



Guidance and Resources for SENDCos and Inclusion Leads

This guide aims to help SENDCos and inclusion leads find resources and information to support you in your role.

It's suitable for anyone working in:

- Early years settings
- Primary and secondary phase schools and academies
- Independent schools
- Post-16 colleges and further education settings.

Most of the resources in this guide can be found on:

- The Norfolk Schools and Learning Providers website
www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk
- The Norfolk SEND Local Offer web pages at www.norfolk.gov.uk/send
- The NHS Just One Norfolk website at www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk

How to use the guide:

You'll find titles and text which are underlined through this guide have clickable links connecting to a website page. This is so you're always able to navigate through to the most up to date web content.

Updated in June 2025

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Local First Inclusion programme

The objectives

[The Local First Inclusion programme](#) is Norfolk County Council's flagship special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) transformation programme for education.

Norfolk's education leaders, the county council and the Department for Education (DfE) have developed it and are delivering it. The DfE has provided around £100m of additional funding.

As you'll know, there are more children with higher SEND needs than ever before. Local First Inclusion aims to support settings with the resources, funding and expertise they need to enable them to provide the right support for the majority of children with SEND to attend their local school, in their community, with their friends and siblings.

The Local First Inclusion programme also provides challenge to mainstream settings not currently able to or not providing suitable support to children with SEND. It aims to achieve a financially sustainable and effective SEND system in Norfolk.

How it works

There are seven main projects within the programme, five of which are focused on creating new support and improving existing support and access to expertise for schools to ensure strong inclusion in the mainstream.

The programme also has a focus on developing and expanding specialist provision in the mainstream, creating more special schools and ensuring best value in the independent special school sector.

The seven key projects

Project 1: The SEND and Inclusion Support Model

[The SEND and Inclusion Support Model](#) focuses on providing early help and intervention, wrapping support around mainstream schools within the 15 school

zones to ensure provision of a consistent level of quality SEN Support across the county to improve inclusion. It includes the SEND and Inclusion phoneline for parents and professionals, Zone Inclusion Partnerships, Strategic Meetings for Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) and larger federations, and Teams Around the School (TAS). TAS are made up of council SEND advisors and inclusion advisors, school and community teams, and can call in educational psychology and support service (EPSS) as needed. The model is rolling out in three phases throughout 2025.

Project 2: Ordinarily Available Provision

This ensures children's needs can be identified in a consistent way and outlines the processes and the options for how SEN support should be assessed and provided. It organises wider services and support for children, families and schools; supports transitions from one setting to another whether from early years to school, changing schools or moving onto further education; and models best practice for small group provision, known as Enhanced Support Provision (ESPs).

Project 3: Remodelling Element 3 (or top up) funding

Element 3 (E3) funding, sometimes referred to as 'top-up' funding, is the funding required over and above the core funding (elements 1 and 2) that a school or college receives to enable a pupil or student with high needs to participate in education and learning. It is intended to contribute to the costs of special educational provision for children and young people with high needs, taking into account other elements of funding that also contribute to meeting such costs, such as mainstream schools' core funding to meet the cost of additional support.

The E3 budget rose from £6m to £23m for the financial year 2024/25, a revised budget of £35m is planned for 2025/26 with the new model planned to launch in September 2025.

The new approach has been designed following significant work with school leaders. The new model aims to combine a 'needs led' and 'money follows the child' approach, whilst considering cohorts as well as individual children. This is with the aim of supporting schools to meet need earlier and more effectively, reducing the escalation of need and demand for specialist provision.

Project 4: Alternative Provision

[Alternative Provision](#) is for secondary schools to support children and young people at risk of exclusion from school. Based on a three-tiered approach, it will deliver: new outreach services and early intervention support; 10 new school-based social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) centres and bases for more than 300 children a year.

Project 5: Independent special schools

This project aims to secure the best value for money in the independent special school sector.

Project 6: Increasing Special School outreach offer

The new Specialist Outreach Advisory Service (SOAS) replaces the School 2 School or S2S service. Developed with Norfolk's Special School leaders, it is an increased outreach offer brokered by the council for special schools to provide more support and expertise for early years settings and mainstream schools to support inclusion.

