

Update on Progress with SEND Written Statement of Action Nov 2019

Report of the Head of Education & Learning

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendation(s):

That the committee note the actions taken and progress made by the local area in delivering improvements following the SEND review, as set out in [Devon's Written Statement of Action](#).

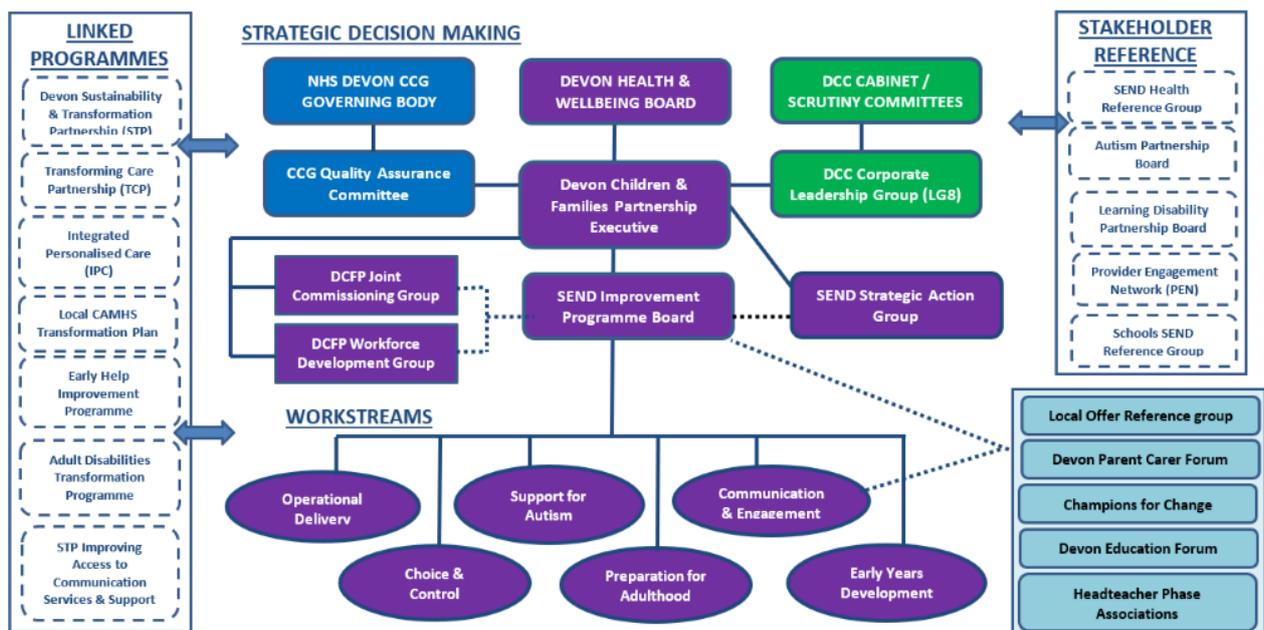
1. Background

Between the 10th and 14th of December 2018, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted a joint inspection of local area to determine the effectiveness of Devon's approach to implementing the special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms. The letter summarising their findings confirmed the Devon Children's and Families Partnership self-assessment.

The inspection identified strengths in relation to positive academic outcomes, support for children with the most complex needs and the strong commitment and dedication from staff across the local area. However, they identified four areas requiring significant improvement and determined that a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) was necessary.

A strategic action group was created to develop the WSoA. The group had clear lines of accountability to the governance boards as set out below.

SEND PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE & REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS



The WSoA was written after wide consultation with stakeholders including young people, families, schools, patterns/stakeholders and Councillors as set out below

- Phase one: a series of workshops and meetings to understand the views of all stakeholders as to what the local area could do to improve against the four areas of significant weakness identified by Ofsted and CQC. This informed the content of the plan.
- Phase two: more detailed discussions to develop the draft plan (actions, outcomes and timescales).
- Phase three: The draft plan was published online with a feedback form that parents and other stakeholders could use to comment and make further suggestions. Meetings also took place with a number of partners and stakeholder groups.
- Final stage: Further amendments were made based on this feedback and the WSoA was submitted to Ofsted at the end of July.

Ofsted asked for some amendments to the plan, mainly in relation to timescales. These amendments were made by the Strategic Action Group and the statement resubmitted. [Ofsted gave final approval](#) to the WSoA on 14th August 2019.

