

Appendix 10.
AET Progress Report October 2024

The AET training offer is now entering the third year of the licence, the licence year runs from September 1, 2024, to August 31st 2025.

Year 1 September 2022 – August 2023

During this year, the Autism Education Trust training team was created, and a team of trainers were inducted.

The training rollout for Making Sense of Autism (course 1) started in April 2023 in pilot districts.

Year 2 September 2023 – August 2024

Making Sense of Autism and Good Autism Practice training courses were rolled out across all districts.

The AET training target was 20% of all early years, school age and Post 16 settings to have completed AET training.

There is an expectation that following every Making Sense of Autism training a follow meeting takes place with the setting to embed the AET Frameworks into school improvement planning with a clear action plan being created.

Understanding Autism and Anxiety training was added to the programme in April 2024.

Year 3 September 2024 – August 2025

AET training continues to be rolled out across Kent.

Additional modules have been added.

Early Years

Developing Play

Toileting

All Phases

Transition Training.

Summary of Training Figures.

Year 1 September 2022 – August 2023

School Age

District	Total number of school age settings	Total number of schools trained in 22/23
Ashford	49	3
Canterbury	45	0
Dartford	43	0
Dover	50	1
Folkestone and Hythe	42	7
Gravesham	38	3
Maidstone	61	0
Sevenoaks	45	1
Swale	57	0
Thanet	40	0
Tonbridge and Malling	57	0
Tunbridge Wells	41	0
KENT	568	15

Early Years (including Childminders)

District	Total number of Early Years settings	Total number of Early Years trained in 22/23
Ashford	120	1
Canterbury	99	0
Dartford	125	1
Dover	74	0
Folkestone and Hythe	75	0
Gravesham	109	0
Maidstone	162	2
Sevenoaks	130	0
Swale	158	1
Thanet	158	7
Tonbridge and Malling	101	0
Tunbridge Wells	124	0
KENT	1435	12

Post 16

North Kent College – 4 campuses received Making Sense of Autism and Good Autism Practice.

Year 2 September 2023 – August 2024

School Age

District	Total number of school age settings	Total number of schools trained in 23/24
Ashford	49	26
Canterbury	45	15
Dartford	43	13
Dover	50	34
Folkestone and Hythe	42	21
Gravesham	38	24
Maidstone	61	9
Sevenoaks	45	25
Swale	57	42
Thanet	40	23
Tonbridge and Malling	57	24
Tunbridge Wells	41	25
KENT	568	281

Early Years (including Childminders)

District	Total number of Early Years settings	Total number of Early Years trained in 23/24
Ashford	120	23
Canterbury	99	8
Dartford	125	13

Dover	74	14
Folkestone and Hythe	75	13
Gravesham	109	19
Maidstone	162	29
Sevenoaks	130	19
Swale	158	25
Thanet	158	15
Tonbridge and Malling	101	15
Tunbridge Wells	124	7
KENT	1435	200

Post 16

District	Total number of Post 16 Settings	Total number of Post 16 trained in 23/24
Ashford	8	5
Canterbury	8	0
Dartford	8	2
Dover	11	3
Folkestone and Hythe	9	1
Gravesham	9	5
Maidstone	13	1
Sevenoaks	3	1
Swale	10	5
Thanet	8	4
Tonbridge and Malling	11	3
Tunbridge Wells	6	1
KENT	104	31

NB. This is working on the assumption that Post 16 staff attend Secondary training sessions.

Year 3 September 2024 – August 2025

School Age

District	Total number of school age settings	Total number of schools trained in 24/25	Number of training sessions booked
Ashford	20	4	7
Canterbury	30	2	2
Dartford	30	0	1
Dover	15	4	1
Folkestone and Hythe	14	4	2
Gravesham	11	1	1
Maidstone	52	2	2
Sevenoaks	19	2	2
Swale	15	3	3
Thanet	17	7	2
Tonbridge and Malling	33	5	10
Tunbridge Wells	16	1	3
KENT	288	35	36

NB. The total number of schools is based on the number of settings that have not accessed Making Sense of Autism training.

