



# VIRTUAL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER TO SCHOOLS SUMMER 2022

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I hope the summer term has started well for you. Always a busy one, this year will surely be no exception. For us, developments with our attendance monitoring, beginning to implement changes in relation to the extensions of duties and reviewing our ePEP are some of the priorities keeping us on our toes. You can read more about these developments and the implications for you in this newsletter.

Our support for Social Emotional and Mental Health needs is extending with a wider programme of awareness raising and staff development coming for 2022/23 through our core training offer and being part of our extended work to support the wider cohort of vulnerable learners.

We hope to see lots of you at the Designated Teachers' Network meeting at Dillington in May and look forward to working with you this term.

**Emily Walters**  
Virtual School Head

## SOME MEETING/TRAINING DATES FOR SUMMER 2022

### DT network meeting

Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2.00 -4.30

Dillington House

'Using Solution Focused Approaches to Build Capacity – positive leadership for improved outcomes'  
Led by Somerset EPS

### DT workshop

Thursday 23rd June 2.00—4.00

Focusing on positive goodbyes, holiday provision and an EP facilitated Solution Circle for complex cases

### Working with the Traumatized Child

Trauma 1 – Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June (1/2 day)

Trauma 2 – Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June (1/2 day)

Trauma 3 – Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> July (1/2 day)

**NB: This is a programme of 3 sessions, all taking place at Dillington and attendance at all three sessions is required**

To book places please visit the SSE website

[Support Services for Education](#)

and search for the event



For more details of opportunities visit the training page of the VS website

[www.somersetvirtualschool.co.uk](http://www.somersetvirtualschool.co.uk)



# SEMh SNAPSHOTS

Look out for our **SEMh updates** being sent out to schools during each term. If you do not appear to be receiving the Snapshot email, please check that we have your details on file by emailing [thevirtualschool@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:thevirtualschool@somerset.gov.uk) You can also use this email address to share any ideas you have for inclusion in future SEMh Snapshots, or any feedback about this developing resource.

We sent out two spring term snapshots, the second focusing on supporting children and young people against the background of the crisis in Ukraine. You can find some further resources from Save the Children on this challenging topic on this page.

Links to all editions of the Snapshot are available on the resources page of our website in case you missed them [Resources – Somerset Virtual School](#). Each edition has links to SEMh resources, ideas and practical suggestions to help support vulnerable learners.

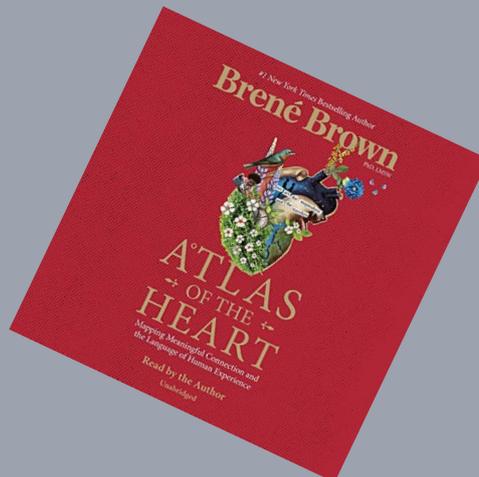
Don't forget the *SEMh Toolkit for Schools* Written by the Somerset Educational Psychology Service [SEMh Toolkit](#)

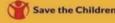
## Some other useful SEMh Resources

Dr Pooky Knightsmith, Mental Health Educator, Speaker and Author and Advisor. Check out some useful podcasts on this page.

[Mental Health | Dr Pooky Knightsmith](#)

Brene Brown's - Atlas of the heart –available as an audiobook and has a workbook that comes with it exploring the broader range of emotions e.g., disappointment. Backed up by evidence and citing research its observations and strategies can be applied as much to ourselves as to working with children.



 Save the Children.

## HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN ABOUT WAR

5 tips from a psychologist and child counselor →




### 1. MAKE TIME AND LISTEN

Give children the space to talk when they want to - even if you're in the middle of something else!

Encourage them to tell you what they know, how they feel and to ask you questions.

