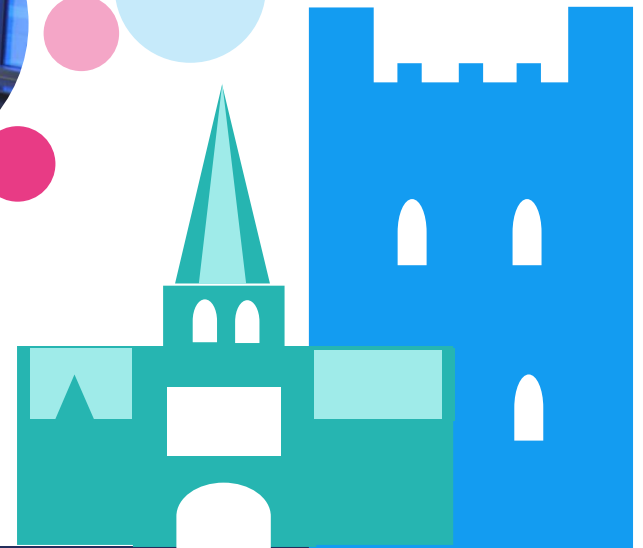


# Medway Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2021



PEOPLE

# Medway



## Children and Young People's Plan

# Introduction

This is a plan for all children, young people and their families living in Medway.

In this new plan we have retained many features of our last Children and Young People's Plan. This is not because we are complacent, but because we believe it has already made, and can continue to make, a real difference in the lives of children and young people. The ambitious and aspirational approach in this new plan is building on solid foundations that have been already mapped out and are therefore critical to its success.

But just as the children whose voice heavily influenced our last Children and Young People's Plan have matured, so have our ambitions. We want to make not just step-by-step improvements, but to start to address some of the more difficult challenges that sometimes limit children's life chances – whether it be the school they go to, the community they grow up in, or the earnings of their parents. We do not accept these limits on the opportunities for children and young people in Medway.

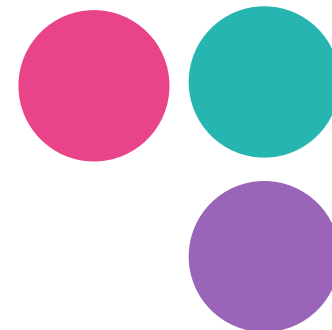
Medway Children and Young People's Plan

At the same time, the national agenda around children's services has continued to evolve since our last iteration. This has brought opportunities as well as challenges, and Medway is now well placed to respond.

This plan cannot answer all of the issues which we have identified, especially in areas where we need to do more work to understand the underlying cause. This plan is intended to be a "live" document that provides an overarching framework to stimulate action, encourage debate and support continued challenge of our collective leadership. It will drive conversations across our partnerships and also with children, young people, families and front line professionals to help ensure that whatever we do genuinely makes a difference to their lives.

**Cllr Josie Iles**  
**Lead Member for**  
**Children's Services**

**Ian Sutherland**  
**Director of People –**  
**Children and Adults'**  
**Services**







THRIVING IN  
THEIR  
COMMUNITY



A HEALTHY  
START



Our vision:  
**Medway**

Children and  
young people are  
thriving, healthy  
and learning  
well.



LEARNING  
WELL

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# Where have we come from...

In 2015, Children's services in Medway Council required improvement to be good. Services had improved from 2013, when they were found to be inadequate.

Senior local authority leaders, politicians and partner organisations worked effectively together to create positive changes in the experiences of children and young people in most of the areas identified for improvement.

In 2019, Leaders, officers and partners remain committed to further improvement in outcomes for our children and young people within Medway.







# Our Vision

We have a vision to give Medway a 'child-focused future', a future where children and young people have 'a healthy start', 'are learning well' and 'thriving in their community' whilst having fun.

We drive forward in our aim to ensure a 'great future' where our children and young people are resilient and healthy, learn well and are contributing to the decisions that affect them.

We want to support all our residents to realise their potential. But the great future of Medway can only be guaranteed by empowering young people to work with us, rather than the Council and its partners doing things for them or to them: creating their own good start. Highly personalised work involves children, young people and their families finding the right solution to the challenges they face with support from a breadth of services provided in the area.

