

North Yorkshire Council

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17 December 2025

Special Education Needs Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Update

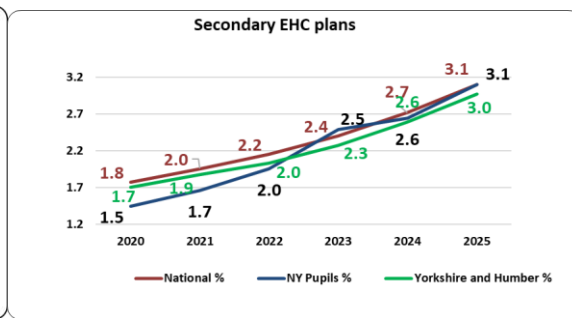
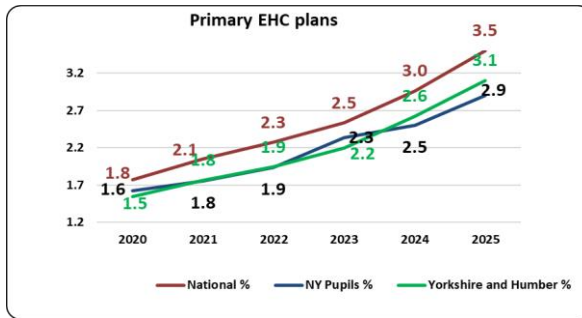
Report of the Corporate Director Children and Young People's Service

1.0 Purpose of Report

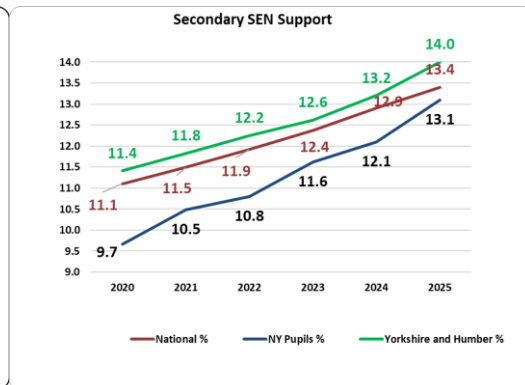
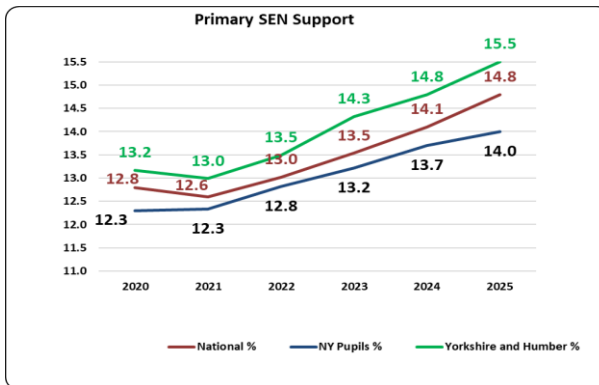
- 1.1 This briefing paper sets out an update to the committee on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion in its current context across the county. The report provides information on current trends, issues and work underway to provide support to children and young people. The report complements quarterly reports and area committee reports covering related topics.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The council's ambition for children and young people with SEND is set out in the Local Area SEND Strategy 2023-2026. Key to the strategy is making sure that children have the opportunity to achieve good outcomes, attend a school close to home where they can make friends and connections in their local community and be prepared for a fulfilling adult life.
- 2.2 Whilst the SEND system nationally and locally remains challenging, the council continues to work proactively to support children and families to have their needs identified and met. The number of children identified as having SEND, is continuing to rise rapidly.
- 2.3 In autumn 2025 the Department for Education were expected to release a white paper setting out significant reforms to the SEND system. Unfortunately, this has been delayed until spring 2026, with no precise date or details yet released.
- 2.4 In January 2025, which is the most recent national data release, 16.6% of children in mainstream schools in North Yorkshire were recorded as having SEND. The national rate was 17.5%. At this time, 3% of children had an Education, Health and Care Plan and 13.6% were recorded by their schools as accessing SEN Support. Both figures were below the national average of 3.3% for children with EHCPs and 14.2% for children accessing SEN Support.
- 2.5 The tables below show primary and secondary aged pupils in mainstream schools with an EHCP against national and regional trends over time. The proportion of children with EHCPs in primary schools in January 2025 remained below both regional and national averages. However, the proportion of children in secondary schools has remained above regional trends since January 2022 and in January 2025 matched the national average at 3.1%.



