

## SEND News Bulletin

### Welcome

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the latest edition of the Worcestershire SEND News Bulletin. What a long term it has been but I'm sure you'll agree that it's been great to see the return of the sunshine and brighter evenings!

As always, it was great to see many SENCOs join us for the Spring Term SENCO Network Locality meetings in the north and south. A special thank you to those SENCOs that shared presentations about the internal specialist provision that they have been developing in their settings – it gave such a valuable insight into the rationale, process, challenges and benefits for the young people.

Lots of feedback was shared on the day about how useful this focus was, and discussions enabled colleagues to share their own experiences and ask questions.

In this bulletin you will find information and updates from a range of national and local service providers and support teams. We encourage you to read and share with relevant colleagues within your school. We hope that you find the information useful and, as always, would welcome any feedback you may have.

We thank you for your ongoing commitment and hard work in meeting the needs of the children and young people with SEND and their families. Despite the ongoing challenges, there are many success stories to share in celebrating the achievements of children and young people with SEND in our schools and settings.

Wishing you all an enjoyable Easter break!

Kind regards

**Helen Harris**

Learning & Teaching Adviser, SEND/Inclusion

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## National News & Updates

### Inclusion in Practice – call for submissions

The DfE Expert Advisory Group for Inclusion has been established to support efforts to improve inclusion in mainstream education. The group brings together experts to provide evidence-informed recommendations and they are calling for submissions on [Inclusion in Practice](#) from teachers, leaders and anyone involved in providing inclusive education in mainstream schools. Based on the hot topic at the recent SENCO Networks, this might be something you wish to contribute to. The window for submissions will close at midnight on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025.

### Special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities: guidance for school governing boards

On 30<sup>th</sup> January, the DfE published new guidance for school governing boards in relation to SEND. This guidance is intended to:

- support school governing boards' understanding of their role and responsibilities in relation to children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities
- empower governors and trustees to hold their schools to account

The guidance also includes a useful checklist for governing boards to consider.

The board is the decision-making body of the school and is accountable and responsible for what the school does. It is vital that boards play an active role in providing support and challenge, to ensure schools are providing the best support for pupils with SEN and disabilities.

School governing boards have responsibilities to children and young people with SEN and disabilities under the [Children and Families Act 2014](#) (the 2014 Act) and to disabled children and young people under the [Equality Act 2010](#).

The governing board should be taken to mean the accountable body for the school or group of schools. In local authority-maintained schools, this will be the governing body and in an academy trust this will be the trust board.

Download the guidance document [here](#).

## Guidance for arranging Alternative Provision

On 5<sup>th</sup> February, the DfE published updated guidance for arranging Alternative Provision [Arranging Alternative Provision - guide for LAs and schools](#).

This statutory guidance is for headteachers, local authorities, governing bodies and academy trusts. It applies to all educational settings providing alternative provision (AP):

- schools maintained by the local authority
- [academies](#) and [free schools](#)
- pupil referral units (PRUs)
- further education colleges
- independent providers that deliver alternative provision

This guidance covers the use of AP where:

- local authorities arrange education for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education
- schools arrange education for pupils on a fixed-period exclusion
- schools arrange education for pupils to improve their behaviour off-site

Statutory guidance sets out what schools and local authorities must do to comply with the law.

## Access SEND CPD resources from the Universal SEND Services programme

The Department for Education's [Universal SEND Services programme](#) provides Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) specific Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for school and further education staff.

The programme's [online CPD units](#) support professionals to make high quality inclusive teaching the reality for every learner. The final unit in the series, 'Supporting Reading and Comprehension Across the Curriculum' is now available.

Complete the new unit to learn more about:

- how to identify barriers to learners within the core building blocks of reading
- the essential role senior leaders, teachers, reading leads, SENCOs, support staff and others can play in identifying when a child needs support with reading
- how to apply practical strategies to use in the classroom as part of an inclusive approach Create an account with Whole School SEND to [access the unit for free](#)

## Local News & Updates

### SEND Improvement Updates

The local area partnership is working through the Priority Action Plan and SEND Improvement Plan following the outcome of the 2024 Ofsted and CQC inspection. The local area partnership includes Worcestershire County Council and NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Please use the following link to the SEND Local Offer website where you will find our March update about the SEND improvement programme: [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/SENDimprovements](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/SENDimprovements)

Updates for March include:

**‘Stock Take’ review session** – As part of our improvement journey, the DfE and NHS England have carried out a ‘Stock Take’ review session with the local area partnership to monitor our progress.

