

# Somerset SEND

# Needs Assessment

(Special Educational Needs and/or  
Disabilities)

# 2025



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## Introduction

If a child or young person requires special educational provision to be made for them due to a learning difficulty or disability, they are defined as having a special educational need and/or disability (SEND). The needs of children and young people with SEND are complex and varied and require daily support from a wide range of professionals and agencies. Somerset has high ambitions for all children and young people to have a good start in life, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. Children and young people, including those with the most complex needs should have access to good local provision and every opportunity to achieve good outcomes, whether this be education, employment, independent living, participation in their community or being as healthy as possible.

This document brings together latest data and analysis on the identification, characteristics, needs and outcomes of children and young people with SEND in Somerset. Comparisons to national benchmarks are provided where available. The report has been compiled by Somerset Council's Business Intelligence team as an update to a previous SEND needs assessment report published in 2022. It draws on data from a range of sources, including Somerset Council, NHS Somerset, Somerset Parent Carer Forum, the Department for Education, and the Department of Health and Social Care.

## Executive Summary

- Numbers of children and young people in Somerset with identified SEND continue to increase year-on-year, mirroring a national upward trend. Somerset is broadly in line with the national average in terms of prevalence of SEND per head of population. While numbers of children receiving SEND Support have remained relatively stable, numbers of EHC plans have more than doubled in the last five years.
- Somerset continues to see a high rate of children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs compared to the national profile, although this variance appears to be narrowing. Rates of hospital admissions due to mental health conditions, self-harm, substance misuse and alcohol-specific conditions are consistently high.
- SEMH is the most common primary need in schools in Somerset, while nationally, Speech, Language and Communication Need (SLCN) is most common. SEMH and SLCN account for nearly half (48%) of all SEND in Somerset.
- Identification of Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) in Somerset remains relatively low. Numbers of school pupils with an ASC primary need continue to increase year-on-year, with national figures also increasing at a similar rate.
- Children living in the most deprived areas of Somerset are twice as likely to have SEND than those living in the least deprived areas. The most deprived communities see particularly high rates of SEMH and SLCN. Prevalence of ASC is broadly consistent across all communities.
- Four-in-ten children and young people with an EHC plan in Somerset attend a mainstream school. Approximately three-in-ten (28%) attend a special school. Compared to national averages, Somerset has a lower proportion attending state-funded special schools and a higher proportion in independent or non-maintained special schools (INMSS). The majority of pupils attending INMSS have a primary need of SEMH.

- Approximately 250 children with SEND receive EOTAS (Education Other Than At School or college), of which around half previously attended a special school or pupil referral unit prior to EOTAS. The majority of the EOTAS cohort are of post-compulsory school age.
- A total of 1,207 requests for an EHC needs assessment were made in Somerset during the 2024 calendar year, representing the highest annual total ever recorded. A lower proportion of requests proceed to an assessment in Somerset than nationally.
- Just over half (52%) of EHC needs assessment requests originate from schools, with 68% of such requests proceeding to an assessment. The next most common source of requests is parents/guardians (30%). Fewer than a quarter of requests from parents/guardians proceed to an assessment. Mediation and tribunal rates are high in Somerset compared to national averages.
- The proportion of EHC plans which are issued within the 20-week statutory timeframe has been declining in Somerset and is below the national statutory benchmark.
- Numbers of Section 23 notifications (informing the local authority that a child, of below compulsory school age, may have special educational needs) continue to increase.
- There were approximately 2,900 referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Somerset in the last year, slightly fewer than in the preceding year, and down from a high in 2022/23.
- Referrals to the Children and Young Person's Neurodevelopmental Pathway have stabilised, after significant year-on-year increases following the inception of the pathway. Increasing proportions of referrals are leading to an assessment.
- Delays in EHCP processes, limited specialist placements and long waiting times for support services were common concerns raised in a recent parent carer survey. Where EHC plans were well-developed and implemented, families reported significant positive impact.
- Survey responses suggest parents find the SEND Local Offer website helpful but would like to see a more user-friendly format and clearer guidance on the availability of services.
- Latest survey results suggest more children and young people with SEND are feeling supported in maintaining good health and developing independence, but fewer feel included in their education setting or able to participate in activities they enjoy or find interesting.
- Pupils with SEND in Somerset perform, on average, consistently below national benchmarks at all key stages of education. Attendance rates are below average, while suspension and exclusion rates are consistently above national averages.
- School-leavers with SEND in Somerset are less likely to remain in education and more likely to move into employment or an apprenticeship than their national counterparts. One-in-seven pupils with SEND in Somerset progress into higher education, compared to one-in-five nationally.
- Adults in Somerset with a long-term physical or mental health condition or illness are most likely to find employment in routine or semi-routine occupations, and less likely to be employed in a professional or managerial role than their peers.
- Employment rates of people receiving long-term social care support for a learning disability are very low, in Somerset and nationally (approximately 5%).
- Just under two-thirds (64%) of children and young people in Somerset with a long-term physical or mental health condition are in 'good' health, according to the latest national census. The remaining 36% are in 'fair', 'bad' or 'very bad' health. Within the older 25 to 34 age group,



the proportion in good health declines to 50%. These proportions are in line with national averages.

- Despite the population of Somerset increasing year-on-year, overall numbers of children and young people (aged 0 to 24) in the county have remained relatively stable. Numbers of school pupils are in decline, with the state-funded mainstream school roll expected to fall each year until at least the year 2029. Eight out of ten primary schools are forecast to see a decline in roll by 2029. Secondary-aged pupil numbers are forecast to decline from 2027.

## 1. Children and Young People in Somerset

The purpose of this section is to describe the overall population of children and young people in Somerset, how the population is changing over time, local socio-economic factors, and the general health and wellbeing of the population.

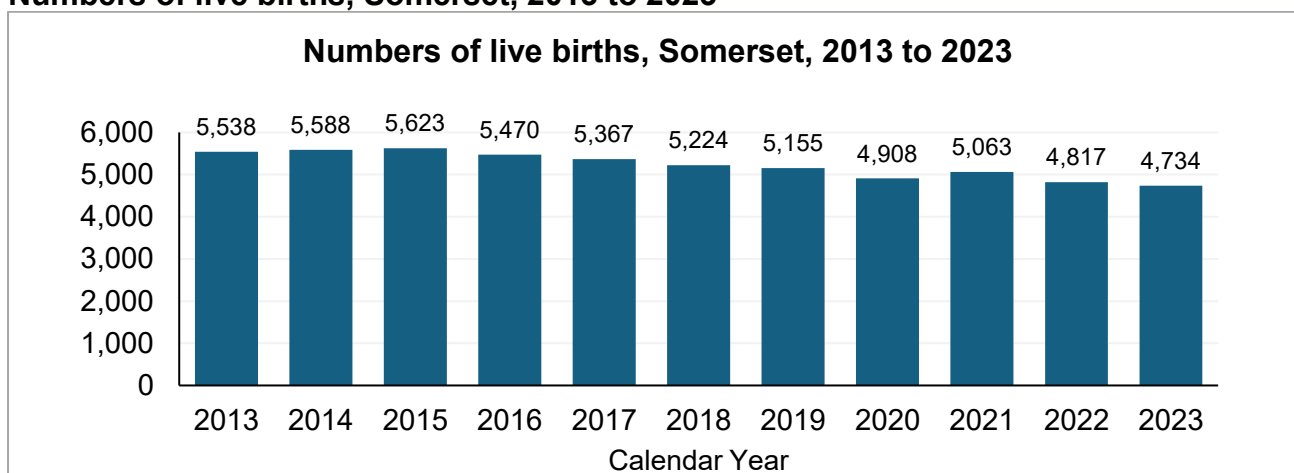
### 1.1. Population of children and young people

- There are 152,692 children and young people (aged 0 to 25) living in Somerset according to latest population estimates from the Office for National Statistics.
- Children and young people make up 26% of the county's overall population, a lower proportion than seen within the national population (30%).

### 1.2. Birth rates

- Numbers of babies born in Somerset continue to decline, mirroring a national downward trend.

#### Numbers of live births, Somerset, 2013 to 2023



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

- Birth rates are consistently lower in Somerset than nationally. There were 8.1 births per 1,000 population in Somerset in 2023, compared to 9.8 per 1,000 in England.

- In the last ten years numbers of births have fallen by 15%, in Somerset and nationally.

### 1.3. Migration

- Latest data from the Office for National Statistics indicates that migration continues to have a minimal impact on the size of Somerset’s child and young person population.
- An estimated 7,398 children and young people (aged 0 to 24) moved into Somerset from elsewhere in England and Wales in the year to June 2023, and 7,858 moved out of the county (resulting in a net change of 460 people overall).
- Significantly, with no university in the county, each year there is a net ‘outflow’ of about 1,500 young people in the 15-19 age group from Somerset, typically to Bristol, Cardiff or Plymouth local authority areas. This offsets a net ‘inflow’ in the younger age groups.

#### Annual Internal migration moves, Somerset

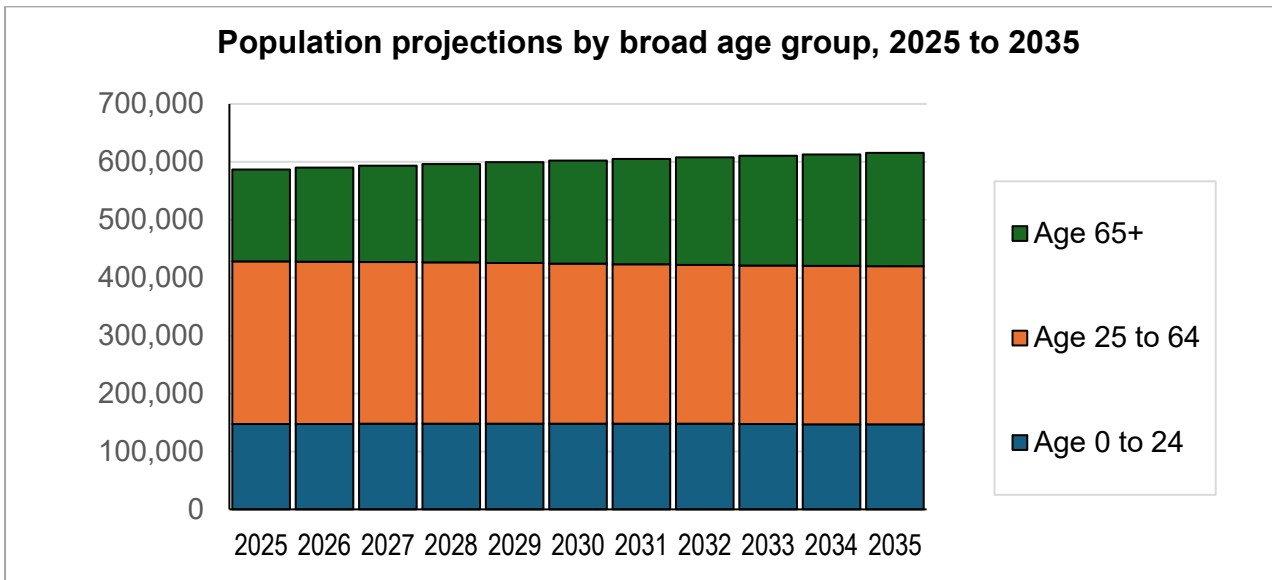
Age group	Number of moves into Somerset	Number of moves out of Somerset	Net change
0-4 years	1,136	736	+400
5-9 years	889	641	+248
10-14 years	987	688	+299
15-19 years	1,069	2,559	-1,490
20-24 years	3,317	3,234	+83
<b>Total (0-24 years)</b>	<b>7,398</b>	<b>7,858</b>	<b>-460</b>

Source: Office for National Statistics, year to June 2023

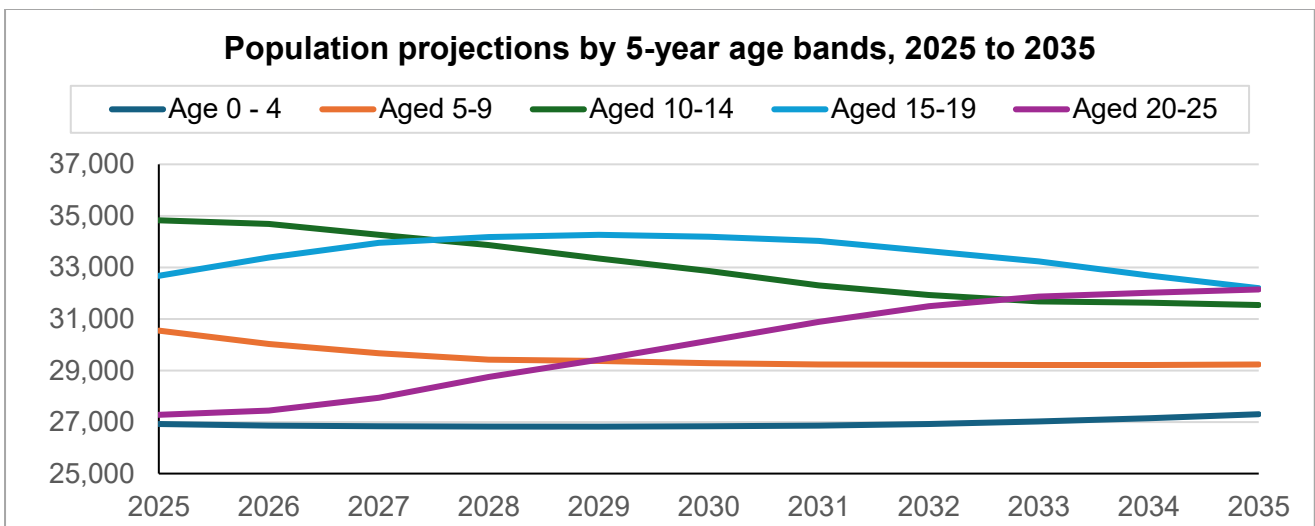
- There is limited data available on international migration into Somerset (i.e., from outside the UK), but indications are that numbers are in decline. According to the DWP, 1,768 overseas nationals registered for a National Insurance Number (NINo) in Somerset in the year to March 2025, down from 2,835 overseas nationals a year earlier. There is no data on how many overseas nationals leave Somerset.

### 1.4. Population change

- The impact of birth rates and net migration means that overall numbers of children and young people in Somerset have remained broadly static in recent years, with this trend projected to continue. Population growth in Somerset is almost exclusively in the 65+ age group. See chart, below.



- At a more detailed age level, numbers of children aged 0-4 years are projected to remain broadly stable over the coming years, while numbers of children in the 5-9 and in the 10-14 age group are projected to decline. The 20-25 age group is expected to grow.



## 1.5. School population forecasts

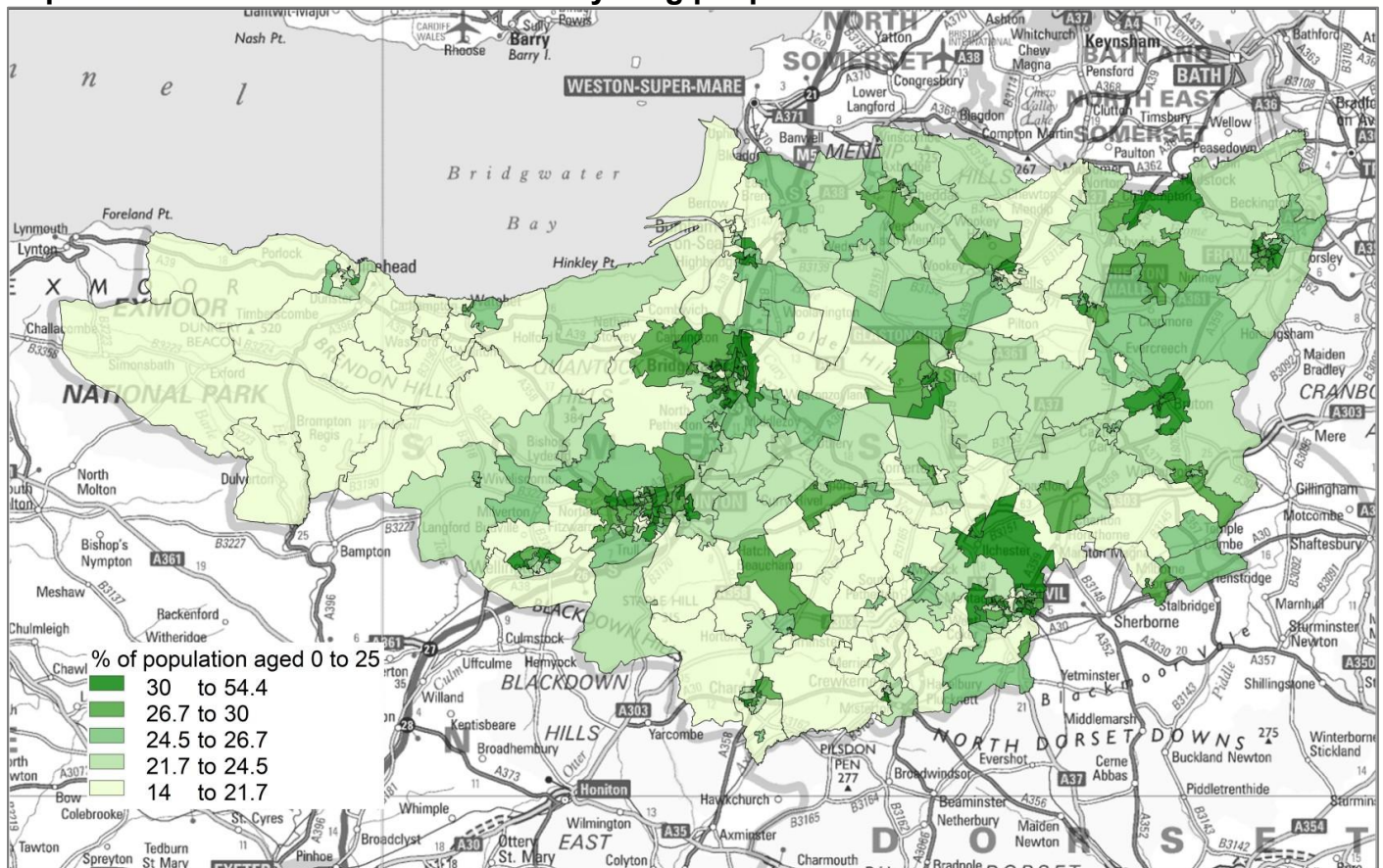
- The total number of state-funded mainstream school pupils in Somerset fell in 2023 and again in 2024. This followed increases between 2014 and 2022.
- Somerset's overall mainstream school roll is forecast to decrease each year up to at least 2029, according to the latest annual Somerset School Population Forecast.
- Somerset's primary school roll is forecast to decline by 8% by 2029. Approximately 8 out of 10 primary schools are forecast to see a decline in pupil numbers by 2029, with an average fall of 21 pupils.

- A levelling out of secondary aged pupil numbers in 2025 and 2026 is forecast, with a forecast decline beginning in 2027.

## 1.6. Geographical distribution of children and young people

- Highest concentrations of children and young people in Somerset are generally located in and around the county’s principal urban areas – Bridgwater, Burnham & Highbridge, Frome, Taunton and Yeovil - and notably along the M5 corridor. See map, below. The darker areas on the map below indicate higher proportions of children and young people within the local population. At a neighbourhood level, this ranges from 14.0% of the local population, to 54.4% of the population (with some of the very high rates linked to the locations of boarding schools).

**Population distribution of children and young people in Somerset**



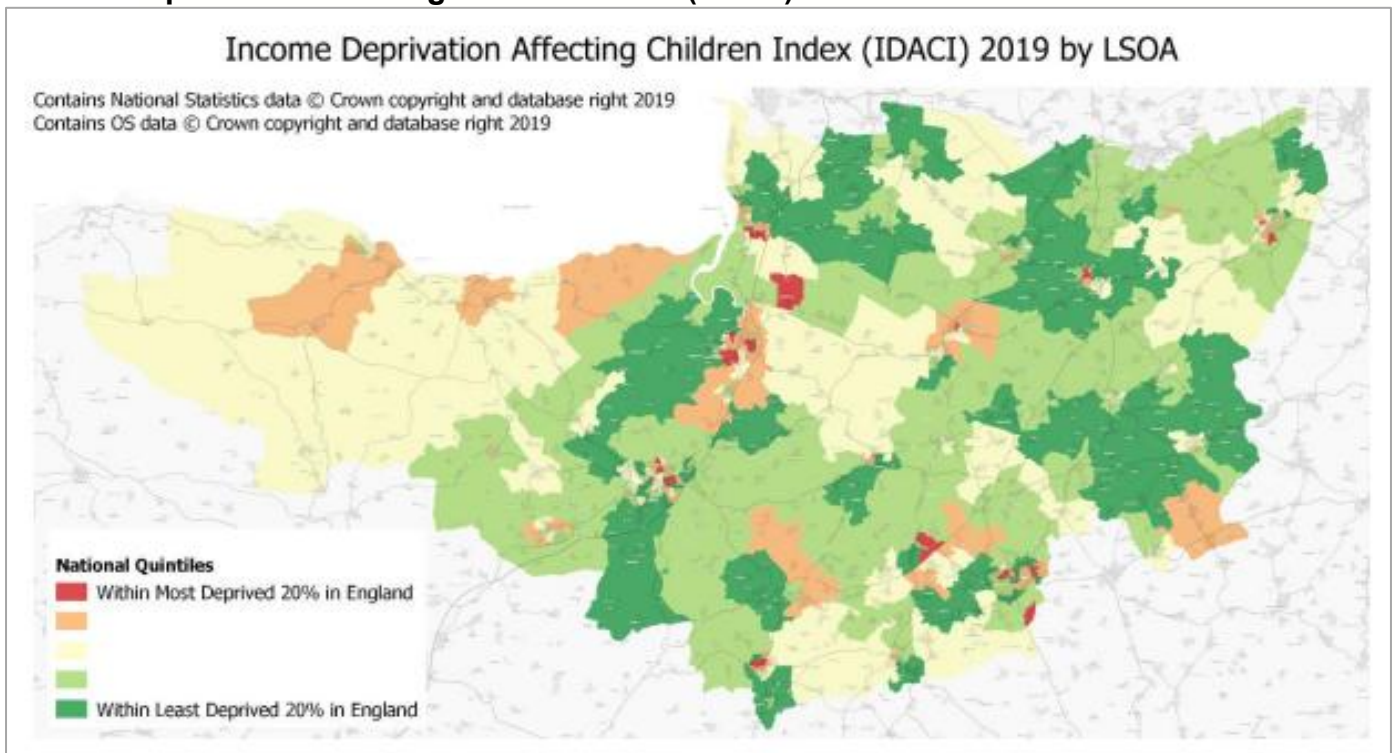
Source: ONS population estimates. LSOA (Lower-layer Super Output Area) is a unit of geography for the collection and publication of small areas statistics. Each LSOA equates to around 1,500 people, or 600 households. © Crown copyright and database rights OS 100038382 (2025).

- Nearly half (47.5%) of Somerset’s population live in a rural area, as classified by the Office for National Statistics. This compares to 17.5% of the population nationally. Rural communities can face particular challenges in terms of geographical access to services.

## 1.7. Local area deprivation affecting children and young people

- The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) finds Somerset generally better than the national average in terms of overall levels of deprivation. However, there has been a slight shift towards greater deprivation, particularly in relation to the quality of housing.
- The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) measures the proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families. In Somerset, 13.6% of children aged 0–15 years live in income deprived households.
- Somerset neighbourhoods with the highest levels of income deprivation are found within its principal urban areas – parts of Bridgwater, Frome, Highbridge, Taunton and Yeovil. See map, below (the red areas on the map indicate the most deprived communities).

### Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) in Somerset



Source: MHCLG. The red areas in the map indicate neighbourhoods (LSOAs) classified as being within the 20% most deprived in England. © Crown copyright and database rights OS 100038382 (2025).

## 1.8. Local area child and maternal health profile

- The latest child and maternal health area profile from the Department of Health and Social Care presents a mixed picture in terms of the overall health and wellbeing of Somerset's children and young people population.

- Indicators for which the county performs **better** than national averages are:
  - Infant mortality rate
  - Low birth weight of term babies
  - Baby's first feed breastmilk
  - A&E attendances (0-4 years)
  - School readiness: percentage of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception
  - Year 6 prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity)
  - Hospital admissions for asthma (under 19 years)
  - First time entrants to the youth justice system
  - Children in Care
  - Children in relative/absolute low-income families (under 16s)
  
- Indicators for which the county performs **worse** than the national average are:
  - Smoking status at time of delivery
  - Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in children (aged 0-14 years)
  - Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in young people (aged 15-24 years)
  - Hospital admission episodes for alcohol-specific conditions - Under 18s
  - Hospital admissions due to substance misuse (15-24 years)
  - Hospital admissions as a result of self-harm (10-24 years)
  - Hospital admissions for mental health conditions
  - 16 to 17-year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) or whose activity is not known
  - Children in Care immunisations
  
- Data is largely based on the 2023/24 period. See below for full profile.

