



A child or young person has special educational needs (SEN) if they have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or have a disability which prevents him or her from making use of the facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post 16 institutes (Children and Families Act 2014). SEN can affect a child or young person's behaviour, reading and writing, concentration levels, ability to understand things, or their physical ability (Gov.uk 2016).

This JSNA will discuss the needs of children with special educational needs and disability in Cheshire West and Chester. It will not cover disability where there is no special educational need identified.

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Chapters coming soon include 'Health' and 'Preparing for Adulthood'.

Note: In this JSNA, those with a EHCP includes a number of children with a statement of SEN.

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National research indicates that children and young people with SEND, (particularly those with a high level of need), are at risk of:

- Poorer physical health
- Poorer mental health
- Persistent absence
- Lower educational achievement
- Exclusion from school
- Becoming isolated from their peers
- Feeling excluded from social and recreational opportunities
- Being out of education, training and employment (NEET)
- Being unprepared for adulthood leading to lack of employment and independence

A child or young person with a disability or learning difficulty that makes it harder for them to learn than children of the same age has special educational needs (SEN). This may not be all children and young people with a disability. Those who do have an SEND can have their needs met through SEN support provided by the early years provision, school or college they attend. If the child has a high level of need which cannot be met through current provision, they will be assessed for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Support is provided up to the age of 25 for those accessing any form of education or training.

Children and young people with special educational needs are a diverse group where some require minimal support, and others require multi-agency intervention.

In order to ensure the best outcomes for children with SEND, it is vital to understand their needs and ensure they are not excluded from any opportunities. This will require identifying outcomes and coordinating support to meet needs throughout childhood and transition into adulthood.

Children and young people with SEND can face multiple barriers which may make it difficult for children and young people with SEND to achieve their full potential. Some of these barriers are listed in the left hand column of this page.

Early identification of needs and accessing the right support can minimise risks. However it is important that support services do not add additional barriers, these can include:

- Late identification of need
- Needs being unmet
- Gaps in support at key transition points
- Lack of provision of information about support available
- Child, parent and care giver lack of involvement and voice.

In addition, there are some groups of children and young people who are more at risk of having an SEND, which will create additional pressures and challenges:

- Looked after children
- Children in need
- Those living in the most deprived areas
- Gypsy and Travellers.



1 in 14 children and young people in Cheshire West and Chester have an SEND.

At January 2018, approximately 6,785 children and young people aged 0 to 25 had an identified SEND. This is 7% of the 0-25 population.

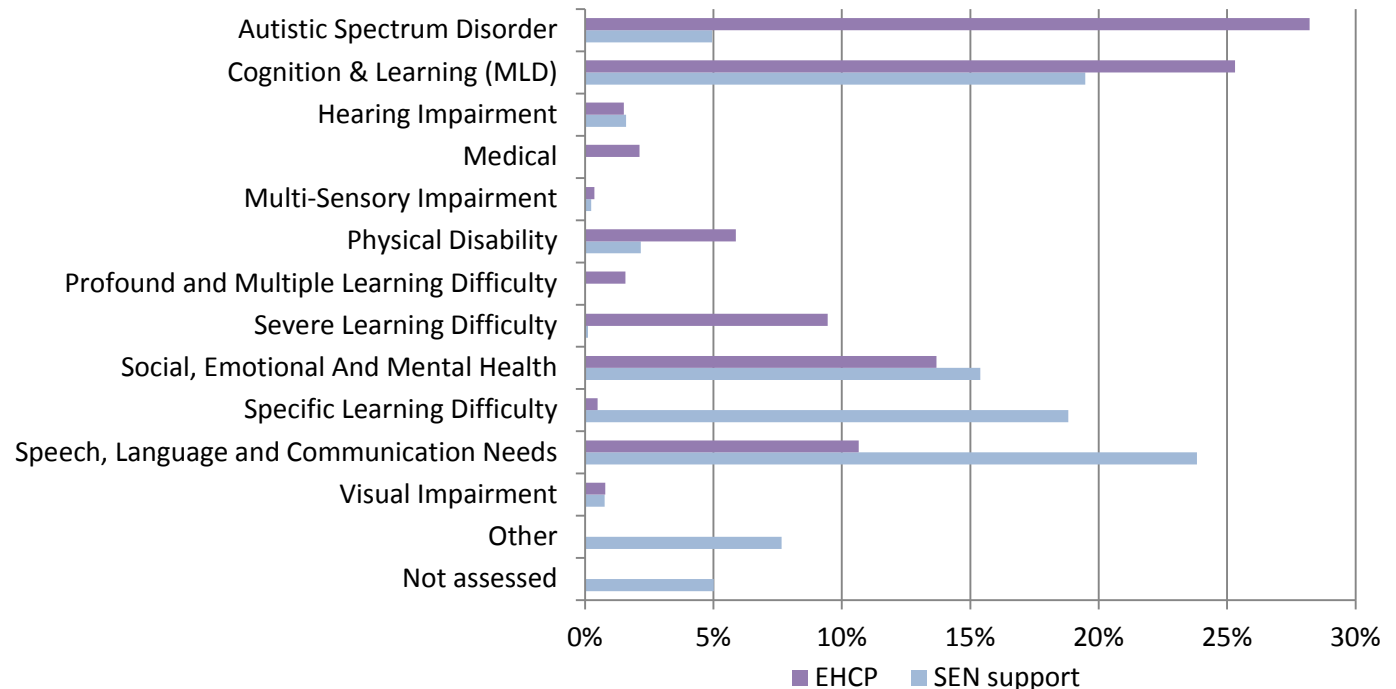
1,664 children and young people with an SEND had a high level of need and are receiving additional support through a EHCP or statement. This is 1.7% of the 0-25 population in Cheshire West and Chester, which is similar to the England average of 1.6%.

In Cheshire West and Chester there are approximately 6,785 children and young people with an identified SEND. The majority of these children are having their needs met by their school (SEN support). However there are 1,664 children with a high level of need who are receiving additional support through a EHCP.

The most common need (based on primary needs) for all children with an SEND was for a moderate learning difficulty (1,414 children; 21%) and a speech, language and communication need (1,394 children; 21%), followed by a social, emotional and mental health need (1,013 children; 15%).

For children and young people with a high level of need that have an EHCP, the most common need was for Autistic Spectrum Disorder (466; 28%) followed by a moderate learning difficulty (418; 25%) and a social, emotional and mental health need (226; 14%).

Special educational need for those on an EHCP and those receiving SEN support



Source: EHCP/statement – Local data set at January 2018;

SEN support – School Census data January 2018 (Cheshire West and Chester residents only);

Note: SEN support data does not include those identified in early years settings as having an SEND but are without a plan and not in receipt of additional funding. In addition it does not include those aged over 18 accessing support or those accessing SEN support in an out of borough or private school.



Children with a high level of need

Of children and young people with a EHCP, 3% were aged under 5, 35% were aged 5-10, 40% aged 11-15, 20% aged 16-19 and 3% aged 20-25. When looking at the age pattern compared to England, previous data suggests that slightly more children and young people aged 0 to 15 have a plan than the England average and fewer aged over 16. Based on the 16-19 population, comparative data suggests that you would expect to see more 16-19 year olds with an EHCP in Cheshire West and Chester than there currently are.

