



Children, Young People and Education
Children's Commissioning Team

Specialist Teaching and Learning Service Countywide Annual Report

Term 1 - 6

2022-2023

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Executive Summary

This report details the findings of the formal performance monitoring of Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS) by the Children's Commissioning Team for the academic year 2022-2023. It explores the progress made towards the recommendations proposed in the Countywide Report for Terms 1 and 2 of 2022-2023.

The report analyses data collected from the full set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) implemented at the beginning of the current Service Level Agreement (SLA) in September 2022 and, as such, summarises activity across the full academic year 2022-2023.

The data illustrates that there is a large demand for support from the service with the majority (if not all) of the early years settings, primary and secondary schools in a district receiving support of some form during the year. Across the county, the largest area of support for individual children is for those in primary schools.

District caseloads submitted through the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) give an idea of the level of demand for the service, however they tend to include children who, for a range of reasons, are not being actively supported by the service. Therefore, the KPI related to the number of children actively being supported is a more accurate measure of demand for the service under the current SLA.

The Annual Survey illustrated that the service is valued by those receiving it. Most respondents were SENCOs and subsequent surveys will seek to broaden the range of respondents.

Purpose

This report details the activity and performance of the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS) across the 12 districts of Kent for the academic year 2022 – 2023. This represents the first delivery year of the three-year Service Level Agreement (SLA) which was initiated in September 2022.

The report includes analysis of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which were agreed with the service to coincide with the new SLA, and for which a sharepoint reporting process was designed. The KPI template can be found in Appendix A. This template has been adjusted slightly to reflect the recommendations made in the previous Term 1 and 2 2022 – 2023 Countywide report (see Appendix D) which includes a detailed description of the service and the background to the [Cabinet Committee recommendations](#) made on 1 March 2022.

The STLS district leads of the SLA holding schools submit their KPIs on a termly basis and formal monitoring meetings are held three times per year, reporting retrospectively on the two preceding terms.

This report outlines the annual countywide findings for Terms 1 to 6 of the 2022–2023 academic year. The Appendices detail district level data.

The overarching aim of the STLS is to support Kent's mainstream early years settings and schools in delivering high quality inclusive provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Their focus is to build capacity,

confidence, skills, and knowledge amongst educators and promote inclusive practice and increase capacity across all mainstream educational settings.

This service operates across the 12 districts of Kent and is commissioned through 12 separate SLAs, each held by a special school within each district. These SLAs end 31 August 2025.

Local Context

Following an initial Ofsted inspection in 2019, and a re-visit in November 2022, the Council is undergoing significant period of change with an even greater focus on Inclusion than previously. STLS sits amongst a range of other services in delivering this ambition. The service supports the strategic outcomes of the Council as referenced in the [Countywide Approach to Inclusive Education \(CATIE\)](#) and the [Accelerated Programme Plan \(APP\)](#) which has been developed as a direct response to the OFSTED inspection. Both of which aim to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

A review of the High Needs Funding model in Kent has been completed and a new model has been proposed which reflects a locality-based approach, with greater decision making and accountability for locality resources within districts. This proposal is currently out for Public Consultation. STLS is funded by KCC through the High Needs Funding block and is also a local resource so any changes to how that funding is allocated and administered may impact on STLS.

There are a number of reviews being undertaken as part of the financial recovery [Safety Valve Agreement](#) which aims to eliminate the cumulative deficit arising from existing and forecast overspends on high needs funding for schools for children and young people with SEND in Kent. These include the Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) review, the Special School review and the Early Years review. These may all have an impact on the STLS over the next six to 20 months.

Part One – Background and Progress to Date

Performance Monitoring took place three times across the academic year 2022/2023. In February (Terms 1 and 2); May (Terms 3 and 4) and September 2023 (Terms 5 and 6).

A countywide report was produced after Terms 1 and 2 monitoring. This was the first report produced that covered the service since the review completed in January 2022. Feedback was positive and the report was welcomed by SLA-holding Heads as well as Lead Specialist Teachers. This report made several recommendations that have since been implemented. (see Appendix B).

1.1 The Service

STLS supports mainstream primary and secondary schools, and early years' settings. The overall offer of support is consistent across the county with some local variations in delivery. The variations are in response to local need, demand and capacity, resulting from 12 separate SLAs and their associated budgets. The past year has seen some districts reducing their staffing teams and adjusting their delivery styles due to budget constraints, which has further contributed towards variations in practice.

The Working Together, Planning Together workshops are a joined-up approach that STLS participate in, alongside Educational Psychologists from Kent Educational Psychology

Service (KEPS), Special Educational Needs Inclusion Advisors (SIA) and council representatives which enables greater collaboration between services, working towards a joined-up approach within local areas. This year has seen a focus on Phase Transition and developing an agreement of the role of various agencies within the process.

Council officers regularly attend the STLS District Leads meeting to provide updates on relevant, strategic developments and activity within the Council.

STLS support the Council's strategic aims by delivering Autism Education Trust (AET) training and supporting the roll out of the Balanced System®.

The last academic year has started to see different ways of working in response to limited and decreasing capacity of services including:

- An approach to more group work, moving away from individual support.
- No allocation at Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT) at certain times in some districts to free up capacity to focus on transition.
- A trial of New Ways of Working in Tonbridge and Malling, and Maidstone, which focuses on delivering specialist support through the graduated approach.
- STLS having greater collaboration with the Council by supporting initiatives such as the rollout of the AET training and attending the Working Together, Planning Together workshops.
- Increased sharing of resources across districts.

All districts reported in their Terms 5 and 6 monitoring meetings that the central government agreed 6.5% teacher pay rises which comes into effect in September 2023 will place additional strain on the static budget.

SLA-holding Heads expressed that they were willing to deliver the STLS service beyond the length of the SLA but cautioned that this would result in a diminished offer over time if the budget remained static.

Part Two – Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Performance Monitoring Process

A new set of KPIs was introduced when the SLA came into effect in September 2022, alongside a new, simplified reporting mechanism using Microsoft forms. Although developed with the service leads in all districts, not all districts initially had the capacity to collect and report on all KPIs. By the end of Term 3, all service leads had processes in place and so the data has a higher degree of accuracy from that term onwards.

Generally, there have been two commissioners, the district lead, and the SLA holding head teacher present during performance monitoring meetings.

In Terms 1 and 2, 12 performance monitoring meetings were held. All were held virtually. The focus of Performance Monitoring was:

Operational Update

Including:

- Transition
- LIFT
- Communications with Schools and SENCos

Performance Against KPIs

Including:

- Narrative report
- Staffing
- Financial Audit

Quality Impact

Case study which could be example of a successful or innovative practise or intervention

Challenges, Barriers, Issues arising.

Following feedback from Terms 1 and 2 performance monitoring, commissioners invited STLS to submit any questions or enquiries in writing prior to the meeting so that commissioners could ensure a full response could be provided, where appropriate. There were no questions presented during Terms 3 and 4 meetings for commissioners to respond to, however this opportunity will still be made available prior to future performance monitoring meetings.

In Terms 3 and 4, 12 performance monitoring meetings were held, 11 of these were in person with commissioners visiting the SLA holding special school, and one meeting was held virtually (due to commissioner capacity).

The focus of Performance Monitoring was:

Narrative Report

(To include transition, process changes, innovation, or new ways of working, supplementary information in relation to KPI's i.e., anomalies/exceptions)

KPI and Local Activity Report (LAR>ReturnsQuestions

(Submitted before the meeting so Commissioners could provide a response at the meeting)

In Term 5 and 6, 12 performance monitoring meetings were held. All meetings were held virtually due to commissioner capacity. The focus of the Performance Monitoring meeting was:

Narrative Report

Please prepare a comment to include anything significant on: transition, process changes, innovation, or new ways of working, supplementary information in relation to KPI's i.e., anomalies/exceptions)

KPI and LAR

Brief overview of any differences to previous terms.
Reflections on changes of delivery and focus over the past year.

Focus for next academic year.

By Term 6, there was minimal feedback of technical issues or reports of any challenges in collecting required data, although there are still some differing interpretations of the KPIs in a very small number of occasions.

2.1 Summary of Activity

Performance Monitoring in relation to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Local Activity Reports (LAR)

The following is a high-level summary (based on data submitted) of the performance of STLS as a countywide service during Terms 1 to 6 of 2022 – 2023 school academic year.

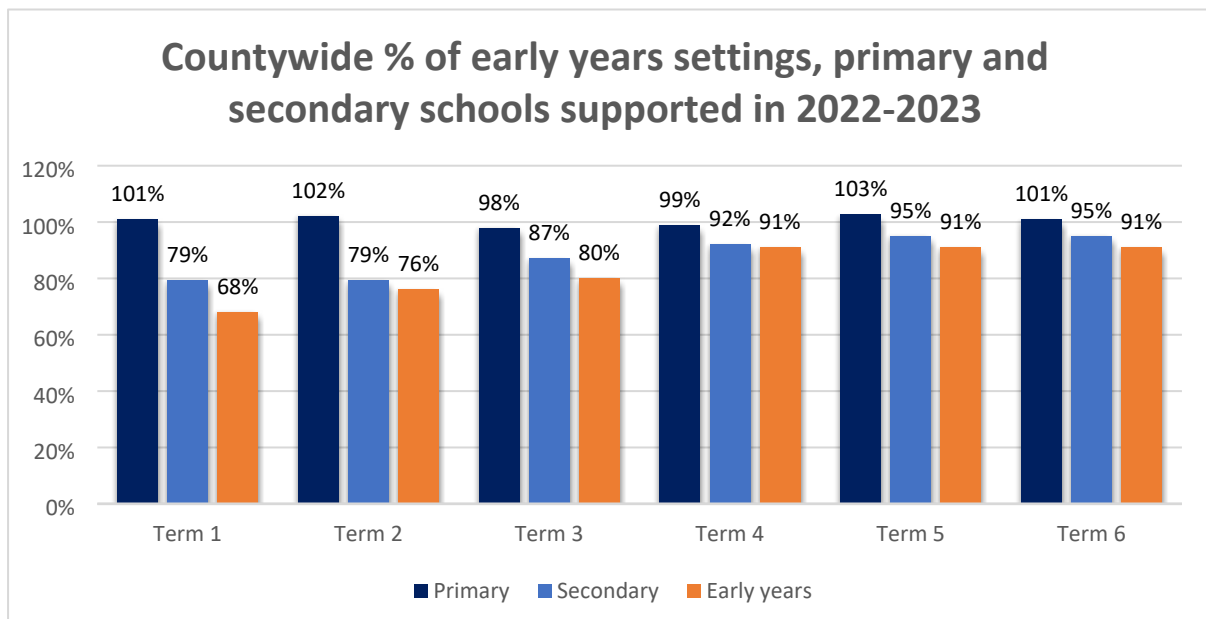


Figure 1: Countywide average % of early years settings, primary, secondary schools supported (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

When the KPIs were agreed, it was not understood that STLS supported schools outside their district. This mostly happens when districts share training courses. This had led to an anomaly in the percentage of schools and settings supported, with schools from outside the district included in the count, resulting in a percentage that is over 100%, as can be seen in Figure 1. This is to be resolved in reporting going forward.

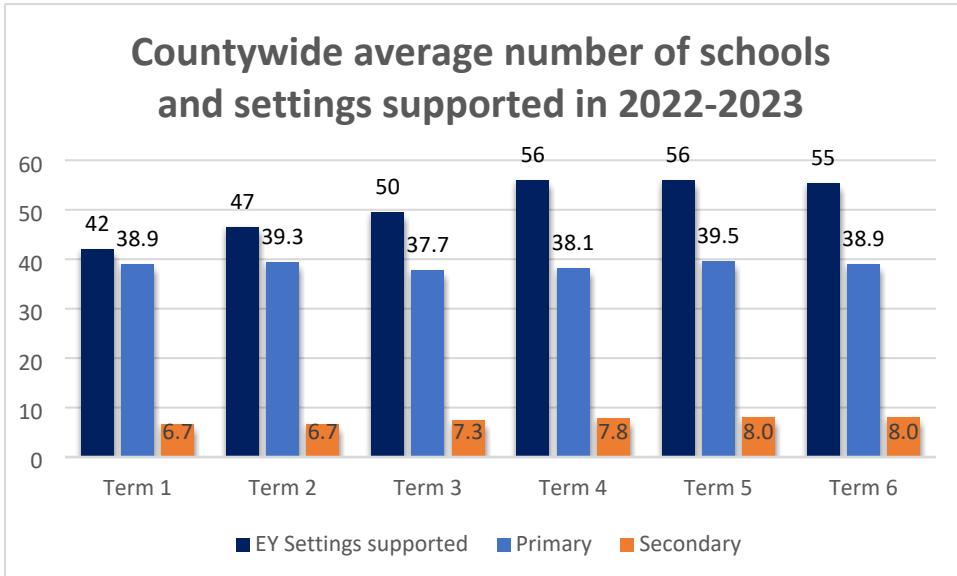


Figure 2: Countywide average number of early years, primary, secondary schools (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

Figure 2 shows STLS are supporting a larger percentage of Primary schools than Secondary schools countywide. According to [Kent Analytics- Integrated Dataset](#) SEN Support for mainstream secondary school pupils increased by 18% between 2019/2020 and 2021/2022, three times higher than the rise in primary school pupils (6%). This could have an impact on STLS capacity if the figures continue to rise.

