

SEND Sufficiency

Strategy

2025 – 2028

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1. Introduction and Aims

The Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Sufficiency Strategy for Slough Council, sets out the baseline for specialist provision across the local area, considering a range of factors that are driving the need for change, over the next three years. This strategy provides information about the current SEND pupil population and factors that will influence place planning in the future, highlighting the potential for reconfiguring and growing our existing provision.

We have set out three clear phases to ensure that Slough has the right provision, in the right place, at that the right time, to meet the needs of its children and young people. Through long-term strategic planning, the council is seeking to reconfigure specialist places to ensure that it can meet need, whilst containing spending within the constraints of the government High Needs Block (HNB) grant within the Dedicated Schools Grant.

The strategy is also linked closely with Slough's wider system changes that are taking place, to support mainstream inclusion, as well as strengthen its SEND governance processes.

2. Our Vision

Our vision is for all children and young people in Slough with Special Educational Needs to have their needs met as near to their local community as possible. This will require a range of inclusive provision through our mainstream schools, specialist resource provision (including Education Support Centres and Primary Support Bases) and in special school provision.

To do this we want to ensure we have a flexible continuum of specialist provision in place in each of the three planning areas across Slough (West, East and Central), so that:

- We will ensure that the majority of our children and young people with SEND will have their needs met within a range of inclusive provision available through mainstream schools, specialist mainstream provision and special school provision in Slough.
- We will ensure that children and young people with SEND will have access to a high quality, broad and balanced curriculum which will be holistic and provide support across education, health and social care to meet their needs.
- We will ensure that our approach will be co-produced with our education settings, children, young people and their families to ensure that we will always have the child and their family at the centre of what we do.

- We will clearly identify the type of support available for all children with SEND in our mainstream schools, the targeted support available across mainstream and specialist settings and the highly specialist support that could be accessed in our special schools. We will ensure that we are admitting our children to the correct settings and will monitor their progress to ensure that the provision is meeting their needs.
- We will build on the existing provision to improve outcomes for all children with SEND, ensure that there are sufficient places to meet forecast demand and achieve best value for money.
- We will ensure that our special school strategy will be informed by evidence-based analysis of need and demography to identify the number and type of specialist education places needed.
- We will review the strategy annually.

3. Our core principles

The following principles are at the centre of our commissioning process for developing our specialist provision in Slough.

- The individual needs of each child and young person will be at the heart of SEND provision planning.
- Most children and young people with EHC plans should expect to have their needs met in their local mainstream provision.
- Where specialist provision is required, this should be located in or as close to Slough as possible.
- Children should only be expected to travel outside of Slough for specialist provision in exceptional circumstances.
- Where possible SEND provision in Slough should be geographically spread to minimise the need for extended travelling times.
- New specialist SEND provision should be created in partnership with children and young people, parents, schools and other education providers and support organisations.
- Where new specialist provision is created within existing schools and academies they will be Ofsted rated good or outstanding.
- Opportunities will be explored to allow creative use of enhanced mainstream provision enabling more pupils to receive their education in a mainstream setting, with the support of the specialist Inclusion Service.
- We will work with schools to create enhanced provisions within existing school buildings limiting the need for capital expenditure.

- Our sufficiency strategy supports the necessity to bring HNB spending in line with the High Needs Grant provided by the government.
- We will further reduce Slough's reliance on specialist independent provision, realigning and investing in the creation of maintained provision within the local area.
- We will seek to reduce the current level of places within other Local Authority special schools, aiming to place pupils within borough.

4. National and Local Policy

Slough Council is responsible, as required by Section 14(1) of the Education Act (1996), for ensuring that it provides sufficient school places for all pupils resident within the local area. It has additional specific duties, under Section 27 of the Children and Families Act (2014), to consider the extent of provision in the borough and whether it is sufficient to meet children and young people's special educational needs [SEND].

Within these overall duties, local authorities must ensure that there is sufficient provision for pupils where an Education Health Care (EHC) plan has determined that the provision should be met in designated specialist provision. This is a vital role that local authorities retain in an increasingly school-led education system and one that requires long-term strategic planning, informed by detailed local knowledge enhanced through consultation with parents and carers, and good relationships with local education providers.

The SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (2015) places further responsibilities on local authorities. The Code of Practice emphasises that every child deserves an education that meets their specific needs, encourages high standards, and supports them in reaching their full potential. The Early Years Sufficiency Duty established under the Childcare Act 2006 also requires local authorities to ensure sufficient childcare, including for children with SEND.

The Green Paper in 2022, undertook a SEND review, that set the expectation that children and young people with SEND need to receive the Right Support, in the Right Place, at the Right Time.

This was followed by the publishing of the government's SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan in March 2023, strengthening the role of mainstream schools. More recently, as part of the government's spending review in June 2025, a SEND White Paper is currently underway and will be published in the Autumn of 2025, which will further inform local authorities on the government's direction of travel.

Over the past decade, the demand for SEND placements in Slough, as in many local authorities, has risen significantly. To meet this growing need, we have been expanding our specialist provision. Our data also shows, that for some of our children placed in special school provision, with the right support, their needs could have been met within the right specialist provision in their local community school. To do this we need to ensure we have the right professionals, who play a key role in the placement of our children and young people.

This strategy sets out a longer-term planned programme of work, that will ensure that Slough has enough sustainable places, in the right locations and at the right time, for children and young people with special educational needs to thrive.

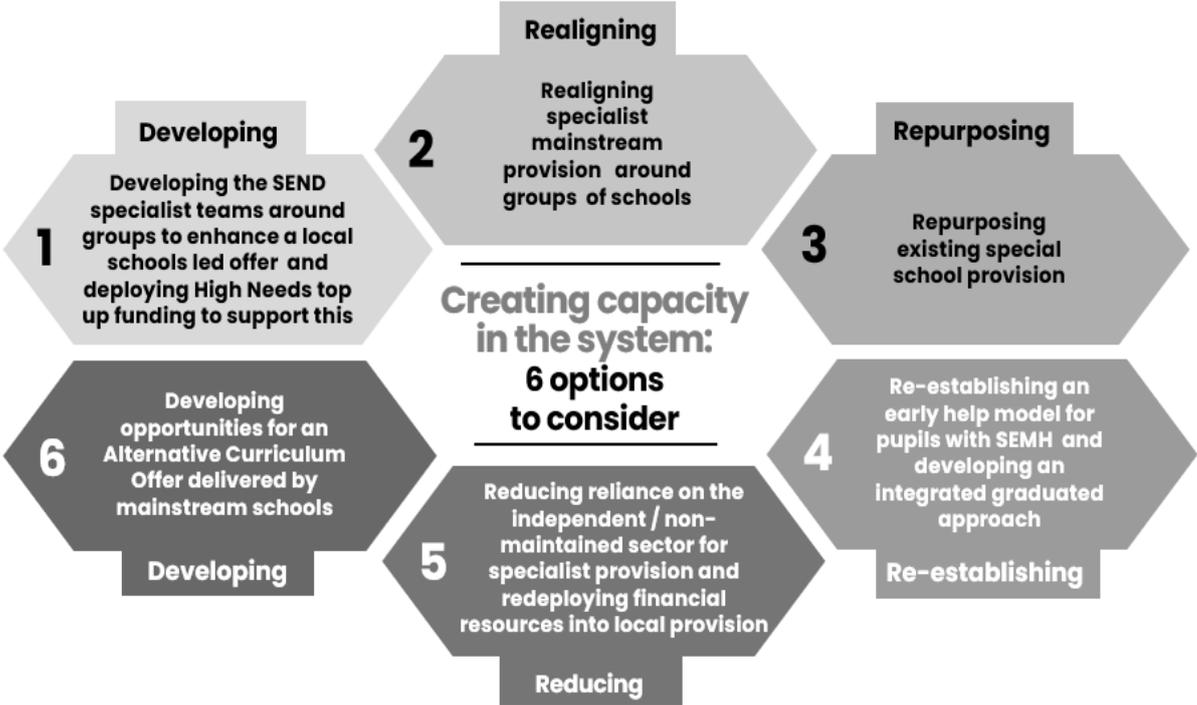
The SEND Sufficiency Strategy sets out our current provision for children and young people with Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs), identifies gaps in existing services, and sets our future plans to ensure we meet these needs.

