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3 October 2025

@TheIFS

Support for children with special educational needs and disabilities



What support is available for children with additional needs in England?

■ Education

- Around 1 in 5 children receive some targeted support for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Those with the most severe needs can apply for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
 - Produces legal obligation for school/council to provide support that meets needs
 - Available from age 0 to 25 – we focus on pupils

What support is available for children with additional needs in England?

- Benefits

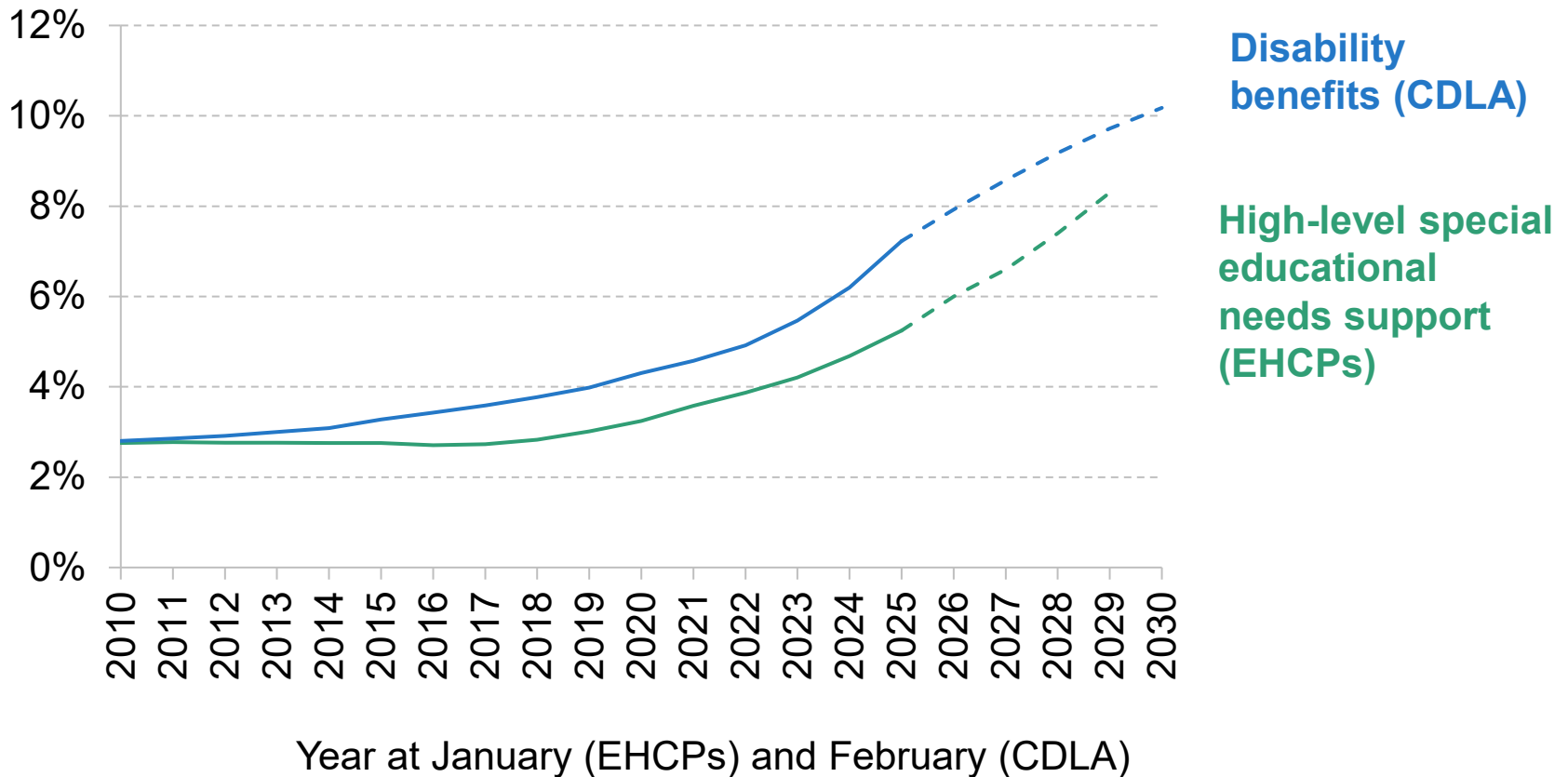
- Child Disability Living Allowance (CDLA) provides additional cash for (the families of) children (0-15) with mobility difficulties or additional care needs
 - Not means-tested
 - Can receive support for mobility and/or care needs
 - Can get from £1,500 to £9,700 per year
 - No major policy changes since introduced in 1992



How many children get support?

