

Autistic Spectrum Disorder in Children 2018

Autism and Asperger syndrome are both part of a range of related developmental disorders known as autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). They begin in childhood and last through adulthood and can cause a wide range of symptoms including the following:

- **problems and difficulties with social interaction** – including lack of understanding and awareness of other people's emotions and feelings
- **impaired language and communication skills** – including delayed language development and an inability to start conversations or take part in them properly
- **unusual patterns of thought and physical behaviour** – including making repetitive physical movements, such as hand tapping or twisting and developing set routines that may cause distress if broken

There is no cure for ASD, although a wide range of treatments, including specialist education and behavioural programmes, can help improve symptoms.

Nationally it is estimated that 1 in every 100 children has an ASD and it is more common in boys than girls. Boys are three to four times more likely to develop an ASD than girls.

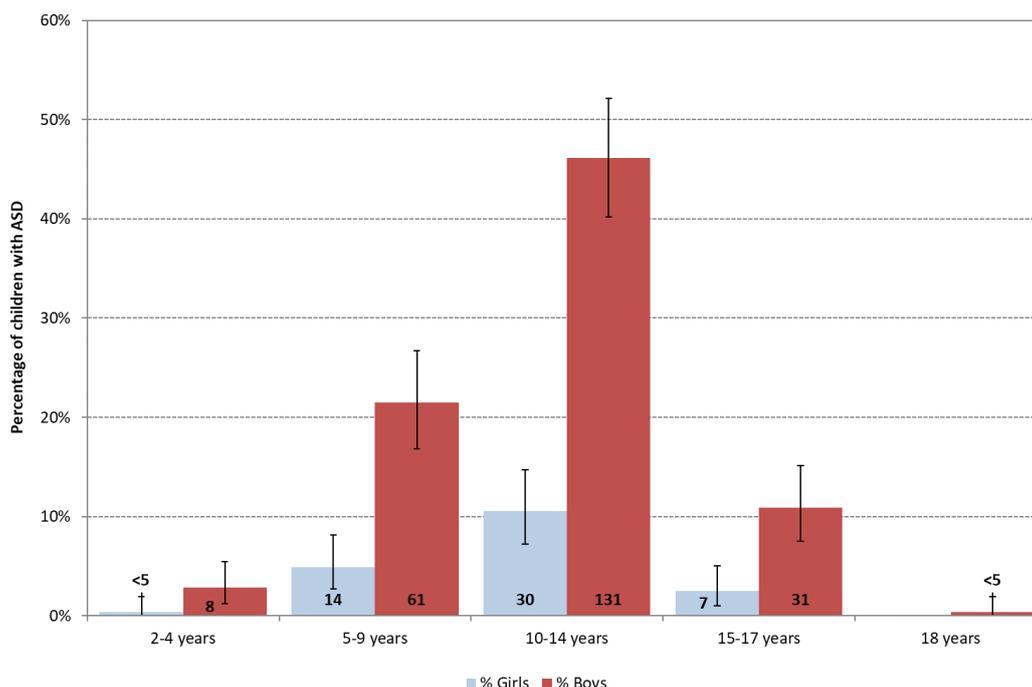
Children with ASD in Shropshire – Total Number = 284

The following information looks at profiling children with ASD recorded on the Shropshire school census, March 2018.

Age, gender and ethnicity

In Shropshire in 2018, 82% of children diagnosed with ASD were boys compared to 18% of girls. This would support the national figures that suggest that up to four times as many boys have ASD compared to girls. The following chart shows the age and gender of all children recorded as having ASD with a significantly higher percentage of boys aged 10-14 years recorded as having ASD compared to other age and gender groups. The number of children in each category is shown at the base of each chart column.

Figure 1 ASD in children in Shropshire by age and gender 2018



Source: School Census, March 2018, Shropshire Council

Ethnicity

94% of children on the school census with ASD were recorded as white British. The remaining 6% were from a variety of different ethnic groups (2.5% being from other white groups and the remaining 3.5% either not stated or from other mixed, black and minority ethnic groups).

