

Special Educational Needs and Disability

Key Points

- Approximately 3,600 pupils are supported with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in Buckinghamshire – Autistic Spectrum Disorder is most prevalent and is increasing in Buckinghamshire and nationally.
 - The proportion of pupils receiving lower-level SEN support in Buckinghamshire is lower than national rates, but the proportion with EHCPs is higher
 - Preparing for Adulthood starts at age 14 and improvement actions are in progress to promote a joined-up approach across the county.
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Introduction

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is an assessment of the current and future health needs of the population in Buckinghamshire. This chapter is focused on developing a better understanding of the needs of children and young people in the County who have Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND).

In Buckinghamshire there are nearly 8000 pupils receiving SEN Support and a further 3600 who are supported with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The latest local and national information available suggests that the number of children and young people with SEND is expected to grow in line with estimated population increases, and at present life chances for these children and young people are disproportionately poor.



Click here for
more info on
the SEND
Strategy

Details of the strategies developed by Children's Services to support all children with SEND can be found in the Buckinghamshire Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy (2017-2020)¹.

Definition

A child or young person in education is said to have SEND if they:

- i. Have a significantly greater **difficulty in learning** than the majority of others of the same age.
- ii. Have a **disability** which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

A child below compulsory school age has SEND if they fall within the definitions above or would do if special educational provision was not made for them. These children and young people may need extra or different help to others.

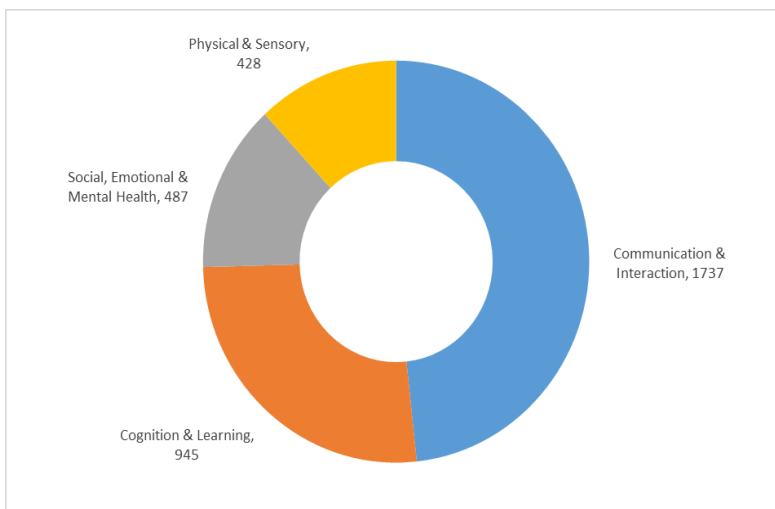
Categories of SEND

Children with SEND may need extra help or support, or special provision made for them to allow them to have the same opportunities as others of the same age.

Figure 1: Primary Need for Children with EHCPs by need as at July 2017²

If a child has SEND their needs will fall into one or more of the following four overarching areas:

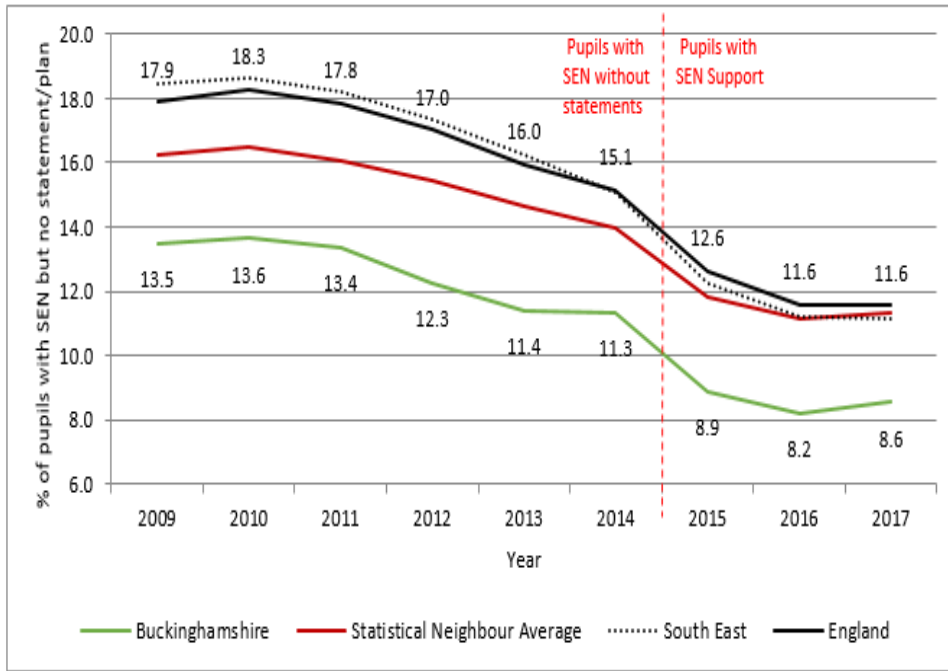
- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Physical and sensory