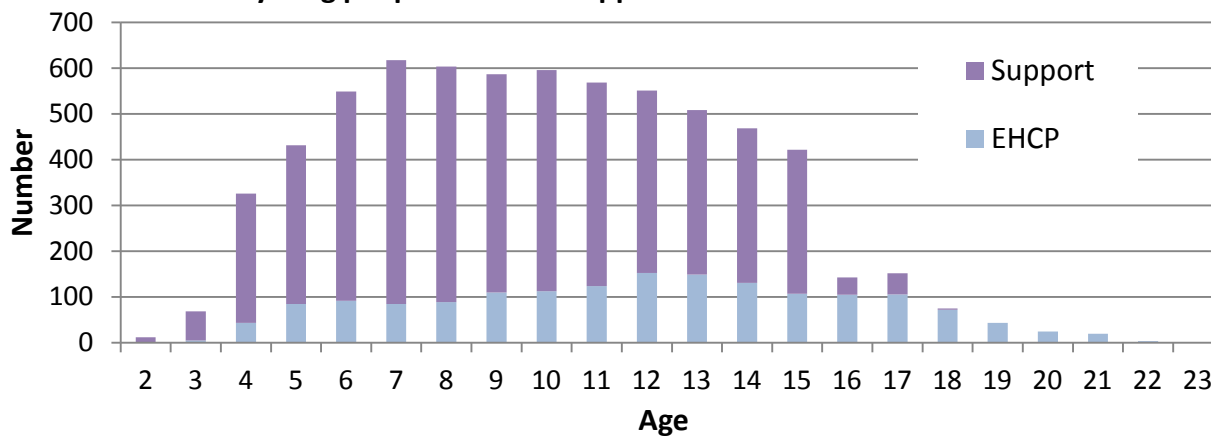
In Cheshire West and Chester a graduated approach is taken and if needs are being effectively met through SEN support then the child will not need an EHCP. For example a child in early years with SEND may receive support from the Early Years Specialist Service (data unavailable) and most often a child may not go on a plan until they start school. However, historically, SEN assessments were not carried out for children in early years with needs only starting to be identified from Reception. This policy has now changed and the figure will continue to grow as needs continue to be identified much earlier. Early years data needs to be explored to understand fully the current level of need.

When looking at primary need by age group, autistic spectrum disorder was the most common for those aged under five and aged 5-10; and was a close second to a moderate learning disability for 11-15 year olds and 16-19 year olds. A physical disability was the most common need for those aged 20-25.

Of children and young people with an SEND in Cheshire West and Chester:

- 407 aged 0 to 4 years (EHCP 49; SEN support 358)
- 2,790 aged 5 to 10 (EHCP 574; SEN support 2,812)
- 2,890 aged 11 to 18 (EHCP 947; SEN support 1,943)
- 94 aged 19 to 25 (EHCP only as SEN support data is not available)

Children and young people with SEN support or a EHCP in Cheshire West and Chester



Source: EHCP/statement – Local data set at January 2018; SEN support – School Census data January 2018 (Cheshire West and Chester residents only). Note: SEN support data does not include those identified in early years settings as having an SEND but are without a plan and not in receipt of additional funding. In addition it does not include those aged over 18 accessing support or those accessing SEN support in an out of borough or private school.



In Cheshire West and Chester a quarter of pupils with an SEND are eligible for and claiming free school meals compared to 11.6% of all pupils.

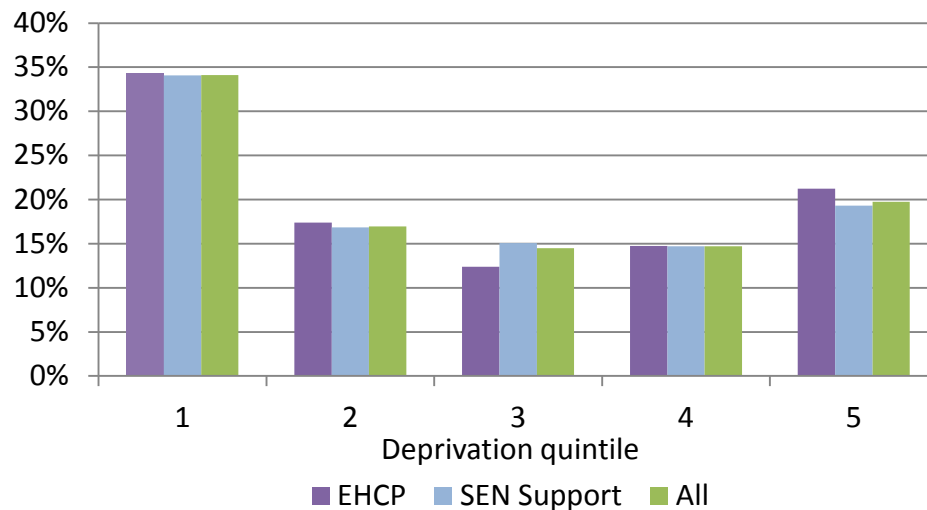
Over 50% of those with an SEND live in the 40% most deprived areas in England.

According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, ‘...poverty is both a cause and effect of SEND.... Children from low-income families are more likely than their peers to be born with inherited SEND, are more likely to develop some forms of SEND in childhood, and are less likely to move out of SEND categories while at school. At the same time, children with SEND are more likely than their peers to be born into poverty, and also more likely to experience poverty as they grow up... Pupils from low-income families are more likely to be identified as having SEND, but at the same time are less likely to receive support or effective interventions that might help to address their needs. This is partly because their parents are less likely to be successful in seeking help. They are also less likely to receive help from their schools, and more likely to end up excluded from school or dropping out of education... As such, children with SEND from low-income families face multiple disadvantages and increased vulnerability from the very start of their lives.’ Special educational needs and their links to poverty, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2016.

Free school meals provide vital support for low-income families and are often used as an indicator of poverty. In Cheshire West and Chester, at March 2018 there were 1,802 pupils (25%) with an SEND who were eligible for and claiming free school meals, the same as the national average. Those with an EHCP were most likely to be eligible (30.8%) compared to those accessing SEND support (23.3%). This follows the national trend.

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2015) are used as a measure of multiple deprivation experienced in each neighbourhood. Those most deprived are ranked ‘1’. Quintile one describes the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England and quintile five describes the 20% least deprived. In Cheshire West and Chester, more children with a SEND live in quintile one than any other quintile.

% of children with an SEND living in each IMD quintile



Source: Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2015); School Census data 2018
 Note: Quintile 1 is most deprived and quintile 5 is least deprived



47% of children and young people with an EHCP attended a mainstream school or post 16 institution at January 2018.

Previous 2017 data available for comparison indicates that Cheshire West and Chester has a lower proportion of children and young people with an EHCP attending mainstream schools or post 16 institutions than the England average.

51% attend a special school.

Again previous data suggests that a higher proportion of children and young people with an EHCP attend a specialist provision than the England average.

Note: comparative data based on Cheshire West and Chester SEN2017 and England 2017 data.

Provision

August 2018

Whether or not children and young people with SEND attend specialist provision or mainstream provision is a measure of the inclusivity of schools. However, there will be children with a high level of need whose needs can not be fulfilled in a mainstream setting, or whose parents choose specialist provision.

