



Department  
for Education

# **Special educational needs: an analysis and summary of data sources**

**May 2018**

# Contents

Introduction	3
Prevalence and characteristics	6
Key trends	6
Type of need	7
Characteristics	7
Early years	8
Looked after children and children in need with SEN – prevalence and characteristics	9
Attainment	10
Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)	10
Phonics screening check	10
Key Stage 1	10
Key Stage 2	10
Key Stage 4	11
Post-16 – attainment by age 19	11
Looked after children with SEN - attainment	12
Preparation for Adulthood	13
Post-16 learner participation	13
Destinations	13
Employment status for adults with learning disabilities	13
Accommodation status for adults with learning disabilities	13
Absence and exclusions	14
Absence	14
Exclusions	15
Permanent exclusions	15
Fixed period exclusions	16
Experience of the SEND system	17
Statements and EHC plans – numbers, transfers and timeliness of issuing	17
Appeals registered with the SEND tribunal	17
Related information	19
Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT)	19
LG Inform	19
Ofsted/ CQC inspections	19
NHS England publications	19

## Introduction

This document provides a combination of analysis and links to the key data sources on children and young people with special educational needs (SEN). This is the fifth release in this format 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 18.

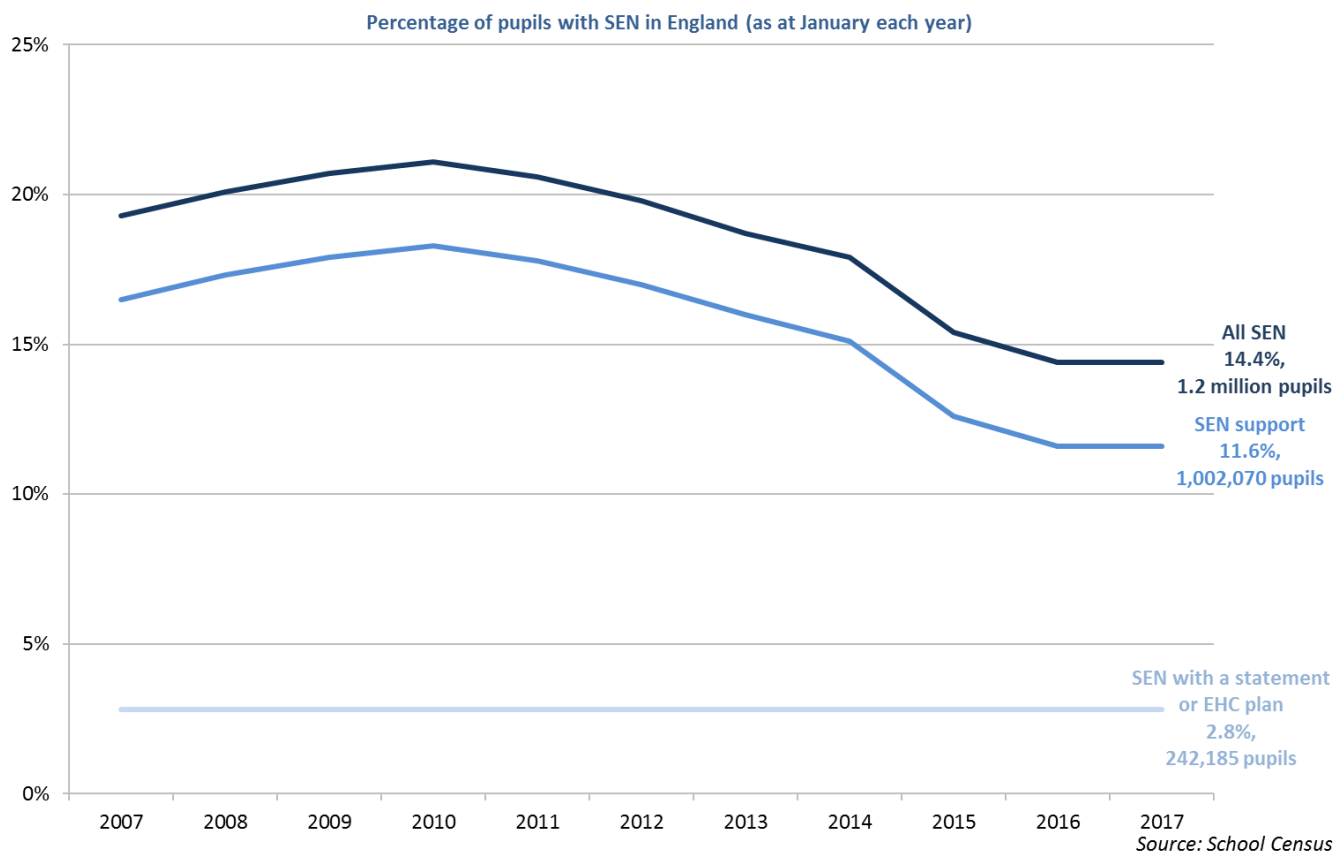
Topic	Publication title link	Latest data reference point	Time series data available?	LA level data by SEN available?	When next published and how often updated
Prevalence and characteristics	<a href="#">‘Special educational needs in England: January 2017’</a>	January 2017	Yes	Yes	July 2018, annual
Early years SEN prevalence	<a href="#">Education provision: children under 5 years of age, January 2017</a>	January 2017	Yes	Yes	June 2018, annual
Early years Foundation Stage profile (EYFSP)	<a href="#">‘Early years foundation stage profile results: 2016 to 2017’</a>	2016/17 (academic year)	Yes	Yes	November 2018, annual
Phonics screening check and Key Stage 1 attainment	<a href="#">‘Phonics screening check and key stage 1 assessments: England 2017’</a>	2016/17	Yes	Yes	September 2018, 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
Key Stage 2 attainment	<a href="#">‘National curriculum assessments at key stage 2: 2017 (revised)’</a>	2016/17	Yes	Yes	December 2018, annual
Key Stage 4 attainment	<a href="#">‘Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2016 to 2017’</a>	2016/17	Yes	Yes	January 2019, annual
Attainment by age 19	<a href="#">‘Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 19 in 2016’</a>	2015/16	Yes	Yes	May 2018, annual
Post-16 participation	<a href="#">‘Participation in education and training: local authority figures’</a>	June 2017	Yes	Yes	TBC
Further Education learning difficulty and disability numbers	<a href="#">‘FE data library’</a>	2016/17	Yes	No	January 2019, annual
Destinations measures	<a href="#">‘Destinations of key stage 4 and key stage 5 pupils: 2016’</a>	2015/16	Yes	Yes	October 2018, annual
Absence (annual release)	<a href="#">‘Pupil absence in schools in England: 2016 to 2017’</a>	2016/17	Yes	Yes	March 2019, 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
Exclusions	<a href="#">‘Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England: 2015 to 2016’</a>	2015/16	Yes	Yes	July 2018, annual
Statements and EHC plans – numbers, transfers and timeliness of issuing	<a href="#">‘Statements of SEN and EHC plans: England 2018’</a>	January 2018	Yes	Yes	May 2019, annual
Appeals registered with the SEND tribunal	<a href="#">‘Tribunals statistics’</a>	October – December 2017	Yes	Yes	June 2018, quarterly
Outcomes for looked after children	<a href="#">‘Outcomes for children looked after by LAs: 31 March 2017’</a>	2016/17	Yes	Yes	March 2019, annual
Measures from Adult Social Care Outcomes framework	<a href="#">Measures from the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework, England - 2016-17</a>	2016-17 (financial year)	Yes	No, CCG level data available	October 2018, annual

