Understanding SEND in Havering

A guide to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, acronyms, services and professionals

Prepared by Sycamore Trust UK for parent carers

Acronyms A–Z	Local services	Professionals	Useful contacts

Welcome

Making sense of the SEND world

Navigating the SEND system can often feel overwhelming. Families are introduced to a wide range of professionals, services and terminology that may be unfamiliar.

This booklet explains…

- Common SEND acronyms and terminology
- Local services available in Havering
- The professionals and job roles you may come across
- Where to find further information and support

How to use it

Keep it handy and look up a term whenever you hear something unfamiliar — in a meeting, a letter or a report.

It is always fine to ask a professional: **"What does that mean?"**

Every journey is different

Every child's journey is different, and not all services or professionals will be involved with every family.

What's inside

1	Common SEND acronyms A–Z
2	Havering services and what they do
3	Professionals and job titles explained
4	Useful websites and contacts
5	My notes

Publication date: June 2026. Information and services may change over time — please check individual websites and organisations for the most up-to-date information.

1 Common SEND acronyms

From AAC to YP

This section explains common acronyms and terms that families may hear when speaking with schools, health services, social care teams or the Local Authority.

Each term has a coloured label to show which area it belongs to:

Needs & conditions	Education	Health & therapy	Communication
Social care & safety	Money & benefits	Services & roles	

A

AAC – Augmentative and Alternative Communication
Methods of communication used to support people who have difficulties with speech, such as communication boards, apps or devices.
Communication

ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
A neurodevelopmental condition that can affect attention, impulsivity and activity levels.
Needs & conditions

AP – Alternative Provision
Education arranged for children who cannot attend mainstream school for various reasons.
Education

APDR – Assess, Plan, Do, Review
A cycle that forms the graduated approach schools should follow (as set out in the SEND Code of Practice) to support children and young people with SEND.
Education

ARM – Annual Review Meeting
A yearly meeting to review an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
Education

ARP – Additionally Resourced Provision
A specialist provision within a mainstream school for children with specific needs, such as autism.
Education

ASD – Autism Spectrum Disorder
A diagnostic term still used by many professionals. Many autistic people and organisations simply prefer the term "autism".
Needs & conditions

B

BSL – British Sign Language
A visual language used by members of the Deaf community.
Communication

BSP – Behaviour Support Plan
A school-based document designed to assist those with behavioural needs.
Education

C

CAF – Common Assessment Framework
A non-statutory method of assessment which can be used by social services, health or education. Many areas now use an Early Help Assessment instead.
Social care & safety

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
NHS services that support children and young people with emotional, behavioural and mental health difficulties.
Health & therapy

CAT – Cognitive Abilities Test
A test used by many secondary schools, usually at the start of Year 7, to establish learning baselines.
Education

CBT – Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
A type of therapy that helps people understand the connection between thoughts, feelings and behaviours.
Health & therapy

CIN – Child in Need
A child who requires additional services to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development.
Social care & safety

CoP – SEND Code of Practice
The statutory guidance for organisations in England that work with children and young people (aged 0–25) with special educational needs and disabilities.
Education

CP – Child Protection
Processes put in place to keep children safe from harm.
Social care & safety

CPOMS – Child Protection Online Management System
An online recording system for child protection records. Some schools also use it to record behaviour, parent communication, contact with outside agencies and safeguarding concerns.
Social care & safety

CQC – Care Quality Commission
The independent regulator of health and adult social care services in England. It inspects local area SEND services together with Ofsted.
Services & roles

CWDT – Children with Disabilities Team
A specialist social care team that supports disabled children and their families.
Social care & safety

CYP – Children and Young People
A general term for children and young people. In SEND it usually covers ages 0–25.
Services & roles

D

DCO – Designated Clinical Officer
A senior NHS professional responsible for ensuring health services meet SEND duties.

Health & therapy

DCS – Director of Children's Services
The most senior officer responsible for children's education, social care and safeguarding services within the Local Authority.

Services & roles

DfE – Department for Education
The central government department responsible for education and children's services in England.

Services & roles

DLA – Disability Living Allowance
A benefit for children under 16 who have additional care or mobility needs.

