



BROMLEY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSON JOINT STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2024

Section 3: Children and Young People with Emerging Needs

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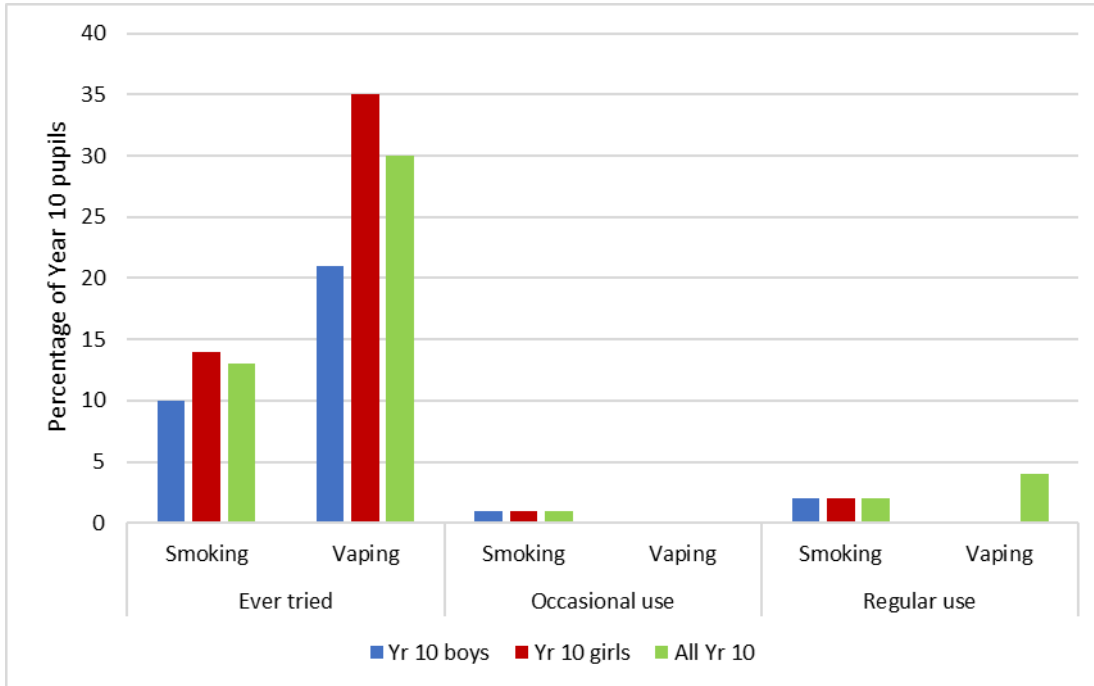
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1. Emerging health and lifestyle issues

a) Children and young people who smoke

In a SHEU survey¹ of year 10 in the academic year 2024, 13% reported that they had ever tried smoking or smoked now (Figure 3.1). This is of concern as two thirds of smokers start smoking before the age of 18 years.

Figure 3.1: Smoking and vaping rates in year 10 pupils in Bromley, 2024



Source: SHEU survey 2024

The proportion of young people in Year 10 even trying smoking has reduced from 18% to 7%. Of the 1% of pupils who smoke regularly, more than a quarter of them would like to give up smoking.

Children and young people who smoke electronic cigarettes (vaping) is now more common than smoking among young people in Bromley. More year 10 girls than boys are trying vaping (35% girls, 21% boys) and the proportion of young people vaping regularly has decreased slightly from 5% in 2022 to 4% in 2024.

The results of the 2024 SHEU survey are mirrored in a national YouGov survey in March 2022² which found that 4% of 11–15-year-olds in the UK are currently vaping.

¹ School Health Education Unit. This survey was conducted in year 10 (age 13/14 years) in academic years 18/19 and 21/22 with the same questions being used in both surveys for comparison. Most of the data used in this report is from the 2022 survey. In 2019, seventeen schools took part (2122 students). In 2022, all 21 maintained schools took part apart from the special schools (2969 students).

² Action on Smoking and Health (ASH). Use of e-cigarettes (vapes) among young people in Great Britain, 2022

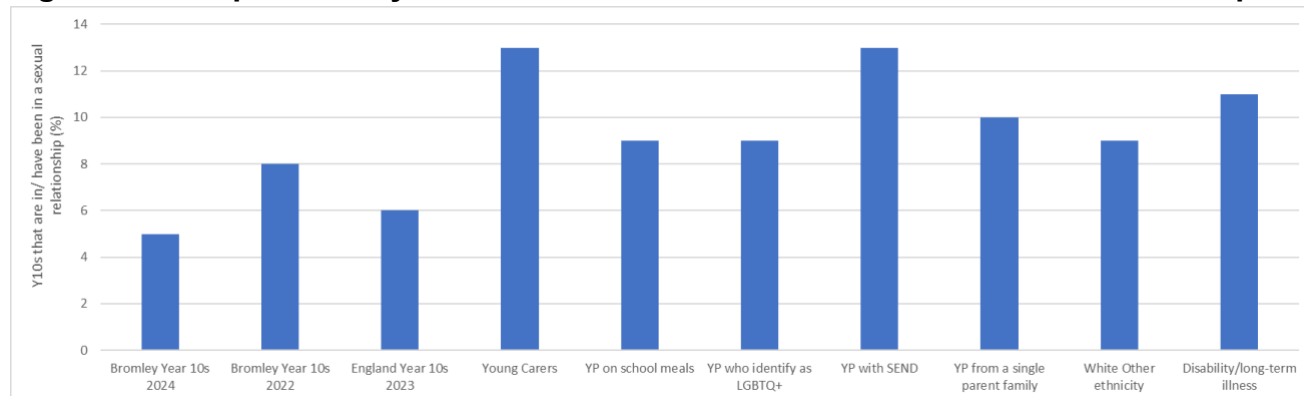
What this means for children and young people in Bromley

Smoking rates in young people in Bromley are falling.

Electronic cigarettes or vaping appears to have stopped rising.

b) Children and young people who need sexual health services

Figure 3.2: Proportion of year 10s who are in or have been in a sexual relationship

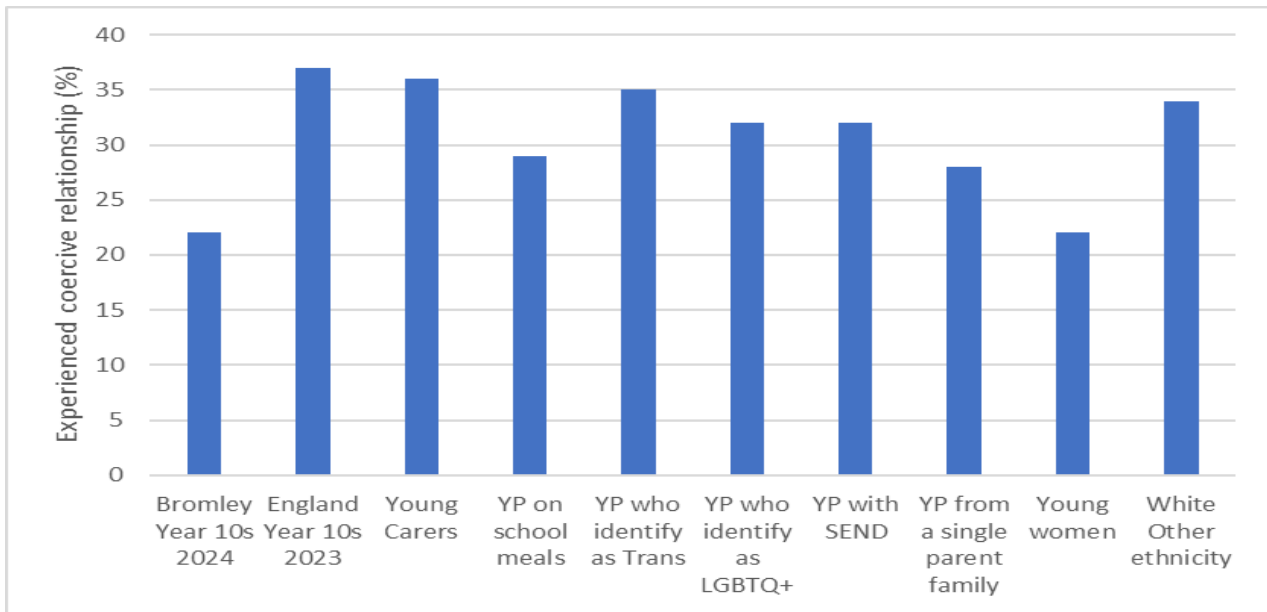


Source: SHEU survey 2024

The SHEU survey of year 10 pupils highlighted that:

- 5% of year 10 pupils (6% boys, 5% girls) are or have been in a sexual relationship. This continues to fall from 13% in 2019 and 6% in 2022. However rates are higher for some young people (Figure 3.2)
- 16% of year 10s have either sent or received a “sexting” image. This is the same rate as the national comparator. However, pupils who have experienced someone writing or showing them things online to hurt or upset them (with text, pictures or video) has increased from 15% in 2022 to 26% in 2024.
- 3% of year 10 pupils worry about being different because of their sexuality “often” or “all the time”. This has decreased from 7% in Bromley in 2022.
- The proportion of year 10 pupils who know where they can get a condom free of charge has fallen from 54% in 2019 to 32% in 2022 and again to 23% in 2024.
- 46% of year 10 pupils in 2022 describe having experienced aggressive/coercive behaviour in a relationship. This proportion is higher for some groups (Figure 3.3) and higher than the national rate (37%).

Figure 3.3: Proportion of YP experiencing aggression or coercion in a relationship



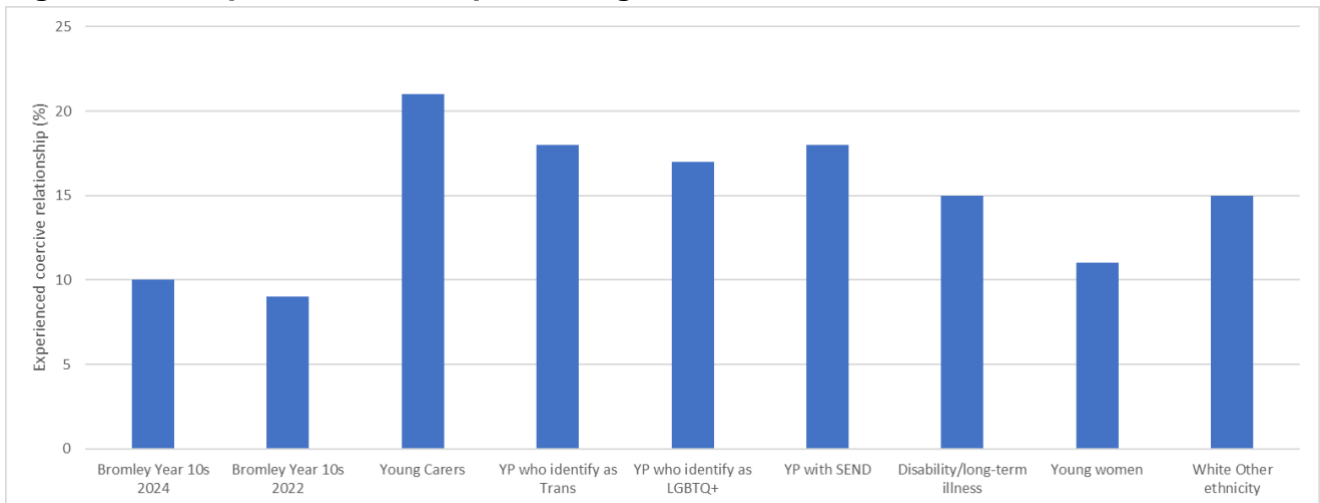
Source: SHEU survey 2024

Sexual harassment by another student

6% of pupils (4% boys, 8% girls) describe themselves as victims of sexual harassment from another student either at school or online in the last 12 months before the survey. Most ignored it although some girls did block them online. This is the same rate as the national comparator of 6%. In some schools more boys suffer sexual harassment than girls and in other schools this picture is reversed.

Some groups were more likely to experience sexual harassment from another student included young carers (21%), young people with SEND (18%), and young people who identified as Trans or LGBTQ+.

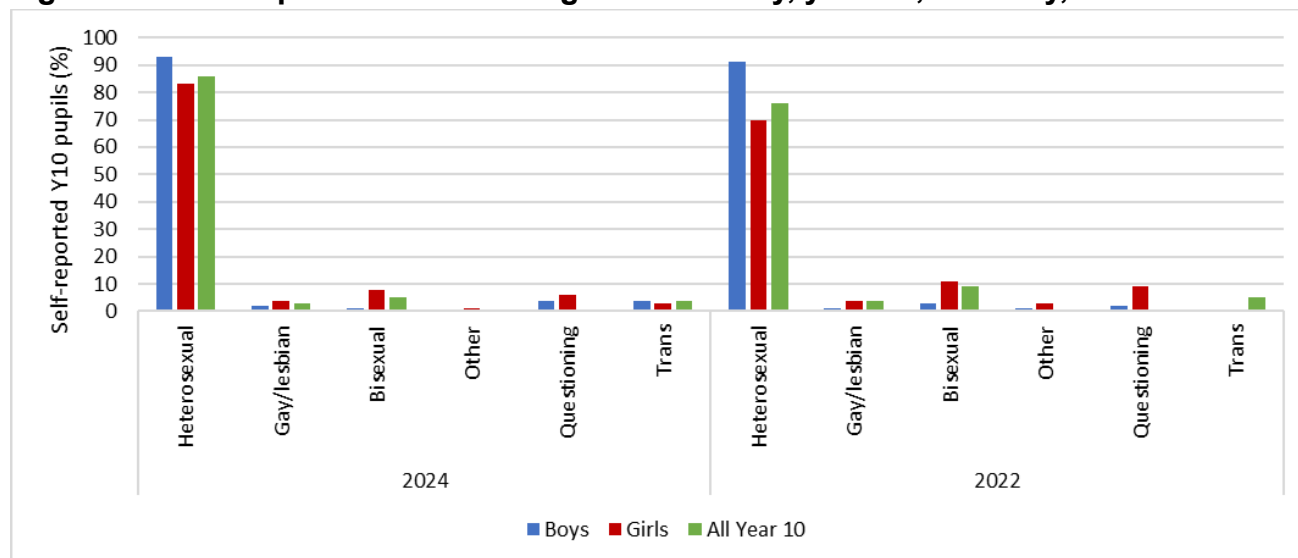
Figure 3.4: Proportion of YP experiencing sexual harassment from another student



Source: SHEU survey 2024

The SHEU survey also showed some changes in pupils' responses about their sexual and gender identity.

Figure 3.5: Self reported sexual and gender identity, year 10, Bromley, 2022 and 2024



Source: SHEU survey 2024

Compared to 2022, girls were more likely to respond that they are heterosexual and less likely to describe themselves as bisexual, gay/lesbian or Trans. The proportion of pupils who worry about being different because of their sexuality “often” or “all the time” has reduced from 7% in 2022 to 3% in 2024.

Chlamydia

The National Chlamydia Screening Programme (NCSP) provides opportunistic screening to sexually active young people aged 15 to 24 years with the aim of increasing the detection of chlamydia and reducing the prevalence of sequelae. This data is shown in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Chlamydia detection rate per 100,000 population aged 15-24 years, 2024

Indicator	Period	Bromley			London	England
		Recent Trend	Count	Rate per 100,000	Rate per 100,000	Rate per 100,000
Chlamydia detection rate / 100,000 aged 15 to 24	2023	→	499	1,564	1,739	1,546
Chlamydia detection rate / 100,000 aged 15 to 24 (Male)	2023	→	183	1,118	1,397	1,042
Chlamydia detection rate / 100,000 aged 15 to 24 (Female)	2023	→	309	1,988	1,991	1,962

Source: OHID Fingertips, 2024

Table 3.1 shows that in 2023 Bromley had a Chlamydia detection rate lower than that of London and very similar to the rate for England, and this relative ranking is unchanged. This detection rate for Chlamydia Infection indicates that Bromley successfully screens Bromley residents who are at the highest risk of infection.

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Sexual ill-health is not equally distributed within the population. Strong links exist between deprivation and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), teenage conceptions and abortions.

Detection of new STIs for diseases other than chlamydia (Table 3.2) shows that, as for Chlamydia, rates in Bromley are lower than the London rate and very similar to the England rate.

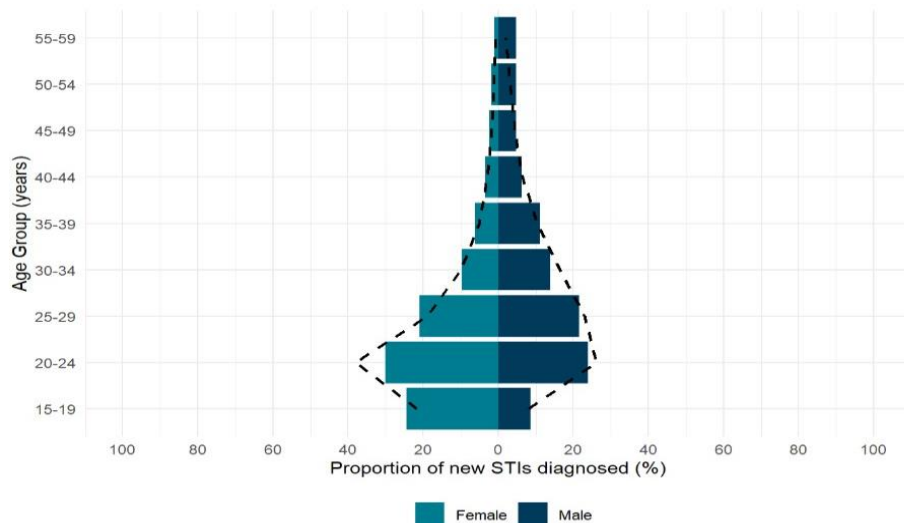
Table 3.2: Rate of new STI diagnoses (excluding chlamydia diagnoses) per 100,000 population aged 15-64 years, London: 2023

Indicator	Period	Bromley			London	England
		Recent Trend	Count	Rate per 100,000	Rate per 100,000	Rate per 100,000
New STI diagnoses (exc chlamydia aged <25) / 100,000	2023	→	1,719	522	1,229	520

Source: OHID fingertips 2024

Young people experience the highest diagnosis rates of the most common STIs. This is likely due to greater rate of partner change among 16- to 24-year-old people³. Higher rates of STIs are diagnosed in young women up to the age of 25, both nationally and locally (Figure 3.6). This is mainly because of women’s health seeking behaviour; they are more likely to be tested for STIs. STI rates are similar in men and women aged 25-30, and above the age of 30 higher rates of STIs are diagnosed in men.

Figure 3.6: Proportion of new STIs by age group & gender, Bromley, 2022



Source: Data from routine specialist and non-specialist sexual health services’ returns to the GUMCAD STI Surveillance System and routine non-specialist sexual health services’ returns to the CTAD Chlamydia Surveillance system.

Please note that to prevent deductive disclosure the number of STI diagnoses has been rounded up to the nearest 5.

As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, since March 2020, the Government implemented national and regional lockdowns and social and physical distancing measures. These measures affected sexual behaviour and health service provision, which is reflected in sexual and reproductive health indicator data. Interpreting data from 2020 should consider these factors, especially when comparing with data from pre-pandemic years.

