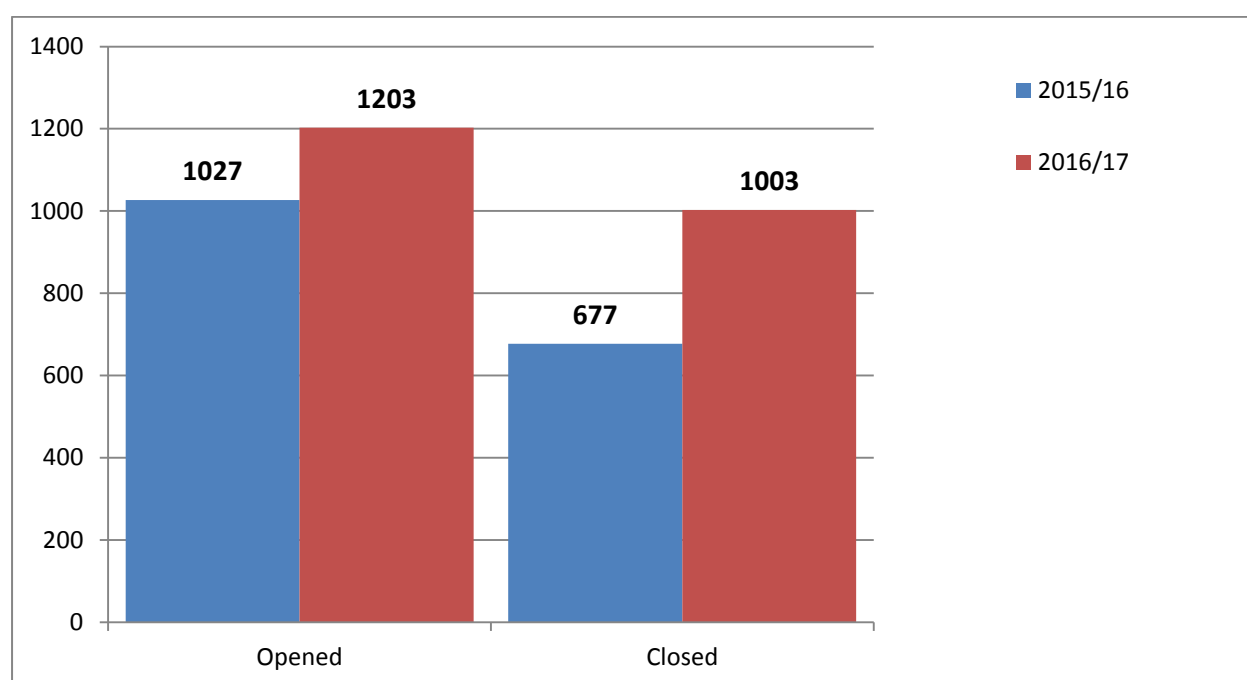


## Elective Home Education Report 2016/17 Academic Year

<i>Figures for referrals during this period</i>	
<b>Total EHE Referrals</b>	1203
<b>Total closed</b>	1003
<i>Figures for all ongoing referrals</i>	
<b>Total EHE cases open</b>	1956

