

COVID19 SENCO Newsletter

Issue 3



Department for Children, Adults and Health
Education, Learning and Skills

This is the third of our series of newsletters for SENCOs and Headteachers written jointly by ELS and the Inclusion and Behaviour Support Service teams. It includes relevant information from the Education Continuity Newsletter and additional information for SENCOs.



EHCP consultations and completed assessments

As mentioned in previous newsletters, the 0-25 SEND Team are continuing their work and some EHC needs assessments will be nearing completion. We are still awaiting further information from the DfE on potential relaxation of the statutory timeline but in the meantime we are required to work to the current regulations. It is therefore our intention to consult with schools in the usual way. We would like to ask all educational settings to respond, as far as possible, within the usual 15 day limit. Funding associated with EHCPs will not be automatically forwarded to schools until schools reopen.

Separate advice on risk assessment under the new COVID 19 requirements has been communicated in most recent newsletters however if you have a child who has been undergoing a needs assessment and their plan is finalised, you might then want to review risk assessment of the vulnerability of the child.

If you have any queries please contact the 0- 25 helpline on 0-25 Duty Line (EHCP enquiries) on 0-25ServiceEducationDuty@southglos.gov.uk or 01454 865137.

Help children with SEND continue their education during Coronavirus - DfE

DfE recently published this [guidance](#) which is aimed at parents. The guidance highlights some resources to help parents which you may want to direct them to. There is a list of online educational resources for children with SEND. This includes apps and games, and resources for teachers as well as specific resources linked to PMLD, speech and language and visual impairment. The list can be accessed [here](#).

There is also a list of Coronavirus educational resources from The Sensory Projects. These are grouped into those aimed at people with additional educational needs, those specific to learning about COVID 19 and the changes it is implementing in

our lives and those aimed at students who attend mainstream schools. It can be accessed [here](#).

Additionally there is guidance on technology resources for SEND to support learning from home. This recommends resources for electronic communication, paper-based communication, online software, downloadable software, apps, tablet and phone accessories and is available [here](#).

Integra home learning website

Our website gives parents advice and support at <https://www.integra.co.uk/home-learning/> This includes learning activities, but also information on how parents can support their child's wellbeing and manage the situation at home. We have included a special area called SENsational learning to help parents support the needs of their child at home.

Local Authority Safeguarding Monitoring of Vulnerable Pupils

From the Education Continuity newsletter.

Over the next few weeks, your school will receive a safeguarding monitoring email from the Local Authority. This will be addressed to the Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead and SENCO. You will have already received an email last week, with full details of what the monitoring process will involve, along with the questions that the LA officer will ask.

This will be a valuable opportunity to discuss your school safeguarding processes for vulnerable pupils and to talk about any concerns you have for vulnerable pupils who are not attending school.

The Local Authority and schools have a statutory duty to ensure safeguarding processes are robust during this unprecedented time. We understand that this is a challenging and unpredictable time for us all and we want to ensure you feel well supported in carrying out your processes and also to ensure education, health and social care are working collaboratively to share information, advice and guidance to keep every child safe.

Keeping children safe during the COVID-19 period is a top priority for education, health and social care. The information gathered from this monitoring process will be fed into a weekly meeting with the Heads of Education, Health and Social care. Thank you to you and your staff for all you are doing to support children and young people during this difficult time.

Domestic violence and abuse

From the Education Continuity newsletter.

We are urging those supporting others in the community to spot signs of domestic violence and abuse. Tackling domestic abuse is an issue that we, as a council, take extremely seriously and are all too aware that vulnerable people may be affected due to the impact of the coronavirus response. If you either see or hear anyone showing any signs of domestic abuse – either physical or behavioural - at this worrying time, this could include bruises, regular shouting, arguments or signs of controlling behaviour, please do report it. There are various agencies you can report this to, please familiarise yourself with our guidance available here – www.southglos.gov.uk/domesticabuse. But please remember, if you think anyone is in immediate risk of harm, you should contact the police urgently, call 999.

