

CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 March 2020

Present

Councillors R Hannaford (Chair), S Aves, F Biederman, J Brazil, J Hawkins, R Hosking, T Inch, A Saywell and Mrs C Mabin

Apologies

Councillors D Sellis, C Channon, I Chubb, G Gribble, L Hellyer and M Squires

Members attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillor J McInnes

* 162 Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the two meetings held on 20 January 2020 be signed as correct records.

* 163 Coronavirus (COVID-19)

(An item taken under Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.)

(Councillor McInnes attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(1) and spoke to this item.)

The Chair had decided that the Committee should consider this item as a matter of urgency In order that the Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity and the Chief Officer for Children's Services could brief Scrutiny on the latest position regarding COVID-19.

The Chief Officer updated the Committee as follows:

- a Pandemic Incident Team had been set up, which included representation from Education;
- the Council were in daily contact with and following Public Health England guidance;
- these were unprecedented times, likely to affect lives in the long term;
- schools were being provided with the most up-to-date advice and information, all of which was available on the website;
- further guidance/new legislation from Public Health England and the Government was expected this week;
- the Council's Public Health team were responding rapidly to concerns raised; and
- a toolkit was currently being prepared, to help support communities.

The Chair wished to put on record the Committee's thanks to the Public Health team for all they were doing and all staff involved in responding to the pandemic and keeping vital services running.

The Head of Education and Learning explained that schools were receiving daily briefings; there had been two short school closures as a precautionary measure; and that the situation would stay under review. Schools were currently open.

The Head of Commissioning (Children) reported that Providers were updating business continuity plans; working on issues of staff shortages; and looking at providing care for the most vulnerable young people.

The Chief Officer for Children's Services reported that Public Health Nursing was continuing with business as usual. However, it was noted that, at a national level, nurses may be called upon to prioritise and this may be a challenge in the future.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Biederman, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hannaford and

RESOLVED that support be given to a Community Toolkit being made available to all Town and Parish Councils and Community Groups across the County.

* **164** **Public Participation**

There were no oral representations from members of the public.

* **165** **Scrutiny Committee Work Programme**

- (a) Performance reporting would revert to being dealt with at Committee, rather than by the Standing Overview Group.
- (b) a briefing note relating to Agency staffing in Children's social care had been circulated to the Committee.

* **166** **Adoption in Devon (*Minute 54/20 March 2018)**

The Committee received the Report of the Head of Children's Social Care (CS/20/05) reviewing progress of the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), Adopt South West, which managed the adoption services for children and adopted adults in Devon, Plymouth, Torbay and Somerset.

Whilst the recruitment of adopters remained a challenge both nationally and regionally, Adopt South West had seen an encouraging increase in expressions of interest in recent months and continued to develop its recruitment strategy and the support offered to adopters that made it well placed nationally.

Discussion points with Members and Officers included:

- the comprehensive training offered to new adopters;
- access to the National Adoption Support Funding, which provided access to therapeutic support for adoptive families; adoption breakdown figures were very low;
- the national adoption campaign was due to go live on 26 March (depending on the coronavirus situation);
- the capacity to assess applicants and the need to keep this under review; and
- working with the New Family Social to promote LGBT+ groups across the region.

The Committee looked forward to a further update at a future meeting.

* **167** **Progress of the SEND Improvement Plan**

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Education and Learning (attached) with an update on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Written Statement of Action.

The presentation included details on Context; the Spread across the age range of Children with EHCPs; Trends since the introduction of the new Code of Practice; Age range for new

EHCP plans; Types of Need; Increase in funding from 2019-20 to 2020-21; Budget v Actual Spend; and Educational Outcomes.

Members and Officers' discussion points included:

- the lobbying of Government for additional SEND funding for Devon was continuing;
- how eligible families could be encouraged to register for free school meals (even if not used) so that schools and the local authority could claim extra funding; and
- the recently approved £19.1 million Council investment to provide 300 additional special school places.

The presentation included sections on Understanding our Strategy; Improving Communication; Timeliness of EHCPs; and Autism. Discussions around these sections covered:

- the rollout of a New to SEN postcard providing links to further information, which had received good feedback;
- user feedback would be used to re-design the website;
- good attendance and feedback had been received from the Short Breaks organised events;
- the launch of the new online case management system, which had received 66 applications in its first week, and was welcomed by parents;
- Members' voiced concern at the 71 week wait for an autism assessment and requested comparison data from other geographical areas; and
- that all those on waiting lists were actively risk assessed.

The Chair thanked the 0-25 team for all the hard work they were doing and continuing to do.

Members requested an update report in six months' time, to include case studies.

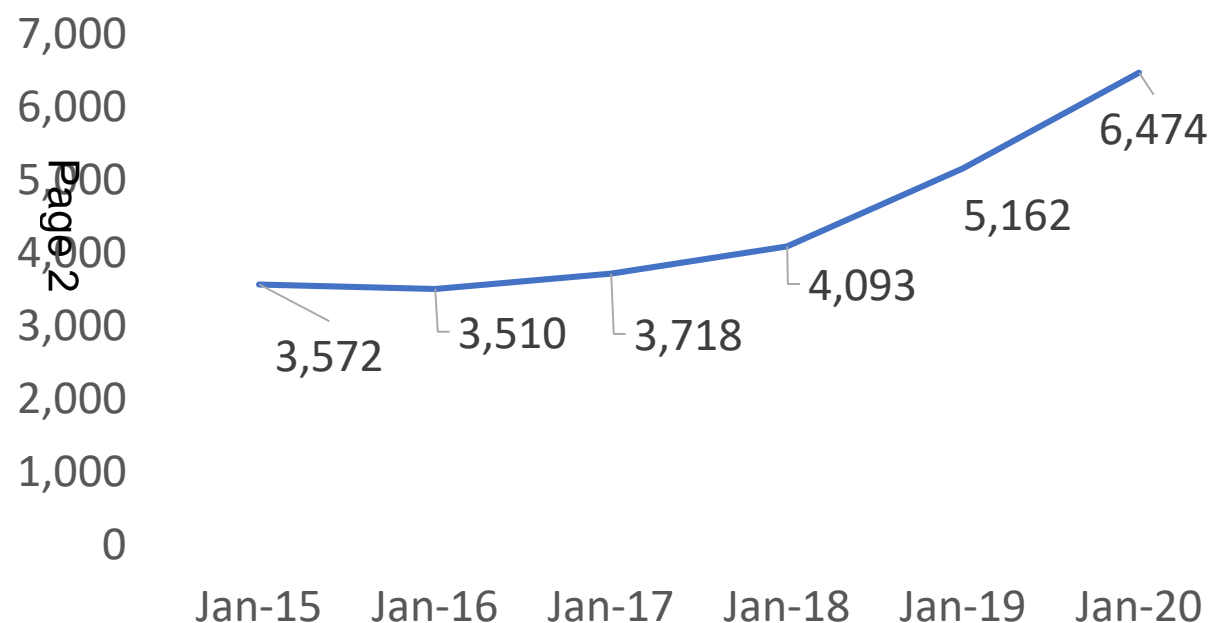
***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 4.58 pm

Special Educational Needs and
Disabilities (SEND) Inspection
Context and
Written Statement of Action
- Update March 2020