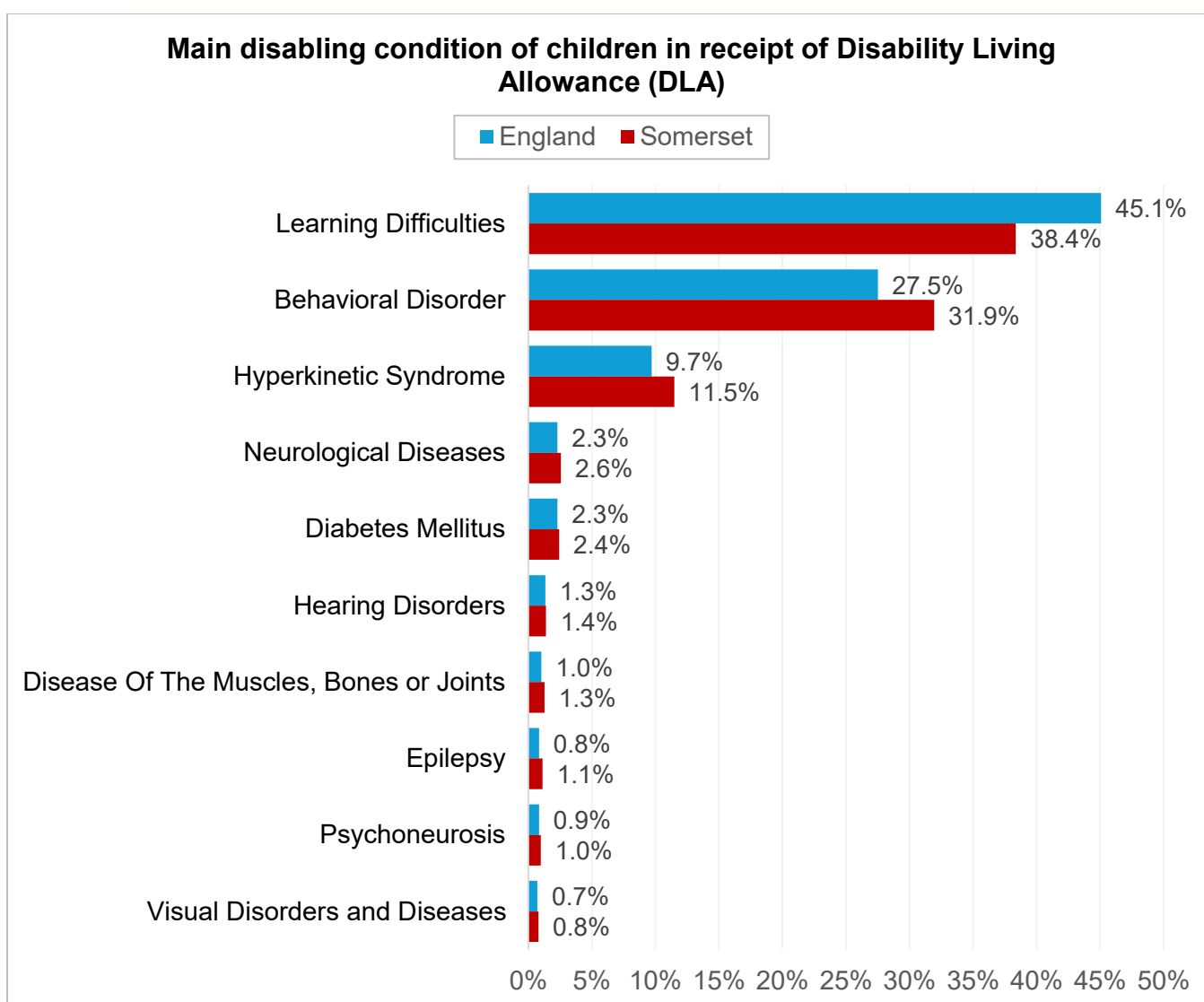


## Somerset Child and Maternal Health Profile (source: [fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/child-health-profiles](https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/child-health-profiles))

Indicator	Period	Somerset				England	
		Count	Value	Value	Worst/ Lowest	Range	Best/ Highest
Infant mortality rate	2021 - 23	34	2.3	4.1	8.4		1.7
Child mortality rate (1 to 17 years)	2021 - 23	26	8.3	11.2	24.2		5.4
Population vaccination coverage: MMR for one dose (2 years old)	2023/24	4,921	91.9%	88.9%	67.7%		96.3%
			<span style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px;">&lt;90%</span> <span style="background-color: orange; color: white; padding: 2px;">90% to 95%</span> <span style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 2px;">≥95%</span>				
Population vaccination coverage: Dtap IPV Hib HepB (2 years old)	2023/24	5,041	94.1%	92.4%	72.4%		97.8%
			<span style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px;">&lt;90%</span> <span style="background-color: orange; color: white; padding: 2px;">90% to 95%</span> <span style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 2px;">≥95%</span>				
Children in care immunisations	2023/24	275	75.0%	82.0%	0.0%		100%
School readiness: percentage of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception	2023/24	3,769	69.3%	67.7%	59.6%		77.1%
Average Attainment 8 score	2022/23	-	43.7	46.2	36.1		58.4
Average Attainment 8 score of children in care	2022/23	-	-	19.4	7.3		30.1
16 to 17 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) or whose activity is not known	2023/24	866	7.2%	5.4%	22.0%		0.9%
First time entrants to the youth justice system	2023	50	94.2	143.4	340.0		42.0
Children in absolute low income families (under 16s)	2022/23	12,183	12.5%	15.6%	35.7%		4.2%
Children in relative low income families (under 16s)	2022/23	17,706	18.2%	19.8%	42.2%		5.2%
Homelessness - households with dependent children owed a duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act	2022/23	-	-	-	-	-	-
Children in care	2023/24	586	53	70	191		25
Children killed and seriously injured (KSI) on England's roads	2020 - 22	-	-	16.5	64.1		0.0
Low birth weight of term babies	2022	103	2.3%*	2.9%	5.0%		1.8%
Reception prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity) (4-5 yrs)	2023/24	485	10.2%	9.6%	13.9%		5.7%
Year 6 prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity) (10-11 yrs)	2023/24	1,030	20.3%	22.1%	31.0%		13.3%
Percentage of 5 year olds with experience of visually obvious dental decay	2023/24	-	20.2%	22.4%	43.4%		11.4%
Hospital admissions for dental caries (0 to 5 years)	2021/22 - 23/24	100	101.6	207.2	0.0		1,018.3
Under 18s conception rate / 1,000	2021	111	11.9*	13.1	31.5		1.1
Teenage mothers	2023/24	25	0.6%	0.6%	-	<i>Insufficient number of values for a spine chart</i>	-
Admission episodes for alcohol-specific conditions (under 18 years)	2021/22 - 23/24	179	54.0	22.6	61.7		3.8
Hospital admissions due to substance misuse (15 to 24 years)	2021/22 - 23/24	110	67.0	47.4	218.5		17.9
Smoking status at time of delivery	2023/24	409	9.1%	7.4%	17.5%		2.8%
Baby's first feed breastmilk	2023/24	3,535	82.0%	71.9%	41.3%		94.3%
Breastfeeding prevalence at 6 to 8 weeks	2023/24	2,564	*	52.7%*	-	<i>Insufficient number of values for a spine chart</i>	-
A&E attendances (0 to 4 years)	2023/24	19,135	713.8	750.7	1,791.9		350.4
Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in children (aged 0 to 14 years)	2023/24	785	86.4	72.7	149.0		29.3
Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in young people (aged 15 to 24 years)	2023/24	745	133.4	88.6	253.0		39.7
Hospital admissions for asthma (under 19 years)	2023/24	130	110.2	148.6	420.4		55.2
Hospital admissions for mental health conditions (<18 yrs)	2023/24	120	107.5	80.2	376.1		22.1
Hospital admissions as a result of self-harm (10 to 24 years)	2023/24	450	497.1	266.6	784.9		65.5

## 1.9. Children and young people with a disability

- The 2021 national census identified 12,521 children and young people (aged 0 to 24) in Somerset with a (self-reported) long-term physical or mental health condition that limited their day-to-day activity.
- Somerset has a slightly higher proportion of children and young people with a limiting condition than the national average (8.8%, compared to 8.4% nationally).
- A snapshot in November 2024 indicated 6,381 children and young people (aged 0 to 17) in Somerset in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), with Learning Difficulties and Behavioural Disorder the most common disabling conditions.
- Compared to the national profile, Somerset has a relatively high proportion of DLA claims due to Behavioural Disorder and a comparatively low proportion due to Learning Difficulties.



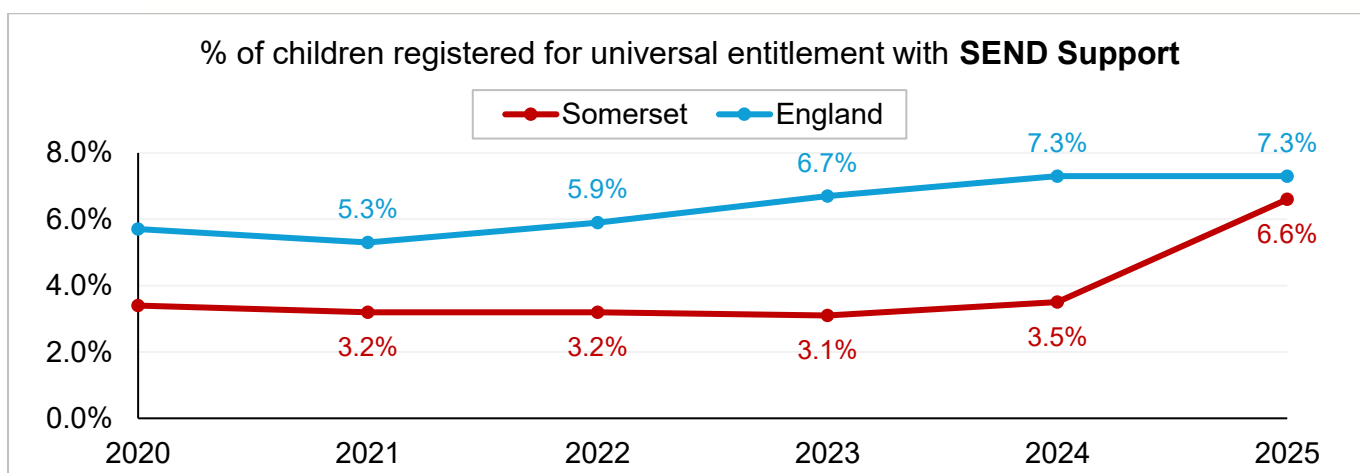
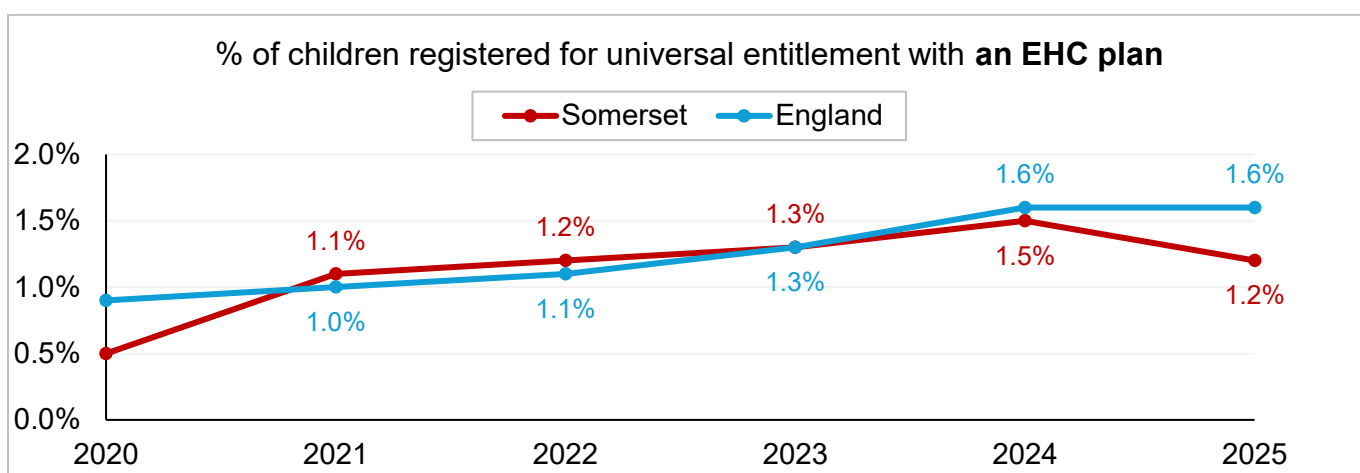
Source: DWP, Stat-Xplore. Most common disabling conditions only.

## 2. Children and Young People with SEND in Somerset

This section describes the population and characteristics of children and young people in Somerset with identified SEND, with comparisons to national profiles.

### 2.1. Children with SEND in early years provision

- The Early Years and School Census in January 2025 identified a total of 10,448 children aged 3 and 4 years in Somerset who were registered for government-funded early education and childcare (the 'universal' 15-hours a week entitlement).
- Of these children, 129 had an EHC Plan, and 685 were receiving SEND Support.
- The proportion of 3- and 4-year-olds in Somerset with identified SEND is broadly in line with the national average, with a notable recent increase in children receiving SEND Support in the county.

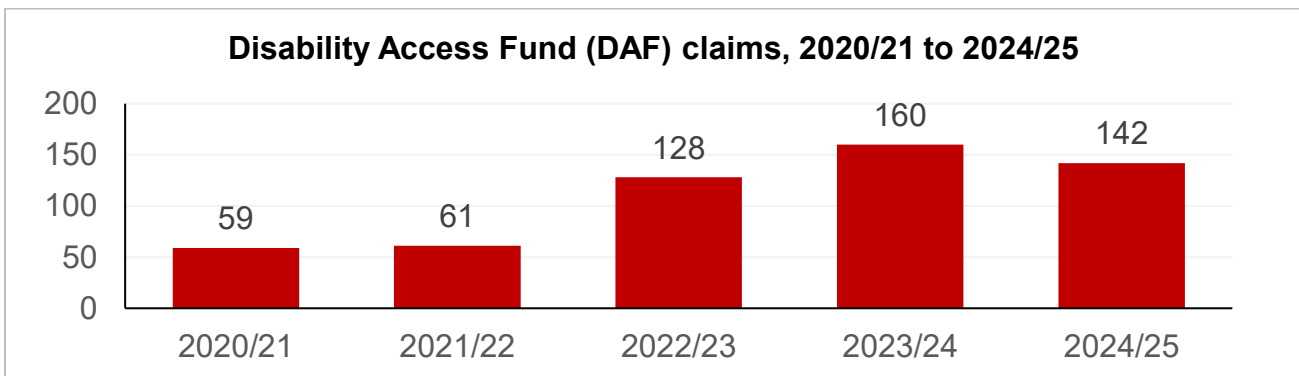


Source: DfE, 'Funded early education and childcare, reporting year 2025'. Figures are as at January each year. Age is as at 31 December. Figures include children in state-funded reception classes as they are considered to be registered for the 15-hour entitlement.

- An estimated 97.5% of all 3- and 4-year-olds in Somerset were registered for the universal entitlement in 2025, compared to an estimated 93.1% nationally (there is no national estimate specifically for children with SEND).

### 2.1.1. Children accessing the Disability Access Fund

- There were a total of 142 claims to the Disability Access Fund (DAF) in Somerset in the 2024/25 academic year, to provide funding to early years providers to support children with disabilities or special educational needs in their settings.
- Although the number of claims was lower than in 2023/24, it remained significantly higher than the totals recorded in 2020/21 and 2021/22.



Source: Somerset Council (Capita One)

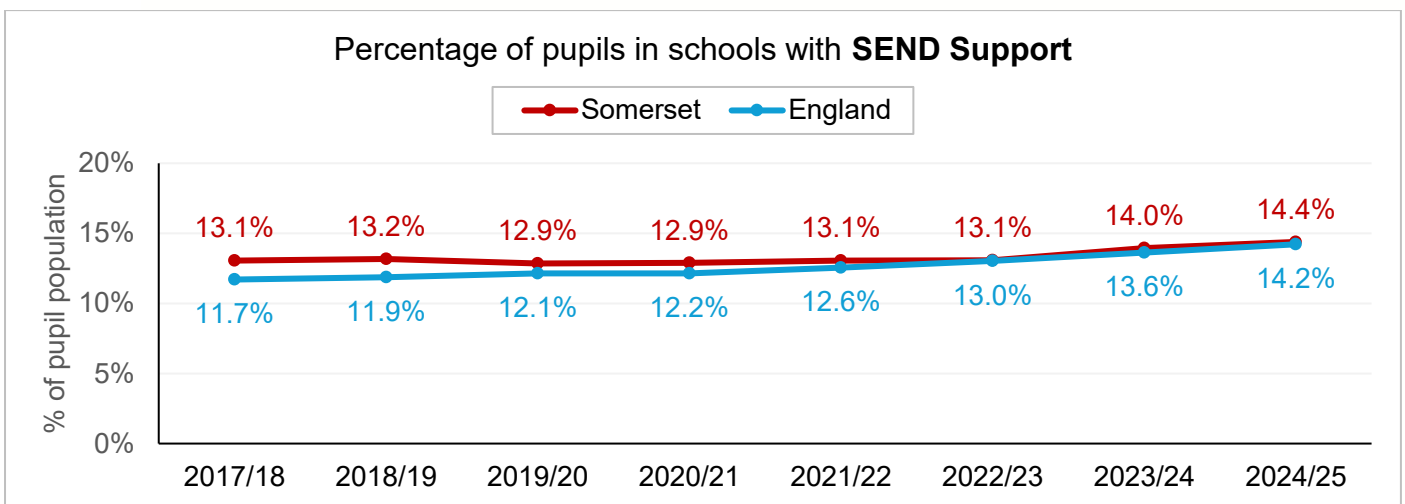
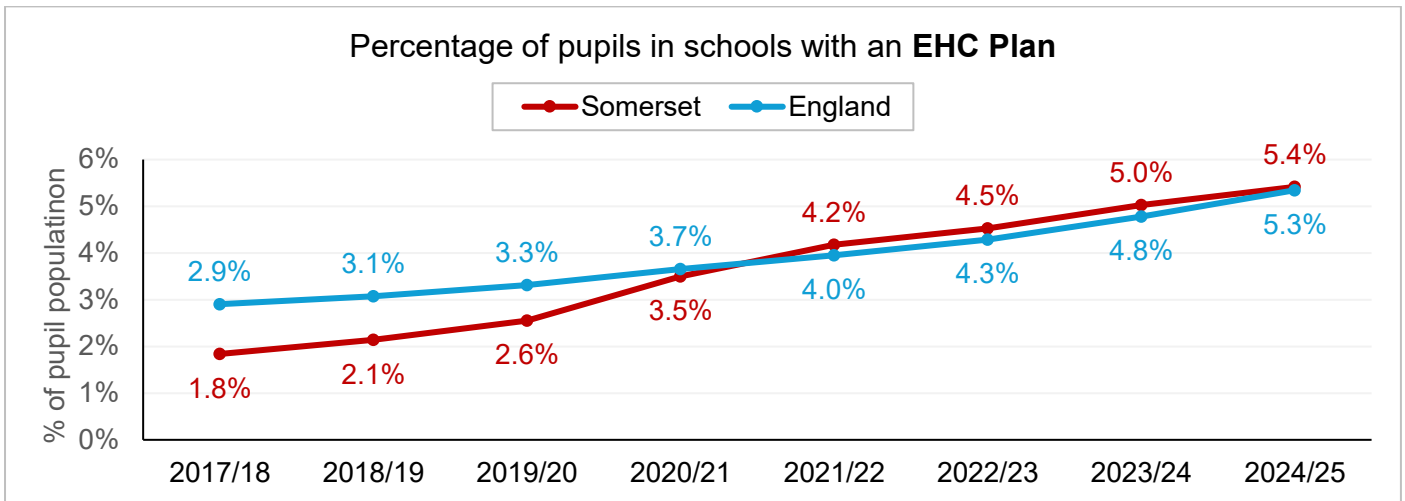
## 2.2. Pupils with SEND in schools

- The School Census in January 2025 identified a total of 80,188 children attending schools (state-funded and independent) across Somerset. Of these, 15,879 had SEND. This equates to 19.8% of the school population, or one in every five children.
- Somerset has a marginally higher rate of pupils with SEND in schools than the national average (of 19.6%).
- There were a total of 4,342 school pupils with an EHC Plan in Somerset, representing 5.4% of the school population.
- There were a total of 11,573 pupils accessing SEND Support, equating to 14.4% of the school population.

### 2.2.1. Trends in proportions of school pupils with SEND

- Proportions of pupils in Somerset with SEND Support have been broadly stable in the long term, while rates of EHC Plans have been increasing. Since 2021/22, the percentage of pupils in Somerset with an EHC Plan has been above the national average. Prior to this, Somerset was significantly below average, linked, at least in part, to historic high needs funding arrangements.

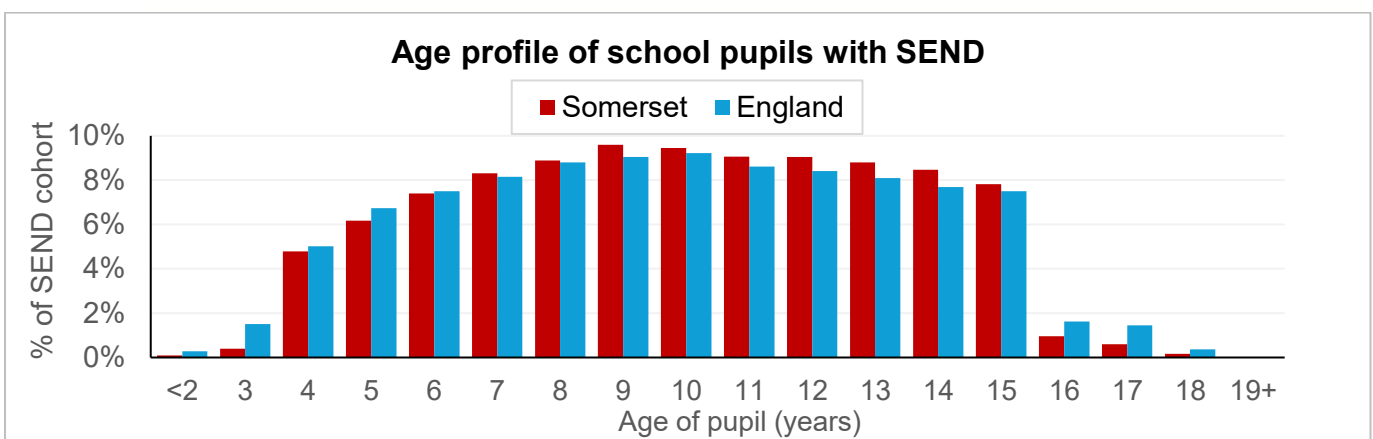




Source: DfE, 'SEN in England', 2024/25

## 2.2.2. Age profile of pupils with SEND

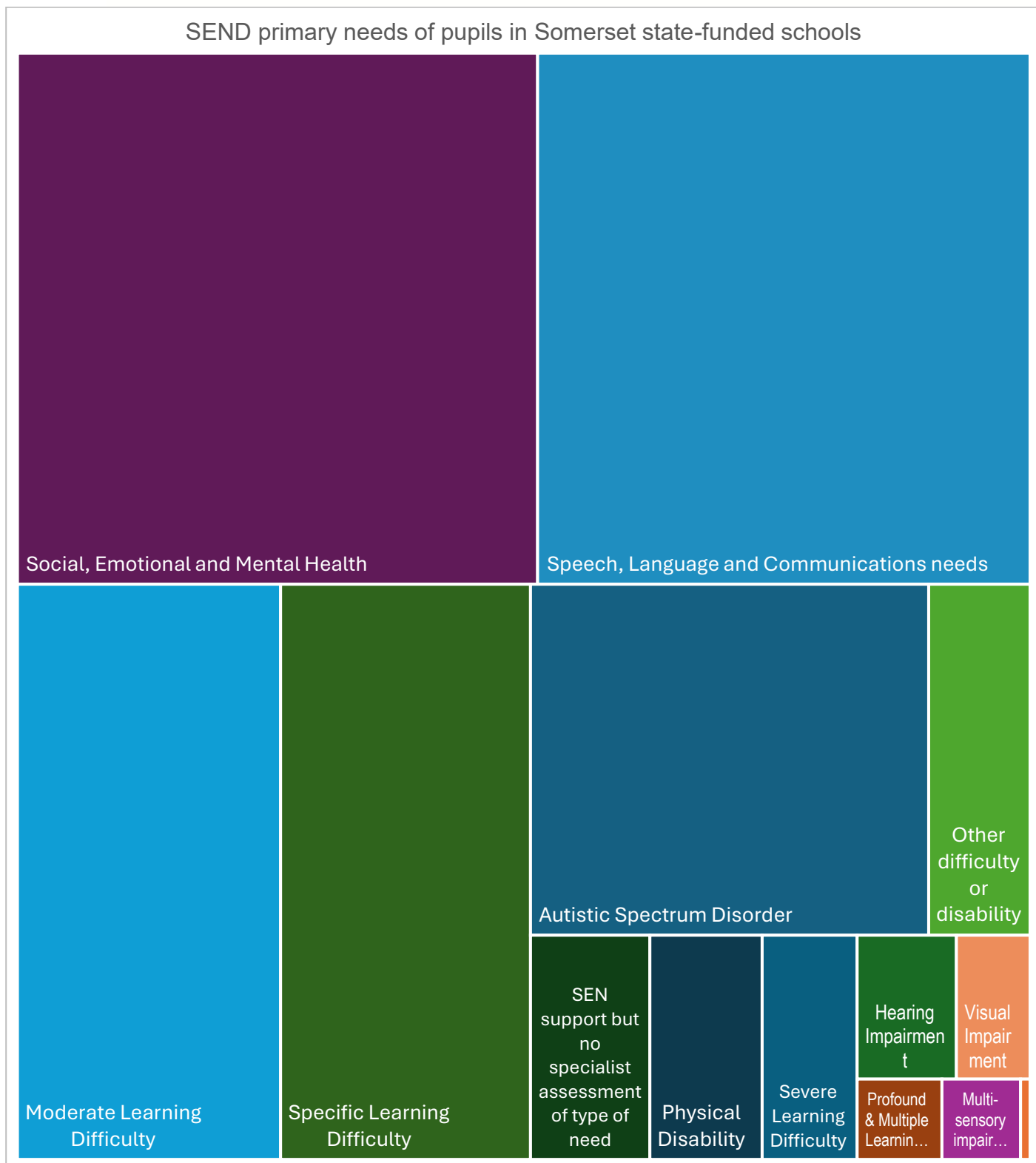
- The age profile of pupils with SEND in Somerset is similar to the national average, albeit with slightly lower prevalence of identified SEND in pupils aged up to 6 years, and higher proportions at ages 7 and over. See chart, below.



Source: DfE, 'SEN in England', 2024/25. Includes children attending nursery settings within state-funded schools.

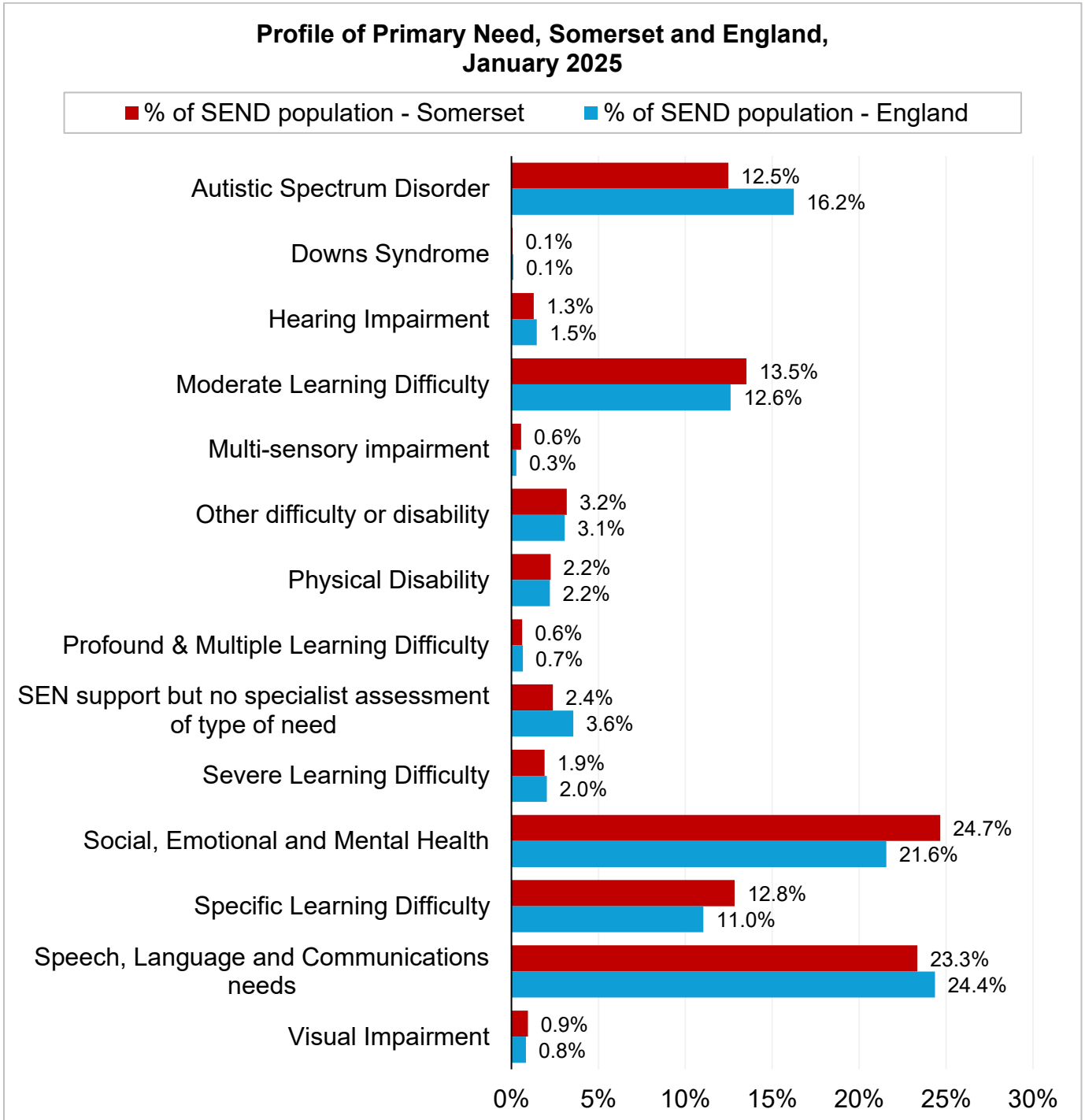
### 2.2.3. SEND primary needs of pupils in schools

- The most common SEND primary need of pupils in Somerset schools is social, emotional and mental health (SEMH), followed by speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).
- Below is a visual representation of the relative size of each cohort.



Source: Derived from DfE, 'SEN in England', 2024/25.

- Compared to the national average profile, Somerset has a higher proportion of its SEND pupil population with social, emotional and mental health primary needs (24.7%, compared to 21.6% nationally).
- Somerset has a lower proportion of its SEND population with autistic spectrum disorder (12.5%, compared to 16.2% nationally).