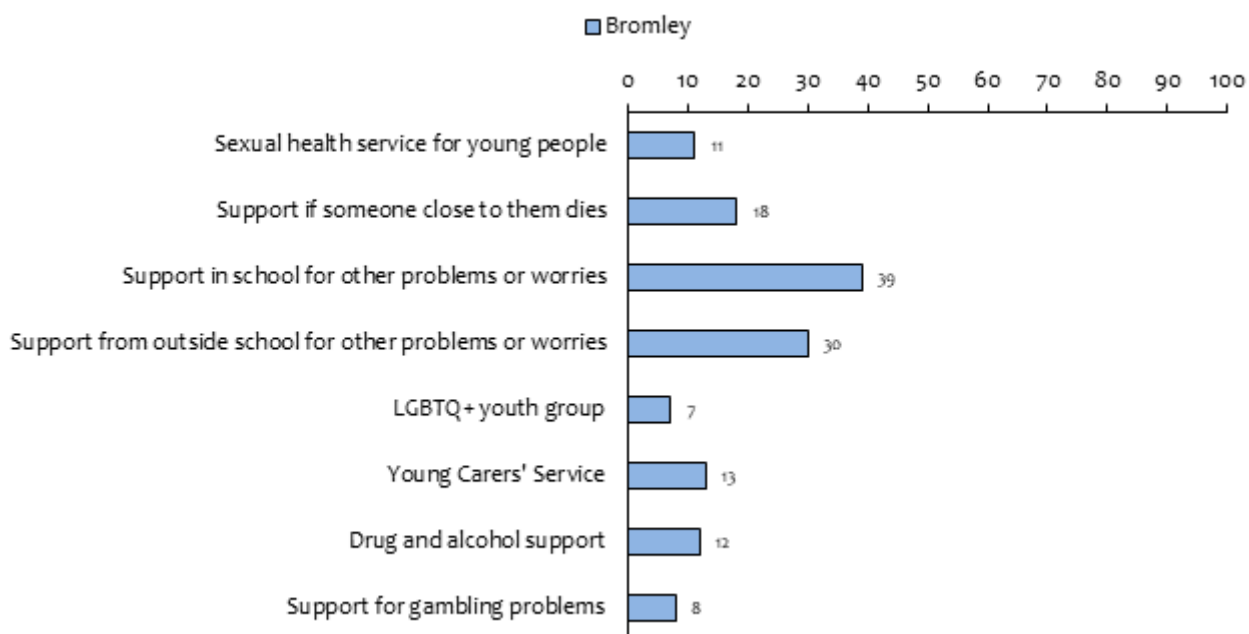
Source: OHID 2022

³ Public Health England. (2018). *Sexually transmitted infections and screening for chlamydia in England*. [online] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/713962/hpr2018_AA-STIs_v5.pdf [Accessed 11/07/2018].

Access to services

The SHEU survey of Year 10s in 2024 showed that 11% of young people knew how to access sexual health services (down from 16% in 2022) and 1% had used those services. This lack of knowledge about services outside their school (Figure 3.7) is of concern.

Figure 3.7. Percentage of pupils responding that they at least 'know how to use' the local services



Sexual violence

Table 3.3 shows Metropolitan Police data on sexual offences in Bromley, London and Sutton (a statistical neighbour) between September 2022 and August 2023. There has been a decrease in sexual offences in Bromley from 1.9 per 1,000 in 2021/22 to 1.4 per 1,000 in 2024. All rates are lower than the rates for London. Analysis by age group is not possible with the available data.

Table 3.3: Sexual violence in Bromley and comparators, September 2022 to August 2023

	Rate of sexual violence (per 1,000 population)		
	Bromley rate (number of events)	Sutton rate (number of events)	London rate
All sexual violence	2.1 (694)	2.2 (469)	2.9
Rape offences	0.7 (239)	0.7 (147)	1.1
Other sexual offences	1.4 (455)	1.5 (322)	1.8

Source: MOPAC, 2024

What this means for young people in Bromley?

Rates of sexual activity in young people in Bromley appear to still be falling.

Rates of sexual harassment reported by Year 10 pupils have fallen to the same level as the national comparator, having been higher in 2022

The proportion of pupils who have experienced someone writing or showing them things online to hurt or upset has increased from 15% in 2022 to 26% in 2024.

46% of year 10 pupils in 2024 describe having experienced aggressive/coercive behaviour in a relationship compared to the national comparator of 37%.

Bromley pupils are less likely to worry about being different because of their sexuality compared to national rates

Rates of sexually transmitted infections are lower in Bromley than in London

c) Children and young people who drink alcohol and take drugs

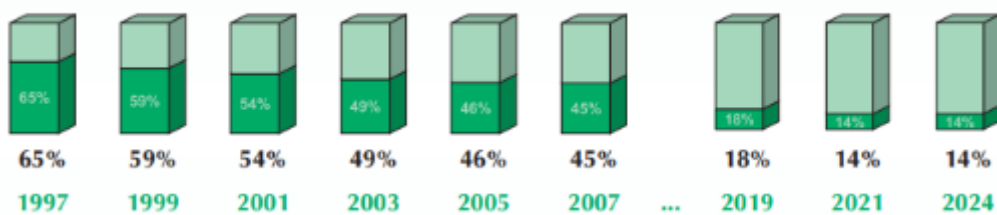
While the majority of young people do not use drugs, and most of those that do are not dependent, drug and alcohol misuse have a major impact on young people's; education, health, families and long-term chances in life.

High levels of alcohol consumption are associated with increased risk taking generally, particularly among young people, including; unsafe sex and drink driving. It is also a common feature of domestic and sexual violence.

Alcohol consumption among young people in Bromley has been falling for many years (Figure 3.8) and at 14% for year 10s is below the national average (20%).

Figure 3.8. Long term trends in alcohol consumption in young people in Bromley

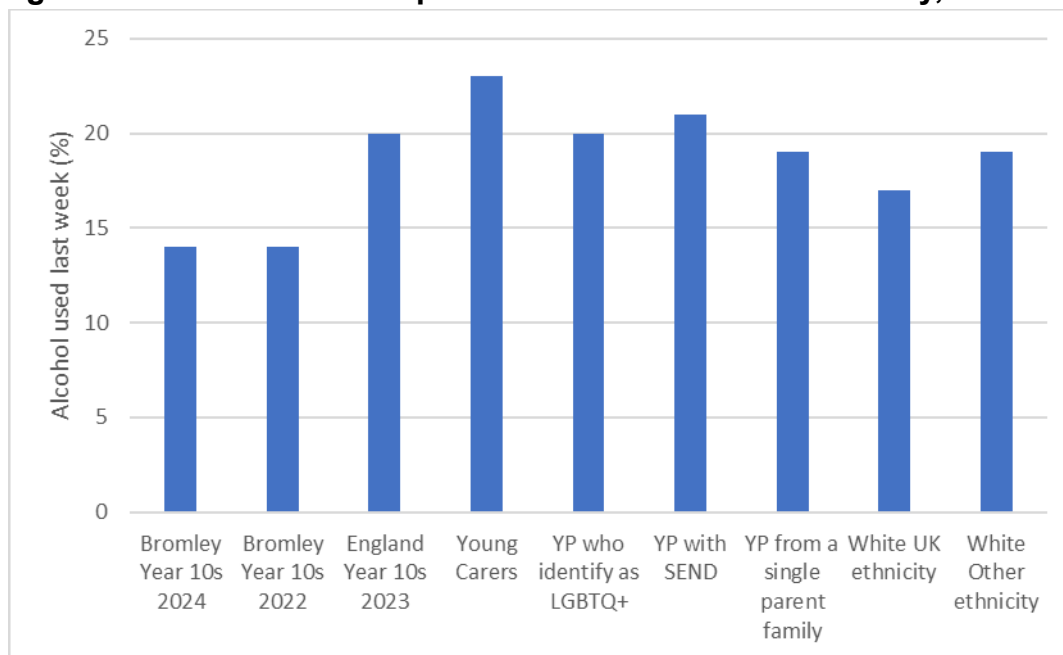
Drank alcohol last week



Source: SHEU surveys 1997 to 2024

The groups within the year 10 population who drank significantly more than 14% average in Bromley were the young carers (23%), young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (21%), young people who identified as LGBTQ+ (20%), young people living in a single parent family (19%) and white pupils (17%). The Black and Asian population drank significantly less than 14%. The proportion of year 10s who said they never drank alcohol increased from 47% in 2019 to 70% in 2024.

Figure 3.9: Alcohol consumption in week before SHEU survey, Bromley, 2024



Source: SHEU survey 2024

Binge drinking

During the pandemic there was an increase in the consumption of alcohol, particularly amongst those who were already the heaviest drinkers. Heavy drinking is more prevalent in the highest income households, but hospital admissions are far more commonly from people living in low income households in deprived areas. Children are far more likely to drink alcohol if their parents do, especially girls.

Binge drinking for men is drinking more than 8 units of alcohol – or about three pints of strong beer. For women, it's drinking more than 6 units of alcohol, equivalent to two large glasses of wine.

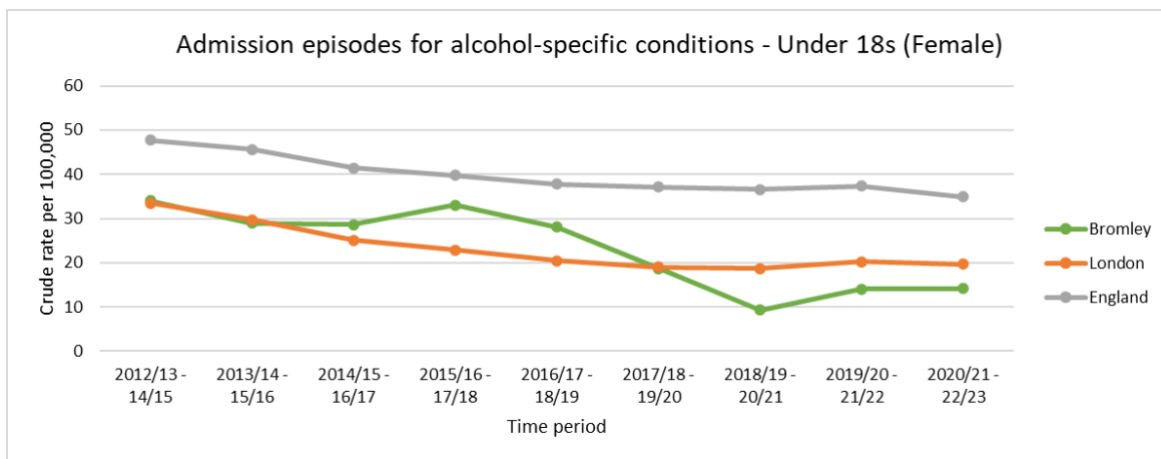
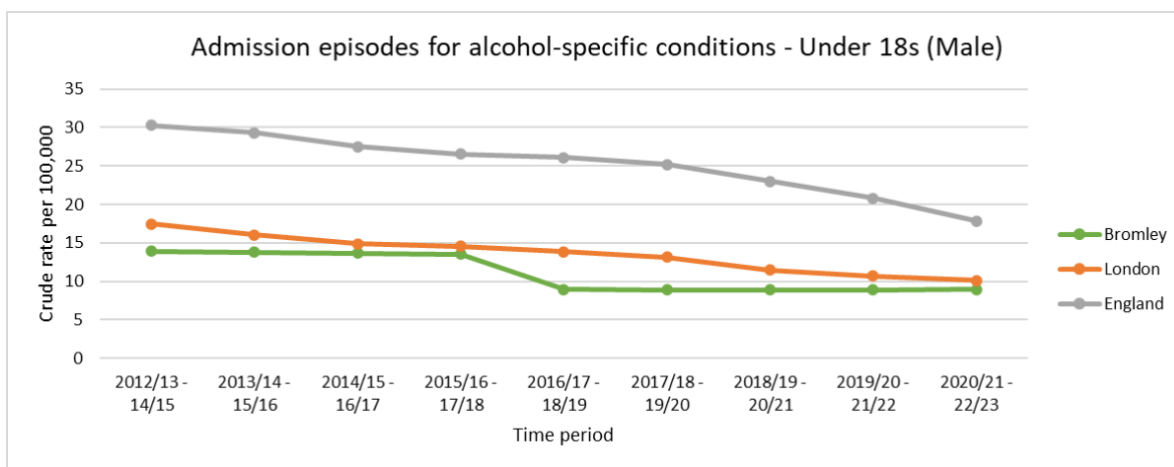
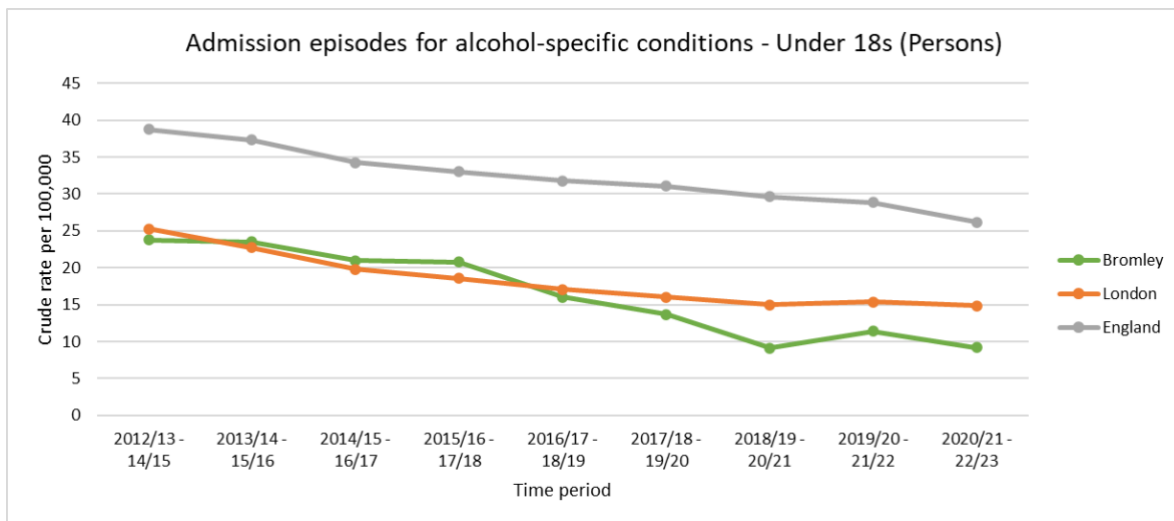
There has been a reduction in the prevalence of binge drinking across all age groups in the UK since 2005. The prevalence of binge drinking in 16 to 24 year olds in the UK has reduced in recent years from 40% in 2009 to 17% in 2019 for men, and from 28% in 2009 to 13% in 2019 for women. There are no local Bromley estimates for the level of binge drinking in young people.

Local substance misuse services report that alcohol is the second most common reason for people presenting to their services (after cannabis). Most service users are male and many have significant vulnerabilities, although most young people in treatment for alcohol only were female. Between April 2017 – March 2022, 72.1% (n=31/43) were female.

Hospital Admissions: burden of ill-health due to alcohol

The alcohol-specific admission rate for under 18 year olds in Bromley has been falling for some time and is lower than the rate for London and England (Figure 3.10).

Figure 3.10: Alcohol-related hospital admissions, Bromley and comparators, 2012/13 to 2022/23



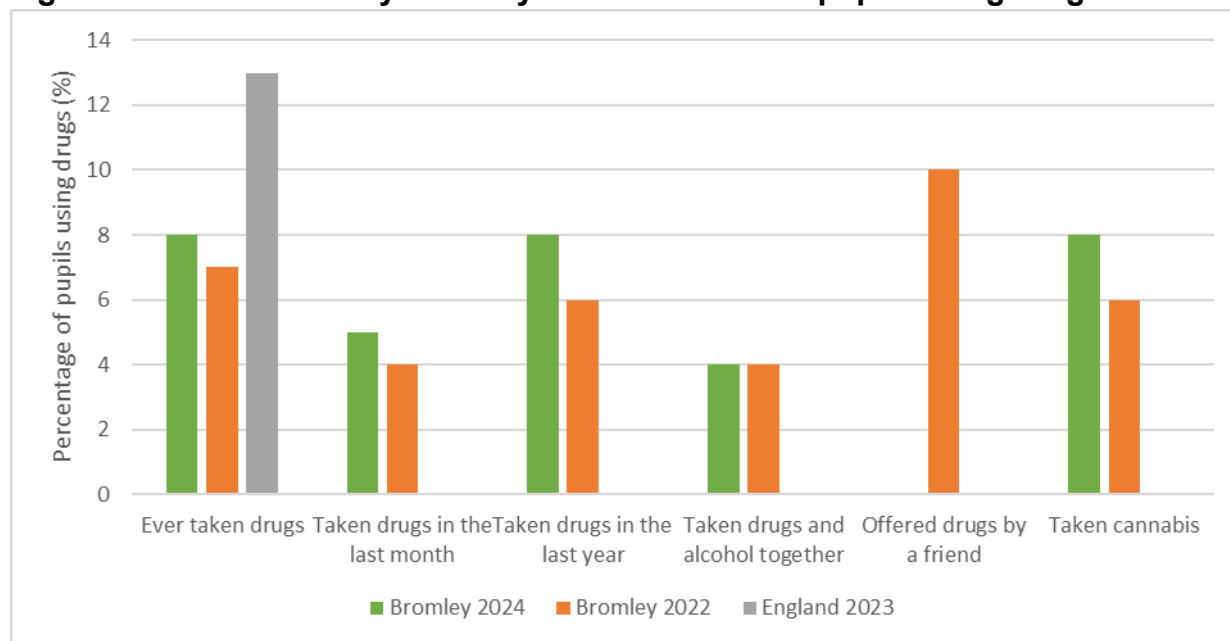
Source: PHE fingertips March 2024

Drug use in young people

Among young people, drug use is linked to increased likelihood of a range of adverse experiences and behaviour including; truancy, exclusion from school, homelessness, time in care and serious or frequent offending ⁴.

The SHEU survey of year 10 pupils in 2024 showed that 92% of this group had never taken drugs. Drug use in year 10s in Bromley is higher than in 2022 but lower than the national rate.

Figure 3.11: SHEU survey Bromley 2024 and 2022: % pupils using drugs



Source: SHEU survey, 2024

The main substances used by those attending services are cannabis and alcohol, and this has been the picture for several years in Bromley.

In 2023-24 there were 82 referrals to the service of which almost 50% engaged in treatment. Children's Social Care was the highest referral source (38% of all referrals). Referrals from education were low at 15%.

Adulterated vape devices containing illegal substances is an emerging risk. Adulterated vape devices pose a serious threat to the health of young people. It appears that the young people purchasing these devices are often unaware of their contents and the potential dangers they pose and there is a risk that they may, unknowingly, be supplied with a device containing Spice. THC is the primary psychoactive compound in cannabis. Spice is a synthetic cannabinoid, that is far more dangerous than THC. In appearance it can look exactly like THC but has a potency that is significantly stronger than THC. In the last twelve months there have been a number of young

⁴ London Borough of Bromley. (2018). *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2017*. [online] Available at: http://www.bromley.gov.uk/downloads/download/877/joint_strategic_needs_assessment_jsna_2017 [Accessed 23/10/2017].

people from Bromley and neighbouring boroughs hospitalised due to their use of adulterated vapes.

