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Date: 27 November 2024

Dear Member

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WEDNESDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2024

Please see attached SEND Scrutiny quarterly report for discussion at the Scrutiny Committee next Wednesday 4 December.

Agenda Item No

C3 SEND Scrutiny - Quarterly Reporting (2nd report) (Pages 1 - 214)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Watts', is written over a faint, illegible printed name.

Benjamin Watts
General Counsel

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From: Rory Love, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

To: Scrutiny Committee, 4th December 2024

Subject: SEN Update - Quarterly reporting – 2nd report.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report provides an overview of progress in SEND since the issuing of the Improvement Notice in March 2023.

Recommendation(s):

The committee is asked to note the report.

1. Background

- 1.1. Following the September 2024 meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, Members have been undertaking an evidence gathering exercise to gain views about and experience of SEN provision and arrangements in Kent.
- 1.2. The previous report included a comprehensive update on the Accelerated Action Plan and notification of the removal of the Improvement Notice. Since September, discussions have taken place with the two government departments involved in monitoring, DfE and NHS England, on the future governance and reporting requirements. Following the lifting of the Improvement Notice, the Departments no longer require monthly reporting and will make an assessment on the progress and impact of the outstanding projects at the next assessment day in January 2025. In view of this the governance and reporting structures for both the Accelerated Action Plan and the Safety Valve have been reviewed. The agreed governance and reporting structures will be shared in a future report.
- 1.3. Nationally, there have been a number of recent announcements by the government regarding SEND, including additional SEND funding though there has been no additional detail about the intended use of that funding to date. In November, Dame Christine Lenehan, formerly of the Council for Disabled

Children, was appointed the government’s strategic advisor for SEND and Tom Rees of Ormiston Academy Trust was engaged to lead a new group of experts to oversee reforms to make mainstream schools more inclusive. Alongside this, the Secretary of State is creating a panel of leading neurodiversity experts to work with the DfE on better developing expertise in mainstream schools.

- 1.4. These developments are very welcome and validate the approaches being taken in Kent to improve the SEND system. This is particularly true of the work with the Autism Education Trust and on neurodiversity across the county, but particularly in Maidstone which is acting as a pathfinder for new ways of working to support earlier identification and intervention through the DfE funded PINS project. More information can be seen here <https://news.kent.gov.uk/articles/pilot-project-aims-to-create-more-inclusive-school-experiences-for-neurodivergent-children>
- 1.5. A new indicator on Annual Reviews has been added to this report and the topics included were requested by members at the September Committee.

In addition to the Introduction and Data Update sections, the sections in this report are as follows:

1. Young People’s Voice – The Kent Approach
2. Engagement with parents and carers including Parents and Carers Together (PACT)
3. Support available pre-EHCP
4. The evidence of SEND inclusion in schools and settings
5. Phase transfer
6. Outcomes for pupils with SEND
7. Appeals & Tribunals

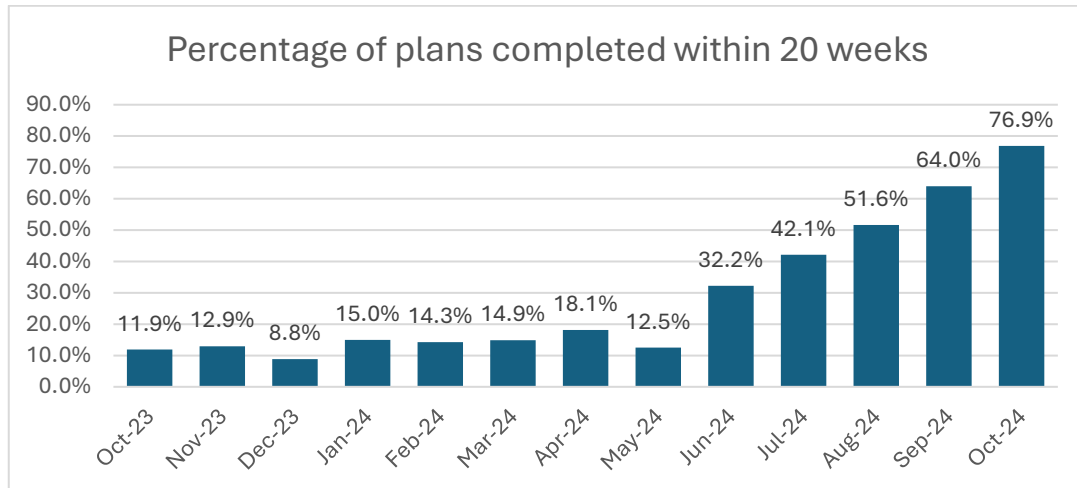
1.6 This report encompasses a comprehensive array of subject matter. Each section has been authored by lead officers who specialise in their respective fields of service ensuring the information is both accurate and insightful.

2. Data Update

2.1. Percentage of Plans Completed within 20 Weeks - The previous report included August data which showed KCC’s completion rate to be 51.6%, marginally higher than the national average of 50.3% (published by DfE in June 2024). 76% of EHCPs were issued within 20 weeks during October 2024. This means 130 of 171 EHCPs issued were in timescale.

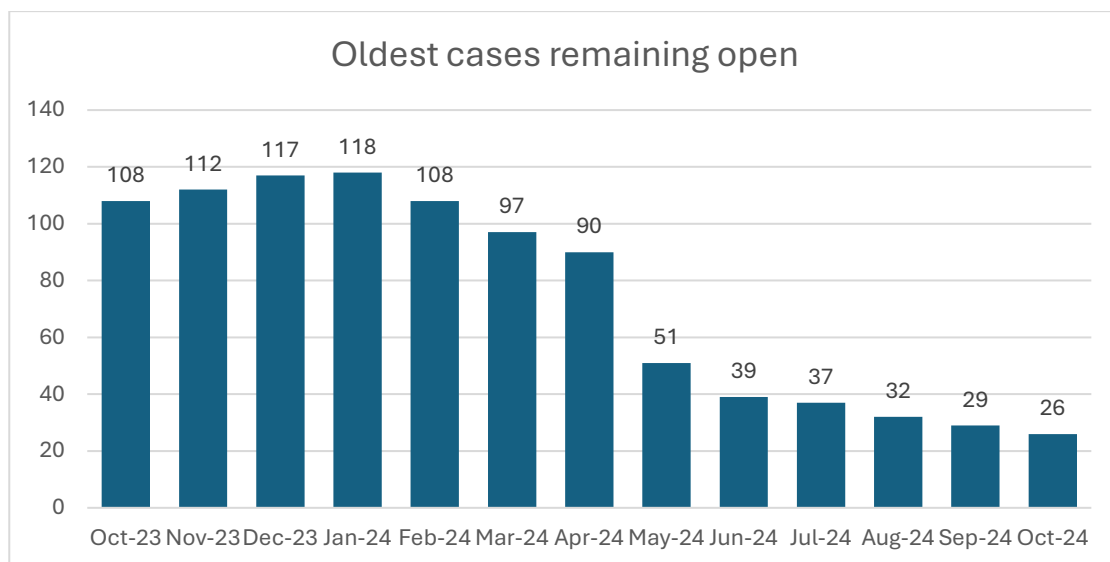
Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24
11.9%	12.9%	8.8%	15.0%	14.3%	14.9%	18.1%	12.5%	32.2%	42.1%	51.6%	64.0%	76%

2.2. As the number of children and young people waiting for a plan continues to decrease (see below), the number of plans issued within the 20-week deadline has continued to rise. We are now confident that issuing of EHCPs within the 20-week deadline will remain around this level, more than 50% above the national average and increased resource is now being directed to maintain the improvements in the quality of the plans.



2.3. Oldest Cases Remaining Open

Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24
108	112	117	118	108	97	90	51	39	37	32	29	26
wks	wks	wks	wks	wks	wks	wks	wks	wks	wks	wks	wks	wks

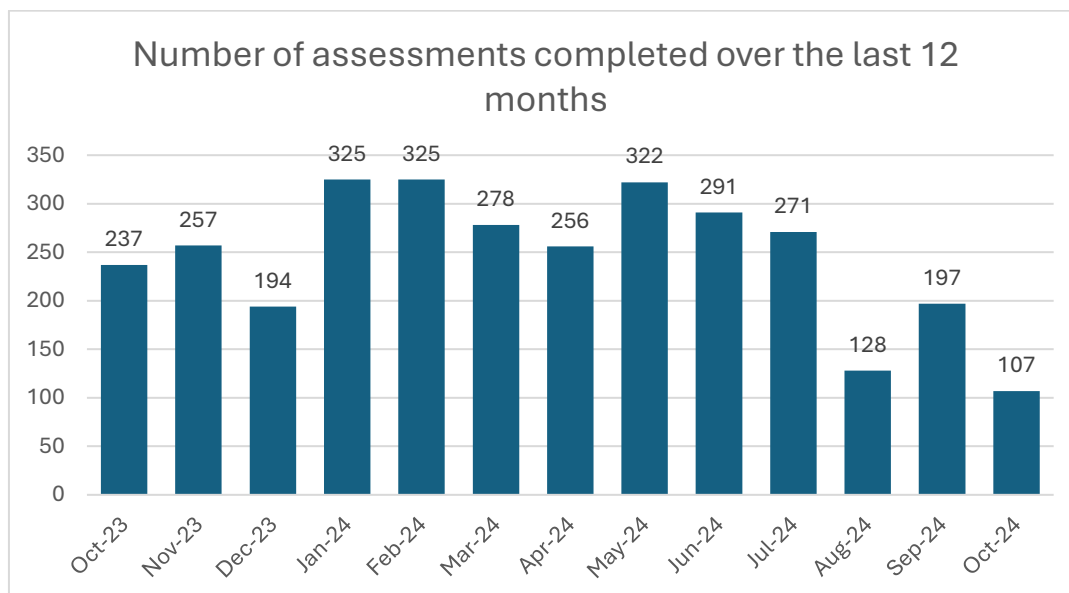


The backlog has almost been cleared and no child or young person is waiting more than 26 weeks to have their EHCP issued.

2.4. Number of Assessments Completed Over the Last 12 Months - The decrease in plans completed is as a consequence of the summer holidays but also

reflects the successful processing of the significant backlog of children and young people waiting to be issued with a plan.

Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24
237	257	194	325	325	278	256	322	291	271	128	197	107



- 2.5. Annual Reviews - Once a child or young person has been issued with an EHCP, a review of the plan should take place annually, or more frequently in the Early Years. A review can also be requested ahead of the annual cycle of review if there is a good reason such as a view there is an urgent need for a change to the child or young person's EHC plan.
- 2.6. The review generally takes place in the education setting or school and is explained in full here <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs/education-health-and-care-plans/annual-review>. For children and young people who are educated other than at school or college or are Electively Home Educated, they will have their annual reviews arranged and chaired by a case officer at the Local Authority. Information and reports will be requested from professionals supporting the child/young person by the case officer.
- 2.7. The review makes recommendations, which the LA has to respond to within four weeks. When reference is made to the LA's backlog of Annual Reviews, it is referring to the LA's duty to respond in writing communicating the LA's decision to:
 - Maintain the EHCP as it is or
 - Amend the EHCP or
 - Cease the EHCP

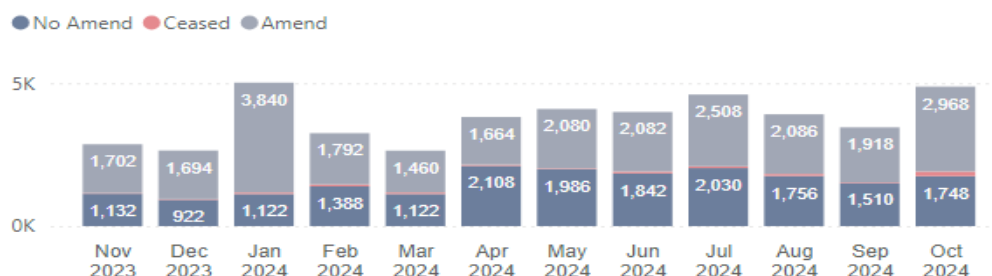
as well as highlighting the right to appeal and to request mediation if parents/carers so not agree with the decision. In October 2024 there were 20,402 children and young people with a live EHCP, each one of whose EHCP is updated annually.

2.8. When the inspection took place in September 2022 there was a significant backlog, and the vast majority of Annual Reviews were not within timescale. Good progress has been made in reducing the backlog and this trajectory of improvement will continue. This table shows the improvement in the percentage of Annual Reviews being completed from 39.8% in October 2023 to 65.8% in October 2024. This means of 20,408 children and young people with an EHCP 13,433 had their Annual Review completed in timescale.

Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24
39.8%	42.6%	45.1%	48.6%	51.1%	51.9%	54.8%	58%	60.2%	62.8%	64.4%	65.3%	65.8%

2.9. This table shows the number of Annual Reviews that have taken place by month and the outcome of the review.

Number of annual review completions made



2.10. A recent enhancement to streamline the system is the digitisation of the paperwork education settings are required to complete when they conduct the Annual Review by the introduction of a drop-down electronic form where options can just be clicked apart from specific boxes that require bespoke text about the individual pupil. Training is being provided to school colleagues that have requested it to ensure consistent implementation in schools.

3. Young People's Voice – The Kent Approach

3.1. Work within Kent County Council - Kent County Council has a legal duty to provide all children and young people in Kent an opportunity to have their say. This includes children in education and those who receive a specific service provided by the Local Authority. The work undertaken to integrate children and young people's voice into service planning is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989, in particular

Article 12 that states: *"Every Child or young person has the right to express his or her views on all matters that affect them, and their views should be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity"* and The Children's Act 1989.

- 3.2. In Kent, our ambition is that the voice of children and young people influence and inform what we do and how we behave as a Local Authority. Our aim is for Children and young people's views to influence what we do and how we deliver services as a Local Authority in an authentic way and this is supported by guidance on effective listening which is included in the Children's Workforce Practice Framework and training. This means children and young people are able to influence decision making in a meaningful way. Our ongoing developments build upon the existing evidence-based practice and aims to improve the range, consistency and coordination of effective participation across the directorate. There are dedicated staff within KCC whose role it is to deliver these statutory duties.
- 3.3. **Participation Teams** - There are two Participation Teams in KCC - The mainstream Participation Team (i-THRIVE and Participation Team) and the Virtual School Kent Participation Team who have focus on children in care, adopted children and young people, young care leavers and children with a social worker or have previously had a social worker. More information on this below.
- 3.4. The i-Thrive and Participation Team (see below) work in partnership with schools, youth groups, NHS Kent and Medway, Kent Police and individual young people to capture their voices about a variety of different topics. A good example is the now annual Big Mental Health Conversation.
- 3.5. Working under the co-ordination of this team, there are four different countywide groups which young people can join, one of which, 'Have your say', is specifically for young people with SEND. 'iTHRIVE' is for young people who have experience of mental health services. More information is available on the website [Youth Voice opportunities - Kent County Council](#)
- 3.6. **Youth Council** - Kent Youth County Council (KYCC) is an elected group of young people aged 11 to 18 years, representing each of Kent's 12 districts. The Council also has 12 community seats, ensuring KYCC is representative of all communities in Kent. 20% of the young people elected to KYCC in 2024 are young people with SEND. There are three campaign issues annually, chosen by young people during the annual election process. In November 2023, 19,400 young people in Kent voted in the KYCC Elections, voting Mental Health, Public Transport and Free School Meals & Tackling Poverty as the top issues for young people and becoming the youth council's campaign for 2024.
- 3.7. **Have Your Say Forum** - Have your Say Forum has been developed over the last 12 months, providing an opportunity for young people aged 11 to 18 years with SEND to come together, once a month as part of KYCC Meetings. Have

Your Say Forum meets separately in the mornings and then come together with KYCC in the afternoon for joint project work on issues including Tackling Discrimination and Opportunities for Young people. Have Your Say Forum participate in a range of activities, while also developing project work and giving their views related to KCC work. The Have your Say Forum have started to develop projects around on anti-bullying and developing independence & preparing for adulthood.

- 3.8. Have Your Say Activity days take place in half terms and summer holidays, these reach a wider cohort of young people with SEND who come along to take part in a fun activity and engagement workshop, but do not want to commit to a regular forum. 46 young people with SEND have attended activities and given their views across six 'Have Your Say' events since April 2024.
- 3.9. These are examples of policies, strategies and service delivery that young people have contributed to or influenced through the mechanisms described above.
 - The Children and Young People's Outcomes Framework - Young people from KYCC, Have Your Say and other school groups were consulted about the Outcomes Framework. Young People fed back through this work that 'My Independence' was missing and young people felt this was important to include for supporting them into adulthood. This also correlated with the NHS Kent & Medway ICB heard in their listening exercise over summer and autumn 2023, when 400 14 – 18 year olds responded, identifying 'independence and personal choices' as key to supporting their mental health and emotional wellbeing. ([Kent and Medway Children and Young People's Mental Health Have Your Say survey responses analysis](#))



- ICS Vision Statement – young people from KYCC and Have Your Say were engaged in process of developing the vision statement.
- “Supporting children and young people to achieve; through living healthy, safe lives in which they feel seen and included.”
- Localities Model Consultation (now known as the Communities of Schools) – young people with SEND supported to understand the Localities Model and respond to the easy read questionnaire.
- SEND Strategy review – focus groups with young people through Have Your Say, KYCC, SpeakOut and schools to review previous SEND Strategy and gives views for strategy which was consulted on during the autumn 2024.
- Drafting of the Education Strategy – young people KYCC, Have Your Say and wider engagement from school groups were involved in giving their views in the drafting of the Education Strategy and providing quotes for the final consultation document, consulted on during the autumn of 2024.
- Engagement with MRX (Kent County Council's communications, marketing, engagement and customer feedback function) about messaging to young people with SEND and their parents. Engagement took place with OCYPC MAGIC and at a Have Your Say Activity Day.
- Young People from KYCC, Have Your Say have had the opportunity to have their stories heard through video at SIAB.
- Coproduction E-Learning Module – Have Your Say, OCYPC MAGIC and the Sensory Student Council are working to re-develop the coproduction e-learning, which is available on Delta to add a module to focus on engaging young people with SEND and hearing their views.
- Self-Harm Strategy – young people decided what key messages and information needed to be included in the guidance, and since publication have been involved in evaluating and providing further messages they want to be included in the annual update. [Self-harm prevention advice: Kent & Medway ICS](#)
- Kent Young Researchers – 38 young people have been trained by the University of Kent to develop their research skills, including 9 young people with SEND. The young researchers have been supported by University of Kent to develop research questionnaires gaining views on role of social media on emotional wellbeing.

- The Big Mental Health Conversation 2024 provides a case study of how young people were involved in the inception, planning and delivery of an event. The Big Mental Health Conversation, held on Wednesday, 9th October, brought together 200 young people from 24 Kent schools along with 34 service providers that support children and young people with their mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- 3.10. Participants engaged in a variety of workshops, including understanding their brain, healthy relationships, online bullying and sexting, the benefits of physical activity, a wellbeing walk, therapy ponies, managing difficult thoughts and feelings, exam anxiety, and marketplace activities. Officers are currently collating the evidence of how young people have been positively influenced and impacted through attending and interacting with the 34 services that were present as well as engaging in facilitated engagement activities. The final report will be distributed in November.
- 3.11. The event secured participation by groups of students from 24 schools which included 11 mainstream, non-selective schools, 6 selective schools, 1 Pupil Referral Unit, and 6 special schools. The 34 special school students attend the following schools - Valence School, Grange Park School, The Wyvern School, Ifield School, Rowhill School and The Beacon. 1 young person from The Beacon School is also a member of Have Your Say and a Kent Youth Voice Young Leader. The young person supported with other Young Leaders in planning the event and taking to the stage to close the event.
- 3.12. As can be seen above, there is a great deal of activity, and the list above is not exhaustive. Evidence of the impact of the activities is monitored and evaluated and these are some examples –
- The Outcomes Framework now includes ‘My Independence’ creating a focus for work and development with all children and young people, so this aspiration will now be measured alongside the other aspirations. The tool to measure the aspirations for all pupils with an EHCP is currently under development.
 - Autism Education Trust Training includes case studies from Autistic Young People in KYCC and evaluation of the training shows impact. KYCC Disability Awareness group collated the experiences of autistic children and young people in Education ([Autistic Artistic Youth Voice](#)).
 - Young person's feedback sparks change in NELFT (<https://www.nelft.nhs.uk/>) services. A young person from Have Your Say wrote a letter in March 2023

which prompted significant reflection and potential changes within the North-East London Foundation Trust (NELFT). Highlighting systemic issues in CAMHS, the letter brought attention to the neglect of young people with eating disorders and complex needs, and the inefficiencies of early intervention. In response, the new Manager for Patient Experience in Kent and Medway acknowledged the challenges and the need for change. The feedback is driving the development of 'experts by experience' groups, inviting young people to help improve service delivery.

- iTHRIVE Young Persons Group Boosts young person's mental health – As part of the monitoring and evaluation of the participation work, a case study with a young person involved in the iTHRIVE group was developed, and their feedback highlights the significant improvement in their mental health. The young person expressed: "My mental health has got better because I know loads of people,". They also shared how they have personally grown: 'I don't just sit at home, bored on my phone. I am happier because I have lots of new friends. I have taken more responsibility of helping other people and becoming an adult.' Additionally, the young person mentioned utilising supportive services: 'I started using Kooth which has been really good. They let you play games and have helped my mental health.' This case study showcases the transformative impact of the iTHRIVE group on young people's mental and emotional wellbeing. Other iTHRIVE group members have shared similar comments and feedback on how their involvement in the project has benefited them.
 - Peer Mentor Training – 6 young people from Rowhill School have been trained as Peer Mentors by Participation Workers from the i-Thrive & Participation Team. The training was adapted to meet the needs of the young people while supporting the school to implement peer mentoring.
- 3.13. **The Virtual School Kent** has its own dedicated Participation Team which has responsibility for facilitating meaningful participation and enrichment opportunities for children, young people and young adults who currently or who have previously been in receipt of Social Care Services. This includes children in care, adopted children and young people, young care leavers and children with a social worker or have previously had a social worker and a high proportion of these children and young people have special educational needs and or disabilities. The VSK Participation Team work closely with the strengthening Independence Service to support children with more complex needs. To meet the needs of these children, in 2023 the VSK Participation Team set up a new Council group for children with SEND and a bespoke range of enrichment activities to engage both children and their families.

- 3.14. The OCYPC Magic (Making A Great And Important Change) Council is a fun and supportive group where children and young people aged 11 upwards can engage in ways that suit their needs. Its purpose is to give them opportunities to share their views and lived experiences to help improve school, education, and wellbeing of young people with additional needs. There are main meetings and social activities for them to attend in every school holiday. There is also a focus on making this Council group as accessible as possible, as we recognise that not everyone is able or wanting to travel to attend our main meetings in person. To appeal to as wide a range as possible of children and young people, we offer different ways for them to feel included and share their views, opinions and experiences, using a 'we will come to you' approach.
- 3.15. Our Council groups, engagement and enrichment activities offer visual timetables, visual aids to support understanding, sensory breaks, fidget toys to help with focus, active games and short engaging, interactive tasks that enable all to positively contribute their valuable views at their own level. Accessible family engagement days, bespoke activities, workshops are now regularly run to support children who come under the Strengthening Independence Service ensuring venues are accessible to all and provide inclusive access, hoists, and changing beds for toileting.
- 3.16. These are examples of how children and young people participate in Boards, Meetings and Recruitment and Selection:
- Children and young people who are members of Our Council groups regularly attend our Corporate Parenting Panel and are supported by care experienced apprentices from the team, some of whom have SEND themselves and receive additional support regarding their needs, so they are able to complete their qualification successfully.
 - Senior staff and KCC directors also regularly attend the children's events and celebrations in order for them to meet and speak to them informally.
 - VSK apprentices with SEND support the recruitment and selection process of workers in the Strengthening Independence Service and are integral parts of the interview panels.
 - Apprentices meet with Elected Members in formal and informal settings to share their experiences of care, schooling, and well-being.
- 3.17. These are examples of VSK Specific Children and Young People's Contributions:

- Strengthening Independence Service Vision Statement has been guided by the views and opinions of young people.
 - Children and young People's involvement in meetings about them.
 - Advising of professionals use of language.
 - Children and young people's lived experience included in Kent universities social worker and trainee teacher programmes.
 - Listen Up – explaining why teachers/professionals need to listen to children and young people.
- 3.18. **Sensory Student Council** - Another specific focus is through the Sensory Student Council, which is supported by the statutory Specialist Teaching and Learning Sensory (STLS) Service. The Sensory Student Council (SSC) members attend 3 Sensory Student Meetings a year and this feedback is shared with the Sensory Reference Group (a Kent wide multiagency meeting from keys stake holders for Sensory and Physical Service), the County Sensory Impairment (CSI) Team meetings (leadership of the Physical and Sensory Team) and Children Hearing Services working Group (CHSWG) – a multiagency meeting of Health East Kent Children's Hearing Service, Social Care Team, Speech and Language Therapist (deafness).
- 3.19. The SSC members have shared views on the following topics that have had impact on practice:
- Frequency of staff training delivered in schools
 - Transition to adult audiology
 - Frequency of visits for individual visits in discussion with QToD (Qualified Teacher of the Deaf), QTVI (Qualified Teacher of Children and Young People with Vision Impairment) and QTMSI (Qualified Teacher of Multi-Sensory Impairment)
 - Kent Association for the Blind Habitation services
- 3.20. Evidence of impact/influence on policies, strategies, or service delivery includes:
- QToD delivered Deaf Awareness training again and the learner agreed this was supportive.
 - Transition to audiology in East Kent Children's is now a longer process and QToDs have formed better links with adult audiology.

- Visually Impaired young people contributed to the Kent Association for the Blind review on behalf of KCC.
- 3.21. **Participation of Young People in the Youth Justice System** - The majority of children and young people in the youth justice system have some type of special or additional need, particularly 'emotional and behavioural' school action rather than an EHCP. Participation is through service user feedback (parents and children) to the county Youth Justice Board on a quarterly basis. This comes from routine use of self-assessments by children and families, which is part of the Asset Plus framework.
- 3.22. Focus groups have been held with children and young people to get their feedback and ideas about how they'd like to influence service design/delivery. For example, they talked about methods of giving feedback (WhatsApp, QR codes, groups, etc) and the layout/content of questions and these suggestions are being taken forward.
- 3.23. Through the Family Hubs and with the involvement of District Contextual Safeguarding Managers (DCSMs), youth participation approaches are being embedded in the core offer. The intention is to have mechanisms in place to obtain the views of children and young people about where they feel un/safe in their communities and on-line, and what needs to be put in place to help them to feel safe. Consideration is being given to having a focus within contextual assessments on the views of children and young people, and routine (possibly quarterly or half yearly) 'pop up' community events, including focus groups, to proactively seek views of children about contextual risks. This methodology, when finalised, will be used across all the Family Hubs, including for our children with SEND, and the information gathered will feed back to DCSMs, and into Local Children's Partnership Groups.
- 3.24. There are a number of examples of children and young people involved in the youth justice system influencing delivery including:
- The creation of court maps for each Youth and Crown Court in Kent, with information about who is in court (their roles etc), where to access water/toilets etc, and what to expect as a response to children and young people feeding back, they are nervous of court and don't know what to expect.
 - The development of biographies with photos and introductory personal information for each Referral Order Panel member which are sent to children to understand who is on their panel and what their role is as a response to children feeding back, they were anxious about the Panel members.

- 3.25. **Youth Voice in the development and delivery of Autism Education Trust Training** - AET staff worked with the Emotional Wellbeing Team and the Kent Youth County Council Disability project group to gather pupil voice. The focus of the work was to understand what autistic children and young people wanted schools to know about autism and what strategies could be used to better support them in schools. The young people gathered many views, and this were also used to feed into 'Artistic Autistic', an art exhibition showing artwork created by autistic young people. The AET also took part in a Q&A with the Disability group turning the tables and asking us what support and strategies could be in schools and wider community to better support SEND children and young people.
- 3.26. Through this work, one young person expressed a wish to have the opportunity to be part of the AET training offer and share his school experiences with teachers and professionals in the hope they would better understand the challenges that autistic children and young people can face every day in schools. Officers and the young person co-presented a short workshop on Autism and Anxiety. The student spoke about his experiences, positive and negative in school and described the emotional impact when reasonable adjustments were not put in place. His narrative was impactful because he highlighted that small things make a difference; for example, he related a time in a classroom when he had been positioned near to a bin. Due to his anxiety around dirt and germs he had asked for the bin to be moved but the teacher had refused to move the bin, he then asked if he could move but this request was also refused. The anxiety built and led to the young person exhibiting very dysregulated behaviour, leaving the classroom and eventually being suspended for his behaviour. Had he or the bin moved this would have been avoided.
- 3.27. Following the presentation, many teachers came to thank him, and I have met several since who still talk about the impact his experiences had on their practice. There are plans in place for more co-presenting of this nature in the future. The young person found it empowering to be able to tell his story in the hope it would help other young people through settings having greater understanding.
- 3.28. **Children and Young People's voice in the statutory EHC plan process and Annual Review process** - The work on EHCPs has involved not just improving KCC's performance of completion within the 20-week statutory deadline, but also improvements in the quality of the contents of the plan. Quality assurance of new plans is through four mechanisms
- The Quality Assurance Team lead regular multi-agency education and health officer audits of plans which analyse the contents and feed those

recommendations back into the professional development programme. These audit teams do include PACT representatives too on a regular basis.

- Monthly DfE review of a selection of plans with senior officers which in November identified 83% of plans were of a good quality.
- A service commissioned from InVision360.
- Annual peer reviews through the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS SE) Regional Improvement Programme, 'Courageous Conversations'.

Whilst there is clear and consistent evidence of improvements in the quality of plans since the September 2022 inspection, quality is a key focus currently to obtain the right balance between completion within timescale and maintaining quality.

- 3.29. The 2014 Code of Practice requires professionals to have regard for the child or young person's views, wishes and feelings within Section A of the EHCP, which is entitled: 'The views, interests and aspirations of the child and his or her parents or the young person' and this has been a particular focus since May 2023.
- 3.30. When considering how to improve the quality of Section A, there was a hypothesis that often children and young peoples' views were actually communicated by parents/carers and professionals, rather than the young people themselves. This hypothesis was confirmed from evidence gathered through a Multi-Agency Audit of Section A in a selection of EHCPs jointly conducted by the QA team and PACT. The evidence showed that CYPs voice could not be evidenced strongly enough in Section A and that the "golden thread" of their views and aspirations was not apparent throughout the EHC plan.
- 3.31. Informed by the findings of this Audit, work is in progress to ensure children and young people understand the importance of making themselves heard independently of parents/carers and professionals, in order to have an EHC plan that fully reflects their views and therefore has impact on their lived experience. Training is being delivered through the SENCo Forum to ensure they are skilled to support children and young people to give their voice to the EHC plan and also to involve them more in the Annual Review meetings for their EHC plan.
- 3.32. In order to help officers better communicate with CYPs to strengthen their input to the EHCP. To achieve this aim, 'Workshop Wednesdays' professional

development session for officers have included training on understanding the importance of effectively integrating children and young people's view into Section A of the EHC plan as this will influence their lived experience and it also enables more effective evaluation of the impact of EHC plans. The evidence from Audits (see QA above) demonstrates the positive impact of this training as Section A on EHC plans have shown distinct improvement and in Cycle 21 of our Audits on the Quality of EHC plan showed 76% were judged as Good or Outstanding. There is still more to be done on improving and hearing the CYPs voice, and work continues on strengthening this important area of activity. An example is the work on diversifying the tools available to capture children and young people's voice and one exemplar (of a total of four) can be seen as Appendix 1. Voice of the Child Young Person Form with Widgit Symbols updated 9th September.

- 3.33. During the Annual Review process and particularly with post-16 students, wherever possible officers speak directly with the young person. As part of the Annual Review process up to date contact details are confirmed to ensure the young person is the first point of contact where appropriate for all communication. If a young person wishes for a parent to advocate on their behalf, we ask them to confirm this with us in writing or verbally if appropriate, but if parent has certificate advocacy due to the young person's capacity, we will ensure this is recorded.
- 3.34. **Youth Voice in Health Services** - Children and Young People's voice are central to NHS Kent and Medway's approach to Children and Young People's services. In partnership with system stakeholders, a Lived Experience Framework which describes the Kent and Medway approach to voice was developed this year and can be seen at Appendix 2. Lived Experience Engagement and Employment Framework. An annual report describes the activities and how voice is being used to develop service and this is included as Appendix 3. Kent and Medway NHS How the voices of children, young people and families are gathered and how they are used to improve their experience and outcomes. Significantly this year Children and Young People were involved in developing the first Kent and Medway system-wide "Vision Statement" which will now underpins all strategies and work we do across the system. NHS Kent and Medway have a participation lead for CYP Mental Health and fund Participation leads that sit within Kent County Council, Medway Council and Porchlight to ensure a joined-up system approach.
- 3.35. Examples of impact this year include:
- Hundreds of young people's experience of transition is used to develop British Psychology Society approved training which has been delivered to **180 Kent**

and Medway Professionals.

- NHS Kent and Medway's **Lived Experience Lead** facilitated and supported young people to express concerns over the planned location of safe havens which led to the change the location of services.
- **200 Kent and Medway children and young people** attended the Big Mental Health Conversation at Detling Hill. Their voices informed the Children and Young People's Strategic framework, children and young people's mental health model and over 20 different organisations planning and delivery of services.
- **30 young adults and 70 professionals** joined the Young Adults' Conference in May 2023. The voices here identified limitations and provided solutions to challenges in transition services, social care and health services.
- Over 12 months to June 2023, the Young Adults Participation service (a commissioned engagement and participation project delivered by Porchlight) engaged with over **1,500 young adults at 96 events** and creative workshops. Their voices have directly impacted the delivery of crisis services in Kent and Medway.
- Over **200 children and young people** were directly engaged, with more through digital platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to develop the ICS Children and Young People's Strategic Framework which will set the direction of travel for the Kent and Medway system for the next few years.
- To inform the development of an integrated model of care for children and young people, 17 young people (85% of those having a disability) and 79 parent/carers took part in a survey to demonstrate the impact that their current care had on their lives, and their wishes regarding what would make things easier for themselves and their family. The findings from the survey together with the outcomes from workshops has led to the development of PCN-Led Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) across East Kent and Medway & Swale, named as the "Children's Care Collaborative".

4. Engagement with Parents and Carers including Parents and Carers Together (PACT)

- 4.1. Kent PACT is the DfE recognised, statutory parent carer forum (PCF) for Kent. their role is to work with the LA and NHS to gather the voice of families to 'design, develop, review, and improve services and support for children and young people with disabilities 0-25 yrs in SEND. All DfE recognised PCF's parent carer forums are funded through a £17.5k grant from the DfE, and KCC also support the organisation through Grant funding. To build on and further develop the existing relationships and structures, the DfE offered consultancy support from the Council for Disabled Children to work with the key stakeholders through the 'RISE ' programme, this took place during February 2024. The aim was to develop a greater understanding for stakeholders about the terminology used in relation to engagement,

consultation, and co-production.

- 4.2. The workshop enabled discussion with stakeholders about the true meaning of co-production and its principles. The group discussed what opportunities in SEND enable us to co-produce and how that could be facilitated. A template for the refreshed co-production charter was agreed and is currently *in the final stages of development* by Kent PACT and the SEND Engagement and Operation Manager. A collaboration agreement was co-constructed with Kent PACT and signed off in October 2023. Schedules form an agreed work plan to underpin this agreement and are reviewed at Quarterly Review meetings. These may, with all parties agreement, be subject to change.
- 4.3. The Partners (KCC, NHS and Kent PACT) jointly *discuss*, review and agree areas of *PCF activity and performance* and the allocation of the KCC Direct Grant Award to Kent PACT. This is agreed pending satisfactory performance and monitoring. This funding is in addition to funding from the DfE. Forward planning for the next financial year takes account of:
 1. Engagement plan and capacity
 2. The annual priorities
 3. Annual meeting matrix
 4. Levels of funding resource
 5. Areas of potential 'in-kind' resource.

Reports to Scrutiny will now include an update on meetings with Kent PACT. Meetings between September and December 2024 are recorded in full in Appendix 4.

- 4.4. KCC PACT Record of engagement - PACT is a key partner in the delivery of the PINS project in Maidstone, leading sessions in the participating schools with the intention over the longer term for these to develop into parent/carer forums. The format of these sessions includes a short presentation from PACT followed by a Question and Answer and informal discussion, providing an opportunity for the participants to talk freely in a safe space and raise any concerns that they had. The need for collaboration between staff and parents is stressed as this provides the foundation for a new culture to embed and benefit as many children as possible. Discussions focus on how the school and parents can work together to establish forums within school to encourage awareness of neurodiversity and how the role of Kent PACT, the menu of support and the wider PINS network can help to facilitate this.
- 4.5. **Family Hubs Parent Carer Panel** – Parent Carer Panel (PCP) sessions have been instrumental in shaping aspects of service delivery in the Kent Family Hubs. For instance, a virtual session introduced the new Family Hub website

where feedback from parents and carers highlighted the need for a user-friendly interface and dedicated section for training opportunities for parents. This feedback has been incorporated into the development of the new Family Hub website.

- 4.6. Another session focused on parental mental health and wellbeing and participants shared their experiences and tips, leading to a review of the mental health support section on the current website. Parents expressed the need for more activities for children over 5 and targeted support for children with SEND during school holidays on the Local Kent Directory. These insights have prompted the development of new support initiatives as part of the Family Hub offer.
- 4.7. At a session led by a Speech and Language Therapist a presentation on language development was followed by discussion on the importance of settings involving parents in information and training on Speech, Language and Communication Needs, including relevant reports around support needed for their children. Additionally, a parent highlighted the high levels of digital poverty on the Isle of Sheppey, suggesting a greater focus on in-person parental engagement. Feedback from this session informed the final version of the Speech and Language section on the new Family Hub website.
- 4.8. Other sessions addressed:
 - Volunteering opportunities, with parents identifying barriers such as family commitments and the need for flexible roles. In response the FH team are improving accessibility, including online training and flexible scheduling and investigating the potential for weekend volunteering.
 - Peer support through a session led by a Family Network Facilitator which has resulted in work to establish a peer-led group.
 - Parental views on education and concerns about exam-based outcomes and testing were raised; this will inform the development of the educational support on the website.
- 4.9. A clear mechanism has been established so that feedback from PCPs informs the SEND Roadshow planning and with the SEND Engagement, Operations and Assurance Manager.
- 4.10. Influence and evidence of impact – the feedback from sessions has influenced the development of the Family Hub digital and support offer. The new Family Hub website's design and functionality reflect parent input, making it easier to navigate and more user friendly. The inclusion of plans to offer a dedicated mental health support section highlights the importance placed on mental health support awareness by parents. The Speech and Language section of the FH website will be refined based on parent and carer feedback, ensuring it meets their needs.

- 4.11. Updated promotional materials, timetables and strategies, fliers and in-person promotion, were developed based on parent suggestions. Adjustments to volunteering roles and promotion strategies have been made to address barriers identified by parents, ensuring opportunities are accessible and well-publicised. The establishment of peer-led groups and increased focus on peer support highlight the value placed on community and shared experiences. These contributions and the resulting changes demonstrate the significant impact of PCP sessions in shaping strategies and services.
- 4.12. Whilst the PCPs do not engage directly with young people, they play a critical role in capturing the voices of children aged 0-19 and up to 25 with SEND through parent/carer engagement, ensuring the needs of all children and young people, particular younger age groups and those with SEND are effectively met. More information about the PCPs can be seen in Appendix 5. PCP update.
- 4.13. **KCC wider engagement with parents and carers** - The SEN Quality Assurance Team is developing an increasing focus on prioritising community engagement in order to collect and incorporate direct feedback from parents, carers, children, young people and schools into wider service development and improvement. Key initiatives include:
- Regular surveys gathering information from parents and carers, children and young people and schools/educational setting on the quality of SEN services and areas for potential enhancement.
 - Conferences and focus groups, like the "Bridging the Gap" conference, that address specific community concerns.
 - A rolling, countywide series of SEND Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG) Roadshows that bring resources and information directly to families across Kent. This section provides an overview of these initiatives, offering insights into their impact and indicating future direction.
- 4.14. **Stakeholder Surveys**
To collect regular qualitative information about perceptions of service satisfaction and community needs, SEN distributes surveys three times each academic year to parents, children and young people and schools. These surveys are integral for:
- **Assessing Service Quality:** Gauging satisfaction with current SEND support, including perceptions of the effectiveness and accessibility of services.
 - **Identifying Improvement Areas:** Parents and schools provide insights into specific service gaps, from early support stages to EHCP assessments and ongoing service accessibility.

- **Building Trust with Families and Schools:** Recurrent surveys demonstrate KCC's commitment to transparency and accountability, as changes based on feedback can be communicated back to stakeholders in future surveys.

The findings are analysed, triangulated with other data to build a rich picture and used to inform service delivery.

4.15. **Process Transparency and the "Bridging the Gap" Conference -** Feedback gathered from the Kent Parent and Carers Together (PACT) "Bridging the Gap" June 2024 conference focused on parental/carer concerns regarding the accessibility and clarity of SEND processes, as well as making suggestions on improving the accessibility of the rich range of information available through the SEND Local Offer. The action taken to address these concerns are as follows:

- **Development of Visual, Co-Designed Resources:** KCC and Kent PACT have organised focus groups to work with parents in producing easy-to-follow documents. These co-designed resources cover critical areas:
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Outlining the distinct roles of families, schools, and council services within SEND processes.
- **Needs Assessment Process:** Clarifying the stages involved in determining whether a child qualifies for additional support, with visual aids to improve understanding.
- **Annual Reviews and Pre-EHCP Support:** Providing detailed steps on preparing for annual reviews and understanding the support available before an EHCP is issued.
- **Enhanced Opportunities for Parental Involvement:** Focus groups are structured to maximise parental contributions, with KCC actively encouraging broader community involvement.

4.16. The Impact of this collaboration has resulted in resources that are not only useful for parents but also facilitate smoother interactions between families and service providers by reducing misunderstandings about roles and expectations. These documents, by making the process more transparent, have shown promise in fostering greater trust between the LA and families.

4.17. **SEND Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG) Roadshows -** KCC has extended its place-based SEND IAG services through an increase in community-based "SEND Roadshows," which bring information and support directly to families at a district level. Key components of these events include:

- **Collaborative Feedback and Workshops:** Families participate in workshops where they can provide direct feedback on critical resources, like the "Handbook for Families - Information on Autism and ADHD." Workshop sessions also allow KCC to gather input on areas of the Local Offer that need

improvement.

- **Strengthening Family Hub Collaboration:** Roadshows work closely with Family Hubs to deliver a cohesive support system. Family Hub staff are increasingly confident in the range of SEND resources available, enhancing their ability to guide families effectively. This partnership also fosters a community-centric approach, making SEND services feel more approachable and accessible for families.
 - **Future Expansion:** Plans for 2025 include specialised Roadshow events, such as a post-16 support event in Tunbridge Wells and a group of primary school sessions in Sevenoaks, aimed at broadening outreach and addressing specific community needs.
- 4.18. Families are reporting high satisfaction with these events, noting improved access to resources and greater confidence in navigating SEND services. This approach allows KCC to adapt services based on real-time feedback, ensuring that future events align with evolving community needs
- 4.19. **Ongoing Consultation and Expert Contributions** - In addition to formal surveys and roadshows, KCC benefits from continuous consultation through the involvement of experts by experience. Key programs influenced by these experts include:
- **Designated Key Worker Program:** This initiative assigns experienced individuals to provide tailored support, guiding families through complex needs and individual care plans.
 - **Neurodevelopmental Assessment Pathway:** Designed to streamline assessment procedures for conditions such as autism, ADHD, and other developmental challenges, ensuring timely and accurate support for CYP.
 - **Children and Young People's Crisis and Complex Care Program:** This program supports families managing acute mental health and behavioural needs, offering immediate intervention and ongoing care resources.

By embedding expert voices directly into program design, KCC ensures that its services remain responsive and relevant to the complex, real-life challenges faced by families.

- 4.20. **The Balanced System Infographic Initiative** - Recognising that traditional, text-heavy resources can be challenging for parents unfamiliar with SEND terminology, KCC co-created the "Balanced System" infographic with parent input. This tool:
- **Simplifies Information:** Converts complex text into a visual format that's easier to understand and more engaging, especially for families new to SEND services.

- Promotes a Welcoming Environment: The infographic uses friendly design elements to make information on SEND services feel approachable, helping to demystify support options and encourage greater parental engagement.

The success of this infographic highlights the importance of using visually engaging tools to improve communication, especially for families with limited prior experience navigating SEND services.

- 4.21. **The SEND Newsletter** - KCC has a newsletter which has grown to almost 14,000 subscribers since it was established in 2020. The newsletter is sent each term and contains a range of education, health and care information for parents, including updates about SEND local area improvements, relevant information related to the school year such as reminders for school place applications, useful tips and information, regular updates from our Young People's Participation team, Kent PACT and IASK. This year we introduced a new 'You Said We Did' section showing how feedback from young people and parents is shaping services.
- 4.22. The parent newsletter, as well as KCC's social media content, performs well in comparison to local government sector performance. The newsletter has an average open rate of 49%, compared with 38-40% for other local government newsletters. KCC does [publish the newsletter on the SEND Information Hub](#) and via social media, and regularly promote the chance to sign up to receive it.

5. Support Available Pre-EHCP

- 5.1. The approach taken is to develop SEND inclusion capacity in mainstream schools through a wider variety of approaches, including outreach by some of the Kent state-funded special schools. KCC has previously endorsed the Countywide Approach to Inclusive Education <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/inclusion/countywide-approach-to-inclusive-education> and the Mainstream Core Standards <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/inclusion/the-mainstream-core-standards>. The roll out of training has also been previously reported on, in summary.

