

Noticeboard

Children, Young People and Families Service

August 2022

This electronic communications bulletin is available on the Support Services for Education website www.supportservicesforeducation.co.uk

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Hello and welcome to the second edition of our monthly newsletter. We hope the first was an effective means to communicate what is happening and going to happen. Feedback following the first would suggest it has been successful despite its infancy. We're keen to include your contributions so please do share them with us.

The newsletter will continue each month and taking a few minutes out of your day to keep connected to what is happening, what is current, and what is pending, is appreciated. Doing so helps us to keep pace with the progress and lift our heads, even if only for a few minutes, to recognise and appreciate the effort and scale of the work being undertaken by all colleagues across our services.

With this in mind the following quote may be a helpful guide to stay the course and reflect on the significance and commitment of your own achievements.

"I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do."

(Edward Everett Hale – 1784–1863).

A moment of self-reflection is a habit we should all develop and, with this in mind, wellbeing is a theme for this edition.

We hope you have all had a good summer. There is still some left so please take advantage and let's hope the good weather continues deep into the autumn.

Many thanks

Becky, Dawn, Shelley, Matt, Jo, Alison, Mike and Christian

New Staff



In our last newsletter we said goodbye to two of our long-standing Team Managers, Ruth Gilpin and Mairi MacFadyen. This month we are excited to welcome four new staff members!

Matt Greenhalgh has joined us as Interim Head of Service, Improvement Lead and says, 'It's great to have arrived in North Somerset'. Matt has over 20 years of experience working in and managing services covering: Early Help, Child in Need, Child Protection, Child in Care, Children with Disabilities, SEND and Inclusion. Matt has already received a warm welcome and is looking forward to sharing his experience alongside colleagues and partners.

Agi Gault has joined us as an Interim Team Manager for Children in Care. Many of you will know Agi from some of the Signs of Safety training she has delivered for us.

Sarah Lewis joined us a Team Manager in Family Support and Safeguarding in the North at the end of July. Charlie James will also be joining us as a Team Manager in the South in September. Both Sarah and Charlie are experienced Teams Managers and we're excited to support them in settling in and getting to know North Somerset.

Finally, we have a confirmed start date for our new Head of Corporate Parenting, Carrie Yeates, who will join us on Wednesday 19 October.

Celebrating our practice educators:

It is with great pleasure that we celebrate the success of some new Practice Educators within the Council. The following people have gained approval within the Practice Educators' Professional Standards.

At stage one:

Sam Speed, Roxanne Lock and Josie Bennett from Children's Services, and Conso Dorantes and Sue Kelly from Adult Services.

At stage two:

(so now officially able to work with any level of social work student and as an off – site Practice Educator)
Kate Chilcott now based in Front Door. For Kate this is the culmination of a long standing commitment to student learning that started in November 2015!

WEBSITE



Microsite Update

The initial work has been completed on this project. The next stage is the design, build and testing functionality which is currently sitting with the web page designers. Following this, last minute alterations and completion of governance, we expect this to be live by mid-September. A thank you to those who contributed to the project and those volunteers who engaged with the photography. There are great photos of teams that will be available on the website. We hope this brings efficiency to the application and recruitment process.

If you were involved and would like a copy of a team photo for your team please contact Christian and he can obtain one for you. Christian.Sweeney@n-somerset.gov.uk

Wellbeing and Self-care

An issue of The Knowledge from early July reiterated the importance of wellbeing and tackling stigma surrounding self-care: especially amongst men. Your mental and physical health are in a balance together and can both benefit from individual work and support from other people.

Just as a personal trainer can coach you physically, a wellbeing coach can help you assess your personal goals and how you're coping in achieving them. Talking-out your goals and the issues surrounding them helps simplify them into manageable terms. Furthermore, you'll gain a pragmatic insight into your mental health and highlight areas you may need support.

'North Somerset Council has trained about 20 wellbeing coaches and allows work time for a series of six one-hour sessions. Sessions are confidential and can be stopped by either the coachee or coach on a no-fault basis. What have you got to lose?'

