

# **A Strategic Analysis of Special Education Needs in Darlington**



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## Summary

Darlington has a higher than average number of children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) when compared with both the regional and national averages

Darlington has more pupils with EHCPs in Special Schools than in mainstream settings

Across all ages the most common type of SEN primary need for those with SEN Support or EHCPs is MLD, followed by SEMH and SLCN. The numbers identified with SEMH are higher than the national average in both the primary and secondary sectors.

There is a higher than average incidence of MLD pupils in special schools.

SLCN is the most significant SEN need in the primary sector for those with SEN Support or EHCPs and is above the national average. For those with EHCPs ASD is the most significant need (32% of all primary EHCPs).

MLD and SpLD are the most significant SEN need for those with SEN Support or EHCPs in the secondary sector, closely followed by SEMH. For those with EHCPs SEMH is the most significant need (27.6% of all secondary EHCPs) and is double the national average.

SEMH accounts for 28.8% of all EHCP pupils in Special Schools closely followed by ASD at 25.6%

Special Educational Needs remains more prevalent in boys and pupils eligible for free school meals

The number of Early Years children receiving SEN support is higher than the national average, whilst the number with EHCPs is lower.

Performance at Key Stage 4 by SEN pupils is poor when compared with national averages.

Darlington has a higher than average percentage of post 16 students with EHCPs in Further Education.

Darlington has a higher than average persistent absence rates, this includes pupils SEN Support pupils

48% of the pupils with fixed terms exclusions had SEN and the number of days lost because of fixed terms exclusions was higher for children with SEN than for those without.

Half of the SEN students excluded had a primary need of SEMH.

The number of assessments requests for EHCPs has more than doubled and is expected to continue to rise.

Darlington has already met the target for the conversion of statements to EHCPs

## Prevalence and Characteristics

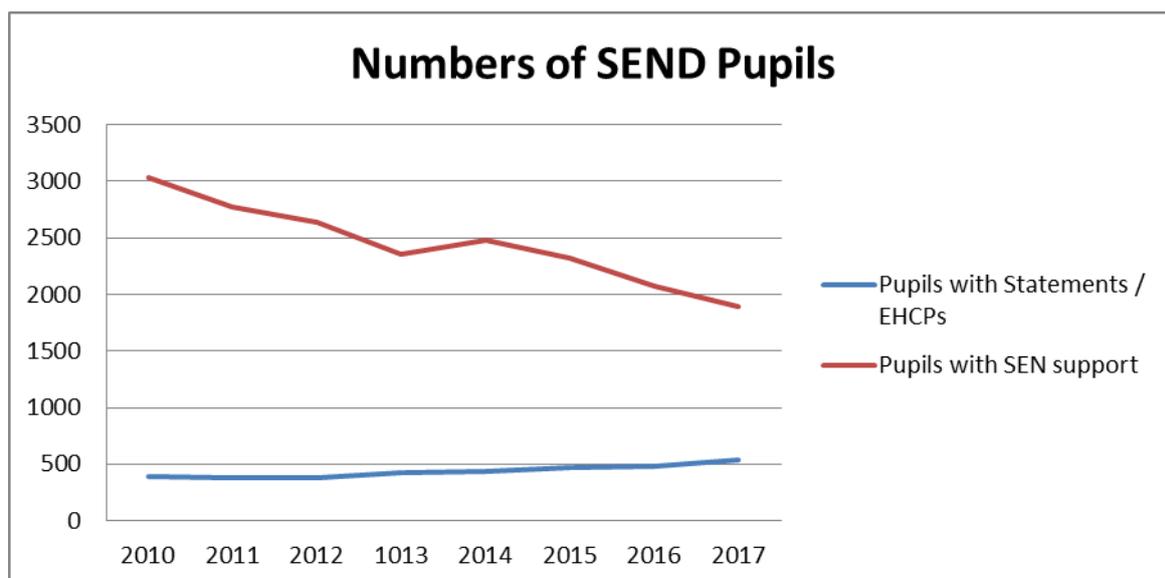
**Pupils with Special Educational Needs are currently categorised as follows:**

**SEN Support:** Extra or different help is given from that provided as part of the school's usual curriculum. Advice or support may be provided from outside specialists. This category has replaced the former 'School Action' and 'School Action plus' categories.

**Statement/Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan:** A pupil with a statement of SEN or an EHC plan when a local authority issued one following a formal assessment. This document sets out the child's needs and the extra help they should receive. By Spring 2018 all statements will be replaced by EHC plans.

### Trends

Overall the number of pupils with SEN in Darlington has fallen from 3,428 in January 2010 to 2,430 in January 2017. The number of pupils with a statement or EHCP has risen by 36.8% since 2010, whilst the number of pupils requiring SEN support has declined by 37.6% ([Tables 12 & 13 – SFR37/2017](#))



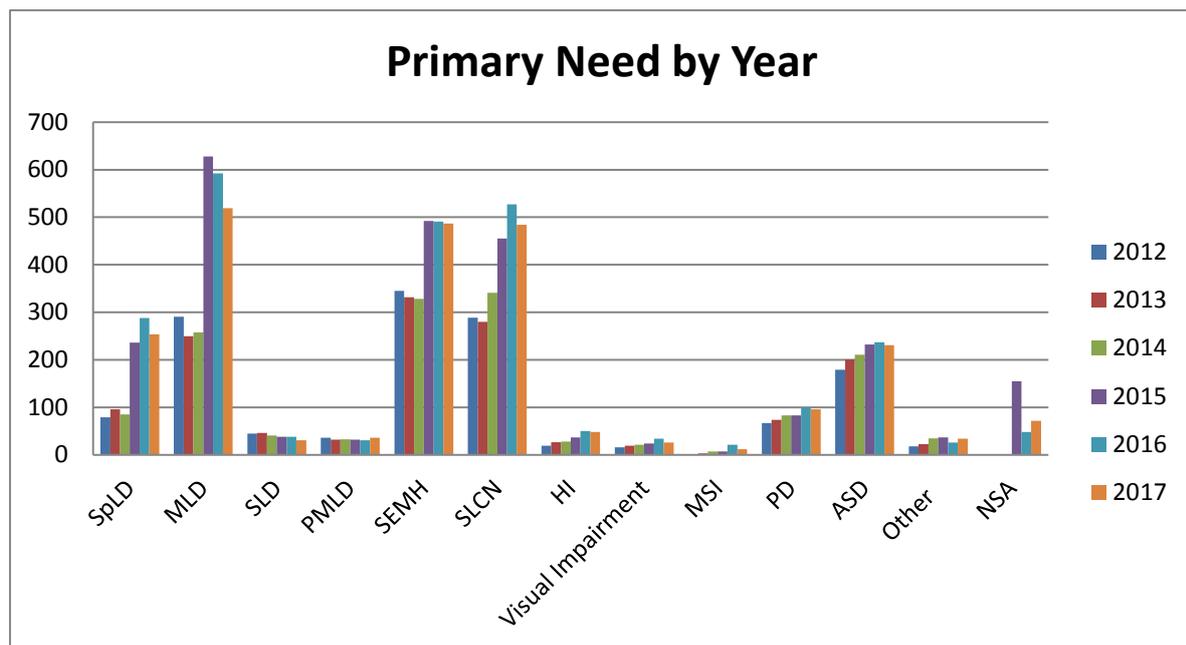
In January 2017 the percentage of pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or EHC plans in Darlington schools stood at 3.3% of the total cohort (535 pupils), this was above the North-East average (3.0%) and the England average (2.8%) ([Table 12 – SFR37/2017](#)).

In January 2017 the percentage of pupils who were identified as requiring SEN support in Darlington schools stood at 11.6% of the total cohort (1,895 pupils), this was below the North-East average (12.4%) but in line with the England average (11.6%) ([Table 13 – SFR37/2017](#)).

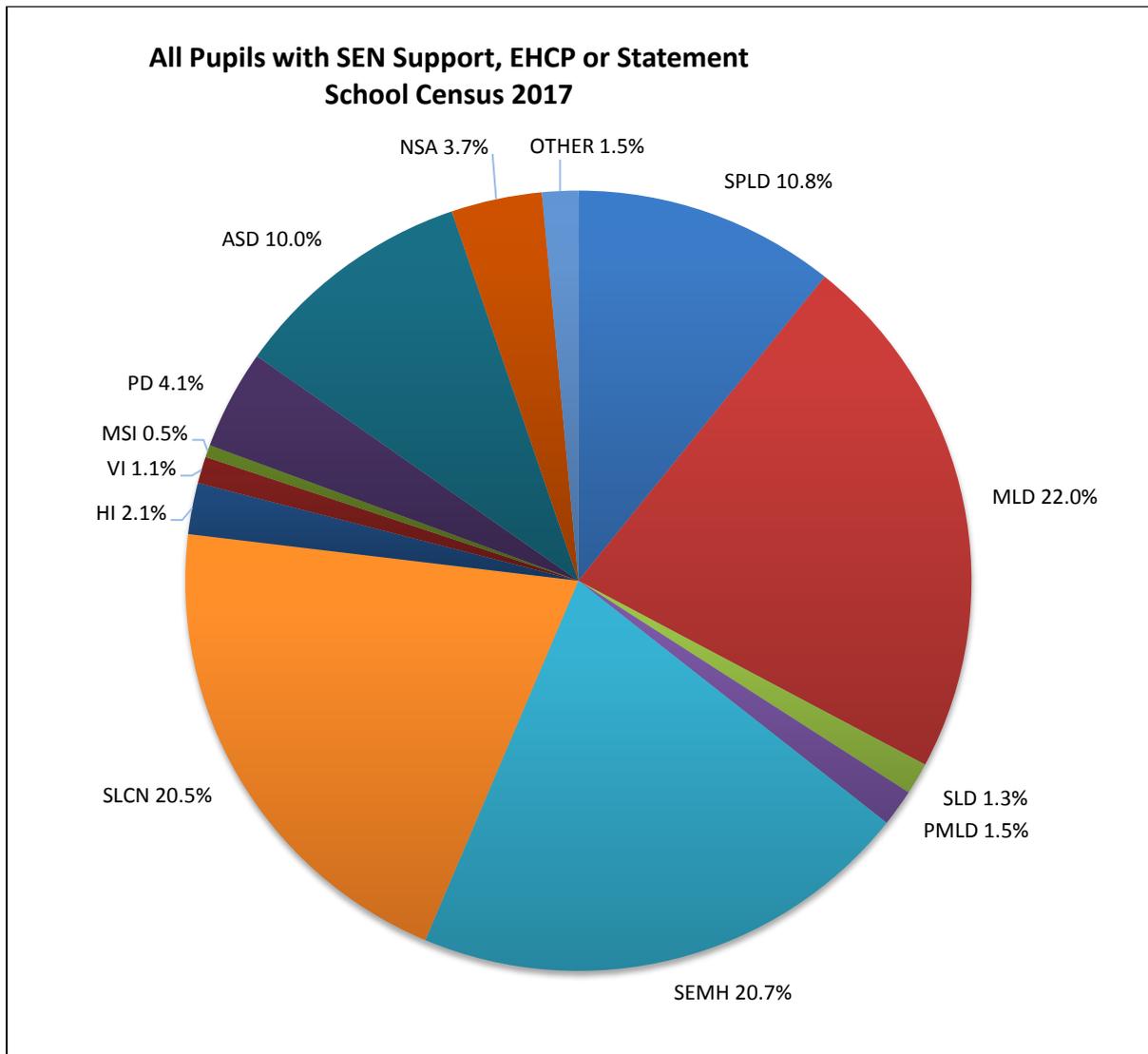
In January 2017, in Darlington schools, there were 103 primary pupils and 58 secondary pupils who had a statement or EHCP. This compares with 281 in special schools with a statement or EHCP ([Table 14 – SFR37/2017](#)). This is a 1:1.75 ratio.

