



Department
for Education

Special educational needs and disability: an analysis and summary of data sources

June 2022

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Introduction

This document provides a combination of analysis and links to the key data sources on children and young people with special educational needs and / or a disability (SEND). This is the ninth release in this format¹ and follows on from the initial publication in November 2015.

The table below lists the topics included in this publication with a link to the source data and whether time series and local authority (LA) level data is available. Commentary on the data trends and more detailed analysis can be found by clicking on the link in the publication title column.

This is a collated product from data published throughout the year. As such, trends across sections might not be directly comparable. More detail can be found in the text.

You may also wish to use this publication alongside benchmarking data tools, such as the [Local Authority Interactive Tool](#) (LAIT) and [LG Inform](#). Further details are provided on page 19.

Topic	Publication title link	Latest data reference point	Time series data available?	LA level data by SEN available?	When next published and how often updated
Prevalence and characteristics	‘Special educational needs in England: January 2022’	January 2022	Yes	Yes	June 2023, annual
Early years SEN prevalence	Education provision: children under 5 years of age, January 2021	January 2021	Yes	Yes	June 2022, annual
Early years Foundation Stage profile (EYFSP)	‘Early years foundation stage profile results: 2018 to 2019’	2018/19 (academic year)	Yes	Yes	November 2022, annual
Phonics screening check and Key Stage 1 attainment	‘Phonics screening check and key stage 1 assessments: England 2019’	2018/19	Yes	Yes	Between September and October 2022, annual

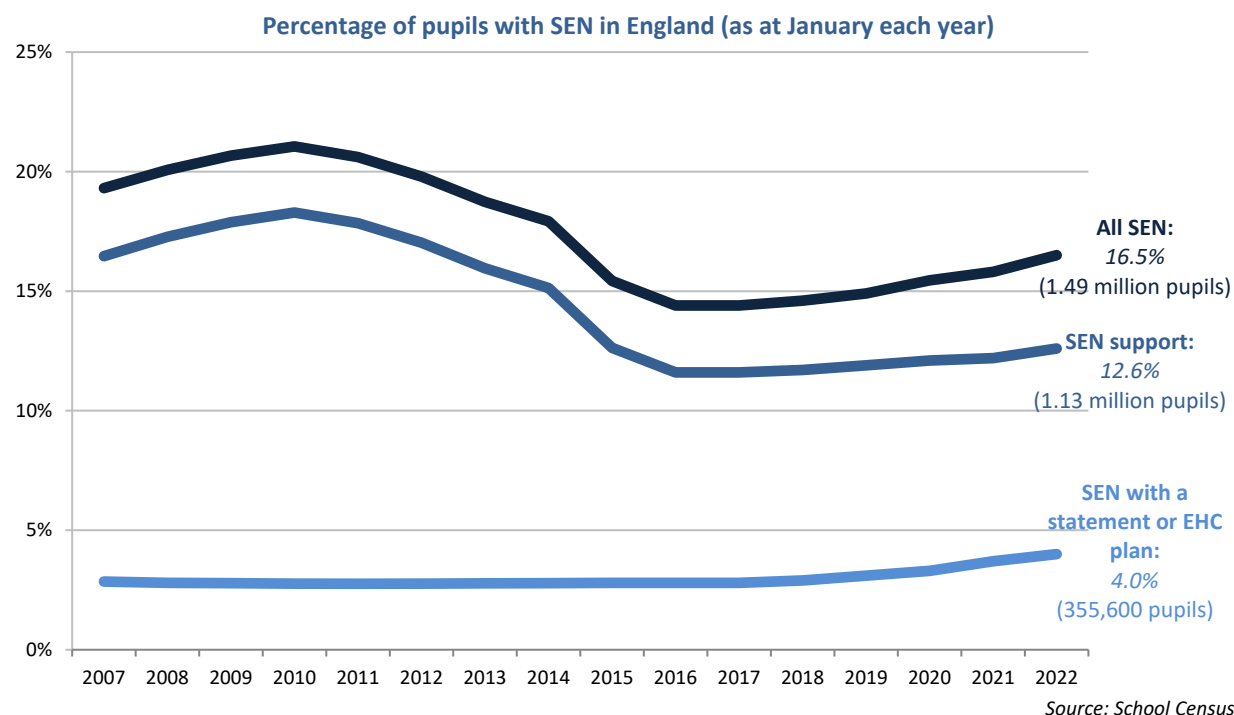
¹ There were two updates to this document in 2016.