Figure 1 - EHE referrals opened and closed

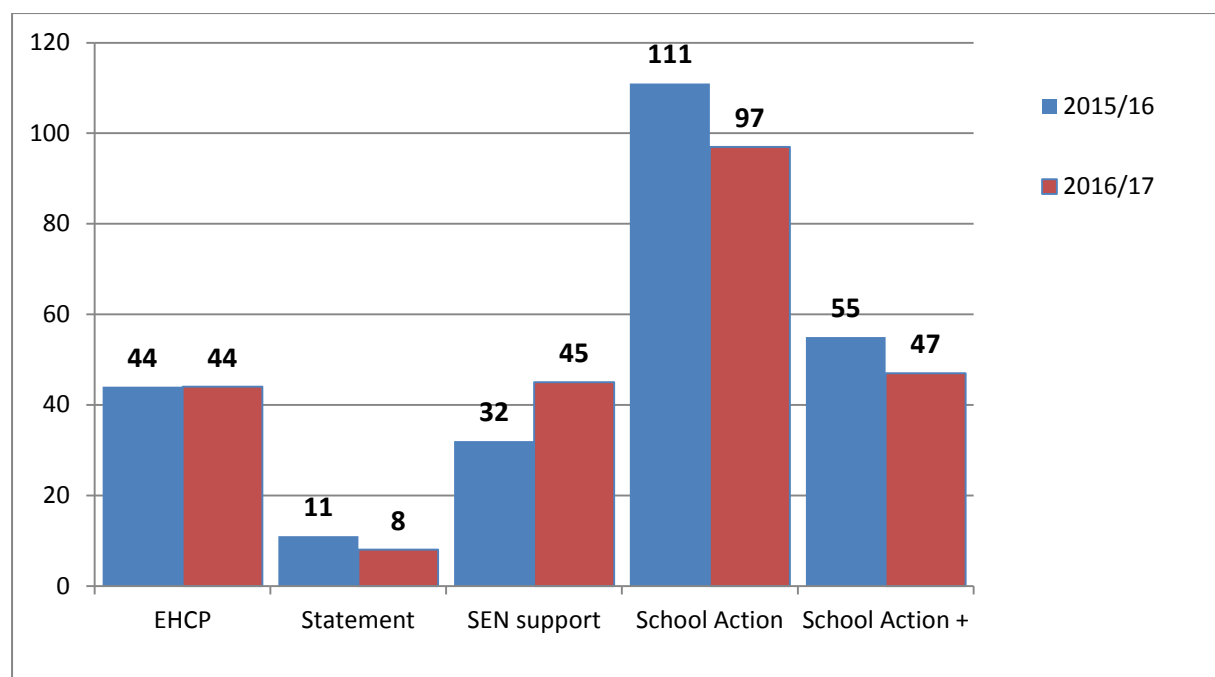


This academic year there has been a 17.1% increase the number of pupils registered as EHE across the county. Over the past few years, Kent has seen a growing trend of parents opting to exercise their right to home education their children.

Despite the growth in pupil referral numbers this academic year, there has been a 48.2% increase in referral closures which indicates that home education is often used as a short-term intervention rather than a preferred life-style choice.

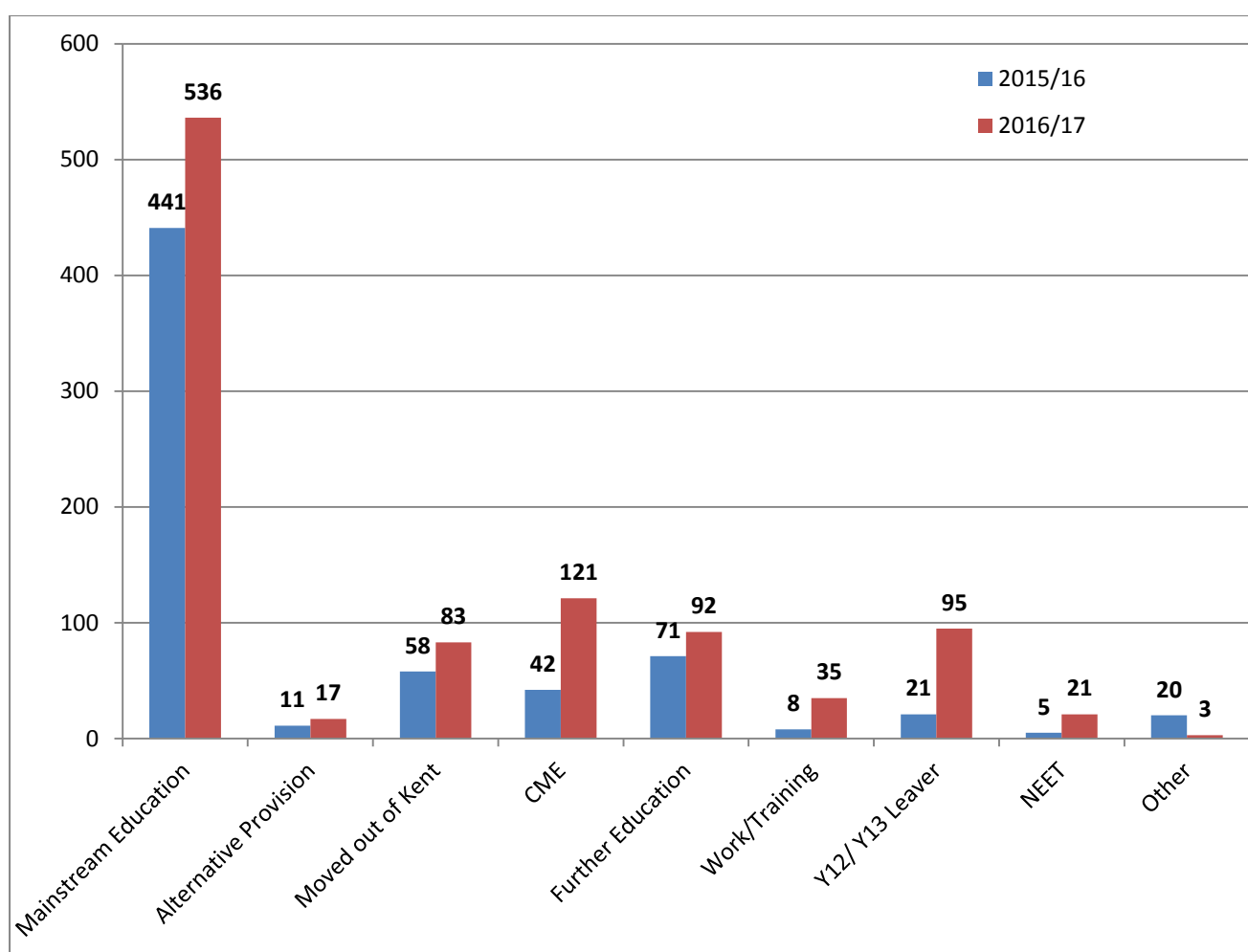
This is the first year that Kent's EHE Policy has been fully implemented and these figures are reflective of the success that our team of EHE Support and Advice Officers have had in embedding the policy and the associated procedures.

