



Delivering Special
Provision Locally



DSPL 9 Weekly Newsletter 1

10.09.25

WELCOME BACK!

Welcome back to another school year. We hope you had a good summer and managed to have a well deserved break. It looks to be another busy and exciting year and DSPL 9 will be here to support you through it, so please get in contact with us if you have any questions or queries. Remember no question is a silly question!

For those of you who are new to the role of SENCo and DSPL 9, we hope you find the DSPL 9 newsletter useful and informative, and enables you to stay up to date in the world of SEND.

Any queries or questions, please don't hesitate to make contact:

gemmahall@dsplarea9.org.uk

07376 394191



DSPL 9 HFL SEND Briefing

As most of you will be aware, for this academic year the HFL SEND briefings will be delivered separately to the DSPL 9 clusters. These sessions will be hosted by secondary's schools over the course of the year

Autumn Term Details:

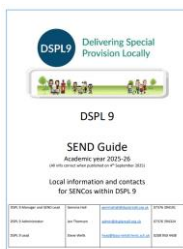
Date: Tuesday 11th November

Time: 1.30-3.30pm

Venue: Westfield Academy, Tolpits Ln, London, Watford WD18 6NS

<https://buytickets.at/dspl9/1753579>

DSPL 9 SENCo Handbook 2025-26



The DSPL 9 SENCo handbook has been updated for this academic year. In this useful guide you will find a whole range of information to support you in your role and understand what is available to you within DSPL 9 and across Hertfordshire.

The guide can be accessed by [clicking here](#) or from the [DSPL 9 website](#).



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DSPL 9 EBSA Support Package Relaunch

Date: Monday, 22nd September 2025

Time: 9:30 AM – 10.30am OR 1-2pm

Venue: Microsoft Teams

DSPL 9 will be holding two virtual webinars to relaunch the hugely successful EBSA support package and provide information of the updates to the service in the new academic year.

Tier 3 solution circles have been a great opportunity to discuss individual cases and gain different perspectives, ideas, and solutions. (SENCo)

What an amazing resource. Our school have really benefited from this service and we would like to continue to use this resource next year. The advice given and professionals involved are fantastic and the children have made progress. (SENCo)

Excellent service provided, joined up approach was really successful. Luke (Nessie Therapist) was excellent, very supportive and knowledgeable. Rebecca (FSW) was fantastic and approachable. (Pastoral lead)

Life changing.
(Parent)

I'm feeling very grateful to everyone who has supported us. Without the intervention I am not sure (child) would have made it through the rest of year 6. (Parent)

SENcos, Pastoral Leads and Mental Health Leads are invited to attend **either** of the session to find out about:

- Updates to tier 2 support:
 - documentation and resources to support schools
 - parent and carer support
- Updates to tier 3 support
 - Solution circle dates and how to access
- How tier 4 support works and how to access

Monday 22nd September 20205
9.30-10.30am

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 335 893 732 043 1
Passcode: JE9DW7ye

Monday 22nd September 20205
1-2pm

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 346 497 274 380 9
Passcode: UE3uH6J5



DSPL 9 SENCo Drop in sessions

Weekly drop in sessions with Mandy Brandon and Gemma Hall are available to all SENCOs across the DSPL 9 area. Starting from **Tuesday 23rd September** and running every week for the entire academic year.

Date: Every Tuesday
Time: 3.45-4.30pm
Venue: Microsoft Teams

Please use the link below for any of the Tuesday sessions:

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 340 101 177 553 9

Passcode: FD789nR7



Applying for an EHC Needs Assessment

This annual training will be delivered by Mandy Brandon (SISO for DSPL 9) and will cover the following aspects:

- what to do prior to applying for a needs assessment
- how to complete the request effectively
- what paperwork should/should not be included
- what to do if a needs assessment is not needed but parents are insisting

The training is refreshed and updated each year, so we recommend attending this year even if you attended last year.

