



# **SENCo newsletter**

## **October 2021**

## Contents

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<b>Quality Inclusion Team</b> .....	3
Meet the Quality Inclusion Team .....	3
<b>Special Education Service</b> .....	5
Service update.....	5
Early Annual Review - Year 6 Pilot .....	6
<b>City Psychology Service</b> .....	7
Black Lives Matter, Diversity and Inclusion: Keeping the conversation alive .....	7
<b>Disabled Children’s Service</b> .....	10
Parent Carer Forum (PCF) recruitment .....	10
Transition documents .....	10
Mystery shoppers .....	10
Rix Wiki.....	11
<b>Early Years Support Team</b> .....	12
Sensory Circuits at Home .....	12
Funtime .....	12
The Early Years SEND Partnership .....	12
Early Years SENCO Award .....	12
Training.....	12
New Early Years Support Teacher.....	13
<b>Learning, Communication and Interaction (LCI) Team</b> .....	14
Autism Support and Online Safety Event for Parents and Carers.....	14
Widgit resources.....	14
<b>Vision Support Team</b> .....	15
Welcome to the new members of the Vision Support Team .....	15
<b>General information</b> .....	17
Care Navigation.....	17
Information about the role of the Care Navigator and how they can help co-ordinate services to support your child .....	17
<b>Dates for diaries</b> .....	19
Links to SENCo briefings 2022: .....	19

## Quality Inclusion Team

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### Meet the Quality Inclusion Team



**Shelley Piercy, Senior Teacher DSP Lead**

I've worked in primary and special schools as both a teacher and SENCo. I've worked for the SEMH Team for 8 years as DSL and Team Teach Lead. My specialist knowledge lies in both SEMH, and ASD enabling me to support our DSPs.



**Anna Bromley, SEND Quality Inclusion Teacher**

I've been teaching in the city for the last 19 years. I've worked in mainstream and special schools, FE and Adult Education. I have also chaired the Leicestershire Parent Carer Forum. I am a parent of two, both with SEND.



**Martine Hudson, Quality and Inclusion Manager**

I've worked at LCC for 10 years in the Vision Support Team, firstly as a team member and latterly as team leader. Previous experience as an Advisory Teacher of Visual Impairment and DSP Lead Teacher in Derby City.

The Quality and Inclusion Team's remit is to promote inclusion and effective SEND practice within the city. We will be working on the Element 3 funding review, promoting and supporting the consultation. We'll be liaising and training all relevant parties on all outcomes from the review. Work has already

begun on creating a new, digital Element 3 application form - a thank you to our city SENCo's who have helped shape our thinking. The team will work together with schools, SENDSS teams and other key stakeholders to ensure transition following the review are as smooth as possible.

In addition to this, the team's remit is to support schools with the BERA (Best Endeavours Reasonable Adjustments) Inclusive Mainstream Provision Framework, ensuring that it is implemented in all Leicester city schools. Details of BERA can be found on the Extranet.

The team will also be supporting the city's Designated Specialist Provisions (DSPs); setting up new DSPs and working alongside our established DSPs to ensure the best provision and practices are in place. Shelley is the DSP lead teacher and, in this role, will be supporting, sharing her knowledge and colleagues' good practice to ensure all the children and young people in our DSPs have the best positive experience and outcomes.

**Over the next few months, we will be holding a series of training events. These will be advertised via the normal channels. We will also be looking for a third teacher/SENCo to join our team.**

If interested, please contact [martine.hudson@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:martine.hudson@leicester.gov.uk)

## Special Education Service

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### Service update

The service in Leicester continues to face several challenges including:

- staff shortages due to long term sickness, retirement and of course Covid
- a huge increase in requests for statutory assessment
- delays in building works providing new placements
- and the challenges of home working

In addition, there have been delays in issuing plans when they are completed by SES due to staffing issues in the administration team.

These issues have had a detrimental impact on our ability to complete initial assessments within 20 weeks, and complete annual reviews as fast as we would like.

To enable us to improve this we have recruited 2 temporary staff members who started on 4 October. Both are experienced plan writers and we hope they will quickly have an impact on both initial assessments and annual reviews.

In addition, we have recruited a replacement for the retiring staff member. She joined us on the 1 October. We expect that after the initial induction period that she will, in the first instance, support the annual review team where she can build skills and will then join the plan writing team.