- **PINS** – Worcestershire will be part of the next wave of the national programme Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS)
- **Melo** – New 0-25 years early intervention and preventative wellbeing and mental health service
- **Preparing for Independence event** – A free event for parent carers on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May to connect with local services that will support young people as they move into adulthood.
- **Free training for parent carers and professionals** – SENDIASS provides free training workshops and webinars, including a new workshop ‘supporting young people with SEND: preparing for adulthood’.
- **Award nomination** – National Star and HOW College partnership has been shortlisted for an award for innovated specialist/mainstream partnership working

### Worcestershire Marketplace Event

**2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025 from 3:00pm - 5:00pm.**

This free marketplace event running in June is the ideal opportunity to come along and find out how teams / services could support your school.

Open to anyone working in schools from Business Managers, Headteachers, Deputies, SENCOs, DSLs etc working in schools across Worcestershire.

This is the perfect opportunity for schools to access resources, documents or any information they feel is beneficial to them.

Some of the Confirmed teams include Human Resources, Training and Conferences, SLAs and eStore, School Finance, Inclusion Support Services (including Learning Support Team, Autism, Education Psychology) and many more....

Reserve your place via CPD: **Course Code 10560** or if you require any further information, please email [Workforcesupport@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:Workforcesupport@worcestershire.gov.uk).

For more information please download our [marketplace flyer](#).

## Supporting families of children who feel anxious about transition

Educational Psychologist Dr Amy Sweet will lead a free half-day workshop from 9am to 12pm on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025 (venue to be confirmed). Aimed at SENCOs and pastoral staff in middle and secondary schools, the course will train them to run a 2-hour parent workshop to support families of children feeling anxious about the move from Year 6 to Year 7.

Year 6 to 7 transition can be an exciting time for children and families however it can also create high levels of anxiety, particularly for children who experience social, emotional and mental health needs, learning difficulties and / or neurodiversity. Identifying children who may be anxious about transition early and engaging with parents has been shown to build resilience and create a positive start to secondary school life.

The course will cover:

- Instruction on anxiety, anxiety management techniques and how anxiety can impact Year 6 to 7 transition.
- Training in the delivery of a workshop that school staff can lead with parents.
- Pre-delivery video call support.

All training materials required to deliver the parent workshop are provided.

This course is open to secondary and middle schools who are able to commit to delivering a 2-hour workshop to a group of parents from their feeder primary schools during the summer term of 2025. School staff attending the course need to have a basic knowledge in the following concepts to support session delivery:

- Fight / flight system and survival responses.
- Supporting children with emotional regulation approaches such as regulated breathing.
- Naming and validating feelings (including approaches such as emotion coaching, PACE and 'naming and taming')

Places are limited – email [LBradbury@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:LBradbury@worcestershire.gov.uk) to book your spot.

## Worcestershire Family Hubs offer

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 Redditch Borough Council, Action for Children and Barnardo's are now delivering the **Worcestershire Family Hub offer for families with children aged 0-19** years, up to 25 with SEND, we are no longer Starting Well Partnership.

Family Hubs are a one stop shop where children, young people and families can seek help and support. There are a few new changes to the offer that is now provided, the team and how you refer into Family Hubs.

There will be workshops scheduled over the next few weeks so you can find out more about the Local Family Hub Offer.

### Referrals to Family Hubs

All professional referrals to be made via website: [Local Family Hubs | Worcestershire County Council](#)

### Criteria / Referrals to Family Hub offer

- Anyone can access Family Hub Navigation service with a child or young person aged 0-19 years or up to 25 years with SEND
- Family Navigation – Extra support to access external service/organisations -levels 1&2 needs
- Brief Invention support is for 0-5 years with levels 1&2 needs
- Groups – open to all Levels of Need – referrals are RAG rated priority is aimed at 0-5 years Families and levels 1 & 2 needs
- Universal offer – Workshops and Solihull Approach online Groups Free
- Online courses for emotional health and wellbeing

A series of Worcestershire Family Hub webinars are taking place this month and will provide you with a full update on What a Family Hub is, how to access support for families and what services are provided by them.

[Book your place now!](#)

# Worcestershire SENCo Network

## SENCo Network Events 2024/2025

Feedback received from SENCOs about the blended approach of virtual and face-to-face SENCO network events has been overwhelmingly positive. SENCOs have reported that they appreciate the shared space together to discuss topics pertinent to their role and problem-solve creative approaches to shared issues or experiences. SENCOs also fed back that information received from a range of partners provided them with updated information about services, guidance and met training needs which enabled them to feel confident in carrying out their role.

