

Child-Friendly Medway Annual Report

2023 – 2024



WHAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE TOLD US

“

I THINK MEDWAY PUTS CHILDREN FIRST AND ENSURES SAFETY, DOING ANYTHING THEY CAN TO PROTECT THEM, MY FAVOURITE PLACE IS THE DOCKYARD.

MEDWAY IS SO FUN!

MORE CHILD-FRIENDLY EVENTS!
I LOVE MEDWAY.

THERE IS LOTS TO DO
IN MEDWAY, I LIKE
THE HISTORY.

NEXT YEAR MAKE SUPER SATURDAY EVEN BIGGER
- WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS REALLY CHANGING CHATHAM.

I LIKE IT THAT WE HAVE A VOICE AND SHARE OUR OPINIONS ON WHERE
WE LIVE, TO MAKE PEOPLE FEEL WELCOME TO NEW PLACES.

I LOVE THE PARK!

THANK YOU FOR
PROVIDING
THESE EVENTS.

LOVE EVERYTHING
YOU DO, IT'S GREAT.
THANKS A LOT.

IT'S GREAT BEING A STUDENT IN
MEDWAY, HAVING A CAMPUS
NEARBY IS SO HANDY!

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2021, we launched Child-Friendly Medway (CFM) as a platform for children and young peoples' voices to be heard and responded to, providing an opportunity for children and young people to play an important part in shaping their futures.

Although this initiative is led by the council, we fundamentally believe this is a community-led approach and something we want our partners to play an active role in developing. We believe that by making Medway even more child-friendly, it will become a better place for everyone to live, work, learn, visit, and play.

As Child-Friendly Medway finishes its third year – our biggest yet - we look back at our progress and achievements of the 2023-2024 financial year. We have worked with more partners, won more funding, delivered more events and activities, and engaged with even more children, young people, and families.

This year, we have welcomed **114,024 attendees across 396 events and activities through our Seeing is Believing programme**. From large scale events, like the return of Super Saturday to new events, like Dino Day, creative and sports activities, and our Child-Friendly Medway City Hall events, we are reaching even more children and young people than ever before.

We continue to provide favourites like *Drop-In Football*, *Soft Play and Story Corner*, and *Doodle 'N' Draw*, with the introduction of new activities through our Start for Life funded programme such as *Pop-Up Mini Nucleus Messy Play*, *Storytime and Snacks*, and the expansion of our *Doodle 'N' Draw* sessions for younger ages.

Our legacy initiative *For the Love of Reading* has seen 51 book drops and 20 literacy themed events meaning 1,888 more books in children and young people's homes across Medway.

This year we have installed eight book nooks in Family Hubs and Wellbeing Centres across Medway, and two at the Medway Maritime Hospital, with shelves stocked with 270 books. More than 2000 pre-loved books were swapped at our Book Swap Shelves. Child-Friendly Medway is driving forward a passion for reading amongst Medway's children and young people.

Child-Friendly Medway continues to engage with children, young people, and families regularly, promoting the voice of the child. Child-Friendly Medway developed their seven core themes (Inclusive and Community Focused, Cleaner and Greener, Safety, Health and Wellbeing, Creativity and Culture, Being Aspirational, and Engaging), based on what children and young people said was the most important to them. We continue to use these core themes as a compass for our work, steering our programming and responding to topics that are most important to Medway's children and young people.

This report not only highlights the amazing progress we are making with engaging our youngest residents, but it also looks at how we are working with both internal and external partners to provide opportunities and experiences that help narrow the gap, and how Child-Friendly Medway is focused and ambitious in making Medway better for children and young people, because 'Children Matter in Medway'.

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

“Once again, Child-Friendly Medway has excelled in providing vibrant, fun and inclusive activities for Medway’s children and young people. Our City Hall events continue to grow in their popularity and are some of the highlights of my work as it gives me a chance to hear first-hand what matters most to our young people. The programme of activities the Child-Friendly Medway Team delivers, and is involved in, is constantly growing, together with even greater engagement with our partners across Medway, which is testament to the importance and value we place on ensuring our children, young people and their families are at the heart of our thinking. I am very proud of what our Child-Friendly Medway Team continues to achieve.”



Cllr Vince Maple, Leader of Medway Council said:

“I’m proud that my first ever public meeting as the 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.

It has been great to hear the of thoughts and hopes of many of our 63,000 young people at not only City Halls but at many Child Friendly Medway events across our community. There have been nearly 400 events with more than 114,000 participants – that’s the equivalent of more than 10 full Priestfield Stadiums!

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.

The outcomes from improving literacy to expanding opportunities to experience sports and arts can be seen with the involvement of Medway children and I’m excited to see the excellent work going from strength to strength as we move forward together.

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. I also want to take a moment to recognise the team who deliver the Child Friendly Medway programme led by Amy St Louis.

At a recent OFSTED inspection, we were told “Children Matter in Medway” and the Child-Friendly Medway programme is another way of making those words a reality.”

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CHILDREN MATTER IN MEDWAY

'Children Matter in Medway' is the takeaway message from Medway Council's 2023 Ofsted Report, where Medway Council children's services were graded 'GOOD'.

Ofsted outlines how Medway has a clear priority improving the quality of support for our children and young people, and how we are ensuring that all children and young people in Medway are considered in our strategic 'Child-Friendly Medway' approach.

It is noted that Child-Friendly Medway includes all parts of the council and community in Medway, with a 'realistic understanding about what is important to children and their families, informed by regular engagement with them'.

The Ofsted report writes that there is a 'mutual understanding of, and focus on children in Medway', with a 'real presence and understanding of the child's voice'. At Child-Friendly Medway, we continuously revisit the voice of the child, always keeping children and young people's ideas and thoughts at the heart of what we do.

Ofsted also commented that 'relationships with partners have been forged and developed', summarising that 'children in Medway benefit from this more cohesive and collaborative approach'.

Partnership working is a key part of our delivery. We work with a wide array of internal and external partners to deliver our events and activities, as well as providing consultation opportunities for our partners to engage with children and young people. Our partnership network is continuously growing as we are always seeking out new partnerships, encouraging all Medway Council teams, local businesses, and community organisations to consider the voice of children and young people in their work.

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Dr Lee-Anne Farach, Director of Children's Services and Deputy CEO, Medway Council said: *"Children matter in Medway. Our dedicated focus on engagement with our children and young people by the Child-Friendly Medway team complements the work of the other areas of the Council. In particular our Start for Life programme – where Child-Friendly Medway works in partnership with teams in Children's Social Care and Education to ensure that the voice of the child is clear in all that we do. The team's programme of free events offers opportunities for all of Medway's children, young people and their families to engage in the community."*

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A LETTER FROM THE PREVIOUS MAYOR OF MEDWAY

(IN POST FROM MAY
2023 – MAY 2024)



In our wonderful Borough of Medway, we take pride and joy in working together to make it as child-friendly and family-friendly as possible. In this endeavour, Child-Friendly Medway is at the forefront of coming up with a variety of fun, exciting activities throughout the year and across all parts of Medway to engage with and to make the activities as accessible and inclusive as possible.

In 2023 alone, the Child-Friendly Medway team organised, or sponsored over four thousand events and activities including additional events during school holidays, all of which are free for children in Medway, to enjoy with their parents and carers.

The highly dedicated and inspiring team are extremely thoughtful about promoting inclusivity; they listen to feedback from our children and their carers and organise events that are accessible and inclusive. These include arts and crafts, music, storytelling, theatre, superhero days, cinema, sports; some of these events have been attended by up to 30,000 people! The team also does the hugely commendable job of organising Child-Friendly Medway City Hall events, providing important opportunities for 'voices and experiences of Medway children and young people' to be heard by Council leaders, and considered when making important decisions.

