



On behalf of



Countywide SENCO Forum

Term 4

Secondary 19th March 2025

Primary 20th March 2025



Today's Presenters

- Ruth Gately: SEND Specialist Adviser (The Education People)
- Clara Green: SEND Quality Assurance and Practice Development Officer
- Dr Alison Ekins: Inclusion Champion
- Annamarie Godden: Inclusion Champion
- Georgette Williams: SEN Tribunal, Placement and Assessment Manager
- Samantha Sheppard: Senior Commissioner: Inclusion and SEND
- Siobhan Price: Assistant Director, School Inclusion (KCC)

Agenda

Item	Topic	Lead/Time
1	Welcome/Housekeeping/Introduction – Ruth Gately (TEP: SEND Specialist Lead Adviser)	(5 mins)
2	Introduction Clara Green – SEND Quality Assurance and Practice Development Officer	(5 mins)
2	Continuum of Need and Provision Alison Ekins (Inclusion Champion)	(5 mins)
3	SEN Information Report and Policy Template Annamarie Godden (Inclusion Champion)	(5 mins)
4	Tribunal – the role of the school Georgette Williams (SEN Tribunal, Placement and Assessment Manager)	(15 mins)
5	STLS Update Samantha Sheppard (Senior Commissioner: Inclusion and SEND)	(30 mins)
6	Communities of Schools Siobhan Price (Assistant Director, School Inclusion)	(15 mins)
7	NPQ for SENCOs Ruth Gately (TEP Specialist Lead Adviser SEND)	(5 mins)
8	Proposed Term 5 Agenda: May 21st & May 22nd 1. Health TBD 2. Transition Plans 3. Update on direction of travel 4. Phase Transfer Team 5. EHCP	

Introduction

Clara Green

Clara.Green@kent.gov.uk

9.30am - 12.30pm Monday to Friday

SEND Quality Assurance and Practice Development Officer

03000 410816



Quality assurance and practice development



Our role:

Quality assurance-

- Holding up the mirror
- Enabling the alignment of the CYP aspirations and values
- Utilize processes to inform decision making and improve service delivery
- Focus on impact of your work and actions to achieve the best possible outcomes
- Promote a culture of reflection and learning

Practice development-

- Deliver activities and initiatives aimed at continuously improving outcomes for the CYP and that support the services professional development
- Facilitating workshops and training

**Our purpose:
continuous learning
and improvement**

Webinars



Content:

- App 2 reflections
- Launch of App 1
- Revised EHCP template
- Child centred annual reviews

Dates and times to book on:

Wednesday 30th April at 4pm

LINK: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_Yzg3NDM2NjYtN2VhZS00YjcxLWI3YzctNWUxMjhiOWM4ZDg4%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%223253a20d-c735-4bfe-a8b7-3e6ab37f5f90%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2248ed5499-5489-460d-a5c7-a62c3b8a4cc0%22%7d

Tuesday 6th May at 10am

LINK

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NmNkNzZmNDktYzhmMy00YzFjLTlmMjktNzdjMzdhdhNWM0MmJl%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%223253a20d-c735-4bfe-a8b7-3e6ab37f5f90%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2248ed5499-5489-460d-a5c7-a62c3b8a4cc0%22%7d

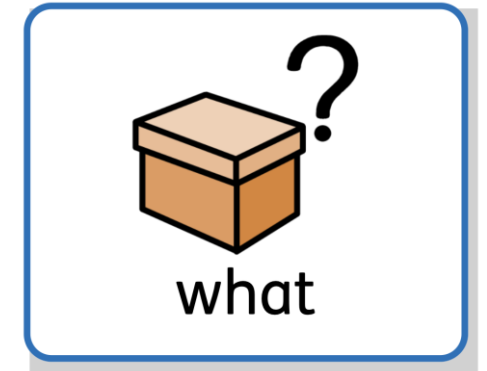
Kent Continuum of Need and Provision

Dr Alison Ekins - Inclusion Champion

Update:

- Timeline
- Overview
- Case Studies

Kent Continuum of Need and Provision- Overview



WHAT?

- The Kent Continuum of Need and Provision provides a framework and toolkit for all education settings in Kent to support consistent understanding and discussions about expectations for meeting the needs of all children and young people.
- It has been developed through collaboration and is grounded in the context of practices and provisions across all education settings in Kent.
- It builds on the Kent Mainstream Core Standards developed for mainstream school settings to focus on needs and provisions across all education settings for all children and young people in Kent.

Why?



