



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Town Hall, St. Helens, Merseyside, WA10 1HP

Telephone: 01744 676276 (Karl Allender)

Agenda

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Monday 10 October 2022

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Room 10

Membership

Lab 6 Councillors Banks, T Long (Chair), McCormack, Osundeko, Sweeney and Vacancy

Grn 1 Councillor Sheldon

LD 1 Councillor Sims

Inds 1 Councillor Greaves

NIW 1 Councillor Maguire

**Co-opted (Voting) Mr D Thorpe (Church of England)
Mr C Williams (Roman Catholic)
Miss A Kirman Parent Governor (Primary)
Vacancy Parent Governor (Secondary)
Vacancy Parent Governor (Special School)**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
5.	<u>Children's Services Improvement Plan -Ofsted Letter</u>	3
7.	<u>Review (Provisional) of School Outcomes 2021/2022 Overview</u>	7

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1 September 2022

Hilary Brooks Director of Children's Services
St Helens Metropolitan Borough
Atlas House
2 Corporation St
Saint Helens
WA9 1LD

Dear Hilary

Monitoring visit to St Helens children's services

This letter summarises the findings of the monitoring visit to St Helens children's services on 27 and 28 July 2022. This was the fourth monitoring visit since the local authority was judged inadequate in September 2019. Her Majesty's inspectors for this visit were Mandy Nightingale and Jan Edwards.

Areas covered by the visit

Inspectors reviewed the progress made in the following areas of concern identified at the last inspection:

- Planning for and achieving permanence for children.

This visit was carried out in line with the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework. This visit was carried out fully on site with inspectors meeting with social workers, managers and leaders, and talking to children and their carers.

Headline findings

The pace of change in the local authority has been too slow since the previous inspection. The local authority's children's service has also experienced a significant change in its leadership. A permanent director of children's services (DCS) was appointed in mid-June and the assistant director (AD) has been appointed in the last three weeks, following a period of them both working as interim leaders for the local authority. Together, they have reviewed the quality of social work practice and outcomes for children. Some children have experienced delay in achieving legal permanence because of significant churn in the 'children we look after' service.

However, there are early signs of an increased pace in practice with children, and some children are now achieving permanence in a timelier way.

Findings and evaluation of progress

Since the inspection in 2019, there has been a clear focus on permanence planning, especially for children coming into care more recently. Permanence planning is now considered at the earliest opportunity. However, for some children, this focus came too late and they experienced drift and delay in decision-making, planning and achieving permanence.

The increase of social work vacancies and sickness during 2021 meant that some social workers had too many children on their caseloads to complete the work necessary to achieve permanence for all children. The plan for permanence for some children has not been achieved because of too many changes of social worker, a lack of pace and ineffective management oversight. Current tracking systems, to monitor permanence planning for children, do not give sufficient assurance to leaders that drift and delay are being addressed effectively. The local authority is aware of this and has plans to refresh these systems. However, at the time of this visit, these plans were not in place.

For most children, this delay in achieving permanence has had a limited impact on their day-to-day lives as they are already living with their intended permanent carers. For a small number of children, the inability to identify appropriate placements means that their need for legal permanence has not been met.

During 2022, the workforce has stabilised and there has been a reduction in social work caseloads. This means that some social workers have been able to complete highly effective pieces of direct work with children and their carers, which are leading to more timely completion of permanence for some children. Children seeking long-term permanence in St Helens are starting to experience more stability with their social workers. This helps them, as they do not have to keep sharing their story with new people.

When children come into care, they make good progress socially, emotionally and educationally. An appropriate range of permanence options are considered for children, for example return to family, revocation of a care order, special guardianship order, and long-term fostering or residential care. However, the practice for assessing children's needs to achieve their long-term permanence plan is inconsistent.

Decision-making for children to return home to parents is not always based on an up-to-date assessment of the child's needs and their parents' ability to meet those needs. For some children, however, good-quality assessments have supported them to successfully return home to their parents' care.

Social workers know the children that they work with well and can articulate their needs clearly. Children are visited in accordance with their needs and these visits are purposeful, with children knowing why their social worker is speaking with them.

The voice of the child is sought and recorded well. Children contribute to their review meetings, either in person or through their social worker, independent reviewing officer (IRO), or carers. This means their views are being heard by professionals and taken into consideration when planning for their future, when it is appropriate. One young person told inspectors that they felt listened to, and that this means they now see the people who are important to them.

Children's care plans are not always clear, as they lack timescales and actions are not specific enough. This means that children, their families, and the professionals who work with them are not provided with a clear understanding of what they are working towards or when this should be achieved. Contingency planning for children is not always evidenced at an early enough stage. As a result, if a child's plan is not achieved, it is not always clear what will happen next.

Social workers and IROs have made a significant shift in their approach to recording and now address all children's records to the child. This is a positive move for children and helps them to understand their records. However, the quality of the written records is not consistent. Too many records include language and content that is not child friendly, and they shift perspective between the first and the third person. This will be confusing to read and potentially distressing for children who choose to access their records when they are older.

In the last three months, the current DCS and AD have reviewed the local authority's self-assessment, including their plans for children achieving permanence. They now have a more accurate understanding of what needs to change to improve the services for children and, ultimately, their experiences.

Leaders have taken decisive and timely action to strengthen their oversight, and the support that they give social workers, to enable them to carry out their duties more effectively. Leaders have targeted resources to meet identified demand, and this has had an immediate impact in reducing social work caseloads in some areas. It has also improved the quality of some social work practice.

