



Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL



Gloucestershire



Gloucestershire Health and Care
NHS Foundation Trust

JSNA 2025

Key points

- Over the past year, the number of children and young people with EHCPs and SEN support* has increased by 9.2% and 7.4%, respectively. These ongoing rises are impacting the Local Area Partnership offer's ability to provide appropriate and timely support.
- The number of children and young people with SEN who are electively home educated has risen significantly in the last year by 24.0%
- Children and young people with SEN are more likely to be persistently absent from school, and are more likely to receive an exclusion than children and young people with no SEN.
- In 2023/24 Children receiving SEN Support/EHCP were significantly more likely to be obese or overweight. However, the percentage of children that are overweight/obese with an EHCP in reception has decreased by 7.3%.
- Two new special schools are planned in the county—one in Cheltenham and the other in Gloucester. These developments respond to the growing number of pupils attending maintained special schools.
- Children's services are under pressure, with referrals increasing for Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy and Learning Disability CAMHS
- Attainment of children and young people with SEN Support at Key Stage 2 (KS2) is lower than the national average. Attainment at Key Stage 4 (KS4) for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) increased in 2024 and is in line with the national averages.



What is a JSNA?

A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is a collaborative document between key partners such as the local authority, Health services and voluntary sector agencies that sets out the health and wellbeing needs of a distinct population with the view to developing a jointly-agreed and locally determined set of priorities on which to base commissioning plans. A JSNA is also the basis of an intelligence informed strategic vision for the future. This JSNA is focussed on the population and needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

We report prevalence of SEN in 2 distinct ways.

- Number of children and young people with EHCPs who GCC are responsible for – **resident** eligible children and young people (who may not be pupils in Gloucestershire schools).
- Number of children and young people with SEN support* led by schools – pupils attending Gloucestershire Schools (who may not be residents)

**SEN support – is what schools, and similar settings use to find and meet the needs of children with special educational needs (SEN). This is recorded on a My Plan or My Plan+ to know who and what will happen to support the child.*

Introduction

Nationally children and young people with special educational needs (SEND) have poorer outcomes than their non-SEND peers. In Gloucestershire we want to better understand the needs of our SEND population so that we can commission appropriate services and provision to meet their needs and improve outcomes.

When a child is born, their development starts to be monitored to ensure they are growing and developing at the expected rates. All children are individuals, and the development rates are guidelines. Where a congenital condition is identified that is known to lead to physical or learning disability support will be put in place.

Developmental delay could be resolved as the child grows without any help or support, be resolved with some minimal help or support or may become recognised as a learning disability which will have a lifelong impact on the child. Therefore, defining levels of children with learning disabilities is difficult.

Once a child enters a more structured learning environment developmental delays are more likely to be observed by professionals, these children will be identified as having special educational needs (SEN) and appropriate support put in place either as school-led SEN support or as an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP).

This JSNA represents an accurate picture of known data and information available as of Summer 2025.

What is SEND?

A child or young person has a special educational need or disability if they have significantly greater difficulty learning than the majority of other children of the same age, or if a physical or mental health condition prevents them from making use of the facilities generally provided for others of the same age.

We have responsibilities by law to support children and young people with a special educational need or a disability, up to the age of 25. This includes helping young people with SEND to prepare for adulthood and independence, and transition to further support after this age if it's needed

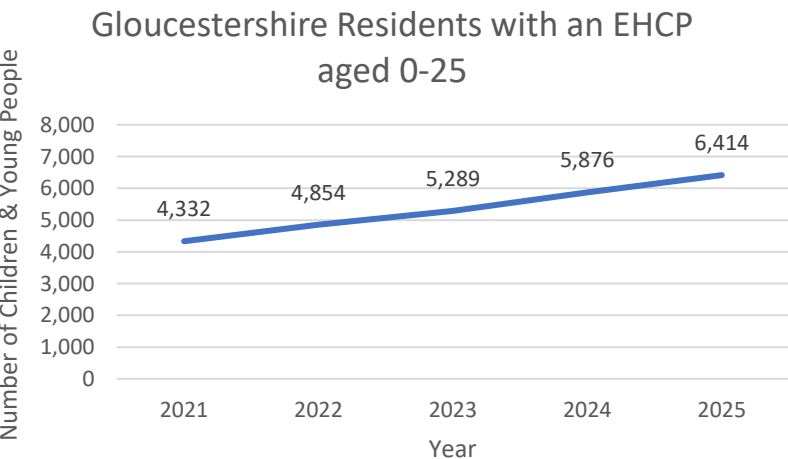


SEND population in Gloucestershire

In January 2025 there were; 15,594 (15.3% of pupils) children and young people receiving SEN support packages in all Gloucestershire schools without an EHCP and 6,414 (3.6% of residents 0-24yrs) with an EHCP.

The number of children and young people with an EHCP has been increasing year on year for the previous 5 years. The rate of children and young people with EHCPs per 100 (3.6) has also been rising, but is still below the South West (4.0) and England (3.8).

There were 967 new EHCPs started in 2024. This was above average for the period 2019-2023 but was below the statistical neighbour average of 1299.



Over three quarters of children and young people with an EHCP are statutory school age (5-15 years) which equates to 4,833 children and young people in 2025.



The number of children and young people with an EHCP has been increasing annually for the past 5 years. The proportion of children and young people receiving SEN support between 2021 and 2025 has seen an 17.7% increase.

This is similar to the national and statistical neighbour trend which has been increasing (16.4% increase and 16.6% increase respectively) in the same period.

