Working together to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND

Inclusion in Kent schools - discussion paper.

**Kent County Council
Children, Young People and Education**

15th September 2020 – 31st October 2020

Contents

1. Introduction

Our vision for children and young people with SEND in Kent is that:-

> Children and young people with SEND in Kent feel happy, safe, supported and as healthy as they can be while they learn and grow.
> Families can reach the right people at the right time to support their children
> Services will work with families to improve outcomes and achievements for children and young people with SEND

The inspection of KCC's SEND Services in January 2019 by Ofsted and the CQC identified some clear areas for improvement. In order to address these issues, KCC is committed to working to address the issues and improve the experiences of our young people and their families, including:

- Ensuring families have a smooth journey through the system
- Improving the way we work with parents, carers, children and young people
- Identifying and assessing needs earlier and in a timelier way
- Creating an effective EHCP System
- Ensuring young people experience a well-planned and smooth transition to adulthood
- Improving education, care and health outcomes for children and young people with SEND
- Improving inclusive practice within settings and schools
- Effective forward planning to ensure we have the right level and type of school places in Kent to meet needs locally
- Ensuring there is a range of high-quality provision available to children and young people with SEND across the 0 – 25 age range
- Ensuring that the right services are available for children and young people at the right time
- Focussing on workforce development
- Ensuring children and young people with SEND are included in their local community

1.1 Executive Summary

To achieve the ambitions set out requires strong collaboration between all partners.

Work is on-going to develop the new SEND Strategy which will encompass all the above areas. This paper focuses specifically on strategies to support inclusive practices within our schools. It explores how KCC and schools might work together to develop a shared understanding of the improvements that are needed and ensure the necessary support that is required to achieve them.

1.2 Draft Proposals for Comment

The paper invites discussion and comment on several specific areas:

i) **Statement of Inclusion**
Improving outcomes for SEND pupils is a long-term and on-going priority. As such, a shared strategic vision of the outcomes we are seeking to achieve is essential to help us work effectively in collaboration to drive improvement across the county. A draft Statement of Inclusion is offered for comment.

Does this statement express fully our shared goals and prioritise the right areas of focus?

ii) **Inclusion Framework**
To embed inclusive practices in all our shared work and achieve an inclusive education system in Kent will require multiple strands of work. A clear framework that defines areas of focus may be helpful in ensuring coherence and unity across all these strands. We are asking for comment and discussion on whether the Inclusion Framework, developed by the Whole School SEND Consortium and recommended by the DfE provides a suitable structure for this work.

Does this framework focus our attention on the right areas of school practice?

iii) **Mainstream Core Standards (MCS)**
The purpose of the MCS is to outline the provision that the local area expects to be made available for children and young people with SEND attending mainstream schools. It is a universal document, intended to support mainstream practitioners, aid local conversations and promote a consistent high-quality approach to SEND inclusion.

How effective is the draft document in achieving these intentions?

iv) **System Leadership of Inclusion**
Long-term sustainable change in the outcomes for SEND pupils will best be achieved by harnessing the knowledge, skills and commitment of those who lead the education system. This paper is proposing a number of linked strands of work which enable a school to school support network designed to strengthen the school's capacity to lead improvements in inclusive practices. These strands are:

   a) A model for Inclusion Peer Review
   b) Leadership of Inclusion development programme for school leaders
   c) Designation, training and deployment of Inclusion System Leaders

Will these initiatives strengthen capacity of the school system to provide peer to peer support and challenge?

v) **Inclusion Dashboard**
As we continue to commit time, energy and resources to ensuring that the system secures improved outcomes for SEND pupils, it is important that we

adopt appropriate methods and measures by which we can review progress, share effective practice and highlight issues that require further attention. There is the proposal of the development of an Inclusion Dashboard for presented for comment.

Would regular presentation of data, on a school and district level, support school leaders to lead improvement?

vi)   Parent Voice

The lived experience of young people and their parents is pivotal in understanding the value and effectiveness of provision. Therefore, it is fundamental that we listen to views of parents and carers and use this feedback effectively to inform change. We welcome your views on how we best do this collectively.