Area	% mainstream schools & settings accessing	Notes
Mainstream Core Standards (evaluation report included as Appendix 6.)	781 delegates from 351 schools 54% (295) Primary Schools 26% (56) Secondary Schools	
SEND Peer Review Programme (i.e. Inclusive Leadership in Kent)	Across the three cohorts a total of 150 schools, 42% of the contract target of 360 mainstream schools, participated in	

	the Programme. This represents approximately 27% of all eligible primary and 26% of eligible secondary schools	
Nurture UK	<p>Across the eight cohorts a total of 298 schools, 99% of the contract target of 300 mainstream schools participated in the Programme. Of these 77% (232 schools) completed the full Programme.</p> <p>This represents approximately 44% of all eligible primary and 28% of eligible secondary schools.</p>	41 schools have achieved the National Nurturing School Programme. However, this is a rolling programme and more schools still going through the process.
Autism Education Trust	<p>Making Sense of Autism</p> <p><u>2022– 2024 School Age</u></p> <p>292/568 schools have received MSA (Making Sense of Autism) 51.4%</p> <p><u>2023 – 2024 School Age</u></p> <p>277/568 schools have received MSA (Making Sense of Autism) 48%</p> <p><u>2022 – 2024 Early Years</u></p> <p>212/1435 settings have received MSA 14.77%</p> <p><u>2023 – 2024 Early Years</u></p> <p>200/1435 settings have received MSA 13.93%</p> <p><u>2023 – 2024 Post 16</u></p> <p>31/104 settings have received MSA 39.80% (this assumes Post 16 staff attended Secondary training)</p> <p>Good Autism Practice</p> <p><u>2022 – 2024 School Age</u></p> <p>23/568 schools have received GAP (Good Autism Practice) practice 4%</p>	

	<p><u>2022 – 2024 Early Years</u></p> <p>31/1435 settings have received GAP (Good Autism Practice) 2.2%</p> <p><u>2022- 2024 Post 16</u></p> <p>3/104 Settings have received GAP (Good Autism Practice) 2.9%</p>	
<p>PINS (Partnership for the Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools)</p> <p>Pathfinder – 20 schools in the Maidstone District</p> <p>The AET training programme is part of the universal offer for PINS)</p> <p>There are 3 training courses on offer plus bespoke action planning support to embed the Standards Framework for school.</p>	<p>Please find below the levels of engagement for the PINS (Maidstone) schools.</p> <p>There are 3 courses on offer plus action planning.</p> <p>90% Maidstone schools have requested training in at least one area 18/20</p> <p>85% Maidstone schools have requested training in at least two areas 17/20</p> <p>25% Maidstone schools have requested training in at least 3 areas 5/20</p> <p>5% Maidstone school has requested all three trainings and action planning 1/20</p>	<p>The expectation is that every school that completes MSA will receive an action planning meeting so these will raise the engagement figures.</p> <p>Two primary schools had already completed MSA training last year so would not be requesting all 3 areas.</p>
<p>Dingley’s Promise (a new Comic Relief funded training programme for the EY)</p>	<p>10% Early Years settings</p>	<p>This is relatively new evidence-based training funded through Comic Relief</p>

5.2. All Mainstream schools (except on Swale and this is being addressed) have been allocated a named link speech and language therapist to support schools with developing their provision for SLCN. Schools can discuss any pupils they have concerns about with the link therapist .In addition, The Balance System is being implemented in schools to develop Speech and Language capacity, more information can be seen here <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/special-educational-needs/the-balanced-system-in-kent-for-speech-language-and-communications-needs-slcn>

- 5.3. There is a wide range of support for **emotional well-being and mental health**. KCC has produced a SEMH Toolkit for schools which can be seen here https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/167278/SEMH-toolkit.pdf
- 5.4. **Mental Health Support Teams:** Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) are government initiative to increase children and young people's access to emotional wellbeing and mental health support in education settings. MHSTs work with children and young people, their families, and education settings. Within Kent, teams are known as 'Emotional Wellbeing Teams'. NELFT delivers Kent's service on behalf of NHS Kent and Medway (NHSKM). Across Kent there are 16 live teams with a further five teams either in their mobilisation phase, or soon to begin mobilisation. Each team supports between 7,000 – 8,000 students. Requests for support can be made by education setting staff, children, young people, or their parents/carers.
- 5.5. **CYPMHS:** NHSKM commissions NELFT to deliver specialist children and young people's mental health services (CYPMHS) for 0–18-year-olds, as well as neurodevelopmental diagnostic assessments. Children and young people seen by CYPMHS are usually significantly affected by mental health difficulties to the point where it is affecting their everyday life, like attending school or going out with friends. Requests for support can be made by children, young people, parents/carers, or professionals by either completing an online form or calling Kent and Medway's single point of access.
- 5.6. **School Health Service:** KCHFT is commissioned by Kent County Council (KCC) to deliver the School Health Service. The service sees children and young people until they are 19 years and helps them reach their full potential. Young people aged 11 to 19 can access the ChatHealth text service to have direct access to a nurse Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. This service is confidential and anonymous. KCHFT also provide the Children and Young People's Counselling Service to support the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people aged four to 19. This service offers up to six counselling sessions to help a young person gain understanding and develop strategies to help them feel better. For primary school-aged children, six sessions with a counsellor maybe delivered to parents/carers to offer advice on practical, easy to use strategies to support their child.
- 5.7. **Captain Wonderweb and the Esteem Machine:** NHSKM commissions Shooting Star to deliver an interactive, theatre-based show, with accompanying classroom teaching resources, to Kent's primary schools. The objective is to provide children, parents/carers and schools with tools to build resilience, keep mentally and emotionally healthy and to raise awareness of how mental health and physical health are linked. Primary schools are contacted and invited to book a performance date.
- 5.8. **Emotional wellbeing networks:** NHSKM funds KCC to deliver termly workshops to education settings and partner agencies with a role in supporting children and young people's wellbeing in each of Kent's 12

districts. The workshops have a focus topic with presentations from invited speakers with specialist information, knowledge, and skills to explore areas of interest and provide evidence-based resources and good practice. Attendees are asked to complete a survey at the end of each workshop to suggest future topics.

- 5.9. **Mind and Body programme:** We are With You provides the Mind and Body programme to young people aged 13 to 25 years old in Kent on behalf of NHSKM. Mind and Body supports young people and young adults who are self-harming, at risk of self-harming, or struggling with their mental wellbeing. The programme helps them to find positive ways to manage difficult thoughts and feelings, working with small groups in secondary schools and in the community. There is an open referral process. Staff working in this programme offer free training for professionals and parents/carers to help them learn how to manage risk and explore strategies to best support a young person who is self-harming or at risk of self-harming.
- 5.10. **Kooth plc** provides anonymous online counselling and online resources to those aged 10–25 living in Kent and Medway on behalf of NHSKM. It is available 365 days a year. Kooth's website contains helpful articles, personal experiences and tips from young people and the Kooth team. There are also discussion boards with lots of topics to choose from. Young people can use text or live chat function to chat to the Kooth team about anything on their mind. There is also an online daily journal to help users to track their feelings or emotions and reflect on how they're doing.
- 5.11. The **School Health Service** provide universal support in schools to support a whole school approach. This includes a tier 1 package of care on mental health and wellbeing and a counselling service which we are currently out for public consultation on - <https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/school-health/>
- 5.12. With regard to **services for schools**, a team of **KCC SEN Inclusion Advisers** whose role is to help mainstream schools include SEN children including supporting parents and carers to raise any concerns with the school's SEN support. The **statutory Specialist Teaching and Learning Services** are managed through KCC and provide support for children and young people (0 to 19 years) with sensory and physical disabilities, or complex needs. <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs/types-of-send/sensory-services/specialist-teaching-and-learning-services> **Non-statutory STL Services** are managed through some Kent special schools and provide support for children and young people on for range of additional and special needs.
- 5.13. In addition, there is a wide range of support available to children, young people and families pre EHCP which can be viewed on the Local Offer and includes:

- Health visitors <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/kent-family-hub/pregnancy-and-the-first-two-years/toddler/health-visiting>
- School health service (nurses) <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/school-public-health-service>
- Voluntary organisations, support groups and advice charities active in Kent <https://local.kent.gov.uk/kb5/kent/directory/results.page?localofferchannel=0>
- Independent advice <https://www.iask.org.uk/>
- Family Hubs <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/kent-family-hub>
- Support in Early Years <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs/support-for-children-under-5/send-for-children-with-SEND-in-early-years>
- Portage <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs/support-for-children-under-5/portage>
- Special Needs Inclusion Fund <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs/support-for-school-age-children/support-for-send-professionals/send-funding-for-early-year-providers>
- Therapies/The Pod <https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/childrens-therapies-the-pod/>
- Kent Children and Families Information Service (CFIS) <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/childcare-and-pre-school/advice-about-childcare>
- Kent Resilience Hub <https://kentresiliencehub.org.uk/supporting-your-child/resources/>
- Multi-agency specialist hubs (MASH) <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs/social-care-support-for-your-child-or-young-person/mashes>

6. The Evidence of SEND Inclusion in Schools and Settings

- 6.1. A range of evidence is used to inform judgements about SEND inclusion in Kent schools and education settings.
- 6.2. **Engagement in and evaluation of training** in the original Mainstream Core Standards ran for several years. This training is now integrated into the standard school improvement offer for Kent. The most recent report for on MCS is included as Appendix 6. Review of the Mainstream Core Standards Evaluation report. There is now a phase specific training and support programme for SENCOs with regular meetings and an annual conference, with the evaluation report included as Appendix 7. SENCO Conference 2024- Celebrating Inclusion Evaluation. Following publication of the CATIE, an

annual report is now drafted to assess the success of meeting the objectives of this strategy and this is included as Appendix 8. CATIE Annual Report 2023-24.

6.3. **Ofsted inspection reports** - All schools and settings are inspected. Reports are reviewed and the majority of schools are judged to have good inclusive practice. Some examples of quotes from reports include –

- Early Years:

Leaders' expectations of what children can achieve are exceptionally high. Children are inquisitive and enthusiastic learners, who concentrate well at all times. They behave extremely well. Any unkind behaviour is dealt with swiftly. Staff are excellent role models and are highly attentive of all children's needs. Relationships are warm and supportive, and everyone is welcome. In particular, staff provide first-rate support to those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Children of all ages behave very well across the setting. There are high expectations for all children, including those with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND). For instance, consistent approaches to behaviour management are embedded across the setting. The skilled staff team support children exceptionally well to learn how to understand their emotions. They adapt their teaching strategies to meet the individual needs of children. Where needed, staff implement a personalised approach to ensure that swift and highly effective action is taken to support children when they struggle to regulate their own behaviour.

Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is exceptional. Staff liaise with parents and other professionals to target and support children's learning. Personalised plans and good use of funding contribute towards the rapid and substantial progress that children are making. They make particularly swift progress in their physical skills and language development.

The dedicated special educational needs coordinator is highly effective in recognising those children that are in danger of falling behind their peers. His astute observations and individual plans support those children to make good progress in their development and learning. Additional funding is used well to provide children with new and enriching experiences, including extra support from specialist teachers.

Staff support all children to make good progress, and children have a positive attitude towards their learning. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff liaise closely with other agencies, such as speech and language therapists. They observe children together and implement helpful strategies that support children, such as visual prompts.

- Primary Phase:

The school has high ambition for all pupils. They encounter an engaging and interesting curriculum. As a result, pupils develop their knowledge and skills across the curriculum exceptionally well. The school supports pupils with special

educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) very effectively. This ensures that they are included in the full life of the school and achieve well.

The achievement of pupils is far stronger than current published outcomes data indicates. The school is ambitious for all pupils to achieve their best, including the substantial cohort of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff understand what each pupil needs for them to move forward in their learning.

Pupils work hard. They have expert help in lessons because teachers are well trained. Staff expect pupils to try their best. Pupils live up to these high expectations. At the heart of the school is the belief that everyone is included. This means that all pupils, and particularly pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn and enjoy school together. For example, in the whole-school 'sign and sing' assemblies, pupils learn sign language. Pupils are thoughtful, kind and respectful.

A growing proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged now attend the school. The school has carefully adapted the provision to support these pupils' needs. As a result, all pupils feel welcomed and confident that adults and other pupils care and understand them. The school's offer beyond the academic is well considered. Experiences such as the choir's regular public performances include and prioritise disadvantaged pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are passionate about these opportunities. The school has made thoughtful changes to routines, which have supported pupils with SEND to make friends and feel like they belong to the school's wider community.

Children make a wonderful start in early years. In Nursery and Reception, staff share impressive expertise and care, working tirelessly to support children with complex needs. Language development is rightly the top priority to help children communicate well. Staff promote independence very well. Children prepare their own healthy snacks and always wash up afterwards. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from strong support. Pupils from the SEND unit receive skilful support to help them access the full curriculum with their mainstream classes. Teachers adapt lessons to help every child to achieve success. Where needed, pupils use sensory equipment, such as ear defenders and individual workstations, to help them thrive.

Children have an excellent start to education in the early years. Children are nurtured, thrive and make strong progress from their starting points. Early years leadership is outstanding. Teaching and learning are good. As a result, pupils make typically good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Additional funding is used well to support the learning of vulnerable pupils. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well.

Teachers know their pupils well. Staff set high expectations and develop pupils' resilience. If pupils find something hard, they are given additional help if they need it. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers support pupils with SEND to be successful, including those from the

resource-based provision. Pupils are given carefully considered resources to allow them to work alongside their peers. Lessons are adapted to ensure that these pupils achieve well. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) knows the pupils well. Checks are made to ensure that work is closely matched to what pupils can do.

- Secondary Phase:

This school is highly ambitious for its pupils. Staff deliver the sophisticated curriculum very effectively. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve exceptionally well.

Staff have high expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils' needs are identified precisely and met effectively. Those pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, specifically with autistic spectrum disorder, receive expert support and are included fully in the life of the school.

Staff identify pupils' needs accurately. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve as well as their peers in almost all subjects because well-trained staff provide strong support, and teachers adapt the curriculum successfully.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported by leaders. Leaders work with teachers to carefully identify any barriers to learning or to taking part in the full life of the school. Staff then ensure that all pupils have the help they need to overcome these obstacles. Leaders have made subtle and thoughtful adaptations to the school to make sure that physical disabilities do not prevent pupils from either achieving highly or from being included in activities with their peers.

Leaders identify well the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils are supported well through the adaptations that teachers make for them in lessons. In the SRP provision, pupils benefit from additional support. All pupils thrive due to the warm and supportive relationships with staff.

Disadvantaged pupils, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive a good quality of education. They are well known to teachers and support staff. Leaders are determined to offer an ambitious and broad curriculum for all pupils. Parents comment positively on the school's support for pupils' mental well-being.

- Post 16:

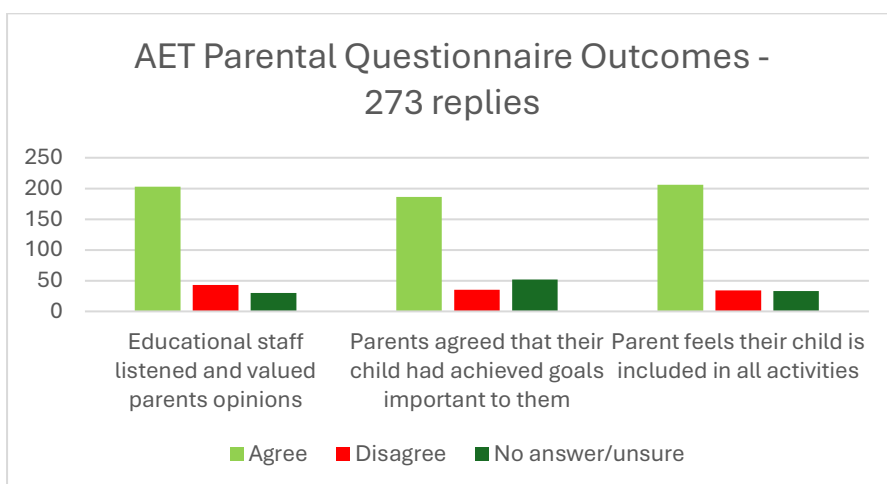
Learners are motivated highly to succeed. They attend lessons very well and demonstrate the reliability that staff and, where relevant, employers expect of them. When learners are absent, caring staff check on their welfare and make sure they always catch up on missed work. Learners become increasingly confident at work and model exemplary professional standards to other learners, who quickly adopt them.

Learners are very positive and proud of their education. They share the exceptionally high ambitions that leaders, trustees and staff have for them to achieve. Learners benefit from early discussions about their aspirations and ambitions with staff, who work with them effectively and consistently to achieve their goals through the course of their studies. As a result, learners make excellent academic and personal progress.

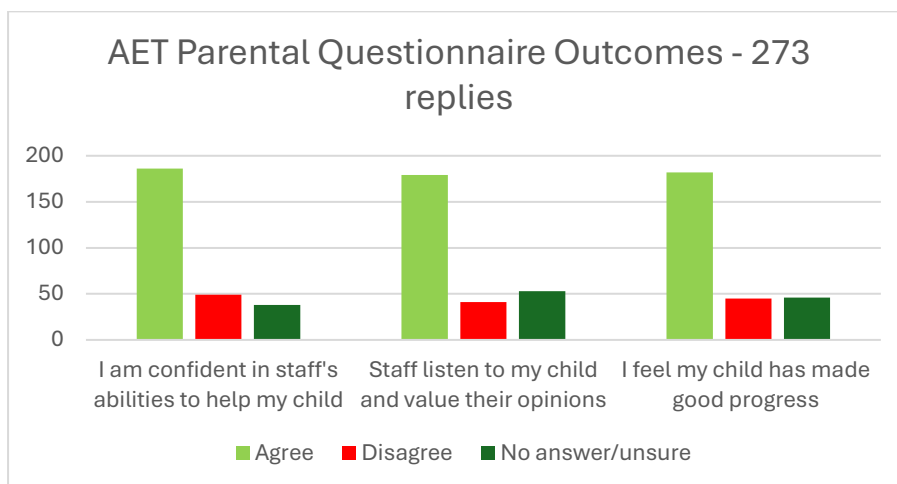
Learners and apprentices, including those who have high needs, make very good and sustained progress from their starting points. They gain many useful additional skills and study complementary qualifications relevant to their specialist industries that stand them in good stead to move on to their intended next steps. For example, those interested in setting up their own business, such as bricklaying learners and offenders at a local open prison, learn about self-assessment tax returns and value added tax. Learners with profound and multiple disabilities increasingly spend more days in community and social care settings, which prepares them well for their transition to these settings at the end of their courses and training at college.

- 6.4. **The Kent District Dashboard** - Working in collaboration with schools KCC has developed a Dashboard which brings together a range of data sets which are inclusion related and the list in full can be seen below. The dashboard is updated regularly as new national datasets are published. The Dashboard is available to all schools to see their own individual data, they can also access other schools' data collated by district to enable benchmarking. The Dashboard is an important tool to support decision-making by the forthcoming Communities of Schools. An example of a District Dashboard report is included as Appendix 9. PowerBI Snapshots one district.
- 6.5. **Autism Education Trust training, PINS; the approach and outcomes of evaluation** - Kent County Council purchased a three-year license for the use of Autism Education Trust (a collaboration between the National Autistic Trust and Ambitious About Autism, supported by the Department for Education) materials. This has enabled KCC to deliver the training and implement other materials in schools and other education settings and this will continue until 2025. An AET progress report is included as Appendix 10. This capacity building in education settings has provided a firm foundation for further development work and evaluation by parents has been generally positive, see below and Appendix 11. An Evaluation Report on SEN Autism/Neurodevelopmental interventions in Kent.
- 6.6. Since this work started, the ICB funded This is Me pilot was completed <https://www.kmhealthandcare.uk/your-health/autism-and-attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd-services/me> and discussions took place about the potential for this model to be extended across Kent to support schools in the early identification and successful intervention with pupils and their families who show neurodiverse traits. At that time children and young people were being recommended to join the waiting list for an ND diagnosis, but high demand meant there was a very long wait. Professionals were concerned to create a positive alternative for these children and young people which did not necessarily require a diagnosis for them to access targeted help. Planning started for a larger scale trial in Maidstone funded by the ICB.

- 6.7. Around the same time, Kent was successful in a cross-organisational bid to join the DfE funded Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) project. A sophisticated project plan, bringing together This is Me and PINS into one package of support for the schools was developed, with preparatory work being undertaken in the summer of 2024 and full rollout taking place from 1st September 2024. A serving Kent headteacher was seconded two days a week to lead the project and implementation is being supported by an impressive number of services.
- 6.8. As the Maidstone pathfinder work is trialling a change which has been agreed in principle should be rolled out across the county over time, it was important that the work was supported by a robust and iterative academic evaluation as this would inform the development of the work in real time as well as evidencing the business case for change. To support this area Kent County Council employed a 0.6 FTE researcher in January 2024, part funded as an embedded researcher in a Local Authority by the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Applied Research Collaborative.
- 6.9. The full report can be seen as Appendix 11. Examples of evaluation include:
- An AET quantitative and qualitative online questionnaire for parents of children where their child’s school setting has had AET training, how things are for them and their neurodiverse child. 296 parents completed the survey, and 273 parents agreed for the results to be used for research purposes.



School delayed in recognising neurodivergence in child	6
Whole school deemed not supportive of SEN	5
Primary support OK but concerns for when child moves to secondary	4
School is supportive of parent and ND pupil	4
Communication with parents from school is poor	3
Teachers are good	3
SEN 'ineffectual'	3
SEN 'effective'	3
I think the school do the best they can with the resources they have	3
Communication with parents from school is poor	3
SEN advice not put into action	3
Not enough supportive therapy	3



- PINS Parental Survey conducted in 10 Maidstone primary schools. This small survey attracted 188 parental responses of which 114 identified as being parents of a child with SEN. Of the 40 parents that provided comments the themes identified from the highest presenting qualitative comments are as follows.

Generally positive comments: 9

Generally negative comments: 16

Neutral (either neutral or a bit of good and bad, or 'school were poor and improved' etc.): 15

Did not make a comment: 148

NB – this project had been running from September 2024.

7. Phase Transfer

- 7.1. Members will be aware that before 2022, the delivery of Phase Transfer was overseen solely by SEN staff, with an expectation that it would be managed by Area Casework teams in conjunction with their continued duties in relation to Annual Review. It should be noted that over time, the Phase Transfer process had become almost completely decentralised, with the majority of parental engagement and a large proportion of decision-making passed to schools. With Kent simply overseeing, there was insufficient central organisation to ensure that disparate area team efforts were adequate to ensure Kent met its county wide duties by statutory deadlines. This negatively impacted SEN families, but also similarly affected related mainstream processes, jeopardising Kent's ability to offer school places to any child in legal timescales.
- 7.2. As a result, for the 2023 intake year, SEN piloted a system that was supported by colleagues in Fair Access, utilising that teams' expertise in delivering statutory functions to high volumes of residents, harnessing system process and function to allow staff resource to be targeted more fully in ensuring pupil level decisions were reasonable and appropriate. Due the level of dysfunction present in the system, it was noted at the time that while this combined approach would reap sizable benefits within the first year, continued year on year refinements would be necessary before residents could experience true parity between the SEN and mainstream processes. It should also be noted that historic prioritisation of Secondary Phase Transfer had resulted in Post 16 processes being in a severely worse state, meaning that improvements in this Phase would be more challenging and therefore more time consuming.
- 7.3. As such, this report will include updates on last year's Phase Transfer (for children who started their new placement this academic year), work underway this year for 2025 intake and plans already underway for improvements for the 2026 intake process.
- 7.4. **Phase Transfer 2023-24** - The main changes that were made from previous practice include:
 - Collection of parental preferences returned to SEN teams, ensuring that staff could engage directly with parents, providing more detailed advice and more timely responses to their queries (although the volume of parental queries across SEN continues to be a challenge and is under constant review and refinement). This approach freed schools up from administrative duties, allowing them to refocus that time to increase the level of support they provide to parents to plan for their child's transition. Annual review processes were also adjusted to ensure that accuracy of parental contact information was improved, so that future engagement would benefit from improved data quality.

- This centralisation allowed for other services to increase the level of support that they provided parents. These included parents being advised of their nearest mainstream school so that transport implications could be considered before they named their preference.
- Formalisation of school led decision making panels, overseen and chaired by SEN Senior Officers. This provided a robust environment for peer to peer and LA to school challenge, to ensure that decisions were appropriate for each child and made best use of available resources. This also helped improve consistency of decision making across the county.
- The introduction of an SEN equivalent of “National Offer Day” ensuring all parents were contacted before the statutory deadline. Historically, parents were contacted on an ad hoc basis as each EHCP was finalised. This created uncertainty for parents and schools and removed Kent’s ability to monitor high level decision making. This also meant that where decisions were not made by the statutory deadline, it was not possible to contact parents to advise why an offer could not yet be made. While Kent retains the duty to make all decisions by the deadline, these improvements still increased the quality of parental communication and allows for remaining cases to be more easily identified and resolved.
- Centralised record keeping has improved the Inclusion Service’s ability to engage with schools to support transition arrangements for individual children.

7.5. Outcomes of the changes include:

- In the year 6 to year 7 transition process, 92% of families received an answer by the deadline compared to c.70% in 2023, which represent a roughly 30% improvement. By the start of the academic year, this position had improved to 98%, with staff continuing to support the remaining 22 children to find a school place. This group comprised children for whom multiple consultations had been undertaken, but for whom a place could still not be finalised as a result of the complexity of their need.
- The Post 16 process saw 70% of families receiving an answer, compared to c.20-30% completed by the deadline last year, which is a 130% increase in the number of families receiving an appropriate service. As highlighted above, the Post 16 team faced a considerably more pressured process, exacerbated by a team comprised of a much higher proportion of new staff members. The level of improvement highlights that the gap between each Phase Transfer should continue to shrink on an expedited timeline, underpinned by a team with growing experience. By the start of the academic year, the position had improved to 88% of students being allocated an appropriate school, with 175

cases ongoing. As at the time of writing this report, 50 pupils remain without a formalised Kent Offer, with Officers continuing to prioritise ongoing consultations to find appropriate provision.

- As a result of these improvements, the Department for Education have removed Phase Transfer from their areas of concern under the Accelerated Process Plan. While this is a positive reflection of how quickly changes have improved Kent's offer, work and focus will not abate until all Phase Transfer processes are completed to 100% by the statutory deadline, as is achieved annually for the mainstream process.
- Kent received 120 appeals for 6 to 7 Phase transfer out of a cohort of 1,236, equivalent to 9.7%. 47 of the 120 appeals (39%) request an Independent setting. Due to the timing of this report, it is not yet possible to report on outcomes of these appeals.
- Work continues on equivalent data for Post 16, which can be made available in future reports.

- 7.6. When considering the significance of appeals numbers when determining parental satisfaction and the appropriateness of LA placement decisions, it is important to note that a parent's decision to appeal does not automatically mean that the decision made by the LA was wrong. In fact, where mediation identifies the LA's initial decision was incorrect, the place will be changed without the need for Tribunal.
- 7.7. Rather, Local authorities have a duty to consider the impact of a placement decision on the education outcomes of others, whilst also ensuring appropriate use of limited resources. This means that the LA's offer must ensure that the child's needs are met. Understandably, a parent's expectation is more likely to be focussed on finding the best possible outcome for their individual child, which in some cases will exceed an LA's statutory duty. It is therefore also understandable that parents may appeal if they cannot be offered a school of their preference.
- 7.8. Another useful comparator is the level of appeals present in the mainstream system, which is arguably a less complex decision and easier for a local authority to explain why a preferred school could not be offered. Last year, Kent received around 43,000 mainstream admissions application each year, which generated around 3300 appeals. This means roughly 7.7% of parents appealed their mainstream offer, compared to 9.7% appealing their SEN Phase Transfer offer. As parents have a greater expectation within the SEN Code of Practice that their preferred school is likely to offer, this small disparity suggests that Kent is not routinely offering inappropriate school places.

7.9. **Phase Transfer 2024/25** - Due to the timing of changes in SEN leadership, 2023-24 process did not benefit from a pre-delivery planning window. Officers were required to rely on experience from the mainstream process, combined with SEN knowledge to plan and deliver changes concurrently. To ensure a similar situation did not occur again, areas of weakness in the 2023 process were identified and mitigations were planned for future years as the timeline developed. The meant that main focus of the 2024-25 process was refinement, with more significant changes planned for the following year. Improvements include:

- The implementation of a dedicated Phase Transfer Data Co-ordination team to monitor the individual progress of every child and support SEN colleagues to ensure key deadlines are fulfilled.
- Better delineation of duties and availability of information across teams. This ensures that pupils new to the system are treated fairly and are not overlooked or offered placements in a different manner.
- Improvements in the organisation, evidence and delivery of school-based panels. Working with schools, we have monitored what more they need to engage with this vital part of the process.
- Refinements in advice provided to parents and planned improvements to final offer letters.

7.10. While the true test will be at statutory deadline points next year, there are already indications of improvements in parental engagement this year. The 2023-24 process, KCC reintroduced direct engagement with parents for their preferred school. By the early September deadline, 71% of parents had engaged with the LA, which increased to 85% this year. However, SEN have continued to support parents which has yielded even further improvements. By the end of the 2023 process, 78% of parents actively engaged, but by the 1 October this year, we'd reached 93% of the required cohort. This is an early indication of increase parental engagement and likely corresponding confidence.

7.11. **Phase Transfer 2025-26 and beyond** Officers continue to engage across the education sector and with parental representatives for areas of future development. These include:

- Improvements in the allocation of work to SEN team members to ensure that Phase Transfer and Annual Review duties do not remain a constant source of

negative internal conflict when prioritising caseloads.

- More direct parental engagement, including at SEN roadshows.
- Improvements in frequency of school engagement and training opportunities, to reflect the work undertaken in the mainstream space.
- Working with Post 16 providers to minimise the Code of Practice's shortcomings in relation to decision making being required to take place before exam outcomes.
- Availability of additional preference options.

8. Outcomes for Pupils with SEND

- 8.1. **Tests and examinations** – In addition to training and development, for maintained schools, SEN is considered through the individual school review process which takes place termly. Support is available through TEP school improvement advisers who consider SEN as part of wider school improvement and the SEN inclusion advisers look at provision planning for the SEND cohort as well as individual provision planning. These officers are also monitoring SRPs.
- 8.2. Data for the 2023-24 academic outcomes has not been finalised currently so 2022-23 data is included as Appendix 12. This shows that in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key stage 1, Key Stage 2 and GCSE the gap for pupils with SEN is broadly in line with national data. At post 16, SEN Support gaps are small at post-16 and better than national, but the EHCP cohort's attainment is lower than National with greater gaps.
- 8.3. **School Attendance** - This section describes the work of the service as a whole to respond to questions raised by Members, as well as commenting on SEND in particular. Kent PRU and Attendance Service (KPAS) formerly known as PIAS (PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service) aims to improve school attendance and reduce suspensions and exclusions for children and young people in Kent the Department for Education (DfE) 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance that became statutory in August 2024. Over the past two years, the redesign of the service has ensured the local authority meets the demands of the statutory guidance and provides advice and guidance to all schools, including special and independent schools through designated link Attendance Officers (AO) and Exclusion Intervention Advisers (EIA).
- 8.4. The Attendance Working Group continues to run since its inception in Spring 2023 and includes representation from a range of KCC countywide professionals including Early Help, Social Care, Virtual School Kent (VSK), SEN, Educational Psychology and the Safeguarding Front Door. The group

aims to ensure attendance is 'everyone's responsibility' across the Children and Young People Directorate and beyond. There has been the successful implementation of the core responsibilities within the 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance. Targeting Support Meetings (TSM) is an example where pupils and cohorts e.g. pupils with an EHCP and at risk of poor attendance, have agreed targeted actions and access to services. Under the new statutory guidance, the local authority will hold 1200 TSMs with schools over the 2024/25 academic year.

- 8.5. Best Practice Meetings to share effective attendance practice are held between schools. KPAS AOs facilitate these meetings which are available to all schools to discuss the DfE attendance guidance, local processes, and resources available for schools and families. Meetings are held either in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams, and in some areas, meetings have been tailored specifically to groups together such as special schools or PRUs. In addition, there has also been the development of practice and protocols linked to attendance for schools and other services. This includes updated KPAS Digital Front Door Pathways (including data returns for unauthorised absence and sickness) and updated Support Level Guidance linked to Safeguarding which now includes threshold support from Early Help for pupils/families with persistent and severe absence.
- 8.6. Under the new guidance, all schools are legally obliged to submit their daily attendance data to the DfE. The local authority is currently designing a School Absence Report scoresheet that identifies patterns of each school's attendance data including cohorts such as gender, SEN, FSM and social care involvement against district and national comparisons. A new Code of Conduct linked to the National Framework for Penalty Notices was published in September 2024 which works in conjunction with the electronic payment system of penalty notices which was implemented in September 2023. During the 2023/24 academic year over 12,000 penalty notices were issued, 90% of these were for an unauthorised family holiday.
- 8.7. There has also been the development of practice to improve attendance within other services, including trauma informed practices by VSK, EBSA training (phase 1 and 2) by the Kent Educational Psychology Service and intensive support guidelines for referrals to Early Help including holding strength-based conversations with families in school meetings. KCC remains a joint partner in a local attendance action alliance with Medway Council, which was formed following the creation of a national attendance action alliance led by the Secretary of State for Education.
- 8.8. Several resources have been produced for schools and partners which include a DfE attendance guidance checklist, attendance policy checklist, good practice guide, attendance contract templates (previously known as parenting contracts). Bitesize guides/fact sheets have also been produced for KCC family practitioners on themes such as children missing education, part time timetables and elective home education. Possibly, the most productive resource has been the development of a KCC School Attendance Handbook,

primarily designed for schools, which breaks down into greater detail the ‘Kent way’ of implementing the expectations in the DfE statutory guidance. The handbook includes reference to other related subjects such as suspensions and exclusions.

- 8.9. Many training opportunities have been accessed by over 250 family practitioners and presentations delivered to over 400 governors and 300 headteachers. Whilst attendance and persistent absence of all schools in Kent is improving, levels remain just below national average according to the most recent DfE data. However, the improvements in Kent schools are greater than those reported nationally. The impact of the work to date is displayed below when comparing 2022/23 against 2023/24 Autumn and Spring combined attendance data in Kent schools.

School Type – all pupils

	% Total Absences Autumn 2022/ Spring 2023	% Total Absences Autumn 2023/ Spring 2024	Difference Total Absences	% PA Pupils Autumn 2022/Spring 2023	% PA Pupils Autumn 2023/Spring 2024	Difference PA
Primary	6.4	5.8	-0.6	19.1	16.1	-3.0
Secondary	9.1	8.6	-0.5	26.8	24.7	-2.1
Special	14.6	14.4	-0.2	43.6	41.0	-2.6
Primary/Secondary	7.6	7.1	-0.5	22.6	20.1	-2.5

School Type - SEN Provision

School Tye	SEN Provision	2022/23 Autumn and Spring Combined		2023/24 Autumn and Spring Combined		DIFF Total Absences	DIFF % PA (10%)
		% Total Absences	% PA Pupils (10%)	% Total Absences	% PA Pupils (10%)		
Pri/Sec	N	6.7	19.3	6.1	16.4	-0.6	-2.9
Pri/Sec	K	10.9	34.0	10.5	31.1	-0.4	-2.9
Pri/Sec	E	13.6	37.7	13.7	36.4	0.1	-1.3
Pri/Sec	E & K	12.0	34.7	11.1	32.1	-0.9	-2.6
Primary	N	5.7	15.9	5.0	12.8	-0.7	-3.1
Primary	K	8.8	29.1	8.2	25.5	-0.6	-3.6
Primary	E	11.3	34.7	11.1	32.1	-0.2	-2.6
Primary	E & K	9.2	30.1	8.7	26.7	-0.5	-3.4
Secondary	N	7.9	23.3	7.4	20.5	-0.5	-2.8
Secondary	K	14.0	40.6	13.8	38.7	-0.2	-1.9
Secondary	E	16.8	41.6	17.0	41.7	0.2	0.1
Secondary	E & K	14.5	40.8	14.4	39.3	-0.1	-1.5
Special	E	14.5	43.2	14.2	40.4	-0.3	-2.8

8.10. **Suspension and permanent exclusions** - KPAS also continues its work regarding suspensions and permanent exclusions. Common themes are identified, and additional processes developed to support schools to ensure all interventions are exhausted and exclusion remains a last resort as detailed in the DfE guidance on suspensions and exclusions issued in August 2024. This includes the development of practices such as an inclusion intervention checklist, the appropriate use of directions off-site (alternative provision) and using inclusion champions to support schools. In addition, KPAS supports the work of CATIE (Countywide Approach to Inclusive Education). This includes the inclusive leadership programme, core training offer, whole school nurture approach provided by Nurture UK and Special School outreach work delivered by the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS) and Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT).

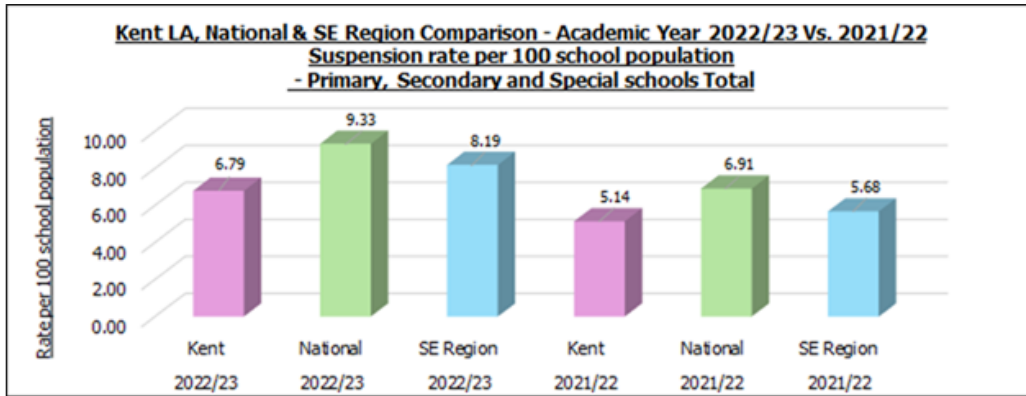
8.11. KPAS provides regular training to governing boards and academy trustees across the county's schools to ensure all cases of permanent exclusion are thoroughly scrutinised, as well as promote the use of timely data to address cases where suspensions are occurring on a regular basis. The link EIA support schools by:

- Providing advice on the DfE exclusion guidance and processes as well as behaviour policies.

- Sharing ideas as well as signposting to resources and services who may be able to support schools and pupils in promoting inclusion where behaviour is a concern.
- Attending meetings in schools with parents (and partner agencies where involved) about individual pupils experiencing suspensions or at risk of permanent exclusion.
- Delivering training to governors and senior leaders on responsibilities in relation to exclusions set out in the DfE guidance.

EIAs represent KPAS at a range of forums such as the Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT), LIFT Executive, In Year Fair Access panels and District Contextual Safeguarding Meetings.

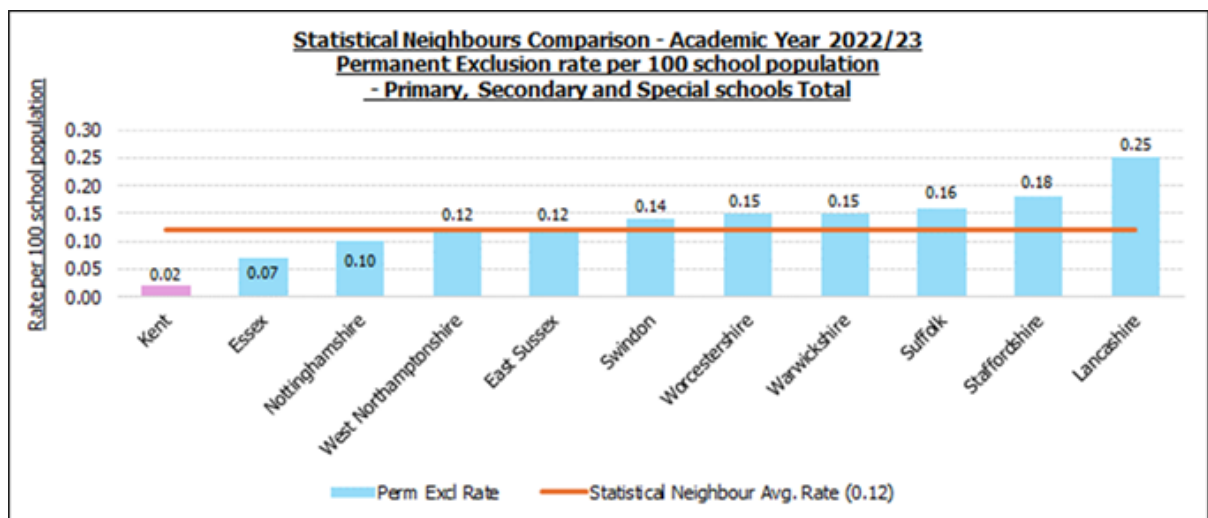
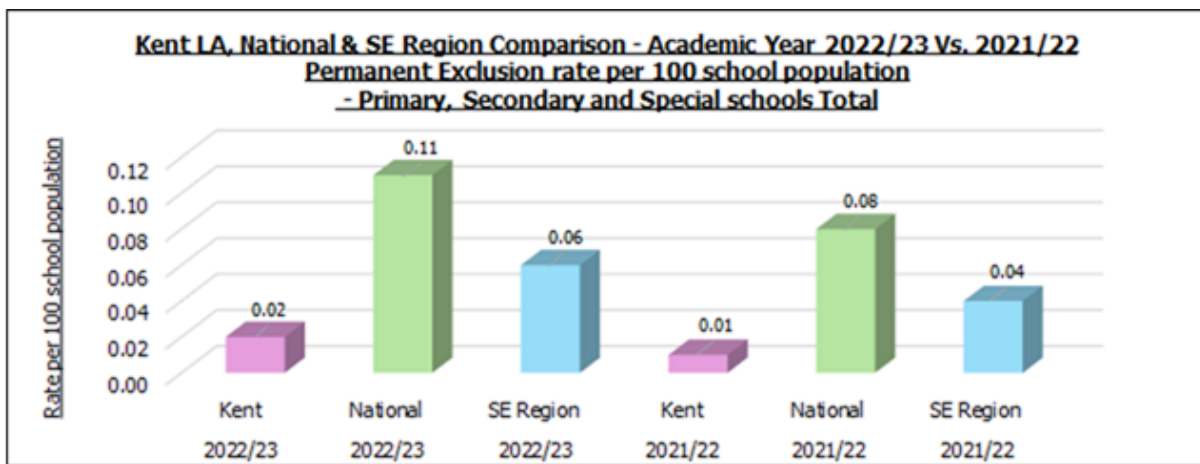
- 8.12. Most recent published DfE figures from 2022/23 academic year highlight that permanent exclusions and suspension rates (per 100 school population) in Kent schools remain well below equivalent levels nationally, within the South-East region and in comparison to our statistical neighbours. This is positive, however more granular analysis shows that some MATs are responsible for a disproportionately high proportion of permanent exclusions, and this has been raised with the DfE as a concern.
- 8.13. In 2023/24 academic year, 23 pupils with an EHCP were issued a permanent exclusion, 3 of those attended a special school. For the most recently reported DfE statistics regarding permanent exclusions in special schools, Kent remains well below the national and southeast regional rates.
- 8.14. In the same period, 14% of suspensions in Kent schools were issued to pupils with an EHCP. Of those suspensions, over 50% of pupils have social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) as their primary need. As a result, a SEMH toolkit has recently been launched for mainstream schools and classroom settings. Created by The Education People, this toolkit has been developed using a number of key DfE documents, research and professional bodies, and supports the eight principles to Public Health England working with the Department of Education 'Promoting Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing' (2021), Kent Resilience Hub's 'Whole School Approach' and KCC's SEN Mainstream Core Standards.



Suspension 'Primary, Secondary and Special' school rate per 100 school population

Commentary:

Kent below National and SE Region rates. Rate increase seen for Kent, National and SE Region on 2021/22.



Commentary:

Kent rate below all Statistical Neighbour Local Authorities. Kent below 0.12 average rate.

9. Appeals & Tribunals

9.1. The SEND Tribunal is part of the system of courts and tribunals which makes decisions in appeals and claims. SEND Tribunal hears cases which involve appeals against decisions of local authorities about children with special educational needs. Parents, carers or young people can appeal if the local authority:

- Refuses to arrange an EHC assessment of the child or young person's special educational needs, following a request by a child's parents, young person or school, college:
- Refuses to issue an EHC Plan for the child or young person after completing an EHC assessment.
- Refuses to arrange an EHC reassessment of the child or young person (following a request by the child's parent, young person's or school, college) if the local authority has not carried out an EHC assessment in the last six months:
- Decides to stop maintaining an EHC plan.
- Decides not to amend the EHC plan following an annual review.
- Decides not to change the EHC plan after carrying out an EHC reassessment or has finalised, or has changed a previous EHC plan, and you disagree with one or all of the following.
- The Section which specifies the child or young person's special educational needs in Section B of the EHC Plan.
- The Section which specifies special educational provision in Section F of the EHC Plan.
- The school/college/institution or type of school/college/institution named in Section I of the EHC Plan or type of school named in Section I of the EHC Plan.
- The local authority not naming a school/college/institution in Section I of the EHC Plan.

9.2. SEND Tribunal cannot deal with a case if the issue is the way the local authority carried out the EHC assessment, or the length of time that it took; how the local authority or the school or college is arranging to provide the help set out in the EHC plan; the way the school or college is meeting the child's or a young person's needs under SEN Support; the outcomes in Section E of the EHC plan or any disputes about the wording of Sections A, J, K of the EHC plan. SEND Tribunal must receive the appeal within two months of the date

on the letter from the local authority giving you their final decision. If this deadline is missed, a Tribunal Judge may extend the time for making the appeal.

- 9.3. Parents can submit an appeal to SENDIST using an online form that requires evidence of the Local Authority's decision, including the date of the decision and a mediation certificate. In the case of parental notification of disagreement to a Local Authority officer there is a recommended resolution process which involves the following steps:
- Meeting/discussion with the local named SEND officer, then
 - Involvement of a mediation adviser to try to reach a resolution.
- 9.4. If the issue is not resolved, then an appeal can be made to SENDIST which makes its decisions after considering all of the evidence either through a paper-based process or a Hearing. Documents with evidence from both sides are submitted before the hearing. Parents must consider mediation before lodging an appeal to the Tribunal unless the appeal is only about which school a child should attend. When a parent contacts the provider of mediation, a mediation adviser arranges a meeting between the parent and a Local Authority Officer with the aim of discussing the problem and bringing about a resolution. At the end of the meeting parents are given a mediation certificate. A national shortage of mediation support can impact the availability of this support. The SENDIST decision is legally binding and can only be appealed on a point of law and permission must be given by the tribunal for either parents or a local authority to make the appeal. The purpose of the LA Tribunals team is to act on behalf of KCC through the Tribunal process.
- 9.5. KCC share's the ambition of the Government's SEND reforms in 2014 under the Children and Families Act to reduce the need for parents to have to fight to get support. The Local Government Association, which represents councils across England, in its paper 'Agreeing to disagree', research into arrangements for avoiding disagreements and resolving disputes in the SEND system in England Research undertaken by Isos Partnership Ben Bryant, Natalie Parish, Karina Kulawik Research' commissioned by the Local Government Association, called on the Government to urgently address this in its forthcoming review of the SEND system, so parents and carers avoid having to take cases to tribunal.
- 9.6. The LGA report, in full here
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ce55a5ad4c5c500016855ee/t/6221ee346c97bb4c0c754891/1646390841226/220222_LGA_SEND+disputes_report

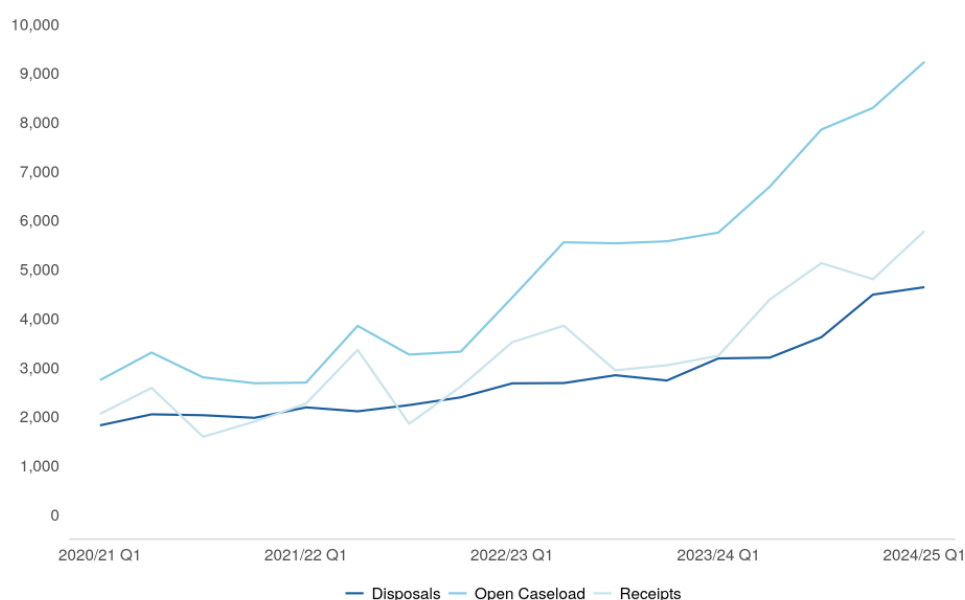
[FINAL.pdf](#) warns the SEND system has instead become more adversarial, with new figures in the report showing:

- The number of appeals to tribunals over SEND disagreements has more than doubled since the reforms, rising by 111 per cent between 2013/14 and 2020/21.
 - Over 9 in 10 appeals are decided in favour of families, overturning the original decision made by councils. Prior to the reforms, 83 per cent of tribunal appeals were made in favour of the appellant.
 - Before the reforms in 2013/14, more disagreements were resolved before they got to a formal tribunal hearing with around a fifth of appeals (21 per cent) decided at a tribunal, whereas now the figure is almost two thirds (64 per cent).
 - The proportion of decisions appealed has gone up from 1.16 per cent at the time of the reforms to 1.74 per cent in 2020.
- 9.7. The research found that the main factor behind the rise in the number and rate of appeals was not councils failing to meet their legal duties under the Act, but instead was reflective of deeper, fundamental problems that need to be addressed within the SEND system. The report also raises concerns about a growth in unregulated organisations encouraging and advising families to appeal. Most councils reported that tribunal appeals are more likely to come from more affluent families, and less likely from those from more deprived backgrounds, highlighting a potential lack of equity of access to dispute resolution. While councils fully recognise the right of families to take appeals to tribunals, the LGA's view is the huge number of cases is indicative of fundamental imbalances in the SEND system.
- 9.8. The LGA called on the Government to use the SEND review – announced in 2019 – to significantly reduce the need for such a high number of cases to be taken to taken to tribunal, by making fundamental changes to the SEND system. This could involve providing greater clarity around the level of need that would require SEND support; making mainstream education settings more accountable for SEND inclusion and enabling decisions over SEND provision to be made jointly by all those responsible, such as health and care bodies, and not just councils.
- 9.9. The report identified key challenges to avoiding disagreements and resolving disputes. These challenges emanating from the wider SEND system, of which disagreements and disputes are the symptoms. Challenges identified:
1. Key parts of the SEN statutory framework, particularly in relation to when to carry out an EHCNA, are vague and circular.