2.6 The tables below show primary and secondary aged pupils in mainstream schools recorded as accessing SEN Support and compares county, national and regional trends. The proportion of children at SEN Support level in primary schools remained below regional and national averages in January 2025. However, the gap between the proportion of children accessing SEND support in secondary schools, whilst remaining below the national trend, had narrowed at the point of the latest published data (January 2025).

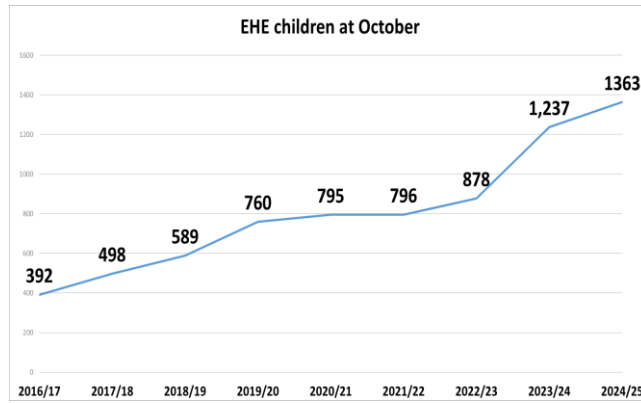


2.7 The council continues to see an increased number of requests for statutory assessment. A total of 1120 requests were received in the first 11 months of 2025 compared to 1070 in the corresponding period for 2024. Currently 80% of requests typically result in an assessment being undertaken and approximately 92% of completed assessments result in an EHC plan being issued.

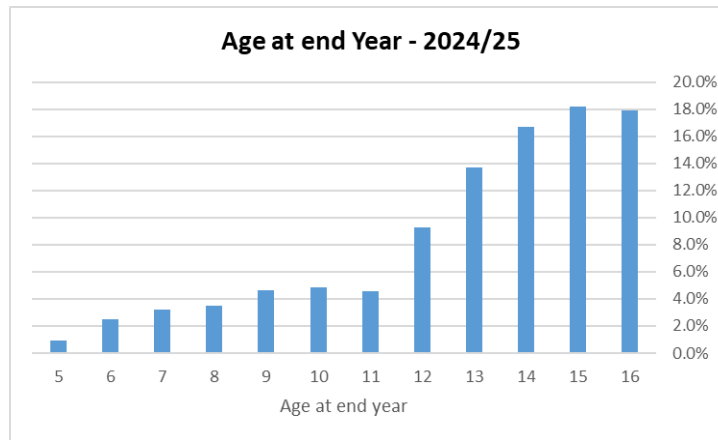
2.8 Total numbers of EHC plans in North Yorkshire have continued to rise with over 6200 plans being maintained by the council at the current time. This compares to approximately 5400 plans held at the same point in 2024. This is an increase of over 800 plans in one year and is likely to impact on national comparators when the next national data set is reviewed in January 2026.

2.9 Almost 400 EHC plans were discontinued between January and November 2025. This is an increase of 26% on the corresponding period in 2024. Despite some plans being discontinued at an appropriate time, the net effect against the increase in new plans being issued accounts for the overall increase in EHC plans.

2.10 Numbers of children Electively Home Educated has continued to rise as is seen nationally. At the end of October 2025, there were 1363 children being electively educated at home. This is an increase of 8.2% from 1259 children at the same point in 2024. The graph below shows the trend as at the end of October each year.



