



Special Education Needs Assessment

July 2025



Introduction: Support for children with SEND, funding, policy guidance and application, and deprivation¹.

Despite long established and very significant increases in the numbers and proportions of school aged children assessed as requiring either SEN support or EHCPs, reports from as recently as December 2024 and January 2025 (respectively, from the Institute of Fiscal Studies² (IFS), and from the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee³) have each emphasised that, although Department for Education (DfE) funding for children with SEN support and EHCPs increased over recent years, it 'has not kept pace with demand' following, for example, the '140% increase nationally in the number of children with education [with EHCPs]' (Published Accounts Committee report, Jan., 2025).

In addition to these funding issues, both the existing model of SEN provision – and its interpretation and application across the relevant sectors (eg local authorities and schools) – have each been criticised over recent years, eg:

an Ofsted research report into SEND provision from June 2021 ('SEND: old issues, new issues, next steps'⁴), researching the effectiveness of SEND provision in schools between 2009 to early 2021 (therefore spanning both the introduction of the [2014 Children and Families Act](#), and the period affected by the restrictions put in place during the Covid pandemic, most notably school closures), noted that *before* the pandemic:

'... many local areas have struggled to implement the...reforms [to SEND provision required by the 2014 Act] successfully. From their introduction in 2016 through to March 2020, we routinely found local areas that were not properly implementing the requirements laid out in the code of practice and related legislation', and that 'successive area SEND inspection reports have commented on:

- a continuing lack of ambition for pupils with SEND
- underachievement, sometimes due to a poorly designed or taught curriculum, [being] ...sometimes wrongly labelled as 'SEND'
- poor-quality education, health and care plans (EHC plans)
- [and significant variation in] how well children's needs are identified from one local area to the next...[and] needs [being] missed or...not [being] identified correctly (Ofsted research report, June 2021).⁵

This very significant variation in provision – and indeed in the accuracy of SEN assessment prior to provision – was also identified and highlighted by a study conducted in 2021 by the Education Policy Institute:⁶

¹ In this section some reports cited are focused on SEN in reference to both children of primary school-age and children of secondary school- age, and it has not been possible to isolate the former from the latter though it is likely that the observations carried within these combined (ie primary and secondary-aged children) reports largely apply to each, with only degrees of variation between. Other research cited (eg LSE/Campbel, T., 2023) in this section is focused specifically on SEN amongst primary school-aged children.

² '[Spending on special educational needs in England: something has to change](#)', IFS report no. R341, published December 2024.

³ '[Support for children and young people with special educational needs \(First Report of Session 2024–25\)](#)', Public Accounts Committee, published January, 2025.

⁴ 'SEND: old issues, new issues, next steps' (Ofsted, June 2021), see Executive summary, [here](#).

⁵ See previous footnote for source.

⁶ Hutchison, J. (2021) 'Identifying pupils with special educational needs and disabilities', Education Policy Institute and Nuffield Foundation, page 7.

'...which primary school a child attends makes more difference to their chances of being identified with SEND than anything about them as an individual, their experiences or what local authority they live in..., with more than half of the differences in identification explained by the school attended'.

The Ofsted research also addressed how such variation was affecting the assessment of more specific primary needs, and found that:

'...speech, language and communication needs...[were sometimes] identified as moderate learning difficulties', that.

'...underachievement, sometimes due to poorly designed or taught curriculum, is sometimes wrongly labelled as 'SEND', and that,

'... Pupils who are not taught to read well in the early stages of their primary education are particularly susceptible to being wrongly identified as having SEND because they cannot access the curriculum'.

It's long been established that higher levels of SEND - as a whole/including all types of need - and lower levels of educational attainment are each strongly correlated with higher levels of deprivation (see Joseph Rowntree Foundation report from 2016⁷), which was still the case in 2024/25⁸ (see further below for detail).

However, there are also some important differences between the provision 'SEND support' and EHCPs as well as differences in amongst certain types of SEND primary need, and how each are provided and assessed respectively, in that each appear to be skewed in relation to different levels of deprivation:

In respect to the provision of SEND support and EHCPs, that:

'Among all [primary school aged] children with any SEND, [nationally] about 17.5% have an EHCP in the most deprived areas, compared to 22% in the most affluent areas. This pattern holds for all children and FSM eligible children'. In other words, the provision of SEND support is rather more associated with assistance for children in more deprived areas, while the provision of EHCPs is rather more associated with assistance for children in less deprived or more affluent areas.

There are also differences between varied levels of deprivation in respect to the assessment of primary needs, in that 'Children with SEND living in more deprived areas are also more likely to be recorded as having less well-defined, more commonly documented SEND conditions, such as 'Speech, Language and Communication Needs', 'Moderate Learning Difficulties', and 'Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties', while,

⁷ On the close correlations between higher levels of SEN as a whole with higher levels of deprivation at the national level and 2016, see the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2016) report, '[Special educational needs and their links to poverty](#)'.

⁸ On the close correlations between higher levels of SEN as a whole with higher levels of deprivation at the national level in 2024/24, see '[Academic year 2024/24, Special educational needs in England: Headline facts and figures](#)'.

'For 'Specific Learning Difficulties' (SPLD), which includes conditions such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, and ADHD...[a]round 15% of children with SEND living in the most affluent decile are recorded with SPLD, compared to about 6% in the most deprived'.⁹

These SPLDs, '...like autism, require diagnosis by professionals outside of the immediate school environment', and on a national level at least it is 'particularly clear' that children from less deprived or more affluent areas are more likely to have their primary needs assessed and categorised as such than are their peers in more deprived areas and circumstances.

Our own (ie LCC BI's) analyses of SEND provision combined (ie both SEND support and EHCPs) in Lancashire¹⁰ evidences a very strong correlation between higher rates of such provision amongst pupils living in IMD quintile 1 areas (ie 20% most deprived areas) and lower rates amongst pupils living in IMD quintile 5 areas (ie 20% least deprived areas).

Further local analyses will be undertaken in order to ascertain whether the Lancashire data suggests similar variation between SEND support, EHCP provision, and deprivation, and between the different assessed categories of primary needs, and deprivation, as were evidenced in national the study referred to above.

The present government has [indicated](#) that it is currently consulting widely on reform of SEND provision, has established an expert advisory group and a Neurodivergence Task and Finish Group, and along with other parties is working to establish 'a shared understanding of what provision and support in mainstream educational settings should look like...within an inclusive system', and will also respond to the Public Accounts Committee report from May 2025:

Given the present government's intention to make significant announcements in the autumn of 2025, post its current review of the SEND system in England, which are likely to include notable changes to 'what [SEND] provision and support in mainstream educational settings should look like...within an inclusive system', now (July 2025) is perhaps an appropriate time for all interested parties to consider for themselves – and to articulate:

how should the pending SEND reforms be structured, organised and funded in order (as is the government's stated intension), to 'ensure services...[are]... focused on *prevention*' (emphasis added),

and as part of this reform, to consider and articulate their views also on the current model of SEND support, and whether a moderately or significantly different model should be developed and implemented.

[Lancashire's most recent Ofsted inspection](#) can be found here

⁹ Source: London School of Economics (LSE) research briefing, '[Local area disparity in SEND diagnosis](#)', January 2024, from a research paper by Campbel, T. (2023), '[Inequalities in provision for primary children with special educational needs and / or disabilities \(SEND\) by local area deprivation](#)', based on 2021 data.

¹⁰ Using data drawn from the 2020 school census (before the restrictions we saw during the pandemic).

Executive Summary

- 18.6% of pupils (nearly 35,000 children) are in receipt of SEN provision in Lancashire.
- Burnley has the highest proportion of pupils with SEN (22.3%), EHCP prevalence is highest in Rossendale (7.9%) and SEN Support prevalence is highest in Lancaster (16%).
- White pupils had a higher prevalence of SEN (19.4%) whilst Black pupils had a lower prevalence (10.7%). Speech Language Communication is more prevalent as a SEN need for Black pupils (40.5% vs 22.3% for all pupils), whilst Social Emotional Mental Health accounts for a lower proportion of need for Asian pupils (6.7%, vs 20.7% for all pupils)
- Boys make up a larger proportion of the SEN cohort, particularly for pupils with an EHCP. Speech Language Communication, Social Emotional Mental Health, and Autistic Spectrum Disorder are more prevalent primary needs for boys than girls whilst Moderate Learning Difficulty and Specific Learning Difficulty are more prevalent for girls than boys.
- 29% of children eligible for FSM in Lancashire have SEN (2024/25) compared to 14.6% for those not eligible. FSM eligible children have a higher proportion of Social Emotional and Mental Health need and a lower proportion of Specific Learning Difficulty than their non-FSM SEN peers.
- For both children in need and looked after children there has been an increase in the proportion of children with EHCPs in Lancashire increasing to 34.6% and 30.4% respectively. Lancashire has a higher proportion of SEN in the CIN cohort than comparators but a lower proportion of in the CLA cohort.
- Speech Language Communication continues to be the most prevalent need in Lancashire schools, followed by Social Emotional Mental Health. The proportion of children with a primary need of Autistic Spectrum Disorder has increased further and this is now the third most prevalent need. Speech Language Communication remains the most prevalent need in primary schools whilst Social Emotional Mental Health is the most prevalent need in secondary schools.
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder is the most prevalent need for children with and EHCP making up around a third of primary needs, for pupils with SEN Support it accounts for under 10%.
- There is a considerable gap in the level of attainment between non-SEN children and those in receipt of SEN provision. SEN children see increasing levels of attainment as they progress through school where their non-SEN counterparts see little change.
- In 2022/23 the proportion of 16-18 year olds with SEN in EET declined to 81.4%, which is in line with comparators, prior to this Lancashire had higher EET rates than comparators.
- Pupils with SEN continue to experience higher rates of school absence including (persistent absence) than their peers, absence rates are highest for children with EHCPs.
- Pupils with SEN also continue to experience higher rates of fixed period and permanent exclusions than pupils without SEN, there have been considerable increases in the rate of exclusion for SEN pupils in recent years, particularly pupils in receipt of SEN Support.
- The total number of EHCPs (0-25) has increased further to 12,317, Lancashire's rate of EHCPs is lower than comparators at 325.7 per 10,000, the rate of new EHCPs is also lower than for comparators (48.2 per 10,000).
- Around a third of all new EHCPs (2024) in Lancashire had a primary need of Speech Language Communication recorded (higher than for England), another third had a primary need of Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Plans with Autistic Spectrum Disorder as a primary need were more prevalent in Lancashire than comparators whilst Social Emotional Mental Health was less prevalent.



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1. SEN proportions

Section includes children in Independent schools

18.6% of pupils (34,628 children) in Lancashire schools¹¹ are identified as having SEN (2024/25) vs 19.6% nationally¹². 5.5% of pupils (10,155) have an Education Health and Care plan (vs 5.3% for England) and 13.2% 24,473 have SEN Support (vs 14.2% for England).

The proportion of pupils with SEN has been increasing. The rate of increase was greater between 2020/21 and 2024/25 (+9,023 pupils, +35.2% increase) than in the preceding 5-year period (+4,009 pupils, +18.8% increase). The total number of pupils with SEN overall in Lancashire has increased by 62.6% (13,329 pupils) from 21,299 to 34,628 between 2015/16 and 2024/25, this is a greater increase than in the comparator areas (England - +43.8%, North West +52.4%, CSC NN – 53.9%).

Figure 1 - % of pupils with SEN in all schools for Lancashire and comparator areas trend

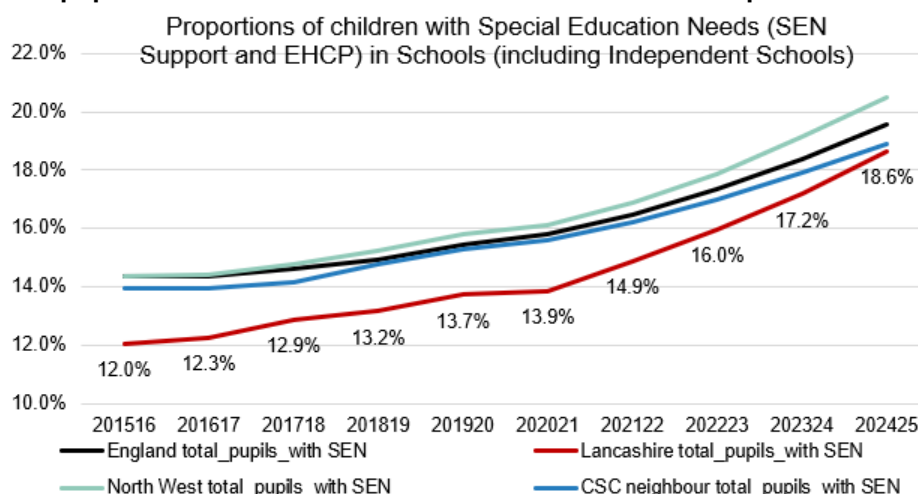


Table 1 below shows the proportion of pupils with SEN in different school types, Lancashire has a slightly higher proportion of pupils with SEN in nursery schools (21.4%), particularly when compared with CSC neighbours (13.7%) however prevalence of SEN in most other school types is generally lower in Lancashire.