Source: DfE, *Special educational needs in England, 2024/25. State-funded schools only.*



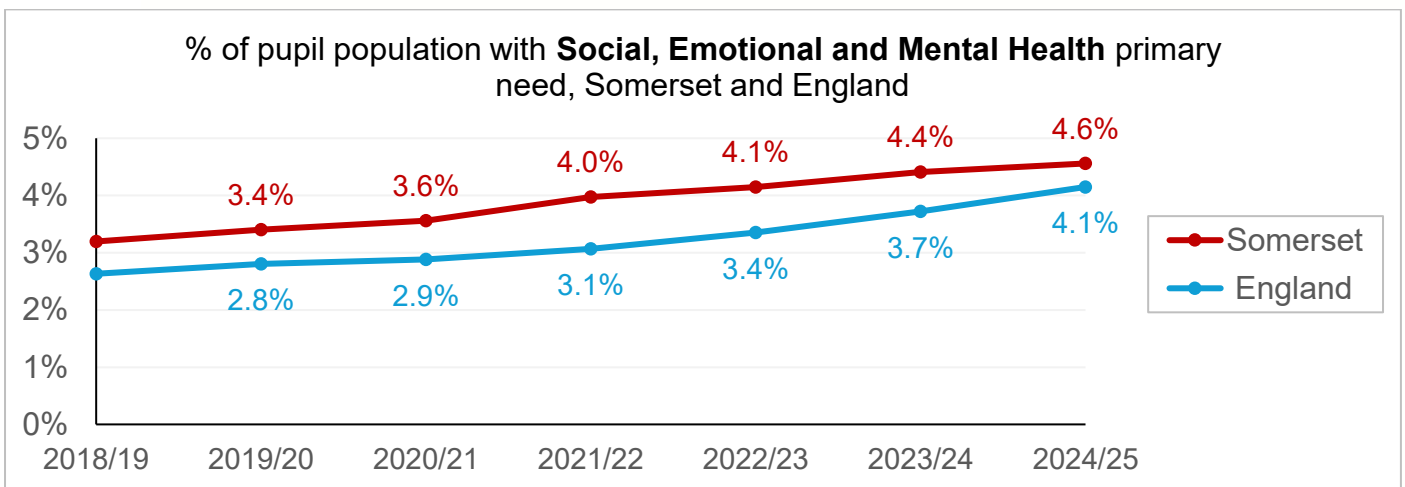
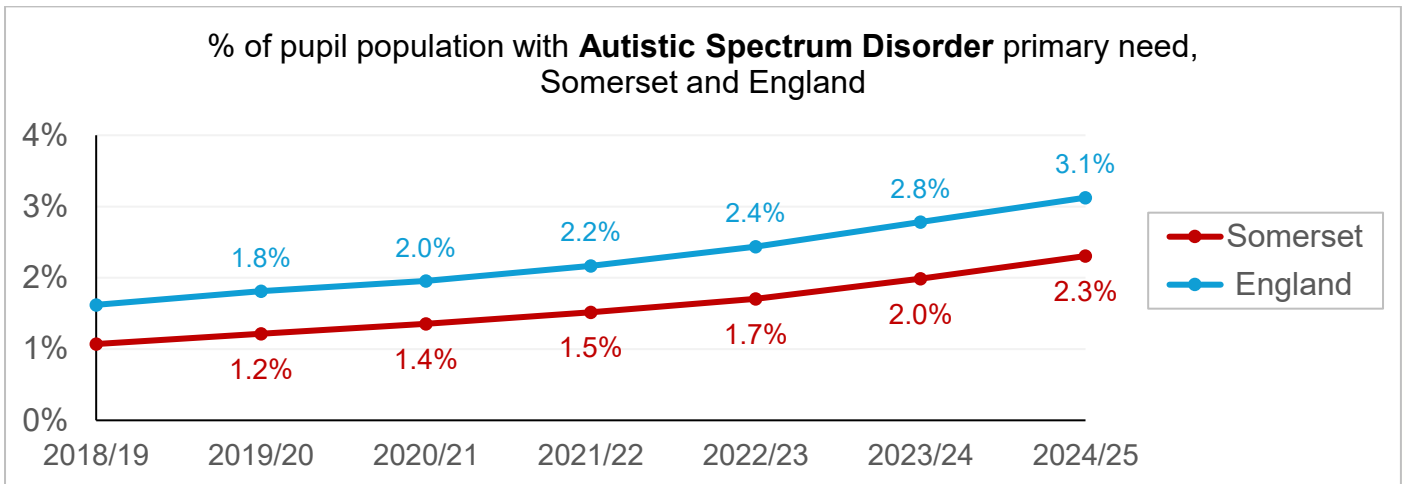
- By way of context, if Somerset were in line with the national SEND profile of primary need, there would be approximately 600 more pupils in the county with an autistic spectrum disorder need, and approximately 300 fewer children with a social, emotional and mental health need.
- See table, below (negative figures in the table may indicate under-identification of a particular primary need; positive figures may indicate over-identification).

### School population by primary need, Somerset and England, January 2025

Primary need	% of National pupil population with primary need	% of Somerset pupil population with primary need	Indicative number of Somerset pupils with primary need if the county was in line with the national profile	Actual number of Somerset pupils with primary need	Difference between indicative and actual pupil numbers
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	3.12%	2.31%	2,248	1,659	-589
Downs Syndrome	0.02%	0.01%	14	9	-5
Hearing Impairment	0.28%	0.24%	202	170	-32
Moderate Learning Difficulty	2.43%	2.50%	1,746	1,798	+52
Multi-sensory impairment	0.05%	0.10%	39	75	+36
Other difficulty or disability	0.59%	0.59%	425	423	-2
Physical Disability	0.43%	0.42%	306	299	-7
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty	0.13%	0.11%	90	81	-9
SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need	0.68%	0.44%	492	318	-174
Severe Learning Difficulty	0.39%	0.35%	282	253	-29
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	4.15%	4.56%	2,985	3,281	+296
Specific Learning Difficulty	2.13%	2.37%	1,529	1,708	+179
Speech, Language and Communications needs	4.69%	4.32%	3,373	3,106	-267
Visual Impairment	0.16%	0.18%	115	126	+11

Source: Derived from DfE, *Special educational needs in England, 2024/25*

- The proportion of pupils in Somerset with autistic spectrum disorder has been increasing year-on-year but has remained consistently below the national average profile.
- The proportion of pupils in Somerset with a social, emotional and mental health need has also been increasing year-on-year, although the increase has been at a lesser rate than seen nationally (hence a narrowing of the 'gap').
- See charts, below.



Source: Derived from DfE, *Special educational needs in England, 2024/25*

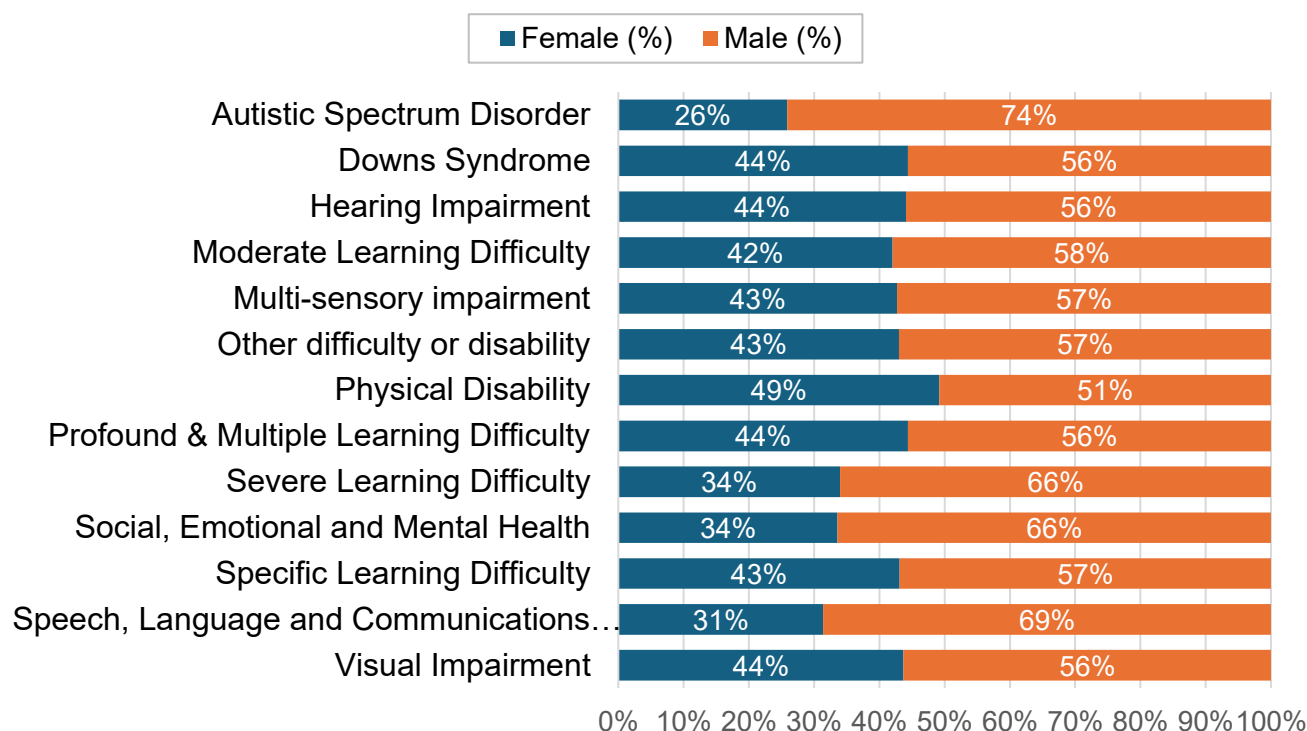
- One explanation for the difference between local and national autism rates is that in Somerset the ASD classification is not used unless there has been a diagnosis, which may not be the case in other areas.

### 2.2.4. Gender of pupils with SEND

- The majority of pupils in Somerset schools with SEND are boys: 72% of pupils with an EHC plan are boys; 62% of pupils with SEND Support are boys. These proportions are consistent with national averages.
- In terms of primary need, boys outnumber girls across all types of need. This is most evident in autistic spectrum disorder (74% boys) and in speech, language and communication needs (69% boys). These ratios may indicate some under-identification of SEND in girls.



## Gender profile of pupils with SEND by primary need, Somerset



Source: DfE, 'SEN in England', 2024/25

### 2.2.5. Ethnicity of pupils with SEND

- SEND is most prevalent within Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller ethnic groups, with more than one-in-three pupils in these groups having identified SEND. There is a similar picture within these ethnic groups nationally.
- Some ethnic groups see relatively low identification of SEND, particularly Indian and Black African.

### Number and percentage of school pupils with SEND by ethnic group

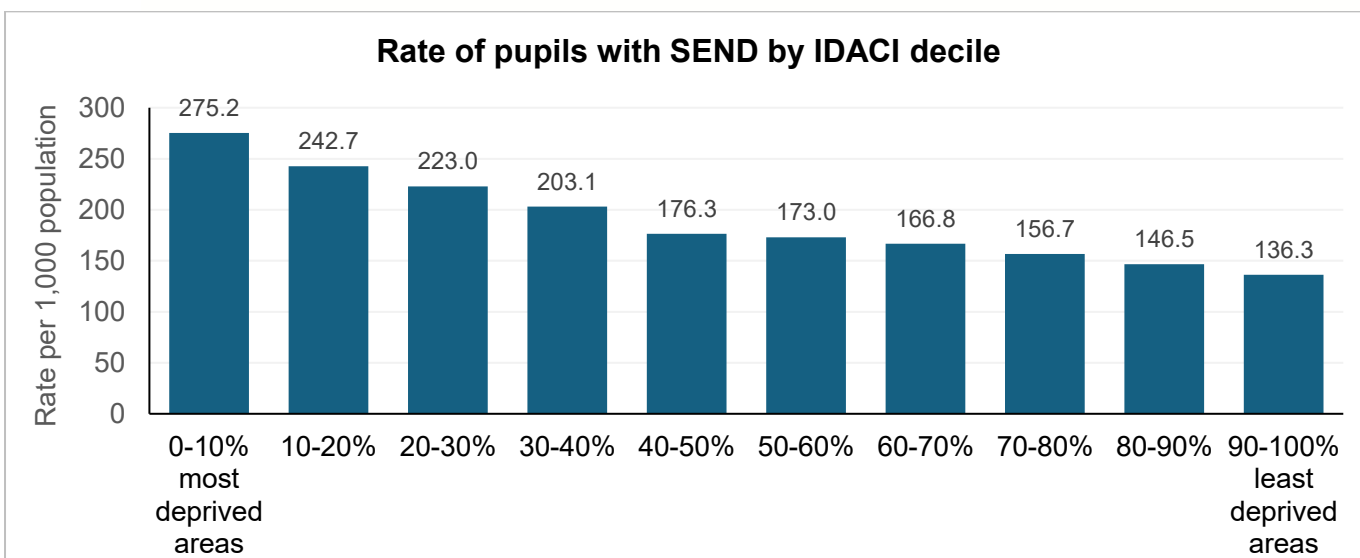
Ethnic group	Total number of pupils	Number of pupils with SEND	% of pupils with SEND
White - Traveller of Irish heritage	41	15	<b>37%</b>
White - Gypsy/Roma	227	81	<b>36%</b>
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	298	69	<b>23%</b>
White - White British	58,796	11,479	<b>20%</b>
Mixed - Any other mixed background	885	167	<b>19%</b>
Unclassified	2,191	398	<b>18%</b>
Mixed - White and Black African	325	57	<b>18%</b>
Black - Any other Black background	109	17	<b>16%</b>
White - Irish	93	13	<b>14%</b>
Mixed - White and Asian	672	93	<b>14%</b>

White - any other White background	4,369	592	<b>14%</b>
Asian - Bangladeshi	138	17	<b>12%</b>
Any other ethnic group	402	46	<b>11%</b>
Asian - any other Asian background	732	80	<b>11%</b>
Asian - Pakistani	91	9	<b>10%</b>
Asian - Chinese	161	13	<b>8%</b>
Black - Black Caribbean	27	2	<b>7%</b>
Black - Black African	1,309	93	<b>7%</b>
Asian - Indian	1,093	65	<b>6%</b>

Source: DfE, 'SEN in England', 2024/25. State-funded schools only.

### 2.2.6. Local area deprivation of pupils with SEND

- Pupils living in the most deprived areas of Somerset are twice as likely to have SEND as those living in the least deprived neighbourhoods.
- In its 2016 report, 'Special educational needs and their links to poverty', the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that children with SEND from low-income families experienced multiple disadvantage and increased vulnerability and therefore poverty could be both a cause and an effect of SEND.
- The chart below indicates the proportion of Somerset pupils living within each IDACI (Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index) decile who have SEND. The rate ranges from 275.2 per 1,000 in the most deprived neighbourhoods, to 136.3 per 1,000 in the least deprived.

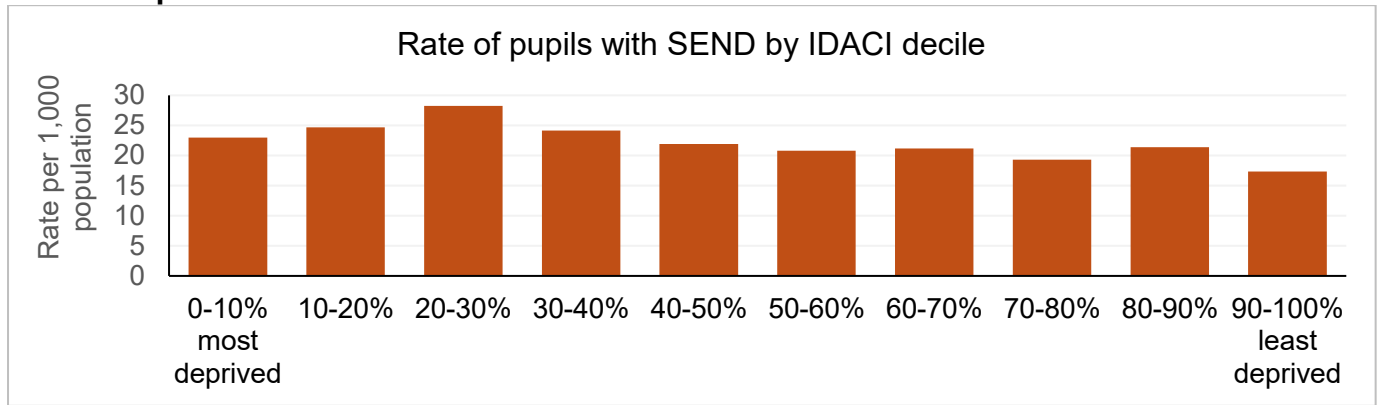


Source: Derived from School Census returns (January 2025) / MHCLG

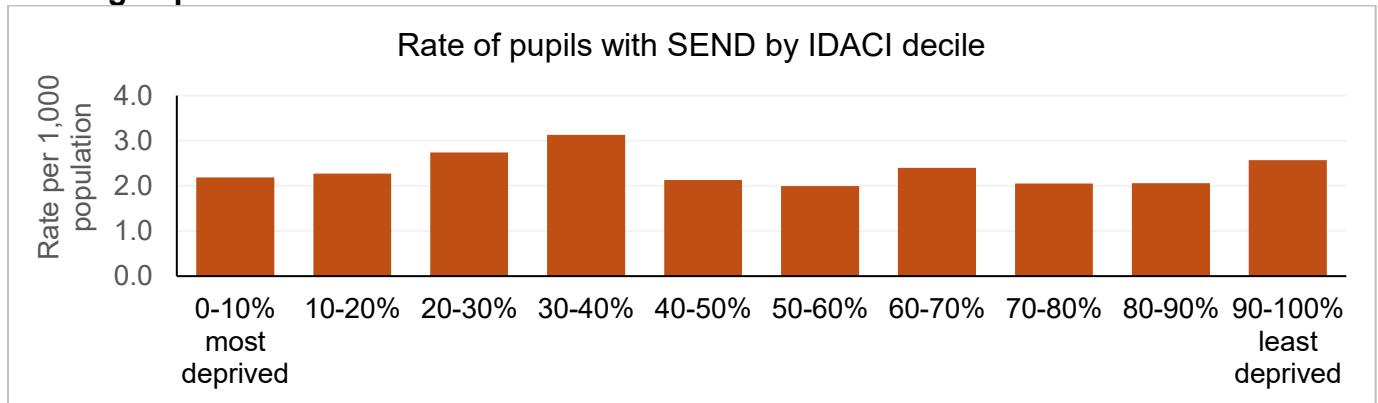
- In terms of primary need, there is a clear association between deprivation and the prevalence of social, emotional and mental health needs; speech, language and communication needs; and severe learning difficulty.
- For other types of need, such as autistic spectrum condition and specific learning difficulty, prevalence is broadly consistent across all neighbourhood types.
- The following charts demonstrate rates in respect of each primary need.



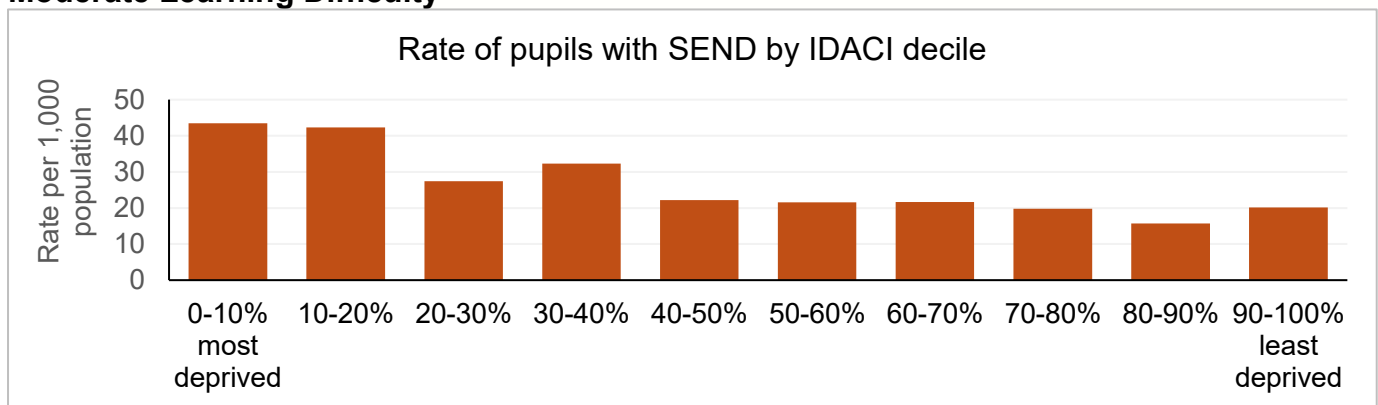
## Autistic Spectrum Condition



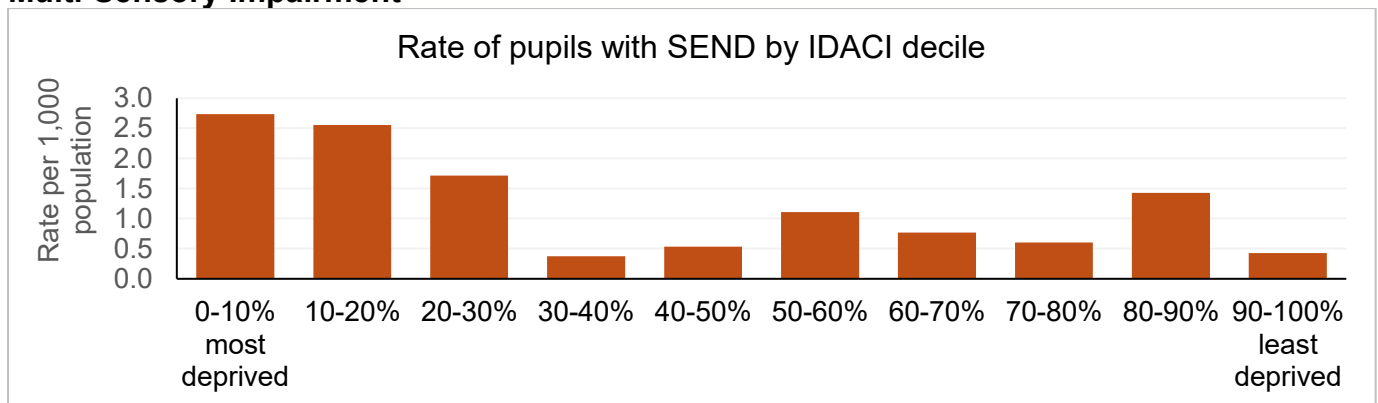
## Hearing Impairment



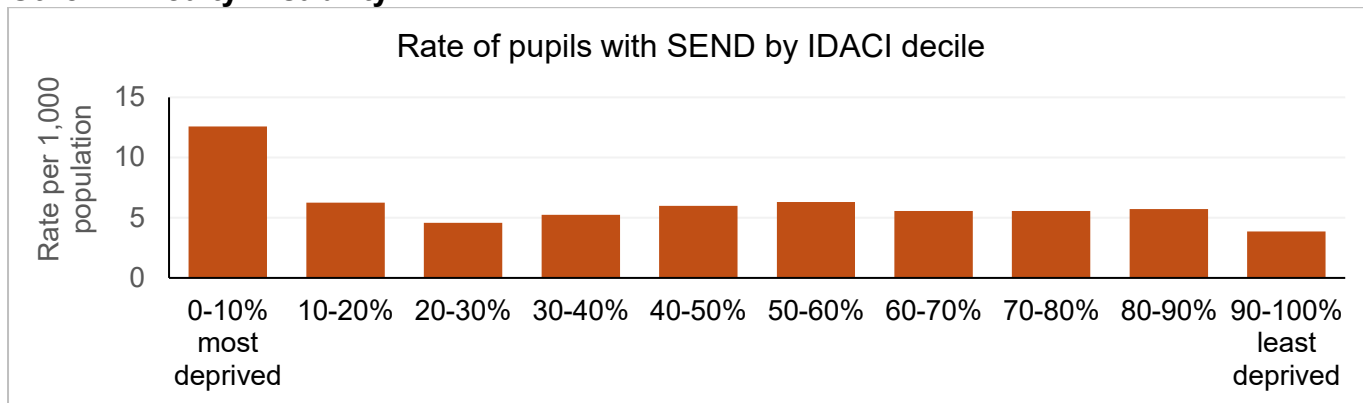
## Moderate Learning Difficulty



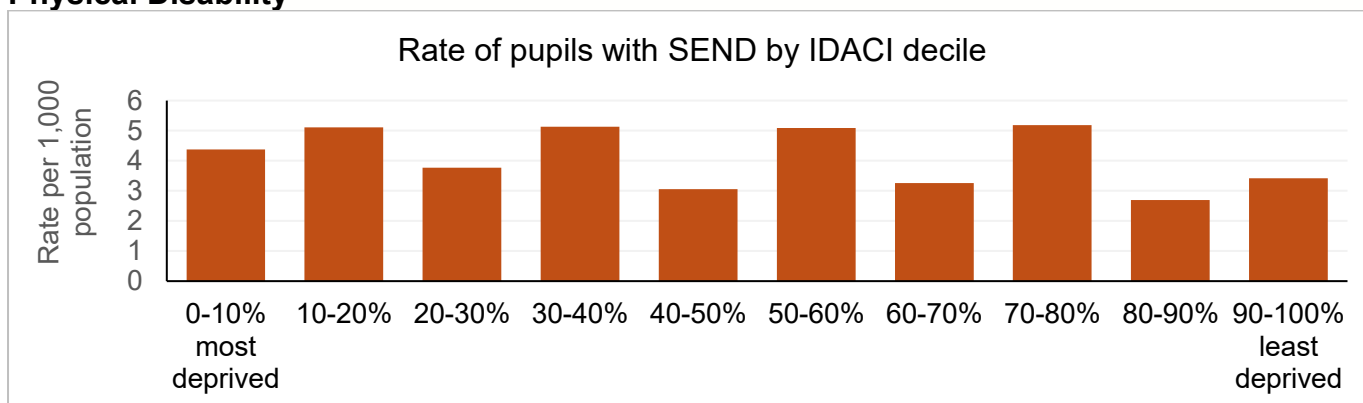
## Multi-Sensory Impairment



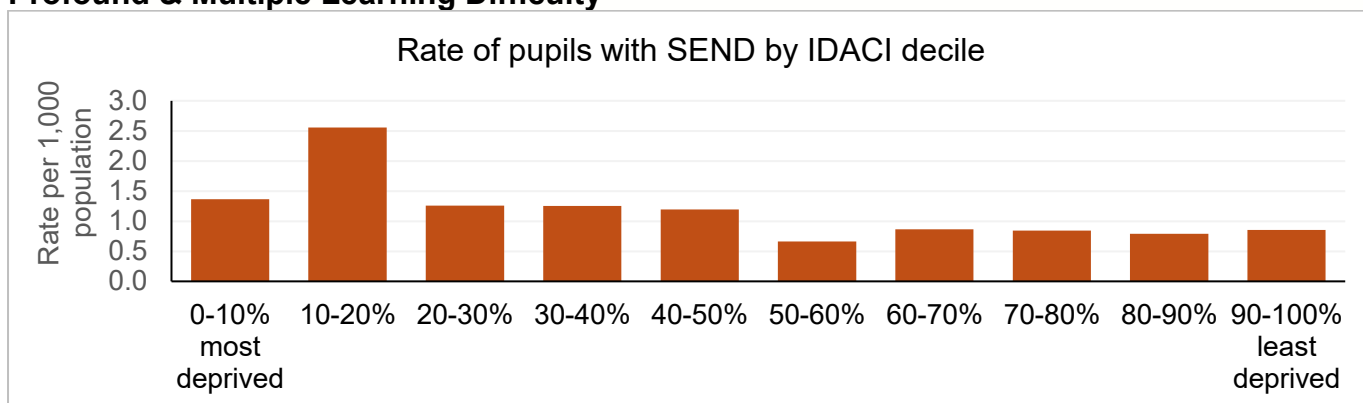
## Other Difficulty/Disability



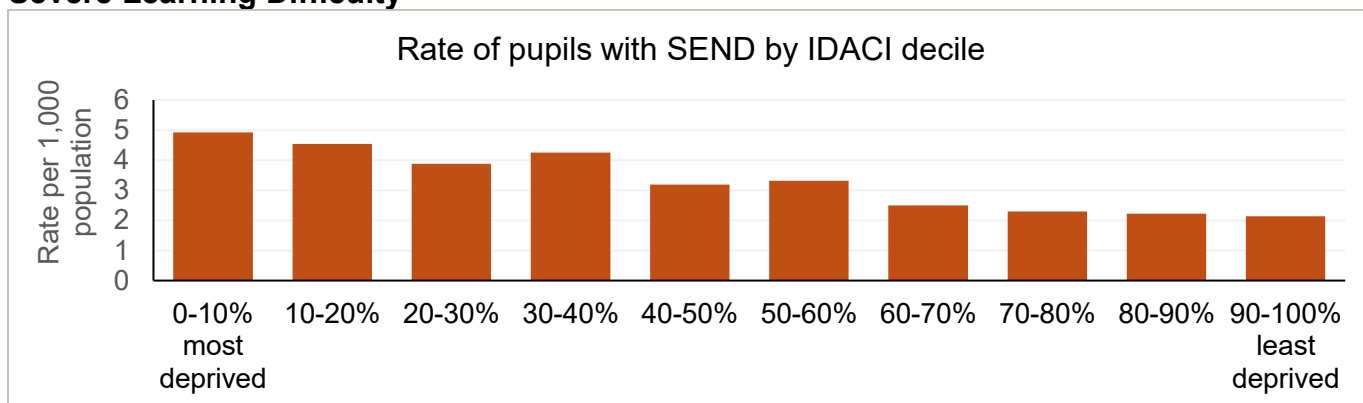
## Physical Disability



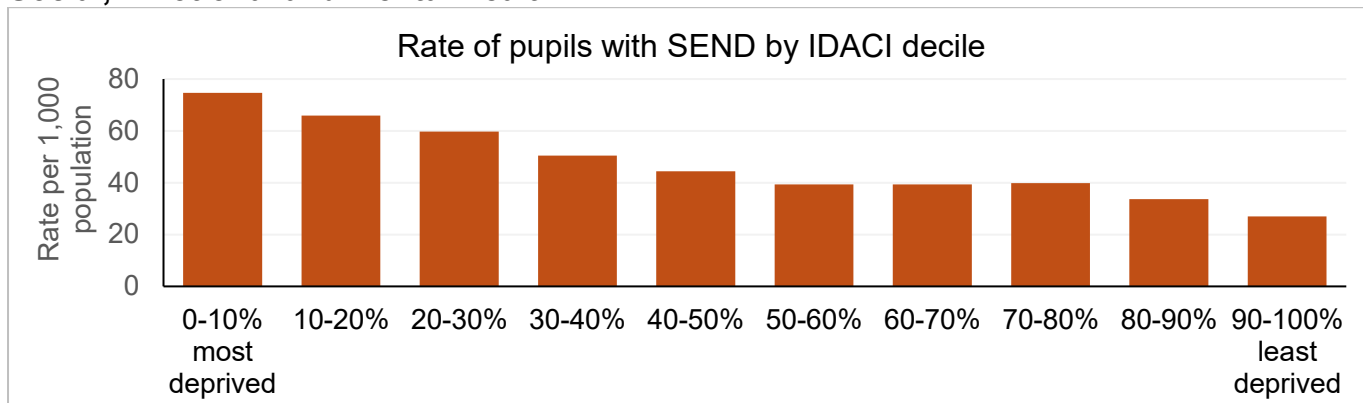
## Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty



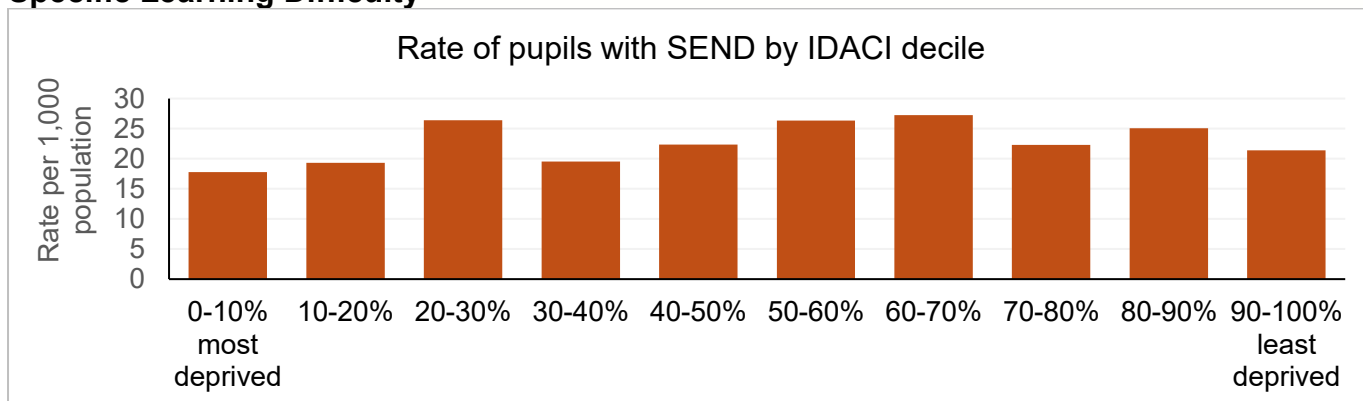
## Severe Learning Difficulty



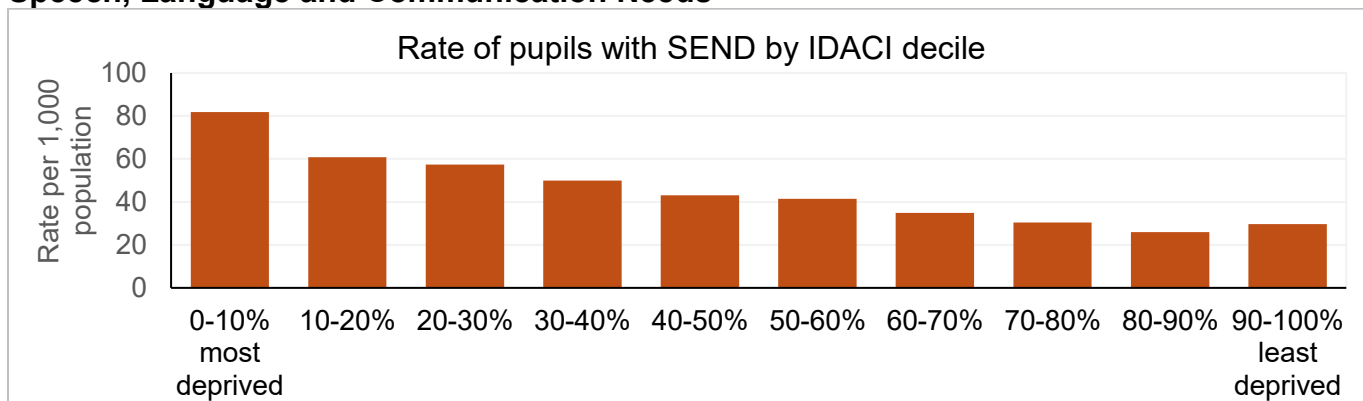
## Social, Emotional and Mental Health



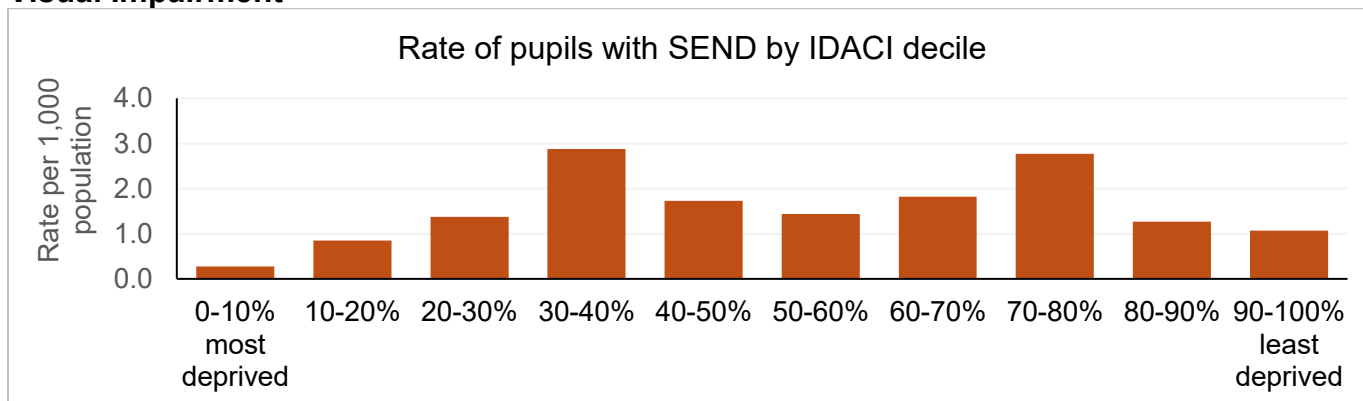
## Specific Learning Difficulty



## Speech, Language and Communication Needs



## Visual Impairment



### 2.3. Children and young people with SEND who are home educated

- A quarter of children who are home educated have SEND. A snapshot in June 2025 indicated 123 electively home educated (EHE) children with an EHC plan and 450 at SEND Support.
- During the 2024/25 academic year, 269 children and young people with SEND became EHE in Somerset, accounting for 31% of all EHE 'starts'.
- The most common primary need of those educated at home is Social, Emotional and Mental Health (26%), followed by Speech, Language and Communication (15%).
- Home educated children with SEND are most commonly in national curriculum year (NCY) groups 9, 10 and 11.
- Overall rates of EHE in Somerset are higher than the national average, although there is no comparative data specifically on children with SEND. The Autumn 2024 census indicated that 2.4% of Somerset's child population (aged 5 to 16) were EHE, compared to 1.4% nationally.

### 2.4. Children looked after and children in need with SEND

- Somerset has a high rate of children looked after (CLA) with an EHC plan: 48% of CLA in Somerset have an EHC Plan, compared to 32% of CLA nationally.
- Somerset has a relatively low proportion of children in need (CIN) with an EHC plan: 23%, compared to 30% nationally.
- Rates of CLA and CIN with SEND Support in Somerset are broadly in line with national averages.

### 2.5. Children and young people with SEND on youth justice statutory programmes

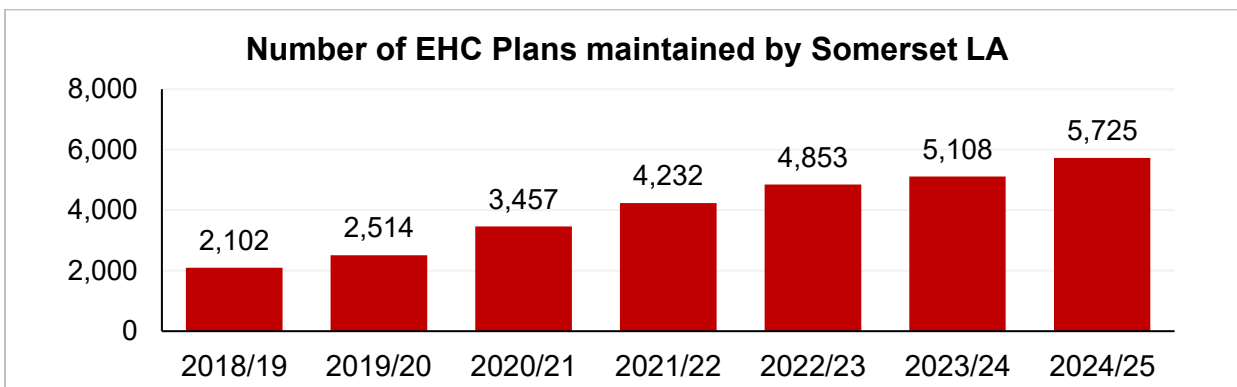
- Two-thirds of children and young people attending statutory Youth Justice Team programmes in Somerset have SEND.
- A snapshot in June 2025 indicated 22 children with an EHC Plan and 17 at SEND Support, from a total caseload of 58.
- For those with an EHC Plan, the great majority (90%) have a Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) need.

### 3. Children and young people for whom the local authority maintains an EHC Plan

This section describes the needs, characteristics and educational provision of children and young people for whom Somerset local authority maintains an EHC plan, and how this cohort has been changing over time.

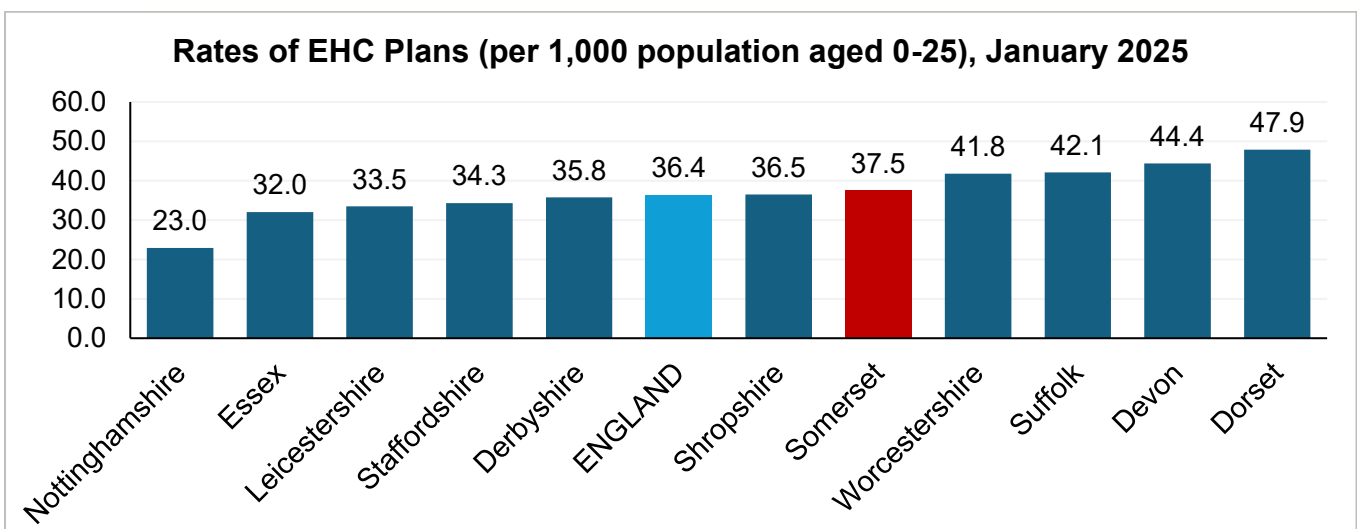
#### 3.1. Numbers of EHC plans

- In January 2025, there were a total of 5,725 children and young people for whom Somerset local authority maintained an EHC plan.
- The total number of EHC plans maintained by the local authority has increased steadily year-on-year.



Source: DfE, 'Education, health and care plans - reporting year 2025'. Figures are as at January each year.

- Rates of EHC plans in Somerset (per 1,000 local population aged 0 to 25) are currently in line with the national average and occupy the 'middle ground' in terms of statistical neighbours (that is, local authority areas with similar socio-economic characteristics).

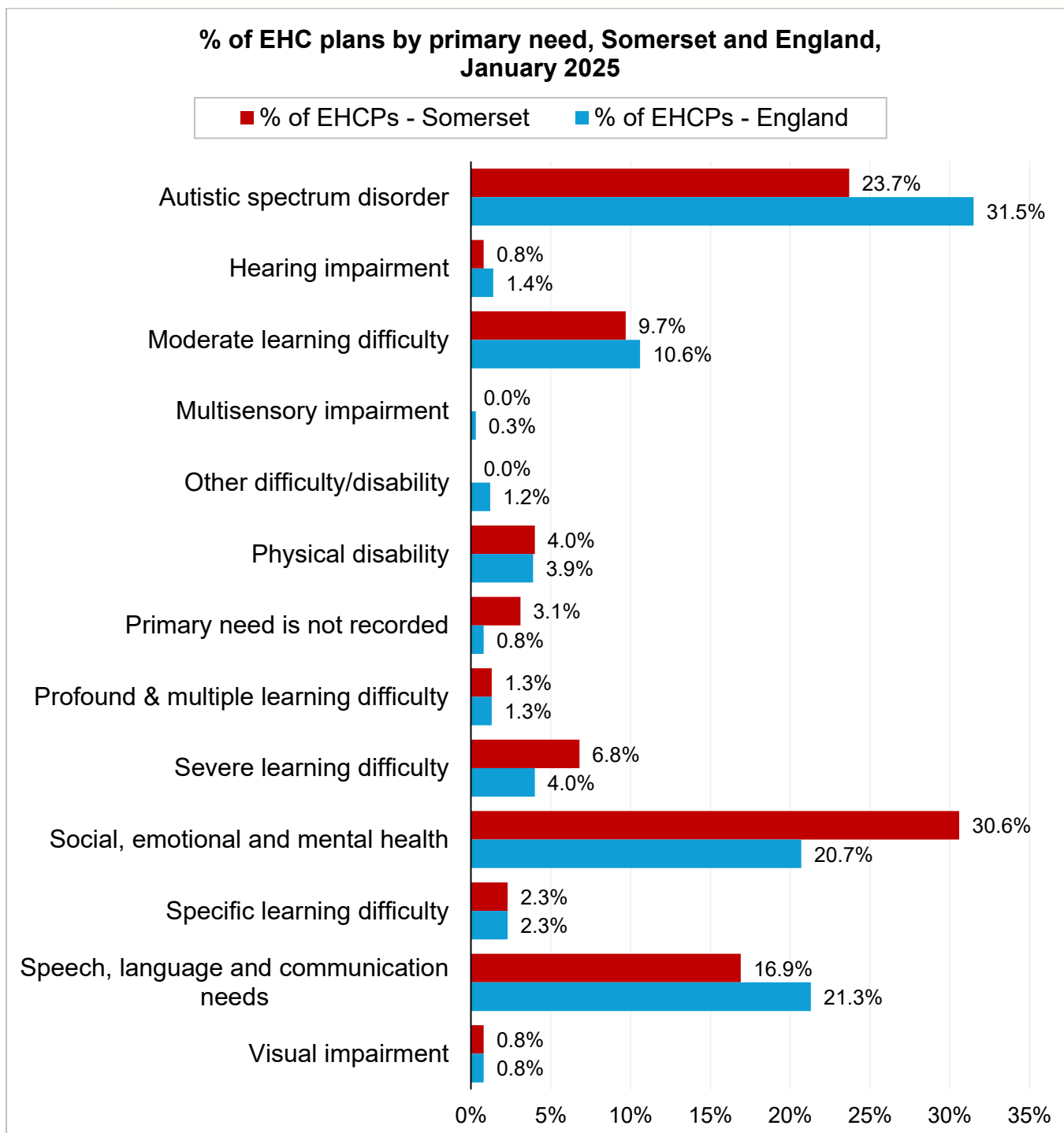


Source: Derived from DfE, 'Education, health and care plans - reporting year 2025' / ONS population estimates.



### 3.2. Primary needs of children and young people with an EHC plan

- The most common type of primary need among children and young people with an EHC plan in Somerset is social, emotional and mental health (30.6% of all plans). Nationally, the most common primary need is autistic spectrum disorder.
- Compared to the national profile, Somerset has a significantly higher proportion of EHC plans made for children with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, and a lower proportion for autistic spectrum disorder. See chart, below.

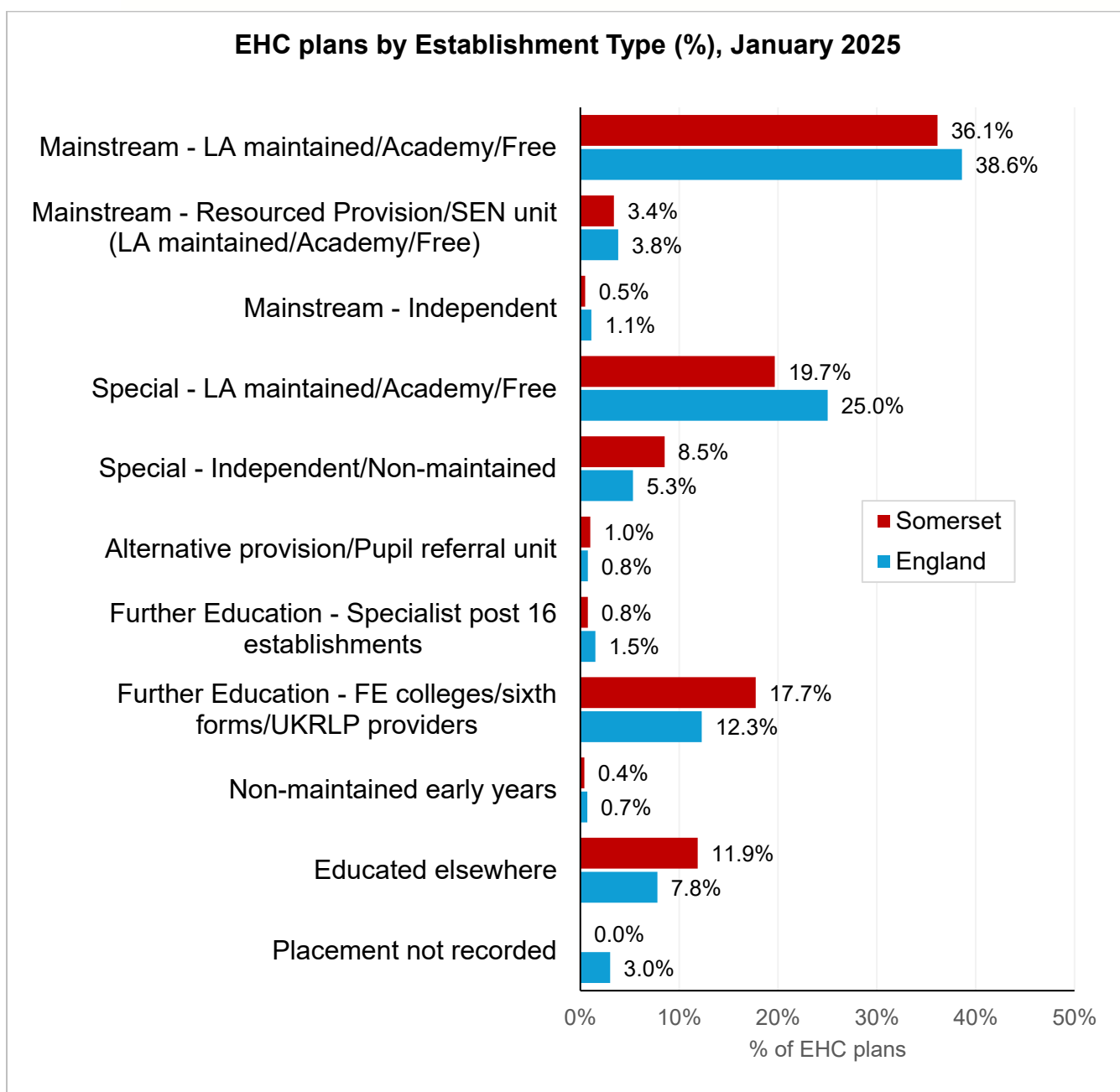


Source: DfE, 'Education, health and care plans - reporting year 2025'



### 3.3. Educational provision of children and young people with an EHC plan

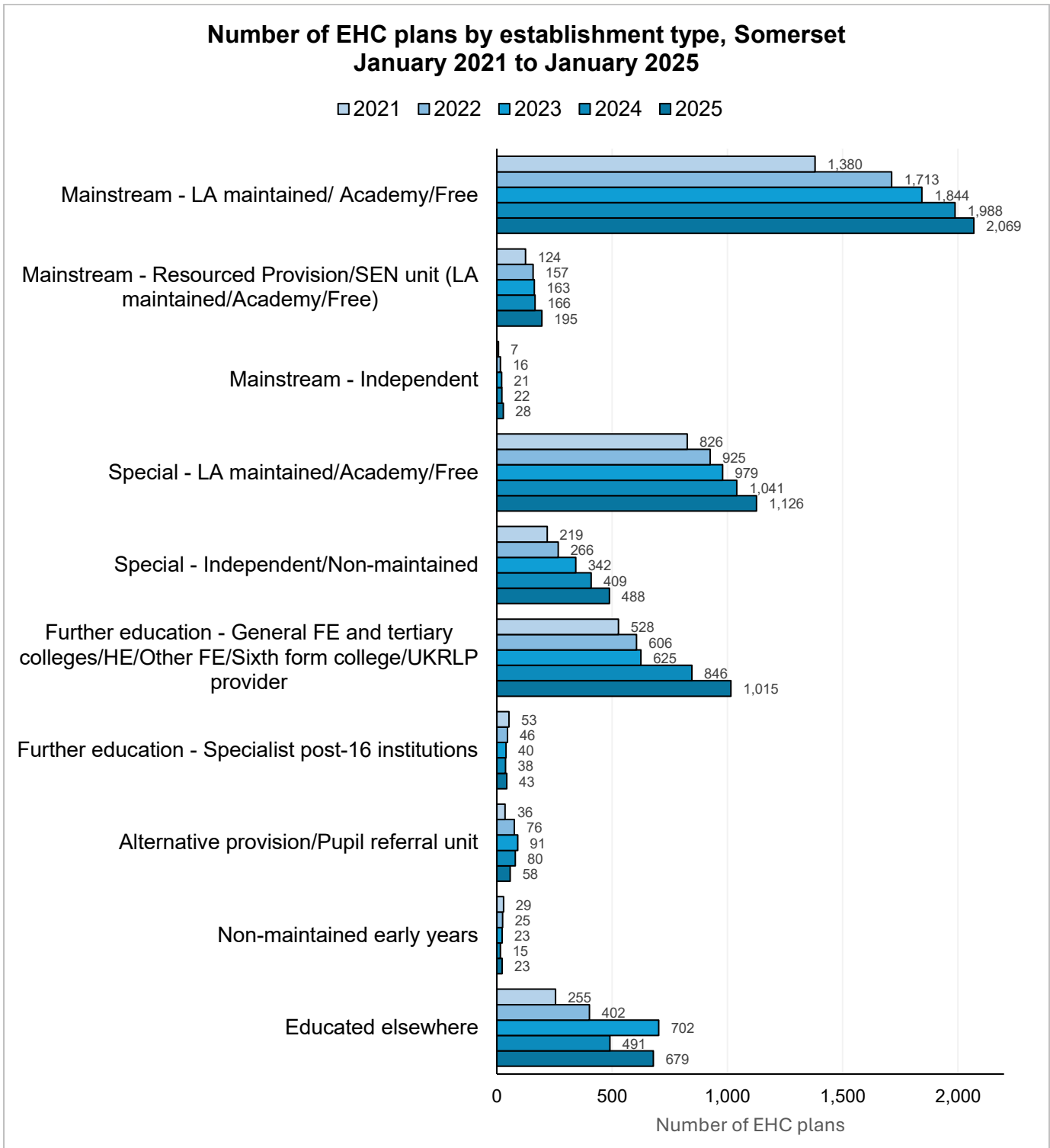
- Four-in-ten children and young people with an EHC plan in Somerset attend a mainstream school. Approximately three-in-ten (28.2%) attend a special school.
- Compared to national averages, Somerset has a lower proportion of children attending state-funded special schools and a higher rate attending independent or non-maintained special schools.
- Somerset has a higher rate of young people with an EHC plan in further education/post-16 institutions.



Source: DfE, 'Education, health and care plans - reporting year 2025'



- Historically, numbers of EHC plans in Somerset have been increasing across most establishment types year-on-year, in line with increasing numbers of plans overall. Exceptions have been specialist post-16 institutions and non-maintained early years providers, where numbers (although relatively small) have been in general decline since 2021.
- Numbers of placements in independent and non-maintained special schools (INMSS) in Somerset have more than doubled since 2021.