Coaching is an effective way of supporting employee wellbeing, especially during times of challenge and change. It helps the individual understand their own wellbeing and how external factors can have an impact. A coach will listen to an individual and ask questions to help them explore what is happening now, how they want to move forward to identify goals and discover their own way of reaching them.

For more information please contact the **Inclusion and Corporate Development Team**. Your name will be added to the coaching pool.

Wellbeing Club

Would you like to join a monthly, hybrid face-to-face/MS Teams meeting dedicated to your wellbeing?

At the sessions you would have conversations, with a facilitator asking you simple yet effective wellbeing questions to strengthen the wellbeing mind – starting with: 'How are you feeling out of 10?' Wellbeing Club is a safe space to meet, share and listen with others in confidence.

Research shows there is a positive impact through connecting with others on your wellbeing as well as theirs. Talking to others helps you to feel happier and more at peace. Let's help remove some barriers and talk to each other.

According to the government's wellbeing survey, men report lower levels of life satisfaction than women, or any other group. We have decided to run two wellbeing clubs: one for men and one for all. There are other options being run: face to face, drop in and teams. There is a broad menu of approaches to support the health and wellbeing of our staff including, yoga, music, a 'menopause café' and others. If you are interested and want to sign up to Wellbeing Clubs or want to obtain further information, please email our wellbeing coordinator Christine Levy.

Christian.Levy@n-somerset.gov.uk





Mind of My Own

Staying with the well-being theme, we also have a focused intervention on capturing children’s voices. We consider this to be one of the most valuable tools we can use to positively influence our decisions and measure our success in providing child-centred services.

North Somerset Council are working with ‘Mind of My Own’ to gain authentic, well-documented feedback from children and young people through their fully accessible digital tools.

A Mind of My Own Pioneer Team of 11 North Somerset Council workers has been established to test these tools and shape the rollout of training with reference to the local context.

A further team of five people from Children’s Services will receive four x 3.5-hour training modules (dates TBD) to then deliver training throughout North Somerset Council. Further information will be communicated as we move closer to the launch and training events.

Child case summaries

A gentle reminder that all children receiving a service are to have case summaries completed on the system in the below format.

This is to be completed by **Friday 23 September**. It is of paramount importance that we achieve consistency and full compliance.

Please set aside a little time each day to update those you are working with to mitigate any last-minute rush.

- About the child
- Current situation
- Danger statement/safety goals
- Safety plan and back-up plan
- People – Key people only
(parents/wider family if significant)
- Date of next review/hearing/conference
- If relevant, please add in Family time arrangements



The following policies are complete or in the final stages before being uploaded to Tri.x

Practice Framework

- Supervision Policy
- Workforce Development
- Quality Assurance Framework
- Practice Standards
- Manager Standards

In consultation:

- Strategy Discussion: Practice Guidance on Strategy
- Permanence Strategy
- Children’s Journey

Social Work Organisational Resilience Diagnostic (SWORD)

