

## EQIA Submission – ID Number

### Section A

**EQIA Title**

Specialist Teaching and Learning Service Funding and provider change

**Responsible Officer**

Barbara Van Minnen - CY CC

**Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)**

Christy Holden - CY CC

### Type of Activity

**Service Change**

No

**Service Redesign**

Service Redesign

**Project/Programme**

No

**Commissioning/Procurement**

Commissioning/Procurement

**Strategy/Policy**

No

**Details of other Service Activity**

No

### Accountability and Responsibility

**Directorate**

Children Young People and Education

**Responsible Service**

Education and SEND

**Responsible Head of Service**

Christy Holden - CY CC

**Responsible Director**

Christine McInnes - CY EPA

### Aims and Objectives

A significant transformation program is underway to enhance how the Council and its partners support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Kent. Proposals like the Communities of Schools model aim to increase school involvement in decision-making regarding the utilisation of local resources for inclusion and the allocation of the High Needs Funding budget.

As part of this transformation, a public consultation titled "Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS) and SEND Transformation in Kent" was held from 9 September 2024 to 3 November 2024. The consultation aimed to understand how existing STLS services, structures, and processes fit into the new ways of working, and to identify duplication and gaps in provision.

The STLS provides services to schools and early years settings across the county, including one-to-one advice for individual children (through Local Inclusion Forum Teams), training, and transition support. The current Service Level Agreement ends on 31 August, 2025, with no option for extension. Key stakeholders have been involved in assessing the current impact of the service and exploring future options. Some stakeholders found it challenging to fully participate in the consultation due to a lack of detail about the new ways of working.

The consultation outcomes indicate that the service is highly valued and plays a crucial role in supporting mainstream schools and early years settings. There is a clear preference for the continuation of the service. Both professional and resident respondents agreed that STLS supports children and young people in achieving the outcomes that are important to them, has the skills and knowledge to promote inclusive practices in mainstream schools, upskills teaching staff, and facilitates school-to-school support.

Recommendations regarding the future of the service reflect this feedback and the proposal is to continue to fund the service. Based on a proposal submitted during the consultation, a further assessment has been undertaken to determine the number of providers for the service and the proposal is for a single provider to deliver the service across the county. In considering the type providers who would be able to deliver a countywide service, within an evolving SEND landscape and recognising the financial pressure against the High Needs Funding, the proposal is that the service will be bought in house and Kent County Council will deliver it. This will ensure consistency and continuity of delivery across the county as SEND provision in mainstream education evolves.

An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was completed and included in the consultation documents. Respondents were asked to read the document and provide feedback on the equality analysis, including suggestions for additional considerations related to equality and diversity.

The EQIA has been updated to reflect the feedback from the consultation.

## Section B – Evidence

**Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?**

Yes

**It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?**

Yes

**Is there national evidence/data that you can use?**

No

**Have you consulted with stakeholders?**

Yes

**Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?**

KCC stakeholders who form the STLS Steering Group

- . KCC internal governance groups i.e. Transformation Operational Group 2 (TOG2) and Divisional Management Team (DMT)
- . SLA-holding Headteachers and the STLS Leads
- . Schools and Early Year's settings
- . Families and carers
- . School Governors
- . Schools Funding Forum

**Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?**

Yes

**Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?**

Yes

## Section C – Impact

**Who may be impacted by the activity?**

<b>Service Users/clients</b> Service users/clients
<b>Staff</b> Staff/Volunteers
<b>Residents/Communities/Citizens</b> Residents/communities/citizens
<b>Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?</b>
Yes
<b>Details of Positive Impacts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of the service by a single countywide provider will ensure an a more equitable offer to children with SEND across the county, addressing current variation in capacity and service offer.</li> <li>• A more integrated local offer of support will be achieved through greater alignment to schools through the Community of Schools model being implemented through the Localities Model.</li> <li>• The model will move to a link practitioner model, moving away from a visiting expert model and towards a mentoring and coaching model, building greater use of the expertise already within schools and settings.</li> <li>• Bringing the service into the Council will facilitate closer collaboration amongst Council inclusion services.</li> <li>• Greater opportunity for sharing of learning amongst SENCos, teachers and HLTAs</li> </ul>
<b>Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions</b>
19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
<b>Are there negative impacts for age?</b>
Yes
<b>Details of negative impacts for Age</b>
<p>Respondents identified a detrimental impact on younger children, specifically those in early years settings, if the service were to end. This would also be the case if the funding approach changed in a way that meant early years settings could not longer access the service.</p> <p>The impact on younger children, specifically those in early years settings, was also referenced in relation to transition into school age settings.</p>
<b>Mitigating Actions for Age</b>
<p>The risk of impact occurring will be mitigated by the service continuing to receive funding. Further, the proposal is that funding for early years STLS will come from the early years grant, a dedicated funding allocated for early years. This will mitigate the risk of the service no longer being provided to early years settings.</p> <p>The proposal to bring the service into the Council will allow for greater alignment of early years support service, supporting a more joined up and coordinated offer of support.</p>
<b>Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age</b>
Siobhan Price
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
<b>Are there negative impacts for Disability?</b>

Yes
<b>Details of Negative Impacts for Disability</b>
Respondents identified potentially detrimental impact on children and young people with SEND if the support provided by the service were to end. Some respondents identified a potential impact specifically on children with Communication and Interaction, Social Emotional and Mental Health, and Cognition and Learning needs. This is because children with sensory and physical disability needs will continue to be supported by in-house Sensory and PD STLS which fulfils a statutory duty.
<b>Mitigating actions for Disability</b>
The risk of impact occurring will be mitigated by the service continuing to be funded and the service continuing to support all eligible children. A move to a Link Practitioner Model will support the ongoing development of inclusive practice in mainstream schools for children of all need types. The involvement of Communities of Schools in directing the work of STLS will support a broader discussion of the needs of schools in support children of all need types.
<b>Responsible Officer for Disability</b>
Siobhan Price
<b>21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Sex</b>
Yes
<b>Details of negative impacts for Sex</b>
A potential negative impact on Sex was referenced by respondents to the consultation if the service ended. This is based on the high portion of women that make up the STLS, school and SENCo workforce.
<b>Mitigating actions for Sex</b>
The risk of impact occurring will be mitigated by the service continuing to receive funding. Further, the proposal to bring the service in house has been assessed as being the option most likely to provide longer term financial sustainability and security to the service and those who both delivery, and receive it.
<b>Responsible Officer for Sex</b>
Siobhan Price
<b>22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</b>
Not Applicable
<b>23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Race</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Race</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Race</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race</b>
Not Applicable
<b>24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Religion and belief</b>

Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Religion and belief</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief</b>
Not Applicable
<b>25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation</b>
Not Applicable
<b>26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity</b>
Not Applicable
<b>27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships</b>
Not Applicable
<b>28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities</b>
<b>Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities</b>
No
<b>Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities</b>
Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities</b>
Not Applicable