

# Trends in special educational needs & the SEN stress-test 2023

April 2024



# Introduction

- This document presents an analysis of **special educational needs (SEN) trends nationally** and the ways in which these **trends vary between local areas**.
- It has a particular **focus on**:
  - Number and rates of children with SEN.
  - Types of need.
  - Profile of provision used to respond to these needs.
  - Spending on independent and non-maintained special schools (i.e. specialist provision that is used when children’s needs cannot be met locally).
- The latter half of this document – the SEN stress-test – recognises that local authorities are experiencing different pressures. We **use 7 indicators** to identify those who we think are experiencing the most pressures and stresses in relation to SEN provision.
- The first SEN stress-test was produced in 2014. **This is the update for 2023.**

# A note about comparisons with previous years

- SEND reforms mean that some historical comparisons can be problematic. This is because:
  - **Since 2017**, information on primary need relates to those with **SEN Support & EHC plans**, whereas prior to 2015 it was School Action Plus & Statements.
  - EHC plans cover **young people up to the age of 25**, whereas the previous SEND regime covered **young people aged 18 and under**.
  - A new primary need of **Social, Emotional and Mental Health** was introduced in 2015. The primary need of **Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties** was removed in 2015 (but SEMH is not a direct replacement).
- There have also been changes to some local authority boundaries. Specifically:
  - Starting from 2020, data for **Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole** is recorded **jointly**.
  - From 2022 data for **Northamptonshire** was split into **North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire**.
- Data for these local authorities are omitted from any analysis where comparisons with earlier years are made (but included in analysis of 2023 in isolation).

# SEND review: Right support, right place, right time

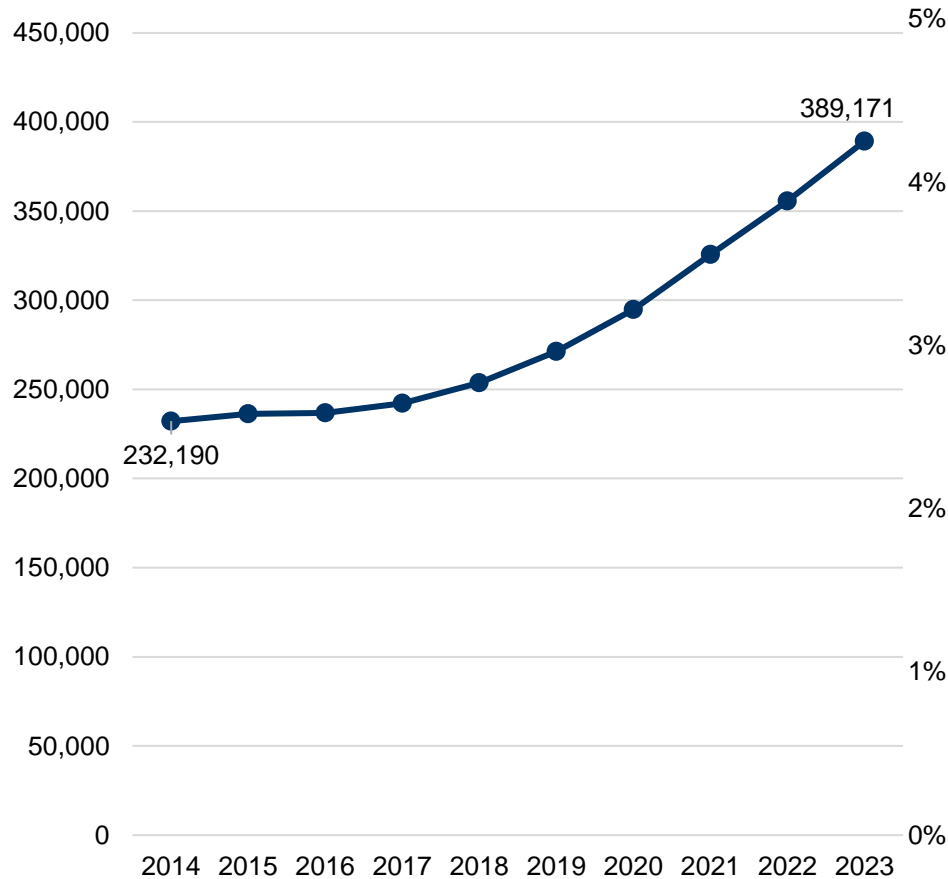
- We note the publication of the government's [SEND review \(2022\)](#) which identified a **'vicious cycle of late intervention'** in SEND provision. Specifically:
  - Children's needs are often identified late, once they have escalated and become increasingly complex.
  - Low confidence in mainstream provision increases the number of families and schools who request EHCPs and top-up funding.
  - Alternative provision is increasingly being used to supplement mainstream SEN provision.
  - As such, resources are redirected away from mainstream provision to the specialist end of the system, resulting in cost inefficiencies.
  - This limits the capacity of mainstream provision to identify need and provide early support, escalating both levels of need and costs and reinforcing the negative cycle.
- This echoes findings presented in both this and previous years' stress-tests, which show:
  - Increases to the number and percentage of children with EHCPs since 2014.
  - Increases to the level of spending, with actual spending on INMSS consistently higher than planned spending on INMSS.
  - Substantial local variation in the prevalence and escalation of need and spending.



