

# SENCo newsletter

## June 2021

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## Head of Service – SEND Support

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Dear SENCOs,

Well we are rapidly racing towards the end of another extraordinary academic year. It seems strange that virtual meetings, bubbles, hand gel and face masks which were all so alien this time last year have now become so embedded in our daily working lives. Yet again you have all worked so hard to meet the needs of our SEND children and young people in Leicester throughout lockdowns and remote working, for your continued dedication, perseverance and resilience we really thank you.

Within SEND we have also been working hard on our improvement journey and making significant changes. As you will know we had our Local Area re-visit from Ofsted and CQC in May, many positives were identified and we look forward to sharing the official report with you before the end of term. Additionally, we have an agreed 3-year strategy for continued development in SEND, we have opened 3 new DSPs in the city with several planned for Autumn 2021. The special school expansions are continuing with the opening of the Knighton Fields Centre (KFC), a 60 place provision for complex ASD and Communication and Interaction needs in September, and further expansions for Ellesmere, Nether Hall, the Primary PRU, CHS and Leicester partnership School in the Spring of 2022. There has been a significant increase in the staffing of SES to support the processing of EHCPs and have already had a great impact. We have a new team within SEND Support the Quality and Inclusion Team led by Martine Hudson (previously Vision Support Team Leader). We have successfully recruited two teachers to her team to begin in the autumn term and a DSP lead teacher is shortly to be appointed.

Finally, Liz Richardson who you will all have worked closely with over the years, has been successfully appointed to the post of Centre Lead for the new Ellesmere-Knighton Fields Centre so will be leaving her role with us at the end of the term. Liz has been an excellent Team Leader for LCI and coordinator for SENCO briefings over the years, she has made such a massive contribution to the SEND Support Service and will leave a lasting legacy. We will all really miss her knowledge, input and skills but wish her well and much luck in her new and exciting venture. Thank you to Liz for all of your hard work and dedication.

I hope that you all found this year's briefing day useful and motivating and fingers crossed we will all get to meet in person in the next academic year.

Take care.

**Sophie Maltby**  
**Head of Service - SEND Support**  
**Social Care and Education**  
**Leicester City Council**

## Annual Review Update

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SES and in particular the Annual Review Team thought it would be good to provide you with an update on where we are with processing Annual Reviews.

The team, which consists of two EHCIO's and one Coordinator, have continued to work incredibly hard over this year. This can be demonstrated through the issuing and finalising of plans, in particular focusing on the key transfer years, F2, Year 2, 6 and 11. In total the team have worked through and actioned approximately **700** annual reviews. There are currently over 3000 children and young people with EHC plans so the team have devised a plan to ensure they are prioritising the most important cases to help manage an effective and proactive turnaround of future reviews, and are continuously looking at ways to improve the annual review process.

We are carrying out a couple of small pilots over the Summer which some of you will be a part of. The first is for upcoming Year 6's having their Year 6/transition reviews this summer (as they are come to the end of Year 5), to provide a broader deadline for the turnaround of these reviews and to allow amendments and consultations to be actioned in a more timely manner.

In addition to the Year 6 pilot, we are carrying out a feedback pilot. We have devised two feedback forms, one for parents/carers and the other for children/young people to complete at the end of their annual review. We have asked that this be completed from after May half term to the end of the academic year to allow us to review this over the Summer. If successful we would like to roll this out to all schools in September.

In addition to the feedback of parents and young people, we also asked SENCO's to complete an online survey regarding annual reviews, this closed on 28/05/2021. The feedback from both parents/young people and SENCO's will be reviewed over the Summer alongside the annual review process to help us assess any changes/updates that need to be made to make the Annual Review process as effective as possible going forward.

We would like to thank you for your continued patience, we have over 3000 annual reviews submitted each year and as a very small team we can face difficulties but please be assured we are working to improve the process and get as many annual reviews completed as possible.

**Caitlin Smith**  
**Annual Review Coordinator**  
**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Service**  
**Learning and Inclusion**  
**0116 454 2879**

## **New Preparing for Adulthood Strategy**

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The Preparing for Adulthood strategy is available to view and share. To ensure that it is accessible for all, there are several versions available, the full glossy copy, an easy read version and a screen reader version added to the local offer as a webpage.

The strategy shares pathways and information about how partners within in Leicester City will work together to support young people to identify their needs, learn skills and plan for their future.

Please share the strategies with young people and their families to support them to start thinking about the process of preparing for adulthood.