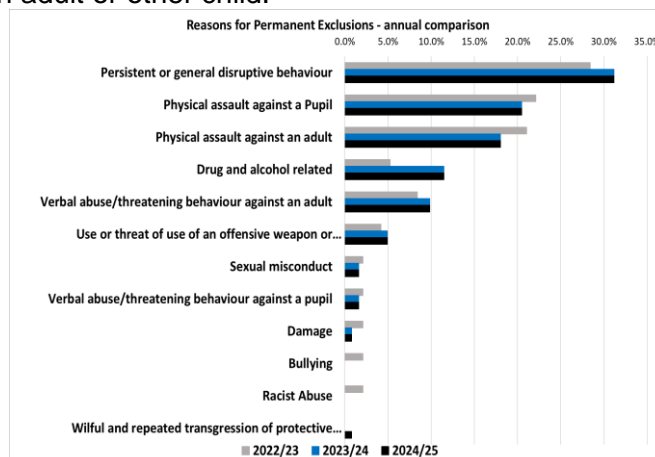
2.11 The graph below shows the age profile of children Electively Home Educated in the county at the end of the most recent academic year.



2.12 Primary and secondary aged children being permanently excluded from school continues to remain a challenge. In the academic year 2024/25 a total of 123 children were permanently excluded. Primary exclusions were slightly reduced from 25 to 23 comparing 2023/24 with 2024/25 and there was a slight increase in secondary aged exclusions from 97 to 100 in the same period.

2.13 In the first 3 months of the 2025/26 academic year the trend in permanent exclusion has remained in line with the previous year.

2.14 Reasons for permanent exclusions are set out in the bar chart below. As can be seen the most prevalent reasons for exclusion remain 'persistent disruptive behaviour' and 'physical assaults' against an adult or other child.



2.15 In the academic 2024/25 there were fewer suspensions overall compared to the previous academic year 2023/24. There were 9566 suspensions from mainstream schools. Notably, primary suspensions increased from 932 in 2023/24 to 1030 in 2024/25.

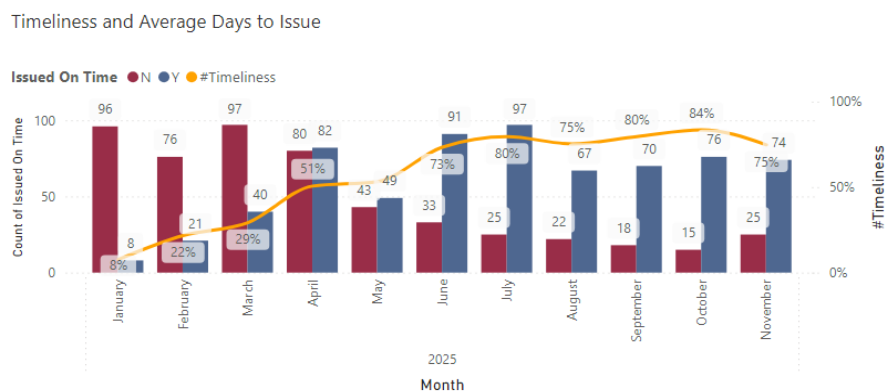
3.0 Service Development

3.1 SEND Assessment Improvements

Despite the growing demand for statutory assessment set out in 3.7 the council have taken action to significantly improve the timeliness of those assessments and clear a backlog of requests that had accumulated during 2023 and 2024.

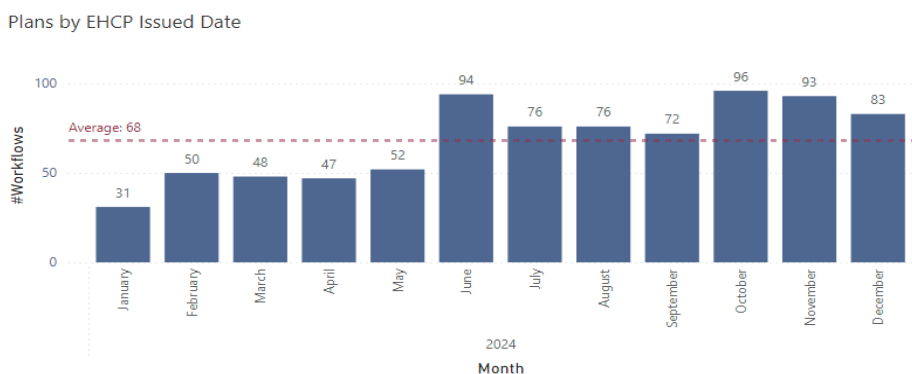
3.2 During 2024, only 11% of assessments were completed within 20 weeks of the assessment being initiated but this has improved significantly in 2025.

