

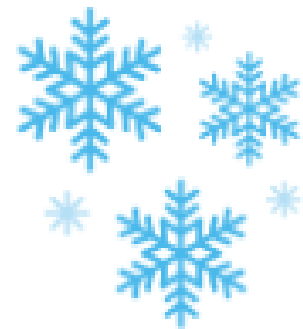
SEND Newsletter

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Newsletter – December 2024



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Welcome

Anthony Webster
Head of SEND at North Somerset



Dear North Somerset SEND Community,

As I reflect on the past year and what has been achieved as a local area, I am reminded of the meaningful progress and collaborative efforts that have occurred across the system which demonstrate our commitment to supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

A few of the standout moments from this year include the Day of SEND in October, which brought our community together to celebrate, learn, and share experiences. This event exemplified the spirit of inclusion and understanding that we strive to foster throughout our area. You can read more about the great work that North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together did with this event in the newsletter. We have also seen the opening of several new SEND school provisions with the opening of Baytree School in Clevedon marking a significant milestone in our commitment to providing specialised education. Additionally, the new speech and language resource base at Hannah More and Grove Junior School is now operational, enhancing our capacity to support children with communication needs. I have also had the opportunity to support the work that is being undertaken around the area's approach to neurodiversity through the health-led co-production meetings. These sessions have been invaluable in exploring new pathways and strategies to better support our neurodiverse community members, bringing together professionals, parents, and stakeholders to shape our future direction.

On a personal note, my highlight continues to be our monthly Children and Young People's SEND Council. These meetings are the heartbeat of our work, where I have the privilege of hearing directly from our young people about the issues that matter most to them. Their insights, perspectives, and suggestions are invaluable in shaping our initiatives and improving their experiences in North Somerset.

While we celebrate these achievements, we acknowledge that there is still much more to accomplish. Change and improvement in SEND provision is an ongoing journey, and we have many challenges ahead. However, I am confident that by continuing to work together families, professionals, and our young people we can build on our progress and create even better support and opportunities for our SEND community.

Anthony Webster Head of SEND North Somerset

Events



December 2024

17th December: NSPCWT Christmas Crafts Parent Carer sessions (AM/PM)

18th December: NSPCWT Christmas Crafts Parent Carer sessions (AM/PM)

23rd December: HAF activity day, various locations throughout North Somerset

January 2025

2nd January: HAF activity day, various locations throughout North Somerset

3rd January: HAF activity day, various locations throughout North Somerset

21st January: SEND And You Professionals Information Session (3.30pm to 4.30pm)

23rd January: SEND And You Applying for an EHCP (10.30am to 11.30am)

29th January: SEND And You EHCP Appeal Process (7pm to 8pm)

This will be an ongoing feature on the SEND Partnership Newsletter, so please do send me details of your forthcoming events. tracy.humphris@n-somerset.gov.uk



News from North Somerset

Guy Clayton

Principal Educational Psychologist

Following the announcement in the last newsletter, I'm delighted to share that the training videos and resources for Emotionally Based School Avoidance/Non-Attendance (EBSA/EBSNA) are now available.

These resources are designed to support school and college staff in using the EBSA Pathway process, a step-by-step approach to meeting the underlying needs of young people whose attendance has declined due to emotional wellbeing or mental health needs.

We've been busy sharing the EBSA Pathway:

- Presentations have been delivered to both primary and secondary Inclusion Panels.
- Parent/carer networks have also been informed about this valuable resource.
- Over the coming month, we will be presenting to the SEN team and Designated Teachers via the Virtual School.

[Access the resources on the Educational Psychological Service.](#)

This comprehensive package includes:

- **Engaging videos** explaining the 4P framework (Pre-Pathway, Pathway, Placement, Panel)
- **Practical resources** to guide you through the EBSA Pathway process.

We encourage all school and college staff to explore these resources and use the EBSA Pathway to support students experiencing EBSA/EBSNA.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact your link EP.

Julia Burgess,
Schools Capital Project Support Officer

MJ Achievement Awards celebrates the stars of local government across the country. The North Somerset **Nurture in Schools Pilot scheme** was a finalist in the 'Innovation in Children's and Adults' Services' category this year. This innovative scheme provides support to children and young people with emerging Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs SEMH.

Jill Woolfall

Team Manager Children's Occupational Therapy, Blue Badges, Community Equipment

Did you know there is an Occupational Therapy service for children within North Somerset Council?

Who do we see?

