



**Ian Morris**

**Early Years and Childcare Strategic Manager**

Email: [imorris@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:imorris@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)

Tel: 01905 844721

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## Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome back to colleagues who have been able to enjoy an extended summer break and to those of you who have worked throughout the summer, we hope that you too have found some time to relax and recharge in preparation for another busy year ahead.

This week in the bulletin I would like to bring to your particular attention the newly introduced annual safeguarding assessment for Early Years Settings and Childminders. Co-produced by the Early Years and Safeguarding teams, we think that you will find this tool extremely useful in identifying priorities and ensuring that your safeguarding is effective.

We're also very excited about our upcoming Early Years conference. We have a range of inspirational speakers and practical, hands-on workshops for you to enjoy as well as an unprecedented high number of exhibitors who can't wait to join us and make the days events that we can all enjoy. The conference is open to schools, settings and childminders so please book early to avoid disappointment.

Enjoy the week.

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## Annual Safeguarding Self-Assessment for Early Years Settings and Childminders

Over the term we have consulted with the sector and worked with some DSL's from across the County and have now developed a self-assessment audit tool (Annual Safeguarding Self- Assessment for Early Years Settings and Childminders). Schools for some years have been completing a similar assessment known as the section 175 which legally has to be completed by all schools.

In Early Years the toolkit is **not** mandatory, however WCF believe this will support you in your setting to assess the effectiveness of safeguarding over the past 12 months. This is an online survey and will be available yearly and can be completed via <https://wh1.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=162566541036>.

This will need to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021. The results will be shared with Denise Hannibal, Early Years and Education Safeguarding Lead and will support developing training needs for Worcestershire Early Years DSL's and all Practitioners, as well as supporting you in your setting to identify any priorities to ensure safeguarding is effective.

## Public Health COVID Advice

On this page you will find useful links to guidance on measures that should be applied within your school during coronavirus. [COVID-19 Education and childcare Guidance](#)

In line with new Government guidelines WCC (LORT) will continue to support local schools and early years settings whilst giving priority to those settings which are in “outbreak” in addition to an enhanced focus on SEN and AP settings. More information to follow in a separate communication with guidance for schools and childcare settings to include the definition of an outbreak, an updated check list and a process flow chart for COVID-19 cases and other infections. Thank you for your patience and look out for the forthcoming communication.

## Healthy Start

Healthy Start is a Government Scheme that provides weekly vouchers to eligible parents and can help parent/carers who are pregnant or have a young child under four. These vouchers can be spent on milk, fruit and vegetables and infant formula milk at local shops and supermarkets, as well as offering coupons for free vitamins too.

**Early Years settings should be promoting this scheme to parent/carers in their settings.**

For more information about the scheme, visit [Healthy Start website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

### Qualifying criteria for the Healthy Start programme

Parent/carers will qualify for the Healthy Start scheme if they are at least 10 weeks pregnant or if they have at least one child that’s under 4. In addition, they must be receiving any of the following:

- Child Tax Credit (only if the family’s annual income is £16,190 or less)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance
- Pension Credit (which includes the child addition)
- Universal Credit (only if the family’s take-home pay is £408 or less per month from employment)

Additional criteria for Healthy Start:

- If the parent/carer is under 18 and pregnant, even if they are not claiming any benefits
- If the parent/carer claims income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and are over 10 weeks pregnant
- If they or their partner get Working Tax Credit run-on only. (Working Tax Credit run-on is the Working Tax Credit they receive in the 4 weeks immediately after they have stopped working for 16 hours or more per week)

To find out if they earn £408 or less per month from employment whilst claiming Universal Credit, please advise them to look at their ‘take-home pay for this period’ on their monthly Universal Credit award notice.

### **Advice on how to apply:**

Please see the [How to apply page on the Healthy Start website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

### **Where can parent/carers get Healthy Start vitamins from?**

To find where parent/carers can use their Healthy Start vitamins vouchers choose the relevant district below:

- [Bromsgrove](#)
- [Malvern Hills](#)
- [Redditch](#)
- [Worcester City](#)
- [Wychavon](#)
- [Wyre Forest](#)

## **Save the Date: Early Years Conference**

We are pleased to announce the return of our popular Early Years conference.

Titled “New Beginnings”, it will take place on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October at Worcester Racecourse. The Early Years team are inviting you to a full day of inspirational and motivational keynotes and workshops exploring the most talked about and current topics in Early Years.

Our exciting line-up of keynote speakers include the internationally renowned John Siraj Blatchford and Lynnette Brock from SchemaPlay, the former story-telling laureate Katrice Horsley, and acclaimed independent consultants Neil Farmer and Sonia Mainstone-Cotton.

There will also be the usual wide array of stalls and exhibitors. There really will be something for everyone in the Worcestershire Early Years community so please take advantage of our special Early Bird booking offer of just £50 to reserve your place.

Booking is now live via [CPD online](#) and be advised that places are limited.

The codes to book are:

- Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October - CON/21/433
- Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October - CON/21/434

## Resource for Aiding Interaction and Developing Shared Attention

The Inclusion Team has produced an information leaflet listing a selection of resources, toys and ideas that may be useful to support children with interaction, shared attention, turn taking and early communication.

The resources should be utilised by parent/carers and practitioners for developing shared attention with an adult in the first instance. When children are confident in this skill, adults should then introduce another child to the activities to develop interactions and shared attention with the child's friendship and peer group.

