

Child-Friendly Medway Annual Report

2021 – 2023



WHAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE TOLD US

“

I WOULD LIKE TO GET INVOLVED IN THE YOUTH PROJECTS AND MEDWAY YOUTH COUNCIL.

I THINK THIS EVENT WAS GREAT FOR LETTING EVERYONE SHARE THEIR IDEAS ON HOW TO MAKE MEDWAY BETTER.

IT IS GREAT BEING A KID IN MEDWAY!

THIS IS VERY CHILD-FRIENDLY. SHOULD DO MORE LIKE THIS.

I LIKE THAT THERE ARE LOTS OF THINGS TO DO.

TODAY HAS MADE ME FEEL LIKE HOW I FEEL AND WHAT I HAVE TO SAY IS IMPORTANT.

I LIKE GOING TO THE PLAYGROUND, FAVOURITE IS THE SWINGS.

I LOVE THIS CITY HALL. IT IS THE BEST!

MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY THINGS LIKE FLOWERS.

I LIKE TO GO ON WALKS AROUND WHERE I LIVE.

HAVING MORE EVENTS LED BY YOUNG PEOPLE REALLY ENCOURAGES US TO COME AND BE HONEST AS WE DON'T FEEL INTIMIDATED. I'D LIKE TO JOIN THE YOUTH COUNCIL.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Child-Friendly Medway (CFM) finishes its second year, this annual report looks back at how the initiative has grown from its inception in April 2021 to a project that now provides and supports a diverse range of ways for children and young people to have their voices heard across Medway.

To illustrate the full story of how Child-Friendly Medway has quickly gathered momentum since its inception, the report documents our progress and achievements during both the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years.

It reviews the hundreds of events and activities Child-Friendly Medway has run or supported over the past two years. How partnership work has enabled us to reach out and engage with different audiences across Medway. Capturing ideas from children and young people on how we can make Medway even more child-friendly. Their feedback has led to the evolution of our strategy, action plan and programming of events and activities. Also shaping our internal and external partners' plans, collectively working to becoming an even more child-friendly city.

Taking in large-scale events such as Super Saturday, which brought more than 30,000 people into Chatham City Centre for a superhero-themed family event, and our flagship City Halls down to smaller storytelling sessions in our pop-up book corner, this report looks at the hundreds of different consultation opportunities provided. Working with partners from both within Medway Council and out in the local community has helped children and young people's ideas and feedback be acted upon.

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Richard Hicks, Chief Executive and CFM Partner Board Chair at Medway Council, said:

“This has been another standout year for Child-Friendly Medway, ensuring we have the voice of Medway’s children and young people at the heart of our thinking, informing our plans and ambitions. Our City Halls are invaluable in terms of their engagement with children, young people and their families, providing opportunities to inform our thinking, shape our services and for our children and young people in Medway to understand what is available for them. Super Saturday, a raft of family-friendly activities and programmes throughout the year and our For the Love of Reading programme have all been so popular and are a measure of our commitment to the children and young people of Medway. Medway is absolutely committed to being child-friendly.”

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THE BEGINNING

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Former Leader of Medway Council, Cllr Alan Jarrett said:

“Since its inception, I am proud to have been associated with the Child Friendly Medway initiative. We launched this in order to better serve young children and families in Medway, by increasing our understanding of how we can improve the life-chances of Medway’s young people.

In order to achieve that, it was decided we would ensure that Child-Friendly Medway was embedded in the corporate centre of Medway Council. This we have done, with the result that Child-Friendly Medway is now a truly cross-cutting initiative.

I pay particular tribute to our excellent Child-Friendly Medway manager, Amy St Louis. Without her drive and infectious enthusiasm, the project would not have been the success we see today. I hope and expect Child-Friendly Medway will provide a long and fruitful resource for our children and young people in Medway over the years ahead.”

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THE FUTURE

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Leader of Medway Council Vince Maple said:

“I’m proud that my first public meeting as the new Leader of Medway Council was a Child-Friendly Medway City Hall meeting so I could hear first-hand from Medway’s young people asking a wide range of questions. Politicians often talk about hearing the voice of the child, but Child-Friendly Medway has put those words into action effectively in a huge variety of different environments and events. I thank you for taking time to explore this annual report to look at the great work of Child-Friendly Medway, who often work alongside a number of key Medway partners. The outcomes from improving literacy to expanding opportunities to experience sports and arts can be seen with the involvement of tens of thousands of Medway children and I’m excited to see the excellent work going from strength to strength as we move forward together.”

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WHO WE ARE:

We created Child-Friendly Medway as a platform for children and young people's voices to be heard and responded to. They help to set our action plan and our team works to deliver this on their behalf.



We aim for all children and young people to be involved in what we do and work to find ways for everyone to participate - especially those who often feel unheard, including children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds or who have additional needs.

Our programme is universal for children and young people in Medway and our target audience is from expectant parents through to children and young people aged up to 25 years old and their families and carers. We work with partners to be as inclusive as possible so disadvantaged young people and those with additional needs have more opportunities to help narrow the gap.

Supporting Medway Council's Corporate Parent role, we work with Medway Council teams, external partners and the wider community to deliver the best outcomes for children and young people.

We strive to provide the best start in life for all children and young people. Helping them to aim high and achieve their goals, hopes and dreams for the future.

Our ambition is to make Medway one of the best places in the country to live, work, learn, visit, and play.

We believe that if we can make Medway a child-friendly city, it will be a better place for everyone.



CHILD-FRIENDLY MEDWAY PARTNER BOARD

Our City Halls and other consultation opportunities help us to capture the voices of children and the partner board provides us with the guidance of professionals and community leaders who offer a range of skills and areas of expertise. We are all invested in enhancing the lives of Medway's children and young people.

Our Child-Friendly Medway Partner Board consists of representatives from within Medway Council and external partners including Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Services, the health sector and local schools and colleges.

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Neil Davies, Former Chief Executive of Medway Council and Former Chair of the Partner Board, said:

“Children and young people are truly at the heart of everything we do here in Medway and our Child-Friendly Medway team has had some fantastic successes. They have reached thousands of children and young people and delivered hundreds of free fun activities for them to take part in. I would also like to thank our own council teams, external partners and the wider community who have taken part in our wonderful events like our City Halls. We remain committed to ensuring all children in Medway have the best start in life and we are working hard to make our city one of the best places to grow up in the country.”

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Simon Cook, Chief Executive of MidKent College and CFM Partner Board Member said:

“Child-Friendly Medway has begun to build a voice for young people of all ages and across all communities already, to help us all shape and drive forward plans that will help our future generations.

We have been delighted to support all the work that has been done and to help further connect our young people with communities, businesses and one another.”

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CHILD-FRIENDLY MEDWAY ANNUAL REPORT (APRIL 2021- MARCH 2022):

To create this annual report, we need to take you back to the birth of Child-Friendly Medway in April 2021. The primary focus of our first year was based on engagement, listening to and setting an action plan with children and young people.

Child-Friendly Medway quickly gained momentum and was launched with a survey and focus groups, led by Tonic, asking children and young people up to the age of 25 about their experiences as a young person in Medway. Through the survey we heard the views of over 3000 children and young people.

Most importantly, the survey emphasized how participants wanted to make Medway even more child-friendly and showed they were engaged and passionate about the project from day one.



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Cllr Adam Price, Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services said:

“I was really pleased in my first couple of weeks in post to be able to come into the Child-Friendly Medway office, to see the energy and drive of the team to hear about all the projects that they had been doing and what they have planned for the future. I am so pleased to see the books they are planning to give out to children and young people of Medway. Reading is such a great thing to be encouraging.

I see Child-Friendly Medway as a front-line service for the council, connecting directly with families at all their events. It is impressive to see in a short period of time the level of engagement the team has had through their events, activities, and City Halls reaching an audience of over ninety thousand last year. I think the Child-Friendly Medway postcards are a great way for children, young people, and families to pass on their comments and ideas.

I am excited for the future and know that Child-Friendly Medway will go from strength to strength in providing amazing activities and events for the young people of Medway.”



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CHILD-FRIENDLY MEDWAY DELIVERY AND OUTCOMES:

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM APRIL 2021-2022

- Our Child Friendly Medway survey and focus groups securing the views of over 3000 children and young people
- Launch of Child-Friendly Medway City Halls
- Creation of the Children and Young People's Action Plan
- Launch of Seeing is Believing programming
- Creation of a community garden at Strood Youth Centre
- Installation of a new water fountain at Riverside Country Park
- Voice of The Child post-box and postcard Initiative

CHILD-FRIENDLY MEDWAY SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUPS LED BY TONIC:

Child-Friendly Medway was launched on 26 April, 2021, with a survey of children and young people to find out what it is like being a young person growing up in Medway, and to capture their ideas on how we can make Medway even more child-Friendly. The survey and focus groups, led by social research consultancy Tonic, also helped us to understand what was important to children and young people, what their hopes and dreams were for the future, what they liked and disliked about their local area and how they would like to be involved in future decision-making.

More than 3,000 participated in the survey – the biggest response from that age group to a survey in Medway – and 142 children and young people took part in targeted consultations across 15 focus groups. The results were used to shape the initial direction of Child-Friendly Medway. There was an overwhelming interest in the project and confirmation that children and young people wanted to be involved and play active roles in their community.

Our engagement has continued through focus groups in schools, Child-Friendly Medway City Halls and our *Seeing is Believing* events and activities.



