

**SEND and EP Solutions**

# **NEWSLETTER**

**ISSUE 3 / September 2025**

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# Special educational needs & disabilities (SEND)



## Overdiagnosis straining SEND system, think tank says

A recent report by Policy Exchange warns that England's SEND system is under growing strain due to overdiagnosis, with one in five children now identified as having SEND. The number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) has surged by 83% since 2015, contributing to rising costs projected to reach £11bn annually. The think tank recommends limiting EHCPs to pupils in special schools and giving councils more control over funding. However, disability charities like Sense have criticised the proposals, arguing they risk excluding children with complex needs in mainstream education from vital support.

[Overdiagnosis straining SEND system, think tank says](#) | [LocalGov](#)

## DfE Guidance for 'non-school' Alternative Provisions

The Department for Education has released updated guidance for *non-school alternative provision* (AP), replacing the term "unregistered AP" to reflect a more positive and inclusive approach. While the standards are currently voluntary, legislation is expected to make them mandatory. Key expectations include a focus on reintegration into mainstream education, clear criteria for when providers must register as schools, and time-limited placements with robust quality assurance. Local authorities are encouraged to adopt these standards, and tools are available to support providers in meeting them.



[A response to the new voluntary standards for non-school or unregistered alternative provision \(AP\) — Close the Gaps](#)

## **MPs need more expert caseworkers to meet rising demands – not a fleet of AI bots**

Terry Jermy MP argues that while AI tools can assist with basic tasks, they cannot replace the empathy and specialist knowledge required to support constituents, especially in complex areas like SEND. With MPs facing rising workloads and increasingly intricate casework, Jermy calls for better funding and more expert staff, warning that AI chatbots lack the emotional intelligence and reliability needed for meaningful public service.

The House | MPs need more expert caseworkers to meet rising demands – not a fleet of AI bots



## **Podcast**

### **“New SEND Reforms Autumn 2025... What’s Coming?”**

The episode outlines key upcoming SEND reforms for Autumn 2025, with legal experts explaining what’s changing and how it may affect families and professionals.

*Tune in and Enjoy!*

Episode 44: New SEND Reforms Autumn 2025...What's Coming? by SEN Talks



**Restrict EHCPs to pupils with most severe needs, says children’s commissioner**

Dame Rachel de Souza has called for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to be reserved only for pupils with the most complex needs spanning education, health, and care. A new three-tiered system is proposed to better match support to need, including separate plans for education and health or care. The aim is to simplify access and reduce strain on local authorities, but the proposal has sparked concern among parents and campaigners worried about reduced protections. Existing EHCPs would remain unaffected, and any changes would be subject to consultation.

Restrict EHCPs to pupils with most severe needs - de Souza



**Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools**

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has published a guidance report offering practical, evidence-based strategies to support pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). It outlines five key recommendations, including creating inclusive environments, ensuring access to high-quality teaching, and working closely with families and professionals. The report also introduces the ‘Five-a-Day’ approach using simple, effective teaching strategies like scaffolding and metacognitive techniques to help all pupils thrive.

Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools | EEF

## **Solving the SEND crisis: report calls for culture shift and funding to make mainstream education genuinely inclusive**

The Education Committee's new report on the SEND system calls for a major cultural and funding shift to make mainstream education genuinely inclusive. With 1.7 million children now identified with SEND, the report highlights a fragmented and under-resourced system that often fails families. Key recommendations include a national framework for SEN support, mandatory SEND training for all school staff, better funding aligned to local needs, and stronger accountability across education and health sectors. The Committee urges the government to define what inclusive education should look like and reduce reliance on EHC plans by improving early support.

Solving the SEND crisis: report calls for culture shift and funding to make mainstream education genuinely inclusive - Committees - UK Parliament



## **SEND funding must align with the government's inclusive vision**

Despite a doubling of investment since 2014, outcomes for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) remain stagnant. A recent *Schools Week* article calls for a shift from reactive, diagnosis-driven funding to a proactive, inclusive model that supports all learners from the outset. By aligning funding with a universal design approach and empowering schools through collaborative models, the vision is to create a system that delivers better outcomes, earlier intervention, and long-term sustainability. Making inclusive education the standard, not the exception.

