

<p>The Children, Young People and Education Directorate's Contribution to the KCC Annual Equalities Plan 2016-17</p>

Purpose

This paper sets out the way in which the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Directorate understands and responds to the needs of its most vulnerable children, young people and their families. The paper details the key equality issues for each service and its clients. Progress the Directorate has made in the last year to address inequalities is chronicled along with the actions services will take in the future in order to narrow the inequality gaps and promote equality of opportunity to address the diverse needs of all Kent's children and young people.

In addition to setting out how the Directorate addresses inequalities, promotes equality and assesses progress against equalities priorities, the Directorate's equalities activity also demonstrates support for the achievement of the Council's Strategic Equality Objectives.

Kent County Council (KCC) is required to publish its Equality Objectives (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). The new Equality and Human Rights Policy and Objectives 2016-20 for the Council were approved by Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on 2 December 2016. These objectives focus on establishing core systems and behaviours that help services to develop good equality practice with a focus on improving outcomes. Performance against the objectives is reported to Cabinet Committees annually and can be found on www.kent.gov.uk. Overall, Kent County Council is now better able to demonstrate how it discharges the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Introduction

Kent County Council (KCC) is operating in a diverse education system with greater freedoms and autonomy for schools, colleges and other education and learning providers. To achieve the improvement in outcomes set out in our strategic plans, particularly our vulnerable groups across Kent, we work in close partnership with early years' settings, schools, colleges, training providers, employers and other providers and stakeholders.

Education and learning has the potential to improve the wellbeing and life chances of all children and young people, especially the most vulnerable groups in our communities including those with protected characteristics under the Equality legislation. Education is linked with happiness and wellbeing, mental and physical health, employment and ultimately life expectancy. It has been proven that generally the more you learn, the more you earn and you are more at risk of spending time not in education, employment or training if you have limited or no qualifications. Good quality education and support builds resilience, increases self-confidence and independence and gives young people the skills and qualifications to progress in their learning and on to achieve sustained employment that will benefit individuals, families and the communities they live and work in.

Reducing inequality in education and learning outcomes, reducing achievement gaps and championing the needs of the most vulnerable children and young people is therefore a vital part of the Local Authority's role and purpose. This affects individuals and whole communities.

"Education is serving many children well, but it is failing those who need it most."
[Sir Kevan Collins, Chief Executive, Education Endowment Foundation – June 2015]

In April 2016 CYPE published its Vulnerable Learners' Strategy, which brought together in one document all the actions EYPS are taking in partnership with schools to improve outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people. The document sets out examples of good practice in schools and strategies that are having some impact in narrowing achievement gaps and promoting greater social mobility. The Strategy is an attempt to move the agenda forward in Kent in a more significant and joined up way.

Strategic leadership and ambitions

The CYPE Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2017-20 is the key strategic plan for these Services in Kent. The development of this plan and its priorities came from a range of discussions that are held regularly with Headteachers, governors and other public sector partners to determine where Kent learning institutions need to be in relation to ever improving education and learning outcomes.

The Plan sets out shared goals and includes a range of ambitious priority improvements up to 2020. These ambitions and strategic priorities for Education and Young People's Services are based on a rigorous analysis of current performance and challenging expectations for future improvements.

The Plan provides all concerned with education in Kent, a clear sense of what services are for, the challenges faced and the priorities and targets for transformation and improvement both within the Council and amongst our schools and other settings.

We will continue to support the best early years settings, schools and their leaders to lead the system and drive improvement through collaboration across all schools, settings and education and training providers, supporting and challenging one another to improve, so that we are able to transform outcomes for all children and young people more rapidly. We aim to promote innovation and creativity in teaching and learning and the curriculum, so that Kent achieves a world class education system, greater social mobility and reverses the national trends of under-performance for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups which hold back progress in our economy and our society.

[Extract from Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2017-20]

Summary of areas where we have made the most difference in 2016

We set very challenging and ambitious improvement targets and there have been positive indications that we are achieving good progress:

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, 74.8% of children achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD). This is a 1.9% increase compared to 2015. Although this misses our challenging 2016 target of 77%, this outcome is above the national average of 69.3%. At this measure, Kent is ranked second amongst its statistical neighbours.
- At Key Stage 1 in 2016, 66.6% of pupils in Kent met or exceeded the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Mathematics combined, which is 6.3 percentage points above the national average.
- At Key Stage 2, with new national measures in 2016, Kent performed above the national average for all indicators, apart from Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling which is in line with the national average. 59% of Kent pupils achieved the 'expected standard' in the Reading, Writing and Mathematics combined measure, which is 6 percentage points above the national average of 53% and the highest amongst Kent's statistical neighbours. The proportion of pupils who attained a 'higher standard' in this combined

measure was 6%, which is one percentage point above the national average. Compared to its statistical neighbours, Kent is ranked third for this measure.

- At Key Stage 4 in 2016 there was an overall positive and improved picture. Secondary schools in Kent performed well against the new and old headline GCSE performance measures and against national averages. Compared with 2015 on the old measures there have been clear improvements in attainment.
- Kent achieved a Progress 8 score of -0.04 in 2016, which is slightly below the national average of -0.03. 59 out of Kent's 98 Secondary schools met or achieved above the national average for this measure and of these 31 are Grammar schools. Kent is ranked sixth out of its 10 statistical neighbours for this measure and 80th out of 151 local authorities nationally.
- On the previous measure (the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A*-C including English and mathematics) Kent achieved 59% in 2016 which is an improvement on last year's figure of 57.4% and 1.3 percentage points above the 2016 national average of 57.7%. Kent is ranked fifth out of its statistical neighbours for this measure and 55th out of 151 local authorities nationally.
- In the new headline Basics measure, the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C in English and mathematics is 63.7% which is 0.4 percentage points above the national average in 2016 and 3.9 percentage points above last year's result of 59.8%. Although this is a positive picture for all Kent pupils there are 58 Kent Secondary schools below the national average. Kent is ranked sixth out of its statistical neighbours for this measure and 68th out of 151 local authorities nationally.
- Improvements have also been made in GCSE A*-C passes for English across the county. The success rate this year is 76.2%, compared to 70.4% last year, which is 1.1 percentage points above the national average of 75.1%. In mathematics, there is a small increase this year to 68.1%, compared to 66.6% last year. Kent is just below the 2016 national average of 68.8%.
- Performance in the English Baccalaureate (Ebacc) measure has also improved. This year it is 29.5%, rising from 26.5% last year, and 4.7% above the 2016 national figure of 24.8%. Kent is ranked first amongst its statistical neighbours and as 34th out of 151 local authorities nationally.
- Performance at post 16 across a range of qualifications is variable with some measures in line with national averages but given improving performance at other Key Stages this is disappointing. It will be a priority to work with schools to continue to improve guidance for students in choosing appropriate pathways Post 16 and to ensure provision of a full range of technical pathways at 14-19.
- Post 16 outcomes for 2016 are based on new DfE performance measures in five categories. These are A Level, Academic, Technical Level, Applied General and the Technical Baccalaureate.
- The figures given below are based upon the DfE 2016 performance tables at Key Stage 4, published in January 2017. All Kent and national averages noted below are for state funded schools only.

A Levels

- DfE results for 2016 show that the A Level Average Point Score per entry achieved by students in Kent schools is 30.9 which is in line with the national average of 30.8 and equivalent to a C grade. Kent is ranked fourth out of its statistical neighbours and 56th out of 150 local authorities nationally for this measure.

- The percentage of A Level students achieving AAB in at least two facilitating subjects is improving. The figure has increased to 17.0% from 12.7% in 2015, which is 1.4 percentage points above the national average of 15.6%, which is encouraging. Kent is ranked third out of its statistical neighbours and 36th out of 150 local authorities nationally for this measure.

Academic qualifications

- Academic results include A Level, AS Level, International Baccalaureate, IBCP and extended project qualifications.
- In 2016, the Average Point Score per entry achieved by Academic students in Kent schools is 32.2 which is above the national average of 31.0 and equivalent to an average C+ grade. Kent is ranked second out of its statistical neighbours and 27th out of 150 local authorities nationally for this measure.

Technical Level 3

- Technical Levels are advanced (Level 3) technical and professional qualifications, on a par with A levels and recognised by employers. Taught from September 2014, for reporting in the 16-19 Performance Tables from 2016, they equip students with specialist knowledge and skills, enabling entry to an Apprenticeship, other skilled employment or a technical degree.
- DfE results for 2016 show that the Average Point Score per entry achieved by students in Kent schools at Technical Level is 36.7 which is slightly below the national average of 36.9 and equivalent to a Distinction+ grade. Kent is ranked fourth against statistical neighbours and 68th out of 150 local authorities nationally for this measure.

Applied General Level 3

- Applied General qualifications are advanced (Level 3) qualifications that equip students with transferable knowledge and skills. Taught from September 2014, for reporting in the 16-19 Performance Tables from 2016, they are for Post-16 students wanting to continue their education through applied study. They fulfil entry requirements for a range of higher education courses, either by meeting entry requirements in their own right or being accepted alongside and adding value to other qualifications at the same level.
- In 2016, the Average Point Score per entry achieved by Applied General students in Kent schools is 37.0 which is below the national average of 38.0 and equivalent to a Distinction+. Kent is ranked seventh out of its statistical neighbours and 86th out of 150 local authorities nationally for this measure.

Technical Baccalaureate (TechBacc)

- The Technical Baccalaureate is a new performance measure that provides young people, aspiring to a technical career, with a high-quality alternative to the A level route. This recognises the achievement of students taking advanced (Level 3) programmes which include a DfE approved Tech Level, level 3 maths and extended project qualifications. It was introduced for courses starting in September 2014, for reporting in the 16-19 Performance Tables for 2016.
- In Kent schools in 2016, 20 students achieved a Technical Baccalaureate representing over 15% of the 129 students in state funded schools nationally. Kent is ranked first both

in comparison to its statistical neighbours and 150 local authorities nationally for this measure. We are intending to expand this programme over the next academic year.

Apprenticeships

- Kent continues to perform well in increasing apprenticeships; in 2015-16 numbers were significantly higher for 16 to 18 year olds at 3020. Performance is better than our statistical neighbours. There has been a significant campaign by all Kent apprenticeship providers to increase the number of 16 to 18 year old apprentices and the latest trend in the data suggests that the final out turn will be well above last year's figures.
- In 2015-16, the new Kent Employment Programme exceeded the target of 100 by placing 129 young people aged 16-24 who were unemployed for more than three months into apprenticeships. The final outturn for the Kent Employment programme for the last four years now stands at 1031 young people taking up apprenticeships.
- In the past year the percentage of schools offering apprenticeships was 51%, which exceeded the target of 50%. Currently, 306 schools are employing apprentices with 453 starts to date. This work continues to engage more schools with a target to increase the number of higher and advanced apprenticeships.
- The NEET figure for 2016 was 5.0% which was a slight increase on the January 2015 figure (4.7%) and above our target for 2016 of 3.5%. A new NEET Strategy is now in place which will help bring the NEET figure down. The target we are working towards in 2017 is 2.5%. In January 2017 the NEET figure was 3%.
- Since last year youth unemployment for 18 to 24 year olds has risen to 2.7%, which is slightly below the national average of 2.8% and accounting for 22.4% of all unemployed people in the area and above the national average of 21.6%. In August 2015 unemployment for this age group was 2.3%, compared to 3.35% in 2014. The five youth unemployment zones are registering the following percentages of young people unemployed in 2016, with data for August 2015 in brackets: Dover 3.4% (3.7%), Gravesham 3.4% (3.7%), Shepway 3.4% (3.4%), Swale 4.5% (3.8%) and Thanet 5.2% (5.6%). Thanet has the highest unemployment rate in the South East. The comparable figures for 2014 were Dover (4.8%), Gravesham (4.3%), Shepway (5.1%), Swale (5.2%) and Thanet at (7.8%).
- The number of assisted employment opportunities for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities fell short of its target of 125 at 94.

The Quality of Education in Kent Schools

- We continue to make progress in increasing the number of good and outstanding schools in Kent, following inspection by Ofsted. As at the end of 2016, 90% of schools were good and outstanding compared to 82% at the end 2015 and 75% in the previous year. In 2011-2012 only 60% of schools were judged good or better; the national average was then 70%. The national average for good and outstanding schools is now 88%.
- In Kent this overall figure of 90% includes 85.4% of Secondary schools, 91% of Primary schools, 100% of Special schools and 86% of PRUs in Kent, judged to be good or outstanding. Also, 97% of Early Years settings are good or outstanding.
- Currently, 88% of pupils attend a good or outstanding school. This includes 88.5% of Primary pupils, 86.5% of Secondary pupils, 100% of pupils attending Special schools and 98.2% of pupils attending a PRU. This equates to 10,300 more children and young

people receiving a better education compared with last year. In 2015, 83% of pupils in Kent attended a good or outstanding school.

Exclusions

- The latest exclusion data for Kent indicates that the number of exclusions reduced significantly in the 2015/16 academic year. Countywide, the number of permanent exclusions has been significantly reduced from 105 to 66 compared to the same period last year, with 727 fewer fixed-term exclusions, reducing from 10,723 to 9,996. This reflects good practice in many schools, supported by LA services, in identifying and providing appropriate help for vulnerable pupils with challenging behaviour and other learning needs.
- In 2015-16, 96% of pupils left Pupil Referral Units with at least 1 A*-G GCSE pass or equivalent. 65% achieved at least 1 or more A*-C GCSE passes or equivalent. 10% of the students achieved 5 or more A*-G GCSE qualifications or equivalent and 8% achieved 5 or more A*-C GCSE qualifications or equivalent, including A*-C in GCSE English and Maths.

School Attendance

- School absence rates overall are now just in line with the national averages.. Overall the percentage of total absences in Kent was 4.6% compared to 4.6% nationally. For Secondary schools the figures were 5.5% compared to 5.3% nationally, and for Primary the percentage was 4.0% compared to 4.0% nationally.
- However persistent absence rates in Kent are higher than the national average. The percentage of pupils who have missed 38 or more sessions (15% persistent absence) was 4.4% in Kent compared to 3.7% nationally. For Secondary schools this figure is 6.5% compared to 5.4% nationally and for Primary schools it is 2.5% compared to 2.1% nationally. The previous persistent absence figure for 2013-14 for Secondary schools was 6.2%, and for Primary schools it was 2.3%. The latest data shows an increase in persistent absence for Secondary schools up to 6.5%, and an increase to 2.5% for Primary schools. These figures continue to be worse than the national figures, which mean they are an even greater priority for improvement. For the new threshold of 10% for persistent absence from school, the figures for Kent are 9.3%, compared to 8.8 nationally for Primary pupils, and 13.2% compared to 12.3% nationally for Secondary pupils.

Education Health and Care Plans

- DfE published data showed that Kent is performing well compared to other LAs nationally, issuing 86.2% of new EHCPs issued within 20 weeks, compared to 59.2% nationally and transferring 30.3% of all existing statements to EHCPs, compared to 18.2% nationally. The volume of transfers and maintaining this pace is an issue for all local authorities.
- The volume of psychological statutory advice completed in 2015-2016 increased by 16% (an increase from 904 in 2014-2015 to 1046 pieces of statutory work), with completion within required timeframes reducing from 98% in 2014-2015 to 91% in the past year. This rising demand for statutory assessment is a concern at a time when we have invested in significant additional high needs funding which delivers resources to schools without the need for a statutory assessment. As a result the number of pupils supported by high needs funding has increased substantially.

Early Help

- In Early Help and Preventative Services support is being provided in a more timely way to 6,300 children and young people, and their families, who have an Early Help Plan. 83.4% of cases are now closed with a positive outcome for children and the family, compared to 69% last year. 22.7% of the cases closed by Specialist Children's Services were stepped down to Early Help for on-going support, which is a marginal improvement on last year. Around 6% of cases closed to Early Help are stepped up to Social Care because children's needs and the risks to them have increased.

Key Equalities Priorities for 2016-17

CYPE's Directorate Management Team considered the Council's overarching equalities objectives in May 2016 and agreed the following key Directorate equality objectives:

- Narrow the achievement gaps for all groups, including FSM pupils, learners with SEND, and Children in Care.

- Increase post 16 – 25 participation and employment opportunities for the most vulnerable groups.
- Ensure more vulnerable young people are able to access progression pathways post 16, including the offer of an apprenticeship.
- Increase access to early years for the most vulnerable including the two-year old offer of free provision for the most disadvantaged.
- Drive down exclusions from schools to zero.
- Increase the proportion of pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium attending selective education.
- Where appropriate, fewer young people become young offenders.
- Ensure more Children in Care are able to access progression pathways post 16, including the offer of an apprenticeship where appropriate, and fewer CiC become young offenders.
- Safeguard all children and young people from harm.

Key Challenges

The UK must achieve a more educated and skilled workforce and cannot afford to lose the potential of so many young people who, if they are not educated and appropriately skilled, will lead less productive and satisfying lives.

The economic and social cost of educational failure and too many young people with low level or no qualifications is immense. Gaps in our educational provision, and provision that is less than good, can damage the life chances of children and young people. In this mix the role of the Local Authority is to be ambitious, focused and strategic in bringing about educational transformation for Kent by being a strong and influential partner and commissioner with schools and other stakeholders and providers.

It is our job to ensure the right educational provision of high quality is there for all children and young people, including appropriate pathways to ensure all young people can gain good qualifications and succeed to age 18 and beyond. It is our role to build and support effective partnerships and networks that are more effective in delivering better services and improved outcomes. We also see our role as championing more innovative and creative practice and ways of working.

In particular our priorities are to:

- **Raise** attainment at all key stages, narrow achievement gaps, particularly for vulnerable learners, increase the percentage of good and outstanding Early Years settings and schools, and ensure all young people are engaged in learning or training until age 18, with a good outcome that leads to employment.
- **Continue to increase** the number of good and outstanding schools, so that the maximum number of children and young people get a good education and achieve well.
- **Embed** our new partnership relationships with all Early Years and childcare settings, schools and other providers, based on collaboration and shared effort, particularly through the Kent Association of Headteachers, to build a more effective system of school to school support.
- **Ensure** all children get the best start in the Early Years by ensuring improved Ofsted and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) outcomes, increasing the take-up of free early

education for 2, 3 and 4 year olds and ensuring there are sufficient high quality early education and childcare places.

- **Support** greater choice for parents and families in every area by commissioning a sufficient and diverse supply of places in strong schools and quality Early Years settings. In partnership with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) we shall ensure new Academies and Free Schools are established in areas of greatest need, led by strong Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) sponsors.
- **Deliver** improved multi-agency support for children and families who have additional needs through our Early Help and Preventative Services (EHPS) and work in an integrated way with Specialist Children's Services (SCS) to support children and families to achieve better outcomes, therefore reducing the need for statutory intervention in the lives of children and families.
- **Focus** on improving the support for vulnerable pupils, so that achievement gaps close for pupils on free school meals, children in care, young offenders and pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.
- **Engage** with schools and all admissions authorities to ensure every child has fair access to all schools and other provision and are included and helped to participate in education which is appropriate for their needs.
- **Continue to review and further develop** our Pupil Referral Units and other services that support pupils at risk of exclusion, or who need short periods out of school, so that the need for permanent exclusion is reduced further, in year fair access protocols work effectively to place pupils that are hard to place, and we achieve a reduction in the numbers of children missing education or who opt for home education because better alternatives are not offered and supported.
- **Promote** and support smooth and successful transitions for every child and young person from any one educational stage and provision to another, so that they continue to make good progress.
- **Develop and improve** the opportunities and progression pathways for all 14-19 year olds to participate and succeed, so that they can access higher levels of learning or employment with training, including apprenticeships and technical options to age 24.
- **Reduce** the number of NEETs by ensuring these young people move on to positive destinations, training and employment, particularly by increasing provision of targeted support for vulnerable learners.
- **Champion** twenty-first century learning so that schools and other settings innovate more and achieve more by delivering a broad curriculum that provides good qualification pathways for all learners and develops pupils' skills and knowledge for their future employment and higher learning. One example is to support the development of the IB Careers Related Programme in more Secondary schools in Kent, and to promote the new technical awards and higher level technical qualifications.
- **Increase** the number of young people on employability and pre-apprenticeship pathways; promote improving standards in sixth forms through the development and extension of successful KS4 strategies and improved GCSE results in English and mathematics; and significantly increase the number of young people gaining level 2 English and mathematics qualifications by aged 19.
- **Ensure** all our Children's Centres are rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted, offer good provision for children and families, work in an integrated way with the health visiting service and effectively target, reach and support the most needy families to ensure a greater number of vulnerable children and families achieve good outcomes.

