



Early Years Team

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Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

We'd firstly like to wish you a Happy New Year. We hope you managed to find time to relax and enjoy the Christmas period.

You'll find a number of free training opportunities within the Bulletin, which we would encourage you to take advantage of, along with both local and national early years updates.

In addition, we have reintroduced a section for early years practitioners; you'll find some ideas for activities centred around the theme of Winter that the Team have enjoyed putting together. If you'd like to contribute to future editions, please email your article to EYCC@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk.

Best regards,

The Early Years Team.

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Early Years Bulletin: Worcestershire News and Reminders

Smoke Free Homes Service

The Starting Well Partnership in Worcestershire have launched a new stop smoking service to support mums and other household members with a child up to 3 years old. The service will:

- Provide 1:1 support with a trained Smoking Cessation Advisor
- Provide point of contact for Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)
- Provide joint family sessions if preferred

To refer a family, please email: whcnhs.smokefreehomes@nhs.net.

For more information and for sharing, please download the [Smoke Free Homes Leaflet \(Google Drive\)](#) or visit www.startingwellworcs.nhs.uk.

Nursery Education Funding – Spring Term

The deadline for submission of your Spring Term funding claims and the Early Years Census 2023 Form (or Sufficiency 2023 form for maintained/academy nursery classes) is **Friday 20th January**. Please access the [Online Provider Portal](#) and complete both your funding claim and the appropriate online form before the deadline. Whilst accessing Online Forms, we would also recommend you complete the 'Update Your Details' form to ensure that we have up-to-date information about your provision.

Preschool Forum Feedback – Children's Secure portal

The Early Years inclusion team are routinely asked to feedback to early years settings when children in their provisions have been discussed at the preschool forum. This can result in a very high number of feedback letters being produced by the team, all of which are sent securely to the Early Years Nursery/Setting secure account on the WCC Children's Secure Portal.

If you have children known to the preschool forum who are supported by either the Early Years Inclusion team, or you are a school run provision – please can you check that your setting is registered to access the early years portal account as this is the main mode of communication used for preschool forum feedback, normally to the registered NEF contact.

They should now always receive an email indicating that they have received a message via the portal, to prompt them to visit and download the document.

If you are unsure whether your setting has access to the early years/nursery/NEF account, please discuss with your NEF funding contact within your provision to ensure they are forwarding this information to you. Please contact the Early Years system team on eycsystems@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk if you are having any difficulties accessing the account.

New PEP/PPP Quality Assurance System

As part of Worcestershire Virtual School's drive to improve PEP/PPP quality, as of the Spring Term 2023 we will implement a RAG rating quality assurance system for all Personal Education Plans (PEPs)/ Personal Progression Plans (PPPs) from EYFS – Post 16.

Such quality assurance systems are common practice for virtual schools and will enable us to more effectively ensure our children and young people get the best deal with their education.

Please note, **this is a developmental, not judgemental tool**. The criteria will act as a useful guide to help Designated Teachers when completing PEPs/PPPs. When red/amber PEPs/PPPs are identified, this will enable us to provide support/training for Designated Teachers, early years providers and Social Workers to write high quality, meaningful PEPs/PPPs that reflect individual pupil's learning needs and associated support. Integral to this is the use and impact of the funding provided by Worcestershire Virtual School via Pupil Premium Plus.

A key change will be that instead of the PEP/PPP initially being Quality Assured and then 'signed off' at the end of the term, 5 school days after the PEP/PPP meeting the Virtual School Learning Advocate will now go into the PEP/PPP and RAG rate it either Red, Amber or Green. Once this has been done the PEP will be completed and signed off and therefore no further additions will be able to be made to the PEP.

Should you have any queries, please contact your Learning Advocate, Matthew Stiles (Virtual School Headteacher) via email at mstiles@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk or the Virtual School at virtualschool@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk.

Early Years Bulletin: National Updates:

Parliamentary Enquiry

The Education Committee has launched an [enquiry](#) into support for childcare and early years. The enquiry is looking at a range of issues including:

- How easy it is to navigate the current system for parents/carers.
- Whether current childcare entitlements are providing families with affordable and flexible childcare.
- The effectiveness of the different funding entitlements including NEF, Tax-Free Childcare and support via the benefits system.
- Workforce issues faced by early years practitioners.

