

Noticeboard Children, Young People and Families Service

July 2022

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

In this week's edition

- Fostering Team Get in a scrum!
- North Somerset SEND Strategy
- Welcoming refugees from Ukraine
- Bye For Nool!
- Pause Project
- Partners in Practice
- Beth's Bit
- Upcoming Training on CPD



Following feedback from many of you, we are launching a monthly newsletter. This initial version is larger than expected as so much has happened in recent months. In our newsletter we will share information about what's happening both within and outside our service, share good news and good practice stories and communicate about any changes and issues we may need to pick up and respond to as a service.

It is very much our newsletter and therefore we would like to invite you to send us information you'd like including – it would be great to hear about team days, any 'shout outs' for teams or individuals (including photographs!) and anything else you think it would be good to share. Please send anything you'd like including to lyndsey.mouland@n-somerset.gov.uk.

It's been a very busy first half to 2022, our introduction to the year did not have the easiest start following our Ofsted focussed visit at the end of 2021. We're proud and pleased to observe how we continue to strengthen our practice and develop evidence based approaches in our engagement with

children and their families. Following our visit from Ofsted we have updated our Service Plan and your Heads of Service have shared this with you and will continue to seek your expertise and insight into the whole service development. Our plan will also provide a structure for team specific plans. As a reminder, on the right are the six key priority areas.

We are in the process of planning for a staff conference on 29 September and are really looking forward to being able to bring everyone together face to face after what has been a very long time. It's been great to hear about some of the team away days which have been happening recently and just how much everyone has enjoyed the opportunity to come together.

As acknowledged in a message sent from Sheila Smith (Director of Children's Services) at the end of May following the publication of the Independent Care Review into Children's Services and in advance of the publication of the national safeguarding review into the deaths of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson. We recognise that we are facing challenges in the service currently with some colleagues leaving us and we're very aware of the additional pressure this puts on you all.

We want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the impact and reassure you that recruitment and retention is a priority for us all. We have developed Workforce Development Strategy, publication of this document is imminent. This includes activity which is already in train such as: the development of a Microsite to enable us to promote all of the positives about working in Children's Services in North Somerset; clarification of our staff benefits; and, a refresh of our Learning and Development Strategy.

In recent weeks we have been successful in our recruitment to Team Manager positions in Family Support and Safeguarding and to a number of newly qualified social worker posts. This is great news and we look forward to welcoming new colleagues over the coming weeks.

All that's left to say for now is thank you so much for your continued hard work and commitment to our children and families, you really are doing a great job and we're proud to be working alongside you.

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

six key priority areas

Area 1 – Continue to develop an experienced, skilled, confident, and stable workforce

Area 2 – Improve our quality assurance, performance management and management information systems to strengthen and support high quality practice

Area 3 – Identify and intervene effectively and proportionately to support children and families in need of help and/or protection: Right Help, Right Time, Right Place

Area 4 – Ensure delivery of high quality, consistent practice, supervision and support through a strength-based practice model

Area 5 – Ensure delivery of needs led, consistent care and provision for children in our care and for care leavers

Area 6 – Ensure there is high quality support in place to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), including when transitioning into adulthood





Fostering Team Get in a scrum!

On Saturday 9 April, North Somerset’s fostering team attended the prestigious local derby between Weston Rugby Club & Weston Hornets.

With a big attendance anticipated, the fostering team worked as volunteers on the day, assisting with various roles to ensure the day went smoothly for the Rugby Club.

The fostering gazebo was also set up pitch-side as a hub for people to gain more information about

fostering in North Somerset. With everyone wearing fostering t-shirts and/or hoodies, there was a real presence in every area of the ground.

The day was a great success with around 2000 people in attendance and Weston Rugby Club claiming a 20-18 victory in a

fantastic match. There was a great sense of community, highlighted by two organisations working together to support each other and it is hoped this will continue in the future.

A huge thanks to everyone who volunteered.

North Somerset SEND Strategy

In North Somerset, we want all children and young people with SEND to be safe and valued, to be ambitious for their futures and to achieve their full potential. For more information on our strategy, please follow the link for more information:

[North Somerset SEND Strategy – SEND and You](#)

Our Vision
In North Somerset, we want all children and young people with SEND to be safe and valued, to be ambitious for their futures and to achieve their full potential.

