

SECTION C

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMISSIONING EARLY YEARS SUPPORT PROVISION

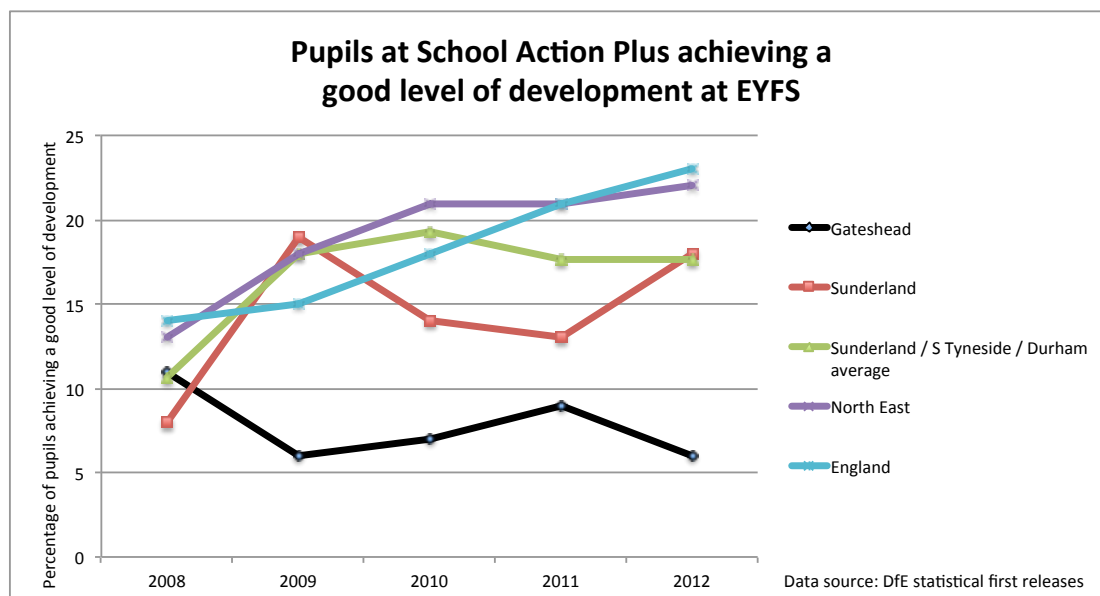
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C1 Recommendations

1. In order to ensure that there is a co-ordinated and comprehensive strategy for the identification and support of special educational needs, all the practitioners engaged in this area of work need to meet together to develop:
 - A shared understanding of the complementary roles they each can play and how each service can best contribute to meeting the needs of young children.
 - A model for a single database which will capture all children from early concern and can be used by all services delivering to children under five; including children's centres, Health Services, PVI's, SENIT, SENCOs and Educational Psychologists.
 - Agreement as to how progress of this group can best be measured and the effectiveness of intervention be reflected in outcome measures. (Given the risk of false positives and false negatives in early diagnosis, the accuracy of early referrals and diagnosis should also be monitored and reported on.)
 - An integrated pathway of early support for children and families and a communication strategy for sharing this.

C2 Summary sheet



Key findings

- Gateshead identifies significantly fewer children with special educational needs under five than the national average.
- Gateshead children with SEN are less likely to do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage assessment than pupils in other authorities.
- There are significant differences between the SEN and SENIT databases in respect of:
 - The number of children with SEN under five
 - The primary needs of those children.
- The lack of a single database that accurately records the number of pupils under five with SEN inhibits a full understanding of the range and pattern of need in this area.
- Medical services have an important role to play in the early identification and notification of young children with SEN. This information is of use both operationally and strategically but is not always communicated effectively.

C3 Evidence concerning Early Years needs and provision

Children under five supported through a statement of special educational need

The SEN2 returns completed by LAs provide an indication of numbers and trends and allow for comparisons.

The SEN2 data return completed by the LA every January identifies:

The number of children under five for whom the LA maintains a statement:

| 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 13 | 11 | 18 | 25 | 20 | 38 |

The number of pupils under five for whom the LA made a statement for the first time:

| 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 10 | 10 | 16 | 22 | 17 | 30 |

Although there is a welcome increase in 2013, which would move Gateshead's performance close to the national profile, it is not clear why this surge in early identification occurred.

