



## Report to Schools Forum Funding Group

**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020

**Title: High Needs Block Update:** Independent Schools Budget focus

**Author and/or contact officer:** Hero Slinn, Head of Integrated SEND Service; Liz Williams, Head of Finance (Children's Services)

**Schools affected:** All maintained schools and academies, FE Colleges and Early Years Settings

**Recommendations:**

**Schools Forum Funding Group is asked to note the impact of the revised budget monitoring position on the High Needs budget for 2020-21 , specifically the independent placements budget.**

**Moving forward, the budget will be split by school type to allow for increased monitoring and scrutiny. Schools Forum is asked to note the data trends and the proposed next steps.**

## **Executive Summary of Budget Spend**

This report summarises the current position with the independent placements budget and notes a forecast of £14,777,769 for this financial year, an overspend of £247,483. The largest proportion of these are in Independent Special Schools (45%) with a forecast spend for the year of £7,762,838. The most commonly recorded primary need (35%) across this area is Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) which is in line with the fastest growing area of need nationally for those with an EHCP (30%).

### Independent Mainstream Schools

This cohort includes parents' private placements where top up funding is provided, in line with the value paid to a maintained mainstream or academy, as well as those where school fees are paid in part or fully by the LA. Forecast for 2020-21 gives an average cost for these placements as £19,730 with an overall cost of £2,111,128.

34% of those placed within these settings have a primary need of ASD. Children and young people with a primary need of ASD or speech, language and communication needs account for 59% of placements in independent mainstream schools. The national picture for those with an EHCP is that these areas of need account for 45% of those with an EHCP. 82% of placements are for CYP with a recorded ethnicity of White British compared to 64% of Buckinghamshire maintained EHCPs and 62% of the Buckinghamshire state funded school population. The majority of the independent mainstream school cohort have home postcodes that fall within the ACORN category 1 – Affluent Achievers – 73%. Although a small sample, this is significantly higher than the Buckinghamshire EHCP population of 31%.

### Independent Special Schools

The fees for these schools are paid in full by the Local Authority from the high needs block. Forecast for 2020-21 gives an average cost for these placements at £56,663 and a total cost for the year of £7,762,838. The highest overall cost by need is for ASD at £3,441,199.

39% of those placed in these schools have a primary need of ASD, and 27% have a primary need of SEMH. 50% of these are recorded as being high functioning. 71% have a recorded ethnicity of White British compared to 64% of Buckinghamshire maintained EHCPs and 62% of the Buckinghamshire state funded school population. The majority of the independent special school cohort have home postcodes that fall within the ACORN category 1 – Affluent Achievers – 73%. This is significantly higher than the Buckinghamshire school population which is 42% and the Buckinghamshire EHCP population of 31%.

### Non-maintained Special Schools

The fees for these schools are paid in full by the LA from high needs block. The highest overall cost by need is for ASD at £1,212,195 and the highest average cost per placement is for PMLD at £182,312.

CYP with primary need of ASD account for 28% of placements. 74% are recorded as having ethnicity of White British compared to 64% of the Buckinghamshire EHCP population. 60%

of those placed in non-maintained special schools have a postcode recorded with the ACORN category 1 – Affluent Achievers compared with 31% of the Buckinghamshire EHCP population.

#### New placements during 2020-21

26 placements have commenced so far during this financial year. The full year cost would be £1,420,294 with an average cost per placement of £54,627, however many of these students joined their settings midway through the financial year (September). 46% of the September placements are in independent special schools and 42% in independent mainstream schools. This is an increase of 7% in the proportion of placements in independent mainstream schools compared to all 2020-21 placements.

50% of the new starters have a primary need of ASD. 10 out of the 12 placed in independent special schools this year have a primary need of ASD or SEMH and are classified as high functioning, as well as the 2 placed in non-maintained special schools. 85% of the children placed in these settings this year have an ethnicity of White British, compared with 64% of the Buckinghamshire EHCP population. 58% had an ACORN postcode classified as Affluent Achievers compared with 31% of the population.

#### Placement Leavers during 2020-21

45 placements ceased at the end of the academic year. The full year cost of these placements based on 20-21 fees would have been £2,433,603 with an average cost of £54,627, however these costs are pro-rotad for the forecast as the students left the placement during the financial year. 49% of the leavers were in independent special schools and 36% in independent mainstream schools. Across all placement types there are a higher number of leavers than starters.

#### Placement Start Dates

Increased placements in all sectors within this budget have occurred between 2017 and 2019 in Buckinghamshire, which is only true nationally of those transitioning to independent special schools. In independent mainstream schools, there was increased entry upon phase transfer to secondary school for those with ASD or SLCN needs. For those attending independent special schools, there were increased placements for those with ASD or SEMH at transition to secondary school and particularly for those with ASD at the start of Key Stage 4.

## **Title: High Needs Block Update: Independent Schools Budget focus – Full Paper**

### 1.1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to outline the projected costs for the independent schools budget for 2020-21 against the actual budget and mitigating actions taken / being taken to support a close to budget position for the end of the financial year. This is the outcome of a recovery action detailed in the Schools Forum Paper of June 2020 on the High Needs Block, 4.2.4, 'Review of External Placements'.

This paper will further breakdown the allocated budget by school type; independent mainstream, independent special and non-maintained special to give an in depth analysis of the cohort of children attending these settings.

### 2. Current Position and Implications for Future Year

The forecast for the financial year 2020/21 for this budget is £14,777,769. This is based upon there having been 302 placements recorded over the course of the financial year with 45 leaving their placements to attend a maintained mainstream, special school, or further education setting, or progressing to higher education or employment meaning their EHC plans have now been ceased. A further 26 new placements started in September 2020 impacting this budget. The budget set for this financial year is £14,530,286, meaning an overspend of £247,483 is forecast for 2020/21. Last year (2019-20) spend was recorded as £15,324,436, with the budget set at £14,219,724, meaning an overspend of £1,104,712 was recorded.

3. A total of 302 placements have been recorded across the financial year. The largest proportion of these are in Independent Special Schools (45% - 137) with a forecast spend for the year of £7,762,838. The most commonly recorded primary need (35% - 105) across this area is Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).