During my year as the Mayor of Medway (2023-2024), Child-Friendly Medway mascot, 'Mojo', based on creative designs and concepts from our children in Medway was unveiled; Mojo is now very popular amongst our children and families. I applaud the entire Child-Friendly Medway team and the team leaders alike for firing up our children's imagination, social skills, confidence-building, aspirations and sharing our collective vision and immense pride in implementing the Child-Friendly Medway Plan, based on the action plan set by our own children and young people. I also applaud the team for actively undertaking lots of outreach work through working in partnership with various organisations and being present and visible at different community events. As said by all parents and carers whose children have enjoyed attending Child-Friendly Medway events, *'We couldn't recommend them highly enough; Well done Child-Friendly Medway!'*

**Cllr Nina Gurung,
Chair of Councillor Conduct Committee,
Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and Leisure,
Medway Council**

WHO WE ARE

Child-Friendly Medway launched with the ambition to make Medway one of the best places to grow up. We are a core principle for Medway Council which all internal teams work towards supporting this vision through their delivery and performance.

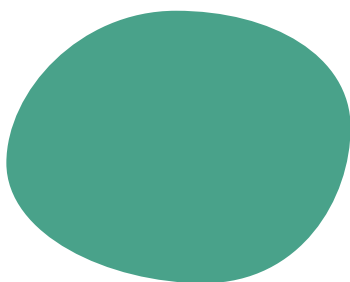
We provide a platform for all children and young people to have a voice. We are champions for the children and young people of Medway, and we work with both internal Medway Council teams and external partners to ensure that our youngest residents have their voices heard and responded to.

Everything we do through Child-Friendly Medway is led by the voices, views and ideas of Medway's children and young people. Our youngest residents inspire our work, and we are determined and ambitious to ensure they have the best start in life. Helping children and young people to aim high and reach their goals while having hopes and dreams for their future.

ACTION PLAN SET BY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The initial feedback we received from children and young people when launching Child-Friendly Medway in 2021 laid the foundations of our action plan and core themes, with children and young people telling us that they would like their Medway to be **Inclusive and Community Focused, Cleaner and Greener, Engaging**, while giving children and young people the opportunity to explore **Creativity and Culture**, to feel **Safe**, to be supported in their **Health and Wellbeing**, and to feel that they can achieve their dreams and **Aspirations**.

Our action plan will continue to evolve, as we keep our finger on the pulse of what our youngest residents are thinking, feeling, and saying, to ensure that the voice of the child is always at the heart of what we do.



HOW THE CHILD-FRIENDLY MEDWAY ACTION PLAN AND SEVEN CORE THEMES ARE BEING USED IN OUR WORK



INCLUSIVE AND COMMUNITY FOCUSED

Child-Friendly Medway offers a universal programme, and we are dedicated to ensuring we provide a platform to listen to all children and young people in Medway.

Often when consulting children and young people, one of the first things they will mention about making Medway even more child-friendly is that **they want a better place for everyone.**

They express concerns and suggest support needed for marginalised groups within their community. Child-Friendly Medway shares children and young people's feedback with internal and external partners who work to support these groups.

Children and young people also want to ensure their peers have the same opportunities. Our programming is universal, we aim to provide opportunities for all, and always consider those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) when planning events and activities. Where possible we make adaptations to our programming, such as running relaxed cinema screenings and theatre opportunities, and providing quiet reading spaces at larger events for our SEND community.

Through external funding, we have been able to provide specific programming for children and young people who identify as SEND. Part of this delivery has included partnering with organisations who are specialists, such as Club AUsome, to deliver activities with provisions and adaptations in place to make these opportunities approachable and fun for children and young people with autism and their families.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Health and wellbeing is important to children and young people. They want opportunities to play, express themselves, look after their physical and mental health.

Child-Friendly Medway provides a variety of physical activities supporting healthy lifestyles, such as Parent/Carer with *Baby Pilates*, *Mini Youth and Disability Youth Games*, *Family Fun Fri-Yay!*, and *Drop-In Football*, in partnership with Medway Council's Sport Service.

Health and wellbeing is not only supported through our physical programming, but also through our activities such as *Storytime and Snacks*, *Doodle 'N' Draw*, and *Women and Girls Creative Workshops*, supporting mental wellbeing through combating social isolation and providing positive experiences.

CREATIVITY AND CULTURE

Children and young people wanted more creative opportunities to build skills and be involved with local art projects, showcase their work and celebrate diversity.

Over the last year we have provided hundreds of creative opportunities for children and young people to participate, develop their skills and showcase their talents.



BEING ASPIRATIONAL

Child-Friendly Medway listens to the hopes and dreams of children and young people and we strive to support them to be aspirational, to look at Medway as a place for their education and future employment. We provide a wide range of opportunities to broaden their horizons, helping them move into adulthood with a vast array of experiences behind them.



ENGAGING

Children and young people tell us they want more opportunities, and more free and fun local events and activities. They want to be involved and consulted about where they live, go to school and play.

We provide hundreds of free events and activities for children and young people, providing consultation opportunities and different ways for them to be involved to share their voice on matters that are important to them. We receive written and verbal feedback from children and young people, as well as parents and carers who provide the voice for young children and those with additional needs. Our flagship engagement opportunity is our Child-Friendly Medway City Halls. We also work with over 63 partners where we provide opportunities and support their engagement with children and young people.

SAFETY

Feeling safe is important to children and young people. They make us aware of places and spaces in Medway that they perceive to be unsafe. They dislike anti-social behaviour which sometimes prevents them from enjoying their local community spaces. We work with Kent Police and multi-agency partners to help respond to the voices of children and young people at our events and provide information, for example on keeping safe online. We also support multi-agency partners by breaking down barriers for engagement and supporting them to foster positive relationships.

CLEANER AND GREENER

Children and young people care about their environment where they live, go to school, their local community spaces and where they play.

Child-Friendly Medway works with internal and external partners to address key concerns about keeping Medway clean and green.

This year we launched the Signs of Youth project showcasing children and young people's feedback, with street signs designed using children and young people's artwork. Based on themes set by children and young people. Themes included: littering; recycling; pollution; dog poo; plant more flowers and trees; and take care of wildlife. These designs are displayed as permanent signage across Medway.

Since its inception, Child-Friendly Medway has continued its momentum, and we are not slowing down! The Child-Friendly Medway team is innovative, creative, and incredibly driven to deliver the action plan set by children and young people. We have worked with even more partners across Medway's communities to expand our programming and respond to the voices of children and young people.

Across 2023-24, we have delivered, supported, or sponsored 396 events and activities reaching 114,024.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM APRIL 2023-2024

- Largest Child-Friendly Medway City Halls to date
- Seeing is Believing activity and event programme highlights
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) programming
- Introducing Mojo, the Child-Friendly Medway Mascot
- What's new!
- For the Love of Reading
- Child-Friendly Medway funded projects
- Partnership Working
- Schools Programme
- Funding Bids
- Child-Friendly Medway Partnership Board

CHILD-FRIENDLY MEDWAY CITY HALL

Child-Friendly Medway City Hall events continue to be popular platforms that offer children and young people the chance to speak directly to the Leader of Medway Council, Councillor Vince Maple and Medway Council Chief Executive, Richard Hicks. Our youngest residents can ask questions about where they live, go to school and play. Provide feedback on what is most important to them and share their ideas to help shape Medway's future.



Child-Friendly Medway fifth City Hall

Child-Friendly Medway's fifth City Hall welcomed over 140 children, young people, parents, and carers to the Rochester Corn Exchange, to enjoy an evening of creativity and cultural food tasting, with a focus on the five senses and a special Q&A with the Leader of Medway Council, Councillor Vince Maple and Medway Council Chief Executive, Richard Hicks.

This Child-Friendly Medway City Hall was the first event for the new leader, Cllr Maple, who received many questions from the children and young people – including 'What's it like being prime minister of Medway?' Ten partners joined us for the event, providing engagement activities and entertainment for the attendees, such as a drama performance by Icon Youth Theatre, a dance performance by Medway African and Caribbean Association, as well as Origami with Nucleus Arts and badge making with Medway Adult Education. We were also joined by the council's Culture Team with local artist Wendy Daws creating shadow photography and other activities provided by teams from Medway Libraries, Medway Youth Service, Medway Tourism and Heritage.

At this City Hall, musician and artist Dani Osoba created an original song, inspired by the words of the children and young people. Dani performed the work-in-progress onstage and completed the song following the event. The song features a fantastic line '*Talk to me, and we'll see what Medway can be*', really capturing the purpose of Child-Friendly Medway City Halls.