Money & benefits

DMO – Designated Medical Officer
A senior doctor who advises on health aspects of SEND and EHCPs.

Health & therapy

DP – Direct Payment
A payment made directly to a parent or young person to buy specific services. It can be part of a Personal Budget, so the family can buy certain services set out in the EHCP.

Money & benefits

DSL – Designated Safeguarding Lead
The person in a school responsible for safeguarding and child protection concerns.

Social care & safety

DSP – Dedicated Specialist Provision
A specialist provision within a mainstream school designed to support pupils with additional needs.

Education

E

EBSA – Emotionally Based School Avoidance
When a child experiences significant emotional distress or anxiety that impacts their ability to attend school.
Needs & conditions

EHCNA – Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment
The assessment process used to determine whether a child requires an Education, Health and Care Plan.
Education

EHCP – Education, Health and Care Plan
A legal document that sets out a child or young person's needs and the support they require.
Education

ELSA – Emotional Literacy Support Assistant
A teaching assistant with specialist training to support the emotional development of children and young people in school.
Education

EMHP – Education Mental Health Practitioner
A practitioner who provides early intervention support for children experiencing mild to moderate mental health difficulties.
Health & therapy

EOTAS – Education Other Than at School
Educational provision arranged when a child is unable to attend school.
Education

EP – Educational Psychologist
A professional who specialises in child development, learning and emotional wellbeing.
Services & roles

EPS – Educational Psychology Service
The service that employs Educational Psychologists.
Services & roles

EWO – Education Welfare Officer
A professional who works with schools and families where attendance is a concern.
Education

EYFS – Early Years Foundation Stage
The statutory framework that sets standards for learning and development for children from birth to age five.
Education

F

FE – Further Education
Education after compulsory secondary education, for example at a college, usually from age 16.
Education

FSM – Free School Meals
Government-funded meals available to eligible children.
Money & benefits

FSW – Family Support Worker
Offers practical and emotional help to families, in the short or long term.
Social care & safety

G

GDD – Global Developmental Delay
A general delay in reaching expected developmental milestones.
Needs & conditions

GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation
A law that tells organisations how they should gather, use and manage personal data. In the UK this is the UK GDPR, alongside the Data Protection Act 2018.
Services & roles

GMS – Gross Motor Skills
Whole-body movements — for example, playing games, swimming or riding a bicycle.
Health & therapy

GP – General Practitioner
A family doctor based in the community. Your GP is usually the first person to speak to about health worries and can refer to other services.
Health & therapy

H

HI – Hearing Impairment
A partial or complete loss of hearing.
Needs & conditions

HLTA – Higher Level Teaching Assistant
An experienced, qualified teaching assistant who supports teachers by planning and delivering lessons, managing classes and tracking pupils' progress.
Education

I

IEP – Individual Education Plan
A document outlining targets and support for a child.
Education

ILP – Individual Learning Plan
A plan outlining a child's learning goals and support.
Education

IPSEA – Independent Provider of Special Education Advice
A national charity providing free legal advice and information on SEND law.
Services & roles

IS – Independent School
A school that is not funded by a local authority or the government, often called a fee-paying or private school. Independent schools can be mainstream or specialist.
Education

K

KS – Key Stage
A stage of education within the National Curriculum: **KS1** – Years 1–2 (ages 5–7); **KS2** – Years 3–6 (ages 7–11); **KS3** – Years 7–9 (ages 11–14); **KS4** – Years 10–11 (ages 14–16); **KS5** – Years 12–13, sixth form (ages 16–18).

Education

KW – Keyworker
Someone who gives children, young people and parents a single point of contact, to help make sure their support is coordinated.

Services & roles

L

LA – Local Authority
The local council responsible for education, social care and SEND services.

Services & roles

LAC – Looked After Child
A child who is in the care of the Local Authority.

Social care & safety

LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer
The officer responsible for managing allegations against adults working with children.

Social care & safety

LO – Local Offer
Information provided by the Local Authority about services available to children and young people with SEND and their families.

Services & roles

LSA – Learning Support Assistant
A member of staff who provides additional support to children in educational settings.

Education

M

MASH – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
A team of professionals from different agencies who work together to assess safeguarding concerns.

