



Department
for Education

Special Educational Needs in England, January 2014

Methodology Document

Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. Background | 3 |
| 2. Methodology | 4 |
| 2.1. Data cleaning | 4 |
| 2.2. Data Processing | 4 |
| 2.3. Production of Statistical First Release | 4 |
| 2.4. Percentage calculations | 5 |
| 3. Process Map | 5 |
| Annex A: Data validation rules for SEN2 survey | 6 |

1. Background

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age
- b) have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority
- c) are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would so do if special educational provision was not made for them.

Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

Special educational provision means:

- a) for children of two or over, educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the local authority (LA), other than special schools, in the area
- (a) for children under two, educational provision of any kind.

The special educational needs of the great majority of children should be met effectively within mainstream settings through Early Years Action and Early Years Action Plus or School Action and School Action Plus, without the local education authority needing to make a statutory assessment. In a very small number of cases the LA will need to make a statutory assessment of special educational needs and then consider whether or not to issue a statement.

The figures in Special Educational Needs in England Statistical First Release (SFR) are taken from the School Census statistical return and the SEN2 survey for spring 2014, along with historical figures taken from the collections for 2009 to 2013.

The School Census collects information about individual pupils and information about the schools themselves, such as their educational provision. The individual pupil information collected includes free school meal eligibility, ethnicity, special educational needs (SEN), attendance and exclusions.

The SEN2 Survey collects information on the number of SEN statements issued by an individual local authority. The school census has collected information from schools on pupils with SEN on the census date in January since 1985. Figures for pupils with SEN without statements were collected from maintained primary and secondary schools for the first time in 1995. The SEN2 Survey has collected information on children with statements on the census date in January and new statements made in the previous calendar year from LAs since 1984.

2. Methodology

Local authorities (LAs) and schools return their information on the number of pupils with SEN to DfE via the COLLECT (Collections On-Line for Learning, Education, Children and Teachers) system. Further information on the School Census return can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/school-census>

Further information on the SEN2 Survey can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/special-educational-needs-survey>

2.1. Data cleaning

COLLECT has built-in validation rules which flag up data which is invalid or the quality is questionable. This allows schools and LAs to identify errors and clean the data before they submit it to DfE. Users are encouraged to clean all errors and double-check data where queries are flagged. Users can add notes to their return if there is a genuine reason for “unusual” data. [Annex A](#) details the validation rules which are ran on the SEN2 Survey in COLLECT. Information on the validation rules for the School Census can be found at the link in section 2 above.

2.2. Data Processing

Once all users have submitted and cleaned their data, a final dataset is formed. The underlying data used in this publication is available to download on the publication page.

The underlying data zip file contains the data itself in .csv format and metadata in .txt format. The metadata document contains a list of the variables and their definitions.

2.3. Production of Statistical First Release

The SFR contains 32 national tables and an additional 16 local authority level tables which cover:

1. Number and percentage of children with SEN in nursery schools, state-funded primary schools, state-funded secondary schools, maintained special schools, non-maintained special schools, independent schools and pupils referral units
2. In state-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools information on the number and percentage of pupils at school action, school action plus and with statements of SEN
3. In independent and general hospital schools, the number and percentage of pupils with SEN without a statement and with a statement of SEN
4. The number and percentage of pupils with SEN by pupil characteristics such as age, gender, national curriculum year group, free school meal eligibility, ethnicity and English as an additional language
5. The number of special schools including provision approved for and size of school.

6. Number of final statements of special educational need issued within 26 weeks excluding and including exception cases as a proportion of all such statements issued in 2013

