



KENT COUNTY COUNCIL STLS CONSULTATION WRITTEN REPORT

PREPARED BY LAKE MARKET RESEARCH



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BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

Background

Kent County Council (KCC) is seeking views on how the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS) might fit within new ways of working that are being introduced as part of the ongoing transformation of Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services in Kent. The STLS works mainly with Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) in mainstream settings, providing advice, support and training that support early years settings and schools to provide good inclusive education to children and young people with SEND.

New ways of working in Kent and changes to legislation across the country mean KCC will continue to adapt the services provided to support children and young people with SEND. As new ways of working are implemented, and the transformation of SEND services continues, KCC want to understand how STLS might fit within these new ways of working, whether there are gaps the service might fill, how it can support children to achieve the outcomes important to them and how it might contribute to a financially sustainable model for the future.

Consultation process

On 9 September, a public consultation was launched, lasting 8 weeks until 3 November. The consultation invited responses from all those interested in the proposals.

Feedback was captured via a consultation questionnaire which was available on the KCC engagement website (www.kent.gov.uk/specialist-teaching-and-learning-service). Hard copies of the consultation material, including the questionnaire, were also available on request. Consultation material and the webpage included details of how people could contact KCC to ask a question, request hard copies or an alternative format. A Word version of the questionnaire was provided for people who did not wish to complete the online version. An easy read version of the consultation document and questionnaire was also available.

To raise awareness of the consultation and encourage participation, the following was undertaken:

Attendance and presentation at the following forums:

- Early Years SENCo Forum
- Primary SENCo Forum
- Secondary SENCo Forum
- School Governor Forum

The consultation was promoted through the following:

- The Kelsi Bulletin
- SEN Family Network Newsletter
- The Specialist Teaching and Learning Service

A summary of interaction and supply of consultation material can be found below:

In addition, during the consultation period, eighteen workshops were completed with stakeholders between 27 September 2024 and 10 October 2024. The purpose of the workshops was to promote the consultation and give respondents opportunity to share their views directly with local authority representatives.

Of these eighteen workshops;

- one was open to any representative from a mainstream school or early years settings
- two were for headteachers and governors of mainstream schools and early years settings
- two for representatives from Early Years settings
- three for representatives from primary
- three for representatives from secondary phase
- two workshops were held for parents and carers
- two workshops were provided for STLS district leads and headteachers responsible for the Service Level Agreement and three for STLS staff
- two workshops were also held with KCC internal stakeholder groups.

In total, 138 individuals registered to attend the workshops. Some workshops had a higher number of attendees than had booked due to multiple people attending on one invitation.

Of the 138 individuals who registered, 113 attended the workshops (82% attendance).

Attendance breakdown:

- 59 individuals attended the STLS workshops
- 24 individuals attended the Primary focused workshops
- 3 individuals attended the Secondary focused workshops
- 6 individuals attended the Early Years focused workshops
- 19 individuals attended the Headteacher and Governors workshops
- 2 individuals attended the Parent workshops

During the workshops, feedback was collated and themed. Across the eighteen workshops, ten key themes were identified. These are summarised below.

92 comments were made expressing concern about LIFT and the service ending. This included concerns that:

- LIFT is considered to be part of the process for referrals with outside agencies such as the NHS.
- Early years staff had concerns that LIFT is a valuable resource that they use regularly, and it is sometimes the only support they receive.
- Primary school SENCOs felt that LIFT was inconsistent across districts, however, it is vital for gathering evidence and getting support.
- Secondary SENCOs said they have an increasing need for lift due to increasingly complicated pathways, they also felt LIFT was well attended and created peer to peer support.
- Headteachers described LIFT as being important to access outside agencies and that it is the only place to access multiagency working. A comment mentioned that they feel LIFT is a lifeline for settings and families.
- Concerns were raised across all stakeholders regarding the diminishing service and members of STLS leaving.

49 comments concerned questions or concerns about the consultation document or process. This included:

- The STLS had concerns about a lack of vision statement and positive options for the future of the service. STLS were also concerned that the public were being asked to give feedback on models that were not yet fully understood.
- Early Years professionals requested an easy read option and were concerned there would be further consultations.
- Primary SENCO concerns were regarding the sheer number of consultations and the lack of clarity regarding the options.
- Parents felt the Local Authority should work with parents more to hear concerns and questions.

47 comments concerned questions or concerns regarding funding. This included:

- STLS had concerns that the service would become subcontracted and that the funding arrangements were unclear. They expressed concerns around financial fairness and how sustainability was going to be ensured.
- Early years professionals were concerned that schools would choose to remove funding from early years settings.
- Primary schools were concerned they wouldn't be able to afford the service.
- Headteachers and Governors were concerned that unless there was some core funding then they would lose STLS staff.

37 comments were regarding the new Localities Model and a lack of consistency across the county. This included:

- STLS voiced concerns regarding the risk of an inequitable offer and not having the expertise for a particular need in a link model. They were concerned as to how they would fit in localities model.
- Primary staff voiced concerns regarding how STLS would fit in the localities model and how the model with work with large academies vs small rural schools.
- Secondary staff would like STLS to control the localities model
- Headteachers were concerned that the only hands-on service (STLS) will be removed from the community models and how will outside agencies then be accessed by communities.

22 comments were regarding the wellbeing of staff and young people. This included:

- STLS are concerned about anxiety their staff are experiencing and the impact on pensions
- Primary and secondary staff are concerned about the wellbeing of STLS and SENCOs as STLS are their only source of help and support.
- Headteachers were concerned about job security for STLS staff and staff would feel very lonely and anxious without STLS
- Parents are concerned the children won't be supported without STLS staff.

21 comments were concerned specifically with Early Years provision. This included:

- STLS were concerned regarding EY funding, and they only really have option 2 as an option and that EY settings were struggling to access the consultation.
- Early Years staff were concerned with the outreach model
- Primary staff felt it was important to split Early years and schools funding.
- Head teachers voiced concerns with transition

16 comments regarded the Service Level Agreement (SLA). This included:

- Concerns were regarding who would hold then SLA and therefore manage STLS. These concerns were raised by STLS and Secondary school staff

16 comments were concerns about a lack of information or of understanding to complete the consultation. These were raised mostly by STLS who were concerned there was not enough information or clarity for people to make an informed decision.

13 comments regarded the potential Ending of the Service. These included:

- STLS main concern was redundancies and who would be responsible for the payment of the redundancies.
- Primary staff were concerned how would staff access outside agencies without STLS. Concerns regarding the gaps that would be left.

3 comments were Secondary specific concerns. These included:

- STLS were concerned regarding the impact of lack of engagement from secondary schools would have on the consultation.

Attendees were encouraged to complete the questionnaires provided on Let's Talk Kent.

Points to note

- Consultees were invited to comment on each aspect of the consultation and were given the choice of which questions they wanted to answer / provide comments. The number of consultees providing an answer is shown on each chart / table featured in this report.
- Consultees were given a number of opportunities to provide feedback in their own words throughout the questionnaire. This report includes examples of verbatims received (as written by those contributing) but all free text feedback is being reviewed and considered by KCC.
- This report includes feedback from professionals / organisations and residents and the consultation contained a separate questionnaire for each stakeholder group. Feedback for each stakeholder group has been reported separately.
- Participation in consultations is self-selecting and this needs to be considered when interpreting responses.
- Response to this consultation does not wholly represent the individuals or stakeholders the consultation sought feedback from and is reliant on awareness and propensity to take part based on the topic and interest.
- KCC was responsible for the design, promotion, and collection of the consultation responses. Lake Market Research was appointed to conduct an independent analysis of feedback.

PROFILE OF CONSULTEES

PROFESSIONALS / ORGANISATIONS RESPONDING

427 consultees took part in the professionals consultation questionnaire.

The table below shows the profile of consultees responding to the consultation questionnaire only. Just under half of consultees answering support children aged 0-5 (48%); 73% support children aged 5 and above. The education setting consultees work in is mixed – 42% in an Early Years setting, 60% in a primary education setting and 20% in a secondary education setting.

The proportion who left these question blank or indicated they did not want to disclose this information has been included as applicable.

RESPONDING AS...	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
A professional employed to work in or responsible for a mainstream educational setting	258	60%
A professional employed to provide support to children in mainstream education settings	98	23%
Providing the official response of an organisation, group, or business	25	6%
Other	43	10%
Prefer not to answer / blank	3	1%

Official responses from an organisation, group or business were received from:

- Canterbury day Nursery
- Chalk Village Preschool
- Cherubs Preschool
- Children and Young Peoples Services (CYPS) (Family Hubs)
- Cobham Community Preschool
- Culverstone Green Nursery
- Tonbridge & Malling Family Hub district
- Halstead Nursery
- Hythe Bay Church of England Primary School
- Kent Autism Education Service Ltd
- Leigh Academies Trust
- Leybourne Chase Preschool Ltd
- Playhouse Preschool
- Poppy preschool
- Scallywags Two Pre School
- St Barnabas Pre School Nursery
- St Hilary's Nursery
- St Nicholas School
- STLS District Lead

- Sunrise Day Nursery (Langley) Ltd
- We are Beams
- Wiggles Playgroup Ltd
- Young risers pre school

AGE OF CHILDREN SUPPORTED	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Child(ren) aged 0-5	206	48%
Child(ren) aged 5 and above	314	73%
Prefer not to answer / blank	9	2%

PROFESSIONAL WORKING IN...	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
An Early Years education setting (including nurseries and childminders)	179	42%
A primary education setting	254	60%
A secondary education setting	86	20%
Other	35	8%
Prefer not to answer / blank	7	2%

Based on the responses above, this equates to 13% of early years settings, 55% of primary and 84% of secondary settings in Kent.

ROLE IN RESPONDING TO CONSULTATION...	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Nursery Manager / Owner	42	10%
School Governor	3	1%
School Headteacher / Senior Leader	68	16%
- Work in Early Years setting	14	3%
- Work in primary education setting	55	13%
- Work in secondary education setting	9	2%
- Other	4	1%
- Prefer not to say / left blank	1	0.2%
School Middle Leader	6	1%

ROLE IN RESPONDING TO CONSULTATION...	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
SENCO / Inclusion Leader	179	42%
- Work in Early Years setting	70	16%
- Work in primary education setting	112	26%
- Work in secondary education setting	21	5%
- Other	1	0.2%
- Prefer not to say / left blank	2	0.4%
Nursery Practitioner	6	1%
Childminder	0	0%
Classroom Teacher	22	5%
Learning Support Assistant (LSA) /Teaching Assistant (TA)	7	2%
Higher Level LSA/TA	0	0%
Specialist Teacher (from Specialist Teaching and Learning Service)	31	7%
Educational Psychologist	6	1%
Speech and Language Therapist	4	1%
Family Hubs worker	5	1%
Early Help worker	0	0%
Other	45	11%
Prefer not to answer / blank	3	1%

DISTRICT WORKS IN	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Ashford	45	11%
Canterbury	41	10%
Dartford	27	6%
Dover	30	7%
Folkestone and Hythe	34	8%
Gravesham	54	13%
Maidstone	75	18%
Sevenoaks	33	8%
Swale	40	9%
Thanet	72	17%

DISTRICT WORKS IN	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Tonbridge and Malling	44	10%
Tunbridge Wells	39	9%

GENDER	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Male	18	4%
Female	154	36%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	255	60%

GENDER SAME AS BIRTH	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Yes	175	41%
No	0	0%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	252	59%

AGE	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
0-15	1	0.2%
16-24	2	0.4%
25-34	19	4%
35-49	81	19%
50-59	61	14%
60-64	6	1%
65-74	3	1%
75-84	0	0%
85 & over	0	0%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	254	59%

RELIGION / BELIEF	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Yes	62	15
- Christian	59	14
- Hindu	0	0
- Jewish	1	0.2%
- Muslim	0	0
- Sikh	1	0.2%
- Other	2	0.4%
No	101	24%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	201	47%

DISABILITY	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Yes	13	3%
- Physical impairment	4	1%
- Sensory impairment (hearing, sight or both)	0	0%
- Longstanding illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy	5	1%
- Mental health condition	3	1%
- Learning disability	4	1%
- Other	1	0.2%
No	157	37%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	240	56%

CARER	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Yes	13	3%
No	157	37%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	257	60%

ETHNICITY	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
White English	154	36%
White Scottish	3	1%
White Welsh	0	0%
White Northern Irish	2	0.4%
White Irish	2	0.4%
White Irish Traveller	0	0%
Asian or Asian British Indian	1	0.2%
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	0	0%
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	0	0%
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	0	0%
Mixed White & Black African	0	0%
Mixed White & Asian	2	0.4%
Black or Black British Caribbean	0	0%
Black or Black British African	0	0%
Other	7	2%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	256	60%

SEXUALITY	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Heterosexual/Straight	155	36%
Bi/Bisexual	2	0.4%
Gay man	0	0%
Gay woman/Lesbian	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	270	63%

RESIDENT CONSULTEES RESPONDING

96 consultees took part in the consultation questionnaire.

The table below shows the profile of consultees responding to the consultation questionnaire only. The proportion who left this question blank or indicated they did not want to disclose this information has been included as applicable.

RESPONDING AS...	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
As a parent or carer	78	81%
On behalf of a friend or relative	1	1%
Other Kent resident	8	8%
Other	9	9%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	0	0%

AGE OF CHILDREN	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Child(ren) aged 0-5	12	13%
Child(ren) aged 5 and above	56	58%
Both	13	14%
Prefer not to answer / blank	15	16%

HAVE CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND / OR A DISABILITY (SEND)	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Yes	64	79%
No	13	16%
Prefer not to answer / blank	4	5%

HAVE CHILDREN WITH AN EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN (EHCP)	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Yes	28	34%
No	52	64%
Prefer not to answer / blank	1	1%

CHILD'S SCHOOL / SETTING RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM THE SPECIALIST TEACHING AND LEARNING SERVICE IN RELATION TO CHILD/REN IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Yes	45	56%
No	16	20%
Prefer not to answer / blank	20	25%

DISTRICT LIVES IN	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Ashford	2	2%
Canterbury	8	8%
Dartford	0	0%
Dover	10	10%
Folkestone and Hythe	3	3%
Gravesham	7	7%
Maidstone	16	17%
Sevenoaks	4	4%
Swale	16	17%
Thanet	5	5%
Tonbridge and Malling	10	10%
Tunbridge Wells	15	16%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	0	0%

GENDER	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Male	6	6%
Female	45	47%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	45	47%

GENDER SAME AS BIRTH	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Yes	50	52%
No	0	0%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	46	48%

AGE	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
0-15	0	0%
16-24	0	0%
25-34	6	6%
35-49	27	28%
50-59	8	8%
60-64	0	0%
65-74	5	5%
75-84	4	4%
85 & over	0	0%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	46	49%

RELIGION / BELIEF	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Yes	27	28%
- Christian	26	27%
- Hindu	0	0%
- Jewish	0	0%
- Muslim	1	1%
- Sikh	0	0%
- Other	0	0%
No	23	24%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	46	49%

DISABILITY	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Yes	7	7%
- Physical impairment	2	2%
- Sensory impairment (hearing, sight or both)	0	0%
- Longstanding illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy	3	3%
- Mental health condition	1	1%

DISABILITY	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
- Learning disability	1	1%
- Other	2	2%
No	39	41%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	50	52%

CARER	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Yes	30	31%
No	18	19%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	48	50%

ETHNICITY	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
White English	41	43%
White Scottish	0	0%
White Welsh	0	0%
White Northern Irish	0	0%
White Irish	2	2%
White Irish Traveller	0	0%
Asian or Asian British Indian	0	0%
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	0	0%
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	0	0%
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	0	0%
Mixed White & Black African	0	0%
Mixed White & Asian	0	0%
Black or Black British Caribbean	0	0%
Black or Black British African	1	1%
Arab	0	0%
Chinese	1	1%
Other	5	5%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	46	48%

SEXUALITY	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Heterosexual/Straight	45	47%
Bi/Bisexual	1	1%
Gay man	0	0%
Gay woman/Lesbian	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	50	52%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONALS FEEDBACK

- 427 consultees took part in the consultation questionnaire. 48% support children aged 0-5 (48%) and 73% support children aged 5 and above. 42% work in an Early Years setting, 60% work in a primary education setting and 20% work in a secondary education setting. Of these, Primary School SENCOs are the highest single group of respondents.
- This group also includes responses from STLS which equates to 7% of the professional consultees taking part. The outcomes below include these responses. Consideration has been given throughout the report regarding the degree to which responses from this group impacts on the overall response rates.
- 64% agree there are gaps within the interventions and resources available to enable mainstream early year settings and schools to successfully support more children with SEND (33% strongly agree). The main gaps noted by consultees who agreed are gaps in health provision: SALT, OT, CAMHS, counselling, physiotherapy, SEND knowledge / insufficient SENCO training / no staff to train or support mainstream staff and general lack of funding, staff, support and resources.
- In the context of STLS support, 29% agree there are gaps in the support provided by district STLS to schools and settings in their district. The main concerns noted by consultees who agreed are STLS staff being understaffed / stretched, caseloads being too large / increasing and being underfunded.
- 13% agree there is duplication within the interventions and resources available to settings and schools from all providers including STLS.
- High proportions agree that the support provided by STLS enables their setting / school to meet the outcomes for children and young people identified within the Kent Children and Young People's Outcome Framework:
 - My learning (87%), My independence (86%), My voice (84%), My future (83%), My quality of life (81%), My community (77%), My safety (81%), My future (83%), My health (74%)
- Perceptions of STLS support provided to consultees are strong:
 - 92% agree STLS have the skills and knowledge to provide support across the broad range specified and complexity of need (74% strongly agree)
 - 83% agree that STLS has the flexibility to adapt support across the specified range and complexity of need (63% strongly agree)
 - 91% agree STLS has a positive impact on development and embedding of inclusive practice in their school / setting (77% strongly agree)
 - 90% agree STLS has an impact on upskilling their teaching workforce in relation to increasing their confidence and knowledge of supporting children with SEND (74% strongly agree)

- The main impacts of STLS support observed by consultees are the sharing of knowledge / strategies to use, input into plan reviews / measuring targets, school wide / individual training schemes, positive parent, pupil and staff feedback, improved staff confidence and children achieving targets / milestones / personal plans.
- 90% of consultees currently attend / access LIFT; 60% will continue to attend / access LIFT the same frequency as they currently do or more frequently when processes are changed.
- The main contributions identified by consultees to contribute to school-to-school collaborative approaches are their expert / specialist knowledge and joint / shared training / workshops. Significant proportions also commented that they do not want to see STLS support removed / they would like it to continue as it is and more specifically there are concerns about the future of the LIFT meetings.
- From a choice of three of the funding options presented - Option 1 (end service), Option 2 (service continuing to be funded by KCC from High Needs Block funding before money is allocated to communities for schools) and Option 4 (communities for schools to fund STLS from the High Needs Block funding), 81% selected Option 2. 14% selected Option 4 and 5% selected Option 1 as their preferred funding option.
- When asked to consider whether future funding options for Early Years should be considered independently of future funding options for school age STLS, views are polarising with 40% agreeing and 37% disagreeing.

