

Alternative Curriculum Pathways and Reintegration Support

2021 (Revised Jul 2023)



SURREY
COUNTY COUNCIL

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Executive Summary

Alternative Provision (AP) is “education outside school, arranged by local authorities or schools, for pupils who do not attend mainstream school for reasons such as exclusion, behaviour issues, school refusal, short- or long-term illness”. It can be for children who have social, emotional, or mental health needs (not necessarily with an EHCP and who may have been excluded), complex health needs or for whom an academic pathway of GCSEs is not appropriate.

This Strategy has been developed in collaboration with a broad range of Stakeholders, including those who work in educational settings as well as children and young people themselves. It sets out the ambition for pupils who need to access alternative provision and will be used to ensure alternative provision delivers positive educational and wellbeing outcomes for young people. It will also ensure that the significant resources Surrey County Council (SCC) and educational settings commit to alternative provision are joined up across the system of provision, and children and young people get the right support at the right time in their learning journey.

Surrey shares the DfE’s vision that: **Every child deserves an excellent education and the chance to fulfil their potential, whatever their background, needs or location in the county. Children in alternative provision deserve these opportunities too.** ([Creating Opportunity For All](#), March 2018).

The vision outlined in this Strategy is one of a whole system approach to alternative provision where inclusive schools, clear pathways and outstanding provision all work together to ensure excellent outcomes for children and young people. We’re promoting a collective system in which educational settings, community services, health and education support services all play a crucial part in responding to vulnerable children and assisting with reintegration to school; it moves away from viewing AP as a ‘market’ with a selection of services, or a number of places to be commissioned.

Our ambition for AP in Surrey is to:

- Increase the number of children and young people supported in mainstream provision, reducing the need for off-site provision
- Continue to reduce the number of exclusions from and within schools (both fixed term and permanent)
- Increase the number of pupils successfully reintegrated into mainstream provision
- Reduce the rising number of young people receiving independent tuition
- Monitor and improve the educational and wellbeing outcomes of children and young people who use AP
- Increase the number of young people who are on a pathway to Further Education
- Improve commissioning of independent providers
- Gain a better understanding of AP pupils needs and outcomes and apply consistency of opportunity across the county

1. Introduction

Alternative provision is “education outside school, arranged by local authorities or schools, for pupils who do not attend mainstream school for reasons such as exclusion, behaviour issues, school refusal, short or long term illness” (Alternative Provision Statutory guidance for local authorities, 2013). Alternative provision is also accessed in our Further Education colleges in order to provide a broader curriculum offer. It is for children of compulsory school age (up to and including Year 11). For young people aged 16 and over, we have a Participation Strategy which sets out our ambitions for all young people, including the most vulnerable, to achieve their full potential.

This Strategy is intended to set out:

1. A **vision** for the alternative provision system in Surrey
2. A set of **principles** for Surrey alternative provision that all stakeholders have signed up to
3. An agreed **direction of travel** and enablers needed to achieve our vision and improve outcomes
4. **Key Performance Indicators** to measure success

2. Context

This Strategy has been developed in collaboration with Surrey Mainstream Headteachers (both primary and secondary phase councils), Special School Headteachers, Pupil Referral Unit Headteachers (both collectively and individually), Assistant Directors across the Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture directorate, children and young people themselves as well as their parents and carers. Three SurreySays Surveys have been undertaken with: i) children and young people; ii) parents and carers, and iii) Headteachers to inform this strategy.

These wide-ranging discussions have been imperative in creating a strategy that is endorsed by all elements of the education system to ensure it is implemented to the highest standard to ensure good outcomes for our children and young people.

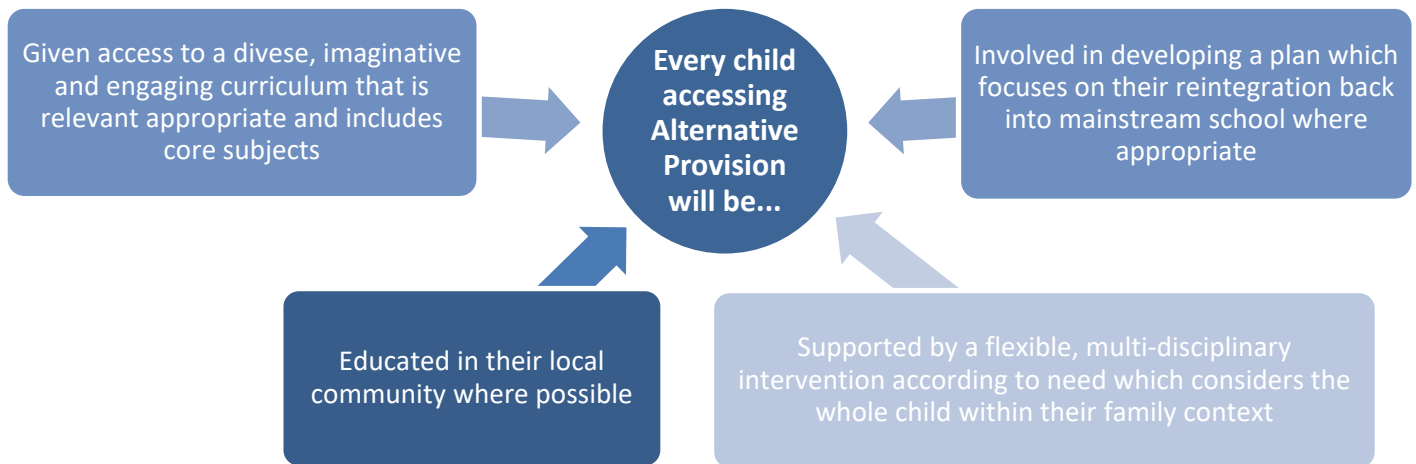
Surrey County Council Cabinet approved the vision and strategic direction of our approach to alternative provision on 30th March 2021.

Part of the implementation of this strategy will be a significant improvement in the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)/Alternative Provision (AP) Academy facilities. In May 2020, SCC Cabinet approved the allocation of £22m capital funds to upgrade the PRU/AP Academy estate and this strategic direction will inform the detail of that allocation.

3. Our Vision for Alternation Provision

Surrey shares the Department for Education’s vision that:









“Every child deserves an excellent education and the chance to fulfil their potential, whatever their background, needs or location in the county. Children in alternative provision deserve these opportunities too”. ([Creating Opportunity For All](#), March 2018).



We will work collaboratively across schools, the local authority, and health services to ensure that where possible, we respond to children’s needs before they escalate and require alternative provision. Many children currently accessing alternative provision require a special school placement as outlined in their Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). If it becomes apparent that a child needs specialist education, it is our aspiration that they are swiftly moved to the right specialist school according to their needs.

3.1 Key Principles

Our ambition for alternative provision in Surrey is to:

-  Increase the number of children and young people supported in mainstream provision, reducing the need for off-site provision
-  Continue to reduce the number of exclusions from and within schools (both fixed term and permanent)
-  Increase the number of pupils successfully reintegrated into mainstream provision
-  Reduce the rising number of young people receiving independent tuition
-  Monitor and improve the educational and wellbeing outcomes of children and young people who use Alternative Provision
-  Increase the number of young people who are on a pathway to Further Education
-  Improve commissioning of independent providers
-  Gain a better understanding of alternative provision pupils needs and outcomes and apply consistency of opportunity across the county

4. Cross-Cutting Strategies

Need for alternative provision is driven by both exclusions (both fixed term and permanent) as well as pupils' social, emotional or mental health needs or complex health needs. Pupils do not need to have an EHCP to access alternative provision. In addition, a minority of pupils require alternative curriculum pathways to the traditional route of GCSEs - often vocational pathways.