- Children aged between 0 to 18
- Children living in North Somerset
- Children with an enduring and substantial disability that critically impacts their everyday activities/daily occupations such that a specialist service is required to help meet their independent function and safety needs.

We help children with:

- Provision of advice and guidance to help parents/carers safely encourage their child's independence at home
- Provision of equipment to promote functional independence and postural support e.g. seating, bathing, toileting
- Provision of equipment to enable safe manual handling e.g. hoist and slings
- Minor adaptations e.g. grab rails in the bathroom
- Major adaptations to a child's home via a Disabled Facilities Grant e.g. a wheelchair accessible shower room
- Rehousing support if the child's home is not suitable for adaptations

We are unable to help with:

- Provision of a buggy/wheelchair: this is NHS provision. If this is the only request, it requires a referral from your health professional, GP or Community Paediatrician
- Provision of car seats.
- Functional skills interventions: this is the role of the Child Health OT
- Behavioural needs interventions: this is the role of the CAMHS LD Nurse
- Sensory needs: this is the role of the Child Health OT, via their 'Sensory Offer'
- Safety in the home that falls under parental responsibility: this is the role of the parent with support from the child's SW or FSW
- Removal of existing adaptations e.g. replacing a level access shower with a bath
- Support for Hydrotherapy in school

Referrals to our service: can be made by parents/carers or professionals. Referrals are made via the Children's Front Door Tel: 01275 888860; this is a team of Children's Social Workers. The OT team then triage the request.

We see children with complex needs and disabilities. We work within the child's home, school and short break setting. All referrals are triaged and prioritised according to level of need and risk. We are a small team and cover the whole of North Somerset. We work closely with other professionals in Social Care, Education and Health.

A Day of SEND - NSPCWT

Francesca Betts (she/her)
Senior Business Lead
Media and Resource Lead



North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together (NSPCWT) facilitated the largest Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Event in the local area this October.

Parent carers of children & young people with additional needs and disabilities accessed face to face support through direct contact with charities, support providers, local advice services, health services along with education and social care teams from North Somerset Council.



Popular training workshops on a diverse range of topics, 100+ exhibitors, hands on activities, drop-in clinics, a performance from Bristol's Misfits Theatre Company and keynote speakers Carrie Grant MBE and Andy Lewis MBE were highly attended.



Over 1,000 Parents, Carers, Family Members & Professionals attended the event based at Priory Community School Academy bringing together a community of support.

'I was there both as a professional and a parent so it was beneficial in all aspects! Lots of services I didn't know existed and good to chat to other professionals. As a parent, it can feel like you are wading through mud to try and get the right help, but having lots of support services in one place made this feel much easier'



'I think it's a wonderful event that helps support families when day to day life, they can feel lost in what the next step is or feel lonely when their circle of friends don't have children like ours so events like these make you realise how much support is out there'.

[To find out more, read our Day of SEND Impact Report.](#)

NSPCWT Update

Francesca Betts (she/her)
Senior Business Lead
Media and Resource Lead



North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together – NSPCWT

NSPCWT are the local parent carer forum, there to support parents & carers of children/young people between the ages of 0 to 25 who have an emerging need, additional need and/or disability.

Our Peer Support Coffees & Training Offer:

We offer a broad range of safe, supportive meet-ups and informative training sessions 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.

Our training sessions may also be held online via Zoom. If you would like a peer support session arranged at your school/setting or if you have a specific training request that would support your community, please email admin@nspcwt.org

[Head to the NSPCWT Calendar to find out what is coming up.](#)

We have just carried out our Annual Survey the findings will be released in January.

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

Contact details:

Our resource base is at The Firs, 89a Drove Road, BS23 3NX

Tel: 01934 440844

[The NSPCWT website.](#) You can email us at admin@nspcwt.org.



SEND Children and Young People's Council

Shelly Smith
SEND Engagement and Participation Officer



As we welcomed in December the students met for the last meeting of 2024 with impending festive spirit. The attendees warm up activity was to describe themselves using up to 5 words. This brought smiles and giggles to the meeting, the council discovered they had 'a living legend' in their midst. 😊

Most of the attendees, students and adults, all used one same word in their descriptions of themselves 'kind'. As the coordinator for the meetings, it struck me to look at the synonyms, so it makes sense: amiable, charitable, compassionate, considerate, courteous, friendly; this is truly the basis and the description of all who attend the SEND Council.