Table 1–prevalence of SEN by school type for Lancashire and comparator areas (2024/25)

Prevalence of SEN by school type in Lancashire and comparator areas (2024/25)				
School Type	England	Lancashire	North West	CSC neighbour
Independent Special School	98.2%	98.2%	97.9%	98.7%
LA Alternative Provision	83.4%	81.4%	84.6%	86.1%
LA nursery	18.8%	21.4%	19.8%	13.7%
LA Primary School	18.2%	16.6%	18.8%	17.4%
LA Secondary School	16.5%	15.1%	17.4%	16.1%
LA Special School	99.9%	100.0%	99.9%	100.0%
NM Special School	99.7%	-	99.8%	-
Other Independent School	19.8%	16.9%	17.5%	21.1%
Total number of children with SEN	19.6%	18.6%	20.5%	18.9%

1.1. EHCPs

Section includes children in Independent schools

The prevalence of EHCPs in Lancashire schools has increased from 2.9% in 2015/16 to 5.5% in 2024/25 – overall a 2.5 percentage point increase, the greatest increase has occurred in the

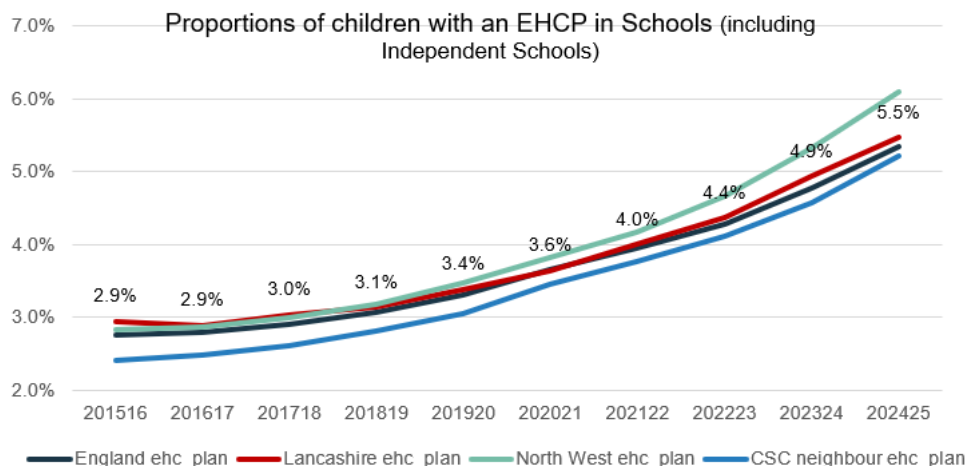
¹¹ Includes children in Independent schools, if excluding Independent schools the figure is 18.1%, 32,309 pupils.

¹² Statistical neighbours presented as an average

most recent 5 years (2020/21-2024/25) increasing by 1.8 percentage points in this period. Lancashire's 5 year increase is generally in line with the comparators with the prevalence of EHCPs being roughly similar to comparators (see Figure 2).

The number of pupils in Lancashire with an EHCP has increased significantly (+95.1%) over the last 10 years from 5,206 in 2015/16 to 10,155 (+4,949 pupils) in 2024/25. Between 2020/21 and 2024/25 the number of pupils with EHCP plans in Lancashire increased by 51.1% (vs 19.7% between the period 2015/16 to 2019/20).

Figure 2 – Proportion of children with an EHCP in all schools in Lancashire and comparator areas 2015/16 to 2024/25 10 year trend



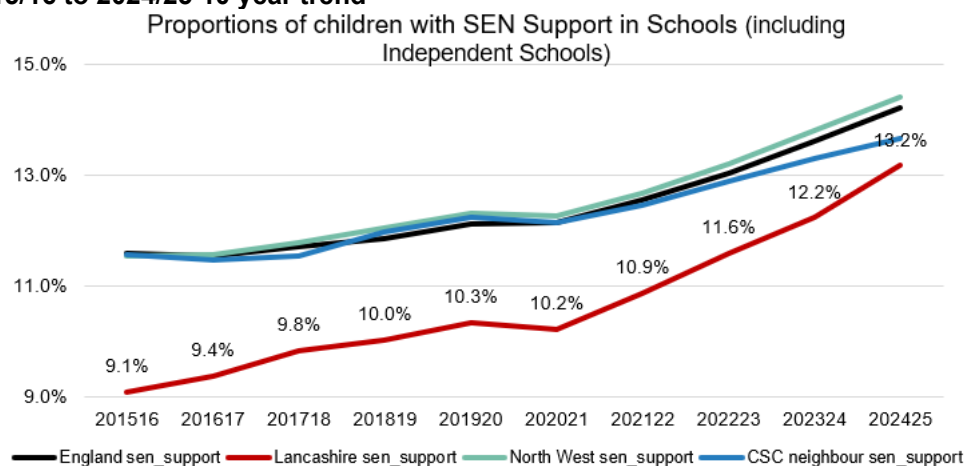
1.2. SEN Support

Section includes children in Independent schools

The prevalence of SEN in Lancashire schools has consistently been lower than for comparators however this gap is closing. Over the last 10 years the prevalence of SEN Support in schools has increased by 4.1 percentage points (higher than for comparators) with the greatest increase occurring between 2020/21 and 2024/25 (+3 percentage points) from 10.2% of pupils up to 13.2%.

Overall, by 2024/25 8,380 more pupils had SEN Support than in 2015/16, a 52.1% increase in cohort size (24,473 pupils total), this is the largest relative increase in SEN Support cohort size of the comparators (England +29.5%, North West +33.4%, CSC NN +34.6%).

Figure 3 – Proportion of children with SEN Support in all schools in Lancashire and comparator areas 2015/16 to 2024/25 10 year trend



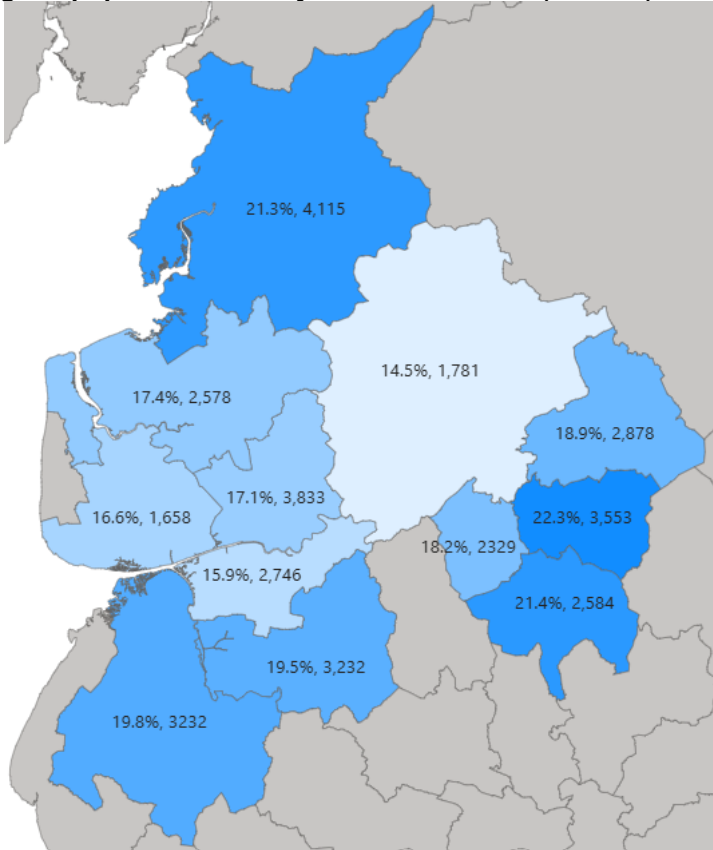
1.3. District level prevalence of SEN provision

Section includes children in Independent schools

Across the districts¹³ there is considerably disparity in the prevalence of SEN in pupils, ranging from 14.5% of pupils in Ribble Valley to 22.3% of pupils in Burnley.

The highest prevalence of EHCPs is in Rossendale schools (7.9%) whilst the highest prevalence of SEN Support is in Lancaster (16%), the lowest prevalence for EHCPs and SEN Support is in Ribble Valley (3.2% and 11.3% respectively).

Figure 3 – Percentage of pupils with SEN by district of school (2024/25)



The proportion of children with an EHCP varies across the districts in Lancashire as represented in **Error! Reference source not found..** A higher proportion of school pupils have an EHCP in Rossendale (7.9%), Chorley (7.2%), Burnley (7.2%), and West Lancashire (6.9%) whilst a much lower proportion is seen in Ribble Valley (3.2%). In terms of SEN support, Lancaster has the highest prevalence of SEN support in the county with 16% of pupils in receipt of SEN support however prevalence of EHCPs is in line with the average for the County.

Table 2 - Table showing EHCP and SEN prevalence by district (2024/25)

¹³ Based of location of school

SEN prevalence by Lancashire district based on location of school (2024/25)					
District	EHCP	SEN Support	All SEN	Total pupils	
Burnley	7.2%	15.2%	22.3%	15913	
Chorley	7.2%	12.3%	19.5%	16549	
Fylde	5.0%	11.6%	16.6%	10000	
Hyndburn	4.1%	14.1%	18.2%	12774	
Lancaster	5.3%	16.0%	21.3%	19353	
Pendle	5.3%	13.6%	18.9%	15219	
Preston	4.5%	12.6%	17.1%	22414	
Ribble Valley	3.2%	11.3%	14.5%	12312	
Rossendale	7.9%	13.5%	21.4%	12095	
South Ribble	4.5%	11.4%	15.9%	17245	
West Lancashire	6.9%	12.9%	19.8%	16756	
Wyre	4.7%	12.7%	17.4%	14833	
Grand Total	5.5%	13.2%	18.6%	185703	

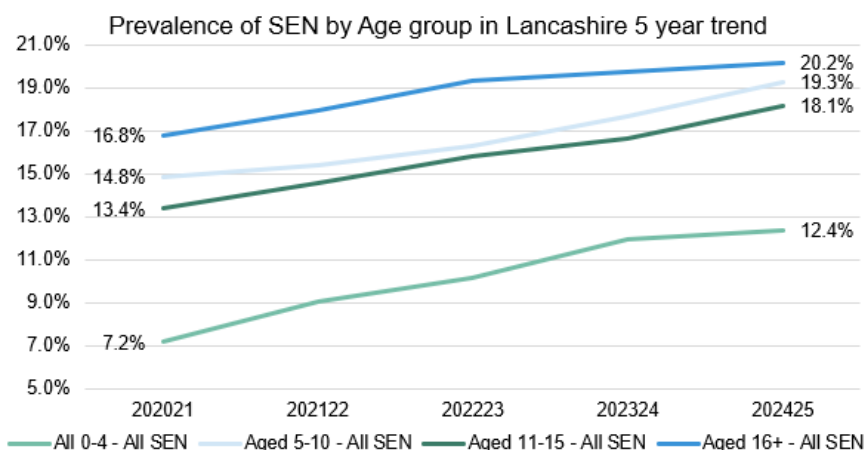
2. Demographics

Demographic data is only collated for pupils attending Local Authority schools, as such this analysis does not include information pertaining to children in Independent schools (2,319 children with SEN). Overall proportions of SEN are 18.1% due to the exclusion of children in Independent schools.

2.1. Children in receipt of SEN provision by age group

Prevalence of SEN has increased across all age group in Lancashire. SEN prevalence in 0-4 year olds had the greatest increase, up from 7.2% to 12.4% however remains the lowest prevalence of all age groups. Pupils aged 16+ have consistently had the highest SEN prevalence over the last 5 years (Figure 4). Overall in Lancashire out of the 32,309 children in Local Authority maintained schools 16,306 are aged 5-10 years and 13,047 aged 11-15 years, children aged under 4 and 16+ account for 9.1% of the SEN cohort.

Figure 4 - % of pupils in receipt of SEN provision in Lancashire schools by age group of pupil, 5 year trend 2020/21-2024/25



2.2. Children in receipt of SEN Provision by ethnicity

In 2024/25 83.9% of pupils with SEN were White (vs 78.4% of the total pupil population), Asian children were under-represented in the SEN cohort accounting for 9.4% of pupils with SEN vs 13.8% of all pupils, Black pupils were also under-represented (1% SEN vs 1.7% full cohort).