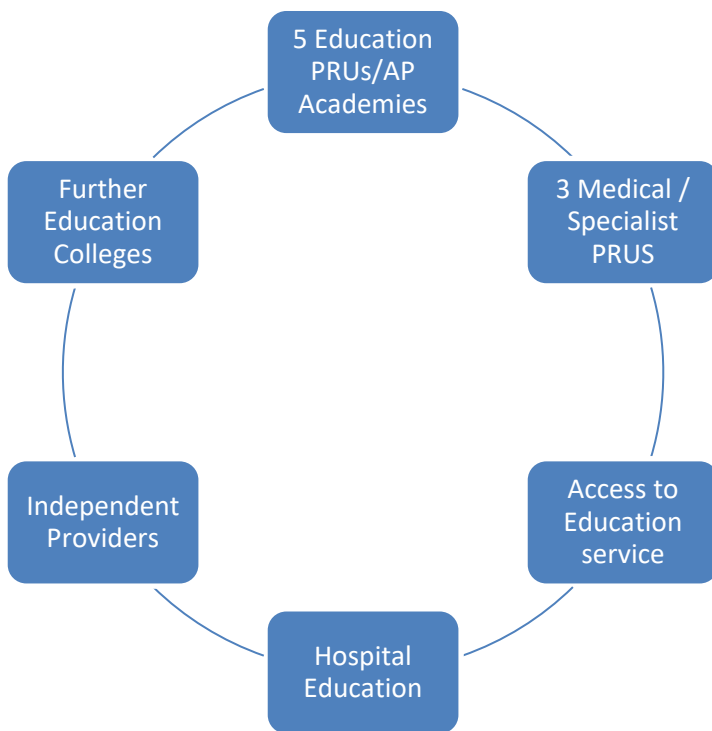
Some children are more likely to be excluded than others, including children in the care. As [Corporate Parents](#), responsibility for our children looked after (CLA) is a top priority and including CLA in mainstream school as well as ensuring excellent alternative provision for CLA when they need it is of key importance.

There are a number of cross cutting strategies that should be read alongside this strategy to fully understand our work in these areas.

- 4.1 **Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy:** The SEMH strategy and our Inclusion Strategy all identify the ambition to support the majority of our children and young people in their mainstream setting. Initially this can be through school led Quality First teaching methods, Behaviour Improvement Plans, Emotional, Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) sessions supported by SENCOs, and individually commissioned or designed pastoral care. It could also be through additional support from the Local Authority in the form of specialist teaching or educational psychology. Another option is through in-school outreach such as nurture groups, learning support units, family learning sessions etc. Only by exception does Surrey advocate the need for pupils to travel off-site for therapeutic intervention or bespoke educational packages and where this is necessary, it will be temporary and short-term with a plan for reintegration into mainstream settings.
- 4.2 **Complex Health Needs:** It is essential that children and young people with significant health needs are able to continue their education whilst receiving treatment or are under the care of specialist paediatricians or psychiatrists. Surrey's aim is that all children, regardless of their health needs, are able to continue their education with the same opportunity as they would have had in their original school. Surrey's three medical/specialist Pupil Referral Units (including HOPE) can provide this education, as well as the Access to Education service who can provide home/hospital visits. Only by exception will the use of private 1:1 tutors be needed.
- 4.3 **Alternative Curriculum Pathways:** There are a minority of young people aged 14-16yrs for whom an academic pathway of GCSEs will not work. In these instances, we will seek to identify vocational pathways, with local further education colleges and similar providers, to meet their needs. How we will do this is described in greater detail in our Participation Strategy which outlines our commitment for all young people to develop skills for adult life and ensuring no young person seeking education, training or employment is unable to participate.
- 4.4 **Corporate Parenting Strategy:** Children Looked After (CLA) are more than five times more likely to have a fixed period exclusion than their peers and Children in Need are about three and a half times more likely to be excluded for a fixed period. As with children who have an EHCP, statutory exclusion guidance sets out that head teachers should 'as far as possible' avoid permanently excluding a looked after child. This strategy echoes [Surrey's Corporate Parenting Strategy](#) which states that we will promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for children and young people who are looked after.

5. Types of Provision

Alternative provision in Surrey is currently delivered through the following:



Surrey has a very successful Online School ([SOS - Surrey online school](#)) and a Virtual School to ensure Children Looked After have the same opportunities as their peers to fulfil their potential. These are critical components of the alternative provision system to ensure that all pupils are included, whatever their circumstances.

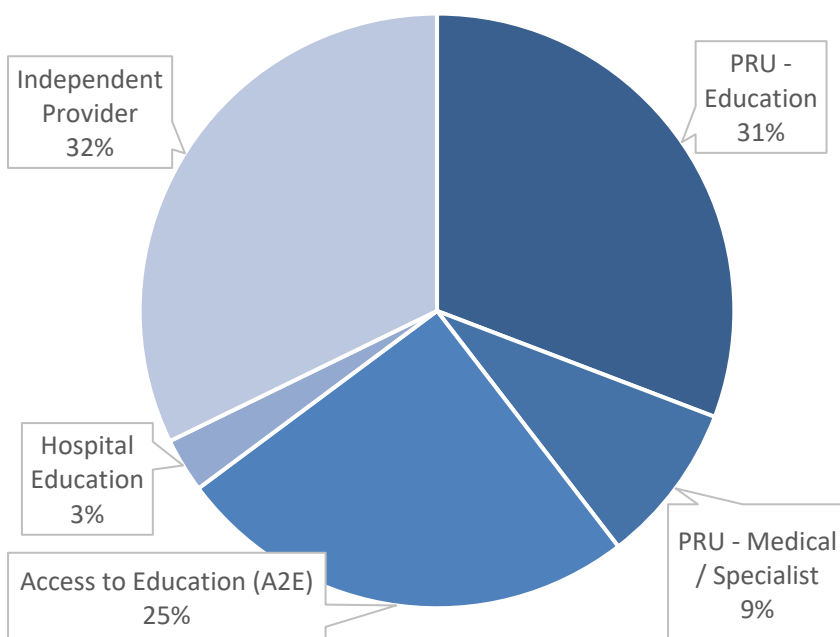
Surrey also invests in a transport service for children in alternative provision, to ensure there are no barriers to accessing their educational placement. This is based on eligibility criteria and is approved through a panel process, similar to SEND transport

N.B. A description of each service is in Appendix 2.

5.1 Children and Young People in Alternative Provision

In March 2020, approximately 780 children were in alternative provision in Surrey – 0.5% of pupils aged 5-16yrs.

Alternative Provision Capacity/Usage (03/2020)



Boys are more likely to access alternative provision, as are pupils in years 10 and 11. Alternative provision is often a solution for children who've been excluded, and we know that children in care, children in need, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and children in poverty are all more likely to be excluded than their peers ([IPPR, Making the Difference, October 2017](#)).

NB. Figures are a combination of cumulative placements through the year, a snapshot at a given moment, and capacity.

5.2 Supporting / Preventative Services

There is also an array of provision intended to prevent children and young people from needing full-time alternative provision which is often in the form of additional support within mainstream schools. This is a critical component of the broader alternative provision system. It could be outreach offered by a range of organisations including PRUs/AP Academies and Special Schools/Settings (each school makes its own arrangements in addition to that which is commissioned by the local authority) and will be 'need-specific', e.g., ASD outreach, or SEMH outreach or it could be Learning Support Units or Nurture Groups within schools. In addition, funding is delegated to quadrants to commission preventative services on a quadrant basis, known as Surrey Alternative Learning Provision (SALP).

AP Transport

Just under 300 pupils used AP transport last year to take approximately 16,000 return trips.

SALP

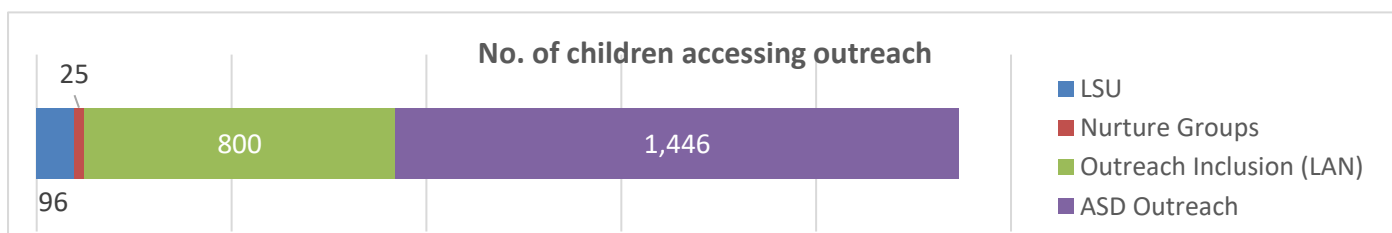
This network funding for each of the quadrants has supported 101 children in 2019/20.

