

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Roger Gough,

Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform

DECISION NO:

17/00038

For publication

Subject: Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2017-2019

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform I agree to note the progress in delivering the SEND Strategy and approve the new revised Kent SEND Strategy for 2017-19 which sets out the Council's priorities for action leading up to 2020.

Reason(s) for decision:

Much has been achieved in expanding SEND provision, ensuring better quality education and support for SEND learners, developing a wider range of options for parents and increasing high needs funding and the capital funding to expand and improve Special Schools. As a result there have been improvements in attainment and progress for SEND learners, although attainment gaps remain very wide and progress rates need to improve further.

The range of support, advice and training for schools and direct additional support for the teaching of SEND learners, through the LIFT process, has improved and levels of satisfaction with the local arrangements are high. As we continue to see the incidence of ASD increase we need to do more to ensure all schools have the expertise needed to support and teach these pupils so that they make good progress.

We have significantly increased high needs funding and more pupils are supported through this mechanism without the need for a lengthy statutory assessment and Education Health and Care Plan. This has increased earlier intervention and achieved better targeting of the available resources to the needs of individual pupils. However referrals for statutory assessment continue to increase, which is costly and time consuming, and where pupils can be supported just as well through high needs funding we need to do more to give parents confidence in this approach.

Finally we have successfully implemented the SEND reforms, introduced Education Health and Care Plans and a new statutory assessment process with the closer involvement of parents, delivered a new Local Offer and made good progress in transferring Statements to the new Plans.

In taking the SEND Strategy forward to 2019 we recognise there is more to do to keep pace with changing needs and levels of demand, and to improve educational outcomes further.

In particular we want to continue to improve our provision for ASD learners across all schools, and work more effectively in partnership with Health Service Commissioners and providers to improve speech and language provision, other therapies, specialist nursing and mental health support.

We are also giving more priority to improving earlier identification and capacity in the early years, to ensure children's needs are identified at the right time and earlier interventions can have greater impact on supporting their development. This involves continuing to improve SEND support in Early Years settings and more integrated working with Health Visitors and Children's Centres.

Looking ahead we also need to continue to increase provision, in Special Schools and Specialist Resourced Provisions in mainstream schools, as well as ensure that new Special Free Schools deliver the additional places we need in parts of Kent where there are still gaps in our SEND provision. Consequently we aim to ensure that fewer children will need to be educated out of their local area and out of the county and as a further consequence we expect to see a reduced level of need for SEN transport.

As we continue to see high needs funding increase, and indications are that the National Funding formula will cap this, we aim to work in partnership with schools to develop more effective ways to use high needs funding in mainstream schools. We will review high needs funding and implement any changes from September 2017.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:


This matter was considered and endorsed by the Cabinet Committee for Education and Young People's Services at its meeting on 30th March 2017.

Cabinet:

Members considered and endorsed the SEND Strategy 2017-2019 at a Cabinet meeting which was held on Monday 26th June 2017.

Any alternatives considered:

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:


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3rd July 2017
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Signed

Date