Date: Thursday 6th November
Time: 3.30-5pm
Venue: Microsoft Teams

To book your place please click [here](#)



Fully funded for Hertfordshire SENCOs with three pathways:

- New to role and at the start of their journey
- New to Hertfordshire and bringing previous experience
- New to a DSPL area with experience and knowledge of Hertfordshire

Practical approaches to effectively support SENCOs with their day-to-day responsibilities

Opportunities to develop local networks

Join us as we launch Hertfordshire's Ordinarily Available Provision guidance



Discover how this new guidance empowers schools to provide a supportive, and inclusive environment that promotes high expectations and aspiration for all children and young people. This essential 2-hour event introduces SENCOs and school leaders to ordinarily available provision's key principles and explores strategies and approaches that support inclusive practice.

[Click here](#) for all dates, times, venues and booking links.

N.B: A maximum of 3 people per setting can attend – all events are fully funded, and refreshments will be provided.



The Hertfordshire SEND Toolkit (7th Edition)

The new edition of Hertfordshire's SEND Toolkit (7th edition) is ready to download now and continues to be freely available to all schools.

Packed with helpful information, useful tools and resources and links to local guidance, this fully funded toolkit can be found here: <https://thegrid.org.uk/news/hertfordshire-send-toolkit-7th-edition-available-now>

Refreshed this year to reflect the introduction of Hertfordshire's Ordinarily Available Provision guidance, the SEND Toolkit is an essential resource for all schools and especially useful for SENCOs to have to hand.

This year's highlights include:

- A fresh, new look to the high-quality inclusive provision section
- New guidance to support the effective deployment of TAs
- New information about professional development opportunities, including Hertfordshire's fully funded core SEND training programme

And the ever-popular SEND context poster has been updated with 2025 national and local data with a further breakdown by nursery, primary and secondary phase.

This 7th edition continues to support all professionals working with children and young people with SEND to deliver high quality, inclusive SEN provision.



All DSPLs have been working collaboratively over the last term to develop a DSPL TA Academy. This will provide TAs across Hertfordshire with access to half termly high quality training covering a range of topics and themes.

Half termly online training opportunities

- These sessions cover a range of topics and themes.
- TAs will be expected to sign up to each of the sessions they would like to attend.
- All training sessions will take place on teams.

[Click here for all information on half termly training sessions.](#)

In addition to the TA training opportunities on offer for TAs across all DSPLs, DSPL 9 will be offering a combination of termly online and face to face support. It is intended that these sessions will further support local TAs across the academic year.

Online termly drop ins:

Please use the links below to join these sessions:

| | Date and Time | Venue |
|----------|--|--|
| Autumn 1 | Thursday 23 rd October 1-2pm | Microsoft Teams Need help? Join the meeting now Meeting ID: 317 404 738 308 5 Passcode: pC9TQ9Mt |
| Spring 1 | Thursday 22 nd January 1-2pm | Microsoft Teams Need help? Join the meeting now Meeting ID: 390 470 898 253 5 Passcode: 3UP6Zy2H |
| Summer 1 | Thursday 7 th May 1-2pm | Microsoft Teams Need help? Join the meeting now Meeting ID: 328 965 404 812 1 Passcode: FY623h7m |

Face to Face termly solution circles

These are bookable sessions. Please use the links below to book onto a session to discuss a particular child (unnamed).

| | Date and Time | Venue |
|----------|--|--|
| Autumn 2 | Thursday 20 th November 1-2.30pm | The Green Room Bournehall Primary, Bournehall Avenue |
| Spring 2 | Thursday 5 th March 1-2.30pm | The Green Room Bournehall Primary, Bournehall Avenue |
| Summer 2 | Thursday 18 th June 1-2.30pm | The Green Room Bournehall Primary, Bournehall Avenue |

All dates available to book via [this link](#)

Please contact Gemma Hall gemmahall@dsplarea9.org.uk if you have any questions regarding any of the support on offer.



It was lovely to see so many of you at the Acorn Centre open days, I hope you found the session useful and I'm sure you will agree that the provision and support available is what our children with SEMH need.

