worcestershire county council

Issue: December 2024

SEND News Bulletin

Welcome

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the latest edition of the Worcestershire SEND News Bulletin. What a long and eventful term it's been, we hope that you and your school/setting community are managing to embrace and enjoy the 'Christmas chaos'!

Sadly, at the end of this term, we bid a very fond farewell to Louisa Jones, our Principal Educational Psychologist and Head of Inclusion Support Services. Louisa has been highly influential in bringing about positive change within Worcestershire, she will be hugely missed but I know you will join us in wishing her well in the next stage of her career. Further information about Louisa's departure and interim replacement can be found on page 5.

In this bulletin you will find information and updates from a range of national and local service providers and support teams. We encourage you to read and share with relevant colleagues within your school. We hope that you find the information useful and, as always, would welcome any feedback you may have.

Thank you again for your continued hard work and commitment to meeting the needs of the children and young people with SEND and their families. We wish you all an enjoyable and fun-filled Christmas break when it arrives!

Kind regards

Helen Harris
Learning & Teaching Adviser, SEND/Inclusion

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National News & Updates

Speech delivered by Bridget Phillipson MP, Secretary of State for Education

On 7th November, the Rt. Hon Bridget Phillipson MP, Secretary of State for Education, delivered a speech at the Confederation of School Trusts (CST) Conference.

The speech focused on SEND reform and further improving inclusivity and expertise within mainstream settings. A range of SEND, behaviour and neurodiversity experts – including those with lived experience – will be brought together to work closely with the DfE and NHS to deliver systemic change, including ITT.

"Now is the time for bold reform.
And let me be clear: the direction of that reform is inclusive mainstream.
That is why we will bring a new focus on improving inclusivity and expertise in mainstream education settings.
I have been really encouraged to see some great examples of mainstream schools delivering specialist provision and showing what is possible – including through the use of SEN Units and Resourced Provision."
"We will encourage more schools to set up this form of provision.
Taking what works and applying it in mainstream schools."

A transcript of the speech in full can be found here.

Research The "What Works in SEND" programme new report on inclusion

The What Works in SEND programme has published a new report looking at the inclusion of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in schools. It explores the key factors that facilitate the inclusion of children and young people with SEND in schools, focusing in particular on understanding what local areas can do to better to support schools to become more inclusive, improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families. It offers an important look at the key ingredient to facilitate meaningful inclusion. Findings encompass facilitating factors and challenges in eight areas, including values and ethos, workforce, leadership and partnership working with parents and carers.

Key messages from the research findings can be downloaded here.

Access SEND CPD resources from the Universal SEND Services programme

The Department for Education's Universal SEND Services programme provides Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) specific Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for school and further education staff.

The programme's online CPD units support professionals to make high quality inclusive teaching the reality for every learner. The final unit in the series, 'Supporting Reading and Comprehension Across the Curriculum' is now available.

Complete the new unit to learn more about:

- how to identify barriers to learners within the core building blocks of reading
- the essential role senior leaders, teachers, reading leads, SENCOs, support staff and others can play in identifying when a child needs support with reading
- how to apply practical strategies to use in the classroom as part of an inclusive approach

Create an account with Whole School SEND to access the unit for free

Kooth Update

FAO: Pastoral Leads, Welfare staff, PSHE Leads, Designated Safeguarding Leads, Parents/ Carers, Teachers

As education providers dedicated to supporting young people's mental health, you've likely noticed the challenges young men and boys face. This is especially highlighted in November by the Movember Foundation, which focuses on male wellbeing.

Research shows that boys aged 10-19 are significantly less likely to seek help for mental health concerns compared to girls [source: Young Minds], even as anxiety, depression, and self-harm among this group continue to rise.

We continue to focus on young men's and boys' mental health, encouraging them to talk about their feelings and reach out early for support. Our BACP-accredited service provides young people with free, anonymous support, helping them find the help they need.

Why not reach out to your local Engagement Lead and book FREE training for your Protected Learning Time to discover how Kooth compliments other NHS mental health services?

Signpost you parents and families to Kooth.