Longer term we are reviewing the team structure and staffing levels; we are monitoring data to establish if the increase in requests for assessments continues and we are looking for improvements in the processes.

This is not where any of us would wish to be, particularly after all the work that took place last year to get the backlogs under control.

We thank you for your continued support during this time and ask for your patience as we strive to make further improvements.

**Vicki Urch**  
**Service Manager**  
**Special Education Service**

## Early Annual Review - Year 6 Pilot

SES carried out an Annual Review pilot in 2021 which involved schools carrying out Year 5 annual reviews at the end of May through to the end of the academic year and using this annual review to discuss the child's Year 7 placement for September 2022.

The aim of the pilot was to complete the Year 6 transition review at the end of Year 5, allowing SES to complete the amendments and issue the appropriate consults over the Summer holidays enabling placements for 2022 to be finalised over the Autumn term.

SES found this to be a great success with 91% of the submitted annual reviews being issued and consulted over the summer allowing the finalising of plans and placements to be carried out over the coming weeks.

Due to the success of the pilot we are now asking that **all Year 6 transition reviews are replaced with an annual review scheduled over the Summer term towards the end of Year 5**, the review will be the same as any other but will involve discussion of Secondary School placements. These will be submitted by the end of the academic year allowing a much more effective time frame and turnaround for Secondary School places to be confirmed.

We anticipate that the Year 6 annual review that is required will be a light-touch review of the plan looking over any amendments that may need further updating before the child's transition into Secondary School. This should happen in the summer term and in many cases will require very few amendments.

We would like to thank all those schools that took place in the pilot scheme that has enabled this change to take place.

**Caitlin Smith**  
**Annual Review Coordinator**  
**Special Education Services**

## City Psychology Service

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### Black Lives Matter, Diversity and Inclusion: Keeping the conversation alive

In May 2020 the death of George Floyd sparked mass activism across the world in support of anti-racism and increased awareness of the Black Lives Matter movement. George Floyd was sadly one victim amongst many and led to conversations taking place across classrooms, living rooms and workplaces as individuals were moved to talk about racism and discrimination.

We have all reflected on our own experience and identities and we are invited to think about what we can do better to promote equality within our city. We are all duty bound by the Equalities Act (2010). It is a legal requirement for schools and support services to eliminate discrimination based upon the protected characteristics; age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, race, sex and sexual orientation.

Black Lives Matter, diversity and inclusion are important topics for psychologists within Leicester City. Psychologists are bound by the HCPC professional code of conduct and British Psychological Society pledge to challenge structural racism to promote and celebrate diversity and inclusion.

Leicester City has a culturally rich and diverse population including 55% of our child population.

Understanding inter-sectionality is crucial to understanding individuals' lived experiences and particularly those of the children and families that we work with. Intersectionality (Crenshaw 2019) is the understanding that we experience life, discrimination and benefits based on a number of identities that we each have.

As SEND professionals committed to promoting inclusion and improving the life chances for our city's children and young people remembering and using the following strategies can help to improve our understanding and practice:

- Our own 'positionality' informs our understanding and views it's important to talk about these ideas within teams.
- Inclusion should be tailored to specific groups and specific situations.
- Be alert to covert racism, notice it and do something.
- Challenge stereotypes or biases.
- Be a role model through your actions
- Model respect for diversity when opportunities arise.
- Respond to children's questions about difference to develop their understanding.
- Preparing for adulthood - provide experiences, opportunities and role models which promote aspiration and choice for all young people.
- From the early years through to post 16 education use song, music, stories and books to share understanding of culture, connections and experiences.

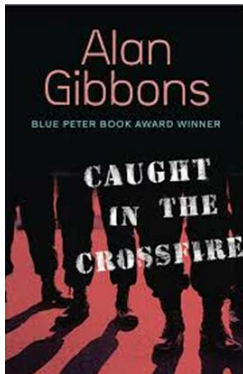
- Reflect on the cultural background and the experiences of our children and their families.
- Work closely with parent/cares, provide language support and listen to their experience.
- Remember the city's [Positive and Peaceful Places Charter](#) (Anti-bullying Strategy)

**Books offer a starting point for a conversation. Our city and school libraries hold a range of books for both children and adults many in different languages, encourage families to use these.**

The website [Using fiction to explore identity and diversity](#) provides resources for children and young people. The books have been recommended by a group of teachers as a tool to explore global issues. They are powerful books exploring a range of 'difficult' issues such as community tension, racism, displacement, bullying and conflict. Fiction provides a 'safe context' for exploring these themes, allowing critical discussion of the characters and their motives.

