

## Noticeboard Children, Young People and Families Service

This electronic communications bulletin is available on the North Somerset Children's Service tri.x area [www.proceduresonline.com/northsomerset/cs/local\\_resources.html](http://www.proceduresonline.com/northsomerset/cs/local_resources.html)

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As always, thank you to everyone who has taken the time to contribute to this month's newsletter. It's been a very busy month with many successful events, positive feedback, and progress across the services. This will be the last newsletter before Christmas with the next edition scheduled for January, please bear this in mind if you would like to submit anything.



## Exploitation Awareness Day

**Councillor Gibbons – Exploitation Awareness Day**

**North Somerset Children's Services in collaboration with the Violence Reduction Unit held a well-attended Exploitation Awareness Day at the Winter Gardens on the 8th of November including Councillor Gibbons, Councillor Canniford, Chief Executive Officer Jo Walker, and Director of Children's services Sheila Smith.**

There were informative presentations from teams within Children's Services and external partners including St. Giles Trust, Unseen, Barnardo's, Prevent, Family Wellbeing and Topaz from Avon and Somerset Police. They reminded us that exploitation can be experienced in many different ways

and is often difficult to see. As with many of our responsibilities when working with children, being vigilant to exploitation is everyone’s responsibility. The day was a brilliant opportunity to reiterate this through sharing knowledge and good practice.

The event was also a great opportunity to network among local partners and strengthen multiagency connections. Developing these communication pathways enables us to share information to prevent and respond to safeguarding situations quickly.



Councillor Gibbons said:

“The Exploitation Awareness Day was a valuable opportunity for us to hear about the dangers faced by children, young people, and vulnerable adults who are at risk of becoming victims.

We know that exploitation happens in all areas of the country – even in our communities, towns, villages, and cities.

I was so pleased to be asked to lead the morning session

– I learned so much and was impressed by the fantastic work being done to protect and support victims, to address the causes of exploitation, and to identify and stop perpetrators from committing further crimes/abuse. I want to thank everyone involved for a challenging and informative day where we were able to share best practice, expand our networks and learn.”

Click the links too access organisations from the day:

- [BASE \(Barnardos\)](#)
- [Crimestoppers](#)
- [Family Wellbeing](#)
- [Prevent](#)
- [Safer Stronger](#)
- [St Giles](#)
- [Topaz](#)
- [Unseen](#)
- [Violence Reduction Unit](#)
- [Weston College](#)
- [Youth Offending Service](#)
- [Young Victim’s Service](#)

## Family Wellbeing Team present at the Child Exploitation Awareness Day

**Laura Mitchell-Miles and Tracey Wells (Family Wellbeing Team Managers) presented a service overview and case study to an audience of multi-agency partners at the Child Exploitation Awareness Day.**

The aim of their presentation was to raise awareness of how the Family Wellbeing Team support children and young people who are at risk of exploitation and shared an example of a young person who went missing. Laura and Tracey explained each step taken, highlighted the holistic support provided by the team,

and how they worked closely with partner agencies to gather information, risk assess, safety plan, and understand Lucy’s lived experience and what was needed to keep her safe.

The presentation ended with a video of a young person and her mum who received support and wanted to share their powerful



story and gratitude of the help they received.

The team are in the process of setting up a steering group of young people, who have been at risk of exploitation, to understand what the service can do differently to support young people who may need this help.

# Guidance on Health Forms for Adoption

## Getting it right will avoid delays!

Children are booked in for adoption medical examinations by social workers (SW) through the Children in Care Adoption Team (Sirona Care & Health) at the following generic e-mail address: [sirona.adoptionbnssg@nhs.net](mailto:sirona.adoptionbnssg@nhs.net)

The Agency Medical Adviser for children in North Somerset is currently Dr Emma Bradley.

When sending through the notification, the following documentation should be emailed:

- Fully completed Coram BAAF consent form Part A (completed by SW)
- Chronology
- Date of proposed meeting for the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) to consider making a decision that the child should be placed for adoption
- Consent for medical examination of the child

In addition, the following health forms should be sent as follows:

- Form PH (health of the birth parent)
  - Completed by SW and parent
- Form M (obstetric report on mother)
  - Completed by SW and doctor/midwife
- Form B (neonatal report on child)
  - Completed by SW and doctor/midwife/nurse from child's birth records
- CoramBAAF consent form Part B signed by parents.
  - This consent form must accompany Forms PH, M & B.

