

# Pathway of Services for children and young people with sensory needs

Toolkit for navigating sensory services  
in Hertfordshire

December 2018



Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)

0-25 Years



Welcome to this step by step guide to finding the services you can receive for a child or young person with sensory needs.

Finding out that your child/young person has sensory needs can bring about a whole array of emotions. We know that regardless of the type of disability, health condition or additional need a child/young person has, parents want information, support and advice they can trust. Whatever stage you are at with your child, there is information and support available.

This support pathway shows the journey a child or young person with sensory needs can expect and aims to help families and professionals make sense of a complex world.

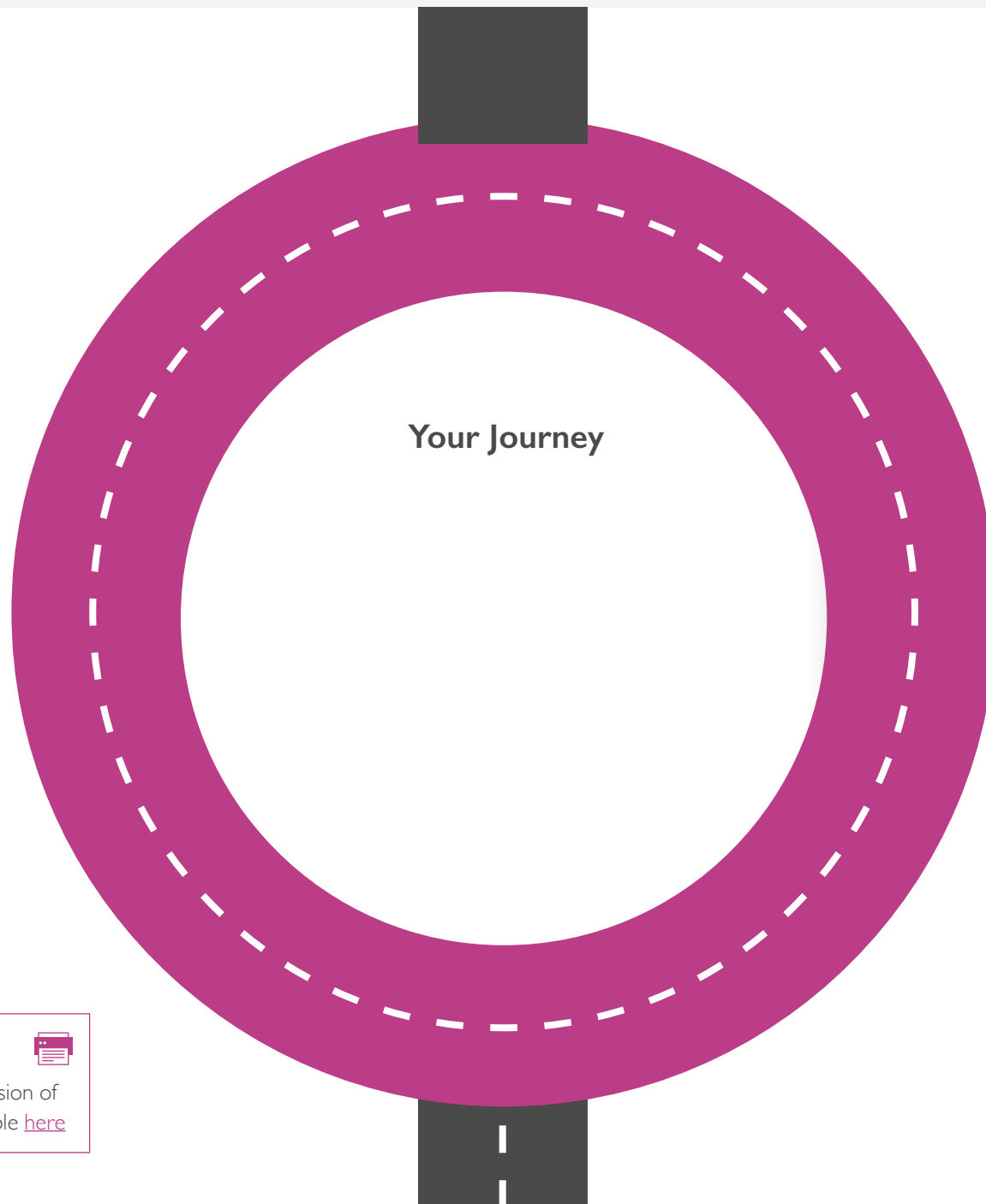
You can follow the steps outlined in each section, or jump to the chapter of interest at the click of a button.

You will also find a 'Glossary of Terms' at the back page of this document for those words or acronyms you don't know.

## Print version



A printer friendly version of this Pathway is available [here](#)





# Diagnosis

Has your child /young person been diagnosed with a sensory need?

This might mean your child is:

- blind/sight impaired (visually impaired)
- deaf or hard of hearing
- deafblind

Diagnosis could be:

## **At birth/neo natal**

Medical diagnosis made – referred to health professionals eye-care or audiology dept. or local authority sensory services (education & social care).

## **After birth/post natal**

GP or Health Visitor diagnosis. Referred to health professionals and/or SEND Specialist Advice and Support (SAS) team.

## **At school**

School picks up concern; arranges assessment. Refers to SEND SAS team. An education, health and care needs assessment may be considered.

You can also get guidance on finding the right specialist service for your child's needs by calling Hertfordshire County Council customer services on **0300 123 4043**.

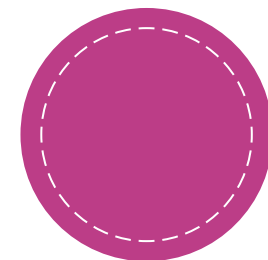
The [government website](#) also gives an overview of the help you can find for a disabled child or young person.

If your child/young person has sensory needs he/she will have been referred to the [Early Years Specialist and Advisory Service's](#) (education) or the [Sensory Services team](#). They will make any necessary referrals to any other relevant SEND teams such as [Families First](#) or the [0-25 team](#) for complex needs.

Services for children and young people with sensory needs within the Hertfordshire County Council include:

- Sensory Services (Social Care)
- Hearing Impairment team (Education)
- Visual Impairment team (Education)
- Deafblind team (Education)
- 0–25 Together team (Social Care)
- Early Years SEND team and;
- Families First in the first instance

Visit Hertfordshire's online [SEND Local Offer](#) one stop shop for all special educational needs or disabilities information, advice and guidance.



