


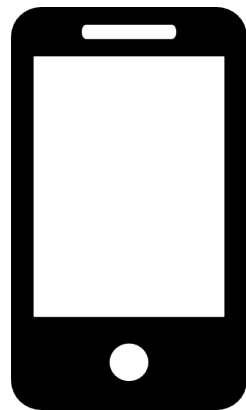
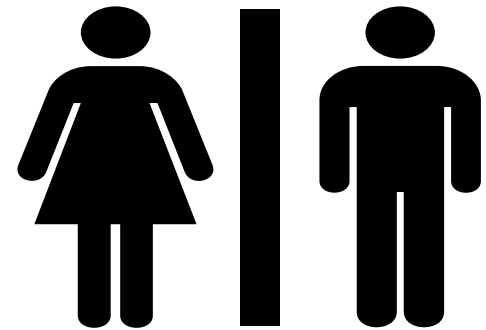
SENDCO Professional Network Meeting 10/02/2026

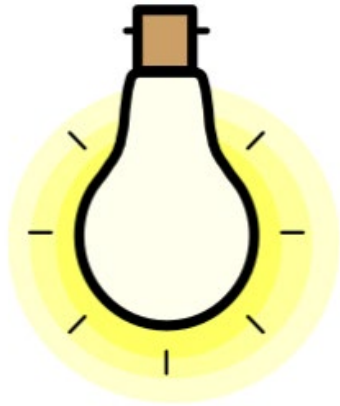
SPRING 2026



	Arrival and welcome
	Spotlight 1 – Cluster pilot updates
	Regional and National Updates
	Coffee with SENCO Champions
	Focused Feedback
	Share your success
	Health Focus – Health mapping
	Home

Housekeeping





Spotlight 1

SEND Cluster Pilot





**Every child in
Stoke-on-Trent
should have the
opportunity to
be successful in
their local
mainstream
school**

SEND
STOKE-ON-TRENT



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Why change is needed

- Current systems often encourage approaches that exclude rather than include.
- The per-pupil funding model and statutory processes like EHCPs can unintentionally create barriers to early, flexible support.
- There are big differences in how schools manage SEN Support, EHC plans, and exclusions. This inconsistency means children don't always get the right help at the right time.
- Outcomes for pupils with SEND remain poor nationally and locally.
- We all share responsibility for the High Needs Block. The current deficit reflects decisions made across the system, and it affects both school and local authority budgets.
- To make a real difference, we need a culture shift and stronger alignment with the national inclusion agenda.

Why adopt a cluster model?



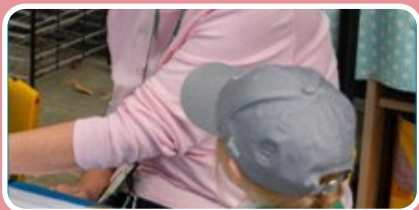
We need to know our children well, early and often – at a setting, locality and city level



Access coherent and expert targeted support – evidence based



Strengthen inclusion through relationships and partnerships



All partners see inclusion as a strategic and shared responsibility

How it works

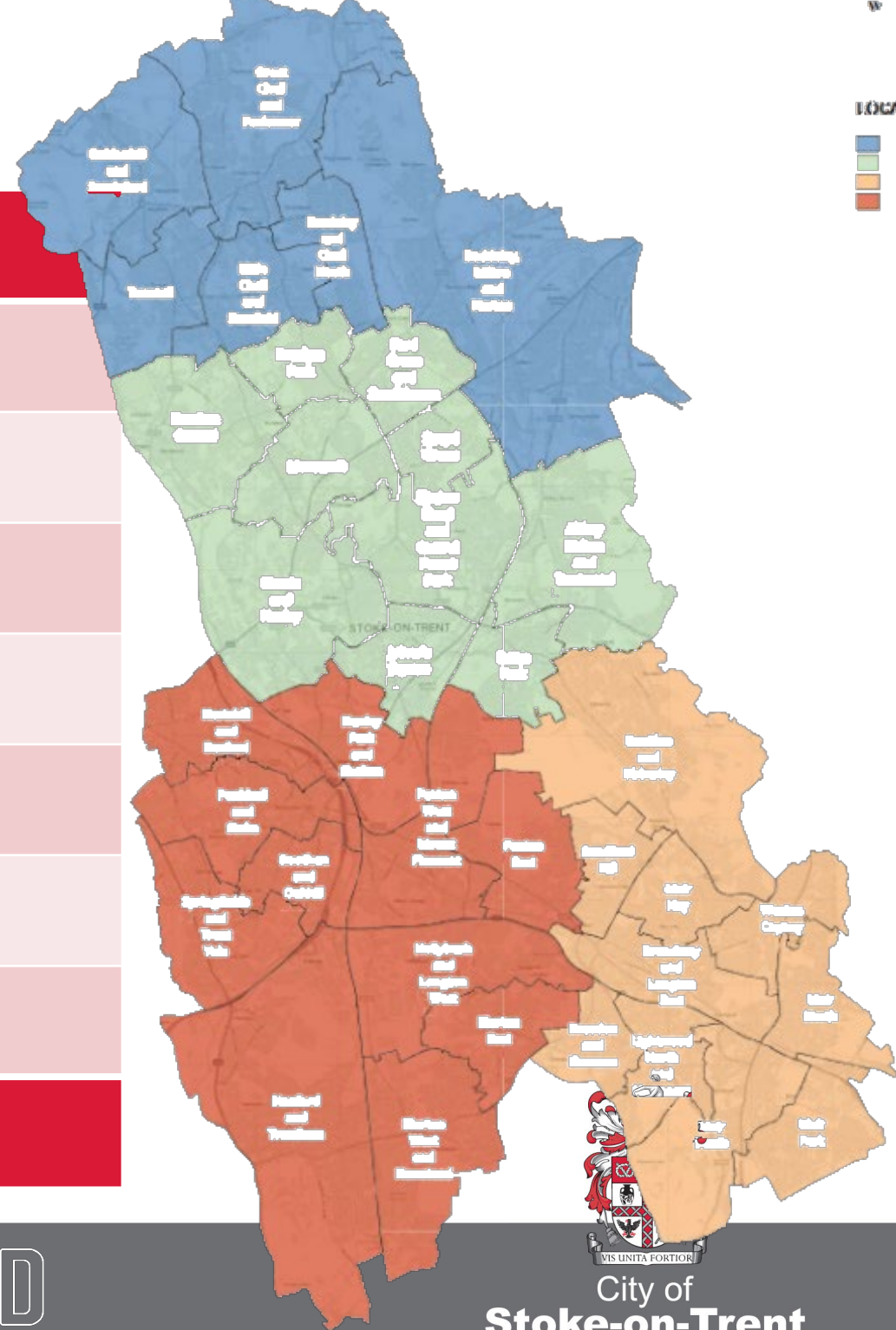
- Schools grouped into clusters aligned to Family Hub footprints. Currently pilot is in the **Central Locality**.
- Panels led by system leaders, with headteachers and SENCOs shaping decisions, supported by the Local Authority.
- 3 types of request for support
 - Individual (child-level) request
 - Project based – whole school or locality wide partnerships
 - Inclusive environments capital funding grants
- Schools work together to resolve challenges using existing resources and innovative ideas.