Context

Pupils with Statement/EHCP maintained by Devon LA*



Percentage change in EHC Plans from 2015 to 2019

		EHCs 2015	EHCs 2019	Change in EHCs	% change
933	Somerset	1,125	2,102	977	86.84%
865	Wiltshire	1,992	3,349	1,357	68.12%
838	Dorset	1,452	2,392	940	64.74%
884	Herefordshire	579	939	360	62.18%
935	Suffolk	2,960	4,735	1,775	59.97%
880	Torbay	882	1,331	449	50.91%
916	Gloucestershire	2,425	3,658	1,233	50.85%
878	Devon	3,572	5,162	1,590	44.51%
926	Norfolk	4,378	6,152	1,774	40.52%
908	Cornwall	2,026	2,814	788	38.89%
845	East Sussex	2,546	3,434	888	34.88%
879	Plymouth	1,574	2,024	450	28.59%
893	Shropshire	1,647	1,906	259	15.73%

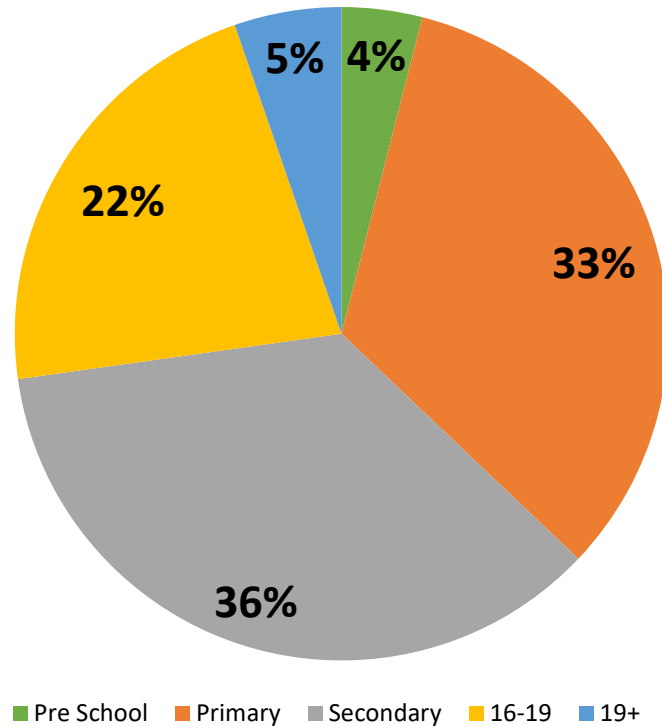
Source: SEN2_2019 table 3

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statements-of-sen-and-ehc-plans-england-2019>

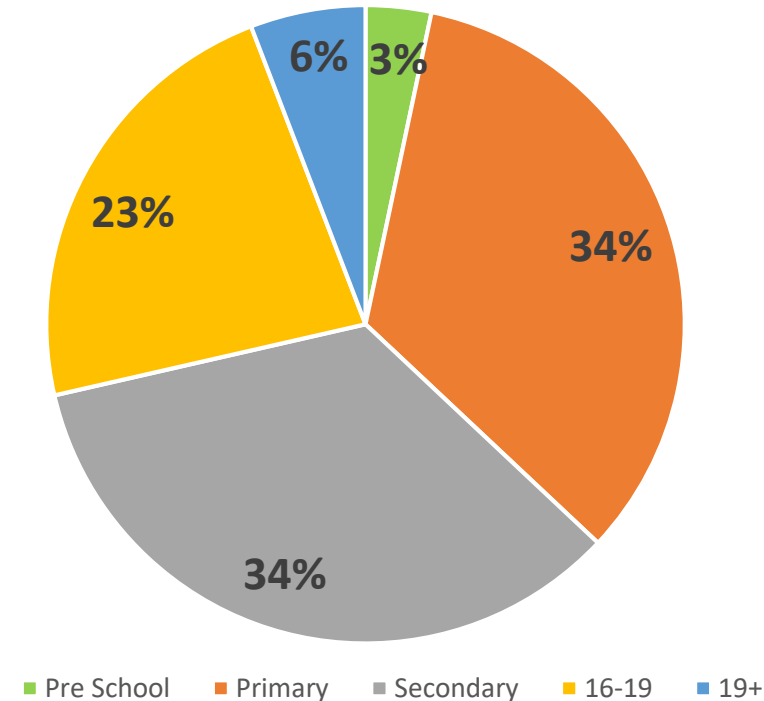
- However the percentage of children with plans was higher than the National Average in 2015 and remains higher now (3.5% compared to 3.1% Nationally).

Spread across the age range of Children with EHCPs

Total Statutory Plans England maintained - January 2019



Total Statutory Plans Devon Jan 2020

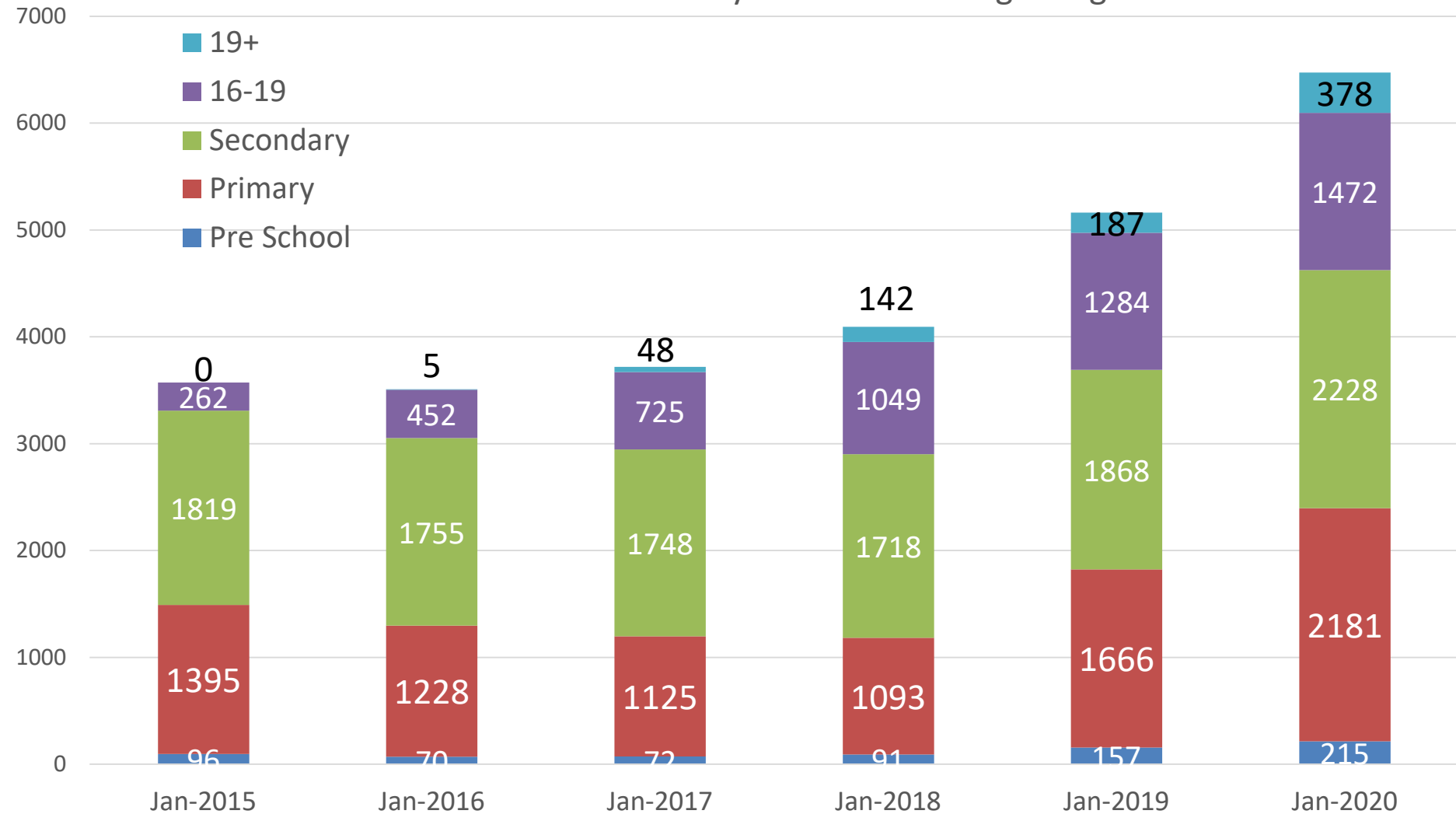


19+	378
16-19	1472
Secondary	2228
Primary	1881
Pre School	115

- Spread is similar to National as shown above however,
- There are nearly 5 times as many 16 to 19 year olds with plans than in 2015. This is due to the extended age range (0 to 25) which was brought in with the SEND Code of Practice in 2014. Growth continues in 19+ age group.

