



Canterbury
Christ Church
University

Our People, Our Place, Our Partners

Our Pledges to Kent and Medway 2025–2030



Welcome

A university with heart,
building sustainable futures

We are delighted to present Our Pledges to Kent and Medway, setting out our commitments to strengthening, celebrating and supporting the region.

As an anchor in challenging times, we have been at the heart of our communities for over 60 years, responding to the needs of the 1.9 million people living, working and learning in Kent and Medway. We are proud of our diverse region of coastal, urban and rural landscape, full of talent and resources. We believe that as a gateway to Europe, our region has much to offer on the national and global stage.

Across the UK, universities have developed Civic University Agreements to define their civic role, set out how they can make a positive contribution to the places where they are located, and identify their key partners in delivering change in the region. For Canterbury Christ Church University, as an institution with strong ties and partnerships with the communities that we serve, it presents a chance to reaffirm our role and clearly communicate how we plan to respond to the challenges and opportunities that our local communities face.

At the heart of Our Pledges is the voice of the people who live, study and work in communities across Kent and Medway. These pledges recognise and respond to the challenges that impact our diverse communities and through them we highlight the potential for us to harness our strengths and resources for the benefit of the region.

Through analysis of internal and external stakeholder feedback, local strategies and joint task group reports, we have identified opportunities for the University to make a positive impact, using our expertise, resources and partnerships to reap the greatest reward for the region. We would like to thank everyone who has had a part in shaping our approach and we look forward to working with our partners and the wider community over the next five years to deliver our pledges.



**Professor Rama
Thirunamachandran OBE DL**
Vice-Chancellor and Principal



Our People, Our Place, Our Partners

In developing Our Pledges, we consulted with stakeholders and communities to analyse regional needs, to identify opportunities to celebrate and support Kent and Medway.

This has resulted in three priority areas that outline our commitment to focus on:

Supporting our
local communities
and the **people**
living, working and
studying here

Celebrating and
promoting the
diverse **place** we
live in and share

Developing
strong
partnerships
to deliver
Our Pledges

Over the next five years, we will commit to:

- making a transformative and measurable impact on our region
- proactively tackling the many challenges the next five years will bring
- forging a brighter, more prosperous and sustainable future for all



Our People

For over 60 years we have been at the heart of the community, responding to the needs of people living, working, and learning in Kent and Medway:

- delivering transformative and relevant courses
- supplying talented graduates to the regional workforce
- advocating for the health and wellbeing of everyone who lives and works here.

People have always been the focus of what we do. We passionately believe in the value of education and are dedicated to widening access to higher education and promoting the social mobility of our learners – the ‘first in the family’ learners, the carers and care leaver learners, the commuting learners, and the learners who strive to succeed against the odds.

Throughout our history, our belief in the transformative effects of education has driven an approach to learning and teaching that is powered by innovation, diversification and partnership, and the ambition to equip graduates with real-world skills and professional expertise.

Did you know?

We ranked **#25** in the Social Mobility Index in 2023.

Almost half of our learners come from areas of rural coastal deprivation in the South-East or areas of inner-city deprivation in London, above the national average.

We pledge to support our People by:

Creating Inspiring Pathways into Education

- developing forward-thinking curriculum offerings that prepare our learners for the future
- directing our resources to make a positive difference to the regional workforce
- offering a variety of routes into higher education, including degree Apprenticeships

Championing Opportunity

- focusing on creating pathways for learners from lower socio-economic groups
- becoming a leading university for social mobility with targeted scholarships and bursaries
- listening to the voices of the community to ensure meaningful societal impact in all we do

See ‘Our Measures of Success’ for the targets we will set ourselves to achieve over the next five years.

Read about some of the ways that we are supporting the people of Kent and Medway

Inspiring young people to pursue STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Medicine)

Our award-winning STEM outreach initiatives 'Community Lab' and 'Inspiring Minds' have played a key role in raising the aspirations of 6.4 million young people across the South-East* between 2019 and 2023.

Reaching into all schools and colleges across the South-East, our STEM Hub provides free advice and guidance on STEM enrichment activities and career paths, providing 338,456 STEM Ambassador volunteering hours. Our Community Lab - a partnership between Pfizer, educational charity STEM Learning, and Discovery Park (Europe's largest science park) - grows the regional STEM skills base by providing schools with inspirational access to industry standard laboratories, facilities and equipment, training teachers and engaging young people.