KEY FINDINGS FROM THE CHILD-FRIENDLY MEDWAY SURVEY: THE VIEWS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN MEDWAY

HOW DOES IT FEEL GROWING UP & LIVING IN MEDWAY?

What's most important to you?

Family and friends matter most to children and young people in Medway. Education, a good career, the environment, and health and wellbeing becoming increasingly important as children got older.

Happy with life

Most (64%) children and young people are happy with their lives.

Keen to be more involved

Children and young people expressed a desire to engage with decision makers, share their insights and help others understand what they want and need. **Nearly all (94%)** would like to be involved in further consultation about creating a Child-Friendly Medway.

Feeling part of a community

Half (49%) liked the location where they lived the most, specifically how close it was to spaces and places that were important to them, such as their school, college, parks and green spaces.

Children expressed a strong sense of local community, which they described as being their family, friends, neighbours and the streets surrounding their homes.

Enjoying parks and green spaces

1 in 5 said that parks and green spaces were what they liked most about Medway.

1 in 4 described their local community as close-knit, friendly and safe.

WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL UNSAFE?

However, they told us they felt less safe in the wider community. This extended into town centres, shopping areas and other public spaces.

These spaces, particularly high streets, could often feel intimidating and scary with anti-social behaviour, drugs, alcohol and litter being reasons people gave for avoiding these areas.

1 in 3 children and young people worry about anti-social behaviour.

Girls were **twice as likely** as boys to report feeling unsafe in Medway.

1 in 3 young adults (aged 16–25) are worried about the environment and the future of the planet.

1 in 4 under 11's told us they worried about their future, getting a good job and being happy when they grow up.

1 in 5 children and young people worried about their mental health and wellbeing.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

"It's home. I'll always want Medway to be better, but I can't help but feel close to the place I've spent my whole life in."

16-18 year old

"I would like to be involved I think young people have a lot of good ideas - we know what young people need and we know where the problems are"

12-15 year old

"I think Medway has the potential to be so much more than it is. My family grew up here, I grew up here, Medway made me who I am. I moved to London to study and to work but have subsequently moved back. I'd love to now be able to serve my community and give something back"

22-25 year old

HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

Children and young people's aspirations for the future and their careers were broad wide-ranging and ambitious.

Staying in Medway

There was a **mixed picture** about whether people saw their future being in Medway, with 20% saying they wanted to live here in the future, with 50% not sure and 30% that did not want to stay in Medway.

Choice of careers

41% across all ages felt that a lack of good jobs and few opportunities to pursue their dreams were the main reasons for not wanting to live in Medway in future.

Realising your dreams

We noticed a tension between young people having high hopes for a good job and career pathway, and a sense that they believed Medway could not offer this to them.

A sense of belonging

Those who wanted to stay in Medway felt this because of a strong sense of belonging, of family history in the area, and of a want to give back to the community.

More opportunities

1 in 2 wanted to see improved local opportunities for living a good life, including more career pathways, clubs, arts and youth centres.

Less anti social behaviour

1 in 3 wanted less anti-social behaviour, so the area was a better place for children and young people to grow up.



INCEPTION OF CHILD-FRIENDLY MEDWAY CITY HALLS:

The concept of hosting twice-yearly City Halls was developed to provide an inclusive and welcoming community platform for children and young people's voices to be heard by Medway Council teams and external partners.

Providing direct links to leadership through our question-and-answer discussions, and soft touch engagement with partners through child-friendly activities. Enabling organic opportunities for children and young people to help lead and influence our thinking and decision making in Medway, ensuring children and young people's voices are being heard.

The first Child-Friendly Medway City Hall took place on September 8, 2021, at Chatham's Brook Theatre and 130 children, young people, parents and carers attended. The event centred around listening to children and young people's ideas around making Medway even more child-friendly. Working as teams, they came up with a list of priorities which they then fed back to the audience. Richard Hicks, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Place at Medway Council, chaired and held a question-and-answer session.

Discussion themes included health and wellbeing, housing, facilities, transport, parks, community spaces, climate change, sports, events, culture and creativity.

Families with children and young people, from babies up to 25-year olds, attended, as well as a group of Girl Guides, young people from the Young Lives Foundation, pupils from The Victory Academy and young people from Medway Youth Service.

The second Child-Friendly Medway City Hall took place on November 21, 2021 at The Brook Theatre in Chatham, and saw 180 attendees enjoy an interactive performance by comedy troupe The Noise Next Door – entertainment that was inspired by ideas put forward by children and young people at the previous City Hall.

Attendees answered a survey, which was based on previous feedback and focused on identifying Child-Friendly Medway's core themes and priority actions.

There was also a discussion on climate change, a quiz, a question-and-answer session with Richard Hicks and the group selected the Child-Friendly Medway logo.

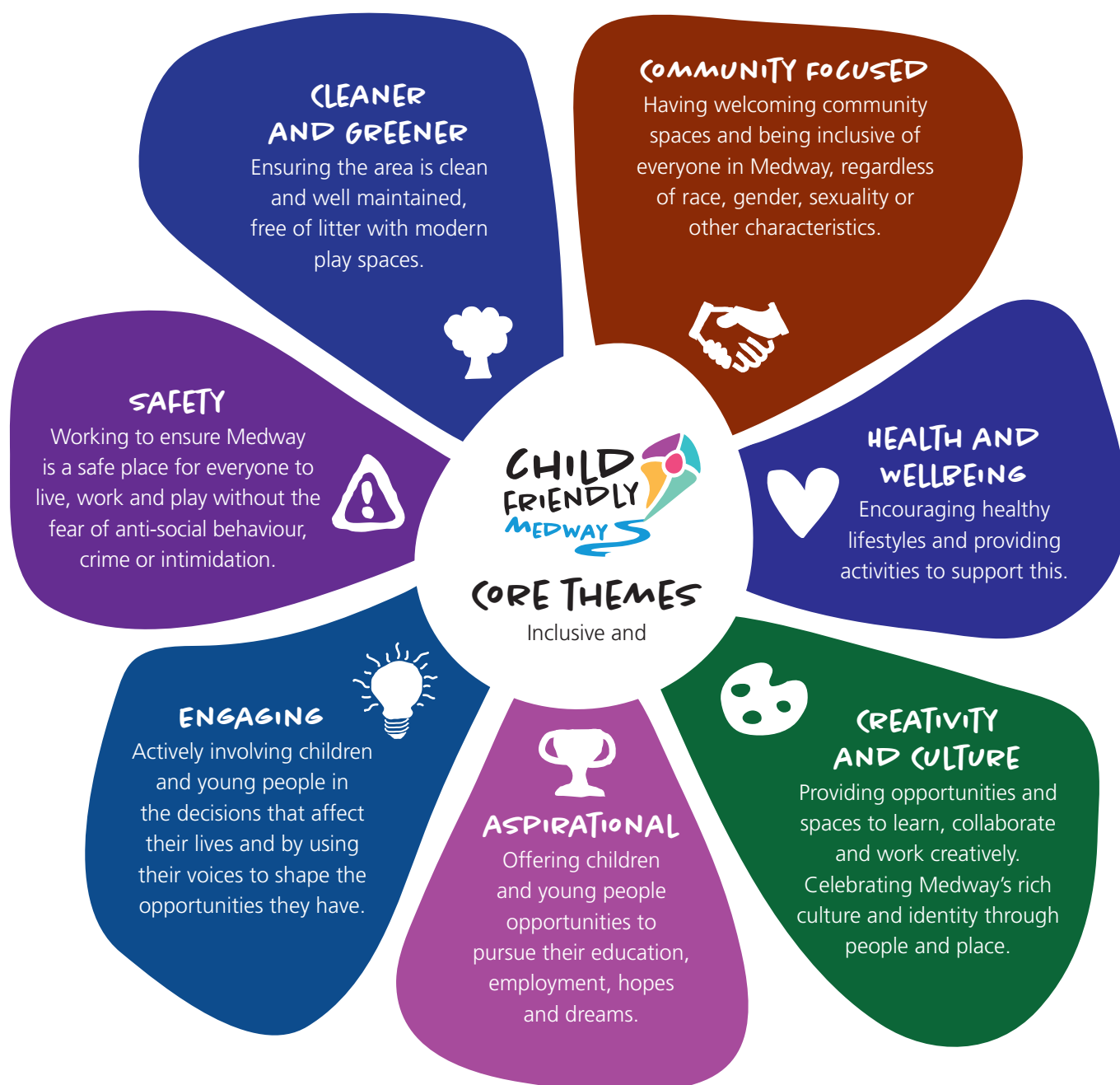
Among those attending were families, pupils from local mainstream and special schools, a local theatre group, members of Medway Youth Council and young people with Medway Youth Service.

CREATION OF THE CHILD-FRIENDLY MEDWAY PLAN AND ACTION PLAN SET BY YOUNG PEOPLE:

This initial plan was written following consultations with children and young people, using data from our Tonic-led survey, focus groups and *Seeing is Believing* activities and events, including our Child-Friendly Medway City Halls. The young people's action plan will continue to evolve over time, following the voice of children and young people.

Everything we do through Child-Friendly Medway is led by the voices, views, ideas and inspiration of children and young people in Medway.

Through our various consultations, we have developed seven core Child-Friendly Medway themes using the topics children and young people have told us matter most to them. These are:



SEEING IS BELIEVING

Our *Seeing is Believing* programming is inspired by young people. We provide a wide range of free engagement opportunities for children, young people, parents and carers, families and the wider community to take part in. These events and activities are part of our ongoing consultation with children, young people and their parents and carers.