We know that if we are to help every child and young person then we shall need to ensure:

- A high-quality universal offer for all
- Targeted services that identify need ASAP and intervene as appropriate
- Specialist services that support the most vulnerable or disadvantaged children







# Our Plan

Medway's Children and Young People's Plan provides a high-level framework for helping children and young people in Medway. The plan is based on three key themes and will be used to inform how we deliver and commission services for children. Any references to "child" or "children" should be taken to mean any young person aged 0-19 (i.e. the 19<sup>th</sup> birthday), care leavers up to the age of 25 (i.e. the 25<sup>th</sup> birthday) and young people up to the age of 25 who have special educational needs and disabilities for whom the local authority continues to provide support.

The plan has been developed by members of the Medway Children and Young People Delivery Board, and will be championed by the wider Medway Children and Young People Transformation Board ("The Board"); a partnership that represents all the agencies working with children and young people across the Medway Towns, of which the Council is a key part.

The Board unites all partners providing services for children and young people at both a strategic and local level. References to "we" in this document are intended to refer to the Board collectively, working in close partnership with children and their families.

This plan draws together several important strategic initiatives helping to better the lives of children and young people in Medway.

The first is the Medway Council Plan (2016/17 to 2020/21), which has three priorities that each contribute to Medway's 'child-focused future' in different ways:

- **Supporting Medway's People to realise their potential:** all children achieving their potential in school, developing resilient families and health active communities.
- **Making Medway a place to be proud of:** a clean green environment
- **Maximising regeneration and economic growth:** residents with jobs and skills, getting around Medway and preventing homelessness.

The Plan also draws together targeted strategies across Medway Council Children's Services and our external partners into a single plan. Including the SEND and Inclusion Strategy, LAC Strategy, Medway Safeguarding Children's Board Strategic Plan, Youth Justice Partnership Plan, Skills and Employability Plan and Education Strategy.

# How we have involved children and young people

We have worked with children, young people and professionals to explore key themes and ideas understanding strengths, priorities, challenges and areas that require improvement

**224** Medway residents engaged through the Citizen's Panel, including approx. **45** parents and carers

**10** young people's youth and engagement groups

**100+** practitioners engaged across the organisation

**100** young people engaged across 11 parks and green spaces

Engagement through social media pages on Facebook and Twitter

# Key Facts

The children and young people who live in Medway

[3265] children took the Medway Test

[1,482] School pupils with social emotional and mental health needs (2018)

[395] Children subject to a Child Protection Plan

In Medway, there are **64,391 children** aged 0 to 17 years.

(2019)



Medway has a **younger population** than England overall. (19.7% and 18.1% respectively)

Children in need 2487

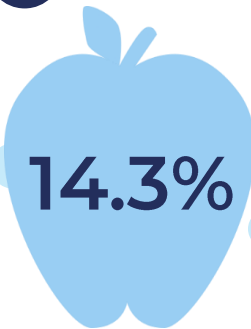
Average IDACI ranks Medway as the **63<sup>rd</sup> most deprived Local Authority** (2015-63 out of 152)

[3,601] Live births in 2017



Large families **[125 families]** (4 siblings or more)





School children from minority ethnic groups (2018)



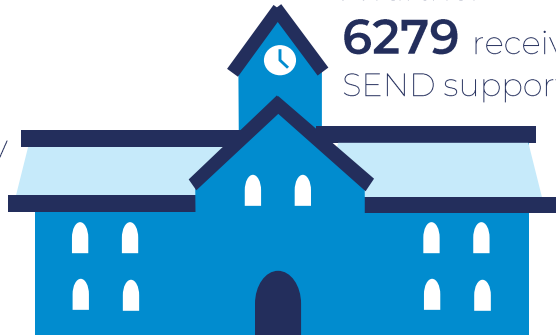
1 in 5 of our children are from the BAME community

**2262** children have EHCP/statement (2019)  
A further **6279** receive SEND support

**20.6%**  
Of children obese (aged 10-11 years)



**[7357]** Medway children were offered one of their preferred schools for 2018 admissions



**[404]**  
Children Looked After  
**[189]** Care Leavers supported

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# How are we going to get there

## BEHAVIOURS AND PRINCIPLES

How we will act to help us  
achieve our priorities

We will work  
together in a  
joined-up way

We will care  
and respect the  
children and  
families that we  
are working  
with