As part of the enquiry, they have launched a '[call for evidence](#)' from early years providers, practitioners and parents/carers. **The deadline for submission is Thursday 19th January.**

Nursery Education Funding

The Government have published the results of their consultation on the [National Early Years Funding Formulae](#), which was conducted between July to September 2022. As a result of the consultation, the national formula for local authorities has been updated for 2023/24; the step-by-step [indicative allocations](#) have been published and local authorities are currently using these to agree the funding rates for April 2023.

We are hopeful of communicating the rates for Worcestershire, along with the results from our recent consultation on the deprivation supplement, in **early February** following the Worcestershire School Forum meeting towards the end of January.

Energy Bills Discount Scheme

The Government have now announced a replacement for the Energy Bill Relief Scheme, which is due to end on 31st March 2023. The [Energy Bills Discount Scheme](#) will run from April 2023 – March 2024, although the total cost will be capped at £5.5 billion. Supporting businesses, voluntary sector and public sector organisations, the new Scheme will provide a discount on the unit prices of gas and electricity; the discounts will be applied automatically to your bill.

Childminder Mentor Programme

As previously announced, the Childminder Mentor Programme is part of the Covid-19 [Early Years Education Recovery Programme](#). Focused on supporting childminders to address the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the youngest and most disadvantaged children, trained early years professionals will provide support which could include:

- Identifying strengths and areas for development
- Improving your confidence in or knowledge of child development
- Implementing the [early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#)
- Planning an effective curriculum
- Supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Supporting children with English as an additional language (EAL)
- Building strong relationships with parents and carers

For further information and to apply for support, please visit: [COVID-19 Recovery Childminders | Hempsalls](#). Applications must be submitted by **17 February 2023**, with support due to start in May 2023.

Childcare Choices

Childcare Choices have updated their Information and Communications [toolkits](#) for both childcare providers and parents/carers. The provider toolkit includes a step-by-step guide to ensure that you have all of the correct elements in place to accept families using government childcare support, such as Tax-Free Childcare, 30 Hours Childcare and support via Universal Credit, as well as marketing materials and information to assist parents and carers.

REMINDER - National Professional Qualification Early Years Leadership (NPQEYL)

The [NPQEYL](#) is a new, DfE-funded, professional development course being offered from autumn 2022 to leaders and aspiring leaders of early years settings. It is designed to support early years leaders to develop expertise in leading high-quality education and care, as well as in effective staff and organisational management.

The NPQEYL has been designed with leaders and practitioners in mind, using the latest and best available evidence and collective wisdom of the profession to ensure every child in every setting gets the best start in life. The NPQEYL is aimed at leaders qualified to (at least) Level 3 with a full and relevant qualification, who are, or are aspiring to be:

- managers of Private, Voluntary and Independent nurseries,
- Headteachers or leaders of school-based and maintained nurseries, or
- childminders with leadership responsibilities.

Early years professionals helped us design this course to fit around busy schedules. On average participants will need to spend between 1 and 2 hours per week working towards this NPQ. Once you have [registered](#) and had confirmation that you're eligible to access this course for **free**, you will be able to apply directly to one of the approved course providers.

Early Years Bulletin: Early Help and Safeguarding Update

Keep Me Safe

Are you aware of Herefordshire and Worcestershire [Keep Me Safe Strategy](#)? Providing consistent and co-ordinated messages to practitioners about a particular safeguarding theme, the aim is to reduce the numbers of children who are seriously injured or die across Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The Strategy encourages and supports partners in all agencies who care for or support families with babies and children, including hospital and community staff (Health Visitors, midwives, mental health nurses), GP's, Children's Social Care, Police and Early Years settings to provide clear consistent and coordinated messages across Herefordshire and Worcestershire about a particular safeguarding theme. Further information can be found here: [Keep me safe... :: Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System \(icb.nhs.uk\)](#)

Keep Me Safe When I'm Sleeping

Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board have put together information focusing upon safer sleeping practices, including a poster that can be used to inform parents and carers: [Safer Sleeping - Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership \(lscpbirmingham.org.uk\)](#)

Early Help in your Community – Provider Events

We all know that Early Help and support is of key importance in working and supporting children, young people and their families, helping them to achieve their best now and into their future. We are running 6 'Early Help in your Community' events across Worcestershire during February and March 2023.