Prevalence in Buckinghamshire & Trends

The number of pupils receiving SEN support (a level of intervention and support where schools and settings make their own arrangements for children and young people with SEND) has been on a general decline nationally and in Buckinghamshire since 2010.

Figure 2: Pupils receiving SEN Support, 2009 to 2017³



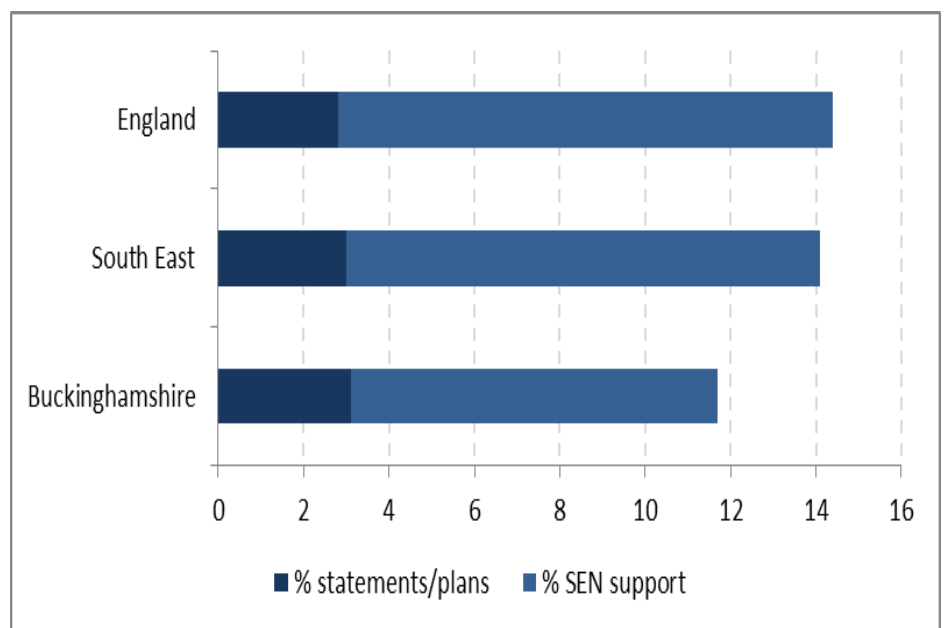
Click here for more info on SEND code of practice

The SEND code of practice⁴ introduced on 1st September 2014 removed the requirement for separate 'school action or early years action' and 'school action plus or early years action plus' categories. These were replaced by a single 'SEN support' category – this is highlighted by the red dotted line in Figure 2.

BENCHMARK: Buckinghamshire has a low percentage of pupils receiving SEN support at 8.6%. This is the lowest of our statistical neighbours. The proportion for all English authorities, in January 2017, ranges from 6.5% to 16.8% while our statistical neighbours range from 10% to 12.4%⁵.