Project 7: Building and creating more specialist places

This project is overseeing the council's work with the Department for Education to build two more special schools in Norfolk. Work is also being done to expand two existing special schools to provide 77 new places; and improving the special school admissions process.

Having created 17 new Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs) in the last five years generating 315 new places, this project is also working on developing more SRBs and Specialist Hubs of Inclusive Practice (SHIPs) to provide a further 100 places during the life of the programme.

Professional training

The SEND Forum for SEND professionals

[The SEND Forum for SEND professionals](#) is a termly online forum is for anyone who works in education, health, and social care services. It provides quick spotlight updates on new initiatives, directives, and specialist advice and support. Book a place on this page and find out about future dates.

Norfolk SENDCo Now

Norfolk County Council training package for SENDCOs who are:

- New to the SENDCo role
- New to Norfolk
- Teachers aspiring to be a SENDCo
- Assistant SENDCos
- Those who would like to refresh their knowledge

To find out more or book onto a course email
sendandinclusiontraining@norfolk.gov.uk

SEND essentials e-learning course

[SEND essentials](#) is a three-hour eight module online course designed to provide a foundation knowledge and understanding of SEND.

SEND self-serve learning for mainstream settings

[The SEND self-serve learning for mainstream settings](#) is a suite of guidance and resources, developed in conjunction with Norfolk schools. This will support you to develop your inclusive culture and ethos, and to implement quality SEND provision which is carefully matched to the needs of children and young people in your setting.

SEND and Inclusion toolkits

The [SEND and Inclusion toolkits](#) video introduces you to the range of thematic toolkits which provide resources to support schools with approaches to support

individual children and groups of children on [a range of issues including behaviour and transitions](#).

Early Years training

[Early Years training](#) is open to practitioners working in early years settings, childminders, reception classes, wraparound provision and registered nannies. Includes Level 2 SEND Award and Level 3 Early Years SENCO Award.

Autism Education Trust (AET) training

Educational Psychology and Specialist Support (EPSS) delivers a range of [Autism Education Trust training](#) that gives professionals the hands-on tools and techniques to support autistic pupils.

National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN)

[NASEN](#) offers information, training and resources for early years, schools and post-16 settings. It hosts the [Whole School SEND website](#) which provides free access to information, resources and CPD to support a whole school approach to inclusion.

Just One Norfolk SEND Training

Create a free [Just One Norfolk](#) account to access training content which includes:

- SEND Essentials e-learning
- SEND Awareness e-learning
- Council for Disabled Children Basic SEND Awareness Level 1 and 2
- Participation
- Transitions
- Childminder's introduction to SEND training
- Understanding specific needs

Dyslexia Outreach Service

The [Dyslexia Outreach Service](#) offers courses and information sessions for teachers, parents and professionals.

Norfolk SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

[Norfolk SENDIASS](#) offers a variety of SEND training for professionals throughout the year.

Keeping yourself up to date

Read and/or subscribe to the half-termly [Norfolk SEND Bulletin](#) for updates from education, health and social care and wider SEND support.

Follow or like the [Norfolk SEND Local Offer Facebook page](#).

Subscribe to the [weekly Together eCourier](#) which is published every Tuesday in termtime, it provides a range of education updates.

If you have any queries about training, email sendandinclusiontraining@norfolk.gov.uk

Guidance for SENDCos working in the early years age range

The Early Years Learning and SEND team provides a service for professionals and settings working with children with SEND in the early years age range. It delivers the Early Years SENDCo Network meeting online via Microsoft Teams for national and local updates and current key issues. Find out more by emailing earlyyearschildcare@norfolk.gov.uk or calling 01603 222300.

[Early Years behaviour](#) provides information on: supporting positive behaviour; behaviour best practice; understanding behaviour through the stages of development; and Norfolk Steps tools.

[Early Years Autism and Social Communication Difficulties](#) helps define the characteristics of autism and provides advice on effective early years practices and how best to work in partnership with parents.

[English as an additional language \(EAL\) for Early Years](#) gives information on Language Line, local support in Norfolk, help in settling children with cultural differences, communication and play ideas, how best to work in partnership with parents, and frequently asked questions.

[Early identification of need \(EIN\)](#) explains the statutory duty to share information about pre-school aged children with SEND between health and education professionals and gives a link to the EIN form.