The blended approach to the SENCO network will continue in 2024/25 with FREE membership for all Worcestershire schools with the slight change that there will be two locality meetings each term for the North and South of the County (rather than 3 locality meetings). This change is based on feedback received regarding travel.

The remaining 24/25 SENCO network events are:

### **Summer 1      Virtual Briefing - National and Local SEND updates (SCH 10178)**

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025 3:30 – 5:00pm Virtual Meeting

### **Summer 2      Inclusion Conference (CON 10565)**

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025, 9:00-3:45pm – Bromsgrove Hotel & Spa

\*£50.00pp + VAT with the option to bring a second delegate from your school for £30.00pp + VAT. (maximum of two delegates per school)

Please note, the Inclusion Conference is now **FULLY BOOKED** but you can add your name to the waiting list by [following this link](#).

Schools will need to book a place for each individual event via the [CPD Portal](#). This will ensure you receive any recordings and presentations shared. It will also enable us to track membership and ensure venues are able to accommodate delegates.

We look forward to you joining us for this series of events.



## Lumi Nova – Feedback Request

The Lumi Nova team would love to hear from you!

Please spare a few minutes to **share your experience** of using Lumi Nova with the families you work with. Your feedback matters and can help them to improve their service.



<https://bit.ly/ln-prof-feedback>

Help gather feedback from families too!

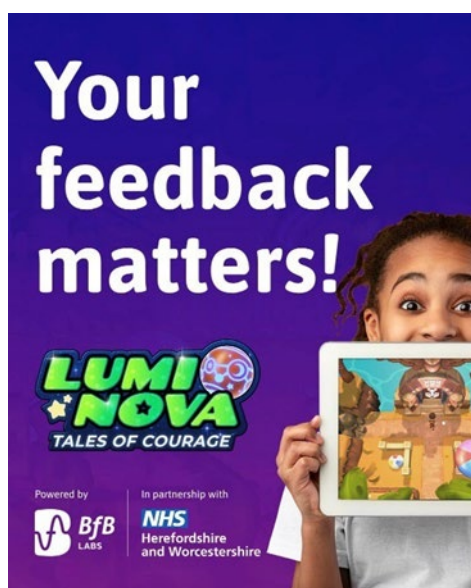
They often speak to families who have benefited from Lumi Nova but didn't know how or who to provide feedback to. Please use the email template or Facebook post linked below to encourage the families you work with to share their feedback on using Lumi Nova with us too.

[Download Feedback Templates](#)

What is Lumi Nova?

**Lumi Nova:** Tales of Courage is a digital therapeutic mobile game supporting children with fears, worries and anxiety. Designed for children aged 7-12 years, Lumi Nova helps children to reflect on their feelings, build resilience, and learn lifelong skills to self-manage their worries in a fun intergalactic adventure.

- **Signpost:** Lumi Nova is instantly accessible to families by signing up at [luminova.app/handw](https://luminova.app/handw)
- **Spread the Word:** Register to receive your digital Lumi Nova Resource Kit [here](#) to support you to share Lumi Nova with other professionals and families



## Worcestershire's Supported Internships

Two new resources clarifying Worcestershire's local Supported Internship offer is and what can be adjusted for SEND students wishing to complete an apprenticeship.

- [Apprenticeships for All Guide](#)
- [What is a supported internship?](#)

Upcoming event! (please share far and wide using this [Preparing for Independence Flyer](#))

Preparing for independence offers the opportunity to parent carers to connect with local services and support networks that will support young people as they move into adulthood. Parent carers can speak with professionals and other families to gain advice and support.

The event will take place on **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May from 4pm-6pm at Kidderminster College**, Market Street, Kidderminster.

To book a place follow the link in the comments: [Preparing for Independence Parents and Carers Evening](#)

## Flexi-Schooling Guidance

Flexi-Schooling is an arrangement between parent and school where children of compulsory school age are on roll at a school but where the provision is split between attendance at school and home education arranged by the parents or carers. The [pupil attendance and welfare guidance](#) provides some more detail and recommendations for schools, parents and carers.

## Empowering Autistic Young People

The National Autistic Society (NAS) have created a collection of free resources designed to help autistic teenagers better understand their unique experiences. The 'Know Yourself' collection aims to give teens the knowledge and confidence to navigate their self-discovery journey.