Help young people access vital mental health support by promoting Kooth within your practice. You can request print materials such as posters, cards, and leaflets to display in waiting rooms or hand them out during appointments.

Additionally, use our digital resources like videos and digital posters, available through Kooth's resource bank, to display on surgery screens or share online. You can also find SMS copy examples here to send to your patients.

Local News & Updates

Wishing a fond farewell to Louisa Jones

We want to take the opportunity to say a huge thank you and very best wishes to Dr Louisa Jones our Principal Educational Psychologist and Head of Inclusion Support Services as she leaves Worcestershire County Council to start a new and exciting role in the East Midlands.

Louisa has been responsible for transforming our psychology services to meet the increasing demands, leading our inclusion services to share their brilliant expertise as far and wide as possible and leading on early years inclusion to raise the profile, impact and improve process to ensure we meet our children's needs early. This is a remarkable achievement in a relatively short time. In addition to the business-as-usual demands Louisa has led the development of mental health support in schools with the NHS and our emergency planning response to supporting critical events in schools. Whilst sad to need to do this she has on multiple occasions provided direct support to staff in schools when tragic events occur.

We wish Louisa all the best.

We are also delighted to confirm that Dr Louise Oland (Senior Educational Psychologist) will be stepping into this senior position and brings her experience of Worcestershire and own expertise, and we look forward to introducing her further in the New Year.

Daniela Carson, Assistant Director - All Age Disability (0 – 25)
Sarah Wilkins, Assistant Director - Education, Early Years, Inclusion and Pupil Place Planning

What we're doing to improve SEND services: December update

The local area partnership is working through the Priority Action Plan and SEND Improvement Plan following the outcome of the 2024 Ofsted and CQC inspection. During November we have been working on:

- **Coproduction workshop** – on 13th November we held a follow up workshop with parent carers on the quality and timeliness of EHCPs. Parent carers made suggestions on how to make improvements through better communication and transparency; and explored how an online system could help to track the EHCP process.
- **Children and Young People's Coproduction Lead** – we are now finalising the job description and person specification for the new role of Children and Young People's Coproduction Lead, to be advertised in January. This role will be crucial in enabling us to better involve children and young people with SEND in making changes and improvements to SEND services.
- **Independent Chair recruitment** – we have completed the interviews for an Independent Chair for the SEND and Alternative Provision Executive Board. An offer has been made and we are now carrying out the standard HR checks and processes before agreeing a start date – which will be in the New Year.
- **EHCP feedback report** – part of our quality assurance process includes collecting feedback from parent carers following the EHC Needs Assessment process where a new EHCP has been issued, or following the annual review of an existing plan. The 'you said, we did' style report is available on the Local Offer website.

Read more about our SEND improvement journey on the Local Offer website.

Worcestershire SENCo Network

SENCo Network Events 2024/2025

Feedback received from SENCOs about the blended approach of virtual and face-to-face SENCO network events has been overwhelmingly positive. SENCOs have reported that they appreciate the shared space together to discuss topics pertinent to their role and problem-solve creative approaches to shared issues or experiences. SENCOs also fed back that information received from a range of partners provided them with updated information about services, guidance and met training needs which enabled them to feel confident in carrying out their role.

The blended approach to the SENCO network will continue in 2024/25 with FREE membership for all Worcestershire schools with the slight change that there will be two locality meetings each term for the North and South of the County (rather than 3 locality meetings). This change is based on feedback received regarding travel.

The remaining 24/25 SENCO network events are:

Spring 1 National and Local SEND updates (SCH 10178)
Tuesday 4th February 2025 3:30-5:00pm Virtual Meeting

Spring 2 Locality Meetings (North and South) (SCH 10421)
Monday 24th March 2025 1:00-4:00pm (North) – Arrow Vale High School
Tuesday 25th March 2025 1:00-4:00pm (South) – Kings Hawford Prep School

Summer 1 National and Local SEND updates (SCH 10178)
Tuesday 20th May 2025 3:30 – 5:00pm Virtual Meeting

Summer 2 Inclusion Conference (fee payable)
Tuesday 24th June 2025 Venue TBC

Schools will need to book a place for <u>each individual event</u> via the CPD Portal. This will ensure you receive any recordings and presentations shared. It will also enable us to track membership and ensure venues are able to accommodate delegates.