- **Deliver** the Troubled Families programme as an integral part of the Early Help offer that succeeds in turning around the lives of more families experiencing challenging circumstances.
- **Improve** the youth offer and programmes of support for vulnerable adolescents so as to increase their participation in positive activities and reduce offending, anti-social behaviour, teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol misuse and youth unemployment.
- **Through** Community Learning and Skills (CLS) commissioned services, support young people and adults to improve their skill levels and reach their full potential by meeting the skills needs of the local economy and improving the training infrastructure for young people and adult learners.
- **Ensure** prompt solutions are found for schools that are under-performing and proactive support is provided for good and outstanding schools and collaborative partnerships that want to develop local MATs, by working in close partnership with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC).
- **Reduce** demand and costs by implementing changes in SEN transport, including rolling out Independent Travel Training for pupils, offering Personal Transport Budgets to families and the commissioning of new SEN transport arrangements for individual Special schools, in order to increase the independence and resilience of pupils and reduce the rising cost of SEN transport. This work has already seen the successful delivery of two pilots and the county-wide roll out has begun to build on the success of that.
- **Ensure** that children and young people are safeguarded and diverted from individuals, institutions and ideologies that promote violent extremism, terrorism and child sexual exploitation, by working with schools and other settings to educate children and young people about potential dangers that undermine British values.
- **Ensure** that the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reforms are effectively embedded through a review of the SEND Strategy, resulting in: higher achievement for all; Special Educational Needs (SEN) statements are promptly converted to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP); pupils and their parents are involved in determining the most appropriate support for their identified learning difficulties; funding is effectively targeted to address high needs; and the need for new provision is addressed through the implementation of the Special Schools Capital Programme and gaps in provision are met through commissioning of new provision in-county.
- **Build** on the good progress that has already been made in respect of the Grammar Schools and Social Mobility Select Committee recommendations, which are seeking to redress the under-representation of children from disadvantaged backgrounds accessing Kent's grammar schools.
- **Continue** to develop our traded services so that schools have the services they need at an affordable cost, by developing new products to support schools and Early Years settings.
- **Develop** an Education Services Company in partnership with schools, in order to increase the resilience and long term sustainability of education services in light of the changing role for local authorities in education.
- **Continue** to ensure that statutory duties and services required by schools are maintained in light of national proposals and possible legislative changes about the role of the LA in terms of supporting children and their families.
- **Support** the Kent Association of Headteachers in delivering the **Kent Leadership Strategy** so that we all remain focused on developing the leadership capacity in Kent

schools, and in the local authority, that is required to have the best education and children's services in the country.

We achieve greater success when we are good at collaboration and partnership, when we integrate our services and ways of working, and when we make optimum use of the networks that exist to support children and families.

We believe it is the job of all leaders across the system to be effective partners and to collaborate in the best interests of children and young people. Working effectively with many different providers across the Early Years, schools and post 16 skills and employment sectors, together with partners in the health service and the police, requires us to drive improvement through strategic influence, pooled effort and shared priorities. This can never be taken for granted and needs clear leadership which is ambitious, and hard work and sustained effort by all partners.

It continues to be a priority, therefore, to ensure success by supporting:

- **School** leaders to lead the system through stronger school partnerships, the Kent Association of Headteachers, working at a local level through District Forums and the Area Boards that have strong and purposeful working relationships in order to deliver the best opportunities and outcomes for children and young people.
- **Schools** to procure support services well, have real choice and be able to procure high quality services through EduKent.
- **Increased** collaborative working in the Early Years and childcare sectors.
- **Locality** based working and commissioning to pool and target resources to local needs in districts.
- **The Kent and Medway Skills Commission** which is prioritising the development of a new model to inform 14-24 technical pathways and to provide better, employer-driven information about career and training options.
- **More** effective partnership with FE Colleges.
- **Local 14-19 strategic partnerships** to maximise effort and increase capacity to develop new provision, address gaps in provision and transform post 16 learning pathways and training opportunities so that they are truly excellent.
- **The district based Local Inclusion Forum Teams (LIFT)** and outreach work from Special schools to have more effective support for all schools in meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.
- **District based integrated teams** and multi-agency working in Early Help and Prevention, so that EHPS work is more closely aligned to partners in schools and SCS, better reflects the needs of children, young people and their families and is more cost effective.
- **Local Children's Partnership Groups** that will drive improvements in outcomes for children and young people by providing a vehicle for identifying and addressing local needs and gaps in provision and facilitating and pooling resources across agencies to meet the needs of local children and families.
- **Effective working in the Youth Justice Board**, to ensure all agencies contribute to the reduction in youth offending, and re-offending, and young people are helped towards positive destinations through education and training.

Improved partnership between schools and colleges, employers and training providers, to develop more high quality 14-19 technical pathways including apprenticeships and encourage providers to make use of local market information and business data to inform decisions about provision and the design of the learning and training offer.

Plans and Strategies to support Vulnerable Learners in Kent

Children, Young People and Education Services Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2017-20

CYPE key strategic plan sets out in detail, the Directorate's priorities, targets and approaches to supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged groups:

'To deliver our vision we are ambitious to achieve the following essential features of a good system for children's development, protection and well-being. Firstly we work hard to ensure the best conditions in which pupils experience good learning and teaching which meets their needs, and where pupils' social, moral and intellectual development and confidence can flourish. We want every child in Kent to achieve well above expectations and not to be held back by their social background. We expect every young person to benefit from a broad range of pathways to further learning and employment, for their own achievement and for the success of the Kent economy. We want to ensure that vulnerable children and families have their needs met early so that they do not experience the level of challenge and difficulty in their lives that requires more intensive statutory services. They should have the same opportunities as all other children and families to flourish, to stay safe and well, and succeed in the education system and the world of work.'

'Ensuring the most vulnerable learners experience success is one of our top priorities. Children in care, young offenders, excluded pupils, learners with special educational needs and disabilities and children from families on low incomes all experience significant barriers to their achievement and attain less well than their peers. We aim, as a priority, to ensure they achieve better outcomes and we close the attainment gaps that exist as a barrier to their future success.'

[Extracts from CYPE Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2017-2020]

To deliver this ambition it is recognized that further work, new approaches and systems are required across Kent, if there is going to be a significant improvement in narrowing gaps and improving life chances for vulnerable children and young people. This key strategic plan builds on a range of successful strategies, plans and activities already in place, which include:

- Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners 2016-19 [Available here](#)
- Refresh of the Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2015–18 [Available here](#)
- Adult Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy [Available here](#)
- Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2014–17 [Available here](#)
- Kent's Strategy for School Improvement [Available here](#)
- Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2013–16 [Available here](#)
- Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2017–21 [Available here](#)
- Early Help and Preventative Services Strategy and Three Year Plan 2015-18 [Available here](#)
- Pupil Referral Unit and Alternative Provision Prospectus [Available here](#)
- Education and Young People's Services NEET Strategy and Action Plan 2015–16 [Available here](#)

- KCC Policy on Supporting Children and Young People with Medical Conditions including Mental Health Needs [Available Here](#)
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015 [Available here](#)

Supporting Parental Preference for Primary and Secondary schools

Local authorities across England continue to face significant challenges because of a rising demand for Primary school places. In Kent, however, the combination of careful planning and close working with schools means we have been able to expand the number of places to meet demand and to sustain a high proportion of children starting at a school of their preference.

We set targets for the percentage of families securing their first preference schools for entry in September 2016. For Primary schools the target was 85% and on Offer Day 87.2% of parents secured their first preference.

Over 96% of children across Kent will start their education at a Primary school named by their parents on their application. That figure - 17,400 children in all - includes 15,705 (87.2%) who were offered their first preference, up by 762 compared to last year. These improved outcomes have been achieved at a time when the total number of applications for school places increased for the ninth consecutive year to 18,006 - a rise of 591 from 2015.

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For Secondary schools the target was 84% and 81.4% of parents secured their first preference. The target for first and second preferences for both primary and secondary schools was 94%, with 93.3% of parents securing their first or second preference.

This year more children than ever applied for a place in a Kent Secondary school, with 18,798 applications received, an increase of over 600 since last year. In total, 16,172 pupils have been offered a place at Secondary school this year, out of the 17,974 places available.

92% of all applications were made online which means from 1st March 2016 thousands of Kent families are able to log on to view their accounts or will have received an email to find out which Secondary school their child has been offered for this September. For families who applied on paper forms, offers went out by first class post and letters should arrive over the next few days

Despite the increase in applications, 357 more Kent children will get their first preference of Secondary school for September compared with last year and over 97% will receive an offer from one of their four preferences. Just over 92% will get their first or second preference of school, and just over 96% will get their first, second or third preference. These figures are an improvement on last year.

Improving Attainment and Achievement across all School Phases

The Directorate takes its school improvement responsibilities very seriously and we use all the available powers of intervention and support to accelerate improvement, address decline and prevent school failure.

We are determined to do everything we can, within the framework of government policy and through our own local initiative, to bring about dramatic improvement in the quality of schools in Kent to ensure every school requiring improvement becomes a good school within the next two years, and that we continue to work together in partnership to ensure no good and outstanding schools decline.

In December 2016, Ofsted published its Annual Report on Education and Skills 2015-16.

Across England, 91% of Early Years settings are good or outstanding, together with 90% of Primary schools and 78% of Secondary schools. 93% of Special schools and 86% of Pupil Referral Units are rated good or outstanding. Kent is performing above average for every sector.

Nationally, 19% of Primary schools are outstanding, 71% are good, 9% require improvement and 1% are inadequate. For Secondary schools, 22% are outstanding, 56% are good, 17% require improvement and 5% are inadequate. Special schools have the highest percentage, 38%, of outstanding provision, 55% are good, 5% require improvement and 2% are inadequate. 18% of Pupil Referral Units are outstanding, 68% are good, 10% require improvement and 4% are inadequate.

Kent is mentioned in the Ofsted Annual Report as one of the local authority areas where there has been the highest percentage improvement in the number of pupils attending a good or outstanding school, from 55% in 2012 to 88% at the end of the last school year. This is one of the best improvement rates in the country, although Kent is still ranked 101 out of 152 local authority areas for Primary numbers and 63 out of 152 for Secondary numbers.

Overall, 90% of schools in Kent are now rated good or outstanding compared to 89% nationally. This includes 21% of schools judged to be outstanding and 69% judged to be good. This is in line with our target of 90% for summer 2017, so we are making very good progress.

This overall figure includes 91% of Primary schools judged to be good or outstanding, 86% of Secondary schools, 100% of Special schools and 86% of PRUs in Kent. Also, 97% of Early Years settings are good or outstanding, which is excellent.

In Kent, there are now 375 good and 114 outstanding schools, 50 schools requiring improvement (including 37 Primary schools and 12 Secondary schools) and 4 schools in a category of concern, out of a total of 545 schools that have a current inspection result. Overall there are 28 more good and outstanding schools compared to this time last year.

In Kent, 17.5% of Primary schools are outstanding, 73% are good, 9% require improvement and 0.5% are inadequate. 31% of Secondary schools are outstanding, 55% are good, 12% require improvement and 2% are inadequate. 36% of Special schools are outstanding and 64% are good. 29% of Pupil Referral Units are outstanding, 57% are good and 14% require improvement.

Kent has more outstanding provision in Secondary schools and PRUs than the national averages. The percentage of outstanding provision is just below the national average for Primary and Special schools. However the overall percentage of outstanding schools in Kent, at 21%, is the same as the national average for all schools.

Pupils Attending a Good or Better School

In Kent now, 88% of pupils attend a good or outstanding school, including 88% of Primary pupils, 87% of Secondary pupils and 100% of pupils attending Special schools. This means that 8097 more pupils attend a good or outstanding school compared to December last year, including 6439 more Primary pupils and 1417 more Secondary pupils. The highest performing local areas in the country have 98% to 100% of pupils attending good or outstanding schools. Kent is ranked 101 out of 152 local authority areas for Primary numbers and 63 out of 152 for Secondary numbers.

The trend over time continues to be a good rate of improvement. In December 2015, 84% of schools were good or outstanding which was in line with the national average. At that time, there were 361 good and 100 outstanding schools, 79 schools requiring improvement (including 61 Primary schools and 15 Secondary schools) and 9 schools in a category, out of a total of 549 schools that had a current inspection result.

Looking back, in July 2014, 75% of Kent schools were good or outstanding, compared to 68% in 2013, 59% in 2012 and 55% in 2011.

We expect this positive upward trend to continue towards our ambitious target of at least 95% of Primary and 90% of Secondary schools to be judged good or outstanding in the next year or two.

All schools currently rated as inadequate and as 'requires improvement' are working closely with the School Improvement Team, and are supported by other schools, to ensure they achieve a rapid rate of improvement to good. We continue to aim for all children in Kent to attend at least a good school.

We continue to be determined to do everything we can, within the framework of Government policy and through our own local initiative, to bring about sustained improvement in the quality of schools in Kent to ensure every school requiring improvement becomes a good school within the next two years, and our aim is to continue to work in partnership to ensure no good and outstanding schools decline.

Inspection Outcomes for Kent Early Years Settings

In the 2015-16 school year, inspection outcomes for Early Years settings continued to improve significantly increasing the number of good and outstanding settings.

In August 2016, 96% of Early Years settings were judged good or outstanding. The figure in August 2015 was 88%.

In August 2016, in Kent overall, 96.6% of children under five were attending a good or outstanding Early Years setting.

Inspection Outcomes for Kent Children's Centres

During the past year Ofsted paused the Children's Centre inspection cycle, pending the outcome of the Government's consultation on the future of Children's Centres.

In seeking to continue to evaluate and improve the performance of Children's Centres in Kent we have commissioned a former Senior HMI from Ofsted to undertake a series of reviews of the Children Centres. These have now taken place in seven districts and the work has been valuable in identifying both strengths as well as areas for development. In 2016 the former HMI concluded that 'overall effectiveness of centres in Kent has been strengthened considerably. It is apparent that Kent's internal QA and audit systems are now well-placed to supersede external scrutiny.' Currently 75 % of Children's Centres are rated as good or better by Ofsted.

Key lessons from schools that achieve a good or better inspection outcome include:

- Effective leadership with a track record of improvement

- Governance that understands the school's strengths and weaknesses, and challenges senior leaders and holds the school to account for its performance
- Having a clear and shared vision, with high expectations of all
- Developing staff
- Assuring the quality of teaching and learning, with an improving trend
- Leading and building leadership capacity at all levels in the school
- Providing a relevant and attractive curriculum that offers success for all groups of learners, and positive destinations
- Assessment and progress-tracking - making this clear, simple and easy to use
- Using external evaluation to challenge the work of the school
- Confident use of data to show evidence of improving pupil progress and attainment in all year groups
- A strong focus on improving rates of progress for all groups of pupils
- Procedures for ensuring the consistency and continuous improvement of teaching
- Effective use of the pupil premium and other funding to ensure under-achieving pupils catch up quickly and gaps narrow
- Good use of assessment to feed back to pupils and help them to do better
- Effective use of data to track individual pupils' progress and monitor teaching quality, which informs the school's procedures for targeting improvement activity
- Evidence of moderating school assessments and accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses with clear actions to address under-performance
- And clear evidence of improvement since the last inspection.

As always, we encourage schools to learn from others' inspection experiences and some of the best preparation for inspection is to talk to a school that has been inspected recently to exchange insights about managing the process.

Early Years and Childcare Service

Key Service Equality Issues

The Kent Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2016 – 2019 states that:

'Our ambition for Early Years and Childcare in Kent is for an exciting, vibrant, increasingly diverse and thriving Early Education and Childcare sector that is of good and outstanding quality, achieves very good outcomes for children and is sufficient, affordable and easily accessible for parents and carers.'

One of the five Strategic Aims of this Strategy is:

'To mitigate the effects of poverty, inequality and disadvantage through the provision of high quality early education and childcare, more effective support for parents and narrowing of the early development achievement gaps for all disadvantaged children'

In this context, Early Years and Childcare Service key equality issues are:

- A stronger and accelerated focus on the narrowing of gaps in achievement by ensuring that children in the early years who may be vulnerable to poorer outcomes (including those with SEND) have their needs identified as early and possible and receive appropriate additional support to develop well
- Further promoting and supporting the take up of free, high quality early education places for eligible two year olds
- Ensuring there is a sufficiency of high quality and accessible out of school childcare places for school aged children to age 14 (up to 18 where a young person has a SEND and/or is in the care of the local authority) so that parents are not inhibited from work or training by the absence of childcare

Progress in reducing inequality in the last year

Narrowing achievement gaps

In 2016, for Kent overall, 74.8% of children achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) which represented a 1.9% increase on 72.9% in 2015

- Girls continued to achieve more highly than boys, with 82.2% of girls and 68% of boys achieving a GLD, with the gender achievement gap at 14.2% representing a marginal narrowing of 0.8% since 2015
- The FSM Eligible Achievement Gap was 19%, a widening of 3% since 2015
- The Achievement Gap for Children in Care (CiC) widened from 26.5% in 2015 to 46.3% which is a cause for concern, although it is important to bear in mind that the number of children in the CiC cohort is very small
- The percentage of SEN children achieving a GLD increased from 26% in 2015 to 27% in 2016 although the SEN achievement gap widened from 52% to 53%

Overall, whilst Kent position is strong in comparison to the national, there is clearly still much work to be done to ensure that more children universally achieve more highly, whilst further narrowing gaps in achievement for children who may be vulnerable to not achieving to their full potential.

Take up of Free Early Education by Eligible Two Year Olds

This has continued to be a challenge in Kent but the picture over the past year is one of improvement with the December 2016 take up reached 74%, an improvement of 4% since December 2015 and 6% above the national average.

Additional activity to support the narrowing of achievement gaps

- Advice, support and guidance and increasing challenge to Children's Centres to ensure that the early learning ethos and any early learning activities are in line with EYFS principles and best practice
- The embedding of the improved Progress Tracker for Early Years settings and the piloting of the Children's Centre Progress Tracker
- An enhanced and accelerated, targeted programme of advice, support and training to early years providers to promote and enable equality and inclusion and to further narrow gaps in achievement
- Improvement in processes to support Early Years providers to ensure maximum impact of the Early Years Pupil Premium
- Enhanced support for providers in relation to Early Years Local Inclusion Forum Teams to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- The embedding of working practices with the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service and Virtual School Kent
- Further development of Early Years Collaborations and providing them with GLD and achievement gap data, by the geography of each Collaboration
- The piloting of Joint Reviews for two year olds in Thanet

Out of school childcare (including for those with disabilities)

In order to support a sufficient supply of out of school childcare so that the absence of this is not a barrier to parents being able to work, study or train, the Early Years and Childcare Service ensures

- Support for Out of Schools Childcare providers to work more collaborative to share effective practice, problem solve etc.
- Annual Conversations for out of school providers judged by Ofsted to be 'requiring improvement or 'inadequate', to help to them be 'good' as soon as possible
- The availability of Threads of Success, supporting excellence in all provisions, including Out of School Childcare
- Support for partnership working through the provision of networking meetings and a framework for collaborations

Future key actions to reduce inequality

We will

- With the recently established Early Years and Childcare Provider Association, carry out a 'Theory of Change' exercise that asks and will seek to respond to the following question:
 - ✓ *'How should Early Years and Childcare be lead in Kent, going forward, to be ready to deliver 30 Hours of Free Childcare and effectively tackle, once and for all, achievement gaps, all in the context of a difficult financial climate?'*
- Use district based data to inform targeted work within districts

- Use Learning Goals data to inform targeted work on specific areas of learning
- Use schools based data to inform targeted support where improvements are needed in teaching and learning
- Use settings based data showing where lower numbers of children have gone on to achieve a GLD, to inform targeted support
- Deliver 'Bring on the Boys', a programme of targeted support aiming to narrow the gender Achievement Gap, in the first instance in the district of Gravesham
- Carry out a comprehensive review of support for children with SEND in the Early Years
- Continue to promote and support the take up of free places by eligible two year olds
- Embed and further promote to parents through providers the effective use of the Early Years Pupil Premium
- Review and refresh the Threads of Success framework of advice, support and training for Early Years and Childcare providers to enable and support earlier identification of and response to need
- Extend the use of the Progress Tracker by Early Years and Childcare providers
- Embed the Children's Centre Progress Tracker
- Make recommendations to the 0 – 25 Health and Well-Being Board concerning the county-wide roll out of Joint Reviews at Two
- Embed links with Early Help for Out of School Childcare providers

Customer Information: Headline feedback from service users

In September 2016 an Early Years and Childcare Provider Satisfaction Survey was carried out. 255 providers (just under 30%) responded to the survey and displayed overall satisfaction in all areas of the service covered. The survey asked people to strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with ten questions, with the outcomes being as follows:

1. Vision and Direction of Travel

There is clear vision and direction of travel for Early Years and Childcare provision in Kent over the next two to three years communicated through KCC's Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2016-19.

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	76%	81%

2. Information and Communication

KCC provides timely, up to date and useful information on Early Years and Childcare issues through a range of media including bulletins, briefing and networking sessions, social media and through the KELSI website.

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	93%	92%

3. Sufficiency and Sustainability of Places

The Early Years and Childcare Service provides helpful information, support and guidance through your Childcare Sufficiency Officer regarding your provision of early education and childcare places

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	73%	81%

4. Continuous Improvement

Your setting is able to access effective support, training and high quality professional challenge from the Early Years and Childcare Service through centrally funded support, for example the Annual Conversation and support to settings with an Ofsted Inspection outcome below good or new registrations, to meet the needs of the provision's improvement and development.

