

## **Final Newsletter Articles**

### **Halit Hulusi – Head of SEND**

Welcome to our first SEND & Inclusion newsletter. This newsletter will come to you termly and is part of a more proactive, responsive and inclusive approach to keeping in touch with Staffordshire's SEND community.

Creating opportunities for good communication is a key priority and will help us to better engage in a dialogue about how we improve services for children, families and schools.

This Autumn Term our work on the Ofsted plan continues.

We are holding a launch event for the 'Strategy for Special Provision' on 22<sup>nd</sup> September at 3.30pm. This event is the beginning of our journey to review and redesign how we meet the needs of all children more responsively, equitably and locally. [Click here to register your attendance at the event.](#)

I wish you all the best for the Autumn Term and all the challenges and celebrations it will hold. Watch out for further communications about how to engage further with the SEND teams and how to contribute to our work on the improvements we are working on.

Dr Halit Hulusi  
Head of SEND

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### **Paula Ricketts – Principle Officer of the SEND and Inclusion Hubs**

#### **SEND and Inclusion Hubs Update**

A new term welcomes new colleagues! Cannock and South Staffs each have a new business admin support officer providing administrative support to their local district hubs. Heather Bates (Cannock admin) and Grace Pickford (South Staffs admin) will both be joining us mid-September and we wish to offer the warmest welcome to the SEND and Inclusion Hub Team. We also welcome a new Effective Practice Development Officer; Alexis Reid-Hamilton who will be sharing his time between the Stafford and Lichfield districts. Welcome Alexis. For all hub contacts and further information please visit the [local offer](#) and see your relevant districts details.

This year, SEND and Inclusion hubs will be working closer with the agencies to address some of the concerns around children going missing. This means speaking more frequently with the police, youth offending teams and Multi Agency Child Exploitation Panel (MACE) to help reduce children going missing as a direct result of education.

Need to Know:

- Individual Needs Guidance has been updated – this will be circulated to all schools. To obtain a copy, please contact your local administrator on the details above ('local offer')
- Whole School SEND (WSS). A reminder that if you have not yet accessed the WSS training, links to the recording of sessions can be obtained by contacting Chris Rogers: [christopher.rogers@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:christopher.rogers@staffordshire.gov.uk). We still need a SEND review coordinator (please contact Chris for more information on what this will involve) in Newcastle and Tamworth.
- Free Ofsted information sessions available. Chris Rogers is offering to talk to SENCOs about his recent experience of an Ofsted inspection in relation to SEND. For more information, please contact Chris on the details above.

For more information about SEND and Inclusion Hubs please contact [paula.ricketts@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:paula.ricketts@staffordshire.gov.uk)

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### **Early Years Forums – Update from Emma Dodd, Chair of the Early Years Forums**

The Early Years forums (EYF) monitors pre-school children with SEND until they go into Reception, have an EHCP or make sufficient progress. This includes children attending school nurseries. The forums aim to ensure that children have the right support at the right time, while responsibility for meeting needs remains with the pre-school setting. In addition, the forum can allocate SEND Inclusion funding. Pre-school settings can refer into the forum after at least one period of assess-plan-do-review. Further information can be found on the local offer [Early years forums | Staffordshire Connects](#)

Pre-school settings based in schools can also access support from the Early Years Area SENCOs [Early Years Area SENCo \(Special Educational Needs Coordinator\) | Staffordshire Connects](#)

For more information about the Early Years Forums please contact [emma.dodd@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:emma.dodd@staffordshire.gov.uk)

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### **Melissa Jones**

#### **EPS SEND newsletter information**

The Service has a new Principal Educational Psychologist, Melissa Jones who began at Easter. We have also recruited three new Eps; Dr Matt Frater for Tamworth and East Staffs, Dr Randeep Kaur for Stafford and South Staffs and Julie Smith, who will join us as a qualified EP in Newcastle and Moorlands in September 2023. Alongside our new Eps we have two new assistant Eps; Nikita Egan-Shaw in our Burton team and Sam Griffiths in our Stafford team.