Resources include videos, PDFs, worksheets and downloadable guides, to support autistic teenagers in understanding what being autistic means to them.

Weblink: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/resources-for-autistic-teenagers>

The series will cover six topics in total over the course of three years. The first four topics, 'understanding yourself', 'energy accounting', 'exploring your identity' and 'setting yourself up for success' are available now on the above weblink. Young autistic people also share personal stories and strategies that have helped them.

## Early Years Inclusion Update

### South Worcestershire Dingley's Promise Enhanced Early Years Provision

Enhanced provision referrals to Dingley's Promise Worcester or Droitwich are made via the lead professional for the child. The referral will be discussed at the next Early Years Enhanced Provision Panel and the outcome will be fed back to the family/referrer. Families can also self-refer to Dingley's Promise Family support offer which may include home visits, walk and talk, information sessions, stay and play sessions or 1:1 support with Family Support Worker by visiting their website [Dingley's Promise - Homepage - Dingley's Promise](#).

The Worcester Dingley's Promise centre was due to open in February 2025, but during planned work, there were bigger issues found with the building, including problems with the roof. These must be fixed before Dingley's can move in and since the building is on a school site, the repairs can only be done during the summer holidays. A temporary building has been found in Worcester, and we are working through the standard legal processes, to enable this to be opened as soon as possible.

### Early Years Annual Reviews

A reminder that detail about reviews of EHC plans for children aged 0 to 5 can be found at: <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/schools-education-and-learning/send-local-offer/ehcp-annual-reviews>.

Reviews of an EHC plan for a child under five should happen at least every three to six months to ensure that the provision continues to be appropriate, please contact the named case worker or SEND services for more specific information about individual cases. Call the helpline on 01905 845579 or email [sen@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:sen@worcestershire.gov.uk). You can also talk to your Area SENCO if you need support with this process.

### WCC delay and defer policy

The DfE guidance clearly states that only children who are summer born are eligible for delay & deferrals into school, see guidance here [guidance on deferred and delayed entry](#). The NEF funding finishes when the child is five and statutory school age. The EHCNA process should enable children to attend a provision in line with their chronological age. When the assessment is complete, and if an EHC Plan is written, any deferral requests are discussed at the weekly placement panel.

### [Download transition toolkit for early years](#)

Smooth transitions within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) depend on a commitment from all professionals involved to develop positive communication links. In order to promote continuity for all children experiencing transitions between settings, it is important that there is a shared approach between all those professionals involved. The information and resources within this approach is designed to be used by all partners involved in transition to help create continuity and consistency. This guidance is designed to help settings adopt an inclusive approach to supporting children and families in the journey of transition from an Early Years setting to a school age setting. We have also included Individual Transition Templates for children with additional needs, early years providers will plan more activities to make the unfamiliar familiar.

## Alternative Provision Directories

Local authorities and schools can arrange alternative provision and special educational provision in settings which are not schools or colleges. This is commonly known as unregistered alternative provision because, unlike schools or colleges, this type of provision is not subject to a national registration scheme or inspection framework.

The vast majority of those in unregistered settings have identified special educational needs (SEN). This fluid, diverse sector provides a range of flexible and bespoke fulltime and part-time education and support for some of the most vulnerable, disadvantaged and disengaged children in the education system.

It consists of many local, often small organizations that provide valuable training, job-related education, and work experience in different settings, such as workplaces or outdoor environments.

The unregistered alternative provision sector also includes tutoring companies and online providers, some of which work with several local authorities.

(Taken from: Strengthening protections in unregistered alternative provision (education.gov.uk))

[Access the Worcestershire Alternative Provision Directories for registered and unregistered Alternative Provision](#)

Although the providers listed in the directories have been subject to LA quality assurance procedures, if schools are the commissioning body, then it is expected that they complete their own quality assurance, monitoring and safeguarding checks of these providers.

## Children who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in the Early Years

All children who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), who receive Nursery Education Funding (NEF), and access an Early Years Provision, are able to claim Inclusion Supplement from the Early Years Inclusion Team. Providers **MUST** apply via the application forms available here:

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/worcestershire-children-first-education-services/support-services/improving-schools-and-settings/early-years/early-years-inclusion/online-inclusion-funding-application-process>

All children who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), will receive **Exceptional Early Years Inclusion Supplement Funding only**. This payment is not automatic, and providers **MUST** apply. Summer term funding applications are available now. The last deadline date for any Summer Term applications is **24<sup>th</sup> April 2025**.

