



NECANN COMMUNICATION

January 2026

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INTRODUCTION

Hello and welcome to the latest North East CANN Update.

North East Children's Additional Needs Network shares information and helps to increase the reach of your services for children and young people in the region.

Regarding updates and information, if you have material or information that you would like forwarded to the members of the Network, or any updates, please ensure that you email it to Miriam on northeast@cann-network.org, before the end of the month.

Thanks to everyone who shared the information below for our latest update, which contains information and sessions for children and young people with additional needs and their parent carers.

You can find these Communications on the CANN Network site at:
<https://www.cann-network.org/blog/>

NECANN MEETING DATE

Please let us know if you need any support accessing the meetings

Next Meetings TBC

CO CHAIR COMMENTS

✨ Happy New Year from NECANN! ✨

As we step into 2026, we want to thank each of you for your continued support and collaboration throughout the past year. Together, we've built a strong network that truly makes a difference across the Northeast.

Looking Back: December Highlights

🎄 NECANN Christmas Meeting – 4th December 2025 🎄

Our festive face-to-face meeting at Irwin Mitchell's Newcastle office was a wonderful success! Thank you to everyone who joined us to celebrate the season of giving.

A special thank you to Amy from Daisy Chain for sharing the incredible work their charity does across the region. Your insights inspired us all to think about how we can support their mission in 2026.

Light refreshments, networking, and plenty of Christmas cheer made it a memorable event!

Why NECANN is the Gift that Keeps on Giving

-  Networking with like-minded charities and organizations
-  Sharing knowledge and best practices for greater impact
-  Opportunities for collaboration and joint initiatives
-  Championing the incredible work happening across the Northeast

Welcome New Members

We're delighted to welcome Activity Alliance to the NECANN family!

Looking Ahead to 2026

This year, let's continue to grow and strengthen our network. We'd love to hear your ideas and suggestions for making NECANN even more impactful. Together, we can achieve great things!

We are keen to get out on the road for NECANN face to face meetings in 2026 so if you have a place we can use for a few hours - let us know!

We know it is another 11 months away but we would like to do something different for Christmas 2026 – maybe a small Christmas fayre/ event- we need to plan ahead to get this up and running in time.

NEXT MEETING March 2026- date to be confirmed ASAP and ideally in person.

Share your thoughts: chair.northeast@cann-network.org

Best wishes for a successful and inspiring year ahead,

Bev, Tracey & Kerry

NECANN Co-Chairs

NEW MEMBERS



Activity Alliance

Activity Alliance is the leading voice for disabled people in sports and activities. Established in 1998 as a national charity, we were previously known as the English Federation of Disability Sport.

“We all belong in sports and activities. Yet many disabled children and adults don’t feel that they do. At school, in the local park or working out in a nearby gym, we all have the right to welcoming, inclusive, and accessible opportunities. The right

to choose how we want to be active. Be that taking part, spectating, employment or volunteering.” Honorary President, Tanni, Baroness Grey-Thompson

<https://www.activityalliance.org.uk/>

If you know of any groups that may be interested, please get them in touch!

If you are not yet on the CANN website, you can be added by completing this form:

<https://www.cann-network.org/member-registration-form/>

RESEARCH

No new research this month

INFO AND DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - NATIONAL / ONLINE

Breastfeeding a baby with Down syndrome

Wednesday 28th January | 12.00 pm

In this webinar, our Breastfeeding Coordinator Sarah, talks again, about supporting families who wish to breastfeed their baby with Down syndrome.

The session aims to equip you with the facts and the lived experience of the families supported by DSUK and leave you confident in the support you give.

It talks about some of the challenges that are faced in establishing breastfeeding and what successful support looks like.

Note: To sign up, please ensure you tick the box of the upcoming webinar before completing and submitting your details.

[Register for the January Webinar here](#)

Time to get quizzical with the CP Teens UK Virtual Quiz Night!

Please note: the CP Teens UK Virtual Quiz Night is different to the annual CP Teens UK Quiz, which is an in-person event, is open to the public and is a fundraiser. The Virtual Quiz is online and is only open to youngsters 14-25 with Cerebral Palsy/a physical disability.

A fun and social quiz evening to kick off your weekend.

Who Can Join?

- Open to participants **aged 14 to 25 with Cerebral Palsy/physical disabilities**
- Physically based in **England, Wales, or Scotland only** (due to insurance requirements)
- **New to CP Teens UK?** You'll need to complete a one-time **ID check** before joining – this is part of our safeguarding process.