Of the 1,664 children and young people living in Cheshire West and Chester with an EHCP, 47% attended a mainstream school or post 16 provision (780 children) and 51% attended a special school (845 children).

Comparative data from 2017 indicates a higher percentage of children with an EHCP in Cheshire West and Chester attend a special school and fewer attend mainstream provision. Children and young people with profound and multiple learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties are most likely to be educated in a specialist provision than a mainstream provision though the greatest numbers are seen for ASD and moderate learning disability due to greater numbers of children and young people with these needs.

Educational provision of children and young people with an EHCP

Provision	Cheshire West and Chester 2018	Cheshire West and Chester 2017	England 2017
Mainstream school or post 16	46.9%	47.8%	53.6%
Special school or post 16	50.8%	50%	42.3%
Awaiting provision	1%	0.2%	1.4%
Early years	0.18%	0.2%	0.4%
Pupil referral unit	0.2%	0.1%	0.8%
Educated elsewhere by parents	0.4%	0.7%	0.7%
Educated elsewhere by Local Authority	0.6%	1%	0.7%

Source: Cheshire West and Chester Local data set at January 2018 and January 2017; England data Statements of SEN and EHC plans: England 2017, Department for Education



A higher proportion of children and young people with an SEND might be attending specialist provision due to Cheshire West and Chester having a higher number of special schools than the average. It could also be that children are attending a special school who would be suitable for mainstream provision, or that children in Cheshire West and Chester have more severe needs therefore needing to attend specialist provision. It could also indicate that mainstream schools are less inclusive.

In regards to more severe needs, available data suggests a similar proportion of the 0-25 Cheshire West and Chester population have a EHCP compared to the England average, but fewer have a moderate learning difficulty than the England average. This could mean children and young people have more severe needs, or it could be that coding of need is inaccurate, for example coding between specific learning difficulties and moderate learning difficulties (data relating to different types of SEN need is difficult to analyse and compare as there is no current common descriptors of need used in reporting types of SEN need).

Focusing on those who attend special schools, School Census 2017 data, indicated that Cheshire West and Chester has a greater proportion of children with a moderate learning difficulty, social, emotional and mental health issue, and speech, language and communication needs attending a special school than the England average.

Further work is needed to improve robust recoding of SEND needs:

- review recording of numbers and types of pupils on SEN support to ensure all those with special educational needs are identified and recorded properly
- undertake a piece of work to develop a borough wide shared understanding of descriptors of need

A High Needs Strategic Review is underway to improve the availability of specialist provision across the borough. The work will inform:

- future development of specialist provision for children and young people including post 16 provision
- consider barriers to inclusion in mainstream school to inform the work of the Cheshire West and Chester School Improvement Board



Supported internships in Cheshire West and Chester:

- 2015 = 0
- 2016 = 0
- 2017 = 15
- 2018 = 20

Supported internships aim to equip 16-24 year olds with an EHC plan with the skills they need for employment through learning in the workplace. It is a structured programme of time with an employer and a personalised study programme, with the opportunity to study for relevant qualifications. Where possible the young person is supported to move into paid employment at the end of the programme.

The majority of Cheshire West and Chester students with an SEND attend colleges in daily travelling distance, with most students attending colleges in the borough. The following colleges in daily travelling distance are commissioned by Cheshire West and Chester:

College	Number of attendees with EHCP
City of Liverpool College	1
Coleg Cambria	9
Warrington Vale Royal College	31
Reaseheath College	18
Riverside College	2
The Cheshire College (South)	8
The Cheshire College (Petty Pool)	38
The Cheshire College (West)	44
Wirral Metropolitan College	11

Source: SEN2, 2018

A small number of students with very complex needs attend Independent Specialist Colleges:

- Seashell Trust, Manchester
- Derwen College
- Priory College
- National Star college

In Cheshire West and Chester, the number of students taking up a supported internship has increased year on year since 2015, with 20 young people accessing a supported internship in 2018. National data shows that Cheshire West and Chester has the highest percentage of supported internship places for learners with EHCPS in the 23 North West authorities.

Cheshire West and Chester have supported one local college to improve personal care facilities to increase access for learners with personal care needs so that they can access learning in the local area, in line with our vision in the SEND strategy plan. Cheshire West and Chester's High Needs Strategic Review will provide recommendations to improve the post 16 education offer, reporting at the end of 2018 to start implementation for September 2019.



A high proportion of children with sensory impairment have complex needs. This is an upward trend in Cheshire West and Chester with 2017-18 data showing that 75% of children with vision impairment and 61% of children with hearing impairment having additional and complex needs.

Early identification is important at all ages but research shows that 85% of brain development occurs before the age of five so identifying children as young as possible who have, or are at risk of having, a disability or delay in development is important as a child can quickly fall behind if speech and language learning is delayed. Once identified, joint assessment and high quality multi-disciplinary early intervention services can improve outcomes for children and families.

A range of services across health, education and social care contribute to early identification, assessment of need and on-going support for children with SEND aged 0-5.

The Child Development Service (CDS) is a multi-disciplinary service which ensures early identification from a range of services across health, education and social care to co-ordinate effective on-going support. In education this includes:

- Early Years Specialist Support Service (EYSSS) provide on-going advice and support for children with complex needs aged 2-4 in Early Years settings to build capacity, ensure children are fully included, increase staff confidence and facilitate a smooth transition into education.
- Sensory Services are involved in providing support for children and families in the home, early years settings and forward into school, with direct referral from Audiology and Ophthalmology services immediately following diagnosis.
- The Child and Education Psychology Service provides advice for all children for statutory assessment, including those children in Early Years.

Established pathways agreed across services ensure that there is a multi-disciplinary approach to early identification and effective on-going support is provided within a multi-disciplinary framework. Assessment of children with complex needs is joint with CDS and NHS therapy services. In Cheshire West and Chester, there are jointly agreed health and education pathways for children with hearing, vision and multi-sensory impairment from diagnosis including following new-born hearing screening.

To facilitate early identification of children within Early Years settings and referral on to specialist services in education, the Early Years Team (EYT) support and challenge settings to ensure consistent approaches are in place to effectively monitor progress of all children, liaising and working with other professionals to ensure a multi-agency approach through the development of SENCO hubs and other briefings.



Children with complex SEND are referred for support from EYSSS to two main centres: Chester and Ellesmere Port area and Winsford area. Data shows that a significantly higher percentage (75%) of overall referrals are in the Chester and Ellesmere Port area.

At March 2018, there were 51 pupils in nursery with a final Education Health and Care Plan. Of those going to school in September 2018, just over half have been identified as requiring a specialist school placement.

Early years cont.

From 2010-2014 the number of children with complex SEND accessing support from the EYSS team increased significantly, but, since the introduction of free places for two year olds for families in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) there has been a further increase in demand for support, with average annual caseloads now almost 4 times higher than they were in 2010. In the past three years EYSS team caseload figures have remained stable at an average 340 per academic year.

59% of children referred through the CDS, or via settings to the EYSSS, have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Social Communication difficulties. This reflects the national picture for ASD and informs the joint commissioning strategy and forward planning for school places and provision of services.