[Accessing SEN inclusion funding](#) provides information about SEN inclusion funding, the early years disability access fund and specialist equipment funding, how funding panels work and frequently asked funding questions.

[The Supporting Transition and Inclusion Record \(STAIR\)](#) is an optional resource designed by the Early Years Learning and Inclusion Service to enable smooth transitions, which recognise children's emotional needs and what help they might need. This section has resources including best practice advice and downloadable leaflets to share with parents and carers around supporting children to move from home to early years and from early years to school.

[Education, Health and Care Plans \(EHCPs\)](#) explains what an EHCP is, how to apply for a needs assessment, gathering information, timelines, and how to contact the EHCP team.

[Specialist Outreach and Advisory Service \(SOAS\)](#) provides advice and guidance to mainstream early years settings to support cohorts of pupils with complex needs, predominantly INDES levels 6 and 7. It replaces the S2S service.

[Preschool liaison groups](#) are groups of health and education senior staff who meet termly to help ensure families with pre-school age children with SEND get the right support.

[Useful links and resources](#) signposts to relevant legislation and national guidance and useful local services and resources.

[The SEND and Inclusion Support line](#) can be contacted by early years professionals requiring guidance and support on a range of issues including advice on whether an EHCP may be needed. It can be contacted on 0333 313 7165 from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays.

Guidance for SENDCos and inclusion leads working in schools, academies and independent schools

[SEN Support Plans](#) clarifies expectations around best practice for mainstream settings in creating robust and effect plans and provides a guidance document and a range of case studies, exemplar plans with INDES, checklists and editable templates for both primary and secondary settings.

[PEaSS \(Provision Expected at SEN Support\) guidance](#) sets out what provision schools are expected to offer to ensure children and young people have consistent and high quality support to learn and make progress alongside others of the same age. There is a link to the full PEaSS guidance document and standalone downloadable documents interactive ticklists for classroom strategies, how to identify needs, suggestions for SENDCos and whole setting approaches.

[Identification of Need and Inclusive Provision](#) sets out three tools to improve support for mainstream educational settings in managing their provision for children with SEND. A range of guidance, template and learning modules are provided here. The tools are:

[Identification of Needs Descriptors in Educational Settings \(INDES\)](#) which is a framework of standardised terms, or a common language, to describe presentation of need. INDES break down the broad areas of SEND into seven specific sections to describe need.

[An Inclusion and Provision Self Evaluation Framework \(IPSEF\)](#) which settings can use to evaluate their provision and demonstrate compliance.

[Graduated Provision Mapping](#) which settings can use to capture their SEND provision, and associated costs, at a Universal, Targeted and enhanced level to ensure provision is in place to meet the profile of needs identified in the setting.

[Guidance to complete a SEN information report \(SIR\)](#) for your school helps education settings ensure their SEN information report is compliant, useful and easy

to understand. All schools must publish a SIR about their provision and support for children with SEND and update it annually on their website.

[Specialist Resource Bases \(SRBs\)](#) explains what SRBs are, describes the SRB programme and has information about how to make an SRB referral, an outline of the referral criteria and pupil profile and a list of SRB locations. An EHCP or formal medical diagnosis is not required for a child to attend an SRB, they may be considered by a school if it is clear a child's needs cannot be met by SEN Support.

[Education, Health and Care Plans \(EHCPs\)](#) contains information about what an EHCP is, how to apply for a needs assessment, gathering information, timelines, annual reviews, phase transfer for children with an EHCP, mediation and tribunals, and how to contact the EHCP team.

[Fair Access](#) contains the fair access protocol, details of the managed moves scheme and attendance trials. The protocol aims to ensure no school is asked to take a disproportionate number of children who have been excluded from other schools or who have challenging behaviour.

[SEN funding for schools](#) is a guide to how funding works for schools. [The Budget Share Tracker](#) helps you find out how much SEN funding your school gets. You can also find out more about [Element 3 or top up funding](#).

[The SEND and Inclusion Support line](#) can be contacted by education professionals requiring guidance and support where SEN Support is no longer working or is not appropriate, if an EHCP is needed, or where a child is at risk of imminent exclusion. It can be contacted on 0333 313 7165 from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays.