# Prevalence and characteristics

## Key trends



The number of pupils with SEN increased from 1.23 million pupils (14.4%) in 2016 to 1.24 million pupils in 2017. The proportion of SEN pupils has been decreasing since 2010 (21.1%), however in 2017 the proportion remained at 14.4%.

The proportion of pupils with a statement/ EHC plan has remained at 2.8% since 2007. The number of children with statements of SEN slowly decreased from 2007 (232,760) to 2010 (223,945) and then slowly increased to 242,185 in 2017.

After a period increasing between 2007 and 2010, the percentage of pupils with SEN support (SEN without statements/ EHC plan) fell for five years in a row, from 18.3% in 2010 to 11.6% in 2016. This proportion has remained stable in 2017 at 11.6%.

### Pupils with SEN are currently categorised 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. This category has replaced the former 'School Action' and 'School Action Plus' categories.

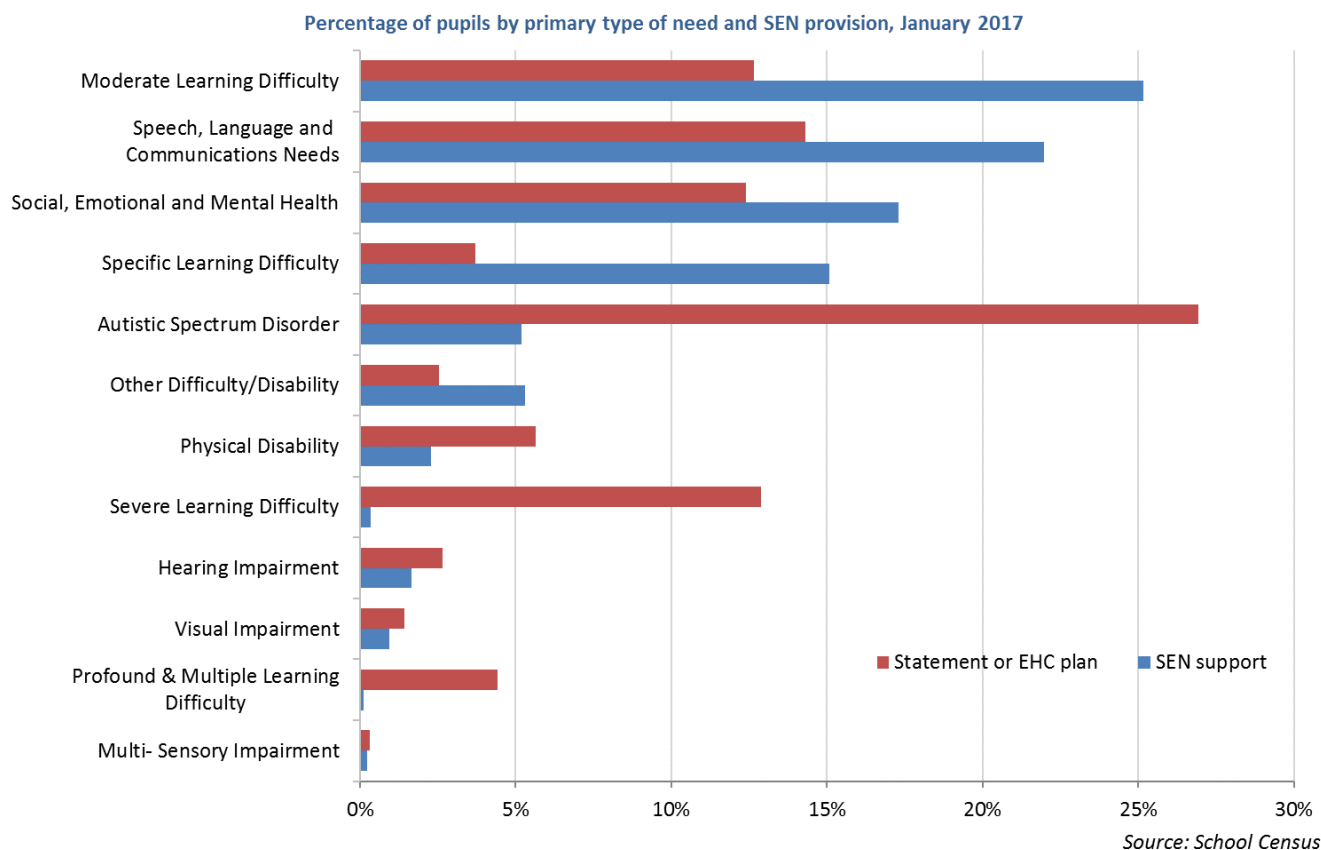
**Statement/ Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan:** A pupil has a statement of SEN or an EHC plan when a local authority issued one following a formal assessment. This document sets out the child's needs and the extra help they should receive.