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	79%	85%

5. Threads of Success

- a) The range of training, services and products available through the Early Years and Childcare Service (Threads of Success) provides flexible effective support that is responsive to your setting's needs

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	58%	80%

- b) The range of training, services and products available through the Early Years and Childcare Service (Threads of Success) provides flexible effective support that is value for money.

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	58%	57%

6. Qualifications

Your setting has been able to access helpful advice and guidance to support the professional development of your workforce (either via workforce mailbox, KELSI or bursary applications).

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	81%	71%

7. Vulnerable Children

Your setting is clear about how to access support from the Early Years and Childcare Service to ensure vulnerable children receive appropriate support and this is reflected in your practice.

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	91%	97%

8. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Your setting is well prepared to implement the SEND Code of Practice (2015).

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	94%	98%

9. Early Years Local Inclusion Forum Teams

The Early Years Local Inclusion Team (EY LIFT) meetings have been effective in providing advice and support for settings' provision for children with SEND.

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	86%	91%

10. Collaboration

The Local Authority supports Early Years and Childcare providers to work collaboratively in order to drive improvement and narrow achievement gaps.

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	84%	83%

Whilst much of this is extremely positive, in the context of equalities issues, we need to seek to better understand why, in the light of the responses to questions 7, 8 and 9, achievement gaps persistently do not narrow.

No complaints about the Early Years and Childcare Service were received during 2015-2016

Key Service Equality Issues

The Kent Strategy for School Improvement, alongside the aspirations and targets set out in the 'Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2017-2020', focuses on the need to build on significant improvements in the proportion of schools which are judged at least good and to further raise attainment whilst narrowing achievement gaps for vulnerable pupils. The Vision strategic document identifies the need to accelerate the rate of progress in closing the gaps in attainment for groups of vulnerable learners, in particular children and young people in receipt of Free School Meals and Children in Care. In addition, it identifies the gaps in achievement between boys and girls.

There continues to be a very prominent focus by Ofsted on inspecting the effectiveness of schools in closing achievement gaps for pupils in receipt of the pupil premium, from the early years through to post-16 provision. No school can expect to achieve a good inspection outcome without demonstrating good progress for these pupils.

Currently (as at March 2017), 91.2% of pupils now attend a primary school which is judged as good or better and 87.5% of pupils now attend a secondary school which is judged good or better. We recognise the need to continue to raise standards and EYPS will work even harder to narrow achievement gaps for vulnerable groups, especially pupils supported by the Pupil Premium.

In light of the new curriculum assessment arrangements and accountability measures, we recognise the need to

- focus on narrowing the achievement gaps between FSM and non FSM pupils – these differences are too wide
- lift the attainment of SEN pupils (support and EHCP) to narrow attainment gaps
- continue to increase the % of schools which are good or better,
- ensure governance in all schools is securely good or better, and,
- in our secondary schools, developing curriculum planning and design in order to build on the success at Key Stage 2 and ensure that progression pathways are available for all learners.

At Primary phase there are challenges with writing.

At key stage 4 it is a priority of our work to increase the proportion of students achieving Basics (a good or better GCSE grade in English and mathematics) and in understanding Progress 8. In addition, we remain focused reducing the number of NEETs by ensuring these young people move on to positive destinations, training and employment, particularly by increasing provision of targeted support for vulnerable learners.

Summary of school performance outcomes and our biggest educational challenges

As we begin 2017 there is much to be encouraged by in the progress we are achieving in Kent in improving the quality of education and the outcomes for learners of all ages. In 2016 there were positive results, above the national averages, at every key stage and 91% of schools are now good or outstanding.

Overall, we continue to see mostly positive trends in the right direction on raising standards of attainment and increasing rates of progress. However, we need to continue to be very ambitious because there is still much to do to bring about further improvements.

Kent has a mixed economy of provision in the early years, schools and the skills and training sectors, serving diverse communities with many challenges. This ranges from outstanding and good provision to a small but not insignificant amount of provision (9% of schools currently) that is not yet good, which is letting down children and communities, some of whom are the most disadvantaged. We need to build on the improved performance in 2016 and do more work in those areas where performance is below average and gaps are wide.

Improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage continue the very good upward trend over recent years, with performance in Kent well above national averages. Outcomes at Key Stages 1 and 2 are also positive and improving year on year, and although it is not possible to compare the 2016 outcomes with previous years Kent is, for the first time, performing above the national average for the majority of indicators at Key Stage 2. This is very positive. Thank you to all the schools that continue to achieve improved outcomes for pupils.

At Key Stage 4 there was an overall positive and improved picture in 2016 with GCSE results just above the national average and results at post 16 across a range of qualifications mostly in line with the national averages. But some performance at post 16 is below average and declining, and given the improving performance at other key stages this is disappointing.

At the same time, the number of 16-18 year olds who are NEET (not in education, employment or training) continues to be a challenge. It remains a priority to work with schools to ensure all young people have a positive learning destination at age 16 that provides them with a successful 16-18 pathway to skilled employment or higher learning. In particular there is a need to reduce the numbers of young people who leave their 6th form or college courses at age 17, and there is more to do to ensure the provision of a full range of technical pathways for 14-19 year olds in all areas of the county.

Our biggest challenge is the slow progress that continues to be made in narrowing the achievement gaps for vulnerable learners. This lack of progress is very disappointing. In the Early Years Foundation Stage the achievement gap for children on free school meals increased slightly in 2016. At Key Stages 1 and 2, gaps for pupils in receipt of free school meals, Special Education Needs and Disability and Children in Care remain very wide, which is a concern. Closing the gaps in achievement for all vulnerable learners continues to be a significant priority for improvement. This issue is pulling down the generally very positive picture for education in Kent.

As we all know wide educational achievement gaps result in low social mobility. We need to do more to ensure that many children's life chances are not determined from the earliest years because they have so little chance of catching up. Recent national and international reports have highlighted this key issue for the economy and for individual life chances. Raising the attainment of disadvantaged children and closing the gap between them and other children must be a priority for the whole of society. This is one of our top priorities in Kent.

Our biggest challenges therefore are to improve the achievement gaps for vulnerable groups and to improve 14-19 education and the outcomes achieved by students in this age group, including reducing the number of young people who do not or cannot participate and become NEET.

In order to make more progress we aim to ensure more schools undertake Pupil Premium Reviews, recommended by the DFE for schools that need to make better use of the funding.

In order to support these reviews, it is important that schools which are effectively using the Pupil Premium share their best practice.

Research shows family engagement and family motivation is highly correlated with attainment at school. The National Audit Office has found that 91% of school leaders see parental engagement as a barrier to closing the attainment gap of some disadvantaged pupils. However, only 57% of these leaders had an intervention in place to address this concern. We aim to ensure there is more focus on engaging and supporting parents and that support from the Early Help services is available for all the children and families who need it most.

The funding for the Pupil Premium in Kent now exceeds £55 million in 2016-17, yet we have seen very little improvement in outcomes for pupils on free school meals at Key Stages 2 and 4. This is a significant resource and it needs to make more of a difference to closing achievement gaps for these less advantaged learners.

Similarly, for SEN learners where achievement gaps continue to be too wide, we allocate over £200 million in Kent to supporting the needs of these pupils yet there is limited improvement to their progress and attainment in relation to other pupils. Once again we aim to ensure that schools make the most effective use of High Needs funding and participate in the local LIFT arrangements, where additional support and advice can be accessed.

Some schools could make more use of the support services available through Early Help, SEN, the Pupil Referral Units, the Primary Behaviour Projects and the Education Health Needs Service or opportunities could be missed to contribute to improved outcomes and better learning progress for vulnerable pupils. We must do more to achieve maximum benefit from these additional resources.

Outcomes for Vulnerable Groups

All attainment gaps at any age are of great significance to the life chances of children and young people as they move through their schooling. Children that fall behind in the earlier years of learning do not catch up sufficiently with their peers. We continue to be determined to narrow these gaps in the next three years, and reverse the trend whereby achievement gaps get wider as children get older.

As we continue to raise attainment overall, we need to work even harder to narrow achievement gaps for vulnerable groups, especially pupils supported by the Pupil Premium. Although Kent has performed above the national average for most Key Stages, gaps in attainment for pupils supported by the Pupil Premium, Children in Care, and for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) remain too wide, and are wider than the national gaps.

Detailed below is the position at September 2016 for all key stages including progress in improving outcomes for the following vulnerable groups:

- Attainment gaps for Children in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM);
- Attainment gaps for Children in Care (CiC)
- Attainment gaps by Gender gaps at Key Stages
- Attainment gaps in respect of SEN pupils

Early Years Foundation Stage

In 2016, the percentage of FSM pupils at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage achieving a Good Level of Development was 58%, compared to 54% nationally, which is slightly less than the 2015 figure of 59%. Kent is ranked second amongst its statistical neighbours for FSM attainment. The FSM achievement gap widened to 19 percentage points in 2016 from 16 percentage points in 2015.

The percentage of **SEN children** in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieving a Good Level of Development increased from 26% in 2015 to 27% in 2016, compared to 23% nationally. However, the SEN achievement gap widened slightly from 52% in 2015 to 53% in 2016 which is one percentage point wider than the national gap figure.

The percentage of **Children in Care** (CiC) achieving a Good Level of Development reduced from 46.7% in 2015 to 28.6% in 2016, which is worrying. The achievement gap for CiC widened from 26.5% in 2015 to 46.3% which is a cause for significant concern. However, it is important to bear in mind that the number of children included in the CiC cohorts is very small, which means that fluctuations in attainment from year to year are more likely than with other groups.

Key Stage 1

In 2016, the proportion of FSM pupils who attained or exceeded the expected standard in **Reading** was 60.0%, which is in line with the national figure and ranks Kent second amongst its statistical neighbours.

The widest gap for FSM pupils was in **Writing**, where 51% of FSM pupils attained or exceeded the expected standard, compared to 50% nationally. Although there is an attainment gap of 23%, which is 5% wider than the national figure, Kent is ranked first amongst its statistical neighbours for FSM attainment in **Writing**.

The proportion of FSM pupils who met or exceeded the expected standard in **Mathematics** was 59%, compared to 58% nationally, which ranks Kent first amongst its statistical neighbours. The mathematics attainment gap is 21%, which is 4% wider than the national gap.

The attainment gap for **SEN pupils** was wide across all subjects in 2016. In Reading, 30.7% pupils with SEN in Kent attained or exceeded the expected standard compared with 29.6% nationally.

The attainment gap is widest in Writing. The proportion of SEN pupils who met or exceeded the expected standard was 21.5%, compared to 20.2% nationally. There is an attainment gap of 58%, which is 4% wider than the national figure. Kent is ranked fifth for this measure amongst its statistical neighbours.

In Mathematics, 32.4% of pupils with SEN in Kent met or exceeded the expected standard, compared with 30.4% nationally. The attainment gap is 53%, which is 3% wider than the national figure. Kent is ranked fifth for this measure amongst its statistical neighbours.

In 2016, the proportion of **Children in Care** (CiC) who attained or exceeded the expected standard in Reading was 38.2%, an attainment gap of 40%. In Writing, 29.4% of CiC attained or exceeded the expected standard, a gap of 42%. The attainment gap was widest in Mathematics, at 45%, 32.4% of CiC attained or exceeded the expected standard.

Key Stage 2

In 2016, the proportion of FSM pupils who achieved the 'expected standard' in Reading, Writing and Mathematics combined was 37%, compared to 36% nationally, which ranks Kent first amongst its statistical neighbours for this measure. The attainment gap is 25%, which is 4% wider than the national gap figure. Kent is ranked fourth for this measure amongst its statistical neighbours.

In 2016, the proportion of FSM pupils who achieved the 'expected standard' in **Reading** was 52%, compared to 49% nationally, which ranks Kent first amongst its statistical neighbours. The reading attainment gap is 18%, which is 1% wider than the national gap figure. Kent is ranked second for this measure amongst its statistical neighbours.

In 2016, the proportion of FSM pupils who achieved the 'expected standard' in **Writing** was 61%, compared to 60% nationally, which ranks Kent first amongst its statistical neighbours. The writing attainment gap is 19%, which is 5% wider than the national gap and ranks Kent fourth amongst its statistical neighbours.

In 2016, the proportion of FSM pupils who achieved the 'expected standard' in **Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling** was 52%, compared to 49% nationally, which ranks Kent first amongst its statistical neighbours. The attainment gap of 18% which is 1% wider than the national figure. Kent is ranked second amongst its statistical neighbours for this measure.

The widest gap for FSM pupils is in **Mathematics**. In 2016, 51% of FSM pupils achieved the 'expected standard', compared to 54% nationally, which ranks Kent second amongst its statistical neighbours. The attainment gap is 21%, which is 5% wider than the national figure. Kent is ranked fourth for this measure amongst its statistical neighbours.

For **SEN pupils**, the attainment gap is wide across all measures in 2016. The proportion of SEN pupils who achieved the 'expected standard' in Reading, Writing and Mathematics combined was 16%, compared with 15% nationally. The attainment gap is 52%, which is 4% wider than the national figure. Kent is ranked ninth for this measure amongst its statistical neighbours.

In Reading, 32% pupils with SEN in Kent achieved the 'expected standard' compared with 29% nationally. The attainment gap is 45%, which is in line with the national gap. Kent is ranked second for this measure amongst its statistical neighbours.

The attainment gap is widest in Writing. The proportion of SEN pupils who achieved the 'expected standard' was 32%, compared with 29% nationally. The attainment gap is 57%, which is 2% wider than the national gap. Kent is ranked fourth for this measure amongst its statistical neighbours.

In Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling, 32% of SEN pupils achieved the 'expected standard' compared to 29% nationally. The attainment gap is 45%, which is in line with the national figure. Kent is ranked second for this measure amongst its statistical neighbours.

In Mathematics, 31% of SEN pupils achieved the 'expected standard' compared to 32% nationally. The attainment gap is 48%, which is 2% wider than the national gap. Kent is ranked fourth for this measure amongst its statistical neighbours.

In 2016, the proportion of **Children in Care** (CIC) who achieved the 'expected standard' in Reading, Writing and Mathematics combined was 21.6%, a gap of 36.8%.

In Reading, 41.9% of CIC achieved the 'expected standard', an attainment gap of 27.6%. In Writing, 51.4% of CIC achieved the 'expected standard', a gap of 28.9%.

The proportion of CIC who achieved the 'expected standard' in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling was 44.6%, an attainment gap of 28.2%, similar to that of Writing.

The attainment gap is widest in Mathematics where only 41.9% of CIC achieved the 'expected standard', a gap of 29.7%.

Key Stage 4

On the Progress 8 measure, the gap between pupils eligible for FSM and their peers is 0.65 which is wider than the national gap figure of 0.50 and ranks Kent ninth against its statistical neighbours.

In the headline Basics measure, pupils in Kent schools achieving grades A*-C in English and mathematics, the attainment gap between pupils eligible for FSM and their peers was 34.1%. This is 6.3% wider than the 2016 national gap of 27.8% and ranks Kent ninth against its statistical neighbours for this measure.

The proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals who achieved the English Baccalaureate was 7.0%, compared to 10.3% nationally. The FSM attainment gap in Kent is 25.1% which is 8.4% wider than the national gap of 16.7% and ranks Kent 11th against its statistical neighbours.

For Children in Care, in Kent Secondary schools, the average Progress 8 score was -1.0, compared to the Kent average of -0.04, which is a Progress 8 gap of -0.96.

In the headline Basics measure 23.7% of Children in Care in Kent achieved a grade A*-C in English and mathematics, compared to the Kent average of 63.7%, an attainment gap of 40.0%.

At Key Stage 4, 2.1% of Children in Care achieved the English Baccalaureate compared to the Kent average of 29.5%. This is an attainment gap of 27.4%.

For SEN pupils, the average Progress 8 score was -0.72, compared to -0.55 nationally. The SEN Progress 8 gap in Kent of -0.78 is wider than the national gap of -0.61.

In the headline Basics measure, 26.6% of SEN pupils achieved a grade A*-C in English and mathematics, compared to the national average of 23.9%. The Kent SEN attainment gap is 42.4%, which is 3.8 percentage points narrower than the national gap figure.

At Key Stage 4 although 8.6% of SEN pupils achieved the English Baccalaureate compared to 4.8% nationally, the Kent SEN attainment gap of 23.8% is slightly wider than the national gap figure of 23.5%.

A Level and Post 16

A Levels only

On the A Level Average Point Score per entry measure, the gap between pupils eligible for FSM and their peers is 3.9 which is slightly wider than the national gap of 3.8. At this measure the attainment of pupils eligible for FSM is 28.4, which is in line with the national figure. This is equivalent to a C grade and is above performance in 2015.

Academic qualifications

In Secondary schools the gap between Academic pupils eligible for FSM and their peers is 4.8, which is wider than the national gap figure of 4.0. At this measure the attainment of pupils eligible for FSM is 28.6 which is in line with the national figure. This is equivalent to a C grade and is above the performance in 2015.

Technical Level 3

The gap between Technical Level pupils eligible for FSM and their peers is 2.7 which is wider than the national gap figure of 1.3. At this measure the attainment of pupils eligible for FSM is 36.1 which is in line with the national figure. This is equivalent to a Distinction and is above the performance in 2015.

Applied General Level 3

The gap between Applied General Level pupils eligible for FSM and their peers is 1.9 which is wider than the national gap figure of 1.0. At this measure the attainment of pupils eligible for FSM is 35.8 which is less than the national figure. This is equivalent to a Distinction grade.

Gender Differences

Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, girls continue to out-perform boys with 82.2% of girls compared to 68.0% of boys achieving a Good Level of Development in 2016. Both groups achieved higher than similar groups nationally. This represents a marginally improved position from 2015, although there is still work to be done to narrow the gender gap which has slightly improved from 15.0% in 2015 to 14.2% in 2016. At this measure Kent is ranked sixth amongst its statistical neighbours.

Key Stage 1

At Key Stage 1, girls outperformed boys in **Reading** in 2016. The proportion of girls who attained or exceeded the expected standard was 82% compared with 74% of boys, with a gender attainment gap of 8%. The gap in Kent is in line with the national picture. The proportion of girls assessed as working at 'greater depth' in Reading was 28%, 7% higher than boys, who attained 21%.

In 2016, as in previous years, the attainment gap between boys and girls remains widest in **Writing**. Both groups achieved higher than similar groups nationally. 78% of girls who attained or exceeded the expected standard compared with 65% of boys, a gender gap of 13%. The proportion of girls assessed as working at 'greater depth' was 19%, which was 8% higher than boys' attainment against this measure.

In 2016, girls outperformed boys in **Mathematics** and the attainment gap was 2%. The proportion of girls who attained or exceeded the expected standard was 79% compared with 77% of boys. Boys outperformed girls against the 'greater depth' measure, with 20% of boys assessed as reaching this threshold compared with 16% of girls, a gap of 4%. Both groups achieved higher than similar groups nationally. The gap in Kent is in line with the national picture.

Key Stage 2

At Key Stage 2, 56% of boys and 61% of girls attained the 'expected standard' in the **Reading, Writing and Mathematics combined measure** which compares favourably with the respective 2016 national averages of 50% and 57%. The gender attainment gap in Kent was 5% compared with the national gap of 7% against this measure. The proportion of boys assessed as attaining a 'higher standard' was 5% and 6% for girls, both of which are in line with the national average for each group, with a gap of 1%.

In 2016, 66% of boys and 74% of girls attained the 'expected standard' in **Reading**. Both boys and girls attained higher than similar groups nationally by 4%. The gender attainment gap in Reading in Kent is 8% which is the same as the national gap. The proportion of boys who attained a 'high score' was 18%, which was 2% higher than boys nationally. The proportion of girls assessed as attaining a 'high score' was 24%, also 2% higher than girls nationally. The gender gap in Kent for this measure was 6%, which is in line with the national gap.

There was no attainment gap in **Mathematics** in 2016, with both groups attaining 72% at the 'expected standard, 2% above the national average. Boys outperformed girls against the 'high score measure' and 1% higher than boys nationally with 19%. 15% of girls attained this measure, the same as girls nationally, a gap of 4%. Boys outperformed girls nationally on this measure by 3%.

As in previous years, girls outperformed boys in **Writing** in 2016 and the gap is widest in this subject. 75% of boys attained the 'expected standard' in Writing compared with 86% of girls, a gap of 11%. Both groups, however, achieved higher than boys and girls nationally and the attainment gap in Kent is narrower than the national gap of 13%. The proportion of boys assessed as 'working at greater depth' was 11%, which is in line with boys nationally. Girls also attained in line with girls nationally against this measure achieving 19%. At 8%, the gender gap in Kent is in line with the national gap for 'greater depth'.