Table 3 - SEN and all pupil ethnicity proportions for Lancashire and comparators in 2024/25

Proportions of students in each broad ethnic group for pupils with SEN and all pupils, Lancashire and comparators (2024/25)								
Ethnicity broad group	CSC NN		England		Lancashire		North West	
	All pupils	SEN pupils	All pupils	SEN pupils	All pupils	SEN pupils	All pupils	SEN pupils
Asian	5.9%	3.4%	13.7%	9.3%	13.8%	9.4%	13.5%	8.9%
Black	3.0%	1.8%	6.9%	6.1%	1.7%	1.0%	4.8%	3.9%
Other	1.2%	0.8%	2.5%	1.9%	1.0%	0.8%	2.4%	1.8%
Mixed	4.8%	4.1%	7.2%	7.2%	4.2%	4.0%	5.3%	5.2%
White	83.6%	88.6%	68.1%	73.9%	78.4%	83.9%	72.6%	78.9%
Unknown	1.5%	1.4%	1.7%	1.6%	1.0%	1.0%	1.4%	1.4%

Prevalence of SEN in Lancashire schools varies considerably across the ethnicity groups with highest levels of SEN found in White pupils (19.4%) and lowest levels in Black pupils (10.7%) (Table 4). Whilst the overall proportions of SEN are slightly lower in Lancashire than England and the North West for all pupils for Black pupils there is a considerable gap (10.7% in Lancashire vs 17.1% E and 16.3% NW), rates of SEN for these pupils is more in line with those seen in CSC neighbours.

Table 4 – Prevalence of SEN by broad ethnicity group in Lancashire and comparators in 2024/25

Prevalence of SEN by broad ethnic group in Lancashire and comparators (2024/25)				
Ethnicity broad group	CSC NN		England	
	pupils with SEN		pupils with SEN	
Asian	10.5%		13.0%	
Black	11.1%		17.1%	
Other	12.2%		14.9%	
Mixed	15.9%		19.2%	
White	19.6%		20.9%	
Unknown	17.3%		18.4%	
All pupils	18.5%		19.2%	

Type of need also varies by ethnicity as displayed in Table 5. Speech Language Communication is the most prevalent need in all groups bar White pupils where it is the second most prevalent. The proportion of SEN pupils with Speech Language Communication as their primary need is highest in Black pupils accounting for 40.5% of SEN, 82% higher than for the full cohort (22.3%) with the lowest prevalence in White groups (20.7%, 6.8% lower).

Social Emotional Mental Health is the most prevalent need for White pupils and the second most prevalent for pupils with Mixed or Unknown Ethnicity. Social Emotional Mental Health is the more prevalent in White and Mixed groups but makes up a much smaller proportion for Asian pupils accounting for just 6.7% of SEN primary needs, 67.7% lower than observed for all pupils (20.7%).

Table 5 -SEN provision across ethnic groups by Primary Need in Lancashire 2024/25 in order of prevalence for the full cohort

Primary need proportions in SEN pupils by broad ethnic group in Lancashire (2024/25)							
Primary need	Asian	Black	Other	Mixed	White	Unknown	All pupils
Speech, Language and Communications ne	31.8%	40.5%	33.7%	24.7%	20.7%	23.1%	22.3%
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	6.7%	10.9%	10.7%	22.2%	22.5%	18.5%	20.7%
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	15.7%	12.1%	10.7%	16.2%	15.0%	13.6%	15.1%
Moderate Learning Difficulty	17.1%	13.1%	18.1%	10.3%	11.9%	11.7%	12.4%
Specific Learning Difficulty	7.6%	8.1%	8.2%	10.1%	13.1%	12.7%	12.3%
Other difficulty or disability	3.7%	1.6%	3.3%	4.3%	4.8%	5.8%	4.6%
SEN support but no specialist assessment	4.6%	2.5%	7.0%	4.3%	4.4%	3.2%	4.4%
Physical Disability	3.3%	1.6%	1.6%	2.2%	2.6%	2.9%	2.7%
Hearing Impairment	2.4%	0.9%	2.1%	1.7%	1.8%	3.2%	1.9%
Severe Learning Difficulty	2.8%	3.7%	2.1%	1.6%	1.2%	2.9%	1.4%
Visual Impairment	2.2%	0.9%	1.6%	0.7%	1.0%	1.3%	1.1%
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty	1.4%	1.6%	0.4%	1.0%	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%
Multi-sensory impairment	0.3%	1.2%	0.4%	0.8%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%
Downs Syndrome	0.2%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%

2.3. Children in receipt of SEN provision by sex

Majority of pupils with SEN are boys accounting for 64.2% of all SEN pupils in Lancashire in 2024/25 (similar to the comparators). Overall, there has been an increase in the proportion of girls in the cohort between 2020/21 and 2024/25 (+2.9 percentage points). Boys make up a larger proportion of EHCPs (71.4%) and a smaller proportion of SEN Support 61.1%.

Table 6 - SEN cohorts by proportion that are boys and girls in Lancashire 2024/25

Pupil sex and SEN provision type in Lancashire 2024/25			
Pupil sex	EHCPs	SEN Support	All pupils with SEN
Female	28.6%	38.5%	35.8%
Male	71.4%	61.5%	64.2%

SEN prevalence is nearly twice as high for boys as it is for girls, in Lancashire 22.8% of boys have SEN vs 13.3% of girls in 2024/25. SEN prevalence has been increasing for both groups, up by 4.2 percentage points for girls vs 5.1 for boys.

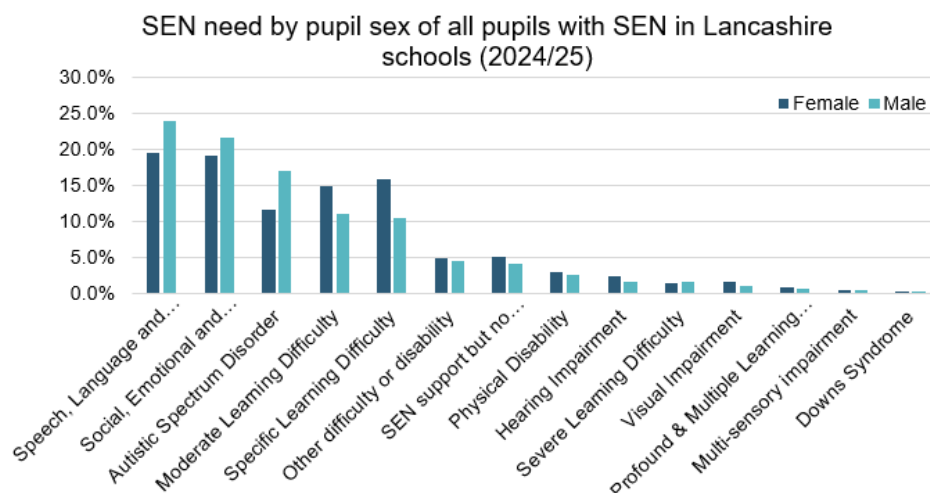
Table 7 - SEN Prevalence by sex in Lancashire and comparator areas 2020/21-2024/25

Prevalence of SEN by pupil sex in Lancashire and comparator areas 5 year (2020/21-2024/25)						
Area	Sex	202021	202122	202223	202324	202425
England	Female	10.8%	11.4%	12.2%	13.1%	14.2%
	Male	20.3%	21.0%	21.9%	22.9%	24.1%
CSC NN	Female	10.5%	11.1%	11.8%	12.5%	13.3%
	Male	20.0%	20.7%	21.5%	22.4%	23.4%
Lancashire	Female	9.1%	9.9%	10.9%	11.9%	13.3%
	Male	17.7%	18.8%	20.0%	21.3%	22.8%
North West	Female	11.0%	11.7%	12.7%	13.9%	15.2%
	Male	20.8%	21.6%	22.7%	23.9%	25.3%

Types of need vary slightly between the sexes with Speech Language Communication making up a larger proportion of primary need for boys than it does for girls (23.9% vs 19.4%), as is the case for Social Emotional Mental Health and more significantly for Autistic Spectrum Disorder (17.0% VS 11.5%) however notably Moderate Learning Difficulty and Specific Learning Disability is more prevalent for girls than boys. All other needs are relatively equal between the sexes (Figure 5).

When comparing the 2020/21 SEN cohort with 2024/25 the proportion of female pupils with Social Emotional Mental Health and Autistic Spectrum Disorder have increased from 12.6% for Social Emotional Mental Health and 7.0% for Autistic Spectrum Disorder to 19.2% and 11.5% respectively. Meanwhile, there has been a reduction in the proportion of boys with SEN with a primary need of Moderate Learning Difficulty down to 11% from 17.9% while the proportions with Speech Language Communication, Social Emotional Mental Health and Autistic Spectrum Disorder have increased.

Figure 5 - Sex breakdown by SEN primary need in Lancashire 2024/25



2.4. Children in receipt of SEN provision by Free School Meals status

Special Education Needs are more prevalent in children who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), in 2024/25 in Lancashire schools 29% of children who were eligible for FSM had SEN compared with 14.6% of their non-eligible peers. The proportion of children with SEN has increased in both groups, up by 5.4 percentage points and 3.6 percentage points respectively. Higher prevalence of SEN in FSM eligible pupils is also evident in comparators.

Pupils eligible for FSM are making up increasingly large proportions of the total number of children with special educational needs increasing from 35% in 2020/21 to 39.6% in 2024/25 (12,804 pupils)

Table 8 – Proportion of SEN children in Free School meal eligible population in 2024/25

SEN prevalence by pupil FSM eligibility status in Lancashire and comparators (2024/25)				
	CSC NN	England	Lancashire	North West
FSM eligible	30.2%	30.3%	29.0%	31.0%
Not eligible for FSM	14.4%	15.4%	14.6%	16.0%
All children	18.5%	19.2%	18.1%	20.3%

Children who have SEN and are eligible for FSM see higher proportions of Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Moderate Learning Difficulty needs but lower proportions of Specific Learning Difficulties when compared against their non-FSM peers.

Table 9 - Primary Need of SEN by Free School Meal eligibility of pupils with SEN in Lancashire (2024/25)

Primary need proportions in SEN pupils by broad ethnic group in Lancashire (2024/25)			
SEN primary need	Eligible for FSM	Not Eligible for FSM	All SEN
Speech, Language and Communications needs	21.3%	22.9%	22.3%
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	25.0%	18.0%	20.7%
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	13.6%	16.0%	15.1%
Moderate Learning Difficulty	14.4%	11.0%	12.4%
Specific Learning Difficulty	9.2%	14.4%	12.3%
Other difficulty or disability	4.4%	4.8%	4.6%
SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need	4.6%	4.2%	4.4%
Physical Disability	2.5%	2.8%	2.7%
Hearing Impairment	1.4%	2.2%	1.9%
Severe Learning Difficulty	1.7%	1.3%	1.4%
Visual Impairment	1.0%	1.3%	1.1%
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty	0.5%	0.7%	0.6%
Multi-sensory impairment	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Downs Syndrome	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
All pupils	12804	19505	32309

2.5. Children in receipt of SEN provision who receive Social Care support

In Lancashire in 2023/24 55.3% of children in need and 54.6% of looked after children had special education needs. In Lancashire there is a higher prevalence of EHCPs in the CIN cohort (34.6%) than for comparators whilst prevalence of SEN Support is lower in Looked after children Lancashire than for comparators (24.2%).

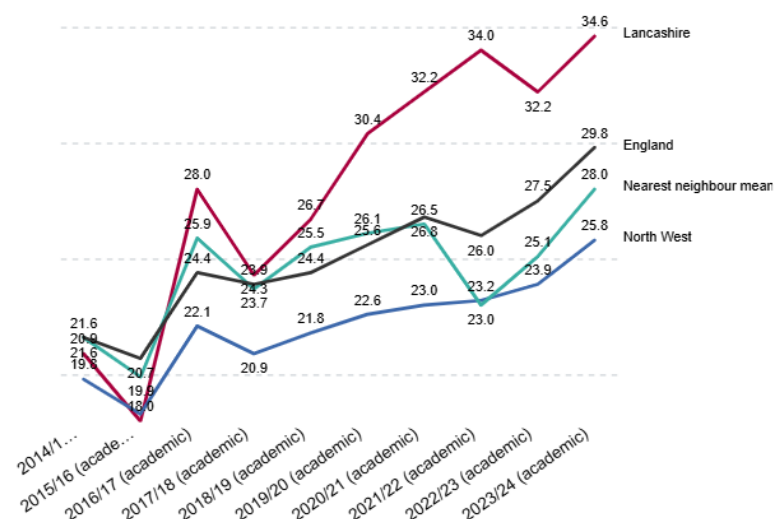
Table 10 Proportions of children with CSC involvement (CIN and CLA) who have SEN Support or EHC plans in Lancashire and comparator areas (2023/24)

% children with social care involvement by SEN status in Lancashire and comparator areas 2023/24						
CSC involvement	SEN Status	England	Lancashire	North West	CSC NN	
Children in need	No SEN	48.3	44.8	51.1	49.4	
Children in need	SEN Support	22	20.7	23.1	22.7	
Children in need	EHCP	29.8	34.6	25.8	28	
Looked After children	SEN Support	27.6	24.2	27.6	27.2	
Looked After children	EHCP	31.9	30.4	30.3	31.8	

There has been a considerable increase in the proportion of children with SEN in the CIN cohort in Lancashire as demonstrated in Figure 6 and though this is the case for all comparators too, the rate of increase in Lancashire is above that of the comparators.