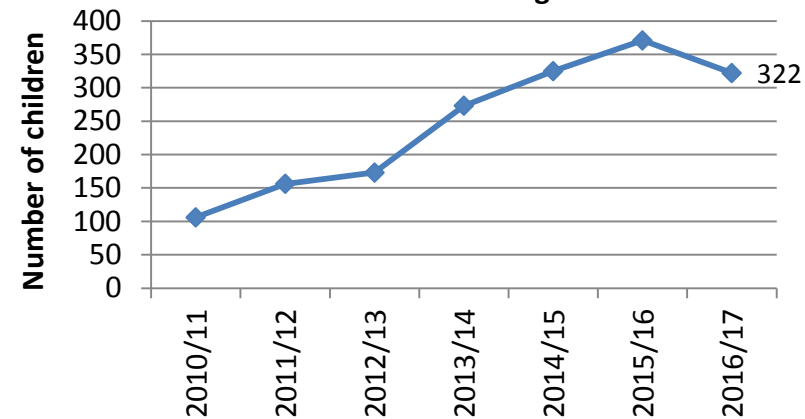
Children 0-4 receiving support from the Sensory Service represent 10% of the overall caseload for sensory services referred following diagnosis by Ophthalmology and Audiology services at 0-2 years old and 10% of overall numbers referred for onward services by Paediatricians from 2 years old onwards.

Recommendations include:

- The establishment of a Strategic Partnership Group for the Child Development Service (CDS) comprising of representatives from the CDS, CCG's, Local Authority and families. The group would be responsible for the overall arching strategic vision and performance of the CDS.
- The numbers of children with ASD and Social Communication difficulties has necessitated a review of services to support this. The Early Bird programme has been a key contribution to the Cheshire West offer to support families in the early stages after diagnosis of ASD and reviews of this from families have shown the benefit it has. We now need to work towards a broader menu of intervention as part of a continuum of services to support families post diagnosis of ASD. Overall aim is to establish an all age neurodevelopmental service to ensure accessibility, timeliness and coordination of specialist services for children, young people and their families.
- Some children with complex needs may benefit from funding for a time limited period, or from the provision of additional resources or equipment. This is currently provided through Early Years Access Funding. A review of this process is being carried out through an Early Years Task and Finish group.

August 2018

Number of children accessing EYSS services





Pupils in Cheshire West and Chester Schools

August 2018

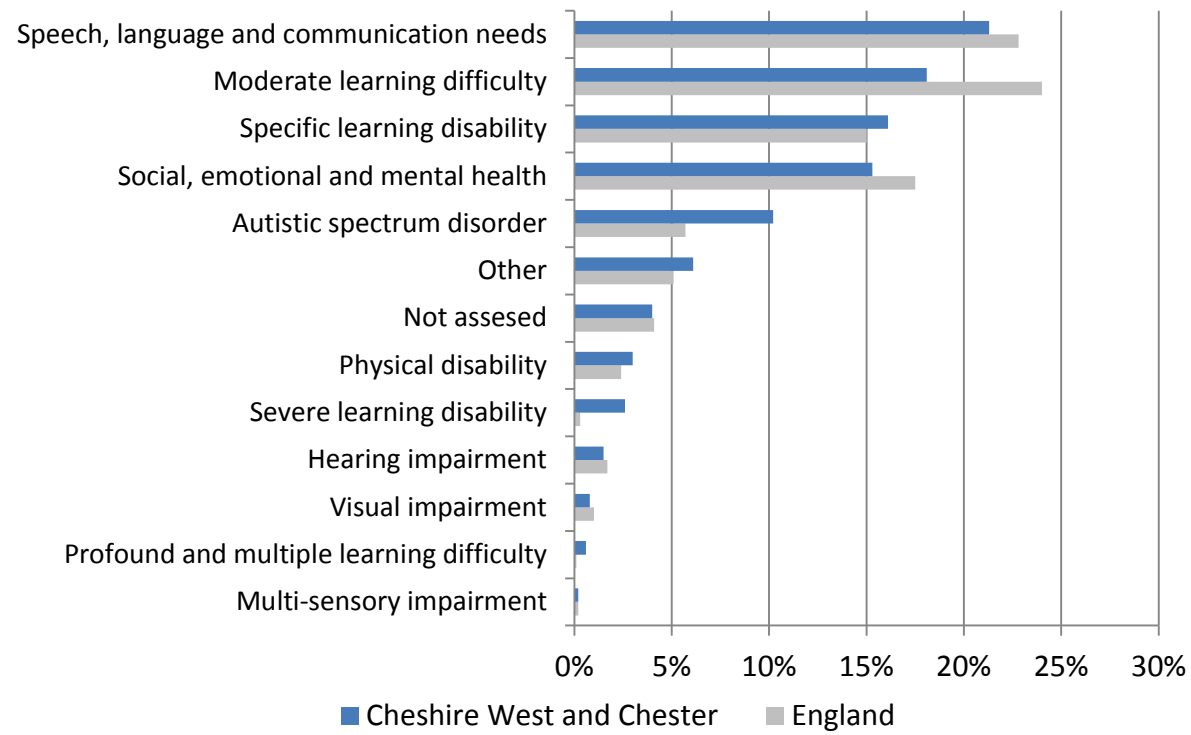
The January 2018 School Census indicated there were 7,191 pupils with a SEND in Cheshire West and Chester schools; 14% of all pupils. This is a rate of 134.39 per 1,000 pupils. This includes pupils who live in and out of the borough. The majority, 11% of pupils are receiving SEN support and 3% have an EHCP plan.

Over half of all pupils with a SEND are in primary school (52%) and a third are in secondary school (22%). 13% are in a special school. The highest numbers of pupils with a SEND are seen for those aged seven and eight. The greatest need for Cheshire West and Chester pupils was for speech language and communication needs. Data suggests that Cheshire West and Chester has more pupils assessed as autistic spectrum disorder than the England average, 10.2% compared to 5.7%.

14% of pupils in Cheshire West and Chester schools have a special educational need. 3% of pupils have a high level of need and are on an EHCP plan.

Since 2010, the proportion of pupils with an EHCP has remained fairly consistent (between 3-3.3%) and is similar to the England average of 2.8%. However, the proportion of pupils receiving SEN support has been decreasing from 15.2% in 2010 to 11.2% in 2018, a pattern reflected nationally.

