

Locality Model: Frequently Asked Questions

This document is divided into three main sections: Communities of Schools, Professional Resource Group, and Area Board. Additional information regarding the Area Board section will be shared soon. Each section includes several sub-sections to support easy and efficient navigation. The Contents Page contains hyperlinks to each part for quick access.

There will be regular updates to this document as the work progresses. There is a dedicated page on Kelsi for all updates and background information: [Locality Model for School Inclusion - KELSI](#)

These questions have been collated from various engagement opportunities over the last few months including Communities of Schools events, SEN System Funding Consultation engagement sessions, Locality Model – Keeping in Touch meetings, The Education People – Finance Information Group Meetings and meetings with the Community Chairs.

For any questions on the whole Locality Model please direct your emails to:
localitymodel@kent.gov.uk

For any questions relating to Communities of Schools please direct your emails to:
cosadmin@kent.gov.uk

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Communities of Schools (CoS) – Frequently Asked Questions

Further information on [Communities of Schools](#) can be found on Kelsi. This includes a series of videos to exemplify the CoS process

Meetings & Attendance

- 1. How often will CoS meet?**

CoS meet monthly, with a minimum of 7 meetings per academic year. Chairs will also attend separate Keeping in Touch (KiT) meetings in November, February, April and July to support evaluation and moderation.
- 2. Are meetings face-to-face or virtual? How long are they?**

This is decided locally by the CoS chair and members. Meetings are typically 3 hours (half a day) but may vary by CoS. Schools tend to prefer face to face but it can be virtual or hybrid if it encourages attendance.
- 3. Are meeting dates set in advance?**

Yes. Most meetings for 2025/26 have been scheduled; future dates will be set at those initial meetings.
- 4. Is attendance at every meeting expected?**

Yes. Schools should aim to be represented at all meetings. Attending is required to access CoS funding.
- 5. Who can attend from each school?**

Ideally, one representative per school. This can be a SENCo or Inclusion Lead, someone with delegated authority to request funding. Final decisions rest with the school and chair.
- 6. Can SENCos and Headteachers both attend?**

Early on yes. However, it is best when one person attends.
- 7. How is attendance monitored?**

Chairs and clerks will monitor attendance. Schools not attending cannot access CoS funding.

Chair & Clerk Information

- 8. Where can I find out who my chair is?**

Visit the [Kelsi Community Chair Allocation](#) for up-to-date information.
- 9. When will all Chairs be appointed?**

All chairs have now been appointed and there will be another recruitment process in February 2026.

CoS Membership, Role & Process

10. What is the purpose of CoS?

To support inclusive practices through peer discussion, joint decision-making, and shared use of funding to meet local needs.

11. What happens if a school has more than one request or complex cases?

Multiple requests are allowed. The forms should be sent 10 working days before the meeting; the Chair will organise the meeting appropriately.

12. Do we need to 'exhaust all options' before applying?

No. The Request for Resource form is brief. Schools present the context and solution at the meeting. However, the discussion should also include what the school has already done and why other options have either not been considered or not been successful.

Funding & Requests

13. How is funding accessed?

By attending meetings and submitting a [Request for Resource](#) form. See [CoS Terms of Reference](#) for details.

14. Who decides on funding allocations?

The CoS group. In case of disagreement, the Chair has the final say.

15. What's the funding turnaround time?

Funds should be processed within 30 working days through the school advance system.

16. Is funding only for group-based support?

Most funding requests will be for groups of pupils. However, individual needs, especially in small schools, are valid and supported. Services like EPs and SALTs are accessible directly via link practitioners.

17. What evidence is required before requesting CoS top-up funding?

The form requests a summary of what outcomes are desired as a result of the extra funding and at what point a review might be necessary to assess progress.

Fairness, Equity & Moderation

18. How will fairness and bias be managed in CoS decisions?

Independent Chairs must declare interests and will not operate where there may be a conflict. Regular reporting, collective monitoring, and moderation at KiT meetings and Area Boards support fairness.

19. How will equity between different school types be ensured?

CoS members are expected to act in the best interests of all children, not only their own schools. Small schools and secondaries all have a voice.

Special Schools & Secondary Representation

20. What is the role of Special Schools in CoS?

Special Schools will sit within the Professional Resource Group.

