

Term 1 Countywide SENCO Forum

Tuesday 22nd September
2026

Strategic

Inclusion Strategy

Siobhán Price
Assistant Director

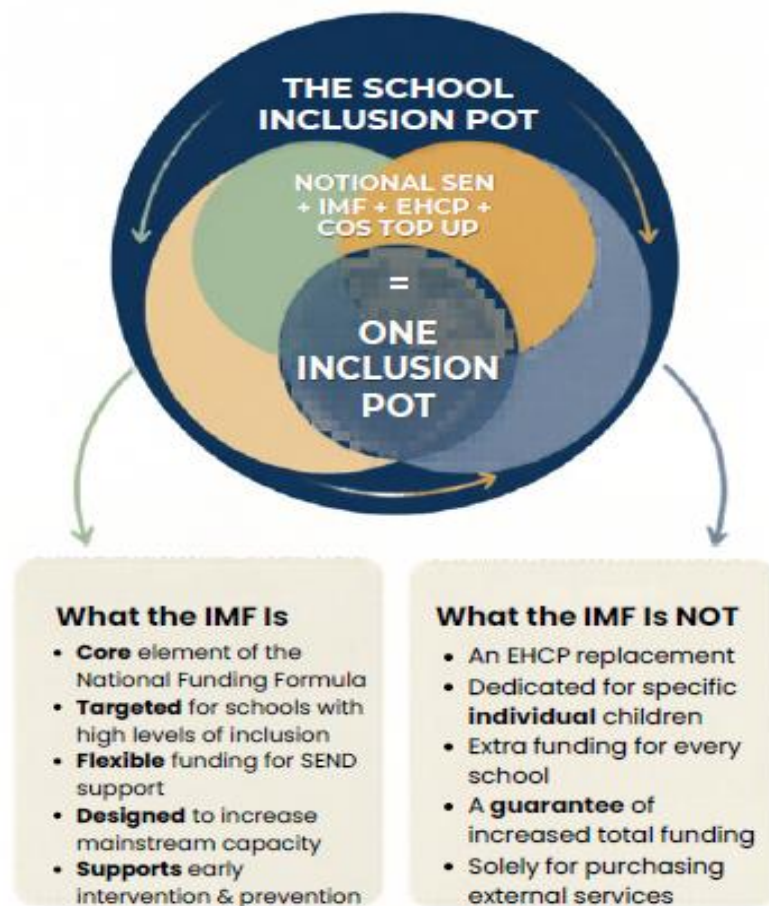
DfE Guidance - Inclusive mainstream fund for schools: methodology 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK

- *'It will support schools to move towards practices that are inclusive by design, providing early support directly to children without the need for diagnosis or statutory process.*
- *Schools will be required to publish an inclusion strategy. An inclusion strategy is a report of their activity and approaches to identify and meet commonly occurring and predictable needs within their cohort and embed inclusive practice. This activity will be funded by the school's core funding allocations, including their notional special educational needs (SEN) budget calculated and communicated by their local authority, as well as the inclusive mainstream fund. The inclusive mainstream fund should not be considered the only source of funding to deliver this activity'.*

CoS Operational Guidance (2)

INCLUSIVE MAINSTREAM FUND (IMF)

What Schools Need to Know for 2026–27



Financial Context (Pg 21)

NEW REQUIREMENT



PUBLISH AN INCLUSION STRATEGY BY 31 DECEMBER 2026

- Identify predictable SEND needs
- Evidence ordinarily available provision
- Show how funding is used for inclusion
- Be relevant to the 7 DfE themes
- Use evidence-based approaches
- Be updated annually
- Include Governor oversight

SEVEN DfE THEMES FOR INVESTMENT



Leadership & Governance

SENDCo & Staff development

Curriculum & teaching

Social, emotional & mental health

Environment & resources

Speech, language & communication

Partnerships & collaboration

Support for schools

- [Series 2 – Academic year 26/27 - KELSI](#) – recorded webinar
- Inclusion Strategy – 8.15 Thursday 8th October.
- Recommend you watch with your Headteacher and/or Business Manager.
- Recommend you watch with your community.
- DfE Template – must be completed and published on your school website by 31st December 2026.
- Will also have ‘drop in’ session in November/December when schools are closer to publication.
- Schools in Ofsted window, -make sure you also have SEN Information report up to date.