More children are receiving support for additional needs

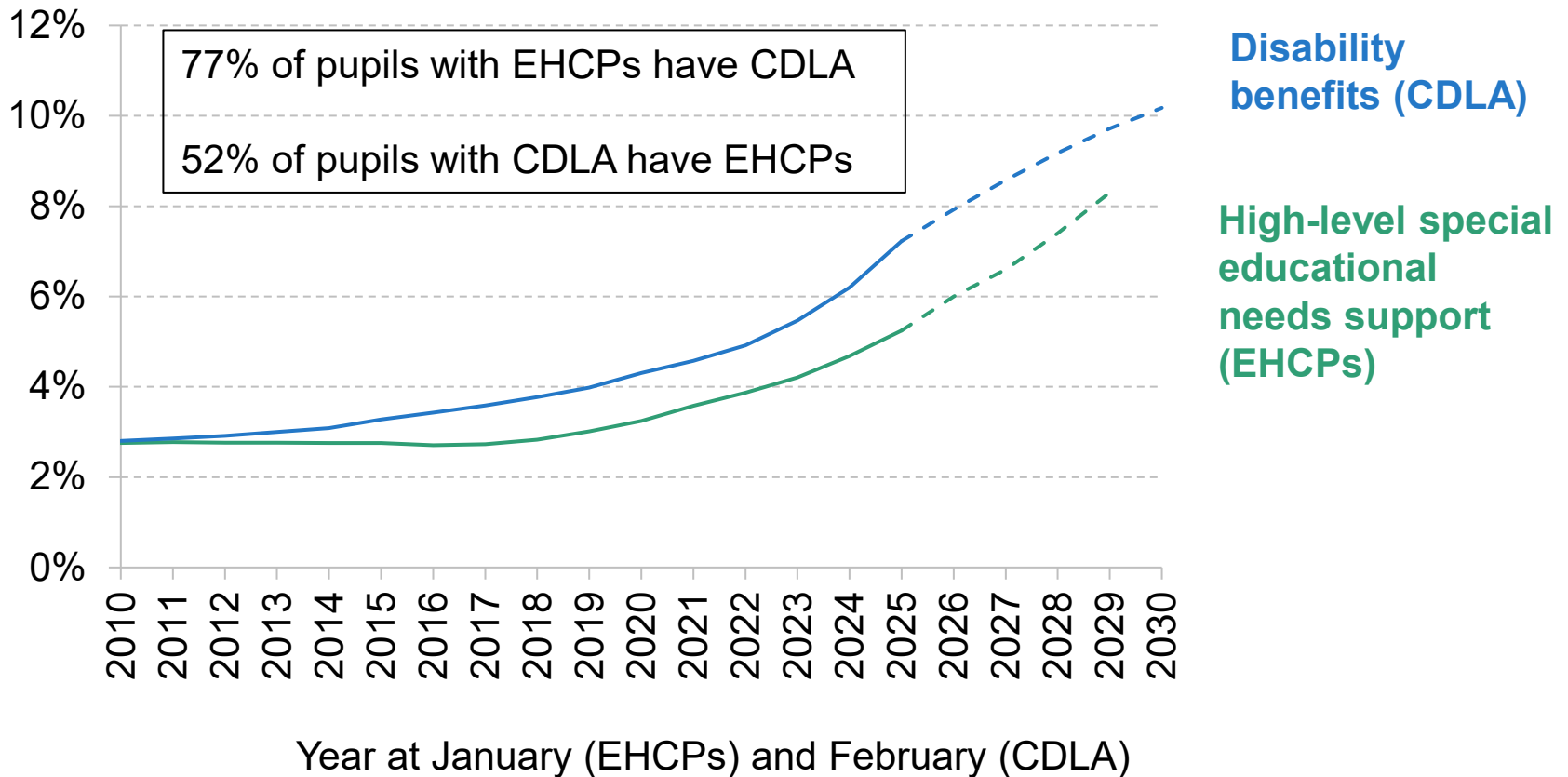
Share of children (0-15) receiving CDLA and share of pupils under 16 with an EHCP in England



Source: Figure 1

More children are receiving support for additional needs

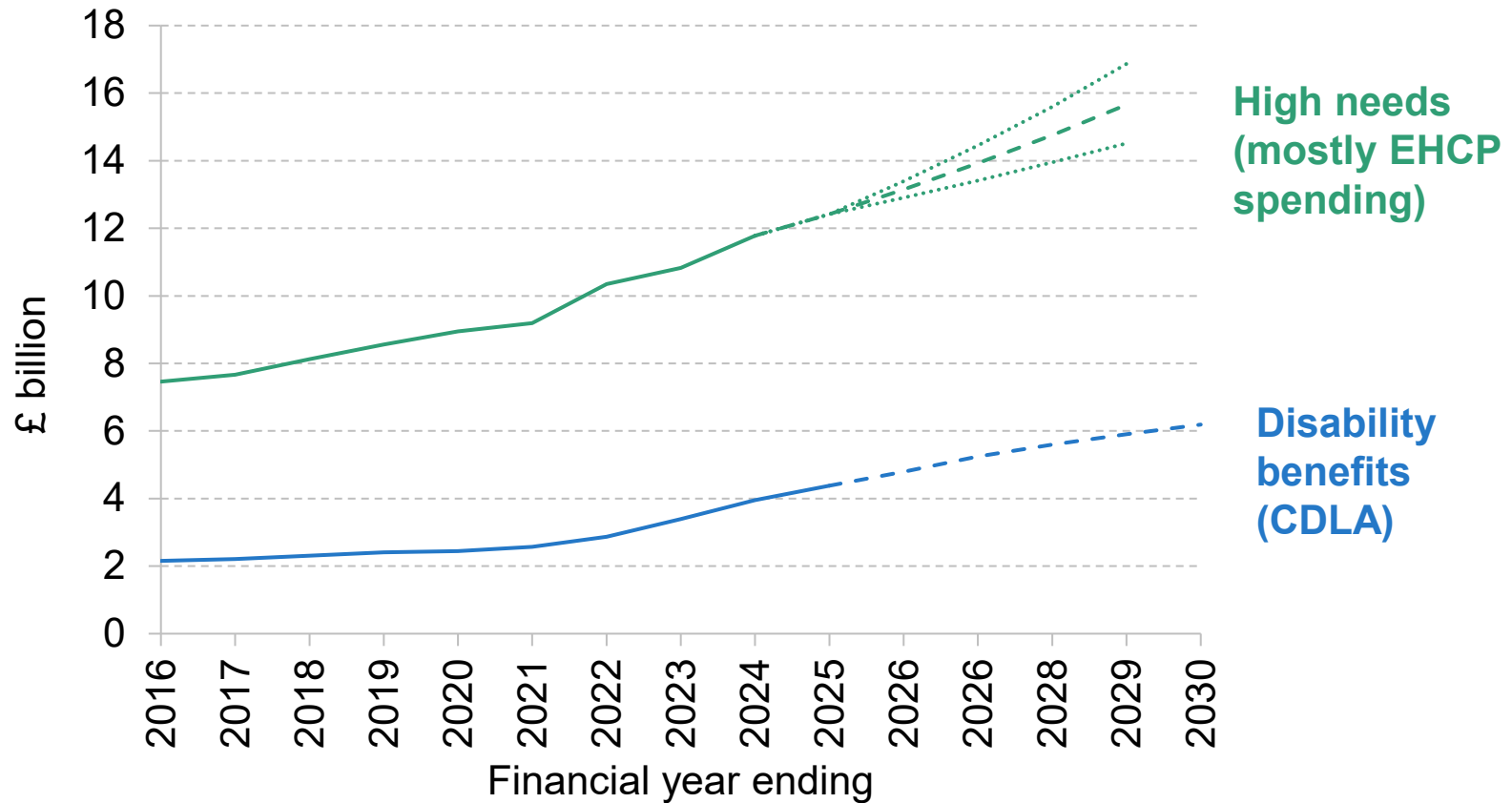
Share of children (0-15) receiving CDLA and share of pupils under 16 with an EHCP in England