Figure 2 - EHE referrals with an SEN need



EHE referrals for pupils with a recognised special educational need have decreased by 5% this academic year in comparison with referrals received in the same period the previous year. This is not considered to be statistically significant given the small numbers of pupils involved however it indicates that this year SEN pupils and their families are happier with their identified educational provision.

Figure 3 - Reason for closure of EHE referrals

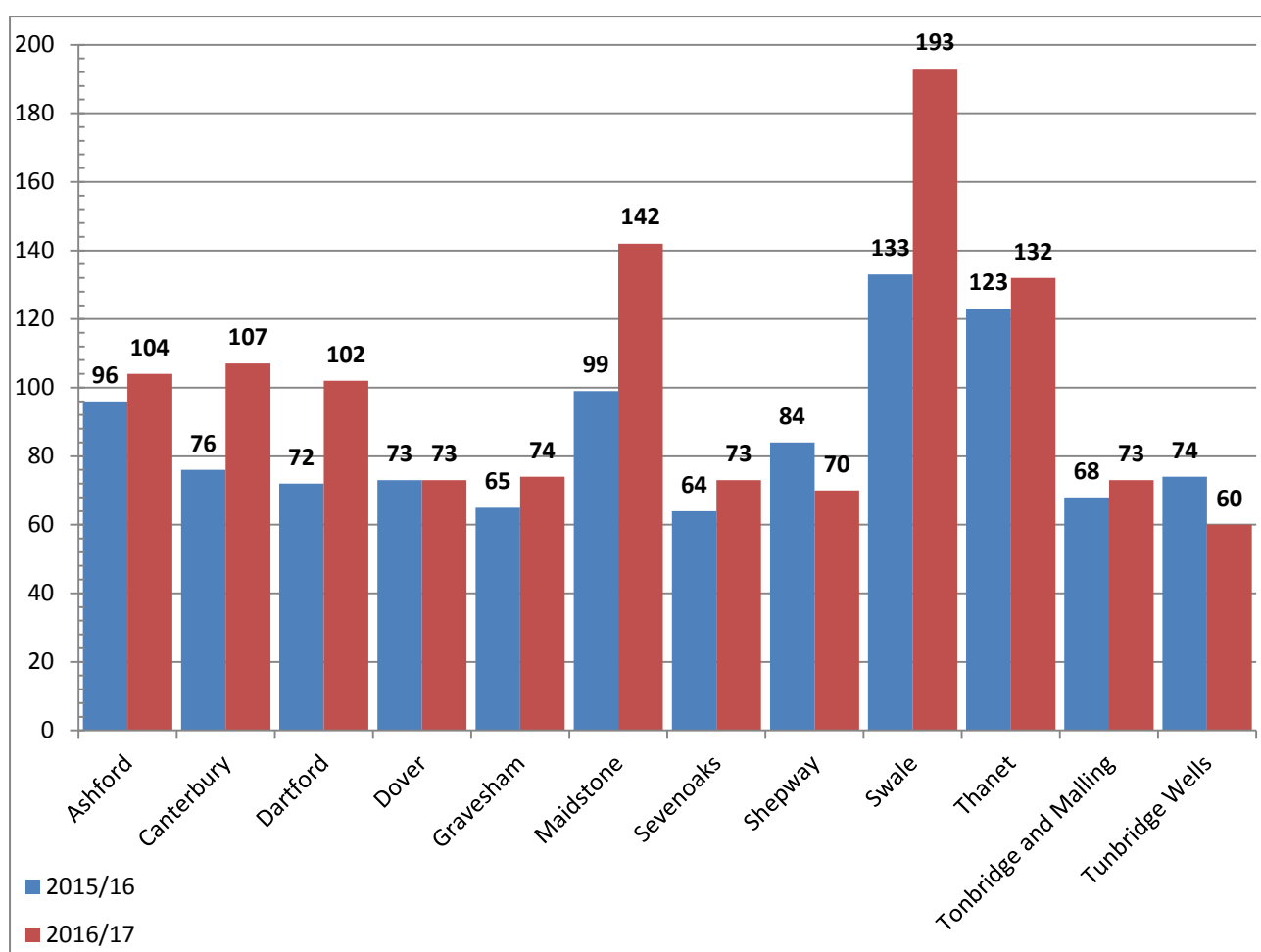


EHE referrals are closed when a pupil of statutory school age returns to education or when it is confirmed that a pupil who has completed their statutory education is no longer being home educated. The onward destinations of pupils who have completed their statutory education are tracked as part of the NEET strategy and the EHE team liaises with the Skills and Employability Team regarding pupils who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) to ensure they are offered appropriate support and guidance.