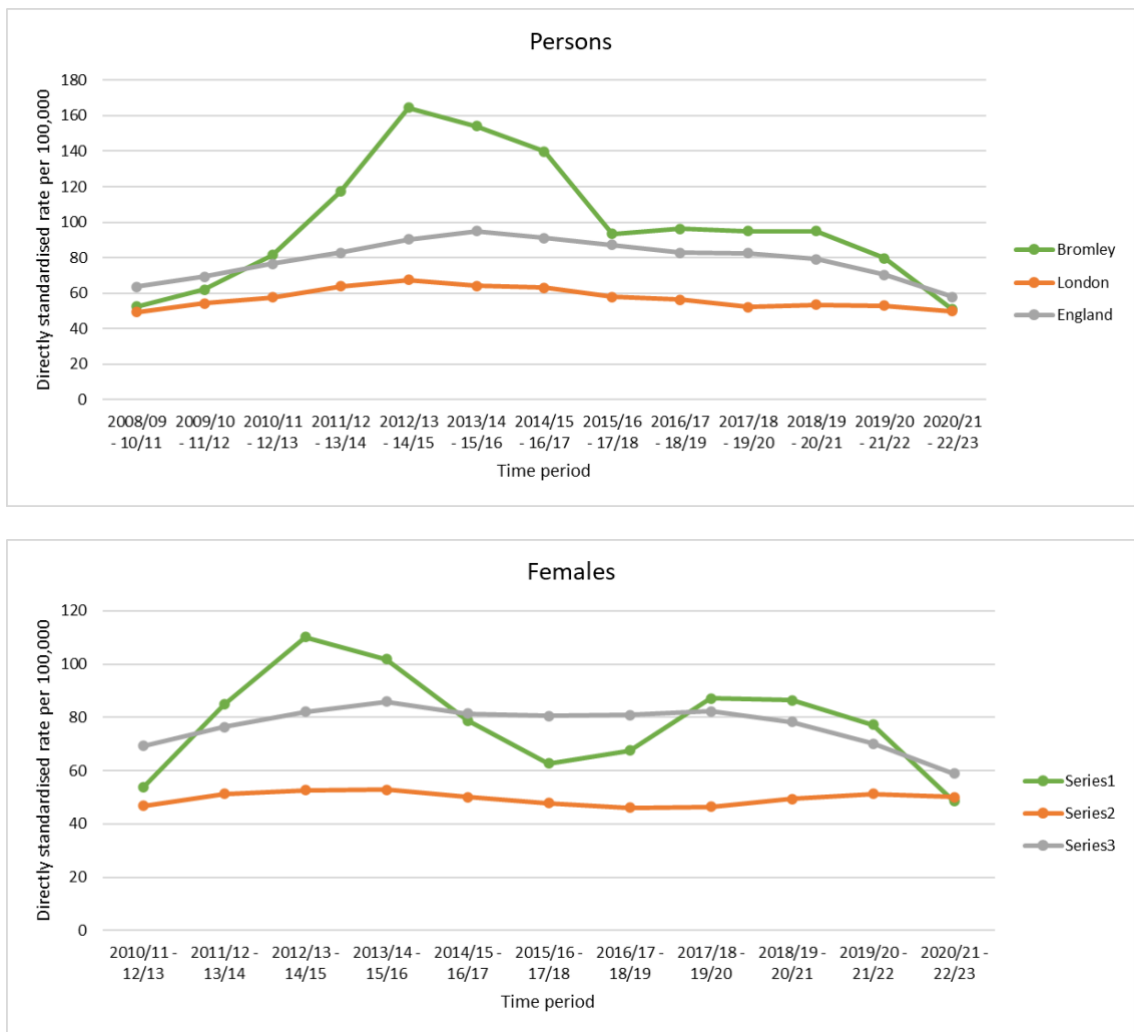
There is evidence to suggest there are increasing risks for those engaging in substance use, there is rising prevalence of synthetic opioids in England. In addition to a growing problem of people using synthetic opioids, in place of heroin, synthetic opioids are also more frequently being detected in recreational drugs such as MDMA.

There is an increase in young people in Bromley using multiple substances and an increase in young people presenting to the substance misuse service with complex vulnerabilities.

The age of young people using the substance misuse service is changing with fewer young people under the age of 14 presenting to substance misuse services.

Hospital admission data of a slightly older cohort aged 15-24 years shows that admission rates for substance misuse in young people in Bromley are below the rate for London.

Figure 3.12: Admissions for substance misuse*, age 15-24 years, Bromley and comparators



*Excludes alcohol Source: OHID fingertips, 2024

What this means for children and young people in Bromley?

The SHEU survey of year 10s in Bromley indicates a slight increase in the proportion of young people using drugs.

Local services report an increase in the number of young people presenting with complex vulnerabilities.

The main substances used continue to be cannabis and alcohol, although there is an increase in young people using multiple substances

There are emerging risks relating to adulterated vapes and synthetic opioids

Hospital admissions due to alcohol are comparable to the national average for young people in Bromley

d) Children and young people who are obese

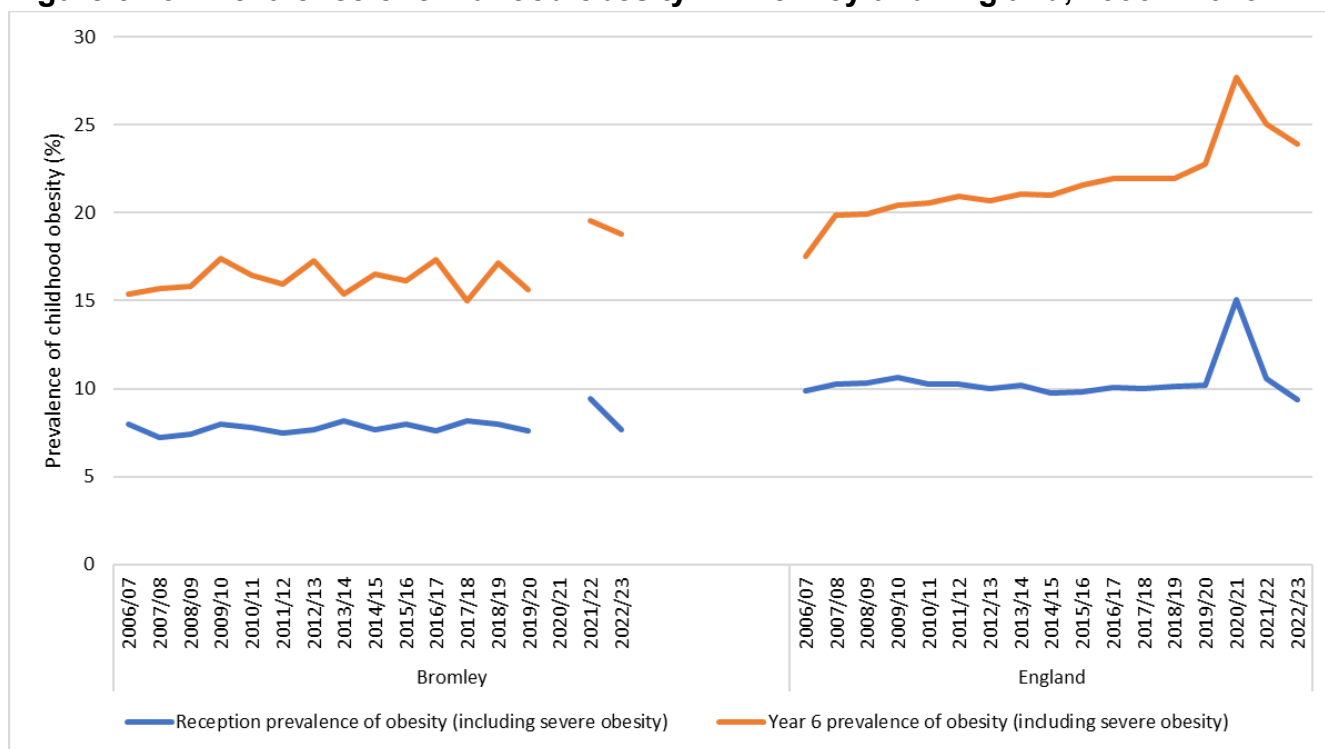
Severely obese children are at risk of developing a number of serious acute and chronic health problems.⁵ These children pose a significant concern in terms of their health and well-being and may require the provision of specialist services. Severe obesity prevalence varies significantly by geography and is highest in children living in income deprived households and those from black ethnic groups.⁶

Obese children are likely to remain obese. Severely obese Reception children are likely to remain severely obese in Year 6⁷. Only a small number of overweight and obese children return to a healthy weight in Year 6. Fewer children from Black and Asian groups and those from more deprived neighbourhoods return to a healthy weight.

⁵ Kelly, A.S., Barlow, S.E., Rao, G, et al. (2013). *Severe obesity in children and adolescents: identification, associated health risks, and treatment approaches: a scientific statement from the American Heart Association*. *Circulation*, **128**, 1689–712.

⁶ Ells, L.J., Hancock, C., Copley, V.R., Mead, E., Dinsdale, H., Kinra, S., Viner, R.M. and Rutter, H. (2015). *Prevalence of severe childhood obesity in England: 2006–2013*. *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, **100**, 631-636. ⁷ Public Health England. (2017). *Changes in the weight status of children between the first and final years of primary school: a longitudinal analysis of data from the NCMP in four local authorities in England between 2006/07 and 2014/15*. [online] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/609093/NCMP_tracking_report.pdf [Accessed 23/10/2017].

Figure 3.13: Prevalence of childhood obesity in Bromley and England, 2006 – 2023



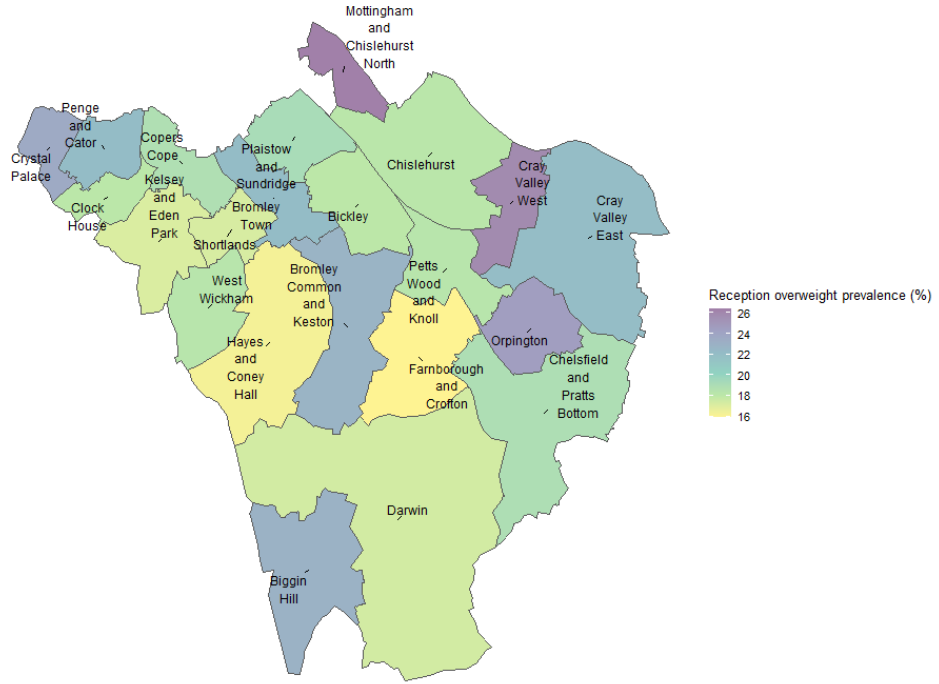
Source: OHID fingertips 2024

The rate of childhood obesity in Bromley is one of lowest rates in London and is also below the rates for England. The obesity rate increased during the pandemic in Bromley and in England for both age groups (measurement stopped in Bromley during the pandemic) . However the obesity rates in the younger children have fallen back to pre-pandemic levels while obesity rates in year 6 in Bromley and England have fallen back a bit but remain higher than they were pre-pandemic.

The percentage of children in Bromley schools who are obese doubles from their first year in primary school. Half of parents do not recognise that their children are overweight or obese ³. Childhood obesity is not evenly distributed within Bromley as shown in Figures 3.14 and 3.15.

Figure 3.14

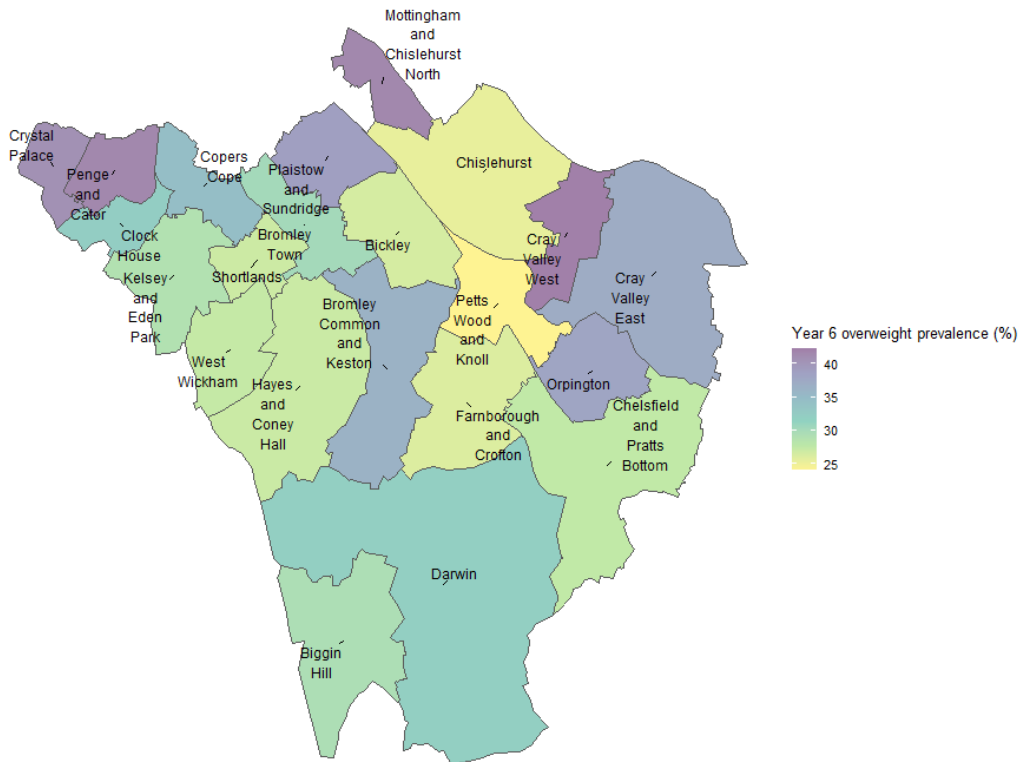
Reception prevalence of overweight (including obesity), 3 years combined in Bromley, 2020/21 - 22/23



Source: OHID Fingertips, 2023

Figure 3.15

Year 6 prevalence of overweight (including obesity), 3 years combined in Bromley, 2020/21 - 22/23



Source: OHID Fingertips, 2023

What this means for children in Bromley

Obesity rates in year 6 children in Bromley increased during the pandemic and have remained higher than the pre-pandemic level.

Rates are highest in the Cray Valley West and Mottingham in Year R (age 4-5) and in Cray Valley West, Mottingham and Penge in year 6 (age 10-11)

e) Children and Young People with Sensory Impairment

Table 3.4: SEN data from maintained primary, secondary and special schools, 2024

	Primary school	Secondary school	Special school
Hearing impairment	67	70	5
Vision impairment	46	38	4
Multi-sensory impairment	7	3	4

Source: LBB school SEND data 2024

Some children identified as vision impaired are registered blind or partially sighted.

Table 3.5: Registered Blind and Partially Sighted People, 2022-2023

	Age 0-4 years	Age 5-17 years
Number of children registered blind	5	25
Number of children registered partially sighted	<5	25

Source: NHS Digital, 2024

Hearing Impairment

Half of all deaf children are born deaf, whilst half acquire deafness during childhood⁷. 2 out of 5 deaf children will have additional or complex needs⁸.

g) Children and young people's online activity

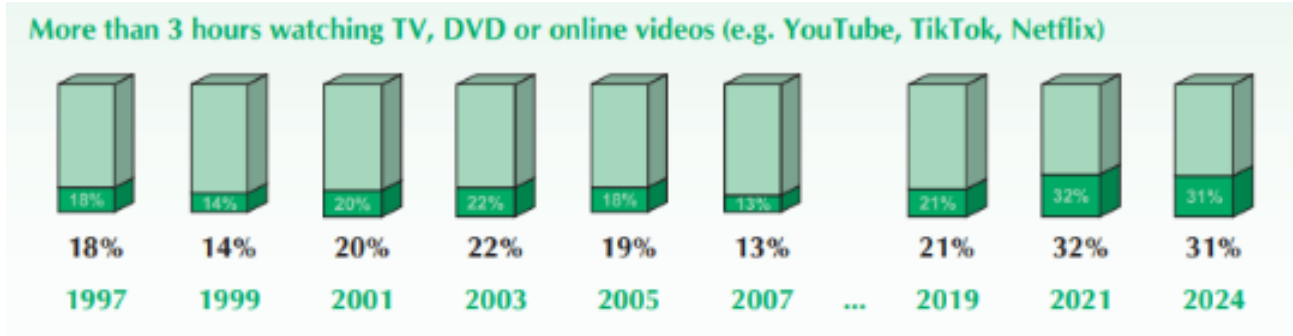
48% of Bromley year 10 pupils in 2024 (up from 41% in 2022) found school lessons about keeping safe online "quite" or "very" useful. Those young people who worried about keeping safe on the internet, email and mobile phones "often" or "all the time" had reduced from 10% in 2019 to 7% in 2021/22 but has now increased again to 11% in 2024.

Overall there has been an upward trend in the time spent online (Figure 3.16).

⁷ Kelly, A.S., Barlow, S.E., Rao, G, et al. (2013). *Severe obesity in children and adolescents: identification, associated health risks, and treatment approaches: a scientific statement from the American Heart Association*. *Circulation*, **128**, 1689–712.

⁸ National Deaf Children's Society Policy on Audiology 2010

Figure 3.16. Trend in online activities, 1997 to 2024, Bromley.



Source: SHEU survey 1997 to 2024

Pupils were asked about their online activities the day before the survey. The results are shown in Table 3.6. This shows gender differences in online activity.

Table 3.6: Online activity more than 3 hours a day

Activity	At all	For more than 3 hours	
		Boys	Girls
Watching TV, DVD or online videos	96%	19%	40%
Playing computer games	51%	21%	7%
Talking/messaging/video chat	90%	13%	26%
Using internet for something else	75%	16%	18%

Source: SHEU survey 2024

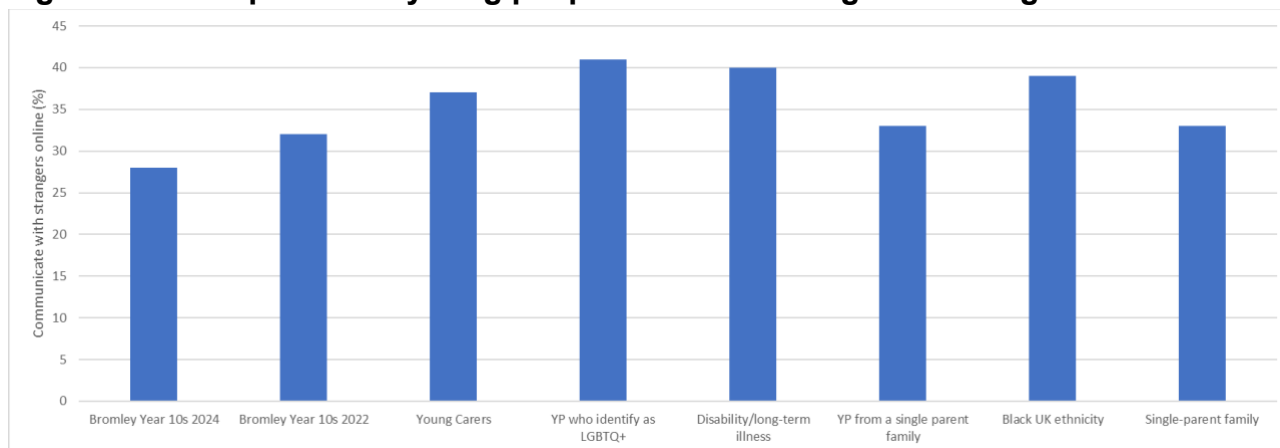
Some groups of young people in year 10 were more likely to spend more than 3 hours online the day before the survey. Those more likely to spend more than 3 hours were young people on free school meals (45%), young people with SEND (41%), and young people living in a single parent family (38%). A higher proportion of all of these groups were spending more than 3 hours online than they were in 2022.

16% of boys placed a bet online compared to 5% of girls.

Online communication with strangers

The proportion of year 10 pupils in Bromley communicating online with strangers has fallen a little to 28% in 2024 from 32% in 2022. In 2019 25% of young people communicated online with strangers.

Figure 3.17: Proportion of young people communicating with strangers online



Source: SHEU survey 2024

Some groups of young people were more likely to communicate with strangers online as shown in Figure 3.17.

Communicating with friends and family online

Almost all year 10 pupils in Bromley participated in communicating online with friends and family they know in real life (92% of boys and 95% of girls). 28% of year 10 pupils also communicate with people they have only met online and don't know in real life. Boys were more likely to communicate through online games (58% vs 24% of girls). Girls were more likely to send messages (91% vs 84% of boys), use picture/video sharing/apps (61% vs 40% of boys), or post things people could see (35% vs 20% of boys).

Undesirable online experience

50% of year 10 pupils in Bromley had undesirable online experiences, up from 41% in 2022. This was more common (53%) for females, those from a single parent family, those with a disability or long term condition or SEND, and those on free school meals. It was much more common (61%) for young people who identified as LGBTQ+ or Trans.

