

Countywide SENCO Forum- 20th and 21st March 2024

Siobhan Price- Education Officer, Mainstream Inclusion (KCC)

Ruth Gately- SEND Specialist Adviser (The Education People)

Samantha Avison-Williams- SEND Quality Assurance and Practice
Development Officer (KCC)

Georgette Williams and Jan Rawlings- Assessment, Placement and Tribunal
Team (KCC)

Teri Rutherford- Interim Specialist Services Manager (KCC)

Hester McKay and Elizabeth Pole- SEND Therapies Team (KCC)

Rory Abbott- Project Lead (The Education People)

On behalf of...



THE EDUCATION
PEOPLE

Housekeeping

- Rory Abbott- Project Lead
 - Please change your name via the Participant tab so that we can see who is present;
 - You will be muted but if you have questions then please type them in the chat box using full sentences. If we can answer your question during the session we will but if not we will take a note of your question and send out a response in the Q+A document post-session;
 - If there are any issues with your session within the main body of the presentation or within a breakout room, then please close the session and click on the link to start again. One of us will let you back in and get you connected back up to your session;
 - If you registered for the session using CPD Online then you should have a copy of these slides, the agenda and any other materials you need for these sessions. If you cannot see the slides that we are sharing then please refer to those instead. If you haven't received the pre-session materials then please email rory.abbott@theeducationpeople.org so the issue can be investigated.

Agenda

Item	Topic	Lead/Time
1	Welcome/Housekeeping (Rory Abbott- Project Lead, TEP)	5 mins
2	Introduction (Ruth Gately- Specialist SEND Lead Adviser, TEP)	5 mins
3	Parental Requests for an EHCNA and Feedback from the Draft Appendix 2 Template Consultation - Next Steps (Samantha Avison-Williams, KCC)	15 mins
4	Feedback Processes- Support from your SEN IA following a decision not to issue an EHCP (Teri Rutherford- Interim Specialist Services Manager, KCC)	10 mins
5	Phased Transfer- Developing practice and Learning from Successes (Teri Rutherford- Interim Specialist Services Manager, KCC)	5 mins
6	Localities Update (Siobhan Price- Education Officer, Mainstream Inclusion, KCC)	10 mins
7	The Balanced System- Successes and Planned Rollout Across Kent (Hester McKay and Elizabeth Pole)	10 mins
8	Tribunals- What does the process involve (Georgette Williams- EHC Tribunal, Assessment and Placement Manager and Jan Rawlings- Interim Tribunal Manager, KCC)	15 mins
9	STLS Impact Survey (Siobhan Price- Education Officer, Mainstream Inclusion, KCC)	5 mins
10	Conclusion- Themes (Ruth Gately- Specialist SEND Lead Adviser, TEP) and Evaluation	5 mins



SEND Quality Assurance & Practice Development:

- (1) Parental Requests for EHCNA Feedback
- (2) Education Advice Template Feedback

Samantha Avison-Williams
SEND Quality Assurance &
Practice Development Officer

Overview:

- Feedback from Parental Requests for EHCNA discussions
- Feedback from Draft Education Advice (Appendix 2) template consultation
- Term 6 workshops

Parental Requests for EHCNA:



Break out room/evaluation form questions:

- 1) What preventative action have you taken (past or present) that has worked well?*
- 2) What factors do you think may be driving parental requests within your school community and/or local area?*

Positive Preventative Action Themes:



- **Communication & Relationships**
- **Workshops, Training & Information Sharing**
- **Transition Support**
- **Initiatives, Holistic Approaches & Collective Action**

Feedback: Positive Preventative Action (1)



Communication & Relationships

- Parent drop-ins
- 1:1 parent meetings
- Open door policy
- Coffee mornings/'Tea & Talk' sessions
- Meeting parents off-site if they prefer
- Informal discussions for parents who may feel intimidated
- Positive relationships with parents – whole school ethos
- Strong relationships with parents – transparency = confidence
- Regular communication
- Discuss directly with parents from early on
- Ask parents what they want from an EHCP that school are not already providing
- Regular update emails
- Working with parents to ensure Personalised Plans are tight

Feedback: Positive Preventative Action (2)