Source: Figure 1

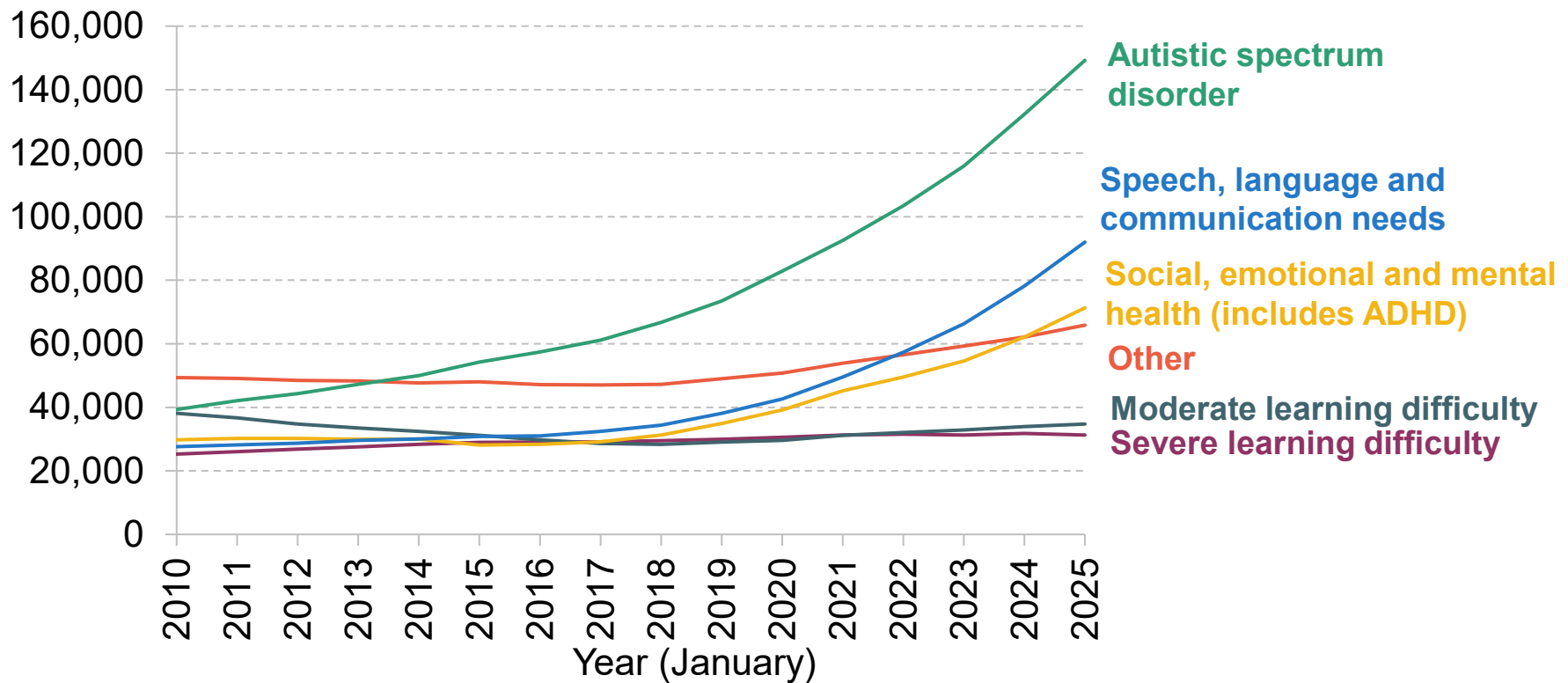
The costs of support are rising

Actual and forecast spend on CDLA and council high needs spending



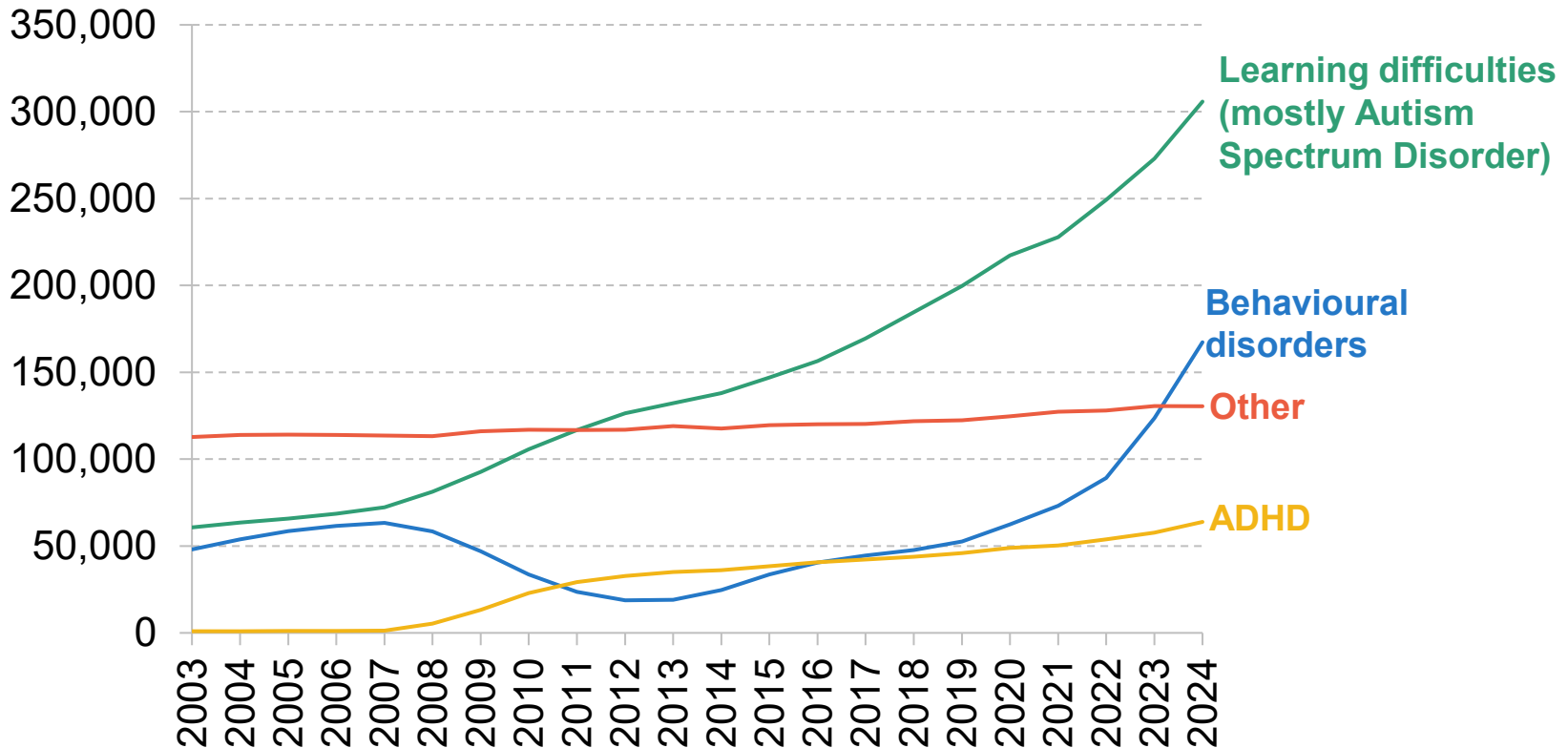
Biggest rise in EHCPs relating to Autism