We launched our *Seeing is Believing* programme in July 2021 with a drop-in football programme in six parks across Medway. Following the success of this programme, we extended delivery into the autumn and added more programming and events to include pop-up soft play events, holiday and themed events, arts and craft activities and more sports running throughout the year.

In our first year we delivered, supported or sponsored **1,600 sessions** with an estimated engagement of **23,000 people**.

FAMILY FUN FRIYAY

We partnered with Medway Sport to pilot a family sports night at Medway Park to get family members of all ages active by playing games and activities overseen by coaches. This included table tennis, basketball, boccia, football and badminton.

Family Fun FriYAY quickly became very popular, with more than 400 people in attendance some nights. The free programming worked to combat obesity in Medway, get people moving, introduce participants to new sports, encourage families to spend time together and provide a free activity for those who may not be able to afford to pay to take part in organised sports.



STROOD COMMUNITY GARDEN

Following the interest of young people, Child-Friendly Medway in partnership with the Paramount Foundation and young people created a community garden at Strood Youth Centre. This provided hands-on experience for young people, including clearing vegetation, creating vegetable plots, installing woodchip pathways and building a raised bed to be accessible to wheelchair users.



The project was part of our place-shaping work to create child-friendly spaces across Medway and worked towards our *cleaner and greener* core value, while also partnering with a community organisation to help build sustainable communities.

RIVERSIDE WATER FOUNTAIN

At our Child-Friendly Medway City Hall, children and young people asked for more water refilling stations. We worked with Medway Council's Climate Response team to successfully bid for funding from the Sea-Changers Coastal Fountain Fund to install a new water fountain at Riverside Country Park in Rainham.

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Marion Phillips, Climate Response Support Officer, said:

“We were aware that access to water refill was an aspect highlighted by children and young people through the consultations and it was great to be able to work in partnership on this project.”

The Child-Friendly Medway team had great communication throughout the bid and project implementation process and were a pleasure to work with.”

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VOICE OF THE CHILD POST-BOX AND POSTCARD INITIATIVE

As a fun way to capture the voice of the child and encourage children and young people to share their ideas and feedback in written form at events, we came up with the idea of creating custom postcards they could write on and put into custom post boxes created by children and young people. We launched our Child-Friendly Medway Postcard and Post-box Initiative at the Rapture gaming and creative festival in Chatham in July 2021, with 160 post-boxes created by children and young people.

To make the post-boxes colourful and engaging, local schools and youth organisations were invited to design and decorate them. Hundreds of children and young people across Medway helped us to create them, including 13 schools, as well as a variety of youth organisations across Medway, including partners like Nucleus Arts, Medway Culture Club, Medway Youth Service, Scouts and Girl Guiding.

The post-boxes are currently on display at the Pentagon Shopping Centre in Chatham.

To date, we have received 2,328 comments on our postcards at events. The data and comments they provide anonymously are written up after an event and compiled in a database where the information can be used to help shape our future event programming and be shared with partners.

CREATING OUR MARKETING AND LOGO

The project for Medway to be a child-friendly city begun as a blank canvas, so it was vital to quickly create a presence, both out in the community and online, and to build ownership of a recognisable brand and entity. Involving children and young people in this journey was key. We wanted them to be able to identify with Child-Friendly Medway and be motivated to engage with us.

As part of launching Child-Friendly Medway, we worked with children and young people to design a logo based on their feedback. We also created a website, social media channels and marketing materials to enable families and others in the community to follow us and get involved.



CHILD-FRIENDLY MEDWAY ANNUAL REPORT (APRIL 2022- MARCH 2023)

The momentum Child-Friendly Medway gathered during its first year continued into the second year, with the number of engagement opportunities and events attended increasing, further partnerships developed within the local community and new projects inspired by children and young people being launched. We delivered, supported or sponsored **4,239** events and activities in 2022-23, reaching around **91,752** people.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM APRIL 2022 TO MARCH 2023

- **Child-Friendly Medway City Halls**
- **Creation of the Child-Friendly Medway plan**
- **Expanding Our Seeing is Believing Programme**
- **For The Love of Reading**
- **Funding bids Child-Friendly Medway won**
- **Super Saturday**

CHILD FRIENDLY MEDWAY CITY HALLS:

We continue to hold our City Halls twice a year as part of our flagship programming.

MAY 24, 2022:

Our biggest City Hall at the time saw 185 people attend an event themed around *Medway the Place*, held at the Brook Theatre in Chatham.

Children and young people and their families and carers had the opportunity to take part in discussions around the regeneration of Chatham City Centre, ask questions to Medway Council Leader, Councillor Alan Jarrett, and Medway Council's Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Place Richard Hicks and enjoy a fun family quiz.

Young people from organisations including Future Chatham, Medway Champions, the Medway Place Board and the British Youth Council took part in on-stage interactive discussions. Among those who attended were families, pupils from mainstream and special schools, youth groups and community organisations.





NOVEMBER 3, 2022:

Numbers continued to grow with 215 people attending the biggest Child-Friendly Medway City Hall yet. The event, held at The Rochester Corn Exchange, started with a question-and-answer session with Medway Council's Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Place, Richard Hicks, when children and young people took to the microphone to ask questions and put forward ideas about things that mattered to them growing up in Medway.

This was followed by a joint dance performance from two local dance groups – Rheinstones Academy and Ability Dance Group, which is a Medway-based inclusive dance company for dancers with mental and physical disabilities.

Families then enjoyed playing traditional funfair games, including hoopla, splat the rat and tin can alley, and could visit the Child-Friendly Medway stand to put forward their ideas for what could make Medway even more child-friendly.

Children and young people could also visit a range of partner stands to take part in a variety of activities and consultations, including making a badge with Medway Council's culture team, signing up for a library card with Medway Libraries and playing a family maths activity organised by Medway Adult Education.

Attendees also got the chance to offer views on local parks and green spaces to Medway Council's Greenspaces team, take part in a consultation on Chatham City Centre with the council's Planning department and play interactive games with teams from Public Health, Medway Sport and Medway Youth Service.

Other partners running activities, taking questions and giving out information included Megan CIC mental health support, Kent Police, Medway Taskforce and Medway Parent and Carers Forum – a support group for parents and carers of children with disabilities.

Among those who attended were families with children ranging in age from babies up to teenagers, children and young people with disabilities and additional needs from Ability Dance Group and members of Medway Youth Council.

CHILD-FRIENDLY MEDWAY PLAN

In 2022, the Child-Friendly Medway Plan was created and shared across Medway Council teams to support delivery and partnership working. The Child-Friendly Medway plan was founded on the action plan set by young people that will continue to evolve as needed.

EXPANDING OUR SEEING IS BELIEVING PROGRAMME:

Thousands of children and young people have engaged with Child-Friendly Medway through our *Seeing is Believing* programme, which reinforces Medway as a child-friendly city by providing positive opportunities for all children and young people across Medway.

The programme of free events and activities aims to help narrow the gap by giving all children and young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and with additional needs, the chance to try new things and take up opportunities they may not otherwise have access to.

Seeing is Believing grew in our second year to include 480 sessions and events, engaging with 10,151 children, young people and families.

The wide array of free-for-all activities included coached sports sessions, ranging from paddleboarding and tennis to family rounders and boccia, arts activities, including artist-led creative workshops and interactive theatre performances, literacy-related events, ranging from cinema screenings to under-fives storytimes, and fun themed events, marking holidays like Halloween, Easter and Christmas.

For a full list of our activities, see the table on page 36.



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Lee-Anne Farach, Director of People (Statutory DCAS) at Medway Council, said: *“Child-Friendly Medway’s dedication to the voice of the child in Medway draws together a community approach to delivering a wide range of projects, services and initiatives to support children, young people and their families ensuring the best start in life.*

In a short space of time, we are delivering results for young people and making sure all young people have access to opportunities and feel included in their community.

Being ‘child-friendly’ as a value has and will continue to permeate everything, we do within the People Directorate and has influenced our Children and Young People’s Plan, as a council.

We aim to ensure that we work together to help them feel safe and secure, live in stable homes, develop well and participate in their community – and Child-Friendly Medway helps us meet those aims alongside our partners.”

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SUMMER OF SPORT

Child-Friendly Medway partnered with Medway Sport to run a programme of free sports activities for families throughout the summer of 2022, which were attended by 1,878 people.

We delivered 285 sessions between June and August through our 31 weekly drop-in classes running across Medway. Activities included rounders, tennis, bootcamp, yoga, rugby, football, aqua aerobics, netball, paddle-boarding, kayaking, circuits, cricket and boxercise. These were led by coaches from Medway Sport and partners including Chatham Maritime Water Sports Centre and Medway Rugby Club.

DOODLE N DRAW

Working in partnership with Nucleus Arts and Medway Libraries, we launched *Doodle N Draw*, a popular weekly creative workshop for all skill levels led by local artist Nick Ashton, for 11 to 18-year-old at Chatham Library on Saturday afternoons. These informal drawing sessions enable young people to gain skills and make friends with similar interests.

The idea of this programme came directly from the Tonic-led survey response, Child Friendly Medway City Hall feedback and our action plan set by young people to have more free creative opportunities.

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Nick Ashton, *Doodle N Draw* workshop artist, said:

“As a local artist, I’ve been able to share my creativity and skill sets with a lot of great young people and local organisations.

