

## **SEND Newsletter**

1. SEND – Halit Hulusi
2. SEND Assessment and Planning Team (EHCPs) – Nadine Young
3. Educational Psychology Service (EPS) – Mel Jones
4. Autism Outreach / Inclusion Team (AOT) – Sam Turnbull
5. Virtual School – Sarah Rivers/Joanne Clark
6. Post-16 – Alison Matthews
7. Health Representatives (Cathy and Lyse sit on the SEND and Inclusion Strategic Partnership Group) – Cathy Morris/Lyse Edwards
8. Parent Carer Forum representatives - Rachel Brass/Joanne Brain

## **SEND – Halit Hulusi**

Welcome to the Summer Term 2023 and our third SEND Newsletter! The Summer Term is a busy time for the SEND world in Staffordshire. On the 20th April, Ofsted and CQC are revisiting us to review our Accelerated Progress Plan (APP). We've done a lot of APP SEND improvement work in the last 12 months and this term sees the launch for consultation of the Staffordshire Coproduction Promise, Strategy for Special Provision and a new Enhanced Educational Health and Care Needs Assessment Pathway. Consultations will go live in May 2023 after Council Elections. We are planning a big launch event for these 3 projects in early September 2023 so watch this space.

Our SEND improvement journey still has a long way to go and we are working hard to make these improvements. I am delighted to say that this year, we completed 96% of our Pre-16 EHCP phase transfers by the February deadline. This is a significant achievement and means that nearly 600 children with an EHCP will have a good transition to their next school and key stage. This term, we are continuing to focus on the remaining very few pre-16 and post-16 young people who are moving to the next stage of their educational journey.

A key part of our SEND improvement journey is the commitment to increase the capacity of our SEND Key Worker team and Educational Psychology Service. I am pleased to let you know that we will be recruiting 13 additional Key Workers and 10 more Educational Psychologists. This represents a significant uplift in capacity and will support us to continue to make the improvements we are focussed on. Interviews are well underway, and we hope to have most of these new colleagues in post by the end of July.

I wish you all a happy and productive Summer Term and hope to see you at various networks and consultation events over the next few months.

Dr Halit Hulusi  
Head of SEND

## **SEND Assessment and Planning Team (EHCPs) – Nadine Young**

Welcome to the second SEND Newsletter my name is Nadine Young, SEND Principal Family Practitioner Lead. I hope you all managed to have a relaxing break over Easter.

### Key updates

#### 2023 Phase Transfers

The teams worked extremely hard to meet this completion date and to support our children/young people and parents and carers. Together with this hard work and the hard work from settings I am pleased to advise that as of the 15th February pre 16 Phase Transfer deadline, 97% of children transferring to their new setting in September this year have a completed phase transfer and amended and finalised EHCP naming their setting. Knowing their new setting by statutory deadline day will support children and their families to engage in appropriate transition planning to their new setting. As a Local Authority we are continuing to work through finalising plans for those final few children and young people and we are continuing to work to the post 16 statutory deadline.

#### 2024 Phase Transfers

To continue to support this achievement we are already starting on planning as a team around our 2024 Phase transfers. You will after Easter receive in the school bag a communication around coordination of the 2024 phase transfers so that parents and young people can continue to be supported and the Local Authority will be in the best position to meet statutory deadlines.

Please keep a look out for this communication, this will also be added to the local offer as well as shared at events such as the SENCO network sessions.

### Training and Support

I am aware we have a lot of new SENCO's within Staffordshire and so would like to continue to promote the extensive resources and training that is on offer via the Council for Disabled Children. This is free online training, that can be accessed once registered. There is training for schools, families, social care and health [E-Learning \(councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk\)](https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

#### Recommended E-Learning

- Supporting children and young people with SEND and their families - SEND basic awareness Level 1 and 2.
- Holistic Outcomes in EHCP's.
- Social Care and Send.

- Focus on Health Advice.
- Delivering Quality Annual Reviews.

SEND team contacts

[SEND family Practitioner Lead and Keyworker Contacts | Staffordshire Connects](#)

## **Educational Psychology Service (EPS) – Mel Jones**

We have had a busy term with a very successful round of recruitment and the completion of our traded subscription offers just before the Easter holidays.