We will listen  
and act  
promptly

We will speak in  
a way children  
and families  
want to be  
spoken to

We will  
ensure value  
for money

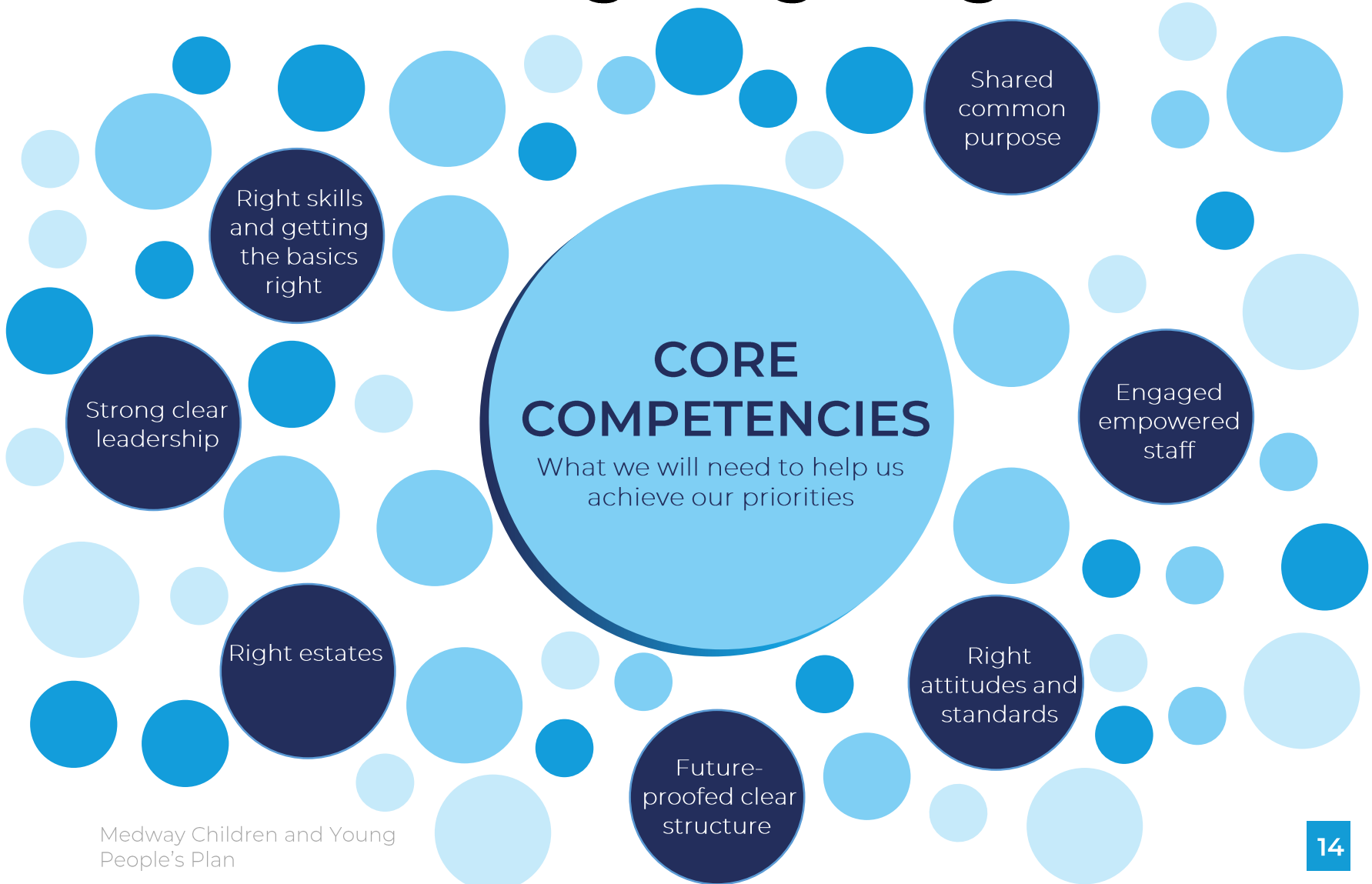
We will be  
childcentred

We will be  
honest and  
transparent

We will be  
creative and  
innovative

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# How are we going to get there





# Priorities

We believe that concentrating our resources in these areas will support our children and young people to realise their potential in Medway.