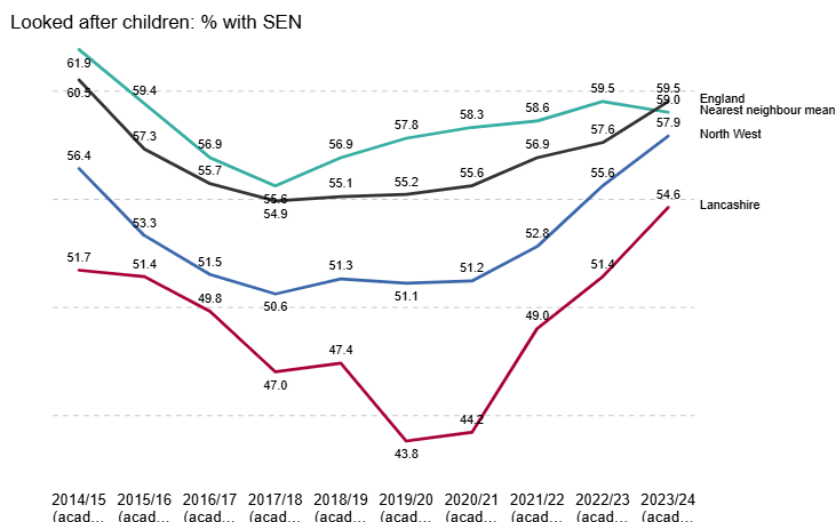
Figure 6 Proportion of children in need who have an education health and care plan trend for Lancashire and comparators

Children in need: % SEN statement or EHC plan



There has also been an increase in the proportion of the Looked After Child cohort with SEN following a decline in the years from 2015/16 to 2019/20. Whilst the proportion of SEN in looked after children in Lancashire is lower than comparators there has been a particularly steep rise between 2020/21 and 2023/24 (Figure 7). This is driven mostly by the increase in the proportion of children with an EHCP which is now 30.4% having previously declined to under 20%. Meanwhile the proportion of pupils who have SEN support is declining across all comparators.

Figure 7 proportion of looked after children with special educational needs trend for Lancashire and comparators



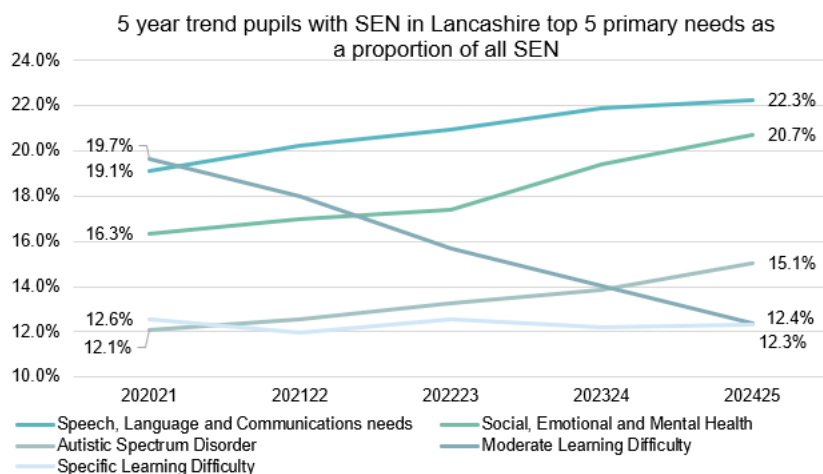
3. Types of Primary need:

This section does not include information pertaining to children in Independent schools, the primary needs of 2,319 children are therefore not included.

In 2024/25 the most prevalent special education need in Lancashire schools was Speech Language and Communication needs which was the primary need for 22.3% of pupils (7,194), Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs were the next most prevalent at 20.7% (6,700). Trend data for the top 5 needs in Lancashire are displayed below in Figure 8.

The primary need of Social, Emotional, and Mental health has seen the greatest increase, up by 4.4 percentage points in 2024/25 (20.7%) compared to 2020/21 (16.3%), the total number of pupils with this type of need has grown by 71.4% up to 6,700 (2,792 more pupils with this need). Meanwhile, there has been a considerable decline in the proportion of SEN pupils with a primary need of Moderate Learning Difficulty down by 7.3 percentage points to 12.4%, in 2020/21 this was the most prevalent need however by 2024/25 it is the 4th most prevalent. Proportions of Speech Language Communication need and Autistic Spectrum Disorder have increased by 3.1 and 3 percentage points respectively whilst Specific Learning Difficulty proportions have remained stable.

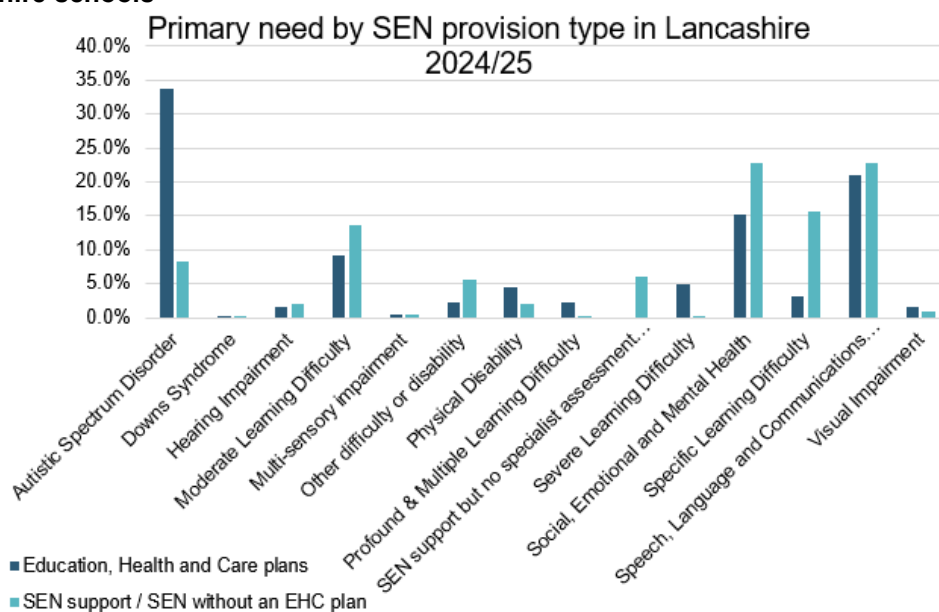
Figure 8 - Top 5 primary special education needs in Lancashire for all pupils with SEN 2020/21 to 2024/25 trend



3.1 SEN Support primary need vs EHCP primary need

The most prevalent type of SEN need differs between the two types of SEN support available, for pupils who are supported by an EHCP 33.8% are due to a primary need of Autistic Spectrum Disorder, conversely this need makes up just 8.2% of the SEN Support cohort. The two most prevalent needs for children with SEN Support are Social Emotional Mental Health (22.8%) and Speech Language Communication (22.7%) which make up 15.1% and 21.1% of the EHCP cohort respectively.

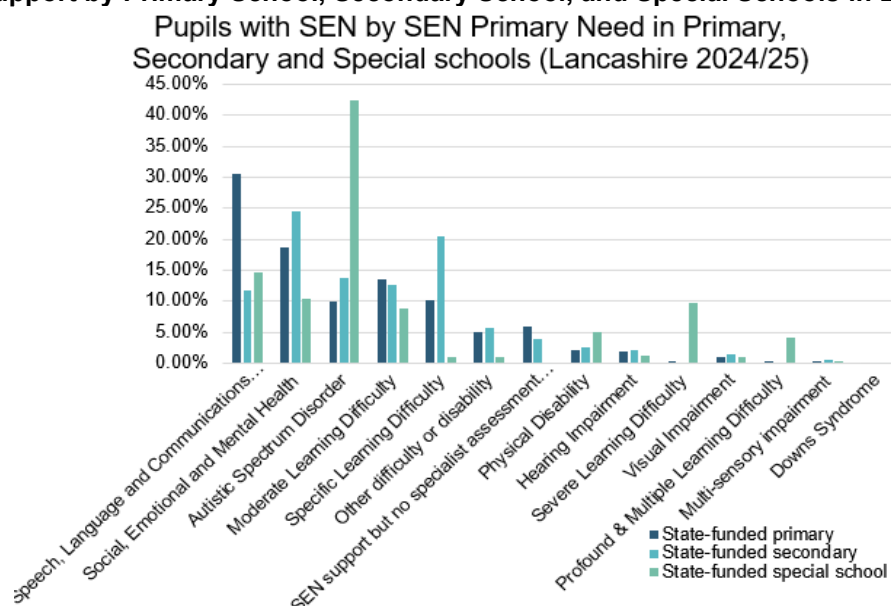
Figure 9 – bar chart showing the 2024/25 primary need for children with EHCPs and SEN Support in Lancashire schools



3.2 SEN Support primary need vs by school phase and type

SEN primary needs also vary across different school types, notably, Autistic Spectrum Disorder as a primary need is most prevalent in Special Schools (where majority of students have an EHCP).

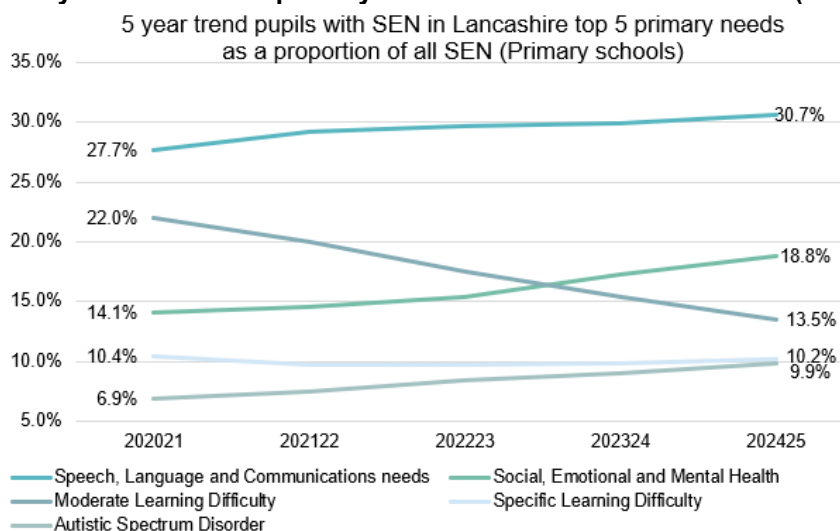
Figure 10 – bar chart showing the 2024/25 primary need as a proportion of children with EHCPs and SEN Support by Primary School, Secondary School, and Special Schools in Lancashire



3.1. Primary School

The primary SEN need in Primary Schools in Lancashire continues to be Speech Language Communication needs accounting for 30.7% of pupils with SEN (5,030 pupils), increasing by 3 percentage points between 2020/21 to 2024/25. Social Emotional Mental Health has seen the greatest increase in the last 5 years, up 4.7 percentage points now making up 18.8% of the SEN cohort. Autistic Spectrum Disorder has also seen an increase of 3 percentage points in the period, now accounting for 9.9% of pupils with SEN whilst Moderate Learning Difficulty in primary schools has declined by 8.5 percentage to 13.5%.

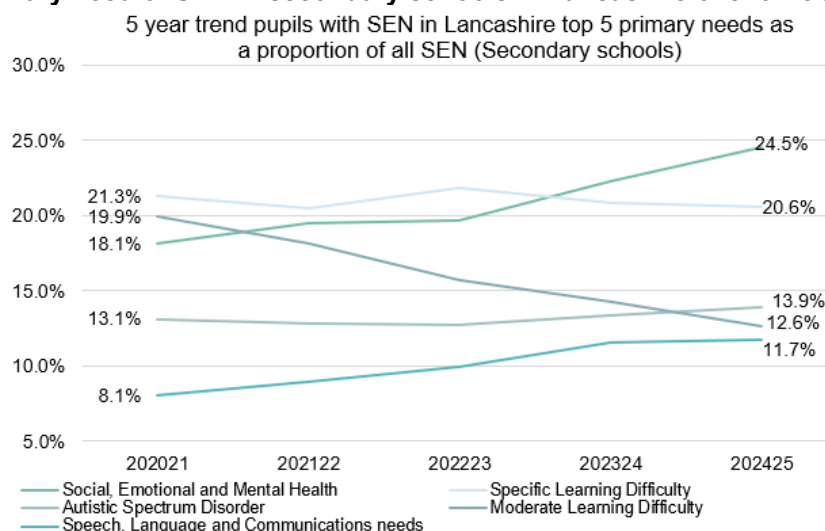
Figure 11 - Primary need of SEN in primary schools in Lancashire over time (% of total SEN)



3.2. Secondary School

For secondary pupils [Figure 12], Social Emotional Mental Health is the most prevalent primary need (24.5% of pupils), increasing by 6.4 percentage points from 18.1% in 2020/21 – Social Emotional Mental Health has been the most prevalent need in Secondary schools for the last 2 years. There has been a considerable decline in the prevalence of Moderate Learning Difficulty (-7.3 percentage points) now accounting for 12.6% of SEN and moving from the second most prevalent need to the 4th in the 5 year period. Speech Language Communication have been increasing in Secondary schools up to 11.7% (+3.6 percentage points).