Girls outperformed boys in the **Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling Test** in 2016. The proportion of boys who attained the 'expected standard' was 68%, which was the same as boys nationally. 78% of girls attained the 'expected standard' which was in line with girls nationally. The attainment gap was 10% which is the same as the national gap. 27% of girls attained a 'high score' which was in line with girls nationally, compared with 18% of boys. These outcomes and the gap of 9% are in line with the national average.

Key Stage 4

On the Progress 8 measure, in Kent Secondary schools boys achieved a score of -0.18 which is slightly below boys nationally who achieved a score of -0.17. Kent girls achieved a Progress 8 score of +0.10 which is also slightly below girls nationally who achieved a score of +0.11.

In the headline Basics measure, 59.6% of boys in Kent Secondary schools achieved a grade A*-C in English and mathematics, which is 0.2 percentage points above the attainment of boys nationally. Similarly Kent girls also performed just above the national average, with 67.9% achieving this measure compared to 67.3% of girls nationally.

At Key Stage 4, 24.3% of boys achieved the English Baccalaureate compared to 19.7% of boys nationally, and 35.0% of girls achieved the English Baccalaureate compared to the national figure of 30.1%.

Post 16

A Levels only

The A Level Average Point Score per entry achieved by boys in Kent is 29.5 which is in line with the national average of 29.6. This is equivalent to an average C grade and remains in line with performance in 2015.

Girls achieved an A Level Average Point Score per entry of 32.1 which is just above the national average of 31.9. This is equivalent to an average C+ grade and remains in line with performance in 2015.

Academic qualifications

The Academic Average Point Score per entry achieved by boys was 30.8 which is above the national average of 29.8. This is equivalent to an average C grade and in line with 2015 performance.

Girls achieved an Academic Average Point Score per entry of 33.4 which is also above the national average of 32.1. This is equivalent to an average C+ grade and remains in line with performance in 2015.

Technical Level 3

The Average Point Score per entry achieved by boys at Technical Level was 38.0 which is above the national average of 36.2. This is equivalent to a Distinction plus grade and is above performance in 2015. Girls at Technical Level achieved an Average Point Score per entry of 34.6 which is also well above the national average. This is equivalent to an average Distinction grade.

Applied General Level 3

The Average Point Score per entry achieved by boys at Applied General Level was 35.5 which is in line with the national average of 36.0. This is equivalent to a Distinction grade.

Kent at Applied General Level achieved an Average Point Score per entry of 38.7 which is just below the national average of 40.2. This is equivalent to an average Distinction plus.

Outcomes for Pupil Premium Pupils at Ages 5, 11 and 16

The Government's new term for narrowing the achievement gap is Diminishing the Difference. In the 2016 results the gaps for pupils supported by the Pupil Premium remained very wide and were mostly wider than the national gaps.

For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the percentage of FSM pupils achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) decreased very slightly from 60.1% in 2015 to 59.0% in 2016. The FSM achievement gap widened to 18.0% in 2016 from 15.0% in 2015.

At Key Stage 2, in 2016, the proportion of FSM pupils who achieved the 'expected standard' in Reading, Writing and Mathematics combined was 37%, compared to 36% nationally. The attainment gap in Kent is 22%, which is 4% wider than the national gap figure. In 2015 the gap in Kent was 17.6%.

In Reading there is an attainment gap of 18% which is 1% wider than the national gap figure. In Writing the attainment gap is 19% which is 5% wider than the national gap and in Mathematics there is an attainment gap of 21%, which is 5% wider than the national figure. These figures have increased in Kent compared to 2015.

At Key Stage 4, for pupils achieving grades A*-C in English and mathematics, the attainment gap between FSM pupils and their peers is 34%. This is 6.3% wider than the 2016 national gap of 27.8%. The gap at GCSE has been over 30% for several years and shows little sign of improving.

This means that nearly 70% of FSM pupils move on to post 16 learning or training without good qualifications in English and maths, and they have to continue to study these subjects and gain the level 2 qualifications as part of their post 16 study programme. This is a very considerable challenge for the whole education system and impacts significantly on these young people's options for the future.

Outcomes for Children in Care

Children in Care are also supported by the Pupil Premium. They achieve the poorest outcomes of all vulnerable groups and the gaps are widest for them compared to all other children and young people.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the percentage of Children in Care (CiC) achieving a Good Level of Development reduced from 46.7% in 2015 to 28.6% in 2016, which is worrying. The achievement gap, therefore, widened from 26.5% in 2015 to 46.3% which is a

cause for significant concern. However, it is important to bear in mind that the number of children included in the CiC cohorts is very small, which means that fluctuations in attainment from year to year are more likely than with other groups.

At Key Stage 2, in 2016, the proportion of Children in Care (CIC) who attained the 'expected standard' in Reading, Writing and Mathematics combined was 21.6%, a gap of 36.8%. In Reading, 41.9% attained the 'expected standard', a gap of 27.6%. In Writing, 51.4% of CIC attained the 'expected standard', a gap of 28.9%. The attainment gap was widest in Mathematics where 41.9% attained the 'expected standard', a gap of 29.7%.

At Key Stage 4, the latest data for Children in Care indicates a gap of 34%, compared to 2015 when the attainment gap at GCSE was 44%.

All schools have a part to play in narrowing these persistent achievement gaps for vulnerable learners, and in helping to ensure young people do not drop out of education and training before the age of 18 to become NEET.

There are many factors which make a difference, including good quality teaching, an appropriate curriculum and the provision of additional support. The Education Endowment Foundation highlights the importance of frequent feedback to pupils and other kinds of formative assessment for learning, which has the highest impact on accelerating progress. Their toolkit also provides helpful guidance to schools on the most effective ways to use teaching assistants. Schools are increasingly recognising that a strong focus on increasing pupils' resilience and motivation, as part of their work on promoting emotional wellbeing, can also make a difference to improving outcomes for these learners.

Progress in reducing inequality in the last year

Primary

- the proportion of schools that are not yet good has almost been halved, from 16% last year to 8.8%
- at KS1 attainment in Kent was above national in reading, writing and mathematics
- FSM pupils attained in line with national attainment in reading, and 1% above national in both writing and mathematics. Attainment gaps, however, remain wider than national across all subjects, 4% wider than the national gap in reading and writing and 5% wider than the national gap in mathematics due to above national attainment overall.
- at KS2, attainment overall was above national for reading, writing and mathematics combined and for discrete reading, writing and mathematics measures.
- FSM pupils in KS2 achieved better than FSM pupils nationally across all measures apart from mathematics where they were 3% lower.
- FSM attainment gaps at KS2 remain wider than national gaps (4% wider than national gap for R,W,M combined, 1% wider than national gap in reading and 5% wider than national gap in writing and mathematics).
- Attainment gaps for SEN pupils above wider than the national attainment gaps across all measures apart from reading which is in line (4% wider than national gap for combined measure and 2% wider than national gap in writing and mathematics.)
- Improvement advisers have been trained to carry out commissioned pupil premium reviews and more than 18 have taken place since September 2016.

- A Pupil Premium Toolkit has been written and delivered to both primary and secondary at the Closing the Gap Conference (January 2017). Schools with FSM combined attainment of 40% and below received the Toolkit for free.
- Pupil level case studies are being completed currently to share best practice for FSM pupils with from a variety of contexts and with different barriers to learning. Expectation clearly communicated to all improvement advisers that there is a relentless focus on outcomes for disadvantaged/FSM pupils during all visits.

Secondary

- pupils in receipt of Free School Meals continue to achieve lower outcomes than Non-FSM pupils, averaging 35.9 (Average Attainment 8 score per pupil). All other pupils averaged 52.1. The gap is 16.2 which is wider than the national average of 12.7.
- slow progress continues to be made in raising the attainment and narrowing the gaps for SEN pupils. The 2016 KS4 Attainment for Kent LA SEN pupils was 30.6 (Average Attainment 8 score). Closing the gaps in achievement for all vulnerable learners continues to be a significant priority for improvement in 2016-2017.
- in 2016, the attainment gap, in Kent, between FSM pupils (eligible) and their peers for A*-C in English and Mathematics (the Basics measure) was 34.1% compared with 32.9% and 33.3% in 2015 and 2014 respectively. The national gap in 2016 was 27.8%.
- the Average Progress 8 score gap between FSM pupils (eligible) and non FSM pupils was 0.65 which is wider than the national average of 0.50 and the percentage gap between FSM pupils (eligible) achieving English Baccalaureate and their peers was 25.1%, which is significantly higher than the national average of 16.7%.
- the gap between FSM eligible pupils and non-FSM eligible pupils, in Kent LA schools, achieving A*-C in English and A*-C in Mathematics is 29.1% and 31.9% respectively
- the county gap between FSM eligible pupils and non-FSM eligible pupils achieving the basic measure of A*-C in English and mathematics is 34.1% (33.1% FSM – 67.2% non FSM) the National gap is 27.5% (39.2% FSM – 66.7% non FSM)
- pupils with SEN statements continue to achieve less well than their peers in Kent LA funded schools, with a gap of 22.8 (Average Attainment 8 score per pupil). There are wide gaps between pupils with SEN statements and those without at Progress 8 (0.78), % A*-C in English (44.8%), % A*-C in Mathematics (40.1%), % A*-C in English and Mathematics (42.2%) and % achieving English Baccalaureate (23.8%).

Future key actions to reduce inequality

Primary

- Dissemination of pupil premium toolkit and pupil level case studies to share best practice
- School to school support where outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are above national non FSM outcomes
- Continue to offer Pupil Premium reviews carried out by improvement advisers
- Relentless focus on ensuring quality first teaching for FSM and SEN pupils rather than intervention as the starting point
- Closer working with SEN officers and school improvement to ensure more cohesive Local Authority response and support for SEN provision within schools

Secondary

- create a refreshed approach to school support by working closely with Skills and Employability in delivering new ways engaging with schools
- dissemination of pupil premium the difference pupil premium toolkit and launch at County conference January 2017
- pilot approach by toolkit creator in LA maintained coasting school to measure impact of the toolkit and provide case studies to share best practice
- provide Pupil Premium reviews for LA maintained SCC carried out by KCC appointed consultants and senior improvement advisers
- fund 'gap challenge' initiatives in targeted schools, extending lessons learned to other schools
- champion twenty-first century learning so that schools and other settings innovate more and achieve better by delivering a curriculum that provides good progression pathways for all learners. One example is to support the development of the IB Careers Related Programme in more Secondary schools in Kent.

Skills and Employability Service

Key Service Equality Issues

Through Area and district partnerships, supported by robust data analysis, NEET tracking and reduction, creative progression 14-19 pathways, apprenticeship campaigns, supported employment and internships, the Skills and Employability Service strives to maximize opportunities to develop new provision, address gaps in provision and outcomes and transform 14-19 learning pathways and training opportunities for disadvantage learners.

Prior attainment is of course key to impactful progression post 16 in no matter what type of provision. In 2016 36% of pupils did not achieve the perceived passport to successful progression to level 3, ie two good passes at GCSE Maths and English. Currently this stands at a grade C and above but from exam cycle 2017 this will be represented by a 4/5 pass. We must continue to find solutions to improving this success rate and in cases where this has not happened, to facilitate creative ways of delivering, and being successful in Post16 Maths and English. Whatever a learner's starting point, the principle aim should however be, progression in these subjects not delivered by pre 16 pedagogy.

FSM students enter post 16 provision with much lower prior attainment than non FSM students and this lower prior attainment is reflected in level 3 outcomes upon completion. Disadvantaged students need continued support, firstly to make the transition to school post 16 delivery (in 2016 the number of FSM completers in schools was 303), and secondly to stay the course (drop out at 17 is unacceptable). Assistance to access the curriculum and to succeed within it is as important at key stage 5 as it is at key stage 4.

For the first time in Kent, three districts have met their NEET target but work still needs to be done. Funding is in the system to provide progression pathways for retaining NEETs locally and a priority for the Service is to support providers to develop and plan, more specialist programmes with appropriate support. Kent achieves higher percentages for destinations (latest DfE figures 2014 -2015) which lead to apprenticeships, further education provision and sustained employment. However, the percentage of students moving onto higher education is lower in Kent, including the percentage to Russell Group and Oxford and Cambridge. We must consider what messages are being given about attendance to these destinations and what guidance is being given to achieve that goal. We need to assure then that our strategies reach out to all young people even those on a comparably more secure route.

And all students of course will benefit from enriched guidance to support informed choices related to local and wider market information and be supported in turn by study programmes which have identified progression to sustainable destinations, including apprenticeships, no longer to be considered as last ditch remedy to participation.

Outcomes, and therefore secure progression into higher or further learning, employment with training, apprenticeships or employment, can be secured by:

- Deeper careers education, information, advice and guidance
- Appropriate study programmes containing relevant qualifications which link to student aspirations, including the inclusion of the transition year to build a skills and knowledge base for further learning.
- Stronger cohesion between the elements of study programmes which deliver purpose – hence the success of IB, IBCP and the Tech Bacc
- Development of numeracy and literacy whatever the starting point of the learner

Progress in reducing inequality in the last year

Employability Skills and the Ready to work District offer

Kent County Council has the statutory duty to ensure that appropriate provision is available to all young people of Kent. Through its strategic leadership, KCC acts as a key link between educational provision and industry. There is a mismatch of local provision to match the needs of young people wanting to enter the job market has been significantly decreased. The annual gap analysis conducted by the Skills and Employability Service revealed a lack of provision at Level 1 and, in particular, the limited availability of traineeships and pre apprenticeships opportunities.

To address these gaps in provision KCC has developed the Ready to Work Kent programme which is run by the Skills and Employability Service www.readytoworkkent.co.uk. The site is populated through collaboration with training providers and colleges across each district. This new strategic platform and the range of opportunities covers all the districts and emphasises the importance of employability skills post 16.

Over the last year 14-19 providers have supported, and improved, Level 1 offers for 16-18 year olds, by increasing the range of post-16 pathways generating 500 new opportunities for learners. Providers continued to improve their offer for September 2017 and made a significant contribute to NEET reduction. The Ready to work offer is used as a September Guarantee for those learners who are at risk of becoming NEET and schools are being briefed on this new strategy to ensure young people are supported to successfully transfer into provision at 16. Ready to work Kent now has over 180 offers across the 12 districts which include employability programmes, study programmes, NEET engagement and many more bespoke local offers. A total of 3,802 visits to the site since January, these visits include training providers and support workers offering careers guidance as well as young people that are looking for opportunities. We have 133 at risk young people who have registered with the site and 81 who have enrolled on a course.

Phase two of the project is building a September offer for those at risk of being NEET after YR11 with built in transitional support through the summer to increase our participation rate to over 95%.

English and Maths

One of the key factors in raising attainment post 16 is to improve outcomes in GCSE level 2 maths and English. The Service has since 2010 advocated the inclusion of maths and English in post 16 study provision and latterly the importance of those skills presence in study programmes, even if students have reached level 2 GCSE. This has been achieved through data pack analysis, curriculum events and working with individual providers including colleges and training providers. Of course, one strategy to enable this recognized passport to level 3 progression is to relentlessly pursue achievement pre 16.

Using the measure, which no longer applies under new accountability reforms, namely the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A*-C including English and mathematics, Kent achieved 59.0% in 2016 which is an improvement on last year's figure of 57.4% and 1.3 percentage points above the 2016 national average of 57.7%. Kent is ranked fifth out of its statistical neighbours for this measure. In the reformed headline measure, the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C in English and mathematics is 63.7% which is 0.4 percentage points above the national average in 2016 and 3.9 percentage points above last year's result of 59.8%. This is an improving positive picture for Kent pupils. Improvements have also been made in GCSE A*-C passes for English across the county. The success rate this year is 76.2%, compared to 70.4% last year, which is 1.1 percentage points above the

national average of 75.1%. In mathematics, there is a small increase this year to 68.1%, compared to 66.6% last year.

Increase Participation in Technical Education

A key aim of the Strategy is to pursue the 14 to 19 pathways and qualifications which are appropriate and purposeful with impactful outcomes for all learners. The table below shows the increase in uptake of applied general and technical education qualifications over the last year which is a welcome development and shows how schools are now offering both an academic and technical pathway at 16 in line with the guidance set out in the DfE post16 Skills Plan.

Students	Vocational	Technical	Applied General	Total
2016		693	2843	3536
2015	2573			2573
2014	2583			2583

Kent County Council Apprenticeships

Kent County Council aims to be a model employer of young people by developing new employment opportunities and providing entry points for **all** young people who wish to achieve an apprenticeship. The pathways range from work experience through to graduate entry. The KCC Apprenticeship Scheme continues to develop, with at least 150 apprentices taken on each year, working in partnership with over 70 KCC departments, and a wide range of training providers and FE Colleges. Through this partnership working, KCC has placed 711 apprentices in KCC (Nov 16). The number of Advanced Apprentices has doubled, with a focus on Higher Apprentices in accountancy and project management. Higher apprenticeships are a priority within KCC departments and work has to of develop new standards.

KC4U Local

Building on the success of the KentChoices live careers events that ran for the last 6 years, 2016 has seen the development of four local events focusing on the needs of more vulnerable learners and those who are interested in options other than Sixth Form for post 16 education. This offers the opportunity to meet local employers and training providers and learners without a post 16 offer will be encouraged to make applications on the day.

These events have been planned in collaboration with local partners in each area to make sure that local needs are met by the events and it is expected to continue this format in the coming years.

Ashford	Schools	10	Learners	890
Thanet	Schools	24	Learners	900
Gravesend	Schools	13	Learners	300
Maidstone	Schools	15	Learners	360

Feedback from events has been very positive with young people coming away with offers. The providers have valued the opportunity to have meaningful conversations with young people about their futures.

Tracking and NEETs

Engagement in learning and educational attainment is critical if young people are to gain employment and make a success of their lives. Evidence shows that not being in education, employment or training (NEET) between the ages of 16 and 18 is a major predictor of later unemployment, lower job security and lower rates of pay. There is also greater likelihood of teenage parenthood, depression, poor physical and mental health, persistent youth offending, insecure housing and homelessness, use of illicit drugs, poor relationships and early death.

The NEET Strategy published in 2015 set out our commitment to our most vulnerable young people to ensure that they are able to engage in education and training, to maximise their life chances and to make a successful transition to adulthood. The aim of the Strategy is to ensure full participation by all young people to age 18 and beyond and to significantly reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training.

To supplement the Strategy an operational handbook has been written for all KCC staff, in a range of services involved in supporting and reducing the numbers of young people who are NEET. This guidance ensures that there is a more joined up approach across all KCC services and officers working with NEET young people are now taking a more proactive approach to support young people into positive sustained destination.

A summary of the 3 key strands of activity which have been achieved over the past year:

- Implementation of an integrated and high quality data system to track all learners across all KCC services. This information is available monthly in detailed reports and is used to identify activities and target resources to support young people into learning
- Developing focused, collaborative and integrated working, not only between services within KCC, but also between KCC, schools, FE Colleges and work based learning providers. This has included focused work and interventions for the most vulnerable groups, which includes Children in Care, SEND, Young Offenders, Teenage Parents, and Elective Home Educated.
- Providing high quality personalised pathways with positive destinations across all districts. A particular focus was to ensure vulnerable learners have the necessary support to progress into appropriate pathways, internships, supported employment, or apprenticeships. A recent activity to meet local demand has been to provide 6 week programmes for unaccompanied asylum seekers (UASC) which provides ESOL support, living skills and vocational profile and guidance so these young people can move into a positive destination.

Kent and Medway Progression Federation

The Kent and Medway Progression Federation comprises 40 schools, 3 universities, Kent and Medway local authorities working together to enable young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to access higher education. The Kent and Medway Progression Federation (KMPF) announced the merger with the Kent and Medway Collaborative Network (KMCNet) in January 2017.

As part of the National Networks for Collaborative Outreach (NNCO), KMCNet has successfully engaged with a wide range of secondary schools and Further Education Colleges in Kent and Medway, providing guidance, information and resources for education practitioners. This work will now continue as part of the new established Federation, which provides targeted outreach activity for around forty specially selected schools.

Since 2007, the Federation has worked with 18,230 young people in Kent and Medway and 2,674 of our most disadvantaged young people in Kent and Medway entered Higher

Education ages 18 or 19. This means that an extra 764 entered higher education than would be expected, given the young progression rate for similarly disadvantaged students in Kent and Medway. This is statistically significant and demonstrates the impact that targeted outreach makes to young people. This is measured by the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS SEC), which indicates that 72% of KMPF students who went to university moved from socio-economic groups 4-8 to groups 1-3 over the tracked period.

Kent Supported Employment

Kent Supported Employment has helped 316 vulnerable learners with physical disabilities, autism and learning difficulties move into a variety of sustainable employment outcomes over the last year including 58% into paid sustainable employment, and a variety of other offers including work placements and voluntary work to enable them to progress into permanent employment as part of their individual journeys. Excellent results have also been achieved by working with 18 vulnerable learners from schools and training providers move into Supported Internships and 23 into Assisted Apprenticeships. This has been achieved by raising aspirations through professional careers guidance, vocational profiling and detailed action planning, using the supported employment model of professional job coaching to ensure young people are confident to take steps in securing a positive career path. Kent Supported Employment has also been working closely with the NHS to help them employ more staff with learning difficulties as part of their 5 year pledge

Vulnerable Young people

Skills and Employability have held discussions with FE colleges SENCO and staff with responsibility for vulnerable learners. The aim is to identify how KCC and the Colleges can work together to improve progression pathways for vulnerable learners. Intrinsic in this is to have effective systems in place to support these young people through transition. A proposal will be put to the college principals and a strategic plan will be developed.