3.3 The graph below shows the current performance of the council in completing assessments within the statutory time frame. In the last 6 months, the council has consistently concluded between 73% and 84% of assessments within 20 weeks. The current annual figure is risen from 11% to 56%. The latest comparative national figure available is that 46% of assessments are concluded within 20 weeks.



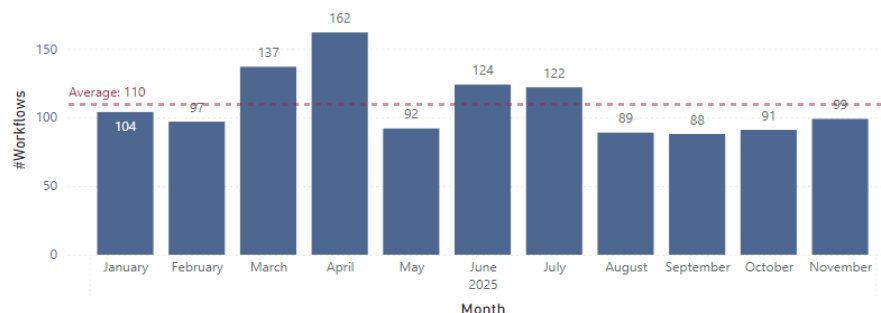
3.4 Additionally the SEND team have also dealt with a backlog in assessments that had been initiated in 2023 and 2024 but not completed. This has meant that on average 110 plans per month have been issued in 2025 compared with 67 per month in 2024. The graphs below illustrate that from summer 2024 through to summer 2025 the volume of plans being issued was significantly higher due to action taken to complete assessments that were part of the overdue backlog. As the backlog has cleared the work has levelled off in the second half of the year. This work was undertaken simultaneously with improving timeliness of new assessment requests to ensure that the statutory timeliness measure was not prioritised at the expense of children already awaiting the outcome of assessments.

EHCPs issued in 2024.



EHCPs issued in 2025.

Plans by EHCP Issued Date



3.5 SEND Provision Development

The council has a duty to keep its SEN provision under review and build capacity so that children with SEN can access suitable provision. The council has a well-developed capital programme that is in the process of being reviewed and updated. Current commitments include strengthening the offer in mainstream schools through rolling out Targeted Mainstream Provision (TMP) as well as creating more special school places across the county and improving existing facilities for children.

3.6 Additional Targeted Mainstream Provisions have been established at the following schools in 2025, creating 56 new places:

- Dishforth Airfield CP School
- Norton CP School
- Brayton CofE Primary School
- Riverside Primary Academy
- Barlby High School
- Rossett School

3.7 In Scarborough, planning permission has been approved for the addition of a purpose built TMP for 16 children at St Martin's CofE Primary School. This is in addition to four further applications received from schools in Harrogate, Selby, Skipton and Ripon which will be progressed this academic year. To date £2.9m capital has been invested in TMPs with a further £1.5m allocated to further support the roll out.

3.8 The council are continuing to work towards establishing 248 places in TMPs for children with Social Emotional and Mental Health and Communication and Interaction needs. It is anticipated that by September 2026 we will have delivered 80% of that target. In early 2026 the council, following the release of the government white paper, will review its position on further roll out of this provision type, using local data and intelligence and taking account of how national government proposals may affect what is required.

