CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION CABINET COMMITTEE

Thursday, 26th November, 2026

10.00 am

Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone

Kent County Council
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AGENDA

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION CABINET COMMITTEE

Thursday, 26 November 2026 at 10.00 am
Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone

Ask for: **James Willis**
Telephone: **03000 417831**

Membership (13)

Reform UK (8):	Mr T Mole (Chairman), Mr T Mallon (Vice-Chair), Mr J Baker, Mr A Kibble, Mr R Mayall, Mr T L Shonk, Mrs B Porter and Miss D Morton
Liberal Democrat (1):	Mrs T Dean, MBE
Restore Britain (1):	Mr P Thomas
Green (1):	Mr P Stepto
Conservative (1):	Ms C Russell
Labour (1):	Ms C Nolan

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

1 Introduction/Webcast announcement

2 Apologies and Substitutes

3 Declarations of Interest

4 Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2026 (Pages 1 - 14)

5 Verbal Update by Cabinet Members

6 Performance Monitoring (Pages 15 - 78)

7 The LADO Education Safeguarding Advisory Service (LESAS) - Annual Report (Pages 79 - 106)

8 Ofsted Local Area Strategic Plan (Pages 107 - 118)

9 Update on Implementation of Post 16 Transport (Pages 119 - 136)

10 Complaints and Representations 2025-26 (Pages 137 - 154)

11 Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership Annual Report (Pages 155 - 220)

12 26/00064 - Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2027-31 (Pages 221 - 398)

13 26/00068 - Proposed New Paddock Wood Primary School (Pages 399 - 416)

14 26/00072 - State Maintained Special School Capacity - Capital Programme (Pages 417 - 440)

15 26/00073 - Proposal to increase Specialist Resource Provision places, 2026-27 onwards (Pages 441 - 464)

16 Private Fostering Report (Pages 465 - 488)

17 26/00071 - Future Commissioning Arrangements for Alternative Provision (Tuition and Therapies) (Pages 489 - 508)

18 26/00074 - Together with Parents (TWP) - Ending the Service at Contract End (Pages 509 - 526)

19 26/00075 - Representation, Rights and Advocacy (RRA) - Direct Award (Non-Key) (Pages 527 - 544)

20 Work Programme (Pages 545 - 546)

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Benjamin Watts
Deputy Chief Executive
03000 416814

Wednesday, 18 November 2026

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee held at Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 15th September, 2026.

PRESENT: Mr T Mole (Chairman), Mr J Baker, Mrs. T Dean, MBE, Mr A Kibble, Mr R Mayall, Ms. C Russell, Mr T L Shonk, Mr P Stepto, Mrs. B Porter, Mr P Thomas, Miss D Morton and Mr A Brady (Substitute)

OTHER MEMBERS: Mrs B Fordham (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills) and Mrs P Williams (Deputy Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services) and Mr B Collins (Deputy Leader of the Council)

OFFICERS: Christine McInnes (Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education), Rebecca Spore (Director of Infrastructure), David Adams (Interim Deputy Director for Education: Sufficiency, Effectiveness and Skills), Robert Veale (Assistant Director of Education-East Kent), Craig Chapman (Interim Deputy Director for Education: Access and Inclusion), Ingrid Crisan (Director for Operational Integrated Children's Services), Kevin Kasaven (Director for Children's Countywide Services), Joanne Taylor (Head of Capital) and Stuart Pryor (Programme Manager), and James Willis (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

89. Apologies and Substitutes
(Item 2)

Apologies had been received from Mrs Nolan for whom Mr Brady was present as substitute. Mr Mallon sent apologies. Webb (Cabinet Member for Integrated Services) was deputised by Mrs Williams (Deputy Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services)

The Committee membership was updated with Miss Morton having now joined the Committee.

90. Declarations of Interest
(Item 3)

No declaration of interests was received

91. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2026
(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2026 were a correct record.

92. Verbal Update by Cabinet Members
(Item 5)

Mrs Fordham (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills) and Mrs Williams (Deputy Cabinet member for integrated Children's Services) were present for the item:

1.Mrs Fordham and Mrs Williams updated the Committee with the following:

a) Outlined visits undertaken during the summer period to a range of educational settings, including specialist schools and a number of newly established Special Resource Provisions (SRPs) within mainstream schools.

b) Highlighted the development of provision at Turner School (Folkestone) due to open in September, Richmond School (Sheerness) Avery provision and The Downs School (Walmer) and emphasised the value of ensuring that children and young people were able to access specialist support within mainstream settings where appropriate. Members were advised that further visits would be undertaken as the provisions became fully operational and that Members would be invited to attend future visits.

c) Referred to GCSE and A-Level results activity across the county and highlighted visits undertaken to schools during results periods. The Cabinet Member advised that the visits had provided an opportunity to engage directly with young people as they considered progression into further education, apprenticeships and employment. The Cabinet Member highlighted the St George in Gravesend and the Leigh Academy in Ebbsfleet as notable GCSE performers.

d) Discussed visits to post-16 and vocational providers, including specialist provision for young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), where a strong emphasis had been placed on practical skills development and employer engagement. The Cabinet Member highlighted the importance of strengthening links between employers and educational settings in order to improve outcomes for young people and support future workforce needs.

e) Members were informed of the significant work undertaken by admissions, fair access and inclusion teams during the summer period to prepare for the commencement of the academic year. The Cabinet Member also referred to attendance at careers engagement events (Future in Works) and highlighted the importance of exposing young people to a broad range of future employment opportunities and career pathways.

f) Councillor Baker updated on his visit to the Kent and Medway Communication and Assistive Technology (KM CAT) team and the important work undertake. The Member suggested that all Members look to attend in the future so the can see first hand the important work that the team completes.

g) Mrs Williams presented a verbal update on behalf of Mr Webb, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services. Members were advised of visits undertaken to a range of children's services settings, including reception centres for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, residential homes and family hubs. The update also highlighted attendance at events celebrating

the achievements of children in care and care leavers and summer activities organised for foster carers and young carers.

h) Members were informed of the opening of family hub facilities in Sittingbourne and Queenborough after a major refurbishment, the attending of the Kent Carers Activities even in August and the visiting of a newly opened children's home in Ashford, which formed part of the Council's continued investment in support services for children and young people.

2.In response to Members questions the following aspects were discussed:

a) In response to Members questions, the Cabinet Member confirmed that representatives from the two newly merged universities (Previously Kent and Greenwich) had contacted the authority regarding work on reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and advised that discussions would be taking place to explore potential opportunities for collaborative working.

b) Officers advised that NEET data was recorded through a nationally prescribed process and measured participation rather than attendance. Members were informed that young people enrolled within further education provision would generally be recorded as participating irrespective of attendance levels and that attendance information was not routinely collected by local authorities for post-16 learners. Officers noted that there was no equivalent statutory attendance requirement beyond compulsory school age.

c) In response to concerns regarding post-16 SEND transport still outstanding for a number of students, officers advised that whilst transport policy arrangements had seen a significant change, eligibility threshold had remained unchanged. Officers confirmed that all applications received by the published deadline had been processed.

d) Officers explained that transport arrangements were finalised as close as possible to the start of the academic year in order to maximise route efficiency and minimise costs. It was agreed that information regarding notification timescales would be provided outside the meeting.

e) Highlighted recent national reporting relating to autism and ADHD diagnosis, Officers advised that EHCP decisions were based upon assessments of individual need rather than diagnosis alone. It was highlighted that the Council's statutory responsibilities were discharged through consideration of a wide range of evidence and that decisions were made on a case-by-case basis.

f) The Cabinet Member reminded Members that a report concerning Post 16 SEND transport and appeals was scheduled to be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

g) Following discussion regarding specialist education providers such as Salt college, the Cabinet Member agreed that officers would look to assist Members of the committee with signposting providers to available grant and funding opportunities where appropriate.

h) Questions regarding isolation practices within schools were raised, officers advised that the local authority did not collect data relating to pupil isolation and that behaviour management policies were matters for individual schools. Members noted that Sandwich Technology School continued to implement changes associated with school improvement activity and emphasised the importance of establishing clear expectations and consistent behaviour policies. The school had been placed in special measures and had seen key staff leave. The Chair acknowledged the concerns but suggested that if Members had continued concerns that they reach out to the school directly to discuss.

i) Officers further advised that schools were expected to maintain robust behaviour management systems supported by a range of interventions, including pastoral support, family engagement, detention processes, isolation and even exclusion. Members were advised that consistency and proportionality remained key principles underlying those approaches.

j) Responding to questions regarding attendance, officers advised that schools continued to operate first-day contact arrangements and that attendance remained a significant safeguarding and educational priority. Officers outlined the range of support and enforcement measures available where attendance concerns persisted.

RESOLVED that the verbal updates be noted.

93. Performance Monitoring
(Item 6)

Craig Chapman (Interim Deputy Director for Education: Access and Inclusion) was in attendance for the item:

1.The officer discussed the following:

a) The Chair asked that the report be noted as read and suggested taking questions directly from Members.

2. In response to comments and questions it was said:

a) Following concerns raised regarding a number of indicators recorded as amber or red within Dover district, officers advised that further analysis would be undertaken and discussed with Members outside the meeting in order to better understand the specific factors influencing local performance.

b) In response to questions relating to requests for Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) statutory assessments, officers confirmed that the indicator measured requests for statutory assessment and explained that the process determined whether an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) should be issued. Members were further advised that information relating to the number of plans declined and tribunal outcomes was available and could

be provided to Members. Members also suggested that numbers be provided in the detail in addition to the existing percentage metric.

c) Officers agreed to provide the underlying numerical data supporting Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) percentage figures. Members were advised that monthly reporting information containing detailed local data was already produced and could be circulated to Members.

d) Concerns regarding workforce capacity and increasing caseloads were raised, officers advised that staffing levels were affected by seasonal recruitment patterns and explained that newly qualified social workers (50-60) were expected to join the service during the autumn as professional registration requirements were completed. Officers highlighted the continued use of graduate recruitment pathways, apprenticeships and frontline social work. Officers acknowledged the national challenges affecting social worker recruitment and retention.

e) In response to questions regarding NEET performance, officers advised that a number of factors contributed to poorer outcomes in certain areas, including educational attainment, barriers associated with travel to learning opportunities, and limited post-16 provision capacity. Officers outlined ongoing work through the Pathways for All programme and wider partnerships with colleges and training providers aimed at increasing opportunities and reducing barriers to participation.

f) The Chair suggested potential online options be explored to mitigate some of the issues impacting NEET. Officers highlighted that some providers already offer this option and the complex nature of DfE funding and KCC involvement with the regional improvement team pilot.

g) A Member raised concerns on the NEET statistics for Canterbury and when interventions would start to be in and show a positive impact. Officers acknowledged the concern and suggested that this potentially be encompassed with the ongoing Marmot projects being explored.

h) The Committee was advised that the work could bring additional capacity, resources and provision for young people who were not in education, employment or training. Particular attention was being given to the decline in attendance and continuation between Years 12 and 13. It was noted that Canterbury may experience greater challenges in this area due to the size of Canterbury College, which could result in higher numbers of students leaving education before completing Year 13. Members discussed this trend and agreed that Year 13 retention appeared to be a particular area of concern. The officer confirmed that the issue would continue to be monitored and explored with education partners.

i) Officers confirmed that work remained underway to develop a Family Hub performance scorecard and that a further update would be provided when development had progressed.

j) In response to concerns regarding specialist placements, officers advised that decisions relating to independent and out-of-county placements were governed by statutory requirements and parental preference. Members were

informed that increasing specialist capacity within Kent remained a priority, but that historic placement decisions and sustained demand continued to influence current performance figures.

k) Advised that implementation of the Families First for Children (FFC) reforms would result in a revised operating model and allow a broader workforce to support children and families. Officers anticipated that the reforms would contribute to improved caseload management over time.

l) In response to questions regarding artificial intelligence (AI), officers confirmed that digital technologies were already supporting administrative functions and note-taking activity. However, Members were advised that professional judgement and direct engagement with children and families remained essential elements of social work practice and could not be replaced by technology.

m) Members discussed rationales for non-attending students. The Committee was advised that schools had a responsibility to investigate and address pupil absence, including undertaking first-day contact procedures when a child did not attend school as expected. The officer explained that first-day contact procedures were an important safeguarding measure, enabling schools to establish the reason for a pupil's absence and ensure their welfare.

n) Members were informed that schools were expected to have robust arrangements in place to engage with parents and carers where attendance was a concern and to support improvements in regular attendance. The officer outlined the role of the local authority's attendance service in supporting schools where non-attendance continued.

o) It was explained that the service worked with families to address barriers to attendance and improve engagement with education. Where appropriate, formal interventions could be considered, including the issuing of penalty notices or legal proceedings against parents where attendance failed to improve.

p) The Committee noted that attendance continued to be a significant area of focus for schools and inspectors following the COVID-19 pandemic. The officer advised that attendance levels had not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels and that schools were expected to demonstrate that they had taken all reasonable steps to improve attendance.

q) Questions were raised concerning care leavers, officers advised that staffing shortages and resource constraints continued to affect service delivery. It was explained that recruitment challenges remained a significant factor affecting performance within elements of the care leaver service

r) Officers advised that previous Educational Psychology capacity issues had now been resolved and that improvements within the Educational Psychology service were beginning to have a positive impact on Education, Health and Care Plan timeliness performance.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

94. 26/00048 - Proposal for KCC capital contributions to the DfE Schools Rebuild Programme for Water Meadows Primary school to include 2 forms of entry core facilities to the 1 form of entry rebuild
(Item 7)

Robert Veale (Assistant Director of Education-East Kent) and David Adams (Deputy Director-Effectiveness, Sufficiency and Skills) were present for the item:

1. Introduced the report seeking approval for a capital contribution towards the Department for Education Schools Rebuild Programme at Water Meadows Primary School.

a) Explained that the Department for Education was progressing a rebuild of the existing one form entry school and that Kent County Council had identified a future requirement to expand the school in response to planned housing growth within the locality. The proposed contribution would enable core facilities required for a future two form entry school to be incorporated within the redesign and rebuilding programme.

b) Advised that the proposal represented a cost-effective opportunity to future-proof the site and ensure that the infrastructure required for future expansion was delivered as part of the current scheme. Members were informed that the proposal was supported by pupil forecasts contained within the Council's commissioning plans and reflected anticipated demand arising from housing developments within the area.

c) The Committee was advised that the estimated capital contribution to the Department for Education was up to £1.4 million and comprised approximately £1 million in base build costs and around £300,000 for external works and associated infrastructure.

d) Members noted that the authority had already secured just over £1 million through developer contributions towards the project and officer informed the Committee that an application had also been submitted to Canterbury City Council for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding of approximately £380,000 to meet the remaining cost.

e) Members were advised that the outcome of the funding bid was expected in October. It was discussed that, should the application be unsuccessful, the authority would be required to fund the shortfall from its own resources.

2. In response to comments and questions it was said:

a) Officers confirmed that the updated Commissioning Plan for Education Provision would be presented to the Committee later in the year (November) and that current forecasts continued to support the need for additional primary capacity within the planning group.

b) In response to questions concerning future expansion arrangements, officers advised that the proposal related solely to the provision of core

infrastructure. Additional teaching accommodation would be considered through a future decision should pupil demand materialise as anticipated.

c) Members welcomed the inclusion of future expansion requirements within the rebuilding project and queried whether further preparatory works could be undertaken now to reduce disruption in future years. Officers advised that discussions continued with the Department for Education (DfE) regarding the most cost-effective approach to delivery and that disruption to the school community remained an important consideration throughout project planning.

d) In response to questions regarding planning and design, officers confirmed that the DfE remained responsible for delivery of the rebuilding programme and that design development and planning processes continued to progress.

e) Members highlighted the importance of sustainability and environmental considerations within school design. Officers advised that modern DfE design standards incorporated environmental performance and biodiversity requirements and that these would form part of the completed scheme.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision, namely:

1) APPROVE the allocation of £1.4m from the Schools Basic Need Capital Programme to provide 2FE core facilities at Water Meadows Primary School as part of the DfE Schools Rebuild Programme of the 1FE School;

2) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Infrastructure to take relevant actions including but not limited to negotiating, entering and finalising the terms of relevant contracts, contract variations or other legal agreements as required to implement the decision; and

3) AGREE for the Director of Infrastructure, to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements, with authority to enter variations as envisaged under the contracts.

95. 26/00049 - Proposal to accept Department for Education (DfE) funding in support of Phase 3 of the School Based Nursery programme 2027 to 2030 *(Item 8)*

Robert Veale (Assistant Director of Education-East Kent) and David Adams (Deputy Director-Effectiveness, Sufficiency and Skills) were in attendance for the item:

1. Introduced the report seeking approval for Kent County Council to submit proposals to the Department for Education (DfE) and, subject to a successful application, accept capital funding through Phase 3 of the School Based Nursery Programme (SBN)

a) Advised that the programme had the potential to support approximately twenty school-based nursery projects across Kent and create around 550 additional nursery places between 2027 and 2030.

2.In response, Members discussed the following:

a) Member unanimously endorsed the decision positively; no additional questions or concerns were raised.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision, namely:

1. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education to:

a) Accept and deploy any funding awarded under the School Based Nursery Programme 2027-2030

b) Finalise the programme of schools and projects included within the approved funding allocation, and to make amendments to projects where required by the Department for Education, affordability, deliverability or programme requirements;

c) Approve capital expenditure on individual school-based nursery proposals, including reallocating funding between approved projects, provided that the total capital expenditure remains within the amount determined by the DfE capital allocation, and in cases involving capital expenditure above £1m, such approval to be made in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills; and

d) Take relevant actions, including but not limited to, negotiating, finalising and entering into contracts and legal agreements as required to implement the decision.

2 Delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education, to take relevant actions necessary to deliver the approved capital projects, including but not limited to, finalising, entering into and varying contracts and legal agreements as required to implement the decision.

96. 26/00044 - Replacement of modular classrooms at Dover Grammar School for Girls - Additional Funding Request (Non-Key Decision)
(Item 9)

David Adams (Deputy Director-Effectiveness, Sufficiency and Skills) and Christine McInnes (Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education) were in attendance for the item:

1. Introduced the report seeking approval for an additional £400,000 to support the replacement of two modular classroom blocks at Dover Grammar School for Girls.

a) Members were reminded that a previous decision had approved £1.4 million for the scheme and that planning permission had subsequently been secured. During progression through detailed design and building control processes, additional fire safety requirements had been identified.

b) Advised that Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS), acting as a consultee to the building control process, had determined that fire appliances could not access the proposed building within required distances due to the constraints of the site. Officers explained that a sprinkler system, together with associated water storage and distribution infrastructure, was therefore required. These works had increased the project cost to £1.8 million.

2.In response to questions it was discussed:

a) Members queried if an oversight in the planning phase had contributed to the issue. Officers explained that the issue had arisen through the building control process rather than the planning process and that the requirement related to fire protection standards associated with modern building regulations.

b) Members queried whether the additional costs could be recovered from contractors or design consultants. Officers advised again that the issue had arisen due to technical requirements identified during regulatory review rather than design failings and therefore there was no realistic mechanism to recover the additional expenditure

c) Responding to concerns regarding future projects, officers advised that lessons learned from the scheme would be incorporated into future school replacement programmes, particularly in relation to fire appliance access arrangements and regulatory requirements.

d) Members questioned whether alternative building locations had been considered. Officers confirmed that all previous options had been revisited; however, alternative solutions would have involved substantially greater costs, additional planning complexity or significant operational challenges associated with the school site. The current proposal therefore remained the most cost-effective and practical option.

e) In response to questions regarding the sprinkler infrastructure, officers advised that water pressure on the site was insufficient to support direct operation of the system and that dedicated underground water storage tanks would therefore be required.

f) Officers confirmed that ongoing maintenance responsibilities for the sprinkler system would rest with the school following completion of the project and would be met through existing school revenue arrangements.

g) Members acknowledged the increase in costs but noted the importance of replacing buildings that had reached the end of their operational life and recognised that continuing maintenance of the existing structures would not represent value for money.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision, namely:

1) INCREASE the funding for the replacement of two modular classroom blocks at Dover Grammar School for Girls by £400,000, from £1.4 million to £1.8 million, to fund the installation of a sprinkler system and associated contingency costs.

2) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Director of Education and SEND, and the Head of Law to take relevant actions, including but not limited to negotiating, entering into and finalising the terms of relevant contracts, contract variations or other legal agreements, as required, to implement the decision; and

3) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Infrastructure to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant contractual agreements and to enter into such variations as envisaged under any of these contracts.

97. KCC Maintained School Estate - Condition Survey Update
(Item 10)

Mr B Collins (Deputy Leader of the Council), Rebecca Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Joanne Taylor (Head of Capital) and Stuart Pryor (Programme Manager) were in attendance for the item:

1. introduced the report and provided an update on the condition of the maintained school estate.

a) Members were advised that condition surveys commissioned from 2021 onwards had informed a long-term programme of maintenance investment and asset management and that updated calculations indicated a substantial continuing maintenance liability across the estate. Current backlog maintenance conditions sat at £330 million forecast over the next 10 years.

b) The Committee was informed that the condition survey programme was currently being updated through the procurement of new surveys based on the most recent information available. he officer explained that changes had occurred since the original survey programme was undertaken, requiring the scope of the surveys to be reviewed and that there had been a reduction in the number of maintained schools included in the programme as a result of academy conversions.

c) Changes to the treatment of voluntary aided schools within the survey programme had also affected the number of schools that would be subject to updated surveys and that the revised surveys would provide an updated assessment of the condition of the maintained school estate and reflect the current composition of schools for which the authority retained responsibility.

d) Officers outlined the Council's continued focus on maintaining buildings to a warm, safe and dry standard. Members were informed that significant investment had been delivered through major maintenance programmes,

emergency works, modernisation funding and the ongoing replacement and refurbishment of mobile classrooms. The report also summarised interventions undertaken to address structural risks associated with reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) and folded plate timber roofs to ensure School had continued to provide education service to the children of Kent.

e) Members were advised that, since the previous condition surveys had been undertaken, the number of maintained schools within the estate had reduced due to academy conversions. Officers highlighted the range of mechanisms used by the authority to monitor and manage building condition, including premises development officer visits, compliance activity, helpdesk reporting and direct engagement with schools.

f) Highlighted the ten schools nominated by the County Council for consideration under the Department for Education's latest School Rebuilding Programme, including Dover Grammar School for Girls. Members noted that no funding decisions had yet been made and that the nominations would be assessed by the Department for Education (DfE). The officer also informed the Committee that a new programme of condition surveys was due to commence in 2026 to refresh and update the asset condition data held by the authority, supporting future planning and investment across the school estate.

2. In response to comments and questions

a) Clarification was requested on the (Paragraph 2.1) if the backlog in the 2026 figure encompasses 244 or 351 schools. Officers confirmed the figure was for the 2024. Officers would look to clarify a figure on the total backlog of repairs.

b) In response to questions regarding changes in reported maintenance liabilities, officers advised that the figures had been updated to reflect inflation and revised costs whilst maintaining consistency with earlier reporting. Members were informed that the figures related only to schools that remained within the maintained estate

c) Clarification was sought regarding the schools nominated for inclusion within the DfE rebuilding programme. Officers explained that nominations had been submitted in accordance with Department for Education criteria relating to significant structural or condition issues. It was agreed that further detail concerning the categories under which schools had been nominated would be circulated to Members.

d) Members queried mobile classrooms, officers advised that replacement and refurbishment priorities had been established following detailed condition surveys and risk assessments. Those units identified as presenting the greatest risk had been prioritised first within the programme. Additional information on the remaining programme would be provided outside the meeting

e) The committee questioned the rationale for recommissioning condition surveys. Officers advised that condition data represented a snapshot in time

and required periodic updating in order to provide an accurate basis for future investment decisions. The next phase of surveys would commence during 2026 and would be delivered over a five-year period.

f) In response to discussion regarding overheating within school buildings, officers advised that climate resilience and environmental performance were becoming increasingly important considerations within capital investment programmes. Members were informed that heating replacement programmes increasingly considered opportunities to improve cooling and ventilation infrastructure and that wider environmental measures such as tree planting and shading were also being promoted

g) Officers explained that prioritisation decisions were informed not only by condition surveys but also by compliance inspections, health and safety considerations, operational risks and direct engagement with schools. It was emphasised that maintaining safe and functional learning environments remained the primary objective of the programme.

h) Members were advised that the Council continued to work closely with schools through its premises development teams and maintained arrangements enabling schools to report urgent property issues at any time

i) Members welcomed the update and recognised both the significance of the maintenance challenge and the importance of continuing investment across the maintained school estate.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

98. Work Programme
(Item 11)

RESOLVED that the work programme was noted.

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Children, Young People and Education Performance Management

Children, Young People and Education Directorate Scorecard

September 2026

Produced by: Management Information & Intelligence, KCC

Publication Date: 20th October 2026

Kent County Council
kent.gov.uk

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Children, Young People and Education Directorate Scorecard

Guidance Notes

Notes:
Figures for indicator CYPE8 (Rate of proven re-offending by CYP) shown in red have not been published by the Minstry of Justice (MoJ) but are included for information in this scorecard. The latest available data for this indicator was released on 30/07/26 and covers the 12 month period October 2023 to September 2024.
Please note that not all Children's Social Work indicators can be shown broken down by District for the associated CSWS team, as caseloads relating to these indicators are held by Area and Kent LA level teams. Cases included in a dataset are based on the Service working with the child and not the child's geographical residence.

POLARITY

H	The aim of this indicator is to achieve the highest number/percentage possible
L	The aim of this indicator is to achieve the lowest number/percentage possible
T	The aim of this indicator is to stay close to the target that has been set

RAG RATINGS

RED	Floor Standard* has not been achieved
AMBER	Floor Standard* achieved but Target has not been met
GREEN	Target has been achieved

* Floor Standards are set in Directorate Business Plans and if not achieved must result in management action

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL (DOT)

⇧	Performance has improved
⇩	Performance has worsened
⇔	Performance has remained the same

INCOMPLETE DATA

N/A	Data not available
	Data to be supplied
	New indicator - historical data not available

Data in italics indicates previous reporting year

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION CONTACT DETAILS

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DATA PERIOD

R12M	Monthly Rolling 12 months
MS	Monthly Snapshot
YTD	Year To Date
Q	Quarterly
A	Annual

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCORECARDS

CYPE	Children, Young People and Education Directorate Scorecard
EY	Early Years Scorecard
NEET	NEET Monthly Scorecard
SEND	Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Scorecard
ICS	Intensive EH and CSWS Monthly Performance Report

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

CIC	Children in Care
CSWT	Children's Social Work Teams
CSWS	Children's Social Work Services
CYP	Children and Young People
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EY	Early Years
EYFE	Early Years Free Entitlement
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
FF2	Free For Two
FSM	Free School Meals
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
SCS	Specialist Children's Services
SEN	Special Educational Needs

Directorate Scorecard - Kent Activity/Volume

as at May 2026

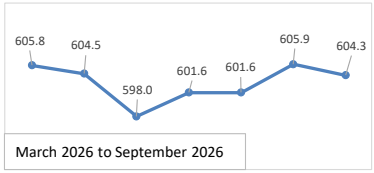
129,613 pupils in 459 primary schools
27.8 % with free school meals (24.8%)

114,037 pupils in 104 secondary schools
26.4 % with free school meals (27.3%)

6,761 pupils in 25 special schools
50.3 % with free school meals (50.9%)

as at Sep 2026

Rate of Early Help Unit Referrals per 10,000 of the 0-17 population (inclusive, rolling 12 months)



as at Sep 2026

Open cases

Intensive Early Help	2,133 (Families)
Open Social Work Cases	11,626
Including:	
• Child Protection	1,208
• Children in Care	2,070
• Care Leavers	2,225

as at Aug 2024

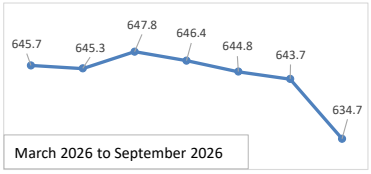
Ofsted judgements

EY providers	98.7	(98%)
Primary	92.4	(91%)
Secondary	88.0	(85%)
Special	92.3	(90%)

Note: From 1st September 2024, inspections of state-funded schools no longer include a judgement on overall effectiveness, and outcomes of ungraded inspections no longer refer to the previous good or outstanding grade. No aggregations of data are now published by Ofsted and no replacement measure has been devised.

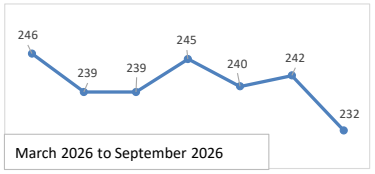
as at Sep 2026

Rate of referrals to Children's Social Work Services per 10,000 of the 0-17 population (inclusive, rolling 12 months)



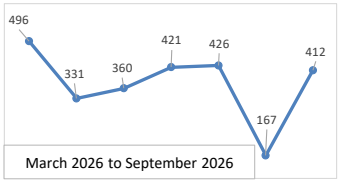
as at Sep 2026

Number of First Time Entrants into the Youth Justice system



as at Sep 2026

Requests for SEND statutory assessment



as at Sep 2026

Activity at the Front Door (children)

Total contacts	7,984
Number resolved at FD	3,811
Number to CSWS	1,890
Number to EH Units	1,721

as at Sep 2026

Family Hub Indicators

Pending Family Hub scorecard development

- Figures shown in brackets are National averages.
- Free School Meal averages are as at January 2026 school census and based on state funded schools only.
- Ofsted National averages are as at 31st August 2024.

Directorate Scorecard - SEND Monthly Indicators

Education Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	South East Average as at 31st December 2025	England Average as at 31st December 2025
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26										
APP17	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks	H	MS		91.3	84.7	75.0	86.6	69.2	60.0	78.2	147	188	⇧	65	GREEN	56.9	65	GREEN	46.9	46.1
APP17-N	Total number of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks	H	MS		146	160	117	174	166	99	188			⇧						N/A	N/A
APP17-D	Total number of EHCPs issued	L	MS		160	189	156	201	240	165	147			⇧						N/A	N/A
APP17-A	Average duration in days from assessment request to EHCP completion	L	MS		142	144	145	143	144	151	146			⇧						N/A	N/A
APP-EP	Percentage of assessment requests sent to Educational Psychology returned within 6 weeks	H	MS		80.7	82.0	79.2	73.5	85.4	80.7	61.7	161	261	⇩	65	AMBER	76.5	65	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of annual EHCP reviews waiting less than 12 months	H	MS	✓	60.5	61.2	62.7	64.8	65.2	64.8	64.6	14,708	22,782	⇩	75	RED				N/A	N/A
CYPE1	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	L	MS		10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.6	10.6	10.7	2,437	22,782	⇩	9	RED	10.6	9	RED	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of open Educational Psychology referrals waiting more than 6 weeks	L	MS		5.5	10.5	18.2	8.6	9.8	8.0	27.4	87	318	⇩						N/A	N/A
	Percentage of SEND statutory assessment requests waiting more than 20 weeks	L	MS		3.4	3.2	2.9	6.6	6.2	3.8	5.6	74	1,325	⇩						N/A	N/A

Commentary on Education SEND Indicators:

Internal reorganisation of casework teams into dedicated Phase Transfer and Annual Review teams have now been established. This redistribution is allowing the new teams to focus on either the year-long statutory function of Phase Transfer or the rolling transactional Annual Review workload. Previously, staff were required to continually balance both requirements, often at the expense of Annual Review completion. This adjustment is expected to provide sufficient dedicated capacity for this KPI to continue to improve. In addition, a programme of improvement is planned to improve timeliness and quality of Annual Reviews. This will follow the model of improvement undertaken successfully within the Assessment teams. The service has an action plan to improve both timeliness and quality of annual reviews, which has recently begun and is expected to be rolled out in year one and embedded in year two (as per annual review cycle).

Kent continues to feel the effect of the delayed provision of two new special schools, leading to a continued over-reliance on independent specialist provision to compensate. While recent DfE advice has made clear that these schools remain in their plans, this does not offset the negative impact of ongoing delays. This area is therefore likely to remain below target for the foreseeable future. In addition, the service continues to be under pressure from requests for placements in the Independent School sector, with new schools frequently being approved by the DfE. The service is using a number of strategies to ensure there is enough suitable provision, including increasing the number of placements in primary and secondary Specialist Resourced Provisions (SRPs). This year there is a planned increase of 111 places across 15 SRPs followed by further development/expansions in 2027/28 of a further 121 places.

Directorate Scorecard - Kent KPIs

Integrated Children's Services Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
Children's Social Work Services					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M	✓	22.3	22.3	22.0	21.7	21.5	21.3	21.2	4,774	22,555	⇧	25.0	GREEN	22.3	25.0	GREEN	28	23
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	H	R12M		90.9	91.1	91.2	90.8	89.8	89.3	87.1	1,838	2,110	⇩	90.0	AMBER	90.9	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	T	R12M		26.5	27.2	27.7	27.2	26.2	26.0	25.7	355	1,384	⇧	20.0	AMBER	26.5	20.0	AMBER	26	25
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	H	MS		71.8	71.6	71.2	70.8	71.9	72.0	70.6	338	479	⇩	70.0	GREEN	71.8	70.0	GREEN	68	69
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	H	MS	✓	69.7	68.6	68.9	68.7	67.5	67.9	68.0	1,025	1,508	⇧	70.0	AMBER	69.7	70.0	AMBER	65	67
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	L	R12M		457.9	425.8	421.6	372.7	391.9	404.2	423.3	23,283	55	⇩	426.0	GREEN	457.9	426.0	RED	437	475
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	H	R12M	✓	54.2	55.4	56.6	56.1	54.3	52.9	54.0	735	1,360	⇧	60.0	AMBER	54.2	65.0	RED	52	54
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	H	R12M		83.8	83.4	82.8	81.2	80.8	80.3	80.5	404	502	⇧	85.0	AMBER	83.8	85.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	H	MS	✓	87.8	86.5	86.8	82.6	83.0	83.5	88.3	557.9	631.8	⇧	90.0	AMBER	87.8	90.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	L	MS		16.8	16.3	15.9	17.0	17.2	16.9	16.2	1,717	105.8	⇧	15.0	AMBER	16.8	15.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	L	MS		20.4	21.1	21.9	23.5	23.1	21.8	20.1	5,425	269.6	⇧	18.0	AMBER	20.4	18.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
Early Help					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M		25.8	25.8	25.6	25.7	25.7	25.8	25.7	2,988	11,606	⇧	25.0	AMBER	25.8	25.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
EH52-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	H	R12M		93.1	92.8	92.7	93.1	93.4	93.2	93.4	5,924	6,346	⇧	85.0	GREEN	93.1	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	H	R12M		89.3	89.3	90.5	90.5	88.2	88.2	89.2	116	130	⇧	85.0	GREEN	89.3	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	L	R12M	✓	14.7	14.7	14.6	14.2	14.1	14.2	14.4	658	4,578	⇩	15.0	GREEN	14.7	15.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	T	MS		17.1	15.2	15.4	15.9	14.9	13.2	14.2	1941	137.0	⇧	20.0	AMBER	17.1	20.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Integrated Children's Services Quarterly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Quarterly Trends			Latest Quarter			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2025-26	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	South East as at Jan 2026	England & Wales as at Jan 2026
								Rate	Numerator	Denominator								
					Q2 25-26	Q3 25-26	Q4 25-26	Q1 26-27										
CYPE8	Rate of proven re-offending by CYP	L	Q		29.3	28.7	29.6	30.8	131	426	⇩	32.1	GREEN	28.7	32.9	GREEN	30.6	31.8

Directorate Scorecard - Kent KPIs

Education Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
SISE71	Percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET) [seasonally impacted indicator]**	L	MS		5.1	5.2	5.0	5.1	5.0	4.8	3.1	1,222	39,879	⇧	3.4	GREEN	4.8	2.8	RED	3.6	3.4
CYPE6	Percentage of Children Missing Education cases, closed within 30 school days	H	R12M		93.3	92.7	92.7	92.6	92.6	91.1	91.8	4,515	4,921	⇧	90	GREEN	91.1	90	GREEN	N/A	N/A
CYPE22	Percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention++	H	R12M		83.7	83.7	83.6	83.3	83.4	83.4	83.6	3,480	4,161	⇧	85	AMBER	83.4	85	AMBER	N/A	N/A
EH43	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase - all Year R to Year 6 pupils	L	R12M		26	26	26	22	25	23	21	N/A	N/A	⇧	22	GREEN	23	<= 25	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH44	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the secondary phase - all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils	L	R12M		63	59	59	63	63	59	58	N/A	N/A	⇧	58	GREEN	59	<= 79	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Percentage (rate) of pupils permanently excluded from primary and secondary phase schools - all Year R to Year 14 pupils	L	R12M		0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.03	N/A	N/A	⇔			0.03			0.06	0.12

Notes: **Several Post-16 enrolment files are still outstanding and have yet to be received or processed. As a result, the Kent and District September 2026 NEET and Not Known figures should be treated as provisional. Final data will be submitted to the DfE at the end of October 2026.

++ EHE figures from March 2026 to September 2026 have been restated following an update to the underlying reporting logic. Workflow changes introduced earlier this year phased out a legacy tracking trigger, which inadvertently led the automated report to overestimate compliance. Following a data cleanse to reflect active triggers, historical and current figures have been aligned to true operational performance.

Exclusion rates have been added alongside the numbers of permanent exclusions, as this is the only way that Kent's performance can be benchmarked to national.

Education Termly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Termly Trends			Latest Term			DOT	Target Summer 2025-26	RAG 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator			
					Summer 24-25	Autumn 25-26	Spring 25-26	Summer 25-26					
EY2	Percentage of DWP and other identified eligible 2 year olds taking up a free early education place [seasonally impacted indicator]	H	T		55.0	69.5	72.7	72.6	2,456	3,385	⇧	64.0	GREEN

Education Annual Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	DOT	Target 2026-27	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26							SN or SE	
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development	H	A		68.3	68.0	68.9	74.0	12,665	17,105	71.6	GREEN	⇧	74.3	74.8	72.4
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM gap	L	A		21.3	24.7	22.8	24.0	N/A	N/A	21.0	AMBER	⇩	21.0	25.4	21.6
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics	H	A		59	62	62	63	11,974	19,030	62	GREEN	⇧	63	63	63
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	L	A		28	26	27	28	N/A	N/A	25	AMBER	⇩	25	27	22
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8	H	A		47.0	47.0	46.7	*46.7*	N/A	N/A	47.0	AMBER	⇔	*47.0*	*47.1*	*46.0*
SISE19	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	L	A		17.8	18.2	18.6	*18.6*	N/A	N/A	17.0	AMBER	⇔	*17.0*	*18.7*	*15.0*
CYPE23	Average point score per A Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		34.20	34.22	34.86	*34.86*	N/A	N/A	35.00	AMBER	⇔	*35.00*	*35.58*	*34.99*
CYPE24	Average point score per Applied General entry at KS5 [State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		29.14	28.03	29.20	*29.20*	N/A	N/A	29.50	AMBER	⇔	*29.50*	*29.02*	*29.89*
CYPE25	Average point score per Tech Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		33.47	27.17	27.97	*27.97*	N/A	N/A	29.00	AMBER	⇔	*29.00*	*28.86*	*28.82*

Data sources for attainment data: EYFSP = 2026 School returns, July 2026. KS2 = 2026 DfE Interim Dataset, July 2026. KS4 = 2025 DfE Published SFR, 05/02/26. KS5 = 2025 DfE Published SFR, 12/02/26

Directorate Scorecard - Kent KPIs

Education Annual Indicators (Continued) (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2025-26	RAG 2024-25	DOT	Target 2026-27	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26							SN or SE	
SEND10	Percentage of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	L	A		5.2	5.4	5.8	6.0	967	16,126	5.8	AMBER	⇩	6.0	6.1	6.0
CYPE2	Percentage of parents getting first preference of primary school	H	A		90.1	91.3	90.6	89.7	14,877	16,594	N/A				91.6	92.4
CYPE3	Percentage of parents getting first preference of secondary school	H	A		78.2	78.6	80.6	79.0	14,714	18,635	N/A				82.8	83.6
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		17.2	15.8	14.6	14.4	16,215	112,451	14.3	AMBER	⇧	*14.3*	13.5	14.4
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		29.2	26.8	24.1	21.9	21,294	97,335	21.1	AMBER	⇧	*21.1*	21.2	21.5
EH48	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1,309	112,451	0.9	AMBER	⇩	*0.9*	1.1	1.0
EH49	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		3.7	3.8	3.7	3.2	3,094	97,335	3.2	GREEN	⇧	*3.2*	3.2	3.2

Directorate Scorecard - Kent KPIs

Commentary on Integrated Children's Services Indicators:

Children's Social Care

AMBER: The average caseload in the Children's Social Work Teams (CSWT) is 20.1 children, which is above the target caseload of no more than 18 children.

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AMBER: The percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time is 25.7% which is above the target range of 17.5% - 22.5%. This compares to average rates for England of 24.5%, Statistical Neighbours 24.3% and the South-East 26.3% (comparative data is for 2024/25). This measure includes all children subject to a subsequent Child Protection Plan regardless of the timescale between those plans.

AMBER: The percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with Children's Social Work Involvement is 87.1%, which is close to the target of 90.0%. For those Returner Interviews that did take place, 85.8% took place within timescale (3 working days) which is above the 80.0% target.

AMBER: At 68.0% the percentage of children in care placed in KCC foster care, or in placements with relatives/friends, is just below the target of 70.0%.

AMBER: The percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with) is 54.0% which is below the target of 60.0%. Those not in employment will include those not able to work due to illness, disability, pregnancy or parenting responsibilities and unaccompanied asylum seeking young people who remain without status and are not able to remain in education or gain employment when they reach the age of 18.

AMBER: The percentage of Children's Social Work Case File Audits graded good or outstanding is 80.5%, close to the target of 85.0%.

AMBER: The percentage of caseholding staff present in post was 88.3%, with 557.9 FTE caseholding staff present in their post from a staffing establishment of 631.8 FTE. The target for this measure is 90.0%. The measure of staff present in post includes caseholding staff employed by KCC and Agency staff and excludes any vacancies or staff who are absent from their role, for example on maternity or long-term sick leave.

AMBER: The average caseload in the Children in Care (CIC) Teams is 16.2 children which is close to the target of no more than 15 children/young people.

GREEN: The percentage re-referrals to Children's Social Work Services within 12 months of a previous referral was 21.2% , achieving the target of below 25.0%. This performance compares to the latest published England average of 22.6%, and averages of 20.5% for Kent's Statistical Neighbours and 28.4% for the South-East (comparative data is for 2024/25).

GREEN: The percentage of Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more) is 70.6%, achieving the target of 70.0% or above. Kent's performance remains above the latest published average for England of 69.0%, for the South-East 68.0% and for Kent's Statistical Neighbours 70.8% (comparative data is for 2024/25).

GREEN: The average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family is 423.3 days which is below the nationally set guide of less than 426 days. This compares to the latest published England average of 475 days for 2024/25.

Intensive Early Help

AMBER: The percentage of referrals to an Early Help Unit where a previous episode ended within 12 months is 25.7%, which is just above the target of 25.0%.

AMBER: The average caseload within Early Help Units is 14.2 families which is within the amber tolerance set for this KPI.

GREEN: The percentage of Early Help Assessments completed within 30 working days is 93.4%, achieving the target of above 85.0%.

GREEN: The percentage of Early Help Unit cases that were audited and graded as good or outstanding is 89.2%, achieving above the 85.0% target.

Commentary on Education Indicators:

The majority of education indicators are annual. Commentary has only been provided for indicators where new data has been published since the last scorecard was issued where targets exist.

AMBER: The percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention at 83.6% is just below the target of 85%. While recent internal process improvements have significantly accelerated overall EHE decision-making times and increased throughput, higher referral volumes continue to impact the 10-day initial contact window. The service is actively reviewing internal processes and capacity to close the 1.4 percentage point gap and achieve the target.

GREEN: The rate of proven re-offending by CYP at 30.8 is better than the target of 32.1.

GREEN: The percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET) is a seasonally impacted indicator. The provisional data for September 2026 was 3.1% with 1,222 children NEET.

GREEN: The percentage of Children Missing Education (CME) cases, closed within 30 school days is 91.8% with 4,515 cases closed out of a total of 4,921.

GREEN: The numbers of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase, as a 12-month rolling average, at 21 is better than the target of 22 or fewer.

GREEN: The numbers of pupils permanently excluded from the secondary phase – all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils is 58 and is equal to the maximum target of 58.

Directorate Scorecard - Kent KPIs - Vulnerable Learners

Annual Indicators - Primary (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2025-26	RAG	DOT	Target 2026-27	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26							SN or SE	
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - all pupils	H	A		68.3	68.0	68.9	74.0	12,665	17,105	71.6	GREEN	⇧	74.3	74.8	72.4
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM gap	L	A		23.2	24.7	22.8	24.0	N/A	N/A	21.0	AMBER	⇩	21.0	25.4	21.6
	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - Kent CIC gap	L	A		22.5	44.4	32.9	31.3	N/A	N/A	N/A small cohort	N/A	⇧	N/A small cohort	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - SEN Support gap	L	A		50.4	52.9	51.6	52.8	N/A	N/A	50.0	AMBER	⇩	50.0	50	50.0
	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - SEN EHCP gap	L	A		70.5	72.9	74.4	78.0	N/A	N/A	73.0	RED	⇩	75.5	75.5	75.7
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - all pupils	H	A		59	62	62	63	11,974	19,030	62	GREEN	⇧	63	63	63
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	L	A		28	26	27	28	N/A	N/A	25	AMBER	⇩	25	27	22
	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - Kent CIC gap	L	A		35.4	30.6	33.3	31	N/A	N/A	30	AMBER	⇧	30	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - SEN Support gap	L	A		47	46	44	42	N/A	N/A	43	GREEN	⇧	42	46	44
	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - SEN EHCP gap	L	A		62	64	65	65	N/A	N/A	63	AMBER	⇩	63	65	65
	Progress score in Reading at KS2 - all pupils	H	A		-0.45	N/A	N/A	-0.19	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.00	-0.01	0.05
	Progress score in Reading at KS2 - FSM Eligible	H	A		-1.86	N/A	N/A	-1.36	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-1.22	-1.22	-0.66
	Progress score in Reading at KS2 - Kent CIC	H	A		-1.55	N/A	N/A	-3.59	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-3.00		
	Progress score in Reading at KS2 - SEN Support	H	A		-1.39	N/A	N/A	-1.32	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-1.06	-1.06	-0.78
	Progress score in Reading at KS2 - SEN EHCP	H	A		-6.00	N/A	N/A	-5.51	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-5.00	-5.25	-4.85
	Progress score in writing at KS2 - all pupils	H	A		0.00	N/A	N/A	0.27	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.00	-0.19	0.06
	Progress score in writing at KS2 - FSM Eligible	H	A		-1.09	N/A	N/A	-0.71	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-0.44	-1.03	-0.44
	Progress score in writing at KS2 - Kent CIC	H	A		-0.86	N/A	N/A	-3.23	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-3.00		
	Progress score in writing at KS2 - SEN Support	H	A		-1.50	N/A	N/A	-1.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-1.50	-2.00	-1.63
	Progress score in writing at KS2 - SEN EHCP	H	A		-5.10	N/A	N/A	-5.13	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-5.00	-5.69	-5.19
	Progress score in maths at KS2 - all pupils	H	A		-1.00	N/A	N/A	-0.78	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.00	-0.35	0.04
	Progress score in maths at KS2 - FSM Eligible	H	A		-2.70	N/A	N/A	-2.15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-1.82	-1.82	-0.83
	Progress score in maths at KS2 - Kent CIC	H	A		-3.32	N/A	N/A	-4.74	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-4.00		
	Progress score in maths at KS2 - SEN Support	H	A		-2.37	N/A	N/A	-2.19	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-1.63	-1.63	-0.98
	Progress score in maths at KS2 - SEN EHCP	H	A		-6.04	N/A	N/A	-5.70	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-5.20	-5.04	-4.50

Note - There are no KS1-2 Progress measures for 2023-24 or 2024-25 as there is no KS1 prior attainment data for the relevant years.

Directorate Scorecard - Kent KPIs - Vulnerable Learners

Annual Indicators - Secondary (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2024-25	RAG	DOT	Target 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25							SE Region	
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - all pupils	H	A		49.3	47.0	47.0	46.7	N/A	N/A	47.0	AMBER	⇩	47.0	47.1	46.0
SISE19	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	L	A		18.5	17.8	18.2	18.6	N/A	N/A	17.0	AMBER	⇧	17.0	18.7	15.0
	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - Kent CIC gap	L	A		27.3	28.2	28.0	24.9	N/A	N/A					N/A	N/A
	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - SEN Support gap	L	A		16.7	16.3	17.5	17.5	N/A	N/A	15.0	AMBER	⇔	16.4	17.7	16.4
	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - SEN EHCP gap	L	A		39.5	37.9	37.7	36.7	N/A	N/A	36.0	AMBER	⇩	35.3	37.0	35.4

Note: There is no Progress 8 data available for 2024-25 due to the lack of KS2 prior attainment data during the Covid-19 pandemic. Progress 8 reporting is due to return in 2026-27.

Data Sources for Current Report

Code	Indicator	Source Description	Latest Data Description	Latest Data release date
Activity-Volume Measures				
CYPE10	Number of Primary Schools	MI School Census Database	May 2026 School Census	Aug 2026
CYPE11	Number of Secondary Schools	MI School Census Database	May 2026 School Census	Aug 2026
CYPE12	Number of Special Schools	MI School Census Database	May 2026 School Census	Aug 2026
CYPE13	Total pupils on roll in Primary Schools	MI School Census Database	May 2026 School Census	Aug 2026
CYPE14	Total pupils on roll in Secondary Schools	MI School Census Database	May 2026 School Census	Aug 2026
CYPE15	Total pupils on roll in Special Schools	MI School Census Database	May 2026 School Census	Aug 2026
CYPE16	Percentage of Primary School pupils eligible for Free School Meals	MI School Census Database	May 2026 School Census	Aug 2026
CYPE17	Percentage of Secondary School pupils eligible for Free School Meals	MI School Census Database	May 2026 School Census	Aug 2026
CYPE18	Percentage of Special School pupils eligible for Free School Meals	MI School Census Database	May 2026 School Census	Aug 2026
EY8	Percentage of EY settings with Good or Outstanding Ofsted Judgements - Overall Effectiveness (non-domestic premises)	MI Ofsted Database	Inspections as at end of Aug 2024	Sept 2024
SISE35	Percentage of Primary Schools with Good or Outstanding Ofsted Judgements - Overall Effectiveness	MI Ofsted Database	Inspections as at end of Aug 2024	Sept 2024
SISE36	Percentage of Secondary Schools with Good or Outstanding Ofsted Judgements - Overall Effectiveness	MI Ofsted Database	Inspections as at end of Aug 2024	Sept 2024
SISE37	Percentage of Special Schools with Good or Outstanding Ofsted Judgements - Overall Effectiveness	MI Ofsted Database	Inspections as at end of Aug 2024	Sept 2024
CYPE19	Number of requests for SEND statutory assessment	Synergy reporting	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
EH71-C	Rate of notifications received into Early Help per 10,000 of the 0-17 population (inclusive, rolling 12 months)	Early Help module	Rolling 12 months up to end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS02	Rate of referrals to Children's Social Work Services per 10,000 of the 0-17 population (inclusive, rolling 12 months)	Liberi	Rolling 12 months up to end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
FD01-C	Number of contacts processed in the Front Door	Early Help module	Children referred during the month of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
FD14-C	Number of Information, Advice and Guidance contacts processed in the Front Door	Early Help module	Children referred during the month of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
FD02-C	Number of contacts processed in the Front Door which met the threshold for CSWS involvement	Early Help module	Children referred during the month of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
FD03-C	Number of contacts processed in the Front Door which proceeded to Early Help	Early Help module	Children referred during the month of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
EH05-C	Number of cases open to Early Help Units	Early Help module	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS01	Number of open Social Work cases	Liberi	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Number of Child Protection cases	Liberi	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Number of Children in Care	Liberi	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Number of Care Leavers	Liberi	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
EH35	Number of First Time Entrants into the Youth Justice system	MI monthly reporting (CareDirector Youth)	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SEND Indicators				
APP17	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
APP17-N	Total number of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
APP17-D	Total number of EHCPs issued	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
APP17-A	Average duration in days from assessment request to EHCP completion	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
APP-EP	Percentage of assessment requests sent to Educational Psychology returned within 6 weeks	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Percentage of annual EHCP reviews waiting less than 12 months	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
CYPE1	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Percentage of open Educational Psychology referrals waiting more than 6 weeks	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Percentage of SEND statutory assessment requests waiting more than 20 weeks	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026

Data Sources for Current Report

Code	Indicator	Source Description	Latest Data Description	Latest Data release date
Key Performance Indicators				
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	Liberi	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	Liberi	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	Liberi	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	Liberi	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	Liberi	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	Liberi	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	Liberi	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	Liberi	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	Area Staffing Spreadsheets	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	Liberi / Area Staffing Spreadsheets	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	Liberi / Area Staffing Spreadsheets	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	Early Help module	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
EH52-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	Early Help module	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	Early Help module	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	Early Help module	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	Early Help module	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
CYPE8	Rate of proven re-offending by CYP	MOJ report covering 12 month period July 23 to June 24	Q1 2026-27 reporting period, released on 30/07/26	Aug 2026
SISE7	Percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET)	Monthly submission to DfE via NCCIS for KCC	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
CYPE13	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
CYPE6	Percentage of Children Missing Education cases, closed within 30 school days	Fair Access Team Synergy reporting	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
CYPE22	Percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention	Fair Access Team Synergy reporting	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
EH43	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase - all Year R to Year 6 pupils	Synergy - monthly reported data	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
EH44	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the secondary phase - all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils	Synergy - monthly reported data	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Percentage (rate) of pupils permanently excluded from primary and secondary phase schools - all Year R to Year 14 pupils	Synergy - monthly reported data	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
EY2	Percentage of DWP and other identified eligible 2 year olds taking up a free early education place	FF2 Team in Early Years & Childcare	Snapshot as at August 2026	August 2026
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development	End of year assessments based on EYFSP framework	2025-26 MI Calculations (LA & District)	Aug 2026
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM Eligible achievement gap	End of year assessments based on EYFSP framework	2025-26 MI Calculations (LA & District)	Aug 2026
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics	Test/TA results for end of academic year	2025-26 DfE Interim (LA), MI Calculations (District)	Aug 2026
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	Test/TA results for end of academic year	2025-26 MI Calculations (LA & District)	Aug 2026
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8	Test results for end of academic year	2024-25 DfE Final (LA)/2024-25 ASP (District)	Feb 2026
SISE19	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	Test results for end of academic year	2024-25 DfE Final (LA)/2024-25 ASP (District)	Feb 2026
CYPE23	Average point score per A Level entry at KS5 [School students only]	Test results for end of academic year	2024-25 DfE Final (LA)/2024-25 ASP (District)	Feb 2026
CYPE24	Average point score per Applied General entry at KS5 [School students only]	Test results for end of academic year	2024-25 DfE Final (LA)/2024-25 ASP (District)	Feb 2026
CYPE25	Average point score per Tech Level entry at KS5 [School students only]	Test results for end of academic year	2024-25 DfE Final (LA)/2024-25 ASP (District)	Feb 2026
SEND10	Percentage of pupils with a Statement or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	DfE annual snapshot based on school census	Snapshot as at January 2026	June 2026
CYPE2	Percentage of parents getting first preference of primary school	Admissions school places offered for start of academic year	Offers data for academic year 2026-27	April 2026
CYPE3	Percentage of parents getting first preference of secondary school	Admissions school places offered for start of academic year	Offers data for academic year 2026-27	March 2026
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	Aut/Spr 2025-26 (LA), Aut 2025-26 (National)	2025-26 MI Calcs (LA & District)	Aug 2026
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	Aut/Spr 2025-26 (LA), Aut 2025-26 (National)	2025-26 MI Calcs (LA & District)	Aug 2026
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	Aut/Spr 2025-26 (LA), Aut 2025-26 (National)	2025-26 MI Calcs (LA & District)	Aug 2026
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	Aut/Spr 2025-26 (LA), Aut 2025-26 (National)	2025-26 MI Calcs (LA & District)	Aug 2026

Indicator Definitions

Code	Indicator	Definition
Activity-Volume Measures		
CYPE10	Number of Primary Schools	The number of Kent maintained Primary schools (excluding Nurseries) and Primary academies (including Free Schools). Total is as at the latest available termly school census.
CYPE11	Number of Secondary Schools	The number of Kent maintained Secondary schools and Secondary academies (including Free Schools). Total is as at the latest available termly school census.
CYPE12	Number of Special Schools	The number of Kent maintained Special schools and Special academies. Total is as at the latest available termly school census.
CYPE13	Total pupils on roll in Primary Schools	The number of pupils on roll in Kent maintained Primary schools (excluding Nurseries) and Primary academies (including Free Schools). Total excludes guest and subsidiary pupils and is as at the latest available termly school census.
CYPE14	Total pupils on roll in Secondary Schools	The number of pupils on roll in Kent maintained Secondary schools and Secondary academies (including Free Schools). Total excludes guest and subsidiary pupils and is as at the latest available termly school census.
CYPE15	Total pupils on roll in Special Schools	The number of pupils on roll in Kent maintained Special schools and Special academies. Total excludes guest and subsidiary pupils and is as at the latest available termly school census.
CYPE16	Percentage of Primary School pupils eligible for Free School Meals	The number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals in Kent maintained Primary schools (excluding Nurseries) and Primary academies (including Free Schools) as a proportion of all pupils on roll. Totals for both numerator and denominator are for statutory aged pupils only and excludes guest and subsidiary pupils. Data is as at the latest available termly school census.
CYPE17	Percentage of Secondary School pupils eligible for Free School Meals	The number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals in Kent maintained Secondary schools and Secondary academies (including Free Schools) as a proportion of all pupils on roll. Totals for both numerator and denominator are for statutory aged pupils only and excludes guest and subsidiary pupils. Data is as at the latest available termly school census.
CYPE18	Percentage of Special School pupils eligible for Free School Meals	The number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals in Kent maintained Special schools and Special academies as a proportion of all pupils on roll. Totals for both numerator and denominator are for statutory aged pupils only and excludes guest and subsidiary pupils. Data is as at the latest available termly school census.
EY8	Percentage of EY settings with Good or Outstanding Ofsted Judgements - Overall Effectiveness (non-domestic premises)	The percentage of Kent Early Years settings (non-domestic premises only), judged good or outstanding for overall effectiveness in their latest inspection, as a proportion of all inspected Kent Early Years settings (non domestic premises only).
SISE35	Percentage of Primary Schools with Good or Outstanding Ofsted Judgements - Overall Effectiveness	The percentage of Kent maintained Primary schools and Primary academies judged good or outstanding for Overall Effectiveness in their latest inspection, as a proportion of all inspected Kent maintained Primary schools and Primary academies.
SISE36	Percentage of Secondary Schools with Good or Outstanding Ofsted Judgements - Overall Effectiveness	The percentage of Kent maintained Secondary schools and Secondary academies judged good or outstanding for Overall Effectiveness in their latest inspection, as a proportion of all inspected Kent maintained Secondary schools and Secondary academies.
SISE37	Percentage of Special Schools with Good or Outstanding Ofsted Judgements - Overall Effectiveness	The percentage of Kent maintained Special schools and Special academies judged good or outstanding for Overall Effectiveness in their latest inspection, as a proportion of all inspected Kent maintained Special schools and Special academies.
CYPE19	Number of requests for SEND statutory assessment	The number of initial requests for assessment for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) for 0-25 year olds in Kent LA.
EH71-C	Rate of notifications received into Early Help per 10,000 of the 0-17 population (inclusive, rolling 12 months)	The total number of referrals to an Early Help Unit completed during the corresponding reporting month per 10,000 (Population figures are updated upon reciept of the latest ONS Mid Year population estimates). This is a child level indicator.
SCS02	Rate of referrals to Children's Social Work Services per 10,000 of the 0-17 population (inclusive, rolling 12 months)	This indicator shows the rate of referrals received by Children's Social Work Services. Numerator: Number of referrals (rolling 12 month period). Denominator: child population figure divided by 10,000 (Population figures are updated upon receipt of the latest ONS Mid Year Estimates).
FD01-C	Number of contacts processed in the Front Door	The total number of notifications received during the corresponding reporting month that were processed by the Front Door. District and Area splits are not available for this indicator. The data includes all contact reasons processed by the Front Door. This is a child level indicator.
FD14-C	Number of Information, Advice and Guidance contacts processed in the Front Door	The total number of notifications with a contact outcome of "Information, Advice & Guidance" received during the corresponding reporting month that were processed by the Front Door. District and Area splits are not available for this indicator. The data includes all contact reasons processed by the Front Door. This is a child level indicator.

Indicator Definitions

Code	Indicator	Definition
Activity-Volume Measures (Continued)		
FD02-C	Number of contacts processed in the Front Door which met the threshold for CSWS involvement	The total number of notifications with a contact outcome of "Threshold met for CSWS" received during the corresponding reporting month that were processed by the Front Door. District and Area splits are not available for this indicator. The data includes all contact reasons processed by the Front Door. This is a child level indicator.
FD03-C	Number of contacts processed in the Front Door which proceeded to Early Help	The total number of notifications with a contact outcome of "Proceed to Early Help Unit" received during the corresponding reporting month that were processed by the Front Door. District and Area splits are not available for this indicator. The data includes all contact reasons processed by the Front Door. This is a child level indicator.
EH05-F	Number of cases open to Early Help Units	The number of open cases as at the end of the corresponding reporting month. The data includes all cases sent to units at Early Help Record stage prior to the end of the month. This is a family level indicator.
SCS01	Number of open Social Work cases	The total caseload figures for Children's Social Work Services.
	Number of Child Protection cases	The number of Children who have a Child Protection Plan as at the end of the corresponding reporting month.
	Number of Children in Care	The number of Children in Care as at the end of the corresponding reporting month.
	Number of Care Leavers	The number of Care Leavers as at the end of the corresponding reporting month.
EH32	Number of First Time Entrants into the Youth Justice system	First time entrants are defined as young people (aged 10 – 17 years) who receive their first substantive outcome (relating to a Youth Caution with or without an intervention, or a Conditional Caution or a Court disposal for those who go directly to Court without a Youth Caution or Conditional Caution).

Indicator Definitions

Code	Indicator	Definition
SEND Indicators		
APP17	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks	The percentage of Education and Health Care Plans that are issued within 20 weeks as a proportion of all such plans. The data is a snapshot at the end of the month.
APP17-N	Total number of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks	The number of Education and Health Care Plans that are issued within 20 weeks.The data is a snapshot at the end of the month.
APP17-D	Total number of EHCPs issued	The total number of Education and Health Care Plans that are issued.The data is a snapshot at the end of the month.
APP17-A	Average duration in days from assessment request to EHCP completion	
APP-EP	Percentage of assessment requests sent to Educational Psychology returned within 6 weeks	The percentage of Educational Psychology assessments returned within a 6 week timeframe as a proportion of all such requests.
	Percentage of annual EHCP reviews waiting less than 12 months	The percentage of Education and Health Care Plans that are reviewed within 12 months as a proportion of all such plans that were due a review. The data is a snapshot at the end of the month.
CYPE	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	The number of pupils with an EHCP that are placed in independent Special schools or out-of-county Special schools as a percentage of the total number of pupils with an EHCP
	Percentage of open Educational Psychology referrals waiting more than 6 weeks	The percentage of open referrals to the educational psychology service that have been waitng more than 6 weeks as a proportion of all such cases. The data is a snapshot at the end of the month.
	Percentage of SEND statutory assessment requests waiting more than 20 weeks	The percentage of cases where a request for a statutory assessment has been made but no final EHCP has been issued that have been waitng more than 20 weeks as a proportion of all such cases. The data is a snapshot at the end of the month.
Key Performance Indicators		
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	The percentage of referrals to SCS in the last 12 months where the start date of the previous referral (if any) is within 12 months of the new referral date.
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	The percentage of returner interviews completed in the last 12 months where the case was open to SCS at the point the child went missing and the child was aged under 18 at the point of going missing.
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	The percentage of children who become subject to a Child Protection Plan during the last 12 months who have been subject to a previous plan.
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	The percentage of Children in Care aged under 16 at the snapshot date who had been looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years, or are placed for adoption and their adoptive placement together with their previous placement together last for at least 2 years.
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	The percentage of all Children in Care at month end (excluding UASC) who are placed in a Foster Care placement.
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	The average number of days between becoming a Looked After Child and moving in with Adoptive Family (for children who have been Adopted in the last 12 months)
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	The percentage of relevant and former relevant care leavers who we were in contact with in a 4 month window around their birthday who were aged 17, 18, 19, 20 or 21 and were in education, employment or training.
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	The percentage of all completed case audits in the last 12 months where the overall grading was good or outstanding

Indicator Definitions

Code	Indicator	Definition
Key Performance Indicators (Continued)		
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	The percentage of caseholding posts with a staff member present at month end.
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	The average caseload of social workers within district based CIC Teams at the snapshot date.
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	The average caseload of social workers within the district based Children's Social Work Teams (CSWTs) at the snapshot date.
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	The percentage of referrals to EH in the last 12 months where the start date of the previous referral (if any) is within 12 months of the new referral date.
EH52-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	The percentage of assessments completed in the reporting month, where the assessment was completed within 30 working days of allocation.
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	The percentage of all EH Unit completed case audits in the last 12 months where the overall grading was good or outstanding
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	The percentage of EH cases that have been closed with an outcome of "outcomes achieved" and then came back into either EH or CSWS in the next 3 months. Please note that there is a 3 month time lag on this data so the result shown for May 2020 is actually looking at all EH Closures in the 12 months up to February 2020.
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	Definition to be confirmed.
CYPE8	Rate of proven re-offending by CYP	An offender enters the cohort if they are released from custody, received a non-custodial conviction at court or received a reprimand or warning (caution) in a three month period. A proven reoffence is defined as any offence committed in a one year follow-up period that leads to a court conviction, caution, reprimand or warning in the one year follow-up or within a further six month waiting period to allow the offence to be proven in court. **It is important to note that this is not comparable to previous proven reoffending publications which reported on a 12 month cohort.**
SISE71	Percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET)	The percentage of young people who have left compulsory education, up until the end of National Curriculum Year 13, who have not achieved a positive education, employment or training destination.
CYPE6	Percentage of Children Missing Education cases, closed within 30 school days	The number of closed cases within 30 school days of their referral to Kent County Council's CME Team, as a percentage of the total number of cases opened within the period.
CYPE22	Percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention	The number of CYP who register with the LA to Home Educate contacted to include information regarding a visit, within 10 days of receipt of the referral to Kent County Council's EHE Team, as a percentage of the total number of cases opened within the period.
EH43	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase - all Year R to Year 6 pupils	The total number of pupils in Year R to Year 6 that have been permanently excluded from a Kent maintained Primary school, Special school or Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or Primary academy or Special academy during the last 12 months.
EH44	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the secondary phase - all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils	The total number of pupils in Year 7 to Year 14 that have been permanently excluded from a Kent maintained Secondary school, Special school or Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or Secondary academy or Special academy during the last 12 months.
	Percentage (rate) of pupils permanently excluded from primary and secondary phase schools - all Year R to Year 14 pupils	The number of Year R (Reception) to Year 14 pupils permanently excluded from Primary, Secondary, Special schools and PRUs (incl. academies) in the last twelve months expressed as rate over the school population.

Indicator Definitions

Code	Indicator	Definition
Key Performance Indicators (Continued)		
EY2	Percentage of DWP and other identified eligible 2 year olds taking up a free early education place	The number of two year old children accessing a free early education place at an early years provider as a proportion of the total number of families identified as potentially eligible for funding by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development	Percentage of pupils assessed as achieving Expected or Exceeding in all Prime Learning Goals and all literacy and mathematics Early Learning Goals at the end of reception year, based on the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM Eligible achievement gap	The difference between the achievement of non-FSM eligible pupils and FSM eligible pupils in terms of percentage assessed as achieving Expected or Exceeding in all Prime Learning Goals and all literacy and mathematics Early Learning Goals at the end of reception year, based on the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics	The percentage of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 working at the Expected Standard in all of Reading, Writing & maths. Includes Kent maintained schools and academies.
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	The difference between the achievement of non-FSM eligible pupils and FSM eligible pupils in terms of percentage working at the Expected Standard in all of Reading, Writing & maths at KS2. Includes Kent maintained schools and academies.
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8	The average Attainment 8 score for pupils at end of Key Stage 4. Attainment 8 is a point score based on attainment across eight subjects which must include English; mathematics; three other English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects (sciences, computer science, geography, history and languages); and three further subjects, which can be from the range of EBacc subjects, or can be any other approved, high-value arts, academic, or vocational qualification.
SISE	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	The difference between the Attainment 8 score of non-FSM eligible pupils and FSM eligible pupils at the end of KS4 (see above definition for SISE12a). Includes Kent maintained schools and academies.
CYPE23	Average point score per A Level entry at KS5 [School students only]	The total number of points achieved in A-Level qualifications by pupils at the end of Key Stage 5 divided by the total number of entries made in all A-Level qualifications. Outcomes are for Kent maintained schools and academies only.
CYPE24	Average point score per Applied General entry at KS5 [School students only]	The total number of points achieved in Applied General qualifications by pupils at the end of Key Stage 5 divided by the total number of entries made in all Applied General qualifications. Outcomes are for Kent maintained schools and academies only.
CYPE25	Average point score per Tech Level entry at KS5 [School students only]	The total number of points achieved in Tech Level qualifications by pupils at the end of Key Stage 5 divided by the total number of entries made in all Tech Level qualifications. Outcomes are for Kent maintained schools and academies only.
SEND10	Percentage of pupils with a Statement or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	Percentage of pupils with an Education, Health and care Plan (EHCP) as a proportion of all pupils on roll in all schools as at January school census. Includes maintained schools and academies, Pupil Referral Units, Free schools and Independent schools (DfE published data).
CYPE2	Percentage of parents getting first preference of primary school	The percentage of parents who got their first preference of Primary school (out of their three ordered preferences) for their child.
CYPE3	Percentage of parents getting first preference of secondary school	The percentage of parents who got their first preference of Secondary school (out of their three ordered preferences) for their child.
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	The percentage of pupils that have been persistently absent from a Kent maintained Primary school or a Primary academy for 10% or more of their expected sessions over the reported time period.
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	The percentage of pupils that have been persistently absent from a Kent maintained Secondary school or a Secondary academy for 10% or more of their expected sessions over the reported time period.
	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	The percentage of pupils that have been severely absent from a Kent maintained Primary school or a Primary academy for 50% or more of their expected sessions over the reported time period.
	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	The percentage of pupils that have been severely absent from a Kent maintained Secondary school or a Secondary academy for 50% or more of their expected sessions over the reported time period.

Children, Young People and Education Performance Management

Children, Young People and Education Directorate Scorecard

September 2026

Produced by: Management Information & Intelligence, KCC

Publication Date: 20th October 2026

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Guidance Notes

Notes:
Figures for indicator CYPE8 (Rate of proven re-offending by CYP) shown in red have not been published by the Minstry of Justice (MoJ) but are included for information in this scorecard. The latest available data for this indicator was released on 30/07/26 and covers the 12 month period October 2023 to September 2024.
Please note that not all Children's Social Work indicators can be shown broken down by District for the associated CSWS team, as caseloads relating to these indicators are held by Area and Kent LA level teams. Cases included in a dataset are based on the Service working with the child and not the child's geographical residence.

POLARITY

H	The aim of this indicator is to achieve the highest number/percentage possible
L	The aim of this indicator is to achieve the lowest number/percentage possible
T	The aim of this indicator is to stay close to the target that has been set

RAG RATINGS

RED	Floor Standard* has not been achieved
AMBER	Floor Standard* achieved but Target has not been met
GREEN	Target has been achieved

* Floor Standards are set in Directorate Business Plans and if not achieved must result in management action

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL (DOT)

⇧	Performance has improved
⇩	Performance has worsened
⇔	Performance has remained the same

INCOMPLETE DATA

N/A	Data not available
	Data to be supplied
	New indicator - historical data not available

Data in italics indicates previous reporting year

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DATA PERIOD

R12M	Monthly Rolling 12 months
MS	Monthly Snapshot
YTD	Year To Date
Q	Quarterly
A	Annual

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCORECARDS

CYPE	Children, Young People and Education Directorate Scorecard
EY	Early Years Scorecard
NEET	NEET Monthly Scorecard
SEND	Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Scorecard
ICS	Intensive EH and CSWS Monthly Performance Report

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

CIC	Children in Care
CSWT	Children's Social Work Teams
CSWS	Children's Social Work Services
CYP	Children and Young People
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EY	Early Years
EYFE	Early Years Free Entitlement
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
FF2	Free For Two
FSM	Free School Meals
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
SCS	Specialist Children's Services
SEN	Special Educational Needs

Directorate Scorecard - Kent Activity/Volume

as at May 2026

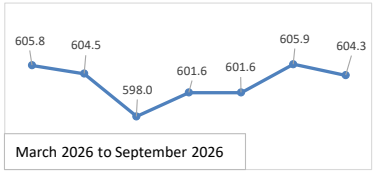
129,613 pupils in 459 primary schools
27.8 % with free school meals (24.8%)

114,037 pupils in 104 secondary schools
26.4 % with free school meals (27.3%)

6,761 pupils in 25 special schools
50.3 % with free school meals (50.9%)

as at Sep 2026

Rate of Early Help Unit Referrals per 10,000 of the 0-17 population (inclusive, rolling 12 months)



as at Sep 2026

Open cases

Intensive Early Help	2,133 (Families)
Open Social Work Cases	11,626
Including:	
• Child Protection	1,208
• Children in Care	2,070
• Care Leavers	2,225

as at Aug 2024

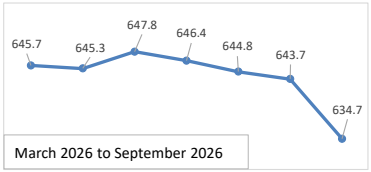
Ofsted judgements

EY providers	98.7	(98%)
Primary	92.4	(91%)
Secondary	88.0	(85%)
Special	92.3	(90%)

Note: From 1st September 2024, inspections of state-funded schools no longer include a judgement on overall effectiveness, and outcomes of ungraded inspections no longer refer to the previous good or outstanding grade. No aggregations of data are now published by Ofsted and no replacement measure has been devised.

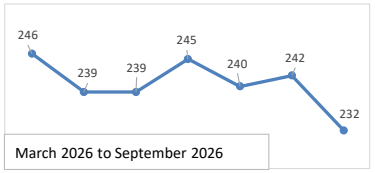
as at Sep 2026

Rate of referrals to Children's Social Work Services per 10,000 of the 0-17 population (inclusive, rolling 12 months)



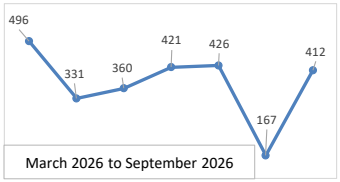
as at Sep 2026

Number of First Time Entrants into the Youth Justice system



as at Sep 2026

Requests for SEND statutory assessment



as at Sep 2026

Activity at the Front Door (children)

Total contacts	7,984
Number resolved at FD	3,811
Number to CSWS	1,890
Number to EH Units	1,721

as at Sep 2026

Family Hub Indicators

Pending Family Hub scorecard development

- Figures shown in brackets are National averages.
- Free School Meal averages are as at January 2026 school census and based on state funded schools only.
- Ofsted National averages are as at 31st August 2024.

Directorate Scorecard - SEND Monthly Indicators

Education Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	South East Average as at 31st December 2025	England Average as at 31st December 2025
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26										
APP17	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks	H	MS		91.3	84.7	75.0	86.6	69.2	60.0	78.2	147	188	⇧	65	GREEN	56.9	65	GREEN	46.9	46.1
APP17-N	Total number of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks	H	MS		146	160	117	174	166	99	188			⇧						N/A	N/A
APP17-D	Total number of EHCPs issued	L	MS		160	189	156	201	240	165	147			⇧						N/A	N/A
APP17-A	Average duration in days from assessment request to EHCP completion	L	MS		142	144	145	143	144	151	146			⇧						N/A	N/A
APP-EP	Percentage of assessment requests sent to Educational Psychology returned within 6 weeks	H	MS		80.7	82.0	79.2	73.5	85.4	80.7	61.7	161	261	⇩	65	AMBER	76.5	65	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of annual EHCP reviews waiting less than 12 months	H	MS	✓	60.5	61.2	62.7	64.8	65.2	64.8	64.6	14,708	22,782	⇩	75	RED				N/A	N/A
CYPE1	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	L	MS		10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.6	10.6	10.7	2,437	22,782	⇩	9	RED	10.6	9	RED	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of open Educational Psychology referrals waiting more than 6 weeks	L	MS		5.5	10.5	18.2	8.6	9.8	8.0	27.4	87	318	⇩						N/A	N/A
	Percentage of SEND statutory assessment requests waiting more than 20 weeks	L	MS		3.4	3.2	2.9	6.6	6.2	3.8	5.6	74	1,325	⇩						N/A	N/A

Commentary on Education SEND Indicators:

Internal reorganisation of casework teams into dedicated Phase Transfer and Annual Review teams have now been established. This redistribution is allowing the new teams to focus on either the year-long statutory function of Phase Transfer or the rolling transactional Annual Review workload. Previously, staff were required to continually balance both requirements, often at the expense of Annual Review completion. This adjustment is expected to provide sufficient dedicated capacity for this KPI to continue to improve. In addition, a programme of improvement is planned to improve timeliness and quality of Annual Reviews. This will follow the model of improvement undertaken successfully within the Assessment teams. The service has an action plan to improve both timeliness and quality of annual reviews, which has recently begun and is expected to be rolled out in year one and embedded in year two (as per annual review cycle).

Kent continues to feel the effect of the delayed provision of two new special schools, leading to a continued over-reliance on independent specialist provision to compensate. While recent DfE advice has made clear that these schools remain in their plans, this does not offset the negative impact of ongoing delays. This area is therefore likely to remain below target for the foreseeable future. In addition, the service continues to be under pressure from requests for placements in the Independent School sector, with new schools frequently being approved by the DfE. The service is using a number of strategies to ensure there is enough suitable provision, including increasing the number of placements in primary and secondary Specialist Resourced Provisions (SRPs). This year there is a planned increase of 111 places across 15 SRPs followed by further development/expansions in 2027/28 of a further 121 places.

Directorate Scorecard - Kent KPIs

Integrated Children's Services Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
Children's Social Work Services					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M	✓	22.3	22.3	22.0	21.7	21.5	21.3	21.2	4,774	22,555	⇧	25.0	GREEN	22.3	25.0	GREEN	28	23
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	H	R12M		90.9	91.1	91.2	90.8	89.8	89.3	87.1	1,838	2,110	⇩	90.0	AMBER	90.9	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	T	R12M		26.5	27.2	27.7	27.2	26.2	26.0	25.7	355	1,384	⇧	20.0	AMBER	26.5	20.0	AMBER	26	25
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	H	MS		71.8	71.6	71.2	70.8	71.9	72.0	70.6	338	479	⇩	70.0	GREEN	71.8	70.0	GREEN	68	69
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	H	MS	✓	69.7	68.6	68.9	68.7	67.5	67.9	68.0	1,025	1,508	⇧	70.0	AMBER	69.7	70.0	AMBER	65	67
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	L	R12M		457.9	425.8	421.6	372.7	391.9	404.2	423.3	23,283	55	⇩	426.0	GREEN	457.9	426.0	RED	437	475
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	H	R12M	✓	54.2	55.4	56.6	56.1	54.3	52.9	54.0	735	1,360	⇧	60.0	AMBER	54.2	65.0	RED	52	54
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	H	R12M		83.8	83.4	82.8	81.2	80.8	80.3	80.5	404	502	⇧	85.0	AMBER	83.8	85.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	H	MS	✓	87.8	86.5	86.8	82.6	83.0	83.5	88.3	557.9	631.8	⇧	90.0	AMBER	87.8	90.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	L	MS		16.8	16.3	15.9	17.0	17.2	16.9	16.2	1,717	105.8	⇧	15.0	AMBER	16.8	15.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	L	MS		20.4	21.1	21.9	23.5	23.1	21.8	20.1	5,425	269.6	⇧	18.0	AMBER	20.4	18.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
Early Help					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M		25.8	25.8	25.6	25.7	25.7	25.8	25.7	2,988	11,606	⇧	25.0	AMBER	25.8	25.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
EH52-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	H	R12M		93.1	92.8	92.7	93.1	93.4	93.2	93.4	5,924	6,346	⇧	85.0	GREEN	93.1	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	H	R12M		89.3	89.3	90.5	90.5	88.2	88.2	89.2	116	130	⇧	85.0	GREEN	89.3	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	L	R12M	✓	14.7	14.7	14.6	14.2	14.1	14.2	14.4	658	4,578	⇩	15.0	GREEN	14.7	15.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	T	MS		17.1	15.2	15.4	15.9	14.9	13.2	14.2	1941	137.0	⇧	20.0	AMBER	17.1	20.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Integrated Children's Services Quarterly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Quarterly Trends			Latest Quarter			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2025-26	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	South East as at Jan 2026	England & Wales as at Jan 2026
								Rate	Numerator	Denominator								
					Q2 25-26	Q3 25-26	Q4 25-26	Q1 26-27										
CYPE8	Rate of proven re-offending by CYP	L	Q		29.3	28.7	29.6	30.8	131	426	⇩	32.1	GREEN	28.7	32.9	GREEN	30.6	31.8

Directorate Scorecard - Kent KPIs

Education Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
SISE71	Percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET) [seasonally impacted indicator]**	L	MS		5.1	5.2	5.0	5.1	5.0	4.8	3.1	1,222	39,879	⇧	3.4	GREEN	4.8	2.8	RED	3.6	3.4
CYPE6	Percentage of Children Missing Education cases, closed within 30 school days	H	R12M		93.3	92.7	92.7	92.6	92.6	91.1	91.8	4,515	4,921	⇧	90	GREEN	91.1	90	GREEN	N/A	N/A
CYPE22	Percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention++	H	R12M		83.7	83.7	83.6	83.3	83.4	83.4	83.6	3,480	4,161	⇧	85	AMBER	83.4	85	AMBER	N/A	N/A
EH43	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase - all Year R to Year 6 pupils	L	R12M		26	26	26	22	25	23	21	N/A	N/A	⇧	22	GREEN	23	<= 25	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH44	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the secondary phase - all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils	L	R12M		63	59	59	63	63	59	58	N/A	N/A	⇧	58	GREEN	59	<= 79	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Percentage (rate) of pupils permanently excluded from primary and secondary phase schools - all Year R to Year 14 pupils	L	R12M		0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.03	N/A	N/A	⇔			0.03			0.06	0.12

Notes: **Several Post-16 enrolment files are still outstanding and have yet to be received or processed. As a result, the Kent and District September 2026 NEET and Not Known figures should be treated as provisional. Final data will be submitted to the DfE at the end of October 2026.

++ EHE figures from March 2026 to September 2026 have been restated following an update to the underlying reporting logic. Workflow changes introduced earlier this year phased out a legacy tracking trigger, which inadvertently led the automated report to overestimate compliance. Following a data cleanse to reflect active triggers, historical and current figures have been aligned to true operational performance.

Exclusion rates have been added alongside the numbers of permanent exclusions, as this is the only way that Kent's performance can be benchmarked to national.

Education Termly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Termly Trends			Latest Term			DOT	Target Summer 2025-26	RAG 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator			
					Summer 24-25	Autumn 25-26	Spring 25-26	Summer 25-26					
EY2	Percentage of DWP and other identified eligible 2 year olds taking up a free early education place [seasonally impacted indicator]	H	T		55.0	69.5	72.7	72.6	2,456	3,385	⇧	64.0	GREEN

Education Annual Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	DOT	Target 2026-27	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26							SN or SE	
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development	H	A		68.3	68.0	68.9	74.0	12,665	17,105	71.6	GREEN	⇧	74.3	74.8	72.4
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM gap	L	A		21.3	24.7	22.8	24.0	N/A	N/A	21.0	AMBER	⇩	21.0	25.4	21.6
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics	H	A		59	62	62	63	11,974	19,030	62	GREEN	⇧	63	63	63
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	L	A		28	26	27	28	N/A	N/A	25	AMBER	⇩	25	27	22
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8	H	A		47.0	47.0	46.7	*46.7*	N/A	N/A	47.0	AMBER	⇔	*47.0*	*47.1*	*46.0*
SISE19	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	L	A		17.8	18.2	18.6	*18.6*	N/A	N/A	17.0	AMBER	⇔	*17.0*	*18.7*	*15.0*
CYPE23	Average point score per A Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		34.20	34.22	34.86	*34.86*	N/A	N/A	35.00	AMBER	⇔	*35.00*	*35.58*	*34.99*
CYPE24	Average point score per Applied General entry at KS5 [State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		29.14	28.03	29.20	*29.20*	N/A	N/A	29.50	AMBER	⇔	*29.50*	*29.02*	*29.89*
CYPE25	Average point score per Tech Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		33.47	27.17	27.97	*27.97*	N/A	N/A	29.00	AMBER	⇔	*29.00*	*28.86*	*28.82*

Data sources for attainment data: EYFSP = 2026 School returns, July 2026. KS2 = 2026 DfE Interim Dataset, July 2026. KS4 = 2025 DfE Published SFR, 05/02/26. KS5 = 2025 DfE Published SFR, 12/02/26

Directorate Scorecard - Kent KPIs

Education Annual Indicators (Continued) (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2025-26	RAG 2024-25	DOT	Target 2026-27	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26							SN or SE	
SEND10	Percentage of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	L	A		5.2	5.4	5.8	6.0	967	16,126	5.8	AMBER	⇩	6.0	6.1	6.0
CYPE2	Percentage of parents getting first preference of primary school	H	A		90.1	91.3	90.6	89.7	14,877	16,594	N/A				91.6	92.4
CYPE3	Percentage of parents getting first preference of secondary school	H	A		78.2	78.6	80.6	79.0	14,714	18,635	N/A				82.8	83.6
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		17.2	15.8	14.6	14.4	16,215	112,451	14.3	AMBER	⇧	*14.3*	13.5	14.4
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		29.2	26.8	24.1	21.9	21,294	97,335	21.1	AMBER	⇧	*21.1*	21.2	21.5
EH48	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1,309	112,451	0.9	AMBER	⇩	*0.9*	1.1	1.0
EH49	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		3.7	3.8	3.7	3.2	3,094	97,335	3.2	GREEN	⇧	*3.2*	3.2	3.2

Directorate Scorecard - Kent KPIs

Commentary on Integrated Children's Services Indicators:

Children's Social Care

AMBER: The average caseload in the Children's Social Work Teams (CSWT) is 20.1 children, which is above the target caseload of no more than 18 children.

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AMBER: The percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time is 25.7% which is above the target range of 17.5% - 22.5%. This compares to average rates for England of 24.5%, Statistical Neighbours 24.3% and the South-East 26.3% (comparative data is for 2024/25). This measure includes all children subject to a subsequent Child Protection Plan regardless of the timescale between those plans.

AMBER: The percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with Children's Social Work Involvement is 87.1%, which is close to the target of 90.0%. For those Returner Interviews that did take place, 85.8% took place within timescale (3 working days) which is above the 80.0% target.

AMBER: At 68.0% the percentage of children in care placed in KCC foster care, or in placements with relatives/friends, is just below the target of 70.0%.

AMBER: The percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with) is 54.0% which is below the target of 60.0%. Those not in employment will include those not able to work due to illness, disability, pregnancy or parenting responsibilities and unaccompanied asylum seeking young people who remain without status and are not able to remain in education or gain employment when they reach the age of 18.

AMBER: The percentage of Children's Social Work Case File Audits graded good or outstanding is 80.5%, close to the target of 85.0%.

AMBER: The percentage of caseholding staff present in post was 88.3%, with 557.9 FTE caseholding staff present in their post from a staffing establishment of 631.8 FTE. The target for this measure is 90.0%. The measure of staff present in post includes caseholding staff employed by KCC and Agency staff and excludes any vacancies or staff who are absent from their role, for example on maternity or long-term sick leave.

AMBER: The average caseload in the Children in Care (CIC) Teams is 16.2 children which is close to the target of no more than 15 children/young people.

GREEN: The percentage re-referrals to Children's Social Work Services within 12 months of a previous referral was 21.2% , achieving the target of below 25.0%. This performance compares to the latest published England average of 22.6%, and averages of 20.5% for Kent's Statistical Neighbours and 28.4% for the South-East (comparative data is for 2024/25).

GREEN: The percentage of Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more) is 70.6%, achieving the target of 70.0% or above. Kent's performance remains above the latest published average for England of 69.0%, for the South-East 68.0% and for Kent's Statistical Neighbours 70.8% (comparative data is for 2024/25).

GREEN: The average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family is 423.3 days which is below the nationally set guide of less than 426 days. This compares to the latest published England average of 475 days for 2024/25.

Intensive Early Help

AMBER: The percentage of referrals to an Early Help Unit where a previous episode ended within 12 months is 25.7%, which is just above the target of 25.0%.

AMBER: The average caseload within Early Help Units is 14.2 families which is within the amber tolerance set for this KPI.

GREEN: The percentage of Early Help Assessments completed within 30 working days is 93.4%, achieving the target of above 85.0%.

GREEN: The percentage of Early Help Unit cases that were audited and graded as good or outstanding is 89.2%, achieving above the 85.0% target.

Commentary on Education Indicators:

The majority of education indicators are annual. Commentary has only been provided for indicators where new data has been published since the last scorecard was issued where targets exist.

AMBER: The percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention at 83.6% is just below the target of 85%. While recent internal process improvements have significantly accelerated overall EHE decision-making times and increased throughput, higher referral volumes continue to impact the 10-day initial contact window. The service is actively reviewing internal processes and capacity to close the 1.4 percentage point gap and achieve the target.

GREEN: The rate of proven re-offending by CYP at 30.8 is better than the target of 32.1.

GREEN: The percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET) is a seasonally impacted indicator. The provisional data for September 2026 was 3.1% with 1,222 children NEET.

GREEN: The percentage of Children Missing Education (CME) cases, closed within 30 school days is 91.8% with 4,515 cases closed out of a total of 4,921.

GREEN: The numbers of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase, as a 12-month rolling average, at 21 is better than the target of 22 or fewer.

GREEN: The numbers of pupils permanently excluded from the secondary phase – all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils is 58 and is equal to the maximum target of 58.

Directorate Scorecard - Kent KPIs - Vulnerable Learners

Annual Indicators - Primary (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2025-26	RAG	DOT	Target 2026-27	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26							SN or SE	
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - all pupils	H	A		68.3	68.0	68.9	74.0	12,665	17,105	71.6	GREEN	⇧	74.3	74.8	72.4
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM gap	L	A		23.2	24.7	22.8	24.0	N/A	N/A	21.0	AMBER	⇩	21.0	25.4	21.6
	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - Kent CIC gap	L	A		22.5	44.4	32.9	31.3	N/A	N/A	N/A small cohort	N/A	⇧	N/A small cohort	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - SEN Support gap	L	A		50.4	52.9	51.6	52.8	N/A	N/A	50.0	AMBER	⇩	50.0	50	50.0
	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - SEN EHCP gap	L	A		70.5	72.9	74.4	78.0	N/A	N/A	73.0	RED	⇩	75.5	75.5	75.7
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - all pupils	H	A		59	62	62	63	11,974	19,030	62	GREEN	⇧	63	63	63
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	L	A		28	26	27	28	N/A	N/A	25	AMBER	⇩	25	27	22
	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - Kent CIC gap	L	A		35.4	30.6	33.3	31	N/A	N/A	30	AMBER	⇧	30	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - SEN Support gap	L	A		47	46	44	42	N/A	N/A	43	GREEN	⇧	42	46	44
	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - SEN EHCP gap	L	A		62	64	65	65	N/A	N/A	63	AMBER	⇩	63	65	65
	Progress score in Reading at KS2 - all pupils	H	A		-0.45	N/A	N/A	-0.19	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.00	-0.01	0.05
	Progress score in Reading at KS2 - FSM Eligible	H	A		-1.86	N/A	N/A	-1.36	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-1.22	-1.22	-0.66
	Progress score in Reading at KS2 - Kent CIC	H	A		-1.55	N/A	N/A	-3.59	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-3.00		
	Progress score in Reading at KS2 - SEN Support	H	A		-1.39	N/A	N/A	-1.32	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-1.06	-1.06	-0.78
	Progress score in Reading at KS2 - SEN EHCP	H	A		-6.00	N/A	N/A	-5.51	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-5.00	-5.25	-4.85
	Progress score in writing at KS2 - all pupils	H	A		0.00	N/A	N/A	0.27	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.00	-0.19	0.06
	Progress score in writing at KS2 - FSM Eligible	H	A		-1.09	N/A	N/A	-0.71	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-0.44	-1.03	-0.44
	Progress score in writing at KS2 - Kent CIC	H	A		-0.86	N/A	N/A	-3.23	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-3.00		
	Progress score in writing at KS2 - SEN Support	H	A		-1.50	N/A	N/A	-1.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-1.50	-2.00	-1.63
	Progress score in writing at KS2 - SEN EHCP	H	A		-5.10	N/A	N/A	-5.13	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-5.00	-5.69	-5.19
	Progress score in maths at KS2 - all pupils	H	A		-1.00	N/A	N/A	-0.78	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.00	-0.35	0.04
	Progress score in maths at KS2 - FSM Eligible	H	A		-2.70	N/A	N/A	-2.15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-1.82	-1.82	-0.83
	Progress score in maths at KS2 - Kent CIC	H	A		-3.32	N/A	N/A	-4.74	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-4.00		
	Progress score in maths at KS2 - SEN Support	H	A		-2.37	N/A	N/A	-2.19	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-1.63	-1.63	-0.98
	Progress score in maths at KS2 - SEN EHCP	H	A		-6.04	N/A	N/A	-5.70	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-5.20	-5.04	-4.50

Note - There are no KS1-2 Progress measures for 2023-24 or 2024-25 as there is no KS1 prior attainment data for the relevant years.

Directorate Scorecard - Kent KPIs - Vulnerable Learners

Annual Indicators - Secondary (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2024-25	RAG	DOT	Target 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25							SE Region	
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - all pupils	H	A		49.3	47.0	47.0	46.7	N/A	N/A	47.0	AMBER	⇩	47.0	47.1	46.0
SISE19	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	L	A		18.5	17.8	18.2	18.6	N/A	N/A	17.0	AMBER	⇧	17.0	18.7	15.0
	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - Kent CIC gap	L	A		27.3	28.2	28.0	24.9	N/A	N/A					N/A	N/A
	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - SEN Support gap	L	A		16.7	16.3	17.5	17.5	N/A	N/A	15.0	AMBER	⇔	16.4	17.7	16.4
	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - SEN EHCP gap	L	A		39.5	37.9	37.7	36.7	N/A	N/A	36.0	AMBER	⇩	35.3	37.0	35.4

Note: There is no Progress 8 data available for 2024-25 due to the lack of KS2 prior attainment data during the Covid-19 pandemic. Progress 8 reporting is due to return in 2026-27.

Directorate Scorecard - Ashford District

Integrated Children's Services Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
Ashford CSWT					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M	✓	26.3	27.4	26.0	24.7	23.7	24.3	24.1	384	1,595	⇧	25.0	GREEN	26.3	25.0	AMBER	28	23
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	H	R12M		97.9	94.0	94.1	93.0	93.1	92.5	94.2	49	52	⇧	90.0	GREEN	97.9	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	T	R12M		20.5	19.3	19.7	21.4	23.8	23.5	22.9	22	96	⇧	20.0	AMBER	20.5	20.0	GREEN	26	25
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	H	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			68	69
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	H	MS	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			65	67
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	L	R12M		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			437	475
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	H	R12M	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			52	54
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	H	R12M		75.0	75.0	75.0	75.0	75.0	75.0	80.0	16	20	⇧	85.0	AMBER	75.0	85.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	H	MS	✓	89.4	89.4	85.1	80.7	72.0	70.3	77.3	17.8	23.0	⇧	90.0	RED	89.4	90.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	L	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			N/A	N/A
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	L	MS		24.4	24.5	26.5	28.6	29.5	28.0	24.8	441	17.8	⇧	18.0	RED	24.4	18.0	RED	N/A	N/A
Ashford EHU					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26										
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M		22.7	22.8	21.7	21.5	22.4	22.7	23.4	220	942	⇩	25.0	GREEN	22.7	25.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH52-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	H	R12M		98.9	98.4	98.4	98.5	98.6	98.4	98.3	564	574	⇩	85.0	GREEN	98.9	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	H	R12M		90.0	90.0	90.0	90.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	8	10	⇔	85.0	AMBER	90.0	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	L	R12M	✓	16.1	15.3	14.7	13.5	12.7	12.3	13.0	51	393	⇩	15.0	GREEN	16.1	15.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	T	MS		16.3	14.3	15.3	14.9	14.6	13.0	13.5	189	14.0	⇧	20.0	AMBER	16.3	20.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Integrated Children's Services Quarterly Indicators - Ashford (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Quarterly Trends			Latest Quarter			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2025-26	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	South East as at Jan 2026	England & Wales as at Jan 2026
								Rate	Numerator	Denominator								
					Q2 25-26	Q3 25-26	Q4 25-26	Q1 26-27										
CYPE8	Rate of proven re-offending by CYP	L	Q		32.0	30.4	35.0	31.8	7	22	⇩	32.1	GREEN	30.4	32.9	GREEN	30.6	31.8

Directorate Scorecard - Ashford District

Education Monthly Indicators - Ashford (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
APP17	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks	H	MS		100.0	100.0	72.7	72.7	29.4	37.0	87.5	14	16	⇧	65	GREEN	48.0	65	RED	46.9	46.1
SISE71	Percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET) [seasonally impacted indicator]	L	MS		4.2	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	2.8	101	3,617	⇧	3.4	GREEN	4.0	2.8	RED	3.6	3.4
CYPE1	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	L	MS		10.0	10.3	10.3	10.2	10.1	9.8	9.7	188	1,939	⇧	9	AMBER	9.8	9	AMBER	N/A	N/A
EH43	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase - all Year R to Year 6 pupils	L	R12M		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	⇔	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EH44	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the secondary phase - all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils	L	R12M		3	2	2	2	2	2	2	N/A	N/A	⇔	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CYPE6	Percentage of Children Missing Education cases, closed within 30 school days	H	R12M		99.7	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	390	390	⇔	90	GREEN	100.0	90	GREEN	N/A	N/A
CYPE22	Percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention	H	R12M		84.8	84.4	83.8	84.0	83.4	83.4	86.0	337	392	⇧	85	GREEN	83.4	85	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Education Termly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Termly Trends			Latest Term			DOT	Target Summer 2025-26	RAG 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator			
					Summer 24-25	Autumn 25-26	Spring 25-26	Summer 25-26					
EY2	Percentage of DWP and other identified eligible 2 year olds taking up a free early education place [seasonally impacted indicator]	H	T		55.8	78.3	77.3	78.0	245	314	⇧	64.0	GREEN

Education Annual Indicators - Ashford (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	DOT	Target 2026-27	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26							SN or SE	
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development	H	A		68.6	68.6	68.9	71.6	1,051	1,467	71.6	GREEN	⇧	74.3	74.8	72.4
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM gap	L	A		16.0	22.1	16.6	24.0	N/A	N/A	21.0	AMBER	⇩	21.0	25.4	21.6
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics	H	A		56.9	58.9	59.5	60.6	1,018	1,680	62	AMBER	⇧	63	63	63
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	L	A		26.8	26.8	27.4	29.0	N/A	N/A	25	RED	⇩	25	27	22
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8	H	A		45.8	44.9	44.9	*44.9*	N/A	N/A	47.0	AMBER	⇔	*47.0*	*47.1*	*46.0*
SISE19	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	L	A		16.9	19.6	20.5	*20.5*	N/A	N/A	17.0	RED	⇔	*17.0*	*18.7*	*15.0*
CYPE23	Average point score per A Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		32.83	32.50	34.24	*34.24*	N/A	N/A	35.00	AMBER	⇔	*35.00*	*35.58*	*34.99*
CYPE24	Average point score per Applied General entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		28.88	29.08	29.83	*29.83*	N/A	N/A	29.50	GREEN	⇔	*29.50*	*29.02*	*29.89*
CYPE25	Average point score per Tech Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		29.72	30.11	27.57	*27.57*	N/A	N/A	29.00	AMBER	⇔	*29.00*	*28.86*	*28.82*
SEND10	Percentage of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	L	A		4.9	5.0	5.2	5.5	1,175	21,551	5.8	GREEN	⇩	6.0	6.1	6.0
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		15.5	16.1	14.1	14.3	1,367	9,539	14.3	GREEN	⇩	*14.3*	13.5	14.4
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		30.8	27.7	24.1	21.0	1,817	8,657	21.1	GREEN	⇧	*21.1*	21.2	21.5
EH48	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		0.9	0.9	1.1	1.1	109	9,539	0.9	AMBER	⇔	*0.9*	1.1	1.0
EH49	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		4.3	4.5	3.7	2.9	248	8,657	3.2	GREEN	⇧	*3.2*	3.2	3.2

Directorate Scorecard - Canterbury District

Integrated Children's Services Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
Canterbury CSWT					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M	✓	25.8	25.9	25.8	24.4	25.1	25.4	23.9	364	1,522	⇧	25.0	GREEN	25.8	25.0	AMBER	28	23
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	H	R12M		95.7	95.7	95.6	96.1	94.5	94.4	94.1	48	51	⇩	90.0	GREEN	95.7	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	T	R12M		23.4	26.6	29.8	31.8	32.9	31.3	30.9	46	149	⇧	20.0	RED	23.4	20.0	AMBER	26	25
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	H	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			68	69
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	H	MS	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			65	67
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	L	R12M		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			437	475
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	H	R12M	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			52	54
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	H	R12M		85.0	85.0	89.5	89.5	89.5	89.5	90.5	19	21	⇧	85.0	GREEN	85.0	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	H	MS	✓	88.5	88.5	84.6	76.9	80.8	77.8	85.2	23.0	27.0	⇧	90.0	AMBER	88.5	90.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	L	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			N/A	N/A
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	L	MS		24.0	23.0	24.2	26.5	25.1	26.1	24.7	567	23.0	⇧	18.0	RED	24.0	18.0	RED	N/A	N/A
Canterbury EHU					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26										
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M		22.2	22.0	22.1	22.4	22.9	22.9	24.1	226	938	⇩	25.0	GREEN	22.2	25.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH52-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	H	R12M		92.8	92.0	91.5	91.1	91.5	90.9	90.2	563	624	⇩	85.0	GREEN	92.8	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	H	R12M		75.0	75.0	84.6	84.6	78.6	78.6	80.0	12	15	⇧	85.0	AMBER	75.0	85.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	L	R12M	✓	9.0	9.6	9.7	10.3	10.8	11.0	11.4	46	402	⇩	15.0	GREEN	9.0	15.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	T	MS		19.3	18.4	17.0	18.0	18.0	17.9	14.2	210	14.8	⇩	20.0	AMBER	19.3	20.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A

Integrated Children's Services Quarterly Indicators - Canterbury (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Quarterly Trends			Latest Quarter			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2025-26	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	South East as at Jan 2026	England & Wales as at Jan 2026
								Rate	Numerator	Denominator								
					Q2 25-26	Q3 25-26	Q4 25-26	Q1 26-27										
CYPE8	Rate of proven re-offending by CYP	L	Q		38.9	36.4	35.6	34.0	16	47	⇧	32.1	AMBER	36.4	32.9	AMBER	30.6	31.8

Directorate Scorecard - Canterbury District

Education Monthly Indicators - Canterbury (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
APP17	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks	H	MS		100.0	100.0	73.1	80.0	63.6	60.9	68.8	11	16	⇧	65	GREEN	62.6	65	AMBER	46.9	46.1
SISE71	Percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET) [seasonally impacted indicator]	L	MS		5.5	5.7	6.1	6.5	6.1	6.0	5.4	195	3,602	⇧	3.4	RED	5.5	2.8	RED	3.6	3.4
CYPE1	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	L	MS		12.4	12.0	12.1	12.0	11.7	11.4	11.8	252	2,136	⇩	9	RED	11.4	9	RED	N/A	N/A
EH43	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase - all Year R to Year 6 pupils	L	R12M		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	N/A	N/A	⇔	N/A	N/A	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EH44	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the secondary phase - all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils	L	R12M		0	0	0	1	1	0	1	N/A	N/A	⇩	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CYPE6	Percentage of Children Missing Education cases, closed within 30 school days	H	R12M		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	463	463	⇔	90	GREEN	100.0	90	GREEN	N/A	N/A
CYPE22	Percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention	H	R12M		85.0	84.9	84.4	84.3	84.7	84.6	82.9	296	357	⇩	85	AMBER	84.6	85	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Education Termly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Termly Trends			Latest Term			DOT	Target Summer 2025-26	RAG 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator			
					Summer 24-25	Autumn 25-26	Spring 25-26	Summer 25-26					
EY1	Percentage of DWP and other identified eligible 2 year olds taking up a free early education place [seasonally impacted indicator]	H	T		54.2	63.9	69.4	69.1	206	298	⇧	64.0	GREEN

Education Annual Indicators - Canterbury (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	DOT	Target 2026-27	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26							SN or SE	
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development	H	A		65.0	67.0	67.8	72.7	1,040	1,430	71.6	GREEN	⇧	74.3	74.8	72.4
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM gap	L	A		20.6	29.3	22.5	24.7	N/A	N/A	21.0	RED	⇩	21.0	25.4	21.6
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics	H	A		56.6	56.6	56.9	58.2	900	1,547	62	RED	⇧	63	63	63
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	L	A		35.5	32.5	31.0	32.6	N/A	N/A	25	RED	⇩	25	27	22
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8	H	A		46.2	45.4	45.4	*45.4*	N/A	N/A	47.0	AMBER	⇔	*47.0*	*47.1*	*46.0*
SISE19	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	L	A		16.7	16.9	18.7	*18.7*	N/A	N/A	17.0	AMBER	⇔	*17.0*	*18.7*	*15.0*
CYPE23	Average point score per A Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		33.19	34.6	35.09	*35.09*	N/A	N/A	35.00	GREEN	⇔	*35.00*	*35.58*	*34.99*
CYPE24	Average point score per Applied General entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		30.24	30.2	30.21	*30.21*	N/A	N/A	29.50	GREEN	⇔	*29.50*	*29.02*	*29.89*
CYPE25	Average point score per Tech Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		31.23	27.3	26.53	*26.53*	N/A	N/A	29.00	AMBER	⇔	*29.00*	*28.86*	*28.82*
SEND10	Percentage of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	L	A		5.4	5.7	6.0	6.1	1,353	22,322	5.8	AMBER	⇩	6.0	6.1	6.0
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		18.2	17.3	16.7	16.2	1,504	9,287	14.3	RED	⇧	*14.3*	13.5	14.4
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		28.1	28.7	24.4	24.6	2,186	8,881	21.1	RED	⇩	*21.1*	21.2	21.5
EH48	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		1.1	1.5	1.5	1.4	134	9,287	0.9	AMBER	⇧	*0.9*	1.1	1.0
EH49	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		4.6	4.6	3.9	4.3	386	8,881	3.2	RED	⇩	*3.2*	3.2	3.2

Directorate Scorecard - Dartford District

Integrated Children's Services Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
Dartford CSWT					Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26									SN or SE	
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M	✓	19.7	20.1	18.9	18.6	17.8	17.4	17.5	255	1,459	⇩	25.0	GREEN	19.7	25.0	GREEN	28	23
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	H	R12M		93.8	93.5	93.9	97.0	97.2	97.3	97.6	41	42	⇧	90.0	GREEN	93.8	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	T	R12M		28.3	28.7	24.2	25.0	21.6	20.4	18.5	17	92	⇩	20.0	GREEN	28.3	20.0	RED	26	25
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	H	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			68	69
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	H	MS	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			65	67
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	L	R12M		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			437	475
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	H	R12M	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			52	54
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	H	R12M		85.0	85.0	90.0	90.0	90.0	90.0	94.7	18	19	⇧	85.0	GREEN	85.0	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	H	MS	✓	96.7	96.7	92.4	88.0	79.3	87.7	87.7	20.2	23.0	⇔	90.0	AMBER	96.7	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	L	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			N/A	N/A
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	L	MS		18.7	19.2	21.4	23.1	26.9	22.3	21.7	437	20.2	⇧	18.0	AMBER	18.7	18.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
Dartford EHU					Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26										
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M		20.2	19.8	19.8	18.6	18.3	18.1	18.9	124	657	⇩	25.0	GREEN	20.2	25.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH2-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	H	R12M		89.0	90.5	89.2	90.5	90.9	89.9	90.9	338	372	⇧	85.0	GREEN	89.0	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	H	R12M		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	10	10	⇔	85.0	GREEN	100.0	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	L	R12M	✓	9.7	10.1	10.7	9.8	11.3	11.1	11.4	25	219	⇩	15.0	GREEN	9.7	15.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	T	MS		13.7	11.8	14.2	15.3	16.4	11.7	11.4	117	10.3	⇩	20.0	RED	13.7	20.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Integrated Children's Services Quarterly Indicators - Dartford (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Quarterly Trends			Latest Quarter			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2025-26	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	South East as at Jan 2026	England & Wales as at Jan 2026
								Rate	Numerator	Denominator								
					Q2 25-26	Q3 25-26	Q4 25-26	Q1 26-27										
CYPE8	Rate of proven re-offending by CYP	L	Q		40.7	46.2	42.9	44.4	12	27	⇧	32.1	RED	46.2	32.9	RED	30.6	31.8

Directorate Scorecard - Dartford District

Education Monthly Indicators - Dartford (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
APP17	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks	H	MS		100.0	100.0	100.0	93.8	100.0	100.0	100.0	9	9	⇔	65	GREEN	64.7	65	AMBER	46.9	46.1
SISE71	Percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET) [seasonally impacted indicator]	L	MS		3.9	3.7	3.4	3.6	3.6	3.6	1.9	63	3,385	⇧	3.4	GREEN	3.3	2.8	AMBER	3.6	3.4
CYPE1	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	L	MS		12.4	12.3	12.3	12.3	12.1	12.8	13.0	222	1,714	⇩	9	RED	12.8	9	RED	N/A	N/A
EH43	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase - all Year R to Year 6 pupils	L	R12M		3	2	3	1	1	1	2	N/A	N/A	⇩	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EH44	Number of permanent exclusions from the secondary phase - all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils	L	R12M		22	22	20	24	21	21	19	N/A	N/A	⇧	N/A	N/A	21	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CYPE6	Percentage of Children Missing Education cases, closed within 30 school days	H	R12M		82.6	81.7	80.6	80.5	79.4	74.8	73.5	360	490	⇩	90	RED	74.8	90	RED	N/A	N/A
CYPE22	Percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention	H	R12M		80.1	79.8	80.7	79.6	80.4	80.3	83.8	259	309	⇧	85	AMBER	80.3	85	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Education Termly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Termly Trends			Latest Term			DOT	Target Summer 2025-26	RAG 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator			
					Summer 24-25	Autumn 25-26	Spring 25-26	Summer 25-26					
	Percentage of DWP and other identified eligible 2 year olds taking up a free early education place [seasonally impacted indicator]	H	T		44.4	59.3	58.2	67.6	179	265	⇧	64.0	GREEN

Education Annual Indicators - Dartford (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	DOT	Target 2026-27	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26							SN or SE	
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development	H	A		70.7	68.4	70.7	73.2	1,168	1,596	71.6	GREEN	⇧	74.3	74.8	72.4
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM gap	L	A		25.0	24.7	20.9	19.9	N/A	N/A	21.0	GREEN	⇧	21.0	25.4	21.6
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics	H	A		64.6	67.1	65.9	69.8	1,215	1,741	62	GREEN	⇧	63	63	63
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	L	A		25.2	21.0	22.6	26.8	N/A	N/A	25	AMBER	⇩	25	27	22
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8	H	A		53.1	53.5	53.7	*53.7*	N/A	N/A	47.0	GREEN	⇔	*47.0*	*47.1*	*46.0*
SISE19	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	L	A		18.6	15.3	18.3	*18.3*	N/A	N/A	17.0	AMBER	⇔	*17.0*	*18.7*	*15.0*
CYPE23	Average point score per A Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		33.96	34.0	33.90	*33.90*	N/A	N/A	35.00	AMBER	⇔	*35.00*	*35.58*	*34.99*
CYPE24	Average point score per Applied General entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		30.66	31.0	33.04	*33.04*	N/A	N/A	29.50	GREEN	⇔	*29.50*	*29.02*	*29.89*
CYPE25	Average point score per Tech Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		33.54	35.5	39.08	*39.08*	N/A	N/A	29.00	GREEN	⇔	*29.00*	*28.86*	*28.82*
SEND10	Percentage of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	L	A		3.0	3.2	3.4	3.6	899	24,769	5.8	GREEN	⇩	6.0	6.1	6.0
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		15.2	14.4	13.3	13.0	1,388	10,668	14.3	GREEN	⇧	*14.3*	13.5	14.4
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		22.7	23.5	21.2	18.5	1,927	10,422	21.1	GREEN	⇧	*21.1*	21.2	21.5
EH48	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		0.9	1.1	1.0	1.0	110	10,668	0.9	AMBER	⇔	*0.9*	1.1	1.0
EH49	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		2.4	2.6	2.3	2.1	218	10,422	3.2	GREEN	⇧	*3.2*	3.2	3.2

Directorate Scorecard - Dover District

Integrated Children's Services Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
Dover CSWT					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M	✓	25.4	25.7	25.7	26.1	26.0	25.4	25.4	337	1,326	⇔	25.0	AMBER	25.4	25.0	AMBER	28	23
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	H	R12M		95.3	94.9	95.0	88.9	91.4	92.3	83.3	40	48	⇩	90.0	AMBER	95.3	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	T	R12M		20.0	21.7	22.0	22.0	20.9	20.5	21.3	33	155	⇩	20.0	GREEN	20.0	20.0	GREEN	26	25
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	H	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			68	69
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	H	MS	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			65	67
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	L	R12M		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			437	475
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	H	R12M	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			52	54
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	H	R12M		82.4	82.4	83.3	83.3	84.2	84.2	88.9	16	18	⇧	85.0	GREEN	82.4	85.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	H	MS	✓	69.6	65.2	65.2	60.9	69.6	65.2	82.6	19.0	23.0	⇧	90.0	AMBER	69.6	90.0	RED	N/A	N/A
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	L	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			N/A	N/A
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	L	MS		29.1	28.0	31.3	33.9	28.8	28.7	22.9	436	19.0	⇧	18.0	RED	29.1	18.0	RED	N/A	N/A
Dover EHU					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26										
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M		23.9	24.5	23.9	23.6	23.3	23.2	23.4	221	946	⇩	25.0	GREEN	23.9	25.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH52-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	H	R12M		97.6	97.5	97.6	97.8	98.2	97.8	97.8	500	511	⇔	85.0	GREEN	97.6	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	H	R12M		88.9	88.9	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	8	10	⇔	85.0	AMBER	88.9	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	L	R12M	✓	15.7	16.8	15.2	14.3	13.8	13.3	13.8	45	327	⇩	15.0	GREEN	15.7	15.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	T	MS		15.1	14.7	16.5	18.0	16.5	15.6	18.0	221	12.3	⇧	20.0	GREEN	15.1	20.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Integrated Children's Services Quarterly Indicators - Dover (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Quarterly Trends			Latest Quarter			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2025-26	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	South East as at Jan 2026	England & Wales as at Jan 2026
								Rate	Numerator	Denominator								
					Q2 25-26	Q3 25-26	Q4 25-26	Q1 26-27										
CYPE8	Rate of proven re-offending by CYP	L	Q		38.2	37.5	39.3	40.0	20	50	⇩	32.1	RED	37.5	32.9	RED	30.6	31.8

Directorate Scorecard - Dover District

Education Monthly Indicators - Dover (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
APP17	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks	H	MS		100.0	100.0	73.3	93.3	20.0	47.8	81.8	18	22	⇧	65	GREEN	57.0	65	AMBER	46.9	46.1
SISE71	Percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET) [seasonally impacted indicator]	L	MS		5.4	5.3	5.3	5.5	5.5	5.0	4.0	113	2,846	⇧	3.4	AMBER	5.0	2.8	RED	3.6	3.4
CYPE1	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	L	MS		12.3	12.3	12.3	12.5	12.2	12.0	12.0	210	1,753	⇔	9	RED	12.0	9	RED	N/A	N/A
EH43	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase - all Year R to Year 6 pupils	L	R12M		0	0	0	0	1	0	0	N/A	N/A	⇔	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EH44	Number of permanent exclusions from the secondary phase - all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils	L	R12M		0	0	0	0	2	0	1	N/A	N/A	⇩	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CYPE6	Percentage of Children Missing Education cases, closed within 30 school days	H	R12M		83.0	80.1	79.0	77.1	76.2	72.1	78.1	221	283	⇧	90	RED	72.1	90	RED	N/A	N/A
CYPE22	Percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention	H	R12M		83.7	84.5	85.1	85.1	85.3	85.4	84.5	306	362	⇩	85	AMBER	85.4	85	GREEN	N/A	N/A

Education Termly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Termly Trends			Latest Term			DOT	Target Summer 2025-26	RAG 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator			
					Summer 24-25	Autumn 25-26	Spring 25-26	Summer 25-26					
	Percentage of DWP and other identified eligible 2 year olds taking up a free early education place [seasonally impacted indicator]	H	T		55.8	82.3	82.9	70.7	215	304	⇧	64.0	GREEN

Education Annual Indicators - Dover (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	DOT	Target 2026-27	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26							SN or SE	
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development	H	A		68.2	67.7	65.2	70.6	766	1,085	71.6	AMBER	⇧	74.3	74.8	72.4
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM gap	L	A		17.9	16.6	21.5	14.9	N/A	N/A	21.0	GREEN	⇧	21.0	25.4	21.6
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics	H	A		56.1	54.7	57.4	57.7	718	1,244	62	RED	⇧	63	63	63
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	L	A		28.5	26.8	25.7	28.3	N/A	N/A	25	RED	⇩	25	27	22
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8	H	A		42.0	42.8	42.5	*42.5*	N/A	N/A	47.0	RED	⇔	*47.0*	*47.1*	*46.0*
SISE19	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	L	A		17.1	15.8	20.1	*20.1*	N/A	N/A	17.0	RED	⇔	*17.0*	*18.7*	*15.0*
CYPE23	Average point score per A Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		32.51	32.2	32.19	*32.19*	N/A	N/A	35.00	AMBER	⇔	*35.00*	*35.58*	*34.99*
CYPE24	Average point score per Applied General entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		24.28	24.5	24.61	*24.61*	N/A	N/A	29.50	RED	⇔	*29.50*	*29.02*	*29.89*
CYPE25	Average point score per Tech Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		24.92	36.9	N/A	*N/A*	N/A	N/A	29.00	GREEN	⇔	*29.00*	*28.86*	*28.82*
SEND10	Percentage of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	L	A		4.5	4.7	5.2	5.3	836	15,752	5.8	GREEN	⇩	6.0	6.1	6.0
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		19.9	18.0	16.8	17.3	1,272	7,368	14.3	RED	⇩	*14.3*	13.5	14.4
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		35.1	34.5	31.8	29.9	1,845	6,169	21.1	RED	⇧	*21.1*	21.2	21.5
EH48	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		0.8	0.8	1.0	1.0	76	7,368	0.9	AMBER	⇔	*0.9*	1.1	1.0
EH49	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		4.3	5.5	4.4	4.2	257	6,169	3.2	AMBER	⇧	*3.2*	3.2	3.2

Directorate Scorecard - Folkestone and Hythe District

Integrated Children's Services Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
Folkestone and Hythe CSWT					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M	✓	22.1	21.6	21.6	20.8	21.5	20.4	20.3	209	1,028	⇧	25.0	GREEN	22.1	25.0	GREEN	28	23
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	H	R12M		79.5	86.1	87.2	90.5	89.6	88.7	85.5	47	55	⇩	90.0	AMBER	79.5	90.0	RED	N/A	N/A
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	T	R12M		39.1	39.7	41.4	38.0	39.1	36.6	34.3	34	99	⇧	20.0	RED	39.1	20.0	RED	26	25
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	H	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			68	69
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	H	MS	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			65	67
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	L	R12M		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			437	475
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	H	R12M	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			52	54
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	H	R12M		57.9	57.9	61.1	61.1	72.2	72.2	68.8	11	16	⇩	85.0	RED	57.9	85.0	RED	N/A	N/A
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	H	MS	✓	100.0	100.0	95.0	92.8	92.8	97.8	100.9	20.2	20.0	⇧	90.0	GREEN	100.0	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	L	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			N/A	N/A
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	L	MS		23.2	23.2	22.6	23.8	24.6	22.0	21.0	423	20.2	⇧	18.0	AMBER	23.2	18.0	RED	N/A	N/A
Folkestone and Hythe EHU					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26										
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M		19.9	19.9	20.0	20.8	21.6	21.0	20.3	140	689	⇧	25.0	GREEN	19.9	25.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH12-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	H	R12M		86.4	87.0	85.1	83.4	83.6	83.5	84.3	316	375	⇧	85.0	AMBER	86.4	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	H	R12M		80.0	80.0	70.0	70.0	60.0	60.0	55.6	5	9	⇩	85.0	RED	80.0	85.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	L	R12M	✓	12.4	10.9	11.8	11.6	13.3	14.1	14.5	36	248	⇩	15.0	GREEN	12.4	15.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	T	MS		20.6	15.8	15.7	15.1	14.4	12.5	11.9	137	11.5	⇩	20.0	RED	20.6	20.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A

Integrated Children's Services Quarterly Indicators - Folkestone and Hythe (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Quarterly Trends			Latest Quarter			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2025-26	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	South East as at Jan 2026	England & Wales as at Jan 2026
								Rate	Numerator	Denominator								
					Q2 25-26	Q3 25-26	Q4 25-26	Q1 26-27										
CYPE8	Rate of proven re-offending by CYP	L	Q		31.8	22.2	15.0	5.9	1	17	⇧	32.1	GREEN	22.2	32.9	GREEN	30.6	31.8

Directorate Scorecard - Folkestone and Hythe District

Education Monthly Indicators - Folkestone and Hythe (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
APP17	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks	H	MS		100.0	100.0	75.0	80.0	66.7	40.0	81.8	9	11	⇧	65	GREEN	47.0	65	RED	46.9	46.1
SISE71	Percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET) [seasonally impacted indicator]	L	MS		5.0	4.9	5.0	5.1	5.1	4.8	3.2	83	2,564	⇧	3.4	GREEN	4.7	2.8	RED	3.6	3.4
CYPE1	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	L	MS		7.6	7.7	7.7	7.6	7.4	6.7	7.0	97	1,391	⇩	9	GREEN	6.7	9	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH43	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase - all Year R to Year 6 pupils	L	R12M		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	⇔	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EH44	Number of permanent exclusions from the secondary phase - all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils	L	R12M		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	⇔	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CYPE6	Percentage of Children Missing Education cases, closed within 30 school days	H	R12M		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	98.8	98.8	165	167	⇩	90	GREEN	98.8	90	GREEN	N/A	N/A
CYPE22	Percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention	H	R12M		87.1	87.3	86.9	86.8	85.7	85.8	81.7	188	230	⇩	85	AMBER	85.8	85	GREEN	N/A	N/A

Education Termly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Termly Trends			Latest Term			DOT	Target Summer 2025-26	RAG 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator			
					Summer 24-25	Autumn 25-26	Spring 25-26	Summer 25-26					
	Percentage of DWP and other identified eligible 2 year olds taking up a free early education place [seasonally impacted indicator]	H	T		59.7	79.4	91.0	89.8	193	215	⇧	64.0	GREEN

Education Annual Indicators - Folkestone and Hythe (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	DOT	Target 2026-27	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26							SN or SE	
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development	H	A		67.1	66.8	67.7	74.4	796	1,070	71.6	GREEN	⇧	74.3	74.8	72.4
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM gap	L	A		24.2	26.3	24.5	27.9	N/A	N/A	21.0	RED	⇩	21.0	25.4	21.6
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics	H	A		59.4	59.2	60.2	63.7	753	1,182	62	GREEN	⇧	63	63	63
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	L	A		28.1	24.5	24.6	20.4	N/A	N/A	25	GREEN	⇧	25	27	22
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8	H	A		43.1	41.3	42.2	*42.2*	N/A	N/A	47.0	RED	⇔	*47.0*	*47.1*	*46.0*
SISE19	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	L	A		17.4	14.4	14.5	*14.5*	N/A	N/A	17.0	GREEN	⇔	*17.0*	*18.7*	*15.0*
CYPE23	Average point score per A Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		31.04	31.5	31.09	*31.09*	N/A	N/A	35.00	RED	⇔	*35.00*	*35.58*	*34.99*
CYPE24	Average point score per Applied General entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		30.87	30.6	30.56	*30.56*	N/A	N/A	29.50	GREEN	⇔	*29.50*	*29.02*	*29.89*
CYPE25	Average point score per Tech Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		37.20	32.1	30.78	*30.78*	N/A	N/A	29.00	GREEN	⇔	*29.00*	*28.86*	*28.82*
SEND10	Percentage of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	L	A		5.0	5.2	5.5	6.0	891	14,936	5.8	AMBER	⇩	6.0	6.1	6.0
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		16.5	16.5	14.4	14.9	1,042	6,973	14.3	AMBER	⇩	*14.3*	13.5	14.4
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		33.1	31.6	25.1	23.1	1,313	5,672	21.1	RED	⇧	*21.1*	21.2	21.5
EH48	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		0.7	0.8	1.0	1.2	87	6,973	0.9	AMBER	⇩	*0.9*	1.1	1.0
EH49	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		3.7	4.7	3.4	3.0	168	5,672	3.2	GREEN	⇧	*3.2*	3.2	3.2

Directorate Scorecard - Gravesham District

Integrated Children's Services Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
Gravesham CSWT					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M	✓	25.1	25.1	25.8	25.9	24.1	22.3	22.6	343	1,515	⇩	25.0	GREEN	25.1	25.0	AMBER	28	23
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	H	R12M		96.0	96.3	96.3	92.9	94.1	91.9	91.9	34	37	⇔	90.0	GREEN	96.0	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	T	R12M		13.3	14.8	15.7	14.5	16.8	19.2	20.4	22	108	⇧	20.0	GREEN	13.3	20.0	AMBER	26	25
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	H	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			68	69
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	H	MS	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			65	67
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	L	R12M		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			437	475
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	H	R12M	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			52	54
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	H	R12M		85.7	85.7	86.7	86.7	85.7	85.7	84.6	11	13	⇩	85.0	AMBER	85.7	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	H	MS	✓	86.7	86.7	90.9	87.5	91.7	91.7	100.0	24.0	24.0	⇧	90.0	GREEN	86.7	90.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	L	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			N/A	N/A
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	L	MS		20.2	19.7	18.2	19.9	18.7	18.4	18.8	450	24.0	⇩	18.0	AMBER	20.2	18.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
Gravesham EHU					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26										
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M		23.0	22.9	22.6	22.5	23.2	23.8	23.9	168	703	⇩	25.0	GREEN	23.0	25.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH52-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	H	R12M		84.8	83.9	84.8	86.3	86.8	86.5	86.3	373	432	⇩	85.0	GREEN	84.8	85.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	H	R12M		85.7	85.7	87.5	87.5	87.5	87.5	100.0	7	7	⇧	85.0	GREEN	85.7	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	L	R12M	✓	17.5	17.7	16.8	15.2	13.5	13.0	12.6	46	364	⇧	15.0	GREEN	17.5	15.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	T	MS		15.1	12.4	11.6	11.4	9.8	9.7	10.3	106	10.3	⇧	20.0	RED	15.1	20.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Integrated Children's Services Quarterly Indicators - Gravesham (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Quarterly Trends			Latest Quarter			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2025-26	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	South East as at Jan 2026	England & Wales as at Jan 2026
								Rate	Numerator	Denominator								
					Q2 25-26	Q3 25-26	Q4 25-26	Q1 26-27										
CYPE8	Rate of proven re-offending by CYP	L	Q		33.3	27.6	35.1	40.0	16	40	⇩	32.1	RED	27.6	32.9	GREEN	30.6	31.8

Directorate Scorecard - Gravesham District

Education Monthly Indicators - Gravesham (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
APP17	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks	H	MS		93.3	100.0	100.0	87.5	92.9	100.0	100.0	9	9	⇔	65	GREEN	51.4	65	RED	46.9	46.1
SISE71	Percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET) [seasonally impacted indicator]	L	MS		5.5	6.0	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.3	2.4	74	3,021	⇧	3.4	GREEN	5.3	2.8	RED	3.6	3.4
CYPE1	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	L	MS		11.0	11.0	10.8	10.8	10.7	11.4	11.5	169	1,466	⇩	9	RED	11.4	9	RED	N/A	N/A
EH43	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase - all Year R to Year 6 pupils	L	R12M		5	3	4	4	5	5	5	N/A	N/A	⇔	N/A	N/A	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EH44	Number of permanent exclusions from the secondary phase - all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils	L	R12M		3	2	3	3	3	3	3	N/A	N/A	⇔	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CYPE6	Percentage of Children Missing Education cases, closed within 30 school days	H	R12M		96.5	93.3	90.3	87.0	85.4	82.1	78.7	280	356	⇩	90	RED	82.1	90	RED	N/A	N/A
CYPE22	Percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention	H	R12M		82.2	82.3	82.7	81.3	81.7	81.6	80.8	173	214	⇩	85	AMBER	81.6	85	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Education Termly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Termly Trends			Latest Term			DOT	Target Summer 2025-26	RAG 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator			
					Summer 24-25	Autumn 25-26	Spring 25-26	Summer 25-26					
	Percentage of DWP and other identified eligible 2 year olds taking up a free early education place [seasonally impacted indicator]	H	T		47.2	60.5	59.6	55.0	160	291	⇧	64.0	RED