Overall children and young people from minority ethnic groups are significantly less likely to have identified SEN needs than children and young people from White backgrounds. However, White children and young people are significantly more likely to be identified as having Moderate Learning Difficulty, Social, Emotional & Mental Health needs, Specific Learning Difficulty and Speech, Language & Communication needs, than children and young people from minority ethnic groups at a population level.

Where SEN supported; significantly more White children and young people were identified with Moderate Learning Difficulty, Social, Emotional & Mental Health needs, Speech, Language & Communication needs and Specific Learning Difficulty than children and young people from minority ethnic groups.

Where EHCP supported, only two primary needs saw a significant difference between the cohorts Social, Emotional & Mental Health needs and Moderate Learning Difficulty where significantly more White children and young people were identified.

What are the needs of children & young people with SEND?

There are 4 main areas of need;

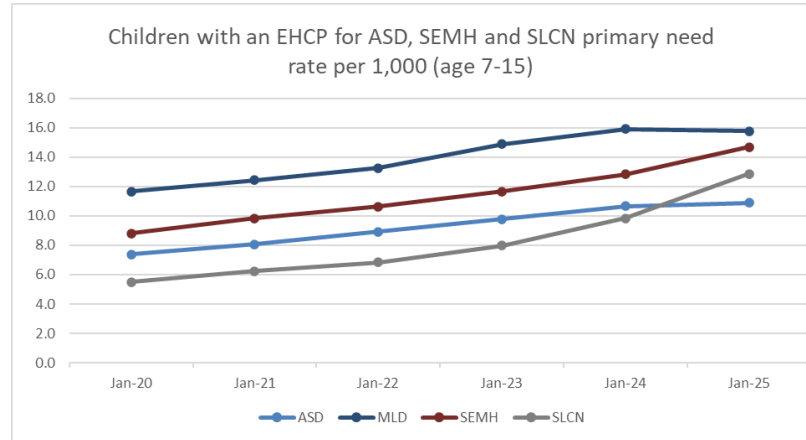
- Communication & Interaction
- Cognition & Learning
- Social, Emotional & Mental Health Difficulties
- Sensory and/or Physical

These are split into 11 primary needs.

Where children and young people have an EHCP a primary need is recorded by educational professionals and is often linked to a clinical diagnosis.

For the majority of primary needs identified in an EHCP the rate of children and young people (aged 7-15) identified and receiving support has remained similar in the last 5 years (2021-2025).

However there has been substantial increases during the same period in the rate of children and young people recorded with **speech, language & communication needs (SLCN)**, **social, emotional & mental health needs (SEMH)**, and **Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)** as well as those diagnosed with **autism and/or ADHD (ASD)** has continued to increase over the last 5 years.



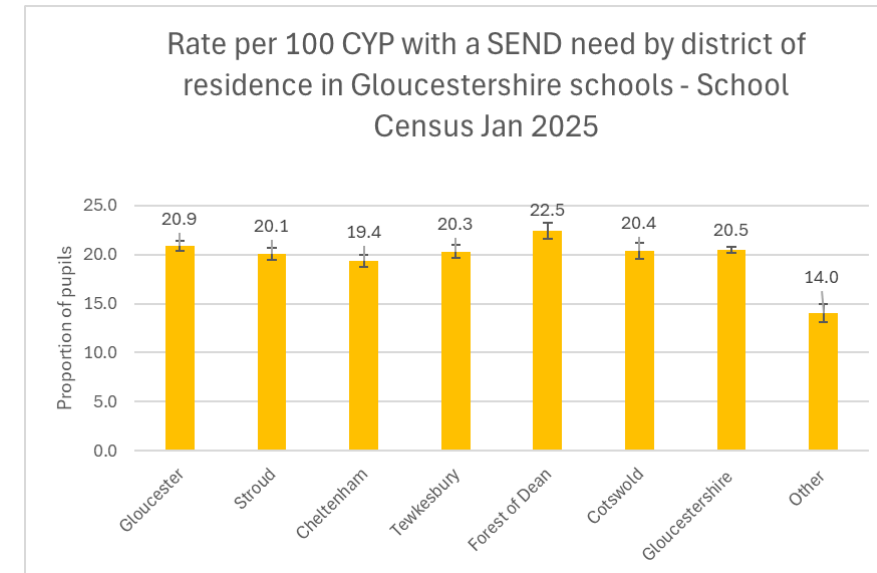
The rate of EHCP pupils (age 7-15) per 1,000 with SLCN has been rising steadily since 2020 with a pronounced increase between January 2024 and January 2025. Over three times the number of children aged 6 with an EHCP were identified as having SLCN in January 2025 compared to January 2021. Just over three times the number of children aged 4 and under were recorded as having SLCN over this period.



Where do children & young people with SEND live?

Special educational needs appear to have some link with deprivation although it is not clear if the deprivation contributes to a special need or the special need contributes to the deprivation, it is most likely to be bi-directional.

The Forest of Dean district continues to have significantly higher rates of resident children with SEN than all the other districts.

