



Skipping School: Invisible Children

Technical Appendix: The number of children withdrawn from school to be home educated in 11 local authorities

FEBRUARY 2019

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1. Introduction

In October 2018 the Children’s Commissioner used her legal powers under Section 2F of the Children Act 2004¹ to request data on the numbers of children withdrawn from school to be home educated. As a first attempt at mapping this information, the data request was sent to an initial group of 11 local authorities (LAs):

- > Birmingham
- > Bristol
- > Doncaster
- > Hackney
- > Leeds
- > Middlesbrough
- > Newham
- > North Yorkshire
- > Nottingham
- > Stoke-on-Trent
- > Wakefield

Each LA was asked to return a spreadsheet providing this information for every school within the local authority. For each school, LAs were asked to report the number of pupils withdrawn to be home-educated in 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18.

2. The sample

We received data on nearly 1,400 schools, depending on the academic year. Middlesbrough did not return data for 2015/16 and 2016/17, while North Yorkshire did not return data for 2015/16. The total number of schools in the sample was therefore 1,283 in 2015/16; 1,369 in 2016/17; and 1,385 in 2017/18.

Using the school name or identifier, we linked in publicly available data² on the characteristics of each school:

- > Phase of education (primary/secondary)
- > Type of school
- > Number of pupils on the school roll

This document set out the overall levels and trajectories over time in the numbers of pupils withdrawn into elective home education (EHE) per year. To take into account changes in the school population, or differences in school size between different types of school, the analysis also shows EHE referral rates per 1,000 pupils. Additional results by each local authority are presented in the Annexes.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/section/2F>

² Additional data sourced from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/746150/schools_pupils_and_their_characteristics_2018_underlying_data.zip

3. The number of and trend in EHE referrals

3.1 The overall number and rate of EHE referrals

Our dataset shows the following numbers of EHE referrals:

Table 1: Level of EHE referrals

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Total number (across 11 LAs)	1,075	1,230	1,723
Total number (across 9 LAs)	1,075	1,159	1,592
Average referrals per school	0.84	0.90	1.24
Rate per 1,000 pupils	1.93	2.07	2.74

The first row of Table 1 suggests that there has been very strong growth in the number of EHE referrals, but this is confounded by the fact that the dataset contains more schools in 2016/17 and even more schools in 2017/18, due to the reporting issue set out of above. Analysis of changes over time in the total number of EHE referrals therefore restricts the sample to the 9 LAs, in order to provide consistency. Changes over time in the average per school and the rate per 1,000 pupils are calculated across all 11 LAs, as these measures are not artificially inflated by including more schools.

Table 2: Percentage growth in EHE referrals

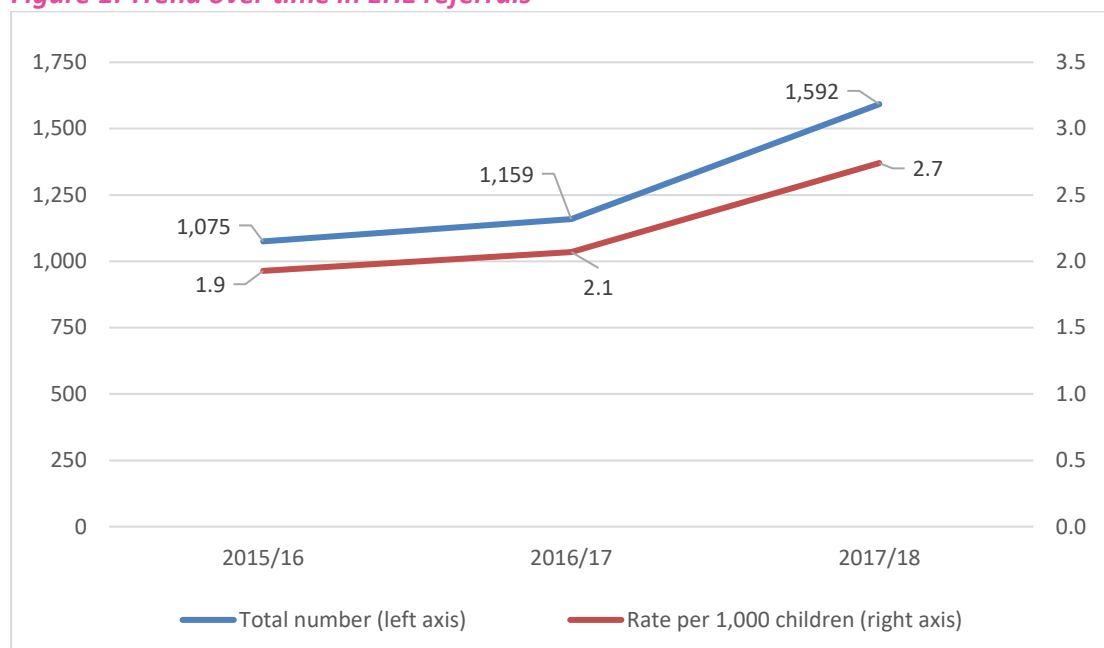
Percentage growth in the:	2015/16 to 2016/17	2016/17 to 2017/18	2015/16 to 2017/18
Total number of referrals ^a	8%	37%	48%
Average referrals per school ^b	7%	38%	48%
Rate per 1,000 pupils ^b	7%	32%	42%