We look forward to you joining us for this series of events.

Lumi Nova: New free App to support children (7-12) with anxiety, fears and worries

Herefordshire and Worcestershire NHS have partnered with BFB Labs to offer children and young people in Herefordshire and Worcestershire free access to Lumi Nova.

Lumi Nova: Tales of Courage is a digital therapeutic mobile game supporting children with fears, worries and anxiety. Designed for children aged 7-12 years, Lumi Nova helps children to reflect on their feelings, build resilience, and learn lifelong skills to self-manage their worries in a fun intergalactic adventure.

Lumi Nova is now accessible to families by visiting https://luminova.app/handw

Spread the Word: Check out the Lumi Nova Resource Kit for resources to support you to share Lumi Nova with other professionals and families. Resources include:

- Intro emails and information sheet for parents
- Intro emails for your team and colleagues (incl. an invitation to a Lumi Nova Discovery
- Webinar)
- Social media and website assets
- Workshop for young people

Stay connected: Subscribe to the Lumi Nova Newsletter and follow them on social media for new resources and updates that you can share with your community.

- Lumi Nova Newsletter
- Facebook
- Twitter

If you would like to order posters/leaflets or have any questions, please reach out to the Lumi Nova team at luminova@bfb-labs.com

Children's Occupational Therapy Advice Line

What is our Advice Line?

If your child finds things tricky when participating in daily occupations at home or in school, you can use our telephone Advice Line to speak with an Occupational Therapist about it. This could be a questions about your child's self - care, leisure, productivity or play skills. Our Occupational Therapists will try and provide you with advice, strategies and tips to try at home or school or be referred to other appropriate support.

When is this advice line open? Every Wednesday 9am-12pm and Thursday 1pm -4pm.

What is the advice line number? 07562 436633

Download the information poster

Flexi-Schooling Guidance

Flexi-Schooling is an arrangement between parent and school where children of compulsory school age are on roll at a school but where the provision is split between attendance at school and home education arranged by the parents or carers. The pupil attendance and welfare guidance provides some more detail and recommendations for schools, parents and carers.

Empowering Autistic Young People

The National Autistic Society (NAS) have created a collection of free resources designed to **help autistic teenagers better understand their unique experiences**. The **'Know Yourself'** collection aims to give teens the knowledge and confidence to navigate their self-discovery journey.

Resources include videos, PDFs, worksheets and downloadable guides, to support autistic teenagers in understanding what being autistic means to them.

Weblink: https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/resources-for-autistic-teenagers

The series will cover six topics in total over the course of three years. The first four topics, 'understanding yourself', 'energy accounting', 'exploring your identity' and 'setting yourself up for success' are available now on the above weblink. Young autistic people also share personal stories and strategies that have helped them.

CHOICES - Transition into Higher Education (SEND)

The Skills and Investment Team have created an informative magazine for those learners with EHC Plans who aspire to go to University. The magazine explains what steps to take, and how to access support. There is also a case study from one young person who explains their journey. Please take a look and distribute to young people and their families as appropriate.

CHOICES - Transition into Higher Education (SEND)

It sits with our other CHOICES magazines on our website, which cover a range of information to support young people in planning for their next steps:

Choices careers and advice magazines and booklets | Worcestershire County Council

Further information you may find useful to support learners with EHC Plans moving on:

- Brand new Life Beyond School Booklet issue 5 CHOICE - Life Beyond School (worcestershire.gov.uk)
- Routes into employment booklet Worcestershire Inclusive Employment: Your Pathways
- Your future opportunities website Your Future Opportunities | Worcestershire County Council
- SEND careers area Career guidance for those with SEND, SEMH, and EHCP (Education and Health Care Plan) | Worcestershire County Council

Early Years Inclusion Update

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the Early Years Inclusion Team!