## THRIVING

safe and resilient within the community

1. Empower families to be resilient and economically secure
2. Protect those at risk of harm or in need of help
3. Have fun growing up and have a voice



## HEALTHY

with a good start in life and makes positive choices

4. Encourage physical activity and healthy eating
5. Improve social, emotional and mental health and resilience
6. Give every child a good start



## LEARNING

to secure skills they need through an inclusive and aspirational education

7. Ensure children have access to good education provision
8. Raise achievement, aspiration and progress for all
9. Equip young people for life and work
10. Focused help to where is needed earlier



This vision and priorities as set out in this strategy will be delivered by [Medway Children's Services](#) and other key partners including [Kent Police](#) and [Medway Clinical Commissioning Group](#)



## What we know

Children's needs are best served in their own resilient families if this is appropriate. Helping families stay together must therefore be a key focus for all children's services.

Early identification of need and effective early intervention are essential. Early intervention and prevention services can reduce the number of children and young people needing to become looked after, avoid repeat entry into care or support them to return safely to their families in a timely manner.

The Council, the Police and the CCG will work in partnership to take forward our new safeguarding arrangements resulting from the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

These principles will enable more families to be economically secure, get back into work and increase child safety whilst reducing child poverty.

## What we are doing already

- National recruitment campaign for social workers – vacant social work posts reduced from 39% to 25%
- Youth Service remodelled during 2017/18 to embed the service into the Medway communities, and to focus on working with vulnerable groups.
- New structure in locality based hubs puts us in a strong position to offer effective joined up early help working closely with families.



## What our young people are telling us

“To be able to walk around on your own and feel safe”

15%

Said they were worried about dying young

“For the place to be better”

Thirty young people out of the one hundred surveyed said they were worried about crime.

“More Activities to engage Young People... A One Stop Shop for Kids in each town”

30%

Said their family is most important to them

Other things that were important include feeling safe and looked after, having enough money





## What we want to achieve

Outcome	Why this is important
 <p data-bbox="318 601 832 672">Empower families to be resilient and economically secure</p>	<p data-bbox="962 576 1754 746">We will endeavour where appropriate that children and young people remain at home remains by identifying issues quickly and early and ensuring the most appropriate package of care is identified and put in place. We will also support family situations were we identify a young person with a caring responsibility.</p>
 <p data-bbox="318 839 852 911">Protect those at risk of harm or in need of help</p>	<p data-bbox="952 815 1702 951">We will support vulnerable children exposed to situations such as domestic violence, gang culture, drug and alcohol abuse through a strengthened Early Help Offer.</p>
 <p data-bbox="318 1072 807 1143">Have fun growing up and have a voice</p>	<p data-bbox="956 1043 1769 1213">Putting children at the heart of what we do is pivotal to help them achieve their potential. We will create opportunities for engagement in service design as well as in Children's Services through engagement groups as well as in their C&amp;F reviews.</p>



## What we will do - Objectives

Continue to build Early Help capacity through improved consistency of practice and throughput so families can access quicker and support increase in numbers of step down.
Ensure effective pathway and partnership working for the entire spectrum of CYP in Medway (incl. LAC and SEN)
Enable parents and carers to improve their material circumstances through access to support, training and employment opportunities through Partnership working with DWP and Employ Medway
Provide timely and high-quality interventions to help children remain with or return to their families as long as it is safe to do so.
Provide and commission the right mix of placements
Ensure the quality and timeliness of assessment and care planning and decision making for children in need and in need of protection
Protect vulnerable individuals who may be at risk of gang culture
Ensure providers are held to account for the service they are being commissioned to deliver
Offer locally based interventions that address disadvantage at a neighborhood level



## What we will do - Objectives

Promote access to activities especially Council run activities and venues
Offer locally based interventions that address disadvantage at a neighbourhood level
Ensure the quality and timeliness of assessment and care planning and decision making for children in need and in need of protection.
Ensure Young People have a voice to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and make sure their opinions are taken into account
Ensure links between the service and engagement groups such as MYC, YPAG, MYCPC, MCiCC and MPCF



## What we know

Ensuring that every child has a good start in life is essential for the future success of Medway and the health and wellbeing of people in the towns and surrounding areas.