## **Did you know...?**

If your child aged 0-2 years has recently been diagnosed as deaf, [NDCS](#) runs a two-day 'Newly Diagnosed Information day'





# Deaf or hard of hearing referral pathway

From point of diagnosis to accessing teachers of the deaf.



## Did you know...?

We have referral pathways for:

- [Visual impairment](#)
- [Deafblind](#)





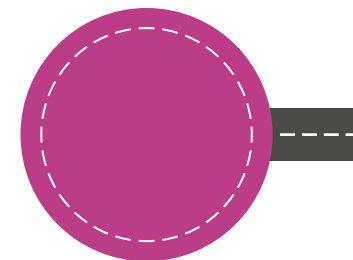
# Visual impairment referral pathway

From point of diagnosis to accessing teachers of the visually impaired.



- Education service
- Sensory Services
- /● Joint working

Sensory Services work closely with Education services whichever one you may be referred to.



## Did you know...?

We have referral pathways for:

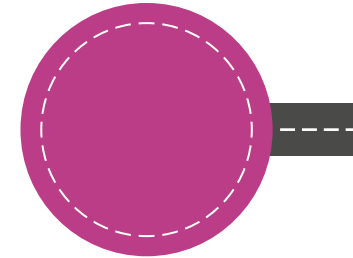
- [Deaf](#)
- [Deafblind](#)





# Deafblind referral pathway

From point of diagnosis to accessing teachers of the deafblind.



## Did you know...?

We have referral pathways for:

- [Deaf](#)
- [Visual Impairment](#)





## Early help

We all experience problems at some time. Finding the help, information and support needed early on, before a situation becomes a crisis, is the aim of all professionals.

By providing early help to families to overcome problems before they get worse we can:

- Enable children to live and thrive in a family environment
- Contribute actively to finding solutions to the issues they face
- Give families choices to find the right kind of support for their needs in the local area, recognise and build on the strengths of the family and improve their situation with our support

If necessary, your child's key worker can attend Families First district meetings to discuss cases that are not progressing with relevant partners, e.g. [Health](#), [Targeted Youth Support](#), [YC Hertfordshire Access Points](#).

If you need support for a child or young person with sensory needs, contact the [Sensory Services](#) for advice.

Families First is Hertfordshire's programme of early help. Visit the Families First website at [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst) to find out what services may help or visit your local family centre for advice and support. Some centres also run speech and language groups.

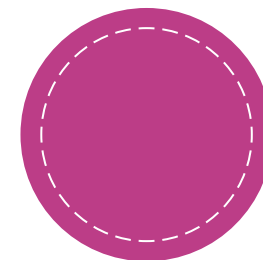
New website for family centres:  
[www.hertsfamilycentres.org](http://www.hertsfamilycentres.org)

Phone: 0300 123 7572.

### Did you know...?

More information in the children [0-5 years](#) chapter includes:

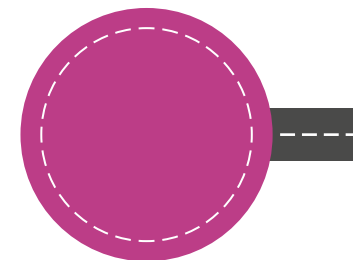
What support is available through the Early Years [SEND](#) Specialist Advice Service.





# What support can I find (1 of 9)

Finding out your child or loved one has a sensory need can be a difficult time for everyone. You, as well as the young person, may need emotional support. These pages highlight some of the key areas of support you can expect at this time and where to find it.



## Voluntary organisations (listed A-Z) for deaf or hard of hearing children

### **Action on hearing loss**

[Action on hearing loss](#) provide support to help people understand their deafness and issues around it. They also provide support to employers of a deaf person.

### **Hertfordshire Citizens Advice Services (HCAS)**

Hertfordshire Citizens Advice Services (HCAS) provides a free advice service to the citizens of Hertfordshire. They work hard to ensure the service is as inclusive as possible and now offers advice directly to clients in Hertfordshire who communicate using British Sign Language (BSL), Sign Supported Language (SSE), or lip-speaking.

Visit their webpage for more information at:

[www.hcas.org.uk/projects/british-sign-language-service](http://www.hcas.org.uk/projects/british-sign-language-service)

### **Herts Young Homeless (HYH)**

HYH focus is on preventing homelessness – from education in schools and family mediation through to supporting 16-24 year olds in their first homes or caring for adults of all ages who have mental health issues and housing needs.

Visit their webpage for more information at: [www.hyh.org.uk](http://www.hyh.org.uk)

### **National Deaf Children's Society**

[The National Deaf Children's Society](#) provides a wealth of support and information and advice. This includes tips on what to look for when choosing a school for child who is deaf, such as whether the school has a peer group for your deaf child, or whether a specialist school might be better where staff are trained especially to work with deaf children in the classroom.

Their website also provides advice for young people +/- 14 years [transitioning into adulthood](#).

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## What support can I find (2 of 9)

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### **Phoenix Group for Deaf Children**

The Phoenix Group for Deaf Children, based in Stevenage are user led and passionate about supporting deaf children, young people up to the age of 25 and their families in Hertfordshire. Their welcoming centre at the Hydeout in Stevenage is acoustically treated so users of hearing aids or cochlear implants will experience better clarity of sound.

Phoenix Parent Groups, who understand what it is like to raise a child with a hearing loss, also offer support to parents/carers. Outings and group activities for families of pre-school children, are organised in term time, weekends and school holidays. Training in Deaf Awareness and BSL (British Sign Language) is also offered.

Visit our website to find out more at:

[www.phoenixgroup.org.uk](http://www.phoenixgroup.org.uk)

### **RAD – Royal Association for the Deaf**

The Royal Association for Deaf people (RAD) provides services to Deaf people in their first language, usually British Sign Language (BSL) and supports mainstream providers to be more accessible to Deaf people.

Web: [www.royaldeaf.org.uk](http://www.royaldeaf.org.uk)

Email: [info@royaldeaf.org.uk](mailto:info@royaldeaf.org.uk)

### **Silver Birch Counselling**

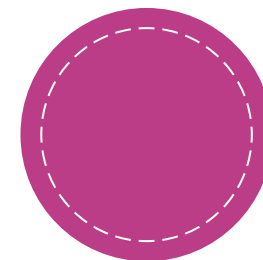
Silver Birch has counsellors experienced in working with those with hearing loss, whether they use speech or British Sign Language. They can work with people from age 12 upwards, including adults.

