

# Gateshead SEND Network News

Gateshead  
**LOCAL  
OFFER**

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## Happy New Year!

Welcome to Gateshead's first SEND Network Newsletter of 2024.

In Gateshead we believe that the voice, opinions and experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families should be at the heart of everything we do. For more information go to [www.gateshead-localoffer.org](http://www.gateshead-localoffer.org), follow the Gateshead SEND Local Offer [Facebook page](#) or visit the [Gateshead Local Offer YouTube channel](#).

A simplified version of this newsletter can be found at <https://gateshead-localoffer.org/gateshead-send-network-newsletter/>

## Gateshead Learning and Skills SEND Provision

Gateshead Learning and Skills have relocated their education provision for young people and adults who have SEND. Formerly based at Low Fell's Dryden Centre, the provision has moved to an exciting newly refurbished site in Birtley. The new site has been designed to support individuals with additional needs in a safe and inclusive learning environment.

Courses are based around Preparing for Adulthood outcomes, with learners also having access to a range of personal development courses. They also have a dedicated employability pathway for young people with SEND including access to a Supported Internship programme for those who are 16-24 with an EHCP.



"I think it's lovely," says learner Jamie. "You've got your friends around you and good teachers. It's a nice building, there's more room." Lauren agrees: "I like it. It's flat and accessible. It gives us more independence."

"The transition to our new site has been great," says Curriculum Lead Chiara Arrighi. "I'm really proud of the learners and the staff - everyone has settled in well. Our provision

provides real opportunities for learners to prepare for the next stage of their life, whether that is work, independent living or further learning. We're all really excited about our future here."

To learn more about courses, discuss support requirements or to arrange a visit click <https://mylearningskills.co.uk/learning-difficulties>, phone 0191 433 8646, or email [contact@mylearningskills.co.uk](mailto:contact@mylearningskills.co.uk)

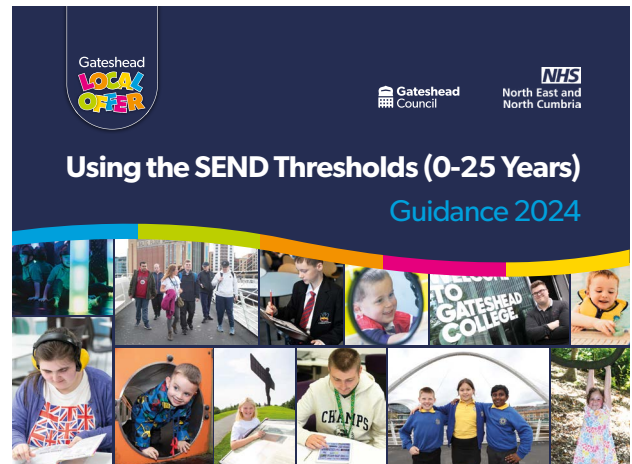
# Gateshead SEND Thresholds

**Gateshead Local Authority's SEND and Inclusion Team launched the new SEND Thresholds document in January 2024.**

The SEND Thresholds are a multi-disciplinary approach across Education, Health, and Social Care to develop a consistent and informative approach to embedding the Graduated Approach across Gateshead. This will ensure that children and young people from 0-25 years get the right support, in the right place, at the right time. The Thresholds will provide a helpful reference point in identifying the level of need and will support children and young people with additional needs with consistency across schools, colleges and other settings.

Launch events were held at Gateshead Civic Centre on January 11th and 12th with over 400 attendees from Education, Health and Social Care services, as well as the families of children and young people with additional needs.

"The SEND Thresholds will provide an invaluable framework for staff in all settings", says Suzanne Dunn, Service Director for Education, Schools and Inclusion. "Forty settings have been part of a Pilot Trial and have contributed to the final document. Gateshead Council have also recognised the importance of the young person and the family voice and hence we have a section in the



Thresholds supporting this. We are delighted to be part of this creative approach and have been supported in all aspects by our professional partners and those within the Parent Carer Forum and SEND Youth forum."

The Thresholds will be gradually introduced into settings throughout 2024, with training and moderation events planned for Spring and Summer of this year. More details and an electronic version of the Thresholds can be found on the Gateshead SEND Local Offer website: <https://gateshead-localoffer.org/send-thresholds/>

## DfE Free School Travel Blog

When choosing which schools to apply for, it is important to consider how your child will get there. Some children are eligible for free travel, but this isn't the case for everyone.

