

Impact Report

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025





Welcome from Phillipa Sherlock-Lewis

CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

I am proud to present the 2024-25 nasen annual report.

For nasen, the National Association for Special Educational Needs, it has been another 12 months of hard work, achievement and delivery of its objective in being the leading voice representing those working in the SEND community in the UK and beyond. I am delighted that nasen has excelled in promoting the needs of so many different SEND communities through its education programmes, events, online training, policy comments and engagement with government. nasen's voice for SEND has been heard and will continue to be loud and proud.

A huge thank you for the time and efforts of our past Chair, Elaine Simpson, with whom I liaised about the highlights and points to share with you during the transitional period, prior to taking up the position of Chair in June 2025. I am proud to submit this Annual Report of Elaine's final year after two terms of office, commencing in 2019.

This year has not been the easiest, some hard decisions have had to be made, but more than ever the trustees have come together and backed the planning of CEO Annamarie Hassall and her team that will ensure a strong future for nasen and the SEND community.

Change is a constant and nasen is evolving. As you read the Annual Report you will see real change in the way that nasen seeks to raise funds for our important work. I am delighted in the progress we have made in positioning nasen as a charity that supports the SEND community. Since the inception of nasen, over 33 years ago, we have been a charity, but perhaps too humble to consider our organisation to be worthy of public giving, of donations.

We, as trustees of nasen, are delighted to offer our time and commitment to the betterment of nasen. We use our skillset to be rigorous in our audit and challenge to the nasen executive team to ensure that nasen is the leading voice representing the SEND community and we will continue to do so.

I wish to thank all my fellow trustees for the time and commitment to nasen and accepting this rewarding challenge to betterment. I see the returns for our efforts coming from the nasen team with continued growth and some excellent initiatives achieved throughout the year.



As a trustee, especially as the Chair of Trustees, your hope and wish is that you are supporting growth and that nasen is achieving its objectives. I am delighted to say, on behalf of our full Board of Trustees, that we are achieving our remit and will continue to push forward to do so.

The coming year I am sure will see more growth and development from the keystones we have in place this year and I look forward to delivering even more positive news next year. Once again, my sincere thanks to everyone who plays a part in nasen's success, it is more than a job, it is a commitment to a community that needs our voice.

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Phillipa Sherlock-Lewis".

Phillipa Sherlock-Lewis
Chair of Trustees

Thank you from Elaine Simpson

OUT-GOING CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

It's been both a huge pleasure and a privilege to chair the Board of Trustees for the last six years.

I'm very proud of how the organisation has grown and developed during that period, including the huge increase in nasen's membership, and thrilled to see the contribution nasen makes to the sector. I'm hugely grateful to all the talented exec team, the staff, and of course the other wonderful and hard-working Trustees I have had the honour of working with during this period. I know that under Phillipa's expert leadership the organisation will continue to flourish and contribute still further to the improvement of the sector and hence to the outcomes for all children and young people with additional needs.



Elaine Simpson
Out-going Chair of Trustees



Foreword by Annamarie Hassall MBE

CEO OF NASEN AND CHAIR OF WHOLE SCHOOL SEND

I am delighted to contribute the CEO perspective to the Trustees Annual Report for the 2024-25 year.

What a year this has been for our sector, a year of new leadership for government, opening a dialogue about opportunities, ambition and a whole education system. As nasen closes our financial and delivery year, we are eagerly anticipating the vision for the future, one where SEND is at the heart of a more inclusive education system, that big picture is yet to be unveiled. I am sure that all parts of our education system will be valued, whether inclusive mainstream or specialist, the anticipated reforms will require a connected sector, not one that is divided by typology or phase.

Many readers of this report will be from the nasen community of learning members, a growing number of more than 170,000 who actively engage through the year, through short surveys on key themes, online participation in member discussions and accessing our website and the wide range of resources for professional development.

I am proud to say that our reach into schools and colleges has grown, year by year. Even more proud being that our CPD resources have been recognised through being shortlisted for several awards, receiving positive accolades from the education sector and beyond.