- This consent is used to access health information relevant to both the child and their birth parent/s.
- Please ensure that you obtain the details of the GP Practice that each parent is registered with when completing the form; the AMA will contact the parent/s' GP in order to request parental health information required for the adoptive process.
- Parents should be assured that only the AMA will have access to their medical records for these purposes and the records won't be shared with SWs or parties to proceedings.

Once obtained, social workers should send the consent forms and PH, M & B forms to:

[ubh-tr.uhbchildprotectionteam@nhs.net](mailto:ubh-tr.uhbchildprotectionteam@nhs.net)

In addition, the M & B forms should be sent to the maternity department where the child was born:

St Michael's Hospital –

[ubh-tr.maternitysafeguarding@nhs.net](mailto:ubh-tr.maternitysafeguarding@nhs.net)

Southmead Hospital –

[nbn-tr.SpecialistMidwives@nhs.net](mailto:nbn-tr.SpecialistMidwives@nhs.net)

The Agency Medical Adviser can then access relevant medical information for both the child and the parent/s. This can include accessing records through 'Connecting Care' or any other system/source, such as a GP Practice.



If no consent can be obtained, an application should be made to court for a court order. The local authority will need to demonstrate the attempts that have been made to try and obtain consent.

The Agency Medical Adviser will complete an adoption medical report, which will include a health summary to be inserted into the child's permanence report (CPR). However, without the health forms being completed or without a court order permitting access to health records, the Agency Medical Adviser will be unable to provide a compliant adoption medical report and a decision to place the child for adoption by the ADM will not be able to proceed.

It should be noted that all the health forms mentioned above should have been completed when a child becomes

a child looked after by a local authority through either:

- being a child in care (i.e. subject to an interim or full care order) or;
- being provided with accommodation under s.20 for longer than 24 hours.

However, if this step was missed when the child became looked after, it is vital that the process for the forms as set out above is followed in order to avoid any delays in the adoptive process.

If social workers have any queries about the process or experience any difficulties in completing any of the required health forms, please contact the solicitor with conduct of the case.

Lorraine Sherman  
Solicitor, Childcare Legal Team



## Covid-19 booster and flu jabs for health and care staff

**Colleagues from across our local health and care system have come together in a short film to share their reasons for getting their flu and Covid-19 booster vaccinations. [View the film.](#)**

We're heading into a challenging winter and contracting Covid-19, flu or both can be very serious, particularly for those at risk. Getting your flu and Covid-19 vaccinations are two of the most important things you can do to keep yourself and those you care for safe this winter.

Frontline health and care staff are entitled to a free Covid-19 booster. To get your booster, you can:

Book an appointment using the online National Booking Service or by calling 119. Frontline health

and social care staff can self-declare to book their Covid-19 seasonal booster.

Attend any of the walk-in clinics in our area without an appointment – details of these can be found at [www.grabajab.net](http://www.grabajab.net).

Other groups who are entitled to a free seasonal Covid-19 booster include people who are aged 50+, pregnant, at high risk from Covid-19, and carers. You can find out more about the Covid-19 vaccine on the NHS website.

To get your seasonal Covid-19 vaccination booster dose you can take up the invite your GP surgery sends you, book an appointment using the national booking system, or find a walk-in appointment at a local vaccination site. You can have your seasonal booster if it's been at least three months since you had your previous dose.

For more information, contact:

Samantha Cross,  
Covid-19 Manager

Christine Levy,  
Wellbeing Co-ordinator,  
01275 888 109

# Mockingbird

**On Saturday 1 October our Constellation two Hub Home Carers Rachel and Kevin Hansford celebrated their 2nd anniversary with a get together at Puxton Park in Hewish.**

They were joined by all their satellite carers and young people that are part of their constellation. Their liaison Worker – Melissa Fowler and Project Officer Sally Woodlock also popped along to join in the fun. All the children enjoyed themselves and there was lots of cake!!! Everyone had lots of fun.

