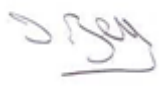



## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

LA Name	Date Report Submitted	Name & Email Address of Key Personnel	
Kent County Council	16 July 2025	CEO:	Amanda Beer
		S151 Officer:	John Betts
Signed off by S151 Officer	Signed off by Director of Children's Services	DCS:	Sarah Hammond
		Other key contacts for Safety Valve:	Christine McInnes Karen Stone Samantha Sheppard

Is your LA's Safety Valve plan on track?	Yes/No	Commentary
<p>Is the LA delivering appropriate support for children and young people?  <i>Safety Valve agreements do not in any way release LAs from their obligation to fulfil their statutory duties to children &amp; young people with SEND.</i></p>	Yes	<p>Following the OFSTED and Care and Quality Commission (CQC) revisit in 2022, Kent was issued with an Improvement Notice.</p> <p>In response to the Improvement Notice, the Council implemented an Accelerated Progress Plan (APP), identifying a total of 116 projects to address the nine areas of weakness identified in the revisit.</p> <p>Following a formal monitoring visit in April 2024, the Improvement Notice was lifted by the (then) Minister for Children and Families in August 2024.</p> <p>This was a result of the LAs ability to demonstrate evidence of considerable progress since the notice was issued, including strengthened capacity and strong governance arrangements. The notice was lifted on the understanding the provision of SEND services would remain a priority.</p> <p>The next formal monitoring visit is scheduled for October 2025.</p> <p>To support the LAs ongoing commitment to children and young people in Kent, Kent Council Council's (KCC) SEND Strategy 2025 – 2028 has recently been published. <a href="#">SEND Strategy - Kent County Council</a></p> <p>The strategy has been developed in partnership with children, young people, parents, carers and colleagues from within the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB), Kent PACT, education and social care. It has been subject to a full public consultation.</p>

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

		<p>In addition, the LA's new Education Strategy 2025-2030 has recently been published. <a href="#">A strategy for education in Kent 2025–2030</a>.</p> <p>Both documents solidify a strategy direction for SEND that builds on and will continue to support the Council's improvement journey.</p>
<p>Is the LA moving towards reaching an in-year balance?  <i>If yes, please include the projected year</i>  <i>If no, is the LA doing everything appropriate to contain costs?</i></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The Dedicated Schools Grant outturn for 2024-25 was an in-year overspend of £54.5m, £1m more than had been reported in the April 2025 report. The overspend on the High Needs block of £58.3m was partially offset by unplanned underspends on both the Schools Block (£0.7m) and Early Years Block (£3.1m). We did not meet the Safety Valve target of an in-year overspend on the Designated Schools Grant (DSG) of £29.9m (before additional contributions from the Safety Valve or Local Authority (LA) contributions). However, because we were ahead of our cumulative plan, this has resulted in a £11.3m shortfall of our planned accumulated deficit position as at March 2025.</p> <p>Our initial forecast for 2025-26 is indicating we will have a similar in-year overspend as 2024-25 (around £55m).</p> <p>There are signs that our spending growth is slowing, just not quickly enough to meet the original safety valve plan.</p> <p>Our overall spend increased by 9% in 2024-25 (compared to annual increases of 13%-10% in the previous 3 years), and we are predicting our growth will slow further to around 6% during 2025-26. This report sets out in detail the breadth of actions taking place to achieve a more financially sustainable SEN system in the future. Three key areas where we expect to see a financial impact in 2025-26 is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The introduction of the community of schools to help slow ongoing</li> </ol>

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

cost increases in the mainstream sector.

2. Continual actions to support inclusion in mainstream schools and continual slowing of demand for specialist placements.
3. Individual projects to identify cost savings (such as ceasing placements where pupils do not attend).

Other immediate actions to contain costs in 2025-26 include: continuing to secure the annual transfer from the schools block to the high needs block of 1.2% to fund SEN support services (including the community of schools model), containing uplifts for state-funded special schools and Specialist Resource Provisions (SRPs) to 1% for 2025-26 and implementing a rigorous price uplift process with commissioners and procurement colleagues to negotiate price uplifts with independent schools.

We continue to see the overall number of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) remaining relatively in line with forecasts with the key concern being the placement of children and associated costs.

We are starting to see the evidence of the positive impact of higher inclusion in mainstream schools with a slowing of the number of children placed in either a maintained special school or independent school. This is in the context that we have recognised we place more children in these settings than most of country.

Extract of our SEN2 data return:

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Independent Schools	1,671	1,769	1,795	1,776
State-funded Special Schools	5,534	6,018	6,222	6,427
Total	7,205	7,787	8,017	8,203
% YOY change	11%	8%	3%	2%

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

% YOY change – National	7%	5%	7%	5%
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\*Between 2022 and 2025, the number of independent and state-funded special school places increased by 19%, whilst in Kent it was 14%.

The main areas of challenge are:

- The ongoing historic impact of rises in mainstream top-ups prior to the introduction of community of schools (for both children with and without an EHCP) – total number and average amount.
- Independent schools – average cost.
- Additional requests from Specialist Resource Provisions (SRPs) and special schools for “exceptional pupil need”.
- Demand for home tuition and Education Other Than At School.
- Due to high inflation and increasing national living wage standard increases for state-funded settings (schools and post 16) were set 1% higher than originally expected in the plan in 2024-25 (impacting the ongoing costs).
- The delay in opening of new Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) need special school (from September 2024 to January 2025) due to late change in Trust leadership had a one-off impact in 2024-25.
- Other Local Authorities refusing to pay for their Looked After Children residing in Kent following the recent changes to the DfE guidance. Kent is a significant net importer of Looked After Children into the county. Looked After Children are more likely to have more significant SEN needs. The DfE changes are having a negative impact on our financial position.

The impact of the ongoing delays for the opening of the new special schools as part of the DfE programme is starting to

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

		<p>really impact in 2025-26, where our original plan assumed two of the three new special schools applied for would have begun a phased opening in 2024 (on the basis of an accelerated programme) with the third a year later.</p> <p>These are now unlikely to open until after the original term of this plan has ended (post 2028). Which means that we now expect to continue relying more heavily on the independent sector than our original plan accommodated for, leading to higher revenue costs.</p>
<p>Is the LA moving towards full eradication of the DSG deficit?  <i>If yes, please include the projected year</i>  <i>If no, is the LA doing everything appropriate to prevent excessive growth in deficits?</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The profile has been updated to reflect the 2024-25 outturn and initial 2025-26 forecast, leaving a residual balance around £120m by March 2028 (assuming all Council and DfE contributions are received). The medium term forecast remains continuously under review.</p> <p>The Council has and continues to aim for a breakeven in-year position, although the speed in which this can be achieved is being reviewed in light of our experiences over the past two years, with the expectation that the in-year deficit will start to reduce over the next few years as the accumulative impact of the actions start to take place. This still assumes the high needs block will only increase by 3% per year.</p> <p>The previous medium term forecast reflected our intention to identify and implement further actions however, the latest forecast has removed any “yet to be identified” savings to avoid setting an unrealistic profile.</p> <p>We believe the cumulation of all our actions outlined in this report will continue to contain excessive growth in the deficit.</p> <p>We are not confident the position can be recovered sufficiently by 2027-2028 to counteract the additional costs we have incurred to date, and continue to incur whilst we embed our plan. These are in</p>

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

		<p>addition to the costs incurred from delays in the building of two new special schools (and the rejection of the bid for a third special school) as set out in previous reports.</p>
<p>Is the LA delivering on all the conditions set out in their SV agreement?  <i>If no, has the workstream been updated or replaced to adapt to current circumstances?</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>A review of all projects within the Safety Valve programme was undertaken in March 2025. The focus was on determining whether projects were actively contributing to the deliverables of the programme or not, identifying conditions where additional support was needed and conditions where new projects could be implemented to increase the pace of change required to see an impact.</p> <p>Consequently, there are now a total of 24 projects that are reported on within the Safety Valve programme. Of these, five projects have been embedded as Business as Usual processes. Eight are projects that are at the point of implementation, being implemented or reaching completion. Seven are new projects that have been identified as opportunities and are being developed following a recent review of Safety Valve programme. At this time, two projects remain unallocated.</p> <p>The number of projects and differences in the stage of each project means that some conditions are further advanced than others. For example, Conditions 1, 3, 4 and 6 were prioritised at the beginning of the Safety Valve and are therefore completed as projects and embedded as business as usual. Conditions 2, 7 and 8 have experienced delays to implementation due to factors recognised in the previous (November 2024) report as barriers to successful implementation, such as democratic process and cultural change. This has delayed the impact expected from these projects, but most are now in the implementation phase. Projects within Conditions 5 and 9 have been later in developing. New projects have been identified within Conditions 4, 7 and 9.</p>

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

	Yes/No	Commentary
Is your LA's Safety Valve capital project on track?	No	<p>The original Safety Valve assumptions included new schools in Swanley and Whitstable to be delivered by the Department for Education opening from September 2024 (now unlikely to open until after 2028 at the earliest) and a further school on Isle of Sheppey to open from September 2025 (this was rejected by Department for Education). These have been delayed.</p> <p>Condition 7 sets out our progress around Special Resource Provisions (SRPs) in mainstream schools. Identification of specific projects to ensure ongoing sustainability of our special schools where they are significantly over capacity is also progressing.</p>

### Programme Headlines

This quarter, the biggest drivers of positive change have been (up to 3):

- This quarter has started to see a shift in improved collaborative relationships between the Local Authority and the education sector in Kent. This is most obviously being seen as part of the implementation of the Communities of Schools Model (Condition 8). Significant levels of engagement with the education sector as part of this implementation has led to increased transparency regarding finance, greater opportunity for challenge and debate and a more robust system of communication and co-production. As a result, there is a shift towards greater collaborative and constructive challenge as opposed to obstruction. Whilst there are still some areas of concern for education colleagues in regard to the changes being implemented, there is increasing understanding of the need for change and support for the direction of travel. This is evidenced by the number of school leaders that are currently working with the LA as either inclusion champions (currently 30 plus) or Chairs of the Communities of Schools, 75 school leaders in total. KCC is also actively recruiting more Inclusion Champions. In addition to engagement with many maintained schools, KCC is working very actively with a range of Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) across Kent which represent a membership of circa 150 schools.
- As part of the wider implementation of a Localities Model for School Inclusion (Condition 8) a revised model of SEND Funding for all schools is being implemented. This model has created individual budgets for each Community to use to support cohorts of children within their schools, predominantly but not exclusively SEN support, and a specific allocation system of funding for some individual children. This is not new funding but a re-purposing of the £22m formerly distributed to individual schools for SEND support. The model allows for a more equitable resource allocation based on need and the ability to use funding more dynamically, informed by school leaders. This is phase 1 of the review of SEN school funding. Phase 2 is focused on pupils with EHCPs. Officers in collaboration particularly with special school leaders are developing funding descriptors for Specific Allocation Funding which will be agreed for individual children to support provision of statutory duties, the intention is that the funding will follow the child. The model will be implemented across all types of education, including mainstream, Specialist Resources Provision (SRPs) and Special Schools, aligning previously different funding models into one system. This approach will provide increased transparency for all partners around how High Needs Funding is being used and provide flexibility to meet need within the available budget. Phase 2 will go live on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2026
- The implementation of the special school review is moving forward with LA officers working with cohorts of schools who share the same designation to support children and

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

young people with specific need types. These meetings enable heads to share practice relating to issues such as broadening curriculum pathways as well as peer challenge regarding what can and cannot be done. The approach enables both parties to work collaboratively to identify opportunities for change that can improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND within the unique environment and circumstances of individual schools. Future changes in relation to individual schools are being supported through individual feasibility studies and consultations. The first report on changes to a special school, Broomhill Bank, is on the agenda for July's Children Young People and Education Cabinet Committee.