Education Annual Indicators - Gravesham (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	DOT	Target 2026-27	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26							SN or SE	
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development	H	A		67.4	65.0	67.7	73.9	1,024	1,385	71.6	GREEN	⇧	74.3	74.8	72.4
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM gap	L	A		15.6	20.6	25.3	18.0	N/A	N/A	21.0	GREEN	⇧	21.0	25.4	21.6
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics	H	A		56.6	58.9	56.5	61.4	911	1,483	62	AMBER	⇧	63	63	63
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	L	A		26.1	25.8	25.4	21.2	N/A	N/A	25	GREEN	⇧	25	27	22
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8	H	A		46.3	45.6	46.2	*46.2*	N/A	N/A	47.0	AMBER	⇔	*47.0*	*47.1*	*46.0*
SISE19	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	L	A		11.8	16.5	14.1	*14.1*	N/A	N/A	17.0	GREEN	⇔	*17.0*	*18.7*	*15.0*
CYPE23	Average point score per A Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		29.55	30.6	31.50	*31.50*	N/A	N/A	35.00	RED	⇔	*35.00*	*35.58*	*34.99*
CYPE24	Average point score per Applied General entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		27.20	26.5	27.63	*27.63*	N/A	N/A	29.50	AMBER	⇔	*29.50*	*29.02*	*29.89*
CYPE25	Average point score per Tech Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		35.21	31.6	30.83	*30.83*	N/A	N/A	29.00	GREEN	⇔	*29.00*	*28.86*	*28.82*
SEND10	Percentage of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	L	A		3.2	3.2	3.5	3.7	756	20,665	5.8	GREEN	⇩	6.0	6.1	6.0
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		18.6	16.8	15.5	15.2	1,327	8,750	14.3	AMBER	⇧	*14.3*	13.5	14.4
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		38.1	24.2	20.5	18.6	1,553	8,329	21.1	GREEN	⇧	*21.1*	21.2	21.5
EH48	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		0.9	0.9	1.0	1.1	99	8,750	0.9	AMBER	⇩	*0.9*	1.1	1.0
EH49	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		3.7	3.2	3.1	2.4	202	8,329	3.2	GREEN	⇧	*3.2*	3.2	3.2

Directorate Scorecard - Maidstone District

Integrated Children's Services Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
Maidstone CSWT					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M	✓	24.7	24.1	23.2	22.8	23.8	23.9	25.0	569	2,277	⇩	25.0	GREEN	24.7	25.0	GREEN	28	23
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	H	R12M		96.8	94.7	95.1	97.6	94.2	92.9	90.5	57	63	⇩	90.0	GREEN	96.8	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	T	R12M		29.5	28.4	27.6	26.9	24.3	27.0	24.8	31	125	⇧	20.0	AMBER	29.5	20.0	RED	26	25
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	H	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			68	69
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	H	MS	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			65	67
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	L	R12M		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			437	475
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	H	R12M	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			52	54
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	H	R12M		70.0	70.0	66.7	66.7	61.9	61.9	60.0	12	20	⇩	85.0	RED	70.0	85.0	RED	N/A	N/A
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	H	MS	✓	90.7	80.7	80.7	80.7	80.7	85.3	95.3	28.6	30.0	⇧	90.0	GREEN	90.7	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	L	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			N/A	N/A
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	L	MS		21.8	22.7	22.7	21.5	22.6	19.9	18.4	526	28.6	⇧	18.0	AMBER	21.8	18.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
Maidstone EHU					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26										
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M		24.5	26.0	26.5	27.0	27.0	26.8	27.5	331	1,204	⇩	25.0	AMBER	24.5	25.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH52-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	H	R12M		96.9	97.0	96.9	97.3	97.6	98.1	98.0	649	662	⇩	85.0	GREEN	96.9	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	H	R12M		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	12	12	⇔	85.0	GREEN	100.0	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	L	R12M	✓	13.5	13.7	13.7	15.0	14.7	16.1	16.1	90	560	⇔	15.0	AMBER	13.5	15.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	T	MS		22.2	16.9	18.1	19.4	17.6	12.6	13.6	191	14.0	⇧	20.0	AMBER	22.2	20.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Integrated Children's Services Quarterly Indicators - Maidstone (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Quarterly Trends			Latest Quarter			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2025-26	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	South East as at Jan 2026	England & Wales as at Jan 2026
								Rate	Numerator	Denominator								
					Q2 25-26	Q3 25-26	Q4 25-26	Q1 26-27										
CYPE8	Rate of proven re-offending by CYP	L	Q		22.6	29.3	33.3	43.1	25	58	⇩	32.1	RED	29.3	32.9	GREEN	30.6	31.8

Directorate Scorecard - Maidstone District

Education Monthly Indicators - Maidstone (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
APP17	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks	H	MS		53.3	53.3	76.2	76.9	90.5	62.5	66.7	14	21	⇧	65	GREEN	65.0	65	GREEN	46.9	46.1
SISE71	Percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET) [seasonally impacted indicator]	L	MS		5.5	5.7	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.0	2.4	111	4,556	⇧	3.4	GREEN	4.9	2.8	RED	3.6	3.4
CYPE1	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	L	MS		7.2	7.3	7.3	7.2	6.9	6.8	6.9	160	2,333	⇩	9	GREEN	6.8	9	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH43	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase - all Year R to Year 6 pupils	L	R12M		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	⇔	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EH44	Number of permanent exclusions from the secondary phase - all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils	L	R12M		3	3	3	4	6	6	5	N/A	N/A	⇧	N/A	N/A	6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CYPE6	Percentage of Children Missing Education cases, closed within 30 school days	H	R12M		97.0	97.0	97.5	97.5	98.4	98.4	98.5	605	614	⇧	90	GREEN	98.4	90	GREEN	N/A	N/A
CYPE22	Percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention	H	R12M		85.4	84.9	84.3	84.5	84.4	84.5	84.7	386	456	⇧	85	AMBER	84.5	85	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Education Termly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Termly Trends			Latest Term			DOT	Target Summer 2025-26	RAG 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator			
					Summer 24-25	Autumn 25-26	Spring 25-26	Summer 25-26					
	Percentage of DWP and other identified eligible 2 year olds taking up a free early education place [seasonally impacted indicator]	H	T		50.9	64.0	65.8	65.9	232	352	⇧	64.0	GREEN

Education Annual Indicators - Maidstone (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	DOT	Target 2026-27	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26							SN or SE	
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development	H	A		70.6	69.7	70.4	75.3	1,481	1,967	71.6	GREEN	⇧	74.3	74.8	72.4
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM gap	L	A		14.8	20.5	17.0	24.1	N/A	N/A	21.0	RED	⇩	21.0	25.4	21.6
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics	H	A		59.0	60.1	59.8	63.1	1,382	2,189	62	GREEN	⇧	63	63	63
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	L	A		22.7	24.8	30.9	28.0	N/A	N/A	25	AMBER	⇧	25	27	22
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8	H	A		46.7	48.3	47.9	47.9	N/A	N/A	47.0	GREEN	⇔	*47.0*	*47.1*	*46.0*
SISE19	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	L	A		19.0	19.3	18.2	18.2	N/A	N/A	17.0	AMBER	⇔	*17.0*	*18.7*	*15.0*
CYPE23	Average point score per A Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		34.47	32.7	34.95	34.95	N/A	N/A	35.00	AMBER	⇔	*35.00*	*35.58*	*34.99*
CYPE24	Average point score per Applied General entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		25.94	24.0	25.48	25.48	N/A	N/A	29.50	RED	⇔	*29.50*	*29.02*	*29.89*
CYPE25	Average point score per Tech Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		29.99	24.7	35.63	35.63	N/A	N/A	29.00	GREEN	⇔	*29.00*	*28.86*	*28.82*
SEND10	Percentage of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	L	A		5.5	6.0	6.5	6.7	2,079	30,838	5.8	RED	⇩	6.0	6.1	6.0
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		16.8	14.6	13.7	14.3	1,889	13,188	14.3	GREEN	⇩	*14.3*	13.5	14.4
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		24.5	23.5	21.1	19.3	2,301	11,945	21.1	GREEN	⇧	*21.1*	21.2	21.5
EH48	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		0.7	1.0	1.2	1.2	153	13,188	0.9	AMBER	⇔	*0.9*	1.1	1.0
EH49	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		2.8	2.8	2.8	2.9	341	11,945	3.2	GREEN	⇩	*3.2*	3.2	3.2

Directorate Scorecard - Sevenoaks District

Integrated Children's Services Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
Sevenoaks North & Tonbridge and Malling CSWT					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M	✓	23.8	23.2	23.8	24.5	24.4	24.5	24.1	409	1,698	⇧	25.0	GREEN	23.8	25.0	GREEN	28	23
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	H	R12M		90.0	90.9	90.9	90.6	91.2	86.5	81.6	31	38	⇩	90.0	AMBER	90.0	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	T	R12M		26.4	26.2	26.4	25.2	22.0	26.0	27.8	35	126	⇩	20.0	RED	26.4	20.0	AMBER	26	25
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	H	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			68	69
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	H	MS	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			65	67
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	L	R12M		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			437	475
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	H	R12M	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			52	54
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	H	R12M		95.7	95.7	95.2	95.2	94.7	94.7	94.4	17	18	⇩	85.0	GREEN	95.7	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	H	MS	✓	79.3	65.0	68.6	65.0	57.9	57.9	71.4	20.0	28.0	⇧	90.0	RED	79.3	90.0	RED	N/A	N/A
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	L	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			N/A	N/A
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	L	MS		23.3	28.2	25.9	32.1	36.0	35.1	28.0	560	20.0	⇧	18.0	RED	23.3	18.0	RED	N/A	N/A
Sevenoaks South & Tunbridge Wells CSWT					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26										
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M	✓	28.9	28.1	28.5	30.1	29.3	29.1	28.9	381	1,318	⇧	25.0	AMBER	28.9	25.0	AMBER	28	23
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	H	R12M		96.0	95.9	94.2	89.1	89.5	89.7	89.4	59	66	⇩	90.0	AMBER	96.0	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	T	R12M		34.2	33.8	35.4	38.4	38.3	38.1	36.8	32	87	⇧	20.0	RED	34.2	20.0	RED	26	25
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	H	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			68	69
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	H	MS	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			65	67
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	L	R12M		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			437	475
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	H	R12M	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			52	54
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	H	R12M		60.0	60.0	70.0	70.0	75.0	75.0	80.0	16	20	⇧	85.0	AMBER	60.0	85.0	RED	N/A	N/A
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	H	MS	✓	104.1	94.1	94.1	84.1	84.1	84.1	89.0	17.8	20.0	⇧	90.0	AMBER	104.1	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	L	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			N/A	N/A
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	L	MS		18.4	20.9	20.6	24.2	21.1	19.6	20.2	360	17.8	⇩	18.0	AMBER	18.4	18.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Directorate Scorecard - Sevenoaks District

Integrated Children's Services Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
Sevenoaks North & Tonbridge and Malling EHU					Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26									SN or SE	
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M		24.6	23.7	23.9	23.3	23.8	24.4	24.7	280	1,135	⇩	25.0	GREEN	24.6	25.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH52-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	H	R12M		98.8	98.9	99.1	99.0	99.0	99.0	99.1	666	672	⇧	85.0	GREEN	98.8	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	H	R12M		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	90.0	90.0	90.0	9	10	⇔	85.0	GREEN	100.0	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	L	R12M	✓	14.5	14.8	15.8	15.1	14.7	14.3	14.9	75	505	⇩	15.0	GREEN	14.5	15.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	T	MS		15.6	15.5	15.9	13.8	10.7	10.7	16.1	201	12.5	⇧	20.0	AMBER	15.6	20.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
Sevenoaks South & Tunbridge Wells EHU					Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26										
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M		27.1	26.2	27.2	28.3	28.6	28.5	27.8	233	839	⇧	25.0	AMBER	27.1	25.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
EH52-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	H	R12M		95.5	95.0	95.0	95.3	96.6	96.6	97.2	457	470	⇧	85.0	GREEN	95.5	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	H	R12M		90.0	90.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	10	10	⇔	85.0	GREEN	90.0	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	L	R12M	✓	13.6	13.0	13.4	12.9	15.5	16.3	16.0	54	338	⇧	15.0	AMBER	13.6	15.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	T	MS		18.5	15.1	14.3	18.1	18.6	15.3	16.2	162	10.0	⇧	20.0	AMBER	18.5	20.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A

Integrated Children's Services Quarterly Indicators - Sevenoaks (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Quarterly Trends			Latest Quarter			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2025-26	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	South East as at Jan 2026	England & Wales as at Jan 2026
								Rate	Numerator	Denominator								
					Q2 25-26	Q3 25-26	Q4 25-26	Q1 26-27										
CYPE8	Rate of proven re-offending by CYP	L	Q		27.3	33.3	30.0	5.9	1	17	⇧	32.1	GREEN	33.3	32.9	AMBER	30.6	31.8

Directorate Scorecard - Sevenoaks District

Education Monthly Indicators - Sevenoaks (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
APP17	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks	H	MS		100.0	90.9	80.0	84.6	100.0	100.0	100.0	18	18	⇔	65	GREEN	56.4	65	AMBER	46.9	46.1
SISE71	Percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET) [seasonally impacted indicator]	L	MS		3.9	4.1	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.4	1.9	49	2,595	⇧	3.4	GREEN	3.1	2.8	AMBER	3.6	3.4
CYPE1	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	L	MS		14.9	14.8	14.7	14.8	14.6	15.0	14.9	230	1,547	⇧	9	RED	15.0	9	RED	N/A	N/A
EH43	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase - all Year R to Year 6 pupils	L	R12M		3	4	3	2	2	2	1	N/A	N/A	⇧	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EH44	Number of permanent exclusions from the secondary phase - all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils	L	R12M		14	14	16	13	12	12	12	N/A	N/A	⇔	N/A	N/A	12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CYPE6	Percentage of Children Missing Education cases, closed within 30 school days	H	R12M		85.8	82.8	82.1	82.4	84.1	78.2	81.9	172	210	⇧	90	RED	78.2	90	RED	N/A	N/A
CYPE22	Percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention	H	R12M		78.2	77.9	76.9	76.5	76.6	76.8	76.1	204	268	⇩	85	AMBER	76.8	85	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Education Termly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Termly Trends			Latest Term			DOT	Target Summer 2025-26	RAG 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator			
					Summer 24-25	Autumn 25-26	Spring 25-26	Summer 25-26					
	Percentage of DWP and other identified eligible 2 year olds taking up a free early education place [seasonally impacted indicator]	H	T		60.7	58.3	75.2	86.0	117	136	⇧	64.0	GREEN

Education Annual Indicators - Sevenoaks (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	DOT	Target 2026-27	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26							SN or SE	
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development	H	A		72.4	69.0	70.8	77.1	995	1,290	71.6	GREEN	⇧	74.3	74.8	72.4
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM gap	L	A		14.2	36.2	24.4	31.6	N/A	N/A	21.0	RED	⇩	21.0	25.4	21.6
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics	H	A		63.5	65.7	67.4	69.4	954	1,375	62	GREEN	⇧	63	63	63
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	L	A		39.8	25.9	38.9	29.0	N/A	N/A	25	RED	⇧	25	27	22
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8	H	A		41.0	41.2	41.9	*41.9*	N/A	N/A	47.0	RED	⇔	*47.0*	*47.1*	*46.0*
SISE19	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	L	A		12.3	16.1	14.4	*14.4*	N/A	N/A	17.0	GREEN	⇔	*17.0*	*18.7*	*15.0*
CYPE23	Average point score per A Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		33.75	31.7	33.47	*33.47*	N/A	N/A	35.00	AMBER	⇔	*35.00*	*35.58*	*34.99*
CYPE24	Average point score per Applied General entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		31.16	26.4	27.22	*27.22*	N/A	N/A	29.50	AMBER	⇔	*29.50*	*29.02*	*29.89*
CYPE25	Average point score per Tech Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		N/A	N/A	N/A	*N/A*	N/A	N/A	29.00	GREEN	⇔	*29.00*	*28.86*	*28.82*
SEND10	Percentage of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	L	A		6.0	6.3	6.7	6.9	894	12,930	5.8	RED	⇩	6.0	6.1	6.0
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		15.3	13.3	13.0	12.8	1,036	8,095	14.3	GREEN	⇧	*14.3*	13.5	14.4
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		31.6	29.5	28.8	26.6	732	2,754	21.1	RED	⇧	*21.1*	21.2	21.5
EH48	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		0.7	0.8	0.9	1.1	85	8,095	0.9	AMBER	⇩	*0.9*	1.1	1.0
EH49	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		4.6	4.2	4.8	4.9	136	2,754	3.2	RED	⇩	*3.2*	3.2	3.2

Directorate Scorecard - Swale District

Integrated Children's Services Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
Swale Central CSWT					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M	✓	26.9	28.1	27.4	26.2	25.8	26.2	25.9	342	1,318	⇧	25.0	AMBER	26.9	25.0	AMBER	28	23
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	H	R12M		90.9	91.4	91.2	89.3	88.0	87.5	90.5	19	21	⇧	90.0	GREEN	90.9	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	T	R12M		10.9	18.4	17.8	17.4	12.3	13.9	13.6	9	66	⇩	20.0	AMBER	10.9	20.0	RED	26	25
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	H	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			68	69
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	H	MS	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			65	67
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	L	R12M		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			437	475
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	H	R12M	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			52	54
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	H	R12M		84.6	84.6	85.7	85.7	78.6	78.6	76.9	10	13	⇩	85.0	AMBER	84.6	85.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	H	MS	✓	86.4	81.2	75.9	82.1	87.4	91.7	93.7	17.8	19.0	⇧	90.0	GREEN	86.4	90.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	L	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			N/A	N/A
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	L	MS		17.4	21.8	26.6	25.8	23.0	19.1	17.2	306	17.8	⇧	18.0	GREEN	17.4	18.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
Swale Island & Rural CSWT					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26										
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M	✓	28.0	28.5	29.2	27.7	26.9	27.2	26.1	232	890	⇧	25.0	AMBER	28.0	25.0	AMBER	28	23
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	H	R12M		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	14	14	⇔	90.0	GREEN	100.0	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	T	R12M		32.3	32.8	32.3	31.8	27.7	25.0	23.8	15	63	⇧	20.0	AMBER	32.3	20.0	RED	26	25
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	H	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			68	69
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	H	MS	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			65	67
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	L	R12M		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			437	475
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	H	R12M	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			52	54
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	H	R12M		85.7	85.7	78.6	78.6	78.6	78.6	85.7	12	14	⇧	85.0	GREEN	85.7	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	H	MS	✓	86.7	86.7	86.7	86.7	93.3	80.0	86.7	13.0	15.0	⇧	90.0	AMBER	86.7	90.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	L	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			N/A	N/A
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	L	MS		22.0	20.9	19.5	19.8	19.4	20.3	17.4	226	13.0	⇧	18.0	GREEN	22.0	18.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Directorate Scorecard - Swale District

Integrated Children's Services Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
Swale EHU					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M		25.1	24.9	25.0	25.9	25.8	26.3	26.3	306	1,165	⇔	25.0	AMBER	25.1	25.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
EH52-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	H	R12M		85.5	84.5	84.6	84.9	84.5	84.1	85.5	478	559	⇧	85.0	GREEN	85.5	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	H	R12M		72.7	72.7	81.8	81.8	100.0	100.0	100.0	12	12	⇔	85.0	GREEN	72.7	85.0	RED	N/A	N/A
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	L	R12M	✓	14.9	15.0	15.7	15.3	15.0	14.5	15.6	68	436	⇩	15.0	AMBER	14.9	15.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	T	MS		15.3	14.1	13.3	12.6	10.2	9.7	10.2	143	14.0	⇧	20.0	RED	15.3	20.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Integrated Children's Services Quarterly Indicators - Swale (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Quarterly Trends			Latest Quarter			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2025-26	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	South East as at Jan 2026	England & Wales as at Jan 2026
								Rate	Numerator	Denominator								
					Q2 25-26	Q3 25-26	Q4 25-26	Q1 26-27										
CYPE8	Rate of proven re-offending by CYP	L	Q		29.7	29.4	27.8	29.7	11	37	⇩	32.1	GREEN	29.4	32.9	GREEN	30.6	31.8

Directorate Scorecard - Swale District

Education Monthly Indicators - Swale (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
APP17	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks	H	MS		100.0	100.0	50.0	95.8	75.9	75.0	94.1	16	17	⇧	65	GREEN	51.3	65	RED	46.9	46.1
SISE71	Percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET) [seasonally impacted indicator]	L	MS		7.5	7.6	7.0	7.2	7.2	6.7	4.3	174	4,044	⇧	3.4	AMBER	7.2	2.8	RED	3.6	3.4
CYPE1	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	L	MS		10.1	10.2	10.2	10.3	10.3	10.0	10.3	329	3,206	⇩	9	AMBER	10.0	9	AMBER	N/A	N/A
EH43	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase - all Year R to Year 6 pupils	L	R12M		5	5	5	3	3	3	3	N/A	N/A	⇔	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EH44	Number of permanent exclusions from the secondary phase - all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils	L	R12M		2	2	4	4	4	4	5	N/A	N/A	⇩	N/A	N/A	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CYPE6	Percentage of Children Missing Education cases, closed within 30 school days	H	R12M		82.0	82.7	85.0	87.4	88.7	88.4	91.1	571	627	⇧	90	GREEN	88.4	90	AMBER	N/A	N/A
CYPE22	Percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention	H	R12M		85.1	85.3	85.1	84.5	84.8	84.8	86.1	428	497	⇧	85	GREEN	84.8	85	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Education Termly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Termly Trends			Latest Term			DOT	Target Summer 2025-26	RAG 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator			
					Summer 24-25	Autumn 25-26	Spring 25-26	Summer 25-26					
	Percentage of DWP and other identified eligible 2 year olds taking up a free early education place [seasonally impacted indicator]	H	T		53.9	68.4	71.3	65.5	291	444	⇧	64.0	GREEN

Education Annual Indicators - Swale (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	DOT	Target 2026-27	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26							SN or SE	
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development	H	A		66.8	67.3	68.7	72.7	1,275	1,753	71.6	GREEN	⇧	74.3	74.8	72.4
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM gap	L	A		23.6	20.1	22.9	23.8	N/A	N/A	21.0	AMBER	⇩	21.0	25.4	21.6
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics	H	A		55.6	60.7	58.8	63.4	1,203	1,898	62	GREEN	⇧	63	63	63
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	L	A		20.2	24.9	24.2	26.1	N/A	N/A	25	AMBER	⇩	25	27	22
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8	H	A		42.4	41.6	41.6	*41.6*	N/A	N/A	47.0	RED	⇔	*47.0*	*47.1*	*46.0*
SISE19	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	L	A		16.8	17.7	17.7	*17.7*	N/A	N/A	17.0	AMBER	⇔	*17.0*	*18.7*	*15.0*
CYPE23	Average point score per A Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		31.93	32.2	31.99	*31.99*	N/A	N/A	35.00	RED	⇔	*35.00*	*35.58*	*34.99*
CYPE24	Average point score per Applied General entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		28.74	29.5	30.95	*30.95*	N/A	N/A	29.50	GREEN	⇔	*29.50*	*29.02*	*29.89*
CYPE25	Average point score per Tech Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		35.52	32.0	36.83	*36.83*	N/A	N/A	29.00	GREEN	⇔	*29.00*	*28.86*	*28.82*
SEND10	Percentage of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	L	A		5.8	6.1	6.3	6.7	1,609	24,135	5.8	RED	⇩	6.0	6.1	6.0
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		19.3	17.7	15.8	14.9	1,727	11,625	14.3	AMBER	⇧	*14.3*	13.5	14.4
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		33.1	32.0	27.9	24.3	2,150	8,861	21.1	RED	⇧	*21.1*	21.2	21.5
EH48	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		1.0	1.1	1.0	1.1	128	11,625	0.9	AMBER	⇩	*0.9*	1.1	1.0
EH49	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		5.9	6.1	6.1	4.1	363	8,861	3.2	AMBER	⇧	*3.2*	3.2	3.2

Directorate Scorecard - Thanet District

Integrated Children's Services Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
Thanet Margate CSWT					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M	✓	28.1	27.4	27.4	27.1	26.1	25.2	24.3	488	2,011	⇧	25.0	GREEN	28.1	25.0	AMBER	28	23
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	H	R12M		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	97.8	98.0	98.0	49	50	⇔	90.0	GREEN	100.0	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	T	R12M		28.3	30.0	30.5	27.7	24.3	22.5	24.8	28	113	⇩	20.0	AMBER	28.3	20.0	RED	26	25
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	H	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			68	69
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	H	MS	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			65	67
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	L	R12M		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			437	475
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	H	R12M	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			52	54
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	H	R12M		73.3	73.3	80.0	80.0	86.7	86.7	85.7	12	14	⇩	85.0	GREEN	73.3	85.0	RED	N/A	N/A
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	H	MS	✓	88.4	88.4	82.5	73.1	76.6	71.9	83.6	14.2	17.0	⇧	90.0	AMBER	88.4	90.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	L	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			N/A	N/A
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	L	MS		21.6	21.8	26.9	31.6	26.0	24.2	22.2	316	14.2	⇧	18.0	RED	21.6	18.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
Thanet Ramsgate CSWT					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26										
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M	✓	31.0	29.5	22.6	18.0	20.9	16.9	20.3	13	64	⇩	25.0	GREEN	31.0	25.0	RED	28	23
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	H	R12M		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	97.9	46	47	⇩	90.0	GREEN	100.0	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	T	R12M		40.4	40.0	40.4	35.4	36.7	35.1	28.8	15	52	⇧	20.0	RED	40.4	20.0	RED	26	25
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	H	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			68	69
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	H	MS	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			65	67
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	L	R12M		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			437	475
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	H	R12M	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			52	54
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	H	R12M		64.3	64.3	71.4	71.4	80.0	80.0	86.7	13	15	⇧	85.0	GREEN	64.3	85.0	RED	N/A	N/A
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	H	MS	✓	82.2	75.5	81.8	75.5	75.5	75.5	85.2	13.6	16.0	⇧	90.0	AMBER	82.2	90.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	L	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			N/A	N/A
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	L	MS		26.8	29.7	29.7	31.8	32.7	33.4	27.6	377	13.6	⇧	18.0	RED	26.8	18.0	RED	N/A	N/A

Directorate Scorecard - Thanet District

Integrated Children's Services Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
Thanet EHU					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M		28.0	28.4	27.8	27.2	27.3	27.3	27.0	321	1,189	⇧	25.0	AMBER	28.0	25.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
EH52-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	H	R12M		95.8	94.6	94.3	94.8	94.6	94.5	94.1	674	716	⇩	85.0	GREEN	95.8	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	H	R12M		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	15	15	⇔	85.0	GREEN	100.0	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	L	R12M	✓	16.7	16.1	16.0	14.8	14.0	14.2	12.9	56	433	⇧	15.0	GREEN	16.7	15.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	T	MS		17.1	16.8	16.3	17.0	18.2	15.5	18.5	245	13.2	⇧	20.0	GREEN	17.1	20.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Integrated Children's Services Quarterly Indicators - Thanet (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Quarterly Trends			Latest Quarter			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2025-26	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	South East as at Jan 2026	England & Wales as at Jan 2026
								Rate	Numerator	Denominator								
					Q2 25-26	Q3 25-26	Q4 25-26	Q1 26-27										
CYPE8	Rate of proven re-offending by CYP	L	Q		16.5	12.9	10.8	8.8	7	80	⇧	32.1	GREEN	12.9	32.9	GREEN	30.6	31.8

Directorate Scorecard - Thanet District

Education Monthly Indicators - Thanet (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
APP17	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks	H	MS		93.8	93.8	66.7	89.5	69.2	60.0	78.9	15	19	⇧	65	GREEN	57.0	65	AMBER	46.9	46.1
SISE71	Percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET) [seasonally impacted indicator]	L	MS		6.8	6.8	7.2	7.0	7.1	6.5	4.1	138	3,405	⇧	3.4	AMBER	6.5	2.8	RED	3.6	3.4
CYPE1	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	L	MS		12.4	12.5	12.4	12.2	11.8	11.0	11.1	269	2,419	⇩	9	RED	11.0	9	RED	N/A	N/A
EH43	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase - all Year R to Year 6 pupils	L	R12M		4	5	4	4	5	4	2	N/A	N/A	⇧	N/A	N/A	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EH44	Number of permanent exclusions from the secondary phase - all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils	L	R12M		1	1	1	1	1	0	0	N/A	N/A	⇔	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CYPE6	Percentage of Children Missing Education cases, closed within 30 school days	H	R12M		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	521	521	⇔	90	GREEN	100.0	90	GREEN	N/A	N/A
CYPE22	Percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention	H	R12M		83.3	84.1	83.7	84.0	84.1	83.9	83.1	392	472	⇩	85	AMBER	83.9	85	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Education Termly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Termly Trends			Latest Term			DOT	Target Summer 2025-26	RAG 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator			
					Summer 24-25	Autumn 25-26	Spring 25-26	Summer 25-26					
	Percentage of DWP and other identified eligible 2 year olds taking up a free early education place [seasonally impacted indicator]	H	T		61.9	69.6	77.9	81.0	328	405	⇧	64.0	GREEN

Education Annual Indicators - Thanet (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	DOT	Target 2026-27	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26							SN or SE	
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development	H	A		61.2	60.1	63.3	71.7	995	1,387	71.6	GREEN	⇧	74.3	74.8	72.4
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM gap	L	A		21.0	24.6	22.6	21.8	N/A	N/A	21.0	AMBER	⇧	21.0	25.4	21.6
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics	H	A		53.9	55.1	56.6	55.3	900	1,628	62	RED	⇧	63	63	63
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	L	A		22.8	19.5	22.5	21.9	N/A	N/A	25	GREEN	⇧	25	27	22
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8	H	A		44.1	43.1	42.2	*42.2*	N/A	N/A	47.0	RED	⇔	*47.0*	*47.1*	*46.0*
SISE19	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	L	A		15.8	14.8	16.7	*16.7*	N/A	N/A	17.0	GREEN	⇔	*17.0*	*18.7*	*15.0*
CYPE23	Average point score per A Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		32.35	34.8	35.57	*35.57*	N/A	N/A	35.00	GREEN	⇔	*35.00*	*35.58*	*34.99*
CYPE24	Average point score per Applied General entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		30.49	28.4	30.14	*30.14*	N/A	N/A	29.50	GREEN	⇔	*29.50*	*29.02*	*29.89*
CYPE25	Average point score per Tech Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		40.36	47.8	44.38	*44.38*	N/A	N/A	29.00	GREEN	⇔	*29.00*	*28.86*	*28.82*
SEND10	Percentage of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	L	A		6.3	6.6	7.1	7.4	1,460	19,845	5.8	RED	⇩	6.0	6.1	6.0
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		22.0	20.7	19.4	18.1	1,644	9,088	14.3	RED	⇧	*14.3*	13.5	14.4
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		32.2	30.8	30.2	28.6	2,237	7,820	21.1	RED	⇧	*21.1*	21.2	21.5
EH48	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		1.3	1.5	1.3	1.6	145	9,088	0.9	AMBER	⇩	*0.9*	1.1	1.0
EH49	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		3.8	4.3	5.6	4.6	360	7,820	3.2	RED	⇧	*3.2*	3.2	3.2

Directorate Scorecard - Tonbridge and Malling District

Integrated Children's Services Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
Sevenoaks North & Tonbridge and Malling CSWT					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M	✓	23.8	23.2	23.8	24.5	24.4	24.5	24.1	409	1,698	⇧	25.0	GREEN	23.8	25.0	GREEN	28	23
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	H	R12M		90.0	90.9	90.9	90.6	91.2	86.5	81.6	31	38	⇩	90.0	AMBER	90.0	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	T	R12M		26.4	26.2	26.4	25.2	22.0	26.0	27.8	35	126	⇩	20.0	RED	26.4	20.0	AMBER	26	25
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	H	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			68	69
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	H	MS	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			65	67
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	L	R12M		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			437	475
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	H	R12M	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			52	54
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	H	R12M		95.7	95.7	95.2	95.2	94.7	94.7	94.4	17	18	⇩	85.0	GREEN	95.7	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	H	MS	✓	79.3	65.0	68.6	65.0	57.9	57.9	71.4	20.0	28.0	⇧	90.0	RED	79.3	90.0	RED	N/A	N/A
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	L	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			N/A	N/A
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	L	MS		23.3	28.2	25.9	32.1	36.0	35.1	28.0	560	20.0	⇧	18.0	RED	23.3	18.0	RED	N/A	N/A
Sevenoaks North & Tonbridge and Malling EHU					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26										
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M		24.6	23.7	23.9	23.3	23.8	24.4	24.7	280	1,135	⇩	25.0	GREEN	24.6	25.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH02-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	H	R12M		98.8	98.9	99.1	99.0	99.0	99.0	99.1	666	672	⇧	85.0	GREEN	98.8	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	H	R12M		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	90.0	90.0	90.0	9	10	⇔	85.0	GREEN	100.0	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	L	R12M	✓	14.5	14.8	15.8	15.1	14.7	14.3	14.9	75	505	⇩	15.0	GREEN	14.5	15.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	T	MS		15.6	15.5	15.9	13.8	10.7	10.7	16.1	201	12.5	⇧	20.0	AMBER	15.6	20.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Integrated Children's Services Quarterly Indicators - Tonbridge and Malling (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Quarterly Trends			Latest Quarter			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2025-26	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	South East as at Jan 2026	England & Wales as at Jan 2026
								Rate	Numerator	Denominator								
					Q2 25-26	Q3 25-26	Q4 25-26	Q1 26-27										
CYPE8	Rate of proven re-offending by CYP	L	Q		30.4	23.5	35.3	33.3	6	18	⇩	32.1	AMBER	23.5	32.9	GREEN	30.6	31.8

Directorate Scorecard - Tonbridge and Malling District

Education Monthly Indicators - Tonbridge and Malling (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
APP17	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks	H	MS		81.0	81.0	90.9	94.1	78.9	60.0	46.7	7	15	⇧	65	RED	63.2	65	AMBER	46.9	46.1
SISE71	Percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET) [seasonally impacted indicator]	L	MS		4.0	4.1	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.5	2.0	66	3,305	⇧	3.4	GREEN	3.8	2.8	AMBER	3.6	3.4
CYPE1	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	L	MS		9.1	9.2	9.1	9.2	8.9	9.8	9.9	175	1,772	⇩	9	AMBER	9.8	9	AMBER	N/A	N/A
EH43	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase - all Year R to Year 6 pupils	L	R12M		1	2	2	3	3	3	3	N/A	N/A	⇔	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EH44	Number of permanent exclusions from the secondary phase - all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils	L	R12M		10	9	7	8	8	8	7	N/A	N/A	⇧	N/A	N/A	8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CYPE6	Percentage of Children Missing Education cases, closed within 30 school days	H	R12M		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	281	281	⇔	90	GREEN	100.0	90	GREEN	N/A	N/A
CYPE22	Percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention	H	R12M		81.7	82.4	83.1	83.3	83.2	83.3	84.0	273	325	⇧	85	AMBER	82.3	85	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Education Termly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Termly Trends			Latest Term			DOT	Target Summer 2025-26	RAG 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator			
					Summer 24-25	Autumn 25-26	Spring 25-26	Summer 25-26					
	Percentage of DWP and other identified eligible 2 year olds taking up a free early education place [seasonally impacted indicator]	H	T		54.8	73.4	72.7	77.7	160	206	⇧	64.0	GREEN

Education Annual Indicators - Tonbridge and Malling (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	DOT	Target 2026-27	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26							SN or SE	
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development	H	A		69.8	72.0	71.5	77.5	1,181	1,523	71.6	GREEN	⇧	74.3	74.8	72.4
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM gap	L	A		33.3	29.8	27.0	30.2	N/A	N/A	21.0	RED	⇩	21.0	25.4	21.6
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics	H	A		60.5	63.7	63.0	64.0	1,097	1,714	62	GREEN	⇧	63	63	63
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	L	A		32.7	31.7	28.0	31.4	N/A	N/A	25	RED	⇩	25	27	22
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8	H	A		53.3	53.8	53.4	*53.4*	N/A	N/A	47.0	GREEN	⇔	*47.0*	*47.1*	*46.0*
SISE19	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	L	A		22.1	21.8	19.4	*19.4*	N/A	N/A	17.0	AMBER	⇔	*17.0*	*18.7*	*15.0*
CYPE23	Average point score per A Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		39.38	39.4	40.77	*40.77*	N/A	N/A	35.00	GREEN	⇔	*35.00*	*35.58*	*34.99*
CYPE24	Average point score per Applied General entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		30.71	29.0	30.53	*30.53*	N/A	N/A	29.50	GREEN	⇔	*29.50*	*29.02*	*29.89*
CYPE25	Average point score per Tech Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		32.49	33.2	30.73	*30.73*	N/A	N/A	29.00	GREEN	⇔	*29.00*	*28.86*	*28.82*
SEND10	Percentage of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	L	A		4.5	4.7	5.0	5.1	1,209	23,489	5.8	GREEN	⇩	6.0	6.1	6.0
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		14.3	13.2	12.6	12.0	1,210	10,112	14.3	GREEN	⇧	*14.3*	13.5	14.4
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		26.8	25.7	24.4	21.8	2,104	9,657	21.1	AMBER	⇧	*21.1*	21.2	21.5
EH48	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		0.9	1.0	0.8	1.0	98	10,112	0.9	AMBER	⇩	*0.9*	1.1	1.0
EH49	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		2.7	3.4	3.4	2.8	270	9,657	3.2	GREEN	⇧	*3.2*	3.2	3.2

Directorate Scorecard - Tunbridge Wells District

Integrated Children's Services Monthly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	Kent Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2024-25	England 2024-25
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
Sevenoaks South & Tunbridge Wells CSWT					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M	✓	28.9	28.1	28.5	30.1	29.3	29.1	28.9	381	1,318	⇧	25.0	AMBER	28.9	25.0	AMBER	28	23
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	H	R12M		96.0	95.9	94.2	89.1	89.5	89.7	89.4	59	66	⇩	90.0	AMBER	96.0	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	T	R12M		34.2	33.8	35.4	38.4	38.3	38.1	36.8	32	87	⇧	20.0	RED	34.2	20.0	RED	26	25
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	H	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			68	69
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	H	MS	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			65	67
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	L	R12M		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			437	475
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	H	R12M	✓	N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			52	54
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	H	R12M		60.0	60.0	70.0	70.0	75.0	75.0	80.0	16	20	⇧	85.0	AMBER	60.0	85.0	RED	N/A	N/A
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	H	MS	✓	104.1	94.1	94.1	84.1	84.1	84.1	89.0	17.8	20.0	⇧	90.0	AMBER	104.1	90.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	L	MS		N/A						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A			N/A	N/A
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	L	MS		18.4	20.9	20.6	24.2	21.1	19.6	20.2	360	17.8	⇩	18.0	AMBER	18.4	18.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
Sevenoaks South & Tunbridge Wells EHU					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26										
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	L	R12M		27.1	26.2	27.2	28.3	28.6	28.5	27.8	233	839	⇧	25.0	AMBER	27.1	25.0	AMBER	N/A	N/A
EH2-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	H	R12M		95.5	95.0	95.0	95.3	96.6	96.6	97.2	457	470	⇧	85.0	GREEN	95.5	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	H	R12M		90.0	90.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	10	10	⇔	85.0	GREEN	90.0	85.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	L	R12M	✓	13.6	13.0	13.4	12.9	15.5	16.3	16.0	54	338	⇧	15.0	AMBER	13.6	15.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	T	MS		18.5	15.1	14.3	18.1	18.6	15.3	16.2	162	10.0	⇧	20.0	AMBER	18.4	20.0	GREEN	N/A	N/A

Integrated Children's Services Quarterly Indicators - Tunbridge Wells (reporting and targets relate to financial years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Quarterly Trends			Latest Quarter			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2025-26	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	South East as at Jan 2026	England & Wales as at Jan 2026
								Rate	Numerator	Denominator								
					Q2 25-26	Q3 25-26	Q4 25-26	Q1 26-27										
CYPE8	Rate of proven re-offending by CYP	L	Q		42.1	38.9	33.3	35.7	5	14	⇧	32.1	AMBER	38.9	32.9	RED	30.6	31.8

Directorate Scorecard - Tunbridge Wells District

Education Monthly Indicators - Tunbridge Wells (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Monthly Trends						Latest Month			DOT	Target 2026-27	RAG 2026-27	District Outturn 2025-26	Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
											Measure	Numerator	Denominator								
					Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26									SN or SE	
APP17	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks	H	MS		90.0	90.0	90.0	81.8	80.0	66.7	46.7	7	15	⇩	65	RED	63.5	65	AMBER	46.9	46.1
SISE71	Percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET) [seasonally impacted indicator]	L	MS		2.9	3.1	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.6	1.9	55	2,939	⇧	3.4	GREEN	3.0	2.8	AMBER	3.6	3.4
CYPE1	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	L	MS		11.6	11.5	11.4	11.6	11.3	12.4	12.4	135	1,091	⇔	9	RED	12.4	9	RED	N/A	N/A
EH43	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase - all Year R to Year 6 pupils	L	R12M		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	N/A	N/A	⇔	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EH44	Number of permanent exclusions from the secondary phase - all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils	L	R12M		5	4	3	3	3	3	3	N/A	N/A	⇔	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CYPE6	Percentage of Children Missing Education cases, closed within 30 school days	H	R12M		99.5	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	281	281	⇔	90	GREEN	100.0	90	GREEN	N/A	N/A
CYPE22	Percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention	H	R12M		84.5	83.6	83.5	82.6	83.0	83.0	84.6	187	221	⇧	85	AMBER	83.0	85	AMBER	N/A	N/A

Education Termly Indicators (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Termly Trends			Latest Term			DOT	Target Summer 2025-26	RAG 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator			
					Summer 24-25	Autumn 25-26	Spring 25-26	Summer 25-26					
	Percentage of DWP and other identified eligible 2 year olds taking up a free early education place [seasonally impacted indicator]	H	T		55.8	65.5	63.9	60.0	93	155	⇧	64.0	RED

Education Annual Indicators - Tunbridge Wells (reporting and targets relate to academic years)		Polarity	Data Period	QPR	Annual Trends			Latest Year			Target 2025-26	RAG 2025-26	DOT	Target 2026-27	Benchmark Group 2025-26	England 2025-26
								Measure	Numerator	Denominator						
					2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26							SN or SE	
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development	H	A		69.2	71.9	73.0	77.7	895	1,152	71.6	GREEN	⇧	74.3	74.8	72.4
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM gap	L	A		28.0	33.3	28.2	23.6	N/A	N/A	21.0	AMBER	⇧	21.0	25.4	21.6
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics	H	A		63.4	68.6	68.6	68.3	921	1,349	62	GREEN	⇧	63	63	63
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	L	A		38.2	25.6	31.4	37.2	N/A	N/A	25	RED	⇩	25	27	22
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8	H	A		53.5	54.6	53.0	*53.0*	N/A	N/A	47.0	GREEN	⇔	*47.0*	*47.1*	*46.0*
SISE19	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	L	A		22.3	21.7	21.8	*21.8*	N/A	N/A	17.0	RED	⇔	*17.0*	*18.7*	*15.0*
CYPE23	Average point score per A Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		37.75	38.9	38.13	*38.13*	N/A	N/A	35.00	GREEN	⇔	*35.00*	*35.58*	*34.99*
CYPE24	Average point score per Applied General entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		29.20	28.2	29.15	*29.15*	N/A	N/A	29.50	AMBER	⇔	*29.50*	*29.02*	*29.89*
CYPE25	Average point score per Tech Level entry at KS5 [State-Funded School students] [National and Benchmark Group averages are State-Funded School and College students]	H	A		37.22	36.1	33.29	*33.29*	N/A	N/A	29.00	GREEN	⇔	*29.00*	*28.86*	*28.82*
SEND10	Percentage of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	L	A		4.2	4.3	4.6	4.6	910	19,656	5.8	GREEN	⇔	6.0	6.1	6.0
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		14.6	11.8	10.5	10.4	809	7,758	14.3	GREEN	⇧	*14.3*	13.5	14.4
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	L	A		21.0	17.8	16.3	13.8	1,129	8,168	21.1	GREEN	⇧	*21.1*	21.2	21.5
EH48	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		0.8	0.8	0.9	1.1	85	7,758	0.9	AMBER	⇩	*0.9*	1.1	1.0
EH49	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	L	A		2.5	2.1	1.9	1.8	145	8,168	3.2	GREEN	⇧	*3.2*	3.2	3.2

Data Sources for Current Report

Code	Indicator	Source Description	Latest Data Description	Latest Data release date
Activity-Volume Measures				
CYPE10	Number of Primary Schools	MI School Census Database	May 2026 School Census	Aug 2026
CYPE11	Number of Secondary Schools	MI School Census Database	May 2026 School Census	Aug 2026
CYPE12	Number of Special Schools	MI School Census Database	May 2026 School Census	Aug 2026
CYPE13	Total pupils on roll in Primary Schools	MI School Census Database	May 2026 School Census	Aug 2026
CYPE14	Total pupils on roll in Secondary Schools	MI School Census Database	May 2026 School Census	Aug 2026
CYPE15	Total pupils on roll in Special Schools	MI School Census Database	May 2026 School Census	Aug 2026
CYPE16	Percentage of Primary School pupils eligible for Free School Meals	MI School Census Database	May 2026 School Census	Aug 2026
CYPE17	Percentage of Secondary School pupils eligible for Free School Meals	MI School Census Database	May 2026 School Census	Aug 2026
CYPE18	Percentage of Special School pupils eligible for Free School Meals	MI School Census Database	May 2026 School Census	Aug 2026
EY8	Percentage of EY settings with Good or Outstanding Ofsted Judgements - Overall Effectiveness (non-domestic premises)	MI Ofsted Database	Inspections as at end of Aug 2024	Sept 2024
SISE35	Percentage of Primary Schools with Good or Outstanding Ofsted Judgements - Overall Effectiveness	MI Ofsted Database	Inspections as at end of Aug 2024	Sept 2024
SISE36	Percentage of Secondary Schools with Good or Outstanding Ofsted Judgements - Overall Effectiveness	MI Ofsted Database	Inspections as at end of Aug 2024	Sept 2024
SISE37	Percentage of Special Schools with Good or Outstanding Ofsted Judgements - Overall Effectiveness	MI Ofsted Database	Inspections as at end of Aug 2024	Sept 2024
CYPE19	Number of requests for SEND statutory assessment	Synergy reporting	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
EH71-C	Rate of notifications received into Early Help per 10,000 of the 0-17 population (inclusive, rolling 12 months)	Early Help module	Rolling 12 months up to end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS02	Rate of referrals to Children's Social Work Services per 10,000 of the 0-17 population (inclusive, rolling 12 months)	Liberi	Rolling 12 months up to end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
FD01-F	Number of contacts processed in the Front Door	Early Help module	Children referred during the month of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
FD14-F	Number of Information, Advice and Guidance contacts processed in the Front Door	Early Help module	Children referred during the month of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
FD02-F	Number of contacts processed in the Front Door which met the threshold for CSWS involvement	Early Help module	Children referred during the month of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
FD03-F	Number of contacts processed in the Front Door which proceeded to Early Help	Early Help module	Children referred during the month of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
EH05-F	Number of cases open to Early Help Units	Early Help module	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS01	Number of open Social Work cases	Liberi	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Number of Child Protection cases	Liberi	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Number of Children in Care	Liberi	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Number of Care Leavers	Liberi	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
EH35	Number of First Time Entrants into the Youth Justice system	MI monthly reporting (CareDirector Youth)	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SEND Indicators				
APP17	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
APP17-N	Total number of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
APP17-D	Total number of EHCPs issued	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
APP17-A	Average duration in days from assessment request to EHCP completion	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
APP-EP	Percentage of assessment requests sent to Educational Psychology returned within 6 weeks	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Percentage of annual EHCP reviews waiting less than 12 months	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
CYPE1	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Percentage of open Educational Psychology referrals waiting more than 6 weeks	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Percentage of SEND statutory assessment requests waiting more than 20 weeks	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot data as at end of Sept 2026	Oct 2026

Data Sources for Current Report

Code	Indicator	Source Description	Latest Data Description	Latest Data release date
Key Performance Indicators				
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	Liberi	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	Liberi	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	Liberi	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	Liberi	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	Liberi	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	Liberi	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	Liberi	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	Liberi	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	Area Staffing Spreadsheets	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	Liberi / Area Staffing Spreadsheets	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	Liberi / Area Staffing Spreadsheets	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	Early Help module	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
EH52-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	Early Help module	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	Early Help module	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	Early Help module	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	Early Help module	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
CYPE8	Rate of proven re-offending by CYP	MOJ report covering 12 month period July 23 to June 24	Q1 2026-27 reporting period, released on 30/07/26	Aug 2026
SISE7	Percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET)	Monthly submission to DfE via NCCIS for KCC	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
CYPE1	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	Synergy - monthly reported data	Snapshot as at Sept 2026	Oct 2026
CYPE6	Percentage of Children Missing Education cases, closed within 30 school days	Fair Access Team Synergy reporting	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
CYPE22	Percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention	Fair Access Team Synergy reporting	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
EH43	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase - all Year R to Year 6 pupils	Synergy - monthly reported data	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
EH44	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the secondary phase - all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils	Synergy - monthly reported data	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
	Percentage (rate) of pupils permanently excluded from primary and secondary phase schools - all Year R to Year 14 pupils	Synergy - monthly reported data	Rolling 12 months up to Sept 2026	Oct 2026
EY2	Percentage of DWP and other identified eligible 2 year olds taking up a free early education place	FF2 Team in Early Years & Childcare	Snapshot as at August 2026	August 2026
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development	End of year assessments based on EYFSP framework	2025-26 MI Calculations (LA & District)	Aug 2026
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM Eligible achievement gap	End of year assessments based on EYFSP framework	2025-26 MI Calculations (LA & District)	Aug 2026
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics	Test/TA results for end of academic year	2025-26 DfE Interim (LA), MI Calculations (District)	Aug 2026
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	Test/TA results for end of academic year	2025-26 MI Calculations (LA & District)	Aug 2026
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8	Test results for end of academic year	2024-25 DfE Final (LA)/2024-25 ASP (District)	Feb 2026
SISE19	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	Test results for end of academic year	2024-25 DfE Final (LA)/2024-25 ASP (District)	Feb 2026
CYPE23	Average point score per A Level entry at KS5 [School students only]	Test results for end of academic year	2024-25 DfE Final (LA)/2024-25 ASP (District)	Feb 2026
CYPE24	Average point score per Applied General entry at KS5 [School students only]	Test results for end of academic year	2024-25 DfE Final (LA)/2024-25 ASP (District)	Feb 2026
CYPE25	Average point score per Tech Level entry at KS5 [School students only]	Test results for end of academic year	2024-25 DfE Final (LA)/2024-25 ASP (District)	Feb 2026
SEND10	Percentage of pupils with a Statement or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	DfE annual snapshot based on school census	Snapshot as at January 2026	June 2026
CYPE2	Percentage of parents getting first preference of primary school	Admissions school places offered for start of academic year	Offers data for academic year 2026-27	April 2026
CYPE3	Percentage of parents getting first preference of secondary school	Admissions school places offered for start of academic year	Offers data for academic year 2026-27	March 2026
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	Aut/Spr 2025-26 (LA), Aut 2025-26 (National)	2025-26 MI Calcs (LA & District)	Aug 2026
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	Aut/Spr 2025-26 (LA), Aut 2025-26 (National)	2025-26 MI Calcs (LA & District)	Aug 2026
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	Aut/Spr 2025-26 (LA), Aut 2025-26 (National)	2025-26 MI Calcs (LA & District)	Aug 2026
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	Aut/Spr 2025-26 (LA), Aut 2025-26 (National)	2025-26 MI Calcs (LA & District)	Aug 2026

Indicator Definitions

Code	Indicator	Definition
Activity-Volume Measures		
CYPE10	Number of Primary Schools	The number of Kent maintained Primary schools (excluding Nurseries) and Primary academies (including Free Schools). Total is as at the latest available termly school census.
CYPE11	Number of Secondary Schools	The number of Kent maintained Secondary schools and Secondary academies (including Free Schools). Total is as at the latest available termly school census.
CYPE12	Number of Special Schools	The number of Kent maintained Special schools and Special academies. Total is as at the latest available termly school census.
CYPE13	Total pupils on roll in Primary Schools	The number of pupils on roll in Kent maintained Primary schools (excluding Nurseries) and Primary academies (including Free Schools). Total excludes guest and subsidiary pupils and is as at the latest available termly school census.
CYPE14	Total pupils on roll in Secondary Schools	The number of pupils on roll in Kent maintained Secondary schools and Secondary academies (including Free Schools). Total excludes guest and subsidiary pupils and is as at the latest available termly school census.
CYPE15	Total pupils on roll in Special Schools	The number of pupils on roll in Kent maintained Special schools and Special academies. Total excludes guest and subsidiary pupils and is as at the latest available termly school census.
CYPE16	Percentage of Primary School pupils eligible for Free School Meals	The number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals in Kent maintained Primary schools (excluding Nurseries) and Primary academies (including Free Schools) as a proportion of all pupils on roll. Totals for both numerator and denominator are for statutory aged pupils only and excludes guest and subsidiary pupils. Data is as at the latest available termly school census.
CYPE17	Percentage of Secondary School pupils eligible for Free School Meals	The number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals in Kent maintained Secondary schools and Secondary academies (including Free Schools) as a proportion of all pupils on roll. Totals for both numerator and denominator are for statutory aged pupils only and excludes guest and subsidiary pupils. Data is as at the latest available termly school census.
CYPE18	Percentage of Special School pupils eligible for Free School Meals	The number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals in Kent maintained Special schools and Special academies as a proportion of all pupils on roll. Totals for both numerator and denominator are for statutory aged pupils only and excludes guest and subsidiary pupils. Data is as at the latest available termly school census.
EY8	Percentage of EY settings with Good or Outstanding Ofsted Judgements - Overall Effectiveness (non-domestic premises)	The percentage of Kent Early Years settings (non-domestic premises only), judged good or outstanding for overall effectiveness in their latest inspection, as a proportion of all inspected Kent Early Years settings (non domestic premises only).
SISE35	Percentage of Primary Schools with Good or Outstanding Ofsted Judgements - Overall Effectiveness	The percentage of Kent maintained Primary schools and Primary academies judged good or outstanding for Overall Effectiveness in their latest inspection, as a proportion of all inspected Kent maintained Primary schools and Primary academies.
SISE36	Percentage of Secondary Schools with Good or Outstanding Ofsted Judgements - Overall Effectiveness	The percentage of Kent maintained Secondary schools and Secondary academies judged good or outstanding for Overall Effectiveness in their latest inspection, as a proportion of all inspected Kent maintained Secondary schools and Secondary academies.
SISE37	Percentage of Special Schools with Good or Outstanding Ofsted Judgements - Overall Effectiveness	The percentage of Kent maintained Special schools and Special academies judged good or outstanding for Overall Effectiveness in their latest inspection, as a proportion of all inspected Kent maintained Special schools and Special academies.
CYPE19	Number of requests for SEND statutory assessment	The number of initial requests for assessment for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) for 0-25 year olds in Kent LA.
EH71-C	Rate of notifications received into Early Help per 10,000 of the 0-17 population (inclusive, rolling 12 months)	The total number of referrals to an Early Help Unit completed during the corresponding reporting month per 10,000 (Population figures are updated upon reciept of the latest ONS Mid Year population estimates). This is a child level indicator.
SCS02	Rate of referrals to Children's Social Work Services per 10,000 of the 0-17 population (inclusive, rolling 12 months)	This indicator shows the rate of referrals received by Children's Social Work Services. Numerator: Number of referrals (rolling 12 month period). Denominator: child population figure divided by 10,000 (Population figures are updated upon receipt of the latest ONS Mid Year Estimates).
FD01-C	Number of contacts processed in the Front Door	The total number of notifications received during the corresponding reporting month that were processed by the Front Door. District and Area splits are not available for this indicator. The data includes all contact reasons processed by the Front Door. This is a child level indicator.
FD14-C	Number of Information, Advice and Guidance contacts processed in the Front Door	The total number of notifications with a contact outcome of "Information, Advice & Guidance" received during the corresponding reporting month that were processed by the Front Door. District and Area splits are not available for this indicator. The data includes all contact reasons processed by the Front Door. This is a child level indicator.

Indicator Definitions

Code	Indicator	Definition
Activity-Volume Measures (Continued)		
FD02-C	Number of contacts processed in the Front Door which met the threshold for CSWS involvement	The total number of notifications with a contact outcome of "Threshold met for CSWS" received during the corresponding reporting month that were processed by the Front Door. District and Area splits are not available for this indicator. The data includes all contact reasons processed by the Front Door. This is a child level indicator.
FD03-C	Number of contacts processed in the Front Door which proceeded to Early Help	The total number of notifications with a contact outcome of "Proceed to Early Help Unit" received during the corresponding reporting month that were processed by the Front Door. District and Area splits are not available for this indicator. The data includes all contact reasons processed by the Front Door. This is a child level indicator.
EH05-F	Number of cases open to Early Help Units	The number of open cases as at the end of the corresponding reporting month. The data includes all cases sent to units at Early Help Record stage prior to the end of the month. This is a family level indicator.
SCS01	Number of open Social Work cases	The total caseload figures for Children's Social Work Services.
	Number of Child Protection cases	The number of Children who have a Child Protection Plan as at the end of the corresponding reporting month.
	Number of Children in Care	The number of Children in Care as at the end of the corresponding reporting month.
	Number of Care Leavers	The number of Care Leavers as at the end of the corresponding reporting month.
EH36	Number of First Time Entrants into the Youth Justice system	First time entrants are defined as young people (aged 10 – 17 years) who receive their first substantive outcome (relating to a Youth Caution with or without an intervention, or a Conditional Caution or a Court disposal for those who go directly to Court without a Youth Caution or Conditional Caution).

Indicator Definitions

Code	Indicator	Definition
SEND Indicators		
APP17	Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within 20 weeks	The percentage of Education and Health Care Plans that are issued within 20 weeks as a proportion of all such plans. The data is a snapshot at the end of the month.
APP17-N	Total number of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks	The number of Education and Health Care Plans that are issued within 20 weeks.The data is a snapshot at the end of the month.
APP17-D	Total number of EHCPs issued	The total number of Education and Health Care Plans that are issued.The data is a snapshot at the end of the month.
APP17-A	Average duration in days from assessment request to EHCP completion	
APP-EP	Percentage of assessment requests sent to Educational Psychology returned within 6 weeks	The percentage of Educational Psychology assessments returned within a 6 week timeframe as a proportion of all such requests.
	Percentage of annual EHCP reviews waiting less than 12 months	The percentage of Education and Health Care Plans that are reviewed within 12 months as a proportion of all such plans that were due a review. The data is a snapshot at the end of the month.
CYPE	Percentage of pupils being placed in independent or out-of-county special schools - Kent responsible EHCPs	The number of pupils with an EHCP that are placed in independent Special schools or out-of-county Special schools as a percentage of the total number of pupils with an EHCP
	Percentage of open Educational Psychology referrals waiting more than 6 weeks	The percentage of open referrals to the educational psychology service that have been waitng more than 6 weeks as a proportion of all such cases. The data is a snapshot at the end of the month.
	Percentage of SEND statutory assessment requests waiting more than 20 weeks	The percentage of cases where a request for a statutory assessment has been made but no final EHCP has been issued that have been waitng more than 20 weeks as a proportion of all such cases. The data is a snapshot at the end of the month.
Key Performance Indicators		
SCS1	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	The percentage of referrals to SCS in the last 12 months where the start date of the previous referral (if any) is within 12 months of the new referral date.
SCS8	Percentage of Returner Interviews completed for those with SCS Involvement	The percentage of returner interviews completed in the last 12 months where the case was open to SCS at the point the child went missing and the child was aged under 18 at the point of going missing.
SCS13	Percentage of children becoming subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time	The percentage of children who become subject to a Child Protection Plan during the last 12 months who have been subject to a previous plan.
SCS18	Children in Care in same placement for the last two years (for those in care for two and a half years or more)	The percentage of Children in Care aged under 16 at the snapshot date who had been looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years, or are placed for adoption and their adoptive placement together with their previous placement together last for at least 2 years.
SCS44	Percentage of CIC in Foster Care (exc UASC)	The percentage of all Children in Care at month end (excluding UASC) who are placed in a Foster Care placement.
SCS29	Average number of days between becoming a child in care and moving in with an adoptive family	The average number of days between becoming a Looked After Child and moving in with Adoptive Family (for children who have been Adopted in the last 12 months)
SCS34	Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (of those KCC is in touch with)	The percentage of relevant and former relevant care leavers who we were in contact with in a 4 month window around their birthday who were aged 17, 18, 19, 20 or 21 and were in education, employment or training.
SCS37	Percentage of Case File Audits graded good or outstanding	The percentage of all completed case audits in the last 12 months where the overall grading was good or outstanding

Indicator Definitions

Code	Indicator	Definition
Key Performance Indicators (Continued)		
SCS45	Percentage of caseholding staff present in post	The percentage of caseholding posts with a staff member present at month end.
SCS42	Average caseloads in the CIC Teams	The average caseload of social workers within district based CIC Teams at the snapshot date.
SCS43	Average caseloads in the CSWT Teams	The average caseload of social workers within the district based Children's Social Work Teams (CSWTs) at the snapshot date.
	Percentage of referrals where a previous referral started within 12 months	The percentage of referrals to EH in the last 12 months where the start date of the previous referral (if any) is within 12 months of the new referral date.
EH52-F	Percentage of EH Assessments completed within 30 working days	The percentage of assessments completed in the reporting month, where the assessment was completed within 30 working days of allocation.
	Percentage of EH Unit Case Audits rated good or outstanding	The percentage of all EH Unit completed case audits in the last 12 months where the overall grading was good or outstanding
EH16-F	Percentage of EH cases closed with outcomes achieved that come back to EH or CSWS in 3 mths	The percentage of EH cases that have been closed with an outcome of "outcomes achieved" and then came back into either EH or CSWS in the next 3 months. Please note that there is a 3 month time lag on this data so the result shown for May 2020 is actually looking at all EH Closures in the 12 months up to February 2020.
	Average Caseload within EH Units (Families)	Definition to be confirmed.
CYPE8	Rate of proven re-offending by CYP	An offender enters the cohort if they are released from custody, received a non-custodial conviction at court or received a reprimand or warning (caution) in a three month period. A proven reoffence is defined as any offence committed in a one year follow-up period that leads to a court conviction, caution, reprimand or warning in the one year follow-up or within a further six month waiting period to allow the offence to be proven in court. **It is important to note that this is not comparable to previous proven reoffending publications which reported on a 12 month cohort.**
SISE71	Percentage of Year 12-13 age-group (16-17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET)	The percentage of young people who have left compulsory education, up until the end of National Curriculum Year 13, who have not achieved a positive education, employment or training destination.
CYPE6	Percentage of Children Missing Education cases, closed within 30 school days	The number of closed cases within 30 school days of their referral to Kent County Council's CME Team, as a percentage of the total number of cases opened within the period.
CYPE22	Percentage of CYP registered to EHE who receive contact and additional information within 10 school days of them being brought to our attention	The number of CYP who register with the LA to Home Educate contacted to include information regarding a visit, within 10 days of receipt of the referral to Kent County Council's EHE Team, as a percentage of the total number of cases opened within the period.
EH43	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the primary phase - all Year R to Year 6 pupils	The total number of pupils in Year R to Year 6 that have been permanently excluded from a Kent maintained Primary school, Special school or Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or Primary academy or Special academy during the last 12 months.
EH44	Number of pupils permanently excluded from the secondary phase - all Year 7 to Year 14 pupils	The total number of pupils in Year 7 to Year 14 that have been permanently excluded from a Kent maintained Secondary school, Special school or Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or Secondary academy or Special academy during the last 12 months.
	Percentage (rate) of pupils permanently excluded from primary and secondary phase schools - all Year R to Year 14 pupils	The number of Year R (Reception) to Year 14 pupils permanently excluded from Primary, Secondary, Special schools and PRUs (incl. academies) in the last twelve months expressed as rate over the school population.

Indicator Definitions

Code	Indicator	Definition
Key Performance Indicators (Continued)		
EY2	Percentage of DWP and other identified eligible 2 year olds taking up a free early education place	The number of two year old children accessing a free early education place at an early years provider as a proportion of the total number of families identified as potentially eligible for funding by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
EY14	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development	Percentage of pupils assessed as achieving Expected or Exceeding in all Prime Learning Goals and all literacy and mathematics Early Learning Goals at the end of reception year, based on the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.
EY15	Percentage of pupils at EYFS achieving a Good Level of Development - FSM Eligible achievement gap	The difference between the achievement of non-FSM eligible pupils and FSM eligible pupils in terms of percentage assessed as achieving Expected or Exceeding in all Prime Learning Goals and all literacy and mathematics Early Learning Goals at the end of reception year, based on the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.
SISE4	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics	The percentage of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 working at the Expected Standard in all of Reading, Writing & maths. Includes Kent maintained schools and academies.
SISE16	Percentage of pupils at KS2 achieving age-related expectations in Reading, writing & mathematics - FSM gap	The difference between the achievement of non-FSM eligible pupils and FSM eligible pupils in terms of percentage working at the Expected Standard in all of Reading, Writing & maths at KS2. Includes Kent maintained schools and academies.
SISE12	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8	The average Attainment 8 score for pupils at end of Key Stage 4. Attainment 8 is a point score based on attainment across eight subjects which must include English; mathematics; three other English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects (sciences, computer science, geography, history and languages); and three further subjects, which can be from the range of EBacc subjects, or can be any other approved, high-value arts, academic, or vocational qualification.
SISE9	Average score at KS4 in Attainment 8 - FSM gap	The difference between the Attainment 8 score of non-FSM eligible pupils and FSM eligible pupils at the end of KS4 (see above definition for SISE12a). Includes Kent maintained schools and academies.
CYPE23	Average point score per A Level entry at KS5 [School students only]	The total number of points achieved in A-Level qualifications by pupils at the end of Key Stage 5 divided by the total number of entries made in all A-Level qualifications. Outcomes are for Kent maintained schools and academies only.
CYPE24	Average point score per Applied General entry at KS5 [School students only]	The total number of points achieved in Applied General qualifications by pupils at the end of Key Stage 5 divided by the total number of entries made in all Applied General qualifications. Outcomes are for Kent maintained schools and academies only.
CYPE25	Average point score per Tech Level entry at KS5 [School students only]	The total number of points achieved in Tech Level qualifications by pupils at the end of Key Stage 5 divided by the total number of entries made in all Tech Level qualifications. Outcomes are for Kent maintained schools and academies only.
SEND10	Percentage of pupils with a Statement or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	Percentage of pupils with an Education, Health and care Plan (EHCP) as a proportion of all pupils on roll in all schools as at January school census. Includes maintained schools and academies, Pupil Referral Units, Free schools and Independent schools (DfE published data).
CYPE2	Percentage of parents getting first preference of primary school	The percentage of parents who got their first preference of Primary school (out of their three ordered preferences) for their child.
CYPE3	Percentage of parents getting first preference of secondary school	The percentage of parents who got their first preference of Secondary school (out of their three ordered preferences) for their child.
EH46	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	The percentage of pupils that have been persistently absent from a Kent maintained Primary school or a Primary academy for 10% or more of their expected sessions over the reported time period.
EH47	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 10% threshold	The percentage of pupils that have been persistently absent from a Kent maintained Secondary school or a Secondary academy for 10% or more of their expected sessions over the reported time period.
	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from primary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	The percentage of pupils that have been severely absent from a Kent maintained Primary school or a Primary academy for 50% or more of their expected sessions over the reported time period.
	Percentage of pupils who are severely absent from secondary schools - all pupils based on 50% threshold	The percentage of pupils that have been severely absent from a Kent maintained Secondary school or a Secondary academy for 50% or more of their expected sessions over the reported time period.

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From: Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services

Christine McInnes, Interim Corporate Director of Children, Young People & Education

To: Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee

Date: 09.09.2026

Subject: LADO Education Safeguarding Service (LESAS) Annual Report 2025-26

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: The LESAS Annual Report for 2025-26 is attached. The report provides an account of the Council's LADO Education Safeguarding Service performance from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026.

Recommendation(s): Members of the CYPE Cabinet Committee are asked to note and comment on the LESAS Annual report and its findings.

1. Introduction

1.2 This year's annual report covers the actions from 2024-25, Management Information, Traded Activity and recommendations for the service moving forward.

2. Body of the report.

2.1 Please see the Table of Contents.

3. Financial Implications.

3.1 The report covers details of the income generated by LESAS from its Traded Activity.

4. Legal implications.

4.1 None.

5. Equalities implications.

5.1 None.

6. Other corporate implications.

6.1 None.

7. Governance.

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN THE CHILDREN'S WORKFORCE

7.1 None.

8. Conclusions.

8.1 In this year of consolidation LESAS has continued to demonstrate a high level of throughput on statutory work, manageable caseloads and an increase in income from Traded Activity**.**

9. Recommendation(s):
Members of the Cabinet Committee are asked to NOTE and COMMENT ON the LESAS Annual Report and its findings.

10. Background Documents.

10.1 No additional background documents.

11. Contact details.

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KENT LADO EDUCATION SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY SERVICE

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN THE CHILDREN'S WORKFORCE

LADO Education Safeguarding Advisory Service

(LESAS)

Annual Report

2025-2026

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1. Introduction and Context

1.1 This is the annual report of Kent County Council's Integrated Children's Services, "Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Education Safeguarding Advisory Service" covering the year 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 (the reporting period). The Service will be referred to as LESAS in the report.

1.2 The identified role for LESAS is to build upon the statutory LADO function for the whole of the children's workforce and support education settings (early years settings, childminders, schools, and colleges) in Kent who work with children aged 0-18 to meet their safeguarding responsibilities and respond to safeguarding concerns in line with relevant legislation and government guidance, including the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004, the Education Act 2002, Working Together to Safeguard Children, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and Early Years Foundation Stage.

1.3 The LESAS provides the following services.

- Undertaking the statutory LADO function for Kent Children's Workforce.
- Strategic safeguarding advice, including online safety, for education settings to support them to meet their safeguarding responsibilities via the LESAS enquiries service.
- A programme of core training throughout the academic year for Designated Safeguarding Leads and other staff in education settings, delivered face to face, virtually or through e-learning, alongside commissioned bespoke training.
- Support for education settings in times of crisis and unexpected critical safeguarding incidents.
- Targeted outreach work, including subsidised support, for education settings following critical safeguarding needs.
- Responses to Ofsted Category 2 & 3 Safeguarding Complaints about schools and other safeguarding related Ofsted enquiries.
- Exemplar Child Protection and Acceptable Use Policy Templates.
- A child protection newsletter for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) that is published six times a year.
- DSL Network meetings held three times a year in each of the four Education Areas in Kent and three times a year DSL Network Meeting for Early Years Settings.

1.4 This report identifies themes from the work of LESAS and provides a medium to highlight areas of good practice and identify those areas which require continued development.

1.5 In summary, LESAS continued to demonstrate a high level of throughput on statutory work, manageable caseloads, significantly increased income generation and refinement in its Power BI reporting. LESAS maintained a comprehensive and efficient service combining statutory functions, contribution to quality assurance and a well-respected traded activity that brings added value to Kent County Council (KCC).

2. Recommendations from Previous Report 2024-2025

The actions referred to below are taken from last year's LESAS Annual Report

2.1 **Evaluate, redesign, and implement a simplified referral process for members or the public (e.g., via Microsoft Form), then monitor referral rates with a target of a 10% increase.**

During the reporting year, LESAS explored the possibility of the KCC portal being used to receive LADO referrals from members of the public and it was agreed this was preferable to the use of a Microsoft Form or Word document. This was agreed by the Liquid Logic Operational Group, but the implementation was delayed by the Liberi system upgrade. After April 2026, LESAS supported the implementation through testing. This was implemented urgently as in 2025-2026 there were 21 referrals from the public, 4 less than the previous year so this improvement target was not met.

2.2 **All parts of LESAS will collect and report KPI data, with quarterly management information reviews to identify achievements and areas for development. Ensure all LESAS service areas meet or exceed 80% of their KPIs.**

During the reporting period, LESAS performance against the agreed KPIs was as follows;

2.3 **LADO Enquiry Form Received to closure (in 2 working days).**

2157 out of 2160 = 99.9%

2.4 **LADO Referral to Threshold decision (in 1 working day).**

1684 out of 1808 = 93.1%

2.5 **LADO Threshold decision to Outcome (in 90 working days).**

486 out of 595 = 81.7%.

This demonstrates good throughput of casework.

2.6 **LESAS Enquiries about agency checks, strategic education safeguarding advice, safeguarding resources, strategic advice on online safety (in 5 working days).**

1007 out of 1007 = 100%

2.7 **Ofsted Category 2 & 3 complaints will be completed within 40 School days.**

For Category 3 Ofsted Complaints 279 out of 281 (99%) were completed in timescale.

For Category 2 Ofsted Complaints 19 out of 20 (95%) were completed in timescale.

For Category 2/3 Ofsted complaints 46 out of 48 (96%) were completed in timescale.

2.8 **The LESAS staff group will complete at least 50 Safeguarding Reviews of settings every financial year.**

34 Safeguarding Reviews were undertaken. This work generated £28,200 in income.

The Service offered a free review for a school where there were significant concerns. LESAS also monitor Ofsted reports to see if there are any schools of concern. It is recognised this was an ambitious target, not previously achieved by the dedicated Education Safeguarding Service which existed prior to LESAS. Around 35 reviews is the consistent average. A target of 40 will be set for next year as that would still be a 15% increase on this year's attainment, without setting an unreachable target.

2.9 **All schools in Kent will be invited to Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Network Meetings 3 times per year**.

The KPI is for 75% of invited schools to attend the Network Meetings. LESAS ran DSL Network Meetings for Schools in June 2025, November 2025 and March 2026. Throughout the year, LESAS strived to sophisticate the method of inviting DSLs to the meetings so there is more accuracy in invites and reporting data.

Overall attendance data was 21.7% for June 2025, 29% for November 2025, 29% for March 2026.

2.10 **Learner evaluations from core and bespoke training and safeguarding reviews will be 90% good or excellent for: "please rate the course on a scale of 1-5, where 5 is excellent, 4 is good, 3 adequate, 2 poor, 1 very poor".**

Overall feedback was 94% Good or outstanding for Core Training and 100% for Bespoke Training.

2.11 **Feedback from LADO Statutory work with settings will be good or excellent for: "please rate the advice you have received from the LADO on a scale of 1-5, where 5 is excellent, 4 is good, 3 adequate, 2 poor, 1 very poor".**

The LESAS feedback form went live in July; 36 Feedback forms were completed about LADO Statutory work between then and March 2026. There were 25 grades of 5/5, 6 of 4/5, 1 of 3/5, 1 of 1/5 and 3 blanks, representing an overwhelmingly positive response with many comments noting the ease of use of the form and the prompt way queries are responded.

The LESAS management team review the feedback each month and discuss any improvements to be made to any aspect of service delivery, and any individualised issues are investigated and explored. This led to changes such as allowing time for questions and discussions at DSL network meetings.

2.12 **LEA oversight of Internal Investigations will be recorded by the tenth working day of the investigations being advised.**

&

The LEA will request an update every 90 days from the Police in respect of ongoing investigations/internal processes of staff in the children's workforce.

LESAS has not been able to collect specific data on these last two items. The possibility of having the case pathway in the allegations section of Liberi was considered, but this was not possible due to technical restrictions from System C (the provider which owns Liberi). These KPIs were developed due to a desire to combat the potential for drift in the follow up of cases. How long police and/or internal investigations take is beyond the LEA's control, so this is not really a useful KPI for the service.

The National LADO Network (NLN) ceased to use this as a KPI due to concerns LADOs may close cases prematurely. Additionally, learning from the peer audit with another local authority about closing a case too prematurely, so this is something the LADO & Education Safeguarding Manager actively discourage. The Management Information Unit (MIU) have, however, developed alternative management tools so the Manager can monitor on casework without needing these items as KPIs in the future. The manager is now able to see how long it has been since a case was updated from Power BI, without needing to open each on Liberi. This enables the LADO and Education Safeguarding Manager to address any longer-term cases, requiring updating.

2.13 **Complete all scheduled SLIP projects with Isle of Wight and Reading Borough Council; collect and review external audit and inspection feedback from partner authorities, securing £127,142.50 in annual income from the DfE.**

Both SLIP projects with the Isle of Wight and Reading Borough Council were completed during the reporting period and in total £92,977.15 was awarded by DfE. This was a shortfall of £34,165.35 on the original grant but is representative of the fact both projects began in earnest at the end of the 2024-25 year, and the delivery straddled both financial years. The DfE confirmed SLIP will be ceased in 2026-27 as funding will only be available to Families First pathfinder local authorities.

2.14 **Increase participation in Early Years safeguarding training by 25% (from January 2025 baseline), ensuring subsidised or free training is provided to EY settings across all areas.**

In the reporting period, 425 Early Years delegates booked to attend LESAS training, with 386 attending. In 2024-25, 386 learners attending LESAS training were from Early Years settings.

This meant Early Years practitioners represented over a quarter of the LESAS core training audience, accounting for 28% of bookings (425) and 27% of attendees (386). While the number of Early Years attendees remained

consistent with the previous reporting period, bookings increased, indicating continued demand for and engagement with the LESAS training offer from the sector.

Although no subsidised or free Early Years training was delivered during the reporting period, participation from the sector was maintained. The difference between bookings and attendance is consistent with known challenges within the Early Years sector, where staffing capacity, statutory ratio requirements and workforce pressures can make it difficult for settings to release staff to attend training. LESAS currently offers bespoke training sessions at twilight times (4-6pm) to early years settings to help alleviate some of these issues.

2.15 **Establish and deliver area-based network meetings for Early Years settings thrice annually; provide guest speakers and safeguarding updates; deploy area-based support for local training and reviews.**

The first DSL Network meetings for Early Years Settings were held in November 2025 with 34% attendance from those invited. The second meeting took place in March 2026 with attendance of 27%. The meetings were well received and LESAS is working to expand the invitation list so all settings in Kent are captured and learning shared widely. To support the continued growth of the network, LESAS introduced a new registration process and worked with partner agencies to promote the meetings across the Early Years sector, including nurseries, pre-schools and childminders. This approach aims to increase participation and ensure safeguarding information reaches as many providers as possible.

2.16 **Achieve a £50K increase in traded income, reaching at least £449.3K total income by 2026, through implementation of a targeted LESAS marketing plan and expansion of outreach activities.**

Table 9 on page 22 compares the traded income between this reporting year and the preceding year. £484.3K was the income for the traded activity from training and products which was an increase of £92.1K from the previous year. A further £15.2K was earned from commissioned work to develop a series of online safety training and resource packs for Kent Family Hubs. The undertaking of Safeguarding Audits and Safeguarding Policy checks for the expanded Holidays Activity and Food (HAF) programme as well as the £92.9K from SLIP as mentioned above brought the total LESAS income figure to £592.4K.

2.17 **Develop and launch in-house purchasing on “My Ed” platform; implement outreach tracker via Microsoft List; systematically monitor and pursue engagement and sales opportunities.**

LESAS provided comprehensive input into the proposed Service Specification for “My Ed” in February 2026 which detailed what LESAS would need to replicate and enhance its current arrangement with The Education People (TEP) which hosts LESAS products at the moment for a relatively low cost (£14.4K in the reporting year). There is no further update on the progress of “My Ed” but at the time of writing no further feedback was received.

In terms of the outreach tracker, LESAS created a new Microsoft List within the LESAS SharePoint, which enables staff to log their contacts with settings. During the reporting year, 126 contacts were made with settings. Many of these came from liaison work the LADO and Education Safeguarding manager did with the Front Door following reviews of contacts where the quality of referrals could have been improved. The impact of this tracker is demonstrated through the LESAS KPIs. In addition to this, we have been liaising with others across children's services such as Kent Pupil Referral Unit & Attendance Service (KPAS), the Special Educational Needs (SEN) department, child education and employment team, early years team in The Education People (TEP) and school improvement officers in order to gather and share information about school concerns.

2.18 **Complete quality assurance visits to 100% of Kent's Family Hub network and children's homes, using LESAS frameworks and reporting findings to the Board.**

In hindsight it was not realistic to expect LESAS to have completed all 13 Family Hub Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) visits in the reporting period. The Family Hub QAF is not led by LESAS; rather LESAS are part of a multi-agency group conducting quality assurance activities in the family hubs. The first QAF did not start until July 2025 and there was also a delay due to Family Hub staff availability. Nevertheless, six QAF visits were completed by 31st March 2026 and the feedback from colleagues was positive about what the LADO Education Advisors (LEAs) were able to bring in terms of their safeguarding knowledge and advice.

The first phase of QAF will conclude in October 2026 at which point LESAS will be involved in evaluating the effectiveness of phase 1 and what phase 2 may look like.

2.19 **Continue shared learning partnership with Lancashire County Council, ensuring at least one peer review occurs by 2026, and findings are actioned by July 2025.**

Two Peer Reviews took place last year with Lancashire and Oxfordshire respectively, and recognition of Kent's involvement in shared learning with the National LADO Network was maintained. LESAS staff travelled to Lancashire in June 2025 for this peer audit to take place in person, and Oxfordshire colleagues travelled to Kent in August 2025.

From these two reviews, many strengths were identified in terms of Kent LADO practice including clear thresholds, outcomes and the quality of recording.

Some learning was identified in that the threshold decision for the LADO does not need to wait until after a social work team have decided about a strategy discussion being required and Position of Trust (POT) meetings can be utilised when cases are complex or involve multiple employers and agencies but are not necessary in every case. Learning was taken when considering if the person of concern is on a long-term absence e.g. maternity leave. Other actions shared with the staff group include where a Section 47 outcome and a LADO outcome

differ in terms of decision making this is to be expressly explained in LADO case summary.

2.20 **Update all LESAS training and products to reflect KCSIE and EYFS by September 2025 ensuring 100% compliance and availability for purchase/use at the start of the academic year.**

All LESAS core policy templates, eLearning courses, training materials and products were fully reviewed and updated between July 2025 and September 2025 to reflect changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), ensuring they were compliant and available for use at the start of the 2025-26 academic year. Where appropriate, updates also incorporated feedback from trainers and learners to strengthen content, usability and relevance.

In addition to the planned annual review, LESAS maintained an ongoing programme of product and content development throughout the year. Further updates were made in response to changes in national and local safeguarding guidance, emerging safeguarding themes, learning from safeguarding practice reviews, and sector feedback. Additional guidance and resources were shared through the LESAS DSL newsletters, including information relating to mobile phone use in education settings, responding to online hoaxes and harmful online challenges, and frequently asked questions regarding the Ofsted complaints process. This approach ensured LESAS training and products remained current, responsive and aligned with emerging safeguarding priorities throughout the reporting period.

2.21 **By December 2025, implement a centralised Microsoft Lists-based tool to categorise and track all DfE and Ofsted enquiries/complaints, ensuring 100% of relevant cases are consistently logged.**

The Microsoft List was achieved internally and sits within the LESAS SharePoint, and the next stage is to enable reporting on performance to be added to the LESAS Power BI and work is ongoing with MIU colleagues to achieve this reporting mechanism.

3. Management Information

LADO Activity

3.1 LADO activity in Kent is underpinned by statutory guidance notably ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ 2026 (WTSC). The guidance sets out Local Authorities should have a Designated Officer (LADO) to be involved in the management and oversight of allegations against staff working within the Children’s Workforce. The legislative framework is also reflected in the Children Act 2004. The Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP) publishes local guidance on allegations management procedures.

3.2 Nationally, all agencies and settings providing services for children, or employing staff or volunteers working with children, are required through WTSC to have and

to implement procedures for responding to allegations against staff members and adults in positions of trust, whether paid or voluntary. The definition of 'working with' children is an adult who is working or volunteering with children, anyone under the age of 18 years old, or in contact with children through work on a regular basis and would be seen as being in a position of trust over them. In addition, this would also apply to someone under eighteen in the same position, for example, a seventeen-year-old teaching a musical instrument or instructing a group. The LADO remit was traditionally person specific, but as the role evolved and learning taken from various reviews, it is now expected the LADO is conscious of the wider safeguarding measures employers have in place.

3.3 WTSC provides the Harm Threshold applied when an allegation is made against a member of the children's workforce and it is believed the individual has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

3.4 LESAS accepts referrals meeting this threshold and supports employers with enquiries about practice concerns just outside it, such as quality of care or professional conduct.

3.5 In education services, the LADO Service follows Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance, updated annually, for managing allegations against staff in schools and colleges.

3.6 Alongside statutory guidance, rules under the Childcare Act 2006 address situations leading to disqualification from work in domestic settings. The LADO will also review risk by association issues and risk assessments involving a variety of settings.

3.7 The LADO's first consideration is always to ensure children involved in an allegation are appropriately safeguarded. The LADO will also consider the safety of other children who could encounter the adult, whether that is at the setting they work in, or children in the person of concern's own family.

The Statistical Report

3.8 The LADO section of LESAS manages two main tasks: Enquiries and Referrals. In 2025-26, the Kent LESAS processed 2160 enquiries (excluding Ofsted matters) and 1874 referrals.

Enquiries

3.9 A LADO Enquiry is when professionals, often line managers or employers, question whether a formal referral should be made to the LADO. Professionals making enquiries want advice and guidance in exploring alternative options such as using the organisation's own HR processes, signposting to other services or submitting referrals to the Front Door or to the LADO.

3.10 A LADO Education Advisor (LEA) is rostered to function as enquiries officer each day. This process enables settings to make enquiries without naming an individual and get advice on the harm threshold. The enquiries process also enables agency checks to be made. Enquiries can be made about individuals by Ofsted in relation to prospective children's home managers or childminders, and by independent or in-house fostering services in relation to prospective or existing foster carers. Settings enquiries include Ofsted, or the Inspectorate for Independent Schools (ISI) inspection queries, and complaints about schools received by Ofsted or the Department for Education.

3.11 When LESAS was formed in September 2024, the enquiries process was changed to combine strategic education safeguarding and online safety enquiries and those relating to the LADO process. A Microsoft form was developed to accommodate these enquiries, and this was shared with settings so they can use the form directly to contact LESAS and receive a response back via email containing the advice for their records.

3.12 LESAS has a commitment to sharing information about individuals and settings for the purposes of safeguarding children. LESAS contributed to this by running checks on 392 foster carers and those applying to become foster carers. In addition to this, LESAS responded to 71 requests made by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) about individuals. LESAS responded to 5 requests made by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). These checks are to enable partner organisations to make informed judgments about safeguarding especially where there are significant concerns about individuals.

3.13 LESAS managed 30 Subject Access Requests (SAR) in this reporting last year. Common themes include individuals referred seeking clarity on their records and incomplete communication from employers regarding LADO referrals, outcomes, and future implications. LEAs continue to encourage employers to provide feedback and later in this report, in the complaints section, this is discussed further. LESAS also processed 6 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, some partially answered or exempt. As a comparison in 2024-25 there were 36 SAR and 6 FOI requests.

Referrals

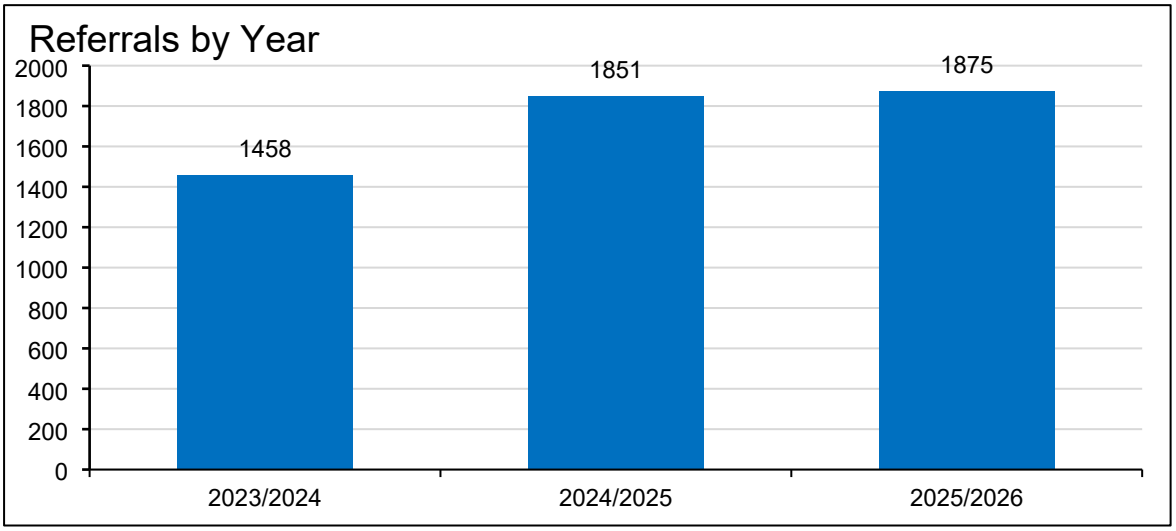
3.14 LADO Referrals are generally received via the Kent County Council Portal, and all professionals must refer via the portal. At present, members of the public have the option to download the LADO referral form and send it as an attachment via e-mail but as mentioned above work in continuing to enable public referrals through the portal as well.

3.15 A LEA is rostered to be on Portal duty every day and referrals are assessed by them to identify whether the concern meets the harm threshold.

3.16 Table 1 below helps to explain the recent pattern of LADO referrals. The LADO Service received 1874 referrals in the reporting year. This is a 1.24% increase from 2024-2025 where 1851 referrals were received. This is a welcome stabilisation in referrals compared to the significant increase last year which increased from 1458 referrals in 2023-2024.

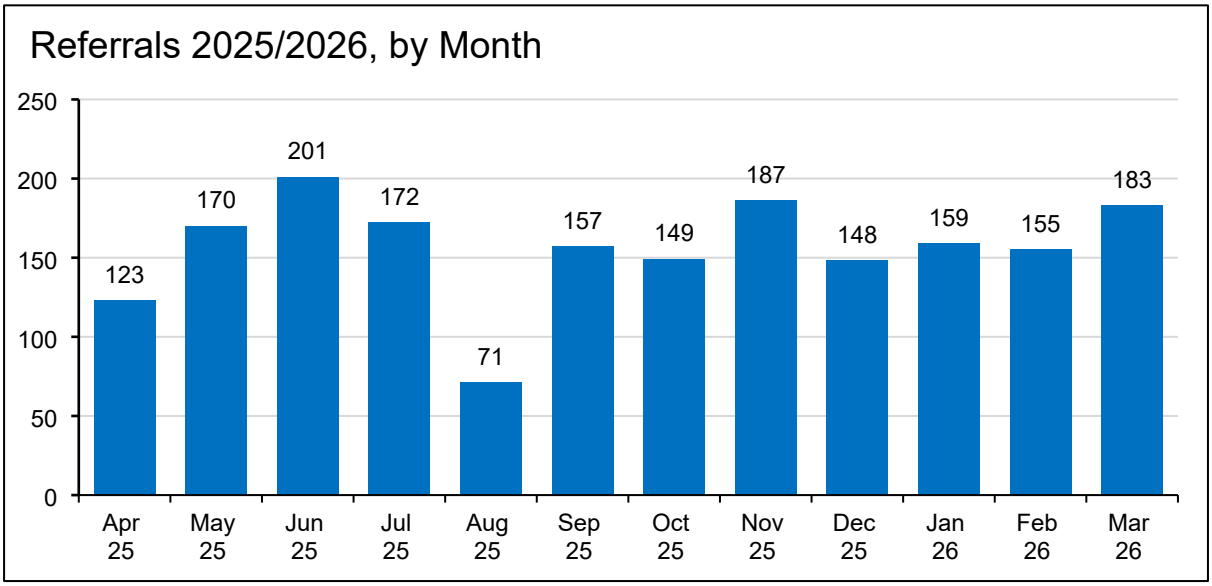
3.17 Kent's "Allegation Management: The Role of the LADO" training programme was launched in March 2025, and this was well received in terms of feedback and attendance on the courses. It appears that this learning has had an impact in helping partners' confidence in recognising a low-level concern and not submitting unnecessary referrals. During the reporting year LESAS ran five "Allegation Management: The Role of the LADO" courses via KSCMP with 150 learners attending. Additionally, we ran 3 bespoke courses, 2 for groups of newly qualified social workers and one for the staff of a further education college.

Table 1



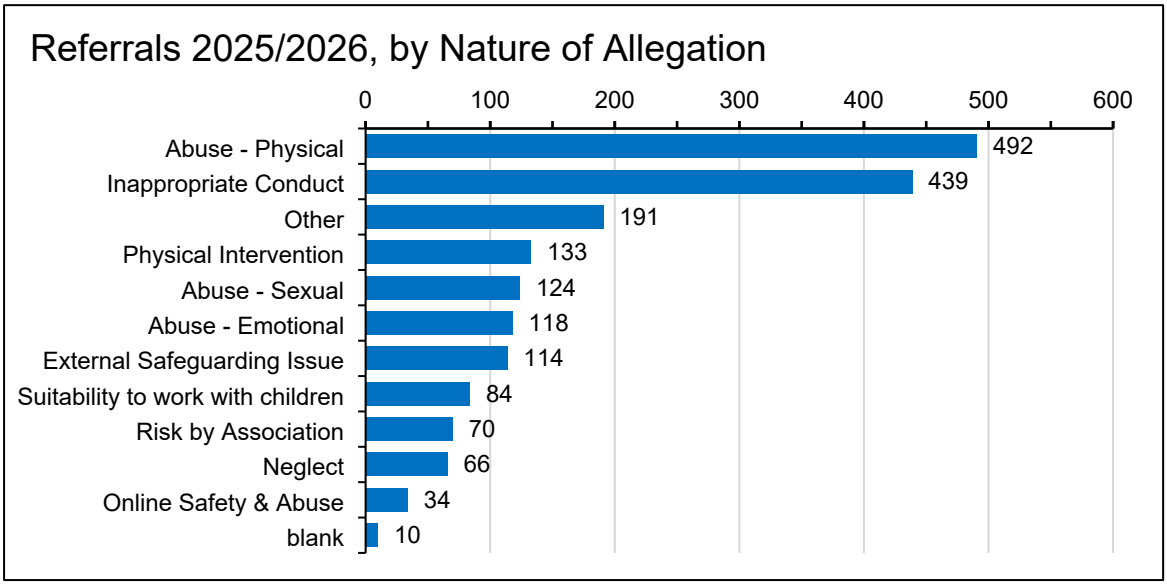
3.18 Table 2 illustrates referral numbers in each month. It is noticeable there are fewer referrals when schools are on holiday particularly in August to a lesser extent in April and December. Conversely, the last few years demonstrate an increase in referral rates in the lead up to the summer holidays during June and July.

Table 2



3.19 Table 3 identifies the different allegation types referred to the LADO. Physical Abuse was the highest allegation category. This is the case for a number of years not just in Kent but nationally. Inappropriate conduct allegations remain high. The 10 referrals which show as blank in this graph represent the fact those cases were ongoing at the time the data was taken from Power BI in readiness for the preparation of this report. It is usual to have cases continuing from one financial year to the next as some investigations, especially those involving police can be protracted.

Table 3

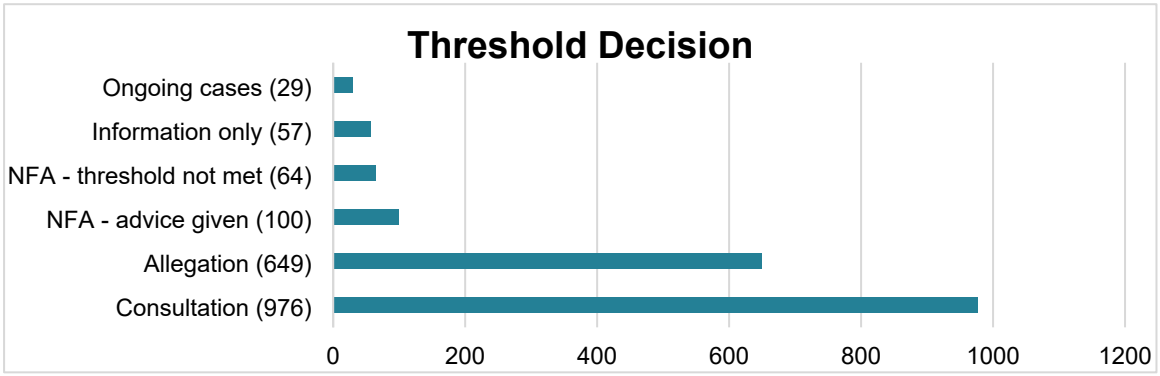


3.20 Table 4 shows the outcome of the LADO referrals made during the reporting period. 976 out of 1875 (52%) were recorded as Consultations. Referrals not meeting the LADO harm threshold can be treated as Consultations. Consultations can be dealt with by recommending management actions and typically advice, signposting or a risk assessment.

3.21 In 2024-2025 42% of referrals into LESAS were treated as consultations which was higher than the 2023-2024 figure of 33%.

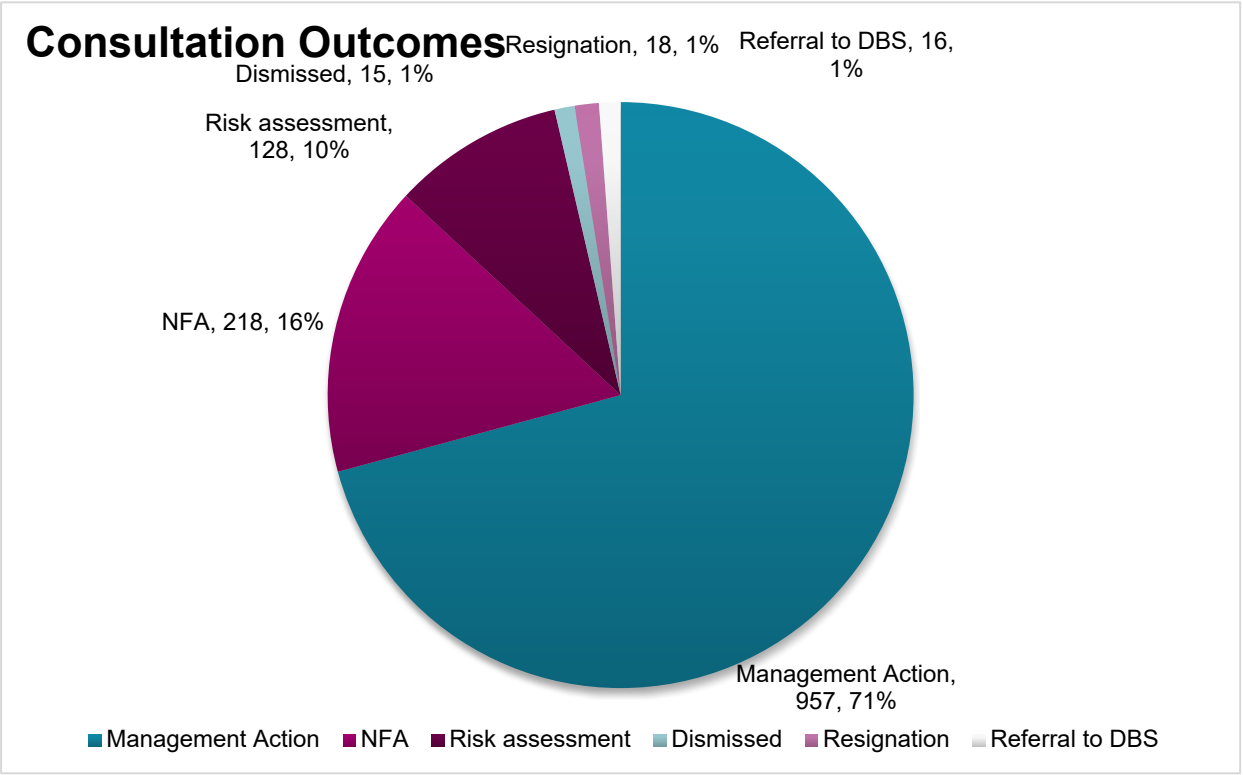
3.22 35% of referrals met the LADO threshold of harm which is a slight increase from the 2024-2025 30% and 27% in 2023-24.

Table 4



3.23 Table 5 shows the outcomes of those 976 referrals treated as Consultations. The majority 587 (60%) were dealt with as Management Action. A Management Action includes undertaking reflective supervision, additional training or support for staff. This may include debriefs following physical interventions that have not reached the harm threshold, for example. This could provide learning in relation to de-escalation techniques and exploration of how things may have been managed differently.

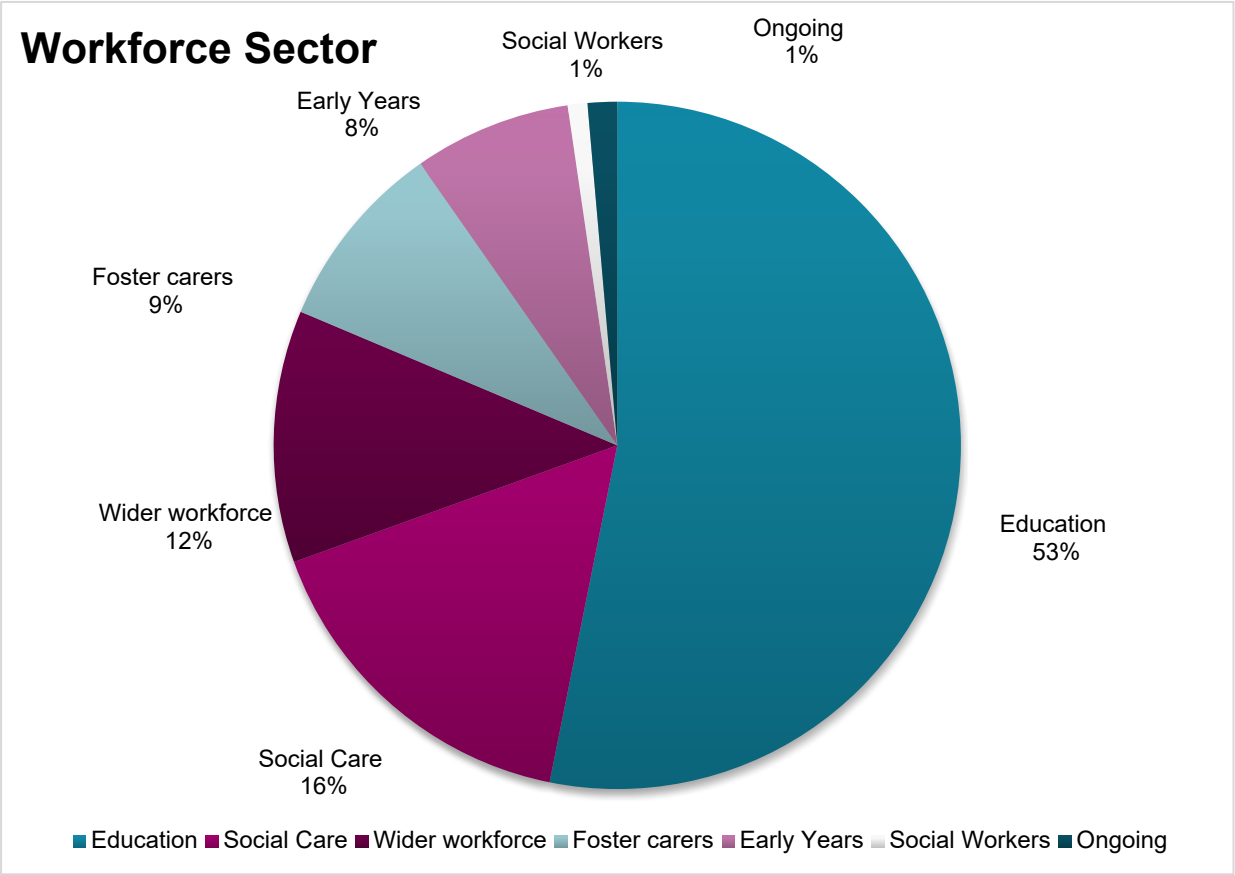
Table 5



3.24 Table 6 shows the range of workforce sectors where referrals met the threshold to proceed as a LADO allegation. Of the 649 allegations recorded during the reporting period, Education accounted for the largest proportion with 345 allegations (53%), this is expected and is consistent with other local authorities and previous years. Foster Care accounted for 58 allegations (9%), Early Years 48 allegations (7%), Wider Workforce 77 allegations (12%). The wider work force includes work in emergency services such as police or work in youth groups, community settings and faith-based settings.

3.25 Registered Social Workers only accounted for 6 allegations (1%). Social care represents 106 (16%) of allegations, this includes work in residential care, supported living as well as unregistered workers in the local authority or independent fostering agencies. It is expected this number would be high due to the number of children's homes and similar transitional care settings in the Kent area.

Table 6


Workforce Sector
Social Workers 1%
Ongoing 1%
Early Years 8%
Foster carers 9%
Wider workforce 12%
Education 53%
Social Care 16%
Education
Social Care
Wider workforce
Foster carers
Early Years
Social Workers
Ongoing

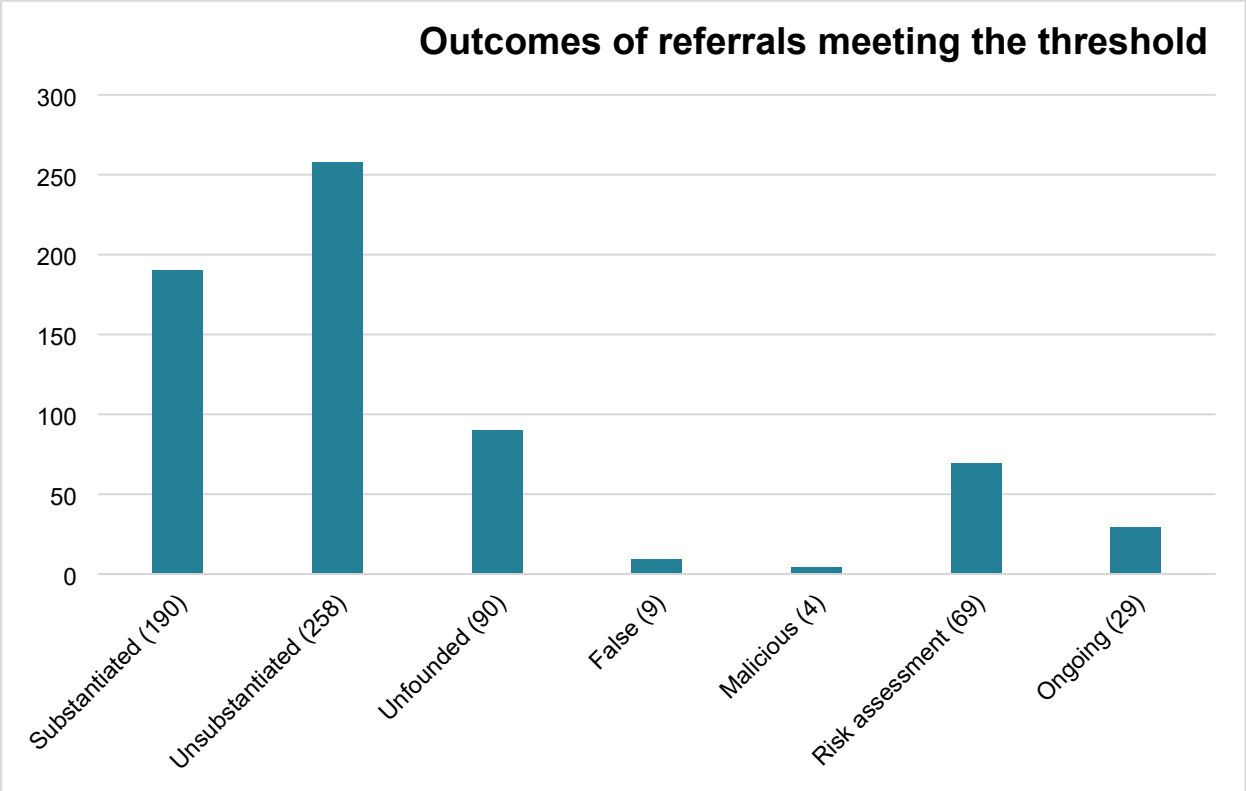
3.26 Table 7 shows the allegation outcomes for the 649 referrals that met the LADO threshold to proceed as an allegation. The most common outcome was Unsubstantiated accounting for 258 (40%) of cases. Unsubstantiated outcomes indicate there was insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove an allegation, although management actions may still be identified to strengthen practice.

3.27 The next common outcome was Substantiated 190 cases (29%). Substantiated outcomes indicate, on the balance of probabilities, the concern was evidenced and required an appropriate management response. 67 cases (10%) of concerns are substantiated but can be managed through management actions and training rather than a dismissal, which indicates less serious concerns. Substantiated resulting in Dismissal was at 9% (59 cases).

3.28 Unfounded allegations accounted for 90 cases (14%). This outcome is often used when circumstances are such the actions of the perpetrator were perhaps misinterpreted. An example of this might be a necessary physical intervention to safeguard a child and others around them from harm but which hurt or upset the child in the process.

3.29 In 2023-24 and 2024-2025, 9% of referrals resulted in substantiated concerns. We have had a significant increase in substantiated concerns this year, which indicates the referrals being received are necessary and the enquiries process fully embedded is effective at gatekeeping lower-level referrals, which we do not require.

Table 7



LEA caseloads and breadth of work

3.30 Caseloads for LEAs have become more manageable since the service merged to form LESAS as LADO casework is able to be shared amongst a greater number of colleagues. The caveat to this is that days spent delivering safeguarding reviews and training means minor delays in casework at times. However, an enquiries officer is available each day to deal with any urgent enquiries on open cases when the allocated LADO is out of office.

3.31 The LEA role combining education safeguarding and LADO work can be challenging to manage especially for part-time staff despite them receiving pro rata amounts of rostered duties and traded activities to be delivered. Further part-time working arrangements for any new or additional staff therefore cannot be agreed as these do not meet the business needs.

Ofsted/DfE Complaints against Schools and other Ofsted Enquiries

3.32 During the reporting, period LESAS coordinated responses to Ofsted and Department for Education (DfE) safeguarding complaints and enquiries about schools and other educational settings. Ofsted classifies complaints into three categories:

- Category 1: Handled by the Front Door Service
- Category 2: Addressed by the LEAs (qualified social workers)
- Category 3: Provided as information to the Director of Children's Services office and addressed by LESAS or Assistant Director for Education

3.33 Ofsted also contacts the LADO service for other matters, such as pre-inspection data for inspections, settings, and individuals.

3.34 Table 8 reflects LESAS records for this period. There was an increase in complaints by 24%, and this should be understood in the context of a wider national picture of rising parental complaints and increased escalation through external routes, including Ofsted, the DfE and local authorities. Recent national commentary highlighted that schools are reporting more complaints being escalated beyond informal resolution, with contributing factors including increased parental expectations, social media, pressures around SEND provision and a greater willingness to pursue concerns through multiple routes as well as the increased assistance of Artificial Intelligence to help complainants articulate their concerns.

3.35 The increase may also reflect local recording and process factors. LESAS now provides a more centralised point for the recording and handling of Ofsted/DfE complaints and related enquiries, which may mean activity is being captured more consistently than under previous arrangements.

3.36 It is therefore likely the rise reflects a combination of increased external escalation, wider awareness of complaint routes, improved local recording, and the broadening range of enquiries being directed through the service. The increase does not, in itself, indicate all matters met a safeguarding threshold or

required formal action, but does demonstrate continued demand on LESAS capacity and the importance of maintaining clear triage, recording and response processes.

Table 8

Ofsted Category/Complaint type	2024/25	2025/26
1	8	5
2	29	18
3	284	281
Multiple categories	40	48
DfE	22	43
Other Ofsted enquiries	46	166
Total	429	561

Learning from Corporate Complaints

3.37 Four corporate complaints were received during the reporting period. These related to the statutory LADO function. One was from a person of concern who was referred to the LADO, and following the employer's management investigation, substantiated allegations were found. This complaint went to Stage 2 and there was learning for the setting in how they communicated the substantiated finding to the member of staff concerns. This was followed up by the LADO & Education Safeguarding Manager with the setting. The complaint was resolved at Stage 2 as there was no fault with how LESAS managed the allegation.

3.38 One complaint went through the Council's complaint stages 1 and 2 to the Ombudsman and necessitated an apology from KCC for failure to fully communicate the reasons for the decision not to investigate a parent's safeguarding complaint against a school which was an Academy.

3.39 The learning here for LESAS was that communication to the parent in a complaint response by the Assistant Director for Education, which covered some of the LESAS aspects, led to confusion for the parent about KCC's safeguarding roles and responsibilities. The lack of clarity in this response was a point of learning and was recognised as an oversight. In future situations similar to this, LESAS will provide a separate explanation that it is the LADO who determines whether the harm threshold is met against specific allegation of harm against an individual and the type of school it is irrelevant.

3.40 LESAS also received a complaint from another parent who was unhappy with the service provided by a child's school. LESAS undertook many appropriate actions in relation to the situation. The learning from this complaint also was that the communications with the parent had not fully explained all the actions taken. Once this was completed, the complaint quickly resolved. Complaints from parents about schools, where the school are investigating can present difficult dilemmas as the LADO needs to appropriately encourage parents to engage in

the investigations being undertaken by schools and seek information from the school about the actions taken and the outcome.

3.41 Another complaint was raised by a member of the public who felt sympathy for a person referred to the LADO function. LESAS was not able to share any information with the individual who was not entitled to know about the actions taken with the person concerned so this was hard to resolve.

3.42 LESAS also assisted with 1 Member of Parliament enquiry from a constituent about a school and one member of public complaint about a school they attended as a child.

4. Traded Activity

4.1 Table 9 below shows the comparison in LESAS income over the past 2 financial years. The rise in training demand since the 2024 merger demonstrates customers' trust in LESAS, which is further supported by high satisfaction ratings from training evaluations. However, the service remains aware of the importance of regularly reviewing and improving its offers.

Table 9

	2024-25	2025-26
Income from Training and Products	£392.2K	£484.3K
SLIP	£101.9K	£92.9K
Other LESAS commissioned work		£15.2K
TOTAL	£494.1K	£592.4K

Training

4.2 During the reporting period, LESAS continued to deliver a diverse and responsive training programme across Kent's education sector, supporting both statutory safeguarding responsibilities and professional development. The LESAS traded training offer comprises of a core training programme for DSLs in schools and early years settings, bespoke staff safeguarding training and eLearning courses for staff, to meet the education sectors' diverse learning needs.

4.3 During this period, a total of 1,532 learners booked onto LESAS core training courses, with 1,449 learners attending, representing an overall attendance rate of 95%. Of those attending, 1,063 learners (73%) participated in school-focused courses, while 386 learners (27%) attended early years-focused sessions. Early Years practitioners accounted for 28% of all bookings (425 of 1,532).

4.4 This distribution reflects strong engagement from the school sector and highlights the continued need to address access barriers for early years settings.

4.5 In addition to core training, 60 bespoke training sessions were delivered to schools, colleges, early years settings and KCC teams. While this represents a reduction from the previous reporting period of 76, bespoke training continued to provide organisations with tailored safeguarding support designed to meet specific needs, address local priorities and reinforce safeguarding practice in context.

4.6 LESAS saw a continued uptake of its digital training offer, with 694 eLearning courses purchased during the reporting period (2024-25: 749). Of these, 370 (53%) were school-focused and 324 (47%) were Early Years-focused. While overall purchases reduced slightly compared to the previous reporting period, uptake of Early Years eLearning increased from 260 purchases in 2024-25 to 324 in 2025-26, representing a 25% increase. This demonstrates growing demand for flexible and accessible safeguarding learning opportunities within the Early Years sector and reflects the increasing importance of digital training formats across education settings.

4.7 The percentages of participants rating core training as good or outstanding (4 or 5 out of 5) during the reporting period was:

- Quality of content: 97%
- Quality of delivery: 95%
- Achievement of learning outcomes: 98%
- Overall, 96% of ratings across the three evaluation measures were good or outstanding.

4.8 Comments from learners included:

- “Very knowledgeable facilitators and good to have the opportunity to ask questions. Pace was just right.”
- “The nuanced case studies were very helpful as they are reflective of many of the issues we deal with as DSL. Hearing experts talk us through actions and considerations gave me a lot of confidence.”
- “Both [LEA] and [SSO] were approachable, deeply knowledgeable and skilled with their delivery. I could not recommend them more highly.”
- “Detailed, informative, well-paced and clear links to relevant updates/guidance.”
- “By far the best DSL refresher course I have attended. It was excellently delivered by two knowledgeable and experienced people and offered everything I needed in a very relaxed and stress-free way.”
- “The course was extremely well presented. The delivery was brilliant and although there was a lot of information to take in, it was done well with good pace. Thank you”
- “Excellent practitioners delivered a first class training session. Their knowledge and pitch was very good and everything said landed well with the cohort. Best delivery of this type of course to date.”
- “The presenters were fabulous. Really engaging and are clearly experts in their fields. Was highly engaging and informative.”

- “This training was brilliant. The presenters were knowledgeable and able to share the important information. This was my second DSL refresher, and it really helped me understand local processes once again.”
- “Both presenters were very knowledgeable and shared very valid and appreciated support. I feel more confident in my role because of attending the training. Thankyou”

Safeguarding Reviews

4.9 In the reporting period, LESAS conducted 34 safeguarding reviews across education settings, an increase of 2 from the previous year as illustrated in Table 10. While this may appear modest in volume, the figure reflects a strategic focus on capacity building, particularly the upskilling of inexperienced staff in the education safeguarding function. This still required some shadowing due to changes in personnel and for those returning from periods of extended leave.

Table 10

Type of Review undertaken	2024/25	2025/26
Early years safeguarding review	3	3
Online safety review	1	0
School safeguarding review	24	26
Monitoring review	4	2
Bespoke commissioned visit	0	3
Total	32	34

4.10 The reviews were well received by schools and settings, offering valuable insights into safeguarding practice. They were not only compliance checks but also aimed to assess whether children were being safeguarded in the most effective way possible. All the reviews were requested by the settings themselves.

4.11 LESAS ensures each review is thorough, reflective, and contributes to ongoing improvement in safeguarding practice across Kent’s education sector by offering setting specific recommendations. There was some positive feedback on the reviews undertaken. 11 feedback forms were completed, and all graded the experience as 5/5 and something that they would recommend to other settings. One setting noted the cost may be prohibitive for some smaller settings.

4.12 Some of the comments made are as follows;

- “LEA was excellent. She was thorough, considerate and caring. The report was well put together and provided us with excellent feedback”
- “Very open discussions and it felt very supportive throughout. There was no negative 'you should already be doing this' attitude, it was very fair and honest, and we have developed because of it”.

5. Summary and Conclusions

4.13 In this first full year of operation since the merger LESAS demonstrated it was able to modernise and meet its statutory requirements in the context of high levels of demand. The service reorganisation and recruitment were embedded, and the staff group able to respond to the challenging environment. This was aided by the refinements to management systems, and Power BI performance monitoring. Specifically, LESAS demonstrated operational resilience and adaptability throughout this transition, maintaining consistently high standards of safeguarding delivery. Training feedback produces consistently high satisfaction rates (96–100%) across core and bespoke training delivered through the traded arm.

4.14 The implementation of enhanced systems and Power BI dashboards, markedly improved data integrity, throughput, and service efficiency. The establishment of defined Key Performance Indicators and strengthened quality assurance mechanisms reinforced accountability and performance oversight.

4.15 The Service is aware that to replicate another income surplus of the magnitude obtained in 2025-26 will be very difficult, not least because the SLIP activity ceased. Nevertheless, there is confidence in LESAS products that traded activity income can be increased to £500K. Other income streams from HAF commissioned activity around safeguarding will also be cultivated this year so that at least 10K income can be received from this stream.

4.16 As well as considering the LESAS income target, the service plans to comprehensively evaluate the costs of providing training. This will include exploring what profit is being made, identifying where expenditure could be reduced (e.g. venue hire), and examining whether training charges need to be adjusted in line with inflation and other on costs. The service will also explore whether subsidised training can be offered to some settings in a more targeted way, such as the Early Years sector, and how the service can remain relevant as planning for Local Government Reorganisation begins in earnest.

6. Action Plan 2026-2027

Objective	Action	Owner	Timeline	Success indicator
The Service will increase the accessibility of LADO referrals for members of the public by reviewing and streamlining the parental referral process, ensuring at least a 10%	LESAS will implement a simplified and accessible public referral process through the KCC Portal and monitor changes in referral rates.	LADO & Education Safeguarding Manager	September 2026 for implement ation of the portal and March 2027 for 10% increase.	The Public report improved understandin g and accessibility. Documented increase in referral numbers from

increase in parental referrals compared to 2025-26 baseline of 21.				members of the public.
Ensure all LESAS service areas meet or exceed 80% of Key Performance Indicators through 2026-27, with monthly reviews to monitor progress and address any underperformance.	All parts of LESAS will collect and report KPI data, with quarterly management information reviews to identify achievements and areas for development.	LESAS Service Manager	March 2027	KPI targets achieved in all service areas; staff survey demonstrates clear role understanding; staff retention rate is maintained or improved.
The Service will increase the accessibility of the information that it provides to parents and stakeholders on Kent's own website.	Create the LADO webpage on Kent.gov.uk, and review the current privacy notice	LESAS Service Manager	December 2026	LESAS website content will be created with clarity.
Maintain 25% of participation in core safeguarding training from EY settings across all areas.	Maintain and deliver area-based network meetings thrice annually; provide guest speakers and safeguarding updates; deploy area-based support for local training and reviews. Produce a survey and send to early years settings about the time of day and day of the week of DSL network meetings and training courses. Consideration to be given for a twilight core DSL	LESAS Service Manager	March 2027	25% participation in training by EY attendees; expanded safeguarding reviews in EY sector to 5.

	training in the 27/28 academic year.			
Increase traded income to at least £500K total income by 2027.	Review traded activity, training delivery, product development and income reporting to support future planning and ensure the agreed activity programme continues to meet service and income expectations.	Assistant Director for SPSQA, LESAS Service Manager, Senior Business Support Officer	March 2027	£500K income target achieved.
Completion of Quality Assurance (QA) visits to Kent's Family Hub network LESAS will then partake in the phase 2 of the Family Hub Network (QA) programme which is due to start in Winter 26/27	LEA cohort to conduct QA visits using bespoke tools, as part of a multi-agency group of quality assurance colleagues.	LADO and Education Safeguarding Manager	October 2026 – phase 1 completion . Phase 2 will complete in the 2027-8 financial year	All Kent family hubs districts homes receive QA visits; Start for Life Board evaluations reflect learning and impact; settings report improved safeguarding awareness.
Continue shared learning partnership with other local authorities and the National LADO network.	Organise and participate in peer review; address recommendation -s and document outcomes for service improvement.	LADO and Education Safeguarding Manager	December 2026	Peer review completed; action plan implemented ; recognition from National LADO Network maintained.

Information held by KCC is useful, held lawfully, filed appropriately and is accessible when required.	The LADO archive needs to be explored, and a decision made about how to manage / file the items in the archive moving forwards.	LESAS Service Manager and LADO and Education Safeguarding Manager	March 2027	The archive is appropriately filed and no longer exists in its current form.
Updated guidance in accordance with the new National LADO Network handbook is available to the public, stakeholders and LADOs alike.	Create the LADO practice manual including LADO Alerts (internal) and update Allegations Management Guidance (public facing)	LADO and Education Safeguarding Manager	March 2027	Accessible guidance is available.

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From:	**Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills** **Christine McInnes, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education**
To:	Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee
Subject:	**Kent Local Area SEND Strategic Improvement Plan**
Classification:	**Unrestricted**

Future Pathway of Paper: For Information

Summary:

Kent's SEND system has been subject to a substantial programme of improvement which has been consistently monitored by sustained external scrutiny. A joint Ofsted/CQC inspection in 2019 identified nine areas of significant weakness. When inspectors revisited in 2022, they found that sufficient progress had not been made in any of the nine areas. A Department for Education Improvement Notice followed in 2023 and Kent, with NHS Kent and Medway and wider partners, implemented an Accelerated Progress Plan. Following evidence of progress under a new leadership team, the Improvement Notice was lifted in August 2024.

The latest area SEND inspection took place between 22 June and 10 July 2026, with findings published on 18 September. Inspectors found that arrangements led to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND, identifying six distinct areas of weakness. This was the middle of the three possible inspection outcomes: the report acknowledged meaningful improvements while identifying important weaknesses that remain. The findings are therefore neither a return to the historic position nor a basis for complacency. They provide the evidence for the next phase of improvement, against a backdrop of meaningful improvements being delivered in the system for the first time in many years.

The proposed 2026–2029 Strategic Improvement Plan responds to six areas identified by inspectors: understanding the impact of services; improving EHC plans and annual reviews; communication, engagement and co-production; reducing variation across Kent; preparation for adulthood; and ensuring improvements are embedded and consistently experienced. These areas provide a coherent structure for collective action across education, health and care.

The strategic direction has been developed jointly by local area partners and informed by inspection evidence and established engagement with families and professionals. A public consultation on the draft plan, alongside discussions with partner organisations and community groups, has provided routes for further scrutiny. The six inspection priorities provide the central organising framework for the agreed approach.

Recommendation(s):

Members note the history of local area SEND improvement in Kent and the findings of the 2026 Ofsted/CQC inspection that underpin the proposed Strategic Improvement Plan.

Members note the six required strategic areas for improvement as the basis for the partnership's work over 2026–2029.

Members recognise the role of engagement and co-production in shaping the partnership's direction and endorse continued involvement of children, young people, families, schools and partners in implementation and scrutiny.

Members note the Kent Local Area SEND Strategic Improvement Plan 2026–2029 as the shared strategic framework for the next phase of improvement.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report presents the rationale and requirements for the Kent Local Area SEND Strategic Improvement Plan 2026–2029. It explains the historical context of SEND improvement in Kent, the findings of the most recent Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection, the development of the proposed plan, the engagement undertaken and the arrangements through which the partnership intends to deliver and account for improvement.

1.2 The plan is a local area partnership response. Its success depends on coordinated action across education, health and care, with children, young people and their families at the centre of decisions. The purpose of Member engagement is prepare KCC for its part in this shared direction, empowering the necessary monitoring and scrutiny to ensure improvements are felt consistently across Kent.

1.3 The plan brings together the learning from successive inspections, partnership improvement activity and engagement with families, young people and practitioners.

2. Kent's SEND history and the improvement journey

2.1 The local area context

SEND support is delivered through a network of schools, early years settings, colleges, health services, social care services, the local authority and community organisations. Families experience these arrangements as one system, even where individual services have different statutory functions and governance. Kent's size and geographic diversity add complexity to the task of providing accessible, consistent support. A shared strategic approach is

essential to ensure that the quality of help a child receives is not determined by where they live, which service they first approach or how successfully their family can navigate the system.

2.2 The Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice established expectations for coordinated planning and support across education, health and care, including the involvement of children, young people and families in decisions affecting them. The partnership's responsibility is not simply to operate separate services, but to make those arrangements work together effectively.

3. Inspection and the improvement journey

3.1 Kent's current strategic direction must be understood in the context of successive Ofsted and CQC inspections and the improvement activity that followed. The 2019 joint inspection identified nine areas of significant weakness in the local area's SEND arrangements. These were wide ranging, systemic, structural failings, identifying a lack of basic competencies across the entire statutory function. They identified poor leadership, partnership working, planning, monitoring, commissioning, communication, co-production, a lack of pupil voice and widespread failure to deliver statutory duties. It showed a system universally failing, with no coherent plan or capacity to change. Those findings, published on 29 March 2019, led to a Written Statement of Action setting out the changes required of the council and its health partners.

3.2 In September 2022, Ofsted and the CQC revisited Kent to assess progress against the nine areas. Their findings, published in November 2022, concluded that sufficient progress had not been made in any of them. This was a critical point in the improvement journey. It demonstrated that the existing approach had not delivered the pace and consistency of change required and that stronger collective leadership, accountability and delivery had failed to be implemented. It also meant that governance arrangements and scrutiny during that period were insufficient to identify that necessary actions were not being taken. Failure remained fully entrenched and little to nothing had been done to address it.

3.3 In March 2023 the Department for Education issued an Improvement Notice. Kent County Council and NHS Kent and Medway subsequently developed an Accelerated Progress Plan, published in August 2023. During this period, a new leadership team took responsibility for addressing these historic and ongoing failures. The plan was subject to twice yearly monitoring by the Department for Education and NHS England and focused the partnership on addressing the longstanding areas of weakness. This period strengthened the emphasis on joint accountability, more disciplined oversight and evidence of progress.

3.4 In August 2024 the Improvement Notice was lifted following evidence of improvement. This was a significant milestone and reflected the work undertaken across the local area partnership. It did not mean that all families were experiencing timely and effective support, or that the need for

improvement had ended. Rather, it marked progress in tackling the historic weaknesses and created an opportunity to embed changes more consistently. It identified that historic failures in meaningfully affecting change were not being repeated, even if considerable improvement was still required.

3.5 Ofsted and the CQC inspected Kent again between 22 June and 10 July 2026. The inspection report, published on 18 September 2026, concluded that the local area partnership arrangements led to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Inspectors recognised progress in the quality of newer education, health and care plans, more inclusive approaches in schools, earlier help for some children and young people, stronger partnership working and a greater focus on meeting needs without waiting for a diagnosis. The Dynamic Support Register was identified as a particularly strong example of effective multi-agency working. This is a mechanism which helps identify and support children and young people who are at risk of admission to hospital or placement breakdown.

3.6 The same inspection was clear that progress was not yet experienced consistently. Areas requiring further attention included delays in accessing some services; variation in support and outcomes across the county; communication with families; support while awaiting specialist assessments; the quality, timeliness and oversight of EHC plans and annual reviews; preparation for adulthood; and leaders' understanding of the impact of services on children and young people. These areas mirrored the local areas self assessment, which was required and shared as a part of the inspection. The final report groups these into six areas of weakness.

