

Aimhigher London 2020 Conference

Coping with cuts: Doing more with less

The SEND system in context: Pressures, trends and local strategies

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Two perspectives on the SEND and high needs system

1

The national perspective

Have we reached a “tipping point”? Trends and pressures in high needs spending

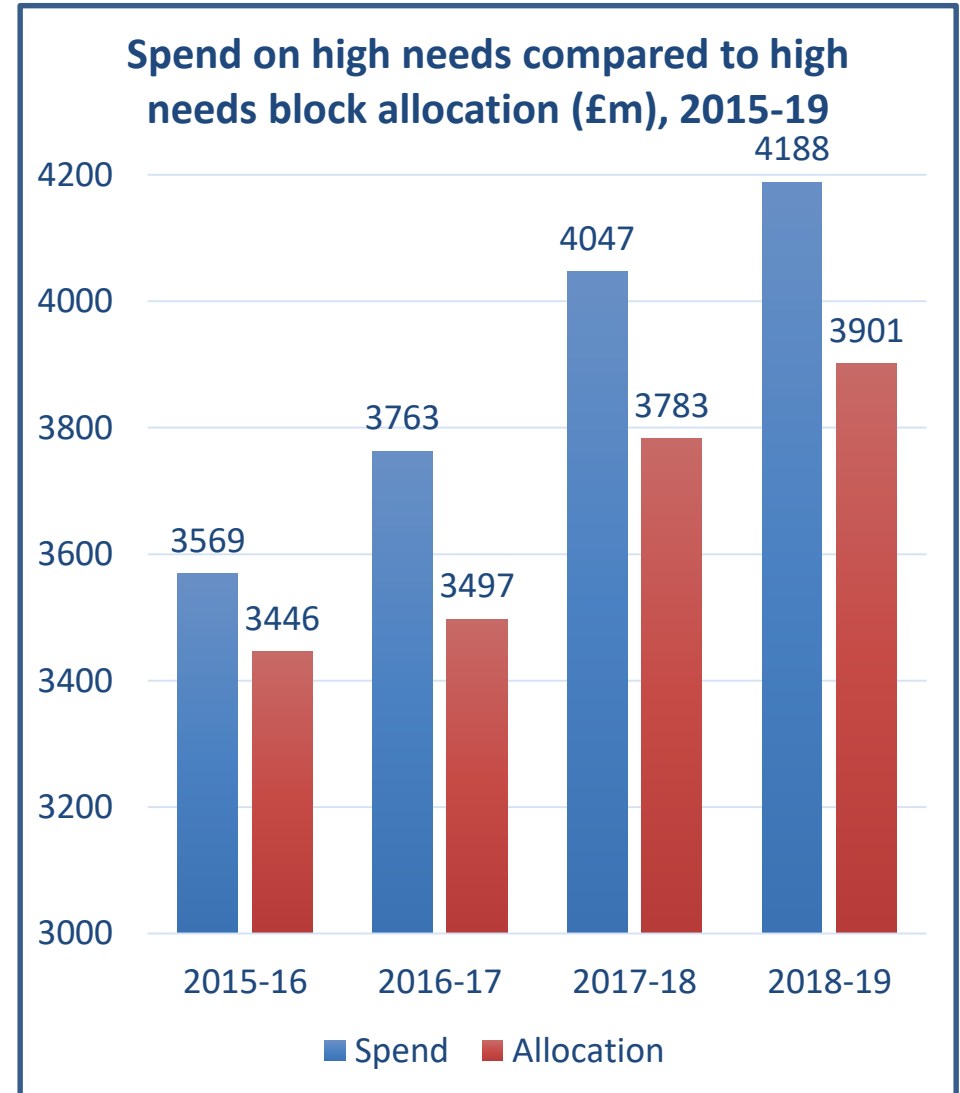
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The local area perspective

What can local areas do to develop and sustain effective practice in local SEND systems?

