

SFP Bronze and Silver Awards Application Form 2024

This form is for completing an SFP Bronze or Silver Award application. If you are considering applying for a Gold Award, please contact the SFP team at sfpawards@soilassociation.org to discuss the process.



Before starting your application, please fully read this form as well as the following documents:

- SFP Awards: Guidance for applicants: [SFP Awards - Guidance for applicants 2024](#).
- SFP Awards: Activity and Impact: [SFP Awards - Activity and Impact 2024](#)

Please do not alter the formatting of this form or redesign it and only return as a Word document not a PDF. This is essential for you application to pass the initial eligibility check.

SECTION 1: Information about your partnership and your place

Please complete the following (*= mandatory):

Name of your partnership*:
Medway Food Partnership
Name and contact details of person/people leading on this application*:
Zak Shinwarie – Zakullah.Shinwarie@Medway.gov.uk
Oluseyi Obadare – Oluseyi.Obadare@Medway.gov.uk
Geographic region which this award will represent*:
Medway
Award you are applying for*:
Bronze

Please provide us with background information about your place (not scored)*: Advisory word limit: 400 words

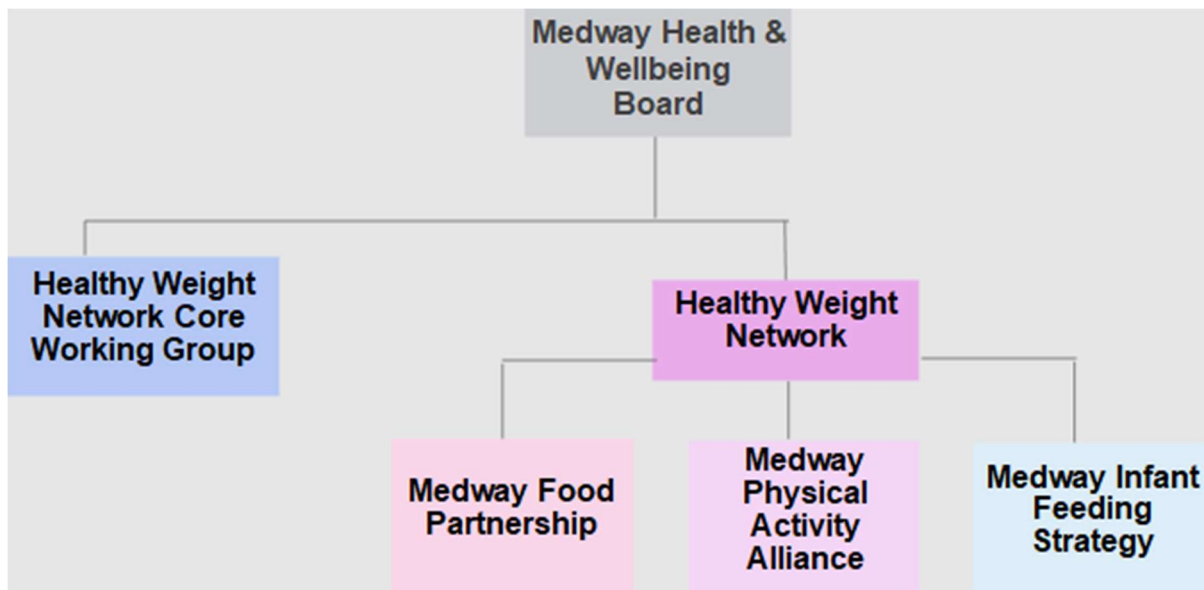
This is to help the panel understand the context in which you are working. *You may include (but not limited to): Population and demographic information, location/geography & economic and social challenges.*

ANSWER:

Medway Unitary Authority (Medway) was formed in 1998 and consists of five main towns (Strood, Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham, and Rainham) and several smaller towns and villages, now contained within 24 electoral wards. There were approximately 279,800 people in Medway in 2021, showing an increase of 15,875 (6%) from the 2011 Census (263,925). Although there is much variation between the Medway wards in terms of population density and deprivation, homelessness and unemployment rates in Medway are generally worse than the England average. Currently, a total of 11,866 children are eligible for benefits related free school meals in Medway, which has increased by 86% from 6,388 in 2019. Obesity is also a significant challenge in Medway and mirrors trends seen nationally. At reception age, 23.5% of Medway children are overweight or obese compared to the England average of 22.3%. This trend continues to be seen in year 6 children, with 41.5% being overweight or obese compared to the England average of 37.8%. Similarly, the percentage of adults living with excess weight in Medway (67%) is similar to the national average (64%).

Medway's Food Partnership was established in July 2020 with the aim to bring together a cross-sector of partners to work towards common goals in building a healthier food system. It is open to

all private and public sector organisations who have a part to play in the food system and health. The partnership is hosted by the council's public health team and feeds into the Healthy Weight Network. The Medway Healthy Weight network is a collaborative initiative that aims to tackle obesity and promote healthy weight in Medway through a whole systems approach. The network demonstrates accountability by reporting to the Medway Health and Wellbeing Board and the Medway Council Cabinet (outlined below). Therefore, one of the Medway Food Partnership's overarching aims is to reduce the levels of obesity in the community and we do so by adopting a holistic and collaborative approach to sustainable and healthy food.



How have you considered equity, diversity and inclusion in the structure and work of your partnership (not scored)*: ? Advisory word limit: 300 words

ANSWER:

The Medway Food Partnership is open to all private and public sector organisations who have a part to play in the food system and health. The team is made up of a mixture of council staff from different departments and partners from various sectors. As for council staff, Medway Council is committed to creating an inclusive work environment with a diverse workforce. All appropriately qualified candidates receive consideration for employment without regard to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability or age. More widely, our food partnership has taken active steps towards ensuring that the cultural diversity of Medway is captured by including representatives from various sectors and organisations, such as public health, education, business, leisure, planning, transport, NHS, voluntary and community groups. Our deep-rooted connection with our partners is also demonstrated by the partnership being co-chaired by the president of the Nigerian association, which is a local charity supporting the socio-economic and welfare needs of the community.

SECTION 2: Local food activity and impact

Please read SFP Awards: Guidance for applicants: [SFP Awards - Guidance for applicants 2024](#) before completing this section.