Our priority is to provide local support, keeping children close to their families and communities, whilst offering opportunities for them to thrive, achieve their aspirations, and enhance their independence.

This strategy is part of our broader SEND and Inclusion Strategy (2025, our Alternative Provision Strategy (2025) and our SEND Transformation Programme (2025).

5. Our Wider Transformation Programme

The diagram below sets out how we intend to create capacity to identify and meet the needs of our children as early as possible and, where possible, in their local community school.



To do this the local authority has set out four key priorities, substantiated in the SEND transformation programme of work, which sets out how it will deliver the workstreams that will bring into effect the next steps in the improvement journey for Slough.

Four key priorities

- supporting schools to develop local provision by strengthening an early help offer of SEND health and education local teams around mainstream schools
- reviewing and developing responsive, flexible and effective local specialist provision as part of an annual cycle
- putting in place effective governance arrangements for specialist resources that manage need through responsive assessments and timely reviews
- developing a Three-Tiered Model for Alternative Provision and specialist support for children with Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Difficulties, including those unable to attend school for medical reasons.

To do this we have put in place quality assurance reporting systems and using them to drive through improved performance.

Priority 1:

Strengthening our robust early identification and intervention offer across the three Slough school localities and a model for the distribution of Top-Up funding

The first approach is to strengthen the local early identification and intervention offer for SEND in our settings, working with the wider partnership and school leaders and supporting the government's drive for inclusion in mainstream provision, for those children whose needs can be met through workforce development and effective distribution/devolution of the High Needs Budget. This approach ensures that mainstream staff are confident in their skills and abilities and that schools are appropriately resourced.

Slough's settings would be supported through the development of an Early Identification and Intervention locality partnership team of specialist education and health professionals, working around groups of settings in meeting local need, managing expectation and demand and playing a significant role in the identification and placement, of children and young people with more complex needs.

It will also involve reviewing the allocation of the High Needs top-up funding in mainstream, to ensure that the current allocation is appropriate distributed and re-design the current allocation of resources, without the need for an EHC Plan and ensuring that the mainstream SEN Support offer is robust.

Priority 2:

Developing a Three-Tiered Model for Alternative Provision and specialist support for children with Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Difficulties, including children with medical issues

The three-tiered model for alternative provision and for children with mental health difficulties, will focus on targeted and early identification and intervention of SEMH in mainstream schools in Slough, through the introduction of a

partnership outreach support offer, to build confidence, and strengthen the school workforce. This would build on the existing framework that currently delivers primary mental health and support and the well embedded Emotional Literacy Support Assistant professional development programme,

The specialist team will also play a key role in early of children and young people experiencing mental health and school phobic issues and as part of the graduated Alternative Provision offer, play a key role in the placement of time-limited specialist support and/or intensive Alternative Provision placements.

Priority 3:

To develop and re-align existing special school and resource base provision to ensure Slough has the right provision in the right place at the right time.

This will focus on the governance of specialist provision, providing strategic and professional oversight both in relation to placement and monitoring, from specialist professionals. The introduction of termly position statements for all our specialist provision and also our children educated other than at school, will provide the leadership with the ability to effectively take action and ultimately ensure Slough children have the best possible chance of thriving.

As part of our governance arrangements, we will also ensure that Slough borough council undertake earlier transition arrangements, to reduce the 81 places, that the borough currently allocate to out of area children and young people for its special school provision.

The development of both our special school satellite and specialist mainstream provision, through the expansion of existing and new sites for specialist accommodation, will increase our offer by a further 100 satellite and mainstream specialist placements and where gaps are identified as a result of our mainstream specialist provision review, this will be further expanded.

Working closely with our children and young people we will also be increasing the range of options for post 16 children and young people, preparing for adulthood.

Our approaches will also reduce reliance on independent placements over time, including lengthy travel arrangements for our Slough children and young people.

Priority 4:

Transformation of the EHCP Support Services.

To overhaul the administration and governance of assessments and review process for Educational Health Care Plans and the allocation and monitoring of specialist resources, to ensure effective and efficient use of resources.

The workstream includes: ensuring timely assessments and EHCP reviews and to establish, over time, good quality plans; developing a workforce plan for implementation; redesign of allocation and monitoring of specialist resources; technology is used effectively to improve accuracy and efficiency and communication.

6. Our Sufficiency Review Process

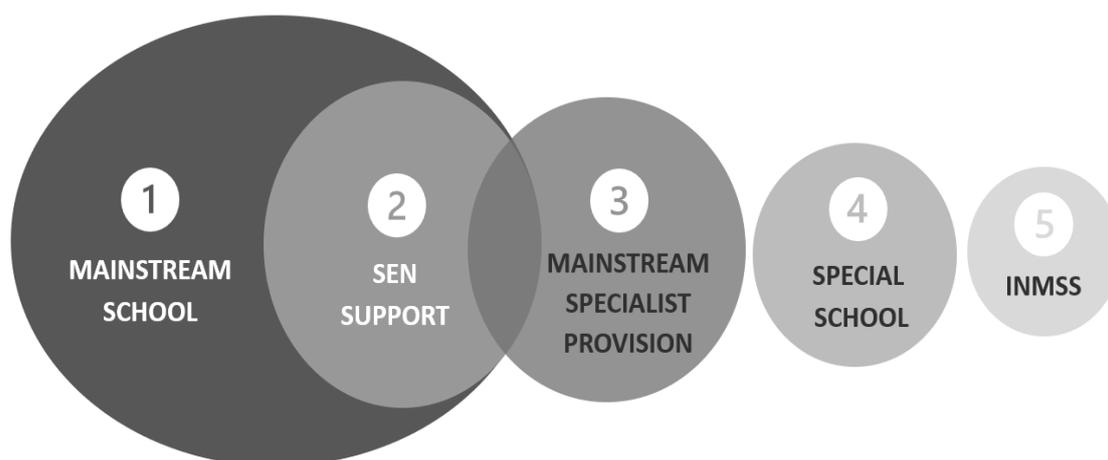
Current Provision

Every local authority makes educational provision in a graduated range of settings. This range covers provision for those with SEND who attend a mainstream school, to those who require access to a specialist curriculum and specialist environment.

This section sets out the number of pupils and students with SEND, with and without an EHC plan, together with the type of setting where they are placed.

Whilst the majority of pupils with SEND attend a mainstream school, there are a range of specialist options and this Graduated Model of SEND Provision is set out in the diagram below.

Ensuring that there is a Graduated Model of SEND Provision



1	2	3	4	5
The majority of pupils with SEND attend mainstream school with quality first teaching identifying need and adaptations to the curriculum	Some pupils require additional resources and arrangements. Their needs are described in an SEN support plan	Specialist resource provision provided within a mainstream school.	Access to a variety of maintained special school provision catering for pupils with the most complex needs	Access to highly specialist learning and care environments for those pupils with highly exceptional or low incidence needs

Our Sufficiency Review Process

In the first instance, the local authority has undertaken a sufficiency review, to understand the SEND cohort in the local area and the number of suitable school places available. There are a number of factors that have been considered as part of the process, relating to **growth factors** which are concerned with:

- an increase in the complexity of need.
- an increase in the take up of specialist placements for children with less complex learning difficulties.
- demand for post 16 specialist placements.
- the confidence of mainstream schools in managing the needs of pupils with SEN.
- parental confidence in the offer made by mainstream schools.

