SEND Local Area Plan 2026-2029



Kent County Council, NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board, Education, Health and Care Partners.

Prepared in response to the July 2026 Area SEND inspection

Action plan aligned to the six Areas for Improvement identified through the July 2026 Area SEND inspection

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Contents

1. Introduction:.....3
2. Our ambition: 4
3. Building on progress: 5
4. Supporting Children and Young People During the Improvement Period 6
5. Our six Areas for Improvement: 7
Area of Improvement 1: 8
Area of Improvement 2: 13
Area of Improvement 3: 17
Area of Improvement 4: 22
Area of Improvement 5: 28
Area of Improvement 6: 33

1. Introduction:

The Kent Local Area Partnership is committed to improving the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The July 2026 Area SEND inspection found that the partnership has made significant progress and identified a number of strengths. It also found that children and young people continue to have inconsistent experiences and outcomes and that further improvement is required.

The inspection found that some children and young people receive timely, well-coordinated support that helps them to participate and make progress. For others, there are delays, uncertainty about support and differences in access depending on where they live and the services available to them.

The central challenge for the partnership is therefore to make the improvements already achieved more consistent and equitable across Kent.



The partnership recognises that improvements must be demonstrated through the experiences and outcomes of children and young people, not solely through the completion of actions, changes to processes or improvements in performance information. Our approach will therefore distinguish between actions completed, improvements delivered and the measurable difference experienced by children, young people and families. We will use performance information, quality assurance, professional evidence and lived experience to assess whether support is available, appropriate and delivered consistently across Kent.

This Strategic Improvement Plan sets out how the partnership will respond to the six Areas for Improvement identified through the inspection. The plan was developed through a process of co-production and engagement with parents, carers, children and young people (CYP), through communications with our parent carer forum (Kent PACT) and social media and website to share the surveys collecting valuable feedback and opinions that fed into the development of the Strategic Improvement Plan.

It builds on Kent's existing SEND Strategy and proven improvement arrangements. It focuses on the changes required following inspection and the difference these changes should make for children, young people and families.

2. Our ambition:

Our ambition is that children and young people with SEND in Kent receive the right support at the right time and are able to participate, achieve and prepare well for adulthood.



We want children and young people to:

- Have their needs identified and understood early;
- Receive effective support without unnecessary delay;
- Participate fully in education and community life;
- Experience coordinated education, health and care support;
- Understand decisions about their support;
- Be listened to and involved;
- Be supported to prepare well for adulthood; and
- Have equitable access to support and opportunities across Kent.
- For parents and carers, this means a system that is clearer, better coordinated and more reliable.

3. Building on progress:

The inspection identified important strengths within the Kent SEND system that ensure the necessary environment for further improvements.



These include:

- Stronger shared leadership across education, health and social care;
- A collaborative partnership culture;
- Developing needs-led approaches that reduce reliance on diagnosis as the only route to support;
- Improving use of data and intelligence;
- Increased opportunities for children, young people and families to contribute;
- Effective examples of multi-agency working;
- Increasingly strategic commissioning;
- Effective oversight of residential and out-of-area placements;
- Strengthened quality assurance of alternative provision;
- Effective use of the Dynamic Support Register; and
- Developing workforce capability.

Our approach is to build on these strengths while addressing the areas where practice and outcomes remain inconsistent.

4. Supporting Children and Young People During the Improvement Period

Building on what children, young people and families have told us, we recognise that improvements to the SEND system will take time and that children and young people need support now, not just when long-term changes are complete. Throughout the delivery of the Local Area Plan, partners will continue to provide advice, support and intervention, while strengthening arrangements to identify and respond quickly where needs increase.

We will support children and young people during the improvement period by:

- Providing clear information about the help and support available now and how it can be accessed.
- Maintaining regular reviews of children and young people's needs, particularly at key transition points and where circumstances change.
- Strengthening early identification of concerns and escalation processes where support is not meeting need.
- Ensuring families know who to contact, what to expect and how concerns can be resolved.
- Using feedback from children, young people and families to identify emerging issues and make improvements as delivery progresses.
- Monitoring access to provision, attendance, participation and outcomes so that children and young people who need additional support can be identified and helped quickly.
- Working across education, health and care partners to ensure support remains coordinated and focused on improving outcomes.