The end result saw a new song created, titled '*More Medway*', with the voices of children and young people heard on the track. It was created in partnership with Child-Friendly Medway and the Medway Cultural Education Partnership, produced by Ideas Test.

Children and young people challenged their taste buds with many new foods from around the world, including Jamaican patties, jollof rice, sushi, perogies, samosas, arancini balls, pizza and spring rolls, to name a few favourites.

This Child-Friendly Medway City Hall was co-funded by Kent Police as part of our Safer Streets 4 Funding to deliver community events for families in Chatham, Luton and Rochester.





Child-Friendly Medway sixth City Hall: Private screening of *Wonka*

Child-Friendly Medway hosted their biggest City Hall yet, in December 2023, with 270 children, young people and parents/carers attending a special Q&A with the Leader of Medway Council, Councillor Vince Maple and Medway Council Chief Executive, Richard Hicks, followed by a free private screening of *Wonka* at the Odeon Cinema, Chatham. Child-Friendly Medway wanted to deliver this film screening event to help narrow the gap and provide positive opportunities for families that may not have been able to afford this in the current economic climate. One family told us that our Child-Friendly Medway City Hall and *Wonka* Screening was their Christmas highlight, and the big event that her children had been looking forward to.

During the Q&A, Child-Friendly Medway had a special mention from a SEND young person who asked the question 'will we continue to provide free events and activities for children and young people', they were very pleased to hear that the answer was a resounding 'yes'!

Medway's children and young people also told us how they care deeply about their places and spaces, talking about how these can be cleaner and greener, about perceptions of safety in high streets, and about our parks could be even more family-friendly. They also shared that they would like us to plant more trees and flowers and look after wildlife.

Every child and young person went home with their own copy of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* or *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator*, as part of our 'For the Love of Reading' initiative, which encourages children and young people to develop a passion for reading and a love for books.

The Medway Adult Education team supported this event and provided worksheets and competitions, promoting their family learning Multiply course.



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"I just wanted to say a big thank you for putting on the City Hall and Wonka showing before Christmas. It was such a lovely experience and really helped get us in the Christmas spirit. We've attended all the city hall meetings so far and I think they're wonderful for our young people to be involved with. It's certainly opened up discussions about the place we call home and got us thinking about how it can be improved to make it the best place for our young people to grow up in".

Parent/carer that attended The Child-Friendly Medway City Hall, Private Screening of *Wonka*.

"Thank you so much to everyone involved in organising this event. Wonderful event and lovely to see such eloquent and polite children being given a voice about their future in Medway. Well done to all involved. My two girls had a fabulous time and I'm so pleased to show them they do have a voice and they can make changes for the better! (Plus, the movie exceeded my expectations!)"

Parent/carer that attended The Child-Friendly Medway City Hall, Private Screening of *Wonka*

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SEEING IS BELIEVING

Child-Friendly Medway has hosted a number of small, large-scale and flagship events for children, young people and families, as well as regular programming of activities to provide a platform for continuous consultation, capturing the voice of the child in our work.

Child-Friendly Medway offers a wide array of free universal *Seeing is Believing* programming of activities and events for children, young people and families in Medway. These events and activities help narrow the gap for children and young people, broaden their horizons and provide opportunities and experiences for all.

Our *Seeing is Believing* events provide opportunities for internal and external teams to support their consultation with our youngest residents while addressing community needs.



THE RETURN OF SUPER SATURDAY

Child-Friendly Medway's flagship event Super Saturday returned for a second year! The event was delivered in partnership with The Pentagon Shopping Centre and Chatham Town Centre Forum, where over 30,000 people visited Chatham City Centre to meet superheroes, see famous movie cars and take part in activities, including a trail for children.

Children, young people and families had the opportunity to meet The Avengers, Batman, and The Ghostbusters, to have a photo opportunity with Spiderman, The Joker, and the 30-foot Marshmallow Man.

Local businesses continue to record an increase in sales as a result of higher footfall due to the event. This type of engagement brings positive attention back to Chatham High Street, transforming the area and The Pentagon Shopping Centre into more than a shopping experience, but into a family-friendly place to be.



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“As we reflect on the past year here at the Pentagon Shopping Centre, I am keen to highlight the flourishing partnership between the Centre and Child Friendly Medway, a collaboration that has enriched our community engagement efforts. Our shared commitment to fostering family-friendly environments has created a vibrant hub of activity that resonates well beyond the walls of our shopping centre.

This productive relationship has empowered us to deliver a series of successful events that have become eagerly anticipated fixtures on our community calendar. With initiatives like bi-monthly soft play sessions, and parents' and baby Pilates, we've created a welcoming space that caters to the needs of families. These events not only provide valuable, free, recreational opportunities but also enhance the shopping experience, making those visits to the Pentagon Shopping Centre a more memorable one.

The impact of our joint efforts is evident in the notable increase in social media engagement and footfall, particularly on event days. This surge not only highlights the community's enthusiasm for our events but also translates into robust sales for our tenants, contributing to the overall vitality of the centre. The consistent performance of our family-oriented activities underscores the value of community-centric approaches in retail environments.

We are grateful for the support and collaboration of Child Friendly Medway, which has been instrumental in achieving our goals. Looking forward, we are excited to build on this momentum and continue to offer high-quality, engaging experiences that bring our community and families together.”

Charlene Malone, Manager, The Pentagon Shopping Centre.

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SEND PROGRAMMING

Child-Friendly Medway provides a universal offer for all children, young people and families in Medway.

Our Seeing is Believing Programme is well-attended by children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). We aim to make our universal programming as inclusive and adaptable as we can to meet as many needs as possible. In our planning we also consider working with partners and venues who have suitable spaces and access. Our universal programme is SEND-friendly with film screenings, adaptable sports and creative programmes. Our big events like *Dino Day*, *Super Saturday* and *Medway's Magical Christmas* activities are accessible and include quiet zones.

Additional funding has enabled Child-Friendly Medway to run specific programming with provisions and adaptations in place for children and young people that identify as SEND.

We work with specialist partners to plan and deliver activities, including working with Medway Parents and Carers Forum, Club AUsome, Diz-ability Dance and schools.



Drop-in multi-sports

Over 500 children and young people attended, with 27% of the children and young people identifying as SEND.

'Coco' film screening

We hosted free film screenings at MidKent College, with reduced volume and mid-lighting, creating a flexible and SEND-friendly space.

25% of the attendees were children and young people with SEND.

Medway's Magical Christmas

29% of attendees at our *Medway's Magical Christmas* were children and young people with SEND.

Sixth Child-Friendly Medway City Hall

On Wednesday, 20 December, our sixth Child-Friendly Medway City Hall took place at the Odeon, Chatham with a private screening of the film 'Wonka'.

27% of attendees were children and young people with SEND. Child-Friendly Medway worked to create a specific seating plan to create an accessible event for children and young people with a range of needs including hearing and visual impairments, and autism.

Stage and Social Sundays

Child-Friendly Medway partnered with Diz-ability Dance to provide inclusive monthly drama, singing and dance workshops with qualified SEND and wheelchair specialist teachers.

These free sessions are accessible and specifically tailored for children and young people with additional needs.

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“The funding from Child-Friendly Medway has meant that I have had the opportunity to run the stage and Social Sunday sessions it has been amazing.

I really enjoyed meeting the families and delivering the sessions and it was so nice to not only have the dance activities, but the time to socialise and get to know the children, young people and their families. I think the sessions were very beneficial for the community and have the potential to grow and be even better in the future.”

Hayley Reinprecht, Diz-ability Dance Co.

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Club AUsome

Child-Friendly Medway worked with Club AUsome to provide free, fun, and inclusive activities and events, specifically for children and young people with SEND.



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“All of the children had an absolute blast, this was their first time skating as typically it is completely out of our price range of what we can afford, not only this, my children don't deal well with big crowds and chaos, so for them to have the opportunity to have this SEN session was just absolute bliss.”

Parent/carer that attended the accessible ice skating.

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“Over the last year Club AUsome have been incredibly lucky to receive funding from Child Friendly Medway, meaning that we have been able to support so many more families in taking part in activities that otherwise may have been out of reach.