Workshops, Training & Information Sharing

- Sharing Mainstream Core Standards with parents
- Showing parents what support is available in school & elsewhere
- Signposting parents
- Ensure parents are aware of the process & what is involved
- Share Kent statutory assessment criteria
- Developing parent understanding of the graduated approach
- Workshops based on parental questionnaire feedback
- Meetings with KCC SEND Inclusion Advisors
- Advice & training sessions with specialist staff
- Joint meetings with professionals
- ADHD Nursing/Education Team offer visits and meetings in school

Feedback: Positive Preventative Action (3)



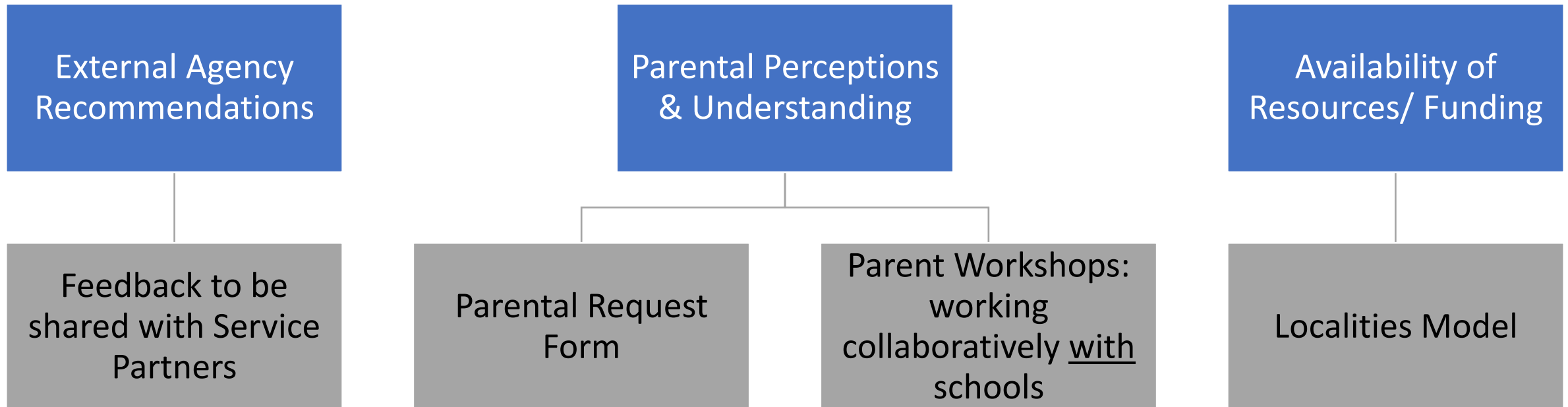
Transition Support

- Transition project loosely based on 'This is Me' pilot in primaries
- Joint transition meetings with parents, current school & receiving school
- Going with parents to look at secondary schools
- Meeting parents at Nursery setting to explain what we can offer
- Story times for pre-school children with SENCo attendance so parents can discuss/ask questions before making a choice
- SENCo part of school tours
- Encourage parents to visit secondary schools in Y5

Initiatives, Holistic Approaches & Collective Action

- Secondary SENCo group in Swale offer joint parent evenings to discuss different topics. Group have delivered training in local primary schools. Good attendance & feedback.
- Work on developing executive function skills for EBSA pupils
- Responding to parental concerns about behaviour at home – e.g. VIP homework club

Factors Driving Parental Requests:



Education Advice (Appendix 2): Evolving the Template



1. Child/Young Person's personal details			
Full Name:			
DOB:		Current Year Group:	
Gender at birth:	Male/Female		
Which gender does the child/young person identify with (if different from above)?	Male/Female/ Gender Neutral		
Is the child/young person gender transitioning?			Yes/No
Pupil Premium:	Yes/No	Child in Care (CiC):	Yes/No
EAL:	Yes/No	Is a translator required:	Yes/No
NHS Number:			
Address:			

Education advice plays a vital role in accurate decision-making and in the production of high quality EHC plans.