Primary need compared to England



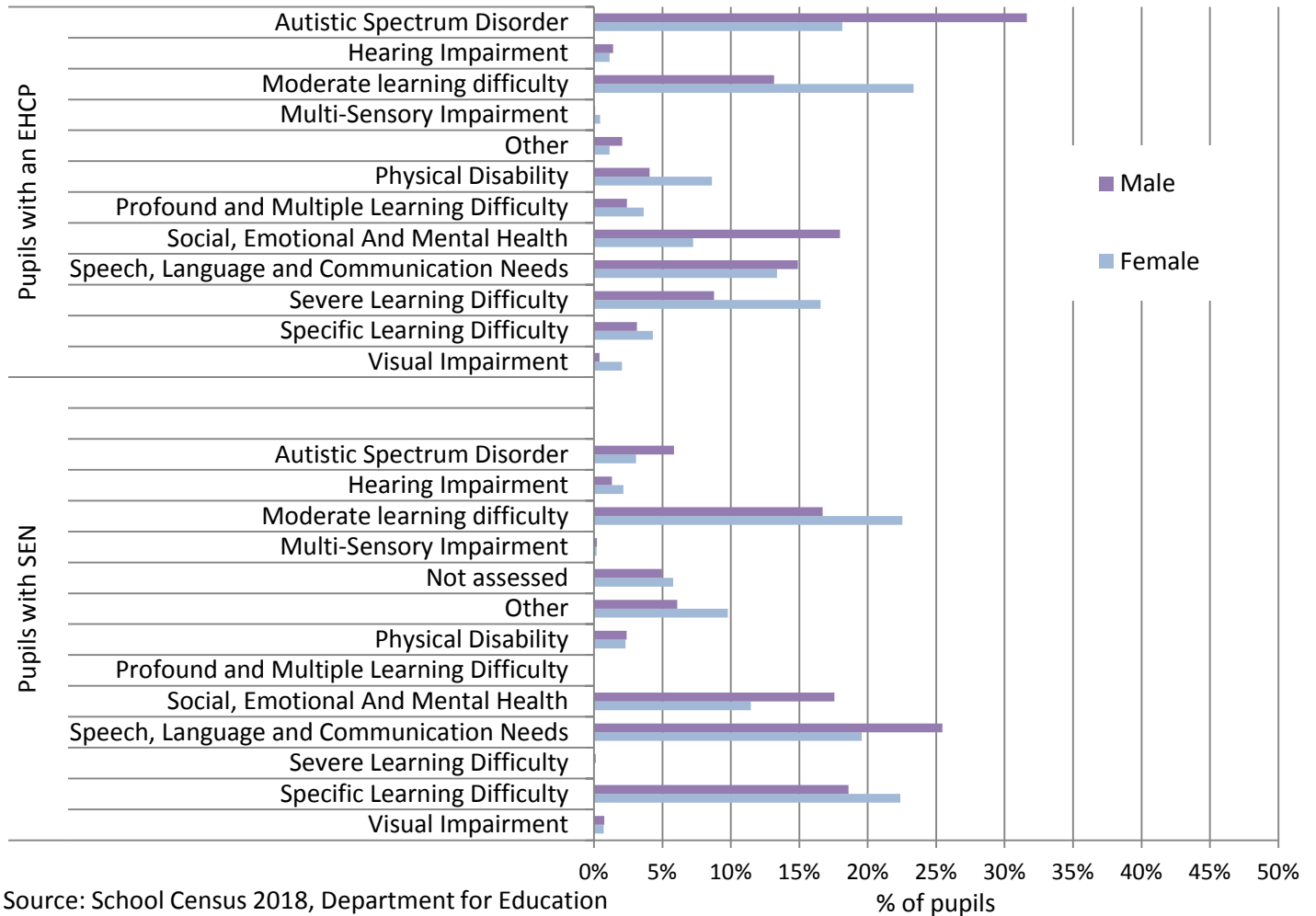
Source: School Census 2018, Department for Education



Boys are more likely than girls to receive SEN support (65% compared to 35%) and even more likely to have an EHCP (73% compared to 27%). This pattern is well documented and reflected nationally. The largest gender gap is seen when looking at pupils with an EHCP with Autistic Spectrum Disorder - 32% of boys have this need compared to 18% of girls, and social, emotional and mental health needs - 18% of boys compared to 7% of girls. In regards to autism, there is debate about whether it is a genetic difference or if females present differently and therefore are not fitting the profile on which assessment tools are usually based leading to under diagnosis (autism.org.uk).

Two thirds of pupils with a SEN are boys.

Primary need by gender for pupils with an SEN



Source: School Census 2018, Department for Education



At Key stage two, pupils with a SEND in Cheshire West and Chester perform below the North West and England average. This is however, an improvement from the previous year.

Progress scores have also improved and are better than the average progress scores for the North West and England.

Educational attainment – KS2

August 2018

Children who have special educational needs can find it more difficult to learn than children of the same age. We expect teachers to have high expectations of all children. For some children with special educational needs meeting age related expectations may be a challenge and therefore it is important to also look at the progress pupils make from their starting points. Ensuring pupils achieve as well as they can ensures they are as well placed as possible to access the next stage in their education.

At a local authority level attainment and progress data is analysed as part of the annual stocktake and this includes a breakdown in relation to SEN performance. This also forms part of our peer review process and annual conversation with Ofsted.

Attainment and progress of children with an SEN – KS2 (2017)

Key stage two (2017)	SEN support			EHCP		
	Cheshire West and Chester	North West	England	Cheshire West and Chester	North West	England
Reading, Writing and Maths (EXS+)	18%	19%	21%	3%	7%	8%
Reading Progress KS1-2	0.5	-0.7	-1.2	-2.6	-3.2	-3.7
Writing Progress KS1-2	-2.1	-2.0	-2.2	-4.7	-4.7	-4.3
Maths Progress KS1-2	-0.3	-0.6	-1.1	-3.6	-3.6	-4.1

For the combined reading, writing and maths indicator, the attainment of pupils on SEN support has increased by 5% points from 2016 but remains 3% points below national. Further work is needed to bring outcomes for this group in line with national. Progress scores across each of the three indicators for this group have improved since 2016 and are all higher than those seen nationally. Progress in reading continues to be a particular strength with pupils in this group making more progress than those pupils with a similar starting point across the county.

The attainment of pupils, for the combined indicator with an EHCP has dropped by 3% points from 2016. This is now 5% points below national. In reading and maths the progress these pupils made was higher than the average progress scores seen nationally. Writing is the area where progress was not as strong and whilst the progress score of -4.7 is an improvement on the -6.0 seen in 2016, there is more work to be done here to improve the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard. Improving the combined reading, writing and maths indicator at KS2, and a specific focus on writing, are also priorities across the local authority for all pupils.



Attainment and progress of children with an SEN – KS4 (2017)

Key stage four (2017)	SEN support			EHCP		
	Cheshire West and Chester	North West	England	Cheshire West and Chester	North West	England
Attainment 8	32.2	31.4	31.9	13.7	13.8	13.9
Progress 8	-0.45	-0.52	-0.43	-1.13	-1.11	-1.04

The introduction of new English and maths examinations alongside a new grading system for these subjects, and the revision of points allocation for each grade in all other GCSE qualifications, make year on year comparisons unreliable.

In Cheshire West and Chester, attainment of pupils with SEN support and those with an EHCP at key stage 4 is similar to the England average. The progress 8 scores are also similar, though slightly lower progress for those with an EHCP.

Where an associate school improvement adviser has been allocated to the school they will challenge the school over their data at whole school and group level and this would include the performance of children with SEN. Schools carry out pupil progress meetings at regular intervals to determine whether pupils are on track to secure the progress expected by the school. Where insufficient progress has been made a review of the provision and interventions in place is undertaken and revised as necessary.

By law, all mainstream primary and secondary schools are required to have a qualified teacher as a SENCO. A SENCO is a Special Educational Needs Coordinator. Their goal is to provide the best individual academic opportunities for all pupils with SEN. As well as working with employees within the school, SENCOs will work with parents, governors, educational psychologists, children and young people services, family support workers, CAMHS, health services, social services and many more.