Prevalence in Early Years

SEN 2 returns show that Gateshead maintains fewer statements for children under five than nationally. This has been a consistent pattern over the last five years.

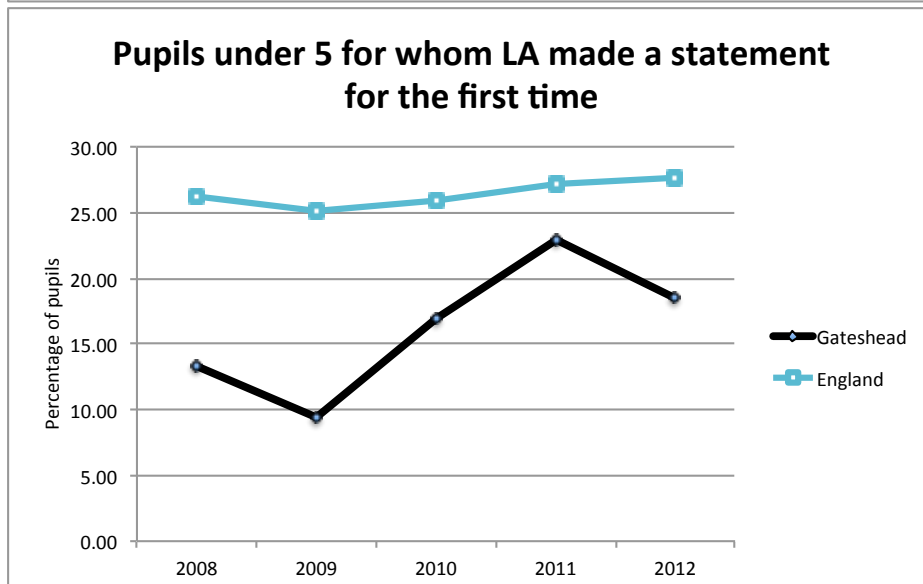
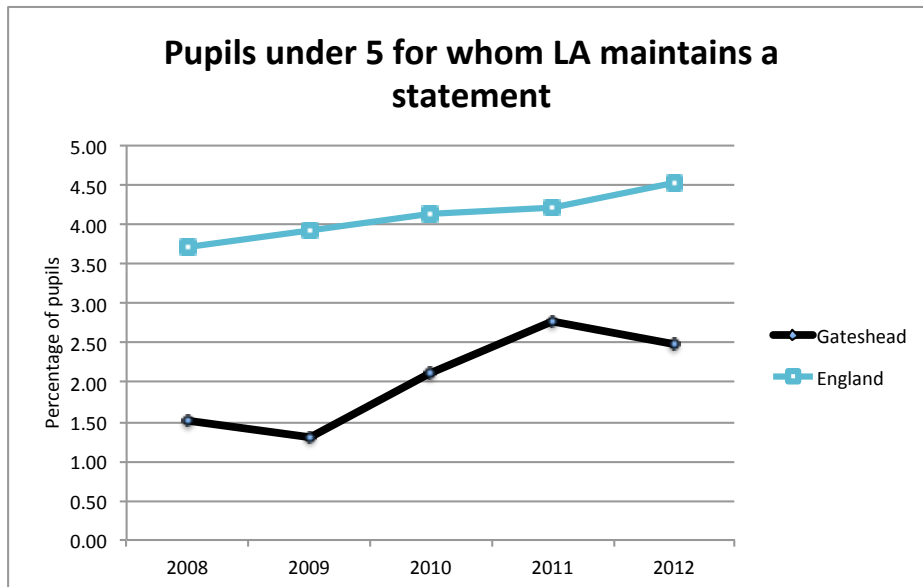
Pupils under five for whom LA maintain a statement as a percentage of the total (SEN 2):

| | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Gateshead | 1.51% | 1.30% | 2.11% | 2.78% | 2.49% |
| England | 3.71% | 3.93% | 4.13% | 4.22% | 4.53% |

Pupils under five for whom the LA made a statement for the first time as a percentage of the total:

| | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Gateshead | 13.33% | 9.43% | 17.02% | 22.92% | 18.48% |
| England | 26.24% | 25.11% | 25.97% | 27.26% | 27.71% |

As the tables above show, Gateshead, for the last five years, was maintaining statements for children under five at about half the national rate.



