

Working together
improving outcomes

Kent Children and Young People's
Joint Commissioning Board

Strategy for Children and Young People with Special
Educational Needs and Disabilities
2013-2016



Easier to read summary version



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Introduction

Hello,

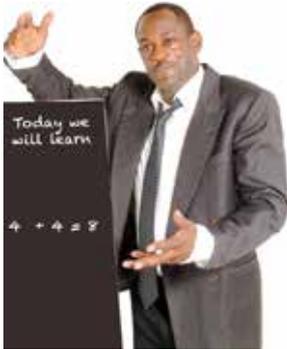
This is an easier to read summary of the 'Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, 2013-16'.



A strategy is a plan that says what an organisation is going to do.



This plan tells you about what Kent County Council are going to do to make sure young people with special educational needs and disabilities have a good education.



Kent has a number of plans for young people to make sure they have a good education.



You may have heard of some of these plans. These are called: Every Day Matters, Children and Young People's Plan and Bold Steps for Education.



Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities deserve the best opportunities to have a good education.



What we are doing well

There has been a big investment in Kent Special schools in recent years. This has made them good or outstanding.

Special schools are working together with mainstream schools to improve support for pupils with special educational needs.

There is better support for parents of disabled children through the short breaks programme. These give carers a well-earned break.

The Multi-Agency Specialist Hubs and Early Support Programme have made services work better together.

There has also been a good improvement in palliative care for children and young people.

What we need to do better

We are very proud of our services, but we know there is more we need to do.

- Like working closer together with health and adult social services.



- We need more local services so children and young people do not have to travel too far to a special school.



- Families tell us that they have to struggle to get the right services in a joined up way.



- Many children cannot use local social activities because some mainstream services do not offer them what they need.



- Too many children have to go to a special school because the right support is not available in local mainstream schools.

This strategy says what we will do about these issues.



The government have also told us what we need to do to make things better for children and young people.

These are:

- Create a Local Offer, and work closer with the NHS and schools to improve the range of local support.





- Give a range of short breaks to carers of disabled children and to tell people how they will be provided.
- Tell people about personal budgets, making sure that children and young people's needs are met wherever they live in Kent.
- Listen and engage with children, young people, their parents and carers better.
- Establish an integrated assessment for education, health and care.
- Commission new services to ensure needs are met in local schools and by local community providers.
- Train our staff so that they are able to meet the needs of children and young people with SEN and those who are disabled.
- Ensure that there are services that support families to meet their children's needs and to help children remain in their local community.
- Ensure positive transitions through services up to the age of 25 age, especially a good transition into adult life.



- Improve quality of information for children, young people, parents and carers to let them make informed choices.



What young people and their parents have told us

Children, young people, parents and carers have told us that they want:



- To be listened to and supported to use the right communication methods;

- Services that act quickly and are pro-active, rather than waiting for a crisis to happen;



- One key person to support the family. Professionals talk to one another so that people do not have to tell their story more than once;



- To be actively involved in assessments;



- To be able to go to a local school and where staff are trained to meet their needs;



- Services that work together to promote independence, access to leisure, training and employment;
- Information that is easy to get and understand. More information about wheelchairs and available equipment;
- To wait less time for equipment assessment, delivery and review;
- Wheelchair clinics to be more child friendly;
- To be able to get support at school when needed but to be able to keep as much independence as possible;
- Protection from bullying and abuse. Have somewhere safe to go and ask for help and advice;
- To be included when services for children and young people are being developed;
- To be able to enjoy everyday activities that all children and young people enjoy in their local community.



We know that for this strategy to be successful, key agencies and services must work closer together.



This strategy also talks about our responsibility for, safeguarding and protecting children and young people with SEND. This is covered in the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 set out by government.



Our vision

We want to give children and young people with SEND well planned services from birth to the age of 25.



To do this we will be working closer together with education, health and social care.

We want transition to be a good experience for every young person. We want them to be talking to the right people in the right places at the right time.



We believe every Kent child and young person who is disabled has the right to live as ordinary a life as possible in the community. So they can use local schools, leisure facilities and support services easily.



We want to improve our provision and parental choice by working in partnership with providers in the voluntary and independent sectors.

We recognise the importance of providing good training for all schools, early years and further education.

The aims of the strategy



The main aim of this strategy is to improve the educational, health and emotional wellbeing of all of Kent's children and young people with SEND.



The second aim is to make the changes to the assessment of needs as set out in the government's Children and Families Bill.

Our third aim is to look at any gaps in how we provide services.



This means making sure all our services are more inclusive of children and young people with special educational needs or who are disabled.

Gaps in our services include:

- Not enough specialist services and skills in local mainstream schools



- Not enough specialist provision and school places for children and young people with autism, behavioural, emotional and social needs
- To many long journeys for children to get to school
- Delays in medical and educational assessments
- Gaps in educational achievement and progress for children and young people with SEND
- Not enough services for those over 16 for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities
- Gaps in speech and language therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy in schools and further education colleges
- Not enough child and adolescent mental health services, for children and young people with a learning difficulty, autism and challenging behaviour
- Gaps in community nursing support for pupils with complex health needs in schools



- Not enough joint working between agencies



- Gaps in short break opportunities across the county.



