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@TheIFS

Support for children with special educational needs

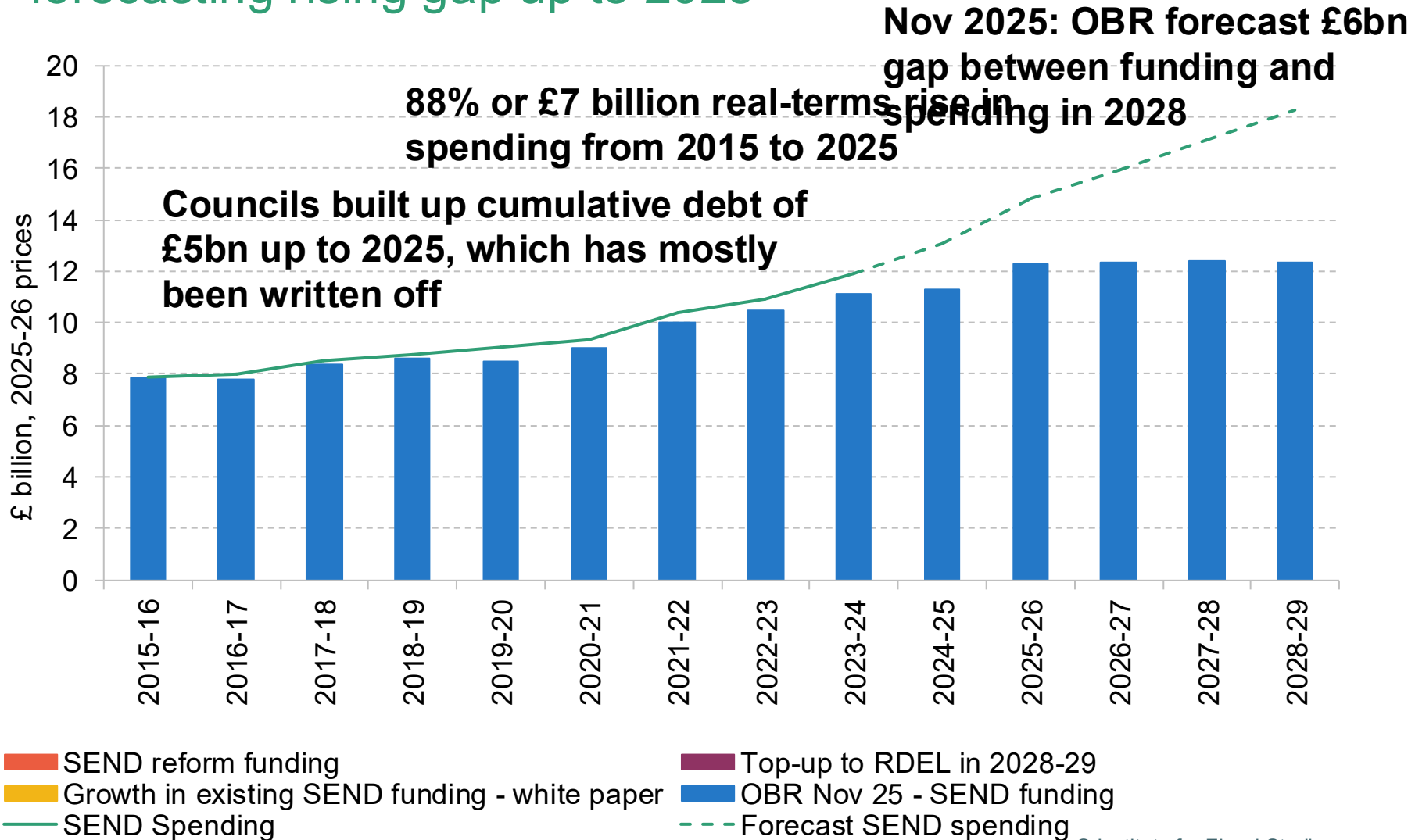


Economic
and Social
Research Council

- Large rise in spending reflects rapid rise in numbers with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Despite rapid rise in spending, everyone seems unhappy with the current system
- Supply side capacity has not expanded sufficiently to meet rising needs
- Government is planning major reforms and extra spending, with a focus on more upstream and mainstream support

