

# KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

**DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:**

**Cabinet Member for  
Adult Social Care and Public Health**

**DECISION NO:**

24/00058

**For publication:**

**Key decision:** Yes

**Title of Decision: Approve the Perinatal Mental Health and Parent Infant Relationships Strategy, 'Nurturing little hearts and minds'.**

**Decision:** As Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, I propose to:

- a) **APPROVE** the adoption of the co-created strategy in regard to low to moderate Perinatal Mental Health and Parent Infant Relationships as detailed in the report and
- b) **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health, to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to allocating resources, expenditure, and entering into contracts and other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision.

**Reason(s) for decision:**

Currently there is no strategy in Kent which focuses on low to moderate perinatal mental health and parent infant relationships yet there are gaps in knowledge and support. Developing a strategy supports strategic planning / delivery and helps improve joined-up working across organisations.

It is estimated that a total of 14,685 babies may need parent-infant relationship support in Kent over the next five years and that a total of 33,317 parents and carers may need perinatal mental health support in Kent at a mild-to-moderate level over the next five years.

Development of a co-created Perinatal mental health and parent infant relationships strategy has provided opportunity to bring stakeholders together from across the system, to raise awareness of perinatal mental health, parent infant relationships and identify where there are gaps in knowledge and in support. The strategy has been made available for public consultation for a period of eight weeks February – April 2024.

Research has shown the importance and need to improve awareness and understanding of low to moderate perinatal mental health and extending the reach of this through implementation of a strategy which also focuses on parent infant relationships is valuable.

This strategy will contribute to *'Priority 1: Levelling up Kent' of the Framing Kent's Future Our Council Strategy 2022-2026* as the themes relate to providing additional support for families at the start of their infant's life which is a preventative approach to improve the populations health and narrowing of health inequalities.

**Financial Implications:**

The DfE family hub grant is a ring-fenced grant specifically for the family hubs and start for life programme which includes a focus on perinatal mental health and parent infant relationships and does not impact the council general revenue fund. This has provided opportunity to increase

workforce capability and capacity to expand the reach of low to moderate perinatal mental health and parent infant relationship support and to raise awareness of support available for those with low to moderate perinatal mental health. The implementation of this strategy will be pivotal to further progressing and embedding this work.

### **Securing Kent's future**

The proposed decision aligns with Objective 3 of Securing Kent's Future

**Legal Implications:** The Council entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department for Education (DfE) which creates obligations to meet specific deadlines and timescales set by the DfE or risk losing further funding or funding claw back.

Access to the associated funding, depending on the type and level of transformation activity progressed, is conditional on compliance with the terms of the MoU and demonstration of progress toward an effective Family Hub Model.

The Council has and will enter into a number of contractual agreements to support delivery in line with Spending the Council's Money and Public Contract Regulations 2015.

### **Equality Implications:**

A Equality Impact assessment has been completed (attached as appendix 2) and has identified that emotional and regulation needs may impact on access and communication; race and faith may impact on access to perinatal mental health support with proposed mitigations outlined.

### **Data Protection Implications:**

General Data Protection Regulations are part of current service documentation for the contract and there is a Schedule of Processing, Personal Data and Data Subjects confirming who is data controller/ processor.

### **Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:**

In February 2024 Kent County Council (KCC) launched a public consultation on two co-created strategies to gain a better understanding of whether the strategies were accessible and presented a vision that was agreed on.

<https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/start-for-life-strategies>

The proposed decision will be discussed at the Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee on 2 July 2024 and the outcome included in the paperwork which the Cabinet Member will be asked to sign.

### **Any alternatives considered and rejected:**

The guidelines from DfE on family hubs outline minimum requirements which includes a co-created Perinatal mental health and parent infant relationships strategy. These are important aspects of health and wellbeing, so non-compliance was not considered.

### **Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:**

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signed

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date