Effective Senco Deployment Guide – NASEN

<https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/whole-school-send/find-wss-resources.html>

We introduced this in a previous newsletter and want to draw your attention to some key aspects.

This guide is for Headteachers, SENCOs and their line managers and was partly developed in response to the

SENCo Workload Survey (Curran et al. 2018), which many of you contributed to. If you have any time at the moment it would be worth exploring.



The aim of the document is to help line managers of SENCO's feel confident that leadership of SEND is well-supported, purposeful and developed in order to enhance educational outcomes and the personal development of children and young people with SEND.

The document has been produced by experienced leaders of SEN in various provisions, and a parent of a young person with SEND, and uses the 5 key themes from the SENCO Workload Survey with the goal of enabling SENCOs to maximise the outcomes for the child:

- Membership of SLT
- Effective Co-Production with Parents
- Time
- The Team Around the SENCo
- Effective Performance Management

Each theme is explored and illustrated with case studies, references to relevant legislation and Key Reflections/Questions.

The document highlights the complexity of the role of SENCo and helps other school leaders understand this. There is scope through using Annex 1 to evaluate and evidence different aspects of the role, through use of enquiry questions/prompts and from this to develop actions both on a strategic and operational level.

This has the potential to help guide Performance Management, so that it can be more relevant and meaningful.

THE SENCO LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES					
Strategic and effective leadership and management of the SEND team helps to ensure that the needs of children are met through a well-organised and deployed team across the school. Line management and deployment within the SEND team, particularly of teaching assistants who are on term-time only contracts, can often be an underestimated challenge.					
SENCO ROLE	B/E/E	PROMPTS/ENQUIRY QUESTIONS	ACTIONS FROM ACROSS AND WITHIN WHOLE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP	ACTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT BY THE SENCO (STRATEGIC)	ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY SEND TEAM (OPERATIONAL)
Line manages the SEND team, maximising the impact of Assistant SENCOs, Teaching Assistants and other SEND specialists across the school		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How many members are there in the SEND team?• How can the SENCO make performance management paperwork meaningful per management?• How can the SEND team be used effectively outside of their work with students to support the demands of SEND Co-ordination across the school?• How can the school help to make staff feel valued?			

Annex 2 delves deeper into optimising the team around the SENCO including staffing, strategies and resources a school might employ to support the four areas of need.

Annex 3 concerns SENCO time allocation and the recommendations made by the SENCO survey and Annex 4 aims to give clear direction of how roles and responsibilities for SEND might be organised across a Multi-Academy Trust.

The Inclusion Support Team would be really interested to hear from any of you engaging in this so please do share your experiences!

CPD opportunities for SENCOs

We are aware that some schools are taking the opportunity to complete and update training during this lockdown period and we have identified some opportunities below that you may wish to explore.

Good Practice in Autism Education

This course run by Bath University is free for 6 weeks and is something that you could signpost staff to. It covers:

- Understanding autism and intellectual disabilities
- Developing an inclusive curriculum
- Good practice in autism education
- Sharing good practice

For more information explore the website [here](#).

Free Weekly Webinars

Studio 3 are offering webinars at 3 pm every Tuesday from a wide range of speakers. The next webinar on 28 April is entitled 'Sulky, rowdy, rude: using low arousal approaches to manage behavior of concern in children and young people' by clinical psychologist Bo Hejlskov. You can also catch up on previous webinars and download the presentations. This include:

- Psychoeducation: should I tell my child they have autism and how? By Peter Vermeulen.
- Using low arousal approaches in learning environments by Gareth D Morewood.
- The low arousal approach@ a practitioner's guide by Professor Andrew McDonnell.

See the [Studio 3 Website](#) for more information and to sign up.

Training Opportunities - Jarlath O'Brien

Thanks to Jarlath who has collated an extensive list of bitesized CPD resources to support SEND and tweeted these. There are short videos, brief explanations of the areas of SEND and resources. They are listed in the attached sheet which he tweeted out and cover aspects such as:

- ADHD
- Autism
- Speech, language and communication needs
- Dyslexia
- Sensory processing difficulties
- Working memory

He has also outlined free online courses in inclusive education, trauma, supporting active participation and creating an inclusive classroom.

