

EQIA

Section A Section A

1. Name of Activity (EQIA Title):

Services to Schools (2026 -27)

2. Directorate

Children Young People and Education (CYPE)

3. Responsible Service/Division

Education Planning and Access

Accountability and Responsibility

4. Officer completing EQIA

Note: This should be the name of the officer who will be submitting the EQIA onto the App.

Laura Murphy – CY EPA

5. Head of Service

Note: This should be the Head of Service who will be approving your submitted EQIA.

David Adams – CY EPA

6. Director of Service

Note: This should be the name of your responsible director.

Christine McInnes - CY EPA

The type of Activity you are undertaking

7. What type of activity are you undertaking?

Service Change – *operational changes in the way we deliver the service to people.* Answer Yes/No

Yes

Service Redesign – *restructure, new operating model or changes to ways of working.* Answer Yes/No

No

Project/Programme – *includes limited delivery of change activity, including partnership projects, external funding projects and capital projects.* Answer Yes/No

No

Commissioning/Procurement – *means commissioning activity which requires commercial judgement.* Answer Yes/No

No

Strategy /Policy – *includes review, refresh or creating a new document.* Answer Yes/No

No

Other – Please add details of any other activity type here.

Not Applicable

8. Aims and Objectives and Equality Recommendations – Note: You will be asked to give a brief description of the aims and objectives of your activity in this section of the App, along with the Equality recommendations. You may use this section to also add any context you feel may be required.

The national funding arrangements for schools and local authorities has been shifting over the years as the Department for Education (DfE) seeks to move schools and academies to a consistent funding arrangement. Kent County Council (the Council) has long argued there should be parity of funding between maintained schools and academies, and between Kent schools and those in other parts of the Country.

With the introduction of the School Funding Reforms in 2013-14 Local Authorities were directed to delegate a number of former centrally retained DSG budgets to schools for the first time. A total of £8.7m of DSG funding was delegated to schools from 1 April 2013. At the same time, local Schools Funding Forums were given the powers to de-delegate

and return some of this funding to the LA for certain categories of spend where better efficiency could be achieved through central delivery by the LA.

The Education Services Grant (ESG) allocated to local authorities by the Government for the provision of statutory services in relation to schools was withdrawn in 2016/17. The DfE introduced a provision within the School Funding Regulations for local authorities to agree a contribution from LA maintained schools budget shares towards the cost of statutory services. This principle reflects the charge that most Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) place on their schools for central services.

The Council provides a range of services and support to schools. Some services and support are provided to all state funded schools in line with our statutory duties. Others are provided solely to the schools we maintain as a local authority. The Council has looked at all the services it provides to schools to ensure it is treating schools fairly and delivering services and support in accordance with any requirements of the grant funding we receive.

The review has led the Council to consider how some services and support to its maintained schools (mainstream and special) and pupil referral units (PRUs) should be funded moving forward. It is therefore proposing the following changes (from 1 April 2026), and is consulting maintained schools and PRUs on these.

Proposed changes are as follow:

1.Statutory compliance testing and surveys, including tree surveys

Our proposal for 2026 -27 is to top-slice school budgets. This would be for a rolling 2-year period. This is being proposed for all maintained schools and PRUs. The Council commissions Skanska to arrange and manage all premises-related statutory compliance tests and surveys and Kent Landscape Services for tree surveys. It does so regardless of whether the Council or the governing body is the duty holder, because schools financing regulations require the Council to fund all maintained schools equitably. The duty holder is generally the employer - the Council for community and voluntary controlled schools, and the governing body for voluntary aided and foundation schools.

2.Health and Safety advice and training

Our proposal is to top-slice school budgets to provide a health and safety advice and training service to maintained schools. This would be for a rolling 2-year period. All employers have a duty to comply with the legal requirements outlined in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated legislation and must so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees and others who have access to their work environment or may be affected by their work activities. The Act mandates risk assessments and the implementation of appropriate safety measures.