## Type of need

In January 2017, the most prevalent type of primary need identified among pupils with SEN was 'Moderate Learning Difficulty', with 22.7% of pupils recording this as their primary need.

For pupils with statements or EHC plans, 'Autistic Spectrum Disorder' was the most common primary type of need, with 26.9% of pupils with statements or EHC plans having this primary type of need.

'Moderate Learning Difficulty' was also the most common type of need for pupils on SEN support; 25.2% of pupils on SEN support had this primary type of need.



## Characteristics

### Gender

Special educational needs remain more prevalent in boys than girls. 14.6% of boys are on SEN support compared to 8.1% of girls. 4.0% of boys have a statement or EHC plan compared to 1.6% girls.

### Free school meal eligibility

Pupils with special educational needs are more likely to be eligible for free school meals. 26.6% of pupils with special educational needs were eligible for free school meals in 2017 compared to 11.8% of pupils without special educational needs.

## Ethnicity

Overall, 2.9% of white-British pupils have statements of SEN/ EHC plan compared to 2.6% of minority ethnic pupils. For SEN support, the figures are 11.9% and 10.5% respectively. Travellers of Irish heritage and Black Caribbean pupils had the highest percentage of pupils with statements or EHC plans (4.4% and 4.0% respectively). Indian pupils had the lowest percentage of pupils with statements or EHC plans at 1.8%, compared with 2.8% of all pupils nationally.

## English as a first language

Of the pupils whose first language is known to be, or believed to be English 2.9% have a statement of SEN/ EHC plan and 11.7% are SEN support. This compares to 2.3% and 10.2% for pupils whose first language is known to be, or believed to be other than English.

## Types of school

The percentage of pupils with a statement or EHC plan attending state-funded special schools has seen a year on year increase since January 2010. In January 2010, 38.2% of pupils with statements attended state-funded special schools, and this has increased to 43.8% of pupils with statements or EHC plans in January 2017.

### Percentage of pupils with a statement or EHC plan by type of provision, England, 2010-2017:

School type	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Maintained nursery	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
State-funded primary	25.8	25.8	25.9	26.0	26.2	26.2	25.5	25.8
State-funded secondary	28.8	28.4	27.7	26.9	25.7	24.6	23.5	22.2
State-funded special	38.2	38.7	39.0	39.6	40.5	41.4	42.9	43.8
Pupil Referral Units	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.7
Independent	4.2	4.3	4.7	4.9	5.1	5.3	5.7	5.8
Non-maintained special	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.5

## Early years

The total number of 2-year-olds benefitting from funded early years education has increased in 2017 and the proportion with SEN has increased slightly from 3.0% to 3.2%. Most of this increase in SEN was due to an increase of those with SEN support.

The number of 3- and 4-year-olds in receipt of funded early education has decreased in 2017 however the percentage with SEN has increased slightly from 6.0% to 6.1%. The increase was due to those on SEN support, the percentage with a statement or EHC plan has remained at 0.7%.



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

[‘Special educational needs in England: January 2017’](#) Next update due July 2018

[Education provision: children under 5 years of age, January 2017](#) Next update due June 2018

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

**Prevalence:** 56.3% of children who had been looked after continuously for 12 months for whom data were available had a special educational need (SEN) in 2016/17, which consists of 26.7% with a statement or EHC plan and 29.6% on SEN support. This compares to 45.9% of children in need with SEN and 14.4% of all children with SEN.

The most common type of need for looked after children was ‘Social, Emotional and Mental Health’ – 37.6% of looked after children with a statement or EHC plan had this type of need compared to 16.3% of all children with a statement or EHC plan.

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

[‘Outcomes for children looked after by LAs: 31 March 2017’](#) (published March 2018) Next update due March 2019

## Attainment

### Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

There has been a steady increase over time in the percentage of SEN pupils achieving a good level of development, in line with the increase for all pupils. In 2016/17, 23% of pupils with SEN achieved a good level of development; this is 53 percentage points lower than pupils without SEN (76%). (A new Foundation Stage Profile was introduced in 2012/13 and data for earlier years is not comparable).

### Phonics screening check

There has been steady increases over time in the percentages of pupils with SEN meeting the required standard. In 2016/17 43% of pupils with SEN met the required standard compared to 87% of pupils with no SEN, a gap of 44 percentage points.

### Key Stage 1

More pupils with SEN met the expected standard in all subjects in 2016/17 compared to 2015/16. In 2016/17, the attainment gap is 53 points in reading, 56 points in writing and 51 points in mathematics. The gap has increased across all subjects compared to 2016, by 1 percentage point in reading and mathematics and by 2 percentage points in writing.