Accessibility & Participation

- A **chat box** is available for anyone who is non-verbal, has speech difficulties, or prefers written communication.
- Don't feel pressured to speak - you're welcome to just listen and participate in the quiz
- We kindly ask that webcams are kept on where possible so everyone feels connected
- We respectfully ask that you do not Google to get the answers to questions

Prizes

- Prize for 1st, 2nd and 3rd
- League - A league will be kept throughout 2026. Prize at the end of the year for the overall winner (must have entered at least 3 of the quizzes)

Book here: <https://www.cpteenstuk.org/events>

Government launches national conversation on SEND Reform

The Schools White Paper will be published early next year and will set out our proposed reforms to the SEND system. Building on extensive engagement over the past year, the Department for Education has launched a national conversation on SEND reform.

DfE wants to hear views, experiences and insights from as many people as possible in the coming months. The national conversation encourages everyone from parents to those working in schools, colleges and early years to get involved and help build a consensus on what works to help deliver lasting reform. Every voice will help shape the system our children and young people deserve.

This will be followed by a period of formal public consultation and further engagement following publication of the Schools White Paper early next year.

How you can get involved

Online events

Join one of five sessions and submit your questions on the key principles guiding SEND reform. You can attend as many as you like. [Sign up here](#).

Share your views online

Contribute ideas and feedback directly online at www.gov.uk/dfe/SEND-conversation

[National conversation on SEND reform Stakeholder toolkit](#)

Child Brain Injury and Early Years Education Conference

Guiding those who support children with birth and brain injuries through the early years' SEN and EHCP process.

Open to parents, families, and professionals. Free to attend.

Date:

Thursday, 29 January 2026

Venue:

Stewarts
5 New Street Square
London, EC4A 3BF

Schedule:

- Lunch: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM
- Presentations & Questions: 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM
- Drinks & Discussions: 5:00 PM onwards

Additional Info:

- CPD points available
- Opportunity to network and gain expert insights

Speakers include:

- Dr Ruth Kent – Consultant in Neurological Rehabilitation
- Dr Angela Simcox – Consultant Neuropsychologist
- Emily Neal – Special Education Advisor
- Jennifer Wright – Solicitor from Roeb Irwin Sweeney
- Launa Randles – Headteacher, The Children's Trust

Registration:

[https://sites-stewartslaw.vulturevx.com/25/1542/landing-pages/rsvp-\(blank\).asp?sid=blankform](https://sites-stewartslaw.vulturevx.com/25/1542/landing-pages/rsvp-(blank).asp?sid=blankform)

STEWARTS

Child Brain Injury and Early Years Education Conference

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Presentations and questions: 1pm – 5pm

Drinks and discussions: 5pm onwards

CPD points available.



Speakers include:

Dr Ruth Kent, Consultant in Neurological Rehabilitation
 Dr Angela Simcox, Consultant Neuropsychologist
 Emily Neal, Special Education Advisor
 Jennifer Wright, Solicitor from Roeb Irwin Sweeney
 Launa Randles, Headteacher, The Children's Trust



[Register Here](https://sites-stewartslaw.vulturevx.com/25/1542/landing-pages/rsvp-(blank).asp?sid=blankform)

H.I.E. Conference - Thursday 14th May 2026

Tickets are on sale for our first H.I.E. Conference, taking place on Thursday 14th May 2026 at The Lowry, Manchester.



The theme is **“Hear, Inform, Empower.”**

Our first announced speakers are Nicholas Hamilton & Paula Abramson.

"Nicolas is a disability ambassador and hugely inspiring speaker. Born with Cerebral Palsy, following an H.I.E. event at birth, Nicolas and his parents were told that he would never walk, or talk, but this did not stop him for achieving his dream of becoming a successful racing driver."

Paula Abramson will be joining us on the 14th May 2026, and we hope you will too. Paula is a psychotherapist and training facilitator, specialising in providing bereavement support to families and training for professionals, following the death of a baby or child.

Conference tickets here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hie-conference-tickets-1434277846649>

Direct Payment Support Group Some Dates for your diary 2025 - 2026

Liz Leach from Imagineer Development UK CIC & Support Brokerage Network and Katie Clarke from Accessible Calderdale are pleased to announce a new series of workshops.

Our workshops are for people who already receive a Direct Payment or Personal Budget, or those people who are interested in this option.

These sessions help people to develop a greater understanding about the assessment process, financial assessment, support planning and recruiting and training of Personal Assistants.

Workshops will help attendees know their rights as a Direct Payments recipient.

Our sessions are a safe place to come together with like-minded people, learn together and share what works, what doesn't work and what we can do to make employing our own team/s easier.

Thanks to Skills for Care we are running the following sessions:

- 12th November online 6pm to 8pm Not Another Assessment
- 3rd December online 6pm to 8pm Support Planning for Individual Employers
- 12th January online 6pm to 8pm Managing your own PA/s
- TBC February online Disability Related Expenses workshop
- 2nd March full day workshop 10am to 3pm What Does Good Support Look Like?

We will be running 3 outreach workshops for family and disabled led organisations so do get in touch if you want us to join one of your sessions.

We run a closed group for anyone receiving Social Care to share ideas, knowledge, and support.

For more information on the Direct Payment Support Group please contact katie@visitsunlimited.org.uk and follow us on social media @AccessibleCalderdale

For bookings contact lorraine.accessiblecalderdale@gmail.com

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - REGIONAL

Grace House Events

Available for registered families with Grace House.

Registration is free for those with a diagnosis or on a Diagnostic Pathway, and can be arranged by contacting myself or Vicki: KM@gracehouse.co.uk / VC@gracehouse.co.uk

- **Gong Baths for Parent / Carers**

Tuesday 13th Jan and Tuesday 10th February 10am to 11.30am

Registered families can book on ourline via Bookwhen. [Upcoming events - Booking by Bookwhen](#)

- **Health and Nutrition Workshop - 6 Week Course**

Starting Thursday 15th January 10am - 2pm for 6 Consecutive weeks

For more info Contact Vicki - VC@gracehouse.co.uk

- **Childrens Massage Therapy starts Tuesday 13.1.2026 10.30am until 1.30pm**

Offering numerous benefits for children aged 5yrs to 16yrs , supporting both physical and mental well-being. It can ease muscle tension, improve sleep, boost mood, and enhance focus, while positively impacting emotional and cognitive development. In essence, massage therapy can help children become happier, healthier, and more resilient.

or more info Contact Keith - KB@gracehouse.co.uk

- **Feel Good Fridays - A social group for adults with disabilities (independent in personal care) , a diagnosis or undergoing a diagnosis, age 18+.**

Ticket cost £5 includes a hot snack and a drink (direct payments are accepted). A tuck shop will also be available priced between 20p and 30p or 5 items for £1. Come and join us for a couple of hours chill out time on a Friday evening. Socialise and make new friends. Facilities available include an XBox and wii, pool, football and table tennis tables and creative activities. We also have a karaoke, silent disco equipment and a safe and secure outdoor space.

Participants must be registered with Grace House

- **We do also have our free in house Counselling Service available to registered families. This is for the child / young person with disability or on pathway to diagnosis, Siblings in the Household and Parent / Carers . We offer 10 sessions per calendar year and the waitlist is currently circa 3-6 months. For more info please contact Keith - KB@gracehouse.co.uk**

Wishing you all the best for Christmas and the New Year 

Kindest regards

Kellie Moore

Tel: 0191 435 2088

Email: km@gracehouse.co.uk

Web: www.gracehouse.co.uk

Useful Vision Events

Useful Vision provides accessible, positive opportunities and activities to visually impaired children and their families throughout the North East region. <https://www.usefulvision.org.uk/about-us/>

Bookings are now OPEN for January to March 2026 activities
<https://heyzine.com/flip-book/112d4b571b.html>

Visit the website linked below to book your place: <https://www.usefulvision.org.uk/events/>

Rainbow Guide

Good Afternoon Everyone,

Thank you to all who joined us on Tuesday for our **Rainbow Guide** Launch event. It was fantastic to see so many professionals and SEND network partners come together in support of families across Northumberland.

We're delighted to share this new resource with you, and we hope it will be a valuable tool in your work with children, young people, and their families. Your ongoing collaboration and commitment to improving SEND support in our county is truly appreciated.

You can now access the online version of the Rainbow Guide using the link below:

 [NPCF Northumberland Rainbow Guide](#)

[NPCF Rainbow Guide Launch Comms](#)

Please feel free to share the guide with colleagues, teams, and families who may find it helpful.

Thank you once again for your continued partnership and support. We look forward to working together as we champion the best possible outcomes for our SEND community.

Kind Regards

Claire North

NPCF Director
Northumberland Parent Carer Forum

Newcastle Adult Autism Support – Professionals Networking Event-Save the date

Hello, I hope this email finds you well.

Following the success of our last networking event, we are pleased to announce that we will be running it again. Please find the details below and save the date. Feel free to share this invitation with any professionals who may benefit from attending.

Newcastle Adult Autism Support – Professionals Networking Event

 Friday 23rd January 2026

 9:30am – 11:00am

 Recovery College Collective, No. 1 Carliol Square, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 6UF

This informal networking event is a great opportunity to:

- Connect with fellow professionals
- Share ideas and best practice
- Learn more about the support offered by the Newcastle Daisy Chain Adult Autism Service
- Explore opportunities for collaboration

Refreshments will be provided, and we look forward to welcoming you for a morning of connection and collaboration.

We hope to see you there!

Warm regards,

The Daisy Chain Team

amy.jordison@daisychainproject.co.uk

--

Amy Jordison (*she/her*)

Senior Adult Autism Support Lead



ZOOM WEBINARS

**SUPPORTING THE EMOTIONAL
WELLBEING OF AUTISTIC
CHILDREN**

24th February

28th April

12.00 - 3.00pm

Please note this course is suitable for parents / carers of children 7 and over who are experiencing low level emotional wellbeing difficulties.

Places are limited and must be pre-booked.

✉ kerrie.highcock@ne-as.org.uk

📞 0191 410 9974

Parents/carers only. You only need to attend one date for each course, they are repeat sessions.

   @NEAutismSociety

Registered Charity No. 1028260

**north east
autism society**

Durham Autism Hubs

For parents / carers of children who are awaiting a referral to the neurodevelopmental team, on the diagnostic pathway, or post diagnosis of autism.

Children must be living in Durham

We have the following dates available:

north east
autism society



Stanley Family Hub
Clifford Road,
DH9 0AB

08/01
05/02
05/03
02/04

Willington Family Hub
Chapel Street,
DL15 0EQ

15/01
12/02
12/03
09/04

Supporting your autistic child workshop

The workshop will cover:

- worries and action planning
- common misconceptions
- differences in autistic children
- practical strategies to use in everyday life

These sessions will run 10-12 and must be pre-booked.

One to one appointments

These appointments are for families that have questions or would like to discuss any issues in confidence.

These appointments are available between 9-3pm and must be pre-booked.



To book please contact Kerrie Highcock on
0191 410 9974 or kerrie.highcock@ne-as.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 1028260 | Company Limited by Guarantee No. 2859620

North Tyneside Autism Hubs

For parents / carers of children who are awaiting a referral to the neurodevelopmental diagnostic team, on the diagnostic pathway, or post diagnosis of autism.

Children must be living in North Tyneside.

north east
autism society



We have the following dates available:

Riverside
Family Hub
NE29 6DQ

06/01
03/02
03/03
07/04

Howdon
Family Hub
NE28 0AL

13/01
10/02
10/03
14/04

Shiremoor
Family Hub
NE27 0TA

20/01
17/02
17/03
21/04

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0191 410 9974 or kerrie.highcock@ne-as.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 1028260 | Company Limited by Guarantee No. 2859620

Newcastle Autism Hubs

For parents / carers of children who are on the diagnostic pathway or post diagnosis of autism.

Children must be living in Newcastle

We have the following dates available:



**Nunsmoor Centre,
Studley Terrace,
NE4 5AH**

07/01
04/02
04/03
01/04

**Galafield Family Hub
Newbiggin Lane,
NE5 1LZ**

14/01
11/02
11/03
08/04

**Byker Sands Family Hub
19 Raby Cross,
NE6 2FF**

21/01
18/02
18/03
15/04

**Charlton Street Hub,
Charlton Street,
NE15 8RN**

21/01
18/02
18/03
15/04

**Fawdon Childrens Centre,
Cairns Way,
NE3 2SN**

28/01
25/02
25/03
22/04

**The Treehouse Early
Years Centre, Brunel
Terrace
NE4 7NL**

28/01
25/02
25/03
22/04

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The workshop will cover:

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NHS



Do you have a child with a vision impairment aged 0-4?

Give them the best possible start in life and sign up for our My Time to Play programme today.

We offer fun and supportive group sessions to help your child develop the practical skills and confidence to explore their world – all through the power of play. You will meet other parents and pick up skills from our expert staff that will help you support your child's early development with confidence.

Our next programme starts at:

Hemlington Lake & Recreation Centre

Cass House Road, Middlesbrough, TS8 9QW

Fortnightly, Mondays 10 am - 12 noon.

Find out more at guidedogs.org.uk/mttp

or contact our local team at

MTTPNewcastle@guidedogs.org.uk or call

0800 781 1444 to sign up.

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity in England and Wales (209617), Scotland (SC038979) and Isle of Man (1334). A136 10/22



Social Media Links and Contact Details:

Website:	www.cann-network.org
Email:	northeast@cann-network.org
X:	https://x.com/CannNorth
BlueSky:	https://bsky.app/necann.bsky.social
LinkedIn:	https://www.linkedin.com/company/north-east-cann/
Facebook:	https://www.facebook.com/northeastcann

Please share NE CANN links with your followers and encourage them to follow too.

Chairs: chair.northeast@cann-network.org