SEND funding and incentives must align to deliver inclusion

# Educational Psychology

## The influences of television on students' social vitality

An interesting article on how television programmes affect students' social vitality.

Interviews with 15 diverse university students revealed that TV shows can influence mood, energy, and social behaviours - some boosting optimism and interaction, while others disrupt sleep and emotional wellbeing.

Read more below:

[Influential themes and categories of television programs on social vitality from the perspective of students' lived experience](#)



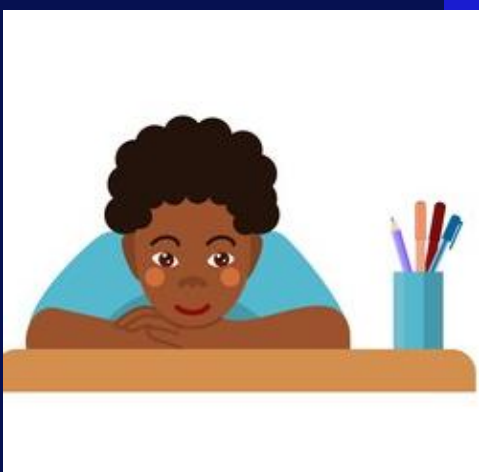
## Black Children & SEND A Crisis: Unpacking the Crisis for Black SEND Children in UK Education!

 - [YouTube](#)

This video explores the deep-rooted systemic issues affecting Black children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in the UK education system.

The discussion highlights how racial illiteracy, misdiagnosis, and exclusion disproportionately impact Black SEND pupils.

The intersectionality of race and SEND is emphasised as a key factor compounding disadvantage, with urgent recommendations for systemic reform, including robust anti-racism training and greater accountability in schools.





# International Educational Psychology

## Personality traits that help schoolchildren succeed

An international study of 44,000 students found that conscientiousness and open-mindedness are key predictors of academic success. Conscientiousness boosted the chance of being in the top 25% by 4 points. While cooperation helps, too much can hurt performance. These traits also reduce the impact of low socio-economic status, suggesting schools should support personality development to improve outcomes and equity.

Scientists identify personality traits that help schoolchildren succeed academically | EurekAlert!



## The Impact of AI on Academic Thinking

AI tools like ChatGPT can boost academic performance and reduce stress, but they also lower mental effort and critical engagement. Students often use AI for quick answers, which risks shallow learning.

Educators are encouraged to design tasks that promote deeper thinking and collaborative use of AI, turning it into a tool for intellectual growth rather than a shortcut.

### **Read about it here:**

[How AI Impacts Academic Thinking, Writing and Learning | Psychology Today New Zealand](#)



# Speech & Language Therapy

## **Celebrating Excellence: RCSLT Honours Northern Ireland's Speech and Language Therapy Stars**

The RCSLT recently marked its 80th anniversary with an inspiring awards ceremony in Northern Ireland, recognising outstanding contributions across the profession. Hosted by Emer Maguire, the event honoured rising stars, innovative teams, and dedicated leaders. Highlights included the Southeastern Trust's Adult Acute SLT Team for service transformation, and Belfast Trust's Chef Engagement Day initiative supporting safe eating practices. The awards showcased the profound impact of SLTs, from empowering communication to enhancing quality of life across communities.

[Awards celebrate speech and language therapy achievements in Northern Ireland | RCSLT](#)



## **Transforming SEND: An alternative white paper**

Speech and Language UK has released an alternative white paper calling for urgent reform to the SEND system, with a focus on the 1 in 4 children affected by speech and language challenges. The report outlines seven key actions, from investing in universal support and expanding specialist provisions to protecting legal rights and simplifying EHCPs. It highlights the need for a system where every child feels understood and supported, and where families no longer have to fight for access to essential services. This is a timely and powerful call to action ahead of the Government's upcoming Schools White Paper.