S&E have been working with Adult Social care to develop a model that reduces the deskilling of SEND young people once they have left education. There are 2 pilots taking place in Kent to model practice for the future. These include an enterprise activity, independent living skills and functional skills

S&E work with providers to develop innovative approaches to Post 16 Programmes to develop the employability skills of young people, particularly for Vulnerable Learners to narrow the gaps in attainment so they can achieve positive destinations at 18. Examples of these are:

- S&E have worked with SEND to support 4 applications to the EFA for specialist post 16 institution status to widen the offer to SEND young people to give them more post 16 options. They have been successful in their due diligence checks and will be funded hopefully from September 2017. These are providers who can meet the needs of these young people and engage them in employability programmes leading to employment. Supajam (music and media), Skillnet (music and arts), Liberty Training (employability skills) and Brogdale CIC (grounds maintenance, horticulture, retail and customer service skills).
- S&E have worked with EHPS to put together EET activities for teen parents based in Children Centres
- Strategically working with STUK who have the SELEP funded contract to deliver in Kent to ensure that they add to, not duplicate provision, that is already available in areas where we have identified a need. One of the projects is working exclusively with care leavers
- There has been close partnership working with VSK and the Care Leaver team to ensure that there is suitable UASC engagement activities available

Future key actions to reduce inequality

Raise Attainment and Extend Technical Education

As we move forward, we need to capitalise on the opportunities presented by the reformed qualifications and accountabilities at both KS4 and KS5. In developing new curricula schools and other providers will need to constantly review qualifications options and packages of subjects which can support appropriate 14 to 19 programmes which offer progression and clear destinations for all young people.

Improve Progression

A key focus of the Strategy continues to be to decrease the number of 16 – 19 year olds who follow courses and do not raise their level of qualifications. Data for 2015 – 2016 is not yet available. The last valid figure was 84.9% which continued a positive upward trend.

Maintaining this level of progress will be challenging, as those young people who are yet to reach Level 2 often have multiple barriers to achievement. To maintain this upward trend we will:

- Support 14-19 providers across district to collaborate to achieve the best outcomes for all learners to ensure there are pathways which offer progression
- Share with providers good practice on KS4/KS5 14-19 curriculum modelling and guidance
- Support schools, colleges and work based provision in the development of appropriate programmes which work towards achievement of level 2 Maths and English GCSE16-19 and level 2 functional skills.
- Develop a progression protocol between schools and colleges for vulnerable learners.
- Provide personalised supported progression pathways for all young people with more complex needs including supported employment and internship opportunities

Develop Employment programmes for vulnerable learners

Over the past 3 years the Skills and Employability service has significantly increased the number of supported employment opportunities for young people which has been nationally recognized for providing sustained employment for young people who would not have entered the labour market. We will continue to continue to build capacity in schools to help the successful transition and provide more supported employment opportunities by:

- Developing capacity in schools to deliver supported employment programmes for vulnerable Learners to ensure continuity in progression at age18
- Developing a range of post 16 pathways including traineeships, work experience, Assisted Apprenticeships and Supported Internship programme for vulnerable learners in order to secure participation and progression into employment and improved destination data for providers.

English and Maths

There is no question that the delivery of post 16 Maths needs review. A continuation of pre 16 pedagogy will not achieve the results essential for progression and improved life chances. The Service will:

- continue to work in partnership with providers to provide eLearning packages for those students who have not reached level 2 GCSE Maths and English (from August 2017 this will be grade 4 upwards to 9) in both functional skills and GCSE.

- offer courses to excellent teachers of other subjects to develop the skill of delivering Maths and English to grade 4 with the intention of relieving a teacher recruitment issue.

Narrowing the Gap

The achievement gaps between this group and other learners still needs to improve significantly at all levels.

In 2014 there were 1,715 students eligible for free school meals at the end of key stage 4, of which 27.3% (468) achieved 5 A* - C with Maths and English, a 34.3 gap against non FSM students. FSM L3 completions at the end of academic year stood at 301 young people. This is only 3% of level 3 completions, 64.3% of the FSM cohort with 5 A* - C EM.

FSM eligible students show much lower prior attainment. Only 68.1% of this cohort achieved 5+A* - C GCSE with English and Maths (v. 86.3% for non FSM). 78.4% of the same cohort achieved 5+ A*- C GCSE (v. 92.8% for non FSM) This lower prior attainment is reflected in outcomes and progression at KS5.

A level APE is 28.4 (v. 32.3 for non FSM) and Academic APE is 28.6 (v. 33.4 for non FSM). This translates to a third of a grade difference. This third difference manifests itself in Applied General and Tech Level qualifications, but with only 2 points different in APE. There will be a more focused approach to narrowing the post 16 gaps through this revised strategy. We will:

- Provide continued support for vulnerable learners, firstly to make the transition to school post 16 delivery, and secondly to stay the course (drop out at 17 is unacceptable).
- Develop transition protocols between schools and colleges
- Provide specialist guidance training for KCC staff working directly with disadvantaged groups

Customer Information: **Headline feedback from service users**

During the summer of 2016, the Skills and Employability Service consulted with partners on which activities facilitated by the Service and supported by the 14 to 24 Strategy, they felt would be beneficial to securing better outcomes for young people. The key actions have been aligned to the four priorities of the strategy, which are outlined in the table below:

Raise Attainment and Skills Levels	Provide regular local curriculum provision updates with successful exemplars of appropriate collaborative 14 – 19 (24) pathways in order to ensure progression and links with local employment.
	Provide regular updates on curriculum information from the DfE, qualification news, resources and funding in order to best plan a financially sustainable 14 to 19 programme with better outcomes.
	Have access to on-line learning either to consolidate post 16 provision based learning or offer alternatives to the school provision.
	Receive a district profile including destination data, post 16 provision data, participation data, a local economic profile and a vulnerable learner profile in order to support 14 to 19 curriculum planning.
	Have access to on line revision lessons for core subjects.

Improve and extend Technical Education, Training and Apprenticeships	Advice and support in ways of delivering level 1 and pre apprenticeship within the study programme which support continued progression and participation for the most vulnerable learners.
	Advice and support in delivering work experience as part of study programmes in order to enhance learning and skill development.
Increase Participation and Employment	Receive Labour Market Intelligence to inform the curriculum offer and learner destinations by identifying sector skills shortages.
	Have direct links and engagement with employers through the Guilds to enhance aspiration and develop awareness of the sectors roles.
	Have access to a more developed KentChoices4U site for years 11, 12 and 13 and other CEIAG software packages for key stage 4 and key stage 5.
	Have access to a strengthened Careers Coordinated Network supplying support and information for careers guidance professionals in order to improve participation and progression.
Target Support for Vulnerable Young People	Receive information on English and Maths working towards level 2 GCSE/Functional Skills and for KS5 teachers to be guided on how improve outcomes for learners thus providing them with a passport to further learning and employment.
	Receive support for vulnerable learners' programmes including access to assisted Apprenticeships and Supported Internships for vulnerable learners.
	Have access to bespoke Careers Guidance for SEND learners.
	Have access to specialist support for parents and carers.
	Have the opportunity to take part in an Employability Health Check and in order to develop employability programmes to enhance skills and work readiness of their learners.

Education Safeguarding Service

Key Service Equality Issues

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Working together to safeguard children 2015 as protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Working together tells us that "safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part".

- Education providers have specific responsibilities under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, which requires school governing bodies, local education authorities and further education institutions to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The statutory guidance issued by the DfE under Section 175 is the document Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016. **All** Schools and colleges must have regard to it when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Early Years and Childcare providers have a duty under section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006 to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The EYFS 2017 stipulates the requirements to be met in relation to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.
- In order to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities all agencies, including education, should consider safeguarding as a priority. The Education Safeguarding Team (EST) has been located within the EYPS Directorate since September 2013 with the rationale being to embed safeguarding policy and practice as critical elements of the school improvement agenda in providing support to raise standards in schools and Early Years settings and challenge poor practice where appropriate.

Key actions to reduce inequality

- Representing education providers and services on Kent Safeguarding Children Board subgroups and the Prevent Cross Directorate Group. This also enables the Local Authority to fulfil its statutory duties under section 11 of the Children Act 2004.
- Providing a lead professional telephone consultation service, as defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015, which offers support, advice and challenge on all matters relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including on-line protection issues. Schools, Early Years and education services consulted on over 4000 occasions during the 2015-2016 academic year.
- The writing of policy documents reflecting the most recent statutory guidance and the cascading of good practice guidance or relevant information via the e-bulletin or Safeguarding Newsletter.
- Providing a tool to enable school leaders and governors to monitor their safeguarding practice to help them in meeting the requirements of Section 175 of the Education Act 2002.

Training

- In order to help people working with children to safeguard and promote their welfare, appropriate training must be provided. There is a statutory responsibility placed on all agencies to provide safeguarding training to its' workforce as outlined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015*. The EST is responsible for providing this training to schools and Early Years settings in Kent with other 7500 education professionals trained in the 20i5/16 academic year.
- For education services, training provided must enable designated staff in schools and early years settings to fulfil the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, with this training to be refreshed every 2 years. At least annual updates are required, via a variety of media. The EST is responsible for providing sufficient places for school and setting staff to meet this training requirement.
- All other staff in education settings must also have training to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This training should be completed every three years, with at least annual updates again via a variety of media.
- The materials and delivery of all training provided by the EST must meet the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016, the EYFS 2017 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015, including local policies and procedures. Kent Safeguarding Children Board has a statutory responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training.
- All training must reflect the most recent statutory guidance and practice developments in safeguarding. These include Honour Based Violence (HBV), preventing people being drawn into terrorism (The Prevent Duty), Children Missing Education and identifying children at risk of sexual exploitation (CSE).
- Training and guidance provided to schools must enable teachers to fulfil the individual mandatory reporting duty under Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015).
- Training and guidance to all education settings must enable them to carry out their responsibilities under Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and promote "Fundamental British Values" which are defined by the DfE as;
 - Democracy.
 - The rule of law.
 - Individual liberty.
 - Mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Customer Information: Headline feedback from service users

- Participants are expected to complete evaluation forms after attending training delivered by the Education Safeguarding Team. Areas for improvement are considered and implemented, where appropriate.
- The EST is represented on local groups with multi agency partners and education professionals which provides a forum to share both positive and less positive feedback on the service.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Service

Key Service Equality Issues

Children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities are at greater risk of underachieving than their non-SEN peers if their barriers to learning are not identified and timely, effective interventions put in place provision to address their difficulties. Critical to closing the gap between their attainment levels and those of their non-SEN peers is ensuring that they have good attendance, high quality teaching and effective support strategies so that they can be fully included in the life of the school. Children and young people with special educational needs are over represented in data which highlights levels of exclusion and non-attendance.

In Kent, the number of children and young people whose special educational needs are so complex that they require statutory assessment and provision specified within an Education Health and Care Plan, rose 16% over the twelve months to January 2017, compared to a general population increase of around 6%. Within this group there are approximately 600 pupils who face a dual disadvantage because they are in public care.

Fundamental to ensuring the Human rights of children and young people with disabilities are respected, is the way in which people are enabled to make choices. Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014 sets out an expectation that children and young people with SEND and their families will have a say in the way that services are designed and delivered to support them. We must ensure that the quality and range of advice, information and supports them to have choice and control. We must make sure that we are co-producing Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) with families so that the provision which is put in place and the outcomes we are working towards have been decided with them, not for them.

Identifying the needs of pre-school children with complex special educational needs is important to ensuring they have effective transition into school. We need to have in place robust arrangements to ensure that the most complex children identified as those who need statutory assessment have access to timely and effective integrated assessments, completed within the 20 week statutory timescale. We must working with the NHS to eliminate health inequalities, to challenge and the culture which means that services are not always available when they are most needed, particularly therapies, nursing and mental health support.

Ensure a skilled and high quality workforce is integral to delivering good and outstanding services. There are challenges in recruiting, training and retaining the workforce within the authority and in schools. We want to make sure that all staff are aware of the vulnerability of pupils with SEND and that they are aware of this, particularly around safeguarding, CSE and channel/prevent risks.

There are limited post 16 pathways for young people with SEND and the number of them whose participation is unsuccessful is worrying. They are over represented in the number of young people not in education, employment and training (NEET) and those aged 17+ whose whereabouts is unknown.

We must ensure SEND reforms are effectively embedded: the remaining Special Educational Needs (SEN) statements are promptly converted to the new Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP); funding is effectively targeted to address high needs; and the need for new provision is addressed through the implementation of the Special Schools Capital Programme and gaps in provision are met through commissioning of new provision

in-county. We want to ensure parents have confidence in good local schools and we can reduce the demand and costs of SEN transport.

We want to increase the support available through outreach, training and joined up working across our services, particularly the support for pupils with autism

Progress in reducing inequality in the last year

We have invested significantly in ensuring these resources to support mainstream schools are available through the local team and LIFT. Schools report that 97% of LIFT activity has a positive impact (86% good or better) and 87% of schools rate impact of STLS as good or better. The impact of Early Years LIFT was also positive: 91% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to access support to make good provision for children with special educational needs and 86% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Early Years Local Inclusion Forum meetings have been effective in providing advice and support.

In the last year we have delivered a programme of training in each district through the lead Special school; over 40 different training modules were delivered to over 75% of schools. The evaluation demonstrates the staff who attended were more confident about their ability to support pupils with special educational needs.

We piloted a framework to influence, at a strategic level, the culture and practice across the whole workforce within schools. Participating schools in the pilot achieved externally accredited awards and individual professionals were accredited by Christchurch Canterbury University. We used the learning from this pilot to encourage other schools to ensure their practice is inclusive and that their training and support for staff ensures they have the right skills to meet children's special educational needs.

We have developed the Kent Local Offer through co-production with parents, carers and a range of partner agencies in order to comply with a new duty to publish information about the services which the local authority expects families to be able to access in the area.

The content is being regularly reviewed and in light of feedback, it is being constantly improved. We have established a multi-agency steering group to monitor the quality and the relevance of information for families.

We have developed a new approach to allocating high needs funding to mainstream schools to support earlier intervention and better targeting of resources to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. This funding identifies high needs pupils and provides schools with a top-up for pupils with additional support costing more than £6,000 a year. Funding is available without the need for a statutory assessment which means it can be targeted much earlier, before gaps widen. By the end of 2016 we were providing high needs funding for 1,680 mainstream pupils and almost half of these (47%) were without the need for assessment and EHCP. Over 500 were pupils have ASD, 300 with SLCN and 300 with SEMH needs.

We joined our Family Advice Service for short breaks with IASK, the Information Advice Service (formerly known as Parent Partnership) so that we are providing advice for families across the county through a single point which can signpost other services.

For disabled children and young people who need specialist equipment recommended by occupational therapy, we have changed the eligibility criteria and extended the remit of the Integrated Community Equipment Service so that those who do not have a Statement or EHC Plan are now eligible. This means that specialist equipment can be recycled to support therapy needs and intervene earlier to support those needs.

We have established 'dispute resolution and mediation' arrangements which allow Kent parents considering an appeal to the SEND Tribunal to ask for mediation across all three agencies in order that they can have their views about education, health and social care discussed in a single conversation.

Future key actions to reduce inequality

Narrowing the gap

Our priorities are to ensure that our systems continue to identify children and young people with the greatest difficulty learning and that our assessments are timely and lead to effective intervention.

Inclusion

The cost pressure from school transport means we must make increase the capacity of local schools to support pupils with SEND so fewer children will need to be educated out of their local area and out of the county without the need for unnecessary travel. We want pupils with SEND to be socially and educationally included in the life of their schools

Participation and NEET. We want to reduce the number of young people with SEND who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) after leaving school. We want to have a clear transfer processes in place particularly for transition from school to college. We have looked at how we can develop bespoke programs for pupils at high risk of becoming NEET through personalised timetables and pathways with appropriate level course content

Pre-school support

We particularly want to increase the provision that is available in the early years and after statutory school age with good transition to adult services. We want to ensure that provision is in place for those pupils who are most vulnerable

Exclusions

Working with the NHS to eliminate health inequalities

We want to ensure the provision of high quality specialist services outcome focused approaches to joint commissioning with the NHS CCGs such as educational psychology, speech and language therapy and child and adolescent mental health support. We want to be delivering greater integration and co-ordination of education, health and care services and plans for children and families in Kent ensuring this is extended to young people aged 25 and promote positive and seamless transitions at all stages between the ages of 0-25.

Quality and range of advice, information and support

We want to families to be actively involved in the way we design and deliver our services. We developed the Kent Local Offer with parents and their role on the steering group means we can monitor how helpful and easily accessible it is for all parents and young people themselves. We want families to be aware that their involvement is leading to improvements in what is information and services. We want to understand more about how we can improve the areas where we are not yet getting it right every time. We want to build parents' confidence in the support provided and improve their engagement by providing them with timely information, advice and support.

We want all young people with SEN and disabilities to participate in education or employment with training until they are 18, and those who need continuing education to age 25, to be able to access local settings. We want pathways for SEND learners aged 16-24 that are coherent, offer appropriate choices and are clear about intended outcomes at ages 16, 19 and 24.

Customer Information: Headline feedback from service users

Knowing that we are providing the right services and support for families has huge importance for us. We recognised that it is from the feedback we receive from parents and carers and what we know about their levels of satisfaction, that we gain a better understanding of how we should improve the areas where we do not get it right every time

We have been pleased to work with the Kent Parent Carer Forum (KPCF) to build a strategic partnership. Their participation has helped us to better understand the views and wishes of Kent families, children and young people. KPCF now has parent representatives on a number of key strategic decision making groups and we are working together to agree protocols for working closely with families. We were pleased to support their events for parents in Broadstairs, Dover, Edenbridge, Gravesend and Maidstone. The views we heard at these events have influenced our plans and areas of activity.

Parents and carers told us that providing them with support and integrating our services should be a priority for us. We responded by broadening our helpline support for those who do not have web access to the local offer and we produced guidance targeted at parents and young people themselves. We know from feedback they have given us that Kent families believe that we are now providing better quality information, that the waiting time for access to specialist equipment is now shorter and that access to a good school is easier. This is improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

We developed the Kent Local Offer with parents and their role on the steering group means we can monitor how helpful and easily accessible it is for all parents and young people themselves. We are publishing comments and questions so families are aware that their involvement is leading to improvements in information and services.

As parents asked us to ensure that the SEND Strategy increases the support in mainstream and Special school places closer to home, there are now more specialist SRP and satellite places available and when our building improvements in Special schools are completed there will be further increases. Parents are influencing specialist resourced provision (SRP) in mainstream schools which host them because we have established steering groups with parent representatives. We have introduced a mechanism to provide high needs funding to mainstream schools without the need for a statutory assessment and help is now available earlier.

We have introduced statutory assessment meetings (SAMs) where we explain what families can expect to happen and when. There are now five formal points for parents to give us feedback on how we are doing in the assessment process and the early responses collated in 2016 showed 100% satisfaction, although we recognised the sample was very small at that point. Similarly when we asked parents about their experience of annual reviews 94% of parents (127 responses) were satisfied. Parents can be confident that these face to face meetings are influencing decisions and leading to co-produced EHC Plans.

Feedback from families influenced staff briefings, training and a new quality assurance framework for EHCPs commencing in the autumn 2016.

Feedback from many families indicates that the reforms have brought about positive change; Parents asked us to increase the support in local schools and there are now more specialist places in Kent schools and as our building improvements complete, there will be further increases.

Kent children and young people, along with their parents and carers, told us to keep their needs at the heart of what we do. We have ensured that they are represented on key strategic groups.

Pupil Place Planning Provision

Key Equalities Issues

In January 2017 Kent County Council published the latest Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2017-21. This sets out how the County Council, as Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision, will provide sufficient good quality provision across all types and phases of education, in the right locations, to meet the demands of increased pupil numbers and parental preferences. The Plan is updated annually.

- Ensure that a place in a good school is available for every Kent child through planning, commissioning and securing high quality school places.
- Address gaps in SEN, Early Years and Childcare and Post-16 provision by commissioning Kent-based state maintained local provision.
- Ensure that equalities issues are considered for all statutory school organisation changes.