Shortfall factors that have also been considered related to:

- the number of children attending Independent non-maintained schools.
- the numbers of children without a school place.

There are three key issues to consider:

- understanding specialist provision in the local authority area and the evidence that supports this.
- options for meeting demand in a variety of settings
- ways of managing demand for specialist provision and ensuring schools and other education settings can meet a wide range of need through ordinarily available resources, supported by specialist teams around groups of school

The sufficiency process has considered:

- Demographics (see Appendices A)
- SEN 2 Needs Analysis (see Appendices B)
- Current Resources, Provision and Associated Costs (see Appendices C)
- Dependencies associated with the Wider Transformation Programme (see section 5)

7. Sufficiency Review Findings

Demographics and EHCP population

- Birth rates in Slough rose steadily for many years, which led to a 50% expansion of primary school capacity in the local area, but started to decline in 2016 and this has been the pattern from then until 2023. The peak in birth rates is now working its way through secondary school year groups, with the current Year 8 as the peak year.
- This will have implications for sufficiency planning, as Year Groups 9 and upwards will see increased demand in the coming years before reducing as the lower birth rate begins to work its way through.
- However, it is important to note that the birth rate unexpectedly rose again in 2024 which will affect future year groups. It will be key for Slough's sufficiency process to keep a close eye on this factor to see if the 2024 birth rate is an anomaly or the start of a new demographic trend.
- The number of new EHC plans, issued by Slough between 2019 and 2025 increased significantly by 51%. This is higher than the Southeast region (38%) but slightly below the national figure of 57%
- However, a significant factor behind this increase is the motivation for mainstream children and young people to have an EHC plan in order for their education setting to access Top Up Funding from the HNB. In a snapshot in April 2025, 701 children and young people in mainstream settings (32% of all plans) were supported through Top Up Funding. The introduction of mainstream early intervention Top Up Funding will reduce and even out the demand for EHC plans, as mainstream needs are met without the need for a statutory assessment.
- A significant factor that has hindered the place planning process for Slough in the last two years has been the backlog of overdue assessments which has made sufficiency planning difficult. This has reduced significantly, to under 60 in June 2025 and will be cleared by October 2025, when it will cease to be a factor in the future.
- Work will commence in September 2025, to cease plans that are no longer active, which will further reduce the number of EHC plans in Slough

Slough Specialist Provision

- In total Slough have 466 children receiving special school provision, 385 in our three in – borough special schools and 81 of our children and young people receive their special school education out of borough. However, partly because of our timeliness in relation to our transition governance arrangements, we also provide 71 special school places for children and young people from neighboring local authorities within Slough special schools.

- Top-Up Funding varies considerably in Arbour Vale Special School, with 38% receiving up to £15k. This will partly be addressed by the introduction of robust governance arrangements and further exploration in relation to the Post 16 offer (including Key Stage 6), which currently provides for 88 children and young people. Another consideration is the proportion of children with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) accessing special school provision in all year groups including post 16.
- Slough has a well-developed mainstream specialist offer, supporting 291 children and young people across 12 specialist resource provisions in Slough. Whilst the majority of provisions operate on the basis that the children are integrated into mainstream for some of the day, there are some very effective provisions that operate specialist provision that caters for children who spend the majority of their time in the specialist provision.
- Further discussions with head teachers along with special school data, highlights gaps in secondary specialist resource provision. To ensure continuum of provision this needs to be mapped, costed, to ensure Slough is able to meet the needs of the majority of its children and young people, where possible locally.

8. Sufficiency Strategy Next Steps

Over the next five years, Slough's strategy will focus on the governance of its current specialist provision. We recognise from the data, that the lack of oversight both in relation to placement and monitoring, from specialist professionals, has not always ensured that the children have been placed in the most appropriate provision. The introduction of termly statements for all our specialist provision and also our children educated other than at school, will provide the leadership capacity to effectively take action and ultimately ensure Slough children have the best possible chance of thriving.

As part of our governance arrangements, we will ensure that Slough borough council undertake earlier transition arrangements, to reduce the 81 places, that the borough currently allocate to out of area children and young people for its special school provision.

We are currently developing both our specialist satellite and mainstream provision, through the expansion of existing and new sites for specialist accommodation. Over the next academic year we will be increasing our offer by a further 100 satellite and mainstream specialist placements. Working closely with our children and young people we will also be increasing the range of options for post 16 children and young people, preparing for adulthood.

Our approaches will also reduce reliance on independent placements over time, including lengthy travel arrangements for our Slough children and young people.

Step 1: May – December 2025

Review of provision and costed proposals completed:

By December 2025, the local authority will have a planned 2/3 year costed programme for implementing a graduated model of nursery, primary and secondary specialist mainstream and satellite provision across each of the three localities in Slough, for children and young people to access their local community schools where appropriate and a range of satellite and special school provision.

As part of the costed proposal for developing local specialist mainstream and satellite provision, feasibility studies will identify the potential for investment in proposed provision. Where gaps in existing provision have been identified, consultation with schools for expressions of interest, and the undertaking of further feasibility studies will enable a programme of work ready for sign off. (October 2025)

An analysis of the 81 (17%) CYP accessing neighboring special school provision, in terms of travel and patterns of accessing the provision over time, will determine contractual arrangements and the potential of meeting this demand locally in the longer term. A costed planned programme to meet needs locally will be set out. (November 2025)

A further costed analysis of specialist independent provision will be set out in a report, to further develop our in-house provision for our school-aged children. (November 2025)

Building on recent discussions with Windsor College and working with wider partners and children and young people, we will set out strengthened pathways for children transitioning from special school with MLD. A phased programme of work will be developed, as part of the local authority's focus on preparing for adulthood, widening opportunities to access college, apprenticeships and work experience, freeing up capacity for complex needs CYP across key stages 1- 4, in special school provision. (December 2025)

We will scope out the potential for extending Arbour Vale's capacity to increase capacity to meet more local needs of complex children and young people through the development and opportunity for existing pupils with MLD (Up to 33% of the current school population) to transition into post 16 opportunities that will increase their independence. (October 2025).

We will undertake further analysis of the uptake in Littledown School, to define provision type given the wide range of bandings, and consider investment in the additional 21 places that are currently commissioned out to neighboring local authorities. (October 2025)

A review of the children accessing resource base provision will be completed to understand the complexity of need, including the percentage of time children access specialist provision throughout the day and to understand if the status remains a resource base or unit provision and/or remains fit for purpose for meeting local area need, especially where there has been little take up of funded places and to reduce the high number of surplus places. (September 2025)

We will develop a costed, planned 2/3 year programme to implement a graduated model of nursery, primary and secondary provision across each of the three

localities in Slough for children and young people to access their local community schools where appropriate. (October 2025)

We are implementing our robust governance arrangements for the commissioning and monitoring of specialist provision, including a commissioning framework. We expect this to be embedded by December 2025. Our termly specialist provision position statements, are beginning to highlight impact and an action plan for identified areas of improvement. This work also includes the introduction of a dynamic purchasing system (DPS), to ensure best value and regulate service providers. (December 2025)

The allocation of a specialised service officer to lead multiagency decision - making group for the allocation of placements and annual review of provision will also be in place. (October 2025)

Step 2: January – July 2026

Implementation programme finalised and phase 1 mobilised

To implement the costed and approved programmes of work for specialist and post 16 provision, set out in the improvement programme.

Review the current banding system and establish mechanisms for determining the level of need and in doing so ensure provision is sustainable and not dependent on individual banding funding.