	Independent Mainstream	Independent Special	Non-maintained Special	Total
ASD	36	53	16	105
SEMH	8	37	3	48
SLCN	27	4	6	37
PD	12	6	7	25
Not recorded	6	12	6	24
PMLD		14	6	20
HI	2		7	9
SPLD	6	3		9
SLD		6	2	8
VI	3		5	8
MLD	3	2		5
Medical	2			2
ADHD	1			1
MSI	1			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>302</b>

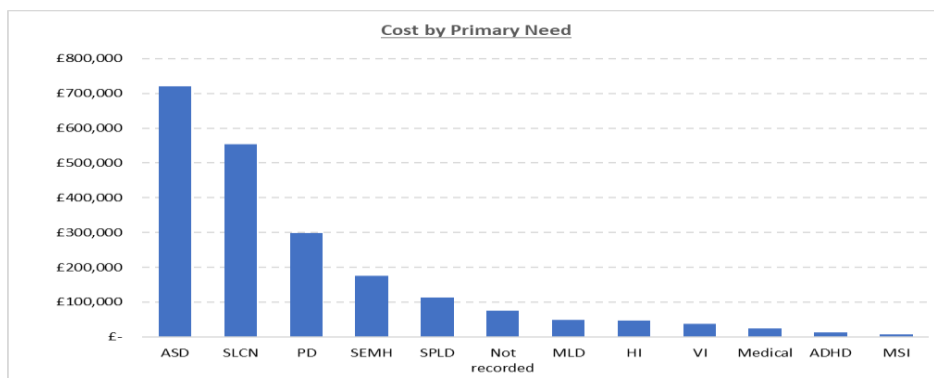
**Table 1**

#### 4. Independent Mainstream Settings

4.1. The Dfe defines independent schools as private schools (also known as ‘independent schools’) who charge fees to attend instead of being funded by the government. Pupils do not have to follow the [national curriculum](#). All private schools must be registered with the government and are inspected regularly.

#### 4.2. Current Spend

There are 107 placements recorded in independent mainstream schools so far over the course of the financial year 2020-21. This includes parents’ private placements where top up funding is provided, in line with the value paid to a maintained mainstream or academy. For the remaining, fees are either paid in full or contributed to by the Local Authority. Forecast for 2020-21 gives an average cost for these placements as £19,730 with an overall cost of £2,111,128.



**Figure 2**

The highest overall cost by need is for ASD at £719,247 and the highest average cost per placement is for Physical Development (PD) at £24,835.

Primary Need	Number of placements	Total Cost	Average Cost
PD	12	£298,020.98	£24,835.08
Hearing Impairment (HI)	2	£46,051.38	£23,025.69
Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)	8	£176,178.18	£22,022.27
SLCN	27	£554,540.55	£20,538.54
ASD	36	£719,246.79	£19,979.08
Specific Learning Difficulties (Spld)	6	£112,409.33	£18,734.89
Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)	3	£48,421.69	£16,140.56
Not recorded	6	£75,440.02	£12,573.34
Medical	2	£24,668	£12,334
Visual Impairment (VI)	3	£36,754.75	£12,251.58
ADHD	1	£12,060	£12,060
Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)	1	£7,336.50	£7,336.50

**Table 2**

#### 4.3. Special Educational Needs

34% of those placed within these settings have a primary need of ASD. Children and young people with a primary need of ASD or speech, language and communication needs account for 59% of placements in independent mainstream schools.

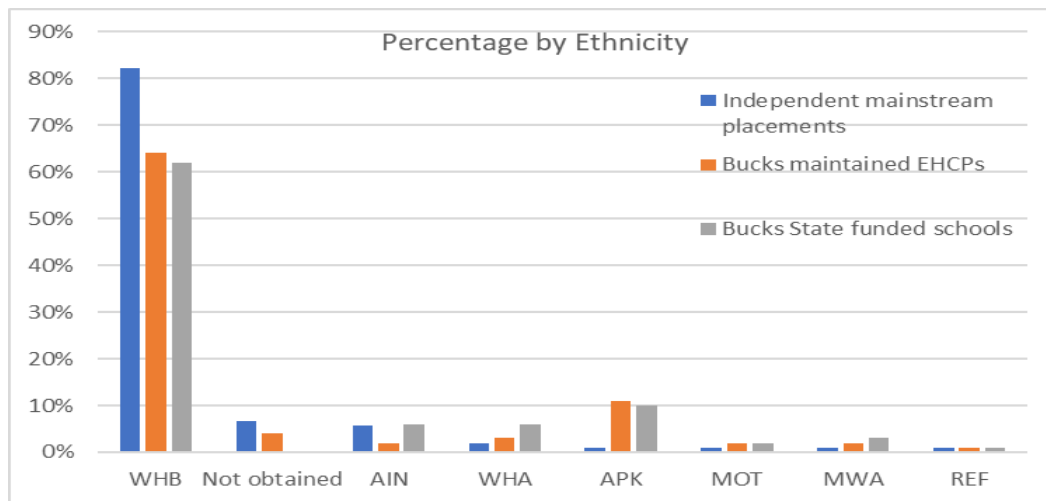
22 out of the 107 are recorded as high functioning, equating to 21%. 18 of these have a primary need of either ASD, accounting for 50% of the total placements of students with ASD.

Primary Need	High Functioning	Total	Percent High Functioning
ADHD		1	0%
ASD	18	36	50%
HI		2	0%
Medical		2	0%
MLD		3	0%
MSI		1	0%
PD	1	12	8%
SEMH	3	8	38%
SLCN		27	0%
SPLD		6	0%
VI		3	0%
Not recorded		6	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>21%</b>

**Table 3**

#### 4.4 Ethnicity and Deprivation

82% (88) of the 107 placements are for CYP with a recorded ethnicity of White British compared to 64% of Buckinghamshire maintained EHCPs and 62% of the Buckinghamshire state funded school population.



**Figure 2**

The majority of the independent mainstream school cohort have home postcodes that fall within the ACORN category 1 – Affluent Achievers – 73%. This is significantly higher than the Buckinghamshire school population which is 42%.