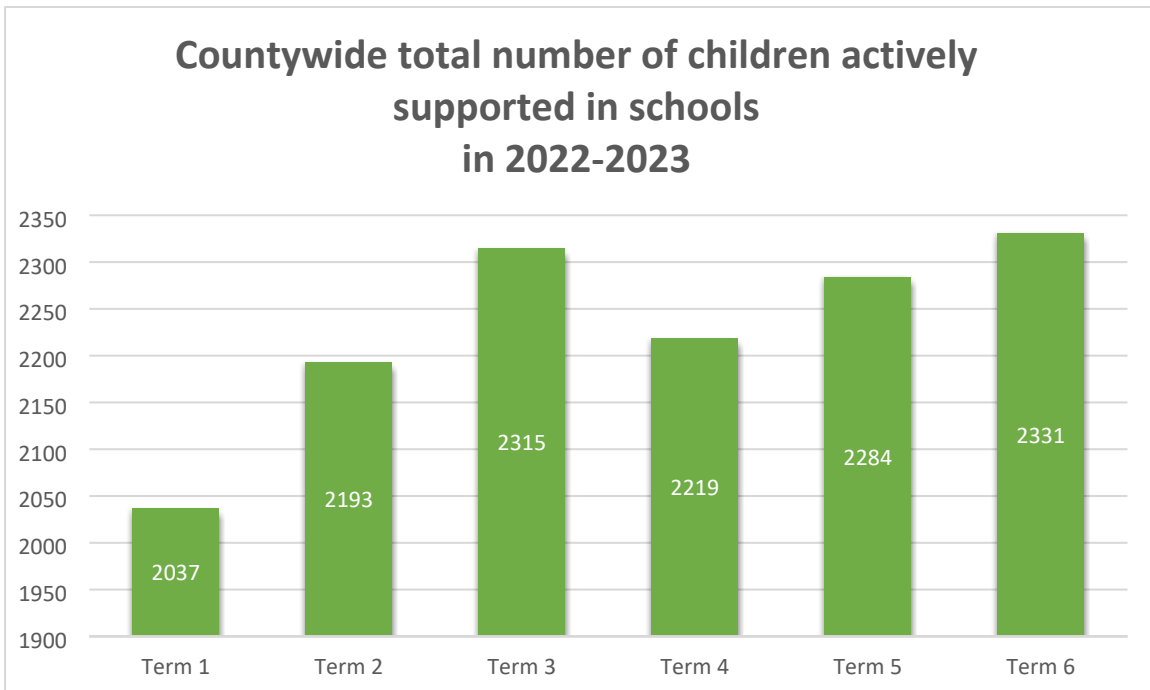


Figure 3: Countywide total number of children actively supported (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

By Actively Supporting, we mean: an individual child that is 1) open to the service; 2) has a specialist teacher actively supporting the child and 3) where the child is working towards individual targets.

It is important to note that these are not new cases each term and a large number of children are likely to be the same children from term to term. Most districts are starting to ensure that cases are closed once the child has reached specific targets or the school has sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the child regardless of the level of progress made. This may reduce these numbers in time. However, this can be challenging where the child has ongoing complex needs or the school asks for ongoing support (e.g. as a safety net) and the specialist teacher cannot identify an appropriate opportunity to close the case. These cases can always be opened again should specialist support be appropriate later.

Fluctuations in number of children supported across terms are mostly due to a traditional emphasis on transition in Term 5 and 6, although other factors are also at play. For example, Swale filling all specialist teacher vacancies after a long period and building caseloads up again, or long periods of staff sickness where no cover was available. In Figure 3, a further factor is that not all districts were able to report on this KPI for Terms 1 and 2 as they had not previously been required to be collecting this data meaning that not all activity is represented. By Term 3 all districts were able to report.

All districts are now working more closely in line with the timelines detailed in the Transition Charter. It is expected that transition will be a focus throughout the year rather than within specific terms, meaning that there will be less fluctuation in activity across the terms during in 2023-2024.

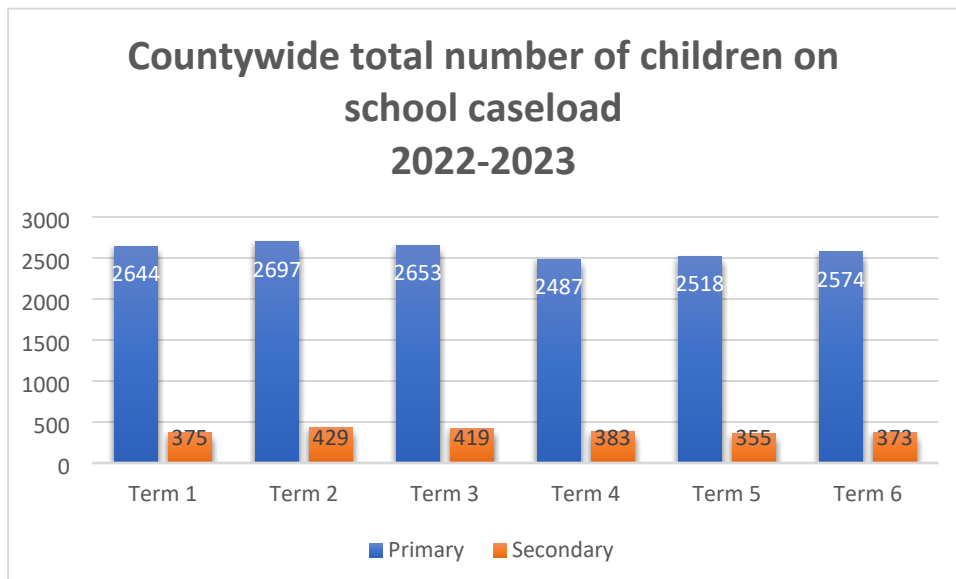


Figure 4: Countywide Total number of children on school caseload (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

Figure 4 shows us that there are more children on the caseload than are being actively supported. The reasons for this may include: children who are required to be open to STLS (although not necessarily supported by them) in order to receive financial or other specialist support; children with ongoing medical conditions such as Down’s Syndrome and other occasions where the specialist teacher is not able to identify a time to end support and cases were schools are reluctant for STLS to close the case even though they are not actively providing support. Note that all schools were able to report on this measure for Terms 1 and 2 as this was information captured within previous version of the KPI’s. The dataset for the cases being actively supported was not complete for Terms 1 and 2 for the reasons cited

above. Nonetheless, it is evident from the remaining terms that there are more children in STLS caseloads than are actively receiving support.

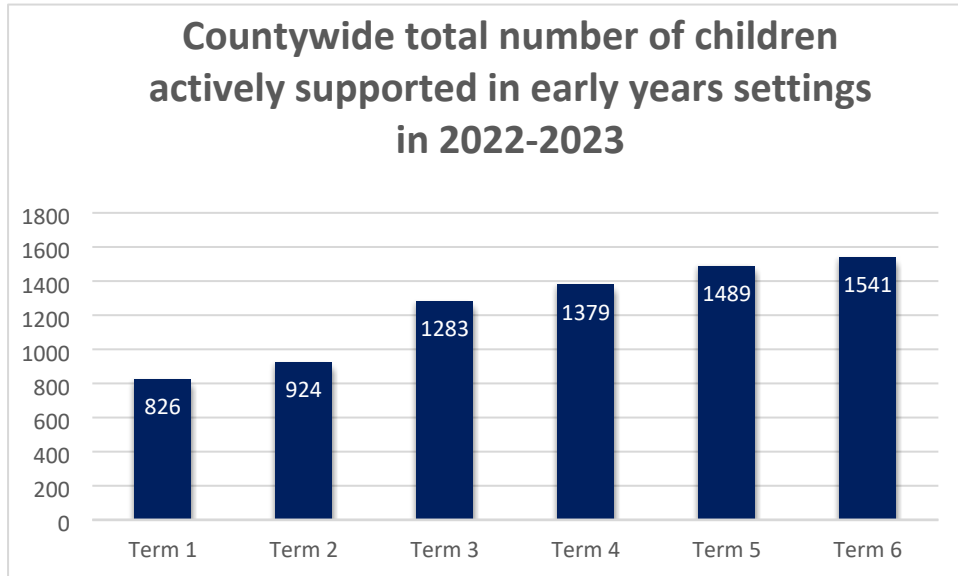


Figure 5: Countywide total number children actively supported in early years settings (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

Again, as with school age, these are not necessarily new cases each term, some children will be counted in more than one term. We can see that, despite not having a complete dataset in Term 1 and 2, caseloads have increased each term. This evidences a significant demand for support in early years countywide, particularly after transition and as part of the requirement for a child to have a specialist teacher allocated to them in order to receive SENIF support and support at a specialist intervention nursery.

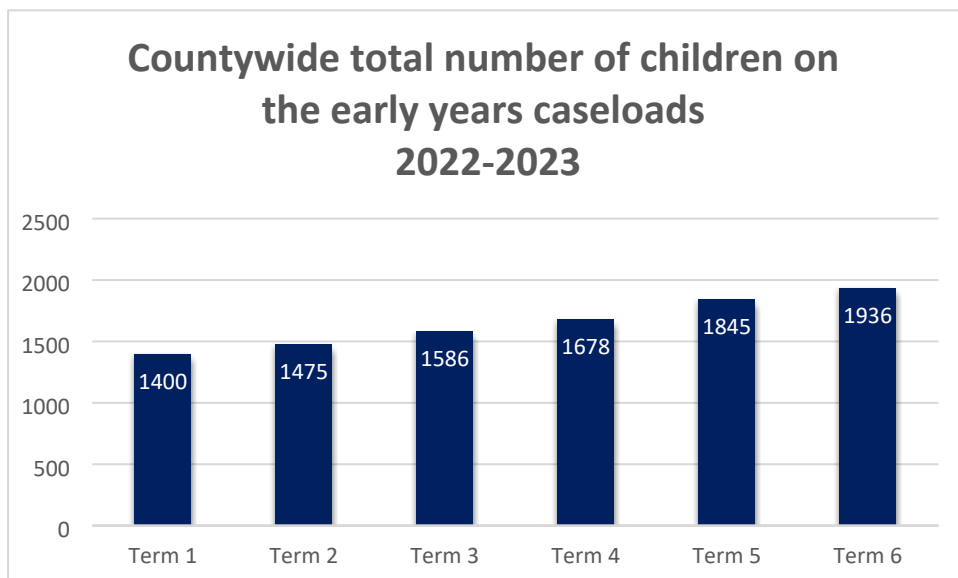


Figure 6: Countywide Total number of children on early years caseload (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

Figure 6 shows the countywide figures for all early years' caseloads. As with school age children there is a discrepancy between caseload and the number of children actively receiving support. For early years, the primary reason for this is that all districts tend to keep children on their cases for one or two terms after they have transitioned into Reception year to support the child and the school as the school identifies any emerging SEND and puts support in place through High Needs Funding or Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP).

Again, the number of children actively supported is not accurate for Terms 1 and 2 as not all districts were able to report on this data during these periods. We will have a more accurate idea in 2023-2024.

LIFT

The Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT) meeting is a forum where SENCOs can discuss children with STLS teachers, other SENCOs and any other attending professionals, such as Educational Psychologists.

The school LIFT meetings are Solution Focussed, with the SENCO defining the piece of support or guidance they need in the form of a question before describing the child's behaviour and techniques already applied, and clarification questions being asked by all professionals present, followed by a solution summary. Early years LIFT is less solution focussed due to the age of the children and associated emerging need or developmental delay.

The districts which have separated out primary and secondary LIFT have found that this encourages other secondary schools to attend.

Depending on the district, a specialist teacher may be allocated in schools LIFT. Due to capacity issues, some districts are encouraging schools to implement the advice given prior to the allocation of teacher, and only allocating teacher where it is most needed.

Conversely, a specialist teacher will often be allocated at Early Years LIFT as well as a SENIF Practitioner. The SENIF Practitioner will support the setting by modelling support identified by the Specialist Teacher. These are a Council service and cannot be allocated without the child being open to STLS. For early years, while LIFT is a valued resource there is an additional driver as attendance at LIFT is part of the process to apply for SENIF.

Having LIFT and allocation of a specialist teachers as part of the evidence used to demonstrate the need for further support through an EHCP, High Needs Funding or SENIF has placed additional pressure on the service. Although valued by SENCOs (as evidenced in the annual survey results found in Appendix D), the process of making a referral can be seen as part of a tick box exercise, it is reported to be time consuming for schools and settings, and the LIFT process is requires a lot of administration by STLS.

To address some of these barriers, more districts are operating a clinic/surgery/in-school or setting review to provide support, advice and guidance in an anonymised way. This provides support and reassurance without unnecessary bureaucracy and allows LIFT to focus on the most complex referrals while ensuring that SENCOs still receive support from a specialist teacher.

Each district operates approximately six school LIFTs, and four early years LIFTs per term, with some districts separating out LIFT for primary and secondary schools. Some districts struggle to engage with secondary schools, although others, such as Gravesham, have excellent engagement.