Phone: 07814 021969

Email [silverbirchtherapy@gmail.com](mailto:silverbirchtherapy@gmail.com)

### **Did you know...?**

A deaf/hard of hearing directory of services is available [here](#)





## What support can I find (3 of 9)

### Voluntary organisations (listed A-Z) for children and young people with visual impairment or deaf/blind

#### **Coesi**

The [Coesi](#) website is helpful if you are experiencing any type of visual impairment having difficulties with your sight, deaf or hard of hearing or you are a carer, family member or health or social care professional, this website will help you to find what you need.

#### **GuideDogs.org.uk**

The [children and young people](#) service offers expert, independent help and advice in accessing the right specialist support.

#### **Herts Vision Loss (Previous Hertfordshire Society for the Blind)**

Herts Vision Loss supports visually impaired people, their family members and carers, offering help, support and advice, counselling services, coaching and training for those in contact with blind and visually impaired people and helping younger working age clients back into the work place. They also offer an advocacy service in partnership with Herts Help and support people in finding routes into employment or volunteering.

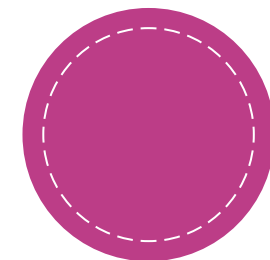
Visit their website: [www.hertsvisionloss.org.uk](http://www.hertsvisionloss.org.uk)

#### **RNIB**

The [Royal National Institute of Blind People](#) (RNIB) is the UK's leading charity supporting blind and partially sighted people. They offer practical and emotional support to those that need us, so they can continue living life to the full.

#### **SENSE**

[Sense](#) can help you find the right support for you and your family about complex sensory and communication needs, including deafblindness.



#### **Did you know...?**

The Hertfordshire Directory has lists of support organisations for the blind [here](#)





## What support can I find (4 of 9)

### General SEND support

#### **KIDS HUB**

Offer support and advice to parents of children with a disability or special need. They can advise you on the various offers of support available to you depending on the need and put you in touch with parent groups. If education and health and care plans are required, [KIDS HUB](#) can help you through the process.

#### **CONTACT (also known as Contact a Family)**

[Contact](#) is a charity for families with disabled children. Helpline advisers can support you with any issue about raising your disabled child: medical information, early years, diagnosis, benefits, education and local support. You can call or email your enquiry.

Phone: 0808 808 3555

Email: [helpline@contact.org.uk](mailto:helpline@contact.org.uk)

### Hertfordshire statutory services for children with SEND

Some of the support you can expect the council to provide if you have a disabled child, includes:

- [Short break services](#) – Short breaks offer disabled children and young people the chance to spend time out with others socialising and doing fun activities, giving their families a break and providing them with the confidence their child is well supported by a trained worker.

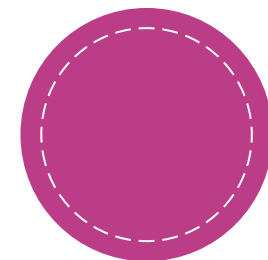
[Apply online for short breaks.](#)

- Care at home
- Some aids and adaptations
- Funding

Councils have a duty to provide these services under the [Children Act 1989](#). Some are free of charge - the council might ask you to contribute towards others.

If you think your child may qualify for support, contact the Children's Services team on 0300 123 4043. A social care worker will then talk to you about the needs of your family, covering health, social care and education. This is called a 'needs assessment' – the social care worker will give you advice on what to do next.

You can also look on the [Local Offer](#) to find out about local support groups and there are some listed in [these pages](#).





# What support can I find (5 of 9)

A child or young person with sensory needs, will more than likely have been referred to the relevant specialised services. These include the Specialist, Advisory and Support team (Education), Sensory Services (Social Care) or 0-25 Together team (Social Care).

If your child has already been allocated a support worker such as a social worker, teacher of the deaf, family worker etc, please speak to them in the first instance. They will help you find the right support for your family.

## Education

### **SEND Specialist Advisory and Support team (SAS)**

For children with sensory needs, Integrated Services for Learning has a specialist advisory and support team (SAS) which consists of teachers of deaf children, teachers for visually impaired children and teachers for the deafblind child.

[Visit their website](#) for more information.

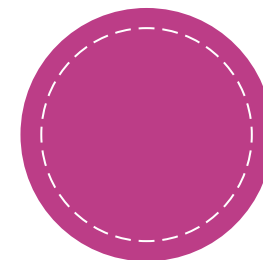
### **Hertfordshire's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SEND IASS)**

Provides impartial and confidential information, advice and support to parents and carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and young people and children with SEND.

[Visit their website](#) for more information.

As well as providing the statutory SEND service to support children and young people reach the outcomes in their SEN plans etc. family support workers, SENCOs and others within an education setting will be able to advise and guide parents/carers needing support.

The school should also trigger an [EHC needs assessment](#) where necessary.



### **Did you know...?**

Most of Hertfordshire's educational support and advisory teams fall under Integrated Services for Learning.

[This chart](#) helps explain the organisational structure.





# What support can I find (6 of 9)

## Health

All new parents receive a visit from a [health visitor](#), who work under the Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust.

Your child may also be known to the Paediatric Audiology Clinic or Paediatric Eye Clinic who will usually assess and monitor your child's sensory needs until they reach adulthood.

Find out more on the Health services for:

- [Children's Hearing Service](#)
- [Children's Eye Service](#)

You can now speak to a health visitor or school nurse at your local family centre.

Phone: 0300 123 7572

## The Children and Young People's (CYP)

### Speech and Language Therapy

This service offers a child and family centred approach to speech, language, communication needs (SLCN) and those with eating and drinking difficulties in Hertfordshire.

Find out more on their [website](#).

You can also find out more from your local family centre.

## National Deaf CAMHS

Provides highly specialised mental health care to deaf children and young people (aged up to 18 years) and their families and the hearing children of deaf adults in the community.

Find out more on their [website](#).

For information on mental health and general CAMHS services, visit the [Local Offer here](#).