If you have a question regarding Inclusion funding, please contact [eyinclusion@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:eyinclusion@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)

## Hereford and Worcester Dyslexia Association Update

Please download the latest newsletter from [Google Drive](#).

### Parent Carer Forum – Free Webinar

This is the first in a series of FREE CPD education webinars being offered by [Worcestershire Parent Carer Forum](#) (WPCF). These webinars are open to all education professionals working in Worcestershire, including SENCOs, head teachers, attendance officers, learning support assistants, pastoral support staff across primary, secondary, further, alternative provision, specialist and independent education settings. Each of these CPD sessions will have an identical webinar exclusively open to Worcestershire's parent carers.

Free CPD Webinar: Understanding Autistic Masking by Jodie Clarke

Join other Worcestershire education professionals to hear from children's well-being practitioner and autism specialist [Jodie Clarke](#). Author of 'Young, Autistic and Burnt Out' and 'Stop The World, I Want To Get Off', Jodie is a regular speaker at the National Autistic Society annual conference and was trained under leading UK autism academic, Dr Luke Beardon.

Autistic masking is the often-unseen effort autistic individuals make to conform to societal expectations, leading to exhaustion, anxiety, poor mental health, burnout and suicidal ideation.

This webinar, designed for education professionals, explores the complexities of masking, its impact on students, and strategies to create a supportive learning environment. Led by Jodie Clarke, this session will offer practical insights and tools to foster genuine inclusion, allowing autistic students to thrive authentically.

Join us to deepen your understanding and make a meaningful difference in your educational setting. All attendees will receive a digital CPD certificate.

Date: Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 4pm

Education professionals can register for the webinar

at: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/z9pdP3lbSH-H5h3EJfjJQ>

## Herefordshire & Worcestershire SENDIASS

[HW SENDIASS](#) is the Special Educational Needs/Disabilities (SEND) Information, Advice and Support Service covering Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

SENDIASS have a dedicated team of trained advisors offering legally based information, advice and support on all matters relating to children and young people (**0-25**) who have or may have SEND. The service is **FREE, impartial, and confidential**.

If you identify children in your setting with SEND, you can signpost them and their families to SENDIASS for free information and support.

SENDIASS can also provide general information, advice and support to professionals working with families of children/young people with SEND. You can contact them using the details below.

### **SENDIASS training at your setting**

SENDIASS provide **FREE SEND Training Workshops and Webinars** for parents/carers and professionals. SENDIASS training workshops can help build knowledge and skills for families with a child or young person with SEND and any professionals that support them.

**They are now able to offer their workshops for free in your settings.** This could be as part of a SEND coffee morning or drop in for your families or part of staff training.

Further information about the workshops that they provide can be found on their webpage: [SENDIASS Training delivered at your venue](#)

If you would like them to deliver one of their workshops at your setting for free, please complete their [SENDIASS Training Request Form](#)

### **Contact SENDIASS**

Call: 01905 768153 Monday-Friday 8.30am-4pm (24hr answerphone service)

Email: [sendiass@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:sendiass@worcestershire.gov.uk)

For regular Special Educational Needs/Disabilities (SEND) updates, sign up to the SENDIASS mailing list by clicking the sign-up link on their [SENDIASS Contact page](#) or follow them on social media: [Facebook-HWSENDIASS](#)

HW SENDIASS also have lots of useful information on their website [www.hwsendiass.co.uk](http://www.hwsendiass.co.uk).

## Latest health updates

### New Service MELO to replace CAMHS Reach for Wellbeing

The CAMHS Reach for Wellbeing service has now ceased. From 1<sup>st</sup> April, Onside, with partners such as MIND, are delivering a new Children and Young People's (0-25 years) Early Intervention and Preventative Well-Being and Mental Health service called MELO. For more information about MELO, please download the [briefing note](#) or visit the [Onside website](#).



**Melo** is taking an innovative and flexible approach to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people [CYP] aged 0-25 years across Herefordshire & Worcestershire. Working closely with partners in the Integrated Care System, **Melo** will provide a range of early intervention and preventative support options designed to meet individual needs identifying what matters for each child/young person and where appropriate, their family.

Moving away from traditional “threshold levels” ONSIDE and their delivery partners will build a tailored package of support around CYP and their families. **Melo** will work closely with other support options and pathways to ensure an integrated and joined up offer.