These events are an exciting opportunity to bring together a wide range of organisations and groups who work in your community and county wide who offer support, advice or services to children, young people and their families locally.

There will be a number of organisations represented such as Mental Health Support, Finance Support, (etc) with lots of information available and an opportunity to ask questions and find out more. This is a fantastic opportunity to network and build relationships and knowledge within the local community.

Please see below for the date and time of each event. These events are free but you must book a place on the event you would like to attend – email earlyhelppartnership@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk and we will then send you the booking link with details of the venue each event will be held at.

- Worcester – Tuesday 7th February 2023, 4:00 – 5:30pm
- Wychavon – Thursday 9th February 2023, 4:00 – 5:30pm
- Bromsgrove – Wednesday 15th February 2023, 4:00 – 5:30pm
- Wyre Forest – Tuesday 28th February 2023, 4:00 – 5:00pm (please note earlier finishing time)
- Malvern – Thursday 2nd March 2023, 4:00 – 5:30pm
- Redditch – Wednesday 8th March 2023, 4:00 – 5:30pm

Starting Well – Wyre Forest Parenting & Community Team

For settings working in the Wyre Forest, please download the flyer from [Google Drive](#) for information about the services and groups that are currently available for families via Starting Well.

Early Years Bulletin: News from the Inclusion Team

As some of you may be aware, the Early Years Inclusion team have a [parent/carer consent letter](#) which we ask that settings complete.

- This consent letter is for the settings to evidence that they have parent / carer consent for us to come and discuss and observe the children within their setting.
- This consent letter is requested in addition to where a setting may already have a generic 'consent to share' within their registration packs.
- When parents sign the referral to Preschool forum (also known as the PSN or preschool notification), they sign to agree for their child's information to be shared with all members of the PSF. However, it is not specific enough to cover observations within the setting.
- Our consent letter is designed to be an additional layer of consent, to ensure that parents are informed and aware of our role and our purpose when involved with their child.
- As mentioned above, the consent letter is **for the setting** to evidence they have discussed our role and have permission from the parents. Therefore, before we visit a new child, we ensure that settings have this in place.
- The setting keeps the consent letter and do not need to send us a copy. It is for them to keep in the child's file at the setting.

We have updated the consent letter for the Spring term and Summer term 2023 to reflect the current provision which our team will offer. This does not mean that you are required to get all parents/carers to re-do their consent letter previously signed; it can be used for all new consents gained.

Any queries, please contact the Inclusion Team helpline on 01905 843099.

Early Years Joint Assessment Meetings (EY JAMs)

What is a Joint Assessment Meeting (JAM)?

The purpose of the Joint Assessment Meeting is to collaborate the professional advice as part of the Statutory EHC Needs Assessment process. Joint Assessment Meetings bring everyone together who is involved with the child so that we can work together to jointly produce a description of the child's strengths and areas of need.

We ask all those involved about what they feel it would be important to achieve in the next year or two and we work together to shape these into clear, realistic and measurable outcomes. We then jointly plan the strategies and interventions that are necessary in order to achieve these outcomes. Prior to the meeting, the Educational Psychologist may carry out observation or assessment work with the child. They will add information from this into the joint assessment, alongside information from others at the meeting, as well as asking questions during the meeting to get as full a picture of the child as possible.

The meetings generally take about two hours, but this can vary.

Why a Joint Assessment Meeting?

A JAM follows the principles of Person Centred Planning which has been shown to have a range of benefits for all those involved: the child, parent(s)/carer(s), staff and other professionals invited and is in line with guidance contained in the SEND Code of Practice. Person centred approaches are about discovering and acting on what is important to the child and for the child and planning future outcomes based on these. Person centred approaches ensure that everyone is listened to and heard and it supports responsive action.

Who might be at a child's JAM?

The Educational Psychologist will discuss with the parent/carer before the meeting who is important to be there; it will be those people who know the child the best or are actively supporting the child or the family, this may include:

- Parent(s)/carer(s)
- The child's key worker or a member of staff from their nursery setting
- Health professionals (e.g. Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist)
- A member of the Complex Communication Needs Team (if they have been involved)
- Other members of the child's family

Do I need to prepare anything before the meeting?

This approach tries to ensure that the child's voice is at the centre of the process so you may like to bring photos of what the child enjoys or their learning journal. The Educational Psychologist at the meeting will also ask you about what is important to the child in the future, what their strengths are and things that they may need help with. You might like to think about these before the meeting so you feel prepared.