The Acorn Centre Handbook has been updated and will provide you with all the information you need to know; what is available and how to access it:

[Acorn Handbook 2025-26](#)

Please be reminded that the deadline for the first panel is Friday 19th September. Referrals are now taken online and can be found using the link below:

[Tier 4 - The Acorn Centre - Behaviour Support referral \(Page 1 of 7\)](#)

LHNF: Autumn Term Arrangements

As you will be aware, LHNF process/funding is under review. However, we have received confirmation that LHNF panels will run as previously in the autumn term 2025.

| Panel Date | Application Deadline |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Thursday 18 th September 2025 | 9 th September (5pm) |
| Thursday 16 th October 2025 | 1 st October (5pm) |
| Thursday 20 th November 2024 | 4 th Nov (5pm) |

Arrangements from January 2026 continue to be under review.



Autumn Term Training Opportunities

Please find attached the flyers for the autumn term for Autism, SLCN and ADHD courses. Details of dates and how to book onto the various sessions can be found on the individual flyer.

There are 7 flyers consisting of -

- Lite bite sessions
- Workshops
- HAT level 2 for ECTs
- ADHD course for ECTs
- 2 flyers for different SLCN sessions
- Level 3 award

All flyers will also be available on the DSPL 9 website.



Forward with Phonics

Training delivered by the Specialist Advisory Teachers for Cognition and Learning for SENCOs & Teaching Assistants

Forward with Phonics is our Phase 3 to 5 phonics intervention for children from Year 2 upwards who have not made progress despite catch up using the school's systematic synthetic phonics programme. The step-by-step lesson plan can also be used with resources from the school's programme. This is one of the interventions recommended on our recent well received Persistent Literacy Difficulties course.

It is a highly structured intervention (one to one or very small group) which makes explicit the vital link between oral blending and segmenting and word reading and spelling.

It uses a hands on approach, super high levels of modelling and fun visual resources to engage children and secure progress.



The practical training session will provide clear modelling of how to carry out the assessment and deliver the intervention effectively.

A comprehensive set of resources will be emailed to delegates after training so that you will have everything you need to get started.

Cost: £60 per person

For booking instructions, see overleaf.

Please make sure you select the correct venue.

Please note: We are unable to accept cancellations once a place has been booked.

Recent feedback from delegates

Engaging, informative, lots of resources.

Very useful strategies that can be applied in our setting.



SEND Specialist Advice and Support - Herts Cognition and Learning Team

Please see attached flyer for dates, times and booking information.

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

DSPL 9/Chessbrook SEMH Solution Circles

Following positive engagement and feedback, the SEMH solution circles will continue in the next academic year. To access these useful sessions please complete the google form below. You will then be offered a date and time to attend (all sessions are virtual and run from 3.30-4.30pm).

[SEMH Solution Circle Referral Form](#)

| | | |
|-------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Autumn term | Monday 13 th October | Primary |
| | Monday 3 rd November | Primary |
| | Monday 17 th November | Secondary |
| | Monday 8 th December | Primary |
| Spring Term | Monday 26 th January | Primary |
| | Monday 23 rd February | Primary |
| | Monday 16 th March | Secondary |
| Summer Term | Monday 27 th April | Primary |
| | Monday 18 th May | Primary |
| | Monday 8 th June | Secondary |
| | Monday 29 th June | Primary |



Primary SpLD Online Pupil Focus Surgeries Academic Year 2025-26

Following a successful pilot in the summer term, Laura Bloomberg (see bio below) has kindly offered to continue to provide weekly SpLD unnamed pupil focus surgeries for primary schools to meet the local need around SpLD support and next steps.

The purpose of these sessions is to help schools support pupils of concern (SpLD in nature), by giving advice on how to best support their presenting needs and advise on next steps, suitable resources, interventions, quality first teaching strategies, inclusive classroom practice...etc

How do I access this support?

- Sessions will be available every Monday from 9-9.30am and 9.30-10.00am (see dates below)
- Following completion of the google form (link below) you will be contacted by the DSPL 9 administrator to book a date and time to attend.
- Once the booking has been confirmed you will receive the zoom link to attend a session.

What will happen during the session?

- The school SENCo and class teacher **MUST** be able to attend the session.
- Verbal feedback/advice will be provided during the session. No written follow up will be provided.