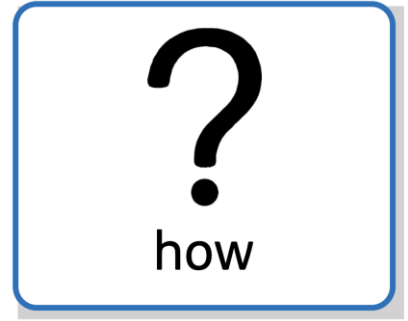
- The Kent Continuum of Need and Provision has been specifically developed to provide clarification and consistency in discussions and practices for meeting the needs of pupils with more complex needs across our education system.
- It responds to the need to make explicit the current context and expectations for all schools and settings across the broad Continuum of Need and Provision through the use of shared language and shared understanding.

Who?



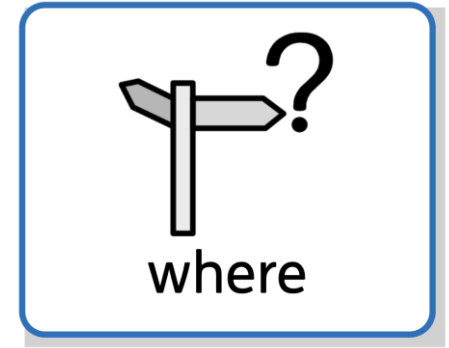
- This document is intended for all schools in the Kent education system to enable reflection on their own practices and provisions
- It will inform collaborative discussions with other school professionals, including in Community of Schools meetings.
- It will be used by Local Authority officers to inform transparency and consistency in statutory assessment, placement and funding decisions.
- Parents and other professionals from outside agencies will also have a version which will explain the key features and support confidence in the system.

How?



- This document builds on Kent's Mainstream Core Standards, which focuses on the needs and expectations for provision and support for children and young people accessing mainstream school settings, and reflects the broader complexity of need across Kent's education system, including in our mainstream schools
- The Kent Continuum of Need and Provision will help to inform focused support and training opportunities for schools.

Where?



- This document is intended to inform, guide and support practices for all schools and settings in the Kent education system.

Case Studies- group/ cohort examples of best practice

Areas:

- Working with children and young people, families and carers
- Pastoral
- Assessment
- Teaching and Learning
- Physical and Sensory Environment
- Resources
- Staff skills and training
- Transition and transfer

Structure:

1. Area of Focus
2. Brief description/ overview- of the group/ cohort or whole-school need that this work addressed-
3. An overview of what you did- key strategies/ actions taken-
4. Impact

Contact: Emily.bambridge@kent.gov.uk

SEND Policy

A countywide template

Annamarie Godden: Inclusion Champion



Kent SEND Information Report

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Information Report

Joy Lane Primary School



Inclusion Team
SEND Governor:
Mrs Marion Steff
Inclusion Lead/SENCO/SEND Team:
Mrs Annamarie Godden (Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion)
Contact No. 01227 261430
Inclusion Team:
inclusion@joylane.kent.sch.uk

Approved by:	[Name]	Date: [Date]
Last reviewed on:	[Date]	
Next review due by:	[Date – note: this document should be updated annually and as soon as possible when any of the information in it changes]	

Kent SEND Information Report

Dear parents and carers,

The aim of this Information Report is to explain how we implement our SEND policy. In other words, we want to show you how SEND support works in our school.

As educational professionals, we are all working towards the **ultimate goal** of growing independent young people as they prepare for adulthood. All provision and support we provide is working towards achieving the Kent Children and Young People (CYP) Outcomes Framework:



If you want to know more about our arrangements [for](#) SEND, read our SEND policy alongside this Information Report.

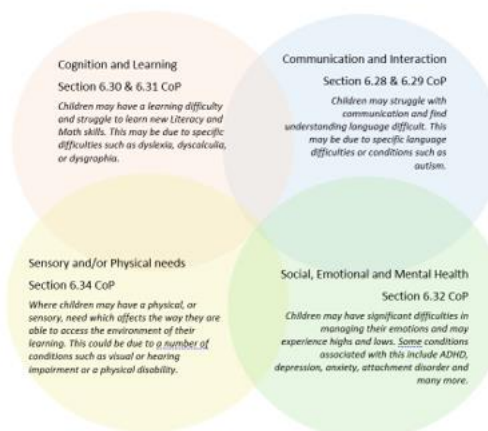
You can find our SEND policy on our website [Joy Lane Primary School - Policies](#).

Note: if there are any **terms** we've used in this information report that you're unsure of, you can look them up in the Glossary at the end of the report.

Kent SEND Information Report

1. What types of **SEND** does the school provide for?

Our school provides for pupils with the following needs (as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice 2015):



Often you will find that children's needs overlap and are rarely confined to one area of need, which is why it is important to gain a holistic overview of your child.

More information about the Areas of Need can be found in the Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (link below).

[SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)





- Separation of Policy and Report rationale
- Will there be a policy to support alongside the report?