Surrey Online School

Although a much larger number of children would have accessed the online school, for 14 children and young people it was named as part of their their alternative provision.

SEND Outreach

Four different types of Outreach to prevent AP were accessed last year.



6. Demand not just places

Alternative provision in Surrey must be a collective system in which educational settings, community services, health and education support services all play a crucial part in responding to vulnerable children and assisting with reintegration to school; this moves away from viewing alternative provision as a 'market' with a selection of services, or a number of places to be commissioned.

Demand for alternative provision is driven by a combination of how schools approach inclusion, the support available to enable inclusion, a collective understanding of how to respond to social, emotional and mental health needs and behaviour that schools find challenging and children for whom a standardised route to GCSEs is not appropriate. It has been well documented that 'the more alternative provision that exists, the more it is filled' ([IntegratED report](#), pg. 64) – solutions need to come from a whole system approach to meeting needs.

The [Alternative provision market analysis research report](#) undertaken by Isos Partnership in Oct 2018 and published by the DfE echoes the need for a system-wide approach and states that growth in AP is not positive, with demand needing to be deconstructed and understood before being carefully controlled and aligned to the supply of local provision. To judge its impact and effectiveness by looking only at the AP itself misses the point and arguably could reward some perverse behaviours of other parts of the system.

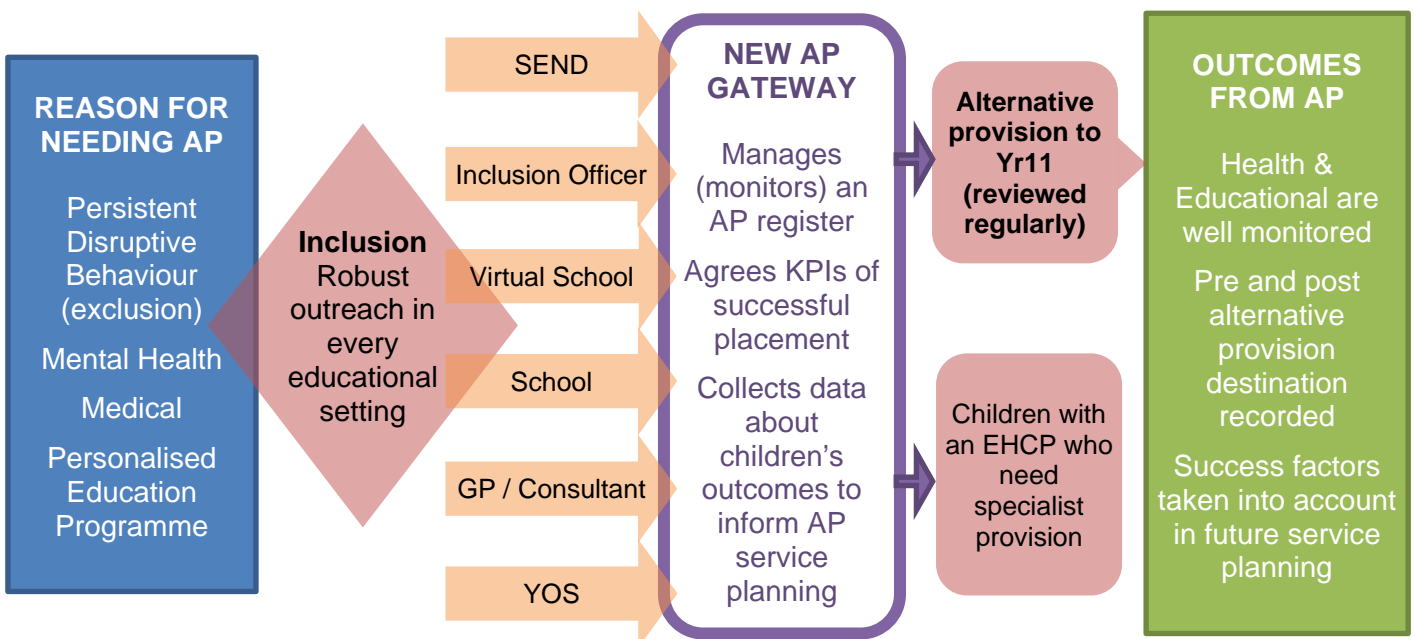
In Surrey, we will use the following nine points from this report as characteristics we seek for our successful AP system:

Theme	Key Characteristic	
1. The make-up of local provision	QUANTITY	Will depend on strategic decisions about the role of local AP and other inclusion support. Must link to inclusion strategy and must be equitable access across county.
	RANGE	Having the right range to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) meet pupils' needs and b) provide appropriate support options and pathways (in-school, outreach, turnaround, long-term placements)
	QUALITY	Having a well-developed Quality Assurance framework and building provider quality pro-actively
2. How local alternative provision is used	FINANCIAL REALISM	A collective understanding of local resources available
	RESPONSIBILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) school-level for individual pupils, their outcomes and destinations (b) collective school responsibility for fair and equitable use of AP (c) oversight and Quality Assurance role for local authority – and links made to early help and SEND
	STRATEGIC PLANNING	Pro-active fostering of inclusion to meet needs and manage demand (not just finding placements). Tight, informed, responsive commissioning
3. The effectiveness of the local alternative provision system	RESPONSIVENESS	Ensuring providers are connected to the local system and see their role as responding to needs, not defining, and performing within their own niche
	OUTCOMES	Collectively agreed and performance measured. Aligned to strategic priorities and that allow AP providers to demonstrate impact
	FUNDING	Used flexibly to incentivise inclusion & support strategic priorities. Decisions are informed by impact on the High Needs Block and benchmarking used to ensure value for money

7. Pathways

Because children accessing alternative provision have a variety of needs, it is important that professionals come together from different disciplines to assess needs and create an education plan. It is equally important that the alternative provision offer is consistent across the county and we are assured that it is creating positive outcomes. Here we propose a streamlined alternative provision pathway which will enable the local authority to meet its duty in maintaining a single register of young people in alternative provision, as well as monitor their progress. Currently, educational settings as well as the local authority can commission alternative provision and as a result the local authority is not always aware of which young people are accessing these pathways, nor able to measure its impact on outcomes. A new 'gateway' will maintain and monitor that single register and collect data about young people's academic as well as wellbeing outcomes to inform alternative provision service planning. The local authority's role is to stimulate alternative provision pathways and commission for excluded children and young people, whilst schools retain responsibility for commissioning alternative provision pathways for the majority of pupils as part of their support to those children.

