

SEN2 – 2026

The SEN2 is a statutory data collection administered by the Department for Education (DfE), it collects data at individual CYP level for the previous year (2025) and all active plans on census day (Thursday 15th January 2026).

The data collected covers all active EHC plans as at census day, plans active during the calendar year [and up until census day] but now ceased, requests and assessments handled by local authorities in the calendar year [and up until census day] and current ongoing requests and assessments for EHC plan. It covers the whole age range from 0-25

Suffolk submitted its SEN2 return on Thursday 12th March.

Summary and Comparison

Table1: Demographics

	2026 ¹		2025		2024		2023	
Total number of CYP on the return	14722		12476		10163		8177	
- Change from previous year	2246		2313		1986		-	
- % change from previous year	18.0%		22.8%		24.3%		-	
Number/% of Female	4881	33.2%	4003	32.1%	3138	30.9%	2497	30.5%
Number/% of Male	9841	66.8%	8473	67.9%	6937	68.3%	5674	69.4%
Ethnicity (Number/%)								
- White	12968	88.1%	10704	85.8%	8353	82.2%	5604	68.5%
- Mixed/dual background	702	4.8%	559	4.5%	425	4.2%	370	4.5%
- Asian or Asian British	227	1.5%	182	1.5%	158	1.6%	92	1.1%
- Black or Black British	202	1.4%	139	1.1%	99	1.0%	71	0.9%
- Chinese	17	0.1%	10	0.1%	8	0.1%	2	0.0%
- Any other ethnic group	212	1.4%	181	1.5%	172	1.7%	46	0.6%
- Information not yet obtained	236	1.6%	672	5.4%	939	9.2%	1950	23.8%
- Refused	158	1.1%	29	0.2%	9	0.1%	42	0.5%

Source: SCC SEN2 return

Suffolk saw an 18.0% increase in the ‘SEN2 2026’ cohort i.e. the number of EHCP’s or requests (EHCNA) during the year. This was an increase of 2,247 from the previous year.

The male/female split is still approximately 2/3 male to 1/3 female, and whilst the proportion of females has increased slightly over the years it still very much dominated by males.

¹ These years refer to the census year

Looking at the ethnicity of CYP with an EHCP, the largest proportion are white (88.1%), it is encouraging to see a continued decrease in the number that do not have an ethnicity recorded (Information not yet obtained).

Table 1a – Ethnicity comparison between 2021 Census and SEN2

Ethnicity (Number/%)	2021 Census	2026 SEN 2
- White	82.9%	88.1%
- Mixed/dual background	5.3%	4.8%
- Asian or Asian British	2.9%	1.5%
- Black or Black British	1.6%	1.4%
- Chinese	-	0.1%
- Any other ethnic group	1.3%	1.4%
- Information not yet obtained	-	1.6%
- Refused	-	1.1%

Source: ONS 2021 Census and SCC SEN2 return

Comparing the ethnicity of the CYP in the SEN2 to the Suffolk 2021 census, we can see that those with an ethnicity of ‘White’ are overrepresented in our EHCP’s, the other ethnicities are underrepresented, especially ‘Asian or Asian British’ which is almost half the census proportion (1.5% / 2.9%).

Table 2: Requests

	2026	2025	2024	2023
Number of initial requests received in collection year	2610	2784	2213	1631
- Change from previous year	-174	571	582	-
- % change from previous year	- 6.3%	25.8%	35.7%	-
Number of initial requests approved in collection year	2142	2499	1694	1016
- % requests agreed to assess ²	82.1%	89.8%	76.5%	62.3%
Number of initial requests refused in collection year	503	262	400	605
Number of request mediations ³	488	409	399	244
- % of initial requests that resulted in mediation	18.7%	14.7%	18.0%	15.0%
Number of request tribunals	319	186	119	33
- % of initial requests that resulted in tribunals	12.2%	6.7%	5.4%	

Suffolk saw a small drop, in the number of initial requests for an EHCNA during 2025, this was 174 less than the previous year. Just over 82% of the requests led to an assessment being

² Some requests may have been agreed after the census date

³ This is where a request for mediation was made, and the meeting took place during the year

started, this was a drop from the previous year (89.8%), it also meant that the number refused has gone up by 92.0% (262 to 503).