Data sets

There is no central database for children under five who are considered to have special educational needs.

Both SENIT and SEN have data sets that identify children under five with special educational needs. There are considerable differences in the information recorded.

SEN data

There are 75 children on the SEN database in the Early Years at Action Plus or statement (March 2013). 41% have statements and 59% are at School Action Plus.

Prior to Nursery age 89% of children identified on the database have an unknown need. In Reception / Nursery 75% children have a known need.

40% (30) of children in the Early Years recorded have unknown need.

94% (29) of children with statements for SEN in the Early Years have a known primary need. 6% (2) have unknown primary need.

At School Action Plus 36% have a known need and 64% unknown need.

SENIT data

SENIT have 187 children (March 2013) on their case in the Early Years. All have at least one recorded area of need. This contrasts with 75 children on the SEN database.

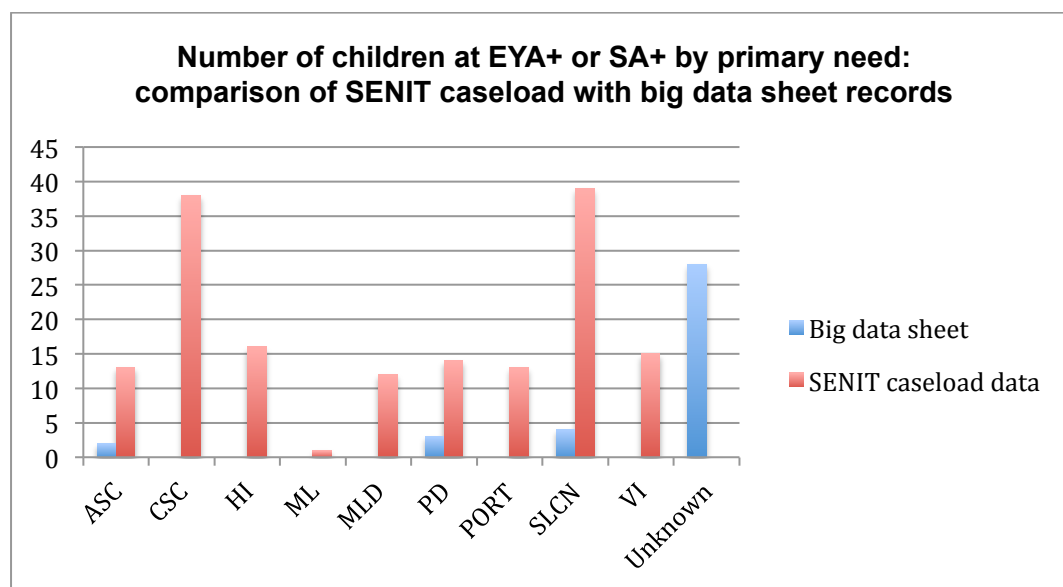
Not all children under five who SENIT and/or SENCOs are supporting are recorded on the SEN database.

Statements

Using the two data sets: SEN data and SENIT caseload (both March 2013):

- SEN records 31 statements
- SENIT records 26 statements
- 15 children are recorded on both, of whom:
 - 2 have different dates of births in the 2 data sets
 - 6 have different primary needs in the 2 data sets.

School / Early Years Action Plus



The big data sheet records 37 individual children and SA+ (it does not categorise as EYA+ for under school age).

SENIT records 161 individual children at EYA+ and SA+.

There are significant variations in data held between Children's Commissioning and SENIT for children in the Early Years with SEND.

17 children are recorded in both data sources and are therefore included in both data series in the chart.

29 children recorded on the SENIT database have more than one SEN area listed: where only one was a disability (as apposed to PORT or EY) we have reported on this; where more than one was a disability we have assumed the one appearing first in the list is the primary need; 13 children have PORT (portage) listed as their only SEN area.

1 child in the SENIT data has ML as their SEN area: we have reported this separately but assume it should read MLD.

On an individual area of need level the variations in data can be taken further, for example hearing impairment. The SEN database identifies one child, whilst there are 19 on the SENIT caseload with the youngest being 3 months old.

SENIT HI team state they receive HI referrals from birth.

Data on need must be shared with Children's Commissioning at the earliest stages to ensure they are able to strategically plan for the future in relation to emerging need and trend. There is a need for one central managed database for all children in the Early Years with SEND.