7.1 Proposed Alternative Provision Pathways



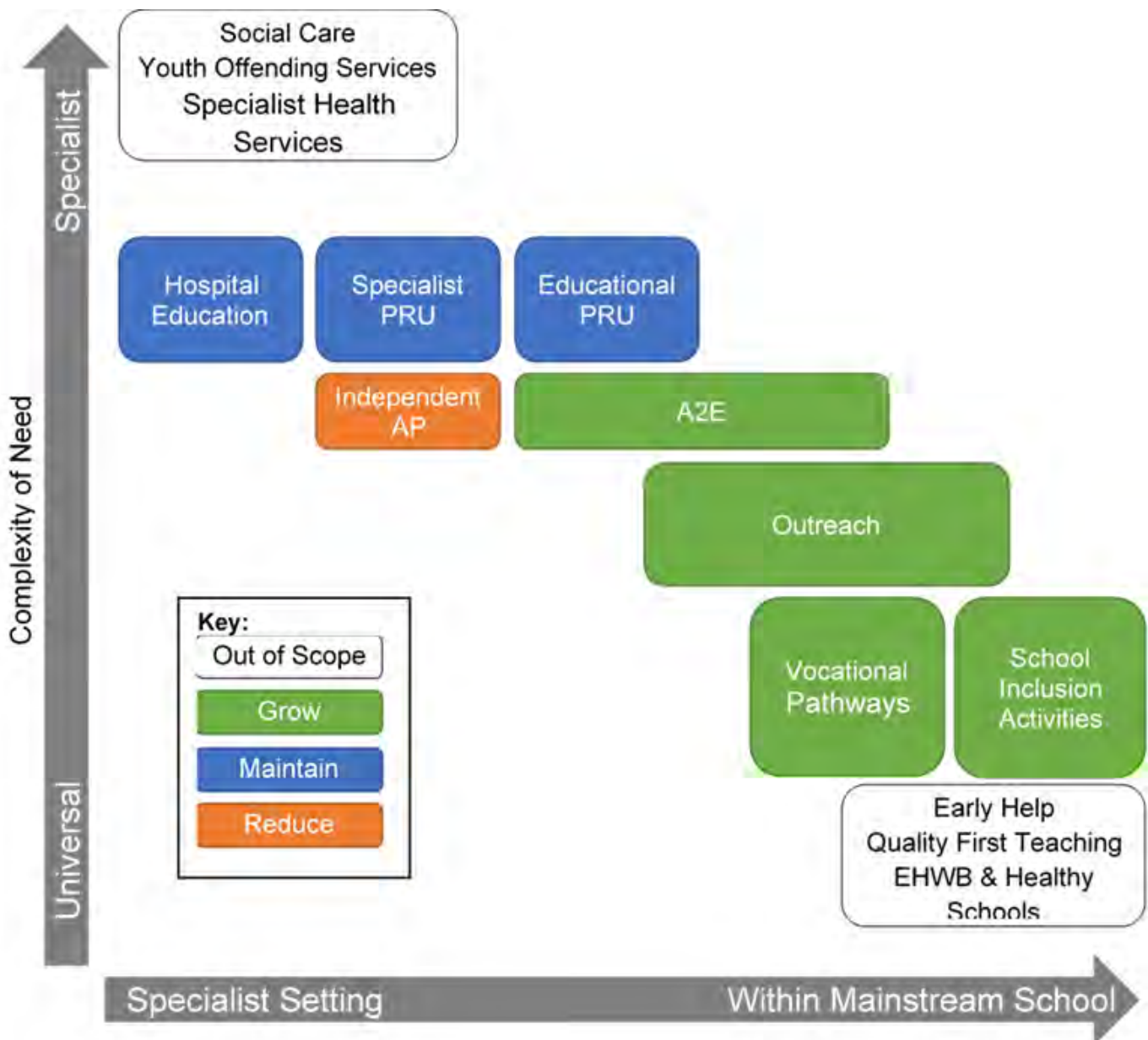
Inclusion is key to preventing children and young people's needs from escalating. Children will not be required to go through a gateway in order to access outreach and other inclusive support - it remains a flexible option for schools to manage. However, it is important that schools collect data about the needs and outcomes of children using their 'on-site' outreach provision, and that if a pupil needs alternative provision, there is a good understanding of the interventions already used by the school and the child and family's journey to date

8. Delivering Surrey's Alternative Provision System

This strategy outlines a shift in the way alternative provision is understood across the county. It is a whole system approach to including young people in their school setting as well as providing positive pathways for young people outside of their setting. We want to ensure more is happening earlier to include young people in their setting, as well as improve provision once a need for alternative provision is established.

8.1 Future Alternative Provision System

In order to meet the ambitions of our strategy, we will need to grow, maintain, and reduce particular elements of our system. This is mapped below, alongside some of the supporting elements of the system that will impact on its success.



9. Operationalising our ambitions

9.1 Inclusive schools with preventative practice

9.1.1 School-Led

We believe that wherever possible, children are best supported in their educational setting. Where behaviour is significantly challenging and social, emotional and mental health difficulties are apparent, schools will deploy the additional support mechanisms they have in place such as behaviour support plans, bespoke family learning packages, quality first teaching, SENCO input and ELSA staff. This additional support offered by schools will be bolstered by sector-led inclusion training and support. Where these interventions are not sufficient, there will be additional support through a variety of teams within the local authority's vulnerable learner services. These include specialist teaching (STIPS) and Educational Psychology (EPs).

9.1.2 Inclusion Strategy

We intend to better coordinate inclusion support services so that Learning Support Units, Nurture Groups, SALP, SEMH and ASD outreach is interlinked with the broader inclusion support. This will be closely linked to the Graduated Response and Local Offer and will be measured for its impact on both alternative provision placements, as well as EHCPs and Specialist Placements. Resources allocated to this must be impactful, but they must also be a combination of schools and LA resources. The Inclusion Strategy will promote and support the development of school-to-school support and draw down on the outreach opportunities available through some of Surrey's excellent special school provision.

Outreach is a tool to help our mainstream educational settings to keep children and young people included. As well as reviewing our outreach services within the broader Inclusion Strategy, we wish to pilot or test new approaches to facilitate inclusion, such as:

- Embed, join up and develop existing arrangements to form multi-disciplinary teams around Quadrants that support children, young people, and their families through school-based activities. From this a 'Team Around the School' model could follow.
- Work alongside the Emotional Health & Wellbeing Trailblazer sites to define what a school that promotes good mental health looks like and the wrap around support needed for this
- Build on Trauma-Informed practice
- Follows the framework of the Healthy Schools approach in Surrey
- Maximise the use of Surrey Outdoor Learning & Development (SOLD)

9.1.3 SALP network funding

Funding allocated to school networks (SALP) to prevent alternative provision has existed in Surrey since 2009 and was established as a school-led set of interventions. A review of SALP demonstrated that whilst being effective in some areas, there are inconsistencies of practice and governance across the networks, and a lack of county-wide data on the impact on outcomes of young people engaged with SALP provisions, and how preventative it has been.

SALP now needs to evolve within a new Inclusion Strategy and its original intention revisited so that its impact on preventing alternative provision is clear, and that there is consistency of practice across the County. This means reducing the use of SALP monies to commission alternative provision, and instead combining it with resources for inclusion to really demonstrate the preventative impact it has on outcomes.