The team also close referrals when it has been confirmed that the pupil is no longer a Kent resident or when the EHE Officer identifies that the pupil is not in receipt of a suitable education, at which time they are immediately referred onto the Children Missing Education (CME) Team. These officers liaise with a number of local teams and agencies as well as other Local Authorities to monitor and support the pupil to secure education provision.

This academic year, there was a 22% increase in the number of EHE referrals closed because the pupil had returned to Mainstream Education or Alternative Provision compared with the same period the year before. There was also a 188% increase in the number of pupils being referred to the Children Missing Education (CME) Team. These figures highlight the role that the EHE Support and Advice Officers have played in quickly identifying pupils who are not in receipt of a 'suitable education'.

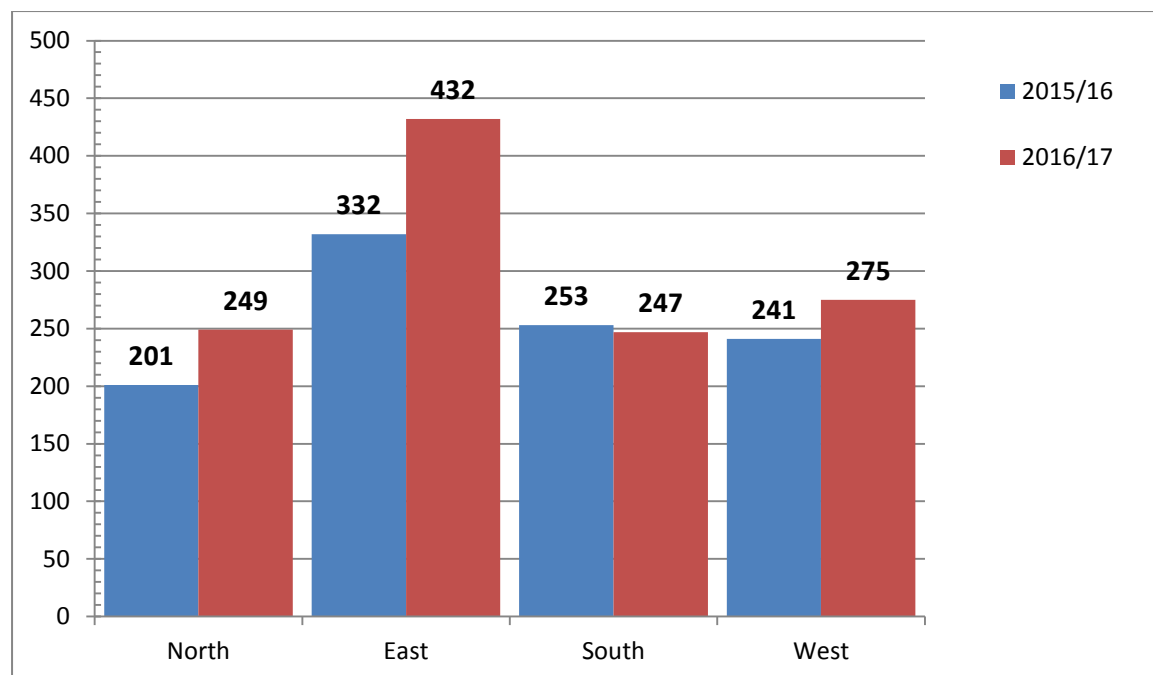
Figures 4 - EHE referrals by home district