Doodle N Draw is an inclusive and welcoming environment for young people to enjoy learning about and practising art. This has enabled me to work closely to support teenagers, who are often a hard-to reach group. One of the best things about this project is how this group is so welcoming, we have several participants with a wide range of special educational needs, and everyone is so understanding and accepting. Many young people and parents have commented on how friendly and inclusive these sessions are.

Child-Friendly Medway have been very generous with their time and funding, they give my trade and skill a lot of respect, which is more appreciated than they can imagine - enabling me to work locally to support my family.”

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FOR THE LOVE OF READING:

Child-Friendly Medway believes literacy is a key priority and launched *For The Love of Reading* in September 2022 as a legacy project to inspire a passion for books and reading among children and young people.

In multiple studies, research has found the presence of books in the home to be the highest indicator of a child's future success - more than socio-economic background, parental income and parental education. *For The Love of Reading* aims to encourage reluctant readers who might not otherwise pick up a book to discover the joy of reading for pleasure.

We use tools including toys, films, songs, crafts, book trails of hidden books, second-hand book swaps and fun activities related to literacy to inspire an enjoyment of books that children can share with their families at home, outside of the educational environment in which they explore books at school.

We aim for our *For The Love of Reading* events to draw these hesitant readers in to engage in books, engage with Child-Friendly Medway and develop a lifelong love of reading that will enrich their lives.

Roald Dahl's *Matilda* describes reading as a "holiday in your head" and the well-known benefits of reading include introducing us to new words and subjects, improving our mental health, developing relationships between those who read together and helping us to generate our own ideas.

We have worked with partners, including Medway Libraries, MidKent College and community venues across Medway, to produce a programme of literacy-related activities and events:

STORY CORNER AT THE PENTAGON SHOPPING CENTRE:

We wanted to bring stories to life through free pop-up story time events, where members of the Child-Friendly Medway team and our partners read books to young children in a relaxed and welcoming setting. Our pop-up story corner was launched in November 2022 inside The Pentagon Shopping Centre in Chatham - providing a place for parents, carers and grandparents to drop in with their under-fives to listen to stories, sing nursery rhymes and socialise.

POP-UP COMMUNITY STORYTIME:

To make our storytimes accessible to different audiences across Medway, we launched our mobile pop-up community storytelling sessions to take to venues in different locations. The first event in February 2023 was held at Sun Pier House in Chatham, where the venue team worked in partnership with us to provide a craft activity linked to the book *The Paper Dolls* by Julia Donaldson.

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Heather Burgess, Operations and Development Officer at Sun Pier House, said:

“The events welcomed lots of new parents into our arts organisation and we were able to promote our other workshops and events to these parents, many of whom also used our café facilities. Both events we've held were at capacity, and we had lovely feedback from all who attended.”

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BOOK SWAP AT THE PENTAGON SHOPPING CENTRE:

We now have a permanent second-hand book exchange shelf where children and young people can swap a book they no longer want or have outgrown for a new one donated by someone else.

This initiative has proven to be extremely popular, with books exchanged ranging from baby picture books up to young adult fiction and many local families have donated books to the project.

THE WITCHES FILM SCREENING AT MIDKENT COLLEGE'S GLASSBOX THEATRE:

Film is a great tool for introducing books to reluctant readers, so we partnered with MidKent College to host a cinema screening of Roald Dahl's *The Witches* to mark Halloween 2022. Students from the college ran spooky craft activities and facepainting alongside the event and all the young attendees received a copy of *The Witches* or another book to take home to read afterwards.



Feedback on social media after the event included a mum saying:

"My little boy had a great time, thank you for putting this on. He loved all the arts and crafts and facepainting and he won some sweets. He has not put his book down. Fab job you have all done."



Hannah Gibbs, GlassBox Theatre and Pavilion Events said: *"We have had a range of successful events in partnership with Child-Friendly Medway, offering a variety of workshops and film showings. The partnership allows for us to engage with a new audience and make our facilities accessible for families in the local area. As well as provide opportunities for our MidKent College students to gain skills and work experience."*

We love seeing children leave our events having had a new experience they may not have had before and with smiles on their faces."

Parent Sarah Jane Pauli on Facebook said: *"We've been to a few events that Child-Friendly Medway have put on and they are always great. The most recent was the film screening of the Witches which was really well organised. Over time they have gone from strength to strength. The event was so accessible with signage everywhere and staff in uniforms so we could spot them if we needed anything. The range of activities were great too and catered for all. The children were over the moon with their reading books, it was a really nice touch. Thank you so much."*

Mother's feedback: *During a For The Love of Reading pop-up community story time event at Sun Pier House in February, a mother with an 18-month old child told Child-Friendly Medway team members she was attending an event with her son for the first time, because she had suffered from post-natal depression and anxiety and not felt confident enough to socialise with him. She had read about the event on Facebook and felt inspired to take the first step to socialise again. She was grateful for the opportunity to meet other parents and socialise with her son and is planning to attend more events."*



FUNDING BIDS:

DESIGNING THE CHILD-FRIENDLY MEDWAY MASCOT:

Following requests from children and young people, we are in the process of creating a Child-Friendly Medway mascot which is inspired by the drawings and ideas of children and young people from schools, youth organisations, creative workshops and partner programming at Medway Libraries and heritage sites.

We were awarded £5,000 from Countryside Partnerships and Hyde Group through the Rochester Riverside Community Board, as part of the Rochester Riverside regeneration scheme supporting community-led projects in Medway.



SAFER STREETS:

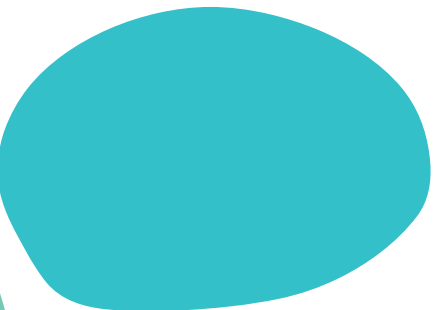
We secured £24,000 as part of more than £200,000 from the Home Office's Safer Streets 4 Fund that the Medway Taskforce and Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Scott were granted to continue Safer Streets work, which aims to make Medway an even safer place to live, work, learn and visit.

Our Safer Streets work aims to change perceptions around feeling safe visiting high streets and community spaces to help address concerns that were highlighted in our initial survey and through postcard feedback and comments at our first Child-Friendly Medway City Hall mind-mapping sessions.

We have used the funding to provide monthly positive activities for children, young people, families and the wider community in the designated area, covering Luton, Chatham and Rochester, between September 2022 and August 2023.

Events have included *Super Saturday*, *Halloween Trick or Treat Scare Fest*, *Elf Yourself*, *Brothers Grimm theatre show and workshops* and *World Book Day* activities.

Kent Police have been present alongside us at these events to engage with the wider community, educate children and young people about safety and address false information about safety in Medway.



“

Kent Police Sergeant Sasha Blomfield, from Medway Task Force, said:

“Medway Task Force have worked alongside Child-Friendly Medway as part of the Safer Streets 4 initiative, which has been a successful and beneficial working relationship.

It has allowed the Medway Task Force to engage with people across a range of different ages and break down barriers.

Having a clear understanding of each other’s objectives has helped us all to build on our knowledge and come up with innovative ideas to provide a high standard of support and guidance within the community.

Early intervention is key with families and young people to prevent complex issues and build community resilience, which we have been able to achieve together.

We have been involved in several community engagement events with Child-Friendly Medway which have enabled us to provide multi-agency intervention with young people and their families across Medway.

The Child-Friendly Medway team are an enthusiastic, committed and highly motivated group of individuals.

They have been a pleasure to work alongside and we look forward to doing more partnership work in the future.”



“

Colin Dunigan, Urban Design Officer, Planning Service, Medway Council, said:

“The Planning team are delivering an exemplary Design Code for Chatham Town Centre and we have been working closely with Child Friendly Medway throughout the Design Code process to understand the town from a young person’s perspective.

The Child Friendly Medway event at the Corn Exchange was a great opportunity to speak to young people about their favourite places in Chatham. These included venues such as The Brook Theatre which was described as “the best place ever”, hanging out at the river, and other community hubs such as the Nucleus Arts Centre. It also underlined the importance of public transport to young people.”



”



SUPER SATURDAY

Child-Friendly Medway, in partnership with the Pentagon Shopping Centre, brought in more than 30,000 people to visit Chatham city centre to meet superheroes, take photos with famous cars from films and enjoy free activities.

The free superhero-themed event in September 2022 took place in and around The Pentagon Shopping Centre and gave children and young people the opportunity to take part in a treasure hunt and mask-making workshop, meet *The Avengers*, *Ghostbusters*, *Batman* and *Paw Patrol* characters and view a 30-foot tall Marshmallow Man and famous cars from films, including *Jurassic Park*, *Batman: The Dark Knight*, *Back to the Future* and Ecto-1 from *Ghostbusters*.

Businesses reported a dramatic rise in foot-fall and spend as a result and, in comparison to previous years, Chatham city centre saw 7,000 more visitors than it had done on the same day the previous year – up by a third - and 5,000 more than pre-pandemic 2019 – up by a fifth.