Please describe the activity and impact of local food work delivered in your place within the last three years against the relevant key issues (1-6) and action areas (A and B) below.

We advise that you keep answers to within 600 words for each action area (i.e. for each A and B under the key issues). Whilst you won't be penalised for going over this limit, this will help the panel focus on your main achievements. For sections C, 250 words is the mandatory limit.

For Bronze and Silver awards, there are mandatory actions for some key issues. These are laid out in *SFP Awards - Activity and Impact*: [SFP Awards - Activity and Impact.docx](#). This document also provides a broad benchmark for each award, rationale for SFP's inclusion of each key issue, and example actions for each action area.

Only submit additional documents for food action plans and strategies related to Key Issue 1 mandatory criteria. All other additional documents will not be assessed. You may add links to online documents but always check the links and permissions as we will not be requesting changes from you after submission.

Key Issue 1 Mandatory Criteria Checklist

NB failure to provide Key Issue 1, Action area B mandatory criteria will result in rejection at the eligibility stage.

- Bronze applications require a one year action plan
- Silver applications require a three year action plan

1. Have you submitted a current food action plan or food strategy with an action plan?
 - Yes
2. How are you evidencing this action plan?
 - Attachment as a Word, PFF, Excel document? Yes
3. Has the action plan less than 6 months to run?
 - No

Key Issue 1: Taking a strategic and collaborative approach to good food governance and action
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Action area A: Establish a broad, representative, and dynamic local food partnership

The Medway Food Partnership (MFP) is multi-organisation collaboration that aims to create a local food culture that is fair, healthy, sustainable, and supportive of the local economy. The partnership was established in 2020 and is open to all private sector,
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voluntary and charitable sector, academic and public sector partners, who have a part to play in the health and food system in Medway. It is currently hosted and funded by the Council's Public Health team, with plans to establish as a separate entity underway. The partnership is currently made up of 143 members from across 58 organisations, which are structured in five subgroups focusing on various aspects of food.

The partnership has clear terms of reference (attached) and food charter (attached) and holds annual network events to allow all stakeholders and residents to meet face to face to share challenges and solutions, while celebrating achievements to date.

To achieve our vision of creating a local food culture that is fair, healthy, sustainable, and supportive of the local economy, we have created a strategic steering group made up of subgroup chairs and senior public health management colleagues and 5 operational subgroups made up of multi-sector partners:

1. Poverty, Food Security and Emergency Food Support
2. Healthy Food for all and Education and Skills
3. Climate Change and the Environment
4. Business and Procurement
5. Oral Health

All subgroups have annually set priorities and hold quarterly meetings to action subgroup priorities. Each subgroup has an allocated chairperson who is responsible for reporting back on all activities to the steering group.

Subgroup 1 brings together representatives from multiple charities, Adult Education, foodbanks, religious organisations, growing initiatives, a range of council departments and food producers to tackle food poverty and provide emergency food support in Medway. It is currently exploring funding opportunities to kick-start a Food Hub, which will also strengthen our working relationship with food retailers through a surplus food donation scheme.

Subgroup 2 brings together representatives from a range of council departments, charities, Medway Adult Education, and a Multi-Academy Trust to educate community members on healthy eating and improving cooking skills through universal cookery courses for all ages. This subgroup is also working to map growing projects and are exploring funding opportunities to support these.

Subgroup 3 has been set up to progress food-related work within Medway's [Climate Change action plan](#) including actions around growing your own food, development of community growing spaces, food waste, and procurement. The subgroup also seeks to address climate change by empowering residents and partners to make practical food pledges, reduce single-use plastic through the promotion of the Refill scheme and addressing big food emission savings by working through the 'Every Mouthful Counts' toolkit.

Subgroup 4 brings together representatives from the NHS retail sector, a private soft drinks supplier, networking charity sector and a range of council departments, who work together on improving public sector catering and vending offer, the Food for Life school food programme and initiatives to encourage businesses to become involved in the partnership.

Subgroup 5 brings together representatives from local dentists, schools, community healthcare services, NHS, charities, and several council departments to reduce dental decay of everyone, especially the most vulnerable groups in Medway. This subgroup officially launched the Medway Oral Health Strategy in July 2022, with over 31 representatives from a variety of organisations across Medway, all committed to working to implement actions from the strategy in their organisations.

Action area B: Develop, deliver, and monitor a food strategy/action plan

Based on an open consultation with community members and a wide range of stakeholders ranging from charities and community groups to food businesses and farmers, the Medway Food Partnership (MFP) is currently in the final stages of developing a long-term food strategy. While we have been able to gather insights through surveys, community engagement workshops, one-to-one interviews and group discussions with residents and stakeholders by working closely with partners at the University of Greenwich, the strategy is still in the final stages of development and therefore not ready for submission. However, we have been able to use these insights to develop the one-year Action Plan (attached). Progress of project work will be monitored and maintained by subgroup chairs and the action plan will be reviewed annually by the food partnership steering group to ensure progress across all key food issues in line with our strategic goals once the strategy is published in Autumn 2024.

Food is also a key area identified and included in the [Climate Change Action Plan](#).

The MFP has developed a food charter (attached) that encapsulates our food vision and actively promotes a wide range of partners from Medway Council, local private and public sector organisations, and charities to act and ensure that people in Medway are able to eat, have access to appropriate diets, and to address the root causes of people's difficulties.

The MFP has developed branding to express the partnership's identity, encompassing its mission, values, and unique narrative, all of which are used to promote our work on healthy and sustainable food. The partnership uses its logo on all platforms that promotes its services, such as through the Medway Council's [website](#), the Sustainable Food Places [website](#), the Food for the Planet [website](#) etc. We have also created banners to promote the partnership at various public events throughout the year. Lastly, we have created MFP window stickers, which are distributed among partners in recognition of their work towards our common goal of healthy and sustainable food for all.