Social care & safety

MDT – Multi-Disciplinary Team
A group of professionals from different services working together to support a child or young person.

Health & therapy

MHST – Mental Health Support Team
A team that provides early intervention support for emotional wellbeing and mental health difficulties in schools.

Health & therapy

MLD – Moderate Learning Difficulties
A learning difficulty that impacts a child's ability to access learning without additional support.

Needs & conditions

MSI – Multi-Sensory Impairment
A condition involving both hearing and visual impairment.

Needs & conditions

N

NAS – National Autistic Society
A UK charity providing information, advice and support relating to autism.

Services & roles

NEET – Not in Education, Employment or Training
A term used for young people aged 16–24 who are not involved in education, employment or training.

Education

NHS – National Health Service
The publicly funded national healthcare system for England.

Health & therapy

O

OCD – Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
A mental health condition where a person has obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviours.

Needs & conditions

ODD – Oppositional Defiant Disorder
A childhood condition defined by a pattern of hostile, disobedient and defiant behaviour directed at adults or other authority figures.

Needs & conditions

Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
The government body that inspects schools, early years settings and children's social care in England. It also inspects local area SEND services with the CQC.

Services & roles

OT – Occupational Therapist
A professional who supports sensory needs, independence and everyday functioning.

Health & therapy

P

PD – Physical Disability A physical condition that impacts a person's mobility or physical functioning.	Needs & conditions
PDA – Pathological Demand Avoidance A profile that describes people whose main characteristic is to avoid everyday demands and expectations to an extreme extent. It is usually seen as a profile of autism, and many people now prefer the term "Pervasive Drive for Autonomy".	Needs & conditions
PECS – Picture Exchange Communication System A communication system that uses pictures to help individuals communicate.	Communication
PEP – Personal Education Plan A plan used to support the educational needs of a looked-after child.	Education
PEx – Permanent Exclusion When a child is no longer allowed to attend a school. Their name is removed from the school roll, and they cannot return to that school.	Education
PfA – Preparing for Adulthood The process of supporting young people with SEND to prepare for adulthood, including employment, independent living and community inclusion.	Education
PIP – Personal Independence Payment A benefit for people aged 16 to State Pension age with disabilities or long-term health conditions.	Money & benefits
PMLD – Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties A severe learning disability combined with additional physical or sensory needs.	Needs & conditions
PP – Pupil Premium Additional school funding to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in state-funded schools in England.	Money & benefits
PRU – Pupil Referral Unit A specialist educational setting for children who cannot attend mainstream school.	Education
PTSD – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder A mental health condition triggered by a frightening or distressing event — either experiencing it or witnessing it.	Needs & conditions

Q

QFT – Quality First Teaching

High-quality teaching that meets the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND.

Education

R

RAGS – Romford Autistic Group Support

A local Havering charity providing help and support for families of children and young people with autism.

Services & roles

S

SALT – Speech and Language Therapist A professional who supports speech, language and communication needs. You may also see SLT.	Health & therapy
SEMH – Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs A category of SEND relating to emotional wellbeing and mental health.	Needs & conditions
SEN – Special Educational Needs A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision.	Needs & conditions
SENCO – Special Educational Needs Coordinator The person within a school responsible for coordinating SEND provision. Also called the SENDCO.	Education
SEN Support – Special Educational Needs Support Additional support provided by schools to meet a child's needs without an EHCP.	Education
SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities The overall term for children and young people who need extra help with learning because of a learning difficulty or disability.	Needs & conditions
SENDIASS – SEND Information, Advice and Support Service An independent service providing information, advice and support to children, young people and families.	Services & roles
SENDIST – Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal An independent tribunal that hears appeals when families disagree with certain Local Authority decisions relating to SEND. Its official name is the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability).	Services & roles
SLCN – Speech, Language and Communication Needs Difficulties with talking, understanding language or social communication.	Needs & conditions
SLD – Severe Learning Difficulties Significant learning difficulties that affect most areas of learning, communication and independence.	Needs & conditions
SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timed A way of checking that targets or outcomes are clearly defined.	Education
SpLD – Specific Learning Difficulties Specific difficulties affecting learning, such as dyslexia, dyscalculia or dyspraxia.	Needs & conditions
SW – Social Worker A professional who assesses needs and supports families — for example with practical issues, short breaks (respite), adaptations and safeguarding.	Social care & safety

T

TA – Teaching Assistant
A member of school staff who supports teaching and learning.