SENCO training has been provided through the reform grant to ensure SENCOs are upskilled and can support colleagues and pupils. As well as supporting the young people, SENCOs must also coordinate the professional development of colleagues.

The special teaching school alliance (CITA) have been asked to co-produce and submit a bid to the Strategic School Improvement Fund to secure funding and support for pupils with SEND based on evidence based research of interventions with a proven impact. Recruitment of SLEs with a special educational needs remit is also being pursued.



Good attendance at school is essential for all children to benefit from high quality teaching and secure the best outcomes possible to open up more opportunities for their future. Pupils with special educational needs can often have higher rates of absence than other pupils due to the nature of their special need.

At a local authority level attendance is analysed termly linked to the information collected as part of the school census returns. At a school level, regular pupil progress meetings will determine the academic progress being made by pupils and whether attendance is impacting on this.

The definition of persistent absence changed from the 2015/16 academic year. Pupil enrolments now missing 10 percent or more of their own possible sessions, due to authorised or unauthorised absence, are classified as persistent absentees.

Overall absence by SEN

Overall absence	No identified SEN		SEN support		EHCP	
	2015-16	2016-17	2015-16	2016-17	2015-16	2016-17
Cheshire West and Chester	4.2%	4.2%	6.2%	6.4%	8.0%	8.1%
England	4.2%	4.3%	6.2%	6.3%	7.7%	8.2%

The latest available data shows that overall absence in CWAC is broadly similar to that seen nationally. Where the rates of absence for pupils with a Statutory Plan had been higher than national in 2015-16 this has now improved and is 0.1% point below national.

Persistent absence by SEN

Persistent absence	No identified SEN		SEN support		EHCP	
	2015-16	2016-17	2015-16	2016-17	2015-16	2016-17
Cheshire West and Chester	8.4%	8.9%	17.7%	17.7%	22.9%	22.5%
England	8.8%	9.0%	17.5%	17.8%	22.6%	23.8%

Rates of persistent absence have decreased for pupils with a Statutory Plan compared to an increase seen nationally. The persistent absence for pupils receiving SEN support in CWAC have remained static again compared to a small increase nationally.

Absence of pupils with a SEND is higher than absence for pupils with no identified SEND, a pattern seen nationally. Whilst the Cheshire West and Chester figures for both overall absence and persistent absence of pupils with an SEND do compare favourably to that seen nationally, there are some variations when analysed by phase and by SEND characteristic.



Primary school and special school data shows that overall absence and persistent absence for children with no SEND, SEN support and those with an EHCP are all lower than the national averages for comparable groups. However there are variations when analysed further – secondary school data is a key focus. Whilst some of the secondary school indicators in 2016-17 have shown an improvement from 2015-16 they remain higher than national averages.

Absence by SEN – Secondary school data

Secondary data	No identified SEN		SEN support		EHCP	
	2015-16	2016-17	2015-16	2016-17	2015-16	2016-17
Cheshire West and Chester Overall absence	4.9%	5.0%	7.7%	7.9%	9.3%	8.5%
England Overall absence	4.8%	5.0%	7.5%	7.7%	7.3%	7.7%
Cheshire West and Chester Persistent absence	11.3%	12.1%	24.4%	23.3%	24.8%	22.8%
England Persistent absence	11.3%	11.8%	22.4%	22.9%	21.6%	22.2%

Improving attendance at school and engagement in education is a priority and was the focus of the Spring 2018 SEN multi agency audit. A number of initiatives have been put into place which will hopefully be reflected in future attendance data, some of these are detailed below.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) have undertaken annual register inspections and identified within each school all vulnerable pupils by grouping, including where necessary those with special educational needs. They have also identified persistent absence pupils and ensured they have plans in place to secure improved attendance. Termly analysis of school level data leads to a RAG rating for each school. Where schools are judged as vulnerable an interim register inspection has been offered to seek reassurance that plans are in place and early help is being accessed. Changes to funding for the EWS and a subsequent restructure implemented in January 2018 means that Education Welfare Officers are now focussing on statutory duties and no longer doing casework.

Documentation has been shared with schools to provide guidance and support them in their understanding of pathways to legal intervention. Support is available through a range of agencies including Early Help and Support, for example through 'Team Around the Family' (TAF) meetings and where necessary through the continuum of need. Three additional TAF advisers have recently been appointed with the specific remit of supporting schools with the TAF process. The impact of these changes is being monitored by the team. All schools are invited to regular themed workshops to provide advice and guidance on specific aspects of work.

Whilst the Cheshire West and Chester figures for both overall absence and persistent absence of pupils with a SEND do compare favourably to that seen nationally, there are some variations when analysed by phase and by SEND characteristic.



In Cheshire West and Chester, Children and young people with a SEND are more likely to have a fixed period or permanent exclusion, a pattern that is reflected nationally.

Exclusions

August 2018

All children have a right to education and supporting schools with alternatives to exclusion is a key task for the Education Service. This is both because of the cost associated with the permanent exclusion of a pupil and the impact of the disruption to the pupil's education. National evidence indicates that children with SEND are more likely to be excluded from school than their peers. Schools should, as far as possible, avoid permanently excluding any pupil with an EHC plan as they are particularly vulnerable to the impact of exclusion.

There are two kinds of exclusion:

1. Fixed period exclusion Where a pupil is temporarily removed from school. They can only be removed for up to 45 school days in one school year, even if they have changed school. It is the governing body's duty to arrange education from the sixth day of a fixed-period exclusion.

2. Permanent exclusion

Where a pupil is permanently removed from school. It is the Local Authority's duty to arrange education from the sixth day of a permanent exclusion.

It is unlawful to exclude for a non-disciplinary reason. It would be unlawful to exclude a pupil because they have additional needs or a disability that the school feels it is unable to meet.

The current Department for Education Statistical Release for permanent and fixed term period exclusions in England is for 2015/16. The 2015/16 data shows that permanent and fixed period exclusions were 0.08% and 4.29% of the whole pupil population. This represents an increase in both permanent and fixed period exclusions by 0.01 and 0.41 percentage points respectively from the previous year.

In 2015/16 there were similar differences in exclusion rates by pupil characteristic as has been seen in previous years. In relation to SEND these are:

- Pupils with identified SEND accounted for almost half of all permanent exclusions and fixed period exclusions.
- Pupils with SEN support had the highest permanent exclusion rate and were almost seven times more likely to receive a permanent exclusion than pupils with no SEND.
- Pupils with an EHCP had the highest fixed period exclusion rate and were almost six times more likely to receive a fixed period exclusion than pupils with no SEND.



The 2015/16 data shows that for both permanent and fixed exclusions, and for pupils with an EHCP and those accessing SEN support (but not those yet assessed), those most at risk have the following primary needs:

- Social, emotional and mental health needs
- Other difficulty/disability
- Moderate learning difficulty.

Although a directory of alternative provision that schools can access both within and outside of the Borough has been developed, there is generally a lack of alternative provision for schools to commission in Cheshire West and Chester. There is in particular a lack of primary school provision for permanently excluded pupils. In order to access provision, primary aged pupils need to travel out of the area.