Step 3: September 2026 – July 2027

Undertake a review of Phase 1 and mobilise Phase 2

We will undertake an annual stock take with a costed written report, including a further analysis of need, to include rates for requesting specialist placement, to understand the impact of the extended integrated early identification and intervention team, as they are embedded and the need for specialist placement.

9. Financial Challenges

In 2023, due to the forecast deficit of £27.6M at the end of the 2022-23 financial year, the Council entered a Dedicated Schools Grant Safety Valve Agreement with the Department for Education [DFE]. Slough Borough Council undertook to reach a positive in-year balance on its Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) account by the end of 2025-26 and in each subsequent year and to have no DSG deficit by the end of 2026-27..

As part of the agreement, the DFE agreed to a schedule of payments over 5 years, totalling £27.0m: £17.28m had been received by the end of 2024-25, with £9.72m expected over the following two years, subject to the Council continuing to make satisfactory progress as evidenced in quarterly monitoring reports.

The SEND Sufficiency Strategy is important to the HNB recovery plan designed to achieve the conditions within SBC's Safety Valve Agreement. Two of these conditions relate to the level of Top Up Funding in education settings and the number of children and young people placed in independent non-maintained special schools (INMSS). This strategy aims to reduce the demand for EHC plans and ensure that there are sufficient special school places in maintained special schools located in Slough.

High Needs Block Funding Cost of Provision

The High Needs Block (HNB) is allocated as part of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) with the purpose of funding education, support, and specialist services for children and young people with SEND. The high needs block covers a range of costs beyond children and young people with an EHC Plan including those who have been excluded, alternative provisions, home tuition and hospital education. It can also be used as "top-up" funding for pupils with SEND as requested by mainstream schools.

The allocation of the HNB to Slough for 2024-25 was £38.3m (including high needs places in academies and further education).. The actual spend was £31.6m – and overspend of 3.2 million. Slough, therefore, did not manage to get to an in-year break-even position on the High Needs DSG by 2024/25.

The underlying financial position, however, had been understated because of a backlog of EHCP assessments, at one point more than 200 cases, which had exceeded the 20-week processing limit. A reduction in the backlog resulted in higher numbers of High Needs cases. Moreover, the rate of new EHCPs (c360 each year, excluding backlog) significantly exceeded the rate of ceased EHCPs (c100 each year). The trajectory of activity and costs is significantly upward. The report to DfE on the Safety Valve in April 2025 indicated that, even with a further £9.72m of additional DSG receipts, the cumulative deficit on the Slough DSG was forecast to be £32.5m by March 2027.

Table 11: Average cost per specialist placement

TYPE OF PLACEMENT	COST PER PLACEMENT
Resource Base	£14k
Special School	£19k
Independent School	£65k

10. Capital investment

Local authorities are expected to make use of their High Needs capital funding to improve the suitability and sufficiency of high needs provision in their areas. In Slough we aim to use this funding to enable as many children and young people as possible to access high quality education in their local area, close to their home and community, whilst providing best value for any investment.

In addition to our High Needs capital allocation, we will take a strategic approach to allocating funding and maximizing best value for any investment. This will incorporate the use of S106 funding linked to housing developments where it can be aligned to specific proposals.

Slough's High Needs Provision capital allocation from Department of Education (DfE) from 2021/2 to 2025/6 amounts to £14,884,612. Out of the total allocation, £13,003,008 has been provisionally allocated to capital projects as listed in Annex 10, with £1,881,604 unallocated.

Our current forecasts indicate that additional special school places for around 150 pupils would be required to meet the rising demand. This provision could be met by reviewing empty or partially occupied buildings within the current school estate as well as by building a new special school. However, it must be noted that this forecast could be reviewed once the government SEND white paper is published in the autumn of 2025.

11. Conclusion

This SEND Sufficiency Strategy sets out the vision and strategic priorities for Slough Council, which will be delivered through a planned programme of work, in order to ensure that Slough children and young people receive the **RIGHT SUPPORT** at the **RIGHT TIME** and in the **RIGHT PLACE**.

The review undertaken considered demographic data, showing school numbers dropping since 2016, which has reflected in a reduction in the number of school places, over time, in Slough.

Whilst the SEN 2 data demonstrated considerable growth in the number of children with an EHC plan, on further exploration, the growth is partly represented by an increasing number of children and young people within mainstream, where

there is a requirement, in Slough, for an EHC plan in order to access Top- Up Funding. This is also reflected in the High Needs Block spend for Top- Up Mainstream Funding.

The special school data reflects over 38% of children in special school with Moderate Learning Difficulties, including a growing number at Post 16. The local authority is clear that the governance processes that have been developed now need to be further embedded, to ensure children are placed in the **RIGHT PROVISION**, in the **RIGHT LOCATION** and at the **RIGHT TIME**.

Slough Council is committed to:

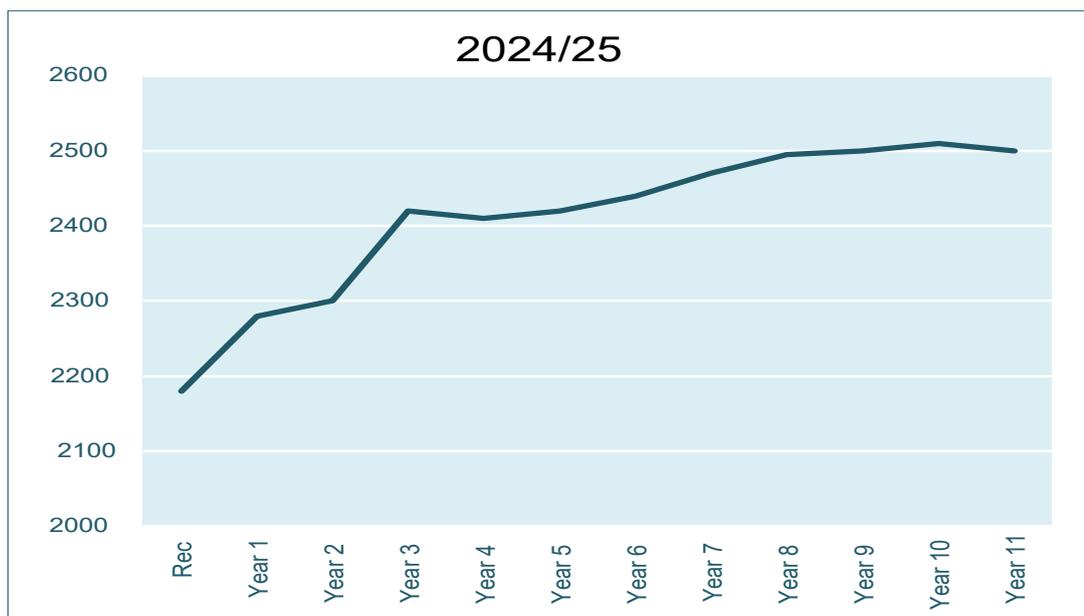
- Implementing an additional 80 special school satellite places and an additional 20 mainstream specialist places
- develop its Post sixteen pathways and offer
- further increase its Graduated Offer of specialist mainstream provision, including the number of places within the nursery and at Key stage 3 and Key Stage 4.
- Undertake further reviews of children currently placed out of area to consider the development of in-house provision

The planned programme of work will be overseen by the SEND operational board, reporting into the SEND partnership board, and will monitor the action plan, associated costs, risks, dependencies, milestones, and benefits. These are all set out in the Project Initiation Document. The operational board will:

- ensure the workstreams are on track, as set out in the milestones
- ensure projects remain within their allocated funds
- identify, manage and communicate dependences and risks between projects and between the Wider Transformation Programme
- review and agree any recommendations, decisions or escalations
- review and agree key messages and consistent reporting that can be collated and sent to the SEND Improvement Board and other relevant stakeholders.