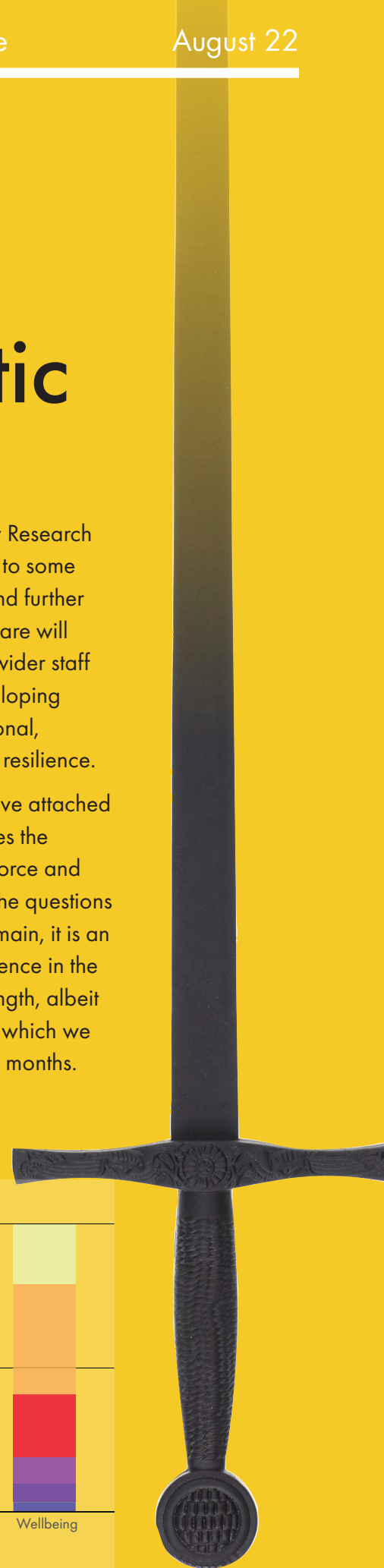
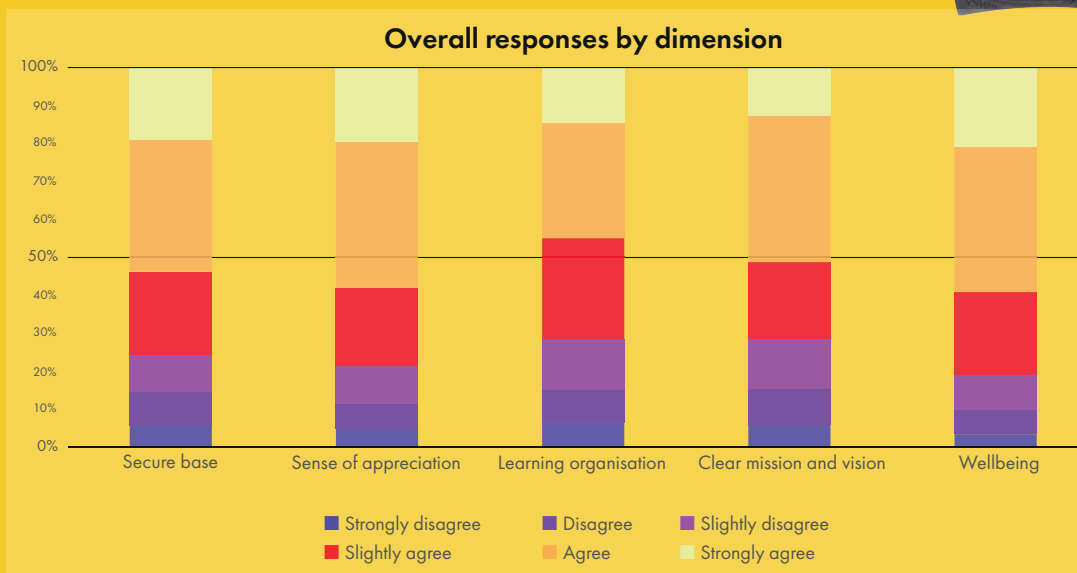
A huge thank you to everyone who completed the SWORD survey. While the acronym states social worker, it was applied to both social workers as well as alternatively qualified staff. Your contribution helps inform the fullest picture possible for understanding our workforce.

The SWORD survey did land shortly after the whole council staff survey, the extra effort to engage with something more targeted and focused on working with children and families is valued.

Organisational resilience is directly related to wellbeing, job satisfaction and retention across our workforce. The

metrics have been returned by Research in Practice, these were subject to some delay outside of our control and further analysis. A contrast and compare will be undertaken alongside the wider staff survey which will lead to developing actions to strengthen our personal, professional and organisation resilience.

To keep you in the loop we have attached a headlines graph that captures the positions of those in our workforce and how they have responded to the questions under each dimension. In the main, it is an encouraging picture and resilience in the organisation is a growing strength, albeit there is room for improvement which we hope to achieve in the coming months.



North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSSCP)

The North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSSCP) undertook a refresh in Spring 2022. An Interim Independent Chair, Ivan Powell, has been appointed to provide independent scrutiny. In addition, a Development Lead/Business Manager has been appointed for a 6-month contract.