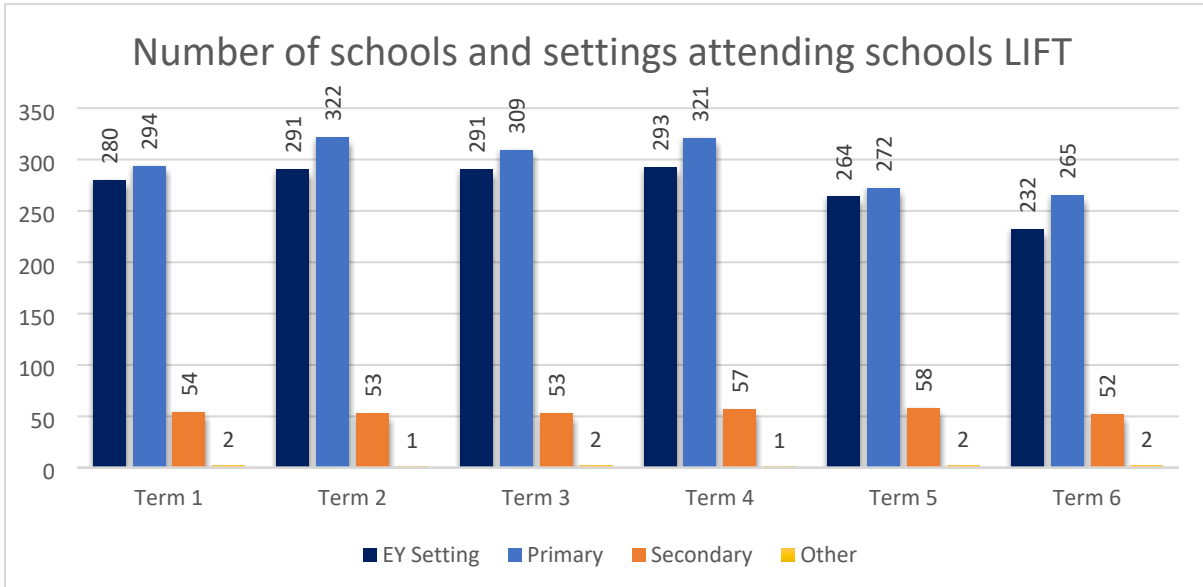


Figure 7: Number of schools and settings attending Schools LIFT (Kent Analytics LAR Power BI Dashboard)

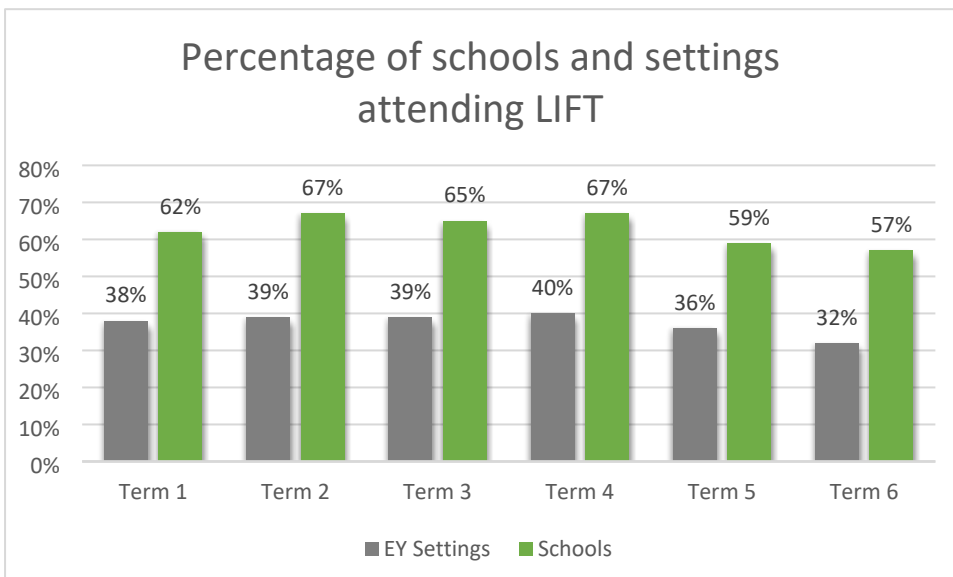


Figure 8 Percentage of schools and settings attending LIFT

As previously mentioned, and is further evidenced in Figure 8, data tells us that primary schools are far more likely to engage in the LIFT process than secondary schools. Whilst schools and settings do engage with the STLS, not all schools and settings engage with the LIFT process.

It was identified in Terms 1 and 2 report that, although LIFT is designed to be a multiagency forum, attendance by professionals other than STLS, Educational Psychologists and SENIF Practitioners (in early years) varies across districts and often the only professionals attending (other than SENCOs) are from STLS (see Figure 9). There are some outliers, for instance, Dover regularly has Early Help professionals attend both early years and school LIFTs. SENIF Practitioners attend early years LIFT, which is where they are allocated, subject to approval from the Senior SENIF Practitioner. Districts also have an allocation of KCC Educational Psychologists time which is allocated towards supporting at LIFT and running clinics.

STLS have widely reported that often professionals who have been invited to attend LIFT, do not attend. The Speech and Language service are often not able to attend, however they will support the process by providing a record of the child’s history, including some medical information that the SENCo may not have been told by the parents, which could guide the direction of support.

Countywide number of professionals attending schools LIFT

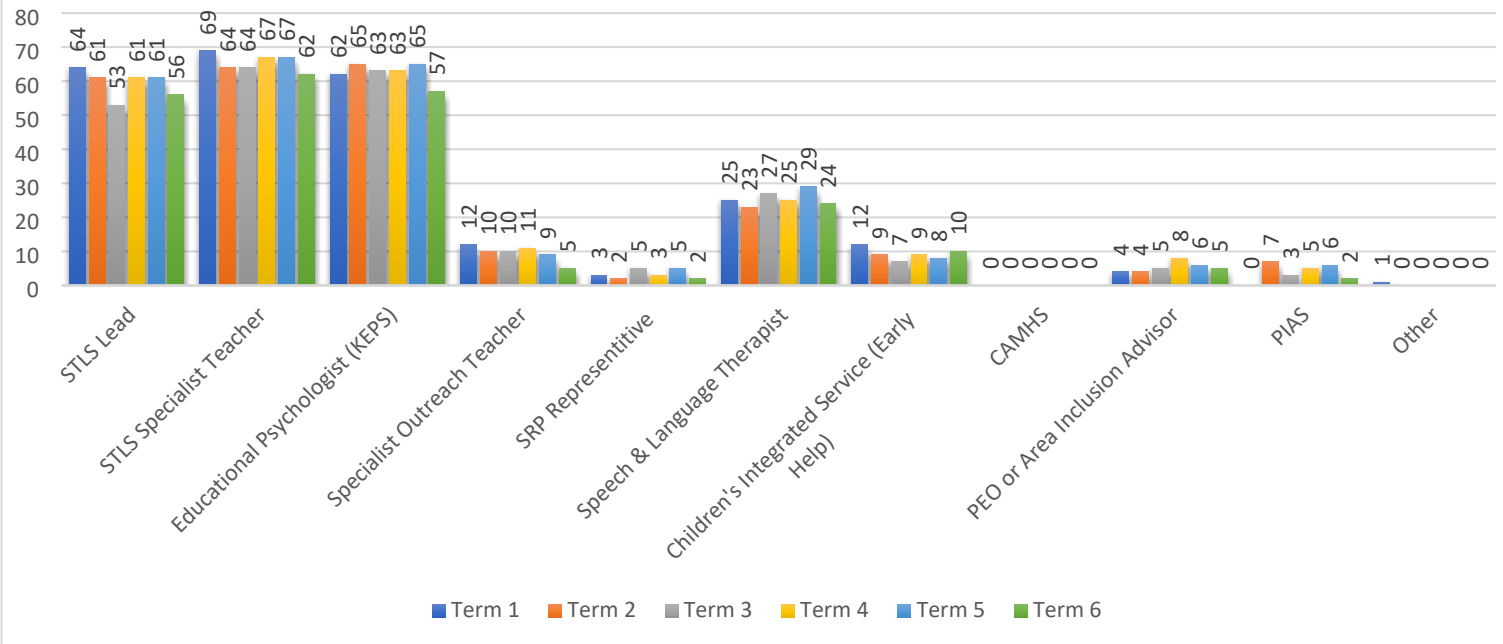


Figure 9: Number of professionals attending Schools LIFT (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

Countywide number of professionals attending early years LIFT

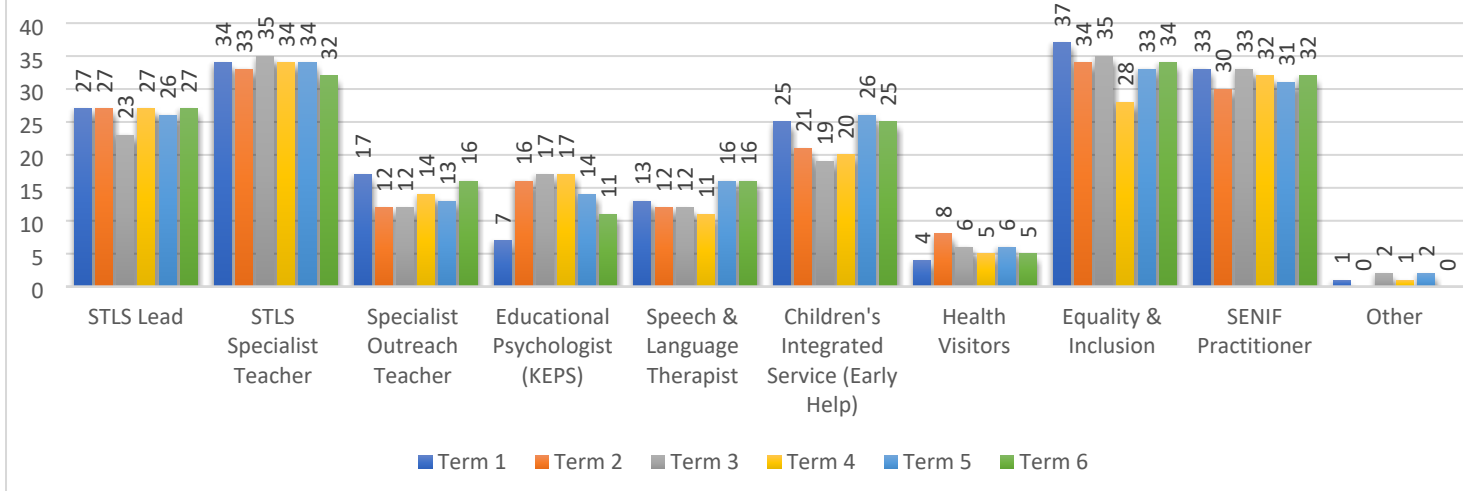


Figure 10: Number of professionals attending early years LIFT countywide (Kent Analytics LAR Power BI Dashboard)

Figures 9 and 10 shows there is consistent presence of the STLS Lead, STLS specialist teacher and KCC Educational Psychologists at LIFT meetings in Terms 1 and 2. No district had representation from a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) professional.

Lack of professional attendance at LIFT is widely recognised and is still the case. However, this measure was put in place to corroborate anecdotal information provided by the service. Having achieved this, the Council will no longer be collecting the data on professionals attending LIFT and will not be reporting this going forward.

The table below shows activity in terms of the number of cases discussed at LIFT.

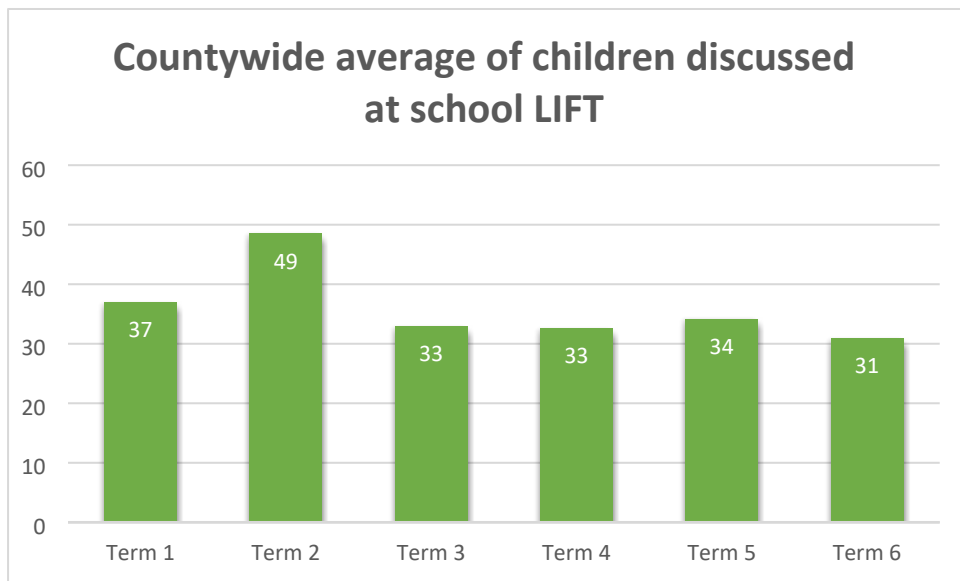


Figure 11: Countywide average of children discussed at school LIFT (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