SEND Governance

[Special educational needs \(SEN\) and disabilities: guidance for school governing boards - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-guidance-for-school-governing-boards)



Department
for Education

Guidance

Special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities: guidance for school governing boards

Updated 3 February 2025

SEND Policy

Joy Lane Primary School SEND Policy

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

Joy Lane Primary School



Inclusion Team

SEND Governor:

Mrs Marion Steff

Inclusion Lead/SENCO/SEND Team:

Mrs Annamarie Godden (Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion)

Contact No. 01227 261430

Inclusion Team:

inclusion@joylane.kent.sch.uk

Approved by:	[Name]	Date: [Date]
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1. Aims

[school/academy name]'s SEND Policy aims to:

- Ensure our school fully implements national legislation and Kent Local Authority's guidance and expectations.

Sets out how our school will:

- Support pupils with SEND ensuring our best endeavours to provide the appropriate provision to enable positive outcomes.
- Provide an inclusive environment that enables pupils to access all aspects of school life alongside their peers.
- Provide pupils with the skills and attributes that enable them to become confident individuals who can successfully live fulfilling lives.
- Support pupils with SEND to realise their aspirations and achieve their best.
- Communicate with pupils with SEND and their parents or carers ensuring co-production and seek pupil and parent or carer voices to fully involve them in decision making and discussions to support their child's provision.
- Communicate and explain the roles and responsibilities of key school and external professionals who are supporting the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Ensure the SEND Policy is understood and implemented consistently by all staff and is monitored by [Governors/Trustees].

5. Roles and Responsibilities – in conjunction with SEN Information Report

[school name] work strategically in line with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2015

The school/academy will ensure that pupils, parents and carers have:

- Access to impartial information, advice and support throughout their time in the school/academy to help them make informed decisions and choices about their future.
- Are effectively supported to understand their rights and decision-making processes and choices regarding their plans and support.
- An understanding of their individual plans, outcomes, provision and support and the reasons why some changes may not be possible

(Area SEND inspections: framework and handbook updated April 2024)

6. SEN Information Report

Our SEN policy works in conjunction with our SEN Information reportadd context details and link to website which sets out how this policy is implemented in the school/ academy.

The SEN Information Report is updated annually or if necessary, when changes to the information may be required during the academic year.

Outcomes framework





Tribunal

The Role of the School

Georgette Williams
SEN Tribunal, Placement and Assessment Manager

Aims of today:

To explain the process, from a school's perspective, of a countdown to a hearing

To give further clarity on the process of tribunal

To provide information on the role of the school in an appeal

To answer questions raised at the last SENCO Forum

To understand the legal process of a tribunal

Countdown to hearing...

- A Tribunal officer is informed that an appeal has been lodged by parent
- The officer reviews the case and determines the LA's position
- Officer reaches out to the current school and parent preference of school, to ascertain their position- could be via phone or email
- A pre-hearing meeting may be held between the LA and the school to discuss the case
- There may be a follow up request for further evidence- e.g. attendance, provision maps, attainment logs. At this point we may ask you to attend as a witness at the hearing.

Countdown to hearing continued...

- LA sends evidence to the tribunal and parents
- LA await tribunal date (in this time we may touch base to ask how things are progressing)
- School will receive the bundle (all paperwork related to the hearing) approximately 4 weeks prior to the hearing
- A further pre-hearing meeting will be held- at this point, the tribunal officer will prep you as a witness to ensure you are comfortable and aware what will be asked of you (approx. 1 week prior)
- Hearing

The role of the school

- The expectation is for any school in Kent to act on behalf of the LA, regardless of whether they are an academy. All element 3 funding and notional SEN budgets are provided by KCC and therefore the expectation would be a joined-up approach between the LA and schools. This doesn't mean you give information that isn't factual- **you present evidence not opinions.**
- Whilst a school can advocate on behalf of the parents, this can cause a conflict of interest between KCC as your school's maintaining/ funding authority and the school itself. Whilst we understand this can cause difficulties between the school and parent, the expectation is that the school can be called as a witness for the LA, You cannot give opinions- e.g. I think the child needs/ Should be placed etc. You should purely be presenting facts.
- In order to maintain relationships with parents, the above can be explained and schools can point parents towards impartial advice and support- e.g. IASK, IPSEA.
- Whilst a school can refuse to be a witness at an appeal, this may result in the LA having to concede and result in further public expenditure and less money going into schools.
- When the LA and schools present a united front, we have more robust defence with appeals, resulting in pupils staying in local schools and more money being available to meet the needs of all pupils with SEN.

Your role as a witness:

As a witness at a Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) tribunal, you should:

- give full, frank and honest evidence

To be a witness, you must have specialist knowledge about the case.