SUMMARY OF RESIDENT FEEDBACK

- 96 consultees took part in the consultation questionnaire; 81% are parents or carers.
- 57% agree Early Years settings have access to the external services and support that they need to help them to support children with SEND in their settings; 24% disagree.
- 49% agree mainstream schools have access to the external services and support that they need to help them to support children with SEND in their settings; 35% disagree.
- High proportions agree that the support provided by STLS enables their child's school or Early Years setting to meet the outcomes for children and young people identified within the Kent Children and Young People's Outcome Framework:
 - My learning (75%), My independence (74%), My voice (69%), My future (71%), My quality of life (73%), My community (71%), My safety (72%), My future (71%), My health (69%)
- 75% agree the STLS advice and guidance provided by their child's school or early years setting has had a positive impact on how their child's classroom teacher has been able to support their SEND needs and enable them to remain in their mainstream setting.
- From a choice of three of the funding options presented - Option 1 (end service), Option 2 (service continuing to be funded by KCC from High Needs Block funding before money is allocated to communities for schools) and Option 4 (communities for schools to fund STLS

from the High Needs Block funding), 79% selected Option 2. 18% selected Option 4 and 3% selected Option 1 as their preferred option.

- When asked to consider whether future funding options for Early Years should be considered independently of future funding options for school age STLS, views are polarising with 39% agreeing and 31% disagreeing.

COMPARING PROFESSIONALS AND RESIDENT FEEDBACK

- Both professional and resident consultees agree that there are gaps within the interventions and resources available to enable mainstream early year settings and schools to successfully support more children with SEND (64% of professionals agree there are gaps; 57% of residents agree Early Years settings have access to the external services and support that they need to help them to support children with SEND / 49% agree mainstream schools have access to the external services and support that they need to help them to support children with SEND in their settings).
- High proportions of professional and resident consultees agreed the support provided by STLS enables settings / schools to meet the outcomes for children and young people identified within the Kent Children and Young People's Outcome Framework.
- Both professional and resident consultees are positive about the support provided by STLS (high agreement ratings amongst professionals for skills and knowledge, flexibility, development and embedding of inclusive practice in their school / setting and upskilling their teaching workforce and three quarters of residents agree the STLS advice and guidance provided by their child's school or early years setting has had a positive impact on how their child's classroom teacher has been able to support their SEND needs and enable them to remain in their mainstream setting).
- From a choice of three of the future funding options presented, the majority of professional and resident consultees selected Option 2 (service continuing to be funded by KCC from High Needs Block funding before money is allocated to communities for schools) as their preferred option.
- Response to whether future funding options for Early Years should be considered independently of future funding options for school age STLS is polarising amongst both professional and resident consultees (with broadly equal proportions agreeing and disagreeing).

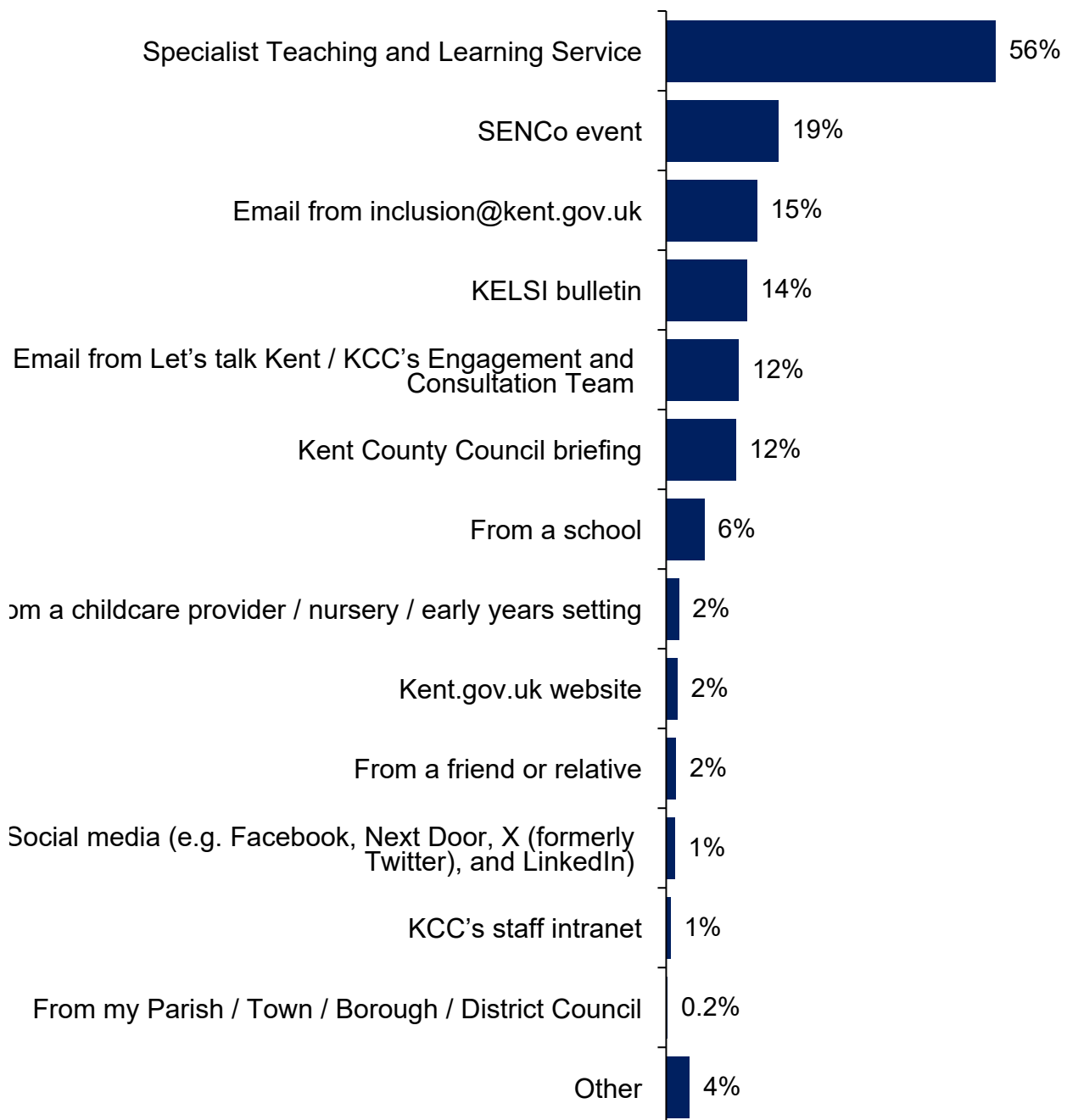
PROFESSIONALS FEEDBACK

CONSULTATION AWARENESS

- The most common route to finding out about the consultation is via the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (56%).
- Just under one in five found out at a SENCo event (19%).
- Broadly equal proportions found out via email from inclusion@kent.gov.uk (15%), the KELSI bulletin (14%), via email from Let's talk Kent (12%) or via a Kent County Council briefing (12%).

How did you find out about this consultation?

Base: all answering (418), consultees had the option to select more than one response.



SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Specialist Teaching and Learning Service	232	56%
SENCo event	79	19%
Email from inclusion@kent.gov.uk	64	15%
KELSI bulletin	57	14%
Email from Let's talk Kent / KCC's Engagement and Consultation Team	51	12%
Kent County Council briefing	49	12%
From a school	27	6%
From a childcare provider / nursery / early years setting	9	2%
Kent.gov.uk website	8	2%
From a friend or relative	7	2%
Social media (e.g. Facebook, Next Door, X (formerly Twitter), and LinkedIn)	6	1%
KCC's staff intranet	3	1%
From my Parish / Town / Borough / District Council	1	0.2%
Other	15	4%

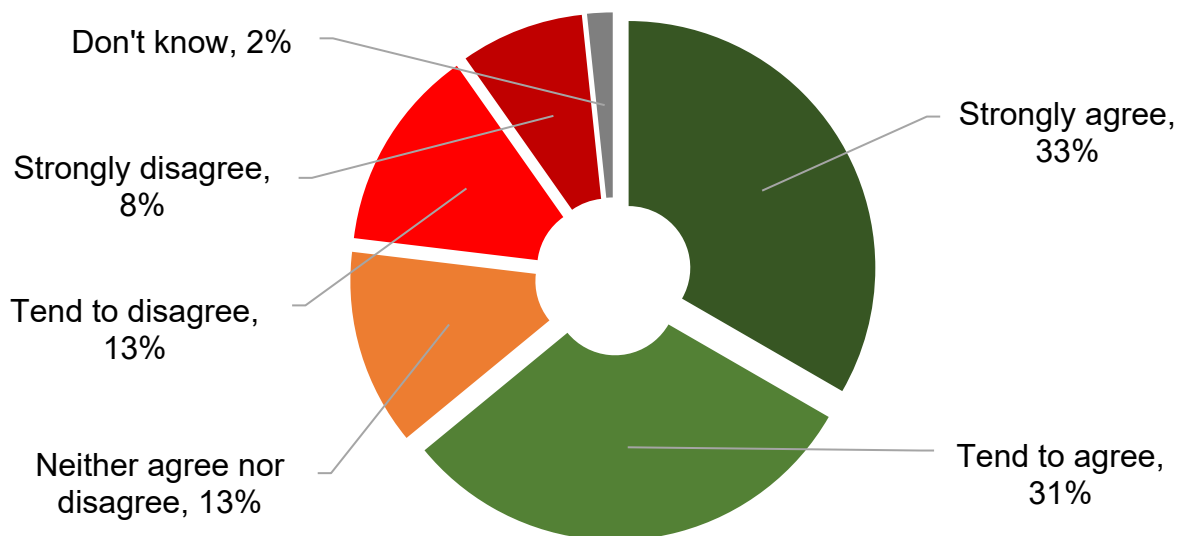
PROFESSIONALS FEEDBACK

CONSULTATION RESPONSE – UNDERSTANDING HOW STLS MAY FIT WITHIN NEW WAYS OF WORKING

UNDERSTANDING GAPS IN INTERVENTIONS AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ENABLE MAINSTREAM TO SUCCESSFULLY SUPPORT MORE CHILDREN WITH SEND

- Just under two thirds (64%) agree there are gaps within the interventions and resources available to enable mainstream early year settings and schools to successfully support more children with SEND.
- Just over in five (21%) disagree there are such gaps. 13% neither agree nor disagree.
- Filtering out the 31 responses from STLS specialist teachers results in a consistent agreement pattern; 64% agree and 21% disagree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that there are gaps within the interventions and resources available to enable mainstream early years settings and schools to successfully support more children with SEND in your district? Base: all answering (420)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Net: Agree	269	64%
Net: Disagree	90	21%
Strongly agree	140	33%
Tend to agree	129	31%
Neither agree nor disagree	54	13%
Tend to disagree	56	13%
Strongly disagree	34	8%
Don't know	7	2%

The table below depicts how different subgroups of consultees responded to this question. These subgroups include the type of consultee responding, the type of education setting worked in and their role. Agreement is higher amongst consultees who work in a primary education setting, consultees responding as a School Headteacher / Senior Leader and consultees responsible for SEN / Inclusion budgets. Agreement is lower amongst consultees providing a response of an organisation / group / business, consultees who work in an Early Years education setting and consultees responding as a Nursery Manager / Owner.

	Agree %	Disagree %
TYPE OF CONSULTEE SUBGROUPS		
A professional employed to work in or responsible for a mainstream educational setting	66%	19%
A professional employed to provide support to children in mainstream education settings	67%	26%
Official response of an organisation, group or business	58%	29%
EDUCATION SETTING SUBGROUPS		
Work in an Early Years education setting	54%	32%
Work in primary education setting	72%	17%
Work in a secondary education setting	64%	19%
JOB ROLE SUBGROUPS		
Nursery Manager / Owner	43%	31%
School Headteacher / Senior Leader	74%	12%
SENCO / Inclusion Leader	65%	22%
Classroom Teacher	59%	9%
Specialist Teacher (from Specialist Teaching and Learning Service)	61%	29%

COMMENTS ON PERCEIVED GAPS IN INTERVENTIONS AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ENABLE MAINSTREAM EARLY YEARS SETTINGS AND SCHOOLS TO SUCCESSFULLY SUPPORT MORE CHILDREN WITH SEND

- Consultees were asked to explain what the gaps are perceived to be, in their own words.
- For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below.
- 91% of consultees who answered 'strongly agree' or 'tend to agree' provided a comment at this question.
- 28% of consultees answering commented on the service delivered by STLS being reliable, knowledgeable / responsive / vital.
- 24% of consultees noted gaps in health provision in terms of SALT, OT, CAMHS, counselling and physiotherapy (with many of these consultees noted at least one of these in their response).
- 22% of consultees commented that SEND knowledge / SENCO training is insufficient / there is no staff to train or support mainstream staff.
- Around one in five consultees answering commented on a general lack of funding, lack of support and lack of resource. 22% of consultees commented on an increasing number of SEND pupils in mainstream settings.

If you have answered 'strongly agree' or 'tend to agree, please tell us what these gaps are?

Base: all answering (246)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
STLS is (the only) good service / reliable / knowledgeable / responsive / vital	69	28%
Gaps in health provision: SALT, OT, CAMHS, counselling, physiotherapy	59	24%
Lack of funding (generally / unspecified)	54	22%
SEND knowledge / SENCO training is insufficient / no staff to train or support mainstream staff	54	22%
Lack of staff (generally / unspecified)	49	20%
Increasing number of SEND pupils in mainstream settings (primary and secondary)	48	20%
Lack of support (generally / unspecified)	48	20%
Lack of resource (generally / unspecified)	34	14%
Schools are under pressure	29	12%
Lack of funding for practical resources / adaptations / environment	24	10%

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Everyone is stretched / nobody has time	21	9%
STLS are overrun	18	7%
Long wait lists for assessments / assessments should be made earlier	16	7%
Lack of specialist provision places	15	6%
Lack of joined up thinking between services and agencies, education and health	15	6%
Long wait lists for support (generally)	15	6%
Lack of interventions	12	5%
Lack of HNF / funding to train / upskill staff	11	4%
Lack of educational psychologists	10	4%
Too much variation from district to district / region to region	10	4%
Long wait lists for referrals	10	4%
Long wait lists for SEMH	10	4%
Lack of support for interventions	9	4%
Lack of support for parents	7	3%
Lack of time to release staff for SEND training	5	2%

Some example verbatims supporting the theme of health provision gaps: SALT, OT, CAMHS, counselling, physiotherapy can be found below:

“Access to therapies particularly Speech and Language. Children are being 'closed' despite schools asking for support. We want to support our complex young people, but we cannot access the specialists (for example; Speech and Language therapists, OTs) to help us do this unless we fund this privately as a school (and with diminishing budgets this will become less likely) or some families funding privately themselves resulting in a lack of equity.”

“Access to health services, such as Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy (to support children with sensory needs), physiotherapy, dieticians and CAHMS. Incredibly long waiting lists for ASD and ADHD assessments with paediatricians. Until health is more present within the support services, any model is less likely to have impact.”

“Access to other health care professionals (SALT, OT, Counselling, CAMHS) for advice on meeting children's needs within a mainstream setting. It is hard to get hold of them and the length of time and the requirements to get them to engage takes too long. Schools are expected to run programmes with little or no training.”