2. Expectations of inclusion and SEN support in mainstream education are not sufficiently defined nor upheld.
3. Growing demand for statutory SEND services reduces preventative SEN support.
4. Growing demand on statutory SEND services reduces capacity for high-quality casework and co-productive, person-centred planning.
5. The SEND system remains too dependent on education, and has not yet delivered a unified education, health and care approach.

10. National Data

Figure 10.1.1: Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) receipts, disposals and open caseload Q1 2020/21 to Q1 2024/25 (Source: Tables S_2, S_3, and S_4)



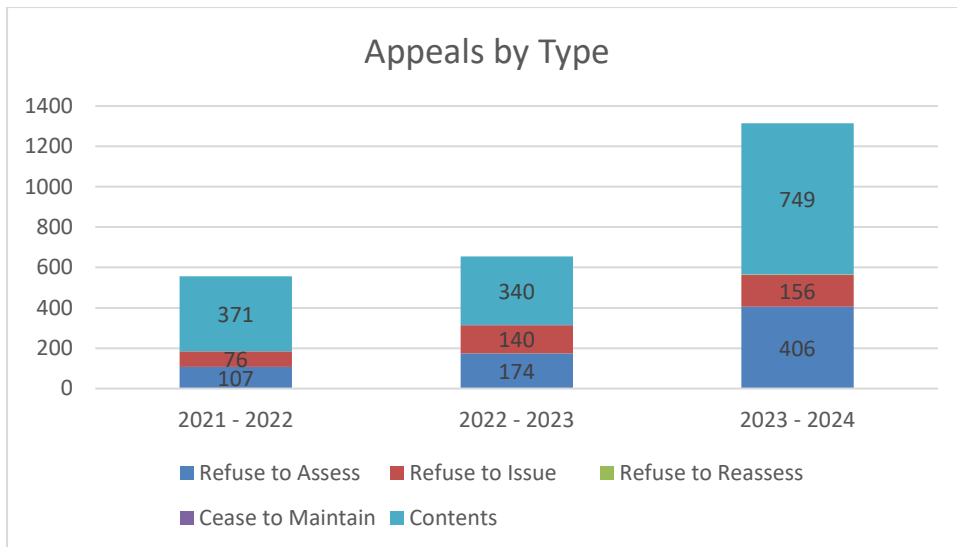
Nationally, SEND received 18,000 receipts in academic year 23/24, the highest amount in any year in the timeseries and an increase of 31% compared to the previous year. Kent tribunal receipts for the same period rose by 59%.

- 10.1. The Administrative Justice Council (AJC) is the oversight body for the administrative justice system in the UK, advising government and the judiciary on the development of the system published a report in July 2023 which can be seen here [SEND-Improving-Local-Authority-Decision-Making.pdf](#). Between 2011 and 2022, the number of appeals registered has increased by over 210.7%. They found The Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal ('the Tribunal') upholds 96% of the appeals it hears (in favour of the appellant i.e. parent/young person).

- 10.2. Differences in data collection and collation methodology between national and local mean that direct comparisons are difficult, figures held for Kent show in 2023 78% appeals were upheld in their entirety, with 79% appeals in 2023/2024 upheld in their entirety.
- 10.3. The AJC described that an increase in the number of appeals being registered does not necessarily indicate that LA decision-making is getting worse. Increases in appeals could be due to positive factors such as greater awareness among parents and young people of their rights and how they can go about securing them. The increase in appeals could also at least in part to be due to the change by the Children's and Families Act 2014 whereby the SEND framework was extended to children and young people from birth to age 25. In addition, the National Trial extending the tribunals' power to appeals on health and social care. There is not a straightforward relationship between volumes of appeals and the quality of decision-making. That said, parents and young people should not have to resort to the Tribunal to secure the educational provision to which children and young people are entitled. That they increasingly need to do so and that, when they do, their chances of success are extremely high, raises legitimate concerns about current approaches to decision-making in LAs.
- 10.4. **Appeals registered in Kent academic year 2023/2024** - There is a discrepancy between the proportion of children identified as having such complex needs that they require an Education, Health, and Care Plan in Kent when compared to that same proportion across England. That discrepancy has grown to Kent having around 20% more than the national average over the last two years, although the gap between Kent and national data is beginning to reduce.
- 10.5. Local Authorities are required to advise parents of their right to appeal any decision to refuse any of the following:
- To assess a child or young person's educational, health, and care (EHC) needs
 - To reassess their EHC needs
 - To issue an EHC plan
 - To change what's in a child or young person's EHC plan
 - To maintain the EHC plan.

In addition, parents can also contest the granular detail of many of the main sections of their child's EHC Plan. This means that for every child and young person, there are 5 decision points where an appeal can be lodged.

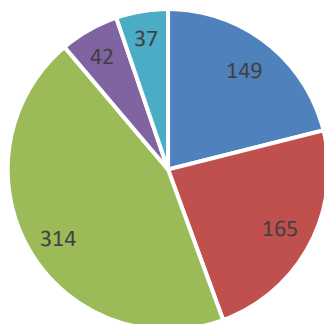
- 10.6. Between the two-year period of April 2022 and April 2024, Kent County Council (KCC) processed somewhere in the region of 8000 assessment requests and completed around 40,000 annual reviews. It follows that there are hundreds of thousands of individual decisions made each year that are subject to the potential for appeal and any data should be considered within that context. Over the two-year period under consideration, 440 tribunal hearings were considered against the Kent Local Authority. Of those, 309 went fully in parents' favour following a decision. (See also reference to academic year 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 above where data shows the Tribunal upholds 96% of the appeals it hears (in favour of the appellant) but in Kent it's circa 78%).
- 10.7. KCC has initiated a data deep dive into tribunal appeals received during the academic year 23/34. This is to monitor the impact of the changes to decision making made to the SEN system in Kent. As stated, the AJC cautions around taking tribunal data alone indicating strengths or weaknesses in a decision-making system due to the number of factors involved, however this data can be considered a useful indicator as part of a series of measures to look at how successful changes have been.
- 10.8. Kent appeal data below is based on data captured within the Tribunals Database. This is a manual database that is maintained by the Tribunals Team and will be subject to data quality risks associated with manual spreadsheets. Care has been taken to mitigate these. Further information around the next steps for data sets is set out later in this report.
- 10.9. **Kent Appeal Data** - The volume of appeals received 2023/2024 has increased by 665 from 2022/2023.



*Content will be section B (Needs), Section F (SEN provision) and/or Section I (placement).

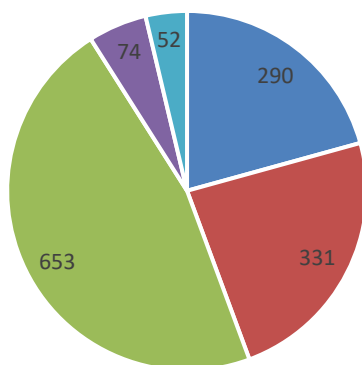
10.10. There were increased volumes of appeals across all EHC plan sections from 2022/2023 to 2023/2024, with proportionately similar distribution across sections compared with 2022/2023. i.e. No one section's proportion of appeals has increased ahead of others. This is to be expected. More robust decision making during the EHC needs assessment (involving a greater number of professionals) has led to an increase in 'no' to assess and 'no' to issue, both appealable. It is therefore useful to separate contents appeals – the reasons for appeal will be based on different decision-making mechanisms and may relate to different processes.

No. of Appeals relating to each Section 2022/23



- B - The child or young person's needs
- F - Special Educational Provision Required
- I - Placement
- H - Health Provision Required
- SC - Social Care Provision Required

No. of Appeals relating to each Section 2023/24



- B - The child or young person's needs
- F - Special Educational Provision Required
- I - Placement
- H - Health Provision Required
- SC - Social Care Provision Required

- The deep dive found 47% of content appeals received in 2023/2024 included an appeal in relation to Section I, compared to 44% in 2022/2023.

Of Section I appeals received during 2023/24:

- 25% relate to pupils in Year 6, down from 35% previous year, despite an increase in volume.
- 10% relate to pupils in Reception, up from 6% previous year.
- 9% relate to pupils in Year 11, up from 4% previous year. This cohort also saw the greatest % increase up 367% from 12 to 56.

10.11. **Next steps** - External and peer reviews have been commissioned to support the SEN improvement journey and in 2022-23 an external review was undertaken to identify key areas for development in appeals and tribunals. Development and improvement of SEN services is part of a phased improvement plan. Whilst focused development in this area of the SEN services has not been wholly prioritised until now, Kent data against national figures demonstrates that the work undertaken by the service over the last 18 months has stabilised and provided a more stable footing on which to build further improvements to the tribunal team going forward.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1. The overall progress documented above must also be considered in the context of the financial situation. SEN services are funded from a combination of Council resources (for staffing & transport) and High Needs Block of Dedicated Schools from the Department of education (for SEN early years/school/post 16 services).
- 11.2. As part of the 2024-27 Medium Term Financial Plan, the Council committed a further £2m to ensure sufficient staffing capacity to deliver improvements in both assessments and annual reviews. In addition, the Council has covered historic overspends and anticipated further growth & costs of SEN Home to School Transport based on projections. The latest financial monitoring, reported to Cabinet in November, suggests improvements and rigour throughout the SEN system are also having a positive effect financially on transport budget, with a £3.5m underspend being reported.
- 11.3. However, there are still significant challenges and work required to achieve the same outcomes in respect of the High Needs Spending related to education placements and support services. From 2018, SEND spending rapidly escalated, with an increasing reliance on specialist school places rather than mainstream education, resulting in Kent becoming a significant outlier in the placement of children with SEN, and if this level of expenditure continued completely unmitigated, the financial projections indicated a potential deficit of almost £700 million by 2027-28.
- 11.4. Even after the consideration of actions already planned, many of which build on the activity outlined in the Accelerated Progress Plan (as reported on in September 2024), there would still have been a considerable deficit of c£220m. So, to avoid the prospect of dramatic and drastic cuts to SEN services in schools to recover this outstanding debt, KCC entered into the Safety Valve agreement with DfE which has secured additional funding of

£140m for Kent over five years, subject to KCC taking action to develop a more financially sustainable system. KCC has also contributed £80m to addressing the cumulative deficit. By March 2025, the council will have received £85m of the £140m from the DfE and made £46.5m of the £80m contribution.

- 11.5. Since entering the Safety Valve in March 2023, there have been challenges around ongoing high inflation, responding to the impact of national changes, such as high increases in national living wage, along with continual high demand for services which have masked financial progress achieved to date. Forecast spending growth for 2024-25 does show early signs of slowing with year-on-year spending estimated to increase by 7% whilst in previous years it has been over 10%.
- 11.6. Positive improvements in both the assessment and annual review process is now enabling the Council to have a better understanding of the overall demand for SEN in the county to enable more robust financial planning and targeted actions. However, the pace of change has been slower than expected, with the impact of significant changes in the school system yet to be fully realised (including Communities of schools, Special School Review, SRP review, early years review). As with the majority of local authorities, this level of deficit on High Needs/SEND represents a considerable financial risk to KCC.
- 11.7. Recent government announcements have committed a further £1 billion in respect of High Needs, we are awaiting confirmation of Kent's share. Whilst this extra funding is welcome, the council cannot assume the Government will continue to "bail out" councils and that we have a responsibility to secure long term financial sustainability within the funding made available to us to deliver future SEN services.

12. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s):

The committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

13. Background Documents

13.1. References:

[220222 LGA SEND+disputes report FINAL.pdf](#)

13.2. **Appendices:**

Appendix 1. Voice of the Child Young Person Form with Widgit Symbols updated 9th September

Appendix 2. Lived Experience Engagement and Employment Framework.

Appendix 3. Kent and Medway NHS How the voices of children, young people and families are gathered and how they are used to improve their experience and outcomes.

Appendix 4. KCC PACT record of engagement

Appendix 5. PCP update

Appendix 6. Review of Mainstream Core Standards

Appendix 7. SENCO Conference 2024- Celebrating Inclusion Evaluation

Appendix 8. CATIE Annual Report 2023-24

Appendix 9. PowerBI Snapshots one district

Appendix 10. AET progress report is included as

Appendix 11. An Evaluation Report on SEN Autism/Neurodevelopmental interventions in Kent

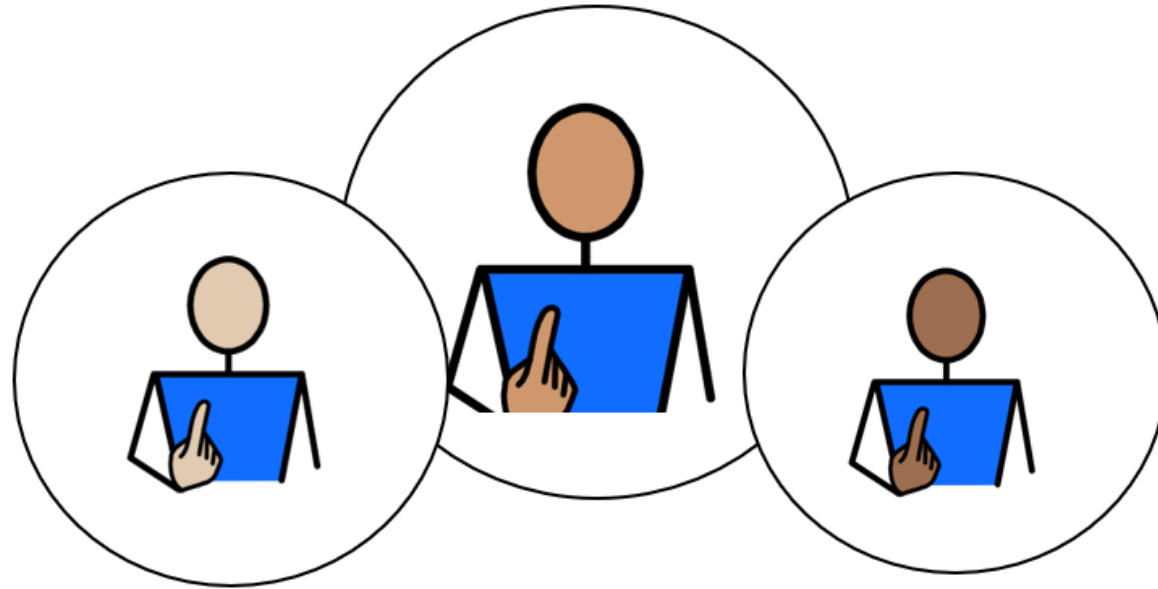
Appendix 12. SEND outcomes 2022-23

13.3. **Contact Details:**

Report Author: Christine McInnes	Relevant Director: Christine McInnes
Job Title: Director of Education & SEN	Job Title: Director of Education & SEN
Telephone Number: 03000 418913	Telephone: 03000 418913
Email: christine.mcinnnes@kent.gov.uk	Email: christine.mcinnnes@kent.gov.uk

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All about Me



Appendix 1A: Pathway 1

Voice of the Child / Young Person



We use our Children and Young People's Outcome Framework, below, to make sure that the support provided for you is having a positive impact on your life.



This is your chance to tell everyone supporting you what is going well, and what needs to change, in order to help you reach your full potential. The following questions will help us to understand more about you, and your views about your life.

This form can be printed off, to add your own ideas and thoughts in the blank grey boxes, if you would like to. An adult can read for you, and /or write your answers for you, if you would like help; and you can break it down into smaller parts, if you don't want to complete it all at once. Alternatively, this form can be completed electronically, using the text boxes to add typed comments and /or selecting thoughts and views using the tick boxes provided.

Please use the information gathered through Pupil Voice to inform the Annual Review Meeting in terms of Outcomes and Provision.



My name is:



Click or tap here to enter text.

Page 59

My school/setting is called:



Click or tap here to enter text.



This information was provided by:

[Click/Tap here to select the relevant statement.](#)

*Please select the relevant statement above to represent how the child's views were gathered to complete Appendix 1A.

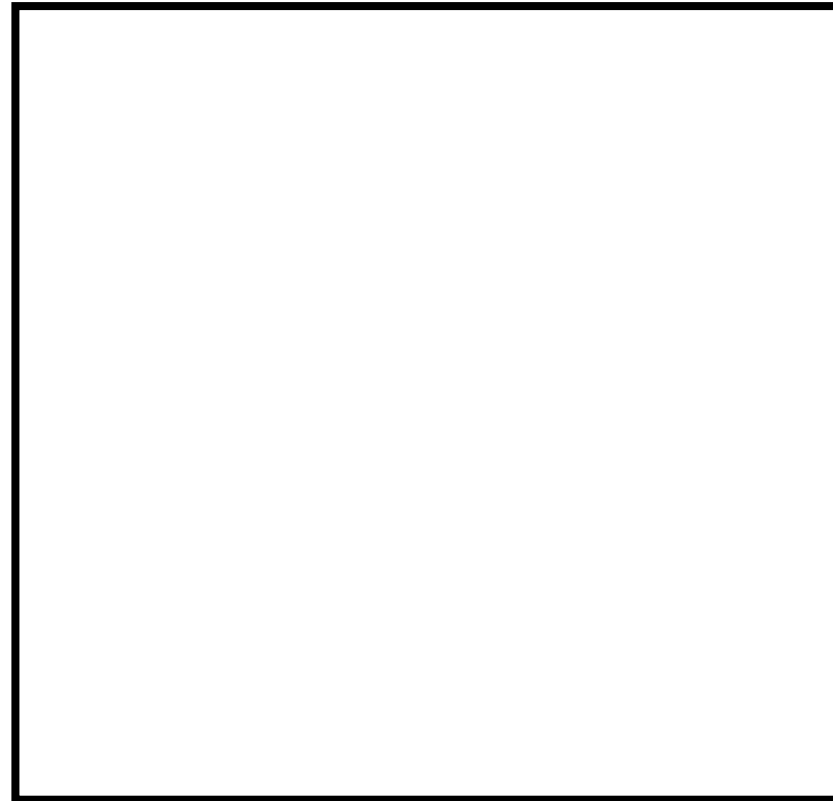
Page 60

Date of completed form:

Click or tap to enter a date.

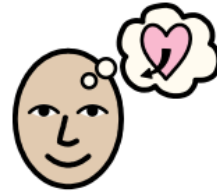


Picture, drawing, or photo of me (*optional*):





My aspirations (goals) for the future:



<p>This year I want to get better at:</p>		<p>Comments:</p>
<p>3 wishes for my future are:</p>		<p>Comments:</p>

Page 62



I am working towards independence, by:



<p>Having my own voice</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Knowing my routine</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Showing my likes to something by smiling or reaching for it</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Anticipating food routines with interest</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Accepting an 'intervention' feed e.g. peg feed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Biting finger food</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>





I am working towards independence, by:



<p>Holding my own cup</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Starting to co-operate with dressing, holding out my arms/legs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Co-operating with nappy/pad changes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Expressing my dislike to something by crying or pushing it away</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Page 64

Comments:



My
Voice

I can communicate best, by:



<p>Page 65</p> <p>Reacting and responding to adults</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Signing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Using Symbols</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Voca / Grid Player (Assistive Technology)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Braille</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Touch Cues</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

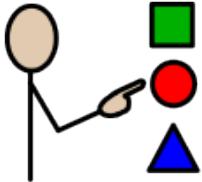



Comments:



My
Voice

I can communicate best, by:



			
Objects of Reference <input type="checkbox"/>	Photo Cues <input type="checkbox"/>	Sensory Cues <input type="checkbox"/>	Vocalisation <input type="checkbox"/>

Page 66

Comments:

My Voice

I can communicate my basic needs and wants, when:



<p>I am hungry</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>I am thirsty</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>I am tired</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>I feel unwell</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>I need help</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>I need suction</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>I need repositioning</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>I am in pain</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>I want to choose between a preferred and non-preferred object</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>I need my nappy/pad/catheter change</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Comments:</p>			
<p>I need a break</p> <input type="checkbox"/>				

Page 67

My
Health

I can keep healthy, by:



<p>Spending time outside each day</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Eating (food, bottle, peg feed, etc)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Drinking</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Staying regulated without a screen for increasing periods of time</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Tolerating having my hair brushed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Getting enough sleep</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Accepting medicine</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Tolerating having my fingernails and toenails cut</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>



My Health

I can keep healthy, by:








<p>Having my nappy/pad/catheter changed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Tolerating having my teeth brushed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Attending medical appointments (doctors/ dentist, etc)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Having sun cream applied</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Comments:



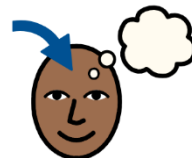
I can show engagement, through:

<p>I show exploration, by... (For example: showing interest and curiosity about an activity by noticing it or reaching out to it).</p>		<p>Comments:</p>
<p>I show realisation, by... (For example: I display behaviours that show I want more control of the stimulus or activity - for example, by stopping it or trying to make changes to it).</p>		<p>Comments:</p>
<p>I show anticipation, by... (For example: I anticipate that a familiar activity is about to start or finish by interpreting cues or prompts such as auditory (what I hear), tactile (what I feel) and visual (what I see)).</p>		<p>Comments:</p>
<p>I show persistence, by... (For example: I can sustain my attention in a stimulus or activity for long enough that I can actively try to find out more and interact with it).</p>		<p>Comments:</p>
<p>I show initiation, by... (For example: I investigate a stimulus or activity to bring about a desired outcome. I can act spontaneously and independently during a familiar activity without waiting for direction).</p>		<p>Comments:</p>





The best way for me to learn, is:



Visual <input type="checkbox"/>	Kinaesthetic (practical, hands-on, doing things) <input type="checkbox"/>	Auditory <input type="checkbox"/>	Out-door <input type="checkbox"/>	Project-based <input type="checkbox"/>
Play <input type="checkbox"/>	Following my special interests <input type="checkbox"/>	Watching videos <input type="checkbox"/>	Life Skills <input type="checkbox"/>	Working towards and achieving my EHCP outcomes <input type="checkbox"/>

Page 74





Adults can help by giving me:

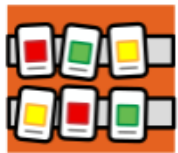


Thinking Time 	Repetition 	Ear Defenders 	Fiddle Toys
Relaxation 	Social Stories 	Choices 	Safe Space





Adults can help by giving me:



Visual Timetable / Objects of Reference

Sensory Room Time

Ensuring that my equipment is comfortable

Motivators

Page 73



Comments:



Adults can help to keep me safe, by teaching me to:



<p>Follow adult direction to keep me safe</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Recognise Danger</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Practise Self-Regulation</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Understand what to do in a fire drill</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Understand Road Safety</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Be aware of Stranger Danger</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Practise Online Safety</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Keep healthy and look after my body</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Understand Consent: My body; My choice</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Understand Boundaries: My right to say No.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>



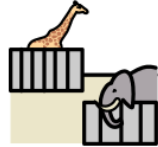
Outside of my school, or setting, I like:



Technology <input type="checkbox"/>	Going outside <input type="checkbox"/>	Going to the park <input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming <input type="checkbox"/>
Going out with their Personal Assistant <input type="checkbox"/>	Going on an outing <input type="checkbox"/>	Going to the playground <input type="checkbox"/>	Visiting a family member's house <input type="checkbox"/>



Outside of my school, or setting, I like:



Going to the cinema

Going to the zoo

Going to the beach

Going to soft play

Going to a trampoline
park



Comments:



My quality of Life:



				
I can express when I like something <input type="checkbox"/>	I can express when I do not like something <input type="checkbox"/>	I have a trusted adult who can interpret my needs and wants <input type="checkbox"/>	I can show pleasure from an activity <input type="checkbox"/>	Adults protect my dignity and show respect, when hoisting or changing me <input type="checkbox"/>
				
I enjoy using the Sensory Room <input type="checkbox"/>	I enjoy going on school trips <input type="checkbox"/>	I enjoy Forest School <input type="checkbox"/>	I enjoy Hydrotherapy time <input type="checkbox"/>	I enjoy using the Sensory Playground <input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:



My quality of Life:



At home, I am happy, with:

		
My family <input type="checkbox"/>	My pets <input type="checkbox"/>	My close friends <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:		



At my school or setting, overall:



My Setting:		Yes 	No 	Unsure
I have the right amount of support:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel listened to:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can show engagement:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a sense of belonging:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been included in my Annual Review meeting:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

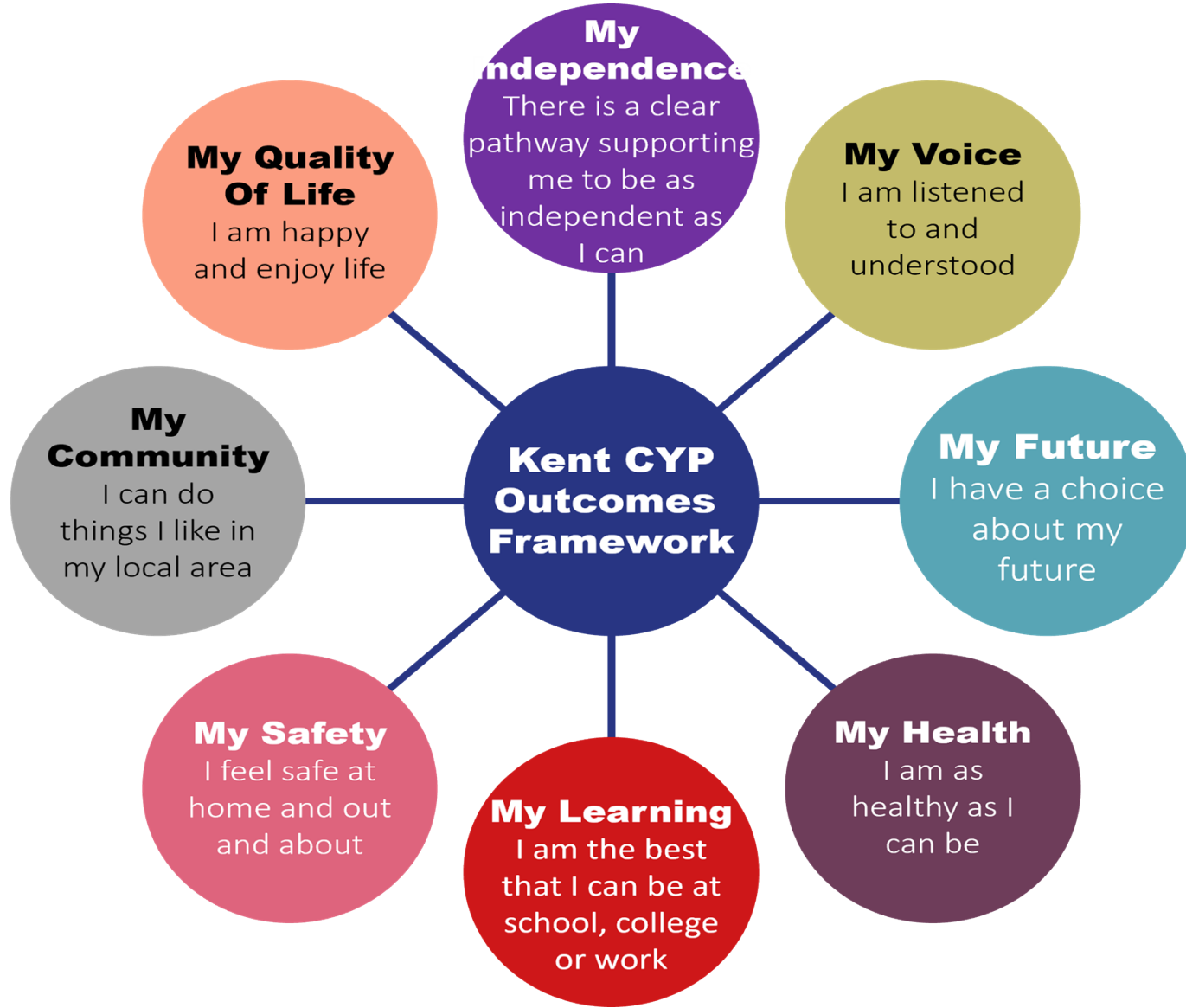


Anything else:



Comments:





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Lived Experience Engagement and Employment Framework

“The art of conversation is the art of hearing as well as of being heard” - William Hazlitt



August 2024



Kent and Medway



Contents

Part 1: The Framework	3
Definitions used in this framework	4
Framework Values	5
Key Concepts	6
Types of engagement Sharing decision making between organisations and the people that use them	7
Co-production in more detail	8
Considerations for types of engagement	9
Putting the values and knowledge into practice	10
Capturing your actions	13
Part 2: Resources	14
Glossary and frequently referenced concepts	17
What is a Parent Carer Forum?	18
Neuro-affirming language	20
Resources for people with lived experience (a starting point)	23
Additional resources for practice (a starting point)	24
References	25
Contacts	26

Thank you to all the contributors who shaped this document

The framework has been shaped by the insights of parent carers and young people in Kent and Medway, and colleagues and partners across Medway Council, Kent County Council and NHS Kent and Medway. We are grateful for the time offered in particular by young people, parent carers and the voluntary sector in support of this first edition. Thank you to Medway Parent Carer Forum, Kent PACT, Peer Associates at Involve Kent, Activmob, staff from East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust, Think Local Act Personal ('TLAP') who have provided specific areas of input and/or feedback. Thank you to the Western Australian Mental Health Commission who responded with additional information about designated/non designated perspectives (roles) to a request for citation information.



Part 1: The Framework

Purpose and use of the framework

Across NHS Kent and Medway, Kent County Council, and Medway Council, strategies and other documents recognise the importance of working with people who live in local communities and/or use services.

This framework supports those commitments and brings together common terminology and positive approaches to working with people with lived experience. It contains common terms and provides explanations for them; includes values that are respectful and inclusive of people with lived experience; provides relevant knowledge; and gives some points to consider when carrying out engagement and participation activities. These topics are also important when people are employed to draw on their lived experience.

The framework was developed with reference to existing literature and good practice guidance and provides an approach to the inclusion of lived experience within strategic and operational functions of Kent County Council, Medway Council,

and NHS Kent and Medway. It is not designed to be prescriptive, but to provide a guide and baseline to those working or engaging with people with lived experience.

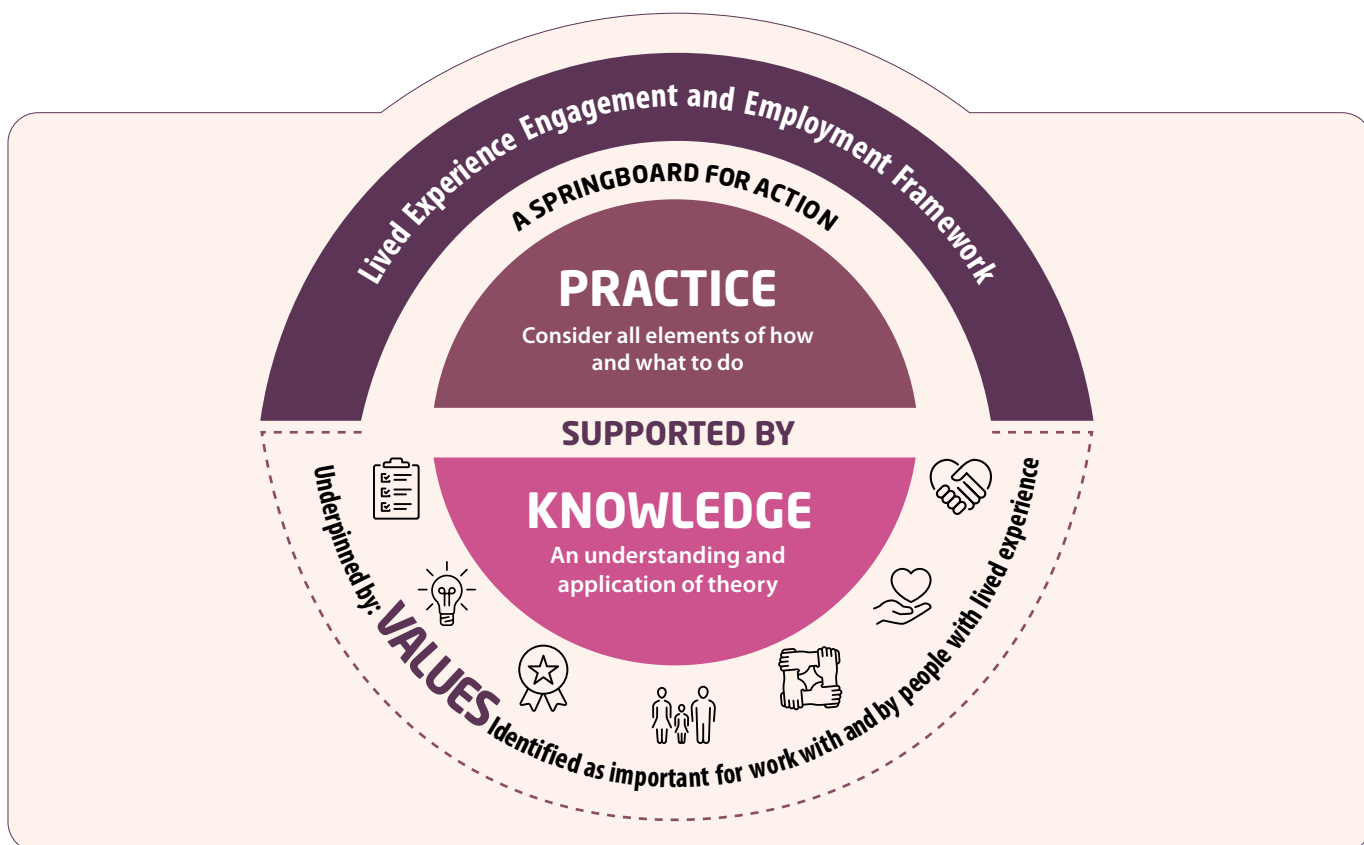
Understanding and aligning with the content of the framework will help with the inclusion of lived experience and removal of barriers, while protecting people's information. It will support both working with people who are employed to use their lived experience, and engaging with people who want to provide feedback and insight.

Internal guidance

Additional resources to support those planning for engagement or employment will be available via training and / or further information. Please use the contacts at the end of this document for further information.

Framework Structure

The framework is structured to include the practice that is important when working with people with lived experience, and the knowledge and values that apply.



Definitions used in this framework

For the purposes of this document, the following definitions apply:

Lived experience means having personal experience of something – an example could be a health condition or using support services. It might be as a family member or carer, or as the person with the health condition. It might not be related to health but to something like homelessness.

Learned experience refers to knowledge of something through education or work/volunteering.

People can have both **lived** and **learned** experience.

Family and carer lived experience or **first person lived experience** can be used to identify a difference in the perspective being used.

A **designated** role is one in which people are employed to draw on their lived experience – this means that one of the criteria is to have relevant lived experience which is relevant to the role. Assumptions should not be made that people holding a **non-designated** role do not have relevant lived experience, but the two roles are different in approach.

The lived experience workforce refers to people employed into designated lived experience roles.

Participation – People are supported to take part in an activity, or activities, (which may be one off or time limited) in which the person/people with lived experience is/are an active part of making or influencing a decision (through sharing experiences and/or or direct feedback on suggestions). An example might be a participation worker facilitating a series of workshops in which people with lived experience attend alongside people seeking decisions, or attending a regular forum (e.g., Youth Voice). The power balance is not decided by the activity type.

Engagement – this may be for a fixed period, or can describe the longer term activities, plan, or strategy for building a relationship with your stakeholders, and gaining and / or maintaining their interest. There may be a different approach for different groups, for example considering engagement with different people and communities (e.g., children and young people). Usage might include 'we have developed an engagement strategy for the X project'.

Communication – for best practice, reference to communication should mean a two way process back and forth between two parties, which offers and invites genuine discussion.



Framework Values

These values were created collaboratively to inform the way that we work together as and with people with lived experience.



Accountability



Being open to accepting responsibility and challenge.
Being honest and transparent.
Actively reviewing and improving.

Ambition



Seeking to make improvements.
Driving change.
Being open to innovation and change.

Bravery



Recognising that sharing your story and/or your needs is brave.
Being ready to challenge stereotypes and stigma.
Asking questions and providing honest answers.

Inclusivity



Welcoming all voices.
Recognising and removing barriers to engagement and participation.
Using a person centred and strengths-based approach.

Integrity



Acting in the best interests of people.
Delivering what you promise and promising only what you can deliver.
Appreciating the skills of others.

Kindness



Understanding different experiences and perspectives.
Prioritising wellbeing.
Being aware that people may be experiencing undisclosed difficulties.

Respect



Recognising the right to participate in decision making.
Appreciating the value of different points of view.
Uniting people who may not agree.

Positive, timely and meaningful communication underpins all of these values.

Key Concepts

Holding knowledge and understanding of the following areas (amongst others) is important when working with people:

- Working with people with lived experience should be supported by **training or assistance** from other teams within your organisation, or via external organisations if necessary. These might be teams that can offer advice about legal requirements to consult, or teams that already work with people and can help with your planning or activities.

- It is important to understand **intersectionality** which recognises that people's experiences are lived through not in isolation, but in the context of other experiences, relationships and identities.

- A **trauma-informed** approach will support the wellbeing of everybody who is taking part in engagement and participation, including people facilitating this work.

- Understanding responsibilities to make **reasonable adjustments** under the Equality Act will help to reduce barriers to participation – how to support disabled people to take part comes into planning.

- **Healthcare inequalities** are described by the NHS as 'unfair and avoidable differences in health across the population, and between different groups within society.' Understanding these can help with planning and with representation of different experiences.

- The **social model of disability** evolved as an alternative to the medical model, which considers that disability is caused by a person's condition or impairment. The social model sees people as disabled by the way that society runs, and that identifying and removing barriers is the appropriate response. Definitions of the medical model and the social model are included in the Glossary. Although there are other models of disability, the most commonly used one in the UK is the social model. This framework is designed to ensure that the approach and language used when engaging with disabled people reflects this.

- **Communities** – "A community is a group of people who have common characteristics or interests. Communities can be defined by: geographical location, race, ethnicity, age, occupation, a shared interest or affinity (such as religion and faith) or other common bonds, such as health need or disadvantage. People who are socially isolated are also considered to be a community group." (NICE, 2017)

- **Confidentiality and Information Sharing** – this requires knowledge of the concepts and how legislation and good practice is applied within your organisation through policy and procedures.

- **Demographic data** refers to information available about the different populations and groups of people nationally or within your local area. This can be useful when looking at whether views are representative of the wider community.

Types of engagement

Sharing decision making between organisations and the people that use them

What are we calling this type of engagement?

Information

A provision of finalised information, which is not currently available for revision.
What might it look like? Examples include: Newsletters / Websites / Posters / Leaflets.

Involvement

People with lived experience shape or provide feedback on an aspect of a project or service.
What might it look like? Examples include: Asking people using the service to look at a leaflet design for readability; offering a choice of operational times; asking for general feedback.

Collaboration

People with lived experience work together with people with learned experience to move a project forward.
What might it look like? Examples include: A series of focus groups, a one off event led by a facilitator, the design and creation of information with a group of informed people (who understand the project).

Co-production

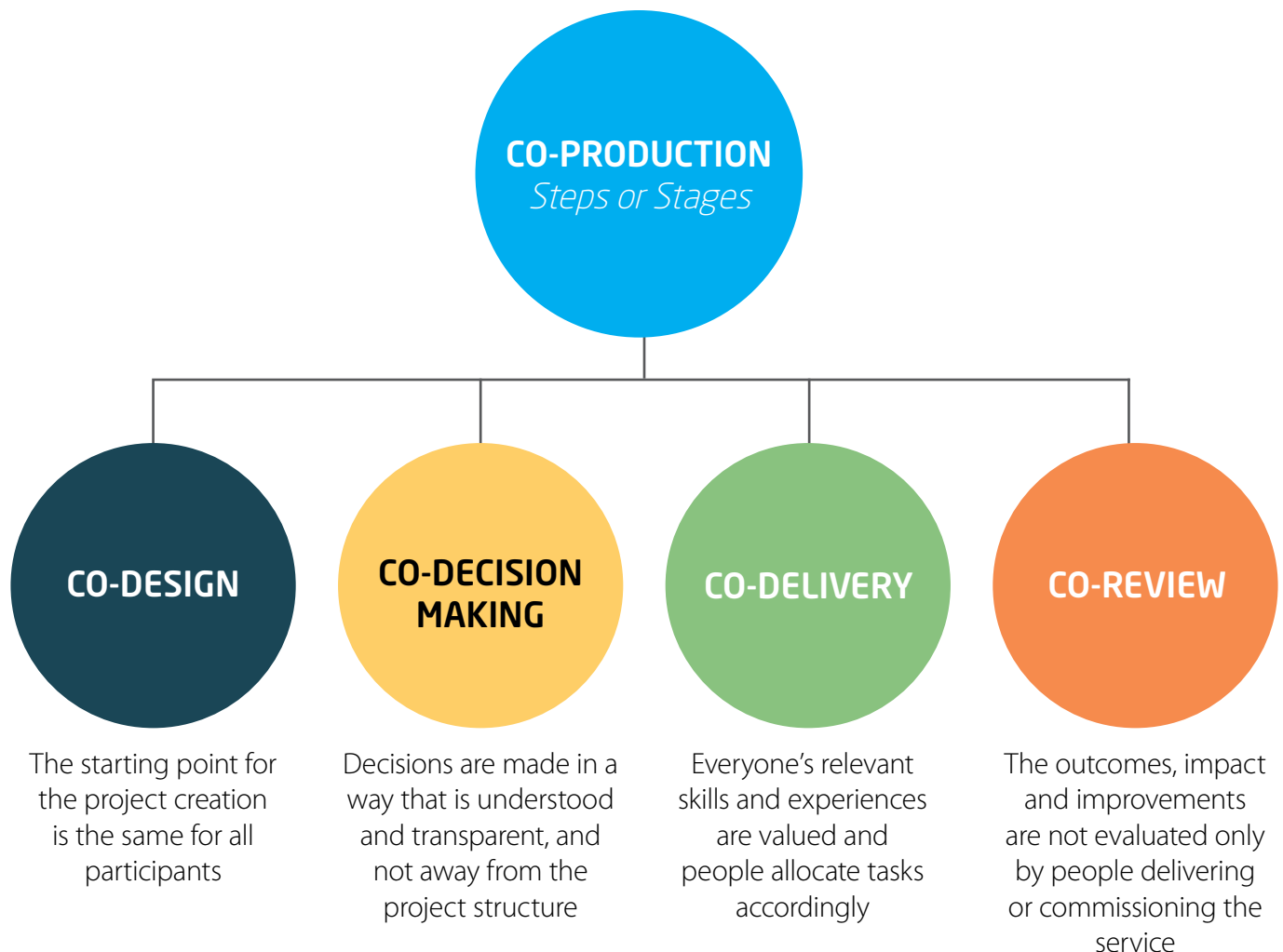
A process in which people use their lived and learned experience and knowledge to make decisions together, on an equal power sharing basis:
• Co-design • Co-decision making • Co-delivery • Co-review
What might it look like? Examples include: Workstreams for large projects, inclusion in steering groups from inception, inclusion at the same point as those with learned experience.

Consultation

A planned request for views and opinions on a specific subject, where these will shape or inform the outcomes.
Avoid the term unless referring to a formal Consultation.
What might it look like? Examples include: A consultation document explaining proposals and rationale. Feedback mechanisms such as a questionnaire. Promotion of the consultation via a range of methods which may include: social media, posters, emails, media releases, and targeted communication with service users and other stakeholders.
Note: there will usually be a planned timescale.

Remember: it should always be clear how people's input has been used and what the end result was. Provide this feedback to those that took part.

Co-production in more detail



“ Co production is a way of working that involves people who use health and care services, carers and communities in equal partnership; and which engages groups of people at the earliest stages of service design, development and evaluation. ”
(NHS England, 2023)

Co-production requires time, and a commitment to working together as equal partners. Explaining it as four parts or stages as above helps to demonstrate how people are included from the beginning through to review.

Considerations for types of engagement

There are a number of factors which will be important to consider. The first is any statutory or local policy driven requirement for consultation or public involvement – see internal guidance in the full framework for a brief overview and follow organisational standards for these. The values and guidance in this framework can be used to complement any existing organisational process.

The internal guidance references national documents and the principles for consultations. The following provides an overview of what to consider when planning to engage with people:

Impact:

How much of a change or difference will this decision or project make?

Public funding:

How much public money is being spent?

Flexibility:

How much has already been decided at a national level? This includes co-produced guidance or decisions.

Timeframe:

How much time is available before the launch day or decision needs to be made?

Prior knowledge:

What existing recent information is there from previous or consecutive engagement?

Proportionality:























The engagement activities should be proportionate to the cost and impact of the project/decision.





















Putting the values and knowledge into practice

Engagement

Although this section refers to engagement with people who use services, as opposed to the lived experience workforce, many of the thinking points will be relevant to employed colleagues.

PRACTICE AREA	APPLICABLE FRAMEWORK VALUE/S				
Ensuring the organisational or team culture is open to lived experience voice.	 Ambition	 Accountability	 Inclusivity		
Making sure planning is based on understanding timescales and scope of the project.	 Inclusivity	 Respect	 Integrity	 Ambition	
Understanding what may motivate people to take part.	 Respect	 Bravery	 Kindness	 Ambition	
Ensuring recognition and/or remuneration is considered.	 Respect	 Integrity			
Thinking about how meaningful representation can be achieved.	 Inclusivity	 Respect	 Integrity	 Bravery	 Ambition
Understanding, identifying and addressing barriers to participation.	 Inclusivity				
Knowing how to facilitate participation and engagement.	 Accountability	 Ambition	 Integrity		

Putting the values and knowledge into practice (Engagement) - Continued
























PRACTICE AREA	APPLICABLE FRAMEWORK VALUE/S				
Ensuring wellbeing.	 Inclusivity	 Kindness	 Accountability		
Supporting volunteer and workforce development.	 Integrity	 Ambition			
Understanding the value of peer support.	 Respect	 Inclusivity			
Building the plan to include reviewing the outcomes and the engagement experience.	 Integrity	 Accountability	 Respect	 Ambition	 Inclusivity
Understanding GDPR and the use of personal information.	 Integrity	 Bravery	 Accountability		
Providing feedback.	 Integrity	 Accountability	 Respect		








Employment

This section focusses primarily on people employed to utilise their lived experience (in addition to other skills and experiences required for the role).