The guest for December's meeting was Emily Hamblin who attended to ask the members for their opinions, thoughts and ideas around a children and young person's council for refugee children and visitors. The members had some very good ideas and suggestions for Emily to support her moving this forward. They also provided some brilliant thoughts and opinions for a child friendly privacy policy.

We are fast approaching the distribution date of the latest The Buzz newsletter. In this edition there are blogs written by two students who attend the council. Please ensure you pass this on to families and children you work with. The kindness and compassion they described in themselves is reflected in their blogs.

From the North Somerset SEND Children and Young Person's Council we wish you all a happy, peaceful and wonderful end to 2024.



Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Christmas (Winter) holiday provision

Tracy Humphris and Shelly Smith
HAF Coordinators



HAF provides sessions during the school holidays for children who are receiving benefits-related free school meals. The HAF fund focuses on children and families who are struggling financially and live in areas of deprivation and poverty.

The HAF Team are delighted to confirm that this Christmas (Winter) holiday, there are 19 different provisions at 15 different locations across North Somerset.

Activities include sports, caving, skiing, arts, crafts, trade skills and gymnastics, to name just a few! At many of the activity days the children and young people will take part in lots of different activities. And all children and young people are provided with a meal and healthy snacks.

To find out more about HAF in North Somerset and how to book on, please visit: [Holiday, activities and food \(HAF\) programme at North Somerset Council.](#)

You can also [visit our HAF booking page.](#)



SAY – SEND and You

Jenna Hollywood
Media Officer/ IAS Advisor



[Professionals Information Session: online \(Zoom\) Tuesday 21st January 2025 from 3.30pm to 4.30pm](#)

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.

[Applying for an EHCP: online \(Zoom\) Thursday 23rd January 2025 from 10.30am to 11.30am](#)

To get an EHCP you first need to request an EHC needs assessment for your child. Our trained advisor will guide you through the EHC needs assessment process, explaining the key legislation relating to the process, so you understand the legal assessment test and the information you need to evidence in your request.

[EHCP Appeal Process: online \(Zoom\) Wednesday 29th January 2025 7pm to 8pm](#)

This information session is for those who are considering appealing an EHCP decision and want to understand more about the process.

News from SENDCAS

Jennie Little
Daycare Coordinator
Children with Disabilities Team



Taster Day Session

SENDCAS held a Taster Day Session designed for younger children in Key Stage 1 (ages 5 to 7) who had not previously attended SENDCAS programmes. This session gave new participants a chance to experience the activities offered by SENDCAS and connect with staff in a welcoming, supportive atmosphere, providing families with an introduction to the services and opportunities available through SENDCAS.

Stay and Play Session

The Stay and Play session was a popular event held at Kidsville, where families could relax and have fun together. This session was designed to be inclusive, welcoming both young people with SEND and their siblings, allowing families to enjoy quality time and shared activities.

The session fostered a sense of community, allowing families to support each other and build connections in a relaxed, fun setting.

News from SENDCAS (continued)

Jennie Little
Daycare Coordinator
Children with Disabilities Team



Saturday Club and Wicked Wednesday Offer



Our Saturday and Wednesday clubs have started the new academic year with a packed programme, which includes seasonal cooking and opportunities for young people to socialise.

This term Wicked Wednesday enjoyed a visit from Mike, a PCSO who used to be a Youth Worker at Wicked Wednesday. Mike explained his role as a PCSO, and the young people had a chance to ask questions.

Clubs run term time only. Please scan the QR codes or email SENDCAS@n-somerset.gov.uk for further information.

Wicked Wednesday



Saturday Club



News from SENDCAS (continued)

Jennie Little
Daycare Coordinator
Children with Disabilities Team



Community Events and Outreach

SENDCAS had the pleasure of connecting with many parents, carers, and young people at two recent community outreach events: NSPCWT's Day of SEND and the Safer Communities event organised by the Family Wellbeing Team. These events provided a valuable opportunity to share information, resources, and support with families in the SEND community.

During these events, SENDCAS assisted families with:

- Registering for resources, such as the Disabled Children's Register
- Signing up for SENDCAS clubs and activities for young people with SEND
- Obtaining Family Time Passes to help families access a variety of activities together

SENDCAS encourages parents and carers to stay informed on upcoming events and activities by registering their child on the Disabled Children's Register. This can be done by scanning the QR code provided or following the online link, ensuring families don't miss out on SENDCAS updates and opportunities.