Figure 3: The proportion of school aged children with SEN EHCPs 2017⁶

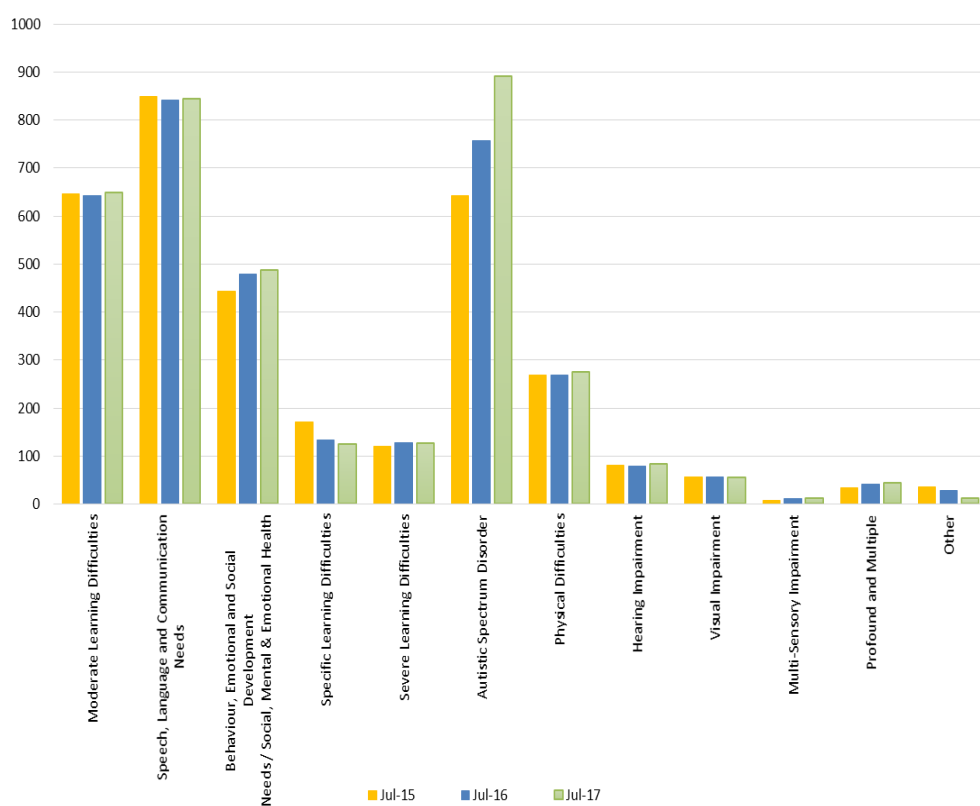
EHCPs are a legal document that describe a child or young person's special educational, health and social care needs. Over the last 5 years the number of statements/EHCPs in Buckinghamshire has increased by 10.3% (338), in line with population increases.



Part of the increase in SEN numbers since 2014 is due to the new EHCP legislation increasing the age range of EHCPs to 0- 25 from 0-19 for statements of SEN.

BENCHMARK: In Buckinghamshire 11.7% of pupils have either a statement/EHCP or are receiving SEN support. This is lower than the percentage for the South East, 14.1%, and for England, 14.4% in January 2017. Buckinghamshire has a higher proportion of pupils with plans compared to England, the South East and statistically similar areas⁷.

Figure 4: 3 year trend of Primary Needs recorded on Statements/Plans, 2015 to 2017⁸



This shows a marked increase during the last 3 years for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The 3 year trend for most other categories of need is relatively stable, with a small increase reported for Social, Emotional & Mental Health needs, and a small decrease for Specific Learning Disabilities.

BENCHMARK: National data shows that Autistic Spectrum Disorder remains the most common primary type of need for pupils with a statement or EHC plan. In January 2017 26.9% of pupils with a statement or EHC plan had ASD recorded as their primary need. This has increased from 25.9% in January 2016⁹.

In line with the National Autism Plan¹⁰ for Children a multi-agency group is in place to oversee the development of Autism Services in Buckinghamshire; to address key issues relating to


identification, diagnosis, family support and access to early interventions for preschool and school age children.

Inequalities

- Compared to children with no SEND, a higher proportion of children with SEN support or an EHCP/statement live in the more deprived communities in Buckinghamshire, with a lower proportion living in more affluent areas.
- In line with national data¹¹, there are a greater number of male pupils with statements/plans compared to female pupils. Data shows that in Buckinghamshire, boys are over 2½ times more likely to have a statement of SEN/EHCP than girls.
- Analysis completed by age and ethnicity did not identify any unusual trends or significant differences.