The nasen journals, BJSE, JORSEN and SfL have been expertly led by their editorial teams, bringing research to practice, and increasingly so through our ambition for open access.

Our events – whether nasen Live or the nasen Awards – bring an important opportunity to collaborate, celebrate and communicate in real time.

Income generation has been our biggest challenge in 2024/25 with funders tightening their budgets at best and more challenging has been the absence of funding for some of the most marginalised communities. We see that through the lens of SEND, through unmet needs. We see where SEND is the priority area of focus too, with an absence of the intersectionality that is also required. It is vital that nasen can raise income in more imaginative ways to enable us to address the gaps. We cannot do that alone.

The generosity of our sponsors, partnerships and supporters does make a difference to the success of events, to the capacity to get to important external events, and those necessary core costs of maintaining our charity. Business development applies to our sector, just as much as in the corporate world.



Our Board of Trustees bring talents and time to the boardroom table. I have been honoured to work with their respectful challenge, their insights and vision for our future at nasen as we developed the long-term priorities for our upcoming 5-year strategy.

The team at nasen are truly remarkable. I am delighted to see internal pathways into our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and opportunities for staff at many levels to be an external ambassador for nasen. As our Executive Leadership Team (ELT) welcomed Samantha Blackwell as Interim Director of Finance and Operations mid-way through this year, while postholder Carol Mahon has been on maternity leave.

I hope you will join us later in 2025 at our Annual General Meeting, to hear more about the difference that nasen is making, how we measure impact.

Annamarie Hassall

Annamarie Hassall MBE

CEO of nasen and Chair of Whole School SEND



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Our Vision, Mission and Values

Our Vision

That the educational experience for learners with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) **will be consistently as good as it is for learners without SEND.**



Our Mission

To support and develop the education workforce. To achieve this, we will ensure that the education workforce is fully equipped to meet the needs of all learners, including learners with SEND by:

- Providing information, training and resources to develop the education workforce.
- Delivering continuing professional development (CPD) programmes, initiatives and services that support the education workforce.
- Be the champion, friend and protector of children and young people with SEND and all those who support them.
- Act as a conduit between SEND sector influencers and the education workforce.

Our Vision, Mission and Values

Our Values



WE PULL TOGETHER

We collaborate with partners, external stakeholders and colleagues. As teams and individuals, we are accountable for our work, understand each team's role, and when to lean in.



WE DO THE RIGHT THING

Despite pressures of time and money, we do the right thing, informed by our stakeholders and driven by our values.



WE ARE INCLUSIVE

Inclusion is our purpose. We overtly discuss processes and behaviours which could be exclusionary and adapt them to become more inclusive.



WE HAVE A LEARNING MINDSET

Our knowledge and understanding enables us to advocate, influence and make change happen. We champion continuing professional development at all levels of the organisation. We have the freedom and courage to test new approaches, and to learn from mistakes when they happen.



WE ARE PASSIONATE AND PROACTIVE

Because our work is important, we take the initiative when we are clear about the need.



WE ARE TRUSTED

We are trusted because we listen and respond to the needs of our stakeholders. Working in partnership, we create a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts. Internally, trust manifests itself in distributed leadership and empowerment.



WE ARE PEOPLE-CENTRED

People are at the centre of our work and we take time to build meaningful relationships with all of our stakeholders, whatever role they play.

From our core in the education workforce, to a wider network of parents, families, carers, specialist service providers, civil servants and policy makers. We all strive to put ourselves in the shoes of the children and young people we serve as we take every step on the journey to inclusion.

nasen in Numbers

Our reach



11%
growth

Our digital community:

- 11% year on year growth
- 62,968 combined social media following across nasen and Whole School SEND



571,000
increase

Websites:

- 170,210 website visitors
- 769,497 Whole School SEND page views



2,115
attendees

Webinars:

- 2,115 attendees across 68 events



733,960
views

Journals:

- 733,960 journal article views

Our impact



15,362
participants

Department for Education (DfE)-funded CPD:

- 15,362 participants
- 8,291 accessed SEND CPD on Demand



12,600
attendees

Universal SEND Services:

- Now in 100% of local authorities
- 12,600 attendees at 290 live events



992
practitioners

Early Years:

- 992 practitioners completed the 'Meeting the Needs of Every Child' training



100%
confidence

SEND reviews:

- 100% of participants have confidence that the SEND Review will lead to improvements

nasen in Numbers



nasen Awards

22% increase

365 entries in 16 categories



nasen LIVE

500+ delegates (a sell-out!)