**Below is a description of some of the texts and a link to the author's website.**

[Caught in the Crossfire](#) Alan Gibbons, set in the northeast, a compelling book about racial tension, following the 9/11 attacks.



[Noughts and Crosses](#) Malorie Blackman

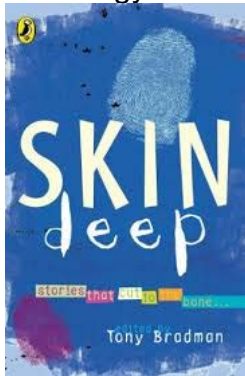
Turns preconceived ideas of racial prejudice, upside down.





**Skin Deep** edited by Tony Bradman

Anthology of short stories set in different parts of the world, on the theme of racism.



**Surprising Joy** Valerie Bloom

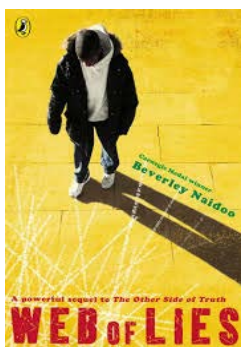
Joy's experiences of leaving Jamaica and coming to be with her mother in London.

**Jupiter Williams** S I Martin

Story of a Sierra Leonean boy fighting for survival in London, in 1800.

**The Other Side of Truth and Web of Lies** Beverley Naidoo

A Nigerian family's experience of being refugees in England.



**Walking a Tightrope** Edited by Rehana Ahmed

Anthology of short stories from Asian writers

Your link Educational Psychologist will be happy to speak with you further about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion or to enquire about further training please contact [psychology@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:psychology@leicester.gov.uk)

## Disabled Children's Service

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### Parent Carer Forum (PCF) recruitment

Leicester City Parent Carer Forum are looking to recruit parents and carers of children and young people aged between 0-25 years with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Parent Carer Forum is a great way to engage with the Local Authority, Health Services and Voluntary sector and other providers to help shape the cities SEND support services. **For further information contact** [rjaramba@lcpcf.net](mailto:rjaramba@lcpcf.net)

### Transition documents

Transition is an exciting time for young people with special educational needs and disabilities between the ages of 14 to 25. It is important to start planning and having conversations early to make transition successful.

The Local Offer hosts transition information documents that can support young people and their families to understand and prepare for some of these changes. Please share the documents with families you are working with that may find it useful, they can be found here [Family Information | Moving in to adulthood \(leicester.gov.uk\)](#).



### Mystery shoppers

The Mystery Shopper Scheme provides an opportunity for families and young people to get involved in developing the content and accessibility of our Leicester's Send Local Offer. We hold a virtual meeting where we look at a particular area every two months and complete a feedback form. Mystery Shoppers can:

- Look at the Local Offer with a fresh pair of eyes
- Look at keyword searches
- Test accessibility
- Highlight information difficult to understand
- Highlight information difficult to find
- Highlight missing information
- Share what is good about the website
- Test on different devices

**If you are interested please email** [localoffer@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:localoffer@leicester.gov.uk) **and we will get back to you.**

## Rix Wiki

The Rix Wiki is an online simple, accessible and easy to build website. They allow children, young people and their family to communicate and share important information. The information can be shared in the format of documents, video clips and images.

The CCG purchased 350 licences which are available to use until July 2022. The pilot scheme is for young people with learning disabilities, ASD and/or have complex health needs in receipt of a personal health budget.

**For further information or to make a referral please contact**

**Lindsey Richardson** [Lindsey.Richardson@EastLeicestershireandRutlandccg.nhs.uk](mailto:Lindsey.Richardson@EastLeicestershireandRutlandccg.nhs.uk)

## Early Years Support Team

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### Sensory Circuits at Home

Sensory circuits are short and snappy sensory motor activities which helps to set children up for the day. Children participate in a 10-15-minute session beginning with Altering, Organising and then Calming.

**For further details follow the link: [Sensory Circuits](#)**

### Funtime

Funtime folders are going online!