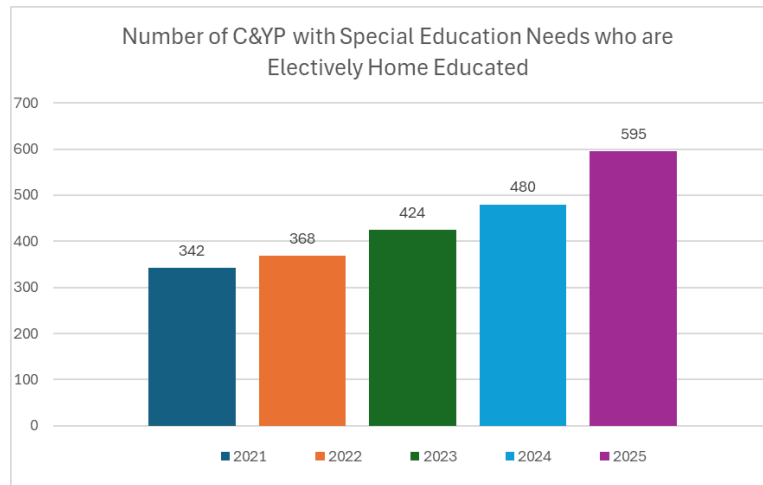


Where are pupils with SEND educated?

Locally 48.2% of children and young people with an EHCP attend a mainstream school and 24.2% attend a maintained specialist school in 2024 (the remaining proportion are in further education settings, early years settings, alternative provision settings, independent settings or are awaiting provision).

There are currently 12 maintained special schools in Gloucestershire. The number of special schools has fluctuated since 2017 but the pupils on roll in the schools has been increasing in the same period. There are also 10 non maintained/independent special schools

A new 200 place special school in Gloucester has been approved to be open by 2026/27.



In January 2025, 88.9% of SEN supported children and young people attended a state-funded school; 10.6% of children and young people were at an independent or non-maintained school and 0.5% of pupils were at an alternative provision school (APS).

The number of children and young people with special educational needs (EHCP or SEN support) who are electively home educated (EHE) continues to increase. On 31st March 2025 595 children with SEND were EHE compared to 424 in March 2023 (a 40% increase); this is compared to a 16.1% increase in children and young people with no SEN over this period (1,250 to 1,451); suggesting a child's SEN status may have an impact on the decision to home educate.

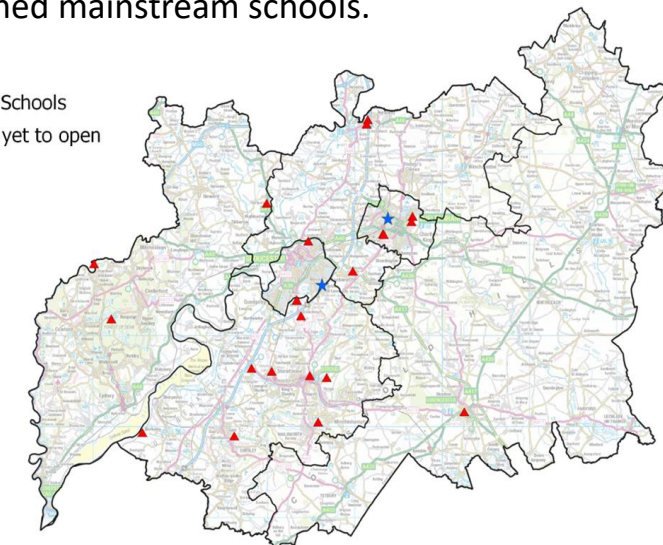
Of those EHE children who had received a permanent exclusion from a Gloucestershire State Funded School (12), 79% had a SEN identified. Children and young people with a SEN identified (particularly those with an EHCP) were more likely to have had a permanent exclusion prior to EHE registration than those with no SEN.

Children and young people at alternative provision schools (APS) are more likely to have an EHCP or receive SEN support than those at mainstream schools.

1 in 7 children and young people at APS settings have an EHCP compared to 1 in 30 in maintained mainstream primary and secondary schools in Gloucestershire in January 24 and nearly 3 in 7 had SEN support compared to 1 in 7 in maintained mainstream schools.

Key

- ▲ Current Special Schools
- ★ Special Schools yet to open



Services for children & young people with SEND

The Local Area Partnership provides and commissions a number of educational, therapeutic and wellbeing services for children and young people with SEND as part of the Local Area Partnership offer.

Complex Care Team

The Gloucestershire Children's Complex Care team delivers home-based specialist care and support to children and young people who have complex needs needing a health input to their care. The service is managed and run by GHC. Children's Continuing Health Care (CCC) has recently transitioned from this team to separate commissioned providers. The Complex Care Team had only 1 referral for an assessment in 2024-25. There are currently 7 active cases.

Community Paediatrics

Community Paediatrics provide medical assessment and care for children and young people with disabilities and complex or chronic health needs. They also provide assessment for infants and children with complex disorders of development. Following diagnosis, Community Paediatrics aim to support children and young people, parents and carers in developing appropriate care pathways for their complex health needs.

Working collaboratively with other supportive services – Community Paediatrics aim to reduce the health consequences of chronic medical conditions and assist the children and young people person in realising their potential.

Speech & Language Therapy

The Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service (CYPS SLT) is a countywide specialist service for children and young people aged 0 – 18 and their families and carers.

In 2024/25, the service had 4011 referrals into the service and 3840 children and young people on the service caseload. Between 2016/17 and 2019/20 there was an increasing overall referral rate and consequently an increasing caseload. The referral rate and demand for CYPS SLT remains high and waiting times continue to increase.

The service has recently launched SHARE. A digital initiative that will support safe waiting by providing assurance that referrals are screened, prioritised and safely supported whilst, waiting for intervention.

The Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC) programme is available in some schools and early years settings in Gloucestershire. Part of the SEND AP Improvement Plan, ELSEC aims to pilot a new support model to improve early identification of SLCN and provide support outside specialist health services



Children's Physiotherapy

The Gloucestershire Community Children and Young People's Physiotherapy Service aims to support children and young people with a range of conditions by providing them and their families with support, advice and physical intervention to achieve planned outcomes for the child and their family.