Number of EHCPs/Statement of SENs by primary need



Autism also key for CDLA rise

CDLA claims by primary condition





Who gets support?

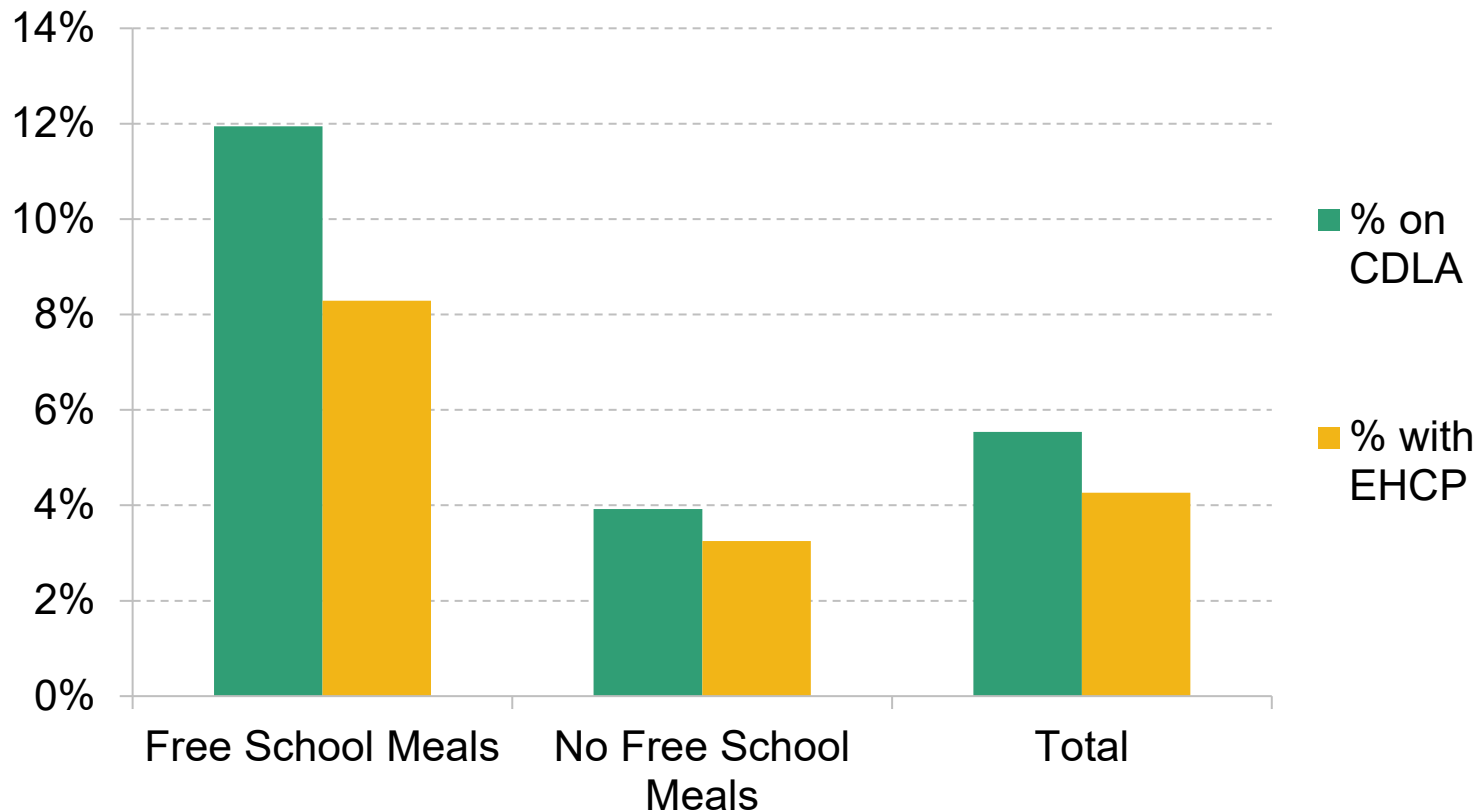
Boys are twice as likely to get support as girls