The local authority has recently agreed its revised quality assurance framework, although at the time of the visit this had not been implemented. In the absence of an agreed quality assurance framework and a programme of case file audits over the last four months, leaders have implemented a regime of dip sampling and thematic reviews of areas that they are concerned about. They have also ensured that team and senior managers meet regularly to review the performance data. However, without regular case file auditing of all areas, leaders cannot be fully assured of the

quality of practice across children's social care services and the impact on children's outcomes.

Team managers have a clear line of sight at key decision-making points for children's permanence planning. IROs regularly gain the views of children and, for some children, they scrutinise their care planning. However, this is not always present for children who have experienced drift and delay.

Targeted training and intensive support for social workers, through the improvement team, have been effective in improving some social work practice. Social workers report they value the inputs from this team and that the training is having a positive impact on the quality of their assessments of children's needs.

Staff are very positive about working in St Helens. They spoke of the recent welcome changes, including more visible senior leaders, engagement in improvement work and feeling that their voices are heard. Experienced and newly qualified social workers, in the 'children we look after' service, told inspectors that they feel supported and receive regular reflective supervision that supports them to think about the child's care plan more fully. One social worker said that there is no hierarchy, and they spoke proudly that 'there is now a sense that they are all in this together, working to get to the finish line'.

I am copying this letter to the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Mandy Nightingale
Her Majesty's Inspector

Scrutiny - 10.10.22

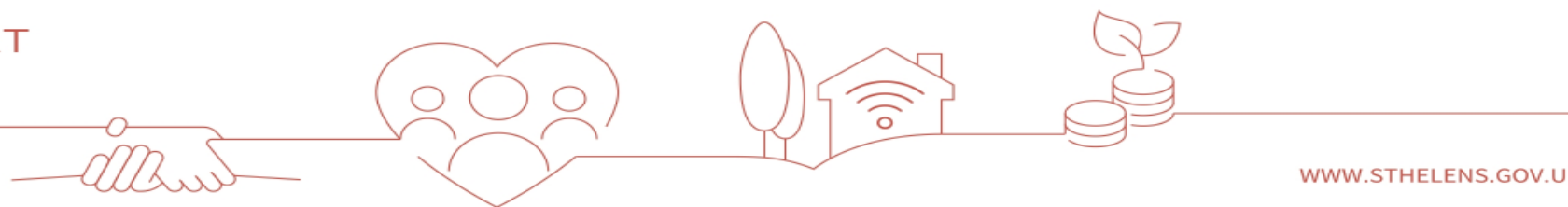
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- Education and Learning's 3 obsessions
- Academic outcomes for 21/22
- Plans and support for 22/23
- Continuing Professional Development offer
- Therapeutic Schools Award
- Learning Partnership meeting
- Statutory compliance
- TESSA model
- Family Hubs
- Repurposing the use of Alternative Education

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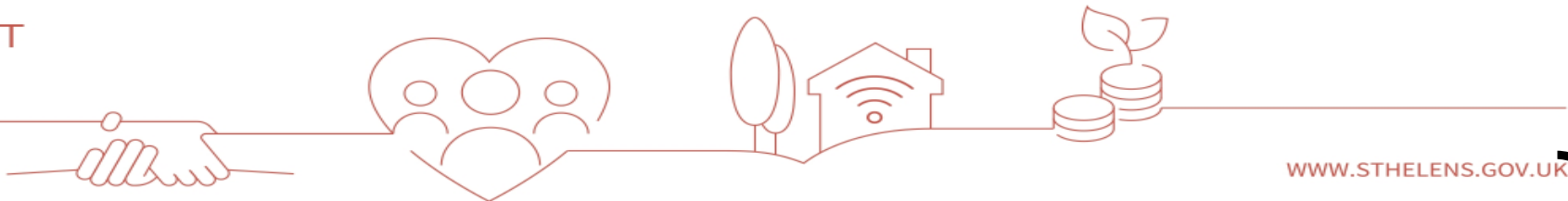
3 obsessions



	<p>All learners, of all ages have the right to the best quality of education.</p>
	<p>We promote inclusion to reduce inequality. We actively work together to champion the needs of disadvantaged children and challenge every organisation and profession across the borough to do the same.</p>
	<p>We focus on the needs of children and young people, rather than the needs of institutions or groups.</p>

All children and young people in St Helens deserve the best education. Receiving a high-quality education puts children and young people on a path to future success. We all want our children and young people to thrive; to be safe, achieving, included, healthy, responsible and heard.

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Academic outcomes for 21/22



Early Years Foundation Stage

Due to changes to the EYFSP framework this year, there are no time series statistics available to compare outcomes over time. However, in 2022 **61%** of pupils educated in St Helens state funded schools achieved a good level of development at the end of the 2021/2022 academic year, the unofficial national average is **65%**.

Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

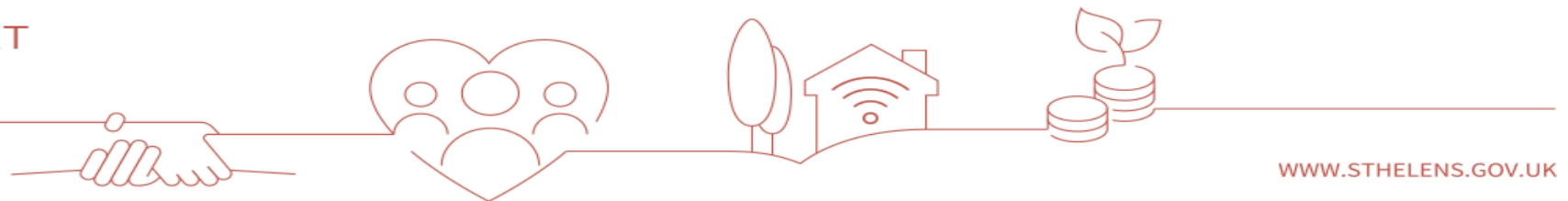
In 2022, **75%** of Year 1 pupils educated in St Helens achieved the expected standard of phonic decoding, down from 82% in 2019. There is a significant decline in the proportion of disadvantaged pupils across the Borough in Year 1 achieving the expected standard of phonic decoding, down from **73%** in 2019 to 55% in 2022.