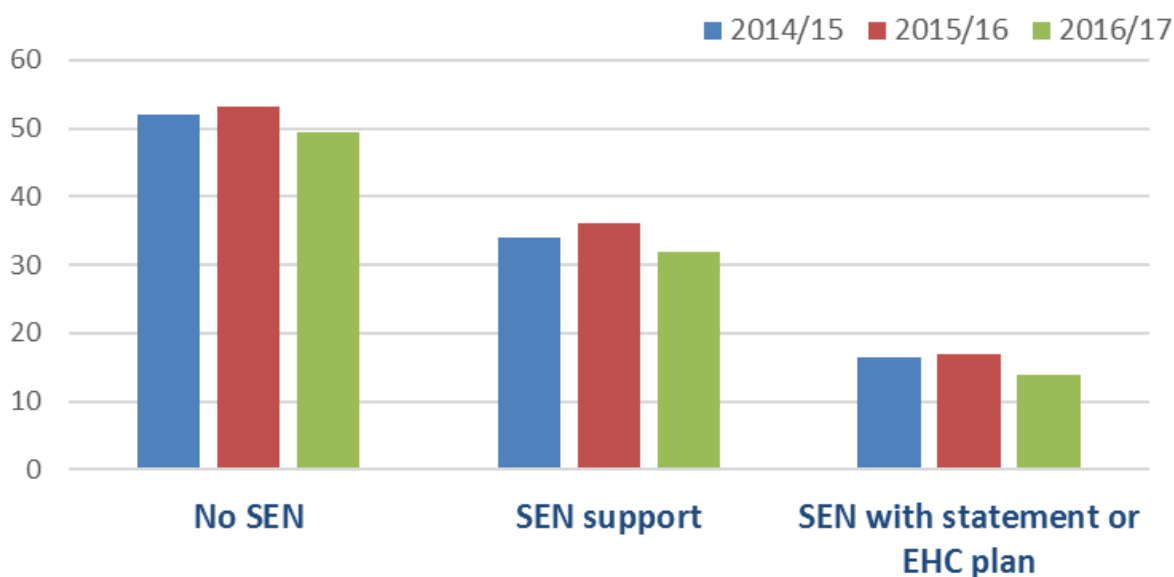
### Key Stage 2

18% of pupils with SEN achieved the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016/17 compared to 70% of those with no SEN – these figures are an increase compared to 2015/16 when 14% of pupils with SEN and 62% of pupils with no SEN achieved the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics. (Changes to the National Curriculum tests were introduced in 2015/16 and data for earlier years is not comparable, see source publication (linked below) for details).

Pupils with SEN have lower progress scores compared to those with no SEN and the score is lowest in writing. For reading the progress score is -1.6 for SEN pupils and 0.3 for those with no SEN; for writing the progress score is -2.6 for SEN pupils and 0.5 for those with no SEN and for mathematics the progress score is -1.6 for SEN pupils and 0.3 for those with no SEN. 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.

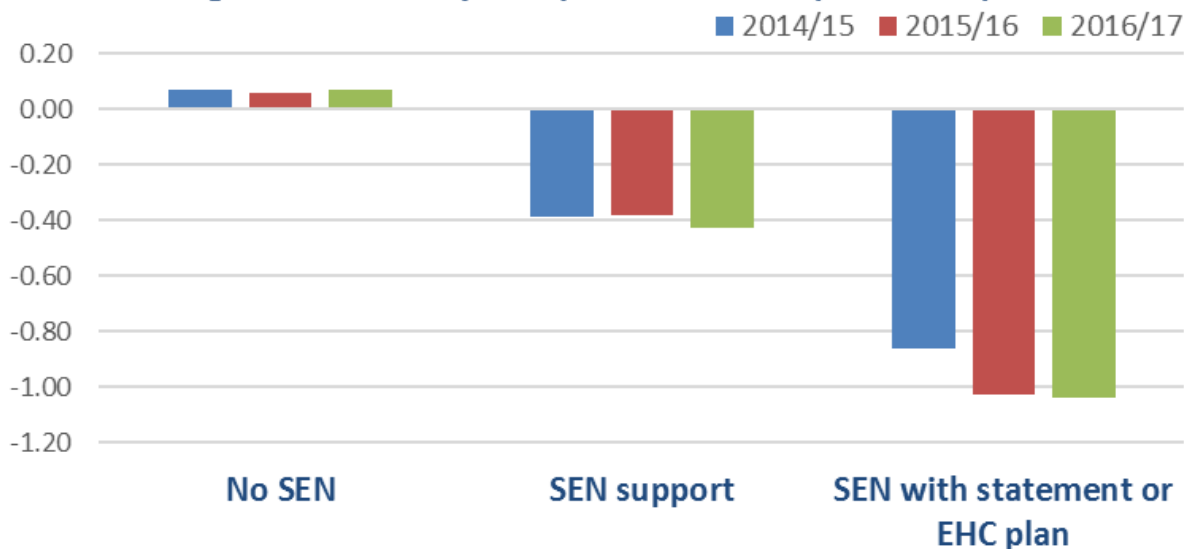
## Key Stage 4

Attainment 8 score, by SEN provision: 2014/15 - 2016/17



Source: National Pupil Database

Progress 8 score, by SEN provision: 2014/15 - 2016/17



Source: National Pupil Database

New attainment indicators were introduced in 2014/15 at Key Stage 4 – Attainment 8 and Progress 8. The attainment 8 score for pupils with SEN in 2016/17 was 27.1 compared to 49.5 for those with no SEN. The progress 8 score for pupils with SEN was -0.59 compared to 0.07 for those with no SEN. The score of -0.59 indicates that pupils with SEN achieve on average around half a grade lower per subject than other pupils with the same KS2 attainment. (See source publication (link below) for detail of definitions).

## Post-16 – attainment by age 19

32.9% of pupils with SEN achieved Level 2 including English and mathematics by age 19 in 2015/16, which is 45.1 percentage points lower than pupils without SEN (78.1%).

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

[‘Early years foundation stage profile results: 2016 to 2017’](#) Next update due November 2018

[‘Phonics screening check and key stage 1 assessments: England 2017’](#) Next update due September 2018

[‘National curriculum assessments at key stage 2: 2017 \(revised\)’](#) Next update due December 2018

[‘Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2016 to 2017’](#) Next update due January 2019

[‘Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 19 in 2016’](#).Next update due May 2018

## **Looked after children with SEN - attainment**

**Key Stage 2 attainment:** 14% of looked after children with SEN achieved the expected level in Key Stage 2 reading, writing and mathematics in 2016/17. This compares with 18% of non-looked after children with SEN.