How do we harness the experience of young people and their parents such that it informs improvements?

vii)   Characteristics of an Inclusive School

Discussions around inclusion and provision for SEND pupils can be complex and multi-layered. Every school will have different challenges and solutions. Each of the specific proposals set out above will contribute over time to the development of a shared understanding of the key characteristics of inclusive schools. For example, the Inclusion Leadership Development programme will engage leaders at all levels in examining their roles in leading inclusion; peer to peer review of inclusion practices will facilitate debate between school leaders and identify 'what works'; Inclusion System Leaders will disseminate effective practice and help peers embed improvement; the Inclusion Dashboard will keep our focus on the impact of inclusive practice.

What else can we do to enable leaders to share in professional dialogue about what an inclusive school looks like?

1.3 Sharing Your Views

Each of these proposals are in the early stages of development and are presented to gather the views and comments of schools. The following sections expand each of the proposals and pose a set of questions. The timeline and structure for discussions is set out in section 10, along with details on how to respond. Each section includes *'pathway of proposals'* which outlines where the items have been formulated and discussed or shared previously.

2. Background and Context

[1]There are 257,807 school aged pupils in Kent, 36,900 pupils in Kent have SEND – 14.3% of total school age population. 27,039 receive SEN Support, 10.5% of school population, compared to 12.1% nationally. 9,861 have an Education Health and Care Plan - 3.8% of school population, compared to 3.3% nationally.

40.5% of children and young people in Kent with SEND attend mainstream schools, 47.8% attend a special school and 11.7% attend an independent or non- maintained special school.

20% of the SEND cohort have Speech, Language and Communication needs (SLCN), 17.5% with Social Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH) and 16.5% with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Not all young people with these needs have an EHCP, only 20% of children and young people who have SLCN have an EHCP and 19% who have SEMH. 60% of children and young people who have ASD in Kent have an EHCP.

At Primary level the most prevalent need is SLCN, followed by SEMH. At Secondary level the most prevalent need is SEMH, followed by Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD). The majority of children and young people who attend a special school in Kent have a primary need of ASD (51.2% of the cohort).

[2]31.5% of children and young people who receive SEN Support have been subject to a Fixed Term Exclusion. 10.5% of children and young people with an EHCP have been subject to a Fixed Term Exclusion.

Academic and attendance at school outcomes for children and young people with SEND are shown in the SEND Improvement Scorecard in Appendix 1.

We ask that this discussion focuses on the actions we need to take and the support we need to provide such that:

— There is consistent quality of provision and commitment to inclusion in all schools and settings
— Standards achieved, and progress made, by children and young people with SEND is improving and is above the national average for all phases.
— Systems to track and quality assure provision are effective, such that the achievement gap for children and young people with SEND is narrowing.

Proposals for Discussion:

3. Statement of Inclusion for the Kent family of schools.

The draft Statement can be found in *Appendix 1*

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[1] * Data Sources – Special Educational Needs in England 2020, Education Health and Care Plans in England 2020 – DfE, SEND Scorecard March 2020 – KCC and Kent and Medway CCG)
[2] SEND Scorecard March 2020

The purpose of the proposed Statement of Inclusion is to set out our collective ambition and values for inclusion. It aims to reflect the partnership working between schools, settings and Kent County Council in developing a child centred approach to SEND across Kent, ensuring that all partners are equally and effectively inclusive, and to follow both the spirit and the letter of the law with inclusive values.

In this discussion we ask that you to consider what inclusion means to you:
— Does the statement reflect our collective understanding of inclusivity?
— Do you agree with our collective commitment to children?
— Do you agree with our collective commitment to parents and carers?
— Do you agree with our collective commitment to schools?
— Do you agree with our collective commitment to staff?
— To what extent do you agree or disagree with the commitment made ('we will' section) across the county, in each area and in the schools?

The statement proposes what we will do. We ask that you consider whether these commitments are appropriate or if there are additions or deletions to be made.

Pathway of Proposal

The statement has been shared/contributed to at the following forums, ahead of this discussion:

- ISOS strategy meeting
- Small working group of Headteachers and Senior KCC Officers
- SEND County Reference Group

4. Inclusion Framework

The draft SEND Inclusion Framework can be found in *Appendix 2*

A clear framework may be useful in both the design and evaluation of our shared work. A single framework universally adopted as an underpinning feature of all work may serve to unify and bring coherence. For example, an agreed framework could be used as a basis for the proposed Kent Peer Review model to guide peer to peer discussions and school self-review, the curriculum for the Inclusion Leadership programme will be built around the same framework, the designation and training of Inclusion System Leaders will focus on these areas.

