

Consultation Report

Consultation on proposed change to Garlinge Children's Centre



1. Summary

This report sets out and evaluates the responses received from the consultation on the proposed changes to Garlinge Children's Centre.

The consultation proposed the following changes to Garlinge Children's Centre:

- The change of use of Garlinge Children's Centre building to provide a 16 place Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as part of Garlinge Primary School and Nursery and that will serve Thanet children with ASD.
- Providing Children's Centre Services to the community served by Garlinge Children's Centre through Birchington Children's Centre.

49 responses were received to the consultation.

35 strongly agreed and a further 8 mostly agreed with the change of use of Garlinge Children's Centre building to provide a 16 place Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Whilst 4 mostly disagreed and 2 strongly disagreed.

27 strongly agreed and a further 12 mostly agreed with providing Children's Centre Services to the community served by Garlinge Children's Centre through Birchington Children's Centre. Whilst 1 neither agreed or disagreed, 5 mostly disagreed and 3 strongly disagreed.

2. Introduction

The public consultation was undertaken to gain the views on the proposal to change the use of the Garlinge Children's Centre building to an SRP and to deliver Children's Centre Services from Birchington Children's Centre, with targeted outreach services continuing for families living in the Garlinge area. The consultation took place from 29 September 2021 to 25 November 2021.

The Local Authority (KCC) is responsible for maintaining Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) for children and young people between the ages of 0-25 years who have special education needs. As of January 2021, this totalled 15,281 children and young people with an EHCP. This is an increase of 1,782 since January 2020, an increase of 13.2% compared to 10% increase nationally.

The number of pupils in the Thanet District with an EHCP in January 2021 was 1,798. An increase of 12.3% from 2020.

11.77% of Kent's children and young people with an EHCP live in Thanet. Some children with an EHCP require a higher level of support than a mainstream school can provide, but

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their needs are not so complex that a special school is appropriate for them. For these children, a Specialist Resourced Provision (SRP) based in a mainstream school and that has places reserved for them is the best way to ensure that they receive the education they require. As a Local Authority there is an imperative for KCC to increase the proportion of children with an EHCP who can remain in and achieve well in a mainstream school by providing Specialist Resource Provisions to support them.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is the most common special education need type in Kent with 42.7% of all EHCPs (0-25) having ASD as their primary need. In Thanet 50% of all EHCPs for Primary aged pupils have ASD named as their primary need in their Education Health and Care Plan. Despite this, Thanet does not have any Specialist Resource Provisions in any of its local schools. The nearest primary schools with specialist resource provisions for ASD for children in Thanet are in Canterbury and Whitstable. We are therefore proposing to open the Specialist Resource Provisions for Thanet primary age children with Autism Spectrum Disorder at Garlinge Primary School within the Children's centre building.

Currently Garlinge Children's Centre has been closed due to covid-19. Before this it was a part-time centre offering services to families with children from pregnancy to aged 8 years, working closely with community partners. Garlinge Children's Centre is part of a network of Children's Centres in Thanet. The centre offers services including Early Years groups, Health Visiting and Midwifery services, and Adult Education courses. Early Childhood services are delivered in an integrated way on site or through outreach services. Birchington Children's Centre is able to offer comparative services to Garlinge Children's Centre and has a bigger outdoor area which allows more outdoor play opportunity. The network of Thanet Children's Centres work closely together offering outreach support across Thanet. The proposed changes will not affect the level of outreach support provided to families living within the catchment area of Garlinge Children's Centre. Birchington Children's Centre is a part time centre, and we would propose to transfer the services from Garlinge Children Centre and open Birchington centre full time to offer access to Garlinge Children's Centre users. Birchington Children's Centre and Garlinge Children's Centre support adjacent wards in West Thanet.