### **Please follow links below**

- [Social Care and Education strategies](#)
- [Preparing for Adulthood strategy](#)
- [Family Information | Preparing for Adulthood Plan \(leicester.gov.uk\)](#)

Pauline Killoran  
Head of Service - SEND Integrated Services 0-25 years  
Learning and Inclusion  
Social Care and Education



## Quality Inclusion Team Update

Congratulations to Anna-Marie Bromley and Rachel Kerry who have been successfully appointed to join the Quality Inclusion Team. Anna joins us from Orchard Mead and Rachel from Sketchley School. Both have had a range of special school and mainstream SEND teaching experience. In September they will support schools in implementing the outcomes of the Element 3 consultation. **A reminder please, if you haven't already responded to the mainstream funding review consultation, your opinions are welcomed and needed:**

[SEN mainstream support - Leicester City Council - Citizen Space](#)

### **BERA – Best Endeavours, Reasonable Adjustment Framework**

The autumn term also sees the launch of BERA - a guide to mainstream inclusive provision. For more information and to respond to the forthcoming consultation, please visit address [schools.leicester.gov.uk/bera](https://schools.leicester.gov.uk/bera)

### **Designated Specialist Provisions (DSPs)**

The team will shortly be joined by a seconded SENDSS teacher with responsibility for the City's DSPs.

With the rise in children and young people with an EHCP in the City, a programme of creating DSPs has been undertaken to ensure that there is a broad spectrum of provision that effectively meets the LA's diverse range of SEND needs. DSPs are co-located specialist facilities within a mainstream setting. This enables children and young people with needs which would normally be beyond the remit of the mainstream environment, to have those needs met, whilst being able to access a mainstream curriculum. The aim is for attendance in the mainstream school with the additional support of the DSP when needed.

**For more information on the provision provided by each DSP visit the school's website or visit:**

[Family Information | Designated Specialist Provision \(leicester.gov.uk\)](#)

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Provision and CYP numbers</b>	<b>Status</b>
Babington	CL & ASD 40	Open
Barley Croft	S&L 15	Open
Braunstone Frith	SEMH 10	Opening Aug 21
Catherine Infant	C1 10	Opening Aug 21
English Martyrs	ASD 5	Open
Fullhurst Community College	CI & ASD 10	Open
Imperial Avenue	CI 10	Open
Inglehurst	SEMH 8 ASD 10	Opening Aug 21 Open
Kestrel Mead	ASD 8	Opening 2021-22
King Richard III	CI & ASD 10	Open
Orchard Mead	SEMH 16	Opening Aug 21
Overdale Infants	EY Unit	Opening 2021-22
Rushey Mead Primary	ASD 10	Opening Aug 21
Sandfield Close	CI & ASD 10	Open
Thurnby Mead	S&L 10	Open
Willow Brook Mead	SEMH 10	Opening Oct 21

**Martine Hudson**  
**Quality and Inclusion Team Manager**  
**SEND Support**  
[Martine.hudson@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:Martine.hudson@leicester.gov.uk)

# Early Years Support Team

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## Funded Early Education (FEEE)

**Don't miss out! You may be eligible for funding to help with children with SEND in your care.**

All early year's providers including schools who deliver Funded Early Education (FEEE) places for 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to a one-off payment of £615 per year for children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.

You are responsible for identifying eligible children through a discussion with parents.

This payment is there to support you to make reasonable adjustments in order to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and could be spent on training and /or resources.

**For further details follow the link below**

[Disability access fund](#)

## Inclusive Provision for Children with SEND in the Early Years

'The Inclusive Provision for Children with SEND in the Early Years' document has been redrafted and is available online. This document has been developed specifically for early years settings in the private, voluntary and independent sector as well as linking to the school's document, '**Best Endeavours, Reasonable Adjustments - The BERA Framework, A guide to inclusive mainstream provision**'.

Schools with nursery provision will find the early years document useful on a practical level but it also provides some of the key messages for supporting children with very young children with SEND.

Please access using the links below:

[Inclusive Provision for children with SEND in the Early Years document](#)

[Resources](#)

[Easy Read](#)



# Learning, Communication & Interaction (LCI) Team

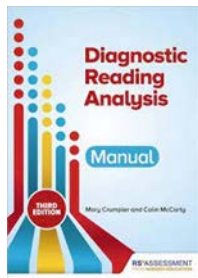
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## Assessments

### Diagnostic Reading Analysis (DRA)

Many of you have been on the School based assessment Course over the last few years and are using the **Diagnostic Reading Analysis (DRA)** as part of your assessment toolkit in school. As you may know a new updated version was published in November 2019. This means that to show good practise you should be using the most updated assessment and should be planning to swap over to either the DRA 3 or another passage reading assessment by November. The current guideline is that previous version are valid for two years after the publication of the latest edition. This is particularly important if you are using this test for your Access Arrangements evidence.

The new version has been re-standardised, has additional harder texts at the end, includes more comprehension questions about vocabulary and now gives an age equivalent for comprehension and reading fluency as well as reading accuracy. It can be purchased through all the usual stockists.



# Learning, Communication & Interaction (LCI) Team

LCI Team in partnership with University of Derby

Year 2 of the AMBDA Teaching and Assessing Learners with Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia) course will begin in September 2021. Successful completion allows assessment for exam access arrangements at secondary school and assessment and diagnosis of dyslexia for primary and secondary aged pupils.

