

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

7 SEPTEMBER 2023

INFANT FEEDING STRATEGY 2023-2028

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Summary

The following paper provides an overview of the draft Medway Infant Feeding Strategy. This is a refresh of the 2018 Infant Feeding Strategy, to ensure the strategic ambitions and actions are fit for purpose.

The strategy outlines the steps taken to refresh the strategy, including the detailed data analysis, community and stakeholder engagement and the assessment of best practice. The strategy concludes with the Infant Feeding priorities for Medway, that will need to be delivered by a range of partners over the next five years.

The Strategy will be reported to Cabinet on 26 September 2023 for final consideration and approval.

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to review the outcomes as set out in the Infant Feeding Strategy 2022-2023, the aim of which is to produce better outcomes for the local population.
- 1.2. The Health and Wellbeing Board Members are asked to consider how they or the organisations that they represent can help to deliver the recommendations set out in the Infant Feeding Strategy 2023-2028.
- 1.3. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to make and send any comments on the Infant Feeding Strategy 2023-2023 to Cabinet.

2. Budget and policy framework

- 2.1 Since 1 April 2013, local authorities have been responsible for improving the health of their local population and for public health services. Medway Council's strategic priorities include 'supporting residents to realise their potential'. Improving infant feeding rates and behaviours specifically links to the aspiration of creating 'health and active communities'. Increasing breast feeding rates in more disadvantaged communities, will support action to reduce health inequalities.
- 2.2 Approval of the Infant Feeding Strategy 2023-2028 is a matter for Cabinet.

3. Advice and analysis

3.1 Appendix A details the draft Medway Infant Feeding Strategy.

4. Risk management

4.1 A diversity impact assessment has been completed and can be found in appendix B. No issues were identified within the DIA that would impact this strategy implementation.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Partner engagement	Critical stakeholders fail to engage and do not prioritise the infant feeding agenda over the life of the strategy	Regular partner meetings, ensuring the priority is raised at suitable meetings such as Health and Wellbeing board and Health and Care Partnership Board	CIII
Impact	The proposed strategy goals and actions do not have the desired impact and breastfeeding and infant feeding does not improve in Medway	Progress will be reported to Medway Council and Health and Wellbeing Board with annual actions revisited	CII

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely	I Catastrophic
B Likely	II Major
C Unlikely	III Moderate
D Rare	IV Minor

5. Consultation

5.1 Section two of Appendix A details how residents were heavily consulted during the development of the strategy. Activity included a series of focus groups and 1 to 1 interviews with key stakeholders.

6. Climate change implications

6.1 [The Council declared a climate change emergency in April 2019](#) - item 1038D refers, and has set a target for Medway to become carbon neutral by 2050.

6.2 Increasing breastfeeding rates correlates to improved infant and adult health and helps to reduce greenhouse gases and lessen the environmental impact of food alternatives. When compared with breastmilk, formula milk production uses large amounts of water and has a high carbon footprint. Increasing breastfeeding rates in Medway will have a positive impact on the environment and aligns with the climate change aspiration of Medway Council.

7. Financial implications

7.2 There are no new financial implications related to this briefing paper. All the current identified infant feeding actions are funded by either the ring fenced Public Health grant, the NHS or children's social care based budgets. New funding was recently made available via the Family Hubs and Start for Life project with specific grant conditions relating to infant feeding topics for these specific initiatives include a focus on infant feeding.

8. Legal implications

8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this paper.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Medway Infant Feeding Strategy

Appendix B – Diversity Impact Assessment

Background papers

None