3.7 While historic areas of weakness identified systemic failures and incoherent plans to address them, these new areas of focus are discrete and already have examples of emergent good practice. This creates a positive environment for further improvements to be made. These six are also distinct from the previous nine areas of weakness, highlighting that the historic systemic failures have been addressed sufficiently to no longer specific monitoring

3.8 The inspection therefore establishes both the case for continued improvement and the direction of travel. It confirms that the local area did not have areas of weakness that had not yet been identified, providing assurance that historic failures are not being repeated by new leadership group and indicating much improved governance and oversight. Kent has made progress from the position identified in earlier inspections, but there remains a gap between improvements in processes or arrangements and the reliable, positive experience of every child and family. The Strategic Improvement Plan is designed to close that gap further.

3.9 Members will also be aware that significant national SEND Reforms have been initiated following governments Education White paper being released in February 2026. While those reforms are subject to their own monitoring and related cabinet papers, both plans have been developed with knowledge of each other, ensuring overlapping priorities are do not create duplication of effort, or gaps. While both areas will be reported separately, references to

corresponding workstreams will be included wherever this aids comprehension.

4. Transition to a new strategic phase

4.1 The Department for Education has confirmed that, following inspection under the newer framework, the additional monitoring arrangements associated with the former Improvement Notice, including the Accelerated Progress Plan, will come to a close. The proposed Local Area Strategic Improvement Plan provides the framework for the next phase. It is not a replacement for the partnership's statutory responsibilities, nor a declaration that existing improvement activity is over. It brings forward the learning from the historic improvement programme and aligns future action to the six areas identified in the 2026 inspection.

4.2 This shift matters for Members because it moves the emphasis from responding to a historic list of weaknesses towards demonstrating that children, young people and families experience sustained improvement. The partnership will need to show not only that actions have been completed but also that support is timely, effective, joined up and equitable across Kent. These requirements will therefore form the basis of the majority of our next round of monitoring and scrutiny. This plan is intended to cover the next three years' worth of development activity and should prepare the local area for its next inspection at the end of that timeframe.

5. Why the Strategic Improvement Plan is needed

5.1 The central issue for the plan to address is the continuing inconsistency identified by inspectors. The evidence indicates that a growing number of children, young people and families are benefiting from improvements, but others still face barriers, delays or uneven provision. The partnership therefore needs a shared framework that identifies the changes required across the whole system to propagate emergent good practice and the outcomes against which success will be judged.

5.2 A local area plan also addresses the risk of fragmented action. Education, health and care partners hold different responsibilities, but many of the issues highlighted in the inspection cut across organisational boundaries. Improving the quality of an EHC plan, for example, depends on effective contributions from different professionals, clear communication with families and arrangements to deliver and review the support described. A strategic plan makes these interdependencies visible and provides a common basis for prioritisation and accountability.

5.3 The plan is also needed to sustain momentum. The lifting of the Improvement Notice in 2024 recognised progress was finally being made. The 2026 inspection showed that progress must now be embedded more consistently. A multi-year strategic framework enables the partnership to focus on the enduring changes needed in practice, culture, commissioning, information and leadership rather than relying solely on short-term improvement activity.

6. How the plan has been developed

6.1 Following publication of the 2026 inspection findings, Kent County Council, NHS Kent and Medway and wider education, health and care partners reviewed the identified areas for improvement and developed a draft Local Area Strategic Improvement Plan. Ofsted requirements meant that this plan needed to be developed and published with 50 days of the inspection report being made public. The created a deadline of 20 November 2026. The plan is a jointly developed response to the six inspection areas, intended to strengthen support across the SEND system and help children, young people and families receive the right support at the right time.

6.2 The starting point has been the external inspection evidence, which draws on service information, case records, the experiences of children and young people and feedback from families and professionals. This provides a common evidence base across organisations and reduces the risk that priorities are determined only by the perspective of one service. The six areas identified by inspectors form the core of the proposed plan, linking the partnership's actions to an independently assessed set of needs.

6.3 The partnership opened the draft to wider co-production opportunities and engagement, recognising that inspection findings alone cannot fully describe the experience of navigating services. Consultation and professional dialogue offered opportunities to test the relevance, clarity and ambition of the proposed priorities against lived experience and practical delivery considerations.

6.4 The resulting strategic framework connects the inspection's six areas for improvement with the partnership's wider ambition to improve consistency, quality and outcomes. It establishes a shared direction for education, health and care, with ongoing co-production and transparent reporting forming essential parts of delivery.

7. Engagement and co-production

7.1 Engagement on the draft plan

While the required timescales to produce the plan created a challenging environment, all key partners were clear that the plan needed to be developed collectively. The local area partnership has invited views on the draft Strategic Improvement Plan from parents and carers; children and young people; schools, colleges and early years settings; health organisations; social care practitioners and providers; voluntary and community sector organisations; and other partners involved in supporting children and young people with SEND. In addition to this consultation activity, similar engagement with education, health and care professionals, partner organisations and community groups through workshops, engagement events and discussions have taken place.

7.2 Consultation activity took place until 2 November 2026, alongside a separate opportunity for parent and carer feedback promoted by Kent PACT. These

routes complemented wider engagement with education, health and care partners. Together, they reflect the importance of testing the partnership's direction with both people who use services and those responsible for providing them.

7.3 The consultation activity is particularly significant given the inspection finding that communication, engagement and co-production require further improvement. The manner in which the plan is developed must demonstrate the behaviours the partnership intends to embed: openness about challenges, a willingness to listen and a clear explanation of how views affect decisions.

7.4 Learning from earlier family engagement

Kent's recent engagement with Kent PACT during the development of the government requested SEND Reform Plan provides relevant context about families' experiences. Parents and carers raised the importance of earlier help, improved communication and trust, clearer accountability, stronger support in mainstream settings, better access to emotional wellbeing and mental health support, more accessible information and stronger preparation for adulthood. While these findings relate to the wider SEND reform work they nevertheless reinforce why the six inspection areas matter to families.

7.5 That earlier feedback demonstrates the importance of distinguishing between changes within the control of the local area partnership and those affected by national legislation, funding or workforce pressures. Being clear about this distinction is part of rebuilding confidence. Families need to understand what the partnership has committed to do, what depends on other decisions and how progress will be reported.

7.6 Published feedback from parents and carers during Kent's wider SEND reform work has emphasised earlier support, more reliable communication, stronger mainstream inclusion, better transitions and clearer accountability. These concerns align closely with the areas identified by inspectors and reinforce the importance of the six strategic priorities. The partnership's ongoing approach must make the link between what people say, the decisions taken and the difference made visible.

8. The six areas for strategic improvement

8.1 The six identified areas of weakness and initial development priorities are as follows:

8.2 Understanding the impact of services and interventions

The first area is to strengthen leaders' understanding of the impact of services and interventions on the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND. This requires the partnership to look beyond volumes of activity or the completion of actions. Leaders need to understand whether support is making a difference, for whom, and where outcomes remain weaker. Performance information must be considered alongside feedback

from children, young people and families so that improvement is measured in ways that reflect their experiences.

8.3 Improving EHC plans and annual reviews

The second area focuses on the quality, timeliness and oversight of education, health and care plans and annual reviews. Inspectors recognised improvements in newer EHC plans but also identified continuing concerns, particularly in relation to consistency and review arrangements. The strategic priority is therefore not simply to improve administrative processes, but expand recent improvements in quality assurance to ensure that plans remain accurate, coordinated and useful in securing appropriate support as needs change.

8.4 Communication, engagement and co-production

The third area strengthens communication, engagement and co-production with children, young people, families and education providers. Effective communication is central to confidence in the SEND system. Families need timely, clear information about decisions and next steps, and meaningful opportunities to influence support and service improvement. Co-production must be reflected in the way decisions are made, not limited to consultation exercises.

8.5 Reducing variation across Kent

The fourth area is to reduce variation and improve consistency of support across the county. The inspection identified differences in experiences and outcomes, including between those who have benefited from more recent improvements and those who have been in the SEND system for longer. A countywide approach must therefore identify where variation exists, understand its causes and respond in ways that improve equity without overlooking the needs of individual communities.

8.6 Preparation for adulthood

The fifth area is to improve preparation for adulthood and help more young people, including those receiving SEN support, to achieve positive next steps into education, employment and independent living. Preparation for adulthood should be a continuing consideration rather than a late-stage transition exercise. Better coordination between education, health, care and other partners is needed to support young people’s aspirations and ensure that planning is timely and purposeful.

8.7 Embedding improvement consistently

The sixth area is to ensure that improvements are embedded and experienced consistently by children, young people and families. This is the overarching test of the plan. The partnership must demonstrate that better practice is sustained over time and across different services and localities, rather than depending on isolated examples or short-term initiatives. The

focus must remain on reliable improvement in the day-to-day experience of support.

9. Delivery, governance and accountability

9.1 The Strategic Improvement Plan requires coordinated delivery across the local area partnership. Kent County Council, NHS Kent and Medway, education providers and other partners each have a role in translating the agreed priorities into changes in practice. Shared strategic ownership is important because the challenges identified through inspection cannot be addressed effectively by any one organisation acting alone.

9.2 The six improvement areas are supported by a delivery framework that makes responsibilities, milestones and dependencies clear. The partnership's existing governance and assurance arrangements will provide local and strategic partner oversight of progress, identify barriers and enable timely escalation where action is not delivering the intended effect. This will be particularly important where improvements rely on contributions from more than one organisation.

9.3 Members' oversight will focus on whether the partnership is making a measurable difference. Reporting should distinguish progress in completing actions from changes in quality, timeliness, consistency and outcomes. It should also be open about areas where progress is slower than expected and explain the corrective action being taken. Transparent reporting will be important in maintaining public confidence and demonstrating that the plan is an active programme of improvement rather than a statement of intention.

9.4 Children, young people and families will continue to have opportunities to challenge and shape delivery. The inspection's emphasis on communication and co-production means that ongoing involvement is itself an important measure of whether the partnership is changing how it works.

10. Risks and considerations for Members

10.1 The principal risk is that the partnership delivers planned activity without achieving consistent improvements in experience and outcomes. The 2026 inspection shows why this distinction matters. A credible delivery and assurance framework will therefore need to combine performance measures, quality assurance and direct feedback from children, young people and families.

10.2 A further risk is that different organisations or localities progress at different rates. This could perpetuate the variation identified by inspectors. Strong partnership oversight, shared expectations and attention to differences across Kent will be necessary to reduce this risk. The Kent Local Area System Leadership board will be integral in maintaining that oversight.

10.3 Capacity and workforce pressures may also affect the pace of delivery, particularly where access to specialist services is constrained. Kent has previously acknowledged that national shortages in some specialist

professions influence local provision. The plan will need to be implemented with realistic assumptions about capacity, while making the most effective use of existing expertise and partnership working.

10.4 Formal financial, legal, equality and constitutional implications will need to be addressed through the council's established decision process. Agreement of the strategic direction does not in itself authorise additional expenditure or change statutory responsibilities; any specific proposals requiring separate approvals must follow the appropriate routes.

11 Conclusion

11.1 The Kent Local Area's SEND improvement journey has been shaped by serious historical inspection findings, a period of accelerated improvement and more recent recognition of progress alongside continuing inconsistency. The 2026 Ofsted/CQC inspection makes clear that the partnership has addressed historic failures, but has more to do to ensure that every child and family benefits from effective, joined-up support.

11.2 The Local Area Strategic Improvement Plan provides the framework for that next phase. It provides a shared direction across education, health and care, and directly reflects the six areas identified through inspection and places sustained impact at the centre of the partnership's ambitions. Members are asked to support that direction and ensure that final approval takes full account of consultation, with clear accountability for delivery and outcomes.

12 Recommendations

Members note the history of local area SEND improvement in Kent and the findings of the 2026 Ofsted/CQC inspection that underpin the proposed Strategic Improvement Plan.

Members note the six required strategic areas for improvement as the basis for the partnership's work over 2026–2029.

Members recognise the role of engagement and co-production in shaping the partnership's direction and endorse continued involvement of children, young people, families, schools and partners in implementation and scrutiny.

Members note the Kent Local Area SEND Strategic Improvement Plan 2026–2029 as the shared strategic framework for the next phase of improvement.

13. Background Documents

Kent County Council, "SEND Ofsted and CQC inspections" (updated 18 September 2026): https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/listening-to-your-voice-and-taking-action/send-ofsted-and-cqc-inspections

Ofsted, Kent County Council inspection reports, including the 2019, 2022 and 2026 SEND reports: https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80476

Kent County Council, “SEND Local Area Strategic Improvement Plan” (draft and consultation): https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/service-specific-policies/education-policies/send-strategies-and-policies/send-local-area-strategic-improvement-plan

Kent PACT, “Draft Local Area Strategic Plan Kent” (2026–2029 feedback): https://kentpactnew2022.co.uk/draft-local-area-strategic-plan-kent/

Kent County Council, “Working with parents and carers to shape Kent’s SEND Reform Plan” (May 2026): https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/listening-to-your-voice-and-taking-action/share-your-views-about-the-send-service/how-your-feedback-improves-send-services/working-with-parents-and-carers-to-shape-kents-send-reform-plan

14. Contact Details

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From: **Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

Christine McInnes, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education

To: Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee

Subject: **Review of Post 16 Home to School transport policy including post 19**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Future Pathway of Paper: For Information

Summary:

At its meeting on 16 July 2026, Kent County Council agreed a motion requesting that the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills review the implementation and impact of the Council's post-16 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) transport policy following its first term of operation.

The preceding key decision taken by the Council on 15 July 2025 revised the way in which transport support is provided for Post-16 and post-19 learners with SEND. In reaching that decision, the Council determined that, in most cases, the default transport offer provided to these learners would be by way of a Personal Transport Budget or mileage payment, instead of the previous approach of providing all learners with access to a KCC organised vehicle. Accordingly, this review considers whether learners are receiving appropriate support as defined within the revised policy framework, rather than assessing arrangements against the previous policy.

The motion requested that the review consider whether eligible post-16 young people with SEND are receiving appropriate support to access education. It also requested information about the impact on young people offered a Personal Transport Budget (PTB), including any subsequent reviews or appeals, available attendance information, concerns raised by families, the consideration of individual circumstances, and the clarity of the review and appeal arrangements.

This report provides the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee with the outcome of the review undertaken in response to that motion. It sets out the available information regarding decisions made under the current policy, the operation of PTBs, the Council's review and appeal processes, and the themes emerging from representations, reviews and appeals during the first term of implementation.

The report also identifies actions taken, or proposed, to ensure that information provided to families is clear, that individual circumstances continue to be

appropriately considered and that the policy and associated operational arrangements support eligible young people to access their educational provision.

Recommendation(s): The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the report.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report provides Members with an update on the implementation and impact of Kent County Council's Post-16 Transport Policy Statement for learners of sixth form age and adult learners, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), following the first term of operation under the revised arrangements introduced for the 2026/27 academic year. As such, any findings are only indicative as transport activity will continue to develop through the full academic year.

1.2 The Post-16 Transport Policy Statement (Appendix A) sets out how KCC will fulfil its statutory responsibilities in relation to transport assistance for young people of sixth form age and adult learners, including those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The policy explains the support available, the eligibility criteria applied, and the arrangements through which assistance will be provided to facilitate eligible young people to access education and training.

1.3 Unlike statutory home to school transport for children aged 4 to 16, Local Authorities do not have a general obligation to provide free or subsidised post 16 travel support in the same way as for pupils aged 4 to 16, but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport, or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training. This includes support for 19+ learners who started their course before their 19th birthday.

1.4 Councils also have a duty to make such arrangements as they consider necessary for the provision of transport and otherwise in respect of:

- Adult learners (i.e. those aged 19 or over, whose course started after their 19th birthday) for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at local authority maintained or assisted Further or Higher Education institutions or institutions within the Further Education sector; and
- Adult learners with an EHCP (which can be maintained up until the age of 25) for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at institutions where they are receiving education and training outside the Further and Higher Education sectors, where the council has secured the provision of education or training at the institution and the provision of boarding accommodation in connection with that education or training.

1.5 The revised Post-16 Transport Policy, implemented from September 2026, introduced:

- Personal Transport Budgets (PTBs) as KCC's default offer to learners who qualify for additional support, to facilitate their travel to their place of education. This meant a KCC organised vehicle would only be provided in exceptional circumstances, rather than to the majority of pupils that qualify for additional support.
- Two linked changes to the support provided to adult learners:

  i. Adult Learners would be expected to apply for support via the Government funded 16 to 19 Bursary Fund from their learning provider before approaching KCC for any additional support. The 16 to 19 Bursary fund is limited national funding provided to learning providers to support a range of needs including transport.

  ii. Where KCC assessed that any support provided to students via the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund was insufficient to facilitate a student's attendance at school, college or training, consideration would be given to support in the form of a mileage payment. KCC would offer a mileage payment, as standard. Under the proposed policy, KCC would generally no longer make transport arrangements for individuals to whom it provides support.

1.6 A PTB is a payment between £1,700 and £4,700 per annum, designed to support parents and young people in making their own personal arrangements to get to and from their school, college or training provider. It is paid on a pro rata monthly basis. Applicants are not limited in how they make use of the PTB to support travel, with the exception that funds cannot be used to purchase an alternative KCC pass or scheme for the young person, as these are already subsidised by KCC.

1.7 Recognising that the circumstances of young people with SEND vary considerably, the policy also includes provisions enabling individual circumstances to be considered where families believe that the standard PTB does not enable safe and appropriate access to education. The policy therefore includes review and appeal arrangements through which additional evidence can be considered and alternative support may be agreed where appropriate.

1.8 The 2026/27 Post 16 Transport Policy was implemented following a full consultation between January and March 2025. On conclusion of the consultation a report was presented to CYPE Cabinet committee on 15 July (Appendix B). A key consideration for members at that meeting was the Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix C). The report made clear to members that the EQIA identified that the learners most likely to be affected by the proposed Post-16 Transport Policy changes would be students with SEND, including those with EHCPs, together with their families and carers, as they represent the majority of learners currently receiving enhanced transport support.

1.9 The EQIA highlighted a number of potentials, unavoidable adverse impacts, including:

- The level of transport support available through a Personal Transport Budget (PTB) or mileage payment may not be sufficient to replicate existing KCC-arranged transport arrangements.
- Families may be required to take a more active role in arranging and managing transport, increasing the complexity of travel arrangements.
- Parents and carers may need to adjust their working patterns, reduce working hours, or make changes to other caring and family commitments in order to transport their child to and from their place of learning.
- Learners may experience longer journey times or be required to travel further, particularly where public transport forms part of the journey.
- Some learners may have reduced access to their preferred school, college, or training provider, potentially impacting equality of opportunity.
- There is a risk that difficulties in making suitable transport arrangements could negatively affect attendance and participation in education.
- In some cases, learners may cease to engage in education altogether if appropriate travel arrangements cannot be secured.
- The EQIA found that adult learners (aged 19+) may be particularly affected, as they generally travel longer distances and may therefore face greater challenges in accessing their place of learning.

1.10 The EQIA identified that it would not be possible to fully mitigate against these risks, meaning that they were both highly likely to occur and that officers would then have no alternative options available to them to directly address those impacts. There was therefore sufficient information available at the time to understand that policy changes would have a negative impact on individual pupils and their families. However, the report outlined why the decision was still necessary and how the consequences of inaction would have a greater detrimental impact overall on Kent residents.

1.11 The EQIA also noted that the proposals could support greater independence for young people through increased use of Personal Transport Budgets and earlier access to independent travel training, while retaining council-organised transport in exceptional circumstances.

1.12 The report explained that KCC had seen a 75% increase in the number of pupils seeking support under this policy in the preceding 6 years, while average costs rose 40% over the same period. With no direct statutory funding for this area of support, this resulted in an annual cost to local tax payers of around £10m.

1.13 The report outlined that the proposed changes sought to promote independence, rebalance KCC's offer to learners of sixth form age and adult learners and provide financial sustainability. KCC's previous Post 16 and 19 transport offer remained one of the most generous in the country, but without attention, was jeopardising its ability to support all post 16 learners, particularly those making use of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver (K16+TS),which

includes all mainstream learners and the majority of those with SEND and EHCPs.

1.14 Discounted alternatives included increasing the cost of the K16+TS from £600 to £1,360, effectively removing all subsidy and ending the scheme for 6,625 learners. The only other alternative was increasing the parental contribution for vehicle users from £600 to £4,850 per annum. While this would still reflect a 40% subsidy on the average cost of travel for those learners, it was assessed that this would have a greater detrimental impact that transition to a PTB.

1.15 Consultees were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the two proposals put forward:

- 34% agree with providing a Personal Transport Budget to most learners who qualify for additional support from KCC, to facilitate their travel to their place of education; 56% disagree. Strength of disagreement is higher than strength of agreement, with 45% strongly disagreeing and 17% strongly agreeing.

- 24% agree with the expectation that students aged 19+ apply for a discretionary bursary from their learning provider to facilitate their travel to and from their school or college, 63% disagree. Strength of disagreement is higher than strength of agreement, with 49% strongly disagreeing and 14% strongly agreeing.

1.16 Having considered the report and associated documents members of CYPE Cabinet Committee endorsed the proposed decision.

1.17 Following formal decision by the Cabinet Member of Education and Skills to implement the new policy, no call in to Scrutiny was lodged. As a result, KCC's formal policy position identified that its new default transport offer constituted appropriate support to access education.

1.18 Officers therefore undertook the necessary arrangements to implement the policy for the 2026/27 academic year.

1.19 On 15 July 2026, County Council agreed a motion requesting that the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills review the implementation of the Post-16 SEND Transport Policy following the first term of operation. The motion requested:

1. Review the implementation of the council's post-16 SEND transport policy following the first term of operation, to ensure that eligible post-16 young people with SEND receive appropriate support to access education.

2. Collate and report on information to better assess and explain the true impact of KCC's post-16 transport policy following the first term of operation, including:

    a. Among young people who applied for and were offered a Personal Transport Budget but subsequently sought a review or appeal of a transport decision, information on attendance outcomes, where available.

    b. Whether any concerns relating to Personal Transport Budgets have been raised by affected families, and how individual circumstances have been considered through the Council's review and appeals processes.

3. Review the appeal and right of review arrangements for families who can show that the fixed Personal Transport budget does not meet the reasonable cost of safe transport to make it as clear and simple as possible.

4. Review all post-16 SEND transport decisions already made under the current model, in relation to the application and impact of the existing policy and report the findings including any emerging themes arising from reviews and appeals to the relevant Cabinet Committee.

5. Report back to the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee, no later than 17 November 2026, on the action taken on points above. (After this motion, the 17 November 2026 Cabinet Committee was moved to 26 November, however, papers were circulated to members of the committee before the initial deadline)

1.20 This report responds to that motion and provides Members with a review of the implementation of the revised policy, the operation of Personal Transport Budgets, the issues raised by families during the first term of operation, the outcomes of reviews and appeals, and any actions identified to improve the clarity and accessibility of the arrangements for families and young people.

2. Early operational delivery

2.1 The revised Post-16 Transport Policy has now been operational for all related applications for transport support required from the start of the 2026/27 academic year and is therefore moving from implementation into the early stages of delivery and monitoring.

2.2 Since September, transport arrangements have been delivered in accordance with the Post 16 Transport policy, with all new applications assessed against the revised eligibility criteria and framework. The policy changes were implemented as planned, with officers communicating the revised arrangements to families no fewer than three times, in advance of the start of the academic year, in addition to a county wide poster and social media

campaign. In addition, a number of engagement events with learning providers and transport operators took place to support preparation for the expected changes.

2.3 The first few weeks of the academic year have provided an initial opportunity to assess the operational impact of the policy. As with any significant policy change, there has been enquiry and challenge from some families affected by the revised arrangements. However, officers have continued to provide information, guidance and support to applicants, ensuring that individual circumstances are considered in line with the adopted policy and statutory responsibilities.

2.4 All on time applications were assessed and implemented before the start of the academic year. At this early stage, the policy is operating as intended and has enabled the Council to apply a more consistent and equitable approach to the assessment of post-16 transport assistance. Decision-making has been undertaken in accordance with the approved policy, with appropriate routes for review and appeal remaining available to all applicants who are dissatisfied with a decision. It should be noted that this operational assessment is wholly distinct from whether or not there is agreement around the aims of the new policy. Significant disagreement remains around whether or not the offered transport support is suitable, particularly by those who received more generous non-statutory support historically, but this does not mean that the policy is not being applied as expected. These other impacts are assessed separately below.

2.5 Officers are continuing to monitor application volumes, transport provision, customer feedback, appeals activity and financial impacts arising from the policy change. It is recognised that September and October traditionally represent the period of highest demand and greatest operational activity within the service. Consequently, a full assessment of the longer-term impact of the policy will require further monitoring throughout the academic year.

3. Operational activity

Post 16 only	2025/2026 Total		2026/2027 by end Oct	
Applications	1269		1274	
Cash Allowance	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
PTBs	172	13.6%	812	63.7%
Hired Transport	1067	84.1%	345	27.1%
Declined	30	2.4%	117	9.2%
Stage 1 Review Heard	Not held	Not Held	Not Held	Not Held
Stage 1 Review Upheld	Not Held	Not Held	Not Held	Not Held
Stage 1 % Upheld	Not Held		Not Held	
Stage 2 Appeals Heard	5	0.39%	66	5.18%
Stage 2 Appeals Upheld	2	0.16%	29	2.28%
Stage 1 % Upheld	00.0%		0.00%	

Post 19 only	2025/2026 Total		2026/2027 by end Oct	
Applications	637		613	
Cash Allowances	0	0.0%	28	4.6%
PTBs	92	14.4%	0	0.0%
Hired Transport	409	64.2%	270	44.0%
Declined	136	21.4%	315	51.4%
Stage 1 Review Heard	Not Held	Not Held	Not Held	Not Held
Stage 1 Review Upheld	Not Held	Not Held	Not Held	Not Held
Stage 1 % Upheld	Not Held		Not Held	
Stage 2 Appeals Heard	1	0.16%	27	4.40%
Stage 2 Appeals Upheld	0	0.00%	17	2.77%
Stage 1 % Upheld	0.0%		00.0%	

Combined	2025/2026 Total		2026/2027 by end Oct	
Applications	1906	0	1887	0
Cash Allowances	0	0.0%	28	1.5%
PTBs	264	13.9%	812	43.0%
Hired Transport	1476	77.4%	615	32.6%
Declined	166	8.7%	432	22.9%
Stage 1 Review Heard	Not held	Not held	495	25.97%
Stage 1 Review Upheld	Not Held	Not held	257	13.48%
Stage 1 % Upheld	Not Held		51.9%	
Stage 2 Appeals Heard	6	0.31%	93	4.93%
Stage 2 Appeals Upheld	2	0.10%	46	2.44%
Stage 1 % Upheld	0.00%		49.5%	

3.1 Whilst overall application volumes have remained broadly consistent, the data indicates that implementation of the revised Post-16 Transport Policy has largely resulted in the outcomes anticipated at the time the policy was approved.

3.2 For Post-16 learners, application numbers have remained stable, suggesting that demand for education transport support has not been adversely affected by the changes. Preparatory analysis did not anticipate any significant changes in the proportion of cases receiving support compared to previous years, as eligibility criteria did not change for this group. As such, the increased proportion of cases that were refused was not anticipated. Without access to historic data, it is not possible to identify which year's outcome is closer to a "normal" outcome. However, the similar proportion of stage 2 appeals being upheld compared to previous years suggests that officers have not been making disproportionately strict decisions, as this appeal stage is wholly member led and does not appear to be compensating for inaccurate earlier decision making. Further analysis will be undertaken as available data grows, to better understand the factors contributing to this trend and whether it reflects changes in applicant circumstances, eligibility, or other external influences, or whether the previous year's figures were abnormally low.

3.3 The most significant changes have been seen within the Post-19 cohort. As the revised policy introduced new eligibility criteria for adult learners, a reduction in the number of learners qualifying for transport support was anticipated. The data indicates that this has occurred, with fewer Post-19 learners receiving funded transport assistance and this reflects the intended effect of the policy rather than an unforeseen consequence.

3.4 Throughout the early delivery, there has been repeated suggestion that KCC had implemented a blanket policy to refuse vehicle based transport support to all learners. These suggestions are wholly undermined by the available evidence. Overall, 32.6% of learners continue to receive a KCC provided vehicle, which likely constitutes a significantly higher proportion of learners than would constitute "exceptional". Vehicle based support has been provided at all three stages the process (application, review and appeal), which also clearly shows a balance between officer and member duties.

3.4 As expected, implementation of the revised policy resulted in an increase in stage 1 reviews, stage 2 appeals and overall challenges to transport decisions as families and learners adapted to the new arrangements. (Further information about how these processes have been reviewed can be found in the following section).

3.5 Historically stage 1 review outcome data has not been collected, so it is not possible to compare this directly, although officers can anecdotally confirm a significant increase compared to historic trends. Similarly, this year's data collection did not allow for distinction between Post 16 and Post 19 cases, but this will be addressed as the system matures.

3.6 Aas an overall cohort, 25.97% of cases requested a stage 1 review. This was considerably lower than anticipated, where as much as 100% of refusals

could have resulted in a review and/or appeal request. Officers anticipated something closer to 50% of all cases would seek review. These cases are either where transport support was fully declined, or where applicants did not feel the provided support was sufficient for their needs. 51.9% of those stage 1 reviews resulted in a changed outcome, which accounts for 13.48% of the total number of applications .

3.7 More detailed historic data is available to allow comparison of the proportion of Stage 2 member led appeals. While overall number are low, so do not provide a strong basis for comparison, it can been seen that proportionally, similar volumes of stage 2 cases were upheld or declined compared to last year. This suggests that transport eligibility decisions continue to be applied consistently and appropriately. The data does not indicate that decisions are being made more restrictively than intended, and appeal outcomes provide assurance that the policy is operating as expected. It should be noted that only 4.93% of cases progressed to stage 2. This again is significantly lower than anticipated, with only 2.44% applications receiving support through stage 2 appeal.

4. Right of appeal process

4.1 Officers were asked to review the transport appeals arrangements to ensure they remain robust, transparent and compliant with statutory guidance. Kent County Council continues to operate the two-stage appeals process as set out in the DFE statutory guidance, providing applicants with the opportunity for both an officer review and, where appropriate, consideration by the Members of the Regulation Committee Appeal Panel.

4.2 The appeals framework plays an important role in ensuring that individual circumstances are fully considered alongside the application of policy. In addition to reviewing whether eligibility criteria have been applied correctly, the process allows for the consideration of exceptional personal, family and educational circumstances that may not be fully captured within the initial application.

4.3 As evidenced by the data in the previous section, where it was clear from a child's EHCP and other available, officers made the proactive decision to provide learners with access to a KCC organised vehicle, without the need for further review. Where such evidence was not immediately available, families were offered the policy's expected default offer of a PTB or milage payment. Stage 1 review and stage 2 appeal data shows that where cases were further reviewed, access to vehicles continued to be offered where there was sufficient evidence of need.

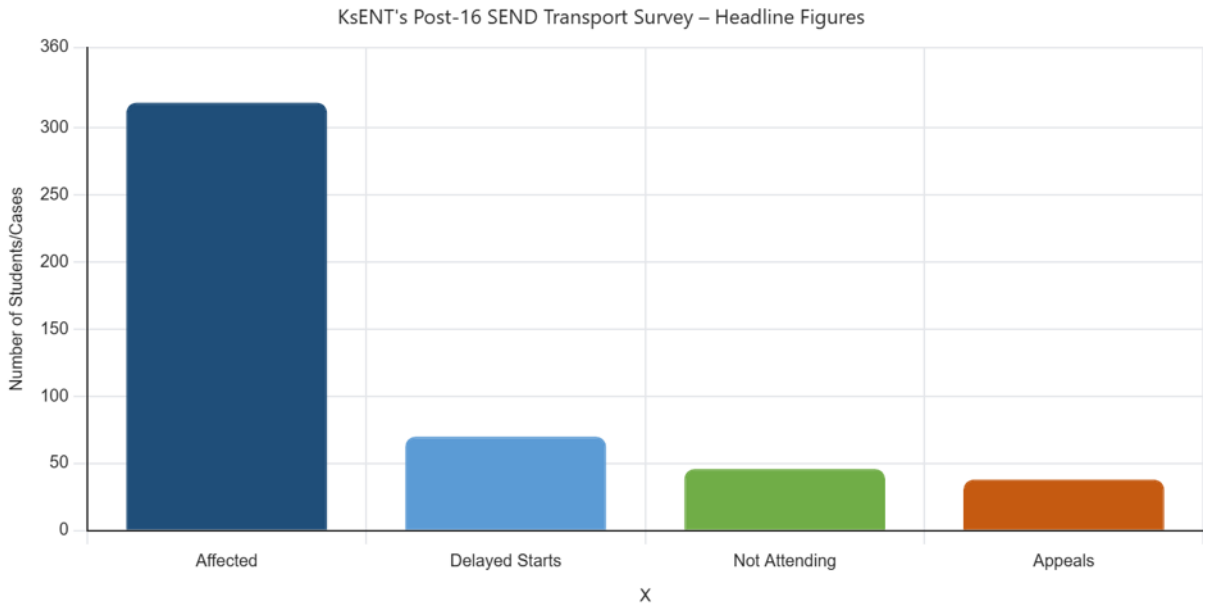
4.4 To support families and learners during the implementation of the revised policy, applications were opened earlier than usual, and appeal hearings were scheduled earlier in the academic cycle, to ensure they were heard before the start of the new academic year. This approach has enabled decisions to be reviewed and resolved more quickly, providing greater certainty for learners and families ahead of the start of the academic year.

4.5 The increase in the number of appeals during 2026/27 demonstrates that applicants are actively engaging with the process and making use of the opportunities available to have their circumstances reconsidered. This provides assurance that the appeals arrangements are accessible and effective, enabling the Council to identify and respond to cases where individual circumstances warrant a different outcome whilst maintaining consistent application of the policy overall.

5. Impact on Learners and Families

5.1 As the revised Post-16 Transport Policy was implemented during the 2026/27 academic year, officer activity during the initial period was primarily focused on processing applications, implementing new arrangements and responding to appeals. Whilst the majority of learners and families have adapted successfully to the revised arrangements, there are instances where learners have experienced difficulties accessing education as a result of changes to transport assistance. To supplement the Council's own operational data, feedback was sought from external stakeholders, including the Kent Special Educational Needs Trust (KsENT), to provide an independent perspective on the experiences of schools, learners and families. This allowed for an impartial analysis of the impact on learners, including on attendance and their wider educational experiences. The full KsENT report is included in Appendix D. Responses were received from 13 schools, so at this stage, data is indicative only. While all schools were given an opportunity to respond, it is important to consider that this request aligned with the start of the new academic year, which was already made more complex as a result of these changes. KCC will therefore continue to work with KsENT throughout the year to broaden our understanding of the full impact, when schools have a greater opportunity to engage.

5.2 Of the 13 KsENT schools that replied, 319 students were identified as being affected by the Post-16 SEND Transport changes. Of these, 70 students are experiencing delayed starts, 46 students are not attending education, due to transport difficulties and KsENT schools report 38 active transport appeals. The data demonstrates that transport changes are affecting safeguarding, attendance, wellbeing and educational outcomes across KsENT’s schools.



5.3 KsENT's survey of member schools identified a number of concerns relating to the implementation of the revised transport arrangements. Responding schools reported instances of transport difficulties affecting attendance, delayed starts to education programmes, learner wellbeing and family circumstances. Schools also highlighted increased demands on their own resources, including additional work associated with supporting families, monitoring attendance and responding to safeguarding concerns.

5.3 A key theme emerging from the feedback is that the impact of transport arrangements extends beyond travel itself and may influence wider aspects of a learner's educational experience, including attendance, participation, wellbeing and transition into Post-16 provision. KsENT's report identifies that these impacts can be particularly significant for learners with complex special educational needs and disabilities who rely upon consistent routines and support arrangements.

5.4 The Council acknowledges these concerns and will continue to monitor attendance, participation, appeals and stakeholder feedback as the policy becomes more established. However, as outlined in the introductory section, officers do not currently have alternative options within the existing policy to address this impact, so this situation could only be materially changed following further policy reviews. It is also important to recognise that attendance and participation in education are influenced by a range of factors, of which transport is only one. Further monitoring over a longer period will be required to understand the extent to which any changes in attendance or participation can be attributed directly to transport policy changes.

5.5 The increase in appeals during the first year of implementation provides a further indication of the impact of the revised arrangements on some learners and families, as outlined in Section 3. Appeals have most commonly raised concerns relating to affordability, the practicalities of transport arrangements and the specific needs of individual learners. The appeals process has enabled these circumstances to be considered on a case-by-case basis and

has provided an important mechanism for identifying learners whose needs may warrant an alternative outcome or additional support

6. School Led Transport

6.1 In accordance with the revised Post-16 Transport Policy, the Council has entered into grant agreements with four Specialist Post-16 Institutions (SPIs) to enable them to develop and deliver transport arrangements for eligible learners attending their provision. These arrangements are intended to provide greater flexibility in meeting the transport needs of individual students whilst supporting access to education.

6.2 As at 31 October the four participating SPIs are providing transport for 143 students through these grant-funded arrangements.

6.3 The Transport Eligibility Operations Manager has worked closely with the participating providers to support the implementation of these services, including the development of transport solutions, funding arrangements and operational processes. This collaborative approach has helped to ensure that transport arrangements were in place from the start of the academic year and that students were able to access their educational provision with minimal disruption.

6.4 Officers will continue to work with participating SPIs throughout the academic year to monitor the effectiveness of these arrangements, review outcomes for students and identify any opportunities to further develop the school-led transport model.

6.5 In addition to the arrangements with Specialist Post-16 Institutions (SPIs), one maintained special school has entered into a bespoke school-led transport arrangement through a Service Level Agreement with the Council. Under this arrangement, the school utilises its Post-16 Transport Budget (PTB) funding to organise and deliver transport directly for a number of its Post-16 students.

6.6 This approach provides the school with greater flexibility to design transport arrangements that meet the needs of its learners whilst supporting attendance and participation in education. Officers have worked closely with the school to develop and implement the agreement and will continue to monitor its operation and outcomes throughout the academic year.

6.7 The introduction of both SPI grant-funded transport arrangements and the maintained special school's Service Level Agreement demonstrates the Council's commitment to exploring alternative and locally managed transport solutions that support learners whilst ensuring the effective use of available resources.

7 Conclusion

7.1 This report brings together all currently available information and evidence to show the initial impact of the implementation of the new Post 16 and Post 19 Transport Policy

7.2 This analysis identifies that the Equality Impact Assessment correctly identified the likely consequences of these policy changes. Analysis has not found unanticipated outcomes, but has clearly outlined the negative consequences felt by individuals and settings

7.3 Officers will continue to monitor the implementation of this policy and its wider impact, through the full academic year.

8 Recommendations

8.1 The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the report.

9. Background Documents

Appendix A - Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19 (link)

Appendix B – 15 July CYPE Cabinet Committee Report (link)

Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment from Key Decision (link)

Appendix D – KSENT REPORT

10. Contact Details

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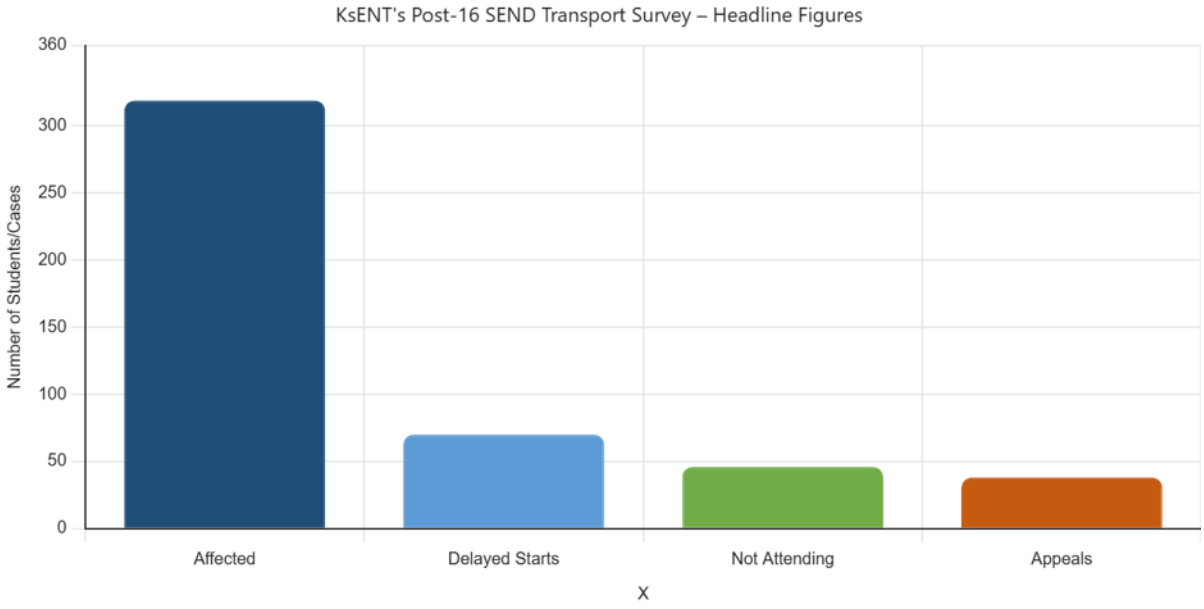
Post 16 SEND School Transport Survey Feedback – October 2026

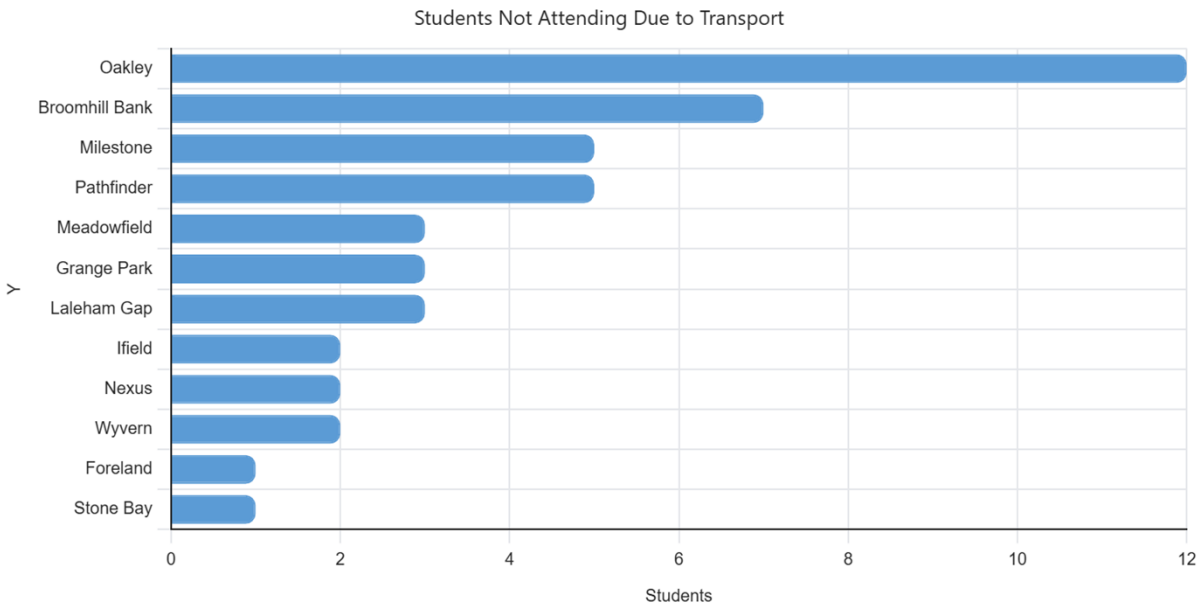
Findings from Kent Special Educational Needs Trust's (KsENT) Post 16 SEND Transport survey indicate widespread concerns regarding the impact of Post-16 SEND Transport changes. KsENT schools report that current arrangements have created barriers to educational access, increased anxiety for young people and their families, and placed additional demands on education providers. The survey highlights the requirement for a consistent and sustainable approach to transport provision that supports attendance, inclusion and positive outcomes for learners with SEND.

Responses were received from 13 KsENT schools which identified 319 students who are affected by the Post-16 SEND Transport changes. Of these, 70 students are experiencing delayed starts, 46 students are not attending education, due to transport difficulties and KsENT schools report 38 active transport appeals. The data demonstrates that transport changes are affecting safeguarding, attendance, wellbeing and educational outcomes across KsENT's schools.



KsENT schools consistently report that transport difficulties are preventing some students from accessing education altogether, whilst others are experiencing reduced attendance through late arrivals, early collections or part-time attendance arrangements. Several KsENT schools report students who have either experienced delays starting their placement or have not attended since the beginning of the academic year.

KsENT schools highlight that students have missed induction activities, course introductions, transition support and opportunities to develop relationships with peers and staff. These missed experiences are particularly significant for students with autism and anxiety, who rely on predictable routines and consistency to engage successfully with education.



A recurring theme is the impact on students' emotional wellbeing and regulation. KsENT schools report increased anxiety, distress and dysregulation as a result of uncertain or inconsistent transport arrangements. Some students with complex needs can become highly distressed when established routines are altered unexpectedly.

KsENT schools also have safeguarding concerns where students are unable to attend education, remain at home for extended periods, or are relying on temporary and unsustainable transport arrangements. In several cases, KsENT schools are undertaking welfare checks, home visits and extensive communication with families and external agencies to ensure students remain safe and engaged.

KsENT schools report considerable pressures on families. Parents and carers have shared:

- Reduced working hours or leaving employment.
- Increased transport costs.
- Reliance on extended family and friends.
- Elevated stress and anxiety levels.
- Difficulties maintaining consistent attendance arrangements.

A number of KsENT schools report that transport difficulties have affected student enrolment and retention.

All responding KsENT schools describe significant additional demands on staffing and resources.

The evidence submitted by KsENT schools identified five consistent themes:

1. Heightened safeguarding risks and responsibilities.
2. Loss of education and reduced access to learning.
3. Increased anxiety, dysregulation, mental health and wellbeing concerns.
4. Significant impact on families and carers.
5. Increased workload and financial pressures on KsENT schools.

Conclusion

The survey demonstrates that Post-16 SEND Transport challenges are having a significant and widespread impact across KsENT schools. The consequences extend beyond transportation itself and affect safeguarding, education, attendance, wellbeing, school capacity and future participation in Post-16 provision. Evidence suggests that the impact is particularly acute for young people with complex SEND who rely upon consistency, routine and specialist support to access education successfully.

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From:	Paul Webb – Cabinet member for Children's Services Beverley Fordham – Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education (Education and Skills)
To:	Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 26 November 2026
Subject:	**COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS 2025-26**
Classification:	Unrestricted
Previous Pathway of Paper:	None
Future Pathway of Paper:	None
Electoral Division:	All

Summary: This report provides information about the operation of the Children Act 1989 Complaints and Representations Procedure in 2025/26 as required by the Statutory regulations. It also provides information about the 'non-statutory' social care complaints and complaints received about Education Services.

Recommendation: The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **COMMENT** on the contents of this report.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report provides detailed information about complaints and other representations received across the whole of the Children's, Young People and Education Directorate (CYPE).

1.2 There is a statutory requirement on the directorate to operate a robust complaints procedure for children, and those who are eligible to make a complaint on their behalf, about the social care services they receive. The statutory complaints procedure is designed to ensure the rights and needs of the child are at the heart of the process and that young people's voices are heard. Children in Care in Kent are advised how to make a complaint and are informed of their right to access the advocacy service.

1.3 The statutory requirement to produce an annual complaints report in respect of children's social care services is included in the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. The Regulations are specific about the type of information which must be included in this annual report.

1.4 Complaints about children's social care services that meet published criteria are considered under the Children Act statutory complaints procedure. However,

complaints which meet the eligibility criteria but cannot be progressed formally because of concurrent legal proceedings (in family and/or criminal court), active child and family assessment, or an active child protection enquiry, are progressed as an informal 'representation'. A 'representation' ensures that the concerns of the eligible child, parent or carer can be taken into consideration by the social care team without a risk of being prejudicial to the relevant concurrent proceedings. All informal representations are recorded on the complaints database, and where appropriate, on the child's social care record.

1.5 Functions excluded from the complaint procedure include multi-agency child protection decisions and decisions made in a court of law. Complainants are advised of the alternative routes available for challenging such decisions. Complaints which fall outside of the scope of the statutory complaints' procedure are considered under the KCC corporate complaints procedure, these include complaints about SEN and other non-social care services. All complainants, and those making representations, are routinely advised of their right to challenge the decision of the Council via the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

1.6 Complaints which do not fall within the scope of either the corporate complaints procedure or the statutory Children Act procedure are handled as 'Enquiries' and customers are advised of alternative routes to progress their concerns, for example appeals processes, safeguarding referrals and school complaints.

1.7 Issues raised by Members of Parliament (MP) and Elected Members on behalf of constituents are registered and responded to as 'Member Enquiries'. However, if there is an active complaint, or the most appropriate way to address the concerns would be to progress them as a formal complaint, then the elected representative is advised of this course of action and subsequently provided with a copy of the complaint response when it is provided to the constituent/complainant.

2. Complaints received

Table 1 – All Case types received at Stage One for CYPE Directorate

Type of Record	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Children Act complaint	30	26	66	**73**
Corporate complaint	1210	1159	1210	**1374**
Member Enquiry	739	636	578	**1026**
Enquiry	288	907	595	**267**
Comment	36	21	40	**4**
Compliment	39	40	33	**149**
Total complaints only	1240	1185	1276	**1447**
Total all records	**2342**	**2789**	**2522**	**2893**

2.1 The total number of complaints received increased by 14% in the year 2025/26, and an increase of 11% progressing through the Children Act Process. Overall, there was an increase in feedback of 13% compared to the previous year. The above table does not include rejected or withdrawn complaints, of which there were an additional 775 cases in 2025/26. This represents a significant increase in the volume of work being handled by the customer feedback team & services.

2.2 The volume of Member Enquiries increased by 70%. In some cases, customers have chosen to pursue several different routes to seek resolution to their issues and concerns.

2.3 Whilst it is important to record the volume of complaints received, performance cannot be measured against this figure. Anybody who receives a service from KCC has a right to submit a complaint if they are dissatisfied with that service.

2.4 It is more appropriate to measure by the percentage of those complaints subsequently upheld, either in full or part. Section 4 of this report provides an analysis of complaints received, with Tables 6 to 13 focusing on the key themes raised and the proportion of those that were upheld either in full or part.

Table 2 - Cases received by type and division

Type of record	Integrated Children's Services	Education	SEN & Disabled Children	Corporate Directors Office	Commiss-ioning	Early Help and Preventative Services	Total
Children Act complaint S1 – Local Resolution	54	0	19	0	0	0	73
Children Act complaint S2 – Independent Investigation	13	0	9	0	0	0	22
Children Act complaint S3 – Independent Review Panel	5	0	2	0	0	0	7
Corporate complaint S1	486	162	702	17	4	3	1374
Corporate complaint S2	124	34	176	2	2	0	338
LGSCO	77	48	108	0	1	0	234
Member Enquiry	109	342	456	117	2	0	1026
Enquiry	134	20	107	4	2	0	267
Comment	1	3	0	0	0	0	4
Compliment	106	2	36	0	5	0	149
Total complaints only	759	244	1016	19	7	3	2048
Total of all records	**1109**	**611**	**1615**	**140**	**16**	**3**	**3494**

2.5 In 2025/26, there were an additional 775 complaints/enquiries received but not progressed. Of these, 734 were rejected at assessment stage, for the reasons identified below, and 41 which were subsequently withdrawn by the customer.

Table 3 – Rejected complaints

Reason for complaint rejection	Number
Duplicate complaint	207
Complaint not for this organisation	99
Complaint subject to legal proceedings	97
Customer declined to provide sufficient information to be able to investigate	84
Representative not authorised to act on behalf of client	81
Other (e.g duplicate MP enquiry, legal proceedings, communication restrictions, personnel issues)	58
Withdrawn	41
Ongoing Assessment	38
Service request not a complaint	26
Complaint about an issue more than 12 months old	18
Appeal not a complaint - Housing, Parking, School Admissions, Social Care etc	11
No consent	9
Signposted to Ombudsman	6
Total	775

Table 4 - Method of receipt – all complaints (Stage one)

Method of receipt	Number	% of total
Email	2164	75%
Self-service/Online	558	19%
Telephone	55	2%
Contact via MP	42	1%
Contact Centre	30	1%
Contact via Member	24	1%
Post	15	1%
Face to face	3	0%
Contact via Corporate Director	2	0%
Total	**2893**	

3 Analysis of complaints

3.1 Dependent on what is being complained about, there is a legal requirement to handle complaints from Looked After Children and Children in Need, or those eligible to make a complaint on their behalf, through the three-stage procedure specified in the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.

3.2 The three stages for the statutory Children Act complaints procedure are:

- Stage 1 - Local Resolution (up to 20 working days)
- Stage 2 - Independent Investigation (up to 65 working days)
- Stage 3 - Independent Review Panel (30 working days)
- Escalation to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

3.3 The KCC complaints procedure consists of three stages:

- Stage 1 – Local Resolution (up to 20 working days)
- Stage 2 – Director Review (up to 20 working days)
- Escalation to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

3.4 The following table shows the number of Children Act complaints dealt with at each stage.

Table 5 – Children Act complaints requested and accepted at each stage

Stage	2022 /23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Stage 1 – Local Resolution	32	22	63	73
Stage 2 – Independent Investigation	5	10	13	22
Stage 3 – Independent Review Panel	3	1	3	7

3.5 The number of complaints accepted and handled through the statutory Children Act complaints procedure has risen at every stage.

3.6 Of the 22 cases investigated at Stage 2, the reasons given for the requested escalations were - 12 because the customer disagreed with the outcome of Stage 1, 3 cases where the customer felt the response did not address all issues raised, and 2 where the customer felt they had been given an inadequate explanation. 5 by passed Stage 1 and were logged at Stage 2.

3.7 Of the 7 cases investigated at Stage 3, the reasons given for escalation were – 5 customers disagreed with the decision, 1 felt they had been given an inadequate explanation, and 1 customer felt the reasons given at Stage 2 were not clear

Table 6 – Outcome of complaints at Stage 1 - Local Resolution

Division/Outcome	Not Upheld	Upheld/Party Upheld	Total
Integrated Children's Services	36	15	51
SEN and Disabled Children	12	10	22
Total	48	25	73

Table 7 – Outcome of complaints at Stage 2 - Independent Investigation

Division/Outcome	Not Upheld	Upheld/Party Upheld	Total
Integrated Children's Services	4	5	9
SEN and Disabled Children	2	5	7
Total	6	10	16

*the number closed will not match the number received

Table 8 – Outcome of complaints at Stage 3 – Independent Review Panel

Division/Outcome	Not Upheld	Upheld/Party Upheld	Total
Integrated Children's Services	3	2	5
SEN and Disabled Children	1	0	1
Total	4	2	6

*the number closed will not match the number received

Table 9 – Complaint Classifications at Stage 1

Problem category	Total	%
Issues with Service	40	52%
Policy and Procedure	28	36%
Communication	7	9%
Equalities and regulatory	1	1%
Quality of service	1	1%
Total	77	

*more than one category can be recorded at case closure

3.8 Customers who approach the LGSCO without first completing all stages of the complaints process are usually referred back to the Council by the Ombudsman. As a matter of course, customers are advised how they can escalate their complaint if they are dissatisfied with the outcome at each stage of the process.

3.9 **Integrated Children's Services and Disabled Children's Service**

Table 10 – Corporate Complaints received by service

Service	No. received	% of total complaints	Snapshot of relative service caseload as of 31/3/26	% of complaints as a proportion of service caseload
Children's Social Work	336	63%	5560	6%
Children with Disabilities	48	9%	1542	3%
Children in Care	39	7%	1691	2%
Front Door*	31	6%	47673	0%
Early Help	27	5%	2552	1%
Adolescents and Open Access	10	2%	198	5%
18+ and Leaving Care	8	1%	1915	0%
UASC	2	0%	129	2%
Fostering	16	3%	595	3%
Safeguarding & QA	8	1%	3112	0%
Adoption	3	1%	67	4%
CART (Children's Allowance Review Team)**	0	0%	n/a	n/a
Attendance and Inclusion**	6	1%	n/a	n/a
VSK	0	0%	1945	0%
Total number complaints received	**534**			

*number of contacts made to Front Door Service (includes Out of Hours Service)
** Unable to provide figures, not case holding teams

3.10 The following table shows the volume of cases closed in the reporting year 2025/26. This volume is different to the number of cases received, as cases can be received up to 31st March 2025, but will close in the following reporting period.

Table 11 – Complaints **closed** by service

Division	Total	%
Children's Social Work	305	56%
Children with Disabilities	44	8%
Children in Care	63	12%
Early Help	31	6%
Front Door	29	5%
Safeguarding & QA	11	2%
Adolescents and Open Access	10	2%
Fostering	11	2%
18+ and Leaving Care	27	5%
Attendance and Inclusion	7	1%
Adoption	3	1%
UASC	2	0%
Total	543	

Table 12 - Key themes and outcomes from complaints closed

	Volume of themes recorded	No. Upheld/ part upheld	% upheld/ part upheld
Communication issues *(e.g. delays or failure to communicate, quality of communications, incorrect information/advice given)*	92	50	54%
Equalities and regulatory issues *(e.g. discrimination, data protection issues, health and safety)*	51	19	37%
Quality of service *(e.g. delays in providing service or the service did not meet the standards expected)*	136	50	37%
Service not Provided *(e.g. failure to do something, cancellation or withdrawal of a service)*	44	14	32%
Policy and procedure issues *(e.g. procedures not followed, disagree with policy or procedure, disagree with decision)*	120	35	29%
Staff conduct	131	43	33%
Total number of issues raised	**574**	**211**	**37%**

3.11 More than one theme can be logged against each complaint, which is why there can be a higher volume of reasons than closed cases.

3.12 Overall, 37% (211) of complaints received against Integrated Children's Services and Disabled Children's Services were either upheld in full or in part. This is an increase from 33% (173) the previous year.

3.13 **Education Planning & Access, and SEN**

Table 13 - Complaints received by service

Service	No. received	% of total complaints	Snapshot of relative service caseload as of 31/3/25	% of complaints as a proportion of service caseload
Special Educational Needs (SEN)	649	80%	23,462	3%
Home to School Transport	37	5%	15,304	<1%
Community Learning & Skills	29	4%	12,444	<1%
Fair Access	82	10%	78,707	<1%
Area Education Officers	14	2%	595	2%
Total no. complaints received	**811**			

3.14 649 complaints were received and logged under one of the four service categories for Special Education Needs (SEN), a 12% increase from 2024/25.

3.15 The following table shows the volume of cases **closed** in the reporting year 2025/26 for Education services.

Table 14 – Complaints closed by service

Division	Total	%
SEN	753	84%
Area Education Officers	9	1%
Community Learning & Skills	31	4%
Fair Access	73	8%
Transport (Education)	34	4%
Total	900	

Table 15 - Key themes and outcomes from complaints closed for Education services

	Volume of themes recorded	No. Upheld/ part upheld	% upheld/ part upheld
Communication issues *(e.g. delays or failure to communicate, quality of communications, incorrect information/advice given)*	16	7	44%
Equalities and regulatory issues *(e.g. discrimination, data protection issues, health and safety)*	9	6	66%
Quality of service *(e.g. delays in providing service or the service did not meet the standards expected)*	26	15	58%
Service not Provided *(e.g. failure to do something, cancellation or withdrawal of a service)*	18	3	17%
Policy and procedure issues *(e.g. procedures not followed, disagree with policy or procedure, disagree with decision)*	71	18	25%
Staff conduct	16	6	38%
Total number of issues raised	**156**	**55**	**35%**

3.16 More than one theme can be logged against each complaint, which is why there can be a higher volume of reasons than closed cases.

3.17 Overall, 35% (55 cases) of complaints received against Education Services were either upheld in full or in part. This is a decrease from 47% (75 cases) the previous year.

Table 16 - Key themes and outcomes from complaints closed – SEN services

	Volume of themes recorded	No. Upheld/ part upheld	% Upheld/ part upheld
Communication issues *(e.g. delays or failure to communicate, quality of communications, incorrect information/advice given)*	220	172	78%
Equalities and regulatory issues *(e.g. discrimination, data protection issues, health and safety)*	10	8	80%
Quality of service *(e.g. delays in providing service or the service did not meet the standards expected)*	313	247	79%
Service not Provided *(e.g. failure to do something, cancellation or withdrawal of a service)*	207	148	71%
Policy and procedure issues *(e.g. procedures not followed, disagree with policy or procedure, disagree with decision)*	134	80	60%
Staff conduct	8	7	88%
Total number of issues raised	**892**	**662**	**74%**

3.18 More than one theme can be logged against each complaint, which is why there can be a higher volume of reasons than closed cases.

3.19 Overall, 74% (662) of complaints received against SEN were either upheld in full or in part. This is a decrease proportionately from 81% (645) the previous year.

3.20 Table 14 shows the top 5 issues raised against the SEN service.

Table 17 – Top 5 complaint reasons

Classification	SEN	SEN Assessment and Placement	SEN Casework	SEN Casework 16+	Total
Failure to do something	34	38	112	50	234
Delay in doing something	40	42	69	39	190
Quality of service delivered	22	39	55	25	141
Failure to communicate	12	21	41	30	104
Disagreement with decision	18	22	21	7	68

3.21 Complaints about schools are managed within each school's own complaints procedure and some disagreements, for example, disputes relating to Education, Health and Care Plans, are considered through the appropriate appeals route, including statutory tribunal.

4 Complaints considered by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

4.1 A total of 234 complaints were received by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in 2025/26 relating to services provided by the Children, Young People and Education directorate.

4.2 44 resulted in further detailed investigation by the Ombudsman. Of these 40 cases were upheld against Kent County Council (91%). This is a reduction of upheld complaints from last year in which 50 were found against the Council.

4.3 The Ombudsman has noted that the way in which they choose which complaints they will investigate has changed, leading to a higher number of complaints being upheld vs not upheld. The below is the Ombudsman's explanation of the change.

4.4 *"…We are less likely to carry out investigations on 'borderline' issues, so we are naturally finding a higher proportion of fault overall. Our average uphold rate for all investigations has increased this year and you may find that your organisation's uphold rate is higher than in previous years. This means that comparing uphold rates with previous years carries a note of caution. Therefore, we recommend comparing your authority's uphold rate with that of similar organisations, rather than previous years, to better understand performance."*

Table 18 – Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman involvement

	Detailed investigation				
	Upheld	Not upheld	Closed after initial enquiries	Premature/ incomplete	Total
Children's Social Work	7	0	41	31	**79**
Kent Test/School Admission appeals	0	1	8	0	**9**
Home to School Transport/Free School Meals	0	0	16	4	**20**
Special Educational Needs	32	3	26	46	**107**
The Education People	1	0	0	0	**1**
Community Learning and Skills	0	0	0	0	**0**
Closed by LGSCO – not sent to KCC				18	**18**
Total	**40**	**4**	**91**	**99**	**234**

4.5 The Ombudsman findings can be found at the following link for Children Social Care decisions SearchResult - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

4.6 For education decisions - SearchResult - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

5 Advocacy services provided under these arrangements

5.1 The Council has a statutory obligation to offer independent advocacy services to any eligible child or young person wishing to make a complaint under the Children Act complaints procedure.

5.2 There is one point of contact for independent advocacy for all children and young people in Kent wishing to make a complaint, irrespective of their status as Children in Need, Children in Care, subject to a Child Protection Plan, or as Care Leavers. The advocacy service in Kent is provided by the Young Lives Foundation.

5.3 In 2025/26, a total of 38 complaints were received from young people. It is a positive point to note that 10 young people made a complaint without the support of an independent advocate, this would indicate that they felt empowered and confident about raising their concerns. Whilst it is right that children and young people have access to the support of advocates, in recent years there has been an emphasis on advocates supporting young people in trying to resolve their concerns rather than going directly through the complaint's procedure.

5.4 The following key themes were raised in complaints from children and young people who are currently in or leaving the care of KCC;

Complaint theme/Outcome	Upheld/Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Delay in doing something	0	1
Disagree with policy or procedure	0	1
Disagree with decision	1	10
Failure to do something	3	2
Quality of communications	2	2
Quality of service delivered	6	9
Staff conduct	1	0
Totals	**13**	**25**

6 Compliance with timescales

6.1 Response targets are based on cases closed within the reporting year. CYPE, as a whole, responded to 25% of Stage One complaints within 20 working days.

Table 19 – Response performance – Integrated Children's Services (incs. Children with Disabilities service).

Procedure/stage	No. of responses made	No. of responses in timescale	% of responses provided within timescale	Previous Year
Statutory complaint (Stage 1) (standard timescale)	51	6	12%	42%
Statutory complaint (Stage 1) (extended timescale)	51	33*	65%	85%
Statutory complaint (Stage 2)	9	4	44%	100%
Statutory complaint (Stage 3)	5	3	60%	n/a
Corporate complaint (Stage 1)	492	209	42%	61%
Corporate complaint (Stage 2)	126	56	44%	55%
Member Enquiry	119	46	39%	70%

**includes those complaints responded to within 10 working days*

6.2 The maximum timescale of 20 working days for Stage 1 Children Act complaints was achieved in 65% of complaint responses from Integrated Children's Services, which is down from 85% the previous year. The standard timescale for responding to Children Act Stage 1 responses is 10 working days, which can be extended up to 20 working days if required.

6.3 The SLA for corporate complaint responses is 85% responded to within 20 working days, the service achieved 42%, which is down from 61% the previous year.

6.4 Work has been undertaken in the service to improve timeliness; focus has been on responding to complaints even if the issue is not resolved (looking at what we will do) and proceeding with investigations even if we haven't been able to arrange a meeting with complainants.

Table 20 – Response performance – Education only

Procedure/stage	No. of responses made	No. of responses in timescale	% of responses within timescale	Previous Year	Average days to respond	Average days previous year
Corporate complaint (Stage 1)	147	70	48%	72%	28	23
Corporate complaint (Stage 2)	34	16	47%	75%	14	27
Member Enquiries	332	120	36%	23%	37	41

Table 21 – Response performance – SEN only

Procedure/stage	No. of responses made	No. of responses in timescale	% of responses provided within timescale	Previous Year	Average days to respond	Average days previous year
Corporate complaint (Stage 1)	727	62	8%	8%	89	122
Corporate complaint (Stage 2)	174	25	14%	5%	69	91
Member Enquiries	446	28	6%	10%	91	116

6.5 SEN complaints have seen a significant drop in time to respond to complaints over the last year. Work is continuing within the SEN service to ensure the handling of complaints is effective and parents feel more confident that their concerns are being heard.

7 Learning the lessons from complaints

7.1 Several complaints received in 2025/26 informed wider service development:

Area for development	Identified Actions
Clarity of information about transport processes	Information provided to families about transport arrangements has been reviewed to make the process clearer. Internal forms used by services to support transport planning should not be issued to families unless they are intended for completion by the parent or carer. Staff have been reminded to check that any correspondence explains clearly what action is required and where families should apply for transport support.
Professional practice and communication with families	Further learning has been shared with the relevant team to reinforce professional standards, respectful communication and the potential impact on families when these standards are not met. The learning has been used to remind staff of the importance of sensitive, clear and professional practice when working with children and families.
Support for families during periods of crisis	The importance of regular contact with families during periods of crisis has been reinforced with relevant staff. This is to ensure that families are offered practical and emotional support at the earliest opportunity and that contact arrangements are clear, consistent and responsive to the family's circumstances.
Compliance with statutory guidance for education, health and care needs assessments	Staff have been reminded of the importance of following statutory guidance when requests for education, health and care needs assessments are received. This includes ensuring that requests are considered properly, timescales

Area for development	Identified Actions
	are monitored, and families are kept informed about the process. Staff have also been reminded that where a child is attending school on a part-time timetable because of difficulties, the situation should be monitored and reviewed so that appropriate support and oversight are maintained.
Timely and appropriate responses to correspondence	Relevant staff have been reminded of the need to respond to correspondence appropriately and within expected timescales. This is intended to improve communication with families and reduce avoidable delay or uncertainty. Reminded relevant staff of the statutory timescales for issuing post-16 education, health and care plans, to support more consistent compliance and clearer communication with young people and families.

8 Review of the effectiveness of the complaint's procedure

8.1 The complaints procedure remains an important route for children, young people, parents and carers to raise concerns, have those concerns considered independently of service delivery, and receive a response. The evidence in this report shows that the procedure is being used, that complaints are being identified and recorded across the directorate, and that learning from complaints is being used to inform service improvement. However, the increase in demand and the reduction in response performance show that further improvement is needed, particularly in relation to timeliness and consistency.

8.2 The centralised management of customer feedback continues to support impartiality, consistency and oversight. This is particularly important for statutory social care complaints, where the complaint's function must remain separate from the services being complained about. Central oversight also allows themes, performance issues and learning to be identified across the directorate rather than only within individual services.

8.3 The increase in complaints accepted under the Children Act procedure suggests that triage arrangements are identifying complaints that are eligible earlier, alongside an increase in receiving complaints from those eligible for the procedure. The number of complaints received directly from children and young people, including some made without advocacy support, is also positive and indicates that the process is accessible to some young people. The continued availability of independent advocacy remains an important safeguard for those who need support to make their views known.

8.4 Timeliness remains the main area where the effectiveness of the procedure has been affected. Performance against response times reduced in most areas during 2025/26, reflecting the continued pressure on services and the volume and complexity of complaints, particularly in SEN. While work to close older cases has helped reduce backlogs, it has also affected reported performance. Improving timeliness remains a key priority.

8.5 The procedure is also effective when it leads to learning and service improvement. The examples in section 8 show that complaints have been used to identify changes in practice, including communication with families, clarity about processes, and quality assurance in SEN decision-making. Further work is needed to strengthen how learning is recorded, shared and followed up so that there is clearer evidence of impact over time.

8.6 Overall, the complaints procedure continues to provide an essential and effective framework for hearing concerns, identifying fault, putting things right and supporting organisational learning. However, its effectiveness during 2025/26 was limited by increased demand, delays in responding, and continuing pressure in some service areas. The priorities for 2026/27 will therefore focus on improving response times, strengthening the quality of complaint responses, improving data quality, and ensuring that learning from complaints is consistently embedded across CYPE.

9 Compliments

9.1 The Customer Feedback Team also record and share compliments received about staff and services. In 2025/26, the service formally recorded 149 compliments. We work on encouraging staff to share any compliments they receive; it is important we use positive feedback to help drive improvements as well as use them to celebrate achievements and good practice.

Table 22 – Compliment themes across CYPE

Theme	Total
Customer care	58
Good service delivery(i.e. Availability of staff, service knowledge)	39
Good Staff Attitude	16
Politeness	1
Good communication/Prompt responses	35
Grand Total	**149**

9.2 Set out below are a few examples of the compliments received in 2025/26 across the directorate:

SEN Assessment & Placement - “I just wanted to take a moment to thank you sincerely for all the support you've provided. Your excellent communication, understanding, and guidance have made a real difference to us, and it's truly appreciated.”

SEN Assessment & Placement - “Thank you so much for all of your help and support you have given us throughout the whole process, especially when I didn't understand or I kept repeating myself. You showed patience and understanding and reassured me of what was going to happen and the timescale.”

Children’s Social Work Team - I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for the support and care I've received through your team, especially from my assistant social worker. Her professionalism, empathy, and dedication have made a meaningful difference in my life. It's clear that her work reflects strong leadership and a team culture that truly prioritises the wellbeing of others.
Please accept my heartfelt thanks for the role you play in guiding such an impactful team.”

Children in Care – “Our contact coordinator for the children in care team has been an absolute pleasure to have contact with. He's very efficient and is always so helpful. If he doesn't know the answer off the top of his head, he does what he can to find out for us. He has displayed so much empathy and kindness in every communication I have had with him. He has been so respectful and I can't thank him enough for his support through what is already a difficult time for our family. His hard work and dedication deserves to be recognised.”

10 Objectives for 2026/27

The priorities for 2026/27 are:

- Improve response times across all complaint types, with a particular focus on SEN, Member Enquiries and areas where performance has reduced during 2025/26.
- Continue to work with services to ensure complaints are responded to clearly, fully and in plain English, with all issues addressed and decisions explained using the available evidence.
- Maintain robust triage arrangements so that complaints are directed to the correct procedure, including the statutory Children Act procedure where this applies.
- Strengthen the quality of data recorded on the customer feedback system so that performance, themes, outcomes, remedies, compliments and learning are captured accurately and consistently.

- Increase training and support for staff across CYPE on effective complaint handling, including evidence gathering, responding to all parts of a complaint, offering appropriate remedies and identifying learning.
- Improve how learning from complaints is recorded, shared and followed up, so there is clearer evidence that service improvements have been made and sustained.
- Continue to promote access to the complaints process for children and young people, including awareness of independent advocacy and support for those who wish to raise concerns directly.
- Continue to develop the skills and resilience of the Customer Feedback Team so that the team can provide consistent oversight, support services effectively and manage increasing demand.

11 Recommendations

Recommendation: The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **COMMENT** on the contents of this report.

12 Report Author

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From:	Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services Christine McInnes, Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education
To:	**Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee** – *26th November 2026*
Subject:	Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP) Annual Report 2025/26
Classification:	Unrestricted
Past Pathway of report:	Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership Executive Board – 4th June 2026 Lead Safeguarding Partners - *4*th June 2026
Future Pathway of report:	None
Electoral Division:	*All*

Is the decision eligible for call-in? *Yes / No – exempt*

Summary: The KSCMP Annual Report provides an overview of Partnership activities undertaken, key achievements, challenges addressed and impact made during the period April 2025 to March 2026.

Recommendation(s):

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **NOTE** the content of the Annual Report.

1. Introduction

1.1 The KSCMP Annual Report 2025-26 has been produced in-line with the statutory requirements sets out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026'[1] (hereafter referred to as Working Together 2026). It has also been produced in-line with the proposed yearly report template set out in Appendix 1 of the Department for Education's (DfE) 'Safeguarding Partners Yearly Report Analysis 2023 to 2024'[2].

1.2 Working Together 2026 requires that Children Safeguarding Partners publish a yearly report by 30th September each year, which should include the following:

[1] Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK
[2] Safeguarding partners yearly reports analysis 2023 to 2024

- What Partnerships have done as a result of the arrangements, including in relation to child safeguarding practice reviews.
- How effective these arrangements have been in practice.
- The contribution of each Safeguarding Partner to the functioning and structure of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- Any themes emanating from aggregated methods of scrutiny, for example, reviews and scrutineer activity and multi-agency audits and inspections such as JTAIs.
- Evidence of the impact of the work of the Safeguarding Partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families, including the identification of groups of children who may be disproportionately over- or under-represented in services.
- An analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities.
- An analysis of learning from serious incidents.
- A record of key decisions and actions taken by the Safeguarding Partners in the yearly cycle.
- Ways in which the Safeguarding Partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.
- The breakdown of costs in delivering the arrangements for that period, including the financial contributions of individual partners.
- Evidence of how Safeguarding Partners are ensuring the adequate representation and input of early education and childcare settings, schools, colleges and education providers at both the operational and strategic levels of the arrangements.
- An overview of how data is being used to encourage learning within the arrangements and evidence of how information sharing has improved practice and outcomes.
- A review of the impact and learning from independent scrutiny arrangements to ensure the leadership is strong and the arrangements are leading to the desired and necessary impact.
- Any updates to the published arrangements with the proposed timescale for implementation.
- Evidence that national reforms have been implemented.

2. Annual Report April 2025 to March 2026

2.1 The report is compliant with Working Together 2026. The 2025-26 report is substantially different in structure and length to previous years, owing to the report template set out by the DfE. In recognition of the increased length and detailed nature of the report, supporting communication resources have been published alongside:

- KSCMP 2025-26 annual report at a glance for professionals
- KSCMP 2025-26 annual report for children and young people
- What KSCMP did this year 2025-26 video for children and young people

2.2 The report includes an overview of key activities undertaken during the 2025/26 financial year, alongside the Partnership's ambitions for the next 12 months. It includes an evaluation from the KSCMP Independent Scrutineer.

2.3 The report particularly highlights several key activities progressed during the period, including:

- Updating of the Partnership Arrangements
- Work undertaken and planned to respond to the additional responsibilities outlined in Working Together 2026
- Hosting of the first annual KSCMP Conference in April 2025, as well as a shorter virtual Partnership Forum in October 2025.
- Undertaking a benchmarking exercise to understand Kent's position against the Domestic Abuse Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) framework.
- Undertaking a benchmarking exercise to understand Kent's position in response to the findings of the national audit on group-based Child Sexual Exploitation ('the Casey audit').
- Completion of two training impact audits, considering online safety and faither inclusive practice respectively, to understand the impact of training the Partnership provides.
- Publication of and implementation of learning and recommendations from Kent Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.
- Development of a Kent Child Sexual Abuse action plan in response to the learning and recommendations of the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review considering child sexual abuse within the family environment.
- Responding to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's briefing on race, racism and safeguarding children.
- Hosting of learning events, including a webinar on the risks posed to children from pets.
- Launch of the 'I'm Lucy' campaign, including video and practice resources, to raise awareness of risks associated with children being considered protective factors for their parents and carers' mental health.
- Development and launch of the 'Clear Minds, Safer Homes' campaign, including an awareness week held in March 2026, to raise awareness of potential risks to children associated with parent and carer cannabis use.
- Tracking of Serious Incident Notifications and referrals to the National Panel.

2.4 The KSCMP Annual Report 2025/26 was agreed by the KSCMP Executive Board on 4th June 2026. It was subsequently signed off by the Lead Safeguarding Partners. It was subsequently published on the KSCMP website.

3. Conclusions

3.1 The KSCMP has been established to fulfil the statutory duties placed on Kent County Council, NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board and Kent Police by virtue of the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017).

3.2 The Lead Safeguarding Partners and KSCMP Executive (Delegated Safeguarding Partners) will continue to discharge such responsibilities as defined in law and statutory guidance working in partnership with all relevant bodies and organisations in Kent.

3.3 The KSCMP Annual Report 2025/26 is presented for the information of the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee.

Recommendation(s):

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **NOTE** the content of the Annual Report.

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4. Background Documents

4.1 *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026: A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children*

5. Contact details

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Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency Partnership

Annual Report

April 2025 – March 2026

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Section One: Introduction

Foreword by the KSCMP Executive

This annual report sets out the work of the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency Partnership (KSCMP) between April 2025 and March 2026 and highlights both the progress made and the challenges faced in keeping children safe. Kent continues to operate in a demanding safeguarding context, shaped by rising levels of need, increasing complexity, workforce pressures and wider system reform. This report reflects a Partnership that has maintained a strong focus on learning from harm, improving multi-agency practice and strengthening accountability, while acknowledging that further improvement is required in some areas.

Throughout the year, the Partnership has prioritised learning from serious incidents and safeguarding practice reviews, using this learning to inform audit, training, guidance and system change. Evidence set out in this report demonstrates improvements in areas such as escalation, information sharing, and father inclusive practice, alongside sustained challenges relating to children's mental health.

Statutory guidance, in particular Working Together to Safeguard Children, sets clear expectations for local safeguarding children partnerships to provide strategic leadership, robust governance, effective scrutiny, and meaningful assurance that safeguarding arrangements are improving outcomes for children. It also requires annual reporting to demonstrate how learning from serious incidents, audits and performance data is used to strengthen practice. This report evidences how KSCMP discharged these responsibilities through updated partnership arrangements, and how we continue to develop approaches to assurance and performance monitoring.

Looking ahead, the Executive has agreed a broader set of Partnership priorities for 2026-27, centred overarchingly on fewer children experiencing harm. The challenge for the coming year will be to embed recent improvements, respond effectively to national reform, and continue to develop the Partnership's ability to evidence the difference it makes to children's lived experiences across Kent.



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Susie Burden,
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Fulston Manor School



Debra Hines,
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Area profile

Inline	2025/26	Comparison to 2024/25
Number of children aged 0-17 years[1]	355,400	+2.0% from 348,300
Looked after children (Kent Citizen) [3]	1,470	+1.8% from 1,443
Looked after children (unaccompanied asylum-seeking children) [3]	451	-1.6% from 458
Missing episodes[4]	6,002	-0.3% from 6,018
Children educated at home[8]	5,234	+0.2% from 5,222

Decreasing	2025/26	Comparison to 2024/25
Referrals to NELFT[5]	20,174	-11.5% from 22,488
Young people who had involved with Early Help - CSE[12]	182	-92.9% from 351
C and F Assessments where a young carer was identified[14]	472	-15.7% from 546
Domestic Abuse – Child Domestic Violence[15]	2,428	-8.2% from 2,626
Domestic Abuse – Parent Domestic Violence[15]	5,704	-4.9% from 5,986
Other Domestic Violence[15]	1,699	-19.7% from 2,034

Increasing	2025/26	Comparison to 2024/25
Under 16s living in poverty[2]	54,002	+12.5% from 47,273
Ethnic minority pupils[6]	73,428	+2.6% from 71,555
Pupils with Special EducationNeeds[7]	48,100	+6.7% from 44,874
Children with a Child Protection plan who has a disability[9]	117	+12.8% from 102
Young People in Youth Justice[10]	222	+25.7% from 165
Children with a child protection plan[11]	1,243	+7.4% from 1,151
Young people who had involvement with CSWS identified at high risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) [12]	560	+11.3% from 497
Privately Fostered Children[14]	27	+18.5% from 22
Referrals to Family Group Conferencing - families[16]	1,737	+16.6% from 1,449
Referrals to Family Group Conferencing - individuals[16]	2,816	+18.7% from 2,289

Please see appendix two for a list of data references.

Inspections

Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services

In November 2025 Ofsted undertook an inspection of Kent County Councils (KCC) children's services. The inspection report sets out that children remain at the core of a strong, and often exceptional, service in Kent and that those children who need help and protection receive services which usually result in positive outcomes for them and their families. Strong partnership working, both operational and strategic, are noted as being productive and child centred. The report also highlighted challenges that are significant to the way services are structured and provided in Kent, including high numbers of both other local authority placements of children in care and unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC).

The overall inspection grading was 'good', with experiences and progress of children in care specifically noted as 'outstanding'. The experiences and progress of care leavers however was graded as 'requiring improvement'. In response, KCC has begun work within the Partnership to address the needs and services for care leavers. The KSCMP is working with the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board (KMSAB) to bring together a care leavers working group. This group has been set up to lead and coordinate the multi-agency response to the inspection findings in relation to the experiences, outcomes and safeguarding of care leavers. The group aims to clarify and embed corporate parenting responsibilities across partner agencies; ensure there are systems in place to recognise and respond to the potential vulnerabilities of this cohort and to promote consistent awareness amongst care leavers and Personal Advisors of the services available to adults at risk as well as relevant escalation pathways.

PEEL

In 2025 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) carried out a PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) inspection of Kent Police. The inspection assessed how good Kent Police is in eight areas of policing, with all being rated as either adequate, good or outstanding. The use of a new inspection framework means it is not a like for like comparison to previous inspection outcomes. The inspection report notes positively how Kent Police keeps people safe, reduces crime and gives victims an effective service. It is also noted that the way the force uses preventative orders in domestic abuse cases and collaborates with partners, such as social services, health providers and education, to protect people at risk of harm has increased. In the majority of cases reviewed, officers recorded the voice of the child in referrals, making sure that the child's experiences and needs were considered in safeguarding decisions.

Innovative practice is highlighted in respect of children, including an early intervention project to reduce knife crime among young people and the use of a learning intervention for children who commit low-level criminal offences.

Whilst the force is graded as ‘adequate’ for safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm, some areas of improvement were identified relevant to children, including increasing consistency of use of Operation Encompass to notify schools of pupils living with domestic abuse and a more coordinated response to safeguarding, and reviewing of sharing of information with appropriate agencies.

Inspection of the effectiveness of police and law enforcement bodies’ response to group-based child sexual exploitation

In October 2025 HMICFRS published a progress report against the recommendations set out in a previous 2023 inspection of how the police, law enforcement agencies and other public bodies were tackling group-based child sexual exploitation. Based on the most recent findings, HMICFRS considers that police forces have made the necessary improvements and therefore closed the area of improvement.

Kent Police was one of the six forces which were visited by HMICFRS as part of the progress report. The report highlights that Kent Police was a notable example of the use of a specialist exploitation team to review open and closed child sexual exploitation investigations reported to it in the previous 12 months, to check the investigation was thorough and that the child sexual exploitation flag had been applied accurately. It also notes that Kent Police applied the Independent Investigation of Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) group-based definition well when it reviewed approximately 3,000 closed child sexual exploitation reports, sometimes resulting in identification of other linked crimes or further lines of enquiry.

Section Two: Progress against statutory guidance

Implementation of changes set out in statutory guidance

Updated Arrangements

In line with our commitment to review and update our Partnership arrangements annually, revised KSCMP arrangements were published in December 2025. As per the requirement of Working Together to Safeguard Children, the revised arrangements were signed off by both the KSCMP Executive and Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs).

Amendments to the arrangements included updating names of relevant senior Partnership leaders, removing the Health Safeguarding Group from the Partnership's architecture, and removal of registered providers of residential holiday schemes for disabled children from the named Relevant Agencies (as no such schemes continue in Kent). In addition, following reflections from the Independent Scrutineer about a lack of connectivity between the Partnership subgroups and the Executive, a provision was included for subgroup chairs to provide an update directly to the Executive via their twice annual 'away days'.

The Scrutiny and Assurance Framework was revised to include a formal escalation pathway from Partnership subgroups to the Scrutiny, Assurance and Audit Sub-group (SAAS), Executive and Lead Safeguarding Partners. The pathway had already been in place in practice, and is now formalised within the framework.

The Practice Improvement Framework had a number of amendments made, many of which reflected learning identified in the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's (CSPRP) learning briefing on race and racism in safeguarding children, as well as updates which reflect the revised CSPRP guidance on reviews for Safeguarding Partners (see below).

Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel Guidance for Safeguarding Partners and Learning Support and Capability Project

Following engagement in focus groups for the national Learning Support and Capability Project and the review of the statutory guidance for Safeguarding Partners, the KSCMP Business Team began implementing anticipated changes ahead of publication, allowing time for embedding and adaptation.

Since October 2024, all KSCMP Rapid Review reports have explicitly referenced Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI); however, limited detail within agency summary reports constrained meaningful analysis. In response, the KSCMP Rapid Review summary template was revised in April 2025 to require agencies to report specifically on EEDI. This has supported learning linked to the Partnership's *It's*

Silent[1] action plan and highlighted where adultification was likely relevant to the circumstances of a child's death. To further strengthen Kent's reviewing approach, the Business Team sought CSPRP support, which might be improved with the offer of a timely discussion.

In line with updated guidance, the Executive decision-making template for notifying serious incidents was revised in May 2025 to record the rationale for informing families of a notification (or not) and the Rapid Review agenda updated to prompt consideration of whether and how families should be informed of learning and actions[2]. This has enabled meaningful engagement with one family following a Rapid Review, whose contributions informed system learning and were incorporated into a learning briefing.

Considering examples in section 7 of the guidance has also strengthened Executive decision-making when notifying incidents involving suspected suicide, children in care, and intrafamilial sexual abuse (including retrospectively), increasing confidence in identifying harm that meets the threshold for notification and review.

Key elements confirmed and updated in the 2025 guidance already embedded in Kent include all Safeguarding Partners agreeing which cases to notify (since 2022); a pathway for decision making regarding serious incidents involving over 18's (since 2022); Rapid Review reports being signed by the Executive (since 2020); and commissioning LCSPRs where there is *new learning* for the local area (supported by the Learning Themes Dashboard developed in 2022).

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 was published in March 2026, without prior consultation and came into effect immediately, indicating less substantial changes than in the previous version. The guidance is now aligned with the Children's Social Care Reform Programme and the Children's Social Care National Framework, where previously it only referenced them. Whilst previous versions of the guidance set an expectation that Local Children Safeguarding Partnerships should focus on strategic governance, this iteration of the requires that Partnerships should provide leadership to, and have active oversight of, the operational delivery of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

These substantive changes in the guidance have been identified and assessed in implications they hold for the KSCMP, with the Executive giving consideration as to how to best reflect the revised and new requirements in the KSCMP arrangements. Work to implement the guidance includes reviewing the remit of SAAS (including use and oversight of operational performance data) and engaging further with the education sector to ensure appropriate representation in the Partnership.

[1] See page 25
[2] The expectation has always been to advise a family when an LCSPR has been commissioned and invite their engagement when possible.

Partnership Forums 2025

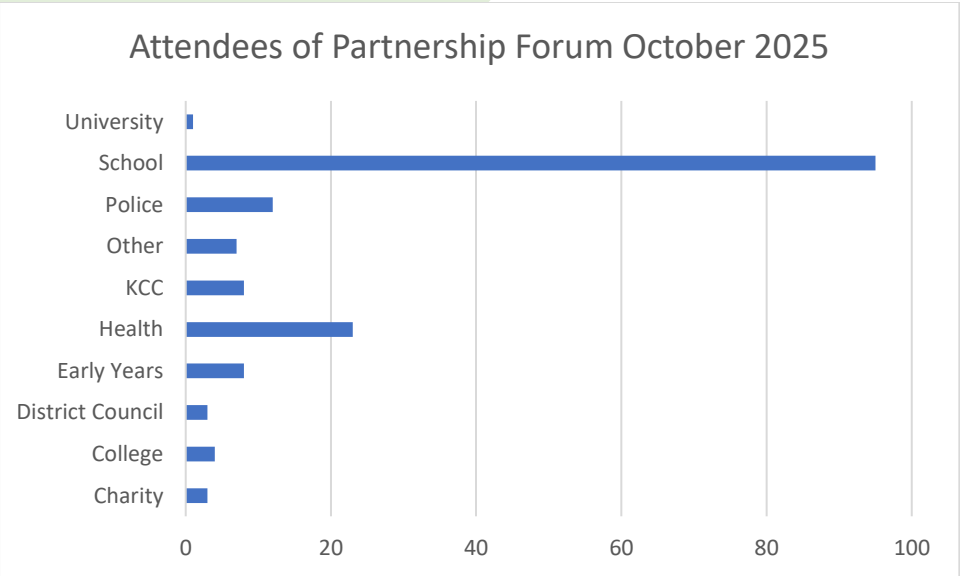
On Wednesday 2nd April 2025 the KSCMP held its first Partnership conference. It was attended by almost 100 professionals from across a range of agencies working in Kent. The agenda included items outlining key activities and priorities of the Partnership, as well as inputs from guest speakers on the role of education within partnerships and online radicalisation risks to children. The conference also provided an opportunity to gather feedback from attendees both on the event and on a range of safeguarding topics.

Feedback from attendees of the conference indicated that the event had been useful and provided learning that could be acted upon in attendees' work. Particular positives noted included the varied agenda, representation of a range of agencies, the opportunity to hear from leaders of the Partnership, and how it brought the work of the Partnership to life.

> *"This is **extremely helpful**. We already access a number of these resources but putting them within this context is really useful."*
>
> ***Attendee of KSCMP 2025 Conference***

The conference also brought benefits for the Partnership, as well as for those who attended. Following the conference additional members were identified for the Education Safeguarding Group and the working group developing the KSCMP's parental cannabis use campaign. Insights from interactive activities during the event were also used to inform development of the Partnership's 2026-27 priorities.

On Monday 6th October 2025 the KSCMP held a Partnership forum, a shorter virtual event to share key information from the Partnership and engage a wide range of partner agencies. It was attended by 164 professionals, the chart below giving a breakdown of attendees by agencies highlights the significant number of school and education attendance. This highlights the success of KSCMP's efforts to better engage with the education sector in Kent.



Kent Safeguarding Children multi-agency partnership
LISTEN TO FAMILIES
BE CURIOUS
TRIANGULATE INFORMATION

Attendee feedback on the forum was largely positive, with an average satisfaction score of 4.0 out of 5, and all attendees who provided feedback indicated they had learned something new which was relevant to their role.

> *"It gave me up to date and new information on all the topics discussed. They were all relevant to my role.*
>
> ***Attendee of KSCMP 2025 Virtual Forum***

> *"It is good to receive regular updates about what is going on in the wider safeguarding world."*
>
> ***Attendee of KSCMP 2025 Virtual Forum***

Contribution of each Safeguarding Partner

Approaches to Partnership governance structures

The KSCMP's governance arrangements promote strong multi-agency leadership, shared accountability and effective scrutiny to ensure safeguarding remains a collectively owned and centrally held responsibility across all partners. Our governance structures support both strategic oversight and operational effectiveness. This includes clear reporting lines between our Lead Safeguarding Partner Board, Executive and subgroups with a thread through to frontline practice. Partner agencies and multi-agency groups ensure that learning and risks are escalated appropriately and that strategic decisions are informed by practice realities. The KSCMP recognises that in order for our Partnership to be effective we have to create an environment in which we can constructively hold one another to account but also support one another to improve and attain – as it is only when we are functioning well as a collective that we can safeguard children as well as individual agencies.

The KSCMP's subgroups work to support this system of constructive challenge and we use our escalation processes to good effect to provide both that questioning and wider support. Partnership groups also consider multi-agency performance reporting, shared assurance processes e.g. via the Partnership multi-agency audit programme and the regular review and tracking of progress achieved against our priorities and Strategic Plan. The KSCMP works to ensure that learning is embedded across our safeguarding system and that safeguarding practice reviews, audits, analysis and feedback from managers, practitioners and children and families inform our joint work and drive our continuous improvement activity. Kent's Safeguarding Partner agencies recognise that effective safeguarding goes beyond the work undertaken by the statutory Safeguarding Partner agencies; the crucial role our Relevant Agencies play is very much recognised in Kent and the Partnership ensures that these agencies are involved in the KSCMP's arrangements and have opportunities to

influence strategic planning and service development. Finally, whilst our work is guided by the Partnership's Priorities and Strategic Plan, the KSCMP's governance arrangements are flexible, responsive and able to adapt to emerging safeguarding risks, legislative reforms and changing local need whilst maintaining a consistent focus on safeguarding children and promoting their wellbeing.

Approach to Partnership Chair function

As required by Working Together to Safeguard Children the KSCMP has implemented a Partnership Chair role. This is rotated on a bi-annual basis through the KSCMP Executive (who are the Delegated Safeguarding Partners), ensuring that at no time is the same agency chair of both the Partnership and the Lead Safeguarding Partners meeting. The functions of the Partnership Chair are outlined in the KSCMP arrangements. During 2025/26 the Partnership Chair has rotated from Kent Police to KCC, with the next rotation due to take place in summer 2027.

Section Three: Scrutiny

Multi-agency Audits

Domestic Abuse Joint Targeted Area Inspection Benchmarking (JTAI)

As reported in the 2024-25 KSCMP Annual Report, the Partnership undertook a local benchmarking exercise to understand our local position against the published domestic abuse JTAI framework. Two activities were undertaken to achieve the benchmarking:

1) **Multi-agency strategic evidence collection:** The JTAI framework criteria was reviewed by a multi-agency working group to identify evidence which would provide insight into the local position.
2) **Multi-agency case audit:** The KSCMP supported a comprehensive multi-agency audit involving KCC Integrated Children's Services (ICS), Police, Health and Probation. The audit reviewed 24 multi-agency cases of children aged 0-7, including unborn babies, selected using JTAI criteria to reflect a diverse and representative cohort. The work included partner-specific pre-audit tools and two full days of in-person reflective discussions. KCC ICS also completed analysis of Front Door and internal KCC ICS audits.

A significant time commitment was made by partners to undertake the benchmarking, which is reflective of the importance placed on responding to children who are the victims of domestic abuse. The benchmarking identified that whilst there is a significant range of domestic abuse training available to professionals across partner agencies, there is no clarity on coverage of children as victims of domestic abuse, and nor was information provided to give assurance on how this is addressed through supervision. It was noted that Operation Encompass is valued by education colleagues and although some challenges had been noted, particularly regarding consistency and timeliness of notifications, these were already being addressed by Kent Police.

Strong evidence was seen of children's voices and experiences being used in the design and ongoing development of the Safe Accommodation Support Services. However, the voice of the child and consideration of the child's perspective as victim was an area for development noted within the case audits. Cultural considerations were also varied; for some agencies this meant protected characteristics had been recorded, whilst for others it meant active consideration of culture within practice responses. Circumstances were also identified where culture had not been suitably considered. This was in-keeping with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's (CSPRP) briefing on race and racism and was subsequently reflected in the Partnership's work to respond to that briefing[3].

[3] See page 25

The benchmarking work and findings were presented to SAAS and the results informed targeted improvements which are being led by the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Partnership. The benchmarking findings were also shared with an Independent Reviewer undertaking a LCSPR in Kent where circumstances include domestic abuse, for the review's themes to be compared with benchmarking findings and its recommendations informed by the actions already underway.

Child Sexual Abuse JTAI Benchmarking

Following publication of a JTAI framework of the multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment in September 2025 and as outlined in the Kent Child Sexual Abuse action plan[4], the KSCMP has begun a benchmarking exercise to understand the local position against the criteria in the framework. A multi-agency task and finish group is developing the benchmarking which will consist of case audit and the review of strategic arrangements. The benchmarking is due to conclude and report to SAAS in autumn 2026, with findings informing further actions in phase two of the Kent Child Sexual Abuse action plan.

Casey Review Benchmarking

Following the national audit on group-based Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Abuse (Casey Review) in June 2025 the KSCMP Executive and Child Exploitation Oversight Group (CEOG) oversaw development of a Casey Benchmarking Tool covering 12 sections aligned to the Casey Review themes (e.g. culture, training, data etc.). The three Safeguarding Partner agencies completed the tool, which was subsequently analysed and collated into a detailed evidence slide deck containing national findings, local comparison and tabulated responses. An executive level summary report with key insights and discussion points was also produced and shared with CEOG in February 2026.

The impact of the activities includes a strengthened understanding of the system's readiness against the main Casey themes. It revealed where agencies aligned strongly and where gaps exist. Strengths included a strong commitment and professionalism across the system, and individual data systems. Information sharing does exist but practice is inconsistent. Gaps largely reflected those identified in the national audit, including inconsistent definitions of group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and limited survivor-informed learning. Kent Police were the only agency with a picture of group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and this was limited. All agencies had training in place, but it was noted that training needs to be more consistent and embedded.

Whilst it is too early to measure the impact of the benchmarking, the findings will continue to be used by CEOG to strengthen multi-agency data collection specific to CSE, to ensure that agreed definitions of CSE and group-based CSE are embedded across agencies and to discuss further multi-agency training needs. The learning from the benchmarking will feed into KSCMP priorities and shape future assurance, audit and improvement activity, supporting a sustained focus on prevention, early

[4] See page 24

intervention and effective multi-agency responses for children and families at risk of exploitation.

Online Safety Training Audit

A multi-agency audit was designed and delivered in summer 2025 to understand: 1) which organisations provide online safety training, 2) whether training is mandatory, 3) types of training delivered, and 4) completion numbers. A survey was issued to key partner agencies (25 in total) including KCC ICS, Kent Police, NHS providers, councils, Probation, Kent Fire & Rescue and CAFCASS. 24 responses were received.

Findings demonstrated significant variation in how agencies deliver online safety training, while also showing strong engagement with KSCMP's training offer, which saw increased e-learning completions and virtual training attendance in 2025. The results were presented to SAAS in December 2025 and have informed the Partnership's ongoing assurance work and strategic planning for 2026-27. Future plans include ongoing monitoring of training engagement trends and opportunities for assurance on the effectiveness of single agency training.

By mapping training provision across the Partnership, the audit provided assurance about the system's capacity to recognise, assess and respond to online risks faced by children, including online exploitation, harmful content, grooming and child-on-child abuse. Improved visibility of training coverage has supported clearer identification of gaps and inconsistencies that may affect how confidently and consistently practitioners respond to concerns raised by children and families.

The engagement with KSCMP training contributes to a more informed workforce, confident to have safe and appropriate conversations with children, recognise early indicators of online harm, and provide accurate advice and support to families. This helps promote earlier intervention, clearer safeguarding responses and more consistent messages to children and parents about online safety and risk.

Father Inclusive Practice Training Audit

The audit aimed to understand whether KSCMP Father Inclusive Practice training improved practitioners' knowledge, confidence, and day-to-day practice when engaging and working with fathers. It specifically examined KSCMP courses such as:

- Barriers to Father Engagement and How to Overcome Them
- A Tough Nut to Crack? Working with Resistant or Challenging Fathers
- Understanding Kent Father Inclusive Guidance

The audit also sought to identify whether staff were using the Partnership resources (i.e., guidance, a one-minute guide, and a checklist).

The survey was sent to 144 individuals who had completed one or more of the Father Inclusive Practice training courses. 28 responses were received (20.6% response rate).

Respondents consistently reported positive outcomes, with all scoring their confidence at least 3 out of 5 and an average rating of around 4.2 across key areas such as understanding father inclusive practice, engaging fathers, recognising varied paternal roles, and applying strategies in their work. Despite this, uptake of supporting resources was low, with two-thirds of respondents not having accessed the guidance, one-minute guide, or checklist.

The completed audit was considered by SAAS, where key findings and implications were presented. SAAS agreed that whilst training is having a clear positive impact on practitioner confidence and awareness, future planning should focus on improving visibility and use of the resources, increasing multi-agency engagement, and continuing to monitor progress through ongoing reporting to SAAS of practice review learning themes. Engagement with fathers is monitored in the Partnership Learning Themes dashboard and is included in the 2026-27 KSCMP priorities, which will require ongoing attention to its recurrence in Rapid Reviews over the coming year.

Embedding father inclusive practice more consistently across the Partnership will ensure gains in practitioner confidence translate into sustained improvement in service delivery. This will ultimately improve engagement with fathers by practitioners across Kent and increases the likelihood that fathers are routinely included in plans to safeguard and support children.

Scrutiny, Assurance and Audit Sub-group

Over the last year, SAAS has continued to provide challenge and assurance on the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Kent. Its work has focused on ensuring that learning from serious incidents, safeguarding practice reviews and audits lead to meaningful and sustained improvement. The group has scrutinised Serious Incident Notification decision-making by Safeguarding Partner agencies, strengthening confidence that serious harm and deaths are identified and referred appropriately, reducing the risk of under reporting and supporting a consistent approach across the system.

The Group has continued to place strong emphasis on the effective use of data and intelligence. Members scrutinised quarterly safeguarding data reports, moving beyond assurance based solely on individual cases, using cumulative data to identify recurring themes and patterns. The group supported the development of clearer, scorecard style reporting aligned to the KSCMP Strategic Plan, improving the ability of the Partnership to monitor progress, identify emerging risks and focus improvement activity where it is most needed.

The group has also played a key role in strengthening system accountability where safeguarding risks persist or progress has stalled. This included maintaining and escalating concerns relating to mental health responses for children at risk of self-harm or suicide, and the implementation of Kennedy sampling following child

deaths[5]. In doing so, the group has ensured senior leadership engagement, clearer expectations for information sharing and coordinated support, and greater transparency in decision making.

Analysis of areas with limited progress

Child's Voice

A great deal of work has been undertaken over a number of years to improve the regularity, consistency and quality of the KSCMP's engagement with children and families as part of the practice review process. The impact of this is evidenced in feedback received from both national bodies (such as the CSPRP) and from children and families themselves. However, the Partnership has not yet determined the best mechanism to obtain and respond to the voice of children and families in relation to the development, delivery and scrutiny of the KSCMP's arrangements. Work has been undertaken over the past year to gather the views of children and young people via established feedback channels within single partner agencies; the Partnership has also undertaken some direct work to gather the feedback of children and young people regarding their perceptions of safety and safeguarding. Nonetheless we know more work needs to be done and various options are being considered to inform our arrangements into the future, led by relevant Partnership subgroups.

Voluntary and Community Sector

The KSCMP Architecture Review and updated Partnership Arrangements in response to Working Together 2023 acknowledged it is not possible to include all voluntary, charity, social enterprise organisations and sports clubs as Relevant Agencies in Kent, given the geographic size of the local authority area, although their involvement and engagement is recognised as important. Instead, it was agreed an existing LCSPR recommendation to develop a communications strategy to reach third sector organisations would be taken forward. Subsequently a further relevant LCSPR recommendation requires consideration to be given to how this can be expanded to include private sector services for children.

In the 2024-25 annual report it was noted that the strategy was expected to be developed in summer 2025, however capacity challenges meant that this was delayed. The work is now underway, with dedicated activity in progress to develop and shape the approach, and completion targeted for November 2026. Opportunities to engage with the sector directly are being sought, in order to inform and shape the strategy.

Whilst this delay has meant that specific communication routes and resources for the voluntary and community sector have not yet been developed, there are a range of existing KSCMP resources which remain available for those organisations, and attendance has been seen from the sector at a number of the Partnership events in

[5] See page 17

2025/26. Individual organisations have continued to be engaged within Rapid Reviews and LCSPRs where appropriate. This ongoing engagement provides a strong foundation to support the implementation of the communications strategy once it has been agreed.

Assessment and safety planning for children at risk of self-harm and suicide

In June 2025, in line with the Scrutiny and Assurance Framework the Learning and Improvement Group (LIG) escalated concerns regarding outstanding North East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT) actions relating to Kent practice reviews where children had died by suicide and suspected suicide. It also highlighted concerns about NELFT's connectivity to the wider Partnership in respect of safety planning.

The escalation was ultimately overseen by the KSCMP Executive, already mindful of the number and nature of Kent suicide related notifications, who steered and maintained oversight of issues highlighted by the LIG and required NELFT engagement at the highest level.

The escalation was successful in progressing relevant practice review recommendations and the results of an audit to measure impact of required change is due for presentation to the Partnership in May 2026. The LIG will then determine the steps required of multi-agency partners to build on NELFT's[6] activity to improve the system response to children at risk.

Kennedy Samples

The LIG raised a second escalation in October 2025 after evidence an action previously agreed complete was not effectively embedded. The action relates to a Serious Case Review recommendation with implication for Kent, commissioned by another area and requiring the implementation of Kennedy guidelines[7].

Kent Police presented recent evidence where Kennedy sampling was specifically requested and denied, hindering its ability to consider criminality where test results were not available for evidential use. Importantly, it also highlighted that by failing to implement guidelines there is potential for delay in the identification of abuse, leaving other children (typically siblings of the child harmed) in the care of the abuser(s).

After the action agreed to evidence more recent progress against the recommendation was unmet, the SAAS progressed the escalation for the attention of the KSCMP Executive where it currently remains. The outcome will be referenced in next year's annual report.

[6] Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services have subsequently transferred from NELFT to Kent and Medway Mental Health NHS Trust

[7] Named after Baroness Helena Kennedy, who chaired the working group and wrote the multi-agency guidelines for the care and investigation of sudden unexpected deaths in infancy and childhood in 2016. New guidelines for the investigation of sudden unexpected death in infancy launched

Independent Scrutineer Evaluation

Over the past year the KSCMP has continued to build on the progress identified in the previous annual report, while operating in a changing and demanding safeguarding environment. Partnership arrangements have continued to mature, with further development of governance structures, refinement of subgroup functions, and ongoing work to strengthen assurance, challenge and learning across the system. At the same time, this year has brought a number of pressures, including changes in Executive membership, transition in the chairing of the SAAS, continuing recruitment and retention challenges across agencies, and wider financial pressures affecting public services.

The continued development of SAAS has been a significant feature of the year. Its evolution has helped provide a clearer route between subgroup activity, assurance work and Executive oversight. Revised Terms of Reference and changes in membership have supported this development, although the subgroup is still maturing and further work is needed to ensure that its role in scrutiny, escalation, assurance and follow-through is consistently understood and embedded across the Partnership. This should be seen as part of normal Partnership development within a wider context of changing national expectations for safeguarding partnerships.

The KSCMP Business Team continues to be a significant strength for the Partnership. The team has maintained oversight of a wide range of activity and has enabled the Partnership to continue progressing despite increasing demands. This includes support to subgroup development, business planning, audit activity, performance reporting, communications and dissemination of learning. The Partnership has also maintained a strong focus on translating learning from LCSPRs into accessible resources for practice. The most recent example is ‘I’m Lucy’ which includes a media clip and links to helpful tools in the mental health space, which builds on earlier work such as EatSafe and Father Inclusive Practice and reflects a continuing commitment to making learning practical, visible and relevant to frontline practitioners.

The year has also seen continued progress in the use of audit and performance information. Data dashboards are better established and provide a stronger basis for identifying themes, patterns and emerging issues. Multi-agency audit activity has continued to support reflection on frontline practice and system performance, and there is now greater openness across agencies in discussing areas for development. A further Section 11 audit is planned for autumn 2026, which will provide an important opportunity to test progress since the previous cycle and assess the impact of learning and assurance activity across the Partnership.

There have however, also been challenges. Executive meetings have not always achieved the depth of strategic discussion or continuity that the Partnership would ideally want, and changes in membership and leadership have inevitably affected momentum at times. The first formal escalations through SAAS during the year have been an important test of the Partnership’s developing arrangements. They have demonstrated that the mechanisms for challenge and escalation are in place and

can be used, while also showing that confidence and consistency in using those mechanisms are still developing.

As in previous years, there remain areas where further development is needed. The Partnership has not yet secured a robust mechanism for capturing the voice and lived experience of children and families at a strategic level, distinct from review activity. VCSE engagement also remains an area of ongoing work. While these gaps are recognised and activity has taken place to explore solutions, they have not yet been fully resolved and should remain visible within future Partnership planning.

The wider operating environment for safeguarding partnerships remains challenging. Recruitment and retention pressures across agencies continue to affect stability and capacity. Financial constraints across the public sector are placing additional pressure on partner agencies and creating a risk that safeguarding capacity may be stretched if not carefully managed. These are not issues unique to Kent, but they require continued oversight because of their cumulative impact on leadership capacity, frontline practice and the ability of agencies to sustain improvement activity.

The national context has also continued to evolve. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 places a clearer emphasis on multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including accountability structures, stronger expectations around data sharing, analysis of disproportionality and racism, and the need for annual reports to evidence their impact on children and families. For Kent, this means that future reporting will need to continue moving beyond the description of activity and further towards demonstrating what difference Partnership work is making. At the time of writing key legislation, including the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and the Crime and Policing Bill remain subject to the parliamentary process. The Partnership will therefore need to remain sighted on the eventual form of these reforms and any implications for local safeguarding arrangements, multi-agency practice and governance.

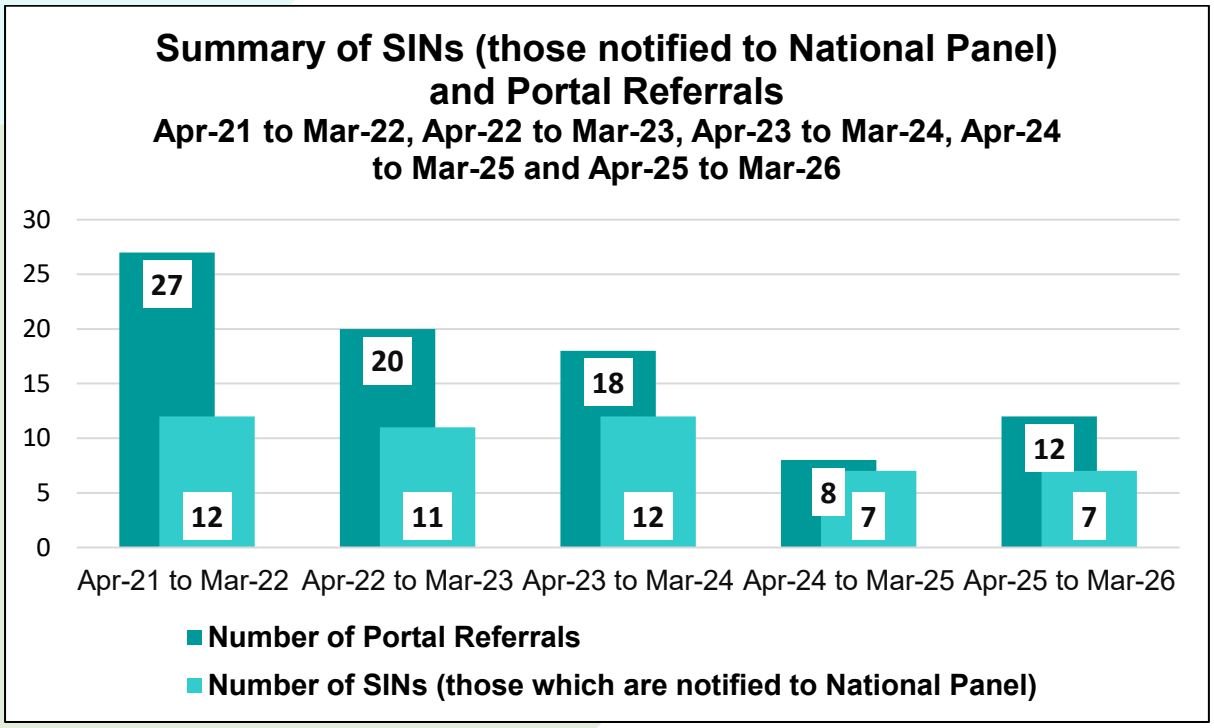
Overall the Partnership remains in a stronger position than it was a year ago. Governance arrangements are more developed, scrutiny and assurance activity is more visible, and there is continued commitment from partners and the Business Team to improvement. The challenge for the coming year will be to consolidate this progress, respond effectively to the revised Working Together framework and forthcoming legislation, maintain a grip in the context of workforce and resource pressures, and continue strengthening the Partnership's ability to evidence impact on the safety and welfare of children in Kent.

Samantha Haspell, KSCMP Independent Scrutineer

Section Four: Learning from Serious Incidents

Serious Incident Notifications

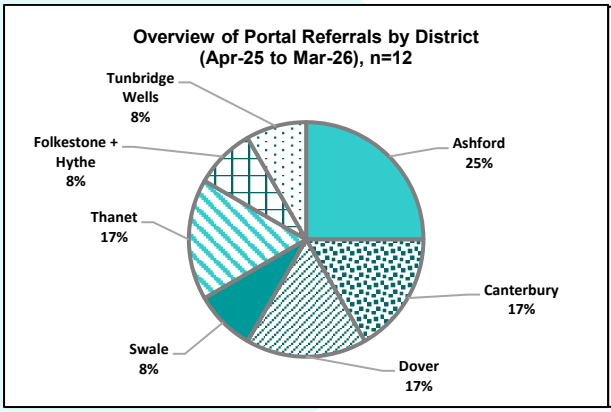
The KSCMP continues to track portal referrals and Serious Incident Notifications (SINs). Portal referrals can be made by any agency wishing to highlight a serious incident for consideration of notification. SINs are those cases notified to the CSPRP and go on to have a Rapid Review. The summary chart below illustrates the numbers of each for the last five-year period. It should be noted a serious incident may involve multiple children but will only result in one SIN.

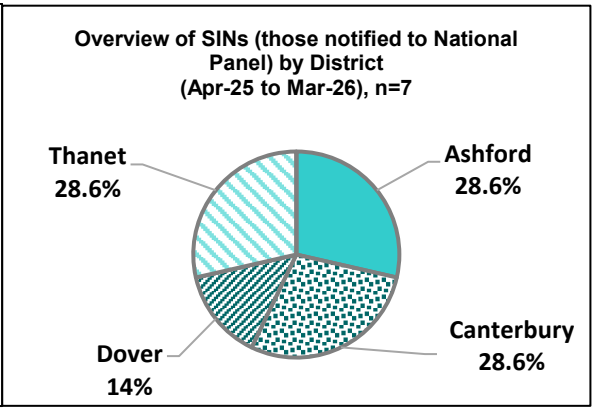


Yearly comparisons show referrals were down in 2024/25 compared to the previous three years but increased in 2025/26 (12 compared to 8 in 2024/25). As in 2024/25, 7 SINs were submitted to the CSPRP. All SINs in 2025/26 were referred to the Partnership in the same timeframe.

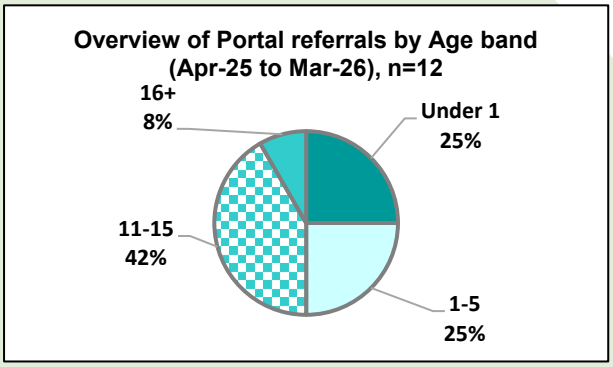
The chart below shows Rapid Review outcomes for the 2025/26 reporting period. All Rapid Reviews not progressing to LCSPR (noted below as 'No Further Action') produce an action plan and learning summary, with actions tracked to completion. This year, 3 of the 7 Rapid Reviews led to LCSPR commissioning in comparison to 1 in 2024/25.

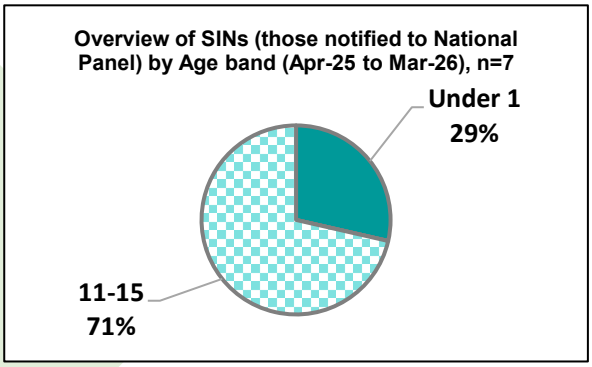
The charts below show the geographic distribution of portal referrals and SINs. Ashford generated the most portal referrals during 2025/26, however, referrals resulting in notification to the CSPRP showed a more even split, with three districts featuring equally: Ashford, Canterbury and Thanet, who each constituted 28.6%.





The charts below show the split of portal referrals and SINs by age band of the child notified. Where a portal referral or SIN identified more than one child, the child who suffered most harm (e.g. in the cases of death) or the youngest age child is been represented in the charts. Kent has seen a year-on-year increase in the percentage of 11-15 year-olds subject of notification, from 0% in 2021/22 to 71% in 2025/26.





Rapid Reviews

Between April 2025 and March 2026 the KSCMP undertook 7 Rapid Reviews identifying a total of 37 relevant practice themes, and commissioned 3 LCSPRs.

The top 3 most frequently occurring themes across the Rapid Reviews were:

1) Assessment of risk/safety planning
2) Child's voice/lived experience
3) Impact of parental mental health on parenting capability

An Action Plan is created at each Rapid Review to consolidate immediate actions necessary to support and safeguard the relevant individuals or groups, to explore any missing information, and to embed identified learning over the longer term. Evidence against each action is submitted to the KSCMP Business Team before circulation to the Rapid Review Group, who endorse completion and closure.

A briefing for professionals identifying relevant learning themes and links to resources is produced and disseminated following each Rapid Review. Independent

Reviewers commissioned to author LCSPRs this year commented they are an excellent means of summarising an in depth report and sharing learning with frontline professionals quickly.

> *"I'm impressed that you produce these Rapid Review learning briefings – really excellent!"*
>
> ***Independent Reviewer***

In addition to completing and embedding actions from Kent Rapid Reviews, the associated learning briefings were **viewed a total of 3,201** times by the end of the reporting year.

One briefing shared directly to a school who contributed to a Rapid Review highlighted the importance of following the Escalation Procedure when concerned about the action or inaction of another agency in their safeguarding response to a child. Having subsequently written the procedure into their own child protection policy, the school has since pursued concerns for other children to Stage 4 for Executive oversight.

This year the Partnership delivered its Risk of Harm from Pets webinar further to Rapid Review learning identified last year[8].

Learning from another Rapid Review informed the development of the Partnership's seminar 'Working with resistant parents' during the Clear Minds, Safer Homes awareness week[9].

Where LCSPRs were commissioned, Independent Reviewers commented on the quality of Rapid Review reports and how they have supported drafting Terms of Reference documents with key lines of enquiry clear from the outset, as highlighted in the quote below.

> *"Like my feedback on (previous child), the report is high quality, balanced and child centred."*
>
> ***Independent Reviewer***

Following each Rapid Review, the Partnership's Learning Themes Dashboard is updated and informs the work of the LIG.

Learning Themes Dashboard

Learning themes from Rapid Reviews are tracked, with all identified, including those that are new, added to the dashboard following each review's completion. The dashboard makes frequently occurring themes clearly identifiable, assisting a prompt and timely system response via LIG.

[8] See page 27
[9] See page 31

The dashboard also enables us to look beyond the prevalence of specific learning themes across the county as a while, to considering them in the context of age cohorts, local authority districts and Health Care Partnership areas. E.g. we can quickly filter to understand the most prevalent theme emerging from Rapid Reviews for 11-15 year olds, or 11-15 year olds in Thanet, and track how this has changed over time.

As noted in the previous section, the most common learning themes identified from Rapid Reviews across the county as a whole in this reporting year were:

1) Assessment of risk/safety planning
2) Child's voice/lived experience
3) Impact of parental mental health on parenting capability.

For more information on how the Dashboard informs the LIG's activity, please see page 26.

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

Between April 2025 and March 2026 the KSCMP published 1 LCSPR Executive Summary, 1 reference document and 3 LCSPR reports.

Child U

Child U was pre-school aged when they died and their review focused on whether the family's ethnicity and culture influenced service delivery, particularly in response to domestic abuse. The Executive Summary for Child U fact checks the LCSPR, highlights key learning themes and action taken since the incident, and makes further recommendations to the KSCMP for it to continue embedding improvements in safeguarding practice. The associated reference document aligns review themes with relevant guidance, newsletters, support services, training, campaigns and practitioner tools.

Eli & Micah

These babies from different families both suffered Non-Accidental-Injuries, with their review benchmarking circumstances against the Harm to Under 2's in Kent thematic LCSPR published in 2022.The purpose was to explore if any unique characteristics in their cases warranted recommendations in addition to those already being progressed by KSCMP, and contributed to learning in respect of parental cannabis use and children being considered protective factors for their parents' mental health.

Mira

Completed in 2022, this review was recently published further to conclusion of criminal proceedings prompted by the Non-Accidental-Injury of four-month-old Mira and considers cultural competence and father inclusive practice in response to domestic abuse. Though unable to engage in the review itself, Mira's mother met the

KSCMP Business Team prior to publication and her reflections, views, and learning from her experiences are to be included in the soon to be published learning briefing.

Molly

Further to CSPRP feedback that LCSPRs often lack appreciation of children's voices and lived experiences, this review trialled a methodology and style new to the Partnership, situating our understanding of what professional practice meant for Molly by writing the report *'to'* her. In doing so, how Molly was impacted by her mother's health conditions, her role as a young carer, referral and service closures, and the fact she became Electively Home Educated, all contribute to our explanation of why we think she died by suicide and what we need to change for other young people in similar situations.

Where-as the 3 previously mentioned LCSPRs were completed some time ago and activity in relation to their recommendations referenced in previous annual reports or noted elsewhere this document (e.g., 'I'm Lucy'[10] and Clear Minds, Safer Homes[11]), plans to implement the recommendations of the more recently completed review 'Molly', will be determined by LIG in May 2026. Activity will include:

- Creation of a Kent Young Carers strategy
- Adoption of the 'No Wrong Doors for Young Carers – Memorandum of Understanding'
- Promotion of an Elective Home Education checklist for schools
- Awareness raising of the impact of unmanaged diabetes and long-term opiate use on parenting capacity.

National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

The KSCMP recognises the importance of considering and responding to learning from National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and CSPRP briefings, as well as our local reviews. National reviews and briefings are considered by LIG to coordinate a response to the learning and recommendations set out.

Child Sexual Abuse within the family environment

The national review report 'I wanted them all to notice: protecting children and responding to child sexual abuse in the family environment' was considered by LIG in July 2025, leading to the development of the two-phase KSCMP Child Sexual Abuse action plan endorsed by the KSCMP Executive in September 2025. Phase one focuses on action to be achieved in the shorter-term and informs actions required in phase two. Activities undertaken in phase one include consideration of multi-agency child sexual abuse training in the KSCMP training needs assessment[12],

[10] See page 28
[11] See page 31
[12] See page 50

making relevant information more accessible on the KSCMP website, and revising the Kent and Medway CSA medical pathway to reflect changes to the Sexual Abuse Referral Centre processes. In addition, the Independent Scrutineer is underway with a dip-sample of local cases where police investigations resulted in no further action, to consider the safeguarding responses to the children. Activities in the action plan are tracked and overseen by LIG, with development of phase two scheduled for May 2026.

Following the publication of the Centre for Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse's guide to developing a strategic response, the KSCMP Executive agreed for scoping to be undertaken regarding the potential development of a KSCMP Child Sexual Abuse strategy. The scoping brought together a review of the current and future policy landscape, including national research and reviews, with data analysis and profiling of the current picture of child sexual abuse in Kent, and was considered by the KSCMP Executive in January 2026. Given the range of activities underway relevant to child sexual abuse (including action plan activities and JTAI benchmarking), they determined it necessary for those activities to be completed and brought together before development of a strategy can commence.

Race, racism and safeguarding children

The CSPRP briefing 'It's silent: Race, racism and safeguarding children' was considered by the KSCMP Executive in May 2025 who determined that two Partnership sub-groups would be responsible for coordinating a response to the briefing.

SAAS considered the practice review related recommendations in October 2025 and made a number of amendments to the KSCMP Practice Improvement Framework in order to respond to them, which were subsequently agreed by both the KSCMP Executive and Lead Safeguarding Partners. The revised framework was published in December 2025. The amendments included:

- Additional requirement of LCSPRs to consider the impact of intersectionality, and start from the position that children from Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage backgrounds will have experienced racism in their lives.
- Additional requirements to give regard to issues relating to racism or racial bias.
- Additional consideration to include a subject matter expert or suitable representative for the family in the Rapid Review and/or LCSPR panel, where it is identified that racism or racial bias is an issue.

The amendments are intended to address the learning identified by the CSPRP, but more importantly ensure that our practice review processes are considering and able to understand relevant issues, so that learning can be acted upon to improve system level support and responses to children and families from Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage backgrounds.

LIG considered the practice based recommendations in November 2025 and requested agencies respond directly to them with the aim of better understanding the

local context and practice gaps. It was also agreed to explore opportunities to include a criteria or survey questions on organisational culture in relation to racism and bias within the 2026 Section 11 audit.

A summary report was produced in March 2026 for LIG to consider agency responses, suggesting the CSPRP recommendation to create conditions that empower practitioners is largely being met by individual agencies though approaches to doing so vary. However, it also indicated a disconnect between empowering conditions and positive impact for children and families as a result of frontline practice. Therefore, the LIG agreed further actions, including for all agencies to review their safeguarding training and to identify any gaps in relation to protected characteristics, and for development of a protected characteristics supervision toolkit to be explored. An update on the response to the learning and recommendations will be provided to the KSCMP Executive in 2026, and the summary report based on single agency submissions has been shared to the author of an ongoing LCSPR where practice in response to Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion is a key line of enquiry.

Protecting all vulnerable babies

The national review 'Protecting all vulnerable babies better: national review into the broader safeguarding issues raised by the death of Baby Victoria Marten', published late in the 2025/26 year, has been considered by the KSCMP Executive, to ensure sight on the specific recommendations for Safeguarding Partners. The review will be considered by LIG later in 2026 for development of local actions in response, which will be reported in the 2026/27 annual report.

Learning and Improvement Group (LIG)

Completed LCSPRs[13] and national reviews are timetabled at LIG which continues to ensure learning is disseminated and embedded through the Partnership. Key agency representatives offer insight into how recommendations can be translated into action in a meaningful and achievable way for their organisation, and commit to owning, following up, and measuring impact.

Updates and sign off are captured in the group's Power BI tracker providing members with a real time account of each organisation's performance against actions agreed. This year the LIG gave specific focus to actions requiring 'All Agencies' to evidence their response to particular learning for assurance the 'Partnership' is responsive.

In 2025/26 the Group realised its commitment to escalating actions causing specific concern due to the significance of risks posed to children or delay in completion using the Partnership's Scrutiny and Assurance Framework, to hold agencies to account whilst simultaneously supporting resolution via the SAAS and the KSCMP

[13] LCSPR's are triaged via LIG once completed and are not subject to the delays often caused to publication.

Executive. Two escalations were made this year, highlighted in the analysis of areas with limited progress[14].

During 2025/26 LIG considered 3 LCSPRs, 1 national review and 1 CSPRP briefing. In response to 20 recommendations, LIG set 44 actions, 28 of which are now agreed completed. A further 60 actions from reviews discussed over the previous 2 years were also completed in this year.

Having reached a point where newly completed LCSPRs can be timetabled for discussion at the *next* meeting, in 2026/27 the LIG aims to use the Learning Themes Dashboard more proactively to triangulate themes from most recent Rapid Reviews with actions already being tracked to measure impact – revisiting or agreeing new actions for repeat themes.

For example, in 2024/25, father inclusive practice was the most prevalent learning theme emerging from Kent Rapid Reviews. The LIG revisited recommendations and actions associated with this theme and prioritised those which remained outstanding. In 2025/26, the father inclusive practice theme decreased in prevalent, evidencing the LIG's positive impact.

The Group will continue to use the Learning Themes Dashboard to monitor any re-emerging themes, also considering if there are specific areas of the county or ages of children it is most relevant to, in order to target intervention.

