

# **EUROPEAN AGENCY STATISTICS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

**United Kingdom (Northern Ireland) 2014/2015  
data background information**



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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

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*An official decision leads to a pupil being recognised as eligible for additional educational support to meet their learning needs.*

#### **Pupils' legal entitlements under what legislation**

An official decision of SEN is referred to as being 'statemented'. This refers to pupils for whom a statement of SEN is being maintained by the Education Authority (EA) under the provisions of the Education (NI) Order 1996, i.e. those pupils at Stage 5 of the Code of Practice in the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs, 1 September 1998. Statutory responsibility for securing provision for pupils 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 with SEN in their areas.

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

#### **How additional support is understood within the country context**

SEN provision is matched to the child's individual needs. Provision may be made in special schools, designed, for example, for children 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.

### **The criteria for an official decision are**

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#### **There has been an educational assessment procedure involving a multi-disciplinary team**

The EA retains overall responsibility for SEN provision and is responsible for formally assessing children with SEN who may need a statement of SEN. The parents may refer a child to the EA for assessment. A school principal may also ask the EA to assess a child if the school considers they need a statutory assessment. The EA must decide whether a statutory assessment is necessary and inform the parents. The Code of Practice contains guidance on the statutory assessment process and on parents' involvement.



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### **The multi-disciplinary team includes members from within and external to the pupil's school**

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

### **There is a legal document which describes the support the pupil is eligible to receive and which is used as the basis for planning**

The statement (made by the EA) identifies all the child's SEN 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 with a statement that names its school. Before naming a school in the statement, the EA must consult the Board of Governors.

### **The official decision is subject to a formal, regular review process**

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

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

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*Placement in a mainstream class implies over 80% or more with non-disabled peers.*

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

The proxy used is 80% or more with non-disabled peers. This includes all pupils in mainstream classes only; it does not include pupils in learning support centres (LSCs) or dual-registered pupils. Pupils enrolled in LSCs are assumed to be there 100% of the time. Some dual-registered pupils 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.

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

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

### **Difficulties in using any proxy**

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

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

Please see above in relation to dual registration in Northern Ireland. In addition to this, Question 3 in the table entitled 'Learners with an official decision of SEN' counts dual-registered pupils, along with those attending LSCs. Some of the pupils attend LSCs in other schools, but a proportion of them attend special schools.



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## Detailed description of what is meant by ‘out of formal education’ within the country’s data collection

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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).*

### **Information on pupils considered out of education (i.e. those not in formal education as per the ISCED definition)**

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

### **Country definitions of formal, non-formal and informal education**

Home-educated pupils are included in the ‘educated off-site but not in a school’ figure, but it is thought that there are some pupils who have always been home-educated, so have never registered in a school. No details are available on this group.

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

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The data collection covers all sectors of education, including numbers for the pupil 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 school census. A small amount of information is collected from this sector (enrolment and free school meal entitlement by age only).



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### **Pupil population counted for each relevant question**

Private sector enrolments are included in the first two tables ('Population and enrolment' and 'Age sample'), but they have not been included in the third one ('Learners with an official decision of SEN'), as information on SEN is not collected from these schools.

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

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

### **Pupil age ranges**

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Usual pupil age ranges in the country at ISCED level 1: 4 to 10

Usual pupil age ranges in the country at ISCED level 2: 11 to 15