This quarter, the biggest barrier(s) to successful implementation of the Safety Valve plan have been (up to 3):

- As noted in the previous April 2025 report, the underpinning premise of the Safety Valve plan is built around greater inclusion of children and young people with SEND in mainstream settings, enabling best use of places within maintained special schools and reducing reliance on more costly, non-maintained and / or independent school placements. A system recalibration is being undertaken to implement this via a revised model of support for children in early years settings (Condition 2), the Localities Based Model of Support (Condition 8, including Communities of Schools and the revised model of SEND Funding for all schools), increased SEN sufficiency within Specialist Resource Provisions (SRPs) and maintained special schools (Condition 7). However, legislation regarding the process for making school placements and, specifically the impact of tribunal decisions, challenge the ability of the LA to implement this. As an example, a Tribunal judge recently ruled in favour of two parents who requested a non-maintained independent special school for their child even though the LA was able to identify an appropriate alternative placement in a maintained school. The Tribunal judge "erred on the side of caution" that the non-maintained placement could meet need best.
- This is indicative of the continuing impact for the LA of the "widely held concern of parents that the local area is not able, or in some cases, not willing, to meet their children's needs." (Area 1 of weakness within the OFSTED improvement notice). There is a continuing perception that an Education and Health Care Plan is needed to ensure that children receive the right level and type of support and a perception that mainstream schools or SRPs are not able to meet need for children and young people with SEND. The LA has undertaken significant work to address this issue and restore parental confidence in the local area through improved communication, the SEND Information, Advice and Guidance Roadshows, the SEND Webcast and Parents Newsletter. The LA has also increased tripled its capacity to participate in mediation with parents, but acknowledges that there is more work to be done.
- Lastly, while some real progress is being made through working more collaboratively with the education sector, there remain small pockets of dissent continuing to vocalise opposition to the plans being implemented. When this dissent is from a MAT, it surfaces the scope for a more consistent policy position to be taken nationally in addressing SEND challenges. This, alongside ongoing challenge from within Opposition Parties making up the elected membership of the Council, and ongoing scrutiny continue to create barriers to timely implementation of the changes agreed.

This quarter, the best examples of stakeholder engagement around the Safety Valve plan have been (up to 3):

- As noted above, there has been significant focus on engaging parents more effectively. The LA's Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Information, Advice and

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Guidance (IAG) offer includes Roadshows, a telephone information service (the SEND Enquiries Hub) and a SEND podcast (SENDcast). To date:

- 15 Roadshows have been held across the county, with 21 services being represented and in excess of 450 families attending.
- SENDcast has received 9,000 listens
  
- Engagement with early years settings and schools continues to remain a priority. This quarter:
  - 671 individuals, representing 479 nurseries and childminders attended workshops around the new ways of working being implemented as part of the early years revised model of support
  - there was 100% attendance from schools at the Community of Schools meetings
  
- Workforce engagement is also a key ongoing element of stakeholder engagement. Regular communication with the workforce working to support children and young people with SEND in schools is crucial in terms of sharing messages, as often professionals are the people that schools turn to for clarification on areas of concern. An example of this is a conference celebrating the roll out of the Balanced System® for Speech, Language and Communication Needs across Kent. The conference held on 30 July 2025 was attended by representatives from 26 schools and settings.

*Alongside your Safety Valve financial and narrative monitoring reports, please share with us **the latest strategic data dashboard utilised by your governance oversight board for Safety Valve.***

***NB** This should not be something created for the DfE Safety Valve monitoring process; if you do not have a strategic data dashboard, just let us know.*



## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

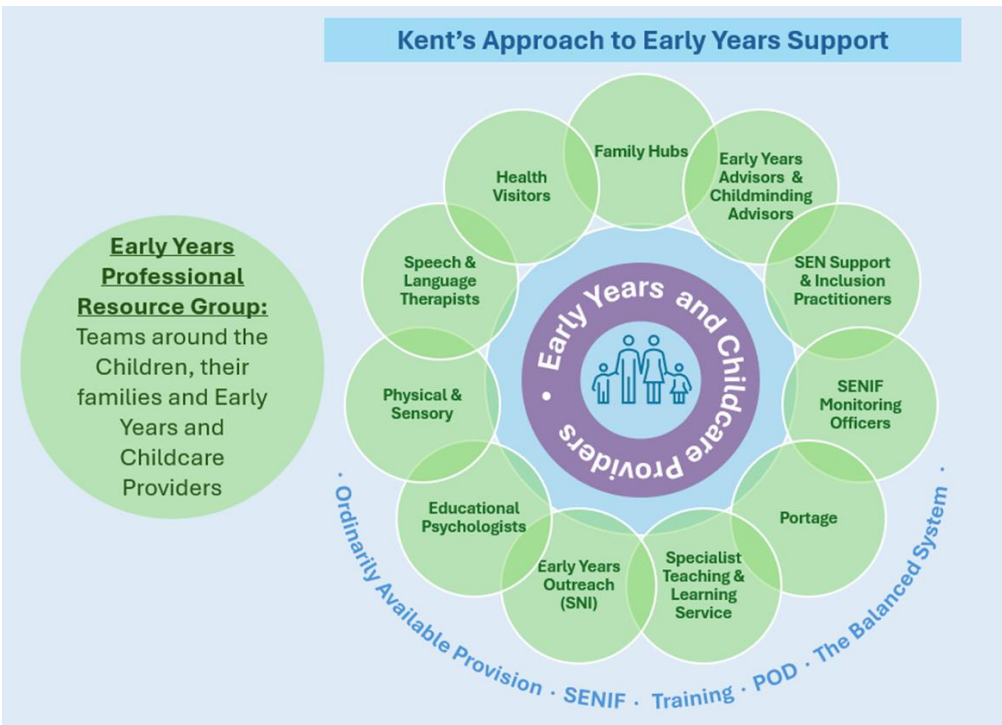
Condition / Workstream	Assurance Level	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>
<p><b>Condition 1:</b> Implement a countywide approach to 'Inclusion Education,' to further build capacity in mainstream schools to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), thus increasing the proportion of children successfully supported in mainstream education and reducing dependence on specialist provision.</p>	Update 1 (April)	As noted in the April 2024 report, the majority of projects supporting the delivery of this Condition have been completed.
	<b>G</b>	
	Update 2 (July)	The Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS) will continue to support the delivery of this Condition through supporting the development of inclusive practice within mainstream schools.
	<b>G</b>	
	Update 3 (December)	The current Service Level Agreement between the LA and twelve maintained special schools in Kent will end 31 August 2025 and the service will transfer in house as of 1 September 2025. The TUPE process is progressing and full due diligence will be completed on 11 July 2025 which will give greater clarity about the number of individuals who have chosen to transfer into the LA.
	<b>RAG</b>	<p>The service will evolve to work differently with mainstream schools as part of the Communities of Schools model and with early years providers as part of the revised model of support for early years. In the later, STLS early years teachers will focus more on supporting a longer transition between early years and Year R of school to support vulnerable children longer and ensure that schools feel confident in supporting them. This is in response to data indicating increasing requests for EHCPs in Year R, as well as requests to defer and increased numbers of part-time timetables.</p> <p>Under Communities of Schools STLS will move to a Link Practitioner model forming part of the Professional Resource Group available to schools to support them at a cohort, class or school level.</p> <p>A review of all areas of work referenced within the CATIE will be undertaken in November 2025 and an update will be provided in the December 2025 report.</p> <p>Projects to accelerate capital spend in mainstream and specialist post-16 provisions are being developed with a view to increasing accessibility on education sites, removing the physical barriers that can result in schools being unable to meet the needs of some children and young people with SEND.</p> <p>For post-16, the current focus is on making small adaptations, for example, installation of hoists, into Specialist Provision (SPIs) that will make these post-16 provisions more accessible. The purpose is to reduce the number of young people being placed in other local authority areas due to lack of accessible post-16 provision in Kent. This will also enable young people currently placed outside of the county to return to a Kent provision. Implementation of this project will impact on the September 2026 of young people.</p> <p>In addition, the project team have supported post-19 placements by providing funding to Oakley 19 (Skills for Independence and</p>

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

Condition / Workstream	Assurance Level	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>
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		Employability) to improve accessibility at their site. This will result in two young people being able to attend a provision in Kent rather than another local authority. This will avoid an additional £266,356 per year associated with the other local authority provision, illustrating the value of this new area of work.
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<p><b>Condition 2:</b> Introduce a robust Special Educational Need (SEN) offer for early years, following a review, which explores alternatives to special school admission before Key Stage 2 (KS2), SEN redesign and implementation of County Approaches to Inclusive Education (CAIE) to support consistent mainstream offer, including leadership development programmes, peer review and core training offer.</p>	Update 1 (April)	The implementation of the revised model of support for early years settings referenced in the April 2024 report is nearing completion.
	G	
	Update 2 (July)	Over the last quarter, an early years professional resource group has been established for each district. This is a multi-team group (see illustration below) that meet termly to review requests for support from early years settings and agree allocation of resources based on the needs of the child.
	G	
	Update 3 (December)	
	RAG	



The aim of this approach is to move away from requests for a service, to a request for support, promoting a system where the right support is provided at the right time.

The Early Years Professional Resource Group began meeting in April 2025 and started taking referrals in June 2025. Number of referrals is currently low as would be expected with the introduction of a new process. Referrals and actions agreed through the Early Years Professional Resource Group will be monitored through a performance dashboard that illustrates demand, capacity and activity.