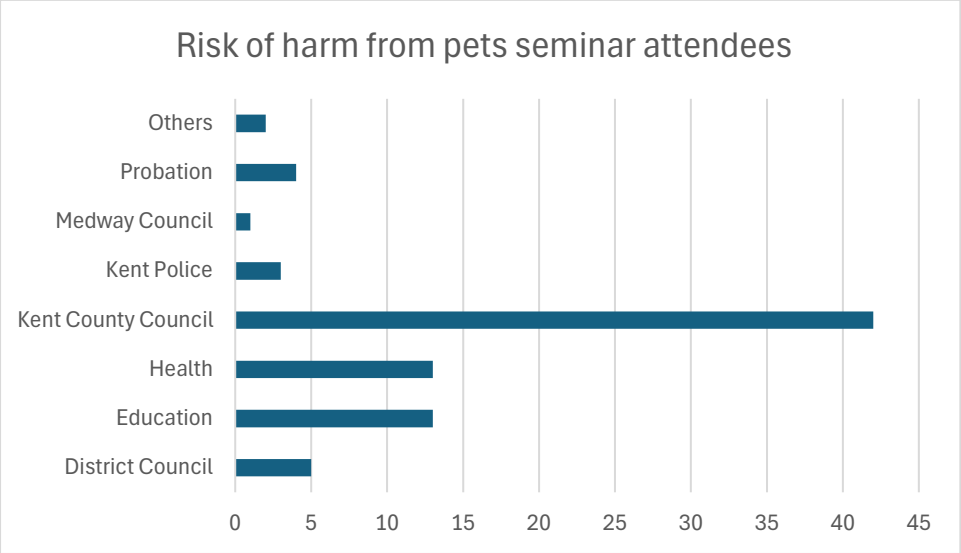
For further examples of how the LIG acts on and embeds learning, please see the sections below.

Acting on learning

Risk of Harm from Pets seminar

On 4th April 2025, the KSCMP hosted a Risk of Harm to Children from Pets seminar to share and act upon learning identified through a Kent Rapid Review. The seminar was attended by 83 professionals, with the agency breakdown of attendance shown in the chart below.

[14] See page 17



A feedback form was sent to attendees after the event, to which 12 responses were received. The average rating for the seminar was 4.6 out of 5 and 10 of the respondents indicated they had learned something new to apply in their work.

"Very knowledgeable presenters who explained how this would be relevant to various job roles, including my own, for safeguarding purposes."

"Providing clarity around action that can be taken where there are concerns about dangerous dogs. Additional information about other pets was also really informative."

"I found it all very informative and how we as professionals can support those with children with dogs in the house and where we stand when visiting homes."

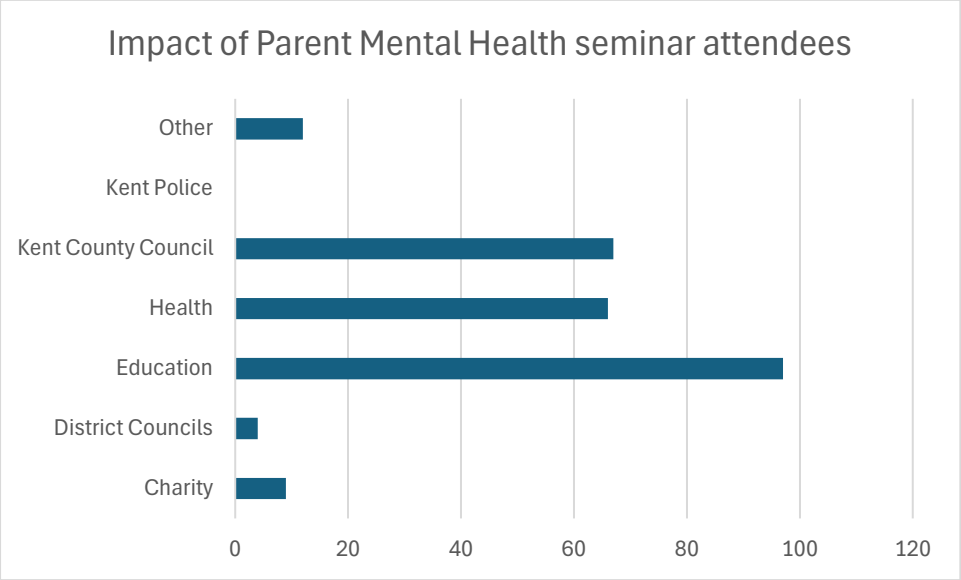
"I have a better understanding of what to do, if I have concerns about a pet in a child's home during a home-visit."

Risk of Harm to Children from Pets seminar attendees

The seminar was recorded and made available in the KSCMP MeLearning platform, so it can be accessed by those who could not attend on the day, and which has been completed 49 times.

I'm Lucy

On Thursday 19th June 2025 the KSCMP held a seminar on the Impact of Parent Mental Health on Children, which served as a launch for the 'I'm Lucy' resources. 255 people joined the event, with attendance by agency broken down in the chart below.



A feedback form was sent to attendees after the event, to which 32 responses were received. The average rating for the seminar was 4.53 out of 5, with all but one respondent indicating they learned something new that they could apply to their work. Respondents mostly indicated that key takeaways from the seminar were related to the 'I'm Lucy' resources and the concept that children should not be seen as protective factors for their parents' mental health, indicating these messages had a strong impact on attendees.

"Clearer understanding of how children are placed in a protective role and that their own needs are not always a major consideration."

"The importance of looking at the whole picture and not considering the children as a protective actor in any family situation."

"Being more mindful around those parents where we know there to be mental health concerns and not to take on face value their engagement with us and other services necessarily being a sign that there are no concerns or means that there is no impact on the young person."

Impact of Parent Mental Health on Children seminar attendees

The KSCMP coordinated development of the 'I'm Lucy' resources which seek to highlight children should not be considered protective factors for their parent or carers' mental health, as the direct result of a LCSPR recommendation. The resources are outlined in the table below, showing the number of times they have been viewed/accessed up to the end of March 2026.

Resource	Views
I'm Lucy video	1,654
Reflection tool	148
Conversation tool	116
Understanding the impact of parent mental health on children factsheet	316



An evaluation of the use and impact of the resources will be undertaken in 2026, however, opportunities to measure the video's impact were created at it's launch. During its screening at the KSCMP Conference in April 2025 and the seminar to promote associated resources, attendees were polled before and after watching to gain insight into its effectiveness at sharing the message, 'Children should not be considered protective factors for their parents' mental health.' The table below shows the average ratings.

Question	Rating (1-5, 1 low, 5 high)
Before: How likely are you to recall particular themes from a LCSPR?	3.0
Before: How likely are you to share a LCSPR report with a colleague?	3.2
After: How likely are you to remember the learning message behind a video?	4.5
After: How likely are to share a link to the video with a colleague?	4.4

Early findings therefore suggest that sharing learning from practice reviews in the form of a video such as 'I'm Lucy', as opposed to relying on more traditional reports and learning briefings, is likely to have a greater impact on practitioners.

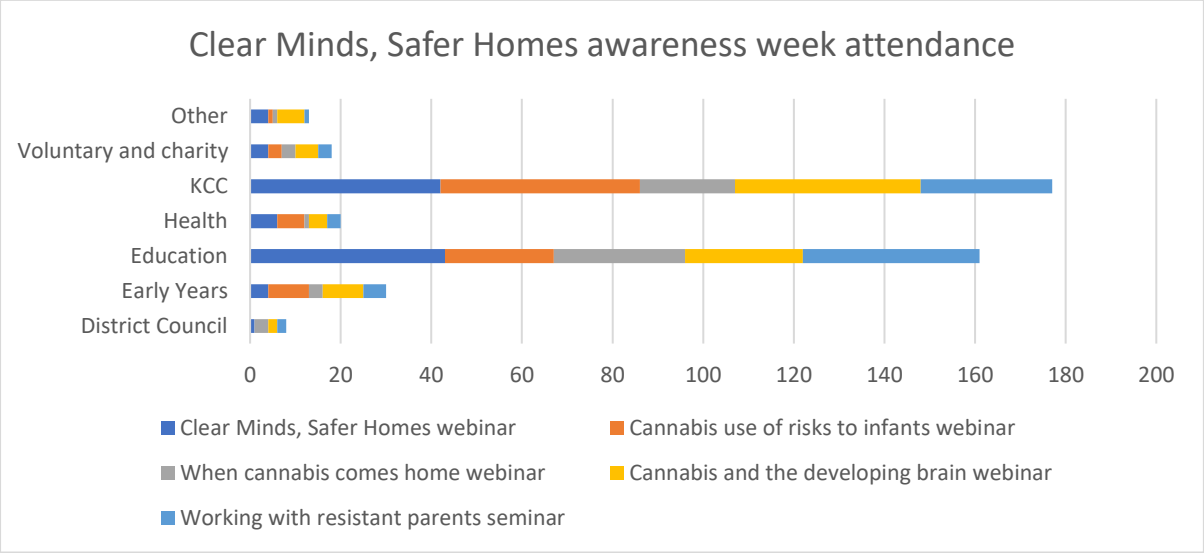
Clear Minds, Safer Homes

Clear Minds, Safer Homes is a KSCMP campaign to raise awareness of potential risks to children associated with parent and carer cannabis use. It was developed in response to learning identified in both Kent and national practice reviews, and specific recommendations of Kent LCSPRs. It's purpose is to raise awareness among professionals working with children and families about the potential risks posed by parental cannabis use.

The campaign has been delivered in two phases. Phase one launched on 6th October 2025 with the publication of an initial suite of resources to inform and support practitioners. Phase two commenced with an awareness week 16th-20th March 2026, which saw delivery of a learning event each day (recorded and subsequently added to the KSCMP training portal to be accessed alongside e-learning), as well as launch of additional resources and training. The resources are outlined in the table below, showing the number of times they have been viewed/accessed up to the end of March 2026. Two further training resources will be made available during 2026: an e-learning course and an interactive workshop.

Resource	Views
Responding to concerns about parental cannabis use practice guidance	521
Cannabis and parenting: what professionals need to know factsheet	543
When cannabis comes home poster	356
Cannabis use conversation tool	285
Cannabis and parenting leaflet for parents	597
When cannabis comes home video	53
Clear Minds, Safer Homes recorded webinar	1
Risks to infants and babies recorded webinar	0
When cannabis comes home recorded webinar	2
Cannabis impact on the developing brain recorded webinar	2
Engaging with resistant parents recorded seminar	3

The awareness week was well attended by a range of professionals and agencies, with positive reception and engagement from attendees. Attendance at the events is shown by agency in the chart below.



A feedback form was circulated to attendees of awareness week events, to which 19 responses we received. Respondents overwhelmingly found the week beneficial with 95% indicating the content was very useful, and the additional 1 respondent rating it as somewhat useful. All respondents indicated that they were likely to use the campaign resources in their practice. Feedback indicated that respondents valued factual, informative, non-biased content and the presenter's expertise, as well as repeatedly referencing the benefit of practical aids for conversations and assessment in practice.

"More confidence when using professional challenge, and I'm using the CMSH resources with several families!"

"A better understanding of how to work with families where cannabis use is a factor so that children in such families are better safeguarded."

"I feel more knowledgeable about the issue and therefore more able to have conversations with young people about cannabis use and able to support them to make informed choices about it."

"I feel more confident to advise practitioners about working with parents who use cannabis."

Clear Minds, Safer Homes awareness week attendees

An evaluation will be undertaken to provide insight into the usage and impact of the campaign. Both quantitative and qualitative information will be sought in order to provide an assessment of reach and effectiveness. The evaluation will be reported to the KSCMP Executive in late 2026. Anecdotal feedback has been received about the campaign and the resources, which has been overwhelmingly positive, and the KSCMP has been approached by other Partnerships seeking to create their own similar resources. A Kent district council also used the campaign resources and principles to create their own bespoke leaflet, which was subsequently shared with the KSCMP District Council Safeguarding Group.

"I recently came across your infographic for the 'Clear Minds Safer Homes' campaign on LinkedIn, and I just wanted to say how fantastic it looks and what a great start you have had with the campaign!

I also wanted to share that our school is currently working towards the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA), which includes strengthening communication with families and sharing valuable resources from our partner agencies. With that in mind, shortly after your campaign materials were published, we sent a letter to all 250 families in our school community, including your resources as part of our outreach.

Cannabis use among parents is a real concern in our school community, and we have been working hard to engage families in a supportive and constructive way. I am pleased to share that we're already seeing a positive impact with some key families."

Assistant Headteacher, Kent Secondary School

Section Five: Key decisions and actions taken by Safeguarding Partners

Lead Safeguarding Partner decisions

The Lead Safeguarding Partners met in November 2025 in order to review the overall effectiveness of the KSCMP, taking assurance on safeguarding activity, scrutiny arrangements and system leadership. They received updates on the Partnership's response to serious incidents, practice reviews and inspections, noting strong multi-agency responsiveness, positive feedback from the recent Ofsted ILACS inspection and examples of effective partnership working. The Independent Scrutineer highlighted strengths in subgroup activity and practice review quality, whilst also raising concerns about the maturity and clarity of scrutiny governance, particularly the role and responsibilities of the SAAS. The LSPs agreed that scrutiny arrangements were improving but required further embedding and clearer oversight.

The meeting also considered financial sustainability, with agreement in principle that Safeguarding Partner contributions required increasing to address budget pressures, and a commitment to progress a 'right-sized' budget for future years. The LSPs also agreed to rotate the chair of the LSP group in line with the KSCMP arrangements, confirming that Kent and Medway NHS Integrated Care Board (KMICB) will assume the chair role.

Decisions made by the LSPs in 2025/26 include:

- Scrutiny governance and implementation to be considered at a future LSP meeting.
- Learning themes emerging from practice reviews and persistent challenges in implementing actions to be considered at a future LSP meeting.
- Endorsement of the KSCMP 2026-27 priorities and strategic plan.
- Sign-off of the revised KSCMP Arrangements, Scrutiny and Assurance Framework, and Practice Improvement Framework.
- To 'right size' the KSCMP budget to ensure the Partnership has sufficient funding to meet its obligations and ambitions.

Executive decisions

The KSCMP Executive (the Delegated Safeguarding Partners) have continued to meet frequently in both scheduled and extraordinary meetings throughout the year, providing strategic leadership with a sustained focus on learning from harm and readiness for significant national and local reform. A notable area of activity was the oversight of practice reviews and serious incident responses, including scrutiny of recurring learning themes, review backlogs and escalation where agreed actions were not being progress at pace.

The Executive also shaped the Partnership's strategic direction, agreeing to refocus the KSCMP strategic priorities for 2026/27[15] on three clear outcomes: fewer children experiencing abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Executive further considered updates to the Partnership's arrangements, ensuring alignment with Working Together and reinforcing clear escalation pathways. Particular attention was given to strengthening scrutiny governance, clarifying the role of the subgroups, and supporting the Independent Scrutineer through the development of a structured scrutiny workplan.

The Executive gave significant attention to preparation for, and response to, national policy and system change, including the Families First reforms and the development of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs). The Executive agreed key design principles for MACPTs, including multi-agency ownership, workforce experience, and flexibility to respond to local government reorganisation and wider health and policing reforms. The Executive also considered evidence and assurance from audits, data dashboards and benchmarking activity, using this intelligence to guide decision-making on child sexual abuse strategy development, exploitation responses, education engagement and learning and development priorities.

Financial sustainability was another key area of Executive activity, scrutinising the Partnership's budget position and acknowledging risks posed by rising costs and static contributions. The Executive agreed that Safeguarding Partner funding would need to be reviewed and 'right-sized' for future years.

Decisions made by the Executive in 2025/26 include:

- A KSCMP response to the CSPRP's briefing on race and racism to be developed by both SAAS and LIG.
- Agreed recommendations of the Training Needs Analysis to be implemented[16].
- Agreed recommendations in response to the Learning Support and Capability Project Report.
- Agreed 2026-27 KSCMP priorities and strategic plan.
- Sign-off of the revised KSCMP Arrangements, Scrutiny and Assurance Framework, and Practice Improvement Framework.
- The KSCMP Child Exploitation Oversight Group to undertake local benchmarking against the Casey Audit of group-based child sexual exploitation[17].
- Safeguarding Partners to increase the annual funding contribution to the KSCMP.
- Endorsed the KSCMP Child Sexual Abuse action plan.
- Endorsed a review of the Kent Support Levels Guidance to be undertaken.
- Endorsed a Kent LCSPR.

[15] See page 49
[16] See page 50
[17] See page 13

- Defined key principles and boundaries for the development of MACPTs in Kent.
- A Scrutiny Plan to be developed to focus work of the Independent Scrutineer.
- Introduction of a training administration charge for non-financially contributing partners.

Section Six: Financial breakdown and value for money

Funding arrangements

Breakdown of funding from each Safeguarding Partner

Agency	Contributions in 2025/2026
Kent County Council	£325,520.53
Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board	£62,662.95
Kent Health providers	£53,711.10
Kent Police	£45,933.98
District and Borough Councils	£18,000
Kent, Surrey and Sussex Probation Service	£2,910.40
Kent Fire and Rescue Service	£5,000
Training income	£42,308
Total	**£556,046.96**

Changes to funding arrangements compared to previous years

Following detailed assessments, triangulating the KSCMP's financial position, agreed work programmes aligning with the Partnership's priorities and projected operating costs for future financial years, the KSCMP LSPs and Executive agreed to an uplift in financial contributions from Kent Police and KMICB statutory Safeguarding Partner agencies. This 'right sizing' of the KSCMP budget puts the Partnership in a strong position to continue to deliver a comprehensive programme of work that is focused on addressing identified areas for improvement as well as building on areas of strength.

Breakdown of Partnership expenditure

Expenditure	Amount
Staffing (including Independent Scrutineer)	£465,681.98
Learning and development	£62,393.37
Practice Reviews	£11,247.50
IT	£13,916.71
Other	£2,807.40
Total	**£556,046.96**

Assessment of impact and value for money

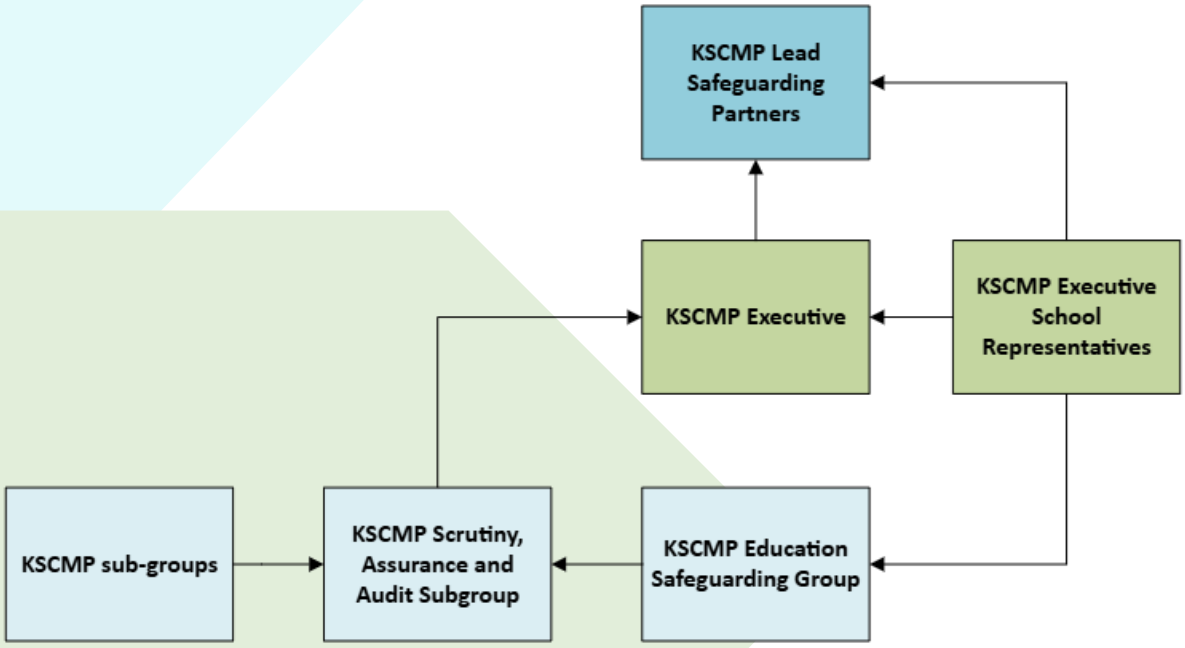
Whilst coordinating a large number of activities and projects, the KSCMP works hard to really assess the 'so what?' question – how do we know we are doing the right things and how do we know they are making a difference? The Partnership has a number of approaches that we use to help us answer these questions and one is our process of formal scrutiny. The KSCMP's Independent Scrutineer can 'deep dive into any area of Partnership work she deems merit her attention to assure herself, and the Partnership as a whole, that we are doing the right things in the right way. The Partnership subgroups also provide forum for partner agencies to hold each other to account and constructively challenge one another – most notably the SAAS which oversees Partnership performance holistically and our LIG, which works to translate LCSPR recommendations into achievable and measurable actions the evidence against which is then assessed by this multi-agency group of professionals to ensure its sufficiency. The Partnership also undertakes benchmarking exercises to assess our performance, patterns and local presentations of harm against national learning – both in relation to reports issued by the national CSPRP or against inspection frameworks (both single and JTAI frameworks). To add to this, the Partnership also undertakes a comprehensive multi-agency audit programme to better understand areas of challenge and assess whether work we are undertaking to address concerns are making a difference.

We also know we are making a difference by whether we are able to effect national change. As a direct result of the KSCMP's EatSafe campaign and subsequent liaison between the Partnership and Department for Education (DfE), there have been significant changes made to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. The Partnership was also consulted on the whole document and supported the updating of the allergy section of the guidance, again drawing directly on findings and learning from our practice reviews. On top of this the Partnership helped co-produce updates to the EYFS nutrition guidance again using what we have learnt from relevant practice reviews to inform particularly the sections related to allergies. We use all these mechanisms to assess where we are in terms of our individual and collective provision, how we measure up against national learning and best practice, and to help us work out where to best target our efforts and focus our attention in order to make a measurable difference for children, to ensure we are using our resources effectively, that Partnership investment is appropriately aligned to our priorities and outcomes set out in our strategic plan.

Section Seven: Representation of education sector

Education representation in the Partnership

The structure chart below gives an overview of how education is represented within the KSCMP.



Representation in Partnership Leadership

Strategic education representation in the KSCMP was established in response to the requirements of Working Together 2023, enhancing the existing Partnership Education Safeguarding Group. The KSCMP Executive membership was extended to include two Kent school leaders, one primary and one secondary representing both local authority maintained and academy schools, who began to attend KSCMP Executive meetings from January 2025.

The role of the school representatives is to provide a view from a Kent school leader, not to represent or speak on behalf of all schools or education in Kent, which individual school leaders are not able to do. They act in an advisory capacity, to enable the KSCMP Executive to consider a school perspective in their discussions and decision making. The KSCMP Arrangements also outline that the representatives will be invited to attend the LSP meetings. Whilst this was not possible in 2025 owing to the LSP meetings still being established, the representatives have been invited to the planned LSP meetings in 2026/27.

Education Safeguarding Group

The Education Safeguarding Group has a core group of members from across the education sector as well as a range of KCC services. The Group has met four times this year. Over the past six months, the Group's membership was expanded to strengthen the education voice contributing to Partnership learning and strategic development. This has resulted in improved representation from early years settings, alongside the inclusion of additional secondary school representatives and an independent school representative. The Group now has 20 members from a wide variety of education establishments across Kent.

The Group provides a structured forum through which education influences Partnership learning, identifies emerging risks, supports dissemination of practice review learning and national developments, and comments on priorities.

Education Engagement Events

The KSCMP began hosting twice annual education engagement events in 2025/26, to offer an opportunity for education settings to hear about and engage directly Partnership activities.

In May 2025 the first two virtual events were attended by a total of 165 education colleagues. Each event covered the same agenda, focusing on how education is represented in the Partnership, promoting training, education relevant resources, practice review learning, and the role and work of the KSCMP Education Safeguarding Group. Feedback was sought from attendees about future agenda items they would like covered.

In November 2025 the second set of events were held, attended by 112 education colleagues. These covered learning from the LCSPR 'James', updates on education relevant Partnership activity, an overview of the Navigate Wellbeing resource, and an update from Kent Police on Operation Encompass.

Education Newsletter

A bespoke KSCMP education newsletter supports improved safeguarding awareness, consistency in practice and engagement with training and relevant updates for those working in the education sector.

Five KSCMP education newsletters were circulated in this year:

- May 2025 **viewed 1,072 times**
- July 2025 **viewed 597 times**
- October 2025 **viewed 472 times**
- January 2026 **viewed 1,502 times**
- March 2026 **viewed 874 times**[18]

[18] Views are as at 31/03/26

Outreach

In 2025/26, the KSCMP maintained strong engagement with The Education People (TEP) and KCC's LADO and Education Safeguarding Advisory Service (LESAS) through regular representation at key network meetings.

In December 2025, the KSCMP Business Team presented an overview of key Partnership activity and learning particularly relevant to early years providers at the TEP Early Years and Childcare Service Away Day. Engagement with TEP, who offer direct support and guidance to early years providers, ensures they have up-to-date information about KSCMP work and priorities to share onwards. Through the away day, links were made to consult with early years providers on the impact of the EatSafe campaign, and members were identified for the working group currently developing its second phase.

Attendance at relevant network meetings also supported KSCMP engagement with the education sector. Throughout February 2026, the KSCMP Business Team attended TEP Early Years and Childcare network sessions to highlight and share education relevant materials produced by the Partnership on a wide range of themes. LESAS Designated Safeguarding Lead meetings were also attended by the KSCMP Business Team to share Partnership resources, notably the mental health and wellbeing signposting work.

This has supported improved communication with a wide range of education settings, strengthened sector awareness of KSCMP resources, and helped ensure key safeguarding messages reach practitioners across the county.

Section Eight: Use of data and information sharing

Data

In line with Working Together to Safeguard Children, the Partnership uses a range of data to support continuous learning and improvement and to strengthen outcomes for children and families. Data relating to learning themes from Rapid Reviews, audits, training activity, and Partnership communications is analysed and triangulated to identify risks, test the effectiveness of practice, and inform proportionate multi-agency action.

The Partnership draws on a wide range of data sources, including multi-agency audit findings, performance dashboards, practice reviews, and workforce development data, to build comprehensive understanding of safeguarding practice across the system. This enables the identification of both strengths and systemic gaps, including issues relating to thresholds, assessment quality, the child's voice and information sharing.

The Partnership routinely collects and reviews a range of performance, learning and engagement data aligned with the current KSCMP priorities. This includes performance dashboards and trend data, learning themes dashboards, workforce development and training data, and engagement with safeguarding resources. This data comes from a wide range of partners including KCC ICS, Kent Police and Health partners, alongside data held by the KSCMP Business Team in relation to their own work. As previously highlighted in this report, the SAAS group supported the development of clearer, scorecard style reporting aligned to the KSCMP Strategic Plan, improving the ability of the Partnership to monitor progress, identify emerging risks and focus improvement activity where it is most needed. This scorecard approach will monitor the 43 success measures of the Strategic Plan. Data and audits are reviewed through established governance structures (SAAS and the Executive) and are used to monitor progress, identify emerging issues, and ensure that improvement activity remains responsive and proportionate.

Data is routinely used to inform targeted improvement activity, including the development of action plans, training programmes, and policy updates. For example, findings from multi-agency audits have identified areas requiring strengthening, such as awareness of the LADO and safer recruitment procedures (Section 11 2024), use of the escalation policy, consistency of online training across agencies, which have directly informed Partnership improvement plans and workforce development activity.

This approach is contributing to improved multi-agency working and practice quality. Audit evidence indicates strengthened information sharing and escalation, alongside a reduction in some previously recurring themes. In addition, projects such as the EatSafe campaign have used engagement and feedback data to refine resources and improve their reach and effectiveness, supporting safer practice across education settings.

Overall, this approach ensures that data is used dynamically across the Partnership to inform understanding, drive improvement, and provide robust assurance of safeguarding effectiveness. By combining performance data, audit findings and learning from practice, the Partnership is able to identify risk at an earlier stage, respond proportionately and strengthen multi-agency practice. As a result, KSCMP hopes that children and families benefit from more timely, informed and consistent safeguarding responses, with ongoing work to improve measurable and sustained improvement across the system.

Section Nine: Implementation of national reforms

Families First Partnership Programme

The Kent Families First Partnership Programme aims to ensure that every child and family in Kent, as appropriate, has access to tailored support from the right professionals at the earliest opportunity. Through improved multi-agency collaboration, integrated strengths-based services and enhanced workforce development, the Programme's goal is to empower children and families to thrive, build resilience and reach their full potential. The Programme has brought together Safeguarding Partner agencies to design and deliver the new approaches to practice, in-line with legislation and guidance. Shared commitments are set out in the Family First Vision, Strategic Partnership Agreement and governance arrangements, focusing on integrated delivery, joint planning, and effective data sharing.

KCC leads programme coordination, working to ensure integration across Early Help, Children's Social Care and Education. Kent Police and KMICB are contributing to the design and implementation of the Programme at both operational and strategic levels e.g. all Safeguarding Partner agencies are standing members of the Families First Programme Board. The KSCMP Executive and LSP Board are provided with updates in relation to the Programme progress and endorse key elements of Programme activity. Both groups also provide an advisory function in relation to progress and deliverables whilst the Kent Strategic Reset Programme Board provides oversight and assurance on progress, quality, and delivery.

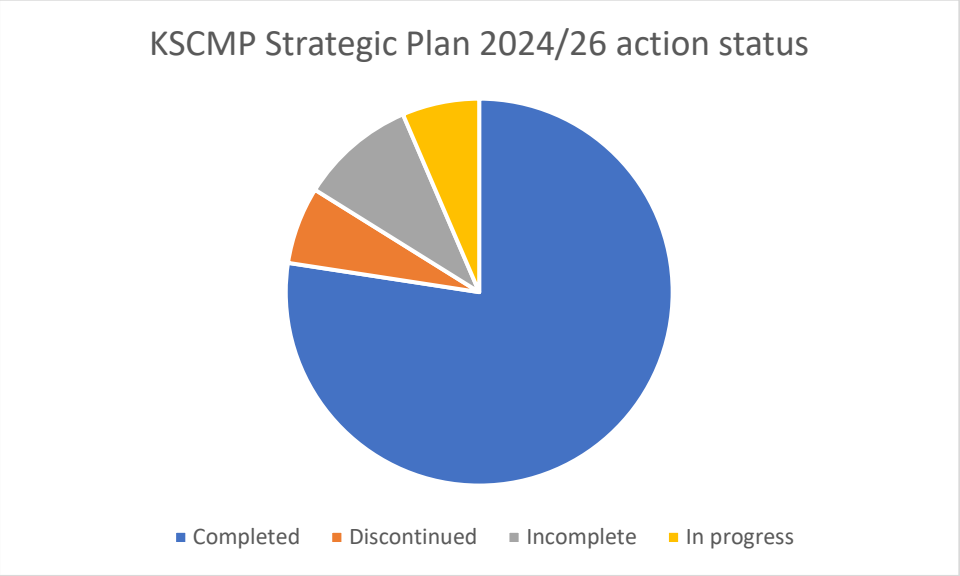
Section Ten: Strategic Priorities

2024-26 Partnership Priorities

The 2024-26 KSCMP priorities were:

- **Mental health of children and young people:** Children to be supported in their social and emotional wellbeing and attunement and receive early intervention in line with their needs.
- **Impact of parent mental health:** Children not to be unsafe due to parental mental health neds.
- **Effective multi-agency working:** Professionals to be courageous and confident in multi-agency working, being able to share information and risk effectively.
- **Online safety:** Children to be supported to be safe online and be able to access advice and support where needed.

The 2024-26 Strategic Plan set out what activity the Partnership expected to undertake and how progress would be measured. Delivery of the plan was monitored via SAAS quarterly, as well as the priority data dashboard, which outlined key data associated with the priority themes. At the end of the two-year plan cycle in December 2025, 24 of the 31 actions had been completed, with 2 others discontinued, and 2 in progress and expected to be completed. The chart below provides an overview of the actions status.



Mental Health of Children and Young People

In 2025/26 the Partnership commissioned an LCSPR where exploring professional understanding of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLs) thresholds and their

application is a key line of enquiry. At the time of writing, a first draft of the report is pending.

Collated learning from Kent practice reviews relevant to the mental health of children and young people was also presented to the Kent and Medway Suicide Prevention Network.

The KSCMP Business Team submitted evidence to the Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy 2026-2030 consultation, consolidating system learning identified as a result of Kent Rapid Reviews and LCSPRs.

The KSCMP has also ran a further Youth Mental Health First Aid course in this year, which was completed by 18 professionals.

Navigate Wellbeing: Mental Health signposting for education settings



In response to feedback from the Education Safeguarding Group highlighting difficulties accessing the wealth of mental health resources that are on offer to them at times of crisis, KSCMP convened a dedicated Mental Health and Wellbeing Working Group to co-design a practical solution with education practitioners. This work led to the development of the Navigate Wellbeing: Mental Health signposting for education settings resource, launched in November 2025, which provides clear, accessible signposting to support. It has been positively received across the sector, demonstrating strong engagement and ongoing demand as a tool that supports day-to-day safeguarding practice for education professionals working with and supporting children and families in Kent. The initial version of the tool had **been downloaded 342 times** and version 2 was launched in 25th March 2026. The tool contains live links and so is reviewed and refreshed quarterly with additional themes and updated links.

"The fact that it has information suitable for school professionals, the child and parents in one place. We also find the split into proactive/preventative, short and long term support very useful. Though we will carry out due diligence, it is helpful to know that the resources have been pre-vetted as being suitable. The areas covered are comprehensive. We have previously collated all this information ourselves so having it in this format, and regularly updated, for all our pastoral and SEND team members to use is great and we can pick and choose the most suitable resources. Thank you for your work on this."

Education professional

"Self-harm, Bereavement and Anxiety resources and sign posting. It really [sic] useful to have all the potential support and resources on one document."

Education professional

Impact of Parent Mental Health

As highlighted earlier in this report[19] this year saw the Partnership complete development of and launch a video campaign, 'I'm Lucy' which seeks to raise awareness of the fact that children should not be considered protective factors for their parent or carer's mental health.

Audit of Children as Protective Factors

Kent and Medway Mental Health Service (KMMH – formerly Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust) undertook an audit and reported findings to LIG, evidencing the extent to which learning that children should not be seen as protective factors for their parent or carer's mental health had been embedded in practice. KMMH reported how the learning from the audit had already been acted on to support further improvement and would continue to be considered in future. The audit is a strong example of LIG's intended audit and assurance cycle, demonstrating how recommendations from reviews lead to tangible practice changes and follow-up.

Effective Multi-agency Working

Escalation

Consistent and appropriate use of escalation processes has continued to be an area of learning identified in Rapid Reviews and LCSPRs. Previous annual reports have highlighted efforts undertaken to build assurance and promote the use of escalation processes. Following further exploration by LIG and the Policy and Procedure

[19] See page 28

Group, as well as learning from Rapid Reviews in this year, the Kent Escalation and Professional Challenge Policy was comprehensively revised and a new Kent Safeguarding Children Escalation Procedure published in March 2026. The revised procedure places emphasis on the professional duty to use the escalation procedure where a concern is held about the action or inaction of another agency to safeguard a child, as well as clearly outlining responsibilities of those receiving escalations (for example, to respond within given timeframes, and provide relevant contact details to support escalation). Further supporting resources will be developed in 2026 to promote the procedure and professional responsibilities.

In addition, further related actions have been agreed from Rapid Reviews, including KCC's LADO and Education Safeguarding Advisory Service (LESAS) amending training for education to be more explicit in outlining the requirement to use the escalation process when relevant, and a similar request being made to TEP to include the responsibility within the template child protection policy for education providers.

Information Sharing

In response to consistent learning identified regarding a lack of confidence in information sharing and building upon previous activities to support practitioners in sharing information to safeguard children appropriately, a new video explainer 'consent and safeguarding children' was developed by the KSCMP. Following publication in August 2025 it has been **viewed 317 times** up to the end of March 2026.

Following sharing of the video explainer, a school contacted the KSCMP to express thanks for the resource and also request consideration be given to developing a similar video which considers the transfer of safeguarding files within education. The KSCMP recognised this as another area of learning which had been identified in practice reviews, as well as an area which had been considered by the KSCMP Education Safeguarding Group previously, and so produced a video explainer 'sharing education safeguarding files'. Following publication in January 2026 it has been **viewed 147 times** up to the end of March 2026.

Online Safety

As reported elsewhere in this report[20] an audit was undertaken of single agency training regarding online safety. In addition LIG continued to track an action arising from a LCSPR to seek assurance from agencies on how the use of social media and online spaces is factored into agencies' assessments of risks and needs of children.

The KSCMP learning and development programme continued to include commissioned Online Safety training this year, with a further 4 workshops held **attended by 84 professionals**.

[20] See page 14

2026-27 Partnership Priorities

The KSCMP Arrangements and the Scrutiny and Assurance Framework outline an expectation that each KSCMP subgroup and Relevant Agency will contribute towards the agreed priorities, with progress against the strategic plan monitored by SAAS, as well as reporting to the KSCMP Executive at appropriate intervals.

The KSCMP Executive agreed that revised Partnership priorities would be developed for 2026-27. Being mindful of the current scope of significant national and local legislative and policy change, as well as reflecting on learning from the 2024-26 priorities and strategic plan, the new priorities focus on the fundamental purpose of the Partnership. The Partnership priorities are to deliver a safeguarding system which means that:

- Fewer children experience abuse
- Fewer children experience neglect
- Fewer children experience exploitation.

In recognition that these priorities are broad in nature, areas of focus have also been identified within each priority. These areas of focus, alongside the clear success measures, and Partnership activities are outlined in the KSCMP Strategic Plan 2026-27. The plan came into effect in January 2026, with a new performance data pack agreed with SAAS to enable oversight of progress of success measures.

Section Eleven: Workforce development and capacity

Workforce

There are a number of challenges facing the multi-agency workforce in Kent, in common with the national picture. Recruitment and retention is a perennial challenge particularly in specialist areas, and agencies continue to work to maintain workforce stability and resilience. This situation may be compounded as we move into a time of strategic change, with the Families First Programme, Local Government Reorganisation, changes within health and the reforms that are anticipated within policing. The Partnership is mindful of this and agencies will continue to work together to ensure developments and risks are monitored and discussed to aid our collective understanding and, where appropriate, to facilitate joint action. Moreover, the Partnership works to ensure multi-agency training and development opportunities are available to all partners and that we are championing a Partnership-wide learning culture as well as pursuing opportunities to strengthen multi-agency practice and collaboration.

KSCMP Learning & Development Programme

Training Needs Analysis

A Training Needs Analysis (TNA) was completed and discussed with the KSCMP Executive in May 2025. The TNA found that overall the existing KSCMP Learning and Development programme offers a broad and suitable range of training which learners indicate has a positive impact on their practice. The gap analysis did not highlight significant areas as being 'missing' from the programme, with only two themes identified where further development is recommended, and a third area identified for consideration in regards to education specific content within KSCMP training.

The TNA did highlight that delivery and take-up of training is at times a challenge. The KSCMP Business Team does not have a training delivery resource, necessitating reliance on volunteers from partner organisations through the Associate Trainer programme, which has reciprocal benefits but also brings challenges in consistency and availability, and restricts the ability to offer more effective and interactive training courses.

The TNA made five recommendations, all of which were accepted by the KSCMP Executive, as well as additional actions being identified to take forward. Developments and activities agreed include:

- Incorporation of the 'I'm Lucy' resources into relevant KSCMP courses.

- Development of standalone Safer Recruitment training and resources, which are not only education specific.
- Review of KSCMP developed training courses content to incorporate case studies which share the voice of children and families, including positive practice examples.
- Development of education specific training content, including in relation to the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education, to the KSCMP training offer.
- Development of an information overview of the KSCMP Learning and Development offer with links to the KSCMP training catalogue and portal, to share with partner agencies and encourage sharing to new staff as part of induction or internal safeguarding training.

The TNA also acknowledged the need for the programme to keep pace with changes in legislation and policy over the coming months, with considerations required about what the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and Crime and Policing Bill might mean in terms of the Partnership training needs. This will be kept under review by the KSCMP Business Team and reported via the regular learning and development reports to the LIG.

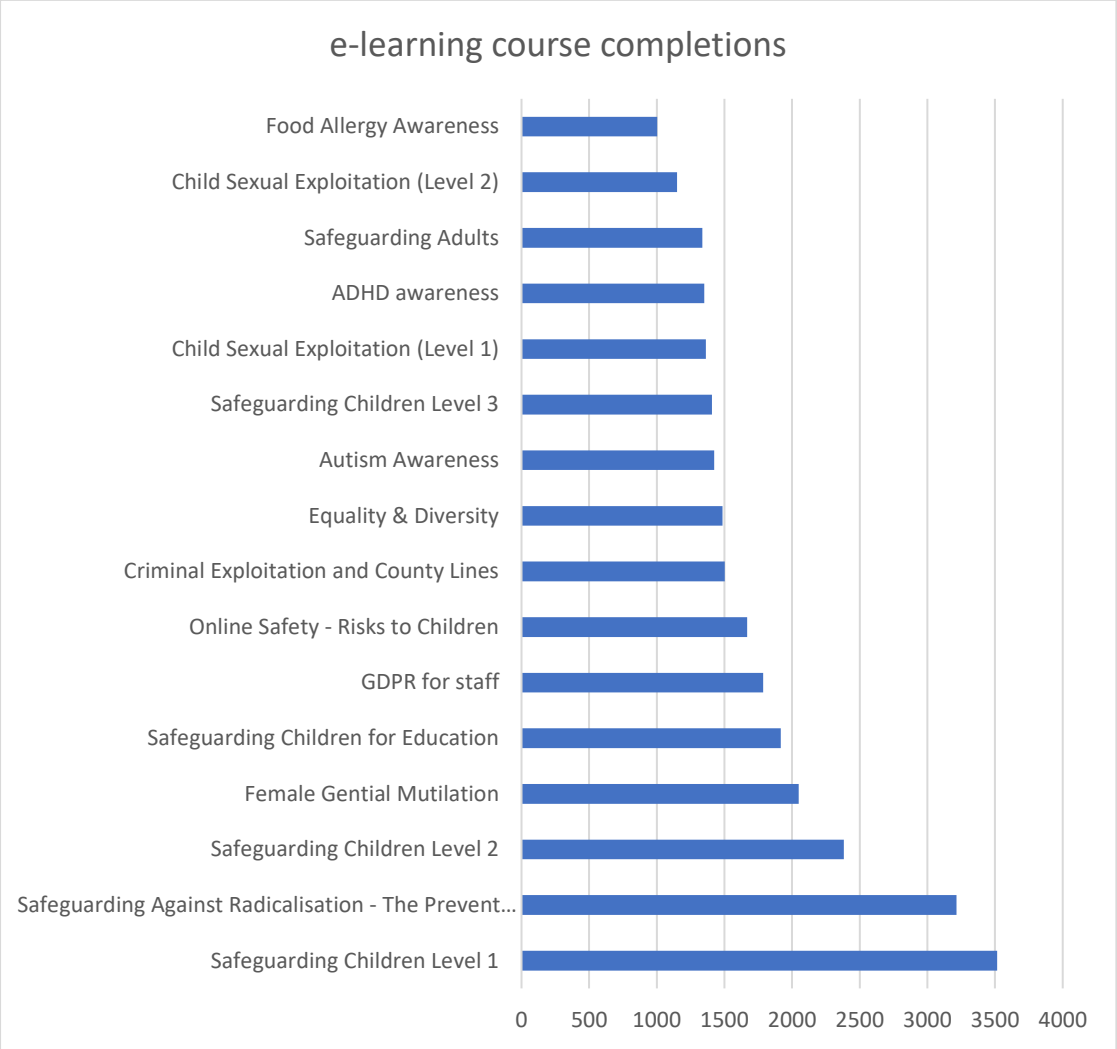
Training administration charge

Following the TNA and in the context of Partnership consideration of future financial sustainability, the KSCMP Executive agreed to implement a training administration charge from 1st April 2026. A £50 charge will be introduced for each attendance at a delivered training course for attendees who are from organisations that do not financially contribute to the Partnership. E-learning and recorded webinars will continue to be free to access for all learners, and the charge will not apply to courses delivered by the Kent and Medway Prevent Team or those which are directly funded. A process has also been introduced for small voluntary and community organisations to be able to apply for an exemption to the charge. Implementation of the charge and its impact on the accessibility and attendance of Partnership courses will be evaluated after six months.

KSCMP Training – e-learning

One new e-learning course was added to the KSCMP e-learning offer this year, exploring the Kent Practice Framework. The framework was developed in response to government reforms for multi-agency working when safeguarding children and strengthens the approach to how partners work with children and families in Kent. The e-learning course gives an overview of the six Practice Framework components and has been **completed 116 times** since it went live in August 2025.

In 2025/26 there were **49,579 completions** of e-learning courses by learners in Kent, a 14.5% increase on 2024/25. The chart below shows the courses with over 1,000 completions in this reporting year.



KSCMP Training – recorded webinars

A further eight recorded webinars were added to the KSCMP learning and development programme this year. Seven are highlighted elsewhere in this report and are recordings of live webinars and seminars; Risk of harm to children from pets seminar, Impact of Parent Mental Health on Children seminar, and the five Clear Minds, Safer Homes webinars. The final recorded webinar produced this year was Safer Recruitment for Non-Education Organisations, which was developed in response to findings from the TNA.

The KSCMP recorded webinars were **completed 2,972 times** in this year. The table below provides an overview of completions by course.

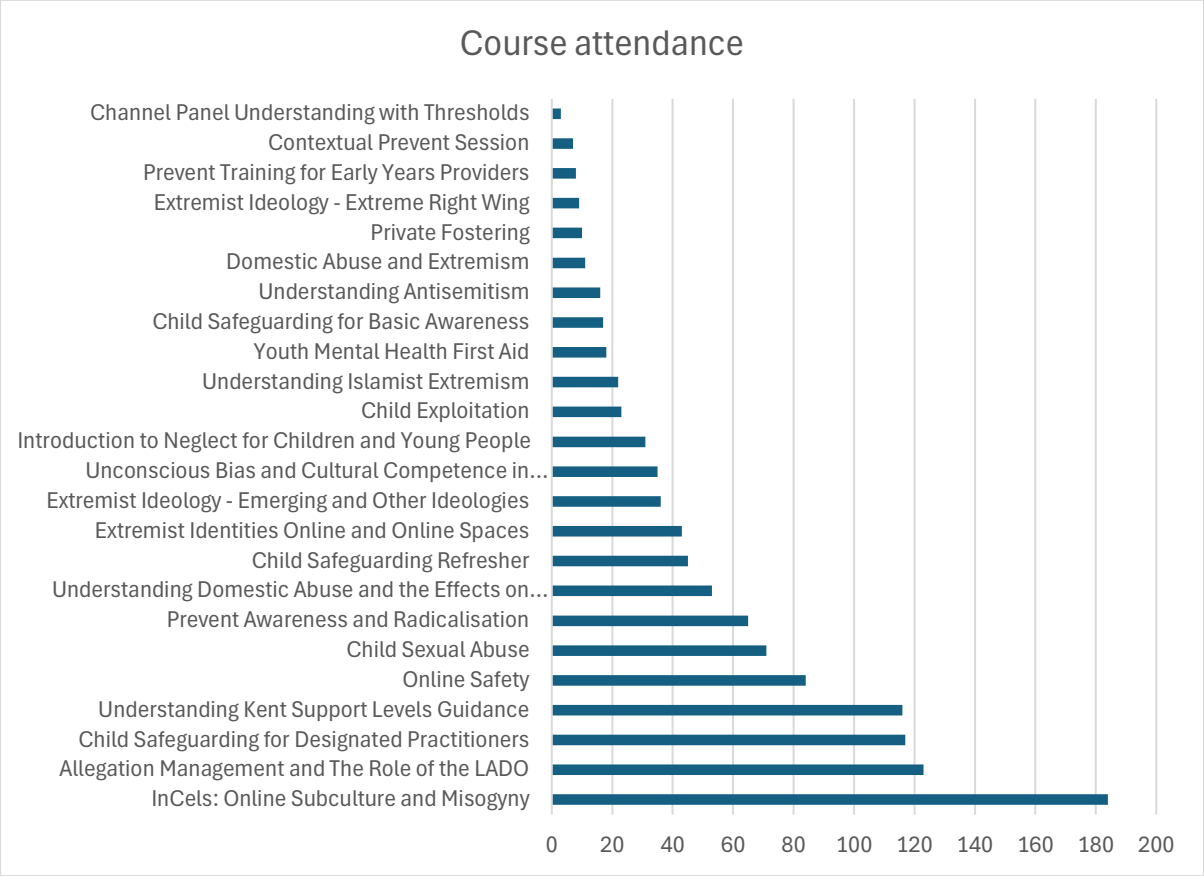
Course title	Completions
Cannabis and the Developing Brain	2
Child Exploitation Intelligence Portal	87
Clear Minds, Safer Homes	1
Cumulative Harm seminar	96
EatSafe: Safer Eating in Early Years Settings	1,882
Elective Home Education	115
Impact of Parent Mental Health on Children seminar	82
Providing Agency Reports for Practice Reviews	122
Public Law Outline and Pre-Proceedings	45
Rapid Reviews: Purpose and Agency Roles	73
Report Writing for Child Protection Conference	142
Risk of Harm to Children from Pets seminar	48
Role of LCSPR Panel Members	98
Safer Recruitment for Non-Education Organisations	103
Understanding Kent Father Inclusive Guidance	71
When Cannabis Comes Home	2
Working with Resistant Parents seminar	3
TOTAL	**2,972**

Note: the five webinars associated with the Clear Minds, Safer Homes campaign were only made live a week before the end of the reporting year.

KSCMP Training – delivered

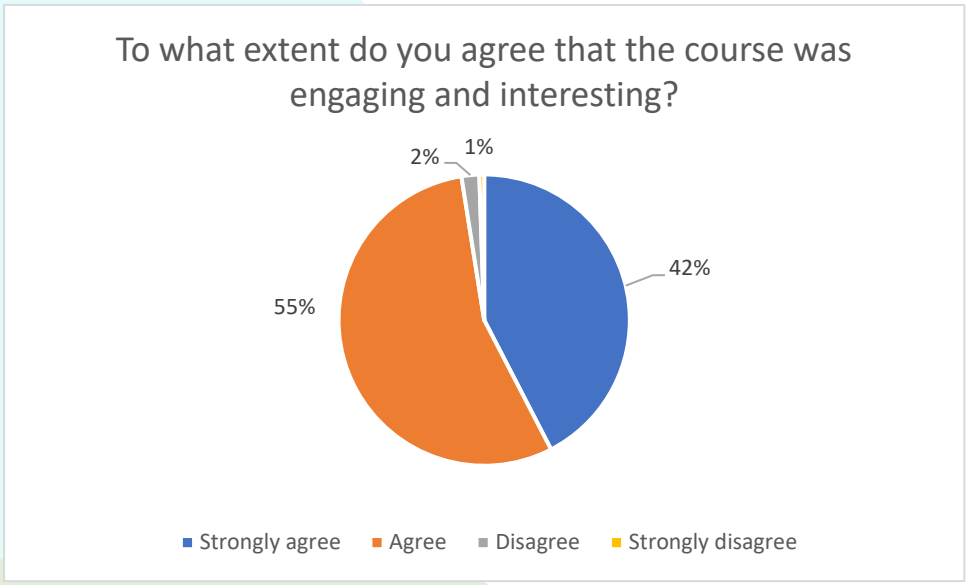
One new delivered course was included into the KSCMP learning and development programme in 2025/26, the Understanding and Responding to Child Exploitation course. The Partnership had ambitions for a local child exploitation course for some time, which it was able to develop this year following completed revision of the Kent and Medway Child Exploitation Identification Tool.

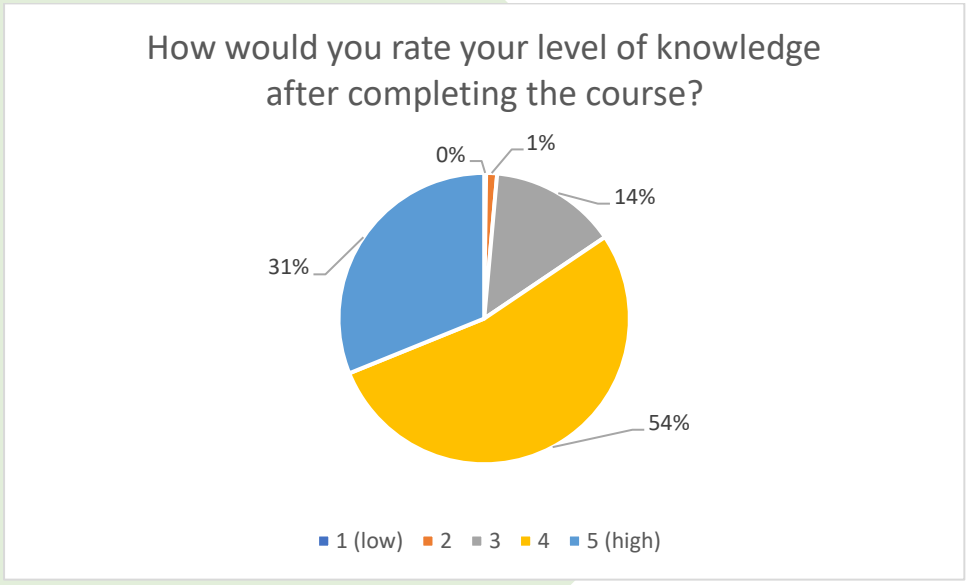
In this year, KSCMP delivered courses have been **attended 1,147 times**. The chart below shows attendance breakdown by course.

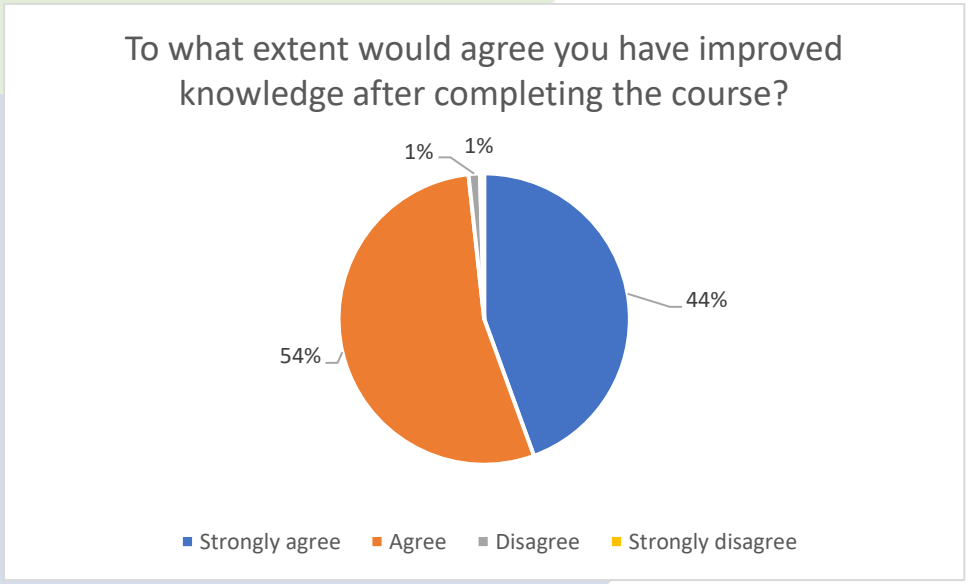


Impact of training

Feedback is routinely collected from learners who complete KSCMP training, looking to ascertain both views on the quality and content as well as evidence of impact of learning on professionals' knowledge. The feedback data is collated within the Partnership learning and development dashboard, reviewed regularly by the KSCMP Business Team and in quarterly reports to LIG. The charts below show feedback gathered from learners since July 2022 when the new training portal came online. Due to the way the MeLearning system records feedback, it is not possible to break feedback down by the date a course was completed, only by when it was submitted. As it is not possible to know whether feedback submitted relates to recent or older completion of learning, the feedback is viewed in totality. Whilst the chart represents feedback related to all KSCMP courses (e-learning, recorded webinars and delivered courses), it can be filtered by individual course and is reviewed by course to identify any specific issues or feedback.


To what extent do you agree that the course was engaging and interesting?
2%
1%
42%
55%
Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree


How would you rate your level of knowledge after completing the course?
0%
1%
14%
31%
54%
1 (low)
2
3
4
5 (high)


To what extent would agree you have improved knowledge after completing the course?
1%
1%
44%
54%
Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

"Very clear, detailed, and thorough course, answered a lot of my questions and helped me become more knowledgeable in this area."

"An excellent course which looked at DA and the impact on children in a much broader context which is both accurate and helpful."

"The course was clear, informative, and easy to follow. It gave a food understanding of safeguarding principles. I feel more confident in recognising and responding to concerns."

KSCMP learners

Section Twelve: Future planning

Planned activities for 2026-27

Partnership Conference 2026

In May 2026 the KSCMP will build on last year's conference by hosting its second in-person event, open to a range of agencies and professionals. Agenda items include the revised KSCMP priorities, local responses to Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation, practice review learning and hearing directly about a family's experience of being engaged in a Kent LCSPR.

Section 11 – Review and planning for 2026 audit

Through its focus on leadership, governance, workforce capability, information sharing and multi-agency working, the Section 11 audit provides critical assurance that organisations are discharging their statutory responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. By identifying strengths and areas for development across agencies, the audit supports early identification of practice gaps that could otherwise impact the quality or consistency of safeguarding responses experienced by children and families.

Planning for the 2026 Section 11 audit built directly on the strengths and learning from the 2024 cycle, including positive feedback about the electronic audit system, reducing panel meeting times to a focused two-hour, and the use of survey data packs to support triangulation. The 2024 audit saw strong partner engagement and a significant increase in survey responses, which reinforced the decision to maintain the same overall structure and joint approach with Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership for 2026.

Several improvements have taken place ready for 2026, including refining success criteria wording and updating survey questions to reflect new Partnership priorities, alongside seeking more in relation to implementation of practice review learning, and exploring enhancements within the electronic audit system. These changes aim to strengthen clarity, consistency, and the overall quality of evidence submitted, and the link between audit findings and safeguarding practice.

The 2026 audit will follow a similar timetable to 2024, launching in May 2026 with submissions due by early September, panel meetings in October, second stage of audit submission in November and analysis completed by December ahead of reporting in early 2027.

Learning in Practice events

In 2026/27 the KSCMP Business Team is running three pilot events designed to support professionals currently working with children and families where needs are complex and escalating. These sessions will draw on learning from Rapid Reviews and LCSPRs to provide a structured, supportive space to think through real-life

challenges in practice, supporting direct work with families and the development of multi-agency action plans. The sessions will be fully evaluated to measure impact.

Section Thirteen: Conclusion

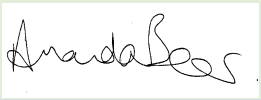
Conclusion by the Lead Safeguarding Partners

This annual report demonstrates our collective commitment as Lead Safeguarding Partners to maintaining robust, effective and collaborative safeguarding arrangements for children in Kent. Over the last year, the Partnership has continued to operate within a challenging and evolving landscape, marked by increasing demand, workforce pressures and significant national reform. Despite this, partners have remained focused on learning from harm, responding to scrutiny and inspection, and strengthening the system's ability to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

As Lead Safeguarding Partners, we have taken assurance on how the Partnership meets its statutory responsibilities, including leadership and scrutiny. This report evidences progress in the maturity of Partnership arrangements, clearer escalation pathways, and continued alignment between learning from serious incidents and KSCMP activity and priorities.

We recognise that Working Together to Safeguard Children places a clear expectation on Lead Safeguarding Partners to hold the system to account and to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. In response, we have supported the strengthening of scrutiny and assurance structures, and endorsed revised Partnership arrangements and strategic priorities.

Over the next year we will look to consolidate progress, respond confidently to national reform, and maintain a focus on outcomes. We remain committed to supporting the Partnership to deliver a safeguarding system in which children are protected from harm.



Amanda Beer,
Chief Executive,
Kent County Council



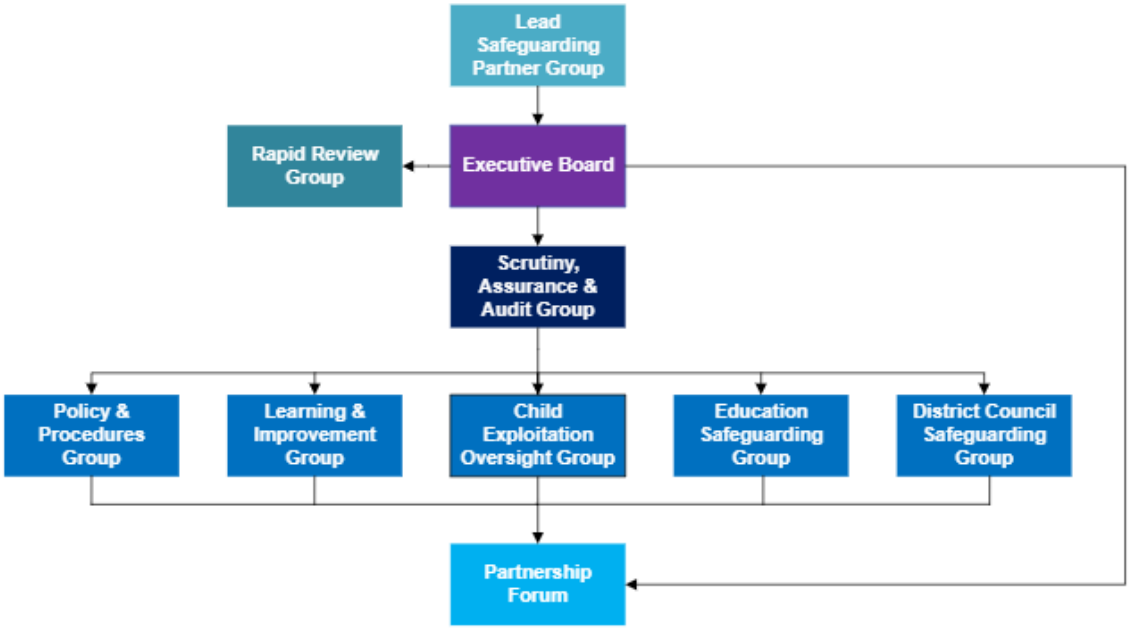
Adam Doyle,
Chief Executive,
Kent and Medway NHS
Integrated Care Board



Tim Smith,
Chief Constable,
Kent Police

Appendices

Appendix One: KSCMP Structure



Kent Safeguarding Children multi-agency partnership
LISTEN TO FAMILIES
BE CURIOUS
TRIANGULATE INFORMATION

Appendix Two: Data references

1. 2024 Mid Year Population. Source: ONS, from Kent Analytics (KCC).
2. Children living in **relative** low income families (defined as a family in low income before housing costs in the reference year. Source DWP (2023/24), from Kent Analytics (KCC)
3. Source: MIU, KCC Snapshot as at 31/3/2026.
4. Number of missing episodes – open to CSW, EH, OLA or not open to CSWS (totalled). Source: MIU, KCC.
5. Referrals are for the NELFT single point of access and include referrals to Kent Children and Young People's mental health service and the Neurodevelopmental diagnostic assessment service. (This figure includes Crisis, Neuro and Locality together.) NELFT are one of four providers of ND assessments in Kent, and provide them for 11+ in West and North Kent and 8+ in East Kent. Referral data is across Kent (excludes Medway) in the 12 months up to and including March 2025. Source: NELFT (Kent and Medway ICB).
6. Ethnic minority categories excluded are: White English, White British, Other White British, Scottish, Welsh, Cornish, Not obtained, refused and not stated. Ethnic Minority includes pupils classed as White Other. Source: January 2026 School census from MIU, KCC.
7. Source: January 2026 School Census from MIU, KCC.
8. Source: MIU, KCC Snapshot as at 31/3/2026.
9. Source: MIU, KCC Snapshot as at 31/3/2026.
10. Breakdown of Youth Justice Caseload population (Snapshot). Source: MIU, KCC Snapshot as of month end Mar 2026. (This indicator has changed slightly since the previous KSCMP annual report in 2025. It now includes out-of-court resolutions).
11. Source: MIU, KCC Snapshot as at 31/3/2026.
12. Number of young people at high risk of child exploitation (number of YP who have had a risk of CSE identified Apr 25 to Mar 26) split by involvement with EH or CSWS. Source MIU, KCC. (This indicator has changed since the previous KSCMP annual report in 2025 and also some additional data changes and validation work has impacted on the measure).
13. Number of C&F assessments where one of the factors identified was young carers (Apr 25 – Mar 26) Source: MIU, KCC.
14. Source: MIU, KCC Snapshot as at 31/3/2026.
15. Number of C&F assessments where domestic abuse was identified as a factor of the assessment, broken down into 3 categories (Domestic Violence – Child,

Domestic Violence – Parent, Domestic Violence – Other) (Apr 25 – Mar 26) Source: MIU, KCC.

16. Number of Referrals to Family Group Conferencing (now renamed to Social Connections Service, by families and individuals received between Apr 25 and Mar 26. Source: MIU, KCC.

REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE

From: **Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

Christine McInnes, Interim Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

To: **Children Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 26 November 2026**

Subject: **Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2027-31**

Decision Number and Title **– 26/00064**

Key decision:

- *It involves expenditure or savings of maximum £1m*
- Affects two or more Electoral Divisions

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All electoral divisions

Summary: This report provides the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee with the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2027-31 for consideration.

Recommendation(s):
The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the proposed decision as set out in the attached PRoD (Appendix A) to approve the Commissioning Plan for Education 2027-20231 and note the Special Educational Needs and Disability Sufficiency Plan.

1. Introduction

1.1 Kent County Council (KCC), as the Local Authority (LA), has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2027-31 (KCP) is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out our future plans as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent.

1.2 The Plan sets out how we will carry out our responsibility for ensuring there are sufficient high quality places, in the right locations for all learners, while at the same time fulfilling our other responsibilities to raise education standards and promote parental preference. The Plan details the expected future need for education

provision, thereby enabling parents and education providers to put forward proposals as to how these needs might best be met.

1.3 The KCP reflects the dynamic and ongoing process of ensuring there are sufficient places for Kent children in schools, and other provisions. It is subject to regular discussion and consultation with schools, district/borough councils, KCC Elected Members, the diocesan authorities, and relevant others. The content of this Plan reflects those discussions and consultations.

1.4 The Plan includes detail of the future commissioning of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision and incorporates the SEND Sufficiency Plan 2026 within Appendix 11.3. The SEND Sufficiency Plan sets out how KCC will plan and commission sufficient, high-quality education provision for children and young people with SEND, particularly those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

2. Key Considerations and Background

The Demographic Context

2.1 Information from the Office for National Statistics shows that in 2005 there were 15,613 live births in Kent (excluding Medway). The number of births rose each year up to 2012 when there was a peak in births of 18,147 children. Since this time, birth numbers have fallen to 15,710 in 2025. KCC will continue to monitor this data and forecast its impact over time.

2.2 The number of children on the rolls of Kent schools is driven by the size of the school-aged population in the county but is also influenced by the number of children resident outside of Kent on the rolls of the county's schools, the take-up of state funded school places and other factors such as the pace and type of new housing. Due to these factors, a change in the overall school-aged population in the county does not on its own necessarily translate into the same change in the number of children on the rolls of schools in Kent. Additionally, changes in the overall school age population at County or district level do not necessarily mirror changes in population at smaller geographic levels, such as planning groups

Our Commissioning Intentions

2.3 The KCP 2027-31 identifies the need for additional permanent and temporary mainstream school and specialist places each year as follows. Additional provision will be secured through a combination of expanding existing schools and opening new ones.

2.4 Within the individual district/borough sections we break down the expected surplus/deficit of places into smaller planning groups. This enables us to identify in more detail where and when provision may need to be added or removed. The pupil growth generated by new homes is forecast to produce significant demand for school places in specific planning groups over and above underlying demographic trends. This is particularly apparent in earlier years of the Plan within a number of primary planning groups impacted by substantial planned house building. The longer-term impact of this house building is also represented by the forecast need for significant additional secondary places in the latter period of the Plan.

2.5 Additional provision will be secured through a combination of expanding existing schools and opening new ones. The overall county commissioning intentions are shown below:

Primary School Commissioning Intentions:

By 2027-28	By 2028-29	By 2029-30	By 2030-31	Post 2031
0 FE	2 FE	1 FE	0 FE	33.6 FE 10 Year R temp places

A total of 36.6FE across the Plan period and up to 10 temporary Year R places

Secondary School Commissioning Intentions

By 2027-28	By 2028-29	By 2029-30	By 2030-31	Post 2031
5.5 FE 285 Year 7 temp places	4 FE 255 Year 7 temp places	0 FE 330 Year 7 temp places	0 FE 105 Year 7 temp places	12 FE

A total of 21.5 FE across the Plan period and up to 975 temporary Year 7 places

3. Alternative Options

3.1 The KCP sets out the principles by which we determine proposals, and it forecasts the need for future provision. It also sets out in more detail plans to meet the commissioning needs which arise in each district and borough in Kent during the next five years.

3.2 The KCP provides an overarching framework for determining when and where education may be needed in the future. It sets out the forecast number of children and young people in Kent and breaks this down to smaller geographical areas (districts and planning groups) to show where there may be a need for more or fewer places. It sets out the principles which will be used to consider and evaluate individual proposals which might come forward (be commissioned) to address any identified shortage or surplus of places in a locality.

3.3 Each individual scheme that is brought forward will have a rigorous feasibility stage that is completed prior to the scheme formally being commissioned, through the appropriate democratic pathway. An integral part of this process is to identify the most suitable option to provide the additional places. Consideration is given to:

- where the additional places would be best located from an education point of view
- the physical capacity of the existing school sites and the practicality of delivery (including geographical and Highways constraints).
- providing the best value for money for the proposed scheme.

3.4 The options considered will then be detailed in the Options section of the individual committee papers associated with each decision.

3.5 Local authorities in England are not legally required to publish a strategic school place planning document as a standalone statutory obligation. However, they do

have a statutory duty under Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that there are sufficient school places available for children of compulsory school age in their area.

3.6 While publication is not mandated by law, the Department for Education (DfE) strongly encourages local authorities to produce and share strategic school place planning documents. These are expected to include medium-term forecasts, rationale for expansions or contractions, and underpinning data. This is part of a broader framework for collaborative and transparent planning with academy trusts, dioceses, and the DfE's Regions Group; the Kent Commissioning Plan achieves these aims and the option of not producing a strategic plan would not, it has therefore been rejected.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 The costs associated with delivering the commissioning intentions outlined in the plan include both capital and revenue costs.

Capital Costs

4.2 Capital costs are associated with the construction of additional school accommodation and revenue costs include providing schools with Growth Funding. The General Fund is Kent County Council's main account for financing a wide range of local services, such as social care, highways `and libraries, using income from council tax, business rates, and government grants.

4.3 Capital Costs for mainstream provision are funded through Basic Need Capital Programme, which is made up from a range of sources including Basic Need Grant, Developer Contributions, Prudential Borrowing (originally agreed to fund shortfalls in historic schemes) and other specific grants (such as schools rebuild programme). The Basic Need Grant is the largest contributor to the programme and is provided by the DfE to support local authorities fulfil their statutory duty to ensure there are enough school places for children aged 5 to 16 in their area. The grant is allocated annually, based on local authorities' own pupil forecasts and school capacity data, which they submit through the School Capacity Survey. The funding is primarily intended to support the creation of new school places - either by expanding existing schools or building new ones to meet projected demand.

4.4 Capital costs for any schemes outlined in the SEND section of the KCP, are funded from the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA) Grant. HNPCA is paid to local authorities to support the expansion or improvement of places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and those pupils requiring alternative provision (AP). Of the available funding nationally, 50% is distributed in proportion to LAs' population (as determined by the School Census) and the remaining 50% is distributed in proportion to LAs' population, weighted to reflect LAs' pupil to capacity ratio for pupils in specialist provision.

4.5 The Education capital programme is continuously reviewed, with projects entering and leaving the programme regularly in response to demand and project completions. The current programme includes projects commissioned in previous years alongside those identified within this new iteration of the KCP for the period 2027-31 KCP. This means the funding associated with the programme also includes elements of Basic Need grant provided to KCC in previous years along with elements

of other DfE grants and Developer contributions. The total estimated cost of the plan for additional mainstream places is £135m.The Basic Need programme for current and future schemes has a budget of circa £130m (in addition to further grant funding of £31m up to 27-28), and the value of projects that are currently committed is circa £98m. The current balance of circa £32m will be used to meet the cost of any new schemes identified in the 2027-31 KCP that may be identified during the coming year or in future KCPs, alongside future DfE Basic Need Grant allocations, new developer contributions and other external grants. To ensure all schemes are prioritised appropriately and expenditure is controlled within available funding, any new scheme included in the programme, first needs to be considered and agreed by Education Asset Board, before being progressed through the formal governance processes.

4.6 In respect of HNPCA, this programme has been running since 2020-21, with a total combined budget of just over £134m, of which £44m has been spent in previous years leaving the total funding available in the current programme at circa £90m, and the value of projects that are currently committed is circa £77m. The current balance of circa £13m, alongside future grant allocations, will be used to meet the cost of any new schemes identified in the 2027-31 KCP that may be identified during the coming year or in future KCPs. The total estimated cost of this Commissioning Plan for High Needs provision is circa £34m, In the same way as the Basic Need programme is managed, to ensure all schemes are prioritised appropriately and expenditure is controlled within available funding, any new scheme included in the programme, first needs to be considered and agreed by Education Asset Board, before being progressed through the formal governance processes. The estimated costs includes £20m for SRPs, The prioritisation of the HNPCA to expedite the development of this provision was authorised under decision 25/00085, in line with the previously agreed KCP. As the KCP is a live document refreshed annually, this provision continues to be reflected in the updated 2027–31 Plan.

Revenue Costs

4.7 The additional revenue costs associated with the Plan for primary and secondary basic need are largely incurred through Growth Funding which is intended to ensure that schools have the resources needed to manage the school-based costs of an expansion, such as increased staffing costs, before the standard funding arrangements (based on pupil numbers from the previous year) are updated to reflect the increased roll. This funding can also be used to support the revenue costs of schools removing or re-purposing places for example: to support inclusive practice. In Kent the fund has been extended to support set up costs for special schools The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ring-fenced grant from the DfE that can only be used for education purposes, including funding schools, early years, and special educational needs provision. Growth Funding is funded through the DSG and not the General Fund.

4.8 The ongoing revenue cost of additional places in primary and secondary schools will be met by the schools through the annual school budget funded by DfE via the DSG. It is the responsibility of maintained schools, academy trusts and free schools to manage their budget in response to a growing or falling roll. There is no expected cost to the General Fund. This plan identifies over 1,500 additional places in SRPs and Special Schools between 2026 and 2030. The Council is responsible for the annual commissioning of these places, normally by paying a pre-agreed rate per place. The funds the revenue costs form the High Needs Block of the DSG, a specific ring-fenced grant from the DfE. The total annual cost of these places would be circa

£42m, when fully occupied. In contrast, by securing more state-funded provision, alongside the wider inclusion strategy it is expected to avoid the independent special school places with an estimated cost of circa £83m. Leading to a net future annual saving circa £40m.

5. Legal implications

5.1 Each project identified in the KCP will be subject to a separate consultation and decision-making process. The legal implications of each proposal will be identified at that time.

5.2 The general and relevant legal obligations includes ensuring there are "sufficient" school places (Education Act 1996), as far as possible, complying with the preferences expressed by parents (School Standards and Framework Act 1998), increasing opportunities for parental choice (Education and Inspections Act 2006, provide fair access to educational opportunity) (Education and Inspections Act 2006, keep its SEND provision under review and consider if it is sufficient to meet the needs of children and young people in its area (Children and Families Act 2014).

5.3 Pursuant to the Equality Act 2010, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions have due regard to the need to: 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not".

6. Equalities implications

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed for the KCP. The screening found no evidence that the KCP will impact negatively on pupils from Protected Groups or lead to them being treated less favourably.

7. How the proposed decision supports the Council's strategic statement

7.1 The KCP supports improved efficiency and timeliness in SEND services with plans to expand Specialist Resource Provisions (SRPs) and increase mainstream inclusion capacity.

7.2 Section 7 of the KCP: Commissioning Statutory School Provision by Districts, details district-level responses to housing growth and demographic pressures, seeking to ensure housing growth is sustainable.

7.3 The KCP supports value for money through Section 5: Capital Funding, which outlines the use of developer contributions, Basic Need funding, and cautious capital investment strategies. The plan also promotes in-house provision where financially viable and reducing reliance on independent placements.

8. Governance

7.4 The decision proposed is to approve the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2027–31 (KCP) and to note the associated Special Educational Needs and Disability Sufficiency Plan.

7.5 The KCP is a live, five-year rolling plan, refreshed annually, which sets out the Council's strategic commissioning intentions for education provision across Kent.

7.6 The KCP is supported by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Sufficiency Plan, which sets out the Council's assessment of the sufficiency of provision for children and young people with SEND and the approach to meeting identified need. The Sufficiency Plan is presented alongside the KCP and is to be noted as part of this decision.

7.7 Approval of the KCP does not in itself authorise the delivery of individual proposals identified within it. Where implementation of a proposal requires a Key Decision, a separate decision will be taken through the appropriate governance process. Other matters may be progressed by officers where these fall within their existing delegated authority under the Council's Constitution. This reflects the approach set out in the report, whereby individual schemes are subject to feasibility and the appropriate decision-making process before being commissioned.

9. Consultation and Views

8.1 Individual consultations will be undertaken on each proposal outlined in the KCP as required and the views of Local Members on individual school consultations in their Divisions will be sought as they come forward.

10. Conclusions

9.1 The commissioning intentions outlined in the KCP are planned to ensure there are sufficient schools places, in the right locations and at the right time in order to fulfil our legal responsibility to offer an appropriate school place to all who require one. At the same time, we are committed to reducing the budget shortfall, but without compromising on the high-quality provision our children and young people deserve.

11. Recommendation(s):

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the proposed decision as set out in the attached PRoD (Appendix A), to approve the Commissioning Plan for Education 2027-20231 and note the Special Educational Needs and Disability Sufficiency Plan.

12. Background documents

- Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026-30 & 2027-31
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Sufficiency Plan
- EqIA

13. Appendices

13.1 Appendix A – PRoD

14. Contact details

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Interim Deputy Director - Effectiveness, Sufficiency and Skills
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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:	DECISION NUMBER:
Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	26/00064

Executive Decision – key

26/00064-
Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2027-31

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, I agree to:

Approve the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2027-31 and agree to note the annual review of the SEND Sufficiency Plan.

Reasons for decision:

Kent County Council (KCC), as the Local Authority (LA), has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2027-31 (KCP) is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out our future plans as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent.

The Plan sets out how we will carry out our responsibility for ensuring there are sufficient high quality places, in the right locations for all learners, while at the same time fulfilling our other responsibilities to raise education standards and promote parental preference. The Plan details the expected future need for education provision, thereby enabling parents and education providers to put forward proposals as to how these needs might best be met.

The KCP reflects the dynamic and ongoing process of ensuring there are sufficient places for Kent children in schools, and other provisions. It is subject to regular discussion and consultation with schools, district/borough councils, KCC Elected Members, the diocesan authorities, and relevant others. The content of this Plan reflects those discussions and consultations.

The Plan includes detail of the future commissioning of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision and incorporates the SEND Sufficiency Plan 2026 within Appendix 11.3. The SEND Sufficiency Plan sets out how KCC will plan and commission sufficient, high-quality education provision for children and young people with SEND, particularly those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Financial implications:

The costs associated with delivering the commissioning intentions outlined in the plan include both capital and revenue costs.

Capital Costs
Capital costs are associated with the construction of additional school accommodation and revenue costs include providing schools with Growth Funding. The General Fund is Kent County Council's main account for financing a wide range of local services, such as social care, highways `and libraries, using income from council tax, business rates, and government grants.

Capital Costs for mainstream provision are funded through Basic Need Capital Programme, which is made up from a range of sources including Basic Need Grant, Developer Contributions, Prudential Borrowing (originally agreed to fund shortfalls in historic schemes) and other specific grants (such as schools rebuild programme). The Basic Need Grant is the largest contributor to the programme and is provided by the DfE to support local authorities fulfil their statutory duty to ensure there are enough school places for children aged 5 to 16 in their area. The grant is allocated annually, based on local authorities' own pupil forecasts and school capacity data, which they submit through the School Capacity Survey. The funding is primarily intended to support the creation of new school places - either by expanding existing schools or building new ones to meet projected demand.

Capital costs for any schemes outlined in the SEND section of the KCP, are funded from the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA) Grant. HNPCA is paid to local authorities to support the expansion or improvement of places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and those pupils requiring alternative provision (AP). Of the available funding nationally, 50% is distributed in proportion to LAs' population (as determined by the School Census) and the remaining 50% is distributed in proportion to LAs' population, weighted to reflect LAs' pupil to capacity ratio for pupils in specialist provision.

The Education capital programme is continuously reviewed, with projects entering and leaving the programme regularly in response to demand and project completions. The current programme includes projects commissioned in previous years alongside those identified within this new iteration of the KCP for the period 2027-31 KCP. This means the funding associated with the programme also includes elements of Basic Need grant provided to KCC in previous years along with elements of other DfE grants and Developer contributions. The total estimated cost of the plan for additional mainstream places is £135m.The Basic Need programme for current and future schemes has a budget of circa £130m (in addition to further grant funding of £31m up to 27-28), and the value of projects that are currently committed is circa £98m. The current balance of circa £32m will be used to meet the cost of any new schemes identified in the 2027-31 KCP that may be identified during the coming year or in future KCPs, alongside future DfE Basic Need Grant allocations, new developer contributions and other external grants. To ensure all schemes are prioritised appropriately and expenditure is controlled within available funding, any new scheme included in the programme, first needs to be considered and agreed by Education Asset Board, before being progressed through the formal governance processes.

In respect of HNPCA, this programme has been running since 2020-21, with a total combined budget of just over £134m, of which £44m has been spent in previous years leaving the total funding available in the current programme at circa £90m, and the value of projects that are currently committed is circa £77m. The current balance of circa £13m, alongside future grant allocations, will be used to meet the cost of any new schemes identified in the 2027-31 KCP that may be identified during the coming year or in future KCPs. The total estimated cost of this Commissioning Plan for High Needs provision is circa £34m, In the same way as the Basic Need programme is managed, to ensure all schemes are prioritised appropriately and expenditure is controlled within available funding, any new scheme included in the programme, first needs to be considered and agreed by Education Asset Board, before being progressed through the formal governance processes. The estimated costs includes £20m for SRPs, The prioritisation of the HNPCA to expedite the development of this provision was authorised under decision 25/00085, in line with the previously agreed KCP. As the KCP is a live document refreshed annually, this provision continues to be reflected in the updated 2027–31 Plan.

Revenue Costs
The additional revenue costs associated with the Plan for primary and secondary basic need are largely incurred through Growth Funding which is intended to ensure that schools have the resources needed to manage the school-based costs of an expansion, such as increased staffing costs, before the standard funding arrangements (based on pupil numbers from the previous year) are updated to reflect the increased roll. This funding can also be used to support the revenue costs of schools removing or re-purposing places for example: to support inclusive practice. In Kent the fund has been extended to support set up costs for special schools The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ring-fenced grant from the DfE that can only be used for education purposes, including funding schools, early years, and special educational needs provision. Growth Funding is funded through the DSG and not the General Fund.

The ongoing revenue cost of additional places in primary and secondary schools will be met by the schools through the annual school budget funded by DfE via the DSG. It is the responsibility of maintained schools, academy trusts and free schools to manage their budget in response to a growing or falling roll. There is no expected cost to the General Fund. This plan identifies over 1,500 additional places in SRPs and Special Schools between 2026 and 2030. The Council is responsible for the annual commissioning of these places, normally by paying a pre-agreed rate per place. The funds the revenue costs form the High Needs Block of the DSG, a specific ring-fenced grant from the DfE. The total annual cost of these places would be circa £42m, when fully occupied. In contrast, by securing more state-funded provision, alongside the wider inclusion strategy it is expected to avoid the independent special school places with an estimated cost of circa £83m. Leading to a net future annual saving circa £40m.

Legal implications:

Each project identified in the KCP will be subject to a separate consultation and decision-making process. The legal implications of each proposal will be identified at that time.

The general and relevant legal obligations includes ensuring there are “sufficient” school places (Education Act 1996), as far as possible, complying with the preferences expressed by parents (School Standards and Framework Act 1998), increasing opportunities for parental choice (Education and Inspections Act 2006, provide fair access to educational opportunity) (Education and Inspections Act 2006, keep its SEND provision under review and consider if it is sufficient to meet the needs of children and young people in its area (Children and Families Act 2014).

Pursuant to the Equality Act 2010, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions have due regard to the need to: ‘eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not”.

Equalities implications:

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed for the KCP. The screening found no evidence that the KCP will impact negatively on pupils from Protected Groups or lead to them being treated less favourably.

Data Protection implications:

There are no data protection implications.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered at the Children’s, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 26 November 2026.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The KCP sets out the principles by which we determine proposals, and it forecasts the need for future provision. It also sets out in more detail plans to meet the commissioning needs which arise in each district and borough in Kent during the next five years.

The KCP provides an overarching framework for determining when and where education may be needed in the future. It sets out the forecast number of children and young people in Kent and breaks this down to smaller geographical areas (districts and planning groups) to show where there may be a need for more or fewer places. It sets out the principles which will be used to consider and evaluate individual proposals which might come forward (be commissioned) to address any identified shortage or surplus of places in a locality.

Each individual scheme that is brought forward will have a rigorous feasibility stage that is completed prior to the scheme formally being commissioned, through the appropriate democratic pathway. An integral part of this process is to identify the most suitable option to provide the additional places. Consideration is given to:

- where the additional places would be best located from an education point of view
- the physical capacity of the existing school sites and the practicality of delivery (including geographical and Highways constraints).
- providing the best value for money for the proposed scheme.

The options considered will then be detailed in the Options section of the individual committee papers associated with each decision.

Local authorities in England are not legally required to publish a strategic school place planning document as a standalone statutory obligation. However, they do have a statutory duty under Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that there are sufficient school places available for children of compulsory school age in their area.

While publication is not mandated by law, the Department for Education (DfE) strongly encourages local authorities to produce and share strategic school place planning documents. These are expected to include medium-term forecasts, rationale for expansions or contractions, and underpinning data. This is part of a broader framework for collaborative and transparent planning with academy trusts, dioceses, and the DfE's Regions Group; the Kent Commissioning Plan achieves these aims and the option of not producing a strategic plan would not, it has therefore been rejected.

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

.....	.....
Signed	Date

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EQIA Submission – ID Number
Section A

EQIA Title
Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2027-31

Responsible Officer
Paul Wilson - CY EDSEN

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)
Nicholas Abrahams - CY EDSEN

Type of Activity

Service Change
No
Service Redesign
No
Project/Programme
No
Commissioning/Procurement
No
Strategy/Policy
Strategy/Policy
Details of other Service Activity
No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate
Children Young People and Education
Responsible Service
Education and SEND
Responsible Head of Service
Nicholas Abrahams - CY EDSEN
Responsible Director
David Adams - CY EDSEN

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the Plan is to:

- provide an overarching framework for determining when and where education may be needed in the future. The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent sets out the forecast number of children and young people in Kent and breaks this down to smaller geographical areas (districts and planning groups) to show where there may be a need for more or fewer places.
- Set out the principles which will be used to consider and evaluate individual proposals which might come forward (be commissioned) to address any identified shortage or surplus of places in a locality.

Summary of the outcome of the analysis:
No change is required. The evidence suggests that there is no potential for discrimination and all appropriate measures have been taken to advance equality and foster good relations between the protected groups.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

The equality impact assessment for the Commissioning Plan is carried out at two levels; First, in respect of the Commissioning Plan itself, to assess whether the commissioning principles and guidelines may have an impact (either positive or negative) on any protected groups and if so what action, if any, should be taken to amend the Plan or to mitigate the negative impacts. The second, a more detailed analysis of the impacts on any protected group arising from individual education consultation proposals is conducted contemporaneously through the Plan period.

This assessment deals solely with the first of these two levels, with consultation completed with high level stakeholders consulted to ensure the Plan is drafted collaboratively. This process incorporates meetings with District and Borough Council Leaders and CEOs/Planning Officers, along with School Governor and Headteacher briefings for each district. This consultative activity will be completed prior to the adoption of the Plan following the CYPE Cabinet Committee meeting in Novemember 2027.

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

Yes

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

No

Residents/Communities/Citizens

No

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

The overarching nature of the Commissioning Plan means that this equalities impact assessment is at a strategic level, rather specifically covering the various local commissioning schemes. In broad terms, the Plan focuses on the positive impacts for all children and young people, particularly the most vulnerable pupils and those with SEND. It provides a vehicle through which individuals and groups can make their voices heard regarding both current education provision and future proposals. An equality impact assessment will be completed as part of each individual consultation process that follows on from the Commissioning Plan. This assessment indicates that the plan will have either neutral or positive impacts on pupils within the protected groups.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

No

Details of negative impacts for Age

Not Applicable

Mitigating Actions for Age

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No

Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent

2027 - 2031













Kent County Council

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1. Contact Details

The responsibility for the commissioning, planning and delivery of new school places in Kent is vested in the Director of Education, and the team of four Assistant Directors whose contact details are below.

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NORTH KENT **Ian Watts** Assistant Director Education Dartford, Gravesham and Sevenoaks Worrall House, 30 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill ME19 4AE Tel: 03000 414302 Mary Rigden Area Schools Organisation Officer Tel: 03000 422920	**WEST KENT** **Nick Abrahams** Assistant Director Education Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone ME14 1XQ Tel: 03000 410058 Paul Wilson Area Schools Organisation Officer Tel: 03000 415650

2. Foreword

As Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, I am pleased to introduce the latest Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent. It sets out how the County Council will discharge its statutory responsibility to secure sufficient education provision and ensure that children and young people can access an appropriate school place.

My experience of teaching in further education has given me a practical understanding of the challenges faced by education providers and the importance of planning provision around the needs of learners. That includes securing the right number and type of places, supporting inclusion and ensuring that provision remains sustainable.

Kent's education landscape continues to change. Overall primary school rolls are falling, while demand for secondary places remains under pressure in some localities. These countywide trends do not tell the whole story; housing growth, parental preferences and changing patterns of pupil movement mean that some communities will require additional provision, while schools elsewhere face the financial and organisational consequences of declining rolls.

Demand for specialist provision also continues to grow. The County Council must increase capacity where it is needed while supporting schools to meet a broader range of needs within inclusive mainstream settings. This requires careful coordination between place planning, SEND provision, school improvement, transport and wider children's services.

The period covered by this Plan may include significant changes to the structure of local government in Kent and Medway. Throughout any transition, our priority will be to maintain continuity, fulfil our statutory responsibilities and ensure that the long-term planning of education provision remains supported by robust evidence and deliverable plans.

Over the academic years 2027-28 to 2030-29, we expect to commission up to 3 forms of entry (FE) of permanent Year R primary provision, 9.5 FE of permanent Year 7 secondary provision and 975 temporary Year 7 places. These requirements will remain under review as forecasts, housing trajectories and patterns of demand change.

Effective commissioning depends on strong relationships with schools, trusts, dioceses, local communities, district and borough councils, developers and central government. We will continue to make decisions transparently, based on the best available evidence, and to advocate for the investment and support Kent's children and communities need.

I would like to thank teachers, support staff, leaders, governors, trustees and officers across Kent for their continued commitment. Their work is central to maintaining high-quality education while responding to substantial demographic, financial and organisational change.

Beverley Fordham - Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

3. Introduction and Executive Summary

3.1 Purpose

The County Council is the Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision in Kent. This Commissioning Plan sets out how we will carry out our responsibility for ensuring there are sufficient high quality places, in the right places for all learners, while at the same time fulfilling our other responsibilities to raise education standards and promote parental preference. The Plan details the expected future need for education provision, thereby enabling parents and education providers to put forward proposals as to how these needs might best be met.

This Plan reflects the dynamic and ongoing process of ensuring there are sufficient places for Kent children in schools, and other provisions. It is subject to regular discussion and consultation with schools, district/borough councils, KCC (Kent County Council) Elected Members, the diocesan authorities, and others. The content of this Plan reflects those discussions and consultations.

3.2 The Kent Context

Kent is a diverse County. It is largely rural with a collection of small towns. Economically our communities differ, with economic advantage generally in the West, and disadvantage concentrated in our coastal communities in the South and East. Early Years education and childcare are predominantly provided by the private and voluntary sectors. Our schools are a mix of maintained and academies and include infant, junior, primary, grammar, wide ability comprehensive, all-through, single sex and faith based. Post-16 opportunities are available through schools, colleges and private training organisations.

3.3 What We Are Seeking to Achieve

Our vision is that every child and young person should go to a good or outstanding early years setting and school, have access to the best teaching, and benefit from schools and other providers working in partnership with each other to share the best practice as they continue to improve. Commissioning education provision from good or better providers can assist in securing this vision. To address the commissioning needs outlined in this Plan we welcome proposals from existing schools, trusts, the three dioceses and new providers; those proposals should be aligned to the commissioning requirements set out in the Plan.

3.4 Principles and Guidelines

The role of the Local Authority is set within a legal framework of statutory duties which are outlined in the relevant sections of the Plan. We also have a set of principles and planning guidelines to help us in our role as the Commissioner of Education Provision (Section 5). It is important that the Local Authority is transparent and clear when making commissioning decisions or assessing the relative merits of any proposals it might receive.

3.5 Kent's Demographic Trends

Information from the Office for National Statistics shows that in 2005 there were 15,613 live births in Kent (excluding Medway). The number of births rose each year up to 2012 when there was a peak in births of 18,147 children. Since this time, birth numbers have fallen to 15,710 in 2025. KCC will continue to monitor this data and forecast its impact over time.

The number of children on the rolls of Kent schools is driven by the size of the school-aged population in the county but is also influenced by the number of children resident outside of Kent on the rolls of the county's schools, the take-up of state funded school places and other factors such as the pace and type of new housing. Due to these additional factors, a change in the overall school-aged population in the county does not on its own necessarily translate into the same change in the number of children on the rolls of schools in Kent. Additionally, changes in the overall school age population at County or district level do not necessarily mirror changes in population at smaller geographic levels, such as planning groups, these are explored in Section 7.

3.6 Capital Funding

The pressure on the County's Capital Budget continues, particularly as demand for secondary and specialist places grows. The cost of delivering school places is currently met from Basic Need grant from the Government, Section 106 property developer contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Government funding for 'Basic Need' is allocated on a formula based upon information provided by local authorities concerning forecast numbers of pupils and school capacity.

The Department for Education's (DfE) Free Schools Programme is another way to deliver some of the school provision Kent needs. We have encouraged promoters to submit bids to Waves 13 and 14, with some success, but this programme is not a significant contributor to places overall and does have financial risks.

KCC also secures developer contributions to the capital programme. The budget gap between what is needed for KCC to meet its statutory duties as school place commissioner and what is available is significant. All avenues are being explored to reduce the risks, but inevitably difficult decisions will have to be made to prioritise KCC's investment of the capital budget. The cost of construction has risen considerably since 2020 and is likely to continue during the Plan period. We will continue to manage and mitigate this as far as we are able to, however, pressure from inflation may become a constraint to our commissioning strategy.

3.7 Kent's Forward Plan – Commissioning Summary

Detailed analysis, at district level, of the future need for primary and secondary school places is contained in Section 7 of this Plan. Figures 3a to 3e provide a summary of the need for additional places, both permanent and temporary, identified within the Commissioning Plan:

Figure 3a: Summary of the commissioning proposals for primary schools by district/borough

District	By 2027-28	By 2028-29	By 2029-30	By 2030-31	Post 2031
Ashford					6.3 FE
Canterbury					5 FE
Dartford and Swanley			1 FE		4 FE
Dover					2.3 FE
Folkestone and Hythe					2 FE
Gravesham		1 FE			
Maidstone					2 FE
Sevenoaks					2 FE
Swale					6 FE
Thanet					2 FE
Tonbridge and Malling					2 FE
Tunbridge Wells		1 FE			10 temp Year R Places
Totals	**0 FE**	**2 FE**	**1 FE**	**0 FE**	**33.6 FE 10 Year R temp places**

Total of 36.6 FE additional provision across the forecast period and up to 10 temporary Year R places

Figure 3b: Summary of the commissioning proposals for secondary schools by planning group

Non-Selective Planning Group	By 2027-28	By 2028-29	By 2029-30	By 2030-31	Post 2031
Ashford North		Up to 30 Year 7 temp places	Up to 30 Year 7 temp places		2 FE
Canterbury City	Up to 30 Year 7 temp places	Up to 30 Year 7 temp places	Up to 30 Year 7 temp places	Up to 30 Year 7 temp places	
Dover					2 FE
Faversham					
Gravesham and Longfield					
Isle of Sheppey	3 FE	3 FE			
Maidstone District	1FE and Up to 30 Year 7 temp places	Up to 60 Year 7 temp places	Up to 90 Year 7 temp places	Up to 30 Year 7 temp places	
Sevenoaks and Borough Green	Up to 30 Year 7 temp places	Up to 30 Year 7 temp places	Up to 30 Year 7 temp places		
Sittingbourne	Up to 60 Year 7 temp places	Up to 30 Year 7 temp places	Up to 30 Year 7 temp places	Up to 30 Year 7 temp places	6 FE
Thanet	Up to 75 temp Year 7 places	Up to 45 temp Year 7 places	Up to 90 temp Year 7 places	Up to 15 temp Year 7places	2 FE
Selective Planning Group	**By 2027-28**	**By 2028-29**	**By 2029-30**	**By 2030-31**	**Post 2031**
Canterbury and Faversham	0.5 FE				
Gravesham and Longfield and North West Kent		1 FE			
Maidstone and Malling	1 FE				
West Kent	Up to 60 Year 7 temp places	Up to 30 Year 7 temp places	Up to 30 Year 7 temp places		
Total secondary commissioning	**5.5 FE 285 Year 7 temp places**	**4 FE 255 Year 7 temp places**	**0 FE 330 Year 7 temp places**	**0 FE 105 Year 7 temp places**	**12 FE**

Total of 21.5 FE across the forecast period and 975 temporary Year 7 places

4. Principles and Planning Guidelines

4.1 What We Are Seeking to Achieve

Our Principles and Planning Guidelines underpin our commissioning decisions. This is further supported by a suite of key strategies including, but not limited to:

- Kent SEND Strategy 2025–2028
- Countywide Approach to Inclusive Education (CATIE) 2023 – 2028
- Kent 16 to 19 Review - Pathways For All

In the national policy context, the Local Authority is the Commissioner of Education Provision and providers come from the private, voluntary, charitable and maintained sectors. The role of the Local Authority is set within a legal framework of statutory duties; the duties for each phase or type of education in Kent are shown under the relevant section in this Plan. Within this framework, the Local Authority continues to be the major provider of education by maintaining most Kent schools and it also fulfils the function of "provider of last resort" to ensure new provision is made if no other acceptable new provider comes forward.

Education in Kent is divided into three phases, although there is some overlap between these. These three phases are:

- Early Years: primarily delivered by private, voluntary and independent pre-school providers, accredited child-minders, and schools with maintained nursery classes.
- 4-16 years: "compulsory school age" during which schools are the main providers.
- Post-16: colleges and schools both offer substantial provision, with colleges as the sole provider for young people aged 19-25 years.

The Local Authority also has specific duties in relation to provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs, pupils excluded from school or pupils unable to attend school due to ill health.

4.2 Principles and Guidelines

It is important that the Local Authority is open and transparent in its role as the Strategic Commissioner of Education. To help guide us in this role we abide by clear principles and consider school organisation proposals against our planning guidelines. We stress that planning guidelines are not absolutes, but a starting point for the consideration of proposals.

4.3 Over-Arching Principles

- Every child should have access to a local, good or outstanding school, which is appropriate to their needs.
- All education provision in Kent should be financially efficient and viable.
- We will consider the needs and aspirations of the local community.
- We will recognise parental preference.
- We recognise perceptions may differ as to benefits and detrimental impacts of future proposals. We will ensure our consultation processes capture the voice of all communities, but to be supported proposals must demonstrate overall benefit to the whole community.
- The needs of Children in Care and those with SEN and disabilities will be given enhanced consideration in any commissioning decision.
- We will also give priority to organisational changes that create environments better able to meet the needs of other vulnerable children, including those from minority ethnic communities and/or from low income families.
- Any educational provision facing difficulties will be supported and challenged to recover in an efficient and timely manner. Where sufficient progress is not achieved, we will seek to commission alternative provision or another provider.
- If a provision is considered or found to be inadequate by Ofsted, we will seek to support the DfE with the commissioning of an alternative provider.

- In areas of housing growth, we will require developer contributions to fund or part fund new and additional school provision.
- In areas of high surplus capacity, we will take actions where possible to reduce the surplus and will seek to work with schools and own admission authorities to minimise the impact of surplus.[1]
- In line with Government policy, surplus may also be used for nursery provision to deliver the extension of government funded places, or to provide more specialist SEN places.

4.4 Planning Guidelines – Primary

- The curriculum is generally delivered in Key Stage specific classes. Therefore, for curriculum viability, primary schools should be able to operate at least four classes.
- We will actively promote opportunities for small primary schools to work together.
- Where possible, planned Published Admission Numbers (PANs) will be multiples of 30, but where this is not possible, multiples of 15 are used.
- We believe all-through primary schools deliver better continuity of learning as the model for primary phase education in Kent. When the opportunity arises, we will seek to amalgamate separate infant and junior schools into a single primary school. However, we will have regard to existing local arrangements and seek to avoid leaving existing schools without links on which they have previously depended.
- At present primary school provision is co-educational, and we anticipate that future arrangements will conform to this pattern.
- Over time we have concluded that a minimum of 2FE provision (420 places) is preferred in terms of the efficient deployment of resources.

4.5 Planning Guidelines – Secondary

- PANs for secondary schools will not normally be less than 120 or greater than 360. PANs for secondary schools will normally be multiples of 30.
- Over time we have concluded that the ideal size for the efficient deployment of resources is between 6FE and 8FE.
- Proposals for additional secondary places need to demonstrate a balance between selective and non-selective school places.
- We will encourage the formation of all-aged schools (primary through to secondary) if this is in the interests of the local community.

4.6 Planning Guidelines - Special Educational Needs

- We aim to build capacity in mainstream schools by broadening the skills and special arrangements that can be made within this sector to ensure compliance with the relevant duties under SEN and disability legislation.
- For children and young people for whom mainstream provision is assessed not to be appropriate, we seek to make provision through Kent based, state funded special schools. For young people aged 16-19 years, provision may be at school or college. For young people who are aged 19-25 years, provision is likely to be college based.
- We will support children and young people to benefit from living within their local community where possible and we will seek to provide them with day places unless residential provision is specifically needed for social care or health reasons. In such cases, agreement to joint placement and support will be sought from the relevant KCC teams or the Health Service. This agreement will be preceded by the relevant health or social care assessments.
- We will aim to reduce the need for children to be transported to schools far away from their local communities by developing local provision to meet need.

[1] Actions might include re-classifying accommodation, removing temporary or unsuitable accommodation, leasing spaces to other users and promoting closures or amalgamations. We recognise that, increasingly, providers will be responsible for making such decisions about the use of their buildings, but we believe we all recognise the economic imperatives for such actions.

4.7 Planning Guidelines - Expansion of Popular Schools and New Provision

- We support diversity in the range of education provision available to children and young people. We recognise that new providers are entering the market, and that parents and communities are able to make free school applications.
- As the Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision, we welcome proposals from existing schools and new providers that address the needs identified in this Plan, this includes new provision to meet increased demand.
- In order for us to support any such proposal, they must meet an identified need and should adhere to the planning principles and guidelines set out above.

4.8 Small Schools

KCC defines small schools as 'those schools with fewer than 150 pupils on roll and/or a measured capacity of fewer than 150 places'. We have over 100 primary schools that fit this criterion.

We value the work of our small schools and recognise the challenges faced. We continue to work with partners to maximise the resilience of small schools to deal with the challenges they face in terms of leadership and management, teaching and learning, and governance and finance so that they can enable their pupils to grow up, learn, develop and achieve, and continue to play a valued role in their communities.

KCC and its partners, in particular the dioceses, will ensure that:

- Support is given to small schools seeking to join appropriate multi-academy trusts, or take other steps on such a pathway.
- All such partners will work closely together to support the protection and maintenance of the distinctive character and ethos of small Church of England schools in future collaborative arrangements.

4.9 Families of Schools

KCC has encouraged schools to work collaboratively together for many years. Such collaborations take many forms in the current education landscape, such as being a church school within Canterbury, Rochester or Southwark's purview, forming a collaboration with neighbouring schools to work jointly on shared school improvement objectives, formally federating or joining a shared schools trust, or academising within a MAT. All these options are important in ensuring no school becomes isolated.

The national direction of travel, through successive Governments, has been towards high quality, inclusive education to be provided through families of schools within strong multi-academy trusts. This is underpinned by the ability of strong trusts to deliver rapid and sustainable school improvement, excellent support for teachers and teaching, strategic leadership and governance, and effective financial management. We support these principles and encourage those Kent schools not currently benefitting from such collaborative arrangements to explore their options to join or form a multi-academy trust.

5. Capital Funding

5.1 Introduction

The Local Authority as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision has a key role in securing funding to provide sufficient education provision in the County, particularly in schools.

The cost of providing additional school places is met from Government Basic Need Grant and developer contributions. It continues to be clear through the County Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan that KCC is not in a position to undertake prudential borrowing to support new provision. To do so would place undue pressure on the revenue budget in what are already challenging times for the Authority. The prospect of having to meet the growth in demand for places through additional borrowing confronts the County Council with a dilemma between delivering its statutory duty on school places and maintaining its financial soundness. Members and officers continue to lobby Ministers and officials within the DfE over this critical issue. Delivery of the additional school places needed in the County will rely more than ever on an appropriate level of funding from Government and securing the maximum possible contribution from housing developers.

5.2 Basic Need

Basic Need funding is allocated by Government on the basis of a comparison of school capacity (not pupil admission numbers) against forecast mainstream pupil numbers from reception year to year 11 uplifted to provide a 2 per cent operating margin. Where capacity is lower than forecast, the DfE provides funding towards the gap.

The combined allocation for the 2027-2028 and 2028-2029 financial years is based upon the projected need for new places by September 2029 (the start of academic year 2028/29); Kent has been allocated £60,759,977.66. The 'lumpy' nature of establishing new school provision means that the County Council incurs the majority of the capital costs at the outset of mitigating a forecast place deficit, e.g. expanding a school by a whole FE; whereas the Basic Need formula does not account for this and provides the Council with funding for places in an incremental way over a longer period of time.

5.3 Free Schools Programme

One funding option which can assist with or overcome the challenges of forward funding new schools is the Free Schools programme. We encouraged promoters to submit bids to Waves 13 and 14, with some success. However, as the free school programme has become more restrictive, being targeted to certain geographical areas of the Country in relation to mainstream schools, and of limited number for special schools and alternative provisions, it will not be the answer to all our needs. Additionally, it is not risk free for the Local Authority. Delays in delivery can require the Authority to put in place temporary provision with the resultant unplanned expense.

5.4 Developer Contributions

Each of the 12 districts in Kent are planning significant housing growth, it is essential that this growth is supported by sufficient education provision that is well integrated within the areas of growth and established at the right time. The cost of providing school places in response to housing growth is significant, the County Council seeks developer contributions towards mitigating this cost. Developer contributions for education are secured either through Section 106 (s106) agreements or through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

S106 agreements are secured from housing developers at the time that planning permission is granted, they are intended to ensure development proposals are acceptable in planning terms. When securing a s106 agreement KCC will outline the additional impact the development would have on local schools, where we would need to add additional provision in response and the cost of doing so. Whilst district authorities, as the relevant Local Planning Authority, are the decision maker on whether contributions towards education provision should be made or not, once a s106 agreement is in place the housing developer becomes legally obligated to pay KCC contributions at specified points.

We will continue to seek developer contributions at every opportunity allowed through legislation and apply funding secured to the most appropriate project in order to mitigate development. Where additional secondary school places are required in order to mitigate development we will seek to secure funding towards both selective and non-selective places on the basis of 25% of the additional demand being within the selective sector; this will not preclude future residents of the development being able to apply for and access a school place in the same way as all other residents in Kent and does not impact the commissioning approach in an area which is based on the forecast need.

Five districts in Kent have adopted CIL, which has largely replaced s106 agreements in those areas. The levy is a tariff-based system where developers are charged a set rate per square metre of development. There is no direct link between the development's impact on local infrastructure and the amount it pays. All CIL funding is paid to the relevant district or borough, which then determines how it will be spent once it is received; there is no funding ring-fenced for education provision and KCC will usually be required to 'bid' to the Borough for a share of the funding. This provides KCC with no security that development charged under CIL will contribute to the cost of new school provision at the time planning permission is granted. Under CIL the amounts collected for community infrastructure are typically lower than could be secured through s106 and the spending of CIL is entirely at the discretion of the District Authority and not KCC, which places the County Council at significant risk moving forward.

The County Council is keen to work with the Government to ensure that reforms to developer contributions are effective in securing the necessary infrastructure to support growth. The new Government has confirmed that they do not intend to implement the introduction of the Infrastructure Levy within the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023; whilst this may be positive in some ways, there still remains a significant level of uncertainty.

5.5 Value for Money

In drawing up options for providing additional places, in addition to the Principles and Planning Guidelines set out in Section 5, the Local Authority consider a range of practical issues, such as:

- The condition and suitability of existing premises.
- The ability to expand or alter the premises (including arrangements whilst works progress).
- The works required to expand or alter the premises.
- The estimated capital costs.
- The size and topography of the site.
- Environmental considerations.
- Future proofing.
- Road access to the site, including transport and safety issues.

Kent is committed to securing value for money when providing additional school accommodation, in line with the DfE's baseline designs, and output performance specification. The construction method for new accommodation will be that which is the most appropriate to meet the needs of provision, e.g. temporary or permanent provision and that which represents good value for money.

One of the key benchmarks against which we will be monitoring all Basic Need projects is the 'cost per pupil'. This benchmark divides the construction cost of the project by the number of pupils that the facility will accommodate to provide a project cost per pupil.

The comparison table below (figure 5a) shows that, for primary school expansion and refurbishment projects, KCC's average costs from 2020 to 2026 are slightly higher than the National School Delivery South East average costs reported in the 2026 Educational Building and Development Officers Group (EBDOG) report, but are lower than the South East DfE Scorecard benchmark. For primary school new-build projects, KCC's average costs are significantly below the National School Delivery South East regional average but marginally higher than the South East DfE Scorecard figure. The results

show that KCC's average delivery costs fall within the range of the South East National School Delivery average and the South East DfE Scorecard costs for 2026.

Figure 5a: Average costs - National and Kent Primary Education Phase:

Type	National School Delivery Average Costs (EBDOG - 2026)	South East National School Delivery Average Costs (EBDOG - 2026)	South East - DfE Scorecard Cost (2026)	KCC Average Costs (2020 to 2026)
Expansion and Refurbishment	£20,106.81	£22,720.70	£24,266.23	£22,978.25
New Build	£30,027.00	£35,190.31	£28,972.32	£29,532.36

For secondary school expansion and refurbishment projects (see comparison table below - Figure 5b), KCC's average costs for projects delivered between 2020 and 2026 are higher than all the national benchmark figures used. This difference should be considered in the context of the reporting periods. The national EBDOG average includes projects delivered between 2012 and 2025, whereas KCC's average covers projects delivered between 2020 and 2026. The EBDOG report identifies that projects delivered from 2020 onwards experienced increased costs associated with the unique socio-economic impacts of this period.

Figure 5b: Average costs - National and Kent Secondary Education Phase:

Type	National School Delivery Average Costs (EBDOG - 2026)	South East National School Delivery Average Costs (EBDOG - 2026)	South East - DfE Scorecard Cost (2026)	KCC Average Costs (2020 to 2026)
Expansion and Refurbishment	£23,563.56	£23,563.56	£33,375.90	£34,061.07
New Build	None available	None available	£34,345.00	None available

6. Commissioning Statutory School Provision

6.1 Duties to Provide for Ages 4-16 Years

The law requires local authorities to make provision for the education of children from the September following their fourth birthday to the end of the academic year in which their sixteenth birthday falls. Most Kent parents choose to send their children to Kent schools. Some parents choose to educate their children independently, either at independent schools or otherwise than at school (i.e. at home); others will send their children to maintained schools outside Kent (Kent maintained schools also admit some children from other areas). Kent will offer a school place to any resident child aged between 4-16 years.

A minority of young people aged 14-16 years old are offered college placements or alternative curriculum provision, usually through school links. Some children are educated in special schools or non-school forms of special education provision because of their special educational needs.

The local authority has a statutory duty to provide full time education for pupils “not in education by reason of illness, exclusion or otherwise” which is appropriate to individual pupil needs. This duty is discharged through pupil referral units, alternative provision commissioned by secondary schools and the Rosewood School.

6.2 Kent-Wide Summary

Detail on the requirement for additional school places is contained in the district/borough commentaries which follow. For 2027-28 and 2028-29 many projects are already in progress. For later years, the need for expansion in planning groups has been noted, but specific schools may not have been identified. For projects beyond 2028-29 the commissioning proposals may be dependent on the pace of planned housing development being realised. A Countywide summary of the proposals for primary, secondary and SEN school places in each district/borough are set out in Section 3.7.

Figure 6a shows the Kent birth rate and the number of recorded births as published by the Office of National Statistics (ONS). Births recorded by the ONS provide a consistent way of measuring and demonstrating changes in births over the last 30 years; it should be noted that the quantum of school places needed is not solely driven by the number of births and our forecasting takes into account those children resident in the county that were born elsewhere, and the forecast inward migration led by housing growth and other factors. Overall, Kent birth figures indicate a significant fall in the number of births from 2017 to 2020, with a slight upturn in 2021 before dropping back again in recent years.

Figure 6a: Kent births and birth rates 1990-2025

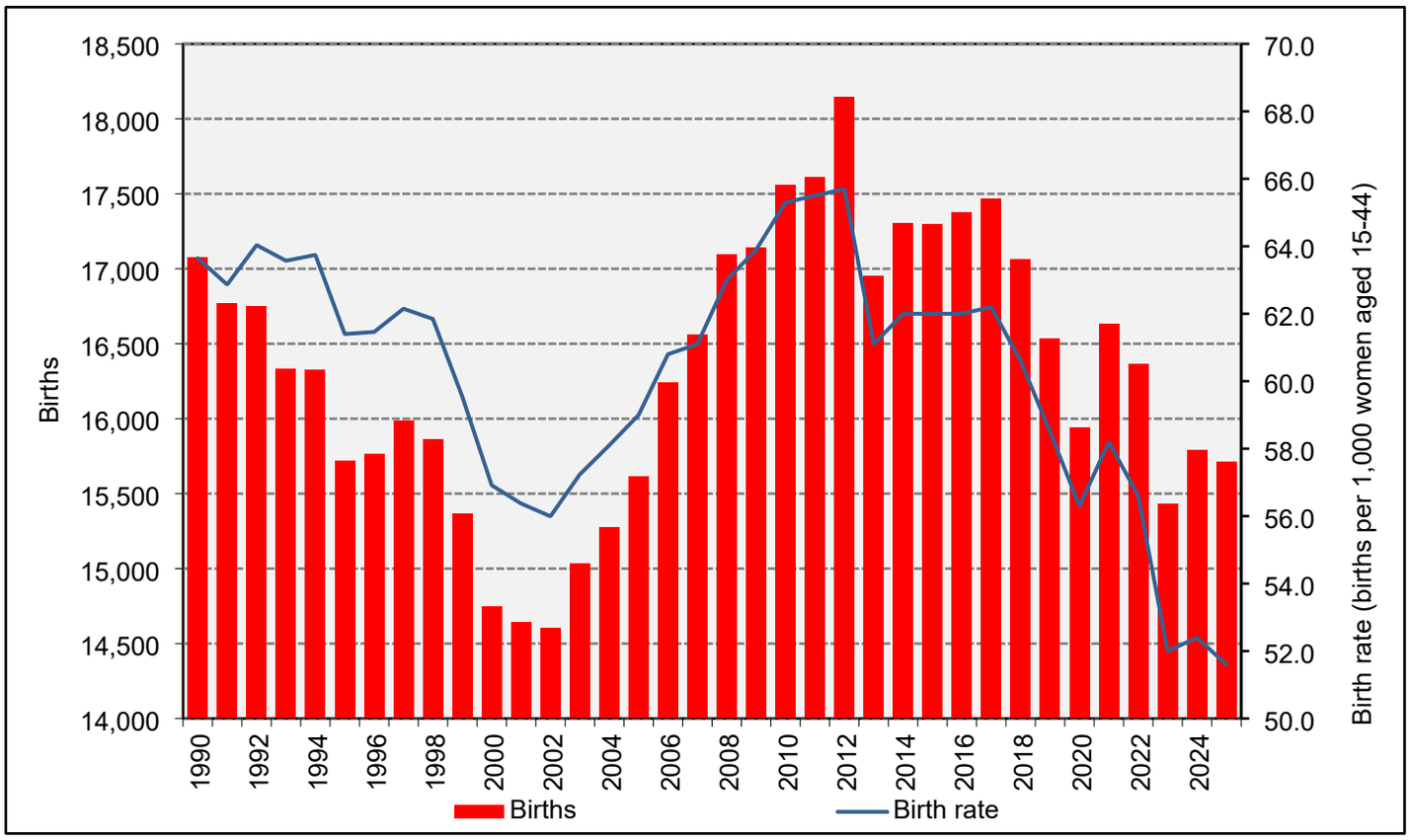


Figure 6b: Housing completions and future housing supply 2005-30

	Completions*				Period 2025-30			
District	**2005-10**	**2010-15**	**2015-20**	**2020-25**	**Extant**	**Allocations**	**Total**	**Grand total 2005-30**
Maidstone	3,528	2,990	6,084	5,765	3,690	608	4,298	22,665
Dartford	2,215	2,274	4,717	3,331	4,907	0	4,907	17,444
Swale	3,693	2,075	3,300	3,991	3,929	0	3,929	16,988
Canterbury	3,747	2,279	2,083	3,524	3,795	462	4,257	15,890
Tonbridge & Malling	3,702	2,270	3,677	2,542	3,208	35	3,243	15,434
Ashford	2,567	2,014	3,921	3,794	2,244	663	2,907	15,203
Thanet	2,955	2,097	1,687	3,342	3,595	705	4,300	14,381
Tunbridge Wells	1,856	827	2,493	2,993	2,083	1,713	3,796	11,965
Dover	1,648	1,236	2,473	2,959	2,804	723	3,527	11,843
Sevenoaks	1,426	1,020	1,784	1,077	3,981	192	4,173	9,480
Folkestone & Hythe	2,054	1,034	2,010	2,087	1,342	548	1,890	9,075
Gravesham	1,462	1,144	1,018	2,488	2,016	150	2,166	8,278
Kent	**30,853**	**21,260**	**35,247**	**37,893**	**37,594**	**5,799**	**43,393**	**168,646**

Source: Housing Information Audit (HIA) 2024-25, Kent Analytics, KCC

Notes:

(1) Housing data relates to financial year (i.e. 2024-25 is the year up to 31st March 2025)

(2) Housing data is shown net of losses i.e. gains - losses = net

(3) The first four 5-year time periods between 2005-25 show actual housing completions

(4) The period 2025-30 shows expected housing completions (extant permissions and allocations)

*Completions - Dwellings completed; Extant- Dwellings with planning permission but construction not yet completed; Allocations - Dwellings within an area designated for future housing development but not yet with planning permission

Figure 6b outlines the historic and forecast house building by district/borough. All districts/boroughs are planning for significant house building, each district/borough is at a different stage of adopting their Local Plan. The figures above incorporate housing numbers from adopted Local Plans, not every district currently has a Local Plan covering the period 2025-30, however our school-based forecasts incorporate all consented housing whether that housing was allocated within a Local Plan or not.

On average 5,211 dwellings were built annually in the ten-year period up to 31st March 2015. This increased significantly to 7,314 dwellings per year in period 2015-25. A long-term yearly average of around 8,679 dwellings per year is anticipated for the period 2025-30.

We need to ensure we are planning for the education infrastructure required. How we plan to provide for new housing is outlined in the individual district/borough sections. It is important to note that additional demand for school places from proposed housing plans that do not yet have planning permission or form part of a Borough's adopted Local Plan are not incorporated within the forecasts presented in Figures 6c to 6h. It is equally important to recognise that while surplus places might exist in districts, these will not always be in the right place to support demand generated by new housing.

6.3 Forecast Pupils in Mainstream Primary/Secondary Schools

For Kent primary schools we have seen a steady rise in the overall number of pupils since 2009-10 to 2019-20, rising from 106,097 to 126,251. However, in 2020-21 the total primary roll saw a slight drop to 125,939, before increasing again 2021-22 to 126,768. In recent years, the total has fluctuated, but the general pattern is one of reduction, with 125,749 in 2025-26.

Figure 6c provides a breakdown of expected surplus or deficit capacity in Year R by district/borough across the ten-year period to 2035-36. The forecast indicates that there will be surplus places across the county for the Plan Period. However, in the individual district/borough sections we break down the expected surplus/deficit into smaller planning groups. This enables us to identify in more detail where and when provision may need to be added or removed at more local geography.

Figure 6c: School-based surplus/deficit capacity summary (Year R) if No Further Action is Taken

District	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (F)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/35 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Ashford	1,675	230	171	283	225	170	213	227	245	257	268	268	1,641
Canterbury	1,530	142	110	134	134	77	80	91	97	98	101	107	1,470
Dartford	1,785	203	172	186	204	191	125	123	102	71	56	62	1,800
Dover	1,332	261	179	232	274	225	215	199	196	193	195	195	1,310
Folkestone & Hythe	1,261	227	225	242	237	259	239	244	249	250	251	257	1,243
Gravesham	1,456	112	71	114	84	117	72	72	71	62	53	58	1,456
Maidstone	2,154	225	109	162	217	178	137	135	142	150	174	206	2,154
Sevenoaks	1,437	178	184	225	165	236	144	120	76	48	36	32	1,392
Swale	1,970	272	203	176	199	167	163	150	146	144	155	158	1,940
Thanet	1,590	254	116	170	156	201	155	149	150	147	150	159	1,515
Tonbridge & Malling	1,668	201	137	218	148	149	131	114	93	88	93	103	1,644
Tunbridge Wells	1,321	191	198	195	181	214	187	173	175	177	185	198	1,306
Kent	**19,530**	**2,707**	**2,219**	**1,813**	**2,506**	**2,632**	**2,181**	**2,112**	**2,044**	**2,026**	**2,072**	**2,144**	**18,995**

Source: Management Information, Children, Young People and Education, KCC

The overall number of pupils in Kent secondary schools has risen since 2015-16, from 78,002 pupils to 94,093 in 2025-26, an increase in excess of 20% over a ten-year period. This has been driven by larger Year 6 cohorts entering the secondary sector and demand generated by housing development. We anticipate that the Year 7 rolls will continue to increase during the Plan Period. This level of need for Year 7 places will require significant further investment in the secondary estate to maintain sufficiency of places and will continue to represent a major challenge to the Council and its commissioning partners in the years to come.

Figures 6d and 6e provide a breakdown of expected surplus or deficit capacity in Year 7 by non-selective and selective planning groups, across the 10-year period to 2035-36. Many districts/boroughs are showing a need for additional non-selective Year 7 places at some point in the forecast period. Within the selective sector we forecast (Figure 6e) a similar pattern of deficits of Year 7 places throughout the forecast period for the many of planning groups. In part this has been due to selective schools accepting over PAN for a number of years rather than cohorts growing significantly.

The need for additional places can in-part be managed through existing schools increasing the number of places offered on a temporary or permanent bases, but not all of the pressure can be managed this way, consequentially there will be a need for new schools or satellites of existing schools. The individual district/borough sections break down the expected surplus/deficit of places into smaller planning for both selective and non-selective.

Figure 6d: Non-selective school-based surplus/deficit capacity summary (Year 7) if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (F)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/35 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Ashford North	968	64	-30	-9	-28	-17	133	59	84	56	140	94	968
Canterbury City	710	23	5	-62	-66	-37	-43	-26	-40	-53	-32	-28	660
Canterbury Coastal	618	87	56	22	39	8	18	59	37	34	67	66	598
Tenterden and Cranbrook	360	39	-4	-11	-10	-12	6	1	2	5	12	17	300
Dartford and Swanley	1,410	100	29	125	153	161	173	197	172	160	203	205	1,590
Dover	450	30	-1	-50	-47	-19	8	16	18	-18	20	49	390
Deal and Sandwich	425	164	76	67	58	64	87	77	84	56	81	83	395
Folkestone and Hythe	595	24	10	-21	-19	29	-15	60	22	25	46	28	595
Faversham	210	49	31	13	25	27	12	28	14	13	0	-7	210
Gravesham and Longfield	1,354	54	37	-3	-4	57	51	59	42	23	53	16	1,389
Maidstone District	1,590	74	-34	-64	-97	-124	-64	-38	30	-69	-10	24	1,560
Malling	543	43	55	12	12	5	30	4	31	8	16	24	543
Romney Marsh	180	-1	15	14	6	13	17	26	24	26	33	43	180
Sevenoaks and Borough Green	610	-16	-22	-24	-16	-19	-9	25	2	15	69	35	610
Isle of Sheppey	360	-1	-12	-21	-12	-17	-15	14	40	28	17	42	330
Sittingbourne	765	-12	13	-70	-52	-38	-52	12	1	-26	27	27	765
Thanet District	1,189	-2	-72	-80	-40	-98	-12	-16	33	-5	30	31	1,099
Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells	1,641	235	96	116	120	84	153	156	169	190	221	175	1,586
Kent	**13,978**	**954**	**249**	**-46**	**21**	**68**	**480**	**713**	**765**	**467**	**992**	**923**	**13,768**

Source: Management Information, Children, Young People and Education, KCC

Figure 6e: Selective school-based surplus/deficit capacity summary (Year 7) if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (F)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/35 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Ashford	420	0	-2	-7	-13	-10	31	5	12	5	27	14	420
Canterbury and Faversham	645	-18	-3	-51	-32	-21	-26	6	-15	-22	-11	-5	645
North West Kent	720	-3	-8	-27	-37	-36	-24	-5	5	-4	23	26	720
Dover District	440	17	-3	13	12	11	23	20	26	14	16	34	440
Folkestone & Hythe District	330	-9	16	20	15	18	17	20	18	21	21	17	330
Gravesham and Longfield	420	-9	-8	-23	-31	-13	-15	-18	-22	-37	-29	-35	420
Sittingbourne and Sheppey	300	30	35	10	19	14	15	37	35	25	42	41	300
Thanet District	345	45	25	25	35	20	42	40	50	47	54	54	345
Maidstone and Malling	815	14	31	6	-9	-30	-1	-2	27	-16	18	23	815
West Kent	1,264	-19	-31	-54	-27	-28	3	30	47	61	126	102	1,264
Cranbrook	90	1	-2	-11	-8	-14	-12	-3	-13	-5	-3	9	90
Kent	**5,789**	**49**	**49**	**-99**	**-75**	**-90**	**54**	**130**	**170**	**90**	**285**	**281**	**5,789**

Source: Management Information, Children, Young People and Education, KCC

6.4 Travel to School Flows

Figures 6f and 6g outline the travel to school flows for selective and non-selective provision in Kent districts. There are big differences between both the scale of travel to school flows and the direction of flows between districts; for example, Sevenoaks has a net outflow of circa 4,300 pupils across the selective and non-selective sectors combined (excluding out of county pupils), whereas Maidstone has a net inflow of over 1,000 pupils. Dartford had the highest number of out of county pupils with over 2,200 travelling from adjacent boroughs. Tunbridge Wells has a high flow of pupils into the District particularly to access both non-selective denominational provision and selective provision. Tonbridge and Malling has high flows into and out of the District for both selective and non-selective provision.