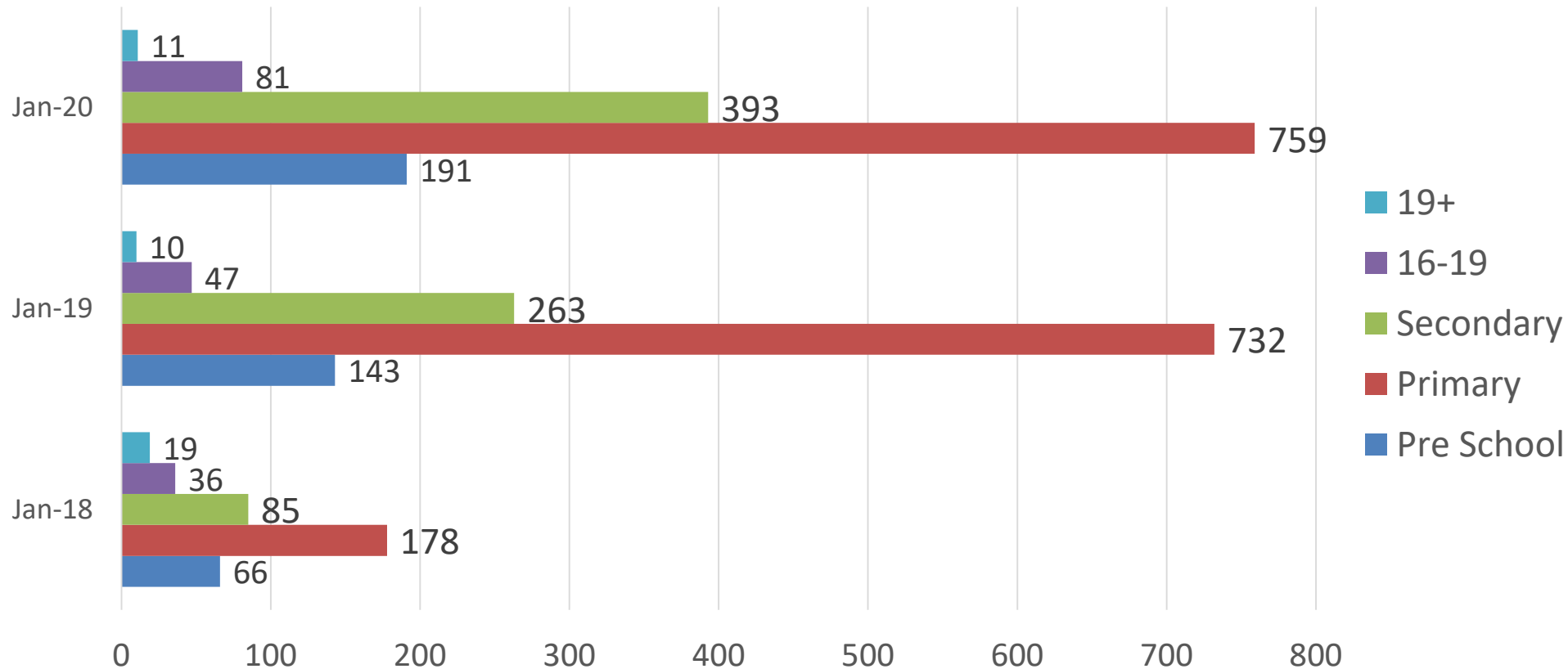
Trends since the introduction of the new Code of Practice

EHCPs maintained by Devon in each age range



More recently Age range for new EHCP plans

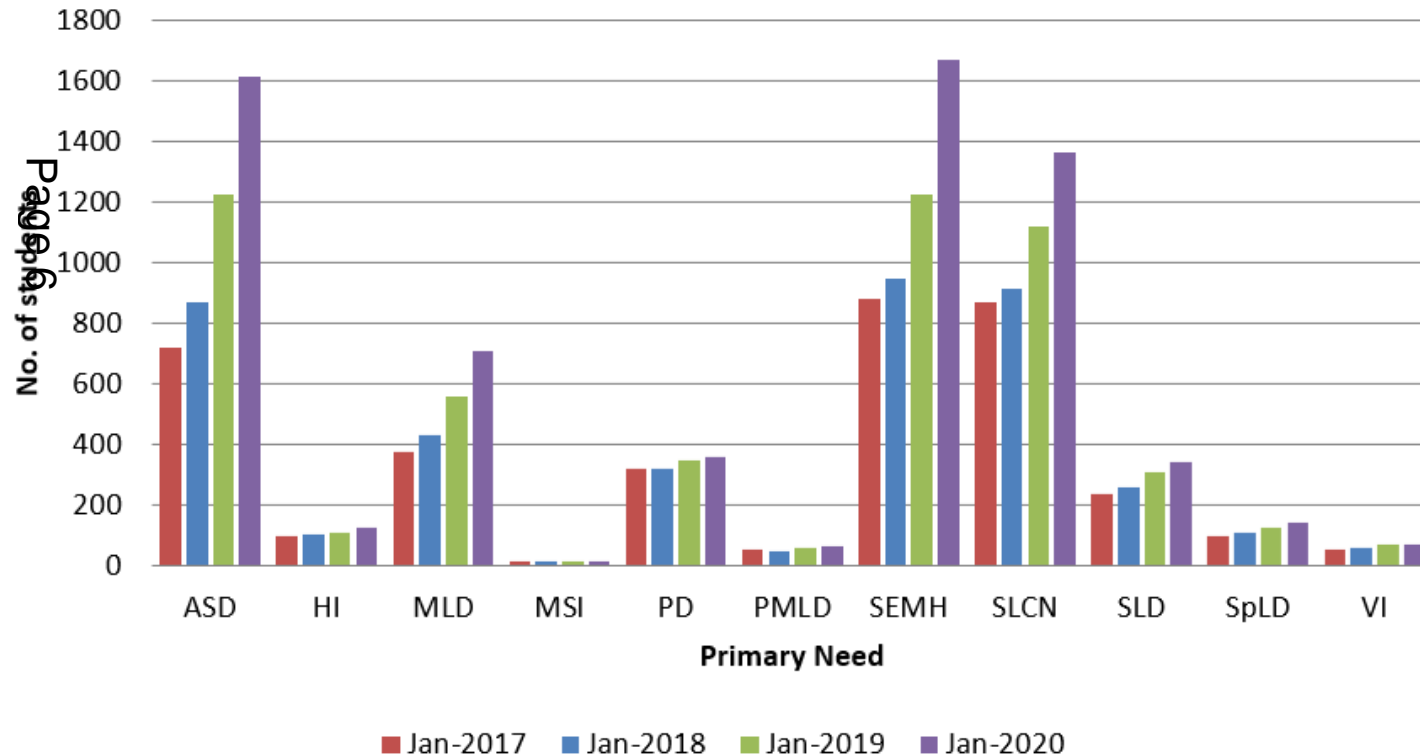
New EHCPs issued in Calendar Year by Age (Jan 2020 SEN2)



Whilst the growth in the primary sector seems most alarming, over the two years both primary and secondary plan have increased by 78% and 76% respectively.

