SESC
Stevenage Education Support Centre

CHANGING LIVES AND FUTURES
NEXUS HERTS

Alternative Provision Nexus Herts Federation and Rivers

North Herts
Education Support Centre

Rivers
Education Support Centre

Overview

Our Alternative Provision (AP) strategy provides a **targeted, flexible, and preventative offer** designed to support pupils Its primary purpose is to enable **early intervention, stabilisation, and successful reintegration**, ensuring that pupils remain engaged in education and achieve measurable outcomes.

The model brings together **in-house outreach capacity and high-quality commissioned provision**, creating a responsive, needs-led continuum of support across Stevenage and the wider DSPL partnership. Placements are agreed through a **structured referral and admission process**, ensuring alignment with pupil need, school priorities, and—where applicable—Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) outcomes.

A strong emphasis is placed on **safeguarding, compliance, and quality assurance**. All providers are subject to rigorous onboarding requirements, including verification of safeguarding procedures, risk assessments, insurance, and secure information-sharing protocols. Clear expectations are set for **daily communication, reporting, and escalation**, ensuring transparency and oversight at all stages of provision.

Operational delivery is underpinned by **robust planning, monitoring, and review systems**. Attendance, engagement, and progress are tracked consistently, with review points to evaluate impact and inform next steps. Our staff play a critical role in maintaining continuity between school, home, and provision, ensuring coordinated and holistic support for each pupil.

The strategy is fully aligned with the **SEND Code of Practice and our commitment to support schools and students**, contributing to improved inclusion, reduced exclusions, and strengthened partnership working. It also reflects a commitment to **value for money**, with provision commissioned strategically to maximise impact, efficiency, and long-term sustainability.

KS4 Provision

Nexus Herts Federation and Rivers, in partnership with Herts Regional College, North Herts College, Harlow College and Oaklands, has developed a **specialised 14–16 Alternative Provision offer** providing personalised learning within a college environment. This programme is designed to support students at risk of disengagement by offering **high-quality vocational pathways leading to industry-recognised qualifications**, strengthening engagement, progression, and post-16 readiness.

Delivery is intentionally **small-scale and highly supported**, with each course limited to a maximum of eight students. Learners are supported by a dedicated Outreach practitioner or Higher-Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA), ensuring consistency, strong relationships, and effective pastoral and academic support.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) oversight is integral to the model, with **regular quality assurance visits and collaborative planning** between SESC and provider staff to ensure that all students are appropriately supported to achieve positive outcomes.

The provision operates through a **clear and structured referral process**, open to schools across DSPL areas 1–4, including pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), subject to consultation with the provider to ensure suitability. In line with the programme's outcome-focused approach, **priority is given to Year 11 students**, enabling them to secure meaningful qualifications and clear progression pathways.

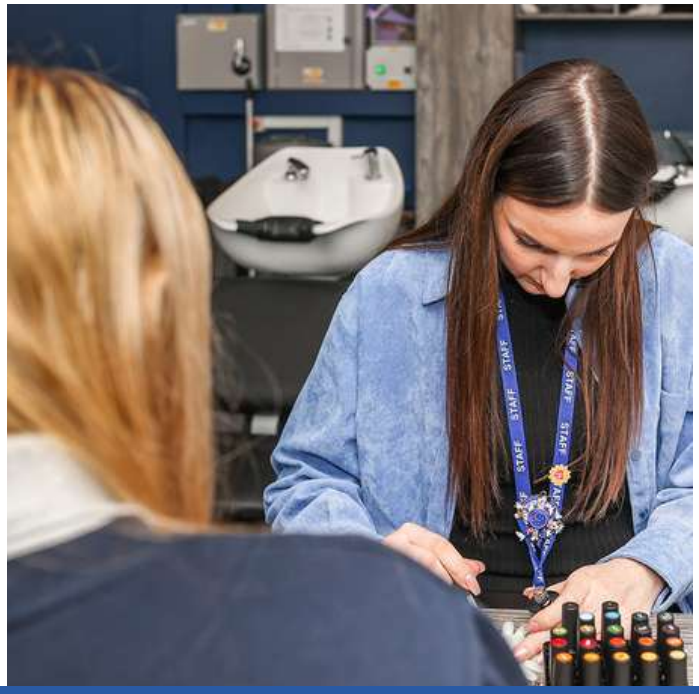
This offer is further strengthened through **established, high-quality partnerships** across the college network and approved external providers, all of whom meet robust quality assurance standards. The model ensures that all programmes are **relevant, purposeful, and aligned to local labour market needs**, supporting both engagement and long-term destinations.