21. Will secondaries have their own space in CoS discussions?

CoS chairs will structure agendas with members. Phase-specific needs can be prioritised as appropriate.

22. Can CoS budgets support secondary-led projects?

Yes. Budgets are managed by the CoS and can be used creatively, including for secondary-focused work, particularly around transition or preparation for adulthood.

Professional Resource Group (PRG)

23. What is the PRG?

A new model to access professional services directly (e.g., Educational Psychology, Attendance, STLS). PRG information is on the [Kelsi website](#).

24. How can secondaries coordinate with PRG?

Through their CoS and link practitioners. All primary and secondary schools have access to a link practitioner from the core services.

Processes & Forms

25. Is there a word limit on the Request for Resource form?

Yes—250 words for describing your *request*, not the full child context. There will be time at meetings to elaborate.

26. Can multiple children be on one form?

Yes, names are entered separately and not counted in the word limit.

27. Are there examples of completed request forms?

These are in development. Check Kelsi periodically for updates.

28. Is there a medical support request process (not SEND)?

Only for children eligible for High Needs Funding. Pupils supported by STLS Sensory and Medical may also be considered.

Consent, Data & Safeguards

29. Do we need parental consent to submit a request?

No. Consent to share information with professionals should be part of your school's admission agreement.

30. Will personal details be shared at CoS?

No. Names and DoB are only retained by KCC, not shared with CoS members or Chairs.

LIFT & the New Locality Model

31. Is CoS replacing LIFT?

Yes. LIFT will no longer operate in Kent from September 2025. Support pathways now run through CoS, PRG, and link professionals.

32. Will new guidance be shared (e.g. flowcharts, case studies)?

Yes. Dr Alison Ekins is developing case studies. Refer to NASEN and Whole School SEND for evidence-based guidance.

33. What if we need help with very complex children or urgent needs?

Request funding through your CoS. Interim decisions can be made between meetings if needed. Services are also accessible via link professionals.

Funding and Budgeting FAQ

Further information can be found in the [Communities of Schools Financial Information](#) on Kelsi.

Overview of the Funding Model

1. What is the funding model for mainstream schools under the CoS approach?

Mainstream funding comprises:

- **Element 1:** Core education funding (age-weighted pupil unit).
- **Element 2:** Notional SEN budget (up to £6,000 per pupil, allocated via a national formula).
- **Element 3:** Top-up funding (previously HNF, now allocated via CoS or Specific Allocation Funding).

2. What is CoS funding and who can access it?

CoS funding supports additional provision for pupils in a school community. It is based on **where a pupil attends school**, not their home address or GP location.

Allocation and Management of Funds

3. How is funding released, allocated, and managed throughout the year?

- Each CoS receives an annual budget.
- CoS determines how to allocate and for how long.
- KCC releases funding to schools once agreed.
- Schools must manage this funding throughout the academic year.

- **4. Is funding guaranteed year-to-year?**

Funding is allocated annually. The new model reduces reapplication requirements.

6. Will funding be available before the first CoS meetings?

Yes, protected transition-year funding has been allocated. Email SchoolFunding@kent.gov.uk if not received.

7. What happens if the CoS budget is exhausted mid-year?

CoS must decide how to reprioritise. Schools are advised to evaluate provision and retrain staff where necessary.

High Needs Funding (HNF) and SEN Support

8. What if a child with High Needs Funding (HNF) no longer requires it?

Contact your area High Needs Funding Officer:

- **North** – rebecca.walsh@kent.gov.uk
- **East** – maria.white@kent.gov.uk
- **South** – alison.sandford@kent.gov.uk
- **West** – nicola.hockney@kent.gov.uk

9. Do schools still need to fund the first £6,000 of support?

Yes – from their [notional SEN budget](#). For small schools, LA may contribute until August 2026.

10. Is the notional SEN budget meant to cover the SENCo salary?

No. Refer to the [Notional SEN Budget Guidance](#) on Kelsi.

11. Can we still apply for staffing funds where needs are significant?

Top-up funding is not intended specifically for staffing, but for supporting provision overall.

Changes and Transitions

19. How are pupils from other LAs funded when they move to Kent?

Schools must apply directly to the previous LA for interim funding.