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

Condition / Workstream	Assurance Level	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>
		<p>The LA recognises that this system change can be concerning and confusing for settings and early years providers. As a result, there has been regular communication with providers throughout the implementation process and five training workshops were delivered to providers regarding new referral processes, and paperwork implemented to streamline processes.</p> <p>The workshops were attended by 671 individuals, representing 479 nurseries and childminders. 192 evaluations regarding the training were received; of which, 89% respondents noted that the training session met its learning outcomes and 94% noted that the training met their expectations.</p> <p>As part of the implementation of the revised model, most of the existing workforce will work in a different way and move to short term interventions.</p> <p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality and Inclusion and Improvement and Standards Teams in The Education People Early Years and Childcare Service have been restructured to form the Early Years and Childcare Quality Team and are now working differently to proactively to support the universal offer for all children.</li> <li>• SENIF Practitioners have been reorganised to work more autonomously with settings and renamed Early Years Support and Inclusion Practitioners (SIPS). This service provides targeted support for children with additional needs.</li> <li>• Specialist Nursery Intervention teams will move from a schools-based approach to an outreach model, renamed as Early Years Outreach Intervention Service, from September 2025.</li> <li>• Specialist Teaching and Learning Service will build on existing good practice to support transition from early years in Year R of school with a more comprehensive support offer from September 2025.</li> </ul> <p>The purpose of this is to provide a focus on building capacity within the existing workforce, thereby reducing waiting lists and ensuring that young children receive support in a timely manner. The SIPS and Outreach service will support settings to build capacity and develop the confidence and skills of their workforce to support young children with additional needs through the use of role modelling and coaching strategies.</p> <p>Early indicators of impact are positive. In districts where early adopters moved to the outreach model from September 2025, a recent survey completed by 192 providers noted that regarding measures related to:</p>

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

Condition / Workstream	Assurance Level	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upskilling workforce knowledge to support children with additional needs                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 82% were satisfied in districts delivering the outreach model compared to 57% in districts delivering the current school-based model</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Increasing workforce confidence to support children with additional needs                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 82% were satisfied in districts delivering the outreach model compared to 42% in districts delivering the current school-based model</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>In September 2025, destination data will be analysed to determine the percentage of children that received support from this specific service who entered into a mainstream versus specialist provision at Year R. The data will compare outcomes for districts operating the outreach model as early adopters to those that operated the special school based model for 2024-25 academic year.</p> <p>Capacity within the services above has been identified as a key risk for the successful implementation of the project and therefore this will be closely monitored.</p> <p>The implementation of the revised model of support for early years, alongside the Communities of Schools model have highlighted challenges that schools experience within the Year R cohort.</p> <p>Data indicates that 6.6% of all Year R pupils were on a part-time timetable as of Autumn 2024 term, the number of children whose place in Year R was deferred from a September 2024 to September 2025 entry was 157, compared to 115 pupils deferred from September 2023 to September 2024 entry.</p> <p>In addition, the number of EHCPs for children in early years and KS1 has continued to rise steadily since August 2024. Recent data also indicates that the number of requests for High Needs Funding for children in Year R has increased significantly over the past years. Consequently, a new project has been implemented to gain more insight into the challenges schools have with Year R inclusion.</p> <p>Following the financial profiling undertaken to implement the Community of Schools model, approximately £4.5m has been spent on supporting Year R children through mainstream top up funding. To support decisions about how best to address issues experienced in Year R, a group of Inclusion Champions have been tasked with understanding how HNF is currently spent in Year R, what resources are available, how these are being used and the impact that they are having. A Year R plan is being developed based on the findings of this work which will assist with benchmarking and inform the decision about how funding is allocated in future.</p>

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

Condition / Workstream	Assurance Level	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>
<p>Condition 3: Review the system of Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessments and annual reviews to ensure robustness, transparency, and consistency, through use of consistent criteria and practice framework.</p>	Update 1 (April)	Progress made towards this Condition remains consistent.
	<b>G</b>	<p>A recent comparison of Kent performance to national averages indicates that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent reported a 6% increase in EHCPs, compared to 11% nationally.</li> <li>• Kent now accounts for 3.23% of England's EHCPs, compared to 3.37% last year.</li> <li>• 6.2% of Kent's 2-18-year-old population have an EHCP, compared to 5.6% in England.</li> <li>• 5.4% of pupils in Kent schools have an EHCP, only slightly above the national average of 5.2%. (excluding independent and non-maintained special schools)</li> <li>• 12.4% of pupils in Kent schools have SEN support, compared to 14.0% in England</li> </ul> <p>Performance information indicates that the percentage of children and young people with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) in specialist settings remains relatively constant across all age groups.</p> <p>The graph below illustrates that the number plans completed with 20 weeks has seen a drop since April 2025. While this drop is in line with the predictive curve, the capacity of Kent Education Psychology Service (KEPS) is a significant contributing factor. For example, in May 2025, 9% KEPS reports were submitted on time and while this rose to 18% in June 2025, the EHCP assessment team is working closely with KEPS whilst they work through the backlog.</p> <p>To address this issue, KEPS have started weekly surgeries to address report queries and a formal written letter has been designed which can be sent to parents from KEPS, to explain and apologise for the delay. KEPS continue to explore options to address capacity issues, specifically through greater use of existing locums.</p>
	Update 2 (July)	
	<b>G</b>	
Update 3 (December)	<b>RAG</b>	

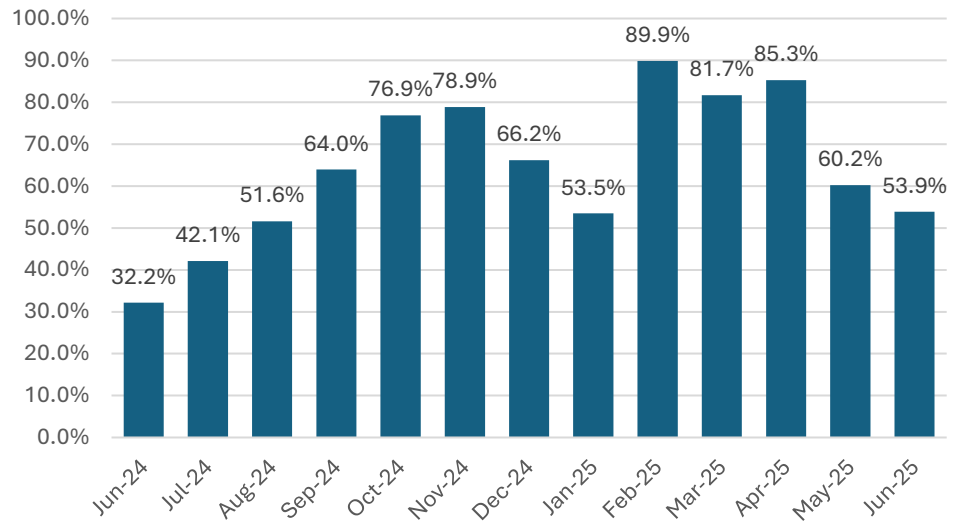
## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

Condition /  
Workstream

Assurance  
Level

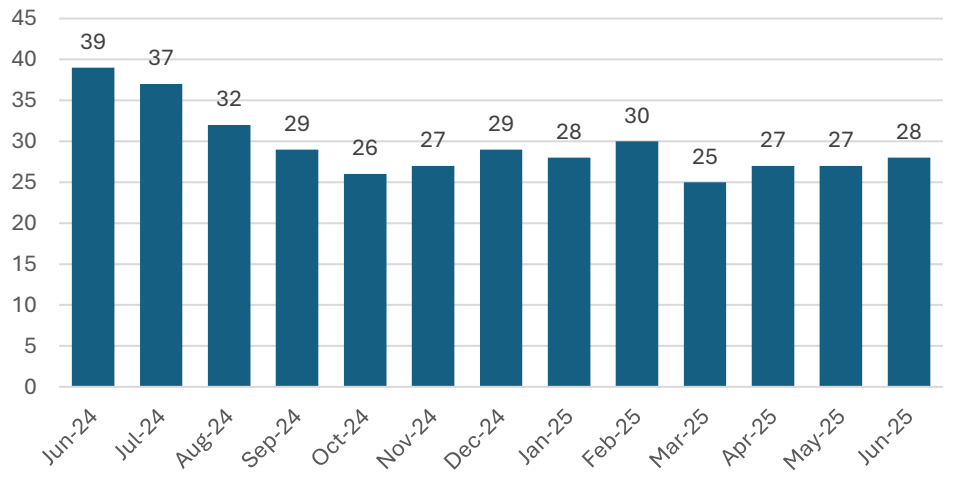
Progress Update from this Quarter  
*Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts*

Percentage of plans completed within 20 weeks



In terms of the oldest cases remaining open, this has remained consistent over the last quarter and remains less than at this time 2024.

Oldest Cases Remaining Open (Weeks)



Percentage of decisions to assess has increased slightly since the last reporting period but has remained relatively consistent within this quarter, as illustrated in the graph below.

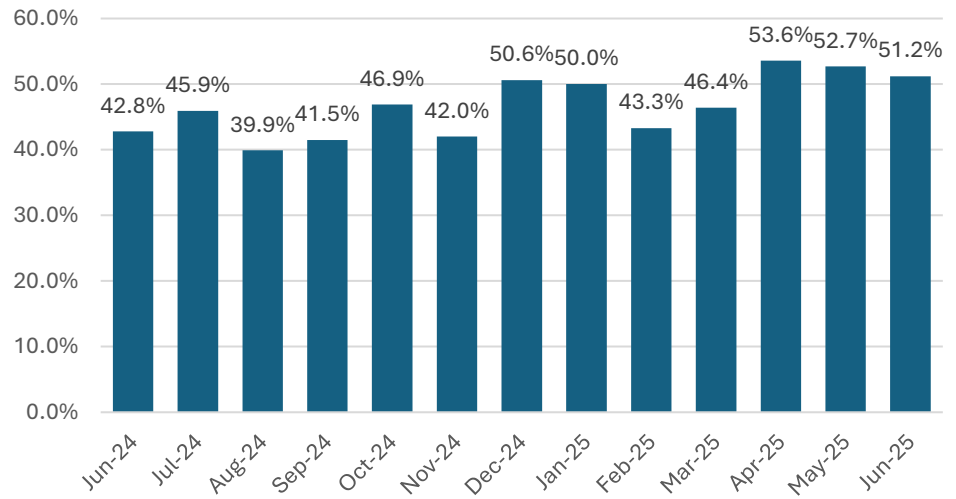
# SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

Condition / Workstream

Assurance Level

Progress Update from this Quarter  
*Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts*

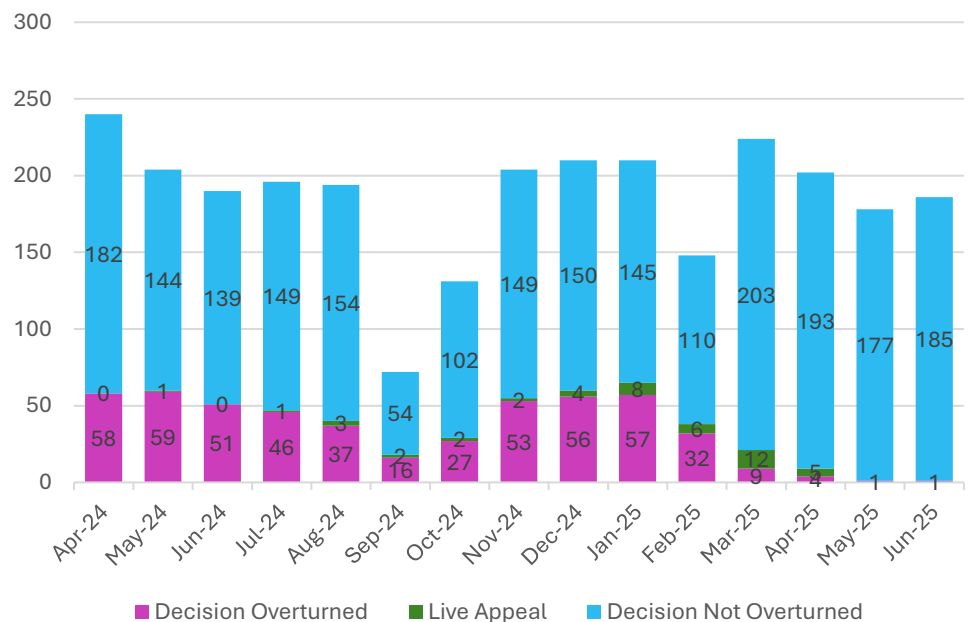
### Percentage of Decisions to Assess



Additional reporting is taking place so that LA officers can understand the outcome of No to Assess decisions. The table below indicates that the majority of LA decisions remain in place.

On average appeals are received and recorded about four months after the “No to Assess” decision. The low number of appeals February to June 2025 is reflective of this, rather than a reduction in the number of appeals made.