Families that face isolation and judgement were able to go out and explore new opportunities together.

Amongst other things families have been to the pantomime, tobogganing, they've seen movies at the cinema and made their very own pizzas.

Soon they will get to go swimming as families all together and we cannot wait! So many memories have been created and the smiles often spoke for themselves.

We do really appreciate all of the support from Child Friendly Medway over the past year as it's made a huge impact on us all at Club AUsome and we are so incredibly thankful.”

Kellie Milano, Founder, Club AUsome CIO, Registered Charity 1187683

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INTRODUCING MOJO, THE CHILD-FRIENDLY MEDWAY MASCOT

What a year Mojo has had! Since their first-ever appearance at Medway Mile, Mojo has attended 21 events and activities, from hiding books at book trails to meeting dinosaurs up close at Dino Day.

Mojo really likes being able to visit so many places in Medway, including our High Streets, Libraries, and Sport Centres. Most of all, Mojo loves being able to meet all of the children and young people.

Our creative workshops and the creation of Mojo has been supported by funds from Countryside Partnerships and Hyde through the Rochester Riverside Community Board, which was set up to spread the benefits of the Rochester Riverside regeneration scheme across Medway by supporting worthwhile community-led projects.



WHAT'S NEW THIS YEAR!

BOOK NOOKS

In January 2024, we launched *Child-Friendly Medway Book Nooks* at Medway Family Hubs and Wellbeing Centres. These provide books for children and young people to read, or parents/carers to read with their young children when visiting the hubs and centres. One of our aims as part of our Start for Life programme, in partnership with Medway Public Health Team, is to build an interest in reading from infancy and providing positive parental bonding opportunities.

As part of the launch, Child-Friendly Medway donated 270 books to create 10 Book Nooks around Medway.

The Book Nooks can be found at Chatham, Gillingham, Strood, and Wayfield Children and Family Hubs and Delce, Gun Lane, Oaklands and Tyrdall Wellbeing Centres.

BOOK NOOKS AT MEDWAY MARITIME HOSPITAL

In February, we installed two Book Nooks in Medway Maritime Hospital, in the Magpie Ward and in the Children's Day Surgery Ward, Sunderland Day Case Unit.

Child-Friendly Medway Lead, Amy St Louis, became aware through a *Kent Online* article that Medway Maritime Hospital Children's department was in need of donations of toys after discarding what they had as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Amy connected with Anne Mckinnon, Play Specialist at Medway Maritime Hospital, to see how Child-Friendly Medway could help. Upon visiting the children's ward, Amy and Anne agreed that the *Child-Friendly Medway Book Nooks* would be a perfect addition.

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“We would like to thank the Child-Friendly Medway Team for thinking of our young patients here at the hospital.

We know being in hospital can be a worrying time for children, so being able to pick up a book and be transported into a story will be a huge help during this time and ease any concerns for both patients and parents.”

**Donna Law, Manager of
The Medway Hospital Charity.**

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DINO DAY

Dino Day, a brand-new event for 2023, took place at The Pentagon Shopping Centre in August and welcomed over 4,000 children, young people and families to enjoy a day of dinosaur themed activities and shows.

Children could meet dinosaurs up close, follow the dinosaur trail and commemorate the day with a photo with a baby triceratops.

Many families report that they would not be able to attend live shows if it was not for Child-Friendly Medway providing these experiences for free, due to the cost-of-living crisis and budgeting for a family. Parents and carers have shared with us how these events are a lifeline and provide somewhere to go and something to do for much needed family-time during the summer holidays.

MEDWAY'S MAGICAL CREATURE TRAIL

Ten magical creatures arrived in Chatham High Street and The Pentagon Shopping Centre, where Child-Friendly Medway launched Medway's *Magical Creature Trail*. Over 1,500 children, young people, and families took part in the activity which led them to shop windows and community spaces to spot the hidden creatures.

This project was in partnership with Medway Council Culture Development Team, and part of the Culture 2024 initiative. This was just the beginning of our *Medway Magical Creature Trail*.



FOR THE LOVE OF READING

Child-Friendly Medway has a passion for literacy and believes that these skills are key to unlocking a young person's future opportunities. In multiple studies, research has found a child's ability to read and 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.



In September 2022, we launched 'For the Love of Reading' as a legacy initiative, with the aim of encouraging and inspiring children and young people to develop a passion for reading and a love for books.

This year we delivered 51 book trails all across Medway, with over 1,888 books hidden in spaces such as parks and high streets, for a child or young person to find and take home to read, supporting Child-Friendly Medway's aim to get more books into more homes.

Through Start for Life funding, in partnership with Medway Public Health Team, we were able to extend our programme of delivery to include even more book trails and storytelling events including *Soft Play and Story Corner*, *Storytime and Snacks*, and *Pop-Up Community Storytime*. We were also able to create Book Nooks at the Family Hubs and Wellbeing Centres across Medway and continue to provide our Book Swap Shop at The Pentagon Shopping Centre.

Throughout the year we deliver large scale literacy themed events, including World Book Day celebrations and film events paired with a book giveaway as another way to inspire a love of reading. **This year we have given away a total of 1,888 books through our book trails and events and over 2000 pre-loved books at our book swap shelf.**

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"We love the Soft Play and Storytime at the Pentagon Shopping Centre. The story time and book exchange is a brilliant idea. We have tried a range of stories due to this opportunity. Love Child-Friendly Medway!"

Parent/Carer attending our Soft Play and Storytime session.

"Child-Friendly Medway has had another hugely successful year. I have been particularly impressed by the 'For the Love of Reading' initiative which encourages children and young people to develop a passion for books. With the creation of 'Book Nooks', giving away free books, pop-up community story times and more, the initiative has been a tremendous benefit to children, young people and families in Medway. I'm proud to be a member of the Child-Friendly Medway Partner Board, and look forward to many more great events to come."

Councillor Tracy Coombs, Portfolio Holder for Education, Medway Council.

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Soft Play and Story Corner
The Pentagon Shopping Centre, Chatham

Storytime and Snacks
Sun Pier House



Pop-Up Community Storytime
Sunlight Centre, Gillingham



Book Trails
Various Locations

Book-themed events
Various locations



CHILD-FRIENDLY MEDWAY FUNDED PROJECTS

WORLD BOOK DAY EVENTS

Child-Friendly Medway hosted World Book Day celebrations in 15 libraries across Medway in partnership with Medway Libraries, funded by the PCC Crime Reduction Fund to address community safety.

We hosted two largescale flagship events for World Book Day at Gillingham and Chatham Community Hub and Library. More than 800 children, young people and families joined us for face painting, slime-making workshops, character meet and greets, our puppet theatre, arts and crafts activities, author talks, and book signings.

Safety materials were provided for children and young people including reflective materials for bicycles, jackets and bags and stickers for helmets and sporting equipment. Adults received card and key defenders and safety information.

Across Medway, a further 14 author talks and arts and crafts activities took place at Medway libraries, community hubs, and schools to celebrate World Book Day.

Children and families shared with us that they felt the library was 'safe', 'warm and clean', 'welcoming' and 'a good family space', with some saying that this was their first visit to the library. Part of our aim for these events was to connect families to these free community spaces and encourage children and young people to read and for parents/carers to read to their children.



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“At Medway Libraries, we were very lucky to work with Child-Friendly Medway for our World Book Day Celebrations.

The mission of World Book Day is to change lives through inspiring a love of books and reading for pleasure in children. Reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child’s future success. We want to see more children in Medway, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, with a life-long habit of reading for pleasure and the improved life chances this brings them.

The 14 author, illustrator, and poet visits certainly were an inspiration for Medway’s school children- they were able to have a positive experience of the library service; with many children visiting the library for the first time or were borrowing books for the first time in years. This shows the events got families across the threshold that we otherwise never would have been able to reach, all thanks to CFM. Library staff have reported that children returned to the libraries after school to join and/or borrow books by the authors they’d met.

