

SEND Improvement Board - Front Sheet

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>SEN2 2026 Comparative Report</b>
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	16 April 2026
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<b>Item Purpose</b>	An information report giving high level data from Suffolk’s SEN2 2026 statutory return and comparing it with our 2025 return.
<b>Key Highlights and Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Sustained growth in the SEND cohort:</b> Suffolk recorded an 18% increase in the SEN2 cohort (numbers of Education Health Care Plans/ Education Health Care Needs Assessments) compared to the previous year, reflecting continued growth in demand across the 0–25 age range and reinforcing the importance of system-wide capacity planning.</li> <li>✓ <b>Significant increase in EHCPs finalised:</b> 3,250 EHCPs were issued in 2025, representing over a 60% increase on the previous year, demonstrating the impact of recovery activity and concerted efforts to reduce the backlog.</li> <li>✓ <b>Strong decision-making at assessment stage:</b> Suffolk continues to issue EHCPs in the vast majority of completed assessments (94.5%), indicating consistent application of thresholds and robust assessment practice.</li> <li>✓ <b>Reduction in new assessment requests:</b> The number of new EHCNA requests reduced slightly (6.3%), which may indicate- earlier intervention, improved SEND support outside of statutory processes, or stabilisation following previous years of sharp growth.</li> <li>✓ <b>Improved data quality for ethnicity recording:</b> The proportion of children and young people with unknown ethnicity has reduced significantly to 1.6%, demonstrating improvements in data completeness and recording practice.</li> <li>✓ <b>Timeliness impacted by increased throughput:</b> While the percentage of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks has reduced, this is directly linked to the substantial increase in plans finalised, reflecting prioritisation of</li> </ul>

	<p>clearing historic backlog alongside current demand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>High level of system activity and resolution:</b> Suffolk completed a significantly higher number of assessments and ceased plans than in previous years, showing active case management and improved flow through the statutory system, particularly for post-16 and post-19 cohorts.</li> <li>✓ <b>Following the publication of SEN2 2026 data for all LAs (June/July), a comparison report</b> will be written comparing Suffolk's performance with its statistical nearest neighbours.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What is the impact of this work for Children, Young People with SEND and their families</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Clear, evidence based- understanding of demand and need across the SEND system</li> <li>✓ Enables transparent benchmarking and targeted action</li> </ul>