Mediations saw nearly a 20% increase from the previous year, but this was against an increase in the number of requests that we refused to assess. The number of requests resulting in a tribunal in 2025 rose to 12.2% from 6.7% in the previous year.

Table 3: Assessments

	2026	2025	2024	2023
Number of assessments in collection year where decision was to issue an EHC plan	3150	1782	1112	685
Number of assessments where decision was to issue an EHC plan (includes assessments from previous years)	3250	2023	1408	1035
Number of EHC plans issued within 20-weeks	434	347	42	-
Number of EHC plans issued (20-weeks denominator)	2635	1366	950	678
- % of EHC plans issued within 20-weeks	16.5%	25.4%	4.4%	-

The percentage of plans issued within 20 weeks (this excludes plans that have been subject to mediation and/or tribunal) has decreased from 24.4% in 2024 to 16.5% in 2025. However, to put that in context, during 2025, 3,250 plans were issued, this was up by over 60% from the previous year. Much of this was due to the recovery work and addressing the backlog of requests made.

In 2025, 1,346 plans were ceased, this was nearly four times the number of cases ceased in 2024 (272). Almost 70% of the ceased cases were for the reason 'Young person no longer wishes to engage in education or training', the vast majority of these were over the age of 18.

Recommendations

- When the SEN2 2026 comparative data with other LA's is available (mid/late June 2026), a comparison report is written and presented.

Comparison of Suffolk SEN2 results for 2025 and 2026 with our statistical neighbours 2024 results

Indicator	LA and Statistical Neighbours	2025	2026
Number of requests	Suffolk	2784	2610
	Statistical Neighbours	2284.6	
	Gap between Suffolk and SN	499.4	325.4
Percentage of initial requests refused in collection year	Suffolk	9.6	19.3
	Statistical Neighbours	29.2	
	Gap between Suffolk and SN	-19.55	-9.85
Number of assessments	Suffolk	1833	3332
	Statistical Neighbours	1581	
	Gap between Suffolk and SN	252	1751
Percentage of assessments where a plan was issued	Suffolk	97.2	94.5
	Statistical Neighbours	91.6	
	Gap between Suffolk and SN	5.59	2.89
Percentage of assessments where a plan was not issued	Suffolk	2.8	5.5
	Statistical Neighbours	8.3	
	Gap between Suffolk and SN	-5.46	-2.76
Percentage of New EHCPs issued within 20 weeks - including exceptions	Suffolk	25.4	16.5
	Statistical Neighbours	38.4	
	Gap between Suffolk and SN	-13.0	-21.9
Percentage of New EHCPs issued within 20 weeks - excluding exceptions	Suffolk	25.4	
	Statistical Neighbours	37.0	
	Gap between Suffolk and SN	-11.6	
Number of EHCPs as at January of the following year (at survey date)	Suffolk	8837	11589
	Statistical Neighbours Average	9294.6	
	Gap between Suffolk and SN	-457.6	2294.4
Number of ceased plans	Suffolk	272	1346
	Statistical Neighbours	706	
	Gap between Suffolk and SN	-434.0	640.0

Comparing our current data (SEN2 2026) with our statistical nearest neighbour's data for SEN2 2025, needs to be undertaken with some care but the following points should be noted:

- Suffolk has a lower percentage of initial requests refused, compared to our SNN, 9.6% in 2024 and 19.3% in 2025, but our SNN was 29.2%.
- Percentage of new EHCP's issued within 20 weeks (inc. exceptions), Suffolk was below the SNN in 2024 (25.4% vs 37.0%) and performance has dropped in 2026.