20. How is funding transferred when pupils move between Kent schools?

- CoS funding transfer depends on the receiving CoS' decision.

21. Will HNF continue during the transition period?

Yes – protected until August 2026.

22. Do we need to reapply for HNF without EHCPs during transition?

No, protected amounts apply for 2025. Future applications go through CoS.

Budget Planning and Support

23. How do we plan for years 2 and 3 without fixed funding data?

Review provision, use historic data, and follow KCC guidance on the notional SEN budget.

24. What support is available for budget planning?

Attend TEP's Financial Information Group meetings (free for all Kent schools).

25. Where can we find notional SEN budget information?

Details are available on [Kelsi](#).

Staffing and Workforce Planning

26. Should we end temporary TA contracts due to uncertainty?

This is at the school's discretion. Funding protections are in place, but staffing decisions are local.

27. Who covers redundancy costs if needed?

Schools are responsible for redundancy costs.

28. What if we have permanent staff but reduced funding?

Schools must manage workforce changes. Training and link practitioner support are available.

Complex Needs, Exceptional Funding & Safety

29. How are children with complex PD or exceptional needs funded?

They will be mapped through funding descriptors to determine funding.

31. How will schools evidence EHCP need without 1:1 provision?

Through provision maps and documented plans. The graduated approach remains valid.

32. How does KCC recognise schools meeting complex needs without EHCPs?

CoS models incentivise this by allowing flexible, community-based allocation from the High Needs Block.

33. What if the funding is insufficient to meet legal EHCP requirements?

Schools must use all training and resources available. The LA is responsible for a contribution, not full funding.

System Development and Future Planning

34. Will the new SRP rates from Sept 2026 be published soon?

These are being developed over the next 18 months.

35. Why is IDACI used for funding when SEND is not linked to deprivation?

IDACI aligns with the **National Funding Formula**, which is nationally mandated.

36. Are all Kent areas receiving equal funding or are some worse off?

No cuts are being made. Allocations are based on the last two years' actual claims. SRP provision is being expanded to address gaps.

Transitions FAQ – Year R, Year 2–3, and Year 6–7

Early Years and Year R (Reception) Transitions

1. What happens to children entering Reception in September 2025 with EHCPs?

If a child has an EHCP and is receiving over £6,000 of funding, the funding will follow them into Reception. The specifics of how this is administered under the new model will be clarified as part of the Year R process update.

2. What if a child has SENIF funding in pre-school – will we need to reapply in Year R?

Children transitioning with SENIF support or EHCPs will be considered within the separate Year R process currently in development. Continuity of support is a key priority.

3. How can schools request funding for Reception pupils with high medical or complex needs?

This is under review. In the meantime, plan for transition using existing knowledge, link practitioners, and CoS preparation where applicable.

4. Will funding be sufficient for the increasingly complex Reception intake in September 2025, especially those without protected funding?

The funding process is still being finalised. However, the intention is to support vulnerable pupils through CoS collaboration and to ensure sufficient support is in place at entry.

5. How can CoS funding be used to support Reception transitions?

CoS structures are intended to support peer-to-peer advice, shared planning, and joint decisions about how to use funding and resources for key transitions like EYFS.

6. What if a child is starting Reception with a medical condition requiring immediate support?

Medical needs must be planned for from day one. Schools should use known information and involve health professionals and link practitioners to develop a robust transition plan. The Year R process will provide further details on funding.

7. I run a nursery—why isn't there EYFS funding in the new model?

The CoS model does not include EYFS funding. EY providers must apply through SENIF (SEN Inclusion Fund) and Early Years High Needs Funding. This process has not changed.

8. Are school nurseries included in the CoS model?

No. School nurseries access High Needs Funding via the EY / SENIF route, not CoS.

Year 2–3 Transitions (Infant to Junior)

9. Will children receiving funding in Year 2 continue to receive it in Year 3?

Yes. If a pupil has an EHCP and is in receipt of funding above £6,000, this will follow them from infant to junior school. This applies to all phase transitions.

Year 6–7 Transitions (Primary to Secondary)

11. Will workload be manageable for schools during Year 6–7 transitions?

Yes. The aim is to streamline funding processes and build collaborative working between feeder schools and secondaries through CoS.