In Cheshire West and Chester, the pupil referral unit (PRU) is full to its capacity. Outcomes for students who are on roll at the PRU do not do as well as their peers in mainstream schools. There are a number of pupils on roll at the PRU that have been identified as having unmet SEND needs who are going through the EHCP assessment process.

The Council has a team (Education Access Team) who support schools to retain pupils on roll who might otherwise have been permanently excluded. Since September 2014 the local 'In Year Fair Access Protocol' and 'Managed Move Protocol' have been developed in partnership with Headteachers. Discussions about pupils who are at risk of exclusion, including alternative pathways for those pupils, are developing at In Year Fair Access Panel meetings.

Further prevention work is need to bring down both the exclusion and permanent exclusion rate. Alternative provision for SEND in the borough, particularly at primary school age, is an issue that needs to be reviewed



The difficulties that vulnerable children may face can cause disruption to learning and schooling. They are therefore more likely to need extra support to ensure they get the best chance of succeeding.

Nationally and locally, a higher proportion of children who are in need, on a child protection plan or looked after have an EHCP.

Vulnerable children in high risk family situations have complex needs which can include neglect, parental substance misuse, parental mental health problems, homelessness, bereavement, abuse, and experiences of crime. They are at increased risk of poor mental health, substance abuse, offending, and becoming disengaged from education. These young people carry with them risks and difficulties which make it much harder for them to succeed in life. When the state has to step in, they may be placed on a children in need plan, child protection plan or become looked after. It is the responsibility of the LA to ensure these children have the best chance of living healthy and safe lives and have a successful transition to adulthood.

Children in need

- Defined in law as children who are aged under 18 and need local authority services to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development, to prevent significant or further harm to health or development, or are disabled (Children Act 1989).

Child protection plan

- If the local authority has concerns that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm they will draw up a child protection plan. The plan sets out how the child can be kept safe, how things can be made better for the family and what support and services they will need for the child's well-being to be protected (Citizens Advice website accessed 2 August 2018).

Looked after children

- A child who is being looked after by their local authority is known as a child in care. They might be living: with foster parents, at home with their parents under the supervision of social services, in residential children's homes, other residential settings like schools or secure units. They might have been placed in care voluntarily by parents struggling to cope or children's services may have intervened because a child was at significant risk of harm (NSPCC website accessed 2 August 2018).

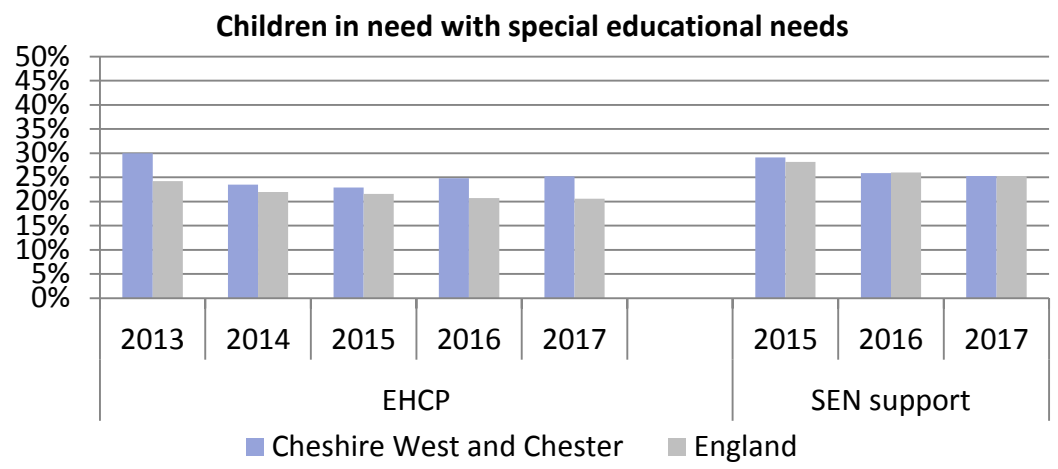


In Cheshire West and Chester, at 4 July 2018:

- 10.3% of children in need aged under 18 have an EHCP
- 5.7% of children aged under 18 on a child protection plan have an EHCP
- 16% of looked after children aged under 18 have an EHCP

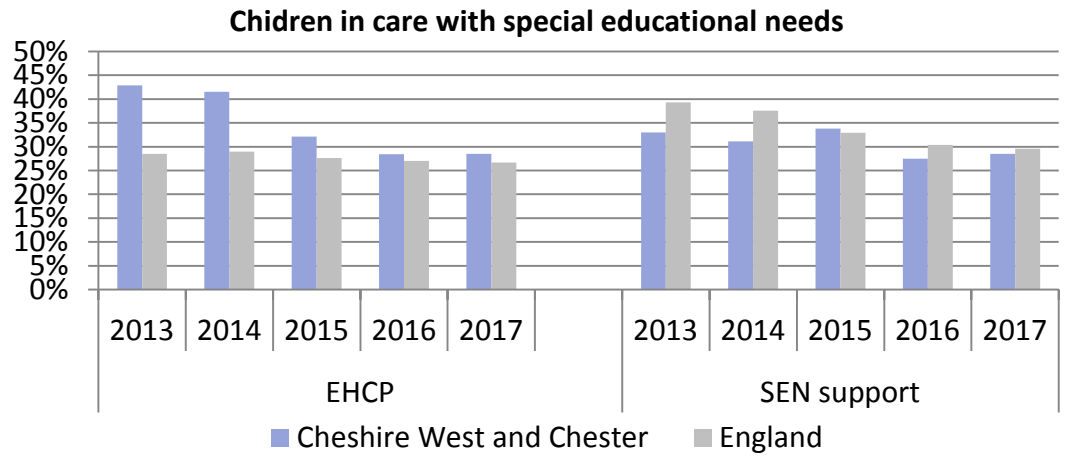
Source: Children in Care Report, Cheshire West and Chester Council, snapshot July 2018

In Cheshire West and Chester there has been a reduction in the percentage of children in need with an EHCP since 2013 though it has fluctuated over the last five years. Those with SEN support has reduced.



Source: Characteristics of children in need, DFE.
 Note: Only those matched to the school census or AP census data with known SEN status and aged 4 or above.

The percentage of children who are looked after and have a special educational need has also reduced over the last five years, bringing the figures for those with an EHCP closer to the national average.



Source: Outcomes for looked after children, Statistics: Looked after Children, DFE.
 Note: Children looked after continuously for at least 12 months, only those matched to the school census or AP census data with known SEN status and aged 4 or above.

The outcomes for Cheshire West and Chester children in care has improved over time, and the Virtual School will continue to work with schools and settings to continue this trend by providing advice and guidance, including additional resources to ensure all children in care have any additional needs identified and strategies implemented at the earliest opportunity. The progress of young people is tracked termly via the Personal Education Planning process and their progress is monitored regularly.



The Local Offer

A key way of collecting the views of families about local special educational needs and or disability (SEND) provision is via the Local Offer. Further information including an annual report and a perceived gaps report can be viewed on the Local Offer website www.westcheshirelocaloffer.co.uk. The local offer have a 'Rate and Review' which allows parents and care givers to highlight the perceived gaps in service. Gaps and concerns have been raised about the following:

Early years

- Accessibility of provision
- Ensuring provision in the right place for disabled children' individual child care
- Equal access to childcare for disabled children and those with additional needs (30 hours)
- Activities for disabled children under five
- Disability awareness e.g. epilepsy

Sensory needs

- Further investigation is required to ensure clarity of this concern and what and where the gap is.