In 2020 Rachel and Kevin became our second Hub Home, and their original launch was virtual as it was during the height of the pandemic. This was a first for North Somerset Fostering Service, but it was a huge success. Since their launch Rachel and Kevin have excelled with their constellation. As they launched during lockdown, they could only offer virtual activities,

but these were a huge success. They always ensured that they were available virtually and at the end of the phone for anyone in their constellation even when they just needed a shoulder. Since the restrictions have started to ease, the activities that Rachel and Kevin have organised have included a coffee and spa day at their home, group activities on the beach, and a trip to Monkey World.

During Lockdown all our constellation hub home carers worked hard and supported their satellite carers. They implemented virtual activities and were always at the end of the phone if any of their satellite carers needed extra support or even just a chat. Lockdown was a



learning curve for everyone, but without their continued support and commitment to our satellite carers and the young people they look after North Somerset Mockingbird service would not have been able to thrive.

We are very lucky in North Somerset to have such dedicated people helping our carers and young people.

Sally Woodlock  
Mockingbird Project Officer.

## Change of date for The Mentoring Training

Please see the change of date for the mentoring training.

The workshop will be held on Tuesday 13 December from 9.30-11.30am and will be delivered via Teams by South West Councils.

If you would like to join us at the training, please contact Dana

Jackson and she will register your place:  
[dana.jackson@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:dana.jackson@n-somerset.gov.uk)

Please note the target audience for this training is members of LDT.



# Sharing the Voices of North Somerset

(Names of residents have been changed for anonymity)

## Parent feedback on support from Sarah Heather

### What did we do well?

(For example, how did we help and/or support you and your family? Please comment of the relationship with your worker)

“So where do I start? I had spent 18 months – 2 years watching my daughters mental health deteriorate with my own anxiety increasing as the help she desperately needed for her mental health was not being met, despite my regularly asking for help.

Sarah Heather entered the scene when I was at rock bottom, I had had to abandon my daughter at the BRI as I quite simply could not keep her safe at home. I was signed off sick from work, I felt totally alone with my suicidal mentally ill daughter, I had significantly failed as a mother, and was angry beyond words at my perception of being failed by statutory services – I had asked and asked for CSC safeguarding referral to be made, with no practical outcome.

I remember clearly Sarah coming late one afternoon and sitting with me and letting me speak about my worries and concerns for my daughter. She explained her role, and that an assessment would be done, and that she would do what she could to help. Quite simple, for the first time, I felt listened to, I was able to express starkly how helpless I felt and how I feared my daughter would be successful in taking her own life, and at times I felt that would be the best outcome for her.

Sarah listened, I did not feel judged or patronised, I felt that at last someone wanted to help. I was not faced with “your daughter is on a waiting list for help with her mental health: go to a & e if you have concerns for her safety” (I had followed this advice and

had significantly traumatised my daughter every time)

Sarah helped facilitate the return of my daughter from hospital to home, ensuring that both myself and my daughter were supported in the process, and has been there ever since. She gently explained that I was not helping my daughter by not looking after myself and stated that this would be impacting my daughter’s sense of feeling unsafe at home. This was something I had lost sight of as my focus was on my daughter. Since this conversation I have returned to work, and re engaged with activities for myself despite an ever present anxiety I feel at leaving my daughter alone.

Sarah identified a parenting course I will be doing in January, for parents of teenagers with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder), which I think will be hugely beneficial for me.

Sarah has shown patience at my forgetting appointments she had clearly set up to visit us (and given me a list of as an aide memoir) – my focus was on my daughter’s needs and at times I simply forgot Sarah had arranged to visit us.”

### What could we have done better?

(For example, what things were not helpful or successful)

“My only complaint is the length of time it took for CSC to become involved in my case – the number of times the BRI (I had attended with her about 5 times) had asked for my daughter’s social worker and I had to explain that we did not have one.”