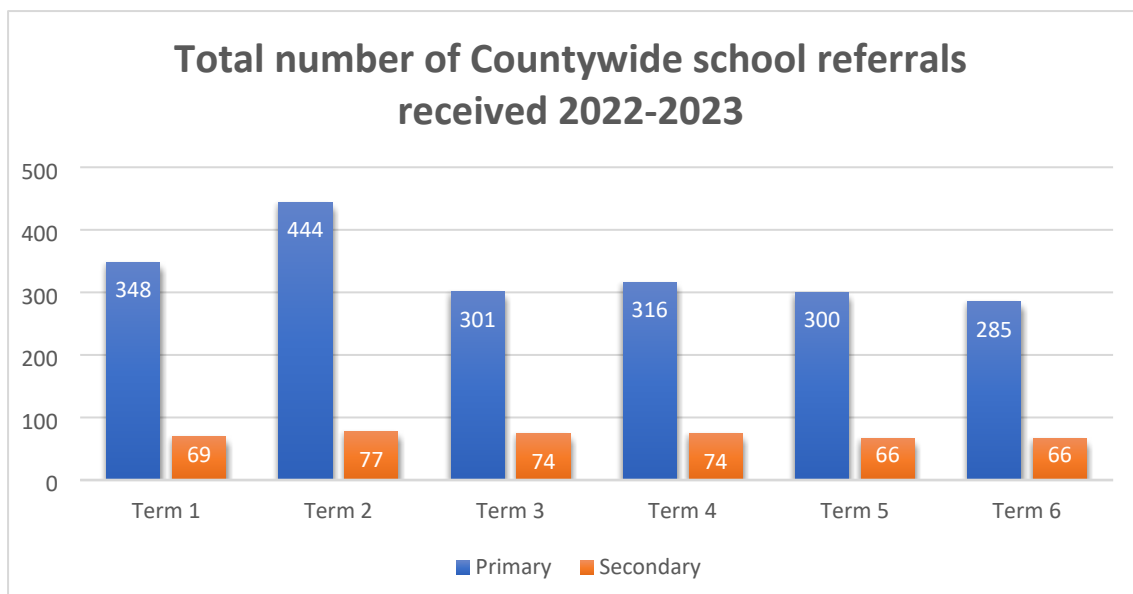


Figure 12: Total number of Countywide school referrals received 2022-2023 (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

Figure 12 shows that primary schools access STLS more than secondary schools. There were 426 secondary LIFT referrals countywide and 1994 primary LIFT referrals in the academic year. The increase in referrals in Term 2 is partly due to schools using Term 1 to allow children to transition and to determine whether universal strategies are enough to meet need before accessing further support via LIFT in Term 2.

There are often a high number of cases at early years LIFT due to the number of settings and the level of need, which adds pressure and impacts on the capacity of early years STLS to support settings. Early years have different processes to schools LIFT, and STLS report practitioners often only tend to attend LIFT if a case requires SENIF funding and practitioners will often only attend to discuss the child they have brought to LIFT, and not stay for the whole meeting due to time constraints. This is more common than not, although there are variations across districts.

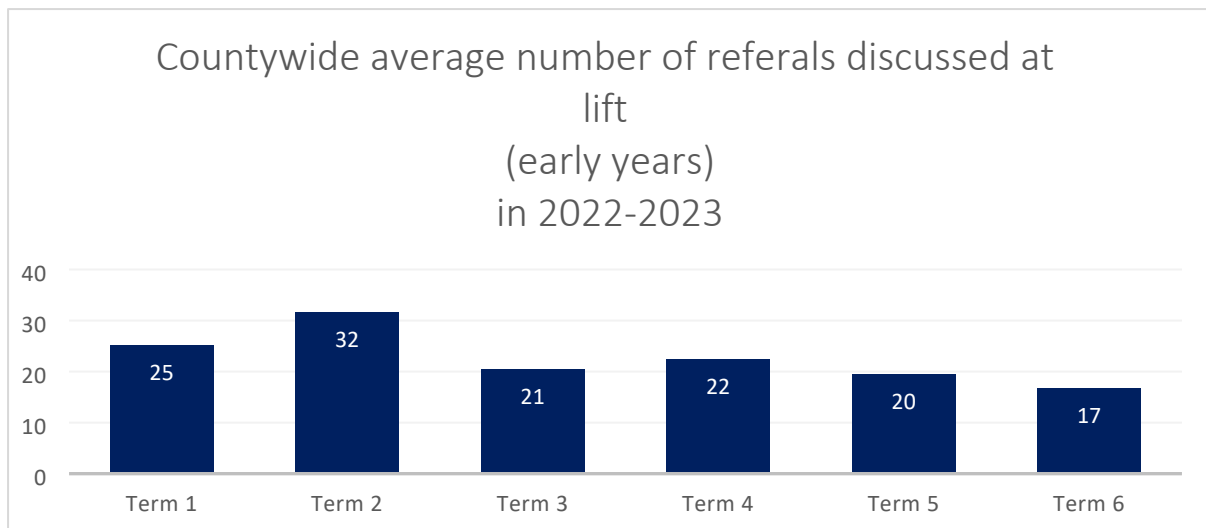


Figure 13: Countywide average of early years referrals discussed at LIFT (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

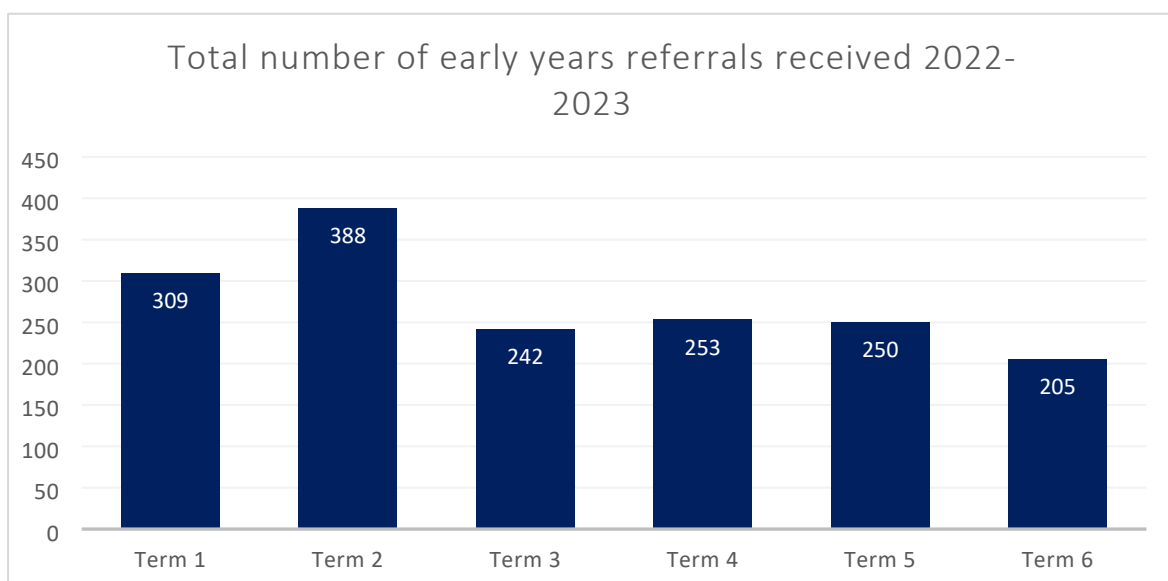


Figure 14: Total number of early years referrals received 2022-2023 – early years (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

According to Figure 14 there were 1647 early years LIFT referrals countywide in the academic year. There is an increase of referrals in Term 2, which could be due to settings implementing the Graduated Approach before referring to LIFT. STLS tend to not allocate to as many children in Term 6 as children who would benefit from support are often being supported through the transition processes.

Looking at the service as a whole, most cases at early years LIFT have a specialist teacher allocated to them. This is due to the reported increase in the volume of highly complex cases being brought to LIFT, the KCC requirement for a specialist teacher allocation before SENIF support can be allocated, and the requirement for the child to be open to STLS while they are being supported by a specialist nursery. These requirements are being examined as part of the Early Years review. These factors have a significant impact on demand for LIFT referrals and specialist teacher allocation and are being considered within the Early Years Review.

Clinics/Surgeries

There is an increasing move towards providing advice and guidance in an anonymised, less formal way outside LIFT to avoid bureaucracy, and so that SENCOs can access advice, guidance and reassurance with a short turnaround. There are variations across the county, with Thanet using their Link Teacher model to provide in school/setting reviews, and other districts offering virtual clinics or surgeries, sometimes with the support of the Kent Educational Psychology Service.

Districts report that this does sometimes remove the need to attend LIFT for children in most need types, however, children with Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) will usually go on to attend LIFT.

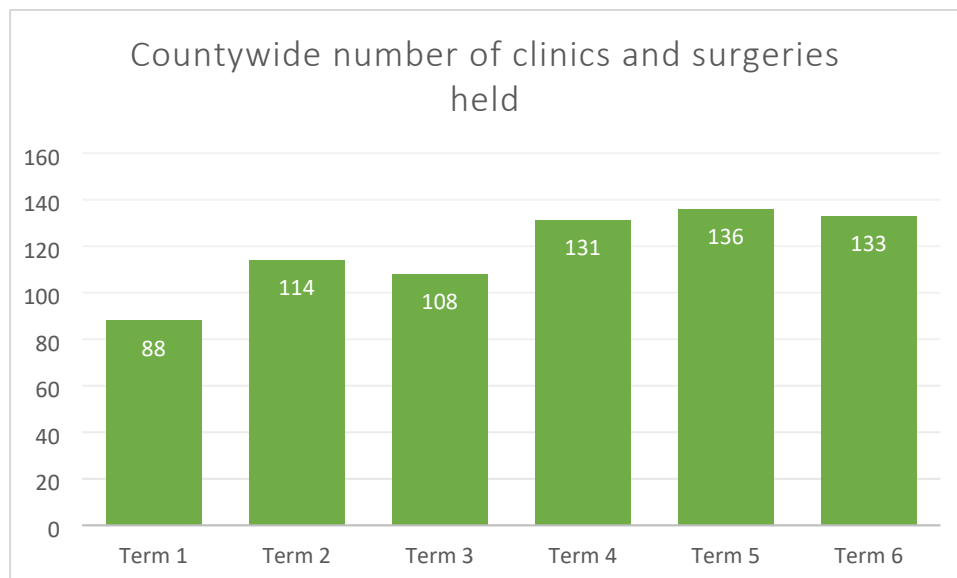


Figure 15: Countywide Number of clinics / surgeries / in school reviews ((Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

A total of 710 clinics/surgeries were reported to have been delivered across the county during the academic year for schools. It is likely that this number will increase next year as districts look for ways to support schools and settings as effectively as possible in light of growing demand and limited capacity.

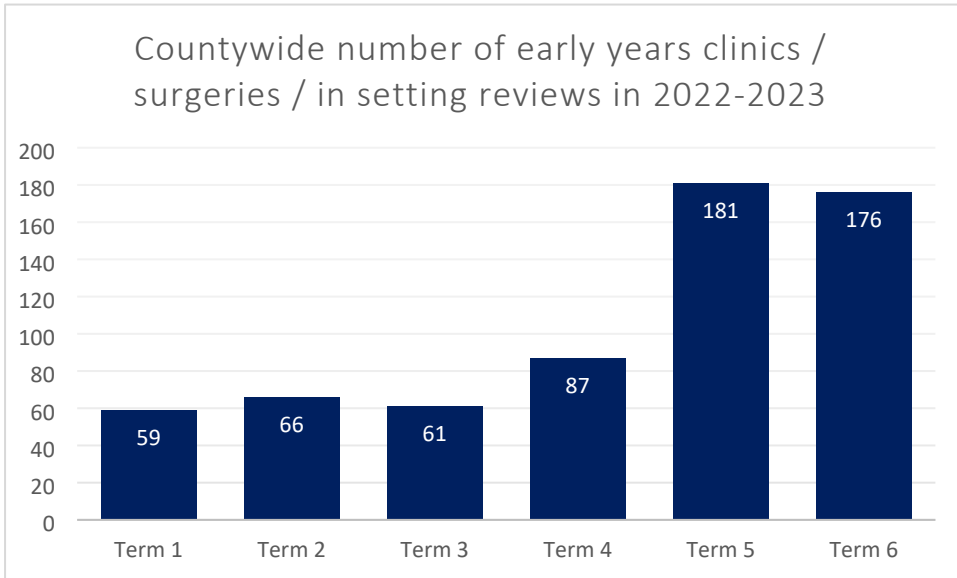


Figure 16: Countywide Number of early years clinics / surgeries / in setting reviews (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

Figure 16 shows that there were 630 early years clinics/surgeries throughout the academic year. It is likely that the jump in numbers in Terms 5 and 6 are due to transition support and some changes to delivery models.

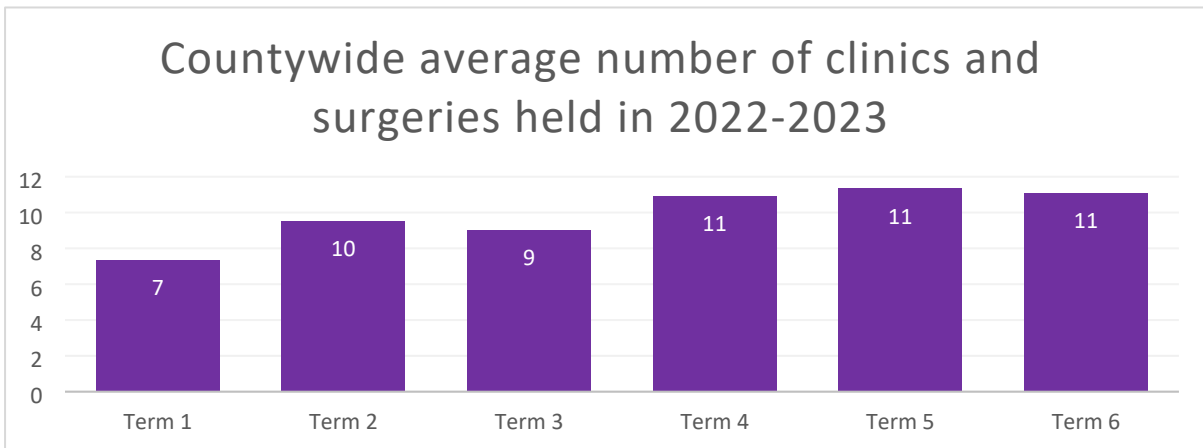


Figure 17: Countywide average of school clinics and surgeries held (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

Tonbridge and Malling, with their new way of working which is modelled around the graduated approach, has a focus on providing specialist support, operate clinics and reserve LIFT for children with the highest need.