[Register your child with the Disabled children's register for North Somerset Council](#)



SENDCAS Family Passes

Jennie Little
Daycare Coordinator
Children with Disabilities Team



Family Time Passes

SENDCAS's Family Time Passes continue to be a popular resource, providing families with the chance to enjoy quality time together through free admission to a range of attractions in North Somerset. These passes are designed to make family outings more accessible, offering an opportunity for families to relax, connect, and explore local attractions at no cost.

Key features of the Family Time Passes include:

- Complimentary entry to various family-friendly attractions in North Somerset
- Opportunities for families to enjoy outings together in an inclusive, welcoming environment
- Passes that are valid for the entire family, though terms and conditions apply.

Families' voice:

"Hi. I would like to say a really big thank you for the passes for family day outs. Being a mum to two autistic children we can enjoy a great day out. My son loves animals, and we've actually managed to go out as a family. It's been truly wonderful many thanks."

"I just wanted to say thank you for our family time passes and share some photos with you as requested from our recent trips."

"The passes have been great because quite often we only manage a couple of hours at these sort of places and so it just wouldn't be financially viable without the passes. It's allowed my boys to connect together a bit more and play together."

"It's also got us out of the house and engaging with the world a bit more during a period where my youngest is currently not able to attend school or access an education."



Weston College Update

Caroline Lewis – Faculty Administrator
Faculty of Inclusive Practice



Showcasing Local Talent: Jack and Amber Compete at WorldSkills

Weston College is delighted to celebrate the achievements of two outstanding young people: Jack and Amber, who have secured their places as finalists in this year's prestigious **WorldSkills UK competition**. Both are fantastic examples of how education and tailored employment support programmes can enable individuals with SEND to thrive in the workplace

Into Work



What is WorldSkills?

WorldSkills is an international competition that brings together young people from around the world to showcase their technical and professional abilities. It provides a unique opportunity for participants to push themselves beyond their limits, build confidence, and refine their skills. Covering a wide range of disciplines, from welding to healthcare, WorldSkills celebrates the remarkable talent of young people and inspires others to pursue excellence in their chosen fields.

At Weston College, we encourage all our learners to seize this opportunity, and this year, Jack and Amber will proudly represent the college at the national finals.

Amber: A Passion for Childcare and Health

Amber will be competing in the **Foundation Skills Health and Social Care** category. She is currently in her second year of the *Into Work* course, which offers a supportive environment to help learners prepare for employment. While Amber's ultimate ambition is to work in childcare supporting SEND students, competing in this category has broadened her knowledge and helped her develop essential life and professional skills.

Amber has been preparing for WorldSkills through weekly coaching sessions, where she practises tasks such as risk assessments and role-playing scenarios, including making a care worker phone call to demonstrate effective communication. Reflecting on her journey, Amber said, *"The staff have been really supportive; whatever I need, they're on hand to help me."*

Her experience in the competition is already equipping her with invaluable skills in health and safety, quality of care, and workplace readiness.



Weston College Update (continued)

Caroline Lewis – Faculty Administrator
Faculty of Inclusive Practice



Jack: Nurturing a Passion for Horticulture

Jack is a finalist in the **Foundation Skills Horticulture** category. He discovered his love for gardening through the *Into Work* course, completing work placements at Butcombe Farm and The Garden at South West Skills Campus. His dedication during a placement at Red Chilli Kitchen, where he made and sold chilli sauces for charity, led to a permanent role at Uncle Paul's Chilli Farm, where he now works as a gardener.

Jack balances his job with his WorldSkills preparations, ensuring he dedicates at least one day a week to practice. Speaking about the experience, Jack said, *"I'm feeling a bit nervous because I don't want to mess anything up, but I know I'll give it my all no matter what the result is."*



Celebrating Success

Jack and Amber's stories highlight the incredible potential of young people accessing employment pathways through education and competition. Their hard work and determination demonstrate the life-changing opportunities that initiatives like WorldSkills can offer.

We wish them both, and their fellow competitor Aidan, the very best of luck as they take on the National Finals in November.

Stay tuned for updates on Jack, Amber, and the exciting journey of our local WorldSkills champions!

Into *Work*



Vita Health Group

Emma Heath

Partnership Liaison Officer



Bristol, North Somerset
& South Gloucestershire
Talking Therapies

NHS Talking Therapies is a free and confidential service for anybody aged 16+. If you are finding that feeling low or down, worried or anxious is affecting your day-to-day life, then NHS Talking Therapies could help.

It is common for carers from all experiences to feel that they would like some extra support with their wellbeing, as a result of the challenges that they and their cared-for are facing. This is true also of SEND parents and carers, who may have a lot of demands on them when supporting their children.

