

Monday 08 January 2024

ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

Purpose of report:

This report seeks to advise the Select Committee on the use of alternative provision in Surrey, with reference to the use of registered and unregistered provision as well as provision in and out of the county. The report will explore the alternative provision market, the needs of the cohort accessing or on a pathway to alternative provision and Surrey County Council's strategies and policies supporting the delivery of high-quality provision. The information presented will set out how Surrey's alternative provision meets the needs of children and young people in Surrey, and how well it enables children and young people to maximise their potential in both adolescence and adulthood.

Introduction:

1. A new national policy direction for Alternative Provision (AP) was set out in the Department for Education's White Paper, Right Support, Right Place, Right Time in March 2023; this cited that AP would be fully incorporated into the SEND System with implementation through a new National SEND and AP Board. The SEND and AP Improvement Plan: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time sets out a vision and delivery approach to improve outcomes and enable CYP with additional needs and disabilities to thrive and fulfil their potential. Alongside the revised Local Area SEND Inspection Framework, this underpins the ongoing programme of improvement across AP in Surrey, helping us to shape our thinking and deliver a child and family centred approach to areas of development.
2. AP is defined by the Department of Education as "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*). It can be for children who have social, emotional, or mental health needs (not necessarily with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and who may have been excluded), complex health needs or for whom an academic pathway of GCSEs is not appropriate. Surrey County Council as an

education authority has a duty to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise for each child who for the reasons outlined above would not receive it unless such arrangements were made (Section 19 of the Education Act 1996).

3. Surrey County Council may establish Pupil Referrals Units (PRU) to deliver their responsibilities in relation to alternative provision but do not have a duty to do so. A PRU can only be established after exploring the possibility of opening an AP Academy (or AP Free School). An AP Academy receives funding directly from the government and is run by an academy trust, giving them more control over how they do things than community schools. The Local Authority has a duty to provide education for a permanently excluded child from the sixth day after the exclusion.
4. To address the duties outlined above, Surrey County Council (SCC) has:
 - Non-medical Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)/AP Academies
 - Medical PRUs
 - Access to Education (A2E)
 - Surrey Online School (SOS)
 - Further Education (FE) Colleges offering 14-16 programmes for those better suited to a vocational pathway.
 - A range of independent alternative providers (registered and unregistered) delivering face-to-face and/or online tutoring and vocational programmes.
5. SCC also have specific duties in relation to young people (primarily girls) with a Surrey postcode who have been sectioned to a mental health hospital/ward. This does not include Hospital Schools which are special schools.
6. It is important to note that AP differs from the provision of Education Other Than at School (EOTAS). In addition to the rights under section 19, children and young people (CYP) with an EHCP can be considered for provision under EOTAS if they meet the criteria set out in Section 61 of the Children and Families Act. Provision under EOTAS is a formal special education package which covers a range of provision for children for whom a school setting is considered inappropriate or not possible.
7. Between 2019-2020, SCC carried out a comprehensive review of the AP system across Surrey. This included consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including parents/carers and young people, and looked at all aspects of the system with a key focus on:
 - Need
 - Progress and outcomes for children and young people
 - Spend
 - Sufficiency (including Capital)

The output of the review along with exploration of good practice and research into innovative and effective alternative provision strategies culminated in the delivery of Surrey's Alternative Curriculum Pathways and Reintegration Strategy which was published in November 2021

8. The revised Local Area SEND Inspection Framework (which came into force on 1 January 2023) strengthened the focus on alternative provision as a key priority area, reinforced further by the roll out of thematic reviews of alternative provision in local areas. Areas of focus with regards to oversight and commissioning of alternative provision outlined in the framework and explored in detail through the thematic reviews include:
 - Early identification of need
 - Intervention plans
 - Transition arrangements
 - Impact and Outcomes
 - Quality and performance of provision

Alternative Provision in Surrey

9. Alternative provision is education arranged for pupils of statutory school age who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons would not otherwise receive suitable full-time education as set out under Section 19 of the Education Act (1996). Provision commissioned or operated by SCC to meet these duties include:
 - 9.1 Five maintained PRUs with 168 funded place (137 on-site capacity), including three medical PRUs – one dedicated to pupils with an acquired brain injury which supports and educates children and young people nationally, one dedicated to pupils with a designated CAMHS Consultant or case-holding social worker and one for those medically unable to attend mainstream school as evidenced by a consultant-level health professional.
 - 9.2 Three Alternative Provision (AP) Academies that are commissioned to deliver 140 places (with a current on-site capacity of 127).
 - 9.3 An Access to Education (A2E) service which provides a flexible service for children and young people who through exceptional circumstances cannot attend school, including medical reasons and permanent exclusions. A2E offers a service made up of teaching, emotional, behavioural and social development work, mentoring and access to a virtual learning environment. A2E aims to cater for up to 280 children and young people at any one time.

- 9.4 Surrey Online School, an initiative that provides live, online lessons to a range of pupils across all key stages across the whole county. This is delivered in partnership with Tute Education Ltd (registered providers of the Department for Education’s National Tutoring Programme) who are partnered with an ‘Outstanding’ academy trust.
- 9.5 SCC also make use of several independent alternative providers (registered and unregistered) delivering face-to-face and/or online tutoring and vocational programmes. As at the start of January 2024 there were 61 independent AP providers (excluding therapies) meeting SCC’s minimum requirements.
- 9.6 Additionally, Further Education Colleges in Surrey offer 14-16 programmes for those better suited to a vocational pathway. Places within these settings are primarily commissioned directly by schools although there are some circumstances where SCC may make referrals and commission a place.

10 Of the places funded/commissioned for children and young people of statutory school age by SCC in 2022/23, places at the PRUs/AP Academies deliver nearly 50% of placements.

AP Places* commissioned by the LA/Capacity	No.	% of Total
Non-medical PRU/AP Academy**	240	45%
Medical PRU	68	13%
A2E#	133	25%
Surrey Online School#	13	2%
Independent AP#	83	15%
Total	537	

*The number of places commissioned for PRUs/AP Academies equates to FTE places. In contrast, placements at A2E, SOS and within Independent AP are most likely part-time.