2. Update on progress

The period between the SEND review taking place and the WSoA being approved by Ofsted was used effectively to progress the plans for improvement and an [update was provided to Scrutiny on 18th March 2019](#).

Direct accountability for ensuring the Written Statement of Action is delivered rests with the Strategic Action Group (SAG) who report to the accountable boards as described above. The SAG meets monthly to monitor progress, and, on a quarterly basis, is supplemented by advisors from the Department of Education and NHS England.

General Actions

- On [10th July 2019](#) the Council agreed additional investment to increase capacity within the SEN team, the Childrens Participation team, the Preparation for Adulthood team and Childrens Social Care (14.2 full time equivalent staff at an ongoing cost of just over £640,000 per annum plus one-off investment for 8.5 full time equivalent staff for a short-term period at a cost of £378,000 in 2019/20 and £58,000 in 2020/21).

The posts were advertised over the summer period and appointed, most have now taken up their posts, with just a few due to start in January after notice periods have been served.

- A business case for £750,000 to address the autism diagnosis waiting list was agreed by the CCG.

The below sections provide detailed information in relation to the strands contained within the WSoA Action.

Strand 1: Strategic plans and the local area's SEND arrangements are not embedded or widely understood by the stakeholders, including schools, settings, staff and parents and carers.

Key actions

- An opt-in option to the local offer website to get automatic updates has been completed and further improvements have been made to content.
- The WSoA, published on Local Offer website, has been updated to show progress against each action. A summary version of the WSoA is available for families.
- Regular news items are published on Local Offer website and distributed through SEND newsletter network. Further web content is currently being designed by the comms team.
- The annual Early Help roadshows this year included workshops on Special Education Needs. Positive feedback has been received in evaluations around improved understanding of systems and responsibilities.
- SEND/Early Help practitioner survey has been completed. 1066 responses have been received and initial results shared with all organisations and the Devon Childrens and Families Partnership. Detailed analysis looking at organisations and geographical results is underway.
- SEND induction training (module one) has been approved and is ready for pilot group testing prior to full roll out. Engagement with stakeholders to secure county wide take up of the training by new staff and relevant existing staff is nearly complete. First SEND induction training (module one) has been run with council members with good attendance.
- Decision makers within the SEN team have now completed the IPSEA (Independent parental special education advice) legal training; Decision Making and the Law.

Evidence of impact in strand one

- Increased use of the SEND Local Offer webpages amongst parent carers and workers.

	2017-18	2018-19	Increase
Sessions (number of devices accessing the pages)	34,709	47,947	38%
Page views (number of times a page is viewed)	37,951	63,683	68%

Data on page views is based on 1st September 2018 – 31st August 2019 and comparisons are against the preceding academic year (1st September 2017 – 31st August 2018).

- Social Media: Facebook and Twitter updated regularly with relevant content to boost the number of followers and people engaging with the posts.

Channel	Followers May 2018	Followers May 2019	Change	Current followers (Sept 2019)
Twitter	675	900	+225 +25%	916
Facebook account	not available	440	not available	460
Facebook page	142	207	+65 +31%	219

- The SEND Local Offer newsletter; from 1st September 2018 – 31st August 2019: 529 new subscribers, 890 total subscribers

Key next steps

- Publish information for parents new to SEND.
- Further website updates are scheduled.
- Analysis of SEND/Early Help survey will be completed and findings used to inform training.
- Module 2 of the training for all staff working with children and families to be finalized.

Strand 2 Significant concerns were reported about communication with key stakeholders, particularly with parents and families.

Key actions

- Strengthening engagement with parents
 - A host organisation was identified and put in place to provide a stronger infrastructure for Devon Parent Carers' Voice (DPCV)
 - Parent reps have co-designed materials about the new Parent Carer Forum. The DPCV membership / mailing list will be connected to new Forum arrangements.
 - Engagement plan and calendar presented to SEND Improvement Board in September.
- Champions for Change Fun Day for young people and their parents was held on 28th September 2019
- Parents are helping to design our feedback surveys and an expert (parent rep) is working with 0-25 team to define specific questions in response to the areas identified through the Local Offer Reference Group (LORG.)
- Parent carer reps reviewed of the Local Offer website and set out the "skeleton" of the Local Offer webpages, to ensure that the arrangement of information makes sense and is accessible for parents.
- Local Offer links of neighboring authorities have been made accessible
- 350 parents have expressed an interest in service redesign. They are initially being invited to get involved in the Community Short Breaks re-procurement

Evidence of Impact

- August 2018 – August 2019 more parents/carers accessing activities to support children:
 - 618 Children 0-5 accessing Let's Talk More Screening and targeted group activity
 - 607 Parents/carers accessing Let's Talk More targeted group activity
 - 117 Children 0-5 accessing Step by Step targeted group
 - 189 Parents/carers accessing Step by Step targeted group
- Ambassador programme launched. Six parents want to volunteer in Ambassador roles.