**Key Stage 4 attainment:** The attainment 8 score for looked after children with SEN in 2016/17 was 13.0 compared to a score of 25.3 for non-looked after children with SEN. The progress 8 score for looked after children with SEN in 2016/17 was -1.45 compared to -0.77 for non-looked after children with SEN.

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

[‘Outcomes for children looked after by LAs: 31 March 2017’](#) Next update due March 2019

## Preparation for Adulthood

### Post-16 learner participation

#### Participation for 16 and 17 year olds

87.4% of 16/17 year olds with SEN with a statement or EHC plan were in education and training in June 2017, this is 4.2 percentage points lower than those without SEN (91.5%).

#### Participation in Further Education

In the 2016/17 academic year 194,210 learners in Further Education (FE) aged under 19, self-declared a learning difficulty or disability (LDD) (21.2% of all learners in this age group) . There were 368,890 learners aged 19 and over in Further Education (FE) with a self-declared learning difficulty or disability (LDD) (16.5% of all learners in this age group).

### Destinations

**After Key Stage 4** - Young people at the end of compulsory schooling: 90% of pupils with a statement were in a sustained education or employment/ training destination six months after completing Key Stage 4, compared to 88% of pupils with SEN without statements and 95% of those without SEN (2015/16 destinations).

**After Key Stage 5** - Young people who took A levels/level 3 qualifications: 87% of pupils with SEN in schools progressed to a sustained education or employment/ training destination six monthly after completing Key Stage 5, compared to 91% of those without SEN. 85% of those with Learning Difficulty or Disability (LDD) in colleges progressed to a sustained education or employment/ training destination compared to 88% of those without LDD (2015/16 destinations).

### Employment status for adults with learning disabilities

In the 2016-17 financial year, 5.7% of adults with learning disabilities aged 18-64 who were receiving support from social services were in paid employment, compared to 5.8% in the previous year.

### Accommodation status for adults with learning disabilities

In the 2016-17 financial year, 76.2% of adults with learning disabilities aged 18-64 who were receiving support from social services lived in their own home or with families, compared to 75.4% in the previous year.

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

[‘Participation in education and training: local authority figures’](#)

[‘FE data library’](#) Next update due December 2018

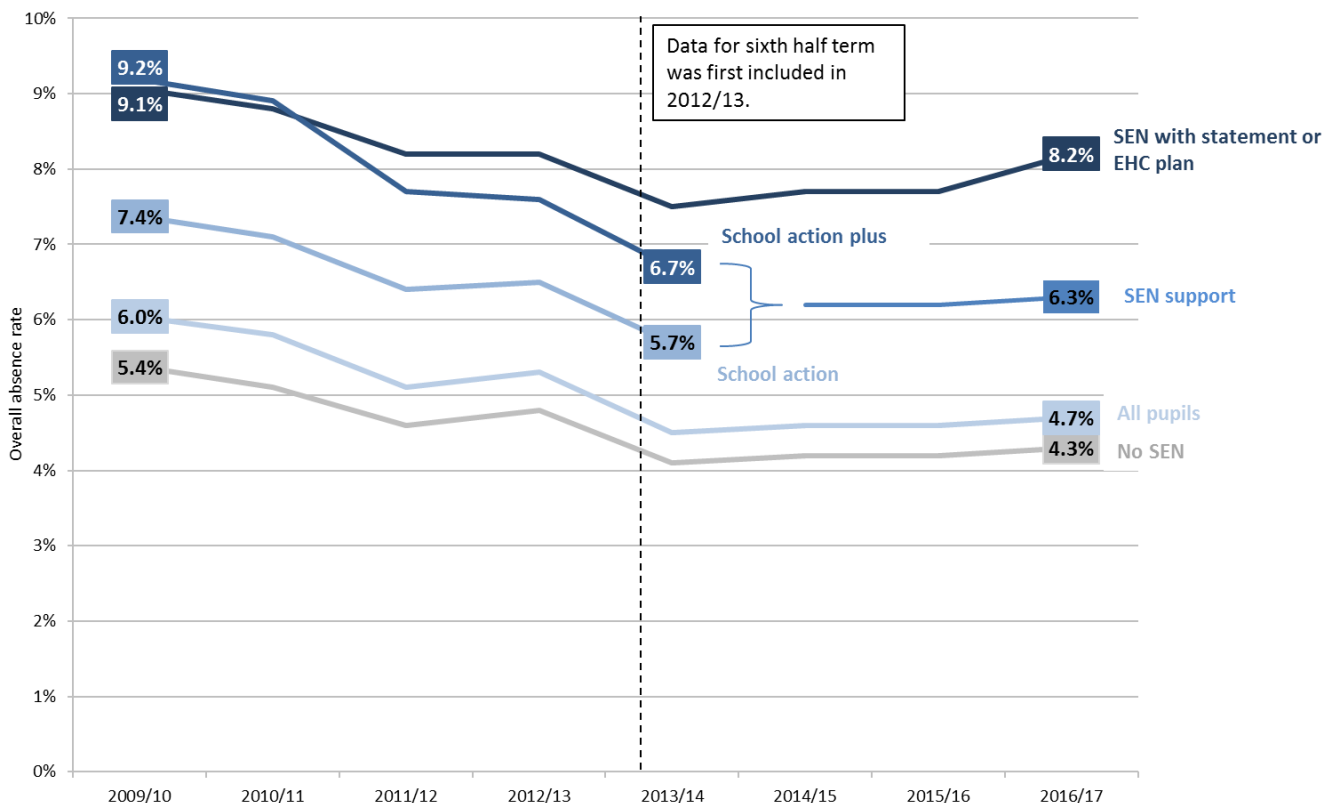
[‘Destinations of key stage 4 and key stage 5 pupils: 2016’](#) Next update due October 2018

[‘Measures from the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework, England - 2016-17’](#) Next update due October 2018

# Absence and exclusions

## Absence

Percentage of sessions missed due to overall absence, by SEN provision: 2009/10 - 2016/17



Source: School Census

8.2% of sessions were missed for pupils with statements or EHC plans in 2016/17 compared to 6.3% for pupils on SEN support and 4.3% for pupils without SEN.