C: Other information: Other activities and context (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

Key Issue 2: Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement

***NB at Silver** we require evidence that your food partnership has catalysed, influenced or delivered activity. That the food partnership has created additionality. At Silver simply mapping activity is not sufficient. The 'value added' of the partnership must be demonstrated.*

Action area A: Inspire and engage the public about good food

The Medway Food Partnership (MFP) newsletter raises public awareness of food, health and sustainability related issues and is currently sent quarterly to over 220 subscribers. A Climate Change newsletter which includes progress updates on the Climate Change Action Plan, local climate events, tips for improving your carbon footprint and general sustainability is sent monthly to over 1,350 subscribers.

Social media posts promoting the [Refill](#) scheme to Medway residents were published throughout the spring months to encourage uptake of the scheme among residents.

The Climate Change webpages offer information on the [Waste Hierarchy](#), as well as how to shop smarter, reduce food waste and home composting through our individualised pages for both [residents](#) and [visitors](#). Our dedicated social media pages ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [twitter](#)) also frequently promote reducing food waste, the correct disposal of food that does go to waste, Refill opportunities and seasonal options.

In May 2024, the University of Greenwich hosted a community learning workshop where Medway residents gathered to discuss and explore the food challenges that they experience and developed some ideas of what our desired food futures might look like and how to get there. This community learning event was just one part of a set of 'Let's Talk About Food and Nature in Medway' activities, including an online survey, artist-led food engagements, community food photography, and a stakeholder workshop.

The Climate Response team attend various public events in Medway to promote climate actions. The public are given a variety of items to support their journey to being more sustainable, such as spaghetti measures to support cooking correct portion sizes, bamboo cutlery kits to support saying no to single use plastic when out and about, and seed sticks to support growing their own vegetables and herbs at home. Three prizes won in the [Medway Walk to School Challenge](#) were the Creative Climate Classrooms, which talked to students about the emissions caused by food, and the options available to them to decrease their food carbon footprints.

The Food for Life (FFL) programme is actively promoted to all schools across Medway and aligns with the Better Medway School Award to offer a whole-school approach focused to embed healthy food culture within schools. The programme manager supports enrolled schools to access online training modules including Growing and cooking for schools, Eat Smart, and can work individually with schools on topics such as sugar swaps, oral health, the EatWell guide etc.

The Food & Nutrition team, work in collaboration with a range of partners such as Adult Education, Military personnel and attend various community events to engage the public on healthy eating/behaviour change and to promote our cookery services. Activities include food preparation, a sensory fruit and vegetable activity for children and provision of resources including Change4Life material, recipe cards and colouring activities. The cookery services are promoted through various avenues including the council's website, social media pages, flyers, word of mouth, referrals (both internal and external) and events/outreach. We are also currently piloting a 'train the trainer' style session to empower key community members to facilitate healthy eating workshops and/or community cookery groups in their settings to scale up the promotion of healthy eating skills and education across Medway.

The food partnership played a bridging role in bringing together local charities and the council through the household support fund. We were able to highlight the need for the delivery of specifically tailored educational sessions by local charity partners to support their clients. A such, funds were allocated to allow 10 partner charities to support over 420 residents with a mixture of sessions, including live cooking demonstrations, educational trips to supermarkets and developing recipe books - all tailored towards how to eat better for less.

The 3-month long Phase 3 of the [Medway Can](#) campaign incorporated the work of the MFP and its members and included two events bringing together local suppliers of fresh fruit and vegetables and local caterers. Social media was used to promote these events along with regular posts to encourage swapping of unhealthy foods for more fruit and vegetables. The first event involved healthy food cookery demonstrations and gave away 420 packages of healthy food to the public to create food at home. The second event supplied over 300 people with a bag of fruit and veg as part of their 5 a day. Recipe cards were available in addition to directing people to make use of the Medway Can [website's](#) resources such as recipe cards, case studies and information on local businesses that supported the events.

Action Area B: Foster food citizenship and a local good food movement

As part of subgroup 4, we are working to establish a procurement forum to enable partners to work together on a range of food initiatives to ensure all council contracts embed sustainability and nutrition. This will be further supported by the development of a sustainable food procurement policy that is currently underway.

To ensure health aspects such as growing and open spaces are a condition of new major planning applications, Medway council employs a specialist planning officer who monitors applications submitted to the council. The food partnership also has key input into the local planning process to ensure our sustainable food priorities are captured.

As part of the [Growing Kent & Medway project](#), we provide a range of research grants worth from £5,000 to £250,000. Whether businesses want to find alternative ways to protect crops, or create a new use for waste products, there is funding to invest in innovative projects. We also run an in-person 2-day training on getting investment ready.

The [Medway Can](#) campaign has also awarded a total of £6500 towards food related projects, including a community growing garden and healthy cookery sessions. Funding has also been awarded to several schools to develop growing plots that will be used as part of children's education during school time and additionally open to parents and local community members such as care home residents to contribute to the project and integrate both the very young and elder community members together. Medway's [Holiday Activities and Food](#) Programme also provides opportunities for children to get involved with local growing over the school holidays.

Working with our Healthy Weight Network partners, we share the demand for growing opportunities and connect organisations together to create new opportunities and share local and national initiatives that encourage growing. Examples of meetings with local stakeholders to establish potential growing projects include:

1. Meeting the head of Medway libraries to establish space within the library grounds and to create a community of growing club as part of the library offer.
2. Discussions with health coaches who are based in GP surgeries to identify practises with land attached to create a patient growing group.
3. Visits to local allotments to build relationships with the local Allotment Federation to share knowledge and understanding on how allotments work.

Subgroup 2 of the partnership has mapped the current growing opportunities via the Whole Systems Obesity [dashboard](#) to ensure maximum allocation to residents, charities, and communities to increase growing, knowledge and wellbeing in these populations. Work to identify new allotment spaces is ongoing within the planning system and the dashboard is updated accordingly. Across Medway, local churches incorporate growing into their place of welcome programmes and other council buildings such as libraries are working to incorporate growing areas into their revised plans. Subgroup 2 members are also part of a local 'Edible Trail' initiative, which is an early step in a partnership led by Rainham Eco-Hub and supported by Kent Wildlife Trust and Medway Norse to map existing edible plants and create new features to encourage engaging with nature, healthy and seasonal eating and how to grow your own fruit and veg to help your budget. Recent discussions also include promoting access to green spaces for those on the waiting list for local allotments.