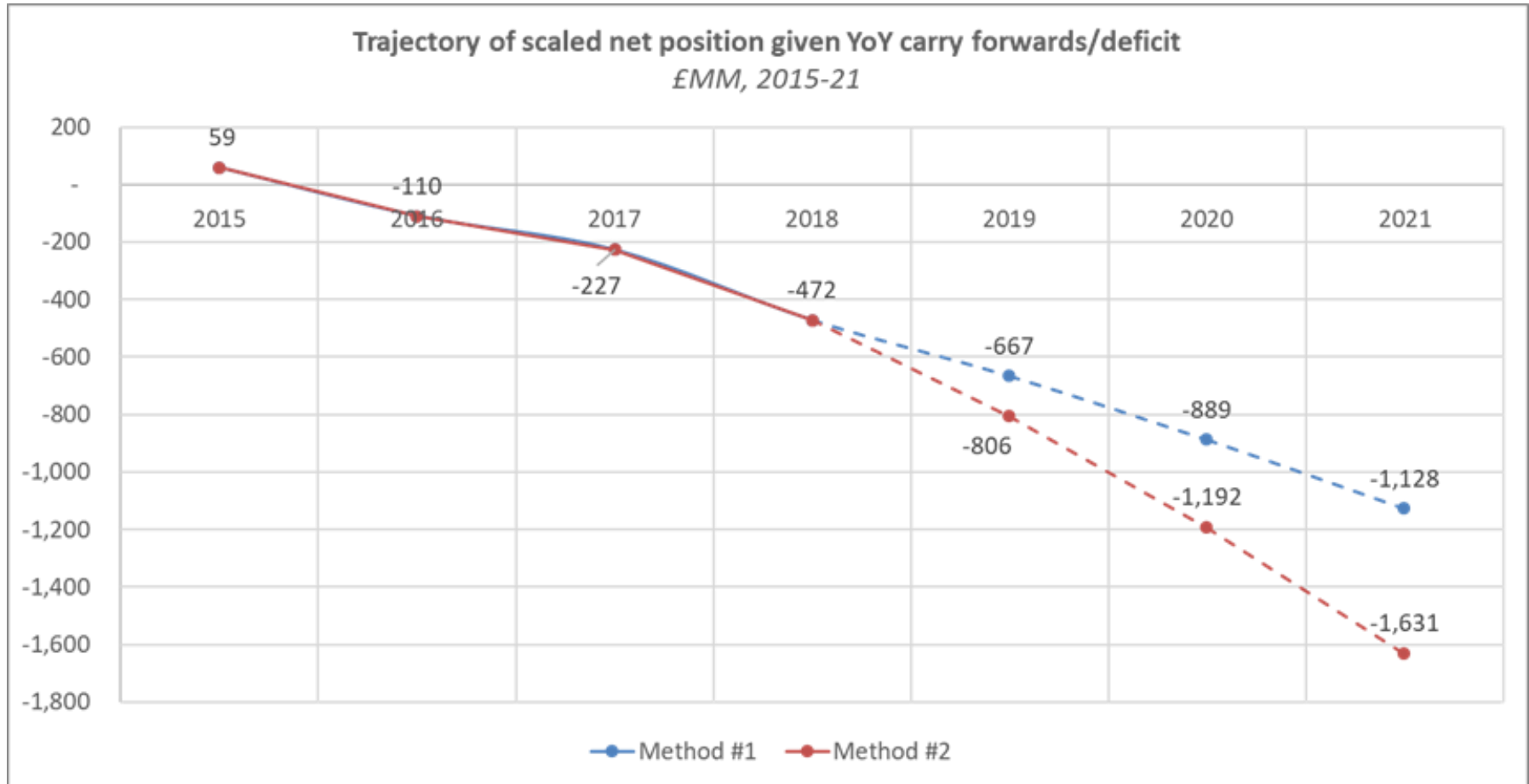
National perspective: The widening high needs funding gap

- Our analysis showed rising levels of spend and the gap between spending and allocations growing.
- Local areas have been “topping up” from other parts of the dedicated schools grant and reserves, but are running out of room for manoeuvre.
- Based on data we gathered, we estimated the national funding gap to be £472m in 2018.
- We projected that this gap would increase to between £1.1bn and £1.6bn by 2021.



Projecting these trends forward to 2021

If current trends continue, our analysis suggested that the deficit could increase to between £1.1bn and £1.6bn by 2021.



National perspective: Factors driving these trends

Understanding the systemic factors that are driving these pressures

- **The issue is not simply the fact that “there is not enough money in the system”.** There is a legitimate point to raise about the quantity of resource in the system, but this is not the sole factor driving the funding gap.
- **There are a wider set of systemic factors causing these pressures.** Putting more money into the system without addressing these issues will not alleviate funding pressures.

Four sets of factors driving pressures on high needs and SEND

- **Increased demand following the SEND reforms** – growth in number of EHCPs, changes in placement profile, increased age-range.
 - **Demographics** – changing profile and nature of needs; complex combinations.
 - **Changes in other policy areas** – pressures, incentives for mainstream schools.
 - **Removal of levers for managing local systems** – resources increasingly linked to individual placements; impact of Tribunal decisions; limited scope for “invest-to-save”; limits on creating new or repurposing existing provision.
- ... creates a vicious cycle – resources diverted to more expensive, reactive support, away from early, preventative support that fosters inclusion.**

Local perspective: Five overarching messages

Co-productive working: Sharing issues and shaping solutions in partnership.