APPENDIX A: Demographics (July 2025)

- There are 2 key sets of data that affect numbers on roll within Slough schools, which are annual birth data and inward migration of children and young people into Slough and its education settings.
- After rising steadily for many years which led to a 50% expansion of primary school capacity in the local area, birth numbers started to decline in 2016 and this has been the pattern from then until 2023. The peak in birth numbers is now working its way through secondary school year groups. Current Year 8 is at its peak year, with year groups 9 and upwards seeing increased demand in the coming years before reducing as the lower birth rate begins to work its way through.
- The graph below, shows the numbers on roll in mainstream schools in January 2025. The peak in Year 8 is clearly seen, with a steady reduction in cohort size down to reception. The current reception year will grow by between 100 and 150 pupils by the time it enters secondary school but will remain well below current secondary numbers.



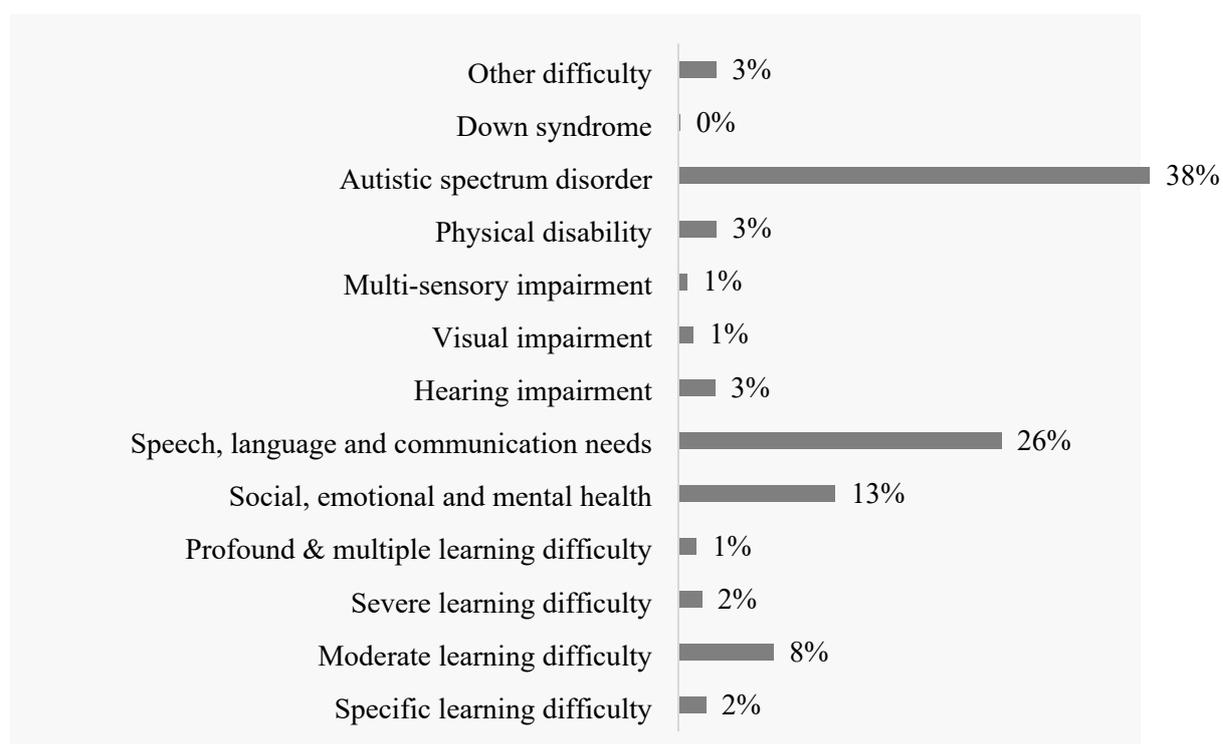
- Reception from September 2025, will see the cohort reach its lowest point then the birth data suggests that numbers will rise for the following 3 years.
- However, it is important to note that the birth rate unexpectedly rose again in 2024 which will affect future year groups. It will be key for Slough's sufficiency process to keep a close eye on this factor to see if the 2024 birth rate is an anomaly or the start of a new demographic trend.

APPENDIX B: SEN 2 Data (January 2025)

According to the National Audit Report published in October 2024, across England, 576,000 children and young people had an EHC plan in 2024 which is an increase of 140% since 2015. There has also been a 14% increase in the number of those identified with SEN support, accounting for 1.14 million pupils. The areas of need with the greatest increase were autistic spectrum disorders; speech, language and communication needs; and social, emotional and mental health needs.

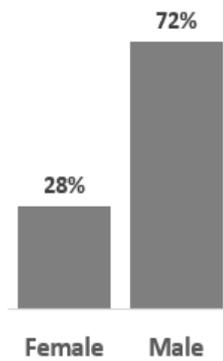
In Slough, there were **2,192** children and young people with a plan in Slough in the 2025 SEN 2 survey return. Of these plans:

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties accounted for **64%** of all children with an EHCP in Slough, compared to **45%** nationally.
- **13%** of all children with an EHCP had SEMH which is comparative with national figures of **14%**
- The full breakdown of the Primary Need data is captured in the table below:

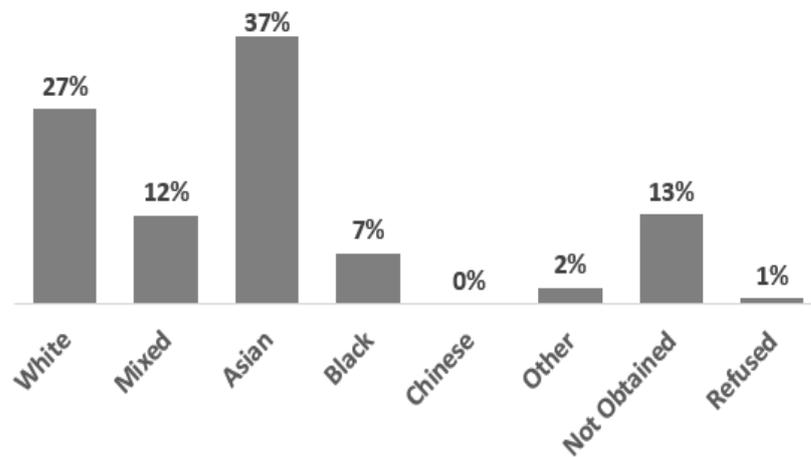


72% of the children and young people in Slough with an EHCP are male – in line with the national average, whilst the ethnic population differs considerably, with 59% of the population in Slough from ethnic minority backgrounds compared to the national average of 37%