You will need to show that you:

- know about the tribunal's process and your role in it
- know about the [SEND code of practice](#)
- understand the issues in the case
- follow all relevant professional codes of conduct and best practice
- have up-to-date knowledge in your particular area of expertise

As witness, you'll be expected to:

- gather information- e.g. provision maps, attainment, attendance
- present your evidence to the tribunal

Your role as a witness :

The tribunal will expect you to:

- use ethical, sound, evidence-based standards and principles
- give clear and unambiguous answers
- use precise, factual and objective information you can verify
- identify clearly what is and is not within your own knowledge
- consider any previous or planned assessment relevant to your area of knowledge e.g. most recent test scores/ exams/ screening tools
- give advice that is justifiable and supported by evidence, and is based on the child's needs
- consider any facts that may affect the evidence you give- e.g. domestic circumstances
- be specific about what can or can't be delivered as outlined in section F
- identify any hypotheses (as opposed to facts or opinions) the judge shouldn't request this
- You should avoid expressing opinions on matters beyond your expertise.

Your role as a witness continued:

If you submit a report as evidence to the tribunal, your report should:

- meet the standards of your professional code of conduct
- say why you've written it
- explain any written or oral instructions you've received from the tribunal
- explain all the facts supplied that are relevant to the conclusions and opinions expressed by the LA/ parent
- say if and when you consulted other experts, what information you shared and how this informed your views
- include all relevant information, whether this supports one party's case or not
- explain technical terms
- give a clear summary of your evidence
- be clearly dated and signed by you

Types of Schools:

Maintained Special- a school that is maintained and funded by the LA. We chose which pupils are placed in consultation with the school leadership team and in relation to the pupil's individual needs.

Non-maintained Special- a school that is not maintained by the LA (often thought of as an independent school). In line with section 33 and 39 of the Children's and Families Act, we have to consult if this school is PP. Do not have to be section 41 approved (approved by the secretary of state)

Independent Special/Mainstream- these have been approved by the secretary of state (section 41 approved) legally we have to consult if a parent requests it.

Non section 41 Special/ Mainstream- these have not been approved by the secretary of state. The LA has to consider the request if PP, but do not have to consult. The LA cannot direct a non-section 41 school.

Costs of placements:

A tribunal (not the LA) will always take into account the use of public expenditure.

Our decisions are not based on cost but on ensuring those most in need of our special school places have access to them. The first consideration is always around suitability.

Due to law surrounding the right to mainstream education, a mainstream school cannot argue a placement on the grounds of suitability, only against the efficient education of others. It is not enough to simply say that placement will harm the efficient education of others, you will need to evidence **how**.

The degree or complexity of the special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities, and the suitability of mainstream, is not a reason in law for refusal of a mainstream education.
(IPSEA- [The right to a mainstream education | \(IPSEA\) Independent Provider of Special Education Advice](#))

Further Questions:

It is outside of a health/ social care professional's remit to suggest a child needs an EHCP. When these are flagged, we automatically inform the relevant service leads in order that they can speak with the individual involved.

The tribunal process is lead by SENDIST not the LA. They determine the timeline, on what basis the hearing should be (oral, paper etc- parents can request this through SENDIST not the LA).

We are working on a resources bank to provide guidance on tribunal paperwork and the hearing itself. We will get this out to school as soon as possible. It is a user-friendly guide to tribunal that will be sent to all schools.

Further Questions (continued):

It is the role of the LA to support you as a school in the run up to the tribunal. Schools should begin to see improvements with this as more pre-hearing meetings take place with our tribunal team.

Whilst the LA recognise the level of work a tribunal cause, the timelines and process is down to SENDIST not the LA.

We currently hold 20 mediation meetings a week. This includes appeal against section I. A mediation certificate is needed to progress to appeal.

If we are aware that a parent has EAL/SEN needs, we will ensure adaptations are made to paperwork and processes to address this

Parents have 8 weeks from the date of a final EHCP being issued, to register an appeal

In summary:

The LA considers all relevant information and evidence when making a decision- e.g. to assess, issue, placement etc.

Though mediation is not always possible within 30 days, mediation always takes place if requested.

The tribunal is not run by the LA it is run by SENDIST. It is a legal, government run process.

Impartial advice is available to parents

Schools provide factual advice and evidence only- not opinions

Decisions are made based on identified need not costs

The more the LA and schools work together, the better the outcome for pupils who really need spaces in our special schools and the less expenditure going into the legal processes.