C: Other information: Other activities and context (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

Key Issue 3: Tackling food poverty and diet related ill-health and increasing access to affordable healthy food

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Action area A: Tackle food poverty

The partnership is actively co-ordinating increasing access to healthy food and ensuring food security for people experiencing food poverty/security by bringing together 17 local organisations, including charities, foodbanks, religious groups, and government initiatives such as the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme and the Household Support Fund in delivering food support.

The excellent work of our partners continues as they support an estimate of 21,000 people on a monthly basis. This built on the work of previous years where 7,654 food parcels were delivered during Christmas in 2020 and 16,357 and 16,976 households were supported monthly in 2021 and 2022, respectively. In 2023, we used the household support fund to support local charity partners in delivering food support and to deliver educational sessions. Through this funding, they supported 24,573 people with food support, including cooked meals and BAME food items. Alongside increasing the fruit and veg content of food parcels, partners have used funds to pay for vegan, gluten free, halal meat and hygiene products to meet user demand as well as to cover costs of deliveries to vulnerable service users. As for the educational component, 420 residents benefited from a mixture of sessions and resources, including live cooking demonstrations, educational trips to supermarkets and recipe books - all tailored towards how to eat better for less. Data from Medway foodbank shows an increase in demand in recent years, demonstrated by a 72% increase in food vouchers issued and 109% increase in the total people fed over the last 5 years. Therefore, we now have much more signposting information, referral pathways and other help for people than we did 5 years ago. A timetable of the food support available everyday can be found [here](#).

All our charity partners uphold the dignity of clients by considering their specific needs. Alongside ensuring the fruit and veg content of food parcels, they buy vegan, gluten free, halal meat, BAME food items and hygiene products to meet user demand. They ensure service users have an opportunity to come together and enjoy hot meals by providing cooked meals in local community kitchens. They also support residents increase their

skills and knowledge by providing a mixture of sessions, including live cooking demonstrations for various cultures, trips to supermarkets and developing recipe books - all tailored towards how to eat better for less.

Free meals are introduced for parents and carers of inpatients on children's ward at Medway Hospital, meaning they have one less thing to worry about. Available each day, a breakfast, lunch and dinner menu has been introduced where parents and carers can choose either the daily dish of the day, or one of the always available main courses.

[MedwayGo](#) is the [Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\) programme](#) for Medway. The programme works with over 40 providers to offer activities over the main school holidays where children aged 5-16 years old who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals participate in physical activities, enrichment activities, develop a greater understanding of nutrition, health and food, and receive a hot, healthy meal, as they would during term time. There is also provision for families by way of access to the right support services, information about food and nutrition and access to cookery courses and being signposted to other information sources and health networks. The focus on food and nutrition is important to introduce new habits to the types of foods children and families eat, as well as taking steps towards a healthier, more active lifestyle.

In Medway, the Healthy Start scheme is promoted and uptake was recorded to be 66% in January 2023. The Healthy Start scheme promotion was reviewed as part of the Infant Feeding Strategy in May 2023 and one of the updated goals is to "Widely promote the benefits of breastfeeding, responsive feeding, introducing solid foods at six months and the Healthy Start scheme". Some of the local charities already accept Healthy Start vouchers, with others working towards registering. This is very useful for our residents to stretch their budgets. We are actively working towards increasing the number of organisations signed up on the [Open Food Network](#) in Medway, which will further support families as the Healthy Start Vouchers are accepted on the online platform.

Medway Council is currently undergoing a pay review called MedPay for all local authority contracted staff. In 24/25 identified the priority was to make a 5% pay award to all staff to address concerns about comparatively low increases over the last five years. This included an increase in the amount for the lowest pay grade (range 1 staff) which is now £11.44 per hour, just short of the real living wage amount. The council are working on addressing this gap and moving to a minimum of the living wage for April 2025. Once addressed the council will be encouraging its contractors to adopt the same approach.

The [Medway Healthy Workplace](#) (MHW) Programme currently deliver workshops covering Food and Mood, Food Labelling and financial wellbeing which include healthy eating on a budget. A new project for the 2024 financial year is to work collaboratively with the MHW to add a food partnership tier to this award framework that better captures elements of healthy eating (low fats, salts and sugar, reduced meat, increased vegetables, reducing portion sizes etc...) and sustainability (locally sourced ingredients,

less but better meat, reduced single use plastic, reduced food waste etc...), among others. This project will also include trainings and support for partners.

Action Area B: Promote healthy eating

South-eastern railway has used a pilot document to introduce healthy vending across their staff areas across Medway stations and have therefore renegotiated their contract with their current supplier to increase product availability that fits within the guidance.

Using Sustain's advertising policy toolkit, Medway Council have agreed changes to their advertising and sponsorship policy to restrict the advertising of foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS). For Medway it will mean that all future contracts to advertise on council owned advertising space for example bus shelters, roundabouts, reverse of parking tickets will need to meet certain criteria. This is a simple process called the nutrient profiling (NP) model which many of our well know fast food and confectionary brands have been following for some years. The model was developed by the Food Standards Agency in 2004-2005 as a tool to help Ofcom differentiate foods and improve the balance of television advertising to children. This same model is now being applied across adverting spaces and in our case here in Medway, sponsorship of any council events. Going forward we would like businesses who both advertise or own advertising space across Medway to make the same changes and join us in our aim to normalise healthier food choices across Medway. This also supports the "Health in all policies" element in our Whole Systems Approach to Obesity.

The Medway Events team have commissioned a consultant to develop an Outdoor Green Events Guide to support sustainable event management of small, medium, large and major events across Medway. This comprehensive guidance will include components of food and nature to ensure the use of local, ethical and fair-trade options when sourcing food and beverages for events, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions related to food waste disposal, and the overall long-term sustainability of our food system.

The Medway Public Health team continue to promote the Sugar smart app, campaigning material from Change4Life, healthy recipes and resources both from partners/national campaigns/websites e.g., Association for Nutrition, British Dietetic Association. The food and nutrition team and healthy pregnancy team also run cookery services and pregnancy courses (Bump Club) to support the life course approach. These services are promoted through various means including website, flyers, social media, word of mouth, events/outreach, referrals etc.