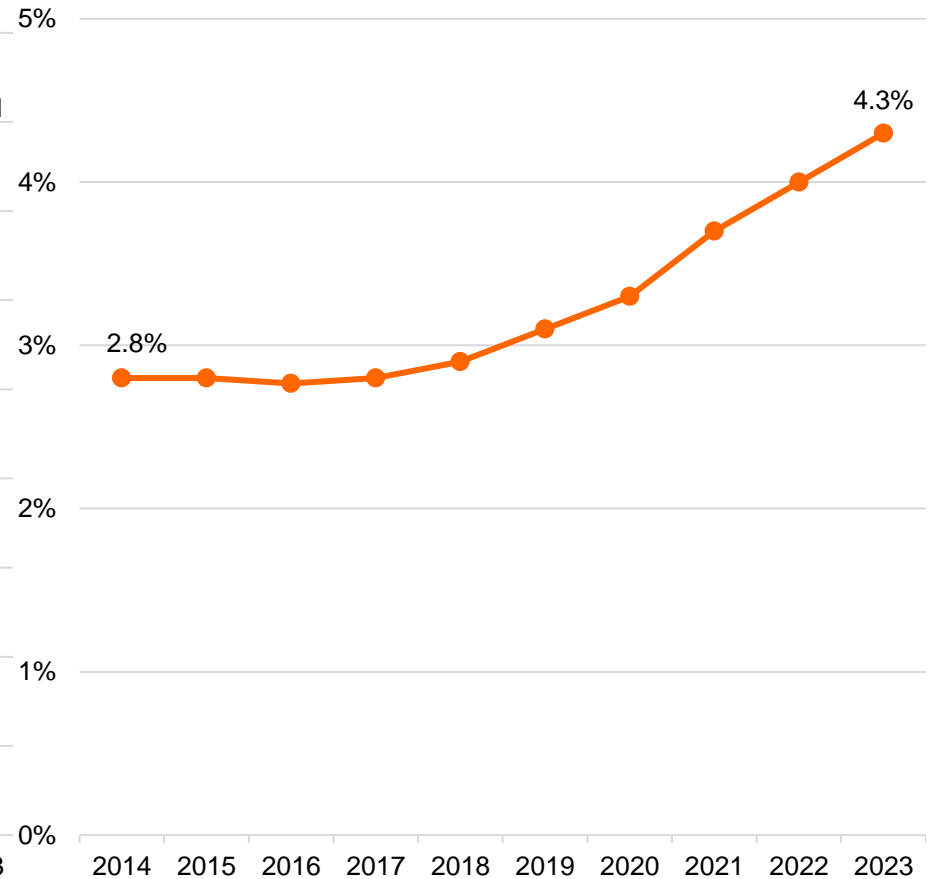
# The National Picture

# Number and percentage of pupils with statements or EHC plans in England (2014-23)

Number of children with statement of SEN or EHC plan

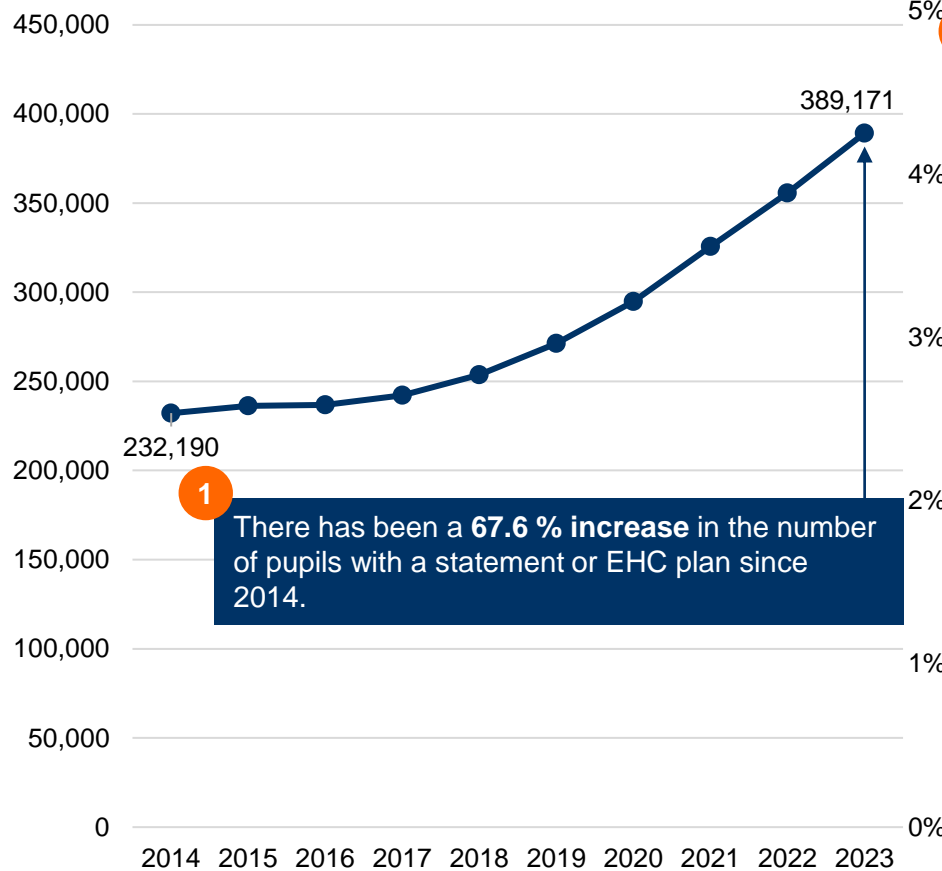


Percentage of school children with statement of SEN or EHC plan

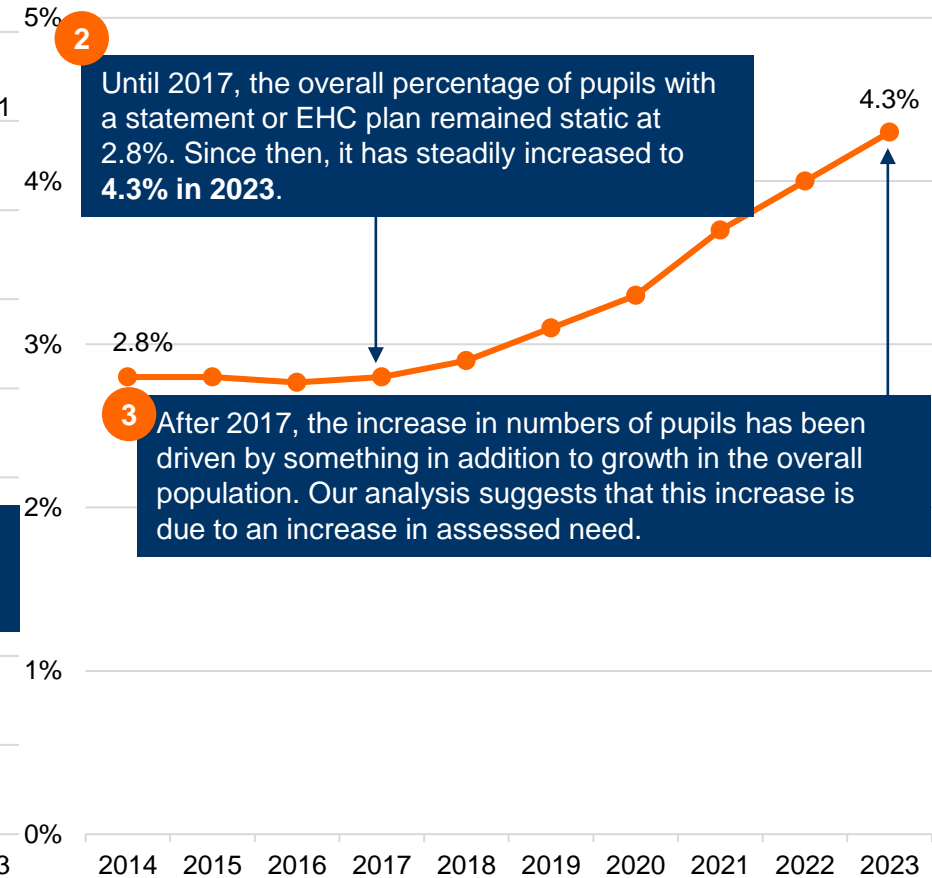


# Number and percentage of pupils with statements or EHC plans in England (2014-23)

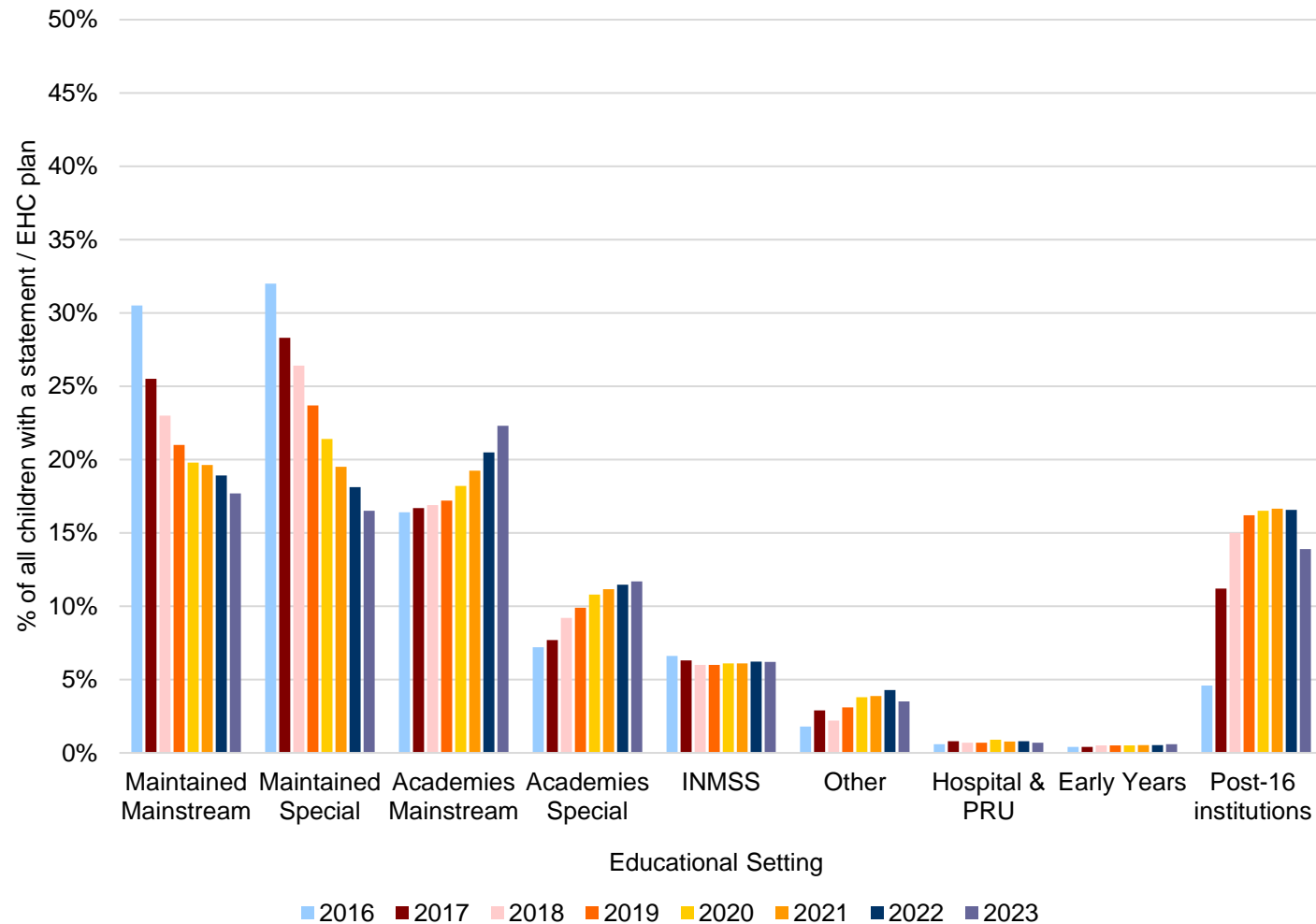
Number of children with statement of SEN or EHC plan



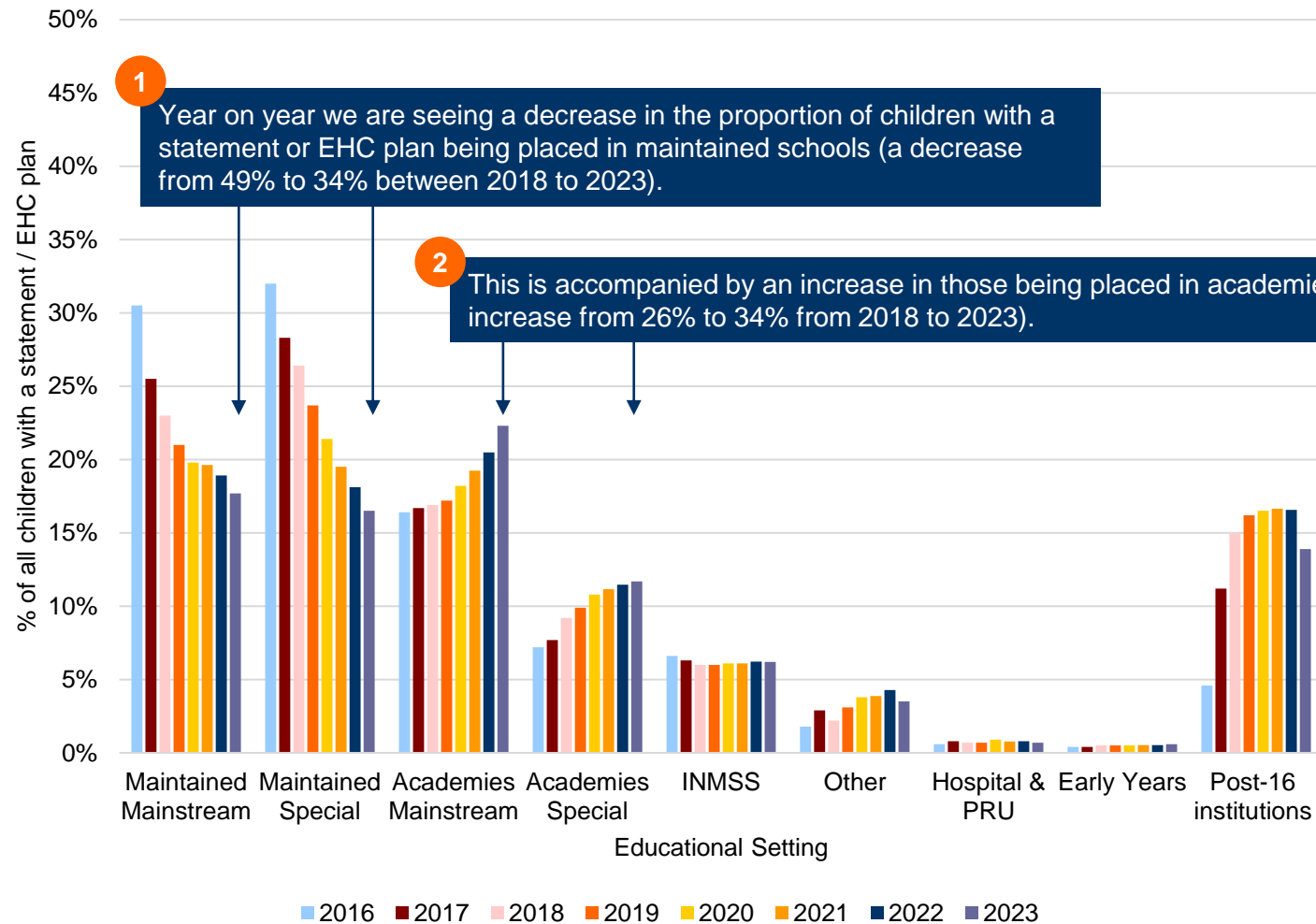
Percentage of school children with statement of SEN or EHC plan



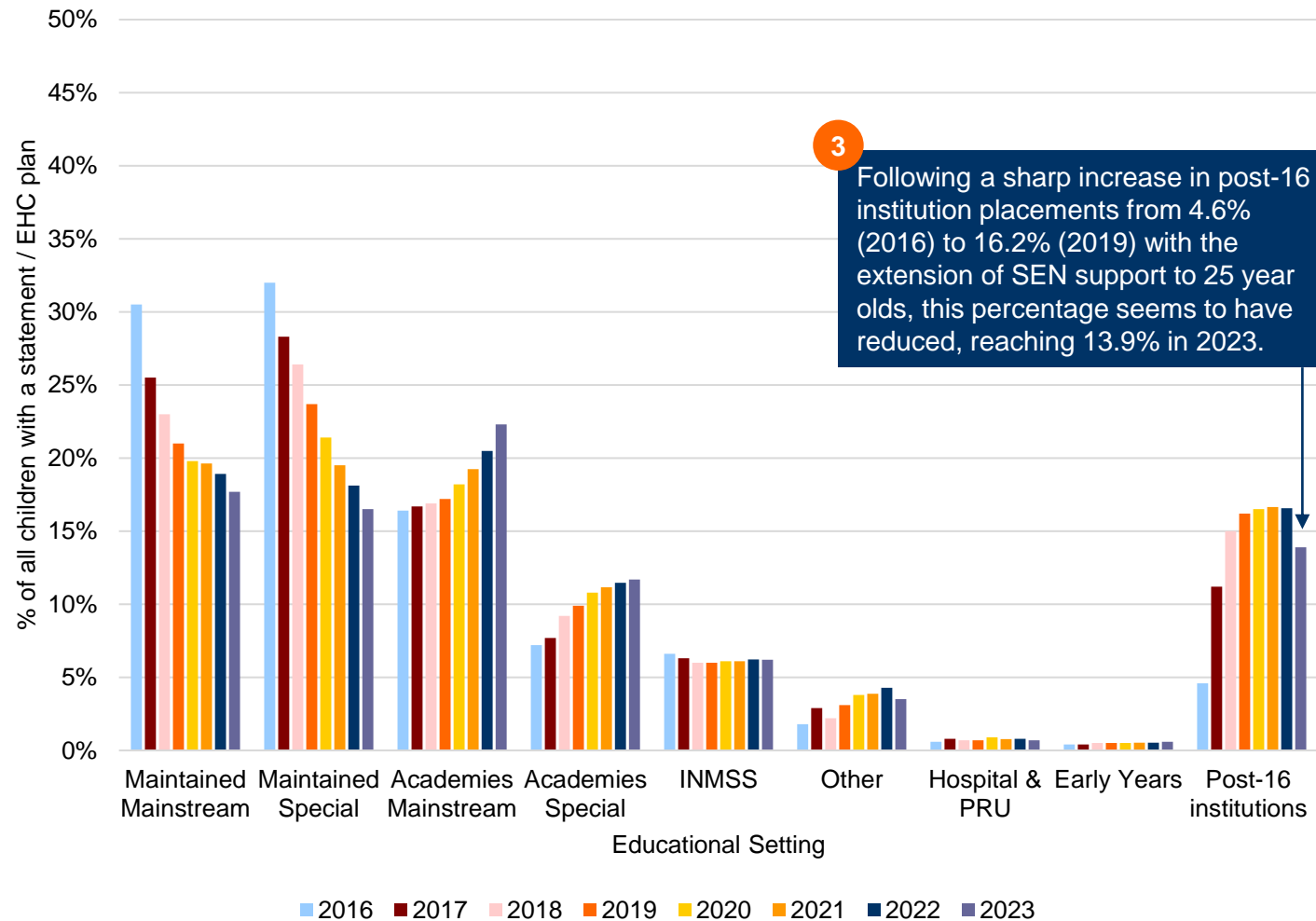
# Placement of children & young people with a statement or EHC plan in different settings (2018-23)



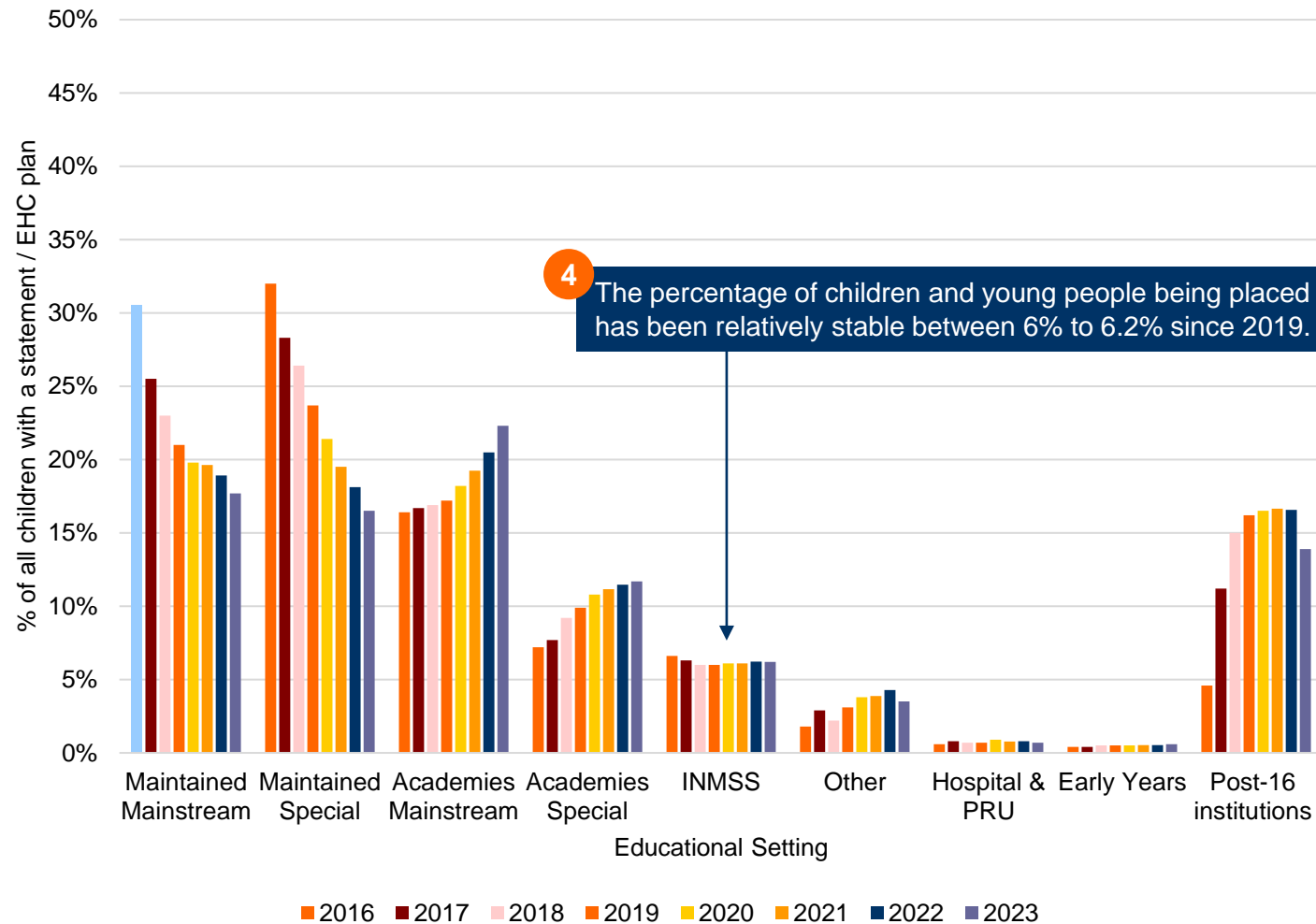
# Placement of children & young people with a statement or EHC plan in different settings (2018-23)