The events also gave us an opportunity to promote our regular events for children and families such as Toddler Shake and Boogie, our library stock, and our other services. For many, the library can be an intimidating place to visit for the first time- but these events have been critical to breaking down this barrier, and have proved that the library can be a riot of free fun and excitement; a place they are always welcome, and where they will always find a book to enjoy. Library use is important for families; multiple studies have proved reading’s positive effect on mental health in the long and short term, and improved life chances for children. Our regular events for families can help reduce social isolation for parents and carers, help parent-child bonding, and improve children’s language development. Without CFM’s hard work on these events some families wouldn’t have made that initial visit, and therefore would be unable to access these benefits.

We were so impressed by everyone in the CFM team- I have never in my life met a team who have such positivity and energy. They were outstanding- their investment and passion for CFM’s mission shines through. They had to fight so hard for funding, and in the planning stages, nothing seemed to faze them. During the events, the whole team showed such an infectious, upbeat attitude- nothing seemed like too much trouble, they kept library staff updated throughout, and helped tidy up.

It has been a pleasure and an honour, and we are so grateful for tangible benefits working with CFM has bought Medway Libraries and its visiting children.”

**Emily Maycock, Community Librarian (Young People’s Outreach Team),
Medway Libraries, Medway Council.**

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START FOR LIFE



Child-Friendly Medway's Start for Life programme, in partnership with Medway Public Health Team, is aimed at babies and toddlers and parents and carers to provide structured parental support, especially for new parents and promoting attachment and access to other specialist support.

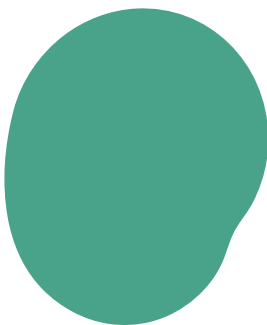
We support Start for Life initiatives including normalising breastfeeding, improved oral health and destigmatising seeking parenting support.

We deliver events and activities to reach this target audience and connect them with multi-agency partners who can support them, including Oral Health, Bump Club, NHS, Family Hubs and Wellbeing Centres, and community organisations and groups.

We also engage with children and young people of all ages, and their families to provide more free opportunities for disadvantaged young people and those with additional needs.

We are helping young people across Medway to have equal opportunities and make the most of growing up in Medway, building an inclusive community and network for young people and families to socialise.

These funds have supported the expansion of our *'For the Love of Reading'* programme. The development of a series of messy play activities, bi-monthly Soft Play and Story Corner, children and young people's drawing clubs, baby and parent/carer Pilates, SEND programming, community events, as well as Child-Friendly Medway programming being delivered in the Family Hubs.



POP-UP MINI NUCLEUS AT THE HUBS

Child-Friendly Medway partnered with Nucleus Arts to bring creative and sensory messy-play workshops for babies and children up to the age of four to the Nucleus Arts Centre, Chatham.

Start for Life funding has enabled us to expand these activities to run at all Medway Family Hubs: Chatham; Strood; Gillingham; and Wayfield Children and Family Hub.

These activities provide children and parents/carers the opportunity to explore different materials and textures, learning through play.



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“Bringing these free and accessible sessions to the hubs around Medway has meant that many more families have been able to access creative sessions with their children. The opportunity to experience creative play and to meet other families, something which many people were struggling to do during and after the Covid pandemic.”

Charlotte Ralph, Youth Engagement Manager, Nucleus Arts.

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JUNIOR DOODLE 'N' DRAW

Doodle 'N' Draw is a weekly creative drawing club for 12-18 year olds, delivered by Child-Friendly Medway and facilitated by local artist Nick Ashton.

Through our consultation with children and young people, it became a recurring comment that younger children would like to attend a similar workshop.

As part of Child-Friendly Medway's aim to narrow the gap, funds were used to extend the *Doodle 'N' Draw* sessions, and to launch a brand-new *Junior Doodle 'N' Draw* programme for ages 7-11 years old, responding directly to the voice of the child.



PARENT/CARER WITH BABY/TODDLER PILATES

Child-Friendly Medway partnered with professional instructor Andrea from Elastix to run Pilates for parents/carers with their babies (under 1 year old) and parents/carers with their toddlers (aged 1-2 years old), providing a gentle approach to exercise.

At these sessions, the Child-Friendly Medway team developed the 'Parent/Carer and Baby Corner', which provided a relaxing space for parents to change and feed their baby, as well as to socialise with other parents after Pilates. This encouraged the attendees to develop a support network, combating loneliness and providing social interaction through shared experiences.



LITTLE MERMAID SCREENING

As part of our Start for Life community programming, Child-Friendly Medway offer free film screenings for children, young people and families. At our free screening of *The Little Mermaid* at MidKent College, we were joined by over 200 Medway children and families.

Our film screening events are accessible for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), due to relaxed seating and volume control.

One parent commented that our free events and activities have *“helped them to enjoy days out with their family, as the Cost-of-Living Crisis has made this financially challenging.”*

CHILD-FRIENDLY MEDWAY PUPPET THEATRE

Child-Friendly Medway partnered with the Pretending People Theatre Company to create *Child-Friendly Medway Puppet Theatre*.

These free performances provide families with the opportunity to enjoy live entertainment, which they may otherwise not be able to, narrowing the gap for Medway families.

The *Child-Friendly Medway Puppet Theatre* has hosted performances at The Guildhall Museum, Rochester and at our Chatham Library World Book Day Event.



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“We are so happy to be in partnership with CFM. One of our primary goals is to make Theatre and experiences accessible to children and families from lower income areas. Child-Friendly Medway share our passion and ethos for creating high quality work and performances that are available for everyone in Medway. From our theatre shows to our pop-up puppet shows, CFM have entrusted us to create something that we can all be proud of, and they have helped to achieve that goal. Our audiences are always engaged and grateful to live in an area where theatre and memorable experiences are free!

The arts are a human necessity, and every child deserves to experience it. We hope for our partnership to last a very long time so we can continue to help CFM make a difference to children’s lives in Medway.”

Matt and Becca Salisbury, Artistic Directors, Pretending People Theatre Company.

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“The Child Friendly Medway Team have played a massive part in the successful roll out of Medway’s Family Hubs and Start for Life offer. They brought creativity, expertise and fun that has enabled us to reach over 11,000 people through their programme of events such as (Soft Play and Story corner, messy play, parent/carer infant Pilates, Dino Day, Doodle ‘N’ Draw, and the Child-Friendly Medway Book Nooks). This exciting programme was the hook that engaged families and helped raise awareness of the Children and Family Hubs and Start for Life offer as well as key messages in relation to child development, perinatal mental health and parent infant relationships. Thank you CFM!”

Glenn Page, Children’s Commissioning Programme Lead (Universal Services), Public Health, Medway Council

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MEDWAY SAFER STREETS 5

Child-Friendly Medway won the fifth round of funding from Medway Safer Streets to develop a programme to support their Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) campaign, including activities and events for women and girls, women and children and the whole family.

Our events and activities have provided opportunities to connect with Kent Police and multi-agency partners to break down barriers and explore perceptions of safety, allowing them to provide safety materials, information and support.

Attendees benefit by developing new skills, building confidence, combating social isolation, intergenerational programming, establishing a strong female support network, and making connections to safe spaces and community organisations.





GIRL'S JUST WANNA' HAVE FUN CELEBRATION

'Girl's Just Wanna' Have Fun' was our flagship event for our women and girls programme celebrating International Women's Day. As part of the event the Kent Police team were able to have important conversations about perceptions of safety, keeping safe in the real world and online, provide information on safe practises, as well as handing out a range of safety equipment.

From our previous women and girls private screening of 'Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour' pilot event for women and girls, we observed the importance of a secure, female-only space and the freeing, confidence-building effect that this had.

By having female police officers attend, it also created a shared experience between the officers and the attendees, showing the police as both a uniformed service, but also, the two officers as women of our Medway community. In addition to the 'Girls' Just Wanna' Have Fun' event, we have delivered a variety of women and girls, women and children, and family events and activities, including our Women and Girls Creative Workshops and Rabbit Run event.

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"We interacted with hundreds of attendees, the majority of this was about crime safety, this included handing out safeguarding equipment such as hi-vis waist bags, reflectors, key defenders, drinks covers, personal alarms, purse chains, reflective bag tags, information on online/social media safety, and VAWG card protectors, which had the domestic abuse hotline information on.