Note: People are often employed in roles they have applied for as a result of their own experiences and background, even if there is no explicit requirement to draw on these. If disclosed, additional wellbeing support may be required. Colleagues in non-designated roles with lived experience have the potential to be an ally to lived experience colleagues but disclosure of lived experience is always a personal choice for colleagues in non-designated roles and should be carefully considered. The objectives and perspectives drawn upon will be different for these roles.

PRACTICE AREA	APPLICABLE FRAMEWORK VALUE/S				
Ensuring the function of the role is clear from the job description onwards; including any additional skills or training that may be required (including once employed).	 Inclusivity	 Ambition	 Inclusivity	 Bravery	 Integrity
Clarity on designated/non designated roles.	 Respect	 Accountability	 Kindness		
Valuing the potential impact of the roles and ensuring this is widely understood.	 Ambition	 Respect	 Bravery		
Understanding and addressing dual relationships.	 Integrity	 Kindness	 Accountability		
Appreciating that disclosure is situation specific and always belongs to the employee.	 Respect	 Accountability			
Making sure that reasonable adjustments are considered wherever necessary.	 Accountability	 Inclusivity	 Integrity		
Ensuring wellbeing of employee and colleagues is considered at all times.	 Inclusivity	 Respect	 Kindness	 Integrity	

Putting the values and knowledge into practice (Employment) - Continued

PRACTICE AREA	APPLICABLE FRAMEWORK VALUE/S				
Ensuring that training and development opportunities are made available to support career progression.	 Respect	 Integrity			
Finding and promoting allyship and champions.	 Respect	 Integrity	 Ambition		

Capturing your actions

“The successful alignment of coproduction, quality improvement and experience of care requires a cultural change and needs to be driven from the highest level in an organisation or system.”
(NHS England, 2023)

The starting point suggested by the framework is consistent consideration of how to include lived experience perspectives within projects; and recording and reviewing this.

Understanding what ‘good’ and ‘effective’ engagement looks like can only be achieved through understanding what has been tried, how this was experienced by people, and what the outcomes were for the project. This is true both of engagement and employment.



For this first edition, the framework suggests that services and projects start recording and reviewing the following:

- **How was the inclusion of lived experience planned?**
- **What level of engagement (or employment) was the aim?**
- **What level of engagement or employment was achieved?**
- **How did you measure this?**
- **What would you do differently to achieve a better level of engagement (is/was this possible?)**
- **What difference did the inclusion of lived experience make? This could be a change to process/culture/understanding and the overall outcome for the project.**
- **Did participants (practitioners and people with lived experience) feel the activity was proportionate to the resources used (e.g. time) and outcome?**
- **What was the experience like for people with lived experience? Did they agree with your assessment of the level of engagement?**

Part 2: Resources

Language guide

Values represented:

Inclusivity



Ambition



Bravery



The organisations will have their own communications teams, which will advise on house style (standardisation requirements re: language, grammar and spelling for that organisation). However, there are some general concepts which can be used when thinking about engagement with people with lived experience, bearing in mind that these will often be useful approaches for everyone involved.

On an individual basis, and always when referring to their own support, health or care needs, people should be free to use, and have used, the terminology they feel comfortable with. The only rare exception would be if this is widely accepted as offensive and would not be appropriate for council/ ICB staff or members to use.

Some of the conversations with people with lived experience which shaped this guide have given different views on the use of language, but the consistent themes have been:

- Use clear and plain language, avoiding ambiguity.
- Support people to learn some of the terms so that they are equal in meetings (this seemed to be more relevant for regular commitments, than for a one-off consultation).
- Provide a glossary, if producing something which needs to use technical language or acronyms.



Acronyms

Acronyms are easy to adopt when they are in everyday use in roles or services. However, it's very hard to remember what they mean for people who don't use them often, and they may have a completely different meaning in a different context. Acronyms can also reduce people to a collection of letters - referring to children and young people as 'cyp' for example, should be avoided. If it is not possible to avoid their use, circulate a list of common acronyms and explanations with agendas, minutes or invitations for meetings. During online meetings a method to explain acronyms that are used by participants should be considered (for example, would using the chat function to explain them be appropriate?).

Identity first language or person first language

"Person-first language introduces a person before any description of them. Examples include person with a disability, patient with cancer, and child who has cerebral palsy. Person-first language is intended to emphasise the fullness of a person and to avoid defining them exclusively by their disability or condition. Identity-first language involves stating a descriptor of a person first, as in autistic person and blind child. This is often done with the idea that the characteristic in question is an integral part of a person's identity and community membership and should be emphasized rather than minimized." (thesaurus.com, 2021)

Differing communities will prefer person first / identity first language and establishing this (e.g., via third sector or house style guides) should be part of planning. However, identity first language is preferred and should be used for participation and engagement with autistic people (Society, n.d.).

Associations

Holding an awareness that some words and phrases may have unintended and/or negative associations is important, to avoid unexpected responses. For example, the word 'user' for people with addictions; the word 'register' may make people wary; or they may have alternative meanings elsewhere – the term 'local offer' (for information on special educational needs and disabilities) is also in use in some social housing contexts for example. Good practice would be to ask people with lived experience to design or support communications, and to respond to insight as it is provided.

Metaphors and similes

It is important to keep in mind that while useful to make a point, or to add humour, metaphors in particular may only work for a specific audience familiar with the subject, or require additional processing time. Similes have the potential to be confusing, especially if someone does not have the same life experience or use of language. Clear language will exclude unnecessary additions, and avoid confusion if a literal interpretation is applied.

Note: a metaphor is the use of one thing to represent another ('they are a whirlwind' meaning 'they are very active') and a simile compares things ('their house was as clean as a whistle').

Neurodiversity

Definitions are included in the Resources section with thanks to the Kent and Medway Partnership for Neurodiversity (2023).

Language guide - Continued

Service user

The terms service user, customer and client all have limitations. People may not feel like customers or clients if they are waiting for a long time to access a service, and have no choice in how, when or what they receive. 'Service user' can reduce someone solely to their relationship as a recipient. Phrases recognising more than this aspect of someone are preferable – for example 'People who access the service', and use 'people' wherever possible.

The government (Cabinet Office and Disability Unit, March) and NHS (NHS England, n.d.) have produced guides which address language to use in reference to disabled people, and on making communication accessible to people with learning disabilities and autistic people which provide easy to follow reference guides.

Current language usage

Being aware of current language, and using it, is a step to holding sensitive conversations. Checking relevant organisations for up to date guides is useful. One example from Mind's language guide (when talking about mental health) is the use of 'a bit OCD' in reference to being tidy or liking cleanliness (Mind, 2023).

Using language which could imply blame or fault onto others, should be avoided. People are generally busy, getting on with their lives and the onus is on services and organisations to make the provision of feedback a meaningful activity. Terminology can be alienating – phrases such as 'hard to reach' can be replaced with more neutral terms - 'under-represented', if this is accurate compared to demographic data for example. 'Not heard from' can be clumsy wording when referring to a group including people who do not speak/ speak in some situations.

This [blog](#) on the [UpRising](#) website, by Haleema Ali, talks about the being 'hard to reach'.

Using gender inclusive language, and which does not assume traditional family relationships avoids

Referring to lived experience roles

Communication with a third sector organisation around titles suggested there was no clear preference for the types of roles which should always include lived experience outside of peer support and caution about titles being explicit reflected concerns such as being seen through the lens of lived experience only or being seen to speak for all people.

At this stage of development, the framework would suggest the continued use of familiar terminology such as expert by experience; peer supporter/peer support worker or 'lived experience lead for ...' with further work recommended for future reviews.

placing assumptions on people we engage with, and their own identity and relationships. The UN describes gender inclusive language (United Nations, n.d.) as 'Using gender-inclusive language means speaking and writing in a way that does not discriminate against a particular sex, social gender or gender identity, and does not perpetuate gender stereotypes.' Guidelines are available on the UN website for further reading which recommend avoiding specifying a gender where it is not relevance to the communication. (United Nations, n.d.)



Glossary and frequently referenced concepts

Term	Definition
ABCD	Asset Based Community Development – a way of acknowledging and using the strengths of the community to contribute to solutions.
EbE	Expert by Experience.
Family carer lived/living experience	Indicates that the experience is that of supporting or caring for someone with a health or social care need and or experience of receiving support. Experience of services will sometimes be direct (e.g., when advocating or receiving support for the caring role). Note: Young Carers is a specific term, see below.
First person lived/living experience	Indicates that the perspective is of someone with a health or social care need, or who has experienced services directly (not in a caring role).
ICB	Integrated Care Board ('statutory organisations bringing the NHS together locally to improve population health and care' (NHS, 2023)).
ICS	Integrated Care System ('a geographically based partnership of health and care organisations' (NHS, 2023)).
Lived or living experience	Knowledge and experience gained which is personal (may be past or ongoing).
Learned experience	Knowledge and experience gained through study, work or volunteering.
Models of disability	Two main models relating the experience to being disabled – these are the medical and social model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical model: "The medical model looks at a person's impairment first and focuses on the impairment as the cause of disabled people being unable to access goods and services or being able to participate fully in society." (Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, 2015) • Social model: "The social model was created by disabled people themselves and looks at the barriers erected by society in terms of disabled people being able to participate fully in day to day life." (Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, 2015)
Protected characteristics	Under the Equality Act 2010, specific protection against discrimination is given to the characteristics of: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex; sexual orientation.

Glossary and frequently referenced concepts - Continued

Term	Definition
System	'In relation to integrated care systems (ICS), this refers to the level of the ICS, typically covering a population of 1–3 million people. Key functions at the system level include setting and leading overall strategy, managing collective resources and performance, identifying and sharing best practice to reduce unwarranted variations in care, and leading changes that benefit from working at a larger scale such as digital, estates and workforce transformation.' (The King's Fund, 2024).
'The organisations'	Kent County Council; Medway Council; Kent and Medway ICB.
Unconscious bias	Beliefs or assumptions that lead to prejudice or preference for a person/group/entity.
VCSE	An acronym for voluntary, community, and social enterprises, also referred to as 'the third sector'.
Young Carer	Someone aged under 18 years old, who helps to look after a disabled relative, and/or a relative with a long term physical or mental health condition, or an unhealthy relationship with drugs or alcohol.

What is a Parent Carer Forum?



A Parent Carer Forum is a group of parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and / or disabilities. They are parents and carers of children and young people aged 0-25 years old, although often people will remain in touch or connected to their forum. The group provides a formal way for people to work

with local authorities, Integrated Care Boards (ICB) and local services to improve services and commissioning.

Parent Carer Forums are funded by the Department for Education, through an organisation called Contact. They can be in various forms – examples include a charity, or a Community Interest Company ('CIC'). There will only be one Parent Carer Forum in each local authority area, although other groups may also exist to provide feedback.

Parent Carer have two broad offers, which are (1) providing a way for parents and carers to work with strategic partners and practitioners and (2) providing signposting and information for parents and carers.

Usually, a Parent Carer Forum holds an Annual General meeting ('AGM') which gives an overview of who is who, and what activities and decisions they have made in the previous year. These will be advertised in advance and anyone can attend.

What is a Parent Carer Forum - Continued

Working together

“Our role is to be the voice of parents as a whole... we take the collective voice”.

Parent Carer Forums have a Memorandum of Understanding between the local authority, the ICB and the forum, which sets out how they all expect to work together. They are part of a National Parent Carer Forum, and have access to resources and training as well as opportunities to apply for funding for specific projects.

Parent Carer Forums inform and influence strategic and operational service commissioning, design, and developments to improve the experiences of families in their local areas.

They do this by gathering the views of local families and then working in partnership with local authorities, education settings, health providers and other providers to highlight where local services, processes and commissioners are working well, or challenge when changes or improvements need to be made.

For local authorities, and ICBs, they will be able to share the views of their members, as well as helping to find people to contribute to a specific project through these members and connections with other groups and organisations.

Parent Carer Forums will have volunteers or paid staff who are also parent carers who organise opportunities to get involved, and help to circulate information. They may have a social media presence, a mailing list, or in-person events. Each forum will do things slightly differently.

Providing signposting and information

“We are a friendly bunch of people who’ve been through it ourselves.”

Sharing information about local events as well as opportunities to feedback is part of a Parent Carer Forum’s support. For parents and carers, their vast knowledge of the local area can help to connect people with groups and activities relevant to their needs. They can also provide ways to meet other parents and carers, and to get together for peer support and understanding.

Parent Carer Forums don’t provide individual case support as part of their main offer, but they will have relationships with services that they can signpost members on to. Some Forums may have additional funding to provide this type of service, and will make this clear to people wanting to join. There are no charges to parents and carers who join Parent Carer Forums, although some meet up activities may have a small cost.

“We’re open to everyone... you don’t need a diagnosis to be a forum member.”



Tips for practitioners working with forums

“Please promote what you are doing, new initiatives don’t always seem to be shared.”

“Involve us early on, if you’ve chosen what you are going to do, why ask us?”

Neuro-affirming language

In 2023, the Kent and Medway Delivery Partnership Board for Neurodiversity agreed the following definitions for use. This Framework shares these definitions to further collective understanding and consistent use of language.

Note: Definitions have not been amended for this framework. Definitions relevant only to the Partnership Board for Neurodiversity have been removed.



Term	Definition
ADHD or Kinetic Cognitive Style (KCS)	Means people whose neurocognitive functioning diverges from dominant social norms by experiencing attention differences, and/or diagnostically labelled as having “attention deficit hyperactivity disorder” or “attention deficit disorder”, people who experience ADHD or ADD are part of the ADHD Neurominority Group.
Autistic People	Means people whose neurocognitive functioning diverges from dominant societal norms by being Autistic, and who are part of the Autistic Neurominority Group, where Autistic experience includes: differences in the processing of, and experience of: sensory, social, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and communication of information.
Co-production or Collaboration	Refer to non-tokenistic, full-inclusion of Independent Neurodivergent Experts/Leaders/Advisors; this means equal and equitable collaboration between Neurotypical and Neurodivergent individuals (recognising the automatic power imbalances between Neuromajority and Neurominority members), involving joint decision-making on e.g., goals, processes, and outcomes ¹ , recognising that Neurodivergent people can also be experts/professionals in their own right, and should not be reduced to “experts by experience”.
Independent Neurodivergent Advisor	Refers to individuals appointed in accordance with this Agreement to the Delivery Partnership Board who are: Learning-Disabled; Autistic; or Autistic and Learning Disabled; or otherwise neurodivergent, and does not include individuals who cannot be classed as an Independent Neurodivergent Advisor as outlined here (e.g., this role does not include neurotypical carers; professionals; or advocates). The role of the Independent Neurodivergent Advisor is further detailed at Schedule 5.

¹ <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/aut.2020.0050>

Neuro-affirming language - Continued

Term	Definition
Identity-First/IFL Language	Refers to wording about a person that leads with a description of them in the context of a disability, medical conditions (including mental health conditions), or other physical or cognitive difference. Autistic people generally prefer Identity-First language and people with learning disabilities, or learning-disabled people neither preferred nor rejected, provided the principles of the social model of disability are applied. Examples include terms like Deaf person, Blind person, and Autistic person ^{2 3} . Generally speaking, the Autistic community prefer identity-first language, and there is evidence Identity-First Language when used to describe Autistic people is less stigmatising than Person-First Language ⁴ , and should be adopted by medical professionals (with the caveat for a need for language training delivered by Autistic people). Since 1985 people with learning disabilities have also defined themselves within a context of disability as disabled people, with the onus on non-disabled people to make adjustments and accommodations with regard to people being learning-disabled, rather than physically-disabled. Identity first language appears neither preferred nor rejected by people who are learning-disabled, or people with learning disabilities provided people are supported within the social model of disability. The terms are therefore used interchangeably throughout this partnership agreement.
Learning Disabilities or Learning Disabled	Refers to people disabled by way of dominant social norms related to learning and retention of information, throughout their life. For example, in understanding complicated information, learning some skills, looking after themselves or living alone. Learning disabilities starts either in utero, or in early childhood but might not be recognised until adulthood.
Multiply Neurodivergent	means to have neurocognitive function/s that diverge/s from dominant societal norms in multiple ways. For example a person who is Autistic and Learning Disabled is multiply neurodivergent; as is someone who is Autistic and experiences anxiety and psychosis.
Neurodivergent Representative	Means people employed, or paid for, or supported in accordance with this Agreement to the Delivery Partnership Board who are Autistic; Learning-Disabled; Autistic with learning disabilities with their supporter or carer as indicated by the person The role of the Neurodivergent Representatives is further detailed in Schedule 5.
Neurodivergent or Neurodivergence	Means having a brain and body that functions in ways which diverge from dominant societal standards of normal, which is a result of innateness or genetics, or produced through brain altering experience, or through a combination of the two (2).

² <https://www.thesaurus.com/e/writing/person-first-vs-identity-first-language/>

³ Resources supporting preference, but importantly wellbeing properties, of identity-first language: We are Autistic <https://aucademy.co.uk/2021/11/25/resources-supporting-preference-but-importantly-wellbeing-properties-of-identity-first-language-we-are-autistic/>

⁴ <https://acamh.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/jcpp.12706>

Neuro-affirming language - Continued

Term	Definition
Neurodiversity or Neurodiverse	Refers to the social model of human diversity of human body-minds. The human species is made up of those who are Neurotypical and able to perform Neuronormatively, and those who cannot perform in Neuronormative ways as expected by society currently. Those who cannot function or perform in a Neuronormative way are today's societally Neurodivergent. In a group of two or more people where one is Neurotypical and one is Neurodivergent, the group can be said to be Neurodiverse.
Neurominority or Neurominorities	Means a population of Neurodivergent people who share a similar form of neurodivergence and is one of the forms of neurodivergence that is largely innate or genetic and is inseparable from who they are and the form of neurodivergence they share is one to which the neurotypical majority tend to respond with some degree of prejudice, misunderstanding, discrimination and/or oppression.
Neurotypical and Neuronormative	Refer to those in society who currently are able to perform and function in an expected and Neuronormative way.
Person-First Language/PFL	Refers to wording that introduces a person first and then follows with a descriptor in relation to a disability, medical condition (including mental health conditions), or other physical or cognitive difference. Since 1985 people with learning disabilities have also defined themselves within a context of disability as disabled people, with the onus on non-disabled people to make adjustments and accommodations with regard to people being learning-disabled, rather than physically-disabled. Identity first language appears neither preferred nor rejected by people who are learning disabled, or people with learning disabilities provided people are supported within the social model of disability. The terms are therefore used interchangeably throughout this partnership agreement.

Resources for people with lived experience (a starting point)

If you are working with people who are keen to find opportunities to become involved beyond your service or project, or who would like some additional support there are some resources available. This is a non-exhaustive list, please add your own findings:

Opportunities

- Involvement with NHS England:
[NHS England » Patient and public voice partners \(PPVs\) and people with lived experience](#)
- NHS England Patient Participation Involvement Policy: [ppp-policy-edit.pdf \(england.nhs.uk\)](#)
- Link to InTouch newsletter (NHS England): [NHS England » How to get involved](#)
- Parent carer forums:
Medway Parent Carer Forum - [Welcome to The Medway Parents & Carers Forum \(medwaypcf.org.uk\)](#)
Kent PACT - [Home - Kent PACT \(kentpactnew2022.co.uk\)](#)
- You will find KCC's public consultations, and other engagement activities, on its online engagement platform called Let's talk Kent: [www.kent.gov.uk/letstalk](#).
- Youth Councils: [Medway Youth Council | Medway | England Kent Youth County Council - Kent County Council](#)

Resources to support people with lived experience

- Guides for organisations and individuals on supporting someone to tell their story (HSC Public Health Agency, Belfast, 2017):
[Guide to speaking publicly about self-harm/suicide/mental health issues | HSC Public Health Agency](#)
- Guide for individuals wanting to share their story (Shaping Our Lives, 2023):
[Lived experience guide \(shapingourlives.org.uk\)](#)
- Mind Action Wellness Plans: [mind-wellness-action-plan-workplace.pdf](#)
- My Involvement Profile (on this page/to support people to outline their needs and preferences):
[Share your lived experience - Shaping Our Lives](#)
- NHS Peer Leader Programme: [NHS England » Peer leadership](#)
- Charlie Waller PLACE (for people providing parent carer support): [PLACE - Parent Support Network | Charlie Waller](#)

Additional resources for practice (a starting point)

Children and young people

- Kent Youth Charter (explains how young people would like to be treated and link leads to co-production training): [The Kent Youth Charter - Kent Resilience Hub](#)
 - Lundy Model (adopted by Kent County Council I-Thrive and Participation team): [Participation Framework | Hub Na nÓg \(hubnanog.ie\)](#)
-

Current use of language

- 'Why language matters' (NSPCC blog): [Why language matters: why to avoid the term 'victim' to refer to children who have experienced abuse | NSPCC Learning](#)
 - Inclusive language guide from Bradford District and Craven Health and Care Partnership: [Inclusive language - Your reference guide by ReducingInequalities - Issuu](#)
-

Lived Experience in the workplace

- [Working definition of trauma-informed practice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
 - [Involving-people-with-lived-experience-in-the-workforce-2020.pdf \(tnlcommunityfund.org.uk\)](#)
-

Local Government Association Guides

- Link arrives at 'resident communications' and two resources: [Resident communications | Local Government Association](#)
-

NHS Guides

- NHS Bitesize Participation guides: [NHS England » Bite size guides to participation](#)
 - NHS training (registration and eligibility requirements): <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/working-with-people-and-communities-to-improve-health-outcomes/1/todo/165427>
 - Kent and Medway ICB Toolkit: [Engagement toolkit for commissioners :: NHS Kent and Medway \(icb.nhs.uk\)](#)
 - FutureNHS workspace 'Start with People' (registration required)
-

Representation

- Listen, a short film by CommunicationFIRST: [LISTEN Movie - Audio-Described Version \(English\) - YouTube](#)
- Kimberlè Crenshaw speaking on intersectionality: [Link](#)
- Mind's guide to reasonable adjustments: [Link](#)

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Contacts



Project team:

Queries regarding the development of the framework

stories@kent.gov.uk

To provide feedback:

<https://forms.office.com/e/QjJR2bDr6n>

Note: If you require an alternative method of feedback, please contact Mhairi or Tamsyn at stories@kent.gov.uk, who will then get in contact with you and make alternate arrangements.

Lived Experience Engagement and Employment Framework

“The art of conversation is the art of hearing as well as of being heard” - William Hazlitt

August 2024

Review due August 2025



Kent and Medway



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KMICB Children's Team

How the voices of children, young people and families are gathered and how they are used to improve their experience and outcomes.

Report for:

- NHS Kent and Medway Improving Outcomes and Experience Committee
- Section 11 Audit: engagement and voices section
- Kent and Medway Children and Young Peoples' Local Transformation Plan

September 2024

Contents

Introduction.....	3
1. The people, projects and activities	3
a. The People	4
Lived Experience Lead	4
Lived Experience Practitioners	4
Participation Workers	4
Co-production leads	5
b. The Projects	6
Children and Young People's ICS Strategic Framework	6
New models of care for children and young people's mental health.....	6
Young People's Voice	7
Lived Experience Engagement and Employment Framework	8
Locality grants for the voice of young adults.....	8
Pie Factory – Open Arms – Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (13-21 years) .	8
Young Adult's Mental Health videos	9
c. The Activities	10
2. Themes, Analysis and Impact	16
3. Plans for the next year.....	20

Introduction

Children's and Families Act 2014: The Law states that:

Young people should be at the centre of planning for and making decisions about their future. Discussions should focus on what they want to achieve, and the support they will need to get there.

Kent and Medway ICB (KMICB) have long been committed to ensuring children, young people and their families' voice has been listened to and appropriately embedded in a non-tokenistic and collaborative practice across the ICS.

Over the past year, the lived experience voice has been more prominent than ever with increasingly robust mechanisms and structures to gather a wide range of voices and improve practices within the ICB and partners in embedding the learning and changing delivery to better meet the needs of the children and young people.

In 2024, the Kent and Medway Children's Programme Board endorsed the Lived Experience Engagement and Employment Framework, which describes the values that underpin lived experience practice as well as guidance for good practice. This provides a robust framework across the system to ensure that voice is gathered and used in the most sensitive and meaningful way. A copy of the framework is made available with this document.

Listening to children, young people and their families' experiences, is a core feature of the children and young people's system in Kent and Medway. Embedding a 'listening and acting culture' enables far reaching and long-term benefits to care children and young people receive. Moreover, gathering and respecting the voices of children and young people nurtures robust relationships, enhances learning and innovation in practice, reveals inequalities and improves quality of care and experience.

1. The people, projects and activities

In this section we outline the people, projects and activities that contribute to the children and young peoples' voices agenda for KMICB. Gathering, understanding and acting on their voices sits within a system infrastructure that is connected and interrelated.

The section below illustrates the breadth and depth of work undertaken in the last 12 months. This document will also be used to inform the Section 11 annual audit reporting for the ICB, which requires the organisation to evidence the actions taken to discharge their duty appropriately in respect of promoting the welfare of children and safeguarding under the requirements of the Children's Act. This document will also be used within the Kent and Medway Children and Young People's Local Transformation Plan refresh for 24/25.

a. The People

Lived Experience Lead

For the past year, Tamsyn Phillips has been employed as the Lived Experience Lead within the KMICB Children's Team. This post is funded through the mental health investment standard and the primary focus is on wellbeing and mental health, however Tamsyn also has a role to strategically embedded and continuously improve children and young peoples' voices in commissioning practice. Tamsyn works in conjunction with the Kent County Council (KCC) Lived Experience Practitioners to develop the Lived Experience Engagement and Employment Framework and run the Young People's Voice Project (both detailed below). Tamsyn is an expert in her field and has spoken at local and international conferences about lived experience and partnership working.



Lived Experience Practitioners

These roles sit within Kent County Council and work closely with parents of children that have mental health diagnoses and/or are neurodivergent. Some aspects of the role involved developing a Family Network for Kent and Medway to strengthen parent peer support by engaging with parents. They also reach parents who want to be involved and support service reviews and organised parent steering groups. They engaged with young people for the development of 'The Lodge' – a service that seeks to avoid a hospital admission for autistic young people with or without a learning disability. They work on strategy and policy and both practitioners used their lived experience to contribute to the training of Educational Psychologists at the University College London.

Participation Workers

KMICB fund Participation roles that sit within Kent County Council, Medway Council and Porchlight. These roles deliver an expert, mature and sophisticated programme of work which is coordinated across the ICS and targets children and young people who are impacted by health inequalities.

With KMICB support and funding, the Participation workers run the Big Mental Health Conversation in the autumn of each year. The report from last year can be found [here](#), which describes the event in which 250 Kent and Medway children attended and what was gathered and achieved from the day.

The Participation Workers are experts in their field and are often involved in new programmes of work from the inception to design the most appropriate and honest engagement with children, young people and families. They have co-developed with young people training for professionals (particularly decision makers, such as Members) on how to improve participation and engagement practice. This is delivered by young people to adults.



The Young Adults Participation Project (YAP), run by Porchlight, works directly with young adults who experience mental health difficulties. They engage with young adults and have 1 to 1 conversations with them and gather feedback on their experiences of the mental health services. This feedback is shared with KMICB and the providers to make service improvements which are then monitored through contract meetings.

Between May 23 – May 24 the YAP service engaged with over 1,500 young adults at 96 events and at creative workshops that they deliver. The project continues to receive positive feedback from young adults and from the organisations that it works closely with to support these people.

Co-production leads

Within KMICB commissioned services, such as Mind and Body and NELFT's Children and Young People's Mental Health Service, there are staff dedicated to co-production and participation. These roles ensure best practice is reviewed with service users and improvements based on user experience are embedded.

Some examples of improvements include:

- Children and young people said they preferred using a longer version of a wellbeing scale to the condensed one. The service worked with the children and young people to amend the evaluation tool and it has now been adapted as a result of their engagement and feedback.
- Co-produced communication materials with parents to explain their child's safety plans that are developed by the service with the young person.

In 2024, the Kent and Medway children's mental health provider, NELFT employed a dedicated Patient Experience, Complaints and Compliments Lead. This role has had immediate impact in improving patient experience for children and their families through increased bespoke communication as they wait for autism and ADHD assessments. These improvements are monitored through contract meetings and the Neurodevelopment Pathway Transformation programme.

b. The Projects

Children and Young People's ICS Strategic Framework

The KMICB Strategy Team have led the way in the development of the Children and Young People's Strategic Framework which has involved developing a shared approach to strategy across all sectors, guided by four core ambitions. The ambitions will help share the approach to effective, compassionate and equitable care, they are:

- Reducing inequalities in care
- Personalised and individual care
- Experience and environment
- Workforce Development

These ambitions not only underpin the strategic objectives, but also act as a compass for the actions and decision-making processes. They ensure that the services meet the diverse needs of all young people in the communities.

Over 200 children and young people were directly engaged, with more through digital platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Engagement with children and young people has been integral throughout this strategy development and will continue to be during future development.

New models of care for children and young people's mental health

In 2023/24, KMICB embarked on a programme of engagement informing the development of the future children and young people's mental health model. Over 1,000 children and young people were engaged and shared their views through online engagement, group work and one to one interviews.

After the initial phase of gathering their views and opinions, we produced a video animation for children and young people that described the future models of care based on the feedback we received. That animation can be viewed [here](#). We then continued to undertake more specific engagement as part of phase two of the project. The work that was undertaken has been published in two reports on the Kent and Medway ICS website:

- [Kent and Medway Children and Young People's Mental Health Have Your Say survey responses analysis – November 2023](#): Analysis of 981 written responses were received, plus 1 poem, 1 drawing, 5 podcasts, and 10 short films
- [Kent and Medway children and young people's mental health services procurement: Report on engagement activity and outcomes – January 2024](#): An independent review of over 60 reports and case studies with children and young people in the previous 18 months, to inform the future model of care.

A further, 'you said, we did' report has been drafted (due to be signed off) that explicitly shows how children and young people's mental health feedback and insights gathered from the engagement activity have influenced the future approach to children and young people's mental health services.

Young People's Voice

This project allows young adults (16–25-year-olds) their parents, carers, families and anyone involved in their mental health care, to feedback about their care experiences. Data is collected through an online platform and engagement and is collated and thematically analysed. Reports are written and sent out to stakeholders and commissioners for review and to build into contract meetings and development of future services.

Quarterly Local Mental Health Network Meetings (LMHN) are held with stakeholders (organisations that work with young adults), which are opportunities for them to talk about key themes that have been reported, and network to create a more joined up network of support for young adults. The meetings are held for the four HCP areas that make up Kent and Medway so that we can understand local needs.

We also hold a bi-annual Mental Health Action Group (MHAG), which hosts commissioners and heads of local mental health services, to speak about the mental health experiences of young adults and how this feedback is used to ensure actionable, non-tokenistic positive outcomes for young adults. This project is run by Tamsyn Phillips from the children's team.

In addition to the LMHNs and MHAGs, we hold meetings with stakeholders and partners, particularly voluntary and community sector organisations that support young people, school wellbeing leads and care leavers organisations. Feedback is given and discussed with senior members of the organisation about improving care based on child and young person's experience.

We have facilitated a direct channel for feedback from stakeholders and partners to NELFT and are in the process of developing a similar model with KMPT (the adult mental health provider in Kent and Medway) in respect of young adults. With the young adults' pathway going up to 25.

**Young People's Voice report
Spring 2023**

What you've told us about mental health care for 16–25 year olds...

Communication

Young people have been reporting that they have had poor communication experiences, from phone calls to communication within therapy settings.

We have also been hearing that young people have been finding it hard to access referrals, appointments and diagnoses, subsequently leaving them with lack of care and support.

We have had feedback that waiting list times for mental health diagnoses and treatment and neurodevelopmental condition diagnoses are long.

Waiting list times and lack of support

It has been reported that young people and their families are often left to chase up referrals and appointments and are unsupported in doing so. Navigating the different services can be really overwhelming and a lot of people don't know who to call or where to turn to.

Peer support

Young people have found that different community projects have been really supportive and some have found work experience at these projects, which has helped in building their confidence.

We have received multiple bits of feedback to reflect the positive effect that peer support groups have been for young people's mental health and wellbeing.

What else have we been hearing...

Young people have been provided positive support from their Job Centre employment coaches

Really positive responses to therapy leading to better quality of life.

We are working to change these things with people across the system!
If you would like to get in touch, please email youngpeoplesvoice@ek360.co.uk

Lived Experience Engagement and Employment Framework

The Framework can be accessed [here](#). It has been co-produced with engagement from children, young people, young adults, families and carers, with input from employees from NHS Kent and Medway ICB, Kent County Council, Medway Council and other local stakeholders. This has been developed to support the system, partners and stakeholders in consistent and shared approaches to engagement, language and employment. Colleagues across the ICS are now working to develop a bespoke promotion and training package alongside the framework to build a system consensus of approach. This was a collaborative piece of work led by Lived Experience colleagues from local authority and ICB and winner of a Healthwatch Kent and Medway Award 2024.



Locality grants for the voice of young adults

EK360, in partnership with KMICB have launched a small grants initiative for local organisations to collect feedback from children and young people on a selection of key identified issues. This allows for children and young people to be actively involved in gathering feedback, designing and planning an engagement event and learning to produce a report in a format of their choosing.

The grants have been awarded to multiple voluntary sector organisations that work with seldom heard communities, such as young people experiencing domestic abuse, carers and young people from African and Caribbean communities.

Kent Youth Research Network

In July 2023 KCC's i-Thrive and Participation Team were awarded funding from the National Institute of Health Research to develop a [Kent Youth Research Network](#), engaging young people in the development of research as well as being participants in research. Working in partnership with the University of Kent, 32 young people aged 11 to 17 years have now been trained in research methods. The young people have worked in small groups to be supported to develop their own research projects including research on the impacts of social media on mental health.

An Organisation and Practitioners Network has also been developed through this funding, providing an opportunity for schools and organisations working with young people to get involved with, undertake and share youth-led research.

Pie Factory – Open Arms – Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (13-21 years)

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people are a group that face significant health inequalities and KMICB is committed to addressing the needs of the groups that experience significant adversity.

The ICB commission Pie Factory Music to deliver 'Open Arms'. A weekly session for unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees aged 13-21 years. It is an open access session where the children and young people can attend a relaxed environment where there are a multitude of different activities they can partake in, all developed and designed by the children and young people themselves. The young adults (18+) who attend are also offered monthly advice sessions with the Refugee Council.

To celebrate the first year of Open Arms, they produced [this video](#) that celebrates the inspiring young people and what the project means to them and their team, and how much they have gained from coming together through compassion, positivity, resilience and community.

Young Adult's Mental Health videos

Young people fed back that they used social media platforms to get information about their mental health. We co-designed and co-produced a set of videos of young adults speaking about their mental health experiences. This will be shared across the NHS Kent and Medway social media platforms and will also be shared by other system partners.

You can view the videos in the links below:



[Amaka](#): Amaka explains how young adults (aged 16 to 25) in Kent and Medway can access mental health support. Amaka is deaf and this is a signed and captioned video.

[Tass](#): Tass, from Medway, has struggled with her mental health and particularly with anxiety. She describes her mental health journey and how she found help and support.

[Archie](#): Archie, from Thanet, struggled with questioning his identity and sexuality which made him feel isolated. Archie tells his story and explains how he accessed NHS mental health services for support.

[Jack](#): Jack, from Kent, explains how he struggles with his mental health when starting university. He explains how he found support.

c. The Activities

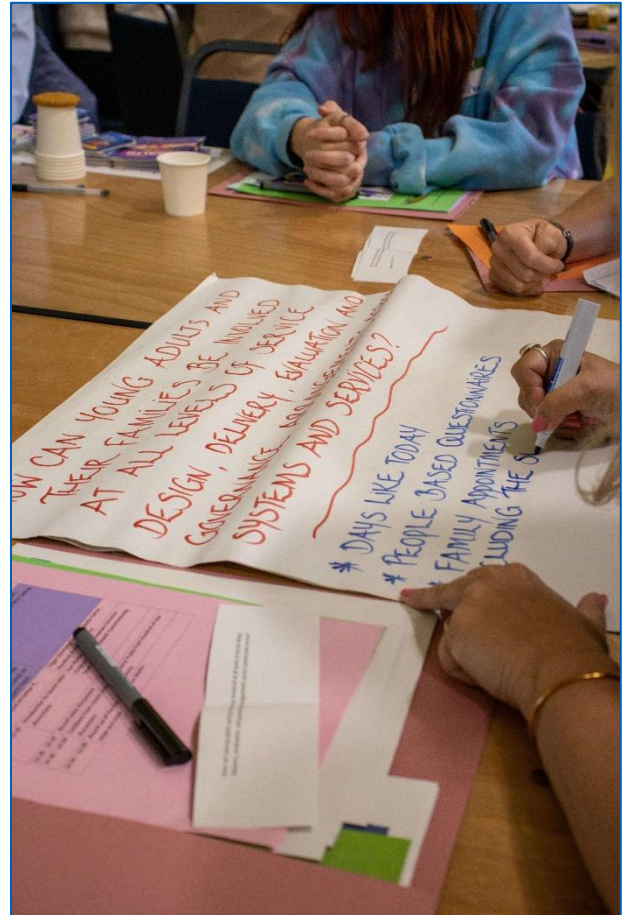
NHS Kent and Medway Young Adults' Mental Health and Wellbeing Conference 2023

A conference that invited young adults, commissioners, heads of service and other stakeholders to speak about issues that are facing young adults and their mental health and wellbeing. The theme that underpinned the conference was 'It would be better if...'.

The conference was designed to ensure that the young adults' voices had the platform to be heard. The conference involved presentations from young adults and organisations that support them. Claire Murdoch, NHS England's National Mental Health Director, kindly recorded a speech for us, highlighting the wider NHS goals for children and young people and touched upon the positive work that is going on in Kent and Medway. Dame Eileen Sills (former) Chief Nursing Officer for the ICB also highlighted the work and commitment of the ICB to young adults.

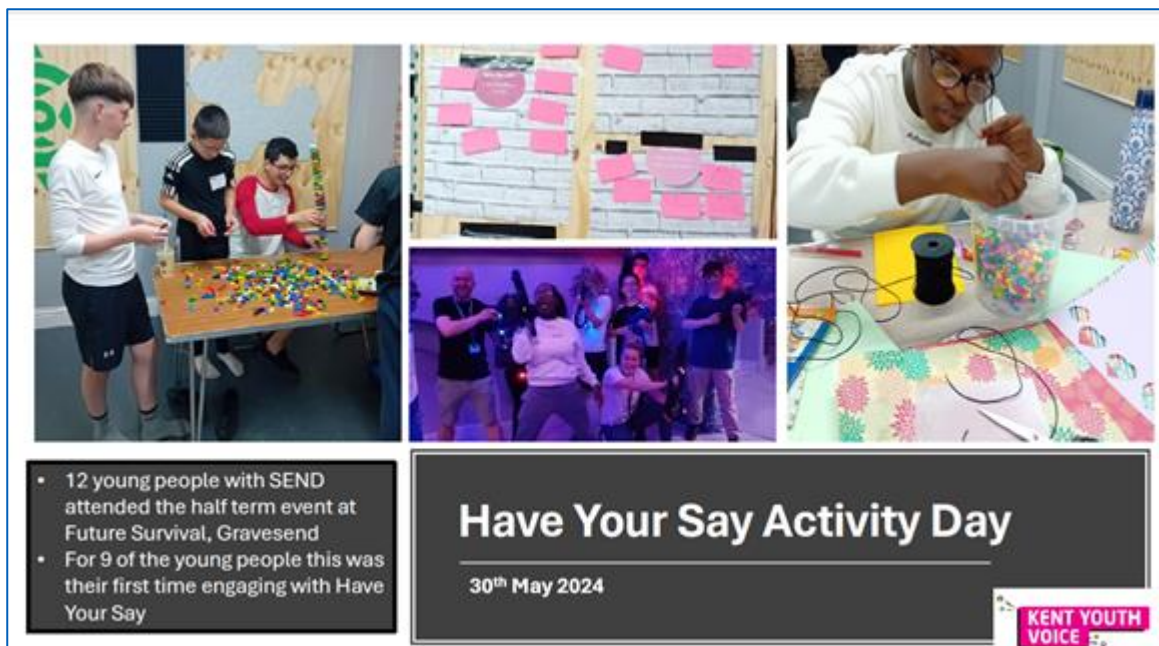
Roundtable discussions included young adults, commissioners and heads of service discussing improvements to outcomes and experience, allowing the young adults' voice to be directly heard by those who make service and delivery decisions.

The feedback collated informed the development of the service specifications for the CYPMHS procurement. The feedback also highlighted that the delegates and young adults wanted more events like the conference, where they had more opportunities to connect and talk. The event was the winner of a Healthwatch Kent and Medway Award.



Voices of children with Special Educational Needs and Disability

The inclusion of children and young people's voice is at the heart of both Kent and Medway's SEND Partnership Board responsibilities. It is reflected in both SEND strategies and is integral to 'Child Friendly Medway', corporate parenting and health and wellbeing strategies. 'SEND is everyone's business' as children and young people need good education, health and care services that require different mechanisms to hear their voice in order to coproduce and feedback, to plan and develop services in which children and young people with SEND attend. Children and young people also attend strategic boards, recruitment processes and are part of Youth Parliament or councils.




Medway Mental Health Week Event – My Voice Matters

This event was part of children's mental health week and celebrated the child and young people's voice. Students across primary and secondary schools were invited, where they worked collaboratively by engaging in different activities on the day.

Medway Council, in partnership with Medway Youth service, organised a vibrant celebration for celebration for Place 2 Be's Children's Mental Health Awareness (2024). Under the theme 'My Voice Matters', the event aimed to raise awareness about mental health and wellbeing and promote self-expression among children and young people in the community. The day included a number of workshops promoting wellbeing and requesting feedback to support service development. Between workshops, pupils were able to engage with various service providers in the marketplace stalls and engaging in a bingo activity to help familiarise individuals with the different services available and consider how these services may support particular scenarios. Some of the stalls had interactive elements, for example Child Friendly Medway invited children and young people to participate in a voting process to select their preferred logo for a citizen award. In addition, the Lived Experience Lead gathered feedback regarding the new mental health approach. During the day, one school also utilised the event to help develop their peer mentors, who actively took notes on how to support others within their school community


PRIMARY SCHOOL RESPONSES:



- Playing with my friends
- Singing & Dancing
- Dance to music and sing
- My friends help me and are kind.
- Dancing
- Playing football with family
- My friends & my family
- Football. Music, basketball, F1
- Cuddling with my grandad
- Playing with my pets
- Hugging my teddy bears
- Crying and listening to music
- Pugs
- Playing games
- Food and music
- Listening to music
- Football
- Music

- My friends
- Playing with Freddie
- Calming music, watching something, playing with Lego
- My pets, hugs, family
- Cuddles
- Music, family
- Music, pets, videos
- Dancing
- Listening to music
- Singing because I can make up a happy or funny song.
- I like to play out with my friends.
- What makes me happy is playing VR and listening to music
- Dancing and friends
- Drawing
- Talking to my friends or playing football

SECONDARY SCHOOL RESPONSES:



- Listening to music
- Watching your favourite show alone
- Music
- Running helps me escape from reality.
- I talk to my mum.
- Put my air pods in, cry, talk to my mum.
- Sleep, music, eating KitKats.
- Listening to music and crying
- Food, buy hair, my phone.
- Listening to music whilst playing a relaxing game on my Nintendo switch
- Basketball
- Listening to music while laying on my bed
- Talking to friends and family
- Listening to music, doing braids, watching TikTok

- Spending time alone thinking.
- Music, sleeping, watching shows.
- English lessons
- My phone
- Painting/ drawing and dancing
- Singing and dancing in my room
- Dog walking, talking to my mum.
- Seeing my friends
- Drum and bass music
- Music and games
- Playing video games
- Games

Children and young people's voices were captured through their responses on what makes them thrive and from their artwork quotes. We encouraged schools to involve their students in a collaborative effort, expressing themselves through art and creative ventures under the theme "My Voice Matters". Children and young people were encouraged to share their unique creative pieces, which ranged from posters, poems and photographed artwork. The aim was to empower children and young people and capture their voices by providing them with a platform to express themselves. With so many fantastic pieces we will be using them to support our next mental health event and support implementation of i-Thrive through the thrive champion's network. A number of the pieces and the thrive postcards, highlighted things which help children thrive which will support our current Self-Harm project and recommissioning of children and young people's mental health and wellbeing services.

BeYou - Porchlight

BeYou is an ICB commissioned service that provides safe spaces and advice to young people and their families in Kent and Medway who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary or are questioning their sexual orientation/gender. The service connects young people and their families, who are from the LGBTQ community to socialise, have fun and support each other.

Young people are enabled to set the agenda for the sessions they attend and mould appropriately to suit their needs. One example is of a group that wanted to do more cooking and the service has supported the young people to engage with a regular volunteer who attends for cooking sessions. Careful attention is given to the noise levels and sensory needs for the neurodiverse clients. This was the feedback from one of the attendees.

"I thought it was absolutely amazing. There was just enough there to do without it being overwhelming. The noise level was just right. The people was wonderful. It wasn't too busy so we all had plenty of personal space."

Given that within the LGBTQ+, voices are often erased, or they do not feel heard or feel invisible. It is a fundamental part of the BeYou service that they feel listened to and shape their own support.

NELFT – Sleep Project

NELFT worked closely with a researcher at University College London, and a talented group of autistic young people to create a leaflet and animation about what helps teenagers to get a good night's sleep. Most sleep advice is for the general population, and it does not always work for autistic children and young people, so they wanted to create something that specifically focusses on autistic young people. This project is particularly special because it is brought to life by a song and music video created by some members of the group.

The resource and music video were launched at a special event at the young people's school and has been used across a number of health, care services in Kent and Medway. Alongside the resources for children and young people, a set of lesson plans were developed and have been promoted across all schools to support teachers and SENCOs in working with autistic children and young people.

You can read the original research paper here: [Sleep Project research paper](#). You can view and download the leaflet here: [Sleep Project leaflet](#). The co-produced animation about what helps autistic young people to get a good night's sleep can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/y6dviuVRkbA>

Kent and Medway Safer Asthma Campaign



KMICBs 'safer asthma' campaign aims to encourage more children and young people with asthma or suspected asthma to come forward for lifesaving checks. The awareness campaign targeting children, young people, parents, general practice and other key stakeholders will help meet the following objectives:

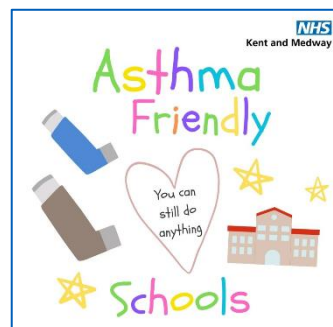
- Increase the prevalence rate of children and young peoples' asthma to the expected levels of 11.4% in the 12 to 24 age group in Kent and Medway through improved diagnosis and data reporting.
- Increase the number of annual asthma reviews for every child with asthma or suspected asthma, and for children six weeks after a flare-up.
- Increase uptake of Personal Asthma Action plans (PAAPs).

The campaign content has been driven by early engagement with children, parents and carers. An online survey for parents and carers and focus groups was held in schools with children who have asthma (3 x primary schools, 1 secondary). The results were combined to influence the content of the Kent and Medway safer asthma public campaign, which will be launched in line with the national #AskAboutAsthma campaign running from the 9th to the 15th of September 2024.