Table 3.7: Undesirable online experiences of year 10 pupils, Bromley, 2024

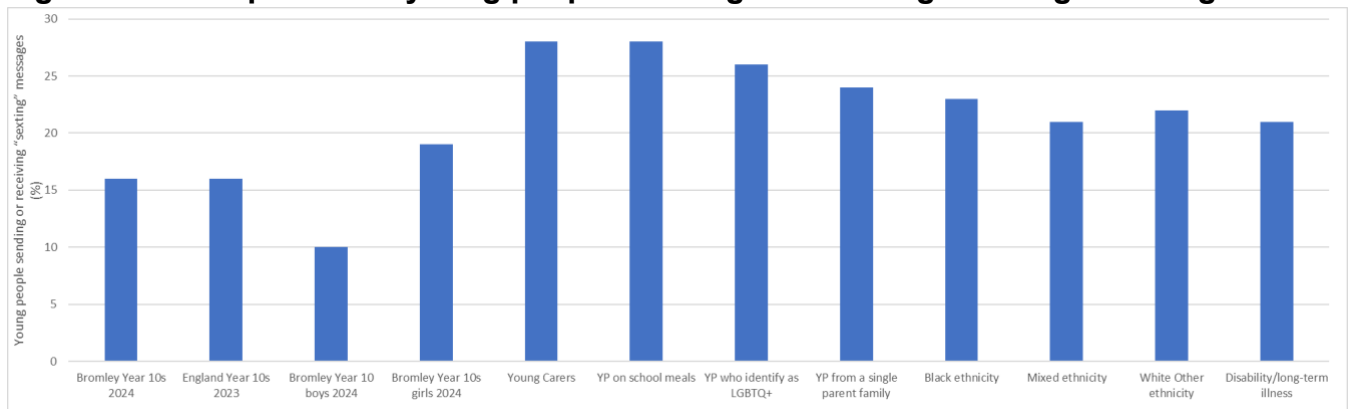
	Boys %	Girls %
Someone writing/showing things to upset or harm them	21	30
Sent personal information to someone and wished they hadn't	9	11
Someone asking to meet they have only met online	9	20
Being approached by an adult who wants a sexual encounter	5	14
Extremism online	8	3
Seeing sexually explicit images or videos or games	22	30
Sent undressed/sexual images of themselves	2	3
Someone who knows them sent "sexting" images of them	2	3
Received "sexting" images	10	18

Source: SHEU survey 2024

Sending or receiving “sexting” images

18% of year 10 girls (10% of boys) received “sexting” images in 2024. Groups more likely to send or receive “sexting” images were young carers, young people on free school meals and young people who identified as LGBTQ+.

Figure 3.18: Proportion of young people sending or receiving “sexting” messages



Source: SHEU survey 2024

30% year 10 girls saw sexually explicit images, videos or games (22% of boys)

What this means for children in Bromley

The proportion of year 10 pupils in Bromley having undesirable online experiences is increasing

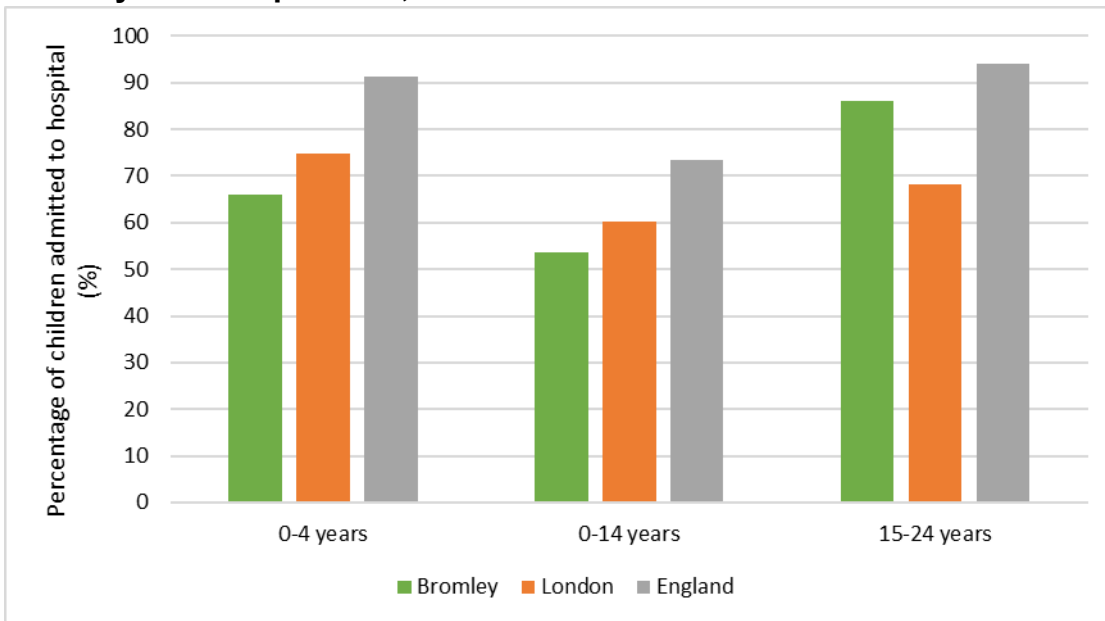
Fewer young people are communicating with strangers online than in 2022

g) Accidental injuries to children and young people

The SHEU survey in 2024¹ asked year 10 pupils in Bromley about accidents in the last 12 months which have required treatment in a clinic or hospital. The rate of reported accidents in 2024, 34%, is lower than in 2019 when the rate was 38%. However this is a higher rate than the national comparator (28%). The reported accident rate is higher in year 10 boys (38%) than girls (30%) and is also higher in young carers (49%), young people who have SEN (45%) or long term illness (44%). The most common reason for the accident was sports injury (22% boys and 12% girls).

Accidents which require admission to hospital are less common. The rate of admissions for accidents in younger children are lower in Bromley than the average for London and England as shown in Figure 3.19. Admission rates for accidents in 15-24 year olds are higher than the rate for London and lower than the rate for England.

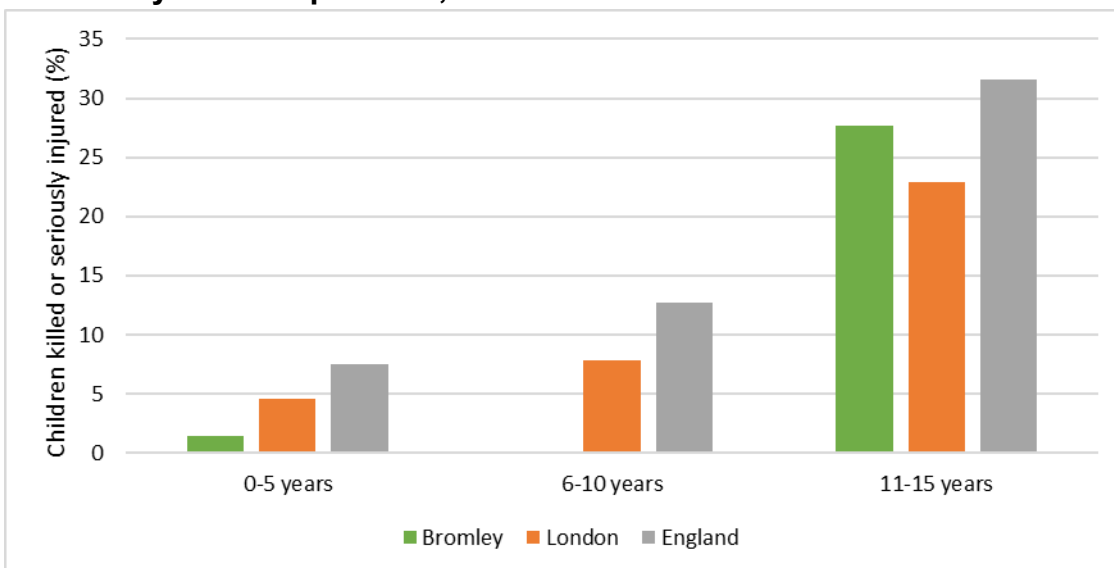
Figure 3.19: Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injury, Bromley and comparators, 2022/23



Source: OHID fingertips 2024

Children and young people in Bromley are generally safer on the road than in London and England apart from the age group 11-15 years.

Figure 3.20: Children killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic accidents (RTAs) in Bromley and comparators, 2020-2022



Source: OHID fingertips 2024

What this means for children in Bromley

Accident rates requiring treatment in a clinic in Bromley are higher than the national rate. Sports injuries (especially for boys) are the most common accidents

Hospital admissions due to accidents are lower in Bromley than national rates for children aged 14 or under.

Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents are lower in Bromley for younger children but above the London rate for young people aged 11-15 years.

2. Emerging emotional health needs

This section will give some recent data from GPs and describe the findings of the SHEU survey. A detailed mental health needs assessment is being written separately.

GP records in Bromley in August 2024 identified 6165 under 18s with mental health problems. These included 4348 children and young people with anxiety, 1356 young people with depression or low mood, and 480 young people with suicidal thoughts or self harm.

In 2019, 60% of year 10s in Bromley were optimistic about the future “often” or “all the time”. In 2022 this had fallen to 31% (38% boys, 27% girls) but in 2024 it has risen again to 37% in year 10 and 45% in year 13.

The proportion with a low mental well-being score in 2024 was lower than the national rate (8% vs 12%). Young people in year 10 in Bromley were also less likely to self harm when worried or stressed than the national comparator (8% vs 12%).

The difference in mental well-being between year 10 boys and girls persisted in a number of areas. The young people were asked whether “often” or “all the time”:

- They felt useful (42% of boys, 23% of girls)
- They felt relaxed (42% of boys, 24% of girls)
- They felt they dealt with problems well (46% of boys, 27% of girls)
- They were thinking clearly (44% of boys, 26% of girls)
- They were feeling close to other people (53% of boys, 47% of girls)
- They felt able to make their own mind up about things (62% of boys, 40% of girls)

There were also clear differences between the year 10 boys and girls in how often they worried.

Table 3.8: Issues year 10 pupils worried about often or “all the time”, 2024

Issue worried about “often” or “all the time”	Boys	Girls
Exams/tests	44%	68%
School work problems	28%	56%
The way they look	21%	48%
Physical health	23%	39%
Mental health	19%	39%
Relationships	18%	24%
Problems with friends	15%	31%
Family problems	14%	28%
Money problems		10%
Keeping safe on the Internet, e-mail and using mobile phones	6%	
Being separated from friends or carers	8%	16%

Source: SHEU survey, 2024

A large proportion of Year 10 pupils worried about some of these issues often or all of the time. Bromley year 10 pupils were slightly more likely than the national comparison group to worry.

There were marked gender differences in how the year 10s reacted when they had a problem or felt stressed. The year 10 boys would:

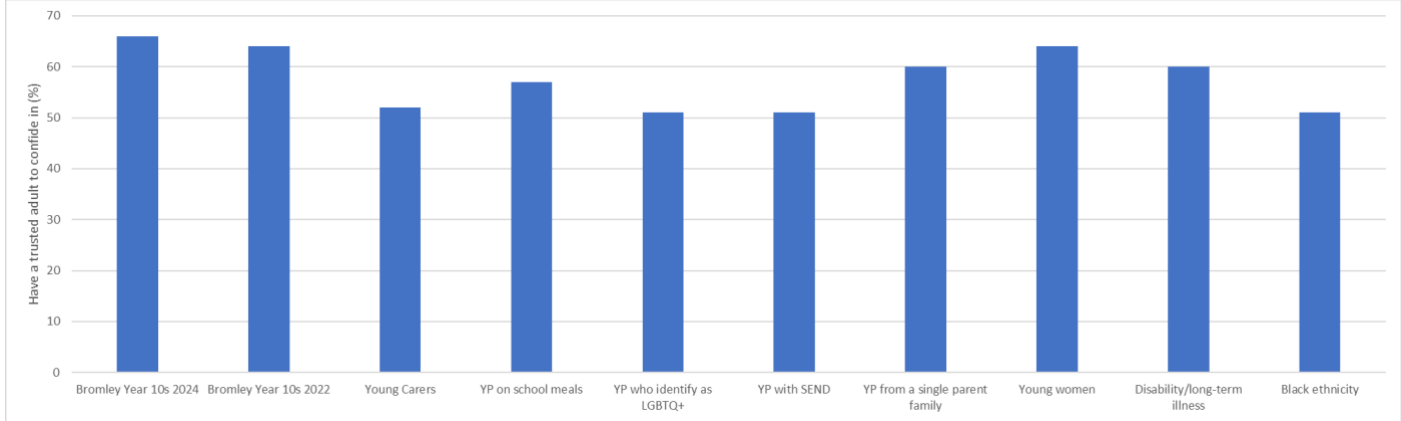
- Talk to someone in their family about it (42%)
- Think about it on their own (39%)
- Try to sort the problem out by themselves (35%)
- Talk to a friend at school about it (33%)
- Do nothing (31%)
- Play video/online games (31%)
- Listen to music (31%)
- Rest or sleep more (29%)
- Keep busy with other things (28%), or
- Exercise more (25%)

In contrast if the year 10 girls had a problem or felt stressed they would:

- Listen to music (50%)
- Think about it on their own (45%)
- Rest or sleep more (45%)
- Talk to someone in family about it (39%)
- Talk to a friend at school about it (37%)
- Try to sort the problem out by themselves (36%)
- Eat less/eat more (35%)
- Do nothing (29%)
- Watch TV, DVDs, videos (28%)

The proportion of year 10 pupils who know an adult they trust who they can talk to if they are worried about something has fallen in Bromley from 69% in 2019 to 64% in 2022 and 66% in 2024. Boys in 2022 are more likely to know someone than girls (71% vs 64%). Other groups less likely to know someone they can talk to includes young people who are black, young people with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities, young carers, and young people who identify as LGBTQ+ or Trans.

Figure 3.21: Proportion of young people with a “trusted adult” they can talk to



Source: SHEU survey 2024

What this means for children and young people in Bromley

GP records indicate large numbers of children and young people with mental health problems.

Yr 10 pupils, especially girls, worry about a lot of issues most of the time

Positive findings include that rates of self harm in year 10 pupils continue to be lower than the national rate.

An issue for some young people, particularly young people who are black or who have Special Educational Needs, is the lack of an adult they trust who they can talk to if they are worried about something.

3. Emerging education issues

a) Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)

This section focuses on children and young people who have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) at the school support level. Those with SEND needs at Education, Care and Health Plans (EHCP) level are discussed in Section 4.

Children with SEND can be very vulnerable; they often do not achieve the same educational outcomes as their peers and are more likely to be excluded from school.

The number of pupils in Bromley schools with Special Educational Needs is currently at 9,390 pupils (based on the Spring 2024 school census). Of these, 6,748 pupils have SEN needs at support level. Their distribution is shown in Table 3.9 .

Table 3.9. Type of need at SEN support level, 2023/24 academic year, Bromley

Type of need – SEN support level	Mainstream Primary phase	Mainstream Secondary phase	Pupil Referral Unit	Total
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	129	285	1	415
Hearing Impairment	46	51	0	97
Moderate Learning Difficulty	161	202	0	363
Multi- Sensory Impairment	6	3	0	9
Physical Disability	47	54	0	101
Severe Learning Difficulty	4	3	0	7
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	735	1050	62	1846
Specific Learning Difficulty	451	940	0	1391
Speech, Language and Communications needs	1407	404	0	1811
Visual Impairment	37	33	0	70
Other	139	234	0	373
SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need	184	81	0	265

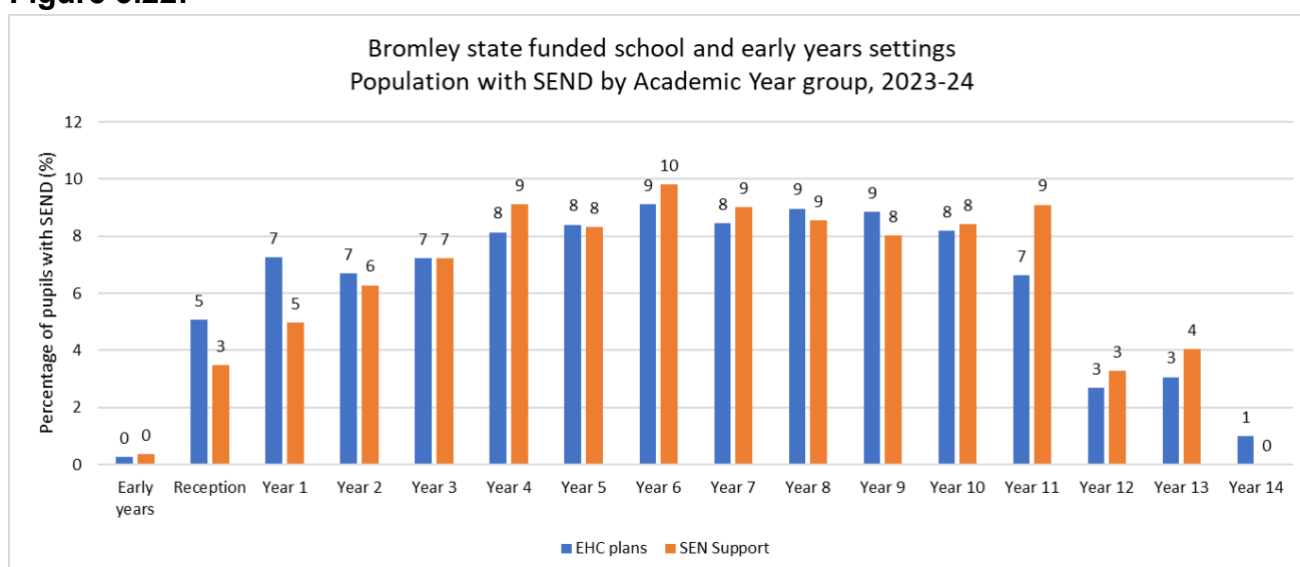
Source: Department for Education data, October 2024

This data shows that the most common reasons for SEN support in the primary school phase are Speech, Language and Communications needs, and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.

The most common reasons for SEN support in the secondary school phase are Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs and Specific Learning Difficulty.

The distribution of pupils with SEN across the school years is shown in Figure 3.22.

Figure 3.22:



Source: Department of Education, 2024

Overall, in Bromley schools, 12.7% of pupils receive SEN support and 5.0% pupils have an EHC Plan (2024 school census data). The majority of pupils with SEND are in mainstream schools.