Kent Inclusion Conference

- [Please register through the TEP website](#), 1 place available per school
 - 14th October 9am-3.30pm
 - Kent Event Centre, Detling Showground
- Clerks to support sharing this information in CoS correspondence with schools
- TITLE: Leading Inclusion Strategically
- Keynote Speaker – Claire Gadsby.
- Working with partners – Inclusion Champions
- Strategic Leadership of Inclusion – Dr Alison Ekins

Leading Inclusion Strategically

Inclusion Workshops & Webinars

Louise Skinner & Clara Green

Leading Inclusion Strategically

Reflecting on last year

Last year's webinars focused on areas including:

- Strategic leadership for SENCOs
- The continuum of need
- Using NASEN strategic guidance
- SEN notional budgets
- Local Offer and Community of Schools processes
- Effective leadership conversations
- Requests for support and funding

These sessions provided practical, real-world insight from experienced leaders and SENCOs for SENCOs and we have used the feedback to support this year's series.

Leading Inclusion Strategically

What's new this year

The Webinar Series Continues

Following the positive engagement from last year, the programme is expanding.

This year you can expect:

- ✓ More webinars across the academic year
- ✓ Additional statutory SEND information
- ✓ Sessions delivered by:
 - Working SENCOs
 - Inclusion Champions
 - KCC representatives
- ✓ Practical guidance alongside strategic leadership development
- ✓ Continued opportunities to learn from colleagues across Kent

Sign up will be the same process through KELSI with access to both live and recorded webinars

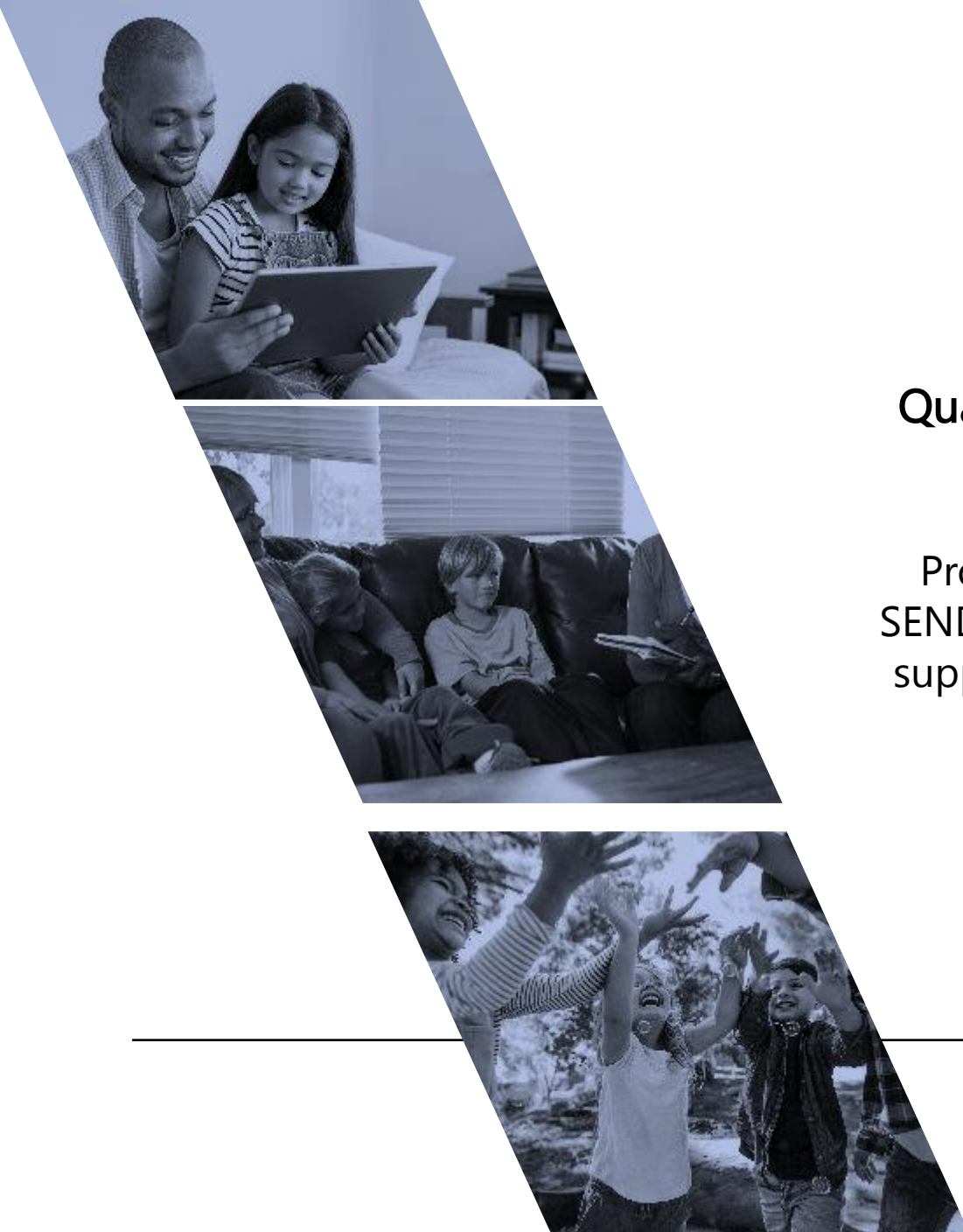
Leading Inclusion Strategically

Schedule 2026-2027

Date/ Time	Title & Registration Link	Content
Wednesday 30 th September 2026	What every SENCo needs to know this year	Key national, Kent and inclusion developments; top priorities for the year
Thursday 8 th October 2026	Writing your inclusion strategy	Inclusion Strategy requirements; Aligning inclusion with school improvement priorities; Measuring impact
Wednesday 4 th November 2026	EHCPs: Getting the basics right	EHC Needs Assessments; Appendix 2; Practical tips
Tuesday 24 th November 2026	Inclusion Funding	Notional budget, IMF, EHCP funding and CoS budgets explained simply
Wednesday 9 th December 2026	Who can help? Integrating Experts	PRG -Educational Psychology /STLS /Occupational Therapy /SALT – Balanced system / Understanding referral pathways

Continued: Schedule 2026-2027

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Wednesday 3 rd February 2027	Stronger partnerships with families and wider services	Early identification; Working with families; Practical school-based approaches
February 2027	Schools Provision Planning to replace EBSA /Section 19	Content to be confirmed
Thursday 4 th March 2027	Consultation Process – what is it? What needs to be considered?	What does consultation mean? Appropriate responses; Schools' statutory duty; Supporting increasing levels of need; Sensory and neurodivergent learners; Reasonable adjustments and inclusive practice
Thursday 29 th April 2027	Inclusion That Works: School Case Studies	Examples of effective practice; Creative use of funding and provision; Lessons learned from schools
Thursday 6 th May 2027	Annual Reviews: Improving Quality and Impact	Effective annual reviews; Amendments and transitions; Keeping outcomes central
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QAPD at SENCO Forum

Quality Assurance and Practice Development Team at Kent County Council, SEND

Providing system-wide assurance that EHCPs and the SEND Service are improving in quality, are compliant, and support better outcomes for children and young people with SEND through Practice Development

Clara Green – QAPD Officer and Kent SENCO Link

Clara.green@kent.gov.uk

Audit Feedback



Multi Agency Audit – September 2026 – Focus: **Preparation for Adulthood**

Scoping: Dip sample of x 10 cases/ mix sex, age and primary need/ KS3 and above (2026 Annual Review

- Strengthen the quality and currency of information within EHCPs and Annual Review documentation to ensure a clear and consistent understanding of children and young people's needs, provision and outcomes.
- Enhance the visibility of the child or young person's voice by embedding a stronger "golden thread" throughout assessment, planning, review and outcome-setting processes.
- Further develop Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) practice across services and partner agencies, ensuring PfA aspirations, outcomes and planning are identified early, reviewed regularly and clearly reflected in documentation.
- Build on existing quality assurance processes through robust management oversight and constructive challenge, while supporting educational settings to proactively plan for and record meaningful PfA outcomes that prepare children and young people for successful adult lives.

Introducing VITA

AI-assisted EHC Plan drafting, with people firmly in control

From September 2026, KCC SEND CYPE is piloting VITA to support the drafting of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans during the Needs Assessment process.

Human oversight remains throughout

All decisions to assess a child / young person and to issue an EHC plan, along with case ownership and oversight, remain with the Assessment Officer.

How it works



VITA supports the Draft EHC plan preparation

Assessment Officer carries out all decision making, reviews and approves the Draft EHCP and continues as usual with case management

Why we are piloting VITA

Improve timeliness

Support Assessment Officers to manage demand and progress draft plans more efficiently.

Strengthen consistency

Promote a clearer and more consistent approach to EHC plan drafting across Kent.

Create more time

Enable more collaboration with children, young people, families, schools and professionals.

Purpose: timely, consistent EHC plans, delivering the best possible service for children, young people and families across Kent.

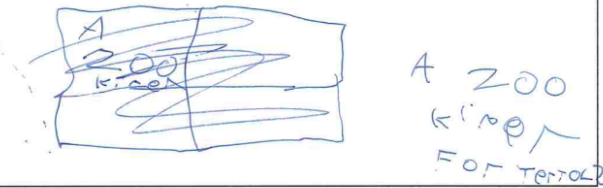
New School Year reminders ☺



- ☐ New health guidance and updates - <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/special-educational-needs/education,-health-and-care/Education-Health-and-Care-EHC-Needs-Assessments-requests>
- ☐ Key Contacts for Kent SENCOs - https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/220892/Key-contacts-for-SENCOs-002.pdf
- ☐ Golden Thread
- ☐ Preparation for Adulthood
- ☐ Outcomes
- ☐ Where to find all Appendices - <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/special-educational-needs/education,-health-and-care/Education-Health-and-Care-EHC-Needs-Assessments-requests>
- ☐ App 1 – new for every Annual Review

Implementation- Good Case Examples Pathway 2

Good case examples through the audit conducted between May- June 2026:

My Future My aspirations (goals) for the future: 		
This year, I want to get better at:		Please use this box to draw / type / write any of your ideas: 
When I grow up, I would like to be:		Please use this box to draw / type / write any of your ideas: 



Pathway 2
Primary

For this Pathway, children are beginning to share their views by providing handwritten responses.

Who can help me at school? 
Please use this box to draw / type / write any of your ideas: 

Growing into the SENCo role – F2F training

For colleagues who are:

- New to the SENCO role
- Early in their SENCO journey
- Looking for a refresher

A practical and supportive face-to-face training day that provides opportunities to:

- Build confidence in SEND leadership
- Strengthen understanding of SEND systems and processes
- Explore effective partnership working with families
- Gain practical tools and strategies
- Network with colleagues across Kent
- Connect with PRG and wider SEND services

Friday 2nd October, 9:30am to 3:30pm

📍 St Augustine Academy, Maidstone

Friday 9th October, 9:30am to 3:30pm

📍 PLCC, Canterbury Academy

Growing into the SENCO role - Registration



GROWING into the SENCO ROLE

DESIGNED BY SENCOs. DELIVERED FOR SENCOs.

New to the SENCO role? Early in your SENCO journey?
Looking for a refresher?

Join us for a practical and supportive face-to-face training day, designed and organised by experienced SENCOs, for SENCOs.

The day will bring together SENCO colleagues from across Kent, alongside representatives from the PRG and other SEND services, providing valuable opportunities to network, share experiences and build professional connections. Through a mix of strategic and practical sessions, delegates will develop confidence in SEND leadership, strengthen their understanding of SEND systems and processes, explore effective ways of working with families, and gain practical tools to support their day-to-day role.

Supporting SENCOs to grow, lead and make a difference

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Build confidence in SEND leadership
- Strengthen your understanding of SEND systems and processes
- Explore effective ways of working with families
- Gain practical tools and strategies to support your day-to-day role
- Network with SENCO colleagues from across Kent
- Connect with representatives from the PRG and other SEND services
- Share experiences and build valuable professional relationships

By the end of the day, delegates will leave with:

- Useful resources
- Renewed confidence
- A personalised action plan to take back to their setting

TRAINING DATES

Friday 2nd October
9:30am – 3:30pm
St Augustine Academy, Maidstone

Friday 9th October
9:30am – 3:30pm
PLCC, Canterbury Academy

BOOKING ESSENTIAL

Secure your place today and take the next step in your SEND leadership journey.

Kent County Council
LEARN CONNECT GROW LEAD

Experts At Hand

Siobhán Price
Assistant Director

Experts At Hand.. Continued

- Grant allocated to ALL councils – [Experts at Hand & Local Authority SEND Transformation Fund: funding for local authorities 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#)
- *‘This new offer is designed to strengthen the capability of mainstream education settings to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND more effectively and inclusively, by providing a new route to access expert advice and support from education and health professionals’.*
- For Kent, this is an extension of PRG
- PRG = link practitioners. SALT, EP, SENIA, KPAS, STLS.
- KCC, Health, parents and school leaders – preparing where the investment is needed.
- **HOW** schools are using their partners (PRG/CoS/others) should be included in Inclusion Strategy.

Dates for the Diary

Fully Funded NPQ for SENCOs

Applications open on 23rd June for Autumn 2026 start



Importantly, NOT just for SENCOs! – also suitable for senior leaders with an interest in whole-school strategy for SEND



Delivered by The Education People



Ofsted Outstanding programme



Fully funded by DfE



18-month programme (blended learning - online and face-to-face)



Kent-based groups – chance to network/build connections/share



Facilitated by Kent school leaders and SEND experts



The Balanced System:

Demo session for Free Balanced System online tools

- Any schools in Kent who have yet to access the free tools can attend a demo session in September.
- **Wednesday 30th September: 1.30 – 2.30pm** [Wednesday 30th September training link](#)
Meeting ID: 334 849 511 577 04 Passcode: vh3nd3C8

Leading Inclusion Strategically

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DfE Early Years Funded Training – Year R Teachers

EYFS Formative Assessment

5 October 2026, 09:00-12:00 at St Edmund's CE Primary School, Sevenoaks

EYFS Formative Assessment

5 October 2026, 13:00-16:00 at St Edmund's CE Primary School, Sevenoaks

EYFS Formative Assessment

6 October 2026, 09:00-12:00 at The John Wesley Church of England and Methodist Primary School, Ashford

EYFS Formative Assessment

6 October 2026, 13:00-16:00 at The John Wesley Church of England and Methodist Primary School, Ashford

EYFS Formative Assessment

13 October 2026, 09:00-12:00 at The Education People, Aylesford

EYFS Formative Assessment

13 October 2026, 13:00-16:00 at The Education People, Aylesford

On behalf of



DfE Neurodiversity Training Package



FUNDED BY THE
Free to every school and college



FREE · LAUNCHING 23 SEPTEMBER 2026

Neurodiversity Training Package

Train the Trainer Series for primary, secondary and FE

A free, ready-to-deliver package that equips your leaders, SENCOs and teachers to deliver high-quality, neuro-affirming training in your own setting, with no external trainer required.

WHAT YOU GET

- ✓ Ready-made leadership and teacher slides, with activities, case studies and presenter guidance
- ✓ Bitesize modules on executive function, intersectionality, adaptive teaching and independence
- ✓ Clear guidance on delivering each session and quality-assuring inclusive, neuro-affirming practice

BUILT FOR EVERY PHASE

Primary

Leadership + teacher

Secondary

Leadership + teacher

FE

Leadership + teacher

JOIN A FREE WEBINAR

All settings · 3.45pm to 4.45pm

- Tuesday 22 September 2026 Autumn 1
- Wednesday 16 December 2026 Autumn 2
- Wednesday 10 February 2027 Spring

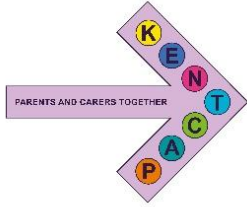


**Book a webinar and
pre-register your interest**

Scan the code, or visit:

wholeschoolsend.org.uk/page/neurodiversity-awareness

Kent PACT Coffee & Chat - For parents and carers



Take a break, grab a cuppa, and join us for our Online Coffee and Chat session for our Families.

These relaxed meetings are a chance for parents and carers to connect with others who understand, share experiences, exchange ideas, and find support in a friendly, safe, and welcoming space. Whether you're looking for a chat, advice, or simply some time to connect, we'd love to welcome you.

[Wednesday 16th September, Canterbury, 12pm - 1pm](#)

[Thursday 17th September, Dartford, 11am – 12pm](#)

[Monday 5th October, Dover, 9:30am -10:30am](#)

[Wednesday 7th October, Folkestone & Hythe 12pm -1pm](#)

[Thursday 8th October, Gravesham 11am -12pm](#)

[Monday 9th November, Maidstone, 9:30am -10:30 am](#)

[Wednesday 11th November, Sevenoaks, 12pm -1pm](#)

[Thursday 12th November, Swale, 11am -12pm](#)

[Monday 23rd November, Thanet 9:30am -10:30am](#)

[Wednesday 25th November, Tonbridge & Malling, 12pm -1pm](#)

[Thursday 26th November, Tunbridge Wells, 11am -12pm](#)

[Monday 11th Jan, Ashford, 9:30am -10:30am](#)

[Wednesday 13th Jan, Canterbury, 12pm – 1pm](#)

[Thursday 14th Jan, Dartford 11am -12pm](#)

[Monday 1st Feb, Dover, 9:30am -10:30am](#)

[Wednesday 3rd Feb, Folkestone & Hythe, 12pm -1pm](#)

[Thursday 4th Feb, Gravesham, 11am -12pm](#)

[Monday 1st March, Maidstone 9:30am -10:30am](#)

[Wednesday 3rd March, Sevenoaks, 12pm-1pm](#)

[Thursday 4th March, Swale, 11am -12pm](#)

[Monday 22nd March, Thanet 9:30am-10:30am](#)

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[Thursday 25th March, Tunbridge Wells, 11am -12pm](#)

On behalf of



Mainstream Core Standards Training 2026/27

Title	Date	Time
Introduction to The Mainstream Core Standards – Embedding Inclusion in your Classroom	Tuesday 29 th September 2026 or Tuesday 12 th January 2027	16:00 – 18:00
SEMH Supporting pupils through the Mainstream Core Standards	Thursday 8 th October 2026 or Thursday 25 th February 2027	16:00 – 18:00
Embedding Inclusion through the Mainstream Core Standards for Middle Leaders	Thursday 12 th November 2026 or Thursday 4 th February 2027	16:00 – 18:00
A Whole School Approach to Inclusion – Embedding the Mainstream Core Standards for Senior Leaders	Thursday 5 th November 2026 or Thursday 11 th March 2027	16:00 – 18:00

KCC Inclusion Conference
The SENCo as Strategic Leader
Wednesday 14th October
Kent Event Centre: 09:00 – 15:30

[Kent County Council Inclusion Conference October 14th 2026](#)

Countywide SENCO Forum 2026/27

Term 2

Date	Registration Link	Time
Tuesday 1 st December 2026	Countywide SENCO Forum - Primary	08:00 – 09:30
Tuesday 1 st December 2026	Countywide SENCO Forum - Secondary	15:30 – 17:00
Thursday 3 rd December 2026	Countywide SENCO Forum - Secondary	08:00 – 09:30
Thursday 3 rd December 2026	Countywide SENCO Forum - Primary	13:30 – 15:00

Thank you

If you have any questions, please email:
SENDandInclusion@theeducationpeople.org

with the subject title:
Countywide SENCO Forum Query