Education

TAC – Team Around the Child
A meeting bringing together professionals supporting a child.

Social care & safety

TAF – Team Around the Family
A meeting bringing together professionals supporting the whole family.

Social care & safety

TEACCH – Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication-Handicapped Children
A structured approach commonly used to support autistic individuals. This is the original name, which is now seen as outdated; today it is usually just called TEACCH.

Communication

U

UC – Universal Credit
A benefit to help with living costs, including additional support for some families of disabled children.

Money & benefits

V

VI – Visual Impairment
Partial or complete loss of sight.

Needs & conditions

Y

YJS – Youth Justice Service
A team of professionals from children's services, education, police, probation and health who work together to prevent children and young people from offending or re-offending and promote safe communities.

Social care & safety

YP – Young Person
A person over compulsory school age and under 25.

Education

2 Havering services

What they do

These are some of the services you may hear about in Havering. You can find details for most of them on **Havering's Family Services Hub**, which includes the SEND Local Offer.

Information, advice and parent voice

Havering Family Services Hub (Local Offer)

Havering's online directory of services, activities and SEND information for families.

Havering SENDIASS

Free, impartial and confidential information, advice and support about SEND for children, young people and parent carers.

Havering SEND Family Voice

Havering's Parent Carer Forum, giving parent carers a voice and working with local services to improve support.

Social Prescribing

Connects families with community services and support.

Family support

Early Help

A voluntary service that provides support to families before difficulties become more serious.

Family Help Service

Provides support and coordinates services for children and families with additional needs.

Targeted Support

Provides additional support to families experiencing emerging difficulties and aims to prevent problems from escalating.

Children's Centres and Family Hubs

Provide parenting support, activities and signposting.

Short Breaks Service

Provides respite opportunities and activities for disabled children and young people.

Youth Service

Provides activities, mentoring and support for young people.

Social care and safeguarding

MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)

Screens referrals and decides what support or intervention may be required.

Children with Disabilities Team (CWDT)

Provides specialist social care support to disabled children and their families.

Education and wellbeing

Educational Psychology Service

Provides assessments and advice regarding learning, behaviour and emotional wellbeing.

Mental Health Support Team (MHST)

Provides early intervention support for anxiety and emotional wellbeing.

Health

Community Paediatrics

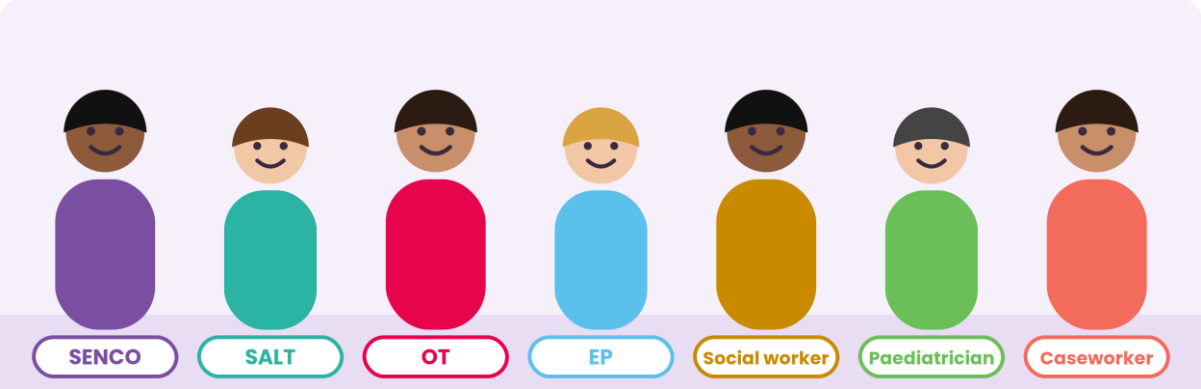
Provides developmental and neurodevelopmental assessments and diagnostic pathways.

School Nursing Service

Provides health advice, emotional wellbeing support and signposting for school-aged children and their families.