Topic	Publication title link	Latest data reference point	Time series data available?	LA level data by SEN available?	When next published and how often updated
Key Stage 2 attainment	‘Key stage 2 performance, 2019 (revised)’	2018/19	Yes	Yes	September 2022 (provisional), December 2022 (revised), annual
Key Stage 4 attainment	‘Key stage 4 performance 2021’	2020/21	Yes	Yes	October 2022, annual
Attainment by age 19	‘Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 16 to 25 in 2021’	2020/21	Yes	Yes	April 2023, annual
Outcomes for looked after children and children in need	Outcomes for children in need, including children looked after by local authorities, in England	2020/21	Yes	Yes	March 2023, annual
Post-16 participation	‘NEET and participation: local authority figures’	March 2021	Yes	Yes	Summer 2022
Further Education learning difficulty and disability numbers	‘Further education and skills: November 2021’	2020/21	Yes	No	November 2022, annual
Destinations measures	‘Destinations of key stage 4 and 5 students: 2020’	2019/20	Yes	Yes	October 2022, annual
Progression into higher education	Widening participation in higher education: 2021	2019/20	Yes	No	July 2022, annual

Topic	Publication title link	Latest data reference point	Time series data available?	LA level data by SEN available?	When next published and how often updated
Measures from Adult Social Care Outcomes framework	Measures from the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework, England - 2020-21	2020-21 (financial year)	Yes	No, CCG level data available	October 2022, annual
Absence (full year release)	‘Pupil absence in schools in England’	2020/21	Yes	Yes	March 2023, annual
Permanent exclusions and suspensions	‘Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England: 2019 to 2020’	2019/20	Yes	Yes	July 2022, annual
Statements and EHC plans – numbers, transfers and timeliness of issuing	‘Education, health and care plans’	January 2022	Yes	Yes	May 2023, annual
Appeals registered with the SEND tribunal	‘Tribunals statistics’	January – March 2022	Yes	Yes	September 2022, quarterly
Family Resources Survey (Disability data)	Family Resources Survey 2020-21	2020-21	Yes	No	March 2023, annual

Prevalence and characteristics

Key trends



The number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) increased to 1.49 million pupils in 2022, representing 16.5% of all pupils. The proportion of pupils with SEN had been decreasing since 2010 (21.1%), however it has increased for the last 5 years.

The proportion of pupils with a statement of SEN/ Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan increased to 4.0% in 2022, continuing a trend of increases since 2017. Prior to this, the rate had remained steady at 2.8%. Pupils with an EHC plan made up 24% of all pupils with SEN in January 2022.

The number of pupils with an EHC plan has increased by 9% between 2021 and 2022, and by a total of 50% since 2016.

Pupils with SEN are currently classified as follows:

SEN support: Extra or different help is given from that provided as part of the school's usual curriculum. The class teacher and SEN Coordinator (SENCO) may receive advice or support from outside specialists. The pupil does not have an education, health and care plan. SEN support replaced the former School Action and School Action Plus categories from 2015.