Referrals

In 2011/12, 58% of referrals to SENIT for Early Years (45 children) came from Health Services, 29% from Primary schools and 9% from private settings. The service needs to ensure that private settings are aware of how to access their expertise.

Gateshead Early Years SEN audit

The detailed audit report on children with SEND in Gateshead (Appendix EY 7) provides a valuable and detailed analysis.

It indicates that 337 were registered as have SEND. Of these, 174 (52%) were indicated as having early concerns and the remaining were at one of the Code of Practice stages.

It also indicates that SLCN is by far the largest area of need.

Prevalence of children with SEND by area of need (Early Concerns, Early Action, Action Plus, Statutory, Statement) in Gateshead PVI settings.

| | Aged 0-2 | Aged 2 | Aged 3-4 | Total | % of total number of children registered with SEND in EY Gateshead schools |
|---|----------|--------|----------|-------|--|
| Behaviour | 0 | 8 | 27 | 35 | 10 |
| Speech, Language and Communication | 2 | 38 | 118 | 158 | 47 |
| Complex, Social Communication /ASC | 0 | 12 | 27 | 39 | 12 |
| Physical | 5 | 4 | 8 | 17 | 5 |
| Hearing | 0 | 0 | 11 | 11 | 3 |
| Visual | 0 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 2 |
| Cognitive | 4 | 5 | 18 | 27 | 8 |
| Developmental Coordination Difficulties | 1 | 4 | 13 | 18 | 5 |
| Specific Diagnosis | 1 | 1 | 15 | 17 | 5 |
| Medical | 2 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 3 |

Its results are summarised as follows.

- *'In Gateshead there a total number of pupils of 29,215 in all schools and settings (Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Special).*
- *5347 (18.3%) of these pupils are registered as having SEND (Action, Action Plus, Statutory and Statement)*
- *In Gateshead Early Years settings and schools 978 pupils aged 0-5 were highlighted as having SEND (Early Concerns, Action, Action Plus, Statutory and Statement).*
- *538 children were highlighted as having Early Concerns and a further 440 as Action, Action Plus and Statutory and Statement).*
- *90 of these children registered were aged 0-2 years old.*

*Therefore, 8% * of all children registered with SEND in July 2012 in Gateshead schools and settings are in the Early Years or 1.2 % * of the total school population. A further 8.9%* of all children registered with SEND or 1.7% of the total school population are registered as having early concerns. (*These percentages do not include children aged 0-2)*

The figure for pupils with SEND in Gateshead in the Early Years Foundation Stage are slightly lower than the national averages (Action, Action Plus, Statutory and Statement) although there are high number of children being identified as having early concerns. Data from PVI settings illustrates that pupils with SEND are more prevalent in 3-4 range and less so in the 0-2 aged range. The number of two year olds identified with SEND is likely to increase because of the increased funding for two year old free nursery education and the introduction of the two year old check by practitioners under the new EYFS framework.

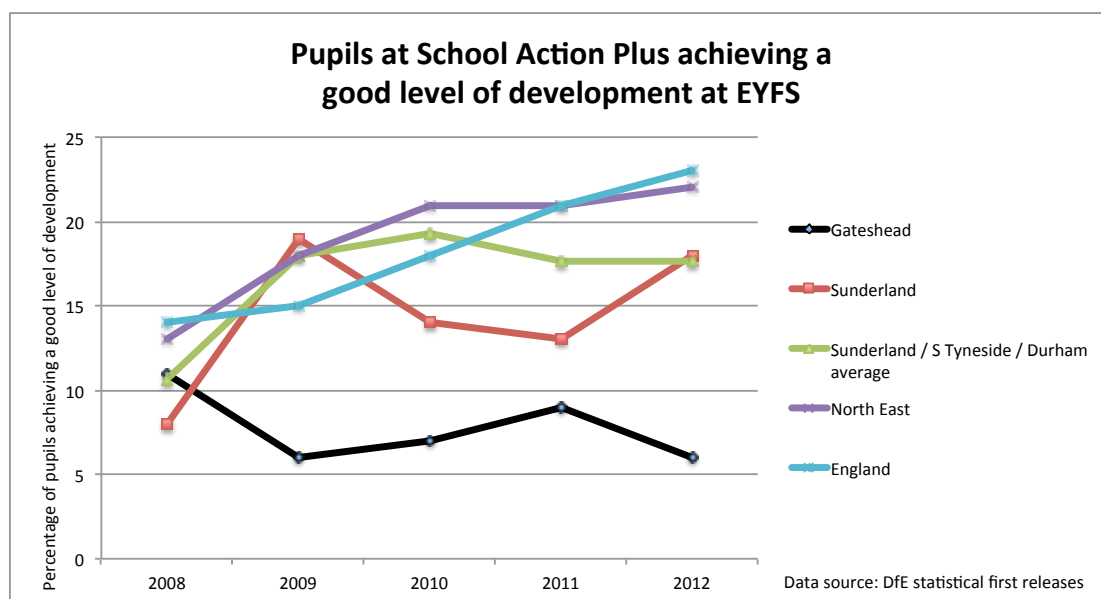
Over half the children being highlighted as having SEND are early concerns. i.e pre early action. This poses the question are practitioners in Gateshead