Parents and carers of children with asthma have also provided feedback on the design of campaign materials, particularly with regards to how best the ICB can convey the potentially life-threatening nature of asthma and the importance of good asthma control, without causing unnecessary panic for parents and carers.

KMICB have commissioned the creation of a [short video](#) featuring two young competitive swimmers from Medway, to convey the message to other young people that having asthma has not stopped them from achieving their goals. The video highlights that children with well controlled asthma can take part in any sport or physical activity that they want to and that it should not be a barrier to young people achieving their goals and ambitions. The video will be shared on social media, via partner channels and on the ICBs website as part of Safer Asthma campaign.

Alongside the public campaign, improving care and managing risk for children with asthma in schools is also a high priority, with the Kent and Medway Asthma Friendly Schools (AFS) programme launching formally in September 24. A competition was run in partnership with a local primary school in July 2024, giving pupils the opportunity to design the Kent and Medway AFS programme



To complete the feedback loop, the University of Kent is undertaking an independent evaluation of the pilot seeking feedback from children and families who have received care via the Children's Care Collaborative MDT process. This qualitative study aims to capture the views and experiences of patients and individuals seen through the MDTs to assess the effectiveness of the integrated model of care. The final evaluation report will be completed by December 2024.

2. Themes, Analysis and Impact

We have multiple reporting methods to capture and analyse children and young peoples' voices. Our data collection mainly takes a qualitative approach, as it is the best way to capture the true experiences of children and young people. However, we still do use quantitative approaches and feel that both approaches can be used in tandem to create the best picture that encapsulates the children, young people, parents and carers experiences and voice.

Example of analysis of children and young peoples' voices

Have Your Say Survey: Children and young peoples' future mental health model. In total 981 written responses were received, plus 1 poem, 1 drawing, 5 podcasts, and 10 short films. In addition to this, a large range of face-to-face engagement sessions and workshops took place, including Virtual School Kent Participation Team, who provide youth voice and engagement opportunities for children in care and those with a social worker. We also engaged with colleagues in the Youth Offending Team who supported 3 young people involved with their services in engage in the consultation, including a young person who was in Foster Care.

The full analysis report can be found [here](#), with a short summary below of themes:

- **Consistency and clear information:** respondents emphasised the need for consistent information about mental health services and clear pathways for accessing support. Support should be available without the necessity of a referral, making it more accessible.
- **GP accessibility and dedicated lines:** suggestions were made to improve access to GPs for mental health concerns, including the establishment of dedicated phone lines.
- **Parity with physical health services:** advocacy for mental health support on par with physical health services, drawing attention to the lack of immediate assistance for mental health issues compared to physical injuries.
- **Emotional resilience in schools:** calls for increased emotional resilience programs in schools, not just for students but also for parents. Recognition of the importance of emotional support alongside academic education.
- **NHS funding and waiting lists:** concerns were raised about the underfunding of the NHS, resulting in long waiting lists. Calls for more funding to reduce waiting times and ensure timely access to services.
- **Preventative support and early intervention:** a strong emphasis on providing support before crisis points, allowing young people to access services they

need before reaching severe mental health states. Advocacy for a conversation-first approach rather than a referral-first system.

- **Person-centred and responsive support:** calls for a person-centred approach, emphasising non-judgmental and responsive support tailored to individual needs. Encouragement for innovation and open-mindedness in service delivery.
- **Increased mental health services:** calls for more mental health services provided by experts, including quicker diagnosis services. Requests for more face to-face counselling services to meet the demand.
- **Communication and community engagement:** emphasis on improving communication within the system, including addressing myths, responding to negative feedback, and changing mindsets. Advocacy for community services to be better staffed and resourced.
- **School involvement and support:** suggestions for direct support from mental health services in schools, networking groups, and interventions. Calls for more clinicians in schools and improved access to emotional well-being support.
- **Shorter waiting lists and immediate access:** consistent demand for shorter waiting lists and immediate access to mental health services. Advocacy for a more proactive approach, including self-referral and school referral options.
- **Increased funding and resources:** calls for more funding and resources in health and social care, including specialised GP services. Advocacy for the smart allocation of funds to balance short-term and therapeutic interventions.
- **Collaboration and coordination:** encouragement for collaboration between different services, schools, and GPs for better coordination. Calls for streamlined processes to reduce the back-and-forth between services.
- **Holistic approach and early intervention:** calls for a more holistic approach, involving coordinated efforts between professionals, schools, and families. Emphasis on early intervention and support for children with mental health issues.

How voice has improved experience and outcomes: *some examples*

Young adults experience changes location of safe haven:

Following engagement that our Lived Experience Lead carried out with young adults and organisations that work with them, some concerns around the potential location of one of the safe havens were raised. The feedback was taken directly to the safe haven commissioners, who reviewed the feedback which resulted in a new location being identified.

The young people who raised their concerns have been told how their feedback was used and the impact it had in moving the site of the service.

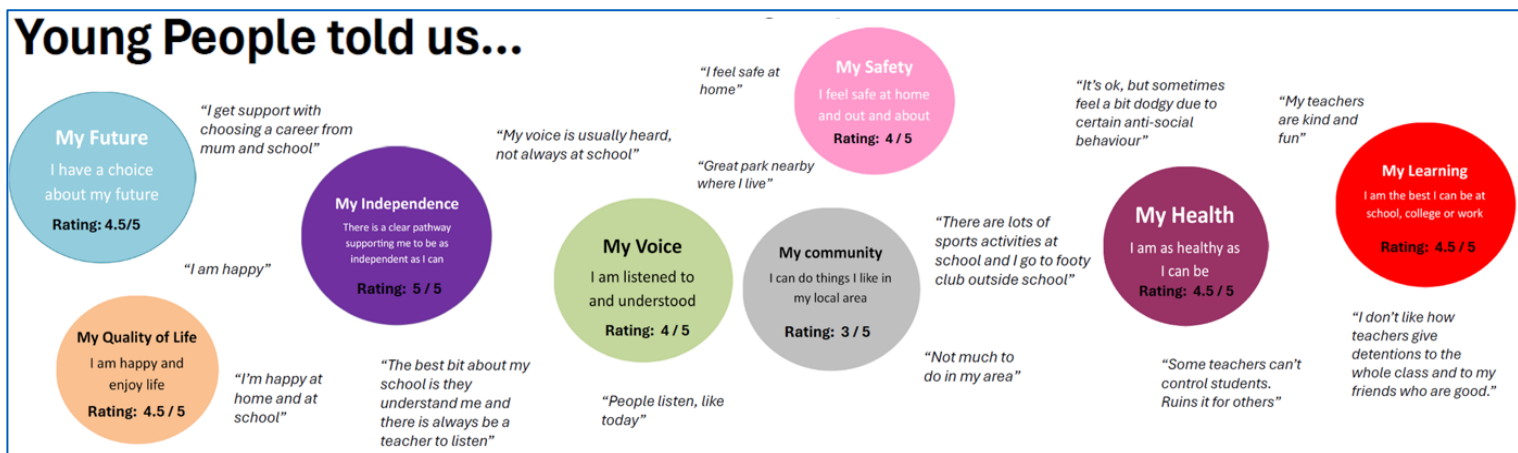
Young person's feedback sparks change in NELFT services:

A young person from Kent Youth Voice wrote a letter in March 2023 which prompted significant reflection and plans for improvements to NELFT's CYPMH service. The young


person was able to describe their poor experience of care within the service, focusing on their experience and that of other young people with eating disorders and complex needs. The Participation Workers in KCC that facilitate the Kent Youth Voice group escalated the young persons' experience to the new Patient Experience, Complaints and Compliments Lead in NELFT. As a result, NELFT have committed to setting up experts by experience groups for young people to help improve service delivery. This young persons' courageous sharing of their story is paving the way for a more responsive and supportive mental health system.

Children with SEND have their say on the SEND Outcomes Framework

In May 2024, a 'Have your Say' activity day explored how important the outcomes framework was for them.



SEND Youth Voice





Kent Youth County Council Disabilities Awareness group invited autistic young people to share their experiences and ideas in planning an Autistic Artist Event, which took place in December.

Educate my peers about autism

Act to protect me from bullying if it occurs

Don't compare us to other autistic people

Help me understand my autism better

Autistic Artistic Full showcase <https://youtu.be/FqNhztBqT-8?si=SXpH7FYQmUv1c4GL>

New Male Mental Health youth project launched in response to young peoples' voices:

Young people highlighted a significant issue: boys often don't talk about their mental health. NHS data confirms that boys are less likely to seek help from mental health services, and stigmas around boys and mental health still persist. In response, a new male mental health project has been launched, aiming to create a safe space for boys to discuss their mental health. This initiative will be led by participation workers and a passionate young male advocate who champions boys' mental health. This project is a direct result of listening to young people's concerns and aims to break down barriers, encouraging boys to reach out and seek the support they need.

iTHRIVE Young Persons Group Boosts young persons' mental health:

Participation workers conducted a case study with a young person involved in the iTHRIVE group, and their feedback highlights the significant improvement in their mental health. The young person expressed: "My mental health has got better because I know loads of people,". They also shared how they have personally grown: 'I don't just sit at home, bored on my phone. I am happier because I have lots of new friends. I have taken more responsibility of helping other people and becoming an adult.' Additionally, the young person mentioned utilising supportive services: 'I started using Kooth (an ICB commissioned digital counselling service) which has been really good. They let you play games and have helped my mental health.' This case study showcases the transformative impact of the iTHRIVE group on young peoples' mental and emotional wellbeing. Other iTHRIVE group members have shared similar comments and feedback on how their involvement in the project has benefited them.

Autistic artistic showcase of children and young peoples' experiences to professionals in a bid to change practice:

The Disability Awareness project group facilitated by the participation workers led an event, showcasing to professionals from across KCC, NHS and Kent schools the experiences of autistic young people in school. The group has been working this year to create resources to support the rollout of the Autism Education Trust training, providing the voice and perspective of autistic young people in Kent.

Young people sent in artwork, written stories and voice recordings sharing their experiences of when they felt supported in school, as well as when they were left feeling unsupported and their recommendations for schools and education providers in Kent. You can hear what young people told us [here](#).

Young adults' experience of transition used to create British Psychological Society approved training to workforce:

This training was developed from a set of robust engagement activities with young adults in 2022/23. Young adults described how, once they reached adulthood, professionals had a poor concept of their experience as children and how that might impact them after the age of 18. This was particularly the case for more vulnerable young adults, such as those who were care-experienced, and/or had complex health needs or trauma.

This course is the first of its kind in the UK to specifically address the developmental needs of 18–25-year-olds in mental health and wellbeing services, and the training has received British Psychological Society (BPS) approved as a CPD activity.

The training is free to the workforce in Kent and Medway that works with young adults and hundreds of professionals from adult mental health services, probation, the police, primary care, colleges and universities have received the training. Over 260 professionals registered for the course between January 2023 and June 2024, with 180 completing all components and receiving the full BPS-approved certificate.

Kent and Medway Community Mental Health Framework (CMHF):

The Community Mental Health Framework (a national improvement programme in line with the NHS Long Term Plan pledge to deliver transformed mental health services in the community), embedded lived experience and voice within Kent and Medway.

The new model of care, Mental Health Together, is now being implemented across Kent and Medway and includes Service User Network (SUN) groups which are peer support groups facilitated by a lived experience practitioner and clinician, with the ambition to deliver young adult specific SUN groups.

3. Plans for the next year

From autumn 2024 and the following twelve months the people, projects and activities that make up the infrastructure which supports child and young peoples' voices will continue. With our partners, we will be delivering of additional and new schemes including:

- **NHS Kent and Medway Young Adults' Mental Health and Wellbeing Conference 2024:** Led by young adults, and with over 30% of the attendance from young people and young adults, the focus of the conference will be on how services can improve their communication with young people and young adults. Changes to long-term practice and service delivery will be monitored as a result of agreed actions from the day.
- **Mental Health Big Conversation 2024:** Detling Hill Showground will be the venue for the fourth annual conference for children and young people to come together for the Big Conversation.
- **Young people as evaluators in the procurement of contracts:** Young people within the voluntary sector and schools are being identified and will receive training to take part in the evaluation of tenders for therapeutic services.
- **Lived Experience Engagement and Employment Framework training:** Embedding the Framework across the system through training for professionals.
- **Locality grants for the voice of young adults:** Delivery of the projects will take place in the next 12 months, where young adults will plan and deliver sessions to collect feedback on several subjects identified by young adults. These will be developed into reports for the ICS to use in future planning and delivery.
- **Medway Child Friendly City:**

Medway Council and partner agencies have an ambition for Medway to become a child friendly city, where all children and young people have a meaningful say in, and benefit from, the local decisions, services and spaces that shape their lives. A consultation is currently taking place as part of ensuring children and young people voices are part of developing.

- **Children and young people's Palliative and End of Life Care**

The Kent and Medway Managed Clinical Network (MCN) for Children and Young People, is the enabler for joint working and shared resources across providers in Kent and Medway who deliver Palliative and End of Life Care. The MCN has a responsibility to coordinate clinical leadership and support the strategic development of children's (Under the age of 18) palliative and end of life care across the Kent and Medway area, improving: child and family experience, clinical outcomes, and equity of service provision.

The MCN have a Standard Operating Procedure that provides guidance as to how the Kent and Medway MCN will action feedback that has been obtained via established patient engagement processes that each of the providers have in place. This feedback will be used to improve the child and family experience, clinical outcomes and equity of service provision. The MCN will invite parent(s) / carer(s) into the MCN to support and enhance discussions relating to service improvement, depending on focus areas agreed by the Network.

The Standard Operating Procedure will be reviewed annually to ensure it is fit for purpose and continues to support the MCN utilise the parent / family / child(s) voice effectively and efficiently.

The MCN will share feedback and learning with the NHS England (NHSE) Southeast Regional Patient Participation Group (PPG) and will utilise all opportunities to engage with and learn from the SE Regional PPG.

- **Children and Young People Epilepsy**

To support the Kent and Medway Children and Young People's Epilepsy Network, a local working group of clinical and strategic leads involved in the care of children and young people with epilepsy, a mother and daughter have recently agreed to be involved in future service development for epilepsy care. As a family who have recently been through the children and young people's epilepsy programme in West Kent, they are ideally placed to share their experiences and enhance future developments concerning:

- Implementation of a mental health screening tool and mental health referral pathway for children and young people identified in epilepsy clinics as requiring support for their mental health and wellbeing.
- Review transition pathway for children and young people moving from paediatric to adult epilepsy services.

- Development and continuous review of children and young people care plans, ensuring the children and young people and their family needs are reflected.

The long-term aim is to work with all appropriate stakeholders to identify additional Children and young people and their families that may like the opportunity to regularly input into the local programme.

- **Spotlight: Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools Programme (PINS)**

Across Kent and Medway, local authorities have been and are continuing to work with schools and parent carer forums to develop creative and innovative ways to support the education and health needs of neurodiverse children in schools, in line with the national Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) Programme.

As part of the programme, all (estimated) 299,840 (22/23 data) children and young people in schools in Kent and Medway will have the opportunity to contribute to this feedback, to offer unique insight to all aspects of the neurodiverse experiences that children and young people face in the school environment.

The Department of Education (DofE) have provided engagement materials, however with the caveat that schools have autonomy over how the child's voice is captured, as they are best placed to understand the needs of their students and how they might best respond to different activities/methods of data collection.

There are six domains that further subdivide into more focussed questions, which can be captured in a qualitative or quantitative matter, with the decision as to which type, ultimately made by the schools.

Kent County Council and Medway Council are assisting and supporting schools to capture and provide the child and young person's voice, in order to provide a comprehensive and inclusive insight of the children and young people in schools in Kent and Medway.

Appendix 4. KCC Engagement with PACT

Work Stream	Frequency	Co-design	Co-pro	Peer Support	Networking	Evaluating	Information
Meetings							
Co production charter Design development	Ongoing	X	X	X	X	X	X
Kent PACT/ DfE	As required				X	X	X
KCC EHC plan multi agency audits	Ongoing					X	X
KCC INVISION EHCP audits(online)	Monthly					X	X
SIAB	Monthly +					X	X
KCC Family Hub	Ongoing	X			X	X	X
KCC Transport /Tracey/ Christine Mc	June-	X				X	X
KCC SEND IAG Roadshows	Monthly	X	X	X	X	X	X
KCC QA working group (TAG)	Ongoing						
KCC SEN/Healthwatch	Ongoing	X	X	X	X	X	X
NHS PINS and This is Me Meeting	Ongoing	X	X	X	X		
Medway PCF	Ongoing			X	X	X	X
KCC Special school parent/ carer	Ongoing	X		X	X	X	X

engagement (Nareece Dearsley)							
KCC Comms KCC letters	Ongoing	X		X		X	X
KCC SEND newsletter	Termly	X		X	X	X	X
KCC Inclusion Teams updates	Ongoing			X	X	X	X
NNPCF SE regional meeting	Monthly	X		X	X	X	X
KCC SEND Comms Planning (Vicky Carton)	Monthly	X	X		X	X	X
Multi Agency SEND Comms and Engagement	Monthly	X	X	X	X	X	X
Partnership Delivery Group							
PAN ND steering group	Monthly	X		X	X	X	X
Family Engagement Award	Ongoing	X	X	X	X	X	X
Transitions engagement session- PWC	September		X				X
This is Me: Schools briefing							
This is Me: Stakeholder briefing							
This is Me: Language and comms	Fortnightly	X	X				

subgroup							
Attendance meeting (Charlotte Freezer)	Sept- Jan						
NHS- ND comms & parent voice group	Monthly			X			X
DfE Curriculum review FLF South East	November				X	X	X
KCC & Invision 360: EHCP moderation session	November	X			X	X	
NNPCF- Virtual conference	November	X	X	X	X	X	X
Voluntray Sector Forum Meeting (Abbi Caine)	Twice Yearly						
Kent PACT termly review	Termly		X			X	X
SEND PDG	TBA						
MASH team strategic group	Quarterly	X			X	X	X
K&M CYP partnership Board	Quarterly	X			XX	X	
Dingleys Promise							
Healthy Parent Carer Training SE19	Sept 24-April 25	X	X	X	X	X	X
Business Planning							

KP HR	Ongoing	X	X	X	X	X	X
Strategic Business Develop EK360/HW	Ongoing	X	X	X	X	X	X
CONTACT /DfE Monitoring	Ongoing					X	X
KCC Focus Groups							
CHC Focus Group (Faye Don)	October			X			X
Scrutiny Parent Feedback (Anna Taylor)	October						X
Kent Transitions (PWC)	October		X	X			X
ND Co-production (Matthew Bushell)	October		X	X			X
KCC Document Review (Laurn Alleyne-Coore)	November	X	X	X			X
Engagement							
ND Dads	November			x	X		x
Space 2 Be Me	November			x	X		x
West Kent ASD Parent Support Group	November			x	X		x
Events							

SENCO Conference	October				X		X
SEND IAG Roadshows	Monthly	X	X	X	X	X	X
NNPCF Conferences							
NNPCF SE regional meeting							
PINS							
PINS FAQ (Lauryn Alleyne-Coore)	Ongoing	X	X			X	X
PINS - School visits	Ongoing	X	X	X	X		
PINS- Programme Headteacher update	September			X	X		X
PINS - Parents subgroup meeting	September	X	X	X	X		X
PINS - Comms	September	X	X				
Kent & Medway PINS Meeting	September			X	X		X
PINS - Resources	September	X	X				X
PINS - Oversight	Monthly	X	X			X	X
PINS - NNCPF	Monthly			X	X		X
PINS- Medway PCF	As required			X	X		X
PINS Legacy Work	Ongoing	X	X			X	X

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Kent Family Hub Parent Carer Panel Update

Page 139
October 2024

Amtul Uzma

Family Hub Partnership and Participation Manager





Parent Carer Panels



- Parent Carer Panels are a space for parents and carers to come together and discuss the issues that are important to them.
- Virtual Parent Carer Panels has been running since February 2024 and feedback from parents and carers has led to changes
- Themes used in the Parent Carer Panels have been determined by the Parents and Carers voting on the 12 outcomes from DfE.
- Further work is being undertaken to develop localised delivery and engagement plans.
- Parent Carer Panel implementation toolkit and operational guidance is being developed.
- Lundy model and Lived Experience training aimed at enhancing professionals' skills and knowledge around effective participation and engagement is being delivered for Community Development Worker who will be responsible for co-



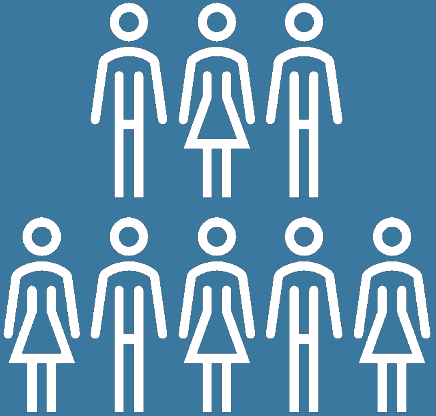
Virtual County Wide Panel

10



County wide virtual Parent Carer Panels

31



Parents and Carers have attended



26

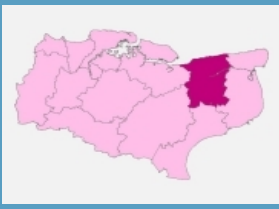
In Person Parent Carer Panels

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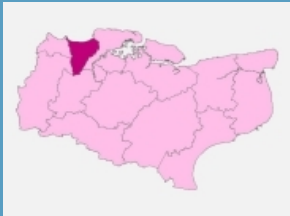
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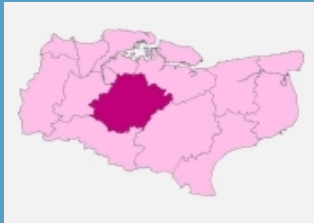
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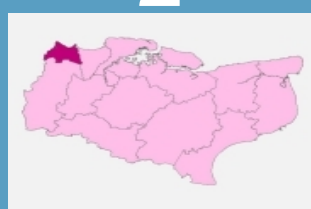
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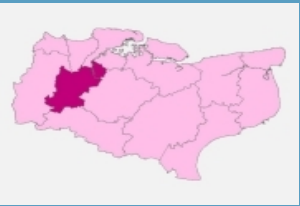
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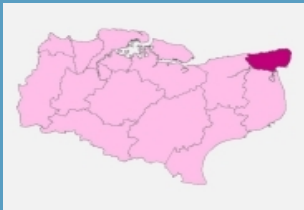
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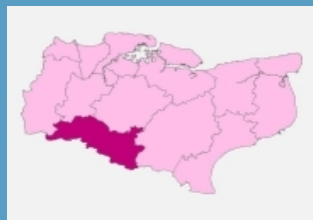
Tonbridge and Malling

6



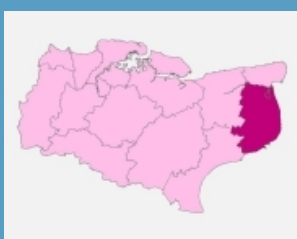
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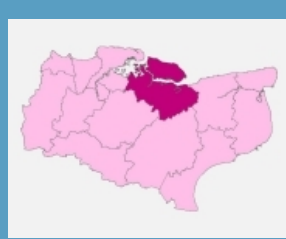
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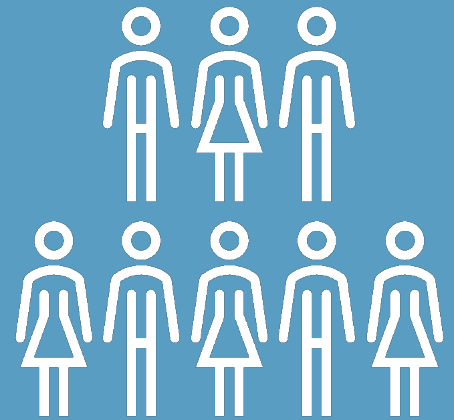
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Swale

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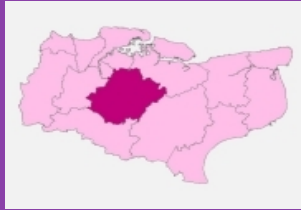


Parents and Carers have engaged

PCPs utilising existing Family Hub sessions and events

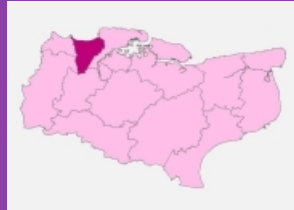


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Maidstone

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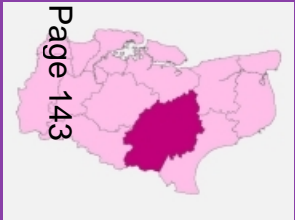
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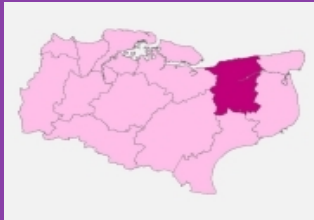
Folkstone and Hythe

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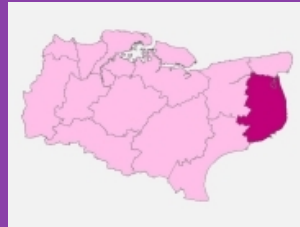
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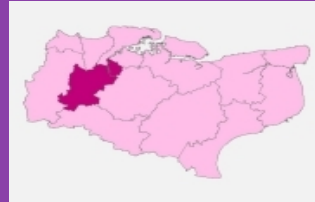
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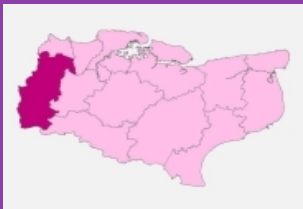
Dover

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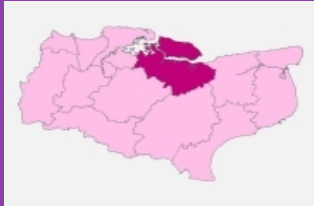
Tonbridge and Malling

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Sevenoaks

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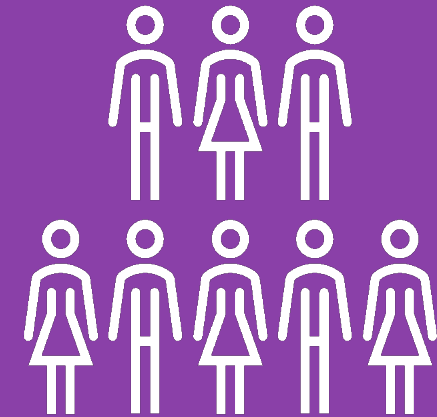
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County Wide

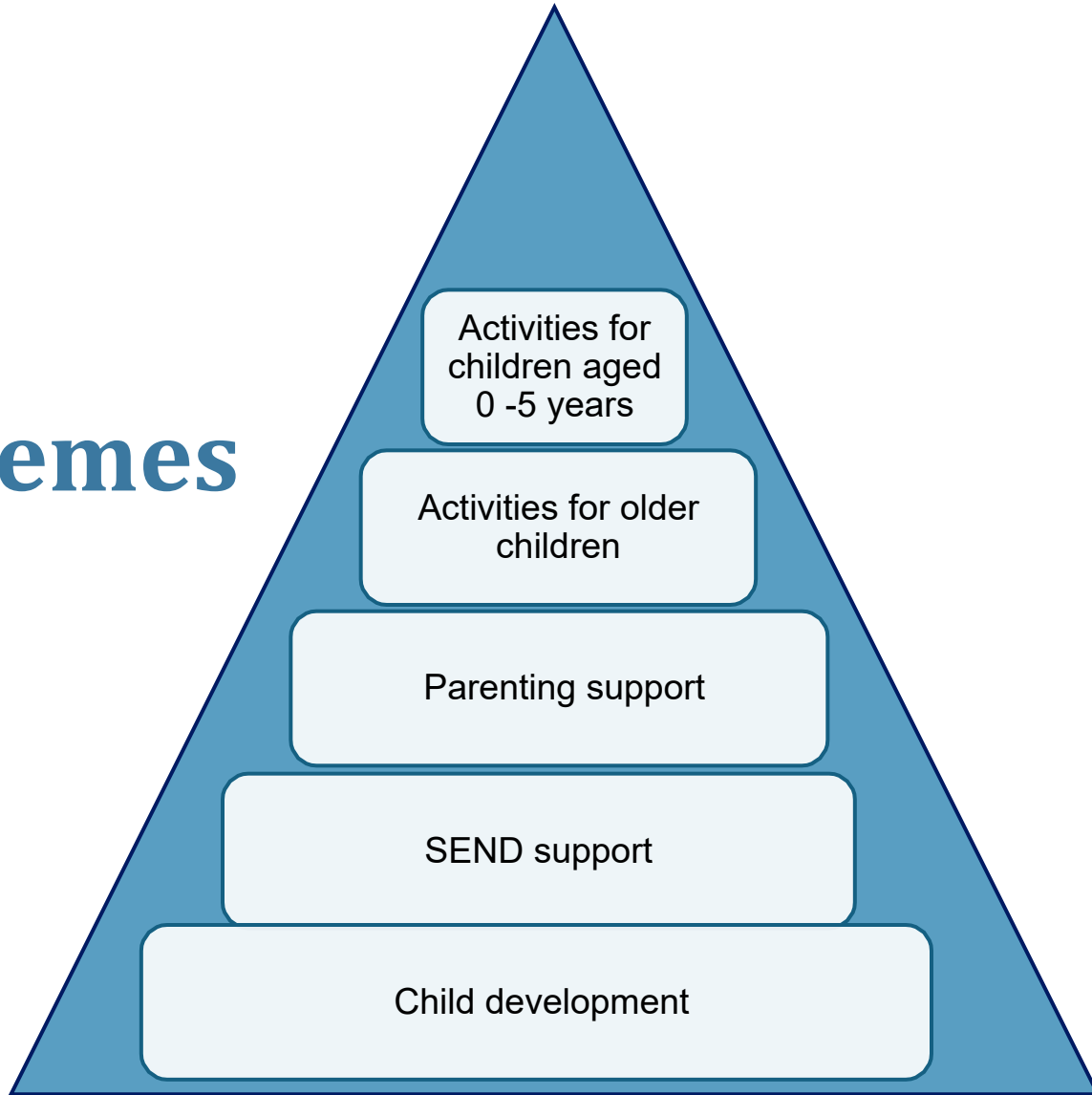
389



Parents and Carers have engaged

Key themes

Page 144



Other concerns raised

- Accessibility of Family Hub Timetables
- Lack of support for Special Guardians
- Lack of support for Rainbow Families
- Education focus on exam based outcomes
- Enhanced focus on peer-to-peer support and in-person engagement, particularly in areas with high digital poverty

Mainstream Core Standards Training for Middle Leaders, Teachers, Governors and Families-2023/24

End of Year Report

As part of KCC’s SEND agenda to create consistency and continuity in the CPD offer to schools and families across Kent, The Education People were commissioned to deliver a range of training during the academic year 2023/24. During this period 781 delegates from 351 schools (56 Secondary Schools and 295 Primary Schools) have benefited from the various training opportunities delivered by The Education People.

Commissioners outlined a target to improve understanding and confidence in those attending by 20% linked to each objective set out within the Alternative Work Request. Information was collected from delegates at the beginning and at the end of CPD sessions to enable The Education People to measure the impact of the training being delivered. The quantitative data in the tables below illustrates the impact this training has had on attendees.

MCS Training for Middle Leaders

Objective	Impact- Primary Schools	Impact- Secondary Schools
I know what the MCS document is aiming to achieve	18.71%	43.00%
I know how the MCS document can be used	19.14%	43.00%
I know how the MCS document can be embedded into quality first teaching	20.00%	43.00%
I know how the MCS document can fit into the wider inclusion agenda	17.71%	43.00%
I feel confident in using the MCS document to support planning an inclusive curriculum	24.57%	43.00%
I feel confident in using the MCS document to plan how to deliver an inclusive lesson	23.29%	43.00%
I feel confident in using the MCS document to plan how to use TAs within the curriculum-	25.14%	42.00%
I feel confident in using the MCS document to benefit the wider inclusion agenda	22.86%	43.00%
I feel confident in using the MCS document to give my curriculum team support in making their lessons more inclusive	26.43%	42.00%

MCS Training for Teachers

Objective	Impact- Primary Schools	Impact- Secondary Schools
I understand what the Mainstream Core Standards (MCS) are.	23.86%	23.00%
I understand what the Mainstream Core Standards are aiming to achieve.	27.00%	26.00%
I understand how the MCS can benefit my classroom practice.	23.00%	26.00%
I understand how the MCS can be embedded into Quality First Teaching.	23.00%	13.00%
I understand how the MCS fit into the wider inclusion agenda.	21.43%	23.00%
I feel confident in using the MCS when working with my Curriculum/Subject Lead to support inclusive curriculum design.	28.57%	27.00%
I feel confident in implementing the MCS in my classroom.	27.86%	27.00%
I feel confident in embedding the MCS into my Quality First Teaching practice.	29.29%	30.00%
I feel confident in using the MCS document to benefit the wider inclusion agenda.	29.43%	33.00%

MCS Training for Governors

Objective	Impact- Primary and Secondary Combined
I know how I can support school leaders in the running of our school	21.86%
I know what the statutory duties on schools are in relation to SEND.	32.86%
I know what my responsibility as a Governor is in ensuring my school is implementing the Mainstream Core Standards (MCS).	33.57%
I know what inclusion means.	16.00%
I feel confident in supporting school leaders in the running of our school.	16.71%
I feel confident that I can challenge school leaders appropriately.	15.14%
I feel confident that I can explain what the statutory duties on my school are in relation to SEND.	27.71%
I feel confident that I can explain what inclusion means.	22.57%
Bearing in mind that all Governors are Governors of SEND, I feel confident that I can evidence that my school is implementing the Mainstream Core Standards.	31.86%

MCS Training for Families

Objective	Impact- Primary	Impact- Secondary
I know what the mainstream core standards are.	40.00%	28.57%
I know what the Local Authority (Kent County Council) are doing to support schools to support my child/ren.	25.71%	28.57%
I know who to speak to at my child/ren's school/s to get the support they need.	18.57%	35.71%
I know what I can do to work with my child/ren's school to create a happy, safe and consistent environment for my child/ren.	30.00%	21.43%

A Note on the Data

When the data has been analysed, one can see that where the impact is shown as red or amber, the objective has been scored at a high level before the training, meaning that there was little scope for the target of a 20% increase to be met.

Qualitative Data

The Education People also collected qualitative data via the post session evaluation document and a sample of the feedback provided is outlined below.

Really Helpful training- Thank You! I have a SEND background but only been a Governor for a few weeks. It's great to know more about the role/ responsibility of the SEND Governor and every Governor. I shall be booking on Lorraine's training!
What I have found most useful are the documents to use for monitoring reports and audits. Thank you.
The session has given me a great insight into the school and governor responsibility with SEND and some great links and info where I can do some further reading to build on this knowledge.
Great and very informative session. Lots of suggestions for further reading and learning.
The content was great. As a teacher who has previously worked in a large school and now in a small school, I think some training specific to small schools would be useful. Schools who do not have the budget or staffing levels of larger schools.
A really clear course with useful strategies. Thank you
Really helpful advice for transitioning to Secondary school, great examples and reassurance, thank you!
Pleasantly surprised it was delivered on parent's side, I was expecting propaganda!
This has been great. I still would like more information on funding and how this process can be sped up.
Many thanks Ruth and Rory. A really excellent course tonight. Enjoyed our breakout room too.

I'll recommend this course to my team.
Could we have an annual SEND Governors Forum session to keep us up-to-date with changes?
It was an interesting session. It would be useful to have a session for SENCOs specifically.
Very useful - should be rolled out to all staff in Education!
Useful training and helped with thinking about how I can apply the mainstream core standards within our secondary school. I need to go back to SLT and look at how we can support teachers further in adapting the learning environment and teaching.
This is a useful course to run for schools. It would be good to have a course specifically for SENCOs.
Louise Agle was superb. Her reference to current research and clear vision for SEND learners really chimed with my viewpoint. Credit to her up to date knowledge.
Great session. Thank you so much Rory and Ruth. Breakout sessions were really useful to give the opportunity to speak to other governors and get feedback and suggestions that can be promoted within our schools.
Thank you very much, the demonstration of the District Dashboard was extremely useful.
Thank you, really helpful as always and lovely to get the opportunity to speak to and share with other Governors.
Thank you so much for the training. It is hard to feel confident and it does not come instantly but i feel with these courses, it helps a lot.
Excellent three sessions the Dashboard very helpful. Having the three sessions enabled me to process each session and then there was a recap throughout which was so good.
Thank you for a brilliant talk and for sending out the slides beforehand. It made such a difference being able to just listen, rather than frantically trying to jot things down.
Informative and clear, good use of breakout rooms to discuss and share ideas with colleagues.
The training was good, breakout rooms allowed us to share different things we all do. It was nice to share and hear other schools' information

Conclusion

In conclusion, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and the training well received. The SEND CPD offer will become part of The Education People's Core Contract Offer for 2024/25 and so will be reported on as part of the continued quarterly reporting presented directly to Christine McInnes via the Partnership Operations Board meeting. SEND CPD for 2024/25 will change focus, to look at High Quality Teaching and provide workable examples of how schools can create an inclusive environment inside and outside of the classroom.

Rory Abbott- Project Lead: School Improvement Service, The Education People- September 2024

SENCO Conference 2024- Celebrating Inclusion

Evaluation

Overview

In April 2024, the decision was taken to deliver a second Kent SENCO Conference. The decision was based on a number of factors:

- The increasing numbers of SENCOs engaging with the virtual Countywide SENCO Forums.
- A desire to give something back to SENCOs and Inclusion Leads in Kent by investing in this CPD opportunity.
- To provide an opportunity to come together as one group of professionals that support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Kent.
- To provide an opportunity for schools to network in their newly formed Communities.
- To celebrate the excellent work going on in schools around Kent.

Changes made based on feedback from the March 2023 Kent SENCO Conference

Using feedback provided from the previous Kent SENCO Conference in March 2023, The Education People made the following changes when organising this year's event:

- A 'one delegate per school' policy was put in place to enable as many individual schools to attend the event as possible. As a result of this, 319 different primary schools and 78 different secondary schools were represented at the event. An increase from the 231 different primary schools and 38 different secondary schools that attended in March 2023.
- More academy schools attended this year with large Trusts such as the Alethia Academies Trust, Aquila Trust, Coastal Academies Trust, the Deal Education Alliance for Learning Trust, Dover Federation of Arts, EKC Schools Trust, Golden Thread Alliance, Kent Catholic Schools Partnership, Leigh Academies Trust, Our Community Trust, Swale Academies Trust, Tenterden Schools Trust, The Galaxy Trust, The Tenax Schools Trust, Turner Schools Trust, Valley Invicta Academies Trust, Viking Learning Trust and the Island Learning Trust all being very well represented.
- TEP and KCC revisited the running order of the day to make sure that delegates would get the most out of their experience on the day.
- TEP and KCC organised the catering so that delegates with a specific dietary requirement would receive their own, named lunch.

- TEP and KCC organised extra screens in the main hall to provide clearer views of presentation slides.
- TEP coordinated the seating plan so that delegates could sit in their 'Communities' to enable more networking opportunities.
- Even more key people from the Local Authority and the Health Services were made available to speak to on the day.

Content Feedback and Impact

Delegates were asked five questions to measure the impact of the conference. Scoring each question out of five (with five being the highest score), delegates then had the opportunity to go on and explain why they had scored each section in the way that they had.

- 1- Has the SENCO Conference impacted on the way in which you appraise your school's/trust's current offer for children with SEN (both SEN support and those with and EHCP)?**

Score out of 5	Percentage
5 (very much so)	9.52%
4	32.65%
3	37.41%
2	14.97%
1 (not at all)	5.44%

'Useful advice and resources on developing inclusion across all stakeholders, e.g. the NASEN handbook for subject leaders, MCS audit to identify strengths and areas of development, The Education People's SEMH toolkit.'

'Amazing to hear from a great range of inclusion champions. I got a lot of ideas and accessed incredible resources that will support me supporting my colleagues and this will hopefully have a huge impact on our students.'

'It has really made me think about inclusion and what it actually looks like at my school.'

- 2- Has the SENCO Conference impacted on how confident you are in the way in which your school/trust engages with your parental body to support the provision you have in place for children with SEN?**

Score out of 5	Percentage
5 (very much so)	6.12%
4	17.01%
3	42.86%
2	23.81%
1 (not at all)	10.20%

‘Ruth (Gately)’s presentation has helped me consider further ways of engaging parents.’

‘It gave me ideas on how to rebrand some of our existing interventions to better engage with (the) parental body.’

‘(I have) more confidence in how processes work and what support there is for parents and families.’

3- Has the SENCO Conference developed your ability/capacity to collaborate further with other schools and partners?

Score out of 5	Percentage
5 (very much so)	21.77%
4	37.41%
3	23.81%
2	9.52%
1 (not at all)	7.48%

‘Networking on our table. The marketplace is excellent - I would like more time to do this.’

‘We have an extremely strong Faversham SENCO forum which has excellent collaborative practices. This conference has given us the time which is very much needed to develop and extend our wonderful practice.’

‘This was a strength of the day. Loved sitting with my Community.’

‘I have now arranged with a local school to go and visit (them) to share practices.’

4- Has the SENCO Conference provided you with a range of CPD opportunities today (both formal and informal)?

Score out of 5	Percentage
5 (very much so)	12.24%
4	29.93%
3	36.05%
2	17.01%
1 (not at all)	4.76%

‘I felt the workshops I attended were particularly useful.’

‘I was able to select workshops that interested me. Most keynote speeches were relevant, interesting and practical.’

‘It was great to hear Pooky speak, after using some of her resources and training materials in the past.’

5- Has the SENCO Conference provided you with strategies that you can use back in your school/trust that will help to improve outcomes for children with SEN?

Score out of 5	Percentage
5 (very much so)	12.24%
4	28.57%
3	37.41%
2	16.33%
1 (not at all)	5.44%

'Dr Pooky's opening has given me strategies on how to get staff to be think more positively.'

'Great strategies suggested in first presentation and video from SEMH workshop.'

'The talk from the Croydon team was very positive and helped some of the colleagues in our locality see things a little more positively.'

'Takeaways'

Delegates were asked a further question to outline what their main 'takeaway' would be from the day. A number of quotes have been lifted from the evaluation and added below:

'Inclusion is an action.'

'Children who find themselves on the margins of school will find themselves on the margins of society! I had never thought of it in this way, but it so, so true. A sense of belonging is so powerful and empowering.'

'Remembering why I do the job I do! I can make a difference, even though it's very tough at the moment.'

'Reinforcement around relationships when supporting all children in school.'

'Very informative and supportive. I loved hearing about Pooky and how I can use her approach in class.'

'Revisit MCS and develop a system for staff to consider all factors before referring child to SENCO.'

General Feedback

Delegates were further asked to provide any general feedback that they may have had about the day. Please see a selection of responses below:

'As my first event, I now feel extremely more able to know where to get support and for it to be effective.'

'Another fantastic and smooth running day. Well done to everyone, I can't imagine this was an easy task!'

'It would be great to have a collaborative conference next time. We are speaking a lot about working collaboratively and sharing of approaches/resources/knowledge. It would be fantastic to have the opportunity to share collaboratively at such a huge event.'

'Such a huge amount of work to organise such a great event. Thank you. Lovely lunch too!'

'Always useful, reduces SENCO isolation and although leaves me a list to add to my massive to do list, is inspiring!'

'This conference was a great idea for networking and sharing information.'

Learning for Future Events

Delegates kindly suggested areas to be addressed at future conferences, some of which have been listed below:

'How to meet EHCP needs without any TAs...'

'Complex needs and planning and resourcing for those'

'Each of the areas of need being a focus for workshops.'

'Exciting new research and inspirational speakers. Introduce key SEND staff.'

'For future training, it would be beneficial to separate the primary and secondary school sessions during the breakout options. This approach would likely result in more relevant takeaways and examples of best practices tailored to our specific school settings. I found this model to be highly effective in the first year. Additionally, with the increased number of communications established to share new initiatives, it would be advantageous to ensure that information isn't simply repeated. Staff who are consistently engaged throughout the year found the redundancy challenging.'

'Question and answer sessions with KCC SEND team.'

'It would be useful to see Headteachers and SENCOs attend conferences alongside each other to ensure that all leaders are leading on Inclusion and being passionate and are supporting their SENCOs with improving inclusion in their schools. This will empower all schools to be inclusive, therefore reducing the disproportionate number of pupils with EHCP's/ HNF/SEND in some school and not others. It could potentially help schools hold each other to account to develop practice ensuring more children are attending their closest most appropriate school to their family home!'

'Managing anxiety in stakeholders including parents.'

'More specific training about types of SEN need.'

‘Practical advice and information. Use of technology to assist children and enhance teaching and learning.’

‘Sessions for new SENCOs would be good as some may have only been a month in post and feel completely overwhelmed by all of the acronyms and high-level government related information. Also, it would be nice to have sessions based on very specific areas with engagement from us as the participants.’

‘Strategies that address the needs of the children in the classes we have today - highly deregulated and physical - low language skills and more for SENCOs to do.’

‘What are KCC doing to ensure accountability at every level? What are the NHS doing to work with us to address the issue of mental health and wellbeing?’

Conclusion

Though there is still much to be learnt from the feedback provided by delegates, the general message received is much improved on the event that took place in March 2023.

Many delegates requested further information that wasn’t provided on the day. Subjects such as, how the Communities model will work and how the quality of EHCPs will be improved were regularly brought up in delegates evaluation responses. There were also requests for good practical strategies that can enable them to provide the levels of support needed for some children and young people in their mainstream settings. KCC colleagues have access to the full set of raw data provided within the completed evaluations, and these should be used to shape future events and future Countywide SENCO Forums, Keeping in Touch meetings and other SENCO and Headteacher events and CPD opportunities.

Delegates consistently fed back that the opportunity to network with colleagues in their newly formed Communities was a big positive of the day. KCC need to harness this positivity and develop sustainable ways in which SENCOs can continue to learn from one another.

The second annual Kent SENCO Conference then, can be seen as a success that has delivered what it set out to achieve- the celebration of inclusion in Kent. However, the success of this event must feed into the next stages of Kent’s SEND development journey to enable a system of support that is truly inclusive by design.

RA- October 2024

CATIE ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

**Kent
County
Council**

The Countywide Approach To Inclusive Education (CATIE) Strategy 2023-28 set out how we will work together to improve outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities. This report measures progress and priorities for 2025-2025.

1. Introduction: CATIE

Kent County Council (KCC), in conjunction with children, young people, parents, carers, educational settings, and other stakeholders, developed a Countywide Approach to Inclusive Education (CATIE)¹ which was published as a strategy in June 2023. The CATIE strategy supports the inclusion of all children and young people in Kent.

As part of the monitoring arrangements for the CATIE Strategy it was agreed an Annual Report would be produced, evidencing progress and highlighting areas of future development. This is the second CATIE Annual Report and looks back over the academic year September 2023 to July 2024.

CATIE Priorities

The CATIE Strategy groups activity under four key priorities:

- Supporting a school led system to deliver the highest quality core inclusive education,
- Providing additional intervention and support with engagement and integration,
- Inclusive Education is part of a broader, holistic, and joined-up offer of support, and
- Ensuring smooth transition between education phases.

Our Mission

Establishing our collective ambitions in the CATIE for children, young people, and their families in Kent we will make sure no child is left behind. Working together in a collaborative, sustainable system, we will ensure equity of education means all children feel they belong, are respected and valued as individuals, and are fully supported to achieve their best.