### 2. TAILOR THE CONVERSATION TO THE CHILD

Older children will need more details while younger ones may be satisfied just by understanding that sometimes countries fight.

Be informed, keep calm and answer questions honestly.

Begin with simple information as too much detail may overwhelm them and cause anxiety.




### 3. VALIDATE THEIR FEELINGS

Speak to the child about how they feel.

It is important that children feel supported in the conversation. They should not feel judged or have their concerns dismissed.

When children have the chance to have an open and honest conversation about things upsetting them, they can feel relieved.

### 4. REASSURE THEM

Remind them this is not their problem to solve. Adults all over the world are working hard to fix this.

They shouldn't feel guilty playing, seeing their friends, and doing the things that make them feel happy.




### 5. GIVE THEM A PRACTICAL WAY TO HELP

For example, they could start fundraisers, write letters to local decision-makers or create drawings calling for peace.

Children who have the opportunity to help can feel like they are part of the solution instead of feeling helpless.

## Raising Aspirations for Post 16 CLA

Are you working with young people who are planning to apply to study at University? UWE Bristol run the Heading Higher Passport Plus, an exciting programme for students studying Level 3 qualifications that is designed to help them reflect on their future plans, their motivators and how to achieve their goals.

The Somerset Virtual School is a partner in this valuable programme and is keen to support young people to participate. An added bonus is up to 16 UCAS points if an application to UWE is made following the programmes completion.

If you would like to know more then please contact

Elizabeth Fox, Lead Advisory Teacher – Post 16. [EZZFox@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:EZZFox@somerset.gov.uk)

## Changes to support for Early Years Children Looked After

To date Somerset's Early Years Area SENCo team has supported pre-school settings with a Somerset Child Looked After (CLA). Following a restructuring of the Early Years Area SENCo team, the Virtual School and Learning Support Team (VS&LST) will now assume responsibility for supporting our youngest CLA. Going forward, Lucy Herring, an Advisory Teacher for the VS, will be the main link with Early Years settings across the County, attending the PEP meetings and providing support to the settings as needed. Our website

[www.somersetvirtuelschool.co.uk](http://www.somersetvirtuelschool.co.uk)

will also be extended to have a specific Early Years focus page where you can find signposts to other services and support and items of interest in relation to CLA.

This is an exciting time for the Virtual School in extending its support to our Youngest CLA and we are currently thinking about ways in which we can develop the existing offer of training and support to enhance the good practice that already exists for Early Years CLA.

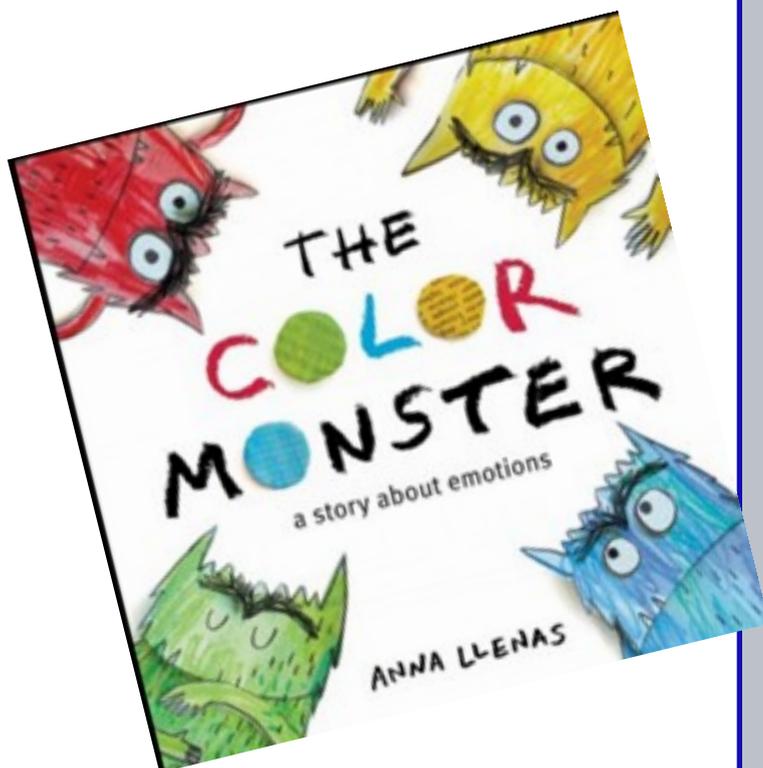
## Resource Recommendation

### The Colour Monster by Anna Llenas:

Yellow is happy, blue is sad and red... well red is ANGRY. The Colour Monster is a great Primary aged text that allows children to identify different emotions and how they can make us feel. A great story to work through as whole class, small group or as a 1-2-1 project.

Some helpful ideas of how to use this book including creating your own emotions book, creating a diary entry from the perspective of the colour monster and creating your own wall of emotion jars can be found here:

[www.teachingideas.co.uk/library/books/the-colour-monster](http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/library/books/the-colour-monster)



## KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH YAMMER

Many of you will be familiar with Yammer as a collaboration tool that helps you connect with colleagues, start conversations, share knowledge, and build communities. We have added a specific Designated Teachers area to the newly extended Inclusion Networks feed which may provide a range of interesting connections and opportunities to link up with people or conversations.

Once logged in you can ask questions, respond to those of others, post thoughts or suggestions or useful resources etc.

If you have not yet checked out Yammer, you can request an invitation to access the Inclusion Networks by clicking on this link and following the single instruction

<https://www.yammer.com/sendnetworkcollaboration/#/threads/company?type=general>



Paddington  
@paddingtonbear

Everyone is different but that means, with a little bit of respect, anyone can fit in.  
03/03/2022, 13:47



## PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN UPDATE

### Adopt South West CPD Opportunity

By popular demand Adopt South West have invited Dr Cassie Jackson to deliver another workshop on working in schools with children with FASD. Dr Cassie Jackson is a clinical psychologist with over thirteen years of post-doctoral experience in working with children and families affected by neurodevelopmental disorders, and in particular, with children who have FASD. She established the Centre for FASD, providing an assessment and intervention service for children and families and whilst this has had to recently close its doors for funding reasons she continues her work within the NHS in Sussex. Cassie also provides professional training in supporting families affected by FASD across the UK, to schools and virtual schools, social care teams, children's homes, and NHS paediatric teams to support them in developing FASD services.

This workshop will be virtual and will be on **Monday 10th October 2022 from 10am -12 midday**. Details of how to book will be sent out in early September but please save the date.



### Previously Looked After Children Conference

We are thrilled to announce the return of **Somerset's Previously Looked After Children Conference**. The Conference will be held on 12<sup>th</sup> October at Long Sutton Golf Club and will feature a brand new Key Note Speaker as well as workshops from Adopt South West, Educational Psychology Service and the Kinship Team. More information on booking will be released in the Summer Term, so keep your eyes peeled!

## PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS (PEPs) UPDATE

Our promised review of the ePEP—both the system and the content—is currently underway and schools have all been emailed a link to the MSForms questionnaire asking for views.

The window for responses officially closed on April 8th but we will keep it open a little longer so this newsletter can be a nudge for anyone who hasn't yet contributed. Final date for submissions is now Friday May 8th using this link:

<https://forms.office.com/r/PvU9EpNphn>

Do tell us what you think and how we can make improvements so the Personal Education Plan can be the most effective tool possible in supporting achievement for our Children Looked After.

## ATTENDANCE MONITORING FOR SOMERSET CLA

We are sure you are aware of our need to carefully monitor and support the attendance of our Children looked After and, under the extension of duties remit, to also work with schools to improve the attendance of all children and young people with a social worker.

From 25th April the attendance of all Somerset's Statutory School Age CLA will be collected by Welfare Call, the same organisation that manages our ePEP. This change is our attempt to ensure the attendance data collection and management makes as few demands on very busy education settings as possible.

A letter went to all schools at the end of the spring term outlining this change and any implications for schools. You can find a copy of this letter here

[WFC Attendance monitoring intro letter.doc](#)

If you have any questions about our attendance monitoring please email [thevirtu-alschool@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:thevirtu-alschool@somerset.gov.uk)

## Somerset's Graduated Response Tool

### Somerset's Graduated Response Tool

Ordinarily Available Provision for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs



Somerset's Graduated Response Tool' and supporting documents are now live and available on the Local Offer here: [What to expect from education \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/what-to-expect-from-education)

This tool guides users through how barriers to learning could be identified, and the strategies that might support children and young people with SEN in overcoming barriers.

As well as many webinars for school staff and professionals, there are introductory webinars for parent carers in May. These can be booked by clicking the chosen date and time and completing the linked registration form:

**[Wednesday 25th May 10:00-11:30](#)**

**[Wednesday 25th May 18:00-19:30](#)**

Thank you to all those involved in co-producing these documents.

## ANXIETY IN CHILDREN

### HOW WE EXPECT ANXIETY TO PRESENT:



### HOW ANXIETY ALSO PRESENTS:



@LEUSE\_COUNSELOR

# SiCC & SLCC news

Somerset In-Care and Leaving Care Councils

[www.somersetincarecouncils.org.uk](http://www.somersetincarecouncils.org.uk)



## SiCC & SLCC are looking for new members

Would you like to use your experiences and views to help others?

- Talk to your social worker, IRO, Leaving Care Worker, advocate or independent visitor
- Take a look at the website [www.somersetincarecouncils.org.uk](http://www.somersetincarecouncils.org.uk) to see the sorts of things S&S do
- Call or text the Participation worker on 07585 983356



## Who are SiCC & SLCC?



A group of young people aged 10 – 20 who are in care or leaving care

They do things like surveys, attend meetings, interview new staff (like social workers or managers), make films and have fun together!

They use their experiences, views and opinions to help improve services in Children's Social Care

This is what some members have said about being in SiCC & SLCC:

*"Makes me happy knowing someone is here for me"*

*"Nice to know that our words are being used in paperwork"*

*"I didn't have a good experience, so I want to help other children and help social workers to do their job better"*

# VIRTUAL SCHOOL & LEARNING SUPPORT TEAM

## CLA SUPPORT 2021-22

(UPDATED JANUARY 2022)

### WEST

Lead Advisory Teacher - Claire Eastwood

#### Advisory Teachers

- ◆ Cassie Jones
- ◆ Sarah Melhuish (LAT)
- ◆ Julie Hunt
- ◆ Zoe Crarer
- ◆ Louise Conway– Byron
- ◆ Lucy Herring

#### Learning Mentors

- ◆ Bev Robson
- ◆ Polly Slade

Lead Advisory Teacher (Post 16) county wide —Elizabeth Fox

Post 16 Officer - Ella Kusiak

### EAST

Lead Advisory Teacher - Helen Berryman

#### Advisory Teachers

- ◆ Heidi Humpage
- ◆ Jackie Jones
- ◆ Mark Long (LAT for SEND)
- ◆ Sian Biggs
- ◆ Wendy Birkett
- ◆ Jo Milum
- ◆ Nicky Harper

#### Learning Mentors

- ◆ Kerry Ashworth
- ◆ Catherine Steadman

Post 16 Officer - Gary Roper

## GETTING IN TOUCH WITH THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL & LEARNING SUPPORT TEAM

If you are not sure who you need to contact about a particular CLA, please email

[thevirtualschool@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:thevirtualschool@somerset.gov.uk)

and your query will be directed to the right person. This mailbox is staffed year round although much of the advisory team works during school term time.

If you have a query about Previously Looked After Children, we have a dedicated mailbox for these questions [PLACSomersetInclusion@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:PLACSomersetInclusion@somerset.gov.uk)

The Virtual School website remains a source of information and provides links to a range of resources and guidance including support for completing PEPs, Education Plans for Previously Looked After Children (EPPLAC) and the current Pupil Premium Policy [www.somersetvirtualschool.co.uk](http://www.somersetvirtualschool.co.uk)