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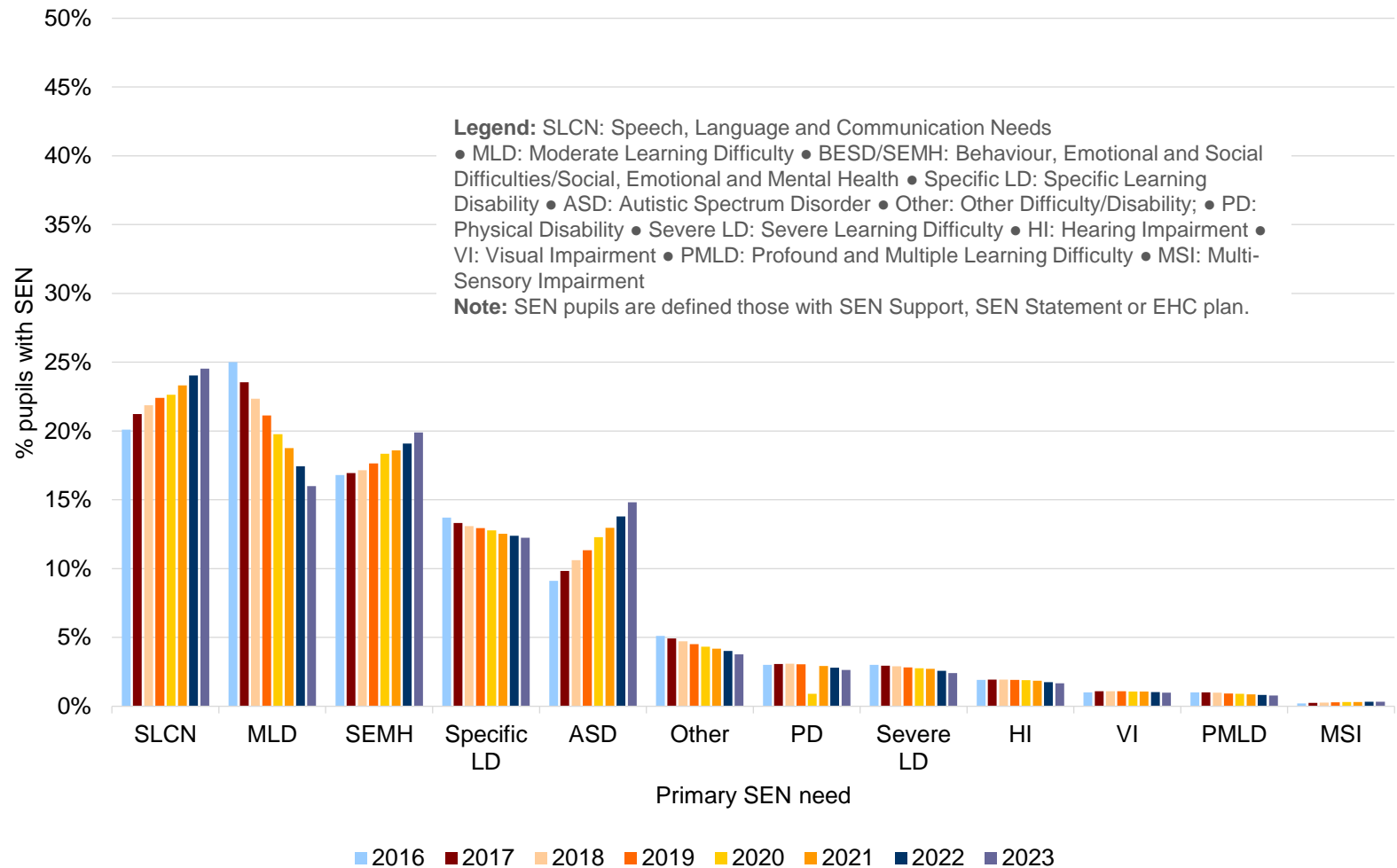


# Placement of children & young people with a statement or EHC plan in different settings (2018-23)



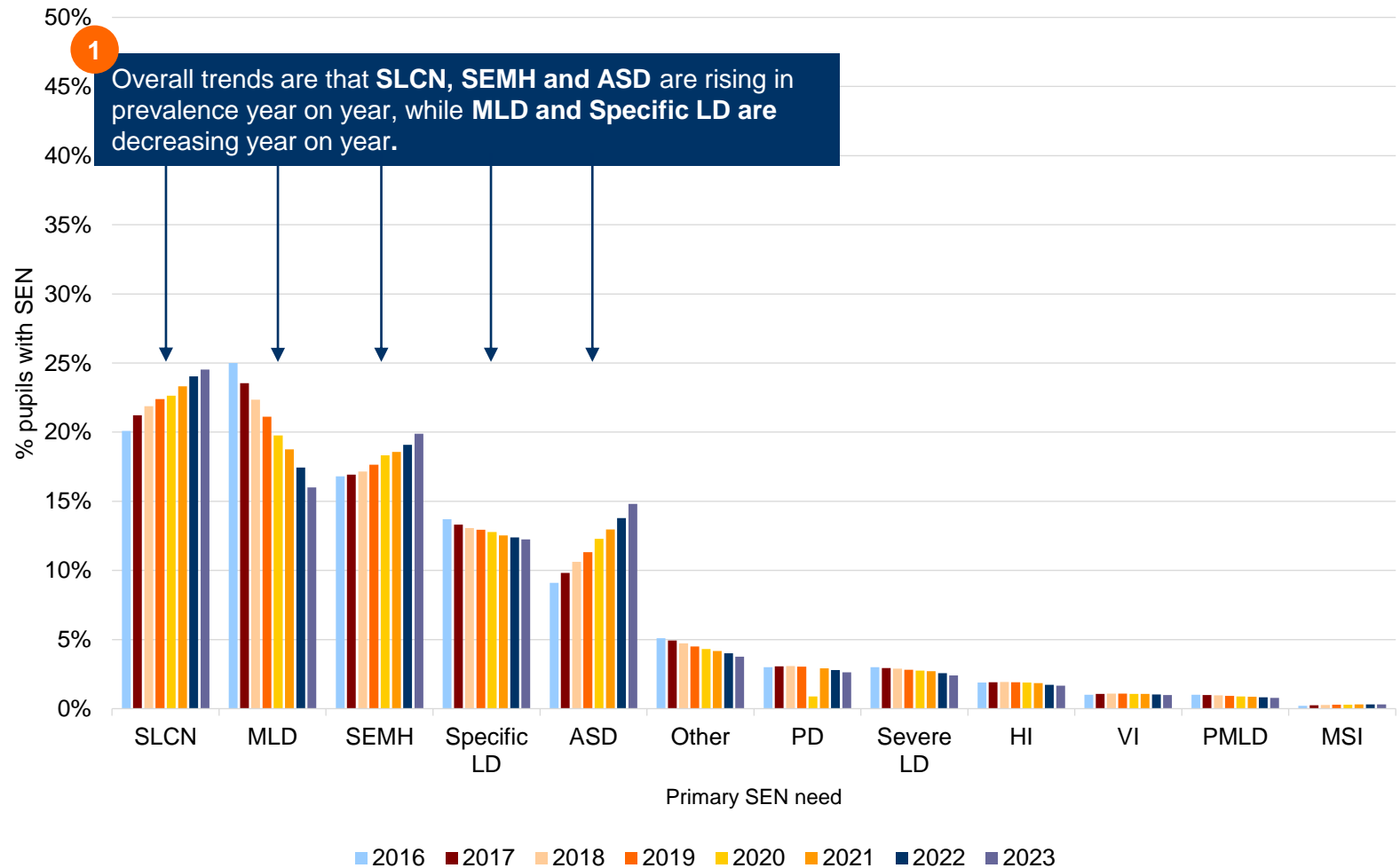
# Primary need among SEN pupils (2018-23)

(state-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools)



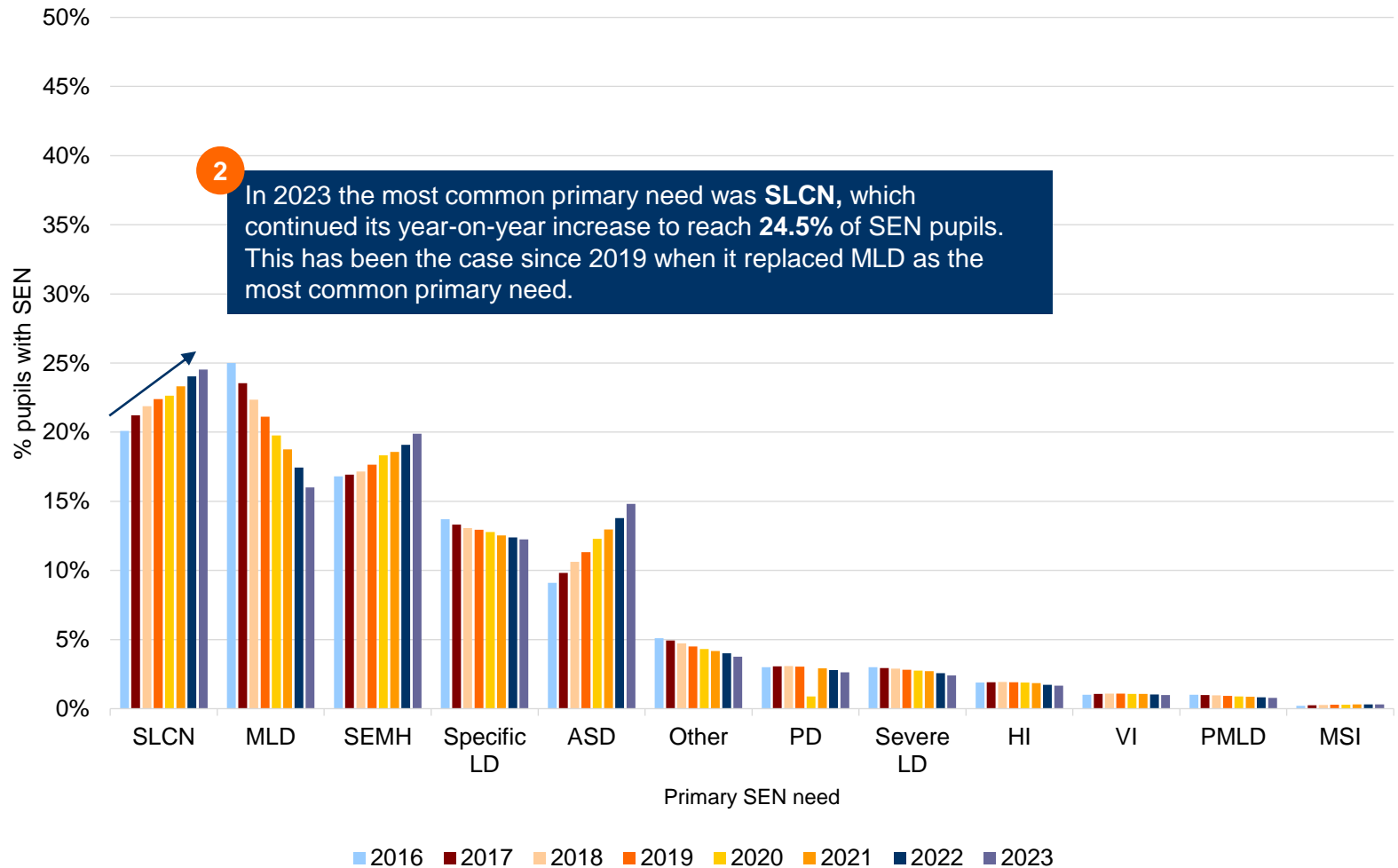
# Primary need among SEN pupils (2018-23)