Our aims
Need-led services: To embed a needs-led approach to shaping and delivering services in every service or agency, prioritising children's safety and wellbeing in everything we do.
Children's needs identified and met at the earliest opportunity: To ensure that all professionals in North Somerset are skilled, well informed and confident in identifying children's needs and can respond to meet needs at the earliest opportunity.
Inclusive systems, services and communities: Design (and redesign) where we meet our services and systems to be barrier-free through co-production with parents, carers and professionals. Creating settings and communities in which children and young people with SEND feel a deep sense of belonging, are valued equally and able to access the support they need to enjoy all aspects of life.
Ambitious pathways, high quality opportunities, meaningful participation in society: To reflect in all that we do, that alongside their additional needs, children and young people have a wide range of diverse talents and unique perspectives. It is our responsibility to encourage their talents and support them to pursue their goals always embracing an aspirational approach for our children and young people.
Resilient, flexible and cooperative partnership working: To continue to build the strong partnerships with parents, carers and professionals across multiple agencies and disciplines, recognising the value of Co-production, expertise and closing the gaps between services. Collectively approach to all our provision.
Active, and timely communication: To ensure that access to clear, accessible and information to help us achieve our work in SEND.

Outcomes

1. There is an adopted SEND Strategy which enables implementation of SEND reforms. These reforms are driven by better leadership across the local area which is well coordinated and effective.
2. There is enough capacity within the local area to recognise need, and provide support implementing the SEND reforms effectively.
3. The standards achieved by Children and Young People with SEND are in line with statistical neighbours. Increased parental confidence of parents and carers that mainstream school will meet their children's needs.
4. All agencies contribute fully and in a timely way to Education Health and Care Plans which are high quality and appropriate, with processes in place for monitoring the quality of plans.
5. Arrangements for joint commissioning are well developed.
6. There are robust systems to track outcomes for children and young people with SEND across the partnership. These outcomes and associated targets are regularly reviewed by senior leaders.

How will we deliver these outcomes?
We have created a SEND Improvement Plan which sets out all the work that we are going to do to deliver the outcomes described. It includes actions from a range of partners and also makes clear what progress we intend to make over time, what impact we stand for this to have on outcomes and how we will know when the change has happened. All of the actions are to be delivered within the next 18 months. You can find out more about this in the SEND Improvement Plan. <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/SENDImprovementPlan.pdf>

North Somerset SEND Partners
This Strategy is for everyone who provides a service for children and young people in North Somerset, each has a role to play in helping achieve our vision. This includes people who provide leisure facilities or transport services for children, Schools, Colleges, Children's Social Care and Health Providers. Whether you are a provider or a parent or carer of children and young people, we consider your contribution to be valuable. But making sure our commitments become reality are three main organisations. These are North Somerset Council (NSC), Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire CCG (BSSG) and North Somerset Partners and Carers Working Together (NSPCWT). But the presence of children and young people that us that they have everything they need and a pathway which will take them towards the life they want to live.

Where you find more
Please have a look at the North Somerset Local Office, which has all the information about what's happening in SEND in North Somerset. <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/northsomersetlocaloffice/>

Welcoming refugees from Ukraine

North Somerset Council is supporting the efforts to resettle families and individuals effected by the war in Ukraine.

We have responsibility for developing a Welcome Point at Bristol airport, identified as one of the routes into the United Kingdom for Ukrainian refugees within the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and Families Scheme. This is currently ongoing and is looking to be implemented and opening the Welcome Point within the next couple of weeks.

We are also involved in the Homes for Ukraine Scheme which is a scheme whereby a sponsor from the United Kingdom who is offering to host individuals/families within their homes matches themselves with individuals/families from Ukraine. There is a joint application process and if accepted a visa will be issued enter the United Kingdom.

The Councils responsibility for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme is to complete suitability checks on all the accommodation, ensure Data Barring Checks are completed on all adults living in such accommodation and complete welcome checks for families with children. None of these checks relate to the visa process and will not stop the process allowing the individuals/families entry to the United Kingdom.

Any enquires with regards the Schemes please forward to the Refugee Resettlement e mail address refugeeresettlementteam@n-somerset.gov.uk





We are sadly saying goodbye to two of our wonderful Team Managers in Family Support and Safeguarding this month.

Ruth Gilpin, Team Manager, retires mid-July and has worked for North Somerset in a range of roles and departments for 40 years!



This photo taken at a recent team day shows what she does best, bringing teams together to celebrate their great work, honouring our fantastic practitioners and their achievements. Ruth's positivity and desire for motivating us to drive forward to continuously review how we support and how this can be strengthened for the benefit of children and families in North Somerset is well known.

Ruth has developed working relationships with so many colleagues in children's services and we have a retirement event planned where we will celebrate Ruth's commitment to North Somerset and her achievements as a Team Manager in Family Support and Safeguarding over recent years. Retirement will now allow Ruth time to enjoy her love of the coast and spend more time with family.

We are also saying good bye to

Mairi MacFadyen at the end of July.

Mairi has been a Team Manager in Family Support and Safeguarding in North Somerset since 2012. During this time Mairi has become well known and respected for being an incredibly supportive and compassionate social work manager.