Aim:

- Evolve rather than full re-draft

Proposed Outcome:

- More 'user friendly' for Education professionals & Assessment Officers
- Increased clarity to avoid duplication & to support the collection of clear & complete information

[DRAFT Advice Template.docx](#)

What Works Well (WWW):

- Clear layout & examples
- Coloured boxes with the questions make it easier to identify what information is required
- Clear expectations around highlighted headings & key information underlined
- Asks clarifying questions rather than previous blank box
- I like the added sections around EYFS data & use of Portage
- Not recording how parents/carers have engaged is better as this is always tricky to write
- I like how the assessment sections & outside agency section are slightly more split up
- Aren't many changes so not a huge disruption to business as usual

Even Better If (EBI):

Specific Concerns

Fix broken KSCB link

Add KS1 Phonics Screening to data section

Better formatting of all text boxes

Wider Concerns

Volume of information required

Duplication of Personalised Plans

Wider Concerns: Volume of Information

What does the Code of Practice tell us:

9.14 *In considering whether an EHC needs assessment is necessary, the local authority should consider whether there is evidence that despite the early years provider, school or post-16 institution having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the special educational needs of the child or young person, the child or young person has not made expected progress. To inform their decision the local authority will need to take into account a wide range of evidence, and should pay particular attention to:*

- *evidence of the child or young person's academic attainment (or developmental milestones in younger children) and rate of progress*
- *information about the nature, extent and context of the child or young person's SEN*
- *evidence of the action already being taken by the early years provider, school or post-16 institution to meet the child or young person's SEN*
- *evidence that where progress has been made, it has only been as the result of much additional intervention and support over and above that which is usually provided*

Wider Concerns: Duplication of Information

- What is the need for Section 7? Inaccurate assumption that all Education Advice (Appendix 2) forms received by the LA are accompanied by good quality Personalised Plans which clearly identify a child or young person's needs, current provision & current outcomes.
- Multi-Agency Audits conducted in June & October 2023 identified a high level of variability in the quantity & quality of Personalised Plans received by the LA from education settings.
- Copy & pasting does incur a time cost. Alternative: potentially higher time cost is 'paid' by Assessment Officers when interpreting & extracting information from non-standardised personalised plans.
- Ultimate goal = accurate & timely decision-making.

Term 6 Workshops:



Overview of the Assessment & Annual Review process from both a setting & LA perspective.

Also, an opportunity to:

Answer questions

Address misconceptions

Bust any myths

Please do take the time to respond to the workshop question on the evaluation form.



SEN Support &
Inclusion Teams
Early Years to
Primary
Phase Transfer
support

Countywide offer for all pre-school children with identified SEN including those with EHC Plans

SEN Support and Inclusion Teams gathering information about EY children in their link district

- **April - May '24** – District planning meetings taking place with Early Years and School SEN Support & Inclusion Team with STLS and Specialist Nursery Managers

- **June – July '24** - transition planning meetings with individual schools to consider individuals and cohorts of children starting in September to discuss what they need for successful transitions

- **June – September '24** – training for schools expected to be delivered as required

School feedback will be gathered in Autumn 24 and then throughout academic year in order to improve our offer of support.



SEN Support &
Inclusion Teams
Primary to
Secondary
Phase Transfer
support

Countywide offer for transition support for all pupils details on KELSI in addition to the Transition Charter find district plans located there

SEN Support and Inclusion Advisers (SEN IA) are gathering information about pupils with EHC Plans going through transition to secondary and will lead on transition planning with schools

All pupils with an EHCplan will have received communication about their secondary placement

Parents can appeal if they do not agree with the decision made by Local Authority

Where a named school placement is still being sought case work teams are working to resolve these swiftly.

June – July '24 – Please contact your SEN IA now for support with transition planning meetings for individual or for cohorts of pupils in your schools in September

Localities Update

Countywide SENCO Forum
20th and 21st March 2024
Siobhán Price

Headlines from Consultation

832 – responses. Very good level of response for a consultation of this type

440 – parents of children still in education

340 – Education professionals

66 - Neither

- Across the 832 responses, a total of 1,493 comments were made

Status of respondents.


	426	51%
As a Kent resident (living in the Kent County Council authority area)		
	13	2%
As a resident from somewhere else, such as Medway		
	3	0%
On behalf of a friend or relative		
	143	17%
On behalf of a mainstream primary school		
	3	0%
On behalf of an early years education provider, such as a nursery		
	38	5%
On behalf of a special school		
	25	3%
On behalf of a mainstream secondary school		
	106	13%
As an education professional		
	3	0%
On behalf of a charity or Voluntary, Community or Social Enterprise organisation (VCSE)		
	2	0%
As a Parish / Town / Borough / District / County Councillor		
	25	3%
As a KCC employee		
	45	5%
Other		
	832	

Activity Update

Full report will be published – 140 pages

Four key areas of activity to follow

1. Predictable and exceptional need – this work is being accelerated in order to influence everything else.
2. Area workshops are being scheduled for the summer.
3. Operating model – will be full consultation with schools. Working with school leaders to develop the detail of the model.
4. Children will not be moved back into mainstream ‘en masse’. Phase transfer will always consider the possibility
5. Investing in secondary SRP places and consultations will take place with individual districts in the summer.
6. Still working on September 2025.



