

SEND Live 2026 inspires schools with inclusion, innovation and shared learning

SEND Live 2026 was Oxfordshire's fourth annual conference celebrating and supporting children and young people with SEND, and the professionals who work alongside them.

Held on Wednesday 29 April 2026, the event brought together educators, health and social care professionals, charities and community organisations from across Oxfordshire for a day of learning, collaboration and shared ambition.

Delegates took part in practical workshops, visited information stands and explored topics including AI, online influence, emotionally based school avoidance, and strategies to support stress and anxiety, alongside valuable opportunities for networking and signposting.

Shaped by delegate feedback each year, SEND Live continues to evolve to meet the needs of schools and services, with the 2026 event placing a strong emphasis on inclusion, practical support and partnership across the county.

Across the day, delegates attended workshops on some of the most pressing issues in SEND education, including supporting neurodivergent learners, emotional safety, Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA), Dyslexia, Social Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH), inclusion in mainstream settings and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in SEND. Sessions gave schools practical ideas and up-to-date thinking to take back to their own settings.

Young people played a key role in SEND Live 2026

SEND Live 2026 also featured a structured work experience model for 10 young people aged 16 to 19 from Kingfisher and Mabel Prichard Schools. Designed to build confidence, independence and real-life workplace experience, the programme included preparation sessions, travel training and venue familiarisation before participants took on roles in catering, event preparation, event management, speaker support and feedback collection. One young person also shadowed the event videographer and will continue working with him on the SEND Live 2026 highlights video. Their contribution played an important part in the successful running of the event, with their professionalism and commitment praised by delegates and venue staff. References were also provided for each young person who took part, and all participants received Oxfordshire Achievement Awards and AQA certification.

Sponsors supported inclusive learning

The event was supported by sponsors TTS and Crick Software. TTS provides a wide range of educational resources, including products that support inclusive learning and SEND provision. Crick Software is known for literacy tools such as Clicker and DocsPlus, which help children and young people develop reading, writing and

classroom independence. Their support reflected the conference's focus on inclusion, accessibility and practical help for schools.

Strong feedback from delegates

SEND Live 2026 received an overwhelmingly positive response from delegates, with feedback reflecting the event's strong impact across the sector. Attendees praised the quality of the workshops, keynote address and networking opportunities, while many highlighted the practical ideas, current themes and collaborative discussions that made the day especially valuable for schools and professionals working in SEND.

Feedback also highlighted the lasting value of the event, with delegates reporting that the learning from SEND Live 2026 would influence practice both in the classroom and across whole-school approaches. Sessions on AI, inclusion, EBSA, emotional safety and literacy were particularly well received, while the involvement of young people with SEND was widely recognised as one of the most powerful and inspiring aspects of the day.

The evaluation data reinforced this positive picture: almost all respondents said the event met their expectations, workshops achieved an average rating of 4.5 out of 5, and more than half of delegates described the content as extremely useful. Around two-thirds said they were very likely to apply their learning in daily practice, while nearly four in five said they were very likely to share ideas with colleagues in school.

What delegates said

Delegates shared positive feedback about the day, highlighting the quality of the workshops, keynote and opportunities to connect with others across the sector. Comments included:

- *One delegate said the event was “very well organised and informative”.*
- *One attendee praised the “opportunity to network with others working in SEND”.*
- *Another said it was “great to see their enjoyment, the inclusive atmosphere and the impact” of young people being involved.*
- *One delegate said Omar was “an amazing speaker” and “so inspiring to listen to”.*

As planning begins for SEND Live 2027, we are inviting ideas from schools, professionals, partners and young people to help shape next year's event. SEND Live 2026 once again highlighted the value of bringing the sector together to share learning, celebrate inclusion and keep improving support for children and young people with SEND across Oxfordshire. For more information about SEND Live 2026 or to share ideas for next year's event, contact Lydia Martin at lydia.martin@oxfordshire.gov.uk.