The referral figures for this academic year indicate growing popularity of EHE across the majority of Kent districts. However it is clear that two districts in particular have seen a marked increase in pupils opting to home educate when compared to the same period the previous year.

Maidstone and Swale have seen 43% and 45% increases in EHE referrals respectively. It is important to reflect upon and consider the reasons for this dramatic increase in referrals from these two districts. It is considered that the most likely reason for this is an increase in new housing developments and families moving into Kent which has placed pressure upon school places. This has also led to reduced choice and options for parents where relationships may have broken down in a particular school.

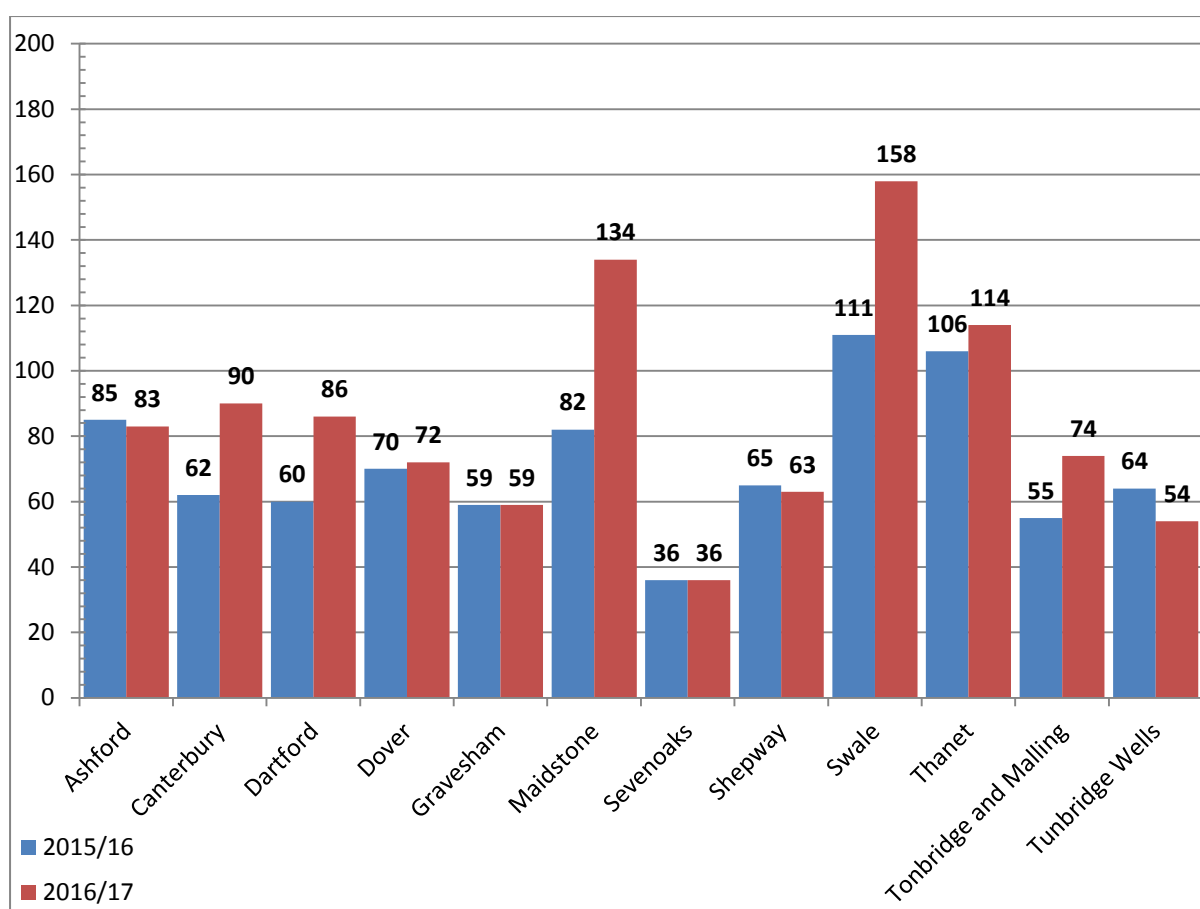
Figures 5 - EHE referrals by home area (CYP living in Kent)