To help support with this, the Department for Education have published a blog post on free school travel. The post aims to support parents' understanding of the eligibility criteria and to answer some commonly occurring questions.

The post is part of the wider DfE Education Hub, which is a site for parents, pupils, education professionals and the media that captures all you need to know about the education system.



Visit <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/11/03/free-school-transport-explained-eligible-free-travel/> to read the information about free school travel. For the DfE Education Hub, visit <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/>

# Gateshead Council SEND Team Update



**We have had some staffing changes within the SEND Team.**

Danny Meek left us in November and we have appointed **Jasmine Jones** as the new SEND Team Manager. We have also appointed **Sam Leaver** who was seconded to us from February 2023 on a permanent basis as our Inclusion Quality Assurance & Monitoring Lead.

The Council have also provided some additional funding to enable us to appoint an additional Quality Assurance and Monitoring Officer (**Helen Dawson**) who will take up post after the

Easter Holidays together with two additional SEND Caseworkers, **Natasha Campbell** and **Jen Derrett-Purvis** who are now permanently with us.

**Sara Baxter** is currently on maternity leave and spending some quality time with her new daughter, Alice.

We now have a vacancy for an Annual Review Officer which is currently being advertised and are hoping to expand the Team further to support our involvement in the Change Programme over the next few months.

**We would love to hear your views about the contact you've had with our SEND Team.** Please click <https://forms.office.com/e/Yd5da2K0g9> to complete a short survey.

## NHS Choices College

NHS England Choices College is a national specialist college providing tailored educational support, work experience and supported internships for young adults aged 16-24 with learning disabilities/difficulties and/or Autism. The organisation – previously known as Health Education England Project Choice - are opening a new provision based at Gateshead's Queen Elizabeth Hospital in September 2024 and are



**CHOICES COLLEGE**  
STEPS TO SUCCESS

looking for young people who may be interested in joining the programme.

During the internship learners spend one academic year attending up to three, 12-week placements to increase their vocational knowledge, skills and experience. This is supported by bespoke classroom sessions where Maths, English and Employability Skills are embedded. Interns use the course as a pre-entry level qualification to move into apprenticeships, work or further education.

**For more information visit**

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/choices-college-supported-internships>

**or contact Stephanie Walker: [Stephanie.walker40@nhs.net](mailto:Stephanie.walker40@nhs.net)**



# Activities, Information and Resources

## Are you a parent or carer of a child or young person who has special educational needs and /or disabilities?

The NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board have created a document to help you find out more about where you can access support or advice to ensure your child's needs are being met  
Gateshead: <https://gateshead-localoffer.org/send-support-for-young-people-in-gateshead/>

## Do you want to have a say in how we support children and young people with additional needs in Gateshead?

If you are 12-25 years old and have an interest in improving the lives of local young people with additional needs, you can get involved with the **Gateshead SEND Youth Forum**.

If you'd like more information about joining the forum, contact [AlexThompson@Gateshead.Gov.UK](mailto:AlexThompson@Gateshead.Gov.UK) or visit <https://gateshead-localoffer.org/gateshead-send-young-peoples-forum/>



Helping our  
community to thrive

**Gateshead's Family Hubs** provide a welcoming space for families and the wider community. Family Hubs support families from conception to the age of two and continue to support families of children up to the age of 19, and to age 25 for young people who have special educational needs and disabilities. There are currently eight Family Hubs located across Gateshead.

For more information visit

<https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/22551/Gateshead-Family-Hubs>

## SEND Local Offer Website Consultation

Gateshead Council have launched an official consultation to hear your views about the SEND Local Offer website. We want to hear from anybody who uses the site - children and young people with SEND, their families, and professionals who work in the sector.

Click here to take part in the consultation:

<https://consultation.gateshead.gov.uk/survey/1193>



## Contact us:

Special Educational Needs and Disability Team, Gateshead Council

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We value your feedback and to help us improve our newsletter we have created a short survey which you can access by clicking <https://forms.office.com/r/HFRHE6EHmd>