



# SEND in the News

## Welcome to SEND in the News!

Welcome to our new SEND newsletter for parents, carers, children and young people. SEND in the News has been named by our young people and has been put together with the help of the Sefton Parent Carer Forum, SEND parents and professionals working across SEND.

In this issue you will find a spotlight on provision for the early years, activities and sessions, a chance to have your say in consultations and details of support for the whole family and so much more!

We want to keep improving this newsletter so send in your thoughts about what should be included next time to [bridie.finnan@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:bridie.finnan@sefton.gov.uk)

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## Having Your Say

### SEND Strategy Consultation

The Sefton SEND Strategy consultation is currently live. We want this strategy to reflect a wide range of views and experiences and invite people in Sefton to take part in our consultation. This is a chance to have your say and contribute to the development of the final SEND Strategy. Our survey should take around 15 minutes and is open until the 11th March.

Link to the survey is here [SEND Strategy Consultation - Sefton Council - Citizen Space](#) with information, strategy and survey questions also provided in an easy read format to help everyone feel empowered to give their views.

### SEND Parent Carer Survey

The SEND Parent and Carer 2025 survey consultation is live from the 1<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> March and should take about 10 – 15 minutes to complete. The findings will be shared with the SEND Partnership Board and feed into the work we do this year. Past feedback on lots of topics from EHCPs, communication, transition support and more has led to:

- Training rolled out to wider network of staff on FASD
- Mental health support team operating in all Sefton schools
- Graduated approach launched with toolkit explainer for parents/carers
- Local Offer Live events run with the Sefton Parent Carer Forum
- New SEND newsletter
- More EHCP workers with greater focus on quality
- Preparation for Adulthood conference to provide info on transitions

The link to the survey is here <https://bit.ly/SENDparentandcarersurvey2025>, please take some time to give your thoughts.



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## Travel Support Review

There is currently a review taking place of the Travel Support Service for eligible children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The review is not looking to change the Travel Support Policy or the current entitlement to Travel Support. The purpose of the review is:

- to provide more options for families to fit around their individual circumstances;
- to provide better support for eligible students, especially those making the transition into adulthood;
- to ensure we are getting the most from our resources and best value for money.

Working in partnership with the Sefton Parent Carer Forum, some 'Early Ideas' for improvements have been developed. We are keen to get feedback from parents, carers and children and young people themselves.

We have held some face to face and online engagement sessions and parents and carers of children and young people in receipt of SEND travel support will have received a feedback form to provide input to the review. Please return this by 7<sup>th</sup> March.

## Early Education and Childcare Survey for Parents and Carers 2025

This survey is to find out from parents and carers what their experiences and needs are in relation to childcare for their Early Years Children (0-4 years).

The information will be used to inform our Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. It will also help us plan to make sure there are enough high quality childcare places at the times and in the places that families need it in Sefton.

We want parents and carers of SEND children to complete this survey as it is important their unique perspective is captured.

This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The survey will close on 21st April 2025. [Complete it now here](#)

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## Early Years Deep Dive

### SEND in 0-5 Early Years

Some Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may be identified very early in a child's life but others may not be diagnosed until they are older, this doesn't mean there is not support available if you do not yet have a formal diagnosis.

Children may have needs in one or more of the following categories:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional and mental health
- sensory and/or physical needs

Children may have needs that cover more than one area or needs that change over time.

Nurseries, schools and other childcare settings will follow what's called a graduated approach to meet your child's needs in their setting. They are expected to make reasonable adaptations and this support can help most children overcome the barriers they face but if your child needs more support, the Early Years SEND team can help.

### Sefton Early Years SEND Team

The Early Years SEND Team provide support to parents and settings for young children aged 0-5 years. They provide developmental programmes of learning both in the settings and at home. They also provide quality assurance, advice and support for children in the settings and monitor their developmental progress.

### Sefton Portage Team

Portage promotes children's development through play. Portage Advisors work directly with young children aged 0-3 years usually in the child's home and where appropriate, their early years setting, modelling effective interventions to those who know the child.

Their role involves;

- An initial developmental assessment to decide whether Portage is appropriate with ongoing assessment and regular reviews of a child's progress.
- Structured play activities with a chart for families to record their child's achievements and advice on further play activities for families to try at home as well as group Stay and Play sessions
- Signposting about other support services and liaison with them
- Support in looking at nursery settings and the 'next steps' after Portage.



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## Sefton Inclusion Officers

Inclusion Officers provide practical advice to settings, schools and families about ways of supporting children up to 4 years of age.

Their role involves;

- Providing assessment and advice around evidenced-based interventions through a cycle of Assess- Plan-Do-Review. (Graduated Approach)
- Supporting children's transitions into early years settings.
- Working with Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) and teachers to advise on appropriate activities and techniques in schools and settings
- Help monitor SEN policy and practice within Early Years settings and delivering SEND training for Early Years Settings

## Sefton Inclusion Consultants

Inclusion Consultants are specialist teachers. Their work is informed by knowledge of teaching approaches, including effective strategies and interventions for children with SEND, and by knowledge of the early years curriculum and development.

Their role involves;

- Promote and develop good inclusive practice in early years settings and schools
- Provide an allocated amount of time to individual schools/settings to support them in the identification of SEND priorities and actions required to improve outcomes
- Support Early Years Practitioners and Teachers in their understanding of why a child is not making progress and the approaches that may enable learning and development
- Monitor the progress of identified children, especially at important transition times between classes and schools.