Our commitment is that children and young people will experience positive change throughout the implementation of the Local Area Plan, with practical support, responsive services and ongoing opportunities for families to shape improvements as they are delivered.

The inspection identifies a clear theme across the six Areas for Improvement: effective practice exists, but it is not yet experienced consistently by children and young people across Kent.



5. Our six Areas for Improvement:

The partnership will focus on the six Areas for Improvement identified through the inspection.

For each area, we have set out what needs to change, what we intend to achieve and the main actions we will take.

Detailed activities, interim milestones, accountable officers, delivery risks and measures will be maintained through the partnership's operational improvement arrangements and reported to the SEND Local Area Systems Leadership Board Reporting will distinguish progress in completing actions from evidence that changes are improving the experiences and outcomes of children and young people. Where progress is insufficient, existing governance arrangements will be used to agree and monitor corrective action.

Progress and impact will be monitored through a performance, quality assurance and governance framework that distinguishes activity measures from outcome and experience measures (evidence of improved experiences and outcomes for children and young people).



The framework will draw on:

- Delivery monitoring against agreed milestones, timescales and accountabilities.
- Quantitative performance indicators linked to Local Area Plan priorities.
- Qualitative evidence from children, young people and parent carers through co-production, engagement activity and lived experience feedback.
- Case file audits, themed reviews and service quality assurance activity.
- Analysis of complaints, compliments, disputes, tribunals and resolution processes.
- Multi-agency performance reporting and exception reporting where progress is off track.

Findings will be reviewed through existing Local Area governance arrangements on a regular basis. Where evidence demonstrates that actions are not delivering the intended impact, governance boards will agree corrective actions, monitor implementation and review subsequent evidence of improvement

Area of Improvement 1:

Area for Improvement: Strengthen data, monitoring, quality assurance and evaluation
Narrative from the report: The partnership's use of data and intelligence is improving, but leaders do not yet have a sufficiently strong understanding of the experiences and outcomes of some children and young people. Oversight needs to improve for children and young people on part-time timetables, experiencing disrupted education, attending alternative provision or otherwise not accessing SEND support or full-time education. Stronger information is also needed for commissioning, sufficiency planning, waiting-list management, placement planning and resource allocation.
Governance Group: SEND Local Area Systems Leadership Board
Linked Strategy Ambition: Improving the Lived Experience of children and families
Lead Partner/s: Joint leadership by Kent County Council and NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board, working with education settings, health providers, social care, parent carer representatives, children and young people and other partners.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
LAP1.1	Establish a single SEND partnership intelligence framework, bringing together agreed education, health and care information, definitions, ownership and reporting arrangements.	KCC MIU Team/ Quality Assurance Team	January 2027	Better visibility of need, access, participation, waiting, quality and outcomes across the partnership.	Review the completeness and reliability of the agreed KPI dashboard. Include, where data is available, indicators of education participation, access to support and children's outcomes. Use partnership governance records to evidence how Information has informed decisions and follow-up action.
LAP1.2	Strengthen identification and oversight of children experiencing disrupted education, including part-time timetables, alternative provision, persistent or severe absence and children not accessing suitable full-time education. Use existing attendance, inclusion and case-review arrangements to	KCC/ Education Settings	September 2027	Earlier identification and escalation of risk, with better visibility of children experiencing disrupted education.	Use performance information and sampled case audits to test whether children experiencing disrupted education are identified, risks are considered and appropriate action is followed up. Monitor available trends in attendance, reduced timetables and participation, recognising the need to interpret variation in context.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
	identify risks, clarify responsibility and escalate concerns where appropriate.				
LAP1.3	Improve the partnership's understanding of waiting in agreed priority pathways, including demand, capacity, longest waits, identified risk, support available while waiting and locality variation. Use this intelligence to inform existing risk-management, service-planning and escalation arrangements.	NHS Community/ Mental Health Provider	January 2028	A stronger understanding of waiting and demand, enabling more timely risk management and service response.	Track demand, capacity, longest waits, risk, interim support and locality variation; triangulate findings with lived experience.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
LAP1.4	Strengthen the information used for commissioning and sufficiency planning, including demand, provision, placement flow, workforce, quality and outcomes.	Commissioning Teams	September 2028	Commissioning and sufficiency decisions are more clearly informed by evidence.	Evidence how demand, provision, placement flow, workforce, quality and outcomes are used in commissioning and sufficiency decisions. Improved timeliness of access to education, health and care provision. Evidenced through case reviews and auditing mechanisms. Evidence that commissioning decisions informed by partnership intelligence result in measurable improvements in access, quality and outcomes.
LAP1.5	Present regularly the partnership quality-assurance cycle, bringing together performance information, case audit, thematic review and lived experience.	KCC/ICB/Quality Assurance Team	April 2027	Quality-assurance findings lead to demonstrable changes in practice and improved understanding of geographical variation.	Report six-monthly on key quality-assurance themes, recommendations and actions. Use proportionate follow-up audits or case reviews to test whether identified practice changes have been