Delivered by Onside  
**Melo**  
Be well being you

## Changes to Hearing Screening

Universal School Entry Hearing Screening for Reception age children will formally stop on March the 31st 2025. The programme will be replaced by a model of direct referral to Paediatric Audiology services at Worcestershire Acute NHS Hospitals Trust. Since the introduction of the newborn hearing screening programme (NHSP) there has been a gradual reduction in school entry hearing screening programmes across the country, including in neighbouring counties such as Herefordshire and Gloucestershire who have adopted similar direct referral models.

Families can already access Paediatric Audiology via their GP, Health Visitor or other Health professional, but will now also be able to access the service via a referral from their teacher or education professional.

Education professionals will be able to refer directly to the Paediatric Audiology service for any child of Primary School age (4-11 years). A standardised referral form will be circulated and hosted on the webpage below. This will ensure that when a concern arises children have access to diagnostics and management as soon as possible. Early intervention is key to preventing adverse outcomes associated with hearing loss e.g. speech and language delay or poorer than anticipated educational attainment.

For further information and guidance on spotting the signs of hearing issues and what to do when you think there might be a difficulty, please refer to this website: [Worried about your child's hearing? :: Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System](#)

## Support available in Worcestershire while waiting for your appointment

A new website has been created to support children and young people, as well as their families, who find themselves experiencing long waits for appointments with health services in Worcestershire. These include appointments for Community Paediatrics, Umbrella Pathway, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and CAMHS.

The website, created by Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrate Care System (ICB), contains details of resources and support available locally and nationally. This includes links to web resources, telephone advice and some in-person groups.

Worcestershire's Children's Community Health services are continuing to experience a high volume of referrals and unfortunately that means children and young people are waiting longer than usual for their first appointment. This can be worrying and frustrating and the ICB are working as a system to improve waiting times for children, young people and their families.

We would encourage anyone working with families who are waiting appointments for these services to make them aware of the website and the support available while they wait: [Support for children and young people while waiting for health appointments.](#)



## Training And Professional Development Opportunities

### RISE Training: New Sensory Processing e-Learning

This new e-learning introduces sensory processing: what it is and why it matters and is intended to be used by a wide variety of practitioners, especially those working directly with disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs. This course was originally developed as training by the Early Years SEND Partnership and has now been re-purposed to create this e-learning that is now delivered through the RISE (Research and Improvement for SEND Excellence) Programme, a contract funded by the DfE.

The course covers the following topics:

- Sensory systems and sensory processing differences
- Practical application of the theory and where to go for support
- Sensory environments

To view and complete the e-learning, please follow the instructions [on this link](#). This course should take around 90 minutes to complete, including making notes in the accompanying learning log document that you can access through the course.

### ELSA: Emotional Literacy Support Assistants

The Educational Psychology Service are excited to be able to continue to offer ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) training and supervision for practitioners working in Primary / First / Middle Secondary schools across Worcestershire.

The ELSA programme has been widely adopted as an evidence-based early intervention for children and young people in over 100 local authorities in the UK. ELSAs attend training days and group supervision sessions led by Educational Psychologists. They will be trained to plan and deliver individualised programmes of support for children to develop their emotional literacy, within a range of different areas.

The initial training is a mix of psychological theory and application of theory to support children and young people. The training involves discussion, activities and sharing of helpful resources. Resources to support work as an ELSA are shared and all delegates will be provided with a copy of the book "Emotional Wellbeing: An Introductory Handbook" within the price of the course.

The initial training covers the following areas of emotional literacy:

- Day 1 – An Introduction to ELSA and emotional literacy: please note: The line-manager or headteacher will be required to join their ELSA(s) for the morning of Day 1.
- Day 2 – Security and affiliation (sense of belonging)
- Day 3 – Self-esteem, motivation and developing feelings of competency and self-efficacy
- Day 4 – Loss and bereavement
- Day 5 – Managing emotions and social/friendship skills
- Day 6 – Active listening, therapeutic stories and measuring outcomes

Cost: £630+ VAT per person and includes two supervision sessions in Spring 2026.

- Date: 23 September, 7 October, 21 October, 11 November, 25 November and 8 December 2025.
- Time: 09:30am to 3:30pm
- Location: Worcester - lunch is provided please ensure any dietary needs are included at the point of booking
- Course code: 10351

## Person centred approaches and planning

A two-part twilight session to explore how person-centred approaches can be used in schools to help meet the needs of every learner. Sessions will be practical and offer a range of ideas that can be put into practice in all settings.