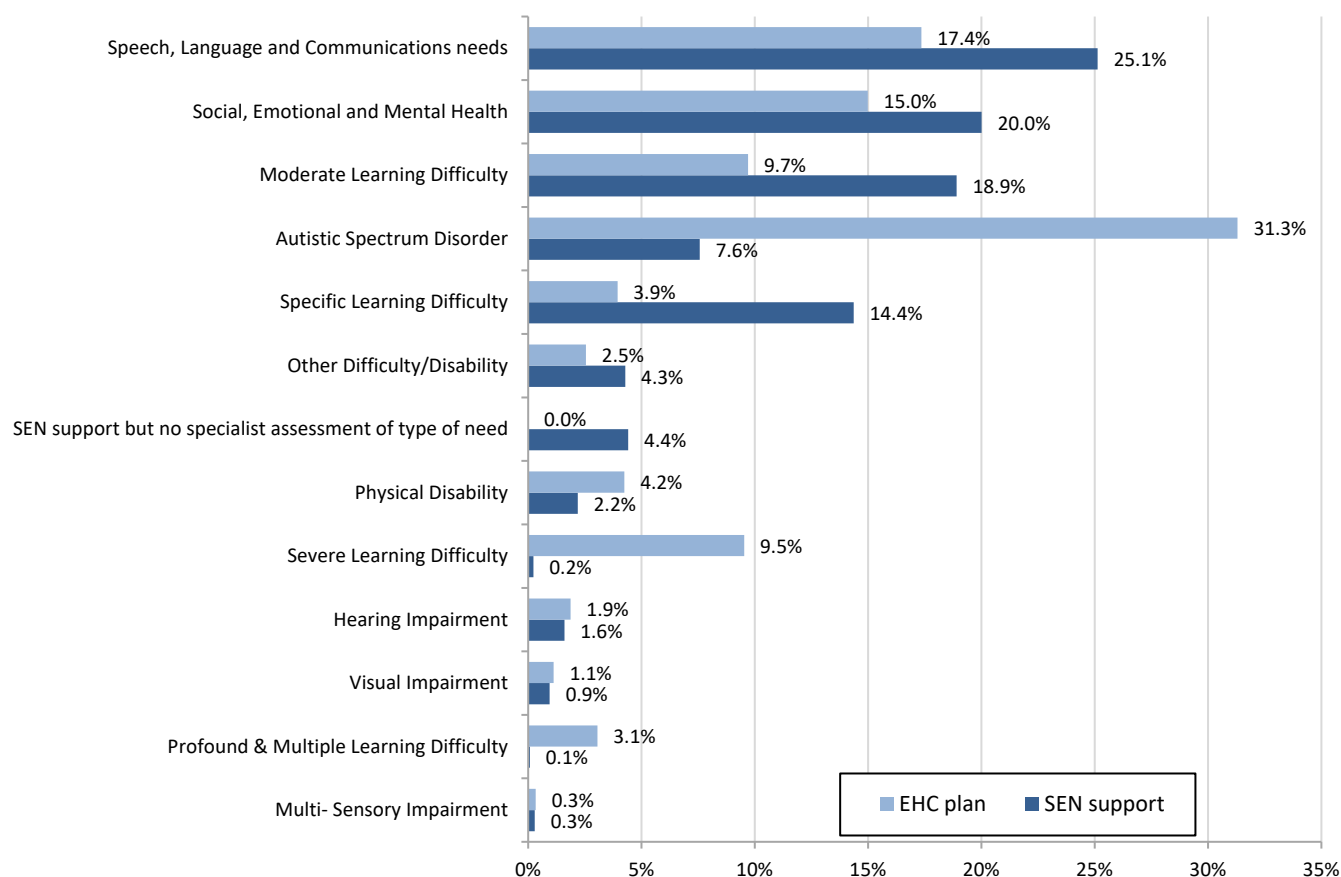
Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan: A pupil has an EHC plan when a formal assessment has been made. A document is in place that sets out the child's need and the extra help they should receive. Prior to September 2014, a statement of SEN was used. The period for local authorities to transfer children and young people with statements of SEN to EHC plans started in September 2014 and ended in 2018. Following the introduction of EHC plans in September 2014, statements of SEN and EHC plans were grouped together within the data.

Type of need

In January 2022, for pupils with EHC plans, 'Autistic Spectrum Disorder' was the most common primary type of need, with 103,400 (31.3%) pupils with EHC plans having this recorded as their primary type of need.

For pupils on SEN support, 'Speech, language and communication needs' was the most common type of need, with 262,400 (25.1%) pupils on SEN support having this recorded as their primary type of need.