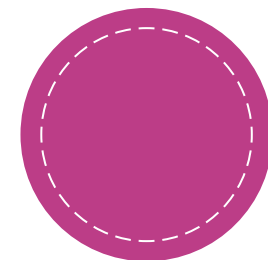
## Social Care

### Sensory Services

Sensory Services is a county-wide resource based in Adult Care Services within Hertfordshire Country Council. They provide services to all children and adults with sensory needs through three key pathways i.e:

1. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services for people who are deaf/hard of hearing or have a degree of hearing loss
2. Deafblind services for people who are Deafblind or have a degree of dual sensory loss; and
3. Visually Impaired services for people who are blind, partially sighted or have a degree of sight loss.

[Various fact sheets on sensory support are available](#)





## What support can I find (7 of 9)

### Advocacy

#### **SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SEND IASS)**

If advocacy is necessary, Hertfordshire's SEND IASS will offer support and help you find ways to resolve a disagreement or make a complaint, offer mediation and help you prepare for meetings. They will attend meetings or visits when appropriate.

Phone: 01992 555847

[Visit their website](#) for more information.

#### **How to appeal and get the right support**

If you disagree with a decision made about your child's SEND assessment, educational, health and care plan, or school placement, you should use mediation services before deciding to appeal.

For advice on this, [SEND Information Advice and Support Service](#) will help.

You may find some organisations offering additional support for parents/carers of children with sensory needs such as:

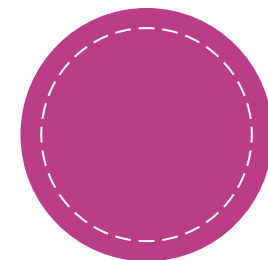
- Phoenix Group for Deaf Children
- The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS)
- The Royal Association for Deaf people
- The Royal Institute of Blind People
- The Guide Dog association also offers an Advocacy service.  
Phone: 0800 7811444.  
Email: [cypservices@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:cypservices@guidedogs.org.uk)

#### **POhWER**

POhWER in Hertfordshire provide an Advocacy service under the Hertshelp brand in partnership with a wide range of voluntary sector organisations; including:

- Carers in Herts (CiH)
- Herts Independent Living service (HILS)
- Herts Vision Loss (Previous Hertfordshire Society for the Blind)
- Viewpoint

Find out more at [www.pohwer.net/hertfordshire](http://www.pohwer.net/hertfordshire)





## What support can I find (8 of 9)

### The importance of communication

Deaf children can communicate as effectively as other children with the right support. Find out how on the [NDCS website](#).

[Heathlands school](#) run parent groups and teach sign language to help you to communicate effectively with your deaf child to support their learning and development.

[The Phoenix Group for Deaf Children](#) offer a range of Family Signing workshops and courses, giving families the basis of sign language and enabling them to choose what topics they want to focus on.

All teaching is held in a relaxing environment with resources for families to take away with them. Children and young people are included. They also offer Level One BSL for parents and young people.

### Equipment

Sensory Services can provide advice and support about equipment needed in the home.

Equipment such as Braille machines are loaned to schools by the Hertfordshire County Council's SEND Specialist, Advice Service (SAS) if required. The SAS team will provide a comprehensive package of support for a child or young person who is accessing the curriculum through Braille.

### The Phoenix Group for Deaf Children

[Phoenix](#) run workshops on use of equipment for parents (including children and young people) and loan out equipment for families to try at home.

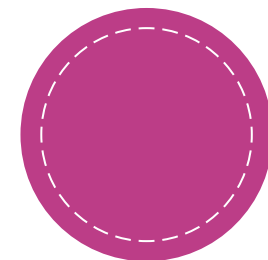
They have a range of gadgets such as flashing doorbells, vibrating alarm clocks and watches. They also teach telephone skills for those with enough hearing to try using the phone. Phoenix is hoping to stock hearing aid batteries for families. Check that a member of staff is available before you visit.

Phoenix also offers training in Deaf Awareness and BSL (British Sign Language) and helps all our members to overcome barriers, at whichever stage of life they are in.

Visit their website to find out more at:

[www.phoenixgroup.org.uk](http://www.phoenixgroup.org.uk)

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## What support can I find (9 of 9)

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### **SignVideo**

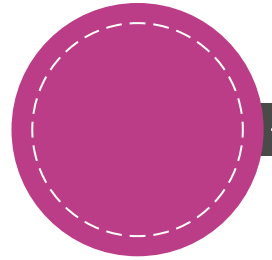
If you are a deaf customer and wish to contact Hertfordshire County Council, please contact us using SignVideo, our live BSL video interpreting service. (Monday to Friday, 8am – 6pm).

Do this by going online via Hertfordshire County Council's ['Contact us'](#) page where an interpreter will put a voice call into the customer service centre general number.

### **VICTA**

VICTA provides grants for children and young people with visual impairment under the age of 30 years to fund technology for home use (not school or college). This may include items such as iPads, laptops, Braille access technology and electronic magnifiers.

[Visit their website](#) for more information.







# Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans

Most young people will already receive sufficient support for special educational needs, through their setting, school or college. An education, health and care (EHC) plan is a document which sets out any additional support identified for ages 0–25, to cater for special education needs identified through the EHC needs assessment.

An Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment will only be considered where the support provided is not sufficient to support the child or young person's needs. The EHC needs assessment may result in an EHC Plan, which is a document that sets out any additional support identified which is not available through usual school support. The process helps identify each child's individual needs and the provision necessary to meet the needs such as resources and teaching approaches.

The assessment of needs should come first because choosing the school should be matched to the assessed need of the child or young person.

A [review](#) of the EHC plan must take place every year for over fives and every six months for under-fives. Parents/carers must receive at least two weeks' notice of the meeting.

Speak to your child's teacher or **SENCo** to find out how to go about getting an EHC needs assessment and you can read more about the EHC planning processes and guidance, on the Local Offer [here](#).

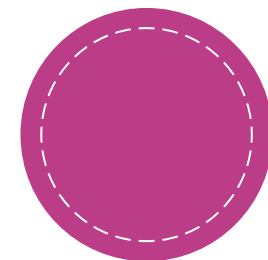
Following an assessment, if an EHC plan is not agreed, you will still be supported to use other available services – see the [voluntary organisations listed](#) in this pathway.

Call **0300 123 4043** to speak to an adviser.

## Note:

Parents/carers are encouraged to learn more about [education, health and care plans](#) (EHCPs) and how to apply.

A film about the EHC plan, with BSL and subtitles is available [online here](#).