### Outcome of No to Assess Decisions made each Month



## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

Condition /  
Workstream

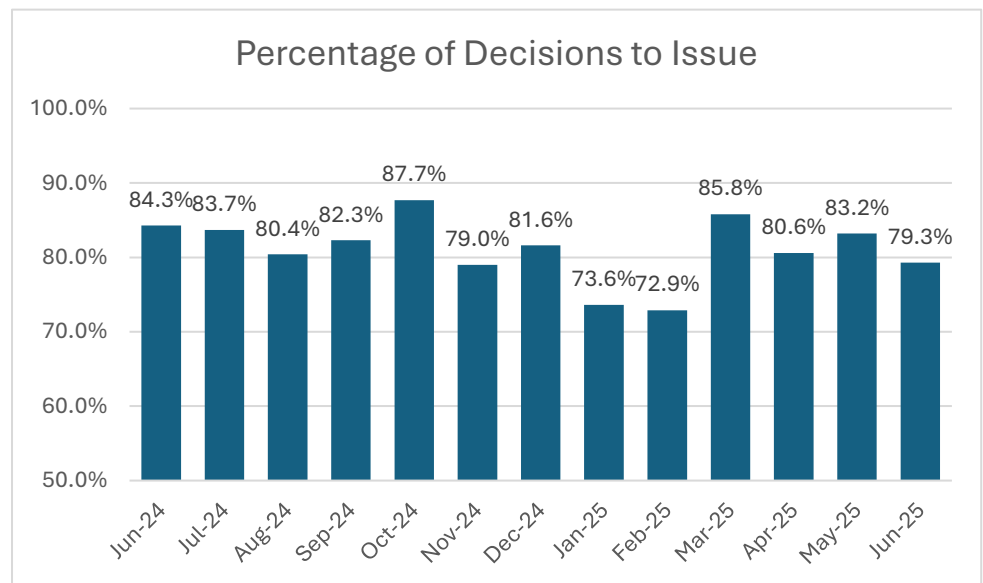
Assurance  
Level

Progress Update from this Quarter  
*Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts*

Approximately 26% of “No to Assess” Decisions made during 2024 have been subsequently changed to “Yes” or have an on-going appeal at time of reporting.

While appeals for 2025 continue to be received and recorded, at the time of reporting about 31% of “No to Assess” decisions made in Jan 2025 have been overturned or have an on-going appeal.

The graph below illustrates the percentage of decisions to issue. Although there remains fluctuation through the year, this percentage also remains relatively consistent.



As with ‘No to assess’ decisions, data regarding the outcome of ‘no to issue’ decisions is also being collated to provide greater insight into the outcome of these decisions and the subsequent impact on placement decisions, and the associated financial costs.

The graph below illustrates that the percentage of ‘no to issue’ decisions that are overturned or subject to tribunal is higher than ‘no to assess’ decisions.

The lower number of overturned decision and tribunal in March to June 2025 is again indicative of the time taken to receive and record appeals, meaning that these numbers will increase over the coming months.

To provide additional context, about 60% of “No to Issue” Decisions made during 2024 were subsequently changed to “Yes” or have an on-going appeal (6% at time of reporting) and, at time of reporting, about 28% of “No to Issue” decisions made in January 2025 have been overturned or have an on-going appeal.

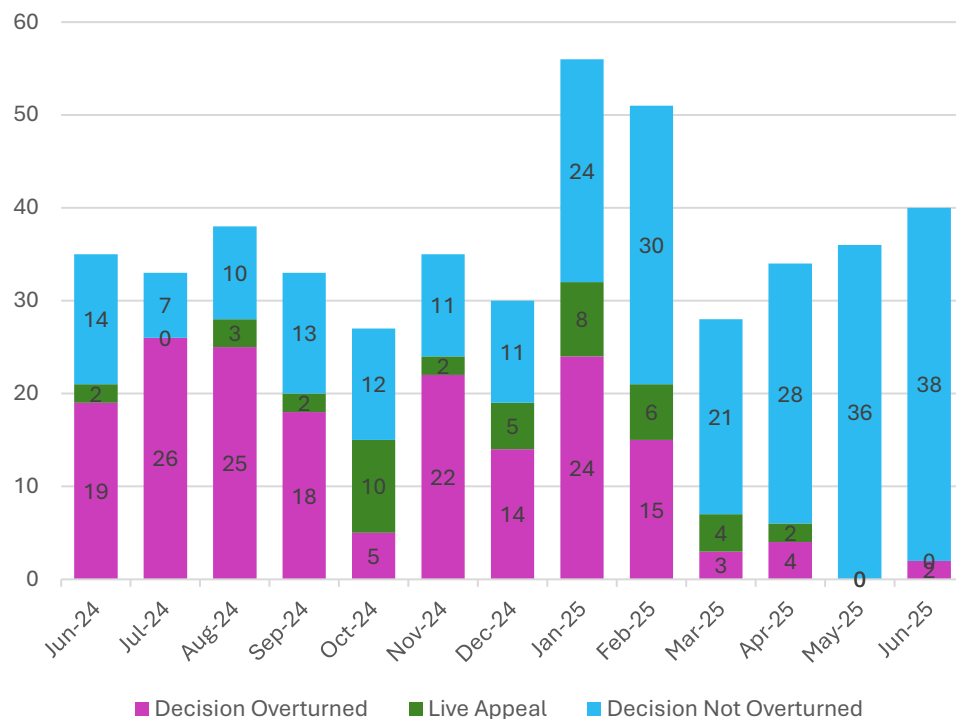
## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

Condition /  
Workstream

Assurance  
Level

Progress Update from this Quarter  
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Outcome of No to Issue Decisions made each Month



As well as processes to ensure that EHC plans are issued within statutory timelines work to improve the quality of EHCP, initiated in May 2024, has also progressed. While there is no blue print of what a 'good' EHCP looks like, the SEND Code of Practice does provide guidance on what should be included. In Kent, we complete over 1,000 audits each year on EHCPs for quality assurance. These include:

- The SEND Audit reviews 20 plans resulting from the assessment and 20 plans from the annual review processes. The audit is undertaken six times per year and moderated by a senior leader within the SEND Division.
- Multi-agency audit reviews a single case study using the SEND Inspection Framework.
- In Vision Audits a platform which is used by multiple authorities throughout the Country which identifies the overall quality of EHC plans as well as by Section.
- Audits of draft initial EHC plans and Amendment Notices( draft amended EHC plans) before issue to parents

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

Condition / Workstream	Assurance Level	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>																														
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback audits – learning from what others have thought of the processes</li> </ul> <p>The chart below illustrates the outcomes of quality audits on initial EHCPs.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Grade</th> <th>Kent</th> <th>National</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Outstanding</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Good</td> <td>21%</td> <td>40%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Requires Improvement</td> <td>66%</td> <td>42%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Inadequate</td> <td>13%</td> <td>16%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>As of May 2025, gradings have been amended in line with OFSTED and are illustrated below.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Grade</th> <th>Kent</th> <th>National</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gold (formerly Outstanding)</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Silver (formerly Good)</td> <td>29%</td> <td>32%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bronze (formerly Requires Improvement)</td> <td>61%</td> <td>46%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Significant Gaps (formerly Inadequate)</td> <td>10%</td> <td>22%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>While the above illustrates an overall improvement in the quality of Kent’s EHCPs, there has also been improvement in individual sections, specifically Sections A, B, C and E.</p> <p>In relation to Section A, the LA conducted a multi-agency audit with Kent PACT focusing on the views and wishes of the child and parents. This resulted in the production of a pioneering adaption of Section A of the EHC plan with four pathways for enabling the voice of the child to be heard according to their needs and age.</p> <p>The LA has also developed a “learning loop” to use learning from the audits to support practice development . This is done through use of a weekly cycle of training through Workshop Wednesdays, individualised induction and refresher programmes SEND Information Library SharePoint channel with guidance and process material.</p>	Grade	Kent	National	Outstanding	0%	0%	Good	21%	40%	Requires Improvement	66%	42%	Inadequate	13%	16%	Grade	Kent	National	Gold (formerly Outstanding)	0%	0%	Silver (formerly Good)	29%	32%	Bronze (formerly Requires Improvement)	61%	46%	Significant Gaps (formerly Inadequate)	10%	22%
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Condition 4: Implement models of reintegration of children from special/independent schools to mainstream where needs have been met.	Update 1 (April)	<p>Over this quarter, the number of children moving from specialist into from mainstream settings continues to be low in comparison to those moving from mainstream into specialist provision. However, work continues on this Condition both through the Phased Transfer Process and through existing and new project work.</p> <p>Targeted work to reduce the overall spend on independent mainstream school placements is continuing. Key areas of focus include developing clear processes for LA placement and casework teams to ensure consistency of approach and compliance to reduce</p>																														
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	Update 2 (July)																															
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future liability for fees where parents have placed their children in independent mainstream settings.

As of February 2025, there are a total of 115 Kent funded independent mainstream placements. This includes placements where the LA is funding an element of the placement in full or as a payment contribution to the overall placement, for example where parent pays fees and LA pays learning costs. This is expected to fall over the coming years as illustrated below.

	2023-24	Nov 24	Feb 25	Projected Sept 25	Projected Sept 26
Total placements	141	132	136	111	85
Total Kent funded placements	129	115	115	92	71

To ensure an accurate understanding and ability to monitor this sector more closely, this quarter there has been a concerted effort in relation to data, for example, manually checking that all independent mainstream placements are accurately recorded on Synergy.

Consequently, work has been undertaken to gain a greater understanding of value for money considerations to inform tribunal decisions.

Where placements are entirely funded by parents, the EHCPs for those children have been reviewed and have been, or are in the process of being reissued with wording in section I that clearly records that parents have elected to make their own arrangements and clearly stating the school or type of school the child would attend should the current arrangement become unsuitable or unsustainable. The purpose of this is to avoid the LA being in a position of having to pay for independent mainstream placements should parents not longer choose, or be able, to do so.

Work to ensure a consistent approach for new placements in independent mainstream schools has been implemented to ensure that the arrangements for funding and placement are clear. This includes situations where schools have offered scholarships to students.