**Funded FTE equivalent places

#As captured in the 2023 AP Census

Pathways to AP

- 11 SCC’s AP Strategy reflects a culture shift in approach, moving away from a focus on ‘alternative provision’ to a focus on the alternative curriculum pathways that alternative provision can offer children and young people. Accessing an alternative curriculum can and should be more fluid, with greater resource emphasis being placed on outreach and reintegration.
- 12 AP plays an important specialist role in supporting children and young people whose specific needs or circumstances (often associated with their additional needs or disability) prevent them from attending a mainstream school, re-engaging them in education as much as their health allows, and providing a supported transition back to mainstream school when appropriate.

13 Surrey County Council must make arrangements for suitable education at a school or otherwise for those children of compulsory school age who, by reasons of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them. This may be full-time education or part-time where this is considered to be in the child's best interest.

14 The date which Surrey County Council have a duty to provide full-time education for a child are:

- 14.1 Exclusions: from the sixth school day after the exclusion
- 14.2 Health needs/anxiety: as soon as it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative, and at the latest by the sixth day of the absence
- 14.3 Children with no school place: immediately

15 Reasons for making alternative arrangements for education and how those arrangements are made (and responsibility for reviewing and monitoring) are summarised below.

Reasons for making alternative arrangements for education	How arrangements are made and responsibility for reviewing and monitoring
Where a Child or young person (CYP) is medically unfit to attend a school.	School and/or (A2E) to make a referral to be considered at medical panel.
Where a CYP has been permanently excluded from a setting.	School to provide education up to day 6. The LA will secure alternative provision after day 6
Where a CYP with an EHCP is awaiting a new school/change of type of placement, as agreed appropriate by the LA, and it is clear that the CYP is not receiving a suitable full-time education	School or the LA can put in AP to support transition arrangements back into setting or whilst awaiting a new school placement
Where a CYP with an EHCP is not on a school roll and the local authority is unable to place them within 20 days. The CYP would be considered to be a child missing education (CME).	The LA will arrange alternative provision whilst a new setting is secured.
Where the LA has agreed that a CYP with an EHCP would be inappropriate to attend a setting they will make arrangements for the provision outlined in section F to be delivered (EOTAS).	LA agreement at EHCP Governance Board or via a tribunal agreement under section 61 of the Children and Families ACT.

16 In some instances, SCC will provide funding for AP for those children and young people on a school roll awaiting a new type of setting and/or not attending a school which impacts on receiving full-time education. Further to this AP can, in some circumstances, be used where a child has not been excluded, where there

are medical needs, or they need a placement/provision to support them with their behaviour or to deliver a specific provision the setting cannot.

- 17 A recent Local Ombudsman review found that Surrey County Council were at increased risk of being found not to be providing suitable AP for children out of school. The review looked at 139 cases recorded as 'alleged missed education' as identified by the categorisation used within the Council's complaints procedure. Of the 139 cases reviewed, the Council was found to be not fully compliant with our duty in 87 cases. In response to this ruling training was implemented in September 2023 across several Surrey County Council teams. The objective was to address common misunderstandings in relation to responsibility, duty to act and suitability of provision in relation to provision of AP. Further to this a number of additional actions were initiated, including the formation of a Section 19 Learning Group, development of improved reporting mechanisms and ongoing development of practice in relation to early identification of children not receiving a suitable, full-time education.
- 18 In addition to the rights under section 19, children and young people with an EHCP can be considered for provision under EOTAS if they meet the criteria set out in Section 61 of the Children and Families Act. Provision under EOTAS is a formal special education package which covers a range of provision for children for whom a school setting is considered inappropriate or not possible. EOTAS can only be agreed in conjunction with the Local Authority via an EHC needs assessment, a reassessment of needs or at the EHCPA annual review.
- 19 In some circumstances, unregistered AP may be considered. Unregistered AP plays a key role in the delivery of alternative curriculum pathways for many young people who are not at the time able to access a registered school setting. This provision is predominantly used for those with additional needs and disabilities requiring a specialist package of support under the legislative allowances of EOTAS. In some circumstances unregistered provision may also be used as an interim provision of AP. Where this is the case adherence to [SCC's Unregistered Schools Strategy \(Sep 2019\)](#) is key. Any provider of education should be registered as an independent school if it meets the criteria – that it provides fulltime education to five or more pupils of compulsory school age, or one such pupil who is looked-after or has an EHCP. The majority of Independent AP providers do not meet the criteria set out by the DfE to register as an independent school as their provision is on a part-time basis. A number of Independent AP Providers, although not a registered independent school, are registered with the DfE as learning providers and as such are listed on the UK Register of Learning Providers (UKRLP). The allocation of a UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN) does not constitute a process of quality checks, nor is it an indication of provider performance or capabilities. Responsibility to carry out quality assurance checks for these providers remains with the commissioner, as it does for all unregistered provisions.
- 20 SCC is currently in the process of developing an AP Admissions policy outlining the responsibilities in relation to AP in line with the provisions and pathways available. This will sit alongside our Alternative Curriculum Pathways and Reintegration Support Strategy to provide greater clarity and detail with regards to processes and decision making. This will be underpinned by a new Quality

Assurance Framework built on good practice from the [IntegratED AP Quality Toolkit](#)

- 21 The Council is developing an Independent Alternative Provision Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for 2024. The purpose of this DPS will be to provide key education and/or other support services to CYP. This builds on the implementation of an interim AP Directory to deliver improved consistency and quality of AP commissioning as seen across many neighbouring authorities. Significant engagement has taken place with providers of Independent AP through 2023, with a particular focus on ensuring the DPS delivers improved quality whilst encouraging applications from a wide array of business types in Surrey (such as smaller organisations, community interest companies or sole traders).
- 22 Where a need for AP is identified, communication with the parents/carer and CYP is critical to ensuring the success of any arrangements made. The referring service/organisation is responsible for ensuring that the voice of the family is captured and communicated as part of the transition to any AP placement. For those accessing AP as part of an EOTAS package, parents/guardians and pupils must be consulted with and have input into the decision-making process of any arrangements.