Collective responsibility: A shared ethos of inclusion and support for children and young people with SEND, and an understanding of responsibilities for their support.

Strategic planning: A shared understanding of a coherent continuum of support, with clarity about roles and links between all support and services.

Leadership: Local SEND and high needs system require pro-active leadership and co-ordination. Capacity to convene, co-ordinate, plan, implement and evaluate.

Governance: Strong partnership governance that fosters shared responsibility and drives a common strategy and agenda of support for young people with SEND.

Local perspective: Six key themes

- ① **Strategic partnership working with parents and carers, and young people**
- ② **Strategic partnership working and joint commissioning across education, health and care**
- ③ **Identifying, assessing and supporting young people's needs**
- ④ **Building inclusive capacity in mainstream schools and settings**
- ⑤ **Developing responsive, flexible and effective local specialist provision**
- ⑥ **Preparation for adulthood**

Why does this matter?

1 Strategic partnership working with parents and carers, and young people

'Typically, where strategic co-production has been most successful, the local area's parent and carer forums have sought and used the views of parents to inform their discussions with leaders and their role in co-production.'

(Ofsted & CQC)

'In [the local area], ... the forum draws on its members, keeping them informed of meetings, consultations and imminent changes in provision using a range of social media and other devices. This means that parents are represented at all partnership meetings between leaders in education, health and care.'

'Local area leaders are clear about and sensitive to the impact of decisions and changes on families. They take this fully into account when planning strategically for the future. Parents feel valued and part of the improvement planning for provision in the city, including understanding the reasons why decisions are taken.'

(Local area inspection report)

Key messages

1 Strategic partnership working with parents and carers, and young people

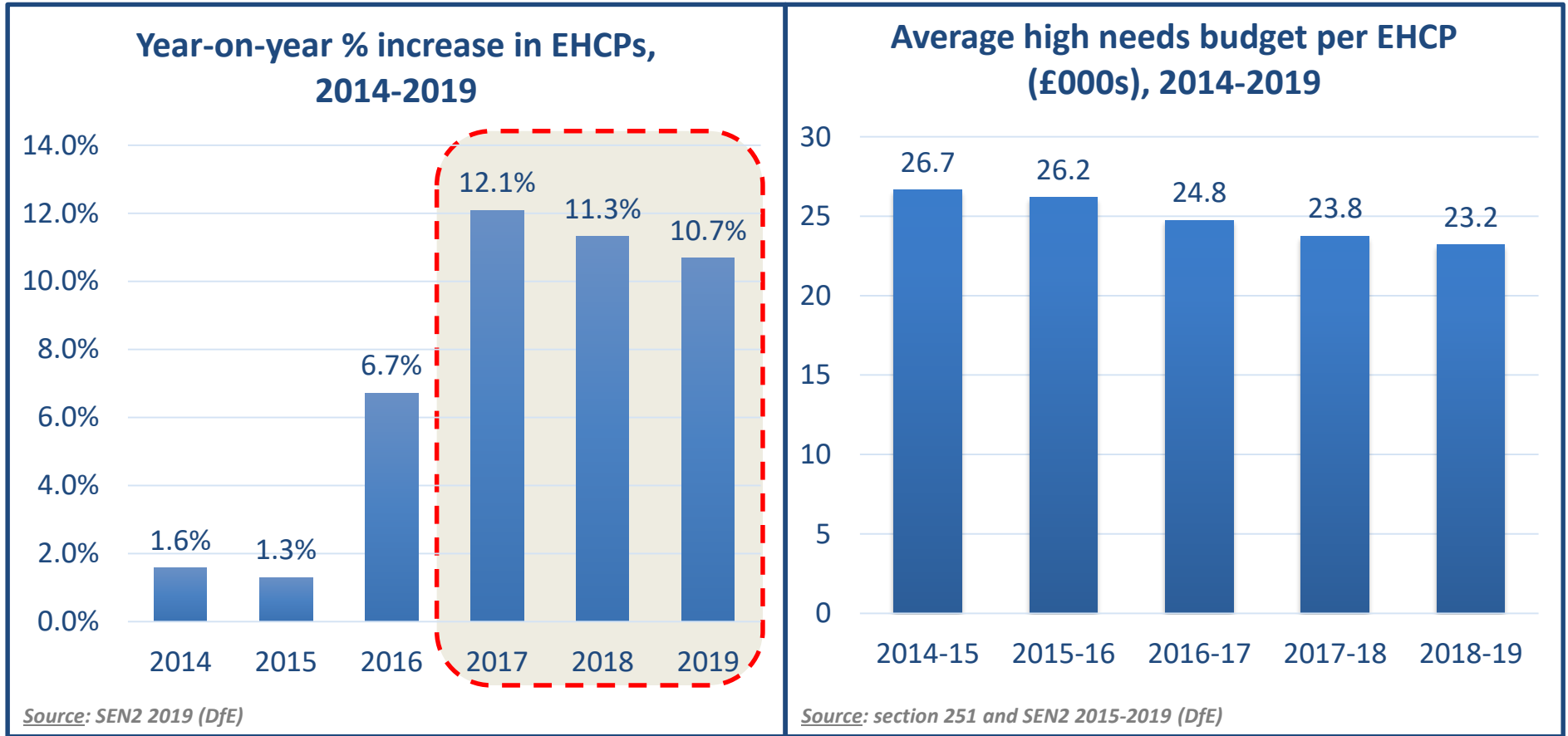
Demonstrate commitment to sharing challenges and solving problems in a spirit of co-production. Ensure that co-production feels meaningful and not tokenistic but engaging at a formative stage, openly sharing a problem and enabling parents, carers and young people to generate ideas and shape solutions.

