

School exclusion in the UK

The number of **permanent exclusions and fixed-period exclusions are increasing**^{1,2}. In 2016/17, among English schoolchildren the rate of exclusions was 0.10% for permanent and 4.76% for fixed-term exclusions¹.

Neurodiversity & exclusion

Concerningly, in England **exclusion rates are markedly higher among** disadvantaged children, including **neurodiverse children** (with Special Educational Needs)^{1,3}. Children in 'alternative provision' are particularly vulnerable: 79.6% have a recognised Special Educational Need⁴, one in two have a recognised mental health need⁵ and many are neurodiverse (see table).

Prospects after exclusion

Children who are excluded often end up in 'alternative provision' where they have

dismal prospects. In 2016/17, only 57% of English pupils in alternative provision achieved *any* passes at GCSE or equivalent, in contrast to 99.3% of those in state-funded mainstream schools⁶.

Even more concerningly, there are reports that some children are being 'informally' (i.e. illegally) excluded^{5,7} and that parents of 'difficult' children are being encouraged to home-educate them^{5,8}. These children may have no hope of even entering exams.

Often, exclusions and 'off-rolling' appear to occur in order to remove children from school statistics and thus improve the school's position in league tables^{2,9,10}. However, **schools cannot bear all the blame** for this. Government policies which narrowly focus on exam results and harshly punish schools for failing to meet targets are driving anxieties about results among schools¹¹.

Type of neurodiversity	Estimated prevalence in the general UK population (%)	Reported prevalence in UK excluded populations (%)
Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder	0.5-2.2 ¹³⁻¹⁷	8.0-65.0 ¹⁸⁻²⁰
Autism Spectrum Disorder	0.6-3.5 ^{13,21-25}	35.0 ¹⁸
Developmental Coordination Disorder	1.8 ²⁶	Unknown
Developmental Language Disorder	Possibly between 0.5 and 2.2 ²⁷⁻²⁸	66.6-69.4 ²⁹⁻³⁰
Dyscalculia	3.6 ³¹	Unknown
Dyslexia	2.3-6.2 ³¹⁻³³	75.0-76.0 ¹⁹ ,
Intellectual Disability	2.7-10.6 (moderate) 0.03 (severe) ^{32,35-37}	Unknown
Tic Disorders	6.0 ³⁸⁻⁴⁰	Unknown

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