Overall, the approach reflects a **targeted, collaborative, and quality-assured AP model**, contributing to improved inclusion, reduced risk of exclusion, and strong, measurable outcomes for young people across the local area

Provision	Costs with Transport from Central Location	Cost Per Day	Cost without Transport	Cost Per Day
HRC	£3250	£108.33	£3000	£100.00
NHC	£2900	£96.66	£2750	£91.66
Harlow	£3250	£108.33	£3000	£100.00
Oaklands	£3250	£108.33	£3000	£100.00
Church Farm	£2500	£80.64	£2300	£74.19
Debut	£3250	£112.90	£3250	£104.83
Stevenage FC	£3250	£104.83	£3000	£96.77
Hoddesdon FC	£3250	£104.83	£3000	£96.77

KS4 Offer

Day	Course	Qualification	Location
Monday	Catering 10:00 – 14:00	City & Guilds Level 1 Certificate in Food Preparation & Cooking	HRC, Turnford
	Construction 10:00 – 14:00	City & Guilds Level 1 Certificate in Construction Skills	HRC, Turnford
	Sport and Coaching 9:30 – 12:30	BTEC Level 1 Sport	Lamex Stadium
Tuesday	Construction 10:00 – 14:00	City & Guilds Level 1 Certificate in Construction Skills	HRC, Turnford
	Travel and Tourism 10:00 – 14:00	City & Guilds Level 1 Certificate in Travel and Tourism Skills	HRC, Turnford
	Animal Care 9:00 – 12:00	NCON Level 1 Animal Care	Church Farm,
	Hair and Beauty 10:00 – 13:00	VCERTS x 3	Debut Academy,
Wednesday	Equine 9:00 – 12:00	Level 1 Outcome to be confirmed upon the needs of the group.	Oaklands, St Albans
	Hair & Beauty 10:00 – 14:00	City and Guilds Level 1 Certificate in Hair and Beauty (Hair pathway)	Harlow, Eastgate
Thursday	Motor Mechanics 10:00 – 14:00	City & Guilds Level 1 Award in Vehicle Systems Maintenance	HRC, Turnford
	Supported Studies (EHCP Students) 9:15 – 12:15	Bespoke transition programme designed for learners who are interested in joining the NHC Supported Studies department in the following academic year.	NHC – Stevenage
Friday	Construction 10:00 – 14:00	City & Guilds Level 1 Certificate in Construction Skills	HRC, Turnford
	Sport and Coaching 9:30 – 12:30	BTEC Level 1 Sport	Hoddesdon Football Club
	Hair and Beauty 09:30 – 12:30	City & Guilds Level 1 Certificate	NHC – Hitchin
	Motor Mechanics 10:00 – 14:00	City & Guilds Level 1 Certificate in Vehicle Maintenance	Harlow – Main Campus



Wednesday

The **KS4 Vocational Programme** offers students the opportunity to attend **SESC on Wednesday mornings** to access **vocational learning** within a **supportive, small-group environment**. For the remainder of the week, students continue their **core studies at their base school**. In **close partnership with each school**, we aim to ensure that students remain **engaged**, make **sustained progress**, and achieve **positive outcomes** throughout **Key Stage 4**.