Demand and Spend

23 Following the comprehensive review of alternative provision undertaken in 2020 several areas of improvement in relation to data capture and quality were identified. These include:

- Accuracy and timely updating of AP placements on SCC's Education Management System (EMS) (formerly Capita, now EYES).
- Alignment of education and financial records for all AP placements.
- Clarity around roles and responsibilities with regards to recording of AP Placements on SCC's EMS.
- Accuracy of Establishment categorisations.
- Reporting of EOTAS cohort as a separate category, unique to wider AP cohort.

Work is ongoing across all these areas to deliver improved reporting mechanisms that better support strategic oversight and performance improvement.

24 The number of registered AP placements increased by 31% between 2020/21 and 2022/23, with increases seen across all key stages. Placements in unregistered AP increased by 75% in the same period (exceeding this in 2021/22).

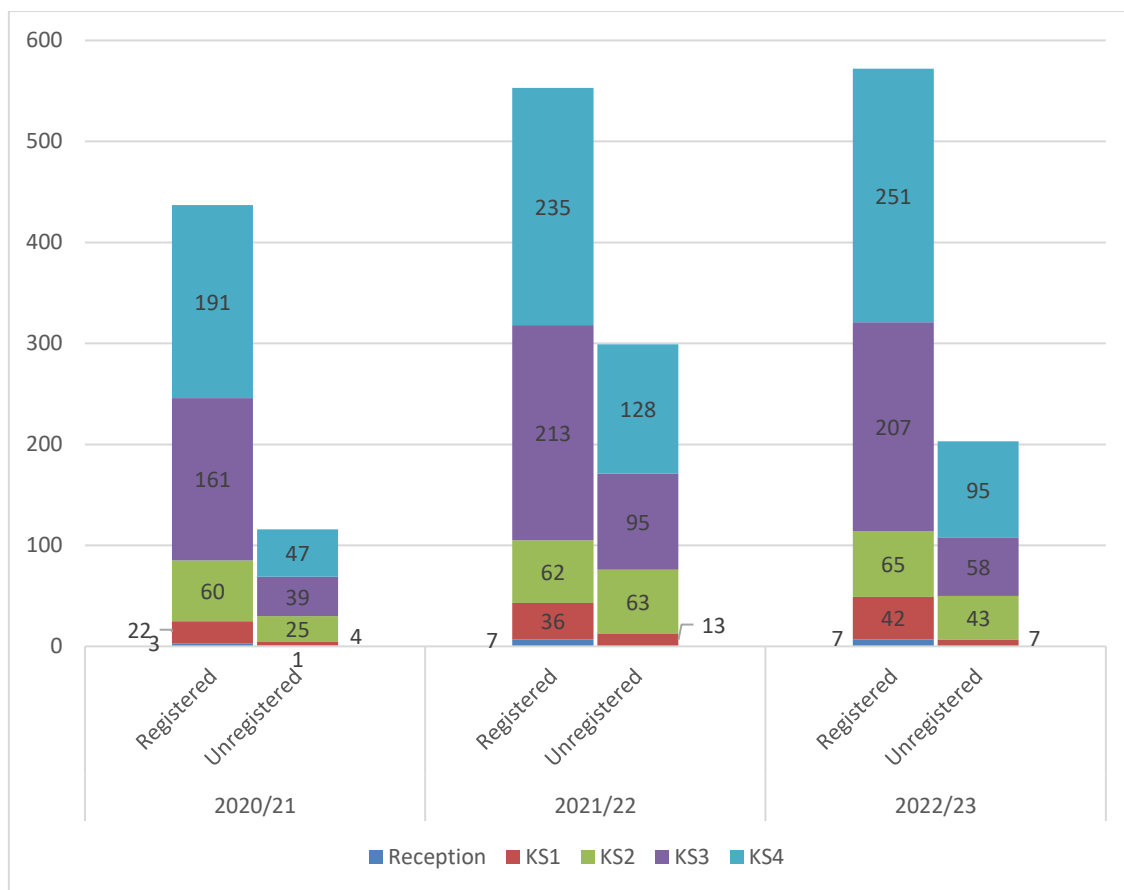


Figure 1: AP placements by registration status and year (extracted from PRU On roll data and AP Census data - Registered AP constitutes all PRUs/AP Academies and any Independent AP with DfE or UKRLP registration)

25 Of the 775 AP placements funded by SCC in 2022/23. 7% were part of an EOTAS package (comprised of 0.8% UKRLP registered and 6.2% unregistered provision). In a small number of cases (where AP is not commissioned as part of an EOTAS package) a CYP may be accessing more than one part-time provision to build a full-time package of education.

26 The vast majority of registered AP placements commissioned by SCC reflect full-time provision delivered by our PRU/AP Academy providers. Placements with Independent AP Providers are more likely to be part time provision. In 2022/23 87% of pupils accessing Independent AP (excluding those which were part of an EOTAS package) were doing so on a part-time basis. These part-time provisions ranged from 1 to 9 session per week, with the vast majority being between 1 to 5 sessions per week.