The Whole School SEND Consortium have developed a framework which defines areas of focus for consideration by schools in reviewing their inclusive practice. In this discussion we ask that you to consider:

— Is this framework a useful guide in identifying areas on which to focus when reviewing inclusion?
— Does this framework include all the appropriate areas of focus?
— Are there any areas of the framework where you feel there is greater priority for support or where support in not currently available?

Pathway of Proposal

The framework was developed by the Whole School SEND Consortium as a framework for self and peer review. It has been used as a framework for peer review by a number of schools in Kent, including the SEND Peer Review pilot developed by 5 Acre Wood School working with primary partners in Maidstone (see 6.1 below).

5. Mainstream Core Standards

The draft Mainstream Core Standards (MCS) can be found in *Appendix 3*.

The Mainstream Core Standards (MCS) is a document which provides guidance and advice to support schools, parent/carers and professionals working with children and young people with SEND. It provides guidance to schools on the statutory duties regarding the inclusion of CYP with SEND. It provides guidance and advice to support schools to meet the needs of and include CYP with SEND.

A child or young person has a right to receive their education in a mainstream school if their parents and, for young people, they want it. Mainstream schools must ensure that children or young people with SEN engage in the activities of the school together with children or young people who do not have SEN (section 35 of the Children and Families Act 2014).

Provision and support available to children and young people with SEND should be provided in line with their needs and is not dependent on any formal diagnosis. The purpose of the MSC is to outline the provision that the local area expects to be made available for children and young people with SEND attending mainstream schools. It is a universal document, intended to support mainstream practitioners, aid local conversations and promote a consistent high-quality approach to SEND inclusion. It also provides information to all stakeholders on your work in relation to the inclusion of CYP with SEND. A parent version is being consulted on at this time.

We are keen to understand how effective the proposed document is in meeting this purpose, in particular:
— Does the MCS support your understanding the legal duties of schools, academies and Pupil Referral Units in relation to provision for and inclusion of pupils with SEND?
— Is the document helpful in setting out the provision that should be ordinarily available for CYP with SEND?
— Does it provide support and guidance to school staff in meeting the needs of CYP with SEND so that they are included and make good progress?
— Will it be useful in developing whole school inclusive practice?
— Does it reflect all of the core inclusive activity carried out by schools?
— How well will it support conversations with parents when discussing their child's needs
— How helpful is the need type breakdown in informing school practice and does there need to be any further additions?

― How universally accessible is the document, could it be used by both specialists and non-specialists?
― Any feedback on the layout and ease of use.

The document has been shared/discussed at the following forums, ahead of this discussion. The forums have been attended by Head Teachers, SENCos, Specialist Teachers, Healthwatch DCO, Kent PACT, Head of the EP Service.

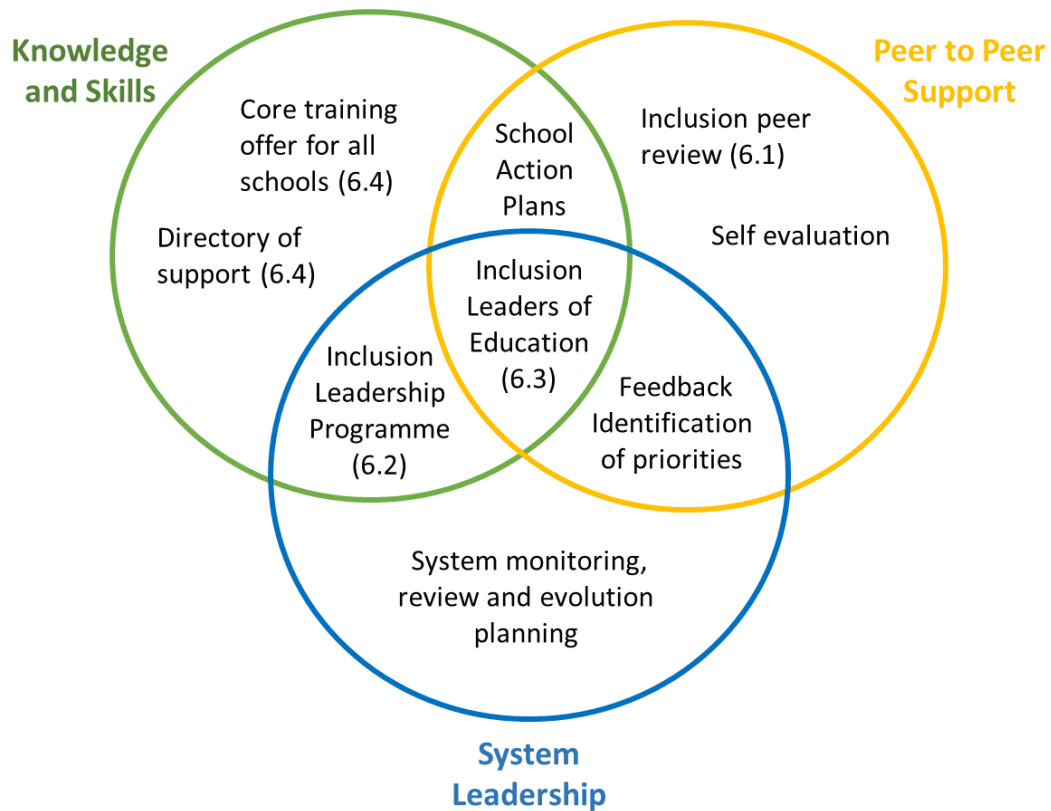| June 2019	MCS Review Workshop	Review of Kent MCS and other LA models
Sept 2019	MCS Steering Group	Agree purpose and format
Nov 2019	Need Type Working Parties	Sessions to develop specific content
Nov 2019	MCS Steering Group	To review draft content and format
Dec 2019/Jan 2020	Working groups consulted	Draft document produced