Chart A3: Four-year breakdown of Primary Need of Statutory Plans

Total of EHCPs (Statements) Maintained by Devon LA by Primary Need



Data source: SEN2 Data Return Jan 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020

Key

- ASD -Autistic spectrum Disorder
- HI - Hearing Impairment
- MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty
- MSI – Multi Sensory Impairment
- PD – Physical Disability
- PMLD – Profound Multiple Learning Disability
- SEMH – social emotional and mental health
- SLCN – Speech Language and communication
- SLD – Severe Learning Difficulty
- SpLD – Specific Learning Difficulty (eg Dyslexia)
- VI – Visual impairment

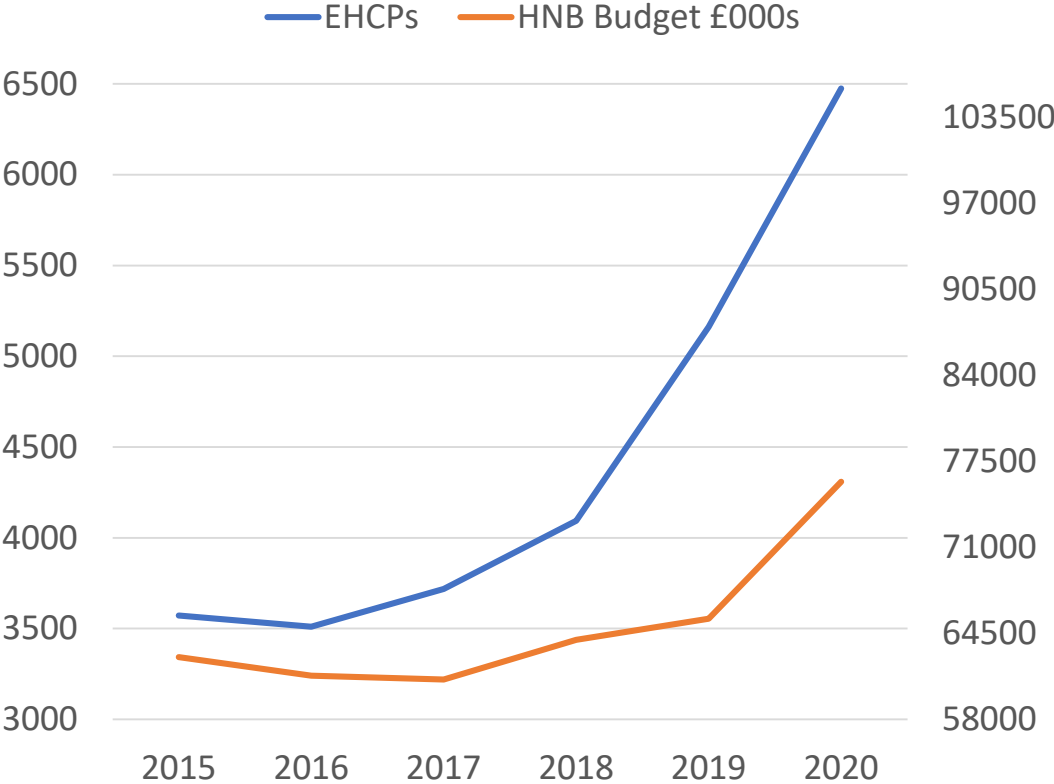
Increase in funding from 2019-20 to 2020-21

- December 2019 settlement
- Devon has seen just an additional £6.9 million (9.97%) raising the funding received from £69.1 million in 2019-20 to £76 million.
- The table opposite shows the indicative values for Devon compared to our statistical and regional neighbours. This means Devon is now ranked 126 lowest funded out of 149 Local Authorities.
- By the end of the 19/20 financial year the Local Authority **will have spent £21 million more on High needs** than was received from Government to fund this part of our work.

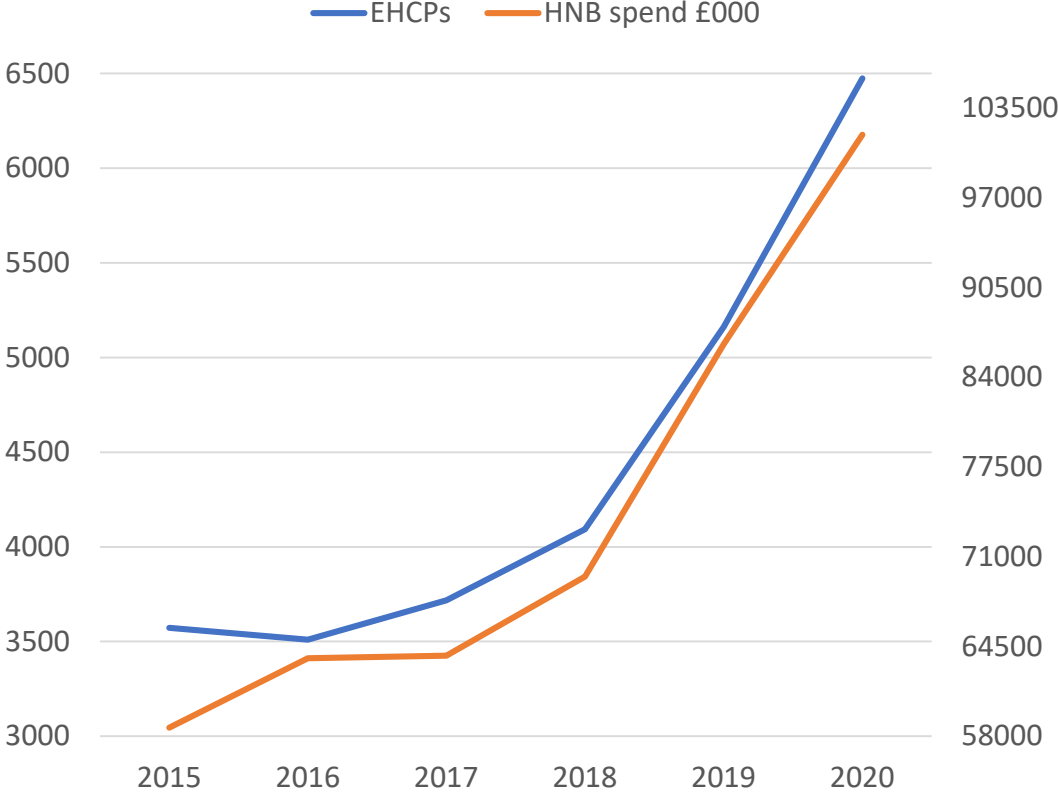
		Total 2019-20 high needs allocations (including additional funding from special free schools and the extra £125m allocated in Dec. 2018)	Total 2020-21 high needs allocations before deductions	Increase in allocation from 2019-20 and 2020-21	Percentage change over equivalent 2019-20 allocations (total cash)
908	Cornwall	£43,232,372	£50,800,069	£7,567,697	17.50%
935	Suffolk	£64,398,647	£75,468,447	£11,069,800	17.19%
884	Herefordshire	£15,681,937	£17,848,951	£2,167,014	13.82%
926	Norfolk	£81,917,357	£93,077,275	£11,159,918	13.62%
879	Plymouth	£30,166,201	£34,164,015	£3,997,814	13.25%
845	East Sussex	£52,263,677	£59,176,363	£6,912,686	13.23%
865	Wiltshire	£46,866,826	£51,996,188	£5,129,362	10.94%
916	Gloucestershire	£59,895,405	£66,429,573	£6,534,168	10.91%
933	Somerset	£52,991,635	£58,548,862	£5,557,227	10.49%
878	Devon	£69,062,120	£75,949,209	£6,887,089	9.97%
893	Shropshire	£25,768,458	£28,130,184	£2,361,726	9.17%
838	Dorset	£35,491,932	£38,668,218	£3,176,286	8.95%
880	Torbay	£17,868,239	£19,183,226	£1,314,987	7.36%