Development begins before birth, and the health of a baby is significantly affected by the choices their parents make, and their mother's health and wellbeing. As well as causing an increased risk of premature birth, miscarriage and perinatal birth, smoking in pregnancy can have detrimental effects for the growth and development of the baby and the health of the mother.

As part of our Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy we will be focusing on giving the child the best start and promoting the best and healthiest choices for parents to make during pregnancy and the early years of a child's life.

## What we are doing already

- A lead person carries out a family assessment meaning telling story only once. Therefore quicker development of an action plan to meet family's needs.
- Help young people access social and leisure opportunities.
- Established a healthy weight network
- Improving accessibility to schools by walking, cycling and public transport.
- Training all staff involved with maternal pathway to raise the subject of smoking and support quit attempts.
- Recommissioned an integrated health visiting and school nursing service to improve universal health offer from pregnancy through birth and up to age of 18.
- Developed and delivered a core framework for PSHE across Medway Schools.



## What our young people are telling us

“Not getting fat – want to stay skinny”

48%

Of young people at a engagement group had seen drugs in their school

“Being more comfortable around people”

A number of responses noted the need to “cut pollution” and have a healthy and attractive environment

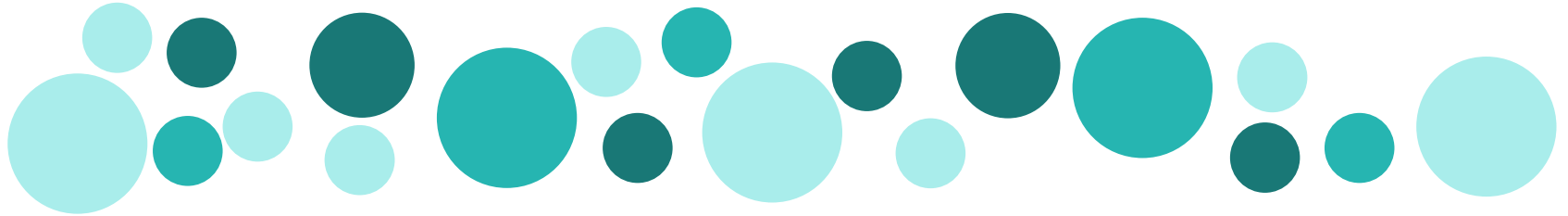
“Teaching health in a fun practical way – healthy eating – how to choose fresh food wisely, cookery lessons”

22%

Said feeling happy is most important to them

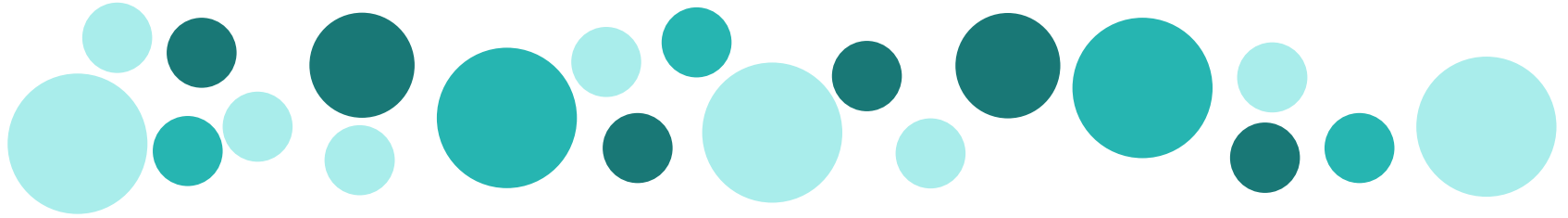
Most direct comments about health revolved around feeling mentally, emotionally and socially happy