9.2 Personalised Education (vocational pathways and A2E)

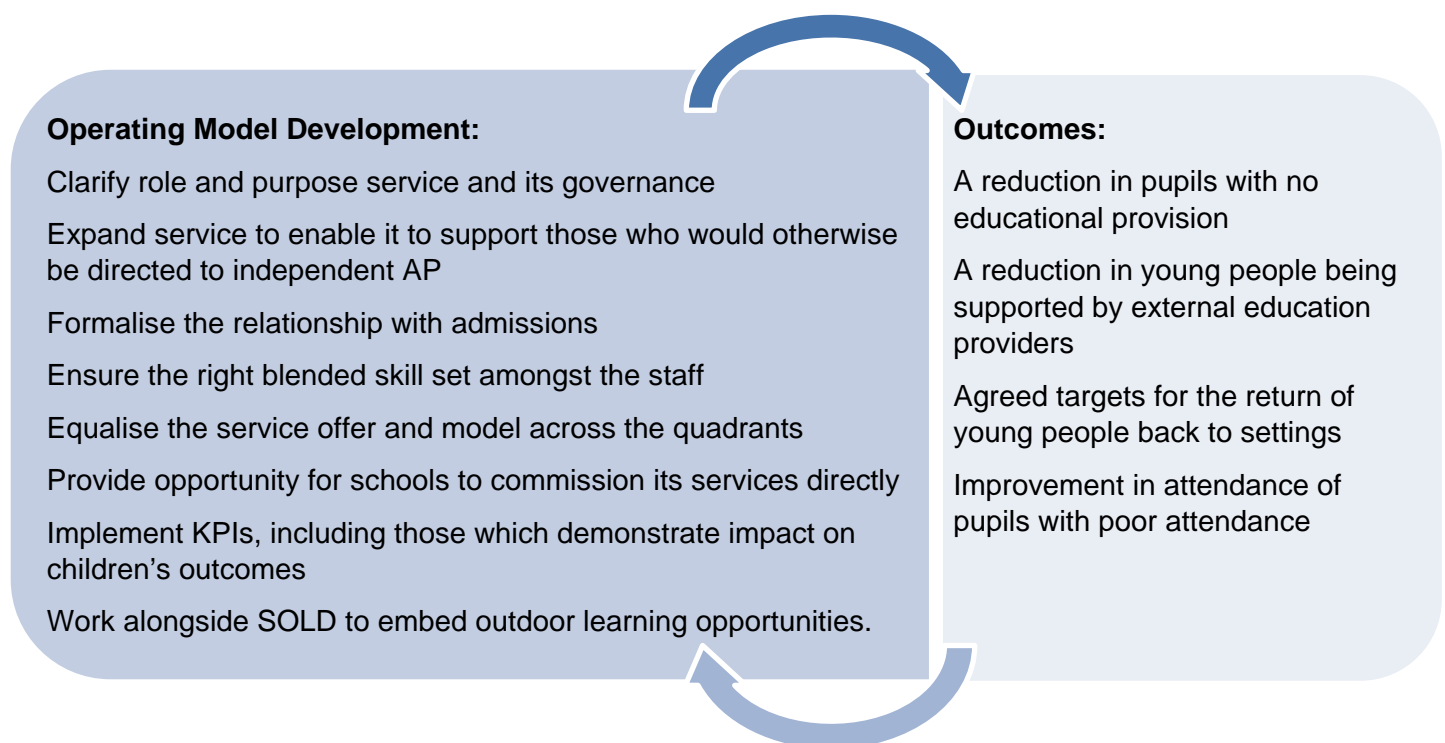
9.2.1 Vocational Pathways

For a minority of children, the academic GCSE route is not a viable one. We wish to develop better vocational learning opportunities for Surrey's young people at Key Stage 4 with appropriate qualifications and a positive pathway to employment. This will mean auditing the current vocational pathways for 14–16-year-olds and developing the market to ensure a range of preferred providers are offering high quality vocational provision.

9.2.2 Access to Education (A2E)

Access To Education (A2E) can provide an interim, flexible, short-term service for children/young people who through exceptional circumstances, such as mental or physical health needs, cannot or will not attend school. This may be due to be an anxiety disorder, or complex health need. Provision is currently through 1:1 home education or exam support and is reviewed jointly with the school every 4-6 weeks. The pupils who access this provision remain on the roll of their school or a PRU/AP Academy.

A substantive review of A2E has taken place which identified the following areas for development of outcomes:



A2E could provide better value for money, and the quality of provision more easily monitored through it being a single provider and in-house.

9.3 Off-site interventions at our PRUs/AP Academies

For a minority of children, it will be good practice to provide a short-term course of alternative provision outside of their school setting – usually around a 6-12 week period (referred to in this [guidance](#)) to improve behaviour and communication and ability to learn in mainstream. Where this works best for the child or young person concerned, this will be provided by one of Surrey’s 5 Pupil Referral Units which provide 240 places – 20% of which are for Primary aged children. These are all Ofsted Outstanding or Good provisions.

Educational PRU/AP Academy	No. of primary places	No. of secondary places	Total
Fordway School	24		24
North East Short Stay School		60	60
North West Short Stay School		40	40
Reigate Valley College	12	60	72
Wey Valley College	12	32	44
Total	47	192	240

Consultation with primary phase head teachers has strongly recommended that children in Year 4 and below do not use off-site alternative provision, and instead provided for through on-site interventions. PRU’s/AP Academies are a good option for pupils in Year 6 and above, and only by exception for those in Year 5.

Surrey PRUs/AP Academies will:

- Provide time-limited educational placements for children in Years 6-11
- Offer full time and part time places
- Have separate age-appropriate facilities for primary and secondary children
- Provide multi-disciplinary interventions that draw on known good practice
- Work closely with families as well as the child or young person
- Identify the best setting for children with an EHCP and move them into that setting quickly
- Be provided on a county-wide basis with transport as needed

Educational PRU/AP Academy Capital Programme and new Service Level Agreements (SLAs)

SCC is committed to spending c.£22.7m capital in improving its Educational PRU infrastructure over the next 10 years.

This capital investment underpins the development of a revised delivery model for the education provision of pupils attending PRUs/AP Academies. This includes the establishment of new SLAs focussing on quality of provision needed and outcomes as well as ensuring equitable funding arrangements across the 5 establishments.

Reintegration to School

Our PRUs/AP Academies and other off-site provisions work with the originating and destination school to provide good transition both into their intervention and away from it.

9.4 Excellent commissioning of independent providers

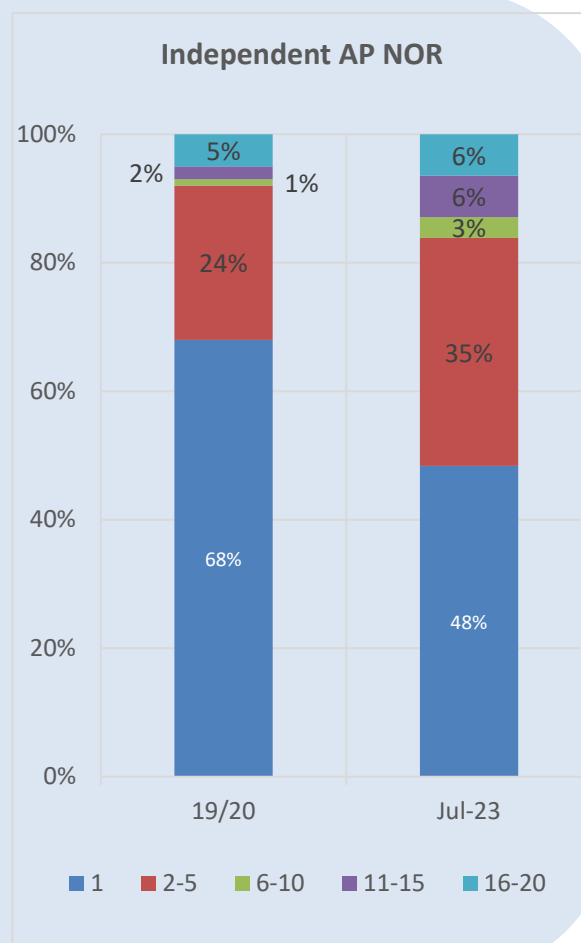
We recognise there will always be a need for independent providers in Surrey and value the contribution this sector makes. A strong focus on the establishment of robust commissioning processes for AP has seen a reduction in the number of independent providers used. However, with around 46 pupils costing more than £20,000 per annum (against the benchmark of £19,000-£20,400 (depending on registration status) suggested by the DfE), with the maximum annual cost expected to be £129,000 for one pupil, it is clear that this alternative provision has to be used carefully and only when the other options won't meet the needs of the pupil.

Independent Sector Use

The proportion of Independent AP settings commissioned with only 1 pupil on roll has reduced between 2020-21 and 2022/23. This progress is driven by the ongoing development of robust commissioning mechanisms which focus on quality of provision and value for money.

At January 2023, Independent alternative provision represented 24% of the places Surrey commissions (down from 35% in 2020). There are a number of concerns with this level of independent provision:

- The quality of the provision & models of practice are hard to ascertain as are the outcomes for the pupil.
- The costs are significantly more with no use of volume discounts or economies of scale.
- Some of the provision is out of county, which isn't near the pupils' home community.



Through the creation of a new and comprehensive Direct Purchasing Framework for Independent Alternative Provision we aim to deliver a standardised approach to our commissioning of AP for 2024. This will deliver increased confidence in costs for AP packages with a consistent approach to funding through a competitive procurement process. Most notably we will be better placed to monitor children's progress and outcomes in AP through the implementation of Individual Placement Agreements. The development of this framework will be underpinned by feedback from Independent AP forums gathered through structured market engagement events,

Our ambition is to significantly **reduce reliance on external independent providers** by building capacity elsewhere in the system (e.g., increasing our A2E service and embedding the Inclusion Strategy). This will take a significant change in culture, working with children and young people, their parents and carers, and schools themselves.