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
				Partnership learning is used consistently to identify strengths and areas for improvement, leading to better quality services and improved outcomes for children and young people.	implemented and whether there is evidence of improved experience or provision.

Area of Improvement 2:

Area for Improvement: Improve the quality, timeliness and oversight of EHC plans and the annual review process
Narrative from the report: The quality and timeliness of newer EHC plans were identified as a strength. The challenge is to sustain this improvement and ensure plans continue to reflect children's changing needs and circumstances. Annual reviews, decisions and amendments are not always timely, some older plans do not sufficiently reflect current need, and the quality and timeliness of professional advice need to be more consistent.
Governance Group: SEND Local Area Systems Leadership Board
Linked Strategy Ambition: Achieving the Best Outcomes through inclusion and participation
Lead Partner/s: Joint leadership by Kent County Council and NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board, working with education settings, health providers, social care, parent carer representatives, children and young people and other partners.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
LAP2.1	Maintain the quality and timeliness of newer EHC plans through existing quality assurance, moderation and performance oversight, with feedback from children, young people, families and education settings used where appropriate.	KCC Quality Assurance Team	April 2027	The quality of newer EHC plans is sustained.	Use regular quality assurance and moderation to monitor plan quality and identify required improvements. Including parental feedback.
LAP2.2	Improve annual review timeliness by strengthening the tracking and follow-up of reviews, statutory decisions, amendments and outstanding professional advice. Use existing performance and escalation arrangements to identify delays, prioritise overdue cases and address recurring causes.	KCC SEN/ Education Settings/ Quality Assurance Team	December 2027	Improved annual review timeliness and fewer long-standing outstanding decisions and amendments.	Monitor annual reviews due and completed, decisions and amendments outstanding, the age of overdue cases and progress against an agreed baseline. Use sampled case reviews and family feedback to test whether decisions and necessary updates are made more promptly.
LAP2.3	Prioritize older plans where there has been significant change in need, provision, placement or transition.	KCC SEN Quality Assurance Team	January 2028	Plans that over the 20 week threshold are updated and more accurately reflect current	Report progress in identifying and reviewing priority older plans, including outstanding cases and any barriers to completion.