What do I do if need more information?

Please contact the Educational Psychology Service at edpsychology@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk.

Early Years Bulletin – In the setting

Winter blues and Staff Well-being

January and the following winter months can be a difficult time for our colleagues and this year is no different. With the cost-of-living crisis January may feel even gloomier than normal with financial strains and the colder weather. Staff well-being is therefore a priority for every setting and doesn't have to be costly.

As part of the Early year's inspection handbook, to gain a Good judgement under the Leadership heading the inspector will be seeking evidence of:

'Leaders engage with their staff and are aware of the main pressures on them. They are realistic and constructive in the way they manage staff. including their workload, to avoid any unnecessary burdens'.

Or for an outstanding judgement:

'Staff consistently report high levels of support for well-being issues'.

So how do we support this while still meeting the daily demands of our provision?

Magic Moments in Kempsey, take great pride in how they support their team's well-being. With a dedicated well-being officer, they are able to always ensure staff well-being remains a priority of the setting. They recognise their team as their best asset and by supporting them they are ultimately improving outcomes for children and families. **Natalie (Magic Moments manager) has shared her ideas, which can be downloaded from [Google Drive](#).**

Other no-cost ideas

Gift swap: If you have accumulated some unwanted gifts over Christmas, why not bring them in and do a gift swap.

Clothes swap: A great fun idea to bring in unwanted clothing to swap with your colleagues.

Team Fundraiser events: There is nothing better to build team spirit and belonging than helping others. Why not sign up for a challenge such as race for life or something similar?

Supervision: Why not change up the supervision process this month and go on a well-being walk where you can still cover all the topics, whilst getting some fresh air and exercise.

Thank you notes: Diarise different times throughout the year to send notes of appreciation. When these are unexpected, they are all the more special to receive.

Celebrate each other through social media/websites: Let your families know how great your individual team members are and how you appreciate them through your social media platforms. This is also great to attract new employees as they will see you value your team.

Job role swap: Swap roles for the day, this helps build appreciation for each other and allows us to understand each other better.

Well-being measurement tool

If staff well-being is your priority this year, Anna Freud have developed a well-being measurement tool for you to access for free. [Wellbeing measurement for early years settings \(annafreud.org\)](https://www.annafreud.org/wellbeing-measurement-for-early-years-settings)

Make the most of the wind!

Resources: Kites, streamers, ribbons, flags, windmills, wind chimes, windstocks etc.

Children love a windy day, you will notice how excitable they get when the wind is strong, so make the most of this wonderful learning opportunity and create a windbox. Simply collect together a range of resources and store them in a box that can be taken outside when the wind blows (you can also use it when it doesn't, notice the change in how resources respond).

Talk about

Is there enough wind to get the windbox out?

How can we tell how much the wind is blowing today?

In what ways can we explore the effect of the wind (through sound, sight, touch)

Make the most of the cold! Ice sculpture

Resources: Large containers of water frozen in the freezer overnight, goggles to protect the children's eyes, hammers, chisels and gloves.

Let the children explore the "coldness" of ice by emptying the ice into a washing up bowl or suitable container, allow the children to work with the ice to change its shape into whatever they want.

Talk about

What happens to the ice when you chip at it?

What changes do they notice when the ice has been out of the freezer?

What happens if we put some of the chippings back into the freezer?

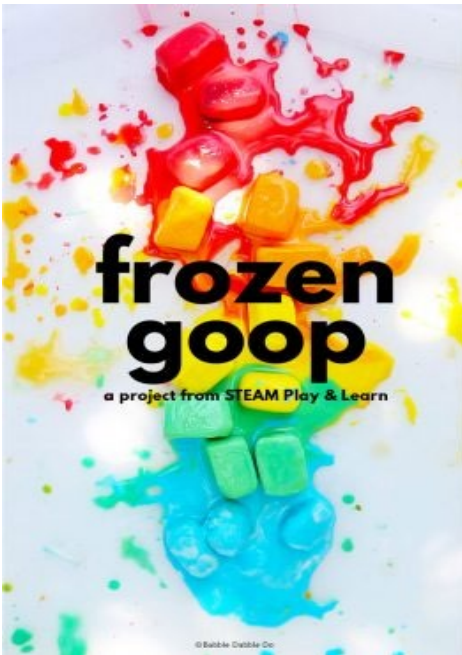
Both of these experiences will promote a lot of conversation; consider what new vocabulary you will be able to introduce to the children. There is no better way to introduce new words than at the time you are also putting them into action!