## Type of Need

Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD) is the most common type of primary need (22.27% of the total SEN cohort) followed by Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH – 20.90%) and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN – 20.77%) and. All three areas increased significantly in 2015 and 2016 but dropped back slightly in 2017 ([Table 16-18 - SFR37/2017](#))

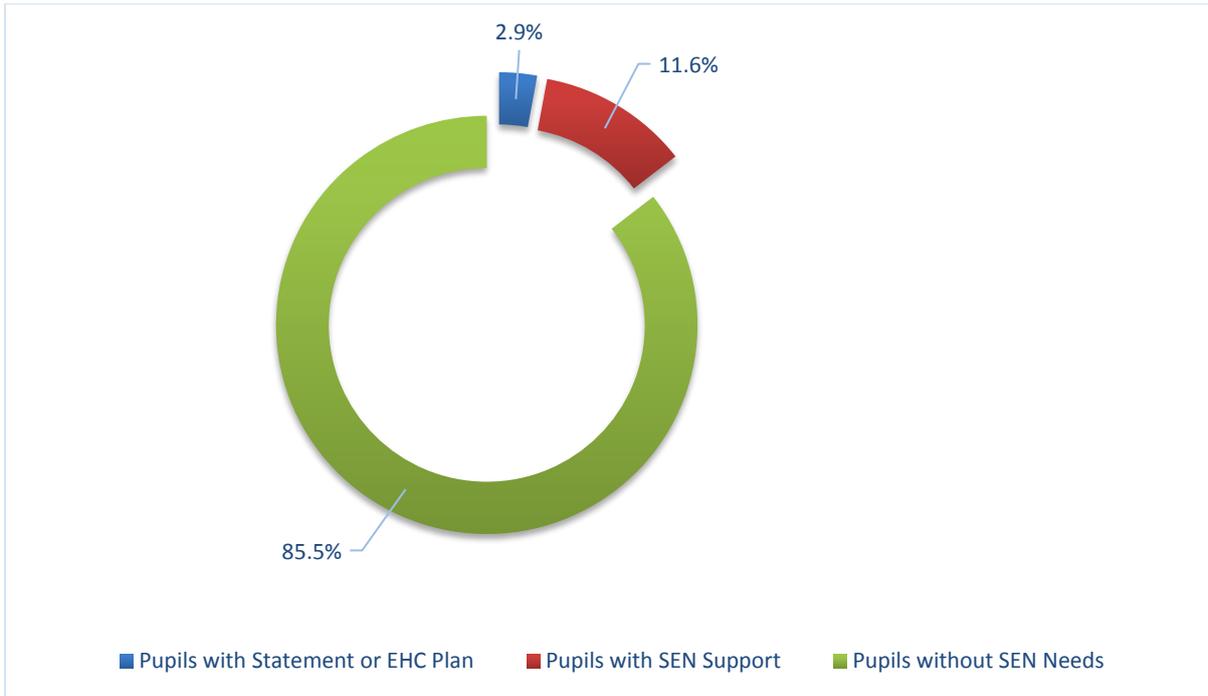


See [Appendix 1](#) for explanation of abbreviations of primary need



According to the 2017 School Census, for all pupils with SEN (including SEN Support, and those with an EHCP / Statements), the highest primary need was MLD with 22% of the 2,356 pupils who had SEN. This is in line with the national figure (22.7%) for the same period. Other primary needs affecting large proportions of Darlington's SEN pupils include SEMH (20.7%) and SLCN (20.5%). Again, this is similar to the national picture with SLCN (20.5%) and SEMH (16.3%). These are by far the highest primary needs both nationally and in Darlington's school population.

2.9% of pupils in Darlington had a statement or EHC Plan in January 2017 and 11.6% were receiving SEN Support. Nationally the data for pupils with a statement or EHC Plan is 2.8% and pupils with SEN Support is 11.6% which is very similar to Darlington.

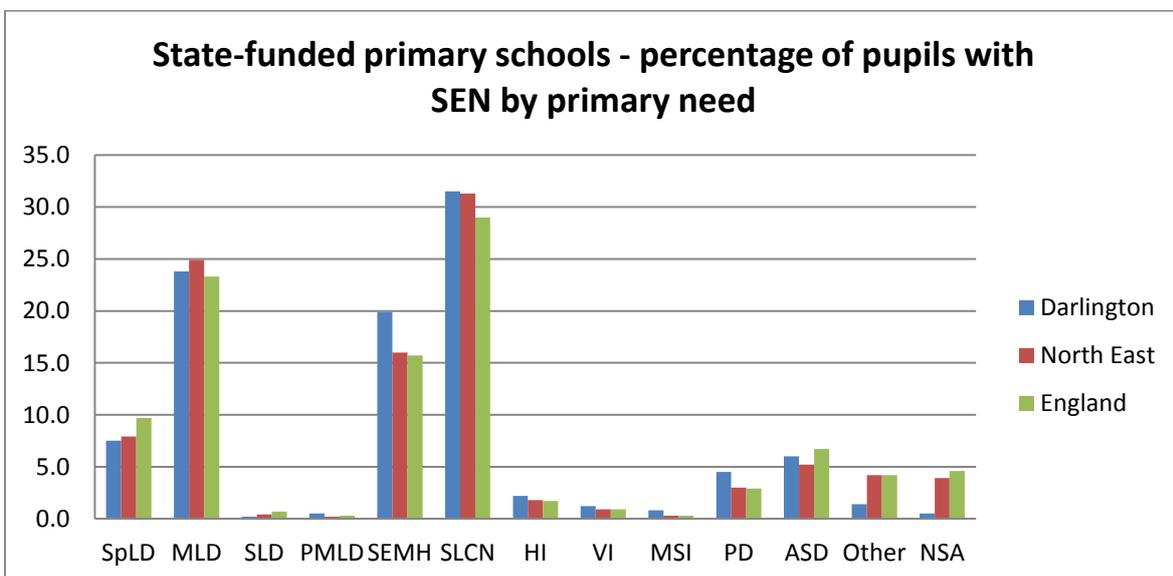


The three charts below show the percentage of SEN primary needs in the Darlington primary, secondary and special sector compared with the North East and England averages.

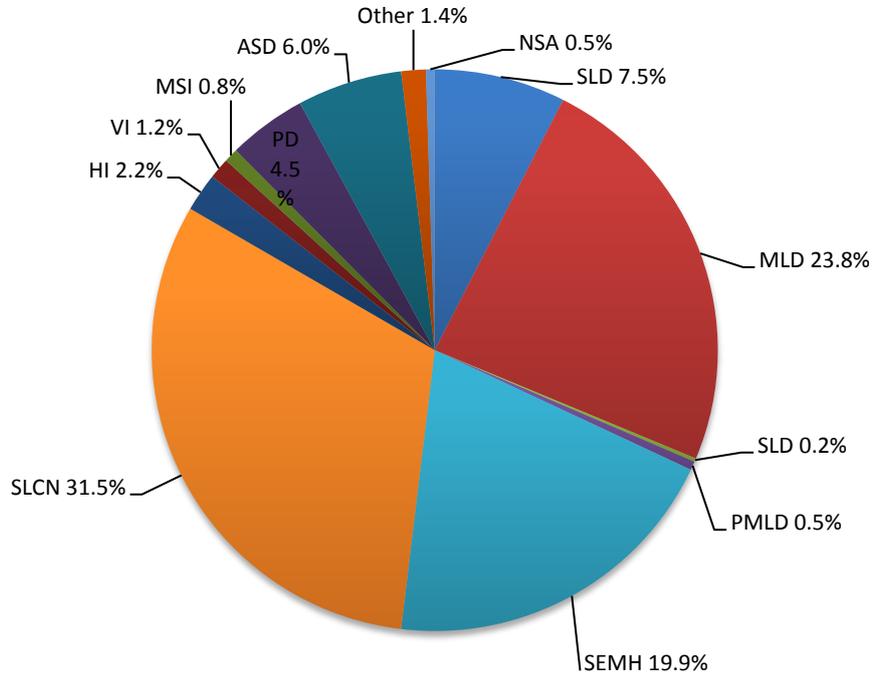
The data indicates that:

- There is a higher than average incidence of pupils with SEMH needs in Darlington in the primary and special sectors.
- There is a higher incidence of MLD pupils in special schools as opposed to that in the secondary sector which is lower than average.
- There is a higher incidence of pupils with PMLD but a lower incidence of pupils with SLD in the Special sector.
- The largest percentage of pupils with SLCN are in the primary sector.

### Primary Sector



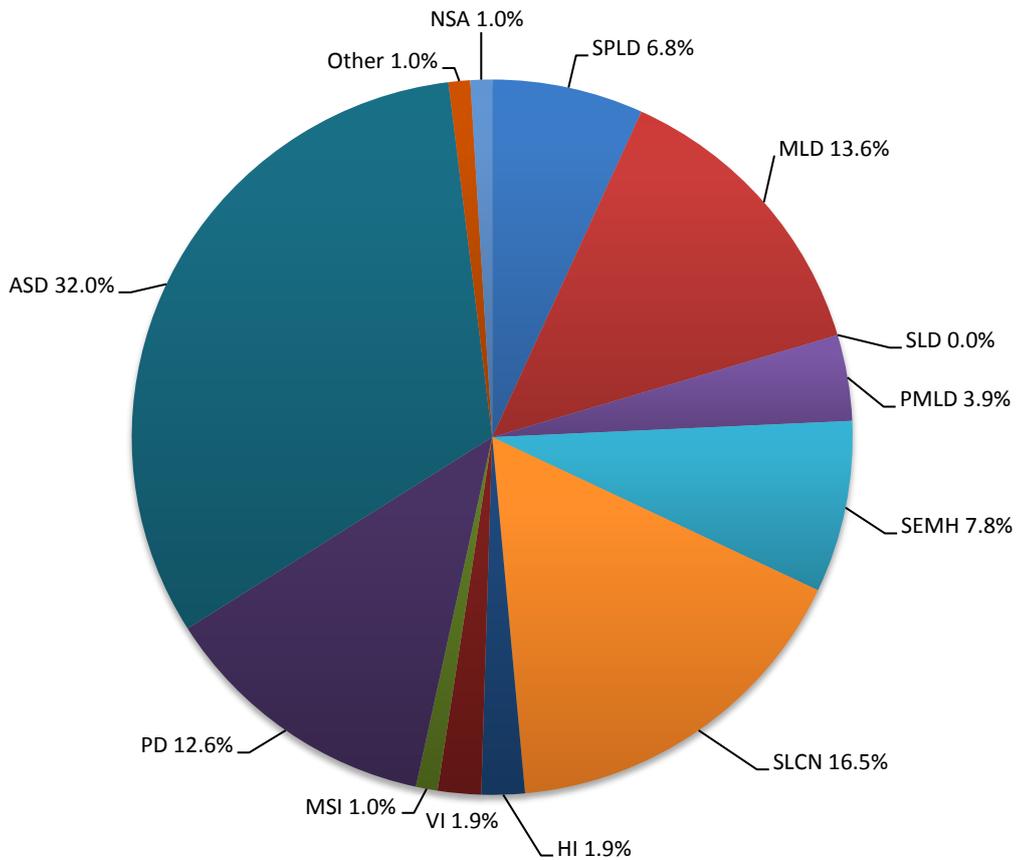
### Primary Schools - All SEN Pupils (SEN Support and EHCP/Statement - Jan 2017



A total of 1,319 pupils at primary school in Darlington have SEN, of which 31.5% have SLCN (also the most common primary need nationally at 29%).

In total, 13.9% of Darlington's primary pupils have SEN, which is slightly higher than the national average of 13.5%. Of those 12.8% were on SEN Support, above the national average of 12.2%, whilst 1.1% have a statement/EHCP compared with 1.3% nationally.

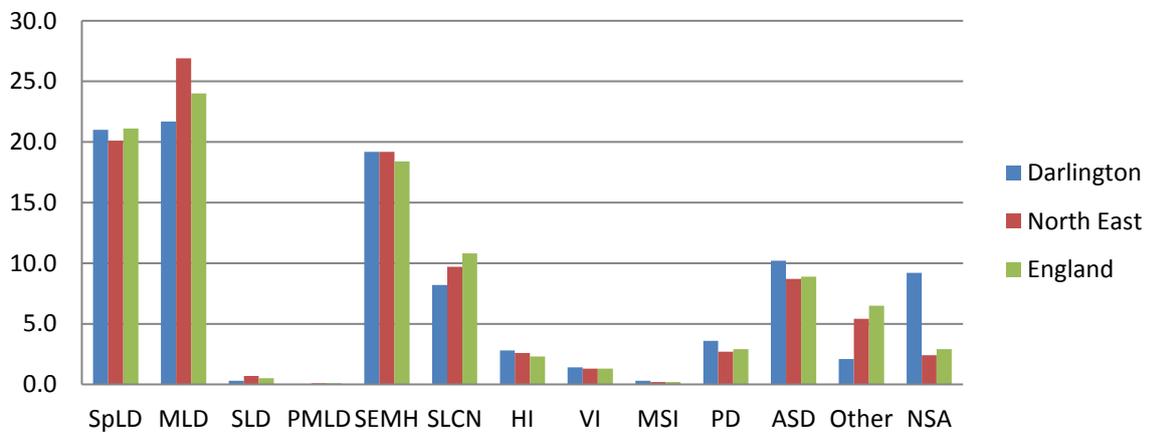
### Primary Schools - EHCP / Statements - Jan 2017



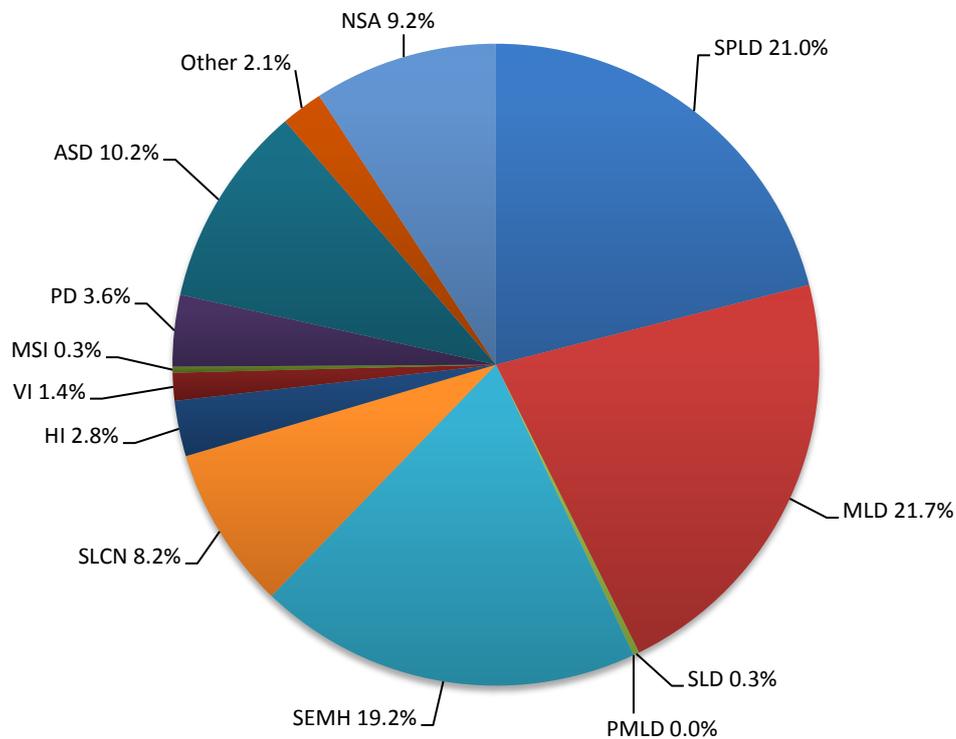
In January 2017 there were 103 primary age pupils with a statemen/EHCP. In line with the national average, ASD is the highest primary need for pupils in Darlington schools at 32% (27.8% nationally), followed by SLCN at 16.5% (24.7% nationally).

### Secondary Sector

#### State-funded secondary schools - percentage of pupils with SEN by primary need



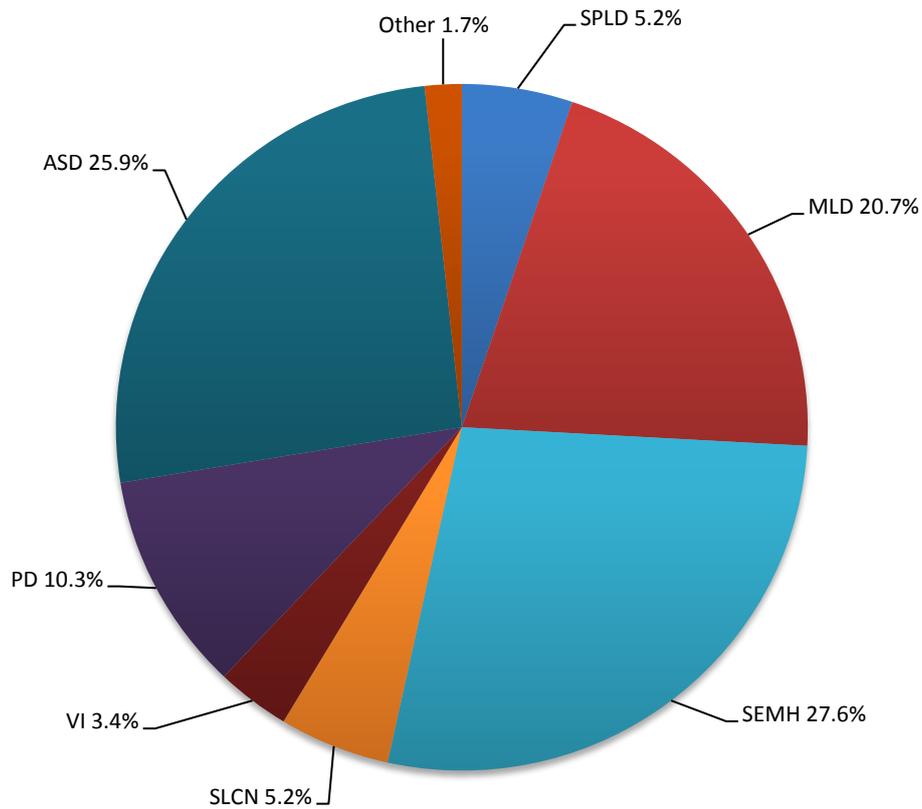
### Secondary Schools - All SEN Pupils (SEN Support and EHCP / Statements - Jan 2017



A total of 718 pupils at secondary school in Darlington have SEN. SPLD and MLD are the highest primary needs, with SEMH (19.2%) also being a significant need. These three categories are recorded as being the primary need for 62% of SEN pupils (School Census, Jan 2017).

Nationally, MLD is the single need for nearly a quarter of SEN pupils at secondary schools.

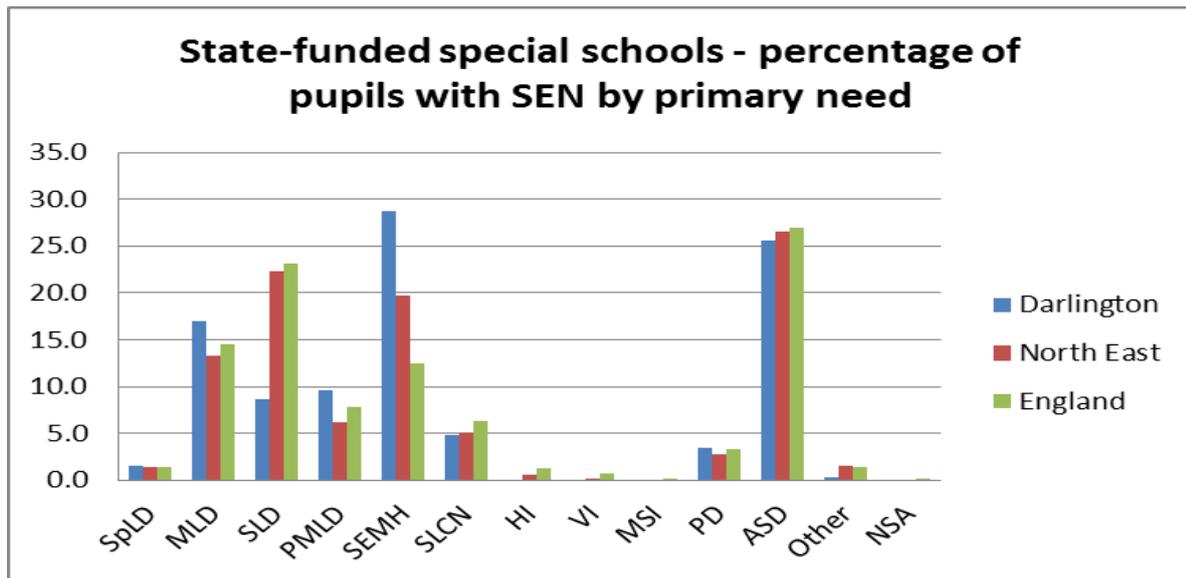
## Secondary Schools - EHCP / Statement - Jan 2017



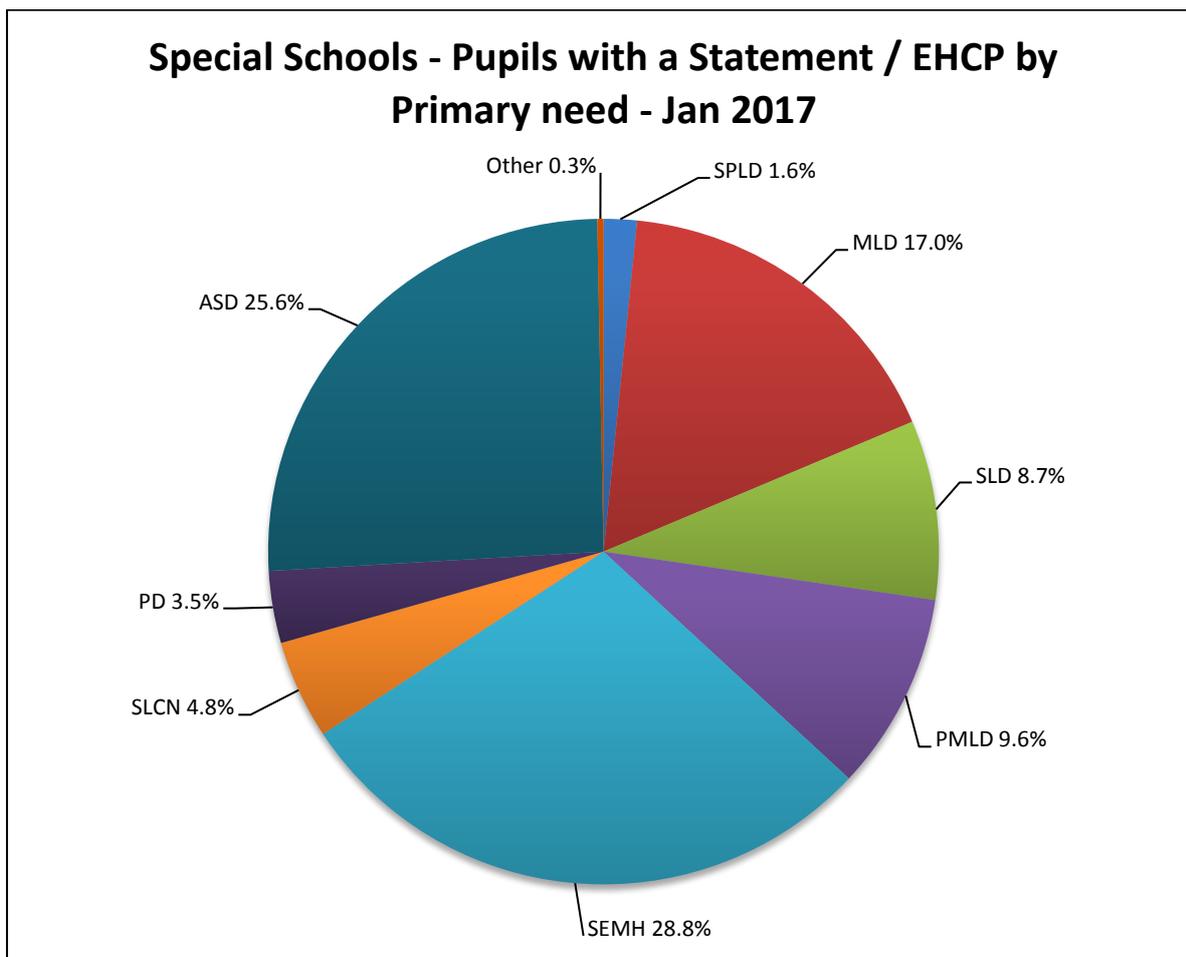
According to the School Census 2017, there were 58 pupils at secondary school in Darlington who had a statement or EHCP. This equates to 0.9% of pupils and is significantly lower than the national average of 1.7%. This low figure for secondary EHCPs may be due to the fact that high needs funding for secondary schools is fully delegated at present therefore there is no incentive to go through that EHCP process.

ASD accounts for just over a quarter of cases, but unlike the primary phase, it isn't the highest single need for secondary schools in Darlington. SEMH at 27.6% represents the highest need, this is almost double the national average of 14.4%.

## Special School Sector



(1) Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools and special academies, including free schools.



According to the School Census 2017, there were 309 pupils at special schools in Darlington who had a statement or EHCP.

Nationally, the highest primary need is ASD at 26.9% with SLD at 23.2% being the second highest. For Darlington, SEMH is the highest need at special schools (28.8%) however nationally SEMH only accounts for 12.5% of primary need (4<sup>th</sup> highest primary need nationally). ASD accounts for just over a quarter of cases and in contrast with the national average, SLD only accounts for 8.7% of need.

A higher proportion of our EHCP/s pupils are educated in special schools (1.9%) than the national average (1.3%).

Currently the number of Darlington EHCP pupils in special schools (237) exceeds the number of EHCP pupils in mainstream schools (212).

## **Characteristics**

### **Age and Gender**

Special educational needs remain more prevalent in boys than girls. 15.4% of boys are on SEN support compared to 7.6% of girls. This is a reduction from last year when 16.9% of boys and 8.5% of girls were on SEN support. 4.3% of boys have a statement or EHC plan compared to 1.4% of girls. This has risen slightly from 3.9% boys, and 1.3% for girls in 2016.

### **Free School Meal Eligibility**

Pupils with special educational needs are more likely to be eligible for free school meals. 32.1% of pupils with special educational needs are eligible for free school meals in 2017 compared to 14.9% of pupils without special educational needs. Pupils with statements or EHC plans are more likely to be eligible for free school meals than pupils on SEN support (37.7% compared to 30.7%).

### **Ethnicity**

In Darlington in 2017, special educational needs is most prevalent in pupils with an Irish heritage at 30.8% (although the cohort is very small 4 pupils out of a total of 13). Other groups where prevalence is also high are Mixed Caribbean and Mixed African and Not Known – but all of these groups have very small cohorts, so any analysis is potentially misleading.

### **English as a First Language**

Pupils whose first language is known to be English were more likely to have special educational needs in 2017 than those whose first language is known to be other than English. 14.8% of pupils whose first language is known or believed to be English had special educational needs compared to 8.9% of pupils whose first language is known or believed to be other than English.

3.0% of pupils whose first language is known or believed to be English have a statement or EHC plan in 2017, whereas 1.1% of pupils whose first language is known or believed to be other than English have a statement or EHC plan.

## Current Provision

For 2017/18 academic year the local authority has commissioned high needs places at the following institutions:

Institution	Pre-16	Post 16
Marchbank Free School (Special)	42	0
Beaumont Hill Academy (Special)	252	28
Heathfield Primary (Resource Base)	16	0
Mount Pleasant Primary (Resource Base)	20	0
Northwood Primary (Resource Base)	9	0
Hurworth School (Secondary Resource Base)	14	0
Darlington College	0	86
Darlington Borough Council	0	3
Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form college	0	2
Home and Hospital Teaching Service	20	0
Rise Carr College (PRU)	40	0

Source: [High Needs: Allocated Place Numbers](#)

## Early Years

### 0-5 Years

26 EHC plans were issued in 16/17 academic year for children aged 0 – 5 years. 50% of these were in the broad area communication and interaction - 69% of those were for children with ASD

2 year olds identified as requiring SEN support has risen from 2.4% in 2016 to 4.5% in 2017. In 2017 this was significantly higher than the 2.7% nationally

Support from the Early Years Inclusion Team (either advice or inclusion funding) continues to be predominately for children with emerging social communication needs. This has more than doubled from 37 children in 14/15 to 78 children in 16/17

## School-based 3 and 4 year olds

### EHCP

0.4% of 3 and 4 year olds pupils (4 pupils) in Darlington have an EHCP, with PMLD being the primary need in most cases. This is lower than the national figure of 0.7% (*source: School Census Jan 17*).

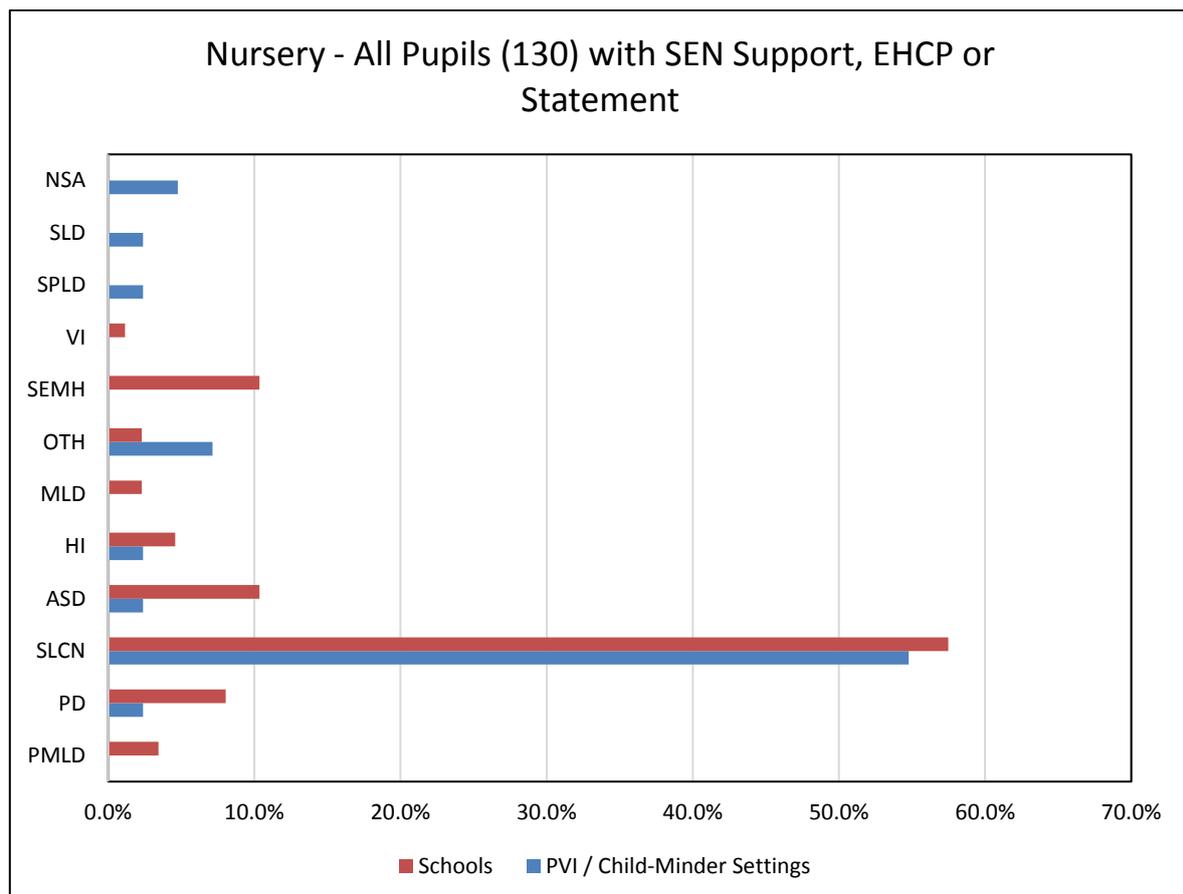
### SEN Support

8.7% are identified as requiring SEN Support, 60% of which have a primary need of SLCN. This is higher than the national figure of 5.4%.

### Wider EY Sector

54% of 3 and 4 year olds in Darlington accessing either 15 or 30 hours do so in the PVI sector (*source: Autumn 17 Headcount data*).

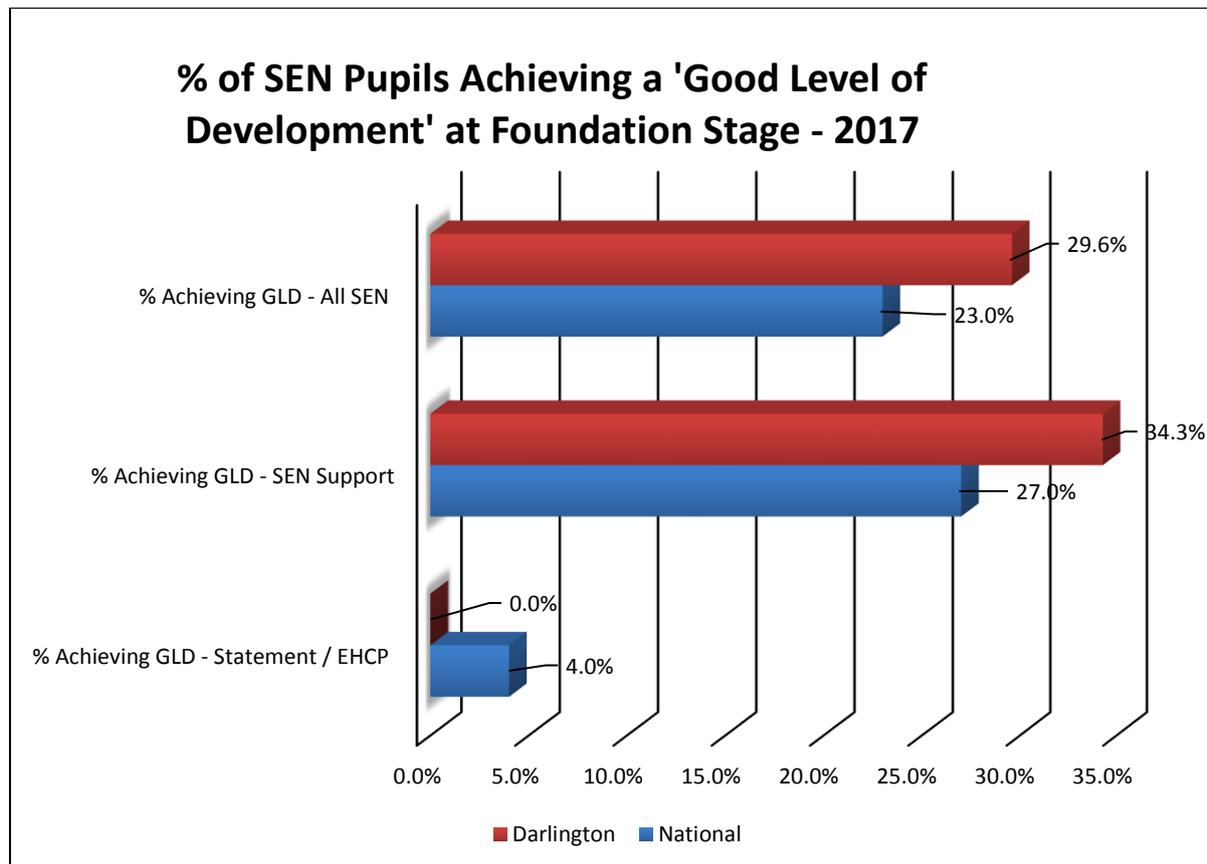
A similar percentage of 3 and 4 year olds have an EHCP in the PVI sector compared with those in schools. A much lower proportion have been recorded as requiring SEN Support (the majority having SLCN as a primary need).



# Attainment

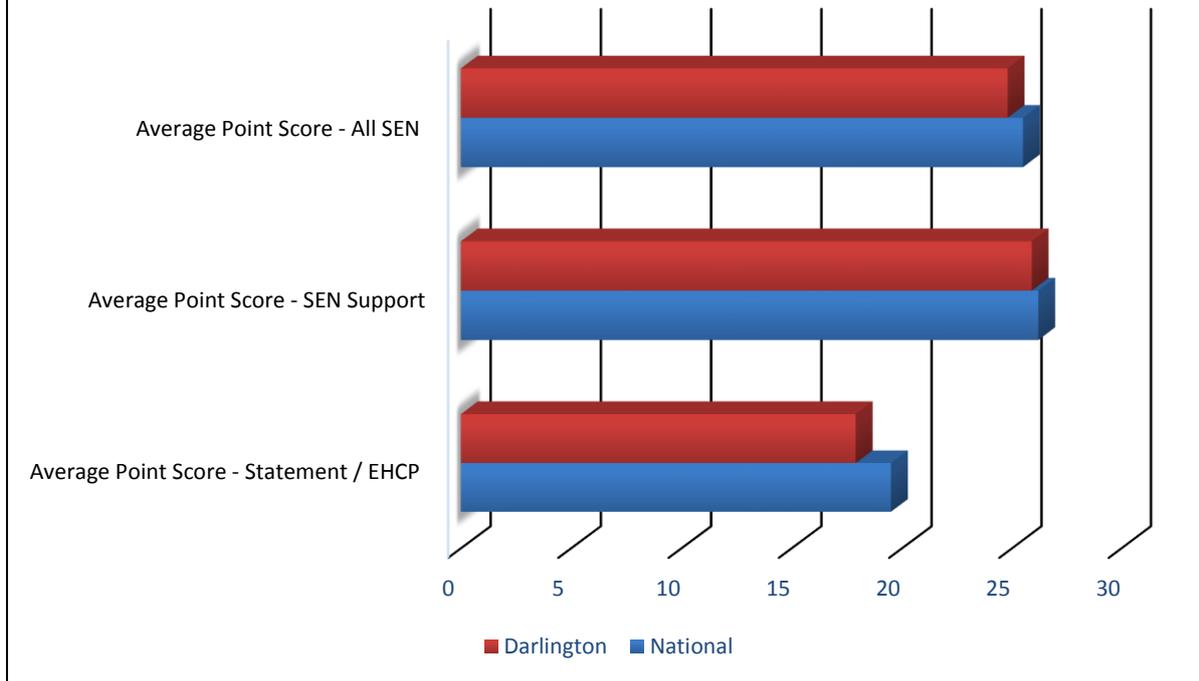
## Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

In 2017, none of the small number of pupils with a statement / EHCP achieved a GLD in Darlington. However, the SEN pupils with SEN Support achieved better than the national measure at 34.3% (national 27%). Overall for SEN pupils, this equated to a higher percentage of pupils achieving a GLD than similar pupils nationally.



For the average point score at Foundation Stage, the results for 2017 were similar to the percentage of pupils achieving a GLD in that SEN Support and SEN overall were higher than the national comparison, but lower for Statement / EHCP pupils.

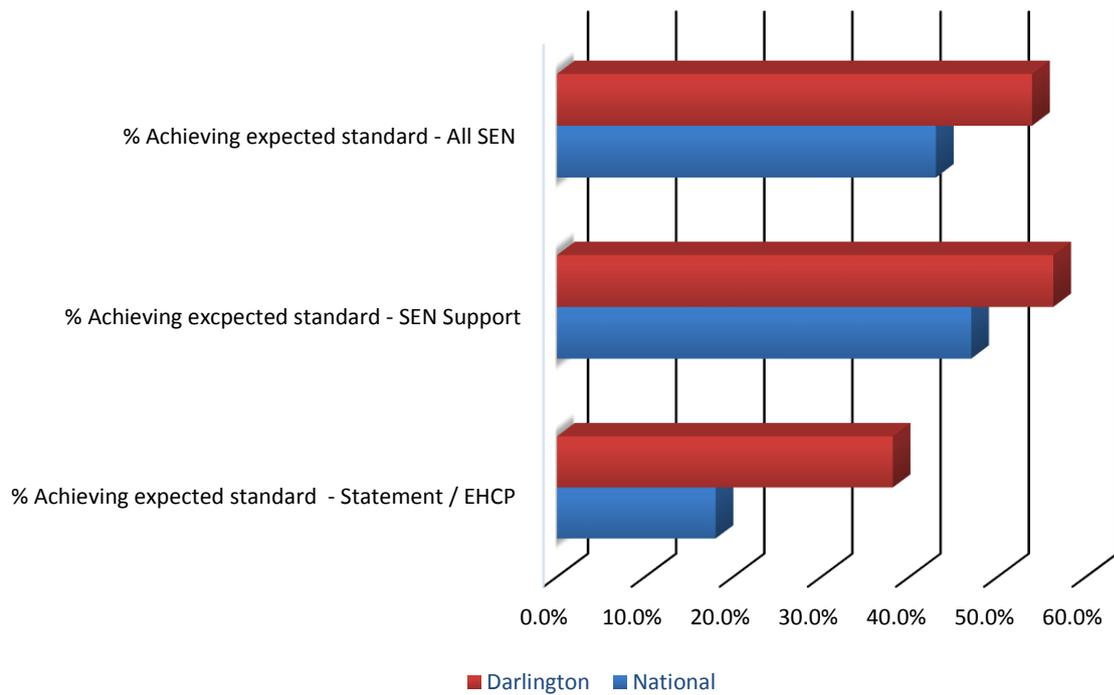
## Average Point Scores - Foundation Stage 2017



### Phonics

In 2017, a higher proportion of SEN pupils in Darlington met the expected standard of phonic decoding when compared with the national average. The gap between Darlington and national results was particularly high for pupils with a statement / EHCP.

## % of Year 1 SEN Pupils Meeting the Expected Standard of Phonics Decoding - 2017



### Key Stage 1

Key Stage assessments for KS1 and KS2 were reformed in 2016 with resulting outcomes being measured by 'Expected Standards' rather than the previously measured national curriculum levels.

When compared to the national average, SEN pupils in Darlington performed less favorably at KS1 in 2017. However, maths was stronger for pupils with a Statement or EHCP and reading was a particular strength in Darlington. The following table highlights this:

Key Stage 1 2017	Statement / EHCP		SEN Support		All SEN	
	National	Darlington	National	Darlington	National	Darlington
Reading	13.5%	20.0%	33.3%	34.9%	30.5%	32.4%
Writing	9.0%	5.7%	22.6%	19.4%	20.7%	17.1%
Maths	13.7%	14.3%	34.8%	32.2%	31.8%	29.2%
RWM	7.6%	2.0%	19.1%	14.4%	17.5%	12.4%

## Key Stage 2

In contrast to KS1, the achievement of SEN pupils at KS2 was stronger in Darlington for 2017 compared to the national average. This was the case in all subjects with the exception of writing for pupils with a statement / EHCP, as the tables below show:

Key Stage 2 2017	Statement / EHCP		SEN Support		All SEN	
	National	Darlington	National	Darlington	National	Darlington
Reading	14.6%	20.0%	36.8%	42.5%	32.9%	36.8%
GPS	16.0%	20.0%	37.8%	44.0%	34.0%	39.9%
Writing	14.8%	20.0%	39.9%	45.1%	35.5%	40.8%
Maths	12.8%	10.0%	33.2%	36.3%	29.7%	31.8%
RWM	7.7%	7.5%	20.0%	27.5%	17.9%	24.0%

The results for SEN Support pupils are higher than those in the North East and Statistical Neighbours with a national ranking of 25. However, pupils with a statement / EHCP are average for these geographical comparators.

## Key Stage 4

New attainment indicators were introduced in 2015/16 at Key Stage 4 – Attainment 8 and Progress 8. The tables below suggest that at KS4, All SEN pupils in Darlington performed less well than their national comparators in all measures.

For pupils with a statement/EHCP, Ebacc Attainment and English & Maths (Basics) are the only two measures Darlington is above national average.

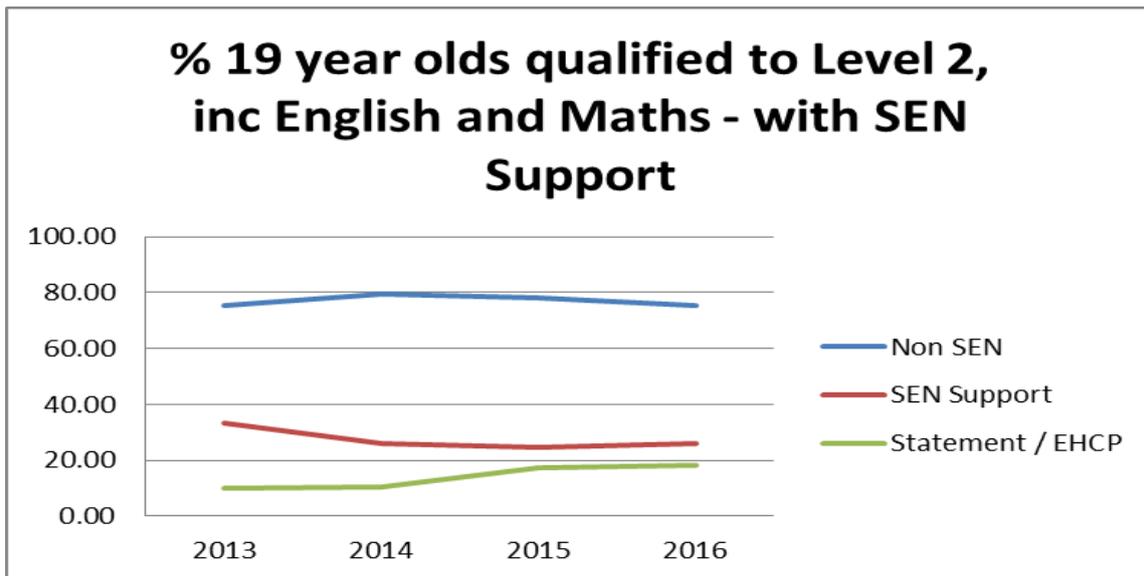
Key Stage 4 2017	Statement / EHCP		SEN Support		All SEN	
	National	Darlington	National	Darlington	National	Darlington
Attainment 8	13.8%	12.7%	31.6%	27.7%	26.9%	24.6%
Progress 8	-1.03	-1.54	-0.44	-0.95	-0.59	-1.08
9-5 (E&M)	5.2%	7.1%	15.3%	13.8%	12.6%	12.4%
Ebacc Entry*	3.7%	2.4%	15.0%	8.8%	12.0%	7.5%
Ebacc Attainment*	1.3%	2.4%	5.0%	1.3%	4.0%	1.5%

\*9-5(English & maths), A\*-C science, humanities and languages

## Post 16 – Attainment by Age 19

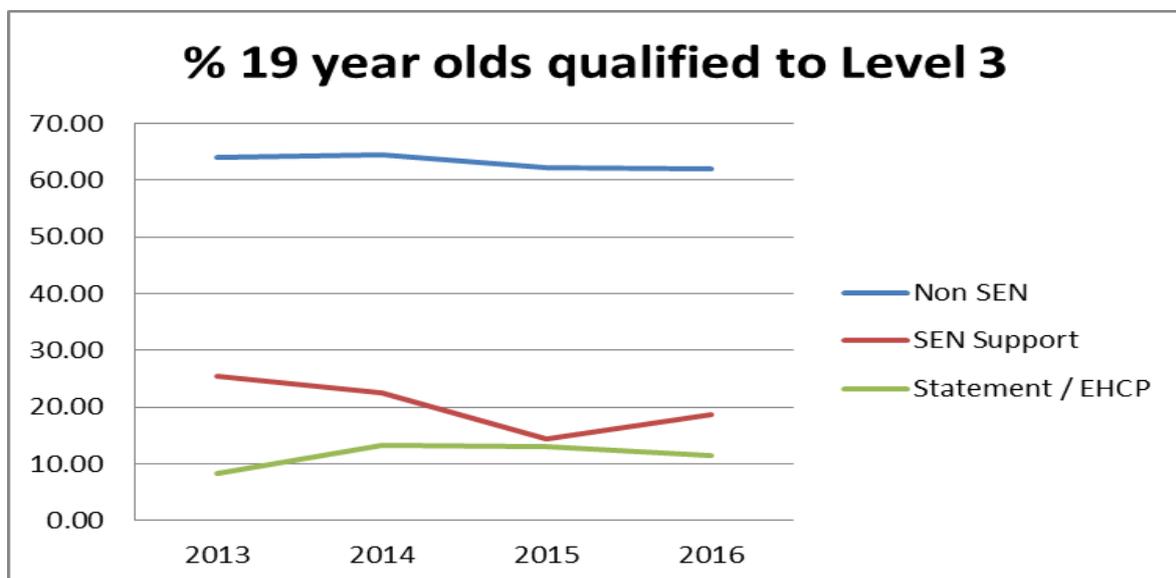
Attainment at Level 2, including English and maths, by age 19, has improved for those with SEN support and Statements / EHCPs, whilst there has been a decline for those without SEN.

Performance at Level 2 for those with statements / EHCPs at 18.20%, is above that of statistical neighbours (12.33%) and the England average (15.30%). However, for those with SEN support needs, at 26.20%, it is well below statistical neighbours (36.64%) and the England average (37.00%).



Attainment at Level 3 by age 19, has declined those with SEN support and Statements / EHCPs, as well as for those without SEN.

Performance at Level 3 for those with statements / EHCPs at 11.40%, is just above that of statistical neighbours (11.34%) but below the England average (13.70%). For those with SEN support needs, at 18.80%, it is well below statistical neighbours (27.78%) and the England average (31.20%).

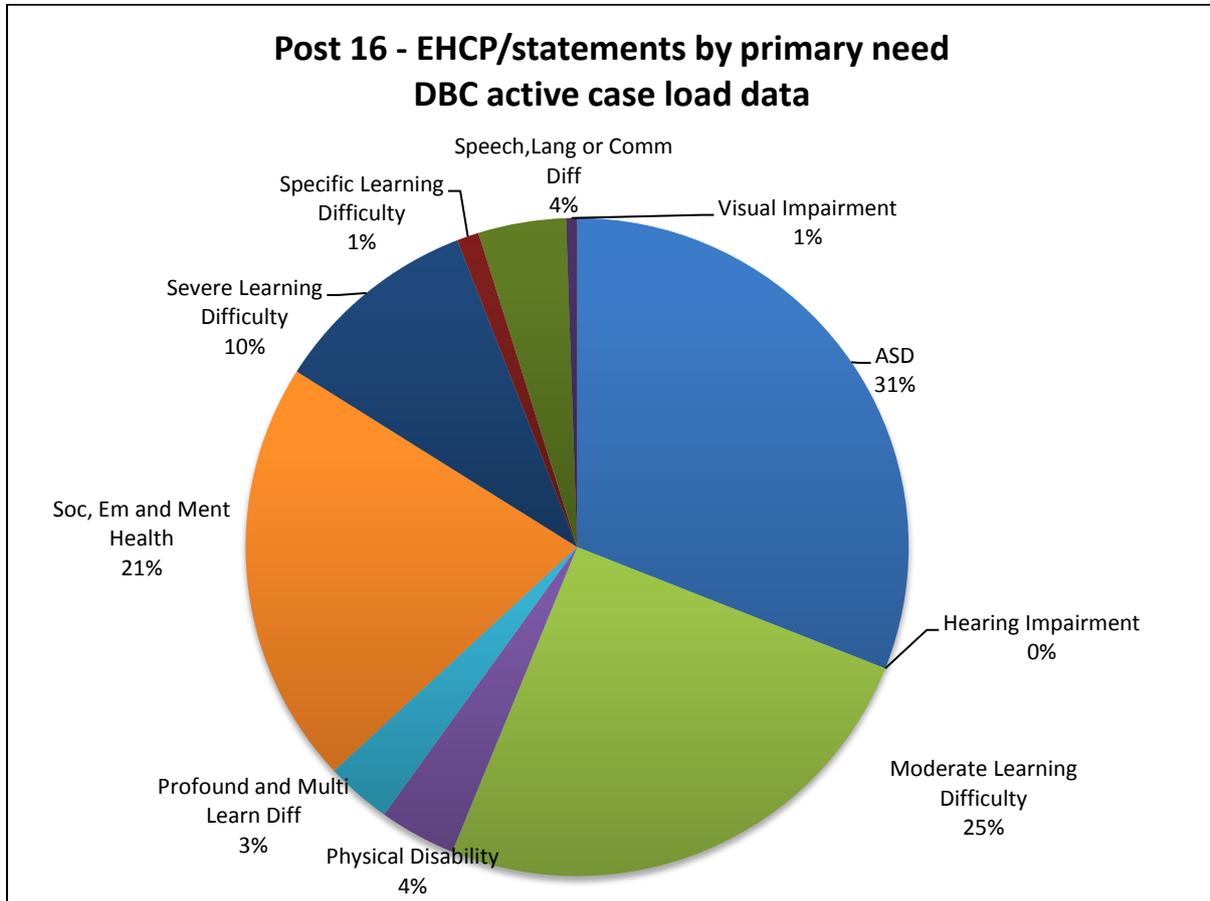


## Preparation for Adulthood

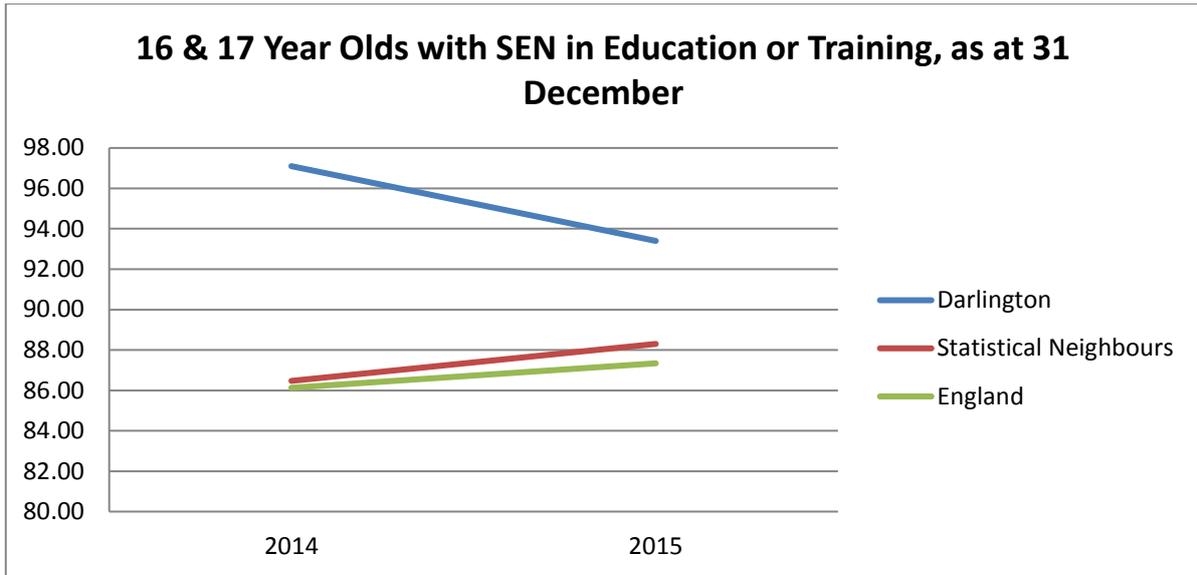
### Participation for 16 and 17 year olds

At 31 December 2015 93.4% of 16-17 year olds with SEN (110 young people) who were resident in Darlington were in education and training compared with 88.30% for our statistical neighbours and the England average of 87.34%. In 2015 it was 97.1% (70 young people).

Darlington has a higher percentage of post 16 students with EHCPs in further education provision compared with the national average, although this may be due to the low number of school sixth form places in Darlington. There is a higher than average percentage of post 16 students with EHCPs in post 16 specialist institutions than the North East and national averages.



The highest primary need in post 16, based on current EHCPs, is ASD at 31%, followed by MLD at 25% and SEMH at 21%. These three primary needs make up 77% of the total EHCP cohort.



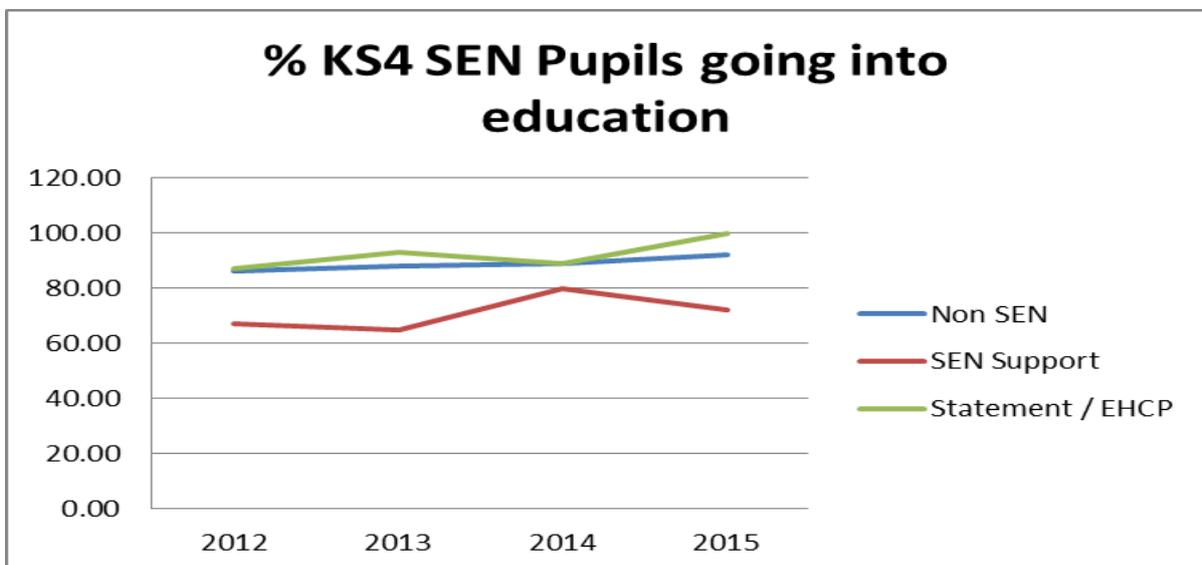
### Participation in Further Education

In 2015/16 academic year 468 Darlington resident learners in mainstream Further Education (FE), aged under 19, self-declared a learning difficulty or disability (LDD). This was 20.7% of the total FE cohort. Part year data for 2016/17 (to February 2017) shows that the percentage of those declaring a LLD has risen to 23.0%.

In 2015/16 academic year 121 Darlington resident learners in mainstream Further Education (FE), had a Learning Difficulty Assessment or an EHC plan. This was 5.36% of the total FE cohort. Part year data for 2016/17 (to February 2017) shows that the percentage of those having a Learning Difficulty Assessment or an EHC plan fell to 5.12% (103 learners).  
 Source: 16-18 ESFA Funded Residency Data & MI Report – June 2017.

### Destinations

In 2015 100% of pupils with a statement or EHCP went into a sustained destination after completing Key Stage 4, compared with 92% of non-SEN pupils and only 2% of those with SEN support.



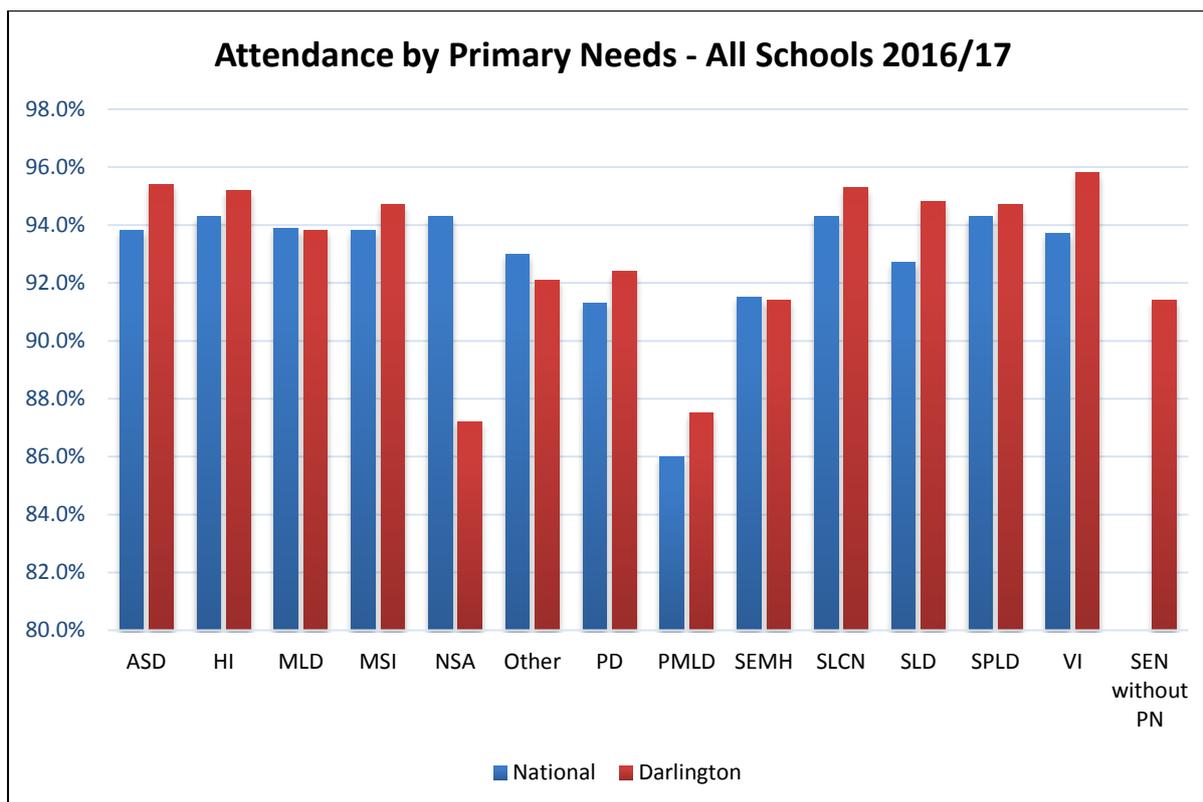
## Absence and Exclusions

### Absence

Absence data for the full year (2015/16) shows that for KS1, absence rates for Darlington pupils was in line with national rates (4%). Pupils with SEN Support missed slightly more sessions (5% in Darlington; which was lower than the national SEN Support rate of 6%). Pupils with an EHCP or Statement were most likely to be absent from school, although the rate in Darlington (8%) was in line with the national rate for similar pupils. 21% of pupils with EHCP / Statement were persistently absent in 2015/16 in Darlington (27% national), compared with 10% for pupils on SEN Support (14% national) and 6% for pupils without SEN (Darlington and National).

Rates of absence at KS2 are similar to those at KS1, however Darlington pupils with SEN were more likely to be persistently absent than similar pupils nationally at KS2. Absence rates for pupils with SEN Support were 6% in Darlington, which was slightly higher than the national rate of 5%. Darlington pupils were also more likely to be persistently absent at 12% compared to 10% nationally. For pupils with an EHCP / Statement, Darlington pupils missed fewer sessions than similar pupils nationally (6% compared to 7%), although those that were absent were more likely to be persistently absent (21% compared to 18% nationally). Similar to KS1, pupils with no SEN at KS2 missed the least sessions, at a 4% absence rate (in both Darlington and nationally).

Problems with absence levels generally escalate at senior school and by KS2 for the academic year 2015/16, Darlington pupils missed on average 7% of sessions. This compares unfavourably with other pupils nationally (6%). The persistently absent rates are also greater at KS4 than both KS1 and KS2, with Darlington pupils being more likely to be considered persistently absent than their peers nationally (20% compared to 15%). Similarly to both KS1 and KS2 pupils, KS4 pupils with SEN missed more sessions than those without SEN (SEN Support 11%, EHCP / Statement 8% and non-SEN 7%). However, the pupils with SEN on average, were not absent more than their peers nationally. Data available indicates that although the absence rates aren't particularly higher, it is the persistently absent rates where Darlington pupils are over represented. 35% of pupils with SEN Support were persistently absent (31% nationally) and 18% for pupils with no SEN (12% nationally). Pupils with EHCP / Statements had a persistently absent rate of 22%, which was less than the 28% for the national average.



## Permanent Exclusions

In the last full academic year (2016/17) there were no permanent exclusions for any pupils in Darlington schools. This was also the case for the previous 3 academic years.

As exclusions are reported two terms in arrears via the School Census, any exclusions for the first term of the current academic year are expected in the Summer 2018, and the LA is aware that a number of permanent exclusions will be reported.

However, in Darlington in Academic Year 2017/18 there have been 14 notified permanent exclusions – 12 Secondary/2 Primary.

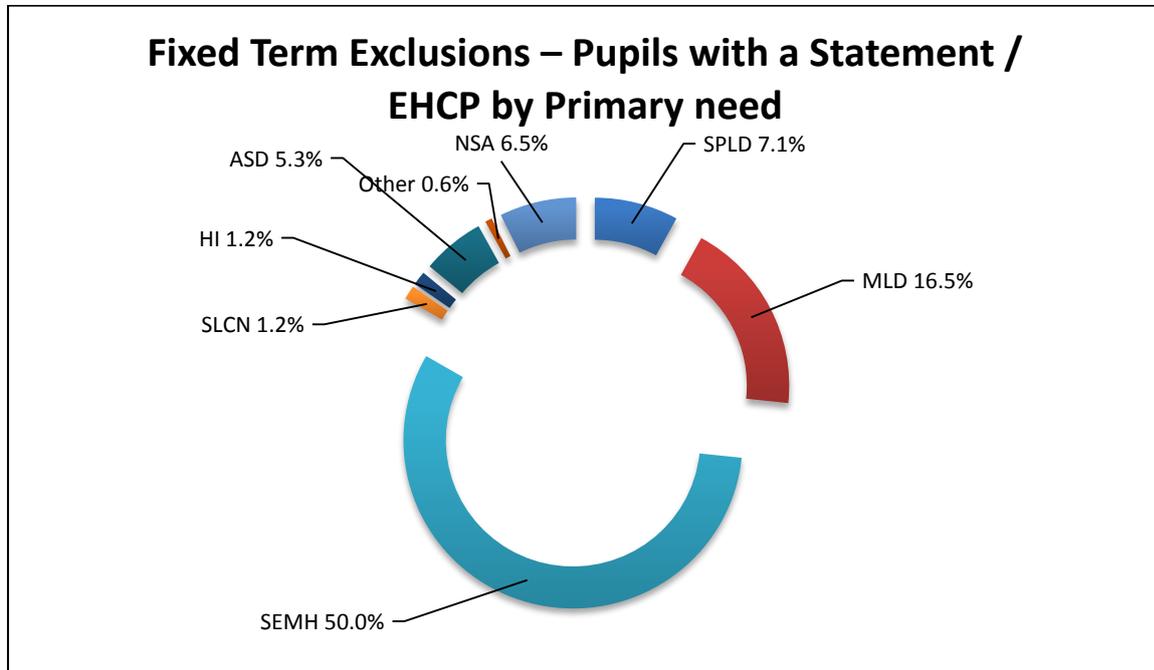
## Fixed Term Exclusions

In the academic year 2015/16 there were 671 periods of fixed-term exclusion (FTE) recorded for Darlington, which applied to 358 individual pupils (the rate for one or more FTEs was 2.24% with an average of 3.8 days lost per excluded pupil). Pupils with SEN accounted for just less than half of all FTEs in 2015/16 (48%). 5.45% of pupils with SEN received one or more fixed period exclusion in 2015/16 (5.89% for pupils with SEN Support, 2.54% for pupils with an EHCP / Statements). In contrast the rate of one or more fixed term exclusions for pupils with no SEN was 1.45%. The average days lost was also higher for pupils with SEN (10.28 days compared with 7.37 days for pupils without SEN).

