Experts at Hand (EAH)

Working Together for Children and Families in Medway

A new national SEND programme bringing specialist knowledge and support closer to children, young people, schools and families.

1 What is Experts at Hand

- To bring specialist knowledge and expertise closer to schools, early years settings and colleges so they can provide support earlier, before difficulties escalate.
- Children do **not need a diagnosis** to benefit from the support available through Experts at Hand. The focus is on understanding needs and providing help as early as possible.

2 What difference could this make for children and families?

Experts at Hand aims to:

- Help children get support earlier.
- Improve inclusion in mainstream schools and settings.
- Build confidence and skills in school staff so they can better meet their needs.
- Reduce the need for families to repeat their story multiple times.
- Ensure communication and partnership working between education, health and care services.
- Ensure children receive support based on their needs rather than waiting for a diagnosis.
- Enable specialist expertise to be available closer to where children learn and grow.

3 What will Experts at Hand look like in Medway?

They are currently developing the Medway model in partnership with children, families, schools, health services and wider partners.

The developing model is likely to include:

- Easier access to specialist advice and support.
- Greater involvement of Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and specialist teaching expertise.
- Outreach support from specialist settings and services.
- More coaching, consultation and training for schools and settings.
- Stronger partnerships between education, health and families.
- A focus on helping children and young people thrive in their local community and education setting.

4 Where are they now?

- Medway has received national funding to begin developing its Experts at Hand offer.
- We are currently in the mobilisation and design phase.
- We are meeting with partners across education, health and care to understand what is already working well and where improvements are needed.
- We are exploring how specialist expertise across Medway can be used most effectively to support children, families and schools.
- No final decisions have been made yet — this is the time when we want to hear from families and young people.

5 How can parents, carers and your people help shape Experts at Hand?

Your experiences matters. They want parents, carers and young people to help them:

- Design the Medway Experts at Hand model.
- Tell us what support works well and what barriers you face.
- Help them understand what earlier support should look like.
- Help us improve communication with families.
- Shape how services work together.

They are committed to co-production, which means designing the service with families and young people, not just for them.

6 Working with the Medway Parent Carer Forum

Experts at hand is working alongside your local Parent Carer Forum and wider family representatives as key partners in the development of Experts at Hand. **They want the Forum to:**

- Challenge our thinking.
- Share the experiences of local families.
- Help us test ideas.
- Support communication with parents and carers.
- Help ensure Experts at Hand genuinely reflects the needs of Medway families.