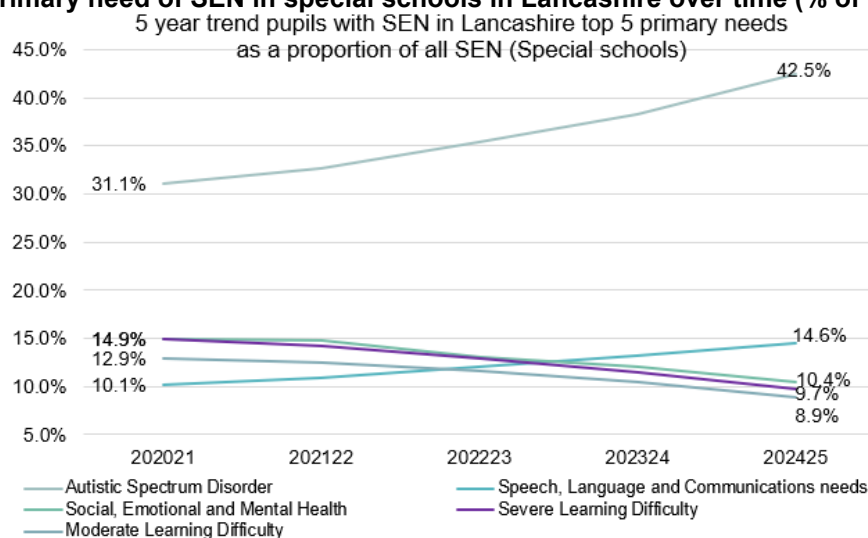
Figure 12 - Primary need of SEN in secondary schools in Lancashire over time (% of total SEN)



3.3. Special Schools

For pupils in special schools [Figure 13], Autistic Spectrum Disorder is the most prevalent primary need (42.5% of pupils), increasing by 11.4 percentage points from 31.1% in 2020/21 – Autistic Spectrum Disorder has been the most prevalent need in Secondary schools for the full 5 year period. Speech Language Communication is now the 2nd most prevalent need in special schools, having seen an increase in prevalence from 10.1% to 14.6% between 2020/21 and 2024/25 moving up from the 5th most prevalent need. The other 3 needs in the top 5 now make up a smaller proportion of than in 2020/21.

Figure 13 - Primary need of SEN in special schools in Lancashire over time (% of total SEN)



4. Attainment:

Data show [Table 11] that a much lower proportion of children with SEN reach the expected level of attainment than those without SEN. The gap in attainment between children with SEN and those without SEN increases with the increase in the level of SEN provision. This gap in attainment starts in Early Years education and persists through all levels of education. Lancashire's data shows that whilst a relatively similar proportion of pupils without SEN attain the expected standard at each stage of assessment, the proportions for pupils with SEN increase.

(For the purposes of this analysis the Key stage 4 indicator "% of pupils achieved grade 9-4 in English and maths" has been used as an "expected standard" as no equivalent indicator exist for this age group)

Table 11 - Summary of Attainment levels across SEN provision groups in Lancashire 2023/24

Summary of pupil attainment in Lancashire by SEN status (2023/24)			
	No SEN	SEN Support	EHCP
Early Years - % pupils at expected level across all 17 ELGs	69.6	21	1.5
Key Stage 2 - % of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths	69	26	7
Key Stage 4 - % Pupils achieving 9-4 in English and Maths	70	34	10.9

4.1. Early Years (ages 4-5)

Table 12 shows that in Lancashire a lower proportion of pupils reach the expected standard across all ELGs when compared with the comparator groups.

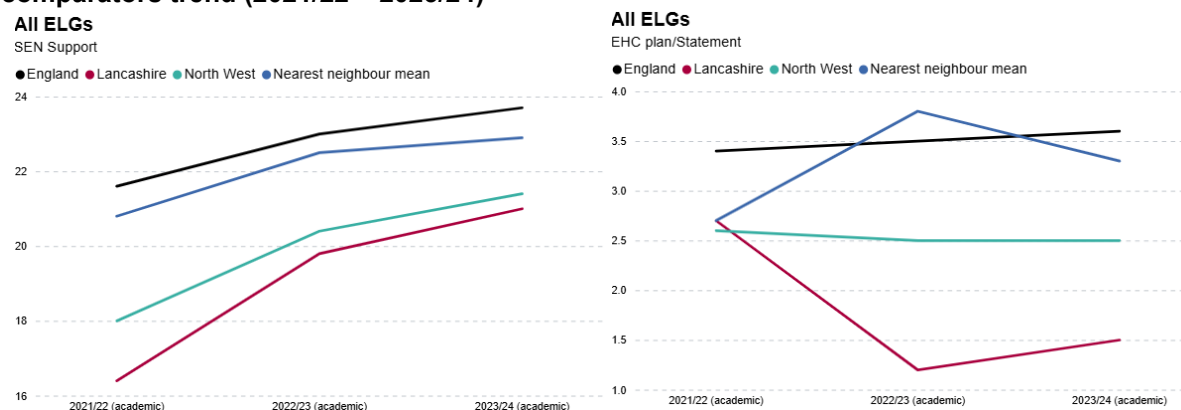
Data show that the proportion of pupils achieving all ELGs in Lancashire has been increasing for pupils with SEN Support and those with no SEN but for pupils with EHCPs there has been a decline when compared with 2021/22 which is not in line with recent performance for

comparators [Figure 14]. *Note: EYFS reforms in 2021 mean it is not possible to compare attainment after 2021/22 with previous data.*

Table 12 - Early Learning Goals attainment by SEN group as at 2022/23

Early Years - % pupils at expected level across all 17 ELGs (2023/24)					
SEN Status	England	Lancashire	North West	CSC NN	
No SEN	74.1	69.6	70.7	73.4	
SEN Support	23.7	21	21.4	22.9	
EHCP	3.6	1.5	2.5	3.3	

Figure 14 – Proportion of pupils attainment all 17 ELGs by SEN Status Lancashire and comparators trend (2021/22 – 2023/24)



4.1.1. Early Years – Good Level of development

In order to provide appropriate support to children with special education needs throughout their education it is imperative that their needs are identified as early as possible in their educational journey. Within the Early Years sector children are assessed as to whether they have achieved a 'Good Level of Development' prior to their transition into compulsory education (primary school) to better equip educators and care givers to support the child's learning and development.

Lancashire has a lower proportion of children without SEN reaching a Good Level of Development than comparator areas [Table 13], this gap is echoed across all SEN provision groups. Just 1.5% of children with an EHCP reached a Good Level of Development in 2023/24 nationally the figure is over twice that (3.8%). The trends for GLD in Lancashire are similar to those pupils for ELGs with increases for SEN Support and those with no special educational needs but declines for those pupils with an EHCP.

Table 13 - Early Years proportion of pupils having a good level of development for Lancashire and comparators as at 2023/24 (academic)

Early Years - % pupils with a Good Level of Development (GLD) 2023/24					
SEN Status	England	Lancashire	North West	CSC NN	
No SEN	75.6	71.5	72.6	75	
SEN Support	24.9	21.4	22.7	23.9	
EHCP	3.8	1.5	2.9	3.5	

4.2. Key Stage 2 (ages 8-11)

As observed for attainment in Early Years, a lower proportion of pupils in Lancashire attained the expected standard for Reading Writing and Maths (RWM) when compared with the comparator areas [Table 14].

Trend data show that proportions of children attaining the expected standard of RWM in Lancashire has not recovered to pre-covid levels for both children without SEN and children with EHCPs but for those with SEN Support they have. [Figure 15]

Table 14 - Key Stage 2 attainment by SEN group for Lancashire and comparators as at 2023/24 (academic)

KS2 - % of pupils reaching the Expected standard for Reading, Writing, and Maths (RWM) 2023/24					
SEN Status	England	Lancashire	North West	CSC NN	
No SEN		72	69	71	72
SEN Support		26	22	26	25
EHCP		9	7	9	8

Figure 15 - % of KS2 children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths IN Lancashire by SEN Status

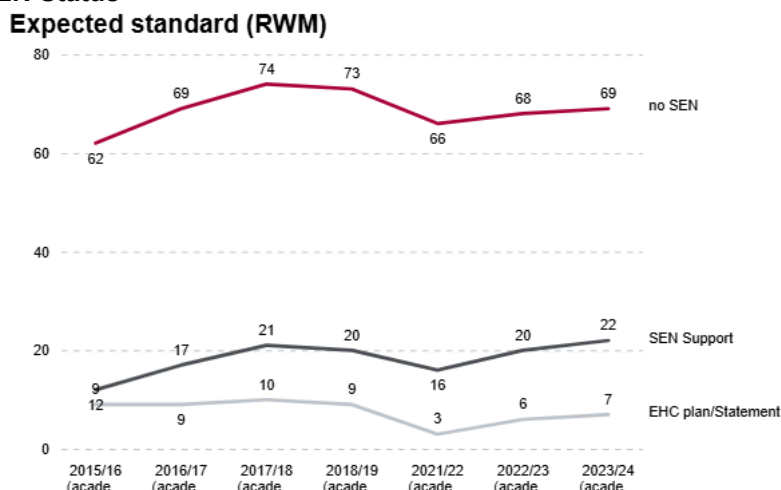
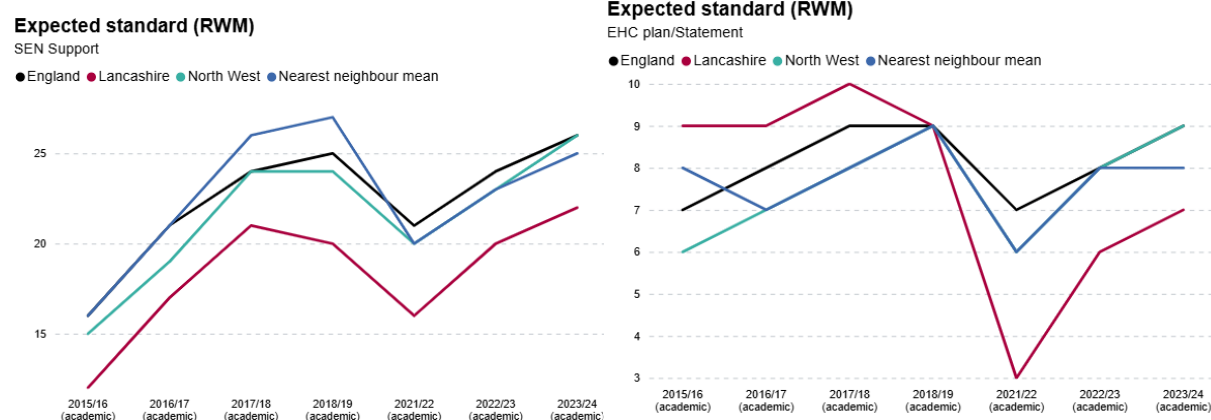


Figure 16 - % of KS2 children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in Lancashire and comparators for pupils with SEN Support or EHCP



4.3. Key Stage 4 (ages 15-16)

The proportion of pupils attaining levels 9-4 in English and Maths in 2023/24 was similar to North West and CSC nearest neighbours for pupils with SEN Support however there is still a lower proportion of pupils with an EHCP achieving these grades with this consistently being the case for Lancashire [Figure 18].

Table 15 - Key Stage 4 attainment by SEN group as at 2023/24

KS4 - % of pupils achieving English and Maths at level 9-4 2023/24					
SEN Status	England	Lancashire	North West	CSC NN	
No SEN		72.8	70	69.2	71.3
SEN Support		37.8	34	34.7	34.8
EHCP		13	10.9	12.5	11.9

Lancashire trend data [Figure 17] show that a relatively consistent proportion of pupils with EHCPs attain level 9-4 (11% for the last 3 years). For the years 2019/20 and 2020/21 KS4

grades were calculated using teacher assessments due to the impact of the covid pandemic, for these years higher proportions of pupils with SEN Support and pupils with no SEN attained grades 9-4 in English and Maths but by 2023/24 the proportions are back in line with previous performance.