We also joined in, in some of the dances and activities I felt this really helps with breaking down barriers with children who possibly only view the police negatively or have had no interaction with police. At this event and a previous Halloween event I was unsure how much interaction we would have due to the fun activities that were available, but I was pleasantly surprised that we were busy talking to people the whole time. We spoke to a lot of parents that had concerns for their children's online safety and were able to educate and hand out specific social media leaflets. During this event we gave our contact details to a local school's PTA member and have since arranged to attend their summer fair."

Aimmie Birch, PCSO, Kent Police.

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PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The Child-Friendly Medway team are committed to developing a community-led approach and are leading on a shared ambition with our all partners to make Medway even more child-friendly. Collectively we support strands of work that are important to children and young people – climate change, safety, health and wellbeing, place shaping the future of Medway.

We work with internal and external partners, including local businesses, community groups and individuals who share their knowledge, expertise, and resources to support our goals, action plan, and respond to the voice of children and young people.

Our footprint is growing across Medway: we now work with several partners. As a core principal Medway Council teams are now coming to us with child-friendly ways of working and thinking of our youngest residents when they plan engagement and consultation opportunities, work with or provide services for children and young people.

Our partners attend our Seeing is Believing programme as a platform for consultation and engagement with children, young people, parents and carers.

The Child-Friendly Medway team attend community events run by partners from within Medway Council and the local community to engage with new and diverse audiences and connect with other local organisations across a wide range of locations.

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“Since January, the Strood Drop-in Football programme has experienced remarkable growth, expanding from 45 participants to a consistent 130+ across all three sessions. This weekly event not only offers a reliable opportunity for the local community to come together in a shared activity but also fosters connections among families and friends in a positive environment. Given Strood’s lower socio-economic status, this free session plays a crucial role in providing children and young people a safe environment to spend their leisure time.

Our partnership with Child-Friendly Medway has greatly contributed to the success of this project, facilitating meaningful interactions with local law enforcement. Their active involvement, including engaging with young participants, and promoting open communication, has been invaluable. We are excited about the potential for further growth and development of this initiative.”

Gary Smith, Sports Development Officer, Medway Council

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CONSULTATION OPPORTUNITIES AND MEDWAY COUNCIL PLANNING TEAM

"The Planning Service have been collaborating with Child-Friendly Medway throughout the Chatham Design Code and participated in a number of their events including Scare Fest, Elf Yourself and the Magical Creature Trail. This really helped us to understand the town from young people's perspective and we encouraged the participants to illustrate their own ideas of how Chatham Centre could be more child-friendly. Our Urban Design Officer also created a drawing illustrating their ideas across Chatham Centre.

One of the key themes across all the events was the need for more 'Activity Zones' in Chatham Centre and along the river front and this helps to guide future plans for regenerating and activating the river front. There were also lots of ideas for how to improve the High Street including a stage for singing and performances, activities such as go-karting, a leisure and entertainment venue and more family-friendly public spaces. The environment is also very important and "less plastic in the river!". Feedback from the events has also been published in our Planning Service Quarterly Newsletter and will help us to build on the ambitious plans to reinvent the High Street and move from retail hubs to healthier and more community-focused High Streets."

Colin Dunigan, Planning Team, Medway Council.

MIDKENT COLLEGE

"MidKent College has enjoyed another year of great partnership working with the Child-Friendly Medway team; providing opportunities for young people and families in Medway to engage with local theatre productions and cinema screenings at Glassbox Theatre alongside themed community open days.

Our partnership allows our own students and staff the opportunity to build relationships with our local community that build upon their own continual professional development and provides industry related work placements for students in a safe and structured environment."

Becky Farley, Director of Community & Civic Engagement, MidKent College.

NUCLEUS ARTS

"Nucleus Arts thoroughly enjoys working with Child-Friendly Medway. All of the amazing ideas that the team dream up seem to come to fruition, something that rarely happens with potential funding partners. It's fantastic to see just how much CFM is doing for children and families in Medway and we are proud to contribute to this outstanding effort.

All of the sessions funded by Child-Friendly Medway have given on-going support to local artists. Artists have been able to utilize their unique skills during the workshops but also have been able to gain new skills and experience, as well as having the chance to get to know the participants and families in Medway - building local relationships."

Charlotte Ralph, Youth Engagement Manager, Nucleus Arts.

THE PARAMOUNT FOUNDATION

"Child-Friendly Medway (CFM) have always championed our charitable foundation and supported our cause to enrich the lives of children and young people in Medway.

CFM are fundamental partners in our annual "Sticks n Stones" wellbeing festival where children and families are able to experience a multitude of Medway services and clubs.

Thanks to CFM's loyal following we have been able to work with them to get our services recognised and draw in more of our target audience.

Together we are able to make a bigger impact and change lives."

Matt Salisbury, Paramount Foundation Manager, The Paramount Foundation.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING EVENTS

Welcome to Medway
by Medway Children and
Family Hubs in Chatham



Medway Mile

by Medway Council Sports Team,
Medway Park in Gillingham



The Big Splash
by Medway Council Sports Team,
the Strand in Gillingham



Chatham Carnival

by Nucleus Arts and the
Town Centre Forum

Chinese New Year Celebration
by Kut-O Chinese Association
in Chatham



Culture Club Carnival
by The Culture Club in Gillingham



Wild About Capstone
by Medway Council Greenspaces Team



Pirate Day
with Strood Town Centre Team



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.

MINI YOUTH GAMES

Child-Friendly Medway worked in partnership with Medway Sport to deliver a range of sporting events, including Hockey Champions Series, Badminton Cup, Kwik Cricket Cup, Table Tennis, Swimming, and Athletics. Over 3,800 students from local schools took part in these events.

DISABILITY YOUTH GAMES

Child-Friendly Medway partnered with Medway Sport to run the Disability Youth Games for children and young people with additional needs from schools across Medway. Over 220 attended these sporting events, which included Skiing, Swimming and Football.



TEACHERS INSPIRE AND DO

Child-Friendly Medway funded four creative continued professional development sessions for primary school teachers in Medway, delivered by Nucleus Arts and Animate Arts Company at the Nucleus Arts Centre, Chatham.

These four sessions focused on diversity in the arts, photography, sketch-booking and printmaking, and demonstrated how these skills can be brought to classrooms in Medway.

One teacher reported that the sessions were informative and that as a self-proclaimed 'non-creative', they found the sessions approachable and confidence-building.

The wider impact of these workshops will benefit children and young people across Medway, as the teachers take this new-found knowledge and confidence into their classrooms, for not only this generation, but future generations also. A creative network amongst Medway's teachers is invaluable to broadening the horizons and experiences of our young people.



MEDWAY YOUTH COUNCIL

Child-Friendly Medway supported the Medway Youth Council Conference, attending their marketplace activity and consulted young people on our Child-Friendly Medway Young Citizens project.

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“Medway Youth Council has always been proud to work alongside Child-Friendly Medway. We are always honoured when asked to speak at one of their city hall events, where it is amazing to see so many young people enjoying themselves and having the opportunity to express their views to key decision makers.”

Rose Stokes, Chair, Medway Youth Council.

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JUNIOR YOUTH COUNCIL

Child-Friendly Medway has supported Medway Council's Youth Service with the delivery of the Junior Youth Council events, attending the sessions with an activity specific to their theme and carrying out consultation on topics important to children and young people.

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“It has been great being supported by Child-Friendly Medway (CFM) at the Junior Youth Council events. They have been able to do some consultation work with the young people which they enjoyed and also been able to talk to the young people about all the activities that CFM have taking place throughout the year.”

Karen Yusuf, Youth Participation Worker, Medway Council.

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FUNDING BIDS

Child-Friendly Medway continuously bid for funding, which enables us to deliver projects to respond to the voices of children and young people. Our most popular request is for more free events and activities, including specific themes, locations, creative and sporting opportunities and large-scale community and family events.

Since inception Child-Friendly Medway have won over £400,000 to deliver projects and even more events and activities for children, young people, and families in Medway, allowing us to significantly expand our footprint and reach for our Seeing is Believing programme and offer a wider variety of engagement opportunities.

Child-Friendly Medway would like to extend many thanks to all our funders that make our events and activities possible.