23.8% of pupils with statements or EHC plans were persistent absentees in 2016/17 compared to 17.8% for pupils on SEN support and 9.0% for pupils without SEN.

Pupils with primary SEN type of profound and multiple learning difficulties were most likely to be absent from school in 2016/17, these pupils missed 14.1% of sessions.

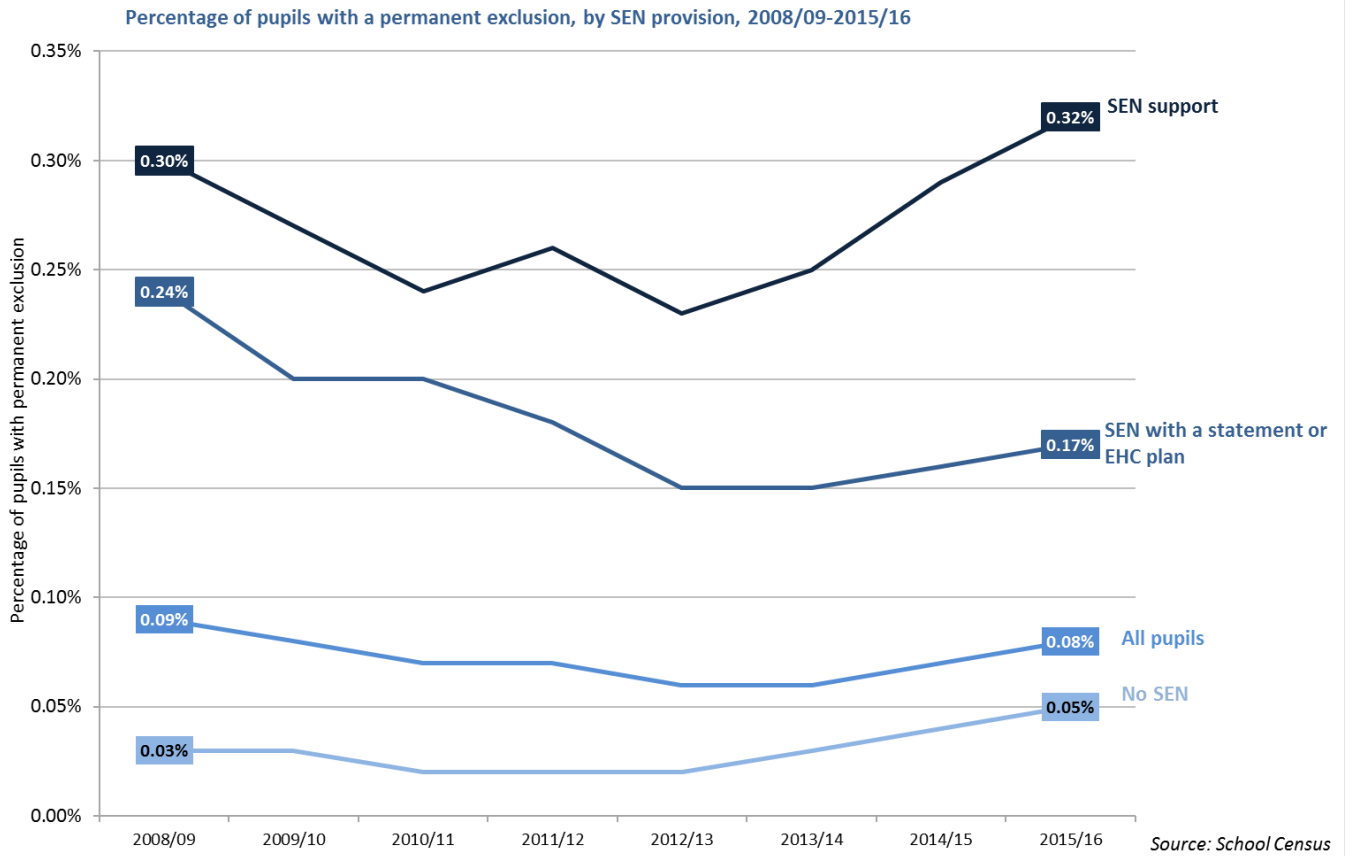
From 2014/15 school action and school action plus categories have combined to form one category of **SEN support**.

Pupil enrolments missing 10 percent or more of their own possible sessions (due to authorised or unauthorised absence) are classified as **persistent absentees**.

# Exclusions

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) accounted for just over half of all permanent exclusions and fixed period exclusions.