Percentage of pupils by primary type of need and SEN provision, January 2022



Source: School Census

Characteristics

Gender

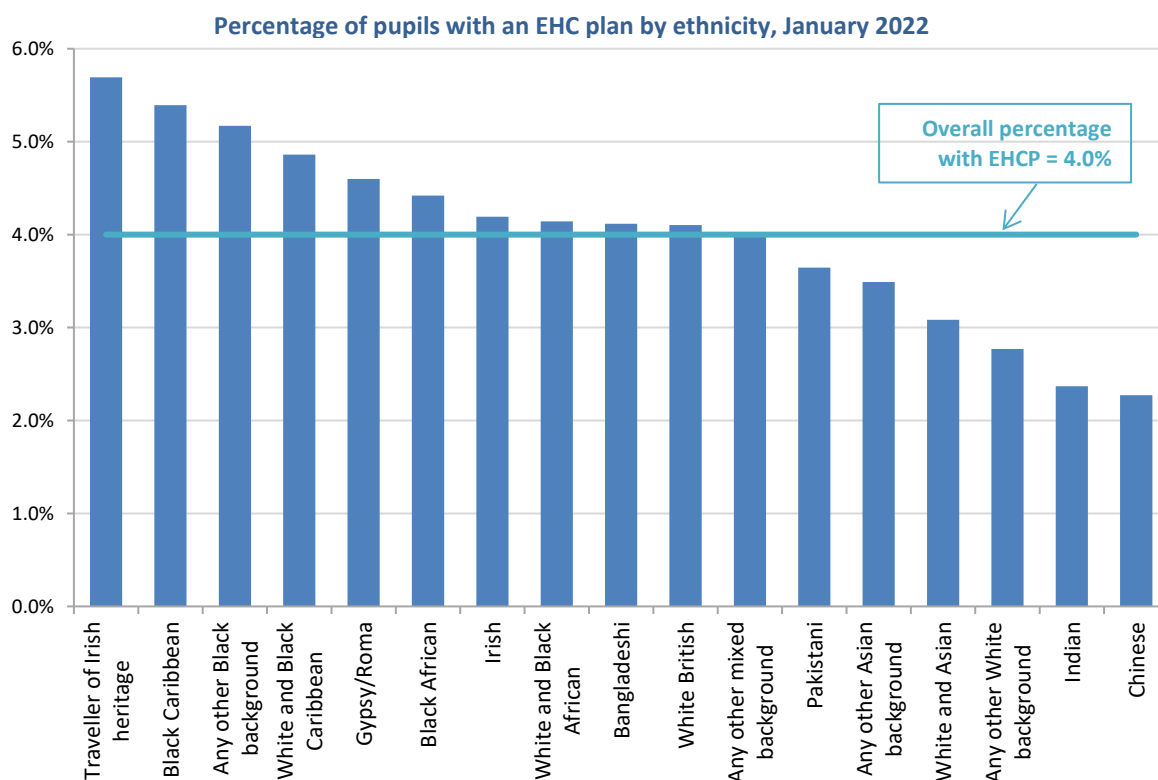
Special educational needs remain more prevalent in boys than girls. In January 2022, 15.4% of boys received SEN support compared to 9.2% of girls, and 5.6% of boys had an EHC plan compared to 2.2% of girls.

Free school meal eligibility

Pupils with special educational needs are more likely to be eligible for free school meals. 37.2% of pupils with special educational needs were eligible for free school meals in January 2022 compared to 19.7% of pupils without special educational needs.

Ethnicity

Travellers of Irish heritage and Black Caribbean pupils had the highest percentage of pupils with an EHC plan in January 2022 (5.7% and 5.4% respectively). Chinese pupils had the lowest percentage of pupils with an EHC plan in January 2022 at 2.3%.



Source: School Census

English as a first language

Of the pupils whose first language is known to be, or believed to be English, in January 2022, 4.1% had an EHC plan and 13.1% received SEN support. This compares to 3.1% and 9.8% for pupils whose first language is known to be, or believed to be other than English.

Types of school

Although the number of pupils in special schools has increased between January 2021 and January 2022, the percentage of pupils with an EHC plan attending state-funded special schools has dropped from 40.6% to 39.4%. These trends continue patterns seen since 2018.

The percentage of pupils with a statement or EHC plan attending independent schools has increased significantly in recent years. In January 2015, 5.3% of all pupils with statements attended independent schools, and this has increased to 7.0% of all pupils with an EHC plan in January 2022.