### Do you feel having Children’s Social Care has improved your situation and has been successful?

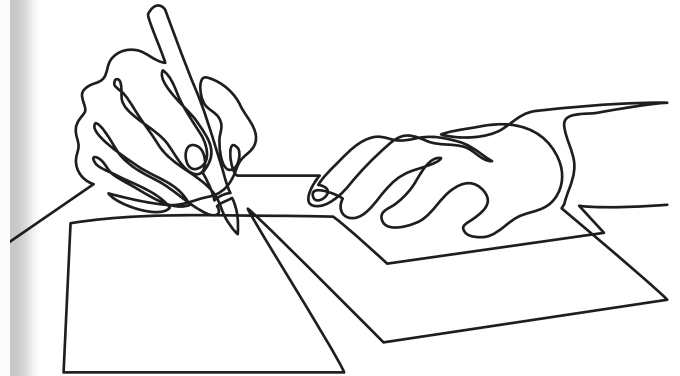
“Yes”

### Letter of gratitude to Elaine Blackmore from a parent

I would like to convey my utmost personal gratitude to Elaine for having come to our home. She has helped us on various emotional and practical levels in reducing parental conflict which have been affecting my 5 year old son.

Elaine is very professional with her profound knowledge of my family life facing a range of difficulties. She is very focused but at the same time she is very empathetic and sympathetic towards her approach. The incredible year's course on a one-one level has been extremely beneficial and she has been very accommodating when arranging the sessions.

I highly recommend this course to parents of young children as it covers real aspects of difficulties that families live through on a daily basis. I will miss having Elaine visiting us, she is very mother-like but very up to the job in the same breath.



### A letter of professional compliment to Kelly Craswell

I would just like to say how impressed we are with the work you have done with this family, Kelly. You are so diligent, and staff from the Early Years team have commented on this. You have managed to develop a good relationship with Alice, even though you have had to discuss difficult topics with her, you have been open and honest but managed this whilst being supportive and have gained her trust and respect.

I was particularly impressed by the way you managed the last Case Conference. You had to summarise a very complex set of circumstances whilst under quite a pressurised situation with a new Conference Chair.

Although you have not had a lot of experience with children with complex additional needs, you have adapted and built relationships with the children which has supported them. Jayden is doing really well and we are so proud of him and we feel this is due to your input with the family.

Thank you for all your hard work.

Sarah Tuttiett – Deputy Safeguarding Lead

# Update from Quality Assurance (QA)

Thank you!!

There has been a great response from everyone involved in the QA process, including great examples of supporting and caring interactions for the children, young people and families in our care.

We want to celebrate and share success. Below are some inspiring findings from recent collaborative and themed practice reviews.

“Great use of peer support to share ideas to engage children”

“No jargon and clear working around risks and expectations”

“Good quality recording of the visit to the children”

We will continue to share the good work and inspiring quotes from all colleagues, children and families.



## Useful info

**View our QA Strategy.** These documents offer useful information for Team Spotlight and reviews, as well as our QA calendar for 2023. Listening to staff feedback, we have made every effort to give colleagues notice of planned QA, while also trying to evenly spread reviews and Spotlights across the year, as best as possible.

## Coming soon: QA Sessions

Martyn Pudner – QA Officer, will soon be offering 30 minute QA sessions. These sessions will allow colleagues to gain feedback from QA reviews and ask questions around the findings. Please contact Martyn for more information.



## Practice Week

Building upon our first Practice Week and the very recent successful Staff Conference we are now planning our next Practice Week which continues with the theme of ‘Relationships Matter’.

In a recent staff poll, colleagues said they wanted a closer connection to senior leaders. With this in mind, we approached the senior leadership team and extended the invitation to Jo Walker and

Councillor Gibbons who of course said that they value all opportunities to better learn about the support we offer and be connected to our practice.

The next Practice Week is planned for 23 January 2023. We will ensure everyone from the senior leadership team has as many opportunities as possible to connect with practice and colleagues. We are organising a range of opportunities for colleagues to be shadowed



throughout the week, your Head of Service will co-ordinate this. Practice week is an opportunity to showcase your work, nonspecial measures required, and help senior leadership understand what a typical day in your work looks like, develop relationships, and improve communication with the senior leadership team.

In addition to this there will also be an opportunity for you to undertake Appreciative Inquiry (AI) training. AI, not to be confused with Artificial

Intelligence, is described as the engine room of ‘Signs of Safety’, a technique for understanding how positives were achieved. Whether this be with a parent, young person, or a colleague, understanding how success came about increases the chances of it being repeated. We recognise that it’s vital to learn and grow from shining the light on our great work and doing more of what’s working well.

We will close the week on the Friday with a face to face get together. It is bake off season

currently, and we hear there are some competitive bakers in the organisation, so we thought it would be fun to have a North Somerset Team bake off, but don’t worry I won’t be offering to bake, just sample!

Please keep an eye out for dates. We’re really looking forward to this exciting opportunity for increased connection to one another, our support to children, young people and families, and shining the light on our practice.

Thanks  
Jo Ratcliffe

# It’s a goal!

## World Cup themed fostering campaign

**North Somerset Council is joining twenty-five other local authorities during the men’s football FIFA World Cup with the aim to achieve one goal – to recruit more foster carers.**

The campaign, which kicked off on Monday 21 November, sees council fostering teams across the country joining a new virtual team called ‘Local Councils United’.

Each day of the football tournament, a different council fostering team is sharing a video created with the message ‘Help a young person achieve their goal’. The videos will highlight reasons why people should foster with their local council.

Watch a preview of the video by Fostering North Somerset on YouTube here: <https://youtu.be/VV0tiZ8GTuY>. A full version will be published on Tuesday

13 December, day 23 of the national campaign.

Those interested in finding out more about becoming a foster carer should email [fostering@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@n-somerset.gov.uk), call 01275 888 999 or visit [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/fostering).

Also follow Fostering North Somerset on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/fosteringnorthsomerset](http://www.facebook.com/fosteringnorthsomerset)), Twitter ([www.twitter.com/FosteringNS](https://www.twitter.com/FosteringNS)) and Instagram ([www.instagram.com/Fosteringnorthsomerset](https://www.instagram.com/Fosteringnorthsomerset)).

Football teams, carers, young people and families will all be featured in the World Cup fostering campaign videos. Follow the campaign on social media using the hashtag **#FosterWithYourCouncil2022**.



Step forward and  
make a difference

[fostering.n-somerset.gov.uk](http://fostering.n-somerset.gov.uk) • 01275 888 999  
• Fostering North Somerset • @FosteringNS



# Beth's Bit

Bethany Swan, Young Director – North Somerset Council

**Hello everyone – It's that time of month for Beth's bit – how exciting! As always, grab your snacks and your nearest pet and bring them in for a nice cuddle while you settle in for this month read (because it is a long one).**

Since our last piece there have been a lot of things going on, and I mean A LOT, but for me the most important thing has been the launch of Mind of My Own training within our council services. Mind of My Own is a communication tool that can be used with children as young as the age of two! This tool will also help us collect the authentic voice of the young person and allow them to explore their rights and agency over their decisions.

Katie Warren, Ella Bunting, Joanne Bocko, and I have all been lucky enough to be “trained as trainers” and now we are in the very early stages of delivering this training to staff. There will be training sessions available on Tuesday mornings and Thursday afternoons, the dates will be released via CPD so please book on when you can!

We will also be holding Mind of My Own Mondays – a space for questions, sharing positive experiences and refresher training exercises. We are excited to see more staff and young people using this app going forward.

Another exciting bright spot I mentioned in the last article was our team spotlights happening across children's services. I enquired within the Quality Assurance Team and asked for some direct quotes so hopefully other teams who have the spotlight coming up know what to expect and can see how others have found it so far.



Linda Walsh quoted

“I found the Team Spotlight to be an enjoyable day overall – it was a chance to come together as a team to think about our roles, the progress we have made as a team and our direction going forwards. The Spotlight report we received a few weeks later highlighted both areas of practice for us to develop as well as recognising the strengths already present and I think this report will be invaluable as we progress in developing the team and our practice further”.