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				need and circumstances.	Use quality-assurance sampling to test whether updated plans reflect current needs and provision, and report significant themes through existing partnership arrangements.
LAP2.4	Strengthening quality of education, health and social-care advice so that it is timely, specific and clear about required provision.	Education, NHS health providers & social care	January 2028	Strengthened quality of education, health and social-care advice so that it is timely, specific and clear about required provision.	Use existing moderation and sampled audits to review the timeliness, clarity and specificity of education, health and social care advice. Record recurring themes and agreed improvement action; establish a baseline before setting any numerical improvement target.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
LAP2.5	Use regular multi-agency moderation, thematic audits, and review of neurodevelopmental assessment pathways and outcomes to identify areas requiring further improvement, promote consistency of practice, and ensure children and young people receive timely and appropriate support	KCC Quality Assurance Team	January 2029	Children and families report that plans are relevant and useful. Variations in practice are reduced, improvement is identified and acted upon more quickly, and children and young people receive the right support at the right time.	Use proportionate multi-agency case audits and feedback from families and settings to consider whether plans reflect current needs and whether specified provision is being delivered. Where gaps are identified, record the responsible service and follow-up action through existing quality-assurance processes.

Area of Improvement 3:

Area for Improvement: Strengthen communication, co-production, transparency and information-sharing
Narrative from the report: The inspection identified positive examples of engagement but mixed experiences for children, young people and families. Some families are unclear about how decisions are made, why support is agreed or declined, what support is available or what happens next. Schools and settings can also be unclear about changes, processes, commissioning and funding. Information is not always shared effectively between services, creating duplication, delay and repeated storytelling.
Governance Group: SEND Local Area Systems Leadership Board
Linked Strategy Ambition: Working Together with CYP with SEND and their families
Lead Partner/s: Joint leadership by Kent County Council and NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board, working with education settings, health providers, social care, parent carer representatives, children and young people and other partners.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
LAP 3.1	Strengthen the use of existing co-production arrangements so that children, young people and families can influence relevant strategy, service design and improvement activity at an appropriate stage. Record examples of how involvement has influenced decisions, including explanations where suggestions cannot be taken forward.	KCC / ICB	January 2029	Clearer evidence that co-production has influenced strategy, commissioning and service development. Information for CYP, parents and families is clear and accessible.	Record involvement, influence and resulting changes, and test experience with children, young people and families.
LAP 3.2	Introduce a regular "You said - We did - Difference made" approach so that children and families can see how their feedback has influenced improvement. As well as clearly articulate why not all feedback can be actioned and provide alternative approaches wherever possible.	KCC communications and engagement teams, reporting through the SEND Local Area Systems Leadership Board.	April 2027	Children and families can see how their feedback has influenced improvement. Children, young people and families having a demonstrable influence on decisions, services and commissioning,	Publish periodic "You said – We did – Difference made" updates using existing communication channels, showing feedback received, action taken and examples of impact. Include contributions from children, young people, families and education partners where relevant.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
				leading to improved service design, increased trust and confidence, and better outcomes for children and young people.	
LAP 3.3	Review priority SEND communications and existing enquiry routes so that families are given clearer reasons for decisions, next steps, expected timescales and routes for advice or escalation. Use common themes from enquiries and complaints to identify where communication needs to improve.	Comms and engagement teams KCC and SEND Local Area Systems Leadership Board.	September 2027	Better understand SEND processes, decisions and available support. Receive clear explanations of decisions, reasons and next steps. Know where to go for advice, information and support. The community feel more informed and involved in decision-making.	Increased positive feedback in parent/carer and young person surveys. Improved satisfaction scores relating to communication and information sharing. Reduced complaints and queries about unclear processes, timescales or decisions. Fewer requests for clarification following statutory decisions and correspondence. Increased website and social media engagement, shared through termly reports.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
LAP 3.4	Work with schools and settings to develop communication pathways about services, funding, commissioning and significant changes with clear engagement expectations across all partners.	KCC/ Education Settings	September 2028	Greater provider confidence in partnership communication. improved accountability, clearer communication, faster resolution of issues, and increased confidence and trust from families.	Use provider feedback and communication reviews test whether information is clear, timely and consistent. Improved family confidence in the SEND system, Schools and Settings, evidenced through increased satisfaction with communication and accountability, reduced complaints and escalations, timely resolution of concerns, and positive feedback regarding access to Schools, Settings, support and multi-agency coordination.
LAP 3.5	Review selected multi-agency pathways where duplication or repeated requests for information contribute to delay or poor experience. Use existing case review and information-governance	KCC and NHS health providers, working with Kent PACT and other relevant partners.	January 2028	Fewer families report repeated storytelling and better coordinated communication across services.	Use pathway review, case audit and lived experience to identify and reduce duplication, delay and repeated storytelling.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
	arrangements to clarify responsibilities and identify practical improvements to information-sharing.				

