

# Divisional Business Plan 2013-14

Directorate Name: Education, Learning & Skills

Division/Business Unit Name: Special Educational Needs  
Assessment & Placement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
Cabinet Portfolio: Mike Whiting
Responsible Corporate Director: Patrick Leeson
Responsible Director: Kevin Shovelton
Head(s) of Service: Julie Ely
Gross Expenditure: £32,427600
FTE: 162.6



## SECTION A: ROLE/PURPOSE OF FUNCTION

The role of SEN Assessment & Placement Service is to fulfil the Council's statutory obligations (Education Act 1996, SENDA 2001) to receive referrals for statutory assessment of special educational needs (SEN), to carry out its assessment within prescribed timescales and to issue a Statement of SEN specifying the additional and extra educational help required, or a notice in lieu of a Statement which confirms support is ordinarily available in school. The Service is responsible for securing an appropriate school placement, for reviewing the progress of pupils with a Statement (annual review); reassessing when necessary, and for ensuring provision is efficient and effective value for money.

Kent's school population exceeds 230,000 of whom 6620 are pupils subject to a Statement; equivalent to 2.8%. 100 new assessments are initiated each month. The number of children and young people subject to a Statement includes 520 who are in the care of other Local Authorities but placed with carers in Kent. 55% of Kent's children subject to a Statement are placed in one of Kent's 24 maintained special schools; half of Kent's special schools are designated for children with Profound, Severe and Complex Needs (PSCN) and have intake. 40% are placed in a local mainstream school, with fewer included wholly in their mainstream class than those in units. 4% of Kent's children subject to a Statement of SEN are placed in independent/ non-maintained special schools as their needs cannot be met in a Kent school.

The Service includes a specialist Communication Assistive Technology team (CAT) providing direct support to children with profound and complex physical disabilities. The CAT team receives referrals for augmentative communication technology advice from mainstream and special school. It supports pupils and their teachers to test drive technology which can remove barriers to their learning, providing specialist advice to their teachers. It comprises teachers, therapy staff and technologists. It is jointly funded with the NHS.

During the academic year 2012-13 the Service became responsible for

- (i) Undertaking learning disability assessments (LDA) known as S139A assessments, for young people with SEN and disabilities moving from schools into further education. Officers from the Connexions Service transferred, via TUPE, to this Service.
- (ii) Quality assurance of the Specialist Teaching & Learning Service (STLS), devolved to 12 Special Schools through a Service Level Agreement, working collaboratively with the Head teachers of those schools.

The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that the provision specified in each individual child's Statement is delivered and that an appropriate school placement is identified. The service must balance the legal duties and finite financial resources whilst ensuring that the needs of each individual child remain at the core of its procedures and processes.

The key objective for SEN Assessment & Placement Service is to ensure that all children & young people with Statements have appropriate and timely educational provision, working in partnership with them, their parents and carers, their schools and other stakeholders.

The Assessment & Placement Service delivers a statutory service to vulnerable and complex pupils experiencing greatest difficulty learning which contributes to Bold Steps Priority 3 - **To ensure all Pupils meet their full potential.** The service manages the resources to fulfil the statutory assessment process for pupils with special educational needs; ensuring appropriate provision is in place to enable pupils with the greatest difficulty to make good progress.

It will do this by:

- Reducing the number of pupils requiring a Statement of SEN
- Improving the percentage of statutory assessments completed within 26 weeks
- Reducing the number of Kent's children & young people placed in independent/non maintained sector provision
- Developing a systematic and strategic approach to planning of places and improving the range of specialist provision in mainstream for children & young people aged 0-24
- Effectively managing increasing demand by instituting robust financial monitoring arrangements
- Developing an action plan to implement the key provisions of the Children & Families Bill

It is intended that this will contribute to the 2016 outcomes rehearsed in Bold Steps for Education:

- Pupils with Statements (and those subject of Statutory Plan) will be making good progress
- More Kent children will have their needs met in their locality, in cost effective provision
- Fewer pupils requiring a statutory response to their special educational needs; more effective early intervention
- 95% of assessments completed with timescales
- Fully implement the requirements of the Children & Families Bill to have in place integrated Education, Health and Care Plans

**SECTION C: PRIORITIES, ACTIONS, PROGRAMMES, PROJECTS, MILESTONES, KEY OR SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS**

Management Teams are required to regularly review progress against the actions and milestones set out in the tables below. Monthly progress may be appropriate for individual services to review their business plan progress, and quarterly may be appropriate at the Divisional level. Formal reporting of progress by Division to Cabinet Committees is required twice a year, at the mid-year point and after the year-end.

The Corporate Director is authorised to negotiate, settle the terms of, and enter the following agreements/projects:

<b>PRIORITY 1:</b>		<b>DESCRIPTION OF PRIORITY: Reducing the number of pupils requiring a Statement of SEN</b>		
<b>Actions</b>		<b>Accountable Officer</b>	<b>Start Date (month/year)</b>	<b>End Date (month/year)</b>
1.1	Ensure SEN teams promote core standards; school to school support; Specialist Teaching (STLS) input & Local Inclusion Forums (LIFTs)	Julie Ely	June 2013	October 2013
1.2	Receive intelligence from Educational Psychology regarding commissioning by schools	Andy Heather	May 2013	March 2014
1.3	Publicise for parents details of Core Standards and funding arrangements to schools. Seek feedback.	County SEN Manager	May 2013	September 2013
1.4	Use data on STLS referrals and ongoing caseloads to influence service targeting and LIFTs	Julie Ely		
<b>2</b>	Pilot local decision making to robustly challenge and support schools assessment requests	Julie Ely	February 2013	December 2013
<b>KEY MILESTONES</b>				<b>DATE (month/year)</b>
A	Fewer assessments will be declined at the County Panel reflecting a better use of guidance to school in the Core standards.			September 2013
B	Where assessments are agreed, schools have evidenced Core Standards within their advice			December 2013
C	Effective STS and teaching school support and intervention will be embedded resulting in fewer Statements.			January 2013

D	Feedback confirms that a parent accessible version of Core standards is readily available.	December 2013
E	The impact of the statutory assessment pilot is monitored through a working group and Reviewed by ELS DMT	March 2014
ARE THERE ANY KEY OR SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS THAT COULD ARISE FROM THIS PRIORITY?		ARE THESE ALREADY IN THE FORWARD PLAN? Yes/No
1	Not envisaged at this time.	

<b>PRIORITY 2:</b>		<b>DESCRIPTION OF PRIORITY: Improve the percentage of statutory assessments completed within 26 weeks.</b>		
<b>Actions</b>		<b>Accountable Officer</b>	<b>Start Date (month/year)</b>	<b>End Date (month/year)</b>
1.1	Use district 'best' performance to model effective ways of working and challenge lowest quartile	County SEN Manager Julie Ely	February 2013	December 2013
1.2	Set specific improvement targets for each district to reduce timescales taken	Julie Ely	February 2013	December 2013
1.3	Complete a review of procedures to validate and assure the quality of ICT (Impulse) input and records in relation to mandatory exceptions.	SEN Area Managers: DH, KF, JB, NT, JEG, ZG	April 2013	July 2013
1.4	Ensure that NHS and Social Care managers are aware of persistent late advice from their services.	Julie Ely	April 2013	March 2014
2	Review pilot approaches to EHC assessments and identify action to make timescale changes needed to comply with anticipated new regulations.	County SEN Manager	March 2013	October 2013
3	Ensure the capacity of our special schools is kept under review the to minimise placement pressure delay in Finalising Statements	Julie Ely	March 2013	January 2014
<b>KEY MILESTONES</b>				<b>DATE (month/year)</b>
A	Case Management Quality Assurance group have completed a review of practice in each area office and identified any changes needed to staff and case allocation across area offices.			September 2013
B	Achieving 90% of SEN statutory assessments within 26 weeks			December 2013
C	All Designated Medical Officers have been engaged in reviewing NHS performance data			September 2013
D	Plans will be in place for 95% of equivalent Education, Health & Care Plans produced in the financial year 2014/15 to be completed within the statutory timescale			March 2014