10. Benchmarking our future system

The [Alternative provision market analysis research report](#) undertaken by Isos Partnership in Oct 2018 surveyed 118 local authorities and highlights that alternative provision is used for a wide variety of purposes across the country, with most LAs using it for a range of functions, including:

- provision for excluded pupils (selected by 96% of LAs)
- provision for mental and physical health-related reasons (80%)
- early, preventative support (78%)
- to provide positive alternative educational pathways (69%)
- reintegrating pupils who have been out of formal education (56%)
- placing pupils who have arrived mid-year (53%)
- a lack of specialist provision (52%)

These differences reflect differing approaches to arranging local support for inclusion, but the research suggests they also reflect whether LAs see the role of alternative provision in more reactive (finding places when pupils are out of mainstream education) or pro-active (fostering inclusion in mainstream education) terms. **In Surrey we are clear that we wish to be pro-active in our approach to preventing alternative provision.**

Market Share

83% of local authorities reported that the majority (78%) of alternative provision places they commissioned from the high needs block were in state-funded provision (54% in pupil referral units (PRUs), 21% in AP academies, and 3% in AP free schools). Independent alternative provision accounted for 14% of places commissioned. In Surrey, our use of the alternative provision market differs from this in that 24% of the places we commission are with Independent Providers – notably more than the national average of 14% but a reduction from the 35% reported in 2020. This demonstrates our progress in reducing our reliance on this section of the market but that further work remains.

[IntegratED's 2020 Annual Report](#) provides useful market comparisons as well as pupil characteristics. It demonstrates that Surrey is an outlier in its (greater) use of the alternative provision independent sector as well as the power of a whole system approach to alternative provision.

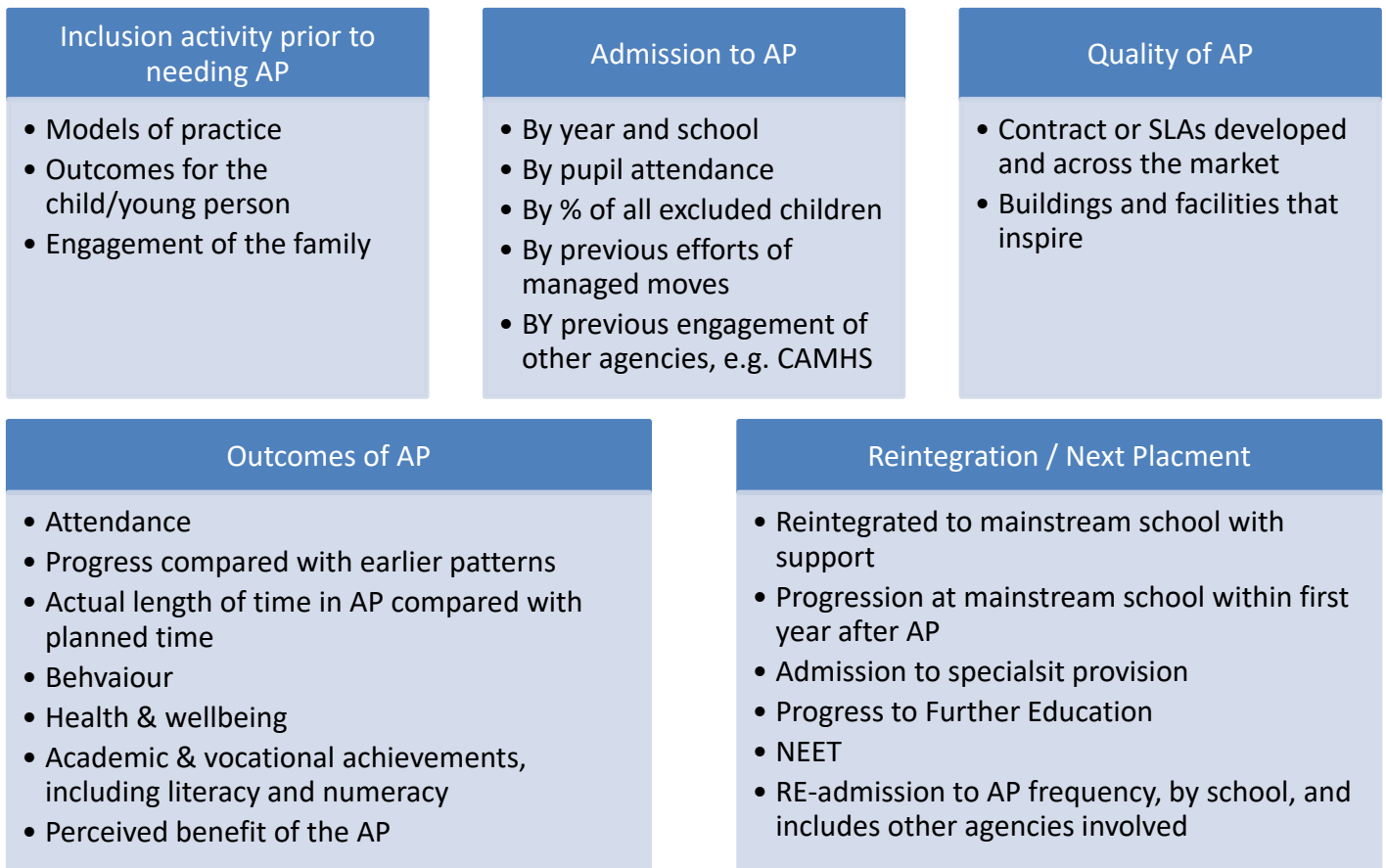
Unit Cost

The Department for Education estimates the per pupil cost of alternative provision (including PRUs) to be £17-18,000 nationally, and the Isos research referred to above puts the unit cost at £18,000. This is the benchmark that we should use when considering our unit costs.

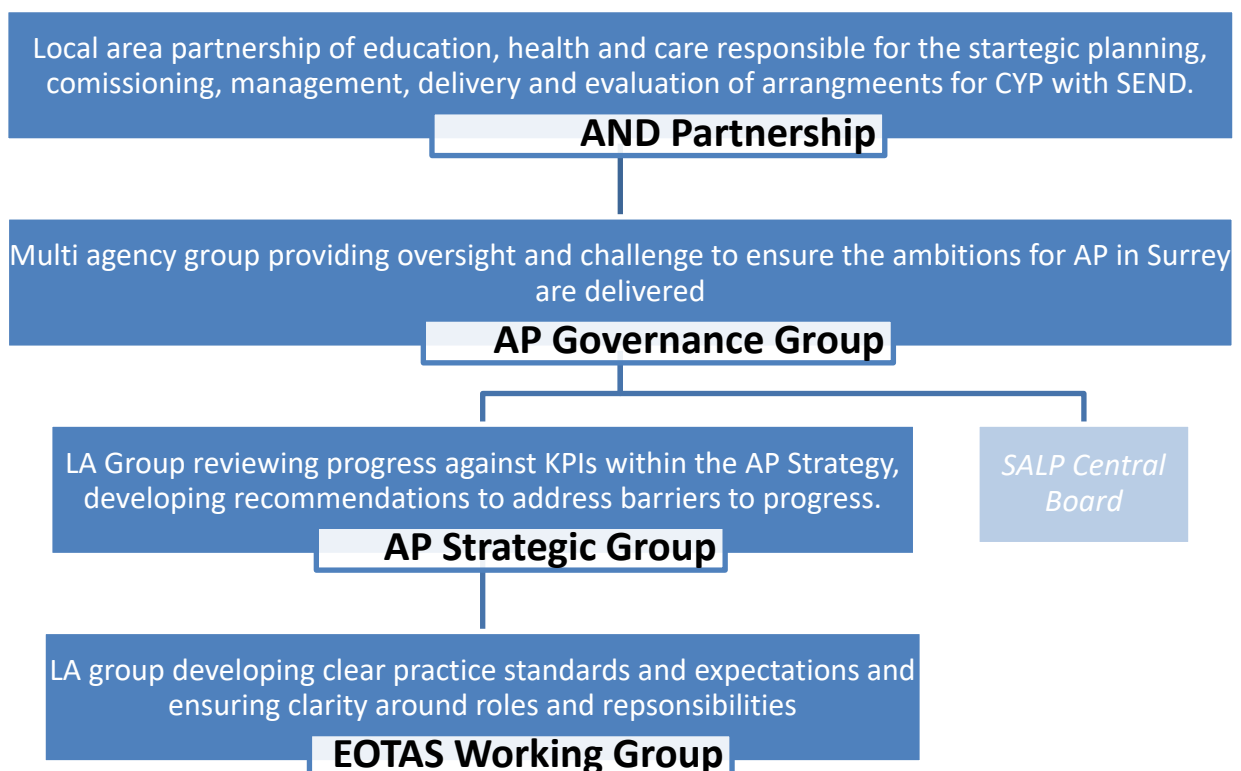
Surrey has more children in alternative provision than our neighbours, and a greater use of private providers which are more costly than our neighbours.