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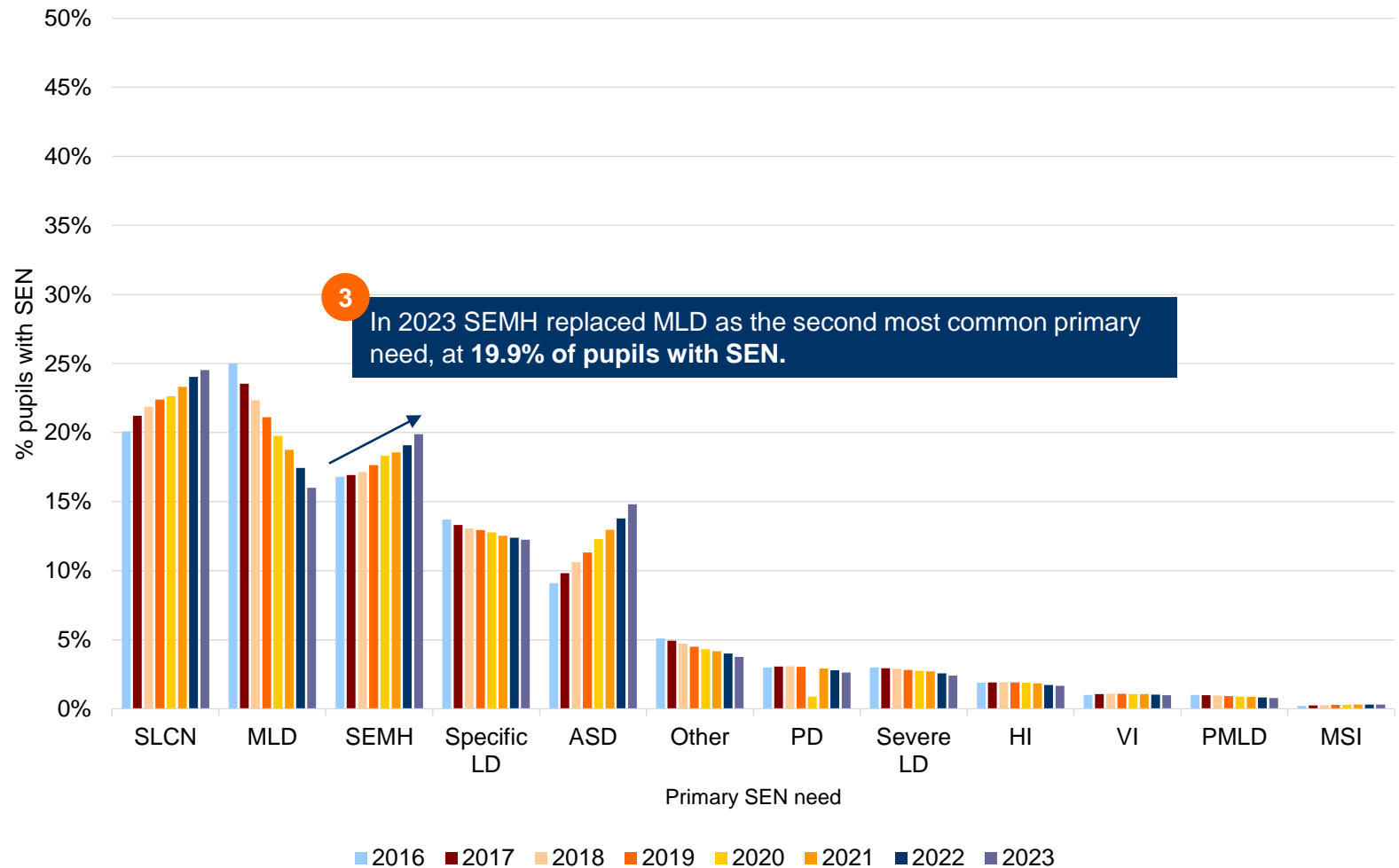
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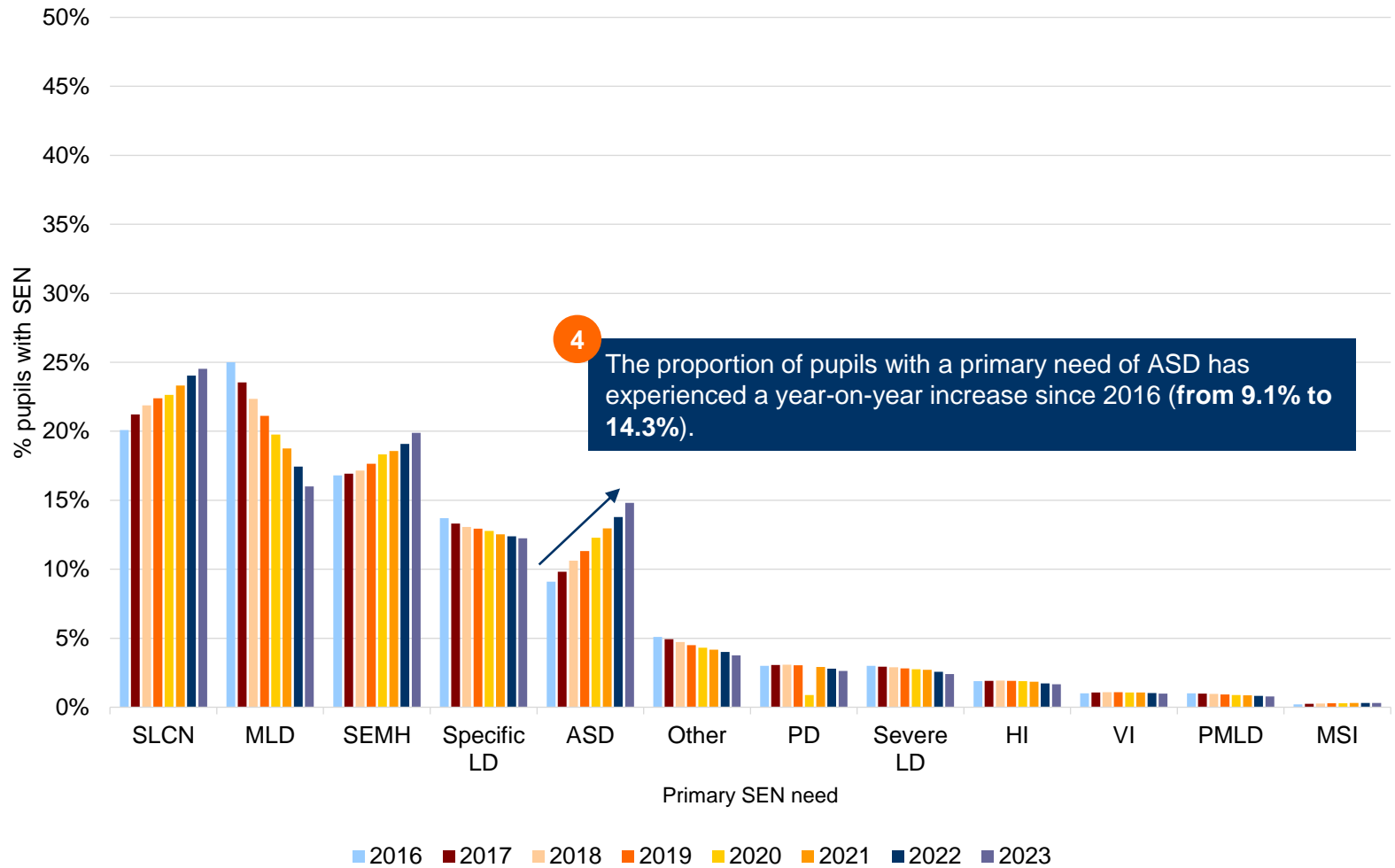
# Primary need among SEN pupils (2018-22)

(state-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools)



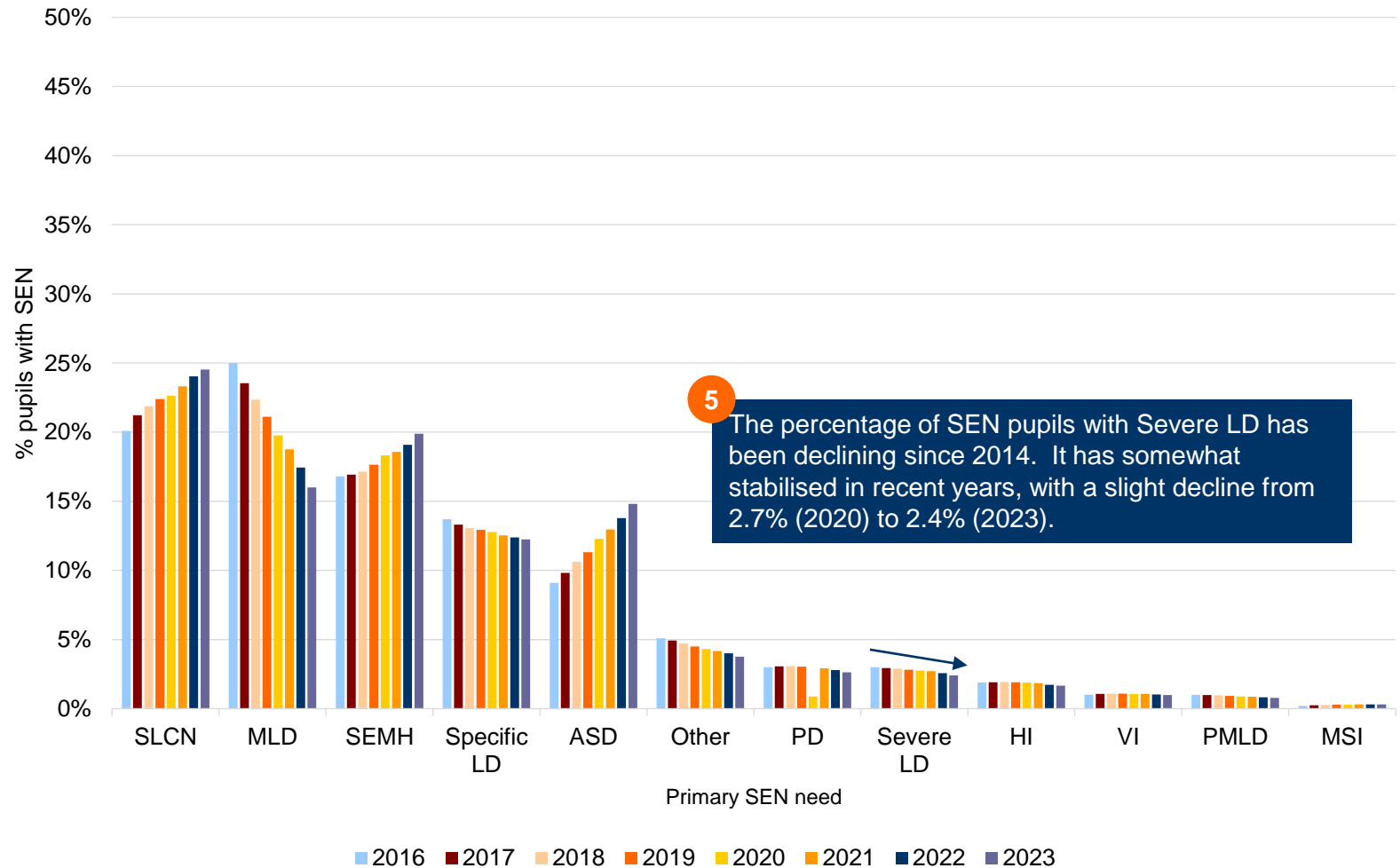
# Primary need among SEN pupils (2018-23)

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# Primary need among SEN pupils (2018-23)

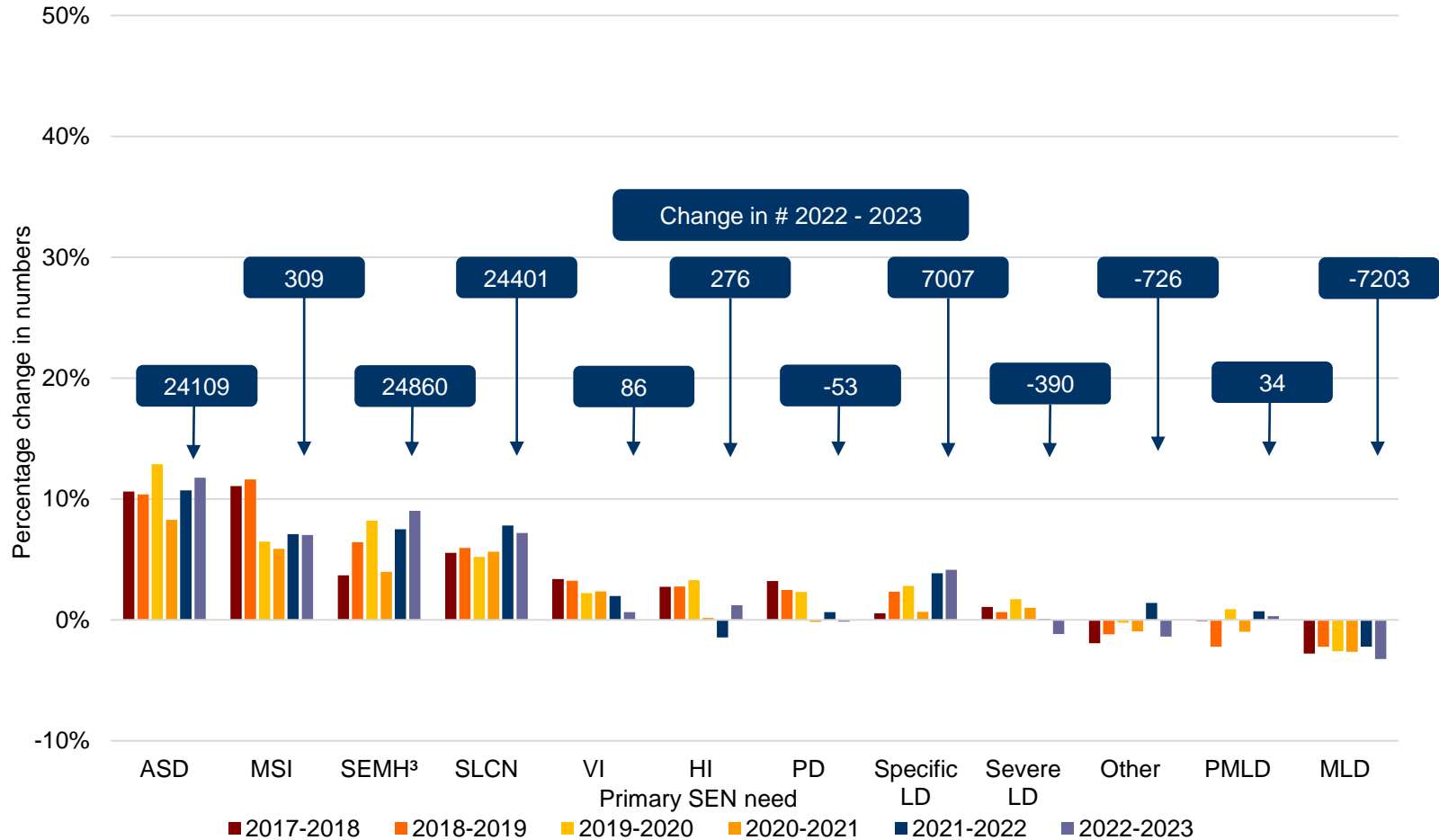
(state-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools)