The resources are particularly useful for children with complex communication needs and/or autism.

Please email the Inclusion Team on [eyinclusion@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:eyinclusion@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk) to request the 'Aiding Interaction and Developing Shared Attention' information leaflet or call the Inclusion Helpline on 01905 843099.

### **Inclusion Courses – Buy one get one half price**

A special offer is available for early years inclusion courses. Quote the following code on CPD online to get 50% off the second course you book onto:

**Code: SENCOAutumn**

For a full list of inclusion courses available please visit the WCF Early Years Training webpage and book on via [CPD online](#).

## New SENCO Support Adviser

My name is Paula Stearman, and I am the new SENCO Support Advisor for the North of the County. My areas will include Bromsgrove and Redditch and Wyre Forest, and my contact details are:

Tel: 01905 843784

Mobile: 07511045700

Email: [PStearman@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:PStearman@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)

I began my career as an Early Years teacher back in the 90's. After many years teaching mainstream Early Years I joined the Herefordshire Early Years Advisory Service as Children's Centre Teacher. During this time I worked with a group of preschool children with severe and complex disabilities and this fuelled my interest in SEND. I then started teaching at a special school for children with severe learning disabilities or profound and multiple learning disabilities. I worked there for eleven years. I am really pleased to join the Inclusion Team and I look forward to meeting you soon.

## Early Years Inspection Handbook

Updated Ofsted guidance on inspecting registered early years and childcare providers under the education inspection framework has now been published on the government website.

[Download Early Years Inspection Handbook](#)

## Vaccine Toolkit: Young People Workforce

The Cabinet Office has produced a workplace communications toolkit to help encourage vaccine take up in younger people, including links to approved social media assets. Please feel free to use the assets in the toolkit circulated with this bulletin as you feel appropriate.

## Understanding and Managing Sexual Behaviours in Education Settings

Worcestershire Children First, in partnership with Public Health, have commissioned a training opportunity with [The AIM Project](#), providing education settings with the opportunity to take part in a free, one day, online training course which looks at understanding and managing sexual behaviours.

The course aims to increase awareness and confidence of staff working in educational settings in identifying, responding to and managing problematic and harmful sexual behaviours in education settings. The course is designed for Head Teachers, Senior Leaders, Designated Safeguarding Leads or other appropriate staff who already have safeguarding children experience working across Early Years, Primary, Secondary and Special Schools settings.

The course is available to 1 member of staff per education setting. Resources will be provided.

To register for a place, please follow the link below to the Eventbrite booking page:

[Foundation Course: Understanding & managing sexual behaviours in education settings](#)

If you have any queries about this training course, please contact [commissioning@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:commissioning@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)

## Harmful Sexual Behaviour Pathway in Worcestershire

**Worcestershire Children First (WCF) would like to invite you to the online launch event of the Harmful Sexual Behaviour Pathway in Worcestershire.**

The NSPCC definition of harmful sexual behaviour is: 'One or more children engaging in sexual discussions or acts that are inappropriate for their age or stage of development. These can range from using sexually explicit words and phrases to full penetrative sex with other children or adults.'

The purpose of this event is to outline the vision for Worcestershire's Harmful Sexual Behaviour Pathway, with introductions from The AIM Project and Barnardo's and details of how you can get involved. To book a place for this event, please follow the Eventbrite link provided below:

[Eventbrite: Harmful Sexual Behaviour Pathway in Worcestershire](#)

Once you have registered, you will be sent a Microsoft Teams link via email to enable you to join the virtual event on the day. If you have any queries or accessibility requirements ahead of the event, please contact [commissioning@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:commissioning@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk).

We look forward to seeing you there.

## Educational Psychology Service (EPS) Questionnaire for Education Settings

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) delivers statutory and traded psychological services for children and young people aged 0 to 25, within a range of educational and community settings such as pre-schools, schools, colleges, children's homes and children's centres. Worcestershire Children First would like to seek your views on the support your school or early years setting receives from this service and understand what you may need in future from this service.

Please complete the [Educational Psychology Service: Questionnaire for Schools & Early Years Settings](#)

The questionnaire gives you chance to share your views and experiences and will be used to help shape the EP service to ensure children and young people get the best support possible. The closing date for feedback is Thursday 30th September 2021.

## Opportunity in the Wyre Forest: Early Years Language Classes

Worcestershire Children First have an exciting opportunity for a school or other appropriate early years setting in the Wyre Forest area to be part of a countywide service providing specialist Early Years Language Classes. The language classes are for pre-school aged children (3-5 years) and have been developed to ensure that pre-school children with a primary Special Educational Need (SEN) of Speech, Language and Communication have the specialist input they require through efficient and effective intervention to ensure that their educational needs can be met.

We are looking for potential providers who have appropriate accommodation within the Wyre Forest and have the delivery capacity to provide up to 10 FTE places, equivalent to support for up to 29 children per year. Places are commissioned and funded at £10,000 per place. The service will also receive dedicated and specialist Speech and Language Therapist time to provide detailed assessments, intervention work, support, advice and training.

If you think this opportunity may be of interest to you and you would like to find out more, please contact Beth Wilkinson on 01905 844724, or email [bwilkinson@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:bwilkinson@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk) to discuss.

Best regards,



Ian Morris  
Early Years and Childcare Strategy Manager

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