Key Stage 1

In St Helens, as was also the case nationally, in individual subjects, attainment, in terms of attaining the expected standard, fell in all KS1 subjects compared to 2019.

- In St Helens, **66%** of pupils met the expected standard in reading, down from 74% in 2019. Nationally, **67%** of pupils attaining the expected standard in Reading, down from 75% in 2019.
- In St Helens, **57%** of pupils met the expected standard in Writing, down 11% from 69% in 2019. In terms of a comparison, nationally, **58%** of pupils met the expected standard, down from 69% in 2019.
- In mathematics, **67%** of pupils in St Helens met the expected standard, down 8 percentage points from 75% in 2019. Nationally, **68%** of pupils met the expected standard, down from 76% in 2019.

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Key Stage 2

These are the first key stage 2 attainment statistics since 2019, after assessments were cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic.

The percentage of pupils, both in St Helens and nationally, attaining the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths has decreased compared to 2019. In St Helens, **56%** of pupils met the expected standard in all of reading, writing and maths, down from 66% in 2019. Nationally, **59%** of pupils met the expected standard in all three subject areas, down from 65% in 2019.

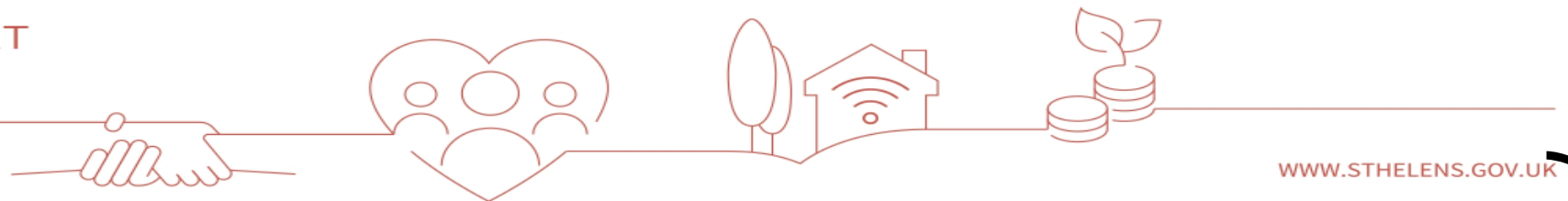
In St Helens, **74%** of pupils met the expected standard in reading, up from 73% in 2019. Nationally, **74%** of pupils attaining the expected standard in Reading, up from 73% in 2019.

In St Helens, **69%** of pupils met the expected standard in Writing, down 11% from 80% in 2019. In terms of a comparison, nationally, **69%** of pupils met the expected standard, down from 78% in 2019.

In mathematics, **67%** of pupils in St Helens met the expected standard, down 12 percentage points from 79% in 2019. Nationally, **71%** of pupils met the expected standard, down from 79% in 2019.

In St Helens, **70%** of pupils met the expected standard in grammar, punctuation and spelling, down from 79% in 2019. Nationally, **72%** of pupils met the expected standard, down from 78% in 2019.

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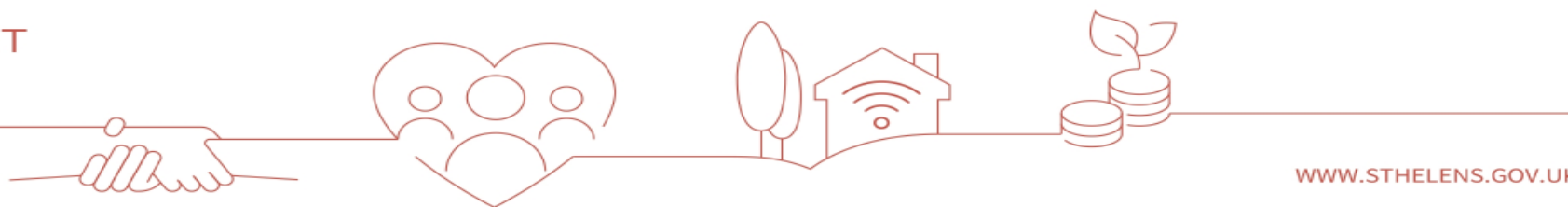


Key Stage 4

These statistics cover the attainment of Year 11 pupils who completed their GCSE studies at the end of the 2021/2022 academic year. These pupils experienced disruption to their learning during the pandemic, particularly at the end of Year 9 and in Year 10. Displayed below are a few St Helens related GCSE attainment headlines:

- **43.4%** of pupils educated in St Helens achieved a grade 5 or higher in both English and maths, referred to as a strong pass. This is a **5.8 percentage point increase (from 37.6%)** in comparison with 2018/19.
- The average Attainment 8 score increased by 0.7 points from **44.5 to 45.2** and the EBacc APS increased by 0.08 points from 3.69 to 3.77
- **33.4%** of pupils educated in St Helens were entered into the full EBacc. This is a **decrease of 3.2 percentage points** in comparison with the last exam year of 2018/19 when 35.6% of pupils were entered into the full EBacc.
- The government's ambition to see 75% of pupils studying the EBacc subject combination at GCSE by 2022, has not been achieved locally and will, in all probability, prove too ambitious a target for most local authority areas in England.
- The ambition that 75% of pupils in 2022 and 90% of pupils in 2025 study the EBacc subject combination will not be achieved locally with low entries to languages being the main sticking point preventing entries to the EBacc rising.