85% intend to put learnings into practice

Our members

29%
increase



year on year growth:

2022 → 57,850

2023 → 88,801

2024 → 125,594

2025 → 161,559





Our impact

Our Impact

This has been an extraordinary year for impact, as we have expanded our reach and grown our partnerships around the country. Our high engagement and satisfaction levels across nasen offerings means we are supporting more providers and settings—from the early years through to further education (FE)—to develop and strengthen high quality, inclusive practice. Highlights include:

100%

of local authorities

Universal SEND Services:

The programme has now reached **100% of local authorities** in England, with a satisfaction rate of **98%**.

100%

practitioners

Educational consultancy:

100% confidence that SEND Reviews will lead to improvements in the setting.

500

delegates

nasen Live:

Our biggest Live to date, a sellout of over **500 delegates**, with **85%** reporting they will put learnings into practice.

992

practitioners

Early Years SEND Partnership:

In year 2 of this DfE-funded project **992 practitioners** completed the 'Meeting the Needs of Every Child' training and **301** took part in the EY SEND Reviewer training.

National

regional and corporate

Impactful partnerships and collaboration:

Our diverse partnerships – **national**, **regional and corporate** – have helped drive greater impact this year.

Our Impact

Universal SEND Services Programme: Year 3 (2024-25)

Funded by the DfE, and delivered by Whole School SEND, in partnership with the Education and Training Foundation and Autism Education Trust, the programme continued to support inclusive practice and professional development across schools and FE settings.

Our impact: Universal SEND Services has now reached professionals in **every local authority** in England. Among many successes in the year were **12,600** attendees at **290** live events and over **26,000 school leaders, teachers, SENCOs and teaching assistants** accessed one or more of the online SEND CPD units. **99%** of respondents reported increased confidence in identifying and meeting needs. Of **48** schools receiving peer mentoring following Ofsted 'Requires Improvement' ratings, **81%** improved to 'Good'. Across all Universal SEND Services CPD activities, **90%** of participants reported positive impact on children and young people with SEND.

To highlight for the 2024-25 year, we worked with the University of Derby to engage schools and FE colleges in small-scale practitioner research enquiries through Action Research and Lesson Study methodologies.

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"Research carried out has almost brought light bulb moments in terms of simple strategies but ones we may not have considered before in the day-to-day rush of school life."

Teacher (Mainstream)

This provided structured yet flexible approaches for practitioners to investigate aspects of inclusion and SEND practice. Research questions included themes such as pupil voice, parental engagement, adaptive teaching, and early identification of SEND. Participants used cycles of planning, implementing, reviewing, and refining to trial small-scale interventions and evaluate their impact.

“

"In the beginning we were playing games like 'Would You Rather?' and now we're discussing racism and why people are stigmatised—the conversation's got really deep."

Teacher (Secondary)

PSHE project on developing communication through Thinking Moves

175 individual practitioners from **120** settings have participated in the lesson study and research activity. Of those, **90** have completed all stages of the project cycle.

Participant feedback indicated the project has led to impactful outcomes, supported meaningful reflection and professional growth.

Project insights highlighted recurring themes across submissions:

- **Pupil voice** remains a powerful driver of change and is frequently underutilised in traditional practice.
- **Parent/carer engagement** emerged as a challenge for schools, with several projects trialling structured approaches to improve collaboration.
- **Small-scale pilots** have enabled settings to embed changes iteratively, including changes to classroom environments, teaching resources, or communication strategies.
- **Cross-setting collaboration**, particularly through MAT or LA involvement, has been identified as beneficial for sustaining engagement and sharing learning.