We need to make sure all children get a good start in life. This means finding out their needs earlier, if possible before they are 5 years old. This will be done through our early years service.



Where there is good work in schools we will make sure it is shared with other schools. This includes training and expertise in Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Behaviour, Emotional and Social Needs and speech and language needs.



We need to make sure that all our SEN services are rated good or better.

We aim to make sure that moving from one stage of education to the next are well managed so that there is continuity of support. We call this transition.



A key time of transition is into education or training after the age of 16, and at age 19 into employment and early adulthood.



We aim to make sure that those up to the age of 25 are in education and training. We aim to make sure they are well prepared for employment and independent or supported adult living with support from adult social care services if they need it.



To improve the ease of getting physiotherapy and occupational therapy for young people going into further education.



We need to make services more flexible and suited to the person.

We need to make sure families and young people only have to 'tell us once' so that they do not have to repeat their story to different agencies.



What are we aiming to do?

1. Give more local services in education, health and care so that children do not have to travel so far.
2. Give more and make better our early years service.





3. Add to the range of organisations that provide services to give more choice.



4. Make sure that children and young people with SEN can get better academic results.



5. Build parents' confidence in services and engage them in those services, with good information and support.

6. Make personal budgets more available to improve independence and choice.

7. Work closer together with local services to give a positive transition through all services till the age of 25.



8. Develop a plan that promotes early intervention across all organisations that work together for people with SEND.



9. Address gaps in services through working together to improve the quality and availability of services for those aged 0-25, with good transition into adult social services.



10. Make sure there are high quality specialist services, such as educational psychology, speech and language therapy and child and adolescent mental health support.

11. Make sure we use all our resources effectively.



12. Ensure disabled children and families have good access to the right community equipment and wheelchair services to meet their needs.



13. Work with partner organisations to make sure that speech and language therapy, child and adolescent mental health services and school and community nursing for children with complex health needs are well met.

Where we are now

Kent has a school population of 233,000, of whom around 2.8% (more than 6,500) are SEND.



Less than half (around 2,500) of Kent's children and young people with statements attend a mainstream school.



Around 400 of Kent's children and young people with a Statement are placed in independent and non-maintained Special schools.

The largest numbers of pupils have autism spectrum disorder needs or emotional, social and behavioural needs. We aim to increase the provision for these kinds of needs in Kent Special and mainstream schools.



Statutory Assessment

The number of children subject to a statutory assessment and statement has remained stable over the past four years.



The number identified with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has increased.

Those with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD) have become less.



There were 181 appeals against Kent registered by the SEN and Disability Tribunal in 2011-12. This is an increase of 35% over the previous year.

Arranging services

Kent has a long history of working with private and voluntary education providers. This offers the service and parents choice and good value.



Families and Social Care services organise over 80 providers of short breaks. These, include after school clubs, youth groups, holiday play schemes, weekend activities, family days and overnight short breaks for the children and young people with the most complex needs.



While there have been successes in jointly organising services between education, health and social care, there is more work to do.

How well pupils are doing

How well pupils with special educational needs do, shows wide gaps compared to other learners.



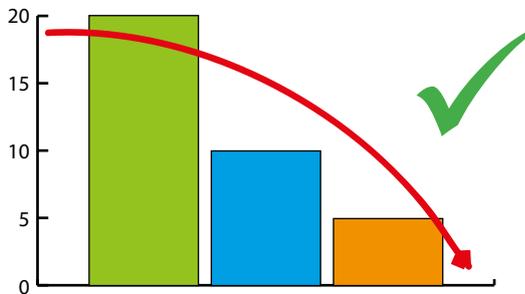
We will be addressing these gaps.



Pupils being excluded from school

During the school year 2011-12, permanent exclusions in Kent reduced by 16.

Of these exclusions 2 were pupils were from Special schools.



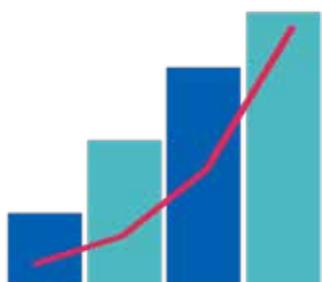
While the downward trend is good, too many excluded children and young people have special educational needs. (More than two-thirds of all those permanently excluded in the past year have SEND.)

School Quality

There are 23 local authority maintained Special schools and one Special Academy in Kent educating and supporting over 3,000 pupils with Statements of SEN. 75% of Kent Special schools are good or better, compared to 87% nationally, according to OFSTED.



The performance of Primary schools with SEN units shows that 43% of Primary schools with SEN Units are good or better, compared to 69% nationally and 61% of all Primary schools in Kent. We aim to improve this.



The overall performance of Secondary schools with SEN units shows that 54% of Secondary schools with SEN Units are good or better, compared to 72% nationally and 73% of all Secondary schools in Kent. We aim to improve this.

