding learning very difficult have the extra help they need to do as well as their friends;
- make sure that having health problems doesn't mean doing badly at school;
- offer more choices and support to young people aged 14 to 19.

Thrive

A photograph of three young people jumping joyfully against a clear blue sky. The person in the foreground is a young woman with blonde hair, wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans, with her arms outstretched and a wide smile. Behind her, another young woman with brown hair, wearing a yellow top, is also jumping with a joyful expression. To the right, a young man with brown hair, wearing a green t-shirt and blue jeans, is also jumping. The overall mood is one of happiness and energy.

We want to help you thrive: to be confident, positive and active, everyone living in decent housing and part of a stable community.



More young people are taking part in activities such as sport, creative arts and leisure, but there's more to do because you've told us that:

- you want more places to go, more things to do;
- you want more and earlier help with housing problems;
- your parents want more advice and support on talking to you about positive and healthy lifestyles;
- some of you haven't heard what youth clubs can offer.

To help young people thrive we're going to:

- increase the number of places to go and things to do for young people in Medway, and make sure you can find out about them;
- offer a new range of short breaks and activities for families with children with additional health needs or disabilities;
- improve our support to young people having emotional problems and worries;
- give you more chances to take part in sport and leisure, including having free swimming for under 16s;
- make sure children and young people who can't live with their families (looked after children) have their health needs met;
- make it easier to get help about sexual health, especially for those young people most at risk;
- give extra help to young first-time parents;
- make sure there is enough safe and suitable housing for young people and help when they need it with housing problems.

Making

Medway Children's Trust

To show we mean what we say, we've formed a new way of working called Medway Children's Trust

A children's trust is a group of organisations working together to deliver services for children, young people and families.

There are many teams of people in organisations belonging to Medway Children's Trust who are working hard to make sure you and your friends have the best start in life, including:

- **Connexions and youth services workers;**
- **schools, college and university staff;**
- **Medway Council leaders, social workers and children's centre staff;**
- **health professionals and their teams;**
- **police officers and community workers;**
- **volunteers and paid staff working for charities and community centres.**

It's important that children and young people help design services so your needs are met. We need to talk with - and listen to - each other; so we will ask

your views at times when you are most likely to be free from school work, and likely to have less to do than usual. We'll ask you - the young people who use the services - your views and opinions. We'll feed back what we have done and find out how you feel about the changes we've made.

A team of Young Commissioners will listen to your ideas and suggestions and make sure the right people hear them, and the Young Inspectors team will help make sure that services are working properly for you.

At the same time, we've also got ways for parents and carers to have their say.

Some services should be there for everyone, like schools and health clinics and opportunities to have fun.

Extra services should be there for some children who might need a bit more help.

Some children might need a lot of help because they have extra challenges to face and are having lots of problems.

You and your friends can tell the trust what would make your life even better or talk to us about any problems you may have.

Working together

We know that we can achieve more for children and young people when we work together as a team. In Medway this means: teams of staff from Medway Council and the Health Service working together with families who might need extra help.

These teams cover Chatham, Gillingham, Rochester, Rainham, Strood and Hoo.

These Council teams include social workers, family support workers, education welfare officers and learning support staff. They also work closely with the youth service and schools.

The health teams include speech and language therapists who help children with communication difficulties, and health visitors who run child health clinics and make home visits to support families with a child under five.

'Universal' services are used by all - or nearly all - children, young people and families and these include schools, Sure Start Children's Centres, GPs, Healthy Living Centres and youth clubs.

Schools are a really important part of the Children's Trust. They share in the Trust's responsibility towards the well-being of all children and young people in the area, and the Trust must make sure that schools, colleges and universities get the services they need to support their students.

it happen

The community and voluntary sector

Sometimes known as the third sector, the community and voluntary sector includes anything from small local groups run by volunteers, to community centres to national organisations that employ lots of people. The main thing they have in common is that they tend to be based in the local community and any money they make is put back into the work they do.

The Third Sector has lots of experience and skills in working with families, children and young people and will be very involved in working with other partners in the Trust to deliver the promises in this plan.

Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB)

In April 2006, Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) was launched. This is a group of different organisations and groups in Medway who work together to make sure that children and young people are safe in their homes and in their community. They work together to look at the kinds of things that worry you – for example, abuse, bullying, and crime – and try to help you and your family feel safer in Medway.

Working with children and young people

People who work with children, young people and their families, whether they are paid or are giving up their free time to help, are part of what's known as the children's workforce.

The trust wants everyone in the workforce to have the skills and knowledge to allow them to do their best work for children and families. We are publishing a document called the workforce strategy that will outline what actions will be taken to make sure this happens.

Getting better at helping earlier

The members of the children's trust have already agreed that it's okay to share information about a child or young person if it's going to help them get a better service or to keep them safe, and the rules about sharing information are followed.

Contact Point

During the next two years, a new system for sharing information called ContactPoint will be put in place across the country, including Medway.

ContactPoint will list the name and contact details for all children and young people up to the age of 18 (with some exceptions), and the professionals and services working with them.

At the moment it can take a long time for a professional working with a child to find out who else is helping, which could mean a longer wait to get the help needed. If professionals can find out quickly who else is helping, children will be more likely to get the right help at the right time.

Access to ContactPoint will be restricted to staff who need information as part of their work, and they will be trained and security cleared.

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

The CAF is another way to get help quickly to children and young people who need it. A CAF is a meeting of all the professionals who can help and the family or child they are helping. It involves listening to what is working well, but also finding out what extra help is needed and making sure that happens.

The CAF is there to help but, if someone doesn't want to take part in the CAF they don't have to.

The CAF means talking to people like nurses and teachers who know the young person. If they can all talk together with the child and their family, they can plan the best support early on, before any problems become bigger. It means that the young person will only have to tell their story once rather than lots of times to different people.

For these reasons, CAF will become the usual way to work out which services a child or young person may need.

Growing up

If young people still need services as they grow older, then plans need to be in place to make sure that the changeover from children's to adults' services happens smoothly.



What happens next?

The things we say we will do in Children and Young People's Plan will be looked at regularly to make sure that the promised actions are carried out. Medway Children's Trust will continue to ask children, young people and families how they think things are going to make sure we are improving the lives of children, young people and families.

We'd like to hear your views
Please get in touch by either:

Writing to: Commissioning and Strategy Division
Gun Wharf
Dock Road
Chatham
Kent ME4 4TR

Phoning: 01634 334049
Emailing: childrenstrust@medway.gov.uk