

## **Position Statement: Statutory SEND Services in B&NES**

**February 2026**

### **Review of the 2025 SEN2 and subsequent unpublished data**

Bath & Northeast Somerset Council remains committed to delivering prompt, high-quality statutory SEND services. The 2025 SEN2 and subsequent unpublished data highlights both progress and ongoing challenges in meeting our statutory duties, particularly around the timeliness of the assessment of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and prompt annual reviews.

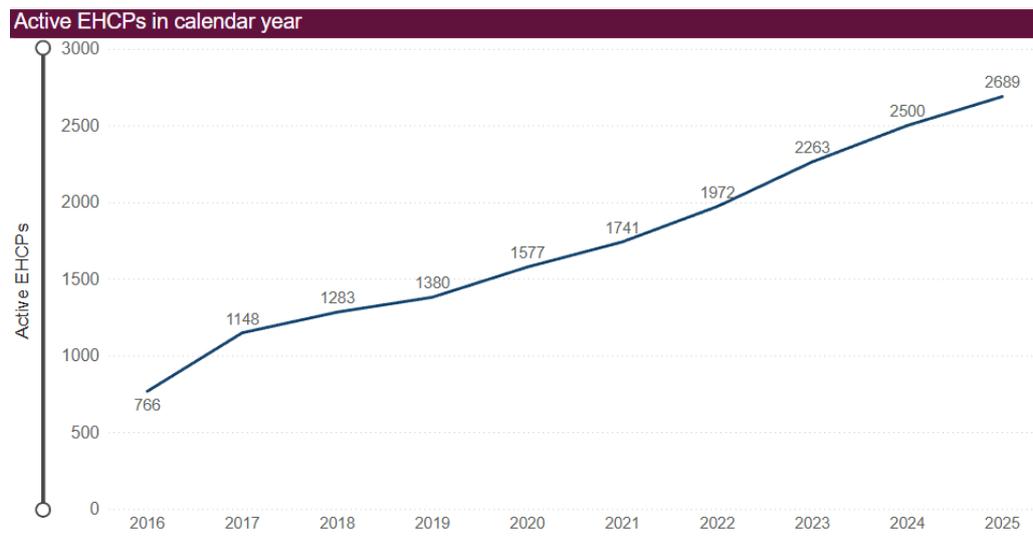
The full data from the Jan 2025 SEN2 is available at the following link:

<https://app.powerbi.com/groups/me/apps/6908d358-7c8f-4f29-aa36-3375bcac3736/reports/d3ff2c2d-6906-47b8-8de4-5b801f2d9149/f73539b79d64dcc94e93?experience=power-bi>

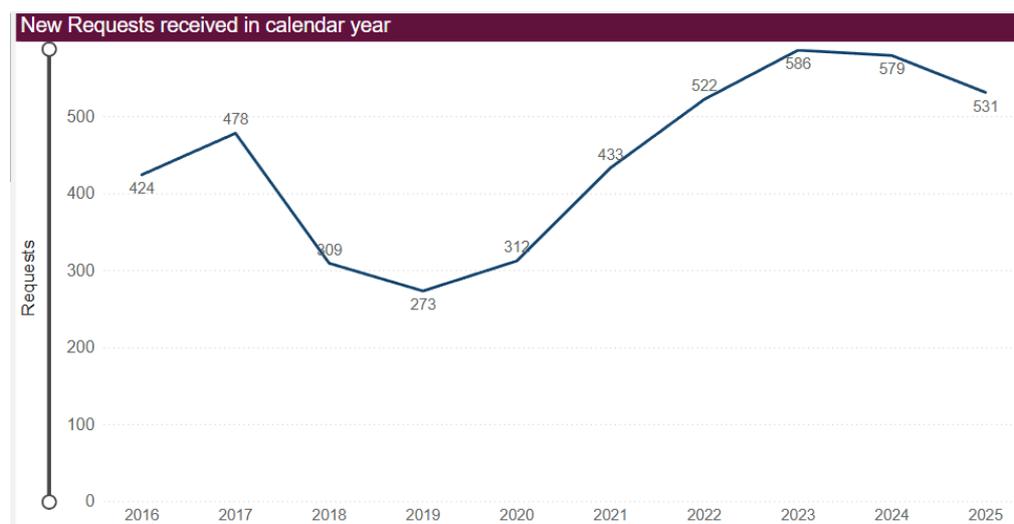
The Jan 2025 SEN2 data and our broader data analysis paints a picture of a local area working hard to improve its SEND services, with some clear strengths and ongoing challenges. Statutory compliance in EHCP processes, particularly the speed of issuing plans, stays the area in which we must make progress to meet the needs of children and families in a prompt way. We have not shied away from this fact – our position is one of transparent self-evaluation and determined action. The improvements seen in the SEN 2 2025 are encouraging early indicators that our interventions are on track. Our target is to achieve 60% of EHCPs within 20 weeks by September 2026, placing us within the top 5 performing LAs in the Southwest.

