

Introduction

All local authorities have a legal duty to provide full-time and suitable alternative education for pupils who have been permanently excluded from school or are unable to attend school due to physical or mental health conditions. In Kent, for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils this duty has been delegated to Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) or Alternative Provisions (APs), the Health Needs Service (The Rosewood School, which includes Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils) and to non-selective secondary schools through devolved funding.

Depending on previous agreements by local headteachers and the Schools Funding Forum (see 'Why do districts have different models?'), funding from the High Needs Block for PRUs/APs will either be fully devolved to non-selective secondary schools within a district or part devolved to non-selective secondary schools and part delegated to a PRU/AP Management Committee/Governing Body.

- Devolved model - in the devolved districts of Canterbury, Ashford and Swale as agreed by local headteachers, there is no DfE registered PRU/AP. Local non-selective secondary schools use the funding to support their internal inclusion strategies and interventions.
- Part devolved, part delegated model – all other districts operate with a mixed model where there is a registered DfE PRU/AP while a proportion of PRU/AP funding is devolved directly to the non-selective secondary schools in the district. The registered PRUs/APs are:
 - o Enterprise Learning Alliance (Dover & Thanet) [Enterprise Learning Alliance](#)
 - o Olive Academy (Tunbridge Wells & Sevenoaks) [OA-Tunbridge Wells | Welcome to OA - Tunbridge Wells](#)
 - o Birchwood School (Folkestone & Hythe) [Birchwood School | Folkestone | Pupil Referral Unit](#)
 - o Estuary Academy (Dartford & Gravesham) [Estuary Academies - Home](#)
 - o Maidstone and Malling Alternative Provision (Maidstone & Malling) [Home - Maidstone & Malling Alternative Provision](#)
 - o The Rosewood School (Countywide KS1-4 - physical and mental health) [The Rosewood School](#)

Why do districts have different models?

Following a consultation in 2013 and then further meetings and consultations in 2019 with schools, headteachers and management committee/governing body members of PRUs/APs, the local authority adopted the current model of funding for PRUs/APs. Following feedback that local decisions should be made by local school leaders, the management and budget of PRUs/APs were fully delegated to the local Management Committee/Governing Body consisting mainly of local headteachers. This enables local headteachers to oversee any arranged provision and maintain the responsibility for children and young people in their local area.

How does the funding work?

Funding provided by the local authority for PRUs/APs is from the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block and is in addition to the annual School Budget. The local authority calculates each districts' allocations using a formula agreed by the Schools Funding Forum. These budgets are re-calculated each year using the updated school budget datasets provided by the DfE. The total funding budget for 2025-26 is £16.2m, this includes funding for out of county health provision.

How is the funding calculated?

As agreed by the Schools Funding Forum, each district will receive an allocation determined by the factors outlined below. The amount delegated to a PRU/AP will be determined by an agreed number of commissioned places. The local authority will commission places in PRUs/APs totalling 0.42% (national average of pupils attending a PRU) of the Kent 11-16 pupil population.

The distribution of devolved funding is based upon allocating the remaining district budget across four factors as below. The number of pupils is based on both the PAN and actual pupil numbers (50:50) to help protect smaller/falling roll schools.

- Pupil numbers – KS3&4 50%
- Income Deprivation Affecting Children’s Index (IDACI) 40%
- Looked After Children (LAC) 5%
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) 5%

Each PRU/AP commissioned place will be funded at approximately £20k and this funding will be delegated directly to the PRU/AP within the district, if there is one. Any remaining district allocation will be devolved to the non-selective secondary schools. It is at the discretion of the schools who receive this funding to determine whether any of this devolved funding should be re-allocated to the PRU/AP. Districts that operate the devolved model will receive the total funding of PRU/AP places plus the remaining district allocation.

Budgets for 2025/26 can be found on the Kelsi website [Budget 2025-26 - KELS!](#), these include:

- Alternative Provision - District summary
- Alternative Provision - School summary
- Alternative Provision - Academy trust summary

What are the commissioned number of PRU/AP places across the county?

The total number of commissioned places will change each year in line with population growth/reduction across the county, along with the share of places in each district. Additional places in the PRU/AP can be commissioned directly by the district or individual schools if available.

There are 399 commissioned places for PRUs/APs across the county, plus 146 health needs places at The Rosewood School for the 2025-26 academic year as highlighted below.