**EHC Plan Population
by Gender**

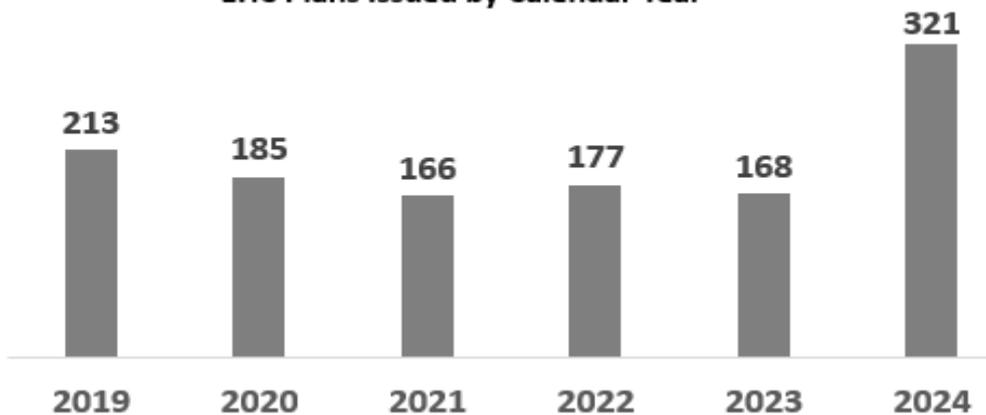


**EHC Plan Population
by Ethnicity**



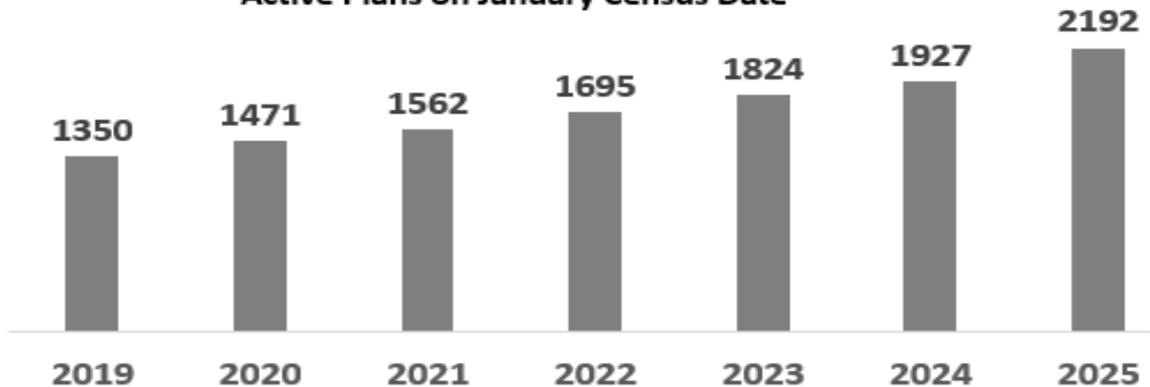
The number of new EHC plans issued between 2019 – 2025, has increased significantly in Slough, by 51%. This is higher than the Southeast region (38%) but slightly below the national figure of 57%

EHC Plans Issued by Calendar Year



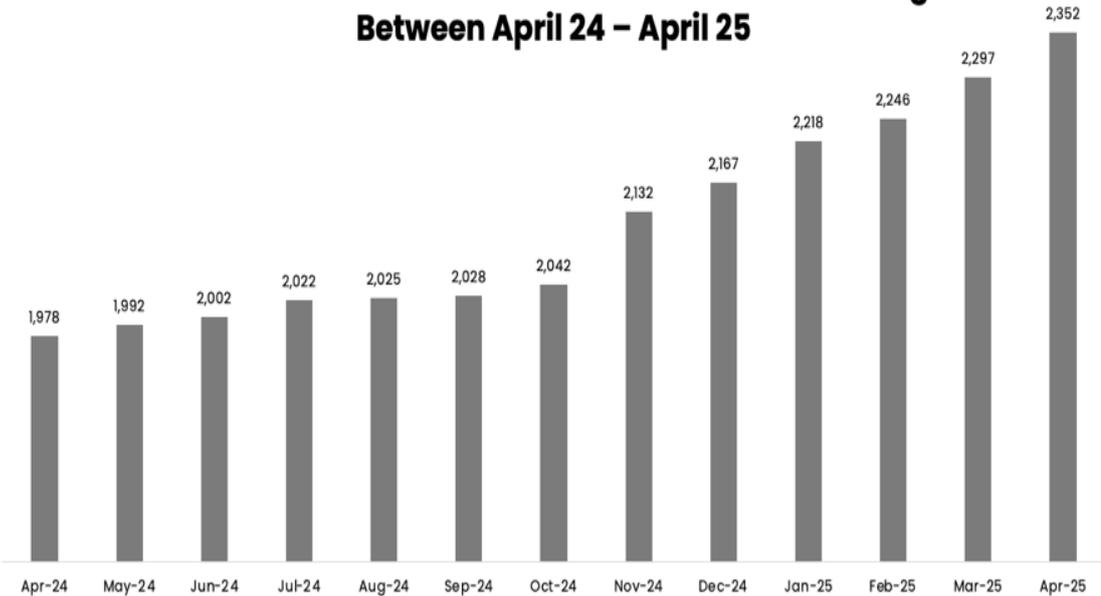
Active plans have also increased significantly - by 62%, from 1350 in 2019, to 2192 in 2025, which is slightly below the Southeast (64%) and national (63%) figures.

Active Plans on January Census Date



Data analysis has shown that the number of EHC plans increased by another 19% between April 24 and April 25. This significantly higher increase is partly due to increased demand for plans but also by the fact that the SEND Statutory Assessment Team have been reducing the significant level of overdue EHC plan requests. In May 2025 the backlog of overdue assessments had reduced to under 60 and will be completely cleared by the Autumn of 2025. Therefore, although this will continue to be a factor for a few more months, it will then cease to be a factor in the future.

**Growth in the number of EHCP Plans issued in Slough
Between April 24 – April 25**



Work is underway to cease plans that are no longer active will this will reduce the number of EHC plans

The introduction of **mainstream early help Top Up funding** will further **reduce the rates** and even out, as mainstream needs are met without the need for a statutory assessment.

APPENDIX C: Specialist resources for SEND in Slough

Mainstream specialist resources for SEND in Slough

In the mainstream school setting snapshot taken in April 2025, there were 701 CYP with an EHCP plan who were supported through Top Up funding,

Top up funding from the High Needs Block, has risen steadily for mainstream schools over recent years, with a spend of 5.5 million at the end of the 2024/2025 financial year.

- 4 million (73%) was allocated to mainstream primary schools, which covers 16,851 (53%) of the school population
- 1.5 million (27%) was allocated to the secondary sector, which covers 14,802 (47%) of the school population
- 7 schools accounted for 1.9m (35%) of the overall spend. The schools represented 21% of the overall school population.
- 4 schools accounted for 37% of the primary school allocation, covering 20% of the school population. These consisted of Castle view; Claycots; Montem; Priory
- 3 secondary schools accounted for 39% of the secondary allocation, covering 20% of the school population. These consisted of Lynch Hill, Ditton, St Josephs

Specialist Provision

There are currently **seven types of specialist provision** available in and surrounding Slough. These are:

- Specialist mainstream provisions located on mainstream school sites.
- Three special schools (Arbour Vale, Littledown and Millside)
- Academies and maintained special school provision located in neighboring local authorities
- One primary and one secondary Alternative provision (AP) for those young people experiencing Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties.
- Special schools in the independent non-maintained sector.
- One local college
- Colleges in the independent non-maintained sector.

In addition, there are 29 pupils who are currently without a school place and are in receipt of **home tuition through an Education Other Than in School (EOTAS) package.**

The table below indicates the range of provision and the numbers of pupils with an EHC plan attending a type of special school provision.

Special School Provision

TYPE	NURSERY	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	POST 16	TOTAL
INDEPENDENT NON MAINTAINED SPECIALIST PROVISION	0	7	16	14	37 (5%)
ARBOUR VALE SPECIAL SCHOOL	4	116	126	70	364 (39%)
LITLEDOWN SPECIAL SCHOOL	0	17	0	0	17 (2%)
MILLSIDE SPECIAL SCHOOL	0	0	74	1	75 (8%)
SPECIAL OUT OF AREA	0	21	43	17	81 (10%)
SPECIALIST MAINSTREAM	20 (7 take up)	195 (169 take up)	72 (48 take up)	0	287(36%) (take up 224)
TOTAL	24	356	317	100	797
% OF TOTAL	3%	45%	40%	12%	100%
ALTERNATIVE PROVISION		3	76 (across both phases)		79

Key Headlines In Slough:

- Slough have 3 special schools and 2 Alternative Providers who all have 'Good' OFSTED ratings
- In total we have 474 CYP receiving special school provision
- 81 of our CYP receive their special school education out of borough
- We provide 49 special school places for CYP out of area
- 37 of our CYP attend an independent specialist provision
- Slough has 12 Mainstream specialist provisions, supporting for CYP across Slough
- Our Alternative Provision supports children and young people with short term interventions, enabling them to return to full time mainstream education. Our Alternative Provision supported 37 permanently excluded young people

Slough Special School Provision

Slough is proud of its 3 special schools, 2 Alternative Providers who all have 'Good' OFSTED ratings. Similarly, we are proud of our 16 Mainstream specialist provisions providing support for 267 CYP across Slough who also are all rated as at least "Good" by Ofsted.