Share of children with CDLA or EHCP in 2025



Children receiving support tend to come from poorer families

Share of 12-15 year olds with an EHCP/CDLA, 2021

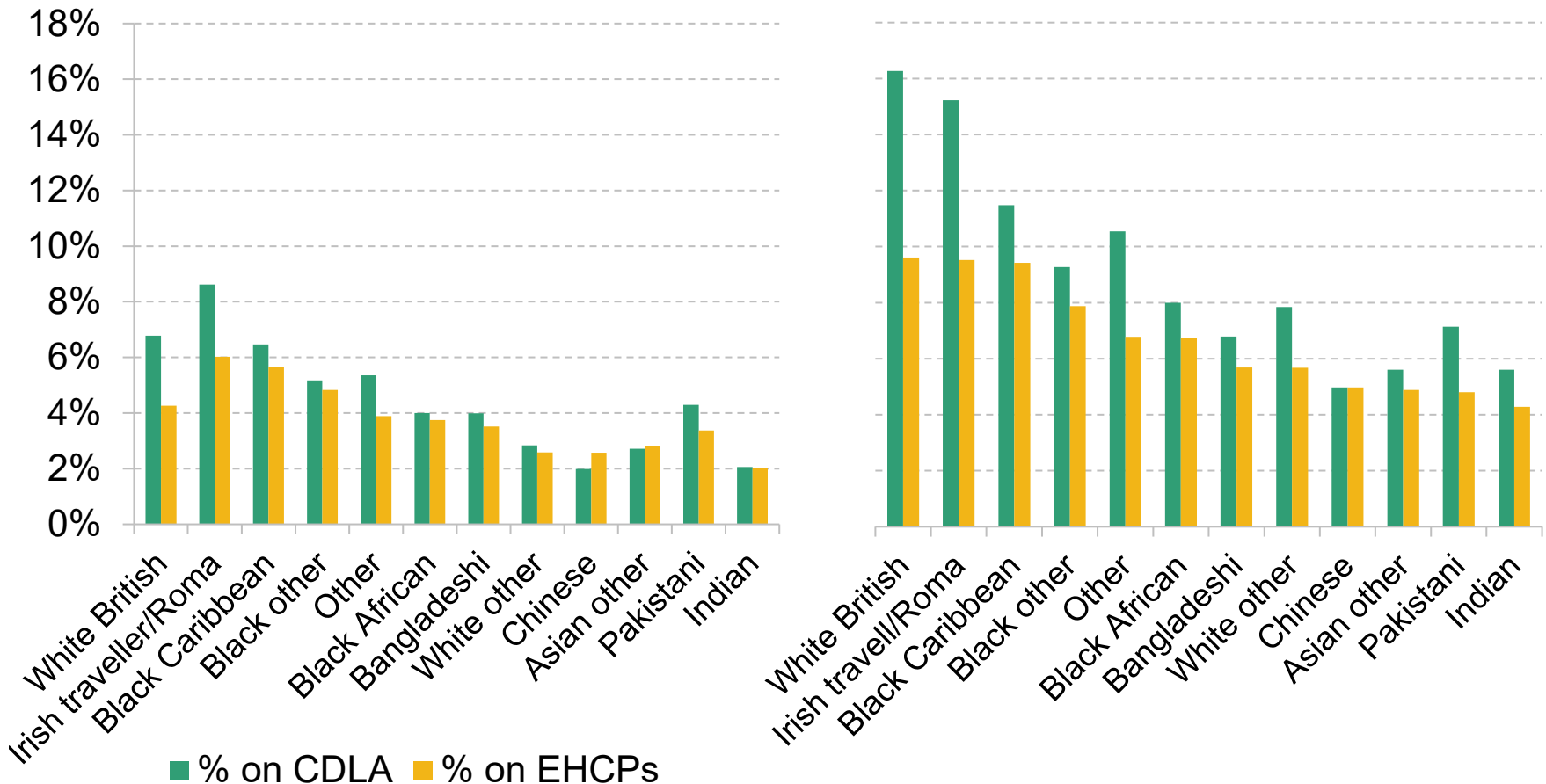