“

"Exploring research has ignited a passion to want to increase the amount of practitioner research that goes on within the organisation and, during the dissemination of the research results, colleagues have approached me with a similar interest and we are continuing to explore options for the next academic year."

Mainstream (Inclusion Manager/Leader)

Our Impact

Early Years Positioning

2024-25 was year 2 of the DfE-funded EY SEND Partnership Project, with nasen supporting delivery of a strong, inclusive early years offer to help practitioners meet the needs of children and families.

Our impact: 992 practitioners completed the 'Meeting the Needs of Every Child' training, while 301 SENCOs, managers and early years leads took part in the EY SEND Reviewer training. 123 reported that they had completed a review in their setting. We also had strong attendance at our **national early years seminar** with 117 delegates who reported that "speakers were very insightful and provided great ideas and knowledge."

Educational Consultancy

Our impact: 100% of participants were satisfied with our SEND Reviews and 100% had confidence that it will lead to real improvements in their setting.

In addition to our SEND Reviews, we have also seen impact this year with the **nasen Quality Framework** and **bespoke consultancy**, offering tailored support for local authorities and organisations seeking to develop more inclusive practice.

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"We have already seen the benefits and staff have "bought in" to the recommendations. The SEND review also helped some of the staff feel really valued in their roles and it made me value our strengths much more. This process was a positive experience, whilst also focusing on the need for improvements."

Headteacher (SEND Review setting)

Impactful Partnerships and Collaboration

In addition to the strategic partnerships highlighted above, we deepened our impact and reach across the country, ensuring nasen is embedded at **national, regional and local levels**.



Our Impact

National Partnerships

nasen continued to play a central role in the **Early Years SEND Partnership**, improving access and inclusion in early years settings through training, resources, and shared learning for professionals and families.

In partnership with Mott McDonald, nasen developed a DfE-funded **digital toolkit to support education and childcare providers** that is available nationally, and beyond.

nasen continues to convene two key advisory groups that are ensuring Whole School SEND embeds authentic perspectives and sector expertise into programme design and improvement: the **Young Persons Advisory Group (YPAG)** and the **USS Advisory Group**.

The Universal SEND Services programme, funded by the Department for Education, epitomises partnership working and collaboration. Our strategic partnerships with the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) and the Autism Education Trust (AET, part of the National Autistic Society) have been a visible example of our commitment to engage authentic partnerships. At nasen we believe in working collaboratively, building partnerships and alliances. Many other organisations have been valuable collaborators and contributors.



Regional and Local Partnerships

We built and strengthened partnerships with local authorities and Stronger Practice Hubs, delivering 'The Golden Key' training to 153 key persons through the Great North and Liverpool and Beyond hubs, and Telford and Wrekin LA.

In London, in partnership with NEWTON, nasen delivered the **London SEND Leadership Programme**, supporting 90 aspiring leaders to build the skills, knowledge, and networks needed to positively impact children and young people with SEND.

nasen worked with **all schools on the Isle of Man** to provide a comprehensive package of training delivered by both members of the nasen Education Team and nasen associates.

In **Leicestershire**, nasen reached over **90 schools** with SEND reviewer training. In **Coventry and Warwickshire** the NHS Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools, through ICB commissioned workshops for 4 Multi Academy Trusts in Warwickshire and all schools in Coventry – focus was Leadership of Inclusion and Development of person-centred practice.



Our Impact

Wider collaboration

The nasen-hosted **National SEND Reference Group** is representative of the specialist sector, facilitating meetings between a representative group drawn from across the specialist sector, including schools, colleges, post-16 providers, professional associations and the **Department for Education**. While exchange of professional knowledge is at the heart of the SEND Reference Group, the purpose is to provide insights while policy and practice developments are under consideration. The membership has contributed to many areas over the past year, including the **Curriculum and Assessment Review**, meeting with the independent review team from the **Education Endowment Foundation**. Raising the profile of lack of secure policy for medicine **and complex health** needs support in education settings. Looking at nursery provision in schools, barriers and challenges for specialist schools. Contributed to consultation on restrictive force in schools. This is an important development, particularly for mainstream schools where everyday likelihood of physical contact with pupils is increasing.