Short Breaks

- What is available each year to be reviewed, ensuring the voice of families is heard and any changes are based on meeting needs and outcomes are achieved.

Mental Health

- Is there enough support in this area? Work to be progressed through various groups regarding improving gaps.

Parenting Support- Parent support groups.

- Consideration of an offer to parents who want to set up groups and support to try to ensure sustainability.

Transition

- Transition is an area where gaps have been reported. What happens when moving to adult services, becoming an adult, what is available regarding further education including residential college provision. This is a national area of concern and Cheshire West and Chester will continue to work on improving the experience for this group of young people.

Personal Assistants

- Lack of appropriate personnel is a national concern as well as locally. Work is going on to consider how this situation can be improved including looking at good practice from other areas

The Local Offer provides information about the services available to support children who are disabled or who have SEND and their families. The Local offer has two key purposes:

- To provide clear, comprehensive, accessible and up to date information about the available provision and how to access it
- To make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving disabled children and young people and those with SEND and their parents in its development and review.



The Parent Carer Forum (PCF) 2018 survey findings top five themes were:

- Communication with families across all sectors
- Mental health issues
- EHCP process
- Identification/ recognition of needs
- Referral/ waiting times

Parent Carer Forum

The Parent, Carer Forum is a key partner organisation involved in influencing decisions about services provided for children and young people with special educational needs and or disability. In 2018 a very valuable piece of work has been the development of a Co-production Strategy and Self Evaluation Tool. The group have recently carried out a survey to collect the views of parents about current SEND provision. Over 200 parents completed the survey. The findings indicated that whilst there were many positive experiences found, unfortunately the lack of consistency highlighted that there are many challenges that we are still faced with as a Borough. By far and away the largest category of barriers to learning identified by respondents can be classified as Neurodevelopmental Disorders with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) being the most significant. The findings indicated the need for clearly defined referral pathways and the need for consistently agreed processes for communication with families.

The Parent Carer Forum steering group is made up of parents and professionals who lead the work of the forum. Parents are represented on various strategic groups. The strategic groups currently having parent representation are:

SEND Strategy Group	Neurological Pathways Review Group
SEND Joint Commissioning Group	Quality Control of Education Health and Care Plans
Transition to Adulthood work stream	Information, Advice and Support Service Advisory Group
Local offer	Transport
Speech and Language Therapy Redesign Group	Consultation re SEND high Needs Block funding

Having parents as part of these groups ensuring parental voice is included in the early stages of discussion and on a regular basis. In addition, Parent views have also been collected via focus groups and at events; e.g. Annual Transition to Adulthood Event.

Young People Voice

Young disabled people are able to give their views on local policy and practice via the School Champions Group which has young people representatives from special schools and one mainstream primary and meet on a termly basis. The group is led by the Information, Advice and Support Service. Young people were involved in the decisions regarding the current short break provision and are currently working on leaflets for other young people about the group, how they can become involved and how young people like to receive support.



Based on information within the JSNA as well as evidence from Cheshire West and Chester Local Area SEND Strategy (and Action Plan), SEND SEF (self-evaluation), North West Peer Challenge (Self View and Ofsted Annual Conversation) the following gaps and challenges have been highlighted:

1. Comparative data from 2017 indicates a higher percentage of children with an EHCP in Cheshire West and Chester attend a special school and fewer attend **Mainstream Provision**
2. There is an inconsistent approach across Cheshire West and Chester for **Autistic Spectrum Disorder**
3. Data suggests that Cheshire West and Chester has more pupils assessed as having **social, emotional and mental health** issues than the England average
4. All key stages of **attainment for pupils with SEN** are below national figures
5. Data shows that **permanent and fixed term exclusions** have increased for SEN pupils from the previous year (2015/16). Pupils with identified SEN accounted for almost half of all permanent exclusions and fixed period exclusions
6. Inconsistent approach to **co-production** of services
7. Post 16 provision
8. Transition at all key stages
9. Preparing for adulthood
10. Quality of EHCPs



Based on the gaps and challenges highlighted the following recommendations have been identified for inclusion in the SEND Action Plan for 2018/19 and the SEND SEF:

1. **Mainstream Provision** – Further exploration needed to investigate whether there are children on an EHCP who are suitable for mainstream provision or if children in CWaC have a higher need than the England average; improve inclusion in mainstream schools by implementing actions in the Cheshire West Education Improvement Board; develop action for inclusion planning across all phases of Education; working with school leaders to change attitudes about inclusion; increase the number of mainstream schools that can access advice and guidance from specialist providers to support inclusion; mainstream schools identifying children’s needs early enough.
2. **Autistic Spectrum Disorder** – Review and refresh decision making process for requests for EHC needs assessments and resource allocation so based on clear and consistent criteria and efficient referral mechanisms and pathways; clarify offer to all autism diagnosis; develop more consistency across the local authority for Autistic Spectrum Disorder Pathway.
3. **Social, emotional and mental health** – To reduce waiting times and parental perception of waiting times for CAMHS services.
4. **Attainment for pupils with SEN** – Improve the attainment of all children and young people with SEND to improve the proportion of pupils reaching expected standards; publish refreshed School Improvement Strategy; schools to carry out pupil progress meetings at regular intervals to determine whether pupils are on track to secure the progress expected by the school; Target SEN Advisory officer visits to schools where census data indicates over/under identification of SEN which may be an issue; focus of SEN Team to change to working with schools and challenging practice.
5. **Permanent and fixed term exclusions** – Further prevention work is required to bring down both the exclusion and permanent exclusion rate. Alternative provision for SEN in the borough, particularly at primary school age is an issue that needs to be reviewed.
6. **Co-production of services** – build on existing good practice to ensure services capture views, aspirations, wishes and feelings of children and young people to support effective provision of services in a consistent way; to ensure co-production drives the new SEND Strategy going forward; embed Co-production Strategy and Self Evaluation Tool.



- 7. Post 16 provision** – improve access and outcomes in Post 16 provision for pupils with SEN; develop increased curriculum options for young people with SEND to improve their Post 16 pathways; develop a college guidance booklet detailing what colleges are expected to provide for learners with SEN and include early identification guidance; develop high quality Post 16 provision in the Borough.
- 8. Transition at all key stages** – develop effective transition from one phase of Education to another to ensure pupils do not fall behind in their development; provide clear information and guidance to parents and families to support transitions from primary to secondary school.
- 9. Preparing for Adulthood** – improve the personal Transition experience to adulthood for young people with SEND and their families by further developing clear guidance around pathways, increase supported internships and employability skills across the 16-19/25 phase; provide options and person centred planning from Year 9 onwards; work to strengthen partnerships with special schools, local FE colleges and training advisers to share expertise and support effective progression towards adulthood; publish clear preparing for Adulthood pathway that is co-produced with parents and young people.
- 10. Quality of EHCPs** – to further improve the quality of EHCPs ensuring that the input from Education, Health and Care into EHCPs (as appropriate) results in a more holistic plan that is outcome focussed.