Early Years (including Childminders)

District	Total number of Early Years settings	Total number of Early Years trained in 24/25	Number of training sessions booked
Ashford	97	0	1
Canterbury	91	0	1
Dartford	112	0	0
Dover	60	1	4
Folkestone and Hythe	63	6	0
Gravesham	90	2	0
Maidstone	133	0	0
Sevenoaks	111	0	5
Swale	133	4	0
Thanet	143	0	0
Tonbridge and Malling	86	5	2
Tunbridge Wells	117	0	0
KENT	1236	18	13

Post 16

District	Total number of Post 16 Settings	Total number of Post 16 trained in 23/24	Number of training sessions booked
Ashford	3	0	
Canterbury	8	0	
Dartford	6	0	
Dover	8	0	
Folkestone and Hythe	8	0	
Gravesham	4	0	
Maidstone	12	0	
Sevenoaks	2	0	
Swale	5	0	
Thanet	4	1	
Tonbridge and Malling	8	1	
Tunbridge Wells	5	0	
KENT	73	31	0

Training Totals August 2022 – October 2024

Early Years including childminders = 1435 or 16.09%

School Age = 569 or 57.29%

Post 16 = 31 or 31.73%

Summary of activity, accomplishments, and challenges from September 2024

School Age Making Sense of Autism has happened in 11/12 districts since September and all districts have training booked. Early Years training has taken place in 8/12 districts, and 10/12 districts have pending training sessions although some districts have provisional bookings but are waiting for the dates to be confirmed and so have not been recorded.

In August, North Kent College received training in both Making Sense of Autism and Good Autism Practice as part of the staff training programme. This is the second year that we have worked with North Kent College.

Last year, we started working with the Graphic Design students at North Kent College, Dartford Campus to develop an art campaign around Neurodiversity. One of the students did submit a piece of work based on the theme of 'Where's Wally' as part of their final project. This work is going to continue this year with a larger group of students and the project will be led by a Level 4 student who is a Lived Experience Expert. We are hoping that some of the images and artwork can be linked into projects around Neurodiversity that are happening in Kent.

We attended the SENCO Conference on 8th October 2024 and led two workshops looking at how settings can use the AET Standards and Competency Frameworks to embed good autism practice in schools and create more inclusive settings. These workshops appeared to be well received, and we had a great deal of interest in training during the lunch session. The themes of all the speakers that day reflected the AET materials and the development of whole school approaches around SEND, so hopefully settings will consider using the frameworks even if they have not had training.

We also attended the Big Mental Health Conversation providing us with the opportunity to meet young people and ask for their views on what they would like to happen in schools to support autistic pupils and those with neurodiversity. We had some interesting conversations, and we were even thanked by a student for leading our training as she said that it has an impact on everyday lives of autistic students.

Examples of student comments were:

- Ask students with autism about their experience
- For teachers to let me have my moment when I am not ok.
- Don't pick on people who don't raise their hands, sometimes they don't like public speaking
- Check people have understood before you move onto the next thing
- Teachers need to read our mood and see our emotions
- Understand that just because we fidget it does not mean we are not listening