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"nasen's initiatives, backed by their passionate and dedicated team, consistently champion the importance of SEND inclusion. We are honoured to support their work and contribute to their mission"

Louise Linehan

AXCIS Education Recruitment, the leading supplier of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

The **Advisory Group** of stakeholders brings together specialist organisations, school leaders, SENCOs, FE specialists, and local authority representatives. Meeting termly, the group provide insights, contribute to good governance principles, enable respectful challenge and support to the delivery implementation of the Universal SEND Services programme. An important feature of the Advisory Group is the independent chair, bringing their perspective as parent of a young person with SEND and lived experience of the education system, alongside their professional role and research experience. An example of the commitment to co-production, embedding authentic perspectives and sector expertise into programme design and improvement. This has contributed to quality assurance and helped refine CPD content to ensure it remains responsive to workforce needs.

As part of **our strategic intent to secure corporate, business and sector partnerships**, we secured support this year from **Concero Education Group, TTS, and Axcis Education Recruitment**. In addition, our nasen Awards benefitted from the sponsorship of the **BeReady Group**. The clear values alignment with these partners presents an opportunity for nasen to extend our reach and impact.

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"Whether it's sharing insights at joint events, co-hosting accessibility webinars, or engaging with nasen's passionate community, we've gained valuable opportunities to amplify our message and connect with schools looking to make a real difference."

Nadia Sweilem

Marketing Manager at Concero Education Group UK



Our Voice

Our Voice

nasen celebrated its biggest **nasen Live** to date, selling out the event and attracting over **500** delegates. The **nasen Awards** were also a resounding success – with a **22% increase** in entries this year. These flagship events provide opportunities to showcase practice, celebrate the achievements and impact in the sector. Such events are an important route to further expand nasen's reach and influence, through our delegates and corporate sponsors.

CEO Annamarie Hassall was appointed to a new role as advisor to DfE. She joined the **Inclusion Expert Advisory Group**, working directly with Ministers, sector experts and senior civil servants to reshape policy, bringing perspectives directly from practice. The CEO joined sector collaborations such as **Rethinking Curriculum**, a think tank with a view across mainstream education, and the **Ethical Leadership Alliance**. Also contributed to the future of assessment through an advisory board position on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for **OCR**, the assessment body. Such roles enable nasen to advance its interests in promoting an inclusive approach, one that works for all learners, including those with learning differences, additional needs and SEND. nasen is becoming increasingly prominent in using its voice to represent and champion initiatives within the sector. **Schools Week**, **Sky News**, **msn news**, **The Times Educational Supplement (TES)**, **The Guardian**, **The Times** and **The Independent** are among those who have come to nasen as an authoritative commenter. Issues nasen has commented on are wide ranging – from early years through to post-16 provision. Above all, nasen takes a responsible position, providing insights into a system that lacks equity for all learners, while balancing that with respectful dissemination of strategies and solutions that are making a difference for children and young people.

Talking about research, sharing research insights and bridging what can be a gap between practice and research has been an important area for the sector. The **nasen Research Journals**, **British Journal of Special Educational Needs (BJSE)**, **JORSEN and Support for Learning (SfL)**, are becoming increasingly open access, and there were over **733,960** views, from the UK and internationally, across the nasen three journals published by **Wiley**.

Our first **online research conference**, led by the **Support for Learning** editors, provided an opportunity for researchers from UK and Internationally to reach the nasen membership community.

We added 4 more book titles to the **nasen Spotlight series**, published with **Routledge**, covering a range of SEND topics and practical guidance, with 5 more titles in the pipeline. The Spotlight series provides an opportunity for practitioners and leaders to be part of the often-elite world of publishing. Our authors include those with publishing experience while also providing a gateway route for first time authors and editorial collaborations.

Our role as a member of the core group for the **SEN Policy Research Forum (SENPRF)**, a well-respected collaboration drawn from academic researchers, has enabled nasen to contribute to in-person seminars and policy briefings for the education sector on topics such as curriculum reform and inclusion. During this year, nasen joined the advisory board for the **Centre for Inclusion at University College London (UCL)**, bringing strategic contributions to the important research applications, delivery of training and planning for an International research conference on inclusive practice.