Children's Physiotherapy is a countywide specialist service for children and young people aged 0-16 years (16-19 in full time education), their families and carers, providing care in both the hospital and community settings. In 2024/25 Children's physiotherapy had 3,570 referrals, this was a slight increase on the previous year (3,476). 11,353 contacts were made with children and young people and their families in 2024/25 from the service.



Children's Occupational Therapy

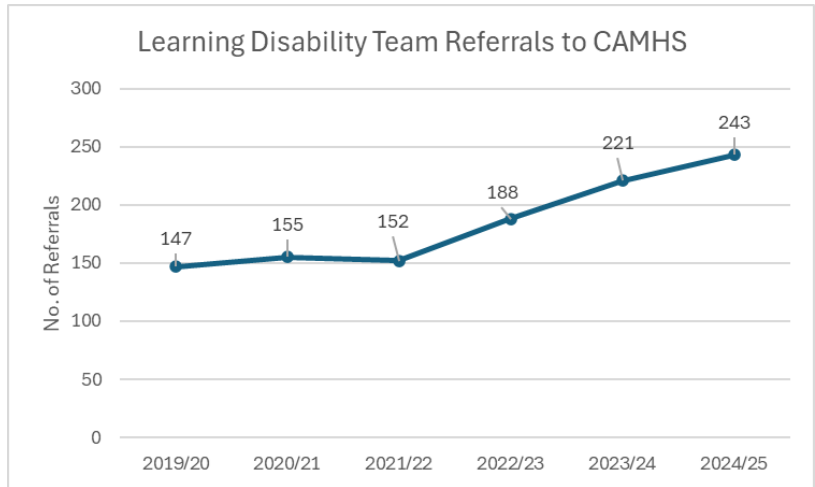
The Children's Occupational Therapy (OT) service is an integrated countywide specialist service working in partnership with other health, education and social care services across Gloucestershire. It aims to address the needs of children and young people who have difficulties managing their activities of daily living and developing functional skills such as bathing, showering, toileting, dressing, eating etc.

In 2024/25, there were 1,626 referrals to the service and a caseload of 1,349 children and young people. Due to capacity challenges, the number of referrals waiting for routine occupational therapy has been rising since January, with some children waiting longer than 18 weeks for non-urgent occupational therapy support. Most referrals to the service come from educational establishments and parents/carers, with the lowest rates during school holidays

Learning disabilities Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

The CAMHS Learning Disability team supports children with a range of learning disabilities including autism and/or ADHD who attend specific special schools. In 2023/24 there were 221 referrals to the service this rose to 243 in 2024/25

There is currently a data gap with identifying referrals to core CAMHS* teams for children and young people with SEN – however the rate of referrals to all CAMHS from special schools was 22.2 per 100 pupils (3 year average 2022/23 - 2024/25) compared to 7.2 per 100 for all schools.



*CAMHS Gloucestershire provides a comprehensive range of specialist emotional wellbeing and mental health services for all children and young people aged under 18 who are registered with a GP in Gloucestershire. Whilst there are specialist teams working with specific groups, such as LD CAMHS team, Core CAMHS supports the majority of children referred to the service.

Children and young people with SEND who are looked after

Services to Children in Care (CiC) include assessment, and placements (this could be residential or foster care), and in addition support services across health, social care and education for children in care and care leavers.

There were 760 CiC in Gloucestershire on 31st March 2025, 25.3% of these also had an EHCP. The proportion of CiC with an EHCP or receiving SEN support was higher than in those who were not in care. EHCP rates matched the 2023/24* national average (31.9%), while SEN Support was lower (26.2% vs. 27.6%).

*2024/25 national data not yet available)

Social care for 18-24 year olds with SEND

In March 2025 there were 295 young people aged 18-24 receiving support from Adult Social Care in Gloucestershire. The majority (68%) of these were recognised as having learning disabilities and were receiving payments for supported living or direct payments to finance their daily care.

Education Settings

Settings such as nurseries, pre-schools, primary and secondary schools and sixth form colleges play a key role in identifying developmental delay and emerging learning difficulties and give a wide range of support daily to children and young people with a wide variety of needs.



Commissioned Education Support Services

The Local Area Partnership commissions a number of information and advice services for professionals such as; Advisory Teaching Service (ATS), Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning (GHLL), Educational Psychology and Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS).

Specialist Teaching and Educational Psychology (STEPS)

Specialist Teaching and Educational Psychology (STEPS) is a multidisciplinary team comprising Advisory Teachers, Sensory Impairment Specialists, and Educational Psychologists. The service provides tailored teaching and psychological support to individual children and young people, as well as their families. STEPS champions the voice of pupils and parents, ensuring these perspectives are central to decision-making processes.

Operating within Gloucestershire's Graduated SEND Pathway, STEPS collaborates closely with schools to identify priorities and agree on interventions. Referrals typically originate from school staff following discussions with parents or carers, or through liaison with health professionals.

The team works across three levels:

- Strategic – partnering with system leaders to drive service-wide development.
- Local systems – identifying and responding to emerging trends and patterns.
- Individual – delivering bespoke support tailored to the needs of each child or young person.

STEPS is committed to workforce development, offering training, coaching, supervision, and guidance to professionals working with children and young people.

Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning

Healthy children do better in learning and in life. The aim of Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning (GHLL) is to help children and young people achieve their full potential and lead long, healthy, happy lives. Working with GHLL will enable schools and colleges to support children and young people to make positive choices to improve their physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning encompasses aspects of both the "Healthy Schools" and "Healthy FE" as well as Mental Health Champions Award to meet the needs of all children and young people across the county.