Our core service activity continues this term comprising of school focused work, EHC assessment work and preschool work; as well as targeted projects around raising attainment in literacy, managing challenging behaviour, ways to tackle school non-attendance, our ELSA project and work in special schools and PRUs.

The service will resume a traded model of service deliver from January 2023 and there will be more information at the meeting for headteachers on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September and at SENCO networks on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September. Please contact [melissa.jones@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:melissa.jones@staffordshire.gov.uk) if you have any further questions.

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## **Samantha Turnbull – Head of Specialist Teaching Support Services**

### **Service Name Change**

Following on from a consultation I am pleased to inform you that from 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022 the Specialist Support Service will now be known as the **Specialist Teaching Support Service** consisting of:

**The Autism Inclusion Team** - (previously known as the Autism Outreach Team)

**The Deaf / Hearing Inclusion Team** - (previously known as the Hearing Impairment Team)

**The Vision Inclusion Team** - (previously known as the Vision Impairment Team)

We hope you agree that our new identity clarifies the role that we have within educational settings and has a real focus on 'inclusion' as opposed to 'impairment or disability'. We look forward to continuing to offer our support your settings and would like to point out that our contact details and referral processes will be remaining the same (please see links above).

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## **Vanessa Willis**

Staffordshire Educational Psychology Service (EPS) have recently completed a self-harm and self-harming behaviours guidance for school staff. This document is being distributed via the school bag and hubs. For any queries and/or feedback about the document, please contact [vanessa.willis@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:vanessa.willis@staffordshire.gov.uk)

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## **Alison Matthews – Head of 16-18 Participation and Skills**

## **Statutory requirements under Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)**

The Standards and Testing Agency are grateful to SEND schools for their engagement with the statutory implementation of the Reception Baseline Assessment during the 2021-2022 academic year.

The RBA has been designed so that almost all children, including children with SEND, can access the assessment, and modified materials are available. There are, however, a small proportion of SEND pupils for whom the assessment is not appropriate.

Our experience this year has shown that SEND schools aren't always aware that where the school decides that it is not appropriate for a pupil to take the assessment, the headteacher must record this decision on the Baseline ePortal (BeP), including where this applies to an entire cohort. Failure to do so may mean your school is marked as not engaging with the RBA and will result in chase activity. As such, we would like to remind SEND schools of this requirement ahead of the RBA due to take place in September 2022-2023 academic year.

For more information on the RBA please visit [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk). If you have any questions, please contact the reception baseline assessment helpline on 0330 088 4171 or email [receptionbaseline@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:receptionbaseline@nfer.ac.uk)

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## **Nadine Young – Principal Family Practitioner Lead**

### **EHCP Updates provided by Nadine Young**

**2022 Phase Transfers** – the team continues to make progress towards completion of these amended EHC Plans. The district teams have recently completed a focus week around phase transfers.

### **2023 Phase Transfers**

Linked to our Accelerated Progress Plan we are commencing our 2023 phase transfers earlier. A communication was sent to all settings around holding the phase transfer reviews in the summer term a year before the move. This will support the team's ability to meet statutory timescales around completion of Phase Transfers. A review in their final year of their setting can then include the receiving setting to support a successful transition.

### **Annual Reviews – front loading and defined timetable**

I'd like to draw your attention to the recent ruling around annual reviews. The advice and information requesting stage of the review will need to be sought well in advance of the meeting itself. We need to remember the meeting is a small part of the process.

Prior to the review, it is imperative that all services involved with the young person are invited to attend and the relevant advice is sought (ideally 10 weeks before the meeting). It is vital that all relevant information is included in the annual review to

ensure the amendment is reflective of the young person and it is clear that both parents and the young person have been involved and supported through the review. The plan must be finalised 12 weeks from date of hearing.