The Food for Life (FFL) programme is actively promoted to all schools across Medway and aligns with the Better Medway School Award and the variety of initiatives taking place via Medway Council and beyond to offer a whole-school approach focused to embed healthy food culture within schools. The programme manager supports enrolled schools to access online and face-to-face training including Growing, Cooking and Farm Links and works individually with schools on topics such as teaching cooking confidently, top tips for getting started with school growing, linking healthy eating to gardening and growing and more. FFL schools and local leaders have attended 6 face-to-face training sessions aimed

to inspire staff to develop cooking and growing with children and young people in their settings. In its first year, 20 schools enrolled in the programme, and in Year 2 this has been exceeded with 21 schools enrolling so far. Two schools have achieved the Food for Life Bronze Award, with three more receiving their Award presentations for Foundation or Bronze Awards in Summer 2024. Other KPIs are available upon request.

The Medway Oral Health Strategy was launched in July 2022 with the aim to reduce oral health inequalities and improve oral health outcomes for service users of all agencies involved. One of the three priorities centres on reducing the free sugars in the diets of service users and all services have a responsibility to offer healthy food choices in their settings.

The Council's planning team are emphasising the promotion of individual growing spaces in new residential buildings. The team also ensures that new residential developments are not placed in food deserts, or that their development reduces access to green spaces/and or heritage sites for the community. The team also reviews applications and controls the establishment of fast-food restaurants near schools and concentrated areas.

[Healthy Early Years Awards](#) is a programme for childcare settings which ensures they're providing nutritious meals, good food education, inviting eating environments and good physical activity meeting the WHO guidance. It also ensures that policies are in place and settings are making the most of conversations with families and providing the best holistic approach when it comes to providing a healthy start for our Medway children and their families.

Free meals are introduced for parents and carers of inpatients on children's ward at Medway Hospital, meaning they have one less thing to worry about. Available each day, a breakfast, lunch and dinner menu has been introduced where parents and careers can choose either the daily dish of the day, or one of the always available main courses. The hospital has also incorporated a 5-a-day greengrocer at the main entrance to promote consumption of locally sourced fresh fruit and vegetables.

The Medway Food Partnership has worked with the Medway Public Health Intelligence team to explore food mapping in Medway and have mapped the current growing, healthy eating, weight management and other opportunities via the Whole Systems Obesity [dashboard](#) to ensure maximum allocation to residents and increase community growing, knowledge, and health and wellbeing among residents. Further work is currently underway to identify gaps in access to healthy food and growing initiatives as part of the Medway Food Strategy development process. A key priority for this year has been set for subgroup 1 to update the mapping of food provision and access across Medway to include food businesses and for subgroup 2 to expand on food business mapping to gather more insights into food businesses in Medway. These workstreams will be used to further develop the current food support [page](#) and the [dashboard](#), respectively.

C: Other information: Other activities and context (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

Key Issue 4: Creating a vibrant, prosperous, and diverse sustainable food economy

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Action area A: Put good food enterprise at the heart of local economic development

The [Food Accelerator Programme](#) is a 4-month programme of dedicated business and technical support, providing training, tools, mentoring and networking opportunities. The programme had a successful start in September 2022 with a cohort of 17 local innovative food and drink businesses with particular emphasis on plant-based food including healthy snacking. Through partnership working, the organisers of the [Medway Food and Drink Festival](#) have offered the opportunity to some of the Food Accelerator businesses to showcase their business on stage. The programme also provides a range of online and in-person [events](#) happening throughout the year from business masterclasses to demonstration visits. The programme has already contributed highly to knowledge exchange in the last 6 months and is driving demand from the business community to the [Medway Food Innovation Centre](#). With incredible new capabilities in alternative protein, novel processing, sustainable packaging, product development and business support, the centre will deliver step-changing food innovation to local food businesses, and it has the potential to become a UK Centre of Excellence for alternative protein-based food innovation including plant and algal protein-based food processing.

The Medway Food Partnership played a key facilitating role in connecting local food startups from the [Food Accelerator Programme](#) with local kitchen spaces across different organisations, such as Medway Adult Education. This is crucial for the development and scalability of these innovative food businesses.

The Medway Events team have commissioned a consultant to develop an Outdoor Green Events Guide to support sustainable event management of small, medium, large and major events across Medway. This comprehensive guidance will include components of food and nature to ensure the use of local, ethical and fair-trade options when sourcing food and beverages for events, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions related to food waste disposal, and the overall long-term sustainability of our food system.

A disproportionately high number of food sector businesses have submitted successful bids for Partnership for Growth Grants and fill 50% of Medway's [Growth Entrepreneur](#) programme places. With [Shared Prosperity Funding](#), further support can be offered to the industry, starting with part-financing a University of Greenwich role of 'Food Innovation Coordinator' to support businesses in the sector and support their long-term occupation and growth in Medway.

The Medway Food partnership (MFP) is actively promoting the [Open Food Network](#) in the community. This platform will act as a distribution network, allowing all parts of the food

network to come together from farm to fork. By connecting local producers directly with local businesses and citizens, we will be able to reduce food miles and food waste and ensure that local food stays local by increasing their visibility in the local community. The MFP has long supported local food businesses through COVID-19 by signposting residents and it continues to serve as a platform to connect the local economy. A recent example of this is the sourcing of local caterers for the local hospital food shop.

The Medway Food Partnership is currently working with the [Healthy Workplace Programme](#) to develop an awards framework to encourage and support local food businesses in adopting our health and sustainability goals. Improvements could be encouraged around healthy options, lower sugar options, portion size, local produce, climate change and better promotion of healthier options. Encouraging food businesses locally to adopt healthier and more climate friendly catering has the potential to influence healthy eating across the community and encourage more sustainable practices. At the same time, using the existing workplace health programme will encourage food businesses to think about the wellbeing of their own staff. As such, we have sent out letters to all these businesses to engage them in the process. Once established, we will be able to promote greater consumer spending in local independent and sustainable food businesses and move closer to creating a vibrant, prosperous and diverse sustainable local food economy.