6. System Leadership of Inclusion

Consideration has been given to the countywide systems and processes which focus on identifying strengths and sharing good practice, identifying challenges and working collectively with all stakeholders to challenge and change behaviours such that:

- There is consistent quality of provision and commitment to inclusion in all schools.
- Standards achieved, and progress made, by children and young people with SEND is improving and is above the national average for all phases.
- Systems to track and quality assure provision are effective, such that the achievement gap for children and young people with SEND is narrowing.

Understanding that schools are the experts and are in the best place to support each other in this we are proposing a number of initiatives collectively designed to:
- develop knowledge and skills
- establish regular and systematic self-evaluation and peer review
- increase capacity for school to school support

Specific detail can be found in the draft 'School to School Support for Inclusion' in *Appendix 4*, which outlines a proposed countywide system, represented in the diagram below.

Knowledge and Skills

Core training offer for all schools (6.4)

Directory of support (6.4)

School Action Plans

Inclusion Leaders of Education (6.3)

Inclusion Leadership Programme (6.2)

Peer to Peer Support

Inclusion peer review (6.1)

Self evaluation

Feedback Identification of priorities

System monitoring, review and evolution planning

System Leadership

6.1 Inclusion Peer Review

Many individual and groups of schools engage regularly in peer review activities as part of their regular cycle of school development activity. Effective peer review and collaboration are essential features of a self-sustaining system and there is considerable evidence that schools that engage in structured peer review can rapidly improve and sustain impact. Peer review processes build deeper relationships between schools, sustain continuous improvement, are focused on action and the support needed for improvement. They are evidence-led, honest appraisals of effectiveness carried out in a clearly structured way between trusted partners.

There are a variety of peer review models, some locally designed, and others facilitated by national groups such as Challenge Partners. Across all of these models a set of principles of effective peer review are evident. These are usefully summarised in an NAHT publication The Principles of Effective School-to-School Peer Review, which also provides an evidence base for these principles.

We are proposing the development and introduction of an Inclusion Peer Review, with a methodology based on existing effective approaches and a clear focus on reviewing and supporting improvement in inclusion and the outcomes for SEND pupils. The proposed model combines the generic elements of the peer review methodology with the use of the Inclusion Framework outlined in Section 4. In so doing it aims to create a sustainable best practice model that is tailored to a review of inclusive practice in schools.

In considering the proposed model, we are keen to get feedback on these key questions:

— Do you have confidence that taking part in the Inclusion Peer Review as described would be of value to your school or group of schools?
— Do you think that the model proposed will help to build capacity for leaders in your schools?
— Do you think the proposed model will help to build deeper professional relationships between school leaders and groups of schools?
— If peer reviews are undertaken in small groups of schools, approx. 4-6 schools per group, do you think the groups should always be either cross-phase or single phase or are you happy that they could be either?
— Do you feel that model proposed has the right balance of being led by leaders of the schools involved combined with support from 'external experts'?