Lessons at SESC follow a **therapeutic, relationship-led approach** and are delivered in **small groups of up to six students**. Each group is supported by both a **teacher** and a **teaching assistant** to ensure **high levels of individualised support**. Lessons are **50 minutes in duration**, with each teaching block consisting of **100 minutes of focused learning time**.

The programme has been designed with **flexibility in mind**, allowing schools to **tailor placements to individual student needs**. Schools may refer students for the following options:

Block One - 9:00am - 10:50

Catering- BTEC Home Cooking L1 & L2
Childcare - BTEC Level 1 Sport
Construction - BTEC Level 1 Construction
Hair and Beauty - BTEC Level 1 Hair and Beauty
Sport - BTEC Level 1 Sport

Block Two - 10:50am - 12:30pm

Art - BTEC Level 1 Art & Design
Catering- BTEC Home Cooking L1 & L2
eSports- BTEC Level 1 Vocational Studies
Hair and Beauty - BTEC Level 1 Hair and Beauty
Public Services - BTEC Level 1 Public Services

Bespoke

In response to increasing demand from our schools, we are now able to offer a broader range of bespoke 1:1 alternative provision through a number of approved providers. Each offer is designed to meet individual student need, with clear progression pathways and, where appropriate, accreditation opportunities.

Church Farm - Over the past four years, Church Farm has successfully delivered highly personalised 1:1 provision, tailored to students' interests and next steps. This includes structured programmes in animal care, horticulture, and site maintenance, supporting both engagement and skill development.

Critical Rhythm - Since 2025, we have worked in partnership with Critical Rhythm to offer music-based provision. Students access either small group or 1:1 sessions, developing skills in music production, songwriting, and recording. By the end of the programme, students will have produced a portfolio of work and gained experience using industry-standard software such as GarageBand and Logic Pro. There is also the opportunity to work towards a **BTEC Level 1 in Creative Media**.

Danecroft Stables- This new collaboration provides access to equine provision, available both as 1:1 and small group programmes. Students engage in all aspects of equine care, including riding and stable management, alongside the developnment of practical and vocational skills to support progression into Key Stage 5 pathways. A **BTEC Level 1 in Equine** is also available.

Stevenage Football Foundation – We have worked closely with Stevenage Football Foundation over the past five years to develop a flexible range of programmes for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 students. Provision includes 1:1 mentoring, group programmes, and pathways focused on employability, including King's Trust engagement.

Adore Mentoring – Hair and Beauty – Offers both 1:1 and small group provision centred on Hair and Beauty. Sessions can be tailored to support therapeutic engagement or structured towards achieving a **BTEC Level 1 in Hair and Beauty**, depending on student need and readiness.

Acorn to Oaks Mentoring - Offers a combination of 1:1 mentoring and group work, with a strong focus on physical activity, particularly boxing, alongside targeted mentoring support. The team brings extensive experience, including work with children in care. Additional bespoke interventions can be delivered, including programmes such as graffiti art and dog training, through a network of DBS-checked practitioners

Bespoke

PotStop (Creative Arts) – Provides 1:1 and small group provision centred on creative arts, including pottery and painting. Sessions are carefully tailored to individual interests, offering both therapeutic engagement and opportunities to develop practical creative skills. Students may also have the opportunity to work towards a **BTEC Level 1 in Creative Arts**.

Barbering @ Buffalo Barbers We are pleased to introduce a new collaboration with **Buffalo Barbers**, offering a structured 12-week barbering programme. This provision is designed to develop practical skills and prepare students for progression into the industry. At end of each block, students will keep their own professional barbering kit. This programme is particularly suited to **Key Stage 4 students** with an interest in progressing into barbering post-16.

Futsal/Football and Sports Learning - This new provision combines structured **football/futsal coaching** with **sports-based literacy and numeracy learning**. Delivered to small groups, sessions include practical activity led by two qualified coaches, alongside classroom-based learning linked to sport. The lead coach brings extensive experience of delivering engaging literacy and numeracy programmes in primary settings, adapted here to meet a wider range of needs.