Every educational setting in Gloucestershire has a dedicated GHLL Lead Teacher. The Lead Teachers are all highly experienced teachers and include Primary, Secondary, Further Education and Special Educational Needs specialists.

Between September 2024 to April 2025 GHLL has engaged with all educational settings in Gloucestershire. 347 educational settings Have achieved or are working towards Their Healthy Schools/College award and 66 schools have achieved their Mental Health Champions Award with 268 working towards it.



Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS).

SENDIASS had 2,847 referrals in 2024/25. This is an increase on the previous year. Advice is given on a range of topics around Education, health and social care. Requests for support are predominantly around children and young people with a diagnosis of social, emotional, or mental health (SEMH) (37.7%) and children and young people with a primary need of autism and/or ADHD (ASD) (25.0%). There has been a significant increase in the number of health-related calls in recent times with parents seeking clarification about several issues.

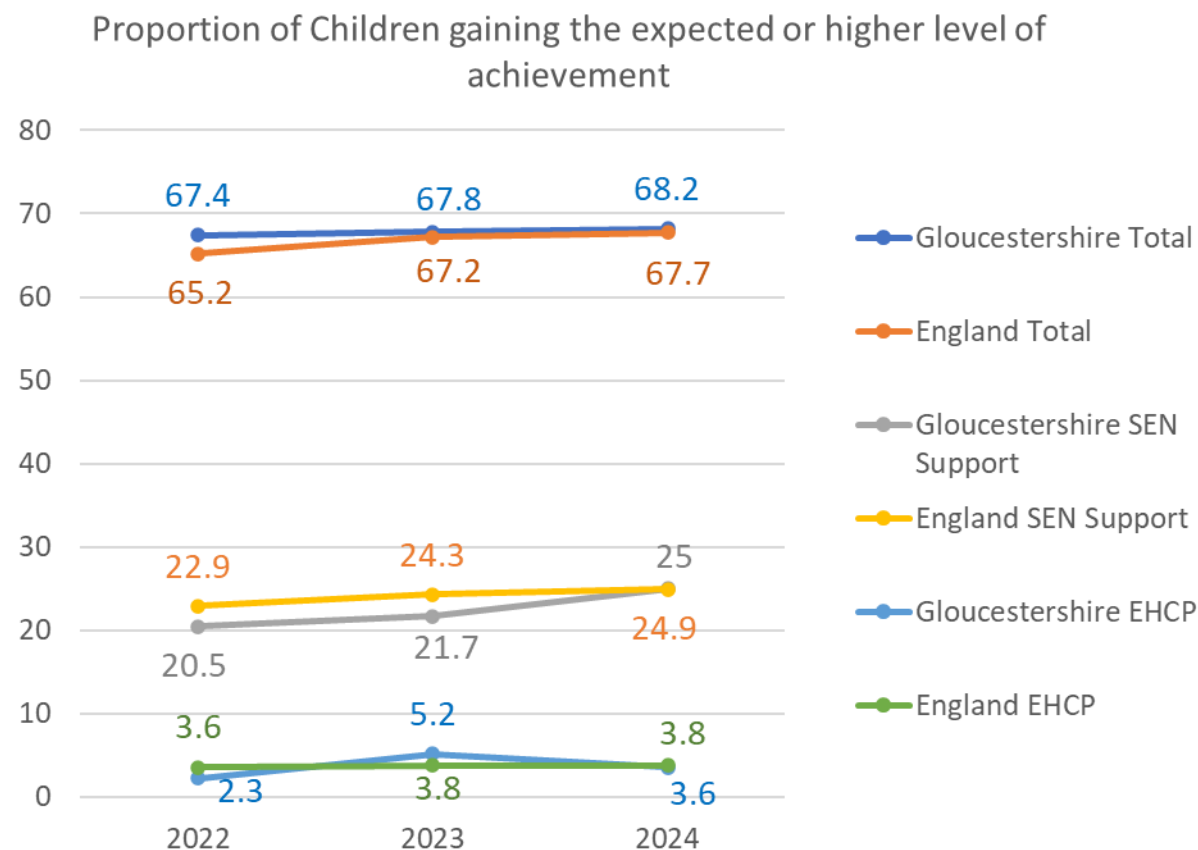
Inclusion Service

Active Impact provides inclusive opportunities for children and young people. They do this by offering training and support to organisations to become more inclusive and develop the market of providers of care and activities via:

- **Inclusion Needs You** - inclusion training and support
- **Of Course You Can** - inclusive activities for children and young people
- **You're Welcome** website - Gloucestershire's Inclusive Events Directory and Forum