12. Is there a plan to align practices across phases, particularly for Year 6–7 transitions?

Yes. CoS structures are expected to strengthen this alignment through:

- Shared transition reviews
- Consistent planning formats
- Regular collaboration between feeder and receiving schools

13. What is KCC's vision for joined-up phase transition work through CoS?

KCC aims for:

- Stronger collaborative practice within each CoS
- Improved continuity of provision planning
- Better outcomes for pupils during transition

This builds on significant progress made over the past two years in strengthening transition processes.

Rationale and National Policy FAQ

National Context and Examples

1. Are there examples of similar models working successfully in other local authorities?

Yes. Variations of the CoS model have been implemented in Nottingham, Croydon, Sutton, Brent, Luton, Essex, and Hampshire, among others. While each area has adapted the model to suit local needs, all have focused on more collaborative and sustainable approaches to SEND funding and provision.

KCC's Assistant Director for Education Inclusion also participates in national forums with local authorities using similar models to share best practice.

2. How do Kent's plans align with national policy on High Needs Funding?

Kent's approach follows the national direction of travel, particularly the Department for Education's (DfE) focus on:

- Strengthening early intervention and SEN Support
- Reducing bureaucracy in funding processes
- Making the system more transparent and sustainable

Kent will also respond to any new statutory changes resulting from the government's SEND improvement plan or future legislation.

Implementation in Kent

3. Has this new CoS model been tested in Kent before the full rollout?

Yes. Schools were encouraged to meet as CoS during Terms 5 and 6 of 2025 to trial the model and build confidence before the official launch in September 2025.

To support this transition, the 2025/26 academic year includes:

- Protected funding based on historic allocations
- A smaller CoS budget in the first year to allow time for schools to adapt

4. Is KCC piloting CoS or implementing the model universally?

While not formally piloted in isolated areas, all schools were invited to test and trial processes collaboratively before universal implementation in September 2025.

Local Variability and System Alignment

5. What happens if a school has a different Primary Care Network (PCN) from others in its CoS group?

This will not negatively impact the school. CoS groupings were created using PCN geography to strengthen potential health and education partnerships, but variation within groups is expected and accounted for.

6. Will the reform of KCC or political changes alter SEND strategy or the CoS model?

It is too early to know the full impact of political or structural changes at KCC. Updates will be shared as more information becomes available. For now, the current CoS strategy remains aligned with national expectations.

Impact and Evaluation FAQ

Measuring the Impact of CoS Funding

1. Who measures the impact of CoS decisions and funding?

Each CoS will:

- Monitor spending using a shared balance sheet updated regularly
- Report on impact to the SEND Partnership Board, Schools Funding Forum and other related governance routes.

2. Is there a requirement to evidence the impact of funding?

Yes. Each CoS must demonstrate how its funding decisions have improved outcomes for children.

- It is not necessary to provide detailed spend breakdowns.
- Instead, CoS will report on whether the intended impact was achieved.

3. How will the impact of funding be measured?

A new framework is being developed (Summer 2025) to support:

- Common language and approaches for evaluating impact
- Consideration of diverse pathways, including engagement models and other non-linear progress tracking methods

Data, Dashboards, and Evidence

4. What's the current evidence for outcomes from previous HNF allocations?

Historically, outcome evidence for HNF was difficult to track. The new CoS model aims to address this by embedding impact measures from the outset and tying them to funding decisions.

5. Will the District Dashboard (CATIE) be developed further to support accountability?

Yes. There are plans to improve the District Dashboard to enhance accountability and challenge. Updates will be shared via:

- Kelsi
- The Director of Education and SEND's Bulletin

6. Where can we find the District Inclusion Dashboard?

The dashboard is available on [Kelsi](#).

Governance and Quality Assurance

7. What governance and quality assurance structures are in place for CoS?

- CoS will be supported and held accountable via Area Boards
- Governance processes are being finalised and will be published in due course but will include the SEND Partnership Board and Schools Funding Forum

Training FAQ

Training for SENDCos and School Leaders

1. Will there be specialist training for SENDCos?

Yes. Training for SENDCos is currently available and is under review. Updates will be provided via:

- Kelsi
- The Director of Education and SEND's weekly bulletin

KCC has already funded the following training opportunities:

- I-THRIVE
- Balanced System

- AET (Autism Education Trust)
Nurture UK
- Inclusive Leaders of Education

These are designed to ensure all staff, including SENDCos, have access to high-quality professional development.