Additional measures have been added to performance monitoring for 2023-2024, monitoring the volume going through clinics, not just the number of clinic/surgeries held to gain more understanding of this activity and the impact that it has.

2.5 Transition

A key topic of discussion within the performance monitoring meetings continues to be the role of STLS in transition. Findings are summarised below:

Primary to Secondary School:

Figure 18 shows in Term 1, STLS reported that 94 schools were supported to deliver transition events, and in Term 5, 322 schools were supported countywide.

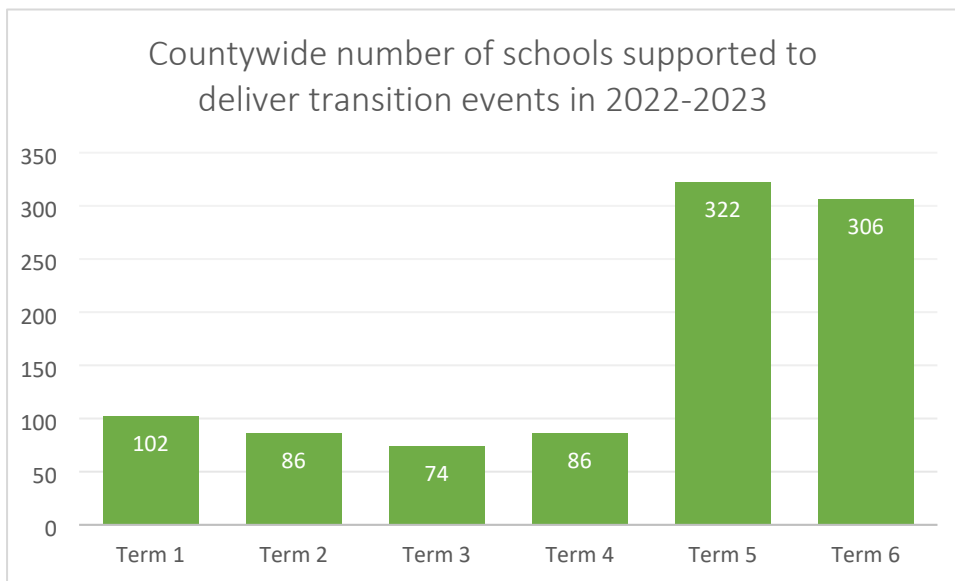


Figure 18: Countywide Number of schools supported to deliver transition events (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

The county's approach to transition has solidified this year, with the termly Working Together, Planning Together meetings in Lenham supporting a more joined-up approach to transition. STLS have further developed relationships with the SIAs and the Education Psychologists in their districts to support implementing the Transition Charter. Districts that previously had only supported transition during Terms 5 and 6 have identified that there are elements of transition that need to be addressed throughout the year and have adjusted their work plans for 2023-2024 in recognition of this.

Early years to Reception:

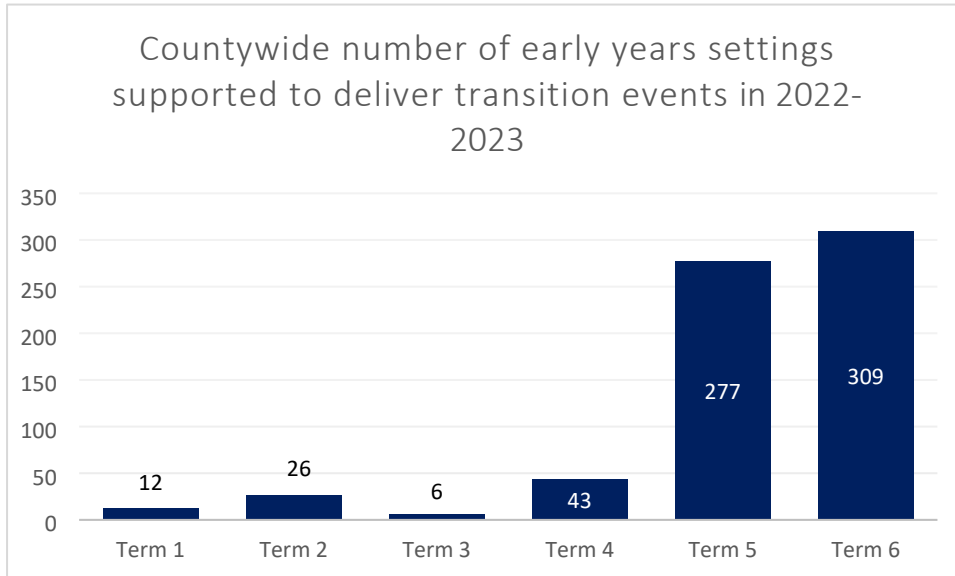


Figure 19: Countywide Number of early years settings supported to deliver transition events (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

Figure 19 shows STLS supported a total of 673 transition events throughout the academic year.

As with schools' transitions, the approach to transition has varied across the county, with a significant emphasis in Terms 5 and 6.

The approach to transition is shifting, with more collaborative working across inclusion agencies. A key challenge is that STLS do not always know which school a child has been accepted at and so are less able to support the process. This is less of an issue in districts where STLS has a link model and the specialist teacher can have regular conversations with a greater number of schools and settings.

Complexity of Needs

At school age, it is evident that the majority of referrals through LIFT are for SEMH. This could be for several reasons – as SEMH is not a diagnosis, the behaviour could be as a result of various factors, including undiagnosed ASD, hearing impairment, trauma and abuse amongst other factors. Also, districts tell us that SEMH is the one need type which is rarely resolved at clinic.

Early years STLS report there has been a significant rise in number of children with complex needs. This does not necessarily mean they have SEND however they will need help, support, and encouragement to develop their early language skills and vocabulary.

Countywide number of schools referrals by Area and Priority Need Type

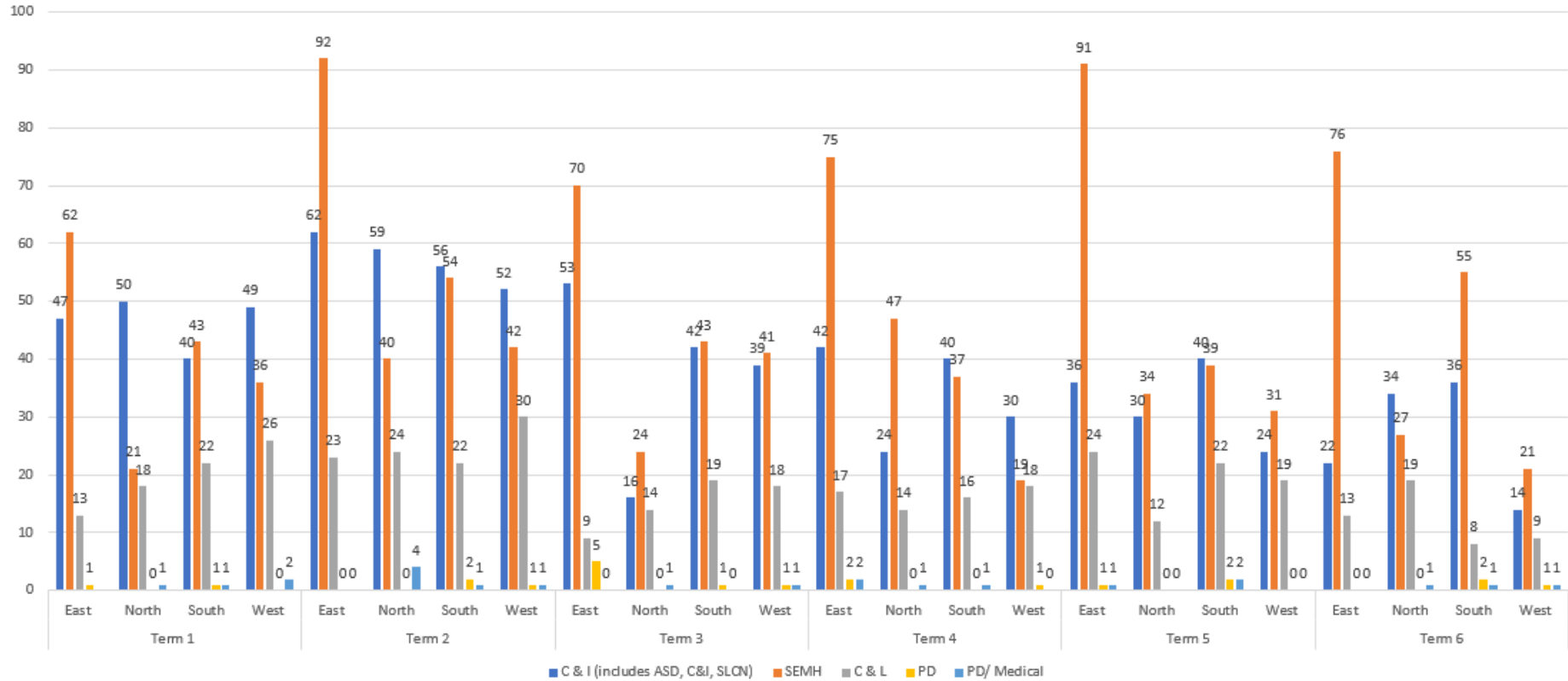


Figure 20:: Countywide Number of Schools Referrals by Area and Priority Need Type (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

There remain serious concerns about the high demand and lack of availability of services in Kent, particularly for Speech and Language. Early years STLS countywide have reported there have been an increase in Communication and Interaction (C&I) referrals, and that this is the most common referral dimension type in early years. Given the accessibility of STLS through the LIFT process, STLS report that they are often 'picking up' cases that require a different specialist service.

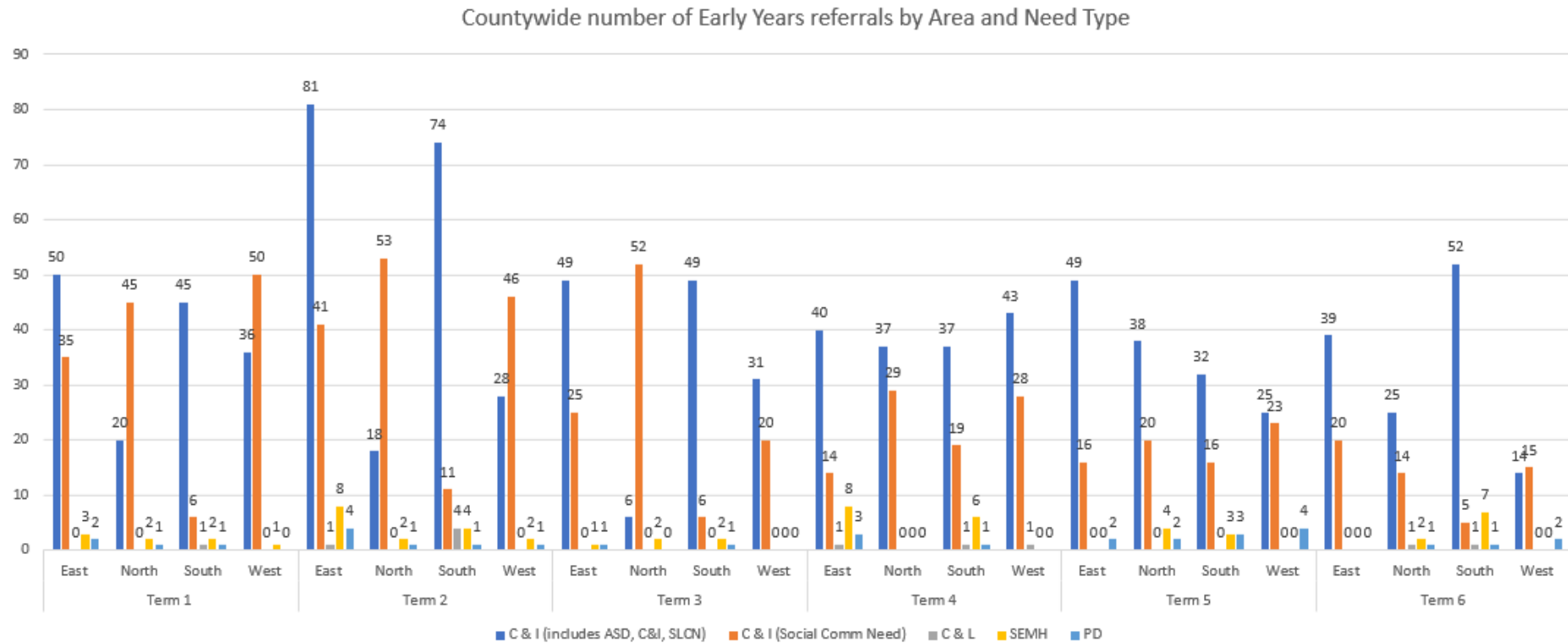


Figure 21: Countywide Number of early years Referrals by Area type and Priority Need Type (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

Children are often undiagnosed, have complex needs, and/or have new or emerging SEN in the early years. However, the highest identified need types in early years STLS are C&I and Cognition and Learning. SEMH falls far below these, and yet this changes significantly when children enter school as evidenced by figure 20.