Empower and enable local groups of parents and carers to play a strategic role within the local SEND system. Identify specific opportunities for parents, carers and young people to influence the local SEND system at a strategic level and build the capacity of local groups and networks to play this role.

Focus on broadening participation by engaging an ever-wider range of young people and families. Make broadening participation, and hearing from as broad a range of parents, carers and young people as possible, an explicit aim of the local SEND system.

Why does this matter

2 Strategic partnership working and joint commissioning across education, health and care



Key messages

2 Strategic partnership working and joint commissioning across education, health and care

Develop and embed strong routines and processes for making decisions and commissioning provision across key agencies. Ensure that there are explicit processes and protocols – about decision-making and the use of resources – that are used to consider commissioning of individual packages of support and overall services.

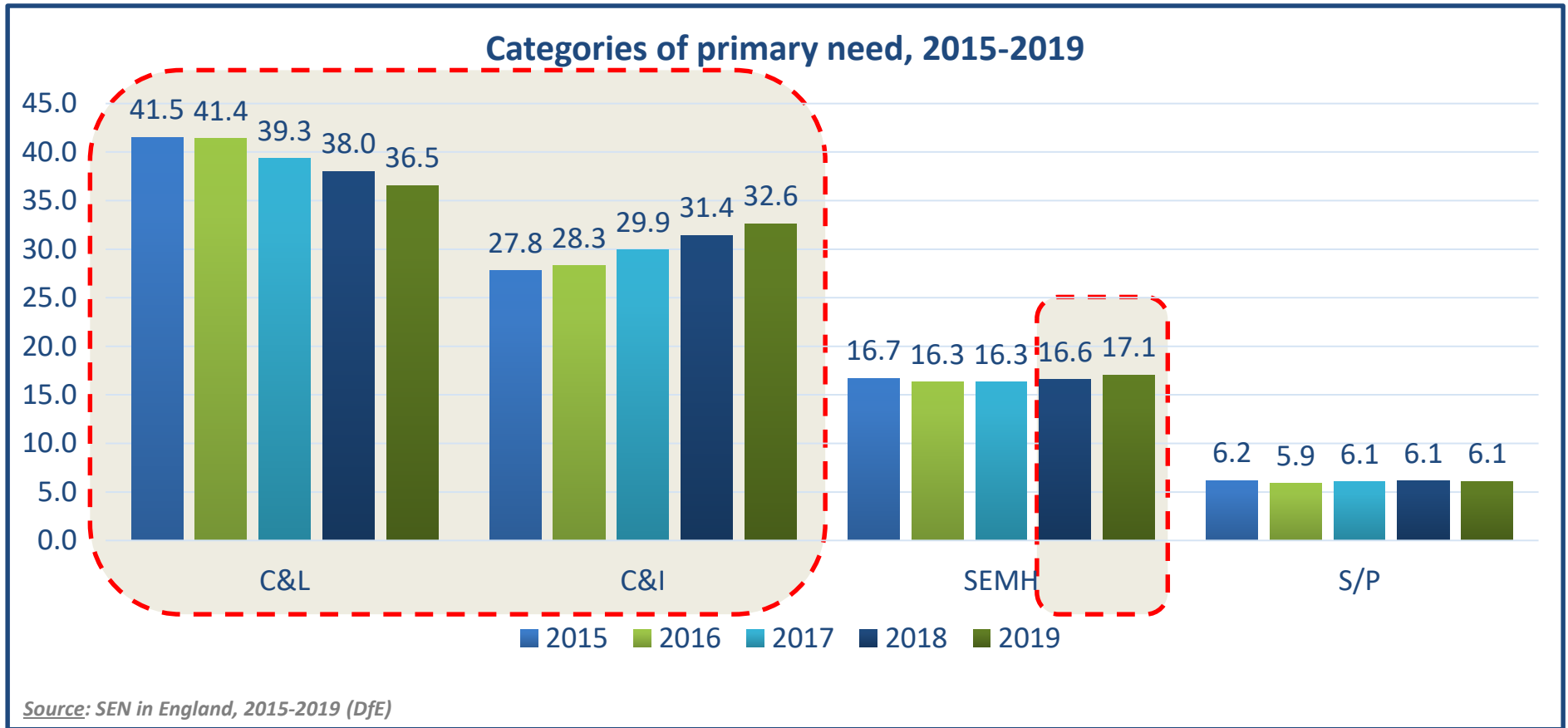
Ensure joint commissioning delivers betters, joined-up support by planning pathways of support for specific types of needs. Identifying key areas of need – autism or mental health – and planning a coherent, seamless pathway of support for young people and their families.