	Independent mainstream placements		Pupils in Buckinghamshire Schools - Jan 20		
			All	EHCP	SEN Support
1 - Affluent Achievers	78	73%	42%	31%	34%
2 - Rising Prosperity	12	11%	9%	8%	8%
3 - Comfortable Communities	8	7%	23%	23%	23%
4 - Financially Stretched	4	4%	17%	25%	22%
5 - Urban Adversity	3	3%	8%	12%	11%
6 - Not private Households	1	1%	1%	1%	1%
Not determined	1	1%	1%	1%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>				

**Table 4**

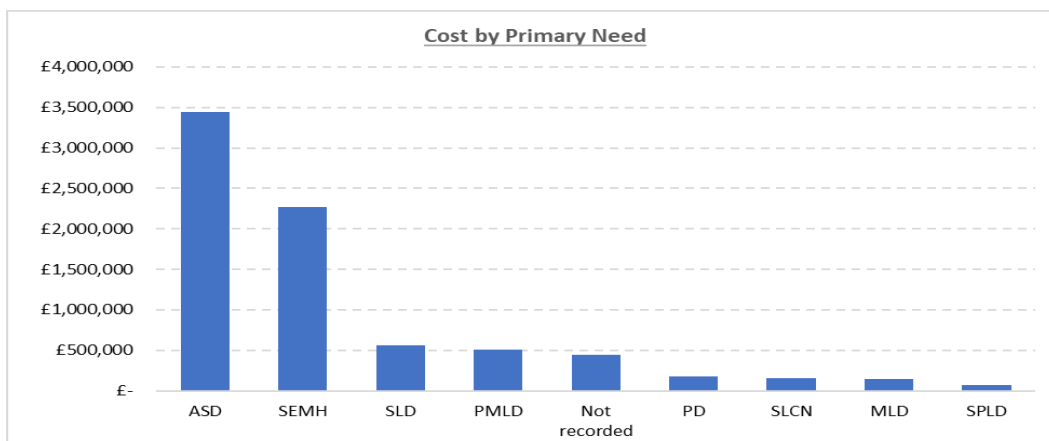
Although the sample being examined here is much smaller, there is also a significant difference between those placed in independent mainstream schools (73%) and the Buckinghamshire EHCP population (31%) and SEND Support population (34%).

## 5. Independent Special Schools

5.1 The Dfe defines an independent special school as a private school that specialises in teaching children with special educational needs.

### 5.2 Costs

There are 137 placements at points during the financial year is forecast for 2020-21. The fees for these schools are paid in full by the Local Authority from the high needs block. Forecast for 2020-21 gives an average cost for these placements at £56,663 and a total cost for the year of £7,762,838.



**Figure 3**

The highest overall cost by need is for ASD at £3,441,199 and the highest average cost per placement is for Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) at £93,374. Special Educational Needs



Primary Need	Number of placements	Total Cost	Average Cost
SLD	6	£560,241.22	£93,373.54
MLD	2	£144,256.67	£72,128.33
ASD	53	£3,441,199.07	£64,928.28
SEMH	31	£2,266,244.57	£61,249.85
SLCN	4	£159,717.75	£39,929.44
Left placement Aug 20 so not analysed	12	£440,767.52	£36,730.63
Profound and Multiple, Learning Difficulties	14	£506,241.22	£36,160.09
Spld	3	£70,556.67	£23,518.89

**Table 5**

### 5.3 Special Educational Needs

The proportion of placement by primary need shows that CYP with a primary need of ASD or SEMH account for 66% of placement in independent special schools.

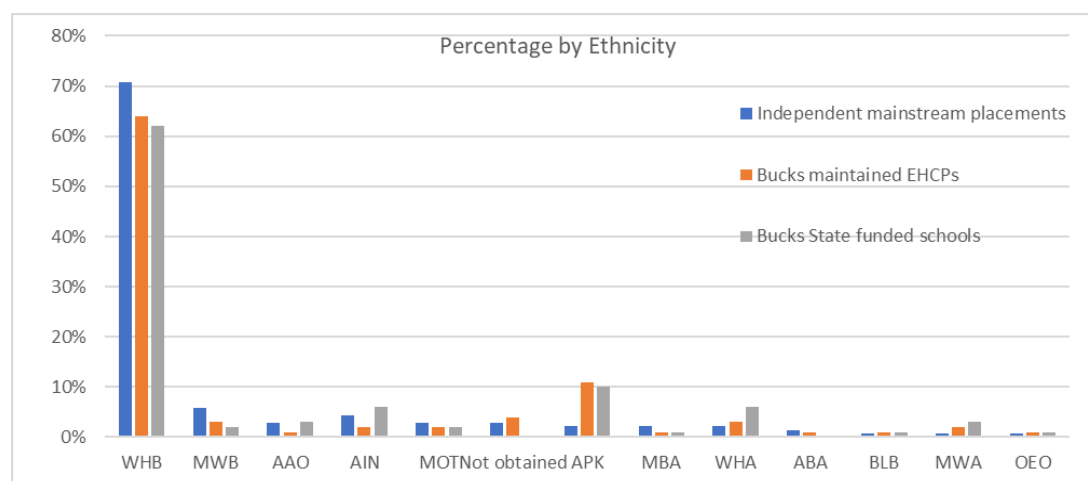
47 out of the 137 CYP are recorded as high functioning, this equates to 34%. 45 of those recorded as high functioning have a primary need of ASD or SEMH.

Primary Need	High Functioning	Total	Percent High Functioning
ASD	28	53	53%
MLD		2	0%
PD		6	0%
PMLD		14	0%
SEMH	17	37	46%
SLCN	2	4	50%
SLD		6	0%
Spld		3	0%
Not recorded		12	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>34%</b>

**Table 6**

### 5.4 Ethnicity and Deprivation

71% (97) of the 137 placements are for CYP with a recorded ethnicity of White British compared to 64% of Buckinghamshire maintained EHCPs and 62% of the Buckinghamshire state funded school population.