Some example verbatims supporting the key theme of SEND knowledge / SENCO training being insufficient / there is no staff to train or support mainstream staff can be found below:

“There are not enough specialist teachers to support and train the staff at school considering the significant needs in mainstream schools. STLS provide most of that support but are stretched already and this will only get worse if STLS do not exist the gaps will widen further.”

“There are many school aged children with SEN on reduced timetables in mainstream schools. Resources that schools have access to within their classrooms are likely not to be appropriate for SEN children with a high level of need who are presenting with delay in their development profile. The strategies and interventions required to support either the provision within their EHCP targets or a differentiated curriculum to meet their current levels can be beyond a teacher and TAs current knowledge. Training which already comes from STLS can be invaluable in supporting schools to understand how to implement strategies and interventions required.”

“There is a growing complexity and volume of need in mainstream provisions. This is stretching school and setting resources (both physical and financial), and staff do not have the training for this level of need. This is resulting in growing staff retainment and recruitment issues, Reduced Timetables for pupils and schools and settings feeling like they are in crisis.”

Some example verbatims supporting the themes of general lack of funding, lack of support and lack of resource can be found below:

“There are long periods of time where we feel we do not receive support. More regular contact with specialists e.g. SENIF practitioner would be more beneficial and give more confidence to staff. There are gaps in resources because we cannot afford to buy many resources e.g. you can only access DAF funding if a child receives DLA. It has not always been possible to access speech and language resources when we need to create communication boards etc. As a very small pre-school we do not have the printing and software resources.”

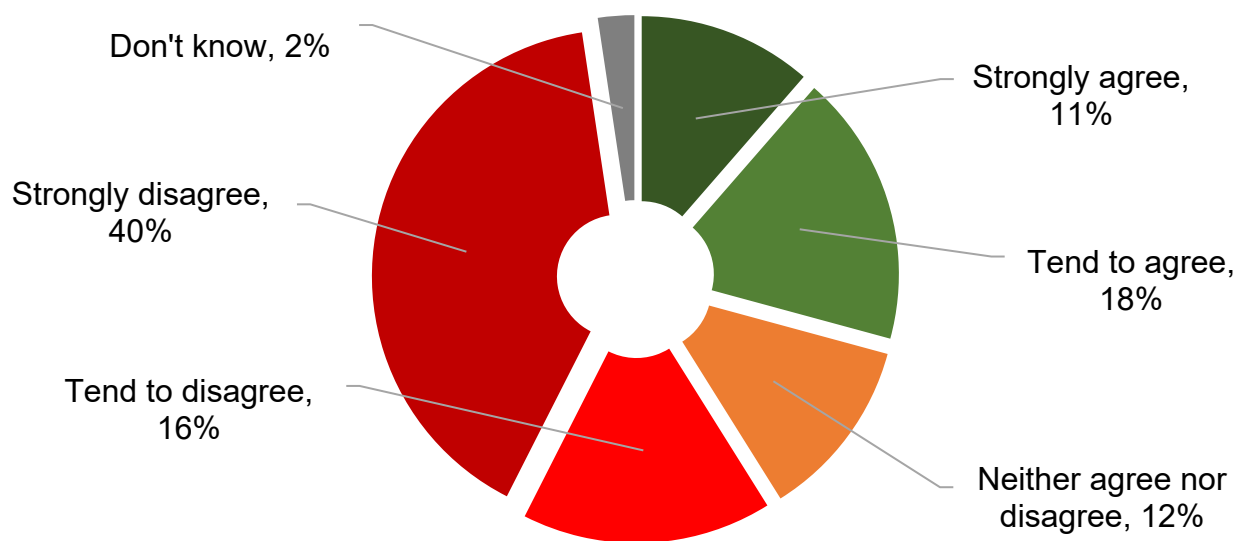
“A lot of children we support in mainstream are no longer seen to be suitable for mainstream, however, they often require an intense level of support, with some requiring 1:1 TAs. From the continuum of need and provision work, we are also going to start to be expected to take children with more complex medical needs, which we do not have health suites for. A lot of what we are asked to provide will not come with any extra funding and so this impacts the education of not only the child with SEN, but of the whole school.”

“The increase in need means it has been getting more difficult to access support. Long waiting lists and cuts in services are having a detrimental impact on our children.”

UNDERSTANDING GAPS IN SUPPORT PROVIDED BY DISTRICT STLS TO SCHOOLS AND SETTINGS

- Just under three in ten (29%) agree there are gaps in the support provided by district STLS to schools and settings in their district.
- Nearly six in ten (57%) disagree there are such gaps. 12% neither agree nor disagree.
- Filtering out the 31 responses from STLS specialist teachers results in a consistent agreement pattern; 29% agree and 56% disagree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that there are gaps in the support provided by district STLS to schools and settings in your district? Base: all answering (420)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Net: Agree	123	29%
Net: Disagree	238	57%
Strongly agree	48	11%
Tend to agree	75	18%
Neither agree nor disagree	50	12%
Tend to disagree	69	16%
Strongly disagree	169	40%
Don't know	10	2%

The table below depicts how different subgroups of consultees responded to this question. These subgroups include the type of consultee responding, the type of education setting worked in and their role.. Agreement is lower amongst consultees responding as a professional employed to work in or responsible for a mainstream educational setting and consultees responding as a SENCo / Inclusion Leader.

	Agree %	Disagree %
TYPE OF CONSULTEE SUBGROUPS		
A professional employed to work in or responsible for a mainstream educational setting	27%	57%
A professional employed to provide support to children in mainstream education settings	33%	55%
Official response of an organisation, group or business	46%	46%
EDUCATION SETTING SUBGROUPS		
Work in an Early Years education setting	28%	55%
Work in primary education setting	31%	59%
Work in a secondary education setting	32%	55%
JOB ROLE SUBGROUPS		
Nursery Manager / Owner	24%	48%
School Headteacher / Senior Leader	33%	52%
SENCO / Inclusion Leader	24%	66%
Classroom Teacher	27%	64%
Specialist Teacher (from Specialist Teaching and Learning Service)	32%	61%

COMMENTS ON PERCEIVED GAPS IN SUPPORT PROVIDED BY DISTRICT STLS TO SCHOOLS AND SETTINGS

- Consultees were asked to explain what the gaps are perceived to be, in their own words.
- For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below.
- 91% of consultees who answered 'strongly agree' or 'tend to agree' provided a comment at this question.
- The most common theme noted by consultees answering is a perception that STLS are understaffed / stretched (43 of consultees answering). 32% of consultees commented they believe STLS caseloads are too large / increasing / at a time when more pupils with SEND are in mainstream settings.

- 22% of consultees commented that STLS are underfunded / they haven't had an increase in budget in 12 years.
- 19% of consultees reference less frequent visits with long waits in between. 13% believe there will be greater gaps if STLS did not exist.

If you have answered 'strongly agree' or 'tend to agree, please tell us what these gaps are?

Base: all answering (112)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
STLS are understaffed / stretched	48	43%
STLS caseloads are too large / have increased / at a time when more pupils with SEND are in mainstream settings	36	32%
STLS are invaluable / do a great job	28	25%
STLS are underfunded / no increase in budget in years	25	22%
Visits are less and less frequent / with long waits between	21	19%
There will be greater gaps (unspecified) if STLS did not exist	15	13%
Lack of long-term support / only the initial short visit and default / generic advice	14	13%
There is a lack of specialist teachers / support	13	12%
There will be more suspensions / exclusions / more children unsupported if STLS did not exist	12	11%
STLS cannot back fill when staff are absent through illness or leave	11	10%
STLS are taking on fewer cases	9	8%
Recommendations for interventions which mainstream schools cannot support / based on adults being able to deliver / some interventions have short time spans leaving times where we don't know how to support children	9	8%
More training and support for SENCOs needed, thus enabling them to have more confidence and be trusted to make decisions	8	7%
No unifying leadership / services aren't joined up / passed around / conflicting advice	6	5%
Only the most severe cases are taken on, leaving other children unsupported	4	4%
Support is weighted towards primary schools / more secondary expertise is needed	4	4%
Lack of direct family support, in collaboration with schools	4	4%
Some STLS teams work with the local authority / some work against	4	4%

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Some districts have one specialist support worker / some more	3	3%
Some districts provide more training than others	2	2%

Some example verbatims supporting the theme of STLS being understaffed / stretched and less frequent visits / long waits between can be found below:

“As demand for support has grown, the budget for STLS has shrunk and frequency of visits from ST has decreased. The support available is superb, the ST are overstretched and cannot get to us enough.”

“STLS do a wonderful job in supporting children in mainstream settings but unfortunately due to previous cuts it has left the service extremely stretched, therefore leaving STLS with extremely high caseloads and consequently children not being able to receive the level of support they need.”

“The only reason there are gaps in the support is due to how stretched Kent have made the team. They have reduced their team already and removed necessary members of the team making it hard for them to give us enough time.”

“We do not get enough visits as it is as they are already stretched, we are already waiting weeks for a visit after lift meeting rarely return for second visit. We need more support Preschools shouldn't be left to pick up the pieces.”

Some example verbatims supporting the theme of STLS caseloads being too large / increasing / at a time when more pupils with SEND are in mainstream settings can be found below:

“STLS caseloads are heavier than ever and as the need is so high only the most severe cases are now able to access support; this is not how it was 4+ years ago. I feel many SEN Support children are missing out on support, especially those who are not a behaviour concern.”

“They do their best but with high caseloads they are not always able to allocate teachers to support pupils with high levels of need on a longer-term basis. They may make advisory one-off visits but often this is not enough. STLS provide some informal supervision and have had some SENCO wellbeing projects which have been well received and valuable, but they don't have the capacity for more formal SENCO supervision, which would be very useful. I would love educational psychologists to be attached to STLS teams and work in a similar way to the specialist teachers. Otherwise accessing their support is costly.”

“The STLS have also had to reduce the number of staff, just as the numbers of SEND children are increasing. They are trying their best and have streamlined their services as much as they can, there just aren't enough of them to go around.”

Some example verbatims supporting the theme of STLS being underfunded / no observed increases in budget for years can be found below:

“They are a very stretched service that is in high demand, and they physically cannot provide everything, but they try. They have demand from other stake holders such as the KCC on their time that impact on how long they can spend on helping schools support children. They have been under funded for years which will mean there are gaps.”

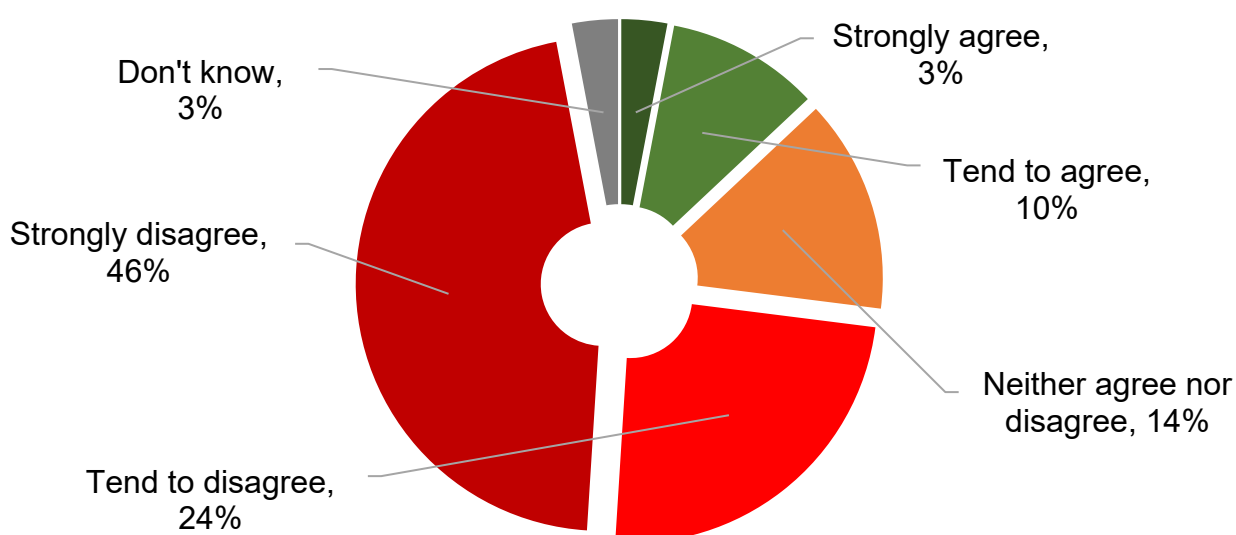
“There are some gaps in some areas of Kent largely due to STLS staff absence and lack of funding (which I understand has not been increased for a long time, despite the growing SEN needs seen in Kent). Other than this, STLS provide excellent support to schools, offering advice quickly (through clinics/email/phone) where other services cannot offer this. This is particularly the case when pupils are at risk of suspension. There is no other support immediately at hand for school staff.”

“The main gap is of capacity - there is not enough STLS support to go around. STLS have worked with schools to identify need and align their support accordingly. STLS have adapted to focus increasingly on working with teachers to build capacity. Because the service is so lean due to no increase in funding for 12 years, there is no capacity for back-up in cases of specific urgent need, or staff absence Will create a gap if STLS are not available.”

UNDERSTANDING DUPLICATION WITHIN INTERVENTIONS AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO SETTINGS AND SCHOOLS FROM ALL PROVIDERS (INCLUDING STLS)

- Just over one in ten (13%) agree there is duplication within the interventions and resources available to settings and schools from all providers including STLS.
- Seven in ten (70%) disagree there are such duplication. 14% neither agree nor disagree.
- Filtering out the 31 responses from STLS specialist teachers results in a broadly consistent agreement pattern; 12% agree and 70% disagree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that there is duplication within the interventions and resources available to settings and schools from all providers including STLS? Base: all answering (421)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Net: Agree	54	13%
Net: Disagree	293	70%
Strongly agree	13	3%
Tend to agree	41	10%
Neither agree nor disagree	61	14%
Tend to disagree	99	24%
Strongly disagree	194	46%
Don't know	13	3%

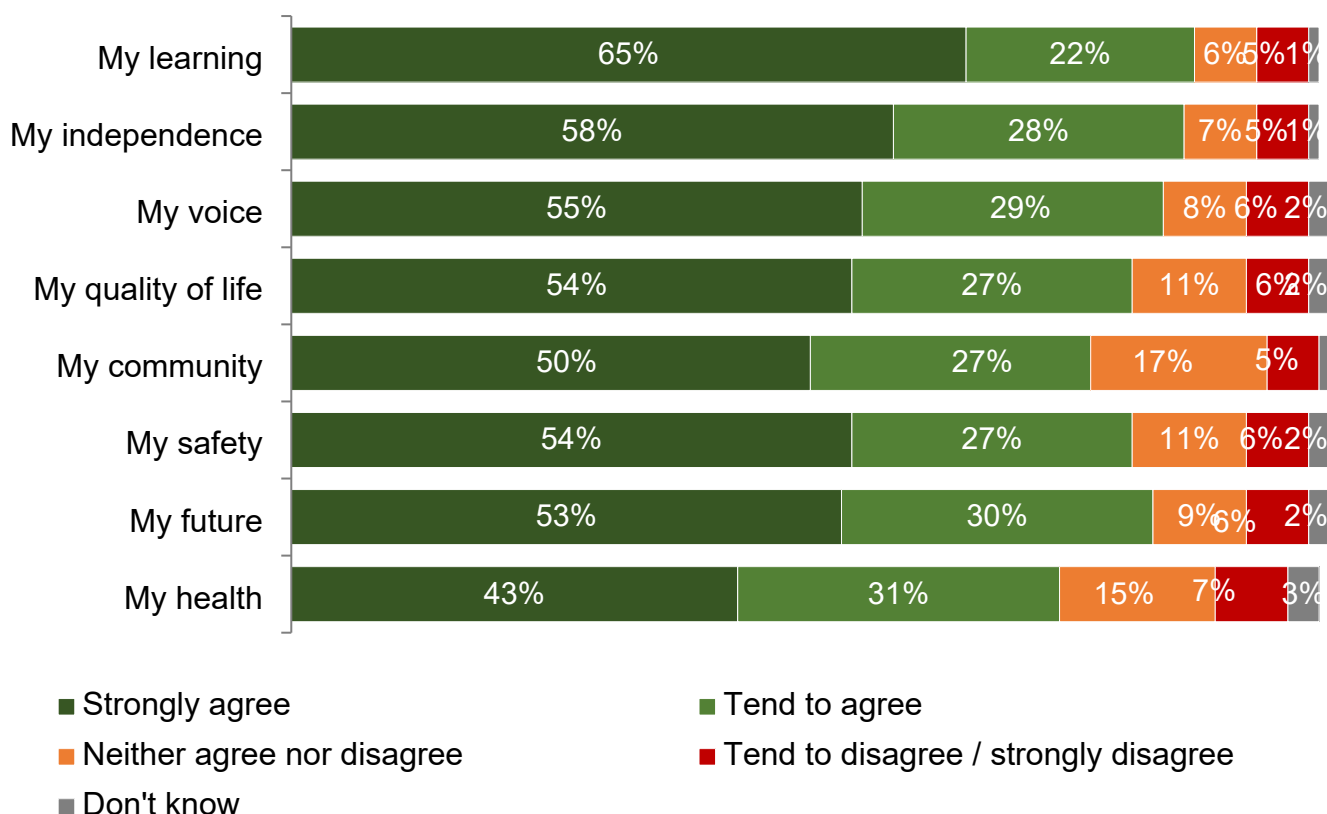
The table below depicts how different subgroups of consultees responded to this question. These subgroups include the type of consultee responding, the type of education setting worked in and their role.. Agreement is higher amongst consultees who work in a secondary education setting and consultees responding as a Specialist Teacher. Agreement is lower amongst consultees who are professionals employed to work in or responsible for a mainstream education setting, consultees who work in an Early Years education or primary education setting and consultees responding as a Senior Headteacher / Senior Leader or SENCO / Inclusion Leader.