3.9 Special school places continue to be in high demand across the county. 1361 places were commissioned from the 10 maintained and academy special schools across the county. This is an increase of 66% from 820 places in 2018. In order to further expand special school places, the following schemes were agreed as part of the SEND Capital Programme:

- Specialist school for children with autism - former Woodfield Primary site, Harrogate
- Expansion of Springwater school - creating 45 additional places, Harrogate
- New 6th Form Centre - added to Brooklands School, Skipton
- Two bids to build new special schools in Northallerton and Selby (DfE delivery)

3.10 The schemes at Springwater and Brooklands schools have now been completed and children are benefiting significantly from the improved facilities and additional spaces

created. The current position of the new special school development on the former Woodfield primary school site is that the DfE have approved the Academy Trust to run the school, and the council have completed the refurbishment of the premises. We are now working with the Trust as they move through the various technical and legal practicalities of taking on the site and establishing the school as a legal entity within their trust.

- 3.11 In addition to local maintained and academy special schools, the council continues to use independent and non-maintained special schools at significant cost. The latest financial reports show that £19.8m is being spent in 2025/26 on these placements which is 22% of the total high needs block allocation. The council has strong contract management arrangements in place to ensure quality and compliance and continually seek to negotiate better value for money.

3.12 **Elective Home Education**

More children than ever before are currently being home educated as set out in 3.1. The council has limited powers to intervene where families decide to educate at home. However, to ensure that families make that choice fully informed, the council do offer pre-decision meetings to ensure parents fully understand the legal duties and responsibilities electing to home educate brings and takes robust action where it is found that parents are not providing a full-time suitable education. Additionally, training and advice is provided to professionals through various forums on this issue.

3.13 **Suspension and Exclusions**

The SEND Hubs continue to provide specialist knowledge and advice to schools where children are at risk of permanent exclusion. Training for schools is also being rolled out to support schools working with children who have SEMH needs. In addition, the council are proposing to expand the age range of Pupil Referral Units across the county, so that they can in future support children of primary school age and offer prevention and reintegration for primary children.

- 3.14 The launch of a new Inclusive Mainstream Toolkit has taken place with training for schools in the spring. This provides mainstream schools and practitioners a guide on what provision should be expected within mainstream settings to help the local area establish a consistent offer across mainstream settings and better support children with SEN to successfully remain in mainstream schools.

- 3.15 Over the course the 2024/25 academic year several exclusions were successfully challenge and resulted in decisions being overturned and/or ordered to reconsider at independent review stage. This is a significant increase on previous years.

3.16 **SEND Employment**

The SEND employment forum continues to deliver opportunities for young people in North Yorkshire. In the year since January 2025 Supported Internships have doubled to 106.

- 3.17 In 2024/25 55% of young people completing a Supported Internship went into employment or volunteering within their communities and 10 % went to further education.

- 3.18 Alongside increasing the number of internships the forum has supported the role out of the Supported Internship Quality Assurance Framework. This is being used by all providers and is helping to identify and address any provision quality concerns early.

4.0 Contribution to Council Priorities

- 4.1 The council's priorities are captured within the Local Area SEND Strategy. Key to the strategy is making sure that children have the opportunity to achieve good outcomes, they are able to attend a school close to home where they can make friends and connections in their local community and that they are prepared for a fulfilling adult life. The update provided in section 4 demonstrates that the work carried out to assess children within the expected timescales, improve provision and ensure more options are available to children within their local communities aligns with the priorities of the council.

5.0 Recommendation

- i) The Committee is asked to note the report and consider the current performance information alongside the quarterly reports and area committee reports covering the same topics.

Background documents:

Quarterly performance report: [20251118 - 1 Executive Performance Report Q2 2025-26.pdf](#)

Area Committee reports:

Harrogate and Knaresborough [Item 06 - CYPS Schools Update Report.pdf](#)

Richmond [250317 Richmond Area Committee - Schools Update.pdf](#)

Scarborough and Whitby [250321 Scarborough Whitby AC - Schools Update.pdf](#)

Selby and Ainsty [Report.pdf](#)

Skipton and Ripon [250306 Skipton and Ripon - School Update Report.pdf](#)

Thirsk and Malton [250328 Thirsk and Malton AC Schools Update Report.pdf](#)

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9 December 2025

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Presenter of Report – Chris Reynolds, Head of SEND Strategic Planning and Resources

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.