Our Alternative Provision supports children and young people with short term interventions, enabling them to return to full time mainstream education. Our Alternative Provision has supported xx permanently excluded young people in 2024/25 by the end of June.

Arbour Vale School

In Slough, Arbour Vale Special School, which forms part of the Orchard Hill Academy Trust, serves a large proportion of the population, for pupils aged 2 – 19. There are currently 315 children and young people attending from Slough and a further 49 out of area children and young people. The school caters for a wide range of needs, including, moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, profound and severe learning difficulties, as well as autism. A phased programme, for the development of an additional 80 satellite placements, will be commencing in September 2025, using off-site capacity at Our Lad of Peace school site.

Millside School

Millside, special school, which forms part of the Haybrook College Trust, also provides 53 specialist placements for children with Social, Emotional, Mental Health Difficulties, across key stage 3 and 4. In addition, the special school provides a further 22 places for out of area children and young people. The Haybrook trust also provides a revolving door Alternative Provision for children and young people in key stage 3 and 4 for 76 pupils.

Littledown School

Littledown special school are currently commissioned to take 19 children and young people in Slough, with capacity to take up to 39 pupils, which is currently being commissioned by neighboring local authorities.

Special Schools Outside the Local Area

Slough also commission maintained special school provision from neighboring local authorities including: Manor Green Special School (57 places); Forest Bridge Special School (16 places) and Meadow Special School a further additional 8 places. Overall, 81 children are in receipt of out of area special school provision. A further 37 attend Independent and Non Maintained Special Schools.

The table below indicates the range of provision and the numbers of pupils with an EHC plan attending a type of special school provision.

Independent Specialist Provision

In line with national and regional patterns, Slough had seen unprecedented growth in the use of Specialist Independent SEND provision. Legitimate use of independent placements relates to those children whose needs are so complex that it is not reasonable to place them in local specialist provision and where the independent non-maintained sector (INM) sector can use specialist approaches and provide specialist facilities or health interventions which are not normally available locally.

However, placing Slough children and young people in specialist independent non-maintained settings, has in recent years, been because of lack of availability of specialist placements. Slough has been addressing the overuse of specialist independent provision as part of its 'Safety Valve' programme, set by the government and has made real progress in managing demand for this sector. As a result, of control for the sign off for all placements, as part of a weekly panel meeting process, now ensures that new placements are only made after all other options have been exhausted. This approach continues to manage demand and expectation.

Special School Headlines

- 466 Slough CYP access 5 special schools
- **385** placements are in Slough **81** are out of area
- **71** out of area CYP access Slough special schools
- **3 (1%)** in Nursery
- **155 (33%)** in Primary
- **224 (48%)** in Secondary
- **84 (18%)** in Post 16

Special School Provision by year group

Year Group	Nursery	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Year 14	Total	Total	Total
Key Stage	Early Years		Key Stage 1			Key Stage 2			Key Stage 3			Key Stage 4		Post 16		All Pupils	In Borough	Out of Borough	
Arbour Vale (IB)	3	11	12	16	17	19	27	15	24	27	31	25	22	26	27	13	315	315	
Arbour Vale (OOB)	1	2	3	6	1	4	9	3	2	2	5	5	2	3	0	1	49		49
Little down (IB)				1	4	5	6	1									17	17	
Millside (IB)									7	10	18	11	6	1			53	53	
Millside (OOB)									6	5	4	4	3				22		22
Forest Bridge (OOB)			1	3					3	3	2		2	2			16		16
Manor Green (OOB)		2	2	2		3	2	5	10	4	4	7	6	5	3	2	57		57
Meadow (OOB)					1							1	1		3	2	8		8
Total	4	15	18	28	23	31	44	24	52	51	64	53	42	37	33	18	537	385	152

Special School Bandings in County

Arbour Vale Special school by Banding							
Banding	40,000	30,000	25,000	20,000	15,000	10,000	Overall Total
Nursery/Primary	9 (2)	36 (10)	17 (5)	41 (11)	16 (1)	1 (0)	120 (29)
Key Stage 3/4	7 (2)	25 (1)	13 (6)	33 (1)	36 (3)	15 (1)	129 (14)
Key Stage 5/6	1 (0)	10 (3)	8 (1)	12 (1)	27 (0)	8 (1)	66 (6)
Totals	17 (5%) 4	71 (23%) 14	38 (12%) 12	86 (27%) 13	79 (25%) 4	24 (8%) 2	315 (49)

Littledown special school by banding							Total
Key stage 1 /2	3 (18%)	4 (23%)	3 (18%)	2 (12%)	5 (29%)		17

Millside special school placements by banding							Total
Key stage 3/4	2 (4%) 2	2(4%) 2	1 (1%) 4	46 (87%) 14	2 (4%)		53 (22)

Special School Bandings Out of County

Banding	50,000	40,000	30,000	25,000	20,000	15,000	10,000
Forest Bridge	8	6	2				
Manor Green	3	7	11	15	11	8	2
Meadow		2		1	3	2	
Totals	11 (13%)	15(18%)	13(17%)	16(20%)	14(17%)	10 (12%)	2 (2%)

What the data tells us

- Top up funding varies in Arbour Vale special school, from **10k – 40k**. **38%** receive up to **15k**; **40%** **20 – 25k** and **22%**, at the higher level of **30 – 40k**. Each top up funded place is further supported by 10k place funding.

- Overall, the highest levels of funded places in Arbour Vale, are at the lower banding of between **10** and **15k**, which suggests further exploration across primary, secondary and post 16 stages of education.
- In Millbrook, the majority of the children (**87%**) are funded at the banding levels **20k** with **9%** receiving the higher banding of **30 - 40%** and **4%** at the lower banding of **15k**
- Littledown, has a much wider range of bandings, with 30% of its pupils at the lower banding range of **15k**, **30%** at the banding levels **20 – 25k** and **40%** at the higher banding levels of **30 – 40k**
- **21%** of the pupils in out of area special schools currently attend post 16 provision and of the 81 pupils accessing out of area provision, **32%** are at the lower banding levels of under **20k**.

Resource Base Provision

There are currently 3 nurseries, 6 primaries, 1 infant and 1 junior and 5 secondary schools with designated resource base provision to meet the needs of children and young people with a wide range of special educational needs.

