

From: Jamie Henderson, Cabinet Member for Coastal Regeneration and Public Health

Dr Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health

To: Kent Health and Wellbeing Board - 30 September 2026

Subject: Kent and Medway Prevention Group Review

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: None

Electoral Division: All

Summary

This report presents the findings of the Kent and Medway Prevention Group review undertaken during summer 2026. The review considered the future role, purpose, priorities, governance arrangements and membership of the Prevention Group in the context of wider system changes, Neighbourhood Health development, changes to Integrated Care Board arrangements, and the evolving role of the Health and Wellbeing Boards. The review identified broad support for retaining a dedicated prevention-focused forum within Kent and Medway, recognising its value in bringing partners together to provide strategic leadership, collaboration and oversight of prevention activity across the system, whilst highlighting the need to clarify future priorities, purpose and governance arrangements. The report summarises feedback received from members and stakeholders and outlines the next steps arising from the mapping exercise.

Recommendation(s)

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

1. **NOTE** the findings of the Prevention Group review.
2. **ENDORSE** in principle the continuation of a dedicated multi-agency Prevention Group for Kent and Medway, subject to further work on its future purpose, priorities, governance arrangements and membership.
3. **NOTE that** a further update will be provided following completion of the mapping exercise and subsequent Prevention Group discussions.

1. Introduction

- 1.1** Prevention remains central to improving population health outcomes, reducing health inequalities and supporting the sustainability of health and care services across Kent and Medway.
- 1.2** The Prevention Group has historically provided a multi-agency forum bringing together local government, NHS organisations, Adult Social Care, voluntary and community sector partners and wider determinants stakeholders to support collaboration on prevention priorities.
- 1.3** Given significant changes across the health and care system development of the Neighbourhood Health model, evolving Integrated Care Board arrangements and changing governance structures, members agreed it was timely to review the future role and purpose of the Prevention Group.

2. Background

- 2.1** At its July 2026 meeting, the Prevention Group participated in a facilitated discussion to consider its future purpose, priorities, governance arrangements and meeting structure.
- 2.2** A review template was subsequently circulated to members and stakeholders to validate and expand upon the discussion. Responses received, alongside feedback from the workshop discussion, have informed the findings presented within this report. The detailed findings from the review are provided in Appendix 1.

3. Key Findings

3.1 Support for a Prevention Function

Feedback demonstrated strong support for retaining a dedicated prevention-focused forum within Kent and Medway. Members considered prevention to be a critical component of improving population health and reducing future demand on services.

3.2 Need for Greater Clarity of Purpose

Members identified the need to clearly define whether the future role of the group should focus on strategic leadership, influencing, advisory functions, delivery oversight, implementation support or a combination of these functions.

3.3 Attendance and Added Value

While attendance has reduced over time, largely reflecting the number of prevention-related meetings operating across the system, members continued to value the unique multi-agency nature of the forum.

3.4 Relationship with Health Inequalities

Members recognised the close relationship between prevention and health inequalities and identified opportunities for greater alignment between the two agendas.

3.5 Priority Setting

Members suggested that future arrangements should focus on a smaller number of strategic priorities where the group can add the greatest value and influence. Potential areas identified included health inequalities, wider determinants of health, rising risk populations, cardiovascular disease prevention, healthy ageing and neighbourhood health.

3.6 Action-Focused Meetings

There was strong support for future meetings to focus more clearly on delivery, outcomes and accountability, supported by clear actions and measurable objectives.

3.7 Mapping Exercise

Members supported a mapping exercise to understand the wider prevention and population health governance landscape, identify duplication and explore opportunities for alignment and simplification.

3.8 Why a Dedicated Prevention Group Remains Important

The review identified strong support from members and stakeholders for maintaining a dedicated prevention-focused forum within Kent and Medway. Participants highlighted that the Prevention Group remains one of the few system-wide forums bringing together partners from local government, the NHS, Adult Social Care, VCSE organisations and wider determinants sectors to collectively consider prevention priorities.