2. Will training be available for SENDCos and senior leaders on CoS processes and funding?

Yes. The training offer is being expanded and refined to ensure:

- SEND leaders understand CoS processes, funding criteria, and funding requests
- Leaders can confidently contribute to peer moderation and triage discussions within CoS meetings

Training for Business Managers and Finance Teams

3. Is there training for business managers or finance officers?

Yes. The Finance Information Group (run by TEP) offers training for school finance teams three times a year.

This group is the main route for updates and training related to finance and the CoS funding model.

Knowledge Sharing and Case Studies

4. How will good practice and successful strategies be shared across schools and CoS?

KCC will publish and circulate case studies to highlight effective practice.

Schools are also encouraged to:

- Share examples of successful practice within their CoS
- Use peer learning to build capability across settings
This supports the capacity-building aims of the CoS model and strengthens local system leadership.

Parents and Carers FAQ

Communication to Parents and Carers

1. When and how will parents be informed of the changes to High Needs Funding (HNF)?

- KCC is working closely with Kent PACT to ensure that communication to parents is clear, timely, and accessible.
- Communications will include:
 - A quick reference guide for schools to use in discussions with parents
 - Planned webinars for parents (delivered in partnership with Kent PACT)
 - Support materials co-produced with KALE to be delivered by schools

2. Will there be resources to help parents understand the implications of the changes?

Yes. KCC is developing:

- An infographic to help parents understand the new funding model
- Clear guidance on what schools can provide with HNF
- [Materials](#) to support conversations around the shift from 1:1 support to more flexible models of provision

3. Is the expectation that schools lead the communication, or will KCC take responsibility?

- Communication should come from both KCC and schools.
- KCC will provide centralised resources that schools can signpost or share with families to reduce the burden on SENDCos and headteachers.

4. Are there dates for parent webinars or meetings?

A series of parent webinars was held in July 2025.

Managing Parent Expectations

5. How can schools explain the changes in provision to parents, especially the move away from 1:1 support?

- It's important to clarify that funding allocations do not equate directly to staffing ratios (e.g. 75% funding does not mean 75% of 1:1 support time).
- Schools can:
 - Use the quick reference guide provided by KCC
 - Seek help from link practitioners to support complex individual cases

- Emphasise the move toward flexible, needs-led provision, often through small-group or targeted intervention

6. How should schools respond when parents question provision for children with EHCPs who move from 1:1 to group-based support?

- Highlight that provision is based on need, outcomes, and best practice rather than simply staffing levels
- Reassure parents that support is still in place and individual funding is being used effectively
- Contact your link practitioner for advice on sensitive or high-risk situations

7. Will parents expect specific outcomes from the CoS funding?

Yes, parents should expect that schools utilise HNF to meet their child's needs. This does not guarantee a specific format of provision (e.g. 1:1), but there should be a clear rationale and evidence of impact.

Family Hub Access

8. Can families use Family Hubs outside of their CoS area?

Yes. Families can access Family Hubs anywhere across Kent, regardless of which Community of Schools they are linked to.

Practical Procedures and System Support FAQ

SEN Registers, Audits, and Standardisation

1. Will there be any work around the standardisation of SEN registers across schools?

This is not currently planned, but it will be considered during the evaluation phase of CoS implementation.

2. Could audits of need be used as part of introductory CoS meetings?

Yes, audits of need may be a useful tool to support early discussions and help shape shared priorities within each CoS.

3. Is KCC rewriting its SEND policy in line with the new CoS model?

Yes. KCC will update SEND policy to reflect the new model, which will help ensure consistency and reduce the burden on individual schools.

4. How is KCC managing potential increases in EHCP applications during transition?

- All applications will continue to go through the normal statutory process.
- Additional moderation will be introduced if there is a spike in requests.
- Any increase in requests for funding via EHCP route may mean a decrease in the funding allocated to CoS.

Additional Needs and Funding Models

5. How does 1:1 funding for additional pupil support in special schools map to the new CoS or tariff system?

A mapping exercise of all additional pupil needs applications is underway, starting Term 5, and will take approximately 18 months. This will inform future CoS funding decisions.