Specialist Teaching and Learning Service Update

School SENCo Forums

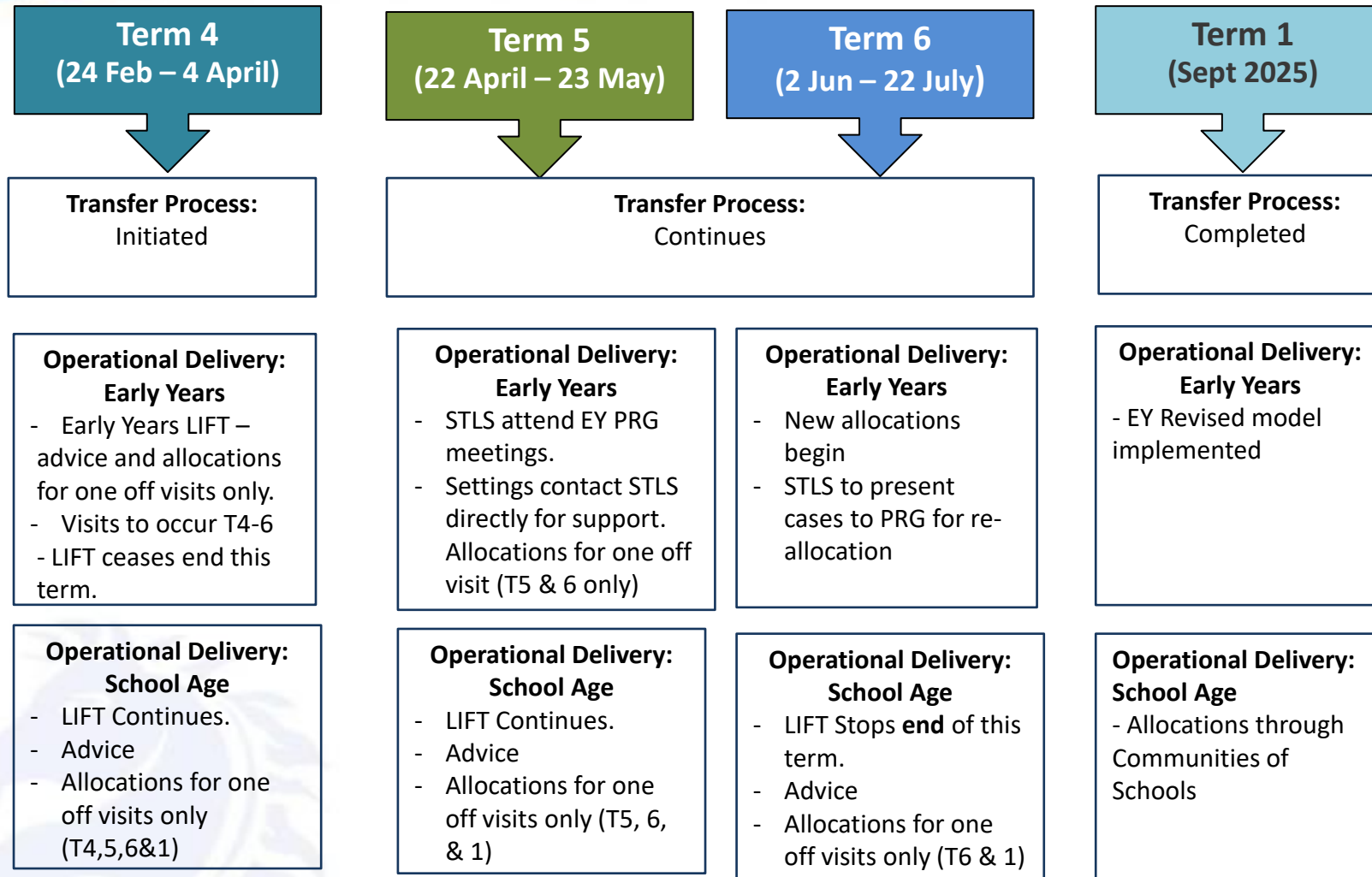
March 2025

Route to Key Decision



- The public consultation held 9 September 2024 – 3 November 2024 had 496 respondents and told us that:
 - Most respondents wanted the service to continue beyond the end of the current Service Level Agreement which ends 31 August 2025.
 - Preferred funding option is that the service continues to be funded by KCC from High Needs Block funding before money is allocated to Communities of Schools for local decision making.
- STLS told us that the service needed significant, ongoing investment to continue to be effective. The option to bring the service in-house was evaluated and preferred to ensure the financial stability of the STLS service.
- 19 February 2025 - The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, made the following decision:
 - that funding for school age STLS will be funded from the high needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant and this funding will form part of the Communities of Schools budget for local decision making.
 - that funding for the early years STLS will be funded from the early years block for central services from the Dedicated Schools Grant.
 - change of delivery from commissioned provision to being managed in-house.

Transfer Timelines



Review of open cases (term 4 -6) Identify cases for re-allocation

Training: delivery of training as planned Term 4 – 6. No new bookings for Term 1 or beyond (except AET and PINS)

Any questions?