Measuring our Progress

The CATIE Strategy sets out the outcomes we aim to achieve for children, young people, and their families; for Schools (all relevant education settings); and system-wide across Kent. We have agreed Key Performance Indicators that will help us to measure our success, and professionals regularly meet within our CATIE Steering Group to review and monitor progress.

2. Priority One – Supporting a school led system to deliver the highest quality core inclusive education

This priority has a core focus on developing and delivering the highest quality of inclusive education provision for Kent's children and young people. As part of this KCC committed to strengthen leadership and collaboration in schools, develop a training offer that mainstream schools could access, look at best practice through quality first teaching, improve data to support

¹ CATIE Strategy https://www.kelsi.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/153185/Countywide-Approach-to-Inclusive-Education.pdf

decision-making, increase financial transparency and develop Special Educational Needs (SEN) Information Reports.

Kent Commissioned Inclusion Services

KCC launched three fully funded Inclusion Services in September 2021. These services were commissioned in response to priorities identified by headteachers and other key practitioners to embed, improve or enhance inclusive ethos and practice in Kent's mainstream education settings. They are:

- Kent Inclusion Leadership Programme (detailed below)
- Whole School Nurture Approach (supporting the CATIE Priority Two)
- Supported Employment

These programmes have now all ended. After three years of delivery, 276 primary and 58 secondary schools (over 59% of all eligible schools) actively participated in at least one of the above inclusion offers. This has been against a backdrop of significant pressures on schools' capacity and the ongoing impact of Covid.

In November 2023, Kent Analytics undertook a quantitative evaluation of participating schools in relation to key inclusion benchmarks, such as reduction in number of suspensions and exclusions, and a reduction in the number of Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs). It concluded that schools that have participated in one or more of the Commissioned Inclusion Services have not shown any change in indicators that could potentially measure inclusion from a quantitative perspective. It noted that some changes may not be measurable and therefore not reflect in the data used for this analysis, and recommended to repeat the same tests in November 2024, once the training and practice developed have been more fully embedded. However, qualitative data (as shown below) demonstrates that the confidence and skill set of the mainstream sector has grown so that quantitative data sets from the SEN score card show that the % of children with EHCPs who are educated in mainstream settings has risen to 41%.

Summary of Key Points: The three Inclusion Services launched by KCC in September 2021 aimed to enhance inclusive practices in Kent's mainstream education settings. Despite significant challenges, over 59% of eligible schools participated in these programs. While quantitative data did not show measurable changes in key inclusion benchmarks, qualitative data indicated an increase in the confidence and skill set of mainstream educators, with a notable rise in the percentage of children with EHCPs being educated in mainstream settings.

Implications: The qualitative improvements suggest that the Inclusion Services have positively impacted the inclusive ethos and practices within schools, even if these changes are not yet reflected in quantitative metrics. This highlights the importance of considering both qualitative and quantitative data when evaluating educational programs.

Recommendations: It is recommended to continue monitoring the impact of these programs, with a follow-up evaluation in November 2024. Additionally, ongoing support and training for educators should be maintained to ensure that the inclusive practices continue to develop and embed within the school culture.

Future Directions: Future evaluations should focus on long-term impacts and explore additional qualitative measures to capture the full scope of changes. Further research could also investigate

the specific elements of the programs that contributed most to the observed improvements in educator confidence and skills.

Conclusion: The initial outcomes of the Inclusion Services indicate promising qualitative improvements in inclusive education practices. Continued investment in these areas, along with comprehensive evaluations, will be crucial for sustaining and enhancing these gains, ultimately benefiting all students in Kent’s mainstream education settings.

Kent Inclusive Leadership Programme (KILP)

The Kent Inclusion Leadership Programme (KILP) programme was commissioned in September 2021 for a contract term of 2.5 years, which ended on 31 March 2024. The offer was available to all mainstream schools in Kent, phased across 3 cohorts.

The purpose of the KILP was to enable a school to-school support network designed to strengthen schools’ capacity to lead improvements in inclusive practice. The focus of the Programme was on middle to senior leadership of schools. The design and delivery of the Programme was led by a consortium comprising Leadership Learning South East (LLSE), NASEN and Education Development Trust (EDT).

KILP delivered structured training, workshops and a web-based library of resources (microsite) to develop knowledge, skills and capacity of leaders as well as establishing mechanisms for peer review to achieve and sustain change within schools. It facilitated developing the capacity and collaboration within schools across Kent to review and evaluate their inclusion practice and work in partnership to develop inclusion from within their own settings and within their partnership.

Across the three cohorts a total of 150 schools, 42% of the contract target of 360 mainstream schools, participated in the Programme. This represents approximately 27% of all eligible primary and 26% of eligible secondary schools that participated in the full Programme. A breakdown of cohort participation for mainstream primary and secondary schools is provided in the table below:

Cohort	Primary schools	Secondary schools	Total
1	43	9	52
2	48	11	59
3	33	6	39
TOTAL	124	26	150

Deliverables

There were four main elements, each aimed at providing the tools, capacity and framework to focus on inclusion across the partnerships, which included:

- Engaging schools with the evidence-based research around inclusion through provision of the microsite and workshops based around this research and highlighting best practice across Kent and beyond. These workshops were coproduced with leaders from across Kent.

- Delivering the peer-review methodology, centred around the Kent Inclusion Framework, providing the means to review and evaluate their current practice and future priorities and share these within a trust-based partnership.
- Increasing capacity at school and system-level through the training of peer reviewers, improvement champions and Inclusive Leaders of Education (ILEs).
- Developing collaborative leadership across Kent using partnership working and developing the role of partnership lead to increase leadership capacity

Achievements

Every participating school identified a specific area of improvement in inclusion through the self-evaluation framework and explored via peer review and training. Each review considered a topic within one or more of the following themes:

- Leadership of Inclusion
- Effective Use of Resources for Inclusion
- Monitoring, Tracking & Evaluation for Inclusion
- Inclusive working with stakeholders to develop Inclusive Expertise and Provision
- Assessment and Identification of Needs
- Developing Inclusive Teaching & Learning
- Inclusive Outcomes

The evaluation surveys at partnership, school, and participant level capture the review progress and impact from the Partnership Lead, Headteachers, and Peer Reviewers / Improvement Champions. Based on feedback to evaluation surveys, the positive changes in practice and culture that the partnerships are seeing are:

Partnership level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater honesty and openness • Shared understanding • We remain very open and honest with each other, keen to help each other and happy to share resources/good practice
Leader level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More reflective • Robust reflection • Really valued the self-evaluation and have continued with this in other areas of the school
Teacher level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More support • More direction • More empowered, having access to more information about the student and strategies they can use
Pupil level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better outcomes • Needs being met • More engaged, more time spent in lessons

The positive changes in practice and culture that some participating schools reported are:

Partnership level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved links and relationship with partner schools • Building trust, with honest and open relationships
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together to share knowledge and resources • Shared responsibility • Working more collegiately across the area • Collaborative support • Supportive, problem solving, non-judgmental
Leader level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start of a mindset shift in that students need to be in the classroom, and stressing the need to measure impact on any interventions and keep them short and sharp in focus • Leaders in class supporting teachers with practices and initiatives within the classroom • Consideration of inclusion at higher level • Peer review fully embedded in school systems • Leaders have grown in confidence to assess and review practice positively and constructively • Measuring impact, not afraid to try new ideas, forward thinking, asking for support, devolved leadership, confidence • Opportunities for subject lead to have control of subject and work with Headteachers and Improvement Champions • Curriculum leaders input in project • Improved insight • Increased knowledge
Teacher level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff feel better equipped to take on responsibility for inclusion and share ideas and good practice, not just SENCO • Teachers aware of improvement priority • Teachers have the tools they can action • A deeper understanding of how to provide a more inclusive maths lesson • Increased participation in whole school planning • More confident, self-reflective and morale is higher than before
Pupil level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children know that inclusion is one of our priorities • Pupils are beginning to understand that we all need different things to support us when learning. Having different needs from your friends is not a bad thing • Improved attainment. Some will come off the SEND² register so will be 100% in class • All pupils are developing skills for their future, particularly those with SEND • Better relationships • Consistency across classes and clear expectations of what a maths lesson will look like • Engagement • Trusting adults, listening skills, responsive to ideas, communication improved and feel safe

² Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Sustainability

With consideration to the emerging developments in the local SEN and Inclusion landscape, there is ongoing planning and discussions to utilise the resources, knowledge and expertise embedded through this programme to support schools in continuing to apply the peer review methodology and the skills of partnership roles to navigate the future challenges.

A total of 26 ILEs were recruited, trained and supported by the Programme, and 18 ILEs remained in the role to the end of the Programme. Of these, 11 ILEs have indicated interest to continue their involvement in various support roles including involvement as part of the localities model, peer reviews, individual school support and ad-hoc individual support to schools or SENCOs as needed. Through the Programme the ILEs have enhanced their skills to support schools on their inclusion journey and will remain in the mainstream education system beyond the lifetime of the programme.

From the pool of schools that registered an interest, a significant number of senior and middle leaders were trained to be skilled Improvement Champions (ICs) and Peer Reviewers (PRs), leaving a legacy within the mainstream education system.

Looking to the future, peer review activities are expected to be part of cycle of school development and improvement under the Localities Model, essential for a self-sustaining system. In this regard, Kent headteachers and ILEs participating in the programme will play a pivotal role in supporting the proposed new Locality Model processes, in building deeper relationships between schools, sustaining continuous improvement, and embedding Inclusive Leadership practices.

Impact on pupils

Evidence collated from the case studies submitted by the Programme identifies positive impact on pupils, although this was not supported with quantitative data. Some of the feedback captured include:

"SEND Pupils are able to access learning alongside their peers in a highly inclusive way."

"Children with complex needs are included and supported more fully in mainstream classroom and making progress."

"The SEN cohort had the biggest increase in progress and attainment last year than has been seen in a long time. This was across the board in all subjects. Students stated that they felt well cared for and that there is always someone to go to when they have a difficulty."

"Our students are in the classroom more meaning they continue to build belonging through being in their known and owned environment which is purposefully set up through enabling environments to aid, scaffold and stretch learning. Where this approach has been most successful, students autonomy and independence has grown as they have an increase in sense of self achievement without waiting to be corrected at a later stage."

Summary of Key Points: The Kent Inclusion Leadership Programme (KILP) was designed to enhance inclusive practices in mainstream schools across Kent by building leadership capacity

and fostering a collaborative support network. Despite significant efforts, only 42% of the target schools participated, representing about 27% of eligible primary and 26% of eligible secondary schools.

Implications: The participation rate indicates a moderate level of engagement, suggesting that while the program was beneficial, there may have been barriers to wider adoption. The structured training and resources provided have likely contributed to improved leadership skills and inclusive practices in participating schools, but the limited reach means that many schools may not have benefited from these enhancements.

Recommendations: To maximize the impact of future initiatives, it is recommended to investigate the barriers to participation and address them in the program design. Additionally, extending the program duration or offering more flexible participation options could help increase engagement. Continued support and follow-up with participating schools will be crucial to sustain the improvements achieved.

Future Directions: Future programs should focus on increasing accessibility and engagement, possibly through more targeted outreach and support. Evaluating the long-term impact of the KILP on participating schools will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the program and inform the development of future initiatives.

Conclusion: The KILP has made a positive impact on the schools that participated, enhancing leadership capacity and inclusive practices. However, to achieve broader systemic change, future efforts must focus on increasing participation and addressing the barriers that limited engagement in this initial phase. Continued investment in leadership development and inclusive education practices will be essential for sustaining and expanding these gains across all schools in Kent.

Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS)

The STLS supports mainstream schools and settings to be inclusive of children with SEN through training, advice, and guidance. The service is delivered through 12 Service Level Agreements (SLAs) which are held by special schools across the 12 districts of Kent.

The overarching aim of the STLS is to support early years settings and schools to build their capacity and confidence in identifying the right children at the right time, in delivering high quality provision for children with SEN, in improving pupil progress and to spread best practice across educational settings.

The main aims of the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service are:

- to raise standards of high-quality Inclusive teaching in mainstream classrooms that enables children and young people with SEND who attend mainstream early years settings and schools to remain in these settings with access to quality first teaching
- to develop the targeted and specialist knowledge, skills and expertise in Kent early years settings and mainstream schools using specialist SEN support services to create a coordinated, equitable, and effective provision of additional support for children and young people with SEN to:
 - build sustainable SEND capacity in early years settings and mainstream schools to meet the needs of children in the mainstream sector through high quality evidence led advice and training
 - close attainment gaps and improve pupil SEND targets and track progress to these outcomes
 - reduce the likelihood of exclusion by ensuring staff skills and provision is right to meet the needs of vulnerable children

- reduce the need for statutory assessments (for example EHCPs) by:
 - supporting schools and education settings in meeting children’s needs through SEN support, adopting an ‘assess, plan, do, review’ approach to enable children and young people to be included
 - by building confidence in the sector and influencing inclusive cultures
 - building confidence in the totality of the local offer signposting the wealth of support available to children and families pre EHCP

KCC conducted a survey to evaluate the impact of the service at the end of the 2022 – 2023 academic year, and a further impact survey in April 2024. All mainstream schools and settings were able to respond, as well as all Kent residents.

The 2022-2023 survey had 472 respondents.

- Survey respondents were asked to rate the quality of support they received in primary settings from 1-5, with 5 the highest

82% of respondents considered the quality of support to primary to be within the top range.

- Survey respondents were asked to rate the quality of support they received in secondary settings from 1-5, with 5 the highest

100% of respondents considered the support provided to secondary to be within the top range.

- Survey respondents were asked to rate the quality of support they received in early years settings from 1-5, with 5 the highest

75% of respondents considered the quality of support provided to early years setting to be within the top range.

STLS links to all four CATIE priorities, the relevant detail is included in each priority section within this report. For Priority One:

- STLS supports the growth of the inclusive nature of mainstream schools through providing advice, modelling strategies, and delivering a programme of core and bespoke training to increase targeted and specialist need
- The Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT) process, which is delivered by STLS in each district, as well as facilitated SENCo meetups, support the sharing of inclusive practice and a peer support system
- The data that STLS reports on through their key performance indicators (KPIs) support the county in their understanding of elements of need and mainstream school engagement in SEN supportive initiatives
- Survey respondents were asked to rate the relevance of the support received in relation to identified needs within the school or setting

65% of respondents considered the support they received to be in the top range of relevance to identified needs within their school or setting.

The April 2024 Impact Survey had 485 respondents.

Survey respondents were asked to rate the following impact statements out of 5, with the caveat that: STLS is part of a whole system of Inclusion support available to schools:

- Your school or setting is more able to provide support to a child or a group of children with SEN without the need for an EHCP
 - Most respondents across Kent schools and settings answered positively to this question with 76% of respondents scoring 4 or above.
- Your school or setting is more able to support children with an EHCP to progress towards targets
 - 76% of respondents scored 4 or above on this measure.
- There has been a reduction in part-time timetables (If you are replying as an early years setting, this applies to children accessing their full entitlement)
 - The response to this question was more varied and reflects the fact that there are several factors impacting on a child's attendance in education. Some feedback provided has stated that a part-time timetable may indicate a positive step for a child who may not have previously been attending at all. This measure had the highest rate of "disagree" responses (14%) and the highest number of "average" responses (32%).
- There is a clearer idea of destination for a child or a group of children (by destination we mean where the child or group of children go once they leave their current education provision)
 - Although mostly positive, the responses to this question were more mixed, and there was some feedback that not all respondents understood the concept of 'destination' and this has influenced the distribution of responses.
- There has been an improvement in learning outcomes/developmental progress and/or academic attainment in children with SEN.
 - 76% respondents submitted a score of 4 or above in relation to this outcome.
- Children feel more able to be the best they can be in school or setting
 - 74% responses to this impact measure were 4 or above, although there was some feedback this is a subjective measure with many impacting factors.
- Parents are more confident in your school / setting's ability to meet the needs of their child with SEN.
 - Of the impact measures, this area of impact received the most above average scores with 79% respondents scoring four or above .

Achievements in 2023-2024

- STLS support the Council's strategic aims by delivering Autism Education Trust (AET) training and supporting the roll out of the Balanced System.
- STLS has been engaged in the pilot of the PINS project. PINS is an NHS England

- All districts have engaged in the Inclusion Working Together meetings which has led to greater partnership working with other Inclusion agencies. These meetings will be known as Professional Resource Core Group Meetings going forward.
- The service has adjusted their ways of working in response to limited and decreasing capacity of services in the following ways:
 - An approach to more group work, moving away from individual support
 - Sharing of resources across districts
 - Using the Graduated Approach in allocation of support
 - Increasing use of clinics, surgeries or in-school reviews

Summary of Key Points: The surveys conducted by KCC at the end of the 2022-2023 academic year and in April 2024 evaluated the impact of the STLS services on mainstream schools and settings in Kent. The surveys revealed high satisfaction rates with the quality of support across primary, secondary, and early years settings. Additionally, the STLS services were linked to all four CATIE priorities, supporting inclusive practices through advice, training, and peer support systems.

Implications: The high satisfaction rates indicate that the STLS services are well-received and valued by schools and settings. The positive feedback on the quality and relevance of support suggests that these services are effectively addressing the needs of schools and contributing to the growth of inclusive practices. However, the varied responses regarding part-time timetables and destination clarity highlight areas where further support and clarification may be needed.

Recommendations: To build on these positive outcomes, it is recommended to continue providing and possibly expanding the STLS services, with a focus on addressing the areas of mixed feedback. Enhancing communication and understanding around concepts like 'destination' and the factors influencing part-time timetables could improve overall satisfaction and effectiveness. Additionally, maintaining regular impact surveys will help track progress and identify areas for further improvement.

Future Directions: Future efforts should aim to increase the reach and impact of STLS services, ensuring that all schools and settings can benefit from the support provided. Continued collaboration with other inclusion agencies and adapting to the changing needs of schools will be crucial. Further research into the long-term impacts of these services on student outcomes and school practices will provide valuable insights for ongoing development.

Conclusion: The surveys demonstrate that the STLS services have made a significant positive impact on the quality of support and inclusive practices in Kent's mainstream schools and settings. Continued investment in these services, along with targeted improvements based on feedback, will be essential for sustaining and enhancing these gains, ultimately benefiting all students and educators in the region.

SEN Outcomes Analysis 2023

2023 outcomes	ALL	CIC	SENK	EHCP	Kent Average	National Average
% placed in mainstream - May 2023 Census	97.6	84.3	99.6	51.6 (* 34.0)	97.6	98.2
Number of suspensions 2021/22 (% in brackets - calculated from May 2022 Census cohort - all schools)	7716 (3.1%)	198 (14.6%)	2506 (8.7%)	890 (7.2%)	7716 (3.1%)	N/A
Number of PEX 2021/22 (% in brackets - calculated from May 2022 Census cohort - all schools)	69 (0.0%)	0	28 (0.1%)	14 (0.1%)	69 (0.0%)	N/A
Number reduced T/T - May 2023 (% in brackets - calculated from May 2023 Census cohort - all schools)	1330 (0.5%)	63 (4.7%)	622 (2.2%)	297 (2.4%)	1330 (0.5%)	N/A
% Persistent Absence - Autumn 2022 and Spring 2023 Combined	23.1	25.2	34.6	40.5	23.1	21.2
% Severe Absence - Autumn 2022 and Spring 2023 Combined	2.1	7	4.1	6.6	2.1	1.9
% KS2 expected standard 2023	59	31.4	23	8	59	60
Progress score KS2 reading 2023	-0.5	-1.5	-1.4	-6	-0.5	0
Progress score KS2 Writing 2023	0	-0.7	-1.5	-5.1	0	0
Progress score KS2 Maths 2023	-1	-2.7	-2.4	-6	-1	0
A8 KS4 Selective 2023 Provisional	66.5	55.8	60.6	54.5	66.5	N/A
A8 KS4 Non Selective 2023 Provisional	38.2	19.2	28.3	11.7	38.2	N/A
P8 KS4 Selective 2023 Provisional	0.48	-0.4	-0.01	-0.25	0.48	N/A
P8 KS4 Non Selective 2023 Provisional	-0.38	-1.48	-0.8	-1.44	-0.38	N/A

Notes:

% Placed in Mainstream - "All" is a percentage of pupils attending primary and secondary schools using the May 2023 Total Roll (all schools and pupils) as the denominator.

% Placed in Mainstream - "CIC" is a percentage of matched CIC pupils as at 31/05/23 attending primary and secondary schools. The CIC data has been matched to the May 2023 School Census by UPN.

% Placed in Mainstream - "SENK" is a percentage based on the number of SEN K pupils attending a Kent primary or secondary schools using the May 2023 Total Number of SEN Support pupils as the denominator.

% Placed in Mainstream - "EHCP" is a percentage based on the number of EHCP pupils attending a Kent primary or secondary school using the May 2023 Total Number of EHCP pupils as the denominator.

% Placed in Mainstream - "EHCP" * - this is using the whole population of EHCP pupils aged 0 to 25 which includes private provision and Kent pupils placed outside the LA. The data is from the January 2022 SEN2 return (sections 1.1 and 1.2).

% Placed in Mainstream - National - is a percentage of pupils attending primary and secondary schools using the January 2023 Total Roll (all schools and pupils) as the denominator.

Exclusions - figure in brackets for CIC is the percentage of CIC with an exclusion that uses the number of CIC as at 31/05/23 that were matched to the May 2023 School Census by UPN as the denominator.

Exclusions - no national data for 2022/23 has been published yet by the DfE.

Reduced Timetable - figure in brackets for CIC is the percentage of CIC with an RTT reported for Summer 2023 that uses the number of CIC as at 31/05/23 that were matched to the May 2023 School Census by UPN as the denominator.

Persistent Absence "All", "SENK", "EHCP", "Kent" and "National" data is DfE published and is for primary, secondary and special schools (Year 1 to 11 pupils).

Severe Absence for "All" is DfE published and is for primary, secondary and special schools (Year 1 to 11) pupils.

Severe Absence for "SENK" and "EHCP" is based on the 2022 School Census returns and is for all schools (Year 1 to 11 pupils).

Persistent and Severe Absence data for the whole 2022/23 academic year is not yet available.

Absence for CIC Pupils - CIC pupils as at 31/03/2023 have been matched to the 2023 January and May Census by UPN.

KS2 2023 "All", "SENK", "EHCP", "Kent Average" and "National Average" are DfE published (14/12/2023).

KS2 2023 "CIC" is based on matching June 2023 Kent and OLALAC pupils to the 2023 KS2 Results cohort.

KS4 2023 - "All", "SENK", "EHCP", "Kent Average" is provisional data published October 2023. The DfE do not publish data for Selective and Non Selective schools.

KS4 2023 "CIC" is based on matching June 2023 Kent and OLALAC pupils to the 2023 KS4 Results cohort (Provisional October 2023 data).

Please note that in 2024:

- Key Stage 1 has been abolished as a statutory assessment so there is no data
- There are no progress measures for Key Stage 2 for reading, writing and maths (due to Covid) and will be none going forward given KS1 has been scrapped. The 2024 KS2 results are still provisional and could change
- The 2023/24 attendance data is not available until the middle of January 2025 so the latest data we have is 2022/23
- We are awaiting a date from DfE as to when the KS4 data will be available for 2024 – likely to be the beginning of November – there will be no P8 due to Covid so the latest data we have is 2022/23

Summary of Key Points: The educational landscape in 2024 has seen significant changes, including the abolition of Key Stage 1 as a statutory assessment and the absence of progress measures for Key Stage 2 due to the impact of Covid-19. Additionally, the latest available attendance data is from the 2022/23 academic year, and the 2024 Key Stage 4 data is still pending, with no Progress 8 measures available due to Covid-19 disruptions.

Implications: These changes and delays in data availability present challenges for accurately assessing and comparing student progress and school performance. The lack of statutory assessments and progress measures means that schools and policymakers must rely on alternative methods to evaluate educational outcomes and identify areas for improvement. This situation underscores the need for flexible and adaptive assessment strategies that can accommodate such disruptions.

Recommendations: It is recommended to develop and implement alternative assessment frameworks that can provide meaningful insights into student progress and school performance in the absence of traditional measures. Schools should also focus on qualitative assessments and other forms of data to monitor and support student development. Continued communication with the Department for Education (DfE) will be crucial to stay updated on the availability of new data and any changes in assessment policies.

Future Directions: Future efforts should aim to establish robust and resilient assessment systems that can withstand disruptions and provide reliable data. Exploring innovative assessment methods, such as formative assessments and digital tools, could offer valuable alternatives. Additionally, ongoing research into the long-term impacts of these changes on student outcomes will be essential for informing future educational policies and practices.

Conclusion: The current challenges in data availability and assessment due to the abolition of Key Stage 1 and the impact of Covid-19 highlight the need for adaptive and innovative approaches to evaluating educational outcomes. By developing alternative assessment frameworks and leveraging qualitative data, schools and policymakers can continue to support student progress and improve educational practices despite these disruptions.

Core Training Offer

The Education People were commissioned to deliver a range of training during the academic year 2023/24. During this period 781 delegates from 351 schools (56 Secondary Schools and 295 Primary Schools) have benefited from the various training opportunities delivered by The Education People. A full report is available to assess the impact of the core training offer and the RAG rating is universally 'Green'.

Countywide Partnership of Local Schools – Localities Model

The Localities Model went out to public consultation between 29 November 2023 and 24 January 2024 for comments and received views from over 800 respondents. Over 1,400 individual comments or suggestions were made, and the Localities Model has been amended accordingly in light of the feedback received. Within the feedback from the Localities Model consultation there was strong representation for the language used in the proposed system to be changed, and this has resulted in the significant, collaborative work, to create a 'Continuum of Need and Provision' for Kent. Currently still at the draft stage, a fully co-produced document has been developed by school and KCC professionals. 6 workshops took place in June 2024, to seek views and begin to populate a template that will support decisions around the needs and provisions for children and young people with SEND. A gap identified by the workshops was the engagement from small and faith schools, due to capacity of releasing staff to attend. KCC have met with the dioceses and small schools separately to gain their feedback and are planning how to work alongside their schedules to garner engagement. Work is now continuing on from the area workshops, with relevant professionals adding and refining the different sections of the Continuum as a direct result of the suggestions received

Summary of Key Points: During the 2023/24 academic year, The Education People provided training to 781 delegates from 351 schools, achieving a universally 'Green' RAG rating. Additionally, the Localities Model underwent public consultation, receiving over 800 responses and 1,400 comments, leading to significant revisions and the development of a 'Continuum of Need and Provision' for Kent.

Implications: The high engagement and positive feedback from the training sessions indicate that The Education People's efforts are effectively enhancing the skills and knowledge of educators across Kent. The extensive consultation and collaborative development of the Localities Model demonstrate a strong commitment to inclusive and responsive educational planning. However, the identified gap in engagement from small and faith schools highlights the need for tailored approaches to ensure all schools can participate and benefit.

Recommendations: To build on these successes, it is recommended to continue offering and expanding training opportunities, with a focus on addressing the specific needs of small and faith schools. Ensuring that these schools can engage fully will require flexible scheduling and additional support. Further, maintaining open channels for feedback and collaboration will be crucial for the ongoing refinement of the Continuum of Need and Provision.

Future Directions: Future efforts should aim to increase the inclusivity and accessibility of training and consultation processes. This could involve more targeted outreach and support for underrepresented schools. Additionally, ongoing evaluation and adaptation of the Localities Model will be essential to meet the evolving needs of students and educators in Kent.

Conclusion: The initiatives undertaken by The Education People and the development of the Localities Model have made significant strides in improving educational practices and planning in Kent. Continued investment in training and inclusive consultation processes will be key to sustaining and enhancing these gains, ensuring that all schools and students benefit from these efforts.

3. Priority Two – Providing additional intervention and support with engagement and integration

With a focus on exploring the best ways to facilitate children and young people with SEN in Kent accessing additional inclusion support, this priority has so far explored ways KCC can implement collaborative locality working and deliver High Needs Funding (HNF) [also known as mainstream top-up] in a more sustainable way. KCC has also started to map how Kent's approach to SEMH can be improved and looked at how attendance for children and young people with SEN can be increased.

Kent PRU & Attendance Service – October 2024

Kent PRU and Attendance Service (KPAS) formerly known as PIAS (PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service) aims to improve school attendance and reduce suspensions and exclusions for children and young people in Kent. The Service continues to explore and develop ways to improve attendance of all children and young people alongside implementing the Department for Education (DfE) '**Working together to improve school attendance**' guidance that became statutory in August 2024.

Over the past two years, the redesign of the service has ensured the local authority meets the demands of the statutory guidance and provides advice and guidance to all schools, including special and independent schools through designated link Attendance Officers (AO) and Exclusion Intervention Advisers (EIA).

The Attendance Working Group continues to run since its inception in Spring 2023 and includes representation from a range of KCC countywide professionals including Early Help, Social Care, Virtual School Kent (VSK), SEN, Educational Psychology and the Safeguarding Front Door. The group aims to ensure attendance is '**everyone's responsibility**' across the Children and Young People Directorate and beyond.

There has been the successful implementation of the **core responsibilities** within the 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance. **Targeting Support Meetings** (TSM) is an example where pupils and cohorts e.g. pupils with an EHCP and at risk of poor attendance, have agreed targeted actions and access to services. Under the new statutory guidance, the local authority will hold 1200 TSMs with schools over the 2024/25 academic year.

Best Practice Meetings to share effective attendance practice are held between schools. KPAS AOs facilitate these meetings which are available to all schools to discuss the DfE attendance guidance, local processes, and resources available for schools and families. Meetings are held either in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams, and in some areas, meetings have been tailored specifically to groups together such as special schools or PRUs.

In addition, there has also been the development of practice and protocols linked to attendance for schools and other services. This includes updated **KPAS Digital Front Door Pathways** (including data returns for unauthorised absence and sickness) and updated **Support Level Guidance** linked to Safeguarding which now includes **threshold support** from Early Help for pupils/families with persistent and severe absence.

Under the new guidance, all schools are legally obliged to submit their **daily attendance data** to the DfE. The local authority is currently designing a **School Absence Report** scoresheet that identifies patterns of each school's attendance data including cohorts such as gender, SEN, FSM and social care involvement against district and national comparisons.

A new **Code of Conduct** linked to the **National Framework for Penalty Notices** was published in September 2024 which works in conjunction with the electronic payment system of penalty notices which was implemented in September 2023. During the 2023/24 academic year over 12,000 penalty notices were issued, 90% of these were for an unauthorised family holiday.

There has also been the development of practice to improve attendance within other services, including **trauma informed practices** by VSK, **EBSA training** (phase 1 and 2) by the Kent Educational Psychology Service and **intensive support guidelines** for referrals to Early Help including holding strength-based conversations with families in school meetings.

KCC remains a joint partner in a **local attendance action alliance** with Medway Council, which was formed following the creation of a national attendance action alliance led by the Secretary of State for Education.

Several **resources** have been produced for **schools and partners** which include a DfE attendance guidance checklist, attendance policy checklist, good practice guide, attendance contract templates (previously known as parenting contracts). Bitesize guides/fact sheets have also been produced for KCC family practitioners on themes such as children missing education, part time timetables and elective home education.

Possibly, the most productive resource has been the development of a **KCC School Attendance Handbook**, primarily designed for schools, which breaks down into greater detail the 'Kent way' of implementing the expectations in the DfE statutory guidance. The handbook includes reference to other related subjects such as suspensions and exclusions.

Many **training opportunities** have been accessed by over **250 family practitioners** and presentations delivered to over **400 governors** and **300 headteachers**.

Whilst attendance and persistent absence of all schools in Kent is improving, levels remain just below national average according to the most recent DfE data. However, the improvements in Kent schools are greater than those reported nationally. The impact of the work to date is displayed below when comparing 2022/23 against 2023/24 Autumn and Spring combined attendance data in Kent schools.

School Type – all pupils

	% Total Absences Autumn 2022/ Spring 2023	% Total Absences Autumn 2023/ Spring 2024	Difference Total Absences	% PA Pupils Autumn 2022/Spring 2023	% PA Pupils Autumn 2023/Spring 2024	Difference PA
Primary	6.4	5.8	-0.6	19.1	16.1	-3.0
Secondary	9.1	8.6	-0.5	26.8	24.7	-2.1
Special	14.6	14.4	-0.2	43.6	41.0	-2.6
Primary/Secondary	7.6	7.1	-0.5	22.6	20.1	-2.5

School Type - SEN provision

School Tye	SEN Provision	2022/23 Autumn and Spring Combined		2023/24 Autumn and Spring Combined		DIFF Total Absences	DIFF % PA (10%)
		% Total Absences	% PA Pupils (10%)	% Total Absences	% PA Pupils (10%)		
Pri/Sec	N	6.7	19.3	6.1	16.4	-0.6	-2.9
Pri/Sec	K	10.9	34.0	10.5	31.1	-0.4	-2.9
Pri/Sec	E	13.6	37.7	13.7	36.4	0.1	-1.3
Pri/Sec	E & K	12.0	34.7	11.1	32.1	-0.9	-2.6
Primary	N	5.7	15.9	5.0	12.8	-0.7	-3.1
Primary	K	8.8	29.1	8.2	25.5	-0.6	-3.6
Primary	E	11.3	34.7	11.1	32.1	-0.2	-2.6
Primary	E & K	9.2	30.1	8.7	26.7	-0.5	-3.4
Secondary	N	7.9	23.3	7.4	20.5	-0.5	-2.8
Secondary	K	14.0	40.6	13.8	38.7	-0.2	-1.9
Secondary	E	16.8	41.6	17.0	41.7	0.2	0.1
Secondary	E & K	14.5	40.8	14.4	39.3	-0.1	-1.5
Special	E	14.5	43.2	14.2	40.4	-0.3	-2.8

KPAS also continues its work regarding **suspensions** and **permanent exclusions**. **Common themes** are identified and **additional processes** developed to support schools to ensure all interventions are exhausted and exclusion remains a last resort as detailed in the DfE guidance on suspensions and exclusions issued in August 2024. This includes the **development of practices** such as an inclusion intervention checklist, the appropriate use of directions off-site (alternative provision) and using inclusion champions to support schools.

In addition, KPAS supports the work of **CATIE** (Countywide Approach to Inclusive Education). This includes the inclusive leadership programme, core training offer, whole school nurture approach provided by Nurture UK and Special School outreach work delivered by the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS) and Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT).

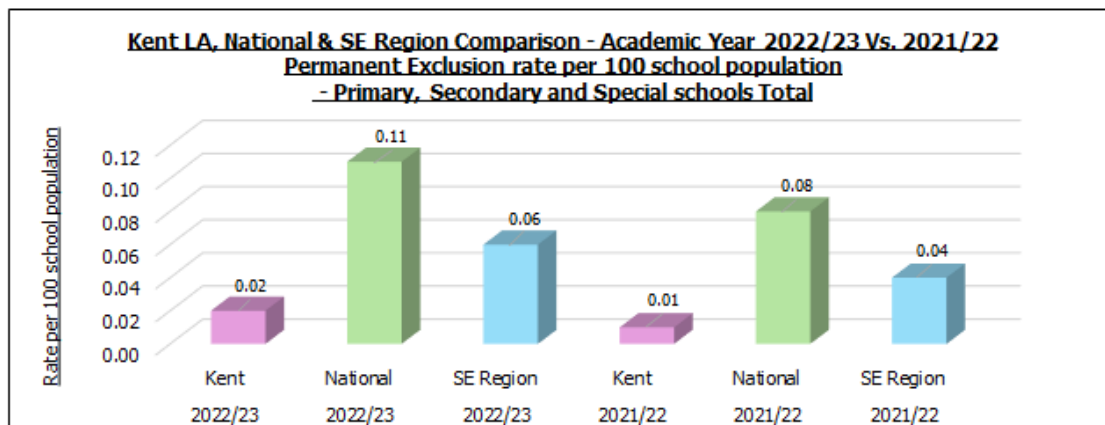
KPAS provides **regular training to governing boards and academy trustees** across the county's schools to ensure all cases of permanent exclusion are thoroughly scrutinised, as well as promote the use of timely data to address cases where suspensions are occurring on a regular basis. The link EIA support schools by:

- Providing advice on the DfE exclusion guidance and processes as well as behaviour policies.
- Sharing ideas as well as signposting to resources and services who may be able to support schools and pupils in promoting inclusion where behaviour is a concern.
- Attending meetings in schools with parents (and partner agencies where involved) about individual pupils experiencing suspensions or at risk of permanent exclusion.
- Delivering training to governors and senior leaders on responsibilities in relation to exclusions set out in the DfE guidance.

EIAs represent KPAS at a range of forums such as the Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT), LIFT Executive, In Year Fair Access panels and District Contextual Safeguarding Meetings.

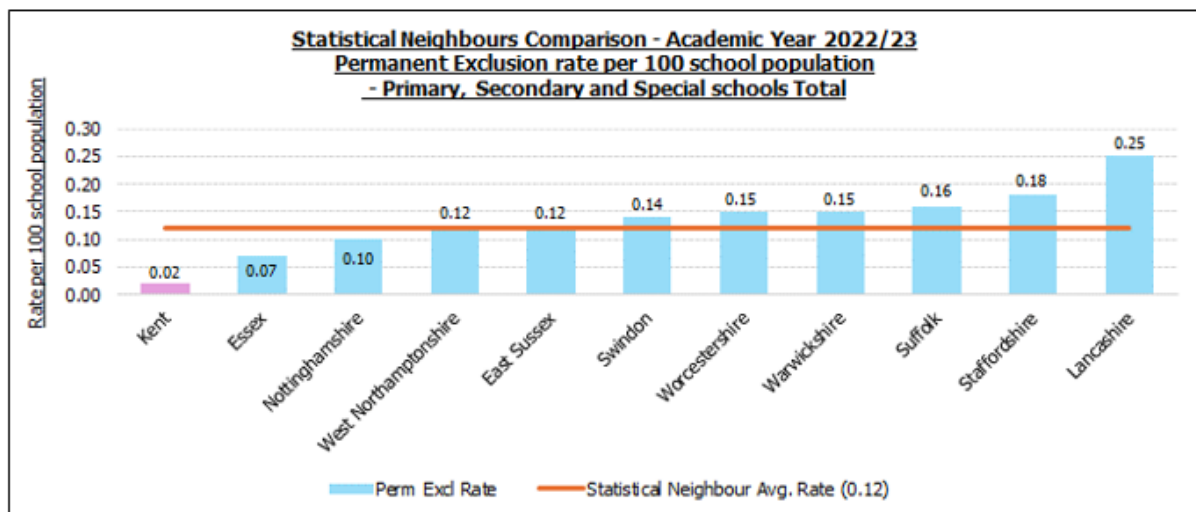
Most recent published DfE figures from 2022/23 academic year highlight that permanent exclusions and suspension rates (per 100 school population) in Kent schools remain well below equivalent levels nationally, within the South East region and in comparison to our statistical neighbours.

Permanent Exclusion 'Primary, Secondary and Special' school rate per 100 school population



Commentary:

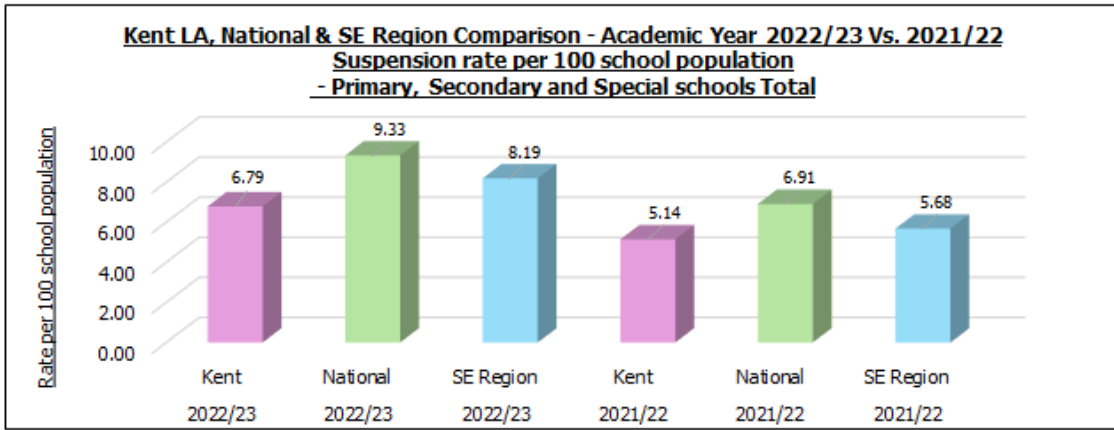
Kent below National and SE Region rates. Rate increase seen for Kent, National and SE Region on 2021/22.



Commentary:

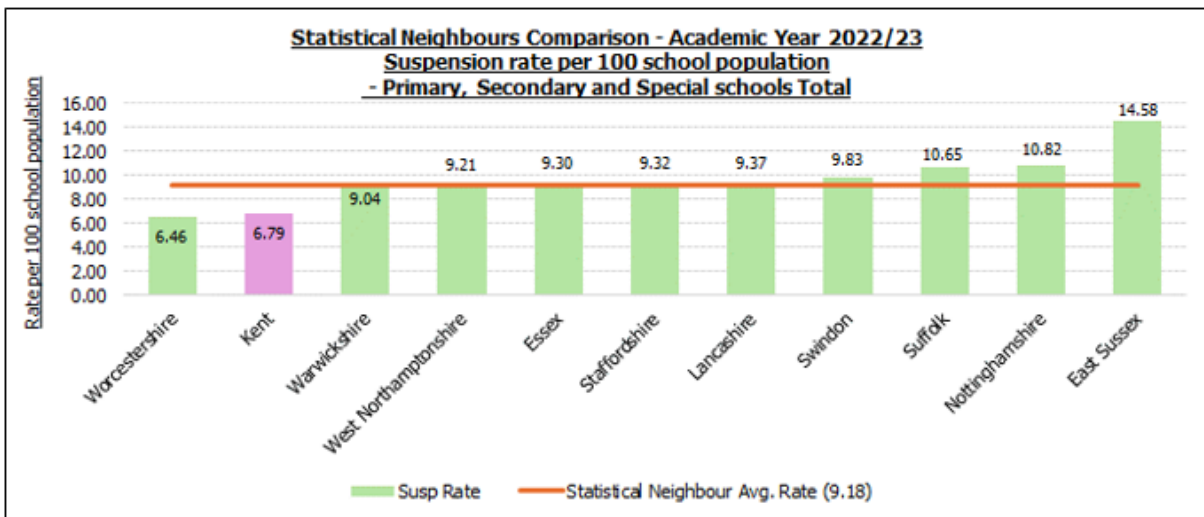
Kent rate below all Statistical Neighbour Local Authorities. Kent below 0.12 average rate.

Suspension 'Primary, Secondary and Special' school rate per 100 school population



Commentary:

Kent below National and SE Region rates. Rate increase seen for Kent, National and SE Region on 2021/22.



Commentary:

Kent ranked 2nd within Statistical Neighbour Local Authority group. Kent below 9.18 average rate.

Summary of Key Points: The Kent PRU and Attendance Service (KPAS) has been actively working to improve school attendance and reduce suspensions and exclusions in Kent. Over the past two years, the service has been redesigned to meet new statutory guidance and provide comprehensive support to all schools. Key initiatives include the implementation of Targeting Support Meetings (TSMs), Best Practice Meetings, and the development of various resources and protocols to support attendance.

Implications: The efforts of KPAS have led to significant improvements in attendance and a reduction in persistent absence, although levels remain just below the national average. The comprehensive approach, including collaboration with various professionals and the development of targeted resources, has created a robust support system for schools. However, the ongoing challenge of improving attendance to meet or exceed national averages indicates the need for continued focus and adaptation.

Recommendations: To further enhance the impact of KPAS, it is recommended to continue refining and expanding the support provided to schools. This includes increasing the frequency and reach of Best Practice Meetings, ensuring all schools can participate, and further developing

resources to address specific attendance challenges. Additionally, ongoing training and support for family practitioners, governors, and headteachers will be crucial for sustaining improvements.

Future Directions: Future efforts should focus on maintaining and building upon the current initiatives, with particular attention to schools that are still struggling with attendance issues. Exploring innovative approaches, such as digital tools and data analytics, could provide new insights and strategies for improving attendance. Continued collaboration with local and national partners will also be essential for sharing best practices and addressing systemic challenges.

Conclusion: The work of KPAS has made a significant positive impact on school attendance and the reduction of suspensions and exclusions in Kent. By continuing to refine and expand their initiatives, KPAS can help ensure that all children and young people in Kent have the opportunity to benefit from consistent and inclusive education.

Whole School Nurture Approach

Nurturing Kent Programme – As part of Kent’s county-wide approach to inclusive education

What is the programme?

Nurtureuk are recruiting schools to take part in a three-year programme across Kent County Council, embedding a whole-school nurturing approach across 300 schools. **This programme is fully funded** by schools, for schools and facilitated by Kent County Council. The aim is to promote inclusion across the county and support pupils with special educational needs to access and enjoy education.

Who is the programme for?

We’re recruiting mainstream primary and secondary schools to take part across the Kent County Council catchment area. We aim to embed a whole-school approach to nurture across 300 schools, including training in our National Nurturing Schools Programme, training and support for how to set up a Boxall Nurture Group® and how to utilise our social, emotional and mental health assessment tool, the Boxall Profile® Online.

Benefits to schools

Schools who participate in the programme will see outcomes such as, but not limited to:

- Reduced fixed term and permanent exclusions
- Improved Parent/Teacher relationships
- Improved Pupil/Teacher relationships
- Improved Pupil/Staff wellbeing and morale
- Improved understanding of pupils with Special Educational Needs
- Improved access to support for pupils with Special Educational Needs
- School budgets will be able to be spent more effectively to meet the needs of pupils
- Better networking opportunities and best practice across the county

Why Kent?

Nurtureuk have been commissioned by Kent County Council to create the country's first nurturing county, where all schools adopt a nurturing approach to teaching and learning. This approach has been adopted as a result of a countywide survey in February 2021, where Kent County Council surveyed schools and partners to explore interest in a countywide programme to embed a whole-school approach to nurture. The survey findings returned an extremely positive response, with an overwhelming majority expressing support for the proposal and many sharing valuable insights into their experiences of nurture.

Programme in detail

The National Nurturing Schools Programme Each school joining the programme will be enrolled in our **National Nurturing Schools Programme (NNSP)**. The NNSP is an 18-month journey, with regular group training and 1:1 bespoke consultancy to develop an inclusive approach that is bespoke to the schools needs and circumstances. The programme supports **Quality First Teaching and Learning** and promotes healthy outcomes for all children and young people. At the end of the programme, schools are assessed, and if successful, are awarded the nurtureuk national accreditation of a National Nurturing School, joining hundreds of schools across the UK.

The Boxall Profile® Online

Each school will also have access to our mental health assessment tool, the training for the duration of the programme, with thorough **Boxall Profile® training** to support its use across the school, so children's needs are better understood and accommodated to make the most of their education.

Boxall Nurture Groups®

Schools will also receive training in how to set up and run a **Boxall Nurture Group®**, to nurtureuk recognised, **externally evaluated** and accredited standards. All schools will have the opportunity to attend regular **networking events** to discuss best practice, and also attend **expert-led webinars** discussing topics most pertinent to the needs of Kent pupils, as voted for by schools. Schools will also receive **publications and resources** designed to support their journey and the development of their own sustainable, bespoke approach. At the end of the 18-month programme, all schools will receive **complimentary one year membership** to nurtureuk, for continued support in sustaining a nurturing approach.

What is nurture?

Contrary to belief by some, a nurturing approach is not 'just tea and toast, nor can it be accurately described as 'soft and fluffy'. The concept of nurture is rooted in Attachment Theory and Neuroscience of the developing brain. It highlights the importance of social environments and its significant influence on social emotional skills, wellbeing and behaviour. A nurturing ethos in an education environment is empathetic, structured and fair for all. At nurtureuk, we have spent 50 years building our evidence-based approach and today we have an reputation for delivering expert nurturing practice in schools. Everything we do is guided best practice in the classroom through the Six Principles of Nurture:

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The classroom offers a safe base
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
4. Language is a vital means of communication
5. All behaviour is communication
6. The importance of transition in children's lives

What is the impact and evidence for a nurturing approach?