**The judgment can be read here:** [L & Ors, R \(On the Application Of\) v Devon County Council \[2022\] EWHC 493 \(Admin\)](#)

## **Training**

I would also like to draw your attention to 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 \(councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk\)](#)

Available courses are:

- 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.

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## **Cathy Morris**

### **Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) News**

From the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022, CCGs will no longer exist, and Statutory Integrated Care systems will become established. This was the desired outcome detailed in the NHS PLAN.

Below are some useful links that explain Integrated Care systems

- [NHS England » Integrated care](#)
- [About our Integrated Care System - Together We're Better \(twbstaffsandstoke.org.uk\)](#)

The Designated Clinical Officers (DCO) for SEND will remain in place and will continue to work with all partners. DCOs for Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent are Catherine Morris and Catherine Lewin.

The DCOs are currently focused on:

- Supporting the local authority to further develop SEND with advice and support in relation to health matters
- Providing training to all commissioned health services to make sure they understand their roles within the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process

### **Provider News**

Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT) have now developed a SEND Champions group with the aim being that each health service will have a dedicated SEND Champion to help them develop their knowledge and expertise of SEND. So far, Local Authority Representatives have supported with learning and engagement events around the EHCP Portal and the Local Offer and various guest speakers have supported. Evidence shows that children's mental health improves

when families and carers also receive help and support. We hope that by offering this service, the wellbeing of the whole family will improve. Below is a link to an online parent/carers support group that may be of value:

[Online support group :: Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust \(mpft.nhs.uk\)](https://mpft.nhs.uk)

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## **Marie Wood – Local Offer Update**

### **Staffordshire Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Local Offer**

Our SEND Local Offer is the place to go for information, support and services for children and young people aged 0-25 years.

The information is held all in one place and can be searched by age and district. It covers early years and childcare, education, social care, health and wellness, travel and transports, places to go/things to do, preparing for adulthood, money matters, extra help and information and support including support groups.

**Visit [Staffordshire Connects SEND Local Offer](#). Follow us on Facebook at [Staffordshire SEND Local Offer](#)**

## **Deb Ryan – PCF Member - Update**



### **Introduction to the Staffordshire Parent Carer Forum (Staffs PCF)**

Staffordshire Parent Carer Forum (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. Staffs PCF is funded by the Department of Education and belongs to a national network of PCFs.

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.

We are different from other specialist SEND parent groups but we want to work with them. We're not a support group, an advisory service or a champion for individual cases. But by having a wide and diverse network of parents and carers parents, we can truly represent the reality of SEND families in Staffordshire and then make sure that the Staffordshire authorities understand them too.

We want you to have the confidence to share your lived experience with us so we can understand where things are working and where improvement or changes are needed. We will feed that back into the system to influence the Staffordshire authorities.

So we need members voices to give us strength in numbers. And we need to hear your lived experience. We collect information from speaking to our members and carrying out surveys on specific issues. This data helps us have hard conversations with Staffordshire authorities in a factual and non-confrontational way.

#### How can you get involved?

**You can become a member.** We'll reach out to you to share your experience and we'll keep you up to speed on our activities.

**You can become a PCF Rep.** Reps represent the PCF in our outreach – that could include help with meeting parent groups and attending project meetings. Even two or three hours per month could make a difference.

**You can be part of a parent community groups in schools.** These groups help parents and carers of children that are coming through the school and you can help with the challenges we all go through along the way.

To find out more go to our website : <https://staffspcf.co.uk/>

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## **Kim Edge, Head of Service – SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs Information, Advice and Support Service) Update**

For those new to our service, Staffordshire SENDIASS is jointly commissioned by Staffordshire County Council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB). It operates independently as a confidential, impartial, free service for parents and carers of children and young people (0 -25) with special educational needs and disabilities, and also for children and young people (0-25) with special educational needs and disabilities. Staffordshire SENDIASS provides Information, Advice and Support covering education, health and social care issues.