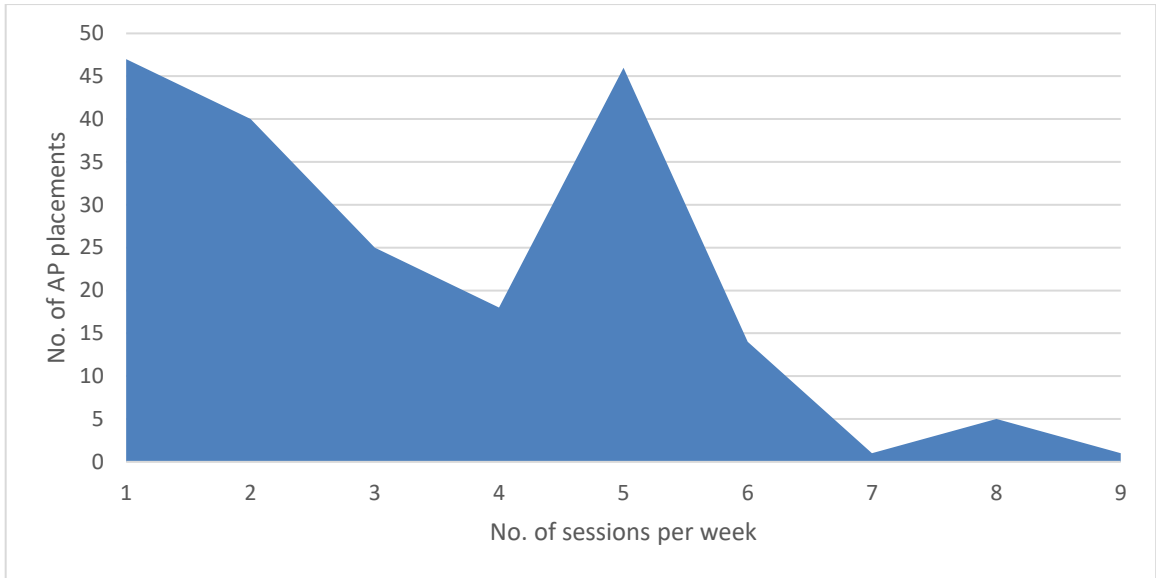
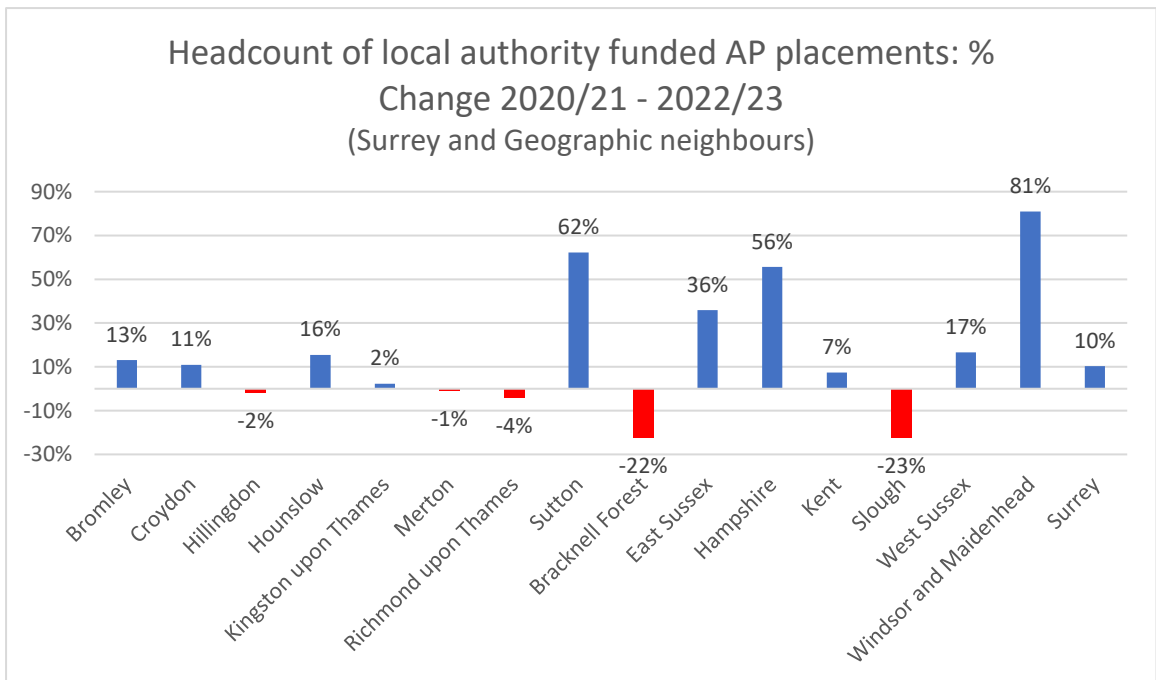
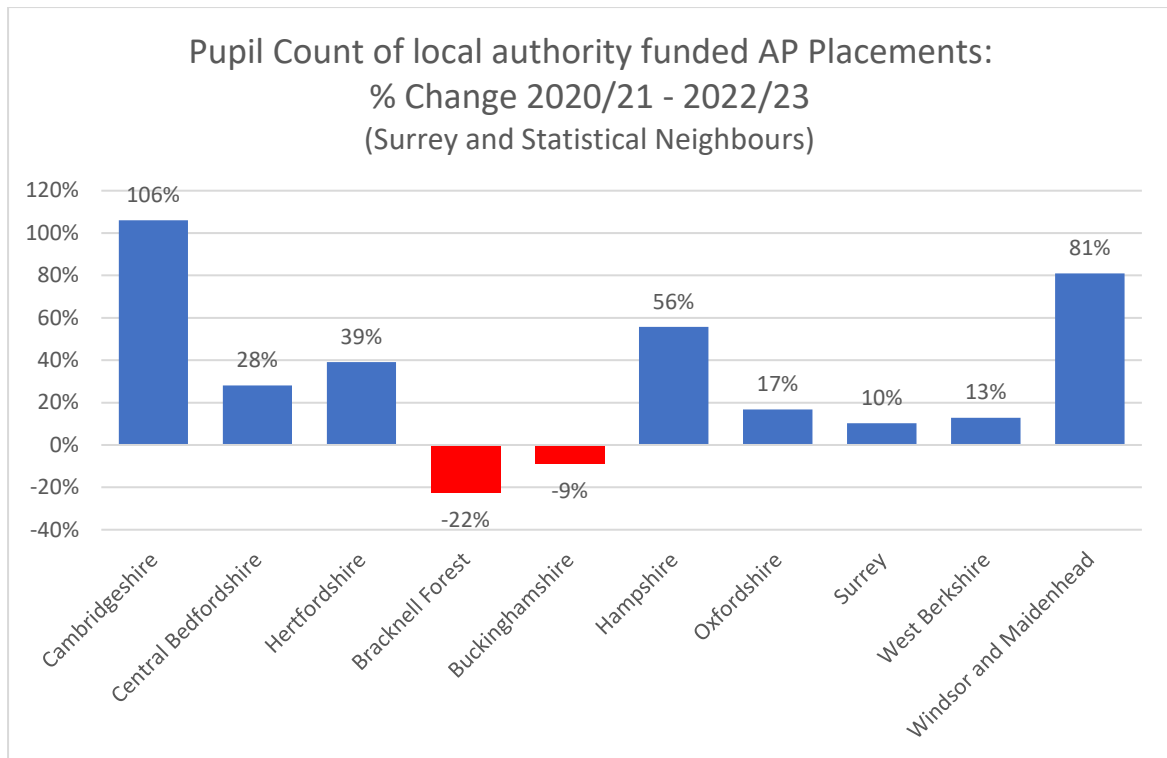


Figure 2: No. of AP Placements by No. of sessions per week (2022/23) for part-time AP Placements recorded in the 2023 AP census.