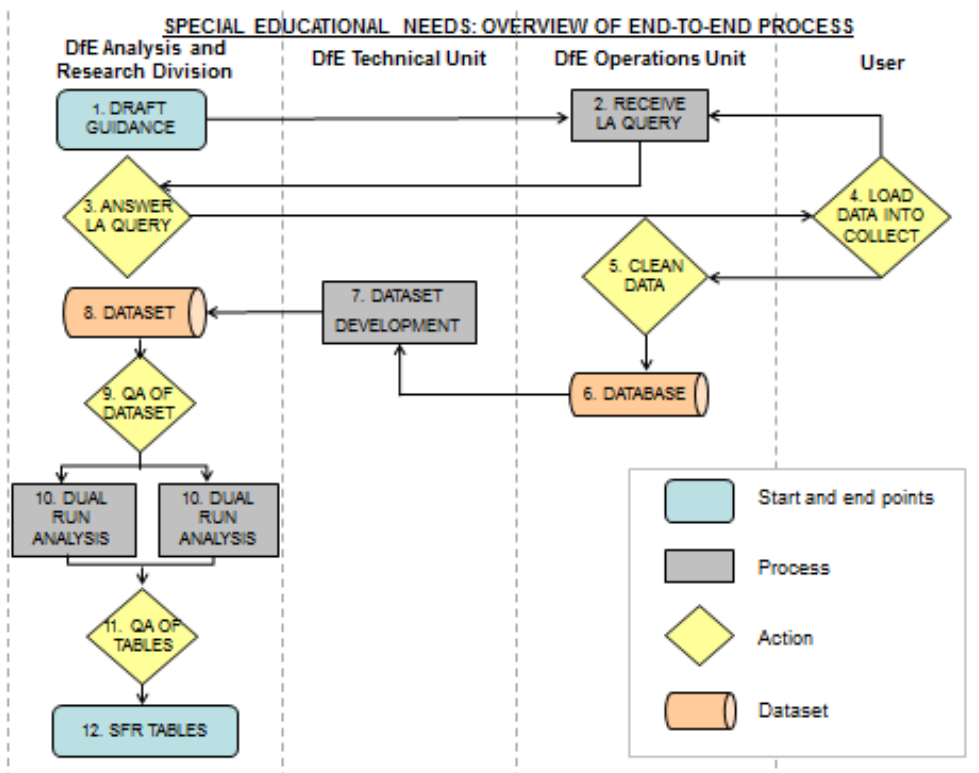
2.4. Percentage calculations

1. Incidence of pupils with statements of SEN - Statements expressed as a percentage of Pupils.
2. Incidence of pupils with SEN without a statement (Independent and general hospital schools) – No Statements expressed as a percentage of Pupils
3. Incidence of pupils with SEN without a statement (other schools) - total of School Action and School Action Plus, expressed as a percentage of Pupils
4. Incidence of pupils at School Action – School Action expressed as a percentage of Pupils
5. Incidence of pupils at School Action Plus – School Action Plus expressed as a percentage of Pupils

3. Process Map

The process map shown in Figure 1 covers the end to end process of the SEN2 survey from data collection through to publication of the SFR.

Figure 1: Overview of end to end process of SEN collection and publication



Annex A: Data validation rules for SEN2 survey

| Seq Number | Error/Query | Description | Field Name | Box No | OK | Message |
|------------|-------------|--|---|--|----|---|
| 8025Q | Query | <ContactForename> must be entered. | ContactForename | 2A | √ | Please Check: Contact Forename is missing |
| 8020Q | Query | <ContactSurname> must be entered. | ContactSurname | 2B | √ | Please check: Contact Surname is missing |
| 420Q | Query | <Phone> must be entered. | Phone | 2C | √ | Telephone number is missing |
| 270Q | Query | <Email> should be entered and it should contain the character @ | Email | 2D | √ | Email address is missing or does not contain @ |
| 3050 | Error | The entry in <Totall> must equal the sum of entries in <Tot05> <Tot510> <Tot1115> and <Tot1619> | Total Tot05 Tot510 Tot1115 Tot1619 | 7 3 4 5 6 | | Message: The total number of children with statements must equal the sum of the age breakdown. |
| 3051 | Error | The entry in <TotM> must equal the sum of entries in <Meyedset> <Mumain> <Msen> <Mmmain> <Mmspec> <Mnmspec> <Mispec> <Moind> <Mhosp> <Mmpru> <Mmacad> <Mspacad> <Mapacad> <Mmfree> <Mspfree> and <Mapfree> | Tot_m Meyedset Mumain Msen Mmmain Mmspec Mnmspec Mispec Moind Mhosp Mmpru Mmacad Mspacad Mapacad Mmfree Mspfree Mapfree | 24 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 | | Message: The total number of children receiving the provision specified must equal the sum of the breakdown by establishment. |
| 3052 | Error | The entry in <Totm> must not exceed the entry in <Totall>. | Totm Totall | 24 7 | | Message: The number of children receiving the provision specified is greater than the total number of children with statements. |
| 3053 | Error | The entry in <Mpexc> must not exceed the entry in <Totall>. | Mpexc | 25 | | Message: The number of children with |

| | | | | | | |
|-------|-------|--|--|----------------------------------|---|---|
| | | | Total | 7 | | statements who are permanently excluded is greater than the total number of children with statements. |
| 3054 | Error | The entry in <Mothlea> must not exceed the entry in <Total>. | Mothlea Total | 26 7 | | Message: The number of children with statements who are educated under other arrangements made by the LA is greater than the total number of children with statements. |
| 3055 | Error | The entry in <Mothpar> must not exceed the entry in <Total>. | Mothpar Total | 27 7 | | Message: The number of children with statements who are educated under other arrangements made by parents is greater than the total number of children with statements. |
| 3056 | Error | The entry in <Mawait> must not exceed the entry in <Total>. | Mawait Total | 28 7 | | Message: The number of children with statements awaiting provision is greater than the total number of children with statements. |
| 3057 | Error | The entry in <Total> must equal the sum of entries in <Totm> <Mpexc> <Mothlea> <Mothpar> and <Mawait>. | Total Totm Mpexc Mothlea Mothpar Mawait | 7 24 25 26 27 28 | | Message: The total number of children with statements should equal the number on roll of school plus children educated other than in school. |
| 3058Q | Query | Query: {Absolute value of (Total of pupils with statements 2013 minus Total of pupils with statements 2014) > 100} and {% change between 2013 and 2014 > + 5%} | Total 2013 Total 2014 | | √ | Please Check: There is a significant change in the number of pupils with statements since the previous year |
| 3059 | Error | The entry in <Newall> must equal the sum of entries in <New05> <New510> <New1115> and <New1619>. | Newall New05 New510 New1115 New1619 | 33 29 30 31 32 | | Message: The total number of children for whom statements were newly made in 2013 must equal the sum of the age breakdown. |
| 3060 | Error | The entry in <Totn> must equal the sum of entries in <Neyedset> <Numain> <Nsen> <Nmmain> <Nmspec> <Nnmspec> <Nispec> <Noind> <Nhosp> <Nmpru> <Nmacad> <Nspacad> <Napacad> <Nmfree> <Nspfree> and <Napfree> | Totn Neyedset Numain Nsen Nmmain Nmspec | 50 34 35 36 37 38 | | Message: The total number of children for whom statements were newly made in 2013 receiving the provision specified must equal the sum of the breakdown by establishment. |