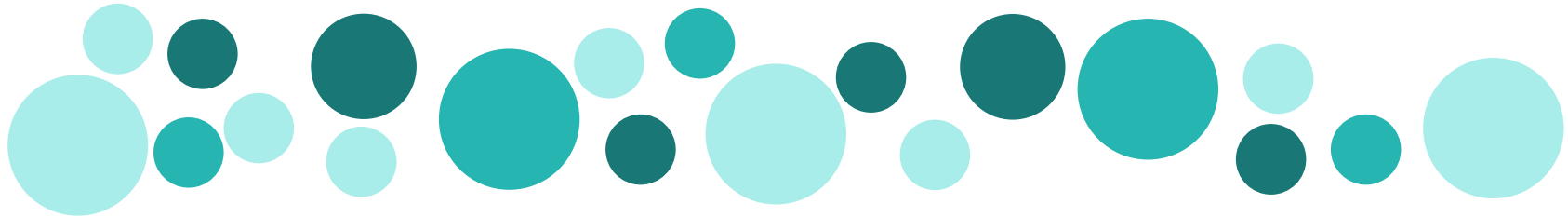
## What we want to achieve

Outcome	Why this is important
 <p data-bbox="285 596 794 668">Encourage physical activity and healthy eating</p>	<p data-bbox="935 586 1740 686">We will support young people to make positive choices when it comes to healthy living, eating and acting.</p>
 <p data-bbox="285 782 884 853">Improve social, emotional and mental health and resilience</p>	<p data-bbox="935 782 1734 882">We will support young people and their families in relation to health and wellbeing, improving confidence and skills and promoting self-help.</p>
 <p data-bbox="285 1025 794 1068">Give every child a good start</p>	<p data-bbox="935 986 1740 1115">We will work with our partners and parents in the early years of children's life (0-5 years) as it is proved to be highly effective in terms of the impact on future health and wellbeing.</p>



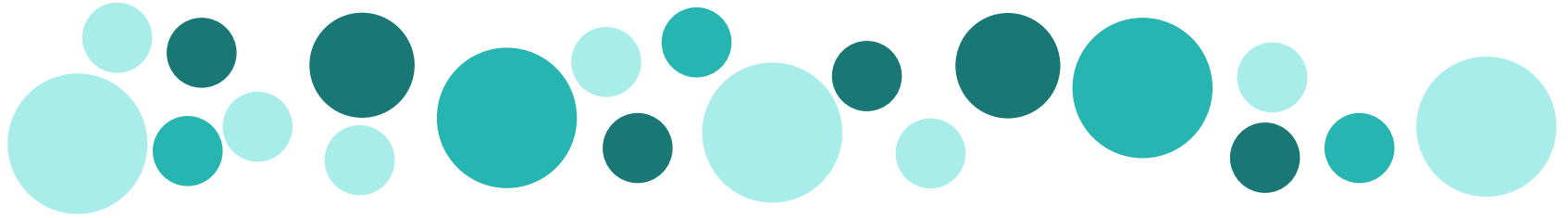
## What we will do - Objectives

Undertake targeted and intelligence led activity to improve health related behaviour in schools
Improve pathway and information sharing and ensure all partner agencies understand the part they play.
Ensure every child and young person's needs are assessed and planned for with needs being met
Reduce a range of risk-taking behavior including substance misuse and sexual health
Promote positive health choices by parents, especially during pregnancy



## What we will do - Objectives

Support improved parenting skills through evidence based programmes that help build resilience and promote self-help
Improve confidence, skills and knowledge across the Children and Young People's workforce around social and emotional mental health at a universal and targeted level.
Develop a range of accommodation and support options that support independence and tenancy readiness.
Encourage further integrated partnership working across the children and family hubs.
Support the whole family in relation to emotional wellbeing



## What we will do - Objectives

Ensure timely access to specialist mental health services for children, young people and their families when required.
Create children and family hubs with partners including the development of emotional wellbeing services with providers
Ensure positive activities and opportunities for young people that prevent the need for more acute interventions
Challenge the stigma of poor emotional wellbeing so that no child or young person is disadvantaged or socially excluded because of their experience of mental ill-health



## What we know

As all schools move towards academy status, the role of strategic coherence to school improvement is vital.

The Local Authority continues to work in partnership with all schools, supporting them to ensure our young people continue to achieve their full potential and aspirations. The educational excellence statutory function required by 1996 Education Act is delivered by the Council's Education teams.

High quality education releases talent, ignites enterprise and endeavour and transforms lives. We want all children and young people to make progress and achieve to the fullest of their ability at every stage of their lives, from their early years through to adulthood. We want this for them because we know that educational attainment has a strong and direct impact on improving their social mobility in life and their consequent health and wellbeing.