Geographical and socio-economic distribution of children with ASD

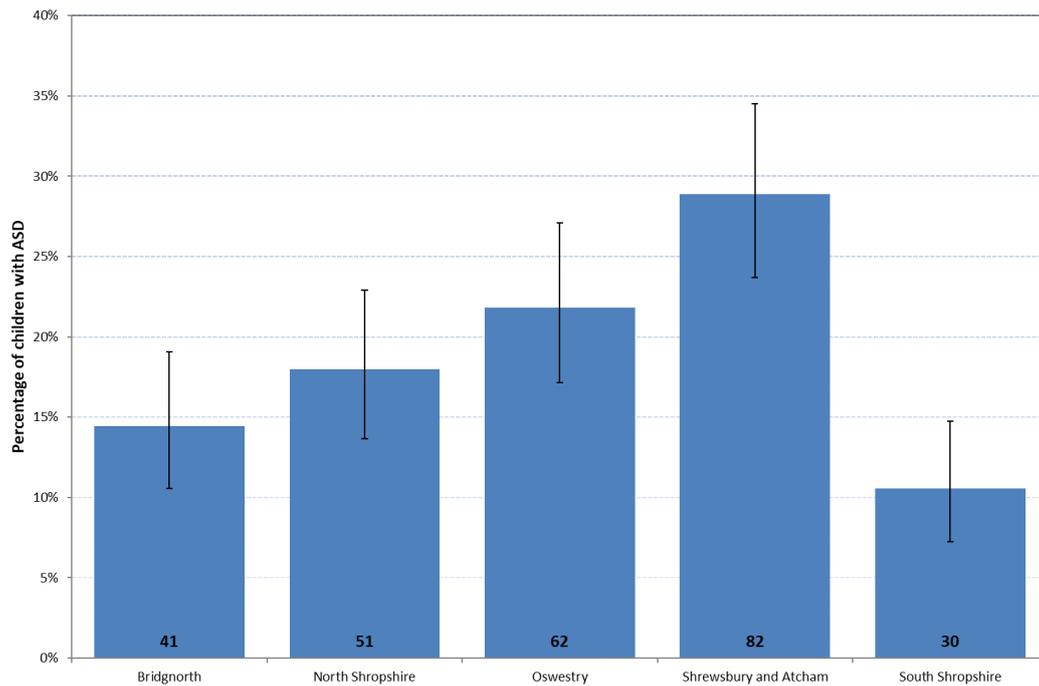
Although estimates suggest that less than 1% of children on the Shropshire census may have ASD, it is not distributed evenly in the population. Knowing and understanding more about the geographical and socio-economic distribution of ASD can enable more efficient and appropriate care and enable the needs of children with ASD to be better met.

Around 32.2% of all children on the Shropshire school census live in the most rural areas, e.g. villages, hamlets and isolated dwellings. However, 30.6% of children with ASD live in these areas, with the remaining 69.4% living in small towns and urban areas.

Local Authority Districts

The following chart shows the proportion of all children with ASD in Shropshire living in each area of the county. The number of children is highlighted in the base of each column. Shrewsbury & Atcham and Oswestry had a similar proportion of children with ASD but Shrewsbury & Atcham was significantly higher than the remaining Local Authority areas, as the largest population of children, live in the Shrewsbury area. Although ASD accounted for less than 1% of children recorded on the school census overall, the percentage in each area varied from 0.6% in North Shropshire and Shrewsbury & Atcham to 1.2% in Oswestry. The other areas were 0.7% of children recorded on the school census.

Figure 2 Location of where children with ASD live by former local authority - Shropshire 2018