Online Introduction to Sensory Integration Difficulties for Schools

This course will provide an introduction to sensory integration and processing difficulties. It will consider a range of sensory strategies and environmental adaptations that can support engagement. The course is 4 hours long and uses animations, videos, quizzes and downloadable content that can be completed over 3 months. It is being offered at £10 (usual price £49) until 30 June. See the webpage for [further information](#).

Autism Education Trust Survey

The Trust are asking for schools to complete a survey to inform the development of digital support and resources for schools and colleges to help you to feel more effective in your role.

This 10 minute survey will help them understand your use of online tools and how they can support your professional learning and development. It can be accessed [here](#).

Tips for managing mental health during Coronavirus

Autistica have identified these tips as this lockdown can be particularly difficult for autistic people.

- Stay active
- Understand your worry
- Create structure and routine
- Limit the amount of news you consume
- Connect with others
- Check your usual supports
- Eat and drink well
- Schedule a nice thing every day
- Try something new

Visit the [Autistica website](#) for further information.

Book Corner

Book Review - The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind and Body in the healing of Trauma. Bessel van der Kolk. Penguin.



The focus of this book shows how trauma marks the body. Van der Kolk describes how the effects of the trauma becomes physically embodied in victims. These embodied scars, while designed to protect the individual, can often have the effect of prolonging and accentuating the scars left by trauma. The physical effects of psychological injury are central to this book and van der Kolk stresses that work with the body is the clearest and most effective approach to working effectively with and healing those who have experienced trauma. There is advice on what can be done physically to control the effects of trauma. When an individual experiences deeply traumatic events, the brain 'copes' by shutting down those parts which are not immediately necessary to actually survive the event. The part of the brain that is shut down in these circumstances is the area which locates events in time.

This results in the event not being connected to any specific time, so it can never be over, it is always present. Any trigger – place, sensations, etc. – that brings the event back to mind does not just remind a person of the event, it puts them back into the immediacy of the event. Consequently, much of trauma therapy is to convince the brain that the traumatic event is now in the past. Those who have experienced trauma do their best to repress and resist the terror, anger and sadness which result from their experiences. Mostly, they are able to get by, though life tends, constantly, to be highly fragile and people have to work tirelessly to maintain control. They simply survive. The case studies in the book which illustrate van der Kolk's premise are moving, profound and sometimes uncomfortable, but they are also uplifting in the positive outcomes which have resulted through focussed work with professionals and personal endurance.

Van der Kolk stresses the importance those with trauma of becoming aware of their own bodies. This is not just about key physical functions such as breathing and heartbeat, but also where memories feel like they are 'stored' in the body. For those with trauma there are often physical actions, activities, positions and stances which are uncomfortable to them. This is also the case with regard to certain environmental contexts and with sensory experiences. The bodies of those with trauma do not know how to 'decompress'. Van der Kolk stresses that people with trauma become stuck in these moments of past horror and faced with what become autonomic imbalances, these keep people on the defensive and they are unable to change

their responses. Key for those with trauma is to get to a place where they can feel safe and validated and connected to others.

This is an insightful book, the product of a professional with thirty years' experience in the field of trauma. The connection between the physical and sensory system and trauma is something of which those of us working with children should be aware. A lengthy, but recommended read.

Helping Young Ones Cope Books

Love Reading have identified a list of books that can support with helping children cope with anxiety.

This article by Charlotte Carus contains a list of books with explanations and other resource links that could help relieve negative feelings and help children to find ways to cope.

Visit the [Love Reading](#) website for this information which you could recommend to parents or share with teachers to circulate.

If you have a book review or recommendation for other SENCos please email jo.briscombe@southglos.gov.uk so that we can include it in our next newsletter.

Contact the Inclusion and Behaviour Teams

Email contacts for inclusion and behaviour support. Contact your usual support person or if urgent ring Julie Cole who can ask them to ring you back.