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There is however a question of the accuracy of the Gateshead data. Some of the financial data is attributed through proxy indicators rather than representing a measure of actual cost.

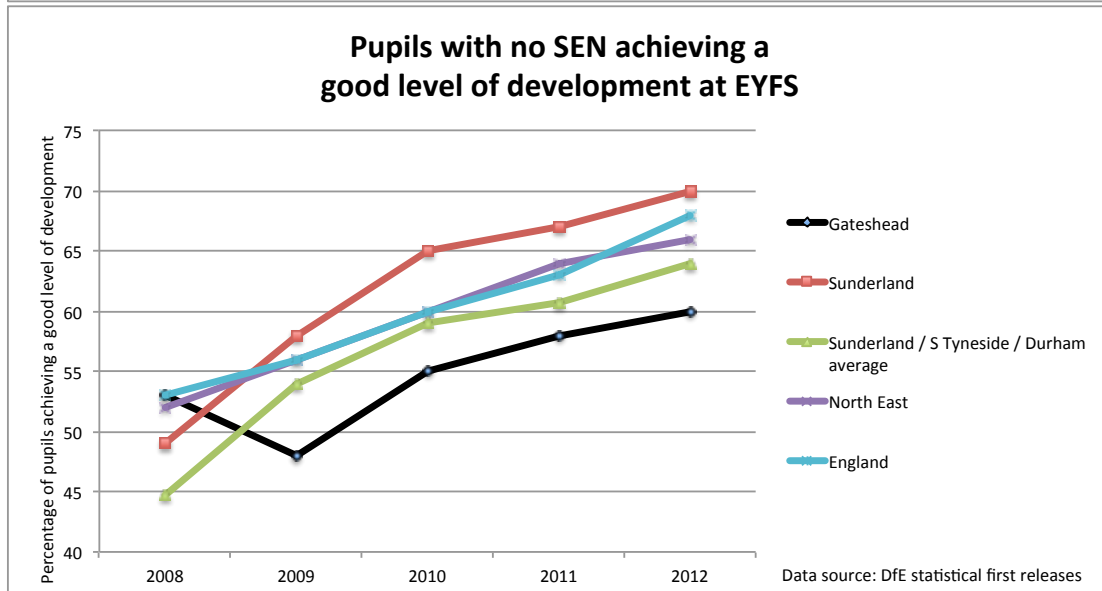
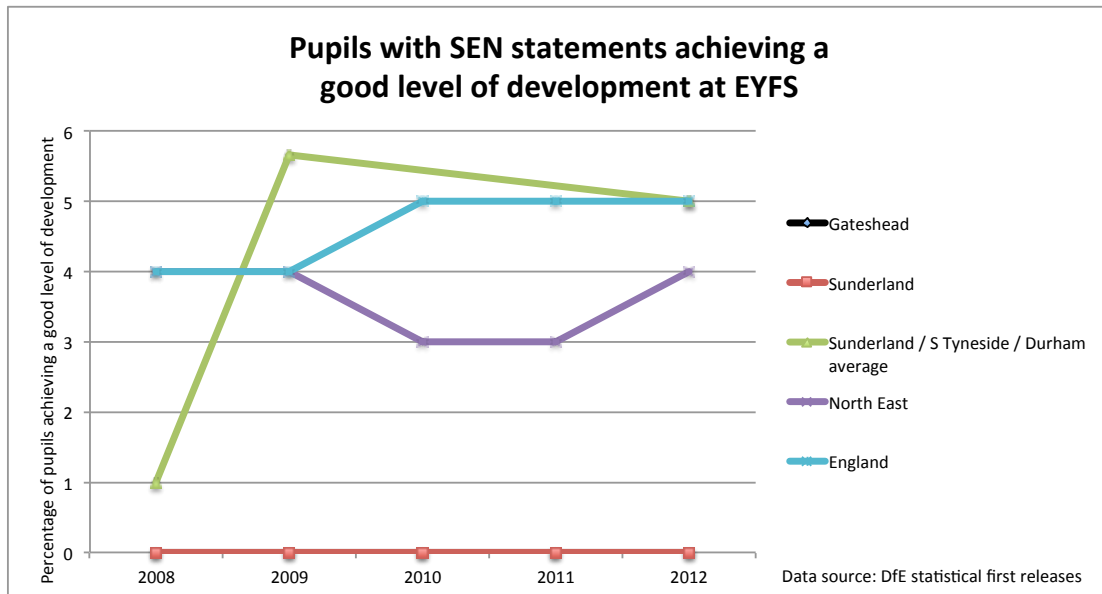
Evidence of impact on outcomes

Department for Education statistical first releases show that children in Gateshead with a statement for SEN or at School Action Plus consistently underachieve at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) compared to their peers nationally and regionally. (See table and graphs below.)

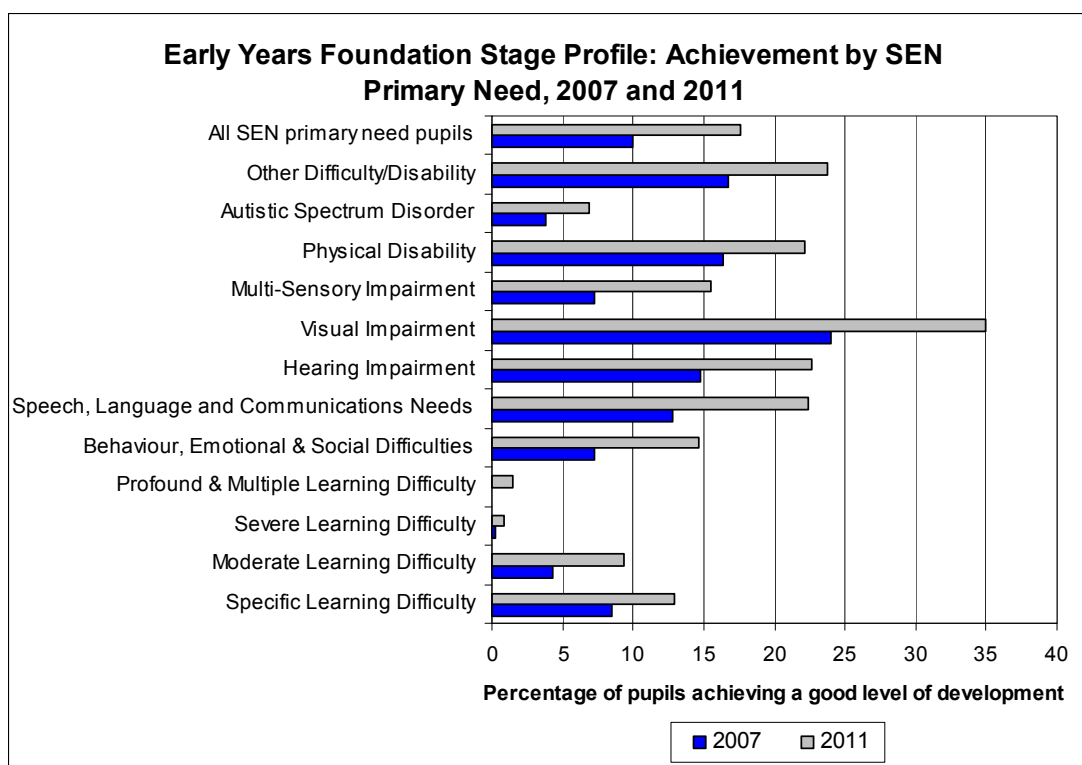


This apparent poor progress could be related to the low number of children being identified. If only the most significant and obvious needs are identified then it would not be surprising if their level of development was low.

If the same number of children are identified and supported as in the comparator groups than a more valid judgement on outcomes can be made.



Nationally the evidence shows a variable pattern of progress for pupils with SEND and that the number of pupils with SEND achieving a good level of development has improved over time. (See chart overleaf.)



In 2012 nationally, 37% of EYFS pupils with VI as their primary need, and 28% of pupils with PD as their primary need, had achieved a good level of development. At present, although the data could be obtained and analysed for Gateshead pupils, it is not. If it was, it could be demonstrated whether Gateshead pupils with SEND are achieving at the same level as is reached nationally.

Educational outcome data for children in the Early Years with SEND needs to be collated centrally to be able to track progress against support provided. The EYFS profile does provide, through its areas and aspects of development, an opportunity to consider the impact of specific needs on different areas of development and a benchmark for future progress.

Changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile assessment

In 2013, changes have been introduced to assessment in the EYFS, and children will be assessed against these new areas in 2013. (See Appendix EY 2 for references to special needs assessment from the National Curriculum assessments Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook 2013.) Changes in the pattern and profile of reporting will make longitudinal analysis and trend data difficult to use.

C4 Early Years Discussion

There are a range of services potentially available to support young children with special educational needs but feedback from the focus groups and interviews suggest that access to the pathways was not always clear.

The services in Gateshead identified as being involved with Early Years are:

- Portage Team (within SENIT)
- Specialist Teams (within SENIT)
- Early Years consultants (Learning and Children Division)
- Educational psychologist services
- Assessment Team Gibside School **awaiting data**.

Although the majority of these services are in the Early Years Division they have different functions and different lines of accountability. The SENIT services are accountable through Pauline Piddlington (Senior Inspector), and the educational psychologists are accountable through Ann Muxworthy (Senior Inspector). There is also an Early Years Inspector, Sue Waugh.

Each of the service areas have specific functions but there is some overlap of engagement. On the whole the Early Years consultants and the Early Years Inspector deal with settings whilst the SENIT team and educational psychologists respond to individual children within settings.

The Health Service has a statutory responsibility to notify the LA of children aged under two who may have SEN and also to notify the LA of children who are blind or deaf. This important early identification data does not appear to be systematically collected or collated. Whilst it may be used operationally it is also of strategic value.

As children with SEN are likely to be known to Health Services, either Health Visitors, GPs or paediatricians before they start school, establishing clear routes for communication is an important element in early identification.

35% of the referrals for SENIT come from Health Services and this indicates that there are known routes of referral. Evidence however suggested that this data is not always made available to central SEN services where it could be used to help in the early identification of needs for commissioning.

There are no specific referral criteria for pupils within Early Years. Each SENIT service area responds according to their own domain guidelines. In some cases children under five are on the caseload of several SENIT teams. Whilst this is understandable, because of the challenges in securing a clear understanding of the special needs of very young children, it does potentially inflate the SENIT caseload. The same issues relating to early identification could be accountable for the same children having different primary needs in different databases.

In February 2013 the Gateshead Strategic Partnership approved *Gateshead Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy 2013-2016*. Although this strategy is not targeted at early intervention for children under five with SEN it does reflect the commitment to early intervention and it specifically recognises the need for Early Years intervention:

'Early years and the best start in life: early intervention in the early years is critical, and done well can bring the most significant benefits – investing earlier to save earlier is better and cheaper than taking remedial action. Child development and language skills are especially critical in developing school readiness.'

It also endorses practice that would assist in the delivery of effective Early Years services. In particular:

- Using lead practitioners to provide continuity and consistency in approach
- Evidencing achievement through outcomes based accountability.

The Early Years audit indicates that there is excellent data gathering and analysis. However awareness of this exercise does not appear to be shared amongst all SEN practitioners.

Key findings

- Gateshead identifies significantly fewer children with special educational needs under five than the national average.
- Gateshead children with SEN are less likely to do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage assessment than pupils in other authorities.
- There are significant differences between the SEN and SENIT databases in respect of:
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- Medical services have an important role to play in the early identification and notification of young children with SEN. This information is of use both operationally and strategically but is not always communicated effectively.