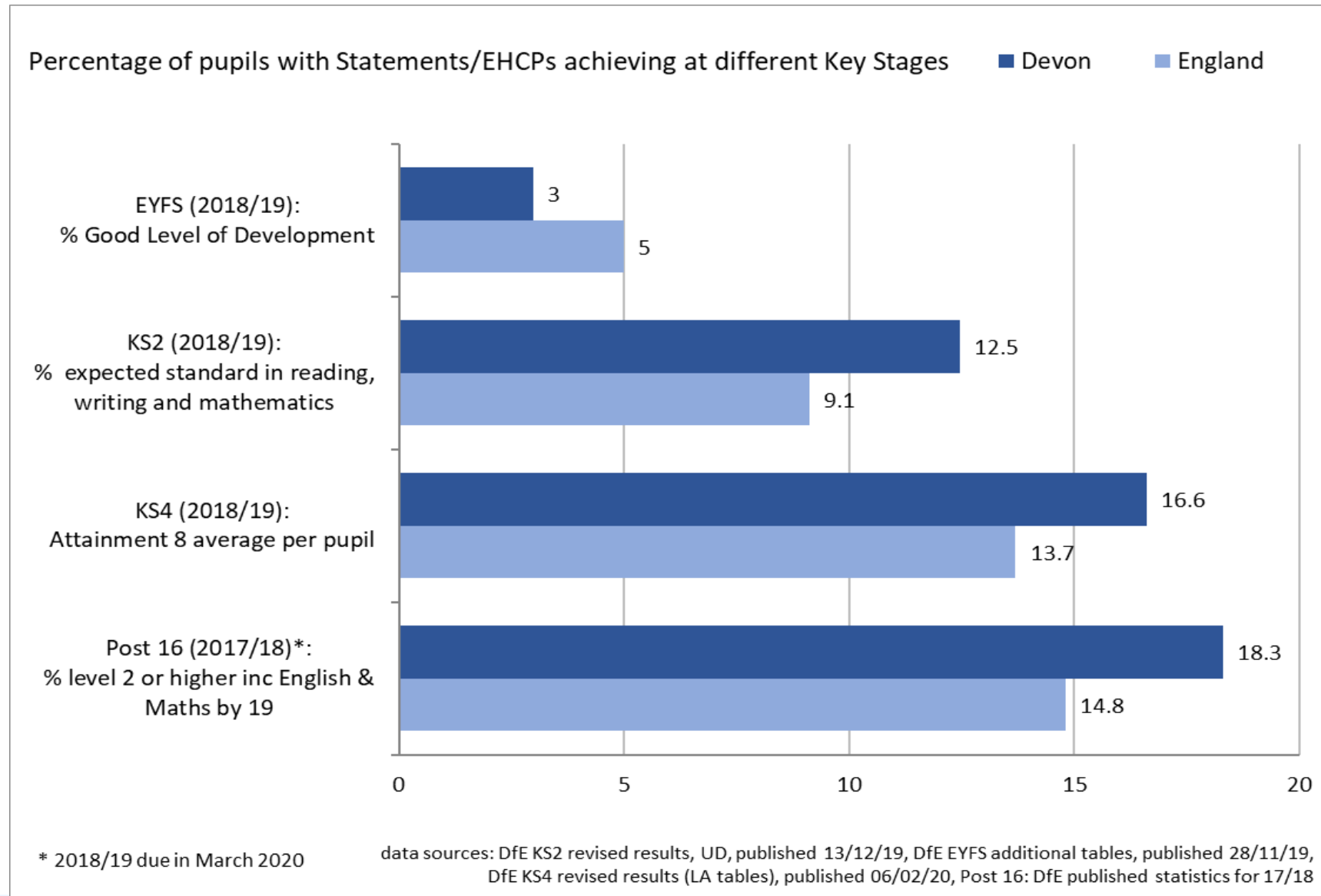
MP briefing will be shared with members and this gives the full detail of our recent funding.

Rate of change SEN and Budget



Rate of change SEN and Actual Spend





Written Statement of Action

All the services, supporting children and young people with SEND in Devon, were inspected in December 2018. As a result the Local Authority and NHS Devon were asked to make improvements in four areas:

- Understanding our strategy
- Improving communication
- Timeliness of Education Health and Care Plans
- Improving support for children with Autism



Our improvement plan to address these areas - called a Written Statement of Action - was approved by Ofsted in August 2019. The following is a summary of our progress from Nov 2019 to date




Section A

Understanding Our Strategy

A: Since November 2019 we have

- Published updates on progress in delivering the Written Statement of Action in full and in summary.
- Updated the contextual information to the webpages to keep them relevant
- New to SEND postcard and website launched
- Rolled out the new induction training across all of DCC and partners.
- Received the first interim report on our SEND transformation plans which included one to one interviews with over 60 people on how to integrate the delivery.
- Started work with SEND improvement board and DPCF on a co- produced refresh of our strategy




Finding out your child has a special educational need or a disability (SEND) affects everyone differently.

Some parents feel upset, overwhelmed and worried about how they'll cope. For others, it's a relief to finally know what's going on. Everyone's experience is different.

No matter how you're feeling about it, there's a lot to learn and a lot to take in. There are services in Devon that can help you to understand what's happening and find the right support for you.

A good place to start is Devon's SEND Local Offer website where you'll find a page just for you.


devon.cc/newtosend



Turn over for more information about where to find help.

Impact measures

- 113% increase in subscribers to the Newsletter (target was 80% increase by March 2020 from Dec 18 baseline of 604 subscribers).
- Hits on Local Offer increased to 46, 602
- 59% of find user feedback indicates that information about Devon's strategy, and how we support children with SEN and their families, is easy to find and use. Target was 50% by March 2020
- Navigation of website being reworked based on user feedback. 380 people have provided feedback to date




Have you got a minute?

We're making our special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) website easier to use.

You're invited to take part in some user research so we can check the changes we are planning to make to the website are the right ones.

Whether you've used the website before or not, we would really appreciate your input.

Sign up at devon.cc/sendwebsiteresearch



Next steps

- Promote our newsletter by sending a link or subscription via emails Twitter and Facebook
- Web pages relaunched with new navigation ready for testing
- Webpage of frequently asked questions ready to go live
- Co produce the new SEND Strategy embedding understanding and ownership throughout the process.
- Start phase 2 (implementation) of the SEND transformation work

Devon's Multi-Agency Strategy
for Children and Young People
with Special Educational Needs
& Disabilities (SEND)

2017–2020





Section B

Improving Communication

Building the capacity for parents involvement

- Parent Forum co-chairs have co-facilitated workshops across the County.
- Change in Hosting has been successful and a plan is in place strengthening the Forum.
- Over 300 parents have been reached through the Short Breaks re-design events.
- Included coffee mornings, one to one sessions and workshops in community venues.
- Next steps to engage about the re-commissioning of Learner Support Services, Autism services and the options for the Short breaks re-design.