Mairi's passion and commitment to relational social work is her strength. Her teams have always felt highly supported and also encouraged to ensure we deliver child focused support even when we have been stretched. We celebrated Mairi's achievements and honoured her commitment at her leaving tea party last month. Social workers who have maintained relationships with Mairi since leaving her team were able to join us and reflect how highly her support and social work knowledge is valued.

Mairi will be moving back to Scotland which has been a long-held desire and will allow her more time with her family.



We wish Ruth and Mairi well in their retirement and know that they will enjoy all the exciting opportunities that their retirement will bring. I am sure you will all join us in thanking them for their years of relentless energy, commitment and compassion.



Pause Project

Pause is a nationally branded and accredited programme which identifies and works with women who have had previous children removed due to safeguarding concerns. The aim of the programme is to create a 'pause' in the cycle of pregnancy and removal and to support women to deal with entrenched detrimental patterns of behaviour and to give them choice around conception and parenthood.

North Somerset has scoped the levels of need along with colleagues in Bristol and South Gloucestershire. We are pleased to confirm that a successful project bid has enabled a model to be delivered across BNSSG. The delivery partner, One25 in Bristol has a proven track record of delivering this work in Bristol for the last three years.

We are excited to confirm that, we now have an appointed worker for North Somerset, we have identified all eligible women and these women will now be contacted and offered the programme.

Pause in North Somerset is currently in pilot. At present there is scope to work alongside eight women, currently five are engaged and eligibility for another two is under review, referrals are still being accepted. The funding is reviewed in August 2023. Pause is nationally recognised and has been in

established in Bristol for the past five years, our neighbours in South Gloucestershire are also commissioning PAUSE. So far, the early engagement with our first five mothers has been very encouraging, anecdotally the success at this early stage is very favourable when compared to other mothers in other local authorities. The participation, openness and availability to the work has been fantastic.

Lizzy is the lead for PAUSE in North Somerset, Lizzy is happy and willing to present to teams, please make contact directly via the following email:

Lizzy.Reakes@one25.org.uk

Thanks to Mollie Brett, for her support and assistance with this project. If you would like to learn more, please follow the link to the website –

<https://www.pause.org.uk/>

Partners in Practice

We have been working with North Tyneside Children's Social Care since 2020, they have been our 'partners in practice' and we have found their support a great help.

We have very nearly completed Phase 2 of improvements to the Front Door into Children's Social Care. North Tyneside assisted in undertaking work with our partners to ensure we are all working together to understand and implement a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This has been a significant piece of work which has been positive in developing our multi-professional relationships. We are planning to 'go live' with the MASH in July.

We have welcomed and valued the support from our North Tyneside partners, and we can now move forward with confidence.

Practice Framework:

Many of you will have been involved in discussions to help us to define what our **Practice Framework**¹ is in North Somerset. We have now completed this work and the Practice Framework is available via on Tri.x. We are confident this will support us to strengthen our identity, what we stand for as a team and what we are all working to achieve for our children and families. Thank you for your contributions to this and please share this with new colleagues joining us – next step is the refresh of the Practice Standards.

Team Spotlight:

This is a new development that is being introduced as part of our

Quality Assurance Framework. The first Team Spotlight will be on the Fostering Service in July, followed by Leaving Care in September. Team Spotlight involves a full day evaluation to explore a team's functioning, review of progress and the effectiveness of their action plan. Areas of exploration include:

- Culture of the team
- Quality of Social Work practice
- Quality assurance within the team
- Management oversight, challenge and support
- Systemic issues

The Effective Support for Children and Families in North Somerset Guidance:

This is in development and the work is being undertaken by the partnership.

Quality Assurance:

Collaborative Practice Reviews, Dip and Thematic Audits are becoming business as usual. Summary documents following this work will help us close the feedback loop and translate the lessons into learning and support us to strengthen our practice. The Quality Assurance Framework is in draft and will be launched in late July/August 2022.

Child Protection processes:

In this **update**² we have focussed

on Danger Statements, Safety Goals and Scaling Questions, a how to guide, as well as a brief document responding to some of the questions raised at the recent refresher training. Please follow this link Further Signs of Safety resources are available on the **signs of safety knowledge bank**³. Please speak to your knowledge bank lead in your team.

Policy, Protocol and Procedural Updates:

find **updated documents**⁴ by using the search function.

National Learning – Local Application:

Reminder to go through the review and presentation in relation to Arthur and Star in your teams.

All Staff Conference:

This is scheduled for 29 September at Winter Gardens, the theme of the conference will be relationships, identity and culture. We are currently exploring a few interesting options for keynote speakers – updates to follow.

Apprenticeships:

As part of our retention strategy, we are exploring the viability and role **apprenticeships**⁵ 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.