^a Calculated across the 9 LAs which provided data across all three years.

^b Calculated across all 11 LAs.

Table 2 shows the trend over time and makes clear that the growth in EHE referrals across the areas in this sample has accelerated considerably after 2016/17. Figure 1, below, shows the trend over time visually.

Figure 1: Trend over time in EHE referrals



Note: Total number is based only on the nine areas which provided data for all three years, so it excludes Middlesbrough and North Yorkshire. The rate per 1,000 pupils is based on all 11 areas.

Annex 1 presents the overall EHE referral figures and rates per 1,000 pupils by local authority.

3.2 The distribution of EHE referrals

Looking at the total or the average does not convey how much variation there is in the numbers of referrals, or how concentrated these referrals are among a small number of schools. To illustrate this, Table 3 shows what proportion of EHE referrals is accounted for by the 1%, 5%, 10%, 20% and 25% of schools with the highest EHE referral numbers.

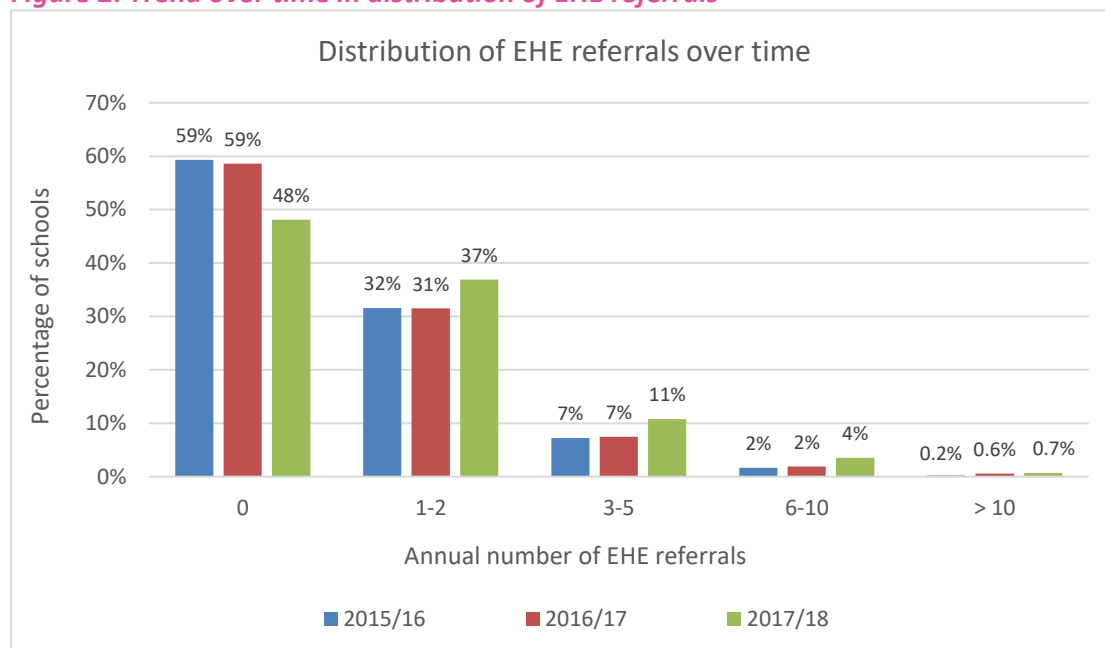
Table 3: Percentage of all EHE referrals accounted for by schools with highest EHE referral numbers