The Balanced System[®] for Speech, Language and Communication Needs Successes and What's next



Kent and Medway

Hester Mackay – SEND Therapies Lead Teacher

Hester.Mackay@kent.gov.uk

Elizabeth Pole – Kent Professional Lead SLT for the Balanced System[®]

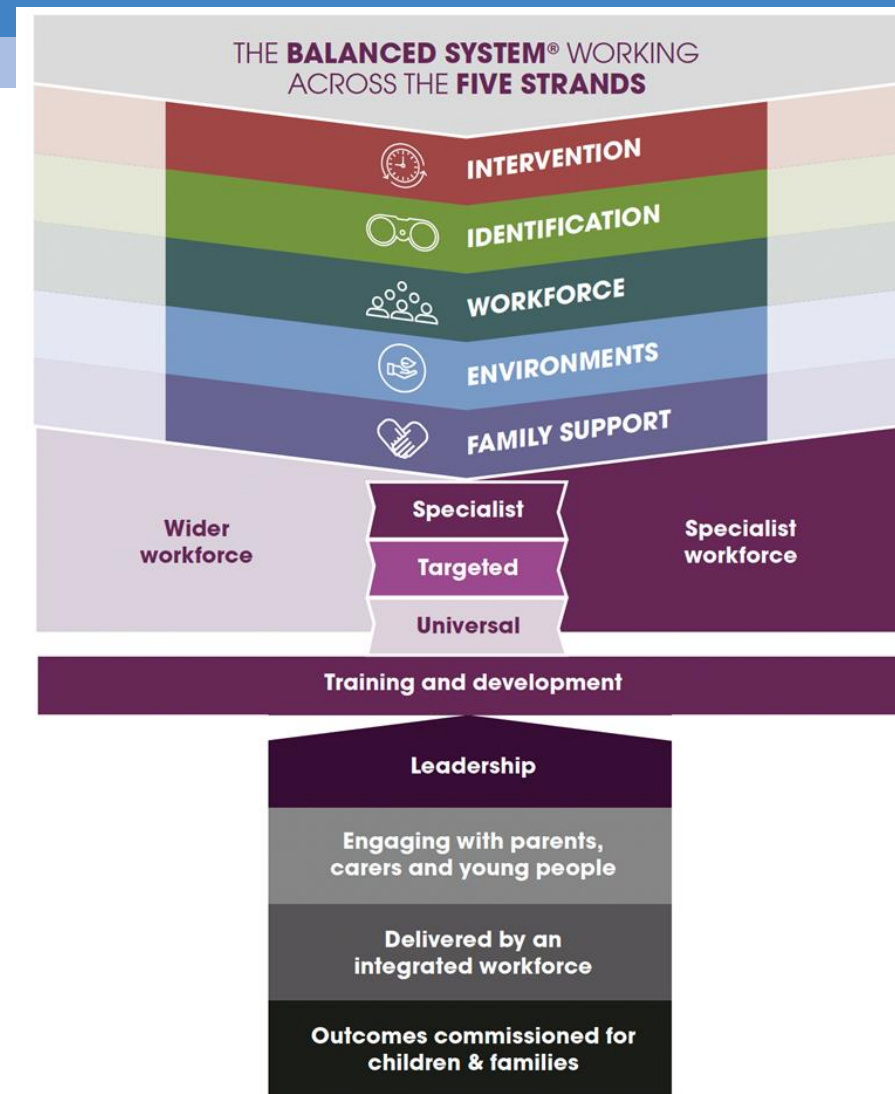
Elizabeth.pole@kent.gov.uk

Quick poll

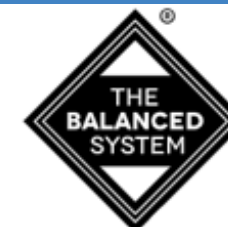
How confident are you in your understanding of the **Balanced System[®]** model for speech, language and communication needs?

1 = it's new to me

5 = very confident



What Matters Most...