Area of Improvement 4:

Area for Improvement: Improve consistency of support and address gaps in provision and sufficiency
Narrative from the report: Developing needs-led approaches and effective early support were recognised, but these are not yet consistent across Kent. Some children and young people experience long waits in specialist pathways, inconsistent support while waiting, delays in provision or placement decisions and differences in access to specialist support. Gaps remain in early intervention, specialist provision and alternative provision.
Governance Group: SEND Local Area Systems Leadership Board
Linked Strategy Ambition: Access to the Right Support at the Right Time in the Right Place
Lead Partner/s: Joint leadership by Kent County Council and NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board, working with education settings, health providers, social care, parent carer representatives, children and young people and other partners.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
LAP 4.1	Agree clearer information and expectations for support while waiting in priority pathways, including available advice, existing interim support, review of identified risks and escalation where needs increase. Work within existing service arrangements while identifying gaps that may require further commissioning consideration.	NHS Health providers	December 2027	More children receive useful support while waiting and fewer reach crisis before effective intervention.	Monitor access to interim support, risk review and escalation; test impact through case audit and lived experience.
LAP 4.2	Evaluate and build on effective needs-led approaches, including learning from developing neurodiversity support.	ICB	January 2028	Effective early support is more consistently available without unnecessary reliance on diagnosis.	Evaluate the reach, experience and outcomes of existing needs-led approaches using available activity information, case review and family feedback. Use the findings to inform decisions on wider implementation, subject to evidence, capacity and resources.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
LAP 4.3	Establish clear recovery arrangements for pathways experiencing sustained pressure, informed by demand, capacity, workforce and risk.	Senior Leaders KCC and ICB	July 2029	Reduced longest waits in priority pathways and more timely response to sustained pressure.	Through tracking recovery plans against demand, capacity, workforce, risk and longest waits, with escalation where progress is insufficient.
LAP 4.4	Refresh SEND sufficiency planning using available information on current and projected need, provision, placements and geographical access. Identify priority gaps across mainstream, specialist, alternative and post-16 provision, and use findings to inform existing commissioning and capital-planning decisions, subject to agreed resources.	KCC	January 2028	More timely placement decisions and fewer significant gaps in provision.	Use refreshed sufficiency information to identify gaps, agree action and monitor changes in access and placement flow. Increase by 10% the proportion of children and young people receiving timely support accessing support and provision closer to home, within their local community, and in provision that meets their assessed needs.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
LAP 4.5	Strengthen access to specialist advice and inclusive practice through existing education, health and care partnerships. Explore opportunities for mainstream schools, special schools and alternative provision to share expertise, including outreach, professional learning and joint problem-solving where capacity and resources permit. Evaluate effective approaches before considering wider implementation.	Education settings, NHS health providers, social care	January 2028	Improved access to specialist support and reduced variation between localities.	Review locality performance, practice and experience and assess the impact of workforce development and specialist advice. Increase by 10% the proportion of children and young people receiving timely support and specialist advice through local services, informed by reviews of locality performance, practice and workforce development impact.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
LAP 4.6	Apply learning from effective anticipatory approaches, including the Dynamic Support Register, to other children and young people at risk of escalation, where appropriate. Use existing partnership arrangements to identify opportunities for earlier intervention, clarify responsibilities and review whether support is helping to prevent needs from escalating.	KCC PMO/ICB	July 2029	Earlier intervention for children at risk of escalation.	Use case review and outcome evidence to test whether anticipatory approaches identify risk and enable earlier support. Use available case-review and outcome information to assess whether anticipatory approaches identify risk earlier and support timely intervention. Review relevant trends in crisis intervention and escalation, taking account of differences in need and case complexity. Improved feedback from children, young people and families that support was provided early enough to prevent needs worsening, through feedback mechanisms Use case review and outcome evidence to test whether anticipatory approaches identify risk and enable earlier support, with quarterly audits demonstrating that at least 85% of reviewed cases show risks were identified and acted upon before needs escalated.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
					Use available case-review and outcome information to assess whether anticipatory approaches identify risk earlier and support timely intervention. Review relevant trends in crisis intervention and escalation, taking account of differences in need and case complexity, with quarterly reporting demonstrating a year-on-year reduction in avoidable crisis interventions and escalations and at least 80% of reviewed cases evidencing timely intervention following identification of risk. Improved feedback from children, young people and families that support was provided early enough to prevent needs worsening, through feedback mechanisms, with at least 80% of respondents reporting that support was provided at the right time and helped prevent needs from escalating, monitored and reported on a quarterly basis.