3. Consultation process:

The consultation took place from 29 September to 25 November 2021. Stakeholder groups were identified and targeted at the start and during the consultation period. The following groups were identified:

- Current service users of all Thanet Children's Centres
- Previous Service users of Garlinge Children Centre
- Parents/carers of pupils at Garlinge Primary School
- All primary, secondary schools in Thanet
- Early year providers in Garlinge area

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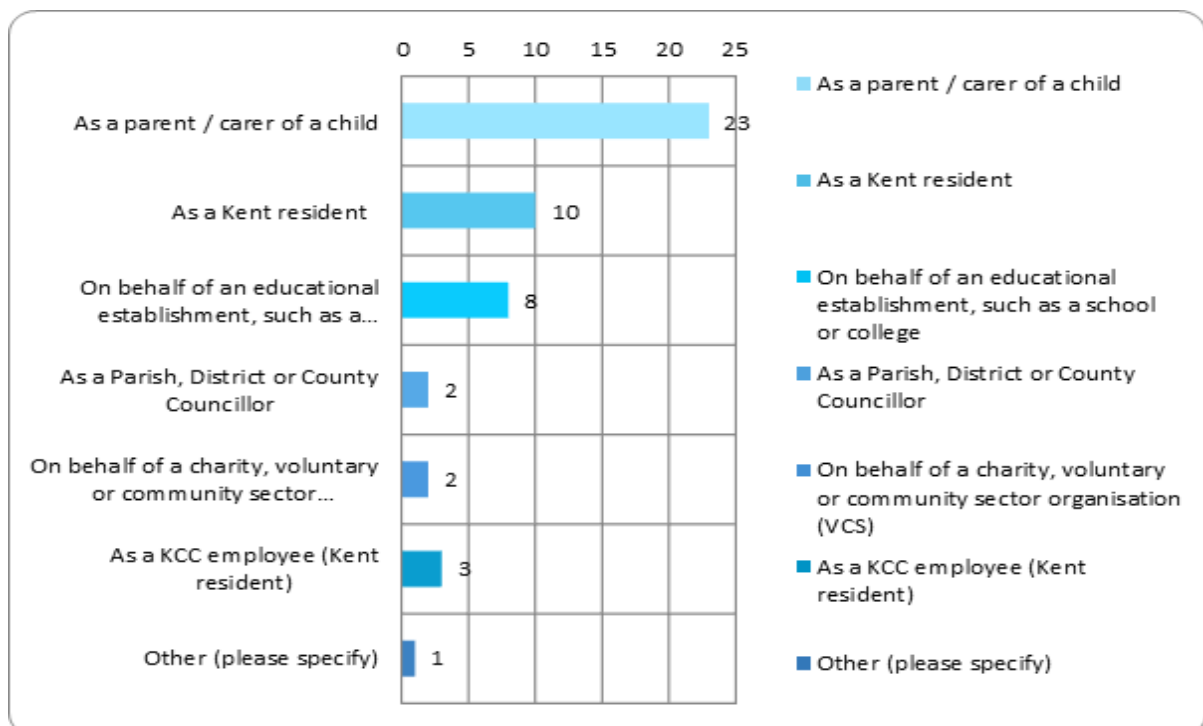


- KCC Members
- District council
- Midwifery and health visiting services
- Clinical Commissioning group
- Children's Centre Staff
- Unions

The consultation documents were posted on the KCC website, the school's website and Thanet Children's Centres facebook page. Two consultation events were organised at the school where people were able to book a slot on either Tuesday 19 October 4pm to 6pm or Wednesday 3 November 5pm to 7pm. One person attended the consultation event on Wednesday 3 November. A press statement was released at the beginning of the consultation. A leaflet drop to local people's houses was also organised for 18 streets surrounding Garlinge Children's Centre. The consultation documents were also available in Polish on the website. This is because this group had been identified in the Equality Impact Assessment as a group that might be impacted by the proposals. Paper copies were available to collect from Reception at Garlinge Primary School. Paper copies and other alternative formats were also available upon request.

4. Respondents

A total of 49 responses were received via the KCC website. No responses were received via post or email. The following table shows the capacity in which they were completing the questionnaire:

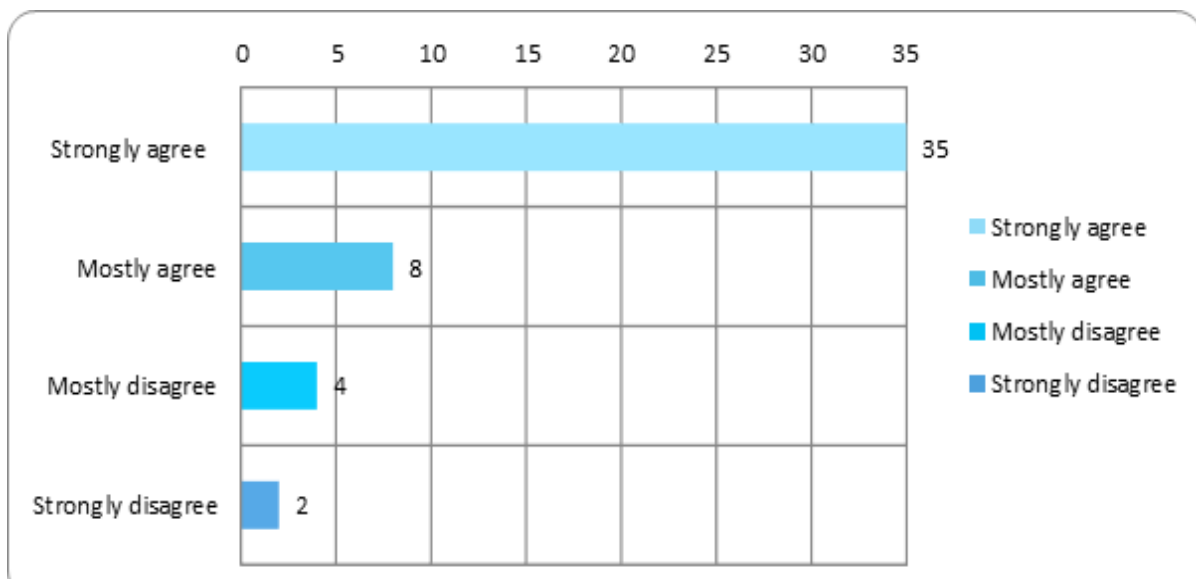


5. Consultation responses

Analysis of each survey question can be found below with the question asked.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to Change the use of the Garlinge Children's Centre building to provide a 16 place Specialist Resource Provision for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as part of Garlinge Primary School and Nursery and that will serve Thanet children with ASD.

35 strongly agreed with the proposal and a further 8 mostly agreed, 4 mostly disagreed and 2 strongly disagreed.



Question: If you mostly disagree or strongly disagree with this proposal, please tell us why. 10 responses were received from this question.

6 comments were received who mostly disagreed and strongly disagreed. The main theme was concerns with the stopping of children centre services including the midwifery at Garlinge Children's Centre, for example "It is the only midwifery and health visiting centre in the area. Some parents may find it extremely difficult to get to Birchington for their appointments which may result in missed appointments."

Another identified theme was the difficulty and cost of travel to Birchington Children's Centre.

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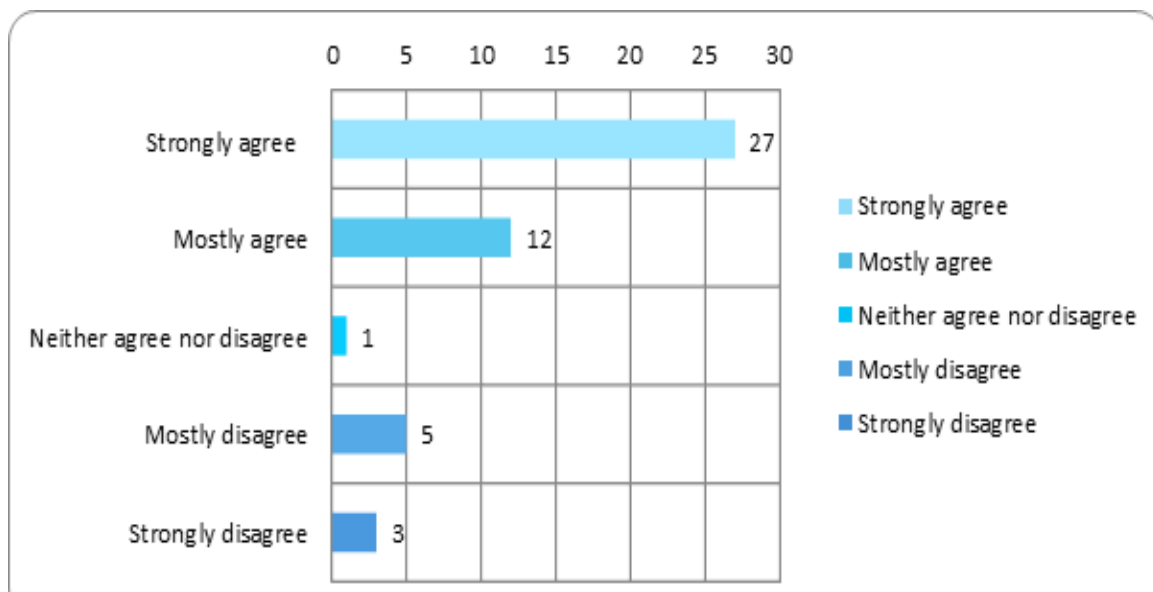


