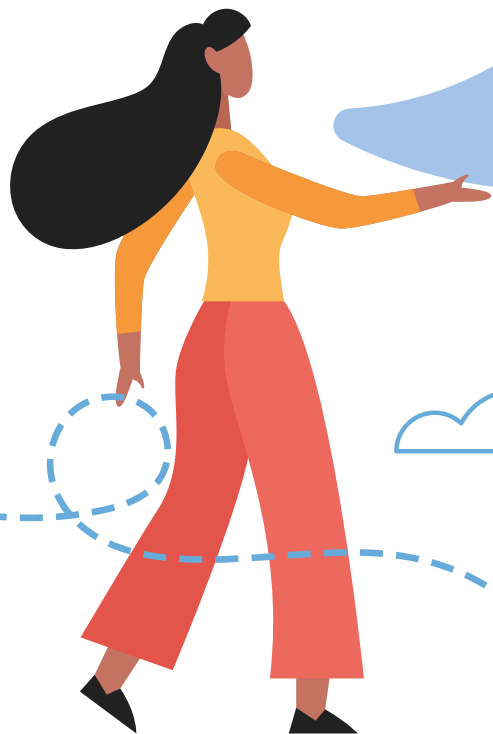


# THE LINK LIVE

## SPEECH & LANGUAGE DAY 2026

Supporting the building blocks of oracy

THURSDAY  
30<sup>TH</sup>  
APRIL  
09:00-16:15  
ONLINE



Free event for  
The Link Community



Produced by The Link Community

# TECH ADVICE and information

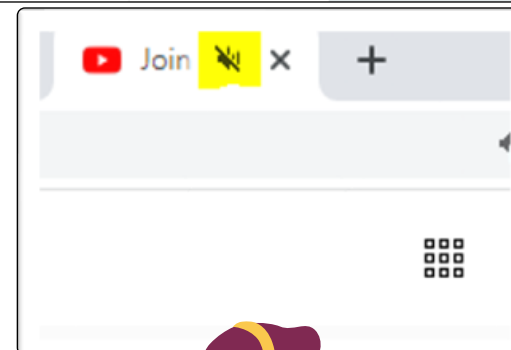
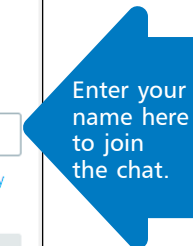
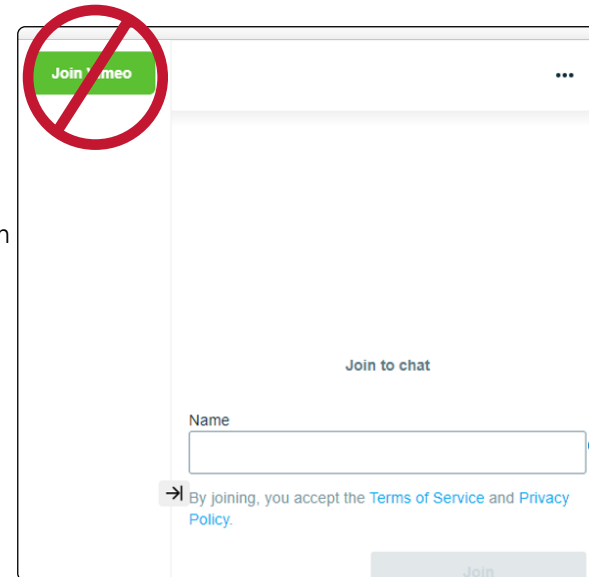
## ACCESSING THE EVENT

- Use a **wired connection** (where possible) instead of Wi-Fi
- We advise that you watch the event using the web browser **Google Chrome**
- Log into your Link Community account and go to The Link Live page
- Click on 'Main Stage' button to access the whole event (including Ann Marie Christian session at 13:00) or use this direct link <https://vimeo.com/event/5886227/ac1f37cc63>
- The 'Second Stage' button can be used to access ONLY Alison Fowle & Juliet Leonard session at 13:00 or use this direct link <https://vimeo.com/event/5886231/f4b85f9295>
- These will take you to Vimeo
- **You do not need to click 'Join Vimeo' to access the event**
- Enter your name into the **Join to chat** box

## SOUND DIFFICULTIES? CHECK THE FOLLOWING:

- The volume on the computer and on your headphones is unmuted
- Your page is not muted. Unmute by **right clicking on the tab at the top of the page** and selecting unmute from the drop-down list
- You can hear a YouTube video or BBC Bitesize video OK

If your sound continues to be an issue this is an internal issue and you will need to contact your IT service provider