Progress so far

- A group of school leaders and MAT CEOs is guiding the project, ensuring that decisions reflect the needs and experiences of schools across the city.
- The pilot started in the central locality, chosen for its diversity and strong links with the Family Hub. This aims to help us test and refine the model in a real-world setting.
- Funding secured from High Needs Board for the pilot:
 - £210k revenue for interventions & training
 - £175k capital for inclusive environments
 - £110k for a commissioned sector led improvement partner

About Central

	CENTRAL
Higher education	1
Nursery	0
Primary	23
PRU	1
PVI	18
Specialist	1
Secondary	4
Grand Total	48



Reflections so far . . .

First meetings held in Autumn term with positive attendance and solutions-focused conversations.

- Genuine sense of partnership amongst schools and willingness to make this work
- Limited understanding from schools of the purpose and how the funding can be used - difficulty spending the money?
- Request process too onerous for schools – simplified process for the next meeting
- Preference to look at system wide solutions rather than to focus on individual child-level requests.
- Key emerging themes around:
 - Speech, language and communication needs
 - Social, emotional and mental health including links to attendance
 - What specialist services exist and how to access them

What we need to develop

How to ensure equal voice for primary and secondary settings

Understanding our needs as a locality

The role of special schools and resourced provisions

What does a team around the cluster need to look like? Who should support schools from health and social care?

Finding the solutions within our settings – rather than looking to commissioned services

Key Performance Indicators

- Agreed impact measures for each project/proposal
- Baseline tracking is underway for our KPIs. Impact is expected to be gradual but significant.
- Working with cluster group to identify system measures but initial suggestions include:

Child level

- Attendance
- Exclusions and suspensions
- Number of children moving into ISP

System level

- Number of children moving from mainstream to special school
- Number of children moving into ISP
- Number of requests for an EHC needs assessment

What you need to do

👂 **Listen out for more information** - Updates and opportunities to get involved will follow over the next months.

💡 **Start thinking about your locality** - How could this model strengthen SEND support in your area?

📌 **If you're in the Central locality and not yet involved** - We'll support you to get engaged and make sure your voice is heard.

Centralcluster@stoke.gov.uk



Regional & National Updates



SEND Local Area Maturity Assessment

“The government’s plan is to ensure opportunity for all by delivering an excellent, inclusive education for every child with a world class curriculum and highly trained, expert teachers. This will be based on an inclusive mainstream system, with specialist support for children that need it, and improved, efficient and effective local delivery.”



Coming next . . . Local SEND Reform Plan

Following publication of the schools' white paper, DfE will ask every local area to produce a Local SEND Reform Plan, setting out how they will move to a new special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system built on 5 principles

Early

Children should receive the support they need as soon as possible.

Local

Children and young people with SEND should be able to learn at a school or college close to their home, alongside their peers

Fair

Every school / education setting should be resourced and able to meet common and predictable needs

Effective

Reforms should be grounded in evidence

Shared

Education, health and care should work in partnership with local government, families, teachers, experts and representative bodies



Pillar 1: Co-production with parents and carers and Children and Young People

Pillar 2: Effective system leadership and governance

**Pillar 3: Accurate understanding of needs through effective use of data
(Understanding and evidencing the needs of children and young people with SEND
and children and young people who may benefit from AP)**

**Pillar 4: High Quality Service Delivery at universal, targeted and specialist level to
promote inclusion**

Pillar 5: Effective partnerships working across education, health and social care

Pillar 6: Skilled workforce across the partnership

**Pillar 7: Targeted, judicious and sustainable use of resources including sufficiency,
place planning and capital**



SEND Inclusion Week Summary



Activities

Activity Bank

- Created by EPS & sent via Padlet
- Activity ideas for all ages
- Assembly template

Project Indi

- Reached approx. 250 children.
- Delivered activities/workshops

Competition:

‘send in a photograph of a place in Stoke-on-Trent that you feel included.’

There were 4 winners...

Survey

- Primary – 207 responses
- Secondary – 99 responses
- Post-16 – 15 responses

BeeActive

- Delivered ‘Goalball’ sessions



Competition Winners



“My name is Oliver, I have chosen to take a photograph at my Nursery school, I have chosen my Nursery as my teachers always make sure I am included by offering different ways we do activities so I can be included, I am always treated the same as my school friends, my teachers always make sure my needs are met along with making sure I feel included and part of my class.”

“ I feel included here as there is no judgement of anyone everyone is there for the love of riding and to celebrate everyone’s success whether a beginner or a pro”