[Transforming SEND, An alternative white paper](#)



# Occupational Therapy



## **Aberdeen honours UK's first occupational therapist**

Royal Cornhill Hospital recently marked the centenary of Margaret 'Peg' Barr Fulton MBE, the UK's first qualified occupational therapist.

Starting her pioneering work in Aberdeen in 1925, Fulton transformed mental health care by introducing therapeutic activities like gardening and crafts. Her legacy includes founding roles in national and international OT organisations, and she was honoured with an MBE in 1954. A new commemorative plaque now joins the existing memorial garden and clinic at Cornhill, celebrating her lasting impact on the profession.

**Aberdeen honours UK's first occupational therapist**

## **NAS Condemns Misinformation Linking Autism to Tylenol and Vaccines**

The National Autistic Society has strongly criticised recent claims by President Trump and Robert F. Kennedy Jr. suggesting links between autism, Tylenol, and vaccines. Labelling the statements as dangerous and anti-science, NAS emphasised that there is no credible evidence supporting such connections. They warned that this misinformation risks public health and perpetuates harmful stigma against autistic individuals. NAS reaffirmed that autism is a lifelong neurodivergence with likely genetic origins, not a disease to be cured, and urged the UK Government and NHS to publicly denounce these claims.

**Our response to President Trump's announcement on Tylenol and vaccines**

# Optimistic October!

Optimistic October 2025

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
		1 Write down three things you can look forward to this month	2 Find something to be optimistic about (even if it's a difficult time)	3 Take a small step towards a goal that really matters to you	4 Start your day with the most important thing on your to-do list	5 Be a realistic optimist. See life as it is, but focus on what's good
6 Remind yourself that things can change for the better	7 Look for the good in people around you today	8 Make some progress on a project or task you have been avoiding	9 Share an important goal with someone you trust	10 Take time to reflect on what you have accomplished recently	11 Avoid blaming yourself or others. Find a helpful way forward	12 Look out for positive news and reasons to be cheerful today
13 Ask for help to overcome an obstacle you are facing	14 Do something constructive to improve a difficult situation	15 Thank yourself for achieving the things you often take for granted	16 Put down your to-do list and do something fun or uplifting	17 Take a small step towards a positive change you want to see in society	18 Set hopeful but realistic goals for the days ahead	19 Identify one of your positive qualities that will be helpful in the future
20 Find joy in tackling a task you've put off for some time	21 Let go of the expectations of others and focus on what matters to you	22 Share a hopeful quote, picture or video with a friend or colleague	23 Recognise that you have a choice about what to prioritise	24 Write down three specific things that have gone well recently	25 You can't do everything! What are your three priorities right now?	26 Find a new perspective on a problem you face
 27 Be kind to yourself today. Remember, progress takes time	28 Ask yourself, will this still matter a year from now?	29 Plan a fun or exciting activity to look forward to	30 Identify three things that give you hope for the future	31 Set a goal that brings a sense of purpose for the coming month		

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Happier · Kinder · Together

Optimistic October | Action for Happiness

# About the authors...



**Hi, I'm Julia!**

As the SEND Practice Lead, I support local authority clients with solutions for their SEND service, including backlogs of new assessments and annual reviews, plan writing, tribunals, and service design.

I also help SEND professionals find interim work.

Interested in learning more? Reach out! Connect with me on LinkedIn [here!](#)



**Hi, I'm Adam!**

I support Local Authorities by delivering packages of Speech and Language Therapy (SALT), Occupational Therapy (OT), and other therapeutic provision as outlined in EHCPs, as well as providing specialist assessments in these areas.

I also help Therapeutic professionals find interim work.

Interested in learning more? Reach out! Connect with me on LinkedIn [here!](#)



**Hello, I'm Princess!**

Specialising in international recruitment, I help UK local authorities and organisations connect with highly skilled Educational Psychologists from across the globe who are seeking to relocate to the UK.

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