This year's referral data indicates that over one third of all new EHE pupils registered with Kent County Council live in East Kent. This is duly concerning as two of Kent's most deprived districts; Swale and Thanet are in the east of the county. As home educating families are required to take full responsibility for their child's education and any associated financial implications, one would question how some families are able to fund educational resources, trips, textbooks and exams.

In comparison with the last academic year, there has been a 30% increase in EHE referrals for pupils who live in East Kent this year. Referrals in North Kent have increased by 23% and are now broadly similar to referral figures in both South and West Kent. The marked difference in referral numbers in East Kent will continue to be monitored in liaison With KCC colleagues and local schools to form part of the district review process.

Figures 6 - EHE referrals by Kent school district (CYP who previously attended a Kent School)



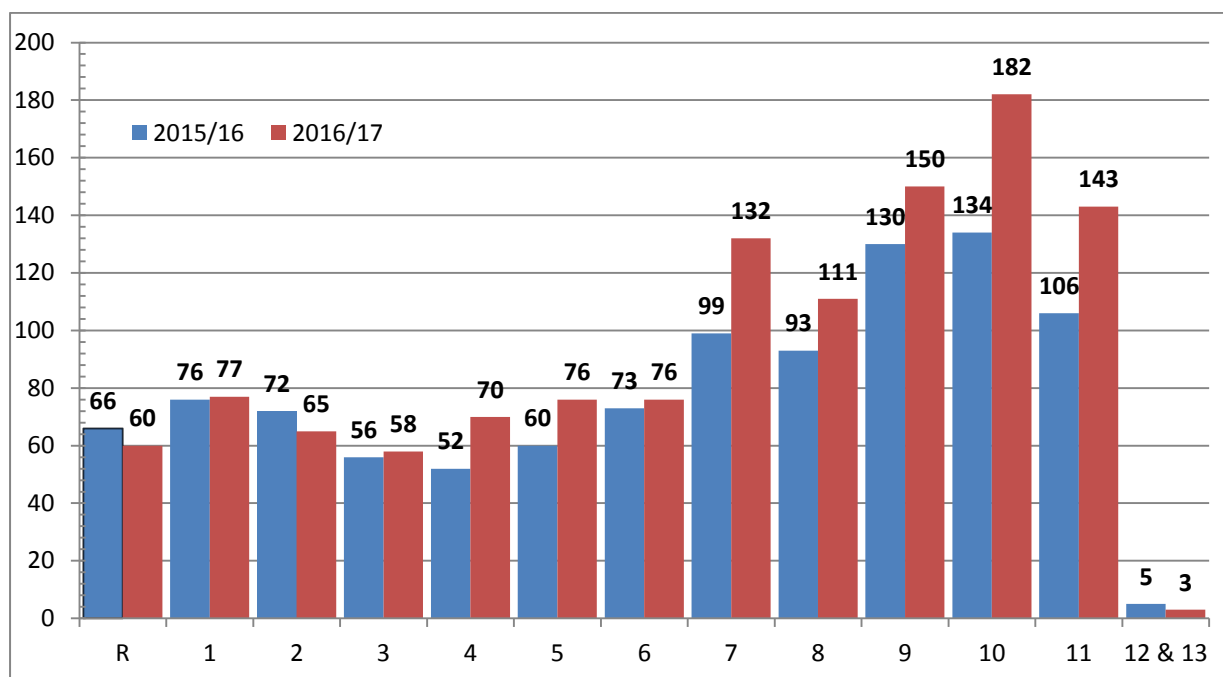
High numbers of pupils are opting to leave Kent schools to home educate and some districts have seen significant increases in the number of EHE referrals that they have submitted to the Elective Home Education Team this academic year.