Award-winning outreach project 'Inspiring Minds' addresses key representation gaps in STEM careers, engaging under-represented pupils from lower-income areas in the region. Led by our LASAR Centre, the project features in the government's Transforming Access and Student Outcomes report on outreach interventions that raise aspirations and confidence.

*Figures for STEM Hub include Home Counties and other locations in the South of England.



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The evaluation findings highlight that the projects approach had a positive impact on end-users. They experienced improved levels of self-efficacy and digital literacy in managing their own health, as well as reduced levels of emotional and social loneliness

Professor Eleni Hatzidimitriadou, lead for the Canterbury Christ Church University evaluation team and Professor of Community Psychology and Public Mental Health

Innovative research in health builds resilience in ageing population

EMPOWERing individuals and communities to manage their own CARE (EMPOWERCARE) is £7.3million funded 3-year social innovation project involving 13 cross border European partners. The project addresses the issues facing the care of our ageing population, aiming to create resilient communities and reduce individual frailty and loneliness.

To do this, partners from across the UK, France, Belgium and the Netherlands developed an approach using research-based solutions and technology to address gaps in the care of the target groups: those aged 65+, and those aged 50+ with at least one chronic condition.

The project addresses the issues facing the care of our ageing population. It combines the work of several existing and tested partner solutions from UK and the EU and ensures that older people are at the forefront of improved technology and better cared for within their communities. The project outputs include:

- An empowerment strategy to deliver what matters to individuals and communities in managing their own care, and a workforce transformation package to upskill the adult social care workforce.
- A technology blueprint for initiatives and technology that support enablement at individual and community level. Informed by partners testing different technologies in co-production with the target group.
- A comprehensive evaluation of the EMPOWERCARE approach, conducted by Canterbury Christ Church University researchers, to outline the benefits and key outcomes of the project.

Our Place

We are proud of our diverse region of coastal, urban, and rural landscapes, a vibrant area full of heritage, culture, and natural resources. Our Canterbury campus holds a unique space in the history of the region, sitting in the outer precinct of St. Augustine's Abbey, an ancient monastery that is a key element of the city's UNESCO World Heritage site that includes the Cathedral and St Martin's Church. With our campus in Medway, near to Chatham's historic dockyard, and the Salomon's campus in Royal Tunbridge Wells, we are embedded in the fabric of local and regional education, health, public services, industry and innovation, and this is at the heart of our approach.

For over a decade, we have been pioneering work in sustainability- securing funding and advocating for long term change, climate action and community wellbeing; seeking and supporting ways to reduce the impact of climate change in Kent and Medway; and influencing policy to lead the way for better outcomes for everyone.

We want to celebrate and champion Kent and Medway as a wonderful place to live, work and study, collaborating with key partners to attract inward investment, support the visitor economy of the region, and to continue to be a driving force for sustainability. We are committed to strengthening the social, cultural and economic prosperity of our communities, using our position to:

- Celebrate tourism in the region
- Protect our heritage assets and spaces
- Contribute to the vibrant social and cultural life of the region
- Champion sustainability
- Strengthen Kent and Medway's economic position

We gifted part of our apprenticeship levy to local charity, the Kent Wildlife Trust, to enable them to train apprentice Country Rangers with Sparsholt

We pledge to support our Place by:

Building a Brighter Greener Future

- contributing to the region's Net Zero target, reducing our carbon emissions and sharing best practices
- championing green heritage and biodiversity on campus and promoting sustainable practices
- tackling climate change and social and health inequality, and enriching cultural life in our community

Training and Retaining Talent

- preparing a skilled workforce for essential frontline services to fulfil regional needs
- providing internships and placements to develop talented graduates who are career-ready
- diversifying our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and apprenticeships to support talent development and retention



Read about some of the ways that we are supporting the place we call home

Championing Sustainable Futures through Green Heritage and Biodiversity

Launched in 2022, the Academy for Sustainable Futures enables the University to make a step-change in its drive towards educating, advocating, and influencing our collective sustainable futures. Responding to the climate crisis, the Academy pushes forward the University's approach to sustainability, leveraging our wider influence and civic duty.

Our Canterbury campus falls within the outer precinct of St Augustine's Abbey, part of Canterbury's UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) that also includes Canterbury Cathedral and St Martin's. Its green spaces and the species that live there are nurtured for their own sake, but also provide resources for learning, for community engagement, and for health and wellbeing.