	Agree %	Disagree %
TYPE OF CONSULTÉE SUBGROUPS		
A professional employed to work in or responsible for a mainstream educational setting	7%	74%
A professional employed to provide support to children in mainstream education settings	27%	58%
Official response of an organisation, group or business	17%	58%
EDUCATION SETTING SUBGROUPS		
Work in an Early Years education setting	16%	60%
Work in primary education setting	12%	74%
Work in a secondary education setting	24%	65%
JOB ROLE SUBGROUPS		
Nursery Manager / Owner	12%	57%
School Headteacher / Senior Leader	6%	76%
SENCO / Inclusion Leader	7%	76%
Classroom Teacher	23%	68%
Specialist Teacher (from Specialist Teaching and Learning Service)	29%	61%

PERCEPTIONS OF STLS SUPPORT ENABLING ATTAINMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OUTCOMES

- High agreement proportions are observed for all of the outcomes, but notably for learning (87%), independence (86%), voice (84%) and future (83%).
- Whilst high, agreement proportions are comparably lower in the context of health (74% agree, 43% strongly agree).
- There are no significant differences in response by consultee subgroup, e.g. education setting, role or by responsibility for SEN / Inclusion budget.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the support provided by STLS enables your setting or school to meet the outcomes for children and young people identified within the Kent Children and Young People’s Outcome Framework, building independence and enabling more children to remain in mainstream settings? Base: all answering (416-420)



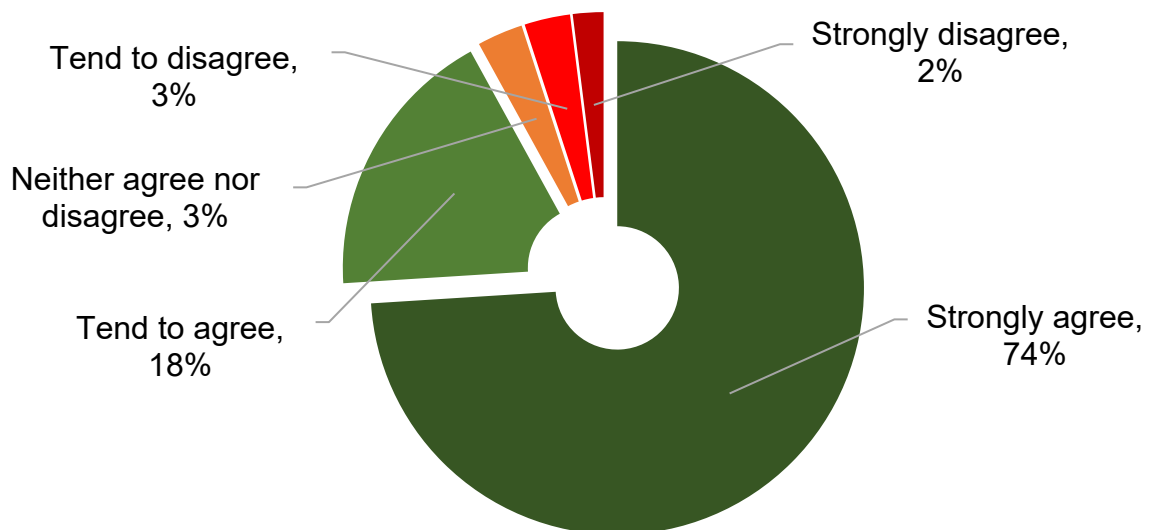
SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree / strongly disagree	Don't know
My learning	65%	22%	6%	5%	1%
My independence	58%	28%	7%	5%	1%
My voice	55%	29%	8%	6%	2%
My quality of life	54%	27%	11%	6%	2%

SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree / strongly disagree	Don't know
My community	50%	27%	17%	5%	2%
My safety	54%	27%	11%	6%	2%
My future	53%	30%	9%	6%	2%
My health	43%	31%	15%	7%	3%

PERCEPTION OF STLS HAVING THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT ACROSS BROAD RANGE AND COMPLEXITY OF NEED

- The vast majority agree (92%) that STLS have the skills and knowledge to provide support across the broad range specified and complexity of need. Strength of agreement is high with 74% strongly agreeing.
- Only 5% disagree STLS have such skills and knowledge. 3% neither agree nor disagree.
- Filtering out the 31 responses from STLS specialist teachers results in a broadly consistent agreement pattern; 92% agree (72% strongly agree) and 5% disagree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that STLS have the skills and knowledge to provide support across this broad range and complexity of need? Base: all answering (422)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Net: Agree	390	92%
Net: Disagree	19	5%
Strongly agree	312	74%
Tend to agree	78	18%
Neither agree nor disagree	11	3%
Tend to disagree	11	3%
Strongly disagree	8	2%
Don't know	2	0%

The table below depicts how different subgroups of consultees responded to this question. These subgroups include the type of consultee responding, the type of education setting worked in and their role.

These include percentage of respondents Strongly Agreeing, a net figure for respondents agreeing (including Agree and Strongly Agree) and Disagree. This breakdown has been included as some differences in responses between subgroups were not apparent at a 'net' level but were at the extreme end of the scale, i.e. strongly agree.

This can be seen below where the proportion strongly agreeing is higher amongst consultees responding as a SENCO / Inclusion Leader. The proportion strongly agreeing is lower amongst consultees responding as an organisation / group / business, consultees responding as a Nursery Manager / Owner and consultees working in Canterbury, Dover, Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells.

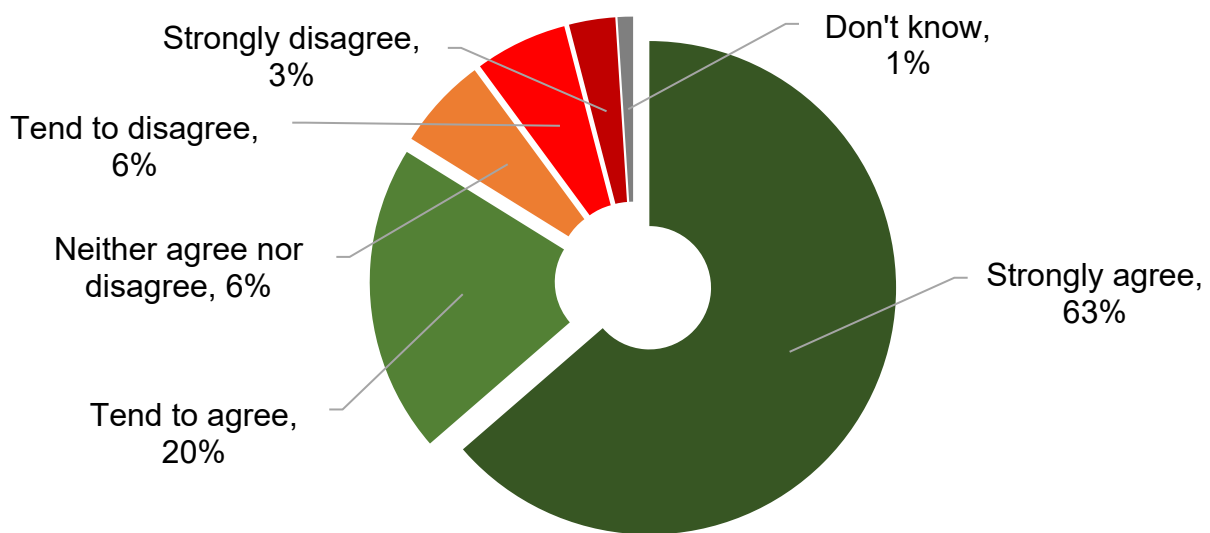
	Strongly Agree %	Net Agree %	Disagree %
TYPE OF CONSULTEE SUBGROUPS			
A professional employed to work in or responsible for a mainstream educational setting	74%	93%	4%
A professional employed to provide support to children in mainstream education settings	75%	95%	4%
Official response of an organisation, group or business	68%	92%	4%
EDUCATION SETTING SUBGROUPS			
Work in an Early Years education setting	72%	93%	3%
Work in primary education setting	77%	95%	5%
Work in a secondary education setting	71%	88%	5%
JOB ROLE SUBGROUPS			
Nursery Manager / Owner	59%	88%	2%
School Headteacher / Senior Leader	69%	93%	6%
SENCO / Inclusion Leader	79%	95%	3%
Classroom Teacher	91%	91%	9%
Specialist Teacher (from Specialist Teaching and Learning Service)	94%	97%	3%
DISTRICT OF WORK			
Ashford	67%	89%	11%
Canterbury	54%	76%	20%
Dartford	59%	81%	11%
Dover	53%	83%	13%
Folkestone and Hythe	64%	88%	12%
Gravesham	83%	94%	2%

Maidstone	57%	92%	5%
Sevenoaks	52%	85%	12%
Swale	66%	89%	11%
DISTRICT OF WORK			
Thanet	81%	99%	1%
Tonbridge and Malling	61%	91%	7%
Tunbridge Wells	46%	85%	10%

PERCEPTION OF STLS HAVING THE FLEXIBILITY TO ADAPT SUPPORT ACROSS RANGE AND COMPLEXITY OF NEED

- The majority agree (83%) that STLS has the flexibility to adapt support across the specified range and complexity of need. Strength of agreement is high with 63% strongly agreeing.
- Only 10% disagree STLS has such flexibility. 6% neither agree nor disagree.
- Filtering out the 31 responses from STLS specialist teachers results in a broadly consistent agreement pattern; 82% agree (61% strongly agree) and 10% disagree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that STLS has the flexibility to adapt support across this range and complexity of need? Base: all answering (421)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Net: Agree	351	83%
Net: Disagree	41	10%
Strongly agree	265	63%
Tend to agree	86	20%
Neither agree nor disagree	25	6%
Tend to disagree	27	6%
Strongly disagree	14	3%
Don't know	4	1%

The table below depicts how different subgroups of consultees responded to this question. These subgroups include the type of consultee responding, the type of education setting worked in and their role. Agreement is higher amongst consultees who work in a primary education setting and consultees responding as a SENCO / Inclusion Leader or Specialist Teacher. Agreement is lower amongst consultees responding as an organisation / group / business, consultees responding as a Nursery Manager / Owner and consultees working in Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone and Hythe, Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells.

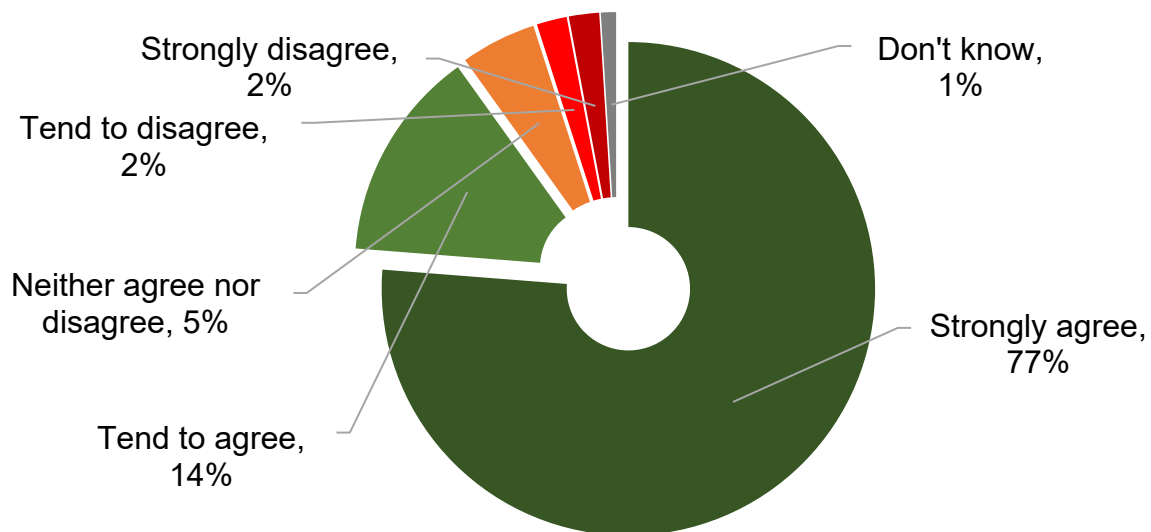
	Agree %	Disagree %
TYPE OF CONSULTEE SUBGROUPS		
A professional employed to work in or responsible for a mainstream educational setting	83%	9%
A professional employed to provide support to children in mainstream education settings	91%	5%
Official response of an organisation, group or business	64%	24%
EDUCATION SETTING SUBGROUPS		
Work in an Early Years education setting	82%	10%
Work in primary education setting	88%	6%
Work in a secondary education setting	85%	12%
JOB ROLE SUBGROUPS		
Nursery Manager / Owner	68%	17%
School Headteacher / Senior Leader	78%	13%
SENCO / Inclusion Leader	88%	7%
Classroom Teacher	91%	9%
Specialist Teacher (from Specialist Teaching and Learning Service)	97%	3%
DISTRICT OF WORK		
Ashford	71%	20%
Canterbury	66%	24%
Dartford	59%	26%
Dover	70%	23%
Folkestone and Hythe	67%	21%
Gravesham	83%	9%
Maidstone	69%	23%
Sevenoaks	64%	27%
Swale	82%	16%
Thanet	92%	6%

DISTRICT OF WORK		
Tonbridge and Malling	73%	18%
Tunbridge Wells	64%	23%

PERCEPTION OF STLS HAVING A POSITIVE IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENT AND EMBEDDING OF INCLUSIVE PRACTICE IN SCHOOL / SETTING

- The vast majority agree (91%) that STLS has a positive impact on development and embedding of inclusive practice in their school / setting. Strength of agreement is high with 77% strongly agreeing.
- Only 3% disagree STLS has this positive impact. 5% neither agree nor disagree.
- Filtering out the 31 responses from STLS specialist teachers results in a consistent agreement pattern; 91% agree (61% strongly agree) and 3% disagree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that STLS has a positive impact on development and embedding of inclusive practice in your school / setting? Base: all answering (395)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Net: Agree	360	91%
Net: Disagree	13	3%
Strongly agree	303	77%
Tend to agree	57	14%
Neither agree nor disagree	20	5%
Tend to disagree	6	2%
Strongly disagree	7	2%
Don't know	2	1%

The table below depicts how different subgroups of consultees responded to this question. These subgroups include the type of consultee responding, the type of education setting worked in and their role.. The proportion strongly agreeing is higher amongst consultees who work in a primary secondary education setting. The proportion strongly agreeing is lower amongst consultees responding as an organisation / group / business.

	Strongly Agree %	Net Agree %	Disagree %
TYPE OF CONSULTEE SUBGROUPS			
A professional employed to work in or responsible for a mainstream educational setting	76%	93%	2%
A professional employed to provide support to children in mainstream education settings	82%	90%	5%
Official response of an organisation, group or business	65%	87%	0%
EDUCATION SETTING SUBGROUPS			
Work in an Early Years education setting	72%	91%	2%
Work in primary education setting	82%	92%	4%
Work in a secondary education setting	71%	88%	3%
JOB ROLE SUBGROUPS			
Nursery Manager / Owner	65%	85%	3%
School Headteacher / Senior Leader	72%	91%	6%
SENCO / Inclusion Leader	79%	93%	2%
Classroom Teacher	86%	91%	5%
Specialist Teacher (from Specialist Teaching and Learning Service)	91%	96%	0%

EXAMPLES OF HOW SCHOOL / SETTING MEASURE THE IMPACT OF EMBEDDED INCLUSIVE PRACTICE IN SCHOOL / SETTING

- Consultees were asked to provide examples of how you (as a school/setting) measure the impact of embedded inclusive practice in your school / setting, in their own words.
- For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below.
- 71% of consultees provided a comment at this question.
- 39% of consultees answering commented on the knowledge and strategies that STLS have provided them / the help they given the school as a whole.
- 36% of consultees specifically referenced impact in reviewing plans / Personal Learning Plans / measuring success towards targets and planned outcomes.
- 30% of consultees referenced the training provided by STLS (either school wide or specific training).
- For some, impact is observed in via parent (18%), pupil (17%) and staff (8%) feedback.
- A proportion have also observed fewer suspensions (16%), improved attendance levels (13%) and improvements in teacher confidence / morale / retention (11%).