Stories with a winter theme

- **Snow** by Sam Usher
- **Storm** by Sam Usher
- **Snowball** by Sue Hendra
- **One Snowy Night** by Nick Butterworth
- **Lost and Found** by Oliver Jeffers
- **Tree: Seasons Come, Seasons Go** by Patricia Hegarty and Britta Teckentrup
- **The Snowman** by Raymond Briggs

Booktrust produce a list of their top [20 picture books for winter](#).

Frozen Goop



Ingredients:

Corn flour

Food colouring

Water

Measuring cups

Bowl and spoon for mixing

Ice cube tray

A tray or plastic plates

Watercolour paper (optional)

1. Combine corn flour (1 ½ cups (187g) and ¾ cup of water (177ml) in a large bowl. Add food colouring and stir to combine. Make several colours – OR – just make the primary colours Red, Blue and Yellow and experiment to make the secondary colours.
2. As soon as mixed pour into ice cube tray quickly
3. Freeze overnight
4. It's ready to use!

Paint: Rub the melting goop onto watercolour paper. Let it dry and peel off any flaking goop

Draw: Use goop cubes like chalk on pavement outside – when you draw it will not be visible, as it dries your drawing will appear, MAGIC!

Mix colours: choose two primary colours, place a few cubes on a plate/tray and watch as they melt and mix making a secondary colour.

Early Years Bulletin: Training news

Early Years Update Meetings – Spring Term

An opportunity to hear the latest Early Years news on policy, Ofsted and best practice within the sector.

Cost: Free

Group Settings

- Thursday 9th February, 18:30-20:00, virtual delivery, Course Code: **10272**
- Friday 10th February, 10:00-11:30, virtual delivery, Course Code: **10272**

Out of School Settings

- Wednesday 8th February, 10:00-11:30, virtual delivery, Course Code: **10274**

Childminders

Including Inclusion updates from Becky White

- Wednesday 8th February, 19:00-20:30, virtual delivery, Course Code: **10273**

Book via [WCF:CPD](#) using the appropriate course code.

Early Years Operation Encompass Launch – What happens next?

Following the distribution of the 'Operation Encompass Welcome Pack' that was sent to all funded Early Years settings on 09th December 2022, the Operation Encompass team are holding a virtual meeting in February 2023. This will be an opportunity for Early Years DSL's to meet the support team and to go over what will happen once a domestic abuse notification has been received. The team will also be able to answer any questions surrounding Operation Encompass and the processes.

Cost: Free

Dates:

- Wednesday 15th February, 6:15 – 7:15pm, virtual delivery, Course Code: **10281**
- Thursday 16th February, 7 – 8pm, virtual delivery, Course Code: **10281**

Book onto an Early Years course via [WCF:CPD](#) using your CPD leader login details. Confirmations will be issued to the delegate email provided at the point of booking, please ensure junk/spam folders are checked - joining instructions will be included within the body of the confirmation email. If you encounter any issues when booking training courses, please contact the Training Team on 01905 or email workforcesupport@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk.

Self-Regulation in the Early Years

Worcestershire Virtual School are excited to invite you to join us for a **free** virtual training session by Diana Lawton, one of the specialist trainers from [Inspired Children](#) (www.facebook.com/inspiredchildrentraining).

Self-regulation is the fundamental ability to understand and manage your emotional and behavioural responses and while the neurological circuitry is not complete until about 26 years old, children need support developing self-regulation from birth. This session is not about teaching obedience or self-control but about building the neurological architecture that will enable the child to regulate their own responses to the world and create effective and successful strategies to respond to and interact with the world.

Effective self-regulation will underpin personal and social success and will support children to manage the expectations of the school environment. It goes much deeper than that though and underpins life-long mental health and emotional well-being which are the key things we all want for our children especially in today's social climate. This session will help practitioners understand their role in building strong and robust neurological circuitry and offer a wealth of insights, practical skills and ideas to ensure all of your children get the best possible start in life. This course is the difference between children that manage and children that fly!