Figure 6f: Travel to school flows for non-selective pupils (years 7-11) in Kent mainstream schools (Autumn 2025)

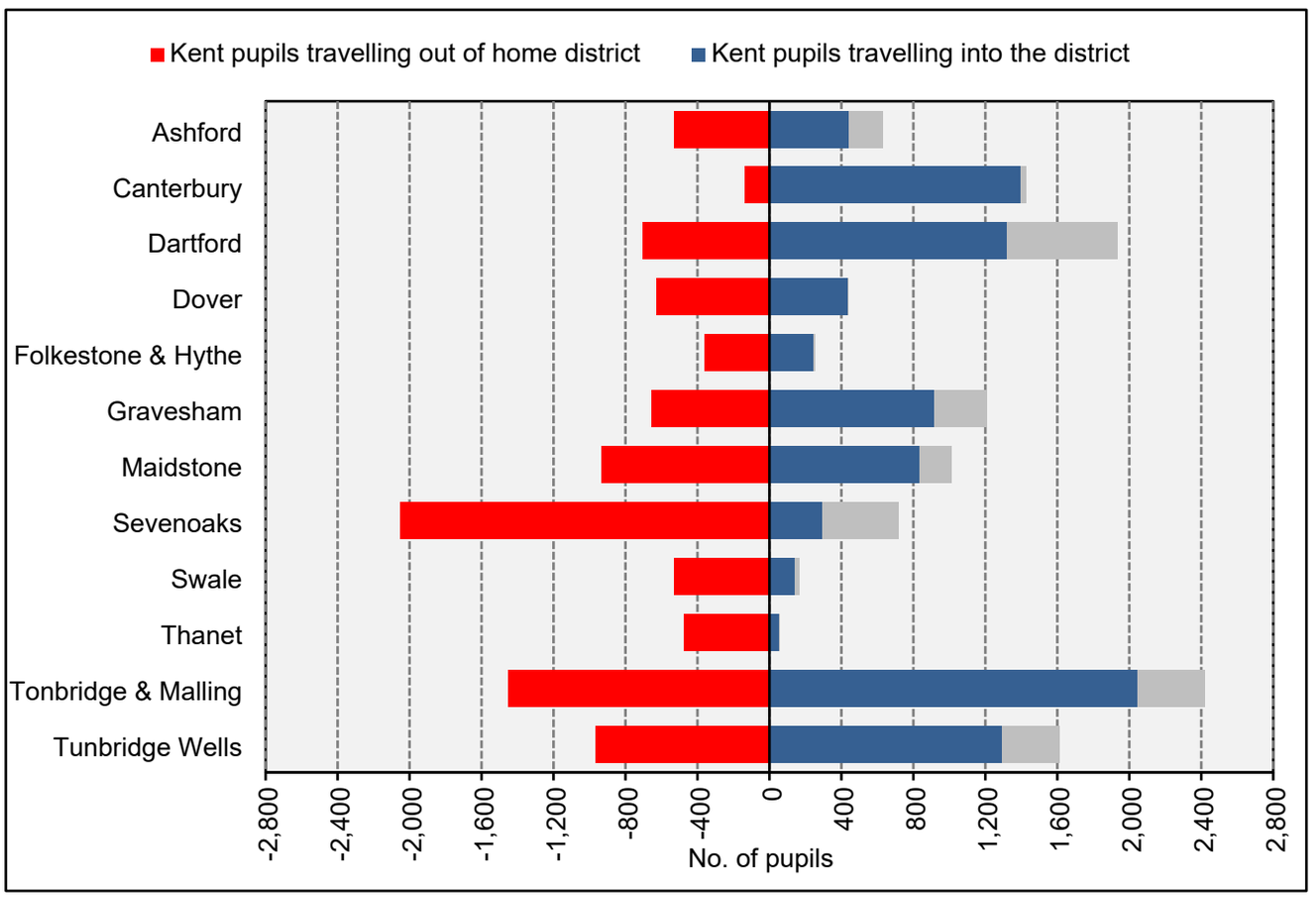
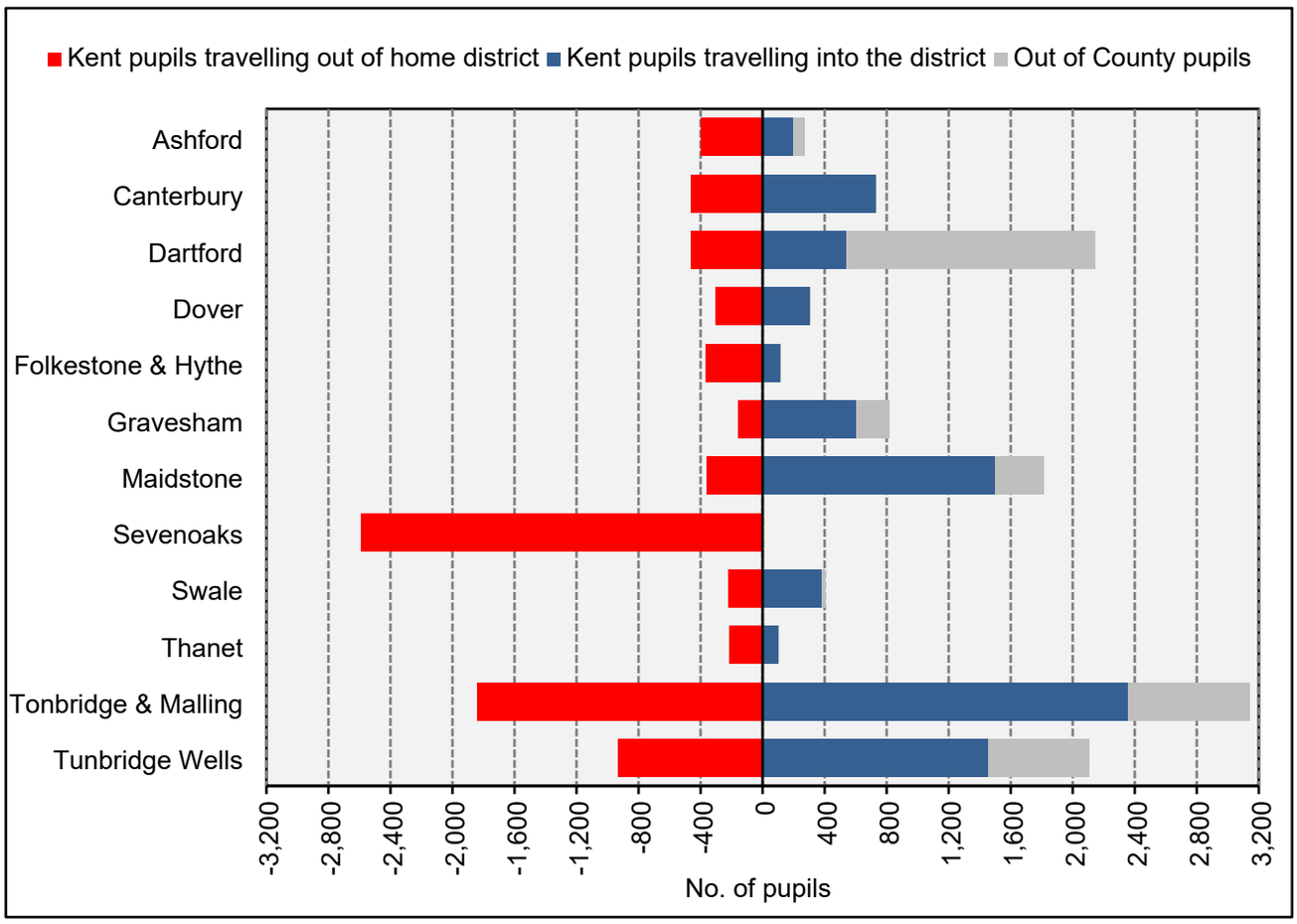


Figure 6g: Travel to school flows for selective grammar pupils (years 7-11) in Kent mainstream schools (Autumn 2025)



Source: Management Information, Children, Young People and Education, KCC

Notes:
(1) Actual roll data 2025/26 - Schools Census, Autumn 2024
(2) Data excludes Duke of York's Royal Military School, Dover
(3) The Sevenoaks Annex of Weald of Kent Grammar School is treated as being located in Tonbridge & Malling
(4) The Sevenoaks Annex of Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys is treated as being located in Tunbridge Wells

6.6 Migration into Kent

Figure 6h, 6i and 6j set out the net migration by pre-school, primary school and secondary school ages for 2024 and 2025. This table indicates a reduction in the annual inwards migration for the pre-school, but a notable increase in both primary and secondary migration.

Figure 6h: Pre-school (0-3 year olds) net migration year ending 30th June 2025

	2024					2025				
District	**Kent districts**	**Medway**	**London**	**Elsewhere in the UK**	**Total**	**Kent districts**	**Medway**	**London**	**Elsewhere in the UK**	**Total**
Ashford	-3	-4	41	-34	0	53	12	59	-16	108
Canterbury	40	9	82	-24	107	17	17	83	19	136
Dartford	-107	-25	203	-71	1	-136	-45	143	-48	-86
Dover	13	5	27	-5	40	82	-1	20	-14	87
Folkestone & Hythe	38	-3	55	0	91	-9	7	49	-20	27
Gravesham	-39	-13	87	-43	-8	0	-26	121	-54	41
Maidstone	8	37	136	-40	141	-30	37	140	8	156
Sevenoaks	-38	-4	162	-61	59	-45	-1	175	-50	79
Swale	40	61	94	0	196	1	51	85	9	146
Thanet	25	0	92	-11	105	10	6	52	-10	58
Tonbridge & Malling	18	27	116	-14	147	14	50	108	-20	152
Tunbridge Wells	5	6	123	-35	99	42	-7	118	-60	93
Kent	**0**	**97**	**1,219**	**-338**	**978**	**0**	**99**	**1,156**	**-257**	**997**

Source: Office for National Statistics, Table IM2023-25

Figure 6i: Primary (4-10 year olds) net migration year ending 30th June 2025

	2024					2025				
District	**Kent districts**	**Medway**	**London**	**Elsewhere**	**Total**	**Kent districts**	**Medway**	**London**	**Elsewhere**	**Total**
Ashford	-9	11	60	-56	6	20	14	98	-40	92
Canterbury	50	23	118	-22	168	53	21	137	6	216
Dartford	-114	-73	464	-61	216	-208	-64	394	-49	72
Dover	53	3	50	-18	88	127	12	35	-5	169
Folkestone & Hythe	32	0	56	23	111	-23	11	87	-9	65
Gravesham	-20	-46	223	-81	75	-43	-36	172	-83	10
Maidstone	35	69	191	-19	276	21	87	112	-21	199
Sevenoaks	-30	1	267	-44	195	-13	-1	236	-76	145
Swale	29	26	147	-25	177	14	115	162	-24	266
Thanet	-55	8	77	-29	1	-15	22	56	16	79
Tonbridge & Malling	-61	5	134	-15	63	26	33	145	-19	186
Tunbridge Wells	90	5	157	1	254	43	3	158	12	216
Kent	**0**	**31**	**1,945**	**-347**	**1,630**	**0**	**215**	**1,792**	**-292**	**1,715**

Source: Office for National Statistics, Table IM2023-25

Figure 6j: Secondary aged (11-15 year olds) net migration year ending 30th June 2025

	2024					2025				
District	**Kent districts**	**Medway**	**London**	**Elsewhere**	**Total**	**Kent districts**	**Medway**	**London**	**Elsewhere**	**Total**
Ashford	3	10	32	-32	12	-5	8	34	-27	11
Canterbury	36	13	78	-11	116	82	14	63	27	186
Dartford	-71	-37	205	-7	90	-84	-32	225	-28	82
Dover	1	1	47	8	57	77	11	37	25	151
Folkestone & Hythe	-18	3	13	-26	-28	-42	4	16	4	-19
Gravesham	1	-22	107	-47	38	-5	-45	90	-19	20
Maidstone	65	41	97	7	209	26	30	83	3	141
Sevenoaks	-61	-7	122	-21	33	-78	-11	168	20	99
Swale	27	57	92	-36	139	-47	75	80	-7	101
Thanet	-9	12	41	-29	16	3	3	22	-19	9
Tonbridge & Malling	-8	16	91	22	121	57	27	105	-7	182
Tunbridge Wells	35	3	106	19	163	17	0	85	16	119
Kent	**0**	**90**	**1,029**	**-154**	**966**	**0**	**84**	**1,008**	**-10**	**1,082**

Across the County as a whole, any fluctuation in migration may only have a small proportional impact on pupil numbers. However, at a district/borough level the fluctuation from one year to the next can be significant requiring the LA to respond swiftly to ensure sufficient school places.

8. Commissioning Statutory School Provision by Districts

7.1 Ashford

Borough Commentary

- Birth rates have fallen nationally by 26% between 2011 and 2024. The trend in Ashford mirrors this, although the birth rate of the Borough continues to exceed both Kent and National rates. Indications are the downwards trend was reversed in England, Kent, and Ashford in 2024 with increases in birth rates.

- Despite the falling birth rate, birth numbers in Ashford have not consistently declined in recent years. Future Year R cohorts (births in 2021 and on) vary in size from 1364 births to 1463.

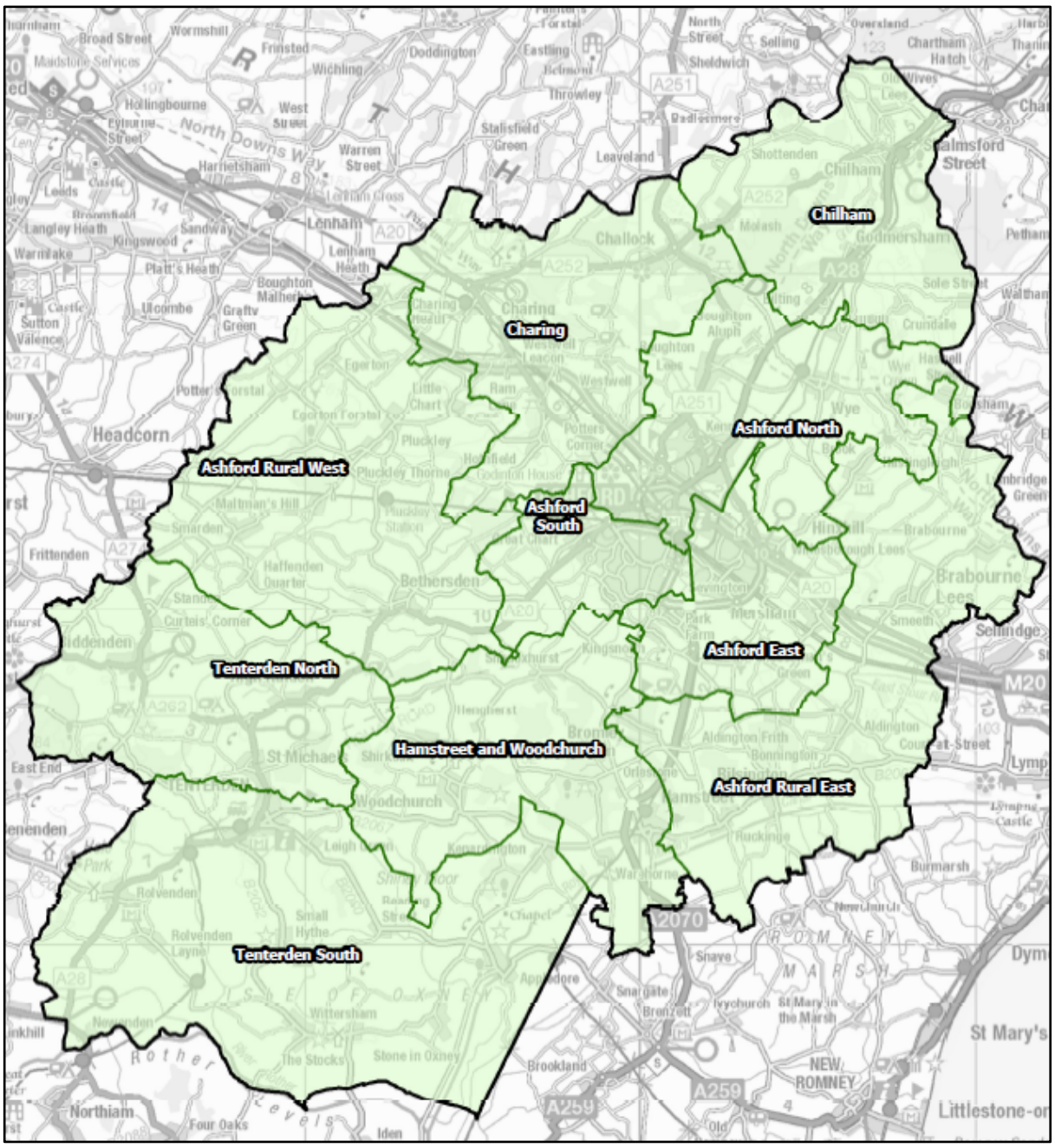
- Primary school rolls fall until 2029/30 then fluctuate. There may be localised pressures as house building resumes following delays in sites coming forwards. If this is the case, we will manage this with schools. In line with Government policy, surplus may also be used for nursery provision to deliver the extension of government funded places, to provide wraparound care, or to provide more specialist SEN places and inclusion bases to meet the objectives of the SEN Reforms.

- Forecasts suggest a deficit of Year 7 places from 2026/27 to 2029/30 across the three secondary school planning groups. This will be managed within the Borough schools.

- The Local Plan (up to 2030) was adopted in the first quarter of 2019. The 'Stodmarsh' nutrient neutrality issue continues to impact housing delivery. During the period 2015/16 to 2024/25 an average of 771 homes were completed per annum (Kent Analytics Statistical Bulletin May 2026).

- Ashford Borough Council ran a high-level Regulation 18 consultation in Autumn 2025, looking at a new local plan period up to 2042 and potential for an additional 7,300 dwellings in the period. KCC will be working with Ashford colleagues to ensure that additional education infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of the new population are planned for and provided as part of planning permissions.

Map of the Ashford Borough primary planning groups



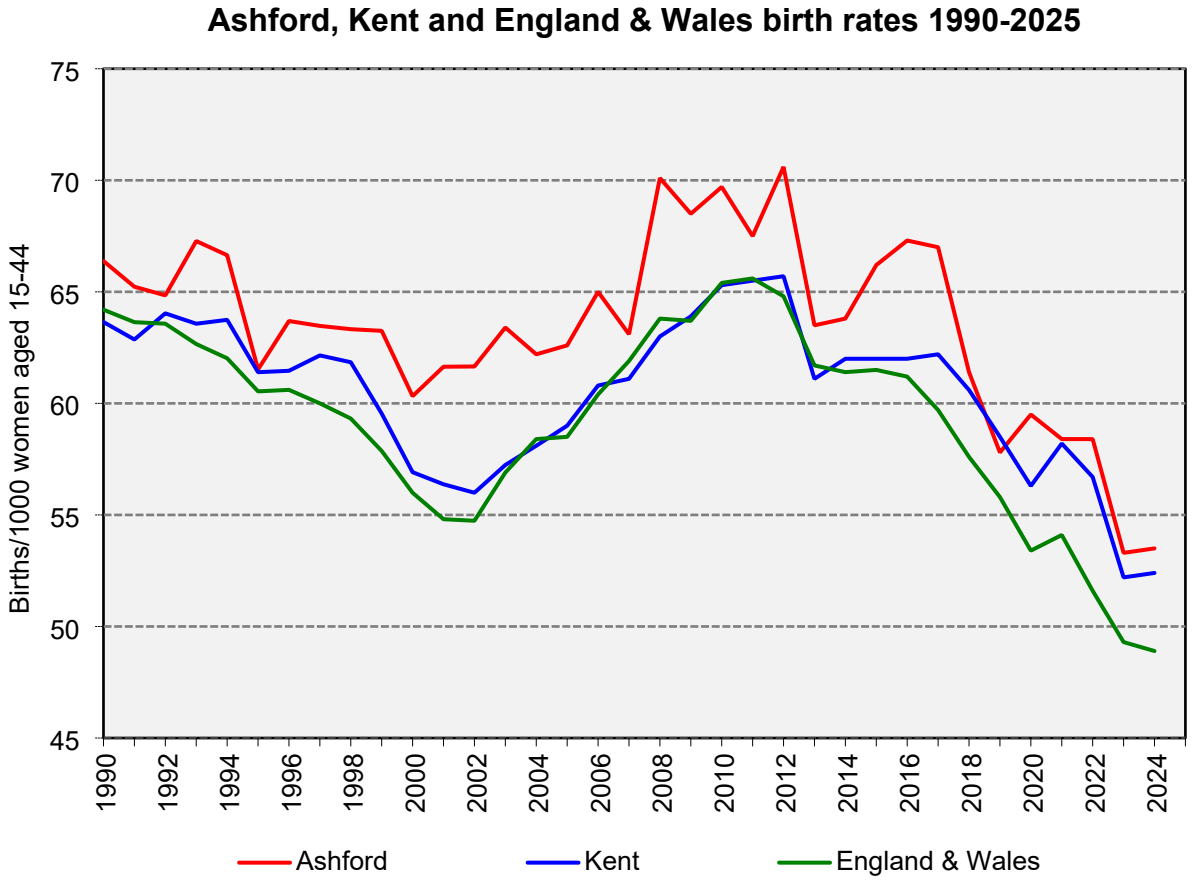
Ashford primary schools by planning group

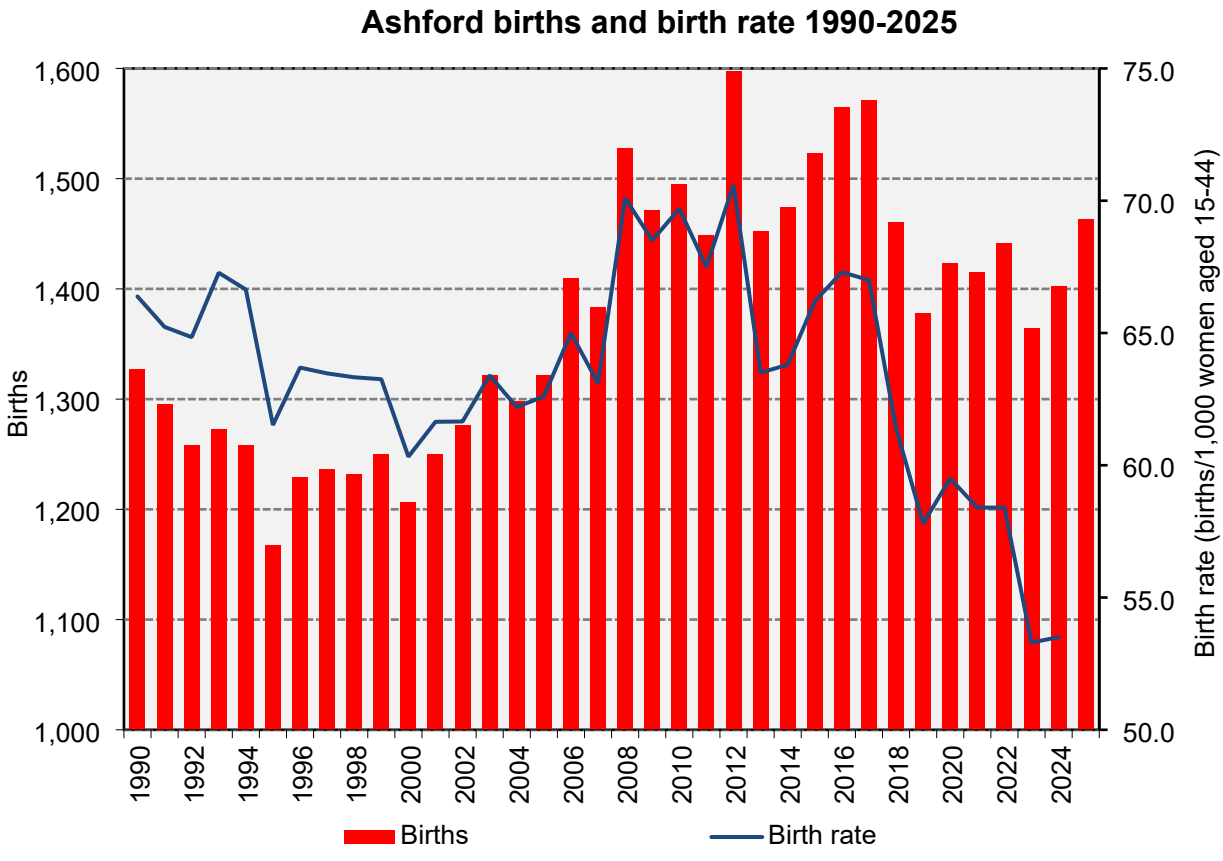
Planning Groups	School	Status
Chilham	St. Mary's CE Primary School (Chilham)	Academy
Charing	Challock Primary School	Foundation
	Charing CE Primary School	Academy
Ashford North	Downs View Infant School	Community
	Goat Lees Primary School	Foundation
	Godinton Primary School	Academy
	Kennington CE Academy	Academy
	Lady Joanna Thornhill Endowed Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Phoenix Community Primary School	Foundation
	Repton Manor Primary School	Foundation
	St. Mary's CE Primary School (Ashford)	Voluntary Aided
	St. Teresa's RC Primary School	Academy

Planning Groups	School	Status
	Victoria Road Primary School	Community
Ashford Rural East	Aldington Primary School	Foundation
	Brabourne CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Brook Community Primary School	Foundation
	Smeeth Community Primary School	Foundation
Ashford East	East Stour Primary School	Academy
	Finberry Primary School	Academy
	Furley Park Primary Academy	Academy
	Kingsnorth CE Primary School	Academy
	Mersham Primary School	Foundation
	Willesborough Infant School	Foundation
	Willesborough Junior School	Foundation
Ashford South	Ashford Oaks Primary School	Community
	Beaver Green Primary School	Academy
	Chilmington Green Primary School	Free
	Great Chart Primary School	Community
	John Wallis CE Academy	Academy
	John Wesley CE and Methodist Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	St. Simon of England RC Primary School	Academy
Ashford Rural West	Bethersden School	Community
	Egerton CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Pluckley CE Primary School	Academy
	Smarden Primary School	Academy
Hamstreet and Woodchurch	Hamstreet Primary Academy	Academy
	Woodchurch CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
Tenterden North	High Halden CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	John Mayne CE Primary School	Academy
	St. Michael's CE Primary School	Academy
Tenterden South	Rolvenden Primary School	Academy
	Tenterden CE Junior School	Academy
	Tenterden Infant School	Academy
	Wittersham CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided

Birth rate and births analysis

The charts below set out the birth rates for the Borough and the number of recorded births.





Ashford Forecasts

Primary - Year R surplus/deficit capacity if no further action is taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Chilham	15	8	3	7	8	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	15
Challock and Charing	50	-4	1	2	6	1	1	0	-1	-1	-1	-1	50
Ashford North	420	18	33	57	58	27	42	47	52	55	60	64	420
Ashford Rural East	80	9	3	17	6	4	8	9	10	10	11	11	80
Ashford East	410	86	15	35	19	12	21	26	33	37	40	40	380
Ashford South	390	50	49	95	58	55	67	72	77	82	84	83	390
Ashford Rural West	80	5	9	9	10	8	8	8	7	7	7	8	80
Hamstreet and Woodchurch	71	19	15	19	16	11	16	16	16	16	16	17	71
Tenterden North	65	16	6	14	8	9	10	10	10	10	10	10	60
Tenterden South	94	23	37	28	36	37	34	35	35	35	35	35	95
Ashford	**1,675**	**230**	**171**	**283**	**225**	**170**	**213**	**227**	**245**	**257**	**268**	**273**	**1,641**

Secondary - Forecast Year 7 surplus/deficit capacity if no further action is taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
NS - Ashford North	968	64	-30	-9	-28	-17	133	59	84	56	140	94	968
NS - Tenterden and Cranbrook	360	39	-4	-11	-10	-12	6	1	2	5	12	17	300
SG - Ashford	420	0	-2	-7	-13	-10	31	5	12	5	27	14	420

Primary Borough Commentary
Across the District we forecast surplus Year R places with 9FE surplus by the end of the Plan period. In the short to medium term, we will collaborate with schools to manage the levels of surplus Year R places to help maintain high quality, sustainable provision. In line with Government policy, surplus may also be used for nursery provision to deliver the extension of government funded places, to provide wraparound care, or to provide more specialist SEN places and inclusion bases to meet the objectives of the SEN Reforms.

Charing and Challock Planning Group
Forecasts suggest there will be no Year R places at the end of the forecast period. The expansion of Charing CE Primary School continues to be the strategic solution for additional primary school places in the planning group. The expansion of the school will be driven by local consented housing developments. It is not expected school places will be required until the next decade.

Ashford North Planning Group
Forecasts suggest 1-2FE of Year R places surplus throughout the Plan period. Planned new developments north of the M20 between Kennington, Willesborough and Eureka Park will increase demand but most are yet to move forward. To support new housing in and around the planning group, the Local Plan makes provision for a new 2FE primary school into the 'Conningbrook Park' development. Should housing come forward as anticipated, the school is likely to be required in the next decade.

Ashford East Planning Group
Although forecasts suggest surplus Year R places across the Plan period, additional provision may be required to support housing development as this comes forward. This includes: Finberry, Waterbrook, Park Farm, Court Lodge, Pound Lane, and Willesborough Lees.

The Local Plan makes provision for a new 2FE primary school to be incorporated into the 'Court Lodge' development area, to meet the longer-term primary education needs driven by that development. We would not expect the new primary school to be available until the 2030's.

Ashford South Planning Group
Forecasts suggest 2-3FE Year R places surplus across the forecast period. The development at Chilmington Green is located within this planning group. It has not come forwards as expected. The surplus capacity will reduce when delivery of housing in the planning group moves forward.

Secondary Borough Commentary
There are three planning groups which are within Ashford Borough, or which cross the Borough boundary (See appendix 13.2 for the non-selective and selective planning group maps). Two planning groups are non-selective (Ashford North, Tenterden and Cranbrook), one selective. The commentary below outlines the forecast position for each of the planning groups.

Ashford North Non-Selective Planning Group
There are five existing schools in the Ashford North non-selective planning group: John Wallis Church of England Academy, The North School, The Towers School and Sixth Form Centre, Wye School, and Chilmington Secondary School. We are anticipating a small deficit of Year 7 places from 2026/27 for 4 years. We will collaborate with existing schools to ensure that there are sufficient Year 7 places for all who require one.

Developer contributions to expand Chilmington Green Secondary School by 2FE have been sought. This planned expansion will support planned housing development in the district.

Tenterden and Cranbrook Non-Selective Planning Group
Forecasts indicate a fluctuation between a small deficit and a small surplus of Year 7 places across the forecast period. This can be managed via admissions criteria.

Ashford Selective Planning Group

There are two selective schools in the Borough: Highworth Grammar School and The Norton Knatchbull Grammar School. Forecasts suggest that there will be a small deficit of Year 7 places until 2029/30. We will collaborate with the existing schools to manage this.

Planned Commissioning – Ashford

Planning Group	By 2027-28	By 2028-29	By 2029-30	By 2030-31	Post 2031
Ashford East					2FE of new provision at Court Lodge
Ashford North					2FE New provision at Conningbrook Park
Charing					0.3FE Charing CEPS
Ashford South					2FE of new provision at Chilmington Green
Ashford North Non-Selective		Up to 30 temporary Year 7 places	Up to 30 temporary Year 7 places		2FE Expansion of Chilmington Green

7.2 Canterbury

District commentary

- The Canterbury district birth rate differs to Kent and the national picture as it is significantly lower, reflecting the large student population. The birth rate has had a downward trend since the 1990s. However, following a sharp fall in 2020, Canterbury's birth rate and the number of births rose again in 2021, before falling back slightly in 2022, 2023 and 2024.

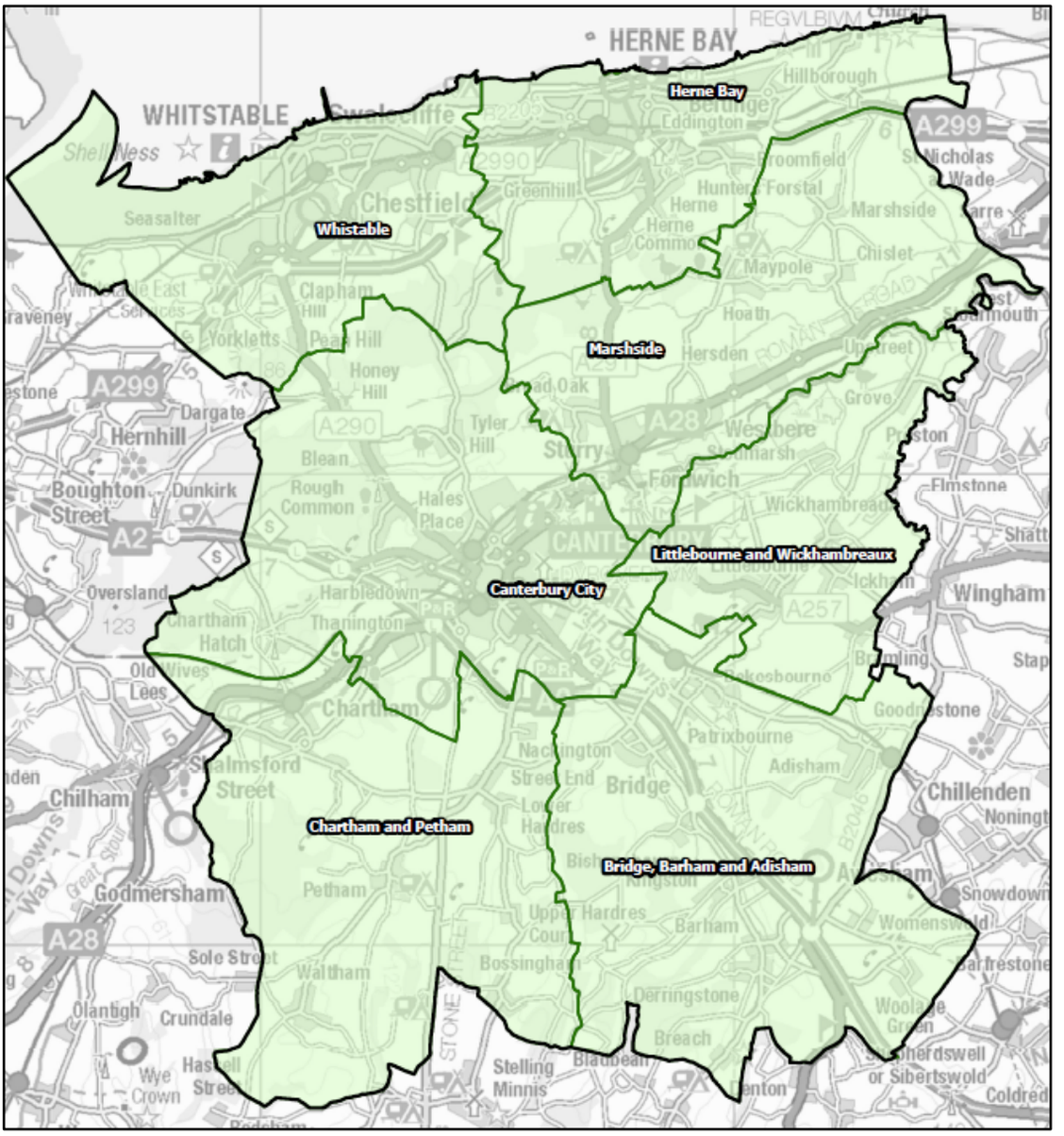
- We forecast surplus primary school places across the district throughout the forecast period, however there are significant differences in the planning groups.

- Within the secondary sector, we forecast pressures on capacity for non-selective Year 7 places in Canterbury City planning group but capacity in the Canterbury Coastal planning group. For selective places there is pressure on places throughout the plan period.

- Canterbury City Council's current Local Plan, adopted on 13 July 2017, proposed a total of just over 16,000 new homes during the Plan period up to 2031. This equates to an average of 925 dwellings per annum. During the 2015/16 to 2024/25 a total of 5866 houses were completed (NET) with an average of 587 per year.

- Canterbury City Council (CCC) is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the district which will set out the blueprint for development up to 2042/43. Following previous consultations at Regulation 18 stage, CCC consulted on a Regulation 19 draft Local Plan in Spring 2026. CCC is currently reviewing the representations received to the Regulation 19 consultation and the draft Local Plan will be submitted for examination in Autumn 2026.

Map of the Canterbury Primary Planning Groups

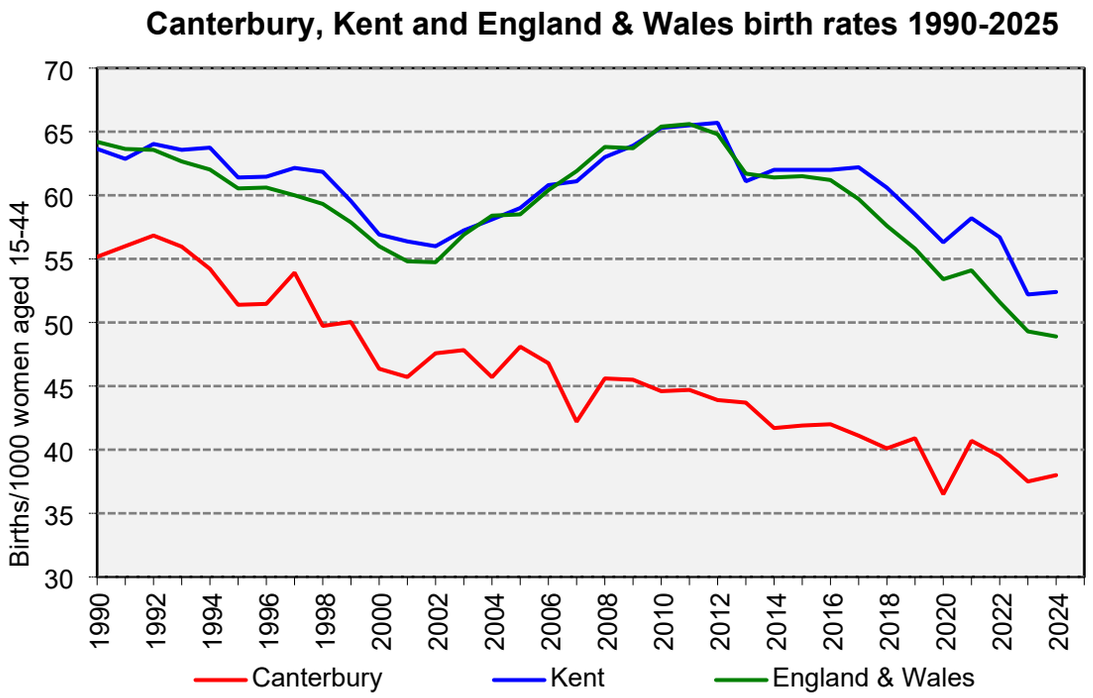


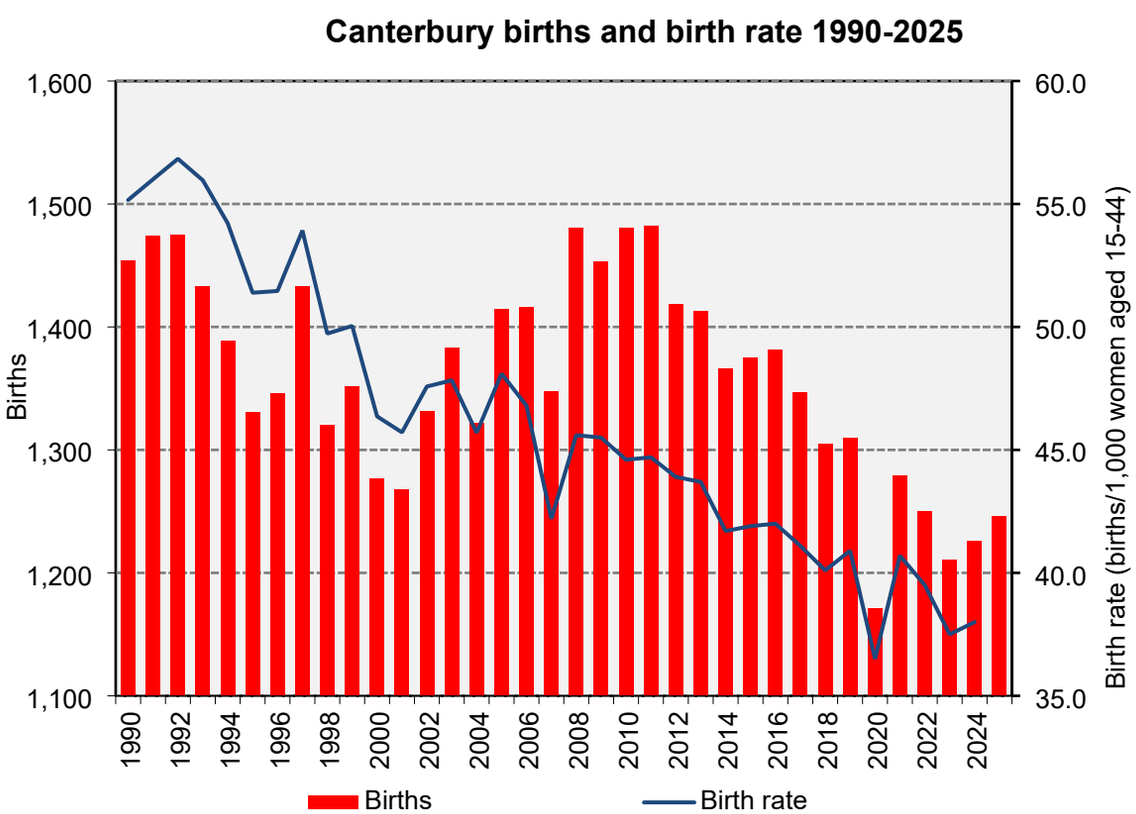
Canterbury Primary Schools by Planning Group

Planning Group	School	Status
Canterbury City	Blean Primary School	Community
	Canterbury Primary School	Academy
	Parkside Community Primary School	Foundation
	Pilgrims' Way Primary School	Academy
	St. John's CE Primary School (Canterbury)	Voluntary Controlled
	St. Peter's Methodist Primary School (Canterbury)	Voluntary Controlled
	St. Stephen's Infant School	Academy
	St. Stephen's Junior School	Academy
	St. Thomas' RC Primary School (Canterbury)	Voluntary Aided
	Wincheap Foundation Primary School	Foundation
Marshside	Chislet CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Water Meadows Primary School	Academy
	Hoath Primary School	Community
	Sturry CE Primary School	Academy
Bridge, Barham and Adisham	Adisham CE Primary School	Academy
	Barham CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Bridge and Patrixbourne CE Primary School	Academy

Planning Group	School	Status
Littlebourne and Wickhambreaux	Littlebourne CE Primary School	Academy
	Wickhambreaux CE Primary School	Academy
Chartham and Petham	Chartham Primary School	Academy
	Petham Primary School	Academy
Whitstable	Joy Lane Primary School	Foundation
	St. Alphege CE Infant School	Voluntary Controlled
	St. Mary's RC Primary School (Whitstable)	Academy
	Swalecliffe Community Primary School	Foundation
	Westmeads Community Infant School	Community
	Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed CE Junior School	Voluntary Aided
	Whitstable Junior School	Foundation
Herne Bay	Thornden Wood Primary School	Academy
	Hampton Primary School	Academy
	Herne Bay Infant School	Community
	Herne Bay Junior School	Foundation
	Herne CE Infant School	Voluntary Controlled
	Herne CE Junior School	Voluntary Aided
	Reculver CE Primary School	Academy

Birth Rate and Birth Analysis
The charts below set out the birth rates for the district and the number of recorded births.





Canterbury Forecasts

Primary - Year R Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Canterbury City	480	21	39	45	42	35	45	67	86	103	119	136	480
Marshside	120	17	1	-4	-8	-25	-13	-14	-16	-19	-21	-24	120
Bridge, Barham and Adisham	105	1	3	-3	1	8	3	5	7	8	10	12	105
Littlebourne and Wickhambreaux	30	0	2	1	5	4	2	3	3	3	4	4	30
Chartham and Petham	75	20	10	23	29	28	22	23	24	25	25	25	75
Whitstable	330	44	57	40	41	42	31	26	21	17	13	11	300
Herne Bay	390	39	-1	33	24	-15	-11	-19	-28	-39	-49	-56	360
Canterbury	**1,530**	**142**	**110**	**134**	**134**	**77**	**80**	**91**	**97**	**98**	**101**	**107**	**1,470**

Secondary - Year 7 Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Canterbury City Non-Selective	710	23	5	-62	-66	-37	-43	-26	-40	-53	-32	-28	660
Canterbury Coastal Non-Selective	618	87	56	22	39	8	18	59	37	34	67	66	598
Canterbury and Faversham Selective	645	-18	-3	-51	-32	-21	-26	6	-15	-22	-11	-5	645

Primary District Commentary

Forecasts indicate that across Canterbury district there will be surplus capacity for Year R places. The surplus for Year R fluctuates throughout the forecast period from 4.5FE surplus for 2027/28, reducing to 3FE for 2031/32 with significant variations across the different Planning Groups.

Canterbury City Planning Group
Forecasts indicate a surplus of places in the planning group of between 1.5FE for Year R in 2027/28 increasing to 2.2FE in 2031/32. A new 2FE primary school is planned to meet the need from new housing developments in the Thanington area, however this will be brought forward when pressures on places are forecast to prevent overcapacity in the planning area.

Marshside Planning Group
Forecasts indicate an increasing pressure of capacity from 0.1FE in 2027/28 to 0.5FE in 2031/32. Initial pressures will be accommodated from surplus capacity in adjacent planning areas, however, later in the forecast period, we plan to expand Water Meadows Primary Academy by 1FE to meet forecast pressures and to serve the housing developments in this planning group.

Herne Bay Planning Group

Forecasts indicate a surplus of places of 1FE in 2027/28, however from 2029/30, the forecast shows an increasing pressure of Year R places throughout the plan period. This is partly due to Herne Bay Infants School reducing its PAN to address the smaller cohorts currently entering school. The capacity has not been lost so this can be reinstated as required. If new housing developments are delivered in line with the Local Plan, additional capacity will be required. Dependent on the order in which developments are built out, this could be delivered through a 1FE expansion of Thornden Wood Primary School or the phased establishment of a new 2FE primary school on the Hillborough development.

Secondary District Commentary

There are three planning groups within Canterbury district, or which cross the Borough boundary (See appendix 13.2 for the non-selective and selective planning group maps). Two planning groups are non-selective (Canterbury City and Canterbury Coastal), and one selective (Canterbury and Faversham). The commentary below outlines the forecast position for each of the planning groups.

Canterbury City Non-Selective Planning Group
There are four schools in the Canterbury City non-selective planning group: Archbishop's School, Barton Manor, Canterbury Academy, and St Anselm's Catholic School.

Forecasts indicate a pressure of 2FE from 2027/28 which decreases to 0.8FE in 2031/32. The historical trend of students travelling from the Coastal planning group to Canterbury city schools place pressure on the Canterbury City planning group. The surplus capacity in the Coastal planning group will help offset these pressures in Canterbury city schools and will realign students to the coastal schools near to where they live. Also, it is partly due to Archbishops Secondary School reducing its PAN to address the smaller cohorts currently entering the school. The capacity has not been lost so this can be reinstated as and when required.

Canterbury Coastal Non-Selective Planning Group
There are three schools in the Canterbury Coastal non-selective planning group: The Whitstable School, Herne Bay High School and Orion Spires.

Year 7 forecasts indicate a fluctuating surplus of places between 0.7FE in 2027/28 to 1.9FE in 2031/32. The historical trend of students travelling from the coast to Canterbury city is starting to change and the surplus capacity in the coastal schools will help offset the pressures in Canterbury City planning group.

Canterbury and Faversham Selective Planning Group
There are four schools in the Canterbury and Faversham selective planning group: Barton Court Grammar School, Simon Langton Girls' Grammar School, Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys and Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School.

Forecasts indicate a decreasing pressure of places in the planning group with a pressure of 1.7FE in 2027/2028 to a small surplus of places in 2031/32 of 0.2FE. We plan a 0.5FE expansion of Simon Langton Girls Grammar School and we will be working with existing school within the planning group to meet any additional need.

Planned Commissioning – Canterbury

Planning Group	By 2027-28	By 2028-29	By 2029-30	By 2030-31	Post 2031
Canterbury City					1FE of new School in Thanington with potential to expand by further 1 FE – Saxon Fields Primary School
Marshside					1FE expansion of Water Meadows 1FE of new provision in Sturry/ Broad Oak
Herne Bay					1FE expansion of Thornden Wood PS or 1FE new provision in Herne Bay
Canterbury City Non-Selective	Up to 30 temporary Y7 places	Up to 30 temporary Y7 places	Up to 30 temporary Y7 places	Up to 30 temporary Y7 places	
Canterbury and Faversham Selective	0.5FE expansion of Simon Langton Girls School				

7.3 Dartford

Borough Summary

- The Dartford birth rate continues to fall, but although it remains higher than the Kent and national averages, the gap has closed in recent years.

- Dartford primary Reception and secondary Year 7 forecasts will only include consented sites that have been notified to KCC by the Borough Council.

- Current forecasts for Reception-aged pupils indicate that Dartford Borough will maintain a surplus of primary school places throughout the Plan period. However, Borough-wide surplus capacity is forecast to reduce from 203 places in 2025/26 (approximately 6.8FE) to 62 places by 2035/36 (approximately 2FE). While overall capacity remains sufficient at a borough level, forecast pressures become increasingly concentrated within specific planning groups later in the Plan period. In contrast, higher surplus capacity is forecast to remain in other planning groups, helping to offset pressures across the borough. KCC will continue to monitor demand, housing delivery and school admissions and will consider adjustments to PANs and future commissioning activity where necessary.

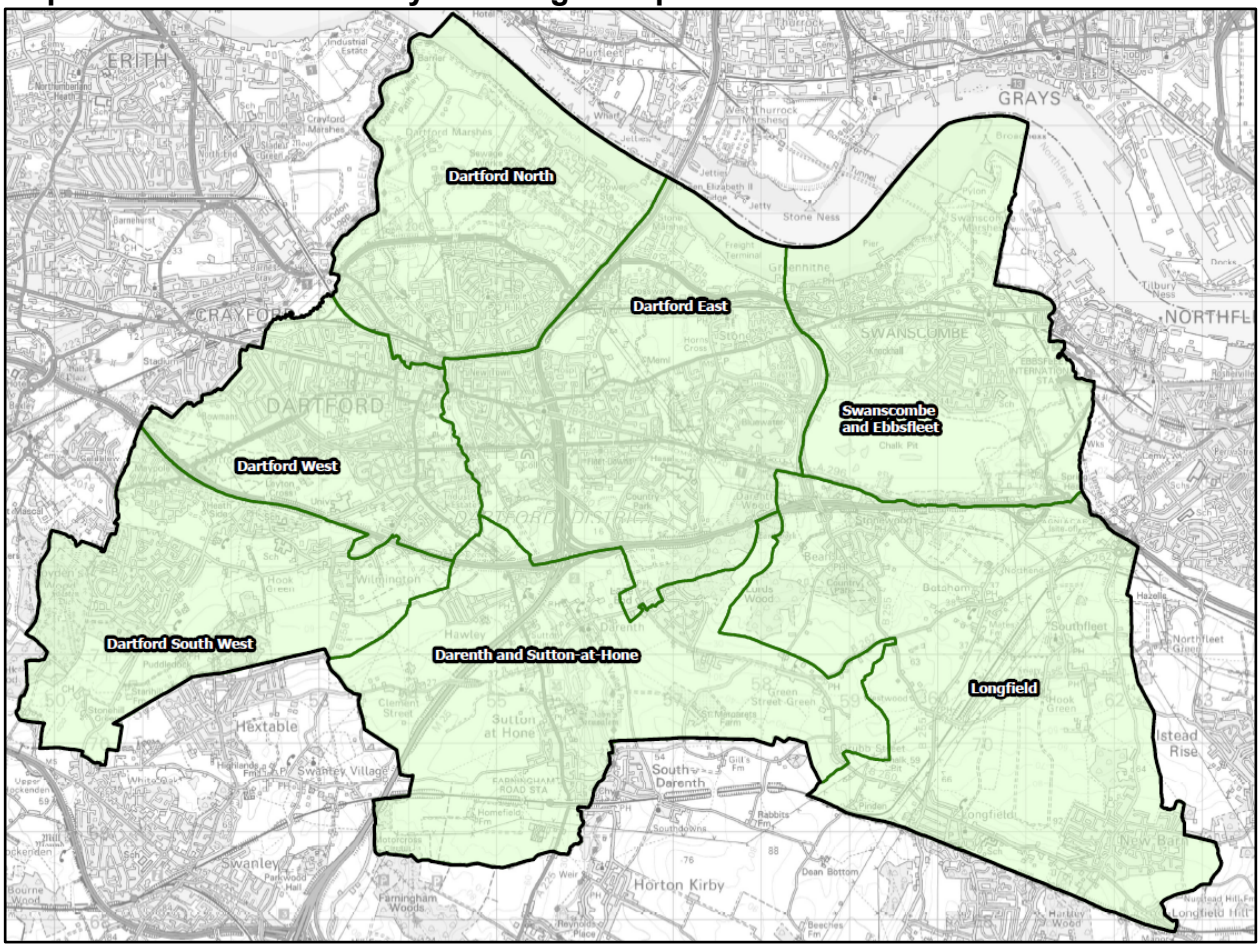
- Current forecasts for secondary non-selective provision indicate no notable pressures arising throughout the period of the Plan. Current forecasts do not identify a need for additional non-selective secondary provision, although KCC will continue to monitor demand and housing growth across the wider North Kent area. In the short/medium term, KCC will work with individual schools to ensure they maintain viability should they not be full in the short/medium term.

- Both the Gravesham and Longfield Selective and North West Kent Selective Planning Groups are forecast to experience pressure on grammar school places during the Plan period. However, the forecast pressure is not as high as indicated in previous commissioning Plans. Expansion opportunities within the existing grammar school estate remain extremely limited, due to site and legislative constraints, though KCC will continue to work with selective schools across North Kent to explore opportunities for additional capacity where feasible, whilst ensuring that sufficient secondary school places are available overall to meet its statutory duty.

- Dartford Borough Council (DBC) and the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) had estimated that up to 2026, approximately 17,300 new homes would be built. The build trajectory to achieve that had slipped due to covid but continues to move at pace. The adopted Dartford Local Plan 2024 requires that 790 dwellings are delivered per annum (totalling 12,640 homes from April 2021 to March 2037).

- The EDC has confirmed that a total 15,000 homes will be built in their area of responsibility alone up to approximately 2040, it should be noted that the figures set out above in the Dartford Local Plan include the proportion of the 15,000 dwellings that fall in the Dartford area, with the remainder being covered in the emerging Gravesham Local Plan. This is not therefore additional development above what is set out in the Local Plans. However, there is a significant proportion of that housing still to be produced. Not all of the anticipated housing has been consented, and so it will not appear in the forecasts. KCC is working in collaboration with DBC and EDC to ensure that sufficient places are available to accommodate the children from the new housing, even if it does not feature in the forecasts at this time.

Map of the Dartford Primary Planning Groups



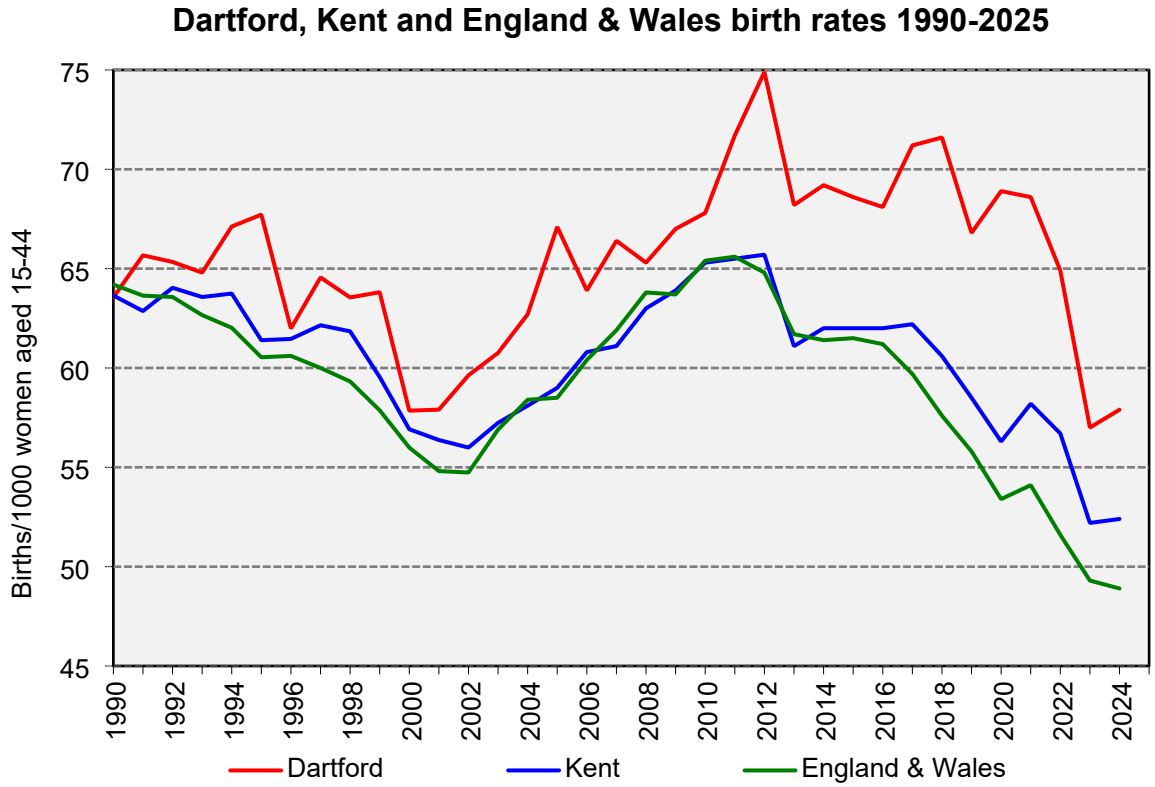
Dartford Primary Schools by Planning Group

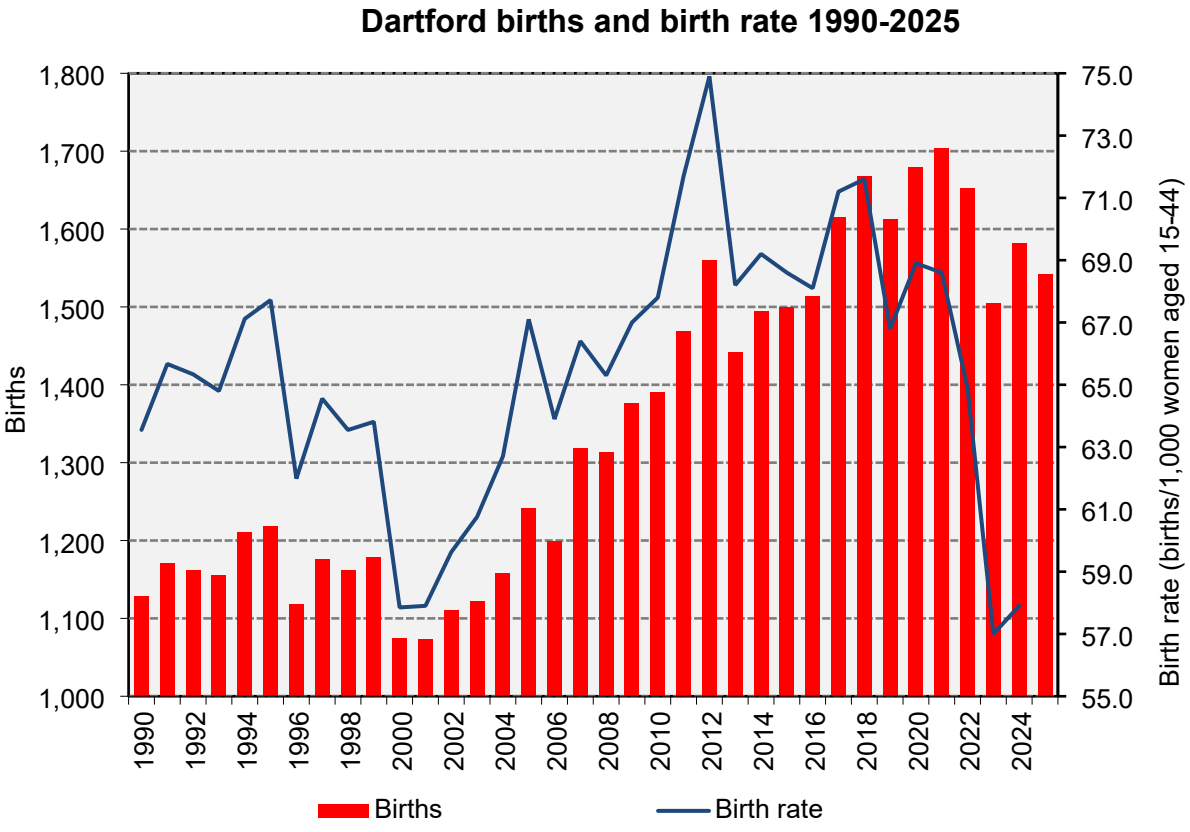
	School	Status
Dartford North	Dartford Bridge Community Primary School	Academy
	Holy Trinity CE Primary School (Dartford)	Voluntary Aided
	River Mill Primary School	Free
	St. Anselm's RC Primary School	Academy
	Temple Hill Primary Academy	Academy
Dartford West	Oakfield Primary Academy	Academy
	Our Lady's RC Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	Wentworth Primary School	Academy
	West Hill Primary Academy	Academy
	Westgate Primary School	Academy
Dartford East	The Brent Primary School	Academy
	Leigh Academy Dartford	Academy
	Fleetdown Primary School	Academy
	The Gateway Primary Academy	Academy
	Stone St. Mary's CE Primary School	Academy
Dartford South West	Joyden's Wood Infant School	Academy
	Joyden's Wood Junior School	Academy
	Maypole Primary School	Academy
	Wilmington Primary School	Academy
Darenth and Sutton-at-Hone	Greenlands Primary School	Academy
	Sutton-at-Hone CE Primary School	Academy
Swanscombe and	Alkerden C of E Academy (from September 2026)	Academy

	School	Status
Ebbsfleet	Leigh Academy Cherry Orchard	Academy
	Craylands Primary School	Community
	Ebbsfleet Green Primary School	Free
	Knockhall Primary School	Academy
	Manor Community Primary School	Academy
Longfield	Bean Primary School	Community
	Langafel CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Sedley's CE Primary School	Academy

Birth Rate Analysis

The charts below set out the birth rates for the Borough and the number of recorded births.





Dartford Forecasts

Primary - Year R Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Dartford North	330	59	68	86	118	117	98	105	110	116	122	128	330
Dartford West	315	23	7	10	-10	21	-1	-2	-9	-14	-12	-8	315
Dartford East	390	6	16	13	7	23	-9	-12	-17	-21	-23	-20	390
Dartford South West	180	28	32	57	49	35	44	45	44	44	45	46	180
Darenth and Sutton-at-Hone	90	19	28	26	26	30	25	25	25	25	25	25	90
Swanscombe and Ebbsfleet	390	45	17	-12	13	-38	-33	-39	-53	-79	-102	-109	420
Longfield	90	23	2	6	1	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	75
Dartford	**1,785**	**203**	**172**	**186**	**204**	**191**	**125**	**123**	**102**	**71**	**56**	**62**	**1,800**

Secondary - Year 7 Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Dartford and Swanley Non-Selective	1,410	100	29	125	153	161	173	197	172	160	203	205	1,590
Gravesham and Longfield Non-Selective	1,354	54	37	-3	-4	57	51	59	42	23	53	16	1,389
Gravesham and Longfield Selective	420	-9	-8	-23	-31	-13	-15	-18	-22	-37	-29	-35	420
North West Kent Selective	720	-3	-8	-27	-37	-36	-24	-5	5	-4	23	26	720

Primary Borough commentary

Current forecasts for Reception-aged pupils indicate that Dartford Borough will retain a surplus of primary school places throughout the Plan period. However, the total surplus capacity is forecast to fall from 203 places in 2025/26 to 56 places in 2034/35 before increasing slightly to 62 places in 2035/36. This equates to a reduction from almost 7FE of surplus capacity to around 2FE by the end of the forecast period. Any forecasted demand primarily relates to the Dartford East Planning Group and the Swanscombe and Ebbsfleet Planning Group.

Substantial residential development continues to generate pressure in specific growth locations. Consequently, although no additional primary provision is currently required at a borough-wide level, localised commissioning activity is expected to be necessary to address emerging shortfalls in the areas experiencing the highest levels of housing growth.

Dartford North Planning Group

The Dartford North Planning Group is forecast to maintain the highest level of surplus capacity within the borough throughout the Plan period. This forecast surplus provides resilience for the wider Dartford primary school system and may assist in accommodating demand that cannot be met within neighbouring planning groups. Consideration may be given to adjustments to PANs where appropriate, to support the long-term sustainability of provision and maintain suitable levels of surplus capacity.

Dartford West Planning Group

The Dartford West Planning Group is forecast to experience some pressure on Reception places over the Plan period. Due to the forecast deficit being relatively small, some demand may continue to be accommodated through surplus capacity in neighbouring planning groups.

Dartford East Planning Group

The Dartford East Planning Group is forecast to face increasing pressure on Reception places over the Plan period. Forecasts only show demand consistently exceeding capacity from 2030/31 onwards. The deficit is forecast to increase from 9 places in 2030/31 to 20 places in 2035/36. Based on current forecasts, up to 1FE of additional primary capacity may be required during the latter part of the Plan period.

Swanscombe and Ebbsfleet Planning Group

The Swanscombe and Ebbsfleet Planning Group continues to be the area most significantly affected by the ongoing development of Ebbsfleet Garden City, with surplus capacity expected to reduce rapidly over the forecast period. The planning group moves from a surplus of 45 places in 2025/26 to a deficit of 12 places by 2027/28. Although short-term fluctuations occur, including a temporary surplus of 13 places in 2028/29, the overall trend is one of increasing pressure. Demand is forecast to exceed capacity by 38 places in 2029/30, rising to a deficit of 109 places by 2035/36.

These forecasts already include the first Form of Entry for Alkerden CofE Academy. Despite this additional capacity, continued housing delivery across Ebbsfleet Garden City will generate the need for further primary school places. Future provision associated with Alkerden and the Ashmere and Ebbsfleet Central developments will be progressed when evidence demonstrates that additional capacity is required.

Secondary Borough Commentary

There are two non-selective and two selective planning groups serving Dartford Borough and the surrounding area. See Appendix 11.2 for the secondary planning group maps.

KCC's strategy across North Kent remains one of managing demand across planning group boundaries where necessary. This approach will help ensure that sufficient school places remain available while maintaining a sustainable level of surplus capacity across the wider area.

Dartford and Swanley Non-Selective Planning Group

There are eight schools in the Dartford and Swanley Non-Selective Planning Group: Alkerden C of E Academy, Dartford Science and Technology College, Ebbsfleet Academy, Leigh UTC, Sir Geoffrey Leigh Academy, Stone Lodge School, Leigh Academy Wilmington and Orchards Academy. All the schools are in Dartford Borough, except for Orchards Academy which is in Sevenoaks District.

Forecasts indicate that the planning group will maintain a relatively high level of surplus capacity throughout the Plan period, with no requirement for additional secondary school commissioning. Surplus places are expected to increase from 125 places in 2027/28 to more than 200 places by 2034/35.

The planning group is therefore well placed to accommodate forecast demand arising from existing and future residential development. As development sites continue to mature, KCC may consider adjustments to PANs at individual schools to ensure that surplus capacity remains at an appropriate and sustainable level in the short to medium term, while supporting the long-term viability of provision across the planning group.

Gravesham and Longfield Non-Selective Planning Group

There are seven schools in the Gravesham and Longfield Non-Selective Planning Group: Longfield Academy, Meopham School, Northfleet Technology College, Northfleet School for Girls, Thamesview School, Saint George's CE School and Saint John's Catholic Comprehensive School.

Current forecasts indicate a very slight deficit within the planning group, with a shortfall of up to 4 places projected for two consecutive years from 2027/28. The planning group then returns to having a surplus of places. Therefore, demand is expected to be managed through pupil movement across planning group boundaries and utilising available capacity elsewhere within the wider North Kent secondary education system.

Looking beyond the current forecast period, KCC will need to consider the implications of planned growth arising from the emerging Gravesham Local Plan. During consultation on the Local Plan, KCC advised Gravesham Borough Council that any significant new housing growth would need to be supported by the identification of land for additional non-selective secondary school provision. KCC will continue to review forecasts and assess future capacity requirements as the Local Plan progresses and the scale and location of developments becomes clearer.

North West Kent Selective Planning Group

There are four schools in the North West Kent Selective Planning Group: Wilmington Grammar School for Girls, Wilmington Grammar School for Boys, Dartford Grammar School and Dartford Grammar School for Girls. Collectively these schools provide 720 Year 7 places annually and serve a wider catchment extending beyond Dartford Borough.

Forecasts indicate that the planning group will remain in deficit for much of the Plan period. The shortfall is expected to increase from 8 places in 2026/27 to just under 1.5FE by 2028/29 before gradually reducing, returning to a small surplus forecast from 2032/33 onwards. The forecast deficits are far lower than those identified in previous Commissioning Plans.

While demand is projected to exceed available places, the scale of the deficit is relatively modest when considered within the context of the wider North Kent selective system. As recognised in previous Kent Commissioning Plans, demand for grammar school places cannot be viewed solely through borough/district boundaries, as pupil movement and parental preferences frequently extend across planning groups. Consequently, forecast pressures are expected to be managed through the wider grammar school network across North Kent.

All four grammar schools within the area have expanded in recent years and therefore opportunities for further expansion are extremely limited. Nevertheless, KCC continues to work with Dartford Grammar School to explore whether a modest expansion (c0.5FE) could be delivered. In addition, recent changes to the admission arrangements at Dartford Grammar School have improved access for Kent-resident pupils, creating additional opportunities for local children without the need for physical expansion.

Gravesham and Longfield Selective Planning Group

There are two schools in the Gravesham and Longfield Selective Planning Group: Gravesend Grammar School and the Mayfield Grammar School. Both schools have previously been expanded and now operate at or close to their practical capacity. Collectively these two schools provide 420 Year 7 places annually and serve a wider catchment extending beyond Dartford Borough.

Forecasts indicate a relatively small but continuing deficit of selective school places throughout the Plan period. The shortfall is expected to increase from around 0.5FE (8 places) in 2026/27 to approximately 1.5FE (37 places) by 2033/34. Demand is projected to remain above 1FE for the remainder of the forecast period.

Following previous expansion projects, opportunities for further growth at the existing grammar schools are now extremely limited. As stated above, any response to this pressure must be considered within the context of the wider North Kent selective system rather than within a single borough/district boundary.

Current legislation continues to prevent the establishment of new grammar schools. Should significant additional selective capacity be required in the future, options would therefore need to be considered at a wider North Kent level, potentially through the development of satellite provision linked to existing grammar schools. However, such proposals would be challenging. Key requirements would include identifying both boys' and girls' grammar schools willing to operate satellite provision, securing a suitable shared site, obtaining DfE approval and securing substantial capital investment. Based on the costs associated with delivering a new 6FE secondary school, the provision of a 3FE boys' grammar satellite and a 3FE girls' grammar satellite could likely require investment in excess of £40 million plus, in addition to the cost of acquiring the necessary land. Provision on a smaller scale is unlikely to be financially viable for a host grammar school to operate effectively.

Given these constraints, 1FE of additional selective commissioning is currently proposed across the North West Kent Selective and Gravesham and Longfield Selective Planning Groups by 2028/29. KCC will continue to monitor demand across both selective planning groups and review any opportunities to improve access to selective education where feasible.

However, recognising the practical and financial challenges associated with expanding grammar school provision, the Council's primary responsibility remains to ensure that there are sufficient secondary school places available overall to meet demand, regardless of school designation. Consequently, where additional capacity is required in the future, KCC will seek to ensure that sufficient places are available, even where that provision is non-selective.

Planned Commissioning – Dartford

Planning Group	By 2027-28	By 2028-29	By 2029-30	By 2030-31	Post 2031
Dartford East					1FE permanent expansion of existing school
Swanscombe and Ebbsfleet			1FE permanent expansion at Ashmere		2FE Permanent expansion Ebbsfleet Central 1FE permanent expansion at Ashmere
North West Kent Selective and Gravesham and Longfield Selective		1 FE permanent expansion of existing school			

7.4 Dover

District commentary

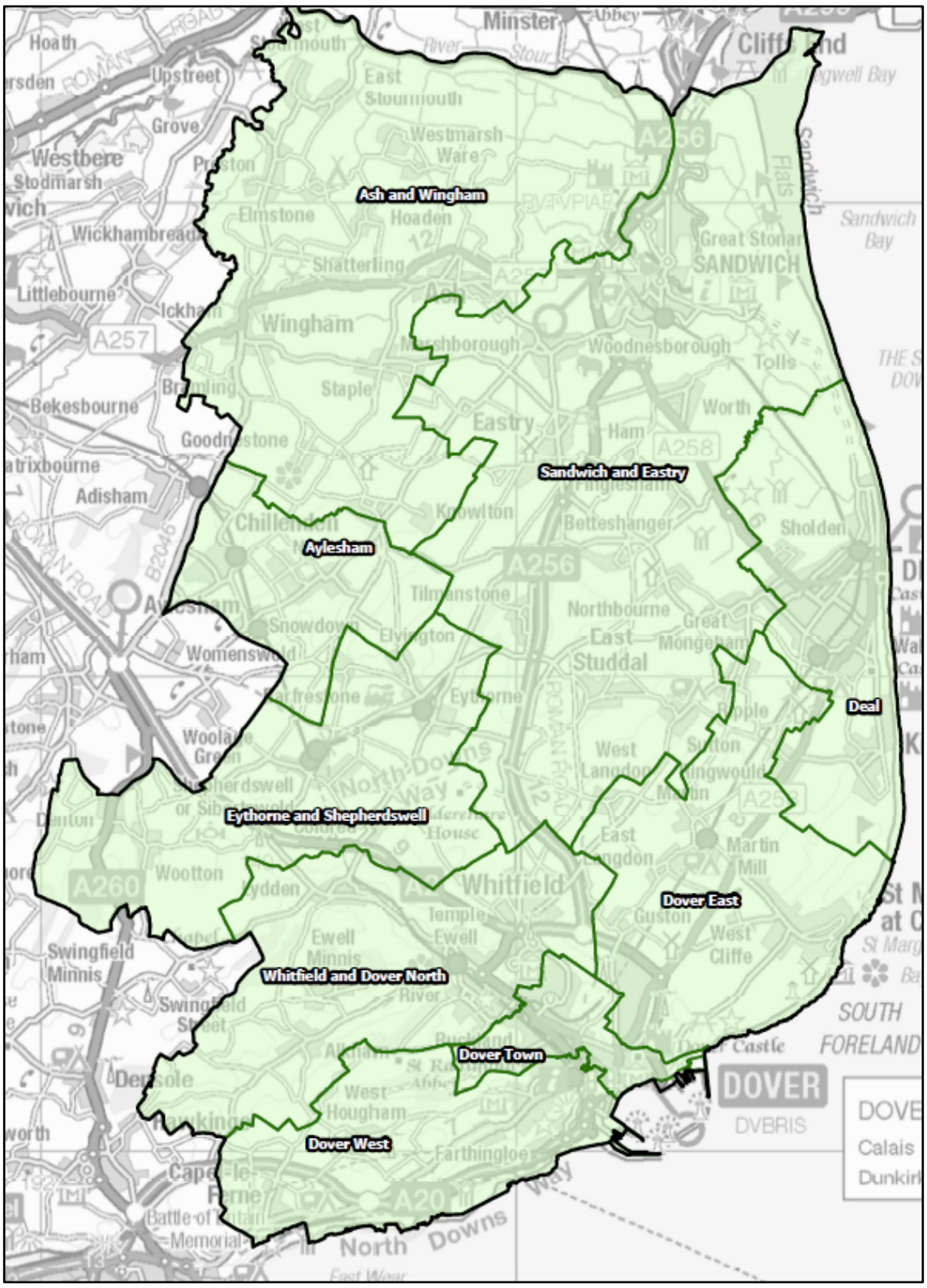
- The Dover District birth rate has been on a downwards trend since a high point in 2012. A 2% uplift in 2024 has brought it in line with the Kent average. The number of births in Dover have followed a similar trend, but there has been a small drop between 2024 and 2025 (6 births).

- Primary school rolls are expected to fluctuate through the forecast period. The current surplus is expected to remain but may be reduced if, in line with Government policy, surplus is used for nursery provision to deliver the extension of government funded places, wraparound care, or to provide more specialist SEN places and inclusion bases.

- Forecasts suggest that there could be a deficit of Year 7 places in Dover Town in the period 2026/27 to 2029/30. Any need for additional places in the Town during this period will be managed in conversation with existing schools. Across the District as a whole, we forecast there will be sufficient Year 7 places. The impact of planned house building may need to be mitigated at some point via the expansion of existing schools. This will be dependent on the rate of delivery.

- Dover District Council's new Local Plan for the period 2022-2040 was adopted in October 2024. The Plan has provision for 10,998 additional houses. During the period 2015/16 to 2024/25 an average of 548 homes were completed per annum (Kent Analytics Statistical Bulletin May 2026). We continue to work with Dover District Council Officers to ensure any required school places to meet the demands generated by new housing can be delivered at the right time, particularly in the planned strategic developments at Whitfield and Aylesham.

Map of the Dover primary planning groups

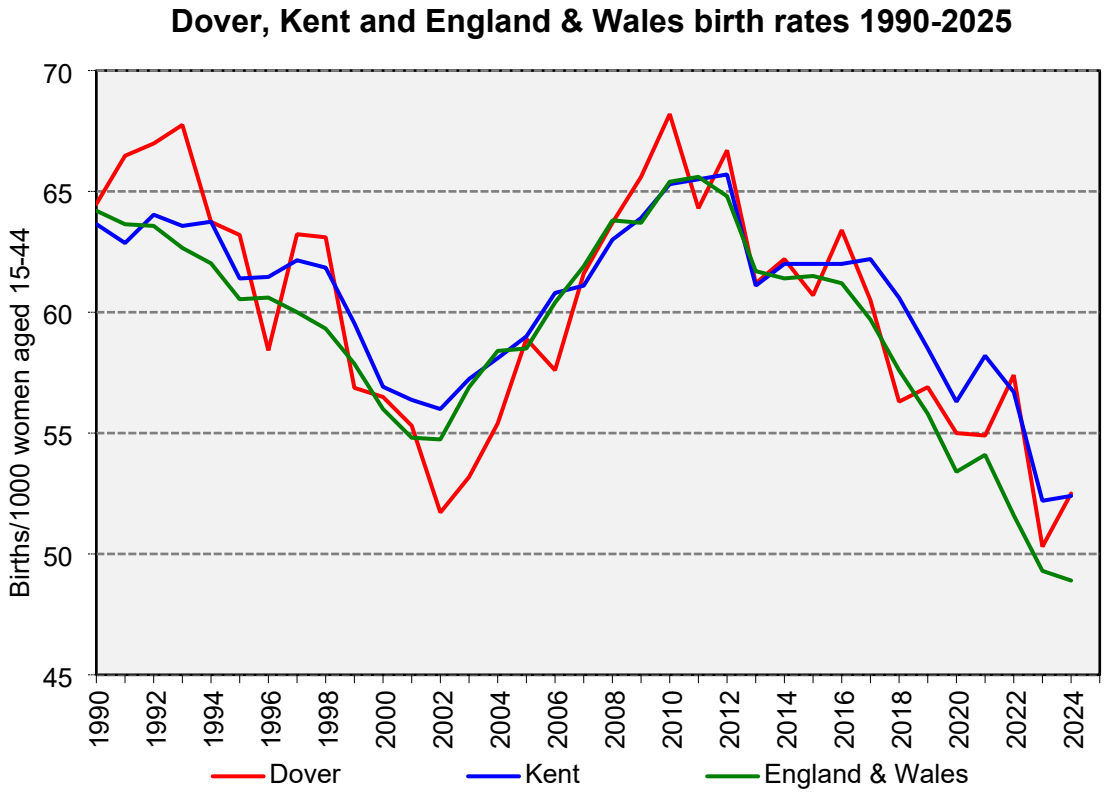


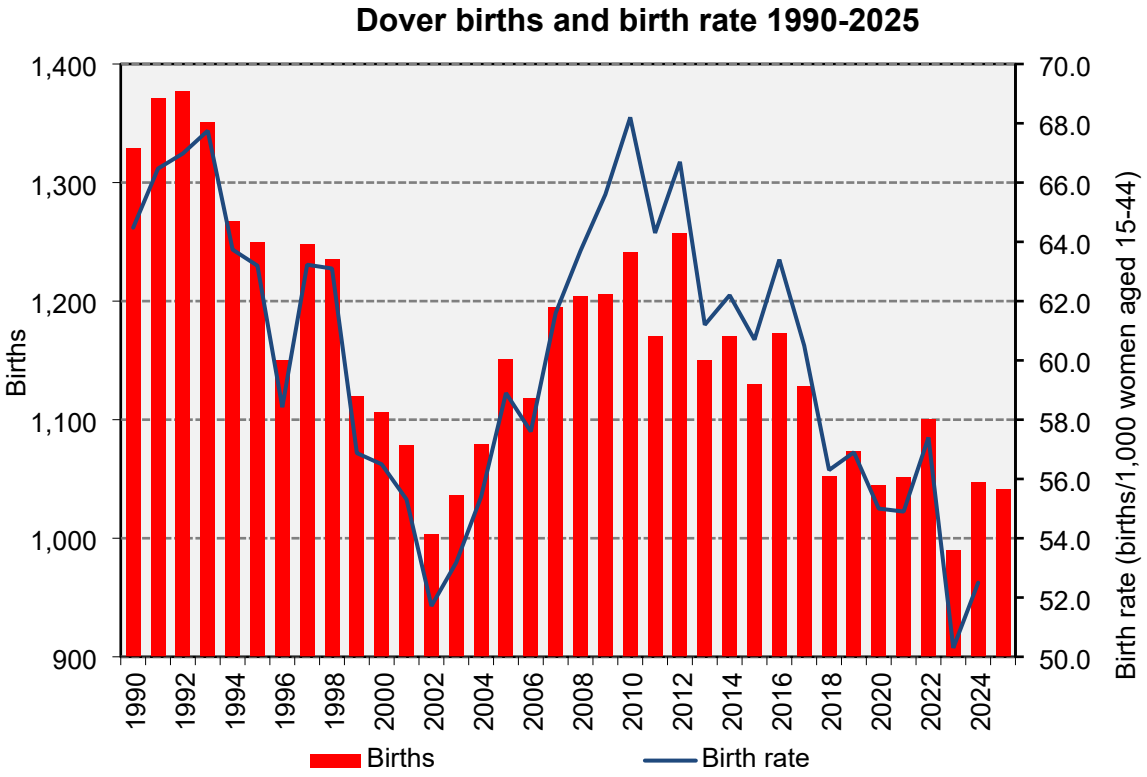
Dover primary schools by planning group

Planning Group	School	Status
Dover Town	Barton Junior School	Academy
	Charlton CE Primary School	Academy
	Green Park Community Primary School	Community
	Shatterlocks Infant School	Academy
	St. Mary's CE Primary School (Dover)	Voluntary Aided
	St. Richard's RC Primary School	Academy
	White Cliffs Primary College for the Arts	Academy
Whitfield and Dover North	Lydden Primary School	Community
	River Primary School	Community
	Temple Ewell CE Primary School	Academy
	Whitfield Aspen School	Community
Dover West	Aycliffe Community Primary School	Community
	Capel-le-Ferne Primary School	Community
	Priory Fields School	Academy
	St. Martin's School (Dover)	Academy
	Vale View Primary School	Academy
Dover East	Guston CE Primary School	Academy
	Langdon Primary School	Community
	St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe Primary School	Community
Deal	Deal Parochial CE Primary School	Academy
	Downs CE Primary School	Academy
	Hornbeam Primary School	Academy
	Kingsdown and Ringwould CE Primary School	Academy
	Sandown School	Academy
	Sholden CE Primary School	Academy
	St. Mary's RC Primary School (Deal)	Academy
	Warden House Primary School	Academy
Sandwich and Eastry	Eastry CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Northbourne CE Primary School	Academy
	Sandwich Infant School	Academy
	Sandwich Junior School	Community
	Worth Primary School	Academy
Ash and Wingham	Ash Cartwright and Kelsey CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	Goodnestone CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Preston Primary School	Community
	Wingham Primary School	Community
Aylesham	Aylesham Primary School	Academy
	Nonington CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	St. Joseph's RC Primary School (Aylesham)	Academy
Eythorne and Shepherdswell	Eythorne Elvington Community Primary School	Community
	Sibertswold CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled

Birth rate and birth analysis

The charts below set out the birth rates for the District and the number of recorded births.





Dover District Forecast

Primary - Year R surplus/deficit capacity if no further action is taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Dover Town	240	52	38	48	70	55	52	53	55	55	56	58	240
Whitfield and Dover North	182	21	-2	-1	24	7	6	5	6	5	5	5	182
Dover West	170	41	48	58	65	60	55	54	56	56	58	59	170
Dover East	67	15	9	19	8	17	13	5	2	1	1	-2	65
Deal	315	59	65	60	66	69	67	64	64	62	60	58	315
Sandwich and Eastry	116	43	3	8	6	-11	-6	-9	-13	-16	-17	-18	101
Ash and Wingham	90	8	9	11	6	3	5	4	5	6	7	8	90
Aylesham	102	22	18	24	24	28	24	24	25	25	26	27	102
Eythorne and Shepherdswell	50	0	-9	4	4	-3	-1	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	45
Dover	**1,332**	**261**	**179**	**232**	**274**	**225**	**215**	**199**	**196**	**193**	**195**	**195**	**1,310**

Secondary - Year 7 surplus/deficit capacity if no further action is taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Dover Non-Selective	450	30	-1	-50	-47	-19	8	16	18	-18	20	49	390
Deal and Sandwich Non-Selective	425	164	76	67	58	64	87	77	84	56	81	83	395
Dover District Selective	440	17	-3	13	12	11	23	20	26	14	16	34	440

Primary District Commentary

Across the District we forecast a peak of just under 9FE of surplus Year R places, which reduces to 6.5FE surplus the end of the plan period. We will continue to collaborate with schools to manage surplus Year R places to help maintain high quality, sustainable provision. In line with Government policy, surplus may also be used for nursery provision to deliver the extension of government funded places, to provide wraparound care, or to provide more specialist SEN places and inclusion bases to meet the objectives of the SEN Reforms.

Whitfield and Dover North Planning Group
We forecast a small deficit of places in the 2026/27 and 2027/28 academic years. This will be managed through the admissions process.

Much of this planning group comprises the area designated as the Whitfield Urban Expansion (WUE). The WUE has outline planning consent for 5,750 new homes to be delivered over the next 20 years with a further 600 allocated via the Local Plan to 2040. To provide sufficient primary school places the provision of three 2FE primary schools were included within the Master Plan, of which the expansion of Whitfield Aspen on to a satellite site at Richmond Way provides one of these.

We are working with Dover District Council officers to plan for the impact of the additional 600 dwellings and to identify when and where the second and third primary schools will be located and come forward.

Sandwich and Eastry Planning Group
A deficit of up to 0.5FE of Year R places is forecast from 2029/30 onwards. This is due to Eastry CE Primary School reducing PAN to address the smaller cohorts currently entering school. The capacity has not been lost so this can be reinstated as and when appropriate.

Consented and allocated developments in Sandwich and the neighbouring villages together account for over 1,000 new homes. Should housing come forward as identified in the Local Plan, up to an additional 1FE of provision in Sandwich may be required.

Aylesham Planning Group
Developer contributions are secured to support the expansion of provision in the planning group. We will continue monitor pupil numbers and will expand provision when required.

Eythorne and Shepherdswell
A small deficit of places is forecast which can be managed in existing schools. This is due to Eythorne Primary School reducing PAN to address the smaller cohorts currently entering school. The capacity has not been lost so this can be reinstated as and when appropriate.

Secondary District Commentary
There are three secondary planning groups within Dover District. Two planning groups are non-selective (Dover, Deal and Sandwich) and one selective. The commentary below outlines the forecast position for each of the planning groups.

Dover Non-Selective Planning Group
There are three Schools in the Dover non-selective planning group: Astor College of the Arts, Dover Christ Church Academy and St. Edmunds RC School. Forecasts suggest that Year 7 places will be required across the four academic years 2026/27 to 2029/30. There were sufficient Year 7 places available on National Offer Day for the 2026/27 cohort and should there be a need for additional Year 7 places in 2027/28, 2028/29 and 2029/30 as forecast, we will work with existing schools to ensure places are provided.

The Whitfield Urban Expansion will, over time, increase the pressure on local secondary schools. When additional places are required, this will be via the expansion of existing schools.

Deal and Sandwich Non-Selective Planning Group

There are two Schools in the Deal and Sandwich non-selective planning group: Goodwin Academy and Sandwich Technology School. Forecasts suggest sufficient Year 7 places throughout the forecast period. Consented and proposed developments in Sandwich, and the neighbouring villages, account for over 1,000 new homes. Land has been secured through the local plan process to support additional secondary school places at Sandwich Technology College as and when required.

Dover Selective Planning Group

Three schools provide selective provision: Dover Grammar School for Boys, Dover Grammar School for Girls and Sir Roger Manwood's Grammar School. There is forecast to be sufficient places in this sector throughout the forecast period.

Planned Commissioning – Dover

Planning Group	By 2027-28	By 2028-29	By 2029-30	By 2030-31	Post 2031
Whitfield and North Dover					Expansion of Whitfield Aspen by 1FE
Aylesham					0.3FE expansion in Aylesham
Sandwich and Eastry					1FE Sandwich planning group
Dover Non-selective					Up to 2FE at Dover Christ Church Academy

7.5 Folkestone and Hythe

District commentary

- The birth rate in Folkestone and Hythe saw a small uplift between 2023-24, but the overarching downward trend which commenced in 2011 remains. The rate remains below the County average but is higher than the National rate. The number of recorded births rose by 48 between 2023 and 2024, before falling by 33 in 2025.

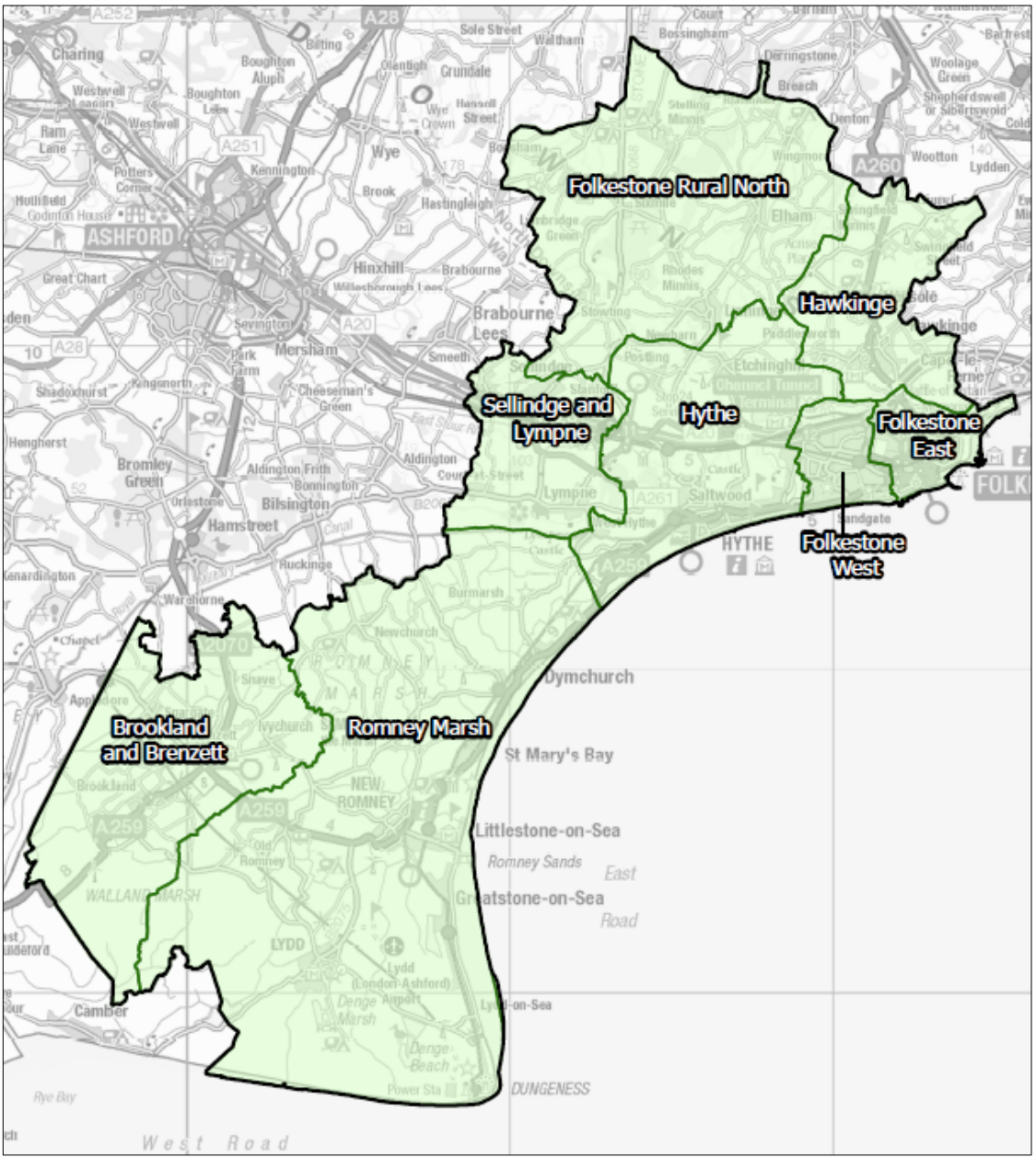
- We forecast that the current high level of surplus Year R school places across the District will remain throughout the Plan period. In line with Government policy, surplus may also be used for nursery provision to deliver the extension of government funded places, to provide wraparound care, or to provide more specialist SEN places and inclusion bases to meet the objectives of the SEN Reforms.

- Within the secondary sector, we forecast a small deficit of non-selective secondary school places in Folkestone and Hythe in three of the academic years. Should this be the case, we will collaborate with existing schools to ensure there are sufficient non-selective places for all who require one.

- The adopted Core Strategy (2022) sets out a long-term vision for the district from 2019/20 to 2036/37. The indicative housing trajectory in the Core Strategy suggest that 13,407 new dwellings could be delivered in the period 2019/20 to 2036/37, with Otterpool Park accounting for 5,593 of these dwellings. This would be an average of 745 per annum. During the period 2015/16 to 2024/25 an average of 410 homes were completed per annum (Kent Analytics Statistical Bulletin May 2026).

- Plans for the Garden Village at Otterpool Park continue to progress. A significant amount of educational infrastructure will be required within the development to meet the needs of this new community. This infrastructure will need to cover the primary and secondary phases, plus Early Years and the specialist sector. We continue to work with the District Council and the promoter of the site to identify when new provision will be required.

Map of the Folkestone and Hythe primary planning groups



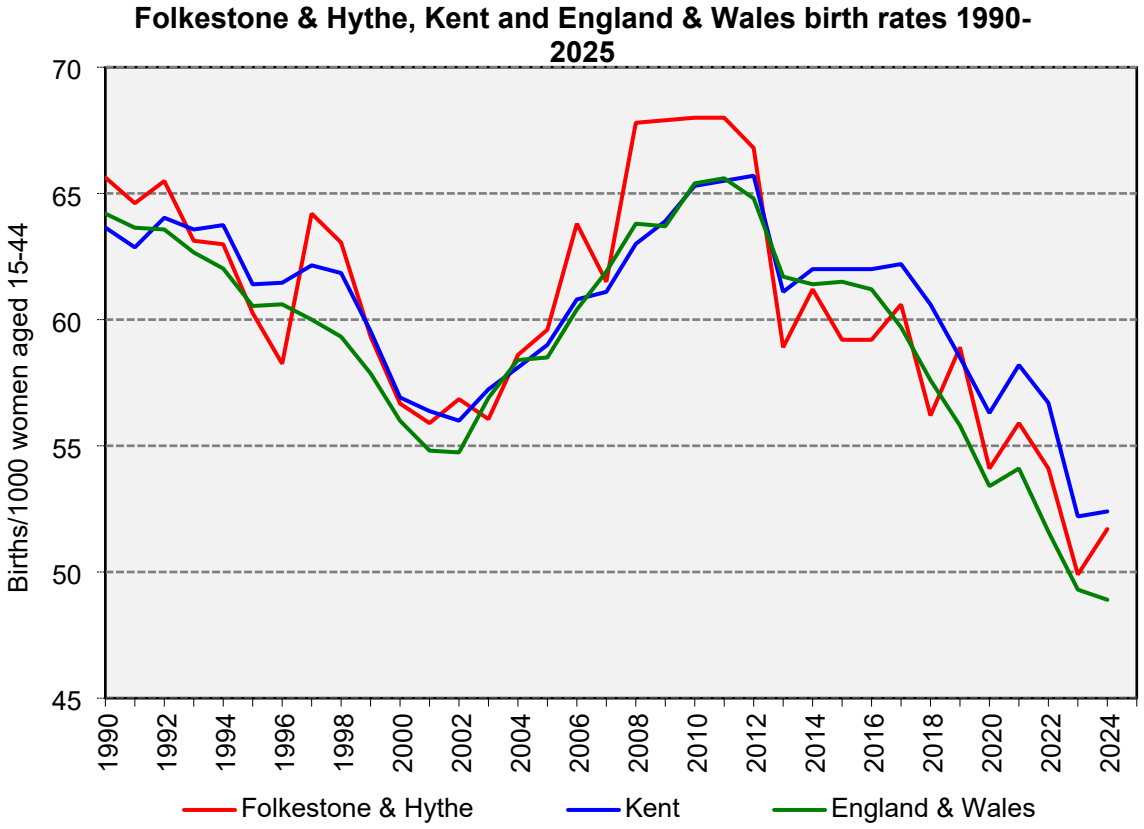
Folkestone and Hythe primary schools by planning group

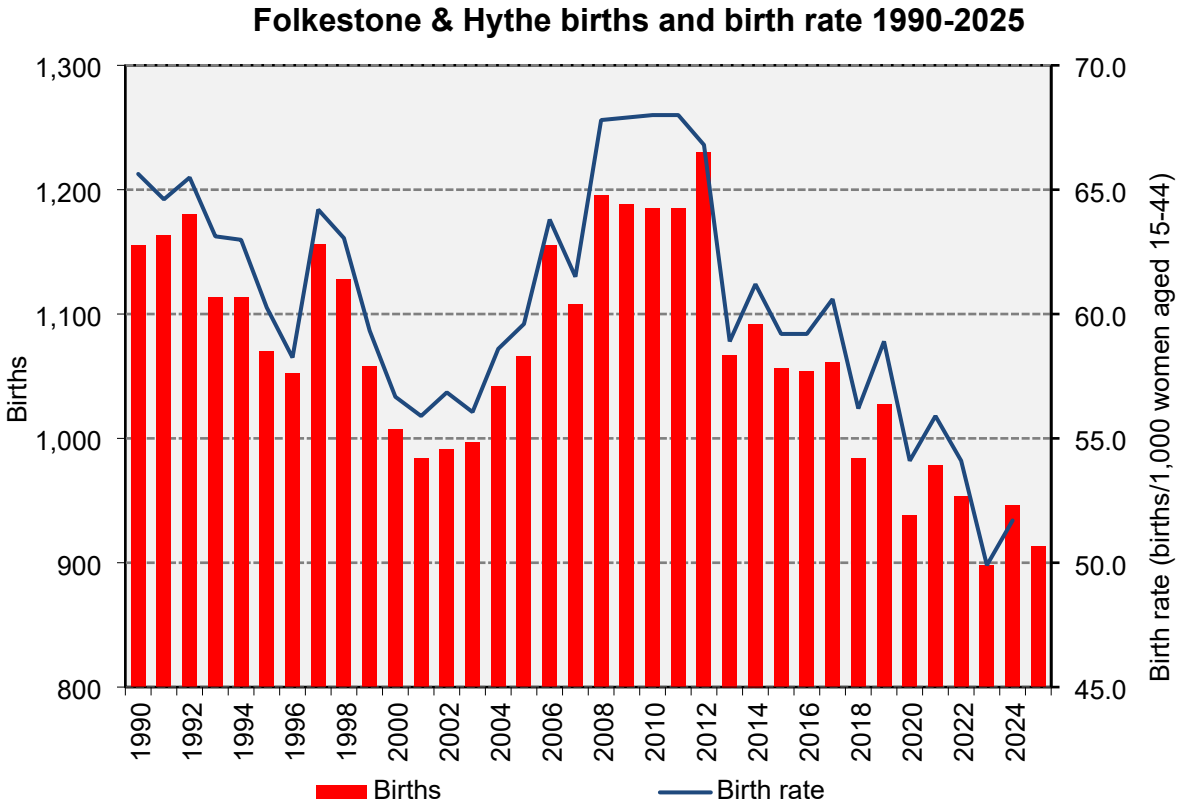
Planning Groups	School	Status
Folkestone East	Castle Hill Community Primary School	Community
	Christ Church CE Academy	Academy
	Folkestone Primary Academy	Academy
	Martello Primary School	Academy
	Mundella Primary School	Academy
	St. Eanswythe's CE Primary School	Academy
	St. Mary's CE Primary Academy (Folkestone)	Academy
	St. Peter's CE Primary School (Folkestone)	Voluntary Controlled
	Stella Maris RC Primary School	Academy
Folkestone West	All Souls' CE Primary School	Academy
	Cheriton Primary School	Foundation
	Harcourt Primary School	Foundation
	Morehall Primary School	Academy
	Sandgate Primary School	Community

Planning Groups	School	Status
	St. Martin's CE Primary School (Folkestone)	Voluntary Controlled
Hawkinge	Churchill School (Hawkinge)	Academy
	Hawkinge Primary School	Foundation
	Selsted CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
Folkestone Rural North	Bodsham CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Elham CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	Lyminge CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Stelling Minnis CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Stowting CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
Hythe	Hythe Bay CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Palmarsh Primary School	Community
	Saltwood CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	Seabrook CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	St. Augustine's RC Primary School (Hythe)	Academy
Sellindge and Lympne	Lympne CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Sellindge Primary School	Community
Romney Marsh	Dymchurch Primary School	Academy
	Greatstone Primary School	Foundation
	Lydd Primary School	Academy
	St. Nicholas CE Primary Academy	Academy
Brookland and Brenzett	Brenzett CE Primary School	Academy
	Brookland CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled

Birth rate and birth analysis

The charts below set out the birth rates for the district and the number of recorded births.





Folkestone and Hythe Analysis

Primary - Year R surplus/deficit capacity if no further action is taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Folkestone East	373	57	100	93	96	124	98	101	103	102	102	103	373
Folkestone West	255	31	29	28	3	27	22	22	24	25	26	28	255
Hawkinge	135	27	28	25	37	35	32	33	33	33	33	33	135
Folkestone Rural North	88	26	6	22	21	24	18	19	20	20	20	20	85
Hythe	150	40	23	29	17	22	22	22	23	24	24	25	135
Sellindge and Lympne	60	7	-4	-2	0	-10	-5	-6	-6	-7	-8	-9	60
Romney Marsh	165	32	39	42	50	34	45	46	46	46	47	48	165
Brookland and Brenzett	35	7	3	4	12	3	6	7	7	7	7	8	35
Folkestone & Hythe	**1,261**	**227**	**225**	**242**	**237**	**259**	**239**	**244**	**249**	**250**	**251**	**257**	**1,243**

Secondary - Year 7 Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Folkestone and Hythe Non-Selective	595	24	10	-21	-19	29	-15	60	22	25	46	28	595
Romney Marsh Non-Selective	180	-1	15	14	6	13	17	26	24	26	33	43	180
Folkestone & Hythe District Selective	330	-9	16	20	15	18	17	20	18	21	21	17	330

Primary District Commentary

Folkestone and Hythe District Analysis - Primary

Across the District we forecast around 8FE of Year R places will be surplus throughout the forecast period. We will collaborate with schools to manage the levels of surplus primary school places to help maintain high quality, sustainable provision. In line with Government policy, surplus may also be used for nursery provision to deliver the extension of government funded places, to provide wraparound care, or to provide more specialist SEN places and inclusion bases to meet the objectives of the SEN Reforms.

Folkestone East Planning Group

Forecasts suggest over 3FE of Year R places will be surplus throughout the plan period. This is not sustainable and as such, we will collaborate with schools to manage the high levels of surplus provision.

Folkestone West Planning Group

Forecasts suggest sufficient Year R capacity throughout the forecast period. Land and developer contributions remain available for a new 2FE primary school at Shorncliffe Heights. This will not be required in this decade.

Sellindge and Lympne Planning Group

Current forecasts are showing a small deficit of Year R places from 2026-27 onwards. Further development is expected in the village which will need to be mitigated. Developer contributed land and funding has been agreed which will enable Sellindge Primary School to expand as and when required.

Secondary District Commentary

Folkestone and Hythe Non-Selective Planning Group

There are three schools in the Folkestone and Hythe non-selective planning group: Brockhill Park Performing Arts College, Folkestone Academy and The Turner Free School.

In three academic years we forecast a small deficit of non-selective secondary school places in Folkestone and Hythe. In part this is due to Folkestone Academy reducing its published admissions number from 210 to 180 from September 2025, with some of the accommodation being used to provide a specialist resourced provision for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Conditions. We will collaborate with existing schools to ensure there are sufficient non-selective places for all who require one.

Romney Marsh Non-Selective Planning Group

There is one non-selective school in the planning group: The Marsh Academy. Forecasts suggest sufficient places across the forecast period.

Folkestone and Hythe Selective Planning Group

There are two selective schools in the district: Folkestone Girls Grammar and Harvey Grammar. Forecasts suggest there will be sufficient Year 7 places throughout the Plan period.

Planned Commissioning – Folkestone and Hythe

Planning Group	By 2027-28	By 2028-29	By 2029-30	By 2030-31	Post 2031
Folkestone West Primary					2FE new provision in Shorncliffe

7.6 Gravesham

Borough Summary

- The Gravesham birth rate has remained consistently above both the Kent and England averages, although the overall trend has been downward since the peak in 2012. In more recent years the gap between Gravesham and Kent/National averages has actually widened again.

- Gravesham primary Reception and secondary Year 7 forecasts do not include any additional housing growth that may arise from the emerging Gravesham Borough Local Plan where details have yet to be confirmed to KCC.

- Current forecasts indicate that Gravesham Borough will maintain an overall surplus of Reception places throughout the Plan period. Borough-wide surplus capacity is forecast to fluctuate between 53 and 117 places, demonstrating that sufficient primary capacity exists overall despite some localised pressures.

- Small deficits emerge within the Northfleet Planning Group from 2028/29 onwards and within Gravesend West towards the end of the forecast period. These pressures can be addressed through the relocation and expansion of Rosherville CE Primary Academy at Cable Wharf, which will increase provision from the current PAN of 20 to a full 2FE primary school over time.

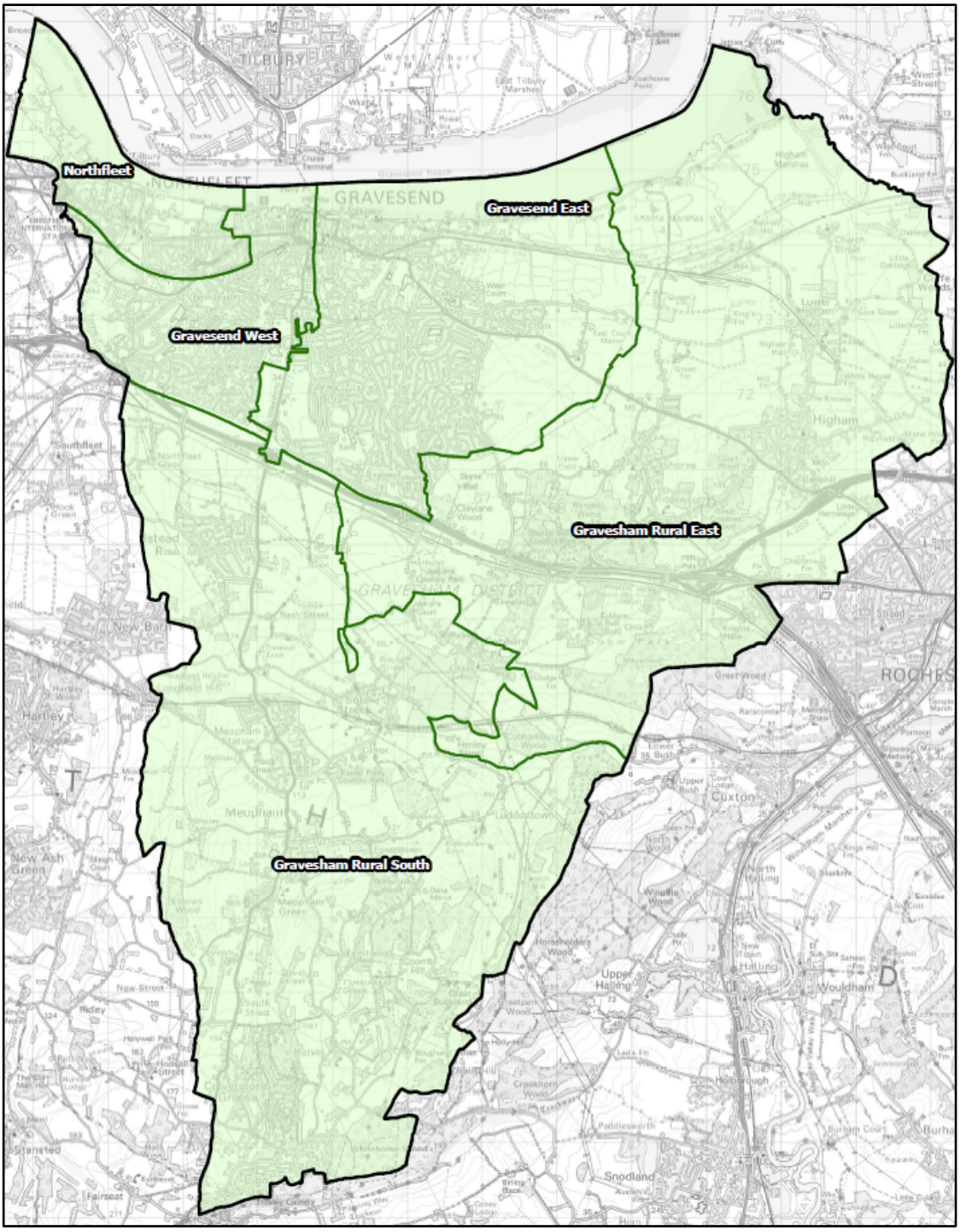
- The Gravesham and Longfield Non-Selective Planning Group will experience a small deficit of up to 4 places during 2027/28 and 2028/29 before returning to surplus capacity for the remainder of the Plan period. This is a marked change from previous forecasts which indicated greater pressures in the Borough.

- The Gravesham and Longfield Selective Planning Group is forecast to remain in deficit throughout the Plan period, with shortfalls ranging from 8 places in 2026/27 to a peak of 37 places in 2033/34. Opportunities to increase grammar school capacity remain extremely limited following previous expansion projects.

- Gravesham Borough Council is preparing a new Local Plan extending to 2042. Significant housing growth proposed at locations including at Ebbsfleet Central, Northfleet Embankment, Gravesend Canal Basin and the town centre will have implications for future school place planning in the urban area. Proposed allocations at in Higham and Meopham, Istead Rise and on land adjacent to the Medway border will have significant implications for school place planning in the rural areas of the Borough.

- Migration from London and neighbouring urban areas continues to influence pupil demand, particularly within secondary-age cohorts, where family movement patterns can create demand pressures that exceed trends suggested by local birth rates alone.

Gravesham Primary Schools by Planning Group

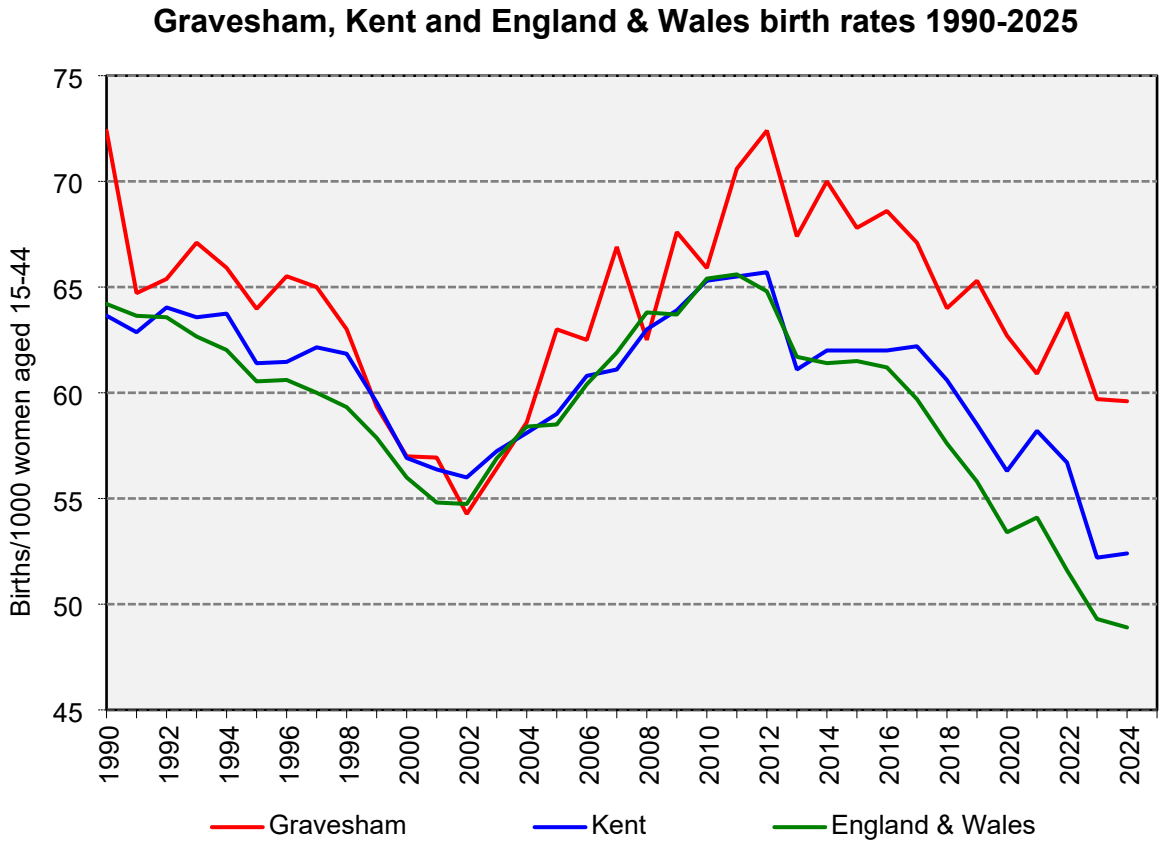


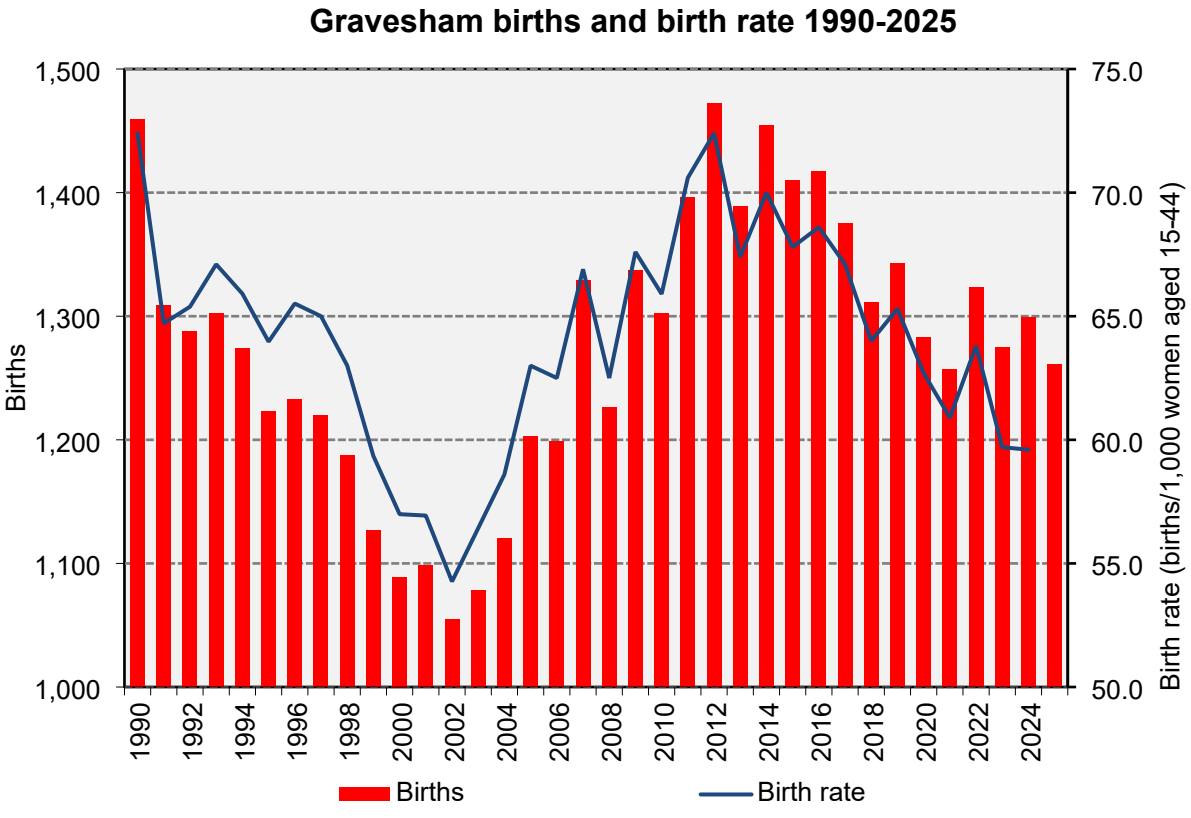
Planning Group	School	Status
Gravesend East	Chantry Community Primary School	Academy
	Holy Trinity CE Primary School (Gravesend)	Academy
	Kings Farm Primary School	Community
	The Riverview Academy	Academy
	Singlewell Primary School	Community
	St. John's RC Primary School (Gravesend)	Academy
	Tymberwood Academy	Academy
	Westcourt Primary School	Academy
	Whitehill Primary School	Academy

Planning Group	School	Status
Gravesend West	Cecil Road Primary School	Community
	Copperfield Academy	Academy
	Painters Ash Primary School	Community
	Saint George's CE Primary School (Gravesend)	Academy
	Shears Green Infant School	Academy
	Shears Green Junior School	Community
	Springhead Park Primary School	Free
	Wrotham Road Primary School	Academy
Northfleet	Lawn Primary School	Community
	Rosherville CE Primary Academy	Academy
	St. Botolph's CE Primary School (Gravesend)	Academy
	St. Joseph's RC Primary School (Northfleet)	Academy
Gravesham Rural East	Higham Primary School	Community
	Shorne CE Primary School	Academy
Gravesham Rural South	Cobham Primary School	Community
	Culverstone Green Primary School	Academy
	Istead Rise Primary School	Academy
	Meopham Community Academy	Academy
	Vigo Village School	Community

Birth Rate and Birth Analysis

The charts below set out the birth rates for the Borough and the number of recorded births.





Gravesham Forecasts

Primary - Year R Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Gravesend East	622	88	48	71	58	64	54	56	56	54	53	59	622
Gravesend West	444	12	17	19	6	19	0	1	1	-1	-7	-7	444
Northfleet	150	0	1	3	-19	-9	-11	-14	-17	-20	-24	-24	150
Gravesham Rural East	60	-1	10	8	5	12	9	10	10	10	10	11	60
Gravesham Rural South	180	13	-5	13	33	29	20	20	21	20	20	20	180
Gravesham	**1,456**	**112**	**71**	**114**	**84**	**117**	**72**	**72**	**71**	**62**	**53**	**58**	**1,456**

Secondary - Year 7 Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Gravesham and Longfield Non-Selective	1,354	54	37	-3	-4	57	51	59	42	23	53	16	1,389
Gravesham and Longfield Selective	420	-9	-8	-23	-31	-13	-15	-18	-22	-37	-29	-35	420

Primary Borough commentary

Current forecasts for Reception-aged pupils which do not include any additional housing growth that may arise from the emerging Gravesham Borough Local Plan, indicate that Gravesham Borough will maintain an overall surplus of primary school places throughout the Plan period. Borough-wide surplus capacity is forecast to fluctuate between 53 and 117 places, reflecting a generally stable position despite localised variations in demand across the planning groups.

However, significant housing growth could still impact the Borough's education provision during the Plan period. Gravesham Borough Council is progressing a new Local Plan to 2042 which seeks to accommodate approximately 11,492 additional homes. Development in Northfleet, Gravesend Canal Basin and other regeneration sites along the Thames Riverside are expected to generate additional demand for primary school places, particularly within the western parts of the Borough.

To support this growth, KCC has already secured the relocation and expansion of Rosherville CE Primary Academy to the Cable Wharf development. The school will expand from its current PAN of 20 and ultimately provide 2FE of primary provision in the future. This additional capacity is expected to accommodate existing forecast demand arising from housing growth in Northfleet and help mitigate the small deficits forecast within both the Northfleet and Gravesend West Planning Groups later in the Plan period.

Although current forecasts indicate that sufficient primary capacity exists across Gravesham, future demand will be influenced by the pace, scale and housing mix of developments delivered through the emerging Local Plan. Should growth exceed current expectations, additional commissioning options, including the expansion of existing schools or the safeguarding of land for future education provision, would need to be considered.

Gravesend West

The Gravesend West Planning Group currently maintains a broadly balanced position throughout most of the Plan period.

The planned relocation and expansion of Rosherville CE Primary Academy at Cable Wharf will provide additional capacity within the neighbouring Northfleet Planning Group and is expected to provide wider flexibility across western Gravesham. This additional provision will help mitigate the small forecast deficits in Gravesend West and support demand generated by both existing communities and new housing developments.

Furthermore, Shears Green Infant School previously reduced its PAN from 120 to 90 places in response to lower levels of demand. This provides an opportunity to reinstate capacity should pupil numbers increase beyond current expectations. Consequently, KCC does not anticipate the need for additional permanent primary provision within the planning group.

Northfleet Planning Group

The Northfleet Planning Group forecasts indicate that Northfleet will experience the greatest level of pressure within the Gravesham primary sector. Following a balanced position in 2025/26, the planning group moves into deficit from 2028/29 onwards.

These pressures are largely attributable to continued housing growth within and around Northfleet, particularly on Northfleet Embankment and other riverside regeneration sites. Together, these developments are expected to generate additional demand for primary school places throughout the Plan period.

To address this demand, KCC secured the relocation and expansion of Rosherville CE Primary Academy to the Cable Wharf development. The school will expand from its current PAN of 20 and will ultimately operate as a full 2FE primary school in this Plan period. The additional capacity created through this project is expected to accommodate forecast demand arising from both existing communities and planned housing growth, while also providing flexibility to support neighbouring planning groups.

Secondary Borough Commentary

There is one selective and one non-selective planning group that cover the Gravesham area. See Appendix 11.2 for the secondary planning group maps.

Current forecasts for Year 7-aged pupils which do not include any additional housing growth that may arise from the emerging Gravesham Borough Local Plan where details have yet to be confirmed to KCC, indicate secondary provision remains more constrained than the primary sector; however, current forecasts present a more balanced position than previous years.

While falling birth rates are beginning to influence future secondary demand, current Year 7 forecasts continue to be affected by larger historic birth cohorts and patterns of inward migration across North Kent.

Gravesham and Longfield Non-Selective Planning Group

There are seven schools in the Gravesham and Longfield Non-Selective Planning Group: Longfield Academy, Meopham School, Northfleet Technology College, Northfleet School for Girls, Thamesview School, Saint George's CE School and Saint John's Catholic Comprehensive School.

Current forecasts indicate a very slight deficit within the planning group, with a shortfall of up to 4 places projected for two consecutive years from 2027/28. The planning group then returns to having a surplus of places. Therefore, demand is expected to be managed through pupil movement across planning group boundaries and utilising available capacity elsewhere within the wider North Kent secondary education system.

Looking beyond the current forecast period, KCC will need to consider the implications of planned growth arising from the emerging Gravesham Local Plan. During consultation on the Local Plan, KCC advised Gravesham Borough Council that any significant new housing growth would need to be supported by the identification of land for additional non-selective secondary school provision. KCC will continue to review forecasts and assess future capacity requirements as the Local Plan progresses and the scale and location of developments becomes clearer.

Gravesham and Longfield Selective Planning Group

There are two schools in the Gravesham and Longfield Selective Planning Group: Gravesend Grammar School and the Mayfield Grammar School. Both schools have previously been expanded and now operate at or close to their practical capacity. Collectively these two schools provide 420 Year 7 places annually and serve a wider catchment extending beyond Dartford Borough.

Forecasts indicate a relatively small but continuing deficit of selective school places throughout the Plan period. The shortfall is expected to increase from around 0.5FE (8 places) in 2026/27 to approximately 1.5FE (37 places) by 2033/34. Demand is projected to remain above 1FE for the remainder of the forecast period.

Following previous expansion projects, opportunities for further growth at the existing grammar

schools are now extremely limited. As a result, forecast demand cannot currently be accommodated through additional expansion of existing provision within the planning group. Therefore, any response to this pressure must be considered within the context of the wider North Kent selective system rather than within a single borough/district boundary.

Should significant additional selective capacity be required in the future, the most viable option would be the development of satellite grammar school provision linked to existing grammar schools, as current Government legislation prohibits the introduction of new selective schools. However, delivering such provision would be challenging. Key constraints include identifying suitable boys' and girls' grammar schools willing to operate satellite provision, securing an appropriate site, obtaining DfE, and securing the significant capital investment required. Based on the cost of delivering a new 6FE secondary school, the creation of a 3FE boys' grammar satellite and a 3FE girls' grammar satellite would be expected to require investment of approximately £40 million plus, in addition to the cost of acquiring the necessary land. Provision on a smaller scale is unlikely to be financially viable for a host grammar school to operate.

Given these constraints, 1FE of additional selective commissioning is currently proposed across the Gravesham and Longfield Selective and North West Kent Selective Planning Groups by 2028/29. KCC will continue to monitor demand across both selective planning groups and review any opportunities to improve access to selective education where feasible. However, recognising the practical and financial challenges associated with expanding grammar school provision, the Council's primary responsibility remains to ensure that there are sufficient secondary school places available overall to meet demand, regardless of school designation. Consequently, where additional capacity is required in the future, KCC will seek to ensure that sufficient places are available, even where that provision is non-selective.

Planned Commissioning – Gravesham

Planning Group	By 2027-28	By 2028-29	By 2029-30	By 2030-31	Post 2031
Northfleet		1FE Permanent Expansion Rosherville CE Primary Academy			
North West Kent Selective and Gravesham and Longfield Selective		1FE permanent expansion of an existing school			

7.7 Maidstone

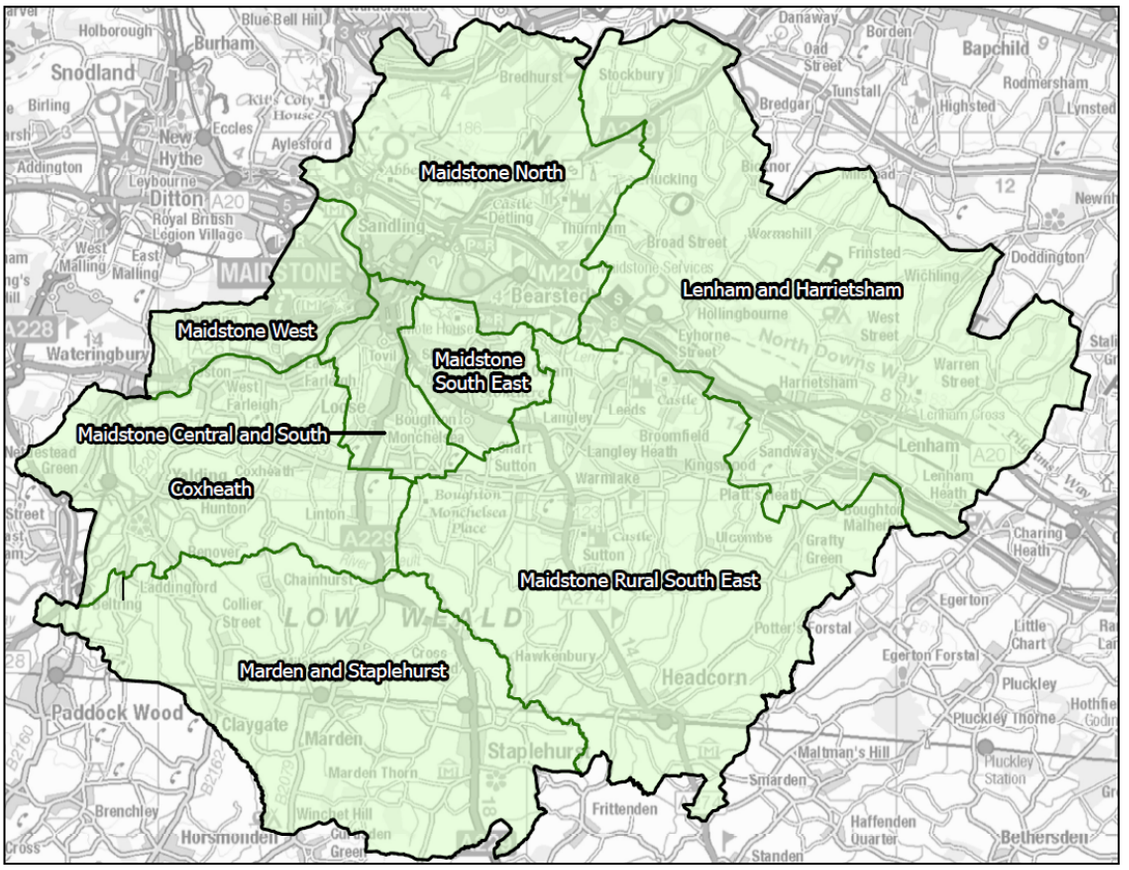
Borough commentary

- The birth rate in Maidstone dropped sharply in 2019 and 2020, but then recovered significantly in 2021, before dropping back again in the subsequent years. However, it remains above the county and national averages. The number of births in Maidstone has been consistently high over the past three years.

- We forecast sufficient primary school places across the Borough throughout the Plan period. However, there is pressure for places forecast within some planning groups. Within the secondary sector, we forecast a significant pressure for places in both the non-selective and selective sectors.

- Maidstone Borough Council's Local Plan was formally adopted in October 2017, setting out the scale and location of proposed development up to 2031. This plan was reviewed and in 2024 the Borough Council adopted the Local Plan Review, which plans for the delivery of 1,157 per annum until 2038.