Put in place effective governance structures and processes to ensure strategic decisions can be taken swiftly and effectively. Whatever the make-up of council and CCG boundaries, ensure that there is a clear partnership governance structure in place that enables partners to make joint strategic decisions swiftly and effectively.

Why does this matter?

3

Identifying, assessing and supporting young people's needs



Key messages

3 Identifying, assessing and supporting young people's needs

Focus on strengthening core processes and building a consistent understanding so that needs can be identified early and accurately (and the right support put in place). Central to this is having a widely understood and consistently applied vocabulary for identifying a young person's needs (as a first step to putting in place the right support).

Ensure that information about local support is accessible and helps families and professionals to navigate the local system easily. Part of this is about ensuring that the local offer enables families and professionals to understand what support is available how to access it. This is also about ensuring that there are mechanisms for services to respond flexibly when a young person requires a more bespoke package of support.

Put in place open, transparent and outcomes-focused processes for assessing young people's needs. Ensure that assessment processes take a holistic view of a young person's needs while also identifying the support that is needed, and that decisions are taken in an open, informed and transparent manner.

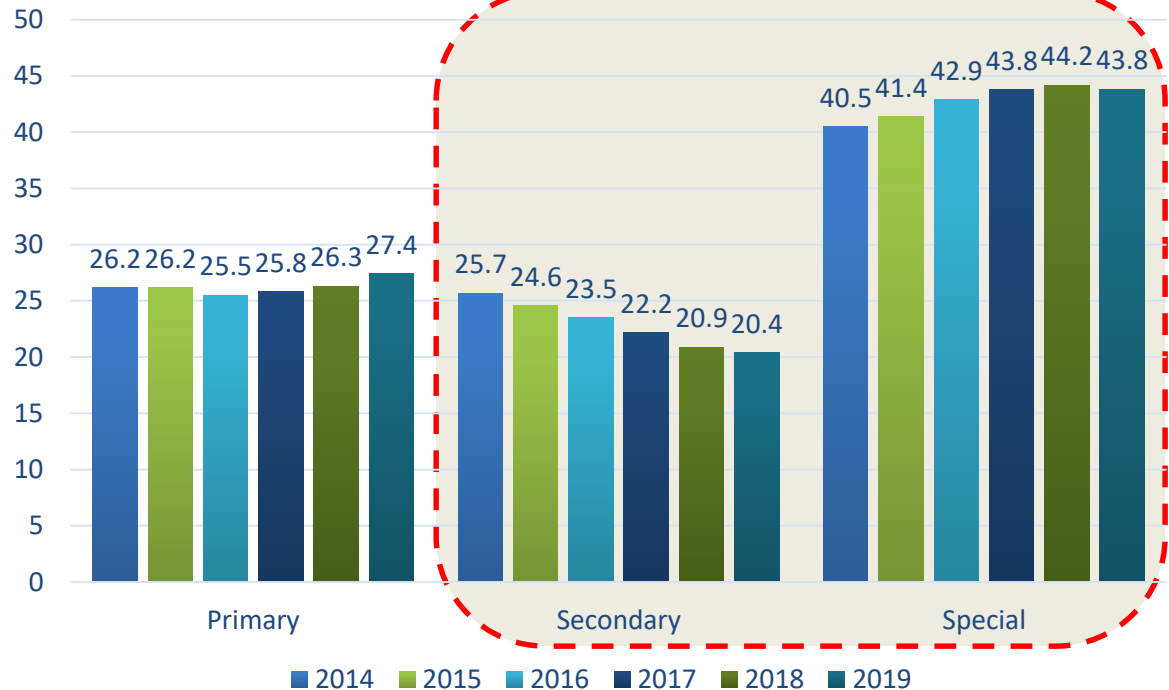
Why does this matter?