Green Heritage is an approach to heritage sites that values nature (wild, semi-natural and cultivated environments) and seeks to provide a distinctive place for it that improves both human wellbeing and the health of the planet. Through it, we advocate taking responsibility for present and future generations, for the legacy and remains of the past, as well as for the living world. Green Heritage sites are often located close to or within human settlements, often providing accessible spaces where people can develop a deep 'sense of place' incorporating both cultural heritage and the living world. Our Green Heritage Manifesto, developed through conversations with partners including Canterbury BID, Canterbury Cathedral and University of Kent, outlines the key principles we work to and our call to action to government agencies.

Biodiversity is our response to the need to nurture the environment in which we work. It involves the stewardship of our green spaces within the Canterbury UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) which in our case involves part of the outer precinct of St Augustine's Abbey. The Biodiversity Initiative focuses specifically on cultural aspects of biodiversity in relation to the history and heritage of the site, explicitly linked to the fact that it has been a centre of knowledge and community in our city for over fourteen hundred years.



Leading the change in technical skill development and innovation in Kent and Medway

Supported by £28 million of public and industry funding, as well as private donations, the Engineering, Design, Growth & Enterprise (EDGE) Hub was launched in 2020 in response to the skills and innovation shortages faced by businesses and organisations in the South-East. Headquartered at the flagship £65m Verena Holmes STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Medicine) facility, it has distributed centres of excellence across Kent and Medway.

It is also:

- Holder of the South-East - STEM Learning schools network contract (STEM Hub)
- Nominated Women in Science & Engineering (WISE) Hub for the South-East
- Part of the international CDIO (Conceive, Design, Implement & Operate) community
- Primary Engineer's education partner for the South East.

With a strong focus on recruiting more women and those from disadvantaged backgrounds into STEM and acting as a catalyst for inwards investment, the EDGE Hub has created 52 full-time direct jobs, injected a total of 1,694 highly skilled engineering and technology graduates into the local economy, creating a sustainable and diverse regional talent pool with 40% + of graduates coming from disadvantaged backgrounds since its launch in 2020.

Furthermore, as one of the few universities in the UK to offer the pioneering CDIO international engineering education model, organisations have prospered from fresh and inventive solutions to business problems through access to expertise, specialist technology and equipment, with 420 CDIO projects delivered to date, contributing to the regional research and development.



Our Partners

Our strong track-record of delivering extensive regional impact and place-based transformation, is underpinned by our meaningful engagement with a diverse range of partnerships and sectors, and it is through those partnerships that we have been able to offer our knowledge, resources, and insights for the benefit of Kent and Medway.

We pride ourselves on being open and accessible, forging transformative partnerships, responding to regional skills and innovation needs, seeking to widen participation and support regeneration. For example, the investment in the Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS) with the University of Kent that has brought significant benefits to the futures of those living, studying and working in the region.

Our sponsorship of, and longstanding partnerships with the NHS, local councils and chambers, Discovery Park, Canterbury Festival and Kent Cricket contribute to a healthy, vibrant, forward-thinking region.

Strong partnership and collaboration underpin these pledges; through open dialogue, reciprocal learning and shared ambitions, Kent and Medway can thrive.

We pledge to support our Partners by:

Being Open and Accessible

- preparing a skilled workforce for essential frontline services to fulfil regional needs
- providing internships and placements to develop talented graduates who are career-ready
- diversifying our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and apprenticeships to support talent development and retention

Innovating to Grow

- offering business support, funding and networking opportunities, driving growth and productivity
- transforming partnerships to unlock funding, attract investment and pursue a healthy future for the region
- collaborating to ensure our research, resources and technology drive innovation and confront inequalities

Read about some of the ways that we are working with partners for the benefit of Kent and Medway

Driving innovation for Creative SMEs

Over seventy five percent of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), employing 250 or less staff, struggle to compete with bigger organisations due to restricted budgets and lack of access to innovative technology, impacting both their growth and recruitment of new talent.

Delivered collaboratively with Screen South, Creative Folkestone and Maidstone Studios Ltd, the **Hi3 Network**, a research, development, and innovation project part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and valued at £12million, was the largest ERDF grant awarded in the South-East region. The project provided support from Canterbury Christ Church University to over 300 small and medium-sized enterprises in the creative industries during the project lifetime, connecting the university with businesses from across the South-East to offer access to:

- innovative and immersive technology
- academic expertise through consultancy
- collaborative research opportunities
- experimental studio space.

Following the Hi3 project completion, Canterbury Christ Church University has set up the Creative Innovation Hub (CIH) enabling organisations to continue to access innovative technology and expertise through research and development sprints and collaborative student industry projects.