Cost: £40 + VAT per delegate

- 14 May and 11 June 2025, 3.30pm to 4.30pm, virtual delivery, course code: 10467 / 84695

## Webcast: Taking a person-centred approach to preparing for adulthood

A free 25-minute webcast looking at Taking a person-centred approach to preparing for adulthood. By the end of this webcast, you will understand:

- SEND Code of Practice expectations in relation to Preparation for Adulthood
- Person-centred approaches to use with children and young people

Audience: All educational settings, especially secondary schools, high schools and Post 16 section

- Cost: Free
- Duration: 25 minutes
- CPD Course code: Search 10540

## WCC Autism Training Courses 2025

### Autism with Demand Avoidance caused by Anxiety

A 60-minute opportunity which covers:

- How demand avoidance may present in your setting
- What are some key strategies to aid with demand avoidance
- Modelled examples of strategies

Cost: £20 + Vat per delegate

21 May 2025, 4pm to 5pm, virtual delivery, course code: 10005 / 90197

### Girls and Autism

A 90-minute opportunity which covers:

- 'Typical' presentations of girls with autism
- How to support "masking" behaviour
- How to support girls with autism in your classroom
- How to support girls with autism with their self-esteem

Cost: £27.50 + VAT per delegate

7 May 2025, 4pm to 5.30pm, virtual delivery, course code 10078 / 90193

### Masking and autism

A 90-minute opportunity which covers:

- What is masking?
- What are some key strategies to help children who may be masking
- Examples of strategies

Cost: FREE to Worcestershire Local Authority / Academy and Free – Schools Max: 2 places per school

Cost: Independent Schools and other settings: £35 + VAT per delegate

14 May 2025, 4pm to 5.30pm, virtual delivery, course code: SCH 10424 / 90171

### Primary Schools: Creating an autism-friendly classroom

A 90-minute opportunity which covers:

- What is autism?
- How does autism present typically in schools?
- Top tips for teaching and supporting autistic pupils

Cost: Free

2 June 2025, 4pm to 5.30pm, virtual delivery, course code: 10116 / 90170

## Understanding and Supporting Sensory Processing Differences in the Classroom

Understanding and Supporting Sensory Processing Differences in the Classroom is a 2-hour course delivered over two parts and will cover:

- Key sensory processing differences in autistic children and young people and how this may present in a school setting.
- The importance of sensory differences in the DSM V Criteria.
- Strategies and tools to gather information and make reasonable adjustments.

Cost: FREE to Worcestershire Local Authority / Academy and Free – Schools max: 2 places per school

Cost: Independent Schools and other settings: £35 + VAT per delegate

11 and 25 June 2025, 4pm to 5pm, virtually delivery, course code: SCH 10426 / 90176

Book your place on the above training via [CPD](#) using your school CPD leader login details. Confirmations are issued at the point of booking and go to the delegate email provided. If your school requires support when booking, please contact the training team on **01905 844 420** or email [workforcesupport@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:workforcesupport@worcestershire.gov.uk)

## Resources

### SEND Podcast

The SENDcast is a weekly podcast focusing on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). It is an effective way to keep up to date with policy changes, best practice and to improve your knowledge around SEN. The weekly podcast features a different guest or guests talking about a specific topic related to Special Educational Needs. [Listen to SENDcast](#)

### NASEN - SEND Teacher Handbook

On 22 January 2024, nasen published an updated version of the SEND Teacher Handbook which is available for free download. This handbook has been developed as a resource for teachers to use over time as they embed inclusive practice in their classrooms: it is not intended that it is read cover-to-cover. It has been written for both primary, secondary and specialist colleagues: teaching assistants, teachers, senior leaders and headteachers. The handbook includes whole-school and whole-class approaches as well as subject-specific and condition-specific guidance.