Progress in reducing inequality in the last year

The Kent Commissioning Plan for Education 2017-21 demonstrated that:

- The County Council's target of maintaining at least a 5% surplus of school places overall was achieved. Surplus capacity in the Primary School sector is at 6.1% in Reception Year and 5.0% across all Primary School year groups
- Three districts are operating below 5% surplus Year R capacity, five at between 5%-7% surplus, and the remaining four districts operate above 7% surplus capacity. In the previous year four of the 12 Districts had less than 5% surplus Year R capacity, and five had less than 5% surplus across all year groups.
- The surplus capacity across all Primary School year groups varies from 0.5% in Dartford to 10.6% in Swale. Six districts are operating below 5% surplus capacity, three at between 5%-7% surplus, and the remaining three districts operate above 7% surplus.
- Surplus capacity both in Year 7 and across the Secondary school sector remains high across the County at 9.1% and 10.1% respectively. There are exceptions to this in individual Districts. Surplus places in Year 7 were below 5% in the Travel to Learn Area of Dartford, Gravesham and North Sevenoaks and in Thanet. Capacity has been added into Swale and Canterbury which will alleviate pressures in Thanet. Across Years 7-11 surplus places were below 5% in Canterbury and Thanet.
- As the increased numbers of Primary aged pupils transfer to Secondary Schools over the next few years, demand will rise and surplus capacity will return to an effective operating level.

Progress in Expanding School Place Numbers

The targets which relate to providing sufficient school places are set out in 'Vision and Priorities for Improvement'. Maintaining sufficient surplus capacity in schools across an area is essential both to meet increased demand and to enable parental preferences to be met. We strive to maintain at least 5% surplus capacity in school places in line with demand and parental preferences, each year. In order to achieve this target KCC has:

- Delivered the additional new school places needed for September 2016. We expanded 25 Primary schools adding 14 permanent forms of entry and 184 temporary Reception

places. 6FE of Secondary provision was added across four schools and 263 temporary Year 7 places

- Achieved the target of at least 85% of parents securing their first preference Primary school with 87.2% securing their first preference on offer day.
- Continued the programme to refurbish or rebuild all Special Schools. Four further projects were completed. The remaining four projects - Foreland, Ridgeview, Five Acre Wood and Portal House - are underway. Two Special Schools are expanding: Wyvern (Ashford) and Meadowfield (Swale). For September 2016 we commissioned 85 new places across twelve Primary school Specialist Resourced Provisions (SRPs).
- Ensured sufficient Early Years places existed for all children eligible for Free for 2 childcare provision.
- Ensured sufficient places to meet need in the pre-school sector, although capacity is not always in the sector parents wish to choose.

Future key actions to reduce inequality

Ensuring sufficient school places:

We are aware that school rolls are forecast to rise further and the larger primary cohorts will soon be flowing into our secondary provision. Therefore the KCP 2017-21 identifies the need to:

- Add up to 83.5FE of new primary provision between 2017-18 and 2022-23
- Add 180 temporary Year R places between 2017-18 and 2018-19
- Add 30 Year 2 and 30 Year 3 places in 2017-18
- Add 79FE of new secondary provision

Commissioning SEN provision

Kent's Strategy sets out an intention to provide additional places for pupils with needs in the following three areas: Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Speech Language and Communication Needs (SCLN), and Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). Since the publication of the Strategy BESD has been reclassified Nationally and is now known as Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH).

In order to address the additional places for the need types identified above and to increase the SEN provision needed as rolls rise we:

- Have commenced the statutory education consultation process to create an observation and assessment provision at Oakley School (Tunbridge Wells) for up to 24 children over time,
- Continued to closely monitor the need for places in Primary schools as we have already identified that this additional capacity is unlikely to be sufficient in the medium term. We will continue to include specialist resource bases or satellite provisions in all our new Primary schools to help meet the need for extra spaces, but importantly, to also increase the choices available to parents,
- Increased the number of PCSN places by adding further capacity to Wyvern School (Ashford) and Meadowfield School (Sittingbourne)

- Will work with Free School promoters to: provide specialist ASD Secondary provision in West Kent (Maidstone), a 120 place Secondary Special school with the designation of Behaviour and Learning on the Isle of Sheppey, a 168 place Secondary school with a designation of PSCN to serve Dover District and a Secondary Special school in North Kent.

In total we propose to commission 642 additional specialist places across the life span of the KCP.

Ensuring sufficient Early Years Places:

- The analysis of childcare places for 0-4 year olds by planning area shows a large disparity in the deficit or surfeit of places. Planning areas which have a particularly notable deficiency of places include Eastchurch and Warden Bay on the Isle of Sheppey; Shepway and Park Wood in Maidstone; and South West Gravesend.
- Whilst it should be noted that in some cases, neighbour planning areas have a surfeit of places, but this does not mean that all the vacant places are accessible – particularly in areas of deprivation.
- The LA submitted 6 bids (the maximum allowed) to the DfE Early Years Capital Fund to increase provision in: Canterbury, Dover, Gravesham (two bids), Shepway and Tonbridge and Malling. Unfortunately these were not successful.
- We will continue to encourage the establishment of additional provision where this is required. This will include free for 2 places, additional 0-4 provision and the delivery of 30 hour free places by September 2017.

Ensuring appropriate Post 16 pathways

The LA will continue to fulfil its statutory duties to:

- Secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for young people aged 16-19 years (and those aged 20-24 years with an Education, Health and Care Plan or Learning Difficulty Assessment).
- Ensure support is available to all young people from the age of 13 that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training (tracking young people's participation successfully is a key element of this duty).
- Have processes in place to deliver the 'September Guarantee' of an education or training place for all 16 and 17 year olds.
- Work with to ensure that they notify the Local Authority when a young person leaves learning so that it can fulfil its statutory duties in respect of Post-16 education and training.

Kent's Key Priorities for 2017-18 and beyond are to:

- Increase the variety of pathways, including academic, vocational and technical, apprenticeships, employment with training or work based learning across all Districts.
- Raise attainment, closing achievement gaps and delivering programmes which advantage rather than disadvantage young people
- Ensure the Post-16 offer meets the requirements of increasing participation.

- Work with providers to ensure they offer a wide range of options which lead to progressive routes towards sustainable further or higher learning, employment with training or employment.
- Work with providers to ensure vulnerable learners, particularly those who do not have Maths and/or English should have opportunities to engage in personalised pathways which lead to sustained employment.
- Ensure the Skills and Employability Service's annual review of provision supports the development of personalised pathways within redesigned Study Programmes to improve the outcomes and destinations for all young people.
- Ensure every young person up to age 19 years is engaged in purposeful and effective learning and training through: raising attainment for all, targeting support for the most vulnerable so that differences continue to be diminished, improve and extend vocational education opportunities and to reduce the number of young peoples classed as NEET through increased participation and employment opportunities.

Children Missing Education (CME) and Elective Home Education (EHE)

Key Equalities Issues

Responsibility for tracking CME children and young people sits within the Fair Access Service. The aim of the Access to Education team is to ensure that all Children and Young People (CYP) without a school place are offered appropriate education provision at the earliest opportunity. The team comprises the following elements: Children Missing Education (CME); Elective Home Education (EHE); In Year Fair Access (IYFA); and the Education Programme.

The role of the officers within the Access to Education team is to support the most vulnerable learners in sourcing and securing appropriate education, through tracking, monitoring, reporting and referring cases with additional complexities to colleagues in the Early Help Service.

An Education Programme provides an interim programme of academic, emotional and social support to students who are not on school rolls. The students referred are a mix of SEN students awaiting specialist placement and students who are excluded from school whilst they await the In Year Fair Access process.

Significant progress has been made to date in improving these service areas to ensure the safeguarding and educational development of vulnerable learners who are electively home educated, who are identified as children missing education or who are excluded from school and need a school place.

CME cases are tracked and monitored until the child or young person secures Education Provision, and where a parent requires support, CME assistants will forward the case to a Senior Access to Education Officer (SAEO) to identify schools through In Year Fair Access. Where appropriate, the SAEO will facilitate a pre-admission meeting with parents and the school to ensure that there is a mutual understanding of the needs of the child and a structured transition for a return to school is in place.

The CME team are responsible for those who are missing Education and are **not** on a school roll. Officers investigate the whereabouts of the child or young person, through their previous schools, KCC databases, NHS records, or the Home Office (where it is thought the child has left the Country). In the case that the child or young person remains untraceable a risk assessment is completed and the case is brought to the attention of Kent Police and the Specialist Children's Services (SCS) County Duty team lead officer.

The number of CME referrals in the 2015-16 academic year was 1,788. This compares to 2,272 in the 2014-15 academic year and 2,486 in the 2013-14 academic year. This shows that there has been a continuing reduction in referrals which is welcome. However, it needs to be noted that following a change in DfE statutory guidance, and the implementation of the Digital Front Door in September 2016, CME numbers have dramatically increased during the current academic year to date.

CME Unknowns

There are some children who appear not to be on the roll of a school following the January census and have not been brought to the attention of the Local Authority (LA) through the CME referral process and as such were unknown to the LA. A number of these CYP have been found to be on a school roll, by using the DfE's 'Keys to Success', which records the UPN of every CYP.

The recent change to statutory guidance requires every school to report to the LA any child they remove from their school roll. In Kent this action is completed through the Digital Front Door.

Officers continue to use Census data to identify CYP who do not appear to be on a school roll and contact schools individually to confirm an onward route for these children and young people and to enable the LA to identify those whose school files have not been requested by an onward provision. Those who cannot be accounted for will be recorded as missing education and the process to track them will commence.

There is now a more strategic and coordinated approach to service delivery which ensures closer monitoring and identifies safeguarding risks. The new systems for monitoring and tracking vulnerable learners ensure a speedier response to their needs and faster re-integration to mainstream school. Efforts will be enhanced further with improved software. Work is well underway to develop this system and officers are actively feeding into that process.

Recent key actions to reduce inequality

Changes have been made to the Impulse database to enable better recording of actions and interventions providing more comprehensive reports.

Guidance for EHE and CME has been produced, clearly highlighting how and when to forward cases on to Early Help, Social Services and the Police.

Kent has a Digital Front Door which is available to the public and professionals external to KCC, making it easier for referrals to be submitted.

Reports will be run post census publication, to enable officers to identify the Unknown cohort who are not picked up through the usual referral route.

Proactive work continues with agencies to highlight the CME processes. Outreach Officers within Early Help and Preventative Services are focused on identifying new arrivals and the Gypsy Roma population to support school access and promote attendance.

Elective Home Education

EHE Support & Advice Officers continue to improve the LA's relationship with Home Educators by building trust and understanding, in order to help ensure every child and young person accesses the best possible education, whether that is delivered at home or in other learning environments. By engaging more effectively with this learning community, KCC is seeking to assure itself that all children are in receipt of suitable education. Officers have completed 930 visits during the 2015-16 academic year and only 65 visits were declined. This number is reducing again this academic year, which is testament to Officers efforts to engage with the EHE families early on in the process.

Engaging with the EHE community early enables KCC to better understand the drivers for electing to home educate, enabling us to record the numbers who are choosing this route and how best to support the families. Improving avenues of communication has enabled KCC to quickly make a distinction between those families who have consciously elected to home educate and those who feel a disconnect with their child's current school.

Processes are now aligned to the revised KCC EHE policy and all families are contacted at the earliest opportunity. It has been identified that whilst the team are effectively visiting new

families that capacity has not permitted the same level of service to historic families. To address this, an additional officer has been recruited and joined the team in March 2017. All six EHE Support and Advice Officers are centrally based, which is integral to offering a more consistent approach to working practices. The EHE and CME Co-ordinator oversees both teams enabling a structured approach to promptly identify those families who are not best placed to Home Educate their child. Identifying this earlier prevents any delay in returning the child to school. Where education is not taking place, the family decline to make contact with the officer, the family is known to other professionals or the child or young person has a history of poor attendance, the child is recorded as CME and supported back into school by the Senior Access to Education Officer (SAEO). The SAEO will present the case to the next 'In Year Fair Access Panel' and the child will return to the home School roll.

A NEET Administrator has been recruited to identify Young People who leave school during Year 11 are most likely to become NEET in Year 12. This is an issue that is being addressed with schools who remain responsible for the exam outcomes of these young people at the end of the academic year. The NEET Administrator contacts all EHE families to ensure they have an onward route if it is not their intention to continue to EHE during years 12 & 13. An additional preventative measure is for Fair Access to fund the cost of GCSE maths and English for families who opt to home educate as a lifestyle choice and would, if they attended school, be entitled to apply for Free School Meals.

In an attempt to engage families earlier and maintain a level of education, KCC funds a small number of licenses for Primary aged children for 'Reading Eggs' and 'Mathletics' to ensure they have access to core curriculum subjects.

Uptake of both these options has been nominal, either because parents are competent educators, not requiring intervention from the LA, or because the parent is not educating at all and has no real intention of doing so. Where the latter is identified the officers work collaboratively with other members of the Fair Access team to support reintegration into school.

The Fair Access Service has created and developed a section on the Kent.gov website dedicated to EHE. It provides useful links, for health, EHE guidance and KCC contact details. Positive case studies have been added, as exemplar models of EHE and they provide a useful resource which the EHE community can use.

The number of EHE children and young people has significantly risen year on year for the past 6 years (from 793 in 2008 to 1622 in 2015-16). It is evident from the feedback from parents, that the decision for electing to home educate is not always a proactive decision by the family. There are concerns about the number of young people leaving formal education in years 9, 10 and 11 with numbers significantly higher in some districts and from particular schools.

Children and young people declared as Gypsy/Roma feature disproportionately in EHE figures. They represent 0.9% of the total school population. Of the 1,622 pupils educated at home between September 2015 and August 2016, 174 were recorded as Gypsy/Roma. This equates to 10.73% of the EHE cohort. This evidences that the GRT community is vastly over-represented in terms of Home Education. It is a cause for concern that these families, in some instances, feel this is the only option open to them. Mosaic data collected through business intelligence identifying where families actually reside, shows that this figure is in reality even higher than recorded, as families are often reluctant to provide their ethnicity.

Future key actions to reduce inequality

- Work more closely with schools to prevent high numbers of pupils and their families inappropriately having to home educate and identify where young people are electing to home educate to avoid interventions from other partner agencies.
- Ensure all pupils receive their entitlement to an efficient full time and suitable education according to their age, ability and aptitude.
- Work to reduce the numbers of GRT EHE children and young people so that they are not disproportionately represented as a proportion of the EHE community, and receive appropriate support to access school and promote attendance.

Key Equalities Issues for Early Help and Preventative Services

Key Service Equality Issues

The vision of the Early Help and Preventative Services (EHPS) is that every child and young person, from pre-birth to age 25, and their family, who needs early help services will receive them in a timely and responsive way, so that they are safeguarded, their educational, social and emotional needs are met and they achieve good outcomes. The service works to ensure that children and young people contribute positively to their communities and are actively engaged in learning and employment to achieve adult wellbeing and independence.

The intention is to make a significant difference through early help and preventative work, to prevent the escalation of needs wherever possible, and to reduce the likelihood of problems emerging in the first place.

Our approach is to work with families to develop their resilience and increase their capacity to help themselves. Our focus is to increase the availability and impact of the positive things that have the greatest beneficial effect on children's lives, such as good parenting, growing up in a household in employment, quality early childcare and learning, a good school, healthy eating, the development of emotional resilience, ambition for the future in learning and employment, help to achieve good qualifications and safe behaviours and healthy habits in adolescence and early adulthood.

EHPS aims to target early help services for the most vulnerable children, young people and families with complex needs who require additional and intensive support, with a focus on delivering better outcomes. The service will also make a significant difference in reducing demand for statutory SCS and to help step-down SCS cases where it is safe to do so. District step-down panels are in place to support safe and efficient transfer of cases from SCS to EHPS. A recent internal audit of the step-down processes across Early Help and SCS found that the process was well-established and effective and improved joint working.

The Early Help and Preventative Services Strategy and Three Year Plan, published in 2015, is focused on achieving the following key strategic priorities for children and young people, outlined in the *Education and Young People's Services strategic document: Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2017-20*:

- Reduce the need for statutory social care and provide more effective support for children and young people on the edge of care so that there are fewer numbers of children in care, child protection cases and children in need
- Increase the numbers of children and young people who are stepped down safely from social care and who are not re-referred
- Increase the use of the Kent Family Support Framework (KFSF), and achieve more successful outcomes as a result of Early Help interventions
- Reduce the days lost to education through exclusions and absence, and the number of permanent exclusions and rates of persistent absence from school
- Reduce youth crime, re-offending and anti-social behaviour
- Reduce the number of young people who are NEET, (not in education, employment or training) and improve their participation in learning and training to age 18
- Improve readiness for school by vulnerable children at age 5

- Improve the participation of young people in 14-19 vocational pathways including increased take up of employment with training, apprenticeships and traineeships by vulnerable groups
- Reduce substance misuse and teenage pregnancy
- Increase breast feeding and reduce smoking by pregnant women and mothers
- Improve the resilience and well-being for children and young people and reduce mental and behavioural problems and the high levels of demand for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) services.

Kent's Strategy and Three Year Plan for EHPS draws together evidence over the last year of early help and preventative work in Kent. It also draws on national policy, research and evidence of practice with the most promising outcomes. The strategy is underpinned by four principles, that we believe impact on best practice, which run throughout all service delivery and four work strands which provide a priority work focus for the next three years and aim to achieve our strategic vision and outcomes.

Key Principles

- We involve children, young people and families
- We strive to improve life chances and build family resilience by using the strengths of families
- Decisions are informed by professional judgement and the working relationship with the child and family
- We ensure that all service delivery and commissioned provision is outcome-focused and informed by evidence-based practice, performance data and evaluation

Key Work Strands

- Ensure a whole system partnership approach across the range of Early Help and Preventative services in Kent
- Develop effective family focused practice approaches
- Support good health and emotional well-being
- Promote educational and vocational achievement

Early Help works closely with Social Care professionals to reduce the referrals to SCS, and to reduce the number of families requiring statutory social care interventions. The co-location of CDT and Triage, which took place in July 2015, greatly improved process and joint working. However, whilst initial contact into SCS has remained consistent since 2014/15, contacts that translate into referrals for assessment have increased. As a result a review of the Front Door and in particular the Demand Management has taken place.

Integrated 0-25 Early Help Services Structure and Delivery Model

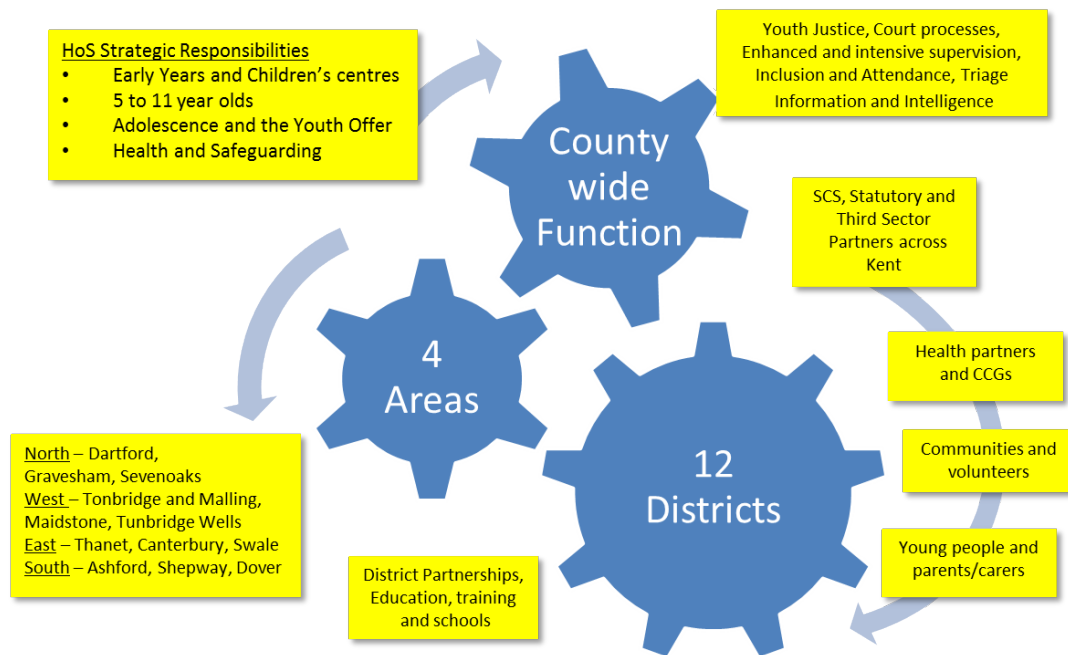
Kent's EHPS provide opportunities and support to children, young people and families across the range of safeguarding and well-being levels to help improve outcomes at the earliest possible stage; and as a step down from SCS to maintain and support achievements made whilst statutory social care was involved.

There are a wide range of services provided to vulnerable children, young people and families with multiple problems and disadvantages, under the umbrella of the EHPS. These

services include Youth Services, Children’s Centres, Kent Troubled Families Programme, Family Support, HeadStart and the PRU, Attendance and Inclusion service.

The EHPS Division is organised and delivered in four geographical areas that align with the SCS area structure and other services within the Education and Young People’s Services Directorate. The operational delivery of EHPS is managed in 12 Districts (each Area includes three Districts).