Rapid rise in SEND spending

Funding has not kept pace, with OBR previously forecasting rising gap up to 2028



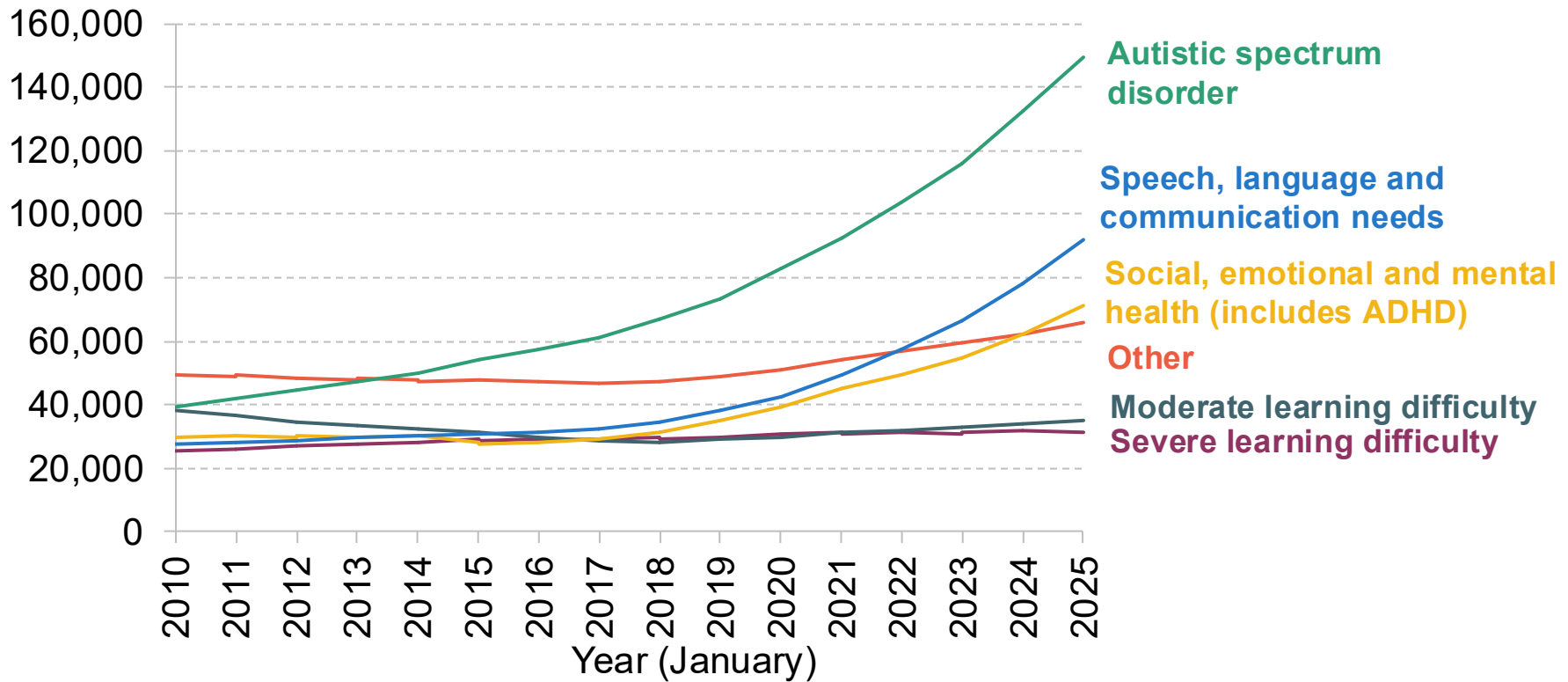
Large rise in number of pupils with EHCPs in England over time

