

Support for pregnancy and care of under 5s

- Guidance for pregnancy and early years parenting
- Healthwatch heroes profile: Child dentistry
- Links to further information
- Emergency phone numbers



This is a resource we have put together which contains information that those going through pregnancy and caring for under 5s may find useful. Included is a Healthwatch hero study on dental care for young children.

There are many services for pregnant women, babies and children under five. The first point of call is the GP. You can contact them for any health issue relating to either mother or child. You should register with one as soon as possible if not registered. [Click here](#) to find your nearest GP.

About ten days after you give birth a health visitor will visit you at your home. A health visitor is a qualified nurse or midwife who has had extra training. While you are normally referred by your GP, you can contact them directly via a Kent specific link [here](#).

A health visitor is trained to support the physical and emotional development of the baby while also assisting the mother in things like breastfeeding and dealing with minor illnesses and infections.

Generally they make contact while the mother is still pregnant and again after birth, when the child is about 7 weeks, then at 3-4 months and finally at about two years old.

You can also contact them at any time up to the two years mark. Health Visitors can also recommend local parent and baby groups (Which you can also find out information about from your GP's receptionist). Contact information can be found [here](#).

Both GP's and health visitors also work in Child Health clinics. These clinics offer health and development reviews and vaccinations. Some but not all run groups to help support new parents on mental health and also breastfeeding,

These children's centres offer a wide range of services such as childcare, education, finding a job, parenting classes, support with mother and child development, specialist support for premature, disabled and special needs children, helpline and drop in services and volunteering opportunities. [Click here](#) to find your local centre.

There is also a Family Information Service which provides parents with support and information on a wide range of issues such as childcare, early education and parental and children health. It includes the only database of Kent based Ofsted registered childcare.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.

There are also information resource centres such as the Citizens Advice which offers advice on a range of issues, including benefits and housing. To find the nearest one to you please [click here](#).

Healthwatch Hero

Healthwatch hero on young family and child dental care:

Whilst providing you practical information and signposting to highlight support for those who are pregnant and caring for those under five, we wanted to shine a light on a Healthwatch Hero working for the benefit of children's dental health.

This Team of heroes worked through local nurseries.

Medway Council Public Health Team

Used Healthwatch feedback to inform their oral health strategy



Over the last 10 years, Healthwatch has worked with many organisations within the NHS, the voluntary community, social enterprise, and with public themselves.

This project is a shining example of excellence in health and social care.

100 people talked to Healthwatch Medway about NHS dentists.



Over half of them told us they either weren't registered with a dentist, or couldn't get an appointment.



Over half the people we spoke to either weren't able to register with an NHS dentist, or had struggled to get an appointment.



Some of them were waiting a very long time to see a dentist, and many talked about the difficulties they faced trying to afford to pay for the NHS dentist.



Our findings suggested that the health inequalities that already existed for people had got worse thanks to Covid.

Prior to that, Healthwatch highlighted a year on year increase in the number of tooth extractions being carried out on children due to tooth decay.

Healthwatch recommendations:



For Medway Public Health to co-create oral and dental health messages in partnership with communities, that would help people to understand why good oral health is important.



Healthwatch findings were used as part of Medway's new Oral Health Strategy which strived to reduce the health inequalities that we had identified.

Collaboration:

This strategy also drew on data from Healthwatch Surrey, as well as priorities identified by the [Medway Food Partnership](#).

Highlights from the strategy include:



The award team includes members of Medway Public Health plus people from Medway's Adult Social Care and local children's nurseries who have helped make these changes which strived to reduce the health inequalities that we had identified.

This strategy also drew on data from Healthwatch Surrey, as well as priorities identified by the Medway Food Partnership.

Highlights from the strategy:

- Talking to children and families during holiday club activities about oral health
- Exploring supervised teeth brushing sessions in schools and care homes
- Water refill stations across Medway to reduce the need for people to buy sugary drinks



Kate Bell, Medway Council Public Health Manager at the Healthwatch Kent and Medway Awards

HELPLINES



Contact: for families with disabled children

Support, advice and information for parents with disabled children.

- helpline: 0808 808 3555
- website: contact.org.uk

Family Lives

An organisation providing immediate help from volunteer parent support workers.

- helpline: 0808 800 2222
- website: www.familylives.org.uk

Family Rights Group

Support for parents and other family members whose children are involved with or need social care services.

- helpline: 0808 801 0366
- website: www.frg.org.uk

Gingerbread: single parents, equal families

Help and advice on the issues that matter to lone parents.

- helpline: 0808 802 0925
- website: www.gingerbread.org.uk

LINKS TO SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS



Here are some great website and organisations that can offer support, guidance and advice on issues that may arise during and after pregnancy.

- [We are beside you](#) campaign offers support on breastfeeding – for more info, [click here](#).
- The start for life programme offers a wide range of information on pregnancy, childbirth, the immediate aftermath and the progression from baby to toddler - [click here](#) for the website.
- If you are on benefits or/and are under 18, are 10 or more weeks pregnant or have a child/children under four, then you can get a prepaid cash card to spend on milk, fruit and veg and formula. You also get free vitamins with this card. To apply, [click here](#).
- For mental health support in Kent, [click here](#).
- The [Kent Mental Wellbeing hub](#) can also help.
- Further help on mental health in pregnancy can be found [here](#).
- This KCC website provides a wide range of help and guidance for parents of children under age 5 with SEND issues, [click here](#) to go to the page.
- [The Kent Portage Team](#) also works with families to support pre-school children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND). [Click here](#) to be referred, or you can contact them over the phone on 03000 417 704, or by email at kentportage@kent.gov.uk.

LINKS TO SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS



- **IASK** also help to empower children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities and their parents to make informed choices about their education and outcomes. They also help to communicate views and opinions confidently. They are a free, confidential and impartial service based in Kent. [Click here](#) to visit the website.
- **The Kent Resilience Hub** provides resources that support parents and carers on understanding how your children are growing emotionally, and how to respond in a helpful way when life gets challenging. [Click here](#) for more information.
- **Kent Children and Families Information Service (CFIS)** provides free, confidential, impartial information and advice to parents, carers and members of the public. They can help with childcare, early education, parenting, family life and issues that affect young people. To find out more [click here](#).
- **Children and Family Hubs and wellbeing centres** offer families with children places to meet new people. They offer baby groups, antenatal classes and baby clinics, information about breastfeeding, speech and language, parenting and more. [Click here](#) to find out more on their website.
- **KCCs Children's Centres** have multiple locations and offer a range of services, including childcare, early education, drop-in sessions for parents and children, services for children with special needs and disabilities and more. for more information, visit their website [here](#).
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- To find your closest **Children's Centre** in Medway, [click here](#).

URGENT CONTACT NUMBERS



Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust Maternity Triage:	01892 633500	24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Medway NHS Foundation Trust Call the Midwife:	01634 825277	24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust Maternity Assessment Unit:	01322 428280 or 01322 428278	24 hours a day, 7 days a week
East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust William Harvey Hospital Maternity Triage:	01233 616638	24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Queen Elizabeth Queen Mother Hospital Maternity Triage:	01843 234483	24 hours a day, 7 days a week