Addyson



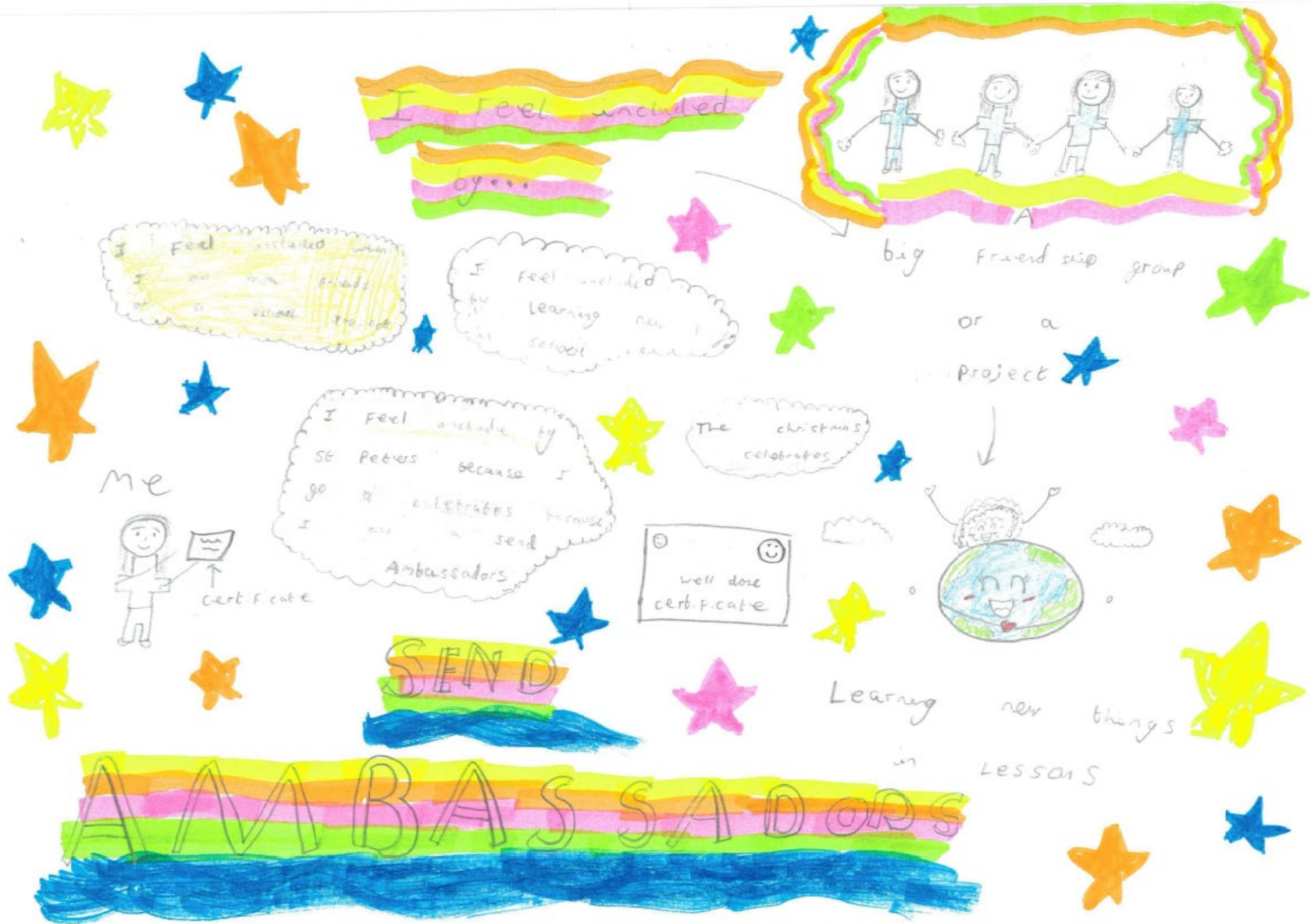
City of
Stoke-on-Trent

“This photo of my sons, Aleksander and his brother, watching the trains at Stoke-on-Trent station, is such a special moment for me. They’re completely lost in their own world, laughing, pointing, and waiting for the next train to arrive.

What I love about this place is how welcoming it feels. People smile, wave at the boys, and share in their excitement. It doesn’t matter who you are or where you’re from; everyone belongs here.

For Aleksander and his brother, it’s not just a station; it’s a place full of kindness, curiosity, and connection. A reminder that the simplest places can bring people together.”





Inclusion Video

https://www.canva.com/design/DAG6SRW7dUI/SUdaBgJSewSTfsJW1PU55g/view?utm_content=DAG6SRW7dUI&ut...



Survey



Upcoming training...

12.5.26
9:30-12:30

Creating positive spaces for parents

Supporting schools to develop welcoming spaces and supportive partnerships with parents of CYP with SEND

English as an additional language

Identifying and supporting multilingual EAL learners who have SEND

18.6.26
9:30-12:30

1.7.26
9:30-12:30

Why rewards don't work

Identifying the psychology that underpins successful teaching and learning practices. Exploring how we can help CYP to move towards internal motivation and self-evaluation skills.



EHCP Update





Cohort EHCP pupils over time

Data Source: Capita ONE

2024 2026

Home LEA
Stoke-on-T...

Funding LEA
Stoke-on-Trent



Pupil in Mainstream

Pupil not in Mainstream

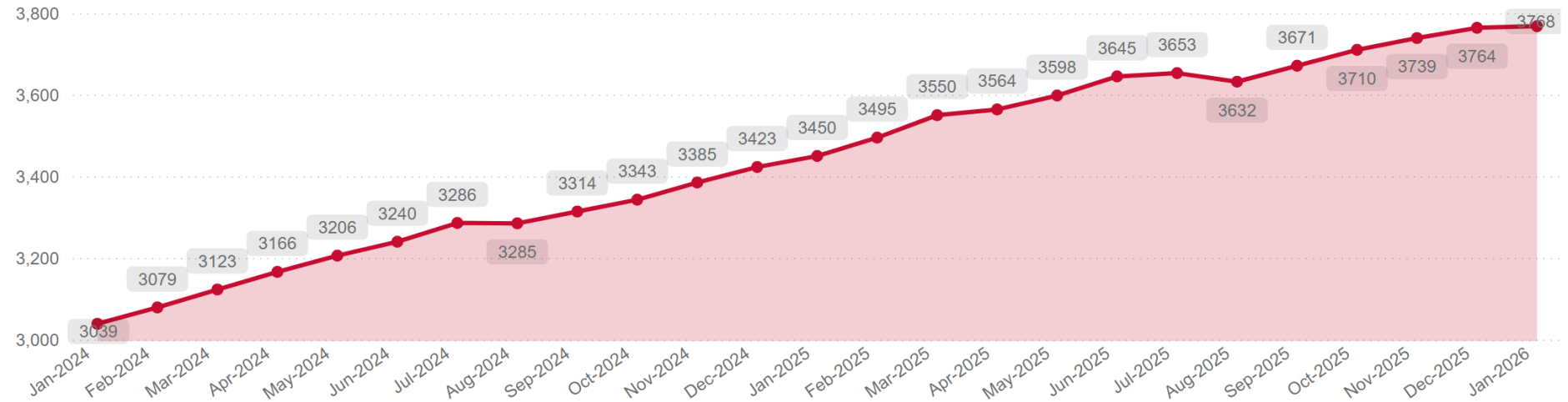
School type

All

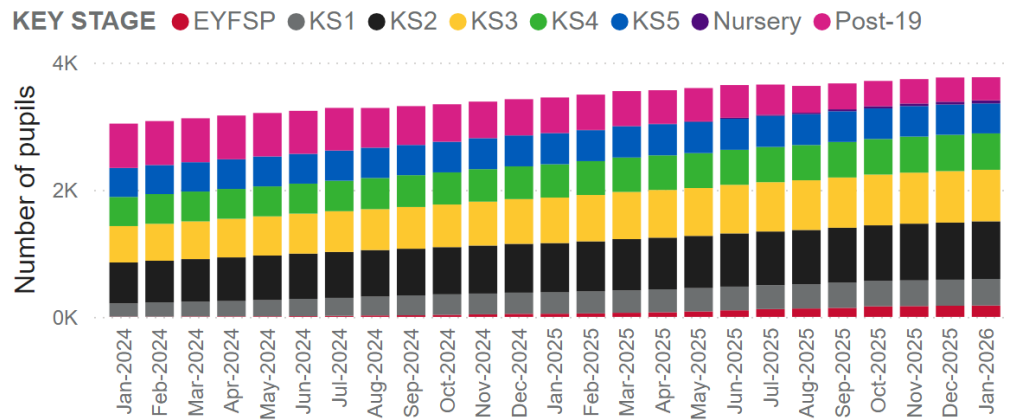
School name

All

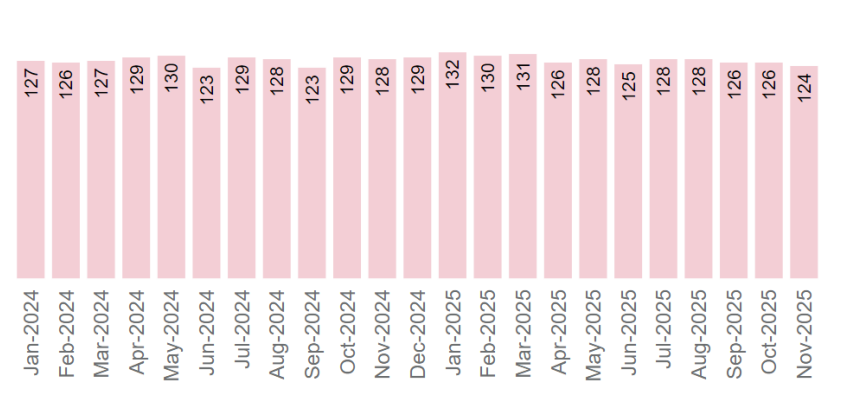
Number of pupils with an EHCP at month end



Number of pupils with an EHCP at month end by Key Stage



Number of pupils with an EHCP as month end who are also in care





Cohort current EHCP pupils

Data Source: Capita ONE

Home LEA

Stoke-on-Tr... ▾

Funding LEA

Stoke-on-Tr... ▾

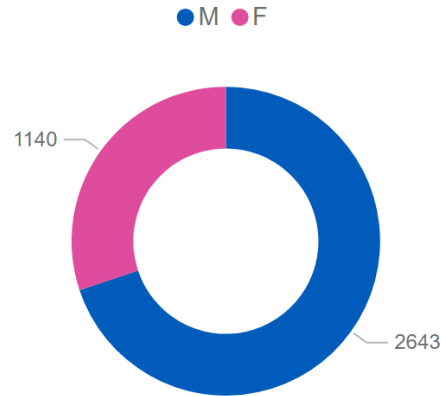
City Status

All ▾

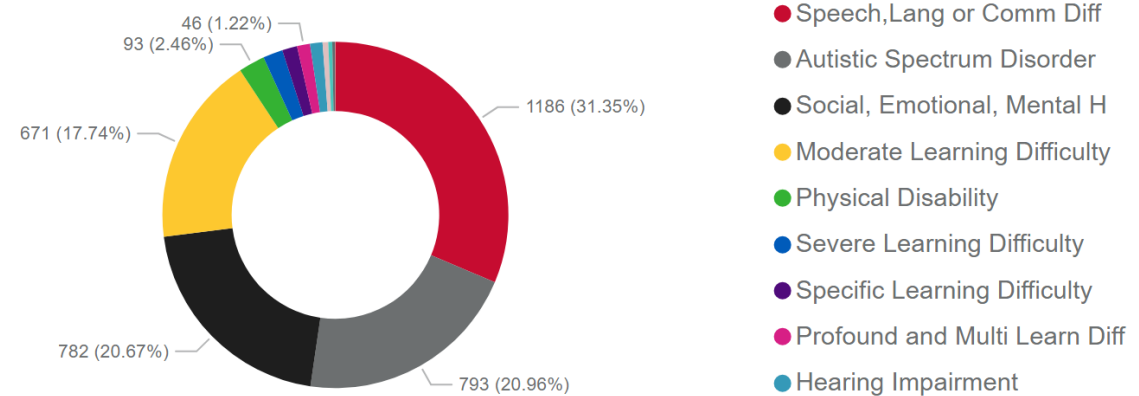
3,783



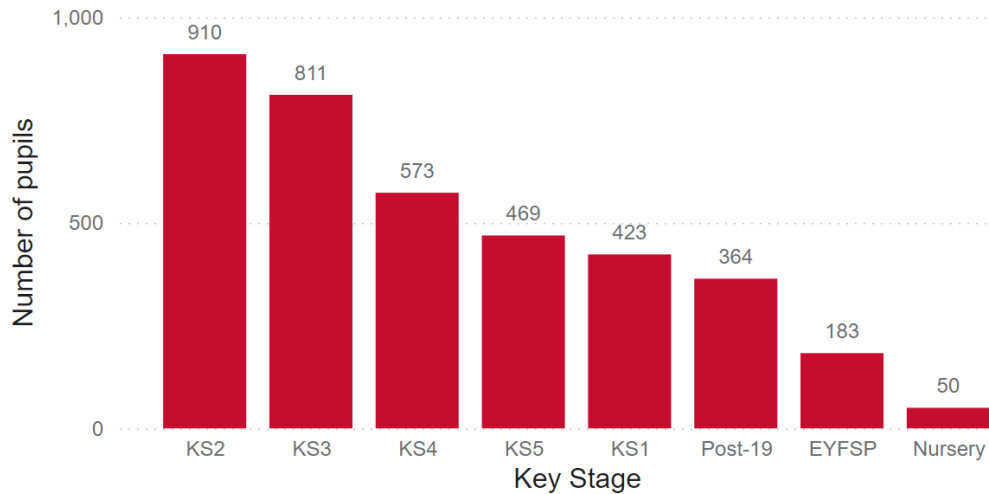
Number of current EHCP pupils by gender



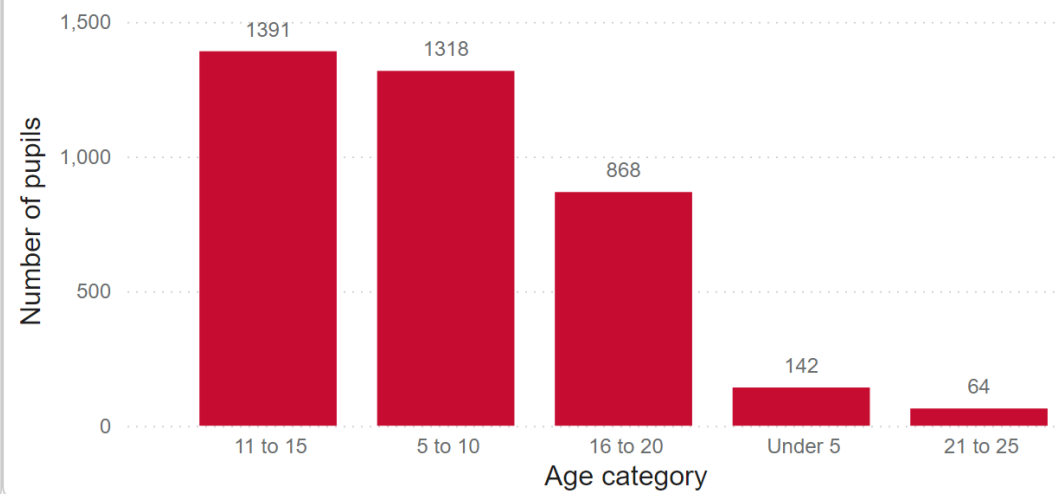
Number of current EHCP pupils by primary need



Number of current EHCP pupils by key stage



Number of current EHCP pupils by age category





Referrals for assessment

Data Source: Capita ONE

Referral date

01/01/2024

31/01/2026

Assessment type

Initial Assessment



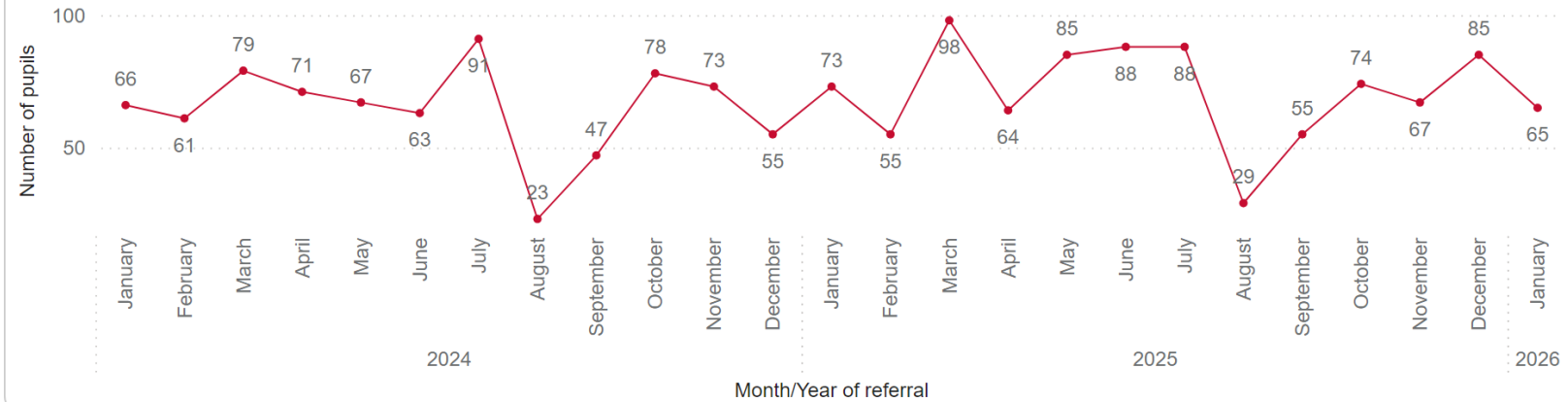
City of Stoke-on-Trent

Referral Year	Number of referrals	% resulting in assessment
2024	774	74.7%
January	66	77.3%
February	61	78.7%
March	79	77.2%
April	71	71.8%
May	67	80.6%
June	63	85.7%
July	91	81.3%
August	23	65.2%
September	47	61.7%
October	78	74.4%
November	73	63.0%
December	55	67.3%
2025	861	68.1%
January	73	82.2%
February	55	65.5%
March	98	61.2%
April	64	70.3%
May	85	81.2%
June	88	72.7%
July	88	62.5%
August	29	62.1%

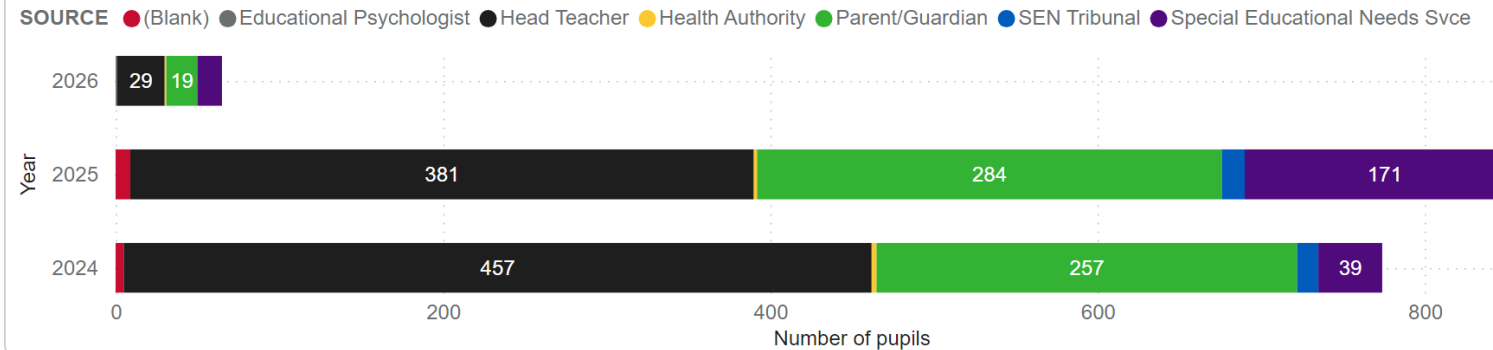
Source of referral



Number of pupils referred for an EHCP assessment



Sources of referrals for EHCP assessments



Number of Final Plans issued by SOT LA

Data Source: Capita ONE

FINAL ISSUED DATE

01/01/2024



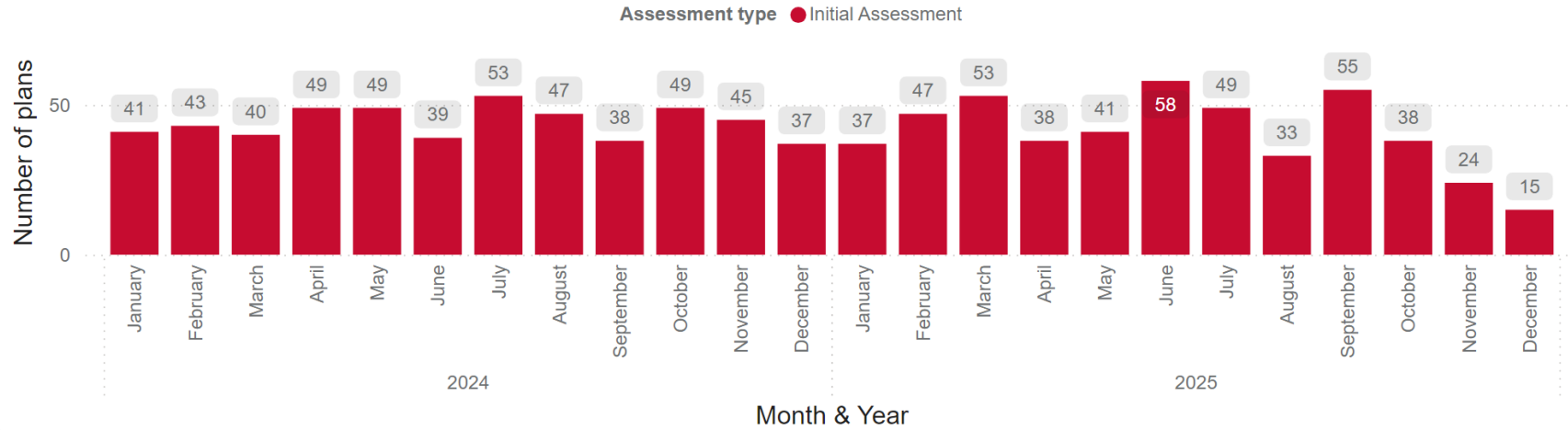
EXCEPTION

Multiple selections

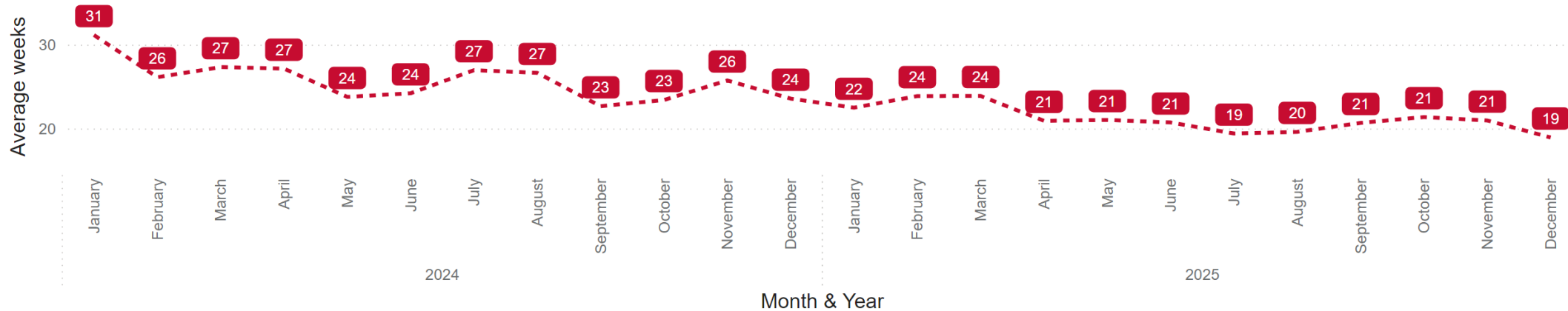
Assessment type

Initial Assessment

Total number of plans issued (LA responsible for assessment)



Average number of weeks to issue a plan (LA responsible for assessment)





Final Plans issued timeliness

Data Source: Capita ONE

FINAL ISSUED DATE

01/12/2023



31/01/2026



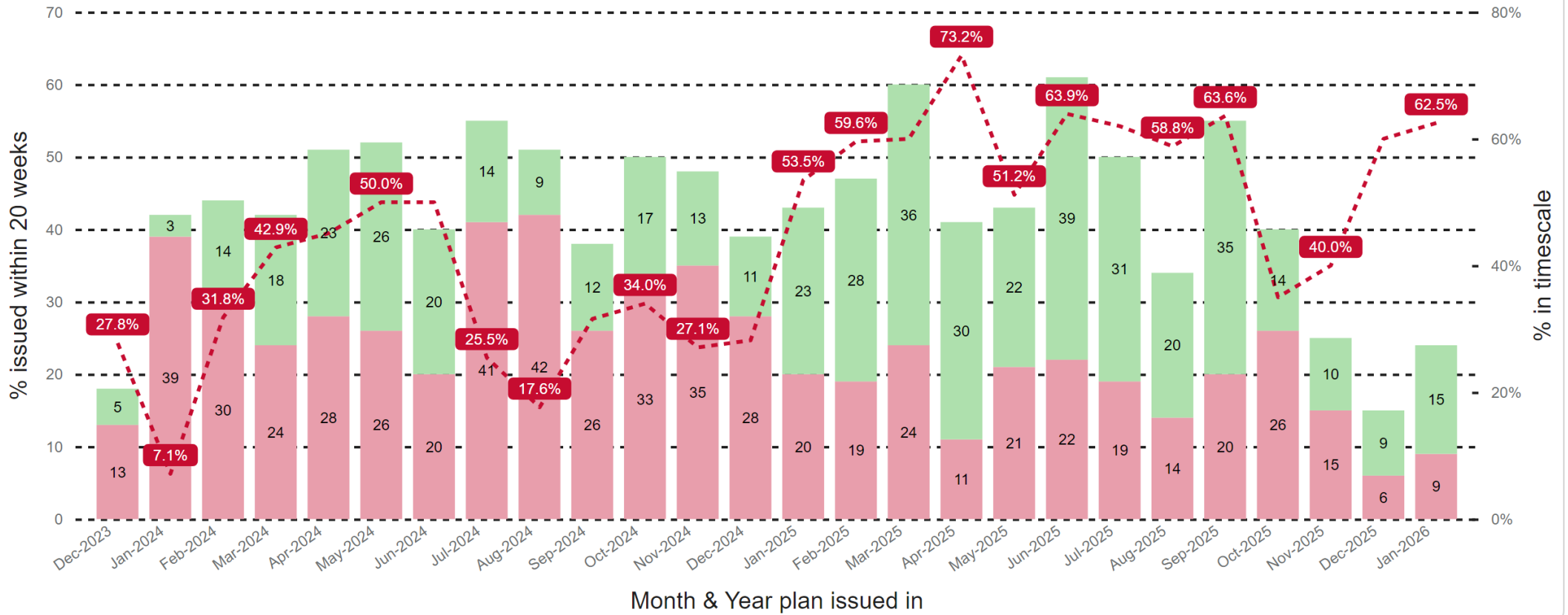
EXCEPTION

Multiple selections



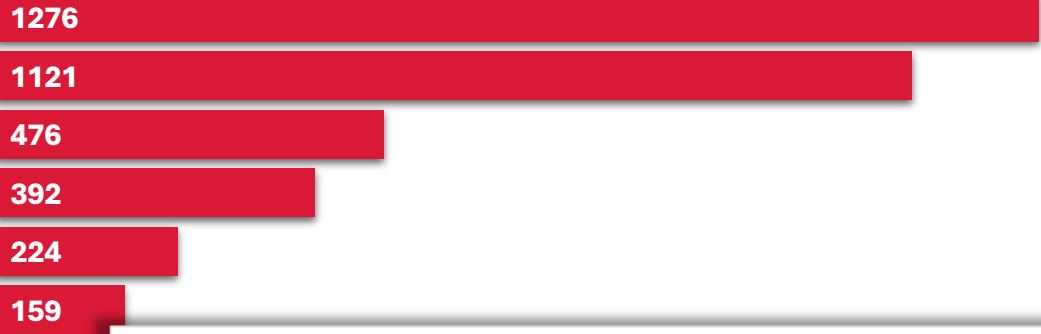
% of plans issued within 20 weeks where the LA responsible for issuing the plan (Initial Assessments, Re-Assessments & LA Transfer during assessment)

Issued within 20 weeks ● N ● Y ● % in timescale



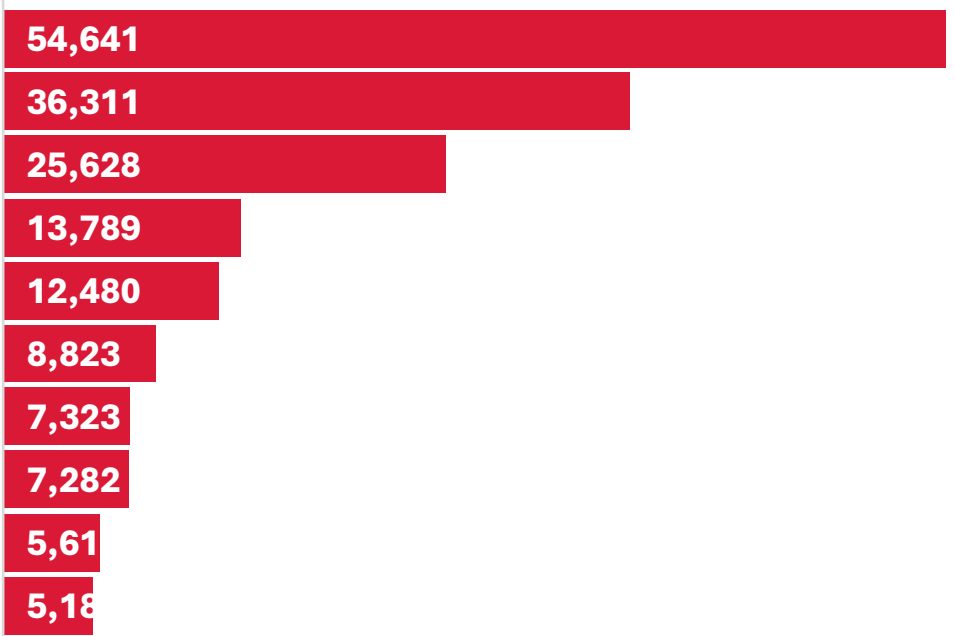
Active Placements by School Type

Mainstream
 Special
 Independent
 Further Education
 Specialist post 16
 Out of school
 AP - SEND
 Special resource provision
 PVI/Nursery
 Personal budget
 PRU
 Area

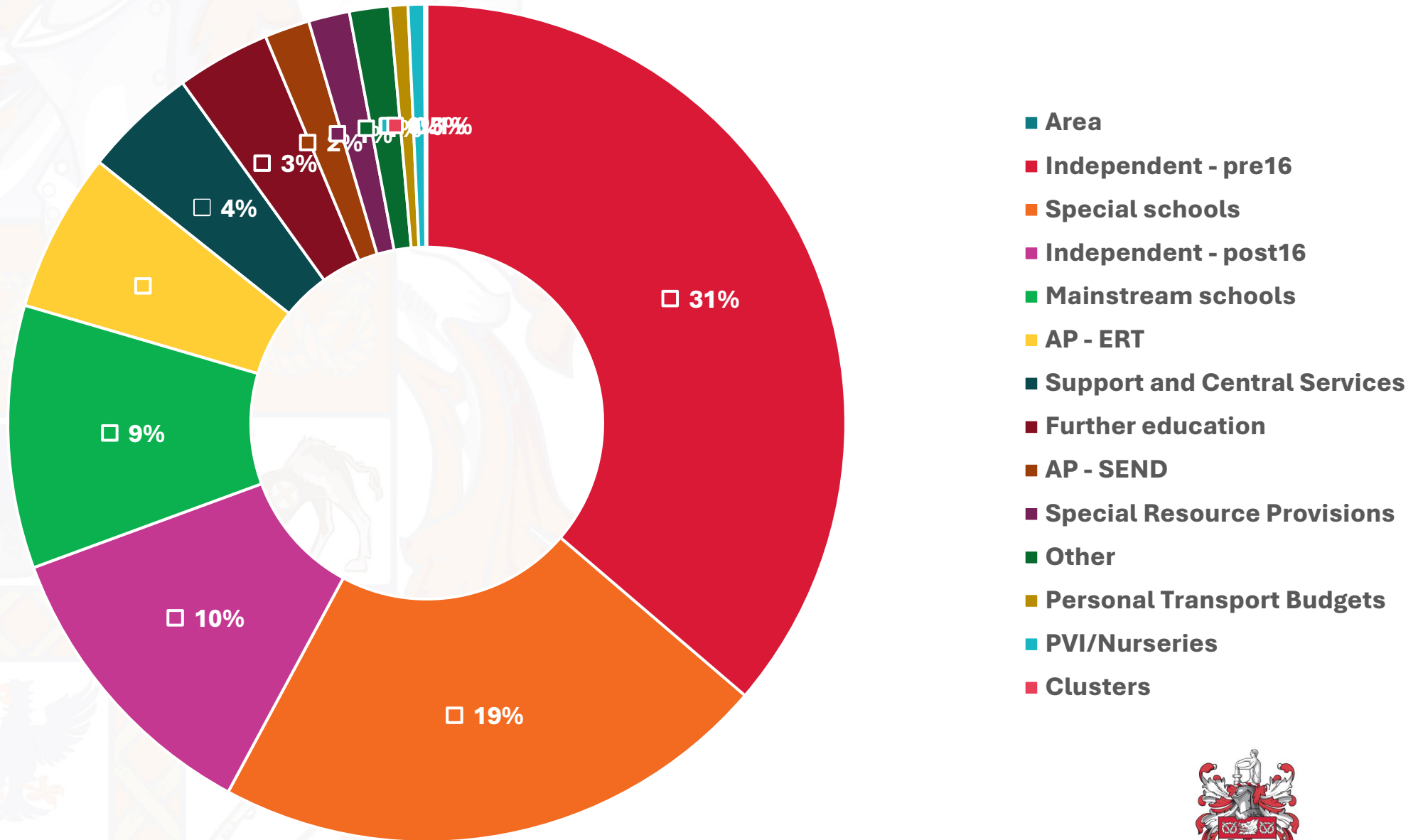


Average cost by school type

Independent
 PRU
 Specialist post 16
 Personal budget
 Special
 AP - SEND
 Further Education
 Special resource provision
 PVI/Nursery
 Mainstream



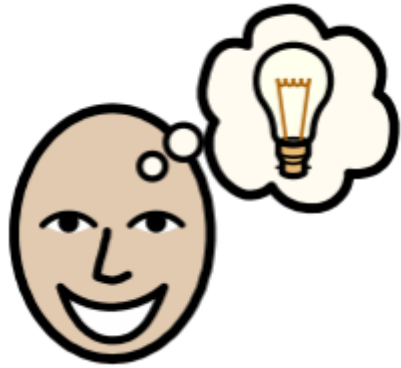
Expenditure by area - post recoupment





Coffee

**Grab yourself a drink and have
a chat about issues that you
are facing at the moment**



Share your success





Health Focus





Stoke SENCO forum – Health Update

Catherine.Lewin@staffsstoke.icb.nhs.uk

Elizabeth.Salvage@mpft.nhs.uk

Deborah.Boughey@combined.nhs.uk

Feb '26

QUIZ

How well do you
know health ?