Map of the Maidstone Primary Planning Groups



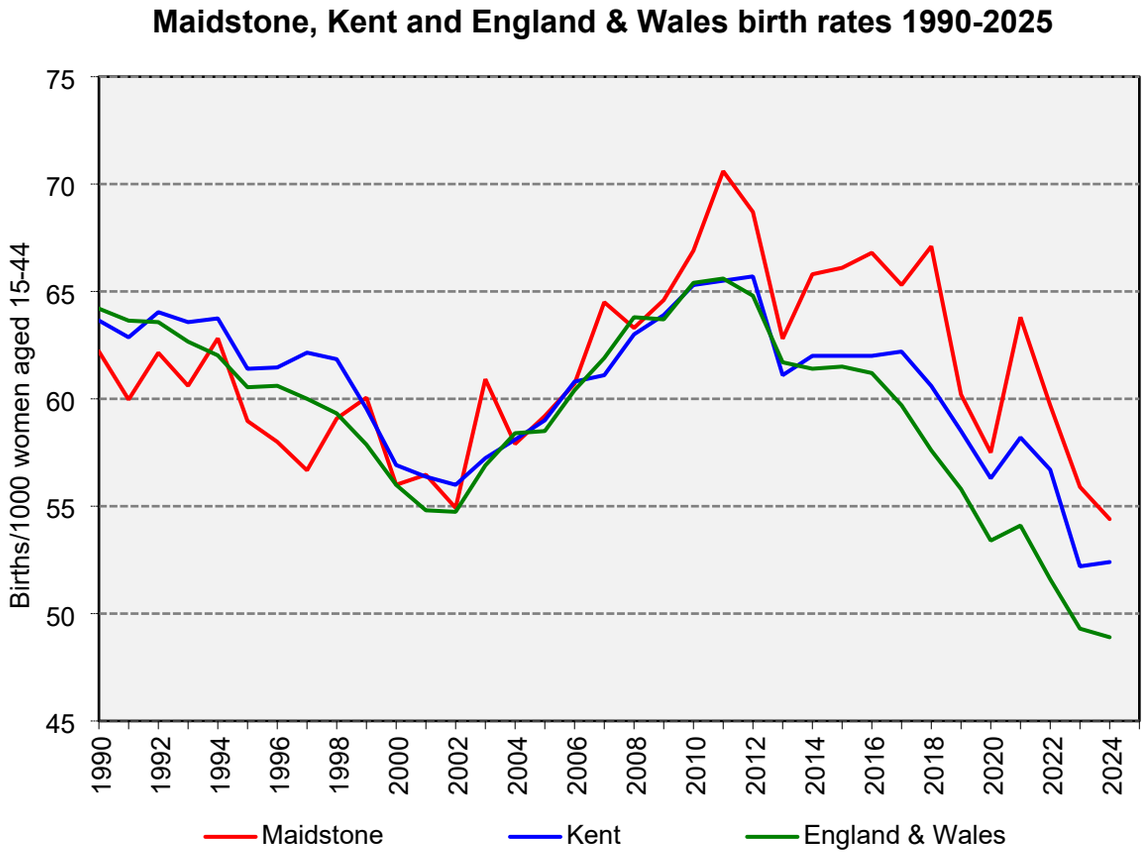
Maidstone Primary Schools by Planning Group

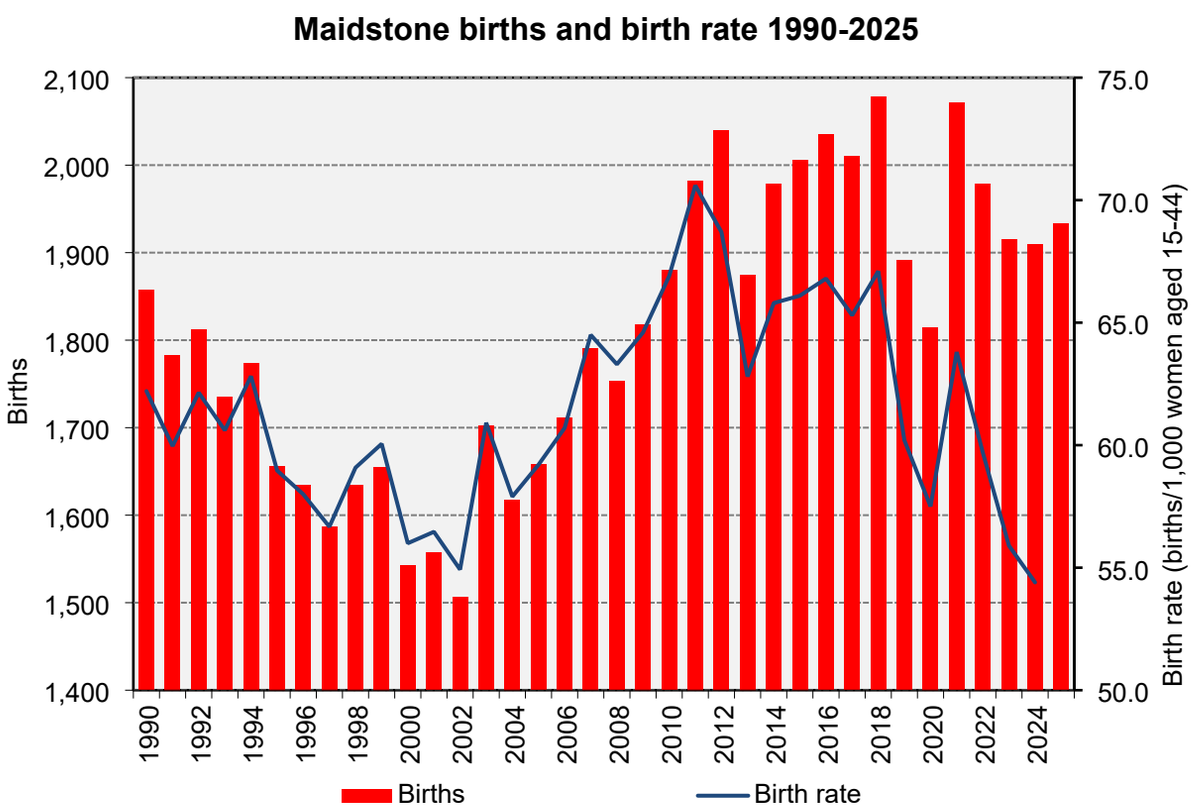
Planning Groups	School	Status
Maidstone Central and South	Archbishop Courtenay CE Primary School	Academy
	Boughton Monchelsea Primary School	Community
	Loose Primary School	Community
	South Borough Primary School	Academy
	Tiger Primary School	Free
Maidstone North	Bearsted Primary Academy	Free
	Bredhurst CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Madginford Primary School	Community
	North Borough Junior School	Community
	Roseacre Junior School	Foundation
	Sandling Primary School	Community
	St. John's CE Primary School (Maidstone)	Academy
	St. Paul's Infant School	Community
	Thurnham CE Infant School	Voluntary Controlled
	Valley Invicta Primary School at East Borough	Academy
Maidstone West	Allington Primary School	Academy
	Barming Primary School	Academy
	Brunswick House Primary School	Community
	Jubilee Primary School	Free
	Palace Wood Primary School	Community
	St Francis Catholic Primary School	Academy
	St. Michael's CE Infant School	Voluntary Controlled
	St. Michael's CE Junior School	Voluntary Controlled
	West Borough Primary School	Community
Maidstone South East	Greenfields Community Primary School	Community
	Holy Family RC Primary School	Academy

Planning Groups	School	Status
	Langley Park Primary Academy	Academy
	Molehill Primary Academy	Academy
	Oaks Primary Academy	Academy
	Park Way Primary School	Community
	Senacre Wood Primary School	Community
	Tree Tops Primary Academy	Academy
Lenham and Harrietsham	Harrietsham CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Hollingbourne Primary School	Community
	Lenham Primary School	Community
	Platts Heath Primary School	Community
Coxheath	Coxheath Primary School	Community
	East Farleigh Primary School	Community
	Hunton CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	Yalding St. Peter and St. Paul CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
Marden and Staplehurst	Laddingford St. Mary's CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Marden Primary Academy	Academy
	St. Margaret's Collier Street CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Staplehurst School	Academy
Maidstone Rural South East	Headcorn Primary School	Community
	Kingswood Primary School	Community
	Leeds and Broomfield CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Sutton Valence Primary School	Community
	Ulcombe CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled

Birth Rate and Births Analysis

The charts below set out the birth rates for the Borough and the number of recorded births.





Maidstone Forecasts

Primary - Year R Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Maidstone Central and South	285	20	13	13	9	-13	-6	-7	-6	-6	-2	4	285
Maidstone North	530	77	44	73	70	74	62	61	62	63	67	72	530
Maidstone West	460	39	3	28	57	36	24	27	33	40	50	61	460
Maidstone South East	327	24	-18	-2	-3	-15	-11	-12	-11	-9	-5	1	327
Lenham and Harrietsham	118	17	17	20	20	24	17	15	14	12	12	12	118
Coxheath	129	9	2	-1	7	18	6	6	7	6	7	8	129
Marden and Staplehurst	165	8	24	19	27	33	25	25	26	27	28	29	165
Maidstone Rural South East	140	31	23	13	30	21	20	18	17	17	18	19	140
Maidstone	**2,154**	**225**	**109**	**162**	**217**	**178**	**137**	**135**	**142**	**150**	**174**	**206**	**2,154**

Secondary - Year 7 Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Maidstone Non-Selective	1,590	74	-34	-64	-97	-124	-64	-38	30	-69	-10	24	1,560
Maidstone and Malling Selective	815	14	31	6	-9	-30	-1	-2	27	-16	18	23	815

Primary District commentary

Overall, forecasts indicate that there will be sufficient places for Year R across the Plan period for the Maidstone district. However, there is pressure for places within the Central and South and the South East Planning Groups.

Over the past decade the Borough of Maidstone has seen one of the highest levels of inward migration in the county; this means that pre-school and school-aged children born outside of the area have moved into the Borough. The most common driver of this movement is the creation of new housing in the Borough, either through planned housebuilding or the conversion of office and retail spaces through permitted development, utilising permitted development rights that aren't controlled through the planning system in the same way. At times this has placed significant in-year pressure on schools, the County Council will continue to monitor the impact of this over the duration of The Plan.

Maidstone West Planning Group
In the longer term, housing developments on the Maidstone side of Hermitage Lane will necessitate up to 2FE of additional provision. Land has been secured that would enable a 2FE primary school to be established on a site to the East of Hermitage Lane, known as Chapel Field. However, based on the current rate of housing growth, it is currently not expected to be required within the Plan period, this will continue to be reviewed as houses are occupied. The location on the boundary between Maidstone and Tonbridge and Malling means that it is important to consider demand arising from housing growth local to the site in both Maidstone North and East Malling when anticipating the timing of the school's establishment.

Coxheath Planning Group
There is a 1 place deficit forecast for 2027-28 which we anticipate can be accommodated within neighbouring planning groups.

Maidstone South East Planning Group
There are forecast deficits throughout the Plan period that range from -2 and -3 in 2027-28 and 2028-29 respectively, to -15 in 2029-30. We will monitor the situation carefully to assess whether additional provision is needed, however, we anticipate that there will be sufficient places in neighbouring planning groups to meet the demand.

Maidstone Central and South
There are small deficits forecast from 2029-30. We will monitor the situation carefully to assess whether additional provision is needed, however, we anticipate that there will be sufficient places in neighbouring planning groups to meet the demand.

Secondary District Commentary

There are two planning groups which are within Maidstone Borough, one non-selective and one selective (See appendix 11.2 for the non-selective and selective planning group maps). The commentary below outlines the forecast position for each of the planning groups.

Maidstone Non-Selective Planning Group
There are eight schools in the Maidstone non-selective planning group: Cornwallis Academy, The Lenham School, Maplesden Noakes School, New Line Learning Academy, School of Science and Technology, St. Augustine Academy, St. Simon Stock Catholic School and Valley Park School.

The planning group has growing deficits from -34 places in 2026-27 which increases by circa 1 FE per year to a peak of -124 deficit in 2029-30. The deficit then reduces until 2031-32 and subsequently fluctuates between surplus and deficit for the remainder of the Plan period.

In recent years, schools within this planning group have admitted over PAN, creating additional capacity. We anticipate that some of the deficit can be accommodated via existing schools admitting over or by temporary bulge provision commissioned by the County Council. However, up to 1 FE of permanent provision within the existing Secondary schools will be needed to meet the demand for places from 2027-28.

Maidstone and Malling Selective Planning Group

There are four schools in the Maidstone selective planning group: Invicta Grammar School, Maidstone Grammar School, Maidstone Grammar School for Girls and Oakwood Park Grammar School.

The forecast for the planning group indicates that there will be sufficient places in 2026-27 and 2027-28, albeit only a 6 place surplus in 2027-28; however, from 2028-29 there will be fluctuating deficits. In recent years additional places have been provided in the planning group via the expansion of Maidstone Grammar School for Girls and consequently the only spare capacity is for girl's selective provision. To provide sufficient places across the Plan period and ensure there is equality of the places between girls and boys selective provision, we have commissioned the permanent expansion of Oakwood Park Grammar School by 1 FE from September 2027.

Planned Commissioning – Maidstone

Planning Group	By 2027-28	By 2028-29	By 2029-30	By 2030-31	Post 2031
Maidstone West					New 2FE School on East of Hermitage Lane
Maidstone Non-Selective Planning Group	Up to 1 FE permanent expansion of existing school Up to 30 temporary Year 7 places in existing schools	Up to 60 temporary Year 7 places in existing schools	And Up to 90 temporary Year 7 places in existing schools	Up to 30 temporary Year 7 places in existing schools	
Maidstone and Malling Selective Planning Group	1 FE permanent expansion of existing school				

7.8 Sevenoaks

District Summary

- Births in Sevenoaks have fallen from a peak of 1,383 in 2012 to 1,092 in 2023, a reduction of 21.0%. Whilst a small increase was recorded in 2024 (1,109 births), the overall trend remains downward and is reflected in a lower demand for Reception intakes across much of the district. The Sevenoaks birth rate remains above both Kent and England averages, although the gap has narrowed considerably since 2021.

- There remains a surplus of Year R places across the district throughout the Plan period. District-wide surplus capacity is forecast to increase from 178 places in 2025/26 to a peak of 236 places in 2029/30 before reducing progressively to 32 places (1FE) by 2035/36. Deficits are forecast in Sevenoaks Rural North from 2028/29, Edenbridge from 2031/32 and the Sevenoaks Planning Group from 2032/33. These forecast deficits emerge despite the significant decline in births recorded across the district in recent years and are expected to be driven primarily by consented residential development and housing growth and changes in migration between administrative boundaries, rather than underlying demographic change. At present, no additional primary provision is proposed until 2031 at the earliest.

- The Sevenoaks and Borough Green Non-Selective Secondary Planning Group is forecast to experience a small deficit of Year 7 places during the early years of the Plan period, peaking at 24 places (1FE) in 2027/28, before returning to surplus from 2031/32 onwards. KCC will seek up to 1FE of temporary additional capacity from September 2027, subject to annual review of demand.

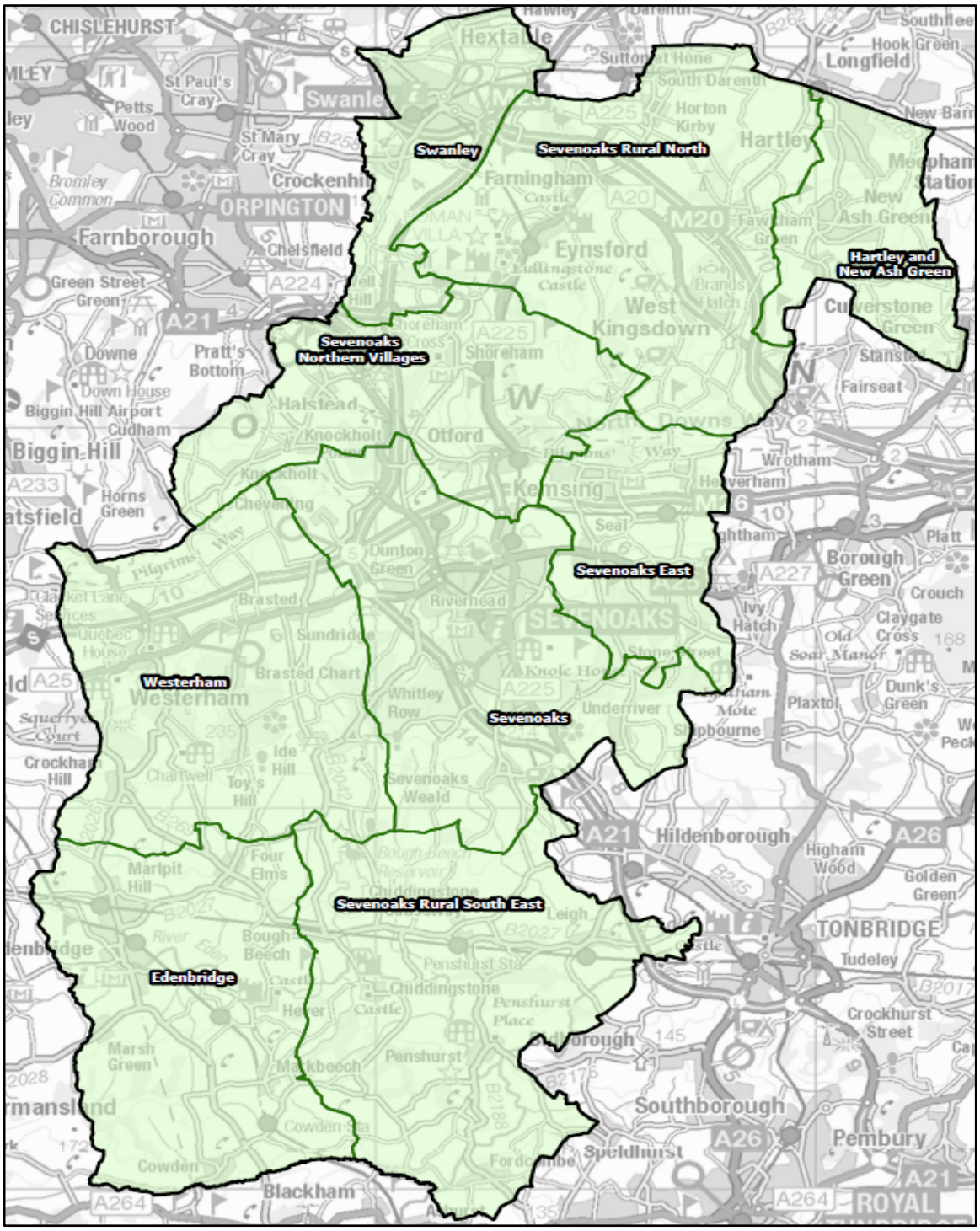
- For all of the Plan period in the Dartford and Swanley Non-Selective Planning Group, there is a surplus in Year 7 places. The surplus is forecast to fluctuate between a 1FE to 6.5FE. However, house building in Dartford Borough continues at pace and not all planned sites have yet been consented and therefore not included in the current projections.

- The West Kent Selective Planning Group is also forecast to experience short-term pressure during the early years of the Plan period and there may be a need for temporary provision.. Current forecasts do not indicate a need for permanent additional secondary provision, although demand will continue to be monitored closely, particularly in light of the emerging Sevenoaks Local Plan and associated housing growth proposals.

- Sevenoaks District Council is progressing a new Local Plan which proposes approximately 17,460 dwellings across the district to 2042. Key strategic allocations include Pedham Place near Swanley, where around 2,600 homes are proposed alongside education and community infrastructure. Other significant growth locations are in and around Sevenoaks Town and Edenbridge.

- As the Local Plan has not yet been adopted, the timing, scale and distribution of development remain subject to the statutory plan-making process. Consequently, current pupil forecasts should be considered within the context of this emerging growth agenda.

Map of the Sevenoaks Primary Planning Groups



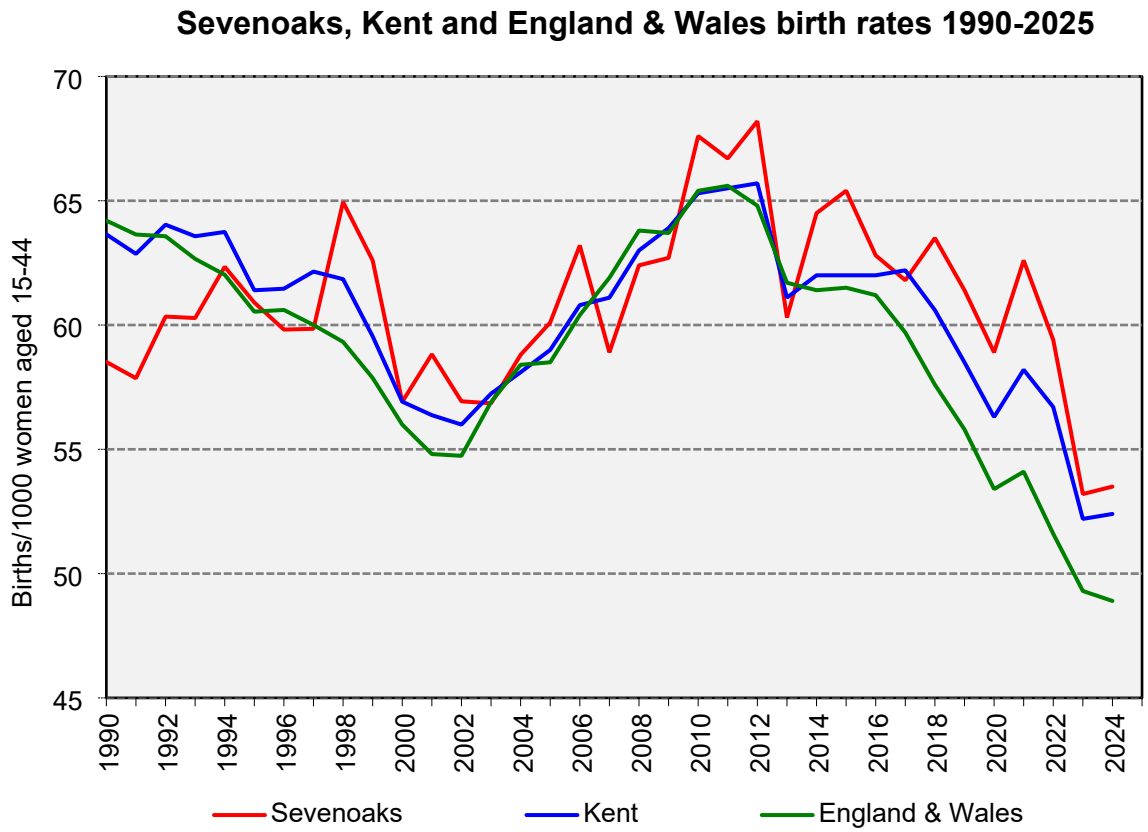
Sevenoaks Primary Schools by Planning Group

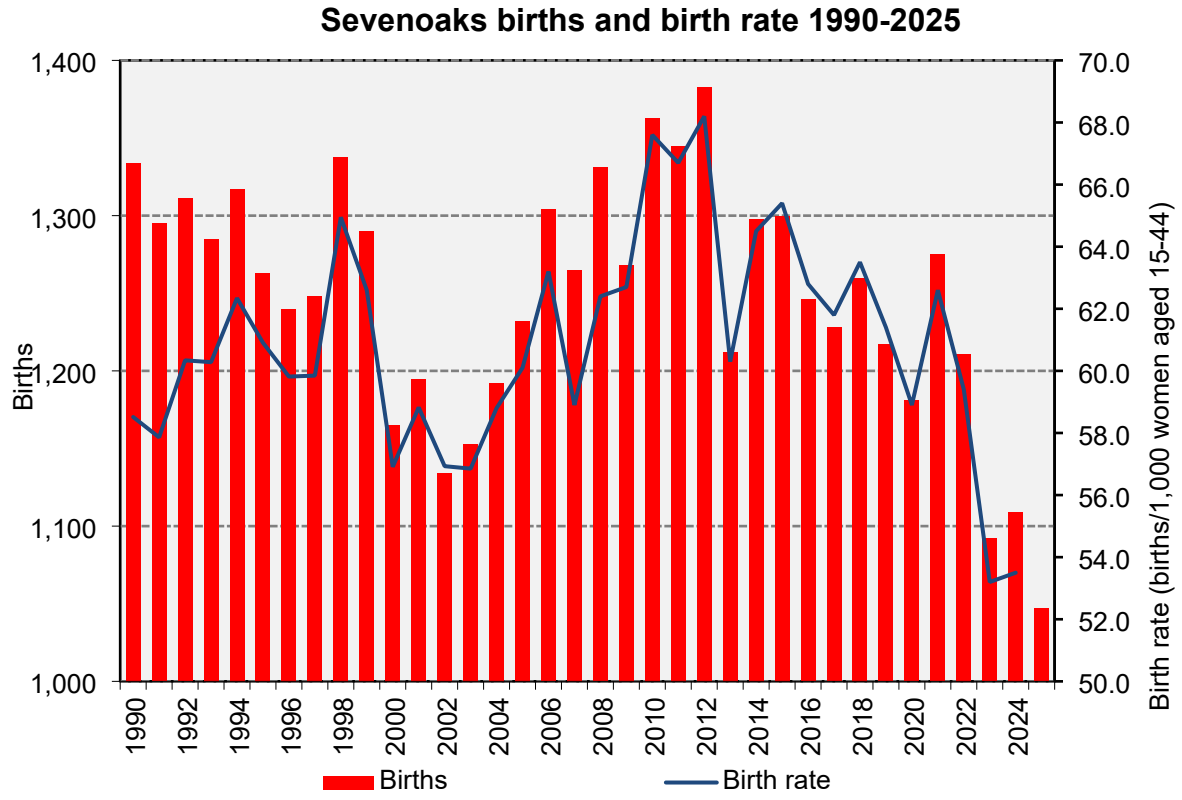
Planning group	School	Status
Swanley	Crockenhill Primary School	Community
	Downsview Community Primary School	Community
	Hextable Primary School	Community
	High Firs Primary School	Community
	Horizon Primary Academy	Academy
	St. Bartholomew's RC Primary School	Academy
	St. Mary's CE Primary School (Swanley)	Voluntary Aided

Planning group	School	Status
	St. Paul's CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
Sevenoaks Rural North	Anthony Roper Primary School	Foundation
	Fawkham CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Horton Kirby CE Primary School	Academy
	St. Edmund's Church of England Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
Hartley and New Ash Green	Leigh Academy Hartley	Academy
	New Ash Green Primary School	Community
	Our Lady of Hartley RC Primary School	Academy
Sevenoaks Northern Villages	Halstead Community Primary School	Academy
	Otford Primary School	Community
	Shoreham Village School	Academy
	St. Katharine's Knockholt CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
Sevenoaks East	Kemsing Primary School	Community
	Seal Church of England Primary School	Academy
	St. Lawrence CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
Sevenoaks	Amherst School	Academy
	Chevening St. Botolph's CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	Dunton Green Primary School	Community
	Lady Boswell's CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	Riverhead Infant School	Community
	Sevenoaks Primary School	Community
	St. John's CE Primary School (Sevenoaks)	Voluntary Controlled
	St. Thomas' RC Primary School (Sevenoaks)	Academy
	Weald Community Primary School	Community
Westerham	Churchill CE Primary School (Westerham)	Voluntary Controlled
	Crockham Hill CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Ide Hill CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	Sundridge and Brasted CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
Edenbridge	Edenbridge Primary School	Academy
	Four Elms Primary School	Academy
	Hever CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
Sevenoaks Rural South East	Chiddingstone CE School	Academy
	Fordcombe CE Primary School	Academy
	Leigh Primary School	Community
	Penshurst CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided

Birth Rate and Births Analysis

The charts below set out the birth rates for the district and the number of recorded births.





Sevenoaks Forecasts

Primary - Year R Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Swanley	300	22	13	39	35	56	29	26	22	22	23	25	300
Sevenoaks Rural North	120	2	0	4	-6	7	-4	-5	-7	-7	-7	-6	105
Hartley and New Ash Green	150	1	20	14	4	21	11	10	9	7	6	6	150
Sevenoaks Northern Villages	100	29	35	38	30	35	33	31	29	28	27	27	100
Sevenoaks East	102	19	22	28	13	27	22	22	21	21	21	21	102
Sevenoaks	390	66	43	57	45	37	15	4	-19	-40	-55	-61	360
Westerham	87	6	19	13	10	13	11	9	7	6	6	7	87
Edenbridge	105	5	7	4	3	9	0	-4	-10	-12	-11	-11	105
Sevenoaks Rural South East	83	28	24	29	31	30	27	26	25	24	25	25	83
Sevenoaks	**1,437**	**178**	**184**	**225**	**165**	**236**	**144**	**120**	**76**	**48**	**36**	**32**	**1,392**

Secondary - Year 7 Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
NS - Dartford and Swanley	1,410	100	29	125	153	161	173	197	172	160	203	205	1,590
NS - Sevenoaks and Borough Green	610	-16	-22	-24	-16	-19	-9	25	2	15	69	35	610
SG - West Kent	1,264	-19	-31	-54	-27	-28	3	30	47	61	126	102	1,264

Primary District commentary

Current forecasts for Reception-aged pupils, which do not include any additional housing growth that may arise from the emerging Sevenoaks District Local Plan, which has not yet been consented, indicate no additional primary capacity is required before 2032.

The level of surplus varies between planning groups and is forecast to reduce over time. Several planning groups move towards a more balanced position, and deficits begin to emerge in Sevenoaks Rural North, Edenbridge and the Sevenoaks Planning Group towards the end of the forecast period.

Consented developments at Fort Halstead, Sevenoaks Quarry and Four Elms Road in Edenbridge are expected to contribute in generating additional demand for primary school places in the future. Current forecasts indicate that this demand can be accommodated within existing provision in the medium term, although the position will be kept under review as housing delivery progresses.

KCC will continue to monitor pupil forecasts, housing delivery and the progression of the Local Plan. In the first instance, where additional capacity is required, the Council will seek to maximise the use of existing surplus built capacity and, where appropriate, the use of surplus places in neighbouring planning groups. Should demand exceed available capacity, options may include the expansion of existing schools or the delivery of new school provision.

Sevenoaks Planning Group

The Sevenoaks Planning Group contains the largest concentration of primary provision within the district and is forecast to experience the most significant change during the Plan period. Although the planning group begins with a substantial surplus of 66 places in 2025/26, this gradually reduces as forecast pupil numbers increase, moving into deficit from 2032/33 and reaching a projected shortfall of 61 places by 2035/36. This represents just over 2FE of pressure by the end of the forecast period.

Secondary District Commentary

Current forecasts for Year 7-aged pupils, which do not include any additional housing growth that may arise from the emerging Sevenoaks Local Plan, that is not yet consented, indicate secondary provision is broadly sufficient to meet forecast demand across the Plan period. Short-term pressures are forecast in some planning groups, but these can be managed through temporary commissioning activity where required.

There are three non-selective and two selective secondary planning groups that are fully or partially within Sevenoaks District. See Appendix 11.2 for the secondary planning group maps.

However, only three groups (West Kent Selective, Sevenoaks and Borough Green Non-Selective and Dartford and Swanley Non-Selective Planning Groups) actually have schools or satellites of schools within Sevenoaks District in them. It is clear forecasts will change significantly in the future once the New Sevenoaks Local Plan is adopted.

Dartford and Swanley Non-Selective Planning Group

There are eight schools in the Dartford and Swanley Non-Selective Planning Group: Alkerden C of E Academy, Dartford Science and Technology College, Leigh Academy Ebbsfleet, Leigh UTC Dartford, Sir Geoffrey Leigh Academy, Stone Lodge School, Leigh Academy Wilmington and

Orchards Academy. All the schools are in Dartford Borough, except for Orchards Academy which is in Sevenoaks District.

Forecasts indicate that the planning group will maintain a relatively high level of surplus capacity throughout the Plan period, with no requirement for additional secondary school commissioning. Surplus places are expected to increase from 125 places in 2027/28 to more than 200 places by 2034/35. The planning group is therefore well placed to accommodate forecast demand arising from existing housing commitments and from developments still to be consented.

Sevenoaks and Borough Green Non-Selective Planning Group

There are three schools in the Sevenoaks and Borough Green Non-Selective Planning Group: Knole Academy, Wrotham School and Trinity School. Forecasts indicate that there will be sufficient Year 7 places across the Plan period. Collectively these three schools provide 610 Year 7 places annually.

Forecasts indicate a small short-term deficit, peaking at 24 places in 2027/28, before the planning group returns to surplus from 2031/32 onwards. To manage this pressure, KCC will seek up to 1FE of temporary additional capacity from September 2027 for up to three years, subject to annual review of demand.

West Kent Selective Planning Group

There are six schools in the planning group: Judd School, Tonbridge Grammar School, Weald of Kent Grammar School, Skinners' School, Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School and Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys.

The forecast indicates that there will be deficit of 31 places in 2026-27 that rises to 54 in 2027-28 and then returns to just under 1FE for 2028-29 and 2029-30. We anticipate that these forecast deficits will be met through commissioned bulge provision in existing schools where necessary or own admission authorities offering over their PAN. We will keep the need for additional permanent capacity under review.

Planned Commissioning – Sevenoaks

Planning Group	By 2027-28	By 2028-29	By 2029-30	By 2030-31	Post 2031
Sevenoaks					2FE permanent expansion of an existing school
Sevenoaks and Borough Green Non-Selective	Up to 30 temporary places	Up to 30 temporary places	Up to 30 temporary places		
West Kent Selective	Up to 60 temporary places	Up to 30 temporary places	Up to 30 temporary places		

7.9 Swale

District commentary

- The birth rate for Swale remains slightly above the national and county averages and follows a similar pattern with a notable decline in the rate from 2016 to 2020, before recovering slightly in 2021 and then declining once again. The number of births recorded follows a similar pattern.

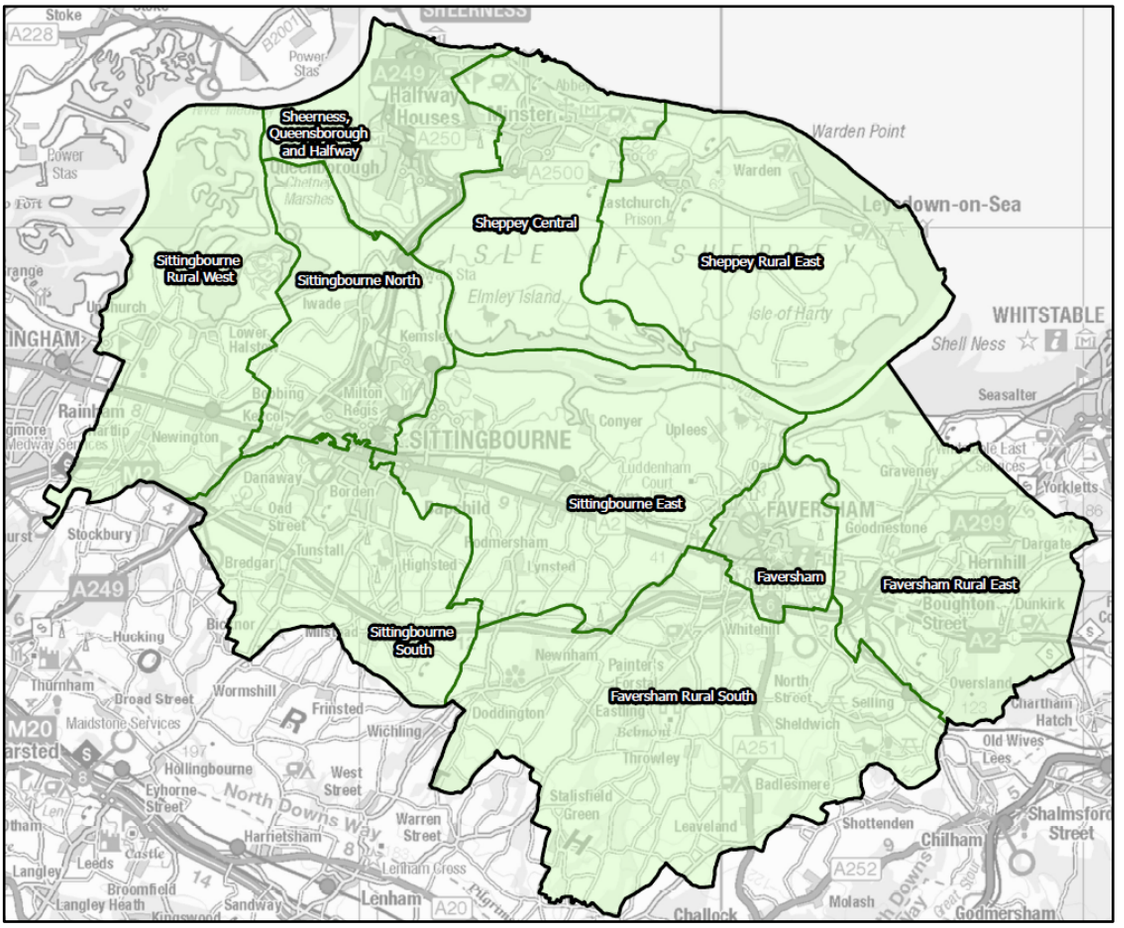
- We forecast surplus primary places across the District throughout the plan period however there are variances across the different planning groups.

- Within the secondary sector, we forecast pressures on capacity for non-selective Year 7 places including Sittingbourne non-selective planning group and Isle of Sheppey non-selective planning group. Whilst Faversham non-selective and Sittingbourne and Sheppey selective planning groups shows capacity across the plan period.

- Swale Borough Council's Local Plan, adopted in July 2017, proposes a total of 13,192 new homes over the Plan period to 2031 with approximately 776 dwellings per year.

- Swale Borough Council is in the process of reviewing their current local plan and have agreed the Local Development Scheme (LDS) agreed with members on the 30th July 2025. The LDS is the formal document that sets out the timetable for the Council's Local Plan Review and in line with the document, a draft Plan Regulation 18 consultation was carried out in the first quarter of 2026, with a Regulation 19 consultation taking place in the third quarter of 2026 and submission of the Council's Local Plan for examination at the end of the fourth quarter in 2026.

Map of the Swale Primary Planning Groups



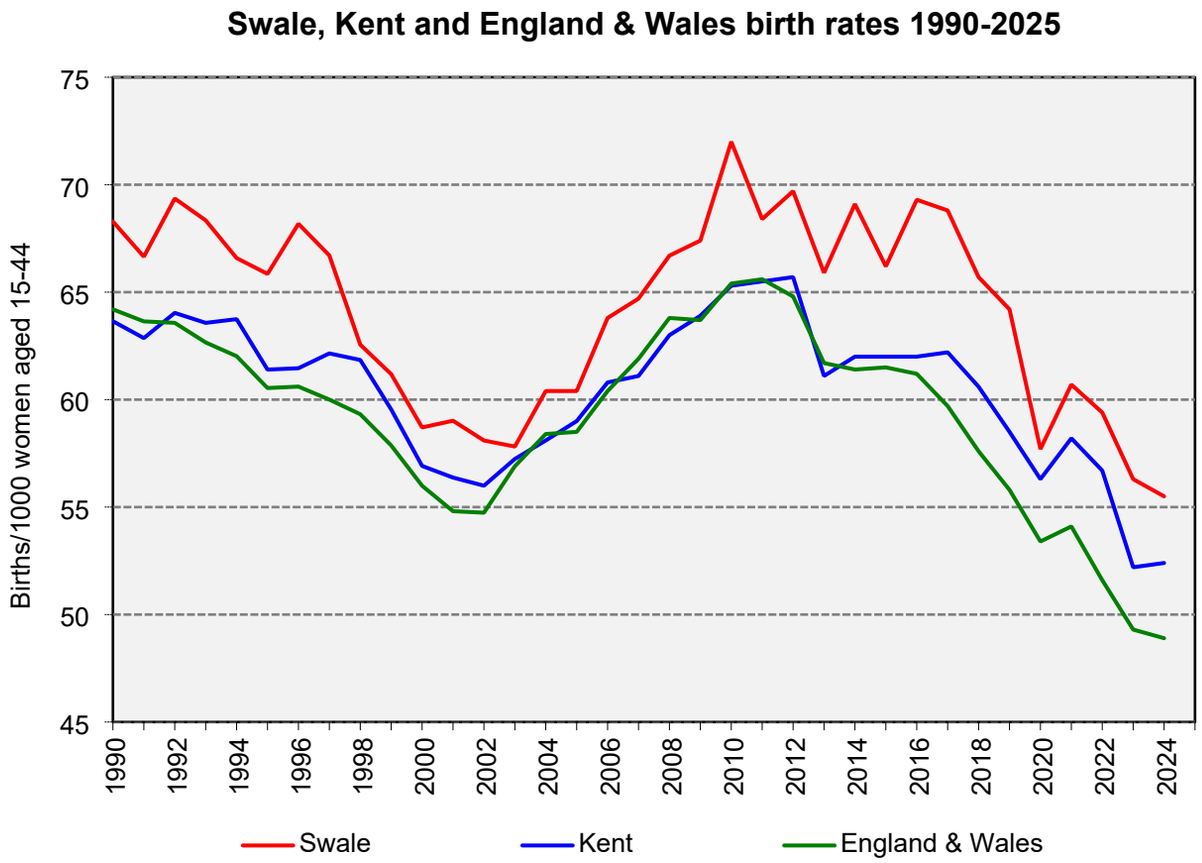
Swale Primary Schools by Planning Group

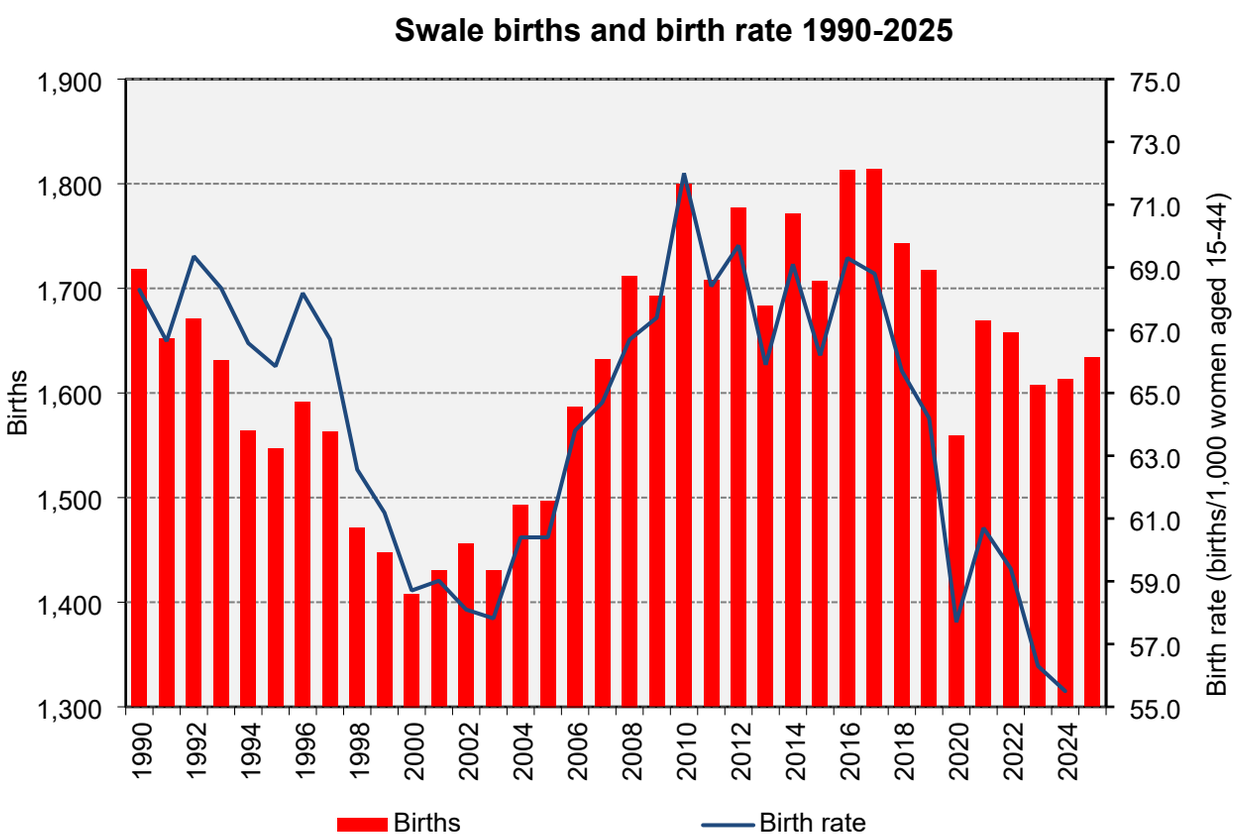
Planning groups	School	Status
Faversham	Bysing Wood Primary School	Academy
	Davington Primary School	Community
	Ethelbert Road Primary School	Community
	Luddenham School	Academy
	Ospringe CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	St. Mary of Charity CE Primary School	Academy
Faversham Rural East	Boughton-under-Blean and Dunkirk Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Graveney Primary School	Academy
	Hernhill CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
Faversham Rural South	Eastling Primary School	Community
	Selling CE Primary School	Academy
	Sheldwich Primary School	Academy
Sittingbourne East	Bapchild and Tonge CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	Canterbury Road Primary School	Community
	Lansdowne Primary School	Academy
	Lynsted and Norton Primary School	Academy
	South Avenue Primary School	Academy
	Sunny Bank Primary School	Academy
	Teynham Parochial CE Primary School	Academy
Sittingbourne South	Borden CE Primary School	Academy
	Bredgar CE Primary School	Academy
	Milstead and Frinsted CE Primary School	Academy
	Minterne Community Junior School	Academy

Planning groups	School	Status
	Oaks Community Infant School	Academy
	Rodmersham Primary School	Community
	St. Peter's RC Primary School (Sittingbourne)	Academy
	Tunstall CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	Westlands Primary School	Academy
Sittingbourne North	Bobbing Village School	Academy
	Grove Park Primary School	Academy
	Iwade School	Academy
	Kemsley Primary Academy	Academy
	Milton Court Primary Academy	Academy
	Regis Manor Primary School	Academy
Sittingbourne Rural West	Hartlip Endowed CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	Holywell Primary School	Academy
	Lower Halstow Primary School	Community
	Newington CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
Sheerness, Queenborough and Halfway	Halfway Houses Primary School	Academy
	Queenborough School	Academy
	Richmond Academy	Academy
	Rose Street Primary School	Community
	St. Edward's RC Primary School	Academy
	West Minster Primary School	Community
Sheppey central	Minster in Sheppey Primary School	Academy
	St. George's CE Primary School (Minster)	Academy
	Thistle Hill Academy	Academy
Sheppey Rural East	Eastchurch CE Primary School	Academy
	St Clements CE Primary School	Academy

Birth Rate and Births Analysis

The charts below set out the birth rates for the Borough and the number of recorded births.





Swale Forecasts

Primary - Year R Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Faversham	240	36	30	-21	-34	-25	-18	-22	-23	-22	-19	-19	210
Faversham Rural East	75	3	-7	-3	-4	-3	-3	-3	-3	-2	-2	-2	75
Faversham Rural South	60	7	8	4	10	5	6	6	6	6	6	7	60
Sittingbourne East	255	24	57	68	58	68	60	59	59	59	62	63	285
Sittingbourne South	305	10	4	31	3	10	-4	-9	-15	-22	-24	-25	305
Sittingbourne North	330	57	20	47	58	38	43	44	46	47	50	51	330
Sittingbourne Rural West	105	3	11	-8	12	5	0	-1	-4	-5	-5	-5	105
Sheerness, Queenborough and Halfway	330	71	30	13	50	23	37	41	46	50	56	57	300
Sheppey Central	210	37	38	31	24	26	24	20	19	18	18	17	210
Sheppey Rural East	60	24	12	14	24	19	17	17	16	15	15	14	60
Swale	**1,970**	**272**	**203**	**176**	**199**	**167**	**163**	**150**	**146**	**144**	**155**	**158**	**1,940**

Secondary - Year 7 Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Faversham Non-Selective	210	49	31	13	25	27	12	28	14	13	0	-7	210
Isle of Sheppey Non-Selective	360	-1	-12	-21	-12	-17	-15	14	40	28	17	42	330
Sittingbourne Non-Selective	765	-12	13	-70	-52	-38	-52	12	1	-26	27	27	765
Canterbury and Faversham Selective	645	-18	-3	-51	-32	-21	-26	6	-15	-22	-11	-5	645
Sittingbourne and Sheppey Selective	300	30	35	10	19	14	15	37	35	25	42	41	300

Primary District Commentary

Forecasts indicate that across Swale district there will be surplus capacity for Year R throughout the plan period. The surplus for Year R fluctuates throughout the forecast period from 5.8FE surplus for 2027/28 to 5FE for 2031/32 with significant variations across the different Planning Groups.

Faversham Planning Group
Forecasts indicate from 2027/2028 a pressure on places for Year R of 0.7FE, which is sustained throughout the plan period. This is due to Bysing Wood Primary School reducing its PAN to address the smaller cohorts currently entering school. The capacity has not been lost so this can be reinstated as and when required. A feasibility study has been undertaken for the future expansion of St Mary's of Charity primary school by 1FE to meet this need when required. Land has been secured through the local plan process for a new 3FE primary school to support the places required for the consented Duchy of Cornwall housing development of 2,500 new homes in Faversham.

Sittingbourne South planning Group
Forecasts indicate a decreasing surplus of places across the planning period. From 2030, the forecasts indicate a slight pressure. Initially this can be met through surplus capacity in adjoining planning groups, however as new housing developments are built out and occupied, a new 2FE primary school will be established to service the need from the Wises Lane housing development.

Sheerness, Queenborough and Halfway, Sheppey Central and Sheppey Rural East Planning Groups
Forecasts indicate an ongoing surplus of places of over 2FE across these three planning groups throughout the plan period. Discussions will take place with the schools on managing this surplus to ensure schools remain viable.

Secondary District Commentary

There are five planning groups within Swale district, or which cross the district boundary (See appendix 13.2 for the non-selective and selective planning group maps). Three of which are non-selective (Faversham, Isle of Sheppey and Sittingbourne) and two selective (Sittingbourne and Sheppey, and Canterbury and Faversham). The commentary below outlines the forecast position for each of the planning groups.

Faversham Non-Selective Planning Group
The Abbey School is the only non-selective school in Faversham. Forecasts indicate there are sufficient Year 7 places across the plan period. As new housing sites are approved and built out including the Duchy of Cornwall housing development in Faversham, an expansion of The Abbey School will be required to meet the need for school places.

Isle of Sheppey Non-Selective Planning Group
There are two schools in the Isle of Sheppey non-selective planning group: East Kent College Sheppey Secondary and Leigh Academy Minster.

Forecasts for Year 7 show a pressure of places from 2027/28 continuing across the plan period. The plan's forecast takes into consideration the historical travel flows of pupils travelling off the Isle of Sheppey for their education in Sittingbourne schools. This results in additional pressure on places in the Sittingbourne non-selective planning group. The establishment of two schools on the Isle of Sheppey in September 2024 has started to address this situation and is helping reverse the number of pupils travelling off the Isle of Sheppey to secondary schools in Sittingbourne. Discussions are being held with the schools on the Isle of Sheppey to ensure there are additional

Year 7 places in the short term and long term, which may include permanent expansions at both schools.

Sittingbourne Non-Selective Planning Group
There are three schools in the Sittingbourne non-selective planning group: Fulston Manor School, The Westlands School and The Sittingbourne School.

Forecasts indicate that for Year 7 there is a fluctuating deficit of places over the plan period. For 2027/28 forecasts show a deficit of 2.3FE. The pressure showing in Sittingbourne is exacerbated by the numbers of pupils travelling off the Isle of Sheppey for their secondary education. Temporary bulges will be needed for 2027/28 and 2028/2029 prior to meeting the ongoing need for places in Sittingbourne and Isle of Sheppey.

In the longer term, a new 6FE secondary school on the North Sittingbourne Quinton Road housing development will be commissioned to meet the need from new housing developments in Sittingbourne.

Sittingbourne and Sheppey Selective Planning Group
There are two Schools in the planning group, Borden Grammar School (Boys) and Highsted Grammar School (Girls). Forecasts indicate sufficient Year 7 places with a surplus capacity across the plan period.

Canterbury and Faversham Selective Planning Group
There are four schools in the Canterbury and Faversham selective planning group: Barton Court Grammar School, Simon Langton Girls' Grammar School, Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys and Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School.

Forecasts indicate a decreasing pressure of places in the planning group with a pressure of 1.7FE in 2027/2028 to a small surplus of places in 2031/32 of 0.2FE. We plan a 0.5FE expansion of Simon Langton Girls Grammar School and we will be working with existing school within the planning group to meet additional need.

Planned Commissioning – Swale

Planning Group	By 2027-28	By 2028-29	By 2029-30	By 2030-31	Post 2031
Faversham					1FE expansion of St Mary's of Charity 3FE primary school Duchy development
Sittingbourne South					2FE new Primary School at Wises Lane
Faversham Non-Selective					1FE expansion of Abbey School
Isle of Sheppey Non-Selective	Up to 3FE temporary expansion	Up to 3FE permanent expansion			
Sittingbourne Non-selective	Up to 60 temporary places	Up to 30 temporary places	Up to 30 temporary places	Up to 30 temporary places	6FE new provision - NW Sittingbourne/Quinton Road
Canterbury and Faversham Selective	0.5FE expansion Simon Langton Girls School				

7.10 Thanet

District commentary

- The birth rate in Thanet has fallen steadily from 2017 however the rate was higher than the national average up until 2020, but has fallen below the county average since 2023. The number of births has similarly decreased since 2015 from a high of 1677 to a low of 1251 in 2023 but has now levelled.

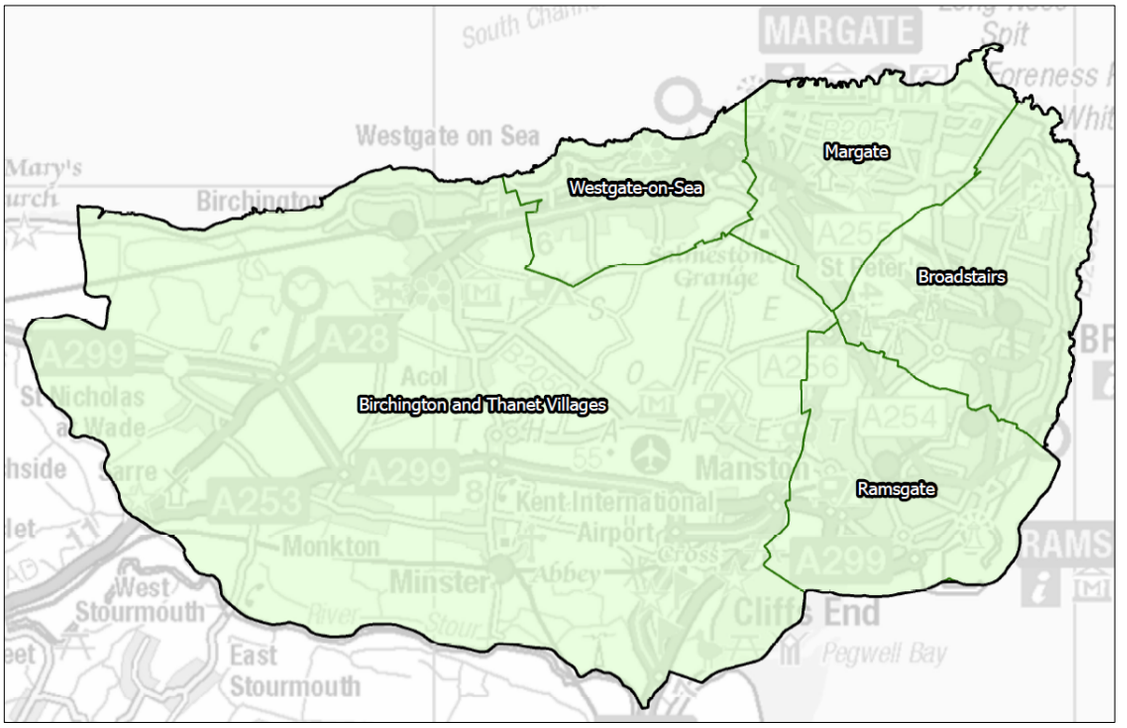
- We forecast surplus primary school places across the district throughout the plan period with a peak in 2029/2030, however there are significant differences in the planning groups.

- Within the secondary sector, we forecast pressures on capacity for non-selective Year 7 places across the plan period. There is a surplus of capacity of selective places throughout the plan period for the Thanet selective group.

- Thanet District Council's Local Plan to 2031, adopted on the 9 July 2020, includes the provision of 17,140 additional dwellings in the period up to 2031. During the 2015/16 to 2024/25 a total of 5,096 houses were completed (NET) with an average of 510 per year.

- Thanet District Council has published its Notice to Commence Local Plan preparation under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, on 12 June 2026. The Scoping Consultation (Regulation 20) will commence on 24 August until 9 October 2026. The 30-month plan preparation process will begin on 30 October 2026 at Gateway 1 under the new regulations, and the full local plan timetable is available to view on the council's website.

Map of the Thanet Primary Planning Groups



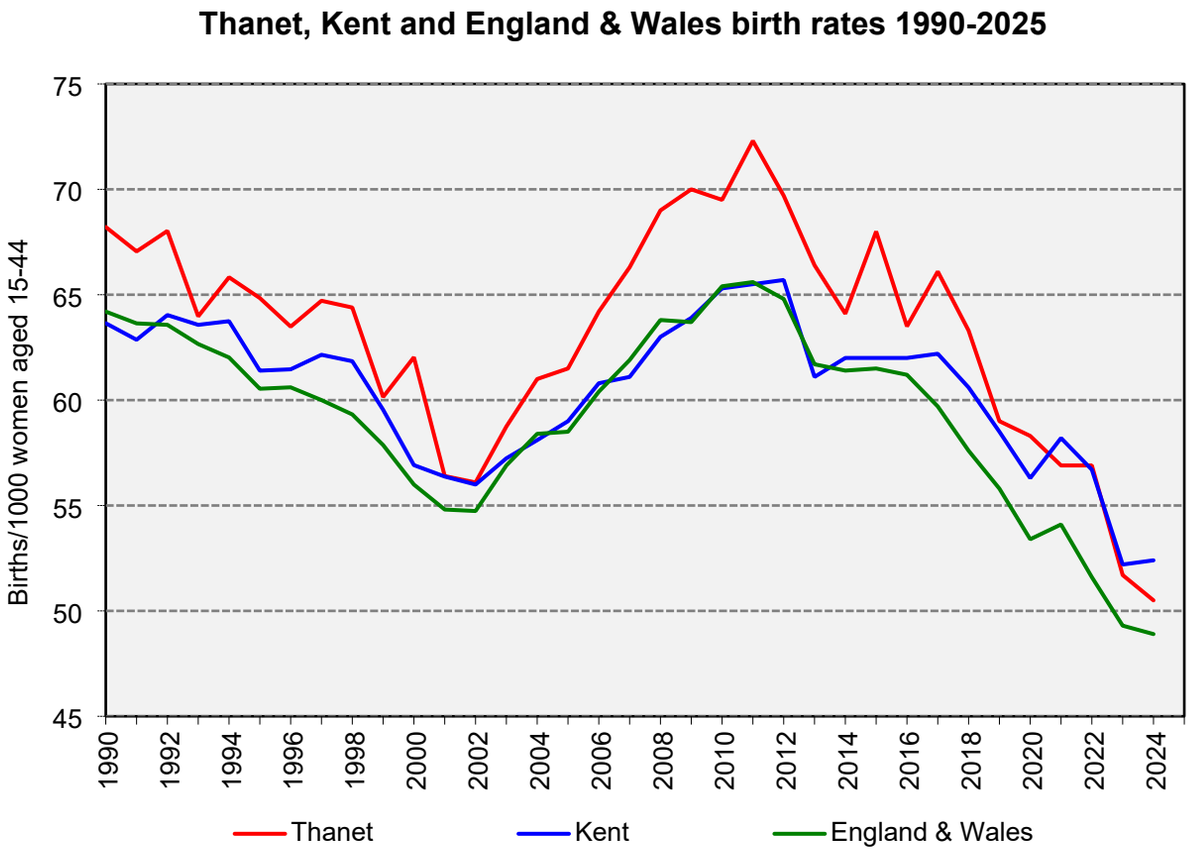
Thanet Primary Schools by Planning Group

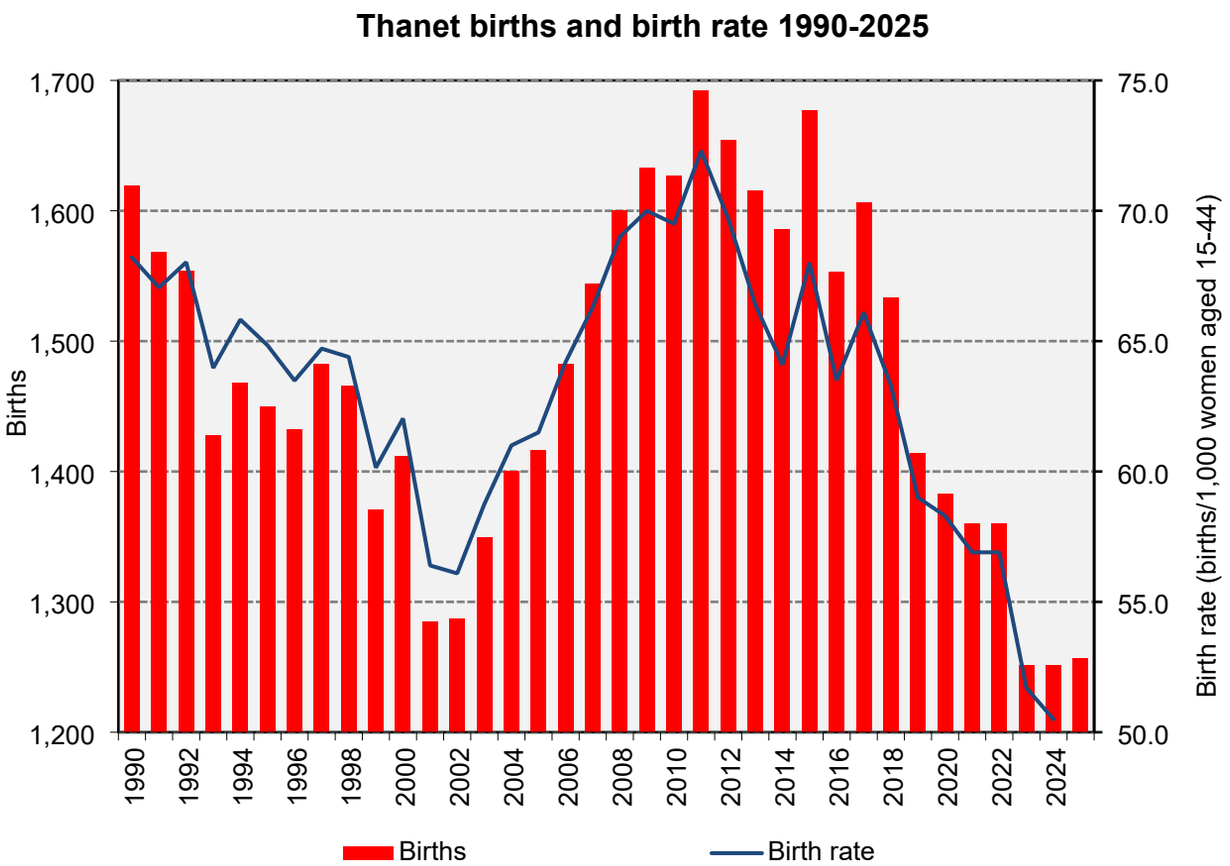
Planning Group	School	Status
Margate	Cliftonville Primary School	Academy
	Drapers Mills Primary Academy	Academy
	Holy Trinity and St. John's CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Northdown Primary School	Academy
	Palm Bay Primary School	Academy
	Salmestone Primary School	Academy
	St. Gregory's RC Primary School	Academy
Westgate-on-Sea	Garlinge Primary School	Community
	St. Crispin's Community Infant School	Academy
	St. Saviour's CE Junior School	Voluntary Controlled
Ramsgate	Chilton Primary School	Academy
	Christ Church CE Junior School	Academy
	Dame Janet Primary Academy	Academy
	Ellington Infant School	Community
	Newington Community Primary School (Ramsgate)	Academy
	Newlands Primary School	Academy
	Priory Infant School	Community
	Ramsgate Arts Primary School	Free
	Ramsgate Holy Trinity CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	St. Ethelbert's RC Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	St. Laurence-in-Thanet CE Junior Academy	Academy
Broadstairs	Bromstone Primary School	Foundation
	Callis Grange Infant School	Community
	St. George's CE Primary School (Broadstairs)	Foundation
	St. Joseph's RC Primary School (Broadstairs)	Academy
	St. Mildred's Infant School	Community
	St. Peter-in-Thanet CE Junior School	Voluntary Aided

Planning Group	School	Status
	Upton Junior School	Academy
Birchington and Thanet Villages	Birchington CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Minster CE Primary School	Academy
	Monkton CE Primary School	Academy
	St. Nicholas at Wade CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled

Birth Rate and Births Analysis

The charts below set out the birth rates for the district and the number of recorded births.





Thanet Forecasts

Primary - Year R Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Margate	420	83	21	62	58	107	73	77	82	87	94	100	390
Westgate-on-Sea	180	29	30	27	37	38	32	33	34	36	37	40	180
Ramsgate	495	122	48	72	56	63	49	43	40	36	36	37	465
Broadstairs	330	15	20	23	16	23	22	20	21	19	19	19	315
Birchington and Thanet Villages	165	5	-2	-13	-10	-30	-20	-24	-27	-31	-36	-37	165
Thanet	**1,590**	**254**	**116**	**170**	**156**	**201**	**155**	**149**	**150**	**147**	**150**	**159**	**1,515**

Secondary - Year 7 Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Thanet Non-Selective	1,189	-2	-72	-80	-40	-98	-12	-16	33	-5	30	31	1,099
Thanet Selective	345	45	25	25	35	20	42	40	50	47	54	54	345

Primary District Commentary

Forecasts indicate that Thanet district has surplus capacity for Year R places across the Plan period. Surplus capacity ranges between 5.6FE in 2027/28 to a peak of 6.7FE in 2029/30.

There are differences within the individual planning groups, with Margate showing high levels of surplus capacity. Ramsgate, Westgate-on-sea and Broadstairs showing some capacity whilst Birchington and Thanet Villages planning group showing a deficit of places across the plan period. Discussions will continue to take place with the schools on options to manage surplus capacity in the planning groups.

Margate and Ramsgate Planning Groups
Forecasts indicate surplus Year R places across the plan period for both Margate and Ramsgate planning groups, discussions will continue to take place with the schools on options to manage this surplus.

Birchington and Thanet Villages Planning Group
Forecasts indicate an increasing pressure of places from 0.4FE in 2027/28 to 0.8FE in 2031/32. Initial pressures can be accommodated in adjacent planning groups due to the surplus capacity available. This is partly due to Birchington Primary School reducing its PAN to address the smaller cohorts currently entering school. The capacity has not been lost so this can be reinstated as and when required. New primary school provision to serve any new housing developments in the planning group may be required later in the plan period if all housing comes forward as set out in the Local Plan.

Secondary District Commentary

There are two planning groups which are within Thanet district, one non-selective and one selective (See appendix 13.2 for the non-selective and selective planning group maps). The commentary below outlines the forecast position for each of the planning groups.

Thanet Non-Selective Planning Group
There are six schools in the Thanet non-selective planning group: Charles Dickens School, Hartsdown Academy, King Ethelbert School, Royal Harbour Academy, St George's CE Foundation School and Ursuline College.

Forecasts indicate a pressure on places across the plan period of 2.6FE from 2027/28 which decreased to 0.5FE in 2031/32. We will work with existing schools to ensure there are sufficient Year 7 places to meet the need.

Thanet Selective Planning Group
There are two schools in the Thanet selective planning group: Chatham and Clarendon Grammar School and Dane Court Grammar School. Forecasts indicate surplus places throughout the plan period.

Planned Commissioning – Thanet

Planning Group	By 2027-28	By 2028-29	By 2029-30	By 2030-31	Post 2031
Birchington and Thanet Villages/ Westgate-on-Sea					2FE new primary in Birchington and /or Westgate on Sea
Thanet Non-selective	Up to 75 temporary Y7 places	Up to 45 temporary Y7 places	Up to 90 temporary Y7 places	Up to 15 temporary Y7 places	

7.11 Tonbridge and Malling

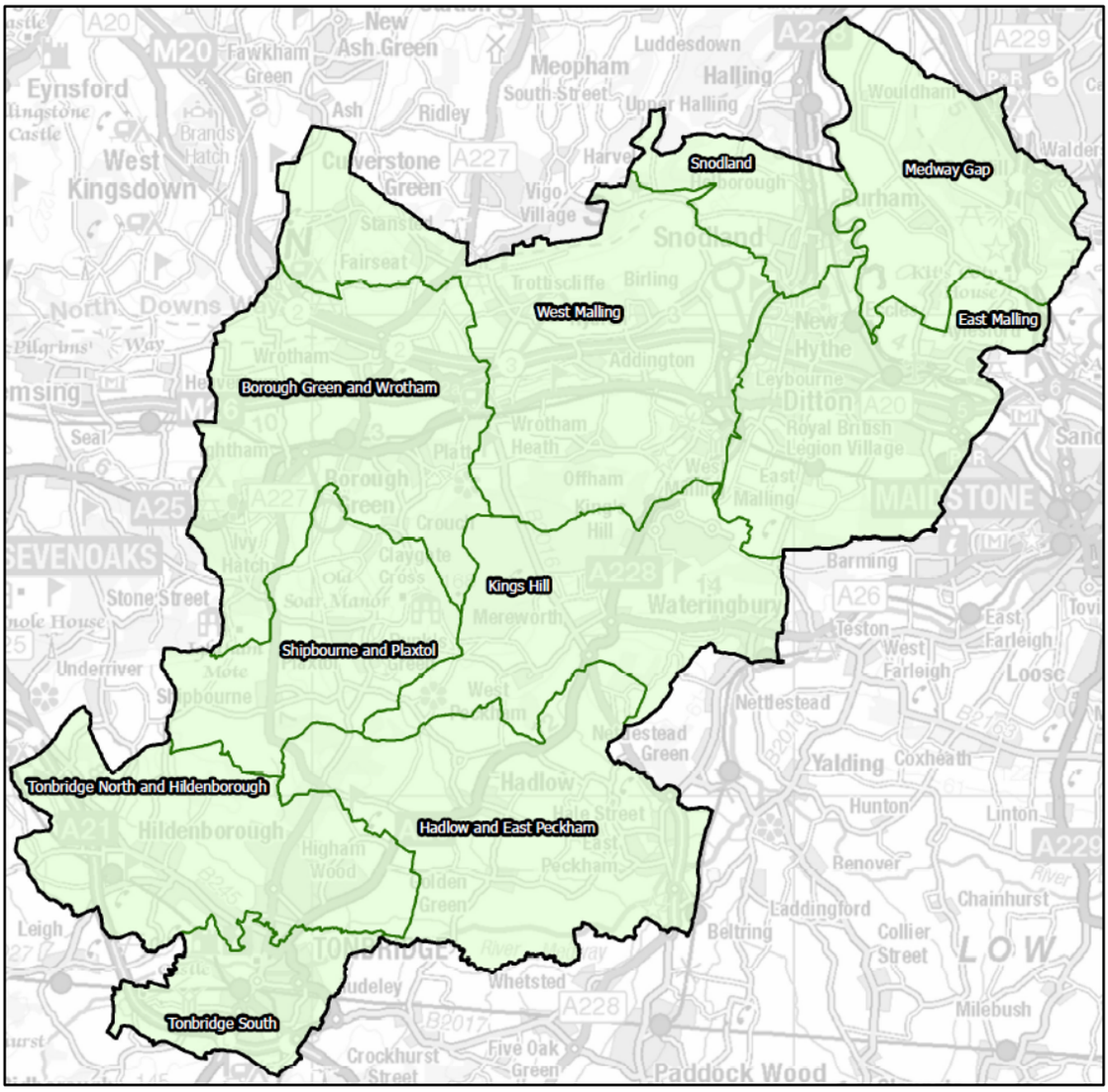
Borough commentary

- The birth rate for Tonbridge and Malling dropped markedly from 2018 to 2023, before recovering slightly in 2024. The number of births followed a similar pattern, dropping significantly in 2023 to 1,253 births which is the lowest since 2013. The number of births moderately recovered in 2024 and 2025, but can still be considered low.

- We forecast sufficient primary school places across the Borough to meet demand across the Plan period. However, there is local place pressures within some planning groups which may need to be addressed. Within the Non-Selective secondary planning groups, we anticipate sufficient places during the Plan period within the Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells group but there are deficits in the initial years within Sevenoaks and Borough Green Non-Selective that may need to be addressed. The West Kent Selective planning group has small deficits forecast for the initial years of the Plan period.

- On 11 September 2026 Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council started a consultation on their Regulation 19 Local Plan, the final version before the Borough Council submits its proposed plan to Government. The forecasts within the Kent Commissioning Plan incorporate consented housing proposals and remaining sites to be built out from the current Core Strategy. Any housing proposals from emerging Local Plans are not incorporated within the forecasts unless they also have planning consent.

Map of the Tonbridge and Malling Primary Planning Groups



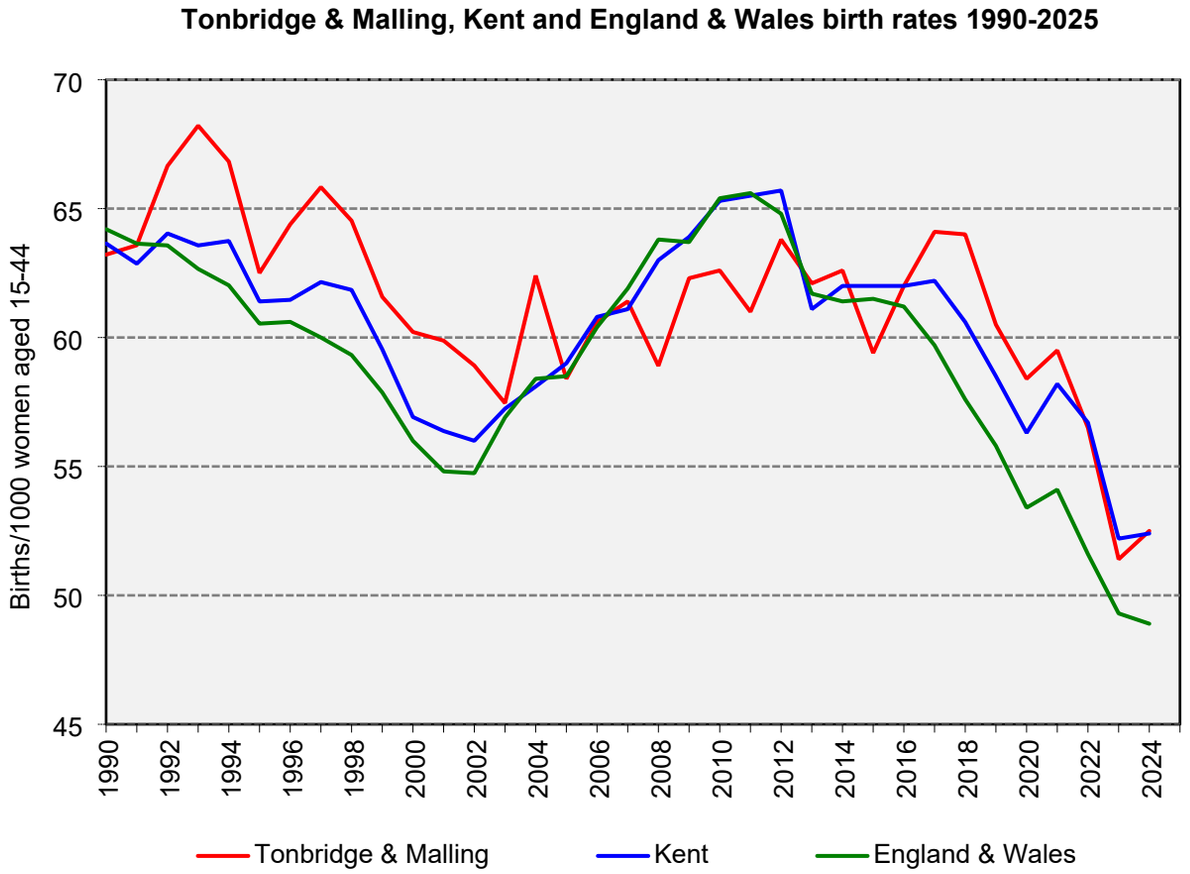
Tonbridge and Malling Primary Schools by Planning Group

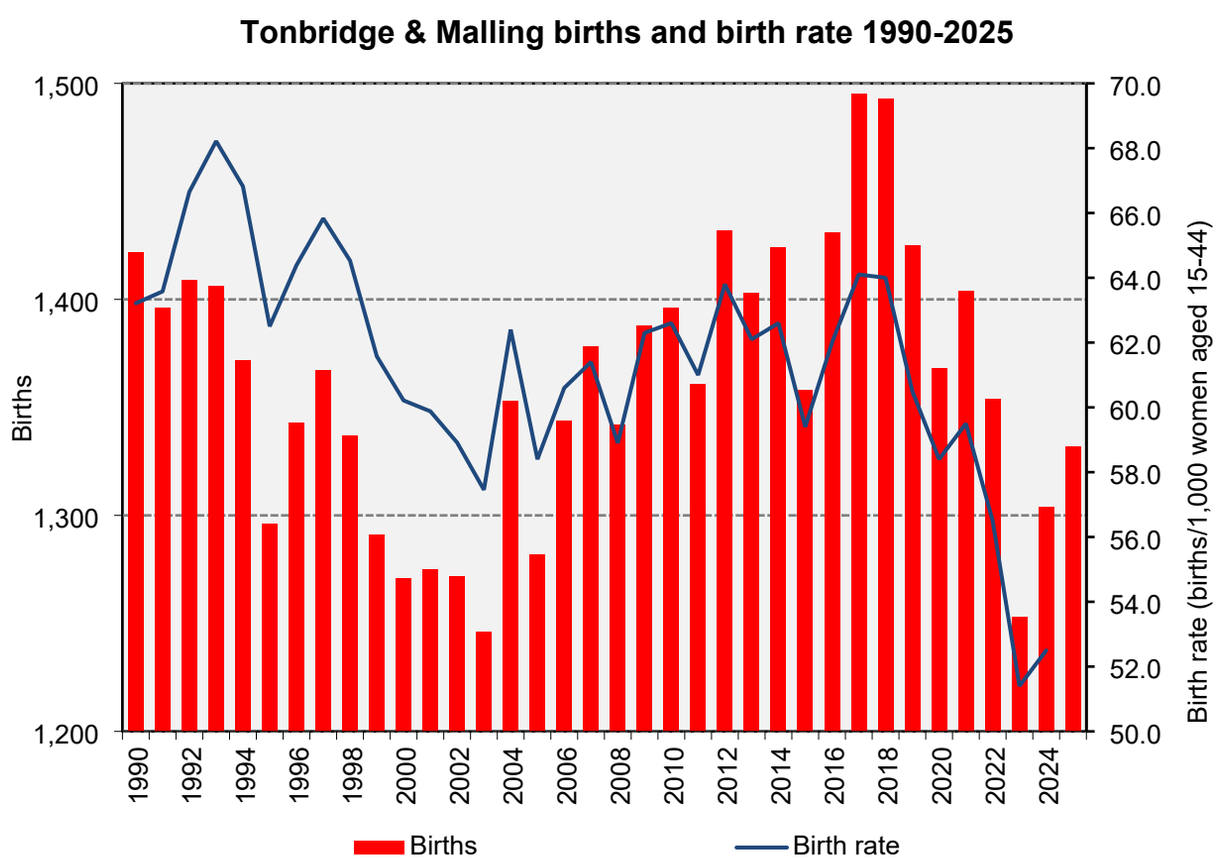
Planning Groups	School	Status
Tonbridge South	Bishop Chavasse CE Primary School	Free
	Royal Rise Primary School	Academy
	Slade Primary School	Community
	Sussex Road Community Primary School	Community
Tonbridge North and Hildenborough	Cage Green Primary School	Academy
	Hildenborough CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Long Mead Community Primary School	Community
	St. Margaret Clitherow RC Primary School	Academy
	Stocks Green Primary School	Community
	Woodlands Primary School	Community
Hadlow and East Peckham	East Peckham Primary School	Community
	Hadlow Primary School	Community
Shipbourne and Plaxtol	Plaxtol Primary School	Community
	Shipbourne School	Community
Kings Hill	Discovery School	Community
	Kings Hill School	Community
	Mereworth Community Primary School	Community
	Valley Invicta Primary School at Kings Hill	Academy
	Wateringbury CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided

Planning Groups	School	Status
Borough Green and Wrotham	Borough Green Primary School	Foundation
	Ightham Primary School	Academy
	Platt CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	St. George's CE Primary School (Wrotham)	Voluntary Controlled
West Malling	More Park RC Primary School	Academy
	Offham Primary School	Community
	Ryarsh Primary School	Community
	Trottiscliffe CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Valley Invicta Primary School at Leybourne Chase	Academy
	West Malling CE Primary School	Academy
East Malling	Brookfield Infant School	Community
	Brookfield Junior School	Community
	Ditton CE Junior School	Voluntary Aided
	Ditton Infant School	Foundation
	Leybourne St. Peter and St. Paul CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	Lunsford Primary School	Community
	St. James the Great Academy	Academy
	St. Peter's CE Primary School (Aylesford)	Voluntary Controlled
	Valley Invicta Primary School at Aylesford	Academy
Snodland	Snodland CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	St. Katherine's School (Snodland)	Academy
	Valley Invicta Primary School at Holborough Lakes	Academy
Medway Gap	Burham CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	St. Mark's CE Primary School (Eccles)	Academy
	Tunbury Primary School	Community
	Wouldham All Saint's CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled

Birth Rate and Births Analysis

The charts below set out the birth rates for the Borough and the number of recorded births.





Tonbridge and Malling Analysis – Primary

Primary - Year R Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Tonbridge South	210	7	4	42	34	28	21	20	20	22	26	31	210
Tonbridge North and Hildenborough	225	36	42	35	41	52	42	41	39	40	41	43	225
Hadlow and East Peckham	60	2	14	5	4	15	7	8	7	7	8	9	60
Shipbourne and Plaxtol	24	11	10	10	10	12	11	11	11	11	11	12	24
Kings Hill	240	17	3	23	-22	4	0	-5	-11	-13	-15	-15	225
Borough Green and Wrotham	135	40	30	42	24	34	28	27	27	27	28	29	120
West Malling	162	28	9	38	31	27	25	25	24	25	26	28	162
East Malling	294	43	20	31	23	2	6	-1	-11	-18	-21	-23	300
Snodland	150	1	14	-5	18	-3	7	9	11	13	16	18	150
Medway Gap	168	16	-9	-3	-15	-23	-17	-21	-24	-26	-27	-28	168
Tonbridge & Malling	**1,668**	**201**	**137**	**218**	**148**	**149**	**131**	**114**	**93**	**88**	**93**	**103**	**1,644**

Secondary - Year 7 Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Malling Non-Selective	543	43	55	12	12	5	30	4	31	8	16	24	543
Sevenoaks and Borough Green Non-Selective	610	-16	-22	-24	-16	-19	-9	25	2	15	69	35	610
Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells Non-Selective	1,641	235	96	116	120	84	153	156	169	190	221	175	1,586
West Kent Selective	1,264	-19	-31	-54	-27	-28	3	30	47	61	126	102	1,264

Primary District Commentary

For primary education, the overall forecasts indicate sufficient places to meet demand across the Plan period. However, there are local place pressures within some of the individual planning groups.

Kings Hill Planning Group
There are small surpluses in the early years of the Plan period, apart from 2028-29 when a 22 place deficit is forecast. From 2031-32 onwards we forecast small deficits. We anticipate that there will be sufficient places in neighbouring planning groups to meet the initial demand, but may need to commission an additional 1 FE of permanent provision later in the Plan Period if the forecast deficits are increased by housing development.

East Malling Planning Group
There are small, but increasing, deficits forecast from 2031-32 through to the end of the Plan Period. We will monitor the situation carefully, but anticipate that there will be sufficient places in neighbouring planning groups to meet the demand.

Snodland Group
Forecasts for Snodland show small deficits in 2027-28 and 2029-30 that can be accommodated in the adjacent East and West Malling planning groups.

Medway Gap Planning Group
The planning group is forecast to have a deficit that increases throughout the Plan period. Where the demand in the short to medium term cannot be accommodated in neighbouring planning groups, we will work with local schools to establish bulge provision before seeking a more permanent solution via the expansion of an existing school towards the end of the forecast period. The demand for school places within this group can be impacted by children resident in Medway, we will work with Medway Council when determining the most appropriate commissioning strategy for ensuring all children have a school place.

Secondary District Commentary

There are four planning groups which are within Tonbridge and Malling Borough or which cross the Borough boundary (See appendix 11.2 for the non-selective and selective planning group maps). Three of which are non-selective. The commentary below outlines the forecast position for each of the planning groups.

Malling Non-Selective Planning Group
There are three schools in the planning group: Aylesford School, Holmesdale School and Malling School. Forecasts indicate that there will be sufficient Year 7 places across the Plan period.

Sevenoaks and Borough Green Non-Selective Planning Group
There are three schools in the Sevenoaks and Borough Green non-selective planning group: Knole Academy, Wrotham School and Trinity School.

Forecasts indicate a small short-term deficit, peaking at 24 places in 2027/28, before the planning group returns to surplus from 2031/32 onwards. To manage this pressure, KCC will seek up to 1FE of temporary additional capacity from September 2027 for up to three years, subject to annual review of demand.

Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells Non-Selective Planning Group
There are eight schools in the planning group: Hadlow Rural Community School, Hayesbrook School, Hillview School for Girls, Hugh Christie Technology College, Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, Mascalls Academy, Skinners' Kent Academy and St. Gregory's Catholic School.

Forecasts indicate that there will be sufficient Year 7 places across the Plan period. It should be noted that these forecasts do not incorporate the impact of housing growth associated with unconsented or unallocated development outside of an adopted Local Plan, therefore future strategic housing growth may have a significant impact over and above the forecast need.

West Kent Selective Planning Group

There are six schools in the planning group: Judd School, Tonbridge Grammar School, Weald of Kent Grammar School, Skinners' School, Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School and Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys.

The forecast indicates that there will be deficit of 31 places in 2026-27 that rises to 54 in 2027-28 and then returns to just under 1FE for 2028-29 and 2029-30. We anticipate that these forecast deficits will be met through commissioned bulge provision in existing schools where necessary or own admission authorities offering over their PAN. We will keep the need for additional permanent capacity under review.

Planned Commissioning – Tonbridge and Malling

Planning Group	By 2027-28	By 2028-29	By 2029-30	By 2030-31	Post 2031
Kings Hill					1FE Expansion of Existing School
Medway Gap					1FE Expansion of Existing School
Sevenoaks and Borough Green Non-Selective	Up to 30 Yr 7 temporary places	Up to 30 Yr 7 temporary places	Up to 30 Yr 7 temporary places		
West Kent Selective	Up to 60 temporary places	Up to 30 temporary places	Up to 30 temporary places		

7.12 Tunbridge Wells

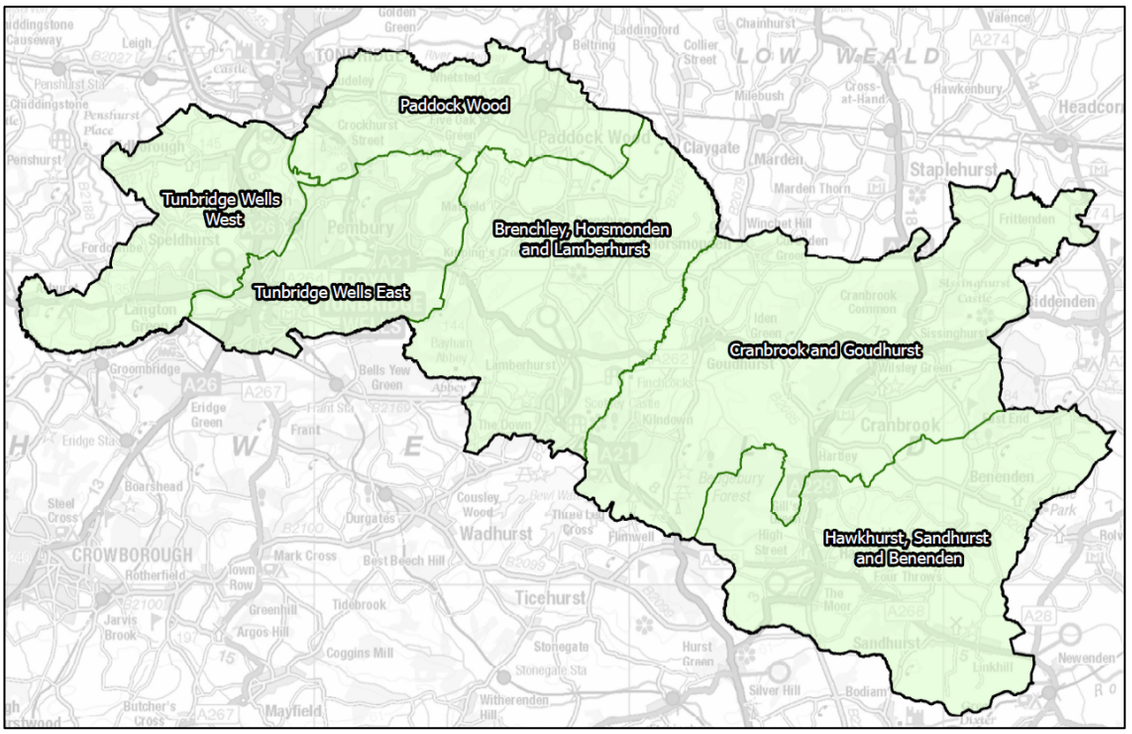
Borough Commentary

- The birth rate for Tunbridge Wells has in general been falling since 2010 and continued to drop in 2025. However, the rate is still above both the county and national averages. The number of recorded births has followed a similar trend to a low of 1,041 in 2025, which is the lowest for more than 20 years.

- We forecast sufficient primary school places across the Borough throughout the Plan period albeit there is local place pressure within the Cranbrook and Goudhurst, the Brenchley, Horsmonden and Lamberhurst, and the Paddock Wood planning groups. Within the secondary sector, we anticipate there will be sufficient places during the Plan period within the Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells and Tenterden and Cranbrook Non-Selective group (in spite of the latter having small deficits forecast in the initial years). The Cranbrook Selective group has small deficits throughout the Plan period and the West Kent Selective planning group as has small deficits forecast until 2030-31 when it reverts to surpluses.

- The new Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Local Plan 2020-2038 was adopted by Full Council on Wednesday 10 December 2025. The assessed housing need for the Borough within the new Plan is 678 dwellings per annum, equivalent to some 12,200 additional homes over the plan period to 2038. We will continue working with the Borough Council to ensure sufficient education provision is provided for future housing growth.

Map of the Tunbridge Wells Primary Planning Groups



Tunbridge Wells Primary Schools by Planning Group

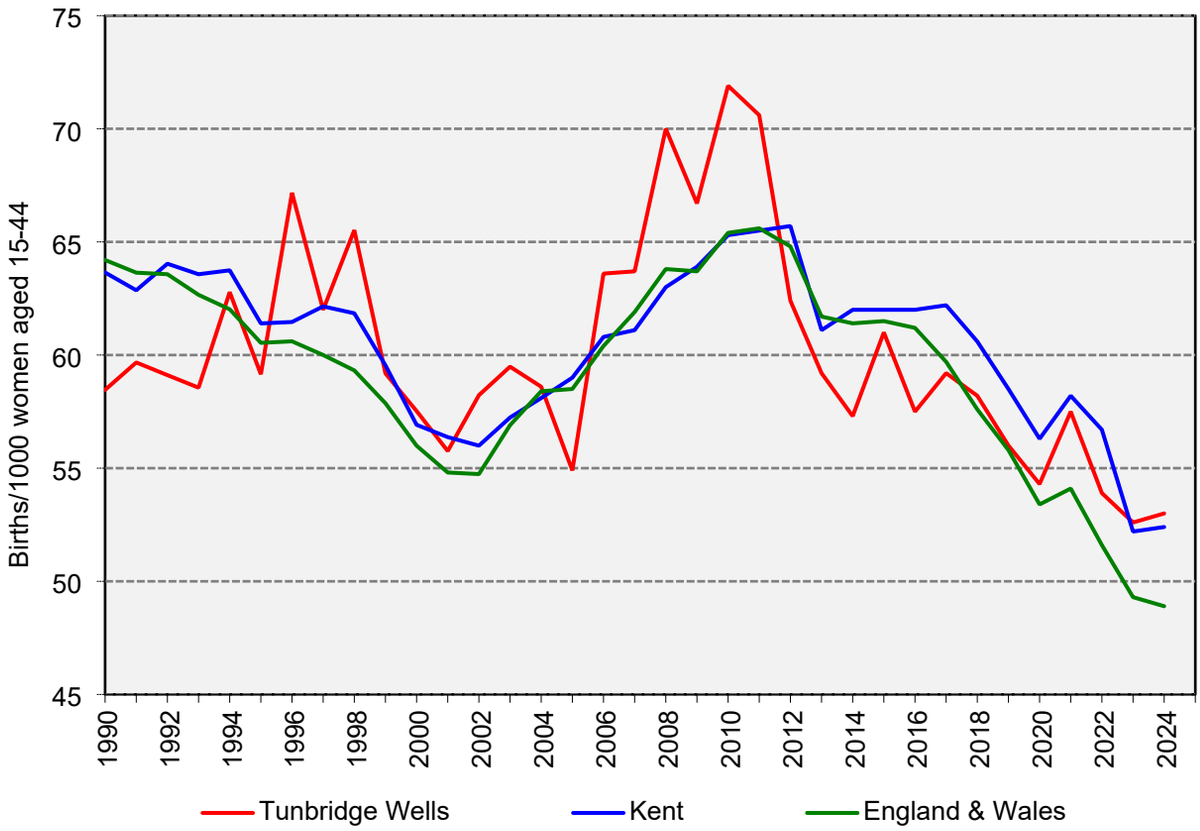
Planning Groups	School	Status
Tunbridge Wells East	Broadwater Down Primary School	Community
	Claremont Primary School	Community
	Pembury School	Community
	Skinners' Kent Primary School	Academy
	St. Barnabas CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	St. James' CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	St. Mark's CE Primary School (Tunbridge Wells)	Academy
	St. Peter's CE Primary School (Tunbridge Wells)	Voluntary Controlled
	Skinners Temple Grove Academy	Academy
	Wells Free School	Free
Tunbridge Wells West	Bidborough CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Bishops Down Primary School	Community
	Langton Green Primary School	Community
	Rusthall St. Paul's CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	Southborough CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Speldhurst CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	St. Augustine's RC Primary School (Tunbridge Wells)	Academy
	St. John's CE Primary School (Tunbridge Wells)	Voluntary Controlled
	St. Matthew's High Brooms CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
Paddock Wood	Capel Primary School	Community
	Paddock Wood Primary School	Academy
Brenchley, Horsmonden and Lamberhurst	Brenchley and Matfield CE Primary School	Academy
	Horsmonden Primary School	Academy
	Lamberhurst St. Mary's CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
Cranbrook and Goudhurst	Colliers Green CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
	Cranbrook CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Frittenden CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled

Planning Groups	School	Status
	Goudhurst and Kilndown CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Sissinghurst CE Primary School	Voluntary Aided
Hawkhurst, Sandhurst and Benenden	Benenden CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Hawkhurst CE Primary School	Voluntary Controlled
	Sandhurst Primary School	Community

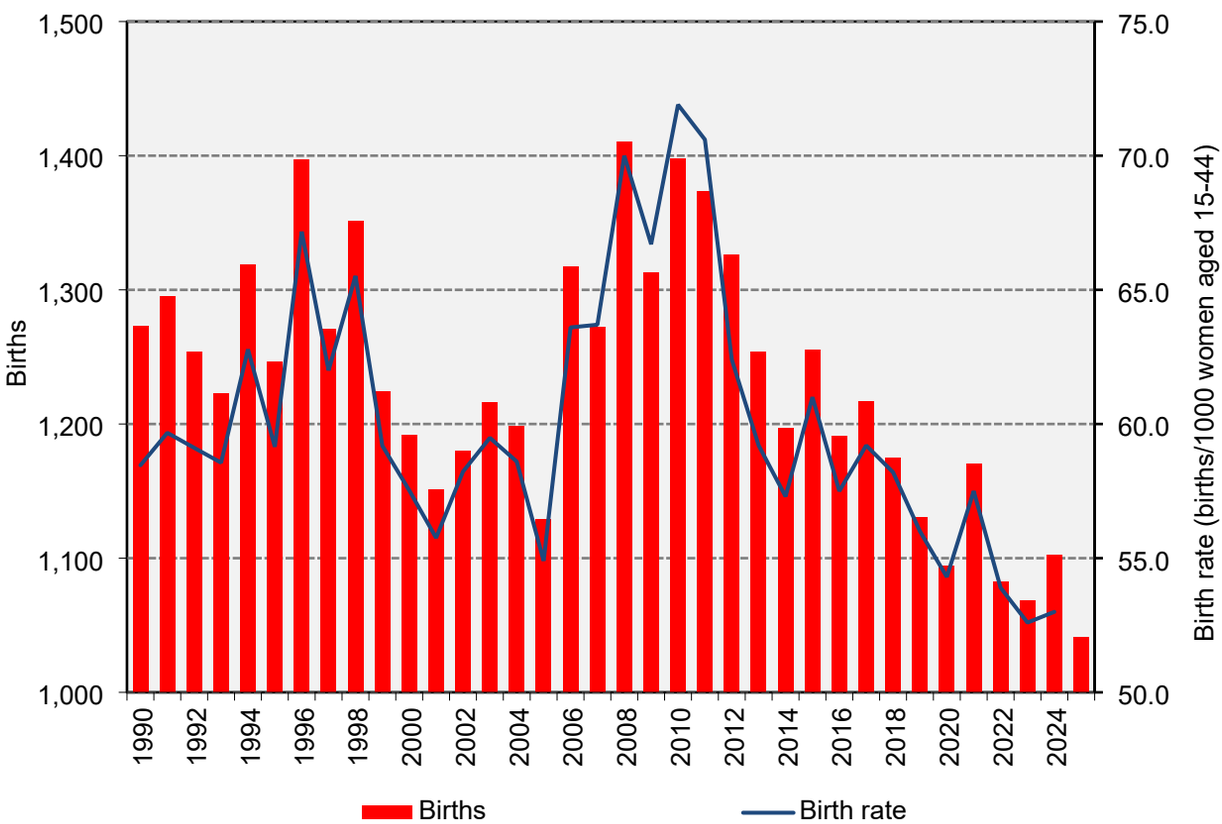
Birth Rate Analysis

The charts below set out the birth rates for the Borough and the number of recorded births.

Tunbridge Wells, Kent and England & Wales birth rates 1990-2025



Tunbridge Wells births and birth rate 1990-2025



Tunbridge Wells Forecasts

Primary - Year R Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Tunbridge Wells East	450	86	85	64	67	89	77	80	88	96	104	114	435
Tunbridge Wells West	450	85	97	139	131	145	128	127	129	130	132	133	450
Paddock Wood	120	7	-4	-30	-60	-63	-37	-44	-47	-50	-50	-50	120
Brenchley, Horsmonden and Lamberhurst	90	5	2	7	5	8	4	2	1	0	-1	-1	90
Cranbrook and Goudhurst	121	3	6	7	19	9	3	-2	-4	-5	-7	-7	121
Hawkhurst, Sandhurst and Benenden	90	5	11	8	20	26	12	10	8	7	7	7	90
Tunbridge Wells	**1,321**	**191**	**198**	**195**	**181**	**214**	**187**	**173**	**175**	**177**	**185**	**198**	**1,306**

Secondary - Year 7 Surplus/Deficit Capacity if No Further Action is Taken

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2025/26 (A)	2026/27 (F)	2027/28 (F)	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Tenterden and Cranbrook Non-Selective	360	39	-4	-11	-10	-12	6	1	2	5	12	17	300
Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells Non-Selective	1,641	235	96	116	120	84	153	156	169	190	221	175	1,586
Cranbrook Selective	90	1	-2	-11	-8	-14	-12	-3	-13	-5	-3	9	90
West Kent Selective	1,264	-19	-31	-54	-27	-28	3	30	47	61	126	102	1,264

Primary District Commentary

For primary education the overall forecasts indicate sufficient places to meet demand across the Plan period for Year R and all primary years. There is local place pressure within the Paddock Wood, the Brenchley, Horsmonden and Lamberhurst, and the Cranbrook and Goudhurst planning groups

The Year R surplus in Tunbridge Wells town (Tunbridge Wells East and West planning groups combined) is forecast to be in excess of 20% during the Plan period; depending on the distribution of this surplus between schools it may necessitate adjustment to the PANs of individual schools in order to ensure class sizes remain financially viable.

Paddock Wood Planning Group
The town has seen significant housebuilding in recent years, consequently the planning group is forecast to have deficits throughout the Plan period. We will monitor the situation but anticipate that the deficits in the short term will be accommodated in the neighbouring planning groups or within one of the small schools within the planning group offering over PAN for the first 2 years of the Plan period.

From 2028-29 the demand is forecast to be 1 FE or greater and there are fewer places available in neighbouring planning groups. To meet this demand, we will seek to establish a new primary school within the town. Careful consideration to any impact for smaller rural schools within the wider area will be given as part of the process for establishing a new school. The school will initially open with a 1 FE PAN and core facilities sufficient for 2 FE to support future expansion when needed.

Brenchley, Horsmonden and Lamberhurst Planning Group
The planning group is forecast to have small deficits towards the end of the Plan period. We will monitor the situation but anticipate that the deficits will be accommodated in the neighbouring planning groups.

Cranbrook and Goudhurst Planning Group
Forecasts indicate that the planning group will have small deficits from 2030-31 onwards. We will monitor the situation but anticipate that the deficits will be accommodated in the neighbouring planning groups or within one of the small schools within the planning group offering over PAN.

Secondary District Commentary

There are four planning groups which are within Tunbridge Wells Borough or which cross the Borough boundary, two non-selective and two selective (See appendix 11.2 for the non-selective and selective planning group maps). The commentary below outlines the forecast position for each of the planning groups.

Tenterden and Cranbrook Non-Selective Planning Group
Following a substantive decision by the Secretary of State for Education to close High Weald Academy on 31 August 2022, this is a single school planning group containing Homewood School and Sixth Form Centre. The academy decreased its PAN from September 2026 by 60 Year 7 places, this was in response to the level of surplus places within the wider area. The forecast indicates that there will be small deficits forecast for 2026-27, 2027-28, 2028-29 and 2029-30. The County Council will work with the academy to ensure that sufficient places are made available.

Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells Non-Selective Planning Group
There are eight schools in the planning group: Hadlow Rural Community School, Hayesbrook School, Hillview School for Girls, Hugh Christie Technology College, Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, Mascalls Academy, Skinners' Kent Academy and St. Gregory's Catholic School.

Forecasts indicate that there will be sufficient Year 7 places across the Plan period. It should be noted that these forecasts do not incorporate the impact of housing growth associated with unconsented or unallocated development outside of an adopted Local Plan, therefore future strategic housing growth may have a significant impact over and above the forecast need.

Cranbrook Selective Planning Group
There is only one school in the Cranbrook selective planning group: Cranbrook School. Small deficits are forecast throughout the Plan period. We will monitor the situation but anticipate that the deficits will be accommodated in the neighbouring planning groups or via an existing school offering over PAN.

West Kent Selective Planning Group
There are six schools in the planning group: Judd School, Tonbridge Grammar School, Weald of Kent Grammar School, Skinners' School, Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School and Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys.

The forecast indicates that there will be deficit of 31 places in 2026-27 that rises to 54 in 2027-28 and then returns to just under 1FE for 2028-29 and 2029-30. We anticipate that these forecast deficits will be met through commissioned bulge provision in existing schools where necessary or own admission authorities offering over their PAN. We will keep the need for additional permanent capacity under review.

Planned Commissioning – Tunbridge Wells

Planning Group	By 2027-28	By 2028-29	By 2029-30	By 2030-31	Post 2031
Cranbrook and Goudhurst Planning Group					Up to 10 temporary places
Paddock Wood		1FE Through Establishment of New Primary School			
West Kent Selective	Up to 60 temporary places	Up to 30 temporary places	Up to 30 temporary places		

8. Commissioning Special Education Needs

KCC's ambition is that every child and young person should have access to high-quality education and the opportunity to achieve and thrive.

A strategy for education in Kent 2025–2030 sets out three qualities at the heart of KCC's vision for education: ambition, curiosity and resilience. These apply to all children and young people.

Kent's SEND Strategy sets out the local area's approach to developing an inclusive education system and meeting its responsibilities to children and young people with SEND. The SEND Sufficiency Plan supports these ambitions by translating them into decisions about the type, number and location of education places Kent will need.

Demand for SEND support has grown significantly. Autism is a particularly important factor in planning future provision: 10,648 children and young people with EHCPs in Kent have autism recorded as their primary need, representing 49% of the total.

Kent's approach seeks to strengthen the ability of mainstream schools to meet a wider range of needs. This includes consistent implementation of the Mainstream Core Standards and programmes such as Partnerships for the Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS), which supports inclusive practice for neurodivergent children. KCC's Mainstream Core Standards set out what schools must do to support children and young people with SEND.

Kent has made progress in improving SEND services since the previous SEND inspection. The 2026 Ofsted and Care Quality Commission inspection recognised improvements, including in newer EHCPs, inclusive support in schools, partnership working and earlier help. However, inspectors also identified continuing inconsistencies in children's and families' experiences across the county.

There is also more to be done to create an effective sustainable system. KCC is seeking to do so through its Local Area Strategic Plan and the Government's High Needs Stability Grant arrangements.

The SEND Sufficiency Plan forms part of this wider programme of improvement. Its particular role is to ensure that the pattern of education provision develops in response to the needs of Kent's children and young people. The Sufficiency Plan can be viewed in Appendix 11.3 of the KCP.

8.1 Future SEN Commissioning of Provision

Pressures remain, both locally and nationally, on state maintained special school capacity. The sufficiency pressures in our special schools has led to a number of challenges and the increased use of the independent and non-maintained sectors. A paper proposing a capital programme to alleviate the sufficiency and suitability challenges and support Kent's maintained special schools to continue to deliver high-quality education to their pupils will be presented to KCC CYPE Cabinet in November 2026.

Below are tables showing the planned commissioning for all SEN Provision:

Figure 8a: Agreed and Planned Special School Additional Provision in Kent

Provision: Special School	Proposed Year	SEN Type	District	Potential Additional Number of Places	Total Additional Places by Year				
					2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32
Expansion of special school (Broomhill Bank)	2027/28	C&I	Sevenoaks	130	40	40	50	0	0
New special school (all through) Swanley	2028/29	PSCN	Sevenoaks	250	0	114	66	70	0
New special school (all through) Whitstable	2028/29	SEMH/ASD	Canterbury	120	0	48	28	44	0
Expansion of special school (Parkwood Hall)	2031	C&L	Sevenoaks	40	8	8	8	16	0
Total planned special school places				**540**	**48**	**210**	**215**	**130**	**0**

Figure 8b: Planned New/Expanded SRPs in East Kent

East Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	SEN Type	District	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
				2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
Newlands Primary*	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	10	7	3	0	0	**20**
Herne Bay Primary Planning Group	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Canterbury	10	10	0	0	0	**20**
Faversham Primary PG Bysing Wood	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Swale	15	5	0	0	0	**20**
Bromstone**	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	6	6	0	0	0	**12**
Total planned primary SRP places				**41**	**28**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**72**

East Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	SEN Type	District	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
				2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
Thanet Non-Selective PG	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	15	15	20	0	0	**50**
Canterbury Coastal PG***	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Canterbury	15	15	10	0	0	**40**
Canterbury Coastal PG (2)	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Canterbury	15	15	20	0	0	**50**
Faversham non-selective PG	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Swale	10	10	0	0	0	**20**
Thanet Non-Selective (2) PG	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	10	10	10	0	0	**30**
Total planned primary SRP places				**65**	**65**	**60**	**0**	**0**	**190**
Total planned SRP places				**106**	**93**	**63**	**0**	**0**	**262**

*Newlands: potential additional number of places reduced from 40 in consultation with the school
**Bromstone: does not have a designated SRP and needs to be formalised through the statutory process. Work is necessary to meet the required standards (BB104)
***Canterbury Coastal Planning Group: potential additional number of places reduced from 50 in consultation with the school

Figure 8c: Planned/New Expanded SRPs in North Kent

East Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	SEN Type	District	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
				2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
Alkerden CoE Academy (Primary)	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Dartford	4	3	3	5	0	**15**
Rosherville CoE Primary Academy	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Gravesham	6	5	4	0	0	**15**
Edenbridge PG: Edenbridge Primary School	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Sevenoaks	7	7	6	0	0	**20**
Swanley PG: St Marys	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Sevenoaks	6	5	4	0	0	**15**
Total planned primary SRP places				**23**	**20**	**17**	**5**	**0**	**65**
Alkerden CoE Academy (Secondary)	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Dartford	6	6	6	7	0	**25**
Sevenoaks and Borough Green PG: Knole Academy	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Sevenoaks	8	12	10	0	0	**30**
Dartford and Swanley non-selective PG	2028/29	ASD/SLCN	Dartford	0	10	10	10	0	**30**
Total planned primary SRP places				**14**	**28**	**26**	**17**	**0**	**85**
Total planned SRP places				**37**	**48**	**43**	**22**	**0**	**150**

Figure 8d: Planned New/Expanded SRPs in South Kent

East Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	SEN Type	District	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
				2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
Ashford North Planning Group	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	7	7	6	0	0	**20**
Ashford East Planning Group	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	7	7	6	0	0	**20**
Tenterden South Planning Group	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	6	5	3	0	0	**14**
Ashford South Planning Group	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	6	5	3	0	0	**14**
Total planned primary places				**26**	**24**	**18**	**0**	**0**	**68**
Total planned secondary SRP places				**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Total planned SRP places				**26**	**24**	**18**	**0**	**0**	**68**

Figure 8e: Planned New/Expanded SRPs in West Kent

East Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	SEN Type	District	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
				2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
South East Maidstone Town	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	6	5	3	0	0	**14**
North West Maidstone Town	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	6	5	3	0	0	**14**
Maidstone Rural	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	6	5	3	0	0	**14**
Tunbridge Wells Town 1 East Planning Group	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	6	5	3	0	0	**14**
Tunbridge Wells Town 2 West Planning Group	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	6	5	3	0	0	**14**
Tunbridge Wells Rural	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	6	5	3	0	0	**14**
Total planned primary SRP places				**36**	**30**	**18**	**0**	**0**	**84**
St Augustine (expansion)	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	8	12	10	0	0	**30**
Maidstone Secondary Town	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	8	12	10	0	0	**30**
Skinners' Kent Academy	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	8	12	10	0	0	**30**
Total planned primary SRP places				**24**	**36**	**30**	**0**	**0**	**90**
Total planned SRP places				**60**	**66**	**48**	**0**	**0**	**174**

Figure 8f: Planned Changes for Established SRPs

SRP Provision	Date	District	Category of Change	Total New Places
The Archbishop School	2027/28	Canterbury	Broaden Designation to ASD/SLCN	10
Westlands School	2028/29	Swale	Broaden Designation to ASD/SLCN alongside School's Rebuild Programme	25
Wincheap Foundation Primary School	2026/27	Canterbury	Broaden Designation to ASD/SLCN	20
Total Planned Places				**55**

Figure 8g: Agreed and Planned Alternative Provision in Kent

Alternative Provision	Proposed Opening Date	SEN Type	District	Total Additional Number of Places	Total Additional Places by Year				
					2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32
Expansion of KS3 provision, The Rosewood School	2027	Health Needs Education Centre	Canterbury	30	30	0	0	0	0
Jude's Academy	2031	AP	Gravesham	80	0	0	0	0	20
Total planned special school places				**150**	30	**0**	0	0	0

9. Commissioning Early Years Education and Childcare

9.1 Legislative Context - Free Entitlements and new Wraparound Childcare

Early Education and Childcare is legislatively governed by the Childcare Acts of 2006 and 2016. These place a duty on all local authorities to improve outcomes for young children, to cut inequalities between them, to secure sufficient childcare, with adequate flexibility to allow parents to work via the following:

- 30 hours per week of funded childcare for working parents of children from 9 months up to school age - WPE
- 15 hours of early education for eligible two-year olds – EL2 (in Kent formerly known as Free for Two)
- The Universal Entitlement of 15 hours for all three and four-year olds - UE

Over the period September 2024 to date, The Education People as commissioned by KCC supported the development of 2,629 free entitlement places in the private, voluntary, independent and maintained sectors.

Also in September 2024, the Government announced School Based Nurseries capital funding to create or expand 3,000 on-site nurseries in primary schools, either run by schools or in partnership with private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers. Of the 13 successful schools in both Rounds 1 and 2, 10 are open and 3 are yet to open but hopefully will in 2027. KCC is currently in the process of submitting a further 19 bids for Round 3 of the Programme

KCC also commissioned The Education People to work with schools and PVI providers to increase the supply of wraparound childcare, so that parents of primary school-aged children could access childcare from 8am to 6pm, or equivalent hours with different start and end times where appropriate, if they needed it. KCC is on track to achieve its target of just over 4,000 places.

Following a national pilot programme of free breakfast clubs in 750 schools, the Government has now received Royal Assent to provide free breakfast club places in every primary school. The national rollout has begun and is likely to be completed during 2028/29.

9.2 Early Education and Childcare Provision in Kent

Early Education and Childcare in Kent is available through a large, diverse and constantly shifting market of maintained, academies, PVIs and childminders, all of which operate as individual businesses and are therefore subject to market forces.

Kent County Council (KCC) commissions The Education People to work with providers in making available a sufficient range of provision, in all geographical areas as needed, at the right times, and offering flexible sessions to fit with both standard and atypical working patterns.

The DfE previously provided each local authority with information related to the expansion of funded early education and childcare entitlements and wraparound childcare announced in the Spring Budget 2023, including analysis of demand for and supply of childcare places in Kent. That analysis informed earlier sufficiency planning by The Education People but has not been used for the 2026–2027 assessment.

9.3 Annual Report on Childcare Sufficiency

KCC is required to produce an Annual Report on Childcare Sufficiency, showing the supply of, and demand for, early years and childcare provision across the County, including where there might be over supply and particularly a deficit in provision. Based on any identified gaps and needs, The Education People's Early Years and Childcare Service works with providers and potential providers to encourage the establishment of additional provision.

The Annual Report on Childcare Sufficiency for the 2026–2027 academic year uses local childcare take-up rates for all age groups to estimate demand. This approach reflects observed patterns after the new entitlements, including the increase to 30 hours for eligible working parents of children aged from 9 months, had been implemented for a full year. Population forecasts are combined with these local take-up rates, while the supply of childcare places in Kent is derived from the number of available places reported by early education and childcare providers through the annual childcare sufficiency audit.

9.4 Sufficiency of Childcare Places for Children Aged 0-4 Years Old

The assessment of sufficiency is calculated by comparing the total available supply of childcare places with the forecast number of places required in each age group, planning area and district. Figure 9a shows the anticipated childcare places needed for 0 to 4 year olds in the 2026–2027 academic year.

Figure 9a: 0 to 4 year olds Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (2026–2027 Academic Year)

District	0-4 Year Old Population	DEMAND: 0-4 Year Old places required	SUPPLY: 0-4 Childcare places	EXCESS SUPPLY: 0-4 Childcare Sufficiency Surplus/Deficit Places
Ashford	6,766	4,247	4,588	341
Canterbury	6,077	3,966	4,835	868
Dartford	7,428	4,244	5,880	1,636
Dover	4,999	3,192	3,596	404
Folkestone & Hythe	4,430	2,902	3,591	688
Gravesham	6,133	3,277	3,819	542
Maidstone	9,490	5,567	6,594	1,027
Sevenoaks	5,694	3,245	5,379	2,133
Swale	7,821	5,001	5,969	967
Thanet	6,156	4,064	4,865	800
Tonbridge & Malling	6,573	4,039	5,033	994
Tunbridge Wells	5,264	3,301	5,391	2,091
Grand Total	**76,831**	**47,047**	**59,539**	**12,491**

With many of the group based early education and childcare providers in Kent offering childcare to 2, 3 and 4 year olds in one room, and to allow for the flexibility in the childcare market within this age group, the sufficiency of childcare places is analysed for under 2 year olds and the 2, 3 and 4 year old age group.

Figure 9b shows childcare sufficiency for under 2 year olds. Monitoring this age group remains important because the increase from 15 to 30 hours of funded childcare per week for eligible working parents of children aged from 9 months to school age had been in place for a full year by the 2026–2027 assessment. Figure 9c shows childcare sufficiency for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

Figure 9b: Under 2 year olds Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (2026–2027 Academic Year)

District	Under 2 Year Old Population	DEMAND: Under 2 Year Old places required	SUPPLY: Under 2 Year Old places	EXCESS SUPPLY: Under 2 Year Old Surplus/Deficit Places
Ashford	2,821	678	944	266
Canterbury	2,517	738	1,048	310
Dartford	3,186	838	1,258	420
Dover	2,135	514	810	296
Folkestone & Hythe	1,869	481	764	284
Gravesham	2,581	457	733	276
Maidstone	4,033	967	1,537	570
Sevenoaks	2,438	543	1,313	770
Swale	3,296	887	1,533	646

Thanet	2,600	727	1,027	300
Tonbridge & Malling	2,765	797	1,383	586
Tunbridge Wells	2,219	570	1,224	654
Total	**32,460**	**8,196**	**13,573**	**5,377**

Figure 9c: 2, 3 and 4 year olds Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (2026–2027 Academic Year)

District	2, 3 & 4 Year Old Population	DEMAND: 2, 3 & 4 Year Old places required	SUPPLY: 2, 3 & 4 Childcare places	EXCESS SUPPLY: 2, 3 & 4 Childcare Sufficiency Surplus/Deficit Places
Ashford	3,945	3,569	3,644	75
Canterbury	3,560	3,228	3,787	558
Dartford	4,242	3,406	4,622	1,216
Dover	2,864	2,678	2,786	108
Folkestone & Hythe	2,561	2,421	2,826	405
Gravesham	3,552	2,820	3,086	266
Maidstone	5,457	4,601	5,057	457
Sevenoaks	3,256	2,702	4,066	1,364
Swale	4,525	4,114	4,436	322
Thanet	3,556	3,338	3,838	500
Tonbridge & Malling	3,808	3,243	3,650	407
Tunbridge Wells	3,045	2,730	4,167	1,437
Grand Total	**44,371**	**38,851**	**45,965**	**7,114**

9.5 Sufficiency Estimates by Planning Area

Sufficiency rates have been calculated using primary planning areas. Where some primary planning areas indicate a deficit of 0-4 childcare places, consideration must be given to the fact that neighbouring planning areas may have a surplus of places and children may be travelling to access settings in adjacent areas based on parental preferences and/or travel to work patterns. Equally, where planning areas have more provision than children, children may be drawn from other areas to access these settings.

The percentage of funded three and four year olds accessing a setting within the planning area in which they live can be used to interpret the deficit in each planning area along with qualitative analysis to understand whether the variation in local take up rates are driven by a preference for particular providers, commuting patterns or a lack of places in the local area.

9.6 Future Planning

Supporting the sufficiency, sustainability and quality of early years and childcare provision remains crucial in the aim to ensure a long term, sufficient supply of places.

The supply of Free Entitlement places for 9 months to four year olds will be kept under review as planned new housing developments are built and potentially increase the demand for places. Where housing developments are proposed in school planning areas where there is an indicative deficit of places or where the size of a development means that it will require new provision, KCC will engage in discussions with developers to either seek funding to provide nursery provision which may include securing community rental or leasehold accommodation availability for private, voluntary or independent sector providers of 0-4 year old childcare.

When a new school is delivered according to the ESFA Baseline Design, a nursery space is now included in the design. As new schools are planned, KCC will work with the sponsor to identify early years provision and the most appropriate way to deliver this.

10. Commissioning Plan Post-16

The academic year 2025/26 has continued to be challenging for young people progressing into post-16 education:

- A considerable number of young people did not achieve the entry criteria for their own 6th forms, consequently the number of students in 6th forms shrank for the second year running and numbers in colleges continue to rise (Jan 2025 compared to Jan 2026).
- Provision for young people needing to study at L2 and below or in specialist settings filled very quickly despite the colleges taking on additional young people.
- The 16-18 cohort grew again. This year by almost 1,000.
- Provision for those outside schools and colleges continued to shrink.

Our NEET numbers have continued to grow. In June 2026, 2018 young people were NEET compared to 1,625 in June 2025, an increase of 24%. Despite this, the NEET support service reported that the weeks after GCSE results day have been much calmer as processes in schools and college have reacted quickly and efficiently to support young people without places. There is also evidence that more schools are offering level 2 qualifications in their 6th forms for their learners that did not reach level 3 entry criteria.

The choice of lower-level qualifications for learners outside college has continued to shrink. The number of providers decreased from 16 in 2024/5 to 12 in 2025/26. The number of places shrank slightly from 720 to 640 over the same period, mainly due to the loss of provisions that relied on short term funding or providers relocating from North Kent into Southeast London.

Work with the DFE to increase places in the county is still ongoing. One of the measures set out in the Post-16 and Skills White Paper (Oct 2025) was the establishment of Regional Improvement Teams (RIT) to focus on quality and capacity in post-16 education. Due to the work of Pathways for All and the quality of Kent's Gap Analysis, the county has been selected as a pilot area. Pathways for All will be the main area of focus for the RIT and other workstreams are:

- Filling Gaps in Local Provision
- Addressing Standards and Outcomes in colleges through improved transition between year 12 and 13
- Work with schools to develop their Careers Education Information, Advice, and Guidance (CEIAG) offer to ensure that young people are adequately prepared to progress into post-16 learning and beyond
- Develop long term collaborative structures and increase engagement through Pathways for All and the Local Collaborative Partnership Areas

In general, focus from Central Government Agencies on performance within the Post 16 Sector appears to have increased in the last year. Towards the end of the 2025/26 Academic Year, alongside the RIT, the local Authority also received requests to produce action plans in respect of NEETs and Not Knowns.

10.1 The Post-16 Co-ordination group

As explained in the previous iteration of the KCP a group has been formed to bring together KCC Departments, including relevant SEND teams and The Education People team that support post-16 learners. The purpose of the group is to provide strategic direction and accountability for achieving KCC strategic outcomes surrounding post-16 education and surrounding projects. The group will produce a Post-16 Co-ordination Plan, bringing together all of the post-16 interdependencies to ensure they are working towards common goals.

Within the plan there are 3 key aims:

Aim 1: Ensuring that the local authority provides appropriate support and oversight to the sector by improving the internal structures, processes, partnerships and data/intelligence.

Aim 2: Working in partnership with the wider sector to ensure there is sufficient and appropriate provision for all learners including for SEND, NEET young people, EHE, CME, UASC and other lower achieving and vulnerable learners.

Aim 3: Ensuring that all young people are prepared for life/employment by making sure there are adequate and appropriate pathways:

The group's oversight will support a complement specific work that is already underway or being initiated within the Local Authority and with sector partners, such as Pathways for All and the NEETs Task Force.

10.2 Pathways for All

The work of Pathways for All, the outcome of the countywide 16-19 review, has continued to move on. The sector-lead board and the local Collaborative Partnership Areas are very aware of the situation for those transitioning onto post-16 and there has been a focus on improving this.

Due to the continuing rise in the number of NEETs it was decided to narrow the focus down to three key strategic objectives:

- Increase provision for vulnerable learners
- Support Transition into Post-16 Education
- Strengthen Collaboration between Providers, and with Employers in each LCPA

Over the course of the next year, the work of Regional Improvement Team will increasingly support Pathways for All. This should accelerate progress, but thought must be given as to how the two workstreams will work together

Notable successes in 2025/26 have been:

- An increase in the number of collaborative events in some areas for young people to explore all the post-16 options available to them.
- Collaborative approaches across education providers to support vulnerable learners in the post-16 transition. This is now expanding across the county.
- Good practice sharing; There have been several expert voices webinars on aspects of post-16 good practice such as funding and developing level 2 programmes. There is also a good practice page on Kelsi where providers can access support.
- An increase in the number of schools offering L2 programmes in their 6th forms.

Last year the LCPAs identified localised priorities, and these were set out in the previous iteration of this document. At the time of drafting this document those priorities continue to be the LCPA's focus. However, the LCPA's are currently reviewing their priorities and plans for the year ahead and amendments will be communicated to officers and Members as appropriate.

10.3 NEETs and Not Knowns

Even though the two categories of Not knowns and NEETS are intrinsically linked, different Government bodies have prompted Local Authorities to review their processes and produce actions plans on how support to both cohorts can be improved.

Due to Kent's Not Knowns being slightly in excess of 3%, KCC has produced an action plan to improve the tracking of individual young people, so that support can be targeted to them in support of them securing appropriate training or employment. At the time of drafting the action plan, Kent had already seen an improvement in the percentage of not knowns, and this is against a backdrop of increasing post 16 cohorts. The data included in the plan showed the following:

Month	Dec 25- Feb 26 NEET & Not Known	Not Known Dec 25-Feb 26	NEET Dec 25- Feb 26
December	8.9%	4.4%	4.5%
January	7.7%	2.9%	4.8%

February	7.2%	2.2%	5.0%
	8.00%	**3.20%**	**4.80%**

The key workstreams within the plan are designed to strengthen the tracking and support targeted towards the Not Known cohort. They are:

- Immediate refocus of resources to prioritise establishing contact with our current Not Known cohort.
- Intensive targeted tracking activities.
- Embed the Risk of NEET Indicator Tool and Strengthen Early Intervention
- Strengthen school engagement and use of data systems during transition periods
- Increase reach of NEET Support Service and Tracking Team to drive down Not Known young people through new approaches and technology

The Skills and Employability Service within TEP has recently been restructured and this has opened opportunities for new approaches to be employed. Some of which are already resulting in improvements.

In respect of the NEET cohort, data demonstrates that young people who become NEET face a wide range of challenges and barriers, including increasing levels of vulnerability with more needing SEN support, greater competition for the available post-16 provision due to rising cohort numbers and a reduced Level 2 offer, reductions in specialist NEET provision, and increased demand on the NEET Support Service. More than half of young people identified as NEET or Not Known now present with multiple vulnerabilities, reinforcing the need for earlier intervention and robust preventative approaches.

KCC submitted a growth case to the Department for Education requesting an additional 460 post-16 education places in Kent. Although this was approved, the funding has not yet been awarded. As a result, young people are being tracked to identify their destinations, but there are insufficient available places to support their engagement in education. This could eventually result in increased disengagement and, in turn, and increase in the number of young people recorded as Not Known.

Due to the evident increase in NEETs, the DWP wrote separately to Kent County Council and Medway Council in July 2026 requesting that a NEET task force be established following the initial findings of the Milburn report.

Given the county's existing collective efforts and joined up nature of work on skills, employment and health, a single Kent & Medway NEET Task Force has been established. This group will operate as a subgroup of the Kent & Medway Employment Task Force, the Kent Pathways for All (16-18) Strategic Board and Medway's oversight structures for Post 16 provision.

The Kent & Medway NEET Task Force (KMNTF) draws on membership from those groups and brings together experts focusing on the 16-18 cohort supported by statutory provision with key stakeholders supporting the 19-24 cohort providing an opportunity to tackle cliff edges and ensure continuity of support availability.

Strategic Links - The KMNTF will align its work to:

- The Get Kent & Medway Working Plan (Oct 25)
- The Kent & Medway Economic Framework (Mar 24)
- The Kent Pathways for All review and strategic plan
- The Medway Post 16 Action Plan
- Skills & Employability Plan for Medway
- The Kent & Medway Local Skills Improvement Plan
- The emerging Local Growth Plan
- Kent Marmot Coastal Region and Medway Marmot Place programmes

The Task Force's remit will be to:

1. Map current provision for 16-18 and 19-24 cohort, review effectiveness, identify gaps, support further alignment and coordination.
2. Create an action plan that will reference / build on and link to the existing strategies and their action plans mentioned above.
3. Consider deliverables that are achievable within the current system, programmes and delivery mechanisms
4. Identify actions that could be put in place with additional dedicated resource.
5. Seek approval from the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership and Employment Task Force, Pathways for All Strategic Board and Medway Post 16 governance structures for the plan.

The work undertaken by the Task Force will also feed into and support the aims set out in the upcoming Post 16 Co-ordination Plan.

10.4 Funding

As highlighted above, funding continues to be a significant barrier in increasing and improving post 16 provision. Kent and its partners continue to lobby Central Government for changes, but to date that has yielded little success.

The main issues are that revenue growth funding is still subject to a "lagged" approach, meaning providers do not receive full funding for an increase in learners in the Academic year that cohort starts. This can often result in significant increases being unviable for many providers. The majority of capital funding is retained centrally often with little or no clarity as to how it is distributed.

However, following a letter to the Minister for Skills Department for Work and Pensions by the 14 Leaders in Kent and Medway, the response set out the following funding plans from Government:

- Over the next three years, there will be investment of an additional £2.5 billion through the Youth Guarantee and Growth and Skills Levy to create up to 500,000 opportunities to earn and learn.
- Transformation of the apprenticeships levy into a new growth and skills levy, to support 50,000 more young people into apprenticeships over the next three years. This includes providing financial support to smaller employers who play a vital role in creating apprenticeship opportunities for young people.
- As of August 2026, the Government are fully funding apprenticeship training for employers of all sizes for eligible people aged 16-24. This includes introducing a new apprenticeship hiring payment of £2,000 for non-levy paying employers, typically SMEs, that take on 16 to 24-year-old apprentices as new employees.
- Employers hiring apprentices aged 18-24 who have been on Universal Credit for over six months are also eligible for the new £3,000 Youth Jobs Grant. These new payments are available in addition to the current £1,000 payments that employers can receive when taking on younger apprentices and the £2,000 payment for foundation apprentices and can be stacked together where the apprentice and/or employer is eligible.
- Specifically to Kent, there has been an increase in the Skills Bootcamps funding allocation for the 2026-27 financial year by c.£700,000.

Additionally, KCC has lobbied for specific capital funding to support the introduction of skills centres to support the provision of lower level or vocational courses. At the time of drafting this document, no response had been received.

11. Appendices

11.1 Forecasting Methodology Summary

To inform the process of forecasting Primary school pupil numbers, KCC receives information from the Kent Primary Care Agency to track the number of births and location of Pre-school age children. The Pre-school age population is forecast into Primary school rolls according to trend-based intake patterns by ward area. Secondary school forecasts are calculated by projecting forward the Year 6 cohort, also according to trend-based intake patterns. If the size of the Year 6 cohort is forecast to rise, the projected Year 7 cohort size at Secondary schools will also be forecast to rise.

It is recognised that past trends are not always an indication of the future. However, for the Secondary phase, travel to school patterns are firmly established, parental preference is arguably more constant than in the Primary phase and large numbers of pupils are drawn from a wide area. Consequently, forecasts have been found to be accurate.