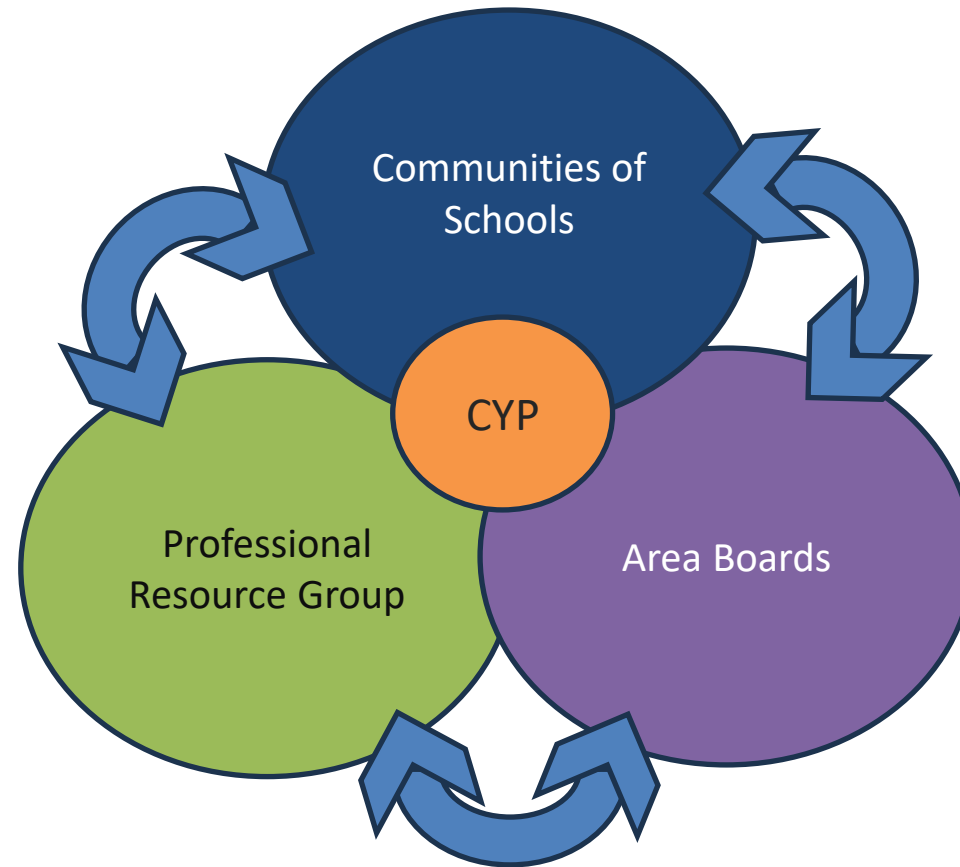


Please send any further questions to inclusion@kent.gov.uk
All questions will be collated into a Frequently Asked Questions document

Communities of Schools

Siobhan Price: Assistant Director, School Inclusion

Meeting Needs Locally



LA Updates

- Schools HNF top-up Consultation: completed, scrutiny call-in period on Key decision expired and decision published.
- Community Chairs induction meetings: support from Croydon LA and SSCYP Senior Consultant – 2 completed, 1 more in place. Communities of Schools induction starts in April 2025
- CoS Documents created: to be finalised - Operational guidance, Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct, Declaration of Interests, Dispute Resolution Policy, Request for Resource
- Continuum of Need & Provision: continuing co-creation with schools, to be published May 2025
- Funding Descriptors: Specific Allocation Funding (Tariffs) being finalised, requires Key decision, planning of mapping started
- Finance Information Group Meetings held with The Education People last week
- Kelsi pages: Updated, schools all directed to check here for info [Inclusion - KELSI](#)