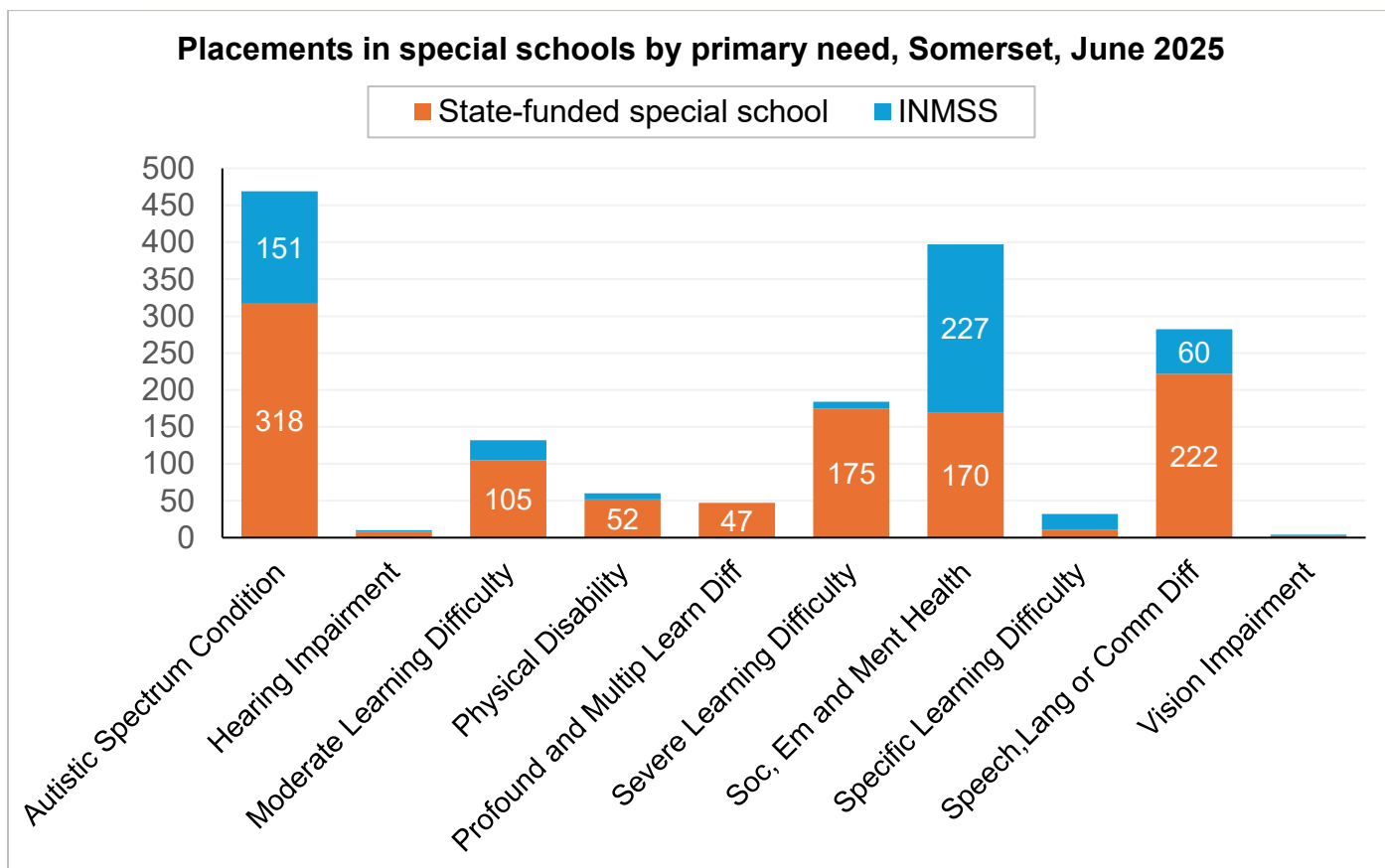


Source: DfE, 'Education, health and care plans - reporting year 2025'



### 3.3.1. Children and young people attending special schools

- The most common primary need of children and young people attending special schools in Somerset is autistic spectrum disorder. Approximately two-thirds of these children attend a state-funded special school and one-third attend an independent or non-maintained special school (INMSS).
- The next most common primary need in special schools is social, emotional and mental health, with the majority (58%) of children attending independent or non-maintained special schools (a total of 227 children, as at June 2025). See chart, below.



Source: Somerset Council, Capita One

- In March 2023, the Department for Education confirmed approval to establish a new special free school in Somerset (in Mendip) for children with social, emotional and mental health needs. It is understood that the earliest the school will be ready to open is September 2027.

### 3.4. Children and young people with an EHC plan who are educated elsewhere

- The statutory SEN2 national data return in January 2025 identified 679 Somerset children and young people with an EHC plan not attending school or further education (classified as 'educated elsewhere').



- Of these:
  - 266 were in 'other arrangements made by local authority' (defined as being in accordance with section 61 of the 2014 Children and Families Act, or EOTAS)
  - 133 were electively home educated (EHE)
  - 251 were not in employment education or training (NEET)
- Overall, 11.9% of children and young people with an EHC plan in Somerset were classified as 'educated elsewhere', compared to 7.8% of children nationally.

### 3.5. Children and young people with an EHC plan attending an educational setting outside Somerset

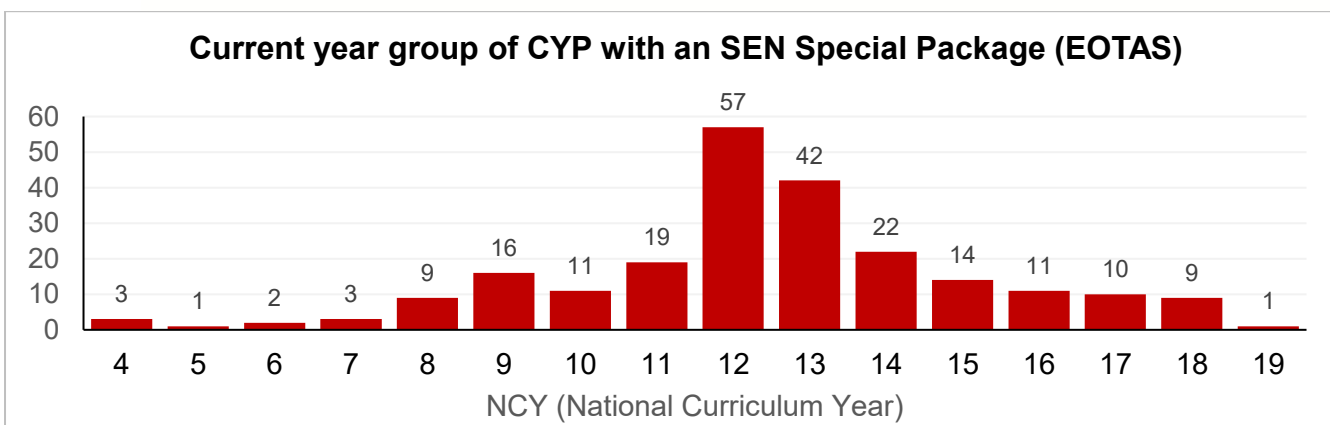
- A data snapshot in May 2025 identified a total of 407 children and young people with an EHC plan attending an educational setting located outside the county. The majority of these (59%) were attending a post-16 institution, typically within neighbouring BaNES or North Somerset local authority areas.
- For children of compulsory school age, the large majority (81%) attended a state-funded school (and typically those located close to the county border). A total of 21 children were attending an independent special school, with social, emotional and mental health and autistic spectrum condition the most common primary needs.

### 3.6. Children and young people with an SEN Special Package (EOTAS)

- A snapshot of Somerset Council Capita One data in May 2025 indicated a total of 231 children and young people in Somerset with an education setting of 'SEN Special Package (EOTAS)'.

#### 3.6.1. Characteristics of children and young people with an SEN Special Package (EOTAS)

- Three-quarters (72%) of the EOTAS cohort are of post-compulsory school age, most commonly in NCY (national curriculum year) 12 and 13.



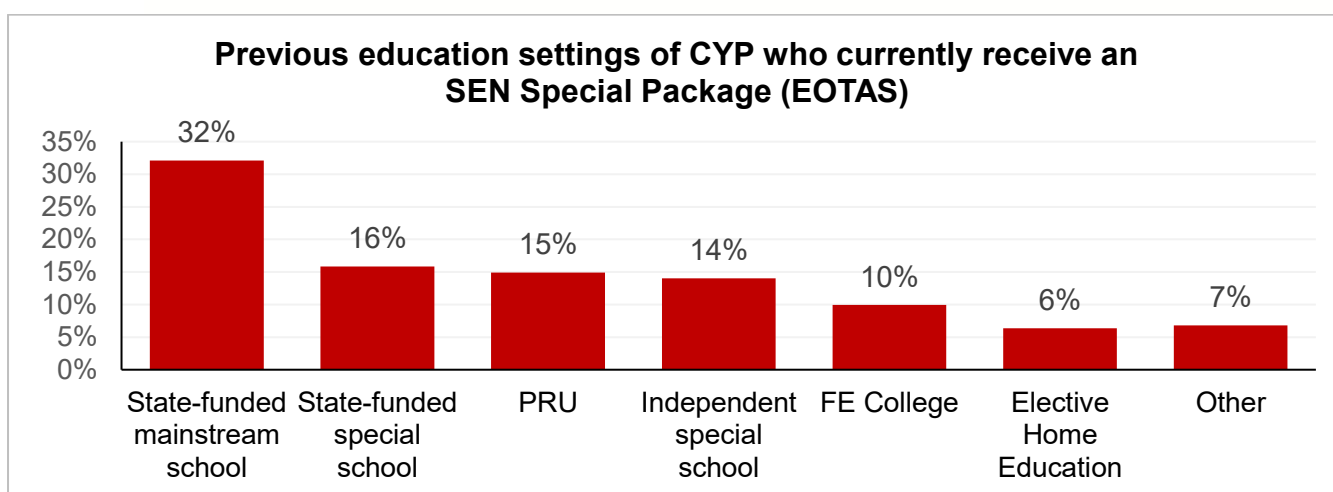
Source: Capita One. CYP with current base of 'SEN Special Package (EOTAS)'. Data as at May 2025.



- Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) is the most common primary need of those with SEN Special Package (EOTAS), accounting for 54% of placements. This is followed by autistic spectrum condition (24% of placements).

### 3.6.2. Previous education setting of children and young people who have an SEN Special Package (EOTAS)

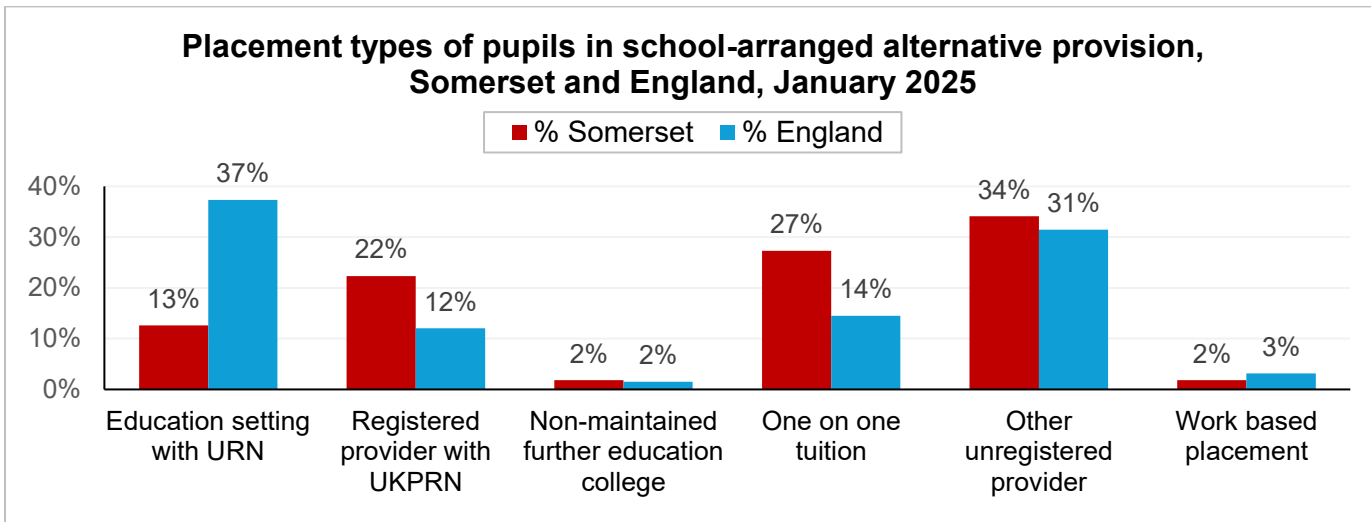
- Pupils who previously attended a state-funded mainstream school account for approximately one-in-three (32%) of the current SEN Special Package (EOTAS) cohort.
- Nearly half (45%) of the cohort previously attended either a state-funded special school, a pupil referral unit (PRU) or an independent special school.



Source: Capita One. Education settings of 'SEN Special Package (Interim)' or SENIT have been discounted in the identification of the most recent educational setting.

### 3.7. School-arranged placements in alternative provision

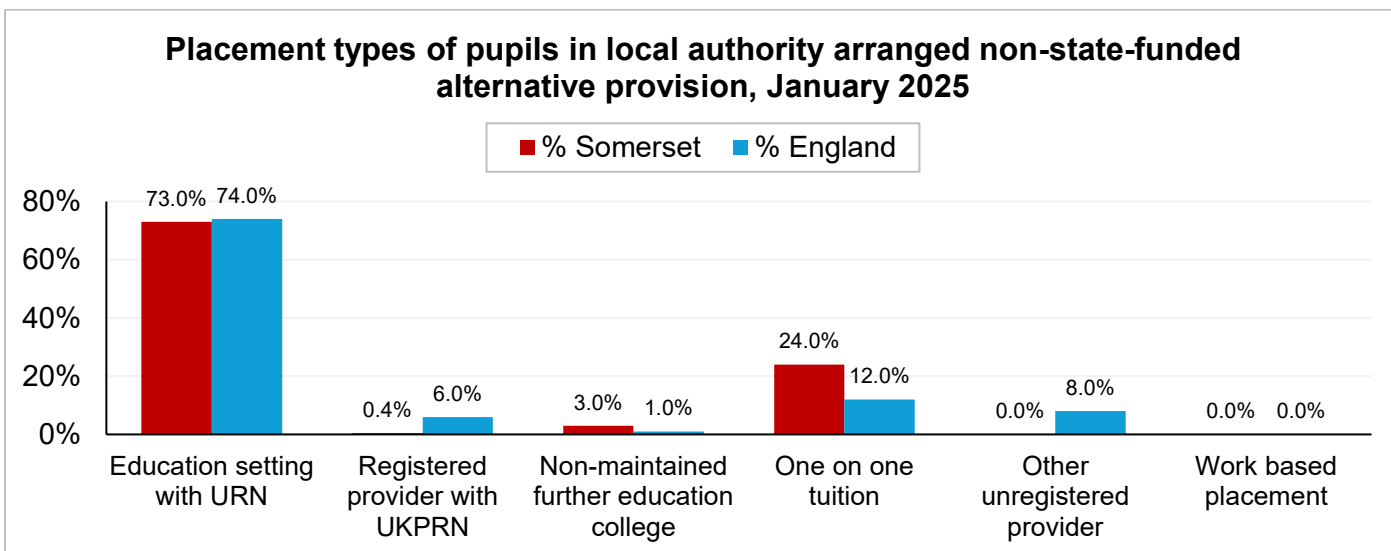
- The School Census in January 2025 identified a total of 443 pupils attending school-arranged alternative provision.
- The most common reason for school-arranged alternative provision in Somerset was 'off-site placements for behavioural support' (at 62% of placements).
- Somerset pupils in school-arranged alternative provision are more likely to attend one-on-one tuition and less likely to be in a registered education setting than the national average. See chart, below.



Source: DfE, School Census

### 3.8. Local authority arranged placements in non-state-funded alternative provision as identified in the alternative provision (AP) census

- The Alternative Provision (AP) Census in January 2025 identified a total of 739 placements in local authority arranged non-state-funded alternative provision (which is defined within the census to include independent schools, independent special schools, FE colleges and unregistered alternative provision settings).
- Of these, 196 placements were in a non-registered educational setting (i.e., not a DfE or UK government registered provider). At 27% of all non-state-funded AP, this was a higher proportion than the national average (of 21%).
- Most pupil information captured in the AP census relates to children with an EHC plan placed in an independent special school ('Education setting with URN' in the chart below).



Source: DfE, Alternative Provision Census

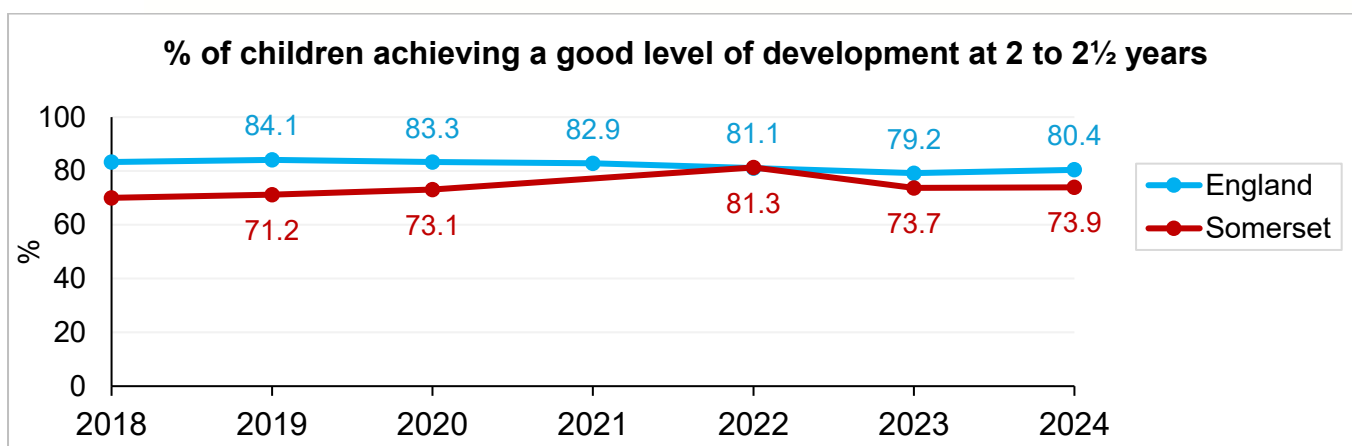


## 4. Assessment and identification of need

The aim of this section is to describe the stages in a child's journey where services have an opportunity to identify developmental concerns.

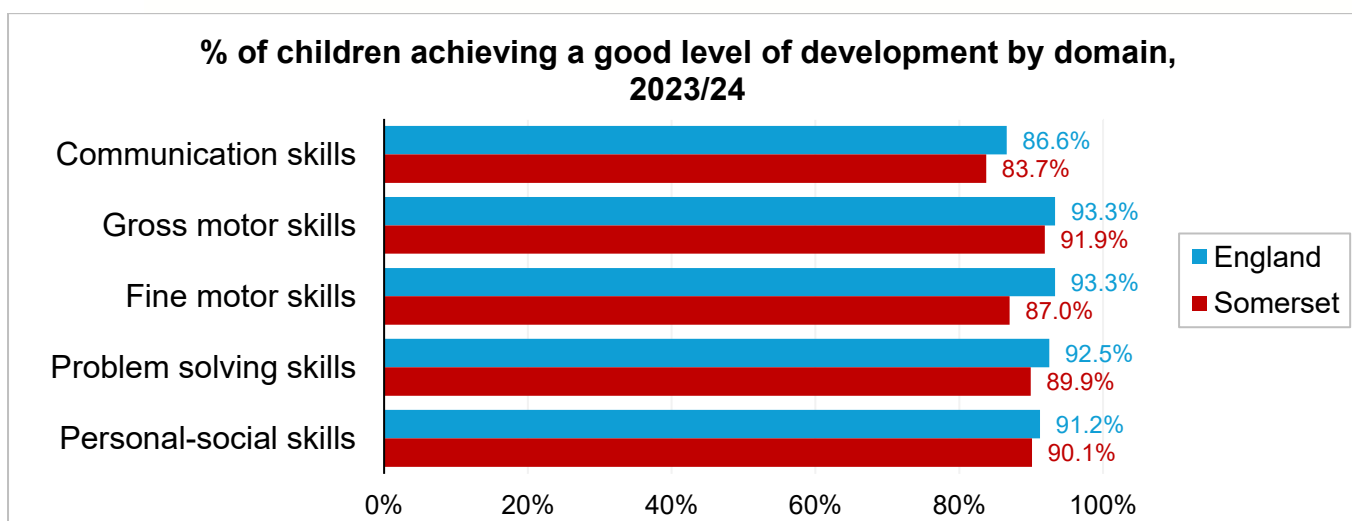
### 4.1. Ages and Stages Questionnaire

- The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) is a screening tool used by health visitors to assess a child's progress and identify potential delays.
- The percentage of Somerset children achieving the expected level in all five domains of development (a 'good level of development') at age 2 to 2 and a half years has been below the national average in each of the last two reporting years.



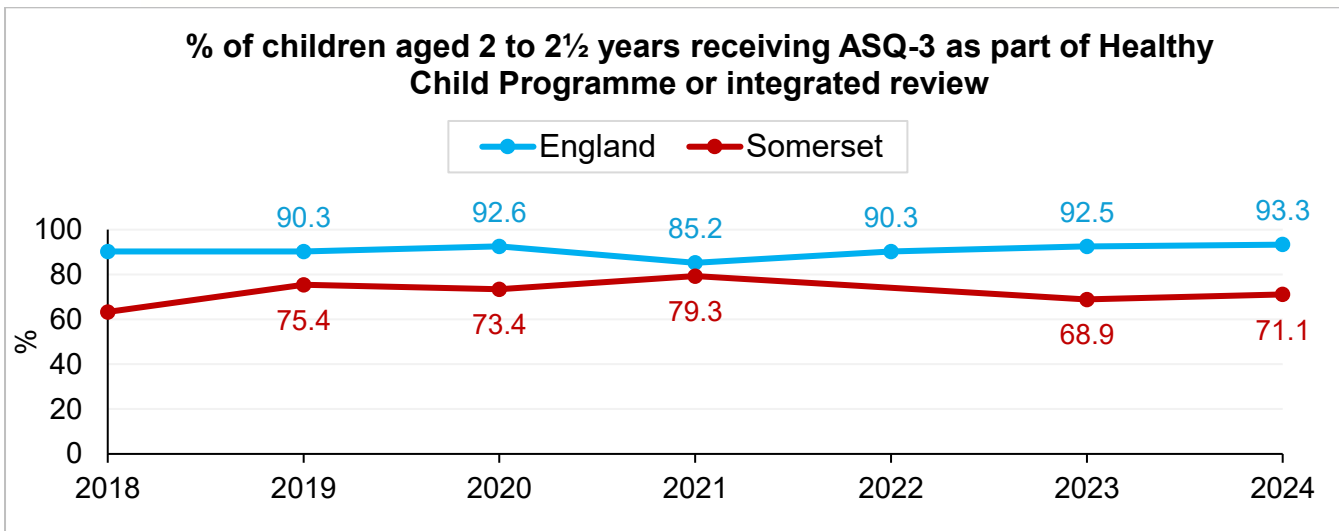
Source: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), Child development outcomes at 2 to 2 and a half years, 2023/24

- In 2023/24, the percentage of Somerset children achieving a good level of development was below the national average in each of the five domains of development, with the widest gap in respect of fine motor skills. See chart, below.



Source: OHID, Child development outcomes at 2 to 2 and a half years, 2023/24

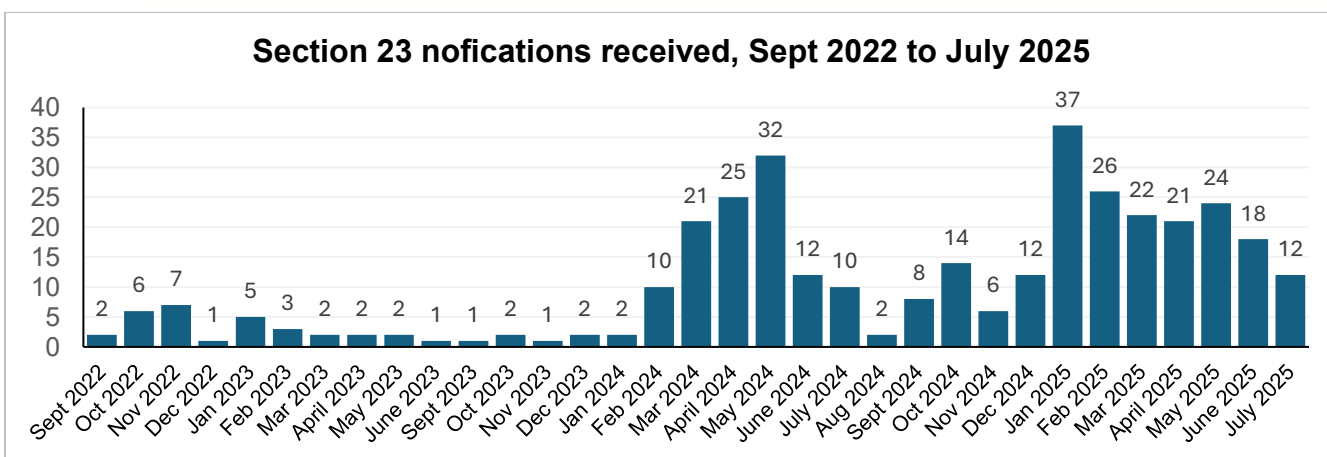
- The proportion of children in Somerset receiving the ASQ-3 screening check is below national average benchmarks.
- A total of 3,167 children in Somerset had ASQ-3 scores (for all five developmental areas) in 2023/24.



Source: OHID, Child development outcomes at 2 to 2 and a half years, 2023/24

#### 4.2. SEND Section 23 notifications

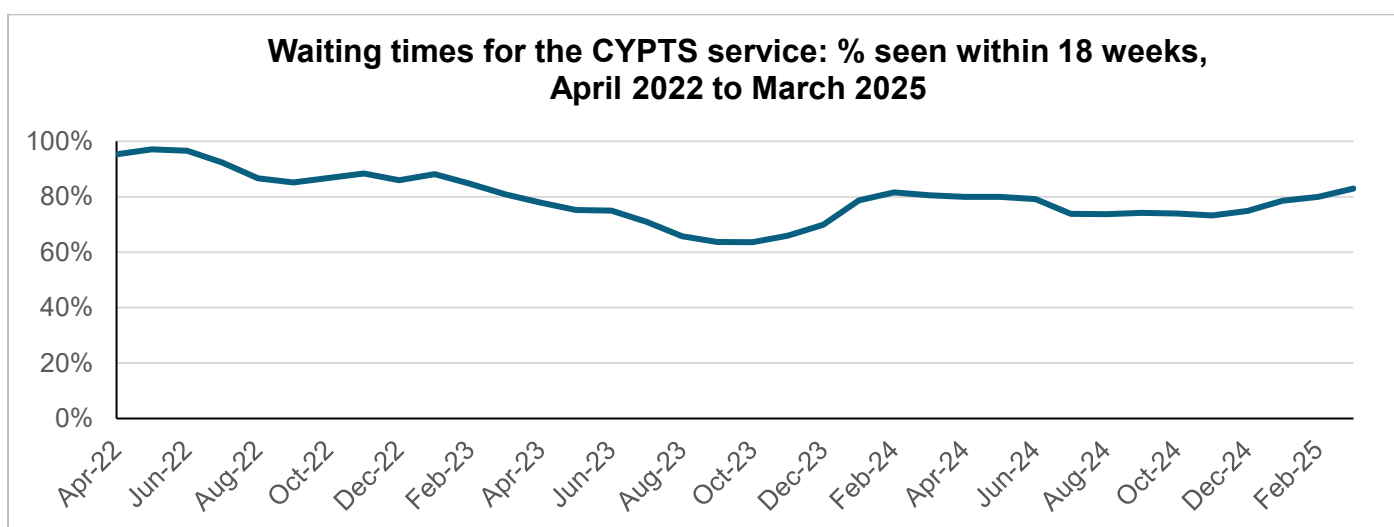
- A total of 200 notifications under Section 23 of the Children and Families Act were received in Somerset during the 2024/25 academic year, informing the local authority that a child (of below compulsory school age) may have special educational needs.
- This represented a significant increase on the 120 notifications received in 2023/24 and 31 notifications in 2022/23. The increase is believed to be linked, at least in part, to changes in processes following the ceasing of MAISEY meetings (Multi-Agency Identification and Support in the Early Years) in early 2024.