Share of pupils under 16 with an EHCP in England

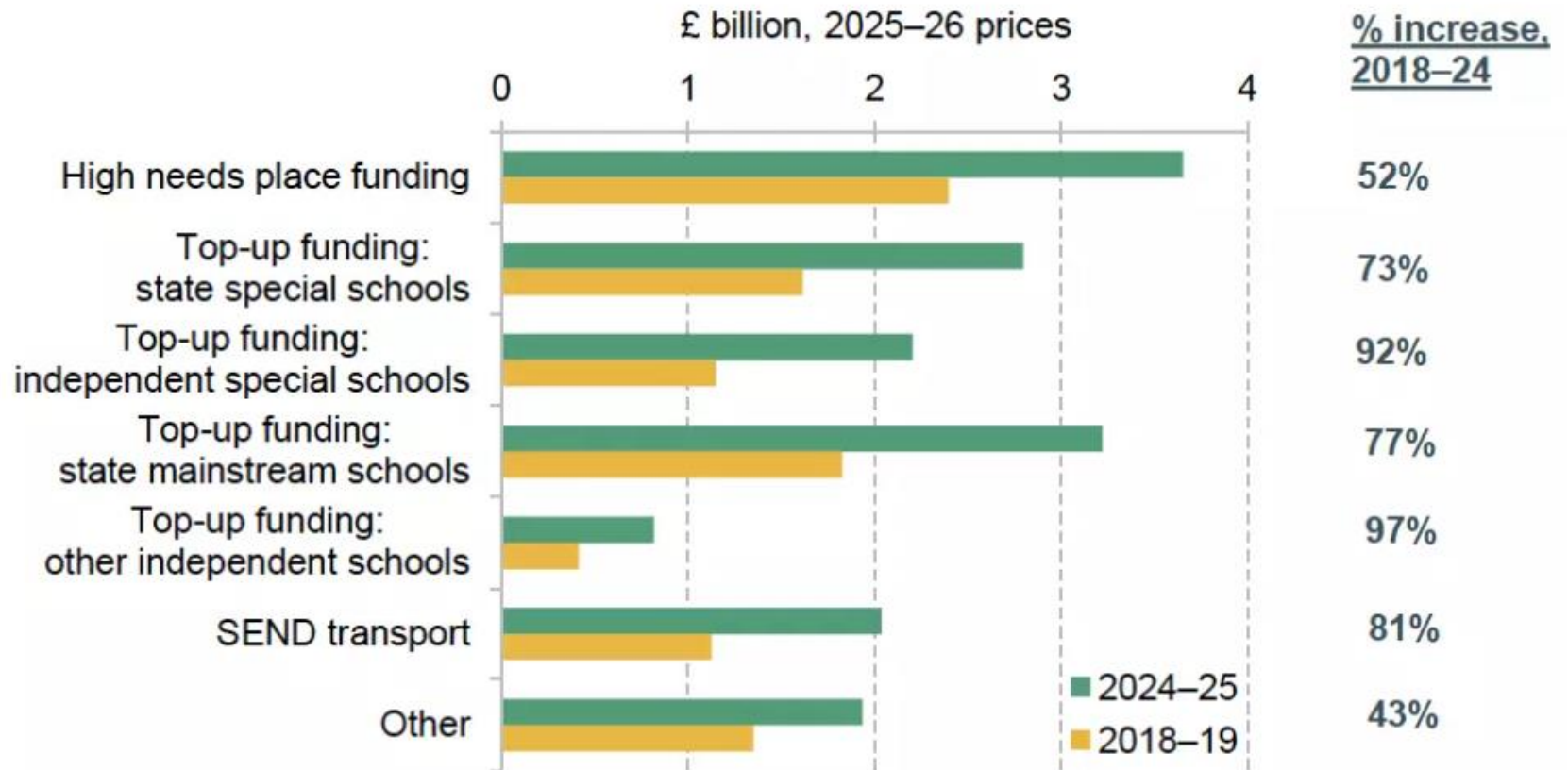


Biggest rise in EHCPs for needs relating to Autism

Number of EHCPs/Statement of SENs by primary need



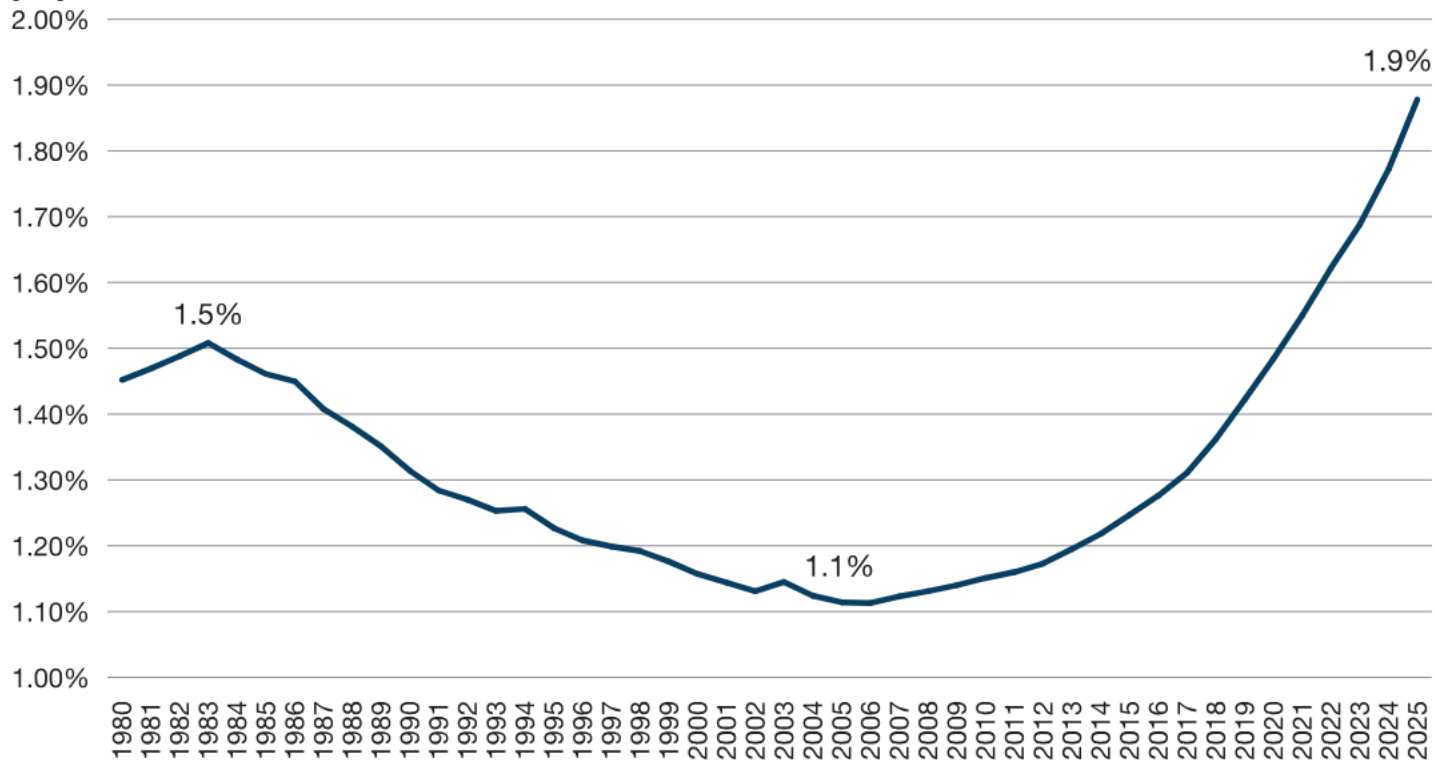
Spending rise mostly reflects extra spending on special schools



Greater use of special schools

Higher than Wales (1.4%) and Scotland (1.1%), but lower than in Northern Ireland (2.1%)

Figure 2: State funded special school population as a % of the total school population [\[footnote 27\]](#)