Area of Improvement 5:

Area for Improvement: Strengthen preparation for adulthood and post-16 pathways
Narrative from the report: Positive examples of supported internships, employment opportunities, community participation and effective transition support were identified. However, these opportunities are not experienced consistently. Preparation for adulthood is particularly inconsistent for young people with SEND who do not have an EHC plan.
Governance Group: SEND Local Area Systems Leadership Board
Linked Strategy Ambition: Preparing for a Successful Future at the Earliest Opportunity
Lead Partner/s: Joint leadership by Kent County Council and NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board, working with education settings, health providers, social care, parent carer representatives, children and young people and other partners.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
LAP 5.1	Strengthen consistent use of Kent's existing preparation-for-adulthood arrangements.	KCC/NHS Health providers	September 2028	Preparation-for-adulthood support is more consistently applied.	Improved feedback from young people and families that they feel informed, involved and prepared for adulthood and transition planning. Use available destination information and feedback from young people and families to assess whether preparation-for-adulthood arrangements are supporting positive transitions into education, employment, training and other appropriate adult outcomes.
LAP 5.2	Improve preparation-for-adulthood planning from Year 9, including education, employment, health, independence, relationships and community participation.	Education settings/ KCC SEN/Pathways For All	January 2029	Earlier and better-quality preparation-for-adulthood planning. Improved confidence and support for young people preparing for adulthood.	On a yearly basis use sampled Year 9 onward planning and review records, alongside young people's and families' feedback, to assess whether preparation-for-adulthood planning is timely, person-centred and addresses relevant education, employment, health and independence outcomes.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
LAP 5.3	Strengthen coordination across the 14-25 pathway, including schools, colleges, children's services, adult services, health and employment partners.	Education settings/ social care/ NHS health providers	December 2027	Better coordinated transitions and fewer avoidable gaps in support.	Use multi-agency pathway review and case audit on a termly basis to test coordination and continuity across transition.
LAP 5.4	Improve oversight of young people at risk of poor transition, including becoming NEET, losing essential support or experiencing delays in adult-service planning.	KCC/ Pathways for All	January 2028	Earlier identification of young people at risk of poor transition, becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET), or experiencing gaps in essential support. More timely and coordinated action to address identified risks and improve continuity of support.	Monitor risk indicators, escalation and outcomes for young people at risk of NEET, support gaps or delayed adult-service planning.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
LAP 5.5	Increase access to appropriate education, employment, training and supported employment opportunities, ensuring pathways are accessible locally wherever possible, including for young people with complex needs, and that effective transition planning and continuity of support enable successful progression into adulthood.	KCC/ Education Settings	April 2028	Improved access to appropriate education, employment, training and supported employment opportunities, with more young people supported to make positive and sustained transitions.	Monitor access to education, employment, training and supported opportunities using available destination data. Where feasible, consider sustained participation and feedback from young people, including those with complex needs. Set numerical improvement targets only after confirming baselines and partner contributions.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
LAP 5.6	Improve understanding of the experiences and outcomes of young people with SEND who do not have EHC plans, using available education, destination and partner information. Identify evidence gaps and use findings to inform future planning and support.	KCC/ Education settings	September 2028	Stronger evidence about outcomes for young people without EHC plans. Improved consistency of support for those without an EHC Plan/ diagnosis.	Annual publication of outcome data and experience measures for young people with SEND without an EHC plan, demonstrating year-on-year improvement. Improved feedback from young people that support is accessible and meets their needs. Evidence that learning from engagement and outcome data is informing service planning, commissioning and improvement activity.