This is going to take a little while so please bear with us. We won't be selling anymore hard copies of the folder, but you will be able to access it online for a small cost. More details to come soon.

### Funtime Bags

We do not currently have Funtime resource bags for sale. We will be exploring whether we can do this in the future but will be subject to costs and whether we have time. In meantime if you need a list of resources to make up your own bag please contact your early years link teacher.

### The Early Years SEND Partnership

The Early Years SEND Partnership brings together a significant amount of **training, resources, support** and an approach to sharing learning that was tried and tested in an earlier DfE-funded project facilitated through the Council for Disabled Children. They are working across all nine English regions. The partners each bring specific expertise to the project and will be working on different aspects of early years, SEN and disability. **For further details follow the link:**

**[Early Years SEND Partnership – National Children's Bureau NCB](#)**

### Early Years SENCO Award

The Early Years Support Team have recently been awarded some funding through the partnership to deliver the Early Years SENCO Award which is a level 3 CACHE accredited qualification for experienced SENCOS in the Private Voluntary and Independent sector. We are delighted to be able to offer this to our setting SENCOS and keen to raise awareness of the award in schools.

### Training

The Early Years Support Team training offer is available to schools.

**For further details follow the link: [Early Years SEND Training](#)**

## New Early Years Support Teacher

I would like to welcome **Helen Smith** as a new Early Years Support Teacher. Helen has been a SENCO in the city for many years and we are delighted to be able to welcome her to the Early Years Support Team.

## Learning, Communication and Interaction (LCI) Team

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### Autism Support and Online Safety Event for Parents and Carers

**Thursday 18 November 2021** from 10am onwards (please note revised time and location)

Join us in person at The Pitches in Hinckley, or watch the event online, to discover what support is available for families of children with diagnosed or suspected Autism in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. You will be able to hear from guest speakers; meet with local support organisation and chat with other parents and carers.

**For further information on this free event, please click:** [autsupport.eventbrite.co.uk](https://autsupport.eventbrite.co.uk)

### Widgit resources

Use Widgit to make symbolised resources to support communication, autism, EAL, scheduling, understanding, families, MFL and much more. Take advantage of the discounted costs available by purchasing **Widgit Online** and **InPrint3** via SEND Support Service, a national Widgit Centre. Further information available from [Paula.Jones@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:Paula.Jones@leicester.gov.uk)

Transform the writing experience for struggling writers with Clicker and DocsPlus CrickSoftware.

### Clicker for Primary **DocsPlus** for Secondary

Be inspired by a cost-free demonstration, delivered remotely to your school staff or SENCo Hub from a Cricksoft specialist. A 45-minute presentation to show you the range of possibilities, demonstrate different functions and answer your questions about Clicker and/or DocsPlus. This software is now compliant with exam access arrangements, enabling independence for students and reducing costs for schools. For further information contact [Paula.Jones@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:Paula.Jones@leicester.gov.uk)



## Vision Support Team

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Welcome to the new members of the Vision Support Team



**Hello. I'm Ben Singh**

Before joining the VS team, I worked in special educational needs for the last 10 years. I worked in a primary SEMH/ASD school setting up and running a nurture class in school. Leaving there, I went back to my roots teaching GCSE English and IT at an alternative provision teaching a predominantly SEMH and ASD caseload. There I implemented Widgit and visual timetables, set up an alternative ASD provision for their higher need learners.

After two terms working for LCI, I joined the VS team as their ICT teacher: managing the specialist equipment across the city. I love being in schools and helping the children and young people with a visual impairment to gain independence through using technology. I have now joined the team permanently and am happy to have a caseload whilst supporting schools to have the best technology possible to help their CYP access their learning.



**Hello, I am David Edwards,**

one of the new Vision Support Teachers in the SEND Support Service. I recently moved back to Leicester after living in Manchester for twenty years, where I worked in a range of primary schools for nine years, after spending time as a programmer, developer, travel agent and barman.



**Hello, I am Faariah Ebrahim**

and have joined the Vision Support Team as a Specialist Teaching Assistant. Previously, I worked in mainstream and specialist settings with children and young people with a range of special educational needs and more recently have worked with the County's Autism behaviour analysis team supporting and training staff in schools across Leicestershire. I have had a wonderful start to my new role, learning new things, meeting lots of helpful and friendly members of the team. and I look forward to what the future brings!