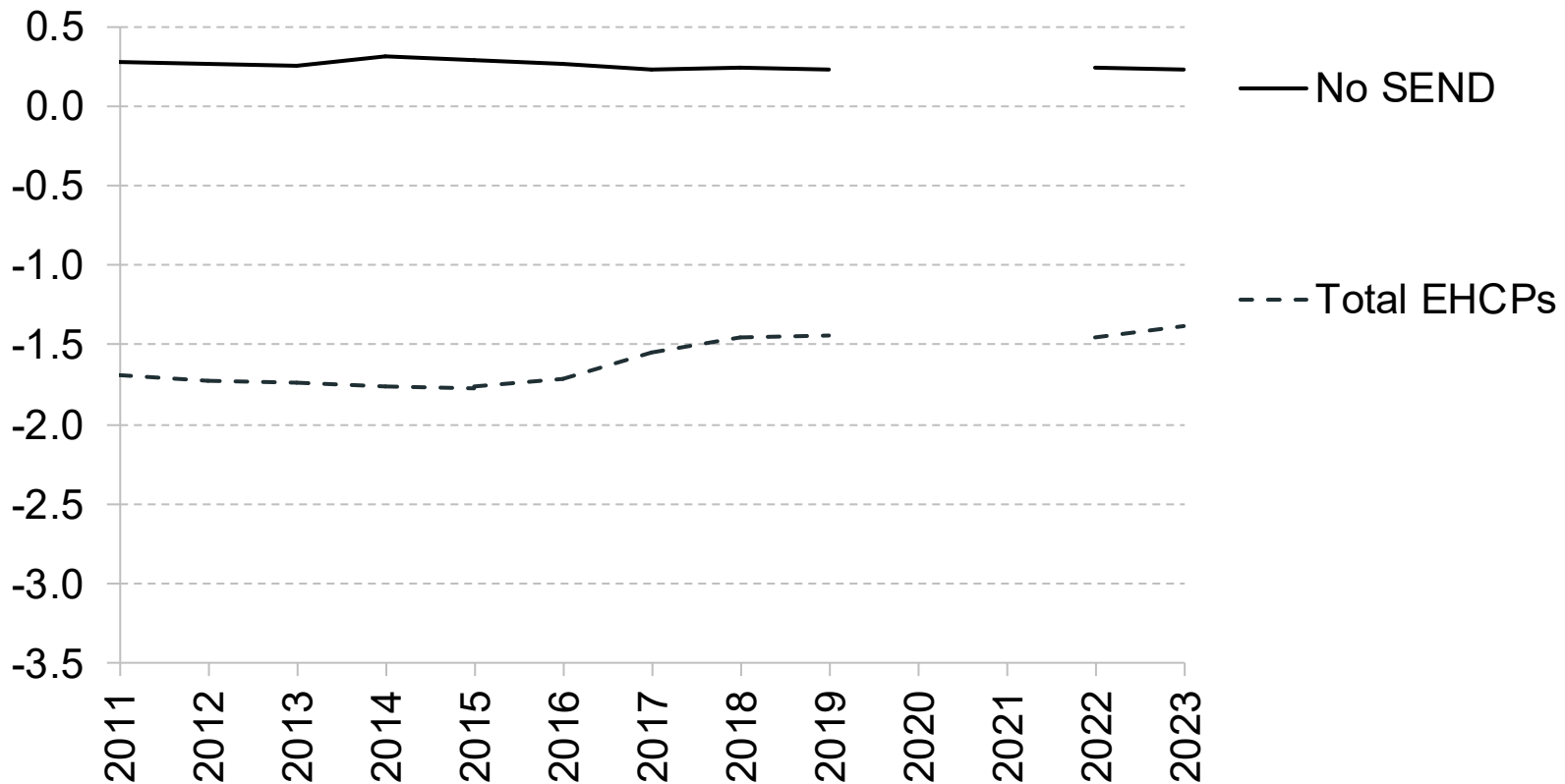
Low satisfaction and poor outcomes

- High wait times for EHCPs
- High level of confrontation and litigation in England
 - 21,000 in England in 2023-24, or 23 per 10,000 pupils
 - 130 in Wales, or 3 per 10,000 pupils
- Quality of EHCPs is variable

- Academic outcomes are low and variable
- Concerning labour market outcomes
- Limited information on wider outcomes, e.g. independence, health and well-being