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Key Stage 5

Across the providers, a total of **32.5%** of GCE A level exam entries resulted in a grade A or A*, slightly below the comparable England average (**35.9%**), however, the percentage of exam entries taken in St Helens graded A or A* (**32.5%**) is well above the position reported pre-pandemic in 2019 (**21%**).

The percentage of exam entries grades A* to E, or achieving a pass, across the providers in St Helens included in the analysis stands at **99.3%**, above the comparable national average (**98.4%**) and above the position reported for St Helens in 2019 (98.2%)

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Plans and support for 22/23

- Band B support for 8 schools (St Anne's Sutton, Willow Tree, Rectory, Sutton Manor, St Mary's Infants, St Mary's Juniors, Rivington and Broad Oak)
- Primary Achievement and Improvement Board meetings for 11 schools
- Secondary Achievement Board meetings for all secondary schools
- PALS group established
- Induction for three new headteachers (St Peter & St Paul, Holy Spirit and Robins Lane)
- Ofsted briefing for St Helens headteachers and governors
- Use of consultants to offer bespoke and tailored support and challenge (academic, attendance, well-being)
- Solution-focused innovative projects working collaboratively with REES Centre and Vision 2000
- Quality Marks linked to attendance and personal development
- Subject specific support, e.g. Maths and English consultants and use of SLEs (specialist leaders of education) to lead subject network groups
- Headteacher information sharing session
- Locality cluster group meetings
- Governors' Forum

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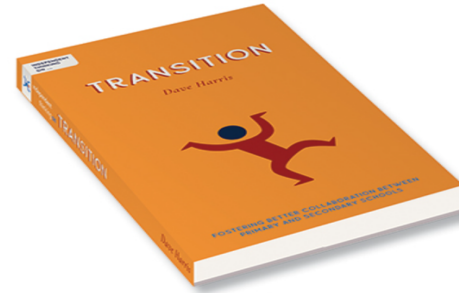


Continuing Professional Development offer

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1. Briefing sessions led by two Senior HMIs for headteachers and governors exploring common inspection themes and additional items to the inspection handbook

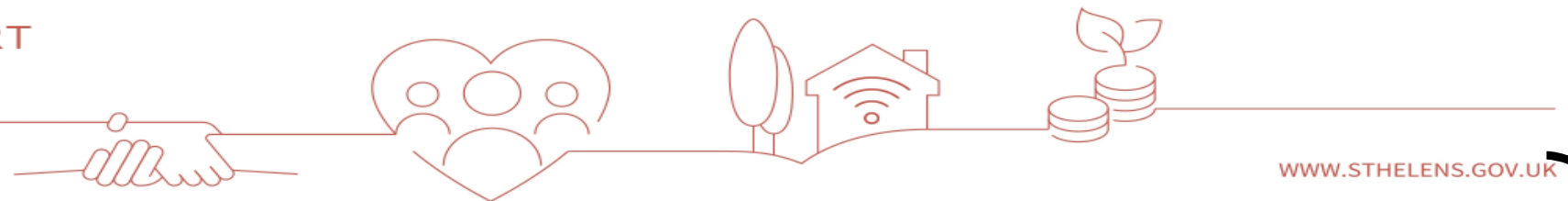


Transition Conference for Early Years, Primary, Secondary and LA leaders delivered by Dave Harris of *Independent Thinking*



Education and Learning's Festival of Learning will take place 30.01.23 to 03.02.23. Speakers will cover a range of topics covering Early Years, SEND, Curriculum, Trauma-informed practice and much more


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Therapeutic Schools Award

The Therapeutic Teaching course is a 6-part course that is designed to embed a therapeutic approach across schools. The modules teach about how childhood trauma and adverse childhood experiences can impact children's mental health and wellbeing. The LA has committed to fund 66% of the cost for 20 schools.


The Course Modules



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Childhood Trauma and the Brain
The Therapeutic Teaching Course
Module 1

Learn about childhood trauma and how it impacts a developing brain. Find out what happens when children are stressed or overwhelmed. Why they have 'meltdowns' and what the impact is on their behaviour and internal processing at school. Most importantly, learn what can you do to help. Underpinned by therapeutic approaches and full of advice and free resources. This session is vital for anyone working with vulnerable children or young people in an educational setting.



Attachment Disorder In the Context of the Classroom
The Therapeutic Teaching Course
Module 2

Learn about attachment disorder and how it impacts a child or young person. Find out how to identify attachment disorder and how to support the children you work with by ensuring you are not triggering attachment style behaviours. Full of practical strategies and advice to help you figure out what is effective and what is not effective at school. You will have lots to take away and implement.



Creating an Emotionally Intelligent Class
The Therapeutic Teaching Course
Module 3

Learn about emotional intelligence and how focusing on developing EI in your children can predict better outcomes and life skills than academic achievements. This module links to the government guidelines on health, relationships and sex education and will inspire you to put wellbeing at the heart of your classroom. Find out how you can increase emotional intelligence in the children you work with and help them become more self-aware and empathetic by following the advice, resources, and support in this module.