[Rochester Farmers market](#) is an established award-winning market that has been trading since 2000 and operates every third Sunday in Blue Boar Lane Car Park. This traditional farmers' market offers over thirty stalls of seasonal, local food produce from the local area, operating under the terms and conditions of farmers markets in the UK. All traders have either grown, bred, processed, or baked their goods to sell at this market. This platform provides an opportunity to buy local seasonal food, reducing air miles, packaging giving consumers the farm to fork platforms.

As part of a push towards promoting local food businesses, a [restaurant](#) on Rochester high street has offered space to local food businesses to promote and sell their goods on during weekends.

From Monday 3 April 2023, Medway Council announced free parking every Monday from 9am in ten car parks across Medway. This will support the high street and local businesses by increasing footfall and allowing citizens to enjoy the benefits they have to offer.

Alongside multiple key stakeholders, including the Medway Food Partnership, the University of Greenwich has made a bid to receive funding from the UKRI Realising the Health Co-Benefits of Net Zero & Health fund towards developing a local food hub in Medway, which will help us join a network of food hubs across Kent. We have active engagement from local councillors, Public Health leads, social enterprises and local charities to achieve this goal.

Action Area B: Promote healthy, sustainable, and independent food businesses to consumers

We are actively promoting the [Open Food Network](#) within our community. This open-source online platform offers the perfect opportunity to keep local food local by allowing producers to promote and sell their produce directly to Medway food hubs, businesses, and residents. Furthermore, by joining the network, food sellers will also accept the Healthy Start vouchers, which will further increase accessibility to locally sourced, healthy food for our community.

As part of a push towards promoting local food businesses, a [restaurant](#) on Rochester high street has recently offered space to local food businesses to promote and sell their goods on during weekends.

Medway Hospital has recently incorporated a 5-a-day greengrocer at the main entrance to promote consumption of locally sourced fresh fruit and vegetables.

The Medway Food Partnership is currently working with the [Healthy Workplace Programme](#) towards developing an awards framework to encourage and support local food businesses in adopting our health and sustainability goals. Improvements could be encouraged around healthy options, lower sugar options, portion size, local produce, climate change and better promotion of healthier options. Currently there are approximately just over 2000 registered food businesses in Medway ranging from restaurants to hot food takeaways, newsagents, cafes and school or workplace catering. The average UK resident eats out of the home 1.5 times a week and a fifth of UK adults report eating a takeaway at least once a week. Encouraging food businesses locally to adopt healthier and more climate friendly catering has the potential to influence healthy eating across the community and encourage more sustainable practices. At the same time, using the existing workplace health programme will encourage food businesses to think about the wellbeing of their own staff. As such, we have sent out letters to all these businesses to engage them in the process. Once established, we will be able to promote greater consumer spending in local independent and sustainable food businesses and move closer to creating a vibrant, prosperous and diverse sustainable local food economy.

Historically, the food partnership has played a fundamentally enabling role in bringing local, independent food businesses to consumers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we supported local businesses by signposting residents towards those that delivered food through the council website, which later transformed into our food support [page](#). A more recent example of this type of work is the food partnership serving as a platform to source local food for the Medway Maritime hospital by connecting them with local caterers on short notice.

Stage 3 of the [Medway Can](#) campaign brought together and promoted local food businesses including local suppliers of fresh fruit and vegetables and local caterers to the public through 2 public events. Social media was also used to promote and provide information on all these local businesses that supported the events.

The vast majority of Medway food businesses participate in the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, which allows citizens to easily find local food businesses and also supports them in their decision-making.

The Medway Events team have commissioned a consultant to develop an Outdoor Green Events Guide to support sustainable event management of small, medium, large and major events across Medway. This comprehensive guidance will include components of food and nature to ensure the use of local, ethical and fair-trade options when sourcing food and beverages for events, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions related to food waste disposal, and the overall long-term sustainability of our food system.

[Rochester Farmers market](#) is an established award-winning market that has been trading since 2000 and operates every third Sunday in Blue Boar Lane Car Park. This traditional farmers' market offers over thirty stalls of seasonal, local food produce from the local area, operating under the terms and conditions of farmers markets in the UK. All traders have either grown, bred, processed, or baked their goods to sell at this market. This platform provides an opportunity to buy local seasonal food, reducing air miles, packaging giving consumers the farm to fork platforms.

C: Other information: Other activities and context (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

Regardless of whether we receive the UKRI Realising the Health Co-Benefits of Net Zero & Health funding, we are keen to develop a food hub in Medway and are actively backed by local councillors, Public Health leads, social enterprises and local charities to achieve this goal by exploring alternative sources of funding together.

Key Issue 5: Transforming catering and procurement and revitalising local and sustainable food supply chains

***NB at Silver** we require evidence that your food partnership has catalysed, influenced or delivered activity. That the food partnership has created additionality. At Silver simply mapping activity is not sufficient. The 'value added' of the partnership must be demonstrated.*

Action area A: Change policy and practice to put good food on people's plates

Medway Council Public Health have developed a draft local Sustainable Food policy and once it gets approved, we will use this to work with our procurement team to review contracts and processes and look for opportunities to embed key themes on healthy eating, climate change and oral health, ranging from school catering contract to adult social care. This will be added to the social value scoring of the framework for future contracts.

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food and beverages for events, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions related to food waste disposal, and the overall long-term sustainability of our food system.

[The Medway Healthy Workplace Award's](#) environmental and sustainability pledges encourage businesses to make provision for the appropriate removal of food waste and supporting local food producers by buying produce locally where possible and serving local produce on site. A new project for 2024 is to work collaboratively with the Medway Healthy Workplace team to add a food partnership tier to their award framework that better captures elements of healthy eating (low fats, salts and sugar, reduced meat, increased vegetables, reducing portion sizes etc...) and sustainability (locally sourced ingredients, less but better meat, reduced single use plastic, reduced food waste etc...), among others. This project will also include trainings and support for partners. Encouraging food businesses locally to adopt healthier and more climate friendly catering has the potential to influence healthy eating across the community and encourage more sustainable practices. At the same time, using the existing workplace health programme will encourage food businesses to think about the wellbeing of their own staff. Once established, we will be able to promote greater consumer spending in local independent and sustainable food businesses and move closer to creating a vibrant, prosperous and diverse sustainable local food economy.

The food partnership has continually promoted the [Refill Scheme](#) through a variety of avenues, which currently has a wide range of 74 organisations registered as free water refill stations across Medway. We have worked with the Council's Communications Team to develop a clear communications plan that actively promotes the scheme to local businesses and organisations. The first round of this promotional activity comprised of social media posts to promote uptake of the scheme among organisations and residents, taking advantage of the springtime weather.

Medway's [Holiday Activities and Food](#) (HAF) programme commissions caterers and food providers via the HAF DPS to deliver hot, healthy meals to children accessing every holiday activity session. Providers are selected based on their commitment to adhering to school food standards and ensuring the food they provide is healthy. All providers have a responsibility to inform children and families of healthy eating options and provide signposting to sources of locally produced, low-cost food provision. All children are encouraged to bring water bottles with them (and are provided with free lightweight water bottles if they forget) to each activity and water refills are available to all children throughout the day.

Medway Council has commissioned Food for Life (FFL) to work proactively with schools, caterers and the Council catering procurement team to support continuous improvement of the catering offer in Medway. FFL is working with schools to improve their dining environments and encourage school meal take-up. FFL is also working with in-house cooks and external caterers to encourage them to achieve Food for Life Served Here / School Award criteria. In its first year, 20 schools enrolled in the programme, and in Year 2 this has been exceeded with 21 schools enrolling so far. Two schools have achieved the Food for Life Bronze Award, with three more receiving their Award presentations for Foundation or Bronze Awards in Summer 2024. Other KPIs are available upon request.

Our school catering contractors use fresh, seasonal, local, and ethically grown ingredients in their menus. This includes UK sourced red tractor fresh meat, free range eggs, Marine Stewardship Council accredited fish, organic milk and wholemeal pasta. Among them, they exceed the national nutritional standards and meet varying Food for Life Catering Marks. They all work towards sustainability goals such as implementing a 'green' procurement model to limit the amount of transportation into schools and having full traceability across supply chains.

The contracts for care homes and nursing homes will begin the recommissioning and will capture the expectation of providers to imbedded healthy, sustainable, and local food in their practice and have a food policy. This would include growing food if possible.

All universities in Medway have adopted healthy and sustainable food policies. The [University of Greenwich](#) works with their contracted caterers, Graysons, who are able to offer an excellent choice of responsibly sourced and prepared catering for students, visitors and for external clients through events. Graysons is fully aligned with the [University's Sustainability Policy](#) and through its work has achieved Food For Life Gold, is Fair Trade University accredited and is Marine Stewardship Council certified. Click here to find out more about their policy and aims [Graysons Venues | Food](#). Similarly, the [University of Kent](#) are committed to offering sustainable catering through their [sustainable food plan](#). Lastly, [Canterbury Christchurch University](#) offers a range of services, sustainability, discounts and deals to support the community. They offer a variety of pre-packaged, Fairtrade items through their Cafe, making it easy to opt for ethical and sustainable products for your breakfast or lunch.

Action Area B: Improving connections and collaboration across the local supply chain

Many of the food and drink businesses that are part of the [Food and Drink Accelerator](#) programme start in their home kitchen. As they join the programme to grow and upscale, they get expert advice from experts in food product development, processing, handling, storage, and food waste. This is a significant and effective method to generate long term partnerships between academia and businesses and contribute to knowledge exchange. They are also in a better place to collaborate and supply larger organisations, which feeds into our aims of enabling small scale local sustainable food businesses to better access procurement markets.

The Medway Food partnership (MFP) is actively working with and promoting the [Open Food Network](#) in the community. This platform will act as a distribution network, allowing all parts of the food network to come together from farm to fork. By connecting local producers directly with local businesses and citizens, we will be able to reduce food miles and food waste and ensure that local food stays local by increasing their visibility in the local community.

The [Holiday Activities and Food](#) (HAF) programme uses the DPS model for procurement and separates providers into three categories – physical activities, food and catering, and

nutritional education. Providers across Medway are encouraged to apply to be part of the It is recommended that all HAF food providers become members of the Medway Food Partnership to enable them to access fresh produce produced locally.

With the support of the HAF team, caterers, and food providers on the DPS framework meet to discuss food provision, agree set menus and identify ways of improving the quality, the nutritional element, food presentation and how access to ingredients.

Subgroup 4 of our food partnership is dedicated to bringing together representatives from several organisations across different sectors to collaborate on improving public sector catering and vending offer. As part of this agenda, we are working towards setting up local cross sector forum to allow key partners to collaborate, share best practice and recognise the great work happening across businesses and ensure sustainable procurement practices are embedded in their business/contracts. This work is supported by the Sustainable Food Policy work and the development of the Medway Food Partnership Award framework that are currently underway.

After contributing to the development of [Food Loop](#) and building on existing relationships with Produced in Kent, the Medway Food Partnership is now working to establish a directory of local food businesses, which will among other things be used to encourage local businesses at Medway events. We have already developed a list of sustainable local businesses we have worked with and will continue to expand this on a continuous basis.

We are actively engaging one of the biggest, Medway based, [fruit producer](#) in the UK and plan to work towards improving their collaboration with smaller farmers/producers in the community.

Finally, we are part of the steering group used to develop the Kent Food Partnership and we are using this as a platform to work with partners across the region.

C: Other information: Other activities and context (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

Key Issue 6: Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food & farming and an end to food waste

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Action area A: Promote sustainable food production and consumption and resource efficiency

Medway Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, committing to achieving net zero carbon emissions across its own estate and operations and across the Medway area by 2050. A [Climate Change action plan](#) has been developed and refreshed in 2022 to ensure we are on a pathway to achieve our net zero carbon ambitions. The action plan is shaped

by 11 priority areas including Priority 2 – Public Sector Decision Making. The plan commits to support delivery of the aims of the Medway Food Partnership by addressing sustainability issues associated with food production, waste, and procurement.

The Medway Schools Climate Network has been set up, to allow schools to share best practice and report back on progress they are making on increasing their sustainability. Many schools have shared that they now compost their food, and that they have been working with their food suppliers to request healthier, more sustainable options. One school has shared with the network that each class has an eco-member who takes a food waste bin out at break, to collect the fruit leftovers from snacks. Other schools have shown interest in setting this up.

As part of the [Growing Kent & Medway](#) partnership, we have compiled resources and tools to help businesses get started on their net-zero journey through the [Growing Green](#) programme. So far, 33 food and drink businesses have reduced their carbon emissions, from which we have produced [case studies](#) to showcase the decarbonisation initiatives.

Many of the food and drink businesses that are part of the [Food and Drink Accelerator](#) programme start in their home kitchen. As they join the programme to grow and upscale, they get expert advice from experts in food product development, processing, handling, storage, and food waste. This is a significant and effective method to generate long term partnerships between academia and businesses and contribute to knowledge exchange. They are also in a better place to collaborate and supply larger organisations, which feeds into our aims of enabling small scale local sustainable food businesses to better access procurement markets.

[The Medway Healthy Workplace Award's](#) environmental and sustainability pledges encourage businesses to make provision for the appropriate removal of food waste and supporting local food producers by buying produce locally where possible and serving local produce on site. A new project for 2024 is to work collaboratively with the Medway Healthy Workplace team to add a food partnership tier to their award framework that better captures elements of healthy eating (low fats, salts and sugar, reduced meat, increased vegetables, reducing portion sizes etc...) and sustainability (locally sourced ingredients, less but better meat, reduced single use plastic, reduced food waste etc...), among others. This project will also include trainings and support for partners and using the existing workplace health programme will encourage food businesses to think about the wellbeing of their own staff. Once established, we will be able to promote greater consumer spending in local independent and sustainable food businesses and move closer to creating a vibrant, prosperous and diverse sustainable local food economy.

The 3-month long Phase 3 of the [Medway Can](#) campaign incorporated the work of the food partnership and its members and included two events bringing together local suppliers of fresh fruit and vegetables and local caterers. Social media was used to promote these events along with regular posts to encourage swapping of unhealthy foods for more fruit and vegetables. The first event involved healthy food cookery demonstrations and gave away 420 packages of healthy food to the public to create food at home. The second event supplied over 300 people with a bag of fruit and veg as part of

their 5 a day. Recipe cards were available in addition to directing people to make use of the Medway Can [website](#)'s resources such as recipe cards, case studies and information on local businesses that supported the events. The campaign has also awarded a total of £6500 towards food related projects, including a community growing garden and healthy cookery sessions. Funding has also been awarded to several schools to develop growing plots that will be used as part of children's education during school time and additionally open to parents and local community members such as care home residents to contribute to the project and integrate both the very young and elder community members together.

Medway's [Holiday Activities and Food](#) Programme also provides opportunities for children to get involved with local growing over the school holidays.

As part of the Council's climate change webpages, [Your journey to net zero](#) offers tips and resources to help schools, businesses and residents take action including changing eating and drinking habits and reducing waste. Case studies of local climate change projects are included on the Council's climate change web pages including [AM Espresso](#); a mobile speciality coffee shop operated from a van with a solar panelled roof. Coffee grounds are saved and provided to the local community for use in their gardens and allotments.

We have begun to support local agroecological farmers through relevant grants as well as incorporating their needs into future funding plans. We plan to build on this by increasing collaboration among local farmers and supporting those that haven't already to adopt similar agroecological techniques.

Action Area B: Reduce, redirect, and recycle food, packaging, and related waste

Towards Plastic Free Medway (TPFM) are a community group tackling single-use plastic pollution in Medway. They encourage local businesses and organisations to switch from single-use plastics to reusable and sustainable alternatives. Medway Council champion the work of TPFM with Medway networks and groups including Greener NHS and Medway Norse, as well as council owned cafes and parks. Council cafes offer a discount for using a reusable cup when purchasing hot drinks to dis-incentivise disposable items. Take away items in council offices, theatres and country parks have been replaced with plastic free plant based compostable items. Medway Norse catering take left over food from Council office cafes', theatres and country parks that is suitable to the winter shelter or drop-in centres weekly.

Medway Council recycles all our residents' food and garden waste into compost and soil improver. In 2020, 42% of our kerbside green waste went to Envar Composting in Cambridgeshire, an in-vessel bulk composting facility, which composts the organic waste material to produce a compost that can be used as an agricultural fertiliser and soil improver. Our Countrystyle Recycling haulage contractor collects all our brown bin waste from the transfer station and takes it to Envar in Cambridgeshire. The other 58% of our kerbside brown bin waste is taken by Countrystyle to West London Composting, an in-vessel bulk composting facility based in Middlesex, which manufactures a variety of high-quality soil conditioners for agricultural and commercial uses. Our waste destination

reports are available to read on our public [webpage](#). Only 4% of the overall waste collected in Medway 2020 was sent to Landfill, the rest is either composted (18%), recycled (27%), incinerated (49%), with the remainder used for biomass or processed through road sweeping.

Clear information and guidance is provided to tenants on the need to reduce waste and levels of contamination in recycling streams. This campaign includes regular, composting, and seasonal advice shared on our social media, our newsletters to residents, and our intranet. For instance, during Halloween week we shared food waste reduction recipes and hash tagged #pumpkinrescue. Medway council also offer a buy one, get one half price on compost bins via www.getcomposting.com to residents and during recycle week a buy one get one free on our food waste caddy liners.

Our Food for Life programme manager is working with schools on an individual basis to embed a whole-school approach to food, including looking at food waste (food waste ambassadors, Eco clubs etc) and how schools can link in with local providers such as supermarkets, homeware stores, for food and gardening donations to reduce waste and provide resources for schools.

Subgroup 1 of the food partnership brings together charities that collect surplus food from supermarkets to donate to community members. The charities also help each other with surplus food provision by sharing surplus food supplies. We are currently in talks with key stakeholders in developing a local food hub which will further support our journey towards minimising food waste.

The food partnership has continually promoted the [Refill Scheme](#) through a variety of avenues, which currently has a wide range of 74 organisations registered as public ally accessible free water refill stations across Medway. We have worked with the Council's Communications Team to develop a clear communications plan that actively promotes the scheme to local businesses and organisations. The first round of this promotional activity comprised of using social media accounts to promote the uptake of the scheme among organisations as well as residents, taking advantage of the springtime weather.

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