# Percentage change in numbers by primary need (2017-23)

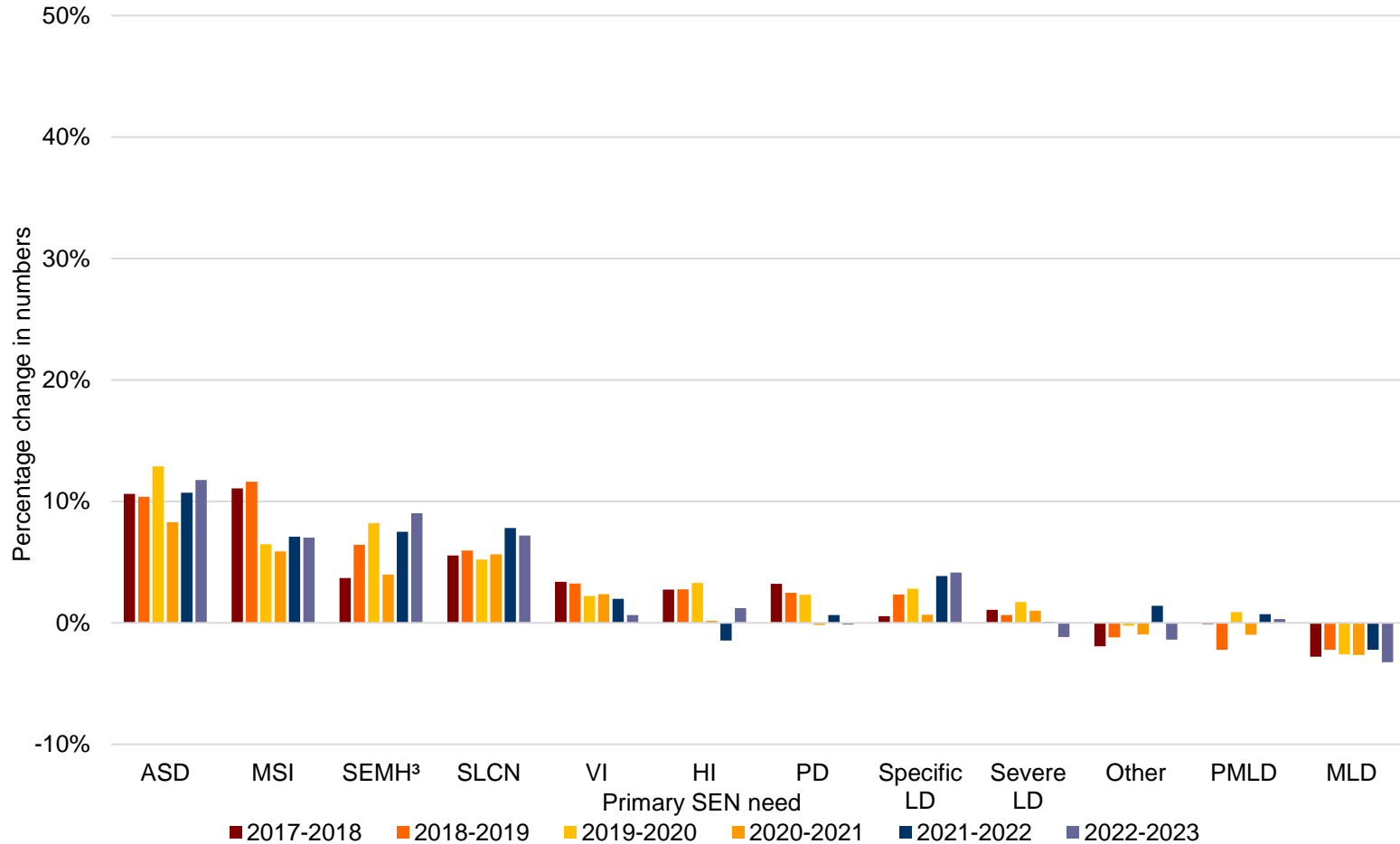


(state-funded primary, state-funded secondary & special)



# Percentage change in numbers by primary need (2017-23)

(state)

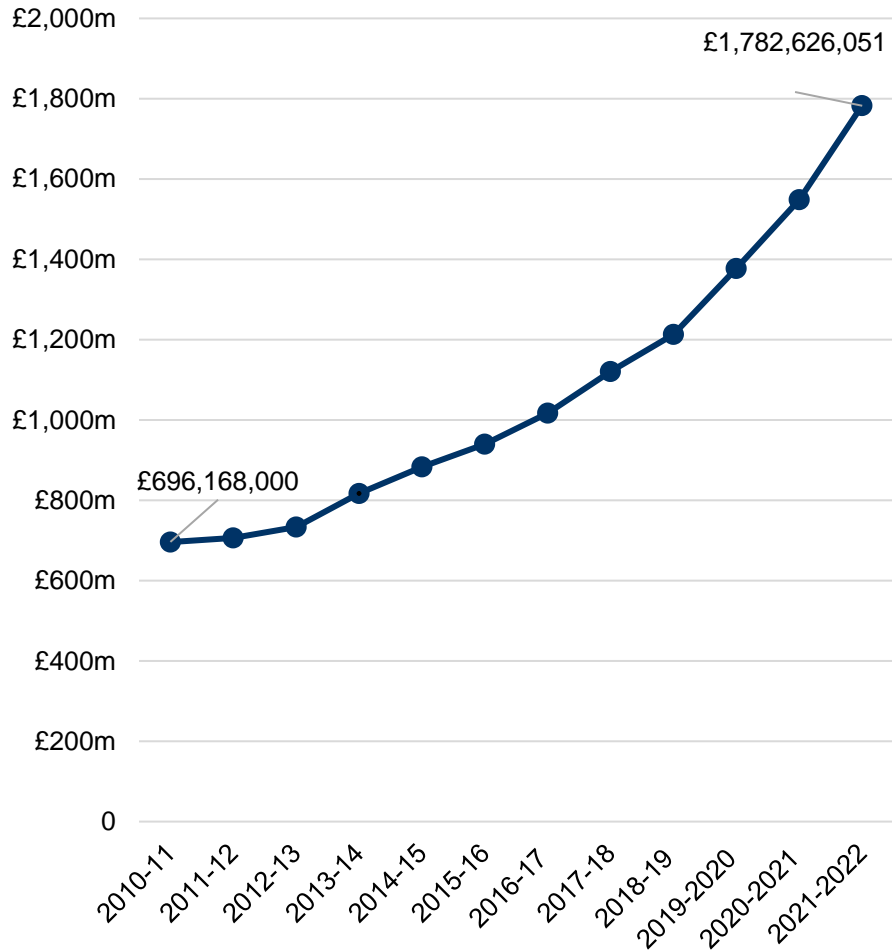


The overall trend is for **year-on-year increases in the number of pupils** presenting with each primary need. Exceptions are **MLD** which has seen year-on-year decreases, **HI** which has seen a down-turn in 2022, but showed higher percentages for 2023, **Other**, which saw year-on-year decreases from 2017 to 2022, but an increase in 2022, and **PMLD** which fluctuates on a yearly basis.

# Spending on INMSS (2012-22) Data not yet available for 2023



Spend on INMSS



INMSS spend per pupil with statement / EHC plan in INMSS

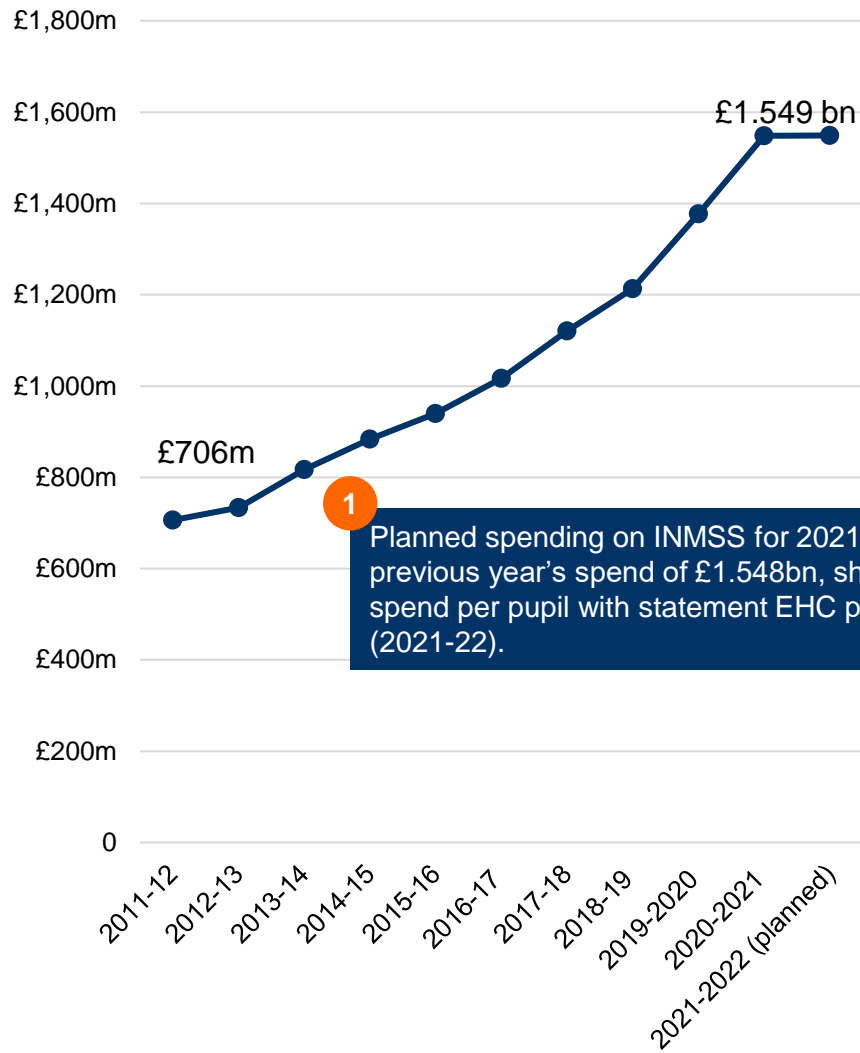


# Spending on INMSS (2012-22)

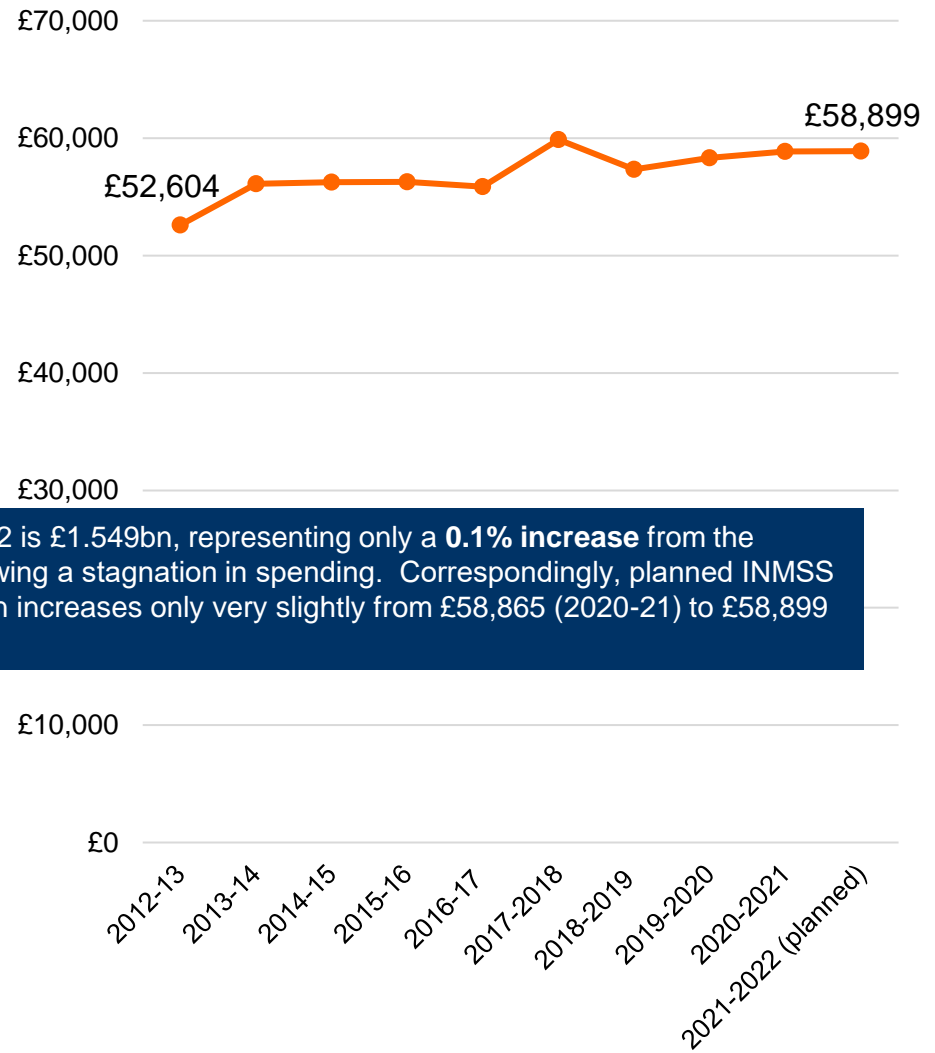
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Spend on INMSS