[School Exclusions](#) gives guidance, forms and templates on the exclusions process and statutory requirements.

[SEND Transition Resources](#) contains a series of downloadable transition resources to support planning and preparation for successful transitions for children and young people with SEND. It includes an overall best practice principles guide, and

individual guides on supporting transitions from infant to junior, primary to secondary, and secondary to post-16.

[Unregulated alternative provision](#) provides guidance and templates for schools to ensure pupils are placed safely and effectively.

[Accessibility resources](#) contains the county council's accessibility strategy to increase access to education for disabled children, accessibility plans for schools and an accessibility self-evaluation framework.

Guidance for SENDCOs working in post-16 settings

[The College SEND Review Guide](#) aims to help professionals to achieve or build on inclusive practice and self-evaluate the effectiveness of their provision for learners with special educational needs and disabilities.

[High needs top-up funding in mainstream sixth forms](#) explains how this funding works, how to apply for it and where to go to find out more.

[TITAN travel training](#) supports young people with SEND to use public transport.

[Specialist Outreach and Advisory Service \(SOAS\)](#) provides advice and guidance to mainstream early years settings to support cohorts of pupils with complex needs, predominantly INDES levels 6 and 7. It replaces the S2S service.

[The SEND and Inclusion Support line](#) can be contacted by further education professionals requiring guidance and support on a range of issues. It can be contacted on 0333 313 7165 from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays.

SEND support services for all education settings

These links contain further information about all the specialist services which provide support for education settings.

[The SEND and Inclusion Support Model](#) is the county council's new approach to supporting schools and families and replaces various elements of previous support including Core Consultations. The model is based on the Team Around the School (TAS) approach and Zone Inclusion Partnership (ZIPs).

- [Rollout](#) sets out when the model becomes live in the 15 school zones in Norfolk throughout 2025
- [School and Community teams](#) sets out how these teams work the early help support they provide for education settings and families focused on prevention and inclusion.
- [Educational Psychology and Specialist Support \(EPSS\) service](#) sets out the changes in this service in 2025.
- [Strategic meetings](#) are for multi academy trusts and large federations.

[The Attendance Team](#) is a statutory service which works with schools and the multi-agency partnership to promote good attendance and reduce absence. Find attendance forms and templates, the attendance toolkit to support you in managing absence and the attendance strategy.

The [Transitional Education Service](#) (TES), previously known as the Alternative Education Service and Section 19 team, arranges interim educational provision for children and young people waiting for a place at the short stay school for Norfolk (SSSfN) because they have either been permanently excluded, had contracts terminated from alternative provision (AP) or are children missing education (CME). This service also arranges provision for CME students where home education has been disallowed.

The [Virtual School Sensory Support](#) is for children who have hearing or sight loss.

The [Dyslexia Outreach Service](#) works collaboratively with schools offering advice and support, strategies for staff working with individual pupils, strategies for a whole

school approach to dyslexia friendly practices and inset training and qualification courses.

[The Specialist Outreach Advisory Service \(SOAS\)](#) is a new intervention which has replaced the School 2 School or S2S service. It provides advice and guidance to mainstream settings to support cohorts of pupils with complex needs, predominantly INDES levels 6 and 7.

[Educational Psychology and Specialist Support \(EPSS\) service](#) offers professional input to help settings address children's issues and improve learning and achievement. The service is provided by a range of professionals including educational psychologists, and specialist learning support teachers. [It is now part of the county council's SEND and Inclusion Support Model and is moving away from being a traded service. From September 2025 it will be free to access for all mainstream schools in Norfolk.](#)

[Access Through Technology](#) is a small specialist team which provides assessment, equipment, advice, support and training for children, schools and parents/carers of children who benefit from using communication technology to communicate and learn.

[Norfolk Steps](#) provides training and guidance to understand, support and manage behaviours that may challenge or harm. This includes planning, viewing behaviour as communication, and as a last resort, training in restrictive physical intervention. You'll find range of bite-sized briefings and one-minute guides here.

[The Children Missing Education \(CME\)](#) team provides advice and guidance to support mainstream settings and ensure the council is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities for identifying children missing education and responding appropriately. These pages provide information on the local procedures, CME policy and SME forms and templates.