# Funding support

Finance and benefits for those with special educational needs or disabilities

## Welfare benefits

If your child or young person has a disability, they may be entitled to welfare benefits. Their support workers will be able to provide you with information and advice about applying for benefits.

There are a number of benefits and tax credits that you may be entitled to. Some benefits can be paid because your child is disabled and some may be paid to you for other reasons.

For example, you may be getting a disability living allowance (DLA) for your child (or Personal Independence Payment if they are 16 or over) and a carer's allowance as their carer depending on your income and certain other factors.

You may also be able to claim benefits such as income support, child tax credit and housing benefit. However, many of the means-tested benefits for people of a working-age are being gradually replaced by universal credit, which also includes extra amounts for children with disabilities and carers. This change to universal credit doesn't affect carers allowance, child benefit, council tax support, DLA or PIP.

[Contact \(a family\)](#) provides useful information on the benefits you can claim with a child with a disability.

Find out more with the [Money Advice Unit Factsheets](#).

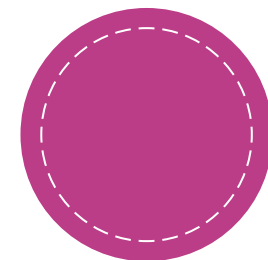
See the [Local Offer](#) website for a dedicated page offering information on ways to get extra money to help your child with special educational needs or disability.

## Free childcare in the early years

In England all three and four-year-olds are entitled to 15 hours of free childcare for 38 weeks of the year. Some two year olds are also eligible, for example any two year- old who is in receipt of a [Disability Living Allowance \(DLA\)](#) or who has an [Education, Health and Care Plan](#). Some working families of children aged three or four years old are entitled to an extra 15 hours of free childcare.

Some working families of children aged three or four years old are entitled to an extra 15 hours of free childcare. A childcare provider can also apply for additional funding via the disability access fund if a child aged three or four years old receives DLA and attends their setting.

Find out more at: [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/parents](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/parents)



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# Funding support

Finance and benefits for those with special educational needs or disabilities

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## Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)

DSA can help university students with the costs of:

- Specialist equipment, for example a computer if you need one because of your disability
- Non-medical helpers
- Extra travel because of your disability
- Other disability-related costs of studying

Find out more on GOV.UK

[www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas](http://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas)

## 16-19 Bursary Scheme

You could get a bursary to help with education-related costs if you're aged 16 to 19 and:

- Studying at a publicly funded school or college in England - not a university
- On a training course, including unpaid work experience

A disabled student can qualify if they are getting DLA or PIP and also getting Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) – a benefit for people who have a limited capability for work. It can be claimed from age 16 even if the young person is in education but the parent would lose the benefits that they get for that child in those circumstances.

You could also get a bursary if you either:

- Are continuing on a course you started aged 16 to 18 (known as being a '19+ continuer')
- Have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

A bursary is money that you, or your education or training provider, can use to pay for things like:

- Clothing, books and other equipment for your course
- Transport and lunch on days you study or train

## Free School meals

Pupils can qualify for free school meals in a number of ways – based on age, parent's income and other factors.

Check the [website](#) for information.

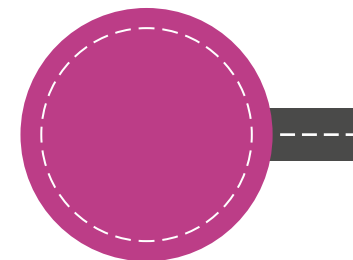
Qualifying for free school meals also brings additional funding – the pupil premium – into your child's school.

## Family Fund

Family Fund may help with a grant if you're raising a child or young person who is disabled or seriously ill.

Visit their [website](#) for more information.

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# Funding support

Finance and benefits for those with special educational needs or disabilities

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## **Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS)**

If you're referred to hospital or other NHS premises for specialist NHS treatment or diagnostic tests by your doctor, dentist or another health professional, you may be able to claim a refund of reasonable travel costs under the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS).

[This website](#) explains who's eligible for the scheme and how to make a claim.

## **Hertfordshire Citizens Advice Services (HCAS)**

HCAS offer free financial advice and also offer communication in sign language.

Visit their website [here](#).

## **Hertfordshire Community Foundation**

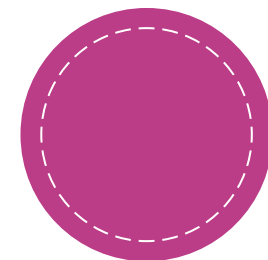
Provides a range of grants to support the county's community and voluntary groups.

Visit their website [here](#).

## **VICTA**

VICTA provides support to children and young people who are blind or partially sighted and their families and may offer grants.

Visit their website [here](#).



### **Did you know...?**

You may sometimes be helped with funding for the cost of transport

Find out more on the [Transport pages](#)





# Transport

Your child may be entitled to free transport if they can't walk to school because of their needs or mobility issues.

Any transport your council provides must be suitable to your child's needs. Once a pupil's Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is finalised, HCC will assess their eligibility for free home to school transport. If a pupil is attending their nearest suitable school, where the distance from home to school is over the statutory walking distance, they will be eligible for free home to school transport.

## Statutory walking distance

### Under 8 year olds

More than 2 miles (3,218 metres) from home.

### Over 8 year olds

More than 3 miles (4,827metres) from home.

If a pupil is attending their nearest suitable school, but their home to school distance is less than the statutory walking distance, they won't be entitled under the 'distance' section of the [home to school transport policy](#).

However, they may be entitled to free home to school transport based on an individual need.

Look online to find out more about [free transport](#).

## Bus and rail travel for disabled people

### Disabled person's rail card

You will qualify if you:

- Receive Personal Independence Payments (PIP)
- Receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA) at either:
  - the higher or lower rate for the mobility component,
  - or the higher or middle rate for the care component

- Have a visual impairment
- Have a hearing impairment

Find additional information [here](#).

### Disabled person's bus pass

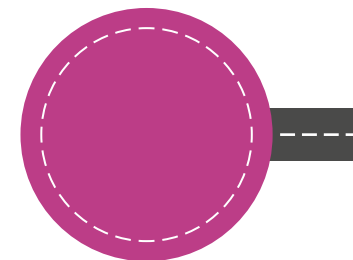
If you are blind or partially sighted, or profoundly or severely deaf, you may qualify for a disabled persons bus pass.