In parallel, we continue driving service transformation, bolstering inclusion, and expanding provision. We recognise that all these elements are interconnected: a more inclusive system will manage demand better, improved sufficiency will ease pressure on statutory processes (with fewer children waiting or in crisis), and a high-performing statutory team will build trust that allows more collaborative work with families and schools. Already, we see positive cultural shifts – for instance, multi-agency collaboration has been strengthened (our health partners through the Designated Clinical Officers and new health dashboard are more engaged than ever in SEND), and parents are increasingly involved in co-producing solutions (the Parent Carer Forum's input is woven through each workstream).

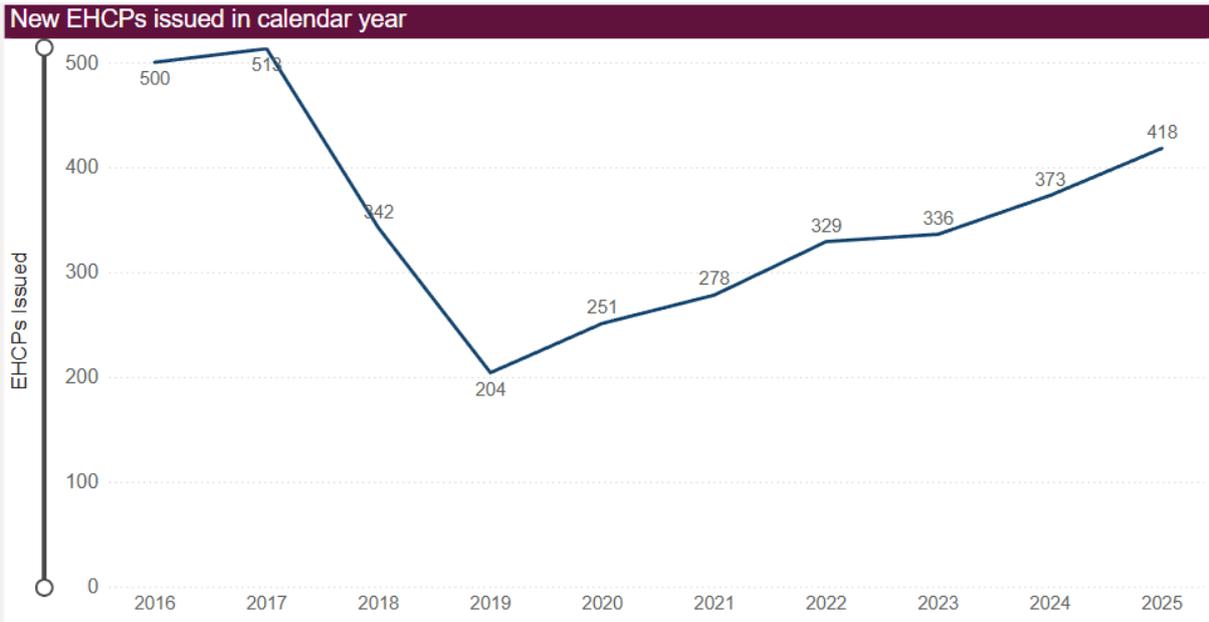
## Key Metrics Summary:



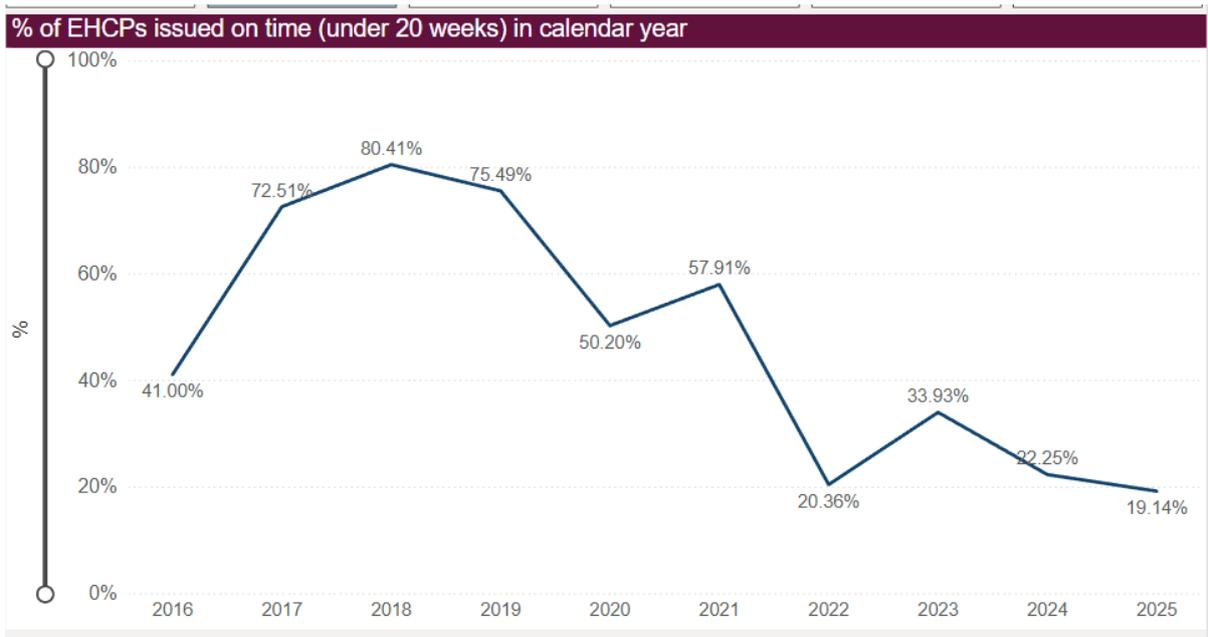
B&NES ended 2025 with c2700 EHCPs, having received 531 needs assessment requests in 2025. 78% of these requests resulted in a plan being issued. This represents the second successive year when the number of requests has reduced, in opposition to the national picture where request continue to increase. The Inclusion & SEND Advice Service, launched in 2024, has significantly strengthened early support and inclusive practice in mainstream settings, whilst providing significant support to our settings to ensure a 'right first time' application when a plan is required. This has contributed to the reduction in EHCP requests and also reduced the number of 'no to assess' decisions and repeat applications.



418 plans were issued in 2025. This shows 52% increase in new plans since 2019 and demonstrates an increase in issued plans for the 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.



The Council has invested in expanding the SEND team, introduced AI-assisted plan writing, and designed new performance dashboards to aid the team in meeting our statutory responsibilities. New team members joined in September and have recently completed their training. Their impact on statutory waiting times is evident in the reduction in the number of weeks families now wait for a plan to be issued, reducing from an average of 31 weeks in 2024, to 29 weeks in 2025 and 27 weeks in February 2026. The service is ambitious in its plans to improve this average waiting time and expects to have 0 plans over 20 weeks and an average wait time of 25 weeks, with 60% of plans being issued on time by September 2026.



B&NES is currently 10<sup>th</sup> in the Southwest for timeliness of needs assessments, with

ambitions to be within the top 5 by September 2026. This is a continued area of concern, however investment in our educational psychology team has provided an accelerated start to 2026, with support in place to ensure the 6-week advice timeframe for needs assessment advice is adhered to by April 2026. This is the key driver for improvement, alongside collaboration with our social care colleagues to ensure increased improvement in the timeliness of social care advice.

Our families tell us that our next challenge lies with the timely issuance of annual reviews. The service has committed to completing all key stage transfer annual reviews (Early Years, Year 2, Year 6, Year 11 and Year 13) in line with statutory timescales and has achieved this for the Early Years, year 2 and year 6 phase transfers in February 2026. The year 11 and 13+ deadline of March 2026 is expected to be met. This means ever child moving schools will do so with a newly issued, quality assured plan.

The service will then move onto reviewing processes for annual reviews with the ambition of being in line with national compliance to statutory timeframes by September 2027.