The whole-school approach to nurture was born out of research into the effectiveness of nurture groups, which saw the value of the six principles of nurture to be utilised across whole schools (Sloan, Winter, Lynn, Gildea, & Connolly, 2016). There are hundreds of nurtureuk commissioned and independent studies that have been conducted over the years to evidence the impact and effectiveness of nurture groups:

- They are proven to **improve social emotional skills** (Cooper and Whitebread 2007), **school attendance** (Estyn 2014; Sanders 2007), academic attainment (Sanders 2007; Reynolds, MacKay, and Kearney 2009; Seth-Smith et al. 2010), **including language and literacy skills** (Hosie 2013)
- They also **improve behaviour** (Sloan et al. 2016) and **reduce exclusions** (Ofsted 2009; March and Kearney 2017). They **improve parent-child relationships** (Pyle 2015), with children being more **affectionate and communicative** at home, and **parents feeling more confident** in being able to help their children (Ofsted 2011).
- It is well understood that nurture groups help develop **affective bonds between teachers and pupils** and help create a **whole school nurturing ethos** (Binnie and Allen 2008; Cooper 2001).

Why adopt a nurturing approach?

We know how important and effective a nurturing approach is at supporting children and young people to be the best they can be. We understand that **social, emotional and mental health issues are not transient issues that pupils will grow out of**. Children with these issues and other socio-economic issues may act in different ways:

- **Externalising behaviours** such as being aggressive, fighting and violating rules may lead to persistent difficulties, including conduct disorders, that can have negative consequences both in childhood and later in life (Moffitt 2006). Children and young people experiencing persistent externalising behaviours are at risk of:
 - Academic difficulties (low grades, truancy and exclusion)
 - Social rejection
 - Antisocial behaviour and substance abuse
- **Internalising behaviours** such as anxiety and depression can lead to:
 - Difficulties forming and maintaining relationships
 - Poor school performance
 - Suicidal behaviours

Children and young people who have experienced depression are also more likely to have recurrent episodes later in adulthood (Rao 2006).

- **Vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils** are at high risk of personal and school failure:
 - Young people who are persistently disadvantaged are up to two years behind on their learning compared to their peers (Andrews, Robinson, and Hutchinson 2017).
 - Poorer young people are four times more likely to be excluded than their wealthier peers (Gill, Quilter-Pinner, and Swift 2017).

Summary of Key Points: Nutureuk is launching a three-year programme in collaboration with Kent County Council to embed a whole-school nurturing approach across 300 schools. This initiative aims to promote inclusion and support pupils with special educational needs (SEN) through comprehensive training and resources.

Implications: The programme's focus on nurturing and inclusion is expected to have far-reaching positive effects on school environments. By reducing exclusions and improving relationships among parents, teachers, and pupils, the programme can create a more supportive and inclusive atmosphere. Enhanced understanding and access to support for SEN pupils will likely lead to better educational outcomes and overall wellbeing.

Recommendations: Schools should actively participate in this programme to leverage the benefits of improved relationships, wellbeing, and effective budget use. Engaging fully with the training and resources provided will be crucial for maximizing the impact of the programme. Additionally, schools should share their experiences and best practices to foster a collaborative network across the county.

Future Directions: Future efforts should focus on monitoring the programme's impact and making necessary adjustments to ensure its success. Collecting and analysing data on key outcomes, such as exclusion rates and pupil wellbeing, will help in refining the approach. Expanding the programme to include more schools and continuous professional development for staff will further enhance its effectiveness.

Conclusion: The Nurtureuk programme represents a significant opportunity for schools in Kent to enhance their inclusive practices and support for SEN pupils. By participating in this initiative, schools can create a more nurturing and effective educational environment, benefiting all members of the school community. Continued commitment and collaboration will be essential for sustaining these positive changes.

4. Priority Three – Inclusive Education is part of a broader holistic and joined up offer of support

The need for integrated approaches is at the heart of the Children and Families Act 2014 and reflected in the SEND Code of Practice, KCC will work with all relevant local partners to ensure services are joined-up and accessible to children and young people with SEND and their families.

We are working with our partners and other additional SEN, health, and education professionals to produce a joined-up offer for schools and create an equitable offer for all mainstream schools to improve the offer for children with SEN support and those with EHCPs. The effectiveness of these services will be assessed through the District Dashboard and Local Inclusion Plans as they are developed.

Following development of a proposed Locality Model for SEN inclusion, we will continue developing these structures to inform how we prioritise resources which support the additional needs of SEN children. Implementation should begin in Spring 2025.

Work continues with the special school sector to define and deliver a continuum of support to deliver better outcomes for children with SEN in a financially sustainable manner.

Special School Review

The Special Schools Review consultation sets out proposals regarding the future designations of special schools, the supporting admission guidance and a school-to-school model of support. These changes have been proposed to assist implementation of the wider changes for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) across mainstream schools and Special Resource Provisions (SRPs).

Of Kent's twenty-four state-funded special schools, the proposed changes outlined in this consultation would affect seven schools' designation and admission guidance whilst an additional two schools would be affected by the proposed admission guidance only. In total, nine state-funded special schools would be affected by the proposed changes to designation and admission guidance; seven of these are maintained special schools and two are part of an Academy Trust. KCC would like the proposed school-to-school support model to be adopted by all Kent special

schools as the approach to providing expertise and guidance for children with SEND in mainstream schools.

Professional Resource Groups – As a key part of the Localities Model, work began in April 2024 to align services and to support the development of a Professional Resource Core Group based on a Link Practitioner model which is endorsed by the Balance System. This is intended to support schools having access to support and interventions in a timely, less bureaucratic manner.

Summary of Key Points: The Special Schools Review consultation proposes changes to the designations and admission guidance of nine state-funded special schools in Kent, aiming to enhance the support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The consultation also introduces a school-to-school support model to be adopted by all Kent special schools, facilitating expertise sharing and guidance for mainstream schools.

Implications: These proposed changes are significant as they aim to streamline and improve the support system for SEND students across Kent. By redefining school designations and admission guidance, the consultation seeks to ensure that special schools are better equipped to meet the diverse needs of their students. The school-to-school support model promotes collaboration and resource sharing, which can lead to more effective and inclusive educational practices in mainstream schools.

Recommendations: It is recommended that stakeholders, including school administrators, teachers, and parents, actively engage with the consultation process to provide feedback and ensure that the proposed changes meet the needs of all students. Additionally, implementing the school-to-school support model will require careful planning and ongoing support to ensure its success.

Future Directions: Future efforts should focus on monitoring the implementation of these changes and assessing their impact on student outcomes. Continued collaboration between special and mainstream schools will be essential to foster an inclusive educational environment. Further development of the Professional Resource Core Group will also be crucial to provide timely and effective support to schools.

Conclusion: The Special Schools Review consultation represents a proactive step towards enhancing the support system for SEND students in Kent. By adopting the proposed changes and fostering a collaborative support model, Kent can improve the educational experiences and outcomes for all students with special educational needs. Continued engagement and evaluation will be key to the success of these initiatives.

5. Priority Four – Ensuring smooth transition between education phases

This priority aims to develop collaborative approaches between settings to achieve successful and sustained transitions for CYP at key phases and times of transition in their lives.

CATIE Annual Report 2023-24 Update: Supported Employment

The details of the Supported Employment in Schools programme are outlined in the last iteration of the CATIE Annual Report 2022-23, including the recognition of the low level of engagement with

schools and subsequent plans to mitigate. The Service Level Agreement for the Supported Employment in Schools programme came to an end on 31 August 2024 and an end of contract meeting with the provider was held on 6 September 2024. See Appendix X for the providers end of contract report.

During Year Two of delivery, performance monitoring of the contract identified that the service was not value for money as it was not delivering the required outcomes due to a range of factors as detailed below:

- The Programme launched at a time when Covid-19 cases were still at high levels with staff absences in schools frequently occurring, limiting their capacity to focus on other priorities. Some schools were also carrying out remote learning.
- The programme was commissioned and launched simultaneously with two other big scale training programmes aimed at mainstream schools funded from the Inclusion budget. Although this service is only open to secondary schools, all three involves a separate time commitment of 18 months from schools to participate in each programme, making it a challenge to participate in more than one service simultaneously.
- After 17 months of delivery, the programme continued to face challenges in engaging schools, although all secondary schools have been made aware of the programme via multiple and repeated communication, including direct phone calls to targeted schools, uptake remained low in relation to targets set. Whilst the other two Inclusion commissioned services had a target of enrolling a proportion of mainstream schools in Kent, the Supported Employment programme had an ambitious target of enrolling 100% of all mainstream secondary schools in Kent.

Feedback provided by The Education People indicated that the programme was well received by participating schools and that the schools that they approached to participate understood the value of the Supported Employment programme and how it could impact on students with SEND (and other disadvantaged students). However, schools indicated that that there were significant barriers to their ability to commit to the programme, including staffing capacity and resource to undertake new initiatives balanced with ongoing priorities within schools.

With the agreement of Children, Young People and Education's Directorate Management Team, an alternative delivery model was agreed for the final year delivery, in recognition that the model delivered for Years One and Two were not addressing the capacity issues and enabling schools to participate.

Year Three Delivery (Final Year)

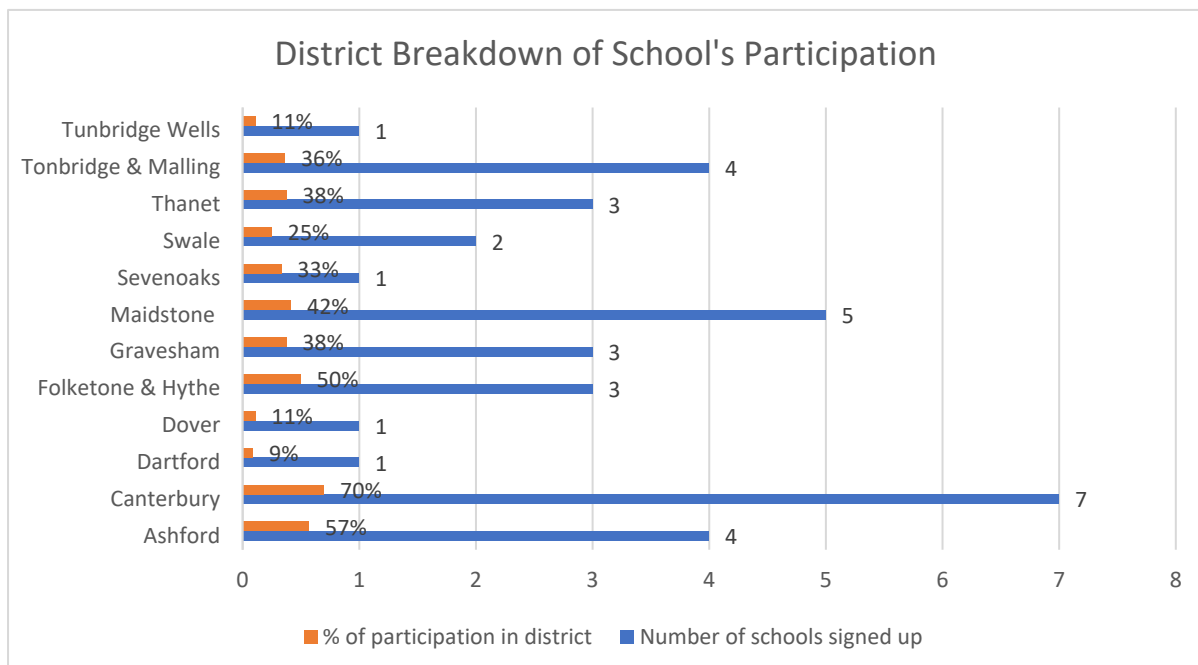
Year Three of the programme ensured those schools already signed up could work through the framework and embed the principles into their school as per the programme when they enrolled. Schools who had not yet signed up to the programme would be able to access a comprehensive 'pick and mix' selection of training, guidance and consultancy to meet their needs.

The revised delivery model was designed to ensure that there was a programme legacy in place for Kent, and the programme was broken down into smaller modules and encompassed specific topics, most of which were made available electronically as downloadable documents, E-learning and pre-recorded webinars, making the training more flexible and accessible for delegates.

Despite the change in the delivery model in the final year, engagement from schools remained low. At the end of the contract, seven additional schools signed up to the programme for its final year. The following details what has been achieved in relation to the contract's Key Performance Indicators:

Stage 1. Engagement

- No. of initial meetings with schools to introduce the programme = 60 out of 101 (60%)
- No. of Mainstream Secondary Schools signing up to programme with identified lead = 35 out of 60 (35%). Below table is a district breakdown of school's participation in the programme, at the end of the contract:



Stage 2. Training

- No. of participating Mainstream Secondary Schools that have undertaken Stage 2 training = 29 out of 35 (82.8%)
- Participating schools provided positive feedback (Good / Excellent) on the quality of training and support received = 21 out of 29 (73%)

Stage 3. Implementation

- No. of participating schools progressed to the Initiating or Emerging stage = 18 out of 35 (51.4%)
- No. of participating schools achieved the minimum level of progress to Established or Embedded = 13 out of 35 (37.1%). Below table breaks down how many schools in each district this includes:

District	Number of Schools at Established or Embedded stage of the Supported Employment model
Ashford	1
Canterbury	1
Dover	1
Folkestone and Hythe	2
Gravesham	3
Maidstone	2
Thanet	1
Tonbridge and Malling	2

- Total No. Of participating schools to have shown progression through the Implementation Stages = 31 out of 35 (88.5%)
- No. of participating schools who have implemented Vocational Profiling (VP) with young people with SEN = 22 out of 35 (62.8%)

Vocational Profiles (VP) have been implemented and embedded into 22 schools (as noted above) across several year groups from year 9, with schools focusing on a small group of students to start to fully understand the VP and how this tool impacts and can enhance career conversations for students with SEND already in place.

The VP has been used for some schools in conjunction with career systems (e.g. Unifrog) and uploaded to allow for regular student updates/milestones (as per the Supported Employment Model). Conversations with schools using the VP have stated they have rolled the use of the VP to additional year groups.

Legacy

As part of the programme's legacy, schools who have not enrolled onto the service are able to access the tools, resources (e.g. vocational profile, employer engagement information, job coach checklist) and recorded webinars that have been used to embed The Supported Employment Model into the school careers strategy.

To provide context of the Supported Employment in schools programme, The Education People delivered a series of live webinars via MS Teams in Term 6 2023/2024. The webinars provided an opportunity for schools to:

- Gain an overview of the Supported Employment Model - the five stages and core values
- Hear about the benefits of embedding the model within the careers strategy
- Learn about the impact of the programme to date, including feedback from schools who have participated
- Learn about the tools and resources (e.g. vocational profile, employer engagement information) and how these will be shared
- Learn about the training webinar titles and how to access through the TEP training site.

The webinars were also recorded with information and programme links accessible on the Kelsi directory and will be made available on KCC's SEN Inclusion Directory as a resource for Mainstream Secondary Schools in Kent.

The Supported Employment Service (within The Education People) was appointed to work with all Kent mainstream schools to embed the Supported Employment (SE) Model <https://www.base-uk.org/what-supported-employment> between 2021 – 2024. This Supported Employment in Schools Programme (SEiS) programme was commissioned following the Ofsted and CQC Joint Inspection with the Kent County Council SEND Service in 2019.

This report will detail:

- Programme Delivery – communication with schools and delivery
- Programme Data – school and student information (please see the School Information spreadsheet attached)
- Programme Legacy – Recorded Webinars and Resources available to all Kent mainstream schools
- Challenges
- Programme Outcomes.

Programme Delivery:

The aim of the SEiS programme was to add value and aspirational support by strengthening the existing careers information, advice, and guidance programme for students with SEND within Kent mainstream Schools.

Programme delivery was Three stages – Consultancy, Training and Mentoring with Implementation of the SE Model into the school across four stages: Initiating, Emerging, Established and Embedded. To show the progression of embedding the SE Model it was agreed a school needed to progress 2x stages e.g. starting at Initiating and moving through emerging to established.

To ensure the SE Model would support within the school setting and student cohort the model was adapted to include these changes: client engagement to student engagement and job matching to career & job matching experience and included an additional stage to support with the understanding the world of work.

A Toolkit was created to support schools to evidence the progression through the Implementation Stages (Initiating - Embedded) that linked directly to the SE Model and with the addition of the Supported Employment underpinning Core Values (named The Core Standards of Supported Employment in schools within the Toolkit) and the Gatsby Benchmarks

<https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance> . The SEiS programme linked directly to three of the eight Gatsby Benchmarks

3.) Addressing the needs of each pupil 5.) Encounters with employers and employees 6.) Experiences of workplaces.

Communication with Schools:

Marketing the programme was a key priority and commenced from term 6 (academic year 2020/21) with notification to all Kent mainstream schools via a variety of ways including email communications, attending meetings, training/overview sessions and with service/teams within The Education People – Skills & Employability/Careers Hub and Secondary School Improvement. Attendance at careers and SENCO meetings where possible with TEP colleagues provided a TEP/whole school approach which supported with joining services and reduced time resource for school staff which was a challenge. A promotional video was recorded and shared

<https://youtu.be/tIK6GP5YStE#>

Communication with schools continued during the three years in terms of marketing the programme, initial meetings, programme sign up, delivery (three stages), review and next steps.

Three Stage Delivery - Consultancy, Training and Mentoring:

The programme was designed to be delivered with the three stages of consultancy, training and mentoring to embed the SE Model into the careers plans that will be differentiated for students with SEND (this including those with/without an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP)) and as the model was communicated to schools it was clear that the school would use this model of support with different cohorts of students (e.g. looked after children) after working through the programme.

Rationale for this delivery format:

- Consultancy: Understanding what is already in place within the schools, valuing this and giving awareness of the SE Model to the SLT & Governors
 - Training: Train staff in the programme and SE Model
 - Mentoring: To support the front-line staff to embed the SE Model.
1. **Consultancy** – Meeting with school staff to introduce the programme, SE Model, discuss current careers plans/practice across the school for students with SEND (as per the Preparing for Adulthood guidance <https://www.ndti.org.uk/resources/preparing-for-adulthood-all-tools-resources/pfa-employment-resources> the focus was for students from yr. 9), view the Toolkit to capture evidence and show progression across the Implementation Stages (Initiating - Embedded), discuss the training and introduce the Employment Support Officer Mentor who will support as per the third stage to implement the SE Model.
 2. **Training** – Training modules directly linked to the SEiS programme and SE Model delivered via MS Teams to groups of school staff who were to work on the delivery of the programme and to ensure the most impact for staff (and students) the modules were allocated to key roles and responsibilities e.g. Vocational Profiling (VP) undertaken by the person meeting the student for these VP sessions (careers), Employer Engagement undertaken by the person who talks to employers for work experience (WE co-ordinator). The training modules were reduced timewise to support with time constraints within the school during years 1 & 2 and changes were made in year 3 to recorded webinars that ensured flexibility for school staff to view the webinars in their time and view the courses they felt were the priority for them/the school. Changes to the third year of the programme were agreed and implemented from September 2023 with the changes to the training.

Year 3. Recorded Webinars

Overview of Supported Employment	Employer Engagement
The Supported Employment Toolkit	Travel Training Students
Supported Employment and The Gatsby Benchmarks	Introduction to Job Coaching & Work Experience
Vocational Profiling	Fading Support in a Classroom Setting
Training in Systematic Instruction - An Overview of the Training Method	Progression Pathways for Students with SEND

3. **Mentoring** – An allocated Mentor for each school signed up to the SEiS Programme and introduced at the consultation stage to key school staff working through the programme. The mentor started with the creation and implementation of the Vocational Profile (VP) (following the VP training – stage 2) for

the school in conjunction with allocated staff member/s (in the main the careers lead and teaching assistants). It was imperative that the VP created with the school met the needs of the school and the student cohort (differentiations where needed and having several VP's e.g. dependent on student age). Support provided to the school to embed the SE Model was bespoke and required the mentor to be flexible in their approach. Reviewing the Toolkit to show progression (adding evidence) across the model and implementation stages provided an opportunity for reflection for school staff as there was excellent practice already in place and having the Toolkit to add information showed where the SE Model complemented this practice and gaps in Supported Employment knowledge and delivery were required. The mentors on the programme have formed professional relationships during the time they have supported the school staff, and the added value has been invitations to student mock interviews, attending careers fairs, parent/carer sessions and join student meetings to discuss progression routes including Supported Internships and referral to The Support Employment Service – this supporting to reduce students becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training).

Programme Data:

Information has been provided for the duration of the programme on the attached excel spreadsheet and relates to the three stages of the programme.

Information provided includes:

Stage 1. Engagement

- No. of initial meetings with schools to introduce the programme = 60 out of 101 (59.4%)
- No. of Mainstream Secondary Schools signing up to programme with identified lead = 35 out of 60 (58.3%)

Stage 2. Training

- No. of Mainstream Secondary Schools that have undertaken Stage 2 training = 29 out of 35 (82.8%)
- Participating schools provided positive feedback (Good / Excellent) on the quality of training and support received = 21 out of 29 (73%)
- School Roles: Undertaking Training/viewed Recorded Webinars

Stage 3. Implementation

- No. of schools progressed to the Initiating or Emerging stage = 18 out of 35 (51.4%)
- No. of schools achieved the minimum level of progress to Established or Embedded = 13 out of 35 (37.1%)
- Total No. of schools to have shown progression through the Implementation Stages = 31 out of 35 (88.5%)
- No. of participating schools who have implemented Vocational Profiling (VP) with young people with SEN = 22 out of 35 (62.8%)
- VP's breakdown by year groups (9-13)

Vocational Profiles (VP) have been implemented and embedded into 22 schools (as noted) across a number of year groups from year 9 with schools focusing on a small group of students to start to fully understand the VP and how this tool impacts and can enhance career conversations for students with SEND already in place. The VP has been used for some schools in conjunction with career systems (e.g. Unifrog) and uploaded to allow for regular student updates/milestones (as per the SE Model). Conversations with schools using the VP have stated they have rolled the use of the VP to additional year groups.

Programme Legacy:

The SEiS programme formally ended in August 2024 with schools finishing the 23/24 academic year in July. As a legacy of this Supported Employment in Schools programme work has taken place during the latter stages of the programme to ensure all Kent mainstream schools can access the recorded webinars and tools/resources that have been delivered and utilised to embed the SE Model into the schools. To promote this legacy 3x dates/times (June 24) were circulated to schools to invite staff to view a webinar. The link to the webinar is enclosed <https://youtu.be/WtVMVGddNNI>

Kent mainstream schools will have access to:

Pre-recorded Webinars	Resources
Overview of Supported Employment	Supported Employment in Schools Overview and Toolkit
The Supported Employment Toolkit	Selection of Vocational Profiles
Vocational Profiling	Autism Communication Passport
Employer Engagement	Disability Passport
Travel Training Students	Fading Support Plan - Checklist
Introduction to Job Coaching and Work Experience	Work Experience and Job Coaching
Training in Systematic Instruction – An Overview of the Training Method	Job (Work Experience Placement) Analysis
Fading Support in a Classroom Setting	Employer Engagement Process
Supported Employment and The Gatsby Benchmarks	Reverse Jobs Fair (Rowhill School link)
Progression Pathways for Students with SEND	

Challenges through the duration of the programme:

The programme proved challenging with (the majority of) schools communicating that although they could see the value of the having the SE Model within the careers plans and how this would directly support students with SEND for the school, they did not have the time and staff resource to allocate to the programme and that with other school mandatory priorities this programme would not be something the school could sign up to.

Communication with schools (as noted above) was a constant priority during the programme to engage with schools to sign up and reengage where needed. The Covid Pandemic impacted on engagement and sign up at one point due to staffing capacity and delivery.

There were a number of schools that did sign up, although did not commence or dropped off during the duration of the programme.

A selection of the challenges has been listed:

- Schools communicated other priorities within schools that resulted in delays to meetings/sign up/starts to the programme. Schools have started that they see the value of the programme as noted yet are not able to move forward with the programme.
- Schools communicated recruitment issues – changing staff roles, staff new to post, staff with multiple roles (impact on capacity) all impacting on sign up.
- school colleagues cancelling meetings with mentors and the need to encourage staff to view webinars as capacity issues remain at times
- Careers colleagues communicated that they have many different roles and careers time is minimal – this is similar with SENCOs communicating not having time to be involved with the programme
- Schools communicated they needed support to have the staffing capacity to start the programme.
- Staffing capacity to attend training in years 1&2 – changes to training delivery (as noted in year. 3)
- Careers & SEND colleagues not collaborating within the schools – this impacting on meetings, programme delivery and communication.

Programme Outcomes:

- 35 Kent mainstream schools have been supported to understand and implement aspects of The Supported Employment Model with 13x schools either at an established or embedded stage within careers provision for students with SEND
- All schools having support from a mentor have evidenced progressing from the initiating

stage of the programme

- A range of school professionals including Governors have undertaken Supported Employment training
- Students with SEND have a Vocational Profile (VP) from Yr.9
- Better quality of work experience placement for students with SEND
- Quality Job Coaching support for students on placement/s
- Creative and innovative ways in which schools engage with employers
- Students are better prepared and equipped for leaving education and entering work.

The Supported Employment Service have been proud to deliver the first Supported Employment in Schools Programme in Kent and within the country. With initial conversations to pilot this programme with a Special School in the county to very quickly rolling out this delivery to all Kent mainstream schools as part of the KCC Written Statement of Action has provided an opportunity to work with the schools to show how quality supported employment methods can impact on careers delivery for students with SEND.

Summary of Key Points: The Supported Employment in Schools programme, detailed in the CATIE Annual Report 2022-23, faced significant challenges in engagement and value for money. Despite efforts to mitigate these issues, including a revised delivery model in the final year, the programme struggled to meet its ambitious targets, with low participation from secondary schools.

Implications: The low engagement levels highlight the difficulties schools face in committing to additional programmes, especially during periods of high staff absences and competing priorities. This underscores the need for more flexible and accessible programme designs that can accommodate the varying capacities of schools. The feedback from participating schools, however, indicates that the programme was valued and had potential benefits for students with SEND and other disadvantaged students.

Recommendations: Future programmes should consider the capacity constraints of schools and offer more flexible participation options. This could include shorter, more modular training sessions and increased use of digital resources. Additionally, setting more realistic targets and ensuring better alignment with other ongoing initiatives could improve engagement and outcomes.

Future Directions: Continued efforts should focus on understanding and addressing the barriers to school participation. Exploring alternative delivery models and leveraging technology to provide more accessible training and support will be crucial. Ongoing evaluation and feedback from schools will help refine these approaches and ensure they meet the needs of both educators and students.

Conclusion: While the Supported Employment in Schools programme faced significant challenges, the positive feedback from participating schools suggests that there is value in such initiatives. By adopting more flexible and realistic approaches, future programmes can better support schools in providing valuable opportunities for students with SEND and other disadvantaged groups. Continued commitment to understanding and addressing the needs of schools will be key to the success of these efforts.

6. Summary

Progress is being made in all areas but there is still need to have a more data driven approach to planning and evaluation in all Priority areas. The challenges of funding remain and the strategy is to ensure that all activity is designed to make the best use of all available resources and have financial sustainability and outcomes for children at the forefront of how all activity is planned.

Priority one – the focus for 2024/2025 is to develop the following;

- fully establish the Community of Schools model which will form a secure partnership network for school improvement with Inclusion at it's core.
- The Mainstream Core Standards training will become part of the core offer for school improvement
- The Continuum of Need and Provision document will support building the capacity of mainstream settings.
- Review the effectiveness of the District Dashboard and make the appropriate improvements
- Review how STLS service is delivered and how it needs to be reformed to meet the changing needs of the sector to meet objectives.

Priority two - the focus for 2024/2025 is to develop the following;

- establish a Community of Schools funding stream which will allow the re distribution of resources to provide additional intervention and support with engagement and integration into mainstream schools.
- provide the Communities of Schools with the structures to contribute to local inclusion plans and pathways
- continue to make improvements with attendance
- develop the Continuum of Need and Provision so that it is the key tool to ensure equity and support consistency across all Communities of Schools.

Priority three – the focus for 2024/2025 is to develop the following;

- agree the outcomes of the Special School review so that peer to peer and school to school support structures are strengthened.
- Fully establish the link practitioner model for the Professional Resource Core group to support a broad and holistic offer of support.
- Begin the work with ICB to support improved Joint Commissioning arrangements in the future.

Priority four – the focus for 2024/2025 is to develop the following;

- Learn from the successful transition processes from primary to secondary and make further improvements, particularly in relation to parental confidence.

- Use said learning to review transition to Post 16 with a focus on supporting YP to transition into mainstream pathways.
- Ensure post 16 transition work is aligned with Pathways for All strategy.

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District

School Type

Primary Schools

District Dashboard - Pupils in Mainstream Schools

Supporting the Countywide Approach to Inclusive Education (CATIE) in Kent

Latest update: October 2024

Management Information
Children, Young People and Education
mieducation&widereh@kent.gov.uk

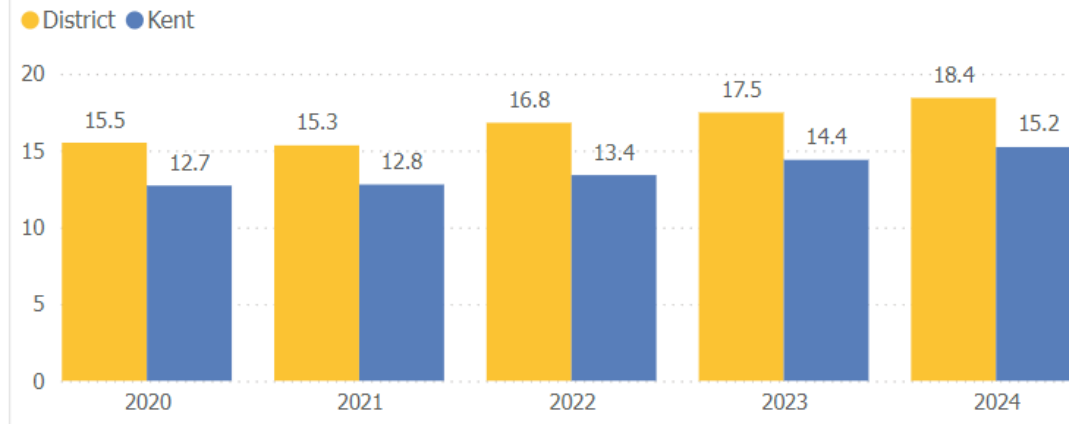


Demographics

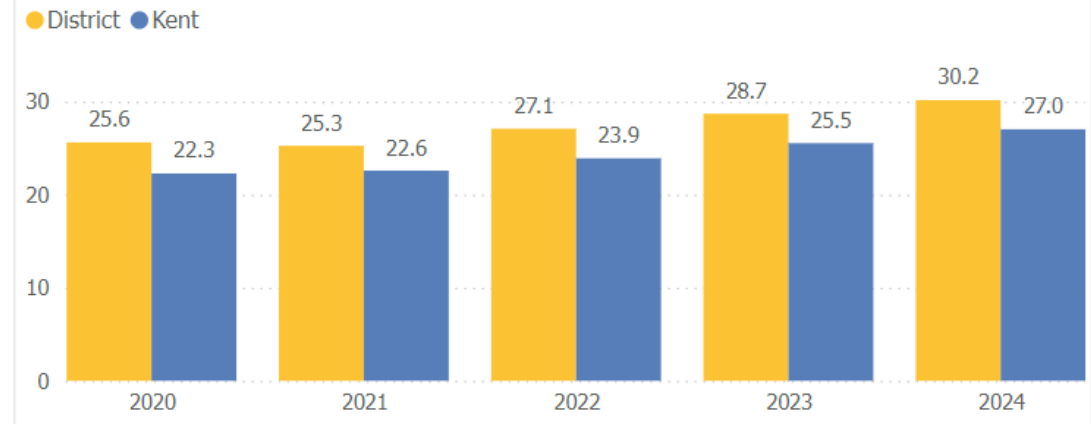
Number of Pupils - January 2024: 14960

Percentage of Kent pupils: 11.4

% of Pupils with First Language other than English



% of Pupils from an Ethnic Minority Group

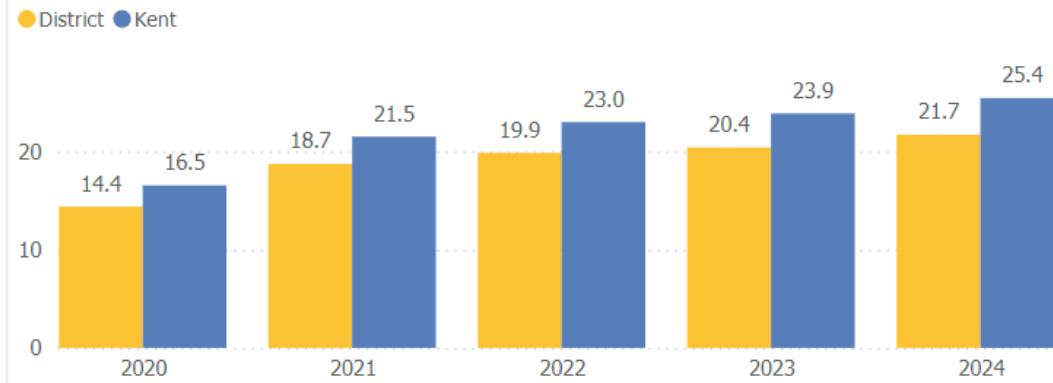


Notes:

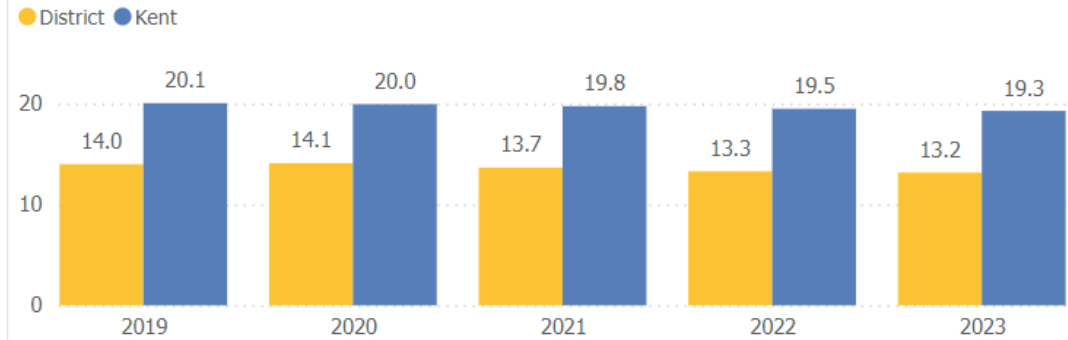
- 1) Number of pupils represents the District and School Type filters applied on this page.
- 2) Percentage of Kent pupils shown is the proportion of the Kent total roll for the District and School Type filters applied on this page.

Deprivation

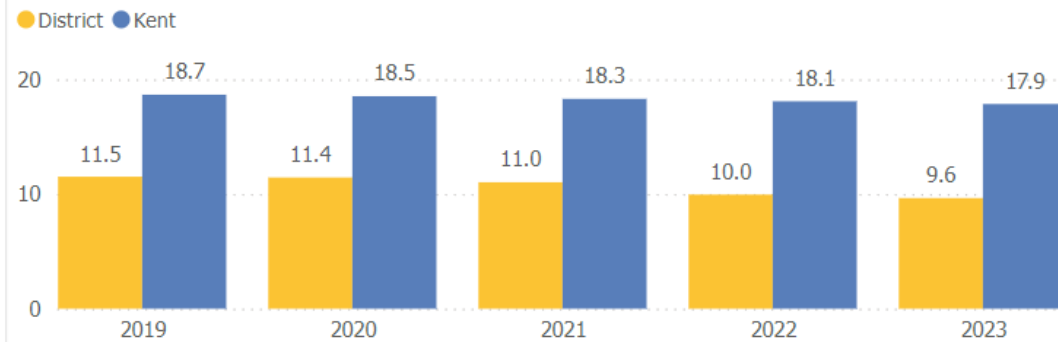
% of Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals (January School Census)



IDACI - % of Pupils who live in the 20% most deprived LSOAs in England (October School Census)



IMD - % of Pupils who live in the 20% most deprived LSOAs in England (October School Census)



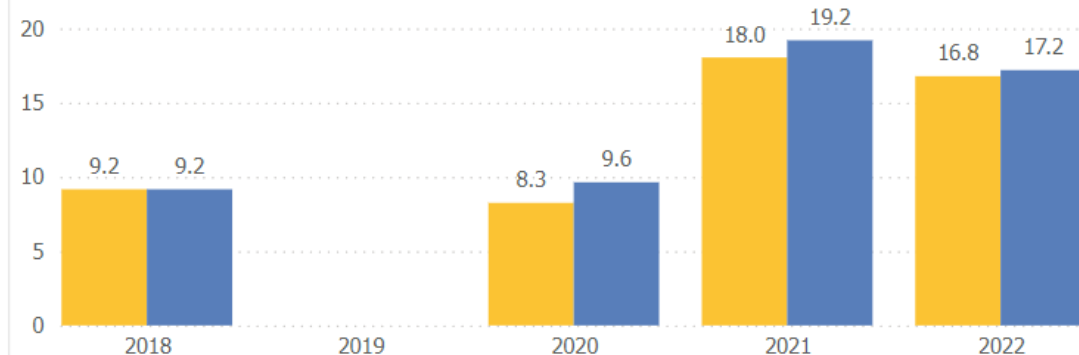
Notes:

- 1) LSOA - Lower Super Output Area
- 2) IMD - Index of Multiple Deprivation
- 3) IDACI - Income deprivation affecting children index

Attendance & Exclusions

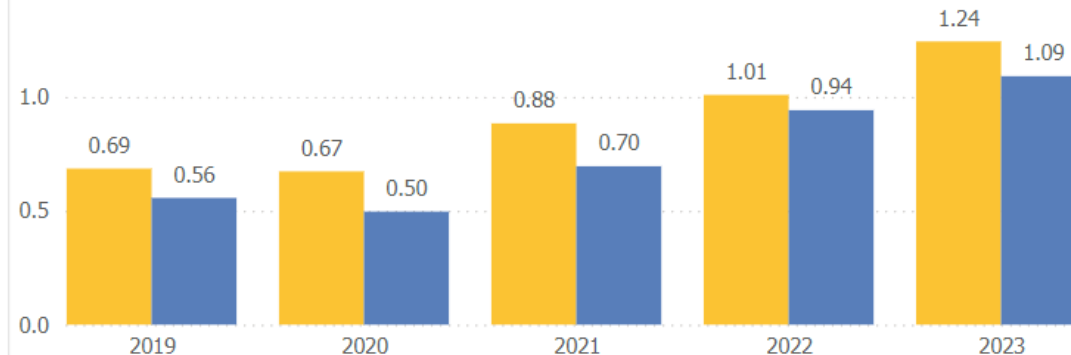
% of Pupils who are Persistently Absent

● District ● Kent



% of Pupils with a Suspension

● District ● Kent

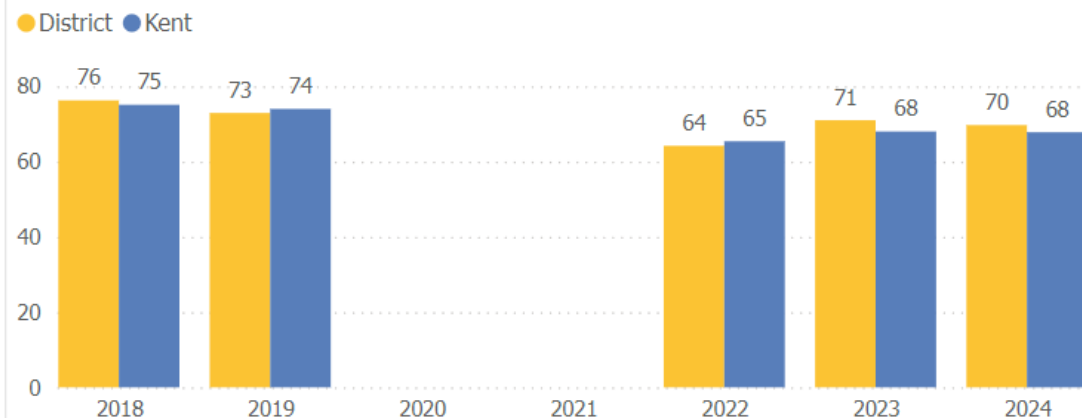


Notes:

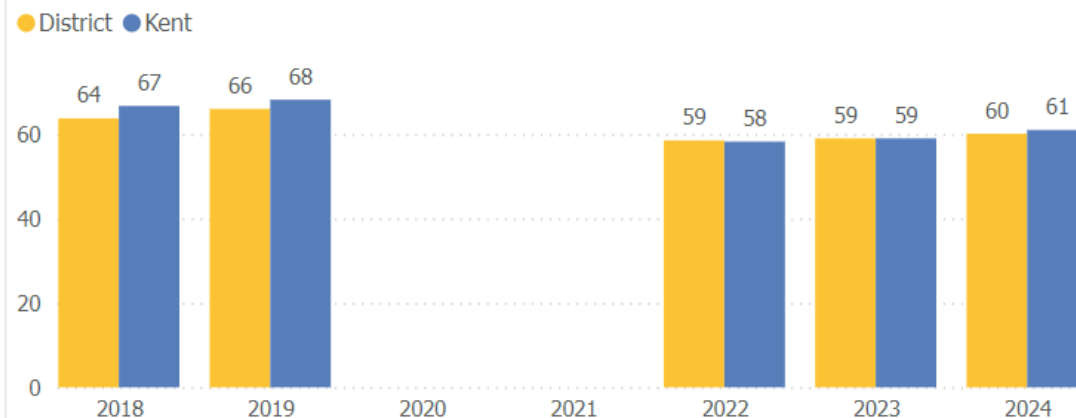
- 1) Year relates to the start of the Academic Year e.g. 2022 = 2022/2023 Academic Year
- 2) A pupil is classed as Persistently Absent if they miss 10% or more the sessions it was possible for them to attend.
- 3) Prior to 2021/2022, Suspensions were classified as Fixed Term Exclusions.
- 4) No Attendance data is available for 2019/2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Primary School Attainment

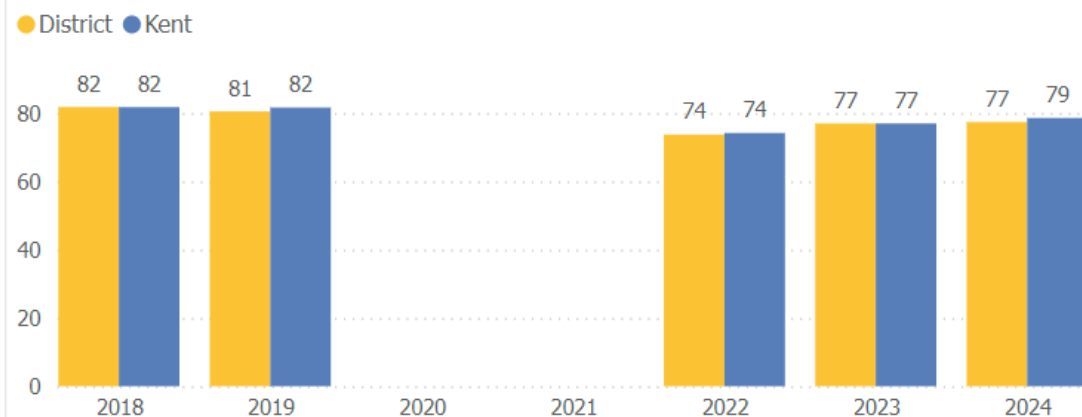
EYFSP - % of Pupils Achieving a Good Level of Development



KS2 - % of Pupils Achieving the Expected Standard



Phonics - % of Pupils Achieving the Expected Standard



Notes:

- 1) Year relates to the end of the Academic Year e.g. 2023 = 2022/2023 Academic Year
- 2) EYFSP Good Level of Development - Pupils achieving Expected in all Prime Areas of Learning and all Literacy and Mathematics Early Learning Goals.
- 3) KS2 - Expected Standard includes Pupils working at Greater Depth (Writing) or with a High Score (Reading and Maths)
- 4) Phonics - Expected Standard represents pupils achieving a score of 32 or more.
- 5) No Attainment data is available for 2019/2020 or 2020/2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

District

School Type

Primary Schools

Primary Schools

Secondary School Attainment

KS4 - % of Pupils Achieving a Strong Pass in English & Maths

Average Progress 8 Score

Average Attainment 8 Score

Notes:

- 1) Year relates to the end of the Academic Year e.g. 2022 = 2021/2022 Academic Year
- 2) KS4 - a Strong Pass relates to grades 9*- 5
- 3) Progress 8 - a score of (for example) 1.0 means pupils in the group make on average a grade more progress from KS2 than the national average.
- 4) Attainment 8 - grades are converted into scores for attainment in English and Math's (both worth double points) and the 6 English Bacculaureate subjects.
- 5) No Attainment data is available for 2019/2020 or 2020/2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

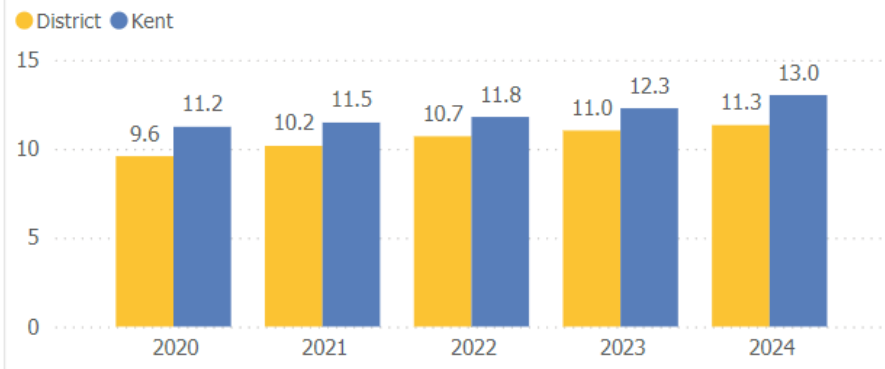
Management Information
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mieducation@kent.gov.uk

Source: DfE KS4 Performance Tables



Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

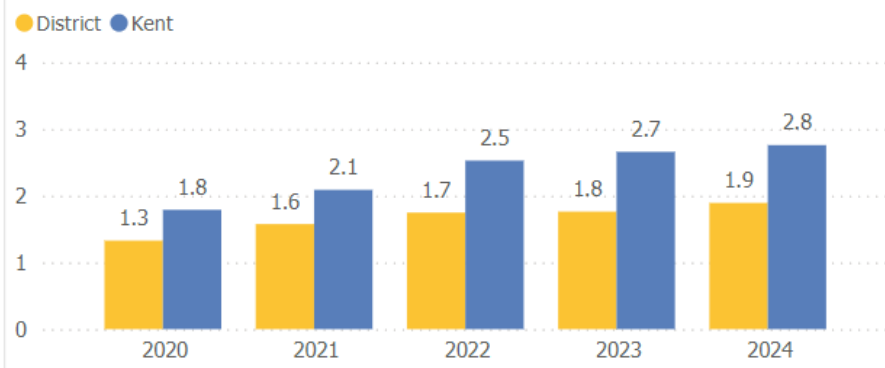
% of Pupils with SEN Support



SEN Support

Year	District		Kent
	SEN Support Pupils	% of Kent SEN Support Pupils	SEN Support Pupils
2020	1,315	9.1	14,397
2021	1,420	9.6	14,721
2022	1,550	10.1	15,277
2023	1,640	10.2	16,045
2024	1,695	10.0	16,948

% of Pupils with an Education Health & Care Plan



Percentage of Kent pupils in the district for comparison: 11.4

EHCP

Year	District			Kent	
	EHCP Pupils	% of Kent EHCP Pupils	% of PRI/SEC Age District Total	% of PRI/SEC Age Kent Total	EHCP Pupils
2020	182	7.9	31.1	4.3	2,292
2021	220	8.2	32.6	4.6	2,679
2022	253	7.7	33.9	4.6	3,274
2023	262	7.5	33.5	4.5	3,473
2024	283	7.9	34.4	4.8	3,591

Notes:

- 1) '% of Kent SEN Support/ EHCP Pupils' represents the proportion of Kent pupils within the selected District and School Type for the pupil group.
- 2) 'PRI/SEC age pupils' includes pupils from all school types (inc. Special schools) split into PRI or SEC categories based on NC Year. PRI Age is pupils in NC Year N to 6. SEC Age is pupils in NC Year 7 to 14.
- 3) '% of PRI/SEC Age' columns are the percentage of all Primary and Secondary aged pupils (including those in Special Schools) that have an EHCP and are attending a mainstream setting. This % is shown at both District and Kent level.
- 4) '% of Kent Pupils in the District for comparison' (Under graph) shows the proportion of the Kent total roll for the District and School Type filters applied on this page.