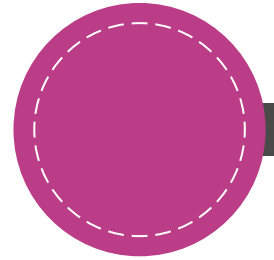
Find additional information [here](#).

### Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS)

If you're referred to hospital or other NHS premises for specialist NHS treatment or diagnostic tests by your doctor, dentist or another health professional, you may be able to claim a refund of reasonable travel costs under the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS).

This [website](#) explains who's eligible for the scheme and how to make a claim.







# I. Referral pathway for children 0–5 with sensory needs

A child with a sensory need will usually have been diagnosed prior to or after birth, at which stage a key worker from health would be allocated. That key worker should then be able to signpost to all required services.

Should your child not be [diagnosed](#) at that early stage, seek advice from a GP or hospital and a health care plan will be arranged. If you're concerned at school age, don't hesitate to talk to someone at school.

Hertfordshire County Council's Early Years [SEND Specialist Advice and Support \(SAS\)](#) team (Education) works with children under 5 and can offer advice or support based on 'the needs of the child. This is not dependent on a diagnosis at this stage. The SAS team also works closely with the [Sensory Team](#) (Social Care) and either team will mutually refer children to the relevant service, where applicable.

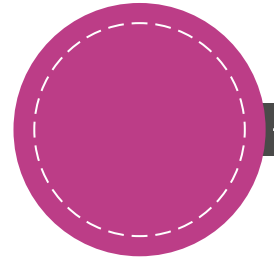
## Early Years Development Centres (EYDC)

An early years Specialist Development Centre helps young children (birth - 3 years) with identified special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and their families. The service however, is only available through referral from the SAS team when a child is being supported by them on their caseload.

## CHICS

CHICS is a pre-school group for children with hearing impairment. Its aim is to empower families and carers to support the development of their child's listening, communication and social skills so that they can be equipped to start school confidently with the skills, needed to play a full part in school life. CHICS allows parents and carers to learn from specialist staff and each other and develop invaluable support networks. There are currently four CHICS groups running throughout the County and these are open to all pre-school children who are on a caseload with the SEND Specialist Advice and Support (Hearing Impairment team).

*Continued on next page...*



### Did you know...?

More information is available on our [Diagnosis](#) pages:

- NDCS has more information for deaf children aged 0-5 years
- RNIB have resources for parents/carers of blind and partially sighted children





# I. Referral pathway for children 0–5 with sensory needs

*Continued from previous page...*

## DOVES

DOVES is a pre-school group for children with visual impairment. Its aim is to empower families and carers to support the development of their child's visual, tactile, communication, social, mobility and independence skills so that they can be equipped to start school confidently with the skills needed to play a full part in school life. DOVES allows parents and carers to learn from specialist staff and each other and develop invaluable support networks.

There are currently two DOVES groups running, one in Stevenage and one in St Albans. These run approximately fortnightly during term time and are open to all pre-school children who are on caseload with the SEND Specialist Advice and Support (Visual Impairment team).

## Play groups / nurseries

The early years SAS team will help you establish networks of early help to prevent any related problems arising such as behaviour management, independence training etc.

The early years SAS team runs two pre-school groups for under fives with sensory impairments. CHICS is a group for children with hearing impairment and DOVES is a group for children with visual impairments.

Heathlands School for the deaf is a community special school starting from the age of 3. Find out more on their [website](#).

[A directory of Hertfordshire's early years providers](#) can be found through the childcare directory or see the Local Offer for listed providers for children with SEND.

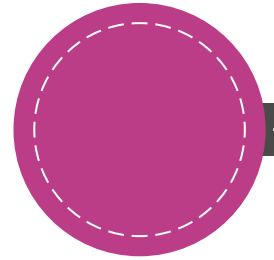
Following an assessment, if an EHC plan is not agreed, you will be supported to use other available services – see the [voluntary section in this pathway](#). Support services for children and families are being provided in every community in Hertfordshire.

Call **0300 123 4043** to speak to an adviser.

### Did you know...?

Heathlands Sign and Play for deaf and hearing children (of deaf parents) one morning a week (Ideal for parents who would like to link up with deaf role models, other deaf parents, or for their deaf child to play with other deaf children. Hearing children of Deaf parents also welcome.

Phone Heathlands School on **01727 807807** for information or to ask for a leaflet.







# 1. Finding the right school

The special educational needs or disability (SEND) Code of Practice says all children and young people are entitled to an education that enables them to make progress.

Every child including those with sensory needs, deserve to:

- Achieve their best
- Become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and;
- Make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training

## If your child is deaf

There are specialist schools suitable for children with a hearing loss with have staff trained especially to work with deaf children in the classroom. An [education, health and care plan](#) (EHCP) is necessary for placement in a specialist school or unit.

Schools in Hertfordshire for children with hearing loss are:

- [Heathlands School for the Deaf](#), St Albans, AL3 5AY (caters for ages 3-16)
- [Knightsfield School, Welwyn Garden City](#), AL8 7LW (caters for ages 10-18/Year 6)

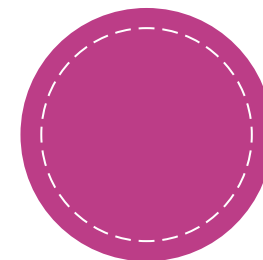
Mainstream schools with deaf units have additional support on site if needed:

- [Mossbury – Stevenage](#)
- [Maple – St Albans](#)

Find the list of all specialist schools in Hertfordshire on the Local Offer [here](#).

If you feel your deaf child would benefit from access to mainstream school, please liaise with your child's specialist advisory teacher of deaf children who will explain the options available and work closely with you and your child's school.

*Continued on next page...*



### Did you know...?

[NDCS](#) has a dedicated page of information for deaf children.





# I. Finding the right school

*Continued from previous page...*

## If your child has a visual impairment

If your child has a visual impairment your local school should accommodate pupils with visual impairment, including those with additional complex needs. The SEND Specialist Advice and Support (Visual Impairment) have a team of Specialist Teachers, Habilitation Specialists and Curriculum Access Specialists who will work with the school to enable a pupil with visual impairment to gain full access to school life.

Discuss your child's needs with Hertfordshire's visual impairment advisory service – see Local Offer [here](#) for details.