We know that there is good work going on in our schools. Parents and governors have told us that staff do a good job in supporting children and young people with complex needs.



A key priority for this strategy is for all schools that have SEN services to be good or better schools.

We recognise that children and young people with SEN are in every local early years setting and school. We want every setting and school to be good or better.



Our plan, 'Bold Steps for Education' sets out targets to improve the quality in all schools and early years provision.

Short Breaks



The Aiming High for Disabled Children programme has enabled Kent to do well in transforming services for disabled children, young people and their families. The parent-led charities



including the Parents' Consortium and Kent Parents as Equal Partners (KPEPs), have taken part in this.

Over 700 families receive direct payments to meet the cost of short break support for their children.



There has also been more involvement of children and young people in transforming services for example, being Young Inspectors for the short break programme.



Parent-led groups have also been successful in reaching families who previously did not access support from services.



The number of short breaks for disabled children has trebled since 2007. There is now a wide variety of short breaks which are becoming more evenly distributed across the county.

Palliative Care



(means relieving pain and suffering for patients).

The Kent and Medway Children and Young People's Palliative Care Network has made good progress in ensuring

there is joined up services for children and young people with palliative care needs and their families.



Over the last two years the Kent and Medway Children and Young People's Palliative Care Network has been able to use a £750,000 grant from the Department of Health to increase the awareness of palliative care needs to professionals including teachers, social workers, nurses, and therapists.



It has developed a new Advance Care Plan for children and their families to provide a joined up multi-agency approach to meeting the child's and family's needs, and worked with parent carers, children and young people on how services can be improved.



This has resulted in an increased availability of short breaks for this group of children and families and improved access seven days a week to specialist advice and support for parent and carers with children who have palliative care needs.

Early Support Programme



Another one of our successful projects is the Early Support Programme.



This programme has different organisations working together make sure children and young people with complex needs and their families are assessed correctly from birth to the age of 7.

There are nine multi-agency Early Support points of access providing good support for families.

Multi-Agency Specialist Hubs



We have spent money on building three new buildings called Multi-Agency Specialist Hubs. These have been built in Ashford, Sittingbourne and Margate.

This has meant services can work better together in the same building.



We have also spent money on sports and play equipment, toy libraries, and navigational aids for visually impaired children.



There has also been major improvements at our five in-house overnight short break and accessible accommodation units at Bewl Water, Swattenden, Allsworth Court and short break foster care homes.



SEN Transport Initiative

We spend £17 million on transport for 4,000 children and young people with special education to school.

This is because we cannot always find local school places for children.



We have asked parents and carers their views on this and how we can improve this service.



We have used their suggestions to develop the transport options. This involves offering personalised transport budgets to more than 500 parents and carers in the Ashford and Shepway areas on a trial basis.

We plan to use this trial to develop our service plan for the whole county.



The Specialist Teaching and Learning Service

In 2012 we gave the management of the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service to 12 District Special Schools to support all schools to improve services for children and young people with SEND.



Each multi skilled district team is led by a coordinator, who also carries the county lead responsibility for a specific area of SEN, under the leadership of the Special school head teacher.



Specialist teachers within the team are qualified and experienced in at least one area of special educational need and disability and act as a County resource to support schools.



In addition a County Professional Lead for Sensory Impairment and two County Coordinators, for hearing and visual impairment, provide professional leadership for sensory staff.

The Education Psychology Service

Educational Psychologists have skills and knowledge in facilitating change at different levels for SEND.



All schools have access to the Kent Educational Psychology Service.

The service provides an extensive range of additional work on a traded basis to schools.



This includes assessment, training, courses, staff development, interventions, projects, research and specialist work.

This builds on good professional relationships and expert knowledge, which supports the delivery of the SEN core standards.

The Communication and Assistive Technology Service

This service is a joint funded team of education professionals, NHS therapists and engineers who work with families, local therapists and professionals to undertake individual assessments of children with significant difficulties with oral and written communication.



The team works alongside those already supporting children to assess how highly specialist technology can help overcome their communication difficulties.

Integrated Community Equipment Service

Health, education and social care work together to recycle specialist equipment whenever possible. The right equipment provided at the right time supports greater independence and may prevent additional impairment.





Children and Families Bill

Kent's Role as SEND Pathfinder

Twenty places in England were selected to test out proposals in the Children and Families Bill. These local authorities are called 'Pathfinders'.

These 'pathfinders', of which Kent is one, will report back to government to let them know how they have got on putting the plans into practice. It is a good thing for Kent to be taking part in.



Kent's Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy

Kent's Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy priorities are:

- Safeguarding children from harm and preventing problems getting worse;
- Focusing services on families with a high level of need;
- Meeting the needs of vulnerable teenagers;
- Giving support during the early years;





- Improving the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people;



- Ensuring early support for disabled children, young people and their families.



This strategy has these as part of it and will be a way for them to be taken up throughout Kent.

This publication is available in other formats
and can be explained in a range of languages.

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