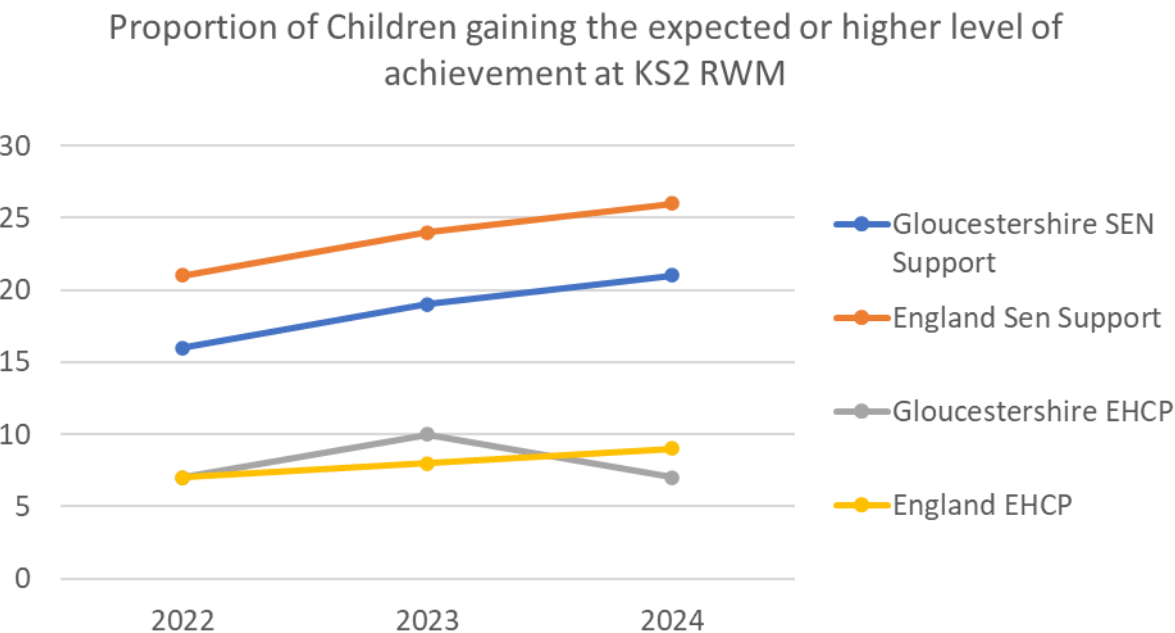
What are the outcomes for children & young people with SEND?

Children and young people with SEN are likely to face additional challenges during their education that may have an impact on their attainment and future outcomes. The Local Area Partnership offer is working hard to remove barriers to achievement and ensure every child reaches their potential.



Early Years achievement*

In 2023/24 68.2% of children met the expected Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of EYFS. 25% of children with SEN support achieved the expected level and 3.6% of those with an EHCP –national rates 24.9% and 3.8% respectively.



KS2 achievement*

In 2023 7% of children and young people with an EHCP achieved expected or higher level in Reading, Writing and Maths; slightly below the national level (10%). 22% of children and young people with SEN support achieved the expected level – below the national rate (27%).

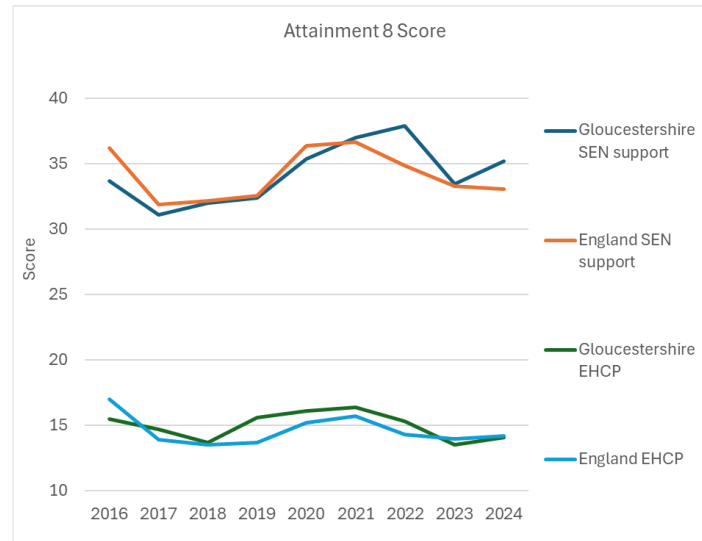
* Attainment tests and exams were widely disrupted by the Coronavirus pandemic. EYFS and KS2 data is not available for 2020 or 2021

KS4 achievement

At the end of Key Stage 4 (KS4) young people sit GCSEs. GCSE results are measured nationally using Attainment 8 and Progress 8. Attainment 8 adds together a pupil's highest scores over 8 government approved school subjects to give an average score. Pupil scores are taken from across a year group to give the school's average score or across the county to give a county average.

Progress 8 looks at a pupil's performance at the end of KS2 in relation to their peers at primary school and compares that to their performance at GCSE. The government uses a mathematical model to give an expected level of progress and will use this to see if the pupil's progress is above or below their expected level. Again, pupil's scores are grouped to give school and county averages.

At KS4 the Attainment 8 scores of young people with an EHCP and those receiving SEN support increased, 14.1 and 35.2 in 2023/24, whilst national performance has remained consistent at 14.2 and 33.1, respectively. Attainment 8 scores of children and young people with EHCP and SEN support are well below the average score for those with no SEN (54.0).



Post 16 achievement

In 2022/23, 89.7% of children and young people with SEN in Gloucestershire were in a sustained education, apprenticeship or employment destination after Key Stage 4. As nationally, children and young people with SEN in the county were less likely to have any sustained destination than those with no identified SEN (95.5%).

11.3% of children and young people with EHCP and 33.1% of those with SEN support qualified to level 3 by age 19 in 2024. For children and young people with an EHCP this is below the national figure (14.2%); the proportion of children and young people with SEN support reaching level 3 is in line with the national average (35.1%).

19.8% of young people with SEN from Gloucestershire entered Higher Education in 2021/22; in line with the regional average (17.0%) but below the national average 20.7%.