National and Local Policy - SEND Policy and Funding changes

Key Features of the Current SEND Landscape

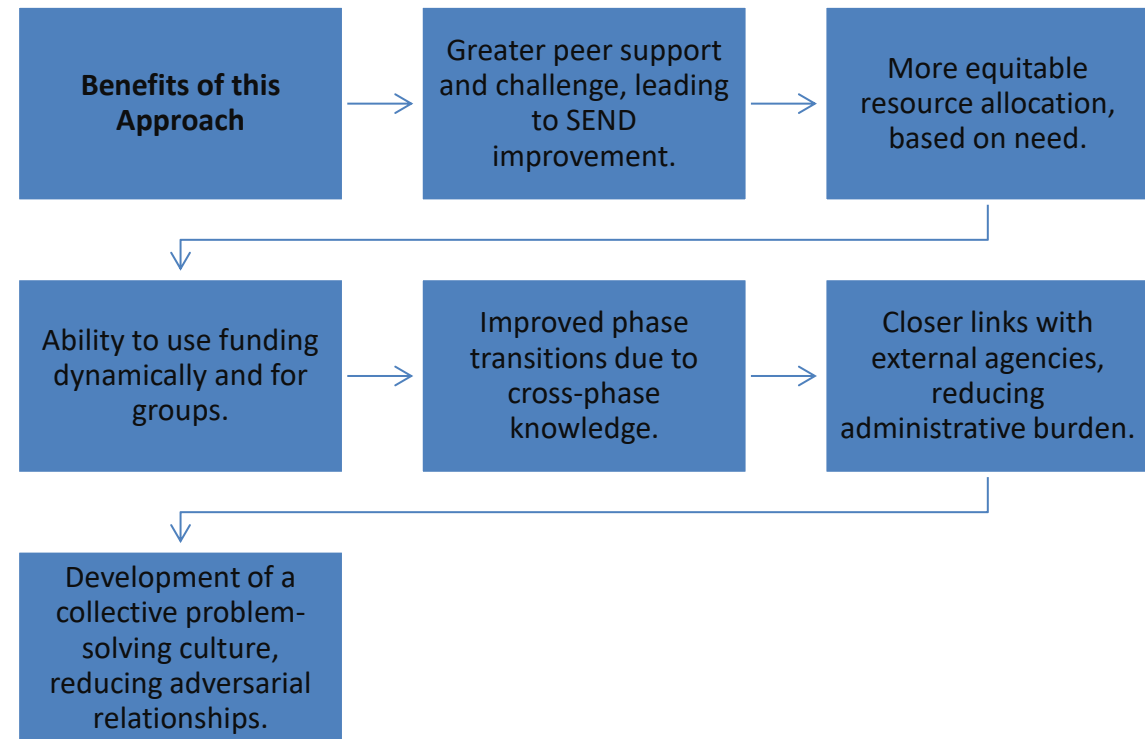
- The current SEND funding model emphasizes children's deficits to secure higher funding levels, creating perverse incentives where money follows failure rather than rewarding effective or inclusive practice.
- This system increases the administrative burden on schools, parents, and local authorities, with limited responsiveness to changing needs.

Alternative Approach

- Propose funding SEND at the school/institution level, restricting pupil-led funding to those with very significant needs.
- The Labour government's last SEND strategy advocated for delegating funding to mainstream schools to meet the needs of students with high incidence needs.

School-led Funding Models

- Collaborative cross-phase clusters of schools manage some of the high-needs funding, making collective decisions that don't require EHCPs.



New Ways of Working

- STLS will come into KCC. Process has started. Will be finalised on 1st Sept 2025
- LIFT will cease to exist 31st July 2025
- LIFT Executive will cease to exist July 2025.
- Mapping of children with most complex needs to move to a 'specific allocation' will start in Term 5
- This work will start with Special Schools and work towards mainstream.
- This will take about 18 months to complete

Induction into a new way of working

- Dates for Community Induction Meetings
 - South – Monday 28th April 1pm - 4pm – Discovery Park, Sandwich
 - North – Wednesday 30th April 9am – 12pm – Inn on the Lake, Shorne
 - West – Friday 2nd May 9am – 12pm – Mercure Great Danes Hotel, Maidstone
 - East – Tuesday 6th May 1pm -4pm – University of Kent, Canterbury

[Registration for Community Induction Meetings](#)

Purpose

Meet the chairs.

Establish relationships and get to know context

Share documentation and process

Ensure consistency of messaging.

Reminder of Key Changes

Mainstream Top Up Funding (E3)2025-26

- Current claim system for top-up funding ceases 31st March
- No further claims post from 1st April
- All agreed claims will continue to be paid until 31st August 25
 - this includes claims that were due to renewed for the Summer Term. No need for re application (subject to child still being at the school)
- Existing top-up claims for children with EHCP above £6k (as at 31st Dec 24) will continue to paid directly to the school. No need for re application. Money will follow the child. This includes Year 6 into 7 transfer (mainstream). This will continue until August '26.
- Notional top funding (contribution towards first £6k) to continue until 31st Aug 26.

National Professional Qualification for SENCOs: Empowering SENCO Leadership

Replacing the NASENCO qualification, this programme equips SENCOs with the cutting-edge expertise and leadership skills needed to navigate the evolving SEND landscape and champion inclusive practices within their schools.