Pupil forecasts are compared with school capacities to give the projected surplus or deficit of places in each area. It is important to note that where a deficit is identified within the next few years work will already be underway to address the situation.

The forecasting process is trend-based, which means that relative popularity, intake patterns, and inward migration factors from the previous five years are assumed to continue throughout the forecasting period. Migration factors will reflect the trend-based level of house building in an area over the previous five years, but also the general level of in and out migration, including movements into and out of existing housing. An area that has a large positive migration factor may be due to recent large-scale housebuilding, and an area with a large negative migration factor may reflect a net out-migration of families. These migration factors are calculated at Pre-school level by ward area and also at school level for transition between year groups, as the forecasts are progressed.

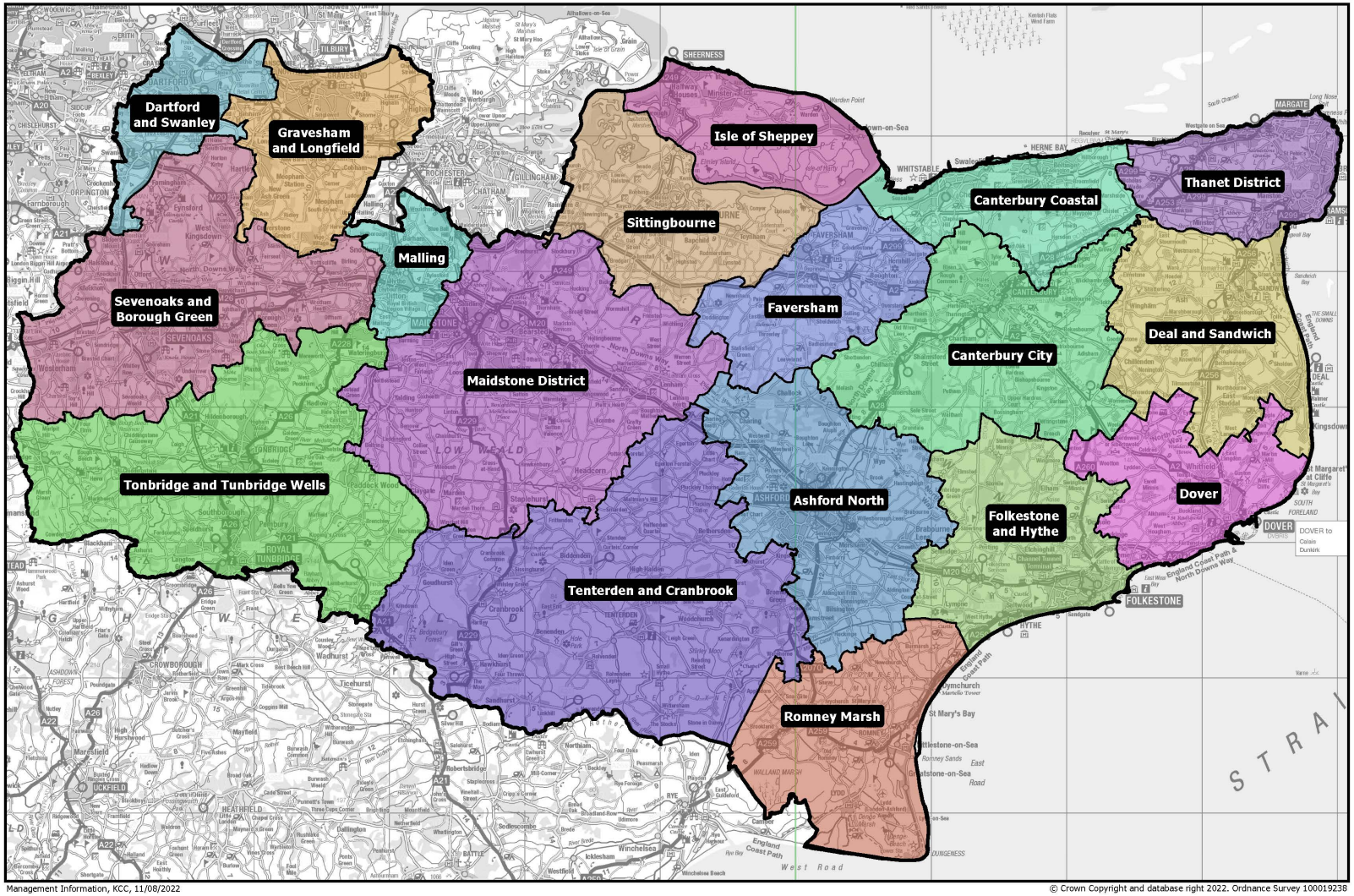
Information about expected levels of new housing, through the yearly Housing Information Audits (HIA) and Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategies is the most accurate reflection of short, medium and long term building projects at the local level. Where a large development is expected, compared with little or no previous house building in the area, a manual adjustment to the forecasts may be required to reflect the likely growth in pupil numbers more accurately.

Pupil product rates (the expected number of pupils from new housebuilding) are informed by the MORI New Build Survey 2005. KCC has developed a system that combines these new-build pupil product rates (PPRs) with the stock housing PPR of the local area to model the impact of new housing developments together with changing local demographics over time. This information is shared with district authorities to inform longer term requirements for education infrastructure and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) discussions at an early stage.

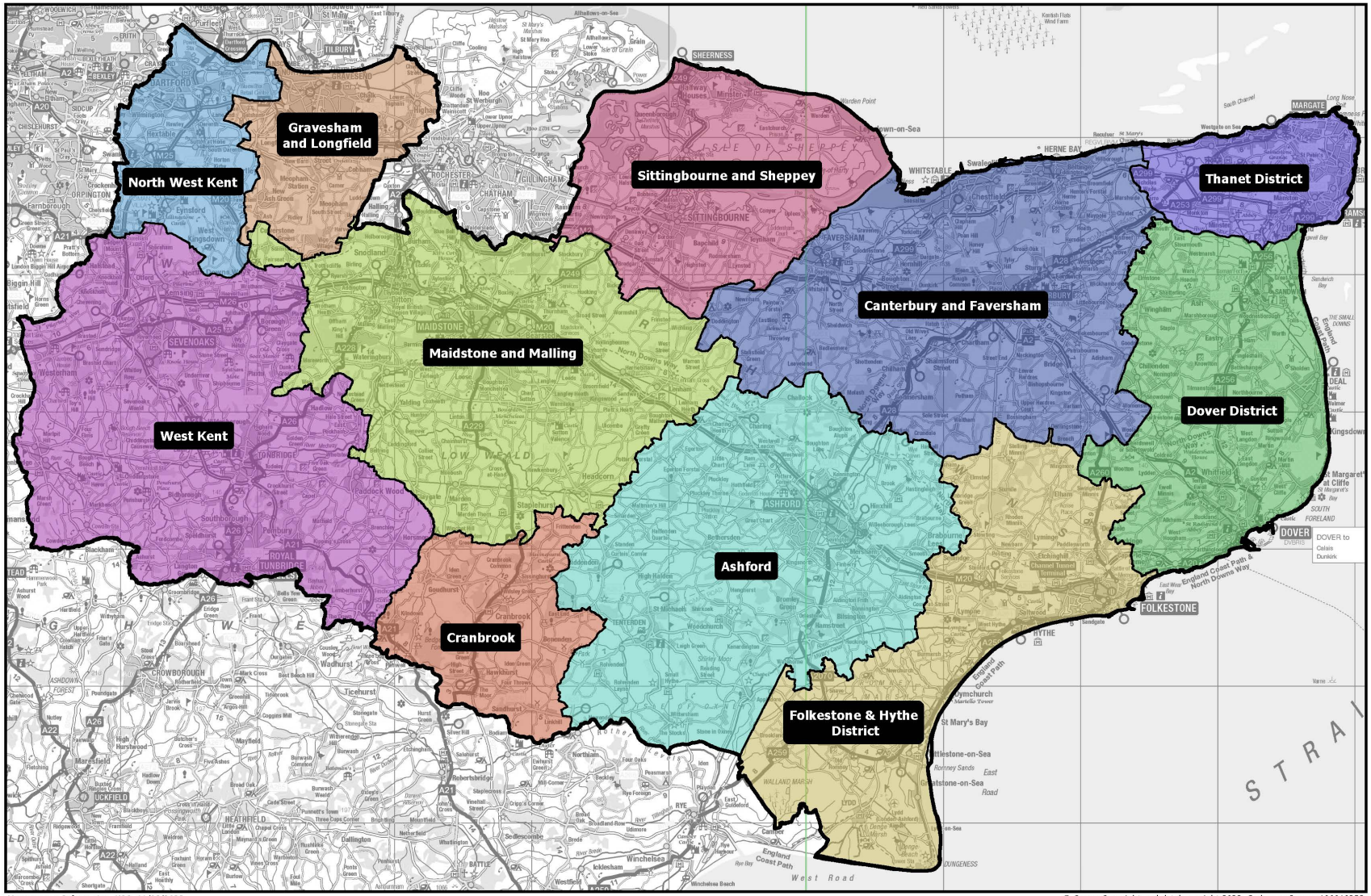
Forecasting future demand for school places can never be completely precise given the broad assumptions which have to be made about movements in and out of any given locality, the pace of individual housing developments, patterns of occupation and not least parental preferences for places at individual schools. This will be a function of geography, school reputation, past and present achievement levels and the availability of alternative provision.

11.2 Secondary Planning Group Maps

Kent Secondary Non Selective Planning Groups



Kent Secondary Selective Planning Groups



Management Information, KCC, 11/08/2022

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11.3 SEND Sufficiency Plan Annual Review

See SEND Sufficiency Plan in separately appended document.

If you need information in an alternative format, such as braille or a language other than English:

Email: alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk

Call: 03000 421 553



Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2027 - 2031

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The SEND Sufficiency Plan

Introduction

The SEND Sufficiency Plan 2026 sets out how Kent County Council (KCC) will plan and commission sufficient, high-quality education provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), particularly those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The plan responds to continuing growth in the number of children and young people with EHCPs and increasing complexity of need. It identifies the provision Kent is likely to need in the coming years and informs decisions about the development and commissioning of mainstream and specialist provision across the county. This reflects KCC's statutory responsibility to secure sufficient school places, including provision for children and young people with SEND.

The foundation underpinning the plan is a commitment to **earlier support and greater inclusion**. Over the period of the plan, KCC and its partners aim to strengthen support for children with SEND at the earliest opportunity, enabling more children and young people to have their needs met successfully in mainstream education within their local communities, while ensuring specialist provision is available for those who need it.

The Plan’s ultimate purpose is to ensure that the right provision is available in **the right place and at the right time**, improving outcomes for children and young people while making best use of the resources available.

1.0 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Kent

KCC's ambition is that every child and young person should have access to high-quality education and the opportunity to achieve and thrive.

A strategy for education in Kent 2025–2030 sets out three qualities at the heart of KCC's vision for education: **ambition, curiosity and resilience**. These apply to all children and young people.

Kent's SEND Strategy sets out the local area's approach to developing an inclusive education system and meeting its responsibilities to children and young people with SEND. The SEND Sufficiency Plan supports these ambitions by translating them into decisions about the type, number and location of education places Kent will need.

Demand for SEND support has grown significantly. Autism is a particularly important factor in planning future provision: **10,648 children and young people with EHCPs in Kent have autism recorded as their primary need, representing 49% of the total**.

Kent's approach seeks to strengthen the ability of mainstream schools to meet a wider range of needs. This includes consistent implementation of the Mainstream Core Standards and programmes such as Partnerships for the Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS), which supports inclusive practice for neurodivergent children. KCC’s Mainstream Core Standards set out what schools must do to support children and young people with SEND.

Kent has made progress in improving SEND services since the previous SEND inspection. The 2026 Ofsted and Care Quality Commission inspection recognised improvements,

including in newer EHCPs, inclusive support in schools, partnership working and earlier help. However, inspectors also identified continuing inconsistencies in children's and families' experiences across the county.

There is also more to be done to create an effective sustainable system. KCC is seeking to do so through its Local Area Strategic Plan and the Government's High Needs Stability Grant arrangements.

This Sufficiency Plan forms part of this wider programme of improvement. Its particular role is to ensure that **the pattern of education provision develops in response to the needs of Kent's children and young people**.

1.1 Strategic Context in Kent

The SEND Sufficiency Plan has been developed during a period of proposed significant national change. In February 2026, the Government published the White Paper *Every Child Achieving and Thriving*, setting out proposed reforms to the school and SEND systems in England. The proposals place increased emphasis on earlier support, inclusive mainstream education and access to specialist expertise.

The proposed model starts with a universal offer of support across all schools, with high-quality adaptive teaching, calm environments and early help when needed. Most children will have their needs met through this offer. Additional support would then be provided through targeted, targeted-plus and specialist levels according to the needs of the child or young person. The Government has also proposed Individual Support Plans and changes to arrangements for children requiring specialist provision and EHCPs. Kent's approach aligns closely with these reforms and seeks to create a more inclusive and sustainable SEND system.

Our Local Area Strategic Plan sets the strategic priorities which the SEND Sufficiency Plan responds to:

Strategic Priority 1: Strengthen Inclusive Mainstream Education

Increase the capacity of mainstream schools to meet SEND needs through high-quality adaptive teaching, earlier intervention, and consistent implementation of Kent's Mainstream Core Standards to enable more children and young people to access support within their local community in mainstream settings.

Strategic Priority 2: Expand Local Specialist Provision

Deliver significant growth in specialist provision through investment in Special Resource Provisions (SRPs), maintained special schools and post-16 capacity. This includes hundreds of additional specialist places across Kent.

Strategic Priority 3: Improve Pathways to Adulthood

Develop a more coherent post-16 system through the Pathways for All programme, expanding access to further education, supported internships, employment pathways and independent living opportunities.

Strategic Priority 4: Create a Sustainable SEND System

Use forecasting, commissioning and service redesign to ensure resources are targeted effectively, improve value for money, reduce dependency on independent provision and support long-term financial sustainability while maintaining positive outcomes for children and families.

Together, these priorities provide the framework for the analysis and commissioning intentions set out in the remainder of this plan.

1.2 Delivery of Additional SEND Provision

During the academic year of 2025-26 we have delivered additional special educational provision as outlined in the previous SEND Sufficiency Plan and in The Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026-30. The following sections give further detail.

1.2.1 Special School Expansion

We indicated that for September 2026 three special school expansions would take place, adding 162 places in 2026/27. Figure 1 sets out the progress of these schemes:

Figure 1a: Special School Expansion

School	SEN Type	Category	Number of New Places	Number of Filled New Places
Broomhill Bank School	C&I	Expansion	112	42
Aspire Primary	C&I	Satellite	0	0
Meadowfield	PSCN	6th Form Expansion	0	0
Total			**112**	**42**

The expansion of the North Site at Broomhill Bank School has experienced delays arising from highway infrastructure requirements, including the provision of additional drop-off and parking facilities. Resolution of these matters is being prioritised to facilitate delivery of the planned expansion.

The proposals for Aspire and Meadowfield were delayed to enable alignment with the wider sector conversations about accommodation pressures. This was to ensure parity across the County.

Two new special schools are to be built by the Department for Education (Swanley and Whitstable) with a delivery date of September 2028. These are likely to be delayed.

Two in-year capital projects had to be delivered to address pressures. Spaces in the Rainbow MASH (Ashford) have been used temporarily to increase capacity at Wyvern School to enable students to remain in the school for 6th form provision. Foreland Fields School was provided with 3 additional classrooms.

1.2.2 Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) Expansion

The expansion of local Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) will improve access to specialist support within communities, strengthen inclusive education, and contribute to the long-term goal of reducing reliance on high-cost independent and non-maintained special school placements. All new SRPs have been designated for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), reflecting the most prevalent primary needs identified in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

At its meeting of 8 November 2025, the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee endorsed a proposal to significantly increase specialist resource base provision (SRP) in the County. The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills subsequently approved £20m to deliver the proposed schemes which together would deliver 889 additional places if all implemented.

As at September 2026 six new SRPs have opened, two existing SRPs have been expanded and one informal provision has been formally designated as an SRP. Together these schemes have added 98 places for September 2026 of which at the start of term 99 have been filled.

Figure 1b: Progress of New SRPs from Table 8c to 8f, (KCP 2026-30)

School	Category	Number of New Places	Number of Filled Places
Ashford Oaks Primary	Expansion	10	10
Dover Christchurch Academy	Expansion	35	35
Homewood School and 6th Form	New	10	9
Lansdowne Primary	New	11	11
Richmond Primary	New	12	14
St Edmund's Catholic	New	7	7
St Edmund's CoE	New	7	9
The Downs Primary	New	6	4
The Turner Free School*	Formalisation	0	0
Total		**98**	**99**

* The Turner Free School: 30 informal places are now formal SRP places; this legally add 30 places to add to the total of new places

The programme to deliver additional SRP places continues. Further new SRPs will open in September 2027 and September 2028. Each year further places will be opened in these SRPs as we phase new admissions over three years. It is important that the new SRPs deliver high-quality provision from day one. It is also important that new provision can grow sustainably, ensuring that the whole school culture adapts to having an SRP, and that parental confidence in the provision is strong. Some proposed projects cannot proceed and alternatives are being sought. The revised list of schemes reduces the total number of potential SRP places from 889 to 821, but numbers continue to be discussed with schools.

During the course of this year, it became evident that due to the falling roll at Langafel CEP School, the current size of its SRP (40 pupils) was disproportionate and risked destabilising the school. As part of the regular commissioning arrangements an Officer decision (with Cabinet Member support) was made to increase capacity at an alternative setting, Temple Hill PS, to enable provision at Langafel to be scaled back over time, with the aim of reducing to 15 places. Temple Hill is being expanded by 30 places, at a cost of £418,000 (capital and revenue) which is outside of the £20m agreed envelope, but within the schemes of delegation for the relevant officers.

The VI designation at Reculver Primary School has been removed following the statutory process to broaden their designation for ASD/SLCN and increase capacity from 15 to 20 pupil places. The VI designation at Morehall School is in the process of being removed.

2.0 Educational Health Care Plans

2.1 England vs Kent

Nationally the number of Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) has increased annually since their introduction in 2014. The challenges this has placed on the SEND system across England, its sustainability, and the consequential impact on families are well documented.

EHCP growth in Kent remains below the national rate in 2025/26, increasing by 5% compared with 13% in England. Kent now accounts for 3.02% of England's EHCPs, down from 3.23% in 2024/25.

- Whilst Kent's EHCP rate remains higher than the national average, for the 2-18 years population the gap has continued to narrow **(6.36% Kent; 6.14% England)**

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- Autism spectrum disorder accounts for almost half of all EHCPs in Kent and continues to increase whilst remaining unchanged nationally **(49% Kent; 32% England)**

- Compared with England, Kent has a lower proportion of EHCP requests assessed **(47% Kent; 65% England)** and a lower proportion of assessments resulting in an EHCP **(78% Kent; 94% England).**

2.2 Age Breakdown

The majority of children and young people with an EHCP in Kent and England are those of statutory school age and post-16 young people (Figure 2.a). Kent has a smaller percentage of children aged 5-10 years with an EHCP than national, but a higher proportion in the 11-15 year old group.

Figure 2a: EHCP Numbers by Age in Kent versus England 2026

Age Group	Kent: Number of EHCPs	Kent %	England %
Early Years	634	3%	4%
Age 5-10	6,726	31%	34%
Age 11-15	8,575	39%	36%
Age 16-19	4,592	21%	20%
Age 20+	1,215	6%	5%
Total	**21,742**		

Source: DfE published figures which differ slightly from SEN2 return 2026

Growth in EHCPs was higher nationally than in Kent across almost all age groups in 2024/25. Figure 2b presents the year-on-year change in numbers, showing the difference between the 2024/25 and 2025/26 academic years.

For year on year change, those aged 20 and over were the only age group where Kent's EHCP growth exceeded the national rate, increasing by 443 additional EHCPs **(57% Kent; 6% England).** We will continue to cease EHCPs for this age group where they are no longer required, e.g. the young person is attending university. We are going to see more young people in the older groups as the bulge from a few years ago continues to age up.

Kent also experienced declines in EHCP numbers among children aged 0-4 and young people aged 16-19, while all other groups recorded an increase.

Figure 2b: EHCP Year on Year Growth by Age Group

Age Group	Percentage Change Year on Year 2024/25
0-4	-5%
5-10	+5%
11-15	+5%
16-19	-1%
20+	+57%

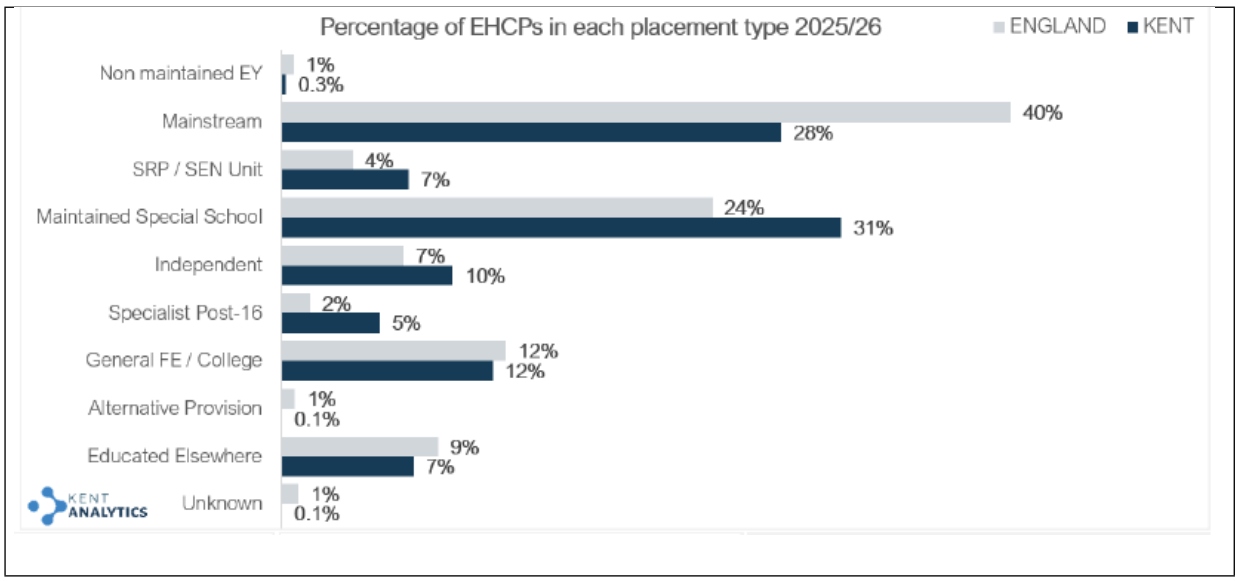
2.3 Placement Type

Kent's continuum of education provision includes mainstream schools and academies, mainstream schools and academies with SRPs, special schools and alternative provisions. We also commission places in independent and non-maintained schools.

In 2025/26 Kent had (Figure 2.c):

- a lower proportion of children and young people with an EHCP attending mainstream schools than England **(28% Kent; 40% England);**
- a higher proportion in SRP/SEN units **(7% Kent; 4% England);**
- a higher proportion attending maintained special schools than England **(31% Kent; 24% England).** Kent has maintained a consistent proportion of children and young people in maintained special schools, whilst England has reported a year-on- year decrease; and
- the proportion of new EHCPs specifying a maintained special school in Kent is more than three times the national rate **(17% Kent; England 5%).** Kent also reports a higher proportion of new EHCPs specifying an independent school **(6.3% Kent; 3.7% England),** although this remains below the level reported between 2019 and 2021.

Figure 2c: Percentage of EHCPs in Each Placement Type 2025/26



2.4 SEN Type

In 2025/26 (Figure 2d) Kent had a higher proportion of children and young people than the England average with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) **(49% Kent; 32% England)** and a lower proportion with moderate learning difficulties **(5% Kent; 10% England).**

Figure 2d: EHCP Distribution by Need Type 2025/26

SEN Type	Total EHCP Number	Kent %	England %
ASD	10,629	49%	32%
SEMH	3,906	18%	21%
SLCN	3,645	17%	22%
MLD	1,012	5%	10%
SLD	778	4%	3%
PD	659	3%	4%
SPLD	367	2%	3%
PMLD	365	2%	1%
HI	202	1%	1%
VI	96	>1%	>1%

What does this mean for pupil place planning – The impact of the differences in EHCP placement types in Kent is significant for families, schools, the local authority and the taxpayer. This position is unsustainable. It means too much of a finite resource is spent on too few, to the detriment of the many.

We will support parents to have confidence in the mainstream offer so that Kent moves closer to national averages for children with an EHCP attending a mainstream school. Children and young people will be educated closer to home for Kent finalised placements. This is particularly important for those with high incident primary needs of ASD, SLCN and SEMH.

The primary to secondary school transfer stage is critical - ensuring there is the right provision, both in terms of the quality SEND support offered by secondary schools and pathways to maintained specialist provision for those who need it.

Our Pathways for All programme was developed to bring together colleges, schools and specialist providers to develop more inclusive post-16 opportunities. Pressure for places will build in the post-16 space and it will be necessary to increase provision capacity to resolve this.

3.0 EHCP Forecast and Current Provision

To support our future SEND commissioning intentions, Kent produces an EHCP Forecast. Based on historical data about how children of certain ages and SEN types move between placement types over time, it estimates the number of children and young people with an EHCP and what type of setting they might be placed in for the future. It factors in newly

issued EHCPs, which are driven by population, and also EHCPs being ceased. Policy assumptions aligned to the Local Area Strategic Plan have been applied to the EHCP Forecast in order to inform future commissioning in line with policy direction.

3.1 EHCP Forecast for Age Groups

Our Forecast produced last year (2025) assumed that EHCPs in Kent would increase by 3% (from 20,635 to 21,270) during the course of the year. Actual data shows the increase was 5% in Kent (21,750). Although this is higher than forecast, it compares favourably with the higher national increase of 13%. This indicates that efforts to bring control to the system are working, but our assumptions were ambitious and optimistic. The assumption moving forward is that the number of EHCPs in Kent will continue to increase at a steady rate and that our forecasts are robust.

There is a risk that ongoing uncertainty regarding future SEND reforms may influence system behaviour including increased requests for statutory assessment and EHCP as families and educational settings seek to secure existing entitlements ahead of potential legislative change. Such behavioural responses could place additional pressure on already constrained statutory services.

Figure 3a: EHCP Forecast by Age Range

Age Group	2026 EHCP Actuals	EHCP Forecast				
		2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Early Years	54	49	49	49	49	48
Years R-6	7,308	7,557	7,493	7,327	6,991	6,495
Years 7-11	8,575	8,819	8,852	8,815	8,914	9,151
Years 12-13	2,981	3,355	3,622	3,805	3,794	3,752
Years 14+	3,015	3,015	3,249	3,456	3,669	3,834
Total	**21,750**	**22,795**	**23,265**	**23,451**	**23,416**	**23,280**

Figure 3a is the forecast by age range. It indicates that the number of children and young people with an EHCP will increase from 21,750 in 2026 to 23,280 by 2031, reaching a peak of 23,451 in 2029. While overall demand continues to grow, the pattern varies significantly by age phase. The number of pupils with EHCPs in primary-age provision (Years R-6) is forecast to decline after a short-term increase, reducing from 7,308 in 2026 to 6,495 by 2031, reflecting falling primary pupil populations. In contrast, demand in secondary-age provision (Years 7-11) is expected to rise steadily from 8,575 to 9,151, making this the largest cohort throughout the period.

The most significant growth is forecast in post-16 provision. EHCPs for young people in Years 12-13 are projected to increase by 26% between 2026 and 2031 (from 2,981 to 3,752), while the number aged 14+ is expected to grow by 27% (from 3,015 to 3,834). Combined, post-16 cohorts will increase from 5,996 to 7,586, accounting for almost all net growth across the forecast period. This reflects the continuing trend of young people remaining in education and training for longer and highlights the increasing need for additional post-16 SEND capacity, specialist provision, and preparation for adulthood pathways.

3.2 EHCP Forecasts for Need Type

Figure 3b: EHCP Forecast by Need Type

Need Type	2026 EHCP Actuals	EHCP Forecast				
		2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
ASD	10,649	11,240	11,553	11,709	11,751	11,742
SEMH	3,926	4,059	4,062	4,002	3,914	3,787
SLCN	3,649	3,927	4,117	4,261	4,341	4,406
MLD/SPLD	1,380	1,420	1,410	1,400	1,369	1,341
SLD/PMLD	1,144	1,115	1,072	1,029	990	953
Other	1,002	1,034	1,050	1,051	1,052	1,051
Total	**21,750**	**22,795**	**23,265**	**23,451**	**23,416**	**23,280**

The forecast (Figure 3b) shows that future demand will continue to be driven by pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN). ASD is projected to increase from 10,649 pupils in 2026 to 11,742 by 2031, remaining the largest area of need. SEMH remains a high incident need but is forecast to remain stable in numerical terms.

For place planning, this highlights the need to continue developing the skills of practitioners in mainstream settings and the physical environments of these schools to meet the needs of pupils with ASD, SLCN and SEMH, with high-quality support services wrapped around them to cater for those with higher levels of need. Specialist Resource Provisions (SRPs) and maintained special schools will continue to play a vital role for those with the most complex needs.

3.3 Early Years (EY)

Policy assumptions influencing our forecasting and commissioning intentions relating to EHCPs and Early Years provision

The Government's Best Start in Life Strategy[1] (2025) sets a national expectation that by 2028, at least 75% of children will achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD) at age five. Helping children feel ready for school is a team effort including everything parents do at home, alongside the care and learning received in childcare and early years education.

Locally, Kent's approach to early childhood and readiness to start Reception aligns with the DfE's Universal RISE (Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence) framework, which identifies Reception-year quality as one of the national priorities for driving improved outcomes.

KCC's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment[2] identifies where further Early Years provision may be needed. Currently provision in Kent is predominantly delivered by the Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector/settings.

The expectation is that such provisions will be inclusive and accessible to all young children, regardless of their SEND and promote equality of opportunity as set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) so that these children can make progress.

It is important that any necessary special educational provision is put in quickly, as any delay may lead to lost learning, frustration in learning, behaviour difficulties and loss of self-

[1] Best Start in Life - Best Start in Life
[2] Childcare Sufficiency Assessment - 2025-2026 Academic Year

esteem. Our revised model of support for early years has a clearly defined offer at universal, targeted and specialist levels. It will upskill and build confidence with Early Years educators in relation to SEND, improving outcomes for young children and enabling earlier identification to the benefit of all vulnerable children, not only those with SEND. Support for a more consistent implementation of universal strategies is being provided to mainstream settings through a coaching and mentoring model.

Children with complex needs will often have many agencies involved with their care and their education journey. In Kent the Early Years Professional Resource Group (EY PRG) ensures that Early Years providers, children and their families, have access to a bespoke offer to meet their needs during the Early Years phase of their education from a range of professionals and services.

The expectation, for the vast majority of cases, is that before making an EY PRG request there will be robust evidence of how Starting Strong[3] guidance, designed to support all early year's providers in developing their Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP), has been implemented within the setting to evidence impact for all children.

The Special Education Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) is provided by local authorities to early years providers, childminders, and some out of school settings to support pre-school children with special educational needs.

The Disability Access Fund (DAF) aids access to early years places by, for example, supporting providers in making reasonable adjustments to their provision and has been extended to include all eligible nine month, two, three and four year olds.

Figure 3c: EHCP Forecast for Early Years Settings

Age Group	2026 EHCP Actuals	EHCP Forecast				
		2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
EY	45	39	38	39	39	38
Year R	15	12	10	10	10	10
Total	**60**	**51**	**49**	**49**	**49**	**49**

The number of pupils with EHCPs in early years settings and Year R is forecast to reduce in 2027 then remain stable for the remainder of the forecast period (Figure 3c). This reduction reflects the assumptions set out above.

What this means for pupil place planning – It is expected that more children with additional needs will transition successfully into mainstream Reception classes, reducing demand for some specialist placements.

Building parental confidence in the mainstream offer will be key to supporting these transitions and ensuring families feel assured that appropriate support can be provided within local schools. However, mainstream schools may see increasingly complex needs within Reception cohorts and will require strong inclusive practice, effective support, and robust transition arrangements to achieve positive outcomes for all children.

[3] Early Years Ordinarily Available Provision

3.4 Mainstream Provision

Policy assumptions influencing our forecasting and commissioning intentions relating to EHCPs and mainstream provision

As of January 2026, Kent has 129,331 pupils in 459 primary schools. There are 114,706 pupils in 104 secondary schools. A total of 244,037 pupils attend 563 state funded schools.

Kent has a lower proportion of children and young people with an EHCP attending mainstream schools, not including SRPs, than England (**28% Kent; 40% England**). This position is unsustainable. Kent has to move towards the national average. If Kent was at national average 2,610 more children with EHCPs would be in mainstream schools. Numerically this equates to the number of children Kent places in independent and non-maintained special schools at a cost of c£130m per annum plus transport costs.

The policy assumption is that with inclusive support a significantly greater proportion of children with an EHCP can and should be educated in a mainstream provision near to their home, local community and friends.

Ordinarily Available Provision: All primary and secondary mainstream schools and academies are expected to deliver a graduated response to pupils with SEND, either as SEN Support or with an EHCP. This is supported by our Mainstream Core Standards. This also includes access to universal health services, and targeted individual support from therapeutic services including Speech and Language, Occupational Health and Mental Health Services, e.g. PINS and the Balanced System.

In general, accessibility is about making sure a person is not excluded from something because of their disability. It is about removing barriers so that someone with a disability can do what they need to, in a similar amount of time and effort as someone who does not have a disability. The Accessibility Strategy[4] sets out how Kent County Council and its maintained schools currently ensure education is accessible for pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), and what steps will be taken to further improve accessibility in the three areas; curriculum, premises and information.

Many aspects of the Accessibility Strategy apply equally to academies and free schools, for example, access to certain local authority services and the expectations on schools. Whilst legally the local authority is not responsible for these schools, we work closely with them and their trusts to ensure that the needs of all pupils are supported.

The proposed national changes for SEND reforms aim to create a more inclusive education system by enabling more children and young people with additional needs to attend their local mainstream school while accessing targeted support. A key element of this approach is the development of inclusion bases within mainstream settings, including both support and specialist bases, to provide flexible provision for pupils with SEND and those requiring behavioural, pastoral or attendance-related support. These bases will strengthen the continuum of provision available, allowing a wider range of needs to be met within mainstream schools. By increasing capacity and expertise, promoting earlier intervention, and enabling children to remain connected to their local communities and peers, inclusion bases are expected to improve participation, outcomes and inclusion, while reducing reliance on specialist placements where needs can be effectively met in a mainstream environment.

[4] Accessibility Strategy 2025 to 2028

The Experts at Hand (EAH) offer supports mainstream early years, primary, secondary and post-16 settings to better identify and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. Delivered through local partnerships, it provides access to specialist professionals who help identify needs earlier through observation, assessment and tailored, evidence-based support. The offer complements, but does not replace, statutory provision set out in an EHCP. By embedding expertise from speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, occupational therapists and specialist teachers within mainstream settings, EAH will strengthen workforce confidence and capability, support earlier intervention, and help ensure that children and young people receive timely support within their everyday learning environment.

Figure 3d: EHCP Forecast for Mainstream Places

Age Group	2026 EHCP Actuals	EHCP Forecast				
		2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Early Years	6	7	7	7	7	7
Years R-6	3,267	3,320	3,176	3,081	2,936	2,763
Years 7-11	2,475	2,441	2,334	2,249	2,286	2,348
Years 12-13	202	242	256	269	260	254
Years 14+	19	16	21	23	24	26
Total	**5,969**	**6,027**	**5,794**	**5,628**	**5,513**	**5,396**

Figure 3d shows that the number of pupils with EHCPs in mainstream provision is forecast to increase slightly from 5,969 in 2026 to 6,027 in 2027, before gradually declining to 5,396 by 2031. This reduction is primarily driven by falling numbers in Years R-6 and to a lesser degree in Years 7-11, although post-16 numbers are expected to increase slightly.

While this may appear to conflict with Kent's ambition to increase mainstream attendance for pupils with SEND, the trend is largely explained by demographic factors and the movement of historically larger EHCP cohorts through the education system. The forecast also reflects the expected impact of SEND reforms, which aim to support more children and young people within mainstream schools at SEN Support level rather than through an EHCP. As a result, a reduction in the number of pupils with EHCPs in mainstream schools does not necessarily indicate a reduction in inclusion. Instead, it may reflect greater success in meeting needs earlier and without the need for statutory plans.

For place planning, this reinforces the need to continue investing in inclusive mainstream practice and support services, while recognising that future inclusion may increasingly be demonstrated through higher levels of effective SEN Support rather than growth in EHCP numbers within mainstream schools.

What does this mean for pupil place planning - responding to national policy developments and building parental confidence in mainstream education will be key considerations for future planning.

Continued investment in mainstream inclusion and early intervention, supported through the DfE High Needs Provision Capital Allocation, will improve the accessibility of schools and learning environments. This funding will enable adaptations to buildings and facilities, increasing schools' capacity to meet a wider range of physical, sensory and communication needs.

By strengthening schools' ability to provide appropriate support locally, more children and young people with SEND will be able to access and succeed in mainstream education within their community. This will help reduce reliance on special school provision where children's needs can be effectively met in a mainstream setting.

3.5 Special Resource Provisions (SRPs)

Policy assumptions influencing our forecasting and commissioning intentions relating to EHCPs and SRPs

A Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) provides support for those pupils who, without specialist input, are unlikely to make progress in their learning and will struggle to take part in mainstream school life, but for whom a Special School is not the most appropriate provision. SRPs support children to attend mainstream provision and take part in the mainstream curriculum and wider offer with others where appropriate. In 2026, Kent has 80 SRPs in 72 maintained and academy trust schools.

In November 2025, KCC agreed an SRP expansion programme focused on addressing areas of identified need (type) and geographical gaps in capacity, particularly to support the transition of pupils with ASD and SLCN from primary education into Year 7. The programme planned to:

- create 32 new SRPs
- expand 4 existing SRPs
- deliver an additional 889 pre-16 specialist places over the five-year period to 2030.

Recognising the pressure of the autism cohort our new provision designations support pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN). This will help more children and young people access appropriate specialist support in their local area. This aligns with the national inclusion proposals for mainstream schools.

We do not have SRPs designated for SEMH places and it is not our intention to commission these in the future. VI places are not commissioned in our SRPs; however, Kent has a countywide specialist service which supports children with SEN for VI, HI and PD in their local mainstream school.

For 2026-27 a total of 1,706 SRP places have been commissioned for children and young people with an EHCP (Figure 3e). This is an increase of 155 places from 2025-26. Kent have 20 post-16 places commissioned for ASD/SLCN. It is our intention that this remains an exceptional circumstances offer agreed in line with our placement decision making process. SRPs are considered an SEN intervention and students attending these will ordinarily be expected to progress to a post-16 provision that is appropriate to their needs and aspirations for the next phase of their education.

Figure 3.e: Commissioned Places by Phase and District for 2026-27

District	Primary Phase	Secondary Phase	Total Places
Ashford	66	40	106
Canterbury	79	134	213
Dartford	132	88	220
Dover	198	101	299
Folkestone & Hythe	67	62	129
Gravesham	40	29	69
Maidstone	40	14	54
Sevenoaks	27	12	39
Swale	97	122	219
Thanet	91	2	93
Tonbridge & Malling	97	152	249
Tunbridge Wells	7	9	16
Total	**941**	**765**	**1,706**

The districts with the lowest number of commissioned SRP places are in Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks and Maidstone. We currently commission more primary SRP places overall. This covers 7-year groups in primary schools compared to 5-year groups in secondary schools. Dover currently has two primary SRPs. One is a new provision that is building capacity through a phased implementation model, while the other has a substantially higher number of places than is typical for primary SRPs, influencing the overall distribution of specialist capacity within the district.

Tonbridge & Malling has four secondary SRPs. While three provisions are comparable in scale to the county average, one operates at a substantially larger capacity, contributing a significant proportion of the district's specialist secondary provision.

Figure 3f: EHCP Forecast SRPs by Age Range

Age Group	2026 EHCP Actuals	EHCP Forecast				
		2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Early Years	0	0	0	0	0	0
Years R-6	822	937	1,087	1,188	1,227	1,237
Years 7-11	655	723	873	1,019	1,128	1,139
Years 12-13	49	54	57	58	63	72
Years 14+*	5	4	4	5	5	5
Total	**1,531**	**1,718**	**2,021**	**2,269**	**2,423**	**2,453**

* Year 14+ young people are included in EHCP forecasts but excluded from school placement totals, as they are no longer on roll in educational settings.

Figure 3g: EHCP Forecast SRP by Need Type

Age Group	2026 EHCP Actuals	EHCP Forecast				
		2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
ASD	922	1,099	1,367	1,585	1,711	1,743
SEMH	51	51	46	44	42	40
SLCN	345	368	419	465	502	509
MLD/SPLD	50	45	44	41	38	39
SLD/PMLD	39	37	31	28	24	19
Other	124	117	114	108	106	103
Total	**1,531**	**1,718**	**2,021**	**2,269**	**2,423**	**2,453**

The forecasts (Figures 3f) indicate a significant increase in the number of children and young people, both primary and secondary school aged, requiring an SRP place.

ASD and SLCN pupil numbers in SRPs over time are forecast to increase (Figure 3g). The group categorised as Other, which includes HI and PD, is forecast to decrease along with the numbers of SLD/PMLD and MLD/SPLD. We do not intend to open SRPs for SEMH but there are pupils with this SEN successfully attending our SRPs.

What does this mean for pupil place planning – The plans to add 899 SRP places will address a significant proportion of the forecasted increase in demand. This will reduce reliance on high-cost independent specialist placements.

Future planning will prioritise districts where capacity gaps have been identified, particularly to support the transition of pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) from Year 6 into Year 7. These cohorts represent a significant proportion of demand and are not forecast to decrease in size.

The greatest pressure for secondary phase provisions are currently evident in Thanet and Tunbridge Wells. To address this, two new secondary SRPs are planned in Thanet and one in Tunbridge Wells. Additional pressure is also evident in Maidstone, where plans include the expansion of an existing SRP and the development of a new provision. In Sevenoaks, a new secondary SRP is planned. Additional SRP capacity in Gravesham is being developed as part of a Department for Education school rebuilding programme. Given the potential for delays associated with major capital projects, planned expansions in the neighbouring district of Dartford will also contribute to meeting anticipated demand across the wider area.

Although primary SRP provision is generally more available, further expansion is required in some areas to meet projected demand. Three new primary SRPs are planned in Tunbridge Wells and two in Sevenoaks.

These developments will play a key role in ensuring sufficient specialist capacity is available to meet future demand and improve local access to provision. Further details are provided in Tables 5b to 5e.

3.6 Maintained Special School Provision

Policy assumptions influencing our forecasting and commissioning intentions relating to EHCPs and maintained special school provision

There are currently 25 maintained special schools in Kent. The majority of these (21 schools) offer places for pupils in both primary and secondary school phases.

In December 2025, the Department of Education (DfE) confirmed a £3bn investment to improve special educational needs (SEN) provision across England. This included previously agreed plans for two new special schools in Kent, the Leigh Academy Birchwood in Swanley and the Whitstable Special School. Both of these new special schools were anticipated to open in September 2025 but have been delayed until at least September 2028 because of DfE decision making. This has led to a continued dependence on high-cost placements in the independent special school sector.

KCC continues to work with its maintained special schools to provide the support to enable them to provide for the needs of children with the most complex needs.

Our policy assumptions are informed by the following information:

1. **6,717 (31%)** of children and young people are in Kent maintained special schools.
2. The percentage of children and young people in England in maintained special schools is 24%.
3. Kent should move towards the national averages for maintained special schools.
4. This indicates that with the expansions contained in the previous iteration of this plan and the two new special schools, Kent's maintained special school sector is the right size to provide for all the county's needs.

KCC continues to work with its maintained special schools to provide the support and funding to enable these to provide for the needs of the most complex children and young people with SEN.

Figure 3h: EHCP Forecast for Maintained Special Schools by Age Group

Age Group	2026 EHCP Actuals	EHCP Forecast				
		2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Early Years	0	0	0	0	0	0
Years R-6	2,542	2,581	2,542	2,447	2,324	2,095
Years 7-11	3,341	3,477	3,543	3,606	3,744	3,974
Years 12-13	631	707	734	766	801	818
Years 14+	203	172	206	212	216	233
Total	**6,717**	**6,936**	**7,025**	**7,031**	**7,085**	**7,119**

The forecast indicates an increase in the number of maintained special school places in line with the delivery of the two new special schools (Figure 3h). The pupil numbers will increase for secondary phase and post-16. Overtime we forecast a decrease in the primary phase of pupils attending maintained special schools.

What does this mean for pupil place planning – Maintained special schools will see an increase proportionally for the secondary and post-16 cohort as we move towards national averages for maintained special school attendance.

Over time the profile of pupils in individual maintained special schools will change to reflect the changing demographic needs as set out above. We expect system realignment to ensure that these schools are supporting those pupils with an EHCP and the most complex needs.

The proposed two new special schools will provide the capacity required to meet the forecast increased need. With this capacity included, we are looking to hold maintained special school numbers broadly static.

3.7 Independent and Non-Maintained Schools (INMSS)

Policy assumptions influencing our forecasting and commissioning intentions relating to EHCPs and independent and non-maintained special school provision

Where we are unable to provide specialist provision in a Kent maintained special school or SRP, specialist placements are commissioned in the independent and non-maintained sector. As of January 2026, there were 2,068 Kent resident pupils funded for an INMSS place. This represents 10% of all Kent EHCP and an increase of 296 places (16%) from

January 2025/26. Our policy assumption is that we will move towards national averages of children and young people attending INMSS.

Each school charges a different rate depending on need type and several other school-based factors. For 2026/27 the average cost for a maintained special school place is £28,621 and an INMSS place is £60,035. This average is not just the basic placement cost for special but includes the other grant funding received such as legacy funding and exceptional pupil need funding. On average, an INMSS place is twice as expensive as a maintained special school place.

Our new independent and non-maintained special school procurement process aims to improve outcomes, strengthen quality assurance, enhance pricing transparency, and secure better value for money while ensuring placements remain focused on children with the most complex needs. Provision under this Framework includes Independent Special Schools (both Section 41 and non-Section 41) and Non-Maintained Special Schools. Providers must be appropriately registered with Ofsted or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) and must meet statutory and contractual quality, safeguarding, and compliance requirements.

It is our intention to reduce the numbers of new admissions in the independent sector as we build capacity in other sectors of our SEND provision, thus our expectation is that we will have less requirement for provision from this sector.

Figure 3i: ECHP Forecast for Independent Schools

Age	2026 EHCP Actuals	EHCP Forecast				
		2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Early Years	0	0	0	0	0	0
Years R-6	400	430	410	348	258	174
Years 7-11	1,400	1,461	1,427	1,303	1,138	1,095
Years 12-13	208	265	318	347	337	319
Years 14+	60	62	69	80	95	105
Total	**2,068**	**2,219**	**2,223**	**2,078**	**1,827**	**1,692**

The forecast (Figure 3i) indicates a slight increase in pupil numbers for 2027 to 2028 and then a decrease for all groups, except post-16 (Years 12-13 and 14+). While this may appear to conflict with Kent's ambition to decrease INMSS attendance for pupils with SEND, it recognises the delays in opening the two new maintained special schools.

What does this mean for pupil place planning – It is recognised that the independent sector is a valuable part of the educational provision in Kent and will continue to be so. However, the current level of reliance on this sector is unsustainable and it is our intention to reduce these places by 3% to move closer to national average figures.

The largest cohort, over 50%, are of secondary age and this cohort are moving through the system.

Most INMSS commissioned places will be for schools on our INMSS Open Framework, supporting due diligence and assessment for quality, governance, policies and cost for this education. This new framework replaces the previous Dynamic Purchase System (DPS) which ended in August 2026.

3.8 Post-16 Provision

Policy assumptions influencing our forecasting and commissioning intentions relating to EHCPs and Post-16 provision

Most young people with SEND complete their education alongside their peers by age 18. However, national legislation allows young people with an EHCP to continue receiving support in education or training up to age 25. The number of young people with an EHCP has increased significantly in recent years and is expected to continue growing as larger age groups move through the education system.

Growth, as measured by the percentage change year on year for 2024/25, in EHCPs was higher nationally than in Kent across almost all age groups. The only exception was those aged 20 and over where Kent recorded a 57% increase compared with the previous year, an increase of 443 EHCPs. As part of our strategic planning, we will through better working practices and engagement with families cease EHCPs in the post-16 sector where appropriate.

Kent launched the Pathways for All programme to bring together colleges, schools and specialist providers to develop more inclusive post-16 opportunities. A key challenge within post-16 education is that many providers, particularly school sixth forms, predominantly offer Level 3 qualifications such as A Levels. However, many young people with an EHCP do not yet have the qualifications required to access these courses and therefore need greater opportunities to Level 2 and below provision. Kent is working closely with education providers to expand the availability of these courses.

Kent currently has 17 special schools with sixth forms, which together provided 834 post-16 places in 2025-26. These schools work in collaboration with further education colleges to broaden the range of academic, vocational and specialist courses available to students. Alongside this provision, three further education college groups operate across 11 campuses throughout Kent, although there are currently no college sites located in Tunbridge Wells or Sevenoaks. In addition, Specialist Post-16 Institutions make an important contribution to the county's post-16 offer, expanding opportunities through vocational pathways in areas such as sport, music, animal care and horticulture.

As part of the Local Area Strategic Plan, work is underway to strengthen post-16 pathways and improve outcomes for young people with SEND. This includes a review of the Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) standards[5], supported by the establishment of a baseline for post-16 SEND participation and transition outcomes, enabling progress to be measured and areas for improvement identified. In partnership with education, health and care providers, post-16 pathway guidance will be refreshed to provide clearer information, more consistent expectations, and well-defined progression routes. These actions will support improved transition planning, helping young people move successfully into further education, training, employment or adulthood while reducing the risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

[5] Preparation for Adulthood Core Standards and Protocols - Kent County Council

Figure 3j: Post-16 EHCPs by District

Home District	Number of Post-16 EHCPs
Swale	776
Thanet	671
Canterbury	586
Ashford	503
Maidstone	489
Dover	439
Tonbridge & Malling	431
Dartford	420
Folkestone & Hythe	394
Gravesham	392
Sevenoaks	373
Tunbridge Wells	311
Not Kent Address	19
Not recorded	9
Total	**5,813**

Source: SEN2 Return 2026

Figure 3j illustrates the distribution of post-16 EHCPs across Kent districts and highlights the continuing demand for specialist support, particularly for courses at Level 2 and below. While it is anticipated that many young people with EHCPs will have their educational needs met within mainstream colleges and other local post-16 provision, the data reflects ongoing pressure on specialist services.

Looking ahead, the greatest level of growth is expected to be in the post-19 cohort (Figure 3.k), with a 56% increase between 2026 and 2031. It is expected that a greater proportion of post-16 learners with EHCPs will be supported in colleges, schools and Specialist Post-16 Institutions (SPIs), rather than Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS). The highest numbers of post-16 young people with EHCPs are found in Swale, Thanet and Canterbury, indicating where demand for both mainstream and specialist support is likely to be greatest.

Figure 3k: EHCP Forecast of Post-16 in Full Time Education

Age	2026 EHCP Actuals	EHCP Forecast				
		2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Years 12-13	1,459	1,641	1,811	1,932	1,939	1,911
Years 14+	2,060	2,328	2,557	2,813	3,064	3,223
Total	**3,530**	**3,985**	**4,384**	**4,760**	**5,019**	**5,150**

East Kent College have junior college provision at several of their sites which provides education for a small number of young people in Year 10 and 11. The row for these students has been removed from the table but not the total.

What does this mean for pupil place planning - The post-16 forecasts present the most significant challenge to the County Council in respect of meeting the education needs of any group with an EHCP.

The EHCP Forecast indicates that better community support for young people with autism is required to enable more young people to become independent learners as they move into post-16 education and on to an independent adulthood.

The provision for course places at Further Education (FE) Colleges and Specialist Post 16 Institutions (SPIs) will need to increase significantly. To avoid long travel distances, there is a greater need for provision in East Kent.

Local Collaborative Partnership Area groups (LCPAs), led by post-16 sector leaders across the county, are developing a more coherent pathway offer within the local action plans. This includes delivering an increase for places at level 2 and below for students across districts.

4.0 Other Settings

Most children attend school for their education, but there are a range of other settings that children and young people with an EHCP attend. These include tuition, online providers arranged by parents or the local authority and Education Other Than At School (EOTAS).

We anticipate that improvements in statutory assessment timelines, expanded maintained provision, better inclusive practice, earlier support and intervention, and more effective commissioning will reduce the number of children and young people with EHCPs waiting for provision, while also shortening the time required to identify and secure appropriate placements.

4.1 Awaiting Provision

In January 2026 a total of 659 children and young people with an EHCP were awaiting provision (Figure 4a). The greatest pressures are evident in Swale, Tonbridge & Malling, Thanet, and Dartford, where the highest numbers of children and young people are waiting for a suitable placement.

The post-16 cohort, including young people aged 20 to 24, represents the largest group (66%) of those awaiting provision. This highlights significant demand for suitable college, sixth form, training, and specialist post-16 placements. Work to address these pressures is being supported through Kent's Pathways for All programme.

Within the secondary-age cohort of those awaiting provision, demand is distributed relatively evenly across districts but reflects greater placement pressures than those seen within the primary-age cohort. In contrast, pressures within the primary-age cohort are most evident in Dartford and Ashford.

The statutory school-age cohort totals 221 children and young people in 2026, representing a reduction of 149 from the 370 recorded in 2024/25. This reduction can be viewed as an indicator of improving system performance. Falling numbers of children and young people awaiting provision, alongside shorter waiting times, suggest that recent improvements across the system are beginning to have a positive impact. We would expect this trend to continue.

Figure 4a: Children with an EHCP Awaiting Provision

Home District	Aged 0-3 Years	Aged 4-10 Years	Aged 11-15 Years	Aged 16-19 Years	Aged 20 – 24 Years	District EHCP Total
Ashford	0	10	15	25	9	59
Canterbury	0	2	15	30	9	56
Dartford	0	13	10	28	12	63
Dover	0	9	11	22	9	51
Folkestone & Hythe	0	0	9	17	13	39
Gravesham	0	7	13	28	11	59
Maidstone	1	2	14	16	10	43
Sevenoaks	0	3	12	21	11	47
Swale	1	7	14	31	13	66
Thanet	1	5	11	33	13	63
Tonbridge & Malling	0	8	16	27	14	65
Tunbridge Wells	0	4	4	16	8	32
Not Kent Address	0	2	0	8	1	11
Not recorded	0	3	2	0	0	5
Total	**3**	**75**	**146**	**302**	**133**	**659**

Source: SEN2 Return 2026

4.2 Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) and Tuition (Alternative Provision)

We commission external tuition companies to provide education for pupils who may be awaiting placement (Alternative Provision) or as part of an Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) package. EOTAS allows local authorities to arrange specialist education outside mainstream school or further education settings for children and young people with an EHCP when school-based provision is unsuitable. EOTAS provision typically combines alternative education with therapeutic and health support.

Currently, 3.7% of the total EHCP cohort are educated through EOTAS or tuition arrangements rather than in traditional school-based provision. More than half of these children and young people **(416, or 54%) are aged post-16,** indicating that the greatest demand for these arrangements lies beyond the compulsory school-age years. There is also notable pressure within the secondary phase, where 293 children and young people (35.5% of the cohort) are supported through EOTAS or tuition arrangements. This suggests that demand is concentrated largely in secondary and post-16 age groups, rather than within primary education.

During 2025/26 in Kent, 614 children received EOTAS. Its increasing use highlights concerns about late identification of needs, insufficient early intervention, and gaps in suitable provision. The Government intends to align future arrangements with SEND reforms and proposed Specialist Provision Packages from 2029/30 and is considering replacing current local authority-led arrangements due to inconsistencies in practice and outcomes.

The Education Programme is an interim (alternative) provision for pupils with SEN and no current educational placement offer from the local authority. It has a total capacity of 108 places. In January 2026, 66 children and young people were receiving tuition from this provision; 17 children were primary aged with an EHCP (and 2 were awaiting an EHCP) and 47 were secondary aged with an EHCP.

Figure 4b: EHCP Other Cohort (including tuition arranged by parents/LA and EOTAS)

Home District	Aged 4-10 years	Aged 11-15 years	Aged 16-19 years	Aged 20 – 24 years	District Total
Ashford	8	21	38	11	78
Canterbury	8	27	49	9	93
Dartford	14	26	34	3	77
Dover	3	19	27	6	55
Folkestone & Hythe	5	14	21	4	44
Gravesham	2	13	37	4	56
Maidstone	10	31	34	2	77
Sevenoaks	5	28	21	6	60
Swale	9	39	40	13	101
Thanet	12	35	24	6	77
Tonbridge & Malling	6	27	30	6	69
Tunbridge Wells	5	13	17	1	36
Not Kent Address	0	0	1	2	3
Not recorded	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**87**	**293**	**373**	**73**	**826**

Source: SEN2 Return 2026

Figure 4b indicates the highest numbers overall are recorded in Swale (101) and Canterbury (93), with the pressure particularly evident within secondary provision. Four other districts also have significant numbers, with more than 76 pupils each: Ashford, Dartford, Maidstone and Thanet. To support effective pupil place planning, there is a need to review and strengthen both the SEN and mainstream offer within these districts, promoting more inclusive practice and increasing parental confidence in choosing and remaining within local provision. In response to this demand, we are developing secondary mainstream provision in Swale alongside a comprehensive SRP offer.

4.3 Elective Home Education (EHE)

Elective home education (EHE) describes the choice that parents can make to provide education for their child either at home, or in some other way, instead of sending them to school full-time. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure their child is educated and it is recognised that parents may choose home education for a variety of reasons.

While parents may choose elective home education for a variety of reasons, for some families this decision may be influenced by a perception that their child's special educational needs are not being adequately met within the state education system. Home education can be a positive and successful option when it is an informed choice and is delivered with appropriate consideration of the child's individual needs. We encourage parents choosing this option to have awareness of their responsibilities as outlined in our policy and procedures Kent County Council Elective Home Education Policy and Procedure.

Figure 4c: Children attending EHE with an EHCP

Age Group	Number of EHCPs
Early Years (0-4 years)	0
Primary Age (5-10 years old)	97
Secondary Age (11-16 years old)	246
Post-16 (16-18 years old)	34
Total	**377**

Source: SEN2 Return 2026

In Kent, there are 377 primary and secondary-aged children and young people with an EHCP who are educated at home (January 2026) (Figure 4c). Most of this cohort are of secondary school age (246 children or 65%), which may indicate perceived challenges relating to curriculum accessibility, school environments, and the ability of settings to meet SEN as children progress through the stages of their education. Parents report concerns about their children relating to anxiety, mental health and wellbeing, sensory overload, and difficulties accessing appropriate support within mainstream settings.

With the Government's focus on developing a more inclusive mainstream education system, Kent's ambition is to ensure that more children and young people with SEND can have their needs met successfully within local schools. This supports the wider objective of fulfilling the legal duty to ensure that every child of compulsory school age receives a safe, efficient and suitable full-time education. Through continued investment in inclusive practice and targeted support, we would expect the number of children with EHCPs accessing elective home education to reduce over time as confidence in, and positive experiences of, school-based provision increases.

4.4 Alternative Provision (AP)

Under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996, local authorities have a duty to arrange suitable education for children of compulsory school age who may not otherwise receive suitable education because of exclusion, illness (physical or mental health conditions) or other reasons.

Education arranged under this duty is referred to by the Department as alternative provision, (AP). Schools may also arrange off-site provision to support pupils to improve their behaviour, and this is also known as alternative provision. Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) are a frequently used form of AP.

In Kent, Alternative Provision (AP) is delivered through a combination of Local Authority maintained Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and AP settings, alongside academy-operated PRUs and AP providers. Budgets are fully delegated to the respective Management Committees, enabling local headteachers to oversee the delivery of alternative provision while retaining responsibility for the pupils on their school roll.

To support inclusion, all non-selective secondary schools in Kent receive inclusion funding. Although primary and grammar schools do not receive this funding, in line with agreements made through the Schools Funding Forum, the local authority expects districts to use their allocations flexibly to meet the needs of all children and young people across their area, including those attending primary schools.

The primary purpose of an AP placement is to provide short-term support that enables pupils to successfully reintegrate into mainstream education. However, some pupils attending PRUs may be undergoing statutory assessment or may have been issued an EHCP whilst at the PRU.

A new alternative provision school, Jude’s Academy in Northfleet, has already been approved by the DfE, and we hope that the DfE will continue to deliver this new free school as planned and as swiftly as possible.

Figure 4d: Kent Pupil Referral Unit Locations

Kent Area/District	Pupil Referral Unit
Dartford and Gravesham	Estuary Academy North
Swale	Estuary Academy Island
Folkestone and Hythe	Birchwood School
Maidstone and Malling	Maidstone and Malling Alternative Provision
Thanet and Dover	Enterprise Learning Alliance
West Kent, Tunbridge Wells	Two Bridges School

The Rosewood School is the authority's provision for children and young people who because of ill health (physical or mental health conditions) cannot attend school for a period of time. Its core aim is to reintegrate a pupil back to their mainstream provision. The school has three sites across the county based in Canterbury, West Malling and a residential adolescent unit in Staplehurst.

4.5 Children Missing Education (CME)

A Child Missing from Education (CME) is a child of compulsory school age who is neither registered at a school, or placed in alternative provision by a local authority, or receiving a suitable elective home education. In January 2026 in Kent there were a total of 321 children.

Children may become missing from education for a variety of reasons, including failure to start school at the appropriate age, being removed from school by their parents due to problems at school, disinterest or poor attendance or stopping their education due to exclusion, illness or bullying. Other reasons can include challenges in securing a school place after relocating to a new area, as well as wider personal circumstances such as the family is homeless and living in temporary accommodation or a refuge, and long-term medical or emotional difficulties.

We will work closely with families to better understand the factors that contribute to children becoming missing from education. This insight will help inform our future planning and ensure that services are responsive to the needs of children and young people.

Our approach is to strengthen commissioning, inclusive practice, and support within schools to reduce the number of children and young people who become CME. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child receives a suitable full-time education, including provision that meets any special educational needs they may have.

Where concerns arise and a child is not receiving an appropriate education, the local authority will take action to safeguard the child's right to education, including the use of School Attendance Orders where necessary. Between February 2025 and January 2026, 94.7% of Children Missing from Education (CME) cases in Kent were closed within 30 school days.

4.6 Forecasts for Other Settings

The forecast (Figure 4e) indicates a gradual reduction in the number of children and young people with EHCPs accessing education in other settings, with overall numbers expected to fall from 1,875 in 2026 to 1,421 in 2031, representing a reduction of 454 pupils (24%). Throughout the forecast period, secondary-aged pupils (Years 7-11) continue to comprise the largest cohort, although numbers are projected to decrease from 693 to 580.

The most significant decline is anticipated among the 14+ age group, where numbers are forecast to reduce by around 50%, from 485 in 2026 to 243 in 2031. The Years 12-13 cohort is expected to remain relatively stable until 2028 before experiencing a gradual decline.

Similarly, the number of primary-aged pupils (Years R-6) in other settings is forecast to decrease steadily from 262 to 216 over the period.

Overall, the trend suggests a reduced reliance on alternative education arrangements over time, particularly among older age groups.

Figure 4e: EHCP Forecast for Other Settings

Age	2026 EHCP Actuals	EHCP Forecast				
		2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Early Years	3	3	3	3	3	3
Years R-6	262	277	268	253	236	216
Years 7-11	693	700	659	623	602	580
Years 12-13	432	446	447	433	394	378
Years 14+	485	433	392	323	264	243
Total	**1,875**	**1,859**	**1,769**	**1,635**	**1,500**	**1,421**

What does this mean for pupil place planning: Our aim is to reduce the number of pupils requiring tuition or EOTAS by increasing access to suitable school-based provision. Enhanced outreach support for inclusion in mainstream schools will promote earlier intervention and more effective SEND support, while ongoing development of our provider framework will help ensure high-quality, cost-effective tuition, therapy and specialist services.

Many of the children and young people in this cohort have not been able to access or sustain a successful mainstream placement. As capacity increases within SRPs and maintained special schools, we expect to secure appropriate placements more quickly.

The Education Programme and external tuition will continue to support pupils who are between placements, although no significant expansion of capacity is planned.

5.0 Future SEN Commissioning of Provision

5.1 Special School Planned Commissioning

Pressures remain, both locally and nationally, on state maintained special school capacity. The sufficiency pressures in our special schools has led to a number of challenges and the increased use of the independent and non-maintained sectors. A paper proposing a capital programme to alleviate the sufficiency and suitability challenges and support Kent's maintained special schools to continue to deliver high-quality education to their pupils will be present ed to KCC CYPEE Cabinet in November 2026.

Figure 5a: Agreed and Planned Special School Additional Provision in Kent

Provision: Special School	Proposed Year	SEN Type	District	Potential Additional Number of Places	Total Additional Places by Year				
					2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32
Expansion of special school (Broomhill Bank)	2027/28	C&I	Sevenoaks	130	40	40	50	0	0
New special school (all through) Swanley	2028/29	PSCN	Sevenoaks	250	0	114	66	70	0
New special school (all through) Whitstable	2028/29	SEMH/ASD	Canterbury	120	0	48	28	44	0
Expansion of special school (Parkwood Hall)	2031	C&L	Sevenoaks	40	8	8	8	16	0
Total planned special school places				540	48	210	152	130	0

5.2 SRP Planned Commissioning

Figure 5b: Planned New/Expanded SRPs in East Kent

East Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	SEN Type	District	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
				2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
Newlands Primary*	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	10	7	3	0	0	20
Herne Bay Primary Planning Group	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Canterbury	10	10	0	0	0	20
Faversham Primary PG Bysing Wood	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Swale	15	5	0	0	0	20
Bromstone**	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	6	6	0	0	0	12
Total planned primary SRP places				41	28	3	0	0	**72**
Thanet Non-Selective PG	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	15	15	20	0	0	50
Canterbury Coastal PG***	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Canterbury	15	15	10	0	0	40
Canterbury Coastal PG (2)	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Canterbury	15	15	20	0	0	50
Faversham non-selective PG	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Swale	10	10	0	0	0	20
Thanet Non-Selective (2) PG	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	10	10	10	0	0	30
Total planned secondary SRP places				65	65	60	0	0	**190**
Total planned SRP places				106	93	63	0	0	**262**

*Newlands: potential additional number of places reduced from 40 in consultation with the school
**Bromstone: does not have a designated SRP and needs to be formalised through the statutory process. Work is necessary to meet the required standards (BB104)
***Canterbury Coastal Planning Group: potential additional number of places reduced from 50 in consultation with the school

Figure 5c: Planned/New Expanded SRPs in North Kent

North Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	SEN Type	District	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
				2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
Alkerden CoE Academy (Primary)	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Dartford	4	3	3	5	0	15
Rosherville CoE Primary Academy	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Gravesham	4	5	6	0	0	15
Edenbridge PG: Edenbridge Primary School	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Sevenoaks	7	7	6	0	0	20
Swanley PG: St Marys	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Sevenoaks	6	5	4	0	0	15
Total planned primary SRP places				21	20	19	5	0	**65**
Alkerden CoE Academy (Secondary)	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Dartford	5	6	7	7	0	25
Sevenoaks and Borough Green PG: Knole Academy	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Sevenoaks	6	12	12	0	0	30
Dartford and Swanley non-selective PG	2028/29	ASD/SLCN	Dartford	0	10	10	10	0	30
Total planned secondary SRP places				11	28	29	17	0	**85**
Total planned SRP places				32	48	48	22	0	**150**

Figure 5d: Planned New/Expanded SRPs in South Kent

South Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	SEN Need Type	District	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
				2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
Ashford North Planning Group	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	7	7	6	0	0	20
Ashford East Planning Group	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	7	7	6	0	0	20
Tenterden South Planning Group	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	6	5	3	0	0	14
Ashford South Planning Group	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	6	5	3	0	0	14
Total planned primary places				26	24	18	0	0	**68**
Total planned secondary SRP places				0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Total planned SRP places				26	24	18	0	0	**68**

Figure 5e: Planned New/Expanded SRPs in West Kent

West Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	SEN Need Type	District	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
				2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
South East Maidstone Town	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	6	5	3	0	0	14
North West Maidstone Town	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	6	5	3	0	0	14
Maidstone Rural	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	6	5	3	0	0	14
Tunbridge Wells Town 1 East Planning Group	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	6	5	3	0	0	14
Tunbridge Wells Town 2 West Planning Group	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	6	5	3	0	0	14
Tunbridge Wells Rural	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	6	5	3	0	0	14
Total planned primary SRP places				36	30	18	0	0	**84**
St Augustine (expansion)	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	8	12	10	0	0	30
Maidstone Secondary Town	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	8	12	10	0	0	30
Skinners' Kent Academy	2027/28	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	8	12	10	0	0	30
Total planned secondary SRP places				24	36	30	0	0	**90**
Total planned SRP places				60	66	48	0	0	**174**

Figure 5f: Planned Changes for Established SRPs

SRP Provision	Date	District	Category of Change	Total New Places
The Archbishop School	2027/28	Canterbury	Broaden Designation to ASD/SLCN	10
Westlands School	2028/29	Swale	Broaden Designation to ASD/SLCN alongside School's Rebuild Programme	25
Wincheap Foundation Primary School	2026/27	Canterbury	Broaden Designation to ASD/SLCN	20
Total Planned Places				**55**

Figure 5g: Agreed and Planned Alternative Provision in Kent

Alternative Provision:	Proposed Opening Date	SEN Type	District	Total Additional Number of Places	Total Additional Places Added By Year				
					2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32
Expansion of KS3 provision, The Rosewood School	2027	Health Needs Education Centre	Canterbury	30	30	0	0	0	0
Jude's Academy	2031	AP	Gravesham	80	0	0	0	0	20
Total Planned Alternative Provision Places				**150**	30	0	0	0	20

REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE

From: Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Christine McInnes, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

To: Children Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 26 November 2026

Subject: Capital funding - Proposed New Paddock Wood Primary School

Decision no: 26/00068

Key Decision: expenditure of over £1m

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Mark Munday - Tunbridge Wells Rural

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary: This report seeks the allocation of the capital funds needed to enable a new primary school at Paddock Wood to progress through detailed design, construction and opening of the school.

Recommendation(s):

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or make RECOMMENDATION to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the proposed decision as set out in the attached PRoD (Appendix A) to allocate a further £13,290,493 of capital funding to enable the new Paddock Wood Primary School to proceed through detailed design, construction and opening in September 2028.

1. Introduction

1.1 The strategic case, initial pre-construction funding and the initiation of the process for establishing a new primary school in Paddock Wood were endorsed by the Children Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 12 May 2026. Subsequently the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills took the decision (26/00025) to allocate £1,409,507 from the Children, Young People and Education Services Basic Need Capital Budget to complete the

pre-construction design activities and the initiation of the process required to establish the new primary school.

1.2 Since the Cabinet Member decision was taken, the contractor has completed the Gateway 3 design stage, site investigations have been undertaken and a detailed cost plan has been prepared. The need for the school remains unchanged and forecast demand continues to support the establishment of new provision within the Paddock Wood planning group.

1.3 A decision is sought to allocate a further £13,290,493 from the Children, Young People and Education Services Basic Need Capital Budget to enable the project to progress through detailed design, construction and opening in September 2028.

2. Analysis of Demand:

2.1 The planning provision data outlining the forecast need for school places against the current capacity was outlined in the Cabinet Committee Report of 12 May 2026, alongside options for mitigating the forecast deficit in provision.

2.2 Since that report, housing development within the planning group has continued and updated forecasts continue to identify a deficit in Reception capacity from September 2028 and then on an ongoing basis.

2.3 The Committee Report of 12 May included forecasts from the 2026 Commissioning Plan; these forecasts have since been refreshed as part of the annual exercise of submitting statutory data to the DfE and production of the Kent Commissioning Plan.

2.4 Below is an extract of the forecasts from proposed 2027 Kent Commissioning Plan (KCP), which benefit from an additional year's worth of pre-school data.

Planning Group name	2025/26 capacity	2028/29 (F)	2029/30 (F)	2030/31 (F)	2031/32 (F)	2032/33 (F)	2033/34 (F)	2034/35 (F)	2035/36 (F)	2035/36 capacity
Paddock Wood	120	-60	-63	-37	-44	-47	-50	-50	-50	120

2.5 The forecasts continue to show significant and sustained deficits. There has been no material change to the rationale for establishing the school and it remains necessary to ensure every child is able to receive the offer of a school place in the future.

3. Key Considerations

3.1 The previous process by which local authorities sought the establishment of a new school, known as the Free School Presumption, was replaced by an updated process from 1st September 2026 under the following:
'Opening new schools Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers'

3.2 Under the new guidance, Kent County Council's (KCC), earlier consultation can be treated as the first stage of the revised process. The indicative timeline for selecting the academy trust to run the new school is set out below.

Event	Proposed Dates
Community Consultation	9 March to 22 April 2026
Cabinet Member decision to enable start of the competition	May/June 2026
Start of the competition – Trusts invited to submit a proposal to run the new school	7 September 2026
Deadline for receipt of proposals	19 October 2026
Representation Period	October/November 2026
Assessment processes	November/December 2026
Scoring and shortlisting of proposals	January 2027
Trust Interviews	February 2027
Decision on Selected Trust	February/March 2027

4. Background

4.1 KCC, as the Local Authority (LA), has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026-30 (KCP) is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out our future plans as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent. A copy of the plan can be viewed from this link:

Commissioning Plan for Education Provision - Kent County Council

4.2 For provision planning purposes KCC's forecasting methodology produces forecasts according to planning groups. These planning groups are nationally recognised by central Government.

4.3 Paddock Wood has seen significant housebuilding in recent years, consequently the forecast for the Paddock Wood planning group shows deficits throughout the KCP Plan period. In the short term, the demand for places can be accommodated in the neighbouring planning groups or within one of the small schools within the planning group offering over PAN. However, from 2028-29 the deficit is forecast to be 1 FE or greater and there are fewer places available in neighbouring planning groups. This increase in demand is linked to significant expansion of the town and the consequential increase in the population; it is not driven by birth rates within the existing population.

4.4 To meet this demand for places within the Paddock Wood planning group KCC will seek to establish a new primary school within the town to open in September 2028. The first phase of the new school will include classroom space to accommodate 1FE and core facilities sufficient for 2 FE to support future expansion when needed. The new school will also include a 26 place nursery and a 14 place SRP.

4.5 A new primary school in Paddock Wood has been provisionally planned since the approval of four housing developments in 2015, when the Department for Education also approved and agreed to fund a free school proposal from the Tenax Schools Trust. KCC supported the proposal on the basis that the school would open when additional places were needed and without detriment to existing schools. Annual reviews found that falling birth rates in the town were offsetting demand from new housing, so the opening was deferred, particularly to protect nearby small rural schools. In 2022, the DfE removed the project from its programme as part of its review of approved free schools that did not have a confirmed start date.

4.6 Because the school was expected to be funded through the Free Schools Programme, developer contributions from the earlier developments were directed to other infrastructure through the borough council's planning consents, this included highway improvements. With the DfE no longer planning on building the school directly, the school will now be constructed by KCC and funded largely through Basic Need, a DfE external grant. This history demonstrates KCC's approach of planning ahead so that places can be delivered when required, while avoiding premature provision that could adversely affect existing local schools.

5. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

5.1 Paddock Wood currently has one primary school that is situated on a compact site that has limited scope for future expansion. The nearest schools that border Paddock Wood are smaller schools in rural locations with very limited scope for substantial expansion. They collectively do not have sufficient places available to accommodate the growing demand driven by new housing development.

5.2 The nearest schools with places available are within Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells town centres which would mean travel distances of around 5 miles from the new school site; for many children located to the East of the new school site it would entail greater distances than this. Pupils travelling these distances would be eligible for free school transport. This would have a substantial and long-term impact on KCCs school transport budget.

5.3 The option to not commission additional school places through the establishment of a new school has been dismissed. The town's significant expansion will permanently increase the size of the population and requires an increase in the number of school places to ensure that all children are offered one and that places are provided alongside the community; it would not be financially nor socially sustainable to require children to travel distances of over 5 miles to neighbouring towns on an ongoing basis.

6. Financial Implications

Capital

6.1 The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills took a Key Decision (26/00025) to allocate £1,409,507 from the Children, Young People and Education Services Basic Need Capital Budget to complete the pre-construction design activities and the initiation of the process required to establish the new primary school.

These activities have now been substantially completed and have informed the preparation of the contractor's detailed cost plan.

6.2 The contractor's Gateway 3 submission identifies a total project cost of £14,700,000. This includes the construction works, fees, risk allowances and other project costs associated with delivery of the scheme.

6.3 The decision seeks approval to allocate a further £13,290,493, which together with the £1,409,507 previously approved, will provide the full estimated project funding requirement of £14,700,000. The decision allows variations to contract value to be no more than 10% above the capital funding agreed by the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills without requiring a further Key Decision, if required this additional capital would also be funded from the Basic Need Capital Budget.

6.4 The Gateway 3 cost plan reflects the developed design and incorporates the outcomes of technical investigations undertaken during the pre-construction phase. The cost estimate therefore provides a more robust assessment of the funding required to deliver the scheme than the early-stage assumptions reported previously. The cost plan also includes allowances for a number of site-specific abnormal costs. These allowances are included within the total project cost and represent the current worst-case position for the budget request.

6.5 The project team is working with statutory undertakers, developers and other stakeholders to reduce or avoid these costs where possible and to establish whether any costs should be met by third parties. If alternative solutions are secured, or third-party funding responsibilities are confirmed, the final project expenditure will reduce accordingly.

6.6 Capital Costs for mainstream provision are funded through the Basic Need Capital Programme, which is made up from a range of sources including the Basic Need Grant and Developer Contributions and other specific grants (such as schools rebuild programme). The Basic Need Grant is the largest contributor to the programme and is provided by the DfE to support local authorities fulfil their statutory duty to ensure there are enough school places for children aged 5 to 16 in their area. The Education capital programme is continuously reviewed, with projects entering and leaving the programme regularly in response to demand and project completions. The latest 2026-27 Basic Need Budget is £127 million. This includes confirmed grant funding from Government up to 2027-28 only. Government have recently confirmed Kent should not expect to receive any further grant funding in 2028-29 and grant arrangements post 2029 are yet to be agreed.

6.7 Section 4 outlines the history regarding the funding of this school. Developer contributions are expected to be in the region of £37k, with the remaining balance of the project expected to be funded from the wider basic need capital funding. There is no prudential borrowing associated with this Decision.

Revenue

6.8 Should the scheme not proceed through to completion, any costs incurred at the time of cessation would become abortive costs and are likely to be recharged to Revenue. Given that considerable preliminary works have already been completed within the initial stages of the project, any abortive costs are likely to be substantial. This would be reported through the regular financial monitoring reports to Cabinet. This will be a cost to the General Fund.

6.9 If the school proceeds, future running cost of the schools would be met through the school budget and funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant, a specific grant from the Department of Education.

7. Legal implications

7.1 Planning permission will be required for the new school.

7.2 The Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Director of Education will be overseeing the scheme to ensure public funds are utilised appropriately.

7.3 Local authorities must plan for and secure sufficient school places for their area in line with their duties under section 14 of the Education Act 1996.

7.4 The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 set out the statutory framework for opening, closing, or altering local-authority-maintained schools in England were updated by The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (Amendment) Regulations 2026, which came into force on 1st September 2026. The amendment revised the content, publication, and notification rules for competition notices and proposals to establish new maintained schools.

7.5 Previously, Section 6A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, provided that local authorities in England were required to seek proposals to establish an ‘academy’ (free school), when a new school was needed; the proposed new school was to be established via “free school presumption” process. However, under the subsequent amendment, where a local authority think that a new school should be established in their area, it can invite proposals for different types of school (mainstream schools, special schools, alternative provision schools).

7.6 The updated process for establishing a new school from September 2026 is detailed in the Non-statutory Guidance published in May 2026 [‘Opening new schools Statutory guidance for proposers and decisionmakers’].

8. Equalities implications

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed for the original Cabinet Member decision relating to the establishment of the proposed new school. The screening found no evidence to suggest that the establishment of the new school will impact negatively on pupils from Protected Groups or lead to them being treated less favourably. As The EQIA will be reviewed and, where needed, updated at key stages of the establishment of the proposed new school.

9. Data Protection Implications

9.1 There are no data protection implications.

10. Other corporate implications

10.1 Support from the Capital and Strategic Programmes team will be required to deliver the project. KCC Highways and Planning colleagues will be consulted, as appropriate, throughout the planning process.

11. Governance

11.1 This decision seeks approval to allocate a further £13,290,493 from the Children, Young People and Education Services Basic Need Capital Budget to enable the new Paddock Wood Primary School to proceed through detailed design, construction and opening in September 2028.

11.2 Together with the £1,409,507 previously approved under Decision 26/00025 for pre-construction activities, this provides a total approved project budget of £14,700,000.

11.3 Subject to approval, the decision will seek to delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Director of Education to take relevant actions including but not limited to negotiating, entering into and finalising the terms of relevant contracts, contract variations and other legal agreements, including the granting of leases for utility installations for periods exceeding 20 years, if required

11.4 The Director of Infrastructure will be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements, with authority to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts. Variations to the contract value will be limited to no more than 10% above the capital funding agreed by the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills without requiring a further Key Decision.

11.5 Implementation of the decision will be kept under review and will be subject to any requirements arising from Local Government Reorganisation, where relevant.

12. Consultation

12.1 In accordance with the DfE guidance, KCC undertook consultation on whether a new school should be established in Paddock Wood.

12.2 The consultation ran for six weeks from 11 March to 22 April 2026. The following stakeholders were consulted:

- Schools in Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone Districts
- Elected Members (Kent County Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)
- Parish and Town Councils
- Local MP
- Dioceses of Canterbury and Rochester and Archdiocese of Southwark

- Residents' groups
- Local community groups

12.3 All stakeholders were able to access copies of the key documents on the KCC website.

12.4 Additionally, KCC held a discussion with representatives from the 13 most local schools, their MAT representatives where applicable and the Diocese of Rochester. This provided those attending with as much information and data as possible to inform their responses to the consultation.

12.5 There were 35 responses via emails and digital response forms: 29 in favour of the new school, 5 against and 1 undecided. The majority of the respondents were from local residents and parents.

13. Conclusions

13.1 This report sets out the proposal to release the capital funds needed to enable the proposed new primary school at Paddock Wood to progress through detailed design, construction and opening in September 2028. Without the provision of additional primary provision, local Paddock Wood children would need to travel outside of Paddock Wood to attend schools with available places. This would potentially perpetually increase the financial burden on the school transport budget. It is also noted that if the scheme was aborted at this stage, the County Council would incur substantial abortive costs.

Recommendation(s):

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the proposed decision as set out in the attached PRoD (Appendix A) to allocate a further £13,290,493 of capital funding to enable the new Paddock Wood Primary School to proceed through detailed design, construction and opening in September 2028.

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14. Background Documents

- Equality Impact Assessment
- Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026-30

15. Appendices

- • Appendix A – ProD

16. Contact details

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:	DECISION NUMBER:
Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	26/00068

Executive Decision – key

26/00068 – Capital Funding - Proposed New Paddock Wood Primary School

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, I agree to:

1) APPROVE the allocation of a further £13,290,493 from the Children, Young People and Education Services Basic Need Capital Budget to fund the construction activities required to establish a new primary school at Paddock Wood.

2) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Director of Education to take relevant actions including but not limited to negotiating, entering into and finalising the terms of relevant contracts, contract variations and other legal agreements, including the granting of leases for utility installations for periods exceeding 20 years, if required

3) AGREE for the Director of Infrastructure, to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements, with authority to enter variations as envisaged under the contracts. Variations to contract value to be no more than 10% above the capital funding agreed by the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills without requiring a further Key Decision.

Reasons for decision:

The strategic case, initial pre-construction funding and the initiation of the process for establishing a new primary school in Paddock Wood were endorsed by the Children Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 12 May 2026. Subsequently I, as the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, took the decision (26/00025) to allocate £1,409,507 from the Children, Young People and Education Services Basic Need Capital Budget to complete the pre-construction design activities and the initiation of the process required to establish the new primary school.

Since my Cabinet Member decision was taken, the contractor has completed the Gateway 3 design stage, site investigations have been undertaken and a detailed cost plan has been prepared. The need for the school remains unchanged and

forecast demand continues to support the establishment of new provision within the Paddock Wood planning group.

This decision allocates a further £13,290,493 from the Children, Young People and Education Services Basic Need Capital Budget to enable the project to progress through detailed design, construction and opening in September 2028.

Financial implications:

Capital
My previous Cabinet Member decision (26/00025) allocated £1,409,507 from the Children, Young People and Education Services Basic Need Capital Budget to complete the pre-construction design activities and the initiation of the process required to establish the new primary school. These activities have now been substantially completed and have informed the preparation of the contractor's detailed cost plan.

The contractor's Gateway 3 submission identifies a total project cost of £14,700,000. This includes the construction works, fees, risk allowances and other project costs associated with delivery of the scheme.

This decision allocates a further £13,290,493, which together with the £1,409,507 previously approved, will provide the full estimated project funding requirement of £14,700,000.

The Gateway 3 cost plan reflects the developed design and incorporates the outcomes of technical investigations undertaken during the pre-construction phase. The cost estimate therefore provides a more robust assessment of the funding required to deliver the scheme than the early-stage assumptions reported previously. The cost plan also includes allowances for a number of site-specific abnormal costs. These allowances are included within the total project cost and represent the current worst-case position for the budget request.

The project team is working with statutory undertakers, developers and other stakeholders to reduce or avoid these costs where possible and to establish whether any costs should be met by third parties. If alternative solutions are secured, or third-party funding responsibilities are confirmed, the final project expenditure will reduce accordingly.

Capital Costs for mainstream provision are funded through the Basic Need Capital Programme, which is made up from a range of sources including the Basic Need Grant and Developer Contributions and other specific grants (such as schools rebuild programme). The Basic Need Grant is the largest contributor to the programme and is provided by the DfE to support local authorities fulfil their statutory duty to ensure there are enough school places for children aged 5 to 16 in their area. The Education capital programme is continuously reviewed, with projects entering and leaving the programme regularly in response to demand and project completions. The latest 2026-27 Basic Need Budget is £127 million. This includes confirmed grant funding from Government up to 2027-28 only. Government have

recently confirmed Kent should not expect to receive any further grant funding in 2028-29 and grant arrangements post 2029 are yet to be agreed.

The previous committee report provides the background history regarding the funding of the school and that developer contributions are limited to around £37k. The remaining balance of the project expected to be funded from the wider basic need capital funding. There is no prudential borrowing associated with this Decision.

Revenue
Should the scheme not proceed through to completion, any costs incurred at the time of cessation would become abortive costs and are likely to be recharged to Revenue. Given that considerable preliminary works have already been completed within the initial stages of the project, any abortive costs are likely to be substantial. This would be reported through the regular financial monitoring reports to Cabinet. This will be a cost to the General Fund.

If the school proceeds, future running cost of the schools would be met through the school budget and funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant, a specific grant from the Department of Education.

Legal implications:

Planning permission will be required for the new school.

The Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Director of Education will be overseeing the scheme to ensure public funds are utilised appropriately.

Local authorities must plan for and secure sufficient school places for their area in line with their duties under section 14 of the Education Act 1996.

The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 set out the statutory framework for opening, closing, or altering local-authority-maintained schools in England were updated by The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (Amendment) Regulations 2026, which came into force on 1st September 2026. The amendment revised the content, publication, and notification rules for competition notices and proposals to establish new maintained schools.

Previously, Section 6A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, provided that local authorities in England were required to seek proposals to establish an ‘academy’ (free school), when a new school was needed; the proposed new school was to be established via “free school presumption” process. However, under the subsequent amendment, where a local authority think that a new school should be established in their area, it can invite proposals for different types of school (mainstream schools, special schools, alternative provision schools).

The updated process for establishing a new school from September 2026 is detailed in the Non-statutory Guidance published in May 2026 [‘Opening new schools Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers’].

Equalities implications:

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed for my original Cabinet Member decision relating to the establishment of the proposed new school. The screening found no evidence to suggest that the establishment of the new school will impact negatively on pupils from Protected Groups or lead to them being treated less favourably. As The EQIA will be reviewed and, where needed, updated at key stages of the establishment of the proposed new school.

Data Protection implications:

There are no data protection implications.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered by the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 26 November 2026

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The previous committee report set out the alternative options to meet the need for additional provision that were considered and dismissed.

The contractors for the scheme were engaged using KCC's procurement framework that ensures a competitive build cost. The new school accommodation is designed in line with the DfE's baseline specifications, and projected costs have been benched marked against other schemes to ensure best value is achieved. Additionally, an external Quantity Surveyor has assessed that the cost meets the market prices. The identified financial risks are accounted for within the Gateway 3 cost plan submission that includes allowances for 'ab-normals' within the site that could impact expenditure.

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

.....	.....
Signed	Date

EQIA Submission – ID Number
Section A

EQIA Title
Proposed New Primary School at Paddock Wood v2

Responsible Officer
Paul Wilson - CY EDSEN

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)
Nicholas Abrahams - CY EDSEN

Type of Activity

Service Change
No
Service Redesign
No
Project/Programme
Project/Programme
Commissioning/Procurement
No
Strategy/Policy
No
Details of other Service Activity
No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate
Children Young People and Education
Responsible Service
Education Planning and Access
Responsible Head of Service
Nicholas Abrahams - CY EDSEN
Responsible Director
David Adams - CY EDSEN

Aims and Objectives

KCC, as the LA, has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available. The County Council's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026-30 (KCP) is a five-year rolling plan which is updated annually. It sets out our future plans as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision across all types and phases of education in Kent. A copy of the plan can be viewed from this link: Commissioning Plan for Education Provision - Kent County Council

For provision planning purposes KCC's forecasting methodology produces forecasts according to planning groups. These planning groups are nationally recognised by central Government.

Paddock Wood has seen significant housebuilding in recent years, consequently the forecast for the Paddock Wood planning group shows deficits throughout the KCP Plan period. In the short term, the demand for places can be accommodated in the neighbouring planning groups or within one of the small schools within the planning group offering over PAN. However, from 2028-29 the demand is forecast to be 1 Form of Entry (FE) or greater and there are fewer places available in neighbouring planning groups.

To meet this demand for places within the Paddock Wood planning group KCC will seek to establish a new primary school within the town to open in September 2028. The new school will include classroom space

to accommodate 1FE (30 places in each year group) and core facilities sufficient for 2 FE (60 places in each year) to support future expansion when needed. The new school will also include a 26 place nursery and a 14 place Specialist Resource Provision (SRP).

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

No

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

An informal education Consultation run for 6 weeks from 11 March to 22 April 2026. The following stakeholders will be consulted.

- Schools in Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone Districts
- Elected Members (Kent County Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)
- Parish and Town Councils
- Local MP
- Dioceses of Canterbury and Rochester and Archdiocese of Southwark
- Residents Groups
- Local Community Groups

All stakeholders had access to copies of the key documents on the KCC website.

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

No

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

No

Residents/Communities/Citizens

Residents/communities/citizens

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

Establishing a new school at Paddock Wood will provide a total of 210 additional primary school places (with the capacity to offer a further 210 places if needed latterly) that will help to ensure that children from Paddock Wood and the surrounding areas will be able to benefit from a local school. This will avoid the need to travel potentially excessive distances to access a school place.

The new building(s) will comply with the BB103 Department of Education building standards and will offer accessible facilities to accommodate students, staff and visitors with disabilities.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions
19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
Are there negative impacts for age?
No
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Applicable
Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief

Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

From: Beverly Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Christine McInnes, Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education

To: **Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee** – 26th November 2026

Subject: State Maintained Special School Capacity – Capital Programme

Decision no: 26/00072

Key Decision: The proposals affect more than 2 Electoral Divisions

Classification: *Unrestricted*

Past Pathway of report: None

Electoral Division: All

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary:
Pressures remain, both locally and nationally, on state maintained special school capacity. This pressure takes two forms – having enough places to meet need (known as sufficiency) and having suitable premises to meet changing needs (known as suitability). For Kent, the sufficiency pressures have led to our state maintained special schools facing a number of challenges, for example, over-crowding, increased class-sizes, reallocation of specialist spaces to general teaching rooms, and shortages of intervention and therapy spaces. These have also led to the increased use of the independent and non-maintained sectors. Sufficiency pressures also create suitability pressures, for example the loss of specialist facilities, but suitability issues exist in some of the school because of the changing needs of our children and young people. Suitability and sufficiency issues can be exacerbated for schools by the condition of some of their buildings (condition issues). A variety of solutions are required to address the challenges.

This paper proposes a capital programme to alleviate the sufficiency and suitability challenges and support Kent's state maintained special schools continue to deliver high-quality education to their pupils. Condition issues are dealt with separately through the Authority's buildings maintenance programme.

Recommendation(s):

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to:

Consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member about, the proposed decision to approve the State Maintained Special School Capital Programme and the associated funding allocation, as detailed in the proposed record of decision.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Nationally the number of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) continues to rise. In 2025/26 the number of EHCPs increased by 13%. Whilst it was 5% in Kent, it currently remains an upward trend. The Department for Education (DfE) expects this trend to continue ahead of any reform to the Special Educational Needs (SEND) system in England.

1.2 This upward trend continues to place pressure on the system for specialist places. The Council's strategic plan to ensure sufficient capacity is set out in its SEND Sufficiency Plan, which is appended to its Commissioning Plan for Education in Kent. The strategy is focused on increasing confidence and skills in the system to enable a greater proportion of children and young people to have their needs meet in mainstream schools. This is fundamental, both for the children themselves so that they can grow up and be educated in their communities with all the advantages and support that this brings, but also to the sustainability of the system. Currently 28% of children in Kent with an EHCP are educated in mainstream schools (excluding specialist resource provisions (SRP)) compared to 40% nationally. This paper does not set out the details of all the strategy, plans and activities within Kent to bring about this change. Such details have been presented separately on many occasions to this Committee and to Scrutiny Committee.

1.3 At the other end, the strategy is to reduce our reliance on more specialist provision and in particular the use of high cost independent and non-maintained special school places. As of January 2026 (SEN2 return) the Council was purchasing 2,068 places in these schools. This represents 10% of the Council's EHCPs, compared to 7% nationally. The cost of this is unsustainable.

1.4 To help support the rebalancing of the system, the Council is investing £20m in increasing SRP places, providing more opportunities for children and young people with EHCPs and higher levels of need to thrive in local mainstream schools. The Council is also committed to improving the physical environments of mainstream schools through its School Access Initiative and high needs capital budgets to ensure these are accessible and meet the sensory needs of an increasing number of children and young people.

1.5 Kent's state maintained special schools continue to play a vital role in meeting the needs of the county's children and young people. In Kent 31% of children and young people with an EHCP attend a state maintained special school, compared to 24% in England. Our strategy is to increase special school capacity, principally through two new special schools in Swanley and

Whitstable, and a new alternative provision school (with specialist provision) in Gravesham. However, it is clear none of these schools will be in operation before 2030. All three are to be delivered by the Department for Education (DfE).

1.6 Currently, the pressure to use the independent and non-maintained special school sector arises for a number of reasons. Lack of places in state maintained special schools, parental wishes and tribunal decisions, and the complexity of need not being met in state-maintained schools. Often these reasons are inter-related, for example a state maintained special school is over-crowded, inhibiting its ability to meet need, leading the parent to want an alternative placement.

1.7 The pressures have led to a situation where many of Kent's state maintained special schools need capital investment to ensure these have the facilities and spaces to meet both the numerical demand of the future and the changing needs of Kent's children and young people.

2. Kent state maintained school capacity and accommodation pressures

2.1 There are 25 state maintained special schools in Kent. Some occupy one site; many have satellite provisions which are either solely the school's or are bases within mainstream schools and colleges. This makes it challenging to state clearly what capacity each school has against any national method of calculation. However, it is clear from the DfE's net capacity surveys that the rolls of nearly all of Kent's maintained special schools exceed their stated capacity. To illustrate, the combined designated number of the 25 schools is 5,956, the combined net capacity figure is 5,654, and as of September 2026 the total roll of these schools is 6,868.

2.2 Repeatedly over time Kent's special schools have responded to the Council's requests to admit more pupils and have been obligated by tribunals to admit yet further pupils. This has resulted in many issues, such as the repurposing of halls and specialist spaces to be class bases, conversion of storage spaces to be intervention rooms, and increased class sizes. The impact of this on the pupils in the schools is self-evident. The less obvious impact is this drives tribunal activity as parents seek alternatives.

2.3 The DfE publish space standards for schools. BB103 applies to mainstream schools, BB104 to specialist settings. It is important to state that these standards represent the current design standards for new school buildings. It must be appreciated that applying these standards to all state maintained schools in Kent and seeking to "right size" them is not feasible. For example, a rural Victorian primary school will not meet the standards, nor could it be modernised to do so. However, these provide a benchmark against which all schools can be assessed to establish over or under provision and to inform decision making.

2.4 The four Assistant Directors Education (ADE) have worked with Kent's state maintained special school headteachers to consider a range of issues. This

has been done by need type – Profound, Severe and Complex (PSCN), Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), and Communication and Interaction (C&I). Through these groups we have sought to:

- identify children and young people whose needs are not currently being met within their (need type) special schools or other state-maintained provision;
- develop a shared understanding of what appropriate provision and additional pathways for these pupils might look like;
- explore the practical barriers and enablers to broadening provision, including accommodation, staffing, training and resources; and
- consider how schools might support additional cohorts while maintaining suitable provision for their existing pupils.

2.5 The backdrop to these conversations needs to be stated. The Council made some proposals for reforming the special school structure in Kent, which were not universally welcomed. However, what is evident and remains so, is that both the Council and its special school leaders are committed to ensuring that all children and young people of Kent receive the best education in state maintained provision that is possible within the resources available. There is a recognition that:

- Pupil need and the presentation of need is becoming more complex;
- State maintained special schools continue to adjust to meet the needs of the most complex, but together we can, and want to, do more;
- The independent sector is not a panacea for the most complex pupils;
- We need to ensure that pupils in state maintained special schools are able to access the wrap around support from partner agencies and commissioned services;
- How we meet the needs of “introvert” pupils (i.e. school refusers, anxious, mental health) and the needs of “extrovert” pupils (i.e. unregulated violent behaviour, fight or flight responses) in the same building needs very careful consideration and likely building adaptations;
- Supporting pupils with more complex needs may mean fewer pupils per class. Accordingly, either fewer pupil spaces will be available in each school, or further accommodation will be required to maintain numbers.
- The future funding model will be aligned to the Government’s plan for specialist provision packages (SPPs) and will be expected to support the different pathways that will operate in the schools. This may include a bespoke pathway for a small number of the most complex pupils, until they are able to access class-based learning with a small number of peers.

2.6 This paper focuses exclusively on the accommodation strand of the conversations. A capacity tool, based on BB104 was commissioned. ADEs invited special school headteachers to use this tool to compare their school to the latest space standards and submit the outputs. Each school site was also visited by the lead ADE for the need type, and usually the local ADE. This provided a cross-county view by need type of the relative issues faced by each school, together with the opportunity for the headteacher to state their priorities. Similarly, priorities were formed in the need type groups, for example the SEMH headteachers agreed the priority for each of them was the provision of a small off-site centre where they can support pupils who were not able to access the main school site, as part of their integration journey.

2.7 Letters were produced for each school in order to "replay" the output of the capacity tool and the discussion, together with a recommendation as to the capital project for the school. Headteachers were invited to raise any queries with the author to enable any issues to be resolved in advance of this report being produced.

2.8 ADEs met with all headteachers (via KSENT) on 15th October 2026 to: share the proposals for each school and the school's response; explain the intended process to move forward, including the key components of this report and proposed decision; to respond to any queries or challenges; to consider if and how any prioritisation might be made; and to determine whether the sector wished to provide a comment for inclusion in this report. This provided both transparency and the opportunity for consensus to be reached.

2.9 It is important that the same transparent messages are conveyed in this report as have been conveyed to and by KCC in meetings with the sector:

- BB104 is the latest space standard, it cannot be applied retrospectively. The Council does not have the resources to bring all 25 special schools up to BB104 space standards. It should also be noted that the standards are for guidance and are not mandatory requirements, meaning school designs and plans can include derogations from the BB standards.
- The Council does not universally apply BB103 retrospectively to mainstream schools, nor does it have the resources to do so.
- The Council will do as much as it can, for as many of the state maintained special schools as it can, but it does not have the resources to do everything that may be required or requested.
- The Council will continue to be transparent in its approach and decision making.
- KSENT is a co-operative trust, and its values are based on putting the needs of all above the needs of the individual. The sector has prioritised with some schools recognising the needs of others are greater than their own.

- Schools that have budget surpluses over the allowed balance control mechanism limit will be required to use this surplus to deliver the project for their school.
- Through transparency and joint working, we will strive to ensure that the limited resources remain available to all in the programme and are not spent on the first few projects.
- Pace of delivery is urgent.

3. Proposals

3.1 Table 1 sets out all Kent state maintained special schools and a high-level summary of the proposal for each. Some proposals have been in development for a period of time and are therefore fairly advanced, others are at early stages. Programme delivery will require access to some buildings the Council has vacated/intends to vacate, in order to create the satellite and off-site provisions described. These will support pacey delivery and provide cost effective solutions.

3.2 Schools that have buildings that are new or have recently received significant investment are not recommended for further capital investment at this point. The schools' leaders recognise the needs of other schools.

3.3 Table 1:

School	Capacity Capital Programme Recommendation
Communication & Interaction (C&I) Dimension	
Aspire	**Develop a satellite provision to increase capacity.**
Broomhill Bank	**No further capital funding proposed – expansion underway.**
Grange Park	**Use accumulated financial surplus to expand provision.**
Leigh Academy Snowfields	**No capital funding proposed. Review pathways and future development opportunities.**
Laleham Gap	**Explore a satellite provision for EBSA pupils.**
Stone Bay	**Improve specialist accommodation.**
SEMH Dimension	
Bower Grove	**Off-site expansion and enhanced intervention spaces on main site**
Elms	**Off-site integration centre and improved support spaces.**
Goldwyn	**Consolidation of provision and additional intervention spaces.**
Nore Academy	**New school – no capital investment planned.**
Portal House	**Off-site integration centre, potentially shared.**
Rowhill School	**On-site nurture/vocational centre and intervention space improvements.**
St Anthony's	**Remodel existing accommodation and off-site integration centre.**
The Orchard	**Modular expansion and off-site integration centre**
Profound Severe and Complex Needs (PSCN) (DfE: Cognition and Learning; C&L)	

Five Acre Wood	**Completion of the 3rd phase of the conversion of the Oxford Road building to provide additional accommodation for the school.**
Foreland Fields	**Increase classroom capacity, access, parking and hygiene facilities.**
Ifield	**Increase teaching space and improve site access and circulation.**
Leigh Academy Milestone	**Replace Post-16 accommodation and enhance key facilities, while reviewing the future suitability of satellite provision.**
Meadowfield	**Reconfigure and enhance both sites to increase capacity and suitability.**
Nexus	**No further capital investment recommended at this stage.**
Oakley	**Improve accommodation, accessibility and site infrastructure across both sites. Address significant maintenance issues (separately).**
St Nicholas'	**Provide a new SEN block and targeted site improvements.**
The Beacon	**No further capital investment recommended.**
Wyvern	**Address sixth form and capacity pressures.**
Valence	**Address suitability issues for PMLD cohort.**

4. Views of the KSENT

4.1 At the meeting of 15th October 2026, the headteacher group expressed the desire to provide a statement for inclusion in this paper. The school holidays, and the time required to agree a single sector response means that this is not available for incorporation in this report, but will be circulated separately in advance of the Cabinet Committee meeting.

5. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk.

5.1 The DfE's most recent position on high needs capital is that this should be directed to mainstream provision, in particular through the provision of inclusion bases. The Council has already committed £20m towards this.

5.2 The option of making no further investment in Kent's state maintained special schools was dismissed. For some, the overcrowding is creating operation challenges and increasing health and safety risks. Additionally, the Council has to discharge its statutory duty to make suitable provision available to all children. The current context means we do need to continue supporting Kent's state maintained special schools to accommodate additional pupils safely, while work in the mainstream sector continues. Doing nothing was not a viable option.

5.3 The option of making significant investment in a few special schools to address fully their issues was also rejected in favour of supporting a greater number of schools, albeit to a lesser degree.

6. Financial Implications

Capital

6.1 Capital costs related to these proposals will be funded through KCC's High Needs Capital Grant allocations provided by the DfE. This capital grant is provided annually to support high needs provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities or requiring alternative provision. The grant can be used to either create new school places, improve existing facilities or/and support mainstream inclusion.

6.2 The annual grant allocations are combined, along with other specific funding sources, to fund the programme of works to support the development of High Needs Provision across Kent. The programme has been running since 2020-21 with grant funding over that period totalling just under £128m. A further £4m has been added to the grant which has been made through the use of other grants and developer contributions. Of the £132m, c£84m has been either spent or committed to current known schemes, such as the £20m allocated to the SRP expansion programme. The balance of £48m is intended to support new projects, such as the sufficiency of SRPs and special school places and SEND support in mainstream schools.

6.3 The estimated cost of delivering the accommodation proposed in this paper is £35m. It is recognised that this is ambitious and will require considerable prioritisation within each project.

6.4 These costs sit alongside those for capital investment in SRPs and initiatives to make environmental changes to mainstream schools to support inclusion.

6.5 Projects will be prioritised to ensure costs remain within the overall budget allocated.

Revenue:

6.6 The Council funds the revenue costs of maintained special school places from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant, a specific ring-fenced revenue grant from the DfE. These are paid as a "rate per place" in line with Government requirements. The Government is intending to move to national funding model for children with Special Education Needs as part of the wider SEN reforms whereby different levels of funding will be linked to newly developed "Specialist Provision Packages".

7. Legal implications

7.1 The proposals support discharging the Councils duties to:

- secure that sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education are available for their area, defined as being sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education.
- ensure that its education functions are exercised by the authority with a view to promoting high standards, ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and training, and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential

by every person under the age of 20 and those over the age of 20 and for whom an EHCP is maintained.

- keep under review the educational provision, training provision and social care provision made in its area (and outside it) for children and young people who have special educational needs or a disability. KCC must consider the extent to which its provision is sufficient to meet the educational needs, training needs and social care needs of the children and young people concerned.

7.2 Some projects may require consultations to be undertaken. The process for each proposal would depend on the status of the school relating to the proposal. For example:

- Proposals which increase the number of pupils a community or foundation special schools is set up for by 10% or 20 pupils would be a statutory proposal in accordance with "Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools", August 2025 statutory guidance. The decision maker in these cases would be the Local Authority.
- Proposals which increase the number of pupils in an academy special school by 21 pupils or more, or more than 20%, fall within the "Making significant changes to an academy", August 2025 non-statutory guidance. Such proposals require full consultation, plus the submission of a Tier 1 screening form to the DfE by the relevant Trust.

7.3 The public sector equality duty requires KCC, in the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct prohibited by the act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic; and
- foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic.

7.4 Projects will be commissioned in accordance with procurement regulations.

8. Equalities implications

8.1 The proposals support more children and young people to attend specialist provision in their locality, reducing travel distances and improving choice. They also seek to ensure equity, as far as possible within the resources available, in the facilities available to children and young people in Kent's state maintained special schools. An EQIA has been completed and no equalities issues have been identified.

9. Data Protection Implications

9.1 An initial Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) screening has been carried out and submitted which determined a full DPIA is not required. No personal data is required for the implementation of this proposal.

10. Other corporate implications

10.1 Where proposals involve modification of buildings, the Infrastructure Team will be involved as necessary, with feasibility studies and resultant works being undertaken. Some proposals will involve building works being managed directly by the schools concerned.

10.2 Implementation will require public consultation on individual solutions proposed, which will require support from the Authority's Engagement and Consultation Team.

10.3 Contracts will need to be entered in to. These are standard documents but will require legal support to have sealed as appropriate.

11. Governance

11.1 The four Assistant Directors Education will, as necessary, undertake or work with schools and/or trusts to undertake consultations (statutory and non-statutory) on individual proposals and to produce the relevant reports/applications to enable the relevant decision maker (Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education and the Secretary of State) to determine proposals. Local Members will be consulted on proposals in their divisions, and consultation documents can be sent to the Members of this Cabinet Committee.

11.2 The proposed decision sets out a range of delegations to relevant Officers to progress work required to implement the overarching policy decision to approve the planned capital programme and allocate required funding to the necessary work. This decision therefore grants appropriate authority for Officers to proceed through to the delivery stages of the programmes outlined in the report, subject to the spend remaining within the approval limit.

12. Conclusions

12.1 Kent's state maintained special schools are a vital part of the Council's continuum of provision. It is important that, within the resources available, these schools have the capacity and facilities to appropriately meet the needs of their pupils. The proposals seek to deliver this, addressing the key issues and priorities as fairly as possible across the sector.

12.2 The proposals sit alongside investment in SRPs and mainstream schools.

13. Background Documents

None

14. Appendices

- Appendix One: Proposed Record of Decision (PRoD)
- Appendix Two: Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix Three: KsENT Strategic Investment Proposal Letter

15. Contact details

Report Author: David Adams Job title: Interim Deputy Director – Effectiveness, Sufficiency and Skills Telephone number: 03000 414989 Email address: david.adams@kent.gov.uk	Director: *Christine McInnes* Job title: Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education Telephone number: 03000 418913 Email address: christine.mcinnes@kent.gov.uk

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:	DECISION NUMBER:
Beverly Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	27/00072

Executive Decision – key decision

26/00072 – State Maintained Special School Capital Programme.

Proposed Decision:

That the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills consider the following proposal:

I. APPROVE the allocation of £35m of the High Needs Capital Grant to enable the delivery of a state maintained special school capital programme including the schools set out in Table 1;

II. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education to:
   a) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to issue public notices, and approve proposals on behalf of the Local Authority; and
   b) approve capital expenditure on individual proposals related to schools contained in Table1 provided that the total capital expenditure remains within the agreed £35m, and in cases involving capital expenditure above £1m, such approval to be made in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills;

III. DELEGATE authority to the Director of Infrastructure to:
   a) in consultation with the Director of Education and SEND, and the Head of Law to take relevant actions, including but not limited to negotiating, entering into and finalising the terms of relevant contracts, contract variations or other legal agreements, as required, to implement the decision; and
   b) be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant contractual agreements and to enter into such variations as envisaged under any of these contracts.

Reasons for decision:

Nationally the number of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) continues to rise. In 2025/26 the number of EHCPs increased by 13%. Whilst it was 5% in Kent, it currently remains an upward trend. The Department for Education (DfE) expects this trend to continue ahead of any reform to the Special Educational Needs (SEND) system in England.

This upward trend continues to place pressure on the system for specialist places. The Council's strategic plan to ensure sufficient capacity is set out in its SEND

Sufficiency Plan, which is appended to its Commissioning Plan for Education in Kent. The strategy is focused on increasing confidence and skills in the system to enable a greater proportion of children and young people to have their needs meet in mainstream schools. This is fundamental, both for the children themselves so that they can grow up and be educated in their communities with all the advantages and support that this brings, but also to the sustainability of the system. Currently 28% of children in Kent with an EHCP are educated in mainstream schools (excluding specialist resource provisions (SRP)) compared to 40% nationally.

At the other end, the strategy is to reduce our reliance on more specialist provision and in particular the use of high cost independent and non-maintained special school places. As of January 2026 (SEN2 return) the Council was purchasing 2,068 places in these schools. This represents 10% of the Council's EHCPs, compared to 7% nationally. The cost of this is unsustainable.

To help support the rebalancing of the system, the Council is investing £20m in increasing Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) places, providing more opportunities for children and young people with EHCPs and higher levels of need to thrive in local mainstream schools. The Council is also committed to improving the physical environments of mainstream schools through its School Access Initiative and high needs capital budgets to ensure these are accessible and meet the sensory needs of an increasing number of children and young people.

Kent's state maintained special schools continue to play a vital role in meeting the needs of the county's children and young people. In Kent 31% of children and young people with an EHCP attend a state maintained special school, compared to 24% in England. Our strategy is to increase special school capacity, principally through two new special schools in Swanley and Whitstable, and a new alternative provision school (with specialist provision) in Gravesham. However, it is clear none of these schools will be in operation before 2030. All three are to be delivered by the Department for Education (DfE).

Currently, the pressure to use the independent and non-maintained special school sector arises for a number of reasons. Lack of places in state maintained special schools, parental wishes and tribunal decisions, and the complexity of need not being met in state maintained schools. Often these reasons are inter-related, for example a state maintained special school is over-crowded, inhibiting its ability to meet need, leading the parent to want an alternative placement.

The pressures have led to a situation where many of Kent's state maintained special schools need capital investment to ensure these have the facilities and spaces to meet both the numerical demand of the future and the changing needs of Kent's children and young people. This pressure takes two forms – having enough places to meet need (known as sufficiency) and having suitable premises to meet changing needs (known as suitability).

This decision approves a capital programme to alleviate the sufficiency and suitability challenges and support Kent's state maintained special schools continue to deliver high-quality education to their pupils. Condition issues are dealt with separately through the Authority's buildings maintenance programme.

The Capital Programme:
Table 1 sets out all Kent state maintained special schools and a high-level summary of the proposal for each.

1.1 Table 1:

School	Capacity Capital Programme Recommendation
Communication & Interaction (C&I) Dimension	
Aspire	**Develop a satellite provision to increase capacity.**
Broomhill Bank	**No further capital funding proposed – expansion underway.**
Grange Park	**Use accumulated financial surplus to expand provision.**
Leigh Academy Snowfields	**No capital funding proposed. Review pathways and future development opportunities.**
Laleham Gap	**Explore a satellite provision for EBSA pupils.**
Stone Bay	**Improve specialist accommodation.**
SEMH Dimension	
Bower Grove	**Off-site expansion and enhanced intervention spaces on main site**
Elms	**Off-site integration centre and improved support spaces.**
Goldwyn	**Consolidation of provision and additional intervention spaces.**
Nore Academy	**New school – no capital investment planned.**
Portal House	**Off-site integration centre, potentially shared.**
Rowhill School	**On-site nurture/vocational centre and intervention space improvements.**
St Anthony's	**Remodel existing accommodation and off-site integration centre.**
The Orchard	**Modular expansion and off-site integration centre**
Profound Severe and Complex Needs (PSCN) (DfE: Cognition and Learning; C&L)	
Five Acre Wood	**Completion of the 3rd phase of the conversion of the Oxford Road building to provide additional accommodation for the school.**
Foreland Fields	**Increase classroom capacity, access, parking and hygiene facilities.**
Ifield	**Increase teaching space and improve site access and circulation.**
Leigh Academy Milestone	**Replace Post-16 accommodation and enhance key facilities, while reviewing the future suitability of satellite provision.**
Meadowfield	**Reconfigure and enhance both sites to increase capacity and suitability.**
Nexus	**No further capital investment recommended at this stage.**
Oakley	**Improve accommodation, accessibility and site infrastructure across both sites. Address significant maintenance issues (separately).**
St Nicholas'	**Provide a new SEN block and targeted site improvements.**
The Beacon	**No further capital investment recommended.**
Wyvern	**Address sixth form and capacity pressures.**
Valence	**Address suitability issues for PMLD cohort.**

Financial implications:
Capital:
Capital costs related to these proposals will be funded through KCC's High Needs Capital Grant allocations provided by the DfE. The grant can be used to either create new school places, improve existing facilities or/and support mainstream inclusion.

The annual grant allocations are combined, along with other specific funding sources, to fund the programme of works to support the development of High Needs Provision across Kent. Of the £132m available to date, c£84m has been either spent or committed to current known schemes, such as the £20m allocated to the SRP expansion programme. The balance of £48m is intended to support new projects, such as the sufficiency of SRPs and special school places and SEND support in mainstream schools.

The estimated cost of delivering the accommodation proposed in this paper is £35m. It is recognised that this is ambitious and will require considerable prioritisation within each project.

Revenue:
The Council funds the revenue costs of maintained special school places from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant, a specific ring-fenced revenue grant from the DfE. These are paid as a "rate per place" in line with Government requirements. The Government is intending to move to national funding model for children with Special Education Needs as part of the wider SEN reforms whereby different levels of funding will be linked to newly developed "Specialist Provision Packages".

Legal implications:
The proposals support discharging the Councils duties to:

- secure that sufficient school places;
- promote high standards and ensure fair access to opportunity for education and training; and to
- keep under review the educational provision, training provision and social care provision for children and young people who have special educational needs or a disability.

Some projects may require consultations to be undertaken in line with:

- "Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools", August 2025 statutory guidance.
- "Making significant changes to an academy", August 2025 non-statutory guidance.

Regard must also be had to the Council's public sector equalities duty, and to procurement regulations.

Equalities implications:
The proposals support more children and young people to attend specialist provision in their locality, reducing travel distances and improving choice. They also seek to

ensure equity, as far as possible within the resources available, in the facilities available to children and young people in Kent's state maintained special schools. An EQIA has been completed, and no equalities issues have been identified.

Data Protection implications:
Screening indicates there are no personal data is required for the implementation of this proposal.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee, on 26 November 2026, endorsed the proposed recommendation.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:
The DfE's most recent position on high needs capital is that this should be directed to mainstream provision, in particular through the provision of inclusion bases. The Council has already committed £20m towards this.

The option of making no further investment in Kent's state maintained special schools was dismissed. For some, the overcrowding is creating operation challenges and increasing health and safety risks. Additionally, the Council has to discharge its statutory duty to make suitable provision available to all children. The current context means we do need to continue supporting Kent's state maintained special schools to accommodate additional pupils safely, while work in the mainstream sector continues. Doing nothing was not a viable option.

The option of making significant investment in a few special schools to address fully their issues was also rejected in favour of supporting a greater number of schools, albeit to a lesser degree.

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

....

Signed Date

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EQIA Submission – ID Number
Section A

EQIA Title
Maintained special school capacity and capital programme

Responsible Officer
Nicola Phillips - CY EDSEN

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)
David Adams - CY EDSEN

Type of Activity

Service Change
No
Service Redesign
No
Project/Programme
Project/Programme
Commissioning/Procurement
No
Strategy/Policy
No
Details of other Service Activity
No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate
Children Young People and Education
Responsible Service
Education
Responsible Head of Service
David Adams - CY EDSEN
Responsible Director
Christine McInnes - CY CDO

Aims and Objectives

Pressures remain both locally and nationally on state maintained special school capacity. This pressure takes two forms – having enough places to meet need (known as sufficiency) and having suitable premises to meet changing needs (known as suitability). For Kent the sufficiency pressures have led to our maintained special schools facing a number of challenges, for example over-crowding, increased class sizes, reallocation of specialist spaces to general teaching rooms, and shortages of intervention and therapy spaces. These have also led to the increased use of the independent and non-maintained sectors.

A capital programmes to alleviate the sufficiency and suitability challenges and support Kent's maintained special schools to continue to deliver high-quality education to their pupils is proposed.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?
Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?
Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?
Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

School leaders of the 25 State Maintained Special School, Multi-Academy Trust leaders of those associated special schools, and leaders of 2 large SRPs, KSENT representatives.

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

No

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

Staff/Volunteers

Residents/Communities/Citizens

No

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

Demand for specialist provision continues to grow both locally and nationally, creating a need to expand capacity and enhance learning environments across Kent's maintained special schools. A targeted capital investment programme will increase the availability of local specialist places, improve the quality and suitability of accommodation, support the delivery of therapeutic and specialist interventions, and enable schools to meet a wider range of needs more effectively. Collectively, these improvements will strengthen Kent's maintained special school sector, improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND, and reduce dependence on higher-cost independent placements.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

No

Details of negative impacts for Age

Not Applicable

Mitigating Actions for Age

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

Not Applicable

20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

Are there negative impacts for Disability?

No

Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Disability

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Disability

Not Applicable

21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex

Are there negative impacts for Sex

No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

David Adams
Interim Deputy Director – Effectiveness, Sufficiency and Skills
Kent County Council
Kroner House
Eurogate Business Park
Ashford
Kent
TN24 8XU

11 November 2026

Dear David Adams,

Re: Strategic Investment Proposal for Maintained Special Schools

We are writing on behalf of the Kent Special Educational Needs Trust (KsENT) to express our support for your proposal for strategic investment across all maintained special schools in Kent.

We warmly welcome this significant piece of work and recognise it as the first time in recent history that the infrastructure needs of all maintained special schools have been considered collectively and strategically in line with the future SEND sufficiency needs of children and young people progressing through the education system. This represents an important opportunity to ensure that our specialist provisions are fit for purpose and capable of meeting increasing and evolving demand across the county.

As school leaders, we particularly value the recent collaborative and transparent approach that has been taken throughout this process. The opportunity for open dialogue between the Local Authority and maintained special schools has allowed for a shared understanding of priorities and challenges, helping to ensure that finite resources can be targeted where they will have the greatest impact on outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people in Kent.

We also commend this work as the first substantial strategic initiative led by a Local Authority officer that has the potential to make a meaningful contribution towards addressing the escalating expenditure on Non-Maintained Independent Special Schools. By investing in and strengthening maintained specialist provision, Kent has an opportunity to build sustainable local capacity, improve outcomes for children closer to their communities, and deliver better value for public funds over the longer term.

Importantly, we believe the success of this programme will rely on continued partnership working. Ongoing engagement with maintained special schools will be essential to ensure investment decisions remain informed by operational realities, emerging needs, and the experiences of children, young people, and their families. We welcome the commitment shown to date and look forward to maintaining this constructive dialogue as proposals develop.

As KsENT, we support this proposal being presented to Cabinet and recognise the strategic importance of securing investment in Kent's maintained special school estate. We remain committed to working collaboratively with the Local Authority and KsENT schools to ensure that future developments deliver meaningful and lasting improvements for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities across the county.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment in bringing forward this important and much-needed programme of work.

Yours sincerely,





Maddie Arnold-Jones, Co-Chair
Kent Special Educational Needs Trust

Kerry Greene, Co-Chair

From: Christine McInnes, Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education

Beverly Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

To: **Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee –** 26 November 2026

Subject: Specialist Resourced Provision – Update Report

Decision no: Update on implementation of 25/00085. New decision 26/00073

Key Decision: The proposals affect more than 2 Electoral Divisions

Classification: *Unrestricted*

Past Pathway of report: Previous report - Children's, Young People & Education Cabinet Committee 18 November 2025

Electoral Division: All

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary:
The aim of this report is to update the Cabinet Committee on the progress implementing the specialist resource provision expansion programme approved under Key Decision 25/00085 and to seek approval to substitute/ amend identified SRP schemes where the originally approved proposals can no longer be implemented. The proposed changes remain within the previously approved £20m capital envelope.

Recommendation(s):

The Children Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to;

Consider and endorse or make recommendations the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the proposed decision at set out within the PROD to approve the substitute and amended Specialist Resourced Provision (SRP) schemes identified in this report, replacing those schemes approved under Decision 25/00085 which can no longer be progressed as originally proposed.

1. Introduction

1.1 At its meeting of 8 November 2025, the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee endorsed a proposal to significantly increase specialist resource base provision (SRP) in the County.

1.2 The DfE's definition of a SRP is: "*resourced provision are places that are reserved at a mainstream school for pupils with a specific type of SEN, taught for at least half of their time within mainstream classes, but requiring a base and some specialist facilities around the school".*

1.3 The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills subsequently approved £20m to deliver the proposed schemes which together would deliver 889 additional places if all implemented (Decision 25/00085).

1.4 The Cabinet Member's decision has provided the authority to officers to progress the programme at pace, but within a tight framework. To ensure transparency in implementing this decision an Officer Record of Decision has been taken on each project as it has progressed to delivery. This report on progress further adds to the transparency and accountability.

2. Progress to date on creating new SRP places

2.1 For consistency and ease of cross referencing, this report uses the same Table titles as those in the November 2025 paper and the Kent Commissioning Plan 2026-30. These have been updated with a progress column. Tables 8c to 8f show that as at September 2026 six new SRPs have opened, two existing SRPs have been expanded and one informal provision has been formally designated as an SRP. Together these schemes have added 98 places for September 2026 of which at the start of term 99 have been filled.

2.2 It is important that the new SRPs deliver high-quality provision from day one. It is also important that new provision can grow sustainably, ensuring that the whole school culture adapts to having an SRP, and that parental confidence in the provision is strong. We have created a comprehensive support package for schools hosting new SRPs, and a sector network is in place to share practice, challenges and ensure we have a continuous improvement loop in place. Pupil admissions are progressive, to ensure that students are settled before further places are offered. The phasing is set out in Tables 8c to 8f.

2.3 Further provisions will open in September 2027 as noted from Tables 8c to 8f. A number of new secondary school provision will come online in September 2027. This is important as we move through the Phase Transfer process for children with EHCPs and seek to avoid independent school placements being required because maintained provision is not available. This avoids five to eight years of higher independent placement costs. It also opens capacity in older year groups to help avoid pupils moving from mainstream settings straight to independent schools in years 8-11.

2.4 Tables 8c to 8f also identify schemes that we have not been able to progress. There will be a variety of reasons for this, for example the governing body/trust decided not to proceed, the school's Ofsted grading has become an

impediment to change, or the value for money has influenced the decision. The Cabinet Member's decision provides some scope for change. If the planning group has been named there is flexibility as to which school in that group is taken forward. However, where a school has been named, or where no school in a planning group could be proposed, the decision does not allow for a different school or planning group to be substituted. This was deliberate. It ensures that more material changes are reported and approval for these sought. Included in Tables 8c to 8f are proposed substitute schemes, which require approval, to replace those that cannot be progressed. The new proposals are the same in terms of need type and district. If approved, these amended proposals would continue to be delivered within the £20m agreed capital envelope.

2.5 The Tables below use the following definitions for consistency:

- **Delivered:** The SRP is fully operational, with a Lead Teacher in post and pupils on roll in the provision.
- **In Progress:** The school has been confirmed with the SRP expected to open before or for September 2027. Public consultation has been completed, feasibility funding has been approved, and construction works are underway.
- **Finalising with School:** The scheme remains under development. The school has not yet received formal approval from its Governing Body or Trust, and/or public consultation has not been completed. Feasibility design work may still be ongoing and construction has not yet commenced.
- **Withdrawn:** The school has formally notified KCC that it does not wish to proceed with the scheme.
- **Substitute:** The school is a substitute after the original school withdrew from the project.

Figure 8c: Planned New/Expanded SRPs in East Kent

East Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	Progress Status	SEN Type	District	New Places Available Sept 2026	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
						2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
Lansdowne Primary School	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Swale	11	9	0	0	0	0	20
Richmond Primary	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Swale	12	12	8	8	0	0	40
Newlands Primary*	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	0	10	7	3	0	0	20
Herne Bay Primary Planning Group	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Canterbury	0	10	10	0	0	0	20
Faversham Primary PG Bysing Wood	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Swale	0	15	5	0	0	0	20
Total planned primary SRP places					**23**	56	30	11	0	0	**120**
Royal Harbour Academy	2026/27	Withdrawn	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thanet Non-Selective PG	2028/29	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	0	15	15	20	0	0	50
Canterbury Coastal PG**	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Canterbury	0	15	15	10	0	0	40
Isle of Sheppey Non-Selective Secondary	2027/28	Withdrawn	ASD/SLCN	Swale	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Faversham non-selective PG	2027/28	Substitute; finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Swale	0	10	10	0	0	0	20
Thanet Non-Selective (2) PG	2027/28	Substitute; finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	0	10	10	10	0	0	30
Total planned secondary SRP places						50	50	40			**140**
Total planned SRP places					**23**	106	80	51	0	0	**260**

Blue font: Schemes delayed from planned 2025 KCP delivery
*Newlands: potential additional number of places reduced from 40 in consultation with the school
**Canterbury Coastal Planning Group: potential additional number of places reduced from 50 in consultation with the school

Figure 8d: Planned/New Expanded SRPs in North Kent

North Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	Progress Status	SEN Type	District	New Places Available Sept 2026	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
						2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
Alkerden CoE Academy (Primary)	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Dartford	0	4	3	3	5	0	15
Rosherville CoE Primary Academy	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Gravesham	0	6	5	4	0	0	15
Edenbridge PG: Edenbridge Primary School	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Sevenoaks	0	7	7	6	0	0	20
Sevenoaks Rural North PG: St Edmunds, CEP	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Sevenoaks	7	7	6	0	0	0	20
Swanley PG: St Marys	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Sevenoaks	0	6	5	4	0	0	15
Total planned primary SRP places					**7**	30	26	17	5	0	**85**
Alkerden CoE Academy (Secondary)	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Dartford	0	6	6	6	7	0	25
Gravesham and Longfield PG:* St George's CoE School	2028 onwards	Withdrawn	ASD/SLCN	Gravesham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sevenoaks and Borough Green PG: Knole Academy	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Sevenoaks	0	8	12	10	0	0	30
Dartford and Swanley non-selective PG	2028/29	Substitute: finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Dartford	0	0	10	10	10	0	30
Total planned secondary SRP places					**0**	14	28	26	17	0	**85**
Total planned SRP places					**7**	44	54	43	22	0	**170**

Blue font: Schemes delayed from planned 2025 KCP delivery.
*St George's SRP considerably delayed as part of the DfE rebuild decision, as site constraints and temporary accommodation arrangements prevent delivery at this stage.