The need for more SEN provisions was also raised, and the concern that this provision will not be large enough for the need.

An additional 4 comments were made that mostly agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal with the theme that SEN provisions were needed in the area.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to provide children's centre services to the community served by Garlinge Children's Centre through Birchington Children's Centre instead.

27 responses strongly agreed with the proposal with 12 who mostly agreed, 1 neither agreed or disagreed, 5 mostly disagreed and a further 3 Strongly disagreed.



Question: If you mostly disagree or strongly disagree with this proposal, please tell us why.

7 comments were received from those who mostly disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal to deliver Children's Centre services to the Garlinge area through Birchington Children's Centre. The main response theme was the disagreement with children's centre services being taken away from Garlinge with one comment "mainstream children's services should be retained locally" and another "It's an awful shame that this decision would be an 'either - or' situation. Obviously, both are a resource that the community needs, and neither should be at the cost of losing the other." Another theme was regarding transport and the ability of families to get to Birchington to access Children Centre services. "The public transport is very poor servicing Garlinge to Birchington and some parents may not be able to access because of this. Also cost of getting there might be an issue."

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Of those who commented but mostly agreed, there were a total of 3 responses. They also mentioned travel difficulties to Birchington from Garlinge but also that all children centre services should cater for SEN. One also suggested that Birchington should be opened full time before Garlinge Children Centre is closed.

Two consultation events were organised at the school where people were able to book a slot on either Tuesday 19 October 4pm to 6pm or Wednesday 3 November 5pm to 7pm. One person attended the consultation event on Wednesday 3 November, and they were fully in support of the proposal and the need for the Specialist Resource Provision.

Further Analysis of Protected Characteristics

Of the 49 responses 35 were willing to provide more information about themselves, 10 were not, whilst 4 responded on behalf of an organisation. 26 of the respondents were female and 9 male. The table below shows the age groups of the 35 responses received.

Which of these age groups applies to you?	
16-24	1
25-34	8
35-49	12
50-59	3
60-64	4
65-74	6
85 and over	1

12 respondents regarded themselves as belonging to a particular religion whilst 12 did not and 1 preferred not to say. Of the 12 respondents 10 were Christian, 1 Buddhist and 1 other.

Of the 35 responses, 2 advised they were disabled whilst 33 were not. 10 also advised they were carers and 25 were not carers.

Of those who responded 33 identified as White English, 1 White other and 1 preferred not to say.

Analysis of the responses from the protected characteristics showed the responses were consistent across the board with no notable differences made by protected characteristic groups.

6. Equality analysis

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was produced for the proposal and the responders were asked to comment on the EQIA. 6 responses were received. 3 responses received were concerned about access to SEN services and the need for more SEN services for different need types. Another comment was regarding transport and parking at the site, whilst 1 comment was satisfied with the level of content of the EQIA. Another commented on the positive inclusivity and diversity of Garlinge Primary School.

7. Conclusions and next steps

The key findings from the consultation show that the majority of respondents (35 out of 49 responses) strongly agreed with the proposal to the change of use of Garlinge Children's Centre building to provide a 16 place Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as part of Garlinge Primary School and Nursery and that will serve Thanet children with ASD. Whilst 27 out of 49 strongly agreed to providing Children's Centre Services to the community served by Garlinge Children's Centre through Birchington Children's Centre.

A report on the proposal, the outcome of the consultation and recommendations will be submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on the 11 January 2022, following which the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services will make a decision on the proposal. If the decision is made to proceed with the proposals, a Public Notice would be issued to establish the SRP. If the proposal goes ahead, the intention would be to implement the change for September 2022.