

Educational Psychology Service

Seasons for Growth in Argyll & Bute



Welcome to our first Argyll and Bute Seasons for Growth newsletter! We hope you find this a helpful way to keep up to date with all the wonderful work of our growing number of companions across the authority and the hugely positive impact they have on the children and young people who access our Seasons groups.

Autumn 2021

Joanna Moir, Argyll and Bute Educational Psychology Service

Seasons So Far...

Seasons for Growth was first introduced into the Helensburgh and Lomond area in 2015 with thanks to funding from the MOD. The recognition that children and young people from Navy families experience significant changes and losses allowed around 20 Companions to be trained. From 2015, until the Covid-19 pandemic between 40 and 50 children and young people were accessing groups every year.

To date, more than 200 children and young people have participated in a Seasons for Growth group!

In February 2020, two companions, Eileen Kay (Community Learning Worker) and Emer Flett (MOD Service Pupil Advisor) held a Helensburgh and Lomond reconstructor for any child who had participated in a Seasons group for the 18 months before hand. The reconstructor was well attended with 40 children coming together in Colgrain Primary to celebrate their success and achievement.

Children shared they had learned that "change is okay" and "change can make us happy and sad".

Across the authority, there were also trained Companions in Oban and Rothesay who hadn't been able to run a group due to lockdown. Recently we have been able to offer Seasons training for free within Argyll and Bute and during the pandemic this has been delivered online. We now have more than 50 trained Companions who are able to offer Seasons within our schools. A significant number of Companions are based within the Helensburgh and Lomond area however, there are now Companions in Cowal, Islay and mid Argyll. We have more training planned with the long term aim of being able to offer Seasons to children and young people as they need it.

Argyll and Bute Model for Seasons

Argyll and Bute is a large local authority with many rural areas and island populations which can bring it's challenges in trying to ensure that children and young people can access Seasons for Growth groups when they need them. Over the last year we have been working to try and support Seasons across the authority and how it might work in all our education settings from our smallest primary school to our largest secondary. We have developed a model for Seasons to try and support groups to be offered across the authority.

Companion Training and Reconnectors



We are in the process of developing a peer support network for Companions. Following completion of the training, you will be asked to attend one reconnector per year. This allows you to maintain your accreditation as a Companion and keep up to date with the latest developments. It is also a fantastic opportunity to hear from other Companions about what has been working well and if they met any similar challenges when running groups. We are able to share experiences and resources and provide support to one another.

Floating Companions

A floating Companion is an individual trained in Seasons for Growth but isn't necessarily based within a school. We have a network of floating companions who are able to support a school based companion to run a Seasons group. It may be that the school is small and only has one trained companion or it may be that a companion has recently experienced a significant change or loss and the time is not right for them to companion a group. A floating companion can allow a group to go ahead as long as there is one school based companion. Please get in touch if your setting needs a floating companion.



Evaluation

Evaluation is built into the Seasons programme with valuable information gathered during and after the group from Companions, children and young people and their parents and carers. This information has always been collected and sent to Notre Dame, the Seasons license holder in Scotland. We really want to collect this information within Argyll and Bute to show the impact of the wonderful work of our Companions and the difference Seasons makes to children and young people.



A quick reminder of the evaluations we collect:

- Sessional Evaluations for Companions (one evaluation completed together after every session)
- Post Programme Evaluations for Companions (one evaluation completed by each companion)
- Post Programme Evaluation for Children and Young People (remember this should match the level of the programme)
- Post Programme Evaluation for Parents and Carers (best collected at the Celebration)

There is new proforma to make gathering of evaluations much easier! All the evaluations and end of group proforma are available in the Seasons for Growth Google Classroom. We ask that these are returned to the Educational Psychology Service (Educational.Psychology@argyll-bute.gov.uk).

Google Classroom

We now have a Seasons for Growth Google Classroom. This has a wealth of resources including evaluation packs, poems and book lists. It is also a space to share anything you have found to be helpful during your groups. We have lot's of experienced companions as well as brand new companions and want to hear from you!

If you would like to join, please send your Glow email address to emer.flett@argyll-bute.gov.uk or joanna.moir@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Journals & Manuals

In order to be able to run your Seasons for Growth groups, companions need access to a manual and children and young people each need a journal. Please remember that all young people should be using the same level of journal in each group. The journals are for children to record their thoughts and feelings in each week and are a beautiful piece of artwork so they are not permitted to be photocopied. It is suggested that the journals are kept in a secure, confidential place within the school until the celebration before young people have a choice of taking them home. We ask that once a school has a manual, this is kept within the Seasons resources in school.

We received some funding in order to provide manuals and journals for free so please get in touch to request the resources you need (Educational.Psychology@argyll-bute.gov.uk).

Reconnector Dates

The next reconnector is Wednesday 22nd September 2021 at 4pm via google meet. The code will be emailed to all companions and we look forward to seeing you there!

Contact Us

If you would like more information or would like to talk about Seasons for Growth please get in touch! We are also really keen to share the work of companions so would love to hear from you to showcase Seasons in your area!

Joanna Moir, Seasons for Growth Trainer

joanna.moir@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Emer Flett, Seasons for Growth Companion

emer.flett@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Visit our Glow Blog on the web at [Seasons for Growth | \(glowscotland.org.uk\)](http://glowscotland.org.uk)