Interfaces Between Services

6. What is the interface between SEN services and Virtual School Kent (VSK)?

- VSK and SEN both sit within KCC
- Both are represented on the Countywide Approach to Inclusive Education (CATIE) Steering Group
- VSK also contributes to **Annual Reviews** for Looked After Children

GDPR and Data Protection

7. Are there GDPR issues with the Request for Resource forms containing names and dates of birth?

No. This identifiable pupil-level data is required internally by KCC for processing. It will not be shared with CoS, so data protection is maintained.

Access and Navigation Support

8. Are the Keeping in Touch meeting links published on Kelsi?

Yes. They can be found on the Kelsi [Updates and Keeping in Touch](#) page.

9. Can the Kelsi website be made easier to navigate?

The site is continually reviewed and updated within its technical parameters.
All [Locality Model information](#) is centralised and accessible from the main page.

Monitoring and Review

10. When is the next Area Review visit from the DfE?

The next Department for Education (DfE) visit to the Kent Local Area is scheduled for Autumn 2025.

Professional Resource Group (PRG) and Link Practitioners – FAQ

Overview of PRG and Its Relationship to CoS

1. Will the PRG be part of CoS meetings?

No. The PRG will not be part of CoS meetings. It is a separate resource that schools can access before or after CoS meetings for advice and support.

2. How does PRG work separately to CoS meetings?

PRG is not a referral-based group. Instead, schools can directly contact link practitioners, who are the professionals aligned to their CoS or setting.

3. Is PRG a meeting?

No. PRG is a 'virtual' network of professionals available to schools, not a scheduled meeting.

Accessing Support and Contact Mechanisms

4. How do schools access PRG or link practitioners?

- Direct contact with link practitioners is encouraged.
- If support is needed for the CoS as a whole, the group can nominate a lead school to contact the practitioner on their behalf.

5. Can support from therapists or specialist staff be requested outside CoS meetings?

Yes. Schools should contact link practitioners directly for any support needs, including complex cases or therapy beyond the usual offer.

6. Will individual, specialist or bespoke support go through PRG or direct contact?

It should go through direct contact with link practitioners. The PRG is not a formal referral body.

7. Can children from outside Kent access support if they attend a Kent school?

Yes. If a child attends your school, they are eligible for the same PRG services, regardless of home postcode.

8. Will schools have access to case studies submitted by other schools?

Yes. These are being developed and will be shared with all schools to support best practice and innovation.

Time Allocation, Capacity, and Equity of Access

9. Will link practitioners be attending CoS meetings?

No. They will not attend CoS meetings to preserve their availability for direct school support.

10. Will link practitioners have capacity to support all schools effectively?

Capacity will be monitored through regular evaluation. Once the model is fully operational, KCC will assess what works and adjust services as needed.

11. How many schools will each link practitioner support?

This will vary by service and is dependent on local demand and staffing.

12. Will link practitioners be allocated time per school or is support needs-led?

Support is needs-led at present. Allocation is not fixed, allowing for flexibility in response to priority cases.

13. How will KCC ensure PRG services are equitably accessed and not monopolised by a few schools?

Evaluation of the model's operation will guide decisions to ensure fair access and inform strategic improvements.

14. What is the expectation of time allocated per school per term?

This depends on service type and will be clarified in September 2025.

Scheduling and Planning

15. Can schools receive scheduled dates for SENIA surgeries and CoS meetings in advance?

Yes:

- SENIA surgeries are scheduled and distributed termly.

- CoS meetings are set by each CoS and should be booked during Terms 5 or 6 of the prior academic year.

16. When will the Early Help lead be assigned to schools?

KCC is gathering this information and will share it as soon as available.

Communication, Reporting, and GDPR

17. Will services produce reports for groups of children? How will this align with GDPR?

This will be determined case by case and in line with each professional's standard terms of service and data protection responsibilities.

18. How are outcomes from CoS group solution discussions shared with STLS?

It is the school's responsibility to communicate relevant outcomes with their STLS link practitioner.

Specialist Needs and Complex Cases

19. How can schools seek support for very complex children awaiting specialist provision?

Schools can and should access support for complex cases through their link practitioners.