Pathway of Proposal

The introduction of a peer review model specifically focused on Inclusion was made by KAH in response to Headteacher feedback highlighting the importance of creating methods that build capacity for system led development.

Approximately 100 mainstream Kent schools, mainly primaries, have engaged with the Schools Partnership programme led by The Education Development Trust, many of them as part of a 3-year EEF sponsored trial to evaluate the impact of the model on KS2 outcomes.

6.2 Inclusion Leadership Programme

Every school leader is a leader of inclusion and shares responsibility for individual SEND pupils as well as for the whole school culture, systems and processes. SENCOS, Inclusion Leads and others play specific roles alongside and as part of middle and senior leadership teams.

Building on the local delivery of NPQs for middle and senior leaders, Headteachers and Executive Leaders we propose to introduce a new leadership development programme – Inclusion Leadership. The programme will be differentiated for leaders at different stages in their development and will examine their roles in developing and sustaining inclusion in their schools.

Currently, local NPQ delivery is led by Leadership Learning South East. They have built a model in which Headteachers design the core curriculum and the programmes are facilitated by school leaders (trained in the programme and in facilitation skills). This is the proposed model for the Inclusion Leadership programme.

In considering the proposed model, we are keen to get feedback on these key questions:

— Do you agree that the introduction of an Inclusion Leadership programme will be valuable to the development of school leaders?

- Do you agree that the programme should be organised for middle leaders, senior leaders, Headteachers, Executive Leaders in order to focus on their particular roles and responsibilities relevant to the level of leadership?
- Do you agree that SENCOs should be included in the senior leadership groups?
- Should this programme be offered to only those who are interested or should a structured roll out be facilitated?
- If a level of subsidy for the costs of the programme where in place, what criteria should be used to prioritise schools for higher levels of subsidy?

Pathway of Proposal

The introduction of a leadership development offer specifically focused on Inclusion was made by KAH in response to Headteacher feedback highlighting the importance developing the knowledge, skills and capacity of leaders.

6.3 Inclusion Leaders of Education

A key feature of a self-improving system is the presence of leaders from the system with capacity to support their peers in leading change and improvement. Typical models include mentoring, external reviews to inform evaluation and planning, supporting a peer in managing a change programme etc. While much of this type of support happens informally and without the necessity for a formal designation there is additional value gained by also developing a cadre of leaders with particular expertise.

The proposal is to invite Headteachers and other school leaders to apply to be designated as Inclusion Leaders of Education (ILEs). Based on current processes for other system leader designation there would be a set of criteria for application based on track record and expertise and impact. We would look to develop a programme to include, a process of application, training in the role, a process for managing and recording 'deployments' and an appropriate level of evaluation and regular review to maintain the credibility of the system leader.

In considering the proposed model, we are keen to get feedback on these key questions:

- Do you agree that the introduction of an Inclusion Leader of Education designation would be a useful addition to the system leadership capacity in Kent?
- If ILEs already existed how might you want to use them?
- What do you think the barriers would be to a system like this working?
- Do you feel that the outline criteria, process and evaluation arrangements described in the Appendix are sufficient to demonstrate the credibility and expertise of the ILE?

Pathway of Proposal

This proposal is based on existing models of system leadership such as Specialist Leadership of Education (SLEs), Local Leaders of Education (LLSEs), Kent Leaders of Education (KLEs) and National Leaders of Education (NLEs)

While NLEs and NLGs are nationally designated, there is a well-established local practice of designating KLEs (KAH) and SLEs (Teaching Schools), with protocols and selection criteria that can easily be adapted to the designation of Inclusion Leaders of Education.

6.4 Core offer and Directory of support

In order to support professional development and provide additional support, we are creating a directory of support. The intention is to have a single directory schools can access to find the training and support available. We would also like to understand if there is a need for a core training offer, training that all schools engage with as a minimum and, if so, what that training needs to include.

— Will a directory of services be useful in informing continuing professional development?
— If there was a core offer of training for all schools, what should it include?

7. Inclusion Dashboard

The Local Authority SEND Improvement Scorecard is used by KCC to inform their progress to the Written Statement of Action. The extract relating to schools can be found in *Appendix 5*.

To support local collaboration, identification and early intervention of potential issues and as a way of measuring impact and successes, we are proposing the creation of a SEND Inclusion Dashboard. This will build on the work of the Alternative Provision Dashboard, currently used by secondary and PRU colleagues within each local area.