Key next steps

- Priority areas of work that parent carers want to work on with us, agreed.
- Parent designed feedback survey questions ready to go live in November. Original timescales changed due to good engagement from parents at a time convenient to them to attend meetings.
- Events are being held during November for parents to engage in the future design of short breaks services.

Strand 3 The time it takes to issue EHC Plans and the variable quality of these plans. Plans do not consistently capture a child and young person's needs and aspirations. EHC Plans are not able to be used as a valuable tool to support the planning and implementation of education, health and care provision to lead to better lived experiences for the child and their families.

Key actions

- Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) first assessment process reviewed and changed.
- SEN Team structural changes implemented and transition planning for young people after year 9 (the year in which they turn 14) has been strengthened.
- A new EHCP case management system has been purchased. Test phase later this term with roll out for first assessments from January 2020. A further roll out for the review process is planned for April 2020

- Monitoring of the timeliness of advice and information from services at 6 weeks now in place.
- EHCP Charter Proposal
- A Quality Assurance framework EHCP has been agreed and baseline set from which to measure progress.

Evidence of Impact

Timeliness

- 1103 EHCPs were issued in 2019 (37% increase on last year when 806 were issued). Between July and September 2019 an average of 39% plans issued were on time. Overall timeliness at end September is 27%, below target, as a consequence of continued increased demand, but nevertheless a month on month improvement
- 52% of EHCPs that are moderated currently meet standards. Staff in the SEN team have successfully completed the National Association of Special Educational Needs (NASEN) SEND Caseworker award.
- Some of the positive responses received in the last month, following final plan issue.

- First I would like to say thank you so much for all your help and understanding with this - I do feel as if xxxx best interests are definitely being served - thank you
- I am pleased we managed to reach an acceptable path forward to the issues, and thank you sincerely for your professional input
- Yippy. You are amazing. Party time. Wow I can even write her name on her uniform whoop whoop. No going back now. Now to sort out school meals and she's completely sorted. O my god what a relief. Thanks for all your help.

Key next steps

- Updated guidance to professionals is in development.
- SENCO development focused on embedding the [graduated response](#), to be available to all schools.
- A satisfaction questionnaire is being developed with parents.
- Focus groups offered to discuss with parents targeted and specific issues.
- IPSEA legal training disseminated across services.

Strand 4 Weaknesses in the identification, assessment, diagnosis and support of those children and young people with autism spectrum disorder.

Key actions

- Action has been taken to increase capacity and reduce the number of young people waiting for assessment. Providers are setting up additional clinics, recruiting additional 11.8 (Full time equivalent) staff as well as implementing improvements in assessment process.
- A workshop meeting has been held with parents of children with autism to understand their views of the current system and how to improve.
- Parent awareness workshops have been held and evaluated
- Working with Girls and ASD training has been devised and promoted to the workforce to take place in the next period.

Evidence of Impact.

As additional funding has just been secured there is no clear evidence of impact to report. It is however noted that the number of children awaiting assessment continues to grow as shown below.

Measure	June	July	August
Number of children & young people waiting for assessment	1,593	1,954	2254
Median waiting time from referral to assessment (no. of weeks based on average across all 3 localities)	67	61	74

Key next steps

- Pre and post diagnostic support being scoped to be shared and recommendations drafted.
- Specialist Behaviour Support Service/Team information from other areas (Bristol & Kensington) to be reviewed.
- NHS England led event for Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Further work on updating the Graduated Response Toolkit is planned to better map health provision alongside the work of school and other agencies.
- Identifying additional metrics (besides assessment wait times) that can be used to measure the effectiveness and impact of actions to address weaknesses in the ASD offer.