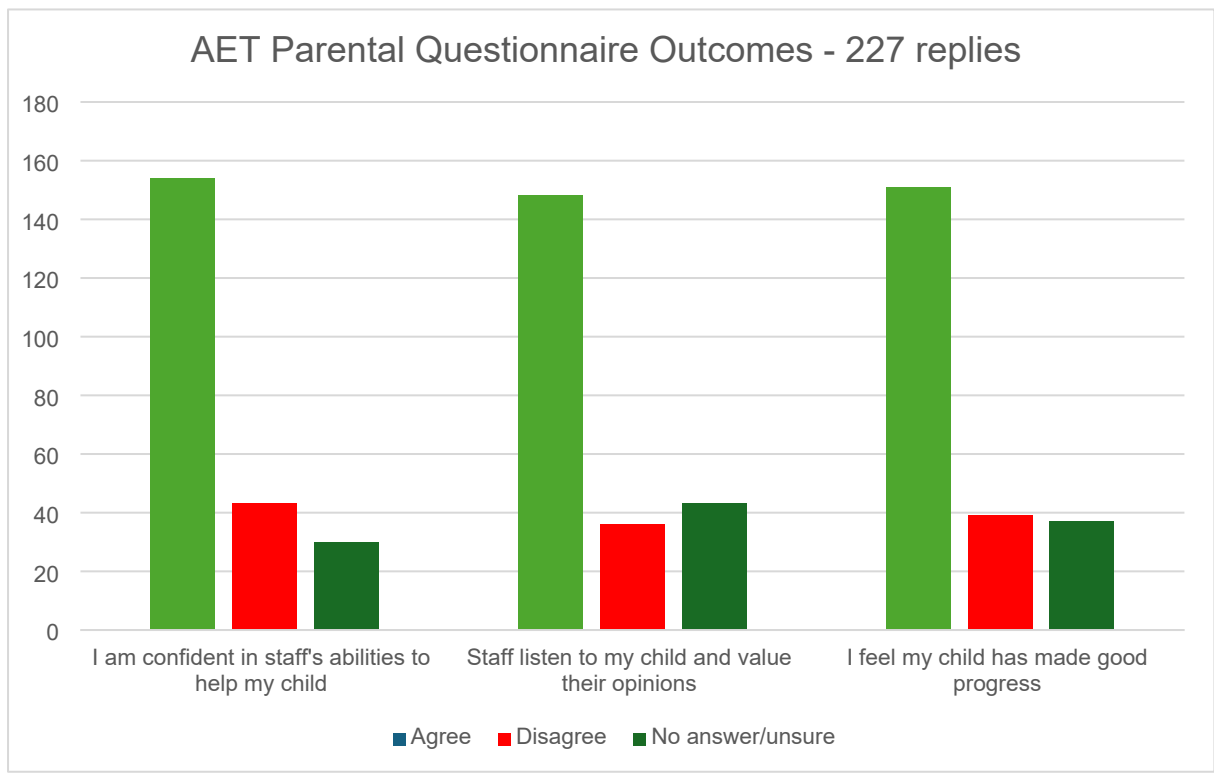
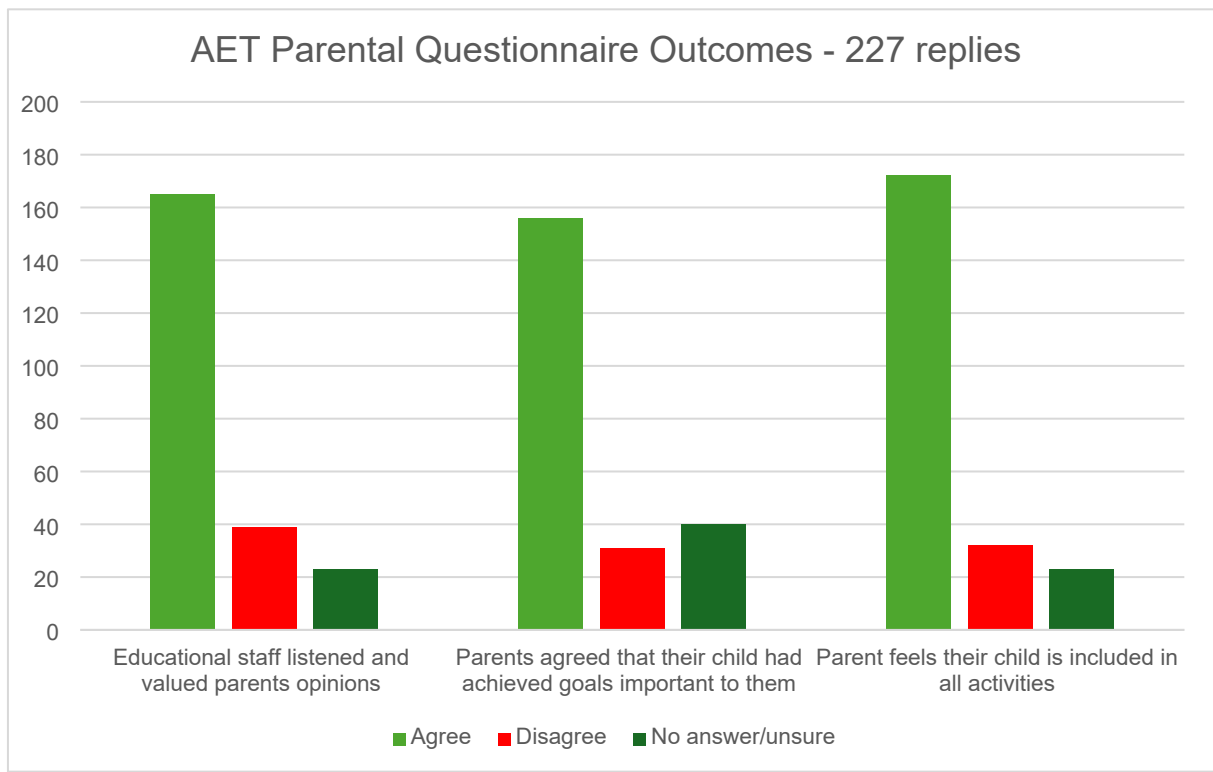
On a national level we are working closely with the AET, Matthew Bushell is continuing to work with Ian Dale on the pilot parent questionnaire. Morag Hards is now part of a focus group working on how to develop a virtual training model that will still provide a level of accountability to delegates and focus on the AET Standards and Competency Frameworks. Melissa Devine is part of a focus group feeding into the AET 's National Strategy 2025, looking at how to develop the operational model for local partners, the initial focus was on the training materials and identifying next steps for the training and framework programme.