“

Charlene Malone, Manager of The Pentagon Shopping Centre said: *“Super Saturday was one of the highlights of 2022 – not just for the amazing feedback we received from the public regarding the experiential elements of the event, but equally from the feedback we received from our retailers. The increased footfall on the day generated a significant uplift in sales compared to previous weeks. Child-Friendly Medway were instrumental from both a funding and support point of view in making the event the success it was. We are very much looking forward to supporting the 2023 Super Saturday event.”*

Hannah Piper, Business Manager at Specsavers said: *“I have heard so many positive things about this event and how great it was for kids and adults alike. Well done on bringing so much fun for families in Medway and bringing attention back to the high streets.”*

A parent on Facebook said: *“My boy doesn’t leave the house unless it’s for school. He was absolutely terrified of the characters, yet he is Marvel mad, but he was so brave to have his photo done with three of them, then we even went back outside so he could have his photo done with Batman too. Thanks guys, it was a fabulous day and the treasure hunt was perfect.”*

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SCHOOLS PROGRAMMING

Child-Friendly Medway complements and enhances the work already going on in schools to make Medway a great place to learn and grow up.

We work in partnership with Medway's schools, colleges and universities to offer opportunities to and consult with children, young people and those who work with them.

This has included us working with partners, including Medway Council's Climate Response Team, Public Health, Community Safety Partnership, Medway Task Force, Medway Sport and Medway Libraries, to enhance schools' existing offers and support competitions and events, while also involving schools in sharing our programming with their families.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Inspire and Do art workshops for teachers**
- **Mini Youth Games**
- **Disability Youth Games**
- **World Book Day**

INSPIRE AND DO ART WORKSHOPS FOR TEACHERS

Primary school teachers learnt new art skills to share with their pupils in their classrooms at our Inspire and Do creative workshops.

A group of 33 teachers took part in the free sessions, meaning they are now sharing their new creative knowledge and activities with 990 children across their classes – and thousands more will benefit from the skills they have developed across the course of those teachers' careers.

The sessions covered basic drawing techniques, painting, an introduction to inspirational artists and designers and why creativity is important in the classroom, while also developing a network of creative teachers across Medway's schools.

The classes were run by Animate Arts in partnership with Nucleus Arts during the autumn term and sponsored by Child-Friendly Medway.

“

A teacher who completed the course said: *“It was fantastic for sharing ideas and networking with other local teachers who are interested in developing arts provision in their schools. The ideas shared by the artist were easily applicable to both primary and secondary. Thank you so much for running these sessions for free in the local community.”*

Jo Dyer, Animate Arts' Artistic Director: *“Teachers need confidence, ideas and knowledge in the arts to bring to their lessons and classrooms on a regular basis. It really is essential that creativity is embedded in children's learning, helping them to develop the skills that will be needed for future careers and education.”*

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MINI YOUTH GAMES

The Mini Youth Games involved 4,899 children from primary schools across Medway taking part in a series of sports competitions between April 2022 and March 2023.

Tournaments and competitions took place in hockey, basketball, badminton, swimming, table tennis, tag rugby, netball, kwik cricket, football and athletics.

The games were organised by Medway Sport and sponsored by Child-Friendly Medway.



DISABILITY YOUTH GAMES

The Disability Youth Games is open to all of Medway's special schools and units and involved a series of competitions for around 300 pupils from year five to year nine. The four sporting events include swimming, football, skiing and an annual summer event covering multiple sports. The games were run by Medway Sport and sponsored by Child-Friendly Medway.

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Harriet Smith from Medway Sport said: *“Thanks to support and funding from Child-Friendly Medway, we were able to deliver an exciting summer of sport and activities to children and families such as water sports, tennis, football, cricket, rugby, yoga and more. The drop-in football and drop-in basketball sessions have continued to see numbers grow throughout the autumn and winter months, giving further opportunities for young people to be fit, healthy and safe.*

During the past year, families have come together to enjoy weekly free activity sessions at Medway Park. Activities on offer included basketball, dodgeball, football, table tennis, badminton, short tennis and short mat bowls.

Child-Friendly Medway's sponsorship towards the wider Mini Youth and Disability Games series has engaged with 75 Medway Primary Schools, including children, staff and parents.”

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WORLD BOOK DAY

Funding provided by Child-Friendly Medway enabled Medway Libraries to host their biggest World Book Day celebration to date, with 1,305 primary school children and 113 adults taking part in author-led workshops during March 2023.



The pupils from 13 schools took part in a series of 21 interactive talks with authors and illustrators including Sam Gayton, Holly Webb, Garry Parsons, Ellie Irving, Margaret Bateson-Hill and Alasdair Beckett-King.

Medway Libraries hosted the events, thanks to co-funding from Child-Friendly Medway and the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner through the Safer Streets 4 Fund.

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Emily Maycock, Community Librarian at Medway Libraries said: *“For many, this would have been their first experience of the library and is hopefully the first step on their journey to becoming life-long readers and library users. The talks have also given us the opportunity to create, renew and strengthen our relationships with the 13 schools that attended the talks.*

Reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child’s future success – more than their family circumstances, or their parents’ educational background and income. We want to see more children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, with a life-long habit of reading for pleasure and the improved life chances this brings them.”

Barry Symons, Head Teacher at Oaklands School in Chatham said: *“It has been fantastic to see such a positive and enthusiastic project come to Medway. The Child-Friendly Medway agenda is just what we need and children and young people have already benefitted from their events and this will hopefully continue from strength to strength.”*

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WHAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE TOLD US

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MORE CROSS-SCHOOL EVENTS/COMPETITIONS.

WILDFLOWER BOXES WITH WILDFLOWERS GROWING IN THEM, IN COMMUNITY SPACES.

HAVE PIANOS SO PEOPLE CAN PLAY WHEN THEY WANT TO.

SECONDARY MIXING WITH PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

TRAVELLING LIBRARY.

I WOULD LIKE TO BE INVOLVED I THINK YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A LOT OF GOOD IDEAS - WE KNOW WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE NEED AND WE KNOW WHERE THE PROBLEMS ARE.

AFFORDABLE PLACES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO SOCIALISE.

A ZOO WITH UNICORNS!

ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO VISIT CARE HOMES. ADOPT A GRANNY.

MAKE BINS HAVE SHIPS ON THEM AND ARE BLUE IN COLOUR.

WE WANT TO IMPROVE MEDWAY SO PLEASE COMMUNICATE WITH US.

MAKE THE CITY MORE PLAYFUL.

”

PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the year, the Child-Friendly Medway team was present at a series of community events run by partners from within Medway Council and the local community. These events provided opportunities to engage with new and more diverse audiences, build relationships with other local organisations and groups and raise awareness of Child-Friendly Medway across a wide range of locations.

We use these events as ways to interact, listen and gather ideas from children and young people in a variety of ways, adapting our methods depending on the audience and nature of the event. We do this through feedback on our Child-Friendly Medway postcards and post boxes and through a variety of engagement activities.

Examples of a few of the partner events we attended in 2022/23:

FAMILY SAFETY IN ACTION DAY

In July 2022, Medway Taskforce and Medway Community Safety Partnership delivered a free family event encouraging families to come together to learn about water, fire, road, internet and personal safety. More than 5,500 people attended The Historic Dockyard Chatham to meet local emergency services, take part in sports taster sessions and learn lifesaving skills.

Child-Friendly Medway helped to run a letter-finding trail, which saw 780 children and young people visit our stand to collect a prize after completing it, and we also provided free facepainting.

This event was inspired by children and young people's feedback around feeling safe from our initial consultation data from our survey and focus groups led by Tonic, Child Friendly Medway City Hall mind-mapping session and feedback on our postcards.

We worked with Medway Task Force and the Medway Community Safety Partnership team to develop a positive event to upskill and combat perceptions of feeling unsafe. Through this event, children, young people and families were able to build their safety knowledge and connect with local services.

“

Hannah Rourke, from Medway Task Force which organised the event said: *“Working with the Child-Friendly Medway team has added an extra layer of passion and enthusiasm to our projects. This has ensured that young people have a voice and that we truly understand what they want and what they need from the services we aim to provide.*

We know safety is a top concern for young people, making activities such as the Safety in Action virtual programme and the Safety in Action Day event hugely important. It was a great experience to work with the team to develop a trail around the Safety in Action Day site, which led people to the Child-Friendly Medway stand.

I know the Child-Friendly Medway team work hard to ensure that we are all listening to children and young people. At the Safety in Action Day, we received a huge amount of suggestion cards, which reflects young people's desire to give their thoughts.

I have been fortunate to watch Child-Friendly Medway develop over the past two years and have worked with the team on many occasions. There is always a great energy and enthusiasm and it has been a pleasure to work with them. Witnessing young people speak up at the Child-Friendly Medway City Hall event has been quite inspirational.”

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THE MEDWAY MILE

The Medway Mile, held at Medway Park in Gillingham in July, saw 1,445 under-21s take part in a free fun run - including 114 under-3s, 830 children aged between 4 and 11 and 501 aged between 12 and 21.

Child-Friendly Medway sponsored the children's medals and offered free facepainting as an engagement tool at the event. Our involvement in this event is part of our commitment to supporting children, young people, parents and carers to be active and combat obesity in Medway.



STICKS AND STONES FESTIVAL

This social wellbeing festival was attended by 2,000 people in August 2022. Child-Friendly Medway participated in this event showcasing our commitment to supporting health and wellbeing for children, young people and families in Medway. Health and wellbeing is one of the seven core themes in our action plan set by children and young people.