Big differences across ethnic groups

Share of 12-15 year olds with an EHCP/CDLA, 2021

All pupils

FSM pupils

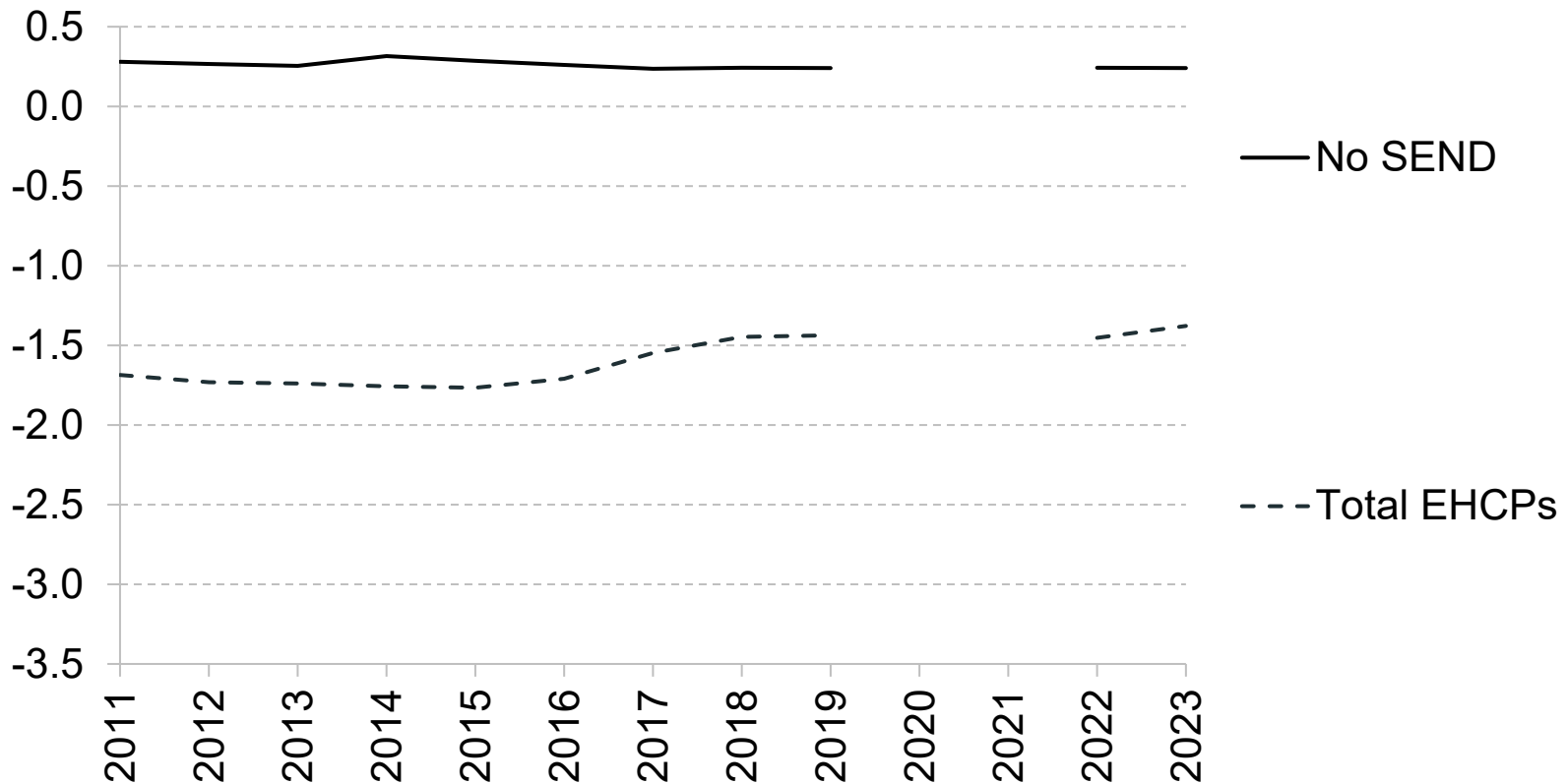




Outcomes of children receiving support

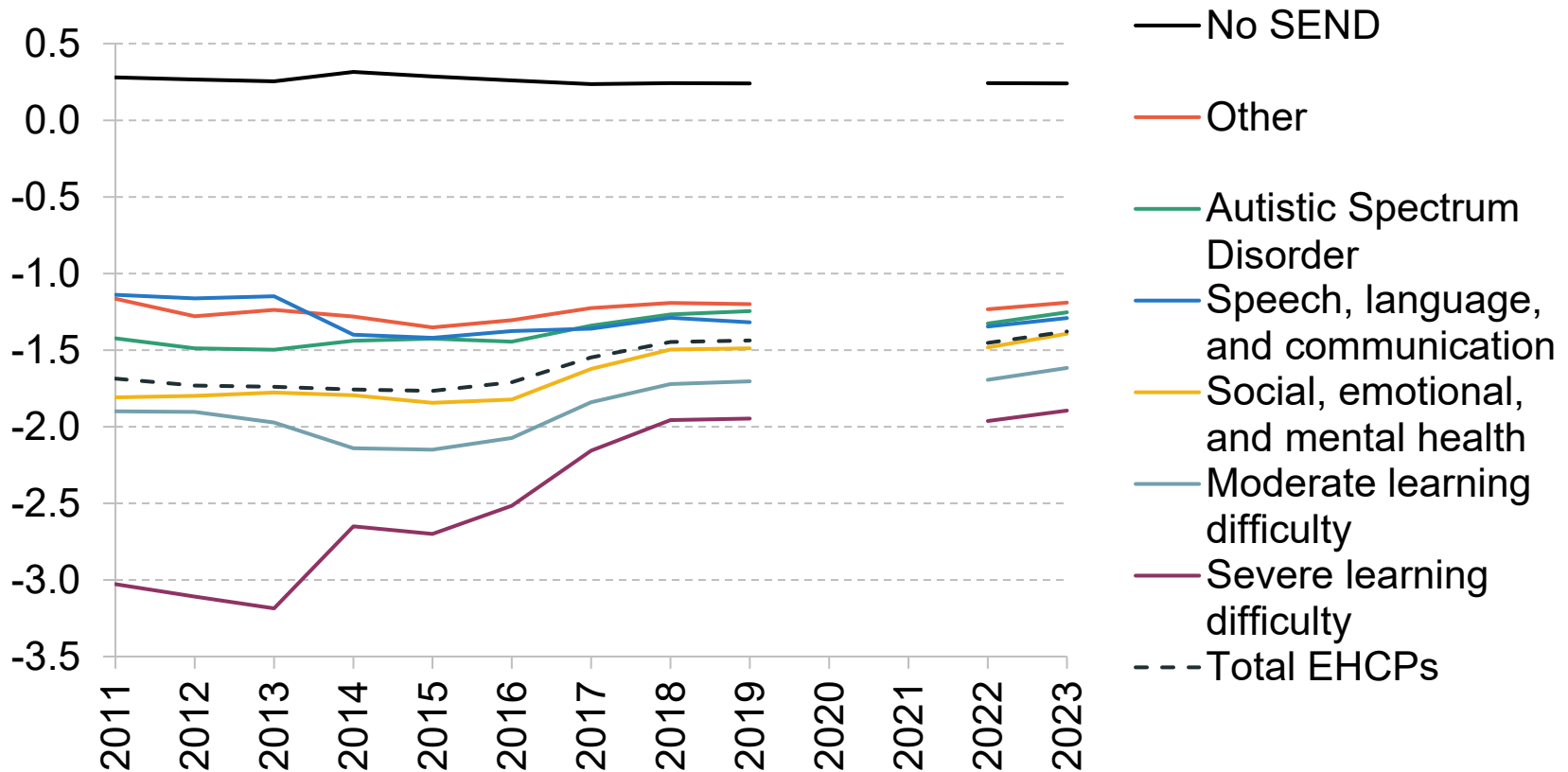