| | | | | | | |
|------|-------|---|---|--|--|---|
| | | | Nnmspec Nispec Noind Nhosp Nmpru Nmacad Nspacad Napacad Nmfree Nspfrees Napfree | 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 | | |
| 3061 | Error | The entry in <Totn> must not exceed the entry in <Newall>. | Totn Newall | 50 33 | | Message: The number of children for whom statements were newly made in 2013 receiving the provision specified is greater than the number of children with newly made statements. |
| 3062 | Error | The entry in <Npexc> must not exceed the entry in <Newall>. | Npexc Newall | 51 33 | | Message: The number of children for whom statements were newly made in 2013 who are permanently excluded is greater than the number of children with newly made statements. |
| 3063 | Error | The entry in <Nothlea> must not exceed the entry in <Newall>. | Nothlea Newall | 52 33 | | Message: The number of children for whom statements were newly made in 2013 who are educated under other arrangements made by the LA is greater than the number of children with newly made statements. |
| 3064 | Error | The entry in <Nothpar> must not exceed the entry in <Newall>. | Nothpar Newall | 53 33 | | Message: The number of newly stated children who are educated under other arrangements made by parents is greater than the number of children with newly made statements. |
| 3065 | Error | The entry in <Nawait> must not exceed the entry in <Newall>. | Nawait Newall | 54 33 | | Message: The number of newly stated children awaiting provision is greater than the number of children with newly made statements. |
| 3066 | Error | The entry in <Newall> must equal the sum of entries in <Totn> <Npexc> <Nothlea> <Nothpar> and <Nawait>. | Newall Totn Npexc | 33 50 51 | | Message: The total number of newly stated children should equal the number on roll of school plus those |

| | | | | | | |
|------|-------|---|--|----------------------|---|--|
| | | | Nothlea Nothpar Nawait | 52 53 54 | | educated other than in school. |
| 3067 | Query | {Absolute value of (Total of pupils with new statements 2013 minus Total of pupils with new statements 2014) > 75} and {% change between 2013 and 2014 > + 20%} | Newall 2013 Newall 2014 | | √ | Please Check: There is a significant change in the number of pupils with new statements since the previous year |
| 3068 | Error | The entry in <TotIncExc> must be equal to or greater than the entry in <IncExc26week> | TotIncExc IncExc26week | 62 63 | | Message: The number of statements issued including exception cases must be equal to or greater than the number of statements issued within 26 weeks including exception cases. |
| 3069 | Error | The entry in <TotNoExc> must be equal to or greater than the entry in <NoExc26week> | TotNoExc NoExc26week | 64 65 | | Message: The number of statements issued excluding exception cases must be equal to or greater than the number of statements issued within 26 weeks excluding exception cases. |
| 3070 | Error | The entry in <TotIncExc> must be equal to or greater than the entry in <TotNoExc> | TotIncExc TotNoExc | 62 64 | | Message: The total number of statements issued including exception cases must be equal to or greater than the total number of statements issued excluding exception cases. |
| 3071 | Error | The entry in <IncExc26week> must be equal to or greater than the entry in <NoExc26week> | IncExc26week NoExc26week | 63 65 | | Message: The number of statements issued within 26 weeks including exception cases must be equal to or greater than the number of statements issued within 26 weeks excluding exception cases. |
| 3072 | Error | (<TotIncExc> minus <TotNoExc>) should be greater than or equal to (<IncExc26week> minus <NoExc26week>) | TotIncExc TotNoExc IncExc26week NoExc26week | 62 64 63 65 | | Message: The total number of exception cases must be greater than or equal to the number of exception cases completed within 26 weeks. |

Additional data validation rules for SEN2 survey

Additional validation checks were conducted during the SFR production process to check the number of statements issued in 2013 matched in part 2 and part 3. In some cases the figures did not match so we consulted with local authorities. This highlighted errors in the returns for some local authorities, hence the decision to delay publication until the differences were corrected or explained.



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