Children and Young People's Involvement

- The Young People who lead Champions for Change have developed a plan to expand their membership and reach.
- Schools have been asked to sign up to ensure children with SEND are integral part of School Councils.
- Young Adults have been involved in the development of the Housing and Accommodation strategy to support people to live in their own homes and to make planned and informed choices about where they live in Devon
- The Autism Involvement Group have been informing the development of the local post diagnostic team in Devon; to ensure that people have timely access to both health and care support to prevent escalation of and meet their needs.



Listen, hear, understand

Voices should be heard, not ignored



Parents have said it is good to

- Be heard and understood.
- Get together and get involved having our voice heard.
- Be with like minded people in the same / similar boat.
Felt listened to and learned new things.
- Very good that DCC are listening to families.
- Listen to all the views and suggestions other parents put forward. Actually being listened to.



Section C

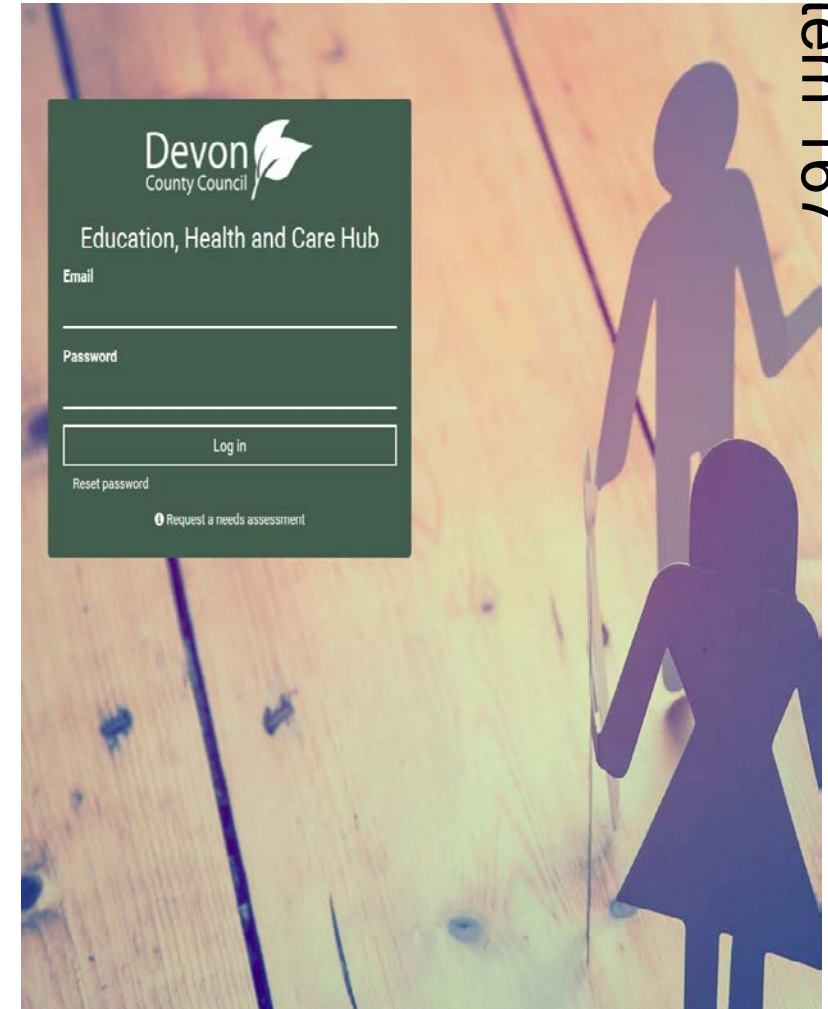
Timeliness of EHCP's

C: Since November 2019 we have

- Launched the new online case management system which was welcomed by parents. 66 applications in the first week, 216 in the first month.

Parental feedback has been positive. We were pleased parents felt it was “very easy to complete”.

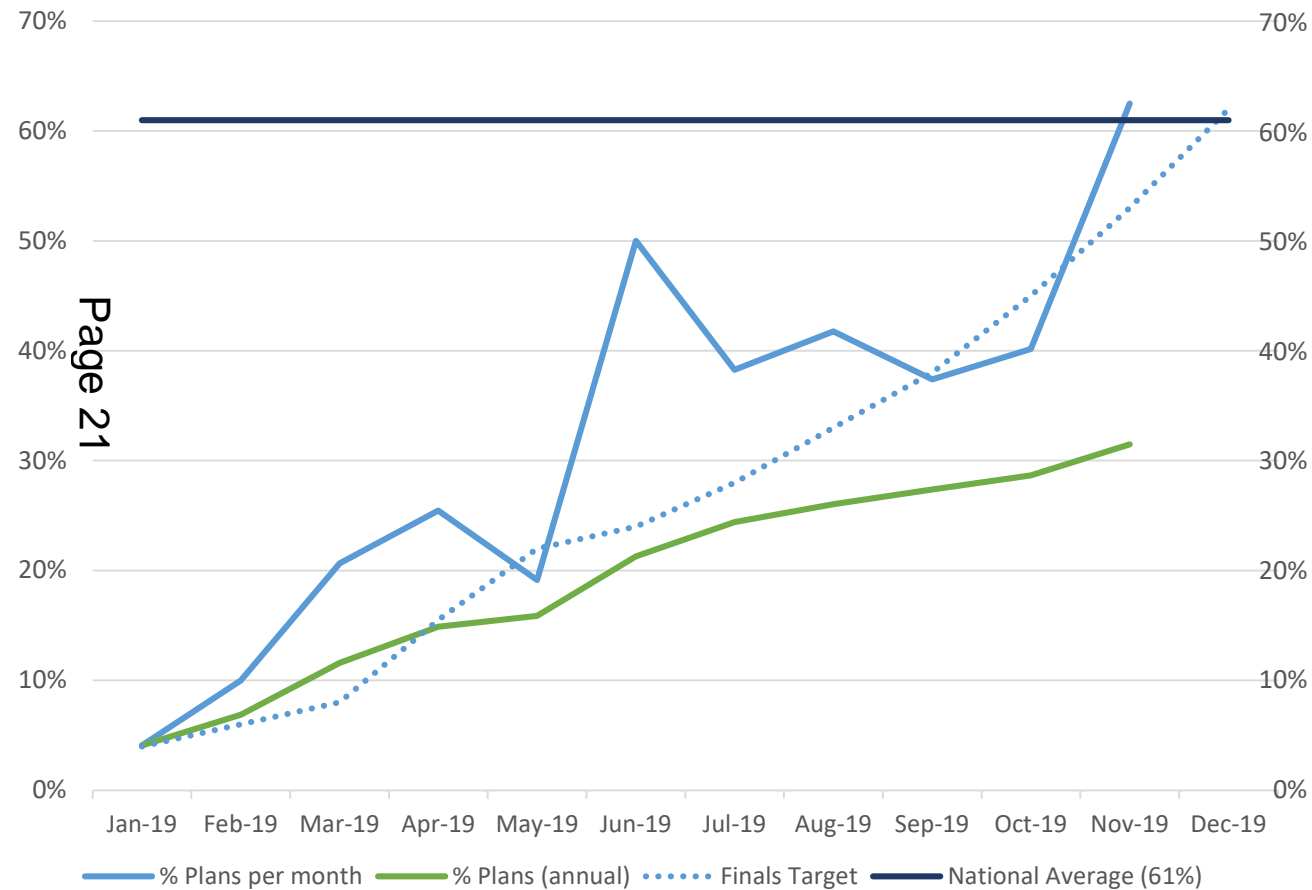
- Feedback form developed by parent consultant and available online from Jan 2020. First feedback point is at 6 weeks.
- 98.5% of primary to secondary transfers completed on time.
- SENCO for SENCO information published on SEN school strategies.
- Designated Social Care Officer in post.
- Secured 19.1 million pounds to provide 300 new state funded special school places.