My family know how to support my speech, language and communication needs at home

The places where I spend my time are set up to help me understand and express myself

The other adults who support me know how to help me develop my speech, language and communication skills

If I am struggling and need extra help, I can trust someone will see and hear me and know what to do

I am given support at the right time to help me make progress

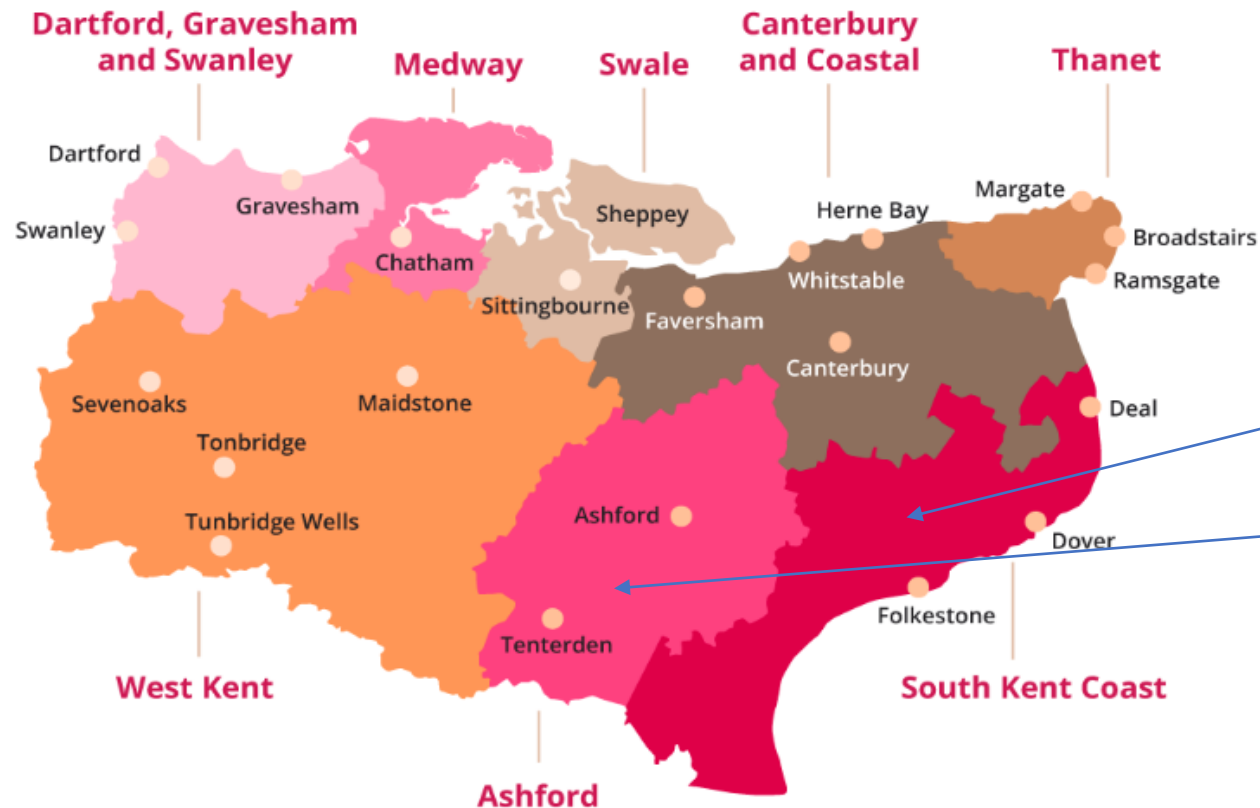


Core Delivery Principles



1. Focus on **functional outcomes** and measures of **impact**
2. Simple and **easy access** to the right information, assessment and support
3. **Place based support** – in the most functionally appropriate and relevant place
4. Strong universal and **targeted** provision is key to facilitating access to specialist support as and when needed for a finite time
5. High quality, accessible and consistent **information**

Update



System-wide, not just schools

E.g. within Early Years: develop targeted offer (e.g. ELIM, interventions delivered in Family Hubs); and improve access to services e.g. Talking Walk-ins

Areas covered by EKHUFT: *Ashford;*

Dover/Deal; Folkestone & Hythe;