Academic attainment has remained lower than average

Standardised GCSE scores for pupils with no SEND or with EHCPs



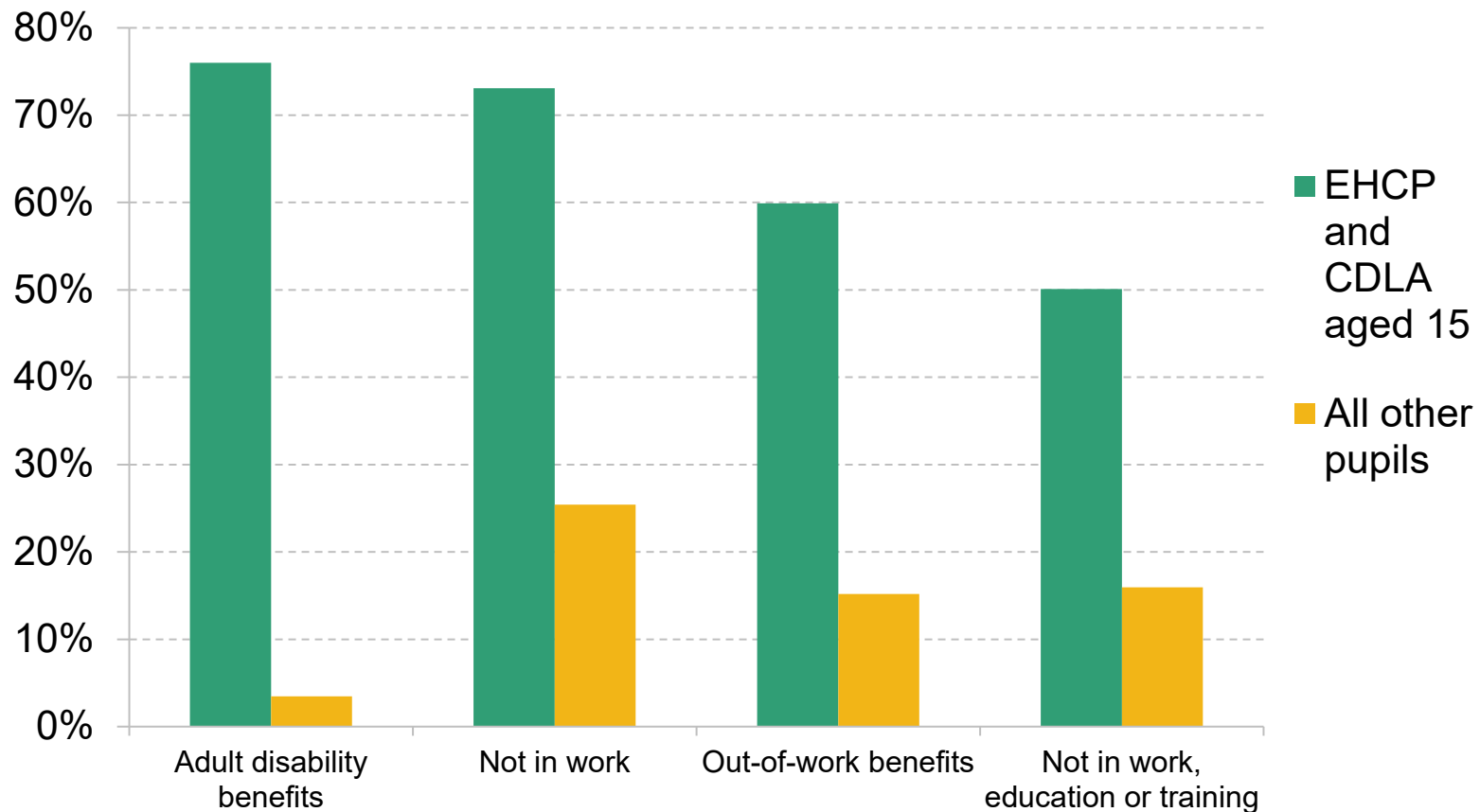
Academic attainment has remained lower than average