BESIDE YOU BABY AND BUMP FAYRE

This event organised by Medway Council's Public Health team was a great engagement opportunity for Child-Friendly Medway to connect with our starting audience. The team used this event to gather ideas for what support and activities new and expectant parents would like to see provided in Medway from among the 190 people who attended in August 2022.

MIDKENT COLLEGE FRESHER'S FAYRE

Supporting this September 2022 event for new students gave us the opportunity to connect with and consult an older age group on their experiences of living and learning in Medway as over-16s. They shared their ideas on what their age group likes to do and how Child-Friendly Medway could support and create opportunities for them. The event was attended by 480 students.

“

David Stokes, Chief Executive of The Halpern Charitable Foundation, which founded Nucleus Arts said:

“In many ways Child-Friendly Medway has been a game-changer for our youth engagement. Being able to suggest novel youth projects that we would struggle to fund otherwise has enabled us to try out new ideas to great success, from carnival workshops to teacher training. It's also been really helpful to promote these activities under the Child-Friendly Medway brand, which is rapidly being recognised by parents and education providers as a badge of quality for youth-related activities in Medway. The flexibility and willingness to experiment of Child-Friendly Medway means that the impacts we can make are disproportionate to the funds provided. I would love to see an equivalent for adult engagement!”

”

PARTNERSHIP CAMPAIGNS

SAFE SPACES

Child-Friendly Medway gathered feedback and data from children and young people that was used to support the launch of a scheme led to help everyone feel safer knowing there are safe spaces in the community to go to if they are feeling vulnerable.

Through Safe Spaces, local businesses can sign up to display window stickers showing people they can ask for help inside if they are feeling unwell, lost, confused or have been a victim of crime. The scheme is run by Medway Task Force and Medway Community Safety Partnership.

The consultation data from our survey and focus groups led by Tonic, as well as face-to-face engagement led by the Child-Friendly Medway team at the Rapture Gaming Festival in July 2021, was used to support the Medway Community Safety Partnership and Medway Taskforce in bringing this scheme to fruition in March 2022 using Safer Streets 3 funding from the Home Office.

“

Matt Salisbury, Foundation Manager of the Paramount Foundation and Artistic Director and Producer of Pretending People Theatre said: *“Child Friendly Medway is a fundamental organisation which all local authorities should aspire to emulate. Medway, like many other towns and cities, has areas of deprivation with children and families struggling to achieve a basic level of social wellbeing. Through our partnerships with Child-Friendly Medway, we have been able to run free events which target families with children living in low-income households.*

With the support of Child-Friendly Medway, we have been able to engage with children and give them the opportunity to do things that they wouldn't be able to afford. Not only does Child-Friendly Medway make a huge impact on Medway's families, but it has an incredible impact on some of Medway's small businesses and organisations. We have been able to outsource our children's activities at our events to independent small businesses who believe in the vision of providing life-changing experiences for Medway's children.

The feedback from our events with Child-Friendly Medway has been overwhelming from parents and children who have said they have taken part in 'first time experiences', whether that has been our Easter event, learning an instrument, gardening, trying a new sport or going to the theatre.”

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Sharon Adley, Former Medway Task Force Lead (Kent Police) said: *“The positive relationship between the Medway Task Force and Child-Friendly Medway has assisted in developing two successful funding bids to the Home Office through the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner’s office. Safer Streets 3 & 4 utilised Child-Friendly Medway consultation data, which identified safety as one of their key themes. This supported a strong application to the Home Office for funding to focus on neighbourhood crime, anti-social behaviour and violence against women and girls in specific areas of Medway.*

The Child-Friendly Medway team worked in collaboration with the Medway Task Force to develop innovative ways to engage young people and their families through a variety of different initiatives, to build confidence and develop trusted relationships between young people and agencies.

These bids gave the Child-Friendly Medway team and Medway Task Force the opportunity to consider ways to promote a positive image of the area, challenging negative rhetoric and ultimately demonstrating how partners working together can make a real difference in the local community.

All of the initiatives run in the Chatham area have enabled the Medway Task Force, which includes Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Medway Council, the Department of Work & Pensions and Victim Support, to chat with young people and their families, offer free security products, give advice relevant to their particular agency and develop understanding of people’s perceptions and, in particular, their feelings of safety in their local community. These events have also enabled the Medway Task Force to promote the personal safety app Hollie Guard and the Medway Safe Spaces Scheme.

All of the Child-Friendly Medway initiatives have been excellent in enabling a high visibility partnership presence to work alongside the Child-Friendly Medway team in high footfall areas demonstrating how partners working together can make a real difference in the local community.”

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CLOSING STATEMENT

This report has reflected on how we have interacted and consulted with thousands of children, young people and their families and carers, and led and supported hundreds of events and activities that have helped to make Medway an even more child-friendly city.

We have also looked back at how we have worked with other Medway Council teams, external partners and the wider community to deliver the best outcomes and opportunities for children and young people.

From moments like seeing families come together to enjoy Super Saturday in a packed-out Chatham City Centre to children taking hold of a microphone to ask questions of those in authority at our Child-Friendly Medway City Halls, we have been led by children and young people to deliver what they tell us they want from the area they are growing up in.

“

Amy St Louis, Child-Friendly Medway lead, said:

“We have made magic happen here in Medway. Through our Child-Friendly Medway City Halls, Seeing is Believing free events and activities, and various campaigns and initiatives including ‘It’s Good to Know’ and ‘Safe Spaces’ with Medway Task Force and our literacy campaign, ‘For the Love of Reading’.

But the work here is not done, and there is still lots for us to do. This year we want to reach across the community, and also put a focus on those we see as some of our most vulnerable children and young people to narrow the gap so all children and young people will have the best start in life. Our ambition is to make Medway one of the best places in the country for children and young people to grow up.

We have worked with thousands of children, young people and families across Medway, and the momentum of Child-Friendly Medway continues to grow at pace. Over the last year we have delivered 480 free events and activities with our partners through our Seeing is Believing programming, creating even more amazing child-friendly opportunities in Medway.

We have received wonderful feedback from children, young people, parents/carers, internal and external partners and the wider community since launching. Child-Friendly Medway has really shone a positive spotlight on Medway the place and Medway Council for leading the inception of this trailblazing Community-wide, change-making initiative.

I am beyond excited about what is planned for this upcoming year, including an even bigger Super Saturday!”



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APPENDIX

OUR ENGAGEMENT FROM APRIL 2022-MARCH 2023

One of our key ways to consult children and young people on their views and ideas is through running, supporting and attending events.

We aim, wherever possible, for these engagement opportunities to be universal to all children and young people living in Medway, inclusive of the whole community and welcoming to anyone with special educational needs and disabilities.

Our free programming aims to narrow the gap for children and young people, to ensure they have opportunities to take part in activities and learn new skills regardless of their socio-economic background, ethnicity and abilities.

In total, we delivered, supported or sponsored 4,239 events and activities in 2022-23, reaching around 91,752 people.

These engagements have been broken down into categories, with details of the types of session and figures relating to each event provided. Attendance figures are based on our own records, figures provided to us by partners or estimates based on the information provided to us.

Please note this does not include our breakdown from our first year of 2021-22, when there were around 1,600 sessions and events delivered with an estimated engagement of 23,000 people.



SEEING IS BELIEVING - PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVITIES

Total: 480 sessions, 10,151 attendees, 52 different types of activities and events

Our free universal programming is aimed at all children, young people, and families in Medway, which includes a combination of pop-up and drop-in events and activities. Delivered directly by the Child-Friendly Medway team or by partners we have sponsored who are often specialists to deliver on our behalf.

Through our Seeing is Believing programme, as detailed in the table below, we delivered 480 sessions and engaged with 10,151 children, young people and their families (this does not include all of our engagement and delivery, please see the other tables below for our additional programming).

CFM SEEING IS BELIEVING EVENTS

Child-Friendly Medway City Halls

Total sessions: 2

Total attendance: 395

Purpose:

- Created a platform to capture the Voice of the Child / young person and using it to shape Medway
- This platform is used for consultation to help us determine our strategy and delivery plan, values and action plan
- Enabling internal and external partnership working to support consultation with children and young people
- Feedback and ideas collected help to influence our programming of events and activities for children, young people and families
- An accessible, universal offer that is inclusive

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Super Saturday

**Please note our flagship Child-Friendly Medway Super Saturday event is listed in the largescale partnership events table below.*

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Holiday and themed events

Total sessions: 6

Total attendance: 1,406

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Engaging, Inclusive, and Community Focused
- Providing free inclusive and accessible events that are aimed at families, with some with larger scope that benefit the wider community.
- Opportunities to consult with children and young people on their views and ideas for a child-friendly city
- Showcasing Medway as a child-friendly place to live and positive place to grow up
- Providing safe, free, fun and exciting ways to celebrate these holidays

**This includes some Safer Streets 4 funded events:*

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core theme of Safety to combat perceptions of feeling unsafe in some highstreets and community spaces
- Providing accessible, free events inclusive of the whole community
- Bringing families together to enjoy community events with others in a positive environment
- Chances to learn new skills and discover new things
- Developing partnerships with and supporting local businesses
- Working alongside Kent Police to enable them to share key safety messages as part of this partnership

CFM SEEING IS BELIEVING ACTIVITY PROGRAMMES

Sports

Including, Summer of Sport, Drop-in Football, Family Fun FriYAY

Total sessions: 383

Total attendance: 3,849

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Health & Wellbeing as well as Aspirational, Engaging, Inclusive and Community Focused.
 - Supporting young people's mental health and combating social isolation
 - Supporting Public Health's Medway Can initiative
 - Combating childhood obesity in Medway
 - Encouraging children and their families to get moving together
 - Providing free activities for families during term-time and school holidays and throughout the year
 - Encouraging teamwork and building relationships
 - Universal offer which is aimed to be inclusive and adaptable wherever possible, based on the activity
-

Literacy

Including, working with libraries (but not *For The Love of Reading*).