3 Professionals explained

Who's who in the SEND world



Job titles can vary between services, and not every family will meet every professional. If you are not sure who someone is or what they do, ask them to explain their role.

Local Authority

Director of Children's Services (DCS)

The most senior officer responsible for children's education, social care and safeguarding services.

Head of SEND

Oversees SEND services within the Local Authority, ensures statutory duties are met and leads the strategic development of SEND provision.

SEND Caseworker

Coordinates EHCP assessments, annual reviews and amendments, and is the main point of contact within the Local Authority for a child's EHCP.

EHCP Coordinator

Manages the Education, Health and Care Plan process.

School and education

SENDCO

Coordinates SEND provision within schools, liaises with families and professionals, and helps make sure the right support is in place.

Educational Psychologist (EP)

Assesses children's learning, development and emotional wellbeing.

Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

Works with schools and families where attendance is causing concern.

School Nurse

Supports children's health and emotional wellbeing.

Health and therapy

Community Paediatrician

Assesses and diagnoses neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism and ADHD.

Occupational Therapist (OT)

Supports sensory needs and daily living skills.

Speech and Language Therapist (SALT)

Supports speech, language and communication needs.

CAMHS Practitioner

Supports children experiencing mental health difficulties.

Social care and family support

Social Worker

Assesses needs and coordinates support for vulnerable children and families.

MASH Practitioner

Screens safeguarding concerns and coordinates appropriate support.

Family Support Practitioner

Provides practical support and signposting to families.

Social Prescriber

Connects families with community services and support.

Advice and parent voice

SENDIASS Adviser

Provides independent SEND information and advice.

Parent Carer Forum Coordinator

Works with families and services to improve SEND provision and make sure parent voices are heard.

4 Useful websites and contacts

Where to find more help

In Havering

Organisation	How they can help	Website and contact
Havering Family Services Hub	Local Offer, services and activities for families.	familyserviceshub.havering.gov.uk
Havering SENDIASS	Free, impartial SEND advice. 01708 433885.	haveringsendiass.co.uk
Havering SEND Family Voice	Havering's Parent Carer Forum.	Havering SEND Family Voice
RAGS	Support for families of autistic children.	rags-havering.org.uk
Home-Start Havering	Volunteers supporting families with young children.	homestarthavering.co.uk
First Step	Support for young children with additional needs and their families.	firststep.org.uk
The Habbit Factory	Creative and pastoral projects for children and young people.	thehabbitfactory.org
DABD	Disability charity offering services for children and adults.	dabd.org.uk
Sycamore Trust UK	Support for autistic people and their families. 020 8517 9317.	sycamoretrust.org.uk

National organisations

Organisation	How they can help	Website and contact
National Autistic Society	Information and support about autism.	autism.org.uk
IPSEA	Free legal advice on SEND law.	ipsea.org.uk
Contact	Advice for families with disabled children.	contact.org.uk
Family Fund	Grants for families of disabled children.	familyfund.org.uk
Cerebra	Help for children with brain conditions.	cerebra.org.uk
KIDS	Support for disabled children and families.	kids.org.uk
Council for Disabled Children	SEND policy and rights.	councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk
NHS	Health information and services.	nhs.uk
Government benefits information	Official benefits information.	gov.uk/browse/benefits

5 My notes

Words I've heard and want to ask about

Write down any new words, acronyms or names you hear, so you can look them up or ask about them later.

Word or acronym	Where I heard it	What it means / who to ask

Thank you for reading

Sycamore Trust UK is a registered charity supporting autistic children, young people, adults and their families across Barking & Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge.

Call us	Visit us	Find us online
020 8517 9317	27–29 Woodward Road, Dagenham RM9 4SJ	sycamoretrust.org.uk

Disclaimer

This booklet gives **general information only** to help parent carers understand common SEND terms, services and roles. It is not legal, medical or professional advice. For advice about your child's needs or your rights, please speak to Havering SENDIASS, IPSEA or a qualified professional.

Information and services may change over time. Service names, job titles and the way services are organised can vary and may be updated by Havering Council or the NHS. Please check individual websites and organisations for the most up-to-date information.

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