

Educational Psychology Service Newsletter

September 2018

Welcome

Welcome to our Autumn 2018 edition of the Educational Psychology Service Newsletter!

In this edition, we focus on specific interventions with schools and partners. This includes a look at how we have been supporting schools to implement Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) (p1) and Lego®-Based Therapy (p1). Our Principal Psychologist, Roslyn Redpath, has also been involved in developing a protocol to support post school transitions for young people with complex needs and disabilities (p2).

This issue also highlights the importance of multiagency working and how we can work together to support the children and young people of Argyll and Bute in an effective way.

Cowal Lego®- Based Therapy Training

On Friday 11th August 15 Lego® enthusiasts from 7 of Cowal's schools attended a LEGO®-based therapy training in Argyll House, delivered by Sabrina Collins. Rather than setting up classrooms and preparing resources the support and teaching staff spent most of the day playing with LEGO®, perhaps why the day was evaluated very positively! In addition to playing with LEGO® sets, staff left the day with the knowledge, understanding and resources* to effectively run LEGO® clubs in their schools. Plans are now firmly in

place in these schools to put the new learning into practice – confirmed by Sabrina who has seen the take-away boxes all prepped with LEGO® in some schools by the end of the first week of term!

If you are interested in similar training for your establishment, please speak to your link EP.



Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)

As we have highlighted previously, Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) is a programme which has been designed to assist in developing children's social and emotional learning skills. It aims to improve self-esteem, conflict resolution, emotional awareness and problem-solving skills, and has shown to improve classroom behaviour and decrease emotional distress.

There are currently 78 schools and early years establishments trained in PATHS throughout Argyll and Bute. Along with colleagues in Early Years' staff the psychological service has been involved fully in training school staff in the programme and supporting them to implement this in their schools. The Education Service has a PATHS Implementation Group which helps to support these developments. The group consists of Educational Psychologists, Early Years Development Officers, as well as representatives from schools

who are using PATHS. Part of the support offered by the group was through the development of an Implementation Toolkit which includes helpful resources for schools such as checklists and ways to evaluate their progress. This has received very positive feedback so far.

The PATHS Implementation Group recently conducted an audit with all schools trained in PATHS. A common theme was seeking advice from other more PATHS-experienced schools. With this in mind, the Implementation Group is in the midst of planning a PATHS conference to allow schools to get together and share practice and experiences. The group is also starting to look at how we can support and facilitate peer support networks for schools to continue this support beyond the conference.



Partners and Educational Psychology Working Together

Following GIRFEC principles, educational psychologists work closely with school staff, children and families as well as with a range of partner agencies. This intervention can include contributing to the assessment of individual children and young people's needs, including through formal structures such as the Approval and Matching Panel, delivering multiagency training, supporting research initiatives and collaborating on strategic initiatives such as developing guidance on mental health and wellbeing and effective transitions. Maximum impact is achieved where services work together effectively with a clear

understanding of roles and responsibilities. To support effective multiagency working, the psychological service has developed a brief information leaflet for partners outlining our role and how to contact the service. We hope this is of help and would welcome feedback on any further information that it would be helpful for us to include.

This leaflet can be found on our website at:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/education-and-learning/educational-psychology>

Service Updates

Since our previous newsletter in February, our team has grown. Educational Psychologist **Sarah Jamieson** welcomed a beautiful baby girl, Vaila, in March. Both mother and baby are doing well!

We have welcomed Educational Psychologist **Frank Coletta** who is with the service whilst Sarah is on maternity leave. Frank previously worked for North Lanarkshire Educational Psychology Service as Depute Principal and is enjoying working in Argyll and Bute, particularly his visits to islands.

The service is currently looking at developing a **social media presence** so watch this space!

Supporting post school transitions for young people with complex needs and disabilities

Moving on from school can be a daunting prospect for all young people but raises additional challenges for young people with significant and complex needs, including those with a disability. The existing Post School Transition Protocol completed in 2012 has provided guidance to services involved in supporting young people with a potential need for support into adulthood.

To take account of the embedding of GIRFEC practice, the publication of *Principles of Good Transition 3* and other policy and legislative changes locally and nationally, a multiagency group, chaired by Roslyn Redpath, has collaborated to review the practice and processes for supporting young people through the important transition from school education and Children's services in to the adult world. This work has

been carried out in conjunction with Bec Williams from the Association for Real Change (ARC Scotland), a third sector organisation commissioned by the Scottish Government. The new protocol has now been finalised and will be launched at a seminar in the autumn. This revised protocol provides a clearer pathway and also details new processes and paperwork for Education staff to access a Social Work assessment for transition.

There will be close monitoring of the impact of the revised document on practice and outcomes for young people and therefore any feedback from school staff and partners will be very much welcomed.



Thank you for reading our newsletter. Any questions or feedback can be directed to:
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