**Hello. I'm Sue Straker**

and I am new to the Vision Support Team, my role being specialist TA, teaching braille. I have a wide and varied career history, having worked in education for nearly 30 years. I started my working life as a primary teacher but later became a Teaching Assistant specialising in Visual Impairment. I have taught and worked with children and young people from ages 3 to 17 in mainstream primary, a couple of special schools, The European School of Brussels and even in a bilingual French/English nursery in France! My teaching adventures have taken me to France, Belgium and Scotland but I am now settled back in the Midlands. I always wanted to work in SEND and have now been working with visually impaired students for the past 13 years or so. I am very excited about my new role as I love doing braille and I know that I have joined a great team!

If you have any concerns regarding the vision of a child or young person in your setting, firstly, please advise that they visit an optician to get their vision checked. This is free for all children and young people aged 16 and below or up to 18 years old where a young person is in full time education. If the child or young person continues to experience access and inclusion difficulties, please consider a referral to the **Vision Support Team via the Leicester City Council referral portal [SEND services referral - Self \(leicester.gov.uk\)](#) or contact Joanne Rowe, Vision Support Team Leader on 01164 544650**



## General information

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### Care Navigation

Information about the role of the Care Navigator and how they can help co-ordinate services to support your child

What is a Care Navigator and how can they help me and my child?

- We are an administrative team working with 0-19
- Practitioners, Therapy Services and external partner agencies to support Families, Young People and Children. We can support with:
- helping you get the right services to support your child signposting you to local support networks
- helping professionals share information more easily, to co-ordinate health appointments
- gathering information from and sharing with Paediatrics, Speech and Language, CAMHS, Occupational Therapy etc., including checking on the progress of referrals
- attend meetings set up by external agencies to share
- health information when required
- providing information around your child's health appointments including who they will see, where and when.
- attend Team Around the Family meetings with professionals that are involved with your child/ren, using a Whole Family Approach to support your needs.

**Not all families will require all the services we offer.**

### Your information

To help your child, consent will be gained to share information between professionals. We may request further information from and work with relevant agencies so that we can make sure your child has the help they need.

### What sort of information is shared?

We share information such as:

- name, address and date of birth
- which professionals are working with you and your family at the moment
- other members of your family
- relevant health information

### Multi-agency professional meetings

These meetings can be organised with the guidance of a health professional e.g. school nurse or health visitor, to support any decision making and enable your family to get the right support at the right time.

## Contact Details:

Leicester City	Leicestershire County and Rutland
Central Area 1 Highfields, St Matthews Sajjad Shah Tel: 07909 401204	Melton & Rutland Jackie Hewitt Tel:078259 23232
South Area 2 Saffron, Eyres Monsell Jane Campbell Tel: 07884 458533	Harborough Jo Houlston Tel:07900 914728
West Area 3 Braunstone, New Parks Jane Campbell Tel: 07884 458533	Charnwood Sajjad Shah Tel:07909 401204
North West Area 4 Beaumont Leys, Bewcastle Gemma Cole Tel: 07827 449413	North West Leicestershire Beth Morris Tel:07827 879700
North Area 5 Belgrave, Woodbridge Jackie Hewitt Tel:07825 923232	Hinckley & Bosworth Gemma Cole Tel: 07827 449413
East Area 6 Thurnby Lodge, Netherhall Beth Morris Tel: 07827 879700	Oadby & Wlgston Jo Houlston Tel: 07900 914728

If you are unsure who to contact, please call the Care Navigation Team Number 0116 215 3265. Leave a message and someone will get back to you or email us at [CareNavigators@leicspart.nhs.uk](mailto:CareNavigators@leicspart.nhs.uk)

### Families, Young People and Children's Services

Leicestershire

Partnership NHS Trust

Bridge Park Plaza, Bridge Park Road, Thurmaston, Leicester LE4 8PQ

[www.leicspart.nhs.uk](http://www.leicspart.nhs.uk)

email: [feedback@leicspart.nhs.uk](mailto:feedback@leicspart.nhs.uk)



## Dates for diaries

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Links to SENCo briefings 2022:

[SENCo Briefing 10 March 2022](#)

[SENCo Update Day 14 June 2022](#)