The proposal is that the dashboard is produced quarterly, in line with the SEND Improvement Scorecard. The dashboard could include the same performance indicators as those in the scorecard and any other data that you feel would be useful.

The suggestion is that, like the AP Dashboard, this is collated at school level for localities/districts and shared with the Head teachers in these areas. This can then be used at local inclusion forums to share good practice, identify priorities and develop collaborative solutions.

We are keen to understand how effective the proposal is in meeting its purpose, in particular:

— To what extent do you agree with sharing of Local SEND Inclusion Dashboards? – should these be shared more widely?
— Do you agree the right information is included in the dashboard, should anything be added or removed?
— How well will this information support local collaboration around SEND inclusion?

The statement has been shared/discussed at the following forums, ahead of this discussion:

— The AP Inclusion dashboard was included in the wider AP discussion with secondary and PRU colleagues
— The SEND Scorecard went to the County Reference Group

8. Parent Voice

The views of parents and carers are fundamental to improving the quality of SEND Inclusion across the county. The lived experience of young people and their parents is an area we are working hard to improve significantly. We currently collect the views of parents and carers through surveys and are keen to ensure that this information is both comprehensive and used effectively to inform change. Therefore, we would welcome your views on the following:

— What feedback do you collect currently about the lived experience of young people with SEND who attend your school? For example: Do you have parent or family meetings/ forums or young people forums that focus on SEND Improvement?
— Would it be helpful to share guidance on how to support this? For example, suggested questions to ask?
— How can we best share our findings in a way that is useful to you? For example, disaggregate the survey data by area, district or child's school.

9. Characteristics of an Inclusive School

Inclusion is the action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure. For children this means equal and equitable access to education, including for those with SEND.

Having a clear and shared understanding of what makes an inclusive school will help us achieve our ambitions for Kent children, as it does within an individual school or group of schools.

As individual schools and groups of schools you will be reflecting on key questions which frame your strategic leadership of inclusion and we are keen to mirror a similar debate across the county.

— What is our shared, Kent-wide vision for inclusion?
— Does every school have a clear vision for inclusion that is framed both by the shared vision and by the specific profile of the population it serves?
— What are the key characteristics of a school in which all children's needs are met?
— How do we know where our inclusive practice is working?

- Have we defined the actions that are needed to achieve our vision?
- Are we listening effectively to the voices of children?
- Are we effectively implementing out priorities?
- Have we got the right and relevant professional development in place?
- Are we achieving improved outcomes for all children?

Each of the individual proposals described in the earlier sections of this paper will in various ways contribute to a debate about these key questions, helping us to reach a shared understanding. In turn this will enable us to work collaboratively to ensure that the right support is in place to support all schools in their on-going work to achieve the most effective inclusive practices.

A set of useful questions to support school leaders in reflecting on inclusion and exploring it with teams can be found in a publication entitled [Understanding Inclusion](#) (NASEN, 2020)

10. Timetable for discussions

We would like to encourage debate around these core questions through as many existing forums as possible including Headteacher networks, KAH meetings, IYFA panels, Inclusion Steering Groups. If you would like a KCC Officer to attend to talk through the proposals with your group please email Julie Hawkins.

Julie.hawkins@kent.gov.uk

We will also be hosting 4 virtual workshops on:

6th Oct: 9.30 – 12.00 – West   emma.o'connor@kent.gov.uk
6th Oct: 1.30 – 4.00   - East   Jennifer.Barnet@kent.gov.uk
8th Oct: 9.30 – 12.00 – South   Julie.Hawkins@kent.gov.uk
8th Oct: 1.30 – 4.00   – North   Ann.Drury@kent.gov.uk

Whilst these are designated to areas, schools are welcome to attend sessions out of their area if the times are more convenient. Please email the area offices, details as above if you wish to attend.

10.1 Who should take part in the discussion?

This discussion is for the attention of all staff and representatives of Schools and Academies in Kent. We actively encourage feedback from the range of school positions as well as the Senior Leadership.

10.2 How to respond to the discussion

- Respond in writing by completing the response (available on Kelsi) and send to Penny.Pemberton@kent.gov.uk
- Attend any of the 4 scheduled workshops, discussions at which will be recorded and summarised

- Feedback directly to your KAH Area Representative

Please respond by: 31st October 2020

Feedback will be collated into a paper, identifying key findings, actions and next steps. This will be shared with all schools.