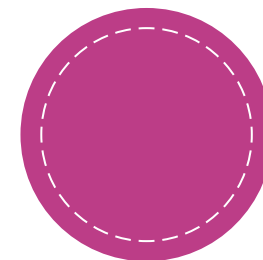
The SEND Specialist Advice and Support service (SAS) will provide a comprehensive package of support for a child or young person who is accessing the curriculum through Braille. This support aims to enable the child or young person to be able to play a full and active part in school life and to be able to access the curriculum and school environment. SAS will lead the teaching of the specialist aspects of the curriculum. This will include teaching the Braille code and then support the child to learn to read alongside their peers and teaching parts of the curriculum which may need to be approached in a slightly different way e.g. showing the child how to approach a mathematical problem using Braille.

It will also include working on the child or young person's mobility and independence skills and ensuring that curriculum materials are appropriately adapted. They will also ensure that school staff are confident and equipped to support individuals with a visual impairment and other pupils can make positive relationships with their visually impaired peers.

## If your child is deafblind

Schools should help to meet the needs of children who are deafblind, including those who have additional and complex needs. These needs may be best met in mainstream schools, or in special schools or units for deaf children, or in other special schools, e.g. for children with learning disability or physical disability, depending on your child's needs.

You can discuss your child's needs with Hertfordshire's Specialist Advisory Teacher of deafblind child who can help support schools in making learning accessible to your child.



### Did you know...?

RNIB hold lists of specialist schools that support children and young people with a visual impairment. Visit the RNIB [website](#) here.

RNIB have [resources](#) for parents/carers of blind and partially sighted children.

### Did you know...?

SENSE has a [route map](#) about meeting the needs of deafblind children and young people in the new SEND system – a guide for professionals.



## 2. Activities and opportunities

In addition to Short Break activities, there are many organisations that offer regular activities specially aimed at children and young people with SEND giving them the chance to spend time with others doing fun activities.

These include arts and crafts clubs, sports lessons, youth clubs, music lessons and lots more.

Find out what these are under Things to do on Hertfordshire's Local Offer and on Hertfordshire's Directory:

- [Activities/groups for visually impaired](#)
- [Deaf/hard of hearing children and young people](#)

If there are complex needs a short break review can be requested.

### Telephone training

Phoenix runs telephone training workshops for hearing aid users and cochlear implant recipients, where parents can work with their deaf child to improve skills in using the phone. Both mobile and landline phones are used; discussion and use of additional equipment compatible with phones is included.

Children need to be seven years old or over.

### Did you know...?

[Phoenix](#) provide specialist activities for deaf children/young people up to the age of 30 years.

NDCS has website for young people called [BUZZ](#).

[Direct payments](#), where applicable, can help support access to local youth/leisure activities.

You can find out about disability football [here](#).



# I. Transition to secondary school

The journeys that get you from one location to another, e.g. primary school to secondary, school to college, university or employment, are what we call your points of transition.

You will be working with many different professionals who will be able to advise you when any actions need to be taken at the various points of transition. This will include things like reviews (EHCP), health assessments etc. Make sure you discuss your child's needs with them. Moving to secondary school can be a daunting time for you and your child. There are many things that you and your child can do to make sure that the move from primary to secondary education is smooth.

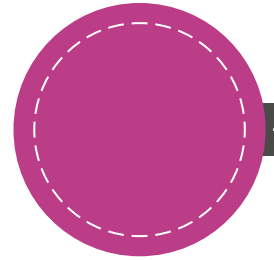
The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) website has many resources to help you. [Their factsheet](#) 'Supporting your child (14 years+) in making choices about their education and future careers' for information on the different options and the extra support that your child might be entitled to.

RNIB, in partnership with Action for Blind People, has produced transition guidance for young people who are blind or partially sighted in England.

Entitled '[Your future, your choice: bridging the gap](#)', the guide outlines the support and services available to assist young people through their journey from school, through further and higher education, and into employment.

Phoenix supports those moving from primary to secondary, and school to college through groups and one to one work. They help to build confidence in managing this transition with support for the first two years of secondary school and in the early days of college.

'Chat club' is open for those with hearing loss from 10-12 years.



## Did you know...?

NDCS have [useful resources](#) and fact sheets about bullying; making choices; exams, [transition pathways](#) and more.

RNIB information on [leaving school](#).





## 2. Finding the right school/college

Hertfordshire's 'Preparing for Adulthood' strategy for young people aged 14-25 with high needs is to ensure all young people achieve the best possible life outcomes and a successful transition into adult life, whatever their disability or learning difficulty. A young person's transition to adulthood begins from the age 14 on (Year 9) when a review of the EHC plan is done.

It is never too early to start planning for life after school.

Some things young people need to think about:

- Career or college options
- Where you want to live (if relevant)
- Relationships
- Apprenticeships

Young people with an EHC plan in school will have a YC Hertfordshire Personal Adviser allocated. The Personal Adviser will write a 'Preparing for Adulthood' Transition Plan in Year 9 and will review this in Year 11 (or Year 14 for young people attending special schools for young people with severe learning difficulties)

YC Hertfordshire Personal Advisers will attend EHCP reviews in Year 9 and Year 11 and can ask the school to invite the Sensory Services Team to the meeting.

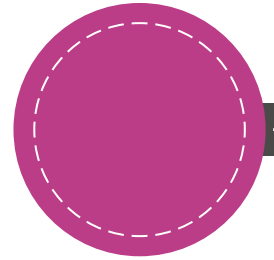
This [guide for parents/carers](#) has more information.

A lot more information can be found on the Youth Connexions Hertfordshire website [here](#).

If the young person has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, the Local Authority must ensure that the EHC plan annual review at Year 9 - and every review thereafter - includes a focus on preparing for adulthood.

Education, health and social care services should all be involved in planning and supporting this from Year 9 and into adulthood. If the Sensory Services team are not yet involved with the family at this stage, they should be invited to the 14+ review.

The [Local Offer's Learning Pathway](#) will help guide you through different pathways for adulthood, and you'll find all you need here.



### Did you know...?

[NDCS have a dedicated page for school leavers](#) which includes:

- 14+ education and future career options
- Transition meetings
- Apprenticeships

You may find the following helpful:

- Case studies
- Real video stories of positive role models
- Buzz



### 3. Youth Activities and opportunities

Service providers have a duty to ensure their activities/services are accessible for all. See [Equalities Act information](#). If you wish to access local activities and have access needs, please contact the service provider to discuss your requirements and how they can best meet your needs. You can use an advocate to support you if necessary. You may also wish to be assessed for direct payments to pay for support in accessing local services.