Please provide examples of how you (as a school/setting) measure the impact of embedded inclusive practice in your school / setting Base: all answering (303)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
STLS providing us with knowledge and strategies / with help across the board	118	39%
Reviewing plans / Personal Learning Plans / success towards targets and planned outcomes / SMART	110	36%
Whole staff / whole school training / specific training provided by STLS	92	30%
Observations in setting / ensuring staff implementing practices / training / Learning Walks	61	20%
Parent Voice / feedback from parents / parent surveys / parent evenings	56	18%
Ensuring all children are included / inclusive environment	53	17%
Reviewing children's academic progress / access to learning / access to curriculum	53	17%
Pupil Voice / pupil surveys / pupil feedback, including their wellbeing	51	17%
Fewer suspensions	48	16%
Improvement in attendance levels	40	13%
Teacher confidence / morale / retention improved	34	11%

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Staff Voice / feedback from staff / staff meetings	23	8%
Children gaining independence and not needing 1:1 support	21	7%
Toolkits / assessments kits / tracker monitoring (e.g. from STLS)	20	7%
Audits / reviews, including EHCP and SEND reviews	16	5%
Successful integration in setting / avoided specialist setting	15	5%
Specific frameworks, e.g. Award in Education and Training / Development Matters	13	4%
Boxall scores	11	4%
LIFT meetings	11	4%
Annual review meetings	10	3%
Introducing THRIVE into the school	9	3%
Nurture	8	3%
Small Steps targets	7	2%

Some example verbatims supporting the theme of STLS providing knowledge and strategies can be found below:

“Strategies and training suggested and delivered by STLS has enables us to support children who otherwise may have needed an EHCP and specialist provision within the school. They have supported in the creation of bespoke curriculum, establishing nurture spaces and meeting the SEMH needs of children. They have supported in challenging meetings with parents resulting in behaviour changes from parents and reduced instances of suspension and part time timetables.”

“STLS have trained all staff on a range of topics including Autism, de-escalation strategies, PDA, ACES and trauma etc Giving staff tools and strategies to enable children to be more independent and have better life chances. They work well with parents and carers to reduce school refusal and give schools strategies to help the children. More staff are confident to teach dis regulated children. They are more confident to support children with higher levels of need. Reduces the fixed term exclusions. We use Boxhall Profile to measure the embedded practice. Nurture UK and Balance system audits also measure inclusive practice.”

“The STLS have a wealth of knowledge that we as a setting use on a daily basis. They help us massively by getting us to look at a child's needs in a different way. As all children are different the same applies to children with SEN. The STLS give us a variety of different tools to do this.”

Some example verbatims supporting the theme of reviewing plans / Personal Learning Plans / measuring success towards targets and planned outcomes can be found below:

“For every child who is open to STLS or for who we have accessed surgeries, we have utilised the advice from the STLS teachers. This can be visible through movement towards each child making progress on their targets on their personalised plans (both small steps linked to any interventions or their overall longer term targets using resources and strategies advised.) Evidence of inclusive practice is also visible through monitoring and learning walks, as well as tangible through professional discussions.”

“We measure the impact of intervention and support on all areas of SEN through things like attendance data and progress. Wherever the STLS is used to support a child, this forms part of the assess-plan-do-review cycle, and all the support and strategies we access through STLS will be reviewed for impact accordingly. I can categorically state that in the last year alone, work with STLS has contributed significantly to us keeping three students in our mainstream setting rather than us deciding that we are unable to meet need, and seeking to secure a specialist placement for said children.”

“The STLS has supported our setting for many years and upskilled SENCOs and Early Years Practitioners to embed inclusive practice in our setting. We measure the impact of our inclusive practice with our children through their personalised plan targets which measure the success and if they are making progress. These are reviewed with the specialist teachers who are able to support us to identify SMART steps for that child to succeed and reach their full potential.”

Some example verbatims supporting the key themes of feedback and improvements to pupils / teachers' wellbeing can be found below:

“Staff retention and improved wellbeing - staff are at breaking point, TAs are low paid and working conditions can be poor being at risk of violence, aggression and anti-social behaviour. STLS has helped us to retain highly skilled members of staff who are key to our SEN pupils. Parent wellbeing and understanding. - STLS have met with parents to help us explain the best ways to help and support their child. This has vastly improved relationships with parents and ultimately outcomes for children.”

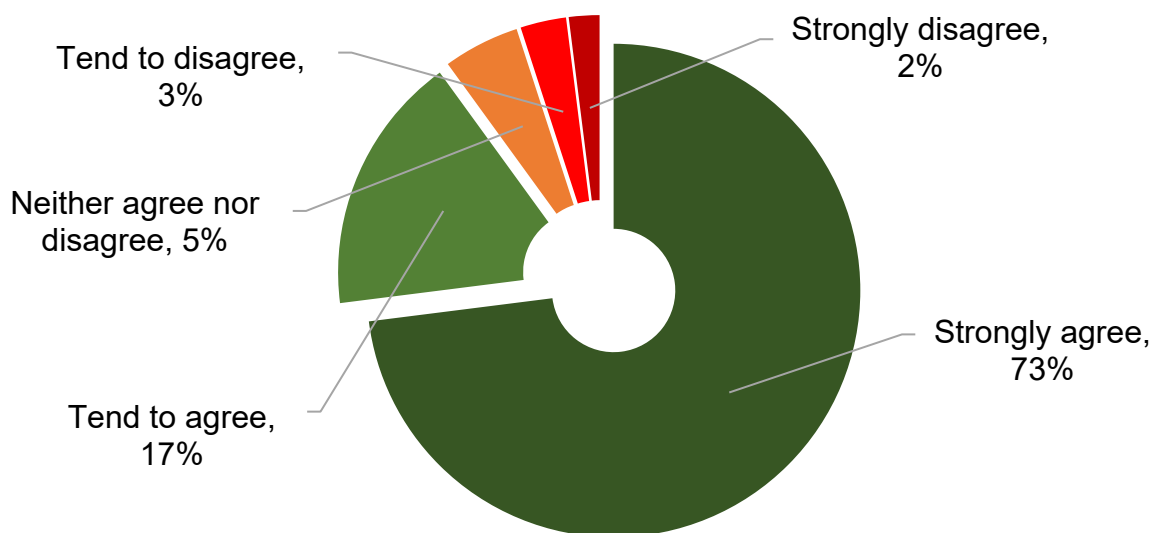
“STLS have provided training for all our staff on a wide range of Inclusion. Because of this we have many children with complex needs making good progress within our school. STLS are always at the end of the phone or email with helps and advice. They are champions for Inclusion and ensuring schools can support as many children as possible. The measure of success of this is seen around our school. It does not need to be academic - children included within school and happy is a clearer measure.”

“Whenever advice, recommendations or training is provided we review the school the direct impact that this has had on meeting the young people's needs within the mainstream settings. This would include observations, student progress, speaking with the young people and seeing what changes the school have implemented to ensure that young people with SEND are engaged and can access learning and their school community.”

PERCEPTION OF STLS HAVING AN IMPACT ON UPSKILLING TEACHING WORKFORCE WITHIN SETTING / SCHOOL, SPECIFICALLY IN INCREASING CONFIDENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH SEND

- The vast majority agree (90%) that STLS has an impact on upskilling their teaching workforce in relation to increasing their confidence and knowledge of supporting children with SEND. Strength of agreement is higher with 74% strongly agreeing.
- Only 5% disagree STLS has such impact. 5% neither agree nor disagree.
- Filtering out the 31 responses from STLS specialist teachers results in a consistent agreement pattern; 90% agree (72% strongly agree) and 5% disagree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that STLS has an impact on upskilling the teaching workforce within your setting / school, specifically in relation to increasing their confidence and knowledge of supporting children with SEND? Base: all answering (395)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Net: Agree	355	90%
Net: Disagree	19	5%
Strongly agree	287	73%
Tend to agree	68	17%
Neither agree nor disagree	20	5%
Tend to disagree	12	3%
Strongly disagree	7	2%
Don't know	1	0%

The table below depicts how different subgroups of consultees responded to this question. These subgroups include the type of consultee responding, the type of education setting worked in and their role. The proportion strongly agreeing is higher amongst consultees who work in a primary education setting. The proportion strongly agreeing is lower amongst consultees who work in an Early Years education setting and consultees responding as a Nursery Manager / Owner.

	Strongly Agree %	Net Agree %	Disagree %
TYPE OF CONSULTEE SUBGROUPS			
A professional employed to work in or responsible for a mainstream educational setting	72%	91%	4%
A professional employed to provide support to children in mainstream education settings	73%	86%	9%
Official response of an organisation, group or business	65%	87%	0%
EDUCATION SETTING SUBGROUPS			
Work in an Early Years education setting	65%	90%	4%
Work in primary education setting	77%	91%	5%
Work in a secondary education setting	73%	85%	8%
JOB ROLE SUBGROUPS			
Nursery Manager / Owner	58%	83%	8%
School Headteacher / Senior Leader	72%	88%	6%
SENCO / Inclusion Leader	72%	93%	3%
Classroom Teacher	91%	91%	9%
Specialist Teacher (from Specialist Teaching and Learning Service)	91%	96%	0%

EXAMPLES OF HOW SCHOOL / SETTING MEASURE IMPACT IN RELATION TO ON UPSKILLING TEACHING WORKFORCE WITHIN SETTING / SCHOOL

- Consultees were asked to provide examples of how (as a school/setting) impact is measured in relation to upskilling the teaching workforce, in their own words.
- For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below.
- 68% of consultees provided a comment at this question.
- Over half of consultees (51%) commented on the training provided by STLS (either for the whole school or individual training). 27% of consultees commented on visits / support / communication with STLS.

- 24% of consultees have seen the impact in terms of staff confidence and seeing staff using training / practice / strategies provided.
- 21% of consultees have seen the impact in terms of children achieving targets / milestones / in Personal Learning Plans / pupil attainment.

Please provide examples of how you (as a school/setting) measure impact in relation to this

Base: all answering (289)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Trainings / whole school training / bespoke training / Solihull approach training	147	51%
Visits / support / communication with STLS	79	27%
Confidence of staff to deliver	68	24%
Seeing staff using trainings, practices, strategies (provided by STLS)	68	24%
Children achieving targets / milestones / in Personal Learning Plans / pupil attainment	60	21%
Learning walks / observations	54	19%
Impacts on class / pupils / meeting the needs of the children	38	13%
Teaching assistant / staff feedback / surveys / meetings	32	11%
Pupil well-being, social, emotional development	29	10%
Improved child attendance	18	6%
Fewer suspensions / exclusions	18	6%
Pupil reviews / feedback / Pupil Voice	18	6%
Staff attendance / retention / morale improved	13	4%
Reviews / audits	13	4%
Discussions / feedback from parents	12	4%
Continuous Personal Development linked to strengths / weaknesses	11	4%
SENCOs attending LIFT meetings and learning from the experience of others	9	3%
Comments related to levels of support / knowledge being varied from STLS	9	3%
Adaptive teaching in place	8	3%
Fewer concerns logged	5	2%
Reduction in reduced timetables	5	2%

Some example verbatims supporting the theme of training can be found below:

“The STLS provides expert training to staff, complemented by follow-up sessions to develop SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) targets for next steps. For instance, whole-school training on Language Through Colour is followed by class-specific recommendations and next steps tailored to the unique needs of each class. The STLS strives to incorporate recommendations that support all children within the classroom, not only targeted groups. This includes offering guidance and demonstrations on how learning can be adapted to promote the success of all students. Impact is measured through these SMART targets, breaking down a learning strategy to something measurable and time bound that then can be expanded.”

“Once STLS have offered advice and support for one child, we are able to apply these strategies to the benefit of other children with similar challenges. Staff who have attended STLS training feel more confident in understanding children's needs and different strategies they can use. The SENCO forums run by STLS in our area - both early years and school age - provide opportunities to listen to experts in their field so that SENCOs can go back into school and educate other staff - I have done this many times covering topics such as de-escalation techniques, the communication tree, sensory processing difficulties, supporting young people with dyslexia. We would not usually have the opportunity to learn from experts in these fields at no additional cost to our schools. These training opportunities have had a hugely positive impact on our whole school community.”

“Our Teachers have been well trained over the last couple of years in a vast range of areas. This has ensured that they are able to plan and deliver a wide and varied curriculum that can meet the needs of all the children in their class. This is easily measured by the number of children engaged in their learning not to mention those making good academic progress. This includes Teachers ensuring that the environment is right, visuals are everywhere, and the language used is appropriate to all stages.”

Some example verbatims supporting the theme of STLS visits / support / communication with STLS can be found below:

“Consultations and discussions between STLS and our staff are of great value in empowering our staff to support our children more effectively. Confidence levels of staff have increased, and a higher level of progress has been seen in the pupils specifically being supported by STLS as they have recommended more appropriate interventions or resources.”

“STLS' advice through surgeries, consultation visits, children being open to STLS or through their training offer is visibly seen through inclusive classroom practice and in professional discussions/ appraisal discussions etc. Their advice and training is well received and acted upon.”

“The STLS provide personalised planning for staff that we have previously had no support on. Provide personalised plans which as a SENCO I would personally struggle to write without the professional help of the STLS. The visits into the setting are very needed they observe children in order to set targets in order for children to develop on individual needs. Always on hand to support with parents and advised. They really value and support SENCO.”

Some example verbatims supporting the themes of staff confidence and seeing staff using trainings, practices, strategies provided by STLS can be found below:

“Staff are more confident (observed in peer obs), strategies and interventions are monitored and staff's ability to deliver these confidently and appropriately are witnessed. Staff are more confident when feeding back to parents. staff are more confident with children with more complex needs.”

“Through our SEND class meetings. Staff confidence has increased and participation levels for children have also increased greatly. Confidence to try new approaches and more group approaches have had a huge positive impact of our way of teaching.”

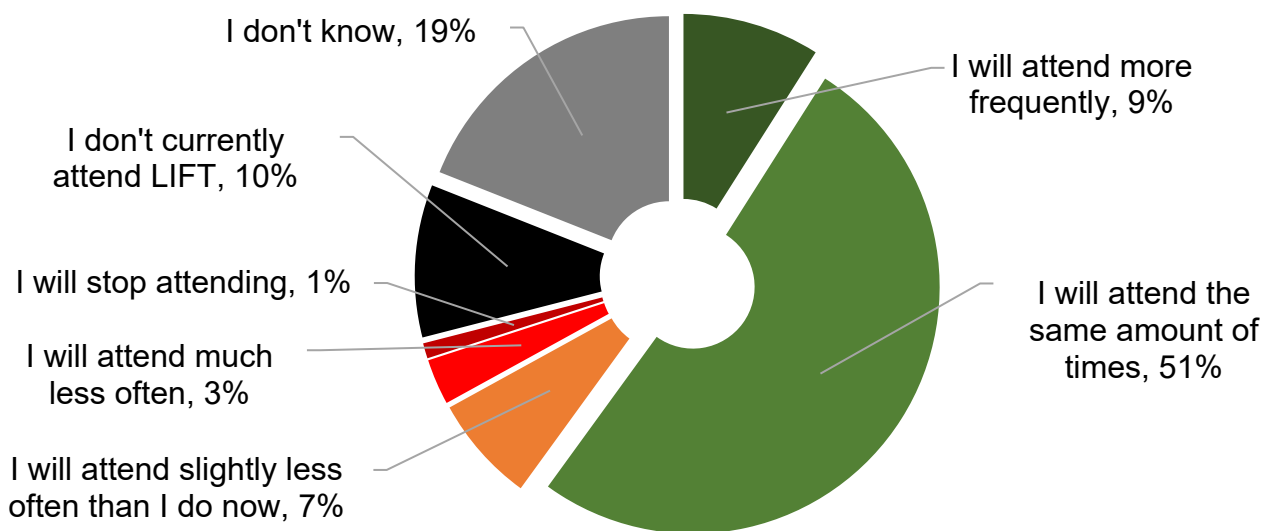
“For small schools, STLS is an invaluable source of expert advice. For example, developing quality first teaching and effective interventions without the expertise support of STLS. If small schools couldn't tap into the expertise offered by STLS they would be significantly at risk. Particularly where the teachers have tried all the strategies they can think of and consultation with STLS has enabled progress and positive outcomes for the pupils. STLS support, their approach to problem-solving, also has a major impact on teacher and TA confidence and retention.”

PERCEPTIONS OF CONSULTEE LIFT ATTENDANCE / ACCESS ONCE PROCESSES ARE CHANGED

- 90% of consultees answering currently attend / access LIFT.
- Six in ten (60%) indicated they will continue to attend / access LIFT the same frequency as they currently do or more frequently.
- 11% indicated they will attend less often or will stop attending / accessing LIFT. 19% are unsure.
- Filtering out the 31 responses from STLS specialist teachers results in a consistent pattern; 91% currently attend / access LIFT and 60% will continue to attend / access LIFT the same frequency as they currently do or more frequently.

When these processes are changed, to what extent do you agree or disagree that you would continue to attend / access LIFT on the same frequency that you currently do?

Base: all answering (408)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Net: More frequently / the same amount of times	246	60%
I will attend more frequently	36	9%
I will attend the same amount of times	210	51%
I will attend slightly less often than I do now	27	7%
I will attend much less often	14	3%
I will stop attending	4	1%
I don't currently attend LIFT	39	10%
I don't know	78	19%

The table below depicts how different subgroups of consultees responded to this question. These subgroups include the type of consultee responding, the type of education setting worked in and their role. The proportion who would continue to attend at least the same amount of times is higher amongst consultees who are professionals employed to work in or responsible for a mainstream educational setting and consultees who are Nursery Managers / Owners, SENCO / Inclusion Leaders and Specialist Teachers.