Source: School Census, March 2018, Shropshire Council

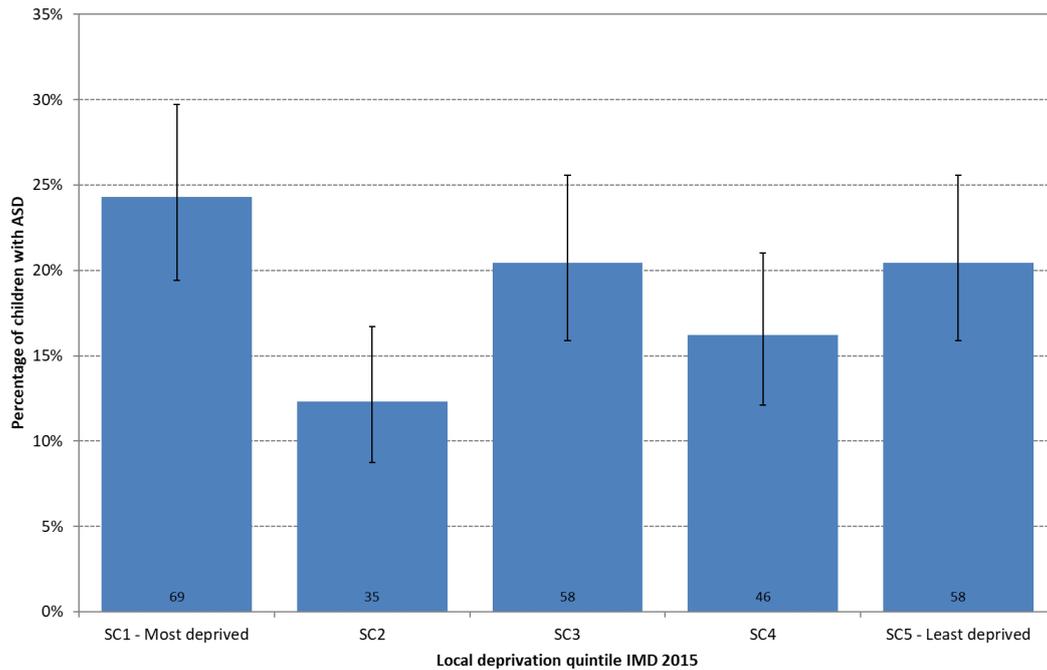
Place Plans

Calculated as a percentage of the total number of children with ASD on the school census, North East Shrewsbury had a higher percentage (11.6%) compared to all the other place plan areas, followed by Oswestry Town (10%). When calculated as a crude rate per 1000 of all children on the census with an SEN, Oswestry Town was significantly higher compared to all the other place plan areas which were all similar.

Deprivation

The following chart shows the relationship of ASD to deprivation in Shropshire. There was no significant difference between the deprivation quintiles except for SC2 significantly lower than SC1, the remaining four quintiles were all similar. Around 17% of children with ASD in Shropshire had free school meals at the time of the school census, recorded in March 2018, compared to 8.6% of the total recorded population of children on the school census.

Figure 3 Location of where children with ASD in Shropshire live by deprivation 2018



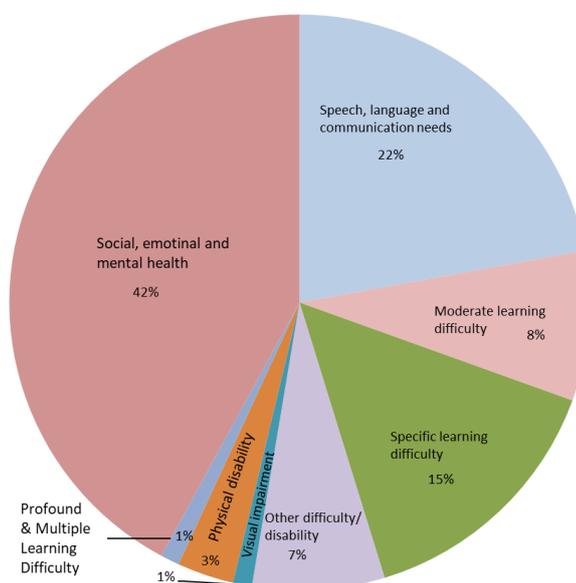
Source: School Census, March 2018, Shropshire Council

ASD and multiple vulnerabilities

It is recognised that many people with ASD also have other conditions such as learning disabilities and sensory impairments. It is estimated that nationally 44% - 52% of people with autism have a learning disability. Overall in Shropshire 33% of children with ASD were also recorded as having another special educational need. The following pie chart highlights the type and proportion of additional special educational needs of that 33% of children recorded on the school census as having ASD in Shropshire.

The most likely additional special educational need of children with ASD in Shropshire was social, emotional and mental health needs, and speech, language and communication needs.

Figure 4 Additional special educational needs of children with ASD in Shropshire 2018



Source: School Census, March 2018, Shropshire Council

Summary

- The recorded prevalence of ASD in children is likely to be higher than that included in this report, as this is based on information from limited sources.
- Boys aged 10-14 years are most likely to be recorded as having ASD, and overall boys are more likely than girls to have ASD which is also reflected nationally.
- A significantly higher percentage of children recorded with ASD on the census came from small towns and urban areas such as Shrewsbury & Atcham Local Authority district; with a higher proportion from Shrewsbury North East, and Oswestry Town which are amongst some of the most deprived areas in Shropshire.
- There was no significant difference in ASD proportions between the deprivation quintiles except for SC2 which was significantly lower compared to the most deprived quintile.
- 33% of children recorded as having ASD in Shropshire also have a special educational need, with social, emotional and mental health needs being the most likely.