Source: Somerset Council (Capita One)

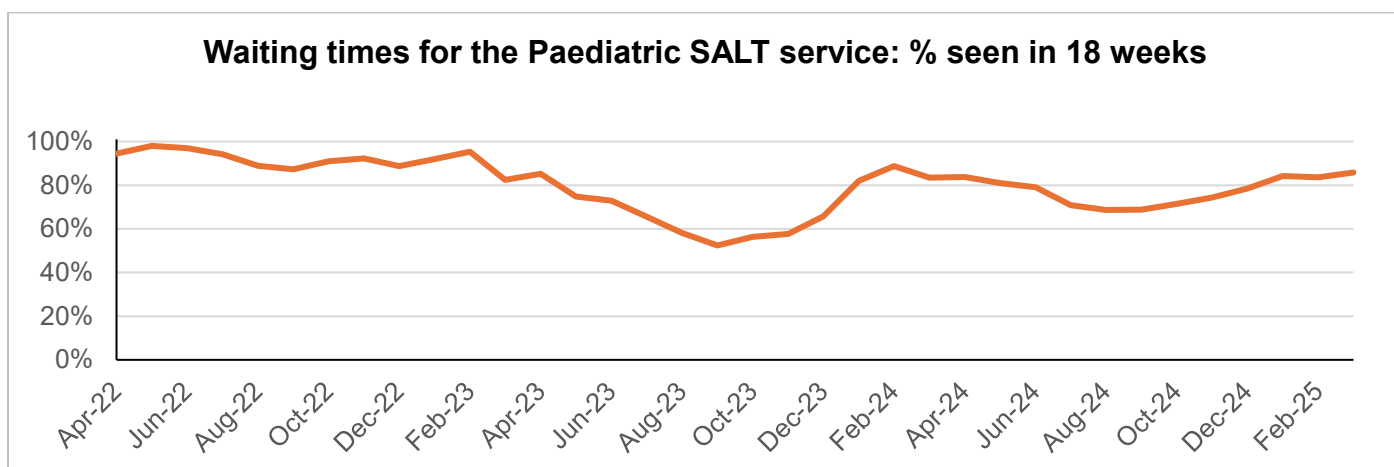
### 4.3. Children and Young People Therapy Service (CYPTS)

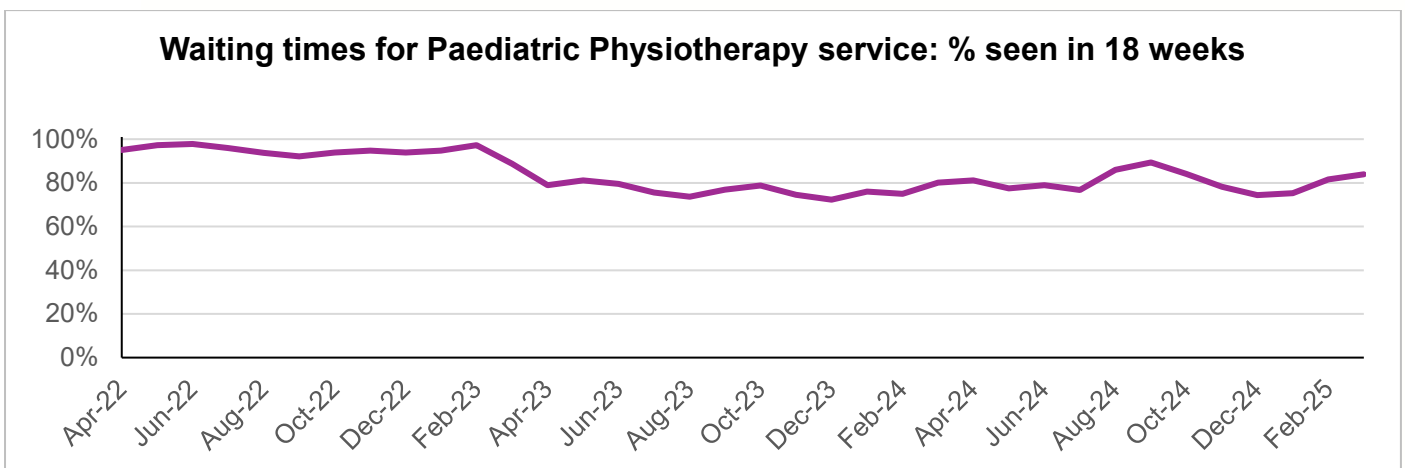
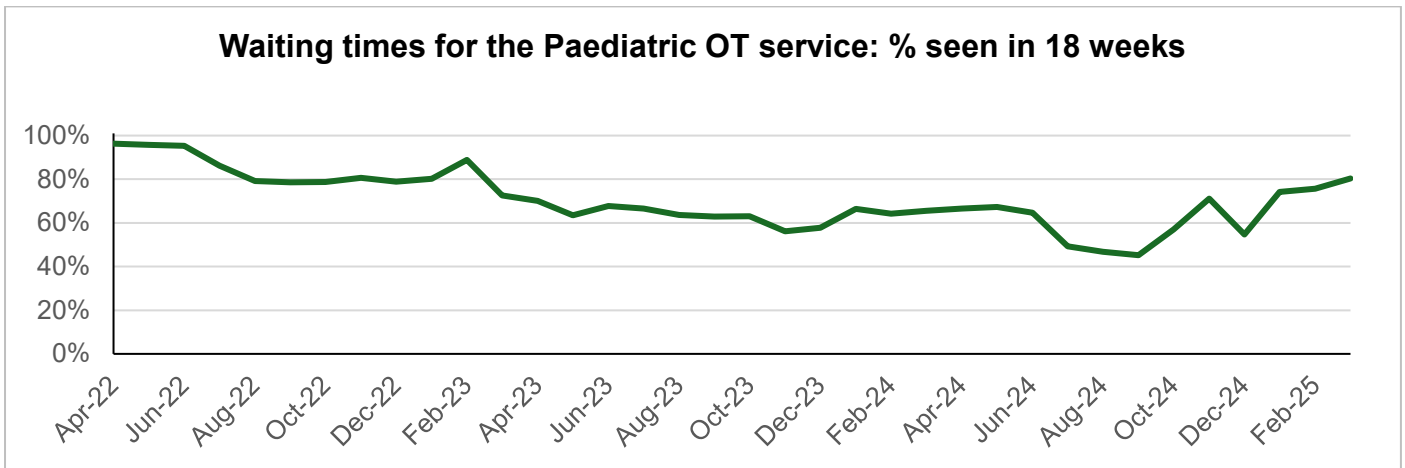
- The Somerset Children and Young People Therapy Service (CYPTS) works with children and young people aged up to 19 years old who have difficulties ranging from speech and language problems and difficulty with concentration and attention, to disabilities and health conditions that slow physical development.
- The CYPTS telephone advice line receives calls for first line advice and guidance, from both parents and professionals with a broadly even split between the two groups.
- There were 734 calls to the service in 2024/25 (April to March), which was a decline on the 958 calls in the same period the previous year.
- Waiting times for the three therapies – speech and language (SALT), occupational therapy (OT), and physiotherapy – have continued to improve in recent months, with overall 83% of children being seen for initial assessment within 18 weeks (as at March 2025).



Source: NHS Somerset SEND Dashboard

- In terms of individual therapies, the percentage of children seen within 18 weeks ranges from 80% to 86% (as at March 2025). See charts, below.

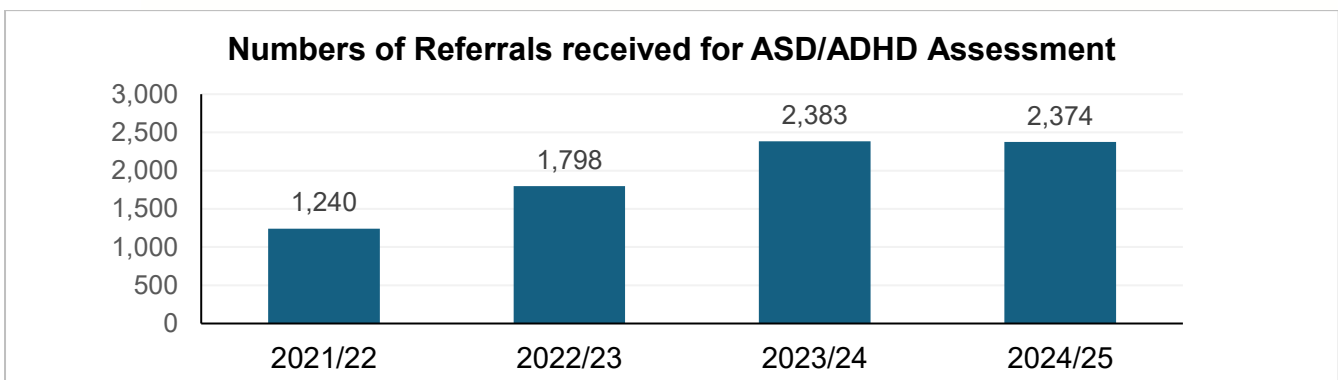




Source: NHS Somerset SEND Dashboard

#### 4.4. Children and Young Person’s Neurodevelopmental Pathway

- The Children and Young Person’s Neurodevelopmental Pathway (CYPNP) conduct autism and ADHD assessments for children and young people, aged 4 to 17.
- There were a total of 2,374 referrals received for assessment during 2024/25 (April to March). This was almost exactly the same number of referrals received during the previous year.
- Prior to 2023/24, there were significant year-on-year increases in numbers of referrals, following the inception of the pathway. See chart, below.



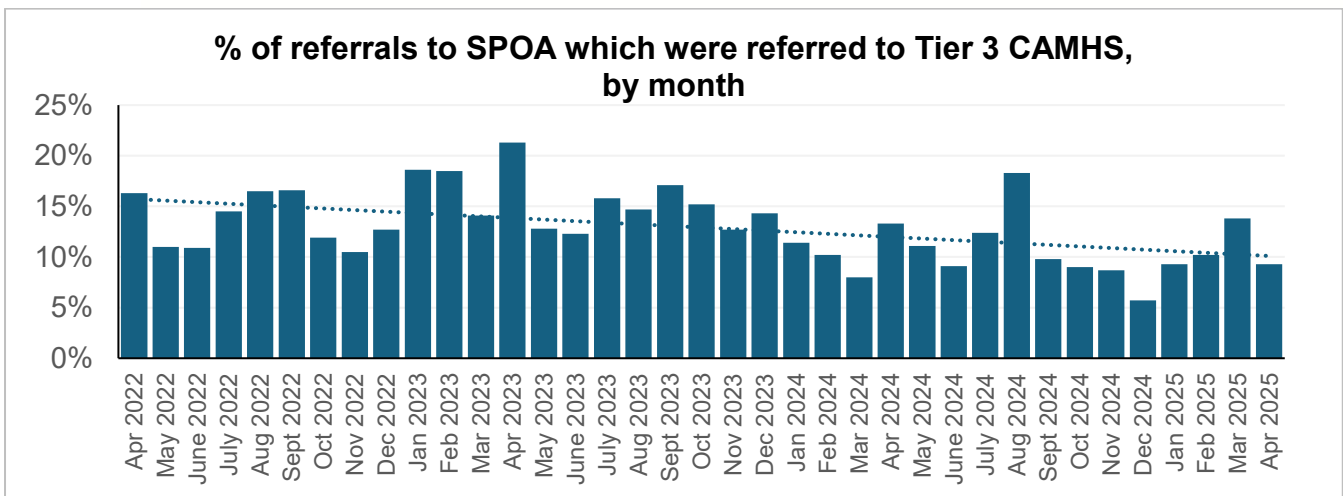
Source: NHS Somerset SEND Dashboard. Children aged 5 to 17 years.



- Increasing proportions of referrals are leading to an assessment. Between April and December 2024, 86% of referrals resulted in an assessment, compared to 82% of referrals in 2023/24, and 72% in 2022/23.
- The average waiting time between referral and first clinical appointment for autism in March 2025 was 88 weeks.
- The average waiting time between referral and first clinical appointment for ADHD was also 88 weeks.

#### 4.5. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

- Somerset Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) offer mental health assessments and intervention to children and young people (up to the age of 18), as well as signposting to other appropriate services.
- There were 2,919 referrals to CAMHS, via the single point of access (SPOA) team during 2024/25 (April to March). This represented an increase on the 2,761 referrals received during 2023/24 but was fewer than the 3,134 referrals in 2022/23.
- Each month during 2024/25, between 6% and 18% of referrals to the SPOA were referred on to specialist Tier 3 CAMHS. There has been a slight decline, long-term, in the proportion of referrals to Tier 3 CAMHS.



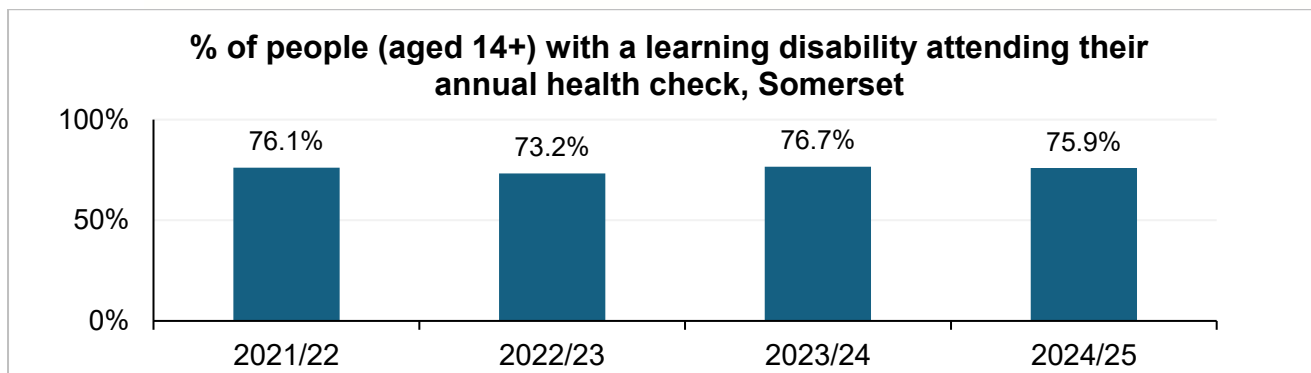
Source: NHS Somerset, SEND System Effectiveness Dashboard

- The service consistently exceeds its target that 92% of people referred should have their initial assessment within 6 weeks, as well as its target that 95% of people referred should have their initial assessment within 18 weeks.



#### 4.6. Learning disabilities health check scheme

- The proportion of people (aged 14+) with a learning disability receiving an annual health check from their GP was 75.9% in Somerset in 2024/25, marginally below the proportion seen in the previous year (76.7%), but above the figure for 2022/23 (73.2%).

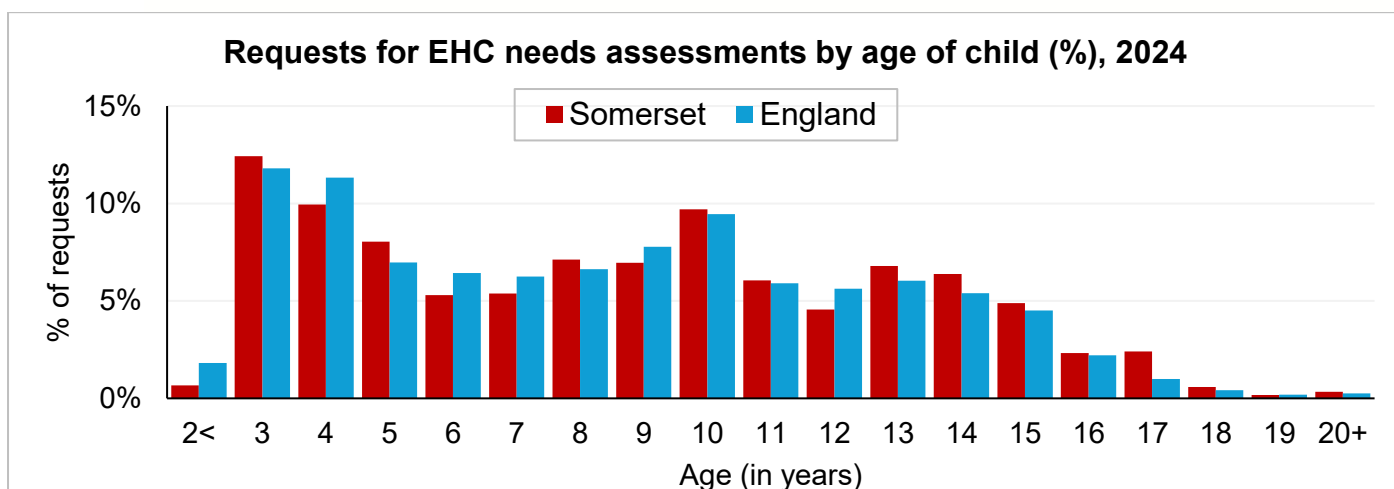


Source: NHS Somerset SEND Dashboard

- In 2024/25, Somerset was below the national average in terms of health checks completed (79.9% in England, compared to 75.9% in Somerset). A total of 2,694 people in Somerset received their learning disability health check during 2024/25.
- A total of 276 health checks were declined in Somerset, and a total of 563 patients did not receive a health check.

#### 4.7. Requests for an education, health and care (EHC) needs assessment

- There were a total of 1,207 requests for an EHC needs assessment made in Somerset during the 2024 calendar year, up from 1,121 requests in 2023, and representing the highest annual total ever recorded.
- The most common time to request an EHC needs assessment is prior to starting compulsory schooling or prior to transfer to secondary school. Somerset generally mirrors the national picture in terms of the ages of children at which requests are received (see chart, below).



Source: DfE, 'Education, health and care plans - reporting year 2025'

- In Somerset in 2024, the local authority proceeded with an assessment in respect of 55.0% of all requests, lower than the national average rate (of 65.4%).
- The proportion of requests where the local authority proceeded with an assessment broadly decreases with age. For children aged 3 in Somerset, 80.7% of requests in 2024 resulted in an EHC needs assessment. For children aged 10, this fell to 47.9%.

#### 4.7.1. Sources of EHC needs assessment requests

- The most common source of EHC needs assessment requests is schools, followed by parents/guardians.
- In 2024, just over two-thirds (68%) of requests made by schools in Somerset proceeded to an EHC needs assessment. Fewer than a quarter (22%) of requests from parents/guardians proceeded to an assessment.

#### EHC needs assessment requests by source, Somerset, 2024

Source	Number of Requests	Yes to Assessment	No to Assessment	% Yes to Assessment
College/Post 16	21	14	7	67%
Parent Guardian	354	78	264	22%
Pre-school setting	170	133	34	78%
School	622	422	188	68%
Somerset Social Services	14	9	5	64%
Young Person (Self)	13	6	7	46%

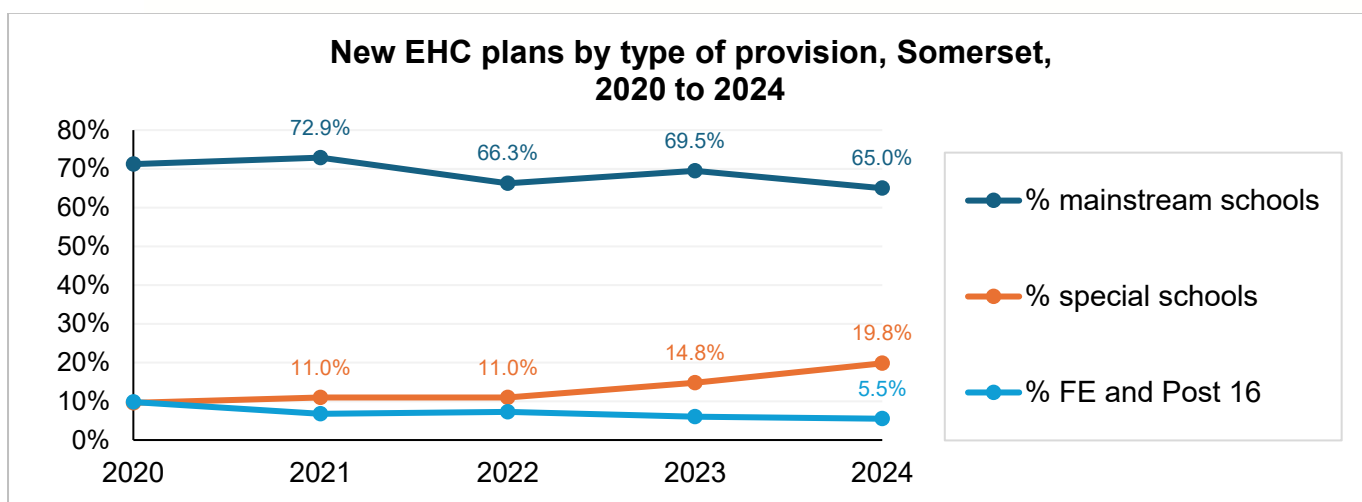
Source: Somerset Council, Capita One

#### 4.7.2. Requests for EHC needs assessment that were subject to mediation or tribunal

- Proportions of EHC needs assessment requests which are subject to mediation or tribunal in Somerset are above national average rates. The 1,207 requests for an EHC needs assessment received in 2024 resulted in:
  - 190 mediations related to the decision not to conduct an EHC needs assessment (equating to 15.7% of all requests, compared to a national average of 6.8%).
  - 106 tribunals related to the decision not to conduct an EHC needs assessment (8.8% of all requests, compared to 3.0% nationally).
  - Of the 190 mediations, 37 were subject to a tribunal following this mediation (3.0% of all requests, compared to 1.0% of requests nationally).

## 4.8. New EHC plans issued

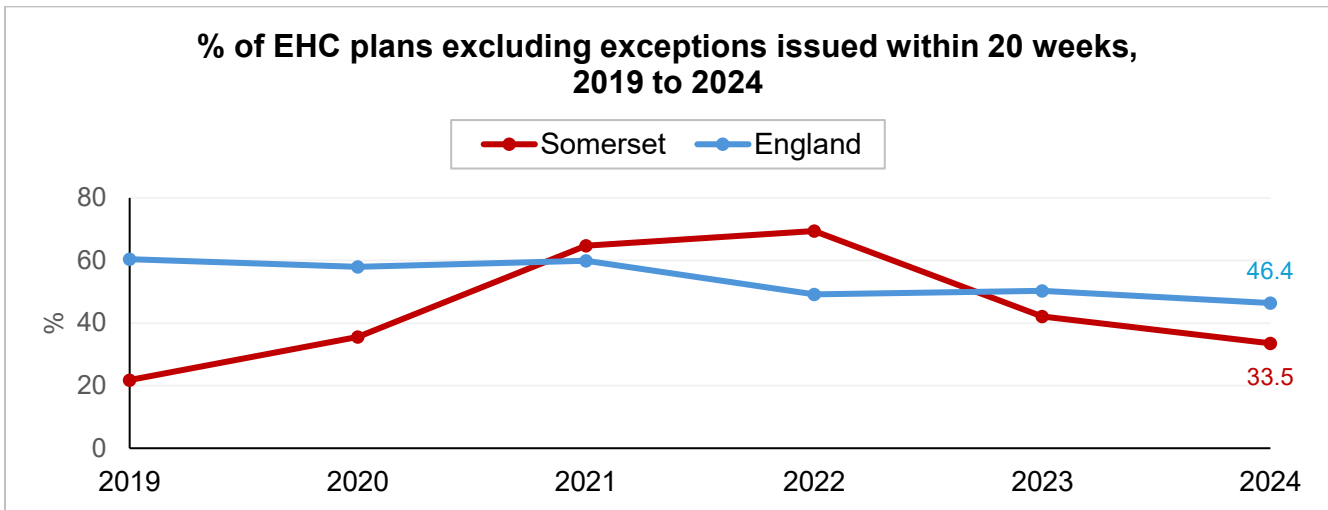
- A total of 743 new EHC plans were issued by Somerset local authority in 2024, representing an increase on the 683 plans issued in 2023, but well below the peak of 1,046 plans issued during 2020.
- 37.0% of new plans issued in Somerset in 2024 were for social, emotional and mental health needs; 22.5% for autistic spectrum disorder; and 22.3% for speech, language and communication needs. Nationally, there was an equal split between these need types (at approximately 27% each).
- Two-thirds (65%) of children and young people who were issued with a new EHC plan in Somerset in 2024 attended a mainstream school (nationally, 75% of new plans were issued to children in mainstream schools).
- Proportions of new plans in mainstream schools have been in marginal decline in Somerset, while proportions in special schools have been increasing. See chart, below.



Source: DfE, 'Education, health and care plans - reporting year 2025'

### 4.8.1. Timeliness of new EHC plans issued

- The proportion of EHC plans issued in Somerset within the 20-week statutory timeframe has been in decline. In 2024, 33.5% of plans were issued within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions), compared to 42.1% in 2023, and 69.4% in 2022.
- Nationally, 46.4% of plans were issued within 20 weeks in 2024.



Source: DfE, 'Education, health and care plans - reporting year 2025'

## 5. Outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families in Somerset

This section highlights findings from recent surveys on the lived experiences of children and young people with SEND, plus national comparative data on the educational, employment and general health outcomes of people with SEND.

### 5.1. SEND Survey Parent Carer Responses

- The 2025 SEND Annual Survey gathered responses from 281 parent carers across Somerset, representing a 46% increase in participation compared to the previous 2022 survey.
- At the time the survey closed (in July 2025), Somerset Council was four months into a major restructuring of its services. A number of parent carers reflected on the impact this transition was having on their ability to access support, noting uncertainty and disruption during the change. In addition, several responses raised concerns about the wider national SEND system, highlighting a lack of clarity around future reforms. This uncertainty is contributing to increased anxiety among families, particularly those navigating complex care and education pathways. Key insights from the survey results were as follows.

#### Education

- Many families shared that while their children are supported at home, mainstream schools often struggle to meet individual needs.
- Delays in EHCP processes and limited specialist placements were common concerns.
- Where EHCPs were well-developed and implemented, families reported significant positive impact.

## Health and social care

- Families highlighted long waiting times and challenges accessing timely support.
- Despite this, several health teams were praised for their responsiveness and compassion.

## Community inclusion

- While many families expressed a desire for more inclusive and accessible activities, some shared positive experiences with local organisations that successfully adapted to individual needs.

## Access to information

- The SEND Local Offer website was seen as containing a lot of helpful information but was needing improvement in clarity and navigation. Parents suggested more user-friendly formats and clearer guidance on available services.

## Financial and employment

- Families expressed concerns about benefit transitions and employment barriers for young people with SEND.
- Some parents reported leaving work to provide care, highlighting the need for better support structures.

### 5.1.1. Progress on ACHIEVE outcomes since the previous SEND Survey

- Parent carers were asked to measure how well the Somerset partnership's seven key ACHIEVE outcomes were being realised.