INMSS spend per pupil with statement / EHC plan in INMSS

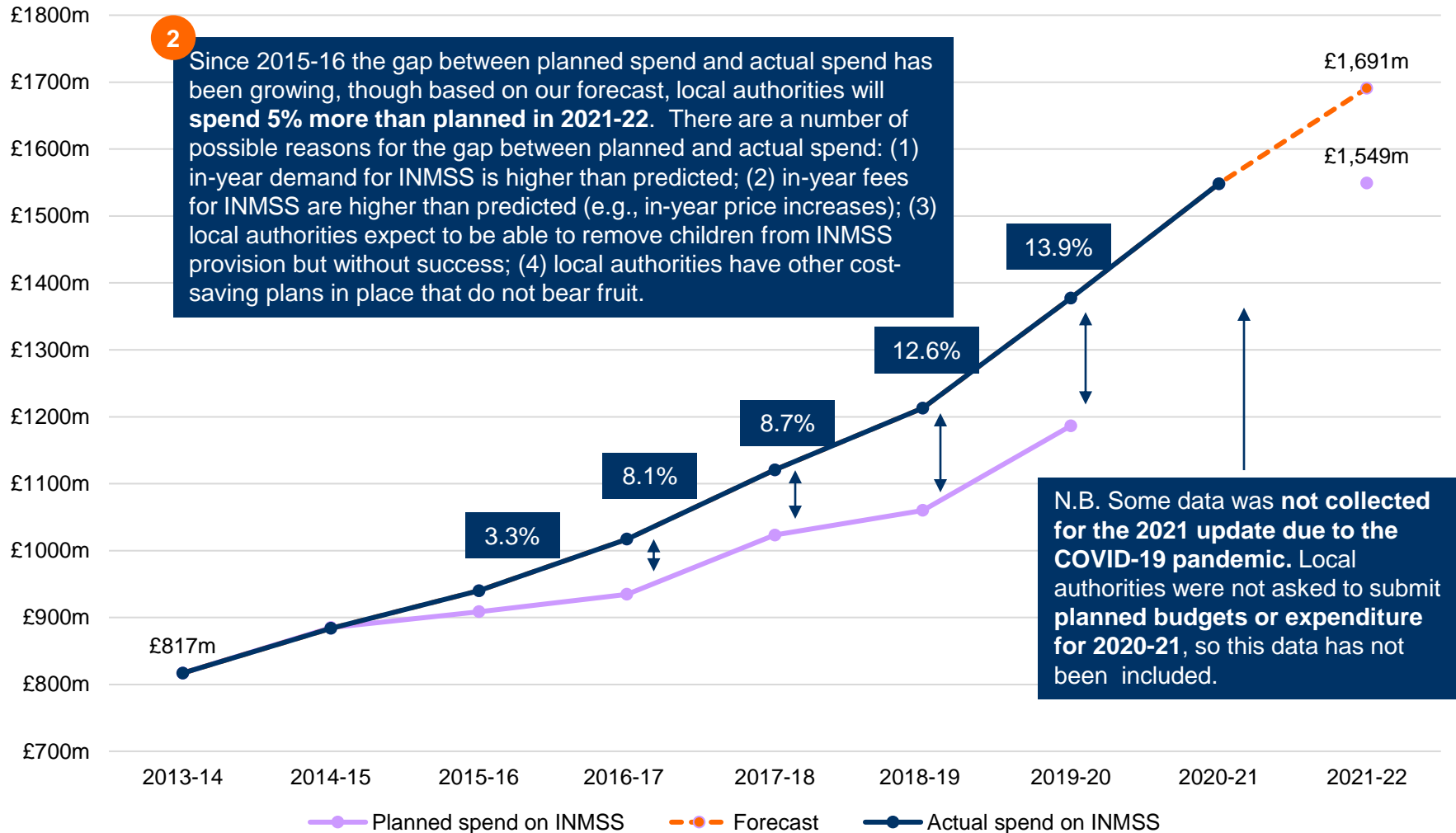


1 Planned spending on INMSS for 2021-22 is £1.549bn, representing only a **0.1% increase** from the previous year's spend of £1.548bn, showing a stagnation in spending. Correspondingly, planned INMSS spend per pupil with statement EHC plan increases only very slightly from £58,865 (2020-21) to £58,899 (2021-22).

# Planned spending on INMSS vs. actual spending on INMSS (2013-22)



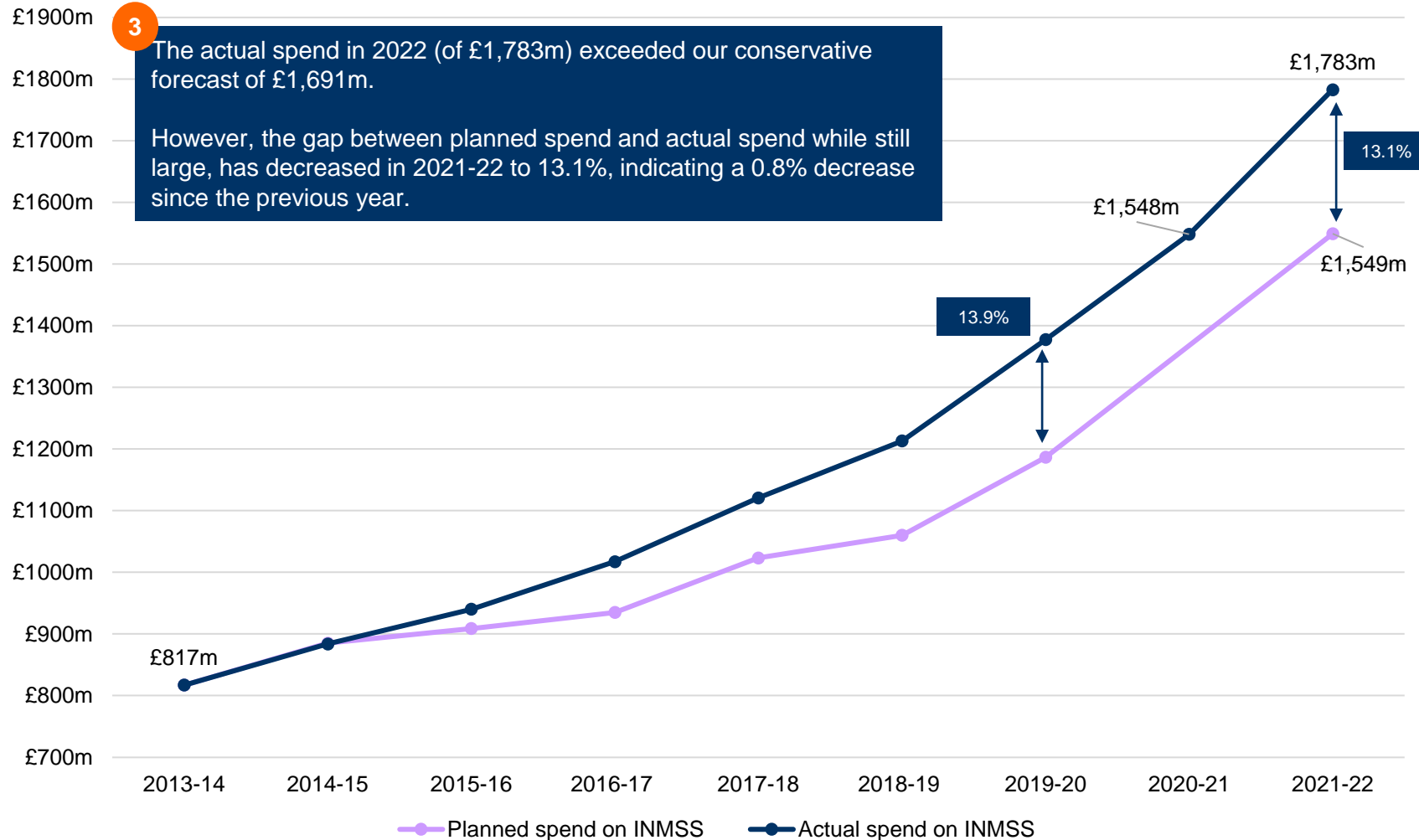
Data not yet available for 2023



# Planned spending on INMSS vs. actual spending on INMSS (2013-22)



Data not yet available for 2023



# The SEN Stress-Test

Looking beyond national averages to decipher substantial differences between local authorities

# Key indicators for the stress-test

National averages can hide the fact that local authorities are experiencing very different pressures in relation to SEN trends. We use seven indicators to explore this in more detail and help to identify which local authorities are experiencing most stress.

## Seven key indicators for 2023 & change over time (2017-2023)

Percentage of pupils with a statement or EHC plan (2022)

Percentage change in number of pupils with a statement or EHC plan (2018-2023)

Percentage of children and young people with a statement or EHC plan placed in INMSS (2023)

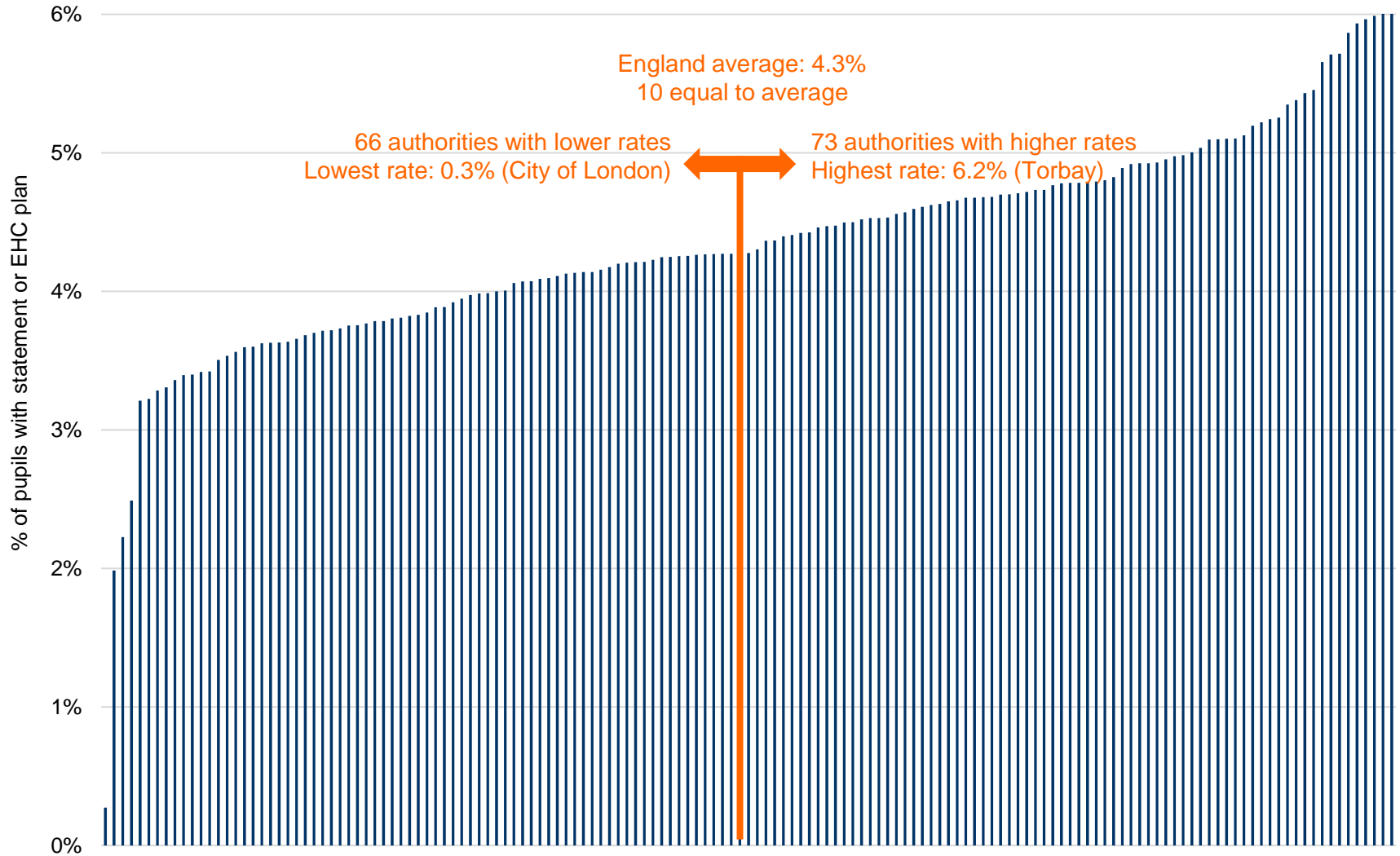
Percentage change in the number of children and young people with a statement or EHC plan placed in INMSS (2018-2023)

Percentage of SEN pupils with a primary diagnosis of ASD (2023)

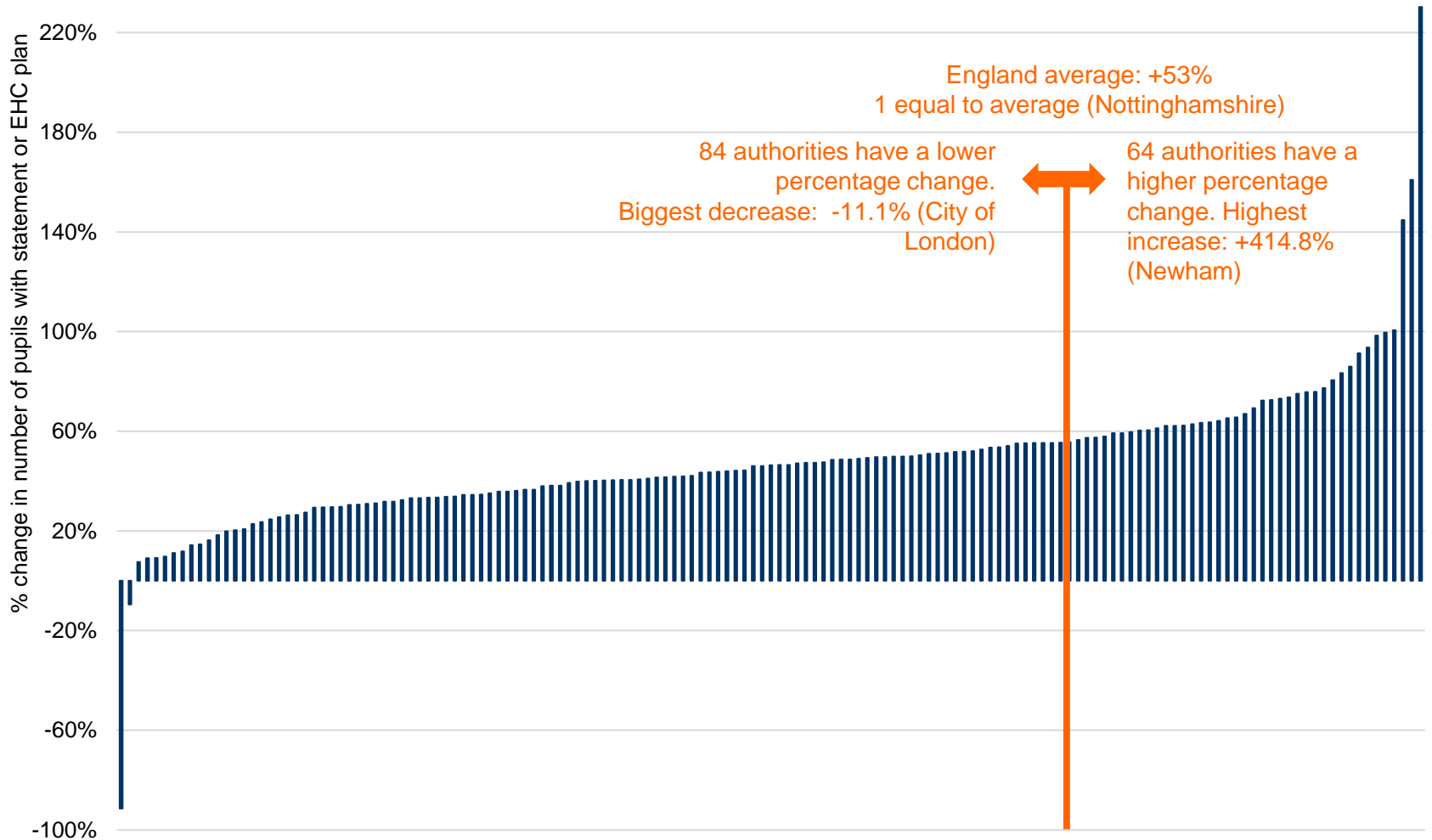
Percentage change in the number of SEN pupils with a primary diagnosis of ASD (2018-2023)