27 Of the 30 unregistered independent providers commissioned in 2022/23, 57% delivered one-to-one tuition. The remainder consisted largely of vocational pathways, mentoring or bespoke provision. Providers were predominantly Surrey based (70%). Of those located outside of Surrey the registered office base for the providers spanned Hampshire, Kent, Islington, Merton, Cardiff, Cumbria and Gloucestershire. Most of these providers were delivering one-to-one tuition, likely operating as an online provision or utilising a local hub base.

28 When looking at SCC’s use of AP compared to both geographic and statistical neighbours, our percentage increase between 2020/21 and 2022/23 is significantly lower than a number of our neighbours.





For most of these local authorities the actual number of placements remains significantly below those made by Surrey County Council due to the relative pupil population. Although Hampshire's pupil population exceeds that of Surrey, again their total number of AP placements remains below that of Surrey across the three year period, although the rate of increase across the period is notably greater than Surrey's.

29 SCC is continuing to see an upward trend of increasing demand for EHCPs. The resultant impact within Surrey is that the independent AP market has grown substantially to meet new and emerging need. Most growth has been toward the later age ranges (28% growth from 2021 to 2022 for ages 20-25), which has limited impact on the demand for AP across the compulsory school age group. Whilst predominantly AP is utilised as an intended, short-term intervention/support, use of this market to support the 5-16 age group has grown since the pandemic to support increasing numbers of permanent/part time excluded individuals and to support the reintegration of individuals back into education or to transition into employment.

30 A2E has become the primary provision for young people with an EHCP requiring AP over the past 3 years.

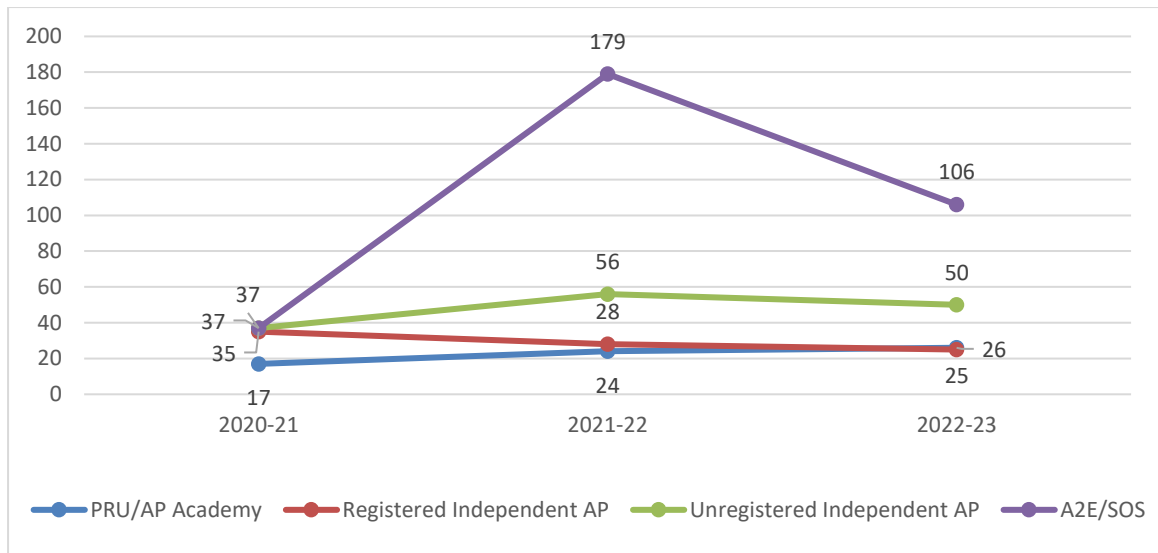


Figure 3: No. of AP placements for statutory school age with an EHCP in Registered and Unregistered AP (extracted from PRU/AP Academy on roll data (SEN Stage when joining school) and AP Census data – including A2E/SOS)

31 When comparing the EHCP status when joining AP in 2022/2 with the current EHCP status of these pupils there is a notable increase. This indicates that a significant number of young people who enter a PRU/AP Academy have additional needs that have not been identified within their original school setting or may have been awaiting assessment.

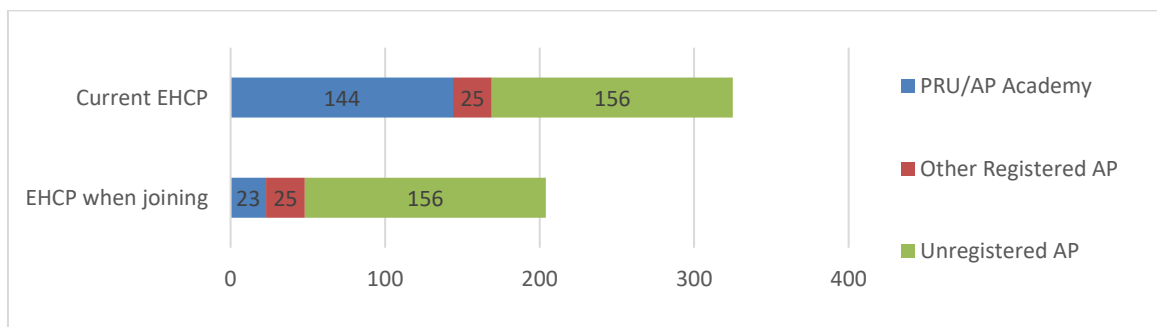


Figure 4: EHCP stats of those in PRU/AP Academy in 2022/23 when joining compared to current status (as of December 2023)

Consistency between those with an EHCP when placed, and those with a current EHCP across other registered AP and unregistered AP is as expected. Placements with these providers are typically driven by additional needs and in a number of circumstances reflect an EOTAS package.