3.Employment Tribunal Awards

Our Proposal is to top-slice school budgets to meet the Council's costs of defending school based employment tribunals and the costs of any tribunal awards relating to school based cases. This would be for a rolling 2-year period. The Scheme for Financing Maintained Schools sets out the circumstances in which a charge may be made to a school's budget share - "6.2.3 Awards by courts and employment tribunals against the LA, or out of court settlements, arising from action or inaction by the governing body contrary to the LA's agreement and/or advice." This means that ordinarily, if a school has followed the Council's (or their commissioned Human Resources (HR) provider's) advice, the Council meets the costs of employment tribunal awards (note: the Council does not meet the costs of settlement agreements). The Scheme implements s37 of the Education Act 2002, which relates to payments in the event of dismissal of employees in maintained schools.

4.Staff Care (Occupational Health Advice)

Our proposal is for schools to commission their own occupational health advice. The Council currently commissions

HR Connect (Staff Care Services) to provide a full suite of fully compliant occupational health (OH) services to maintained schools.

5.Administration of teachers pensions

The proposal is to top-slice school budgets for the full cost of the Council administering the pension arrangements of maintained school staff. This would be for a rolling 2-year period. Under the regulations of the Teachers' Pension scheme, LAs are responsible for the provision of data and contributions to the Teachers' Pensions Scheme, and for ensuring compliance with the Disclosure and Auto Enrolment Regulations. The LA retains these responsibilities even where a maintained school chooses to use a payroll provider other than the LA. This is not something that can be delegated to schools and thus not a service schools can buy from the market. It is an area where the finance regulations enable the Council to top-slice maintained school budgets, recognising that the Education Services Grant has ended, and the Council must provide this service.

Overall impact of the proposals

The table below summarises the current costs of top-slicing related to the proposals above. All of the pupil numbers and figures contained in this are indicative and based on October 24 census data; actual figures will be based on 2026/27 financial data using October 25 census data. Please note the pupil numbers relate to maintained schools only. Guidance sets out that LAs should charge a single rate per 5-16 year-old pupils for all maintained mainstream schools (and this is deducted from the basic entitlement funding). The rate does not include Early Years or Post-16 as these pupils are funded via a different formula. LAs may chose a different rate for Special Schools and PRUs. As the Council is proposing a 2-year rolling agreement, it is important to note the costs would be increased year on year in accordance with the related contract clauses on inflation.

Table: Proposed top-slicing and buy-back rates based on 2024-25 costs. These costs are subject to annual inflation.

Top-slicing/buyback rates (£ per pupil) of existing	Primary (62,699 pupils)	Secondary (15,384 pupils)	Special & PRU (5,437 & 354 pupils)	Total pot
Statutory compliance (including tree surveys)	£22.61	£22.61	£22.61	£1,896,128
Health and Safety advice, training, and compliance	£1.81	£1.81	£1.81	£152,075
Employment tribunal awards and associated legal costs	£0.82	£0.82	£0.82	£68,800
Administration of teacher pensions	£1.57	£1.57	£1.57	£132,000
Total	£26.81	£26.81	£26.81	£2,249,003

Section Section B– Evidence

Note: For questions 9, 10 & 11 at least one of these must be a 'Yes'. You can continuing working on the EQIA in the App, but you will not be able to submit it for approval without this information.

9. Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity? Answer: Yes/No

Yes

10. Is it possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way? Answer: Yes/No
Yes
11. Is there national evidence/data that you can use? Answer: Yes/No
Yes
12. Have you consulted with Stakeholders? Answer: Yes/No Stakeholders are those who have a stake or interest in your project which could be residents, service users, staff, members, statutory and other organisations, VCSE partners etc.
LA maintained schools and PRUs are to be consulted 9 June to 18 July 2025. Final proposals will be presented to the Schools Funding Forum in Autumn 2025 for their decision.
13. Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with? Please give details in the box provided. This may be details of those you have already involved, consulted and engaged with or who you intend to do so with in the future. If the answer to question 12 is 'No', please explain why.
A Consultation is scheduled. It will be available on the KCC website and shared with schools via briefings. Those consulted will include maintained primary, secondary and special school and PRU headteachers, school business managers and governing bodies. The assumptions made in this EQIA will be tested through the consultation process and reviewed in response to the responses received.
14. Has there been a previous equality analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years? Answer: Yes/No
Yes, for the previous phase of changes, although the areas of service differed.
15. Do you have evidence/data that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity? Answer: Yes/No
Yes - We have reviewed the evidence/ data and have carefully considered any impact this proposal may have on groups with protected characteristic. This includes pupils and staff in maintained schools. The data collected included pupils sex, SEN, EHCP, EAL, FSM and ethnic minority. After applying the proposal which seeks to move schools and academies to a consistent funding arrangement we have concluded that there is no group which would be impacted above others - all schools and therefore pupils within each setting will be impacted equally and consistently under the proposal. CYPE have also reviewed the Schools workforce in England 2023 data - School workforce in England, Reporting year 2023 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK (explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk) After careful consideration we can't find any data or evidence which shows any significant impact on groups with protected characteristics. All staff and pupils in maintained schools will be treated equally within this proposal. National information shows other LAs have adopted proposals similar to those we are considering. Academy schools in Kent already fund the services within our proposals from their school budgets. 50% of Kent's schools are academies, and these educate 66% of our pupils. Thus we concluded the proposed changes to how the services are funded does not on any group more than any other.
Section C – Impact
16. Who may be impacted by the activity? Select all that apply.
Service users/clients - Answer: Yes/No
Yes
Residents/Communities/Citizens - Answer: Yes/No
No
Staff/Volunteers - Answer: Yes/No

Yes
17. Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>
No
18. Please give details of Positive Impacts
Negative Impacts and Mitigating Actions
The questions in this section help to think through positive and negative impacts for people affected by your activity. Please use the Evidence you have referred to in Section B and explain the data as part of your answer.
Impacts and
19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
a) Are there negative impacts for Age? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i> <i>(If yes, please also complete sections b, c and d).</i>
No
b) Details of Negative Impacts for Age
Not Applicable
c) Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
a) Are there negative impacts for Disability? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i> <i>(If yes, please also complete sections b, c and d).</i>
No
b) Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
c) Mitigating Actions for Disability
Not Applicable
d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
a) Are there negative impacts for Sex? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i> <i>(If yes, please also complete sections b, c and d).</i>
No
b) Details of Negative Impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
c) Mitigating Actions for Sex
Not Applicable
d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
a) Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i> <i>(If yes, please also complete sections b, c and d).</i>
No
b) Details of Negative Impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
c) Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Race

a) Are there negative impacts for Race? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i> <i>(If yes, please also complete sections b, c and d).</i>
No
b) Details of Negative Impacts for Race
Not Applicable
c) Mitigating Actions for Race
Not Applicable
d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
a) Are there negative impacts for Religion and Belief? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i> <i>(If yes, please also complete sections b, c and d).</i>
No
b) Details of Negative Impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
c) Mitigating Actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Religion and belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
a) Are there negative impacts for sexual orientation. <i>Answer:</i> <i>Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c and d).</i>
No
b) Details of Negative Impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
c) Mitigating Actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
a) Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i> <i>(If yes, please also complete sections b, c and d).</i>
No
b) Details of Negative Impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
c) Mitigating Actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for marriage and civil partnerships
a) Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i> <i>(If yes, please also complete sections b, c and d).</i>
No
b) Details of Negative Impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
c) Mitigating Actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
a) Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>

<i>(If yes, please also complete sections b, c and d).</i>
No
b) Details of Negative Impacts for Carer's Responsibilities
Not Applicable
c) Mitigating Actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Carer's Responsibilities
Not Applicable