In May 2022 key Safeguarding Leads from the statutory organisations met to discuss and agree the working arrangements going forward including Sub/Working Groups, frequency of meetings and reporting arrangements. Chairs and Vice Chairs of all Sub/Working Groups have been identified and Terms of Reference agreed. Reporting arrangements between the Executive and the Sub-Group leads has been strengthened and a Workplan agreed.

The areas of practice which have been identified for specific focus over the coming months are Neglect and Child Exploitation.

We will keep you updated on progress.



Mark Riddell (National Implementation Advisor Care Leavers)

Mark Riddell MBE, National Implementation Adviser for Care leavers, Department for Education will be visiting North Somerset on 6 September 2022.

Mark last visited us in June 21, commenting, 'I was impressed by the leadership and management approach that was ambitious,

aspirational and I got a real sense of passion and commitment to have a better offer for Care Leavers across the whole service area'. He noted the Ofsted 2020 judgement deemed as 'good' for care leavers and felt it was clearly evident why this judgement had been secured.

Mark gave feedback and made recommendations, his return will give opportunity to update him on our progress with reference to our strengthening participation work which Beth, as our Young Director, to help drive the voice and choice for our young people.

Collaborative practice reviews June 2022

Focus:
Children in Care

Reviews completed **20**

Outstanding **1**

Good **15**

Requires Improvement **4**

She (sw) was lush to have, made me feel comfortable and safe

When I had a sw, she never called me back, it's not nice not getting a reply

Good Practice

- Well written records
- ISRO letters
- Regular quality supervision
- Family involvement
- Direct work with children

Weaker Practice

- Inconsistent family work
- Children confused
- Case notes unfinished
- Children not seen
- Poor care plans
- Unhelpful case summaries

Quality Assurance

The above graphic is a brief representation of key issues from the recent Children in Care collaborative reviews.

Once again, a huge thank you to everyone who helped complete these whether allocated practitioners or reviewers. This is incredibly important work

and your continued support to test and challenge different aspects of practice is not only of paramount importance but deeply appreciated.

The wider findings and broader context will be delivered by Jo Ratcliffe, our Head of Quality Assurance in the coming weeks

Mockingbird Information Sessions



MOCKINGBIRD
FAMILY
MODEL™

The Fostering
Network

This is a 1 ½ hour session for all Children Services, including existing and recently appointed Staff of all levels and across the whole directorate.

The aim is to raise awareness of the Mockingbird Family Model across Children's Services and ensure everyone has access to the latest information.

Come along and find out more about how Mockingbird in North Somerset Fostering Service helps to improve the outcomes for children looked

after, prevents children having unplanned moves and retains foster carers.

Choose from one of two Teams sessions

- 11 November 2022 – 9.30-11 am
- 5 December 2022 – 9.30-11 am

This event will take place on Teams. Contact Sally Woodlock for more information: sally.woodlock2@n-somerset.gov.uk

Beth's Bit

Hello all, and welcome to another "Beth's Bit". I hope you have all had a chance to enjoy this glorious weather we have been experiencing and just in time for the school holidays too!

By now I'm hoping that some of you will start to have noticed or possibly have already been involved with some of the projects going on within North Somerset. For those who haven't heard, let me elaborate.

We recently welcomed the SEE monster to our shore! The SEE monster is a world-first art installation which will showcase a thriving garden, a 10-metre-high waterfall with renewable designs that aims to ignite global conversations around our sustainable future. The installation will be open in Weston-super-Mare from August until October. So, make sure to book your tickets as soon as possible! Alongside the SEE monster, Weston-super-Mare has welcomed various wall murals in several new locations to contribute to the street art trail! Weston Wallz hopes to grow the towns' cultural identity and boost local business. **Find a list of the artists and where to find their murals**



Another must attend event would be Thatcher's family open day next month in Sandford. The famous cider company is set to welcome crowds to their factory for one day on Saturday 17 September from midday until 5pm, and until 8pm for the music stage. At this event there will be entertainment for all ages, live music from local bands and plenty of local craft and product stalls. There will be trailer tours of the orchards and Thatcher's are said to be revealing some of the secrets of cider making!