Costs

32 Market analysis conducted in 2018 by the Isos Partnership on behalf of the Department for Education identified the average cost of an AP placement to be £18,000. This did however vary by provider type with Independent AP being of a higher cost (£19,000 for unregistered and £20,400 for registered). State funded AP (PRUs and AP Academies) were closest to this overall average at £17,600 and £18,100 respectively.

- 33 The average per pupil commitment for Independent AP (2023/24 to date) in Surrey is £20,528, however the range varies greatly from £96 for one pupil to £153k for another. Of the cost commitments for independent AP to date for 2023/24, the average costs per pupil for registered AP is £9,266 compared to £23,266 for unregistered AP. This differs to the Isos market analysis that indicated independent registered AP typically ran at a higher cost than unregistered. This result may however reflect the attendance pattern at registered settings making up a smaller proportion than unregistered provision.
- 34 Funding for a full-time equivalent placement at a non-medical PRU/AP Academy in 2023/24 is £22,504. Although slightly above the figure reflected in the Isos research, inflation must be factored into the comparison as well as the relative cost of provision within Surrey compared to other areas of the country.
- 35 SCC's overall projected spend on AP (excluding home to school transport associated with AP) for 2023/24 is £17.9m. Costs associated with home to school transport for AP amount to an additional £2.2m.

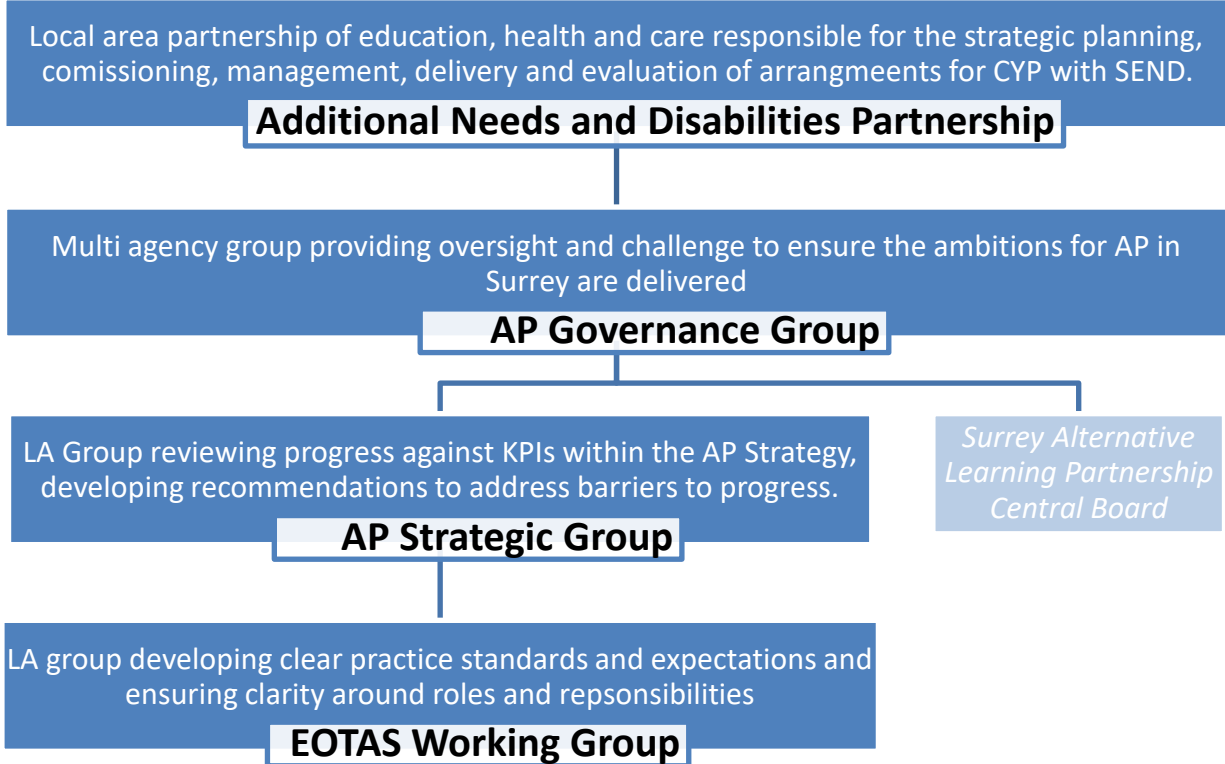
Provision	2022/23 Spend	2023/24 projected cost
Non-medical PRU/AP Academies	5,242,258	5,401,000
Medical PRU	697,004	722,000
PRU - HOPE	756,000	782,000
Access to Education	2,200,000	2,500,000
Hospital Education	410,000	393,000
AP Transport*	1,447,552	2,210,000
Independent AP (Pre 16)	2,995,130	2,781,000
Independent AP (Post-16)	3,319,519	3,308,000
Independent AP (Direct Therapies)	336,697	491,800
SALP	1,250,000	1,250,000
Total excl. AP Transport		17,878,800
TOTAL incl. AP Transport		20,088,800

*This is a subset of the overall SEND transport costs.

- 36 To meet the growing demand for an alternative curriculum, the alternative provision capital programme will improve the infrastructure of our non-medical PRUs/AP Academies, to ensure all 240 pupil places can be delivered on site. The Council has invested £43m capital funding to achieve this by September 2026.

Oversight

- 37 Oversight for AP across Surrey is delivered through a robust governance structure, based on partnership working and collaboration.



Work is underway to further strengthen this structure, broadening the scope of the Working Group to cover AP (including EOTAS), providing traction to key areas of activity. Furthermore, consultations to align the work of the SALP Central Board and AP Governance Group more closely.