AET parental online questionnaire

A quantitative and qualitative online questionnaire

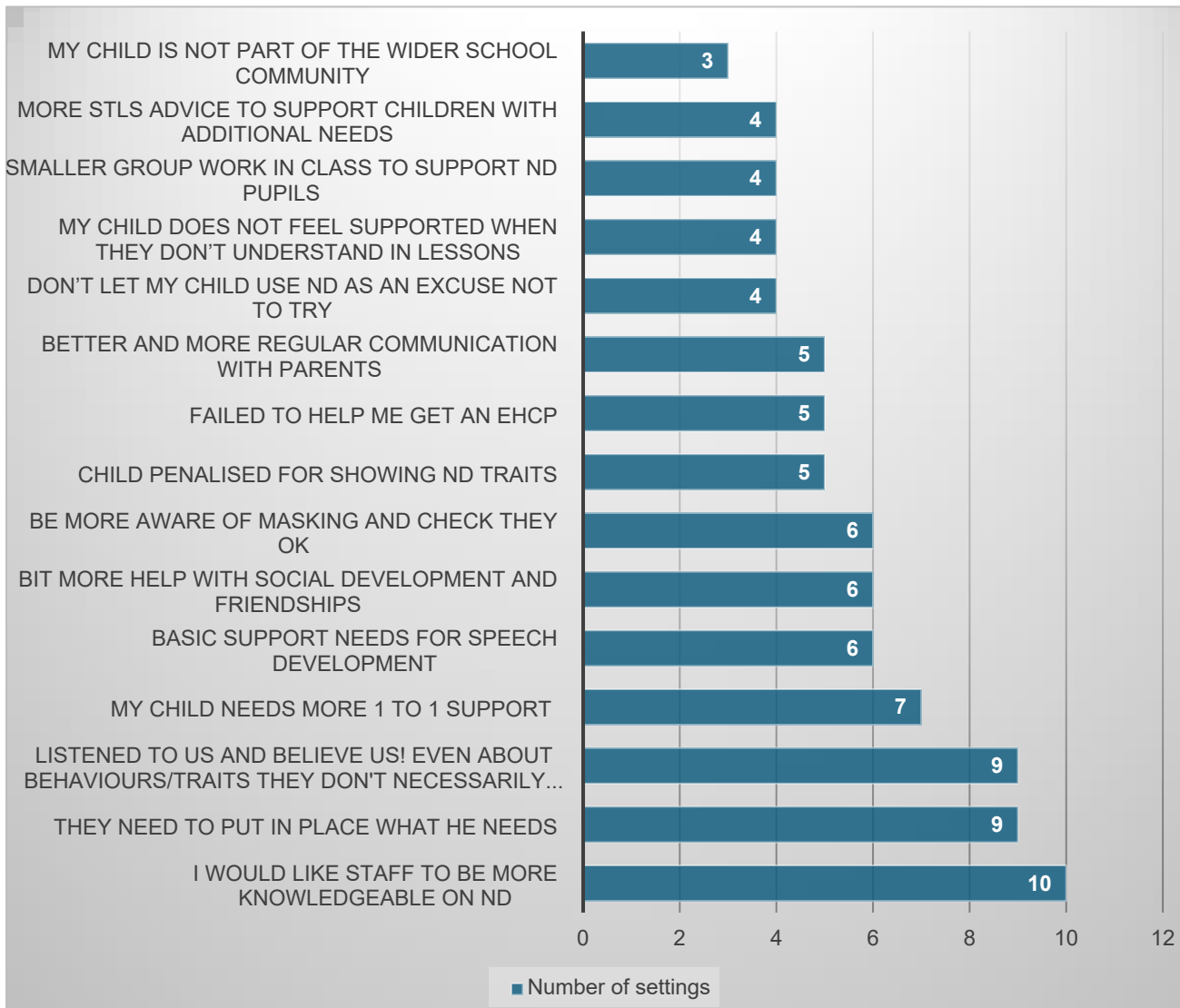
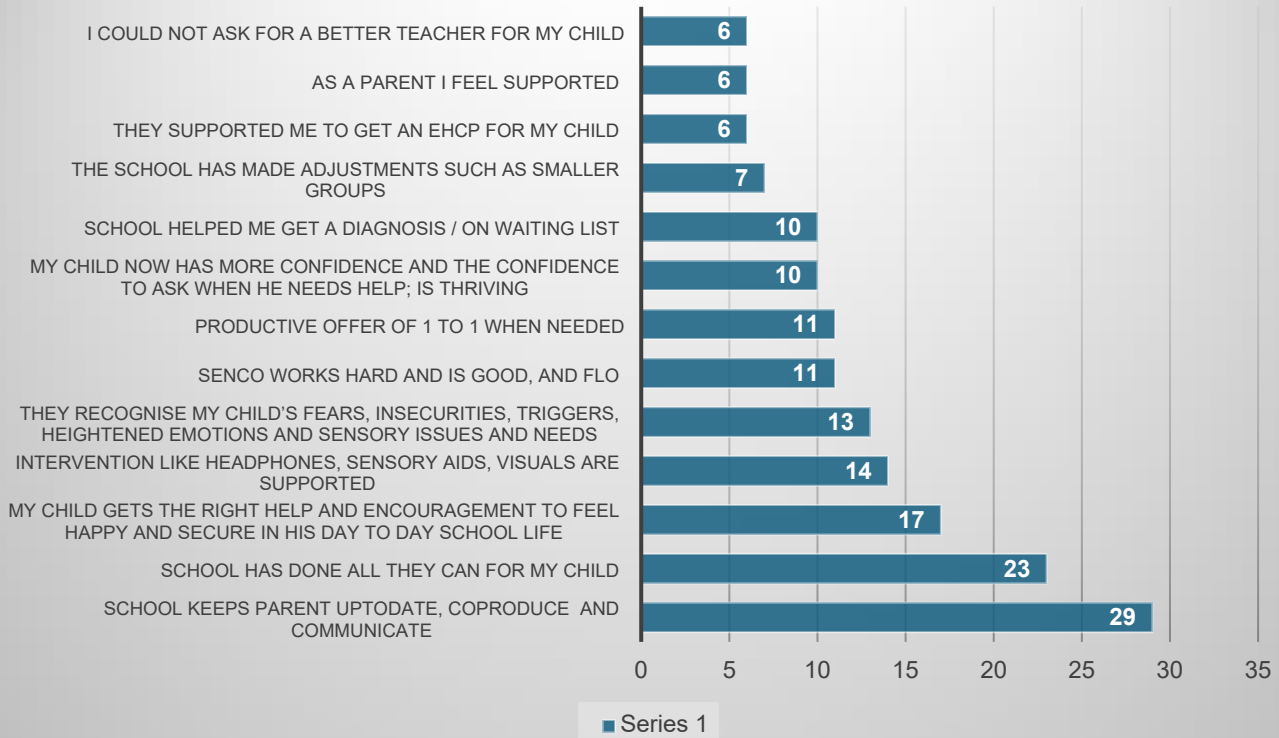
National AET researchers choose 5 sites to trial this questionnaire, of which Kent was one; it asks parents of children whose school setting have had AET training, how things are for them and their neurodiverse child.