Appendix 1: Devon's Context

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Children Services and Schools: Councillor James McInnes

Chief Officer for Childrens Services: Jo Olsson

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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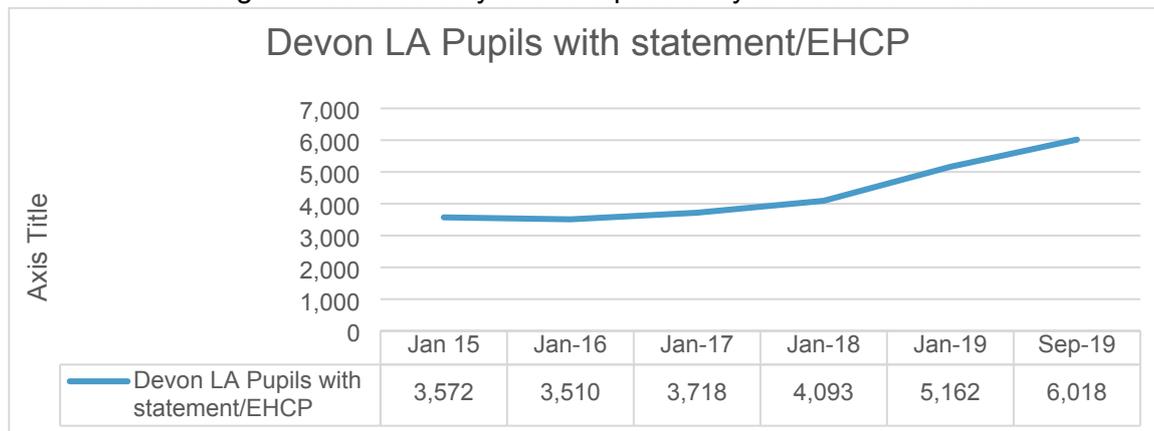
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Appendix 1

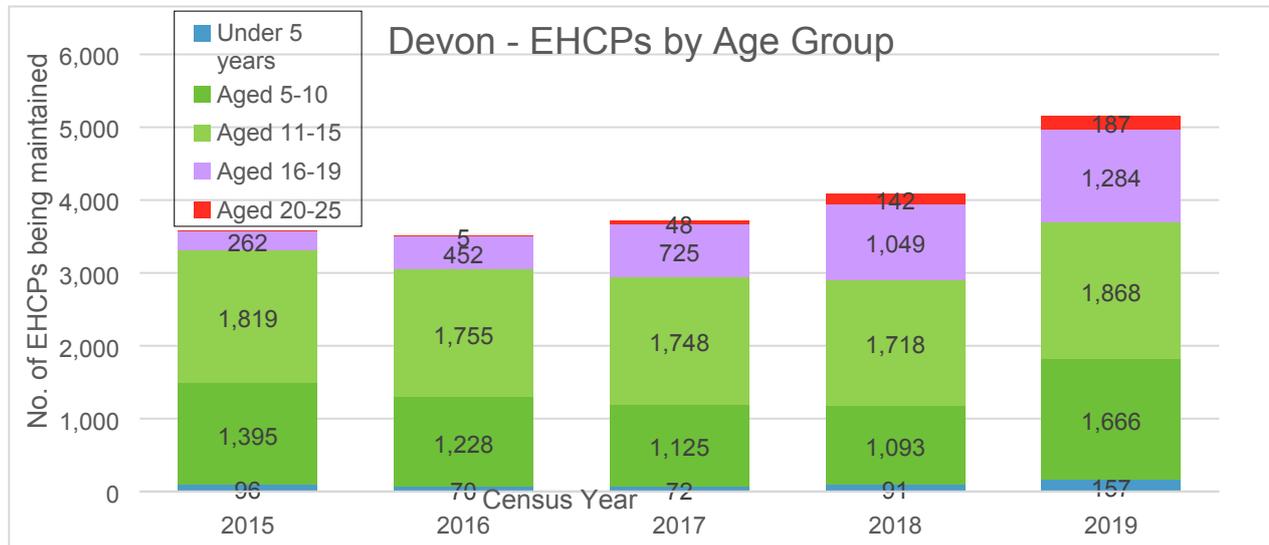
Devon's Context

- The 2017 Census reported **approximately 204,000 young people aged 0 to 25** and approximately 140,760 children and young people under the age of 18 years live in Devon. This is 18.3% of the total population in the area.
- In spring 2019 there were 106,295 children attending Devon schools. A further 1265 are known to be home educated (total 107, 560 children)
- In August 2019 there were
 - 20,137 children and young people who had an identified special educational need in Devon.
 - 14,059 children were supported at school level, without the need for a local authority determined plan
 - 6078 children and young people had an Education Health and Care plan.