Football Mentoring - This offer provides **1:1 mentoring with an FA-qualified coach**, supporting both football development and personal growth. Sessions focus on building key skills such as **relationships, emotional regulation, anger management, and interpersonal communication**, alongside improving sporting ability.

Aston Alpacas – We are delighted to offer a unique outdoor provision where students engage in caring for animals, including alpacas, cows and miniature Shetland ponies. Delivered in **1:1 or small group sessions**, learners take part in hands-on activities such as feeding, leading and animal care. Sessions are designed to promote **confidence, independence, practical skills and wellbeing**, within a calm and supportive outdoor environment.

Kerry – Life Coaching - A qualified **Life Coach and England Boxing coach** with extensive experience supporting young people across primary and secondary settings. Provision is delivered through **1:1 or small group interventions**, focusing on **confidence building, emotional regulation, behaviour, engagement and mental health**. This work is currently delivered in partnership with NHESC to support improved resilience and personal development.

Bespoke

Active Resilience - Offer **1-hour hybrid sessions combining Muay Thai and conditioning training**. These sessions are specifically designed to build resilience, improve mental wellbeing and promote the benefits of regular exercise. Each session blends **Thai boxing fundamentals with structured, military-style fitness training**, providing a safe, disciplined and supportive environment for students to channel their energy positively. Programmes are led by experienced coaches with a strong focus on personal development.

Helping Hoof – Has provided specialist **1:1 equine-based provision** for the past three years. Sessions combine equine care with mentoring and personal development, delivered in a nurturing and supportive setting. Experienced practitioners work with students with a wide range of needs, focusing on building **confidence, trust, emotional regulation and engagement**.

KS3

KS3 Vocational – Satellite Provision and Church Farm

We have **extended our Vocational Programme to include KS3 students**, providing **increased opportunities for vocational learning throughout the week**. This provision is built upon the **same core principles as our KS4 Vocational Programme**, with a strong emphasis on **therapeutic support** and **personalised learning**.

Students are taught in **small groups of no more than six**, supported by both a **teacher** and a **teaching assistant**, ensuring **high levels of individualised support**. All lessons follow a **therapeutic, relationship-led approach**, promoting **emotional wellbeing alongside academic progress**.

Each teaching block consists of **90 minutes of focused learning**, delivered during the **afternoon of the school day**. The programme is designed with **flexibility in mind**, allowing schools to **tailor placements to meet individual student needs**.

Schools may refer students for the following options:

Monday
- Catering - 12:50 - 14:20
- eSports - 12:50 - 14:20

Tuesday
- Hair and Beauty - 12:50 - 14:20
- Art - 12:50 - 14:20

Wednesday
- Catering- 12:50 - 14:20
- Hair and Beauty - 12:50 - 14:20

Thursday
- Sports - 12:50 - 14:20

Our collaboration with **Church Farm** offers a structured **12-week programme** providing one day per week of practical, hands-on learning and runs on a **Tuesday** from 12:30 – 15:00.

Delivered in small groups of up to six students and supported by SESC staff, this provision focuses on **personal development, engagement and vocational skill-building** through farm-based activities. The programme is particularly suited to Key Stage 3 students requiring a therapeutic, outdoor learning environment to support confidence, independence and re-engagement with education.

Key Dates

On the following dates our providers or the Centre is closed leading to schools needing to make alternative arrangements.