Figure 8e: Planned New/Expanded SRPs in South Kent

South Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	Progress Status	SEN Need Type	District	New Places Available Sept 2026	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
						2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
Ashford Oaks Community Primary School (expansion)	2026/27	Delivered	ASD	Ashford	10	0	0	0	0	0	10
The Downs CoE Primary School	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Dover	6	4	4	0	0	0	14
Ashford North Planning Group*	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	0	7	7	6	0	0	20
Ashford East Planning Group*	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	0	7	7	6	0	0	20
Tenterden South Planning Group	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Ashford South Planning Group	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Total planned primary places					**16**	30	28	18	0	0	**92**
Homewood School and 6th Form Centre	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	10	20	20	0	0	0	50
Dover Christchurch Academy (expansion)	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Dover	35	0	0	0	0	0	35
St Edmunds's Catholic School	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Dover	7	5	8	0	0	0	20
The Turner Free School** (formalisation)	2026/27	Delivered	C&L, Speech and Language	Folkestone & Hythe	0	10	10	0	0	0	20
Total planned secondary SRP places					**52**	35	38	0	0	0	**125**
Total planned SRP places					**68**	65	66	18	0	0	**217**

Blue font: Schemes delayed from planned 2025 KCP delivery.
*Ashford North and East Planning Group: increase of places from 14 in consultation with the school
**The Turner Free School: 30 informal places are now formal SRP places; this legally add 30 places to add to the total of new places

Figure 8f: Planned New/Expanded SRPs in West Kent

West Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	Progress Status	SEN Need Type	District	New Places available Sept 2026	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
						2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
South East Maidstone Town	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
North West Maidstone Town	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Maidstone Rural	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Tunbridge Wells Town 1 East Planning Group	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Tunbridge Wells Town 2 West Planning Group	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Tunbridge Wells Rural	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Total planned primary SRP places					**0**	36	30	18	0	0	**84**
St Augustine (expansion)	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	0	8	12	10	0	0	30
Maidstone Secondary Town	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	0	8	12	10	0	0	30
Skinners' Kent Academy	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	0	8	12	10	0	0	30
Total planned secondary SRP places					**0**	24	36	30	0	0	**90**
Total planned SRP places					**0**	60	66	48	0	0	**174**

Blue font: Schemes delayed from planned 2025 KCP delivery.

2.6 During the course of this year, it became evident that due to the falling roll at Langafel CEP School, the current size of its SRP (40 pupils) was disproportionate and risked destabilising the school. As part of the regular commissioning arrangements an Officer decision (with Cabinet Member support) was made to increase capacity at an alternative setting, Temple Hill PS, to enable provision at Langafel to be scaled back over time, with the aim of reducing to 15 places. Temple Hill is being expanded by 30 places, at a cost of £418,000 (capital and revenue) which is outside of the £20m agreed envelope, but within the schemes of delegation for the relevant officers.

3. Progress on changing SRP designations

3.1 Decision 25/00085 included changing the service delivery for children with Visual Impairment and ceasing to commission SRP provision for this need type. The VI designation at Reculver PS has been removed following the statutory process to broaden their designation for ASD/SCLN. Morehall has commenced the process to remove their VI designation and close the provision. The VI designation at The Archbishop's School is the only remaining provision and discussions are ongoing with the school regarding the closure of the provision and the potential broadening of the school's designation.

3.2 Table 8g of the KCP 2026-30 identified a number of schools where proposals to broaden their designations were expected to come forward. A statutory proposal is being progressed at Hythe Bay CEPS, to move from SLCN to ASD/SLCN, and Reculver CEPS has moved from C&L, VI to ASD/SLCN. Discussions with the other schools in Table 8g continue. It has always been intended that such changes would evolve, rather than be forced.

3.3 Table 8g of the November 2025 paper included Bromstone CPS. This table related to proposed changes of designation. With hindsight this school should have been included in Table 8c. Bromstone does not have a designated SRP. Its provision is "informal" and should be regularised through the appropriate statutory process, as has happened with that at Turner Free School. It was originally commissioned for 14 places but now has 53 children on roll. Its accommodation is not fit for purpose. Feasibility work has identified that to meet the required standards (BB104) the school requires internal space reconfiguration, new classroom extensions and associated external areas to meet the specific requirements of an SRP for pupils with ASD and/or SLCN at an estimated cost of £1.4m. A separate proposal to regularise this position and seek funding for the scheme will come forward in due course.

4. Options considered and dismissed and associated risk.

4.1 The November 2025 paper set out the options considered and dismissed and the risks.

4.2 The option of not replacing schemes that had become undeliverable was dismissed because there is an identified need for additional SRP provision, particularly in the secondary school sector.

5. Financial Implications

Capital

5.1 Decision 25/00085 allocated £20m to deliver the SRP expansion programme, to be funded from the High Needs Capital Grant (a ring-fenced capital grant from the Department of Education). The proposed substitute schemes set out in Tables 8c to 8f above do not change that funding envelop. Projects will be prioritised to ensure costs remain within the overall budget allocated. Additional projects over and above those set out in table 8c to 8f are not part of this key decision and approval will be sought, separately through the appropriate governance route.

Revenue:

5.2 As set out in Decision 25/00085, one-off set up costs will be funded from the growth fund of the Dedicated Schools Grant. The Council commissions schools to provide the support and provision provided in an SRP on a day-to-day basis, normally by paying a pre-agreed rate per place. The Council funds the revenue costs of SRP places from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant, a specific ring-fenced revenue grant from the DfE.

5.3 The revised list of schemes reduces the total number of potential SRP places from 889 to 821, but this remains subject to ongoing discussions with schools. This is based on the latest forecast requirements.

6. Legal implications

6.1 The legal implications were set out in the papers for Decision 25/00085.

7. Equalities implications

7.1 The EQIA for the SRP expansion programme was considered as part of the process leading to Decision 25/00085. This has been reviewed and remains unchanged. The main programme will expand provision to enable more children and young people to attend specialist provision in their locality, reducing travel distances and improving choice.

8. Data Protection Implications

8.1 A full DPIA was published as part of the process for Decision 25/00085.

9. Other corporate implications

9.1 The existing SRP expansion programme is progressing with support from the Infrastructure Team, the Engagement and Consultation Team and Legal Services.

10. Governance

10.1 The proposed decision seeks approval to substitute or amend specific Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) schemes previously approved under Key Decision 25/00085, where the original proposals can no longer be progressed as intended.

10.2 Key Decision 25/00085 established the governance and delegated authority for implementation of the approved SRP programme, including commissioning, statutory processes, capital expenditure and contractual arrangements. However, those delegations relate to the schemes approved through that decision and identified within Tables 8c to 8f of the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026-30.

10.3 The proposed substitute/amended schemes therefore require further Member approval. Should the decision be approved, it will be implemented in accordance with the existing delegations established under Key Decision 25/00085 and within the previously approved £20m capital expenditure limit. Any proposals outside the scope of the approved programme will be subject to the appropriate separate decision-making process.

11. Conclusions

11.1 Delivery of the agreed SRP expansion programme continues apace. Adjustments are required to ensure full deliver.

12. Background Documents

- *Report to CYPE Cabinet Committee 8 November 2025*
- *Decision Maker's Report – November 2025*
- *Record of Decision* (Decision:25/00099)
- *Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2026-30*

13. Appendices

13.1 Proposed Record of Decision (Appendix 1)

14. Contact details

Report Author: David Adams Job title: Interim Deputy Director – Effectiveness, Sufficiency and Skills Telephone number: 03000 414989 Email address: david.adams@kent.gov.uk	Director: *Christine McInnes* Job title: Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education Telephone number: 03000 418913 Email address: christine.mcinnes@kent.gov.uk

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:	DECISION NUMBER:
Beverly Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	26/00073

Executive Decision – key decision

26/00073 – Specialist Resource Provision Update.

Proposed Decision:

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is being asked to:

a) APPROVE the substitute and amended Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) schemes identified in Tables 8c to 8f of the report, replacing the relevant schemes previously approved under Key Decision 25/00085, within the existing £20m High Needs Capital Grant allocation;

b) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education to take all necessary actions to implement the schemes approved under a), including, but not limited to, undertaking all necessary negotiations and consultations, progressing the establishment, expansion and delivery of SRP places, entering into any necessary contractual arrangements, and approving capital expenditure on individual schemes, subject to the total capital expenditure remaining within the approved £20m allocation and, where an individual scheme involves capital expenditure above £1m, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills;

c) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, to issue any required public notices and approve proposals on behalf of the Local Authority; and

d) DELEGATE authority to the Director for Education and Special Educational Needs to enter into any necessary contracts and service level agreements with mainstream primary and secondary schools providing new or existing SRPs, in accordance with the arrangements approved under Key Decision 23/00128.

Reasons for decision:

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills approved £20m to deliver a capital programme to significantly increase specialist resource base provision (SRP) in the County. The proposed schemes would deliver 889 additional places if all implemented (Decision 25/00085). The decision provided the authority to officers to progress the programme at pace, but within a tight framework. To ensure transparency in implementing the decision an Officer Record of Decision has been taken on each project as it has progressed to delivery.

As of September 2026, six new SRPs have opened, two existing SRPs have been expanded and one informal provision has been formally designated as an SRP. Together these schemes have added 98 places for September 2026 of which at the start of term 99 have been filled.

Further provisions will open in September 2027 as noted from Tables 8c to 8f.

Tables 8c to 8f also identify schemes that we have not been able to progress for a variety of reasons, for example the governing body/trust decided not to proceed. My decision provided some scope for change, but intentionally this was limited to ensure more material changes were reported and approval for these sought. Included in Tables 8c to 8f are proposed substitute schemes, which require approval, to replace those that cannot be progressed. The new proposals are the same in terms of need type and district. These amended proposals would continue to be delivered within the £20m agreed capital envelope.

Figure 8c: Planned New/Expanded SRPs in East Kent

East Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	Progress Status	SEN Type	District	New Places Available Sept 2026	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
						2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
Lansdowne Primary School	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Swale	11	9	0	0	0	0	20
Richmond Primary	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Swale	12	12	8	8	0	0	40
Newlands Primary*	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	0	10	7	3	0	0	20
Herne Bay Primary Planning Group	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Canterbury	0	10	10	0	0	0	20
Faversham Primary PG Bysing Wood	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Swale	0	15	5	0	0	0	20
Total planned primary SRP places					**23**	56	30	11	0	0	**120**
Royal Harbour Academy	2026/27	Withdrawn	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thanet Non-Selective PG	2028/29	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	0	15	15	20	0	0	50
Canterbury Coastal PG**	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Canterbury	0	15	15	10	0	0	40
Isle of Sheppey Non-Selective Secondary	2027/28	Withdrawn	ASD/SLCN	Swale	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Faversham Non-Selective PG	2027/28	Substitute; finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Swale	0	10	10	0	0	0	20
Thanet Non-Selective (2) PG	2027/28	Substitute; finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Thanet	0	10	10	10	0	0	30
Total planned secondary SRP places						50	50	40			**140**
Total planned SRP places					**23**	106	80	51	0	0	**260**

Blue font: Schemes delayed from planned 2025 KCP delivery
*Newlands: potential additional number of places reduced from 40 in consultation with the school
**Canterbury Coastal Planning Group: potential additional number of places reduced from 50 in consultation with the school

Figure 8d: Planned/New Expanded SRPs in North Kent

North Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	Progress Status	SEN Type	District	New Places Available Sept 2026	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
						2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
Alkerden CoE Academy (Primary)	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Dartford	0	4	3	3	5	0	15
Rosherville CoE Primary Academy	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Gravesham	0	6	5	4	0	0	15
Edenbridge PG: Edenbridge Primary School	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Sevenoaks	0	7	7	6	0	0	20
Sevenoaks Rural North PG: St Edmunds, CEP	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Sevenoaks	7	7	6	0	0	0	20
Swanley PG: St Marys	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Sevenoaks	0	6	5	4	0	0	15
Total planned primary SRP places					**7**	30	26	17	5	0	**85**
Alkerden CoE Academy (Secondary)	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Dartford	0	6	6	6	7	0	25
Gravesham and Longfield PG:* St George's CoE School	2028 onwards	Withdrawn	ASD/SLCN	Gravesham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sevenoaks and Borough Green PG: Knole Academy	2027/28	In progress	ASD/SLCN	Sevenoaks	0	8	12	10	0	0	30
Dartford and Swanley Non-Selective PG	2028/29	Substitute: finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Dartford	0	0	10	10	10	0	30
Total planned secondary SRP places					**0**	14	28	26	17	0	**85**
Total planned SRP places					**7**	44	54	43	22	0	**170**

Blue font: Schemes delayed from planned 2025 KCP delivery.
*St George's SRP considerably delayed as part of the DfE rebuild decision, as site constraints and temporary accommodation arrangements prevent delivery at this stage.

Figure 8e: Planned New/Expanded SRPs in South Kent

South Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	Progress Status	SEN Need Type	District	New Places Available Sept 2026	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
						2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
Ashford Oaks Community Primary School (expansion)	2026/27	Delivered	ASD	Ashford	10	0	0	0	0	0	10
The Downs CoE Primary School	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Dover	6	4	4	0	0	0	14
Ashford North Planning Group*	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	0	7	7	6	0	0	20
Ashford East Planning Group*	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	0	7	7	6	0	0	20
Tenterden South Planning Group	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Ashford South Planning Group	2027/28	Finalising with school	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Total planned primary places					**16**	30	28	18	0	0	**92**
Homewood School and 6th Form Centre	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Ashford	10	20	20	0	0	0	50
Dover Christchurch Academy (expansion)	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Dover	35	0	0	0	0	0	35
St Edmunds's Catholic School	2026/27	Delivered	ASD/SLCN	Dover	7	5	8	0	0	0	20
The Turner Free School** (formalisation)	2026/27	Delivered	C&L, Speech and Language	Folkestone & Hythe	0	10	10	0	0	0	20
Total planned secondary SRP places					**52**	35	38	0	0	0	**125**
Total planned SRP places					**68**	65	66	18	0	0	**217**

Blue font: Schemes delayed from planned 2025 KCP delivery.
*Ashford North and East Planning Group: increase of places from 14 in consultation with the school
**The Turner Free School: 30 informal places are now formal SRP places; this legally add 30 places to add to the total of new places

Figure 8f: Planned New/Expanded SRPs in West Kent

West Provision: SRP	Date of Opening	Progress Status	SEN Need Type	District	New Places available Sept 2026	Total Additional Places by Year					Total New Places
						2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	
South East Maidstone Town	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
North West Maidstone Town	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Maidstone Rural	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Tunbridge Wells Town 1 East Planning Group	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Tunbridge Wells Town 2 West Planning Group	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Tunbridge Wells Rural	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	0	6	5	3	0	0	14
Total planned primary SRP places					**0**	36	30	18	0	0	**84**
St Augustine (expansion)	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	0	8	12	10	0	0	30
Maidstone Secondary Town	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Maidstone	0	8	12	10	0	0	30
Skinners' Kent Academy	2027/28	Finalising with School	ASD/SLCN	Tunbridge Wells	0	8	12	10	0	0	30
Total planned secondary SRP places					**0**	24	36	30	0	0	**90**
Total planned SRP places					**0**	60	66	48	0	0	**174**

Blue font: Schemes delayed from planned 2025 KCP delivery.

Financial implications:
Capital:
Decision 25/00085 allocated £20m to deliver the SRP expansion programme, to be funded from the High Needs Capital Grant (a ring-fenced capital grant from the Department of Education). The substitute schemes set out in Tables 8c to 8f above do not change that funding envelop. Projects will be prioritised to ensure costs remain within the overall budget allocated. Additional projects over and above those set out in table 8c to 8f are not part of this key decision and approval will be sought, separately through the appropriate governance route.

Revenue:
As set out in Decision 25/00085, one-off set up costs will be funded from the growth fund of the Dedicated Schools Grant. The Council commissions schools to provide the support and provision provided in an SRP on a day-to-day basis, normally by paying a pre-agreed rate per place. The Council funds the revenue costs of SRP places from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant, a specific ring-fenced revenue grant from the DfE.

The revised list of schemes reduces the total number of potential SRP places from 889 to 821, but this remains subject to ongoing discussions with schools. This is based on the latest forecast requirements.

Legal implications:
The legal implications were set out in the papers for Decision 25/00085.

Equalities implications:
The EQIA for the SRP expansion programme was set considered as part of the process leading to Decision 25/00085. This has been reviewed and remains unchanged. The main programme will expand provision to enable more children and young people to attend specialist provision in their locality, reducing travel distances and improving choice.

Data Protection implications:
A full DPIA was published as part of the process for Decision 25/00085.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee, will consider the proposal on 26 November 2026,

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Any alternatives considered and rejected:
The option of not replacing schemes that had become undeliverable was dismissed because there is an identified need for additional SRP provision, particularly in the secondary school sector.

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

....

Signed Date

EQIA Submission – ID Number
Section A

EQIA Title
Specialist Resource Provision Review and Commissioning Intentions

Responsible Officer
Marisa White - CY EDSEN

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)
Siobhan Price - CY EDSEN

Type of Activity

Service Change
Service Change

Service Redesign
No

Project/Programme
Project/Programme

Commissioning/Procurement
No

Strategy/Policy
No

Details of other Service Activity
No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate
Children Young People and Education

Responsible Service
Education and SEND

Responsible Head of Service
Siobhan Price - CY EDSEN

Responsible Director
Christine McInnes - CY EDSEN

Aims and Objectives

The Department for Education expects Local Authorities (LA) to manage their specialist estates efficiently to avoid detriment to schools' educational offers, creating disadvantage to children and young people who have special educational needs (SEND), or the LA's financial position. This means ensuring the sustainability of maintained specialist school places that are appropriately matched to need-type, phases of education and geographical locations.

These proposals sit within the broader context of KCC's transformation of SEND system, working to ensure equitable provision for all children and young people throughout the County and improve outcomes for Kent's most vulnerable children. The programme includes the introduction of a school-to-school model of support (communities of schools) aligned with Health Primary Care Networks (PCNs), a review of the service level agreement for Specialist Resource Provisions to be implemented for September 2026; the introduction of a SEND continuum of need and provision designed to support decision making around support for children and young people, and work on a new funding model to support children and young people with SEND in accessing the curriculum, whether they are being educated in a mainstream school, mainstream with SRP, through an Alternative Curriculum provider or a maintained special school.
The proposals will also come under the Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision and KCC's SEND Sufficiency Plan processes in order to ensure alignment with the Capital budget planning and reporting

process.

The proposals aim to ensure that KCC has sufficient choice of planned provision geographically across the continuum of education: mainstream schools, mainstream schools with specialist resource provision (SRPs), and special schools, focussing on SRPs in this instance. Provision must be financially viable to ensure that it can provide the quality of education and specialist support required to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

The aim is to provide additional specialist SEN and disability spaces through new and expanded Specialist Resource Provisions within mainstream schools. The proposals aim to address pathway gaps (primary to secondary gaps in provision), geographical gaps (where children and young people currently have to travel long distances to access appropriate SRP places, and demand gaps (where children and young people are having to be placed in the Independent, non-maintained sectors due to lack of maintained provision).
The proposals aim to enhance current provision and are positive for the local communities as there will be more places available to meet the needs of children and young people in their local area.

With regard to proposals to change the model of support for the few children and young people with visual impairment (VI) who currently attend SPS specifically for VI. The proposals are to expand the current model that operates across most of the County. Provision must be financially viable to ensure that it can provide the quality of education and specialist support required to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

The low numbers of children and young people in provisions with VI as their designation as well as the location of current provisions only in the east and south of the County means that the viability and accessibility of these SRPs is an issue. The low numbers of children with VI requiring support from an SRP also prohibits expansion of similar provision across the County. As schools have become more inclusive, new accommodation is designed to be more accessible and with improvements in technology, increased numbers of children and young people with visual impairments are choosing to attend their local mainstream schools. These children are supported by the Qualified Teachers for Visual Impairment and other VI specialists from the KCC Specialist Teaching Services for Children and Young People with Sensory Impairment and/or Physical Disabilities. It is proposed that all children and young people with VI will be able to attend their local mainstream schools, if appropriate, and will be supported by the KCC Specialist team providing peripatetic services across the County.

It should be noted that children and young people currently attending the provisions that are affected by the proposals will not be detrimentally impacted. They will remain in the mainstream schools they currently attend and will receive continuing support.

The Qualified Teachers for VI currently employed in relation to the VI SRPs (all are employed by Academy Trusts) all carry additional duties within their schools and will not be detrimentally impacted by these proposals. They will retain links to the central team of specialist teachers in order to ensure that their qualifications and practice are kept up to date.

The recommendations for Post 16 are to remain with current policy- that SRP places are for young people in Years 7 to 11, and to be consistent in our approach to placement of young people Post 16, whilst being able to consider exceptional cases. The Local Authority is required by law to ensure any young person with an EHCP is able to access support required to meet their needs as set out in their EHC Plan. This does not necessarily mean that this has to be through a place in an SRP.

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

No

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

No. There has been targeted consultation as part of the review and gap analysis. This consultation has been with maintained mainstream and special schools and partner organisations. There has not been any public consultation to include service users. It is intended that this will take place linked to individual proposals as they are brought forward through the recognised statutory and democratic process and in accordance with the following government guidance:
Making significant changes to maintained schools
Making significant changes to an academy
Involved so far:
Maintained schools (including Academies, Academy Trusts, Special Schools and PRUs)
Education and Special Educational Needs staff.
Partner organisations (nhs).

Future (on individual proposal basis):
maintained primary, secondary and special school staff and governing bodies including academies
SRP Lead teachers, SENCOs
Parents of children/young people
KENT PACT
KCC Members
Kent MPs
District/Borough/City Councils
All relevant partner agencies
Cof E and RC Diocesan authorities
Relevant representative groups for relevant SEND need types

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

No

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

Staff/Volunteers

Residents/Communities/Citizens

No

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

For children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan, the proposals intend to provide additional specialist SEN and disability spaces through new and expanded Specialist Resource Provisions within mainstream schools. The proposals aim to address pathway gaps (primary to secondary gaps in provision), geographical gaps (where children and young people currently have to travel long distances to access appropriate SRP places, and demand gaps (where children and young people are having to be placed in the Independent, non-maintained sectors due to lack of maintained provision). Where changes are proposed to the designations of current SRPS, these are made to ensure that SRPs can meet the needs of children and young people in their locality.

The proposals (once implemented) should provide more choice for children and young people with SEN who prefer and/or would benefit from remaining with maintained mainstream schools alongside their peers but require the additional support that an SRP brings. They also are designed to reduce the distances some children and young people are currently having to travel to access appropriate provision and enable them to access appropriate education provision more locally.

All children and young people with an EHC Plan for VI who wish to be educated in mainstream schools will be able to attend their local schools and receive the specialist support they require to achieve their potential no matter where in Kent they live.

For children and young people with an EHCP for VI, KCC Specialist Teaching Services for Children and Young People with Sensory Impairment and/or Physical Disabilities will provide the appropriate support to children in their local schools and provide advice, support and training to schools with pupils with complex VI. The Service is already aware of the children with complex VI and the support they require having supported most from birth. The proposed model of support already operates across North and West Kent and in schools without an SRP for VI in East and South Kent.

All children with an Education, Health and Care Plan are entitled to the support set out within that plan no matter whether they attend an SRP or are supported within the mainstream school.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

Yes

Details of negative impacts for Age

Those young people who have been receiving support in an SRP and remain in their mainstream school Post 16 who will no longer be funded for a continued placement in the SRP unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Mitigating Actions for Age

1) Ensure that all decisions that are made in relation to the EHC Needs Assessment, subsequent issuing of an EHC Plan and placements are made consistently in line with decision making protocols and the law.
2) To introduce a robust and well organised procedure for Post 16 transfer, ensuring that all decisions made regarding placements are made consistently and lawfully and that EHCPs are reviewed to reflect the young person's needs as they progress towards adulthood.
3) To ensure that all young people with an EHCP at Post 16 are receiving the support set out within their plan.

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

Alice Gleave – SEN Safety Valve Lead

20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
Yes
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Yes, children and young people with visual impairment in East and South Kent who will no longer be able to attend an SRP specifically for VI. Those few pupils whose families chose an SRP for VI and lived in East and South Kent would no longer have that option to choose from.
Mitigating actions for Disability
1. The option of an SRP with a different designation if the child/young person also had other SEND needs would remain open. 2. The child/young person would receive full support in their local school from fully qualified teachers for VI and other specialist VI staff via the KCC Specialist Teaching Services for Children and Young People with Sensory Impairment and/or Physical Disabilities.
Responsible Officer for Disability
Rory McDonnell – Head of Specialist Teaching Service
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief

Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

Private Fostering Annual Report

April 2026 – March 2027



Authors: Sarah Jenner and Anita Hiller
Senior Manager: Louise Fisher
Date Published: June 2026

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Introduction

This report is a statutory requirement laid down in the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering (July 2005). It provides an overview of Private Fostering in Kent from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026. It should be read alongside the Kent's Private Fostering Statement of Purpose which sets out the minimum standards and expectations for managing private fostering arrangements in Kent.

A private fostering arrangement is one made privately (without the involvement of the local authority) for the care of a child by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention it should last for 28 days or more.

A privately fostered child is defined in the Children Act 1989 as a child under the age of 16 (or under 18 if the child has disabilities) who is cared for and provided with accommodation for 28 days or more by someone who is not the child's parent, or close relative, or someone with parental responsibility. It is a private arrangement between parent and carer.

A private foster carer may be a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child, or someone previously unknown to the child's family who is willing to privately foster a child. The period for which the child is cared for and accommodated by the private foster carer should be continuous, but continuity is not broken by the occasional short break, i.e., the child stays with parent for a weekend.

The private foster carer becomes responsible for providing the day-to-day care of the child promoting and safeguarding their welfare. Overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the privately fostered child remains with the parent or other person with parental responsibility. This is a private arrangement between parent and carer.

The local authority has a duty to satisfy itself the welfare of children who are privately fostered in Kent is being satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted, and to ensure such advice is given to those caring for them as appears to be needed. Local Authorities do not formally approve or register private foster carers.

The Children Act 2004 places duties on local authorities to:

- Raise awareness.
- Make enquiries about the suitability of private foster carers wherever possible before children are cared for by them.
- Undertake an assessment of the child's needs.
- Appoint a Private Fostering officer to monitor compliance with the notification system.

- Include Private Fostering amongst the areas to be addressed by safeguarding boards.
- Introduce minimum standards for Local Authority Private Fostering.

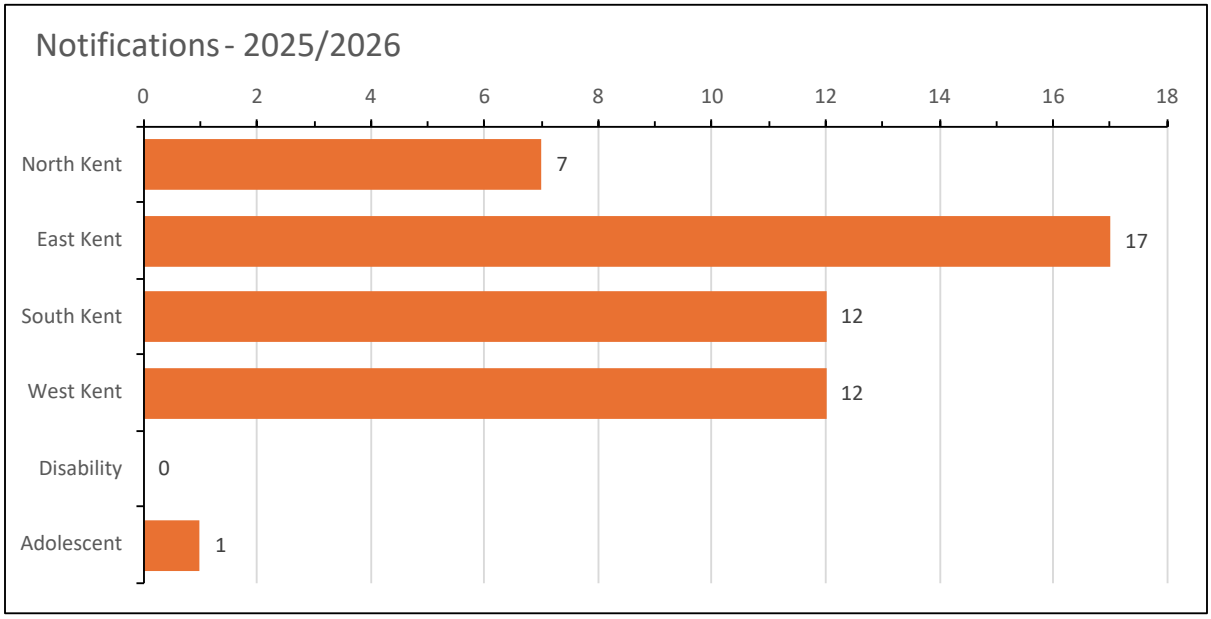
To support our practice with privately fostered children, Kent has a Private Fostering Lead Officer and Social Work Standards Officer who support practice across the county; Private Fostering Leads in each district social work team and Business Support Leads to assist administration. 'Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums' are held with these leads every two months to teach, support and disseminate good practice across the county.

Private Fostering Data

Notifications

In 2025–2026, Kent received 49 new private fostering notifications, representing a 22.5% increase compared to the previous year (40 notifications). This rise indicates a return to previous levels. It is difficult to state emphatically why there is an increase as this is likely due to several reasons including higher numbers of children from other countries studying in Kent, impact of awareness raising, and internal processes, such as out Good Practice Forums and Lead roles in each district having a positive impact.

Graph 1 – Notifications Received by Area April 2025–March 2026



38 private fostering arrangements started between April 2025 to March 2026. There are fewer peak periods across the year compared to previous years, with only slight

increases in April 2025 (6), August 2025 (5) and January 2026 (5). There are usually peaks in particular months due to English Language students or internationals students in secondary schools so the figures this year reflect a decline in these students. The increases could also coincide with school holidays when families experience increased pressures, including financial.

From a national perspective, trends in private fostering notifications should be interpreted with caution. Since 2015, the Department for Education has not collected national private fostering data, meaning there is no comprehensive England-wide dataset against which local authority activity can be benchmarked.

The Coram BAAF Private Fostering Survey 2025 received responses from 61 local authorities, 61% of whom reported between 1 and 20 notifications. The survey highlights that nationally many privately fostered children remain unknown to Children's Services, with notifications most commonly initiated by professionals rather than by parents or carers themselves.

Graph 1 shows notifications the area variations. Strengthening Independence Service (recorded as Disability) had zero arrangements. This is not unusual as the significant needs of children with disabilities make it difficult for them to be looked after by friends or family, so less likely to be privately fostered and more likely to access short breaks care or residential settings.

There has been a small decrease in notifications from the Adolescent Service. Adolescents are generally the age group most likely to move to these type of arrangements so it is important that workers within the Adolescent Service are aware of private fostering and curious about adolescents who may be privately fostered but have not been notified to the local authority. This continues to be part of our plan to raise awareness.

The spread of notifications across areas varies slightly and indications of increased notifications take place where English Language Schools are situated.

Source of Private Fostering Notification

Notifications from Education, particularly from secondary schools, have recovered to some extent from 38% (7) in 2024/2025 to 43% (10) in 2025/2026. There has been a slow and steady return from international students attending secondary schools on a year's programme so this may account for the slight increase.

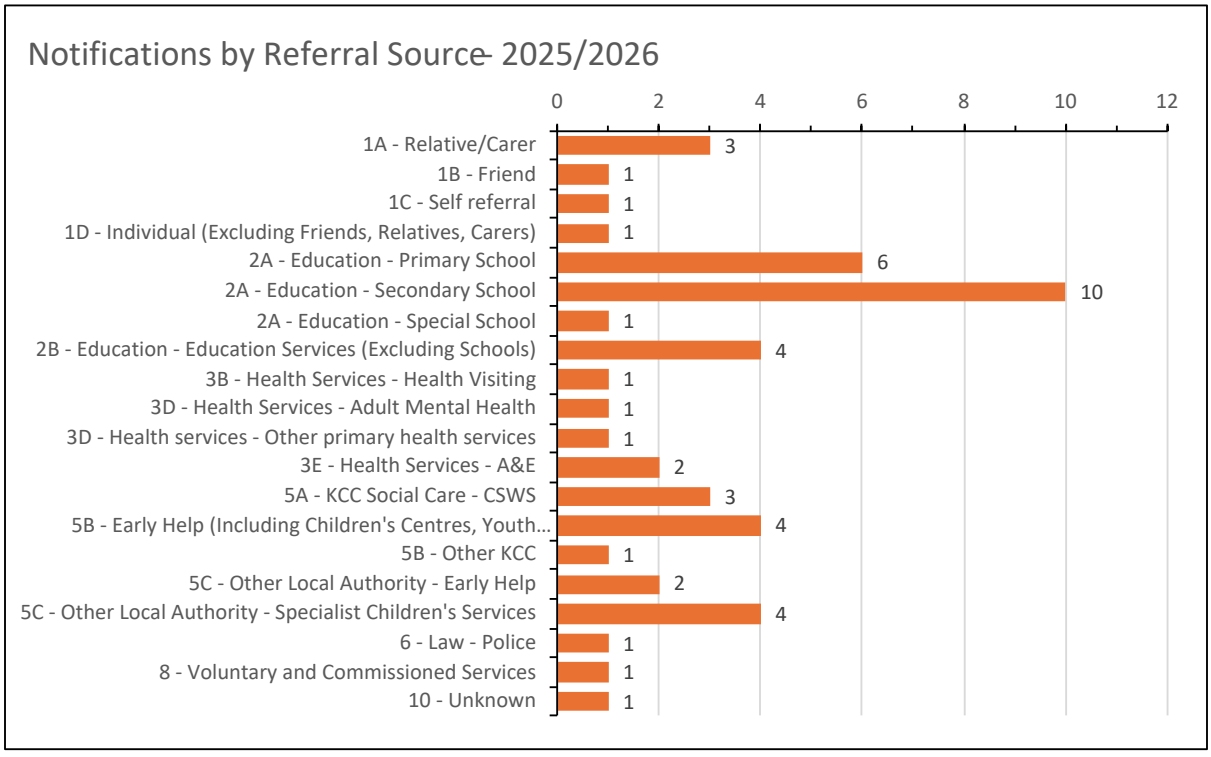
Although the increase is promising, it continues to indicate a need to maintain awareness raising within the education sector schools, as students in private fostering arrangements are vulnerable and need their needs and safety need to be assessed.

Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums are internal meetings attended by Practice Fostering Leads. The Forum has discussed concerns including occasions when English Language Schools fail to notify the local authority when overseas students are placed with hosts for more than 28 days. This can lead to issues resulting in hosts becoming very frustrated when they become aware of the requirements of private fostering assessments and checks. Leads notify the Private Fostering Officer of any issues, who makes contact with the school to help them understand their duties under the legislation.

Notifications from Early Help have decreased slightly from 6 in 2024/2025 to 4 in 2025/2026, although this still is a slight, change, numbers are still higher than previous years. Notifications from Children's Social Work Services increased slightly from 1 in 2024/25 to 3 in 2025/2026. This low number of notifications is concerning as it may indicate children not being identified in these arrangements and increased risk for this vulnerable cohort of children.

Referrals from other local authorities remained relatively consistent with 5 notifications in 2024/2025 to 6 in 2025/2026.

Graph 2 – Referrals by source



Ethnicity, Nationality, Age and Sex

Most children continue to be White British (59.2% from the UK) but of the 38 arrangements initiated, only half had the child's nationality recorded. This indicates that consistent recording of nationality is not yet fully embedded in practice despite work to improve this.

Notifications were again weighted towards the adolescent age band of 12 to 15, with a similar number of females (49%) to males (51%). This is similar to previous years. There were 10 notifications for children 11 years and younger (9 in 2024-2025). private fostering arrangements are only suitable for younger children for a limited period of time. Stable permanent plans should be sought if there is no plan for the child to return home. In the majority of situations for younger children, they return home or go on to kinship care arrangements. In 2025-2026, the private fostering arrangement ended for 2 children due to legal orders being obtained and securing permanence for them.

Permanency planning is monitored within moderations of audits and within the Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums.

Private Fostering Assessments and Annual Reviews

The Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment Record (PFAAR) should be completed within 42 days. Of the 42 PFAARs commenced in 2025/2026, 30 were completed within that period but only one was completed within the required 42-day timescale.

Delays in receiving Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are consistently identified by Service Managers as the primary reason for assessments not being completed within timescales. To help mitigate risk during these delays, alternative checks, such as police checks, are undertaken. In addition, Social Workers are regularly reminded of the importance of applying for DBS checks as early as possible. However, progress is often dependent on Private Foster Carers providing the necessary information promptly. This has been further impacted by changes to the DBS process, which now require applicants to present identification documents in person to the system approver, adding additional logistical challenges.

There is no available data to indicate how many parents were consulted as part of the PFAAR process to capture their views on the private fostering arrangement. This is a requirement and consideration needs to be given about how we could access this data in future.

Service Managers are required to authorise Private Fostering Assessments and Annual Reviews. In 2025/2026, 12 private fostering Annual Reviews were completed but issues with authorisation were identified in all but 4 of these Reviews. The 4 were authorised correctly by the Service Manager but some authorisations were complete by Team Managers. The Annual Reviews require the Review to be reassigned to the Service Manager. This has not happened in all instances or there have been recording errors, such as Service Manager oversight on one sibling but not the other. se issues included. Of these, 4 were authorised by a Service Manager and 4 were authorised by a Team Manager. The other reviews, either had no manager recorded, although in one of these instances the Service Manager had authorised the sibling's review, suggesting this may be a recording error. It was concerning that for one review, there was no manager authorisation. The sign off process for the Annual Review on Liberi does not currently include a prompt for the Team Manager to re-assign to the Service Manager for them to review and authorise the Annual Review. This process will be reviewed and a prompt added to Liberi to ensure more consistent sign off of the Private Fostering Annual Review going forward.

It is positive that the majority of annual reviews had management oversight recorded by either Team Manager or Service Manager which ensures that oversight, challenge and accountability have been applied. However, greater consistency is required in ensuring that Service Managers provide oversight and authorise all arrangements.

Visits to Children

Each Private Fostering visit is recorded on a statutory Regulation 8 form. Children are visited 6 weekly within the first year of the private fostering arrangements, and 12 weekly thereafter. The target for visits to be completed within timescale in Kent is 90%. The average percentage of visits undertaken within timescale over the 12-month period was 92.2% (88.2% in 2024-2025).

One barrier to visiting children is when notifications (expected 6 weeks prior to a private fostering arrangement starting) are for children who are not yet in the country and therefore, cannot be visited in person. This usually applies to international students or Ukrainian children waiting for a visa (60% of the arrangements). The assessments and statutory checks can be started but the child cannot be seen in person until arrival which is then out of the statutory timescale. The initial visit in person is required within 7 days of being in the arrangement, or within 24 hours if from Ukraine. This year the 'Out of Country PF Communication' option for a case note was introduced for children in another country. This allows for an online call to the child and family to introduce the process and reassure the family what will happen when they arrive. This option was only used 10 times. For some Ukrainian

children who are travelling or in temporary accommodation while awaiting visas, it is difficult to make contact online.

The proportion of private fostering visits where children were seen alone in the year April 2025 to end of March 2026 was 60.6%, representing a decrease from 71.7% in 2024/2025. This level of direct engagement is too low, and social workers will be reminded of the need to see these vulnerable children alone. These children should be seen alone to ensure they are safe and able to speak freely so it is concerning that this is still not happening despite consistent efforts to raise awareness at training events and Good Practice Forums. Improving the quality and consistency of management oversight and reinforcing clearer expectations through the quarterly Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums will be prioritised this year. One challenge of seeing children alone is due to the children themselves. When they are in stable and long-term arrangements, they do not see the need for ongoing intervention and visits so it can become a challenge to see them, including seeing them alone. To improve management oversight of this issue, a checklist was introduced last year within the assessment process to prompt Service Managers to consider whether children had been seen alone prior to sign-off.

Private fostering performance is monitored through Power BI dashboards and the monthly performance scorecard, providing improved visibility of activity and compliance. Performance is routinely reviewed within the Good Practice Forums, where issues are identified, practice challenges are explored, and solutions are considered collectively at the quarterly Forums.

The process of recording a Private Fostering visit differs to that for a child subject to Child in Need and this is not always being recorded accurately. This is regularly discussed with Private Fostering Leads and reminders posted on the Private Fostering Teams channel to ensure recording accurately reflects the practice.

Arrangements subject to dual planning

There were 65 different Private Fostering arrangements open during 2025–2026 some of whom had a dual plan of Child Protection or Child in Need. Table 1 indicates the changes from the previous year in respect of dual planning.

Table 1 – Percentage of Private Fostering subject to other plans

Dual plan with Private Fostering	2024-2025	2025-2026
Child Protection	7.5%	13.8% (9 children)
Child in Need	31%	30.8% (21 children)

There has been a notable percentage rise in in children subject to Child Protection Plans, although the numbers remain low, six of the nine children were subject to a Child Protection Plan because of concerns related to the private fostering arrangement, but in all cases appropriate action has been taken to mitigate the risk for the children. It is positive that proactive and robust action is being taken to identify and address the concerns in a timely way.

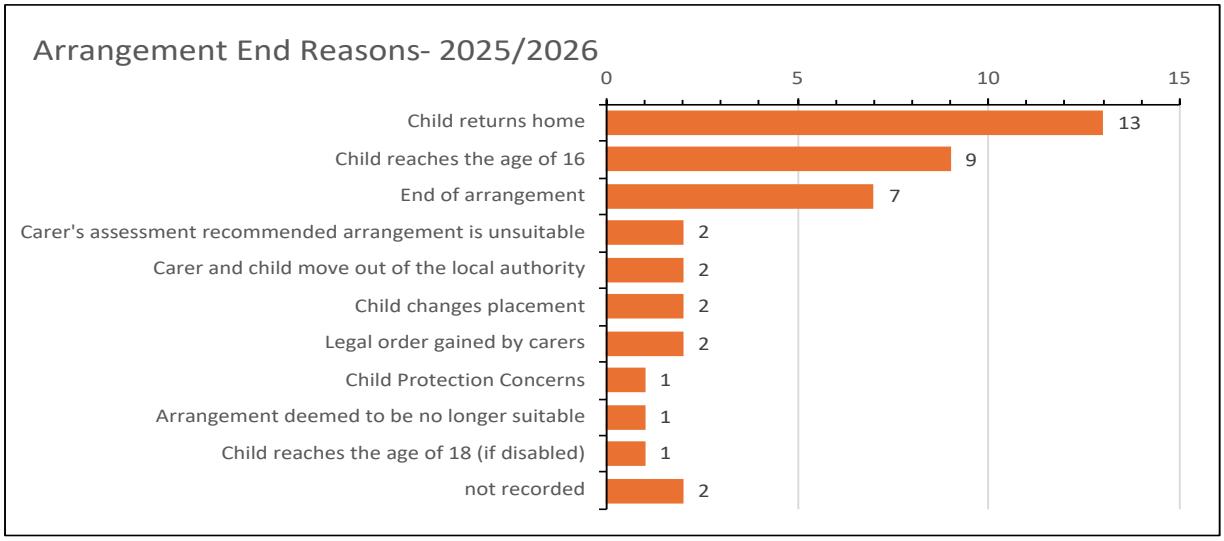
The concerns which lead to dual planning are shown below. As with all child protection planning, there is rigorous oversight by a Social Worker and a Child Protection Chair.

1	Two siblings (one now age 16 and the other 13) chose to live with a family friend following a breakdown in their relationships with their parents. The concerns related to the Private Foster Carer having a long history of alcohol and substance misuse resulting in involvement with the police. An application for Care Orders was initiated. The younger sibling is now subject to an Interim Care Order, placed in a residential children's home. The older sibling is subject to an Interim Supervision Order and has remained living with the Private Foster Carer, a family friend, but with the on-going oversight of the Family Court.
2	A thirteen year old girl who went to stay with her girlfriend's parents, but she is in now looked after under S20 in a children's home. The concerns about the arrangement were related to the quality of care being provided.
3	Two siblings age 1 and 7 were being cared for by their mother's partner in the family home while she served a short prison sentence. She has since been released and is staying with maternal grandmother to the children. Mother has contact on a daily basis with the children. Concerns remain about her and her partner's care and pre-proceedings have commenced in relation to both children.
4	A 15 year old girl moved with the Private Foster Carer to Bedford in September 2025 and a transfer Child Protection Case Conference took place with Bedford assuming case responsibility. The concern about the arrangement was due to the Private Foster Carer involving the child in shoplifting.

Private Fostering Arrangements Ended

During the reporting period 42 arrangements ended. The range of reasons is shown in graph 3. 'Child returns home' data will include international students returning to their country.

Graph 3 – PF arrangements ended by reason



Children aged 16 and over with a disability should remain subject to a private fostering arrangement until they turn 18. While the regulations do not define "disability," current practice applies the Strengthening Independence Service eligibility criteria. This highlights the differing criteria for children with disabilities, balancing the need to support and monitor vulnerability with the principle of proportionate intervention. Updated guidance now allows social work teams discretion to consider each child's individual needs and vulnerabilities when deciding whether to end involvement after age 16. Although Child in Need support can be considered as an alternative, this presents challenges, as it requires consent, whereas Private Fostering is a statutory process with a duty to assess and monitor arrangements. In practice, this cohort is small: last year, only one private fostering arrangement involving a child with a disability ended when the child reached 18.

Children under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme remain subject to private fostering until 18.

The reasons where other arrangements were not deemed suitable are listed below.

Table 2 - Reasons for PF arrangements ended due to no longer being suitable

Child	Age	Reason for end- Arrangement deemed no longer suitable	Current status of child
Child 1	17	Child came to UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme but turned 18 shortly after so plan changed to completion of Child and Family assessment which identified no concerns with the child staying with the family.	No longer in need of service.

Table 3 - Reason for end- Assessment recommended arrangement is unsuitable

Child	Age	Reason for end- Assessment recommended	Current status

		arrangement is unsuitable	of child
Child 2	14	Concerns arose about Private Foster carer being involved in criminality and in possession of substances. Care proceedings initiated as no other family were able to offer care.	Child Looked After s31 (Interim Care Order)
Child 3	14	Private Fostering Arrangement assessed as unsuitable due to carers' cannabis use and carer declining DBS checks.	Child Looked After s.20.

Prohibitions and Disqualifications

There were no recorded prohibitions or disqualifications during 2025/2026.

In circumstances where there are significant concerns about the quality of a Private Fostering arrangement and the care being given, a disqualification or prohibition should be considered and recorded by the team with a clear rationale. This ensures an accurate record of concerns for any future private fostering assessments. These should be recorded and on the Private Foster Carer's file and a formal letter sent. Although there were no recorded prohibitions or disqualifications, there were incidences where risk was identified. In these circumstances, parents are advised to end the arrangement and move their child which most do.

In both the situations above in table 3, a formal prohibition or disqualification may have been appropriate. The social work teams where there were concerns have been reminded of the practice guidance and whilst a prohibition or disqualification cannot be applied retrospectively, a note has been added the to the Private Foster Carer's file.

The Private Fostering Guidance was updated this year to strengthen information about prohibitions and disqualifications, and when these should be applied. This will be discussed and promoted with the Private Fostering Leads for learning and future action.

Private Fostering Awareness Raising and Training

Communication

The Local Authority has a duty to promote and raise awareness of private fostering with partner agencies. In February 2026, a Private Fostering leaflet was circulated to partner agencies who may be likely to encounter children in private fostering arrangements, including English language schools, faith organisations and youth groups.

Additionally, a letter was sent to English Language Schools in February 2026 reminding them of their duties in relation to private fostering. A poster and leaflet were included in the letter to display and disseminate within their schools.

Training

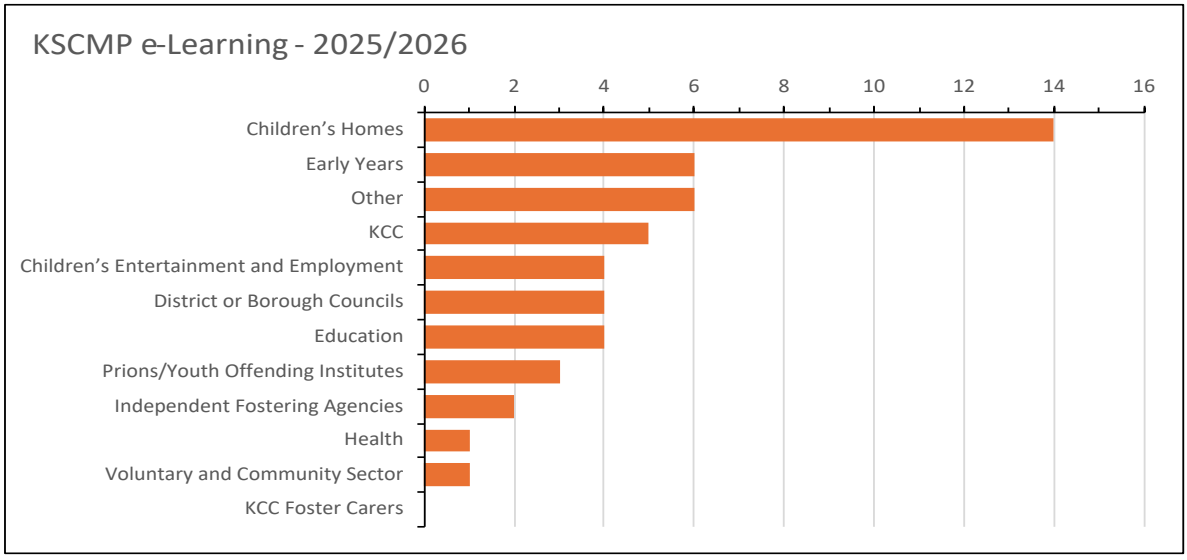
In April 2025, the Practice Development Team provided a virtual training event for multi-agency partners, advertised through the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP) attended by 11 participants.

A second date was identified in January 2026 but as the sign up was particularly low, it was postponed allowing for additional promotion. This took place in April 2026 and was attended by 29 participants. The training included information about private fostering requirements; risks and vulnerabilities; duties; and actions for external professionals as well as Children's Social Work Teams. Participants at the event included Safeguarding Leads and teachers from primary and secondary schools, health practitioners, faith organisations and colleagues from Integrated Children's Services.

E-Learning

KSCMP also provide a Private Fostering e-learning course and over the year, this was completed 50 times by partner agencies from Early Years, Education, Health, fostering agencies and Children's Services in Kent and Medway. This was 23 times fewer than the previous year.

Graph 4 – Bar chart showing breakdown of organisation type/sector for KSCMP e-learning

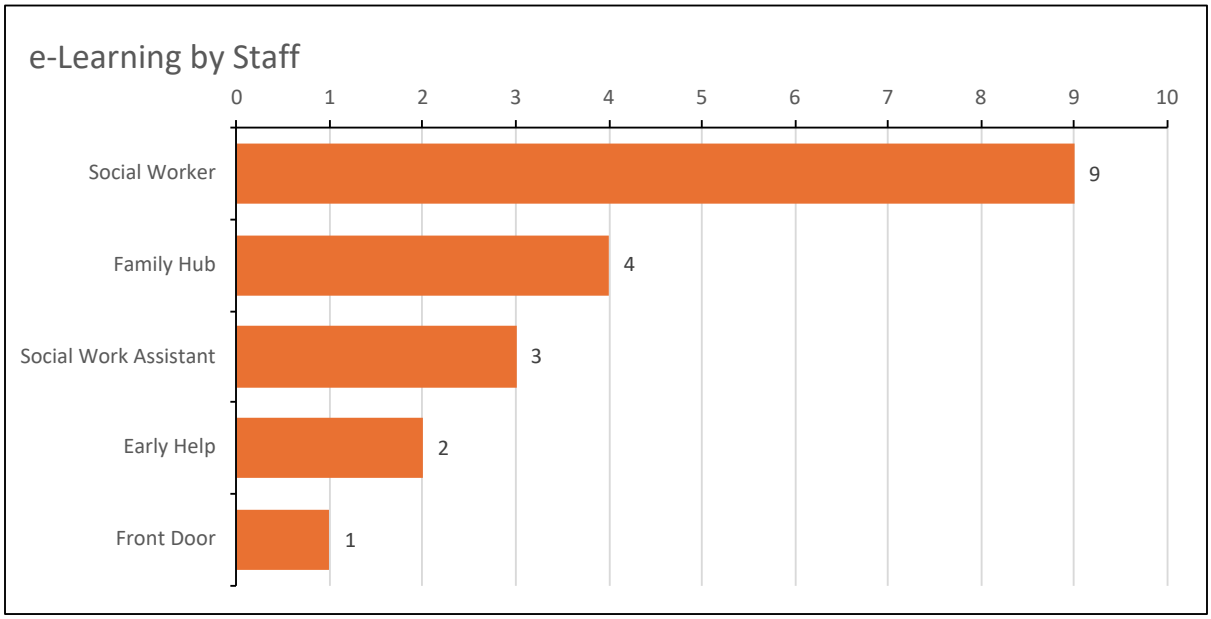


Integrated Children's Services

In January 2026, targeted training was delivered to Newly Qualified Social Workers in Kent and was attended by 40 participants.

DELTA is the training hub for all staff within Integrated Children's Services where dedicated training and resources can be accessed. 16 members of staff accessed the Private Fostering e-learning during 2024-2025 (1 less than the previous year). The breakdown is shown in Graph 6.

Graph 5 - ICS staff professions accessing e-learning 01.04.25 – 31.03.26



Although it is positive that some practitioners are accessing opportunities to increase their knowledge of private fostering, levels of participation remain limited when assessed against the size of the overall workforce, indicating that reach and consistency of learning could be strengthened. However, these figures do not fully capture the contribution of Private Fostering Leads, who play a key role in cascading information, supporting learning and training within their districts. Evidence from audit findings (detailed in the following section) suggests that this targeted activity is effective, demonstrating a positive impact on practice and highlighting the value of the Leads' training and quality assurance functions.

Guidance is regularly reviewed for Kent Procedures Online and this year a new appendix on Prohibitions and Disqualifications was added and clarification provided around the need for children in the Homes for Ukraine scheme to remain identified as Privately Fostered until they are 18.

An updated and refreshed Practice Bulletin on Private Fostering was published in November 2025 to raise awareness and increase knowledge of private fostering and to coincide with the National Private Fostering Awareness Day.

Quality of Practice

Good Practice Leads, Forums and Channels

Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums continued quarterly throughout the year, chaired by a Social Work Standards Officer with private fostering responsibility and overseen by the Private Fostering Lead Officer. All services have a Private Fostering Lead currently, including the Adolescent Service and Early Help. There is an expectation a representative from each Service attends the Forums but there were some regular gaps in attendance highlighted with the Service Managers.

Agenda items include trends and themes (including from audit findings), key performance indicators, challenging aspects of the work and good practice examples. This helps inform changes to the Private Fostering resources, Liberi and the Private Fostering guidance. Information was disseminated back to services by the Leads and audits continued to indicate practice improvement throughout the last year.

There is a Private Fostering Teams Channel for the Leads. Information is shared on a regular basis which provides helpful reminders about practice, information from case law and training.

The county Private Fostering Lead Officer and the Social Work Standards Officer provide individual consultations and guidance to practitioners to help inform practice.

Audits

Private Fostering work is audited as part of the countywide audit process in line with other children receiving support from the Children's Social Work Services. From April 2025 to March 2026 inclusive, 8 privately fostered children's records were audited by the allocated districts. This is lower than the previous year (22 audits) due to the low numbers of privately fostered children. Children who have been privately fostered for some time are likely to have been audited already within the year. Therefore, the number of children who can be audited reduces with the number of private fostering arrangements. Hence, the lower number of audits.

Moderation is a valuable check on the quality of audits undertaken, as well as an opportunity for the Private Fostering Lead to give informal training. This usually includes information about the importance of Reg 8 forms and discussing

permanency and vulnerability. This year has been an increased emphasis on contingency planning within private fostering practice to strengthen forward planning and safeguarding arrangements for children. This was also explored at the Private Fostering Forum, where practitioners identified the need for greater consistency in how contingency planning is addressed within assessments. As a result, a prompt was added to the PFAAR assessment at the start of the year to support practitioners in evidencing this consideration.

Audit analysis

Audit outcomes for private fostering show a notable improvement between 2024/2025 and 2025/2026. In 2024/2025, 77% of audited files were graded as good, with 23% assessed as requires improvement. These findings identified key areas for development, including greater consistency in practice, strengthened recording, and clearer evidence of management oversight.

In response, targeted actions were implemented during 2025/2026, including reinforced learning through forums, the introduction of clearer prompts within assessments, and an increased focus on reflective practice. As a result, all private fostering audits completed in 2025/2026 were graded as good.

While this improvement is positive and suggests that learning from previous audits has been effectively embedded, it is important to recognise that this judgement is based on a small audit sample of eight cases. The limited volume of audits means that continued quality assurance activity is required to provide greater confidence that improvements are fully embedded and sustainable across the wider service.

Table 4 – Grade comparisons from year to year

Percentage grades	2023-2024	2024-25	2025-2026
Good	76%	77%	100%
Requires improvement	24%	23%	0%
Inadequate	0%	0%	0%

Graph 6 – Table showing audit gradings broken down by Area



ILACS Inspection 2025

The most recent full inspection of Kent County Council children's services took place November 2025 (published 2 February 2026) and judged overall effectiveness as Good. In relation to Private Fostering Ofsted said:

> *"Private fostering arrangements are suitable for children. Assessments are timely, and written agreements clearly set out safeguarding responsibilities. Children are seen regularly, and oversight ensures their safety and wellbeing."*

The Ofsted commentary is significant because it focuses on the core legal and practice expectations for private fostering, timely assessment, clarity about safeguarding, regular visiting and seeing the child and effective management oversight. What Ofsted have concluded from the cases they sampled is that Kent's private fostering practice is safe, compliant and child focussed and functioning well as part of Kent's broader help and protection system.

However, it will be important to ensure that Kent do not become complacent and a focus is retained on maintaining the current good standards of practice and remaining sighted on the low number of notifications, as the biggest risk is likely to be on the arrangements that are not known, and requires an increased focus on awareness raising.

Systems

The Management Information and Intelligence Team continues to work closely with district social work teams to improve recording, reduce data errors and ensure

compliance with statutory requirements. The Management Information Officer attends the Good Practice Forums and training events and offers one-to-one support to practitioners. The MIU Officer is a member of the Teams Channel and posted advice and information about Liberi recording.

On 5th March 2026, system changes were agreed at the Liquid Logic Operational Group to enable more sophisticated data collection, including information about prohibitions and requirements. This will ensure we are monitoring accurate recording which will reduce risk if any individual attempts to privately foster a child in future. A new prompt in the private fostering assessment will consider contingency planning. If a private fostering arrangement ends in an unplanned way, there should be a clear plan of who could care for the child if they are unable or unwilling to return to their parents care.

Summary

Over the course of the year, the quality of practice in relation to private fostering has remained consistently strong. Audit activity continues to indicate a good overall standard, and this is aligned with the assurance provided through Ofsted's findings.

Alongside this, the service has maintained a clear and sustained focus on raising awareness of private fostering responsibilities and the importance of timely notification. This has supported an increase in notifications received during the year, suggesting improved recognition and reporting of private fostering arrangements.
Where concerns have been identified, there is clear evidence of prompt and robust action, particularly for children subject to Child Protection plans, demonstrating that risk is being responded to decisively and that safeguarding oversight is being maintained when private fostering arrangements may not be safe or suitable.

For children, this means they are more likely to be identified earlier, appropriately assessed, and supported in safe and suitable arrangements. Where concerns arise, there is clear evidence of prompt and robust action, particularly for those subject to Child Protection plans, ensuring risks are addressed decisively. This strengthens safeguarding oversight and helps to better protect children's welfare, reducing the likelihood of them remaining in unsuitable or unsafe living situations.

Despite these positive indicators, the overall number of notifications remains low and continues to be a key concern. This suggests that private fostering may still be under-identified, and that further efforts are needed to strengthen understanding across partner agencies and within communities.

Awareness raising should therefore remain a priority, with a strengthened focus on both internal staff and external agencies to ensure consistent understanding of private fostering responsibilities and notification requirements. Particular attention should be given to engagement with language schools, where such arrangements may arise, as improved awareness could support earlier identification. As part of future planning, this focus will align with the development of Families First, ensuring that awareness and early identification are embedded within a broader, proactive approach to supporting children and families. It is important that, within the development of new mixed teams and the Family Help model, private fostering continues to be recognised as a statutory responsibility and is not overlooked within broader integrated ways of working.

Operationally, delays within the DBS process continue to impact timely progression of checks. While it is acknowledged that much of this sits outside the direct control of the service, it is important to continue to mitigate delay through escalation, where this is possible, proactive tracking, and consistent interim safeguarding measures while checks are pending.

It was also identified that children are not always routinely seen alone, which is a key safeguarding requirement. This presents a gap in practice, as it may limit children's ability to share their views and experiences openly. Addressing this will be a priority for future improvement to ensure that all children are consistently given the opportunity to be seen alone as part of effective safeguarding oversight.

In addition, recording and monitoring arrangements for prohibitions and disqualifications should be strengthened to ensure that decision-making is fully evidenced, oversight is clear, and any restrictions are consistently captured and reviewed.

Finally, it will be important to consider the implications of Families First on practice with privately fostered children, ensuring social work qualified staff assess and visit these children. Pathways, roles and responsibilities, and wider safeguarding processes should be clear to ensure a sustained focus on the safety and wellbeing of privately fostered children.

Actions completed since 2024-2025 Annual Report		
Action:	**How:**	**Date completed:**
Continue to raise awareness of Private Fostering with partner agencies and wider community	Private Fostering Awareness Raising leaflet to be sent to partner agencies and wider community, including Education, Health, Language Schools and Faith organisations.	Feb 2026
	Promotion of Private Fostering Day	Nov 2026
	Information shared with language and private schools in each area about the legal provisions and their duties and responsibilities to children who are privately fostered.	Feb 2026
	Advertise and provide virtual training for multi-agency partners from statutory and voluntary services. Training will be twice a year, booked via KSCMP.	Continuing through the year. Twice yearly – April and Nov 2025
Develop Private Fostering practice across Integrated Children's Services	Continue to provide access to Private Fostering training and relevant resources on the Kent Academy and Kent Procedures Online.	Throughout the year
	Private Fostering e Learning within induction and training programmes for inexperienced staff, Newly Qualified Social Workers, social work students on Step Up to Social Work programmes, Frontline and Apprenticeships.	January 2026
	Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums to be held with district Private Fostering Leads to discuss best practice and disseminate information. Private Fostering Leads to feed back to districts.	Quarterly throughout the year
	The Private Fostering Teams Channel used as an information exchange and arena for promoting information and guidance to Private Fostering Leads.	As and when required
	Consultations available and advice given by Private Fostering Lead regarding complex Private Fostering Arrangements. These are now recorded on Liberi by the Private Fostering Leads.	Throughout the year.

Ongoing audit and monitoring of practice	2 Private Fostering children to be included in each audit cycle with moderations by moderators with Private Fostering experience.	Throughout the year

Action Plan 2026 – 2027			
	Objectives 2026 – 2027:	**Responsible person:**	**Complete by:**
1	**Continue to raise awareness of Private Fostering (PF) with partner agencies and wider community**		
1.1	Advertise and provide virtual training for multi-agency partners from statutory and voluntary services. Training will be twice a year, booked via KSCMP with one coinciding with Coram BAAF Private Fostering Day.	PF Lead / KSCMP	Bi-annual April 2026 November 2026
1.2	Share Private Fostering Day events, including Coram BAAF activities	PF Lead	4th November 2026
1.3	Build links with language and private schools in each area to improve communication and practice. Private Fostering leaflet and poster to be sent to partner agencies and wider community, including Education, Health, Language Schools and Faith organisations	PF Lead	February 2027
2	**Develop Private Fostering practice across Integrated Children's Services**		
2.1	Highlight in CYPE Bulletin practice expectations and statutory requirements for Private Fostering and link to updated guidance.	PF Lead	Throughout 2026-2027
2.2	Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums to be held with district Private Fostering Leads to discuss best practice, learning from audits and data and disseminate information. Private Fostering Leads to feed back to districts.	PF Lead and District Leads	Quarterly
2.4	Continue to promote attendance at the Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums with Service Managers and link with data/audit findings.	PF Lead	As and when required

	Key discussion points from the Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums summarised and shared within the Good Practice Private Fostering Forums Teams channel.		
2.5	Consultations available and advice given by Private Fostering Lead Officer and Social Work Standards Officer regarding complex Private Fostering Arrangements	PF Lead	As and when required
2.6	Promote Private Fostering within the Families First new service delivery programme. Private Fostering Guidance to be reviewed in line with the practice changes in the Family's First model.	PF Lead	February 2027
2.7	Continue to promote Private Fostering training and relevant resources on the Kent Academy and all Teams channels.	PF Lead	2026-2027
2.8	Private Fostering promotion within induction and training programmes for inexperienced staff, Newly Qualified Social Workers, social work students on Step Up to Social Work programmes, Approach Social Work (formerly Frontline) and Apprenticeships were required.	Team Managers/ district Leads / ASYE and student programme co-ordinators	Throughout2026-2027
2.9	Liaison with specific services, where required regarding identifying PF – Adolescent Service, Strengthening Independence. This may include visits to service meetings.	PF Lead	Throughout 2026-2027
2.10	Strengthen management oversight and practitioner awareness through direct emails and within Good Practice Forums to ensure all privately fostered children are routinely seen alone, in line with statutory requirements, with compliance monitored through supervision, case auditing, and performance reporting.	Team Managers, Service Managers,	Throughout 2026-2027

		District Leads and PF Lead	
2.11	Improve recording of Regulation 8 visits, especially within services where this is challenging, e.g., Adolescent Service, as well as increasing the number of children seen alone. This will be through the visits to service meetings, within awareness raising/moderations/Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums, and COP in Private Fostering Week.	PF Lead and Practice Development Team	Throughout 2025-2026
2.12	Ensure management oversight is consistently recorded within all private fostering annual reviews, with compliance monitored through regular audits. This will be supported with changes to the Private Fostering Annual Review form on Liberi to include a prompt to re-assign the form to the Service Manager for review and sign off.	Team Managers, Service Managers, District Leads and PF Lead	Throughout 2026-2027
3	**Ongoing practice monitoring**		
3.1	4 Private Fostering children to be included in each audit cycle, with moderations by moderators with Private Fostering experience.	Management Information Team	2026-2027
3.2	Work with Management Information and Intelligence to: - Understand data on nationality and country and correlate this to initial visits to report separately regarding Kent children and international students or Ukrainian nationals. Capture and monitor child seen alone data.	PF Lead / Management Information	February 2027
3.3	Further analysis required to understand and report on initial visits to children within Private Fostering arrangements. Changes to Liberi already made will support this but further work is required to improve reporting.	PF Lead / Management Information	February 2027

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From: Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Christine McInnes, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education

To: Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 26 November 2026

Subject: Commissioning Arrangements for Tuition, Therapies and associated provision

Decision no: 26/00071

Key Decision: Overall service value exceeds £1m and affects more than two Electoral Divisions

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: None

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary: This report sets out the rationale behind the proposal to procure and implement a new contract for externally provided Tuition, Therapies and other associated provision through a single commissioning framework for SEND, Adoption Services and Virtual School Kent.

Recommendation(s):

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A) which is to approve the establishment of a contract for the future commissioning of externally delivered Tuition, Therapies and other associated provision.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Kent County Council (KCC) has statutory responsibilities to ensure that children and young people receive suitable education and, where required, appropriate specialist support to access learning and achieve positive outcomes.

1.2 To fulfil these duties, KCC commissions a range of externally delivered services across SEND, Virtual School Kent (VSK) and Adoption Services. These services come under the heading of Alternative Provision, and this

commissioning activity relates to externally provided Tuition, Therapy and other associated provision, such as mentoring, life skills programmes, vocational or enrichment activities which support children and young people who are unable to access, or fully benefit from, mainstream or specialist educational placements.

1.3 The current contractual arrangements that support these services are approaching the end of their available terms. The External Tuition Modified Dynamic Purchasing System (MDPS) expires on 31 August 2028 and the Therapies Qualified Provider List (QPL) must end by February 2029. These are contractual arrangements allowed under the Light Touch Regime of the Public Contract Regulations 2015. Replacement arrangements are therefore required to ensure continuity of provision and maintain compliant routes beyond these dates, under the Procurement Act 2023.

1.4 This decision seeks approval to establish a new contractual arrangement that will commence in September 2028 and have a maximum eight-year term comprising of an initial four-year term, with extensions of up to four years.

1.5 The new contract will provide a sustainable and compliant route for procuring externally commissioned provision beyond the expiry of the existing arrangements. The proposed contract will create a single commissioning structure for externally commissioned Tuition, Therapy and other associated provision whilst retaining flexibility to respond to future service developments, SEND reforms and Local Government Reorganisation considerations.

2. Key Considerations

2.1 The new contract will take into consideration the sustained growth in demand for specialist educational support services that has occurred over recent years, alongside increasing levels of complexity within the cohorts of children accessing provision. Learning from the current contract will be applied to ensure that new contract reflects these demands and establishes a more consistent approach to quality assurance, safeguarding and provider performance.

2.2 The contract will bring together externally commissioned SEND Alternative Provision, which include specialist and complex delivery, post-16 and qualification provision, group and online delivery models, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Virtual School Kent and Adoption Services within a single commissioning structure.

2.3 Each service area will have its own specification, referral pathway, funding arrangements and performance requirements. This will ensure that the differing statutory, operational and professional requirements applicable to each service remain fully reflected within the contract.

2.4 Standardised requirements will support greater consistency across commissioned provision whilst maintaining service-specific delivery requirements where necessary.

2.5 The new contract will strengthen KCC’s ability to monitor demand, expenditure, utilisation, attendance, activity and outcomes across commissioned provision.

This will support improved commissioning intelligence, more informed decision making and greater visibility of provision being delivered across the system.

2.6 The SEND Strategic Improvement Action Plan has been developed in response to six areas for improvement identified through the July 2026 Area SEND Inspection. The new contract will support the delivery of several of these areas including strengthening oversight of children experiencing disrupted education (Action 1.2), strengthening information used for commissioning and sufficiency planning (Actions 1.4 and 4.4), improving preparation for adulthood planning from Year 9 (Action 5.2), strengthening coordination across the 14-25 pathway (Action 5.3), improving oversight of young people at risk of poor transition (Action 5.4) and increasing access to appropriate education with effective transition planning and continuity of support to enable a successful progression into adulthood, including for children with complex needs (Action 5.5).

2.7 The new contract will ensure delivery of an equitable offer (Area of Improvement 6) of Tuition, Therapies and associated provision across Kent and will also form a key part of the Strategy being developed to address improvement of consistency and quality of offer across the range of alternative provision available to support children and young people who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to engage in mainstream provision.

2.8 The arrangements will be designed to remain sufficiently flexible to respond to changes in demand, future commissioning requirements, legislative changes, SEND reform activity and any implications arising from Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). A key feature in addressing implications arising from LGR is the commitment from Medway Council to join the new contract. This flexibility will support the long-term sustainability of the commissioning model whilst maintaining continuity of provision.

3. Background

3.1 KCC currently commissions Tuition, Therapy and other associated provision through a number of separate arrangements. These include the External Tuition Modified Dynamic Purchasing System (MDPS), the Therapies Qualified Provider List (QPL), Virtual School Kent commissioning arrangements and Adoption Services, alongside internally delivered provision through The Education Programme.

3.2 These arrangements have developed incrementally over time in response to differing service requirements, funding streams and operational needs. Whilst each arrangement has supported access to provision for the relevant children, they have evolved independently and are subject to differing contractual arrangements, management processes and commissioning approaches.

3.3 Demand for externally commissioned provision has increased significantly across all service areas. This increase reflects wider pressures relating to complexity of need, placement sufficiency and access to specialist support.

3.4 Kent Analytics identified 285 children and young people receiving external Tuition during 2022/23, increasing to 340 in 2023/24 and 616 in 2024/25. This

represents growth of 116% across the period and significantly exceeds the growth observed for children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). As a proportion of all children and young people with EHCPs, those receiving external Tuition increased from 1.5% in 2022/23 to 3% in 2024/25.These changes have predominantly been driven by Kent's improved delivery of SEND services, with a focus on ensuring pupils receive a suitable alternative education while permanent placements are secured.

3.5 More recent commissioning data demonstrates that this growth has continued. During 2025/26, KCC commissioned approximately 1,127 external Tuition arrangements supporting approximately 1,120 children and young people, with annual expenditure reaching approximately £10.9m.

3.6 Demand for Therapies has also increased significantly. Kent Analytics data identified an increase from 119 children and young people receiving Therapies in 2019 to 476 in 2025, representing a four-fold increase over the period. The greatest areas of demand relate to Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) and Occupational Therapy (OT), with increasing complexity of need and growing demand across mainstream and specialist educational settings.

3.7 A review of current arrangements was undertaken to understand future commissioning requirements and identify opportunities for improvement. This review considered service demand, expenditure, provider activity, contractual arrangements, operational processes and future commissioning needs across all services within scope.

3.8 The review identified a number of recurring themes, including:

- increasing demand and complexity of need;
- pressure on specialist placement sufficiency;
- multiple commissioning routes operating in parallel;
- variation in data collection and reporting arrangements;
- differing approaches to provider oversight and contract management; and
- opportunities to improve strategic visibility of demand, expenditure and outcomes across commissioned provision.

3.9 The proposed contract has been developed in response to these findings. Bringing a range of alternative provision together into a single contract recognises the complexity of children and young people's need and the interdependences between the support they need to engage and actively participate in education. It will enable a more coordinated commissioning structure whilst preserving the distinct operational, statutory, professional and funding requirements applicable to individual services. The approach provides a single route to market, strengthened governance arrangements and greater consistency across commissioned provision whilst maintaining service-specific delivery models.

4. Options considered and discounted, and associated risk

4.1 The following options were considered and discounted:

- Option 1: Maintain current arrangements - Continue with the existing commissioning arrangements. This option was discounted as it will not sufficiently address fragmentation, variable quality assurance, data limitations, market oversight or the need for a sustainable future commissioning solution.
- Option 3: Fully Internal Delivery Model - Expand internal provision to deliver all services directly. This option was discounted due to workforce, capacity and affordability constraints, and limited flexibility to respond to specialist demand.
- Option 4: Fully External Commissioned Model - Procure all services through a wholly external arrangement. This option was discounted as it would increase reliance on external markets and would not provide the optimal balance of oversight, quality assurance, sufficiency and value for money. The internal Education Programme provides a mixed economy of provision

5. Strategic context

5.1 The proposed contract aligns to Reforming Kent 2025-2028 Aim 3; Supporting Residents that need Help by improving access to suitable provision for children and young people who are unable to access education through mainstream or specialist placements alone.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The services within scope of the proposed contract are funded through a combination of sources as detailed below. Consequently, the proposed arrangements are not expected to have a direct cost to the KCC General Fund.

Service Area	Funding Source	2025/26 Spend
SEND Tuition and Alternative Provision	High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant	£10.91m
SEND Therapies	High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant	£2.19m
Therapy and tuition provision - Virtual School Kent	Virtual School Kent Pupil Premium Plus Post-16 Pupil Premium Plus	£0.77m
Therapy provision - Adoption	Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund	£0.61m
Total Spend		**£14.48m**

6.2 Based on the 2025/26 spend of £14.5m and acknowledging an increase from the proposed contract commencement date of September 2028, the aggregate value of contracts awarded under the contract is approximately £60m over the initial four-year term and £125m should the full eight-year term, including all extension options, be utilised. The actual procurement contract value will be advertised including Medway Council's spend, as they have indicated that they want to continue accessing the KCC contractual arrangements, as they currently are. The £125m is KCC spend only.

6.6 Spend across these services has increased significantly in recent years, driven by increasing demand for Section 19 provision, growing numbers of children

and young people with complex SEND, specialist placement sufficiency pressures and increasing use of personalised packages of support. Future expenditure may also be influenced by wider factors including demand growth, provider market pressures, inflationary increases, workforce challenges, changes in service utilisation, SEND reform activity, Local Government Reorganisation and future participation by Medway Council.

7. Legal implications

7.1 The proposed contract will support KCC's existing statutory duties under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996[1] , the Children and Families Act 2014[2], the SEND Code of Practice[3] and the Equality Act 2010[4] .

7.2 Services may form part of the special educational provision required for a child or young person, including provision specified within the EHCP.

7.3 The procurement and contract award will comply with the Procurement Act 2023 and KCC's constitutional, financial and governance requirements.

7.4 Key legal risks include service discontinuity, non-compliant procurement, failure to secure required provision and ensuring that future contractual arrangements remain sufficiently flexible to respond to any future Local Government Reorganisation requirements. These risks will be mitigated through early planning, a compliant procurement process, flexible contract design and clear mobilisation arrangements.

8. Equalities implications

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed. The new contract is expected to have a positive impact by improving access to commissioned provision through clearer pathways, strengthened oversight, consistent provider standards and improved commissioning arrangements. The contract is intended to support timely access to suitable provision whilst promoting educational participation, inclusion and improved outcomes for children and young people.

8.2 Identified risks include geographical variation in provider availability, accessibility challenges for some children and the risk that standardised commissioning approaches do not fully reflect individual needs and circumstances.

8.3 These risks will be mitigated through service-specific specifications, market engagement, proportionate lot design, mobilisation planning, contract monitoring, provider performance management and ongoing review of access, sufficiency and outcomes across all service areas.

9. Data Protection Implications

[1] Education Act 1996
[2] Children and Families Act 2014
[3] SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK
[4] Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK

9.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessment will be completed as operational delivery of the new contract is finalised. The new arrangements will seek to address issues identified within the current arrangements, including variable data quality, inconsistent use of coding on systems, and lack of integrated systems across SEND services. Mitigations include data cleansing, improved definitions, centralised recording, and closer oversight by the SEND Quality Assurance Team.

10. Other corporate implications

10.1 This approach requires support from the Commercial and Procurement Division, Finance, Health and Safety and practitioners across the Children, Young People and Education directorate.

11. Governance

11.1 This report sets out the proposal for the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to approve the establishment of a contract for the future commissioning of externally delivered Tuition, Therapies and associated provision. The contract will replace existing commissioning arrangements as they expire and will provide continuity of provision from September 2028.

11.2 The proposed contract will operate for an initial period of four years, with provision to extend for up to a further four years, subject to the terms of the contract and the appropriate approvals. Individual contracts will subsequently be awarded to providers under this arrangement in accordance with identified need.

11.3 Subject to the decision being taken, authority will be delegated to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education or other Officer authorised by the Corporate Director, to take relevant actions necessary to implement the decision, including but not limited to, procuring, establishing and implementing the contract; awarding and entering into individual contracts under the contract; managing the resulting contractual arrangements; undertaking contract re-openings; agreeing any variation, novation and disaggregation arrangements permitted under the terms of the contract and any associated contracts; and finalising the terms of and entering into any necessary contracts or other legal agreements.

11.4 Authority will also be delegated to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education (or other officer authorised by the Corporate Director) to exercise any permitted extension of the contract, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills. All delegated authority will be exercised within the scope, maximum term and budget approved through the Key Decision.

12. Conclusions

12.1 The current External Tuition MDPS and Therapies QPL will expire during the period 2028/29 and replacement contractual arrangements are required to ensure continuity of provision and maintain compliant commissioning routes. The proposed contract provides a coordinated commissioning model for

externally commissioned Tuition, Therapies and other associated provision whilst retaining separate service specifications and operational arrangements for individual service areas.

12.2 The contract will strengthen safeguarding, provider assurance, quality monitoring, contract management and financial oversight, whilst improving visibility of demand, expenditure and outcomes.

12.3 The implementation of a sustainable long-term commissioning arrangement will support statutory duties, improve oversight of commissioned provision and promote positive outcomes for children and young people across SEND, Virtual School Kent and Adoption Services.

12.4 It will be designed to provide flexibility to respond to future changes in need, commissioning requirements, SEND reform activity and Local Government Reorganisation.

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13. Recommendation(s):

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A) which is to approve the establishment of a contract for Tuition, Therapies and other associated provision.

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14. Background Documents

None

15. Appendices

Equality Impact Assessment
Proposed Record of Decision

16. Contact details

Report Author: Christy Holden Job title: Head of Children's Commissioning Telephone number: 03000 415356 E-mail: christy.holden@kent.gov.uk	Director: Craig Chapman Job title: Interim Deputy Director for Education: Access and Inclusion Telephone number: 03000 415934 E-mail: craig.chapman@kent.gov.uk

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:	DECISION NUMBER:
Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	26/00071

Executive Decision – key

26/00071-Commissioning Arrangements for Tuition, Therapies and associated provision

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, I agree to:

Approve the establishment of a contract for commissioning of externally delivered, Tuition, Therapies and other associated provision

Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education or other Officer authorised by the Corporate Director, to take relevant actions necessary to implement the decision, including but not limited to, procuring, establishing and implementing the contract; awarding and entering into individual contracts under the contract; managing the resulting contractual arrangements; undertaking contract re-openings; agreeing any variation, novation and disaggregation arrangements permitted under the terms of the contract and any associated contracts; and finalising the terms of and entering into any necessary contracts or other legal agreements.

Further delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education (or other officer authorised by the Corporate Director) to exercise any permitted extension of the contract, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills. All delegated authority will be exercised within the scope, maximum term and budget approved through the Key Decision.

Reasons for decision:

Kent County Council requires a safe, coordinated, compliant and financially sustainable route for commissioning Tuition, Therapies and other associated provision such as mentoring, life skills programmes, vocational or enrichment activities which support children and young people who are unable to access, or fully benefit from, mainstream or specialist educational placements. The External Tuition Modified Dynamic Purchasing System expires on 31 August 2028, and the Therapies Qualified Provider List must end by February 2029. These are contractual

arrangements allowed under the Light Touch Regime of the Public Contract Regulations 2015. Replacement arrangements are therefore required to ensure continuity of provision and maintain compliant routes beyond these dates, under the Procurement Act 2023.

The approach brings the relevant externally commissioned services into one contractual arrangement with discrete lots. This will improve strategic oversight, safeguarding, quality assurance, performance management, data transparency and value for money while preserving the distinct requirements of each service.

The arrangements will strengthen safeguarding, provider assurance, quality monitoring, performance oversight, data transparency, fee management and contract management.

They will support delivery of several areas of improvement (areas 1, 4, 5 and 6) within the SEND Strategic Improvement Action Plan developed in response to the July 2026 Area SEND Inspection.

They will also provide improved visibility of demand, expenditure, attendance, activity and outcomes while retaining flexibility to respond to future SEND reforms, demand changes and Local Government Reorganisation

How the proposed decision supports the Council's Strategic Statement:

The contract aligns to Reforming Kent 2025-2028 Aim 3; Supporting Residents that need Help by improving access to suitable provision for children and young people who are unable to access education through mainstream or specialist placements alone.

Financial implications:

The services within scope of the proposed contract are funded through a combination of sources as detailed below. Consequently, the proposed arrangements are not expected to have a direct cost to the KCC General Fund.

Service Area	**Funding Source**	**2025/26 Spend**
SEND Tuition and Alternative Provision	High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant	£10.91m
SEND Therapies	High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant	£2.19m
Therapy and tuition provision - Virtual School Kent	Virtual School Kent Pupil Premium Plus Post-16 Pupil Premium Plus	£0.77m
Therapy provision - Adoption	Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund	£0.61m
Total Spend		**£14.48m**

Based on the 2025/26 spend of £14.5m and acknowledging an increase from the proposed contract commencement date of September 2028, the aggregate value of contracts awarded under the contract is approximately £60m over the initial four-year term and £125m should the full eight-year term, including all extension options, be

utilised. The actual procurement contract value will be advertised including Medway Council's spend, as they have indicated that they want to continue accessing the KCC contractual arrangements, as they currently are. The £125m is KCC spend only.

Legal implications:

The contract will support KCC's existing statutory duties under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 , the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice and the Equality Act 2010.

Services may form part of the special educational provision required for a child or young person, including provision specified within the EHCP.

The procurement and contract award will comply with the Procurement Act 2023 and KCC's constitutional, financial and governance requirements.

Key legal risks include service discontinuity, non-compliant procurement, failure to secure required provision and ensuring that future contractual arrangements remain sufficiently flexible to respond to any future Local Government Reorganisation requirements. These risks will be mitigated through early planning, a compliant procurement process, flexible contract design and clear mobilisation arrangements.

Equalities implications:

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed. The new contract is expected to have a positive impact by improving access to commissioned provision through clearer pathways, strengthened oversight, consistent provider standards and improved commissioning arrangements.

The new contract will ensure delivery of an equitable offer (Area 6 within the SEND Strategic Improvement Action Plan) of Tuition, Therapies and associated provision across Kent and will also form a key part of the Strategy being developed to address improvement of consistency and quality of offer across the range of alternative provision available to support children and young people who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to engage in mainstream provision.

Data Protection implications:

A Data Protection Impact Assessment will be completed as operational delivery of the new contract is finalised.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered by the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 26 November 2026

Committee Feedback:

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Option 1: Maintain current arrangements - Continue with the existing commissioning arrangements. This option was discounted as it will not sufficiently address fragmentation, variable quality assurance, data limitations, market oversight or the need for a sustainable future commissioning solution.
Option 3: Fully Internal Delivery Model - Expand internal provision to deliver all services directly. This option was discounted due to workforce, capacity and affordability constraints, and limited flexibility to respond to specialist demand.
Option 4: Fully External Commissioned Model - Procure all services through a wholly external arrangement. This option was discounted as it would increase reliance on external markets and would not provide the optimal balance of oversight, quality assurance, sufficiency and value for money. The internal Education Programme provides a mixed economy of provision

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

....

Signed Date

EQIA Submission – ID Number
Section A

EQIA Title
Commissioning Arrangements for Tuition and Therapies and associated provision

Responsible Officer
Catherine Read - CY CC

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)
Alice Gleave - CY EDSEN

Type of Activity

Service Change
No
Service Redesign
No
Project/Programme
No
Commissioning/Procurement
Commissioning/Procurement
Strategy/Policy
No
Details of other Service Activity
No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate
Children Young People and Education
Responsible Service
SEND
Responsible Head of Service
Alice Gleave - CY EDSEN
Responsible Director
Craig Chapman - CY EDSEN

Aims and Objectives

This commissioning activity includes externally commissioned Tuition, Therapies and other associated provision accessed by SEND, Virtual School Kent (VSK) and the Adoption Service.

Kent County Council currently procures External Tuition through a Modified Dynamic Purchasing System (MDPS) and Therapy Services through a Qualified Provider List (QPL). These are formal contractual arrangements under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and are due to expire in August 2028 and February 2029 respectively.

Analysis of the current commissioning arrangements has identified opportunities to improve consistency, governance, quality assurance and value for money through the development of a single commissioning contract. Subject to approval, the future approach would bring together External Tuition, Therapies and other associated provision, such as mentoring, life skills programmes, vocational or enrichment activities under a common set of contractual terms, quality standards, safeguarding requirements and fee management arrangements. This would support services commissioned by SEND, VSK and Adoption Services.

The commissioning arrangements support KCC's statutory duties and responsibilities under:

- Education Act 1996 (including Section 19)
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015)
- Equality Act 2010
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005

The proposed refreshed approach would strengthen market oversight, provider due diligence, safeguarding assurance and contract management arrangements, whilst simplifying purchasing processes and improving consistency for commissioners, providers, children, young people and families. It is expected to support equitable access to provision and greater alignment of commissioning activity across SEND, VSK and Adoption Services.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

No

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

SEND Management Team
- Operational SEND staff

VSK Management Team
-Operational VSK Staff

Adoption Support Management Team
-Operational Adoption Support Staff

Service Review Group
- Approved Providers

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

Yes

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

Staff/Volunteers

Residents/Communities/Citizens

No

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

1. Consistency and Continuity of Support

Continued access to suitable education and support for children and young people who are unable to attend school due to illness, exclusion, anxiety, or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
Children and young people currently placed with providers will be able to remain with those providers during the transition period, regardless of whether those providers apply for or are awarded places under the new commissioning arrangement.
Reduced disruption to education and support arrangements through the implementation of a planned and managed transition to the new framework.
Greater stability and continuity of provision for vulnerable children and young people.
2. Improved Outcomes for Children and Young People
Strengthened due diligence, quality assurance, and safeguarding requirements for commissioned providers.
Improved contract management arrangements, providing greater assurance regarding provider capability, service quality, and compliance.
Greater oversight of attendance, engagement, progress, and the delivery of outcomes for children and young people.
Improved monitoring and performance reporting to support early identification of concerns and continuous service improvement.
Reduced disruption for children and young people undertaking examinations through the inclusion of a dedicated lot for providers with examination centre facilities, enabling learners to complete accredited qualifications in an appropriate setting.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

No

Details of negative impacts for Age

Not Applicable

Mitigating Actions for Age

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

Not Applicable

20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

Are there negative impacts for Disability?

No

Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Disability

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Disability

Not Applicable

21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex

Are there negative impacts for Sex

No

Details of negative impacts for Sex

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Sex

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Sex

Not Applicable

22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

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From: Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Christine McInnes, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education

To: Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 26 November 2026

Subject: Together with Parents – ending the service at contract end

Decision no: 26/00074

Key Decision: It affects more than two Electoral Divisions

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary: This report sets out the background and rationale to end the Together with Parents service at the end of the contract on 30 April 2027.

Recommendation(s):

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A), to not recommission the Together with Parents service following expiry of the current contract on 30 April 2027

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1. Introduction

1.1 Kent County Council commissioned the Together with Parents service in April 2022 to provide early support for families whose children have neurodevelopmental needs, including those awaiting assessment, diagnosis or referral to the Neurodevelopmental Pathway. The model was innovative when commissioned as lived experience was embedded throughout service design, leadership and delivery. This service was available to families of children known to Children's Social Care or Early Help.

1.2 The contract is held by Whitehead-Ross Social Work Ltd and the service provides two elements; Guided Support, offering targeted one-to-one help,

navigation and self-advocacy; and Stronger Together, offering peer support, workshops, information and parenting programmes including Cygnet.

1.3 The contract was let for an initial term of three years from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025 and has utilised the two allowable contract extensions. The contract is due to end on 30 April 2027. From May 2027, Family Hubs will provide the locality-based support, alongside other successful programmes piloted and developed through this period.

2. Key Considerations

2.1 This service was commissioned as a result of the joint Ofsted and Care Quality Commission Inspection in 2019 which highlighted a need to increase levels of early support for families whose children have neurodevelopmental needs, including those awaiting assessment, diagnosis or referral to the Neurodevelopmental Pathway.

2.2 The funding available was limited and therefore a prioritisation approach was taken for the children awaiting assessment and was targeted at children who were known to Social Care or Early Help.

3. Background

3.1. The service was commissioned following SEND improvement activity arising from the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission joint inspection in 2019 and was designed to help families build resilience and self-help strategies while navigating the Neurodevelopmental Pathway. It has contributed to Kent's 'Support First' approach and has generated learning about co-production, lived-experience delivery, accessible parent programmes and community engagement.

3.2. The original funding included a repurposed Early Help allocation and a contribution from NHS Kent and Medway. The NHS contribution ceased, leaving KCC responsible for the full annual cost. The ending of the contract does not reflect the quality of the service or the value reported by families and professionals. It reflects the expiry of the available contract term, the non-statutory status of the provision, the duplication of service delivery, and the need to prioritise statutory responsibilities within the available budget.

3.3. Since this service was commissioned, national legislation and policy have increasingly shifted children's services towards earlier, more integrated and whole-family support. The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 introduces measures to strengthen multi-agency safeguarding and the involvement of families and their wider networks through family group decision-making, while the Families First Partnership Programme sets the direction for a more integrated Family Help model.

3.4. As KCC is implementing Families First, its services need to align with the policy and guidance underpinning that model, including the move towards coordinated, whole-family support rather than separate or parallel interventions. KCC is responding to this through changes to its Family Help provision and the development of an integrated offer for children and families. Continuing to

commission Together with Parents as a separate service alongside this developing provision risks duplicating support available through the Family Help model, rather than fully embedding the whole-family approach that Families First is intended to achieve.

3.5. The development of the 'This is Me' programme in Kent, a strengths-based tool that helps schools and families identify a child's needs and the practical adjustments that may help, has been piloted in districts with outstanding evidence-based impact and was developed to support schools and families at the start of the Neurodevelopmental Support Pathway. This offer does not replace every aspect of the Together with Parents service, particularly its relationship-based one-to-one and peer support, however it will focus on support for the child and family throughout their diagnosis journey.

3.6. Families First in Kent is focusing on a "tell it once" approach, with professionals working together to provide the right support at the right time. Family Hubs will provide the local access route for universal and targeted support, including parenting support, SEND information and advice, and connections to health, education, community and voluntary services including Kent's parent carer forum for families of children and young people with SEND (Kent PACT) and Independent Advice and Support Kent (IASK). This model is intended to reduce duplication and provide more coordinated support for families known to KCC, while maintaining open access to help for other families. Again, while this does not replace the Together with Parents service in a like for like way, the multifaceted approach being taken by KCC to support families on the Neurodevelopmental pathway will work to alleviate any potential service gaps or disruption caused by ceasing the provision.

3.7. The mandatory Family Hubs Best Start Inclusion Practitioner (BISP) roles, funded by the Department for Education (DfE), commenced in October 2026. They provide a focus within Family Hubs, working in collaboration with Health and SEND services, to identify and provide early support and service navigation for families whose children may have emerging needs. Maintaining Together with Parents would therefore be a significant duplication.

3.8. Since contract commencement in April 2022, the Together with Parents service has performed well against its contractual KPIs and maintained strong levels of activity and engagement. The service received approximately 960 referrals and delivered 5,855 Family Advice interventions. It also reached 394 parents and carers through workshops, 1,606 through peer support groups and 3,473 through Cygnet courses. Families value practical and emotional support from staff who understand the experience of navigating neurodevelopmental pathways. Delivery has increasingly focused on building parental confidence, resilience and self-advocacy.

3.9. This service is has reached the end of its contractual term. There are alternative services that have been developed for a wider number of families with evidence of impact and success and therefore this service is no longer required. The ending of this service is in no way a reflection of the service delivered by Whitehead Ross Social Work Ltd.

4. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

4.1 The options included for consideration were:
Option 1 – Continue with the existing contract – this was dismissed as there is no scope to extend the contract further and other successful programmes have been implemented and established focusing on a wider group of families
Option 2 – Commission a replacement countywide service - this was dismissed as there is no requirement to commission a further service since other successful programmes have been implemented and established focusing on a wider group of families
Option 3 – End the contract and transition families to established locality-based provision, removing duplication with the developing Family Help and Family Hub offer and aligning support with KCC's implementation of the Families First whole-family model – preferred.

4.2 The proposal being progressed for decision is Option 3 as the service has reached the end of its permitted term. The contract would end on 30 April 2027. From May 2027, support for families will be provided through Family Hubs which have established locality-based route into universal and targeted support, including parenting support, SEND information and advice, 'This is Me', IASK, Kent PACT and links to wider health, education, community and specialist services.

5. How the proposed decision supports the Council's Strategic Statement

5.1 The proposal aligns with Reforming Kent 2025–2028, including the aim of supporting residents who need help, by moving towards locality-based access through Family Hubs and connected SEND, community and voluntary sector routes.

6. Financial Implications

6.1. The Together with Parents service is non-statutory and has an annual value of £369,380. It ends on 30 April 2027, with no further extension available.

6.2. KCC funds the full cost, through the General Fund, following the end of the NHS contribution. Current spend for this service is included within the key service line on the "Early Help and Preventative Services" budget. Agreeing not to recommission the services will lead to a saving in 2027/28 as other established provision is already funded separately and will not need to be expanded to compensate for this service ending.

7. Legal implications

7.1. Since this service was commissioned, national legislation and policy have increasingly shifted children's services towards earlier, more integrated and whole-family support. The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 introduces measures to strengthen multi-agency safeguarding and the involvement of families and their wider networks through family group decision-making. Alongside this, the Families First Partnership Programme supports the development of a more integrated Family Help offer, bringing services together around children and families and placing greater emphasis on earlier support to address needs before they escalate.

7.2. The current contract will legally expire on 30 April. KCC has historically adopted a good practice approach to the decommissioning of voluntary and community sector provision, reflecting the principles of the Kent Compact. On this basis, a 90-day notice period is considered appropriate to support an orderly exit and transition, including effective communication with service users and stakeholders and measures to minimise disruption to existing provision.

7.3. The Council must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 [1]of the Equality Act 2010 when considering this decision, including having due regard to the potential impact on people with protected characteristics. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed and identifies a medium adverse impact associated with ending the Together with Parents service.

7.4. A structured decommissioning process, which will include liaising with referral services to identify and mitigate impact, notice to the provider, full case holding review and agreed date for cessation of referrals and related communications, will be undertaken as part of the ending of the contract.

8. Equalities implications

8.1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed and identifies a medium adverse impact before mitigation, particularly for disabled children and young people, families awaiting neurodevelopmental assessment or diagnosis, and parents and carers who currently benefit from one-to-one advice, peer support and structured programmes. These impacts have been recognised and considered as part of the decision-making process, acknowledging that the potential impact of ending the Together with Parents service cannot be removed entirely.

8.2. The identified impacts will be mitigated through a planned transition to KCC's Families First approach and locality-based, whole-family provision. This will include early communication with families, individual exit planning, clear referral cut-off arrangements, active signposting and planned handovers where ongoing support is required. As all families currently receiving the service are already known to KCC, this will support continuity and enable their needs to be considered through the developing locality offer.

8.3. The EqIA will remain under review throughout the decommissioning and transition process to assess the effectiveness of these mitigations and identify any further action required.

9. Data Protection Implications

9.1 Upon contract cessation, the Council will ensure that all contract closure activities are undertaken in accordance with the terms of the contract and the requirements set out within the existing Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA).

[1] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149

10. Other corporate implications

10.1 The commissioning team will engage with the Commercial and Procurement Division to confirm the arrangements needed for ending of the contract. They will also work with the operational teams so there is a shared and known exit plan for the families supported.

11. Governance

11.1 The proposed decision is for the Cabinet Member for Children's Services to agree not to recommission the Together with Parents service following expiry of the current contract on 30 April 2027.

11.2 The proposed decision also seeks to delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education (or other officer authorised by the Corporate Director of CYPE) to take all necessary actions to implement the decision, including, but not limited to, contract and provider exit arrangements, decommissioning and transition arrangements, information governance and data transfer, the transfer and management of outstanding cases, communications with affected families and providers, and to enter into any contracts or other legal agreements required to implement the decision.

12. Conclusions

12.1 The Together with Parents service has provided valued support to families and demonstrated the benefits of combining practical intervention with lived experience. The service has contributed to the Support First approach and wider neurodevelopmental transformation.

12.2 The contract has reached the end of its permitted term and will end on 30 April 2027. Ending the contract will remove the annual commitment of £369,380. From May 2027, Family Hubs will provide the locality-based route to support alongside 'This is Me', SEND services, IASK and Kent PACT.

12.3 The future offer will be more integrated and locality-based, but it will not be a like-for-like replacement for the Together with Parents service. A controlled decommissioning process will support affected families, manage risk and ensure that the support available from May 2027 is clearly communicated and understood.

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13. Recommendation(s):

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE, or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A), to not recommission the Together with Parents service following expiry of the current contract on 30 April 2027

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14. Background Documents

None

15. Appendices

Proposed Record of Decision
Equality Impact Assessment

16. Contact details

Report Author: Christy Holden Job title: Head of Children's Commissioning Telephone number: 03000 415356 E-mail: Christy.holden@kent.gov.uk	Director: Ingrid Crisan Job title: Director of Operational Integrated Children's Services Telephone number: 03000412795 E-mail: Ingrid.crisan@kent.gov.uk

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:	DECISION NUMBER:
Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Children's Services	26/00074

Executive Decision – Key

26/00074 - Ending of the Together with Parents service at contract end

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Children's Services, I agree to:

APPROVE the non-recommissioning of the Together with Parents service following the end of the contract on 30 April 2027

Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education (or other officer authorised by the Corporate Director of CYPE) to take all necessary actions to implement the decision, including, but not limited to, contract and provider exit arrangements, decommissioning and transition arrangements, information governance and data transfer, the transfer and management of outstanding cases, communications with affected families and providers, and to enter into any contracts or other legal agreements required to implement the decision.

Reasons for decision:

Kent County Council commissioned the Together with Parents service with the contract commencing 1 April 2022 to provide early support to parents and carers whose children have neurodevelopmental needs, including families considering referral or awaiting assessment or diagnosis. The commissioned service was targeted at families whose children were known to Children's Social Care or Early Help.

The contract was awarded for an initial three-year term with two allowable 12-month extensions. Both extensions have been used. The signed final extension confirms that the contract ends on 30 April 2027, with no further extension available. The proposed decision is therefore to end the contract at the end of its permitted term and complete a controlled decommissioning process.

How the proposed decision supports the Council's Strategic Statement:

The proposal aligns with Reforming Kent 2025–2028, including the aim of supporting residents who need help, by moving towards locality-based access through Family Hubs and connected SEND, community and voluntary sector routes.

Financial implications:

The TWP service with an approved annual value of £369,380 and ends on 30 April 2027, with no further extension available. KCC funds the full cost through the General Fund, following the end of the NHS contribution, within the key service line on the "Early Help and Preventative Services" budget. Agreeing not to recommission the services will lead to a saving in 2027/28 as other established provision is already funded separately and will not need to be expanded to compensate for this service ending.

Legal implications:

The current contract will legally expire on 30 April 2027. KCC has historically adopted a good practice approach to the decommissioning of services and therefore a 90-day notice period is considered appropriate to support an orderly exit and transition, including effective communication with service users and stakeholders and measures to minimise disruption to existing provision.

The Council must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 when considering this decision, including having due regard to the potential impact on people with protected characteristics. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed and identifies a medium adverse impact associated with ending the Together with Parents Service.

A structured decommissioning process, which will include liaising with referral services to identify and mitigate impact, notice to the provider, full case holding review and agreed date for cessation of referrals and related communications, will be undertaken as part of the ending of the contract.

Equalities implications:

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed and identifies a medium adverse impact before mitigation, particularly for disabled children and young people, families awaiting neurodevelopmental assessment or diagnosis, and parents and carers who currently benefit from one-to-one advice, peer support and structured programmes. These impacts have been recognised and considered as part of the decision-making process, acknowledging that the potential impact of ending the Together with Parents service cannot be removed entirely..

Data Protection implications:

Upon contract cessation, the Council will ensure that all contract closure activities are undertaken in accordance with the terms of the contract and the requirements set out within the existing Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)..

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered by the CYPE Cabinet Committee on 26 November 2026.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Continue with the existing contract – this was dismissed as there is no scope to extend the contract further and other successful programmes have been implemented and established focusing on a wider group of families

Commission a replacement countywide service - this was dismissed as there is no requirement to commission a further service since other successful programmes have been implemented and established focusing on a wider group of families.

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

....

Signed Date

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EQIA Submission – ID Number
Section A

EQIA Title
Ending the contract of the Together with Parents Service

Responsible Officer
Alice Unsworth - CY CC

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)
Ingrid Crisan - CY OICS

Type of Activity

Service Change
No
Service Redesign
No
Project/Programme
No
Commissioning/Procurement
Commissioning/Procurement
Strategy/Policy
No
Details of other Service Activity
No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate
Children Young People and Education
Responsible Service
Integrated Children's Services
Responsible Head of Service
Ingrid Crisan - CY OICS
Responsible Director
Ingrid Crisan - CY OICS

Aims and Objectives

Context

Together with Parents is a Kent County Council commissioned service that supports parents and carers whose child has received a neurodevelopmental diagnosis, is awaiting assessment, or is being considered for referral to the Neurodevelopmental Pathway. The service was developed following the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission joint review of SEND provision in Kent and the resulting Written Statement of Action. It provided early, practical and relationship-based support to families while they wait for assessment or diagnosis, and to help parents and carers build confidence, resilience and self-help strategies.

The service offer includes one-to-one family advice and reviews, peer support groups, workshops, evidence-based programmes such as Cygnet, information events and signposting. The model uses staff with lived experience and is delivered countywide through a mix of face-to-face and virtual support. The service has contributed to the Support First approach and the pre-diagnosis element of the Neurodevelopmental Transformation work across Kent and Medway.

The current contract, has reached the end of the allowable extension period. The decision under consideration is to end the service at the end of the current contract term, with service delivery ceasing on

30th April 2027. The service is not statutory provision. Ending the contract is the only viable option within the direction of delivering statutory provision only.

In order to conclude the contractual relationship with Together with Parents, a responsible decommissioning programme is required. The aims of the decommissioning activity are to:

1. Ending the Together with Parents contract in line with the approved contract term and governance requirements.
2. Ensure that parents, carers, referrers, partners and the provider receive clear and timely information about the end of the service.
3. Manage open children, referrals, waiting lists, final reporting, records and data in accordance with the contract and data protection requirements.
4. Reduce avoidable disruption for families through planned endings and signposting to alternative sources of support where available.
5. Capture learning from the service to inform future planning for parent and carer support, SEND improvement activity, the Neurodevelopmental Transformation Programme, Families First and any future commissioning or service redesign.

Summary of equality impact
The ending of Together with Parents is likely to have a medium adverse equality impact before mitigation. The principal impacts relate to disabled children and young people, children and young people awaiting neurodevelopmental assessment or diagnosis, and parents and carers who may rely on the service for practical advice, peer support and help to navigate complex systems.

The service itself is not statutory, however it was designed to address identified gaps and fragmentation in early support for families linked to the Neurodevelopmental Pathway. Ending the service may reduce access to lived experience support, one-to-one family advice, Cygnet provision, peer groups and community-based signposting. This could increase pressure on families already managing long waits, uncertainty, SEND processes or repeat contact with services.

The identified impacts will be mitigated through a planned transition to KCC's Families First approach and locality-based, whole-family provision. This will include early communication with families, individual exit planning, clear referral cut-off arrangements, active signposting and planned handovers where ongoing support is required. As all families currently receiving the service are already known to KCC, this will support continuity and enable their needs to be considered through the developing locality offer.

The impact can be reduced, not removed, through a managed exit plan. This should include early communication, clear exit arrangements, appropriate management of open children's files during the exit period and a cut off point for referrals, accessible information for families, and signposting to alternative support. The EQIA should remain under review through the exit period so that any emerging impact on protected groups can be identified and addressed.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?
Yes
It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?
Yes
Is there national evidence/data that you can use?
Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

No

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Evidence has been drawn from the original service specification, contract monitoring information, scorecard reports, options appraisal work, provider feedback, internal commissioning discussions and feedback from professionals who have worked alongside the service. This evidence shows that Together with Parents has provided early support to parents and carers through one-to-one advice, peer support, Cygnet delivery, workshops, Family Hub communication, community outreach and signposting.

Communication to date has included contract management discussions with the provider, internal commissioning review, SEND complaints discussions, work with Information Advice and Support Kent (IASK), to explore a controlled complaints support pathway, and feedback from professionals on the impact of the service. The evidence indicates that demand for the service has remained strong and that the service has been valued by some families and professionals. It also identifies capacity pressures, uncertainty about the future of the service and the need for clear exit planning.

The identified impacts will be mitigated through a planned transition to KCC's Families First approach and locality-based, whole-family provision. This will include early communication with families, individual exit planning, clear referral cut-off arrangements, active signposting and planned handovers where ongoing support is required. As all families currently receiving the service are already known to KCC, this will support continuity and enable their needs to be considered through the developing locality offer.

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

No

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

Staff/Volunteers

Residents/Communities/Citizens

No

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

The main positive impact is that responsible decommissioning activity when ending a contract, creates a clear point to review what support parents and carers need now, rather than assuming that the existing model remains the right long-term approach. This is important because Together with Parents was commissioned in response to identified SEND improvement concerns. The wider neurodevelopmental support landscape is also expected to continue changing, including in response to future SEND inspection feedback, national SEND priorities and the implications of Local Government Reorganisation.

For disabled children and young people, the process can support better future planning by capturing learning from the current service about pre-diagnostic support, parent confidence, peer support and community-based signposting. For parents and carers, the exit process can identify what aspects of the service have been most useful and where gaps remain. This evidence can inform future commissioning, Families First development, SEND improvement work and the Neurodevelopmental Transformation

Programme.

The positive impact is conditional on the responsible decommissioning activity being managed properly. If learning is not captured, or if families are simply signposted without a realistic understanding of alternative support, the opportunity to improve future planning will be lost.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

Yes

Details of negative impacts for Age

The service supports parents and carers of children and young people up to age 25. Ending the contract, and therefore service, may indirectly affect children and young people who are awaiting neurodevelopmental assessment or diagnosis because their parents and carers may lose access to early advice, peer support, Cygnet provision, workshops and one-to-one family advice. The impact may be greater at points of transition, escalation or family stress, where parent confidence and timely support can help prevent issues becoming more complex.

Mitigating Actions for Age

Develop a managed exit plan that identifies open children, current referrals and planned group provision before closure. Families will receive clear information on when support will end, what will happen to any current involvement, and where they may be able to seek alternative support. Learning about age-related demand, particularly for young people approaching transition points, will be shared with SEND, Family Hubs and neurodevelopmental transformation leads.

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

Ingrid Crisian

20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

Are there negative impacts for Disability?

Yes

Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

Disabled children and young people are likely to be the group most affected, because the service is specifically linked to neurodevelopmental needs and SEND. Decommissioning may reduce access to early support for families while they wait for assessment, diagnosis or wider SEND support. This may be felt most by families who use the service to understand behaviour, develop home strategies, access Cygnet provision, build parent confidence or connect with peer and community support.

Mitigating actions for Disability

Ensure the exit plan clearly distinguish between ending this non-statutory service and any ongoing statutory SEND duties or assessment rights. Families will be given accessible information about available support routes, including SEND information, Family Hubs, IASK and relevant voluntary and community sector provision where appropriate. The service closure will also capture learning about unmet need so that future planning does not underestimate the impact on disabled children and young people and their families.

Responsible Officer for Disability

Ingrid Crisian

21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex

Are there negative impacts for Sex

No

Details of negative impacts for Sex

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Sex

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Sex

Not Applicable

22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

No

Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Not Applicable

23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race

Are there negative impacts for Race

Yes

Negative impacts for Race

Families from ethnic minority communities, families with English as an additional language, and families who are less connected to formal services may face greater barriers in understanding that the service is ending and where to seek alternative support. If communication is only provided in standard written formats, there is a risk that some families will not receive or understand the information in time to plan for the change.

Mitigating actions for Race

Communication will be accessible and proportionate. Where needed, information will be supported by translation, interpretation or explanation through trusted professionals. The exit plan will avoid relying only on written notices and will include clear signposting that can be used by referrers and partner services when speaking with families.

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race

Ingrid Crisian

24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief

Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief

No

Negative impacts for Religion and belief

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Religion and belief

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief

Not Applicable

25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation

Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation

No

Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation

Not Applicable

26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity

Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity

No

Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Yes
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Parents and carers are directly affected by the ending of the contract and service because the service is designed for them. Some carers may lose access to one-to-one advice, lived experience support, peer groups and practical strategies for managing family life while waiting for assessment or diagnosis. This could increase pressure on carers, particularly where families are already managing SEND processes, education concerns, repeat complaints, emotional pressure or limited informal support.
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
The exit plan will include early notice to families, planned endings where possible, and clear information for referrers so that families are not left with unrealistic expectations about continued support. Alternative support will only be listed where it is genuinely available and relevant. Commissioners will use final contract reporting and provider feedback to identify the scale and type of parent and carer need that may remain after the service closes.
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Ingrid Crisian

From: Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Christine McInnes, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education

To: Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 26 November 2026

Subject: Rights, Representation and Advocacy Service - Direct Award of a two-year contract

Decision no: 26/00075

Key Decision: It affects more than two Electoral Divisions

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary: This report sets out the proposal to directly award a two-year contract to the incumbent provider, Young Lives Foundation, for the continued delivery of the Rights, Representation and Advocacy service.

Recommendation(s):

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE, or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A) which is to directly award a contract for two years to the Young Lives Foundation, commencing 1 September 2027.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Services covering Appropriate Adults, Advocacy, Independent Visitors, Independent Persons, Accompanying Adults and Care Leaver Mentoring are delivered under one contract, known in Kent as Rights, Representation and Advocacy (RRA).

1.2. Provision for RRA has been in place since at least 2012, with a commissioned service operating continuously since 2015. The current contract was last competitively tendered in 2022 with the service, delivered by the Young Lives Foundation (YLF), commencing 1 October 2022. The current annual contract

value is £284,600, and all allowable extensions have been enacted, giving a total contract value over the five years of £1.29m.

1.3. The RRA Service comprises of six distinct elements as demonstrated in the table below.

Service Elements	Description	Statutory obligation
Appropriate Adults	Support for children aged 10–17 detained in police custody under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984, who do not have a parent, carer or other adult available to them at point of arrest and/or interview. Appropriate Adults safeguard children's rights during detention and interview, prevent unfair or unreliable evidence, support communication, and ensure procedures are followed lawfully	Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) and its Code of Practice C.2 [1]
Independent Advocacy	Provides Independent Advocacy for children in care, care leavers aged 16–24, children in need, those requiring safe plans, and those subject to child protection processes. Independent Advocacy under the Children Act 1989, ensures children's voices are heard, their rights are protected, and decisions are made with their wishes central to the process.	Adoption and Children Act 2002, ss.26a [2]
Independent Visitors	Matched volunteer relationships providing long-term support for children in care aged 8–18, as required under the Children Act 1989. IVs offer stable, reliable relationships outside care arrangements, helping children develop confidence, emotional stability, and a sense of normality. They also provide additional safeguarding oversight.	Children Act 1989, ss.23ZB [3]
Independent Persons (Stage 2 Complaints)	Provides impartial oversight for Stage 2 complaints. A Stage 2 complaint is a formal, independent investigation used when a care-related concern is too complex for early resolution or the person remains dissatisfied after Stage 1. It involves a detailed review of evidence by an independent person and results in a written report with findings and recommendations for action. It is a statutory requirement under the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. Independent Persons ensure fairness, accountability and transparency during formal investigations.	Children Act 1989, ss.24d[4] and 26 [5]
Accompanying Adults	Provides independent support during age assessment interviews which assist with identifying the correct level of support for individuals accessing services. Accompanying Adults ensure the interview process is fair, that individuals understand their rights, and that their welfare is protected.	Case law – including B v Merton and FZ v Croydon, together with Home Office policy, [6]

[1] **CODE C Revised Code of Practice for the detention, treatment and questioning of persons by Police Officers**
[2] **Children Act 1989**
[3] **Children Act 1989 23ZB**
[4] **Children Act 1989 24d**
[5] **Children Act 1989 section 26**
[6] https://gardencourtchambers.co.uk/r-fz-v-london-borough-of-croydon-2011-ewca-civ-59-court-of-appeal-guidelines-on-correct-test-at-permission-stage-in-an-age-dispute-case/

Service Elements	Description	Statutory obligation
Leaving Care Mentoring	Provides mentoring for care leavers aged 18–25 who are transitioning to independent living. In the last year, 70 young people left care and moved into independent living arrangements with support, and 53 left care and moved into independent living arrangements with no support. Care leavers face significantly higher risks of poor outcomes than their peers, with evidence showing gaps in social networks, trusted adult relationships and practical guidance after leaving care. Legislation places duties on Local Authorities to support care leavers up to, and in some cases beyond, age 25. The Care Leaver Mentoring Service supports Personal Advisers to meet this statutory obligation. Mentoring builds stability and supports emotional resilience, life skills, education, employment and mental health.	No statutory obligation, however, supporting the delivery of wider statutory duties

1.4. With the existing the contract ending 30 September 2027, the proposal is to directly award a new two year contract under from 1 October 2027 to 30 September 2029, at a value of approximately £569,360. The proposal would maintain the existing service model and contract value.

2 Key Considerations

2.1 The current contract will end on 30 September 2027.

2.2 Delivered by the Young Lives Foundation since 2015, the service supports young people by providing the six elements detailed in the table above, to ensure that needs are recognised and promoted whilst also providing vulnerable children with consistent, reliable support from a trusted adult.

2.3 Given the continuing uncertainty regarding the timetable and final arrangements for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and a lack of clarity as to how districts could contribute to the Advocacy element of this contract, it is proposed to make a time-limited direct award to the incumbent provider. This will maintain continuity while future commissioning responsibilities and funding arrangements are clarified.

2.4 The directly awarded contract would be for two years from 1 October 2027 to 30 September 2029, at a total value of approximately £569,360..

2.5 A direct award would provide a period of stability while future commissioning responsibilities are clarified in light of LGR, and potential future funding arrangements with District and Borough Councils, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and/or successor authorities are explored..

3 Background

3.1 The current service has consistently met or exceeded demand targets across most service areas, despite operating within a contract value that has remained largely unchanged for over a decade.

3.2 Previous market engagement identified concerns from potential providers regarding the sustainability of delivering the service within the current budget. Feedback suggested a future procurement may require a significantly larger budget than is currently available.

3.3 Demand has continued to increase across several service elements, including Independent Advocacy, Appropriate Adults, Independent Visitors and Accompanying Adults. Growth has been particularly notable in advocacy associated with housing assessments for which the districts also hold statutory responsibility and currently do not contribute financially. Evidence will presented to Leaders and Chiefs of the District and Borough Councils to consider their obligation for the Advocacy element of this provision and how this will be managed with any potential changes under LGR.

4 Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

4.1 The options included for consideration were:
Option 1 – Procure a new contract – recommended.
Option 2 – Commission a new countywide service – This option was dismissed as any new contract would need to incorporate a district-based funding model, with clarity on the respective statutory responsibilities and financial contributions of KCC and District and Borough Councils. The impact of LGR means there is currently insufficient certainty around how these responsibilities and funding arrangements would operate, both during the transition and under any future local government structure.
Option 3 – End the contract – this was dismissed as ending the contract without replacement arrangements would place KCC at risk of failing to meet relevant duties as set out above.

4.2 The preferred option and recommendation for decision is Option 1, to procure a new contract through a direct award. The current contract, which supports delivery of the Council's statutory responsibilities, has reached the end of its permitted term and will expire on 30 September 2027. A new contract would therefore be directly awarded from 1 October 2027 for a period of two years, ending on 30 September 2029, at an approximate total value of £569,360. The new contract would maintain the existing service model and contract value, with no substantive changes to eligibility, delivery arrangements or service scope.

5 How the proposed decision supports the Council's Strategic Statement

5.1 The proposal supports Reforming Kent 2025–2028 Aim 3 'supporting residents who need help', by maintaining access to advocacy, representation and independent support for children and young people who may need additional help to ensure their rights, wishes and interests are understood and represented. The proposed time-limited arrangement also supports the Council's focus on delivering sustainable and value-for-money services by maintaining continuity while longer-term commissioning, funding and partnership responsibilities are clarified.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 This service is currently budgeted funded from a combination of the Council's General Fund and Home Office Asylum Grant (we appropriate). Spend is reported within the revenue budget against the Key service line Children in Need – Care and Support (payments and commissioned services).

6.2 Market engagement undertaken as part of previous commissioning activity identified concerns regarding affordability of delivery within the current budget, with providers indicating that significantly higher levels of funding may be required in a future procurement.

6.3 The proposed contract would avoid immediate exposure to market cost pressures whilst further work is undertaken to understand future demand, partnership funding opportunities and commissioning responsibilities.

7 Legal implications

7.1 The statutory obligations are listed in the table in Paragraph 1.3 above.:

7.2 Legal advice notes that that a direct award is permissible provided KCC complies with the core procurement principles of value for money, transparency, fairness and integrity, secures the appropriate internal approvals, and maintains a clear audit trail documenting the rationale for the decision and consideration of alternative options.

7.3 Legal advice has confirmed that a lawful route exists to directly award a new contract for this service. The RRA Service falls within the light touch regime under the Procurement Act 2023. The proposed two-year contract value of approximately £569,360 is below the current £663,540 threshold for light touch contracts. As a result, the requirements applicable to a covered procurement do not apply and a direct award is permissible, subject to compliance with KCC's internal governance and procurement requirements and the core procurement principles of value for money, transparency, fairness and integrity.

8 Equalities implications

8.1 The Equality Impact Assessment identified no adverse impacts arising from the direct award contract proposal and concluded that continuity of provision is likely to produce positive outcomes by ensuring vulnerable children, young people and care leavers continue to access advocacy, representation and procedural safeguards without disruption.

9 Data Protection Implications

9.1 Upon awarding the contract, KCC will continue to ensure that all contract activities are undertaken in accordance with the terms of the contract and the requirements set out within the existing Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA).

10 Other corporate implications

10.1 The commissioning team will engage with the Commercial and Procurement Division to confirm the arrangements needed for directly awarding the contract.

11 Governance

11.1 This report sets out the proposal for the Cabinet Member for Children's Services to approve the direct award of a contract for the provision of Rights Representation and Advocacy.

11.2 Subject to the decision being taken, authority will be delegated to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education or other Officer authorised by the Corporate Director, to take relevant actions, including but not limited to, awarding and implementing the contract; managing the resulting contractual arrangements; exercising any permitted contract extensions; undertaking contract re-openings; agreeing any variation, novation and disaggregation arrangements permitted under the terms of the contract and associated contracts; and finalising the terms of and entering into any necessary contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

12 Conclusions

12.1 The Rights, Representation and Advocacy service enables KCC to meet a range of statutory and legal responsibilities and provides continuity of advocacy, representation and independent support for children and young people. The current contract will end on 30 September 2027 following the expiry of all available extension options.

12.2 A two-year directly awarded contract to the incumbent provider, under the same terms and conditions from 1 October 2027 to 30 September 2029, would maintain service continuity while longer-term commissioning, funding and partnership responsibilities are clarified. This includes consideration of responsibilities relating to advocacy and the potential implications of Local Government Reorganisation. The proposed award would maintain the existing service scope and delivery arrangements.

Recommendation(s):

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE, or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A) which is to directly award a contract for two years to the Young Lives Foundation, commencing 1 September 2027

13 Background Documents

None

Appendices

Proposed Record of Decision
Equality Impact Assessment

14 Contact details

Report Author: Christy Holden Job title: Head of Children's Commissioning Telephone number: 03000 415356 E-mail: Christy.holden@kent.gov.uk	Director: Ingrid Crisan Job title: Director of Operational Integrated Children's Services Telephone number: 03000 412795 E-mail: Ingrid.crisan@kent.gov.uk

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:	DECISION NUMBER:
Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services	26/00075

Executive Decision – non-key

26/00075 – Rights, Representation and Advocacy Service - Direct Award of a two-year contract

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, I agree to: APPROVE the direct award of a two-year contract to the Young Lives Foundation for the provision of Representation, Rights and Advocacy (RRA) services from October 2027 for a period of two years

Reasons for decision:
Decision required as the ending of contract will impact two or more electoral decisions.

Kent County Council commissioned the Representation, Rights and Advocacy service with the contract commencing 1 October 2022 with provision covering Appropriate Adults, Advocacy, Independent Visitors, Independent Persons, Accompanying Adults and Care Leaver Mentoring are delivered under one contract, known in Kent as Rights, Representation and Advocacy (RRA).

Provision for RRA has been in place since at least 2012, with a commissioned service operating continuously since 2015. The current contract was last competitively tendered in 2022 with the service, delivered by the Young Lives Foundation (YLF), commencing 1 October 2022. The current annual contract value is £284,600, and all allowable extensions have been enacted, giving a total contract value over the five years of £1.29m.

The service is a statutory requirement and has reached the end of its permitted term. The current contract would end on 30 September 2027. From October 2027, a directly awarded contract would commence for the period of two years to 30 September 2029, at a value of approximately £569,360. The proposal would maintain the existing service model and contract value, with no substantive changes to eligibility, delivery arrangements or service scope.

Financial implications:

This service is currently budgeted funded from a combination of the Council's General Fund and Home Office Asylum Grant (we appropriate). Spend is reported within the revenue budget against the Key service line Children in Need – Care and Support (payments and commissioned services).

The proposed contract would avoid immediate exposure to market cost pressures whilst further work is undertaken to understand future demand, partnership funding opportunities and commissioning responsibilities.

Legal implications:

Statutory obligations:

- Appropriate Adults - Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) and its Code of Practice C.2
- Independent Advocacy - Adoption and Children Act 2002, ss.26a
- Independent Visitors - Children Act 1989, ss.23ZB
- Independent Persons (Stage 2 Complaints) - Children Act 1989, ss.24d and 26
- Accompanying Adults - Case law including B v Merton and FZ v Croydon, together with Home Office policy,
- Leaving Care Mentoring - No statutory obligation, however, supporting the delivery of wider statutory duties

Legal advice notes that that a direct award is permissible provided KCC complies with the core procurement principles of value for money, transparency, fairness and integrity, secures the appropriate internal approvals, and maintains a clear audit trail documenting the rationale for the decision and consideration of alternative options.

Legal advice has confirmed that a lawful route exists to directly award a new contract for this service. The RRA Service falls within the light touch regime under the Procurement Act 2023. The proposed two-year contract value of approximately £569,360 is below the current £663,540 threshold for light touch contracts. As a result, the requirements applicable to a covered procurement do not apply and a direct award is permissible, subject to compliance with KCC's internal governance and procurement requirements and the core procurement principles of value for money, transparency, fairness and integrity.

Equalities implications:
The Equality Impact Assessment identified no adverse impacts arising from the direct award contract proposal and concluded that continuity of provision is likely to produce positive outcomes by ensuring vulnerable children, young people and care leavers continue to access advocacy, representation and procedural safeguards without disruption.

Data Protection implications:
There are no additional data protection implications arising from this decision, as the service will continue to be delivered by the same provider under the existing arrangements.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered by the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 26 November 2027

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Option 1 – Commission a replacement countywide service - this was dismissed as there a lack of clarity surrounding the advocacy element of the contract and how in line with statutory responsibilities the districts could contribute into this both prior to and following LGR.
Option 2 – End the contract – this was dismissed as ending the contract without replacement arrangements would place KCC at risk of failing to meet relevant duties as set out above.

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

....

Signed Date

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EQIA Submission – ID Number
Section A

EQIA Title
Direct Award for the Representation Rights and Advocacy Service

Responsible Officer
Alice Unsworth - CY CC

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)
Ingrid Crisan - CY OICS

Type of Activity

Service Change
No
Service Redesign
No
Project/Programme
No
Commissioning/Procurement
Commissioning/Procurement
Strategy/Policy
No
Details of other Service Activity
No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate
Children Young People and Education
Responsible Service
Integrated Children's Services
Responsible Head of Service
Ingrid Crisan - CY OICS
Responsible Director
Ingrid Crisan - CY OICS

Aims and Objectives

Kent County Council proposes to make a direct award of the Representation, Rights and Advocacy (RRA) Services contract to Young Lives Foundation for two years, from 1 October 2027 to 30 September 2029, following expiry of the current contract.

The direct award is intended to maintain continuity of statutory and related independent services during the uncertainty of decisions regarding Local Government Reorganisation by retain the current delivery model.

The integrated RRA Service includes:
• Independent Advocacy for children in care, care leavers and other eligible children and young people.
• Independent Visitors for children in care.
• Independent Persons for Stage 2 children's social care complaints.
• Appropriate Adults for children and young people detained in police custody.
• Accompanying Adults for age assessment interviews involving unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
• Care leaver mentoring.

The proposal does not reduce eligibility, remove any service element or change the current delivery model.

No adverse effect on protected characteristics has been identified. The overall equality impact is assessed as low and primarily positive because continuity reduces the risk that children, young people, care leavers and vulnerable people lose access to Advocacy, representation or procedural safeguards.

The position will be reviewed through contract monitoring and before any future redesign or procurement. Any subsequent material change to eligibility, access, specification or delivery will require a further EQIA.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Evidence has been drawn from the existing EQIA, contract monitoring and scorecard information, market analysis, legal and procurement advice, discussions with Young Lives Foundation, and internal engagement with commissioning, operational services, finance, procurement, legal and governance colleagues.

Existing engagement and monitoring capture the experience of children and young people using the services. Engagement with service users and operational stakeholders will continue during the award period and will inform future commissioning by successor authorities.

Any emerging access barriers or disproportionate impacts identified through complaints, feedback, safeguarding information or performance monitoring will be addressed through contract management.

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

Yes

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

Staff/Volunteers

Residents/Communities/Citizens

Residents/communities/citizens

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

Age: Continuity protects access to Advocacy, Independent Visitor, Appropriate Adult, complaints and age-assessment support for children, young people and care leavers. It avoids a gap in services used by people whose age and care status can increase vulnerability.

Disability: Existing reasonable adjustments and accessible communication arrangements will continue. Continuity is particularly important for service users with learning disabilities, neurodivergence, mental

health needs or communication difficulties.

Race: The service will continue to provide interpreters, translated or accessible information where required. Accompanying Adult and Advocacy provision supports unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and other young people from diverse ethnic and national backgrounds.

Religion or belief: The service remains available without discrimination and delivery will continue to take account of religious observance, cultural needs and the preferences of the individual.

Sex, gender reassignment and sexual orientation: Independent Advocacy supports privacy, dignity, safety and the expression of individual wishes. The provider will continue inclusive practice and respond to any identified safeguarding or access needs.

Pregnancy and maternity: Eligible service users who are pregnant or have recently given birth will continue to receive the same access, with reasonable flexibility and adjustments where needed.

Marriage and civil partnership: No differential impact is identified.

Carer's responsibilities: Continuity of independent support will continue assist young people and care leavers with caring responsibilities and supports professionals and carers by maintaining established referral routes.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions
19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
Are there negative impacts for age?
No
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Applicable
Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships

Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

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- Provisional Agenda January 2027 (Subject to Change)

Tuesday, January 19, 2027	Scorecard	
Tuesday, January 19, 2027	Draft Capital Programme, Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)	Annual item
Tuesday, January 19, 2027	Simon Langton Girls Grammar expansion	Key Decision
Tuesday, January 19, 2027	Swale Secondary expansions	Key Decision
Tuesday, January 19, 2027	Fostering Project: Create a Bedroom Scheme	Key Decision
Tuesday, January 19, 2027	Meadowfield 6th form expansion	Key Decision
Tuesday, January 19, 2027	Canterbury Rosewood School Expansion	Key Decision
Tuesday, January 19, 2027	Maidstone Family Hub Relocation	Key Decision
Tuesday, January 19, 2027	Schools Funding Arrangements 2026-27	Key Decision
Tuesday, January 19, 2027	Dartford Grammar (Boys) School Expansion	Key Decision
Tuesday, January 19, 2027	Exam Results - FSM / Vunerable Gap	Report
Tuesday, January 19, 2027	Social Care Residential and Education Day Place Provision Project	Update report
Tuesday, January 19, 2027	Work Programme	Standing Item

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