Year 1 (ATS) of the course will begin again in September 2022. ATS must be completed before accessing Year 2 (AMBDA). In Year 1 you will learn about literacy difficulties and dyslexia and assess learners in order to plan and teach a bespoke literacy programme to address their needs.

All parts of the course are accredited by the British Dyslexia Association and taught at masters level (7). Open to appropriately qualified teachers, teaching assistants and other professionals with at least two years relevant professional experience teaching/supporting learners of school age (18 years or under) required.

**If you have completed the equivalent year 1 (ATS) elsewhere and would like to join us for Year 2 this September or are interested in further information for the start of the course in September 2022, please contact**

**[deborah.perkins@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:deborah.perkins@leicester.gov.uk)**

## Vision Support Team

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### Vision Support Team Update

I wanted to introduce myself to those of you who don't already know me.

My name is Joanne Rowe and I am now the Team Leader of the Vision Support Team. I have been in post for the last few weeks since Martine Hudson moved to the role of Quality and Inclusion Manager, still within SEND Support Services. I have worked with the Vision Support Team for the past 12 years, the last five years in the role of senior teacher. Prior to that, I was a primary school teacher in a Leicester City School where I was also a SENCO and acting deputy head.

Martine has left big shoes to fill but I will do my best to ensure that the team continues to provide high quality support and advice for the children and young people with a visual impairment within your settings. I am very lucky to be working alongside an amazing group of very skilled and knowledgeable people within the team who strive to do their best for the children and young people of Leicester City.

Over the past few weeks, we have recruited new teachers and teaching assistants to the team, and I look forward to introducing them to you next year.

If you have any concerns regarding a child or young person in your setting, please always speak to your VS teacher first as they know your child and their needs so well, but I am always here, if needed.



Thank you.

**Joanne Rowe**  
**Vision Support Team**



# Local Offer Live 2021

## VIRTUAL EVENT

The Local offer live event took place week 24-28 May 2021. Big Mouth Forum, Parent Carer Forum and various teams from the Local Authority worked together to plan and deliver the virtual event. It featured a range of virtual stalls, activities and workshops to ensure families were aware of support and services available locally. All the sessions were free to attend.

There are also pre-recorded sessions and information available to view on the website such as SENDIASS, Ellesmere College, Sense, Pathways, Healthy Together and Forever Savvy.

Some of the live sessions delivered during the week were the Psychology service, Early years team, Annual health checks, Steps Conductive Education Service, DWP support for young people and Helping your child with spellings at home.

**The local offer live is still available to view and will be updated with recordings of the live sessions in the next few weeks so please keep checking [Family Information | Local Offer Live \(leicester.gov.uk\)](#)**

## General Information

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**Please share with families and colleagues**

### Bamboozle Backyard

The Wildings are free outdoor immersive sessions specifically designed for families with children on the autistic spectrum.

During the wilding experience you and your child will be encouraged to relax and recharge alongside Bamboozle artists who will skilfully provide a safe and engaging space to explore the natural elements within the site.

**Sessions will from:**

15 July – 22 October 2021

**For more information or to sign up to a session please visit our website:**

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

**Location:** Rowley Fields Allotments, 165 Meredith Road, Leicester LE3 2EU

### Behavioural Optometry at Peter Jackson Opticians

SIGHT is the eyes ability to see. Most people are born with sight but not vision. VISION is a learned process through various stages of development and experiences. One may have good sight but poor vision. This may be evident in children who attend a traditional eye examination and appear to have good sight but struggle academically with tasks such as reading and copying from the board.

Our Behavioural Optometrists carry out specialized assessments to determine why the child struggles. These tests include primitive reflex testing, bilateral integration, binocular vision function, functional field analysis, eye tracking, visual processing, handwriting assessment, short term memory and Mears Irlen testing.

The assessment takes 90-120 minutes to complete and costs £200.

The child may then need Vision therapy to help treat the issues that have been identified. The therapy costs £300 for a block of 6 sessions and the child normally needs to be seen every 3-4 weeks. The child will be expected to spend around 15 minutes a day at home carrying out their vision therapy and primitive reflex integration exercises.

**For further information please, visit our website**

**[www.PeterJacksonOpticians.co.uk](http://www.PeterJacksonOpticians.co.uk) give us a call 0116 288 1121 or email us**

**[reception@peterjacksonopticians.co.uk](mailto:reception@peterjacksonopticians.co.uk)**

## SENCo Briefings – future dates: 2021-22

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### 2021

SENCo Briefing	13 October	1-3:30
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### 2022

SENCo Briefing	10 March	1-3:30
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SENCo Update Day	14 June	9-4:00
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SENCo Briefing	11 October	1-3:30
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**Not all dates are available to book at present**