Figure 17 - % of Key Stage 4 children achieving English and Maths at level 9-4 in Lancashire by SEN status

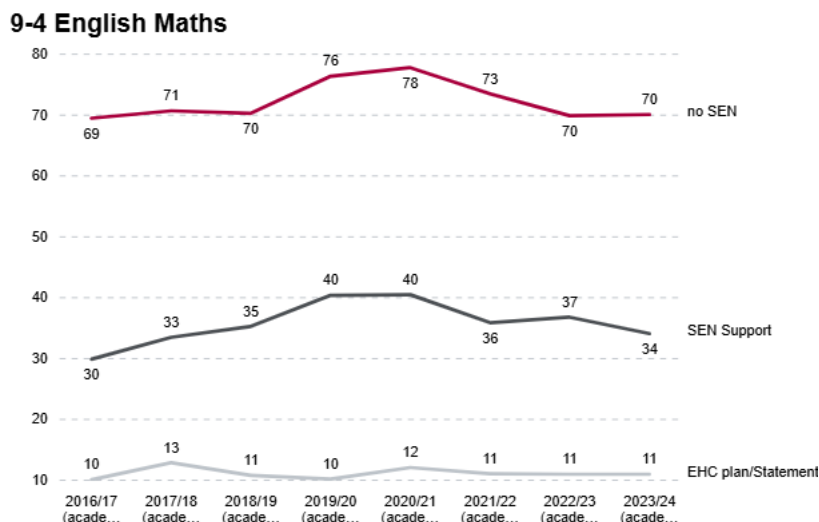
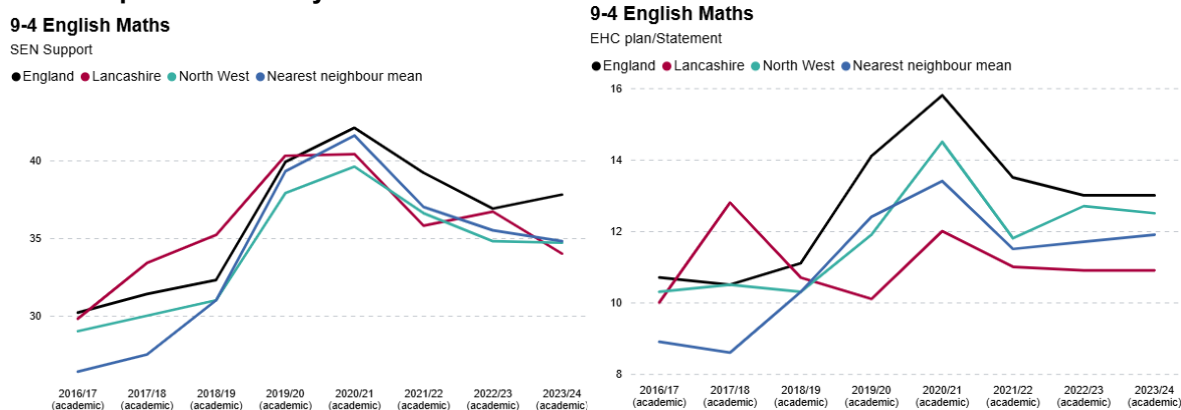


Figure 18 - % of Key Stage 4 children achieving English and Maths at level 9-4 in Lancashire and comparator areas by SEN status



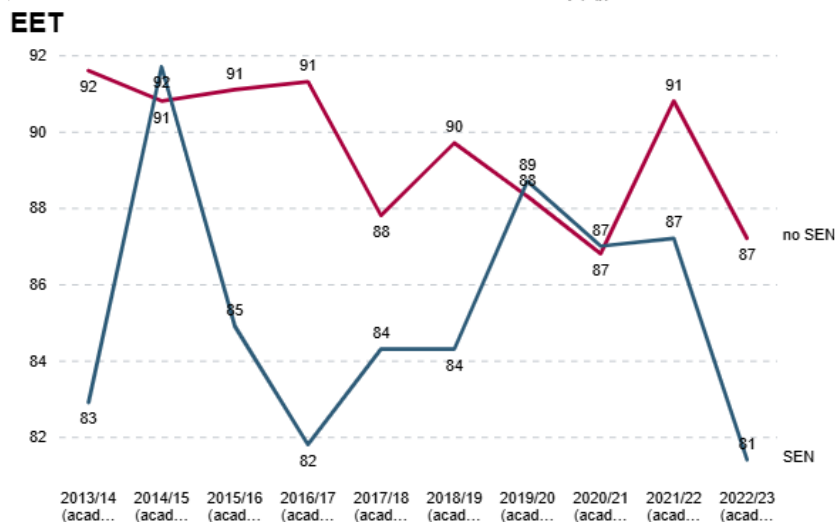
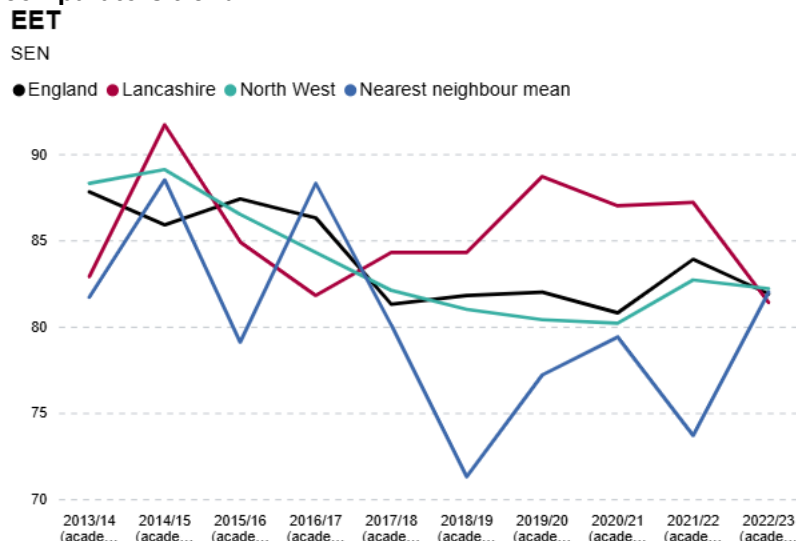
4.4. Key Stage 5 (Ages 16-18)

By Key Stage 5, the proportion of children aged 16-18 who are in Education Employment or Training (EET) is similar to nearest neighbours for both pupils with and without SEN (2023/24) [Table 16].

Trend data in Lancashire shows no consistent trend in EET for pupils with SEN whilst for those without SEN the trend is generally a decline [Figure 19Table 16]. Generally in Lancashire, EET engagement for young people aged 16-18 with SEN was higher than observed for comparators but most recent data (2022/23) shows a decline bringing Lancashire in line with the comparator group [Figure 20].

Table 16 - Key Stage 5 EET by SEN group as at 2022/23

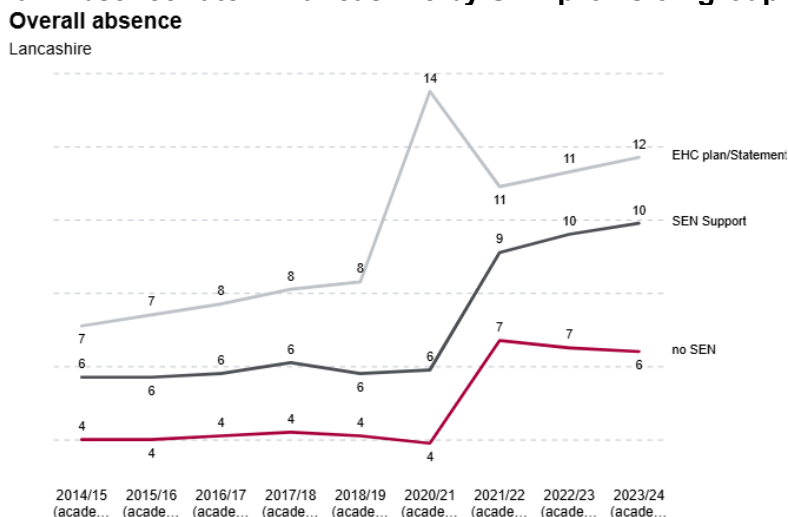
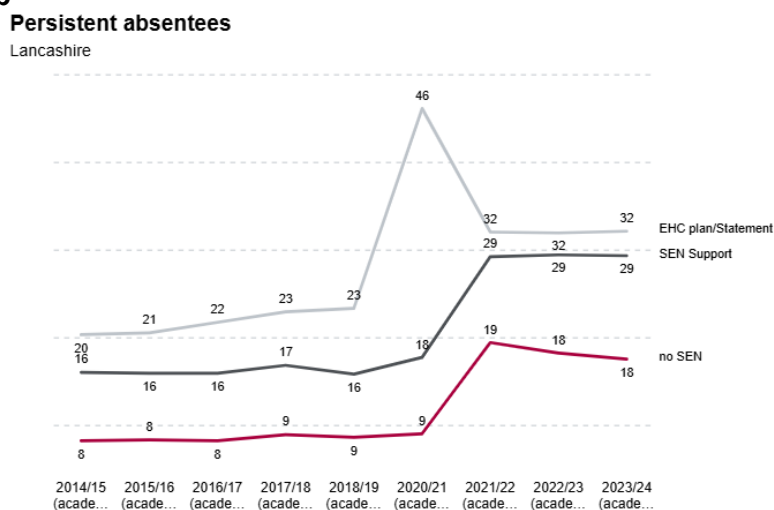
KS5 - % of pupil engaged in education, employment, or training 2022/23					
SEN Status	England	Lancashire	North West	CSC NN	
No SEN		87.5	87.2	87.2	83
SEN		81.9	81.4	82.2	82

Figure 19 - % of KS5 Cohort that are in Education Employment or Training in Lancashire trend**Figure 20 - % of KS5 Cohort with SEN that are in Education Employment or Training in Lancashire and comparators trend**

5. Children Missing Education

5.1. Absences:

The impact of the covid pandemic on school attendance was evident in data from 2020/21 for children with EHCPs and 2021/22 for all other children. The increases in absence rates that were a result of the pandemic have sustained with 2023/24 levels of absence being largely similar to absence rates in 2020/21 [Figure 21]. Absence rates increase as the level of SEN provision does, pupils with an EHCP have the highest rates of absence at 12% in 2023/24, whilst those with no SEN had much lower rates (6%). The rate of persistent absenteeism has followed the same trend as the overall absence rate [Figure 22].

Figure 21 - Overall Absence rate in Lancashire by SEN provision group**Figure 22 - Persistent Absentees (10% of sessions missed) in Lancashire by SEN provision group**

Rates of pupil absence in pupils with SEN in Lancashire are slightly lower than observed for the comparator groups though all follow the same trend of a spike in absence and sustained absence rates post-covid.

Table 17 Absence rates in Lancashire and comparator areas 2024/25

% rate of pupil absence in Lancashire and comparators 2023/24						
Absence type	SEN Status	England	Lancashire	North West	CSC NN	
Overall absence rate	No SEN		6.3	6.4	6.4	6.6
Overall absence rate	SEN Support		10.2	9.9	10.1	10.2
Overall absence rate	EHCP		12.6	11.7	12.5	12.8
persistent absence	No SEN		16.8	17.5	17.3	17.7
persistent absence	SEN Support		30.1	29.3	30	30.4
persistent absence	EHCP		35.5	32.1	35.1	35.9

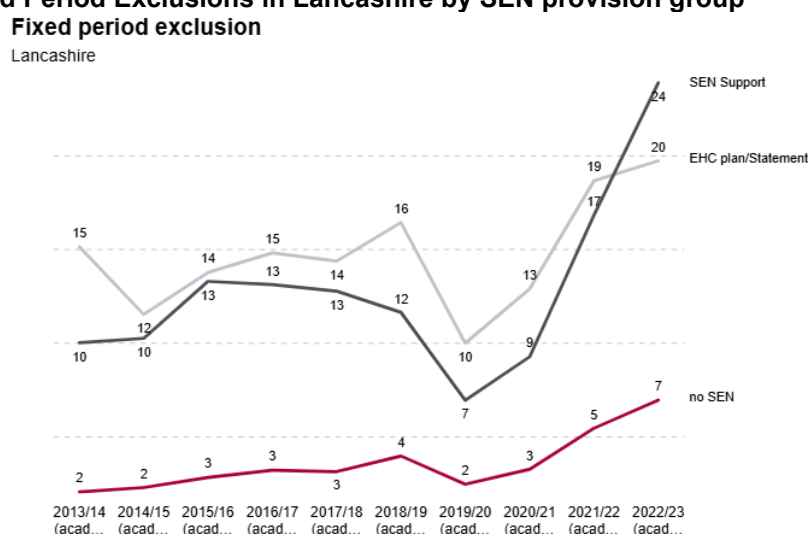
5.2. Exclusions

In 2022/23 pupils with SEN Support in Lancashire had the highest rate of Fixed term and permanent exclusions at 23.9% and 0.8% respectively. The permanent exclusion rate in Lancashire for all groups (pupils with EHCPs, with SEN support, and those with no SEN) is higher than for comparators (Table 18).