And another member of the team, Susan Gambier, stated

“I was quite apprehensive about the Spotlight beforehand, but it felt collaborative and has opened up further discussion within the team”

The spotlight report has highlighted the team's culture and there is now a permanent manager within the team. The exploration of the team's culture concluded: “The team present as passionate about the work they do, child centred and motivated to achieve what's best for the children and young people they work with”. Looking at the strengths of the team, it is noted that the “ISRO'S in the team are in regular contact with each other and describe good mutual

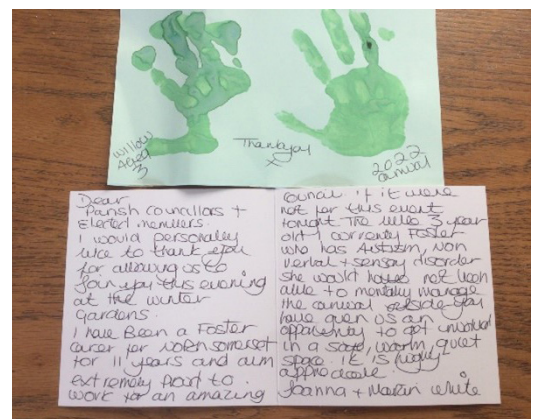


support and feeling supported by their managers”. Another strength to note was “both the young director and participation worker within the team felt a part of the team and feel they receive good support and direction. Both bring Passion, energy and enthusiasm to their roles and are very keen to make a difference”.

A very bright spot for the whole community was this year’s Weston carnival! For those who attended you will understand what I’m talking about because this year’s procession was spectacular! Kitted with bright lights and loud music you can’t help but dance too! Spectacular costumes and even better performances from our float actors! A huge commendation for the teams that put it together because on behalf of myself, my partner, and the others who were stood around us we were absolutely mesmerised!

Here are some photos I took on the night – just look how big the crowd is!

And an even bigger thank you to Councillor Karin Haverson who extended an invite for foster carers, their children, young people, and care experienced adults to sit in the winter gardens, enjoy a fantastic meal and then watch the show either out of the windows or the garden area!



The gesture was greatly received, and the councillors even received a card from one of the children:

I hope you all have a fantastic day and I’ll see you the same time next month 😊

For any Mind of My Own related questions or queries please contact: [mindofmyown@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:mindofmyown@n-somerset.gov.uk)

# Youth Inclusion Support Programme (YISP): How Parents can Support Their Children's Mental Health



As part of the work that the Youth Inclusion Support Programme (YISP) do to support families, Arti Vaghela and Lorna Kerins delivered an evening presentation to parents at Priory School on the topic of how to support their children's mental health in the home environment.

Parents were taught about factors that cause mental health to deteriorate, signs to look out for in their children, and a range of practical strategies that promote mentally healthy habits. This included how to create better sleep routines, how to communicate in an

empathetic way that validates their emotions, how to challenge negative automatic thoughts, and ways that home can be a safe space. The information disseminated was current, with discussion on the impact of the pandemic, and with a lens of how the teenage brain differs from

the adult brain. This motivated why, for example, more structure is needed around conversations about consequential thinking.

This was delivered near World Mental Health Day 2022 to continue raising awareness for the important subject. Parents were appreciative of the input, engaged in a variety of tasks and asked lots of questions at the end showing their dedication to better support their children – YISP will continue to engage with parents and support families.

## Meet our colleagues

### Carrie Yeates

I joined North Somerset as Head of Corporate Parenting in October and have had a brilliant welcome, not only from teams across Children's Services but also from the senior leadership team.

I've spent my career working with children in care initially working in and managing children's homes. Following this, for the last 18 years I worked for Bristol City Council in various social work and management roles relating to children in care. More recently, I've managed the fostering, kinship and SGO service. I'm really excited to bring together my experience in this role and have been impressed with the motivation and enthusiasm I've seen so far.

Relationship based practice, and approaching our work with children, families, and foster carers with honesty and kindness is really important to me. It's been great to see this evident in the practice I've seen and modelled in the working relationships across children's services.

I'm passionate about ensuring that our children in care and care leavers have the support and care they need into

adulthood and beyond, and that our foster carers have the right support to enable them to offer stable, loving homes to our children, in North Somerset where they belong. There's lots of work happening across the service to continue development of our Mockingbird fostering model and to work with young people to update our corporate parenting strategy and our offer to care leavers, look out for these being shared soon.

I look forward to meeting more of you in the coming weeks and months, please do get in touch or stop and say hello if you see me at the Town Hall 😊