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Top 1% of schools	12%	13%	10%
Top 5% of schools	33%	36%	32%
Top 10% of schools	52%	55%	49%
Top 20% of schools	75%	76%	69%
Top 25% of schools	81%	82%	77%

Table 3 indicates that the distribution has become slightly less unequal over time (although this could be influenced by the changing sample of schools as well). However, the distribution is also moving to the right: over this period it has become less likely for the schools in this sample to have 0 EHE referrals, and slightly more likely for them to have a high number of EHE referrals. This is shown in Figure 2 below. Between 2015-16

and 2017-18, the proportion of schools making no referrals at all to home education fell from 59% to 49%, while the proportion of schools making more than five referrals rose from 1.9% to 4.3%.

Figure 2: Trend over time in distribution of EHE referrals



Annex 2 shows how the distribution of EHE referrals (in 2017/18) varies across the 11 LAs in the sample.

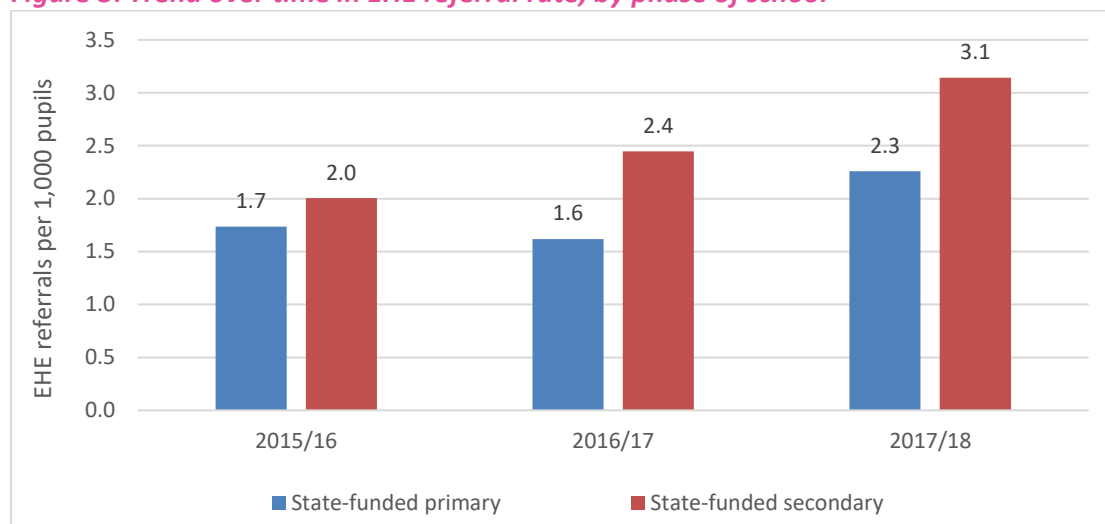
4. Differences in EHE referral rates between different types of school

This section compares levels of and trends in EHE referrals between different parts of the school system to examine whether there are any differences. Given that different types of school may differ in size, the analysis here focuses on EHE referral rates per 1,000 pupils.

4.1 Differences by phase of school

Figure 3 shows that the EHE referral rate is higher among secondary schools than among primary schools across our sample of 11 LAs. However, rates have been increasing for both – and between 2016/17 and 2017/18, the rate increased faster among primary schools than among secondary schools.