COUNTRYSIDE PARTNERSHIPS AND HYDE THROUGH THE ROCHESTER RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY BOARD

This year children and young people were able to meet the newest team member... Mojo, our Child-Friendly Medway Mascot, designed by children and young people and supported by funds from Countryside Partnerships and Hyde through the Rochester Riverside Community Board.

START FOR LIFE

Child-Friendly Medway secured Start for Life funding, which has been used to expand our Seeing is Believing programme to provide even more opportunities for children, young people, and families in Medway, with a special focus on 0–2 year-olds, parents/carers, those who identify with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

MEDWAY SAFER STREETS 5

Funding secured from the Medway Safer Streets Fund has supported a programme of activities and events to raise awareness of the *Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)* campaign and provide opportunities for Kent Police and multi-agency partners for engagement. This funding has been used to host activities and events for women and girls, women and children and events for the whole family during school holidays.

POLICE CRIME COMMISSIONER CRIME REDUCTION

Child-Friendly Medway secured funding from the Police Crime Commissioner to host a number of community events and activities, including our *Drop-In Football* programme in Strood, and *Family Fun Fri-Yay* in Gillingham. As well as *World Book Day* events and our first *Violence Against Women and Girls* pilot event, a private film screening of *Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour*.

MEDWAY COUNCIL CULTURE DEVELOPMENT TEAM

In 2023, we launched the *Medway Magical Creature Trail* in partnership with Medway Council Culture Development Team, and part of the Culture 2024 initiative.

MEDWAY COUNCIL TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

Throughout the year, partners such as Medway Town Centres Team have partnered with Child-Friendly Medway to deliver activities and events with their secured funding streams, such as the *Strood Pirate Day* and Rainham and Gillingham holiday themed events.

UNITED KINGDOM SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (UKSPF)

Child-Friendly Medway won UKSPF funding for our Signs of Youth project, which is an initiative that offers children and young people the opportunity to design a sign based on the theme of Cleaner and Greener, which were shortlisted and printed onto aluminium, becoming permanent signage displayed in Medway.



CHILD-FRIENDLY MEDWAY PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Medway's children and young people bring their expertise on what it is like to grow up here, and the Child-Friendly Medway team bring their dedication and passion to deliver. The Child-Friendly Medway Partnership Board is in place to support our ambitions and provide professional guidance and knowledge-sharing opportunities, embedding Child-Friendly Medway deeper within the community.

Our Partner Board consists of representatives from within Medway Council and external partners including:

Richard Hicks	Chief Executive, Medway Council & CFM Partnership Board Chair
CLlr Adam Price	Portfolio Holder for Childrens Services, Medway Council
Andy Minchin	Headteacher, Beyond Schools Trust
Cathy Reid	Director of Education, Howard School
David Stokes	Chief Executive Officer at Halpern Charitable Foundation
James Williams	Director of Public Health, Medway Council
Jane Howard	Chief Executive, Medway Voluntary Action (MVA)
Lee-Anne Farach	Director of People, Deputy Chief Executive, Medway Council
Lisa Scarrott	Parents & Carers Forum
Raj Dusanj	Sergeant Child Centred Policing, Kent Police
Rhiannan Pepper	Operational Superintendent – Medway, Kent Police
Simon Cook	Chief Executive, MidKent College
Stephen Grey	Chief Executive, Young Lives Foundation (YLF)
CLlr Tracy Coombs	Portfolio Holder for Education, Medway Council

The Child-Friendly Medway Partnership Board meetings take place twice a year, together with an annual community partner event. Providing an opportunity for key stakeholders to play a more active role in supporting the Child-Friendly Medway initiative, through partnership working and shining a spotlight on how community organisations and businesses are embracing the Child-Friendly Medway movement.



The Child-Friendly Medway team would like to extend many thanks in tribute to **James Williams (1966 – 2024)**, Children's Commissioning Lead for Public Health, for all his support to our child-friendly initiative. James was an active part of our Child-Friendly Medway Partnership Board since inception, and always strived for the best for our children and young people. His passion and dedication was contagious, and he is greatly missed.

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"I am proud that Nucleus Arts is a partner of Child-Friendly Medway, working together to foster creativity and community for children, young people, and families. As a member of the partner board, our collaboration ensures that we bring enriching, accessible arts and cultural events to Medway, creating spaces where young minds can thrive, families can connect, and the community grows stronger. Through our partnership and activities, such as Doodle and Draw and Mini Nucleus, we continue to support a vibrant, inclusive environment that benefits everyone involved."

Dr David Stokes, CEO, Halpern Charitable Foundation/Nucleus Arts

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"Child-Centred Policing is at the heart of our policing decisions where building positive and meaningful relationships with today's youth allows for us to develop a brighter future for all of Medway.

Supporting Child-Friendly Medway and being a partner on the board has afforded us some key engagement opportunities in which we have seen real positive relationships being built with both children and adults from across different communities within Medway.

Child-Friendly Medway create a safe space for children and their families to voice their honest opinions which has allowed open conversations to take place between police and the community it serves.

We hope that with this working partnership that we can continue to build relationships with the youth community of Medway and give them reassurance that as a police service, we are listening, and we are here to support and guide them whenever they need us.

The drive and motivation that the CFM team have is infectious and heart-warming, where I hope that their inspirational focus on creating a better Medway continues for years to come."

Raj Dusanjh, Detective Sergeant of the Child Centred Policing Team, Kent Police, and Child-Friendly Medway Partnership Board Member.



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"A year into post Child-Friendly Medway never cease to amaze! It's that combination of giving a voice to all children, hosting and bolstering such a wide range of child-friendly events such as the screening of Wonka before Christmas, sparking creativity with Mojo and all the 'critters', and relentlessly spreading a passion for reading. The stats speak for themselves.

It's a pleasure to work in partnership with so many children, Amy, her team, Medway Council departments and a host of One Medway agencies. There have been challenges along the way such as the discovery of RAAC in the roof at Gun Wharf, however Amy and the team have taken it all in their stride.

I am confident Child-Friendly Medway will go from strength to strength."

Cllr Adam Price, Portfolio Holder for Children's Service, Medway Council.

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CLOSING STATEMENT

Child-Friendly Medway continues to grow, in the third year reaching more than 100,000 children, young people and families in Medway.

Our work and delivery have expanded – reaching further across Medway communities...

We have expanded on how we work with partners to make Medway even more child-friendly, and how our partnerships are building strong relationships that benefit our community. We have also shared how children and young people's feedback has informed our core themes and action plan, and how this is living in our work.

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Amy St Louis, Child-Friendly Medway Lead, Medway Council said:

“It is hard to believe that it has only been three years and we have achieved so much. I am proud of how Child-Friendly Medway has become a household name in our community and that we are loved by the people that matter most to our team, children and young people.

I still get goosebumps when the team has a big win – like the private screening of Taylor Swift for our first ever Women and Girls event, home grown projects like Medway's Magical Creature Trail and our Signs of Youth, and at our Child-Friendly Medway City Halls.

I love hearing the hopes and dreams from children and young people at our events, and from parents/carers and community partners on how we are making a difference. I would never have imagined we would have made this kind of impact in such a short space of time. Child-Friendly Medway's success story is a community one, together we are making Medway even more child-friendly. Thank you to all our amazing partners and to our generous funders for helping to make so many things possible for children and young people this past year. Together we have reached more than 100,000 children and young people – we have provided new opportunities and helped narrow the gap. Without your funding and support we would never have been able to provide 396 free events and activities, food when possible and thousands of free books.

The momentum of Child-Friendly Medway continues to grow at pace, and I am extremely proud of the team who meet these challenges and are passionate to deliver for children and young people on a daily basis. There is no slow day for the Child-Friendly Medway team, and I would like to thank my colleagues for their hard work, commitment, team focused approach and unwavering passion to deliver the best for children and young people, and when they are not running off to an event or activity - their ability and interest to dream big with me. They truly make the dream work! I can't wait to see what next year holds.”

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APPENDIX

OUR ENGAGEMENT FROM APRIL 2023-MARCH 2024

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 and abilities.

In total, we delivered, supported or sponsored 396 events and activities in 2023-24, reaching around 114,024 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.