4 Building inclusive capacity in mainstream schools and settings

'A large proportion of parents in the local areas inspected lacked confidence in the ability of mainstream schools to meet their child's needs. ... Consequently, parents reported that getting an EHC plan was like a 'golden ticket' to better outcomes.'

(Ofsted & CQC)

Placement of pupils with EHCPs, 2014-2019



Source: SEN in England, 2019 (DfE)

Summary of key messages

4 Building inclusive capacity in mainstream schools and settings

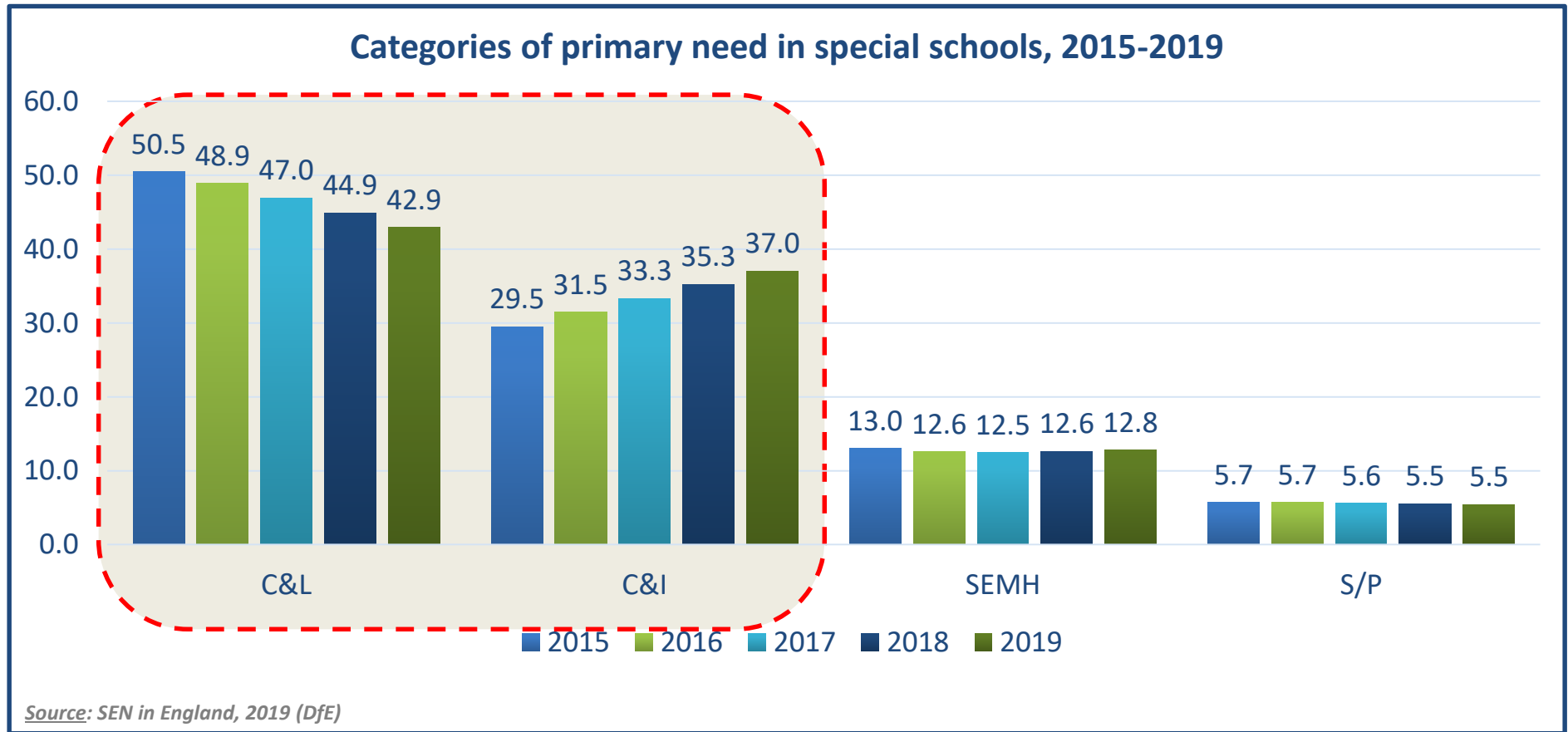
Ensure that there is a clear strategy for building inclusive capacity in mainstream schools and settings. This will require there being a set of consistent expectations about the support mainstream settings and schools will offer, but also a clear offer of support to build their capacity to deliver this support effectively.