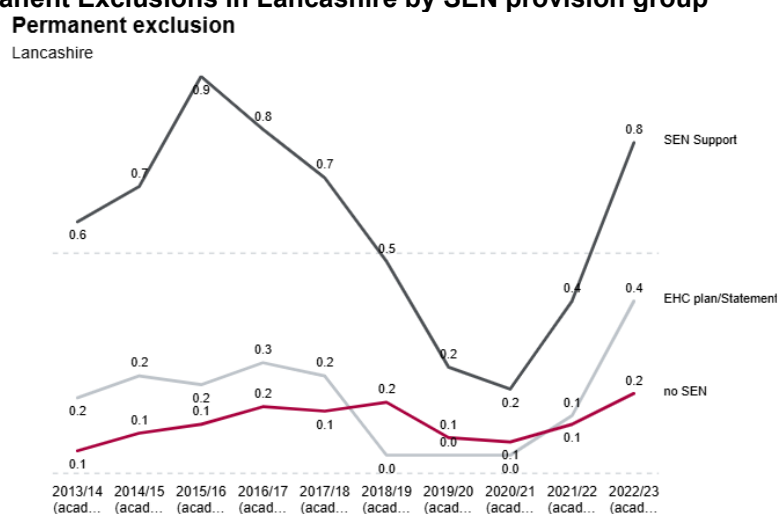
Table 18 - Summary Table of exclusions by SEN group in 2022/23

% rate of exclusions in schools Lancashire and comparators 2022/23							
Exclusion type	SEN Status	England	Lancashire	North West	CSC NN		
Fixed period exclusion	No SEN		6.4	6.9	6.6		8.3
Fixed period exclusion	SEN Support		24.4	23.9	22.4		28.4
Fixed period exclusion	EHCP		21.6	19.7	19.9		25.2
Permanent exclusion	No SEN		0.1	0.2	0.1		0.1
Permanent exclusion	SEN Support		0.4	0.8	0.5		0.5
Permanent exclusion	EHCP		0.2	0.4	0.2		0.2

There has been a significant increase in the proportion of pupils experiencing a fixed period exclusion in Lancashire, the most significant increase has been for pupils with SEN Support wherein the proportion has increased to 24% in 2022/23. Where previously in Lancashire a higher proportion of pupils with EHCPs had a fixed period exclusion now those with SEN Support do. Fixed period exclusions for all pupils have also increased but the rate is considerably lower.

Figure 23 - Fixed Period Exclusions in Lancashire by SEN provision group

The trend for permanent exclusions in Lancashire for pupils with SEN Support was one of decline prior to 2019/20 however since 2020/21 there has been a considerable increase back to levels seen in 2016/17 (0.8%), permanent exclusions for pupils with SEN are now at the highest rate since 2013/14 at 0.4% [Figure 24].

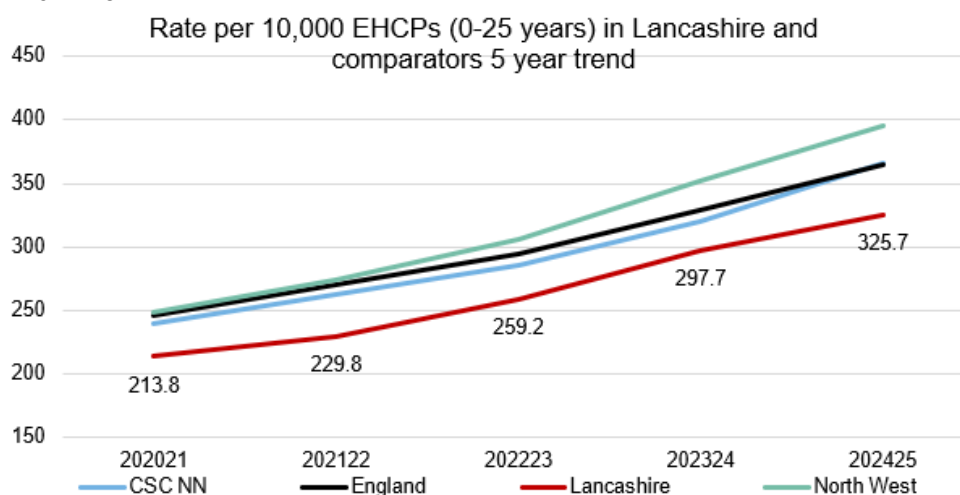
Figure 24 - Permanent Exclusions in Lancashire by SEN provision group

6. EHCPs

6.1. Total number of EHCPs

As observed nationally, the total number of EHCPs in Lancashire (for children and young people aged 0-25 years) has been increasing, up by 52.3% from 8,085 in 2020/21 to 12,317 in 2024/25 – the rate of EHCPs in Lancashire for 2024/25 is 325.7 per 10,000 0-25 year olds, which is lower than the majority of comparators.

Figure 25 Rate of EHCPs in 0-25 population in Lancashire and comparator areas 5 year trend 2020/21 – 2024/25



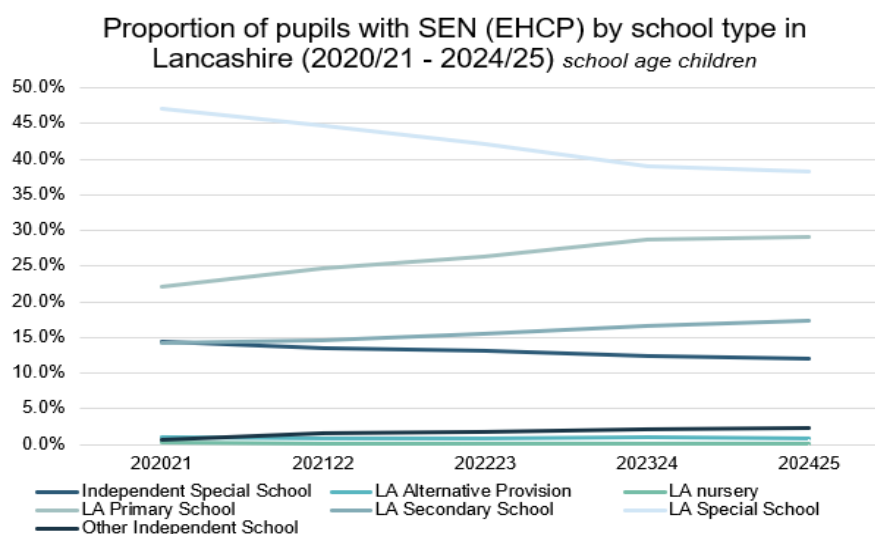
6.1.1. Place of education for children with EHCPs

Over the last 5 years the proportion of children with EHCPs being educated in Local Authority Special Schools has declined from 47.2% of children to 38.2% though the number of children has increase (3,170 to 3,882, +22.5%). Meanwhile the proportion of children with an EHCP who are educated in a local authority primary school has been increasing from 22.2% to 29%.

Whilst the number of children with EHCPs in Lancashire schools has increased by 51.1% in the last 5 years (+3,435 children), some schools have seen greater increases eg LA secondary schools (+83.1%, +798 children), LA Primary Schools (+98%, +1459 children) and Other Independent Schools (+370%, +185 children).

Any increased reliance on provision through Independent Schools will have greater cost implications for the local authority however proportionally, relatively low proportions of pupils with EHCPs are educated in this type of provision at 12.1% for Independent Special Schools (down from 14.5%) and 2.3% for Other Independent Schools (up from 0.7%).

Figure 26 proportion of pupils with EHCPs by school type in Lancashire 5 year trend 2020/21-2024/25

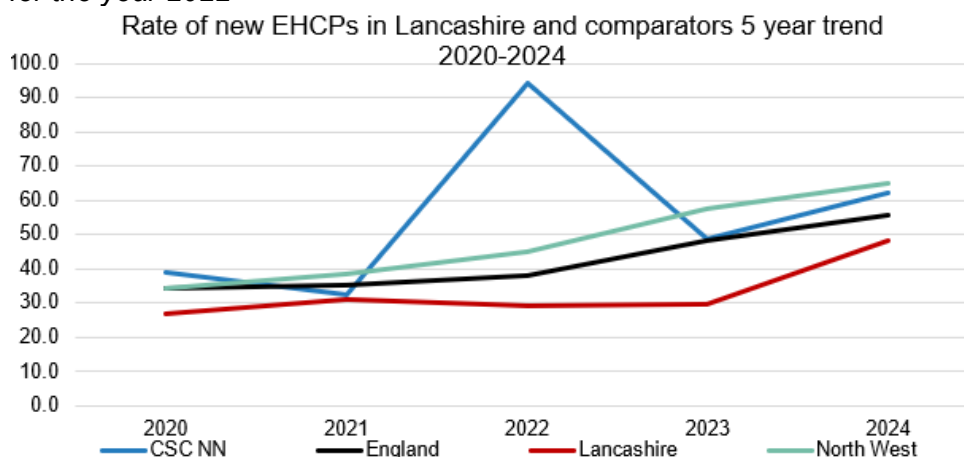


6.2. New EHCPs

In 2024 an additional 1,821 new EHCPs were started in Lancashire, this is an increase of 77.3% compared with 2020, notably the number of new plans was relatively stable for the years between 2020 to 2023, averaging just over 1,100 for the 4 years. Lancashire's rate of new EHCPs is generally statistically lower than for the comparator groups with a rate of 48.2 per 10,000 0-25 year olds.

Figure 27 Rate of EHCPs in 0-25 population in Lancashire and comparator areas 5 year trend 2020/21 – 2024/25

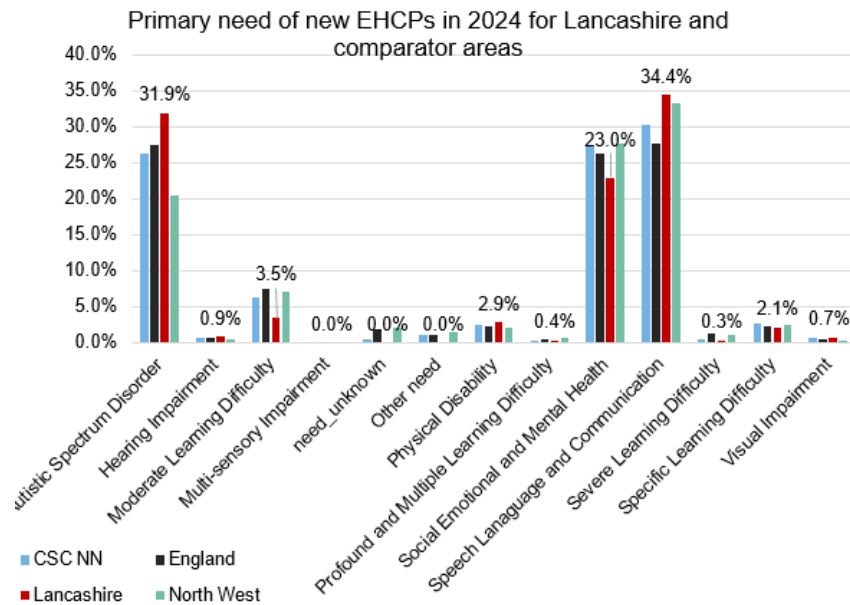
**anomalous data point of 6,078 new EHCPs in Wakefield has inflated the CSC neighbour average for the year 2022*



6.2.1. New EHCP primary needs

The most prevalent primary need of new EHC plans made in 2024 was Speech Language Communication (34.4%), followed by Autistic Spectrum Disorder (31.9%) and then Social Emotional Mental Health (23%). When compared against the other areas Lancashire has a higher proportion of new EHCPs with a primary need of Autistic Spectrum Disorder, and Speech, Language and Communication need, with lower proportions of Social Emotional Mental Health and Moderate Learning Difficulty (Figure 18 Figure 28).