2.7 Training

STLS continue to offer both a range of core and bespoke training courses, with the requirement for bespoke training outstripping the requests for core training across the county.

Core training refers to training that is planned yearly in advance, is often delivered across areas and requires individuals from schools to register and attend. The bespoke training is provided at the request of individual schools to meet an identified need within the school.

The graphs below clearly illustrates the reported trend towards more schools requesting bespoke training packages and greater engagement by primary schools in training.

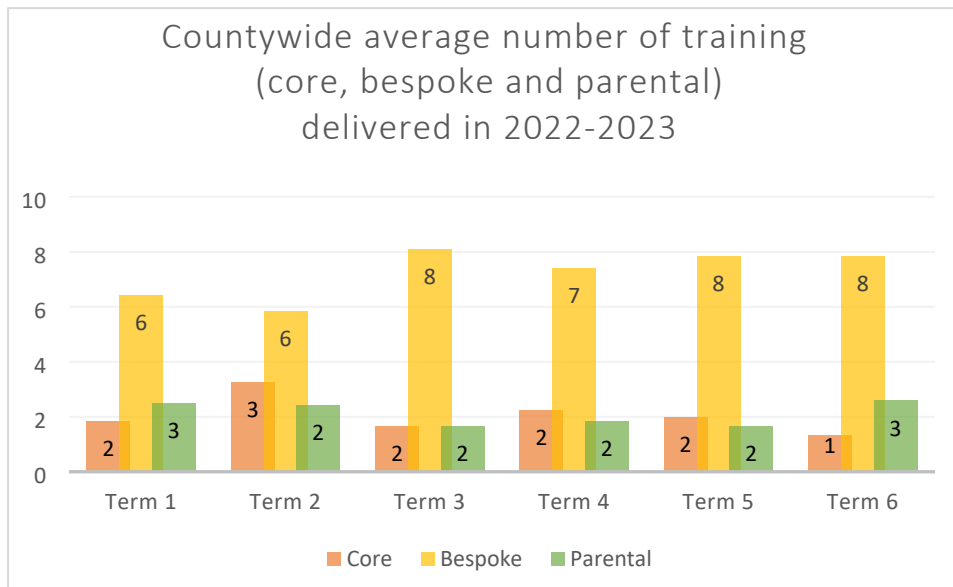


Figure 22: Countywide average of core, bespoke and parental training delivered per district (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

Refer to individual district profiles for district data.

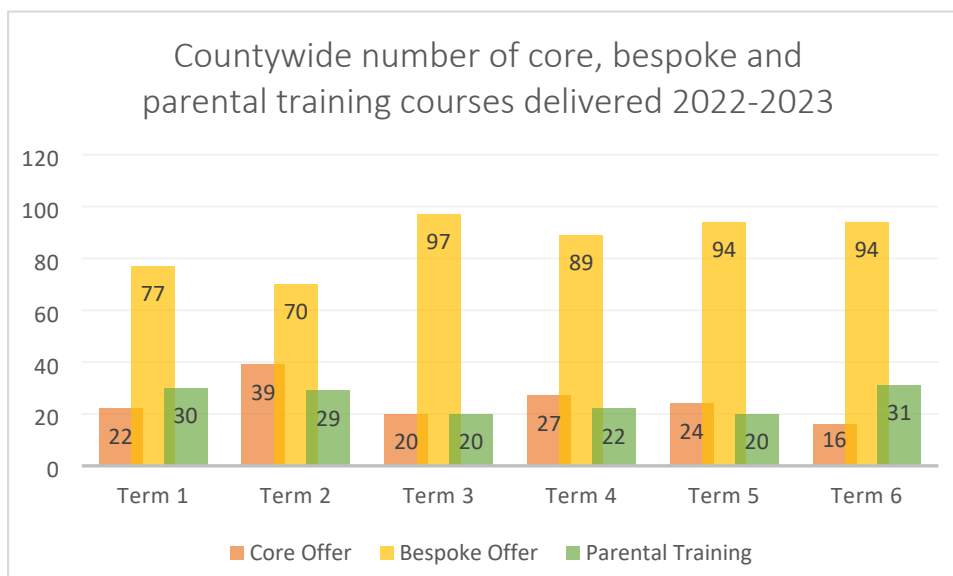


Figure 23: Countywide number of core, bespoke and parental training courses delivered in total across each term (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

Continued key feedback from performance monitoring meetings is that schools are facing increasingly tight budgets and capacity issues. As a result, most STLS districts have reported a reduction in the number of schools attending core training courses, with many being cancelled due to lack of sign up.

The dataset in Figure 22 tells us that, as the demand for core training decreases, the demand for bespoke training has increased. The datasets tell us that training is generally lower in Term 1 and is relatively consistently offered throughout the year.

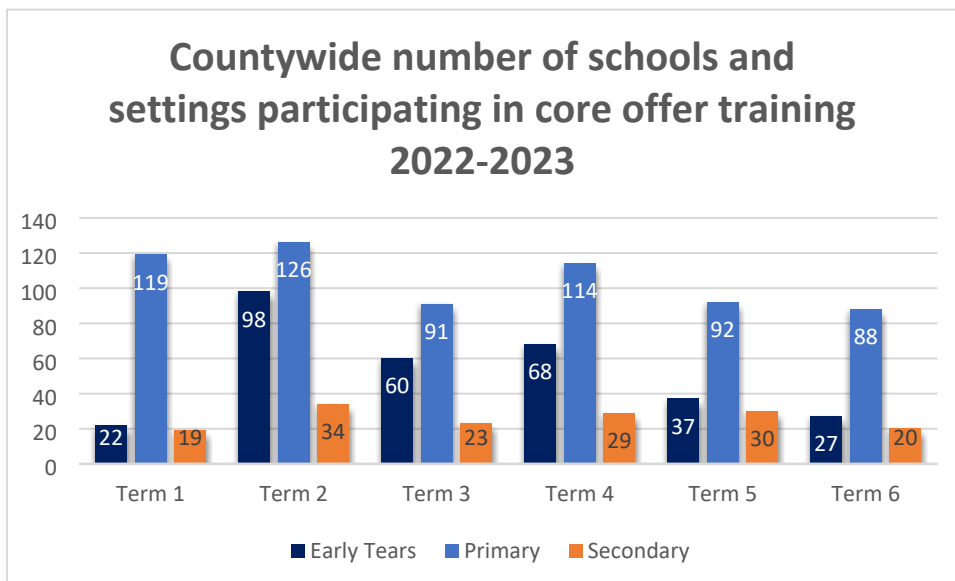


Figure 24: Countywide number of schools and settings participating in core offer training (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

Figure 24 shows us that most training is provided to primary schools.

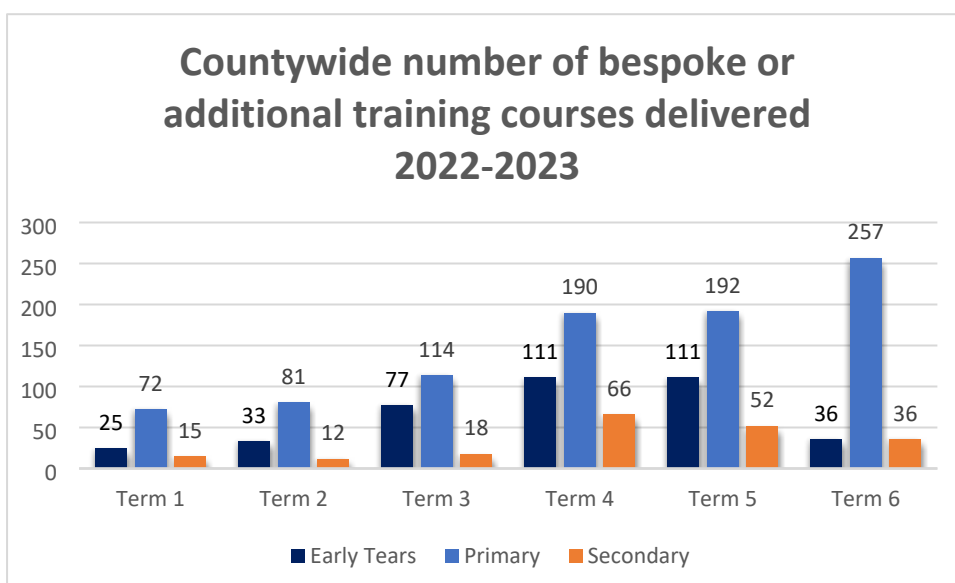


Figure 25: Countywide number of bespoke or additional training courses (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

Figure 25 shows us that there was a significant increase in bespoke primary school training courses in Term 6.

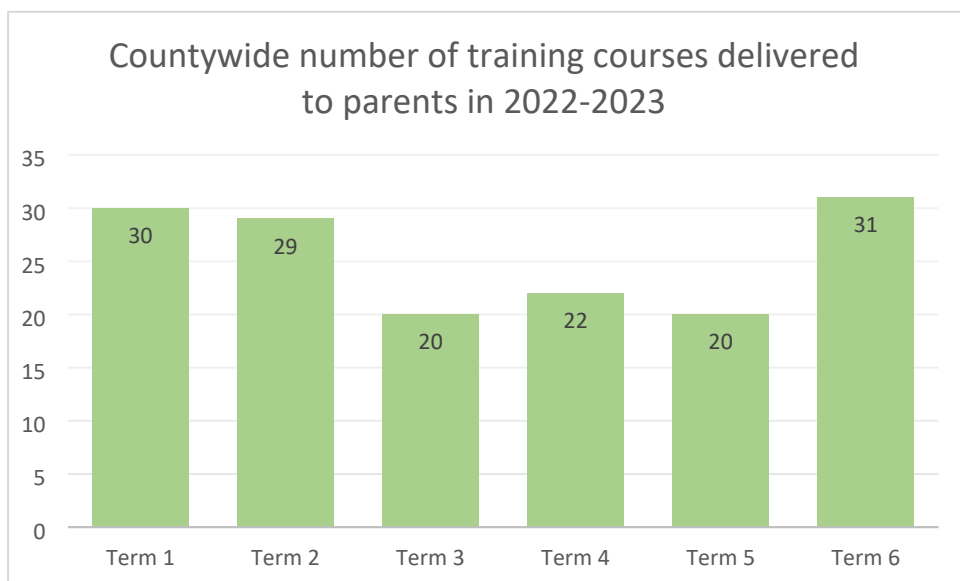


Figure 26: Number of training courses delivered to parents (schools) (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

STLS is engaged with the delivery of the Autism Education Trust (AET) training across KENT. This framework has been purchased by KCC with the ambition of supporting children across with county with autism, or autism-like traits. The rollout of this training started in 2022-2023. The full roll out of training started fully from September 2023, however some districts had already started to deliver sessions by the end of the academic year.

The AET KPI is that 20% of School Age, Early Years and Post 16 Settings are trained by August 2024. The data below is correct up to the end of July, although the recording mechanisms in Tonbridge had a technical glitch, so although they had bookings coming in, but they had not been recorded on the data sheet at the end of term.

School Age

District	Number of AET School Age Training Sessions Completed	Number of AET School Age Training Sessions Booked
Thanet	2	3
Swale	9	12
Maidstone	0	0
Folkstone and Hythe	8	15
Ashford	4	9
Gravesham	1	13
Canterbury	0	2
Dover	1	3

Dartford	0	3
Tonbridge and Malling	1	1
Tunbridge Wells	0	1
Sevenoaks	2	9

Early Years

District	Number of AET Early Years Training Sessions Completed	Number of AET Early Years Training Sessions Booked
Ashford	0	2
Canterbury	0	0
Dartford	0	5
Dover	0	0
Folkestone and Hythe	0	8
Gravesham	1	11
Maidstone	0	2
Sevenoaks	0	0
Swale	0	3
Thanet	0	3
Tonbridge and Malling	0	1
Tunbridge Wells	0	1

Data provided by KCC AET Lead Trainer

2.2 Finance and Budget

The annual STLS budget is £5,856,468. This is funded through the High Needs Funding budget and is allocated to each district based on several factors.

The funding allocation was agreed in 2012 when the service was devolved from the Council and has not changed since then. This budget will remain static for the duration of the SLA.

This table below shows the funding allocated to each district across the county.

District	Core Budget	Outreach Budget	Total (This is the amount specified in each SLA)	Any other Income
Thanet	£377,550	£278,000	£655,550	£1,120
Swale	£617,679	0	£617,679	£50,596
Maidstone	£267,850	£240,000	£507,850	£12,080
Folkstone and Hythe	£307,210	£200,000	£507,210	£3,000
Ashford	£502,839	0	£502,839	Not reported
Gravesham	£309,310	£180,000	£489,310	£9,000
Canterbury	£278,840	£200,000	£478,840	Not reported
Dover	£283,230	£180,000	£463,230	£23,479
Dartford	£288,830	£170,000	£458,830	£8,276
Tonbridge and Malling	£264,850	£190,000	£454,850	£1,750
Tunbridge Wells	364,850	0	£364,800	£19,163
Sevenoaks	£235,480	£120,000	£355,480	£24,023
Total			£5,856,468	

Figure 28: Information accurate as of Term 2, 2022-2023. The Total column remains static whilst districts may make changes to the other amounts according to priority and activity. This table reflects reporting from each district.