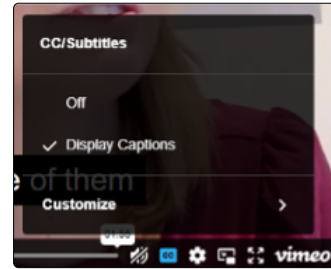
# TECH ADVICE and information

## CAPTIONS

If you need to access captions you can use either:

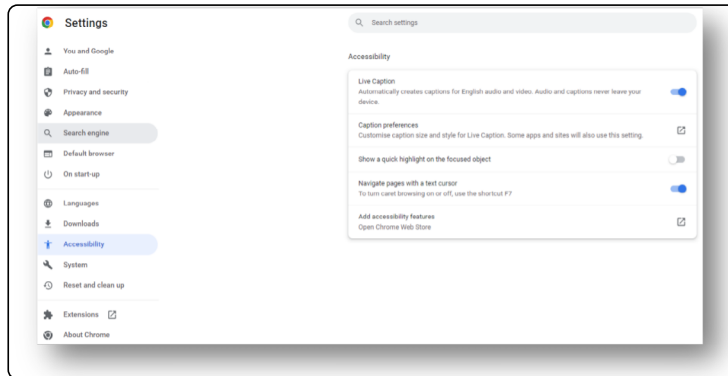
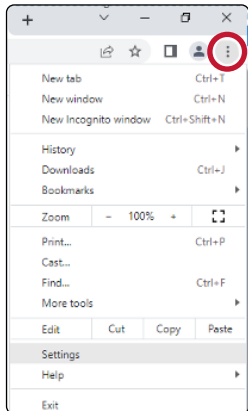
### Vimeo captions

- Once you are in the event you will see the video screen
- At the bottom right hand of this click on 'cc' and tick 'Display Captions' or,



### Google captions (see below)

- Click on the three dots
- Go down to settings
- Then click accessibility in the left-hand menu

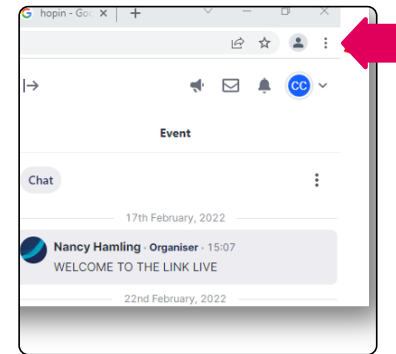


## STREAMING DIFFICULTIES

Please **close the Vimeo tab** and try clearing your cache.

To clear cache in Google Chrome:

- Click on 3 dots top right of tool bar to display a drop-down menu



- From this please select:  
*More tools - Delete browsing data  
- Cached images and files*
- Close your browser tabs
- Click on the event link again

IF YOU HAVE ANY  
FURTHER ISSUES,  
PLEASE CONTACT YOUR  
IT SERVICE PROVIDER  
DIRECTLY.



# WELCOME!

PRODUCED BY  
THE LINK  
COMMUNITY

A warm welcome to The Link Live Speech & Language Day 2026.

We're thrilled that so many of you have signed up to attend and we're delighted to welcome all our new members.

Since the launch of The Link Community in 2024, our membership has grown to a fantastic 5,000 members, all of whom enjoy access to our free SLCN knowledge hub - which of course includes a free ticket to The Link Live.

One of the great benefits of being a Link Community member is the continued delivery of The Link Primary magazine to your school. **From this summer, printed copies will be sent only to schools with at least one registered member of staff in The Link Community.**

If you haven't yet updated your details to include your school address, it's quick and easy to do. Simply [go to the website](#), log into your account, and update your information. You'll only need to do this once.

Now - let's get on with the show! We hope this year's line-up doesn't disappoint, and we look forward to connecting with you in the live chat on Thursday.



## SPEAKER PROGRAMME

### MORNING SESSION

- 9:00 **Host, Kate Freeman**, Introduction and welcome
- 9:10 **Ali Neal**, Regulation through the senses for children with SLCN using The BREAD Approach
- 10:00 **Kate Freeman**, Speech, language and communication: the building blocks for oracy
- 11:00 **Abigail Hawkins**, What we see isn't always what it seems

12:15 LUNCH BREAK

### AFTERNOON SESSION

13:00

- 13:00 **Kate Freeman**, Introduction after lunch

#### PRIMARY SESSION

...

**Juliet Leonard &  
Alison Fowle**

Supporting language for school  
readiness

#### PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SESSION

...

**Ann Marie Christian**

Safeguarding challenges for  
children with SLCN

14:00

- 14:00 **Louise Emerson**, Neuro-affirming considerations
- 15:00 **Shelbi Annison**, You can't see DLD
- 16:00 **Kate Freeman**, Conclusion and closing remarks

# MORNING Sessions



**Kate Freeman**

Consultant - Speech and Language in Education

## Presenter and The Link Live Host

We're delighted to welcome Kate back as host of The Link Live 2026. With her calm, confident approach and wealth of experience, we know the day couldn't be in safer hands.