We teach practical tools and techniques which are proven to help people improve their mood and find better ways to cope. We are also here to support young people and adults of all needs with their mood challenges, whether they are carers or not. If you would like to find out more or request an appointment, contact us directly using the telephone or website details shown on the attached flyer or ask your GP or another professional, such as the Children's Centre, to help you with a referral.

Tel: 0333 200 1893 [The Vitahealthgroup Website](#)
Text 'YOU' to 88802.

Do you feel low or anxious as a parent/carer?

We are here to help you

At NHS Bristol, North Somerset and 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.



The flyer features a photograph of a woman in a winter hat talking to a young girl in a wheelchair. The text on the flyer includes the NHS logo, the service name, the headline 'Do you feel low or anxious as a parent/carer?', the sub-headline 'We are here to help you', and contact information: '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.' and '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.' It also lists contact details: 'Contact us today - it is a FREE and confidential service.', 'vitahealthgroup.co.uk', '0333 200 1893', and 'Text 'YOU' to 88802'. A QR code is provided for self-referral, with the text 'Scan to self refer' and 'Service provided by vita healthgroup'.

Vita Health Group

Emma Heath
Partnership Liaison Officer



Bristol, North Somerset
& South Gloucestershire
Talking Therapies

Are you experiencing excessive worry, low mood, depression, anxiety or 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:

1. Self-refer using our website, or by scanning the QR code on this leaflet or by giving us a call.
2. You will be assessed by a friendly member of our team. Together, we will agree the best support for you.
3. A fully qualified therapist will support you throughout your treatment.

Contact us today: it is a FREE and confidential service.

Tel: 0333 200 1893
Text 'YOU' to 88802

[The Vitahealthgroup Website](#)

Making people better in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

Are you experiencing:



Excessive worry



Low mood



Depression



Anxiety



Lack of motivation

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

 vitahealthgroup.co.uk

 0333 200 1893

 Text 'YOU' to 88802

Making People Better in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

Scan to self refer



The Poetry Basket

“Chop Chop”, the Early Years Poetry Basket Poem for December



The Poetry Basket is a project which aims to develop children’s language, learning and development in a fun and effective way. The Poetry Basket scheme was launched by the Early Years Team in partnership with [MakeBelieveArts](#) in 2020. Each month children in early years settings across North Somerset learn a new poem and how to sign it in Makaton.

*“Chop, Chop, Choppity Chop.
Cut off the bottom and cut off the top.
What there is left, we put in the pot.
Chop, Chop, Choppity Chop.”*

[Use this link to watch “Chop Chop” signed using Makaton language.](#)
[Check out the Poetry Basket on the Helicopter Stories website.](#)



Reproduced with the permission of MakeBelieve Arts
The Poetry Basket www.helicopterstories.co.uk / Online Learning

Key SEND Partnership Contacts

SEND and You

SEND and You provides the statutory Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) in South Gloucestershire, Bristol and North Somerset.

Our role is to help parents carers, children, and young people build their knowledge, understanding, and confidence in SEND procedures, policies, practices, and law. We work to enable people to communicate their own needs, wishes, aims, and rights. This means people playing an active and informed role in making decisions about their education, health and social care.

SAY SENDIAS service is free, confidential, impartial, and independent from the local authority and health services. We work with professionals, organisations and services in delivering our function as a SENDIAS service with a team of trained practitioners, based on and within the legal SEND framework.

Contact SEND and You in the following ways:

- New or [first-time users can use our web-contact form](#).
- Call on 0117 9897725 (24-hour answerphone)
- Email: support@sendandyou.org.uk

Please be aware that young people aged 16 and older will need to give consent and permission for their parent carer to speak to SAY on their behalf.

North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together: NSPCWT

We are here to support parents & carers with children between the ages of 0 to 25 that have an emerging need, additional need and/or disability. We signpost families to relevant organisations, host regular coffee mornings, training sessions & events plus we previously organised free wellbeing days out for parent carers to enjoy.

North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together aim to improve the service, provision and the quality of life for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs by being the collective voice of parent carers and a strategic partner for the Local Authority, Education and Health.

The Firs, Parent Carer Resource Hub, 89a Drove Rd, Weston-Super-Mare, North Somerset, BS23 3NX

Tel: 01934 440844

Email: admin@nspcwt.org or visit [the NSPCWT website](#).

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.

This publication is available in large print, Braille or audio formats on request.

Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English.