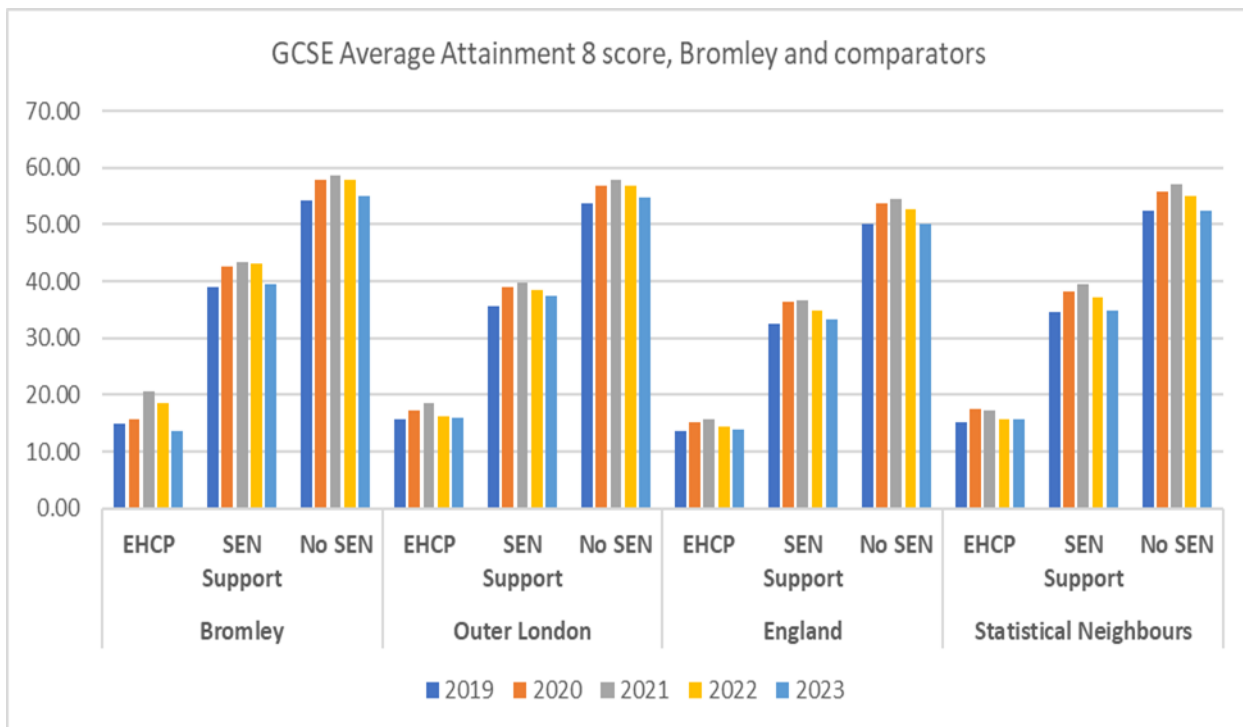
Table 3.10 Children with SEN by type of need in maintained schools and academies, 2024

Primary type of need 2024	Primary schools	Secondary schools	Special school	Pupil referral unit	Total	% share
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	405	444	94	1	944	10.1%
Hearing Impairment	67	70	5	0	142	1.5%
Moderate Learning Difficulty	181	229	125	0	535	5.7%
Multi- Sensory Impairment	7	3	4	0	14	0.1%
Other Difficulty/Disability	178	254	6	0	438	4.7%
Physical Disability	73	77	9	0	159	1.7%
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty	15	1	107	0	123	1.3%
SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need	184	81	0	0	265	2.8%
Severe Learning Difficulty	33	5	298	0	336	3.6%
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	862	1195	170	62	2289	24.4%
Specific Learning Difficulty	513	1015	27	0	1555	16.6%
Speech, Language and Communications needs	1896	559	47	0	2502	26.6%
Visual Impairment	46	38	4	0	88	0.9%

Source: [School census data 2024](#)

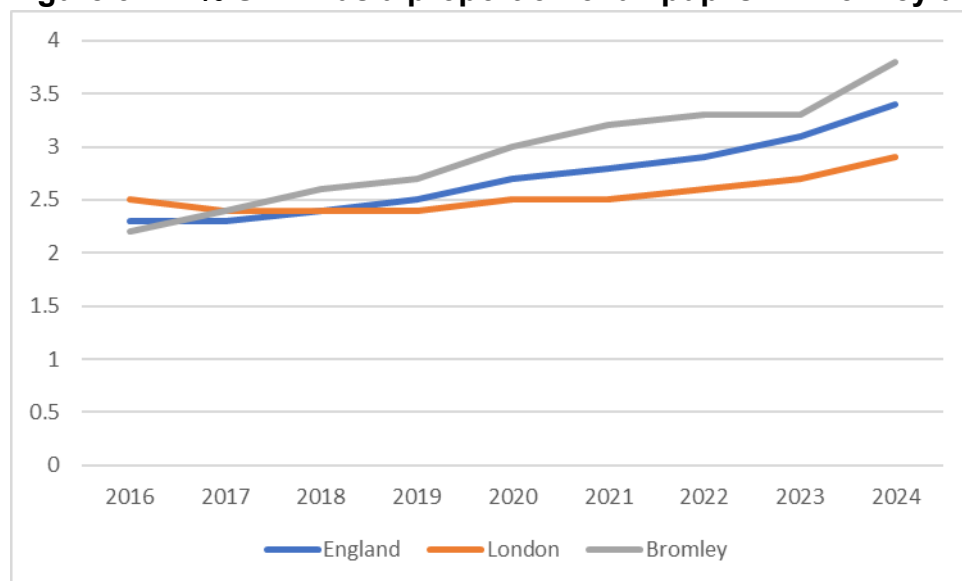
Figure 3.23 shows that pupils at GCSE level (Key stage 4) are achieving better in Bromley for those receiving SEN support. Attainment 8 score is calculated by adding together pupils' highest scores across eight government approved school subjects.

Figure 3.23: Pupils average Attainment 8 score, 2019-23, Bromley and comparators



Pupils with SEMH are a higher proportion of pupils in Bromley (3.8%) than in London (2.9%) or England (3.4%) and this proportion is increasing (Figure 3.24).

Figure 3.24: % SEMH as a proportion of all pupils in Bromley and comparators, 2024



Source: Dept for Education SEND data

What this means for children and young people in Bromley?

The proportion of all pupils with social, emotional or mental health issues in Bromley is significantly higher than the national average and rising.

Attainment at GCSE of Bromley pupils receiving SEN support is higher than comparators.

The rest of the SEND analysis is in Section 4: Established needs

Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs

Speech, language and communication skills are core to overall child development. Difficulties in these areas will potentially have significant and far-reaching impacts on social, emotional, behavioural and academic development. The term 'Speech, Language and Communication needs' (SLCN) is the most commonly used term to describe children who find it hard to talk and/or understand what people say to them. Autistic Spectrum Disorder is a type of social communication disorder but is measured and reported separately.

A variety of adverse outcomes are associated with SLCN in a child. These include:

- being bullied
- mental health difficulties
- lower educational attainment

- up to 60% of young offenders have SLCN⁹
- 88% of long term unemployed men have SLCN¹⁰

It is estimated that, nationally, 7% of children 0-5 years will have speech, language and communication needs, but this may be as high as 55% of under 5s and 35% of 5 to 16 year olds in areas of high deprivation¹⁰.

An “Ages and Stages Questionnaire” (ASQ) is used nationally as a screening tool to identify developmental delay in young children. In 2023/24 in Bromley, 1,474 children aged 24-27 months were screened using this tool as part of the routine Health Visitor developmental review. Of the children screened, 85% met the expected standard in communication but 218 children (15%) were below the expected developmental standard for this age group. In most cases parents will be given advice by the HV team and the child reassessed a few weeks later. In cases with poorer scores, or if the child does not improve after simple advice, they are referred to a Speech and Language therapist.

Comparing those with SLCN needs in Bromley with England:

- The rate of identified Speech, language and communication needs (both SEN support and EHC Plan) is higher in Bromley at 4.7% than for England at 4.4% but lower than the rate for London of 5.3%.
- The rate of identified Autistic Spectrum Disorder (both SEN support and EHC Plan) is lower in Bromley at 1.8% than for London at 3.1% and England at 2.8%.
- There may be some substitution of a primary need of ASD with SLCN. The total proportion of all pupils with either ASD or SLCN in England is 7.2%, in London it is 7.8%, and in Bromley it is 6.2%. This indicates that although there may be some substitution, the overall level of communication need is lower in Bromley children and young people than in London or England.

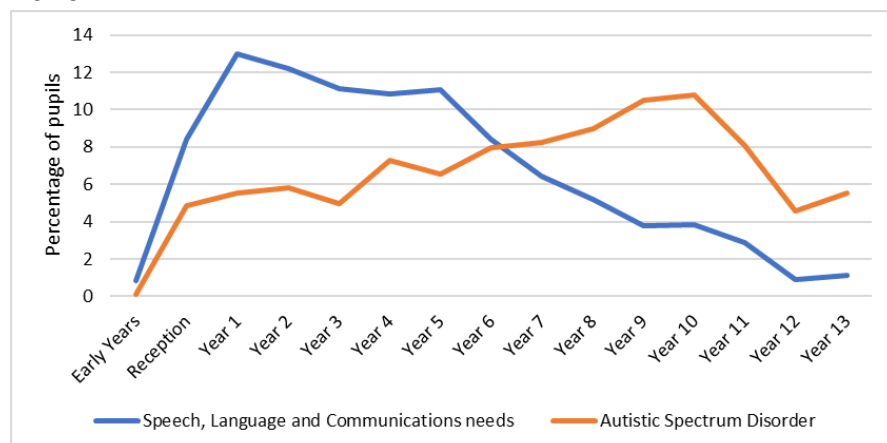
The distribution of SLCN needs across the age range in Bromley is not uniform, with the rate of SLCN need in primary school age children higher than the rate of SLCN need in secondary school age children, but this pattern reversed for pupils with ASD (Figure 3.25).

⁹ Davies, S.C. (2013). *Annual report of the chief medical officer 2012 - our children deserve better: prevention pays*. [online] Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/255237/2901304_CMO_complete_low_res_accessible.pdf [Accessed 23/10/2017].

¹⁰ Bercow, J.S. (2008). *Bercow report – a review of services for children and young people (0-19) with speech, language and communication needs*. [online] Available at: http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/8405/7/7771-dcsfhttp://dera.ioe.ac.uk/8405/7/7771-dcsf-bercow_Redacted.pdf [Accessed 23/10/2017].

Figure 3.25: Proportion of pupils with SLCN and ASD by school year in Bromley, 2023/24



Source: Department for Education SEND data, 2024

Approximately 2502 children and young people in Bromley schools are identified as having SLCN (1811 at SEN support level and 691 at EHC Plan level). Of these, 1896 are primary school age and 559 are secondary school age. 47 pupils with SLCN are in special school.

SLCN is described in more detail in Section 4: Children with Established Needs.

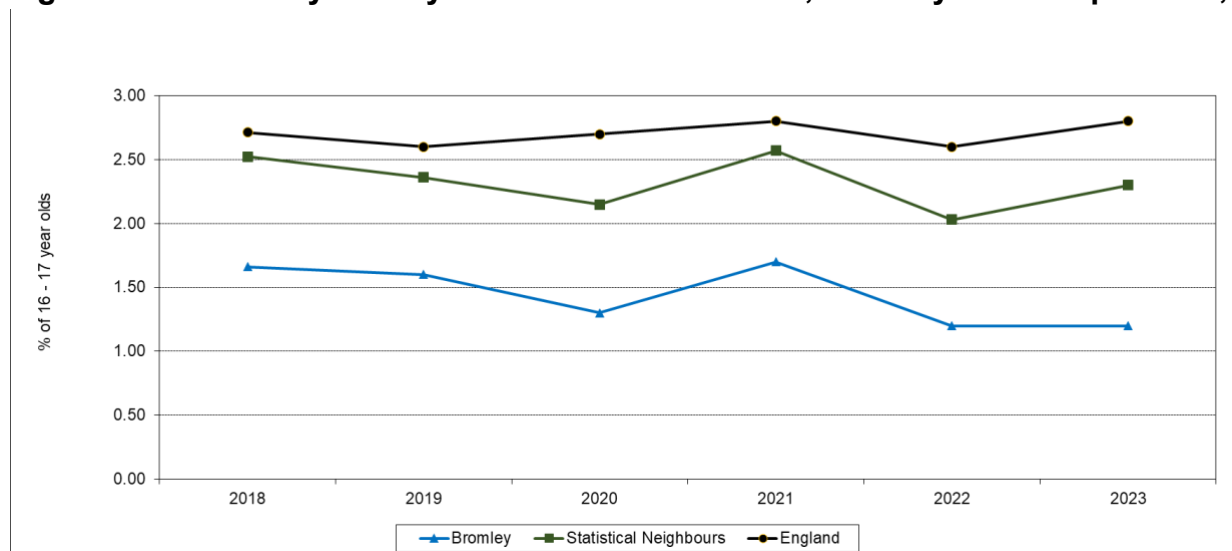
What this means for children in Bromley
 The level of communication need is lower in Bromley children and young people than in London or England.

b) Young People who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

Those at risk of being NEET include; young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, those who have underachieved in school, teenage parents, young people in or leaving care, and young people with learning disabilities or mental health problems.

The latest published rate of NEET in Bromley 16-17 year olds was 1.2% in 2023. This compares favourably to a rate of 2.3% in statistical neighbours and 2.8% nationally.

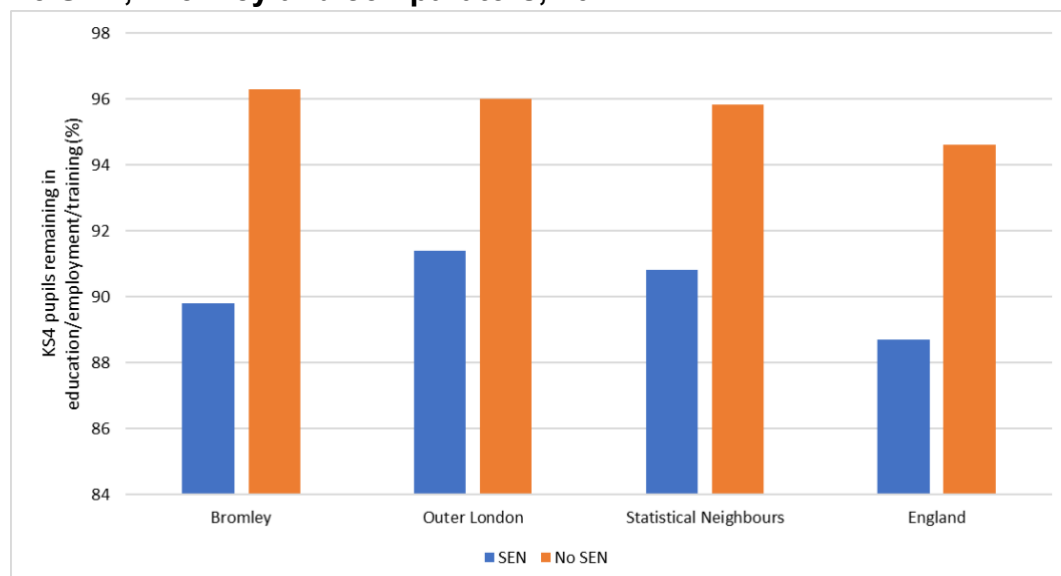
Figure 3.26: Bromley 16-17 years olds who are NEET, Bromley and comparators, 2024



Source: LAIT 2024

The proportion of pupils with SEND who remain in education, employment or training after KS4 in Bromley is lower than statistical neighbours and higher than the rate in England (Figure 3.27).

Figure 3.27: % KS4 pupils remaining in education, employment or training, SEN and no SEN, Bromley and comparators, 2022.



Source: LAIT 2024

What this means for children and young people in Bromley?

Rates of NEET in Bromley are lower than statistical neighbours and the national rate.

Rates of NEET for pupils with SEND are better than the national average but lower than statistical neighbours.

c) Children and young people who are not attending school

School is a protective factor in the life of most children and young people. When a young person does not attend school regularly they can quickly lose step with their peers, both educationally and socially. They are also less likely to be protected from harm and may not be observed by adults who recognise the signs of harm. Attendance at school also limits the extent to which young people can engage in harmful or antisocial behaviours such as self-harm, drug and alcohol use, offending and gang association. It also reduces the risk of CSE.

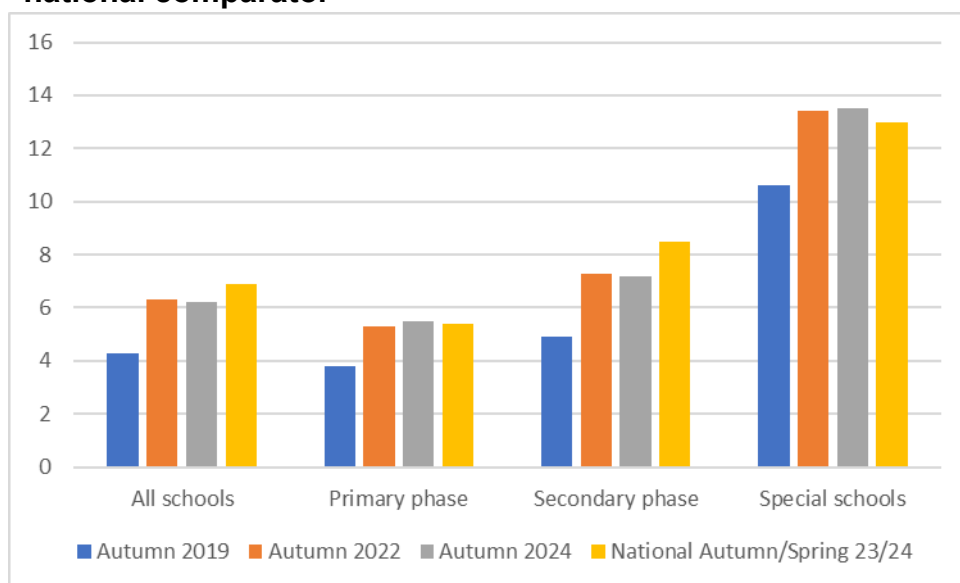
The SHEU survey 2024 found that 82% of pupils had attended school on 5 or more days in the week prior to the survey. There were no differences in attendance between boys and girls.

In the month before the 2024 SHEU survey:

- 41% missed no school at all (an increase from 39% in 2019 and 34% in 2022)
- 43% missed school due to illness or injury (an increase from 37% in 2022)
- 21% missed school due to medical or dental appointments (20% in 2022)

Pupil absence rates from school increased both locally and nationally during the pandemic and are very slowly reducing again. Overall absence rates are lower in Bromley than the national rate, mostly due to better attendance in the secondary phase.

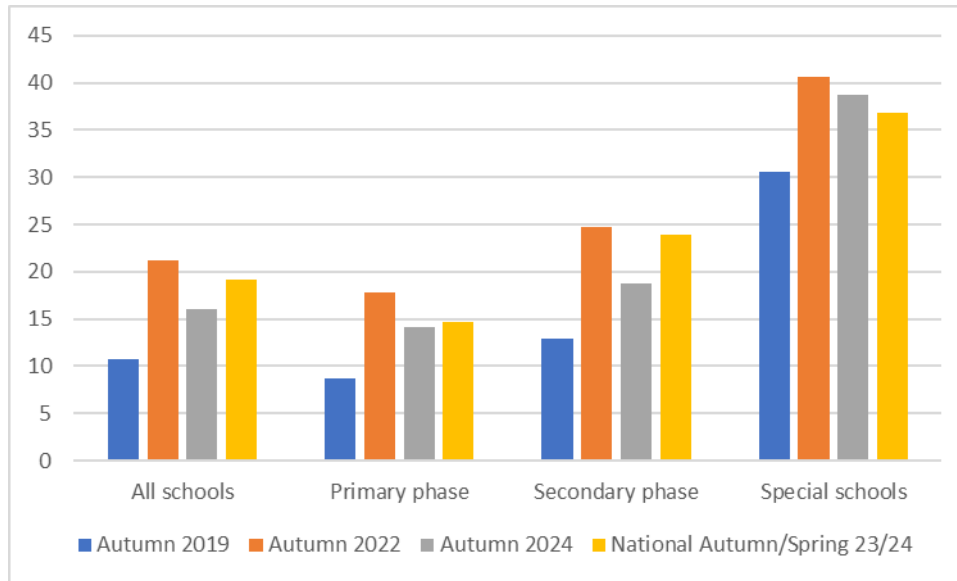
Figure 3.28: % of pupils who are reported absent, trend in Bromley, 2019 to 2024, and national comparator



Source: Dept for Education October 2024

Persistent absence is defined as an attendance record of less than 90%, measured over a single term. This amounts to around 7 days per term. Persistent absence rates are lower in Bromley than national rates except for special schools.

Figure 3.29: % of pupils who miss more than 10% of school, trend in Bromley, 2019 to 2024, and national comparator



Source: Dept for Education May 2024

Young people with SEND and those eligible for free school meals (FSM) are more likely to be classed as persistently absent.

Figure 3.30 shows that in 2018/19, persistent absence rates of children and young people in Bromley with an EHC Plan or with SEN support were higher than those for London. Persistent absence rates of children and young people in Bromley in special schools were higher than those in London and England.

By 2023/24, persistent absence rates for those with an EHC Plan or with SEN support were the same as London and better than the England rate. Persistent absence rates of children and young people in Bromley in special schools were the same as London but still higher than England.

Figure 3.30: Persistent absence from school of children and young people with SEND, 2018/19 and 2023/24, Bromley and comparators

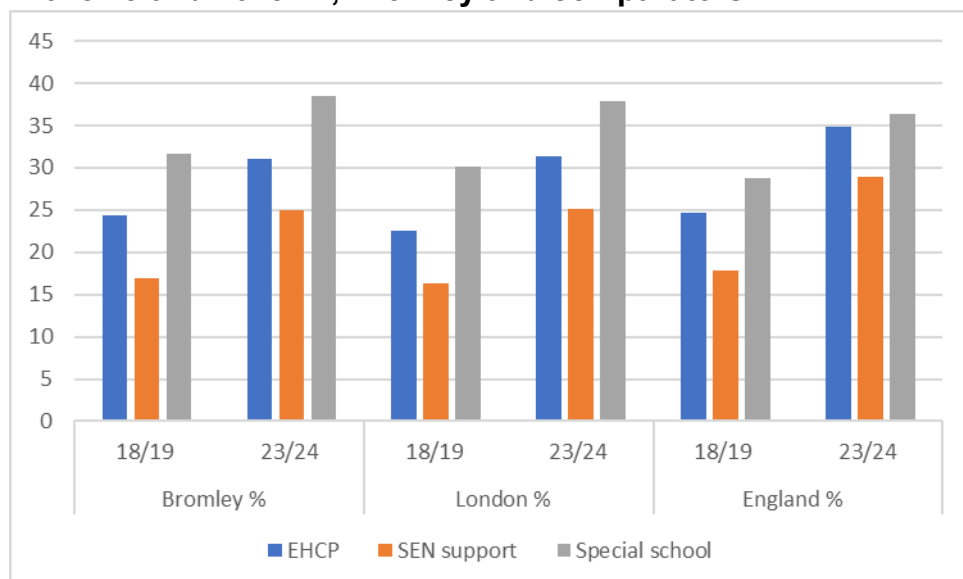


Table 3.11 shows that persistent absence rates for young people eligible for free school meals are higher in Bromley than the national average and much higher than the rate for London.

Table 3.11. Persistent absence from school of children and young people eligible for free school meals, 2023/24, Bromley and comparators

Pupil characteristic	Bromley %	London %	England %
Eligible for FSM	35.7	27.7	33.0
Not eligible for FSM	11.6	12.7	13.8

Source: Dept for Education October 2024

The SHEU survey 2024 asked year 10 pupils about reasons for missing school in previous month (Table 3.12).

Table 3.12: Proportion of pupils reporting school absence in previous month, year 10 pupils, 2024

Reason	Boys %	Girls %
Illness or injury	39	47
Medical/dental appointments	14	27
Having their period	-	14
Worries about school	-	5
Mental Health	3	15
Other	3	-

Source: SHEU survey 2024

What this means for children and young people in Bromley?

- School absence rates for children with SEND are no longer significantly higher than comparators
- Persistent absence rates of children eligible for free school meals in Bromley are higher than the rates for England and much higher than the rates for London.

Children and young people excluded from school

Children and young people may be excluded from school temporarily (suspension) or permanently (permanent exclusion). Exclusion from school is known to impact significantly on young people's life chances and wellbeing. Over 80% of permanently excluded children are estimated to develop mental health difficulties and many will struggle with poor self-esteem. They may struggle to secure opportunities in employment or studies later in life.

Figure 3.31. Trends in rates of suspension, Bromley and comparators, 2021 to 2023



Figure 3.31 shows that suspension rates in Bromley schools are comparable to outer London and below the national rate. The numbers of suspensions and permanent exclusions in Bromley schools are shown in Table 3.13.

Table 3.13: Numbers of children and young people suspended or permanently excluded in Bromley, 2020/21 to 2022/23

	Suspension			Permanent exclusions		
	20/21	21/22	22/23	20/21	21/22	22/23
Bromley	1,437	3004	2539	17	35	48

The rate of permanent exclusions is shown below (Figure 3.32). This shows that the rate of suspensions in Bromley has increased faster than the rate for London, although still below the national rate.

Figure 3.32. Trends in rates of suspension, Bromley and comparators, 2021 to 2023



The following table breaks down the exclusions and suspensions by type of school. Table 3.14 shows that the exclusion rate in Bromley is lower than for outer London and England except in the special schools where it is higher than both.

Table 3.14: Rate of Fixed Period and Permanent Exclusions in maintained Primary, Secondary and Special Schools in Bromley 2022/23

	Primary schools		Secondary schools		Special schools	
	Suspension %	Permanent exclusion %	Suspension %	Permanent exclusion %	Suspension %	Permanent exclusion %
England	1.8	0.03	18.9	0.2	11.0	0.08
Outer London	1.0	0.01	9.2	0.1	9.2	0.02
Bromley	1.0	0.01	8.8	0.2	14.4	0

Source: Department for Education 2024

Figure 3.33. Trend in rate of permanent exclusions, Bromley and comparators, 2021 to 2023

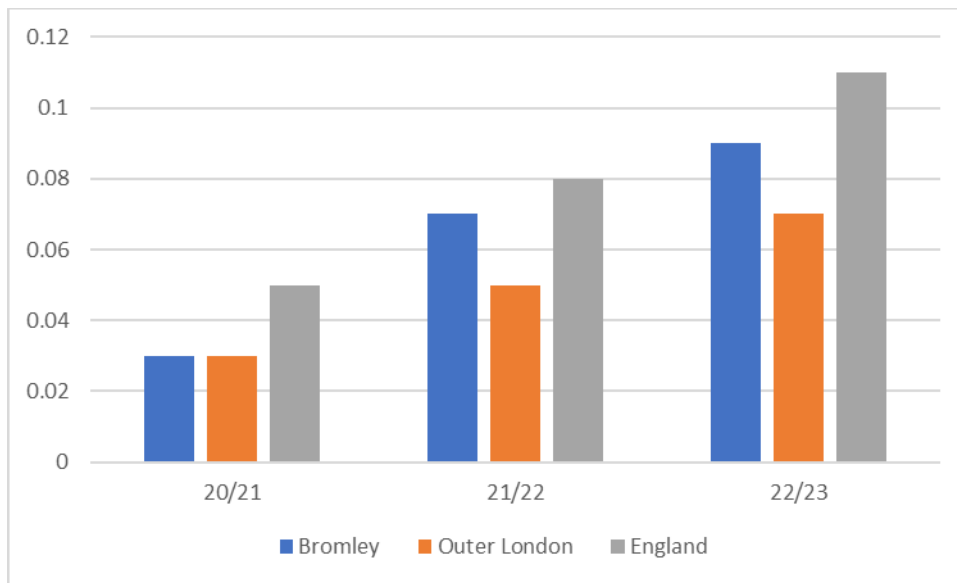


Table 3.15 gives a detailed analysis of reasons for exclusions, although due to small numbers caution should be taken in interpreting this data. Bromley has a higher rate of exclusions for verbal abuse and threatening behaviour against a pupil and physical assault against a pupil than other areas. Rates of exclusion due to use/threat of use of an offensive weapon and drug and alcohol related reasons have fallen in Bromley and in comparators.

Table 3.15: Reasons for exclusions in maintained schools in Bromley and comparators, 2020/21

	Physical assault against a pupil	Physical assault against an adult	Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against a child	Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult	Bullying	Racist abuse	Sexual misconduct	Drug and alcohol related	Persistent disruptive behaviour	Use or threat of use of offensive weapon
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
England	15.3	11.9	5.2	12.3	0.7	0.5	1.1	4.6	38.5	5.3
Outer London	17.6	8.4	6.2	9.3	1.2	0.9	1.8	5.9	35.3	8.7
Bromley	25.4	3.2	11.1	9.5	1.6	0	1.6	6.4	30.2	6.4

Source: Department for Education 2024

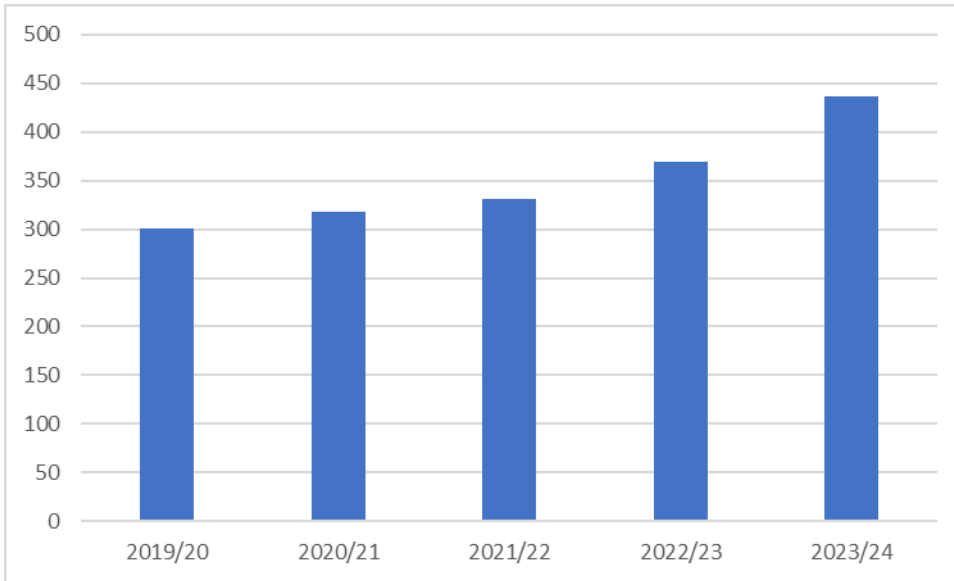
What this means for children and young people in Bromley?

Suspension and permanent exclusion rates have gone up across London and England, but permanent exclusion rates are higher in Bromley special schools than comparators.

d) Children who are Electively Home Educated (EHE)

Elective Home Education is a conscious decision by parents or carers to educate their children at home. The number of children declared EHE in Bromley is rising.

Figure 3.34: Average number of children declared EHE in Bromley, 2019/20 to 2023/24

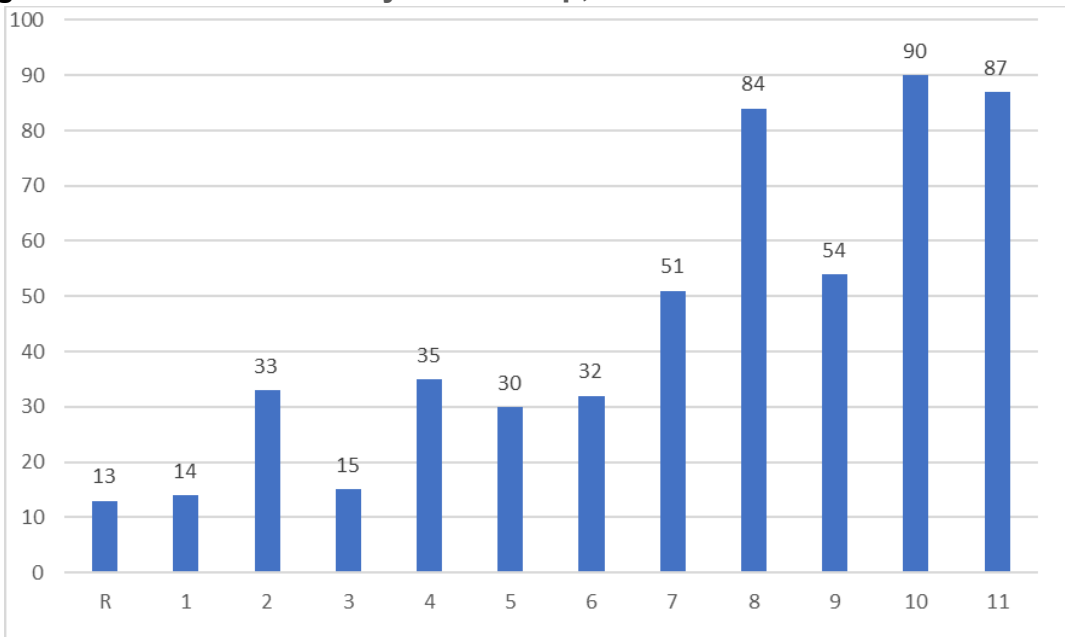


Source: ECHS data

There is an overall increase in EHE, both locally and nationally. This number is fluid with some children returning to mainstream education during the academic year.

The academic stage and gender of the EHE children in Bromley in June 2024 is shown in Figure 3.35. The number of declared EHE pupils is higher in secondary years compared to primary.

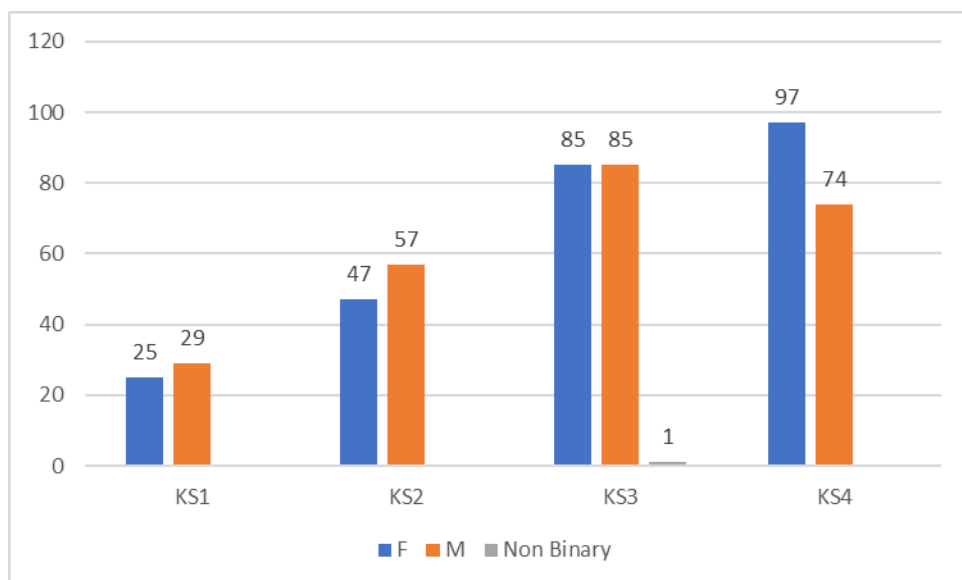
Figure 3.35: EHE Cohort by Year Group, June 2024



Source: ECHS data

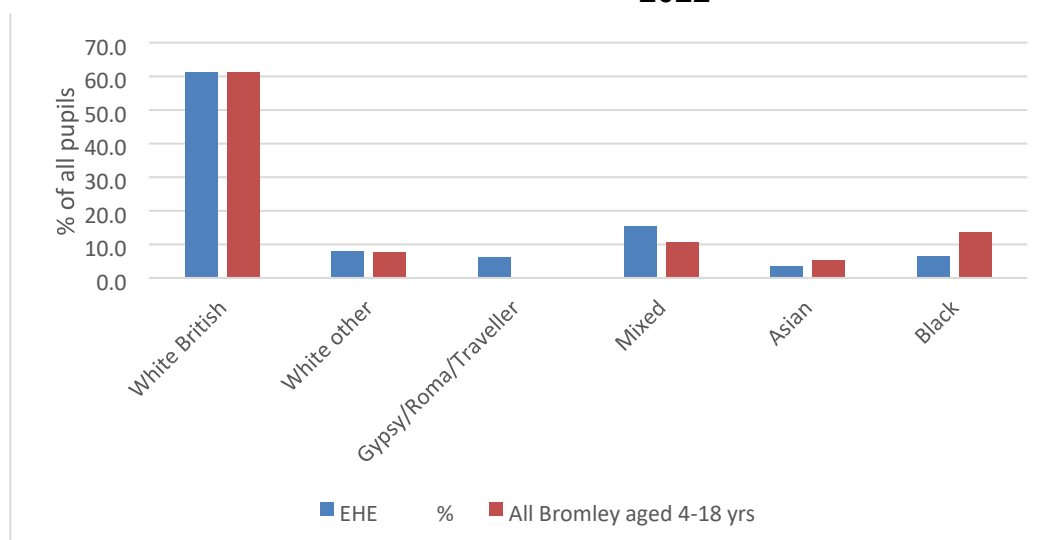
There is no clear pattern of gender difference.

Figure 3.36. EHE Cases by Key Stage and Gender, Bromley, June 2024



There are some differences in ethnicity of EHE pupils with Gypsy/Roma/Traveller children significantly over-represented in the EHE population, and to a lesser extent children of mixed ethnicity. Figure 3.37 uses data from 2022.

Figure 3.37: Ethnicity of EHE children compared to all children of school age in Bromley, 2022



National research suggests that some parents are encouraged to remove their children from school rather than to have them excluded.

What this means for children and young people in Bromley?

The number of children who are electively home educated continues to grow in Bromley

The majority of EHE in Bromley are of secondary school age.

4. Emerging social issues

This section starts with the lowest level of social care support as seen in Early Help services and CAF assessments. The next level of need is Children in Need (CiN), and the highest levels of need are seen in children subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP) or children who are taken into public care, Children Looked After (CLA). The needs of CPP and CLA are set out in Section 4: Children and Young People with Established Needs.

a) Early help

National evidence demonstrates a link between socio-economic status and attainment with a developmental gap, apparent as early as 22 months. This means that when children start school there is already a gap in attainment between children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and children overall. It is now widely accepted that high quality early years services and high quality teaching and learning in schools can enable all children to achieve well.

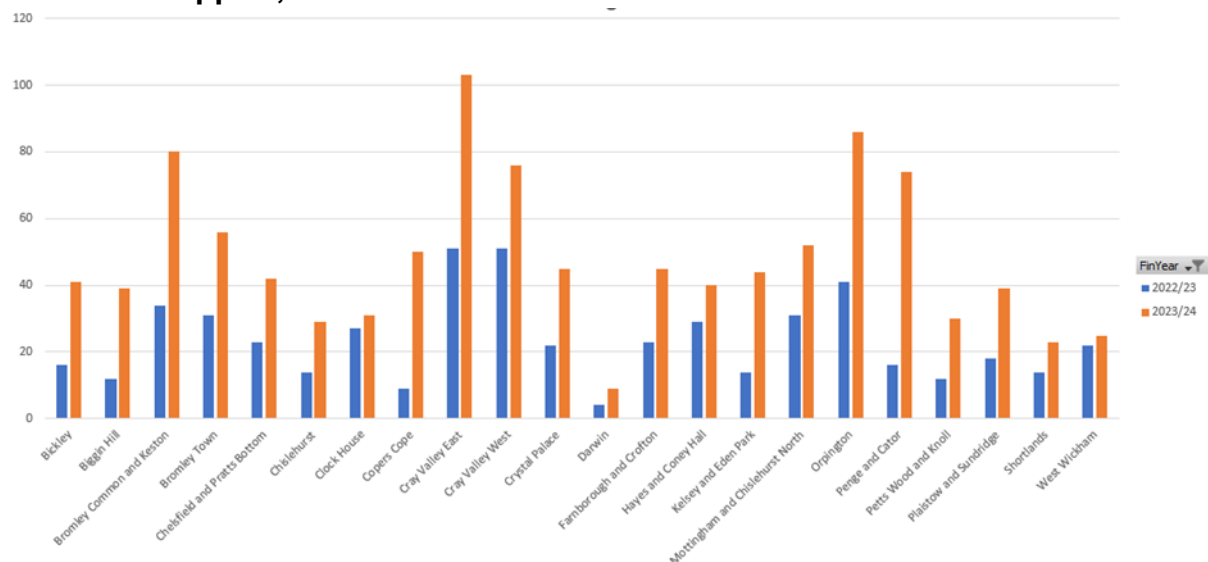
Most children grow up without needing more than the help of universal services such as health and education. However, some children at different stages of their life journey may have additional needs which require support so that they can grow up successfully in secure, healthy home environments.

Local agencies in Bromley work together, to identify children with additional needs and provide support as soon as a problem emerges.

Some children and families with lower levels of need are supported by Bromley Children Project Early Intervention Family Support and the Children and Family Centres. The total number of children living in families where the family are receiving support from Bromley Children Project Family Support, CAF, or Children and Family Centres is set out in Figure 3.39 by ward.

Some wards have a higher number of children living in families who are receiving support in 2023/24, namely Cray Valley East and Orpington.

Figure 3.38: Number of Children & Young People in Bromley, by ward, who need intensive support, 2022-2024.