There has been some challenge to this allocation in relation to the inequity of the funding and the impact that it has on resources and capacity. While funding allocations have remained static, the nature of need within districts has changed. The allocation also fails to consider factors such as the number of settings or schools in each district, the geographic size of the district or the number of children travelling out of or into the district to attend mainstream schools. As salaries increase, the amount of resource and therefore capacity within the service may decrease. An agreed 6.5% teachers pay rise to be implemented in 2023/2024 will have an additional impact, with some SLA-holding Heads reporting that they will not be able to sustain the service without a diminished offer beyond the length of the SLA with no additional funding, and that the current service is likely to be diminished during the length of the current SLA. The Term 1&2 Countywide report recommended that a decision be made as to whether this allocation would be adjusted, and it was subsequently decided the budget would remain the same for the duration of this SLA.

Each district receives funding for both Core STLS and outreach, although several districts amalgamate the budgets and report this as one figure, and others are cutting their outreach budget allocation due to increasing core costs – mainly salaries. They are also able to generate income through their training offer. Some districts are reporting that their ability to generate income through training has been impacted by the requirement for them to deliver the AET training, which is free.

Appendix D in the previous countywide report (see Appendix B) contains a more detailed summary of information relating to funding, staffing volumes, caseloads and schools

supported. This contains an analysis of demand in relation to staffing levels if all schools and settings in a district received support and average caseloads per district.

In the above table, the Core and Outreach columns total to the amount specified on their Service Level Agreement. Any other income, including the Teacher's pay and Pension grant and any income generated from training appear in the 'Any Other Income' column. Information related to Pay and Pension Grant was not requested as part of the performance monitoring process, however some districts have included this information and so it has been referenced above where it has been reported.

As part of the performance monitoring process in Term 2, districts were asked to report on how they spend their allocated budget. Overall, approximately 95% of the budget is spent directly on staffing costs.

Key differences include:

- the way that each district manages their budgets.
- how outreach funding is allocated, with some districts choosing to allocate an amount to a special school to deliver outreach and others subsuming it within the core budget and providing outreach themselves. Districts who operate an outreach model through a special school are examining their funding allocations and adjusting these to reflect diminishing resource.
- allocation of non-staffing related costs, for example, rent or management costs for the host school.

District	Total Budget	Direct Staffing Costs (SLA Holding School)	Rent and Premises Overheads	Amount Allocated to Special School Outreach
Thanet	£655,550	£605,652	0	£53,100
Swale	£617,679	£487,725	£64,447	0
Maidstone	£507,850	£519,287	0	0
Folkstone and Hythe	£507,210	£521,371	0	0
Ashford	£502,840	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
Gravesham	£489,310	£494,596	£18,800	0
Canterbury	£478,840	£381,386	£3,500	£100,000
Dover	£463,230	£446,562	£8,000	£41,149
Dartford	£458,830	£498,846	£23,000	0
Tonbridge and Malling	£454,850	£461,834	£22,714	0
Tunbridge Wells	£364,800	Not reported	0	0
Sevenoaks	£355,480	£331,531	£12,000	£60,000

Figure 29: Spending This information is accurate as of Term 2 2022 – 2023. Changes in staffing, salary rises and other costs may have had an impact.

2.3 Staffing

The level of staffing within each district is a direct result of the amount of funding available.

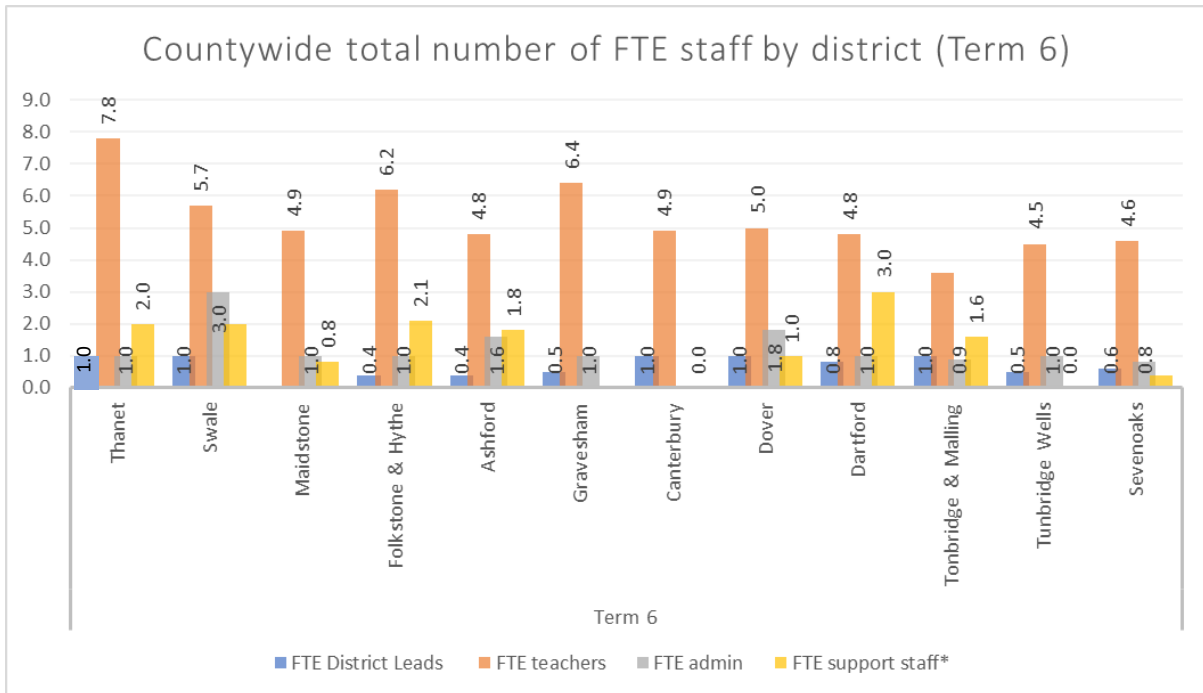


Figure 30: Countywide Total number of FTE staff by district as of Term 6 (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard).

Figure 30 shows the staffing variations across the county. Swale has been operating at much reduced capacity for most of the year due to staff vacancies. These have now all been filled. Although Dover is showing that they no longer have vacancies, the district has had specialist teachers away from work on long term sick and dependants leave which has impacted their capacity.

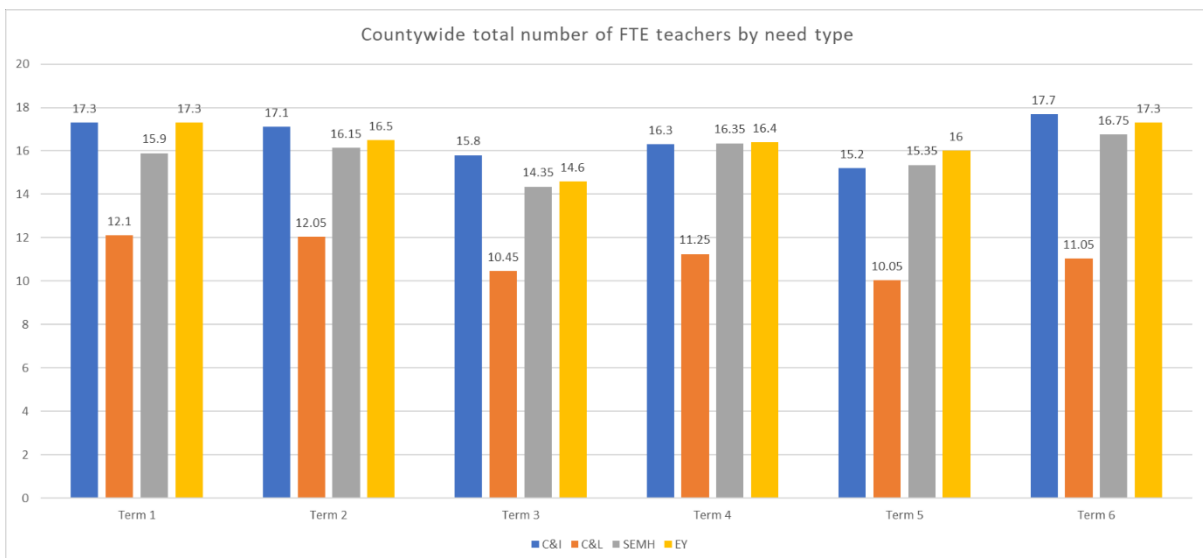


Figure 31: Total number of FTE teachers by need type (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

The resource dedicated to need types remains relatively consistent across the year. All districts are reporting an increase in SEMH cases being brought to LIFT which may affect future recruitment priorities, however districts report during their monitoring meetings that this need type is the one least likely to be resolved at clinic.

Most districts are reporting that staff pay rises and static budget impacts are likely to show a reduction in staffing levels through the remainder of the SLA.

2.8 Impact

Measuring impact is challenging. When multiple factors or areas of support are involved in a single environment or with a single individual attributing impact to a single service or entity can be almost impossible. This does not mean that impact cannot be seen at a system level.

Within the KPIs there are several measures of impact. These are best efforts to measure the impact of STLS as a service in relation to individual progress of children supported and capacity building with schools and settings.

Not all districts have had reporting mechanisms in place to measure impact as identified within the KPIs, so were unable to report on in this round of monitoring. This includes Dartford and Sevenoaks.

STLS review cases regularly and on request.

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
% of children are open to STLS whose targets have been formally reviewed	35%	38%	36%	41%	46%	41%

Figure 32: % of children are open to STLS whose targets have been formally reviewed (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
% of individual cases where STLS-set targets are amended on review - schools only	25%	23%	35%	37%	30%	33%

Figure 33: % of individual cases where STLS-set targets are amended on review - schools only (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

Impact is also determined by cases closed due to achievement of targets.

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
% of individual cases closed due to STLS-set targets achieved	13%	12%	25%	31%	21%	23%

Figure 34: % of individual cases closed due to STLS-set targets achieved (Kent Analytics KPIs Power BI Dashboard)

In addition to the above, impact has been measured through self-reporting and satisfaction surveys administered by each STLS district. The satisfaction surveys have had a very low return rate, which has not provided an accurate picture of the impact of the service.

Commissioning developed an Annual STLS Survey. It received over 400 responses, mostly from SENCO's. Overall, respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with the support they received from STLS. Primary school SENCOs reported a higher level of satisfaction than secondary schools on the whole. This survey will be repeated in 2023-2024, with a wider respondent base to include more headteachers to gauge how impact is seen beyond SENCOs. See appendix B for the results of this survey.

Part Three – Capacity versus Demand

All districts are struggling to manage case lists of individual children and are starting to look at ways of increasing capacity within their teams to address the increased and highly complex need coming through LIFT and to support the priorities of the Council.

There is a growing appetite to deliver advice and guidance outside LIFT, with only those most in need of specialist support being formally presented. The new way of working in Tonbridge and Malling which was initiated by the district this year and explained in detail in the Term 1 and 2 report, was reported in the Term 5 and 6 to be showing signs of effectiveness. Other districts such as Gravesham are considering adopting a similar process. Thanet has traditionally adopted a link teacher model which they have found successful, and which is manageable due to their staffing resource, and Dover is examining the possibility of adopting a similar model.

Some demand through LIFT can be attributed to the rising level of children within mainstream settings with SEND and / or complex needs. However, the widely held belief by professionals that children need to have gone through school LIFT and have been allocated a specialist teacher to be allocated an EHCP may also be driving demand. There is a clear ambition within the Council for the right support, at the right time to be available to children with SEN without the need for an EHCP.

All districts have now received training in delivering the AET autism programme. Many have started to deliver and have reported some challenges, such as the capacity for early years settings to attend this training as a unit. Some districts have addressed this by delivering multiple training sessions at the setting in one day to allow a rotation of attendees which is time consuming. Others, such as Ashford, have run a large Saturday training day in order to maximise their training time, with trainers taking Time Off In Lieu. Other districts are not able or willing to undertake out of hours working. Most districts reported that the training has been very well received and that there is much enthusiasm for booking sessions. This is creating a large demand on training capacity and the free nature of the training is reducing the ability of the district to generate income through paid for training.

Strategically, STLS are being encouraged to move increasingly towards building capacity through group rather than individually focused interventions. As illustrated above, districts are actively developing ways of working that enable this, as well as working differently to build capacity within the service generally.

As previously mentioned, early years professionals' attendance at LIFT is generally lower, due to staffing capacity. Some early years settings have minimal staff numbers, which will mean staff are unable to be released due to ratio constraints.

The number of 5–10-year-olds with an EHCP is forecasted to increase by over 65%, an increase of around 3,100 children and young people, by 2026. If these projections come to fruition, this will have a significant impact on the number of LIFT referrals, and STLS capacity, presenting further challenges for the service to continue delivering its current offer of support within a static budget.

Part Four - Planned Work

Although significant progress has been made in streamlining STLS work, developing mechanisms for evaluating impact and improving communication and joined up working, there is still a lot to be done.