Percentage of total school budget spent on INMSS (planned budget 2021-22)

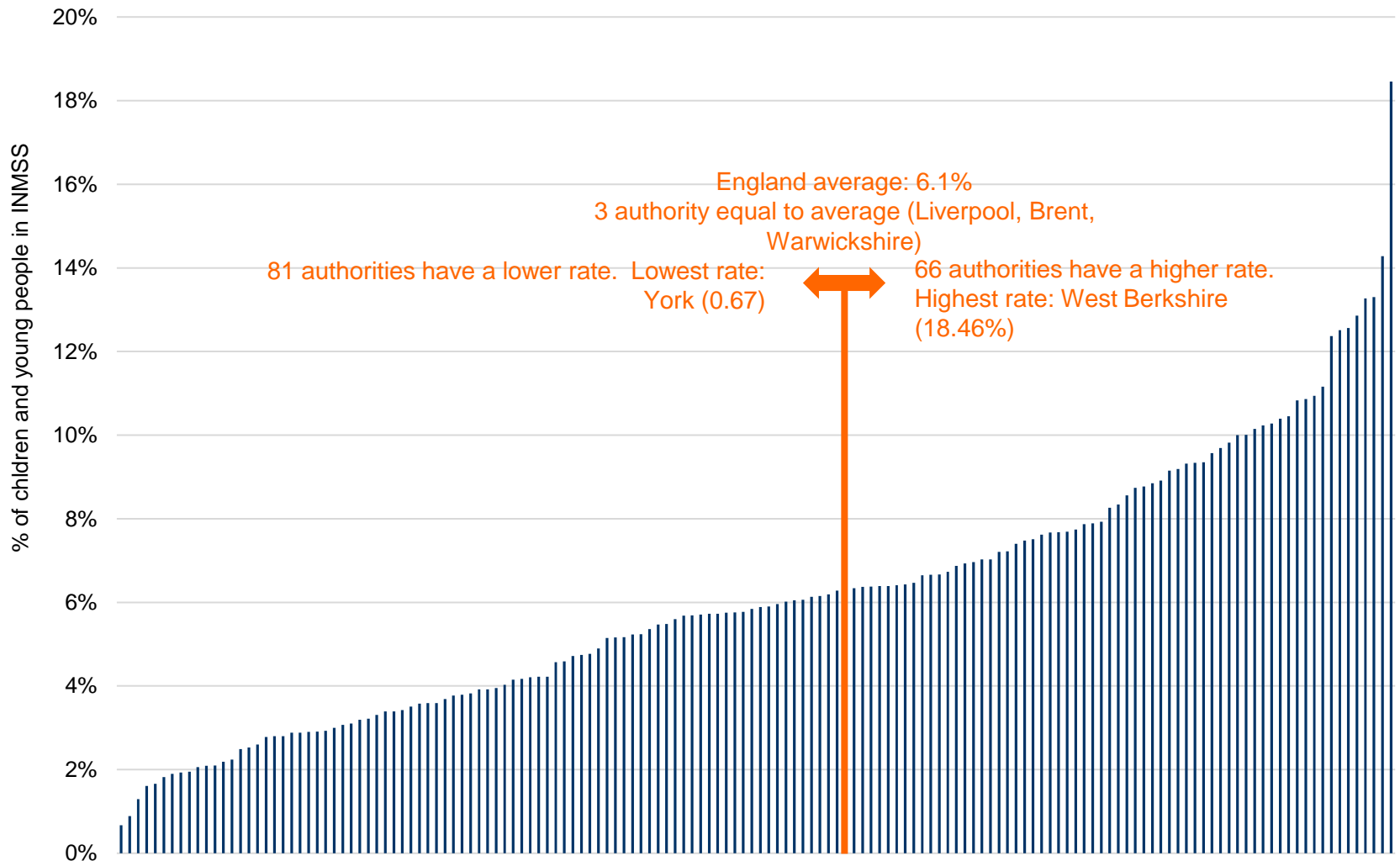
# 1. Percentage of pupils with a statement or EHC plan (2023)



## 2. Percentage change in the number of pupils with a statement or EHC plan (2018-23)

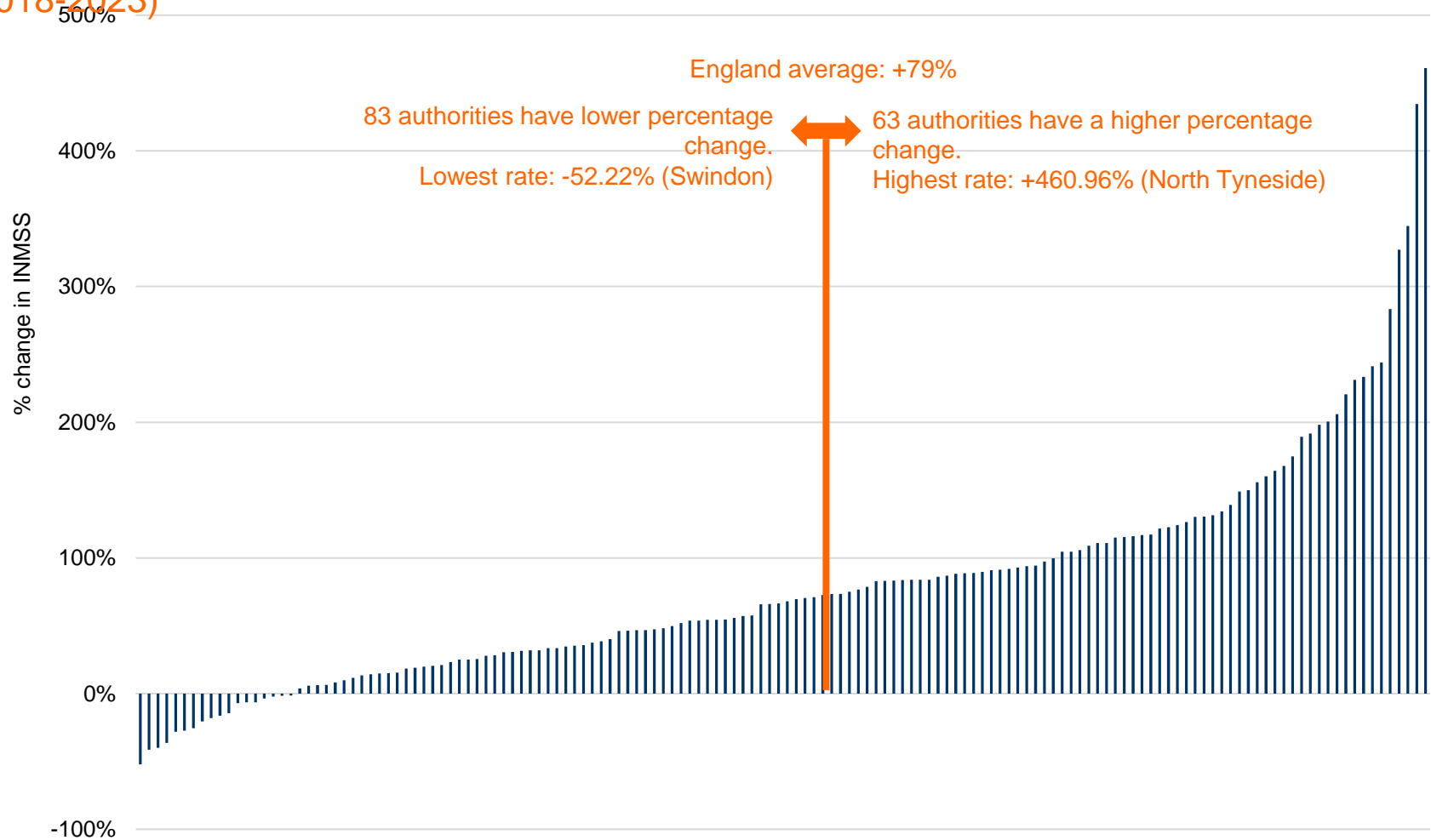


# 3. Percentage of children and young people with a statement or EHC plan in INMSS (2023)



# 4. Percentage change in the number of children and young people with a statement or EHC plan placed in INMSS

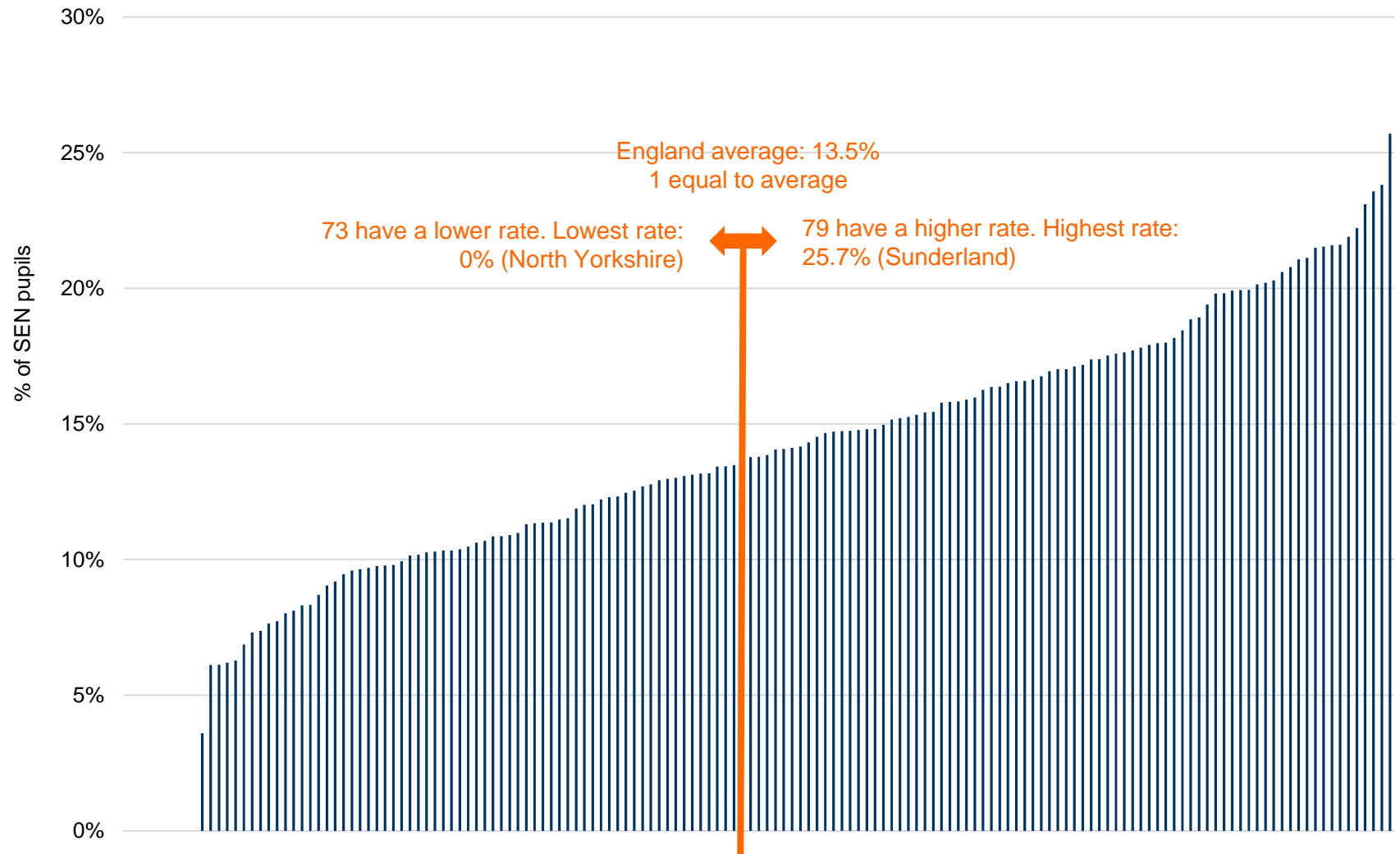
(2018-2023)