On 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 we welcomed a new officer to the service, Sally Davies-Jones who alongside our existing team can provide support regarding the law on Special Educational Needs and Disability, the law on Health and Social Care, information on how to resolve disagreements, including complaints, mediation and appeal, personal budgets, the Local Offer and much more. Contact details for SENDIASS are detailed below:

**Telephone Helpline:** 01785 356921 (Monday to Thursday 9am - 5pm, Fridays 9am to 4.30pm)

**E-Mail:** [sfps@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sfps@staffordshire.gov.uk)

**Website:** <https://www.staffs-iass.org/home.aspx>

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## **Mandy Tucker Update (ASSIST) Update**

[ASSIST](#) – Managed by Halit Hulusi. ASSIST (Autism and Sensory Support In Staffordshire) is part of the Specialist Teaching and Support Service supporting people aged 16 and above in colleges, universities, social care and the wider community.

Staff have been busy over the summer having had a lot of medical and police call-out requests to provide BSL interpreters. Office staff are now preparing for the influx of returning Further Education /Higher Education students and for the new intake. Some new referrals are usually made late in the day as students come through clearing.

Due to the plethora of jobs, we have been struggling to recruit specialist notetakers and despite the appointment of four new staff recently, they have all been offered work elsewhere, which they have accepted.

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## **Sarah Rivers – Headteacher of the Virtual School Update**



Welcome to the new term colleagues. Staffordshire Virtual School is here to promote the attainment and progress of children who have a social care involvement. We have statutory responsibilities to work alongside you to support looked after and previously looked after children and new wider duties from September 2021 to promote the education of Children in Need and Children Subject to a Plan. For information on our team and how to contact us please check out our website. [Virtual school - Staffordshire County Council](#)

The Virtual School has expanded to include a new Relational and Restorative team who will be supporting local authority colleagues and schools to co-ordinate work around embedding relational and restorative work within our education settings, we have also recruited an Engagement and Participation Officer who delivers a range of consultation activities for children with a social work involvement to improve access to wider learning particularly within the area of arts and sport.

What we know from research including the recent DfE Children in Need Review [Review of children in need - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) is that having a social care involvement however short and however long ago can have a long lasting impact on attainment and progress and wider life chances.

Here are some key areas for you to consider when thinking about how you are supporting our children with a social care involvement.

- Does the SENCO, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children meet regularly to have collective oversight of children



with a social care involvement to share attainment and progress and explore any barriers to education?

- Does your school understand the impact of adverse childhood experiences, attachment and trauma on education and are able to develop individual plans for children with a social care involvement? Are you implementing the graduated response early for children with social, emotional and mental health issues? There is a responsibility to involve the Virtual School and Social Care early where there are concerns around behaviour which leads to a risk of suspension. Please see our training offer on developing relational and restorative practice.
- Does your education planning for children with a social care involvement adhere to RADY principles (Raising Attainment of Disadvantaged Children)? All schools have access to the professional development resource “Thinking Differently for Disadvantaged Children” created by Challenging Education? [Challenging Education – Education consultancy, training and monitoring to maintained and academy schools across all phases](#). Consultation with our children with a social care involvement regularly identify that they want people around them to be aspirational for them and not to be defined by their social care involvement.
- Are you aware of the review of the EEF Toolkit for children with a social care involvement? You may need to consider individualised Pupil Premium interventions for children with a social worker? [What Works in Education for Children who have had Social Workers - What Works for Children's Social Care \(whatworks-csc.org.uk\)](#)

We want to thank you so much for your support for our children with a social care involvement .One of the most effective things that you can do is make sure that every child in the school with a social care involvement has one key member of school staff who is especially interested in them. We hear time and time again the difference that having a good relationship with a member of staff at school who believes in them can make a lifelong difference to them.