Kate Freeman is a highly experienced and forward-thinking speech and language therapist, author, and consultant. She works with Speech & Language Link as well as a range of other organisations.

Kate delivers training, supports joint working, and helps build staff confidence in identifying and supporting pupils with SEND and SLCN, making a meaningful difference to practice in schools.

We are also particularly pleased that Kate will be speaking at 10:00 today. Her session is not to be missed. Check out her speaker profile below.



**Ali Neal**

Specialist Occupational Therapist

## DATE

Thursday 30th April 2026

## TIME

9:00–10:00

## REGULATION THROUGH THE SENSES FOR CHILDREN WITH SLCN USING THE BREAD APPROACH

Ali Neal is a specialist occupational therapist and the founder of School Sensory Solutions. Her organisation provides training and resources for educators who support pupils with SEN and neurodivergent needs in school settings.

Ali is committed to identifying practical solutions to the everyday challenges experienced by children and to supporting teachers in embedding these strategies into their already busy working days.

## Key takeaways

- 1 Regulation comes before communication: children with SLCN cannot use language when they are overwhelmed.
- 2 You can't talk a child into calm. When children are dysregulated, thinking and language are not easily accessible. Use sensory strategies to support regulation before communication.
- 3 You don't need a perfect plan – you need a simple, consistent approach. What matters is that staff use a shared, predictable approach. The BREAD Approach gives you a structure for this.



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“ As of November 2025... more than 64,000 children and young people were waiting to see a SaLT.

<https://tinyurl.com/ypcefd7c>”

# MORNING Sessions



**Kate Freeman**

Consultant - Speech and Language in Education

Kate delivers training, supports joint working, and helps build staff confidence in identifying and supporting pupils with SEND and SLCN, making a meaningful difference to practice in schools.

We are also particularly pleased that Kate will be speaking at 10:00 today. Her session is not to be missed.

### Key takeaways:

- 1 Oracy relies on strong speech, language and communication foundations.
- 2 Many pupils have unidentified SLCN that affect oracy (early identification and support are vital).
- 3 National reforms reinforce the importance of consistent, evidence based practice and rely on every adult contributing to a communication supportive school culture.

### DATE

Thursday 30th April 2026

### TIME

10:00–11:00

SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION: THE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR ORACY



**Abigail Hawkins**

SEN Consultant

Abigail has over 30 years' experience in education. She is the founder of SENSIBLE SENCO and is widely recognised for her strategic clarity and practical wisdom.

Abigail supports SENCOs to lead with confidence, precision, and integrity, while championing inclusive practice, robust provision mapping, and the thoughtful use of technology across schools both nationally and internationally.

### Key takeaways:

- 1 Behaviour is not always what it seems. Difficulties may reflect hidden speech, language and communication needs rather than attitude or effort.
- 2 Subtle signs matter. Gaps between verbal and written work, limited vocabulary, or misunderstanding figurative language warrant closer attention.
- 3 Small adjustments have big impact. Clear, step by step instructions, vocabulary pre teaching, visual supports and consistent checking for understanding can significantly improve access to learning.

### DATE

Thursday 30th April 2026

### TIME

11:00–12:15

WHAT WE SEE ISN'T ALWAYS WHAT IT SEEMS



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### Did you know?

There are 8069 Speech Link and Language Link packages currently active in over 4000 settings in the UK and overseas.

# Speech & LanguageLink

The Speech Link and Language Link packages help build communication skills for life from early years to secondary. They provide:

- 👍 Online standardised assessments
- 👍 Individual profiles and class reports
- 👍 Targeted intervention groups
- 👍 Printable resources

Find out more here:

<https://speechandlanguage.link/our-packages/>



Speech & Language Link is brought to you by  
Speech Link Multimedia Ltd.



# AFTERNOON Parallel Sessions

EARLY YEARS



**Juliet Leonard**

Specialist Speech and Language Therapist at Speech & Language Link



**Alison Fowle**

Specialist Speech and Language Therapist at Speech & Language Link

DATE

Thursday 30th April 2026

TIME

13:00–14:00

LANGUAGE AND SCHOOL READINESS

Juliet brings over 20 years of NHS experience, having worked extensively with children with complex needs before joining Speech & Language Link four years ago. She thrives in the vibrant environment of busy schools and enjoys contributing to the organisation's creative projects.

Alison, who qualified as a Speech and Language Therapist in 2005, also brings significant NHS experience, having spent 17 years supporting children across mainstream primary schools and early years clinics. In her role at Speech & Language Link, Alison develops and delivers training, provides advice to schools, and supports product development. Together, they combine deep clinical expertise with practical insight to inform and enrich their joint session.