EHPS: An Integrated Service, aligning structures and partnerships



Early Help Units

Early Help Units are in place in each District to deliver intensive support for children, young people and families who have an Early Help assessment and plan. They promote working together in small teams with high levels of responsibility and autonomy, to promote a culture of challenge and respect with an opportunity to learn from what went well, and what did not.

Early Help Unit meetings are now well-established and enable reflective review, support and challenge of open cases worked at intensive level. This has developed practice and ensured that families receive the best support possible.

Open Access: Children’s Centres, Youth Hubs and Outdoor Education

The work delivered through open access Children’s Centres, youth hubs and outdoor education is critical to achieving positive outcomes for children, young people and their families, and incorporates a range of key services.

Children’s Centres (CCs) and Youth Hubs (YHs) deliver the Early Help Open Access offer providing relevant support to families and averting the need for higher-level interventions.

A new framework for additional support in Open Access was launched in September 2016 to provide clear structures around the accessing and provision and the recording and reporting

of additional support. When it is thought that a young person or family with needs identified at Tier 2 would benefit from some 1:1 support tailored to their specific needs, we describe this as additional support. Interventions last around 6-8 weeks and are provided by Senior Early Help Workers or Early Help Workers within Open Access settings.

A review is currently underway in relation to Health Visitors. The outcomes of this review will be important in shaping the future development of Children's Centre provision. This work seeks to optimise the opportunities for further co-location of Health Visitors and Children's Centres.

Children's Centres continue to in partnership with Early Years, to promote the take up of Free for Two early education, to maximise the impact on disadvantaged children and their development to be school ready.

All Young Carers and Children with Disabilities are able to access support, information and guidance through Open Access groups held in both Youth Hubs and Children's Centres. Where appropriate and based on need, specific targeted groups take place which are either staffed by Early Help, or by our commissioned services, such as Imago for Young Carers.

Children's Centre facilitate Young Active Parent (YAPs) group. This is a group that is often delivered in conjunction with Health Visitors and other agencies to provide advice and support to young parents.

Kent Parenting Support

Analysis of data has identified that a significant number of families require support with their child's behaviour. EHPS has responded by investing in Parenting Capacity Training for staff in Units to ensure that they have the skills to understand child and adolescent development and strategies for supporting parents to understand and change their own behaviour in order to improve the behaviour of their children.

In addition to this, a number of staff have been trained on the Cygnet programme and a new bespoke Kent Parenting Programme has been developed. This is in response to previous parenting programmes which have not always been well attended, with limited evidence of positive outcomes. The new course draws on the best of a range of known courses and techniques which will better support SCS when faced with requests from court for evidence based parenting programmes.

The revised Kent Parenting Programme compliments the wider range of parenting support programmes available in the county. Offered as part of the wider package of support within EHPS, the programme is 8 weeks long and uses the Signs of Safety methodology. Accreditation routes for the programme are currently under consideration.

Signs of Safety

In September 2015, SCS and EHPS agreed that Signs of Safety would be the consistent model of practice across both services to enable children, young people and families to have a more seamless journey.

Commissioned Services

Prior to the EHPS restructure in 2015, Kent's existing externally commissioned offer was isolated from the limited Early Help intensive support offer. Commissioned services could only be accessed through a CAF and had waiting lists of up to six months. Some children

and young people were unable to access support because they did not meet narrow threshold criteria and some commissioned services held waiting lists of up-to 30 weeks.

As part of the EHPS whole system change all externally commissioned services have been recommissioned to provide a complementary, prompt and flexible offer with key performance indicators that are aligned across all Early Help services. Contract monitoring arrangements are in place to ensure that all issues which arise around capacity of the service are highlighted and responded to immediately.

Resilience, Emotional Health and Wellbeing

Based on EHNs received from January 2016 to December 2016, requests for support with Behaviour (27.7%) and Mental and Emotional Health and Wellbeing (37.9%) make up the majority referrals to Triage. Children, young people and families have asked for services tailored to their needs that can be accessed with minimal delay. The primary unmet need for children, young people and families, identified by schools in Kent, has been around support for resilience and emotional health and wellbeing. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Kent states that everyone who works with children and young people has a role to play in early intervention, mental health prevention and promotion.

HeadStart, an emotional resilience programme, is undertaking significant work with young people to determine what is most likely to help them and has introduced whole school approaches to wellbeing. Kent has been successful in its Phase 3 bid to the Big Lottery for funding under the Headstart Programme and has been awarded £9.89m over 5 years to deliver this programme which is a school based initiative designed to improve resilience for children age 10 - 16 through a whole system approach.

The programme will focus on developing resilience through:

- A resource hub
- Whole school and in school provision
- Targeted support for children and young people who are experiencing domestic violence

In addition and working in partnership with Public Health, the 7 Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) in Kent and SCS EHPS is part of a joint commissioning initiative bringing together a comprehensive emotional health and wellbeing offer across the county including 22 mental health professionals to work within Early Help units to deliver support and help to develop the skills of other professionals.

Progress in reducing inequality in the last year

- The percentage of cases closed by SCS that step-down to Early Help is remaining fairly constant (an average of around 20%) and has not increased significantly despite the successful formation of the joint step-down panels. Early Help is committed to ensuring a constant focus on case throughput and effectiveness, and is able to take more step-downs from SCS as this a key way in which Early Help can support the demands within SCS.
- There are 3000 families – or nearly 6728 children and young people supported in EHPS intensive units. 81.6% of cases are within the 20 week service standard. Between 600 and 700 cases are closed every month, by targeting drift and ensuring close monitoring of all cases, case durations have halved meaning that around 65% more families can be supported per worker.

- Early Help aims to close at least 80% of cases with outcomes achieved. For unit cases initiated via an EHN, 82% of cases are closed with outcomes achieved.
- Performance data from December 2016 shows that 68,451 children registered at a children's centre. It further evidences that 73.5 % of under 5's who are known to SCS, are registered with a Children's Centre.
- Development of a comprehensive Additional Support in Open Access offer, to articulate and guide targeted work for children and young people who do not meet the threshold for Intensive or Specialist Support.
- Establishment of a Kent Parenting Support Programme, delivered within Children's Centres. This has now been rolled out across the county.
- Improved monitoring of commissioned services to ensure parity in quality of support provided to children, young people and families
- December 2016 data shows that NEET Not Knowns, as a percentage of the 16-17 academic age group is 4.57%, a significant reduction from 6.50% in November 2016 and 7.20% a year ago in December 2015.
- Continued contribution of Outdoor Education settings as reception centres, providing a safe space for social workers to provide statutory support for vulnerable UASC.

Future key actions to reduce inequality

- Front Door Demand Management Project: Improve early identification and response to need by increasing the number of families receiving early help support as a result of the implementation of revised county Single Point of Access arrangements.
- Revised version of the KSCB Inter-Agency Threshold Guidance to reflect changes at the Front Door and new expectations for partnership working.
- Ensure that EHPS staff continue to develop their understanding of the critical importance of positive health choices in determining improved longer term outcomes for children and young people and design interventions that support these.
- Promote the improved take-up of free early education places by eligible two year olds to ensure that more disadvantaged children develop well and are school ready.
- Achievement of formal joint commissioning arrangements with Public Health that secures the contribution of Health Visitors to the core purpose of Children's Centres, reaching an increased number of targeted and vulnerable families at an earlier stage.
- Deliver a comprehensive district youth offer and programmes of support for vulnerable children and adolescents that increase participation in positive activities and reduce offending, anti-social behaviour, teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol misuse and youth unemployment
- Successfully implement the new Family Support (commissioned) Service to deliver positive outcomes for families, which complement the work in EHPS Units.
- Effectively align targets and resources with partners across the wider children's workforce, including EHPS Commissioned Services, to best meet identified need and achieve mutually agreed outcomes. Ensure that commissioned services meet the needs of key equality groups through robust contract management and performance monitoring
- Awarding and monitoring of District Grants and that they have the maximum impact for families.

- Improved working with Public Health and the 7 CCGs, to address emotional health and wellbeing and to maintain an offer that is better suited to the needs of vulnerable groups, including the full integration of Primary Mental Health Workers into Early Help Units across the county.
- Ensure the Troubled Families Programme continues to be well embedded and integrated into the Early Help and Preventative Services Division and that further opportunities for integration are identified and considered; such as Social Care Service, Adult Social Care Services, Youth Justice and Open Access
- Ensure that school attendance and involvement in education, employment and training are considered in all assessments and that, where relevant, activities to address them are included in family plans
- Embed a revised Quality Assurance Framework across EHPS that scrutinises and captures the quality and impact of practice and facilitates continuous improvement. Ensure any equality issues continue to be highlighted through this process

NEET

New processes have been introduced to embed the NEET strategy into all aspects of Early Help and Preventative Services, to ensure an integrated approach across the service when working with young people at risk of NEET, or with those already NEET.

Key Equalities Issues for the Information and Intelligence Service

Key Service Equality Issues

Information and Intelligence provide a framework for continuous improvement within Early Help. There are a range of process, guidance, and policy documents which support staff to do their job effectively. A workforce development plan is refreshed annually and this ensures that workers are up to date with safeguarding training and key issues around identifying and supporting vulnerable children and young people.

The scorecards produced by the service are reviewed regularly in order that they monitor all key aspects of services' activity and performance, and there are indicators that report by age and vulnerable group. A scorecard has recently been designed for Early Help commissioned services to support contract management and to ensure that children and young people benefit from a high quality service regardless of provider.

The EHPS Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) includes a range of performance, audit and evaluation tools, as well as a focus on feedback from children, young people and families, feedback from cross-directorate peers, key stakeholders, together with staff feedback and assessment of their competence, skills and motivation. We have redesigned our Early Help Unit audit tool to make it more focused on practice and impact. This is currently being trialled and should produce richer audit findings that can be triangulated with the process and timescales elements of the audited cases that will be extracted from the system. A new online tool for children, young people and families to provide anonymous feedback has been piloted since September with all EHPS staff asked to offer and encourage feedback. Initial responses demonstrated a high level of positive feedback.

Processes in Triage have been improved to ensure swift management and clearance of backlogs during/following peaks in demand, to ensure that cases can always be passed to districts for allocation in a timely way.

Progress in reducing inequality in the last year

- Prioritisation of notifications to Triage for cases involving missing children, youth justice, children known to SCS and children with a high level of need in order to ensure swift and appropriate provision and consideration of safeguarding issues
- Review and improvement of processes in Triage to improve response times as demand into the service has risen
- Improved monitoring of commissioned services to ensure parity in quality of support provided to children, young people and families
- Improved audit processes leading to increased awareness of strengths and challenges within Early help work

Future Key actions to reduce inequality

- Ensure the new commissioned services meet the needs of key equality groups through robust contract management and performance monitoring
- Ensure any equality issues highlighted through analysis or audit are addressed in a timely way to improve the service to vulnerable children and young people. This will be further supported by a new programme of thematic audits
- Ensure that future Front Door arrangements continue to check information across a range of key business and casework systems to ensure that a full picture about a child or

young person and any vulnerabilities is understood in order to support assessment and planning of support required

Customer Information: Headline feedback from service users

A new online tool for children, young people and families to provide anonymous feedback has been piloted since September with all EHPS staff asked to offer and encourage feedback. Initial responses demonstrated a high level of positive feedback:

Question	Positive feedback
How well were your wishes and feelings considered	100%
How helpful and friendly was your Early Help worker	92%
How well do you feel the outcomes you agreed have been met	100%
How confident do you feel about coping with future difficulties	82%
How well did the service meet your needs (Open Access)	100%

Our internal unit casework audits show an upward trend, with the percentage rated as good or outstanding rising to 63% in Q3 from 52% in Q2.

In Q3, our audits of step-down cases found that 71% were good or outstanding, up from 56% in Q2.

Key Equalities Issues for the Youth Justice Service

Key Service Equality Issues

The Youth Justice Service, which is part of EHPS, is responsible for assessing, planning and intervening with the 10-17 age group who have come to the attention of the Police and receive either an out of court disposal or a sentence. The principal aim of the Youth Justice System is to prevent offending by children and young people. Young people subject to out of court disposals are supported within the Early Help Units.

A review of Youth Justice Services was undertaken between June and September 2016. The findings of the review supported the need to re-shape the structure of Youth Justice and to put in place changes to practice to improve the outcomes of young offenders and their families. EHPS are developing 5 bespoke units in line with the wider unit model to work intensively with young people subject to Court ordered disposals. From April 2017 these will be part of the Area structures and aligned to the wider Area offer.

(i) Children with a Legal Status with Specialist Children's Services

This group of children and young people are disproportionately represented within the youth justice system. Assessments indicate a strong association between their experiences of neglect, abuse and disadvantage and their offending behaviour. They also feature among those who re-offend frequently and as a result amongst those receiving custodial sentences.

It has been identified that the inequality is evident from the earliest stages of the criminal justice system, with this group of children being over-represented amongst those who are dealt with by Kent Police for an Out of Court disposal, and a higher proportion are dealt with more than once for such offences when compared with other young people.

(ii) Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Representation within the Youth Offending Population

Youth Justice performance data indicates that children and young people from the BME communities are disproportionately represented in the youth justice system in the county, despite their numbers being relatively low. Children from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background are also disproportionately represented in the youth justice system. Kent Police are interested in determining the reasons for this finding so that consideration can be given to possible discriminatory decision making across the whole youth justice process, including how they are reported on and supervised by the Youth Offending Teams.

Additionally children and young people from the various Eastern European communities in the county are becoming evident in the youth justice system. There is a need to ensure all in the Central Youth Justice Team have an understanding of the different cultures of these communities so that, as appropriate, officers can help to shape the style of interventions to better support these children and young people.

(iii) Children & Young People with Special Educational Needs

About 35% of the Kent youth population in custody have a statement of SEN or an Education Health and Social Care Plan. The changes in the SEND Code of Practice post the Children and Families Act 2014 for the SEND population in custody should support improved resettlement arrangements but the objective is to reduce the number of the SEND population receiving custodial sentences by enhancing the quality of

community based interventions. Anticipated changes to the secure estate mean that improvements to the arrangements will be possible from July 2016 when the Taylor Review into Youth Justice is published. The review has already identified improvements and changes to the secure estate in an interim report on its findings.

Progress in reducing inequality in the last year

In April 2016 a new process for considering Out of Court disposals was established. This allowed Early Help and Prevention to review proposals for decisions along with Kent Police prior to the disposal being given. The process ensured that particular groups and crimes were always reviewed. The panel which conducts the reviews always considers any young person who is a Child in Care, and the panel has been able to identify alternatives to a criminal disposal for young people at various times. The alternatives will always include support for the young person and a focus on a restorative approach towards the victim.

Kent Police and SCS have a Kent & Medway Joint Protocol on Criminal Justice Agency Involvement with Children in Care aims to reduce the prosecution of Children in Care (CiC), wherever possible, by encouraging the use of alternative resolution approaches such as restorative justice. The implementation of this protocol is currently being reviewed.

Reviews have been carried out for the County Youth Justice Board on Looked After Children in the Youth Justice system and young people who transition to the National Probation Service or to the Community rehabilitation Company. Youth Justice staff now regularly attend District Partnership meetings and are able to represent the needs of young people when identifying suitable Education, Training or Employment opportunities.

A joint protocol between Youth Justice and SCS was agreed in July 2016. Work is ongoing to develop a shared protocol between Youth Justice, SEN and SCS.

Future key actions to reduce inequality

Planned activities include:

- Review, with Kent Police, the possible reasons for the disproportionate representation of children and young people from the BME communities and agree an action plan in response to the findings.
- Monitor the implementation of the Out of Court process and consider whether this can be applied to Children with a Legal Status with Specialist Children's' Services who go through the Court process
- Monitor decision making with respect to females within the YJS with a view to assessing whether there is evidence of them being treated more punitively than males. If this is the case, share the findings and a proposed remedy with the County Youth Justice Board for their endorsement.
- Review the 2015 Protocol which looks at Children in Care within the Youth Justice system
- In line with the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice (June 2014) with respect to children and young people subject to Education Health and Care Plans, review the number of them in the YJS, and specifically in custody, so that practices can be agreed that are designed to reduce their representation.

The Youth Justice service will ensure that there is a strengthened offer for all young people around the availability of Education, Training and Employment (ETE). Subject to all services

agreeing this, an agreed plan which sets out the availability of ETE in advance of a sentencing decision will be drawn up between Youth Justice, PIAS, VSK, Skills and Employability and the SEN service. The plan will make clear what the court can expect to see for all young people around a full time ETE offer, and is intended to improve the educational outcomes for all young people including those from disadvantaged groups .

The panel which currently scrutinises Out of Court disposals will be strengthened by:

- The attendance of a representative from SCS to contribute to the discussion of cases and identification of alternatives to prosecution which will support the prevention of offending
- The inclusion of all possible charging decisions within the remit of the panel, subject to the agreement of the Crown Prosecution Service

An in-depth review of Children in Care who receive more than one Out of Court disposal will be carried out in the first quarter of 2017/18. The aim is to identify the factors which lead to recurrences of offending behaviour, and to ensure that efforts are made to build on the strengths in the young person's life that will support a desistance from offending.

An in-depth review of the needs of young people from the BME and GRT communities will be undertaken to identify the factors which have led to them being over-represented within the Criminal Justice system.

In partnership with Public Health and the 7 Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) across Kent, fully embed the new Emotional Health and Wellbeing service provision from tiers 1-4, including the delivery of services to the Youth Justice population.

Customer Information: Headline feedback from service users

A survey of young people in the youth justice system was carried out between November 2016 and February 2017. The survey focussed on their experiences within the system, the support they receive from staff and the impact the service has had in improving the life of the young person. The results of the survey, which had responses from 90 young people out of a total possible of 240, will be available in April 2017. This will inform the design and delivery of services in the coming year.

Key Equalities Issues for Troubled Families

Key Equality Issues

The delivery of support to Troubled Families is integrated within KCC's Early Help and Preventative Services (EHPS) Division, with outcomes generated by engaging with families with workers in taking a whole family approach.

Phase 2 of the Programme, which launched in April 2015, expanded the relevant criteria to include younger children, adults with mental health concerns or issues of domestic violence and families requiring EHPS or Specialist Children's Services. As a result, the required target numbers increased threefold, whilst the attachment funding decreased.

Troubled Families face multiple disadvantages and often cause a high cost to the public purse.

National Early analysis of families in the Expanded Programme indicates that families, compared to national rates, are 5 times more likely to be claiming benefits, 3 times more likely to be absent from school, 3 times more likely to have committed a criminal offence, and 4 times more likely to be a Child in Need.

While retaining its focus on reducing truancy, crime and anti-social behaviour, the Expanded Programme will apply this approach to a broader group of families, with a wider set of problems, including domestic violence, debt and children at risk of being taken into care.

The national Expanded Troubled Families Programme, referred to as Phase Two, commenced in Kent in April 2015. As part of Phase Two, Kent is required to work with 9,200 families between 2015 and 2020.

The national Headline Criteria has been broadened and troubled families are those that:

- Parents and children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour
- Children who have not been attending school regularly
- Children who need help: children of all ages, who need help, are identified as in need or are subject to a Child Protection Plan
- Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion or young people at risk of worklessness
- Families affected by domestic violence and abuse
- Parents and children with a range of health problems

Furthermore, as well as expanding from working with school-age children to those under 5, the wider programme will also have a particular focus on improving health outcomes, which new published data highlights is a particular problem in troubled families, with 71% having a physical health problem and 46% a mental health concern.

Whilst the headline criteria has been set nationally, the indicators which sit beneath the Headline Criteria have been set locally with partners and forms Kent's Troubled Families Outcome Plan. This has enabled Kent County Council to work closely with partners to agree the key areas of need affecting local families and set these against mutual strategic goals, to devise a set of 'significant and sustained' outcomes by which a troubled family could be measured and Payment by Result achieved.