Figure 3: Trend over time in EHE referral rate, by phase of school



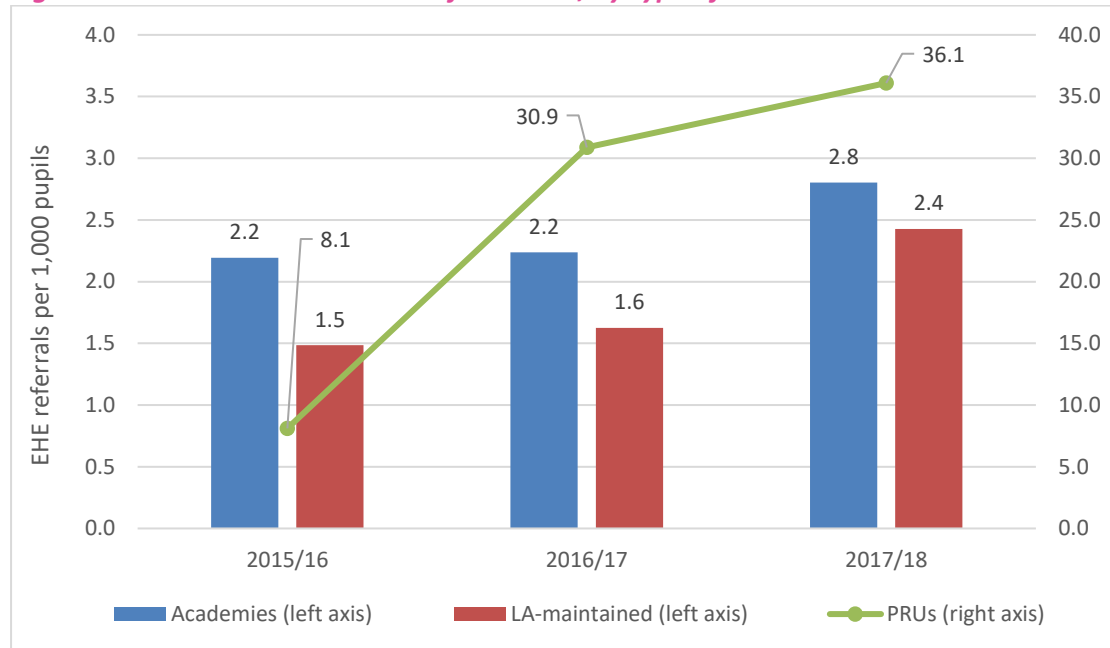
Annex 3 contains additional results, breaking down these by local authority as well.

4.2 Differences by type of school

Figure 4 shows that the EHE referral rate is higher among academies than among LA-maintained schools, however rates have increased for both types of school. Most recently, between 2016/17 and 2017/18, the EHE referral rate increased more quickly in LA-maintained schools (by 49%) than in academies (by 25%).

The chart also shows that EHE referral rates per 1,000 pupils are much higher in pupil referral units (PRUs) across the 11 LAs in this dataset. The rate has also increased very sharply since 2015/16. However, these figures are based on a small number of referrals across a very small cohort of pupils in the 11 LAs: 17 referrals among 471 pupils in 2017/18. By comparison, across the same LAs there were 303,000 pupils in LA-maintained schools and 322,000 in academies in 2017/18. The PRU figures may be volatile and difficult to generalise from, in the absence of data from more LAs across more years.

Figure 4. Trend over time in EHE referral rate, by type of school



Annex 4 contains additional results, showing the figures by local authority as well.

Annex 1: EHE referrals and referral rates per 1,000 pupils, by local authority

Table A1: EHE referrals, by local authority

Local Authority	EHE referrals 2015-16	EHE referrals 2016-17	EHE referrals 2017-18	Percentage change: 2015-16 to 2016-17	Percentage change: 2016-17 to 2017-18	Percentage change: 2015-16 to 2017-18	Max. number of EHE referrals in 2015-16	Max. number of EHE referrals in 2016-17	Max. number of EHE referrals in 2016-17	% of schools with 0 EHE referrals in 2015-16	% of schools with 0 EHE referrals in 2016-17	% of schools with 0 EHE referrals in 2017-18
Birmingham	314	361	428	15%	19%	36%	11	16	18	62%	57%	48%
Bristol	66	108	153	64%	42%	132%	7	7	8	60%	50%	29%
Doncaster	193	70	178	-64%	154%	-8%	19	6	14	29%	57%	34%
Hackney	35	44	68	26%	55%	94%	†	13	8	47%	47%	47%
Leeds	196	266	293	36%	10%	49%	9	14	19	64%	64%	62%
Middlesbrough*	N/A	N/A	36	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5	N/A	N/A	59%
Newham	41	65	113	59%	74%	176%	†	8	9	64%	57%	42%
North Yorkshire**	N/A	71	95	N/A	34%	N/A	N/A	5	8	N/A	41%	43%
Nottingham	50	79	116	58%	47%	132%	†	11	9	69%	69%	56%
Stoke-on-Trent	60	42	56	-30%	33%	-7%	†	†	10	42%	58%	50%
Wakefield	120	124	187	3%	51%	56%	9	11	11	64%	68%	53%
Total	1,075	1,230	1,723	8%*	37%*	48%*	19	16	19	59%	59%	48%

* Did not provide data for 2015-16 and 2016-17.