Link Therapist within schools in place since September 2023

Schools impact survey

- **Input:** Survey to schools in EKHUFT area (approx. 150)
- **Reach:** 40 responses (so far)
- **Quality:** 80% of schools reported either 'somewhat improved' or 'significantly improved' access to support for SLCN across their school
- **Impact:** 50% of schools were able to identify at least one area of impact already seen e.g.
 - Parents/carers more effective in their role
 - Classroom environments more communication friendly
 - Increased participation of pupils
 - Staff more confident to use SLCN strategies or interventions
 - SLCN identified more effectively
 - Children making increased progress with SLC
- Others reported actions at too early stage for impact to be seen

THE BALANCED SYSTEM® OUTCOME FRAMEWORK



Level 3 – Quality feedback

It feels like a far more holistic approach that benefits all levels of need and empowers staff and families, rather than a child having needs identified and waiting on a list to be seen by a therapist.

More confident to find and share resources and ideas with staff and parents.

Seeing the link therapist more regularly has been a huge benefit as this has enabled more opportunities to work in partnership to identify areas of need within the whole school not just for individual pupils.

More targeted support and feels like we are now working together as a team, rather than just expecting a 'visit' from SALT

Having a link therapist to discuss issues with without going through a referral process and a long wait is much easier, quicker and a better use of everyone's time.

Level 3 – Quality feedback Continued

The termly meetings have been really beneficial so far, gives impact instantly, and feels helpful to have access to identified therapists who work with the school and they get to know us and we them.

It has been quicker to access the support needed for children and families.

I think The Balanced System approach has really helped our school to support pupils with SLCN difficulties. Our SENCo/therapist meetings are purposeful and beneficial

No need for referrals that take a long time when you need to discuss strategies to support children.

Termly meetings allow for timely response allowing for early intervention. Able to seek advice in a more timely manner to ensure appropriate actions/provision in place

Level 4 - Impact

Following training in 'Language Through Colour' teachers across all age phases are enthusiastic and confident to adapt planning to be more inclusive of children with SAL needs.

Staff are more skilled. They really feel more involved whereas as before fewer staff had met and spoken to a therapist.

A child with a cleft palate found and diagnosed after Link Visit

Actions have been put in place to support pupils with SLCN effectively through work with the Nurture provision and stronger links, communications, meetings and events with parents and carers.

Pupil with Developmental Language Disorder - He has improved his attendance to school and an improvement in his engagement in all lessons and his well-being.

What's next?

- KCHFT plan to offer link therapist model of delivery from September 2024
- Work is happening now to shape and prepare the service
- Only going to work with your commitment and partnership
 - Realistic about the EHCP challenge
 - Work with link therapist to plan how need is met in your school



Get Balanced System[®] ready

Register to use free Balanced System tools: [Free tools : The Balanced System](#)

Ready for discussion with your Link Therapist

- Stars, Moons and Bugs
- Baseline Evaluation
- Detailed Evaluation

See Link Therapist Guidance Document to help

- Information about link therapist role and what to expect
- Information about **tools** to **self-evaluate** school's SLCN provision to **inform planning**
- Outlines responsibilities of school and link therapist

Demo sessions Balanced System[®] tools: TEAMS – just turn up

- Tues 7th May 2.00 – 3.00 pm [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- Weds 22nd May 1.00 – 2.00pm [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- Weds 5th June 9.30 – 10.30am [Click here to join the meeting](#)

De-mystifying the Tribunal Process

Georgette Williams
SEN Tribunal, Placement and Assessment Manager



What is an SEN Tribunal?

[The First-tier Tribunal](#) (Special Educational Needs and Disability)
Independent National Tribunal

Decides appeals against local authority (LA) **decisions** about the [special educational needs \(SEN\)](#) of children and young people

Appeals can be lodged by parents and/or young people

Right to Appeal

Appeals can only be made against **LA Decisions** relating to EHCP processes:

- *Refusal to carry out an assessment of special educational needs*
- *Refusal to issue an EHCP following an assessment of special educational needs*
- *Refusal to amend a final EHCP following an annual review*

Once a plan has been issued (or a final not amended) parents can appeal

- *The contents of Section B – which sets out the Child/YPs needs*
- *The contents of Section F – which sets out the provision to meet the needs in Section B*
- *The contents of Section I – type and name of placement*
- *The appeal can also include Health and/or Social Care – known as extended appeals*

Who can appeal and how?