Diana Lawton

Diana is a senior consultant and trainer for Inspired Children. She has a degree in Psychology and an MA in Early Childhood studies with a near encyclopaedic knowledge of child development theory and early years procedure. She is also the owner manager of a group of settings in Leicestershire and Derbyshire. She is currently working on her first textbook and is an accomplished trainer having delivered a huge range of training for Inspired Children and being responsible for all in-house training at her settings. She is frequently asked to take part in panels for the Nursery World Business Conference and sits on several early years focus groups.

Who is the training for?

All early years' practitioners from nursery and pre-school settings, childminders, reception teachers and teaching assistants, senior leads, social workers with early years children on their caseloads.

And it's **FREE!**

Dates: Wednesday 1st February 2023 from 4pm-6.30pm, virtual delivery

To book your place, please email virtualschool@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk.

Safeguarding Training

Are you aware that the [Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) offers a range of safeguarding courses? To find out what is available, please visit: [WSCP Training and Events](#).

Educational Settings Bereavement Policy Training

Delivered in collaboration between your three local Hospices (Primrose, KEMP and St Richard's) with support from Worcestershire Children's First.

Delivered over two virtual sessions this training provides advice and guidance on how to create a bereavement policy and the benefits this could bring. It introduces the idea and the importance of having a Bereavement Lead in all educational settings. Over the two workshops topics covered include:

- Perspectives of bereaved children and young people
- Recommended approaches to grief and loss
- Educational settings roles and responsibilities
- Introduction of Bereavement Lead
- Attitudes to death and dying
- Consideration of self-disclosure
- Resilience, self-care, reflection and supervision
- Local Bereavement Services, resources and further training

It is essential that both sessions are attended. Ideally the first session will be attended by a member of the senior management team or someone responsible for policy writing.

We anticipate that this training will be popular, we have a maximum of 20 spaces available, and kindly ask for one member of staff only from each setting attend and confirm availability before booking.

Cost: Free

Dates: 28th February and 28 March 2023 4pm to 6pm, virtual delivery

Book your place via: <https://buytickets.at/strichardshospice1/812251>

Cost of Living: Supporting Families in the Early Years

[Anna Freud](#) National Centre for Children and Families is hosting a virtual event reflecting on what the cost-of-living crisis means for children in the early years, their families and early years providers.

Cost: Free

Date: 23rd February 2023 4:30 – 6pm, virtual delivery

Book your place via: [Cost of Living: Supporting Families in the Early Years | Anna Freud Centre](#)

Active Storytelling Training

Early years settings in Worcestershire continue to have access to the Animatey's Active Storytelling Training for **free**, up until **February 2023**. If you haven't yet accessed the training, please download the flyer from [Google Drive](#) for information about how to access the course.

Reminders from the Training Team

The CPD site website is: <https://capublic.worcestershire.gov.uk/LearnCPD/CoursesSearch.aspx>

Access to CPD: Each Early Years Setting and Childminder will have a CPD Leader account to access the new system. If you have not received your CPD Leader email welcoming you to the site then please let the training team know by emailing workforcesupport@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk so that this can be looked into and resolved accordingly.

Joining instructions for training: How do I receive them?

Please be aware that joining instructions for virtual training are now included within the body of your confirmation email. They will appear as hyperlinks. If for any reason they do not appear as a hyperlink then you will need to copy the link into a web browser/MS teams app (if you have it) or Zoom app if we are using that method, to allow you to join the training. Please ensure that there are no spaces before the "https" and the final character of the link.

Joining instructions: I have misplaced them what do I do?

If for any reason you cannot find your joining instructions please ensure you contact the training team with a minimum of 5 days before your course to get them re-sent. The training team cannot guarantee availability on the day of the course to support you.

The team can be contacted by emailing workforcesupport@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk.

Certificates for course since September 2022: How do I receive them?

The training team allow 10 days for a register to be returned from the trainer, once it's received and the course is marked as held on WCF:CPD booking system then certificates are issued. Certificates are currently sent via email (from the booking system) to the email held against the delegate for that specific course.

Certificates for courses that took place before September 2022

If for any reason you are missing any certificate for a course that took place before 01.09.2022 then please email the training team with the course title / date and the name of the delegate the certificate is required for. We are allowing 10 days to organise replacement certificates. The team can be contacted by emailing workforcesupport@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk.