

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS (EqIAA) Appendix D2

DSG Deficit Recovery Programme - Theme 3: Early Years

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

The Local Authority (LA) and partners have a legal duty to regularly review the special educational needs (SEN) provision available in the local area. This includes:

- Sufficiency planning of the number of places, the age and type of special educational needs and disability (SEND) they support;
- Commissioning arrangements for the availability of support services for SEND; and
- The way Top Up funding is allocated to individual children and young people with high level SEND.

In 2021, the High Needs Working Group commissioned a review of the way Top Up funding for children and young people with complex SEN, is allocated. This commission was triggered by a range of indicators such as a wide variety of methodologies used to calculate Top Ups, different decision-making processes and national benchmarking data suggesting that high Top Up values are applied across the whole spectrum of provision in South Gloucestershire.

Key issues were identified through the data analysis of the high needs block as follows:

Services

- Low/below average spend on inclusion services. This could be one of the reasons for SEN identification issues (SEN support) and/or capacity to provide support in local schools.

Places

- Very high number of EHCPs in early years.
- Slightly below average number of number of places in local special schools and resource bases combined.
- Well above average number of places in the independent sector – Highest education contribution - £119,452 (educational part of a residential placement)
Lowest education contribution - £9,013 (day placement).

Top ups (Element 3)

- Very high top up values when compared to national averages in all types of provision (primary, secondary and special).
- Variety of methodologies and decision making related to the allocation of top ups.

Through exploration of the high levels of ECHPs, the following was identified:

- Early Years settings currently have little access to advice, information and support from other professionals such as Educational Psychology as Early Years is a non-statutory educational phase. As a result, settings are applying for EHCPs as a way to access this support.

- Currently, children with SEND are either in a mainstream setting or a specialist nursery class. Practitioners in mainstream settings have indicated they often struggle to meet the complex needs of many of the children and feel they lack the relevant skills, expertise and resources required.
- Funding to support children with SEND in mainstream provision is limited and therefore settings often apply for an EHCP as a way to finance the support, training and resources required.

The number of SEND pupils and the complexity of their needs has been growing over recent years. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is used to fund this. A large part of the grant is given straight to schools. Another part is given to the local authority. The DSG consists of four blocks as illustrated below. The greatest deficit is in the High Needs block.



Within early years the aim is to improve identification of need and access to support to reduce the reliance on ECHP's and improve practitioner confidence and skills to intervene to support children.

The Schools Forum has allocated £200,000 during 2021-22 to support the development of initiatives within this theme, which aims to use the funding to provide creative solutions that recognise and support where a special education need has been identified but may not need an ECHP plan at this stage, the outcomes of these initiatives will be assessed.

Theme 3 therefore, seeks to strengthen the information and support available to early years practitioners and parents from professionals, including specialist provision. Alongside this, it also seeks to strengthen the professionalism of the sector by enhancing professional development available. Theme 3 is very closely linked and interdependent on Theme 2, Review of Top Up Funding.

SECTION 2 - RESEARCH, ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

An analysis of the number of early years children with ECHP's and those applying, has been completed. The research was conducted with information taken before the Covid pandemic and is from 2019, as this provides the most accurate data set to use as it reflects a typical year. There was no EYFSP data for 2020 as assessment of children were suspended due to the pandemic.

Table 1 Outcomes for children at the end of their Reception Year in school

EYFS GLD	All	Girls	Boys	EAL	SEN EHP	SEN Support	White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Chinese
South Glos	76.8	82.7	71	68.6	5.3	27.6	77.2	73	71.2	71.4	81
England	71.8	78.4	65.5	66	4.5	28.5	72.7	73.2	77.1	68.9	77.8
South West	72.1	78.4	66	64.2	5	30.2	72	72.5	71.1	64.6	71.7

School data shows that in South Gloucestershire:

- 76.8% of children achieved the expected level of development at the end of reception and this is above both the National and South West region average.
- There is a significant gender gap, with girls achieving a higher percentage of expected level of development in comparison to boys with a 11.7% gap.
- Both boys and girls have attained a higher level of development above both the National and South West region average.
- There is a wide gap in the expected level of development for children with an SEN EHP and SEN Support, performing significantly lower than those pupils without SEN.
- The attainment of children according to ethnicity shows a mixed picture, with 'Chinese' and 'White' children performing higher than the other ethnicities shown.
- Children with English as an additional language attain a higher level of development than both the national and South West average, but still lower than average.

Table 2 A breakdown of primary needs of children who were supported by the Early Years Team age 0-4years in early years settings 2019.

Need	Number of children
Social Communication and Autism	173
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	48
Speech, Language and Communication	48
Developmental Delay	34
Medical	26
Physical	7
Hearing Impairment or Visual Impairment	5

The data shows the number of children in Early Years, applying for EHP's in South Gloucestershire and indicates a significant volume in the following areas of need;

- Social Communication and Autism
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Speech, Language and Communication

Table 3 A breakdown of needs for children with an EHCP

Year groups	Number of EHCPs	ASD	HI	MED	MLD	MSI	PD	PMLD	SEMH	SLCN	SLD	SPLD	VI
-2	2						1						1
-1	18	3	2		1		1	2		3	3		
0	62	13	2	3	2		8	1	3	25	4		1
1	99	18	4	3	9		9	3	11	35	3	1	
2	82	15	2	1	6	1	7	4	6	35	4	1	1

NB Data in this table is based on the information available at the time and therefore may not add up to the full number of EHCPs.

The data shows the number of children with an EHCP in Early Years indicating a high number across year groups for Speech, Language and Communication in comparison to other SEND.

Gender

64.3% of children in early years in receipt of an EHCP are boys and 26.3% are girls.

Ethnicity.

76.2% of children with an EHCP state their ethnic origin as being 'White British'.

6% of children with an EHCP state their ethnic origin as being 'White Other'.

Therefore, 17.8% of children with an EHCP are either from a minority ethnic heritage or have not declared this information.

As such, the data shows that there is potential for an over-representation of children in early years in receipt of an EHCP from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Table 4 Breakdown of ethnic background of children with an EHCP in Early Years.

NB the small percentages are often one or two children.

Ethnicity	% EY pupils
Asian Indian	2.4%
Asian other	1.2%
Asian Pakistani	1.2%
Black African	1.2%
Mixed other	3.6%
Mixed White Asian	1.2%
Information Not Obtained	6.0%
Any Other Ethnic Group	1.2%
White British	76.2%
White Other	6.0%

SECTION 3 - IDENTIFICATION OF DISPARITIES, IMPACTS AND ISSUES

The data shown in Section 2 of this EqIAA show the following key points:

- The data shows that there are significant performance gaps for children with SEND, especially for children with an EHCP.
- The data also shows that there are significant performance gaps for boys and children from 'Mixed', 'Asian' and 'Black' heritage.
- Children being supported by the Early Years Team and those with an EHCP tend to have the following needs: Social Communication and Autism, Social, Emotional and Mental Health, Speech, Language and Communication.
- Boys are more likely to have an EHCP than girls.

SECTION 4 - ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN (Full action plan available)

In order to address these gaps, we will:

- Create a new funding stream which enables children from a younger age to access funding and supports the transition of children into their Reception year in school. Applications to this fund will be monitored and outcomes analysed to enable us to understand if applications represent the diversity of children within the Early Years across South Gloucestershire.
- Strengthen the support provided to practitioners in settings to enable them to support children with Social Communication from an early age without the need for external professional support. This will be achieved through the AET training being offered to all.
- Develop a pilot to support speech, language and communication across the LA, enhancing the training offered to practitioners and support to parents. This offer will aim to support all children, including those for whom speaking English is a new or emerging skill whether that be linked to their ethnicity, their age, or stage of development.
- Develop Inclusion Hubs based in Children's Centres within local communities to engage those who may not be able to travel to centralised services. These Hubs will provide early years providers and parents with opportunities to meet with professionals to gain information and support concerning how they can support children in their care.
- Develop a pilot to support parents to understand how to meet the needs of their child and how to best support them. These will be offered both virtually and face to face to meet the different needs of parents and will include a stay and play session.
- The take up of activity will be monitored according to the LA Policy on data collection and analysis ('Customer Insight') and will form part of the annual reporting of this work.
- Given the potential for over-representation of children from some BAME backgrounds within the EHCP data, we will link with the Race Equality in Education Taskforce within the ELS division in order to keep the group abreast of our actions and to identify any specific actions moving forwards which will positively impact upon outcomes for children, especially those from 'Asian', 'Mixed' and 'Black' heritage.

SECTION 5 - EqIAA OUTCOME

Outcome	Response	Reason(s) and Justification
Outcome 1: No major change required.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Outcome 2: Adjustments to remove barriers or to better promote equality have been identified.	<input type="checkbox"/> x	The data and information that has been collected and analysed as part of this project identifies the need to strengthen access to other professionals, including specialist provision and enhance professional development available. The actions set out in Section 4 of this EqIAA are clear in their positive contribution to these aims as they will both improve access to support for children with SEND and improve the skills of the practitioners. Full details in Theme 3 action plan.
Outcome 3: Continue despite having identified potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Outcome 4: Stop and rethink.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

SECTION 6 - SOURCES OF EVIDENCE INFORMING THIS EqIAA

Data was obtained from the following sources;

- PID
- Project Brief
- EHCP needs assessment data
- Early Years Team visit data
- EYFSP information from national data sets.