	Ashford	Canterbury	Dartford & Gravesham	Dover & Thanet	Folkestone & Hythe	Maidstone & Malling	Swale	Tunbridge Wells & Sevenoaks	Total
No. of places	34	45	75	77	28	53	39	49	399

How are PRU/AP places distributed to schools?

The district’s PRU/AP Management Committee/Governing Body will agree the number of Key Stage 3 and 4 PRU/AP places allocated to each school. Each placement should be for a maximum of 12 weeks unless exceptional circumstances, with the aim for the pupil to be reintegrated back to mainstream education at the earliest possibility. It is recommended that a small number of places are reserved for any pupils that are directed to the PRU/AP that do not attend a non-selective secondary school e.g. they are directed to the district’s In Year Fair Access panel from out of area or attend a grammar school. For districts where funding is fully devolved, it is recommended that a portion of this funding is reserved for the above circumstances.

How are pupils registered at a PRU/AP?

Where a pupil has been directed off-site to a PRU/AP, they should always be dual registered from the beginning of the first day on which the school has directed the pupil to attend the provision, unless there are exceptional circumstances. For the purpose of the school census, a pupil should be dual main registered at their school and dual subsidiary registered at the PRU/AP.

This in effect places a condition of receiving PRU/AP funding, requiring mainstream schools to keep pupils on roll while they are placed at a PRU/AP. This follows the 2025 DfE guidance 'Arranging Alternative Provision' [Arranging Alternative Provision - guide for LAs and schools](#) and is in addition to the evidence showing that the dual-rolling of PRU/AP pupils strengthens the connection between pupil and school, and encourages reintegration.

Attendance code 'D' can be used for pupils who are dual registered with the PRU. When using the D code, attendance is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census and does not affect a School's attendance figures.

The local authority and PRU/AP Management Committees/Governing Bodies have agreed the exceptional circumstances in which a school may apply for a pupil's name to be removed from the school roll and to be single rolled at a PRU/AP. The main rationale for these exceptions is that a school cannot reasonably be deemed accountable for the education of the pupil. To ensure consistency across Kent, a referral system has been set up for schools to apply for sole registration via the KPAS Digital Front Door. [KPAS 10 | Request for single registration at a Pupil Referral Unit \(PRU\) - Kent County Council](#).

Can the devolved funding amount change?

Funding allocations may differ each year due to the changes to pupil numbers across the county/district.

In addition, in the event of a non-selective secondary school issuing a permanent exclusion, £21,000 of the devolved funding will transfer with the pupil to their new setting, this is known as 'Funding following the child'. For example, for an exclusion or admission in the Spring Term 2025, Summer Term 2025 or Autumn Term 2025, funding will be transferred from the excluding school and paid to the admitting school from April 2026. The deduction or payment profiling depends on the exclusion or admission date as the £21,000 is profiled over a 12-month period. Some districts have a local agreement through their PRU/AP Management Committee/Governing Body where 'Funding following the child' will not be implemented due to the issuing of a permanent exclusion.

How are schools held accountable for the devolved funding?

Schools must complete the 'School Funding Overview' annually to highlight how their devolved funding is spent on inclusive practices with the aim to reduce suspensions and permanent exclusions. The school's allocated KPAS (Kent PRU and Attendance Service) Exclusion Intervention Advisor will discuss the content of the 'School Funding Overview' with school staff.

Why do primary and grammar schools not receive any funding?

In Kent, all non-selective secondary schools will receive the PRU/AP funding. Primary and grammar schools do not receive the funding as previously agreed by the Schools Funding Forum. However, the local authority is clear in its expectation that districts should use their whole allocation flexibly to meet the needs of all children within their district. Please also see 'How are PRU/AP places distributed to schools?'

What is the role of PRU/AP Management Committee/Governing Body and who are their members?

PRUs/APs are governed by their local Management Committee/Governing Body, who agree the financial arrangements and funding passed to schools, including the PRU/AP places each school receives.

Each PRU/AP Management Committee/Governing Body should have an Instrument of Governance listing the number of committee members (no less than seven and no more than 20) and the types of members including parent members, staff members, local authority appointed members, community members and sponsor members.

Each PRU/AP Management Committee/Governing Body should be open to membership by all Headteachers of the schools in the area that the PRU/AP serves. It may not need to be a requirement for all Headteachers to be a

member, but the opportunity should be in place if they wish to join. The expectation is that the Local Authority will have a presence on each PRU/AP Management Committee/Governing Body.