Source: January School Census

Management Information

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mieducation&widereh@kent.gov.uk

District

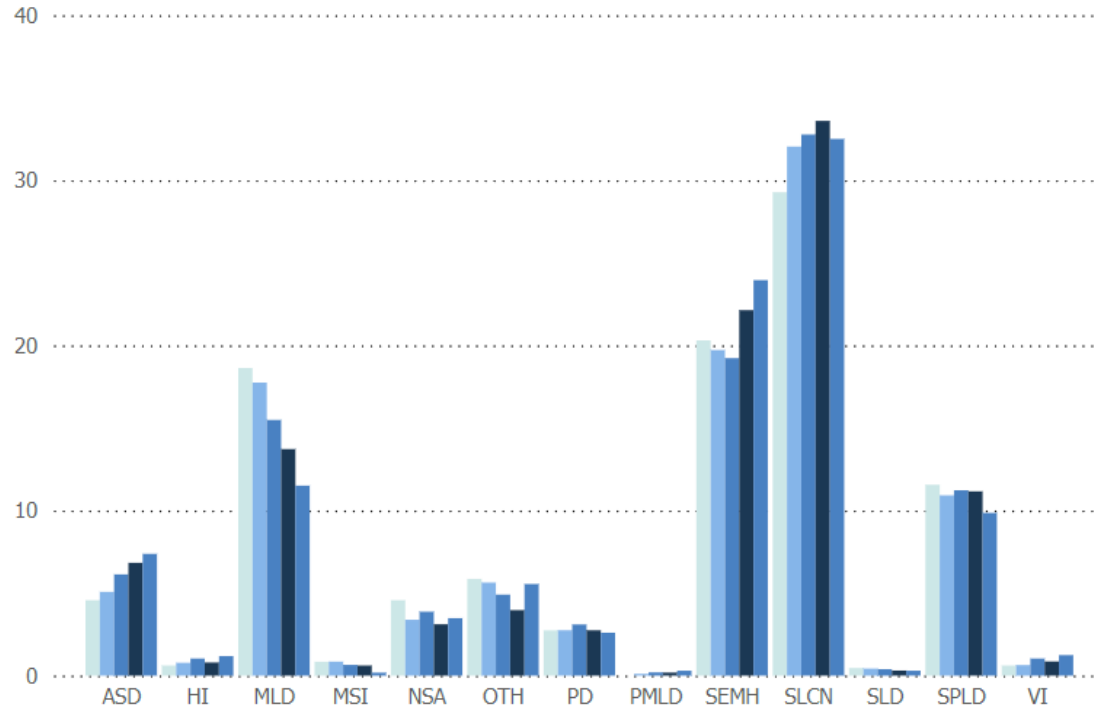
School Type

Primary Schools

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities - SEN Support Pupils by Primary SEN Need

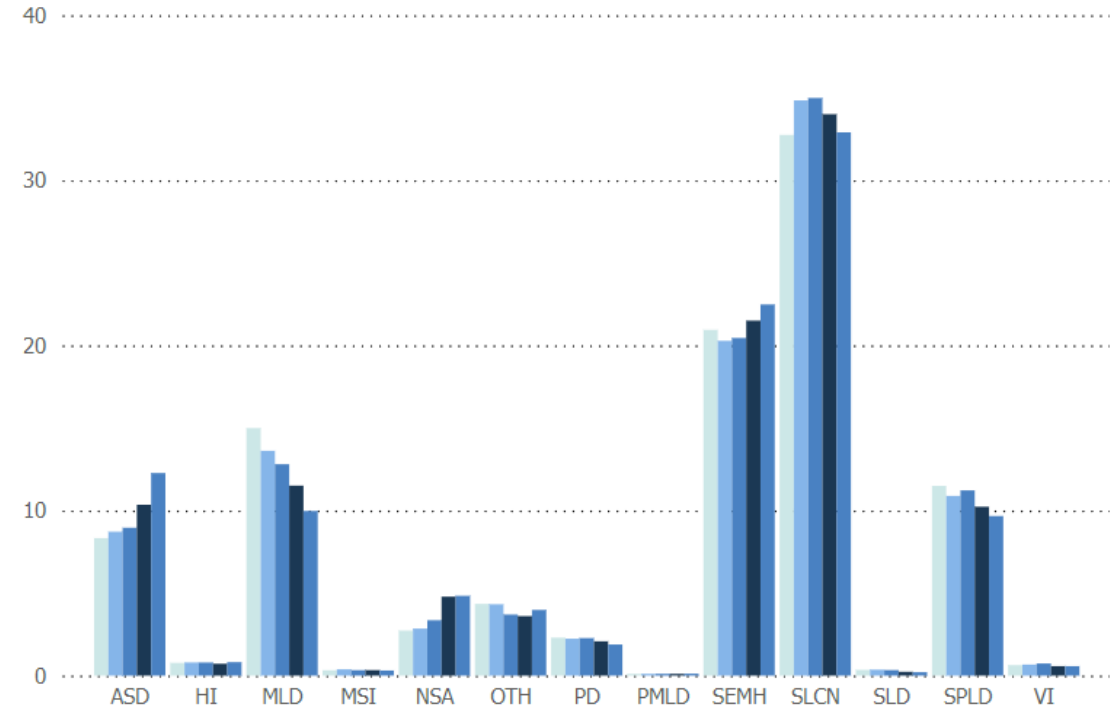
% of Pupils with SEN Support by Primary SEN Need (District)

Year ● 2020 ● 2021 ● 2022 ● 2023 ● 2024



% of Pupils with SEN Support by Primary SEN Need (Kent)

Year ● 2020 ● 2021 ● 2022 ● 2023 ● 2024



District

School Type

Primary Schools

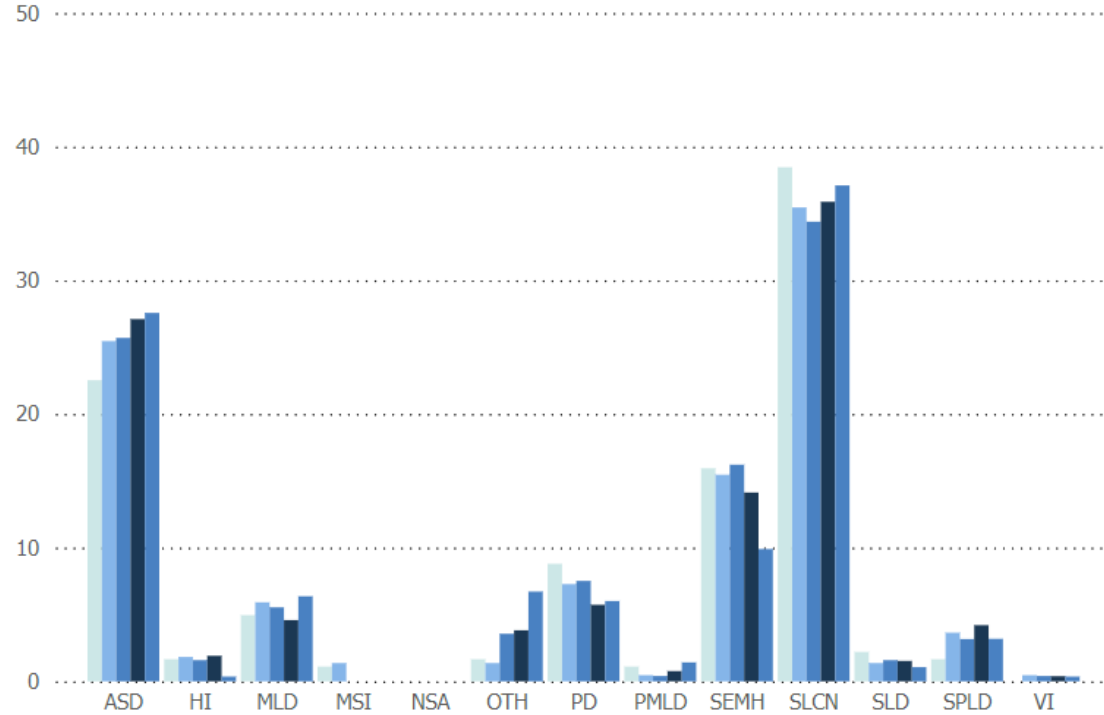
Dropdown menu for District selection

Primary Schools

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities - EHCP Pupils by Primary SEN Need

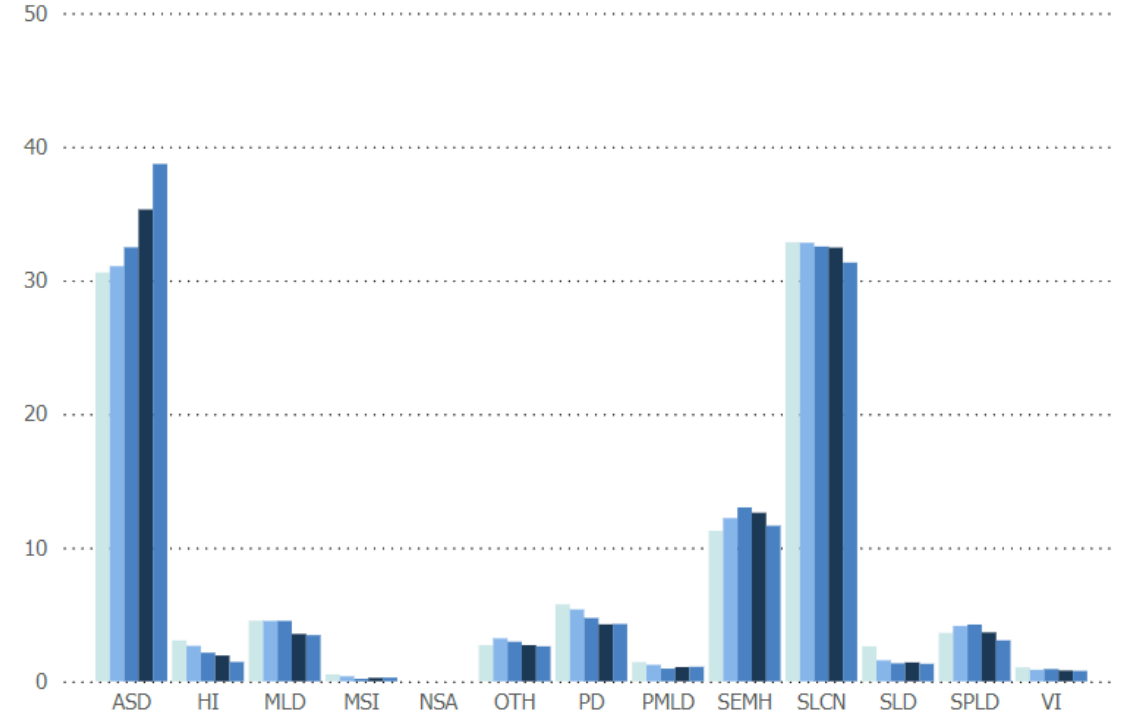
% of Pupils with an EHCP by Primary SEN Need (District)

Year 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024



% of Pupils with an EHCP by Primary SEN Need (Kent)

Year 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024



Page 199

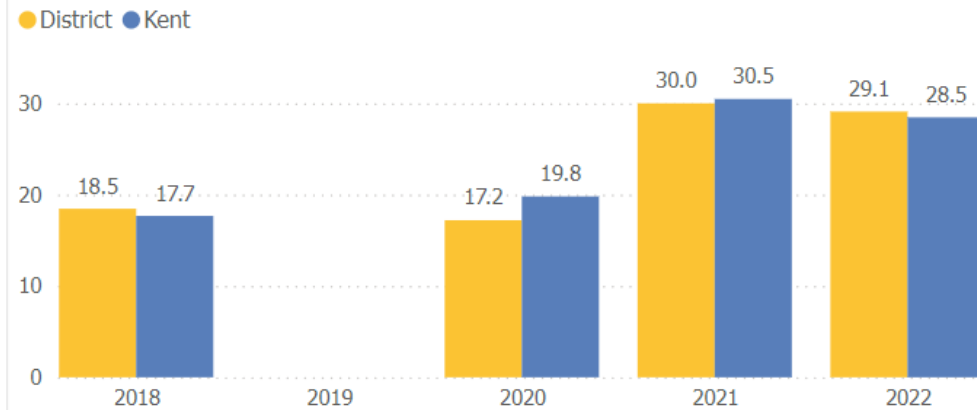
Management Information
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mieducation&widereh@kent.gov.uk

Source: January School Census

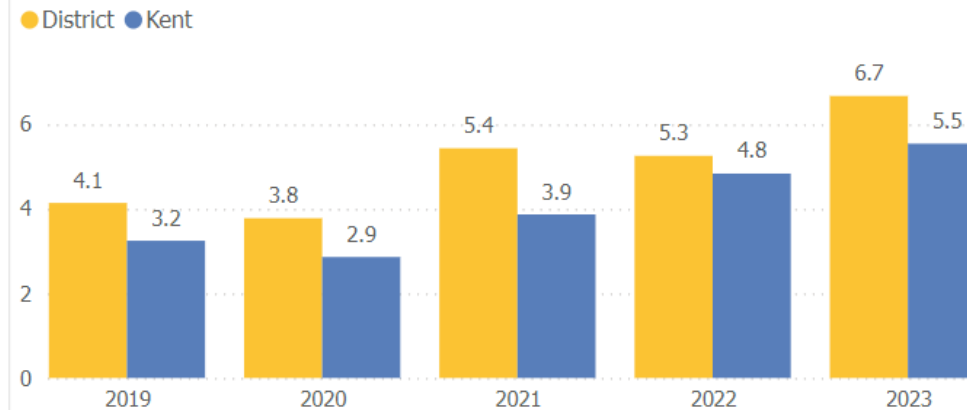


Special Educational Needs & Disabilities - Attendance & Exclusions for all SEND Pupils

% of SEND Pupils who are Persistently Absent



% of SEND Pupils with a Suspension



Year	All SEND pupils	% of Kent SEND pupils	Number of SEND PA pupils (District)	% of Kent SEND PA Pupils within District
2018	1,322	8.9	244	9.3
2019	-	-	-	-
2020	1,581	9.7	272	8.4
2021	1,940	9.9	582	9.7
2022	2,024	9.8	589	10.1

Year	Number of SEND Pupils with a Suspension	% of Kent SEND Pupils with a Suspension within District
2019	62	0.4
2020	62	0.4
2021	98	0.5
2022	100	0.5
2023	132	0.6

Data Table Notes:

- 1) The % of Kent SEND pupils data represents the proportion of Kent pupils with SEND within the selected District and School Type.
- 2) Percentage of Kent pupils in the district for comparison shows the proportion of the Kent total roll for the District and School Type filters applied on this page.

Percentage of Kent pupils in the district for comparison: 11.40

Notes:

- 1) Year relates to the start of the Academic Year e.g. 2022 = 2022/2023 Academic Year
- 2) A pupil is classed as Persistently Absent if they miss 10% or more the sessions it was possible for them to attend.
- 3) Prior to 2021/2022, Suspensions were classified as Fixed Term Exclusions.
- 4) No Attendance data is available for 2019/2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Management Information
Children, Young People and Education
mieducation&widereh@kent.gov.uk

Source: January, May, October School Census (Absence), Synergy (Suspensions)

District

School Type

Primary Schools

EHCP Referrals

District Referrals:

Year Indicator	2019		2020		2021		Num
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Referrals made by a Parent/ Guardian	114	77.6%	118	72.4%	136	70.1%	10
Referrals made by a Professional	0	0.0%	1	0.6%	2	1.0%	0
Referrals made by a School	33	22.4%	44	27.0%	56	28.9%	8
Total EHCP Referrals	147	100.0%	163	100.0%	194	100.0%	18

Kent Referrals:

Year Indicator	2019		2020		2021		Num
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Referrals made by a Parent/ Guardian	827	59.2%	865	56.4%	1,169	60.9%	7
Referrals made by a Professional	8	0.6%	9	0.6%	14	0.7%	
Referrals made by a School	563	40.3%	659	43.0%	738	38.4%	8
Total EHCP Referrals	1,398	100.0%	1,533	100.0%	1,921	100.0%	1,

Page 201

Year Indicator	2019		2020		2021		Nu
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Other Referrals resulting in an EHCP	13	16.9%	8	7.3%	5	4.9%	
Parent/Guardian Referrals resulting in an EHCP	41	53.2%	61	55.5%	57	55.9%	
Professional Referrals resulting in an EHCP	2	2.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
School Referrals resulting in an EHCP	21	27.3%	41	37.3%	40	39.2%	
SEN Referrals resulting							
Total EHCP Referrals	77	100.0%	110	100.0%	102	100.0%	

Year Indicator	2019		2020		2021		Nu
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Other Referrals resulting in an EHCP	155	15.5%	96	10.5%	91	6.6%	
Parent/Guardian Referrals resulting in an EHCP	398	39.8%	384	42.1%	597	43.0%	
Professional Referrals resulting in an EHCP	11	1.1%	7	0.8%	10	0.7%	
School Referrals resulting in an EHCP	435	43.5%	425	46.6%	691	49.7%	
SEN Referrals resulting							
Total EHCP Referrals	999	100.0%	912	100.0%	1,389	100.0%	1

Notes:

- 1) Data above includes all Kent Schools (inc. Special, Private, Maintained) grouped by Primary and Secondary based on age. Primary ages: 5-10 Years, Secondary ages: 11-19 Years.
- 2) Year relates to a Calendar Year (Jan-Dec).
- 3) Districts are based on pupil home address.
- 4) Pupils whose home address is outside of Kent are excluded from District level data but included in the Kent Overall Figures.

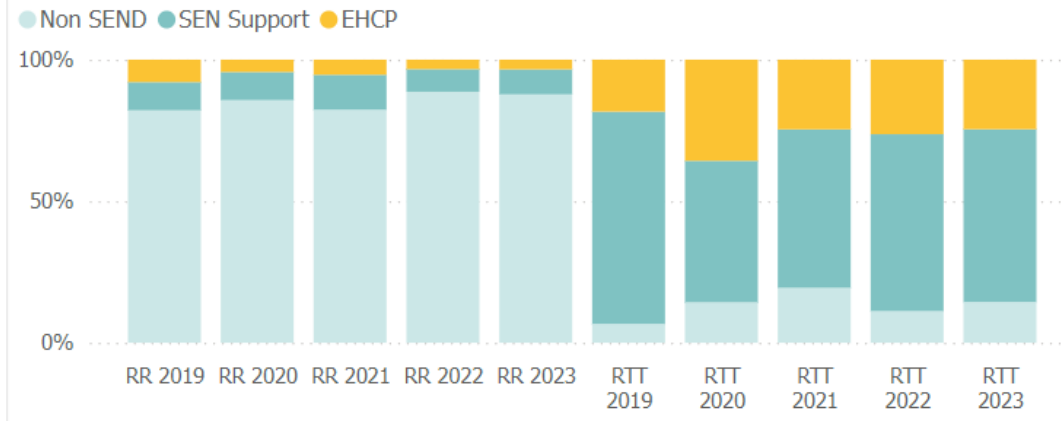
Management Information
Children, Young People and Education
mieducation&widereh@kent.gov.uk

Source: SQL Synergy workflow,
as at 05/10/2023

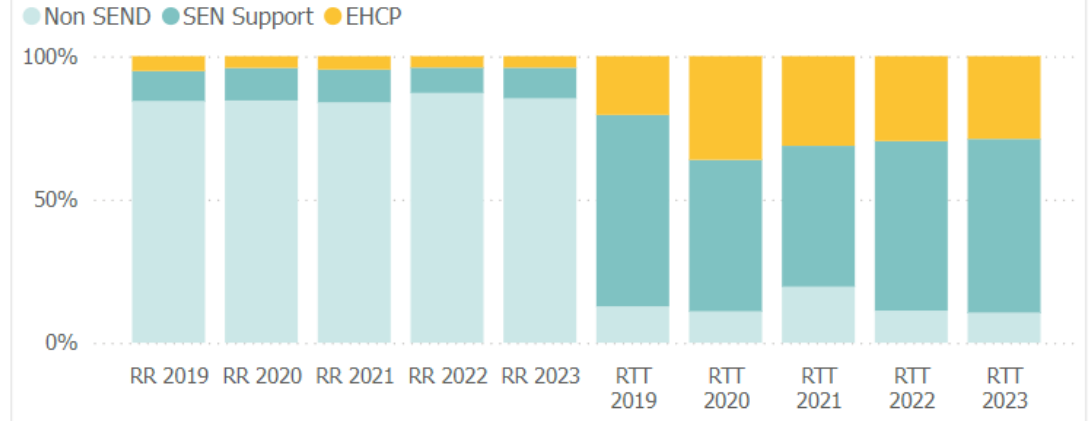


Reduced Timetables & Removed from Roll

Maidstone Primary Schools



Kent Primary Schools



District	Non SEND	SEN Support	EHCP	Total
RR 2019	280	34	27	341
RR 2020	414	48	21	483
RR 2021	340	51	22	413
RR 2022	399	36	15	450
RR 2023	437	44	17	498
RTT 2019	4	45	11	60
RTT 2020	12	42	30	84
RTT 2021	26	75	33	134
RTT 2022	17	95	40	152
RTT 2023	17	72	29	118

Notes:

- 1) Year relates to the start of the Academic Year e.g. 2022 = 2022/2023 Academic Year
- 2) All data is derived from individual notifications from schools during the Academic Year
- 3) RR = Removed from Roll, RTT = Reduced Timetable

Appendix 10.
AET Progress Report October 2024

The AET training offer is now entering the third year of the licence, the licence year runs from September 1, 2024, to August 31st 2025.

Year 1 September 2022 – August 2023

During this year, the Autism Education Trust training team was created, and a team of trainers were inducted.

The training rollout for Making Sense of Autism (course 1) started in April 2023 in pilot districts.

Year 2 September 2023 – August 2024

Making Sense of Autism and Good Autism Practice training courses were rolled out across all districts.

The AET training target was 20% of all early years, school age and Post 16 settings to have completed AET training.

There is an expectation that following every Making Sense of Autism training a follow meeting takes place with the setting to embed the AET Frameworks into school improvement planning with a clear action plan being created.

Understanding Autism and Anxiety training was added to the programme in April 2024.

Year 3 September 2024 – August 2025

AET training continues to be rolled out across Kent.

Additional modules have been added.

Early Years

Developing Play

Toileting

All Phases

Transition Training.

Summary of Training Figures.

Year 1 September 2022 – August 2023

School Age

District	Total number of school age settings	Total number of schools trained in 22/23
Ashford	49	3
Canterbury	45	0
Dartford	43	0
Dover	50	1
Folkestone and Hythe	42	7
Gravesham	38	3
Maidstone	61	0
Sevenoaks	45	1
Swale	57	0
Thanet	40	0
Tonbridge and Malling	57	0
Tunbridge Wells	41	0
KENT	568	15

Early Years (including Childminders)

District	Total number of Early Years settings	Total number of Early Years trained in 22/23
Ashford	120	1
Canterbury	99	0
Dartford	125	1
Dover	74	0
Folkestone and Hythe	75	0
Gravesham	109	0
Maidstone	162	2
Sevenoaks	130	0
Swale	158	1
Thanet	158	7
Tonbridge and Malling	101	0
Tunbridge Wells	124	0
KENT	1435	12

Post 16

North Kent College – 4 campuses received Making Sense of Autism and Good Autism Practice.

Year 2 September 2023 – August 2024

School Age

District	Total number of school age settings	Total number of schools trained in 23/24
Ashford	49	26
Canterbury	45	15
Dartford	43	13
Dover	50	34
Folkestone and Hythe	42	21
Gravesham	38	24
Maidstone	61	9
Sevenoaks	45	25
Swale	57	42
Thanet	40	23
Tonbridge and Malling	57	24
Tunbridge Wells	41	25
KENT	568	281

Early Years (including Childminders)

District	Total number of Early Years settings	Total number of Early Years trained in 23/24
Ashford	120	23
Canterbury	99	8
Dartford	125	18

Dover	74	14
Folkestone and Hythe	75	13
Gravesham	109	19
Maidstone	162	29
Sevenoaks	130	19
Swale	158	25
Thanet	158	15
Tonbridge and Malling	101	15
Tunbridge Wells	124	7
KENT	1435	200

Post 16

District	Total number of Post 16 Settings	Total number of Post 16 trained in 23/24
Ashford	8	5
Canterbury	8	0
Dartford	8	2
Dover	11	3
Folkestone and Hythe	9	1
Gravesham	9	5
Maidstone	13	1
Sevenoaks	3	1
Swale	10	5
Thanet	8	4
Tonbridge and Malling	11	3
Tunbridge Wells	6	1
KENT	104	31

NB. This is working on the assumption that Post 16 staff attend Secondary training sessions.

Year 3 September 2024 – August 2025

School Age

District	Total number of school age settings	Total number of schools trained in 24/25	Number of training sessions booked
Ashford	20	4	7
Canterbury	30	2	2
Dartford	30	0	1
Dover	15	4	1
Folkestone and Hythe	14	4	2
Gravesham	11	1	1
Maidstone	52	2	2
Sevenoaks	19	2	2
Swale	15	3	3
Thanet	17	7	2
Tonbridge and Malling	33	5	10
Tunbridge Wells	16	1	3
KENT	288	35	36

NB. The total number of schools is based on the number of settings that have not accessed Making Sense of Autism training.

Early Years (including Childminders)

District	Total number of Early Years settings	Total number of Early Years trained in 24/25	Number of training sessions booked
Ashford	97	0	1
Canterbury	91	0	1
Dartford	112	0	0
Dover	60	1	4
Folkestone and Hythe	63	6	0
Gravesham	90	2	0
Maidstone	133	0	0
Sevenoaks	111	0	5
Swale	133	4	0
Thanet	143	0	0
Tonbridge and Malling	86	5	2
Tunbridge Wells	117	0	0
KENT	1236	18	13

Post 16

District	Total number of Post 16 Settings	Total number of Post 16 trained in 23/24	Number of training sessions booked
Ashford	3	0	
Canterbury	8	0	
Dartford	6	0	
Dover	8	0	
Folkestone and Hythe	8	0	
Gravesham	4	0	
Maidstone	12	0	
Sevenoaks	2	0	
Swale	5	0	
Thanet	4	1	
Tonbridge and Malling	8	1	
Tunbridge Wells	5	0	
KENT	73	31	0

Training Totals August 2022 – October 2024

Early Years including childminders = 1435 or 16.09%

School Age = 569 or 57.29%

Post 16 = 31 or 31.73%

Summary of activity, accomplishments, and challenges from September 2024

School Age Making Sense of Autism has happened in 11/12 districts since September and all districts have training booked. Early Years training has taken place in 8/12 districts, and 10/12 districts have pending training sessions although some districts have provisional bookings but are waiting for the dates to be confirmed and so have not been recorded.

In August, North Kent College received training in both Making Sense of Autism and Good Autism Practice as part of the staff training programme. This is the second year that we have worked with North Kent College.

Last year, we started working with the Graphic Design students at North Kent College, Dartford Campus to develop an art campaign around Neurodiversity. One of the students did submit a piece of work based on the theme of 'Where's Wally' as part of their final project. This work is going to continue this year with a larger group of students and the project will be led by a Level 4 student who is a Lived Experience Expert. We are hoping that some of the images and artwork can be linked into projects around Neurodiversity that are happening in Kent.

We attended the SENCO Conference on 8th October 2024 and led two workshops looking at how settings can use the AET Standards and Competency Frameworks to embed good autism practice in schools and create more inclusive settings. These workshops appeared to be well received, and we had a great deal of interest in training during the lunch session. The themes of all the speakers that day reflected the AET materials and the development of whole school approaches around SEND, so hopefully settings will consider using the frameworks even if they have not had training.

We also attended the Big Mental Health Conversation providing us with the opportunity to meet young people and ask for their views on what they would like to happen in schools to support autistic pupils and those with neurodiversity. We had some interesting conversations, and we were even thanked by a student for leading our training as she said that it has an impact on everyday lives of autistic students.

Examples of student comments were:

- Ask students with autism about their experience
- For teachers to let me have my moment when I am not ok.
- Don't pick on people who don't raise their hands, sometimes they don't like public speaking
- Check people have understood before you move onto the next thing
- Teachers need to read our mood and see our emotions
- Understand that just because we fidget it does not mean we are not listening

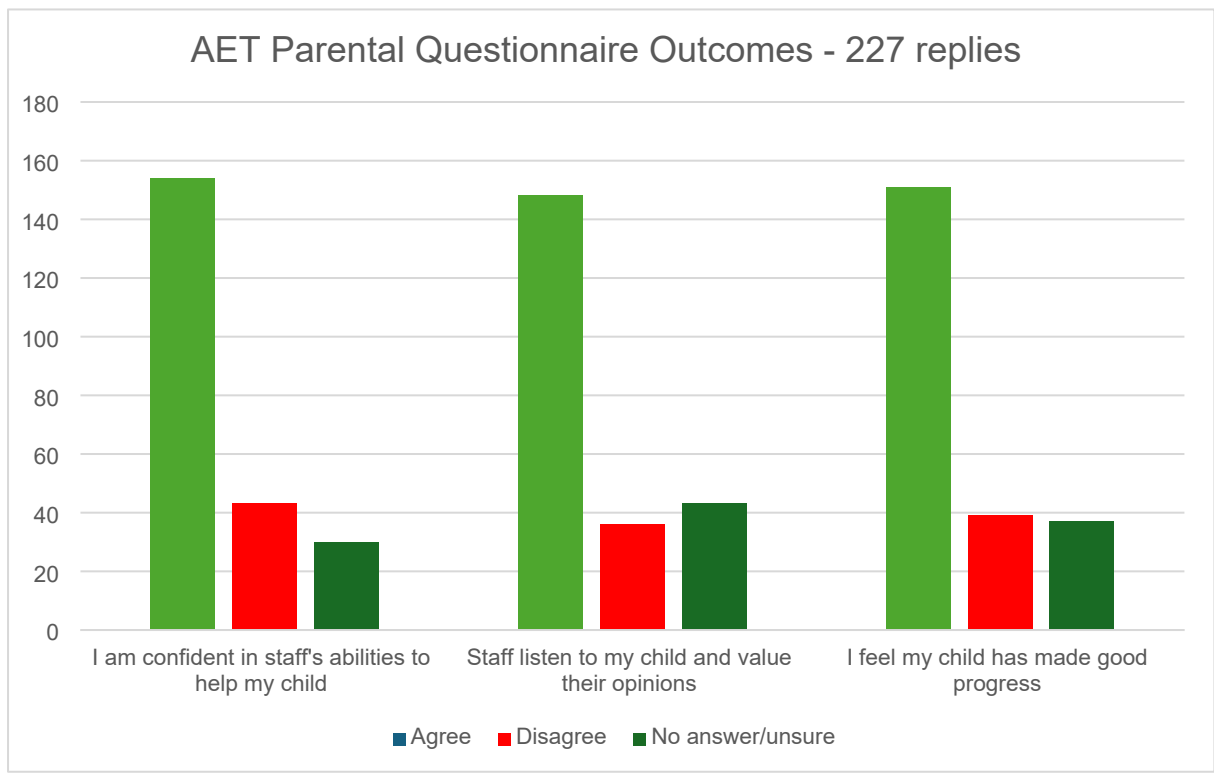
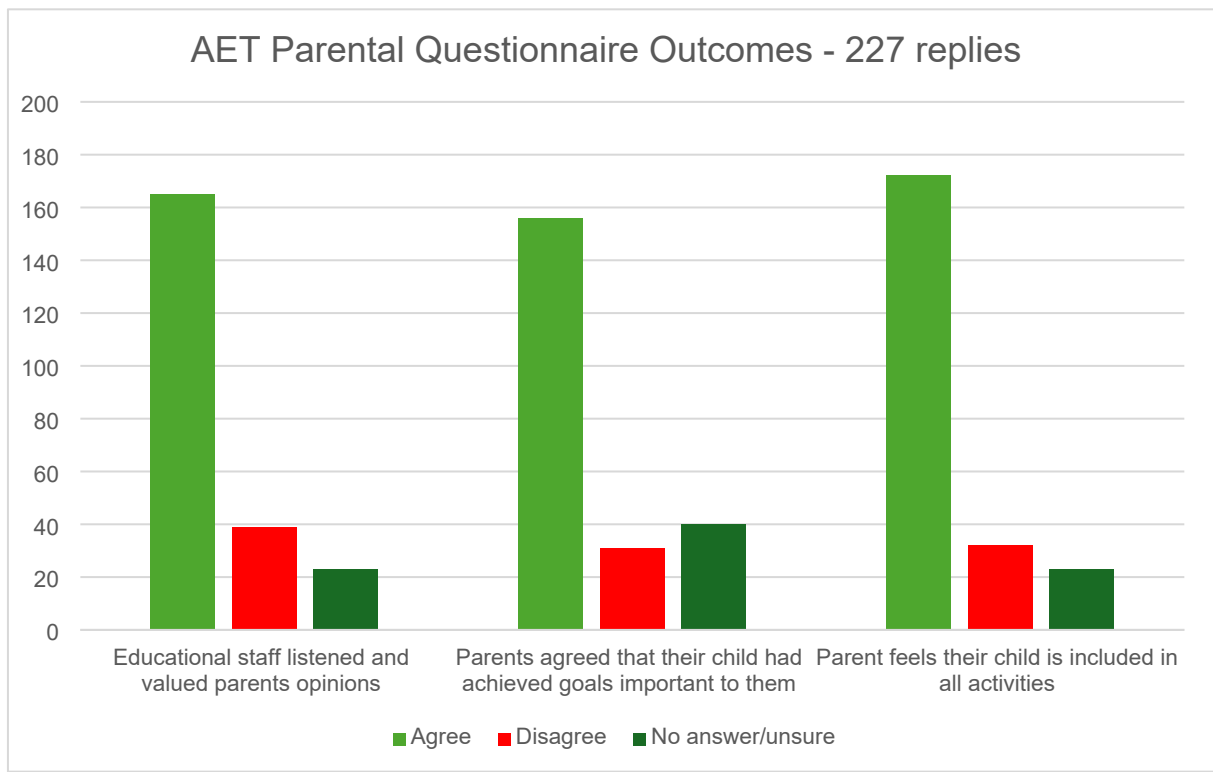
On a national level we are working closely with the AET, Matthew Bushell is continuing to work with Ian Dale on the pilot parent questionnaire. Morag Hards is now part of a focus group working on how to develop a virtual training model that will still provide a level of accountability to delegates and focus on the AET Standards and Competency Frameworks. Melissa Devine is part of a focus group feeding into the AET 's National Strategy 2025, looking at how to develop the operational model for local partners, the initial focus was on the training materials and identifying next steps for the training and framework programme.

AET parental online questionnaire

A quantitative and qualitative online questionnaire

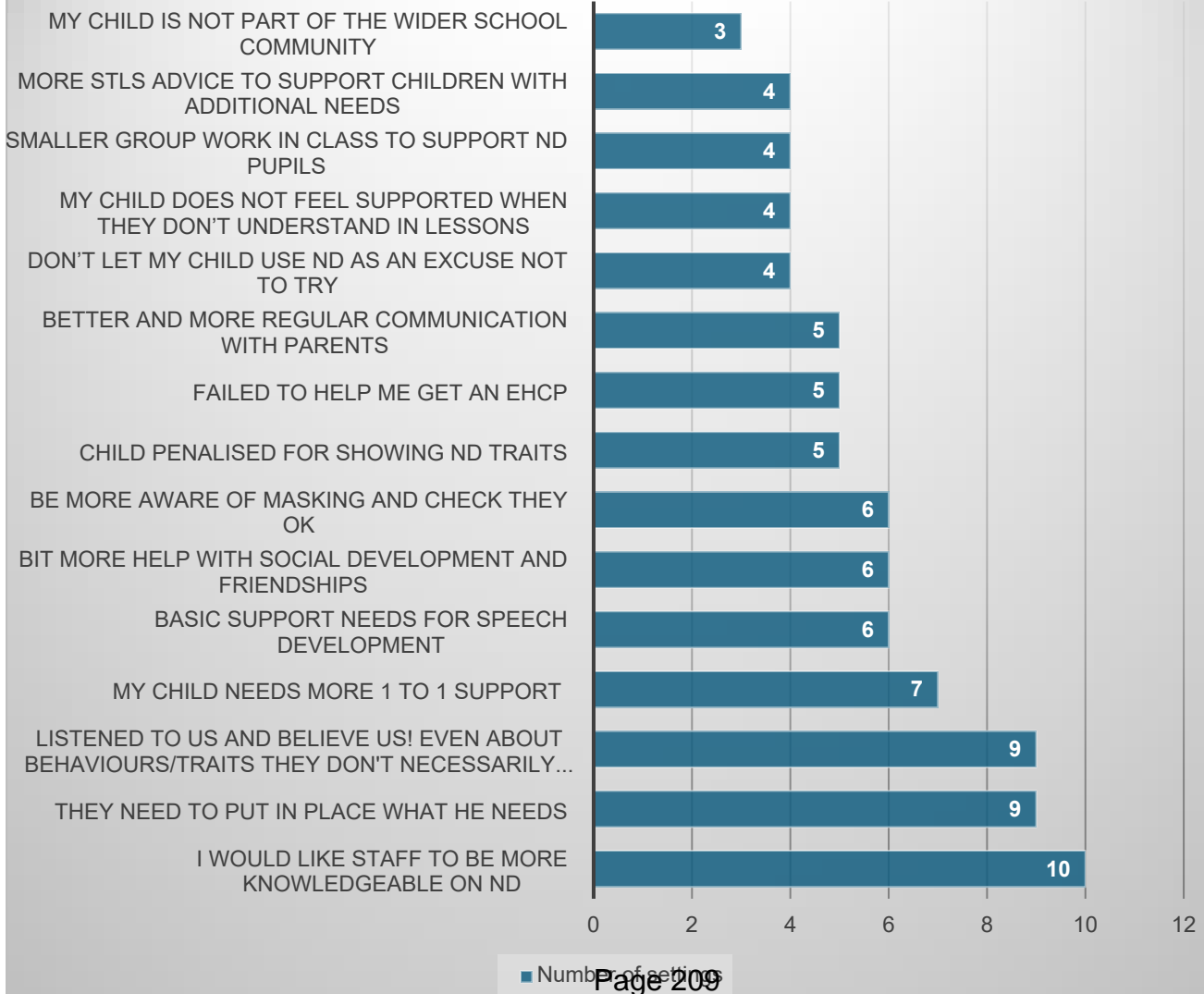
National AET researchers choose 5 sites to trial this questionnaire, of which Kent was one; it asks parents of children whose school setting have had AET training, how things are for them and their neurodiverse child.

In an ever-increasing sample 244 parents from 60 settings have completed the survey, of which 227 are happy for the results to be used for research purposes. We expect this number to double in the coming year. Although a small sample in the scale of Kent SEN, the response rate is quite good for a questionnaire of this length - and it is uplifting in an appreciative enquiry sense to hear from parents where things have gone right. The response is overwhelmingly positive.



There is clearly still work to do so, but although it is early days, the results still show promise, and in a key area 'My child is happy at school, 72% of parents (163 parents of 227) agreed - match this against the much-publicised statistic that only 26% of autistic pupils surveyed felt happy at school (Nov 2021 National Autistic Society - School Report - survey found [Supporting autistic children to stay in mainstream education \(autism.org.uk\)](https://www.autism.org.uk))

Best Things School Did



The big challenge now is to maintain momentum as we still need to reach 288 school age settings for Making Sense of Autism and 538 school age settings for Good Autism Practice. We need to reach Secondary schools as we know that that are still 73 who have not accessed any AET training modules.

We need to focus on the Action Planning meetings as currently we have only completed 139 Action Planning meetings but have trained 481 settings (School Age and Early Years). We know that very few review meetings have happened with Early Years, yet we know that this is the phase that is asking for the support around practice and implementation. We are also aware that many of the Review Meetings that have happened have not used the suggested AET Action Planning document and so do not link into the research work that Matthew Bushell is doing.

Districts have stated that they have completed 139 Action Planning meetings, however we do not have 139 Action Plans in the requested format. This means that firstly, not all action planning is focusing on the AET Standards Frameworks to embed good autism practice and secondly the information provided will not inform the research evaluation effectively. These needs to be addressed and the correct paperwork used more consistently in this final year if we are to have the desired impact on practice. There are also Action Plans that may have been done but we have not been given access to them as we did not add a permissions box on the booking form until the summer.

District Leads and Educational Psychologists are telling us that they do not have the time capacity to do the follow up meetings.

Number of Review meetings held post MSA (Making Sense of Autism Training)

District	Number of review meetings 22/23	Number of review meetings 23/24
Ashford	3	17
Canterbury	0	9
Dartford	0	8
Dover	0	26
Folkestone & Hythe	3	16
Gravesham	1	7
Maidstone	0	0
Sevenoaks	0	5
Swale	0	27
Thanet	0	14
Tunbridge & Malling	0	0
Tunbridge Wells	0	3
	7	132

Using 23 action plans, these were the most presenting elements of recent advancements which AET training and supporting elements, could reasonably be seen to have contributed to:

Use of Pupil Voice, canvass young person's opinion	Principle Two. Enabling the voice of the autistic child and young person to contribute to and influence decisions	18
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One page profile, Autism profile, communication passport.	Principle One: Understanding the strengths, interests and challenges of the autistic child and young person	17
Sensory checklists	Principle One: Understanding the strengths, interests and challenges of the autistic child and young person	10
Regular SENCO and parent engagement	Principle Three: Collaboration with parents and carers of autistic children and young people	10
Co-production of pupil support with parents	Principle Three: Collaboration with parents and carers of autistic children and young people	9
Focus on sensory environments	Principle Six: An ethos and environment that fosters social inclusion for children and young people on the autism spectrum	9
Working on more effective use of visuals (Transition, equipment, refocussing, end of day, lanyards)	Principle Four: Workforce development to support autistic children and young people	8
Updating website information with ND info and right language	Principle Five: Leadership and management that promotes and embeds good autism practice	8
Staff confidence has markedly increased supporting ND pupils	Principle Four: Workforce development to support autistic children and young people	6
Staff are better supporting pupils to self-regulate	Principle One: Understanding the strengths, interests and challenges of the autistic child and young person	6
Learning walks are proving useful	Principle Six: An ethos and environment that fosters social inclusion for children and young people on the autism spectrum	6
Parent SEND questionnaires have been used	Principle Three: Collaboration with parents and carers of autistic children and young people	6

Staff capacity in districts remains the key challenge for the rollout as the timings that settings would like to have training does not link into working hours for the STLS or EPs. We are having discussions with the different teams to see how we can provide support.

Key risks, issues and mitigating actions

*Risks: That we do not maintain the momentum with the training in the next academic year. For Making Sense of Autism we still need to reach 51% of School Age and 75% of Early Years

settings. In Good Autism Practice we need to reach 94.55% of school age settings and 97.70% of Early Years settings.

*Mitigate: In the summer term, we wrote to all schools that had not received AET training and reminded them of the AET training and included training and booking information. We also attended the SENCO Conference to promote the AET training and demonstrated how to use the AET Standards Frameworks to develop inclusive practice.

We need to work with District Leads to identify which settings are using other Autism Training and then see if we can develop a model to support these schools to adopt the AET Frameworks to evidence good autism practice. The AET Frameworks form the basis of the National Autistic Society Inclusion Accreditation and so we can encourage schools to use the frameworks to work towards this award.

*Risks: Secondary Schools not engaging with the Autism Education Trust training. We only have 26% Secondary Schools in 23/24. We met the KPI of 20% but it is a low take up compared to Primary settings. Sustaining the level of Secondary training will be a challenge. Many have training programmes set up well in advance or prefer virtual training models that staff can access in their own time. The modular face to face format of the Autism Education Trust programme does not always meet the training need and model for Secondary settings.

*Mitigation: STLS District Leads are working with Secondary Settings to encourage them to engage with the AET training and frameworks. This will be supported through the transition work happening in districts. The AET have released specific training on Transition that the STLS and EPs can utilise. The AET team will attend the Transition Steering group from September 2024.

*Risks: Reduction in training capacity in 2024/2025 due to staff shortages in the Educational Psychology Service and Specialist Teaching Service. Both services have reported that certain districts will have a reduced capacity due to staff changes or staff absence due to illness. This would limit the number of training sessions that they can deliver.

*Mitigation: The AET Core team have offered to support training particularly those requested for weekend and evenings. Swale district are trialling a virtual pre-recorded sessions using a locked system where delegates can only access the training through the Swale administrator. The AET materials are licenced and so we need to ensure that only recognised delegates can access them. Should this work then we can consider creating more virtual training to be rolled out across the districts.

Dover District are running live virtual training on a range of dates to provide greater flexibility for settings in the district. This came about after focused meetings with the Nurseries to try to find accessible sessions. Again, any learning from these will be shared with other districts.

*Risks: Limited time capacity of trainers meaning that settings are not having the review meetings post training. This means that settings are not accessing the full AET programme or embedding the Standards and Competency Frameworks into their setting improvement plans and general activity. We know that training alone does not bring about cultural change. Currently only 139 have had a follow up meeting.

*Risks: Currently, meetings following training do not have a consistent format. Different areas are working in different ways rather than using the proforma provided by the AET Core Team. Some meetings do not have any notes or recorded information around changes or new approaches that settings are adopting post training.

*Mitigation: Trainers have been made aware of the research work and the building of a Kent Strategy Bank that Matthew Bushell is carrying out so that they can see the bigger picture around

why the meetings are important. Those trainers that have been working with schools have been sharing the impact of the action plans and how it has fed into district work.

Mitigation: We did ask districts to feedback on the suggested action planning document in term 3 before it went live in March. We also asked for further feedback in June when we did the trainer workshops to ensure that trainers felt that the document was workable. We have shared a guidance document on how to help settings to develop their action plan which may have helped those that are less confident in speaking to senior leaders about school improvement.

How will you evidence the impact of the action on children, young people and families?

This is an ongoing process and AET will still be provided long into 2025. An autism intervention offered can never completely be evidenced as a sole causation of impact for pupils and parents satisfaction and confidence in schools, because life is not so linear, there are other wider factors and schools of course, to varying degrees have been working on improving their offer to neurodivergent pupils previously – but within the AET offer there is very much the complete circle evidenced now – action planning, training provided, actions worked on, online parental interview, case studies, individualised school report, which can be used as feedback and inform future actions.

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