If a booked session is not attended this service will not be available to you in the future.

Bookings for the autumn term are now available:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Monday 15 th September | Monday 3 rd November |
| Monday 22 nd September | Monday 10 th November |
| Monday 29 th September | Monday 17 th November |
| Monday 6 th October | Monday 24 th November |
| Monday 13 th October | Monday 1 st December |
| Monday 20 th October | Monday 8 th December |

To access the google form please click on the link below:

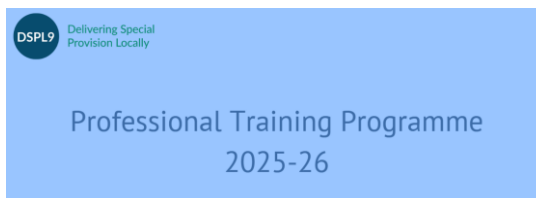
<https://forms.gle/9SjqxvEv7tTpfVAp7>

Please note:

This service is purely available to enable the schools to best support individual pupils. The information provided by Laura cannot be used as evidence for any referrals or applications.

DSPL 9 Professional Training Programme

Don't forget to use the new [DSPL 9 professional training programme](#) document to search all training opportunities for all staff.



Key dates for Autumn Term 2025

Did you know over 90% of Hertfordshire's mainstream schools are now trained in VSEND? Did you know paediatricians make use of the tool as part of their diagnostic pathways for young people? This tool is Hertfordshire's expected approach to the graduated response and information-sharing.

Full training for schools/settings

Virtual training for those who have never used VSEND before
Suitable for SENCOs and SLT looking to understand VSEND
Book by emailing vsend@hertfordshire.gov.uk

3:30pm-5:00pm on Wednesday 24th September
11:00am-12:30pm on Monday 6th October



Full training for Early Years settings

Virtual training for PVI's and other EY's settings who have never used VSEND before
Suitable for SENCOs and managers looking to understand VSEND
Book by emailing vsend@hertfordshire.gov.uk

3:30pm-5:00pm on Wednesday 1st October
3:00pm-4:30pm on Monday 6th October

Joint work with a SENDIAGO

Have a complex case you'd like support to work through? Feel like you could use it as a learning opportunity for your wider staff? Request a joint piece of work involving guidance from start to finish, including signposting and training for SENCOs and the teaching team.

Request by emailing katy.alexander@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Note: this joint work is subject to SENDIAGO capacity

Watch this space for:

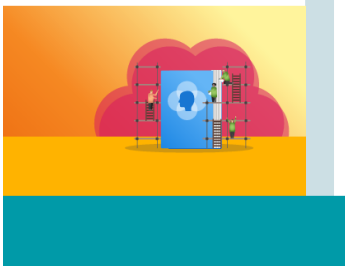


- Setting readiness training and workshops
- Moderation sessions
- Focused work



Call/email Ask SALU or email vsend@hertfordshire.gov.uk for any queries

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS Guidance Report



EEF: Special Educational Needs in mainstream Guidance Report

Please be reminded that the EEF guidance around SEN in mainstream schools was published in May 2025. In this document it highlights 5 recommendations to improve provision for pupils with SEND:

- Create a positive and supportive environment for pupils, without exception.
- Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs
- Ensure all pupils have access to high quality learning
- Compliment high quality teaching with carefully selected small group and one to one interventions
- Work effectively with teaching assistants

[Click here](#) to access the guidance report, recommendation poster and additional tools.



Education Setting's Training Programme Guide

Academic Year 2025-2026

The 2025-26 academic year training programme is now available. Please [click here](#) or use the DSPL 9 [professional training programme](#) to access this information.

Please note the training around the new EHCNA request form will be available on Friday 7th November and Wednesday 17th December.



Early Years Emotional Wellbeing and Behaviour Information

EWB Drop-In sessions:

Please find attached the Flyer for the Autumn Term Emotional Wellbeing and Behaviour Drop-in sessions for Early Years Settings. An SSR form needs to be completed and signed by the Parents for consent, prior to the session.