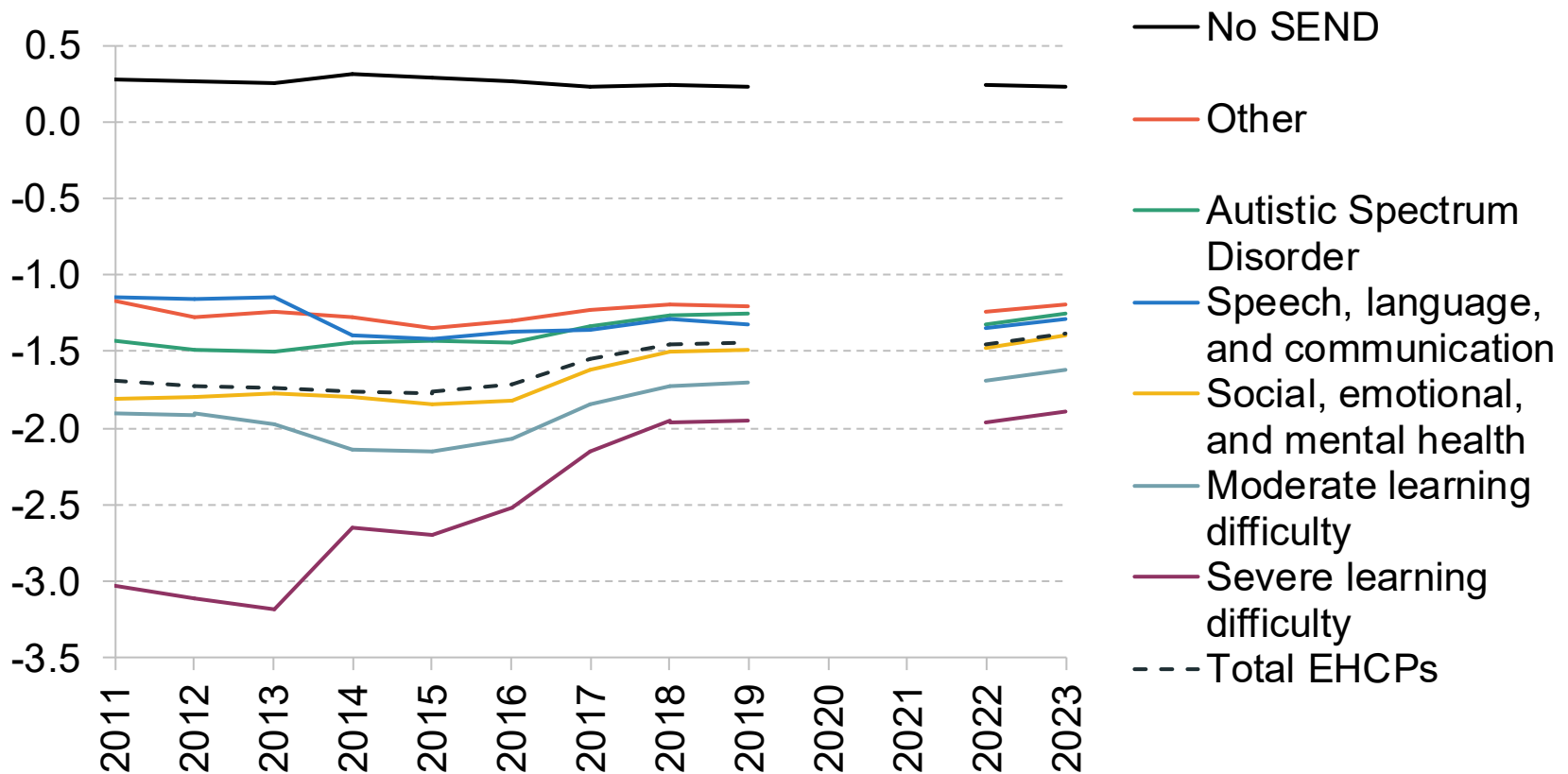
Academic attainment has remained lower than average