E	Monitoring of Area SEN Office performance by district is taking place on a monthly basis and the % gap between draft and Final Statement reduces to less than 5%	September 2013
ARE THERE ANY KEY OR SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS THAT COULD ARISE FROM THIS PRIORITY?		ARE THESE ALREADY IN THE FORWARD PLAN? Yes/No
1	Not envisaged. This indicator was subject to Performance Evaluation Board scrutiny Nov 12	PEB review due Jan 2013

<b>PRIORITY 3:</b>		<b>DESCRIPTION OF PRIORITY: Reducing the number of Kent children &amp; young people placed in independent and non maintained sector provision</b>		
Actions		Accountable Officer	Start Date (month/year)	End Date (month/year)
1.1	Ensure schools have online access to Core Standards guidance about interventions they should exhaust firstly	County SEN Manager	April 2013	June 2013
1.2	Ensure recommendations for specialist provision arising from reviews demonstrate an exceptional transfer case	County SEN Manager	April 2013	March 2014
2.1	Analyse referrals, assessment outcomes and placements to inform placement pressures , planning and commissioning	Julie Ely	April 2013	March 2014
2.2	Ensure learning from Tribunal appeals influences service delivery in SEN Area teams.	Julie Care	April 2013	March 2014
3.1	Increase Kent schools' capacity to support /retain pupils through Communicative Assistive Technology ( CAT) service	Sarah Lloyd-Cocks	April 2013	March 2014
3.2	Ensure CAT direct assessment pathway commences within 18 weeks of allocation	Sarah Lloyd-Cocks	April 2013	March 2014
3.3	Pupils receive assistive technology and initial training within 14 weeks of assessment	Sarah Lloyd-Cocks	April 2013	March 2014
4.1	Develop regional links to inform commissioning practice and explore commissioning frameworks	Julie Ely	April 2013	September 2013
4.2	Participate in CIPFA Benchmarking to compare cost and ensure placement value for money is evident	Julie Ely	September 2013	December 2013
KEY MILESTONES				DATE (month/year)
A	Use of the Core Standards is evidenced in schools requests for placement change			September 2013
B	Placements in non maintained provision have fallen by 10%, from 415 in October 2012 to 353. Committed placement fees are kept within agreed budget levels; expenditure is well controlled.			December 2013



C	Schools are more confidence using assistive technology and CAT pupils have improved communication skills	March 2014
D	Regional discussions have informed commissioning arrangements	March 2014
ARE THERE ANY KEY OR SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS THAT COULD ARISE FROM THIS PRIORITY?		ARE THESE ALREADY IN THE FORWARD PLAN? Yes/No
1	Not envisaged at this time	

<b>PRIORITY 4:</b>		<b>DESCRIPTION OF PRIORITY: Developing a systematic and strategic approach to planning of places and improve the range of specialist provision in mainstream for children &amp; Young people aged 0-25</b>		
Actions		Accountable Officer	Start Date (month/year)	End Date (month/year)
1.1	Implement the recommendations of the task and finish group review of existing mainstream specialist provision	Julie Ely	April 2013	July 2013
1.2	Identify resource implications from the working group and develop a business case to increase capacity in mainstream	Julie Ely	April 2013	July 2013
1.3	Remodel existing provision and create new specialist provision where recommended by the review via a commissioning exercise	Julie Ely	May 2013	September 2013
1.4	Institute a systematic review mechanism for monitoring capacity and use specialist places	Julie Ely	September 2013	March 2014
2.1	Increase the capacity of mainstream schools through access to specialist advice delivered by the special schools in accordance with a Service level Agreement	Julie Ely	April 2013	July 2013
2.2	Quality Assure the work of the Specialist Teaching & Learning Service (STLS)	Louise Langley	April 2013	March 2014
2.3	Review outreach arrangements to align the work of the STLS and special schools	Julie Ely	September 2013	March 2014
KEY MILESTONES				DATE (month/year)
A	Establish a monitoring system to collect and analyse pupil progress data to ensure outreach is operating effectively			April 2013
B	The increase mainstream school expertise is reflected by a fall in requests for assessment and special school placement			March 2014
C	We are maintaining an effective balance of provision in the areas of the County where it is needed and making best use of available resources.			March 2014