Training:

The 'Introduction to TAB' and the full TAB training will be offered in October & November 2025. See the attached Flyer for further details and booking information.

From 1st-4th of December 2025, we will also be **piloting our free virtual 'Lite Bite' training**. The 1hour sessions will focus on Early Years Emotional Wellbeing and Behaviour themes and will support and enhance the Therapeutic Approach.

The themes covered:

We see you 'Boys' in the Early Years.

Biting in the Early Years.

Risk taking play in the Early Years.

Supporting children in the Early Years to build Resilience.

Separations and Transitions in the Early Years.

'Feelings' Is there more to it than happy and sad?

Please [click here](#) to see flyer with details of dates, times and booking details.

A refresher TAB has also been created for January 2026. All the new training has been written with engagement and participation from settings.



Children and Young People Sensory Processing Service

The sensory processing service team will be delivering targeted support and training opportunities for education settings during this term. There are a wide range of topics including supporting sensory differences in school and sensory differences and transitions.

Please [click here](#) to see all topics, dates and booking instructions.

The service have also produced a colour coded [criteria document](#) for accessing the sensory processing support. This has been designed to support parents and schools in better understanding what the service can and cannot offer.

For all information about the service please click the link below:

[Children and young people's sensory processing service | Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust](#)



Children & Young Peoples Speech & Language Therapy Service



Please see the attached flyers for all the face to face and virtual training sessions available to educational settings.

All information about the speech and language therapy services can be found on their website.

Introduction to Mental Health Leads Training for new MHLs/Deputy MHLs

This training is provided by Hertfordshire County Council and is free for all education settings in Hertfordshire. The training is designed to give an overview of information and services to support your role as a school/college Mental Health Lead. Suitable for MHLs and Deputy MHLs who have had no formal training or are new to their role.

Topics include

- Staff wellbeing
- What is emotional wellbeing and mental health in children and young people
- What are the roles and responsibilities of a mental health lead in education
- Introduction to the Department for Education **Whole School/College Approach (WSCA) to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing**
- How to create or further develop your own WSCA action plan
- An overview of Children & Young Peoples Mental Health Services in Hertfordshire and how to access them
- Practical examples and sharing of good practice

| | | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Robertson House in person | Monday 15 Sept 2025 | Wednesday 19 Nov 2025 | Wednesday 21 Jan 2026 | 9:15pm to 3:30pm |
| Online | | Wednesday 15 Oct 2025 | Tuesday 3 Mar 2026 | 9:30pm to 3pm |

Mental Health Leads Refresher Training

This training is provided by Hertfordshire County Council and is free for all education settings in Hertfordshire. The training is designed to give an overview of information and services to support your role as a school/college Mental Health Lead. Suitable for MHLs and Deputy MHLs who have had not accessed any training in the last two years.

Topics include

- Staff wellbeing
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health in children and young people
- Recap of the Department for Education **Whole School/College Approach (WSCA) to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing**
- Overview of Hertfordshire's Emotional Mental Wellbeing in Schools Mark
- An overview of Children & Young Peoples Mental Health Services in Hertfordshire and how to access them
- Practical examples and sharing of good practice

| | | | | | |
|--------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Online | Tuesday 23 Sept 2025 | Thursday 13 Nov 2025 | Monday 12 Jan 2026 | Tuesday 24 Mar 2026 | 9:15pm to 12:30pm |
|--------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|

To book your place please email schoolsmh@hertfordshire.gov.uk
Places are limited to two representatives per education setting



Some highlights include:

- Our **interactive, full school performances and key stage specific workshops** at mainstream primaries, as highlighted in this [video](#)
- Our [Inclusion Academy](#), launching in September 2025. Free for all schools to get involved with. Combining online interactive assemblies, music learning resources and PSHE/Citizenship resources (all based on our original songs) the Inclusion Academy is a nationwide movement to unite schools and create a culture of kindness. By engaging with us, schools are enrolled on our Accreditation Programme, leading to Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards to celebrate their inclusion journey.
- Our online Schools' Provision is all free of charge and accessible for teachers by creating an online account [here](#)
- For SEND learners, we offer in person visits and also our free, weekly [Music Machine Broadcast](#). This is 45 minutes of interactive, musical joy where schools come together on Zoom to sing, dance and find belonging through creativity.
- [Shine a Light](#). After the huge success of our 2025 project, culminating in a day of musical celebration at St Albans Cathedral, we will again be inviting Year 4 Mainstream learners and SEND School learners of any age to take part in our 2026 project. Schools gain access to music learning resources for all of our Express Songs, practice them at school over the academic year, host a singing workshop with us and then become part of a 1,000 person strong "Super Group" at the Cathedral. We are hoping to gain funding that means we can again offer this opportunity free of charge to schools.

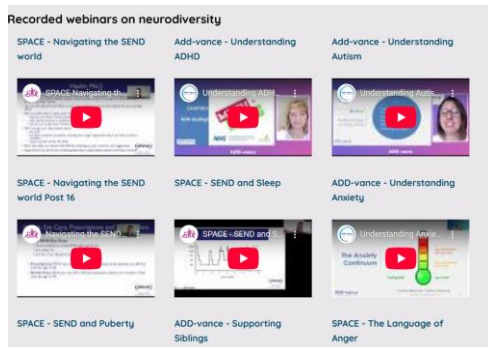
Schools can contact us at schools@electricumbrella.org.uk to see what we can offer their community.



Neurodiversity Support

The [neurodiversity page](#) on the Herts Local Offer have recently added a range of recorded webinars which may be useful. Topics include

- SEND and sleep
- The language of anger
- Supporting siblings



Sign up now for our three-part training course this coming Autumn term: 'Supporting Pupils with Down Syndrome in Education'.

The training course includes:

- an online workshop
- a day of face to face training
- a visit from a Specialist Down Syndrome Advisor into your school



SUPPORTING PUPILS WITH DOWN SYNDROME IN EDUCATION

Meet our trainer:
Helen Long
Down Syndrome Specialist Advisory Teacher, SENCo, parent and teacher



A THREE PART course in autumn for teachers, TAs and other education professionals working with children with Down Syndrome, in Hertfordshire and the surrounding counties.

1) **Face to face: 'Supporting Pupils with DS at School'** - Tuesday 7th October, 9am - 3:30pm, at Holy Rood Primary School, Greenbank Road, Watford, WD17 4FS.

This will cover key points on the following topics:


- Introduction to Down Syndrome
- Reading - how to teach reading and how to use it across the curriculum and to teach expressive language
- Literacy - including spelling and recording information
- Maths

2) An **online workshop on Behaviour and Social Development** - Monday 10th November, 4pm - 5:30pm, online


3) **Bespoke guidance and training at your school** focused on the individual child(ren) with DS you support. A DS Specialist Advisor will visit your school as part of our Resources into Schools programme. This includes an assessment of the individual child's challenges and a recommendation for a resource and/or additional training which will be provided by DS Achieve in school.

For further information and to book a place click [here](#).

Please share with your school community:



Delivering Special Provision Locally



PARENT/CARER COFFEE MORNINGS 2025
For all parents/carers of children with SEND
Tuesday 21st October 2025 10-11.30am
Tuesday 2nd December 2025 10-11.30am

ASDA WATFORD COMMUNITY ROOMS
ST ALBANS RD, WATFORD WD24 7RT

Please join the DSPL9 Triage team to find out about the support available locally and to meet other parents and carers of children with SEND. We will also be welcoming professionals from Children and Young People's Mental Health Services, SPACE Herts and Add Vance across the year. Attendance to be confirmed at a later date.

If you would like to attend or to find out more please email us at admin@dsplare9.org.uk or enquiries@dsplare9.org.uk

Please share with your school community:



for young people with autism
aged 14-25

We meet monthly on a
Thursday evening 6- 8pm
in **Abbots Langley**

A safe space
to make friends

For
more info....
call Dawn
on **01923 549093**
or email:
aaagroup@little-grove.org

Be Yourself
&
Have Fun



with Parents & Carers Group running next door
for anyone interested!