22%
INCREASE IN
ENTRIES THIS YEAR

Our People

Membership

This year we were thrilled to increase nasen's membership by an amazing **29%**, continuing the strong trend of year-on-year growth. Since 2022, membership has almost tripled, giving nasen unrivalled reach into the SEND community. Our **160,000+ members** are equipping themselves with nasen resources such as Twilight Talks, interactive webinars and CPD units to keep abreast of the latest thinking and continue to upskill their practice.

Through the "**1000 Voices**" survey for members, nasen garnered opinions of SENCOs across the UK, providing invaluable insights into how the role of the SENCO has expanded for many. Members also reported pressures on their time and the administrative burden they carry. nasen is committed to drawing on our members' feedback to improve design and delivery of CPD and other member products.

99.7%

Early Years satisfaction survey – **99.7%** **agreed** that nasen Early Years has made a positive difference to their practice.

562

562 participants across 55 groups took part in Professional Development Groups.

1,200

Over **1,200 responses** to 1000 Voices survey.

Young Person Advisory Group (YPAG)

The **Young Person Advisory Group (YPAG)** ensures the lived experiences of young people with SEND remain central to the training we develop for the sector. Their voices and experience help shape programme content and highlight the real-world impact of inclusive practice. YPAG members contributed to national events—including the Preparation for Adulthood conference—through filmed reflections and live input.

Trustee Board Development

Throughout the year the Board has worked closely with the CEO to shape **the next 5-year strategy**, distilling this into 7 priority areas. A series of extraordinary sessions engaged Board, Committee and Constitutional members before passing over to a series of seminars open to the nasen team. Each seminar considered one of the priority areas, taking the big picture vision to a series of implementable actions. We tested out a new induction programme for trustees and **welcomed one new trustee** who brings the voice of Teaching Assistants to our board's diversity of experience, joining the Strategy and People Committee.

The board also conducted an **internal audit of board effectiveness**, with trustees providing their input on performance and reflecting on areas for improvement and development.

Finally, the end of the year saw the beginning of the handover between former Chair Elaine Simpson and incoming Chair Phillipa Sherlock-Lewis. The two worked together for a seamless handover, ensuring nasen governance remained steady.

Our People

Team nasen

Our core team comprises 35 staff across our head office in Tamworth, Staffordshire and a coworking space in central London.

Our Whole School SEND (WSS) regional team is drawn from schools and settings with employees seconded to regional teams by their employing school, local authority or multi academy trust. This blended model enables a delivery model that is by the sector, for the sector. It is recognised that practitioners continue to be influential system leaders when in their regular role. Towards the end of the 2024-25 year, the regional team worked with us on alignment of the Whole School SEND regions to the regional structure of the Department for Education in England.

Our staff join whole organisation away days and have their professional training and development needs considered through regular one-to-one meetings with their line manager and annual reviews. Away day topics included business priorities and planning, the Strategy 2025-2030, and strengthening relationships - an externally facilitated event, led by an international mediator.

A key theme in 2024-25 has been succession planning, through bespoke line management training to further our approach to distributed leadership. Our executive leadership structure of three roles, CEO, Strategic Director of Education and Director of Finance and Operations, dovetails into a wider structure of seven roles in the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). A further two staff have line management responsibilities. Bespoke line management training considered organisational culture, leadership styles and management of conduct and performance.

A review of roles and responsibilities led to the inclusion of three further roles at SLT level:

- Head of Data and Insights with Data Protection – existing role, revised responsibilities
- Head of Development and Fundraising – new role
- Executive Office and Board Coordinator – existing role, revised responsibilities

Our trainee Management Accountant successfully completed their professional accountancy training, supported through our Professional Qualification Study Support policy.

Staff turnover: One Programme Management role was deleted through redundancy due to a change in business priorities and funding. One further employee resigned due to an external promotion.

INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE IS A PRIORITY

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nasen
Helping Everyone Achieve 