

# SEND Newsletter

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Newsletter

January 2024

*In this month's edition:*

## Introduction

**Anthony Webster**

**Head of SEND at North Somerset**

I am pleased to connect with you through this SEND newsletter as the Head of SEND for North Somerset Council. My name is Anthony Webster and I have over fifteen years of experience working in special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services within local authorities.



In my current role, I oversee our SEND team which coordinates the EHC assessments for children and young people with SEND in North Somerset, as well as supporting the Educational Psychology and School placement teams. Our goal in North Somerset is to ensure every child and young person with additional learning needs can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. I strive to collaborate across education, health, and social care to provide personalised support based on each student's strengths and needs.

In editions we'll update you on our SEND strategies, initiatives, policies, and programmes. I want to spotlight a couple of innovative practices we are implementing, such as the opening of the Baytree Clevedon site later this year and the new resource bases and nurture groups being set up across North Somerset. We were also excited that the permanent secretary who visited before Christmas took the time to write to our young people, thanking them for sharing their experiences during her visit to North Somerset. We have many great things happening for SEND students in our area and I welcome open communication and partnership as we equip today's SEND students for brighter tomorrows.

Thank you for your commitment to the SEND community. I would urge you to share your updates on the positive initiatives happening locally for inclusion in future newsletters.

- Welcome from Anthony Webster
- Letter of thanks from Susan Acland-Hood
- New SEND places delivered and in delivery
- "Right Service, Right Time"
- Mind of My Own
- SEND Council
- SEND News from North Somerset
- SaY - SEND and You updates
- NSPCWT
- Weston College update
- NHS update - Talking Therapies
- Introduction to Ruth Lewis - the new Parent Liaison Worker
- Springboard Outreach Service



## Thank you letter from Susan Acland-Hood

*The SEND Council were delighted to host a meeting with the permanent secretary for education, Susan Acland-Hood, on 23rd November 2023.*

*Following her visit, she very kindly sent this card to say thank you.*



'Escape to Nature'  
Artwork by Adam Jones,  
DfE Art Competition 2021



To all on the North Somerset SEND Council,  
  
Thank you for meeting me when I came to Somerset. You  
  
**Thank you**  
  
were really clear and thoughtful and I enjoyed talking to you  
and hearing your views, which will really help me think about  
how we improve things for children with SEND.  
  
Thank you!  
  
SUSAN ACLAND-HOOD  
PERMANENT SECRETARY



**The letter reads:**

**To all the North Somerset SEND Council,  
Thank you for meeting me when I came to Somerset. You were really clear and thoughtful and I enjoyed talking to you and hearing your views, which will really help me think about how we improve things for children with SEND.  
Thank you!  
Susan Acland-Hood**



## New SEND places delivered and more underway

Sally Varley - Head of Strategic Place Planning, Capital Programmes and School Organisation/Admissions Service

Sam Byers - Communications and Engagement Adviser (Major Projects)

### Baytree comes closer to completion

There has been great progress expanding Baytree School with the building fast approaching completion both inside and out. It has been a long road since proposals were initially developed and a planning application submitted, so it is great to see that the school expansion will soon be a reality.



**Picture: Baytree School in Clevedon in December 2023**

Viewed from outside, it is possible to see how the school will look, its size, its shape and the quality of its modern facilities. Landscaping works are also underway, which will ensure the school provides pupils with a green and welcoming environment.

Inside the building, the classrooms and corridors are also reaching completion, ready to be fitted out with all their internal features. It's hoped construction will be finished by the end of January/beginning of February, when the keys to the building will be handed over to Baytree School so that they can begin their transition into the facilities.

This year's work on Baytree has also extended beyond the site boundary, looking at ways to promote accessibility and inclusivity in Clevedon. We've visited local primary schools to give students presentations and ask them what could make inclusivity and accessibility in Clevedon even better. This will also help to prepare local primary pupils for the opening of Baytree School, so they can do their bit to make Baytree pupils feel welcome. North Somerset Council have spoken to the Clevedon Chamber of Commerce to ensure that businesses are encouraging inclusivity and accessibility throughout the wider community.



## Lime Hills Academy

The DfE's planning application for the permanent Lime Hills Academy site was considered by the North Somerset Planning Authority on 13 December 2023 and was approved unanimously (subject to a number of delivery conditions). We are hopeful the DfE will progress their building of the new site, enabling site works starting from spring onwards so the new permanent site can be open to pupils from September 2025.