ARE THERE ANY KEY OR SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS THAT COULD ARISE FROM THIS PRIORITY?		ARE THESE ALREADY IN THE FORWARD PLAN? Yes/No
1	This will be an integral element of the SEN Strategy which will be considered by Members through the usual democratic processes Spring 2013.	

<b>PRIORITY 5:</b>		<b>DESCRIPTION OF PRIORITY: Effectively manage increasing demand by instituting robust financial monitoring arrangements</b>		
Actions		Accountable Officer	Start Date (month/year)	End Date (month/year)
1.1	Ensure financial monitoring is part of monthly Case Management meetings for the whole service	Julie Ely	April 2013	March 2014
1.2	Review service capacity to monitor delegated SEN funding for children in mainstream schools	Julie Ely	April 2013	July 2013
1.3	Report annually on the Provision Evaluation Officers (PEO) activity; good practice or concerns and analysis of the need and frequency of future visiting arrangement	David Finch	April 2013	September 2013
1.4	Ensure robust monitoring of 16+ Independent Specialist Providers and clear policy criteria for funding new placements	David Finch	April 2013	September 2013
2.1	Review, monitor and increase staffing related information (where funded from LA SEN) received from schools.	Julie Ely	April 2013	September 2013
2.2	Ensure that information provided to SENCOs by all staff engaged in supporting schools promotes awareness of the Audit Commission VFM tool	Julie Ely	April 2013	March 2014
3	Monitor the effectiveness of our SLAs with special schools to measure value for delegated outreach resources	Julie Ely	April 2013	March 2014
KEY MILESTONES				DATE (month/year)
A	SEN Area Managers and LDA Officers have been trained to challenge schools to demonstrate effective use of delegated resources			September 2013
B	An Annual Report of PEO activity is produced			September 2013
C	Schools' routinely provide robust evidence to support a request for a change of placement.			March 2014

D	Reviewed the Service Level Agreement for outreach resources	March 2014
ARE THERE ANY KEY OR SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS THAT COULD ARISE FROM THIS PRIORITY?		ARE THESE ALREADY IN THE FORWARD PLAN? Yes/No
1	This will be an integral element of the SEN Strategy which will be considered by Members through the usual democratic processes Spring 2013	

<b>PRIORITY 6:</b>		<b>DESCRIPTION OF PRIORITY: Developing an action plan to implement the key provisions of the Children &amp; Families Bill</b>		
<b>Actions</b>		<b>Accountable Officer</b>	<b>Start Date (month/year)</b>	<b>End Date (month/year)</b>
1.1	Establish a task and finish group to assess impact of the changes required by the legislation and trial the new ways of working to develop a whole service action plan.	Julie Ely	March 2013	August 2013
1.2	The action plan will put in place a route map to move from current to future operational state.	Julie Ely	September 2013	March 2014
2.1	Contribute and support the work of the SEN & disabilities Pathfinder which is trialling aspects of the proposed statutory changes, ensuring information provided for all stakeholders is easily accessible	Julie Ely	April 2013	July 2014 (end of the Pathfinder)
2.2	Developing the local offer (SEN entitlement) in Thanet Schools as a pilot to clarify the local offer in all Kent schools	Julie Ely	April 2013	October 2013
2.3	Skill up existing staff to be tour guides to help parents navigate the published local offer	Julie Ely	September 2013	January 2014
2.4	Identify how SEN caseworkers can use a key working approach in their relationship with families	County SEN Manager	July 2013	January 2014
2.5	Ensure support and guidance for young people 16 - 24 with SEN & disabilities to access education or training	Tiffany Sonnex	April 2013	March 2014
3	Develop and trial a single assessment process and Education, Health & Care (EHC) plan	Julie Ely	September 2013	March 2014
4	Deliver the SEN strategy; developing an action plan with milestones, targets and lead	Julie Ely	September 2013	March 2014
<b>KEY MILESTONES</b>				<b>DATE (month/year)</b>
A	A clear action plan detailing activity and timeframe is in place to implement statutory change arising from the Children & Families Bill, to be enacted from September 2014.			December 2013
B	New ways of working in Thanet have been evaluated , modified where necessary and rolled out across			December 2013