This number has grown considerably over the past few years as shown below.



The chart below shows how this increase has been split across the age ranges in Devon. There are nearly 5 times as many pupils age 16 to 19 years old who have EHC Plans than there were in 2015. This was expected as FE learners who had previously had statements ceased, now had EHCPs, however there are an additional 187 young adults over 19 who also now have a plan. These age groups were previously without the legal protection of EHCPs. Within the statutory school age range the largest growth has been seen in the primary phase.



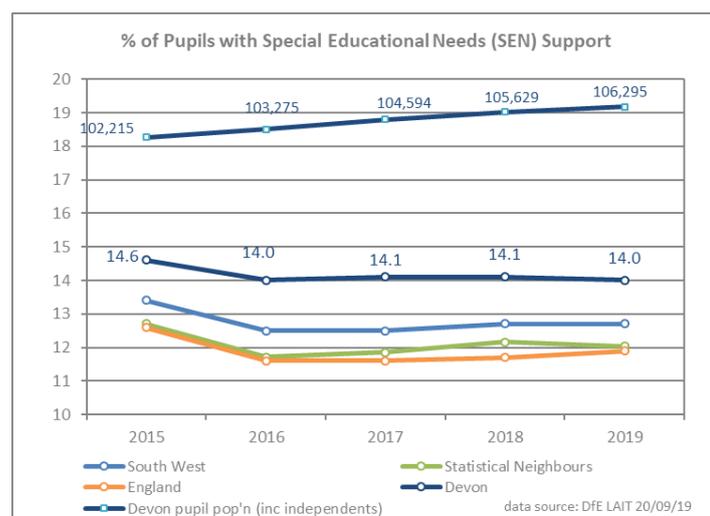
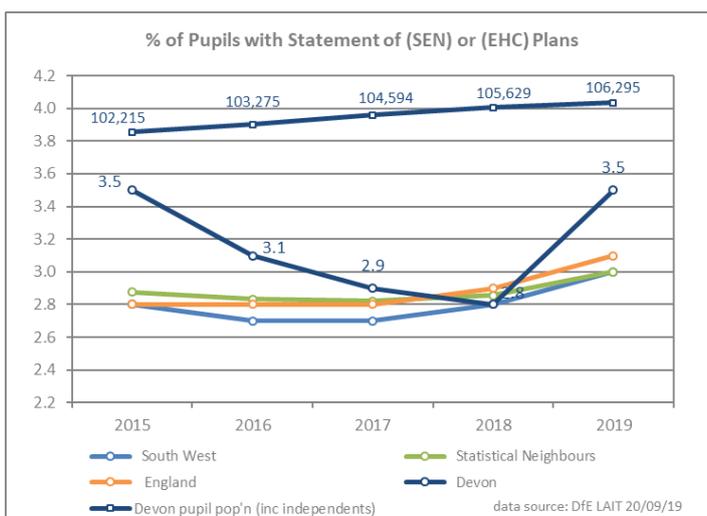
Funding however has not kept pace with this growth and this misalignment has left a significant funding gap between the budget received from the Department for Education and the actual cost of delivering the requirements of the Code of Practice.

The funding gap between the amount received and the amount actually spent by Devon is shown below.

High Needs Block	2015/16	2018/19	2019/20
Budget Allocated by the DfE in millions	61.3	65.4	65.2
Cumulative Funding Gap (the difference between the funding received and the money actually spent by Devon LA – Note this does not include Health or care contributions which are in addition to the above)	4 million	7 million	18.8 ⁽¹⁾