EY Inclusion Team Training
Just to remind you that we currently have a FREE training offer:

Webcast: How to write an Individual Support Plan	85126	31/01/2025
How to complete an Education, Health, and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA)	90065	04/02/2025
SEND in the Early Years	90061	18/03/2025
Individual Provision Maps (IPMs) and Smart Outcomes	90063	01/04/2025

EY SENCO Clusters
Please ensure you attend our EY SENCo Clusters, these meetings include our important updates and a CPD slot, see you there! If you cannot make it, we also record them and add them to our YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/@worcschildrensservices.

SENCo Forum / Cluster Spring Term 2025	90070	04/03/2025
SENCo Forum / Cluster Summer Term 2025	90071	10/06/2025

EY Inclusion Team Website
We have been working hard to revamp our website so that it is more user friendly following your feedback, take a look https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/worcestershire-education-and-early-years-services/support-services/inclusion-support-services/early-years-inclusion.

EY Annual Reviews
We have recognised there is a need for additional training about Annual Reviews in the Early Years (now that we are seeing EHCPs earlier for children) and so we have developed training and updated the WCC Annual Review webpage with Early Years Information.

Attend our next Annual Review training to find out more!

Annual Reviews of EHCPs	90068	13/05/2025

When do we need to complete an Annual Review in the Early Years?
SEN CoP: Reviewing an EHCP page 198

Reviews of EHC plans for children aged 0 to 5
Local authorities should consider reviewing an EHC plan for a child under five at least every three to six months to ensure that the provision continues to be appropriate. Such reviews would complement the duty to carry out a review at least annually but may be streamlined and not necessarily require the attendance of the full range of professionals, depending on the needs of the child. The child's parent must be fully consulted on any proposed changes to the EHC plan and made aware of their right to appeal to the Tribunal.

Hereford and Worcester Dyslexia Association Update

Please download the latest edition of the HWDA Newsletter

Tutor vacancy
Are you passionate about teaching children with dyslexia?
Would you like to support and tutor at a wonderful, child-friendly teaching workshop?

If you are an experienced teacher or have a background in education and an interest in training as a dyslexia specialist, Hereford and Worcester Dyslexia Association would like to hear from you. There is a vacancy for a Primary and Secondary Specialist Tutors for their Bromsgrove Workshop which takes place Fridays after school during term-time between 4:30pm to 6:45pm.

For more information or to apply contact Katrina Kear-Wood: president@hwda.org.uk

Further details can be found on our website and Facebook page.

- https://hwda.org.uk/
- https://www.facebook.com/hwdyslexia

WCC EAL (English as an Additional Language) Service

From September, all schools who request support will receive a half term package of intensive weekly language support from our Specialist Practitioner including a cognitive assessment for multilingual learners which might help identify any additional needs. Following the initial intensive programme, the team will offer a monitoring visit in the next half term and each term thereafter, for the remainder of the academic year, to facilitate embedding of skills and capacity building for EAL learners. All our learners will now receive a report of assessment findings and recommendations to meet their individual needs. EAL audits are still available either via online consultation or a one hour in-person visit.

This service is free to maintained schools or can be purchased via the eStore for academies. Please email eal@worcestershire.gov.uk for more details or to make a request for involvement and look out for a range of training opportunities coming in the next academic year.

Herefordshire & Worcestershire SENDIASS

HW SENDIASS is the Special Educational Needs/Disabilities (SEND) Information, Advice and Support Service covering Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

HW SENDIASS have a dedicated team of trained advisors offering legally based and easily accessible information, advice and support on all matters relating to children and young people **(0-25)** who have or may have SEND. The service is **FREE, impartial, and confidential**.

If you identify children in your setting with SEND, you can signpost them and their families to SENDIASS for free information and support.

SENDIASS can also provide general information, advice and support to professionals working with families of children/young people with SEND. You can contact them using the details below.

SEND Training

HW SENDIASS also provide **FREE SEND Training Workshops and Webinars** for parent carers and professionals. They have released **new dates for the Spring Term**.