Standardised GCSE scores for pupils with no SEND or with EHCPs



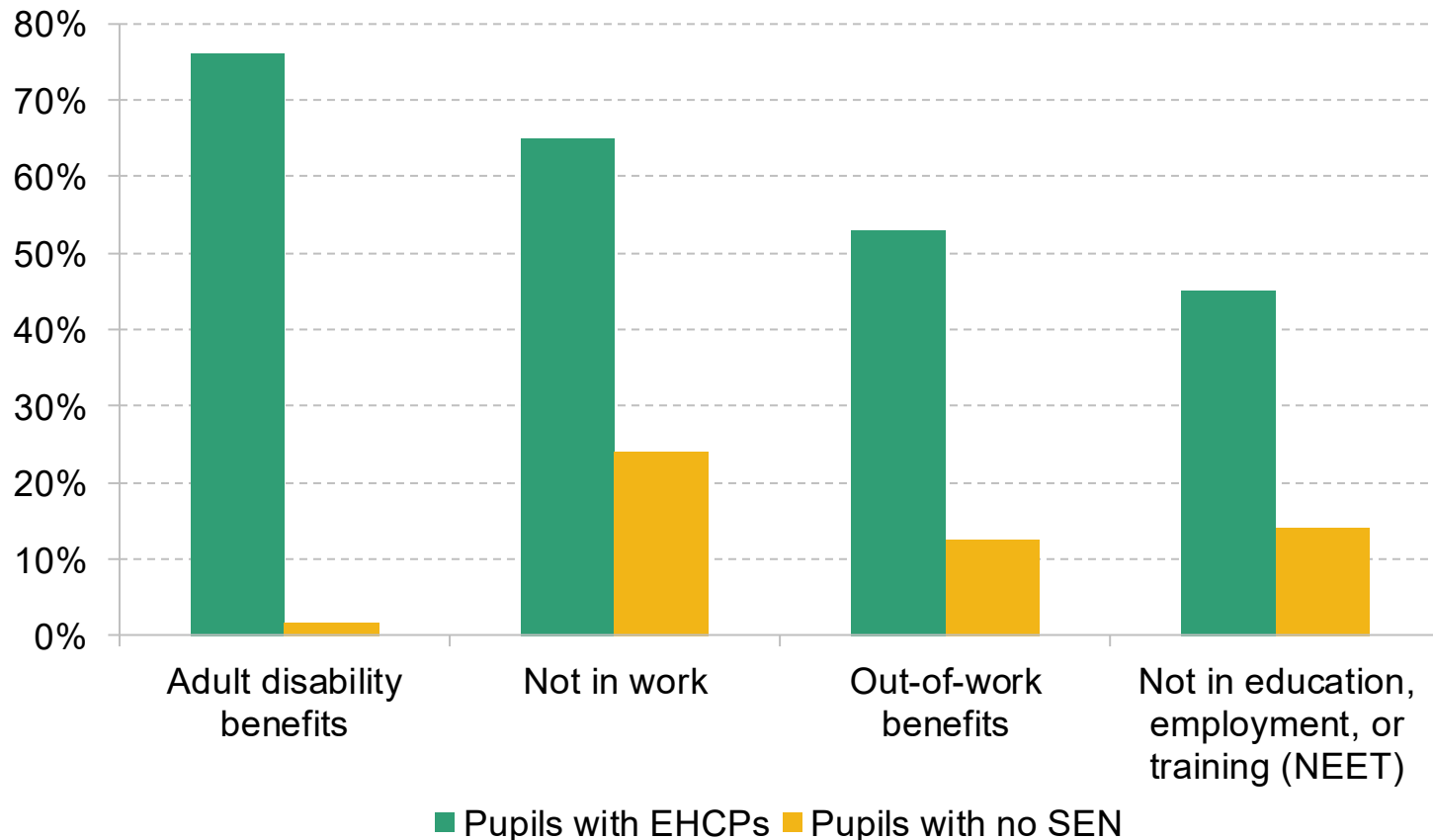
Academic attainment has remained lower than average

Standardised GCSE scores for pupils with no SEND or with EHCPs by type of need



Past children with EHCPs more likely be out of work

Outcomes for 22-year-olds in 2021, by SEN status at age 15



Incentives within current system



- Mainstream schools expected to fund lower-level SEN support and initial costs of EHCPs
 - Rising numbers have stretched school budgets and resources
- Strong incentive to apply for EHCPs to guarantee extra funding
 - This does not guarantee resources or staff exist
 - Lack of specialist staff and special school places
- Lack of plans or incentives to expand supply side capacity

New system from 2029 onwards

- Provide more upstream and flexible support in mainstream schools to reduce demand for more specialist support
- Mainstream schools to undertake more assessment of needs and deliver range of support packages
- New guidelines for whether pupils move to special schools