There are several interdependent projects taking place across the Council that will enable the Council to achieve its strategic aims of greater inclusion of children with SEND in mainstream settings and although STLS may not be directly involved in all of these, it is likely that the outcomes of this will have a direct impact on the service.

These include:

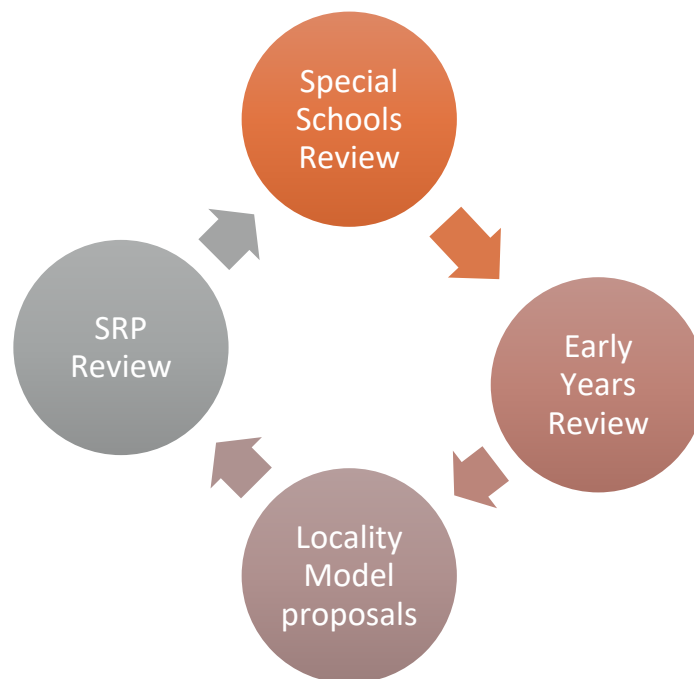


Figure 35: Interdependent projects

Locality Resource Proposals - Services can often be disjointed, with multiple agencies working with children in an incoherent way. In addition, professionals are acutely aware of very localised issues and pressures on communities and feel they cannot effectively influence, giving indication of the need to move towards a locality working model. Kent is proposing to have 'clusters' of all designation and cross-phase schools, working together to

influence the expenditure of a defined pot of money and use of resources, to the benefit of children and young people who attend Kent schools within their geographical area.

These proposals are currently out to Public Consultation and will be presented to the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Cabinet Committee in March 2024.

Special Schools Review - A key part of developing curriculum pathways for children with SEND is the presumption of more children with SEND in mainstream settings. This may result in additional demand for STLS support and training.

Early Years Review – An overarching report which takes into consideration the deep dives which include Pathways and Specialist Intervention Nurseries and the SENIF process will be produced as part of this review, with the recognition that a significant amount of STLS resource is utilised in administration and evidencing need for SENIF support. Recommendations will be made which may affect the way that the early years STLS hold caseloads, manage LIFT and work with other early years inclusion teams (such as the SENIF Practitioners).

Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) Review – The rationale for the review is:

- Ensure there is consistency in content and terms between the contract and SLA. Strengthen the monitoring and reporting arrangements to ensure these are robust.
- Strengthen the governance arrangements between schools and KCC, as well as internally within KCC.
- Establish where SRPs sit in the wider SEND Improvement context.

The outcome of the review indicates that this is likely to impact on STLS outreach, however this is yet to be determined.

Part Five - Summary and Conclusion

This report has identified several successes and challenges facing the service. Some of the challenges are reflective of wider national issues, for example, early years workforce recruitment and retention. Other challenges are unique to STLS in terms of current processes and capacity.

A considerable amount of development has taken place over the past year to build positive working relationships with STLS District leads and SLA holding Heads. It is evident that the sweeping changes required across the SEN landscape to support the CATIE, the Accelerated Progress Plan as well as supporting the need for KCC to manage a challenging budget are putting pressures across the sector, and particularly for STLS.

SLA-holding Heads told commissioners during monitoring meetings that they are fully supportive of the service and would want to continue delivering it, but that ongoing delivery within the current financial envelope and with the increasing levels of demand, will likely result in a diminishing service over time and, possibly, within the term of the current SLA.

It is important to note, that whilst there has been a significant amount of information collected as part of this formal performance monitoring process, changes to KPIs and the introduction of the SharePoint system mean that there are gaps in relation to the data submitted, particularly at the beginning of the academic year. Commissioners recognise therefore that this report does not present a full picture of the delivery and impact of STLS across the

county. However, it does provide sufficient information to identify some key themes in relation to the service and serves as a template for future reporting.

As a result, focus of future performance monitoring will be on clarifying issues and questions raised within the report and ensuring that consistent data collection is established for the remainder of the SLA to provide a full picture of the service, its impact, and the future.

Over the course of this year, and through the recent Monitoring meetings, the following key findings have been identified:

- The increasing financial pressures on the service will result in most districts reducing their staff FTEs and adjusting their offer as a result during the lifetime of the current SLA.
- Whilst supportive of the service, most SLA holding Heads have expressed a degree of caution to signing a new future SLA without a revised budget.
- As districts revise their practise, there is more disparity across the county, which is frustrating for associated services, such as SENIF and E&I.
- There is an appetite from most districts to work more in partnership with the Council to deliver key priorities.

Part Six – Next Steps



This report will be distributed to the STLS Steering Group for comment and will be presented to and discussed at the KCC internal SEND Transformation Operational Group (TOG) 2.








For clarification purposes, the STLS Steering Group is an internal stakeholder group established during the process of the initial review. Since then, both the Terms of Reference and the membership has been reviewed. Given the number of interdependences between STLS and other strategic projects within the Council, this group is formed of individual KCC Officers leading those projects, so ensure that interdependences in relation to STLS are fully understood.

The report will then be updated to reflect comments from both groups and a final version agreed.

UPDATED: April 2024. Please note that this is the final version of the report.

APPENDICES

A	Key Performance Indicators Template and Local Activity Report Template	 STLS Key Performance Indicators.xlsx  Local Area Report template.xlsx
B	STLS Countywide report Term 1 and 2 2023	 STLS Countywide Report Terms 1&2 20
C	STLS MD Report May 2022	 STLS MD report May 2022 Final.docx
D	STLS Annual survey 2022-2023	 STLS survey 2022-2023.docx
E	District Profile: Ashford	 District Profile - Ashford.docx
F	District Profile: Canterbury	 District Profile - Canterbury.docx
G	District Profile: Dartford	 District Profile - Dartford.docx
H	District Profile: Dover	 District Profile - Dover.docx

I	District Profile: Folkestone and Hythe	 District Profile - Folkestone & Hythe.d
J	District Profile: Gravesham	 District Profile - Gravesham.docx
K	District Profile: Maidstone	 District Profile - Maidstone.docx
L	District Profile: Sevenoaks	 District Profile - Sevenoaks.docx
M	District Profile: Swale	 District Profile - Swale.docx
N	District Profile: Thanet	 District Profile - Thanet.docx
O	District Profile: Tonbridge and Malling	 District Profile- Tonbridge & Malling.c
P	District Profile: Tunbridge Wells	 District Profile- Tunbridge Wells.docx

Appendix C: Update on recommendations from Term 1 and 2 report

Recommendation One – Communication

- Commissioners to continue bi-termly formal monitoring meetings with STLS.
- Council representative to continue to attend termly STLS Leads meetings.
- Working Together Planning Together workshops to continue.
- ‘Open door’ communication to continue between STLS and relevant Council officers
- Work to rebuild relationships with SLA-Holding Heads through improvement communication and engagement

Update: Bi-termly formal performance monitoring is continuing into the next academic year. There have been council representatives in attendance at STLS Leads meetings to respond to any queries and to share updates. Working Together, Planning Together workshops are to continue, with the latest workshop held in September with a focus on transition. Communication between STLS, Holding Heads and the Council is positive and productive.

Recommendation Two – LIFT - Changes to paperwork:

- Continue to work with STLS to agree a countywide LIFT referral form and look to create an easily accessible digital version.
- Work with district leads streamline Record of Visit paperwork to focus on appropriate and proportional information referencing the Graduated Approach and Mainstream Core Standards

Timescale: Terms 5 and 6 2022/2023

In line with interdependent projects:

- Work with STLS Leads, SLA Holding Heads, Mainstream schools and representatives from LIFT Executive to consider how the purpose and function of school LIFT might adapt in response to changes with High Needs Funding and Locality Resources. Co-produce a new Terms of Reference.
- Map out and understand the role of early years LIFT in relation to the review of SENIF Funding processes being undertaken as part of the Early Years review. Work with key stakeholders (including STLS) to undertake this.

Timescale: Term 1 2023/2024

Update: Changes to paperwork is currently on hold until the interdependent reviews are completed. Some districts are implementing some local changes to their paperwork.

Interdependent projects - On track to be completed by Term 4 2023/2024

Recommendation Three - Clinics/Surgeries:

- STLS to continue offer of support outside LIFT process via Clinics, Surgeries and in school/setting support.
- This process to ensure that MCS and BPG have been implemented prior to LIFT referrals being made.
- Consider making attendance at Clinic mandatory prior to accepting LIFT referrals to ensure LIFT is utilised for cases that require specialist and / or multi-agency support.

Predicted Timescale: Term 1 2023/2024

Update: This recommendation was received with mixed views. It has been decided that clinics/surgeries are generally good practice, and most districts do support schools and setting through surgeries/clinics or in-school reviews. However, these are not being made mandatory. It has been agreed that recording of attendance at clinics will be added to the Local Area Report (LAR) reporting as of Term1 2023-2024.

Recommendation Four -Training

Core training offer:

- STLS to review Core Training offer with the Council in terms of content and focus.
- STLS to implement a reduction in the number of core training courses offered, increasing joined up delivery across areas and the county, reducing and streamlining the Core training offer and expanding delivery of a bespoke training offer to schools.

CPD and quality assurance:

- STLS SLA Holding heads and staff to ensure they are accessing the most up to date training available for their own Continuous Professional Development.
- Develop a Quality Assurance process to measure the impact of training delivered.

Predicted Timescale: Term 1 2023/2024

Update: STLS continue to develop a countywide core offer that is delivered in collaboration with all districts, taking into account that schools are generally requesting more and more bespoke training that can be delivered at the school, and less of the core training. STLS review the core training offer in Term 5 of each year and plan delivery for the next academic year. The Council are in the process of reviewing its core offer and will work in collaboration with STLS to reduce risk of duplication.

A survey of support provided by STLS was produced and circulated by the Council. This survey had 475 respondents who were mostly SENCOs. 13 Headteachers responded to the survey, all from Primary schools. The results of the survey were positive and were welcomed by STLS. The intention is for this to be produced annually and for a wider set of respondent views, particularly headteacher views to be reflected. See Appendix D for the results of the survey.

Recommendation two: For the annual survey to include a wider set of respondents, particularly Primary and Secondary Headteachers.

Recommendation Five – Reporting and Impact KPIs:

- As of Term 1 2023/24 amend the requirement to monitor:
 - Number of schools and setting supported to include % of schools and settings supported. This will be achieved by amending the reporting template and not require additional input from STLS.
 - As of Term 1 2023/24 remove the requirement to monitor:
 - Number of cases open more than six months.
 - Number of open cases supported through outreach.
 - Total sum of all visits provided during reporting period per dimension.
 - Training separated between core and bespoke.
 - Number of children referred to other inclusion agencies.
 - School staff reporting increased confidence.
 - As of Term 1 2023/24 include the requirement to monitor:
 - Number of active cases per dimension type
 - Number of cases discussed at Clinics.
 - Training as one service regardless of whether core or bespoke, to include number of courses delivered, number settings / schools supported through training.
 - Commissioners to work with STLS to develop an online survey for SENCOs about their experience of the service, to understand impact and be administered annually by Commissioners.
- Process:
- STLS will continue to report termly via the SharePoint system.
 - The Council to stop informal performance monitoring meetings and replace with Area Development Meetings
 - The Council to continue bi-termly formal performance monitoring meetings.

- Commissioners to report high level performance information to Council governance meetings bi-termly and submit a full performance review annually.

Predicted Timescale: Term 1 2023/2024

Update: KPIs have been amended for the requirement to monitor the stated previous reporting requirements in Recommendation Five, this will be effective from Term 1 2023/2024. Reporting through the SharePoint system has now fully embedded with all districts successfully reporting through this platform. Some information is missing from Terms 1 and 2 as not all districts were in a position to record the required data at that time. Area Development Meetings did not take place in Terms 5 and 6 and are planned to take place during the next academic year. The Council have produced this report as the first annual full performance review. The next report will be published in September 2024.

Recommendation Six – Budget:

The Council will decide either to review the current financial profiles or to make a strategic decision to leave current budget allocations until the end of the Service Level Agreement which ends in 2025.

Predicted Timescale: Transformational Operational Group (2) on 13 April 2023

Update: There was no appetite to review the current budget allocations before the end of the Service Level Agreement; therefore, the budget will remain the same until the end of the Service Level Agreement which is due to end in August 2025.

Recommendation Seven – Commissioning Resource/ Head of Service:

- Develop a business case to recruit a Head of Service for STLS

Predicted Timescale: April – May 2023

Update: There were mixed opinions as to whether this recommendation would be beneficial, with some opinion that this would add a further layer of bureaucracy and concerns about the source of the funding. This business case will form part of the discussions on the future of STLS after the end of the current SLA, taking into account the changes that will come with Locality Based Resources.