Percentage of pupils with a statement or EHC plan by type of provision, England, 2015-2022:

School type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Maintained nursery	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
State-funded primary	26.2	25.5	25.8	26.3	27.4	28.3	29.4	29.7
State-funded secondary	24.6	23.5	22.2	20.9	20.4	20.4	21.0	21.6
State-funded special	41.4	42.9	43.8	44.2	43.8	42.6	40.6	39.4
Pupil Referral Units	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9
Independent	5.3	5.7	5.8	6.3	6.1	6.4	6.7	7.0
Non-maintained special	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.1

Early years

The total number of 3- and 4-year-olds in receipt of funded early education decreased between 2020 and 2021, and the percentage with SEN decreased from 6.6% in 2020 to 6.3% in 2021.

More information on prevalence and characteristics can be found in the following publication:

[Special educational needs in England: January 2022](#) Next update due June 2023

[Education provision: children under 5 years of age, January 2021](#) Next update due June 2022

Looked after children and children in need with SEN – prevalence and characteristics

Prevalence: 56.2% of children who had been **looked-after continuously for 12 months** for whom data were available had SEN in 2020/21, which consists of 28.9% with an EHC plan and 27.4% with SEN support. This compares to 48.7% of children in need with SEN and 15.8% of the overall pupil population identified with SEN.

The most common type of need for all looked after children at 31 March 2021 was 'Social, Emotional and Mental Health'.

Note: Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked-after by a local authority if he or she falls into one of the following:

- is provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours [Children Act 1989, Section 20 and 21]
- is subject to a care order [Children Act 1989, Part IV]
- is subject to a placement order

A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health or development will be significantly impaired without the provision of children's social care services, or the child is disabled.

More information on looked after children and children in need with special educational needs can be found in the following publication:

['Outcomes for children in need, including children looked after by local authorities in England'](#)

Next update due March 2023

Outcomes

Outcomes data is published by a range of characteristics, including pupils identified with special educational needs, for those in state-funded schools. The section below gives a summary of the available data, further information can be found in the source publications.

Note: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department for Education cancelled the 2019/20 and 2020/21 national curriculum assessments.

The Early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP) 2019/20 statistical release was cancelled, and the 2020/21 data collection and subsequent statistical release was cancelled.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

There has been a steady increase over time in the percentage of pupils with SEN achieving a good level of development. In 2018/19, 25% of pupils with SEN achieved a good level of development, which is 1 percentage point higher than the figure for 2017/18 at 24%. There was no change in the percentage of pupils with no identified SEN who achieved a good level of development in 2018/19 at 77%.

Phonics screening check

The percentage of year 1 pupils who met the expected standard in the phonics screening check fell slightly in the latest year of assessment, following a period of increases over time. In 2018/19, 43% of pupils with SEN met the expected standard, a decrease of 1 percentage point compared to the 2017/18 figure of 44%. There was also a decrease in the percentage of pupils with no identified SEN meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check, from 89% in 2017/18 to 88% in 2018/19.

Key Stage 1

The percentage of pupils who achieved the expected standard in KS1 teacher assessments (TA) has been fairly stable in recent years for both the SEN and no identified SEN groups.

Percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in KS1 teacher assessments (TA) by SEN provision, 2018/19:

Teacher assessment	SEN	No identified SEN
Reading TA	30	83
Writing TA	22	78
Maths TA	33	84

Key Stage 2

22% of pupils with SEN achieved the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics in 2018/19 compared to 74% of those with no identified SEN – these figures are similar to 2017/18 when 21% of pupils with SEN and 74% of pupils with no identified SEN achieved the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils with SEN have lower progress scores compared to those with no identified SEN and the score is lowest in writing TA.

Progress scores by SEN provision, 2018/19:

Teacher assessment	SEN	No identified SEN
Reading TA	-1.5	0.4
Writing TA	-2.2	0.5
Maths TA	-1.5	0.4

Note: A progress score of -1 would mean that the pupil achieved the equivalent of 1 scaled score point lower in that subject than all pupils with similar prior attainment nationally. See source publication (link below) for detail of definitions.

Key Stage 4

The average attainment 8 score for pupils with SEN in 2020/21 was 31.1 compared to 54.5 for those with no identified SEN.

In 2020/21, 18.3% of pupils with SEN achieved grades 5 or above in English and mathematics GCSEs, compared to 58.0% of pupils with no identified SEN.

See source publication (link below) for detail of definitions.