Source: EIFS data, October 2024

What this means for children in Bromley

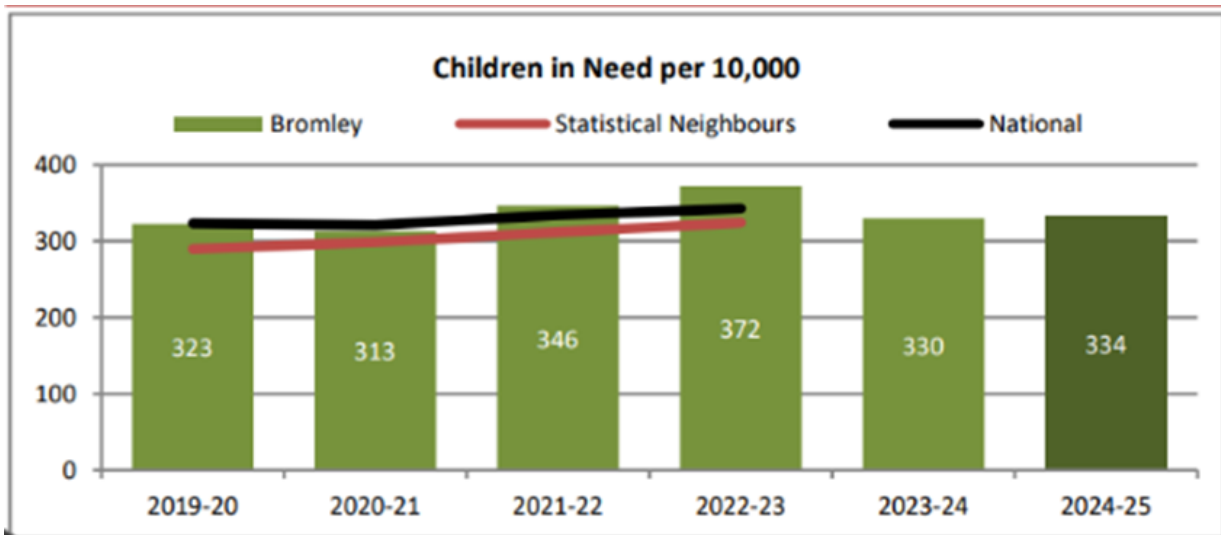
Additional support needs in children have been identified particularly in Cray Valley East and Orpington.

b) Children in Need (CiN)

If it is judged that a particular child is unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development without the provision of services, or the child is disabled, then that child is judged to be a Child in Need (CiN)¹¹. These children and their families may be facing complex and/or multiple needs.

¹¹ A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989

Figure 3.39: Proportion of Children in Need (CiN) in Bromley and comparators, 2019/20-2024/25



Source: Department for Education

Table 3.16 compares the characteristics of CiN in Bromley with data for London and England.

Table 3.16: Descriptors of Children in Need in Bromley, 2022/23

Descriptor	Bromley %	Statistical neighbour %	England %
CiN with no SEN	44.1	47.2	51.8
CiN with SEN support needs	18.4	21.1	21.3
CiN with EHC Plan	38.1	31.8	26.9
CiN eligible for free school meals	49.1	55.8	59.8
CiN achieving 9-4 pass on Key Stage 4 in English and mathematics	24.5	24.3	19.1
CiN with unauthorised absence from school (% sessions missed)	7.0	7.1	8.2
Proportion of CiN absentees who are persistent absentees	45.5	46.4	48.8
CiN who are excluded for a fixed period (2021/22)	9.6	9.2	11.9
CiN who are permanently excluded (2021/22)	*	0.4	0.7

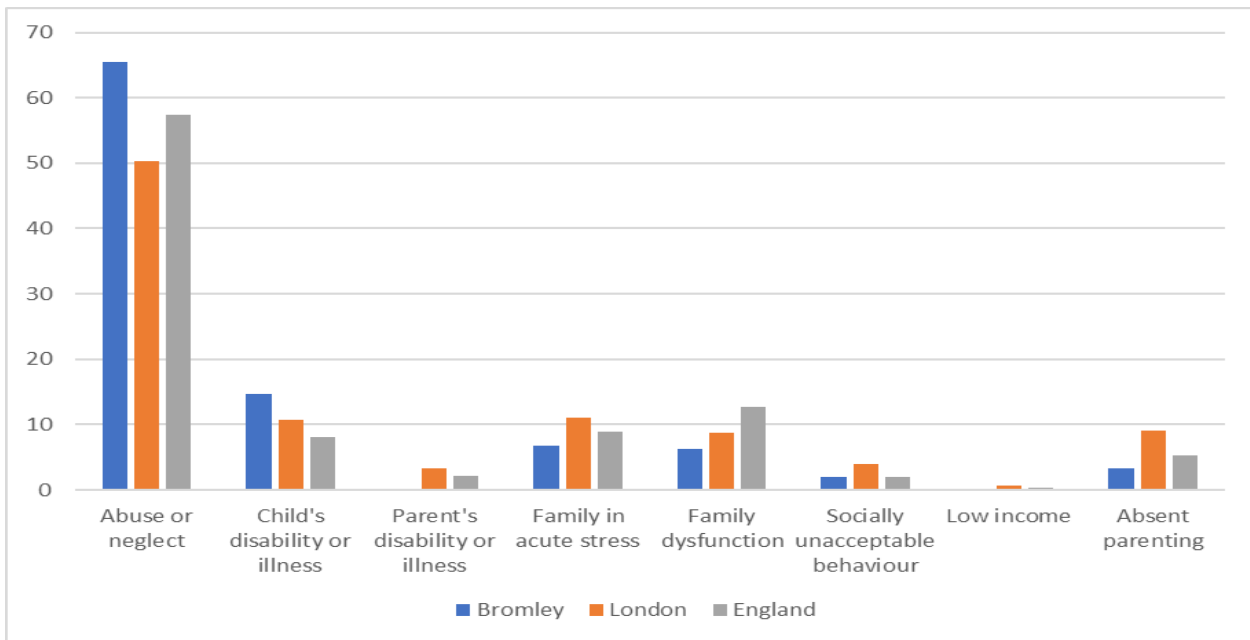
* No data. Source: LAIT

The proportion of children on SEN support is lower in Bromley but the proportion with an EHC Plan is much higher than the national rate.

The following figure shows more detail of the characteristics of CiN 2018 to 2021, comparing Bromley figures with London and England.

Figure 3.40 shows the assessment of CiN by primary need.

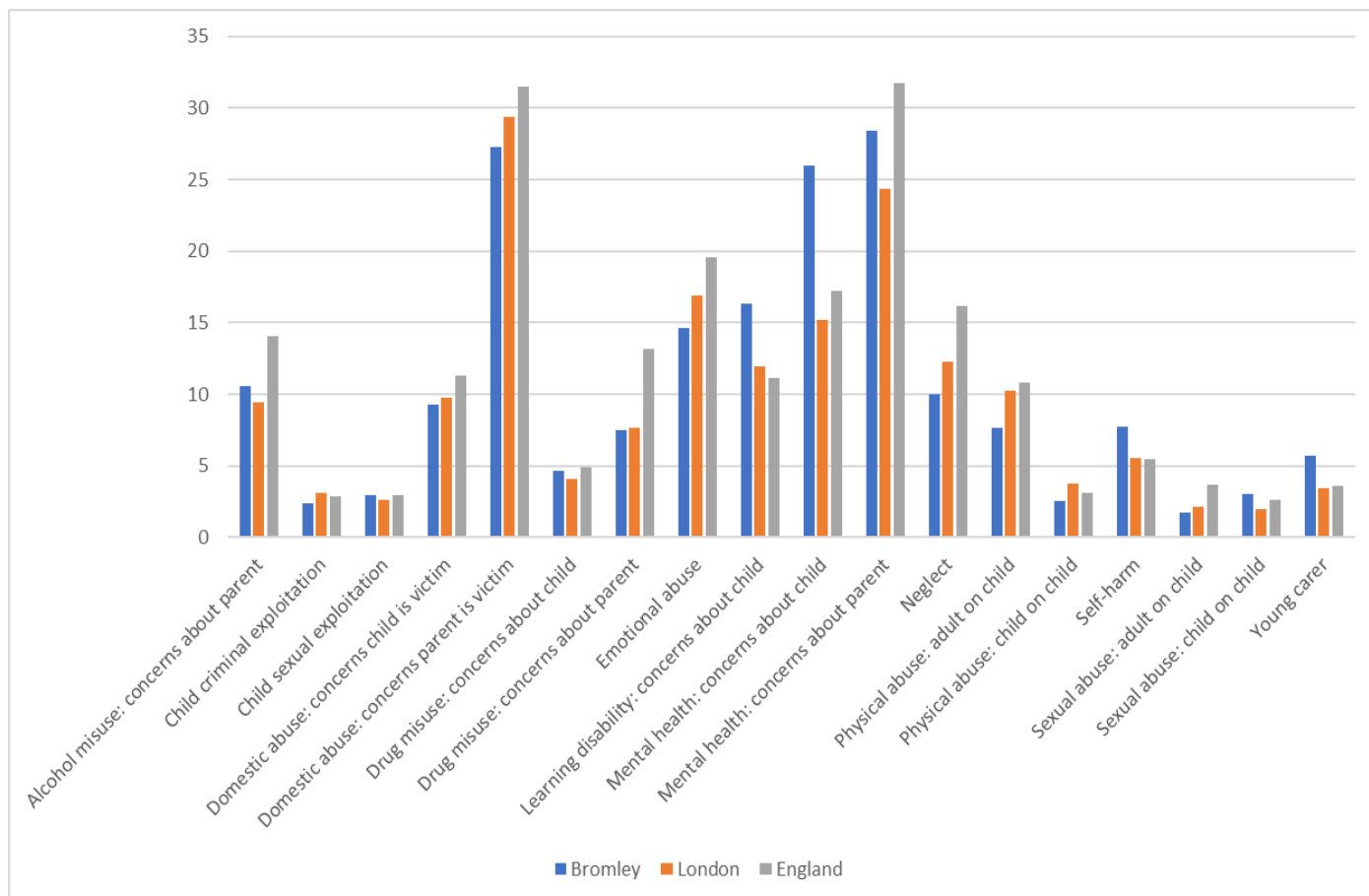
Table 3.40: Percentage of CiN in need by primary need, Bromley and comparators, 2022/23



Source: Department for Education

Analysis of factors identified at the end of assessment of CiN in Bromley identified higher rates than comparators in several factors as shown in Figure 3.41. Rates appear particularly high for mental health concerns about the child. Other factors which are higher for Bromley compared to London and England include learning disability in the child, mental health concerns about a parent, self harm and young carers.

Figure 3.41: Percentage of episodes with assessment factor information, Bromley and comparators, 2023



Source: Statistics: children in need and child protection

Children at risk of significant harm

This small group of children/young people will have needs which may meet the threshold for statutory intervention at the highest level. Children at this level may be subject to child protection enquiries, taken into the care of the local authority or need specialist mental health intervention. This is examined in more detail in Section 4: Established Needs

What this means for children in Bromley

The proportion of the population who are CiN in Bromley is no longer lower than the national proportion.

There is an increase in persistent school absence in CiN in Bromley. This is similar to increases in London and England.

The proportion of Children in Need with an EHC Plan is relatively high in Bromley.

c) Young Carers

The Children and Families Act 2014 defines a young carer as, “someone under 18 who helps look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol”.

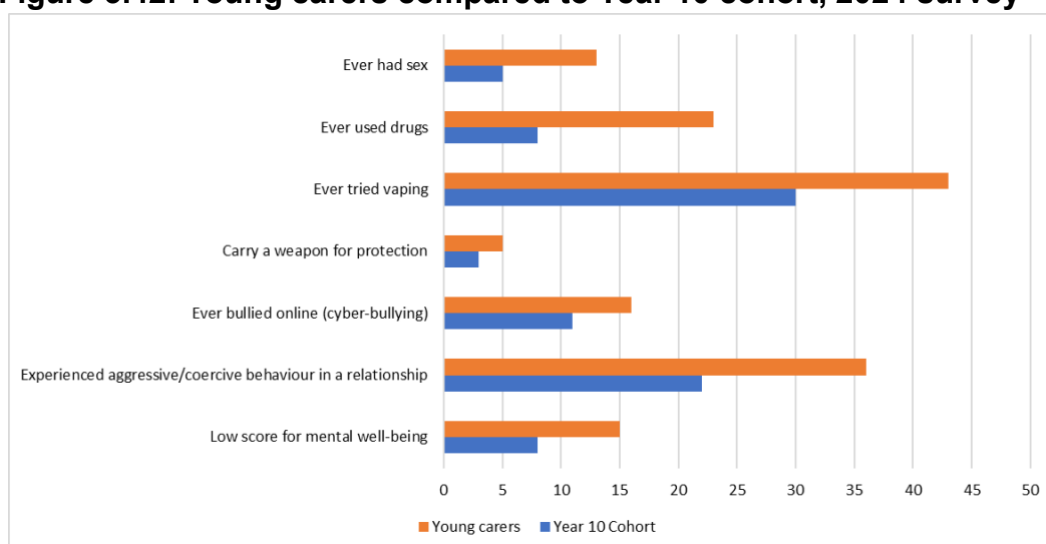
The SHEU survey of year 10 pupils in Bromley in 2024 identified 122 pupils (8% of the cohort) who had to look after family members every week. In year 7 there were 146 young carers (8% of the cohort) Both male and female pupils were affected equally.

Within this cohort of 122 year 10 pupils:

- 35 pupils reported that the amount of time they spent caring for family members affected their school work.
- 70 pupils reported that the amount of time they spent caring for family members stopped them from doing the things they wanted to do.

By analysing the entire survey separately for this group of pupils the survey identified some statistically significant differences between young carers and the rest of the year 10 cohort.

Figure 3.42: Young carers compared to Year 10 cohort, 2024 survey



Source: SHEU survey 2024

They participated in more risky behaviours and were more likely to carry a weapon for protection. They were more likely to have been bullied online and experienced aggressive or coercive behaviour in a relationship.

Their mental wellbeing and aspirations were affected. They were less likely to carry on in full time education after year 11 compared to their cohort (60% compared to the year 10 average of 72%).

They were also less likely to have a trusted adult they could talk to about things that worried them (52% compared to the year10 average of 66%).

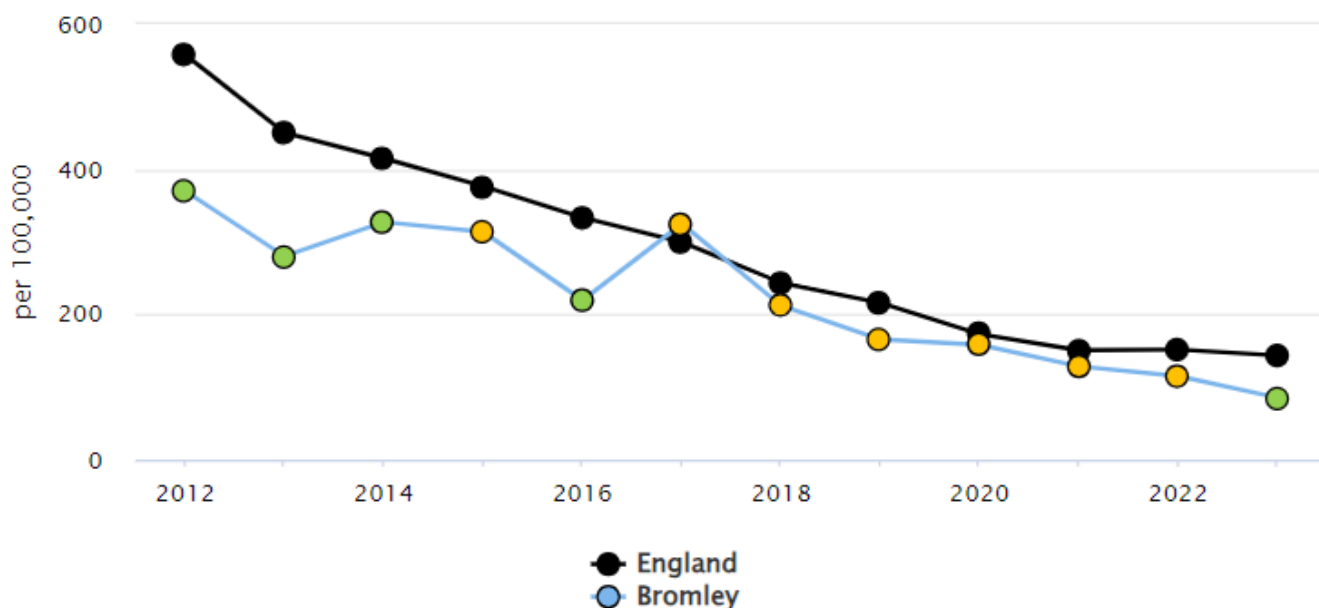
What this means for children in Bromley

Young carers continue to be a particularly vulnerable group of young people.

They have worse risk factors than their peers and their protective factors, such as a trusted adult they can talk to, are significantly poorer than their peers

d) Young People in contact with the Youth Justice Service

Figure 3.44. Trend in First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System



The number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice system continues to fall in Bromley. In 2023/24 there were 30 first time entrants.

41 children and young people have been given an “out of court disposal” in 2023/24. These include diversion, youth caution or youth conditional caution.

Of the children and young people in contact with the Youth Justice Service:

- 23% are female,
- 68% are aged 15 to 17,
- 32% are aged 11 to 14,
- 48% are Black African, Black British or Black Caribbean,
- 45% are White British, White Irish or White Other,
- 11% have Special Educational Needs,
- 9% have an Education Health and Care Plan, and
- 14% have experience of care.

The majority of early offences committed by children and young people of both genders tends to be related to violence, exploitation and shoplifting.

In relation to crimes for which young people receive a substantive outcome, the majority of these are violence against the person, drug related offences (possession of cannabis) and theft and motoring related offences.

Young people are likely to be the victims of crime and not just perpetrators.

The data highlights the disproportionate number of black young people within the youth justice cohort in Bromley.

What this means for children in Bromley

The number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System continues to fall.

Most referrals are young men involved in violence, drugs or theft.

There is an over-representation of black young people

e) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBTQ+) young people

Research in 2012 showed that, 55% of LGBTQ+ pupils in secondary schools experienced homophobic bullying and over half had self-harmed. This can lead to health problems such as alcohol and drug abuse, depression, suicide and self-harm.

The SHEU survey of year 10 in 2024¹ found that 86% of pupils reported themselves to be straight or heterosexual. This was higher than in 2022 when the proportion was 76%. There was also a gender difference with 91% of boys and 84% of girls reporting themselves as straight.

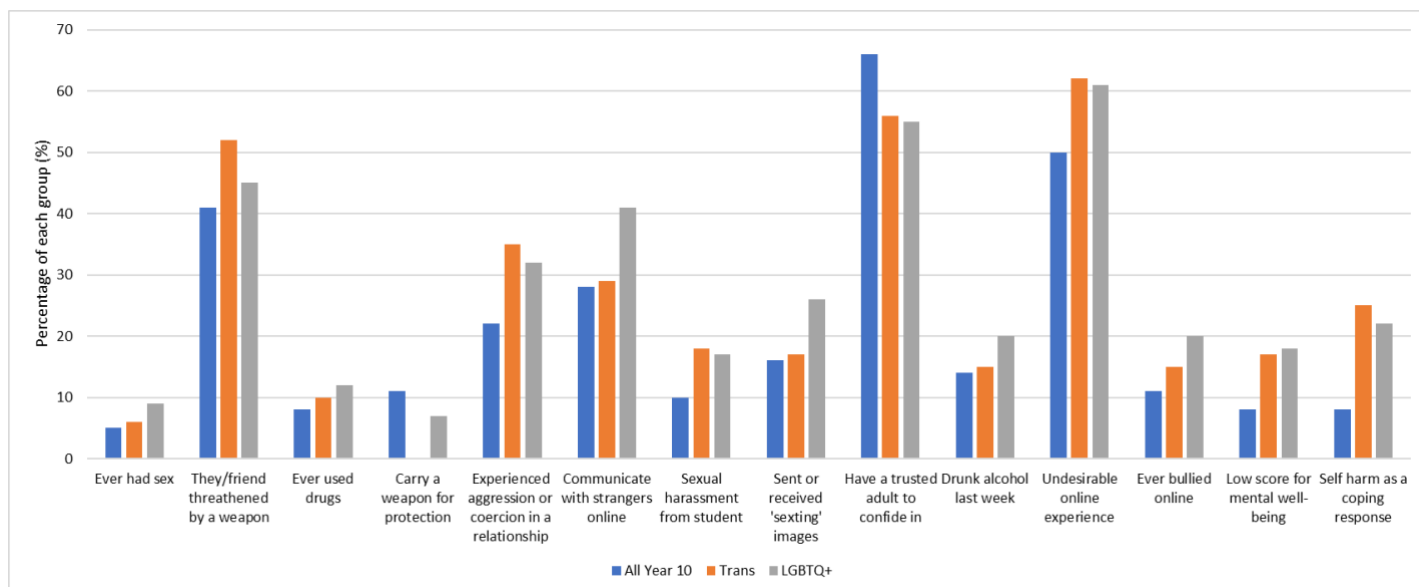
Pupils were less likely than in 2022 to describe themselves as bisexual (3% in 2024 vs 9% in 2022), gay/lesbian (2% in 2024 vs 4% in 2022) or Trans (4% in 2024 vs 6% in 2022).