Ensure that schools and settings have access to an explicit offer of targeted inclusion support. Be clear what targeted support can be accessed access, what will be part of a “core” offer open to all schools and settings (without requiring a statutory assessment and plan), and where there is an additional offer that settings and schools can tap into by using their own resources.

Ensure that education inclusion support is part of a broader, holistic and joined-up offer of support for young people’s care and health needs. Recognise the importance of supporting a child’s needs in their education setting, but also that those needs may be linked to issues related to their family, home or health needs that will require joined-up support from a wider range of services.

Why does this matter?

5 Developing responsive, flexible and effective local specialist provision



Key messages

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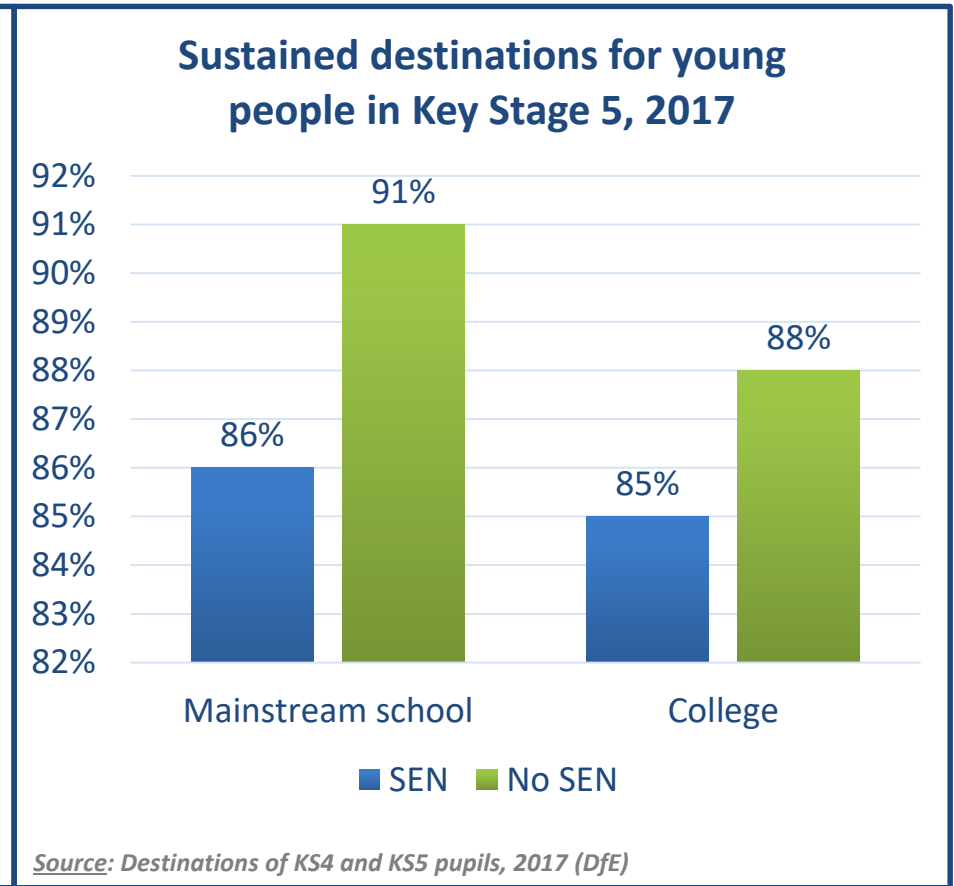
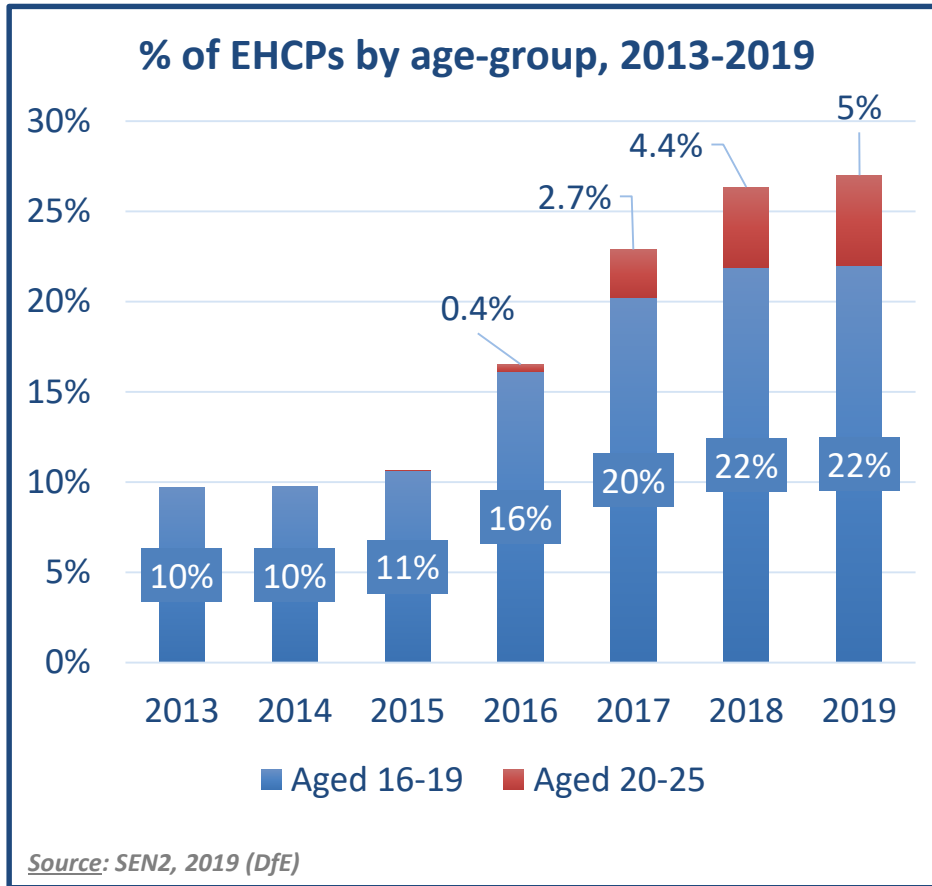
Work with local specialist providers to develop robust routines for considering local needs and shaping local provision to meet them. Developing an evidence-informed and collaborative approach to planning places in specialist SEND provision – both the state-funded and independent / non-maintained sector – so that there is an effective, collective plan for how local provision can meet local needs.