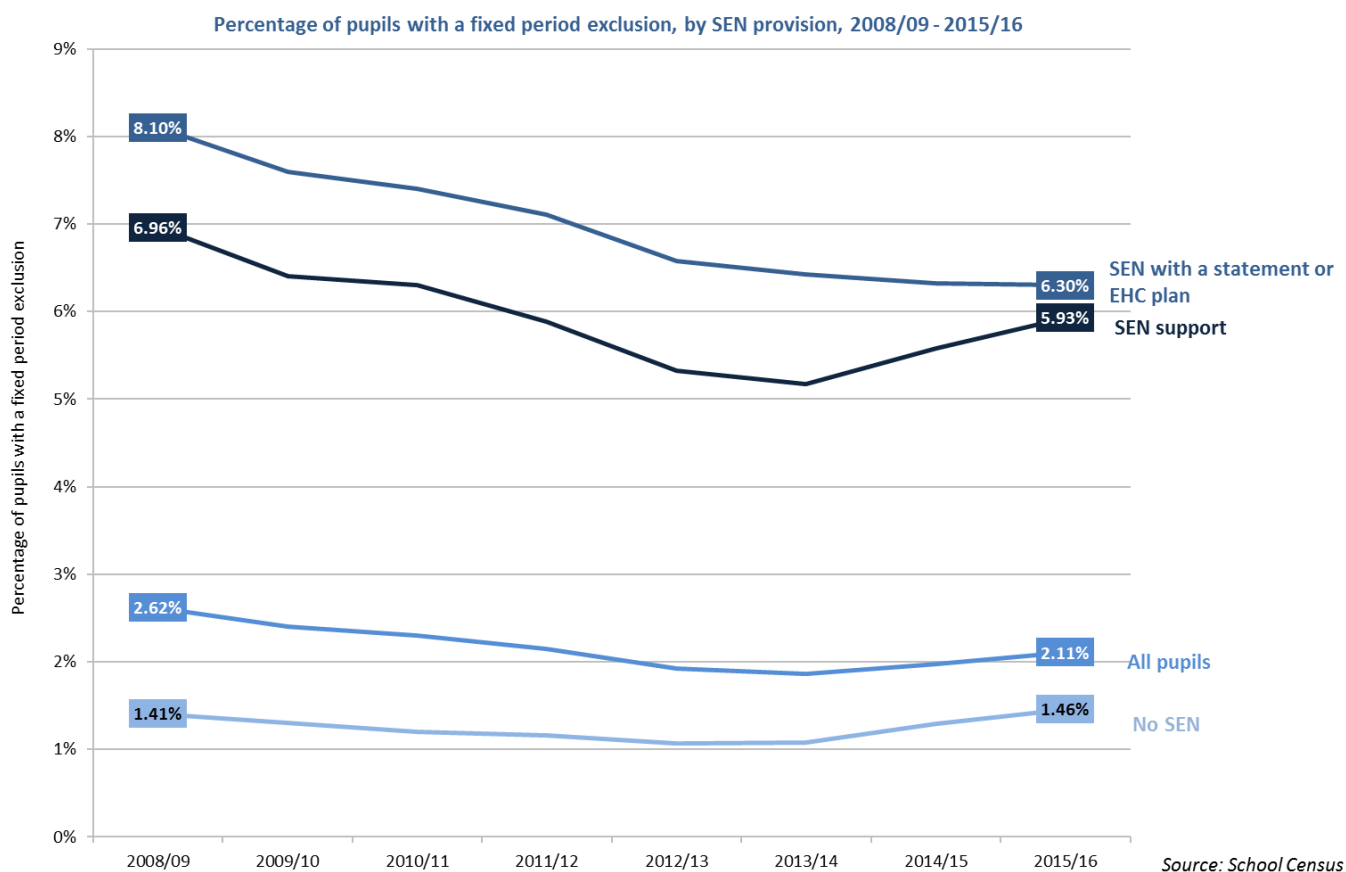
## Permanent exclusions



The permanent exclusion rate for pupils on SEN support in 2015/16 was 0.32%, compared to 0.17% for pupils with statements or EHC plans and 0.05% of pupils with no SEN.

Pupils with primary type of need 'Social, emotional and mental health' (SEMH) have the highest permanent exclusion rate at 0.99%.

## Fixed period exclusions



5.93% of pupils on SEN support received one or more fixed period exclusion in 2015/16 compared to 6.30% of pupils with statements or EHC plans and 1.46% of pupils with no SEN.

Pupils with primary type of need 'Social, emotional and mental health' (SEMH) had the highest percentage of enrolments with one or more fixed period exclusion in 2015/16 at 17.03%.

**More information on absence and exclusions can be found in the following publications:**

['Pupil absence in schools in England: 2016 to 2017'](#) Next update due March 2019

['Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England: 2015 to 2016'](#) Next update due July 2018



## Experience of the SEND system

### Statements and EHC plans – numbers, transfers and timeliness of issuing

#### **Total number of statements or EHC plans maintained by local authorities**

There were 285,722 children and young people with statutory Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans and 34,097 children and young people with statements of special educational needs (SEN) maintained by local authorities as at January 2018. This gives a combined total of 319,819, an increase of 32,529 (11.3%) from 287,290 as at January 2017.

#### **Number of new statements or EHC plans issued by local authorities**

There were 42,162 children and young people with new EHC plans made during the 2017 calendar year. The number of children and young people with new EHC plans made during the 2017 calendar year has seen an increase of 6,068 (16.8%) when compared against the number of children and young people with new EHC plans made during 2016.

#### **Timeliness of issuing statements and EHC plans**

Of the new EHC plans made during the 2017 calendar year (excluding cases where exceptions apply), 64.9% were issued within the 20 week time limit, an increase from 58.6% in 2016.

#### **Progress transferring statements to EHC plans**

Transferring children and young people from Statements to EHC plans has been phased from the introduction of the SEND reforms in September 2014 to end of March 2018. During the last year of this transition period, the Department has collected monthly information from local authorities on the number of transfers of Statements of SEN yet to be completed.

The latest MI data collected in early April, shows that there were 3,873 transfers of SEN Statements yet to be completed as at 31 March 2018. This means that up to this date, 232,352 Statements (98.4%) have either been:

- a) Transferred to an EHC plan,
- b) Assessed and a decision made not to transfer to an EHC plan,
- c) Discontinued because they have left school at the end of compulsory schooling, or after, or
- d) Reviewed and discontinued as special needs being met without Statement or EHC plan or for other reasons.