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This is a really wonderful example of our whole NHS community working together to best educate our students, form exciting and positive partnerships and for the long-term benefits of health care provision in our community.

Professor Chris Holland, Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS) Founding Dean

Training future doctors to tackle workforce challenges

The Kent and Medway region has some of the highest levels of health inequality in the UK and severe workforce challenges caused by shortages of both GPs and secondary care doctors, and the drain of aspiring doctors out of the region for medical training. In 2020, a partnership between Canterbury Christ Church University and the University of Kent, secured £30m+ in funding to establish Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS), to tackle the challenges, poor health and life outcomes facing the region's ageing, coastal and hard to reach communities.

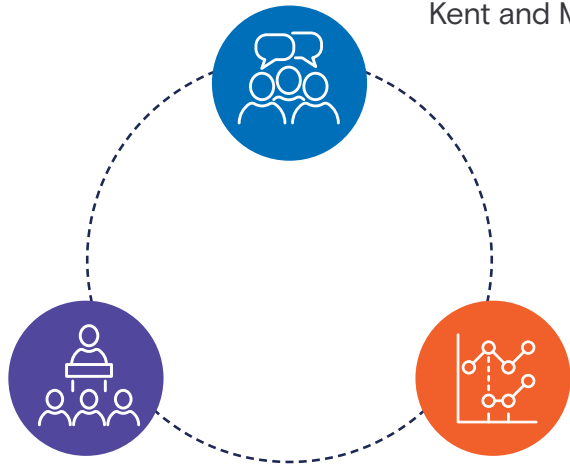
In establishing this regional centre for medical education and research, KMMS will contribute to the 'medical corridor' envisaged by the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission, with the first cohort of medical students due to graduate in September 2025.

- Across the 5 years of their course, KMMS Students undertake a wide variety of placements across the region. To facilitate this, KMMS is now working with 34 Primary Care Networks; 4 acute hospital trusts; the Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust; 6 Urgent Treatment centres and 13 observational placement partners including Integrated Carer 24 (NHS 111 service deliverer); hospices and optometrists.
- KMMS runs a Patient Engagement Programme, incorporating the patient and carer voice into the learning environment. This programme enables the community to help shape the training, assessment and selection of future doctors.
- In 2023. KMMS appointed its first Directors of Research who have developed a diverse portfolio of global, national and regional research projects, bringing in extensive funding to the school.
- In 2024. KMMS won substantial grants (£1.4m) from the National Institute of Health Research to launch an Integrated Academic Training Programme, introduce a research internship programme, and fund intercalated degrees for some students.

How we will organise, measure and communicate our progress

Continuous Feedback Loop

To consult and engage with organisations and communities across Kent and Medway



Annual Forum

To welcome and listen to voices across the region

Annual Pledges Report

To demonstrate progress against our Measures of Success

Our Measures of Success

The table below highlights the measures we will use to demonstrate our progress on meeting our pledges.

	Measure	Baseline	By 2030
Our People	Higher Education Social Mobility Index position <i>(Higher Education Policy Institute 2023)</i>	#25	#20
	Students from lower economic groups in most deprived areas <i>(University student population data/ Office for Students (TUNDRA) 2022/23)</i>	17.9%	21.5%
	Graduates into key worker services in Kent and Medway (police, armed forces, education, health and social care, public administration) <i>(Graduate Outcomes 2021-22)</i>	2,110 per annum	13,000 <i>(Cumulative Total)</i>
Our Place	Supporting Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) through volunteering <i>(Christ Church Volunteering 2023/2024)</i>	1,264 days	2,000 days
	Rating for Sustainability <i>(People and Planet University League, 2024)</i>	2:1 class (41=)	First class
	Graduates working in all sectors in Kent and Medway <i>(Graduate Outcomes 2021-22)</i>	2,600	15,600 <i>(Cumulative Total)</i>
Our Partners	Number of organisations (SME, Large commercial and non-commercial) collaborated with on contract research, consultancy and facilities use <i>(Higher Education Statistics Agency 2022/23)</i>	208 per annum	950 per annum
	Community visits to our free public events <i>(Higher Education Statistics Agency 2022/23)</i>	76,359 per annum	100,000 per annum
	Value of knowledge exchange activities and grants with business, the public and third sector <i>(Knowledge Exchange Framework Sept 2023 results)</i>	£3.8m per annum	£5.7m per annum



**Canterbury
Christ Church
University**

With special thanks to