# 5. Percentage of SEN pupils with a primary diagnosis of ASD (2023)



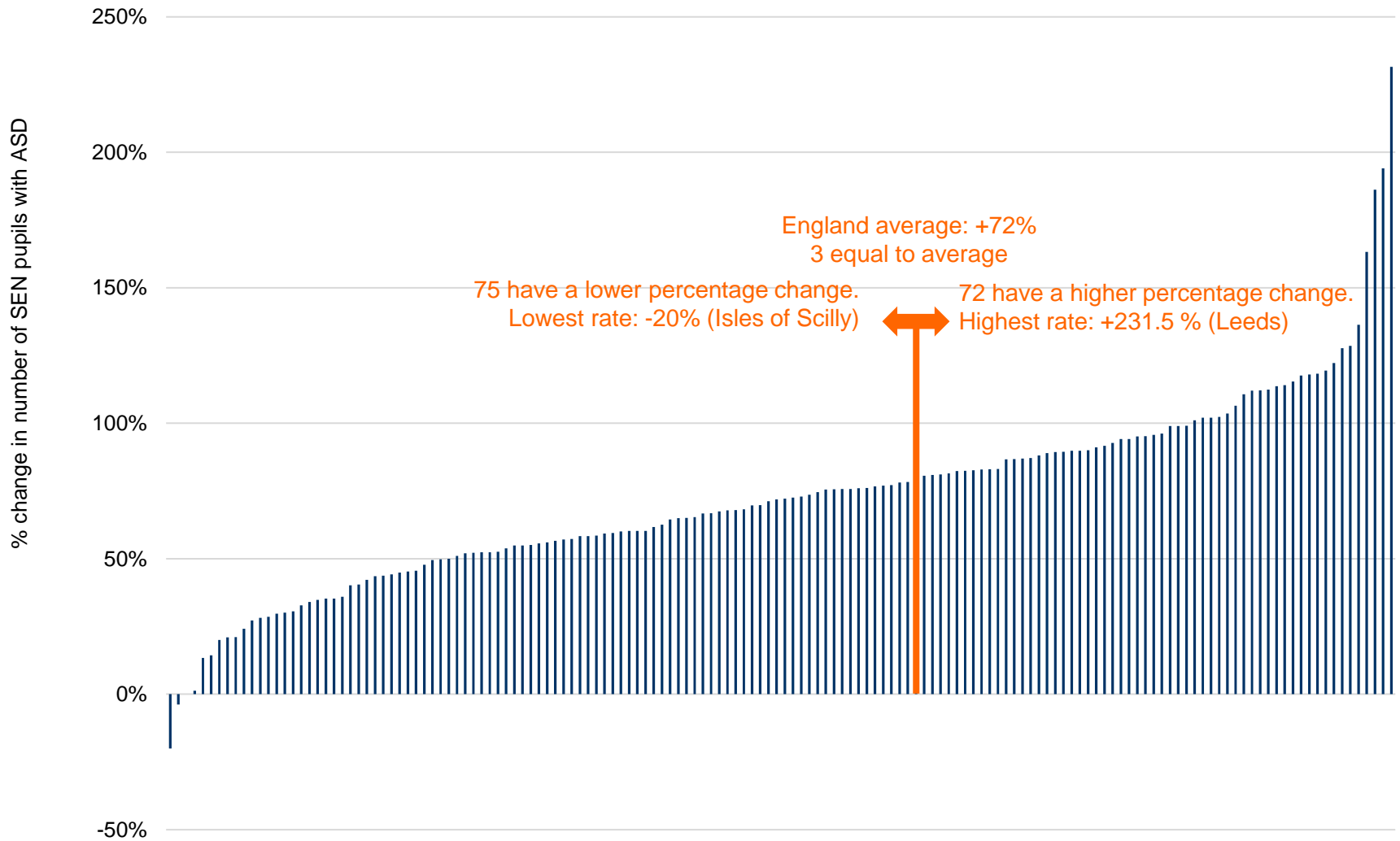
(state-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools)



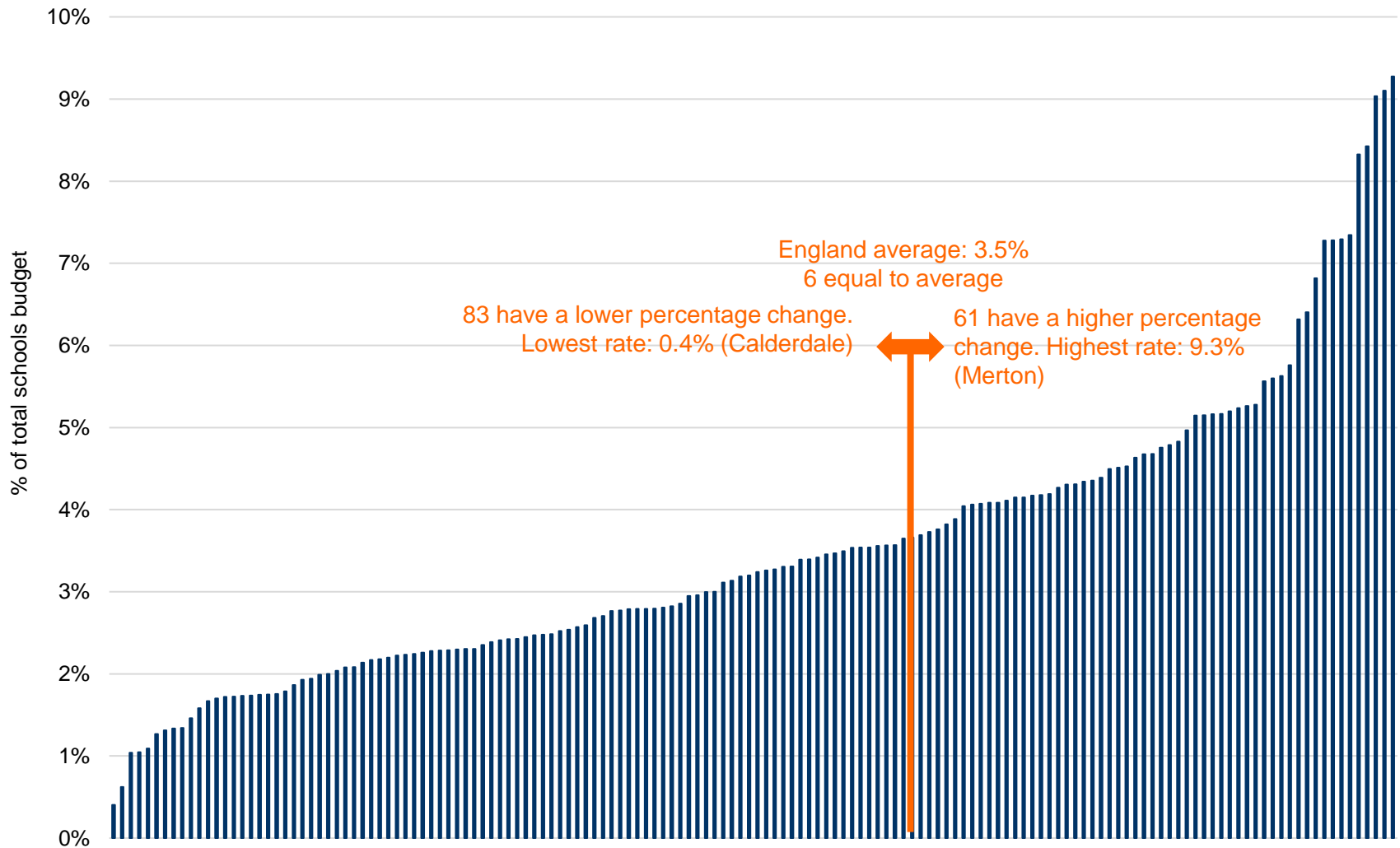
# 6. Percentage change in the number of pupils with a primary diagnosis of ASD (2018-23)



(state-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools)



# 7. Percentage of school budget spent on INMSS (2018-23)



# The 20 “most stressed” local authorities (2023)



	Statement / EHCP		IMNSS		ASD		INMSS £ (planned)
	%	% Change	%	% Change	%	% Change	% Change
1	Torbay	Newham	West Berkshire	North Tyneside	West Berkshire	Leeds	Merton
2	Islington	Tameside	City of London	Liverpool	Sunderland	Southampton	Medway
3	Knowsley	Somerset	Merton	Wakefield	Hillingdon	Brighton and Hove	Bracknell Forest
4	Isle of Wight	North Somerset	Surrey	Kent	Solihull	North Lincolnshire	Oxfordshire
5	Tower Hamlets	Cheshire East	Hackney	Manchester	Sheffield	Derby	Devon
6	Wandsworth	Liverpool	North East Lincolnshire	Devon	Hammersmith and Fulham	Kensington and Chelsea	Barnsley
7	Lambeth	Devon	Bracknell Forest	Walsall	Sutton	Buckinghamshire	Surrey
8	Merton	Halton	Windsor and Maidenhead	West Berkshire	Newham	Liverpool	Cheshire East
9	North Tyneside	St. Helens	Kensington and Chelsea	Hammersmith and Fulham	Kent	Westminster	Hackney
10	Hammersmith and Fulham	Enfield	Medway	Wigan	Nottingham	Devon	Norfolk
11	Devon	Kensington and Chelsea	West Sussex	Doncaster	Nottinghamshire	Wolverhampton	Richmond upon Thames
12	Enfield	Manchester	Richmond upon Thames	Dudley	Kingston upon Thames	Islington	Bury
13	Oldham	North East Lincolnshire	Staffordshire	Sandwell	Islington	County Durham	Doncaster
14	Hackney	Kent	North Lincolnshire	Cornwall	Kensington and Chelsea	South Tyneside	Stoke-on-Trent
15	Kent	Bristol, City of	Devon	St. Helens	Rochdale	Gateshead	Wokingham
16	Southampton	Central Bedfordshire	Lewisham	Staffordshire	Liverpool	York	Dorset
17	Manchester	Oldham	Norfolk	Rochdale	Bracknell Forest	Hampshire	Derby
18	Northumberland	Newcastle upon Tyne	Wandsworth	Newham	Southwark	Salford	West Sussex
19	Hampshire	Cambridgeshire	Barnsley	North East Lincolnshire	Windsor and Maidenhead	Sefton	Kent
20	Cambridgeshire	Blackpool	Kingston upon Thames	Sefton	Haringey	Leicestershire	Windsor and Maidenhead

# Ones to watch in 2023...



Local authority	Number of indicators in which LAs 'most stressed' (2023)
Devon	6
Kent	5
Kensington and Chelsea	4
Liverpool	4
Bracknell Forest	3
Hackney	3
Hammersmith and Fulham	3
Islington	3
Manchester	3
Newham	3
North East Lincolnshire	3
West Berkshire	3

NB: Changes to local authority boundaries mean that it was not possible to conduct change over time analysis (i.e. three of the seven indicators) for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. However, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole are also “one to watch” as they were one of the 20 ‘most stressed’ local authorities for **two out of the four** indicators for which we could conduct analysis.

# Ones to watch in recent years...

2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Devon (6)	Merton (4)	Merton (3)	Merton (4)	Stoke-on Trent (4)	Richmond upon Thames (4)
Kent (5)	Kingston upon Thames (4)	North East Lincolnshire (3)	Newham (4)	Barnsley (3)	Stoke on Trent (4)
Kensington and Chelsea (4)	Hammersmith and Fulham (3)	Southampton (3)	Blackpool (3)	Blackpool (3)	Hillingdon (4)
Liverpool (4)	Southampton (3)	Hammersmith and Fulham (3)	Bracknell Forest (3)	Bracknell Forest (3)	Wokingham (3)
Bracknell Forest (3)	North East Lincolnshire (3)	Islington (3)	Islington (3)	Darlington (3)	Merton (3)
Hackney (3)					
Hammersmith and Fulham (3)	Islington (3)	Newham (3)	Kingston upon Thames (3)	Hammersmith & Fulham (3)	Kingston upon Thames (3)
Islington (3)					
Manchester (3)	Southampton (3)	Devon (3)	North Tyneside (3)	Kensington & Chelsea (3)	Southampton (3)
Merton (3)		Halton (3)	North East Lincolnshire (3)	Kingston upon Thames (3)	Southwark (3)
Newham (3)	Devon (5)	St. Helens (3)	Richmond upon Thames (3)	Lewisham (3)	Lewisham (3)
North East Lincolnshire (3)	Kensington and Chelsea (4)		Salford (3)	Merton (3)	Oldham (3)
West Berkshire (3)	Kent (4)		Southampton (3)	Richmond-upon-Thames (3)	Barnsley (3)
	Cheshire East (3)	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 5px;"> <div><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #f0e68c; border: 1px solid black;"></span> = on watch list in 2 of last 5 years</div> <div><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #f08080; border: 1px solid black;"></span> = on watch list in 3 of last 5 years</div> <div><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #ff4500; border: 1px solid black;"></span> = on watch list in 4 of last 5 years</div> <div><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #ff0000; border: 1px solid black;"></span> = on watch list for last 5 years</div> </div>	Salford (3)	Darlington (3)	
	Liverpool (3)		South Tyneside (3)	Hammersmith & Fulham (3)	

N.B.: As some data was not collected for the 2021 update due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 stress test was based on 6 indicators. Therefore, the number of indicators in 2021 is not directly comparable to the number of indicators in other years.

# References I

## Slide 4:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1063620/SEND\\_review\\_right\\_support\\_right\\_place\\_right\\_time\\_accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1063620/SEND_review_right_support_right_place_right_time_accessible.pdf)

**Slide 7 :** : <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2023>

**Slide 9:** Number of pupils, by type of SEN provision and establishment type - 2018-2023 at -<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/education-health-and-care-plans#subjectTabs-createTable>

## Slide 13:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2018>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2019>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2020>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2021>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2022>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2023>

## Slide 19:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2018>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2019>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2020>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2021>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2022>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2023>

# References II

**Slide 21:** Table 1 in LA and School Expenditure and Planned LA and School Expenditure:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statements-of-sen-and-ehc-plans-england-2017>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statements-of-sen-and-ehc-plans-england-2018>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statements-of-sen-and-ehc-plans-england-2019>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/section-251-2019-to-2020>.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/section-251-2020-to-2021>.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/planned-la-and-school-expenditure-2021-to-2022-financial-year>

Data not available for 2023

**Slide 23:** Table 1 in LA and School Expenditure and Planned LA and School Expenditure:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statements-of-sen-and-ehc-plans-england-2016>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statements-of-sen-and-ehc-plans-england-2017>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statements-of-sen-and-ehc-plans-england-2018>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statements-of-sen-and-ehc-plans-england-2019>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/planned-la-and-school-expenditure-2018-to-2019-financial-year>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/section-251-2019-to-2020>.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statements-of-sen-and-ehc-plans-england-2021>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/planned-la-and-school-expenditure-2021-to-2022-financial-year>

Data not available for 2023

# References III

**Slide 27 and 28:** Type of establishment (SEN\_Phase) <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2023> - Based on where the child goes to school.

**Slide 29 and 30:** INMSS = Number of pupils, by type of SEN provision, by type of establishment - 2022-2023 at <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/education-health-and-care-plans#>

**Slide 31 and 32:** Age and gender (2023) – by SEN provision, type of need, and school type: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-England> (Sen\_age\_gender)



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