- 38 A key focus of SCC’s AP strategy, underpinned by a governance structure that draws on a strong partnership approach, is supporting schools to identify need, access and effectively commission AP. SCC Officers identified a potential gap in our support with regards to communicating SCC’s AP vision. All maintained schools have a local authority governor, some of whom are local authority councillors. The Education Service is working with Schools Alliance for Excellence (SAfE) governor services in order to design training and support material for local authority governors, making them aware of key issues and policies to support them in their strategic role and developing the critical friend approach.
- 39 The Council has put Service Level Agreements (SLA) in place with all non-medical PRUs/AP Academies, ensuring CYP accessing an alternative curriculum have a high-quality experience, where the focus is on reintegration and in the meantime the provision delivers strong outcomes for all. These SLAs have ensured that CYP using these services have clear intervention plans in place.
- 40 Council officers consistently monitor placements as part of a robust quality assurance process, which also includes an annual visit built around a new QA document based on learning from the 2022 IntegratED Alternative Provision Quality Toolkit. This is underpinned by regular monitoring of Key Performance

Indicators through our PRU Performance Cards, which focus strongly on pupil outcomes and destinations.

- 41 Individual progress, safeguarding and attendance are monitored through a wide range of teams including A2E (qualified teachers) and Inclusion Teams. Attendance monitoring for PRUs/AP Academies is also facilitated through SCC's Group Call functionality within EYES, delivering a 'live' feed of attendance from these settings. Intervention plans – monitored half termly, annual reviews for children with an EHCP, schools' direct monitoring (where children are on roll) and information on attendance provided by providers are key processes.
- 42 Independent AP providers, under the interim AP Directory arrangements, are required to meet a range of minimum requirements relating to quality, including evidence of DBS checks, safeguarding policies, insurance etc. The implementation of the new dynamic purchasing system in 2024 will strengthen these arrangements. The DPS will deliver significant improvements in the monitoring of progress and attendance for all pupils placed in Independent AP through the requirement to submit both high-level activity monitoring forms and termly attendance forms.
- 43 The recent Area SEND Inspection of Surrey Local Area Partnership identified some key areas for improvement within Surrey with regards to AP:
 - 43.1 Strengthen quality assurance processes.
 - 43.2 Focus on ensuring CYP in AP are accessing a full-time equivalent education.
 - 43.3 Embed a robust feedback loop for parents/carers and CYP and increase consultation and coproduction in relation to AP strategy and policy.
 - 43.4 Continue to review the breadth and offer of AP to inform commissioning of provision meets need and improves outcomes.
- 44 These areas for improvements have been reflected in SCC's improvement plans, with key areas of focus being:
 - 44.1 Enhancing the breadth and level of alternative provision commissioned and provided, ensuring that CYP, with involvement of their parents/carers and school, receive timely and appropriate levels of suitable alternative provision that align with their needs.
 - 44.2 Ensuring the delivery of high-quality alternative provisions services that deliver the aspiration and outcomes specified in the EHCPs for all CYP who require it as identified by CYP, parents/carers, and their educators.
 - 44.3 Enhancing SCC's inclusion strategy to proactively identify CYP at risk of education placement breakdown to enable timely and tailored provision of support to facilitate continued participation in mainstream settings.

Progress and Outcomes

- 45 The average placement duration for pupils in AP across all provisions is 28 weeks. When exploring this data in more detail some notable differences between the categories of provision provide some valuable insights.
- 46 Of the placements in PRUs/AP Academies that ended in academic year 2022/23, the average placement duration with non-medical settings was greater for those who were dual registered than those single registered. For those placed in a medical PRU, the placement duration across both registration types is comparable.

	Single Registered	Dual Registered
Non-medical PRU/AP Academy	29 weeks	42 weeks
Medical PRU	20 weeks	21 weeks

This indicates that those who had been permanently excluded were likely to transition to a mainstream or special school setting sooner than those at risk of permanent exclusion in receipt of a period of intervention were to reintegrate into their school.

- 47 For those whose placement in Independent AP was reported to have ended within the 2023 AP Census, the average placement duration was 30 weeks. The range however across this category is quite large, from 1 week up to 143. This reflects the wide variety of provision types captured within this category, from short term interventions and interim placements to long term EOTAS package provisions.
- 48 For those whose placement with SCC's A2E service ended as reported to the Department for Education in the 2023 AP Census, the average placement duration for those receiving a service due to a medical need was 41 weeks. For those receiving a non-medical related service whose placement ended in the same period the average placement duration was 37 weeks. This demonstrates the greater level of support and intervention required for those with medical needs. Attainment data for those accessing AP is limited due to the disparate data sources and complexities in extracting the relevant data at pupil level. For example, for those accessing a PRU/AP Academy in Year 11 where they are dual registered for all or part of the year, qualifications achieved may well be captured in the main pupil population of the 'home' school. Whereas those single registered with the PRU/AP Academy will be linked to this establishment. For those attending Independent AP, though some may take accredited qualifications, others may be focussing on soft skills and personal development.
- 49 Pupils engaged in SCC's A2E service are supported to achieve qualifications appropriate to their needs and aspiration. These include Functional Skills, GCSEs and other vocational qualification. Attainment information for 2022/23 is summarised below.

Functional Skills	GCSE	Other
13 X Entry Level English 7 x Entry Level Maths 2 x L1 English 4 x L2 Maths 2 x L3 Maths	10 x GCSE inc. Maths, English and Computer Science	159 x AQA Awards

50 As part of wider development activity, SCC has begun rolling out consistent Individual Support Plans for all AP pupils. This will support the monitoring of progress.

Destinations after Alternative Provision

51 Destinations data for KS4 (and KS5 from medical PRUs) leavers from AP settings in 2022/23 indicates that of the 234 leavers 65% are participating in post-16 education, employment or training, with 46% being in mainstream or specialist further education, training or employment and a further 19% continuing in some form of AP. Of those who have not yet progressed, 12% are confirmed to be NEET whilst 23% do not yet have a confirmed destination.