In an ever-increasing sample 244 parents from 60 settings have completed the survey, of which 227 are happy for the results to be used for research purposes. We expect this number to double in the coming year. Although a small sample in the scale of Kent SEN, the response rate is quite good for a questionnaire of this length - and it is uplifting in an appreciative enquiry sense to hear from parents where things have gone right. The response is overwhelmingly positive.



There is clearly still work to do, but although it is early days, the results still show promise, and in a key area 'My child is happy at school, 72% of parents (163 parents of 227) agreed - match this against the much-publicised statistic that only 26% of autistic pupils surveyed felt happy at school (Nov 2021 National Autistic Society - School Report - survey found [Supporting autistic children to stay in mainstream education \(autism.org.uk\)](https://www.autism.org.uk)).

Best Things School Did



The big challenge now is to maintain momentum as we still need to reach 288 school age settings for Making Sense of Autism and 538 school age settings for Good Autism Practice. We need to reach Secondary schools as we know that that are still 73 who have not accessed any AET training modules.

We need to focus on the Action Planning meetings as currently we have only completed 139 Action Planning meetings but have trained 481 settings (School Age and Early Years). We know that very few review meetings have happened with Early Years, yet we know that this is the phase that is asking for the support around practice and implementation. We are also aware that many of the Review Meetings that have happened have not used the suggested AET Action Planning document and so do not link into the research work that Matthew Bushell is doing.

Districts have stated that they have completed 139 Action Planning meetings, however we do not have 139 Action Plans in the requested format. This means that firstly, not all action planning is focusing on the AET Standards Frameworks to embed good autism practice and secondly the information provided will not inform the research evaluation effectively. These needs to be addressed and the correct paperwork used more consistently in this final year if we are to have the desired impact on practice. There are also Action Plans that may have been done but we have not been given access to them as we did not add a permissions box on the booking form until the summer.

District Leads and Educational Psychologists are telling us that they do not have the time capacity to do the follow up meetings.

Number of Review meetings held post MSA (Making Sense of Autism Training)

District	Number of review meetings 22/23	Number of review meetings 23/24
Ashford	3	17
Canterbury	0	9
Dartford	0	8
Dover	0	26
Folkestone & Hythe	3	16
Gravesham	1	7
Maidstone	0	0
Sevenoaks	0	5
Swale	0	27
Thanet	0	14
Tunbridge & Malling	0	0
Tunbridge Wells	0	3
	7	132

Using 23 action plans, these were the most presenting elements of recent advancements which AET training and supporting elements, could reasonably be seen to have contributed to:

Use of Pupil Voice, canvass young person's opinion	Principle Two. Enabling the voice of the autistic child and young person to contribute to and influence decisions	18
-----------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------

One page profile, Autism profile, communication passport.	Principle One: Understanding the strengths, interests and challenges of the autistic child and young person	17
Sensory checklists	Principle One: Understanding the strengths, interests and challenges of the autistic child and young person	10
Regular SENCO and parent engagement	Principle Three: Collaboration with parents and carers of autistic children and young people	10
Co-production of pupil support with parents	Principle Three: Collaboration with parents and carers of autistic children and young people	9
Focus on sensory environments	Principle Six: An ethos and environment that fosters social inclusion for children and young people on the autism spectrum	9
Working on more effective use of visuals (Transition, equipment, refocussing, end of day, lanyards)	Principle Four: Workforce development to support autistic children and young people	8
Updating website information with ND info and right language	Principle Five: Leadership and management that promotes and embeds good autism practice	8
Staff confidence has markedly increased supporting ND pupils	Principle Four: Workforce development to support autistic children and young people	6
Staff are better supporting pupils to self-regulate	Principle One: Understanding the strengths, interests and challenges of the autistic child and young person	6
Learning walks are proving useful	Principle Six: An ethos and environment that fosters social inclusion for children and young people on the autism spectrum	6
Parent SEND questionnaires have been used	Principle Three: Collaboration with parents and carers of autistic children and young people	6

Staff capacity in districts remains the key challenge for the rollout as the timings that settings would like to have training does not link into working hours for the STLS or EPs. We are having discussions with the different teams to see how we can provide support.