Resource Base Provision in Slough

Setting	Primary Need	Places Funded	Actual Placement	Banding						
				05	10	15	20	25	30	40
Baylis Court Nursery	Observation Unit	4	4	2	1					
Chalvey Nursery	Complex Learning	5	5	1	1					
Slough Centre Nursery	Observation Unit	3	3	2						
Colnbrook CE primary	Learning Difficulties	10	7		4	3				
Castle view Primary	Learning Difficulties	29	31 (4)		6	1	4		2	10
Phoenix Infant	Learning Difficulties	12	9		4	4	1			
Godolphin Junior	Learning Difficulties	10	10 (1)	1	7	1	1			
Marish Primary	Complex Needs	65	78 (9)		1	34	16	7		
Priory School	Learning Difficulties	70	70 (5)		6	4	3		30	
St Ethelbert's RC Primary	Speech and Language Difficulties	10	2		2					
Wexham School	Physical Difficulties	18	17	4	11	1	1			
Ditton Park Academy	Learning Difficulties	20	17	3	13	1				
The Langley Academy	Learning Difficulties	8	6	1	5					
Slough & Eton College	Learning Difficulties	20	15	4	10	1				
The Westgate School	Physical Difficulties	15	10	2	3	3	2			
Grove Academy	Learning Difficulties	9	0							
TOTALS		287	224	20		53	28	7	32	10

Headlines

- There are **287** funded mainstream specialist places
- The take up for Mainstream Specialist places is **224 (74%)** with **63** funded unfilled
- Top up funding varies: with **42%** up to 10k; **40%** 10k – 25k; **18%** 30k – 40k;

What the data tells us

- Top up funding between resource bases varies from **5k – 40k**, with **42%** receiving up to **10k**; **40%** **15 – 25k** and **18%** between **30 – 40k** top up funding
- Overall, the place funding provides for **287**, although actual take up is **224** places for children and young people. This equates to **41%** of all specialists placements within Slough, which compared to national and regional counterparts, suggests a stronger use of maintaining children in their local area
- However, on further analysis of placement costs, **147/224 (66%)** meet the banding that would normally follow children accessing specialist resources within their local mainstream and 44% with top up/placement costs of between **30-50k**, which exceeds special school placement costs

Independent Specialist Provision

In line with national and regional patterns, Slough had seen unprecedented growth in the use of Specialist Independent SEND provision. Legitimate use of independent placements relates to those children whose needs are so complex that it is not reasonable to place them in local specialist provision and where the independent non-maintained sector (INM) sector can use specialist approaches and provide specialist facilities or health interventions which are not normally available locally.

However, placing Slough children and young people in specialist independent non-maintained settings, has in recent years, been because of lack of availability of specialist placements. Slough has been addressing the overuse of specialist independent provision as part of its 'Safety Valve' programme, set by the government and has made real progress in managing demand for this sector. As a result, of control for the sign off for all placements, as part of a weekly panel meeting process, now ensures that new placements are only made after all other options have been exhausted. This approach continues to manage demand and expectation

Independent Specialist Provision by year group

Year	N	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	17
Pupils			2	0	1	1	2	1	1	3	7	4	1	3	4	5	2

Independent Specialist Provision by banding

Funding banding	£10 k	£15 k	£20 k	£25 k	£30 k	£40 k	£50 k	£60 k	£70 k	£80 k	£90 k	£100 k+
Pupils	2	4	5	5	2	2	1	3	3	0	5	5

Headlines

There are 37 pupils receiving specialist independent provision

- 14 (38%) are in post 16
- 16 (43%) are in Secondary
- 7 (19%) are in Primary
- 43% receiving up to 15k banding
- 27% receiving 20k - 70k banding
- 33% receiving 80k - 150k banding

What the data tells us

- Placement funding for specialist independent placement varies from **10k – 150k**, with **43%** receiving up to **15k**; **27%** **20 – 70k** and **33%** between **90 – 150k** funding.
- Overall, the place funding provides for **37 pupils**. There are **14 (30%)** of pupils taught in post 16 provision; **16 (43%)** in secondary and **7 (19%)** in primary education.

APPENDIX D: Key Milestones

Workstream	5.2 The right provision in the right place at the right time
Description	Review and development of existing specialist support and provision is essential for ensuring that it is 'fit for purpose' and linked to the council's aspirations to maximise the use of resources and ensure the appropriate range of specialist provision is in place locally, with built in flexibility that can support the changing needs of the school population. This workstream will review and develop responsive, effective local specialist provision, re-aligning, to ensure the right support, in the right place at the right time.

Sub Project	5.2 (i) To review and develop the authority's existing special school and school-based provision to ensure that they remain 'fit for purpose'.			
Key Milestones	Actions for the coming period	Lead	Date	RAG
To undertake a sufficiency review to consider the broader context for meeting the needs of children and young people with complex needs including, SEMH, ASD and profound and multiple learning difficulties	To undertake a high-level review to establish a current position statement and proposed steps to meet needs in the short, medium and long term.	NJ	March – April 2025	Green
In consultation with the special school, to prepare an options paper for maximising special school site provision for complex learners, as well as the development of a wider satellite provision offer for moderate learning difficulties, in conjunction with mainstream and post 16 providers.	To map out current provision for children with MLD and prepare an options paper for the development of mainstream satellites, using surplus space.	NJ	Sept – Dec 25	Green
	To map post 16 specialist provision, to include all post 16 providers, in order to strengthen pathways for special school MLD CYP, in preparation for adulthood, widening opportunities to access college, apprenticeships and work experience and realising additional capacity for complex needs CYP across all key stages.	NJ	Sept – Dec 25	Green
To develop a proposed model for school-based resource base provision as part of a tiered local offer (by locality) for implementation	To undertake a review of all specialist provision for children accessing resource base provision to understand complexity of need of the children and to understand if the status remains a resource base or potential for a special school satellite/unit	NJ	April – Sept 25	

	To review and establish that resource provision remains fit for purpose for meeting local area need, where there has been little take up of funded places and in doing so reduce the high number of surplus places	NJ	April– Sept 25	
	A programme to be developed, with timescales, for the phased implementation of realigned satellite provision and a planned phased programme for implementation of realigned commissioned resource base provision as appropriate	TBA	Sept – Oct 25	
	In consultation with mainstream leaders, to develop contracts that are fit for purpose, outlining principles, roles, responsibilities, the commissioning and funding arrangements and to agree current and potential changes to provision as a result of the sufficiency report findings and locality needs.	NJ	February – July 2025	Green
	To review the current banding system and establish appropriate mechanisms for determining the level of need, ensuring sustainability of provision and not subject to fluctuation annual individual banding arrangements.	NJ	Jan – April 2026	
	To develop a business case for the appointment of a specialised service professional (EPS/advisory team manager) to lead the multiagency decision-making group for the allocation of placements and annual review of provision	NJ	July 2025	

Sub Project	5.2 (ii) To put in place monitoring and reporting for children and young people accessing specialist provision to ensure effective and efficient governance, including financial control of the High Needs Block budget			
Key Milestones	Actions for the coming period	Lead	Date	RAG
To develop a reporting framework for monitoring and reporting specialist provision	To develop accurate lists and an ongoing monitoring and escalation system, for attendance and children taught off site/part timetables for all specialist providers by sector (special school, resource unit provision, independent non-maintained schools) and allocated team lead.	NJ/	February – May 2025	Green
	To develop termly position statements and set up liaison meeting with school leaders as part of the monitoring framework	NJ	February – May 2025	Green
To develop and implement a robust and effective financial reporting and commissioning and placement/review process for the procurement of placements for CYP in specialist independent placements.	Linked with Slough Children’s First, develop a commissioning framework and finalise and implement, to ensure all schools are using the dynamic purchasing system and subject to the safeguarding and quality assurance checks.	NJ	Sept-Dec	

Sub Project	5.2 (iii) To review children and young people accessing specialist provision and ensure effective and efficient governance of placements.			
Key Milestones	Actions for the coming period	Lead	Date	RAG
To ensure criteria for accessing special school, resource base, including Top Up funding, banding and governance are clearly set out, with the appropriate specialist professional oversight for allocating and reviewing of specialist provision	Individual meetings to take place with all mainstream specialist provision and independent providers and a termly position statement and monitoring report developed and implemented.	NJ	July – March 2026	
To develop a terms of reference document outlining decision making processes, half termly monitoring and review meetings, with independent providers special schools, hub/unit head teachers and alternative providers and implement.	Contracts and governance oversight and team lead roles and responsibilities to be clearly articulated in a terms of reference allocation of resources policy document to ensure fairness and transparency in the allocation of specialist resources.	NJ	July – March 2025	

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