Post-16 – attainment by age 19

33.9% of pupils identified with SEN in year 11 achieved Level 2 (equivalent to 5+ A*-C/ 9-4 at GCSE) including English and mathematics (GCSEs only) by age 19 in 2020/21, which is 43.1 percentage points lower than pupils with no identified SEN (77.0%).

More information on attainment can be found in the following publications:

[‘Early years foundation stage profile results: 2018 to 2019’](#) Next update due November 2022

[‘Phonics screening check and key stage 1 assessments: England 2019’](#) Next update due between September and October 2022

[‘National Curriculum assessments: Key stage 2, 2019 \(revised\)’](#) Next update due December 2022

[‘Key stage 4 performance 2021’](#) Next update due October 2022

[‘Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 16 to 25 in 2021’](#) Next update due April 2023

Absence, exclusions and suspensions

Information on absence, exclusions and suspensions can be found in the following publications:

[‘Pupil absence in schools in England’](#) Next update due March 2023

[‘Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England: 2019 to 2020’](#) Next update due July 2022

Preparation for Adulthood

Post-16 learner participation

Participation for 16 and 17 year olds

89.2% of 16-17 year olds with an EHC plan were in education and training in March 2021 compared with 93.9% of those with no identified SEN.

Participation in Further Education

In the 2020/21 academic year 16.3% of FE and skills participants aged 19 and over had a self-declared learning difficulty, disability or health problem.

Destinations

After Key Stage 4 - Pupils with special educational needs were less likely to have any sustained destination than those with no identified SEN. 89.3% of pupils with SEN went onto education, employment or apprenticeships compared to 94.7% of those with no identified SEN. To be counted in a destination, young people have to have sustained participation for a 6 month period in the destination year.

After Key Stage 5 - Students with recorded special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools were only 2.6 percentage points less likely to have an overall sustained destination than those students without SEN (85.2% compared to 87.8%, respectively). 76% of those with self-declared Learning Difficulty, Disability or health problem (LLDD) in state-funded mainstream colleges progressed to a sustained education, employment or apprenticeship destination compared to 76% of those without LLDD (2019/20 destinations).

Progression to higher education

In 2019/20, 8.4% of pupils with an EHC plan progressed to HE by age 19, compared to 20.8% of pupils with SEN support and 47.5% for pupils with no identified SEN. The progression rate for pupils with an EHC plan fell in the latest year, whilst the rates increased for pupils with SEN support and pupils with no identified SEN.

More information on Preparation for adulthood can be found in the following publications:

[‘NEET and participation: local authority figures’](#) (Data for previous years can be found here [‘Participation in education and training: local authority figures’](#))

[‘Further education and skills: November 2021’](#) Next update due November 2022

[‘Destinations of key stage 4 and 5 students: 2020’](#) Next update due October 2022

[‘Widening participation in higher education: 2021’](#) Next update due July 2022

Employment status for adults with learning disabilities receiving support from social services

In the 2020-21 financial year, 5.1% of adults with learning disabilities aged 18-64 who were receiving support from social services were in paid employment.

Housing status for adults with learning disabilities receiving support from social services

In the 2020-21 financial year, 78.3% of adults with learning disabilities aged 18-64 who were receiving support from social services lived in their own home or with their families.

More information on Adult Social Care outcomes can be found in the following publication:

[‘Measures from the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework, England - 2020-21’](#) Next update due October 2022

Experience of the SEND system

Total number of EHC plans maintained by local authorities

There were 473,300 children and young people with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans as at January 2022. This is an increase of 10% from 430,700 as at January 2021. This follows similar increases in recent years.

Following the SEND reforms introduced in September 2014 there was a period of transition to move all those with a statement of SEN onto an EHC plan. This transition period formally ended on 31 March 2018 and as at January 2019 there were no pupils remaining on a statement of SEN.

Number of new EHC plans issued by local authorities

62,200 new EHC plans were made during 2021, an increase of 2,100 (3%) when compared against 2020. This follows an increase of 11% from 2019 to 2020.

Number of initial requests for assessment

There were 93,300 initial requests made for assessment for an EHC plan during 2021, up from 76,000 in 2020 and the highest number since data was first collected in 2016.