Preparing for Adulthood

Young people with SEND need to begin transitioning at age 14, with this process continuing until age 25. A 'transition' essentially involves changes in the kind of service provision young people receive, in order to prepare them for adulthood, and, a fulfilling and independent life.



[Click here for more info on the Children & Families Act](#)

Collaboration between services has been improved with the development of the teams and joint funded posts supporting transitions to ensure young people leaving care have a seamless experience of services. One of our drivers for progressing and improving the work within schools is to ensure that we are adequately preparing families/young people through earlier review to begin considering their care needs post-18. This will be accomplished through an improvement in earlier interventions allowing for an extended handover period between children's and adult services.

The Children with Disability Team work closely with colleagues in Adults Services, alerting the Transitions Team at age 16 when a child is likely to require support post 18.

Health Passports have also been extended to CYP with learning difficulties. This coincides with the GP held registers for these young people (14+) who should be routinely seen for an annual medical, and is in recognition of their health vulnerability. It gives them the opportunity to express any health concerns they may have.

During the process of preparing for adulthood a number of changes occur in the kind of service provision available to Children and Young People – in Health, Education and Social Care. There are several improvement areas identified which are detailed under the relevant headings below:

a. Health

Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust is reviewing their Transitions Policy and adopting The ‘Ready Steady Go’ programme which is a structured transition programme to equip young people with the necessary skills and knowledge to manage their condition confidently and successfully in both paediatric and adult services. In addition the Health Passport Working Group are planning to extend the age of Children and Young People who can have a Health Passport¹².



b. Education (post 16)

Work is underway to improve liaison between Children’s Services, the Transitions team and partner services including Schools and Health services, to ensure there is a timely transition and that information regarding need and funding is understood early in the process. To facilitate this, a Transitions Steering Group has been set up along with a sub-group for schools to promote better communication and information sharing.

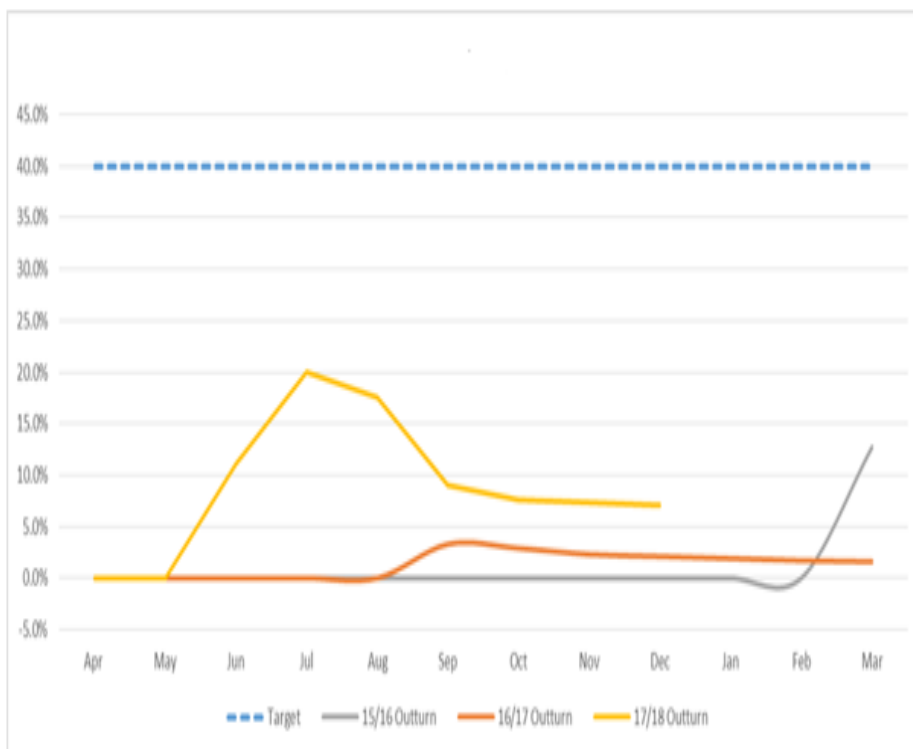
Figure 5: Timely Transitions, 2015/16 to 2017/18¹³

c. Social Care

Figure 5 shows the proportion of young people requiring transition to Adult Social Care services who are assessed by the time they are aged 17yrs and 1 month

