



South Eastern Family Support Hubs Strategic Analysis Report 2025/26

**Integrating Family Support Hub and
Outcomes Monitoring Evidence**



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can achieve alone.*



Produced by the Children's Services Planning Team

Executive Summary



This report brings together Family Support Hub monitoring information and Outcomes Monitoring data to provide a deeper understanding of demand, need and future planning implications within the South Eastern Outcomes Group area.

South Eastern Family Support Hubs present one of the most distinctive profiles across the region. The evidence suggests a system increasingly characterised by neurodevelopmental need, disability, assessment pathways and emotional behavioural difficulties. Outcomes Monitoring indicators support this picture, showing increasing autism diagnoses, rising disability prevalence and continued growth in Special Educational Needs. The Hub is increasingly supporting families requiring guidance and intervention while navigating assessment and support pathways.





Understanding Demand

Referrals increased modestly from 881 families in 2024/25 to 903 in 2025/26. This followed a significant reduction during 2024/25 and suggests relative stability in demand compared with some other areas. Whilst growth was modest, the profile of demand indicates substantial complexity, particularly relating to disability and emotional behavioural needs.



Presenting Needs

Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties for school-aged children remain by far the dominant presenting reason for referral, increasing from 607 referrals in 2024/25 to 727 referrals in 2025/26. Parenting support also increased but remains significantly lower than EBD referrals. This pattern differs from Southern, where parenting support dominates, and Belfast, where financial support dominates.

Disability and Neurodevelopmental Need



This remains the defining feature of the South Eastern profile. In 2025/26, 728 children referred had a disability and 114 were awaiting assessment. Autism and ADHD were the dominant categories. Outcomes Monitoring data demonstrates increasing autism diagnoses, rising DLA claims and increasing SEN statements. Together these indicators suggest growing neurodevelopmental demand across the area. *Data quality issues in the 2025/26 report should be reviewed as disability prevalence exceeds expected referral volumes.*



Referral Pathways

South Eastern demonstrates one of the strongest health-system referral profiles in Northern Ireland. GP/Nurse referrals were the largest referral source in 2024/25 and remained joint highest with self-referrals at 22% in 2025/26 with School referrals at 18%. Paediatrician referrals also increased significantly to 9%. This indicates strong integration between health services, Schools and the Family Support Hub model.

Education and Early Identification

Children aged 5-10 remain the largest referral group, representing over half of all referrals in 2025/26. This reflects the age at which developmental, behavioural and educational needs become increasingly visible and aligns with the Hub's strong neurodevelopmental profile.

Family Circumstances and Vulnerability

South Eastern reports a balanced profile similar to Southern and Northern. Referrals were almost equally divided between one-parent and two-parent households in 2024/25, with two-parent households becoming the largest group in 2025/26. This demonstrates that family support need exists across all household structures.

Inclusion and Accessibility

South Eastern has comparatively low ethnic diversity compared to other Trust areas. However, the area were able to meet interpreting needs during 2024/25 and 2025/26. This is most likely due to South Eastern area Hubs being Trust led with better access to Interpreting Services compared to Community and Voluntary led Hubs in other Trust areas.

Outcomes and Performance

South Eastern continues to demonstrate a highly distinctive outcomes profile. Most families are linked to a single service, with comparatively few linked to multiple services. This differs markedly from Northern, where multiple-service referrals dominate. Further exploration of the reasons behind these differing models may provide useful regional learning. The Outcomes Monitoring Report highlights higher low birth rate weights, increased child deaths by suicide (2024) increasing autism diagnoses, increasing DLA claims and rising SEN statements. South Eastern is among the highest areas for children receiving disability-related supports and continues to demonstrate significant educational support needs. These wider population indicators closely match Family Support Hub activity.

Implications for Future Planning

Future planning should focus on: Continue to strengthen support for families awaiting neurodevelopmental assessment. Expand provision aimed at emotional and behavioural difficulties. Strengthen links between education, pediatric and family support pathways. Review disability data collection and reporting processes. Continue effective interpreter provision and inclusive practice. Consider whether additional family support is required alongside clinical and assessment pathways.

Points for Discussion

- How can children awaiting diagnosis be supported more effectively?
- What additional interventions are required for emotional and behavioural difficulties:
- What explains the areas' strong concentration of disability-related referrals?
- What learning can be shared regarding interpreter provision and accessibility?

CONCLUSION

South Eastern Family Support Hubs provide an important early intervention response for children and families affected by disability, neurodevelopmental need and emotional behavioural difficulties. Future planning should continue to strengthen support around assessment pathways, family resilience and integrated working across education, health and community services.

Data Sources:

[South Eastern Family Support Hub Annual Report Card 25/26](#)
[Outcome monitoring report 24/25](#)



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