In September 2023 two new Resource Bases and three new Nurture Groups opened across five schools in North Somerset:

- Milton Park Primary - A ten-place facility for primary-aged pupils with autism and Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
- Locking Primary - A ten-place facility for primary-aged pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulty with Developmental Delay (MLD)
- A ten-place Nurture Group for secondary-aged pupils at Broadoak Academy
- A ten-place Nurture Group for secondary-aged pupils at Hans Price Academy
- A ten-place Nurture Group for primary-aged pupils at Crockerne CE Primary School



**Picture: Milton Park Primary's Resource Base**



**Picture: Crockerne CE Primary School's Nurture Group space**



## New Resource Bases and Nurture Groups

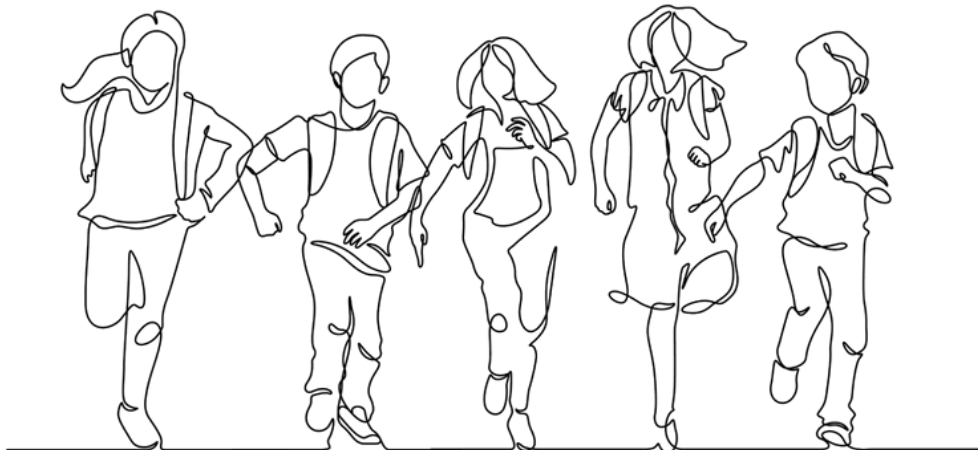
We have started work on a further three new Resource Bases and five Nurture Groups to be delivered in the 2024/25 school year.

Hannah More Infant and Grove Junior Schools have recently consulted on the creation of a ten-place Resource Base for primary-aged pupils with Speech and Language needs and further secondary bases, each for ten pupils with autism and anxiety are in progress to open in the near future. Ten-place Nurture Groups for primary aged pupils at Christ Church CE Primary, Mead Vale Primary, Portishead Primary and St Andrew's CE Primary will open in 2024/25 along with a ten-place Nurture Group for secondary aged pupils at Gordano School.

These new Resource Base and Nurture Group places are part of our strategy to secure local SEND provision in areas of identified need to support pupils with autism, MLD, and Social and Emotional Mental Health needs. The new Lime Hills site will deliver sixty five permanent SEMH places for pupils aged 5 to 16 and the new Baytree site can accommodate between sixty five to eighty five pupils with Profound and Significant needs.



**Picture: Hans Price Academy's Nurture Group**



# SEND news from North Somerset

**Riccardo Enoch**

**Strategy and Policy Development - Children's Services**

North Somerset Council created this pathway document for professionals who work with children and young people. It aims to help them identify mental health issues as early as possible and get the right support at the right time for children and their families.

The guide is broken down into five levels of need. For each stage, professionals can see:

- what might be happening for the child or young person at that stage
- what they need to do to ensure appropriate support is organised for them
- what services are available locally to help them do this

[Read more about how to seek help with mental health in North Somerset by visiting our website](#)



## Mind of My Own

**Bethany Swann - Young Director, Quality Assurance and Safeguarding**

Mind Of My Own is now a year in, and we can look back and see all the positive news we have gathered from our children and young people. A look at the past year has shown that we have run 30 training sessions and have successfully signed up 172 of our practitioners to have their own accounts. Alongside this, 49 young people have signed up and have sent a whopping 117 statements.

Our most used statement type is "My Life" and "My Wellbeing" and we have had a range of responses such as "feeling happy" and really liking "where they live, their families and family"

I am looking forward to the year ahead! We will shortly be releasing this year's dates for 2024, with the first being January 30th from 10am to 11:30am.



## SEND Children and Young People's Council



**Shelly Smith, SEND Engagement and Participation Officer**

In November, nine of our student council members met and had lunch with the Permanent Secretary of State, Susan Ackland Hood. They met at the Town Hall and came with some very well-prepared questions for Susan.

They talked with her about the language that was used for descriptions of disabilities and how they felt about it. She also listened to them speaking about the available opportunities for further education, amongst lots of other questions and queries whilst enjoying a lovely lunch. At North Somerset we have committed to use language that cares. We will keep you all updated as this moves forward.

Also, in December the very first edition of the SEND Children and Young people's newsletter, *The Buzz* was distributed to all schools in North Somerset in time for the end of term. The newsletter is designed and written by our SEND student council for students, it provides useful information and hints and tips, advice and guidance and available resources including activities. This month the blog was written by a student from one of our secondary schools with SEND.

If you have any activities or guidance you would like to share in the next edition, please contact Shelly Smith: [shelly.smith@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:shelly.smith@n-somerset.gov.uk)

# THE BUZZ

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## News from the SEND Team

**Anthony Webster - Head of SEND**  
**Education Partnerships - North Somerset Council**

**Free Early Years training:** The Educational Psychology Service has published free online training videos for educators and parents of children aged 0 to 5. The videos are all less than 10 minutes long and focus on areas such as Separation Anxiety; Biting; Throwing; Sharing; and turn taking. [Search for 'EPS Library' on the North Somerset Council website.](#)

**Nurture:** Momentum with Nurture in North Somerset is building. As an authority, we have arranged training from NurtureUK for fourteen schools. In addition to this, the Lighthouse MAT are liaising directly with NurtureUK to begin their training programme, and we have had interest from ELAN in arranging training for their schools. As you are aware, the results of an independent evaluation into Nurture in North Somerset was very positive, but don't just take our word for it, [hear Susan Ackland Hood talking about North Somerset Nurture Groups in this week's Parliamentary Select Committee](#) (This was discussed at timestamp 11:50).

### SEND and You (SAY)

Victoria Allan, Head of Service

#### Training for Schools- Bristol



[SEND and You are offering some free training sessions for schools](#) alongside Bristol Parent Carers and Murmuration Community Therapy.

The topic is 'Working Effectively with parent carers of CYP with SEND'. It can be [booked through the Trading with Schools Website](#).

The training is running until 11th March 2024. The individual dates and times are available on the website or schools can contact SEND and You directly to ask for a specific date.

### Information Sessions

Our Information Sessions have remained popular and will continue into 2024. We will also be introducing a new session on the process of appealing an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Parent/Carers can [check our Events Page](#) for information on upcoming events, or follow us on social media for regular reminders.





# SEND and You (SAY) - continued

## Local Area Events

### North Somerset: People First- Games Group based in Weston-super-Mare.

[This free and friendly group](#) is aimed at young people with a learning disability and/or autism. It is a chance to make friends and have fun. Groups run every two weeks at The Campus, BS24 7DX from 7pm to 9pm.

### Bristol: Ignite - Inclusive Sport and Physical Activities

Ignite have updated [their directory of events](#). This useful guide contains times, dates and contact details for a variety of inclusive physical activities in and around Bristol.

### The Department for Education: Elective Home Education Guidance Review

This consultation seeks views on [revised versions of the non-statutory elective home education guidance](#).

The guidance helps local authorities and parents understand their roles and legal responsibilities around elective home education. The changes aim to help parents and local authorities better understand what they are required to do to ensure children receive a suitable education.

You can respond to the proposed changes by [completing the online consultation survey](#). The survey closes on 18th January 2024.

### Long Covid Kids Educational Toolkit: a training video series for Educators

[The Long Covid Kid's Educational Toolkit](#) is a video series and handbook, aiming to increase awareness and understanding of Long Covid in children. These resources provide guidance for teaching and support staff across all age sectors to support Children and Young People with Long Covid.

### Home to School Travel Survey

Bristol have reviewed their existing policies for home to school travel support. As part of the review they have identified some aspects that they think will need to change. They are asking for [parent/carer feedback on these proposals through a public consultation survey](#). The survey will close on Wednesday 17th January 2024.