Timeliness of issuing statements and EHC plans

Of the new EHC plans made during the 2021 calendar year (excluding cases where exceptions apply), 59.9% were issued within the 20 week time limit. This is an increase from 2020 when 58.0% of new plans were issued within the time limit.

This figure excludes exceptional cases where the local authority need not comply with the 20 week time limit if it is impractical to do so.

More information on the experience of the SEND system can be found in the following publication:

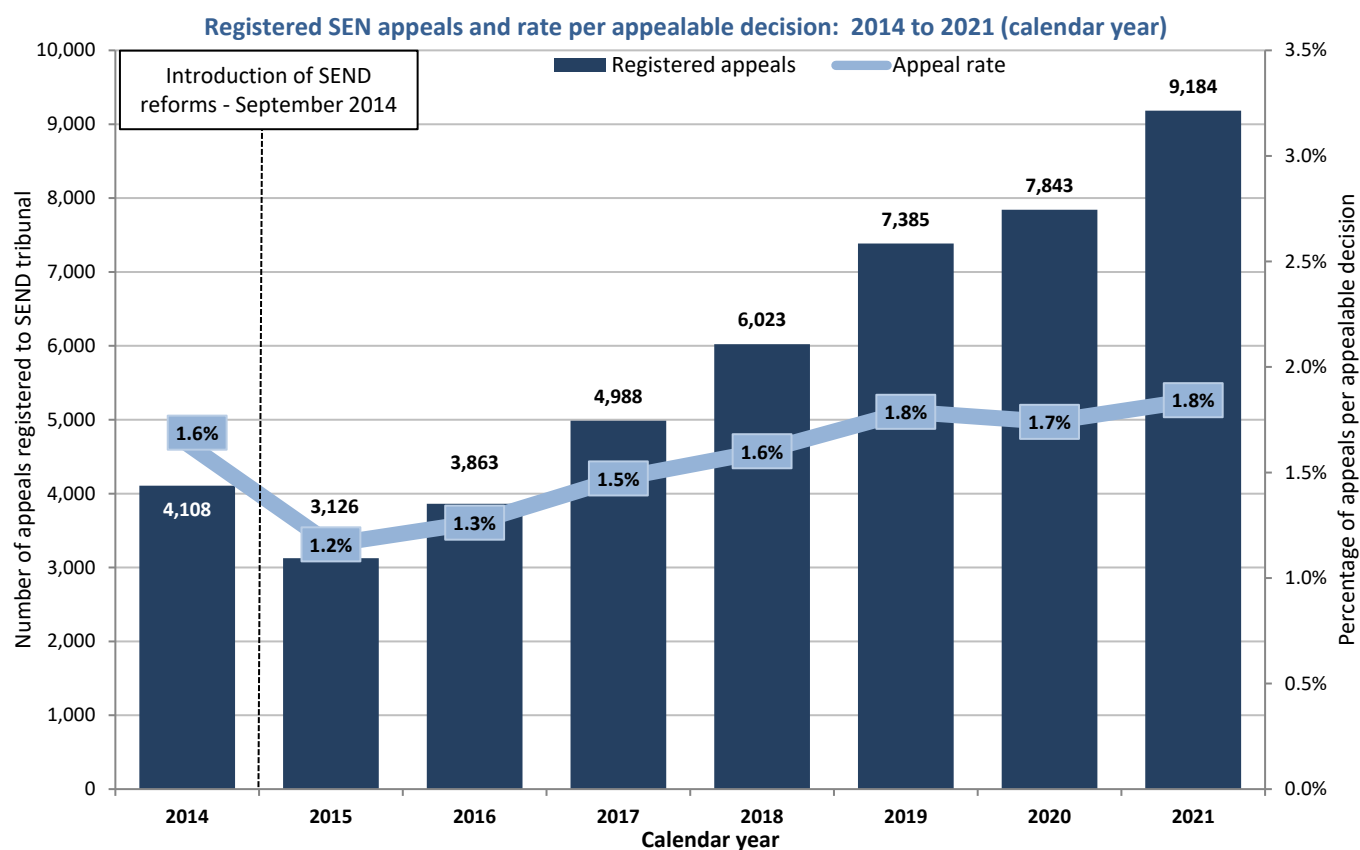
[‘Education, health and care plans’](#) Next update due May 2023

Appeals registered with the SEND tribunal

Parents/carers and young people can register an appeal with the SEND tribunal if, for example, there is a refusal to assess or they are unhappy about the contents of the plan. There were 9,184 appeals registered in 2021 (calendar year), which is equivalent to 1.8% of appealable decisions. This is an increase compared to the previous year when there were 7,843 appeals registered equivalent to 1.7% of appealable decisions.