We are looking forward to new team members joining us in the new academic year, and we are very pleased with the requests for traded packages received across all four districts. All schools who have requested a will be contacted once EPs are allocated in the next 6 weeks.

The summer term is a time for feedback for the service and we would love to hear your views. Please look out for forthcoming information about how you can contribute to the conversations in a variety of forms.

## **Specialist Teaching Support Service – Sam Turnbull**

### **Deaf/ Hearing and Vision Inclusion Teams (DHIT / VIT)**

The STSS is currently in the process of reallocating our Communication Support Worker's in preparation for September 2023. Many thanks to all of you who have ensured that annual reviews of EHCP's have been held in a timely manner giving us a clear understanding of student support needs and requirements across the County. CSW's are allocated out to students with the highest level of needs, those requiring either BSL sign support in order to access the mainstream curriculum or students who require tactile access (Braille).

Some of you may be welcoming CSW's into your settings for the first time and will be unfamiliar with the role. Please do discuss further with either the Qualified Teacher of the Deaf or the Qualified Teacher of the Vision Impaired allocated out to your setting who will be more than happy to answer any questions you may have.

Following on from the COVID pandemic I am pleased to announce that in September 2023 we will be once again facilitating an outdoor residential experience to Chasewater Country Park for students with a sensory loss. This opportunity offers students who are Deaf or Visually Impaired the chance to meet up with peers and build supportive social networks in a fun yet challenging environment. It is the annual highlight of our extra-curricular activity programme, please do encourage any youngster who may be attending from your setting to feedback on their experience.

Team Lead for (DHIT) [moira.cooper@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:moira.cooper@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Team Lead for (VIT) [donna.mcnaughton@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:donna.mcnaughton@staffordshire.gov.uk)

### **Autism Inclusion Team**

Staffordshire's Autism Inclusion Team have been working with University of Birmingham on a pilot project to integrate the use of a Computerized Progressive Attention Training (CPAT) app in schools. Pilot schools of all age groups participated in this state of the art project.

The app supports development of attention and focus, and also helps with emotional and sensory regulation. The project has found that children and young people using the app have enjoyed using it, and are able to become independent users after an initial period of supported use. The schools have found the app motivational, easy to use, and easy to build into a routine.

If you are interested in learning more about autism and attention, and the CPAT app please email [Kate.perry@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Kate.perry@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Team Lead for AIT – [kate.prinold@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:kate.prinold@staffordshire.gov.uk)

### NHSE Autism in Schools Annual Conference 2023

Over the past 18 months the Autism Inclusion Team have been collaborating with our partners from within the NHS, The Parent Carer Forum and The Virtual School to help support and facilitate inclusive environments within mainstream settings for young people with a diagnosis of Autism. The pilot has run across the wider North Midlands Region and 13 schools in total have participated. On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 we held our first annual conference at Beaconside, in Stafford celebrating the successes so far and identifying the impact and outcomes of the project. The conference hosted 48 delegates in total representing, parent /carers, young people, health and education professionals and we welcomed Tom Shaw from Carr Manor Community School, Leeds as one of our Keynote Speakers.

This NHS funded project has facilitated settings to embed the relational and restorative approach, develop networks of student ambassadors and has established supportive parent carer networks within our settings. The schools have undergone environmental audits conducted via MPFT experts by experience and have had an increased CAMHS offer as part of the pilot. Together we remain focussed on building inclusive environments for all based upon strong relational working.

Many thanks to the Staffordshire Settings that have been part of this project so far and continue on the journey with us they are:

Churnet View Middle School, Clayton Hall Academy, The Hart School and Walton High School

Sam Turnbull (Head of STSS) - [samantha.turnbull@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:samantha.turnbull@staffordshire.gov.uk)



**North Midlands Autism in Schools Conference**

## **Virtual School – Sarah Rivers/Joanne Clark**

It's hard to believe we're already half-way through the academic year! Thank you as ever for your hard work supporting our children.

This term, we have welcomed some new members to the Virtual School team. To find out who's who in each district please see our website [Contact us - Virtual School - Staffordshire County Council](#)

We have a full Arts and Sports Events Calendar for 2023 for our children and young people. Please do get in touch if you are supporting a looked after young person with SEND who would like to join us. [Staffordshire Virtual School Arts and Sports Events Calendar 2023 - Staffordshire County Council](#)

For details of the training we are able to offer, including DT training & network meetings, RADY, Emotion Coaching and Attachment & Trauma, please see [Looked after children's virtual school training calendar - Staffordshire County Council](#)

The training packages offered by The Virtual School's Relational and Restorative Practice team can also be found on the link, above.