Jackie Muggleton	Jackie.muggleton@southglos.gov.uk
Claire Phillips	Claire.phillips@southglos.gov.uk
Sara Tanner	Sara.tanner@southglos.gov.uk
Linda Boyce	Linda.boyce@southglos.gov.uk
Louise O'Rourke	Louise.ORourke@southglos.gov.uk
Alison Little	Alison.little@southglos.gov.uk
Eleri Sears	Eleri.sears@southglos.gov.uk
Jo Briscombe	Inclusion & Behaviour Services Leader Jo.briscombe@southglos.gov.uk

Websites for Learning

Help Kids Learning <https://www.helpkidzlearn.com/>

Accessible game-based learning activities to engage and teach a progression of skills, enabling children of all abilities to play, develop and achieve. Enables the creation of personalised choice-making activities. Some assessment activities.

SEN Teacher <https://www.senteacher.org/>

SEN Teacher is amongst the oldest teaching/learning resource sites and has over 300,000 regular users. Learning materials are free to share and use in schools or at home. The Print tools on SEN Teacher allow you to create, adapt and share teaching resources for a wide-range of abilities.

Inclusive teach <https://inclusiveteach.com/free-printable-sen-teaching-resources/>

Printable resources for use within a TEACCH approach for autistic pupils or as evidence within ASDAN. Many have visual symbols, use Widget and they are grouped in themes, e.g. space, transport, people who help us etc.

Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/curriculum_microsite/SEN_PMLD_thematic_units/index.asp This website has thematic units designed to support teachers in delivering a vibrant and motivating curriculum for learners aged 3–19 with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD).

Supporting communication

Visuals 2 Go <https://www.visuals2go.com/>

Create visuals for pupils with a range of communication needs and print on a range of templates – flash cards, small visuals for folders, activity boards, bingo boards, visual timetables etc.

Teaching Visually Impaired <https://www.teachingvisuallyimpaired.com/>

Locate VI resources and learn strategies to support pupils who are blind and visually impaired. Sign up to get free access to printables, presentations and a goal bank. Includes interactive sensory stories.

Speech and Language Kids

<https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/free-speech-language-resources/>

Created by an American Speech and Language Therapist to support teachers, speech therapists and parents. Includes free resources to help with developing receptive and expressive language, speech sounds, pre-verbal children, increasing sentence length etc.

Links for SENCos

In South Gloucestershire, we are keen to share innovative ideas for supporting SENCos.

We will disseminate these ideas to all schools.

Please email your ideas to our School Improvement Team at:

Faye.bertham@southglos.gov.uk

Inclusion and Behaviour Teams at

Jackie.muggleton@southglos.gov.uk
Jo.briscombe@southglos.gov.uk

Autism websites

National Autistic Society website

<https://www.autism.org.uk/> - UK's leading charity for autism with a comprehensive website of support and resources and an online shop.

Autistica

<https://www.autistica.org.uk/> - founded by Dame Shirley, Autistica is a charity which funds and campaigns for research to understand the causes of autism, improve diagnosis, and develop evidence based approaches and strategies to help autistic people lead long and happy lives.

Autism Education Trust

<https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/> - The AET is a not for profit programme led by two national autism charities – the National Autistic Society and Ambitious about Autism. Established and supported by the Department for Education, the AET promotes and supports partnerships throughout the education system to improve educational access, experience and outcomes for children and young people with autism.

Do2 Learn Website - support for emotional regulation

<https://do2learn.com/organizationtools/EmotionsColorWheel/overview.htm> The **Emotion Colour Wheel** can help visually group feeling using a circle divided into colours to show basic emotions. Brighter, bolder colours are associated with more intense emotions. There are tips for using the wheel, activities and worksheets.

Sensory App House - apps to support sensory regulation

<https://www.sensoryapphouse.com/>

Free apps on this website for stimulation, relaxation, fun, digital art and speech therapy. Many of the apps are cause and effect style apps, using digital techniques developed over time. A particularly good section on sensory apps.