Note: The total appealable decisions figure is calculated as the sum total of the following:

- Number of initial requests for Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessments refused
- Number of assessments completed and a decision made not to issue an EHC plan
- Number with an EHC plan as at January each year
- Number of EHC plans ceased because the special educational needs of the child or young person are being met without an EHC plan



Source: Ministry of Justice Tribunals data, Appealable decisions DfE SEN2 data from LAs

Of the 8,579 registered SEND appeals in 2020/21 (academic year), 27% were against 'refusal to secure an Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessment' or 'refusal to re-assess' and 62% were in relation to the content of EHC plans.

The most common type of need identified in SEND appeals continues to be Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), accounting for 47% (4,041) of all SEND appeals.

In 2020/21 HMCTS recorded 7,554 outcomes in relation to SEN appeals, an increase of 12% compared to 2019/20, as detailed below:

	2020/21	2019/20
Total outcomes	7,554	6,720
Withdrawn	11% (826)	13% (866)
Conceded	25% (1,903)	31% (2,084)
Outcomes decided by tribunal	64% (4,825)	56% (3,770)
<i>Of decided, part in favour of appellant</i>	<i>96% (4,651)</i>	<i>95% (3,577)</i>

The quarterly tribunal statistics, which were published in June 2022 show 2,612 tribunal receipts with the SEND tribunal between January-March 2022, which is an increase of 38% based on the same period in 2021 (there were 1,899 between January-March 2021).

More information on SEND tribunals can be found in the following publication:

[‘Tribunals statistics’](#) Next update due September 2022

Disability

The DWP Family Resources Survey shows that in 2020-21, 9% of children in the UK had a disability. This proportion has increased slightly since 2009-10. For disabled children, the most common reported impairments are social and behavioural (37%) and mental health (21%).

The DfE Childcare and Early Years survey of Parents for 2018 suggests that 7% of children have longstanding health conditions or disabilities. Children in lone parent families are more likely to have a long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness or disability (10%) or a special educational need (12%) compared with children in couple families (6% and 7% respectively).

The Children in Need (CIN) census is an annual survey from 2008-09 onwards that includes the numbers of disabled CIN in England. The CIN census enables DfE to support future policy development by achieving a better understanding of these vulnerable children. Latest figures show that of those recorded as children in need as at 31 March 2021, 12.7% had a recorded disability.

More information on Disability can be found in the following publication:

[‘Family Resources Survey 2020-21’](#) Next update due March 2023

[‘Childcare and early years survey of parents 2018’](#)

[‘Characteristics of children in need’](#) Next update due October 2022

Related information

Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT)

This tool is produced by the Department for Education, it contains a range of LA level information relating to Education and Children's services (including on SEND) and enables comparisons across all local authorities in England. It is available to access at "[Local Authority Interactive Tool link](#)".

LG Inform

The Department for Education has also worked with the Local Government Association (LGA) to produce a local area SEND comparison tool on LG Inform, a local authority comparison tool similar to the LAIT. With the SEND tool, users can view a range of SEND data on a local area in one report, enabling them to compare LA performance against LAs nationally, LAs in the same region and similar LAs. The report is available at the following link, and users can generate reports for individual local areas: "[Local Area SEN report link](#)".

Ofsted/ CQC inspections

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspect local areas' effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Read more about these inspections in the inspection framework and handbook. Outcome letters from these inspections can be found here: "[Ofsted/ CQC outcomes link](#)".

Feedback: We welcome feedback on any aspect of the publication at:
SEN.Statistics@education.gov.uk



Department
for Education

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About this publication:

Enquiries: Rose Paul, Department for Education, St Pauls Place, Sheffield.

Email: SEN.Statistics@education.gov.uk

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