Designed in collaboration with leading experts and informed by the latest evidence, the NPQ curriculum covers key areas such as:

- **Strategic Leadership:** Fostering a collaborative school culture that prioritises inclusive education and empowers all stakeholders
- **Expert SEND Knowledge:** Mastering the intricacies of the SEND framework, legislation, and best practices to ensure seamless support for students with diverse needs
- **Effective Collaboration:** Building strong partnerships with teachers, parents, and external agencies to create a network of support for students



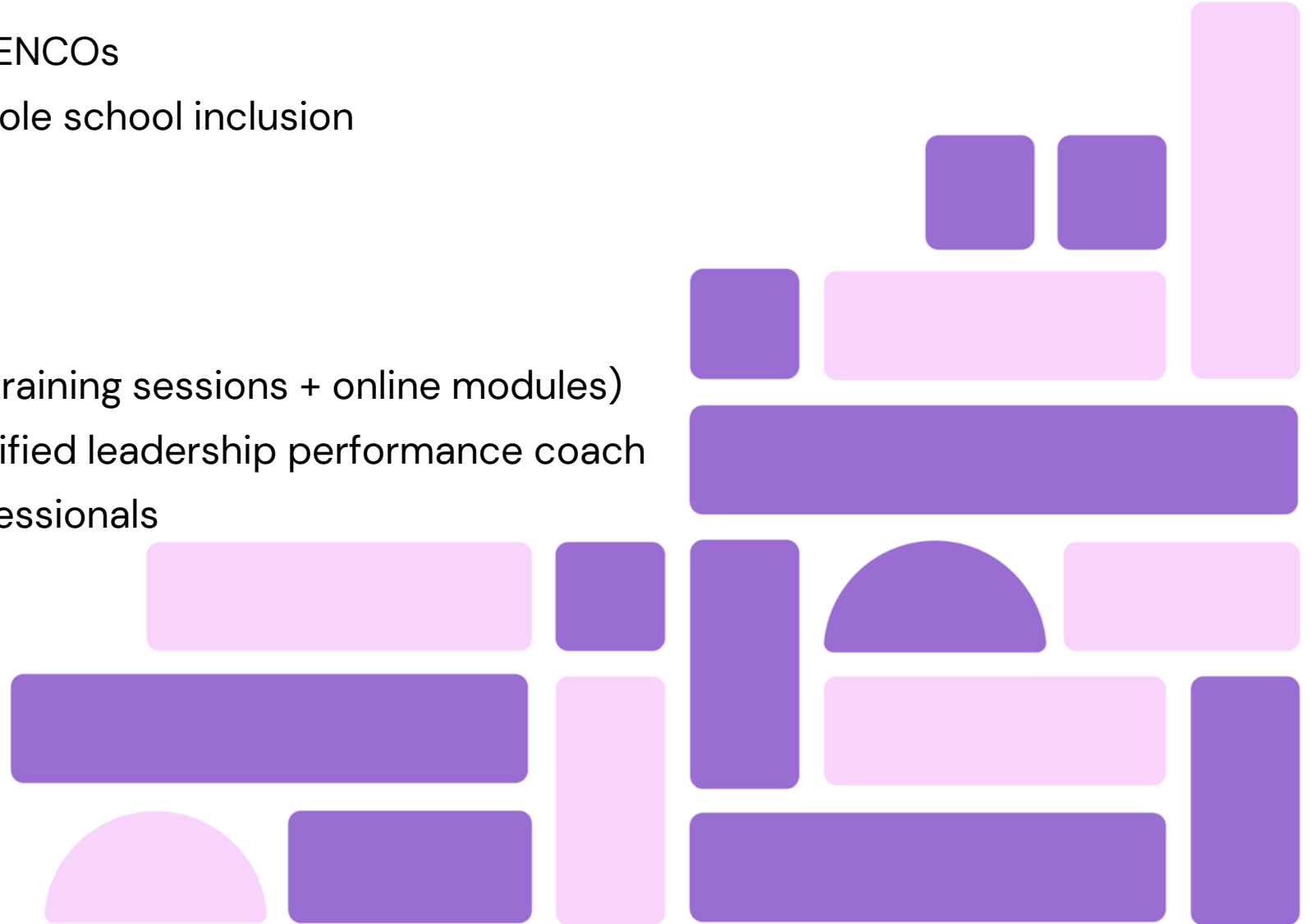
Who is it for?

- Current (new to post) and aspiring SENCOs
- Senior Leaders with an interest in whole school inclusion

Specifics:

- Funding – **fully funded by DfE**
- 18 months duration (4 face-to-face training sessions + online modules)
- 4 x 1-2-1 coaching sessions with qualified leadership performance coach
- Delivered by experienced SEND professionals
- Local Kent groups

Application deadline **6th April** – apply via Best Practice Network website (<https://www.bestpracticenetwork.co.uk/NPQ-for-SENCOs>)



Term 4: SENCO Forum Evaluation

[Term 4 Evaluation Link](#)



Many thanks!



Thank you

If you have any questions, please email:
SENDandInclusion@theeducationpeople.org

with the subject title:
Countywide SENCO Forum Query