EHCP Timeliness

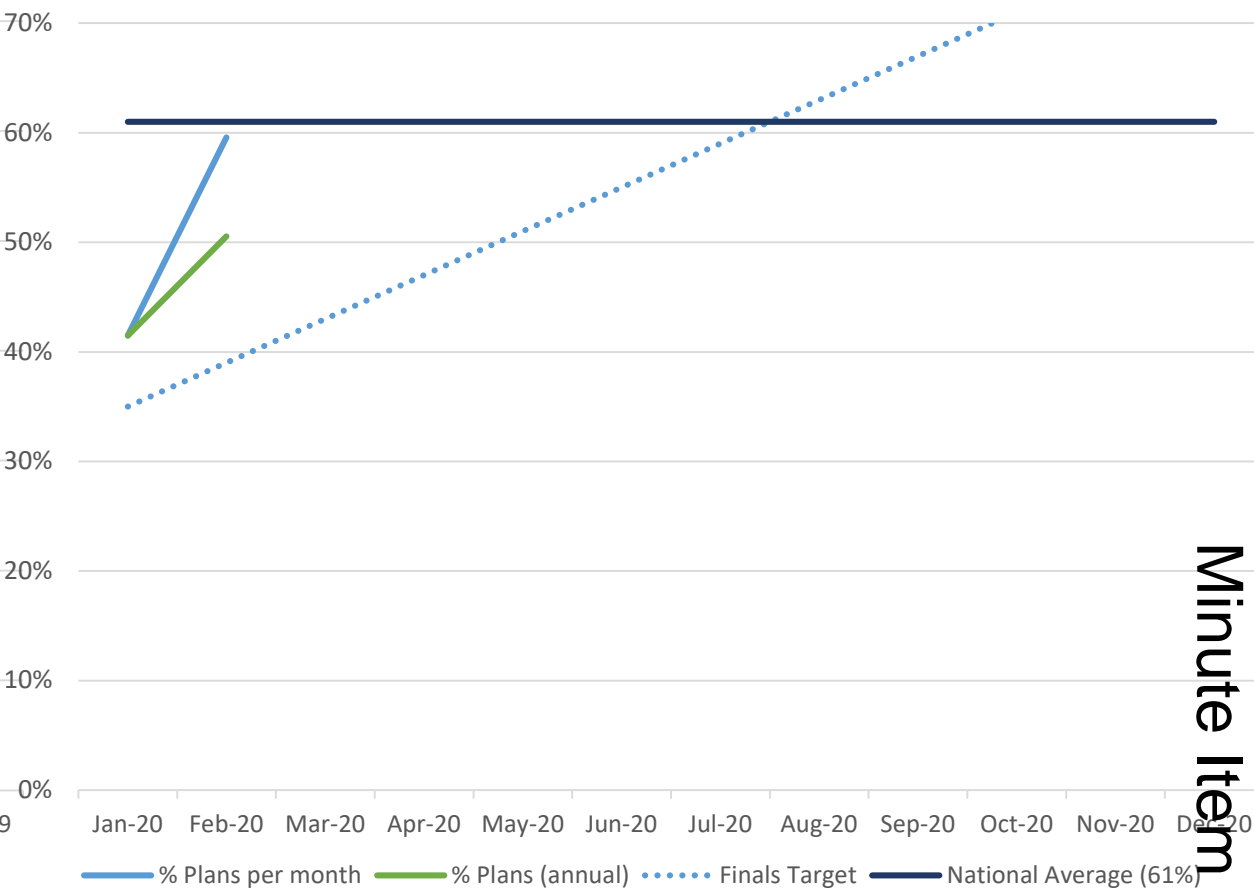


EHC Plans issued on time in 2019



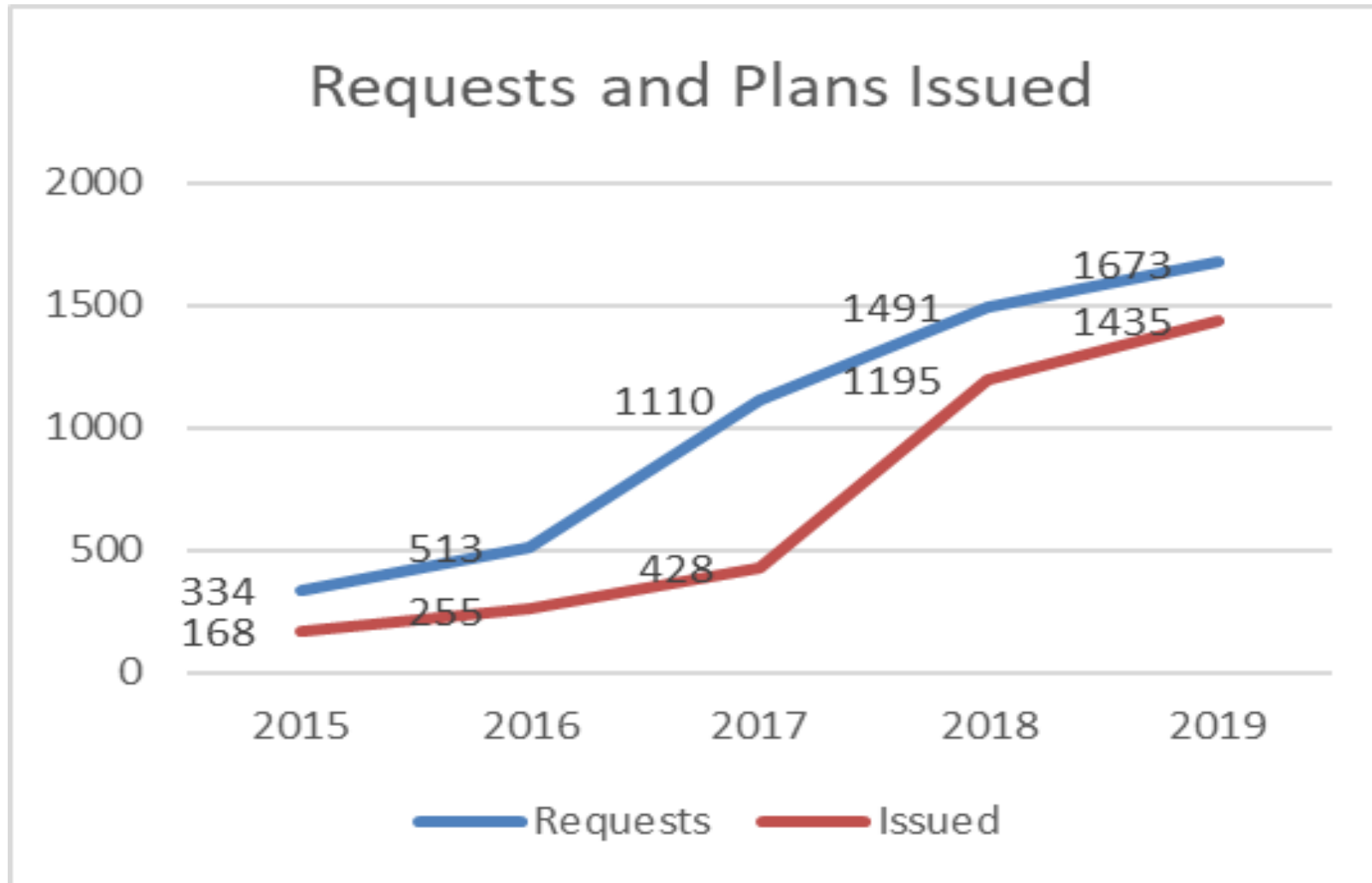
Highest November 2019 63%, Annual Average 32%

EHC Plans issued on time 2020



February 2020 60% , Annual Average 52%

EHCP Productivity



Feedback from families



24th February

Thank you so much . I really appreciate you checking. Fab!