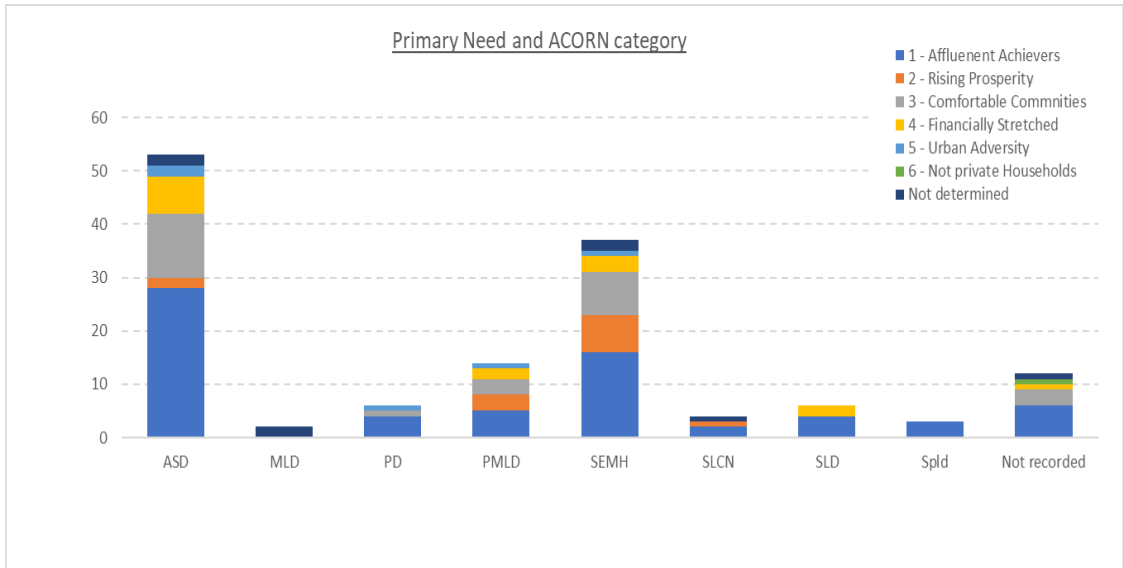
**Figure 4**

The majority of the independent special school cohort have home postcodes that fall within the ACORN category 1 – Affluent Achievers – 73%. This is significantly higher than the Buckinghamshire school population which is 42%.

	Independent special placements		Pupils in Buckinghamshire Schools - Jan 20		
			All	EHCP	SEN Support
1 - Affluent Achievers	68	50%	42%	31%	34%
2 - Rising Prosperity	13	9%	9%	8%	8%
3 - Comfortable Communities	27	20%	23%	23%	23%
4 - Financially Stretched	15	11%	17%	25%	22%
5 - Urban Adversity	5	4%	8%	12%	11%
6 - Not private Households	1	1%	1%	1%	1%
Not determined	8	6%	1%	1%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>				

**Table 7**

Although the sample being examined here is much smaller, there is a significant difference between those placed in independent special schools (50%) and the Buckinghamshire EHCP population (31%) and SEND Support population (34%).



**Figure 5**

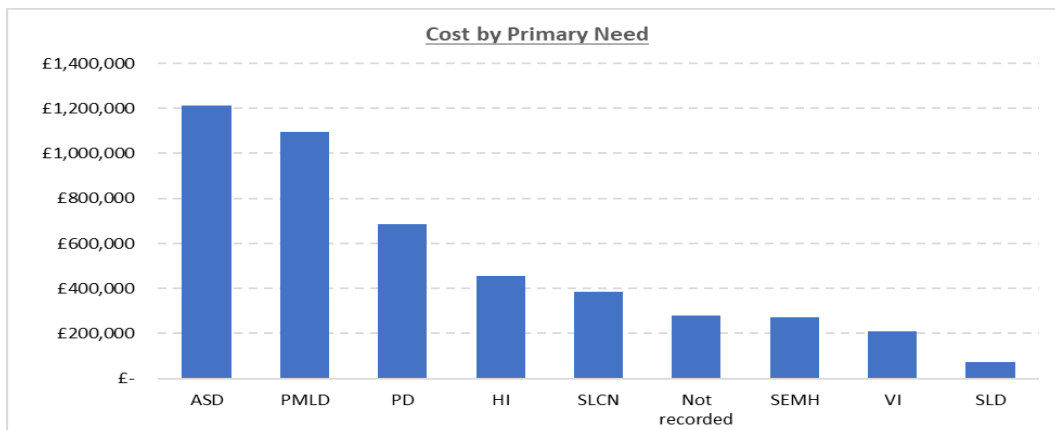
## 6. Non-maintained special schools

6.1 Non-maintained special schools are defined by the DfE as schools for children with special educational needs that the Secretary of State for Education has approved under section 342 of the Education Act 1996. They:

- teach students with special educational needs
- are independent of local authority control
- operate on a not-for-profit basis

### 6.2 Costs

58 placements at points during the financial year are forecast for 2020-21 for non-maintained special schools. Forecast for 2020-21 gives an average cost for these placements at £80,486 and a total cost for the year of £4,668,205.



**Figure 6**

The highest overall cost by need is for ASD at £1,212,195 and the highest average cost per placement is for PMLD at £182,312.

Primary Need	Number of placements	Total Cost	Average Cost
PMLD	6	£1,093,872.09	£182,312.01
PD	7	£686,623.62	£98,089.09
SEMH	3	£273,616.11	£91,205.37
ASD	16	£1,212,194.92	£75,762.18
HI	7	£454,644.58	£64,949.23
SLCN	6	£386,910.42	£64,485.07
Left placement Aug 20 so not analysed	6	£277,925.67	£46,320.94
VI	5	£210,277.08	£42,055.42
SLD	2	£72,140.26	£36,070.13

**Table 8**

### 6.3 Special Educational Needs

The proportion of children placed in non-maintained special schools is relatively evenly split by primary need. CYP with primary need of ASD account for 28% of placements, followed by HI and PD accounting for 12% each.

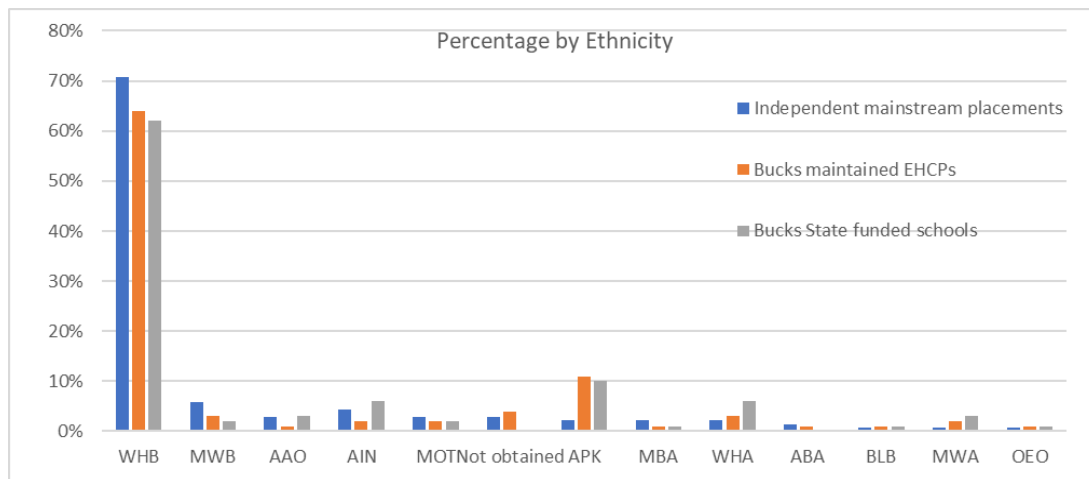
14 out of the 58 CYP are recorded as high functioning, this equates to 24%. 11 of those recorded as high functioning have a primary need of ASD.

Primary Need	High Functioning	Total	Percent High Functioning
ASD	11	16	69%
HI		7	0%
PD		7	0%
PMLD		6	0%
SEMH	2	3	67%
SLCN		6	0%
SLD		2	0%
VI	1	5	20%
Not recorded		6	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>24%</b>

**Table 9**

### 6.4 Ethnicity and Deprivation

74% (43) of the 58 placements are for CYP with a recorded ethnicity of White British compared to 64% of Buckinghamshire maintained EHCPs and 62% of the Buckinghamshire state funded school population.



**Figure 7**

The majority of the CYP in non-maintained special schools have home postcodes that fall within the ACORN category 1 – Affluent Achievers – 60%. This is significantly higher than the Buckinghamshire school population which is 42%.

	Non-maintained special placements		Pupils in Buckinghamshire Schools - Jan 20		
			All	EHCP	SEN Support
1 - Affluent Achievers	35	60%	42%	31%	34%
2 - Rising Prosperity	3	5%	9%	8%	8%
3 - Comfortable Communities	5	9%	23%	23%	23%
4 - Financially Stretched	8	14%	17%	25%	22%
5 - Urban Adversity	4	7%	8%	12%	11%
6 - Not private Households	0	0%	1%	1%	1%
Not determined	3	5%	1%	1%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>				

**Table 30**

Although the sample being examined here is much smaller, there is a significant difference between those placed in non-maintained special schools (60%) and the Buckinghamshire EHCP population (31%) and SEND Support population (34%) classed as Affluent Achievers according to the ACORN deprivation measure.

## 7. New placements

### 7.1 Costs

Included in the overall data are 26 placements that commenced during the financial year 2020-21, primarily from September 2020. 20-21 financial cost of these placements is £828,505 with an average cost of £31,866. The full year cost of these placements based on 20-21 fees would be £1,420,294 with an average cost of £54,627.

### 7.2 Placement Type

46% (12) of the September placements are in independent special schools and 42% (11) in independent mainstream schools. This is an increase of 7% in the proportion of placements in independent mainstream schools compared to all 2020-21 placements.

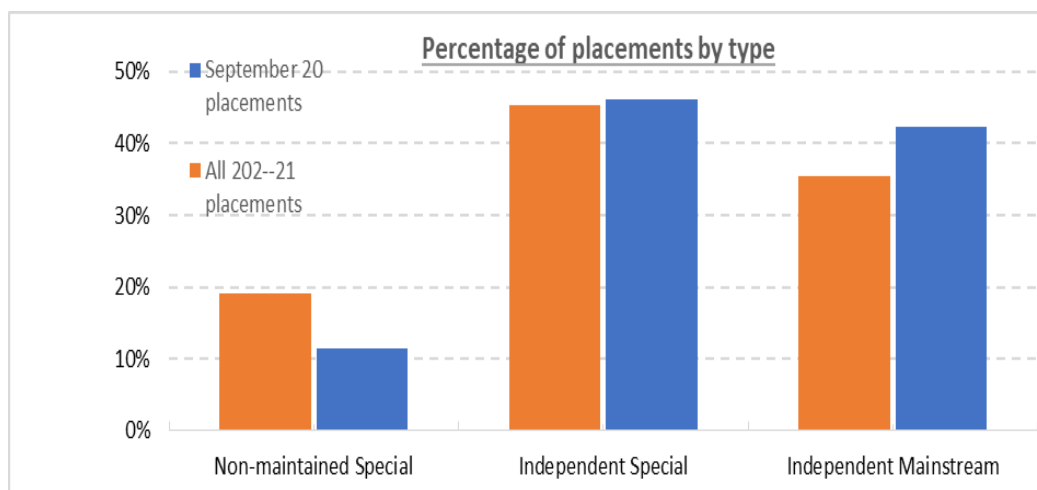


Figure 8

Independent Mainstream		
Primary Need	Total Cost	Average Cost
ASD	£ 75,436.48	£ 15,087.30
SLCN	£ 25,342.59	£ 8,447.53
PD	£ 19,747.00	£ 19,747.00
SPLD	£ 17,129.58	£ 17,129.58
SEMH	£ 16,162.81	£ 16,162.81
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 153,818.47</b>	<b>£ 13,983.50</b>

Table 41

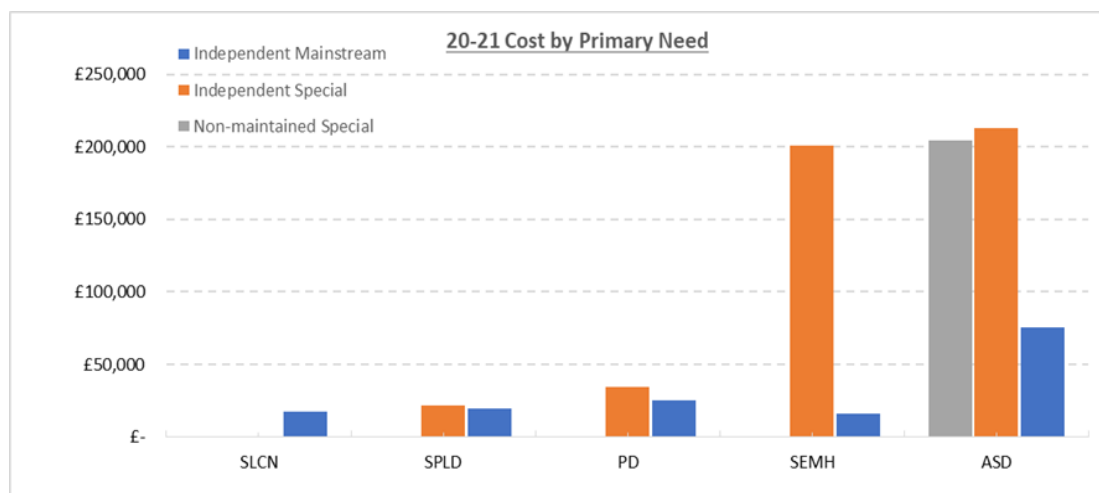
### 7.3 Special Educational Needs

Across all placement types, 50% of the starters have a primary need of ASD. This increases to 100% for placements in non-maintained special schools.

	Independent Mainstream	Independent Special	Non-maintained Special	Total
ASD	5	5	3	13
SEMH	1	5		6
SLCN	3			3
PD	1	1		2
SPLD	1	1		2
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>26</b>

Table 52

10 out of the 12 placements placed in Independent Special Schools were classified as high functioning with a primary need of ASD (5) or SEMH (5), along with both of the 2 new placements in non-maintained special schools (ASD,2). This is therefore the current year area of growth in high cost placements where Buckinghamshire has utilised the independent / non-maintained sector.



Independent Special		
Primary Need	Total Cost	Average Cost
ASD	£ 213,020.45	£42,604.09
SEMH	£ 201,115.83	£40,223.17
PD	£ 34,674.50	£34,674.50
SPLD	£ 21,501.67	£21,501.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 470,312.45</b>	<b>£39,192.70</b>

Table 63

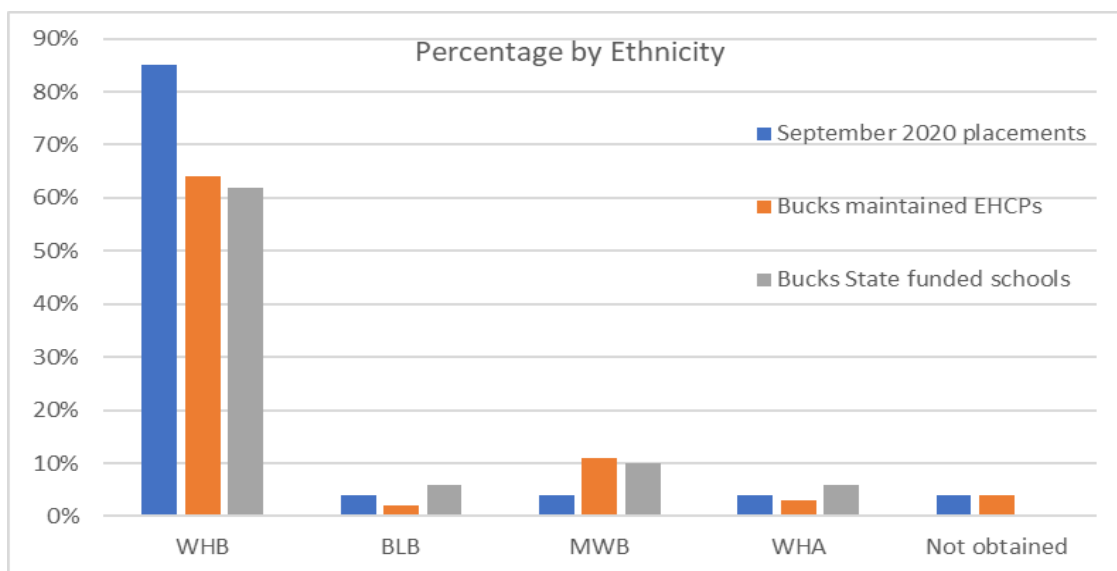
Non-maintained Special		
Primary Need	Total Cost	Average Cost
ASD	£204,373.75	£68,124.58
<b>Total</b>	<b>£204,373.75</b>	<b>£68,124.58</b>

Table 74

#### 7.4 Ethnicity and Deprivation

85% (22) of the 26 new placements are for CYP with a recorded ethnicity of White British compared to 64% of Buckinghamshire maintained EHCPs and 62% of the Buckinghamshire state funded school population.





**Figure 9**

The majority of the new placements have home postcodes that fall within the ACORN category 1 – Affluent Achievers – 58%. For the wider Buckinghamshire population, affluent achievers are at 42%, those with EHCPs 31% and at SEN Support 34%, demonstrating a significant difference with the rest of the SEN cohort.

	September 20 placements		Pupils in Buckinghamshire Schools - Jan 20		
			All	EHCP	SEN Support
1 - Affluent Achievers	15	58%	42%	31%	34%
2 - Rising Prosperity	2	8%	9%	8%	8%
3 - Comfortable Communities	3	12%	23%	23%	23%
4 - Financially Stretched	3	12%	17%	25%	22%
5 - Urban Adversity	2	8%	8%	12%	11%
6 - Not private Households	0	0%	1%	1%	1%
Not determined	1	4%	1%	1%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>				

**Table 85**

## 8 Placement Leavers

### 8.1 Costs

Included in the overall data are 45 placements that ceased at the end of the 2019-20 academic year. 20-21 financial cost of these placements is £1,014,001 with an average cost of £22,533. The full year cost of these placements based on 20-21 fees would be £2,433,603 with an average cost of £54,627.

## 8.2 Placement Type

49% (22) of the leavers were in independent special schools and 36% (16) in independent mainstream schools. Across all placement types there are a higher number of leavers than starters.

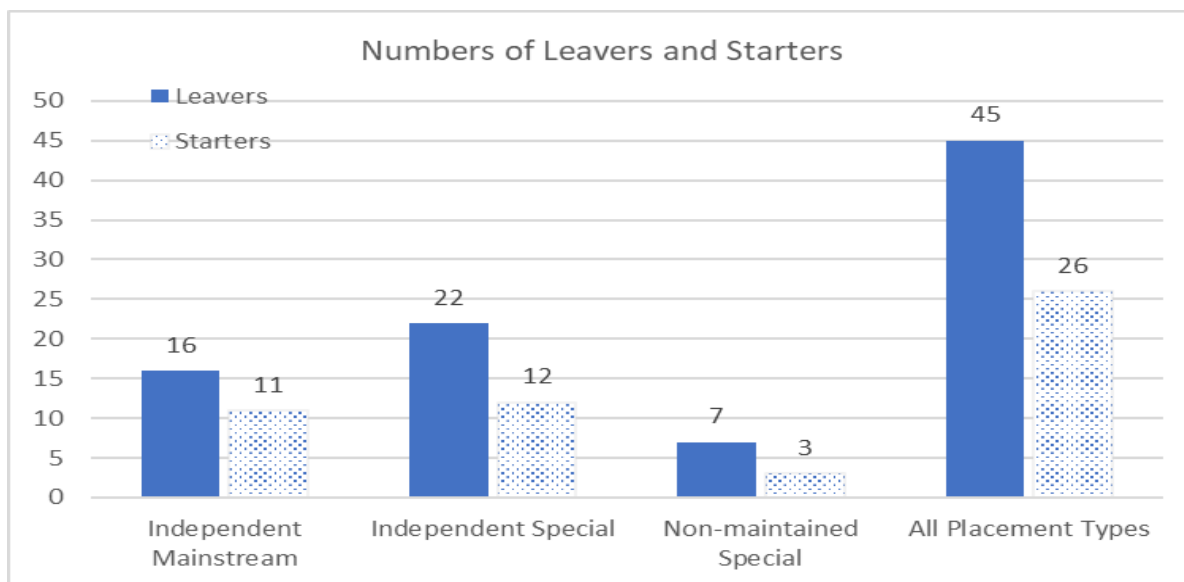


Figure 10

## 9 Placement Start Dates

### 9.1 National Picture

Data from the DfE publication Education, health and care plans: England 2020 based on SEN2 submission in January each year shows that since 2017 the number of CYP placed in non-maintained special schools and independent mainstream schools in England has remained constant while an increase has occurred in independent special school places.

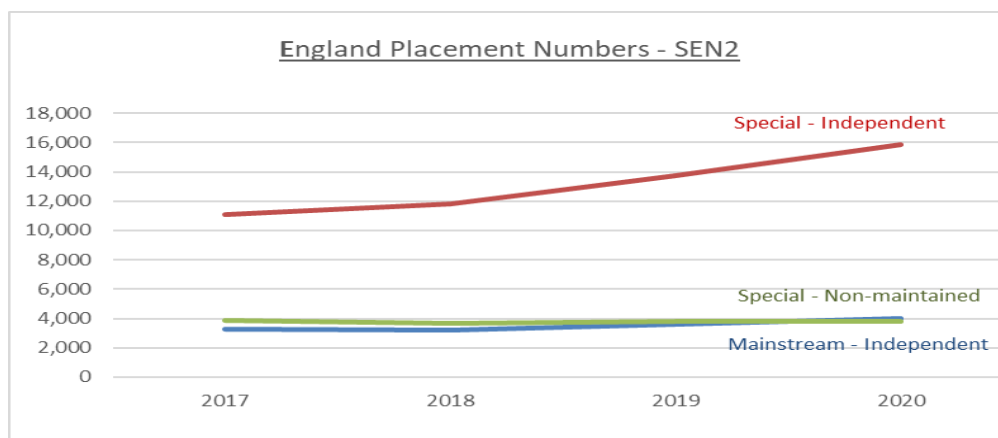
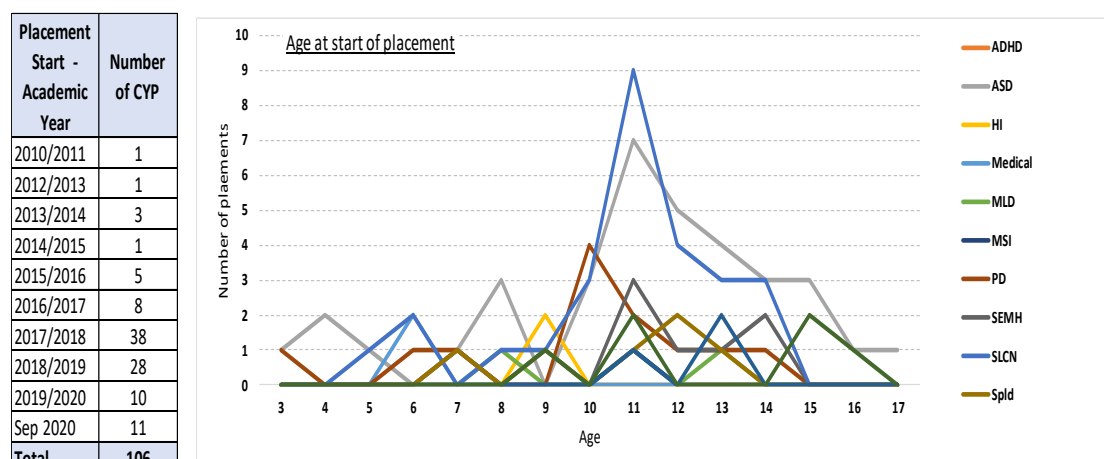


Figure 11

## 9.2 Placement Start Dates and Age Range

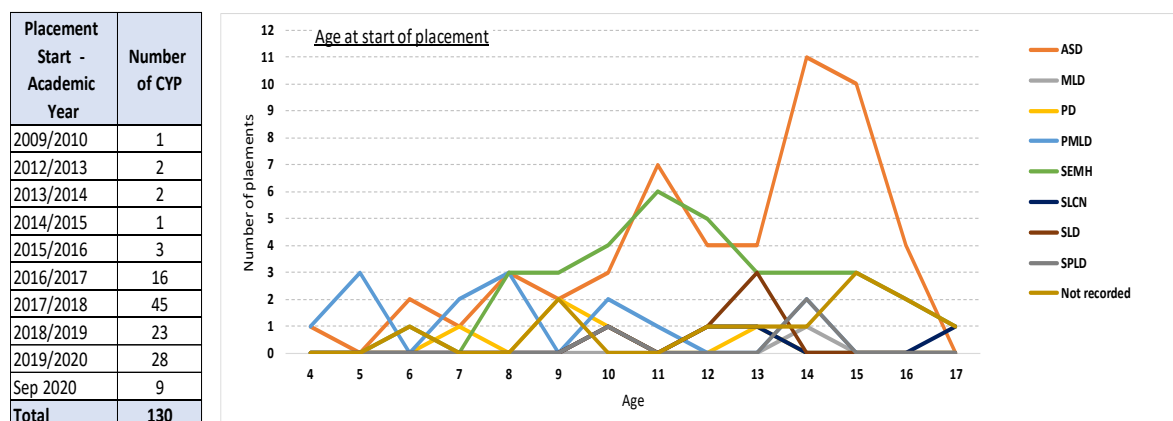
### 9.2(a) Independent Mainstream Schools



**Figure 12**

There has been a particular spike in placements starting upon phase transfer from primary to secondary for those with ASD and SLCN as primary needs. There has also been a particular increase in placements being named for independent mainstream schools between 2017 and 2019 which is not in line with the national picture.

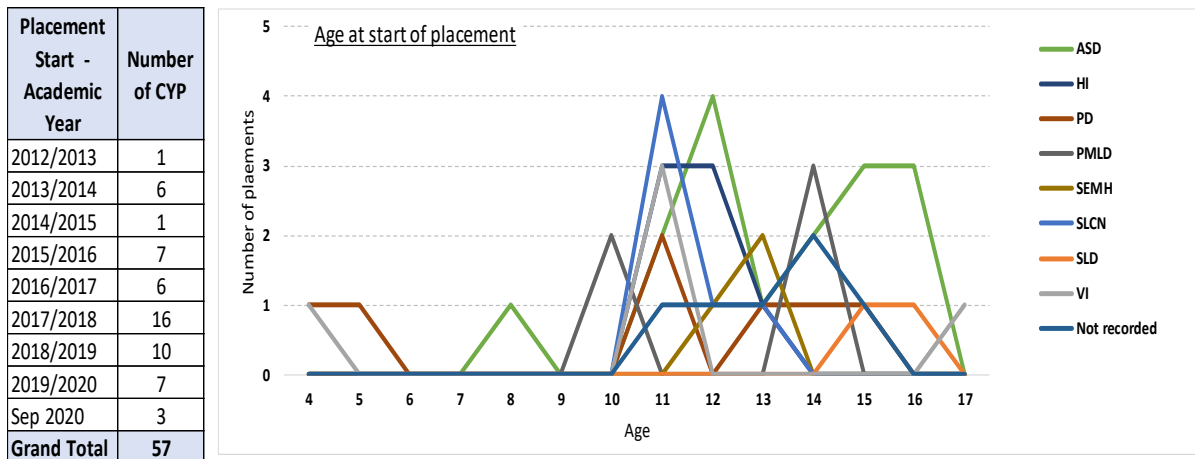
### (b) Independent Special Schools



**Figure 13**

Surge of placements has occurred between 2016 and 2020 which is in line with the national picture of increased placements from approximately 2017 in the independent specialist sector. Placements appear to spike for those with a primary area of need of ASD or SEMH at phase transfer age and also quite significantly at Year 10 for those with ASD.

### (c) Non-maintained Special Schools



**Figure 14**

Placement start dates have increased between 2017 and 2019, which is not in line with the national picture. Due to the low numbers entering placements at different age ranges, it is difficult to draw significant conclusions from this.

## 10 Key themes and Next Steps

10.1 Following this in depth analysis, weekly and monthly tracking systems have been put in place to ensure this information is up-to-date and maintains accuracy.

10.2 Risks including £264,992.10 of potential tribunal outcomes costs for families requesting an independent mainstream, special or non-maintained special school that are likely to be determined before the end of the financial year has been built into the forecast. Equally, significant work has taken place recently examining high cost residential placements included within the independent and non-maintained special school part of the budget, to ensure costs are shared, where appropriate, with social care and health partners. Savings secured in September 2020 of £160,052.45 as a result of this work have also been built into this forecast, and savings earlier in the financial year already accounted for.

10.3 Steps have already been taken to develop our provision in Buckinghamshire to support a greater range of children. From September 2020, the Educational Psychologists are now offering a non-statutory service to schools and specialist teachers have introduced a tiered approach to support that is enabling them to support more mainstream settings earlier.

10.4 Robust decision making on requests for ARP, specialist or independent settings has been in place from September 2019 through a multi-agency panel. Monthly meetings scrutinising spend and suitability of high cost placements involving the iSEND service, finance and commissioning teams are also in place. This increased scrutiny has led to the projected spend for 2020-21 to reduce the budget compared with 2019-20 by over £500,000. A future proposal for next financial year is to

increase commissioning capacity to have SEND placement focus, with the post self-funding as a result of the additional scrutiny capacity it would create. This would include two posts, one at a total cost of £69,369 and the other at £52,179 focused on the monitoring, review and securing of new placements within the sectors examined in this paper (total cost to HNB £121,546).

10.5 In September 2019, a new primary specialist provision was opened in Buckinghamshire with 42 new places available, primarily for those with high functioning SEMH and ASD needs (Chiltern Way Academy). From September 2020, schools specialising in communication and interaction needs with learning difficulties across the county have also increased their places (Furze Down School by 12; Heritage House School by 20; Stony Dean School by 10). Westfield School is also planned to increase their capacity by a further 14 places from April 2021.

10.6 The ASD, SEMH Sufficiency Impact Group feeds in to the Local Area SEND Improvement Plan has recently been reconfigured to address this area of need. Individual workstreams chaired by Headteachers from Buckinghamshire's maintained special sector (ASD) and Primary PRU (SEMH) will focus on the development of mainstream school capacity to support these key areas of need, working in collaboration with health partners to enable effective wider provision. The governance group for this impact group is chaired by the Head of the Integrated SEND Service and the Head of the Integrated Commissioning Service to ensure a collaborative approach to tackling these issues. This group will also oversee the release of the SEND sufficiency consultation in Spring 2021 and subsequent strategy development.

10.7 It is clear from this analysis however that the capacity for our local mainstream and special schools to meet the needs of children and young people, particularly with ASD, is an area for development. Opportunities to develop mainstream provision including ARP and SEN unit provision will be a focus for the coming months.