## What we are doing already

- A trend of KS2 improvement – climbed 19 places from 115/150 to 96/150 in 2018
- Expanding our virtual school to reduce attainment gap.





## What our young people are telling us

“To get my own house and to have a good life”

25%

Said having enough money was important or were worried about passing exams or not achieving

“Give all young people a chance”

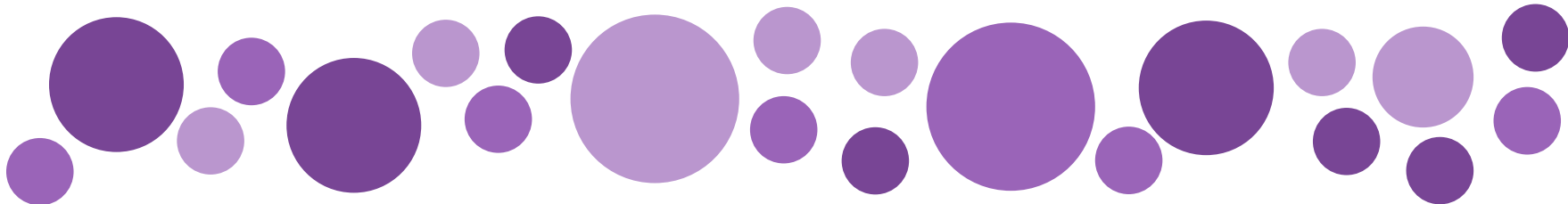
A large amount of comments were about ensuring that they got a good job and being successful.

“Reduce pressure on children from testing and exams...not everyone is academic”





2%

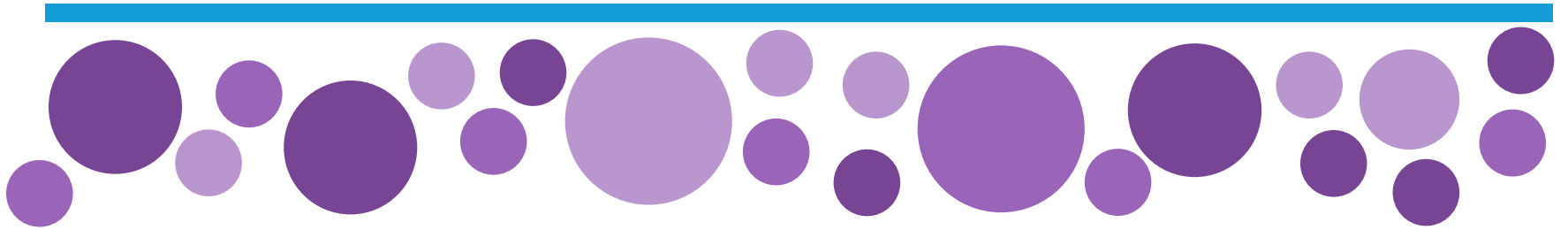
Said they wanted to go to university

A number of comments were made regarding access to good and appropriate educational provision



