

# **EUROPEAN AGENCY STATISTICS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

**UK (Northern Ireland) 2016/2017  
data background information**



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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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### How the official decision of special educational needs (SEN) in the country relates to the agreed EASIE operational definition

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#### Operational definition

“An official decision leads to a child/learner being recognised as eligible for additional educational support to meet their learning needs.”

#### Criteria for an official decision of SEN

- There has been an educational assessment procedure involving a multi-disciplinary team
- The multi-disciplinary team includes members from within and external to the child’s/learner’s (pre)school
- There is a legal document which describes the support the child/learner is eligible to receive and which is used as the basis for planning
- The official decision is subject to a formal, regular review process

#### Educational assessment procedure in the country

An official decision of SEN is referred to as being ‘statemented’. This refers to children/learners for whom a statement of SEN is being maintained by the Education Authority (EA) under the provisions of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996, i.e. those children/learners at Stage 5 of the [Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs](#), 1 September 1998.

Statutory responsibility for securing provision for children/learners with SEN rests both with schools and the five EAs, which are responsible under special education legislation for identifying, assessing and, in appropriate cases, making provision for children/learners with SEN in their areas.

The Code of Practice sets out a five-stage approach to the process. Some children/learners may move between stages as their needs are met. Some children/learners will have their needs met locally by their own school. Some children’s/learners’ needs are so great that they require specialist intervention through the completion of a Statement of SEN by the EA.

SEN provision is matched to the child’s/learner’s individual needs. Provision may be made in special schools, designed, for example, for children/learners with particular needs (e.g. severe learning difficulties or moderate learning difficulties), in special units attached to mainstream schools, or in mainstream classes themselves. It may consist of home or hospital tuition, pre-school support or placement outside Northern Ireland.



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### **How the multi-disciplinary team is comprised in the country**

The EA is required to seek parental, educational, medical, psychological and social services advice, together with any other advice considered desirable.

### **The legal document used in the country to outline the support that the child/learner is eligible to receive**

The statement (made by the EA) identifies all the child's/learner's special educational needs and the arrangements needed to meet those needs, either in a mainstream school or in a special school. Parents can express their preference for the school that they wish their child to attend. The Board of Governors is required to admit a child/learner with a statement that names its school. Before naming a school in the statement, the EA must consult the Board of Governors.

### **How the document is used as the basis for planning in the country**

The document lists all the child's/learner's special educational needs and the arrangements needed to meet those needs.

### **The formal, regular review process in the country**

The EAs are required to review all statements at least annually. These reviews should be seen as part of the continuous assessment process.

## **Proxy indicator for the 80% benchmark used for the country's data collection**

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The EASIE work uses an 80% benchmark of inclusive education. This is defined as:

“An inclusive setting refers to education where the child/learner with SEN follows education in mainstream classes alongside their mainstream peers for most – 80% or more – of the school week.”

### **Proxy indicator used**

Placement in a mainstream class implies over 80% or more.

### **Details on what the country proxy is**

The proxy used is 80% or more with non-disabled peers. This includes all children/learners in mainstream classes only; it does not include children/learners in learning support centres or dual-registered children/learners.

Children/learners enrolled in learning support centres are assumed to be there 100% of the time. Some dual-registered children/learners could be educated 80% of their time with non-disabled peers, but the majority are less than this (even as low as 0%), so this group has been removed.



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### **Why this proxy was used**

In Northern Ireland, the exact number of hours that dual-registered children/learners spend in each type of education is not known, so the proxy above was used.

### **Difficulties in using the proxy**

All the children/learners included in the proxy are definitely educated at least 80% of the time with non-disabled peers. The only issue is that some dual-registered children/learners may also fit into this proxy, but this is not known, as the hours are not recorded.

### **Specific country issues in applying the proxy indicator**

Please see above in relation to dual registration in Northern Ireland.

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## **Detailed description of what ‘out of formal education’ means within the country**

The 2011 International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) defines ‘formal education’ as follows:

“[...] education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned through public organizations and recognised private bodies and, – in their totality – constitute the formal education system of a country. Formal education programmes are thus recognised as such by the relevant national education or equivalent authorities, e.g. any other institution in cooperation with the national or sub-national educational authorities. Formal education consists mostly of initial education [...] Vocational education, special needs education and some parts of adult education are often recognised as being part of the formal education system. Qualifications from formal education are by definition recognised and, therefore, are within the scope of ISCED. Institutionalised education occurs when an organization provides structured educational arrangements, such as student-teacher relationships and/or interactions, that are specially designed for education and learning.”

(United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011, *International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 2011*, p. 11).

### **Do the country definitions of formal, non-formal and informal education differ from the ISCED definitions?**

Yes, Northern Ireland uses its own definitions.

### **How specific cases – such as home-educated children/learners – are considered**

Any child/learner who is recorded as being ‘educated off-site but not in a school’ is considered out of education.

### **Children/learners who are considered out of formal education (meaning those not in formal education as defined by ISCED)**

Home-educated children/learners are included in the ‘educated off-site but not in a school’ figure. However, it is thought that there are some children/learners who have



always been home-educated, so have never registered in a school. No details are available on this group.

In subsequent data collections, it should be possible to provide more information around this, as child-/learner-level data is now being collected electronically from 'Education other than at School' (EOTAS) centres.

### **How the population of children/learners who are out of formal education is defined**

As above.

## **Provision of data on private sector education**

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The data collection covers all sectors of education, including numbers for the child/learner population in the private sector.

### **Private sector education in the country**

The private sector in Northern Ireland is the independent sector. This sector does not receive any funding from the Department of Education and so does not complete the census. A small amount of information is collected from this sector (enrolment and free school meal entitlement by age only).

### **Child/learner population counted for each relevant question**

Children/learners in the independent sector are counted in Questions 2, 4 and 5 of Tables 1 and 2. However, they have not been included in Table 3, as SEN information is not collected from these schools.

### **Specific issues with providing data on private sector education and how these have been overcome in the data collection**

Please see above – SEN information on this sector is not available.

## **ISCED level age ranges**

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The following are the most common (pre)school entrance ages and (pre)school leaving ages for the different ISCED levels:

- Age range in the country at ISCED level 02 (pre-primary): 2 to 3
- Age range in the country at ISCED level 1: 4 to 10
- Age range in the country at ISCED level 2: 11 to 15
- Age range in the country at ISCED level 3: 16 to 17