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



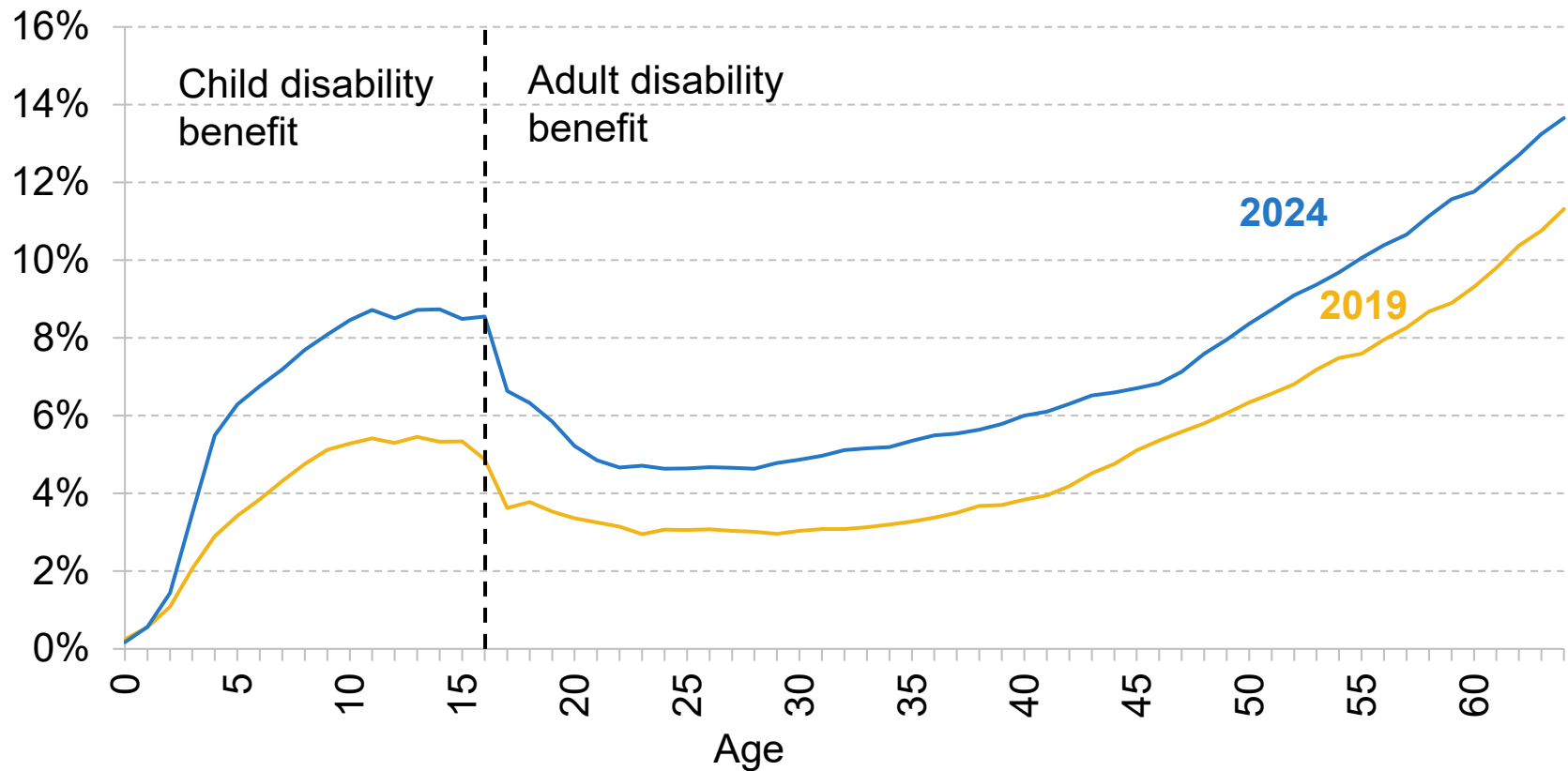
Children with EHCPs and CDLA also get support in early adulthood

Outcomes for 22-year-olds in 2021, by CDLA/EHCP at age 15



Young adults have seen a fast rise in disability benefits claims

Share of population claiming disability benefits by age



Conclusions

- Rise in identified learning and behavioural conditions has pushed up demand for support across the welfare state
 - Absent reform, costs will almost certainly keep rising
- Increased health-related support has big implications for other inequalities
- Children who receive health-related support in childhood are very likely to be out of work and claiming benefits in early adulthood
 - Debate needs to consider long-term impacts on public finances (lost tax, working-age benefits) and individuals
 - But little evidence on what works, especially for long term

Recommendations



- OBR should forecast council spending on special educational needs
- Review of CDLA eligibility, assessment, and rates of support
 - CDLA structure has been unchanged since 1992
- Holistic review of the support provided across different systems
 - Trade-offs involved across different options for reform

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