Connection Vs Disconnection when Approaching Behaviour
The Therapeutic Teaching Course
Module 6

Learn about the importance of boundaries and consistency when working with vulnerable children. Find out how to approach behavioural incidents whilst still maintaining a therapeutic approach based on connection. With specific approaches and advice for you to begin to implement in your school. This session guides you toward alternative methods to time out and detention whilst still maintaining the boundaries many vulnerable children desperately need.



Therapeutic Teaching Skills
The Therapeutic Teaching Course
Module 5

Learn about how to develop therapeutic teaching skills with the children in your school. Find out how to adapt your responses to behavioural incidents and emotional outbursts to focus on connection and care. The lessons in this module will begin to create a therapeutic ethos amongst your staff and help guide everyone working with the children toward an approach that puts mental health and well-being first. A very popular session which will change perceptions and offer a lot of 'ah-ha' moments.

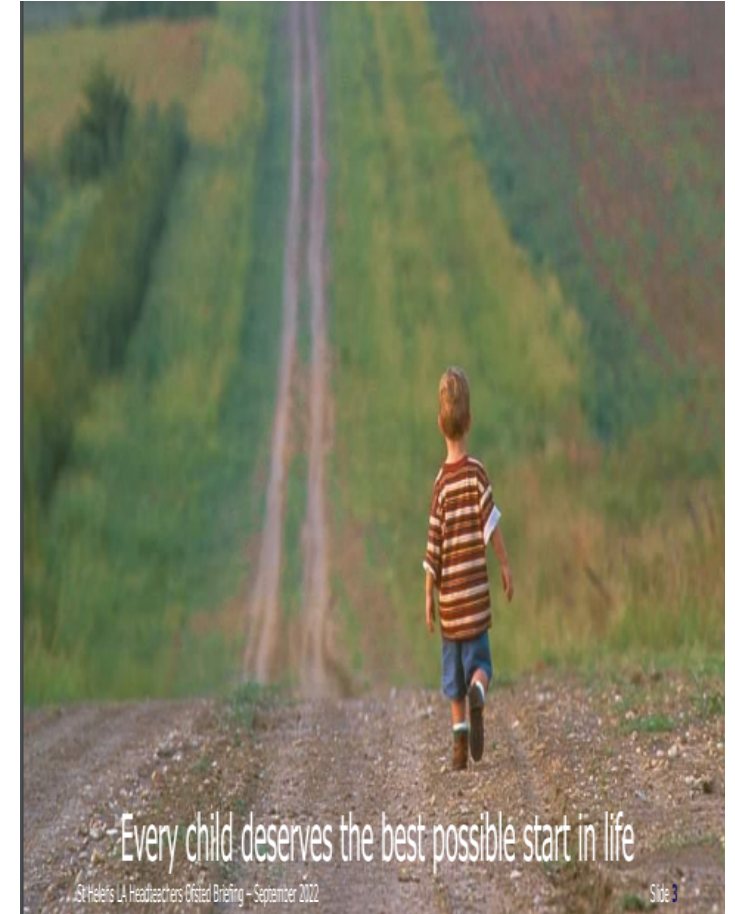


Creating A Therapeutic Environment
The Therapeutic Teaching Course
Module 4

This module underpins the learning in other modules and extends it to the classroom environment. How can you help children feel engaged and ready to learn? How can you reduce stress levels in the body? In this session, you will learn how to create a therapeutic environment throughout your school which puts well-being and mental health at its core. Find out how changing your classrooms, hallways and outdoor areas can increase feelings of safety and promote self-belief which in turn positively impact learning. Ensuring your school is meeting the needs of each child through its design.

Learning Partnership Meeting

- Explored and discussed outcomes data for St Helens: highlighting strengths and areas for improvement
- *The Big Numbers* – attendance, persistent absenteeism, suspensions, permanent exclusions and NIROFTE
- \rightarrow Consultation and collaborative work – TESSA and use of alternative provision
- Family Hubs



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Statutory compliance

- Awarding Body for Early Career Teachers
- Advice and support for ECT mentors and headteachers
- SACRE
- LA monitoring duties on behalf of Standards Testing Authority:
Phonics Screening Check and Key Stage 2 SATs
- LA moderation duties for KS1 and KS2 SATs. This involves recruiting, training and maintaining oversight of the moderation teams and leading scrutiny visits (if selected by STA)

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TESSA model

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TESSA

Triage, Education, School Support and Advice

Initial Enquiry

New telephone hotline for Schools to use.



TRiage

Graduated advice, guidance, information and Signposting

- SEND Portal
- MASH
- Mental Health Portal



WFP- WAYS FORWARD PANEL



No further action- response to referrer and case closed.