**Ambitious** – pursue my interests and aspirations  
**Connected** – have relationships with people who are important to me  
**Healthy** – access health and wellbeing support when I need it  
**Informed** – make informed choices  
**Educated** – access education and opportunities for lifelong learning  
**Valued** – be heard, have choices and have control over my life  
**Employed** – have access to money

- Statements for which there was an increase in positive responses (that is, responses of 'yes' or 'sometimes') in the 2025 survey when compared to the 2022 survey were:
  - My child or young person **has people in their life that they trust and feel safe with** (up 1.4%)
  - My child or young person **is supported to build their independence** (up 6.3%)
  - My child or young person **is supported to be as healthy as they can** (up 4.8%)

- Statements for which there was a decline in positive responses in 2025 compared to 2022 were:
  - My child or young person **feels like they are part of a group and/or their community** (down 8.2%)
  - My child or young person **gets to do activities that they enjoy or find interesting** (down 9.3%)
  - My child or young person **is supported to follow their dreams** (down 2.8%)
  - My child or young person **feels valued by the people around them** (down 1.2%)
  - My child or young person **feels included in their education setting** (down 16%)

*(Source: SEND Survey 2025 Parent Carer Responses, Somerset Parent Carer Forum)*

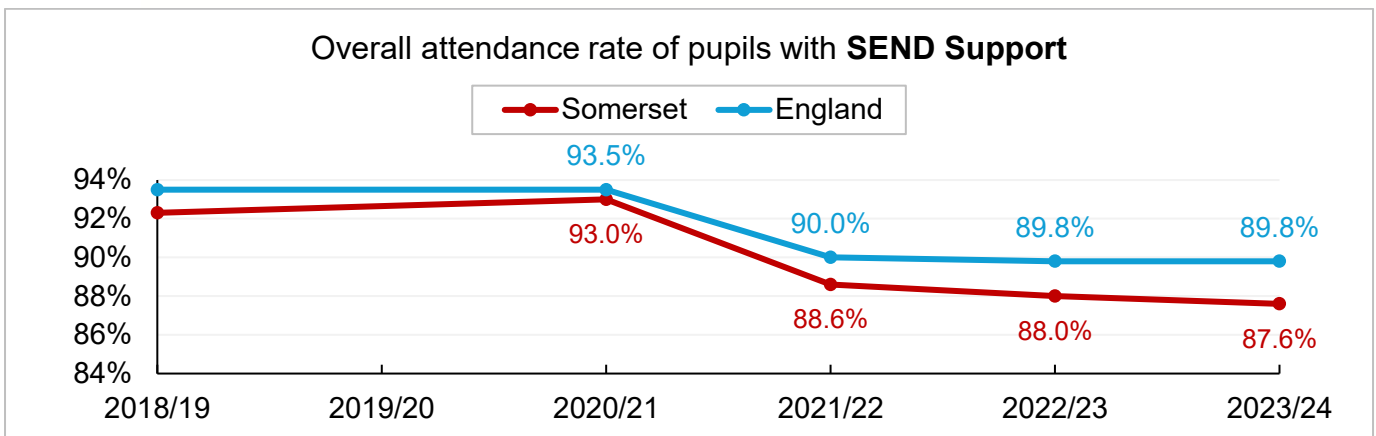
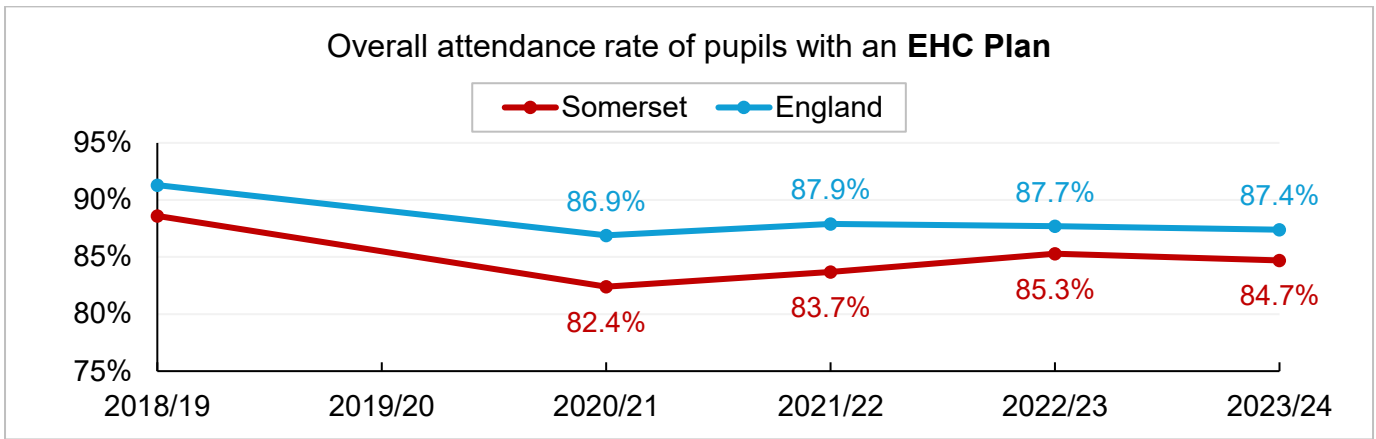
## 5.2. Children and young people’s mental health survey results

- Findings from multi-agency research into the lived experiences of children, young people and parent carers in accessing help for managing their emotions and mental health, were:
  - Children and young people predominantly depend on their peers and parents for information and support (approximately half of respondents indicated that they would go to a friend and/or a parent/guardian/carer if they were looking for help). This underlined the importance of having information readily available to these groups, without the need for direct engagement with mental health practitioners.
  - Children, young people, parents, carers, and the people supporting them expressed a strong desire for a greater emphasis on early intervention.
  - Pathways to support were often unclear, leaving individuals uncertain about their eligibility for services and the appropriate timing for access.

*(Source: ‘Support for children and young people to understand their feelings and mental health’ (2024), SPARK Somerset, Healthwatch, Somerset Parent Carer Forum, Somerset NHS ICB, Somerset Council and Somerset Foundation Trust.)*

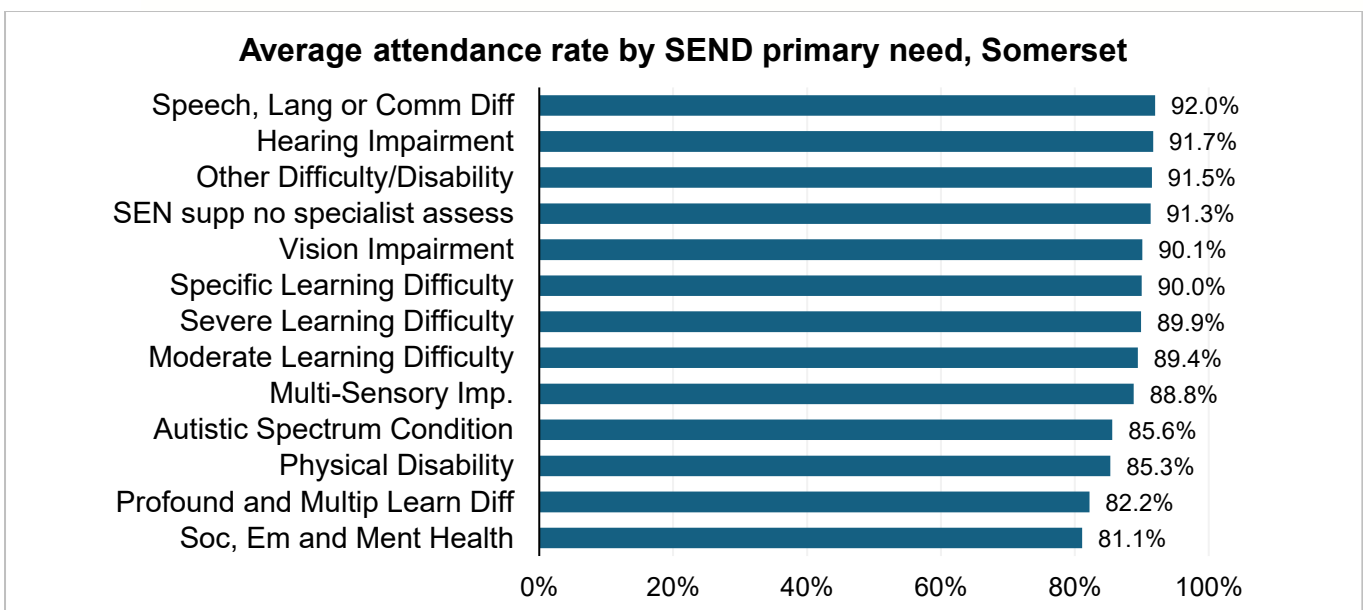
## 5.3. School attendance of pupils with SEND

- Overall attendance rates of pupils with an EHC plan in Somerset are below national average benchmarks.
- Overall attendance rates of pupils with SEND Support in Somerset are also below national average benchmarks, with a widening gap between Somerset and national figures in recent years.
- See charts, below.



Source: DfE, Pupil absence in schools in England, 2023/24.

- A snapshot of Somerset Council data in May 2025 indicated that SEND pupils with a primary need of speech, language and communication difficulty have the highest average attendance rate (92%), while pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs have the lowest average attendance (81%).

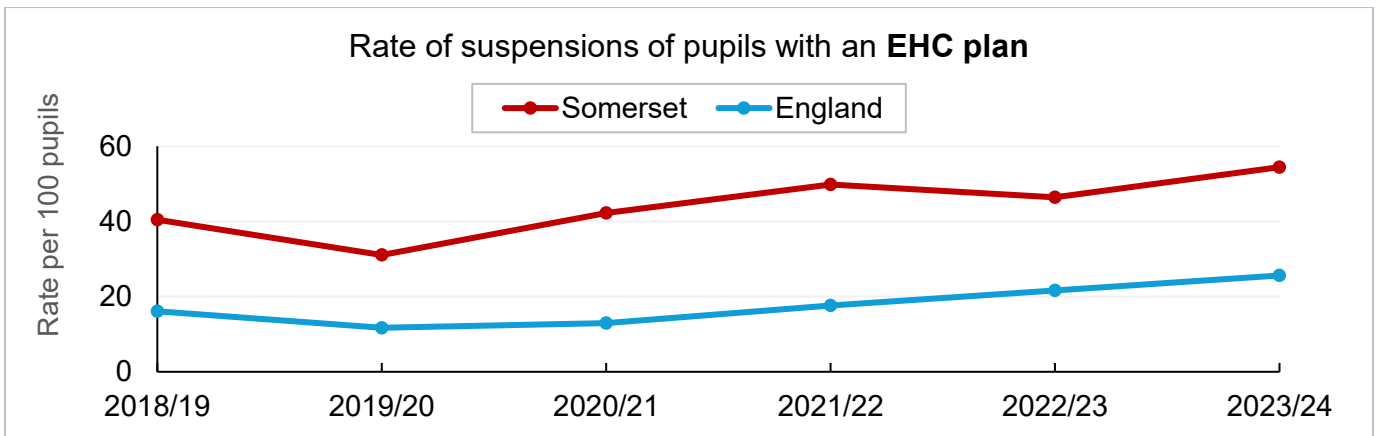


Source: Somerset Council. State-funded schools only. Data is for period Sept 2024 to May 2025.

- Department for Education research has consistently demonstrated that school attendance is associated with higher average academic performance across all pupils from all backgrounds.

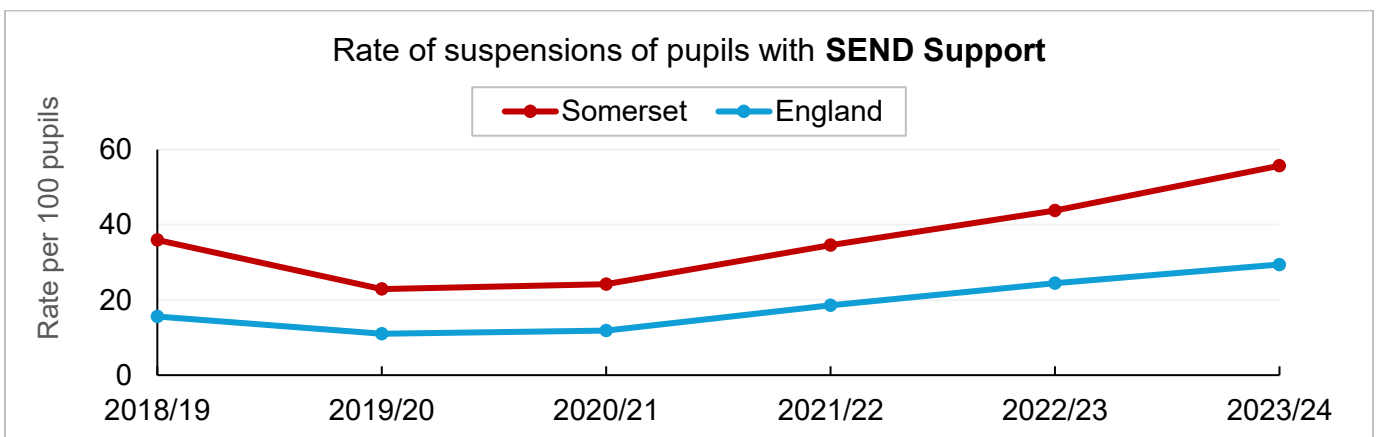
### 5.4. Suspensions of pupils with SEND

- Rates of suspensions of pupils with an EHC plan in Somerset are consistently above national average rates.
- Latest published data indicates a total of 1,729 suspensions of pupils with an EHC plan in Somerset in 2023/24, equating to a rate of 54.4 suspensions per 100 pupils on roll. This compared to a national average of 25.6 suspensions per 100 pupils.



Source: DfE, *Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England, 2023/24*

- Rates of suspensions of pupils with SEND Support in Somerset are also consistently above national averages.
- Latest published data indicates a total of 5,344 suspensions of pupils with SEND Support in Somerset in 2023/24, equating to a rate of 55.7 suspensions per 100 pupils on roll. This compared to a national average of 29.4 suspensions per 100 pupils.

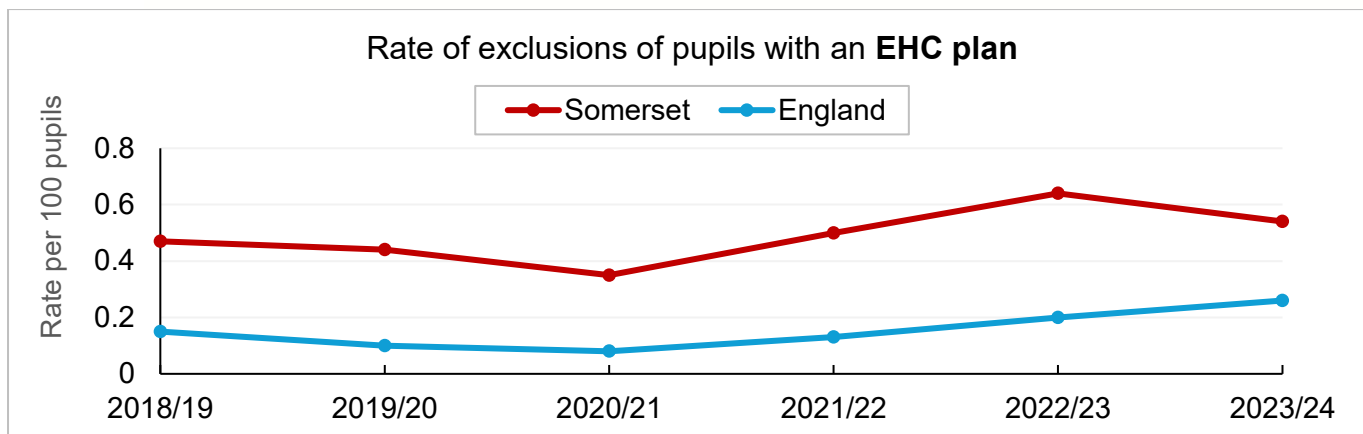


Source: DfE, *Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England, 2023/24*



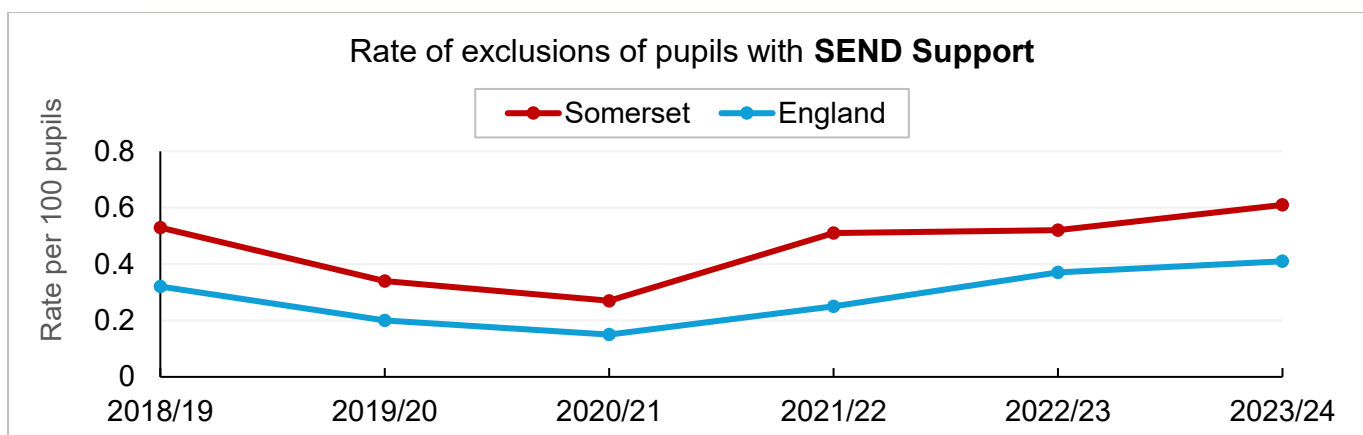
## 5.5. Exclusions of pupils with SEND

- Rates of exclusions of pupils with an EHC plan in Somerset are consistently above national averages.
- Latest published data (for 2023/24) indicates an exclusion rate in Somerset of 0.54 per 100 pupils, compared to a national rate of 0.26 per 100.



Source: DfE, Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England, 2023/24

- Rates of exclusions of pupils with SEND Support in Somerset are also consistently above national averages. There were 0.61 exclusions per 100 pupils in Somerset in 2023/24, compared to 0.41 per 100 nationally.



Source: DfE, Suspensions and exclusions in England 2023/24

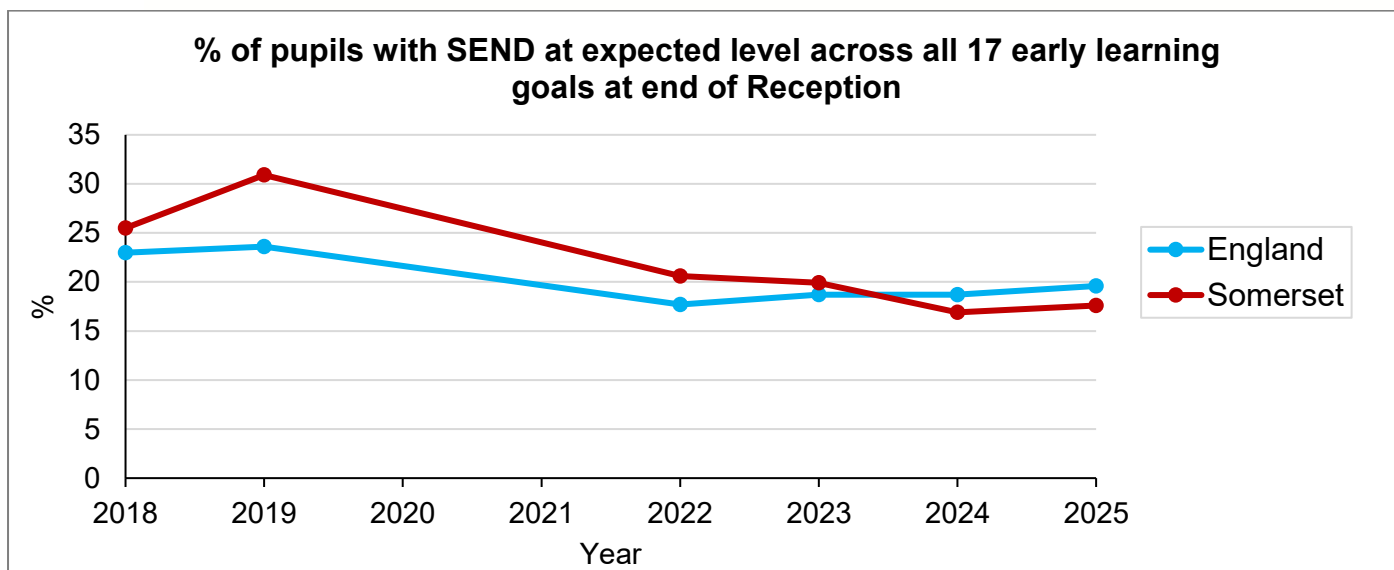
- Local data shows that 8 out of 10 (80%) of excluded pupils with SEND in Somerset in 2023/24 had a social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) primary need.

## 5.6. Educational attainment and progress of pupils with SEND

- Pupils with SEND in Somerset perform, on average, below national benchmarks at all key stages of education.

### 5.6.1. Early years foundation stage (EYFS)

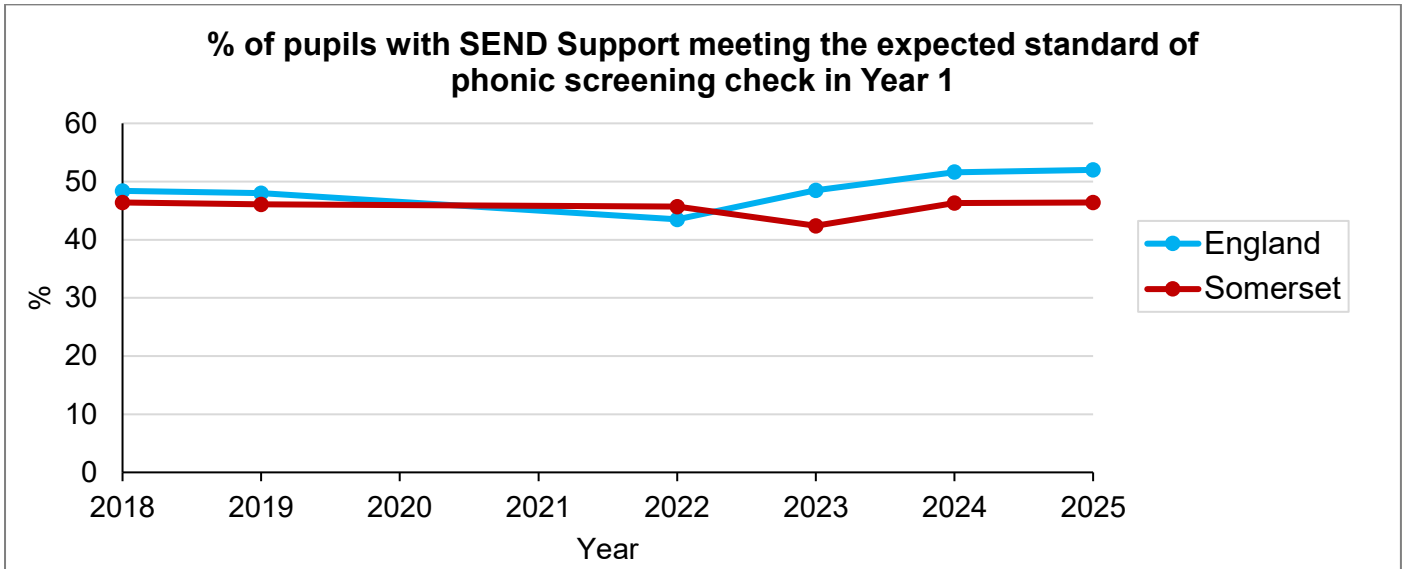
- 18% of children with SEND in Somerset reached the expected level across all early learning goals at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in 2025, below the national average (of 20%). Prior to 2024, Somerset had performed above the national average rate.



Source: DfE (2018 to 2024). **2025 figures are provisional.**

### 5.6.2. Phonics screening check (Year 1)

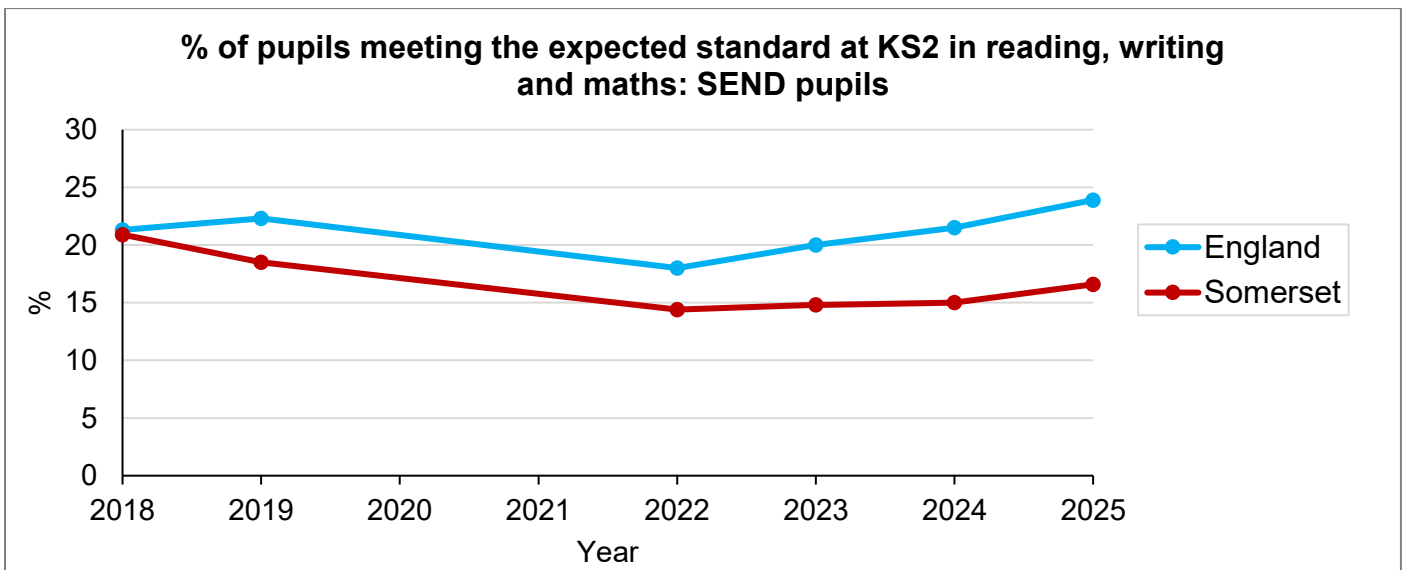
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils with SEND Support meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check was 46% in 2025, compared to 52% of pupils nationally. Somerset has performed below the national average rate in each of the last three reporting years.



Source: DfE (2018 to 2024). 2025 figures are provisional.

### 5.6.3. Key stage 2 statutory assessments (SATS)

- The proportion of pupils with SEND meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined) at the end of key stage 2 is consistently below the national average rate.
- In 2025, 16.6% of Somerset pupils achieved the standard, compared to 23.9% nationally, with the gap widening in each of the last three years.



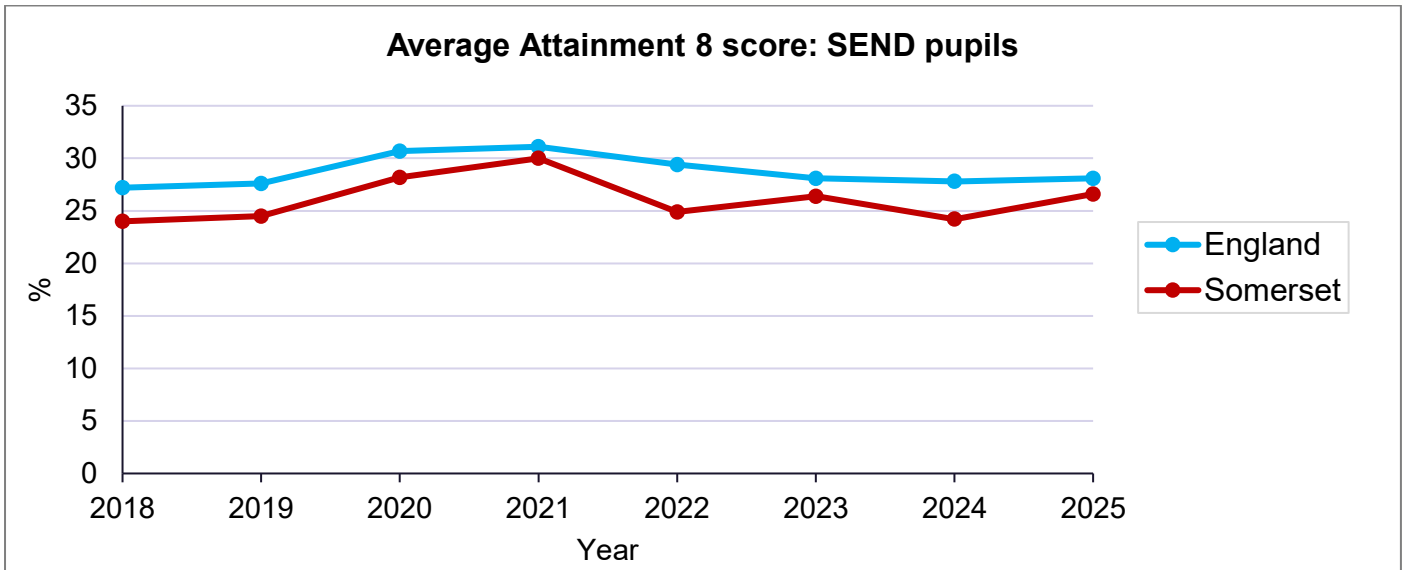
Source: DfE (2018 to 2024). 2025 figures are provisional.