+
•
○

How well do you know health ?

1. Which team can you either call yourself as a professional or signpost families to when concerned around health and wellbeing - including support with links to physical and mental health teams for information to support care planning ?

2. Which team runs drop ins and Chat health for parent and children?

3. Which team trains school staff on asthma, allergies and epilepsy?

4. Which team can help with building whole school approaches to emotional wellbeing, offer advice and some early interventions ?

+
•
○

How well do you know health?

5. Which team has resources for schools and parents to help with skills development ?

6. Which team has a graduated approach toolkit called the staged pathway?

7. Who can refer to CAMHS mental health services?

8. When should school refer a child to a GP?

9. Who runs groups to support and educate parents post diagnosis ?

Context

Government White Paper/SEND Agenda

NHS 10 Year Plan

ICB Developments

Developments in Provider Trusts

Neighbourhood Model

Key Issues: Health

Autism (significant growth)

- North Staffs and S-o-T (NSCHT)
 - 415% increase in CYP Autism referrals.
 - Between 2019 and 2025 there has been a 947% increase in the number of CYP on the Autism caseload.
 - Average wait for first appointment increased from 92 weeks in April 2024, to 103 weeks in June 2025. In June 2025, the longest wait was 136 weeks.
- South Staffs (MPFT)
 - 145 % increase in in CYP Autism referrals.
 - Between 2020/21 and 2042/25 there has been a 144% increase in the number of CYP on the Autism caseload.
 - Average wait for first appointment increased to 84 weeks in April 2024 compared to 84 weeks in April 2025. The longest wait was 102 weeks.

CAMHS (significant growth)

- North Staffs and S-o-T (NSCHT)
 - 375% increase between 21019-2025 in referrals for Core CAMHS (6,575) and a 59% increase in Core CAMHS caseload (2,004 at the end of March 2025).
- South Staffs (MPFT)
 - Since 2022 , referrals increased from 2,151 to 2,355 between 2023/24 and 2024/25 (9%) with average monthly caseload increasing by 13% from 1,866 to 2,105.

ADHD (limitations to routine data availability)

The data is complex and incomplete due to how ADHD provisions is configured within services and limitations of EPR systems . Only Q1 data from MPFT and data will be available from NSCHT by Q2 45% Comm paedts are for ADHD MPFT

Speech and Language Therapy

- **NB:** Staffordshire and S-o-T
 - From 2019, 18% increase in annual referrals (5576) with 37% increase in caseload (7022). Between 2022 – 2025, a 437% increase in EHCNA requests.
 - In May 2025, 2.9% of patients were waiting over 18 weeks: improvement from 13.1% in May 2024 (national average 26.6%).

Physiotherapy

- **NB:** Staffordshire and S-o-T
 - 31% increase in annual referrals between 2019 and 2025 with 52% increase in caseload (but plateaued from 2023).
 - In May 2025, 1.9% of patients were waiting over 18 weeks: improvement from 3.2% in May 2024 (national average 9.3%).



North 3 main
Health
Providers

MPFT

0-19 Service and TIS

SLT, OT, Physio

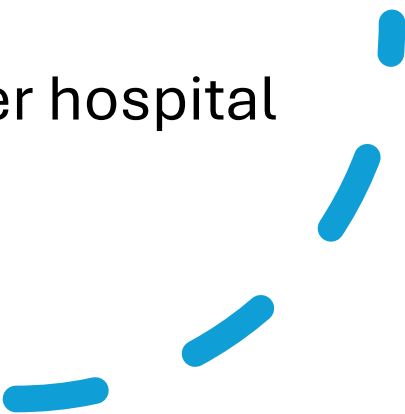
Community Children's Nurses

Combined HealthCare

CAMHS , ADHD , Autism Assessment ,
Learning Disabilities

UHNM

Community Paediatrics and other hospital
specialisms



Health Services

0-19 Public Health school nurses one per district LA commissioned, Community nurses if complex nursing need

[Health Visiting and School Nursing :: Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust](#)

0-19 Service

- **Contact information**
- **Stoke-on-Trent 0-19 Hub**
- Covering all localities in Stoke-on-Trent

Freephone 0808 178 3374

ChatHealth Text Messaging Service

Parents/ Carers text: 07312 277161

For young people living in Stoke-on-Trent, text 07520 615723

Mental Health Services

MHST or Changes \ Staywell 100% offer, up to CAMHS

[Combined Wellbeing](#)

- [SCC Mental health support for children and young people map](#) – with QR code

ASD and ADHD pathway – all age, November separate out ADHD from Camhs, development work on post diagnosis and support whilst waiting with parents

Please do not divert to GP or Right to Choose

- [CAMHS Autism Spectrum Disorder Team - North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust](#)
- <https://combinedwellbeing.org.uk/>

Speech and Language Therapy

Speech and Language therapy MPFT – Staged pathway, increased EY screening NELI, Stoke Speaks out – best practice by Royal College, are you paying for therapists when you could upskill your TA's via the training offer

- [Speech and Language Therapy Services \(Children\) :: Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- www.stokespeaks.org/training
- [Staged Pathway.pdf - Google Drive](#)

Speech and Language Therapy Training Offer

- **Early Communication Screen – free**
- **Staged Pathway – free**
- **(More)Time to Talk**
- **Communicating with Confidence**
- **Information Carrying Words
Workshop**
- **Closing the Word Gap**
- **Support for a Child Young Person
With English as a Second Language**
- **Makaton L 1 and 2**

**And more ... contact the service for
further information**

Occupational Therapy and Community Paediatrics

Occupational therapy MPFT– movement programme, Sensory toolkit check you not paying for support in the toolkit, web resources for functional skills and training on DCD

- [Occupational Therapy \(Children\) :: Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [Sensory Processing Needs Toolkit - Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, ICS](#)

Community paediatrics – and specialisms e.g diabetes – Royal Stoke (UHNM) [Staffordshire Children's Hospital at Royal Stoke | University Hospitals of North Midlands](#)

Key Messages



Significant ongoing work around CYP, MH and ND – in the ICB and providers



Providers have graduated approaches to assist you in Inclusion and SEND – they include training, SLCN network



Please take time to understand the offers, understand where and who to contact as an external partner agency and understand – who in your schools knows who!



Help us to help you! –Asthma in schools, MHST, SLT, relational approaches to MDT around your school



Managing medical needs in schools – how up to date are your policies



Please do not be sending Right to Choose many providers poor quality or wrongly advocating for ND assessments

Next Steps Reflections

Who are your local health teams?

Have you already got connections you haven't mapped in your school or MAT, so staff are aware?

What other connections do you need to make? who is the best person to do that ?

What might your training need be to understand evidence based graduated approaches and referral pathways?

Could there be some myths and legends that need exploring with your teams and ours to 'seek to understand'

What language are we using in school e.g emotional health and wellbeing and at what literacy \ oracy level?

Summer term meeting

Thursday 11th June 2026

1-3:30pm