Education, training & employment

In 2023 86.9% of children and young people with an EHCP and 92.1% of children and young people with SEN support aged 16-17 years were in education or training vs. 90.7% of non-SEN children and young people in Gloucestershire schools. 38 Interns (76%) who completed a Supported Internship moved into employment in 2023-24. 13 (40%) of them are currently being supported to find employment or are in voluntary work since their Supported Internship. 4.1% of people aged 18-64yrs with a learning disability were in paid employment in 2022/23, below the regional (5.5%) and national averages (4.8%).

Attendance & exclusions

A higher rate of children and young people with EHCP/SEN support are persistently absent. In 2023/24 the overall persistent absence rate for pupils without SEN was 16.0, compared to 35.1 where children and young people had an EHCP and 30.2 where children and young people had SEN support. These rates are similar to the England average (35.5 and 30.1 respectively).

Children and young people with additional needs are more likely to receive an exclusion than those with none. Rates of suspensions for those with an EHCP increased in 2023/24 to 32.5 from 28.0 in 2022/23 and the increase for those with SEN support was to 27.5 from 22.6.

Permanent exclusion rates also increased for children with additional needs over this period (for those with EHCP support from 0.52 in 2022/23 to 0.54 in 2023/24 and for children receiving SEN support the increase was from 0.35 in 2022/23 to 0.59 in 2023/24).



Community inclusion

In 2023/24 67.9% of adults with a learning disability were living in their own home or with their family, this is significantly below the national average (81.6%) and the South West average (75.8%).

Short breaks provide disabled children and young people with an opportunity to spend time away from their parents or primary carers, relaxing, having fun with their friends, experiencing the same range of activities and environments as non-disabled children and young people. Short breaks also provide parents and carers with a "break" from their caring responsibilities, giving them a chance to rest, spend time with partners and other children.

The Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) team supports children and young people with SEND. The team focuses on supporting young people to safely navigate and engage with their local communities. This includes promoting independent travel where appropriate, as well as delivering tailored one-to-one interventions for those requiring additional support with social interaction and community participation.

In 2024/25, the PfA team provided direct support to a total of 416 young people. This included 30 individuals who received independent travel training, 366 participants who engaged in group-based sessions delivered in both educational and community settings and 19 young people receiving 1-2-1 support through commissioned services in the community.

The PfA team expanded its professional development offer with 465 education professionals receiving training and support—representing a substantial increase from 36 professionals in 2023/24. This growth reflects a strategic emphasis on building capacity within the wider education workforce to better support the transition to adulthood for young people with SEND.

Healthy lifestyles

Pupils at special schools, those with a disability and those with SEN/EHCP were all significantly less likely to report the food available at home allowed them to eat healthily compared to their less vulnerable peers. Four times as many pupils with a disability (12.5%) and over 4 times as many with SEN/EHCP (14.7%) reported eating no fruit or vegetables in a day than those without.

Pupils at special schools (35.5%) and those with SEN/EHCP (37.2%) were significantly less likely to report trying alcohol than their less vulnerable peers (42% and 42.4% respectively). In contrast pupils with a disability (44.6%) were significantly more likely to report trying alcohol than their less vulnerable peers (41.6%).



Each year pupils in Reception and Y6 mainstream maintained primary schools are weighed and measured as part of the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP).

In 2023/24 children in Reception with SEN Support Only (28.7%) were significantly more likely to be overweight or obese than those with no SEN (21.9%). Children with an EHCP (35.6%) showed significantly more likelihood than both groups. This is a notable decrease on the 2022/23 EHCP figure (42.9%) whereas the proportions for SEN Support and no SEN remained in line with 2022/23 (25.9% and 20.3%) respectively.

In Y6 the 2023/24 proportion of children receiving SEN support (41.1%) were significantly more likely to be overweight or obese than those with no SEN (32.4%). The proportion of those with an EHCP (45.1%) was also higher than those with No SEN but was not statistically significant

Transitioning to support from Adult Social Care

In 2024/25 there were 81 Young People aged 17-24 who started as adult service users. Of those, 81.5% either had a transition meeting or were known to Children's Social Care or were identified on the School Census as having an EHCP or SEN Support. Only 6 of the young people were not previously known to CSC nor identified with a Learning Difficulty. In addition, 22 young people completed transition assessments during 2024/25 but no adult service has started to date.

There are currently different ways that Adult Social Care support is offered and may comprise; supported housing, independent living grants, carer services, day care, transport, advice and guidance etc.

What are the lived experiences for children & young people with SEND?

Every two years since 2006 the county council has commissioned a pupil survey of children in Gloucestershire schools. Pupils in years 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 and 12 are invited to take part. The survey comprises a wide range of questions around health and wellbeing topics and the wider determinants of health. The latest survey was the 2024 Pupil Wellbeing Survey.

In the 2024 Pupil Wellbeing Survey 11.0% of children and young people reported having an EHCP/SEN support. This ranged from 9.8% in Secondary to 11.9% in further education young people this differs for the proportions in the 2024 School Census, but children and young people may not be fully aware of all the support they receive and may not put a label on it.

Children and young people reporting EHCP/SEN support, were significantly less likely to report doing the recommended amount of exercise (39.7% vs. 50.3%) compared to those with no SEN/EHCP.

13.1% of young people with EHCP/SEN support report experiencing 4+ ACEs* this is in line with those with no SEN/EHCP.

The proportion of children and young people with EHCP/SEN support reporting feeling close to other people (47.4%) was significantly lower than those with no SEN/EHCP (54.1%).

11.4% of children and young people with an EHCP/SEN support said they were bullied regularly (*Quite Often (weekly)/Most days*) significantly more than those who reported no special educational need (6.9%). Bullying can have a profound effect on mental wellbeing, a quarter of children and young people with SEN/EHCP reported low mental wellbeing.

