



**Medway
Safeguarding
Children Partnership**

Safeguarding Medway's
children together

Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership

Early Help and Prevention Strategy
2025 – 2027



**Kent
Police**

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COUNCIL
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Foreword

We are pleased to introduce the Medway Early Help and Prevention Strategy 2025 – 2027.

The strategy represents our joint commitment as partners to ensure that we work in the most effective, co-ordinated way as early as possible when children and families need our support and help. The strategy is for all agencies and practitioners in Medway to ensure children and families get the right help at the right time.

We have built on the success of our last early help strategy (2021 – 2024) that established the foundations for partnership collaboration to drive early help approaches. As part of this revision, we recognise there are emerging national reforms likely to impact on individual agencies and our work together. The 2025-2027 strategy brings together our collective vision for early help and prevention in Medway where families are empowered as equal partners, taking a strengths-based approach that is open and honest.

The strategy sets out our principles that underpin the drive for Medway to be a place where children are safe from harm in their homes, families and communities. We have identified three key priorities that we need everyone's collective action to make the difference for all children and their families in Medway.

As Lead member I am pleased to support the Early Help and Prevention Strategy. We are confident that this strategy will make a difference for Medway's children and families.



Cllr Adam Price



The vision for early help and prevention in Medway

“Our vision of early help is to empower whole families as equal partners to safely make and sustain positive change”.

We do this by empowering families to address issues independently by boosting their confidence, resilience and aspirations. We celebrate each family's uniqueness and provide tailored support, enabling them to take ownership of their responsibilities with direction and focus.

When help from services is needed, we aim to ensure easy access to support from agencies. Our approach is strengths based, taking away labels and judgements, increasing understanding and supporting good communication and challenge to help families reach their potential. In doing this we are open, honest, realistic, inclusive, and always work in partnership.



What is early help and prevention?

Early help is about providing support to children and families as soon as an issue or problem emerges. As set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, it is not a single service, but a system of support around children and families. In Medway we recognise that emerging needs within families are often best supported by practitioners known to the family, such as health visitors, schools or community-based programmes offered by the voluntary sector.

Early help is support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chances of a problem getting worse.

Prevention is about taking action to reduce the chances of something happening or to stop something that is already happening from getting worse. This way of working can be seen as a continuum of action and a way of working that spans a whole range of needs.

- Primary prevention focuses on universal activity to keep people fit and well, using community-based opportunities to build social support systems and encourage self-help.
- Secondary prevention is targeted. It is for those at risk of becoming unwell or needing additional support services, ensuring appropriate services are available and accessible to them.
- Tertiary prevention focuses on those needing support services to help to reduce the need for high levels of intervention and to limit the impact of their circumstances.



How do we do it?

Our approach in Medway to early help and prevention aims to promote good long-term outcomes for children and families and prevent the need for more intensive and costly interventions.

This strategy is based on the principle of a continuum of need as set out in the Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) threshold guidance. This means that services are available universally i.e. for all children and that at times some children will need more targeted help and support.

Early help may be provided through a variety of services, including voluntary agencies. Any agency that works closely with children and/or their families can identify their need for early help. (Ofsted: The multi-agency response to children and families who need help 2023)

“Early help is everyone’s responsibility”

Identifying need

Most children’s needs are met by their family or universal services that are available to everyone. These are provided as a right to all children, young people and their families.

However, some children require support above that provided by universal services to ensure that their education, health, social and developmental needs are met. For these children additional support may be provided by a single agency, or by several different agencies working together, with a lead practitioner co-ordinating the work.

“The right conversations, with the right people at the right time”

As a partnership we commit to working together, as a system, at all levels to ensure that our approach and services best support children and families in Medway. We have a single vision, joint priorities and services which are delivered in harmony to ensure the best possible outcomes for children. Families and those working with them are aware of the universal and more targeted services available to them, as and when they need them.

“Together we are stronger”



Our principles

In line with the Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, the following principles underpin the drive for Medway to be a place where children are safe from harm in their homes, families and communities.

As an early help and prevention partnership we will:

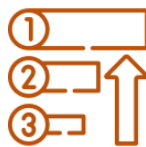
1. Be alert to children's changing needs so families are supported at the earliest opportunity to prevent escalation of need.
2. Drive cultural change, so that parental support is seen as entitlement whereby all families and communities can access support without fear of stigma or judgement, promoting the concept of "child friendly Medway"
3. Work with families as equal partners to co-produce services that promote resilience and positive choices.
4. Promote the health and wellbeing of children, young people and families.
5. Address inequalities and promote equity and equality of opportunity for children in Medway.



Governance

The delivery of our strategy is the shared responsibility of all partners involved in supporting children and families, including Health, Children's Services, Police and Education. This is overseen and governed by the Early Help Partnership Board. The Early Help Partnership Board is accountable to the MSCP Executive group.

The Start for Life and Family Hub Steering Group, Parenting Support Strategy and Early Help Partnership priority sub-groups support the Early Help Partnership Board and report directly to them.



Our early help and prevention priorities

These priorities have been agreed through consultation and analysis from a partnership review undertaken summer 2024.

System leadership for partnership working

System leadership, i.e. leading across agency boundaries to sustain strong partnership working relationships to meet local needs, making effective use of local resources including the community and voluntary sector.

How we will do this:

By developing robust system leadership across all agencies/partners sharing strategic and local goals, having regular conversations to influence direction and encourage innovation.

Co-production of early help with children, young people and their families

Children, young people and families are at the core of service design and delivery

How we will do this:

By co-ordinating work to build responsive services based on the views, experiences and ideas of children, young people and their families, embedding this approach across the partnership in quality assurance and service improvement.

Locality driven prevention and integrated early help

Early help & prevention are recognised as an active collective responsibility by those working with children and families in Medway. Partners will regularly share data on their early help work and its impact to inform system leaders.

How we will do this:

By celebrating and publicising the outcomes that come from partnership work that is collaborative and innovative, that demonstrates the culture of

prevention and access to early help and informs collective workforce development opportunities.



Measuring the Impact/Success

We will establish shared objectives that are integral to this strategy and jointly develop impact measures. Analysis, evaluation and joint review will be used to inform future joint working.



Links with Other Strategies and Plans

The Early Help and Prevention Strategy links to with several strategies and plans for children and families in Medway. Details of these strategies and plans can be found following these links:

[The Medway Plan](#)

[Child-friendly Medway](#)

Medway [Parenting Support Strategy](#)

[Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

[Medway Local Area SEND Strategy](#)