Many thanks, as always, for your continued support. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any enquiries.



## **Post-16 – Alison Matthews**

### Supported Internships

On 27<sup>th</sup> March we celebrated the first National Supported Internships Day, this gave all those involved in offering Supported Internships a great opportunity to share the benefits of offering a supported internship brought to host employers and young people with SEND. Video clips and further information are available to view on the Local Offer - [Supported internships | Staffordshire Connects \(staffordshirecares.info\)](#)

Local post-16 education providers are always keen to work with employers who are interested in hosting interns or even as a first step offering insights into the world of work for Staffordshire young people with SEND. Any employers interested in finding out more are encouraged to get in touch using this link [Supported Internships - Staffordshire County Council](#)

**Health Representatives (Cathy and Lyse sit on the SEND and Inclusion Strategic Partnership Group) – Cathy Morris/Lyse Edwards**

MPFT Children's Speech and Language Therapy South team:

The Children's Speech and Language Therapy South team are now offering regular skill share sessions online. These are run monthly and are available to parents/ carers of children and young people who the Speech and Language Therapy service is supporting and for staff from their Early Years and school settings.

Topics currently covered in the session include:

- Objects of Reference
- PECS
- PODD
- Play box
- Identiplay
- Hanen

The following topics are also about to be launched:

- Colourful semantics
- Blanks
- Auditory memory
- Vocab/Word finding
- Fluency

Families and EY/school staff will be directed to the sessions by the SLT managing the intervention.

## **Parent Carer Forum representatives - Rachel Brass/Joanne Brain**

### **Staffs Parent Carer Forum Steering Group**

The Staffordshire Parent Carer Forum (PCF) has been busy ensuring parent and carer voices are at the heart of the changes being made in terms of policy and service delivery. We meet monthly with the Head of SEND in the Staffordshire Local Authority, and we've put forward parent carer views directly to the Leader of Staffordshire County Council, based on the feedback we've had through our engagement. An important piece of work for us has been our full involvement in the working groups developing a new pathway for Educational Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNAs), building on the great direct engagement we helped set up with parents at the end of last year. We have just run a survey of our members to gather parent and carer views to feed into the Ofsted review of progress on SEND in Staffordshire. We'll share more information about the survey results with our members in the next few weeks. And of course we've been working away on a range of projects, especially the Autism in Schools project, supporting 4 pilot schools make changes that we believe will make them much more inclusive and have a positive impact on all their students.

But the highlight of the year so far was the families' day at the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust HQ at Wolseley Bridge where we met new families and children and young people got to meet one another and share experiences. We'll organise more of these events in the coming months.

Look out for more information on the Learning Disability and Autism one-stop-shop event taking place **Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> June at Stafford County Show Ground** and **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June Guild Hall Lichfield**. The event aims to have as many NHS services and Staffordshire County Council departments, SEND organisations and support groups all under one roof as possible so that parents and education settings can get a better understanding of what is out there in Staffordshire and how it works. As Staffs PCF we know that both parents and education settings sometimes struggle to know where to start or who to go to. We have been given a great opportunity to co-produce this event and give parents, carers and education staff an opportunity to speak to people that they usually are not able to meet in a more relaxed setting.

A reminder: Staffs PCF is an independent parent/carers-led organisation run by volunteers. We aim to be the voice of families of Staffordshire children with special educational needs and disabilities in order to positively influence the policy and systems that affect their daily lives. We are totally independent from schools, the Local Authority and the NHS. But we work closely with them to make sure that they understand the lived experience

of families of children with SEND and take it into account as they make policy and deliver services.

To find out more go to our website : <https://staffspcf.co.uk/> We aim to get as wide a range of views and experiences of SEND services as possible. So, if you want to help us build an accurate picture of the realities for families of children with SEND by sharing those experiences, please fill in the forms to become a member. We're also looking for more people to get involved in running the PCF and participating in meetings with the Local Authority. If you are interested and could potentially commit some time, please get in touch for a chat with one of our steering group members [info@staffspcf.co.uk](mailto:info@staffspcf.co.uk).