The latest data held for fixed-term exclusions is the first 2 terms of the 2016/17 academic year. During this period, there were 979 incidences of FTE involving 414 individual pupils; of which 115 had SEN Support and 55 had a Statement or EHCP. Therefore, 41% of the pupils who had 1 or more FTE had some form of SEN.

50% of the SEN pupils who were excluded for 1 or more fixed term exclusion had SEMH as their main primary reason, with another 10% having it as a secondary need.

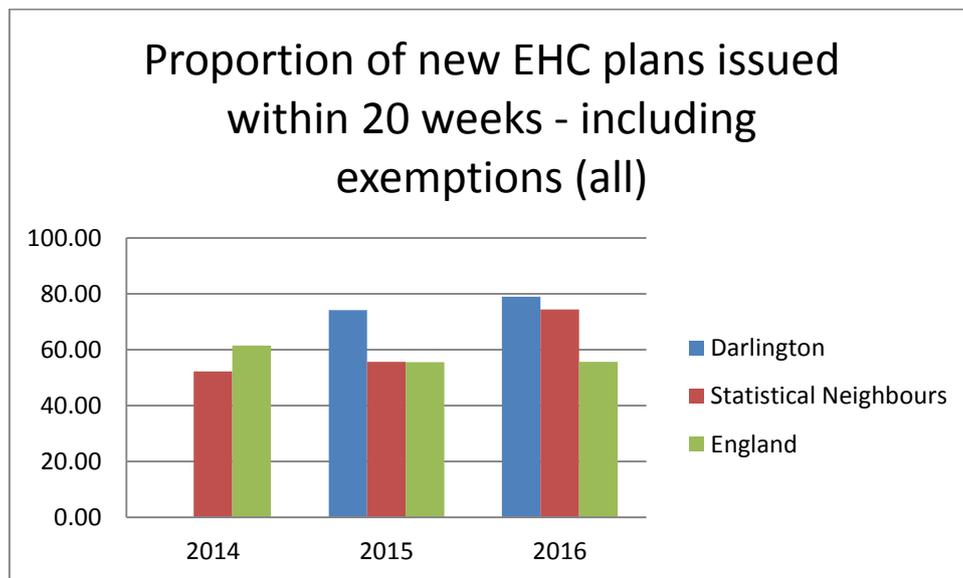
The second highest primary need for pupils that were excluded in Darlington during the first two terms of the 2016/17 academic year was for MLD (16.5%).



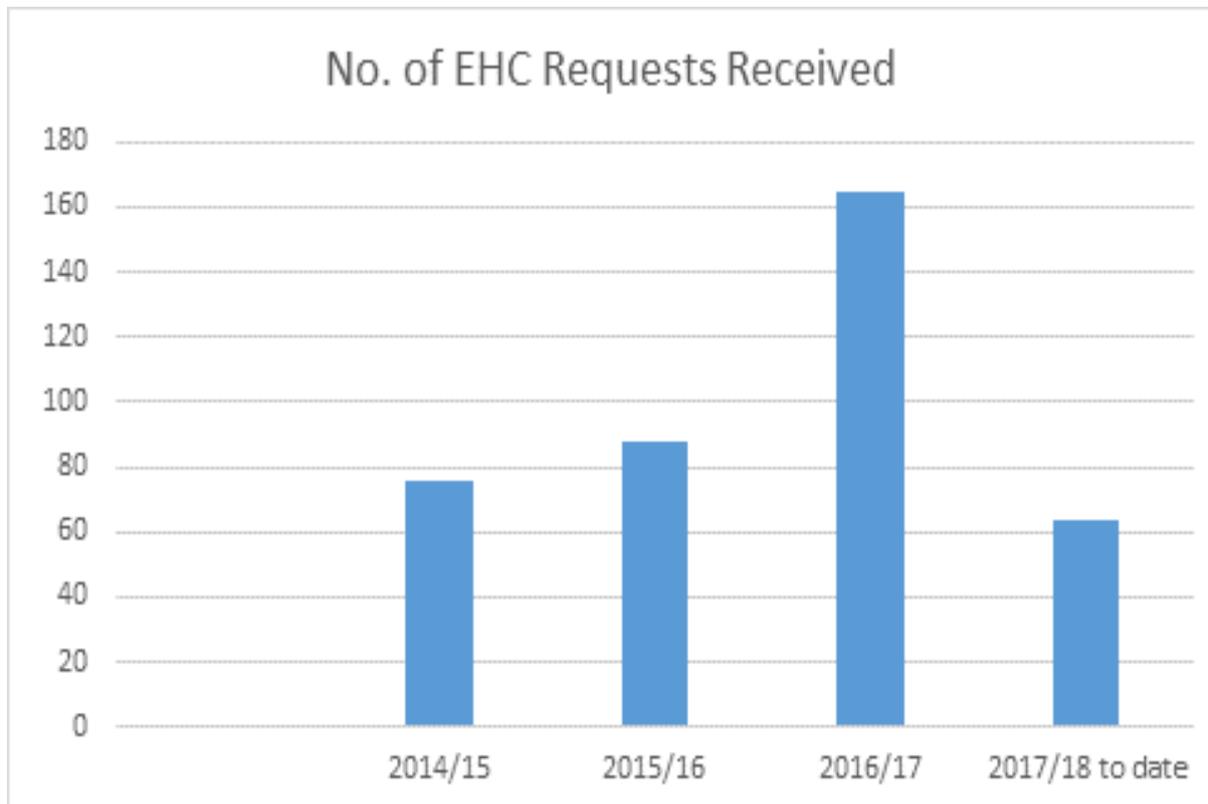
## The SEND System

By January 2016 45.60% of SEN statements were transferred to the new EHCP system, this is above the rate for statistical neighbours (42.35%) and the England average (32.70%) – (LAIT). As of 1 March 2018 all statements had been converted to EHCPs.

In 2016 78.95% of new EHC plans (including exemptions) were issued within 20 weeks, this is above that of statistical neighbours (74.46%) and the England average (55.65%) – (LAIT).



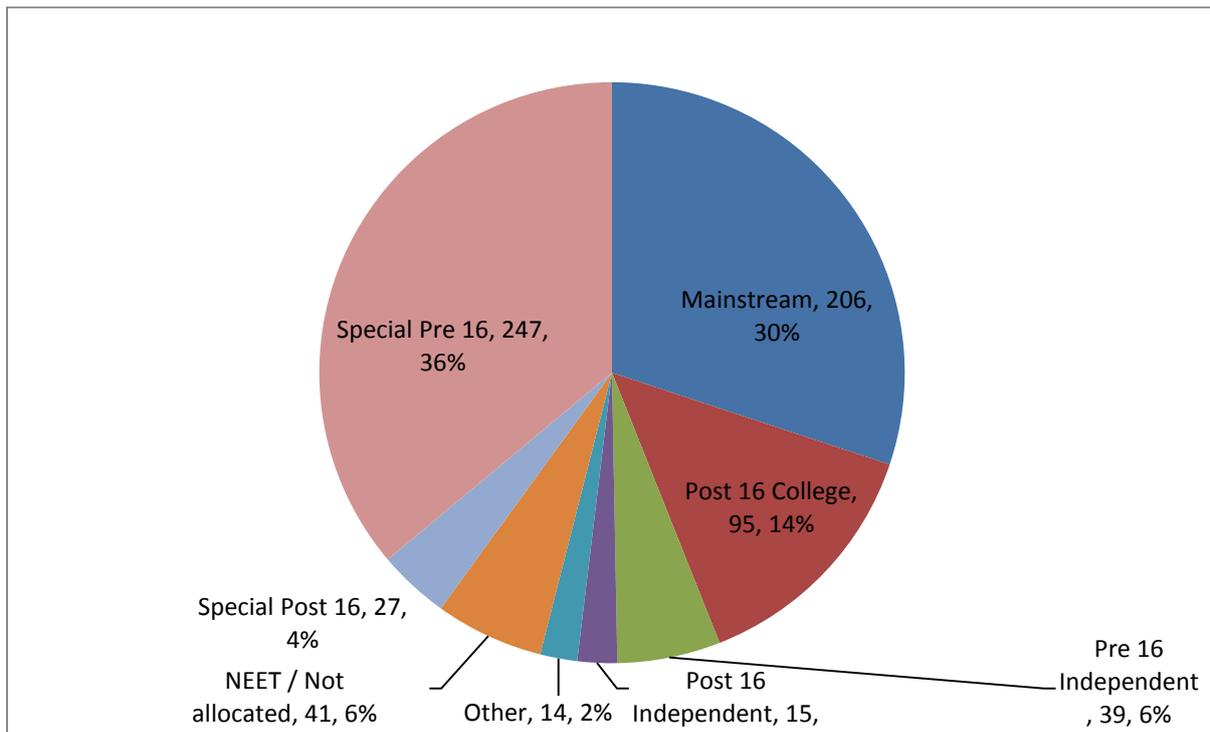
The number of EHCP requests more than doubled between 2015/16 and 2016/17 as the chart below shows.



Three year trend in new assessment requests show that there is no disproportionate increase in demand with regards to SEMH and ASD, within the context of the overall increase in requests. Although these two areas together have made up more than half the requests for a new assessment in the last 3 full calendar years.

Fastest growing group in terms of new requests is MLD, which goes from 13% in 2014/5 to 31% in 2016/7. Next fastest growth area is SLCN, 4% in 2014/5 to 10% in 2016/7.

As at the end of November 2017 the split of EHCP placements was as follows:



## Appeals registered with the SEND Tribunals

Parents / carers and young people can register an appeal with the SEND tribunal if, for example, there is a refusal to assess or they are unhappy about the contents of the plan. In Darlington only two appeals have been registered in recent years, one in 2014/15 and one in 2015/16, both were withdrawn before tribunal (Source: LAIT).

**Abbreviations of SEND Primary Need**

SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulty
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulty
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulty
PMLD	Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
HI	Hearing Impairment
VI	Visual Impairment
MSI	Multi-Sensory Impairment
PD	Physical Disability
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
Other	Other Difficulty/Disability
NSA	SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need