Workshops currently available for **Parent Carers:**

- Autism and Me (developed by autistic young people)- HW SENDIASS
- What does a good Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) look like? – HW SENDIASS
- How to check a draft Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)-HW SENDIASS ONLINE WORKSHOP
- What you need to know if your child has an additional need/ disability- HW SENDIASS ONLINE WORKSHOP
- Who are SENDIASS and how can they support me? - HW SENDIASS Online Information Session

Workshops currently available for **Professionals:**

- Autism & Me (Developed by Autistic Young People) Workshop for Professionals- HW SENDIASS
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire SENDIASS Online Information Session for Professionals
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support and The Graduated Response in Schools Workshop for Professionals- HW SENDIASS
- What Does a Good Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) look like? Workshop for Professionals- HW SENDIASS

All sessions are interactive, enabling participants to ask questions.

SENDIASS would appreciate your help in informing the families that you support about these opportunities.

- Download Training Workshops for Parent Carers A4 poster
- Download HW SENDIASS A4 poster

If you have any questions about the workshops or would like to host a FREE session at your setting, please complete the SENDIASS Training Request Form or contact SENDIASSTraining@worcestershire.gov.uk for more information.

Contact SENDIASS

Call: 01905 768153 Monday-Friday 8.30am-4pm (24hr answerphone service)
Email sendiass@worcestershire.gov.uk

Christmas Hours
The SENDIASS adviceline will be closed for Christmas from 4pm on Friday 20th December and will reopen from 8.30am on Monday 6th January 2025. You will still be able to leave a message on their answer machine and one of their advisors will call you back as soon as possible after their return.

For regular Special Educational Needs/Disabilities (SEND) updates, sign up to the SENDIASS mailing list by clicking the sign-up link on their SENDIASS Contact page or follow them on social media: Facebook-HWSENDIASS.

HW SENDIASS also have lots of useful information on their website www.hwsendiass.co.uk.

Training And Professional Development Opportunities

Annual reviews and preparing for adulthood

SENCOs from all settings will understand how to start planning for adulthood from the earliest years for those CYP with EHC Plans, and how to use person-centred approaches for their Annual Reviews. The co-constructed toolkit for annual reviews, which includes a focus on how to support Year 9 reviews onwards, will be shared and explored. There will be time for networking and sharing of good practice to enable settings to start planning person centred annual reviews for their children and young people with EHC Plans. The session will be interactive, and refreshments will be provided

Cost: Free – funded via the DBV grant

- 27 February 2025, 9.30am to 12.30pm, Worcester, course code: 10526 / 90738
- 24 March 2025, 9.30am to 12.30pm, Worcester, course code: 10526 / 90739

Webcast: Taking a person-centred approach to preparing for adulthood

A free 25-minute webcast looking at Taking a person-centred approach to preparing for adulthood. By the end of this webcast, you will understand:

- SEND Code of Practice expectations in relation to Preparation for Adulthood
- Person-centred approaches to use with children and young people

Duration: 25 minutes
Audience: All educational settings, especially secondary schools, high schools and Post 16 section

This webcast can be watched as an individual or whole school.
Cost: Free
CPD Course code: 10540

To access the webcast please request the link via CPD using your school CPD Leader login details and search course code 10540. The confirmation email will provide all details on how to access the webcast and obtain certification. If you encounter any issues please do not hesitate to contact the training & conference team on 01905 844 420 or email workforcesupport@worcestershire.gov.uk.

Educational Psychology training available during 2024-25

Coming Spring Term 2025:

- Person Centred approached and planning: February 2025, Course code: 10467
- An Introduction to the Zones of Regulation curriculum and framework: February 2025, Course code 10288

What is the SCERTS Approach for EYFS / Reception?

SCERTS: Social Communication Emotional Regulation Transactional and Support

SCERTS is an evidence-based framework for assessing children who need support with their social communication and emotional regulation skills, including autistic children. Transactional support is the support given to children to reach their goals and achieve their potential.

The SCERTS approach is not a prescriptive curriculum, and it works alongside practice in settings and home. Designed to be collaborative and to value the contributions made by settings and families to a child's development, setting goals to reflect what the child can do with the right support. A strength-based approach, so it starts with what a child can do instead of what they can't do.

To find out more about SCERTS access Stage 1 of the programme a **free webcast**. Once your setting / school has watched Stage 1 you can progress onto Stage 2.

This is specifically for those working with EYFS children in Settings / Reception Classes and School ran nurseries can access this webcast.

When booking via CPD search course code: 10462. Only one member of staff needs to be booked to get all the Stage 1 information, as once you have the webcast it can be shared amongst your EYFS team. When your school / setting is ready to access Stage 2 of SCERTS please contact the training team by emailing workforcesupport@worcestershire.gov.uk.

Book your place on the above training via **CPD** using your school CPD leader login details. Confirmations are issued at the point of booking and go to the delegate email provided. If your school requires support when booking, please contact the training team on **01905 844 420** or email workforcesupport@worcestershire.gov.uk

FREE NASEN Webinars and Spotlight Discussions for January

8th January 2025 - 15:45 - 16:45 Specialist Spotlight: Understanding Executive Functioning – Primary

10th January 2025 - 9:30 - 11:30 Meeting the Needs of Every Child (9.30am - 11.30am) | Nasen

13th January 2025 - 15:30 - 16:30 Specialist Spotlight: Understanding Executive Functioning – Secondary/FE

15th January 2025 - 16:00 - 16:30 Twilight Talks: A War Widow's Story: How Military Bereavement Affects Children and Young People (Cross-Phase)

17th January 2025 - 14:00 - 15:30 Positively Responding to Increasing Complexity in our Mainstream Schools Part 2: How to Secure a Process-driven Approach when Considering Additional Provisions in Mainstream Schools (Cross-Phase)

Resources

SEND Podcast

The SENDcast is a weekly podcast focusing on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). It is an effective way to keep up to date with policy changes, best practice and to improve your knowledge around SEN. The weekly podcast features a different guest or guests talking about a specific topic related to Special Educational Needs. Listen to SENDcast

NASEN - SEND Teacher Handbook

On 22 January 2024, nasen published an updated version of the SEND Teacher Handbook which is available for free download. This handbook has been developed as a resource for teachers to use over time as they embed inclusive practice in their classrooms: it is not intended that it is read cover-to- cover. It has been written for both primary, secondary and specialist colleagues: teaching assistants, teachers, senior leaders and headteachers. The handbook includes whole-school and whole-class approaches as well as subject-specific and condition-specific guidance.

It brings together practical examples of high-quality teaching - placing focus on removing barriers to learning, getting to know and understand individual learners, and bringing to life the graduated approach. With three completely new subject-specific chapters for History, Geography and Religious Education, it offers a wealth of ideas and information about the following key areas:

- Planning inclusive lessons
- Creating including environments
- Curriculum considerations for KS3 and 4
- Strategies to scaffold learning
- Vocabulary retentions
- Supporting learners who need additional conceptual understanding

Download the Teacher Handbook | Nasen

Shine A Light - Sharing Effective Practice

A huge congratulation to Hannah Strong for recently winning The Rhiannon Rimmer 2025 Award for Demonstrating Excellence in Inclusive Careers Practice for the work she does with specialist settings.

Hannah is the Senior Enterprise Coordinator - Worcestershire SEND & NDTI Internships Works Lead within the WCC Skills and Employability team and is passionate in developing sustainable pathways into employment for young people with SEND.

If you would like to share effective inclusive practice and 'shine a light' on what is working well, please email Helen Harris at: hharris@worcestershire.gov.uk. We know that SENCos find this peer support extremely valuable so please get in touch to share your positive experiences, case studies or effective strategies or resources that have proven successful in improving the experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

SENCo Contact Details

Please ensure that we have the current email address (school/work based) for your school's SENCo/Inclusion Leader or SEND Team to enable them to receive ongoing communications including updates, information, Bulletins, and training opportunities.

If your SENCo/Inclusion Leader has a change of email address, please email sread2@worcestershire.gov.uk to ensure your school's details are updated. Thank you.