18th February

'thank us from the bottom of her heart' as it will 'make such a massive massive impact on his future'. She is going to be writing to the local MP and Secretary for Education to express this and urge them to give funding for more settings like this to benefit other children.

19th February

It's excellent thanks. No more amendments needed. Thank you again for your time and patience.

4th February

A quick message of thanks for attending the review meeting yesterday. I am hoping with the changes in provision we can get MG back into a school setting as soon as possible. I appreciate the time and efforts at the meeting.

29th January

Fabulous. Thanks so much for all your work and communications with me. It's comforting to know that this is in good hands.

23rd January

Great. Hurrah all done within time frame which is good for everyone involved. I'll continue to work alongside you as long is needed.

8th January

I was really impressed with the depth and accuracy of the Ed Psych report and the specific detail of the plan. It really felt as if everyone had listened. Thank you.

6th January

Since having the EHCP the right support is now being in place and my son has thrived and it has had a huge positive impact. Once the EHCP is in place the system then really works".



Section D

Autism

D: Since November 2019 we have



- Additional clinics have been set up to provide families with assessment appointments. These include weekends.
- Recruitment to additional staffing within Livewell, Babcock and RDE to provide additional capacity in undertaking and contributing to assessments.
- Improved joint working between the ASD team and Paediatricians – scheduling of appointments so that the assessment outcome can happen at Multi disciplinary meeting.



D: Since November 2019 we have

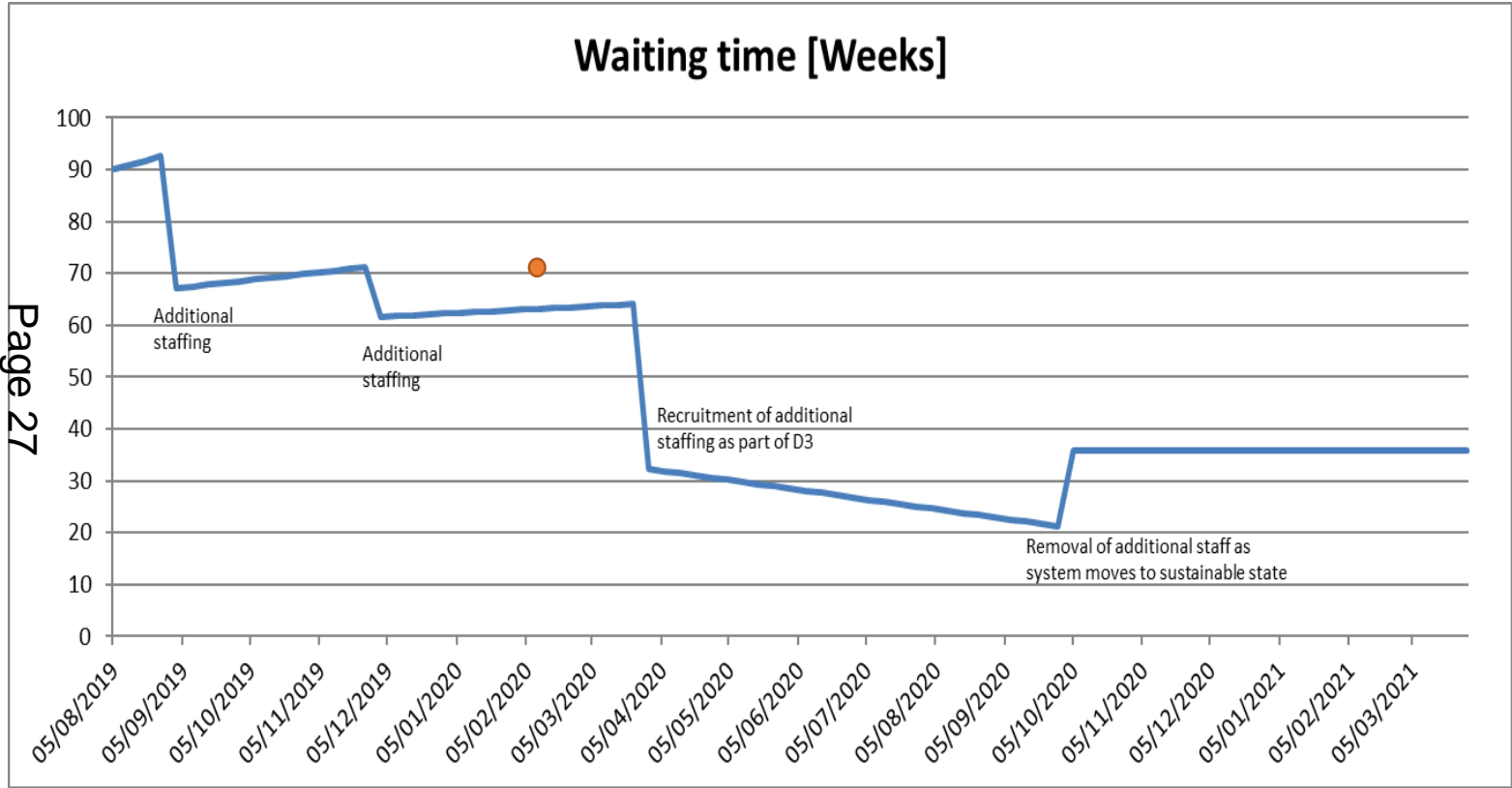


- Training planned for staff in 3Di and Autism Diagnostic Observations Schedule (ADOS) during March and May for staff (incl CAMHS) which will increase the capacity in the workforce to undertake and contribute to the assessment process including school/setting based and home observations as well as post diagnostic support.
- Babcock have received 153 names on wait list in transition so that they can engage and support school and families to help reduce anxiety and support successful transition.
- A Group feedback style workshop with parents following assessment has been introduced.
- 'Go To Families' - ASD team offering to attend existing parent groups to offer information, advice and guidance.

Waiting times



Target



FEBRUARY 2020:
Average Wait 71 weeks
70% of Children wait for more than 18 weeks.

Assessments completed
Jan 2019 - 39
Jan 2020 - 74

There were 470 referrals in Qtr 3. Monthly figures vary greatly

What's next summary...

Over the next few months we will focus on:

- Completing the review of how we can better integrate staff who work to support children with SEND
- Continue to support the Parent Carer Forum Devon to reach more parents and bring existing parent carer support groups into the fold.
- Include the EHCP review process in the new online system.
- Finalise the second stage SEND training for all practitioners who work with children and young people.
- Develop the Graduated Response Tool to include Health elements.
- Reducing the average waiting time for an autism assessment and increasing the range of support available while you wait.