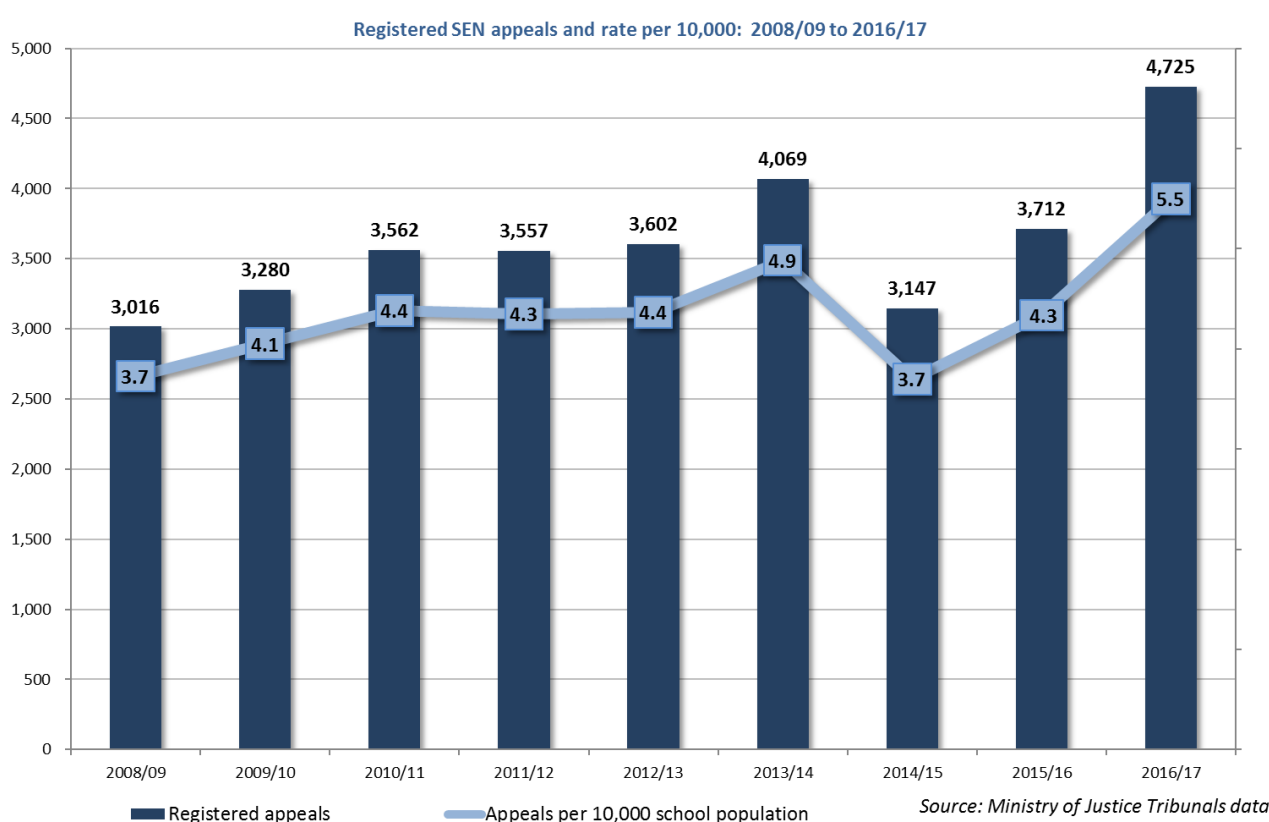
### Appeals registered with the SEND tribunal

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 4,725 appeals registered in 2016/17, which is equivalent to around 5.5

appeals per 10,000 of the school population. This is an increase compared to the previous year when there was 3,712 appeals registered equivalent to 4.3 per 10,000 of the school population. *(Although year-on-year comparisons should be treated with caution due to the change in eligibility for registering an appeal following SEND reforms. These changes have led to a change in the calculation of the rate of appeals, which will be published for the first time in June 2018).*

A total of 4,387 outcomes were recorded for SEN appeals, an increase of 39% compared to the previous year. Of these, 36% were decided at tribunal, an increase of eight percentage points compared to 2015/16.

In 2016/17, approximately one third (32%) were against 'refusal to secure an EHC assessment', and over half (55%) were in relation to the content of EHC plans, these proportions are similar to 2015/16.



The quarterly tribunal statistics, published on 8 March 2018, show that 1,085 appeals were registered with the SEND tribunal between October-December 2017, which is an increase of 24% based on the same period in 2016 (there were 874 between October-December 2016).

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

[‘Statements of SEN and EHC plans: England 2018’](#) Next update due May 2019

[‘Statements of SEN transferring to EHC plans: 31 March 2018’](#) This is an ad hoc statistical release, no further updates are planned.

[‘Tribunals statistics’](#) Next update due June 2017

## Related information

### Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT)

This tool is produced by the Department, 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 DfE 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 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](#)".

### NHS England publications

NHS England publish some information of relevance to special educational needs:

- [Community Services Statistics for Children, Young People and Adults](#)
- [Clinical Commissioning Group \(CCG\) improvement and assessment framework](#)  
(For SEN use the Well-led domain).

**Feedback:** We welcome feedback on any aspect of the publication at:  
[SEN.Statistics@education.gov.uk](mailto:SEN.Statistics@education.gov.uk)



Department  
for Education

© Crown copyright 2018

This publication (not including logos) is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

To view this licence:

visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3)

email [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

About this publication:

Enquiries: Jessica Miller, Department for Education, St Pauls Place, Sheffield.

Tel: 0114 2742194

Email: [Jessica.Miller@education.gov.uk](mailto:Jessica.Miller@education.gov.uk)

Download: [www.gov.uk/government/publications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications)

Reference: DFE-00158-2018



Follow us on Twitter:  
[@educationgovuk](https://twitter.com/educationgovuk)



Like us on Facebook:  
[facebook.com/educationgovuk](https://facebook.com/educationgovuk)