Total sessions: 27

Total attendance: 3,178

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Aspirational, Engaging and Creativity & Culture
 - Supporting the best outcomes for children and young people, by encouraging them to read
 - Developing key skills in literacy
 - Encouraging creativity and imaginative thinking
 - Teaching children and young people about new subjects
 - Showcasing reading as a fun hobby to engage in
 - Providing accessible opportunities inclusive of the whole community
-

Arts

Including Nucleus Arts, Doodle N Draw, Mascot Project, Culture Club, Cinema event, Brothers Grimm theatre shows and workshops

Total sessions: 62

Total attendance: 1,323

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Creativity & Culture, providing more creative opportunities and showcasing talent as well as Aspirational, Engaging, Inclusive and Community Focused
- Upskilling young people
- Creating accessible, fun, free and educational opportunities
- Encouraging creativity
- Building a community
- Being inclusive to all
- Supporting mental health and wellbeing
- Supporting Medway Council's corporate ambition to be a city of culture

* *This includes our Safer Streets 4-funded theatre project*

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core theme of Safety to combat perceptions of feeling unsafe in some highstreets and community spaces
- Providing accessible, free events inclusive of the whole community
- Bringing families together to enjoy community events with others in a positive environment
- Chances to learn new skills and discover new things
- Developing partnerships with and supporting local businesses
- Working alongside Kent Police to enable them to share key safety messages as part of this partnership

PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Total: 11 partner events, 51,536 attendees

For Medway to be a more child-friendly city, the wider community outside of Medway Council also needs to embody our vision and embrace the aims and values of Child-Friendly Medway.

We work in partnership with Medway Council teams, local businesses and community organisations to help run, support and sponsor events and activities for children, young people and those who work with them – empowering them to take ownership of their own child-friendly initiatives and making Medway a more child-friendly city beyond our own work.

PARTNER EVENTS WE ATTENDED DURING APRIL 2022 - MARCH 2023:

SMALLER SCALE (UNDER 500):

Beside You Baby and Bump Fair

Date: Saturday, 6 August, 2022

Partnership working: Public Health, Medway Parents and Carers Forum

Attendance: 180

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Engaging and Health & Wellbeing
- Opportunity for us to meet our starting audience – new and expectant parents
- Informing and engaging with new and expectant parents about Child-Friendly Medway
- Gathering feedback and ideas from those at the start of their parenting journey
- Supporting mental health and wellbeing
- An accessible, universal event that was inclusive to all

BUP Festival

Date: Saturday, 1 October, 2022

Partnership working: D live

Attendance: 30

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Engaging, Health & Wellbeing and Inclusive and Community Focused
- Opportunity to engage and consult with children with SEND and their families at this free arts festival curated for deaf children and their families
- Targeted event, but open to the whole community

Freshers Fair

Date: Thursday, 15 September 2022

Partnership working: MidKent College

Attendance: 480

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core theme of Aspirational
- Opportunities to engage and consult with new and existing students
- Showcasing Child-Friendly Medway to a new audience in an informative manner
- This programming was an accessible universal, offer that was inclusive.

Medway Youth Awards

Date: Wednesday, 9 November 2022

Partnership working: Medway Council's Youth Service and Medway Youth Council

Attendance: 110

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Aspirational, Engaging, Inclusive & Community Focused
- Celebrating and recognising the achievements of young people
- Providing a platform for them to have their voices heard

LARGER SCALE COMMUNITY EVENTS (MORE THAN 500):

Sticks N Stones Festival

Date: Saturday, 27 August, 2022

Partnership working: The Paramount Foundation and other community partners

Attendance: 2000

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Health & Wellbeing, Engaging, and Inclusive & Community Focused
 - Supporting mental and health and physical and mental wellbeing
 - Engaging and consulting with a diverse audience at this free community event
 - Bringing families together to enjoy music, food and activities in a positive, safe environment
 - Providing accessible opportunities inclusive of the whole community
-

Wild About Capstone

Date: Sunday, 25 September, 2022

Partnership working: Medway Council's Greenspace Development Team in partnership with Medway Norse's Countryside Ranger Team

Attendance: 2,500

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Cleaner & Greener, Engaging, and Inclusive & Community Focused
 - Chances to engage and consult with a diverse audience at this free community event
 - Celebrating being outdoors, nature and local produce to educate and inform families
 - Providing accessible opportunities inclusive of the whole community
-

Family Safety in Action Day

Date: Sunday, 24 July, 2022

Partnership working: Medway Community Safety Partnership

Attendance: 5,500 at the event, 780 took part in quiz trail

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Safety, Aspirational, Inclusive & Community Focused.
 - Large audience to engage and consult with at this free community event
 - Promoting and educating attendees about different elements of safety and confidence building
 - Providing accessible, free events inclusive of the whole community
 - Bringing families together to enjoy community events with others in a positive environment
 - Chances to learn new skills and discover new things
 - Working alongside Community Safety Partnership and Medway Task Force to develop this opportunity
-

Medway Mile

Date: Friday, 22 July, 2022

Partnership working: Medway Council's Sport Team

Attendance: 3,236

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Engaging, Health & Wellbeing and Inclusive & Community Focused.
 - Supporting young people's mental health and combating social isolation
 - Supporting Public Health's Medway Can initiative
 - Combating childhood obesity in Medway
 - Encouraging good health and fitness practices
 - Celebrating children's achievements by sponsoring their medals
 - Giving the opportunity for children to enjoy having their faces painted for free
 - Engaging with a diverse audience
 - A free, inclusive, accessible event
-

Medway Light Nights

Date: Friday, 10 February, 2023

Partnership working: Medway Council's Culture team

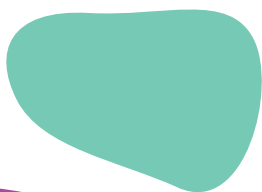
Attendance: 25,000 attended the event, over 5000 visited the CFM stall /Marble Run

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Creativity & Culture, Engaging and Inclusive and Community Focused
- Providing the opportunity for children and the wider community to engage with our giant marble run in a safe, positive night-time environment

*This was a Safer Streets 4- funded project

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core theme of Safety to combat perceptions of feeling unsafe in some highstreets and community spaces
- Providing accessible, free events inclusive of the whole community
- Bringing families together to enjoy community events with others in a positive environment
- Working alongside Kent Police to enable them to share key safety messages as part of this partnership



Love Chatham Carnival

Date: Friday, 8 July, 2022

Partnership working: Nucleus Arts

Attendance: 2,500

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Aspirational, Engaging, Inclusive & Community Focused, Creativity & Culture and Safety
- Encouraging creativity by sponsoring an opportunity for children to make props and take part in the parade with Nucleus Arts
- A free, inclusive, accessible event
- A positive activity in a high street area, changing perceptions about feeling unsafe



Super Saturday

*Flagship large-scale Child-Friendly Medway partner event

Date: Saturday, 24 September 2022

Partnership working: The Pentagon Shopping Centre, Love Chatham, Chatham Town Centre Forum, Kent Police, Medway Task Force, Local Businesses

Attendance: 30,000

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core theme of Safety, to combat perceptions of feeling unsafe in some highstreets and community spaces, Inclusive & Community Focused, Engaging and Aspirational
- Providing accessible, free events inclusive of the whole community
- Developing partnerships with and supporting local businesses by increasing footfall in Chatham city centre
- Bringing positivity to high streets and community spaces through community events
- Working alongside Kent Police to enable them to share key safety messages as part of this partnership

**This event launched our Safer Streets 4-funded monthly community events programme, from September 2022 to September 2023*

SCHOOLS

Total: 92 sessions/events, 10,632 attendees

The council's Child Friendly Medway team works in partnership with schools and colleges to enhance the opportunities they offer to their pupils.