	% attend more frequently or attend the same amount of times
TYPE OF CONSULTÉE SUBGROUPS	
A professional employed to work in or responsible for a mainstream educational setting	66%
A professional employed to provide support to children in mainstream education settings	57%
Official response of an organisation, group or business	56%
JOB ROLE SUBGROUPS	
Nursery Manager / Owner	71%
School Headteacher / Senior Leader	55%
SENCO / Inclusion Leader	70%
Classroom Teacher	33%
Specialist Teacher (from Specialist Teaching and Learning Service)	67%

COMMENTS ON STLS CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOOL-TO-SCHOOL COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES

- Consultees were asked to comment on how they think STLS might, or might not, contribute to school-to-school collaborative approaches, in their own words.
- For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below.
- 65% of consultees who answered 'strongly agree' or 'tend to agree' provided a comment at this question.
- 33% of consultees commented that STLS have expert / specialist knowledge which they can share / will still be needed in school-to-school settings.
- 29% of consultees expressed a desire for STLS support must not be removed / should continue as it is / it's essential and integral.
- One in five (20%) commented on the LIFT meetings works well / expressed concerns that these would be ending or whether an equivalent will be in place.

Please tell us how you think STLS might, or might not, contribute to school-to-school collaborative approaches. Base: all answering (279)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
STLS have expert / specialist knowledge, which they can share / will still be needed in school-to-school settings (including for more complex needs)	93	33%
STLS support must not be removed / should continue as it is / it's essential and integral (especially as more and more SEN children coming into mainstream settings)	82	29%
STLS are already doing this / already collaborate / provide this	81	29%
LIFT meetings / they work well / concerns around LIFT meetings ending / would need to be an equivalent in place	57	20%
Unsure as to how this will evolve / work / difficult to comment until know how it will work / more information, clarity needed	53	19%
Joint / shared training / workshops / continuing to offer	46	16%
Promoting (more) collaboration and school to school support, matching schools with one another to provide support / continuing to	44	16%
Giving advice and updates / continuing to	29	10%
SENCO forums / meetings / group sessions / continuing	26	9%
STLS have more focus on Early Years settings / continue to work in Early Years settings / bridging the gap between Early Years and schools, educating on the importance of Early Years support	19	7%

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
By providing a (more) co-ordinated, joined up, standardised model of service delivery / role / continuing to	17	6%
Transition meetings / continuing to attend	16	6%
We are an Early Years Provider / we don't know how / where we will fit	12	4%
STLS are independent and unbiased	9	3%
Parental engagement	9	3%
Concerned localities model will be funding focused	8	3%
Depends on the size of the groups / too big could be a barrier	7	3%
Understanding and input into the local / community needs	5	2%

Some example verbatims supporting the theme of STLS having expert / specialist knowledge, which they can share / will still be needed in school-to-school setting can be found below:

“STLS team are skilled in asking the right questions to activate thinking around how to inclusive support children to thrive and to encourage school staff to shift narratives and prioritise the factors of the KENT CYP Outcomes Framework for each individual child. They have the knowledge and skills to train staff in inclusive approaches (Autism education trust / Emotion Coaching / Trauma Informed etc) and are able to facilitate collaborative, supportive conversations including professionals and parents to increase parental confidence.”

“Definitely will contribute to school-to-school collaboration because schools will still need advice on strategies and support. They will need training for old and new staff and different viewpoints on a specific child. Schools will still need specialist advice and capacity from other services, particularly STLS.”

“STLS provide a vital role in school-to-school collaboration as they are in different schools regularly and so have the opportunity to see best practice and share that information. Class teachers do not have the time or luxury to be able to do that. STLS act as the conduit between schools.”

Some example verbatims supporting the theme that STLS support must not be removed / should continue as it is / it's essential and integral can be found below:

“STLS have the expertise, knowledge and time to research and identify evidence-based approaches and share effective strategies with schools. They will be able to advise and support busy SENCOs who do not have the same time and resources available. STLS provide an invaluable resource which I do not think can be replicated in school-to-school support.”

“STLS is an integral part of schools. Their support has allowed my school and me as a school to develop and thrive! With out their great support student in our school will not be in the position they are. STLS also connect me to other school and have allowing us to run across school interventions. If anything, STLS need more funding and other agency support to continue they great work they already do.”

“STLS have an essential contribution to make for children who are complex, e.g. a child who has a sensory need such as vision impairment but also has a learning need or Autism. Joint visits are invaluable with STLS colleagues with a wider range of experience than would be gained in a school. Also, in Early Years where training opportunities, experience and funding is more limited.”

Some example verbatims supporting the theme LIFT meetings / they work well / concerns around LIFT meetings ending / would need to be an equivalent in place can be found below:

“STLS are able to understand the schools’ resources and environments and support staff to plan and develop the appropriate support. LIFT is a vital element of our school’s support that can be accessed to gain advice, support and resources. They facilitate discussions between schools in our LIFT groups and guide ideas and help build strategies and interventions.”

“I attend LIFT every term to access the support of the STLS. I don't think SENCo's have enough knowledge and understanding to be able to support each other. Most SENCo's are also teachers and Early Years staff and so they are not qualified and experienced enough. They are not working all day every day just with SEN children.”

“It doesn't seem clear that LIFT will continue within the new model. STLS are good at working with individual pupils. Is there a place for this alongside the new model? STLS have lots of expertise and advice that will continue to be valuable going forwards.”

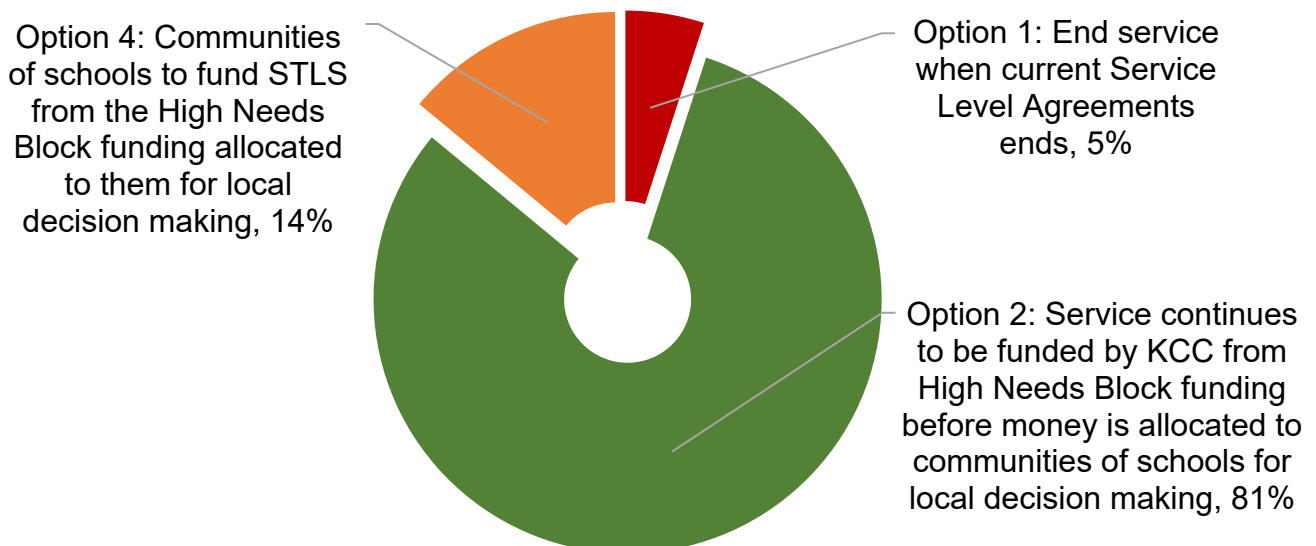
PROFESSIONALS FEEDBACK

CONSULTATION RESPONSE – UNDERSTANDING HOW STLS MIGHT BE FUNDED WITHIN THE NEW WAYS OF WORKING

RANKING OF THREE OPTIONS PUT FORWARD FOR FUNDING

- Consultees were asked to rank three proposed options put forward:
 - Option 1: End service when current Service Level Agreements ends
 - Option 2: Service continues to be funded by KCC from High Needs Block funding before money is allocated to Communities of schools for local decision making
 - Option 4: Communities of schools to fund STLS from the High Needs Block funding allocated to them for local decision making
- The pie chart below displays the proportion of consultees ranking each of the options as first out of the three options presented.
- The vast majority of consultees ranked Option 2: service continues to be funded by KCC from High Needs Block funding before money is allocated to communities of schools for local decision making as first (81%).
- 14% ranked communities of schools to fund STLS from the High Needs Block funding allocated to them for local decision making first. 5% ranked Option 1: End service when current Service Level Agreements ends first.
- There are no significant differences in response by consultee subgroup, e.g. education setting, role or by responsibility for SEN / Inclusion budget. However, the proportion selecting Option 2 first is highest amongst consultees working in an Early Years education setting (87%).
- Filtering out the 31 responses from STLS specialist teachers results in a consistent pattern; 80% selected Option 2 first. 14% selected Option 4 first and 5% selected Option 1 first.

Proportion of consultees ranking option in first place Base: all answering (395)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE - % RANKED 1ST	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Option 1: End service when current Service Level Agreements ends	18	5%
Option 2: Service continues to be funded by KCC from High Needs Block funding before money is allocated to Communities of schools for local decision making	320	81%
Option 4: Communities of schools to fund STLS from the High Needs Block funding allocated to them for local decision making	57	14%

COMMENTS ON OPTIONS FOR FUNDING IDENTIFIED

- Consultees were asked to note any comments about any of the options identified in the consultation document, in their own words.
- For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below.
- Only 41% of consultees provided a comment at this question. However, comments were made by consultees from all three education settings and all roles.
- Half of consultees (50%) expressed a desire for STLS to continue as it is / commented that it is a vital service. 24% of consultees commented that STLS is essential in Early Years settings / helping to transition to mainstream.
- 24% of consultees noted that Option 2 would continue the service / is the preferred option / the most equitable. 18% of consultees commented that Option 1 is not an option / it will be of detriment to children and young people.

If you have comments about any of the options identified in the consultation document (Options 1 to 6) please tell us. Please identify which option(s) you are commenting on. If your comment relates to a specific option, please make this clear in your response

Base: all answering (177)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
STLS must continue as is / it is a vital service	88	50%
STLS is essential in Early Years settings / helping to transition to mainstream	43	24%

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Option 2 continues the service / this is the preferred option / the most equitable (including for Early Years) and will fit in with the CoS model	42	24%
No STLS will put pressure on teachers, staff, SENCOs, STLS is vital to SENCOs	36	20%
Option 1 is not an option / it will be of detriment to children and young people	32	18%
STLS is just underfunded, not ineffective, it needs investment	23	13%
Ending STLS will result in a decrease in an inclusion	18	10%
Difficult to comment / difficult to know how this will work until Community of Schools takes shape	17	10%
STLS is needed even more with the increase in SEN pupils	12	7%
Option 4 will be a postcode lottery / unfair on those who need more / less support	12	7%
Option 3 is not financially viable / will leave a huge gap in support / restricting support to those that need it most	11	6%
Option 4 will see staff leaving	11	6%
Option 4 creates a competitive environment / who shouts loudest	10	6%
Option 6 is an option / could work / allows time for other systems to establish whilst still accessing the service	8	5%
Option 4 leaves Early Years settings with no support	7	4%
Not for profit / charities / smaller schools will not have the funds to buy in support	6	3%
Unfair for settings to have to fund / find services themselves	5	3%
Communities would allocate some funds to STLS if needed, they can decide how much and where to use	5	3%
Option 6 is a deferral of Option 4	4	2%
Option 5 stretches schools too thin, already difficult to get specialist staff	3	2%
STLS staff back in classrooms - showing, not telling	3	2%
Option 4 works / brings funding in line with other services and schools can get what they need	3	2%

Some example verbatims commenting that STLS is essential in Early Years settings / helps to transition to mainstream can be found below:

“I feel it would be beneficial for the service to continue as it is currently as the STLS team provide additional support and knowledge to schools who may not have the expertise in the specialist areas of children with additional needs. STLS in nursery and school settings

work together to provide better outcomes for children with additional needs prior to any diagnosis which is beneficial to the child and family and enables them to access education prior to the EHCP process or diagnosis to make sure the child's individual needs are met.”

“I feel that STLS services being stopped would be a very bad idea especially for early years. As an early years setting we use this service multiple times throughout the year and without it, would cause a very difficult impact on the way we can support SEN children in mainstream settings, which is the goal for this whole process so it makes no sense to me for it to be stopped. I also do not believe early years setting should pay for this service themselves as the funding is tight enough as it is so this is not something we would be able to afford. Finally, without the support and plans put in place by us in early years, the children would struggle much more when starting reception and the whole process to get the children support, they need would go well into their KS1 journey. Early years settings spending the duration of the children's time with us getting the support and processes in place (such as EHCP's), and without the support from STLS and other services this would not be possible.”

“As an Early Years setting, this consultation is not a true reflection of what this means to our sector. As we are not a mainstream school, ideally there should be a separate early year's consultation. SLTS is vital to us and how we support young children with additional needs, and we strongly disagree with STLS being removed. As we are not specialist SEN practitioners, we require their vital service, input and advice.”

Some example verbatims supporting preferences for Option 2 / continuation of the service / being the most equitable (including for Early Years) can be found below:

“I think STLS provides a vital service in an already broken SEN system and so needs to continue so Option 1 should not be considered. The current mode of funding (Option 2) provides us with access the service and I believe this is a good use of money from KCC, which might otherwise not be directed to a service which directly impacts on the quality of education for children and young people with SEN. My concern about Option 4, is that it does not provide an equitable allocation of HNF, which is currently in place as it is done centrally.”

“Option 2 will ensure that STLS have stability and skilled, knowledgeable and experienced staff do not to leave the role. It also ensures that Early Years settings will have access to a service This option will also ensure that the Early Years Specialist Teachers continue to be part of the current model and can continue their work with Early Years settings providing much needed early intervention.”

“Option 4 is so ambiguous as the Communities of Schools model is unknown. There is so much change happening it would be good to keep STLS as it is (Option 2) to provide consistency of support, accessibility to a service which is front-line and quick to respond to need and offer reassurance and stability to schools and settings. Option 1 is short-sighted in the current climate and would further damage relationships between KCC, schools, settings and families of children with SEND.”

Some example verbatims commenting that Option 1 is not considered an option / it will be of detriment to children and young people can be found below:

“Option 1 - In my current job role I have seen firsthand the huge impact that the STLS makes in the Gravesham area. The District lead and all the staff are extremely knowledgeable and experienced in understanding the individual needs of the children they work with. The STLS give invaluable advice, support and training to the school and Early Years setting staff. This provides the staff with the opportunity to greatly improve their ability and capacity to meet the needs of the children and enable them to achieve their outcomes. I feel if this service was ended it would be greatly missed by setting and school staff. I am very concerned and saddened by the potential negative impact that terminating this service would have for children with SEND in Gravesham and throughout Kent.”

“We cannot have Option 1. I, personally, would feel a great deal of anxiety if the service were to disappear entirely in August 2025. I fear this would leave staff with nowhere to turn to for support and help. I strongly believe this would make the situation for children and young people in Kent with SEN much worse. With option 4 I fear schools will want to keep as much money as possible for "bodies on the ground" so to speak (support staff) who can help support and manage learners with SEN.”

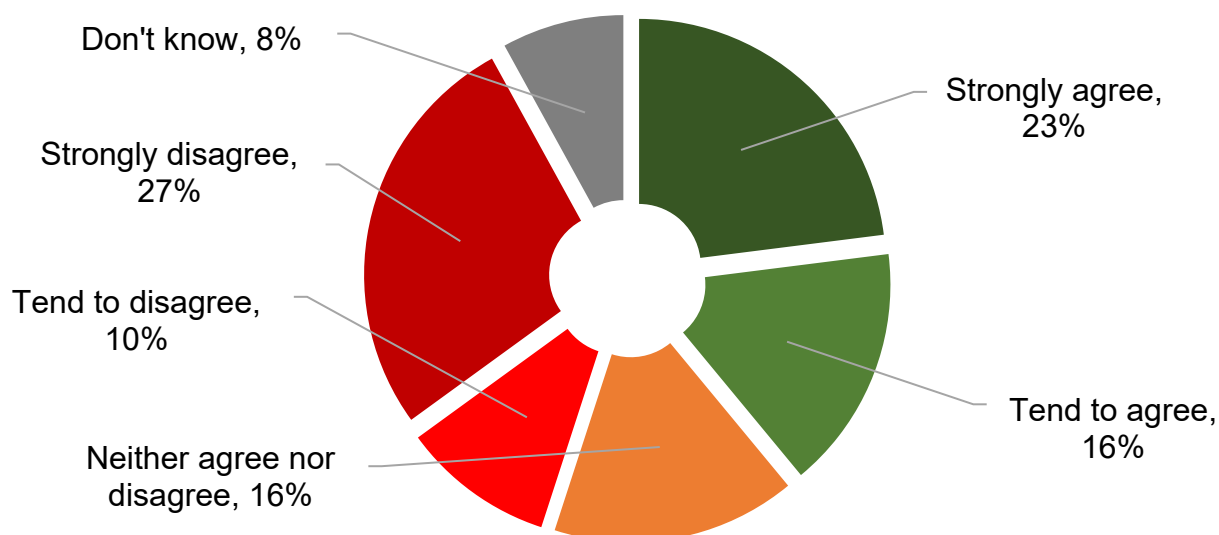
“I think the idea of Option 1 is ridiculous! This service is vital to supporting young children and with the potential of more complex needs being supported in mainstream settings I am not sure how we are considering dissolving a support system.”

WHETHER FUTURE FUNDING OPTIONS FOR EARLY YEARS STLS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED INDEPENDENTLY FROM FUTURE FUNDING OPTIONS FOR SCHOOL AGE STLS

- Views are polarising with 40% agreeing future funding options for early years STLS should be considered independently from future funding options for school age STLS; 37% disagree.
- 16% neither agree nor disagree and 8% are not sure.
- Filtering out the 31 responses from STLS specialist teachers results in a broadly consistent agreement pattern; 41% agree and 35% disagree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the future funding options for early years STLS should be considered independently from future funding options for school age STLS?

Base: all answering (419)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Net: Agree	166	40%
Net: Disagree	155	37%
Strongly agree	97	23%
Tend to agree	69	16%
Neither agree nor disagree	65	16%
Tend to disagree	43	10%
Strongly disagree	112	27%
Don't know	33	8%

The table below depicts how different subgroups of consultees responded to this question. These subgroups include the type of consultee responding, the type of education setting worked in and their role.. Agreement is higher amongst consultees responding as an organisation / group / business and consultees who work in an Early Years education setting and consultees responding as a Nursery Manager / Owner. Agreement is lower amongst consultees who work in a primary education or secondary education setting and consultees responding as a Specialist Teacher.

	Agree %	Disagree %
TYPE OF CONSULTEE SUBGROUPS		
A professional employed to work in or responsible for a mainstream educational setting	40%	36%
A professional employed to provide support to children in mainstream education settings	36%	36%
Official response of an organisation, group or business	48%	40%
EDUCATION SETTING SUBGROUPS		
Work in an Early Years education setting	48%	31%
Work in primary education setting	35%	40%
Work in a secondary education setting	24%	46%
Nursery Manager / Owner	57%	31%
School Headteacher / Senior Leader	37%	43%
SENCO / Inclusion Leader	40%	33%
Classroom Teacher	29%	57%
Specialist Teacher (from Specialist Teaching and Learning Service)	23%	58%

PROFESSIONALS FEEDBACK

EQUALITY ANALYSIS

- Consultees were asked to comment on the Equality Analysis put forward and if there was anything that should be considered relating to equality and diversity in their own words.
- For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below.
- Only 11% of consultees provided a comment at this question.
- The main concern put forward by consultees answering is a belief that Early Years has not been considered / the impact on Early Years children (33% of consultees answering).

We welcome your views on our equality analysis including suggestions for anything else we should consider relating to equality and diversity. Base: all answering (49)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Early Years has not been considered / impact on Early Years children	16	33%
Leave as is / STLS is vital	9	18%
This survey is biased / clumsy / difficult to understand	7	14%
Children / families / the most needy will be discriminated against if STLS services removed, money can't be the deciding factor	6	12%
Need to consider those who have difficulty filling in forms / application forms / this questionnaire	5	10%
Negatively affects those in lower socio-economic demographic	3	6%
STLS cuts will affect the female workforce	3	6%
Discriminates against C&I, SEMH, C&L (Sensory and Physical Specialist Teachers are statutory provision, the others aren't)	3	6%
What about LACs and PLACs (Looked After / Previously Looked After Children)	2	4%
Community of Schools model will not be inclusive (limited funding, more demanding schools, some not requesting support)	2	4%
Factor in families who don't speak English as a first language	1	2%
All staff across all settings should be SEND trained, to be inclusive	1	2%
Each county is different, all need to be treated accordingly to be inclusive	1	2%
Irrelevant to main issue of future support, discriminates on age	1	2%

Some example verbatims from the most common themes raised can be found below:

“By pulling money from Early Years you are discriminating against our very young and vulnerable children.”

“I feel that taking away anything that can support the early years sector with children under SEN is wrong, the support we get is minimal but vital in what they do. We are seeing more and more children starting nursery with an SEN need and putting things in place to support them and the family.”

“I believe the proposed changes would impact on children and young people who have SEN, as the service is something which is actively and regularly used by the school in which I work to support children with SEN.”

“Early intervention and supporting the youngest children with SEND has the biggest impact on these children life chances. By creating a system that deprives them support, will impact their development and education building blocks as they grow.”

“Within the current Early years system there is no equity when compared to schools and yet we have to work the hardest to get it right for the child at the foundation level. We struggle to get support from Speech and Language interventions to support children.”

“Proposing to stop the STLS would disproportionately affect lower income families or children looked after by the local authority as they may have parents who are not aware of what support is available therefore impacting on life chances and perpetuating the cycle of need and impacting on health and social care later on in the child’s life if needs have not been met earlier where there is opportunity to.”

“I fear this is a very loaded and misguided consultation process that will leave children bereft of the support they need in school. At a point when we need more support and expertise in school to manage the increased complexities in mainstream children, consultations such as this cause fear and uncertainty in the sector and staff will leave, meaning that the time we need most support, we will have the least support available to school and our children.”

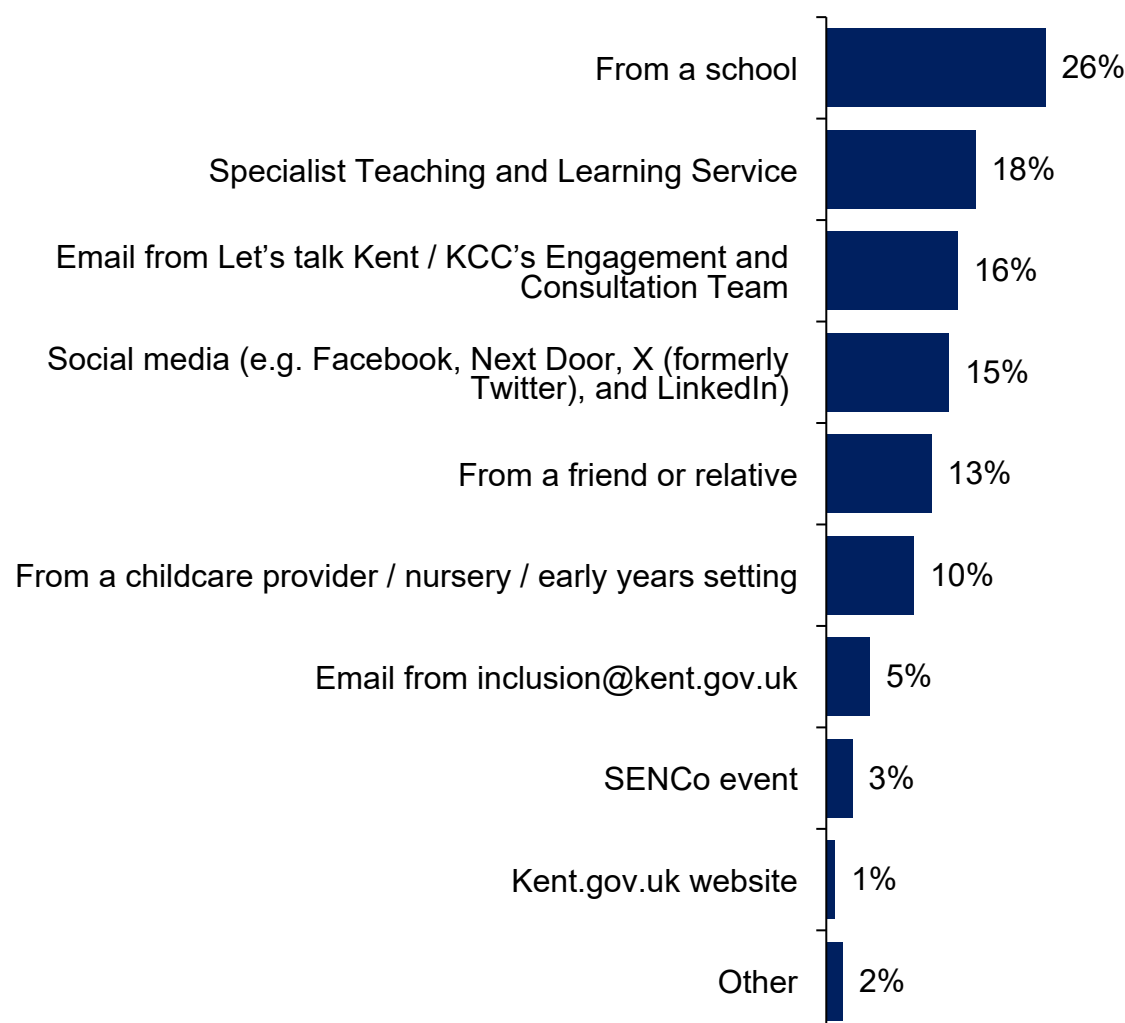
RESIDENTS FEEDBACK

CONSULTATION AWARENESS

- The main routes to finding out about the consultation are from a school (26%), the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (18%), an email from Let's talk Kent (16%) and social media (15%).

How did you find out about this consultation?

Base: all answering (96), consultees had the option to select more than one response.



SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
From a school	25	26%
Specialist Teaching and Learning Service	17	18%
Email from Let's talk Kent / KCC's Engagement and Consultation Team	15	16%

SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Social media (e.g. Facebook, Next Door, X (formerly Twitter), and LinkedIn)	14	15%
From a friend or relative	12	13%
From a childcare provider / nursery / early years setting	10	10%
Email from inclusion@kent.gov.uk	5	5%
SENCo event	3	3%
Kent.gov.uk website	1	1%
Other	2	2%

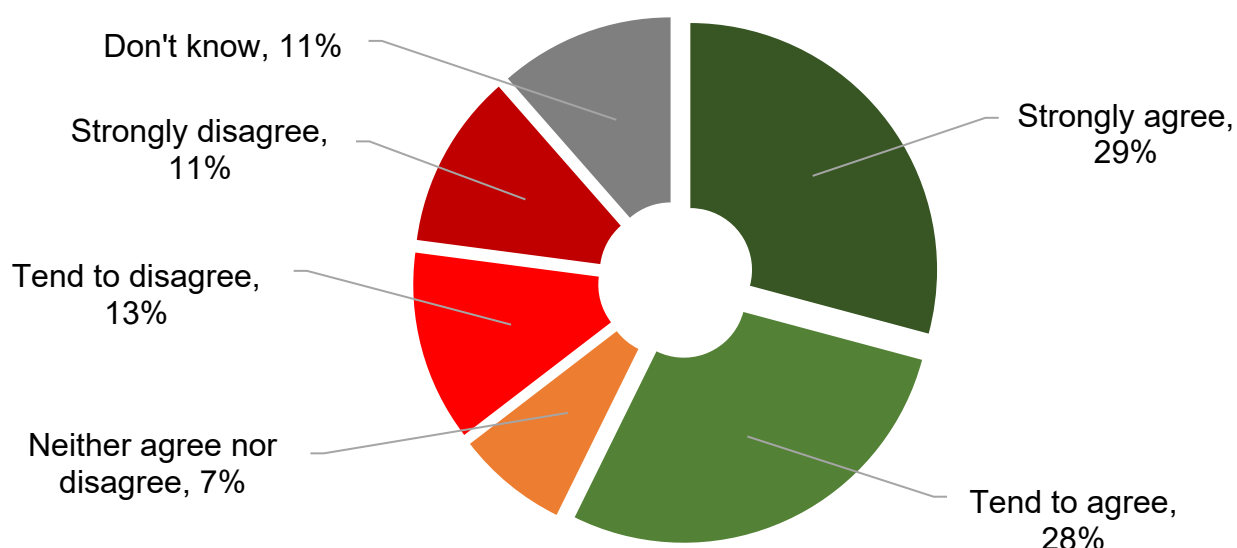
RESIDENTS FEEDBACK

CONSULTATION RESPONSE

PERCEPTIONS THAT EARLY YEAR'S SETTINGS HAVE ACCESS TO EXTERNAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT TO SUPPORT CHILDREN WITH SEND

- Just under six in ten (57%) agree Early Years settings have access to the external services and support that they need to help them to support children with SEND in their settings.
- Just under a quarter disagree (24%) and 7% neither agree nor disagree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that Early Years settings have access to the external services and support that they need to help them to support children with SEND in their settings? Base: all answering (96)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Net: Agree	55	57%
Net: Disagree	23	24%
Strongly agree	28	29%
Tend to agree	27	28%
Neither agree nor disagree	7	7%
Tend to disagree	12	13%
Strongly disagree	11	11%
Don't know	11	11%

Consultees who disagreed were asked to comment on what they think is missing. 19 consultees provided a comment. Example verbatim comments are shown below and highlight the key themes expressed: the vital support provided by STLS to date, funding concerns and staffing level concerns.

“My child’s school were utterly useless with support until the STLS came in and made them implement changes. If you took that service away the support in schools would deteriorate even further than it already has done. There is not enough training, resources or trained TAs and it’s making people’s lives a complete misery and it seriously needs fixing and it’s gone being on its knees it’s broken!”

“The capability of the early years staff is not enough to support children with SEND needs. We have heavily relied upon the help of STLS (via LIFT) to support both my children and set out a plan of support. Without this they would have floundered in their transition to school.”

“The STLS does what it can to work with the schools but there are still not enough external SEND specialists available to help and support the number of kids who are struggling with special needs in school and not enough money within the schools. This service needs proper funding to expand the number of kids it can reach.”

“There is great support from STLS, and I can’t fault them and their support. However, the provisions for all children, regardless of ages in Kent, is unacceptable and hugely lacking. STLS are stretched and they need to be allowed to grow to enhance their provision, not cut.”

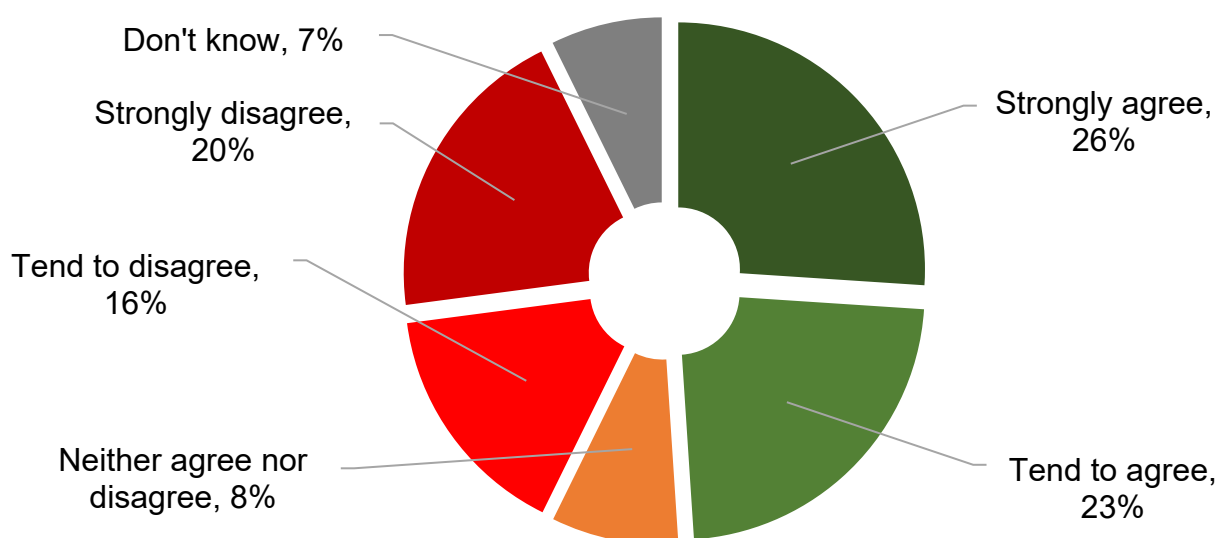
“There are so many children with SEN requirements - and not enough professionals to help them with their individual needs to enable them to fully flourish in primary school.”

“I feel like accessing support NEEDED is too hard for settings and parents. The delays and processes that are required to be followed only delay the support the child receives. This is detrimental to any child that needs additional support.”

PERCEPTIONS MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS HAVE ACCESS TO EXTERNAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT THEY NEED

- Just under half (49%) agree mainstream schools have access to the external services and support that they need to help them to support children with SEND in their settings.
- Just over a third disagree (35%) and 8% neither agree nor disagree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that mainstream schools have access to the external services and support that they need to help them to support children with SEND in their settings? Base: all answering (96)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Net: Agree	47	49%
Net: Disagree	34	35%
Strongly agree	25	26%
Tend to agree	22	23%
Neither agree nor disagree	8	8%
Tend to disagree	15	16%
Strongly disagree	19	20%
Don't know	7	7%

Consultees who disagreed were asked to comment on what they think is missing. 31 consultees provided a comment. Example verbatim comments are shown below and highlight the key themes expressed: funding concerns and level of support available to parents.

“Schools are not able to offer services that parents and children are crying out for because of waitlists and delays. The medical professionals are not available when needed so schools are moving more towards training those staff in house, which puts huge pressures on those fulfilling more than one role within a school community and inevitably means many children are not receiving the support they are entitled to.”

“STLS are currently the only service that support the child holistically, there needs to be additional support alongside this team.”

“There is lack of funding, lack of teachers, lack of additional support, lack of understanding/specialist knowledge required to assist children with further needs in the best way possible.”