[Autism Specialist Support Assistant team](#) provides a range of services including consultation with staff, training, advice regarding strategies and approaches, information about suitable materials, and direct work with children both individually and in groups.

[The Virtual School for Children in Care and Previously in Care](#) has a team of advisers which work with schools and educational settings to help improve the educational journey and outcomes for children in care and previously in care.

[The Health Needs section](#) includes information and guidance on supporting children with health needs and medical conditions and the council's medical needs service, which ensures children with additional health needs can access education.

[NHS Neurodevelopmental Services for children and young people](#) gives information for schools and early years professionals about directly requesting assessments, referrals and support, and Right to Choose.

[Mental Health Support Teams \(MHST\)](#) is an early intervention service in Norfolk which works with schools and children and offers support for mild to moderate mental health difficulties. [Norfolk and Waveney Access to Mental Health Advice and Support](#) is the single point for all mental health requests for children and young people.

[Norfolk and Waveney Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service \(SaLT\)](#) provides resources for communication development; support for pre-talkers and new talkers; support for stammering; free online training courses and links to request support for pre-school aged children and school-aged children.

[The Occupational Therapy Digital Library](#) has resources for professionals.

Specialist provision

These links give further information about the special school and alternative provision available and how it works:

- [State funded special schools](#)
- [Independent special schools](#)
- [Admissions process for special schools and specialist colleges](#)
- [Compass Schools](#)

Norfolk Area SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2024-29

[The Norfolk Area SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2024-29](#) explains the joint Norfolk County Council and NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board plans to improve SEND and inclusion services for children and young people aged from birth to 25.

It was co-produced by the community of practice and then consulted on widely through a series of community engagement events. It has five themes each with priorities to improve the lives of children and young people with SEND in Norfolk. These are: My learning and development; My changes and new beginnings; My adult life; My family is supported; and My friends and activities.

Key Norfolk contact details

Service	Contact details
Access Through Technology	t: 01603 505324 e: helen.hards@norfolk.gov.uk
Admissions Line	t: 0344 800 8020 e: admissions@norfolk.gov.uk
Attendance team	t: 01603 223681 e: csattendance@norfolk.gov.uk
Children Missing Education (CME)	t: 01603 307716 e: cme@norfolk.gov.uk
Critical incident phone line	t: 07623 912974
Dyslexia Outreach Service	t: 01603 860505 ext. 239 e: dosadmin@taverhamhigh.org
Early Years Finance	e: earlyyearsfinance@norfolk.gov.uk
Early Years Learning and SEND team	t: 01603 222300 e: earlyyearschildcare@norfolk.gov.uk e: csearlyyearsadviceline@norfolk.gov.uk
Element 3 funding	e: element3funding@norfolk.gov.uk
EHCP team	t: 01603 679183
Exclusions team	t: 01603 307727 e: csexclusions@norfolk.gov.uk
LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)	t: 01603 223473 e: LADO@norfolk.gov.uk
LADO - Education Duty Desk	t: 01603 307797
Medical Needs Service	t: 01603 223609 e: medicalneeds@norfolk.gov.uk
Safeguarding – reporting concerns to the Children’s Advice and Duty Service (CADS)	t: 0344 800 8021 www.norfolk.gov.uk/childatrisk

Service	Contact details
Safeguarding – education safeguarding	t: 0344 800 8020 e: educationasafeguarding@norfolk.gov.uk
School and Community teams	Find your local team on the Norfolk Schools and Learning Providers website
SEND and Inclusion Support Line	t: 0333 313 7165
SRB team	e: cs.srb@norfolk.gov.uk
TITAN travel team	e: titan@norfolk.gov.uk
Training queries	e: sendandinclusiontraining@norfolk.gov.uk
Transitional Education Service (formerly Alternative Education Service)	e: cs.educationalprovision@norfolk.gov.uk
Virtual School Sensory Support	t: 01603 704040 e: sensorysupport@norfolk.gov.uk
Virtual School for Children in Care	e: virtual.schools@norfolk.gov.uk

[Names and portfolios of the Children's Services Senior Leadership Team and Extended Senior Leadership Team.](#)