When the LA makes a decision

- ***Decision letter is sent to parents and young person 16+, and school***
- ***The decision letter gives right of appeal and information on how to appeal***
- ***Sets out right to request mediation and how to get a mediation certificate***
- ***Details how to get independent advice and support***
- ***Parents should be encouraged to engage with the LA mediation but if parents chose to not attend mediation then they can get a mediation certificate***
- ***The tribunal will not take into consideration a parent's decision to not attend mediation***

The Tribunal Process:

Parent lodges appeal with the First Tier Tribunal Service
LA is sent Notice of Appeal (NOA) with all the documents submitted by parents
NOA includes case directions setting out evidence required
Tribunal team add tribunal dates to calendar and spreadsheet
Tribunal team assigns appeal to a Tribunal Officer
Officer conducts the appeal on behalf of the LA and represents at hearings
Tribunal officer acts on the instructions of an Area Manager (the decision maker)



CASEWORK

Tribunal Officers are not caseworkers, their role is limited to appeals
Casework remains with area team
Annual review should be held as normal, copy sent to tribunal team

Key Dates:

Tribunal timelines can be lengthy
– up to 13 months for DTI/DTA-
new info can be new consideration

Local Authority Responds to
tribunal direction
Final evidence deadline
Case review form
Bundle
Working Document
Hearing



Pre-hearing meetings – bring everyone together at beginning to
discuss strategy
Can be held several times during course of appeal
Useful to support witness preparation prior to hearing

Outcomes:



Majority of cases resolved without the need for hearing
Parent can withdraw, LA can concede, both parties can agree and conclude by consent

Oral hearings

Online and attended by parents, LA and witnesses – usually schools and EPs

Witnesses – attend to support the tribunal panel to make an informed decision

Process is Judge led, and not adversarial

Judge and two expert panel members ask questions

Tribunal outcomes are not usually given on the day

Paper and oral hearings the outcome is a detailed written decision

Impact on families, services and schools:



Long waiting times

Family in state of limbo

Strain on families and young people

Families, Schools and LA collating large evidence base

Schools called as witness for the LA

Public expenditure

And finally....

High cost placement schools annual fees between £60,000 and £120,000 a year

Transport cost on top adds between £10,000 and £30,000 per year

High Needs Funding being diverted to pay for High Cost Placements

Children lose touch with their local community

LA loses over sight of the progress of the child

Travelling- sometimes long journeys and further away from home

STLS Impact Survey Summer 2024

- The Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS), which operates in each of the 12 districts of Kent, is funded through HNF. Each district has a separate Service Level Agreement (SLA), with the only variation being the funding allocated to each district
- The current SLAs will come to an end in August 2025 and so it is time to consider the options for further funding and service priorities after the SLAs end. As the primary recipients of this service, we are asking for your support to develop and understand these options.
- KCC is undertaking an impact survey to understand the impact the service has had. This survey can be [found here](#) and should take about six minutes to complete. It will close at 5pm on the 26th April 2024.
- KCC will host a number of online workshops to consider the relative merits and risks of a number of options for the future delivery of the service.
- We know from the STLS survey we conducted in July 2023 that the service is highly valued, particularly by SENCOs who made up the majority of respondents. We would now like to have a better understanding of the impact of the service and how it supports children with SEND, particularly from previously less represented voices, including Secondary schools and those in Senior Leadership positions.

STLS Engagement with Mainstream Schools and Settings

- As part of the localities consultation, some questions have been raised around how STLS fits in. The current Service Level Agreement ends in August 2025, and we are conducting a strategic commissioning process to develop options for the future of the service. We are asking schools to be part of this process in two ways:
- We will be running options development workshops with schools on four dates and we would welcome a wide representation from schools:
 - 26/3/2024 10.30 – 12.00
 - 27/3/2024 10.30 – 12.00
 - 17/4/2024 13.00 – 14.30
 - 18/4/2024 14.30 – 16.00
- You can book on to one of these sessions by [clicking here](#). However, if you have any issues with registration please email rachel.wallis@kent.gov.uk
- We are inviting schools and settings to contribute to an STLS impact survey which can be [found here](#)

Session Feedback and Evaluation

- Please take the time to complete the evaluation-
the link is below

<https://forms.office.com/e/3MreTB7BYs>

- The link for the evaluation will be posted in the chat by either Rory Abbott or Ruth Gately. Please click on it now or scan the QR Code and give us your feedback.



Thank You for listening and taking part

If you have any questions then please email
rory.abbott@theeducationpeople.org with the
subject title of Countywide SENCO Forum
Query