Single agency assessment and support



Specialist assessment/support
Multi agency approach
Lead professional identified

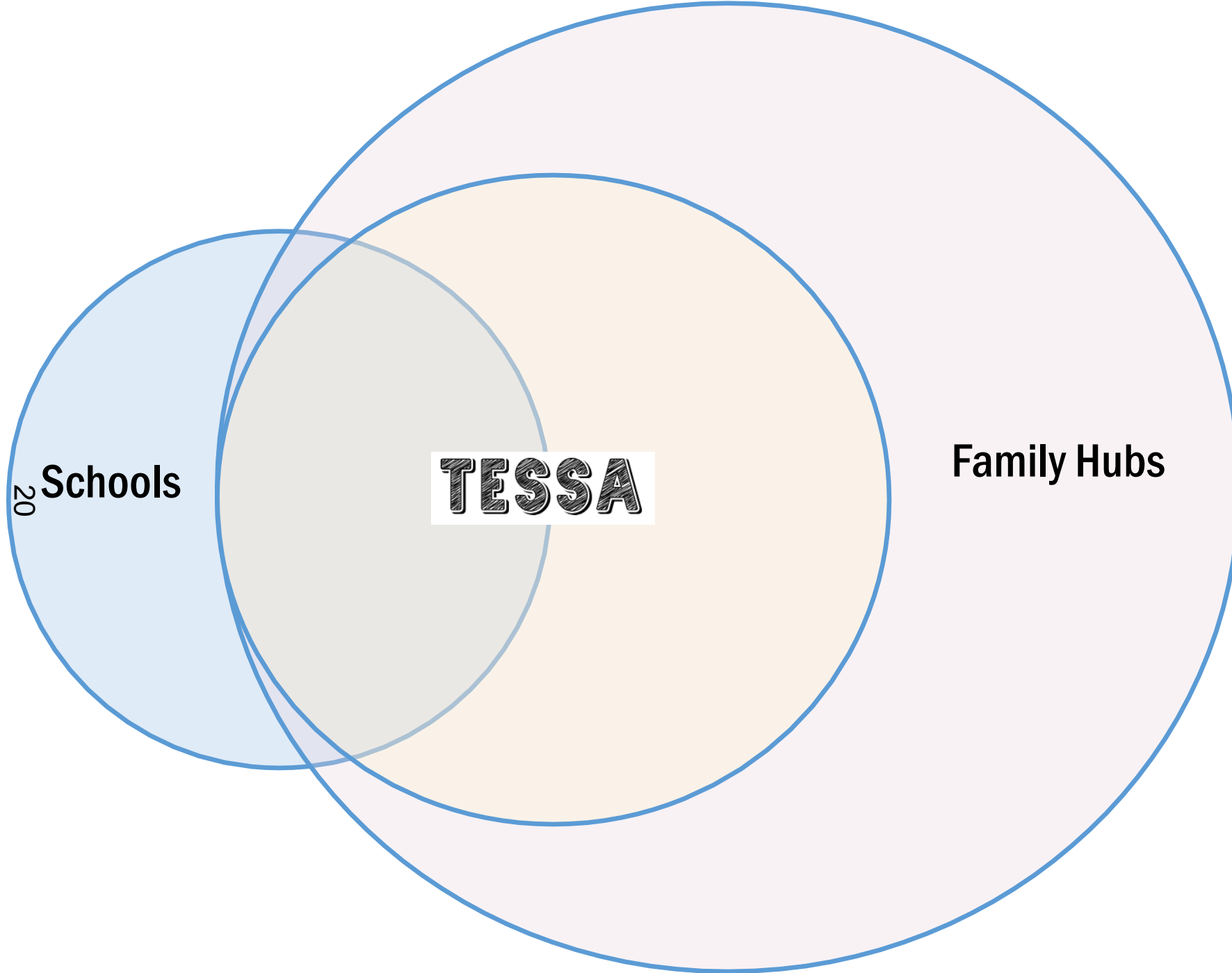
Team of duty managers made up of current service leads will triage calls and offer advice and solution at this first point of contact.

Purpose- To discuss and agree a response to requests for support for children requiring assessment and intervention at a specialist level.

Action-

A bespoke plan is formulated.





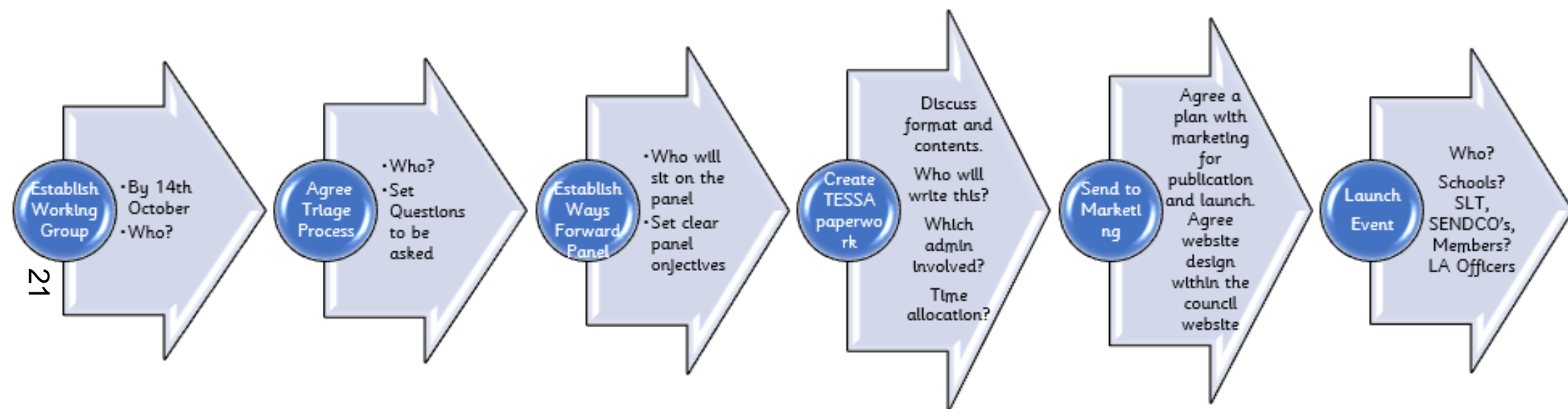
20 Schools

TESSA

Family Hubs

TESSA

Triage, Education, School Support and Advice



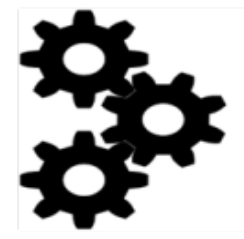
The family hub model

Each Family Hub is bespoke to each local community it serves.
The Family Hub model is informed by three key principles:

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Access
Principle 1

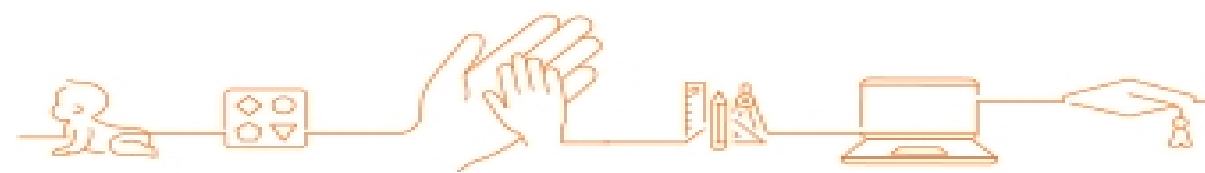


Connection
Principle 2

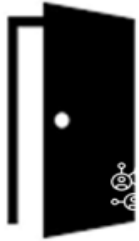


Relationships
Principle 3

Complementing the three key principles underlying the Family Hub model, other key factors include the **who**, **where** and **what** of service delivery.



Family Hub Model



Principle 1 - Access

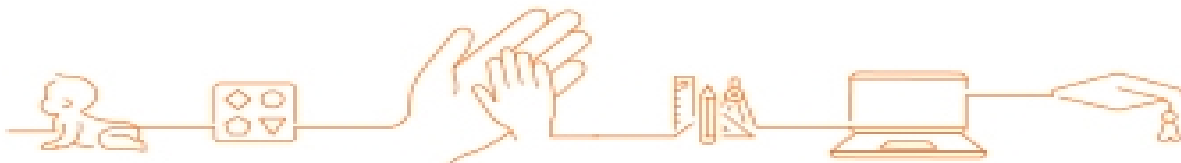
'One stop shop' of services for Families with children 0-19yrs (25yrs SEND)

Centred around a building / group of buildings / community / locality

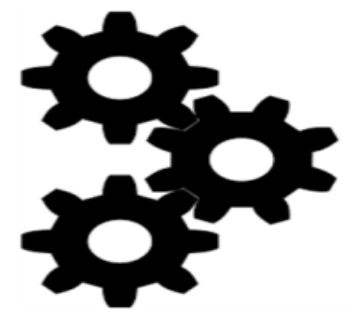
In person and 'online offer' of services

Recognised Brand which promotes the offer of services

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Family Hub Model



Principle 2 - Connection

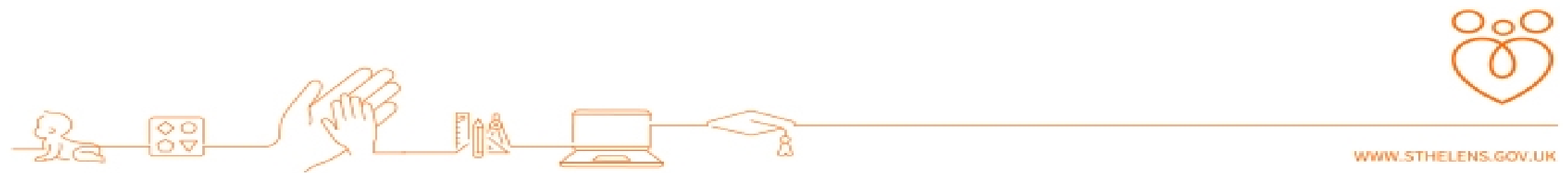
Partners / Services working to a 'Tell it once' model

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Universal access with seamless support to more targeted help

Public and voluntary, community and faith sector working together

Information Sharing & Joint Training



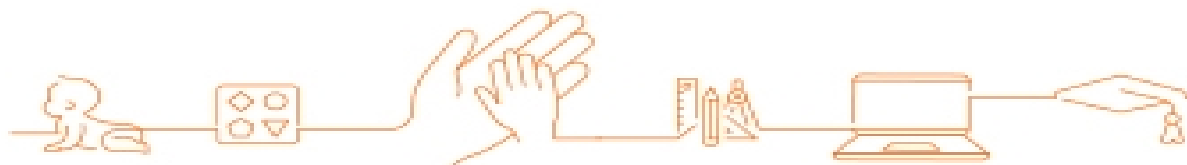
Family Hub Model



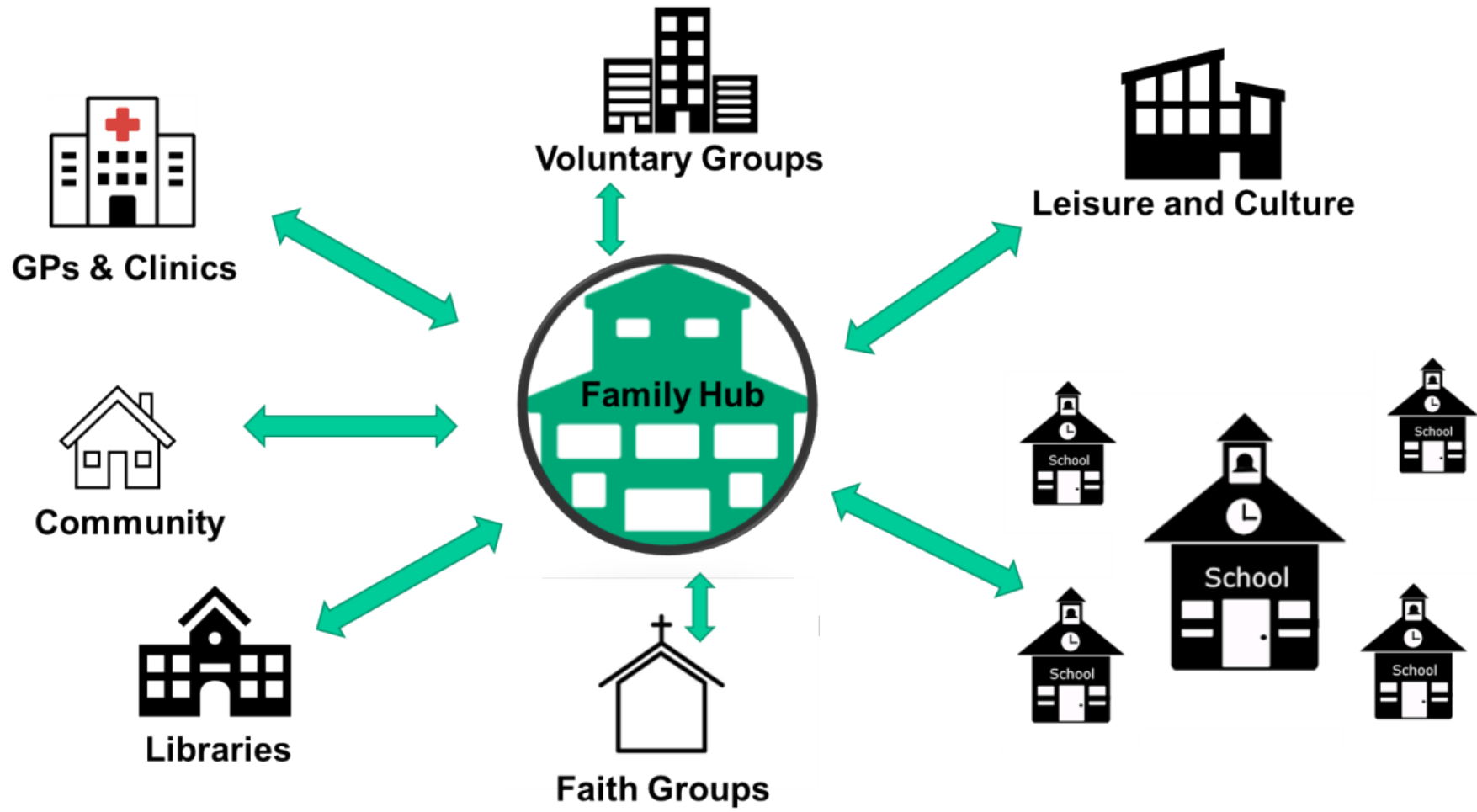
Principle 3 - Relationships

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- Partners / Services working in an integrated 'one workforce' manner
- Parent Panels
- Partners involved in joint governance arrangements

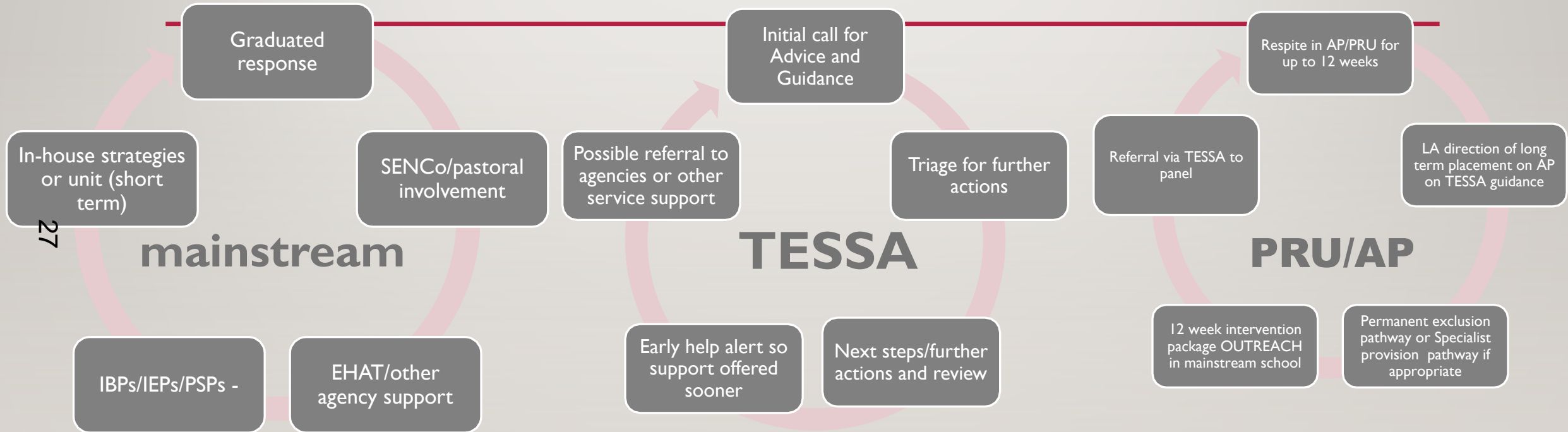


Universal access and Linked Provision



Repurposing the use of Alternative Education

AP/PRU OUTREACH MODEL (feeding into TESSA)



Continuum of Need

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