For children who move into Kent and are already attending an independent mainstream school (placed by parents or other LAs) a process is being implemented to ensure that these arrangements are reviewed in a timely manner and funded at an appropriate level. By this we mean that placements represent reasonable public expenditure (until the EHCP is reviewed, where children move into

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

Condition / Workstream	Assurance Level	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>
		<p>Kent, the LA is bound by the SEN Code of Practice to continue to name the current school, this can lead to the LA being liable for full fees unless the arrangement is formalized in a timely fashion).</p> <p>Ongoing casework is being undertaken for children currently placed. This includes reducing payments for placements where the level of provision and support required to meet needs has reduced. Thereby ensuring that levels of funding provided are aligned to levels of need.</p> <p>The review of independent post-16 placements in other Local Authorities continues to yield positive outcomes. This quarter there has been an ongoing focus on ceasing EHCPs for young people at the end of the academic year (where appropriate), recouping fees for non-attenders, working with providers to reduce placement fees and seeking Kent provisions at the point of phase transfer rather than placing out of county.</p> <p>To reduce reliance on out of county placements, LA officers are working with providers to make Kent SPIs more accessible (see Condition 1) and to broaden their curriculum offer.</p> <p>This quarter notice has been given on young people attending Cambian College. Pupils will leave at the end of this academic year creating a £100k plus saving overall.</p> <p>In addition, the LA has given notice on 19 placements where children and young people attending non-maintained and independent special schools have 0% attendance resulting in a cost avoidance of £1,140,714 this academic year.</p> <p>As with all decisions to cease EHCPs or change placements, the risk of tribunal is present. In relation to the above, in two instances, where the EHCP were proposed to cease parents have appealed and were going to tribunal. Following discussion with the LA one has been conceded and one has decided not to appeal.</p> <p>In addition, the specialist Speech and Language Therapist for Deaf Learners will no longer be working with East Kent College. Due to a lack of suitable alternative provision in Kent, some students may now need to go to expensive out of county placements.</p> <p>In relation to this ongoing project, over the summer LA officers will be identifying existing placements that can reviewed as existing pupils age out of the education system, are moved to a new in county provision or have their EHCP ceased.</p>

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

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		<p>Two new projects have been established to develop new pathways for children and young people from special into mainstream settings. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ashford Post-16 transition project</li> <li>• Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) pilot.</li> </ul> <p>The Ashford Post-16 transition project focuses on increasing the number of students progressing from special school to mainstream post-16 pathway and is a pilot being undertaken by Goldwyn Special School in collaboration with East Kent College (EKC). It is being supported by LA officers.</p> <p>The project provides a supported transition from special to mainstream post-16 provision with clearly defined pathways, robust curriculum and support structures to make the progression successful. In practical terms, pupils move from being on Goldwyn's roll full time but receiving their education in an EKC class supported by Goldwyn staff (Pathway 1), to moving to EKC's roll but with support remaining from Goldwyn as necessary (Pathway 2) to being fully on EKC roll.</p> <p>This approach is demonstrating positive outcomes. For example, families would previously have named Goldwyn as Post-16 placement mainly around the expert SEMH provision provided. Yet, Goldwyn has seen a reduction in 'pure' Goldwyn post 16 offer over the past three years with 45 students on roll at Goldwyn in Year 1, 37 in Year 2 and 18 in Year 3 and 21 on Goldwyn EKC Pathways.</p> <p>Number of year 12/13 students moving from Pathway 1 to Pathway 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 1: 86%</li> <li>• Year 2: 87%</li> </ul> <p>Families have communicated that they are happy with the breadth of offer available to their children and that independence has been increased.</p> <p>The support that Goldwyn students have received has had an impact on many fronts, including enabling students to shine out beyond peers in mainstream groups – be noted as ambassadors. Also supporting the hardest to reach to retain placed through facilitation of support and understanding around SEMH needs.</p> <p>Goldwyn students have been supported to achieve level 2-3 qualifications as well as addressing barriers around engagement and learning. In year unit exams and English and math achievements have been positive. The first set of Year 13 results are expected this summer.</p>

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

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		<p>Key risks identified to the longer term sustainability of the project are that Pathway 2 is rapidly growing and is currently run unfunded by Goldwyn. Therefore this may need review as the model grows. Transport links to EKC is a barrier for students from coastal or rural areas.</p> <p>In addition, the Ashford Bridge Project focuses in on maintained mainstream placements by supporting a successful secondary transfer for pupils who are at high risk of exclusion from their new secondary school.</p> <p>It involves the creation of intervention support, specifically for children with Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs transferring from primary to secondary school. The approach involves using a split time table, where children will receive support from their local SEMH special school at a hub site and attend their new mainstream secondary school. Up to twelve pupils will receive support, starting from September 2025. As of June 2025, recruitment for staff has begun and secondary schools are identifying pupils to receive this support. Given that this is a new project, further information will be provided in the next report.</p> <p>An important factor influencing the reintegration of children and young people from specialist (or no) education settings into mainstream provision is Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). Early intervention to prevent entrenched emotionally based school avoidant behaviours is highly beneficial as once young people are out of the mainstream (or any) school environment it takes a lot more time and resource to re-engage them with learning and the more time lost impacts further on their education, overall outcomes and post-16 pathways.</p> <p>This quarter a new project has started to focus on this issue.</p> <p>The project proposes a five year pilot project working with Simon Langton Girls Grammar School to develop additional provision for young people at risk of EBSA. Learning and opportunities to roll out the model of other grammar school within Kent will be a key aspect.</p> <p>The project will be led by the school itself with support from LA officers, including Assistant Director of Education, Kent Educational Psychology Service (KEPS) and KPAS (Kent PRU and Attendance Service).</p> <p>The project has three key phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase 1: Establish provision and information share with all Kent grammar schools</li> <li>• Phase 2: Grow and develop outreach model (and continue information share)</li> </ul>

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Condition / Workstream	Assurance Level	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>																				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phase 3: develop and deliver option for time limited intervention for students from other schools</li> </ul> <p>Key deliverables of Phase 1 are:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Deliverable</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Timescales</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1.1 Identify potential pilot eligibility criteria</td> <td>Agreed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1.2 Scope project feasibility - costs, number of spaces, staffing implications etc</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1.3 Identify and share appropriate pre and post measures, including advice around the frequency of use (specifically in relation to the outcome measures of student wellbeing and parental perceptions).</td> <td>Term 6 (2024-25).</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1.4 Deliver whole school awareness training for EBSA (specifically in relation to the eligibility criteria for the provision, including primary/secondary/contextual factors).</td> <td>Term 1 (2025-26).</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1.5 Deliver further bespoke input/support for LSAs who will be supporting young people in the provision.</td> <td>Term 1 (2025-26)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1.6 Facilitate solution-focused consultations with LSAs/SENCo regarding existing students being considered for the provision.</td> <td>Term 2 (2025-26).</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1.7 Research and share information with SLGGS regarding current evidence base in relation to EBSA, e.g. current guidance, similar provision approaches, national trends and how these compare with patterns seen by SLGGS.</td> <td>Term 6 (2024-25).</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1.8 Recruit teacher.</td> <td>TBC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1.9 Establish provision</td> <td>TBC</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Deliverable	Timescales	1.1 Identify potential pilot eligibility criteria	Agreed	1.2 Scope project feasibility - costs, number of spaces, staffing implications etc		1.3 Identify and share appropriate pre and post measures, including advice around the frequency of use (specifically in relation to the outcome measures of student wellbeing and parental perceptions).	Term 6 (2024-25).	1.4 Deliver whole school awareness training for EBSA (specifically in relation to the eligibility criteria for the provision, including primary/secondary/contextual factors).	Term 1 (2025-26).	1.5 Deliver further bespoke input/support for LSAs who will be supporting young people in the provision.	Term 1 (2025-26)	1.6 Facilitate solution-focused consultations with LSAs/SENCo regarding existing students being considered for the provision.	Term 2 (2025-26).	1.7 Research and share information with SLGGS regarding current evidence base in relation to EBSA, e.g. current guidance, similar provision approaches, national trends and how these compare with patterns seen by SLGGS.	Term 6 (2024-25).	1.8 Recruit teacher.	TBC	1.9 Establish provision	TBC
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Condition 5: Develop a robust Post16 offer across the county with clear pathways to independence for children with	Update 1 (April)	<p>As noted in the April 2025 report, a Post-16 Coordination Group has been established. The purpose of the group is to collectively take accountability for achieving the Council's strategic outcomes for post-16 education in Kent by working towards development of a post-16 policy and bringing together all the post-16 interdependences to ensure they are working towards common goals.</p> <p>The group will work to ensure that:</p>																				
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## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

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SEN, through increased Post-16 opportunities for preparing for adulthood.	<b>RAG</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the LA is clear on what it expects from its post-16 provisions (including defining the role of Mainstream (including SRP) and Special School sixth forms, Further Education Colleges and Specialist Post-16 Institutions) and that this is clearly communicated to the sector. The</li> <li>• the sector are provided with appropriate data and intelligence to ensure planning for future cohorts can be adequately supported.</li> <li>• there is a forum for ideas, discussion and challenge around future provision for post-16 SEND provision in Kent.</li> </ul> <p>A key focus of the group for this quarter is on ensuring sufficiency of post 16 places across the post-16 sector within Kent for young people with EHCPs and that this places provide a breadth of choice reducing the number of young people who become not in education, employment or training (NEET). The group have agreed to use the Department for Education (DfE) Net Capacity Assessment to provide a starting point to assessing post-16 capacity in schools. KCC Management Information will analyse this data and it will be used to inform the content of a questionnaire that will be send to schools in Term 1 of 2025-26 to understand more about gaps in local provision and needs. It is intended that an existing future planning tool will be utilised to capture the views of young people in relation to their needs and aspirations.</p> <p>In the interim, work is ongoing with mainstream schools to offer Level 2 qualifications in their Sixth Form provision. Currently most only provide Level 3 qualifications which excludes existing pupils from that provision if their results at GCSE are not sufficient to progress.</p> <p>There has also been a focus on directing young people to use Kent Choices to understand their post-16 options. The site has been expanded and can now be used to identify which post-16 settings have space in individual courses. <a href="#">KentChoices   Home</a></p>
Condition 6: Develop the Transition Charter to increase parental confidence in Kent's provision. This involves working with schools to enable them to articulate the provision pathways for parents clearly and provide	Update 1 (April) <b>G</b> Update 2 (July) <b>G</b> Update 3 (December) <b>RAG</b>	<p>In relation to the implementation of phased transfer across primary, secondary and post-16 phases. Processes and reporting are now embedded as business as usual. This includes an internal re-organisation within existing staff structures and capacity, to decouple phase transfer and annual review activity into distinct workstreams. This allows corresponding teams to focus singularly on either the annual phase transfer process or more iterative annual review cycle. It is anticipated that this will ensure that phase transfer prioritisation does not continue to be at the expense of the annual review statutory responsibility.</p> <p>As of 12 May 2025, there are a total of 274 Nursery 2 pupils with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), 22 of which were issued on or before 27 September 2024 and 252 after. The latter figure is</p>

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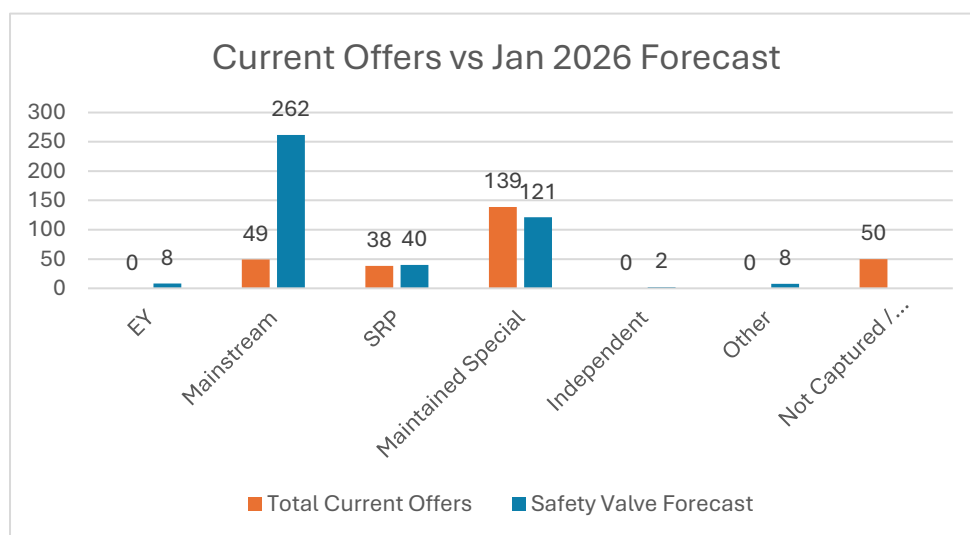
support to both children and parents at key transition points.

expected to increase as new EHCPs are issued.