Nexus Federation x Rivers Closure Date

Friday 4th December 2026 - Occasional Day - No NHC Hair and Beauty
Tuesday 15th December 2026 - Centre Christmas Lunch – No Satellite
8th February 2027 – 12th February Assessment Week – No Satellite or Wednesday Programme
Wednesday 23rd June 2027 - Leavers Assembly - Closed PM for Satellite

GCSE Exams - Centre Closed for SESC Provision
Wednesday 12th May 2027 – GCSE Exam – No Wednesday Programme
Wednesday 19th May 2027 – GCSE Exam – No Wednesday Programme

North Herts College

Friday 4th November 2026 – GCSE Exam @ NHC
Friday 4th November 2026 – GCSE Exam @ NHC

Herts Regional College

Thursday 22nd October 2026 – CPD
Friday 23rd October 2026 – CPD
Monday 4th January 2027 – Friday 8th January 2027

Oaklands

N/A

Harlow College

Start date for all group provision is Monday 28th September 2026

Year 11 provision ends on Friday 14th May 2027 - Students maybe be invited in to complete any outstanding work

Year 10 provision ends Friday 18th June 2027 @ HRC, NHC, Oaklands and Harlow.

Year 10 provision ends Friday 25th June 2027 @ Church Farm, Football Foundation and Debut.

Following the completion of courses by Year 11 students will be able to offer college taster sessions on all our courses to prepare students for our programmes in 2026/2027. Prices will be confirmed for these in April 2026.

Safeguarding

SESC works in **close partnership with commissioning schools** to deliver **high-quality, safe, and impactful alternative provision** that supports students to remain **engaged, make sustained progress, and achieve positive outcomes**.

All provisions are underpinned by **robust safeguarding and quality assurance processes**. We only work with providers who meet our **strict standards for safeguarding, health and safety, and quality of education**. Partnerships are formalised through a **Service Level Agreement (SLA)**, reviewed annually to ensure **clarity of roles, accountability, and compliance**.

We maintain **regular oversight** through **Senior Leadership Team (SLT) visits**, with formal **quality assurance reporting** to monitor delivery, student experience, and adherence to agreed standards. This ensures **consistency, transparency, and continuous improvement** across all provisions.

Schools receive **regular, structured reporting** via **Talaxy**, including:

- **Daily attendance tracking**
- **Session-by-session feedback** on engagement and learning
- **Half-termly progress reports** outlining attainment, behaviour, and next steps

To support strong communication, schools nominate **key contacts**, ensuring that **attendance, safeguarding, and progress information is shared promptly and effectively**.

In addition, all staff working within provisions are supported through **compulsory safeguarding training**, **DBS verification**, and **ongoing CPD**, ensuring a **highly skilled workforce** equipped to meet the needs of our students.

QA

How do we quality assure and monitor our providers?

All provisions are subject to **regular quality assurance visits** conducted by SESC staff. During each visit, providers are assessed against key criteria, including:

- **Compliance with safeguarding requirements**
- **Compliance with health and safety standards**
- The provision of a **supportive and inclusive learning environment**
- **Student engagement** and alignment with the **expectations of Nexus Herts Federation**
- Evidence of **effective feedback**, including both **written and verbal feedback to students**

A **digital record** is maintained for every visit, capturing a **summary of learning activities**, levels of **student and tutor engagement**, **feedback provided**, and **assessment evidence**. These records ensure that all provisions consistently meet required **safeguarding and health and safety standards**.

All **quality assurance records are stored centrally** and **shared with the commissioning school's key contact**, ensuring **transparency and accountability**. We also actively encourage **school staff to visit provisions alongside SESC colleagues**, supporting **strong partnerships** and a deeper understanding of the provision.

How do we support our providers with Continued Professional Development (CPD)?

As part of the **Service Level Agreement (SLA)**, all providers who are not **Ofsted registered** are required to attend a **compulsory induction programme in September**. This includes a **safeguarding refresher**, alongside **targeted CPD** focused on **working effectively with our students** and **adapting curriculum delivery to meet diverse needs**.

Throughout the year, providers have access to **termly training opportunities** to further develop their practice. Where specific needs are identified, we offer **bespoke CPD sessions**, ensuring that all providers are **well-equipped to deliver high-quality, inclusive provision**.