## Sefton Early Years Educational Psychologists

The Early Years team work closely with specialised Educational Psychologists. Educational Psychologists have qualifications in psychology and educational psychology. They are interested in how children learn. They use knowledge of child development and psychological theory to help find solutions in relation to a child's needs.

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## Support for Parent/Carers of Early Years SEND Children

There is a wider network of support for parents/carers and their children. These include the [Sefton Parent Carer Forum](#), a group of SEND parents who offer guidance, advice, support and advocacy.

There are also a wide network of professionals you can speak to if you think your child may have a special educational need or disability. You can visit your GP or discuss your thoughts with your [Health Visitor](#). You can also discuss with your child's nursery or childcare setting who will be able to offer advice or put you in contact with your local SEND team.

They may be able to offer support through

- [Speech and Language Therapy Service](#)
- [Occupational Therapy Service](#)
- [Physiotherapists](#)
- [Early Help Team](#)
- [Speech, Language and Communication | Sefton Early Years](#)
- [Autism and Social Communication Team](#)
- [Complex Needs Team](#)
- [Hearing Needs Team](#)
- [Visual Needs Team](#)

Our Early Years Team host regular coffee mornings for parents to drop in, meet the team and discuss any queries they have. All little ones welcome and sensory play and activities will be provided. The next one will be at Formby Library on 9<sup>th</sup> May 10am-12pm.

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## Activities and Sessions for SEND 0-5's

- [Sefton Family Hubs](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/familyhubs) [www.sefton.gov.uk/familyhubs](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/familyhubs)  
Our Family Hubs offer sessions for children and young people as well as support for parents and carers. You will be able to choose a session from the timetable and most do not need to be booked in advance, you can contact each hub if you need further information using the email in the bottom left of each timetable.  
Some sessions are part of our universal offer while others are targeted support and need a referral. You may benefit from baby yoga, stay and play sessions and more. Contact the Hubs for details of bespoke SEN sessions.
- [Twinkle House, Wellness and Sensory Centre in Skelmersdale](http://www.twinklehouse.co.uk). [www.twinklehouse.co.uk](http://www.twinklehouse.co.uk)  
Sensory rooms available on hire and sleep clinics available. Mon-Fri 9.30am-5.30pm.



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- **The Sensory Hive** [www.thesensoryhive.co.uk](http://www.thesensoryhive.co.uk)  
Specialist Sensory Integration Therapy Centre. Whiston, Liverpool. Weekly Sensory sessions. Fridays at 10am 18mths-4 years.
- **Fun Time Knowsley** [www.funtimesoftplay.com](http://www.funtimesoftplay.com)  
Toddler sessions Mon-Thurs 9.30am-11.15am. SEN sessions on a Wednesday in school holidays only, see Facebook for details.
- **The Play Den Burscough** [www.playandlearncentre.co.uk](http://www.playandlearncentre.co.uk)  
SEN sessions available in the holidays. See Facebook/Instagram for updates
- **VIPhq Birkdale Southport** [www.viphqbirkdale.co.uk](http://www.viphqbirkdale.co.uk)  
SEN sessions Thursday 9.30-11.15am
- **Autism In Motion Liverpool** [www.aimautism.com](http://www.aimautism.com)  
Pre school Stay and Play SEN sessions Monday 10-11.30am term time.

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## SEND Charities

There are also a number of charities who can offer guidance, advice and support.

- **Autism Education Trust** - <https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/>  
The AET is a not-for-profit organisation, led by the National Autistic Society and Ambitious about Autism, and supported by the Department for Education. Since 2007, the Autism Education Trust (AET) has been helping to develop good autism practice. They offer an extensive library of free resources for education professionals, leaders and parents.
- **ADHD Foundation:** <https://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk>  
The ADHD Foundation is the UK's leading neurodiversity charity who support children, young people and adults who live with ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia and more. The ADHD Foundation Neurodiversity Charity supports parents and carers so they can understand and meet the needs of their child.
- **Speech and Language UK** <https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/>  
Provide tools, training and resources for parents and teachers.
- **Communication Trust– ICAN charity** <https://www.icancharity.org.uk/>  
I CAN is a children's communication charity, who help children develop the speech, language and communication skills they need to thrive.
- **PACEY - Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years | PACEY**  
PACEY is the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years. They are a charity dedicated to supporting everyone involved in childcare and early years. They provide training, expert advice, help and peer support to practitioners and practical and impartial support and information for families and carers and those advising them.



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## Aiming High for 0-5's

Following feedback from families with children under 5, Aiming High are developing their Early Years offer.

At present children under 5 years can be referred into the team to access our Early Years Stay and Play sessions at Jakes Sensory World, these run on the last Sunday of every month. Aiming High also support a session every Saturday morning at Kinderworld in Southport.

0-5's can also be issued with an Active Choices Band which enables the child (plus an adult to support them) to have unlimited access to Sefton Council swimming pools for £20 per year.

Once referred in the family will receive all the information about family activities available during our school holiday programmes, such as sessions at Flip Out trampoline park and trips to Chester Zoo. The whole family unit are able to enjoy days out with the support of Aiming High staff. Once the child is old enough to access our full offer a member of team will contact parents/carers directly.