- Maidstone - 63% increase
- Canterbury - 45% increase
- Dartford - 43% increase
- Swale - 42% increase
- Tonbridge & Malling - 34% increase

It is considered that the most likely reason for this are the changes that have been made to the curriculum and GCSEs which have placed increased pressure and expectation upon both pupils and schools. However this pressure does not seem to be affecting all Kent districts in the same way.

Swale referrals account for the highest percentage of new EHE referrals. This is undoubtedly driven by some schools encouraging EHE for its more challenging pupil's. One school in particular off-rolled 44 pupils to home educate last academic year alone.

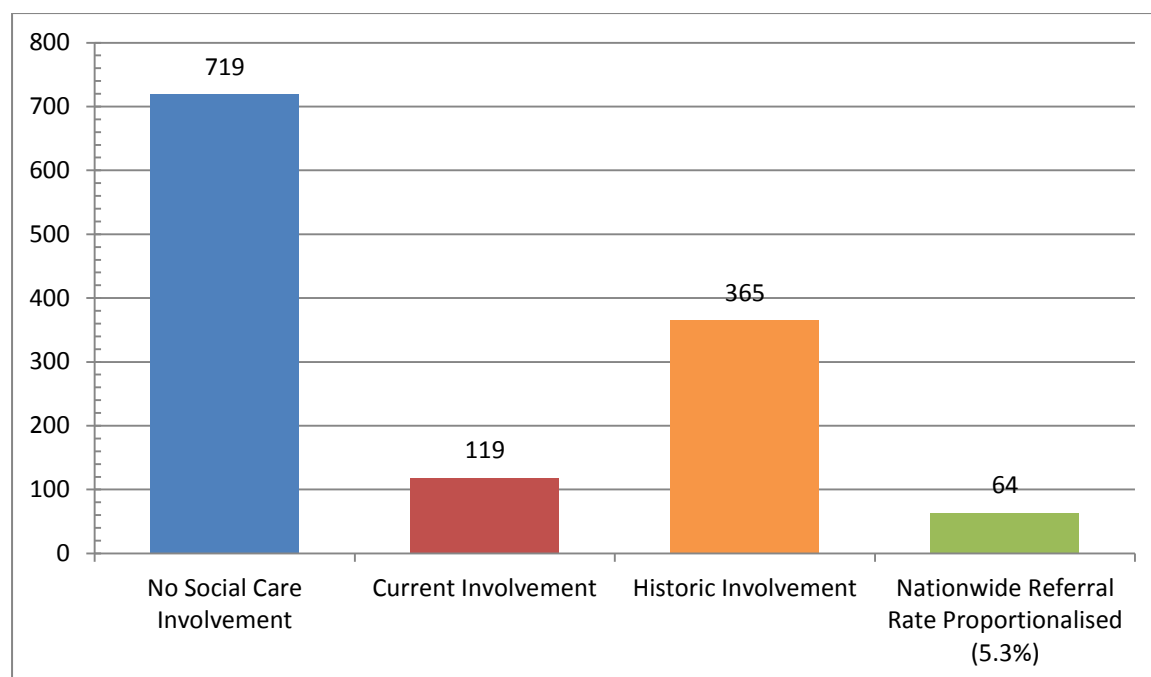
Figures 7 - EHE referrals by year group



This academic year, EHE referrals for secondary age pupils made up 60% of all new referrals. There has been a continual increase in referrals amongst KS4 pupils (Y10 & Y11), who made up 27% of all new referrals. This is a pivotal time in a pupil's educational career and we must question why parents are opting to home educate at this late stage in their child's education. Anecdotal evidence from EHE Support and Advice Officers following visits with families suggests that parents are choosing to home educate as a means of combating wider issues and in some cases schools encourage parents to consider this option when pupils behaviour is challenging or their attendance is poor.

Another concerning trend is the growth in Year 7 pupils who registered with the EHE team this year, this highlights a possible issue surrounding transition from primary to secondary education that requires further investigation and discussion with senior colleagues in Kent and the DfE.