The following clubs advertise as being fully inclusive, meaning that anybody, no matter their impairment or ability, is welcome to attend.

We would recommend contacting the club direct to discuss your individual needs.

Fairlands Valley - Six Hills Way, Stevenage,  
Herts SG2 0BL

[www.sll.co.uk](http://www.sll.co.uk)

[www.sll.co.uk/Fairlands/Fairlands](http://www.sll.co.uk/Fairlands/Fairlands)

Fairlands Valley are affiliated with [rya-sailability](#) which is a national programme enabling people with disabilities to try sailing and take part regularly.

Level Water Broxbourne

[www.levelwater.org](http://www.levelwater.org)

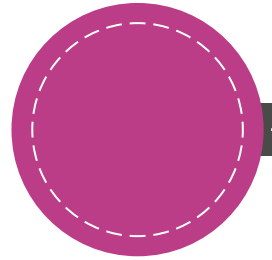
Numerous youth activities and volunteering opportunities such as the National Citizenship programme are available for young people in Hertfordshire.

National Citizen Service (NCS) is a fantastic life experience that reaches beyond school and is something which employers look for. NCS is a challenging, personal and social development programme which helps young people aged 15-17 (School Years 11 and 12) to build independence and confidence. [Find out more here.](#)

YC Hertfordshire – Herts Youth Futures is an innovative new project to support young people facing significant barriers to the workplace, to improve employability and enter training or work. [Find out more here.](#)

Lots of events and activities for young people are listed on YC Hertfordshire's [Mogo Listings website for young people](#).

NDCS also run youth programmes for deaf 8 to 18 year olds to build confidence, self-esteem and independence, and develop communication skills – [visit their website](#) for more information.





# 1. Future planning for further education or work

## It is never too early to start planning for life after school

Making decisions about what steps to take beyond school can be daunting. Many young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) want to go to college. To help the decision-making progress, YC Hertfordshire has a wealth of information on their website.

### YC Hertfordshire

There is a dedicated team of personal advisers (PAs) for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) to help them make a smooth transition into adult life.

The Personal Advisers are linked to schools, colleges and other learning providers and also support young people who are attending out of county schools or colleges and help those not in education, employment or training.

YC Hertfordshire also has a small Supported Employment Team who can help young people who had an EHCP to find and maintain employment.

You can contact the team on the duty line:

**01438 844 999** or email: [YC.LDD@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:YC.LDD@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

Young people with a sensory need who wish to explore college options should contact the college, where a special needs co-ordinator will discuss additional support. Colleges will also arrange for a communicator to be there.

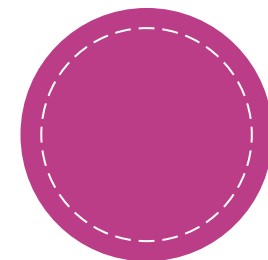
YC Hertfordshire's [leaflet](#) on the transition of students from special school to post 16 provision offers useful guidance.

YC Hertfordshire is able to provide information, advice, careers guidance, work experience, support and development opportunities dependent on the services that your school or college buys.

Find out more about [Work Solutions](#) on the Local Offer.

[Connected2Work](#) is a new scheme aimed at helping young people find the right job or volunteer role.

[Access to Work](#) is a government programme helping people to go to work with support offered based on their needs. This may include a grant to help cover the costs of practical support in the workplace, equipment or getting to and from work.



### Did you know...?

Phoenix Plus is a group for young adults aged 16–25, supporting them to develop skills ready for further education or for work. Phoenix provide training and advice with a group of peers. They can help with understanding what support might be available in Further Education or at work, including Access to Work.

Phoenix also offers training and discussions around living independently, with topics chosen by participants in the group. Trips out are included to promote independence, whilst also offering travel training opportunities.



## BSL

British Sign Language

## CAMHS

Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service.  
See also [Deaf CAMHS](#)

## Cochlear Implants

A small, complex electronic device that can help to provide a sense of sound to a person who is profoundly deaf or severely hard-of-hearing. The implant consists of an external portion that sits behind the ear and a second portion that is surgically placed under the skin

## Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)

An allowance for undergraduate or post-graduate students who have a disability or long-term health condition, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia or dyspraxia which affects their ability to study. It can be used to pay for things such as special equipment, a note-taker or transport costs

## DLA

Disability Living Allowance

## EHCP

Education, Health and Care Plan

## Families First

Hertfordshire's brand for early help, front line services

## HCC

Hertfordshire County Council

## HI

Hearing Impairment (term for children with hearing loss in medical or educational settings)

## ISL

Integrated Services for Learning

## MLD

Moderate Learning Difficulties

## Multiple disabilities and visual impairment (MDVI)

A visual impairment with additional disability

## Multi-sensory impairment (MSI)

Child/young person has both a vision and hearing loss

## NDCS

National Deaf Children's Society –  
[www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

## PA

Personal Adviser – engages with young people to assess needs, offer impartial information, advice or guidance and engages with partners (schools, colleges, training providers and employers) to find solutions for young person

## PfA

Preparing for Adulthood

## PMLD

Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties

## RNIB

Royal National Institute of Blind People  
[www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

## SAS

Specialist Advice and Support

## SENCo – Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

All schools must have a qualified teacher designated as SENCO to manage the strategic development of SEN policy and provision in the school and to arrange the necessary SEN support for a child or young person

## SEND

Special Educational Needs or Disability

## SEND IASS

SEND Information Advice and Support Service

## Sensory needs:

1. **Deaf/Hard of Hearing:** people who are deaf/hard of hearing or have a degree of hearing loss;
2. **Deafblind:** people who are Deafblind or have a degree of dual sensory loss; and
3. **Visually Impaired:** people who are blind, partially sighted or have a degree of sight loss

## SpLD

Specific Learning Difficulties

## YC Hertfordshire

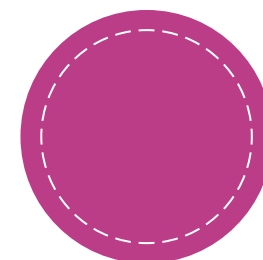
The newly named Youth Connexions Hertfordshire – [www.ychertfordshire.org](http://www.ychertfordshire.org)

## Universal

A baseline level of service provided for every resident of the country

## VI

Visual Impairment (term for children with sight loss in medical or educational settings)



### Note:

For a more detailed Glossary of Terms visit the [Local Offer](#) here.