SPORTS PROGRAMMING

Mini Youth and Disability Youth Games

Number of sessions/events: 24

Attendance: 5,199

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Aspirational, Engaging, Inclusive & Community Focused and Health & Wellbeing
- Supporting young people's mental health and combating social isolation
- Supporting Public Health's Medway Can initiative
- Combating childhood obesity in Medway
- Enhancing the opportunities schools can provide to their pupils
- Encouraging teamwork and building relationships
- Being inclusive and universal
- Being welcoming and adaptable to special educational needs and disabilities

CLIMATE CHANGE

Walk to school challenge and Poet Tree competition

Number of sessions/events: 27

Attendance: 2,195

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Aspirational, Engaging, Inclusive & Community Focused, Cleaner & Greener, Safety, Creativity & Culture and Health & Wellbeing
- Encouraging children and their families to get moving and combat obesity by walking to school
- Supporting Public Health's Medway Can initiative
- Educating children and young people about the environment and encouraging positive habits
- Encouraging teamwork at school
- Celebrating positive environmental programmes such as World Tree Planting Day
- Inclusive offer, accessible to everyone

ARTS

Love Chatham (workshops)

Number of sessions/events: 2

Attendance: 59

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Aspirational, Engaging, Inclusive & Community Focused, Creativity & Culture and Health & Wellbeing
- Encouraging creativity, self-expression and civic pride
- An accessible, inclusive and universal offer

Inspire and Do teacher CPD workshops

Number of sessions/events: 4

Attendance: 68

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Aspirational, Engaging, Inclusive & Community Focused, Creativity & Culture
- Upskilling teachers to inspire and educate pupils
- Encouraging creativity
- Developing relationships and networks with teachers and schools


World Book Day

Number of sessions/events: 21

Attendance: 1,305

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Aspirational, Engaging, Inclusive & Community Focused, Creativity & Culture and Health & Wellbeing
- Inspiring and empowering young readers by enabling them to meet and learn from famous authors
- Encouraging creativity
- Introducing families to libraries
- Accessible offering



Safety in Action poster competition winner's event at Rochester Fire Station

Number of sessions/events: 1

Attendance: 33

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Safety, Aspirational, Engaging, Creativity & Culture and Inclusive & Community Focused
 - Educating children about safety
 - Encouraging creativity
 - Inspiring the winning pupils by enabling them to meet and learn from emergency service workers
 - Accessible offering
-

Theatre event - Tales of Places and Old Suitcases

Number of sessions/events: 3

Attendance: 120

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Creativity & Culture, Aspirational, Engaging and Inclusive & Community Focused
 - Inter-generational programming, bringing different age groups together
 - Encouraging creativity
 - An accessible, inclusive and universal offer
-

Junior Youth Councils

Number of sessions/events: 4

Attendance: 72

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Aspirational, Engaging and Inclusive and Community Focused
 - Providing children with a platform to have their voices heard
 - Educating children about democracy and decision-making
 - Encouraging teamwork and civic pride
 - Opportunities to meet and work with other schools
 - An accessible, inclusive and universal offer
-

Mascot project assemblies

Number of sessions/events: 2

Attendance: 968

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Creativity & Culture, Aspirational, Engaging and Inclusive & Community Focused
 - Encouraging creativity
 - Educating pupils about Child-Friendly Medway's work and events
 - Feedback opportunity for children
 - Accessible and inclusive to all pupils within the schools
-

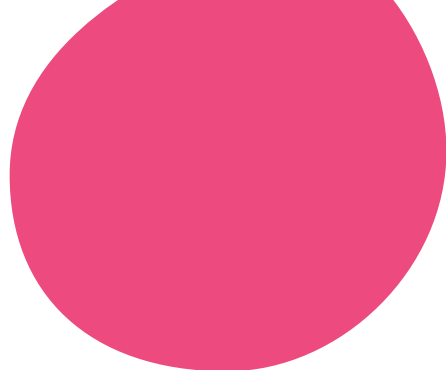
MidKent College Freshers Fair

Number of sessions/events: 1

Attendance: 480

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Aspirational, Engaging and Inclusive & Community Focused
 - Opportunity for new students to find out what Child-Friendly Medway has to offer
 - Engagement opportunity for 16+ young people to comment on services for their age group
-



MidKent College Youth Voice

Number of sessions/events: 1

Attendance: 65

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people’s CFM action plan core themes of Aspirational, Engaging and Inclusive & Community Focused
- Providing young people with a platform to have their voices heard
- Educating students about Child-Friendly Medway’s work and events



MidKent College “What Matter to Them” event for students and councillors

Number of sessions/events: 1

Attendance: 25

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people’s CFM action plan core themes of Aspirational, Engaging and Inclusive & Community Focused
- Providing opportunities for young people to have their voices heard and ask questions of key figures in local democracy
- Educating pupils about democracy and decision-making and helping to shape Medway



Kent Arts Con

Number of sessions/events: 1

Attendance: 43 (Estimated figure based on numbers provided by partners)

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people’s CFM action plan core themes of Aspirational, Engaging and Inclusive & Community Focused
- We sponsored 43 places for young people from Medway to attend this annual international arts conference
- Encouraging creativity



In addition to these activities, we sponsored the Schools Swimming Charter.
Total: 1440 sessions, 19,433 attendees

We sponsored access to the School Swimming Charter for all 64 Medway primary schools, which provided access to resources and enabled teachers to attend a Swim England workshop to improve delivery standards and understanding.

School swimming charter

Number of sessions/events: 1,440

Attendance: 19,433 (Estimated figure based on numbers provided by partners)

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people’s CFM action plan core themes of Aspirational, Engaging, Inclusive & Community Focused, Safety and Health & Wellbeing
- Learning a key life skill
- Supporting Public Health’s Medway Can initiative
- Combating childhood obesity in Medway
- Enhancing the opportunities schools can provide to their pupils
- Our funding provided a structured teaching aid
- Being inclusive and universal
- Being welcoming and adaptable to special educational needs and disabilities



FOR THE LOVE OF READING

Total: 11 sessions/events, 1662 attendees

With the aim of ensuring more children have books in their homes to enjoy reading for pleasure, *For The Love of Reading* has seen 675 children and young people receive books during book trails and events. Several hundred more books have been exchanged by young readers on our second-hand book shelves at The Pentagon Shopping Centre.

Books given out through events and book drops

Number of sessions/events: 9

Books given out: 625

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Aspirational, Engaging and Creativity & Culture
- Working towards more children having books in their homes so they can enjoy the benefits of reading for pleasure
- Supporting outcomes for children's development based on research
- Encouraging creativity
- Developing literacy skills
- Offering universal opportunities to read and own books
- An inclusive and accessible offer

Story Corner at the Pentagon Shopping Centre & Pop-Up Community Storytime

Number of sessions/events: 2

Books given out: 49

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Aspirational, Engaging and Creativity & Culture
- Introducing young children to literature through books and songs
- Providing a free, inclusive social opportunity for young families, carers and grandparents
- Encouraging creativity through craft
- Partnership working with local businesses and community venues

Pre-loved Book Swap Stand at The Pentagon Shopping Centre

Number of sessions/events: N/A

Books given out: 988

Purpose:

- Supporting children and young people's CFM action plan core themes of Aspirational, Engaging, Creativity & Culture and Cleaner & Greener
- Working towards more children having books in their homes so they can enjoy the benefits of reading for pleasure
- Supporting outcomes for children's development based on research
- Encouraging creativity
- Encouraging recycling and developing positive environmental habits
- Helping to narrow the gap for disadvantaged families

Please note, when we refer to families, this includes parents, extended family members such as grandparents, aunts and uncles, carers, guardians and other adults working with children in a professional capacity.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit: medway.gov.uk/ChildFriendly
Email: childfriendly@medway.gov.uk



Customer services: 01634 333333 (8am to 8pm (Mon-Fri) and 9am to 1pm (Sat))

Please note: Calls to customer services may be recorded or monitored for security and staff development purposes.



Medway Council Child Friendly Medway Team, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR



Minicom: **01634 333111**

This information can be made available in other formats from
01634 333333

If you have any questions about this leaflet and you want to speak to someone in your own language, please phone **01634 335577**

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Polish Polski 332373 Sorni كوردی 331841 Turkish ଏକ୍ସକର୍ମ 331786 Urdu اردو 331785 Farsi and Dari فارسی 331840
Russian Русский 332374 Lithuanian Lietuviškai 332372 Slovakian Slovensky 331839



HOW YOU CAN HELP MAKE MEDWAY EVEN MORE CHILD-FRIENDLY

LISTEN

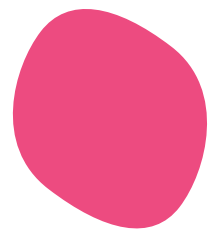
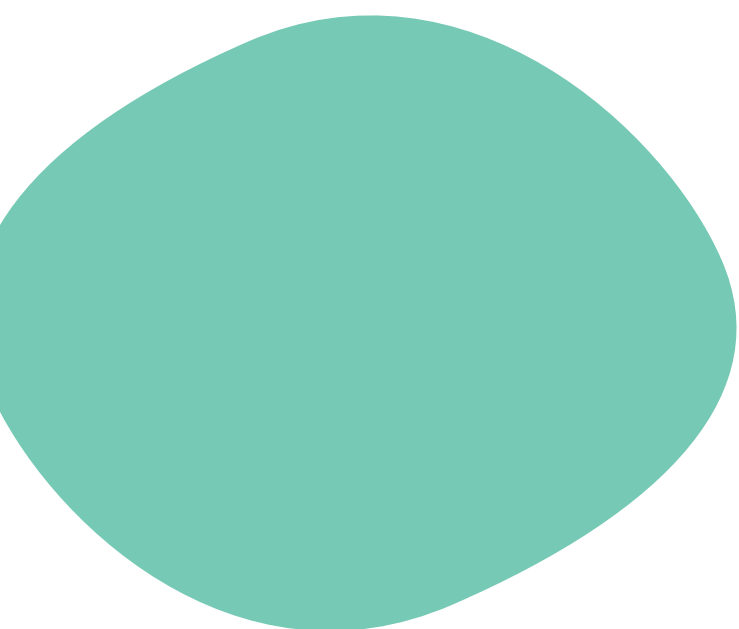
to the voice of Medway's children and young people and reflect on the insight they have shared about their hopes, fears and dreams.

CONSULT AND INVOLVE

children, young people and their families in the decisions that affect lives and their communities.

WORK IN PARTNERSHIP

with children and young people to create the spaces, activities and programmes that will make Medway even more child-friendly.



“

IT IS GREAT
BEING A KID
IN MEDWAY

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