Pupils were less likely in 2024 to worry about being different because of their sexuality “often” or “all the time” (3% in 2024 vs 7% in 2022). Girls were more likely to worry about this than boys.

7% of year 10 pupils reported that they at least “know how to use” a local LGBTQ+ youth group (down from 14% in 2022) and 1% have used one.

By analysing the entire survey separately for this group of pupils the survey identified some statistically significant differences between young people who identify as LGBTQ+ or Trans and the rest of the year 10 cohort (Figure 3.45).

Figure 3.45: Experiences of LGBTQ+ and Trans pupils in year 10 compared to whole year, 2024



Source: 2024 SHEU survey

LGBTQ+/Trans young people participated in more risky behaviour, with a higher rate of using alcohol in the last week. National statistics show a higher proportion of LGB adults drink alcohol than heterosexual people and a higher proportion drink more than 14 units a week.

The LGBTQ+/Trans cohort in the SHEU survey were also more likely to have ever used drugs, or ever tried smoking or vaping. They or their family/friends were more likely to be threatened with a weapon. They took more risks online, communicating with strangers online and were more likely to have been bullied online or had an undesirable online experience. They were more likely to have experienced aggressive or coercive behaviour in a relationship.

Unsurprisingly, they were more likely to have a low score on the mental well-being part of the survey and were more likely to use self harm as a coping response. They were less likely to have a trusted adult they could confide in.

What this means for children and young people Bromley?

Young people who identify as LGBTQ+ or Trans are a vulnerable group who have significantly worse experiences than their peers.

f) Children and young people who are at risk of exploitation

“Assessment of risk outside the home”, or contextual safeguarding, is a duty to consider the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people with specific reference to extra-familial harm.

In Bromley, children and young people at risk of extra familial harm includes those who go missing from home and care, those who are at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, gang affiliation/association, serious youth violence, radicalisation and trafficking. A detailed list includes:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE: including county lines, gang affiliation, drug dealing)
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Modern Slavery/Child Trafficking
- Radicalisation
- Online Child Exploitation
- Peer on Peer Exploitation
- Organised begging
- Youth produced sexual imagery identified in schools.

More than one category of exploitation may be present for a young person e.g. young people may be at risk of CSE and CCE at the same time and may also be at risk of Modern Slavery/Child Trafficking.

The national and local landscape in relation to vulnerable adolescents, exploitation, extra familial harm and child protection is changing very quickly. During the pandemic, there was a significant increase in online grooming and sexual exploitation. Since then, there have been changes in county line activity and serious youth violence as well as cross border conflict between Bromley, Lewisham and Croydon young people. There may also be risks for young people who are gender fluid or trans-gender.

There appear to be changes to social norms for young people particularly in relation to how they engage with each other both in person and online. They may not see themselves at risk of harm, particularly when communicating with strangers online.

Bromley data on young people at risk of exploitation in 2024

- a) Missing from home and care: Between April and September 2024, 67 children/young people were reported missing.
- b) Risk of Exploitation: some young people were identified as being at risk of exploitation:
 - 28 were identified to be at risk of CSE.
 - 26 were being exploited by gangs.
 - 64 were being criminally exploited.

6 Young people were referred to the National Referral Mechanism due to concerns in relation to Trafficking/Modern Slavery.

The number of children being sexually or criminally exploited has risen since 2022.

What does this mean for the residents of Bromley?

The number of young people at risk of being exploited has risen since 2022, particularly those at risk of being sexually or criminally exploited

g) Youth Violence

The reasons young people become victims and perpetrators of serious youth violence are many and varied. Factors such as; the influence of peer groups; the level of exposure to violence within the family; or the impact of the community have all been cited as reasons why a young person might engage in serious violence.

A dominant driver, particularly of knife crime among young people, appears to be a belief that they need to be prepared to defend themselves.

Young people as perpetrators of violence

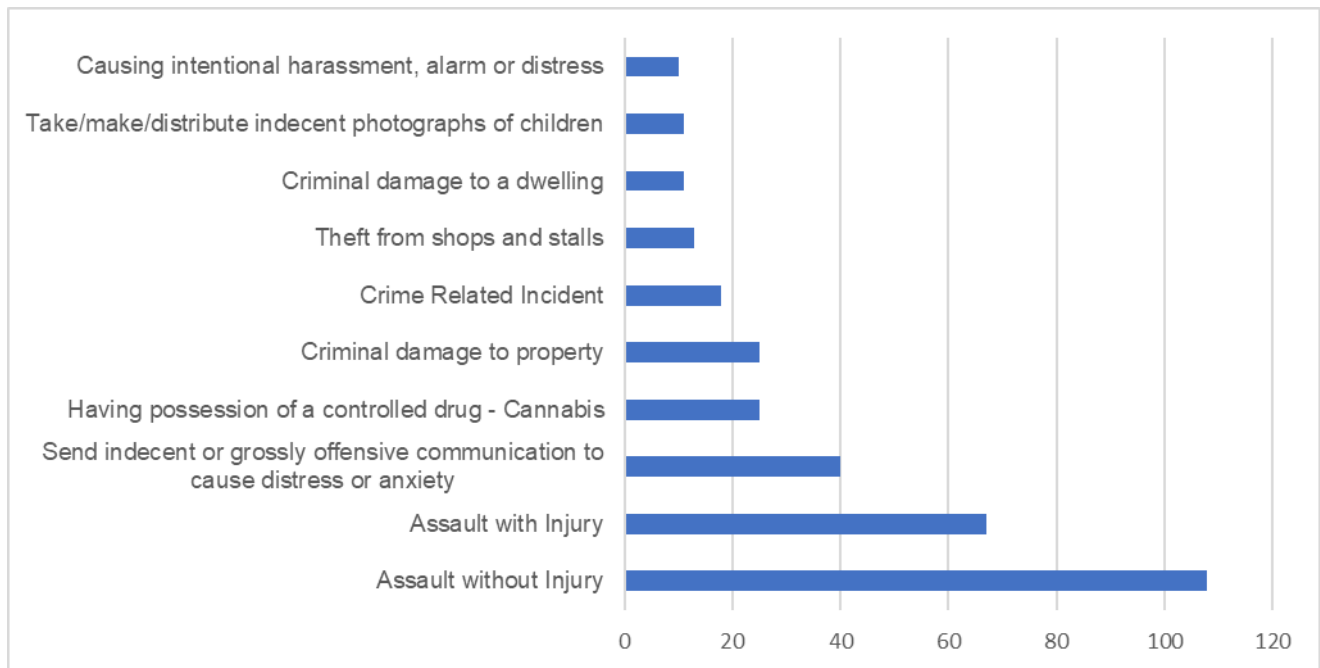
The 2024 SHEU survey of year 10s in Bromley showed that the proportion of young people who carry a weapon for protection is 3%, which is lower than the national rate in this age group of 9%. Some groups are more likely to carry a weapon, including young people who identify as Trans (11%), young people who identify as LGBTQ+ (7%), and young people with disabilities or long term illness (6%). Girls were slightly less likely than boys to carry a weapon when going out.

Table 3.17: Ever carry weapon, year 10 pupils, Bromley 2024

Every carry a weapon?	Boys %	Girls %
Never	95	96
Sometimes	3	3
Often	0	1
Very often	1	0

Figure 3.46 shows that the 2 most common offences suspected to have been committed by young people in the last year in Bromley are violence (assault with or without injury).

Figure 3.46..Top 10 offences for youth suspects in Bromley, October 2023 to September 2024



Source: Bromley Police

Year 10 pupils recorded some of their behaviours which might have affected whether other young people felt safe. In general, these behaviours were less common than in the last survey in 2022.

Table 3.18: Reported behaviours year 10 pupils, Bromley, 2024

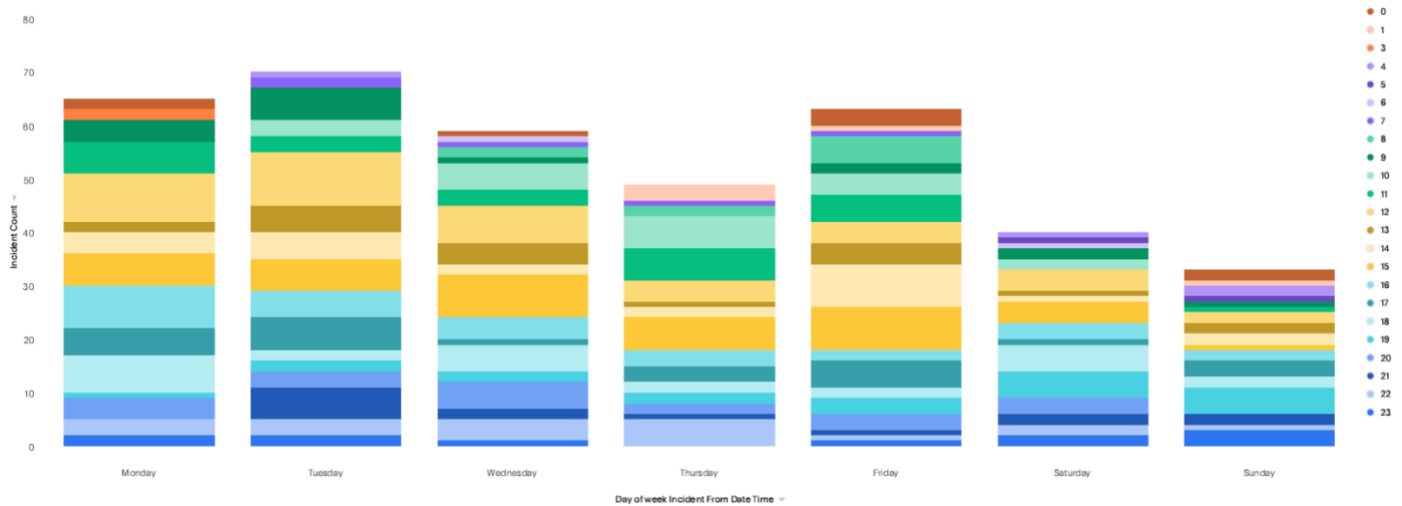
	Boys		Girls	
	Ever	This term	Ever	This term
Stolen something from someone	25	5	24	4
Damaged a car	13	2	7	0
Vandalised something	10	2	11	1
Hit or kicked or thrown stones at someone	23	6	21	3
Started a fire they shouldn't have done	12	4	8	1

SHEU, 2024

Young people as both perpetrators and victims of violence

Information about the day and time violence takes place is set out in Figure 3.47

Figure 3.47. Youth criminal violence data (suspects aged 10-17 years and victims aged <18 years), 2023



Source: Bromley Police

Young people as victims of violence

The proportion of year 10 pupils who had either themselves or a friend/family member been threatened or harmed by a weapon was 41%. This was higher for some groups such as young carers (56%), young people with disabilities or SEND (51%) and young people from a single parent family (47%).

Girls were more likely to worry about weapons when going out.

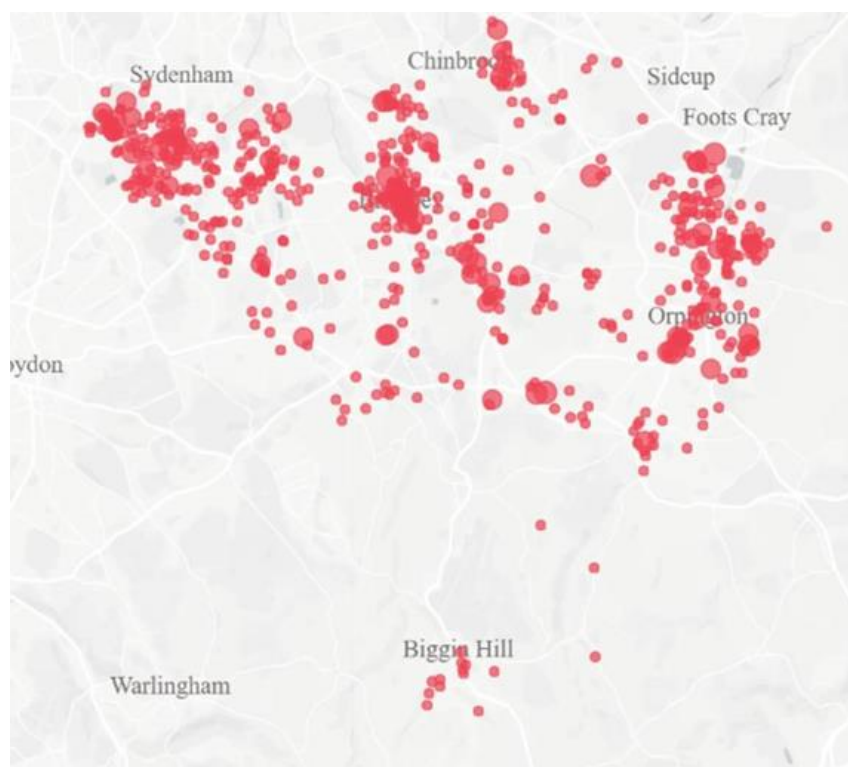
Table 3.19: Worry about people with knives when going out, year 10, Bromley, 2024

Worry about weapons when going out?	Boys %	Girls %
Never	41	25
Sometimes	47	57
Often	8	12
Very often	5	6

Source: SHEU survey 2024

Metropolitan Police data shows the number of young victims of knife crime injury in Bromley in the last year is falling. The number of victims aged 1-24 years has fallen from 51 in 2017 and 29 in 2022 to 21 in the year to October 2024. This is a rate of 0.1 per 1,000 population and is a similar rate to statistical partners. This is surprising as the Knife Crime Count for all ages in Bromley has been rising from 533 in 2021 to 689 in 2022 and 764 in 2023. The location of these offences is shown in Figure 3.48.

Figure 3.48. Knife crime map 2023 Bromley (all ages)



The SHEU survey in 2024 asked whether year 10 pupils in Bromley had been a victim of violence or aggression. 24% of boys reported they had (8% in the last term), and 24% of girls (5% in the last term). The year 10 pupils were also asked about feeling safe.

Table 3.20: Settings where year 10 pupils do not feel safe, Bromley, 2024

Young people who don't feel safe:	Boys %	Girls %
At school	10	18
Going to and from school	4	8
Being outside where they live	3	5
At home	1	2

SHEU, 2024

What does this mean for the residents of Bromley?

The most common offence committed by young people in Bromley is violence.

41% of year 10 pupils have either themselves or their family/friends been threatened by a weapon

More than half of year 10 pupils worry about people with knives when going out at least sometimes

Despite this, young people in Bromley are less likely to carry a weapon when going out than they were in 2022.

h) Women who have undergone Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The daughters of women who have undergone FGM are themselves at risk of FGM. Few cases of FGM are identified in Bromley, usually by maternity services. Between January 2022 to 4th October 2023, 47 women with FGM were identified at the Princess Royal University Hospital in Orpington.

Key Findings from Section 3

Emerging health and lifestyle issues

Smoking rates in young people in Bromley are falling.

Electronic cigarettes or vaping appears to have stopped rising.

Rates of sexual activity in young people in Bromley appear to still be falling.

Rates of sexual harassment reported by Year 10 pupils have fallen to the same level as the national comparator having been higher in 2022

Bromley pupils are less likely to worry about being different because of their sexuality compared to national rates

Rates of sexually transmitted infections are lower in Bromley than in London

The SHEU survey of year 10s in Bromley indicates a slight increase in the proportion of young people using drugs

Local drugs services report an increase in the number of young people presenting with complex vulnerabilities.

The main substances used continue to be cannabis and alcohol, although there is an increase in young people using multiple substances

There are emerging risks relating to adulterated vapes and synthetic opioids

Hospital admissions due to alcohol for young people in Bromley are comparable to the national average

Obesity rates in year 6 children in Bromley increased during the pandemic and have remained higher than the pre-pandemic level.

Rates are highest in the Cray Valley West and Mottingham in Year R (age 4-5) and in Cray Valley West, Mottingham and Penge in year 6 (age 10-11)

The proportion of year 10 pupils in Bromley having undesirable online experiences is increasing

Fewer young people are communicating with strangers online than in 2022

Accident rates requiring treatment in a clinic in Bromley are higher than the national rate. Sports injuries (especially for boys) are the most common accidents

Hospital admissions due to accidents are lower in Bromley than national rates for children aged 14 or under.

Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents are lower in Bromley for younger children but above the London rate for young people aged 11-15 years.

Emerging mental health issues

GP records indicate large numbers of children and young people with mental health problems. These numbers are higher than in 2022.

Year 10 pupils, especially girls, worry about a lot of issues most of the time

Rates of self harm in year 10 pupils continue to be lower than the national rate.

An issue for some young people, particularly young people who are black or who have Special Educational Needs, is the lack of an adult they trust who they can talk to if they are worried about something

Emerging education issues

The proportion of all pupils with social, emotional or mental health issues in Bromley is significantly higher than the national average and rising.

The level of communication need is lower in Bromley children and young people than in London or England.

Rates of NEET in Bromley are lower than statistical neighbours and the national rate.

Rates of NEET for pupils with SEND are better than the national average but lower than statistical neighbours.

Suspension and permanent exclusion rates have gone up across London and England, but permanent exclusion rates are higher in Bromley special schools than comparators.

The number of children who are electively home educated continues to grow in Bromley. The majority of EHE in Bromley are of secondary school age.

Emerging social issues

Additional support needs in children have been identified particularly in Cray Valley East and Orpington.

The proportion of the population who are CiN in Bromley is no longer lower than the national proportion.

There is an increase in persistent school absence in CiN in Bromley. This is similar to increases in London and England.

The proportion of Children in Need with an EHC Plan is relatively high in Bromley.

Young carers continue to be a particularly vulnerable group of young people. They have worse risk factors than their peers and their protective factors, such as a trusted adult they can talk to, are significantly poorer than their peers

The number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System continues to fall.

Most referrals to the Youth Justice Service YJS in Bromley are young men involved in violence, drugs or theft.

There is an over-representation of black young people in contact with the Youth Justice Service in Bromley

Young people who identify as LGBTQ+ or Trans are a vulnerable group who have significantly worse experiences than their peers.

The number of young people at risk of being exploited has risen since 2022, particularly those at risk of being sexually or criminally exploited

The most common offence committed by young people in Bromley is violence.

41% of year 10 pupils have either themselves or their family/friends been threatened by a weapon

More than half of year 10 pupils worry about people with knives when going out at least sometimes

Despite this, young people in Bromley are less likely to carry a weapon when going out than they were in 2022.

Glossary and abbreviations

ASQ	Ages and Stages Questionnaire (development assessment 2 year olds)
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
CAF	Common Assessment Framework (multi-agency assessm't of concerns)
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation
CiN	Children in Need
CLA	Child Looked After
CPP	Child Protection Plan
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CYP	Children and Young People
ECHS	Education, Care and Health Services
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
EHE	Electively Home Educated
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GP	General Practitioner
KS2/KS4	Key Stage 2 (school years 3-6), Key Stage 4 (school years 10 & 11)
KSI	Killed or Seriously Injured
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay , Bisexual, Trans, Questioning and others
MOPAC	Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime
NCMP	National Child Measurement Programme (height & weight year R & 6)
NCSP	National Chlamydia Screening Programme
NDTMS	National Drug Treatment Monitoring System
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
OHID	Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (formerly part of PHE)
RTA	Road Traffic Accident
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health (difficulties)
SEN	Special Education Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SHEU	School Health Education Unit
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
Trans	Transgender (gender identity is not the same as sex assigned at birth)