Members identified several benefits associated with the current arrangements, including cross-system collaboration and partnership working, alignment of prevention programmes across organisations, shared learning and dissemination of good practice, maintaining a strategic focus on prevention and population health, and supporting coordination between prevention, health inequalities and wider determinants of health activity.

The review also highlighted the value of maintaining a multi-agency approach, recognising the importance of participation from Public Health, NHS organisations, local authorities, Adult Social Care, VCSE organisations and

wider determinants partners in influencing system priorities and improving population health outcomes.

While members recognised the need to clarify purpose, improve attendance and review governance arrangements, there was little support for discontinuing prevention-focused partnership working. Instead, feedback consistently suggested that the response should be to evolve and strengthen the Prevention Group, rather than remove the prevention function from the system.

Collectively, the feedback suggests that prevention continues to require visible system leadership and that a dedicated Prevention Group remains an important mechanism for coordinating action across organisations and sectors.

Members also recognised the importance of demonstrating the impact of the Group more clearly in future. This includes developing a stronger focus on outcomes, identifying measurable priorities and ensuring appropriate reporting arrangements are in place to demonstrate how the Group contributes to improving population health and reducing health inequalities across Kent and Medway.

4. Emerging Considerations

The review identified several areas requiring further discussion:

- Future purpose and function of the Prevention Group.
- Strategic priorities for the next 12 months.
- Future governance and reporting arrangements.
- Membership and representation requirements.
- Opportunities to streamline existing structures.
- How should prevention priorities, delivery and outcomes be monitored and reported across the system?

5. Proposed Next Steps

- 5.1** A mapping exercise will be undertaken to identify key prevention, population health and health inequalities groups operating across Kent and Medway and clarify reporting arrangements and responsibilities.
- 5.2** The findings from the review and mapping exercise will inform future discussions regarding the purpose, priorities, governance arrangements and membership of the Prevention Group.

- 5.3** The findings of the review and mapping exercise will inform future proposals, which will be reported back through the appropriate governance arrangements, including the Health and Wellbeing Board. This work will also consider how prevention priorities, actions and outcomes are monitored and reported across the system to support greater accountability and evidence of impact.

6. Opportunities and Future Direction

- 6.1** The review demonstrates that prevention continues to be a strategic priority across Kent and Medway and that partners value the role of a dedicated multi-agency forum to support leadership, collaboration and shared action.
- 6.2** Maintaining a dedicated prevention focused partnership approach provides an opportunity to strengthen coordination across organisations, align prevention activity with emerging system priorities and the strategic ambitions of NHS, local authority and wider partner organisations, and maintain a focus on improving population health, reducing health inequalities and addressing the wider determinants of health.
- 6.3** The planned mapping exercise and subsequent Prevention Group discussions will inform future proposals, ensuring that future arrangements are effective, streamlined and aligned with the evolving health and care system.
- 6.4** Future arrangements should build on the strengths of the current Prevention Group, retaining its unique multi-agency partnership approach while increasing focus on action, delivery and measurable outcomes.

7. Recommendation(s)

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

1. **NOTE** the findings of the Prevention Group review.
2. **ENDORSE** in principle the continuation of a dedicated multi-agency Prevention Group for Kent and Medway, subject to further work to clarify the future purpose, priorities, governance arrangements and membership.
3. **NOTE that** a further update will be provided following completion of the mapping exercise and subsequent Prevention Group discussions.

8. Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Kent and Medway Prevention Group Review

9. Contact details

Authors

Surbdeep Rai
Prevention Programmes Manager, Public Health
Surbdeep.rai@kent.gov.uk

Claudia Sykes
Community Leader Kent and Medway VCSE Health Alliance

Relevant Director

Dr Anjan Ghosh
Director of Public Health
Anjan.ghosh@kent.gov.uk