Key risks, issues and mitigating actions

*Risks: That we do not maintain the momentum with the training in the next academic year. For Making Sense of Autism we still need to reach 51% of School Age and 75% of Early Years

settings. In Good Autism Practice we need to reach 94.55% of school age settings and 97.70% of Early Years settings.

*Mitigate: In the summer term, we wrote to all schools that had not received AET training and reminded them of the AET training and included training and booking information. We also attended the SENCO Conference to promote the AET training and demonstrated how to use the AET Standards Frameworks to develop inclusive practice.

We need to work with District Leads to identify which settings are using other Autism Training and then see if we can develop a model to support these schools to adopt the AET Frameworks to evidence good autism practice. The AET Frameworks form the basis of the National Autistic Society Inclusion Accreditation and so we can encourage schools to use the frameworks to work towards this award.

*Risks: Secondary Schools not engaging with the Autism Education Trust training. We only have 26% Secondary Schools in 23/24. We met the KPI of 20% but it is a low take up compared to Primary settings. Sustaining the level of Secondary training will be a challenge. Many have training programmes set up well in advance or prefer virtual training models that staff can access in their own time. The modular face to face format of the Autism Education Trust programme does not always meet the training need and model for Secondary settings.

*Mitigation: STLS District Leads are working with Secondary Settings to encourage them to engage with the AET training and frameworks. This will be supported through the transition work happening in districts. The AET have released specific training on Transition that the STLS and EPs can utilise. The AET team will attend the Transition Steering group from September 2024.

*Risks: Reduction in training capacity in 2024/2025 due to staff shortages in the Educational Psychology Service and Specialist Teaching Service. Both services have reported that certain districts will have a reduced capacity due to staff changes or staff absence due to illness. This would limit the number of training sessions that they can deliver.

*Mitigation: The AET Core team have offered to support training particularly those requested for weekend and evenings. Swale district are trialling a virtual pre-recorded sessions using a locked system where delegates can only access the training through the Swale administrator. The AET materials are licenced and so we need to ensure that only recognised delegates can access them. Should this work then we can consider creating more virtual training to be rolled out across the districts.

Dover District are running live virtual training on a range of dates to provide greater flexibility for settings in the district. This came about after focused meetings with the Nurseries to try to find accessible sessions. Again, any learning from these will be shared with other districts.

*Risks: Limited time capacity of trainers meaning that settings are not having the review meetings post training. This means that settings are not accessing the full AET programme or embedding the Standards and Competency Frameworks into their setting improvement plans and general activity. We know that training alone does not bring about cultural change. Currently only 139 have had a follow up meeting.

*Risks: Currently, meetings following training do not have a consistent format. Different areas are working in different ways rather than using the proforma provided by the AET Core Team. Some meetings do not have any notes or recorded information around changes or new approaches that settings are adopting post training.

*Mitigation: Trainers have been made aware of the research work and the building of a Kent Strategy Bank that Matthew Bushell is carrying out so that they can see the bigger picture around

why the meetings are important. Those trainers that have been working with schools have been sharing the impact of the action plans and how it has fed into district work.

Mitigation: We did ask districts to feedback on the suggested action planning document in term 3 before it went live in March. We also asked for further feedback in June when we did the trainer workshops to ensure that trainers felt that the document was workable. We have shared a guidance document on how to help settings to develop their action plan which may have helped those that are less confident in speaking to senior leaders about school improvement.

How will you evidence the impact of the action on children, young people and families?

This is an ongoing process and AET will still be provided long into 2025. An autism intervention offered can never completely be evidenced as a sole causation of impact for pupils and parents satisfaction and confidence in schools, because life is not so linear, there are other wider factors and schools of course, to varying degrees have been working on improving their offer to neurodivergent pupils previously – but within the AET offer there is very much the complete circle evidenced now – action planning, training provided, actions worked on, online parental interview, case studies, individualised school report, which can be used as feedback and inform future actions.