

Report to: People Scrutiny

Date of meeting: 12 March 2026

By: Director of Children's Services

Title: Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) update

Purpose: To update the Committee on progress on the SEND action plan, national policy reform, and any local programmes of work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The People Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- 1. consider the current position on SEND in East Sussex, including demand pressures, financial challenges and progress in increasing specialist places;**
 - 2. support the continued development of the Local SEND Reform Plan in response to national change requirements; and**
 - 3. note the national policy reform and ongoing programme of work to strengthen inclusion in mainstream settings.**
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1 Background

- 1.1 In line with national trends, East Sussex continues to experience increasing demand for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) support, with Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) numbers rising and a growing complexity of need. Meanwhile, National SEND and schools' reforms require significant changes, including new models of support for SEND and strengthened accountability across the system.
- 1.2 This report provides an update to People Scrutiny Committee on the SEND context in East Sussex, national policy reforms and next steps in East Sussex County Council's (ESCC) response to these changes.

2 Supporting information

- 2.1 The presentation slides at Appendix 1 detail the latest context in relation to SEND, including local pressures and performance; progress on the SEND place planning strategy; an overview of national SEND reforms presented in the Schools White Paper along with their implications for ESCC; and ongoing programmes of work to address these challenges and reforms.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to consider the pressures across the SEND system and the programme of work underway to address sufficiency and prepare for national reforms.

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