** Did not provide data for 2016-17.

*** Calculation excludes Middlesbrough and North Yorkshire as they did not provide data across all three years.

† Values below 5 have been suppressed to prevent statistical disclosure.

Table A2: EHE referral rates per 1,000 pupils, by local authority

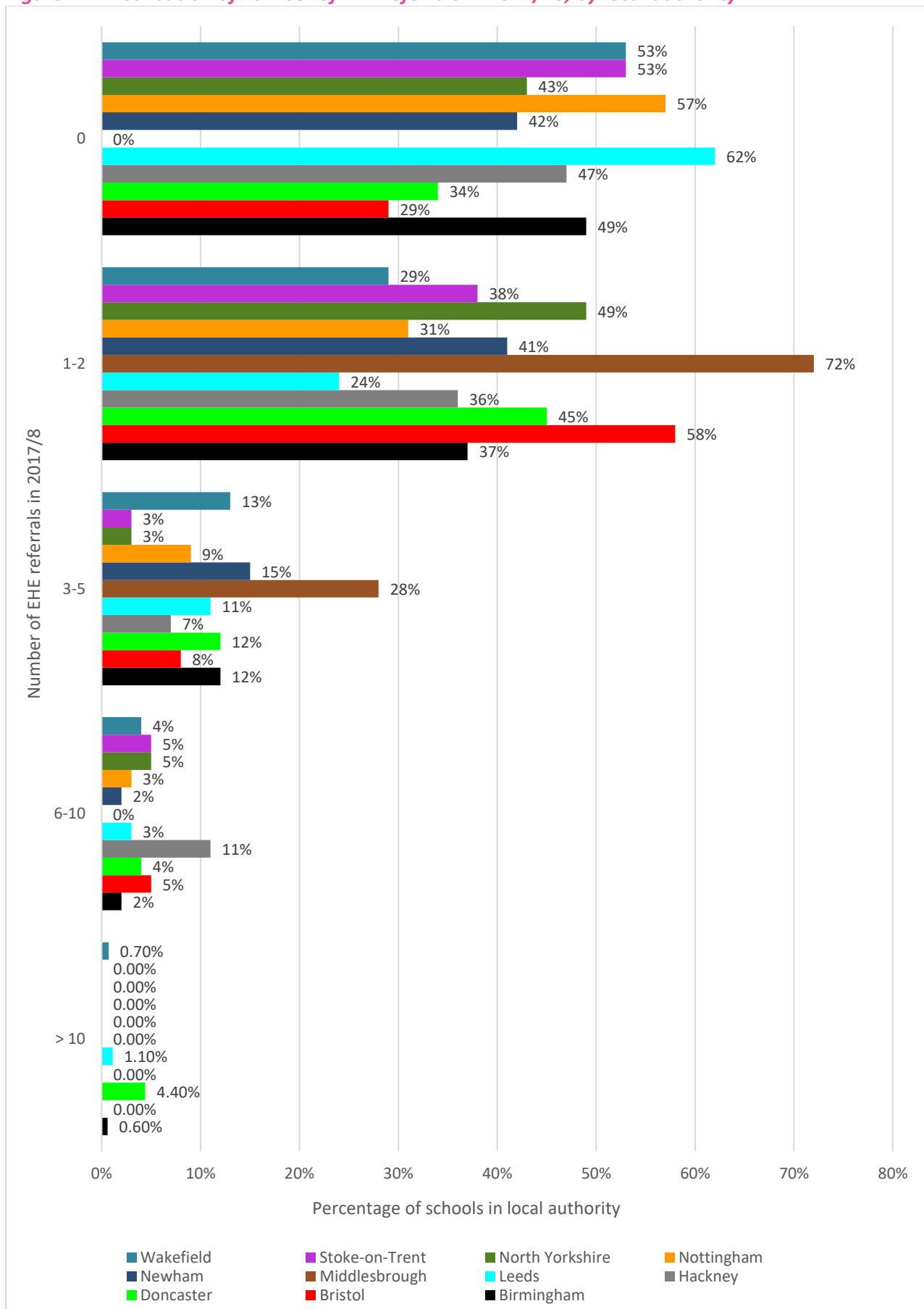
Local Authority	EHE referral rate per 1,000 pupils 2015-16	EHE referral rate per 1,000 pupils 2016-17	EHE referral rate per 1,000 pupils 2017-18	Percentage change: 2015-16 to 2016-17	Percentage change: 2016-17 to 2017-18	Percentage change: 2015-16 to 2017-18
Birmingham	1.83	2.02	2.33	10%	15%	27%
Bristol	1.47	2.32	3.13	58%	35%	113%
Doncaster	5.59	1.93	4.65	-66%	141%	-17%
Hackney	1.45	1.79	2.78	24%	55%	92%
Leeds	1.73	2.28	2.42	32%	6%	40%
Middlesbrough*	N/A	N/A	2.94	N/A	N/A	N/A
Newham	0.75	1.15	1.91	53%	66%	155%
North Yorkshire**	N/A	4.00	5.03	N/A	26%	N/A
Nottingham	1.11	1.73	2.43	56%	40%	119%
Stoke-on-Trent	2.67	1.82	2.21	-32%	21%	-17%
Wakefield	2.54	2.58	3.83	1%	48%	51%
Grand Total	1.93	2.07	2.74	7%	32%	42%

* Did not provide data for 2015-16 and 2016-17.

** Did not provide data for 2016-17.

Annex 2: Distribution of EHE referrals by local authority

Figure A1. Distribution of number of EHE referrals in 2017/18, by local authority



Annex 3: EHE referrals and referral rates per 1,000 pupils, by local authority and phase of education

Table A3: EHE referrals, by local authority and phase of education

	Number of EHE referrals 2015-16	Number of EHE referrals 2016-17	Number of EHE referrals 2017-18	Percentage change: 2015-16 to 2016-17	Percentage change: 2016-17 to 2017-18	Percentage change: 2015-16 to 2017-18
Birmingham						
State-funded primary	187	180	223	-4%	24%	19%
State-funded secondary	127	178	199	40%	12%	57%
Bristol						
State-funded primary	41	62	84	51%	35%	105%
State-funded secondary	25	44	61	76%	39%	144%
Doncaster						
State-funded primary	86	31	72	-64%	132%	-16%
State-funded secondary	102	34	102	-67%	200%	0%
Hackney						
State-funded primary	21	18	20	-14%	11%	-5%
State-funded secondary	13	24	48	85%	100%	269%
Leeds						
State-funded primary	106	108	129	2%	19%	22%
State-funded secondary	81	142	153	75%	8%	89%
Middlesbrough*						
State-funded primary	N/A	N/A	10	N/A	N/A	N/A
State-funded secondary	N/A	N/A	24	N/A	N/A	N/A
Newham						
State-funded primary	34	40	69	18%	73%	103%
State-funded secondary	6	13	32	117%	146%	433%
North Yorkshire**						

State-funded primary	N/A	41	54	N/A	32%	N/A
State-funded secondary	N/A	15	27	N/A	80%	N/A
Nottingham						
State-funded primary	24	34	66	42%	94%	175%
State-funded secondary	21	43	45	105%	5%	114%
Stoke-on-Trent						
State-funded primary	33	19	16	-42%	-16%	-52%
State-funded secondary	15	19	36	27%	89%	140%
Wakefield						
State-funded primary	52	44	92	-15%	109%	34%
State-funded secondary	46	58	71	26%	22%	19%
Total						
State-funded primary schools	585	581	836	-8%***	43%***	32%***
State-funded secondary schools	436	570	798	27%***	35%***	71%***

* Did not provide data for 2015-16 and 2016-17.

** Did not provide data for 2016-17.

*** Calculation excludes Middlesbrough and North Yorkshire as they did not provide data across all three years.

Table A4: EHE referral rates per 1,000 pupils, by local authority and phase of education

	EHE referral rate per 1,000 pupils 2015-16	EHE referral rate per 1,000 pupils 2016-17	EHE referral rate per 1,000 pupils 2017-18	Percentage change: 2015-16 to 2016-17	Percentage change: 2016-17 to 2017-18	Percentage change: 2015-16 to 2017-18
Birmingham						
State-funded primary	1.80	1.68	2.05	-7%	22%	14%
State-funded secondary	1.88	2.49	2.64	32%	6%	40%
Bristol						
State-funded primary	1.46	2.13	2.78	46%	31%	90%
State-funded secondary	1.50	2.56	3.32	70%	29%	121%
Doncaster						
State-funded primary	4.72	1.62	3.51	-66%	117%	-26%
State-funded secondary	6.43	2.00	5.80	-69%	189%	-10%
Hackney						
State-funded primary	1.79	1.55	1.74	-14%	12%	-3%
State-funded secondary	1.05	1.87	3.72	79%	99%	254%
Leeds						
State-funded primary	1.50	1.49	1.73	-1%	16%	15%
State-funded secondary	1.94	3.30	3.39	70%	3%	75%
Middlesbrough*						
State-funded primary	N/A	N/A	2.40	N/A	N/A	N/A
State-funded secondary	N/A	N/A	3.02	N/A	N/A	N/A
Newham						
State-funded primary	0.97	1.12	1.90	15%	70%	96%
State-funded secondary	0.31	0.64	1.42	106%	123%	358%
North Yorkshire**						
State-funded primary	N/A	4.07	5.20	N/A	28%	N/A
State-funded secondary	N/A	2.27	3.51	N/A	55%	N/A

Nottingham						
State-funded primary	0.86	1.20	2.26	39%	88%	163%
State-funded secondary	1.26	2.55	2.53	102%	-1%	101%
Stoke-on-Trent						
State-funded primary	2.86	1.60	1.23	-44%	-23%	-57%
State-funded secondary	1.42	1.75	3.03	24%	73%	113%
Wakefield						
State-funded primary	1.74	1.44	2.96	-17%	105%	70%
State-funded secondary	2.78	3.48	4.22	25%	21%	52%
Total						
State-funded primary schools	1.73	1.62	2.26	-7%	40%	31%
State-funded secondary schools	2.00	2.45	3.14	18%	28%	57%

* Did not provide data for 2015-16 and 2016-17.

** Did not provide data for 2016-17.

Annex 4: EHE referrals and referral rates per 1,000 pupils, by local authority and school type

Table A5: EHE referrals, by local authority and school type

	Number of EHE referrals 2015-16	Number of EHE referrals 2016-17	Number of EHE referrals 2017-18	Percentage change: 2015-16 to 2016-17	Percentage change: 2016-17 to 2017-18	Percentage change: 2015-16 to 2017-18
Birmingham						
Academies	173	208	215	20%	3%	24%
LA-maintained	136	147	205	8%	39%	51%
Pupil referral units	No schools	No schools	No schools	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bristol						
Academies	42	77	90	83%	17%	114%
LA-maintained	24	30	59	25%	97%	146%
Pupil referral units	0	†	†	N/A	N/A	N/A
Doncaster						
Academies	145	57	130	-61%	128%	-10%
LA-maintained	46	9	45	-80%	400%	-2%
Pupil referral units	†	0	†	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hackney						
Academies	8	8	27	0%	238%	238%
LA-maintained	26	34	41	31%	21%	58%
Pupil referral units	†	†	0	N/A	- N/A	N/A
Leeds						
Academies	72	112	115	56%	3%	60%
LA-maintained	115	132	168	15%	27%	46%
Pupil referral units	No schools	No schools	No schools	N/A	N/A	N/A
Middlesbrough*						
Academies	N/A	N/A	25	N/A	N/A	N/A
LA-maintained	N/A	N/A	10	N/A	N/A	N/A

Pupil referral units	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Newham						
Academies	17	25	53	47%	112%	212%
LA-maintained	23	29	48	26%	66%	109%
Pupil referral units	0	†	9	N/A	N/A	N/A
North Yorkshire**						
Academies	N/A	11	11	N/A	0%	N/A
LA-maintained	N/A	45	69	N/A	53%	N/A
Pupil referral units	N/A	6	†	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nottingham						
Academies	32	51	76	59%	49%	138%
LA-maintained	16	26	36	63%	38%	125%
Pupil referral units	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stoke-on-Trent						
Academies	38	30	45	-21%	50%	18%
LA-maintained	11	8	9	-27%	13%	-18%
Pupil referral units	†	†	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wakefield						
Academies	79	79	117	0%	48%	48%
LA-maintained	20	23	46	15%	100%	130%
Pupil referral units	0	0	†	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total						
Academies	606	658	904	6%***	41%***	50%***
LA-maintained	417	483	736	7%***	34%***	43%***
Pupil referral units	†	13	17	5%***	50%***	58%***

* Did not provide data for 2015-16 and 2016-17.

** Did not provide data for 2016-17.

*** Calculation excludes Middlesbrough and North Yorkshire as they did not provide data across all three years.

† Values below 5 have been suppressed to prevent statistical disclosure.

Table A6: EHE referral rates per 1,000 pupils, by local authority and school type

	EHE referral rate per 1,000 pupils 2015-16	EHE referral rate per 1,000 pupils 2016-17	EHE referral rate per 1,000 pupils 2017-18	Percentage change: 2015-16 to 2016-17	Percentage change: 2016-17 to 2017-18	Percentage change: 2015-16 to 2017-18
Birmingham						
Academies	2.05	2.31	2.27	13%	-2%	11%
LA-maintained	1.58	1.67	2.32	6%	39%	47%
Pupil referral units	No schools	No schools	No schools	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bristol						
Academies	1.52	2.64	2.87	74%	9%	89%
LA-maintained	1.4	1.73	3.37	24%	95%	141%
Pupil referral units	0	76.92	100	N/A	30%	N/A
Doncaster						
Academies	6.06	2.2	4.65	-64%	112%	-23%
LA-maintained	4.5	0.88	4.39	-80%	400%	-2%
Pupil referral units	33.33	0	32.26	-100%	N/A	-3%
Hackney						
Academies	1.04	0.98	3.2	-5%	226%	208%
LA-maintained	1.58	2.09	2.57	32%	23%	63%
Pupil referral units	11.9	21.51	0	81%	-100%	-100%
Leeds						
Academies						
LA-maintained	1.44	1.62	2.03	13%	26%	41%
Pupil referral units	No schools	No schools	No schools	N/A	N/A	N/A
Middlesbrough*						
Academies	-	-	3.09	N/A	N/A	N/A
LA-maintained	-	-	2.39	N/A	N/A	N/A

Pupil referral units	-	-	No schools	N/A	N/A	N/A
Newham						
Academies	0.87	1.19	2.26	37%	90%	160%
LA-maintained	0.65	0.82	1.36	25%	66%	109%
Pupil referral units	0	34.88	102.27	N/A	193%	N/A
North Yorkshire**						
Academies	-	2.52	1.96	N/A	-22%	N/A
LA-maintained	-	3.69	5.63	N/A	53%	N/A
Pupil referral units	-	142.86	70.18	N/A	-51%	N/A
Nottingham						
Academies	1.04	1.63	2.29	57%	40%	120%
LA-maintained	1.12	1.8	2.47	61%	37%	121%
Pupil referral units	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stoke-on-Trent						
Academies	2.16	1.66	2.23	-23%	34%	3%
LA-maintained	2.27	1.59	1.76	-30%	11%	-22%
Pupil referral units	38.46	28.57	0	-26%	-100%	-100%
Wakefield						
Academies	2.58	2.54	3.7	-1%	46%	43%
LA-maintained	1.22	1.36	2.7	12%	97%	121%
Pupil referral units	0	0	6.8	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total						
Academies	2.19	2.24	2.8	2%	25%	28%
LA-maintained	1.49	1.62	2.43	9%	49%	63%
Pupil referral units	8.11	30.88	36.09	281%	17%	345%

* Did not provide data for 2015-16 and 2016-17.

** Did not provide data for 2016-17.



Children's Commissioner for England

Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Tel: 020 7783 8330

Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Visit: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Twitter: [@ChildrensComm](https://twitter.com/ChildrensComm)