For Primary Transfer (children entering year R from Nursery 2 in September 2025)

- 82% (18) of Nursery 2 children with an EHCP issued before 27 September 2024 have received offers with 4 consultations on-going.
- For Nursery 2 children with EHCPs issued post 27 September 2024, 80% (202) children have received offers with 50 consultations ongoing.
- Of the total cohort, 80% (220) children have received offers.
- In terms of placements, 39% have been offered placements in mainstream or Specialist Resource Provision (SRPs) settings, 61% in Maintained Special settings.

As noted in the April 2025, report Kent has seen a spike on EHCP applications for early years children since COVID, like much of the country. The original Safety Valve assumed that as this cohort of children moved into the education system, numbers would return more towards pre-COVID levels, alongside the benefits of the wider early years review having an impact. Consequently, placement numbers for January 2026 phased transfer are expected to exceed Safety Valve forecast across all placements types due to higher volume of EHCPs within this cohort. This is illustrated in the graph below.



Work is ongoing to determine whether the percentage of Nursery 2 children with an EHCP and the percentage of those children entering a mainstream placement at Year R varies according to district, comparing districts who moved to the Early Years Outreach

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

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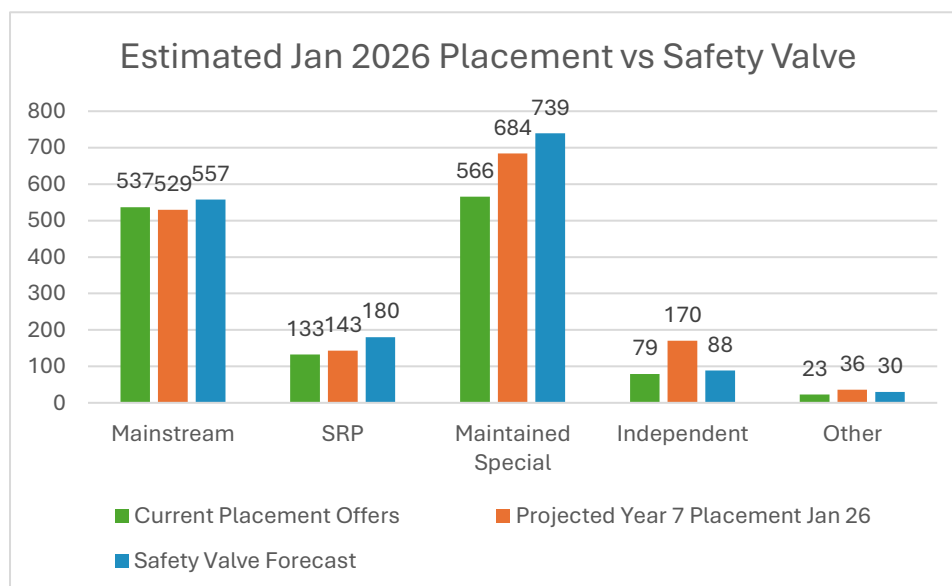
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Intervention Service (see Condition 2) as early adopters versus those that retained a school based, specialist nursery intervention model.

For secondary transfer, as of 12 May 2025, there were a total of 1,450 Year 6 pupils with an EHCP

- Of those with an EHCP issued on or before 27 September 2024, 94% (1,232) have received offers with 73 consultations on-going.
- For Year 6 children with EHCPs issued post 27 September 2024, 73% (106) children have received offers with 39 consultations ongoing. This figure is likely to increase as new EHCPs are issued
- Of the total cohort, 92% (1,338) children have received offers.
- In terms of placements, 50% have been offered placements in mainstream or Specialist Resource Provision (SRPs) settings, 48% in specialist settings (42% in state-funded and 6% in independent specialist settings) and 2% will be in other arrangements.

An estimate of January 2026 placements versus Safety Valve forecast shows the projected number of Year 7 pupils in January 2026 being slightly lower than forecast. This is illustrated in the graph below:



While placements in mainstream, SRP and maintained special are lower than projected, placement in independent are higher than forecast. Additionally, this data does not take into account sufficiency of places. Since 14 February 2025, 147 appeals received for Year 6 pupils in respect of Section I of which:

- 72 of these are requesting Maintained Special school placement,

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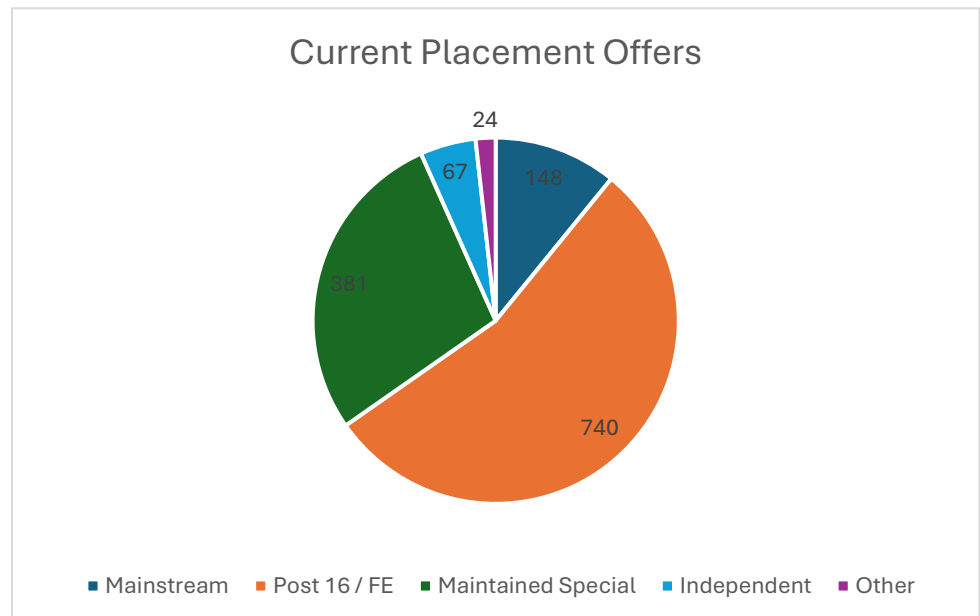
- 47 are requesting Independent school placement (Current placement: 35 Mainstream, 3 Maintained Special, 8 Independent, 1 Educated at Home)

The above illustrates the barriers (referenced above) that the LA experiences in implementing the Safety Valve conditions in relation to delays to the building of new special schools, and the tribunal system.

In relation to Post-16 phased transfer as of 19 June 2025,

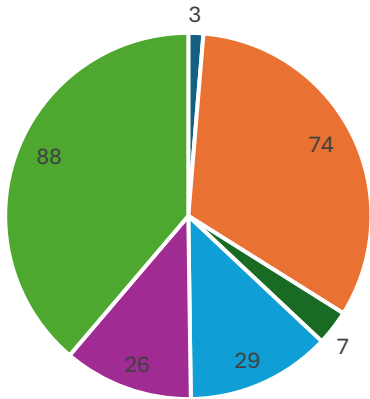
- 86% (1,342) of Year 11 children with an EHCP issued on or before 8 November 2024 have received offers with 227 consultations on-going.
- For Year 11 children with EHCPs issued post 8 November 2024, 53% (18) children have received offers with 16 consultations ongoing. This figure is likely to increase as new EHCPs are issued
- Of the total cohort, 85% (1,360) children have received offers.
- In terms of placements, 65% of offers are in mainstream or Post 16 / FE placements, 33% in specialist settings (28% in state-funded and 5% in independent specialist settings) and 2% in other arrangements.

Of young people with a placement offer the graph below illustrates expected destination.



The graph below shows the likely placement types provided for 139 of the remaining 227 pupils in original phase transfer cohort.

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

Condition / Workstream	Assurance Level	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>
		<p style="text-align: center;">Likely Placement of Remaining</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"> <span style="color: blue;">■</span> Mainstream             <span style="color: orange;">■</span> Post 16 / FE             <span style="color: green;">■</span> Maintained Special             <span style="color: cyan;">■</span> Independent             <span style="color: purple;">■</span> Other             <span style="color: limegreen;">■</span> Unknown         </p> <p>The remaining 88 are either NEET, being ceased or where there is a need to make contact with the family as no updated information is available.</p> <p>Proportions of placement are broadly comparable to those of Year 12 pupils as of January 2025. However, some movement should be expected as a result of appeals and tribunals. As of 19 June 2025, there are 19 appeals in relation to Section I for Year 11 pupils, 11 of which are requesting an independent placements, all of which currently attend an independent placement.</p> <p>Projections for January 2026 indicate an increase on the Safety Valve forecast of 96 pupils.</p>
Condition 7: Ensure there is sufficient and consistent capacity across the county to support children with severe and complex needs in their local area where possible. This includes recruitment of temporary posts to support	Update 1 (April)	<p>Implementation of the Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) review continues. There are currently 67 SRPs in Kent, of which 42 are primary SRPs supporting 771 children and 25 are secondary supporting 700 children.</p> <p>Following on from a mapping exercise that identified gaps in provision and lack of adequate pathways from primary to secondary the process to establish new SRPs is progressing. The intention is for four new SRPs to be established from September 2026, three between September 2026 and January 2027 and two secondary SRPs from September 2027.</p> <p>The mapping exercise also identified SRPs that were underutilised, indicating lack of demand, and SRPs supporting need types that could be met in mainstream settings. Consequently, the process to close SRPs supporting pupils with visual impairments has been</p>
	<b>A</b>	
	Update 2 (July)	
	<b>G</b>	
	Update 3 (December)	<b>RAG</b>

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

Condition / Workstream	Assurance Level	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>
<p>sufficiency planning, reviewing the use of Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) and reviewing the specialist continuum to ensure only the most severe and complex needs are supported in special schools.</p>		<p>initiated, as it is was determined that the needs of those children could be met in a mainstream school with support from the in house Sensory and Physical Disability Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS). Work to initiate the same process for children who are hearing impaired will follow in the next academic year. SRP's supporting children with Speech Language and Communication Needs are being consulted with a view to remove their current admissions criteria, broadening the range of pupil needs that they can support and addressing underutilisation of these resources. This will be reflected in the new contracts from September 2026 which will replace the current contracts that ends 30 August 2026.</p> <p>A key challenge with the implementation of this is the time taken to navigate the legislative framework required to establish and register SRPs which can be time consuming. This may impact on timescales and consequently the ability of the LA to reduce the number of children in special schools – specifically where children enter into special schools due to lack of available places in SRPs.</p> <p>Monitoring of SRP performance was implemented with the current funding arrangements in September 2023. Based on a 60% return rate monitoring, data indicates that the majority of children leave SRPs to attend special school, post-16 Further Education College or a different SRP. The number of children leaving to attend mainstream school is more than half when compared to each of those three destinations. This is likely to be due to children leaving primary provisions and moving to special schools at phase transfer due to the lack of secondary SRP places. Consequently, the LA would expect these numbers to change as new secondary SRPs come online.</p> <p>At a more strategic level, SRPs are being included in the Kent Commissioning Plan which has previously focused on special school places. Local Inclusion Plans outline what the plans are for each area of Kent. The current contracts and Service Level Agreements for all SRPs in Kent will end 31 August 2026. New agreements and performance monitoring processes are currently being developed and will incorporate learning from the current arrangements.</p> <p>Pending formal local decision making, both special schools and SRPs will be subject to the new SEN Funding Model referenced in Condition 8.</p> <p>As noted in the April 2024 report the implementation of special schools review is progressing utilising an individualised approach to ensure that any proposed changes are both practically and financially viable.</p> <p>Assistant Directors for Education (ADEs) are leading this work and taking a twofold approach. ADEs are working with designation</p>