Develop a range of “mainstream plus” options. This will include working with local mainstream and specialist providers and developing models for meeting young people’s needs in learning environments that match their educational and wider developmental needs, and allow them to remain connected to their local communities.

Develop collaborative processes for considering bespoke placements for young people with the most complex needs. Bring together local specialist providers to consider how they could develop bespoke packages of support to enable young people with the most complex needs to be supported in their local communities, and ensuring strategic and effective commissioning of placements in the independent and non-maintained sector.

Why does this matter?

6 Preparation for adulthood



Key messages

6 Preparation for adulthood

Be pro-active in gathering feedback from young people about their aspirations and use this intelligence to commission pathways that will enable young people to pursue their goals. Engage young people who are likely to require further support or bespoke pathways to pursue their aspirations, and convene local education providers and wider partners to shape corresponding pathways.

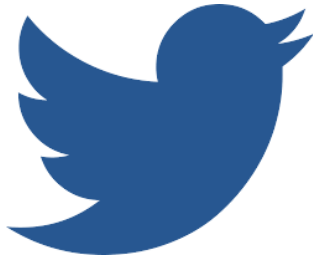
In parallel, pro-actively engage local employers to support them to develop support and opportunities for young people with SEND to make a successful transition to the world of work. Take an incremental approach to working with employers (including the council and health services), develop employment pathways, build employers' capacity, and use this learning to engage other employers.

Ensure that there is a strong, joint local offer of education, health and care options to enable young people with the most complex needs to make a successful transition to adult life. Ensure that there are effective processes for early planning of a young person's transition, as well as working across services to enable agencies to work together to put in place holistic packages of support that will enable a young person to thrive in adult life.

To continue the discussion ...



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