## SEND and You (SAY) - continued



**SAY**  
SEND AND YOU  
SENDIAS

**Professionals  
Information Day**

**Wednesday 7th  
February 2024  
3.30 - 4.30pm**

### **Professional's Information Day**

This virtual event is for professionals working with children and young people with additional needs and their families. We would particularly like to welcome school staff to join us. It is an opportunity to find out how as the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS), SAY, can work effectively with you to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

SEND and You (SAY) SENDIASS provides the statutory information advice and support service across Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

The event will include a presentation introducing the SENDIAS Service followed by a Q and A session.

All spaces must be booked in advance.

Visit: [Our Eventbrite Page](#)

Date: Wednesday 7th February 2024

Time: 3.30 - 4.30pm



# North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together (NSPCWT)

Francesca Betts, Media and Marketing  
Co-ordinator NSPCWT



*North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together are the local parent carer forum, there to support parents & carers of children/young people between the ages of 0-25 that have an emerging need, additional need and/or disability.*



## A Day of SEND

Due to the success of our most recent and largest event we have started the ball rolling for our 2024 plans. Please note the confirmed date of our next 'A Day of SEND'.

**When:** Wednesday 23rd October 2024

**Where:** Priory Community School, BS22 6BP

More details will follow in the New Year.

## Our Peer Support Coffees

We offer a broad range of safe, supportive meet ups for our community, some within settings, others at our base at The Firs in Weston-Super-Mare or at locations suitable to those living further North. Often these coffees are attended by informative services such as SEND and You (the local SENDIAS team).

**17th January:** Parent Carer New Year Brunch - St George's Church Hall, Easton-in-Gordano

**24th January:** Parent Carer Coffee Morning - Yatton Youth Club, Yatton

**25th January:** ASD/ADHD Support Coffee - The Firs, WSM

If you would like a peer support session arranged at your school/setting or if you would like to attend to discuss how you could support our community, please contact us at: [admin@nspcwt.org.uk](mailto:admin@nspcwt.org.uk)



# NSPCWT continued

## Our Upcoming Training

Parent Carers and Professionals are welcome to access our training offers.

**16th January:** Dyslexia - The Firs, Weston-super-Mare

**23rd January:** Emotionally Based School Avoidance - Portishead Football Club, Portishead

**25th January:** Autism, Male and Female Presentation & Puberty - Zoom

**29th January:** Dyslexia Workshop - Zoom

**31st January:** Managing the Red Zone - The Firs, Weston-super-Mare

## Useful links and contact details

[Access the NSPCWT calendar here.](#)

[Check out our 2023/24 Annual Survey, Annual Report and Impact Reports here.](#)

Free Online Resource: Sensory Processing Difficulties (SPD) Video . Created by professionals with Debbie Meintjes, Occupational Therapist; [this supportive video covers the 8 senses and provides information and tips here.](#)

Contact details for the NSPCWT:

Our Resource base is at The Firs, 89a Drove Road, BS23 3NX Telephone: 01934 440844

[The NSPCWT website can be found here.](#)

Email: [admin@nspcwt.org](mailto:admin@nspcwt.org)



# Weston College Update

**Sam Mayhew**  
**Assistant Principal**  
**Faculty of Inclusive Practice**



All Abilities Foundation Learning Football Academy qualify for the AoC National Finals in Nottingham.

The Weston College football team were victorious winners in the South-West regional finals. The first game was played against Petroc College with a 4-0 win, with all four goals being scored by Ryan Mills who is a new addition to the academy. The team continued their winning streak beating Yeovil 6-0, with a hat-trick going to Lucas Adams, and further goals secured by George Ridge, Cameron Jackson and Ryan Mills. Weston will now represent the South-West at the National Finals at Nottingham University in April 2024.

This is a fantastic achievement, and we are all incredibly proud of the learners and all they have achieved already this academic year. However, the real achievement is in the change we have seen in the learners and their development as individuals. The confidence, friendships, camaraderie, resilience, and sense of belonging the learners gain from being part of the academy is not quantifiable.



## NHS Talking Therapies

**Emma Heath, Partnership Liaison Officer**

NHS Talking Therapies offer free and confidential mental health therapies for those aged 16+ who are affected by feeling low, anxious or demotivated, or related mental health concerns. The Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Talking Therapies service can support anybody who is registered with a GP in the area. The Christmas holidays and New Year can bring additional pressures with family life, additional expenses and time off work. If anybody you are working with is struggling with low mood or worries, get in touch with NHS Talking Therapies for help. The service is self-referral. You can contact us via the website or telephone number:

[Vita Health Group resources for North Somerset](#) **Tel: 0333 200 1893.**

[The Vita self referral page can be found here](#)

ARE YOU STRUGGLING TO COPE?

### Self referral is quick and easy to do

The fastest way to get support is by selecting one of the options below.



#### Digital Assistant

Start now by using our digital referral assistant. This will guide you through some questions.

**This is the fastest way to access support.**

[Click here](#)



#### Online form

Enter some basic details into our form.

We will then contact you and arrange an assessment.

[Click here](#)



#### By Phone

You can call us to start your referral. We will then arrange an initial assessment.

8am – 8pm Mon to Wed & 8am – 5pm Thu & Fri.

[Click here](#)





## Bristol, North Somerset & South Gloucestershire Talking Therapies

# Are you feeling low, worried or stressed?

## We are here to help you

At NHS Bristol, North Somerset & South Gloucestershire Talking Therapies, we provide a range of support to thousands of people to help them to improve their mood and find ways to manage.

If you are 16 years and older and live in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire we can support you by providing the tools you need to get life back on track.

**Contact us  
today - it is a FREE  
and confidential  
service.**

 [vitahealthgroup.co.uk](https://vitahealthgroup.co.uk)

 0333 200 1893

 Text 'YOU' to 88802

Scan to  
self refer



Service provided by



## Are you experiencing:



Excessive worry



Low mood



Depression



Anxiety



Lack of motivation

We provide a range of evidence based talking therapies and new ways of coping to help you better manage your mood.

Our therapies are available via secure video, text-based therapy, webinar, phone or face to face (one to one or group).



## Our easy 3 step approach

01

Self-refer using our website, or by scanning the QR code on this leaflet or by giving us a call.

02

You will be assessed by a friendly member of our team. Together, we will agree the best support for you.

03

A fully qualified therapist will support you throughout your treatment.

**Contact us today - it is a FREE and confidential service.**



[vitahealthgroup.co.uk](http://vitahealthgroup.co.uk)



0333 200 1893



Text 'YOU' to 88802

**Scan to self refer**



**Making People Better in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire**



# Hello!

## An introduction to Ruth Lewis, Parent Carer Liaison Officer

My name is Ruth Lewis, I am in a new role as a Parent Carer Liaison Officer for North Somerset Council SEND Department.

I have a background in health and worked as a qualified nurse in the NHS for twenty years. Then for the past twenty years I have worked in education, as a School Matron, and providing student support for secondary pupils with an EHCP. More recently, I was an Assistant Head of House supporting children pastorally and as a safeguarding officer.

In my new role, I will be working directly with parent and carers, offering them support and guidance on issues around SEND.

I can give you support with:

- general enquiries
- navigating the local offer
- accessing the EHC portal
- signposting to local support groups.

I have also been attending local parent support groups and parenting villages to offer face to face advice and support.

I am looking forward to the role growing and developing over the coming year and to meeting many of the families in North Somerset.

My email address for contact is: [ruth.lewis@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:ruth.lewis@n-somerset.gov.uk)





# Springboard Outreach Service



Supporting early years children with additional needs and disabilities for over 35 years.

**SPRINGBOARD**  **ARD** SINCE 1986  
**OPPORTUNITY GROUP** 

# Springboard Outreach Service

Our Outreach Service can support your key person working with a child with SEND, providing tips, ideas and strategies to be used immediately. You will also receive a follow up report for your ongoing work.

Costs will be dependent on the support requested. A series or block of visits over time can also be arranged.



2a Princes Road, Clevedon  
North Somerset, BS21 7SZ



[info@springboardweb.org.uk](mailto:info@springboardweb.org.uk)



01275 341113



Registered Charity Number: 1025787

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**OPPORTUNITY GROUP**  SINCE 1986

We are continually developing the SEND Partnership newsletter. If you have any feedback or would like to contribute, please email: [tracy.humphris@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:tracy.humphris@n-somerset.gov.uk)



**North  
Somerset**  
Council