Area of Improvement 6:

Area for Improvement: Ensure a more equitable offer across Kent
Narrative from the report: Geographical variation is a significant theme. Children and young people with similar needs can experience different levels of access to services, specialist support, workforce and opportunities depending on where they live. Kent is a large and diverse county, but geographical differences should not result in unjustified differences in access, experience or outcomes.
Governance Group: SEND Local Area Systems Leadership Board
Linked Strategy Ambition: Access to the Right Support at the Right Time in the Right Place; Improving the Lived Experience of children and families
Lead Partner/s: Joint leadership by Kent County Council and NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board, working with education settings, health providers, social care, parent carer representatives, children and young people and other partners.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
LAP 6.1	Establish clear partnership expectations for equity and consistency across priority SEND services and pathways.	KCC/ICB/Education	April 2027	A shared standard for equitable and consistent access across priority services and pathways.	Agree a proportionate set of indicators to identify significant differences in access and experience between localities. Establish baselines and investigate whether variation reflects need, capacity, accessibility or inconsistent practice before setting numerical reduction targets.
LAP 6.2	Use existing locality and partnership review arrangements to examine available information on SEND need, access, waiting, provision and outcomes. Identify priority variation, understand likely causes and escalate matters requiring joint action.	All partners	April 2028	Improved understanding of geographical variation and earlier action where inequity is identified.	Through locality data showing improved access, reduced variation and better outcomes for children and young people following implementation of agreed improvement actions.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
LAP 6.3	Investigate significant or persistent geographical variation and agree corrective action where differences cannot be justified.	KCC/ICB	September 2027	Reduced unjustified variation in priority pathways. reduced geographical variation in access to education, employment, training and supported employment opportunities across Kent.	Through reduced variation in access, waiting times and outcomes for children and young people across localities.
LAP 6.4	Use existing partnership commissioning, workforce planning, specialist outreach and provision development arrangements to respond to identified geographical gaps in SEND support and provision. Prioritise improvement activity according to assessed need, available resources and the impact of gaps on children and young people.	KCC/ICB	September 2028	Commissioning and service planning increasingly reflect identified geographical gaps, supporting more consistent access to appropriate SEND support and provision across Kent.	Review how identified geographical gaps have informed commissioning, workforce planning and provision development decisions. Monitor progress against agreed actions to address priority gaps, using existing partnership performance information and locality reviews. Use feedback from children, young people, families and education settings to assess whether changes are improving access to appropriate support.

Action Ref	Strategic Improvement Priority	Accountable Partner	To be fully completed by	What is the expected impact	How will the Partnership know outcomes have improved for children and young people?
LAP 6.5	Ensure commissioning and service redesign consider geographical access, including rural and coastal communities, transport, workforce availability and accessibility, through publishing sector wide data after review, from the Inclusion Dashboard for external accountability and transparency.	KCC/ICB	December 2028	Commissioning and redesigning decisions to better address geographical access.	Evidence from Inclusion Dashboard data showing narrowing gaps in access, participation and outcomes between localities. Improved transparency and accountability through regular publication of locality-level performance and outcome data.
LAP 6.6	Include the experiences of children, young people, families, schools and providers in locality reviews.	Education settings/NHS health providers	January 2029	Improved family and provider experience across Kent. Improved responsiveness to local needs.	Monthly monitoring of locality data, with quarterly review and challenge of impact, supported by structured feedback from children, young people and families showing how lived experience influences priorities and resulting actions.



NHS
Kent and Medway

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