SEEING IS BELIEVING - PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS

Total: 338 activities, 17,947 attendees, 34 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 specialists to deliver on our behalf.

Through our Seeing is Believing programme, as detailed in the table below, we delivered 338 activities and engaged with 17,947 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: 416
Number of partner spots: 12

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Holiday and themed events

Including Sun Pier Easter Event, Cinema Showing of *Coco*, *Jack & The Beanstalk* Pantomime, Medway's Magical Christmas, Club AUsome: *Aladdin* Pantomime, *Snow White* Pantomime, Coronation Activities.

Total sessions: 16
Total attendance: 1,801
Number of partner spots: 34

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Sports and fitness

Including Drop-In Football, Family Fun Fri-YAY, Drop-In Multisport, Baby/Toddler and Parent/Carer Pilates.

Total sessions: 109
Total attendance: 2,052
Number of partner spots: 9

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Literacy

Including, For Love of Reading programming (Soft Play and Story Corner, Storytime & Snacks, Pop-Up Community Storytime) and working with Medway libraries for World Book Day Events and their Summer Reading Project.

Total sessions: 56
Total attendance: 7,979
Number of partner spots: 6

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Arts

Including Mini Nucleus, Pop-Up Mini Nucleus, Doodle 'N' Draw, *Brothers Grimm* Theatre Shows and workshops, Puppet Theatre, Stage and Social Sunday, Chatham Magical Creature Trail, Cinema showing: *The Little Mermaid*, Club AUsome: Planet Ice.

Total sessions: 141
Total attendance: 4,680
Number of partner spots: 21

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Safer Streets programming (Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) programming for women and girls, women and children)

Including Women and Girls Creative Workshops, *Barbie* Film Screening, Girls' Just Wanna' Have Fun event, *Taylor Swift: Era's Tour* Screening.

Total sessions: 15
Total attendance: 623
Number of partner spots: 9

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PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Total: 26 partner events, 89,564 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.

SMALLER SCALE (UNDER 500)

Bunting Making

Total sessions: 3

Total attendance: 346

Number of partner spots: 4

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Opportunities Fair

Date: 31/05/2023

Total attendance: 280

Number of partner spots: 2

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Hub Family Day Chatham

Date: 27/07/2023

Total attendance: 120

Number of partner spots: 1

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Medway Culture Club Carnival

Date: 05/08/2023

Total attendance: 500

Number of partner spots: 1

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VAWG Walk and Talk

Date: 09/08/23

Total attendance: 160

Number of partner spots: 1

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Rainham Summer Fun Day

Date: 17/08/2023

Total attendance: 400

Number of partner spots: 2

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Fun Palace

Date: 07/10/2023

Total attendance: 400

Number of partner spots: 5

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Ninja Warrior (Adult Education)

Date: 22/01/2024

Total attendance: 70

Number of partner spots: 1

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Welcome To Medway

Total sessions: 1

Total attendance: 338

Number of partner spots: 2

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Medway Youth Creates

Date: 17/11/2023

Total attendance: 400

Number of partner spots: 5

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LARGE EVENTS

Rabbit Run

Date: 05/04/2023
Total attendance: 750
Number of partner spots: 5

The Big Splash

Date: 17/06/2023
Total attendance: 1000
Number of partner spots: 1

Chinese New Year

Date: 17/02/2024
Total attendance: 24,000
Number of partner spots: 4

Medway Gaming Festival

Total sessions: 2
Total attendance: 12,000
Number of partner spots: 2

Chatham Carnival

Date: 08/07/2023
Total attendance: 2,500
Number of partner spots: 4

Medway Mile

Date: 21/07/2023
Total attendance: 3,300
Number of partner spots: 2

Dino Day

Date: 02/08/2023
Total attendance: 4,000
Number of partner spots: 4

Sticks and Stones Festival

Date: 26/08/2023
Total attendance: 2,000
Number of partner spots: 3

Super Saturday

Date: 02/09/2023
Total attendance: 30,000
Number of partner spots: 7

Wild About Capstone

Date: 24/09/2023
Total attendance: 3,000
Number of partner spots: 1

Scare Fest

Date: 27/10/2023
Total attendance: 2,000
Number of partner spots: 5

Elf Yourself

Date: 18/11/2023
Total attendance: 2,000
Number of partner spots: 4



SCHOOLS

Total: 32 activities/events, 6,513 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

Mini Youth Games

Total sessions: 16

Total attendance: 3822

Number of partner spots: 1

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Disability Youth Games

Total sessions: 4

Total attendance: 227

Number of partner spots: 1

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Signs of Youth Assembly

Number of sessions: 2

Total attendance: 1025

Number of partner spots: 6

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YOUTH COUNCILS

Cliffe Junior Youth Council

Date: 23/06/23

Total attendance: 20

Number of partner spots: 1

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Woodlands Junior Youth Council

Date: 30/06/23

Total attendance: 25

Number of partner spots: 1

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Medway Youth Council Conference/Market Place

Date: 26/01/24

Total attendance: 81

Number of partner spots: 1

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Mental Health Awareness Week Event: My Voice Matters

Date: 08/02/2024

Total attendance: 183

Number of partner spots: 1

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MidKent Annual Freshers Fair

Date: 21/09/23

Total attendance: 1000

Number of partner spots: 1

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Inspire and Do: CPD

Number of sessions: 4

Total attendance: 80

Number of partner spots: 2

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Education Leaders Event: Afternoon Tea

Date: 13/06/23

Total attendance: 50

Number of partner spots: 1

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FOR THE LOVE OF READING

See literacy figures in *Seeing is Believing* for attendance engagement figures.

With the aim of ensuring more children have books in their homes to enjoy reading for pleasure, *For The Love of Reading* has given away 4,257 books to children and young people, putting more books in more homes across Medway.

Book Swaps

Number of events: 17

Books swapped: 2000

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Book Trails

Number of book trails: 51

Number of books hidden: 1433

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Book Nooks

Number of Book Nooks: 12

Number of books on shelves: 324

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Book give aways at events

City Hall *Wonka*: 155

Medway's Magical Christmas: 135

World Book Day events: 210

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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](https://www.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**

Bengali বাংলা 331780 Chinese 中文 331781 Gurjurati ગુજરાતી 331782 Hindi हिंदी 331783 Punjabi ਪੰਜਾਬੀ 331784
Polish Polski 332373 Sorni كوردی 331841 Turkish ଏକ୍ସକର୍ବ 331786 Urdu اُردو 331785 Farsi and Dari فارسی 331840
Russian Русский 332374 Lithuanian Lietuviškai 332372 Slovakian Slovensky 331839



WHAT PARENTS AND CARERS HAVE TOLD US

“

A VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE.
MY CHILD LOVED IT, AND I LOVE
THE SOCIAL INTERACTION.

KEEP THIS GOING AS IT PUTS SMILES ON ALL OUR FACES

YOU ASK HOW WE
CAN MAKE IT MORE
CHILD FRIENDLY -
THIS IS SUPER CHILD
FRIENDLY!

LOTS OF THINGS TO DO.
LOVE ALL THAT IS ON
OFFER FOR CHILDREN

WE LOVE THE EVENTS PUT ON WITH CHILD FRIENDLY
AND ATTEND ALL. KIDS LOVE THE EVENTS AND
PERFECT OPPORTUNITY FOR QUALITY FAMILY TIME

FANTASTIC INITIATIVE!!
THANK YOU SO MUCH!!

IT IS GOOD TO HAVE
FREE THINGS TO DO

HAPPY WITH SOFT PLAY AREA AND
CHANCE TO MEET NEW PEOPLE. THE FACT
THAT IT IS FREE IS A MASSIVE BONUS!
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

FIRST TIME TO A CHILD-FRIENDLY MEDWAY EVENT.
LOVELY ATMOSPHERE AND EVERYONE FRIENDLY!

I REALLY ENJOY THESE EVENTS IT'S
NICE TO BRING MY GRANDCHILDREN
TOO, SO THANK YOU

”

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.



“

I LIKE IT THAT WE
HAVE A VOICE
AND SHARE OUR
OPINIONS ON
WHERE WE LIVE

”