52 Of those CYP pre-16 who accessed AP in 2022/23 (838), 44% reintegrated back into a school setting (29% to mainstream and 15% to specialist provision). A further 40% continued in the same setting into 2023/24 or transferred to an alternative AP setting. Those supported by A2E and/or accessing Independent AP are more likely to continue with this provision than those in PRUs/AP Academies. This primarily reflects the proportion of those who are accessing an EOTAS package and/or have complex needs.

53 A small proportion (3%) of CYP pre-16 in AP in 2022/23 moved to being electively home educated in 2023/24, the majority of whom had been in receipt of intervention from a non-medical PRU/AP Academy. Destinations for a further 13% are currently unconfirmed.

54 Tracking of destinations data for the AP cohort is at present a complex process requiring mapping across multiple data sources along with significant amount of manipulation and data cleansing. Much development work is underway to improve data insights for AP, with the development of multiple Tableau dashboard to enable interrogation and analysis to support strategic planning. Furthermore, ongoing data cleansing following the implementation of the EYES system continues to provide greater confidence in reporting.

	2022/23 AP setting			
	Non-medical PRUs/AP Academies	Medical PRU	A2E	Ind AP

Cohort		Pre-16	KS4 Leavers	Pre-16	KS4/KS5 'Leavers'	Pre-16	KS4 Leavers	Pre-16	KS4 'Leavers'
2023/24 Destinations	Ind AP	1		3		4		78	
	Post-16 AP				1		13		19
	PRU/AP Academy	18				2			
	Medical PRU			26	8			1	
	A2E	9		2		187			
	Mainstream School	141		5		75		24	
	Specialist School	12		1	2	62	5	51	5
	FE		31		8		28	1	16
	Employment		12				1		
	Re-engagement				1		1		1
	EHE	16				6		1	
	NEET / CME		12		1	1	11	1	4
	Unknown	27	11	53	15	16	21	14	7
	Total	224	66	90	36	353	80	171	52

55 Tracking of destinations for 2023/24 for the post-16 cohort continues, with a priority focus on identifying SCC's vulnerable cohorts to offer support to reengage with education and training as appropriate.

Conclusions:

56 Surrey has a wide range of AP provisions including SCC-operated services, state-funded education and independent providers. This diverse offer enables us to meet the wide-ranging needs of some of our most vulnerable CYP whilst also ensuring we deliver against our statutory responsibilities. A comprehensive programme of development has been underway since 2020 to evolve the Independent AP market to drive improvements in quality and ensure sufficiency of provision. Further work is underway to improve the PRU/AP Academy estate to

deliver fit-for-purpose facilities which can accommodate the full number of funded places on site. SCC's Access to Education Service continues to provide flexible support and oversight to a wide range of CYP to support them to reintegrate into a school setting.

- 57 Alternative provision plays an important specialist role in supporting children and young people whose specific needs or circumstances (often associated with their additional needs or disability) prevents them from attending a mainstream school, re-engaging them in education as much as their health allows, and providing a supported transition back to mainstream school where appropriate. SCC is committed to ensuring children and young people with additional needs and disabilities are supported within county, close to their local communities.
- 58 A significant programme of improvement is underway across SCC AP, spanning all aspects of delivery, with a key focus on strengthening oversight to deliver improved outcomes for CYP accessing AP. The recent Local Area Partnership SEND inspection reaffirmed that the areas for improvement identified remain a key priority. These form part of the Local Area Partnership Improvement Plan (to be available at <https://www.surreylocaloffer.org.uk/improvement-plan> following approval by the Department for Education).
- 59 Although demand for AP has increased significantly in recent years, largely linked to the upward trend of increasing demand for EHCPs and the impact of the pandemic, work across SCC services around inclusive practice in schools and internal practice related to the commissioning of AP has been seen to have some impact. This will be further driven by the implementation of the DPS in 2024 which will aim to strengthen commissioning of independent AP, focussing on quality assurance, value for money and reducing reliance on unregistered provision.
- 60 Spend on AP has increased since 2020/21 reflecting the increased demand outlined above. Overall spending on independent AP remains an area of focus as well as the use of home-to-school transport for AP. Work being undertaken to support and strengthen our PRU/AP Academy offer will contribute to addressing this issue, along with further strengthening the governance structure to provide robust support and challenge.
- 61 Data analysis indicates that some young people spend an extended period in AP. This can have a significant impact on their progression and does not align with our strategic ambition to facilitate reintegration. Evidence suggests that those CYP accessing AP, particularly in KS4, are less likely to progress successfully to further education or training. Limited data is available on the attainment for those in AP making this performance measure difficult to scrutinise.

Recommendations:

62 That the Select Committee notes:

- a) The breadth of development activity underway, driven by the national policy change in 2023, to increase the profile, breadth and quality of the AP offer, with a focus on sustained outcomes by September 2026.
- b) The ongoing activity to deliver improvements in performance reporting and data analysis across all aspects of AP, with a particular focus on progress and outcomes, addressing current limitations and embedding new processes and functionality across the EYES system and Tableau analytics.
- c) The strengthened governance and oversight for AP within SCC.

Next steps:

Finalise the detailed Action Plan delivering the required improvements outlined in the Surrey Local Area Partnership Improvement Plan, with progress to be monitored by the AP Governance Board and reported to the AN&D Partnership.

Report contact

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Sources/background papers

[Alternative provision market analysis: Research report \(October 2018\)](#)

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

[Area SEND inspections: framework and handbook \(2023\)](#)

[Area SEND inspection report: Surrey Local Area Partnership 25 to 29 September 2023](#)

[Section 19, Education Act \(1996\)](#)

[Section 61 of the Children and Families Act \(2014\)](#)

[Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) and Alternative provision \(AP\) Improvement Plan: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time \(March 2023\)](#)

[Surrey Alternative Curriculum Pathways and Reintegration Support Strategy \(revised July 2023\)](#)

[Surrey Inclusion and Additional Needs Partnership Strategy \(2023-2026\)](#)

Surrey Local Area SEND Partnership Improvement Plan (January 2024)

[Thematic reviews of alternative provision in local areas \(2023\)](#)