Key takeaways:

- 1 Language underpins school ready tasks.
- 2 Early years settings can make the difference can boost language for school readiness.
- 3 Little Link can support our school readiness journey.



**Ann Marie Christian**

International Safeguarding Consultant and Trainer

DATE

Thursday 30th April 2026

TIME

13:00–14:00

SAFEGUARDING CHALLENGES FOR CHILDREN WITH SLCN

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY

Ann Marie Christian is an international safeguarding consultant, a qualified social worker since 1996, and an award recognised child protection trainer. She has led child protection services within local authorities, delivered safeguarding training worldwide, and written extensively for education publications.

Ann Marie specialises in safeguarding children within education and childcare settings, bringing both strategic expertise and practical insight to her work.

Key takeaways:

- 1 Reflect on our own unconscious bias especially when responding to concerns.
- 2 Remain child centred.
- 3 Practice professional curiosity.

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# AFTERNOON Sessions



**Louise Emerson**

Specialist Speech and Language Therapist  
at Speech & Language Link

Louise is a speech and language therapist with specialist interests in Developmental Language Disorder (DLD), augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), and literacy across childhood and adolescence.

At Speech & Language Link, she supports product development and provides guidance to school staff through training and expert advice via the Help Desk.

### Key Takeaways

- 1 Understanding what neuro-affirming language is and why it is important.
- 2 Listening to and respecting individuals and their families: preferences, lived experiences, and backgrounds.
- 3 Looking for strengths and keeping goals aspirational.

### DATE

Thursday 30th April 2026

### TIME

14:00–15:00

### NEURO-AFFIRMING CONSIDERATIONS



**Shelbi Annison**

Author and Ambassador for RADLD and AFASIC.

Shelbi is an adult with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) and dyslexia, having received her DLD diagnosis at the age of 25. She is passionate about raising awareness of these often-invisible disabilities and is proud to serve as an Ambassador for RADLD and AFASIC.

Shelbi is also a children's illustrated author and has published three books. She works within a supportive and inclusive local authority, where she is encouraged and valued by her manager, colleagues, and wider team.

### Key takeaways

- 1 All behaviour is a form of communication – further unpicking is key.
- 2 Early screening is essential – Think Language, Think DLD!
- 3 "I am more than a label; I am capable and ABLE!"

### DATE

Thursday 30th April 2026

### TIME

15:00–16:00

### YOU CAN'T SEE DLD

NOTES

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# CONTACT DETAILS AND USEFUL LINKS

## Kate Freeman

Website: [www.katefreeman.org.uk](http://www.katefreeman.org.uk)

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kate-freeman-05486512/>

X: [https://x.com/\\_KateFreeman](https://x.com/_KateFreeman)

Words Together books: <https://www.routledge.com/Words-Together/book-series/WTOG>

## Juliet Leonard

Website: <https://speechandlanguage.link/authors/juliet-leonard/>

## Alison Fowle

Website: <https://speechandlanguage.link/authors/alison-fowle/>

## Shelbi Annison

TikTok: dldwhycantyouseeeme

Weblinks:

<https://radld.org/>

<https://thedldproject.com/>

<https://afasic.org.uk/>

## Ann Marie Christian

Website: <http://www.annmariechristian.com/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ann-marie-christian-frsa-7116b71b/>

Instagram: thesaefguardingguru

TikTok: the safeguardingguru

## Ali Neal

Website: [www.schoolsensorysolutions.co.uk](http://www.schoolsensorysolutions.co.uk)

Email: [ali@schoolsensorysolutions.co.uk](mailto:ali@schoolsensorysolutions.co.uk)

### Socials

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ali-neal-7b6b9b35/>

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/ali\\_neal\\_the\\_classroom\\_ot/](https://www.instagram.com/ali_neal_the_classroom_ot/)

Courses: <https://schoolsensorysolutions.co.uk/what-we-offer-courses>

Sensory Circuit Resources: <https://shop.schoolsensorysolutions.co.uk/products-list/collections/resources>

## Abigail Hawkins

[www.sensibleenco.org.uk](http://www.sensibleenco.org.uk)

[enquiries@sendcosolutions.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@sendcosolutions.co.uk)

## Thank you for attending The Link Live

Speaker slides will be available within 24 hours of the conference, with full talks to be released at a later date.

**We hope you enjoy reading The Link Primary magazine and would like your school to continue receiving a printed copy.**

To make sure you stay on our mailing list, simply log into your Link Community account and update your account details. That's it - we'll do the rest!

TheLink  
MAGAZINE



<https://tinyurl.com/ydtx529c>