“The support and service available to mainstream schools is limited any many children including my own do not receive the help and support needed.”

“I think it is hard for schools to access a lot of services- referrals to Early help or STLS seem to be stepping stones to a lot of other services, who then have their own criteria.”

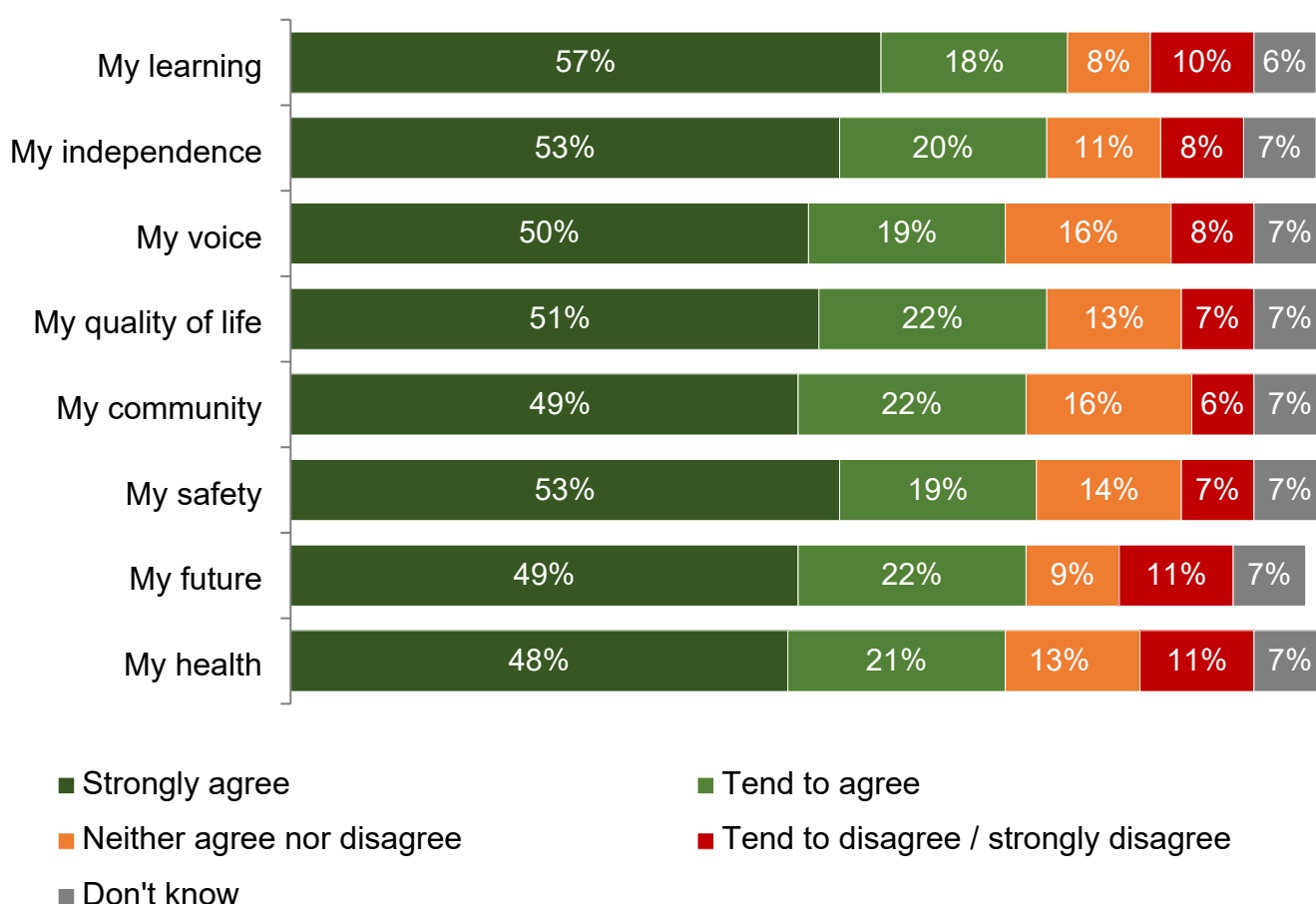
“Funding and personnel are tight. Not enough staff to liaise with parents and teachers and provide continuity. We were promised social skills training, but this was limited to small number of pupils.”

PERCEPTIONS OF STLS SUPPORT ENABLING ATTAINMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OUTCOMES

- High agreement proportions are observed for all of the outcomes, but notably for learning (75%), independence (73%) and quality of life (73%); broadly consistent with patterns observed amongst professionals.
- Whilst high, agreement proportions are marginally lower in the context of health (69% agree, 48% strongly agree).

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the support provided by STLS to your child's school or early years setting enabled the school or setting to support your child to achieve the outcomes identified in the Kent Children and Young People's Outcome Framework?

Base: all answering (96)



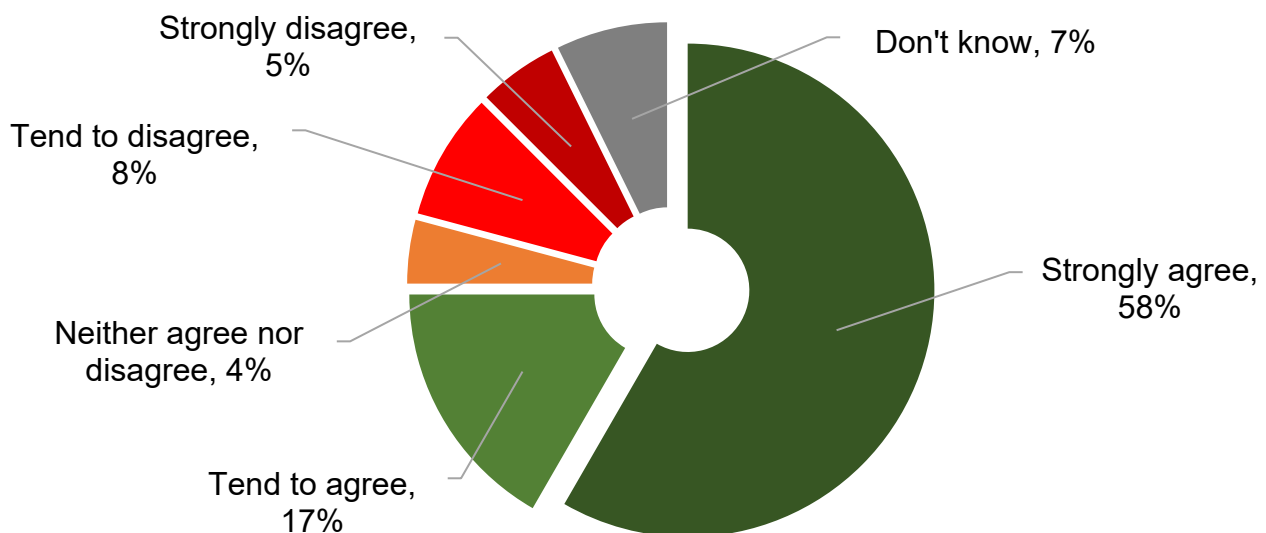
SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree / strongly disagree	Don't know
My learning	57%	18%	8%	10%	6%
My independence	53%	20%	11%	8%	7%
My voice	50%	19%	16%	8%	7%
My quality of life	51%	22%	13%	7%	7%

SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree / strongly disagree	Don't know
My community	49%	22%	16%	6%	7%
My safety	53%	19%	14%	7%	7%
My future	49%	22%	9%	11%	7%
My health	48%	21%	13%	11%	7%

PERCEPTIONS OF IMPACT STLS ADVICE AND GUIDANCE GIVEN TO SCHOOL OR EARLY YEARS SETTING HAS HAD ON

- Three quarters (75%) agree the STLS advice and guidance provided by their child’s school or early years setting has had a positive impact on how their child’s classroom teacher has been able to support their SEND needs and enable them to remain in their mainstream setting.
- 14% disagree and 4% neither agree nor disagree.

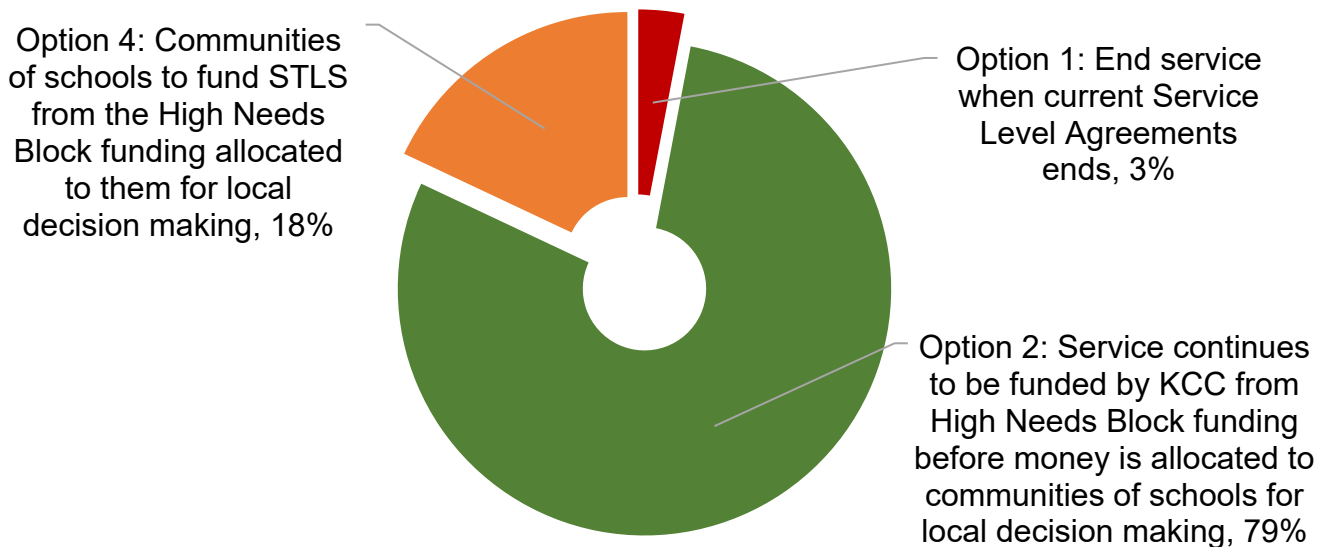
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the advice and guidance provided to your child’s school or early years setting by STLS has had a positive impact on how your child’s classroom teacher has been able to support their SEND needs and enable them to remain in their mainstream setting? Base: all answering (96)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Net: Agree	72	75%
Net: Disagree	13	14%
Strongly agree	56	58%
Tend to agree	16	17%
Neither agree nor disagree	4	4%
Tend to disagree	8	8%
Strongly disagree	5	5%
Don't know	7	7%

RANKING OF OPTIONS FOR FUNDING

- Consultees were asked to rank three proposed options put forward:
 - Option 1: End service when current Service Level Agreements ends
 - Option 2: Service continues to be funded by KCC from High Needs Block funding before money is allocated to Communities of schools for local decision making
 - Option 4: Communities of schools to fund STLS from the High Needs Block funding allocated to them for local decision making
- The pie chart below displays the proportion of consultees ranking each of the options as first out of the three options presented.
- Consistent with response from professionals, the vast majority of consultees ranked Option 2: service continues to be funded by KCC from High Needs Block funding before money is allocated to communities of schools for local decision making as first (79%).
- 18% ranked communities of schools to fund STLS from the High Needs Block funding allocated to them for local decision making first. 3% ranked Option 1: End service when current Service Level Agreements ends first.



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE - % RANKED 1ST	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Option 1: End service when current Service Level Agreements ends	3	3%
Option 2: Service continues to be funded by KCC from High Needs Block funding before money is allocated to Communities of schools for local decision making	75	79%
Option 4: Communities of schools to fund STLS from the High Needs Block funding allocated to them for local decision making	17	18%

Consultees were given the option to comment on the funding options outlined. 36 consultees provided a comment. Example verbatim comments are shown below and highlight support for Option 2.

“Lots of kids can't cope in mainstream and need quieter areas, more support and more autonomy. This is a terrible move to try and force them and will lead to more absence and more alternative provision paid for by the council. Many more children with poorer outcomes and more parents unable to work as their children can't attend school.”

“STLS are currently the only successful service supporting pupils in all areas of their learning and presentation, to consider taking away the service or altering the one service that works and gives the best outcomes for pupils, is going to hinder inclusion to mainstream education for the most vulnerable pupils, which is surely what the Council should be working towards. Increasing support for the STLS team rather than thinking of altering or removing would be a much better spend of money.”

“It should continue as it is. Taking money from the Communities of Schools block funding will just cause problems further down the line. It will create uncertainty for the service and may result in it being difficult to recruit / retain staff. Different communities may consider it a higher or lower priority which will result in inequality across Kent. This is a big enough issue already in SEND (see variation in SLT service across Kent depending on where you live).”

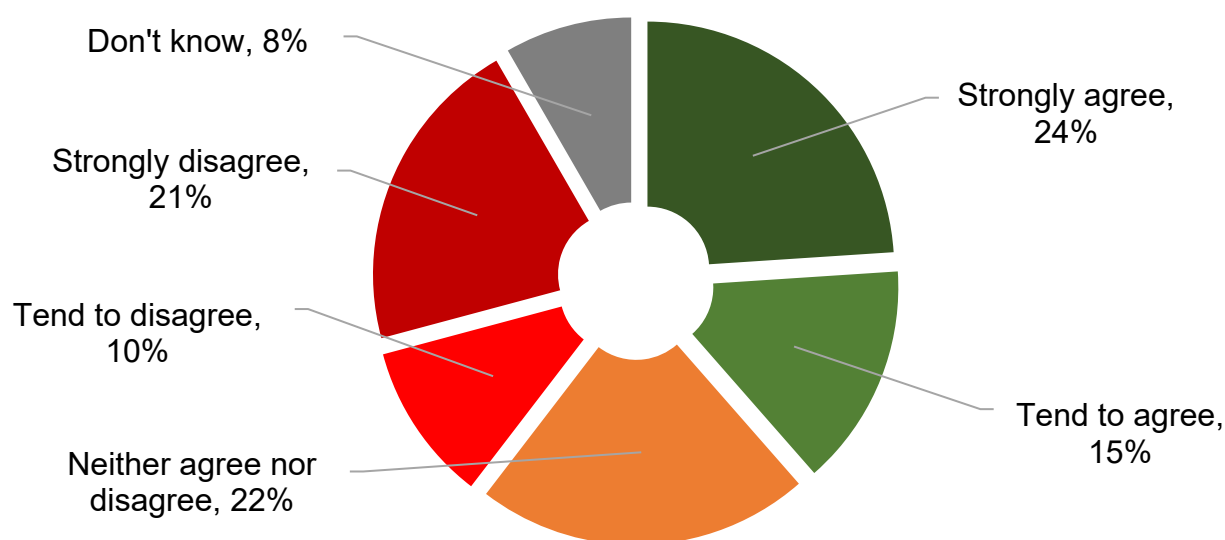
“Lots of kids can't cope in mainstream and need quieter areas, more support and more autonomy. This is a terrible move to try and force them and will lead to more absence and more alternative provision paid for by the council. Many more children with poorer outcomes and more parents unable to work as their children can't attend school.”

PERCEPTIONS FUTURE FUNDING OPTIONS FOR EARLY YEARS STLS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED INDEPENDENTLY OF FUTURE FUNDING OPTIONS FOR SCHOOL AGE STLS

- Views are polarising with just under four in ten (39%) agreeing the future funding options for early years STLS should be considered independently of future fundings options for school age STLS, and 31% disagreeing.
- 22% neither agree nor disagree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the future funding options for early years STLS should be considered independently of future funding options for school age STLS?

Base: all answering (96)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Net: Agree	37	39%
Net: Disagree	30	31%
Strongly agree	23	24%
Tend to agree	14	15%
Neither agree nor disagree	21	22%
Tend to disagree	10	10%
Strongly disagree	20	21%
Don't know	8	8%

RESIDENTS FEEDBACK

EQUALITY ANALYSIS

Consultees were asked to provide view on the equality analysis conducted, including suggestions and anything else that should be considered. 24 consultees provided a comment. Example verbatim comments are shown below and highlight the key themes expressed:

“There should be consideration on how this affects the SEN children and how it impacts their life and ability to access education. Services are hard enough to access without taking things from these children. Discriminating against children with additional needs to save money.”

“Both early years STLS and school age STLS work closely in supporting the transition to school. I feel getting in early to support as young as possible can aid young children getting support as early as possible. Splitting the service, potentially due to different avenues of funding, could affect communication and slow down support being put in place. Changes to services could impact how early support is able to be in place.”

“Send / disabled children are impacted hugely by removing these services and from an EDI perspective women and disabled children are more disproportionately affected when you remove services to send. You make vulnerable people even more vulnerable, and they then end up costing the country even more money.”

“If you were to go with option 1, and cease the SLTS, then the impact of those students with SEND would be, in my opinion, very negative both in terms for the individual students affected and for "inclusion" as a whole. If teaching staff aren't trained and educated in how to teach students with SEND, then it's inevitable that those students will not be able to be included.”

NEXT STEPS

Feedback submitted as part of the consultation has been used to develop recommendations in relation to the future of STLS.

These recommendations will be presented at Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 16 January 2025.