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		<p>specific cohorts of schools to discuss curriculum and pathway development for cohorts of children.</p> <p>ADEs will also work with individual special schools to consider local area need and the pathways available to ensure that there are enough places for children with severe and complex needs who require a special school across the county. This will include undertaking feasibility studies to provide an evidence based approach to changes that schools may or may not be required to implement, for example, if additional room/adaptations are required so that pupils can be effectively taught within schools and may require some schools to change aspects of their admissions criteria to allow children with more complex levels of need to attend.,</p> <p>Assessing each school individually will provide a clearer understanding of their specific needs and challenges and allow the LA and special schools to plan for placement on a cohort/pathway basis rather than individual.</p> <p>School visits and meetings are already taking place with some additional classes for children with more complex needs already implemented. A three year work plan is being developed to account for the above activity.</p> <p>Key risks identified with this project include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• schools being reluctant to change their admission criteria, creating challenges in placing pupils with severe and complex needs and impacting on the LAs ability reduce use of NMISS.</li> <li>• Feasibility studies indicates costly changes.</li> <li>• Public perception that Special school places are being 'taken away'.</li> <li>• Tribunal placements affecting possible placements in schools for more complex students.</li> </ul> <p>The current Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) contract for Non-maintained and Independent Special Schools (NMISS) will end 31 August 2026 following a Key Decision to extend the existing contract for one year. <a href="#">Decision - 25/00007 - Non-Maintained Independent Special School (NMISS) Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) - Contract extension and re-procurement options</a></p> <p>The purpose of extending the existing contract is to procure a new contract under the Procurement Act 2023 to be implemented from September 2026 for placement of children and young people in independent and non-maintained special schools.</p> <p>As of November 2024, the LA places children and young people in 124 non-maintained, independent special schools. This is a total of 2069 children and young people. Of the schools used:</p>

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

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Progress Update from this Quarter  
*Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts*

Location	On DPS	Not on DPS	Total
In Kent	21	50	71
Out of Kent	5	48	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>124</b>

Although the LA makes placements more in schools that are not on the DPS, than are on it, when taking into considering the number of children placed 56% are placed on DPS schools and 44% on non-DPS schools. This equates to an average 45 children in each DPS schools receiving placements compared to an average of nine children in each of the non-DPS schools receiving placements. It is worth noting that being on the DPS does not guarantee placements.

The impact in terms of cost is illustrated in the table below. All figures as of November 2024.

Location	On DPS	Not on DPS	Total
# of placements	1159	910	2069
Total annual cost	£46,757,180	£39,995,262	£86,752,443
Average cost per pupil	£40,343	£43,951	£41,930

The new contract will focus on addressing issues and challenges within the existing contract specifically in relation to quality of provision, sustainability and wider impact and value for money.

Work to engage stakeholders is underway and is expected to be completed by end July 2025. A market engagement event held on 13 June 2025 was attended by 56 NMISS representatives. This event marked the beginning of formal engagement with the sector pending the re-procurement process. In addition, an online survey for non-maintained, independent special schools to share their views about the current and future service specification has received a total of nine responses to date. Two schools have offered to hold focus groups with children and young people who attend these schools, and 11 parents have registered to attend online focus groups to share their experience of non-maintained, independent special schools. The focus is on gathering feedback that can inform the development of the new service specification as well as the tendering evaluation criteria.

As of May 2025, there are 741 children recorded on Synergy as having no current placement (with placement recorded as out of school, unknown or no current placement). This marks the continuation of a steady decrease on this measure since August 2024.

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

Condition / Workstream	Assurance Level	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>
		<p>As noted in the April 2025 report, this decrease is a result of caseworkers working to place children and young people with tuition providers and to secure appropriate school or Post-16 placements. The consequence being a significant increase in the number (and associated costs) of pre and post 16 pupils accessing tuition packages.</p> <p>Work continues to improve the quality of data to enable the LA to have active oversight of the children and young people on these packages so that where a return to school is appropriate, this can be supported to happen. Good quality data will also enable the effective quality assurance of children not in a school placement and is essential to ensuring effective oversight of safeguarding processes.</p> <p>A suite of closely aligned thematic reviews are being planned to complement the data quality work. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development of systems and protocols for personal budgets,</li> <li>• decision making around EOTAS packages,</li> <li>• identifying children and young people in receipt of alternative provision education packages that can be supported to re-integrate into mainstream education.</li> </ul> <p>A thematic review of children not in education will look in detail at those children in Years 10/11 who are not in school placement and identify where improvements can be made to enable those children to attend a local school or college at phase transfer rather than independent schools or EOTAS packages.</p> <p>This project is currently in the planning phase. Key milestones identified are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial scoping and devising a model for undertaking the review that can be adapted to other areas of work: August 2025.</li> <li>• Work plan development, including prioritisation of work areas and tasks for implementation throughout 2025/2026: August 2025.</li> <li>• Implementation of the review: 2025-2026 academic year.</li> <li>• Outcome of the review (August 2026) to include:</li> <li>• identification of clear definitions for pathways and strategies, including accompanying systems/protocols</li> <li>• clear evidence base for the permanent personnel and resource required</li> <li>• projection of financial impact of implementation..</li> </ul> <p>A key risk to this project relates to capacity of LA staff to undertake the review within the identified timescales.</p>
Condition 8: Develop a school/related	Update 1 (April) <b>G</b>	Work to implement the Communities of Schools model continues across the county. As noted in the April 2024 report, independent

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

Condition / Workstream	Assurance Level	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>
<p>approach to commissioning of SEN support services (Locality Based Resources), to better respond to the needs of children and young people with SEND</p>	<p>Update 2 (July)</p>	<p>chairs for each of 53 Communities have been allocated and full induction meetings have taken place which outlined the arrangements for 2025–26 academic year which is being used as a transition year to move from current to new arrangements, specifically in relation to funding.</p> <p>Each chair has met with their “community” and there are meetings scheduled for each community to meet in June and July to enable them to become more familiar with the process.</p> <p>Information related to the Notional SEN Budgets of individual schools has been published and made publicly available as well as guidance related to SEN Notional Budgets and the allocated budget for each community of schools. <a href="#">Communities of Schools Financial Information - KELSI</a></p> <p>Alongside the work to establish Communities of Schools a revised model of SEND funding is being implemented over the academic year 2025–2026 to distribute high needs funding for children with SEN Support or an EHCP.</p> <p>These changes relate to the payment of high needs mainstream top-up funding (Element 3). This is the funding provided to mainstream schools for individual children above the first £6,000 per child available to schools from within their notional SEN budget. It also impacts on children attending SRPs and special schools.</p> <p>For children in mainstream provision on SEN Support or with lower-level support needs funding allocations will be agreed via the Communities of Schools, using the allocated budget. Interim arrangements have been agreed for 2025-2026 to enable a phased implementation of the full model. Therefore for this interim year, Communities of Schools budget will be used to support children on SEN Support and children with EHCPs where their existing top-up claim is less than £6,000 and who can benefit from wider support and strategies in mainstream schools.</p> <p>Children requiring higher levels of support, including those for whom schools request exceptional pupil funding, will ultimately have funding agreed by the LA using a Specific Allocation Model. Allocations will be graduated according to level of adaptation required and based on funding descriptors informed by the locally developed Continuum of Need and Provision document. The mapping of children onto the Specific Allocation Model will begin September 2025 with the intention to have all eligible children mapped by September 2026.</p> <p>Work has begun to map cohorts of children against the proposed funding descriptors to provide an understanding of associated costs and more fully define the specific allocations.</p>
	<p><b>G</b></p>	
	<p>Update 3 (December)</p>	
	<p><b>RAG</b></p>	

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

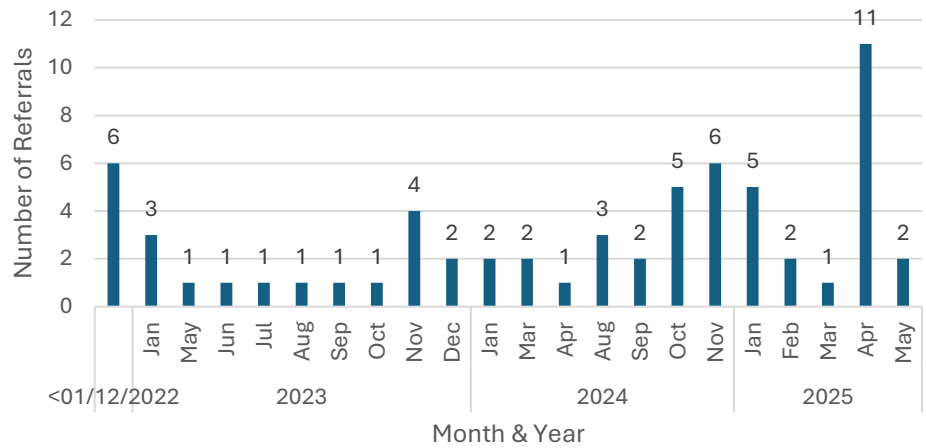
Condition / Workstream	Assurance Level	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>
		<p>The revised model will enable a move from three different funding approaches for mainstream, SRP and special schools based on primary need type to one overarching model for all children with an EHCP. This will enable funding to follow a child, as they transition from different phases of education, which is not currently the case.</p> <p>The change to the top-up funding is being phased in over a period of time. The current claim process for mainstream top-up ended on 31 March 2025. All agreed claims will be paid until 31 August 2025. From 1 September 2025, the communities of schools budget will be introduced with interim protections in place for academic year 2025-2026 with full implementation of the revised model beginning from September 2026.</p> <p>Given the scale of change being implemented there have been four meetings with headteachers to fully explain the process, training has been undertaken with LA officers, Frequently Asked Questions for schools and parents have been produced and published and Kent PACT are hosting webinars for parents on 14, 16 and 18 July 2025.</p>
<p>Condition 9: Continue working closely with NHS Kent and Medway to ensure a common understanding of SEND needs, including the drivers behind increases in need, ensuring clarity of clinical assessment and the subsequent funding associated.</p>	Update 1 (April)	<p>Since the April 2025 report, work has been ongoing to understand more about the impact of the Joint Funded Placement, Services and Packages process on Special Education Needs (SEN) funding.</p> <p>New processes have been implemented as of 1 May 2025 to enable this reporting to happen, including the development of revised forms, processes and spreadsheets.</p> <p>All information presented below is accurate as of the time of reporting (30 May 2025).</p> <p>The graph below illustrates the number of Joint Funding requests submitted by Health and Social Care requesting a SEN financial contribution. The figures below include requests for both placements and services / packages of care costs.</p>
	<b>A</b>	
	Update 2 (July)	
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	<b>RAG</b>	

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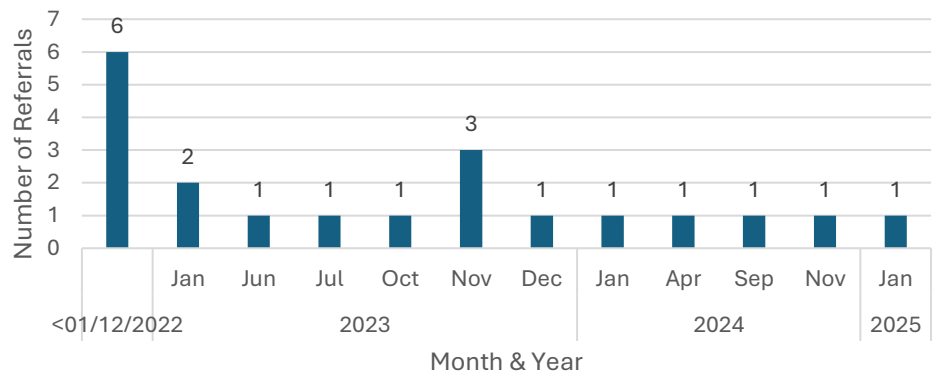
Condition /  
Workstream

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*Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts*



The graph below illustrates the number of requests that have been agreed by SEN. In terms of this reporting, the outcome of SEN decisions regarding the request are recorded when the request was received, rather than when the decision was received. Consequently it is possible to see that of the five requests for funding that SEN received in January 2025, at the time of reporting, they had agreed to fund one.