Performance has been lower than expected over the past few years, impacted by issues including:

- Lack of staff capacity
- Delayed referrals
- Unclear understanding of eligibility within schools



- Inefficient screening process of referrals
- Assessments not within timescales and often delays
- Gaps in provision and difficulty identifying appropriate services

The Transitions Preparing for Adulthood Operational Plan 2018/19 aims to address these issues, improve performance and improve outcomes for children and young people in Buckinghamshire.

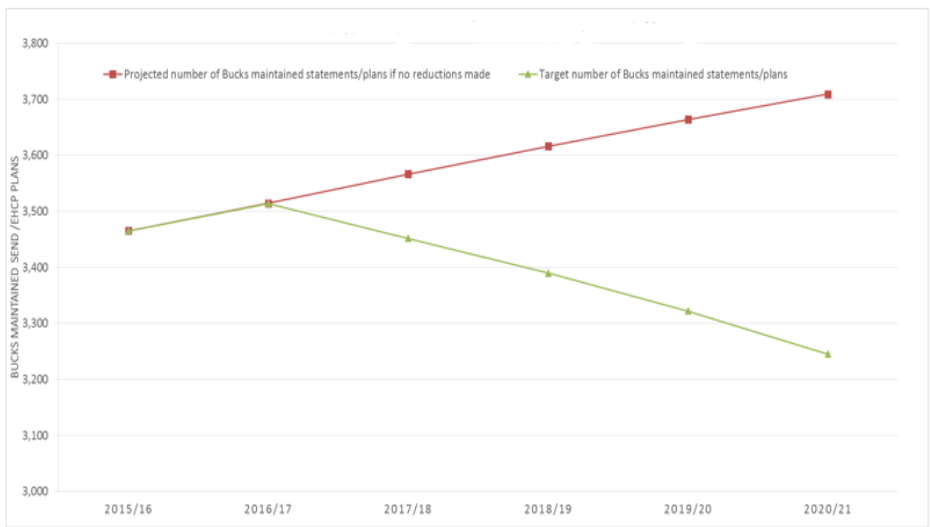
Short Breaks

Local authorities have a legal duty to enable carers of disabled children to have breaks from caring by providing a reliable range of services. The number of children and young people with disabilities in Buckinghamshire is expected to increase in line with population growth and many will have eligible needs for services across health, social care and education. The highest growth in Buckinghamshire is expected in Aylesbury Vale and High Wycombe and this will equate to increased demand for short breaks in these areas.

A draft Short Breaks Strategy has been developed, which sets out the vision for short breaks from 2018 - 2022. This will be consulted on, which will inform the final strategy before final sign off.

Future Projections

Figure 6: SEND Projections model output, 2017¹⁴



The Business Intelligence & Insight team have developed a statistical model to predict future demand by analysing 5 years of historic trends along with future population projections, referral rates, conversion and completion rates.

This shows the projected number of plans in 2021 if there are no changes to the historic rate of referrals and assessment conversions. The forecast line estimates numbers over the same period

if the number of assessments required reduces through improved support to schools who are then able to maintain the placements of children and young people in the mainstream environment.

The model has been discussed with the Buckinghamshire Change for Children Board. One of the aims of this workstrand within the Change for Children programme is to provide better support to schools to enable them to access appropriate help for children at an earlier stage within the mainstream education environment, if this is the best thing for the child and their outcomes. The Graduated Approach is designed to assist them in being better equipped and more confident to do this, and Buckinghamshire County Council are also changing the way that the Special Education Needs Organisers (SENO's) work, to improve direct contact with schools and parents.

The chart shown is an illustration, not a target, though we would anticipate that earlier support would reduce the number of assessments and plans.

References

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- ¹³ Buckinghamshire County Council, 2017. Data extracted from Northgate AIS Database
- ¹⁴ Buckinghamshire County Council, 2017. Source data from Capita ONE Database

[All online sources correct as at 07/09/2018]