10.1 Measuring Impact

We wish to improve our intelligence about the alternative provision system, which children and young people are in it, what triggers placements and outcomes for children and young people.



10.2 Governance



11. Summary & Implementation

In summary, we are looking for a shift in the way alternative provision is understood across the county. It is a whole system approach to including young people in their school setting as well as providing positive pathways for young people outside of their setting. This strategy sets out a number of changes we wish to see over 2021-22:

- Working with schools to **promote inclusion** and tap schools into new models of support and therefore have less children needing alternative provision. This will be through the development of an Inclusion Strategy endorsed by all stakeholders.
- Developing **vocational learning opportunities** for Surrey's young people at key stage 4 with appropriate qualifications and a positive pathway for those young people for whom the offer of GCSEs is not working. This will mean commissioning and developing the market for a different range of preferred providers offering high quality provision and good outcomes. We will ensure that every child who is in Year11 and in alternative provision or at risk of needing alternative provision is on a pathway to Further Education.
- Evolving SALP as a truly **preventative service** which is aligned to a programme to support in-school settings for children who are at risk of exclusion or in need of personalised education
- Developing **new service level agreements with our PRUs/AP Academies** which ensure both full educational placement capacity as well as good quality outreach programmes for our young people. The emphasis will be on providing temporary education with a view to reintegration to mainstream settings or swift transition to special schools.
- Significantly **reducing the number of young people placed with independent providers** by around 50%.
- Expanding and developing a **new operating model for the A2E** service to provide for children and young people who would previously have been tutored by independent providers
- Developing our contractual relationship with the **best independent providers** to enable high quality services for a number of our children and young people. This includes creating preferred provider information to share across all education settings
- Working with our independent sector partners as well as our own A2E and PRUs/AP Academies to use our **SOLD and the local authority Farm** facilities to promote outdoor learning
- Establishing a **gateway for all children accessing alternative provision** so that a single register of children using alternative provision can be maintained, and the data gathered to understand the impact of alternative provision on children and young people's educational and wellbeing outcomes
- Setting out our alternative provision 'offer' clearly as part of the local offer
- Develop our work with HOPE (particularly step-down mechanisms) and our Medical PRUs to meet the needs of children and young people with complex needs
- Reviewing alternative provision transport as part of our evolving SEN transport service. The new panel will help to understand the need for transport to and from placements

References

[Alternative Provision](#), Statutory guidance for local authorities, January 2013

[Alternative provision: education outside school](#), Research, June 2011

[Alternative school provision: findings of a three year survey](#) - Findings from an Ofsted survey on the use of off-site alternative provision by schools and pupil referral units, February 2016

[Alternative provision: year 11 transition funding](#) - Sets out the financial support available to alternative provision (AP) schools and colleges to support current year 11 students into post-16 education. June 2020

[Applying Corporate Parenting Principles to Looked-After Children and Care Leavers](#)

[Behaviour and discipline in schools: guide for governing bodies](#), July 2013

[Children missing education Statutory guidance for local authorities](#), September 2016

[Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school](#), Statutory guidance for local authorities, January 2013

[Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England](#), September 2017

[Implementing Inclusive Education](#) - Rapid Review, August 2018

[Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children](#), Statutory guidance for local authorities, February 2018

[Schools: guide to the 0 to 25 SEND code of practice](#), Advice for school governing bodies/proprietors, senior leadership teams, SENCOs and classroom staff, September 2014,

[SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#), June 2014

[Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#) Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England, December 2015

[Timpson Review of School Exclusion](#) – May 2019

Appendix 1: Legislative Context

The different characteristics of children who may not be able to attend school on a full-time basis mean there are different requirements and legislation pertaining to them. There are also duties for both schools and local authorities in relation to providing alternative provision, where children are unable to attend school. All of the relevant guidance, which is cited at the end of this paper, is underpinned by two key principles:

1. Wherever possible, all children should be able to attend school within their home communities, alongside their peers. This could be in the form of Outreach or in-school units and services
2. If alternative provision is required, the standard of education provided must be comparable to that of regular schooling and must enable children to achieve everything they would have accessed at school.

The main statutory guidance covering alternative provision is the DfE's 2013 [‘Alternative Provision Statutory guidance for local authorities’](#). The key points of this guidance are:

- Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for permanently excluded pupils, and for other pupils who – because of illness or other reasons – would not receive suitable education without such arrangements being made.
- Governing bodies of schools are responsible for arranging suitable full-time education from the sixth day of a fixed period exclusion.
- Schools may also direct pupils off-site for education, to help improve their behaviour.
- Local Authorities are to maintain a register of all pupils who are in alternative provision
- Statutory guidance sets out the Government's expectations of local authorities and maintained schools who commission alternative provision and pupil referral units. The Government expects those who are not legally required to have regard to the statutory guidance to still use it as a guide to good practice.

For children with complex medical needs, the DfE's statutory guidance [‘Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school’](#) is critical and it states that Local Authorities must arrange suitable, full-time education (or as much education as the child's health condition allows) for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would otherwise not receive suitable education. This should be arranged as soon as it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more and allows children to take the appropriate qualifications whilst in healthcare as well as reintegrating successfully back into school without any slippage of learning.

Appendix 2: Description of Services and Referral/Admission Information

Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) / Alternative Provision (AP) Academies

Educational settings specifically providing education for children who are excluded, sick, or otherwise unable to attend a mainstream or special maintained school. They offer full-time and part-time placements as well as outreach services. Surrey has 5 educational PRUs/AP Academies, 3 medical PRUs. All PRUs/AP Academies are classified as Good or Outstanding.

Educational PRUs/AP Academies:

Referrals for on-site intervention and outreach provision from Educational PRUs/AP Academies can only be made through Surrey County Council's Inclusion Service or directly from Schools. Applications directly from parents/carers are not accepted.

Further information about referrals and admissions can be found on each PRUs/AP Academies websites.

North East and North West Surrey Primary Service	Fordway Centre
North East Surrey Secondary Service	NESSSS
North West Surrey Secondary Service	NWSSSS
South East Surrey Primary and Secondary Service	Reigate Valley College
South West Surrey Primary and Secondary Service	Wey Valley College

Medical PRUs

The Surrey Teaching Centre Pupils admitted to Surrey Teaching Centre are all on placement with The Children's Trust. Applications to Surrey Teaching Centre cannot be made directly to the school. Referrals from The Children's Trust are for rehabilitation or step-down placements or where there is capacity, these may be Surrey children offered rehabilitation outreach placements.

For more information about admissions please refer to the [Admissions Protocol](#).

St Peter's Centre Education provision for children medical unable to attend mainstream school. The medical condition must be evidence by a consultant level health professional. Referrals for on-site intervention and outreach provision can only be made directly from Schools or through Surrey's Inclusion Service. For more information about admissions please refer to the [Referrals and Admissions Information](#) on the website.

The Hope Service A multi-agency service for young people aged 11-18 with complex mental health, emotional, social and behavioural needs. The Day Programme offers structured therapeutic educational and personalised recreational activities to young people. Referrals can on be made by Social Workers from Assessment, Child in Need, Child Protection & Care Proceeding and Looked After Childrens' Teams. Further information about referrals can be found on the [Hope Service website](#).

Access to Education (A2E)

Provides an interim flexible short-term service for children who through exceptional circumstances cannot attend school including medical reasons and permanent exclusions. Arranges home visits, organises exams etc. Provision is reviewed by the school every 4-6 weeks in school meetings.

Referrals to A2E can come from the following:

- The Schools Admission Team
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Team
- The Area Care Review and Area Action Group (ACRAG)

Surrey Online School

Provides a range of traded flexible education solutions from KS1 to KS4 and EAL to a range of pupils across the county, up to 25 hours of provision a week. A total of 31 subjects are offered at GCSE and A Level. It is offered to a wide range of pupils including those accessing Access to Education (A2E), hospital schools, Special Educational Needs (SEN), Looked after Children (LAC), PRUs/AP Academies, secondary and primary schools, elective home education and GRT, school refusers, expectant mothers and those at risk of permanent exclusion.

Referrals to this service can only be made by a school or organisation.

To find out more, please visit: [Surrey Online School](#) website. Surrey schools can log in to the [Surrey Education Services Hub](#) to access referral forms and request provision.

Inclusion Outreach Service

Established to help mainstream schools to meet the needs of primary and secondary age children with learning and additions needs. The service, commissioned by Surrey County Council, is based in four schools across the county.

Referrals must come from the child's school. Further information and how to make a referral can be found on each team's website (below).

Carwarden House Community School	Outreach - Carwarden House Community School
Gosden House School	Outreach - Gosden House School
Philip Southcote School	Outreach - Philip Southcote School
The Park School	Inclusion Outreach — The Park School
Woodfield	Woodfield School - Outreach Provision

Surrey Autism Outreach service

Established to build skills of mainstream staff and suggest strategies for schools to help students meets their potential. The service, commissioned by Surrey County Council, is based at four schools across the county.

Referrals must come from the child's school. Further information and how to make a referral can be found on each team's website (below).

East Surrey Schools Primary Service	Linden Bridge School
East Surrey Schools Secondary Service	Limpsfield Grange School
West Surrey Schools Primary Service	Freemantle's School
West Surrey Schools Secondary Service	The Abbey School

Surrey Alternative Learning Programme (SALP)

Secondary only each area is allocated 11-19 funding which is referred to as Surrey Alternative Learning Provision (SALP) network funding. The funding is distributed to each quadrant who use their SALP executive board to determine how it is used in their localities. It is intended to be preventative and to intervene early.

AP Transport

Used primarily for getting students to PRUs/AP Academies but occasionally other alternative provision too.

Hospital Education

For young people (primarily girls) with a Surrey postcode for whom we have specific duties because they have been sectioned to a mental hospital/ward. Does not include Hospital Schools which are special schools.

Surrey Virtual School - for Looked After Children

This is not a 'type' of alternative provision itself, rather a service that monitors and supports children's engagement in education, including alternative provision.

Appendix 3: Consultation with Children, Young People and their Parents & Carers

The User Voice and Participation (UVP) Team created a survey for children, young people, parents and carers to have their voice heard on the subject of alternative provision. This survey was aimed both at those who had direct experience of alternative provision (65% of CYP respondents and 51% of parent and carer respondents) and those who may have struggled with mainstream education. The survey was open for live consultation from 23rd October 2020 – 17th November 2020.

We received responses from 65 children and young people and 78 parents and carers. Based on the responses, the UVP team suggest the following recommendations:

1. Additional mental health support

38% of children and young people said that mental health was one of the main barriers that affected them staying in mainstream education. Parents and carers also expressed that mental health was a significant issue and that more support is needed to help children and young people to remain in education. Children and young people need to be able to access support easily and in a timely manner to ensure that their mental health issues are addressed quickly, and their education is not affected.

2. Appropriate support for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

44% of parents and carers said that undiagnosed SEND or lack of support for those with SEND was the main barrier to their child or young person remaining in mainstream education. A number of children and young people also expressed that they felt their additional needs were a barrier to remaining in education. Children and young people with SEND need to be diagnosed in a timely manner and that sufficient support is put in place to help them manage their education. Many parents and carers feel that the cause of this is often due to a lack of funding for schools.

3. Adaptable teaching styles & understanding of needs

A number of respondents expressed their frustration at the 'one size fits all' approach that they feel is often in place in education. It is important that teaching staff have a good understanding of their students' individual needs and are able to adapt their teaching styles accordingly so that nobody gets left behind.

4. One-to-one Support

When children and young people feel like they are falling behind in education, it can cause a lot of anxiety and, due to class sizes, it is not always possible for the teacher to spend as much time as they need with individual pupils. Respondents from both surveys expressed that it would be beneficial to have more 1:1 support in place to help children and young people remain in education.

5. Alternative provision within reasonable travelling distance

Although a number of children and young people expressed that they would be happy to attend alternative provision that was in a different town, more than half said that travelling a long way was likely to affect their attendance. Similarly, over 70% of parents and carers felt that travelling a long distance would impact on their child or young person's ability to attend e.g., due to anxiety, tiredness etc.

Appendix 4: Stakeholder Views

A range of stakeholders were consulted throughout the course of developing this strategy, including all Head Teachers, conversations with Primary, Secondary and Special School Phase Leads, council officers and subject matter experts, 65 children and young people themselves as well as 78 parents & carers.

Children & Young People and Parent & Carer Feedback

A number of key themes emerged across all conversations with stakeholders including the need for whole school approaches to mental health and emotional wellbeing and inclusion, one type of teaching not fitting all, and some children and young people needing bespoke alternative provision packages due to the nature of their needs or educational pathway. More detail of the consultations is in Appendix 3. Where alternative provision is required, respondents felt it important to not have to travel too far for it. They also wanted it to address their range of needs as well as not letting them fall behind in their academic work and that it provides the same educational opportunities as any other school.

Lots of conversations were about more opportunity for outdoor learning, as well as providing separate rooms within schools where pupils could go for time out, or a quieter, calmer type of lesson. In addition, more vocational pathways were advocated if the traditional GCSE route wasn't a good fit. Better Pupil Referral Unit buildings were also flagged as essential, and SCC has committed to significant investment for upgrading the PRU/AP Academy estate.

Ideas raised which warrant further consideration were:

- Multi-agency teams around the school which included CAMHS, other mental health support and whole family work
- Exploring the links between special educational needs (and pupils with an EHCP) and alternative provision and whether children are in the right educational setting for their needs
- Staff having a better understanding of pupils needs – access to training.

'My son is currently attending a short stay medical school and it has literally been a life saver for him and myself as a parent'

'I didn't attend the alternate school that much. I think it was 1 day every week. I found it really hard to go back to mainstream and fit in. Lots of students asking where I had been'

'My stepson attended a PRU and other alternative learning provisions. He was often with young people with similar or more severe behavioural issues, which impacted his ability to stay focussed'

'Once in place SOS and A2E together helped him to regain his confidence and achieve 7-9 GCSEs, thus transforming his outlook'

'The fact that I had to wake up every day and travel 2 hours a day to school and back was exhausting'

Headteacher Feedback

- The majority (92%) of Headteachers who responded support a whole system approach to alternative provision and with a focus on inclusion and early intervention.
- Headteachers provided other suggestions of good practice that could be delivered within their school to prevent pupil exclusion (either fixed term or permanently). These can be categorised as the following:
 - Reduced timetables & flexible curriculum
 - Closer relationships with parents to support engagement and planning
 - Training for teachers to promote inclusive practice and culture
 - Specific programmes, such as vocational training (e.g., barista, health and beauty)
 - More and better multi-agency working, such as with social care, CAMHS and between mainstream/SEND provision
 - Inclusion centres and teams within the school who can support reintegration
- It was widely felt that personalised education should be a last resort for children and that appropriate use of it includes pupils with health concerns for short-term periods and as way to support transition or reintegration back into school settings. It was not thought to be appropriate for pupils struggling with engagement in general.
- 46% of Headteachers said they were assured that positive outcomes were met by the alternative provision that they use, however a similar proportion (45%) said they were not. The majority of Headteachers (85%) agreed with the proposed alternative provision gateway approach which will provide a register of pupils in the alternative provision system, and measure the impact on outcomes from alternative provision with three quarters (75%) happy to facilitate this
- Headteachers called for closer collaboration and supportive links with PRUs to share learning. Close working practices, for example around pupil transitions were also suggested.

“At my school we try our best to take an individual approach to pupils needs. We try our best to work with parents and outside agencies to get the best outcome, however this can often be challenging when outside agencies have a lack of capacity.” *Primary school*

“I believe that it is vital that AP needs to be part of a wider inclusive team as we need to work collectively and intervention needs to be at a much earlier stage in order to reduce the risk of PEX and build on life chances for individuals that require such provisions.”
Secondary school

“It is difficult as all students need to be accessing education, whether this is in a mainstream setting, through an AP or 1:1 at home. That said, I think there needs to be a consideration for value for money and 1:1 provision at a child's home does not provide this. I feel this could be better spent providing support and provision for a larger number of students in a small group setting.” *Secondary school*