SEN generally make fewer requests to reclaim funding for placements, services and packages in comparison to Health and Social Care. For example, from January 2025 to date, Health has 33 requests awaiting decisions, Social Care 39 and SEN 9.

The graph below shows the value of funding reclaimed by SEN from Health and Social Care across the current and two preceding financial years.

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LA staff attended a national forum with other LAs regarding issues experienced with securing appropriate funding from the NHS for children and young people with complex needs. There is concern that funding for this cohort of children will decrease, placing an additional financial burden on the LA.

Risks associated with consistency across SEN and Social Care teams in their understanding of how to make joint funding referrals and who is responsible for making them has been identified and is being addressed through training.

Both the LA and Kent and Medway ICB fund health providers to deliver commissioned therapy services. This quarter, significant work has been undertaken regarding contracts for commissioned therapy services, and alignment of NHS and LA funding in this arena.

The Community Services contracts for children and adults was awarded to a single provider (East Kent Hospital Foundation Trust (EKHFT)) by the Kent and Medway ICB. It is expected that this will support the ongoing roll out of the Balanced System® across the county, including Swale who have yet to adopt the approach. The new contracts will begin in the autumn.

Leads for the Balanced System® in Kent have been involved in supporting LA commissioners to develop the invitation to tender and service specifications for an LA led therapies contract, that will focus on early intervention and the principles of easy access and align to the ICB Communities Services contract.

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

Condition / Workstream	Assurance Level	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>
		<p>The implementation of the Balanced System® model for Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) continues to progress this quarter.</p> <p>Key upcoming milestones include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link therapist rolled out in all districts by August 2025. This has been impacted by the lack of engagement by Swale which is currently supported by a different commissioned provider to the rest of Kent. The expectation is that this will be addressed through the new ICB Community Services contract.</li> <li>• Talking Walk-ins available in all districts by August 2025.</li> <li>• Scheme for Schools and Settings - first two cohorts achieve Balanced System® accreditation by August 2025.</li> </ul> <p>In relation to the above, progress is steady and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 55% of mainstream schools have met with their link therapist and have a development plan in place as of April 2025.</li> <li>• A meeting with key delivery partners to review Talking Walk-ins and Targeted SLCN interventions held in Family Hubs was held, the goal being to achieve a consistent Kent wide offer.</li> <li>• Three schools/settings completing their 'review' phase and going forward for Balanced System accreditation in July.</li> </ul> <p>The leads for the Balanced System® roll out in Kent have also been supporting the roll out of the Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) project to Swale and sharing information with schools about speech, language and communication needs and Balanced System® that can be published on their websites and in newsletters. This information has been co-produced with parents. Leads have also attended meetings to explain the benefits of Link Practitioner model.</p> <p>The Scheme for Schools and Settings Celebration Event was held on 30 June 2025. This was attended by 26 schools and settings. Feedback is currently being collated.</p> <p>Risks associated with this project include ongoing dependence on the commitment of the wider workforce to implement the system and the potential negative perception about service changes by parents of children receiving speech and language therapy as part of EHCP provision or from belief that specialist provision is always needed for SLCN. The impact of funding cuts to ICB remains a risk for this ongoing transformation process.</p> <p>Given the diversity of commissioning arrangements involved in the delivery of therapeutic services in Kent, a delivery group is being established to ensure a joined up and coordinated approach across all therapy services for children with SEN in Kent. The group will</p>

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		<p>address challenges and look to ensure a coordinated delivery of speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy and will oversee the delivery of projects related to improving the quality, availability and appropriateness of therapeutic support.</p> <p>One such project is focusing on ensuring that the education and health care plan process enables the LA to understand and utilise therapeutic services most effectively to meet the needs of children.</p> <p>This includes building on existing work undertaken as part of Condition 2, to ensure consistency in the therapy advice included in plan and will seek to address lack of parental confidence in the provision available from local services (NHS) that can lead to the over provision of therapeutic support within plans that the LA cannot realistically deliver as per statutory requirements.</p> <p>The identified outcomes of this specific area of work are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that there is widespread understanding within the SEN service of local resources available to meet needs of CYP with speech and language and physical and IT needs</li> <li>• Physical and sensory, language and communication needs are being met within available resources and within a timely manner.</li> <li>• Teams are confident on what to enter onto EHC plan</li> <li>• Tribunal outcomes regarding levels of therapy will be positive and as such high cost independent over provision will be avoided.</li> </ul> <p>Planning is underway to develop the full scope of this project, identify resource and develop an action plan with identified timescales.</p>

RAG	Definition
	Savings/cost avoidance and/or workstream(s) complete
	Savings/cost avoidance and/or workstream(s) remains on target
	Savings/cost avoidance and/or workstream(s) are currently off target, with plans to mitigate
	Savings/cost avoidance and/or workstream(s) are off target

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME RISK REGISTER

Risk	Assurance Level	Mitigation	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>
Risk 1: Inability of the Council to meet the financial targets agreed within the Safety Valve Agreement, due to external factors outside the control of the Local Authority.	Update 1 (April) <b>R</b>	Minimal mitigation available due to elements of the risk being outside the control of the Council and dependent on external factors.	<p>Risks to the Safety Valve Programme remain relatively unchanged this reporting period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delays to the building of two new special schools continues to contribute to the projected financial deficit and accounts for the continuing forecast of £20 – £30m remaining accumulated deficit at the end of March 2028. The total lost saving from the delays between 2024-2025 and 2027-2028 is approximately £23m in total and means that the LA is less able to reduce the number of children and young people being educated in private independent schools in accordance with forecasts.</li> <li>• Increased robustness in LA decision making is not always upheld by DfE and central government when challenged at tribunal. This can result in the LA having to place children in higher cost, non-maintained independent school provisions and undermine the efforts of the Local Authority to successfully implement the changes needed to achieve Safety Valve objectives. Mitigating actions include: increasing capacity to participate in mediations, and strong communication with SENCO's in mainstream schools to develop their understanding of the process and ability to be a strong a witness, ensuring that legal advice regarding current position and practice is clear and compliant.</li> <li>• We continue to see an increase in other local authorities refusing to fund their looked after children who have been placed in Kent. Mitigating action is to raise concerns with DfE.</li> <li>• School Budget funding for mainstream schools was lower than inflation and increased efficiencies expected from schools to fund teachers pay increases</li> </ul>
	Update 2 (July) <b>R</b>		
	Update 3 (December) <b>RAG</b>		
	<b>RAG</b>		

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME RISK REGISTER

Risk	Assurance Level	Mitigation	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>
			<p>from September 2025. Mitigating actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KCC currently commission a “schools in deficit” team to support maintained schools.</li> <li>Schools Funding Forum have agreed to continue to fund full access to support services for primary schools (our most vulnerable group of schools).</li> <li>Access School Resource Management Advisor (SMRA) service where applicable.</li> <li>Review position following submission of three-year financial plans for maintained schools (due 31 May 2025)</li> </ul>
<p>Risk 2: Inability of the Council to meet the financial targets agreed within the Safety Valve Agreement, due to increased demand for services, alongside increased inflation, national living wages, teachers pay and changes to VAT.</p>	<p>Update 1 (April)</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: orange; font-weight: bold;">A</p>	<p>Increasing demand for support will be addressed through system recalibration and maintenance of robust decision making.</p>	<p>Changes planned as part of the implementation of the Communities of Schools has seen an increase in the number of requests for high needs funding from schools.</p> <p>Mitigating actions include the introduction of the revised SEND funding model. As part of this implementation of the model, a phased approach is being taken and protections have been put in place regarding funding for the most complex children and young people.</p> <p>Grant funding is not adjusted to reflect inflation forecasts meaning that overall the funding available to meet increased costs is increasingly insufficient to do so. This continues to impact on the financial stability of state-funded special schools and creating anxiety within the state-funded sector.</p> <p>This reporting period work has continued on the fee uplift process for independent and non-maintained special schools. As of 18 June 2025, 32 schools had requested a fee uplift for financial year 2025–2026 for current placements. A robust approval and negotiation process was implemented which avoided £1,009,637 being spend on these placements. However, against a 1% increase in funding to this sector, this has resulted in a £552,000 overspend against the allocated budget.</p>
	<p>Update 2 (July)</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: orange; font-weight: bold;">A</p>		
	<p>Update 3 (December)</p>		
	<p style="text-align: center; color: red; font-weight: bold;">RAG</p>		
		<p>Implementation of robust processes for fee increase requests.</p>	

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME RISK REGISTER

Risk	Assurance Level	Mitigation	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>
Risk 3: Lack of stakeholder confidence and engagement in changes being implemented	Update 1 (April)	Increased regular and ongoing stakeholder engagement, alongside clear and transparent information sharing.	<p>Mitigating actions in relation to this risk are beginning to have impact. Examples of stakeholder engagement referenced earlier in this report is resulting in greater engagement with transformation projects, increased understanding and support for the changes being implemented.</p> <p>The LA continues to strive to be open and transparent in its communications and sharing of information, taking a proactive approach to address issues and concerns through, for example, publication of frequently Asked Questions documents.</p> <p>Work continues to address data quality issues to ensure increased understanding current performance and future trends, but also to ensure our ability to share accurate and timely data with stakeholders as part of open and transparent communication process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following a government inquiry, a SEND White Paper is expected in the autumn 2025. While there is speculation surrounding the contents of the paper, any changes to legislation that may impact on the current local policy and statutory duty may impact delivery of the Safety Valve programme. Mitigating actions: continue to engage in national and local forums to understand, anticipate and plan for future direction of travel.</li> </ul>
	<b>A</b>		
	Update 2 (July)		
	<b>A</b>		
	Update 3 (December)		
<b>RAG</b>			
Risk 4: New administration within the LA and upcoming publication of the government SEND White Paper may require changes to	Update 1 (April)	Engage with new administration and specifically Cabinet Members to ensure full understanding of Safety Valve programme.	<p>This is a newly identified risk following local government elections that took place in May (after the last reporting period) and have resulted in a change in administration of the LA.</p> <p>LA Officers have met with elected members to share information about the Safety Valve as part of a comprehensive induction process.</p>
	N/A		
	Update 2 (July)		
	<b>A</b>		
	Update 3 (December)		
<b>RAG</b>			

## SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME RISK REGISTER

Risk	Assurance Level	Mitigation	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>
local policy and direction of travel underpinning Safety Valve plans		Engage in national and local forums to understand, anticipate and plan for future direction of travel.	