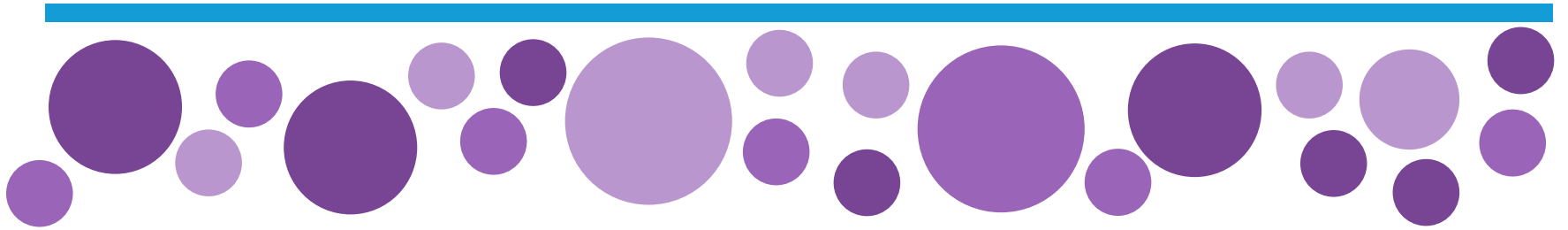
## What we want to achieve

Outcome	Why this is important
 <p>Ensure children have access to good education provision</p>	<p>We ensure children and young people have enough opportunity to access a wide range of provision even if they are not in a traditional classroom environment</p>
 <p>Raise achievement, aspiration and progress for all</p>	<p>We will raise aspiration and ambition through raising standards in schools, improve the percentage of children in schools and that are good or outstanding and engaging with young people.</p>
 <p>Equip young people for life and work in a strong Medway economy</p>	<p>Through our Skills and Employability Plan we will make sure that the skills businesses want are matched appropriately with those of children and young people.</p>
 <p>Focused help to where is needed earlier</p>	<p>It is important that schools have the ability and skills to handle both complex cases and those with additional needs to allow as many students to be educated with their peers as possible.</p>



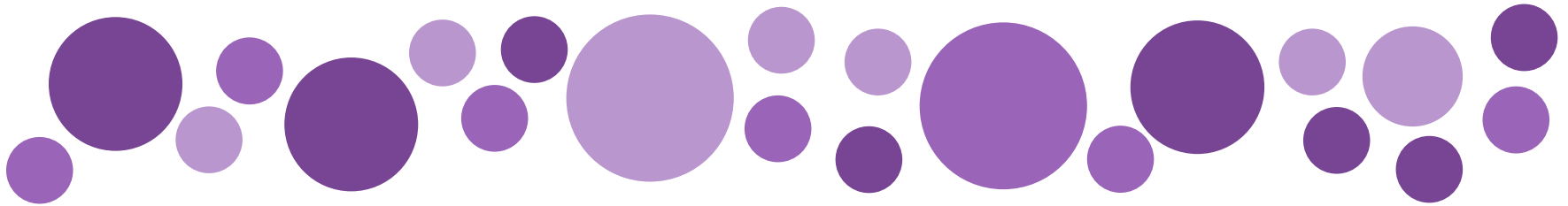
## What we will do - Objectives

Promote access to activities especially Council run activities and venues
Offer locally based interventions that address disadvantage at a neighbourhood level
Ensure the quality and timeliness of assessment and care planning and decision making for children in need and in need of protection.
Ensure Young People have a voice to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and make sure their opinions are taken into account
Work with RCET around Skills and Employability Strategy
Improve achievement at KS2 in all subjects to close the gap with national for all groups
Young People gaining access to Education, Training and Employment focus on – YOT, SEN, LAC



## What we will do - Objectives

Improve system leadership across teaching zones to reduce variations in school performance
Good universal offer for children's 0-5 education including school readiness
Families able to access Early help before needs escalate
Ensure a smooth education pathway from childhood to adult hood for children and young people (incl. LAC and SEND)
Improve Young People access to education, training and employment
Ensure staff trained in resilience –based practice
All children should start their education and continue to be educated together (incl. LAC and SEND)
Increase the uptake of high-quality early education.



## What we will do - Objectives

Encourage parental engagement and enable families to provide strong support for their children's learning to support their development
Ensure children and young people (incl. LAC and SEND) are provided with opportunities to develop resilience and learn to be as independent as possible as they transition to adulthood
Each area to have a Youth Centre or access to Youth Work provision.
Coordinated response for families needing support and ensure all children and young people have a safe roof over their heads
Recognise young people as a valuable asset and create opportunities beyond the school gates that build their skills and knowledge and broaden their horizons.
Ensure every LAC's Personal Education Plan outlines their strengths and areas for development and how the school will support
Targeted support to increase care leavers to progress to higher education



# Opportunities and challenges

Opportunity / Challenge

Solution



Partnerships

After a review in May 2016, a stronger, but more flexible, statutory framework and partnership was proposed between the Police, Local Authority and CCG to improve children and young people's safeguarding.



Robust data to inform service improvement

Continue to think smartly about how we collect information about our services and the people that use them and how we use that to improve services.



Budgets

Increasing requirement to make savings and think creatively about how we deliver



Changes in legislation

We have reviewed our SEN Transport policy and worked to reduce unit costs and demand. Plus we will work with schools and academies to facilitate a more inclusive approach