Progress in reducing inequality in the last year

- Further embedding and integration of the Troubled Families programme into the Early Help Units, allowing greater identification and support of Troubled Families
- Provision of a clear framework of wider support for families around housing, worklessness and school attendance as part of the intensive support family plan
- As at January 2017 we had successfully verified 5121 families with an assessment by Early Help, and had made 1586 claims
- In the latest claims window (still being audited) we have submitted an additional 703 families for claim, which, if successful, will mean we have exceeded both our minimum target (1580) and our stretch target (2022) for 2016/17

Future key actions to reduce inequality

- Phase Two will reach out to families with a broader range of problems, such as children who need help, families affected by domestic abuse and parents and children with a range of health problems. Which means more families can receive support; improving their life chances.
- Our high number of claims places us in an excellent position as we move into 2017-18 to continue to maximise our claims from intensive support cases, and to further explore opportunities for expanding claims within Open Access, Youth Justice and Specialist Children's Services.
- We are working with the newly commissioned family support services to ensure that they can maximise their claims by supporting them with Troubled Families recording and monitoring of outcomes, and working with us to ensure a shared approach to quality assurance and audit
- We will be working with a range of partners to complete our Troubled Families maturity model in order to identify areas for future development to continue to expand and embed the programme within the work that we all do to support the children and families of Kent

Customer Information: Headline feedback from service users

	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17	2016/17	2016/17	2016/17	2016/17	2016/17	2016/17
	2015/16	Claims submitted to Audit MAR 17	Claims submitted to DCLG JAN 17	Claims submitted to DCLG SUMMER 16	Potential Total 2016/17	Indicative Percentage towards STRETCH TARGET	Stretch target	Indicative Percentage towards MINIMUM TARGET (DCLG)	Minimum target (DCLG)
ASHFORD	0	73	90	58	221	144.4%	153	184.9%	120
CANTERBURY	1	51	74	63	188	83.2%	226	106.5%	177
DARTFORD	2	33	49	34	116	154.7%	75	197.9%	59
DOVER	0	83	87	63	233	110.4%	211	141.3%	165
GRAVESHAM	2	52	79	64	195	137.3%	142	175.7%	111
MAIDSTONE	1	62	91	40	193	129.5%	149	165.8%	116
SEVENOAKS	0	27	35	36	98	122.5%	80	156.8%	63
SHEPWAY	0	72	85	57	214	120.2%	178	153.9%	139
SWALE	7	60	128	78	266	91.1%	292	116.6%	228
THANET	1	106	102	59	267	92.7%	288	118.6%	225
TONBRIDGE & MALLING	3	48	92	40	180	130.4%	138	166.9%	108
TUNBRIDGE WELLS	3	36	34	28	98	108.9%	90	139.4%	70

GRAND TOTAL	20	703	946	620	2269	112.2%	2022	143.6%	1580
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Key Equalities Issues for PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS)

Key Service Equality Issues

Forming an integrated part of EHPS, the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance service has adopted a new approach of intervening early and providing timely support to schools, children and families to address the issues of behaviour, attendance and exclusion.

Two of our key challenges are to improve attendance and to continue to find alternatives to permanent exclusion. In the past year, PIAS has adopted some new approaches and focused its effort on helping schools to find positive alternatives to permanent exclusions and to develop whole school approaches to improve attendance. These new ways of working have generated positive outcomes in reducing absences and exclusions.

Inclusion and Attendance workers are working as an integrated part of EHPS to provide a preventative and outcomes-focused service that encourages supportive engagement as well as mandatory enforcement interventions.

The most entrenched non-attendance cases where unauthorised absences occur on a regular basis and there are complex factors that need to be considered, are referred to the Step Down Panels. The Area Inclusion and Attendance Lead or School Liaison Officer, caseworker, a solicitor from Kent Legal Services or a member of the Attendance and Enforcement team and the Headteacher or their representative attend the panel to discuss the case.

The design of the new approach was based on shifting the intensive interventions in relation to attendance and exclusions, which Education Welfare Officers and Exclusion Officers traditionally carried out, to be delivered in the Early Help Units.

Progress in reducing attendance and exclusion inequality in the last year

The latest data shows that the average school attendance rate in Kent has improved to nearly 96% through the good work of schools and effective partnership with KCC's Early Help and Inclusion and Attendance Services. The latest school census data confirms that Primary schools' attendance has improved to 96% and Secondary schools close to 95%.

During the past 18 months we have developed a new delivery model refocusing on preventative, advisory and outcomes-focused support for schools and families to improve attendance. At the same time we reconfigured the previous six enforcement hubs to form a single county wide enforcement team, in order to make the legal process more agile, consistent and effective when taking court action and issuing penalty notices.

In order to make schools' access to the service easier and the legal process for taking court action in relation to attendance more outcome-focused, the service has piloted and implemented the Digital Front Door and the new Code of Conduct for issuing education related penalty notices.

Smarter datasets for school attendance and exclusions were developed to better inform the improvement strategies both of schools and KCC, as well as monitoring effectiveness and identifying targets for co-ordinated support.

In last academic year, KCC prosecuted 223 parents for failing to ensure their children's regular school attendance. Since September 2016 a further 136 parents have been prosecuted.

Exclusions and PRU Results

The latest exclusion data for Kent indicates that the number of exclusions reduced significantly in the 2015/16 academic year. Countywide, the number of permanent exclusions has been significantly reduced from 105 to 67 compared to the same period last year, with 759 fewer fixed-term exclusion, reducing from 10,723 to 9,964. This reflects good practice in many schools, supported by LA services, in identifying and providing appropriate help for vulnerable pupils with challenging behaviour and other learning needs.

Only four Secondary schools permanently excluded more than one pupil in the last school year, which is a marked difference to the previous patterns, and only eight Primary schools permanently excluded a pupil.

The largest numbers of permanent exclusions took place in Maidstone (12), Tonbridge and Malling (11) and Shepway (9). There were no permanent exclusions in Ashford, and only one in Canterbury and Thanet.

It is very welcome that only one Child in Care was permanently excluded in the past year (our commitment is to have none) and only four pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan were permanently excluded. The proportion of permanently excluded children, with special educational needs and with an Education Health and Care Plan has been reduced from 9.2% to 6.3%.

One year ago 70% of permanently excluded pupils were eligible for free school meals (FSM). This figure has now been markedly reduced to 46.9%. There is also a reduction in the proportion of FSM children involved in fixed-term exclusions.

The work of the Pupil Referral Units and other Alternative Provision has also played a key role in working with schools to identify alternatives to exclusions, providing appropriate support for children with challenging behaviours. There are now six PRUs, and two alternative provision arrangements managed by groups of schools in two areas of Kent, plus the Kent Health Needs Education Service, which has six satellite provisions around the county. In addition we have invested in developing Primary projects to provide support for pupils with challenging behaviour in Primary schools. The quality of this provision is now mostly good, with 86% of PRUs rated good or better by Ofsted and 95% of pupils attending a PRU in provision that is good.

In the 2016 GCSE results nearly all pupils (96%) attending PRUs achieved at least one qualification and 68% achieved five or more GCSE passes. 79% achieved a GCSE pass in English and 70% in maths. 65% achieved the expected rate of progress in English and maths. At the time of writing 74% of these pupils are now continuing in some form of education and training post 16. While there is room for further improvement these results are significantly better than the outcomes achieved for these learners in previous years.

New Ways of Working to Reduce Exclusions in Kent

The re-organised PRU arrangements have made a clear contribution to the reduction in permanent exclusions over time. This has been achieved through a review of the local offer, an improved curriculum and a commitment on the part of schools to find positive alternatives to exclusion and clearer pathways to post 16 training and learning.

The Inclusion and Attendance Advisers have adopted more preventative approaches to focus their interventions on the factors that make a difference to children's behaviours, which in turn affects the rates of permanent and fixed term exclusions.

These factors include the effectiveness of school practice and in-school support; the cooperation of schools in the local 'In Year Fair Access' arrangements; the alternative curriculum provision and support for schools by the Pupil Referral Units; the availability of support to Primary schools for challenging behaviour; the early identification of special educational needs and the use of the LIFT process; and the use of support through Early Help notifications.

There are eight Primary phase projects, partially funded by KCC to provide effective support to schools in managing pupils with challenging behaviour.

Future key actions to reduce inequality

We are very clear that an attendance rate below 96%, even if it is above 90% is not good enough. Schools take the initial actions to help or intervene when a pupil's attendance rate falls below 96% without a justifiable reason. In some extreme circumstances where a pupil's unauthorised absence persists and attendance has dropped to below 90%, the matter is escalated for legal actions to be taken, which include an Education Supervision Order, Penalty Notices and prosecution taken against parents.

In order to disseminate the good practice and effective processes that have been adopted by many schools in Kent, we have produced the first [Kent Exclusion Guidance for Schools and Governors \(PDF, 1023.3 KB\)](#). The document summarises the statutory requirements while promoting effective and preventative approaches that Kent schools and LA services have developed in the past year. You will see that the procedural sections reflect many good practices and new ways of working, which the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS) has worked with schools to develop.

There has been very good work in the PRUs and across schools to improve provision and outcomes for these vulnerable learners. A very small number of schools now resort to permanent exclusion and the numbers continue to reduce. This means that more young people have a better chance of being helped and they can remain in the education system.

If we continue on this trajectory we will see even better outcomes for improved attendance and reduced exclusions.

Key Equalities Issues for the Inclusion Support Service Kent

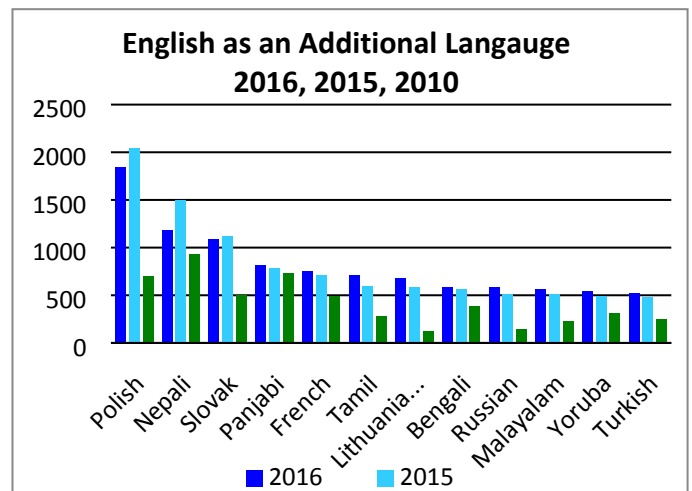
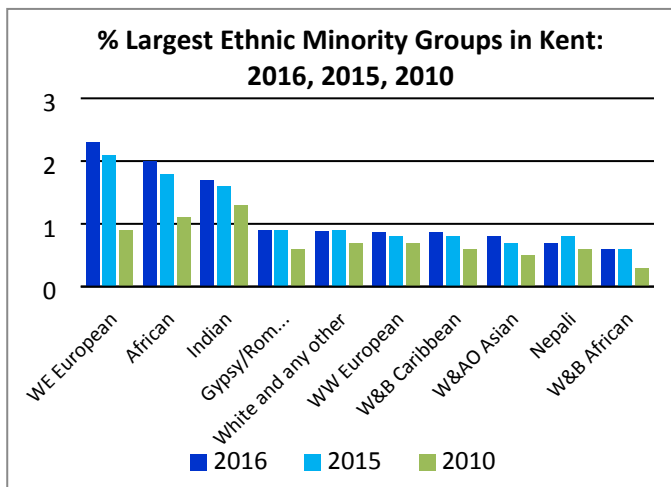
Key Service Equality Issues

The Inclusion Support Service Kent (ISSK) supports schools to raise the attainment and inclusion of vulnerable children and young people particularly those from ethnic minority groups including those with English as an Additional Language (EAL), advanced bilingual learners and Gypsy, Roma, Travellers (GRT).

Kent is the main port of entry into Britain; many immigrant families initially choose to settle in Kent. These include economic migrants from within and outside the EU, students and professionals, refugees and asylum seekers including unaccompanied minors, serving Gurkhas or ex-Gurkhas. New arrivals who speak English as an additional language in Kent schools (excluding Year R) have increased from 21.6% in 2010 to 25.8% in 2016.

There has been a steady increase in the number of Minority Ethnic and EAL pupils in Kent schools, with the largest minority groups – white Eastern European, African and Indian consistently rising over the last 4 years.

EAL AND MINORITY ETHNIC PUPILS IN KENT SCHOOLS			
	2010	2015	2016
Minority Ethnic	15%	17%	19%
EAL	5.7%	9%	10%



Travellers of Irish heritage, Gypsy/Roma, White Eastern European and Turkish pupils consistently underachieve across all key stages. In KS4 no Irish Travellers achieved 5+ A*-C including English and Maths. Language data indicates that the lowest achieving WEE pupils are Slovakian and Czech, it is likely that some of these will be undeclared Roma.

EYFS 2016 (>20 pupils)	% GLD
Traveller of Irish Heritage	36.4
Gypsy / Roma	40.4
Turkish	54.8

	% Expected Standard R W M
*Gypsy / Roma	18.5
W Eastern European	36.0
Turkish	40.0

KS4 2015 (>20 pupils)	% 5+ A*- C inc. EM
Gypsy/Roma	9.1
Turkish	35.0
W Eastern European	35.7

Chinese	61.2	White British	43.3	White & Black Caribbean	48.6
W Eastern European	62	Portuguese	46.2	Caribbean	55.2

*Traveller of Irish Heritage 8.3

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils

Gypsy, Roma pupils are Kent's 4th largest ethnic group, this does not reflect the large number who haven't declared. Gypsies, Roma and Travellers have the lowest achievement and attendance of all pupils nationally and locally as detailed below.

In 2014, 19% of exclusions were related to GRT pupils. In 2015, it was reduced to 11%. The latest figure, covering the period between March 2016 and February 2017, is 3.9%, a very significant reduction.

GYPSY/ROMA (WROM) AND TRAVELLER OF IRISH HERITAGE (WIRT) ATTAINMENT						
	2010		2015		2016	
	WROM	WIRT	WROM	WIRT	WROM	WIRT
KS2	17.5	8.3	30.6	33.3	18.5	8.3
KS4	Not available		9.1	0	Not available	

Ethnicity - January 2015	% Authorised Absences 2014-15	% Unauthorised Absences 2014-15	% Total Absences 2014-15	*% PA 2014-15 (56+ Sessions)	**% PA 2014-15 (38+ Sessions)
All	3.7	1.1	4.8	4.2	10.0
White – Gypsy / Roma	6.9	5.6	12.4	25.6	43.3
White - Traveller of Irish heritage	9.0	9.8	18.8	36.0	60.5

Two years ago, Kent GRT children's attendance rate was worse than the national average. The interventions and support provided by the Local Authority service in past two years has reversed the trend and resulted in the improvement in attendance of the cohorts to being better than the national average. The latest DfE attendance release shows that Kent Gypsy/Roma children's attendance rate is 88%, compared with the national average of 82.5%; Travellers of Irish Heritage children's absence rate is 82.5% while the national average is 82.1%.

Progress in reducing the inequality in the last year

Minority Ethnic Pupils

In all Key stages most minority ethnic pupils (broad category) are achieving higher than their national counterparts with the exception of Chinese children in the EYFS.

2015/2016 Achievement by Ethnicity Broad												
	White		Mixed		Asian		Black		Chinese		All	
	Kent	Eng.	Kent	Eng.	Kent	Eng.	Kent	Eng.	Kent	Eng.	Kent	Eng.
EYFS expected standard	74	69	77	69	73	65	77	66	59	66	74	67
KS2 L4 Inc.	57	54	66	56	71	56	66	51	90	72	59	54

E&M													
KS4 Progress 8 Av. point score	-0.08	-0.09	0.11	-0.04	0.61	0.31	0.41	0.17	0.77	0.68	-0.04	-0.03	
Coverage: England, state-funded schools (including Academies)													

EAL achievement

In 2015 KS2 Pupils with English as an additional language in Kent achieved below their non-EAL peers locally and were in line with their counterparts nationally. In 2016 EAL pupils achieved above both non-EAL learners in Kent and nationally also outperforming EAL learners across the UK.

In 2015 KS4 EAL pupils in Kent achieved above non-EAL learners in locally and above non-EAL and EAL learners nationally. In 2016 EAL learners in Kent out-performed their peers both locally and nationally.

In 2016 EYFS EAL children out-performed their EAL peers nationally 67% compared with 61%. In 67% of EAL children reached the required standard compared with 75% non-EAL pupils.

ACHIEVEMENT % REACHING THE REQUIRED STANDARD												
	2010				2015				2016			
	Kent		National		Kent		National		Kent		National	
EAL	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
KS2	62	71	75	81	79	81	79	81	60	58	52	54
KS4	62	60	58	59	59	57	57	58	0.50	-0.07	0.39	-0.09

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils

ISSK supports schools to identify and increase the ascription of GRT pupils to help schools target resources. We also raise awareness of this communities EAL status, their history and culture and how this can impact on their learning and engagement. ISSK provides consultancy and training to help establishments meet the needs of these most vulnerable pupils, ensuring that staff are aware of national research on GRT inclusion, and how effective policies and practice can remove barriers to accessing education.

The DfE highlights the support that ISSK provided at Parkside Primary School as a best practice example: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/raising-aspirations-and-retaining-roma-pupils-at-key-stage-2>

New Arrivals

In response to the increasing number of new arrivals in our schools, ISSK offers advice and training on induction, assessment, development of effective strategies to accelerate the acquisition of English and curriculum engagement, for both beginners in English and more advanced bilingual learners.

ISSK supports schools to meet the needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people, developing staff's understanding of their life experiences and journeys, and offering consultancy to increase access to the curriculum. This is particularly important with year 10 and 11 UASC, where schools and pupils face particular challenges due to their complex language and emotional needs.

Advisory Teachers have also been supporting schools and settings to ensure that the children of Syrian refugees are made welcome, and schools are able to meet their needs.

International Work

Following the successful presentation on 'Accelerating Second Language Acquisition of Newly Arrived Pupils' in Spring 2016 by two Advisory teachers at an EAL conference in Brussels, Kent hosted a study visit from Swedish and Belgium teachers in February. ISSK Advisory teachers spent a day with their European Colleagues sharing good practice in schools and inviting them to an area Hub where they explored linguistic diversity and the importance of including pupils' first language in their learning. This was extremely well received with delegates commenting on the benefits of sharing EAL approaches with colleagues from other countries.

Promoting the Inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Questioning pupils

For the last 3 years ISSK has been an accredited Stonewall training partner, striving to eliminate homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools and promote the inclusion of LGBTQ pupils in schools, colleges and settings.

ISSK provide Train the Trainer sessions for all education establishments, offer consultancy to schools to ensure that they are LGBTQ inclusive, respond to enquiries from parents and pupils signposting to relevant support, resources and agencies.

Future key actions to reduce inequality

Proficiency in English

In January 2016 the DfE introduced Proficiency in English for EAL pupils scales, Nationality and Place of Birth as new categories to be collected in School Census data. To ensure that the proficiency in English data was obtained through robust assessment of EAL pupils ISSK held 4 training events across Kent and Medway, and inset training in individual schools. These were well received by all candidates.

Racist incidents and promoting community cohesion

Following national and local unrest there has been increased friction between local communities. The latest Racial Incidents Survey Analysis 2015 - 16 indicated that there were a total of 769 Racial Incidents reported by Kent's schools during this year's data collection. This figure compared with 691 in the previous academic year showing an increase of 11.3%.

ISSK offers training on identifying, recording, responding to and preventing all types of bullying: we will help schools to review their behaviour and anti-bullying policies. ISSK has recently been commissioned by the DfE and DCLG via The Linking Network to offer Schools Linking across Kent over the next 3 years. So far over 60 schools have expressed an interest to participate during 2017/18.

KCC Trans Working Group and Trans Toolkit for Schools

ISSK continues to work with colleagues from across KCC to raise awareness and address and advance Trans Equality in employment and service provision. ISSK have been collaborating with colleagues from other local authorities to produce a Trans Toolkit for Schools. This will be published early this year and made available via KCC websites for teachers, pupils and families

Joint working with EYFS

In January the Spring term ISSK ran a successful joint training session with colleagues from the EYFS Diversity and Equality team for staff in Kent settings, another is planned for the Autumn term.

Next Steps

A refreshed Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2017-20 was published in March 2017. This Strategic Plan details the way that both KCC and the Children, Young People and Education Services Directorate are changing to improve the lives of children, young people and families by redesigning services so that they are integrated and better meet the needs of vulnerable groups.

The annual refresh of the Vision and Priorities for Improvement will be undertaken in the autumn of 2017 and will have at its heart, the new KCC Equality Objectives 2016-2020. These objectives support the delivery of KCC's Strategic Outcomes, the first of which is primarily the responsibility of the CYPE Directorate:

'Children and young people in Kent get the best start in life'

The equality objectives to support the achievement of this Strategic Outcome are:

- Narrow the achievement gaps for all groups, including FSM pupils, learners with SEND, and Children in Care.
- Increase post 16 – 25 participation and employment opportunities for the most vulnerable groups.
- Ensure more vulnerable young people are able to access progression pathways post 16, including the offer of an apprenticeship.
- Increase access to early years for the most vulnerable including the two-year old offer of free provision for the most disadvantaged.
- Drive down exclusions from schools to zero.
- Increase the proportion of pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium attending selective education.
- Where appropriate, fewer young people become young offenders.
- Ensure more Children in Care are able to access progression pathways post 16, including the offer of an apprenticeship where appropriate, and fewer CiC become young offenders.
- Safeguard all children and young people from harm.

Some of the ways we will continue to improve the outcomes for the most vulnerable groups of children and young people include:

- Improving education and attainment outcomes for children and young people from early years through to post-16;
- Improving the integration of children's services within Kent through delivery of the Children and Young People Services Improvement Programme;
- Promoting emotional resilience;
- Delivering early help and preventing the escalation of problems;
- Continuing to deliver on the ambitions of our SEND Strategy;
- Reducing the number of NEETs and increasing the number of technical and apprenticeship pathways for young people; and
- Developing an Education Services Company to support schools.

with the intention of increasing their life chances, so that they may thrive at every stage of their lives.