20. Will there be mechanisms to access timely SEMH support via CoS?

- For SEMH or any other need, schools should make direct contact with link practitioners.
- Chairs can also request follow-up support after meetings, but this may delay access.

Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) – FAQ

Access and Availability of SALT Support

1. Can schools use their CoS budget to purchase extra SALT time from Kent services?

KCC is working with SALT providers to reduce existing caseloads and increase capacity, which should reduce the need to buy in extra support. Purchasing additional time could reduce availability for other schools.

2. Not all CoS currently have access to SALT—will this be addressed?

Yes. Swale is the only district currently outside the Balanced System. New commissioning

arrangements are being finalised, and an announcement is expected soon.

Link Practitioners and The Balanced System

3. Will the CoS link SALT replace the therapist we had under the Balanced System?

No. They are likely to be the same professional where the Balanced System is already in place.

4. Why don't CoS have consistent SALT or EP support across all areas?

Where professionals are employed by KCC (e.g., EPs, SENIAs), they are often consistent across schools and CoS. For SALT, who are NHS-employed, staffing may differ and cannot be directly controlled by KCC. This does not affect CoS functionality.

5. How is NHS SALT capacity being integrated within the link practitioner model?

Outside of Swale, SALT is embedded via the Balanced System. In areas where schools currently purchase their own SALT time, integration is planned following new commissioning.

Working with SALT: Capacity, Process, and Surgeries

6. Our link SALT has limited time and many schools. Can we still request support for multiple pupils?

Yes. SALTs can meet with schools to discuss groups of children, avoiding the need to book individual surgeries. However, some providers are still transitioning to this model. Please discuss your needs with your link practitioner.

7. Do I need to book an individual surgery for each child needing SALT input?

No. SALT can support discussions about groups of children, but you should check the process with your local link practitioner.

8. Is speech therapy covered in the Balanced System, or only language?

Speech Therapy is still via referral in some areas. The Balanced System currently covers language, and expansion is in progress.

Statutory Duties and EHCP Provision

9. Does this risk reducing the capacity for non-statutory SALT work?

This has been considered. The intent is to deliver SALT in school settings, allowing practitioners to support a broader group of pupils while fulfilling statutory obligations.

Educational Psychology (EP) Access and Funding – FAQ

Service Level Agreements and Access

1. Will schools require a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Kent EP service to access support?

No, an SLA is not required to access EP support through the link practitioner model. Schools should engage with their link EP in the first instance.

2. As an academy with access to our own EP, will the local authority insist we use the Kent EP service for official reports?

No, there is no requirement for academies to use the Kent EP service if they already employ their own EP.

Funding and Costs

3. Do schools still have to buy in to the EP service?

No. All access to link practitioners, including Educational Psychologists, is provided at no cost to schools under the CoS model. The offer available from link practitioners is available on KELSI.

VI – FAQ

Visual Impairment (VI) and High Needs Funding (HNF)

1. What will happen with HNF for children with Visual Impairment (VI) who do not have an EHCP but need adult support to access learning, such as using an iPad to mirror the Interactive Whiteboard (IWB)? What if the child is a Child in Care (CiC) and not from Kent?

VI support can be sourced through the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS) Sensory Services. This applies regardless of the child's home authority.

Health - FAQ

1. Where do OT and Physio fit within the health team and the link practitioner model?

OT and Physio are accessible in the same way as before. There is no change in their delivery or access through the link practitioner model.

2. Are the link practitioners assigned to all children in a school regardless of the child's or their GP's address?

Yes, link practitioners cover all children attending the school regardless of GP or home address.

3. What support is available from the Primary Care Network, and will these practitioners be named?

Primary Care Network (PCN) websites are very informative. Your PCN is named on your Link Practitioner spreadsheet.

4. Could Primary Care Network practitioners be added to the same document as the Professional Resource Group (PRG) practitioners, so all information is in one place?

Yes, where known these have been added, and information continues to be collected and updated.

5. Why are CAMHS not included in the Professional Resource Group?

CAMHS do not operate a link practitioner model and so are not part of the PRG list. Schools can access CAMHS through their usual referral pathways. The PRG list shown at induction meetings is not exhaustive.