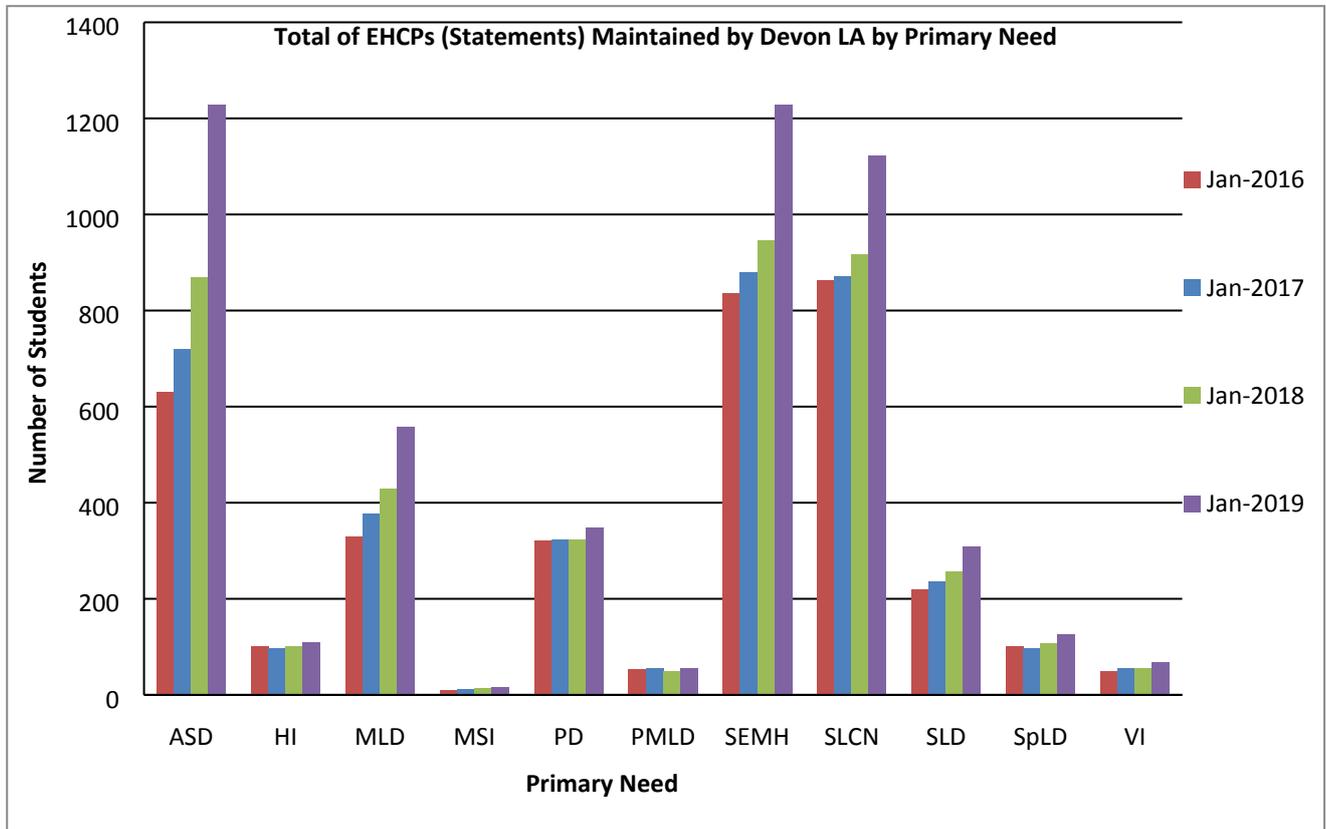
1. This is a projected figure taking into account growth predictions

Devon has more children supported at both SEN support level and with an EHCP than seen elsewhere in the country.

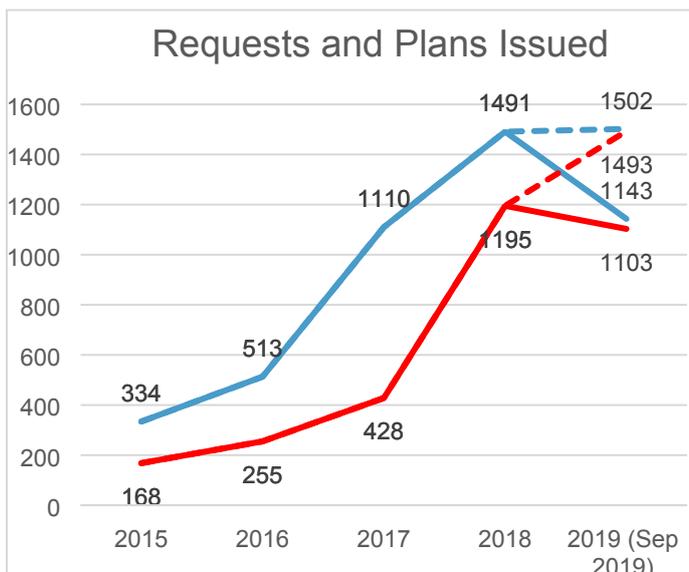


The top three categories of need for this cohort of young people, making up two thirds of the cohort, are:

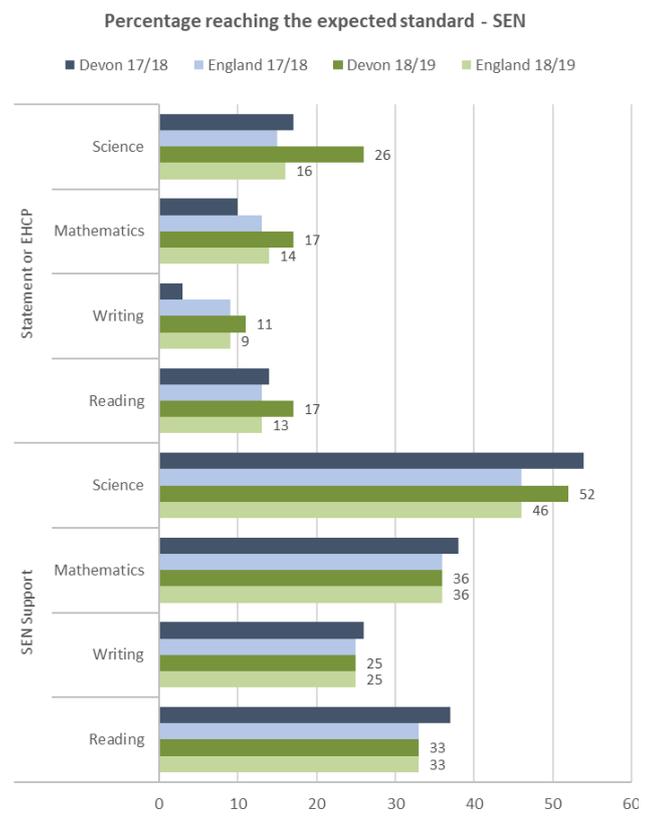
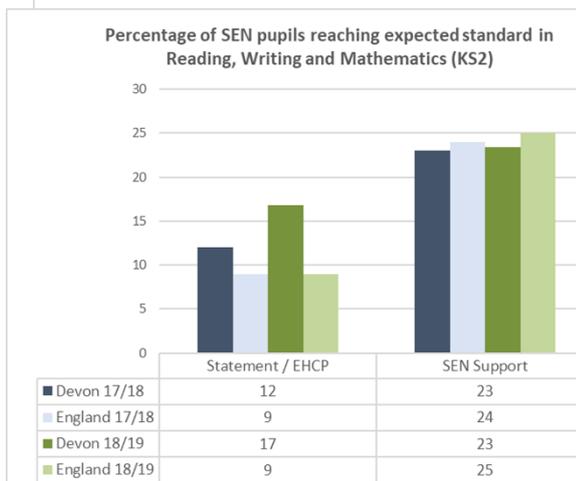
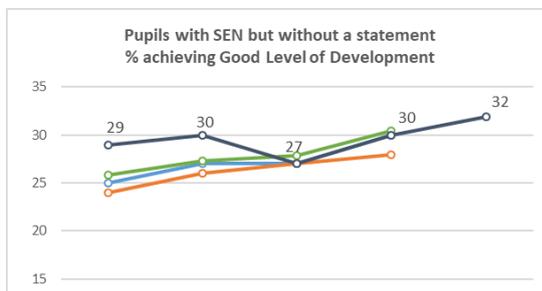
- SEMH: Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties
- ASD: Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- SLCN: Speech, Language and Communication needs



The below shows our monitoring of the requests received and the plans issued on time each month. The requests and plans issued, while showing a dip in actual numbers as of Sep 2019, do show that the improved productivity is having an impact. The dotted trajectory forecasted shows plans issued should match requests received by end of Dec 2019.



- Approx. 89.5% of children and young people with a special educational need attend a mainstream school.
- The educational outcome for children on SEN support and with EHCP are significantly better in Devon than the National Average as shown in the charts below.



Keystage 4 results for pupils with SEN are not yet available for 2019 so the 2018 information is shown below for information.