It brings together practical examples of high-quality teaching - placing focus on removing barriers to learning, getting to know and understand individual learners, and bringing to life the graduated approach. With three completely new subject-specific chapters for History, Geography and Religious Education, it offers a wealth of ideas and information about the following key areas:

- Planning inclusive lessons
  - Creating including environments
  - Curriculum considerations for KS3 and 4
  - Strategies to scaffold learning
  - Vocabulary retentions
  - Supporting learners who need additional conceptual understanding
- Download the [Teacher Handbook | Nasen](#)

## Shine A Light - Sharing Effective Practice

### The Role of a Parent Career Ambassador and Its Importance in Schools

The Shires Mat are into their exciting journey of developing their parent carer ambassador community. Each school within the MAT has designated ambassador/s who work closely with the SENDCO in communicating information, expressing concerns and sharing positives and ideas from the parent community. The SHIRES parent/carer ambassador has had its first meet and greet event which was a lovely evening where parents came to understand about the ambassadors and conversation flowed, relationships formed and parents left feeling excited and hopeful about the development of this community.

What is a Parent Career Ambassador?

A Parent Career Ambassador (PCA) is a volunteer role designed to bridge the gap between parents, students, and the school community in the area of SEND. Their role is to empower parents with information and strategies to help their children make informed decisions about their futures and bridge gaps between school and parents.

Why Every School Needs a Parent Career Ambassador

Having a Parent Career Ambassador in every school is crucial for fostering a supportive and informed school community. Many parents often feel isolated when trying to navigate assessments, diagnosis and for their child's needs. A PCA helps mitigate these challenges by providing a dedicated point of contact for parents as well as school key contact ensuring that parent has access to relevant information and resources and support for both the child and families.

A Parent Career Ambassador can create support networks where parents can share experiences, exchange strategies, and offer encouragement to one another.

Some ways to promote information sharing include:

- **Parent Discussion Groups:** Creating forums for parents to discuss concerns and solutions.
- **Providing training workshops and community events**
- **Social Media or Online Groups:** Establishing digital platforms where parents can engage with one another and share useful resources.

A Parent Career Ambassador plays a vital role in ensuring that SEND information and guidance is accessible, supportive, and parent/child driven. By establishing this role in every school, we can create an environment where parents feel more engaged, students are better informed, and the school benefits from stronger community ties. Encouraging collaboration and reducing isolation among parents leads to a more cohesive and empowered school community, ultimately benefiting students in their school journey.

## Worcestershire Autism Mentor (WAM) training

Worcestershire Autism Mentors (WAM) are making a meaningful difference to the lives of autistic young people. Using a neuro-affirming approach and shaped by the voices of autistic people, WAM was developed into a formal training offer during 2020 and trained its first mentors in January 2021.

Since then, 119 mentors have been trained across Worcestershire schools. The training enables a member of staff within a school, with a special interest in autism, to become a mentor. It equips them with the knowledge and skills to guide pupils in understanding themselves in the light of a diagnosis, in a supportive and individualised way. Rather than focusing on specific difficulties such as attendance or anxiety, mentors are guided and supported to have open conversations with the pupil in a balanced approach. This includes looking at their strengths, likes and interests, as well as differences and difficulties, to help young people better understand themselves and develop strategies for moving forward. The training is delivered by Specialist Practitioners in our Autism and Complex Communication Needs (CCN) team.

One of the programme's many success stories come from Ethan, a pupil at The Chase High School in Malvern who has benefited from the support of his mentor, Mr. Griffin. Ethan shared how the programme has given him a trusted adult to talk to: *"It's just been a good time. Like when I've had stress with various things, just to tell Mr. Griffin and share what was bothering me. Just talking about it and come up with ideas to solve whatever the issue is, if possible."* Ethan's mother, Dawn, also highlighted the value of the programme in reducing anxiety: *"For a lot of autistic children and adults, anxiety plays a huge part in our lives, and it can be quite a barrier to learning. Having that mentor to help reduce that anxiety puts those barriers to learning down and I think allows them to really thrive."*

[Watch Ethan's video case study, and other video case studies about the WAM programme on YouTube.](#)

Find out more about accessing the WAM programme for your school here: [Autism and Complex Communication Needs | Worcestershire County Council](#)

If you would like to share effective inclusive practice and 'shine a light' on what is working well, please email Helen Harris at: [hharris@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:hharris@worcestershire.gov.uk). We know that SENCos find this peer support extremely valuable so please get in touch to share your positive experiences, case studies or effective strategies or resources that have proven successful in improving the experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

## SENCo contact details

Please ensure that we have the current email address (school/work based) for your school's SENCo/Inclusion Leader or SEND Team to enable them to receive ongoing communications including updates, information, Bulletins, and training opportunities. If your SENCo/Inclusion Leader has a change of email address, please email [sread2@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:sread2@worcestershire.gov.uk) to ensure your school's details are updated. Thank you.