Children and young people with SEN/EHCP were also more likely to report ever witnessing domestic abuse (32.7%) than those with no SEN (27.3%)

The proportion of children and young people who *Agreed/Strongly agreed* they got enough help at school with learning was slightly lower in children who reported SEN/EHCP (51.1%) than those who didn't, but not significantly so.

*Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) question asked to young people in years 10 and 12 as part of the Pupil Wellbeing Survey



Children and young people with SEN/EHCP were significantly more likely to live in a single parent family, with another relative, in a children's home, residential special school, with foster carers, or friends than those with no SEN/EHCP.

Children and young people with SEN/EHCP are more likely to engage in health harming behaviour such as drinking regularly, smoking, vaping or taking illegal drugs than their non-SEN peers; however, smoking and vaping were the only health harming behaviour that were significantly higher in children with SEN/EHCP.

Recommendations

Building the right foundations

Building strong foundations will provide us with a stable platform upon which we can continue to successfully develop the key features of our local system. The principles of our local area system shape the experience that we want people to have, and that this drives decision making and planning.

They are:

1. **Early Intervention** that makes sure support is available at the right time
2. Effective multi-agency working where **collective responsibility** is a consistent theme
3. Taking a **holistic approach** to understanding and responding to the emotional and physical needs of children and young people
4. Making sure that all developments and **interventions are data and research-led** – we find out what works and apply it to our local context
5. Making sure that we remain focussed on the **impact our work has on the outcomes** for children and young people
6. Making sure that what we do is **co-produced** with key stakeholders, but most importantly, parents and carers and children and young people
7. **Workforce development** – great people are at the heart of a great and sustainable Local Area Partnership offer, and it is critical we support them to develop their skills and expertise

What we will do/our commissioning priorities

Our SEND priorities are built on the foundations set out below and focus on what we have heard is important to children, young people and their families in Gloucestershire. These broad priorities are delivered through a local SEND action plan that is regularly reviewed and refreshed

Priority 1 – Improve our communication

The SEND local area partnership - we will work together to make sure that communication is timely and effective, and information is easy to access and updated regularly.

Priority 2 - Access to support when it is needed

We know that support can come in many ways and our roles are to work with children, young people and their families to help find the right support as early as possible. We want our services to be agile, and we want to be able to reduce the complexity of processes so that we can give children and young people the support they need in a setting that is appropriate for them at that time.

Priority 3 – Improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND

We want to do more to help young people with SEND achieve better outcomes; outcomes that are ambitious and allow them to grow into the best version of them. To do this, we need to ensure that their support plans are built around what they want and need; our job is to make it possible.

Glossary of terms

ACEs – Adverse Childhood Experiences, these experiences can include things like physical and emotional abuse, neglect, caregiver mental illness, and household violence.

ASD – Autistic Spectrum Disorder - Autism and/or ADHD

EHCP – Education Health & Care Plan

EHE – Elective Home Education

GCC – Gloucestershire County Council

Maintained school – (in England and Wales) A school that is funded by a local education authority. These schools must follow the national curriculum and national teacher pay and conditions.

MLD – Moderate Learning Difficulty

SEMH – Social, Emotional & Mental Health

SEN – Special Educational Need

SEN support – Support co-ordinated by a child's educational establishment that is not part of an EHCP

Short breaks – Period of care undertaken by a non-parent/carer

SLCN – Speech, Language and Communication



Data limitations

GCC are aware our recording processes across the system are not consistent or well aligned. We are aiming to rectify this by creating a single Education and Care record for children and young people in Gloucestershire. We recognise this is a big ambition and are working towards better data sharing between agencies in the interim.

The Local area partnership are also improving monitoring and performance datasets in relation to our children and young people with additional needs to aid strategic decision making including digitalising EHCPs.



Further information

This report was compiled in collaboration with education, health and care colleagues in Summer 2025. In 2026, a full needs assessment will be published.

The previous full needs assessment published in 2023 can be found on Inform Gloucestershire:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/inform/children-and-young-people/children-and-young-people-who-have-special-educational-needs-or-disabilities-send/>

Produced by the Data Analysis & Insights Team:
informgloucestershire@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Useful contacts



ACEs

<https://www.actionaces.org/>

Specialist Teaching and Educational Psychology (STEPS)

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/your-pupils/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send/send-support-services/advisory-teaching-service/>

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/educational-psychology-service-eps/>

CAMHS Learning Disability Team

<https://cayp.ghc.nhs.uk/parents-and-carers/gloucestershire>

Children's Physiotherapy

<https://www.ghc.nhs.uk/our-teams-and-services/childrens-physiotherapy/>

Family Information service

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/children-young-people-and-families/family-information-service-fis/>

Family Link Plus

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/familylinkplus/>

Gloucestershire Healthy Living & Learning

<https://www.ghll.org.uk/>

Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust - Paediatrics

<https://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/services-we-offer/childrens-services/about-us/>

Gloucestershire Parent Carer Forum

<https://glospcf.org.uk/>

Occupational Therapy

<https://www.ghc.nhs.uk/our-teams-and-services/childrens-occupational-therapy/childrens-ot-referral-form/>

Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

<https://sendiassglos.org.uk/>

Short breaks

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/disabilities/short-breaks-for-disabled-children-and-young-people/>

Speech & Language Therapy - SALT

<https://www.ghc.nhs.uk/our-teams-and-services/childrens-slt/>

You're Welcome

<https://www.yourewelcomeglos.org/>