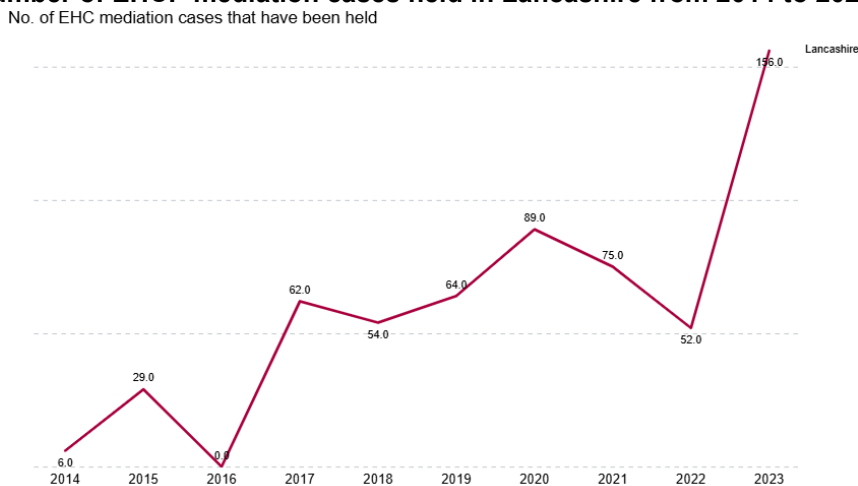
Figure 28 chart showing the primary need of new EHCPs made in Lancashire and comparator areas in 2024



6.3. Tribunals and Mediations

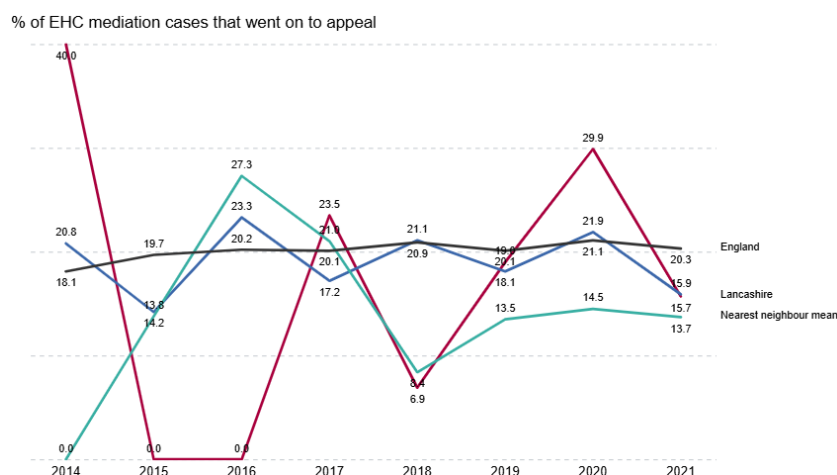
Data show that the number of EHCP mediation cases in Lancashire increased considerably in 2023 with 159 appeals in the local authority, nearly three times the number of appeals in the year prior. Numbers of appeals also spiked in England and the other comparators, with all comparison groups seeing the number of appeals at least double.

Figure 29 - Number of EHCP mediation cases held in Lancashire from 2014 to 2023



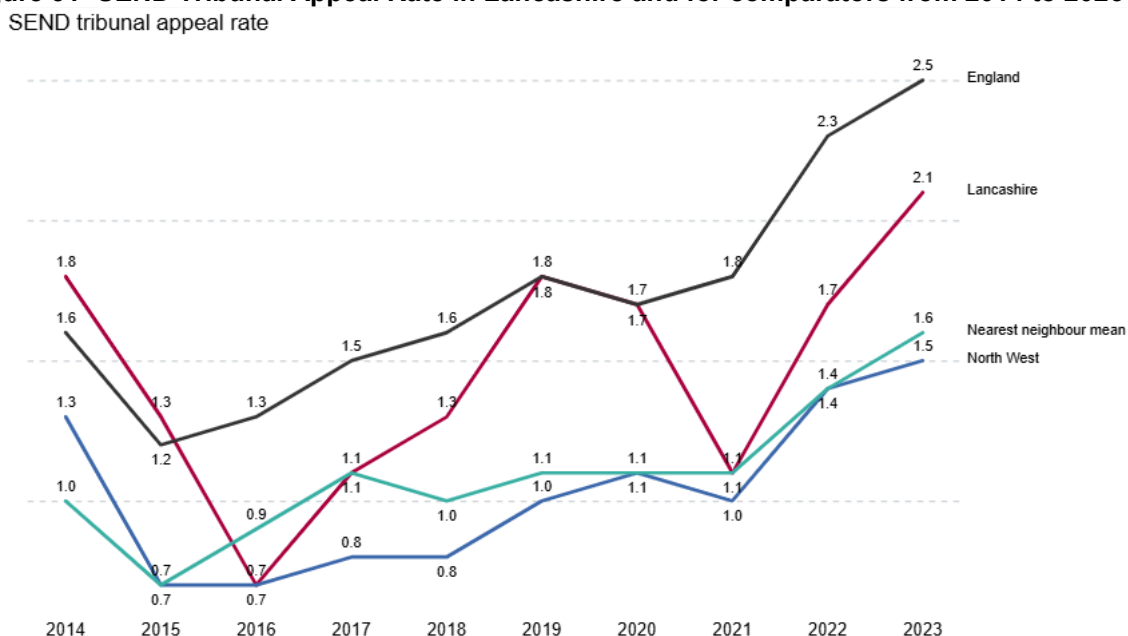
The proportion of EHC mediations that went to appeal in Lancashire has varied over the years, from a high of 40% in 2014 to 0% in 2015 and 2016. Between 2018 and 2020 the proportion going to appeal increased peaking at 30% in 2020 after which there was a decline to 15.7% – these variations are not in line with comparators where the mediation proportions have been more stable. The proportion of EHC mediations that went to appeal in Lancashire in 2021 is in line with what is seen for the North West and CSC neighbours and lower than England.

Figure 30 - % of EHC mediations that went on to appeal in Lancashire and comparators from 2014 to 2021



The SEND Tribunal appeal rate [Figure 31] has been increasing nationally since 2015. Lancashire's rate has generally been lower than England but higher than for the North West or CSC nearest neighbours. Lancashire's rates fluctuate much more than any of the comparators with notable dips in the rate in 2016 and 2021 and more rapid increase between 2016/2019 where there was a peak of 1.8. The 2023 rate is the highest recorded for Lancashire at 2.1.

Figure 31- SEND Tribunal Appeal Rate in Lancashire and for comparators from 2014 to 2023



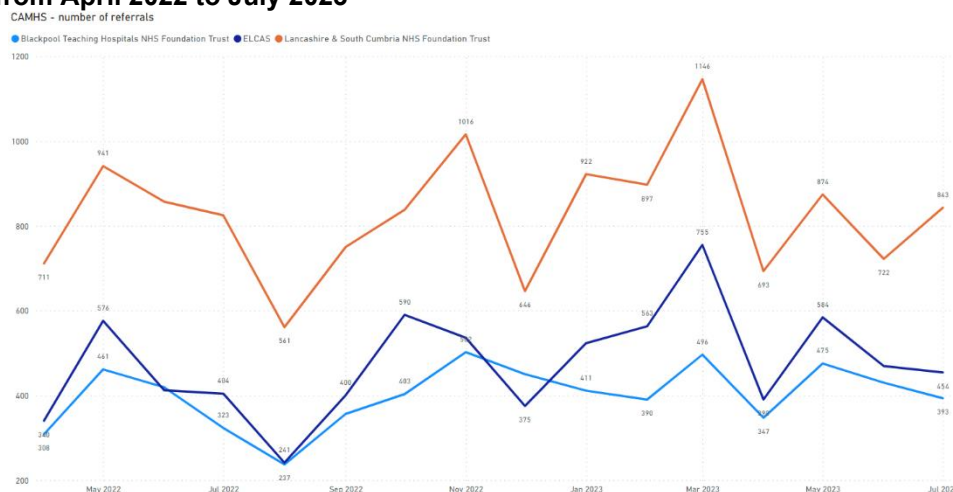
7. Health care provision

Further to special education needs (SEN) provision there are many other health care provisions that children with disabilities in Lancashire may access. Individuals living within Lancashire will access services provided by the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB), however residents from Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen, and Cumbria will also receive services from this ICB. Lancashire residents will also access services from Blackpool Teaching Hospitals and East Lancashire Child and Adolescent Services; as such

these providers have been included in this summary. It is important to note that the below data does not represent Lancashire-12 residents alone. Further to this, not all children captured in the below data will have SEN.

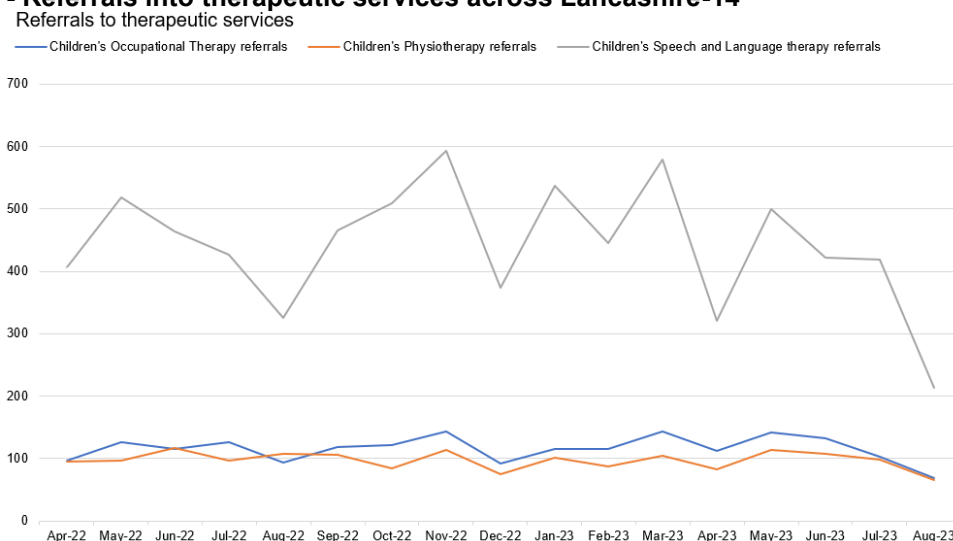
The number of referrals into Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHs) has increased slightly between April-22 and July-23 though no definitive trend can be observed [Figure 32 *ELCAS refers to the East Lancashire Child and Adolescent Services]. Dips in referrals occur in August, December, and April, presumably impacted by school holidays.

Figure 32- Referrals into the child and adolescent mental health services in Lancashire by provider from April 2022 to July 2023



Referrals to therapeutic services see a slight downward trend [Figure 33]. Speech and Language referrals outweigh the referrals to Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy making up two thirds of the therapeutic referrals outlined below.

Figure 33 - Referrals into therapeutic services across Lancashire-14



8. Recommendations

Recommendations offered by Lancashire County Council's Director of Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health.

1. The Local Area should respond to the increased demand for specialist services and alternative provision, including provision of appropriate school places.
2. The Local Area should continue to develop the Balanced System approach to identify and meet Speech, Language and Communication needs of children and young people, recognising the significant increase in primary need of SEN in primary schools.
3. The Local Area should strengthen support to meet the social, emotional and mental health needs of children and young people, recognising the increasing needs of children, particularly in secondary schools.
4. The Local Area should develop a greater understanding of the reasons for increasing proportions of young people, particularly in primary schools, whose primary need is Autistic Spectrum Condition and the reason for the levelling off of need in secondary schools.
5. The Local Area should strengthen support to meet the needs of the rising proportion of children, particularly at primary school age, with a primary need of Autistic Spectrum Condition.
6. The Local Area should continue to strengthen support in the Early Years, helping to enable more children and young people with additional needs to have a good level of development.
7. The Local Area should strengthen its inclusive offer, including a focus on inclusive schools and settings to reduce exclusions.
8. The Local Area should develop a better understanding of disproportionality within the Lancashire SEND system, ensuring that the benefits of early identification and support are available to all children and young people where needed.

Data notes

The primary sources of data for this report at the School Census and the SEN2 return, both data sets published via the DFE.

The most recent data included is 2024/25 Academic Year unless otherwise stated.

Where possible 10 year or 5 year trend data will be considered.

Any differences identified between data points in this overview are numerical differences, no statistical testing has been carried out.

Some data in this overview includes Independent schools, where this is the case it will be clearly denoted in the text and visuals.

Definitions

CYP – Children and Young People.

SEN – Special Education Needs.

SEN Provision – The combined total for children with an EHCP and SEN Support.

SEN Support – Additional support and adjustments provided by a child's school in order to support the child's education.

EHCP – Education Health and Care Plans which have replaced special educational needs statements, these are for children who require further support than what is available through SEN Support. Assessments for EHCPs require a referral to the local authority. EHCP are available from 0-25 years.

Comparators

To complete this analysis data from similar local authorities has been included. In total three comparators are included in this report with which to evaluate Lancashire's position, these are outlined below;

An average Children's Services nearest neighbour¹⁴ value, represented as "CSC Nearest Neighbours" or "CSC NN" in the commentary and charts, has been calculated using values from the below identified Local Authorities;

Bury, Darlington, Dudley, Herefordshire (County), Lincolnshire, Northumberland, Nottinghamshire, Stockton-on-Tees, Wakefield, Wigan¹⁵

'England' and 'North West' will also be included in the 'comparators' group to provide regional and national context.

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¹⁴ [Children's services statistical neighbour benchmarking model - technical report](#)

¹⁵ [Children s services statistical neighbour benchmarking tool.xlsx](#)



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