	Kent	
C	Parents who are part of the delivery of the Pathfinder are informed and engaged in co-production of services	March 2014
D	Consultation on the SEN strategy has been completed and a detailed delivery plan is being monitored	March 2014
ARE THERE ANY KEY OR SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS THAT COULD ARISE FROM THIS PRIORITY?		ARE THESE ALREADY IN THE FORWARD PLAN? Yes/No
1	Yes – Cabinet will be considering for approval, the new SEN in the Spring of 2013.	Yes

SECTION D: FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

For the Financial Resources section **Finance** will provide the required information and detail that sets out the main components of your budget by completing the table below.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES (000's)								
Divisional Unit	Responsible Manager	Staffing	Non Staffing	Gross Expenditure	Service Income	Net Expenditure	Govt. Grants	Net Cost
SEN Assessment and Placement	Julie Ely	£8704.1	£23723.5	£23723.5	£-697.4	£31730.2	£-29,841.7	£1,888.5

HUMAN RESOURCES		
FTE establishment at 31 March 2013	Estimate of FTE establishment at 31 March 2014	Reasons for any variance
162.6		



SECTION E: RISK & BUSINESS CONTINUITY

RISKS	
RISKS	MITIGATION
<p>Statutory Assessment Process : Lack of parental confidence in mainstream schools leading to an increase in requests for statutory assessment which increases demand for advice from schools, NHS and Social Care. Political and Operational</p>	<p>Policy - Development of better universal provision and Pathfinder work on local offer to increase confidence through transparency.</p>
<p>Insufficient staffing to manage the statutory assessment process Reduced performance against NI 103. Risk of LGO complaint and compensation. Political and Operational</p>	<p>Case Management Quality Assurance group put in place (CMQA) to scrutinise and carry out monthly monitoring. Feedback to NHS Designated Medical Officer.</p>
<p>Lack of health funded services to support not only the statutory assessment process but also specialist intervention</p>	<p>Monthly monitoring. Annual Review of Statements. Multi-agency liaison.</p>
<p>Tribunal and Legal action Increased pressure on Kent Special School Places could lead to statutory breach, appeal or Judicial Review. Risk of direction to fund placement in independent school. Demand exceeds budget</p>	<p>Commission extra places. Policy - revising SEN Strategy. Decision making - Complex Case Panel</p>
<p>Tribunal and Legal action. Increase in the number of SEN appeals lodged against refusal to assess. Limited alternatives reducing value for money options. Demand exceeds budget. Financial/ Reputational</p>	<p>Bold Steps and targets monitoring/review Launch of LIFTs</p>
<p>Finance and data input: Late payment of invoices could lead to penalty payments and budget deficit. Reconciliation/budget monitoring delay could reduce capacity to take Corrective action. Risk of fraud by payment recipient. Financial/ Reputational</p>	<p>Implementing recommendations of audit review October 2012.</p>

BUSINESS CONTINUITY		
CRITICAL FUNCTIONS	TIMESCALE	MINIMUM SERVICE LEVEL
Contractual requirement to pay fees for pupil placements on time. This relies on finance system working effectively and sufficient staff expertise.	7-10 days	Finance system working effectively and sufficient staff expertise. Temporary arrangements to ensure cheques can be produced by another team/service
Major disruption to Sessions, Kroner, Gibson Drive, Clover House  Lower risks which could affect statutory timescales: Photocopiers/printers out of action for 3 or more days	3-5 days	Staff located temporarily at other Centres 'hot desk'.  Home work using laptop A2K computers. Work in schools could continue.
Transport difficulties e.g. extreme weather or industrial action	3-5 days	Work from home would provide a good interim solution.
Unusually high levels of staff absence e.g. sickness	3-5 days	Staff relocated temporarily from other Centres.  Tribunal casework with statutory timescales may need to be passed for external legal representation via in house legal team.

SECTION F: PERFORMANCE AND ACTIVITY INDICATORS

**Table for PERFORMANCE indicators measurable on a quarterly basis by financial year**

- The indicator for Percentage of Statements issued in 26 weeks is a National Indicator. Performance is measured annually on a financial year basis. Performance is measured at a district level on a monthly
- CAT is a locally developed indicator.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – QUARTERLY BY FINANCIAL YEAR	Floor Performance Standard	2012/2013 Outturn	Comparative Benchmark	Target			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Percentage of Statements issued in 26 weeks: Ni103a) excluding exceptions	80%	78.8%	93% (DfE National average 2011/12)	?	?	?	?
Children with complex communication needs who are open to the Kent CAT service will have achieved 3* targets	65%	90%*	NA	65%	65%	65%	65%
Children with complex communication needs, open to the Kent CAT service, remain in Kent schools	90%	100%	NA	90%	90%	90%	90%

\*This is a stretch target; 2011/12 measured against a 70% target for children to achieve 2 targets.

**This service does not have any specific performance indicators measurable on a termly basis by academic year**

**Table for ACTIVITY indicators measurable on a quarterly basis by financial year**

ACTIVITY INDICATOR	2012/13 Outturn	Comparative Benchmark	Expected range for activity				
			Threshold	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
SEN Referrals for statutory assessment	1059	N/A		254	226	188	391
Number of children with SEN Statement	6901	N/A		6990	6654	6760	6901
Placements in out county placement fall by 10%, from 415 in October 2012 to 353.	450	N/A		425	400	375	353

**Table for PERFORMANCE indicators measurable annually by financial year**

**Note: These are local indicator; national benchmarks are not published. Floor Standard is March 2012 outturn.**

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR - ANNUALLY BY FINANCIAL YEAR	Floor Performance Standard	2012/13 Outturn	Comparative Benchmark	Target 2013/14	Target 2014/15
	415				353

**SECTION G: ACTIVITY REQUIRING SUPPORT FROM OTHER DIVISIONS/SERVICES**

(For example Property, ICT, Business Strategy, Human Resources, Finance & Procurement, Planning & Environment, Public Health, Service Improvement, Commercial Services, Governance & Law, Customer Relationships, Communications & Community Engagement or other Divisions/Services)

ACTIVITY DETAILS	EXPECTED IMPACT	EXPECTED DATE
Finance support priority 4; identifying resource implications, collaborative business planning	An effective well costed business plan supports proposed changes	July 2013
Property support with priority 3; addressing placement pressure	capital improvements to special school	March 2014
FSC commissioning support with priority 3; commissioning framework in place for independent school placements	Robust commissioning of non maintained placements	December 2013
Legal Services support for judicial review, case precedents, Tribunals	Ensuring practice remains lawful	ongoing
ICT support for priority 2; validating the quality of data input (Impulse)	Accurate data on Ni103a/b	September 2013
ICT support for priority 6; ensuring the Local Offer is accessible online and skilling up staff as tour guides to help parents navigate the	Pathfinder is fully developed and rolled out across Kent	January 2014
Communications support for priority 6; publicising the Local Offer	Readiness for Children & Families Bill	January 2014