- In terms of individual subjects, in 2025, 33.6% of SEND pupils in Somerset achieved the expected standard in reading, 25.4% in writing, and 31.1% in maths.
- Somerset was 8.7 percentage points below the national average in reading, 6.9 percentage points below in writing, and 8.6 below in maths.

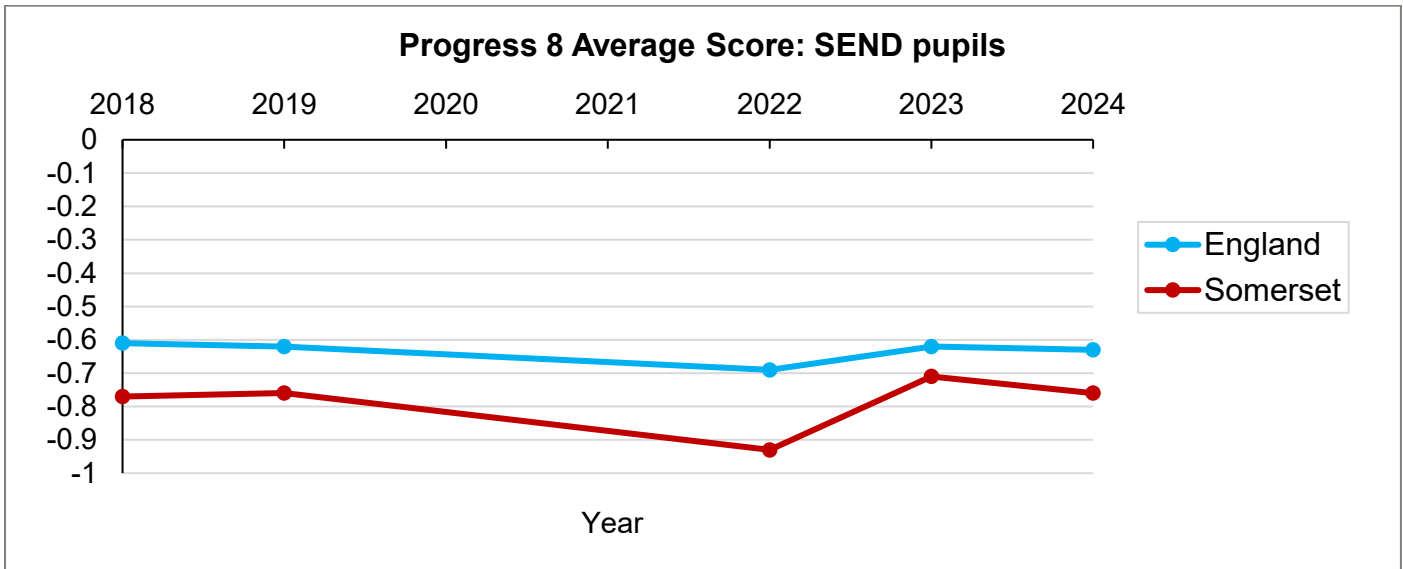


### 5.6.4. Key stage 4 performance (GCSEs)

- Outcomes for pupils with SEND at the end of key stage 4 in Somerset are consistently below national benchmarks, in respect of all key performance measures.



Source: DfE. 2025 figures are provisional.



Source: DfE. No Progress 8 data is available for 2025 due to Covid19 disruption of prior KS2 assessments.

- In 2025, 27.7% of pupils in Somerset with SEND achieved a grade 4 ('standard' pass) or higher in both English and Maths GCSE, below the national rate of 31.3%, based on provisional data.
- In 2025, 14.8% of pupils in Somerset with SEND achieved a grade 5 ('strong' pass) or higher in both English and Maths GCSE, compared to 17.9% nationally.

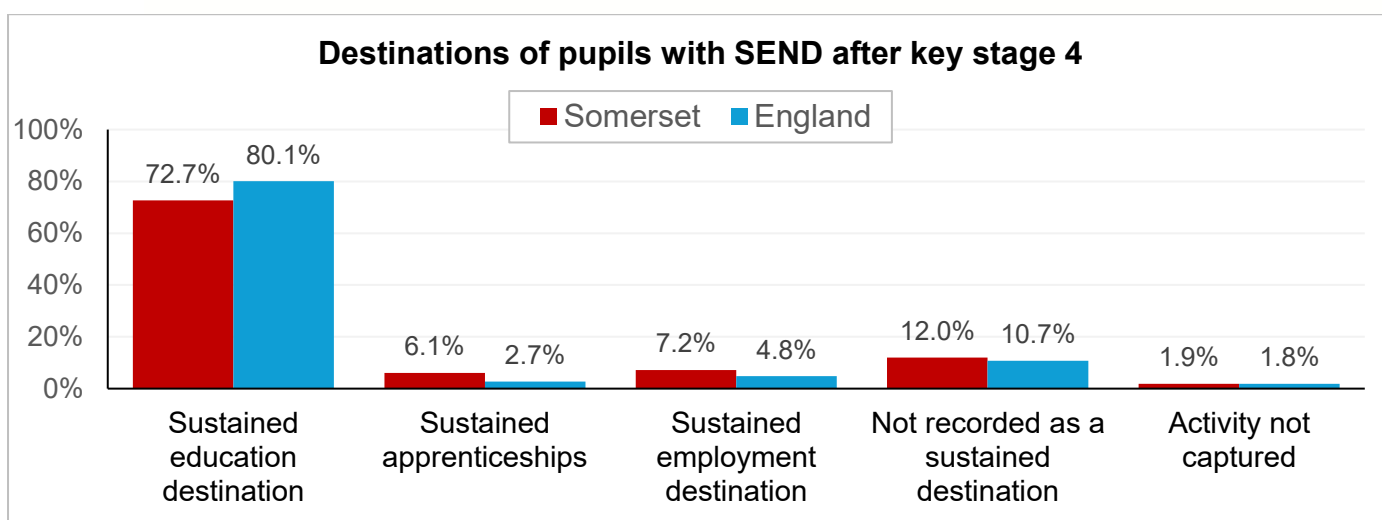


### 5.6.5. Attainment of children looked after (CLA) with SEND

- The proportion of children looked after (CLA) with SEND in Somerset reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at the end of key stage 2 is in line with the national average. In 2024, 14% achieved the standard in Somerset, compared to 16% of CLA pupils with SEND nationally. This was based on a cohort of 14 pupils.
- At the end of key stage 4, the average Attainment 8 score for Somerset CLA with SEND in 2024 was 11.2, compared to 11.7 nationally. The average Progress 8 score was -1.78 in Somerset, compared to -1.68 nationally. This was based on a cohort of 47 pupils.

### 5.7. Destinations of school pupils with SEND after key stage 4 (GCSEs)

- Somerset has a lower proportion of pupils with SEND staying in education after key stage 4 than the national average, and a higher proportion going into apprenticeships or employment.



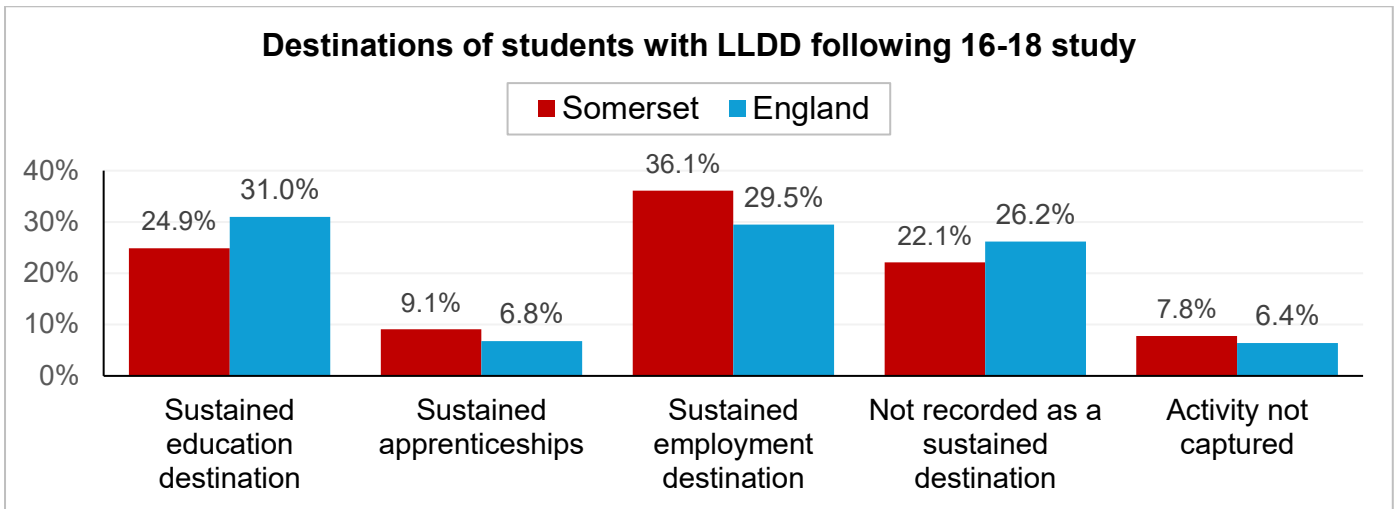
Source: DfE, KS4 destination measures, 2022/23. State-funded mainstream and special schools only.

- Overall, in 2022/23, 86.0% of Somerset pupils with SEND had a sustained education, employment or apprenticeship destination following key stage 4, below the national average rate (87.6%).

### 5.8. Destinations of college students with LLDD after 16-18 study

- Somerset has lower proportions of college students with (self-reported) learning difficulties or disabilities (LLDD) remaining in education after 16-18 study than the national average, and higher proportions in apprenticeships or employment.





Source: DfE, 16-18 destination measures, 2022/23. State-funded mainstream colleges only.

- Overall, the proportion of college-leavers with LLDD in Somerset moving into a sustained education, apprenticeship or employment setting is above the national average rate (70.2%, compared to 67.3% nationally, in 2022/23).

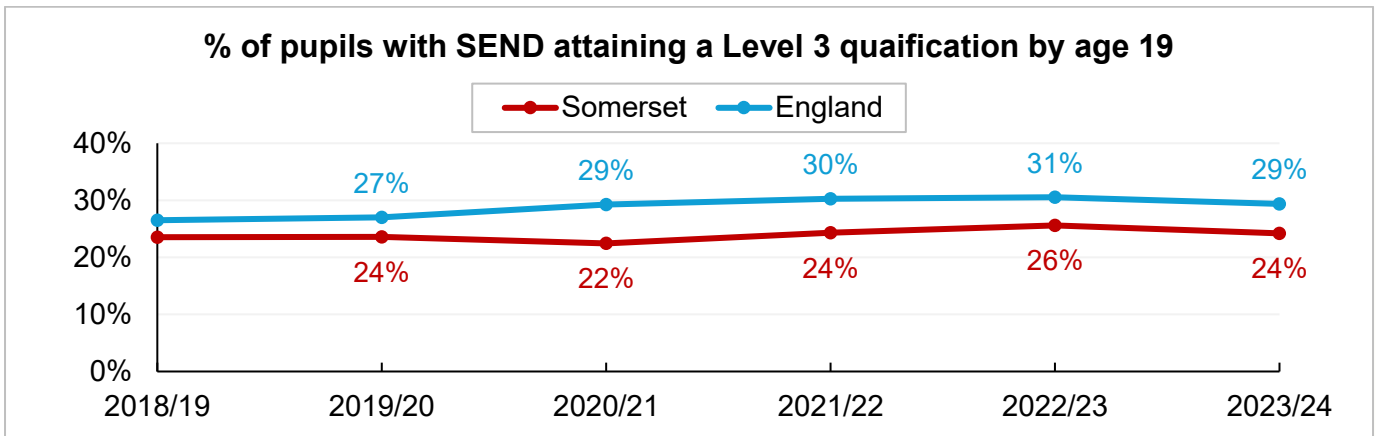
### 5.9. 16 and 17-year-olds with SEND not in education, employment or training

- Annual data from the National Client Caseload Information System (NCCIS) in 2023/24 indicated that 13.6% of 16 and 17-year-olds in Somerset with an EHC plan were NEET (not in education, employment or training). This compared to a national figure of 8.5%. Figures are based on an average of the December/January/February period.
- In terms of pupils who had received SEND Support, the gap was narrower: 7.2% of 16 and 17-year-olds in Somerset were NEET, compared to 6.4% nationally.
- The DfE advises applying some caution when considering the figures due to the estimates being based on management information. The DfE cite considerable variation in how well 16 and 17-year-olds are tracked at a local authority level.

### 5.10. Attainment by age 19 of young people with SEND

- Just over half of Somerset pupils with SEND go on to achieve a Level 2 qualification (equivalent to 5 GCSEs at grade 4+, or an intermediate apprenticeship) by the age of 19. In 2023/24, 52% of Somerset pupils with SEND achieved a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19, below the national average (of 55%).
- The proportion of Somerset pupils with SEND attaining a Level 3 qualification (equivalent to 2 A levels, an advanced apprenticeship, or an access to Higher Education diploma) by the age of 19 is also below the national average, with a slightly wider gap to the national benchmark. In 2023/24, 24% of pupils in Somerset with SEND had achieved a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19, compared to 29% of pupils with SEND nationally. See chart, below.

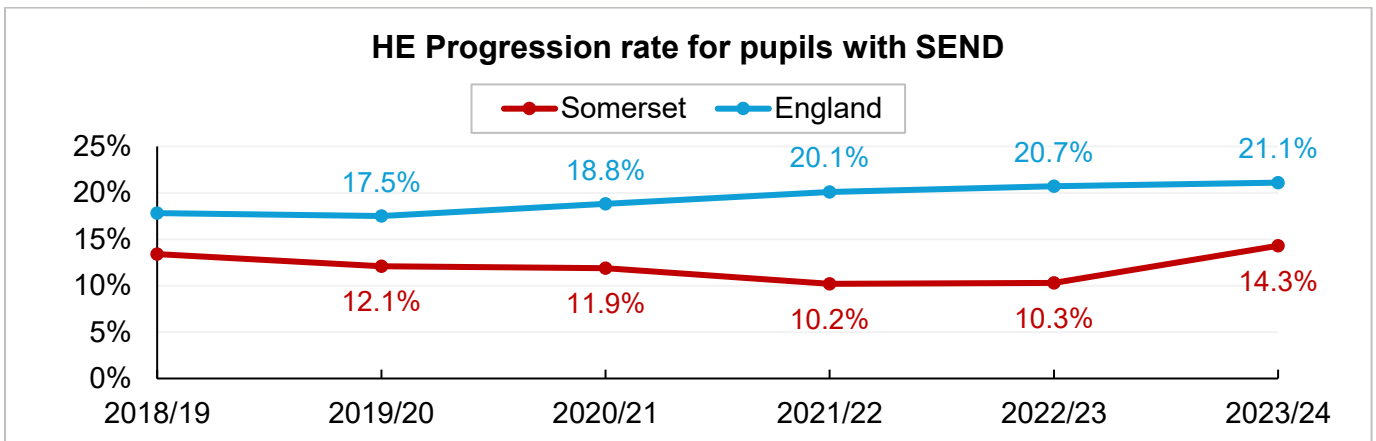




Source: DfE, Level 2 and 3 attainment age 16 to 25, 2023/24. Pupils attending state-funded schools only.

### 5.11. Progression to higher education of pupils with SEND

- Approximately one-in-seven pupils with SEND in Somerset progress into higher education (HE), compared to one-in-five pupils with SEND nationally.
- The HE progression rate 'gap' between Somerset and England narrowed in latest annual data, reversing a trend of four consecutive years in which the gap had widened (see chart, below).

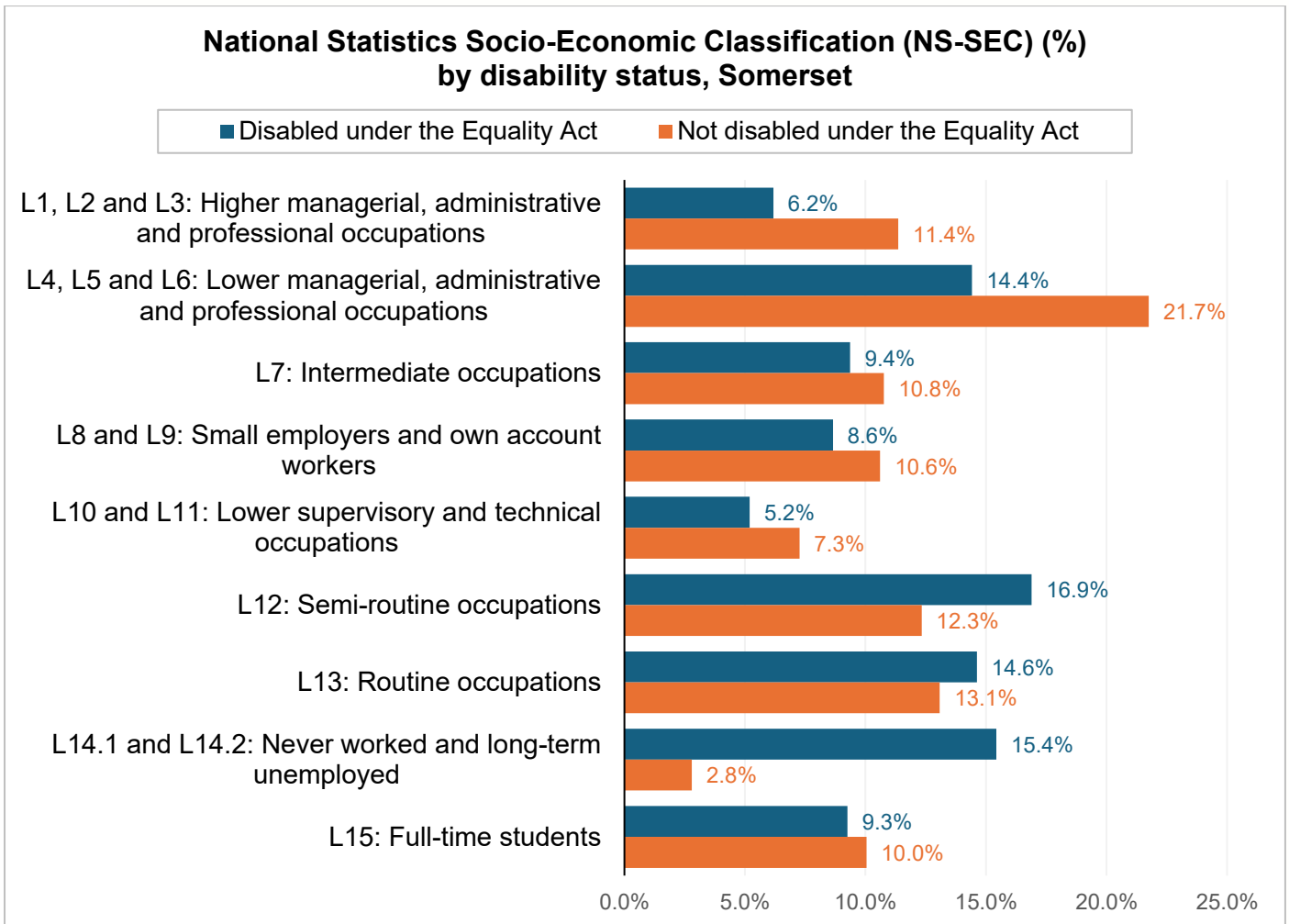


Source: DfE, Widening participation measures, 2023/24. Pupils attending state-funded schools only.

### 5.12. Socio-economic status of people with a long-term physical or mental health condition or illness

- The national census in 2021 identified that people with a disability (that is, those who assessed their day-to-day activities as limited by a long-term physical or mental health condition or illness) were less likely to be employed in managerial or professional roles, and more likely to be employed in routine or semi-routine occupations.

- 20.6% of people aged 16 to 49 with a disability in Somerset were employed in managerial, administrative or professional occupations, compared to 33.1% of people with no disability.
- 15.4% of people with a disability in Somerset had never worked or were long-term unemployed, compared to 2.8% of people with no disability.



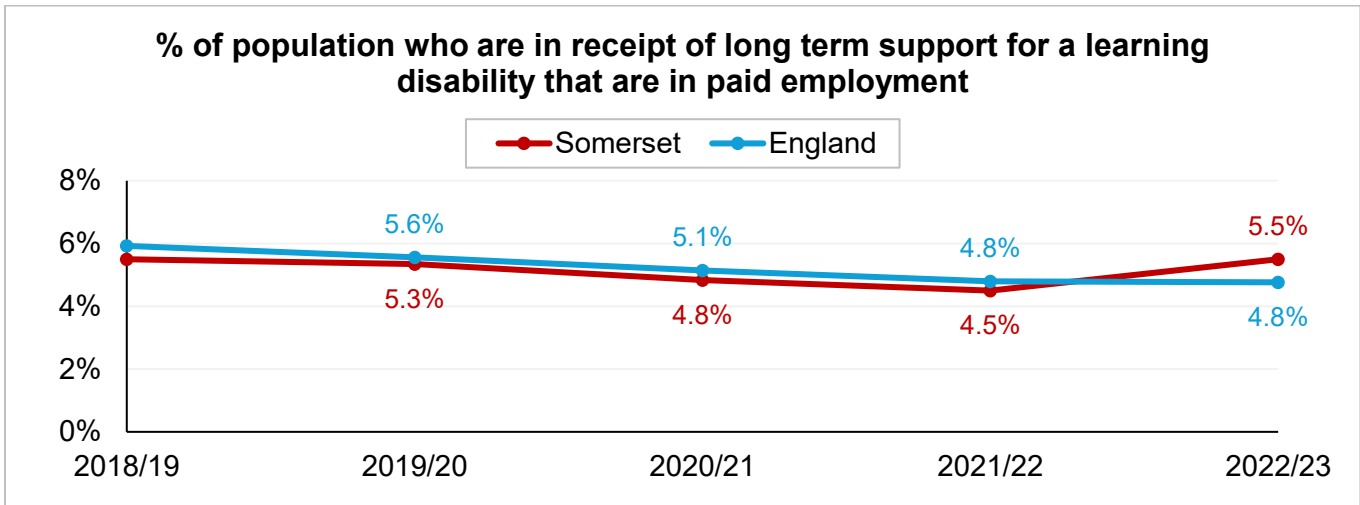
Source: Office for National Statistics, 2021 Census. Ages 16 to 49.

- Compared to the national socio-economic profile, Somerset has a relatively low proportion of people with a disability who have never worked or are long-term unemployed (15.4% in Somerset, compared to an England average of 18.9%).
- Somerset also has a relatively low proportion of people with a disability who are full-time students (9.3% in Somerset, compared to 13.5% nationally), although this is likely linked to an absence of a university within the county.

### 5.13. Employment of people with a learning disability receiving long-term social care support

- The proportion of people with a learning disability who receive long-term social care support and who are in employment is very low, in Somerset and nationally.

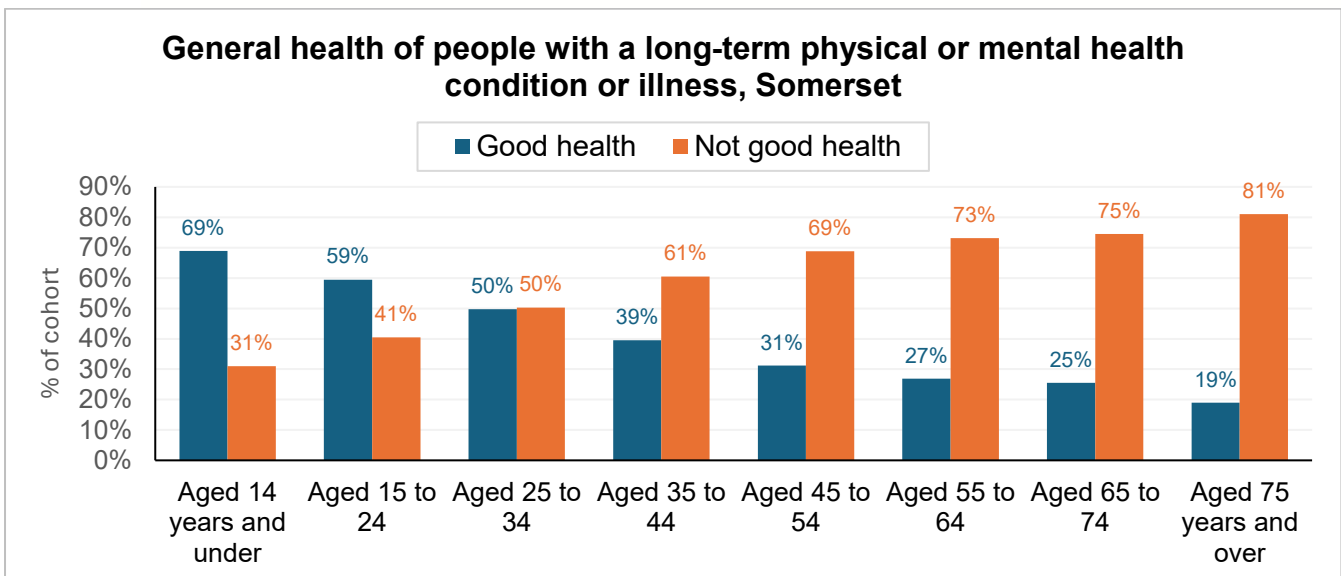
- 5.5% of adults with a learning disability in Somerset, who were receiving long-term social care support, were in paid or self-employment in 2022/23, marginally above the national average rate (of 4.8%).



Source: Department for Health and Social Care, based on data from NHS England

#### 5.14. General health of people with a long-term physical or mental health condition or illness

- Just over two-thirds (69%) of children (aged 0 to 14) in Somerset with a (self-reported) limiting condition were identified as being in ‘good health’ at the time of the 2021 national census. The remaining 31% were identified as being not in good health (that is, ‘fair’, ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’ health), equating to a total of 1,694 children. These proportions are in line with national averages.
- For young people aged 15 to 24 years, the proportion in good health declines to 59%, and in the 25 to 34 age group it is 50%.



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2021 Census

## List of acronyms

Acronym	Definition
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AP	Alternative Provision
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
ASQ	Ages and Stages Questionnaire
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CIN	Children In Need
CLA	Children Looked After
CYP	Children and Young People
CYPTS	Children and Young People's Therapy Service
DfE	Department for Education
EET	Education, Employment and Training
EHCP / EHC plan	Education, Health and Care Plan
EHE	Elective Home Education
ELG	Early Learning Goal
EOTAS	Education Other Than At School
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
GLD	Good Level of Development
GP	General Practitioner
HI	Hearing Impairment
IDACI	Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
INMSS	Independent or Non-Maintained Special School
KS2 / KS4	Key Stage 2 / Key Stage 4
LA	Local Authority
LD	Learning Disability
LLDD	Learner with a Learning Difficulty or Disability
LSOA	Lower-layer Super Output Area
MAISEY	Multi-Agency Identification and Support in the Early Years
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulty
MSI	Multi-Sensory Impairment
NCY	National Curriculum Year
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
OHID	Office for Health Improvement and Disparities

ONS	Office for National Statistics
OT	Occupational Therapy
PD	Physical Disability
PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
RWM	Reading, Writing and Maths
SALT	Speech and Language Therapy
SC	Somerset Council
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SEN/SEND	Special Educational Needs or Disability
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulty
SPLD	Specific Learning Difficulty
VI	Visual Impairment