During the school holidays and this heatwave, the young people and children in our local authority have continued to help us to work co-productively in a positive way to make change. Some of these things have included running young person's interview panels before a professional panel and then using the thoughts and feelings of young people to influence the decision-making process. Forming several focus groups surrounding Education, Employment, Training and Housing to see where we are at, and where we could be better. We also now run practitioner events for our child protection conferences. You can make yourself more aware of what's happening, and help be a part of the on-going changes. Please contact our Independent Safeguarding Reviewing Manager, Julie Bishop at

Julie.Bishop@n-somerset.gov.uk

I know many of us are looking forward to “the big thank you event” coming up in September for our fantastic foster carers. If you haven’t already, could you send a short video clip of yourself saying “thank you” to our foster carer’s to

Bethany.swann@n-somerset.gov.uk.

If you would like an alternative to providing a video clip – you can send a short sentence which can then be added into the presentation too. This event is so we can show our carers how truly appreciated by us they are.

As always it has been a pleasure to update you on some of the things going

on in our wider community, as well as within Children’s Services – and I am excited to discuss how the events went in the next issue.

I truly hope you have enjoyed reading this and if you want to know anything more about something that was mentioned in the blog today, please don’t hesitate to get in touch with any questions, comments, or queries :)

If you have bright moments that you’d like to see highlighted in the blog or you’d like to mention anything – please email: Bethany.swann@n-somerset.gov.uk

Training

All Staff Conference:

This is scheduled for 29 September at the Winter Gardens, the theme of the conference will be relationships, identity and culture. We have secured Dez Holmes from Research in Practice and are exploring our second keynote speakers. We’ll be able to share the agenda for the day with you soon.

Apprenticeships:

As part of our retention strategy, we are exploring the viability and role apprenticeships can play in development for our staff. If this is of interest, please explore the search function in the link and approach you manager if there are options that may be of interest to you in your current role/service.

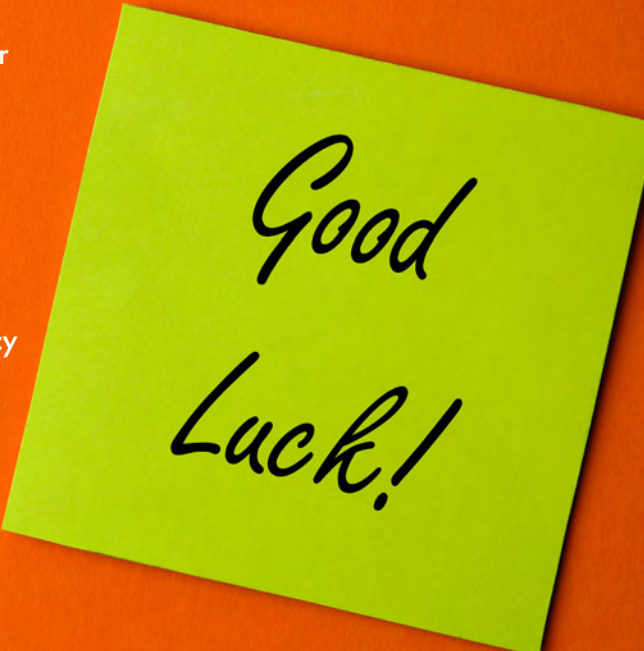
Internal training happening in September

- Advanced Inter-Agency Child Protection UPDATE
- Inter-Agency Child Protection – Basic Awareness
- Cyber protect training for YOS
- Young Peoples Substance Misuse
- WRAP to raise awareness to Prevent
- Reflective Supervision
- Fair to All – For Manager
- Reflective Supervision
- Child Sexual Exploitation (Awareness Raising)
- Domestic Abuse Basic Awareness
- ADVANCED Inter-Agency Child Protection

Joint Training:

North Somerset Exploitation Awareness Professionals Day. Tuesday 8 November 2022, 9am-4.30pm, Winter Gardens, Weston-super-Mare

This event has been jointly organised by North Somerset Violence Reduction Unit and North Somerset Council Children’s Services



Good
Luck!