Medway Youth Service – FAQ

Welcome to the Medway Youth Service Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) guide. This document has been developed to provide professionals, parents, carers, partners, and young people with clear information about the services, opportunities, and support available through Medway Youth Service.

Medway Youth Service works with young people aged 8 to 18, and up to 25 for those with additional needs or disabilities, through a broad range of open access and targeted provision delivered across communities in Medway. The service aims to provide safe, inclusive spaces where young people can build positive relationships, develop confidence, learn new skills, have fun, and play an active role in their communities.

This FAQ answers some of the most common questions about accessing youth provision, the activities available, support for young people with additional needs, safeguarding arrangements, and the ways in which the Youth Service works alongside schools, social workers, families, and other professionals.

Whether you are looking for information for yourself, a young person, or as part of your professional role, we hope this guide helps you understand the opportunities available and how Medway Youth Service can support young people to thrive.

This guide is intended to support social workers, Early Help practitioners, schools, family support workers and partner agencies to understand and access Medway Youth Service provision for the young people they work with.

For the latest programme information, visit www.medway.gov.uk/youth or contact the team directly at youth.service@medway.gov.uk

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1. Who can access Medway Youth Service?

Medway Youth Service is open to all young people aged 8 to 18 who live, learn or spend time in Medway, and up to age 25 for eligible young people with additional needs or disabilities.

It is not limited to children open to Children's Services. Any young person living in or spending time in Medway can attend.

2. Do young people need a referral?

No. Medway Youth Service provision does not require a referral and young people can attend directly. This means:

- Young people can just turn up
- No referral, booking, assessment, or paperwork is required
- All open-access sessions are free of charge

If a young person needs additional help to get involved or has specific support needs, social workers can email youth.service@medway.gov.uk and a youth worker will provide guidance.

3. What does the Youth Service offer?

The service delivers weekly sessions across Medway. These include:

- Social youth clubs
- Arts, music, gaming and cookery
- Climbing, archery, and other sports
- Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Detached street-based youth work
- Holiday activities and trips
- Participation opportunities such as Medway Youth Council

This mix supports both informal, fun engagement and structured personal development.

4. Where are sessions held?

Medway Youth Service works across four geographical areas:

- Luton & Rainham
- Strood & Peninsula
- Gillingham & Twydall
- Chatham, Walderslade & Rochester

Sessions run in youth centres, community spaces, parks and local neighbourhoods through detached youth work.

The latest weekly programme is available at:
www.medway.gov.uk/youth

5. What does “open access” actually mean?

- Young people attend by choice
- Sessions are free, inclusive and community-based
- Activities are shaped around the interests of the young people who attend
- Youth workers build voluntary, trusting relationships
- Support evolves at the young person’s pace

Open access allows workers to offer long-term support, promoting growth, social skills, wellbeing and belonging.

6. How is this different from targeted support?

While most work is open access, some targeted projects exist for young people who need additional support, such as:

- WASP (Wrap Around Support Project)
- Youth Mentoring
- Hospital Youth Work (Reachable Moments Team)

These require professional involvement or internal discussion, but still link young people into the open-access programme for longer-term community support.

7. What if a young person has SEND or additional needs?

Young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or additional needs are welcome to attend Medway Youth Service activities. We will make reasonable adjustments where possible to help young people access our provision.

Young people can attend:

- Any open-access youth session, where appropriate support can be provided within the staffing available.
- SEND-specific youth provision for eligible young people up to age 25.

Families, social workers, and other professionals are encouraged to discuss a young person's needs with us before attending so that we can consider any reasonable adjustments.

Please note that Medway Youth Service is not able to provide personal care, medical care, or dedicated one-to-one support. Where a young person requires ongoing individual supervision or support to participate safely, we will discuss support needs on an individual basis. Where a young person requires ongoing one-to-one supervision, personal care, or medical support in order to participate safely, arrangements may need to be made for a parent, carer, support worker, or personal assistant to attend with them.

For advice about available provision and support arrangements, please contact youth.service@medway.gov.uk

8. Is the Youth Service safe for vulnerable or at-risk young people?

Yes. The service has:

- Skilled, trained youth workers
- Safeguarding procedures aligned with Children's Services
- Contextual safeguarding expertise, including location assessments and detached work
- Strong partnership working with schools, social workers, police and community organisations
- Staff are DBS checked and receive regular safeguarding training.

Staff focus on creating safe, non-judgemental spaces where young people feel respected and included.

9. How does the Youth Service support personal and social development?

This is at the heart of the service's approach, which emphasises:

- Treating young people as people, not problems
- Co-creating activities
- Building confidence, relationships and essential life skills
- Supporting meaningful, personal growth
- Encouraging leadership, creativity and participation

Sessions promote:

- Life skills
- Wellbeing
- Safety and resilience
- Community belonging
- Pro-social behaviour
- Education and employability skills

10. How can I encourage young people to attend?

You can:

- Share the weekly programme
- Suggest a young person tries a local centre or detached session
- Attend with them the first time if appropriate
- Request a youth worker to link in directly by emailing youth.service@medway.gov.uk

The Youth Service welcomes introductions but does not require them for access.

11. What if a young person is anxious about attending alone?

Youth workers can:

- Arrange a meet-and-greet
- Provide a gentle introduction
- Make reasonable adjustments
- Work with parents, carers or professionals to build confidence

Just email youth.service@medway.gov.uk for support.

12. How much does it cost?

All open-access youth sessions are free to attend. Some optional trips and activities may involve a small contribution, although support can often be provided where cost would otherwise be a barrier.

13. How does the Youth Service help other professionals?

It can:

- Offer safe places for young people to build relationships
- Provide long-term, community-based support
- Reduce isolation
- Strengthen protective factors
- Identify emerging risks through detached work
- Build resilience, confidence and pro-social engagement

For young people known to Children's Services, the service complements statutory interventions with voluntary, relational, preventative support.

14. Who do I contact for further information?

Medway Youth Service is committed to helping young people feel safe, supported, connected and empowered to achieve their potential. We encourage families and professionals to get in touch if they would like to discuss how a young person can become involved.

For general enquiries or support accessing sessions:
📩 youth.service@medway.gov.uk

For WASP (targeted wrap-around support):
📩 wasp@medway.gov.uk

For the full programme:
🌐 www.medway.gov.uk/youth