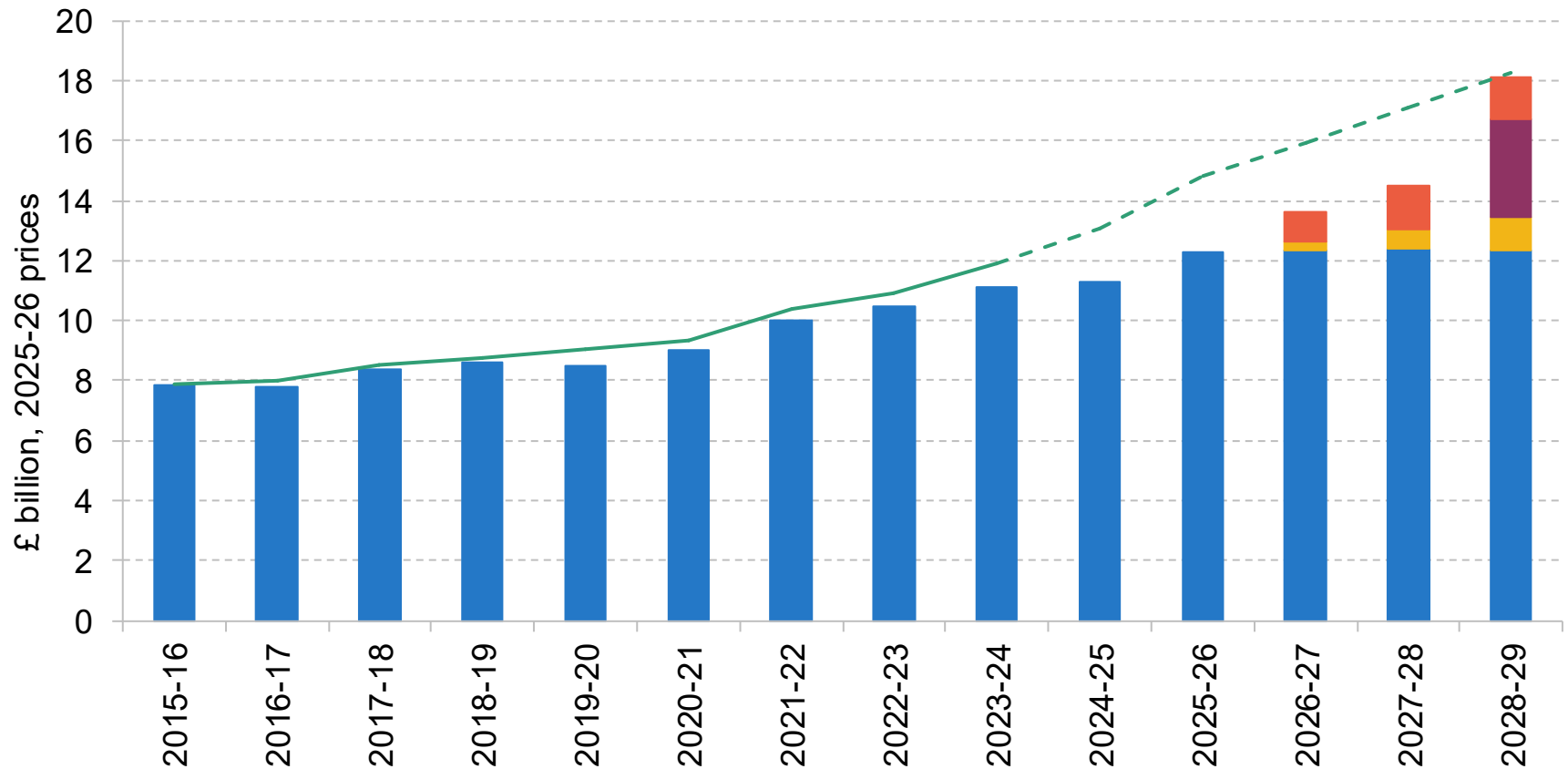
Transition from 2026 onwards

- Current system of EHCPs to remain in place, with £3.3 billion in 2028 to cover rising costs
- About £1.5 billion per year to provide more upfront mainstream support (***Inclusive Mainstream Fund***) and more specialists (***Experts at Hand***)
- Extra training for teachers and staff in mainstream schools

Extra £6bn SEND spending in 2028,



But will extra mainstream support fill in for rising demand for EHCPs



- SEND reform funding
- Growth in existing SEND funding - white paper
- SEND Spending
- Top-up to RDEL in 2028-29
- OBR Nov 25 - SEND funding
- Forecast SEND spending

Key sticking points

- **A new funding system to provide more upfront support**
 - What factors are most associated with differences in need
- **Interim incentives**
 - Will more EHCPs be issued before the 2029 deadline?
- **New staff required**
 - Long-term workforce plan – speech therapists, education psychologists....
- **Will the new system meet needs?**
 - Government will need to build evidence base on what forms of support are most suitable for different types of needs
 - Greater evidence needed on specialist/mainstream decision

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