Figure 8 – EHE referrals with Social Services Involvement in 2016/17



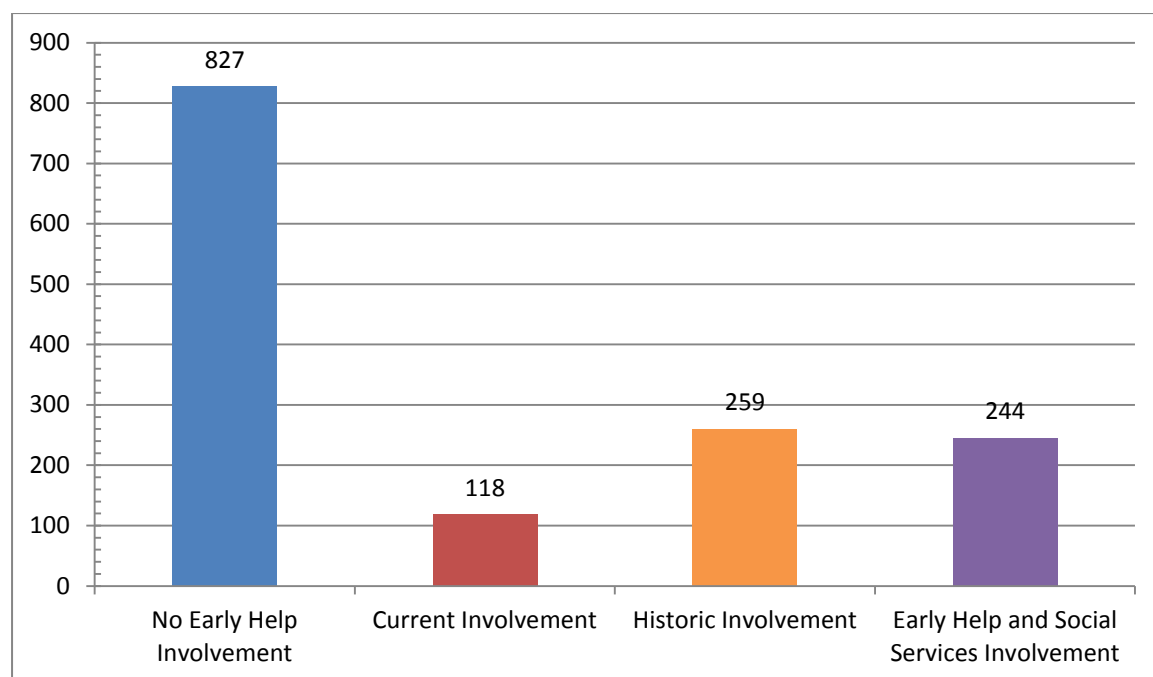
All new EHE referrals are assessed at point of registration prior to being allocated to an EHE Support and Advice Officer. Part of this assessment process includes checking the pupil's involvement with other KCC agencies including Attendance and Inclusion, Early Help and Specialist Children's Services to ensure a joined up approach.

This academic year, over 40% of our new EHE referrals are known to Specialist Children's Services. Of these pupils, one quarter had an open social care case at the time of their EHE registration. The other three quarters of the 40% had had involvement from social care prior to their EHE referral being received by the team.

These figures indicate that a significant proportion of parents who opt to home educate may have chaotic lifestyles and may not be equipped to provide their children with a suitable level of education due to the wider environmental issues that they are facing.



Figure 9- New EHE referrals with Early Help Involvement in 2016/17



Over 30% of our new EHE referrals this year are known to Early Help and Preventative Services. There is an overlap of pupils who are also known to Specialist Children's Services, these pupils make up 20% of pupils who registered with the EHE team this year. The fact that one fifth of our new referrals have a history of multi-agency involvement is a cause for concern that cannot be ignored.

When figures for pupils known to Early Help and Preventative Services and/or Specialist Children's Services are combined over half of the pupils who were registered as EHE this academic year have been supported by these agencies. This highlights the potential vulnerabilities that face a growing number of home educated pupils in Kent. However the lack of legislative power continues to limit the ability of the LA to engage where it is not wanted resulting in large numbers of pupils potentially being not receipt of the education to which they are entitled.

**Priority areas of service activity for the 2017/18 academic year include:**

- Pupils and families to be surveyed to better understand their rationale for choosing to home educate.
- Raise profile of concerns to seek more powers to intervene or at least require evidence of education.
- Further training and collaborative working with schools to prevent parents choosing to home educate when it is clearly not an appropriate option e.g. Use of an EHE checklist outlining roles and responsibilities for parents to sign before their child is removed from the school roll.