Expectations

Across all provisions, we expect students to follow the **expectations of both the provider and Nexus Herts Federation and Rivers ESC**. These expectations are in place to ensure the **safety, wellbeing, and progress of all students**.

While individual providers may have **setting-specific expectations**, the following standards apply as a minimum:

- Wear the correct **uniform and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**, as outlined during the **induction process**
- When on the **SESC site**, all **phones, jewellery, and personal belongings must be stored in lockers**
- At alternative provision, **phones may be kept on the person but must not be used during learning time**
- **Follow staff instructions promptly** and respectfully
- Use **appropriate language at all times – no swearing or inappropriate ("street") language**
- Demonstrate **respect towards staff, peers, the provision, and the wider community**
- **Bullying, physical contact, or unsafe behaviour** is not acceptable
- **No chewing gum, sweets, or nuts** during sessions
- **Take responsibility for the environment** – any damage to the centre or provision may result in **cost recovery from parents/carers**
- **Comply with all health and safety requirements**, including when using **transport provided to and from provision**
- Maintain **high levels of attendance and engagement**, supported by **strong parental/carer involvement**

Referral

Who can refer a student to Alternative Provision?

Referrals can only be made by a **mainstream school**. Schools **commission the provision**, and the student **remains on roll at their home school** throughout. The **responsibility for the student's progress, welfare, and safeguarding** remains with the **mainstream school**, supported by **Nexus Herts Federation and Rivers ESC**.

We only accept referrals for students who are **on roll at a school**; referrals **cannot be made directly by parents, carers, or external agencies**.

Do you accept referrals from schools out of area?
We primarily support students and schools within **DSPL 1–4**. However, we are able to consider **out-of-area referrals**, subject to the **availability of suitable provision**.

How can we refer a student?
Schools can refer a student by completing the **online referral form** via our website. For further information or to discuss suitability, please contact:

- **Steve Fuller (SESC): s.fuller@nhf.school**
- **Gemma Anderson (SESC): g.anderson@nhf.school**
- **Simon Dent (Rivers ESC): s.dent@riversesc.herts.sch.uk**

What happens next?

Once the **referral paperwork** has been submitted, we will confirm if we are able to offer an **exploratory meeting.**

For students with an **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**, a **consultation with the provider** will take place to ensure that needs can be **appropriately met**.

An **exploratory meeting** will then be arranged with all stakeholders. If agreed, a **start date** will be confirmed, along with any necessary **transport arrangements**.

Please note that **submission of a referral does not guarantee a placement**. A student can only begin once the **Service Level Agreement (SLA)** has been **signed and returned** by the commissioning school.

Locations

Stevenage Education Support Centre

Collenswood Road

Stevenage

Hertfordshire

SG2 9HQ

North Herts College

Cambridge Road
Hitchin
SG4 0JD

Herts Regional College

The Springs
Turnford
Broxbourne
EN10 6AE

Harlow College

Velizy Avenue
Harlow
Essex
CM20 3EZ

Oaklands College

Hatfield Road
St Albans
AL4 0JA

Stevenage Football Foundation

The Lamex Stadium
Broadhall Way
Hertfordshire
SG2 8rh

Critical Rythmn @ The Practice Roomz

Unit 6 Pond Close Industrial Estate
Walkern Road
Stevenage
Hertfordshire
SG1 3QP

Danecroft Stables

1A Vera Lane
Welwyn
Hertfordshire
AL6 0EW

Church Farm

Ardeley,
Near Stevenage
Hertfordshire
SG2 7AH

Debut

Unit 14 Mimram Road
Hertford
Hertfordshire
SG14 1NN

Pot Stop

11 Station Lane
Knebworth
Hertfordshire
SG3 6AP

A Helping Hoof

Duck Lane
Bennington
SH2 7LJ

Contacts

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Claire Clarke – Secondary Outreach Support Services Lead @ NHESC
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