1 <https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms2/media/15115/31063-north-somerset-practice-framework-g.pdf>

2 https://www.proceduresonline.com/northsomerset/cs/local_resources.html

3 <https://knowledgebank.signsofsafety.net/subscribe>

4 <https://www.proceduresonline.com/northsomerset/cs/>

5 <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/?routes=Care-services,Education-and-childcare>

Beth's Bit

Hello all, grab a seat, grab some snacks and welcome yourself to the first edition of my blog! Here is just a little bit about me before we begin: My name is Beth and I'm the not-so – newly appointed young director for children's services in North Somerset. My role is ensuring that the young people and children who receive our service are having their thoughts, feelings and wishes relayed back to the service so we can make things better for them and find out what we're already doing that works well for them.

It's safe to say that the start of this year has been an absolute whirlwind. Between Storms Eunice, Dudley and Franklin and we have witnessed the devastating events still unfolding in Ukraine; it's safe to say that all services are running full speed ahead to help out where they can.

Not long after that the world started to face the price of everything going up, from fuel to food, rent and gas. It's safe to say that we are still dealing with unprecedented times and that can take it's toll after a while so I feel it's important to highlight a few of the more positive moments from the beginning of this year. It's been so great to see everyone banding together and working so hard to help others in our community and I'm so delighted to discuss some of the bright moments from not just within children's services but within our greater community as well.

The bright moments from our greater community include Puxton park's donation of 10,000 medical kits for Ukrainian families and Weston Lions raising nearly £2,000 for Ukrainian refugees. Another bright spot to celebrate, was our very own Councillor Gibbons role in the "achievements of women in North Somerset" article run on the Weston Mercury. Councillor Gibbons



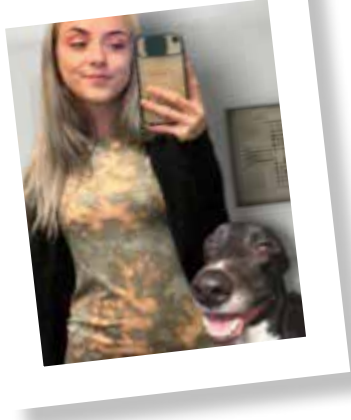
talks about her role as a woman within the council and discusses the changes she has helped to bring forward to our community.

Whilst the outside events of the world strongly affect our day to day lives, as well as our working lives within children's services it is also important to remember the unknown events people are coping with in their day to day lives and the need for being kind to ourselves, and others – especially those that receive a service from us.

Something I have been drawn to this month is using and understanding language that cares. As a service we are used to following forms and using the language that we've been taught BUT do we ever wonder, do the young people understand what I'm saying?

Do the young people engaging with me even like these words being used? If the answer is no to either of these questions, then language that cares might be something you'd like to look into too.

Pictured above are some snaps from the children in care awards day and safe to say it was an absolute success! The sun shined brightly throughout the day and there was an abundance of smiles from both children and staff alike.



A lot of planning and hard work from various teams created an all – together unforgettable day – from the bouncy castles and dancing to rugby and forming positive relationships with the police, there was something for everyone to enjoy. But we can't forget to give special thanks to our foster carers who helped in the planning process and by providing such a range of crafts and activities for the young people to make long lasting memories. It truly was an amazing experience and I thoroughly look forward to the next one!

I look forward to the months going forward and updating you all with some direct quotes from our care leavers forum and North Somerset Youth Parliament, some interview's with different teams/ heads of service and just generally spreading news about all the great things we have going on in our little town. I truly hope you have enjoyed reading this and if you want to know anything more about something that was mentioned in the blog, please don't hesitate to get in touch with any questions, comments or queries.

I'm aware that some staff still work from home and I find that sometimes it's nice to be able to put a name to a face so

for reference I thought I would include a picture of me and my oversized puppy Rex.

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

Moving through to April and May I was thrilled to take part in a full council meeting. I was able to witness the councillors and executive members in action! I was also invited there to talk about some of the things that I have been working on. Some of those things included being a part of the corporate parenting panel and chairing the North Somerset Youth Parliament.

I have also recently worked alongside Ella Bunting and presented at a regional conference for care experienced adults in the South West. The presentation informs on the education, employment and training aspects of the regional survey and North Somerset's response to that.

The presentation also looks at elements of best practice and specifically about the next steps fund available to care leavers in our local authority and how beneficial it has been to some of our young people.

Upcoming Training on CPD

- 12 July 2022 – Return from Missing interview Training
- 14 July 2022 – Signs of Safety22
- 14 September 2022 – Cyber protection training for YOS
- 15 September 2022 – Cyber-crime
- 16 September 2022 – NSC Substance Misuse Service
- 22 September 2022 – WRAP to raise awareness to Prevent
- 28 September 2022 – Child Sexual Exploitation
(Awareness Raising)
- 28 September 2022 – Domestic Abuse Basic Awareness

<https://www.n-somersetcpd.org.uk/index.asp>

