

Somerset Children and Families Scrutiny:

West Somerset Opportunity Area -  
Keeping alive the spirit of the programme

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Julia Ridge: Head of Vulnerable Learners



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# Background to the presentation

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## West Somerset Opportunity Area



This report was commissioned by Cllr Leigh Redman, Chair of Scrutiny to explore whether the current work programme for children in the county reflects or does not reflect the learning from the WSOA about what works for children in Somerset.

This report focuses on some key areas of alignment where national and local programmes are attuned to the spirit and learning of the WSOA. It is not a comprehensive review.

The Opportunity Area was funded and managed by the Department for Education. West Somerset was 324 out of 324 Local Authorities for Social mobility and one of 12 chosen to explore ways of improving social mobility through education.

**The overarching ambition from the DfE was that:**

No community left behind. Putting real emphasis on the range of places where resources and additional targeting are needed the most, with our Opportunity Areas at the sharp end to tackle the most entrenched disadvantage.

# The presentation will:

- **Reference evaluation undertaken of the West Somerset Opportunity Area**
- **Five externally funded projects which align**
- **Five examples of local practice which align**
- **Local Community Networks**
- **Questions**

# External Evaluation of the West Somerset Opportunity Area. Centre for Education and Youth

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## West Somerset Opportunity Area (WSOA) Synthesis Report for Years 1-4

The Centre for Education and Youth were commissioned by the West Somerset Opportunity Area to review Years 1 – 4.

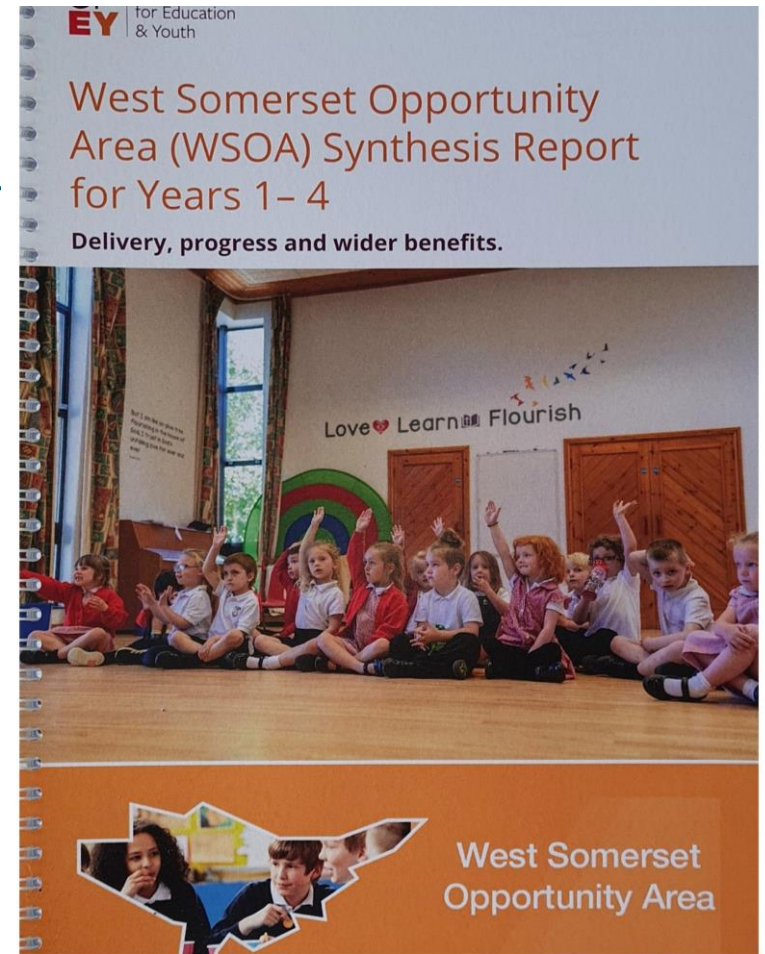
The review considered delivery, progress and wider benefits across four priority areas. The period covered was 2017 to 2021.

It is recognised that the area could not be evaluated by data alone, therefore the Centre for Education and Youth have interviewed various organisations and developed case studies to explore the learning from the opportunity area.

The report is an interesting and reflective report.

[West Somerset Opportunity Area \(WSOA\) Synthesis Report for Years 1-4 – CfEY](#)

Taking the learning from the Opportunity Area this scrutiny report highlights the ideas that have continued post the DFE investment exploring place based interventions to improve education outcomes.



(hard copies will be available at the meeting)

# Five externally funded projects which align

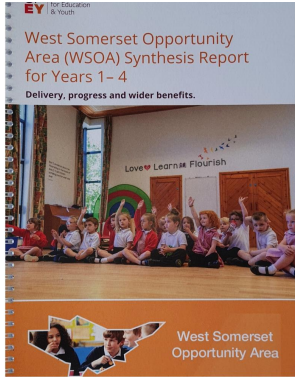
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- 1 Partnership working Early Help
- 2 Holiday activities with Food
- 3 Early Years Training
- 4 Somerset Works
- 5 Vocational Training for Bridgwater and Minehead



# 1 Partnership Working - Early Help

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## Role of the voluntary sector

### Page 17

### Targeting of resources

Partnerships between a number of organisations enabled pooling of knowledge about local communities. This in turn led to better targeting of resources to families with greater need. Resources could also be shared, for example running in multiple interventions from children centre buildings.

# Partnership Working – Early Help

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## *“Together we’ll fly”*

Kite is helping families and young people to make connections and discover the great things that are happening in West Somerset.

From Minehead to Dulverton and Porlock to Stogursey, West Somerset has so much to offer. At Kite we believe in helping make grassroots change by facilitating ideas and encouraging creative ways to make our area fly.

Following the development of strong partnerships around community need the Voluntary groups within West Somerset have grown to provide a wider selection of services and drawn down significant funding from other partners including Hinkley and the Lottery to support their work

Key organisations were **Home Start and Minehead Eye**



# 2 Happy Healthy Holidays Somerset Programme

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Across Somerset there are now fun packed Summer holiday programme with activities and food provided for young people aged 5 - 16 years old.

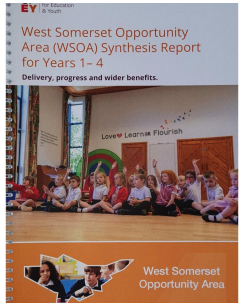
The funding has been made available by Somerset Council to enable local groups to provide holiday activities including food to children eligible for free school meals in Somerset. This is part of a Government programme which has provided healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children since 2018 and is now being expanded across the whole of England. The Happy Healthy Holidays Somerset Programme, is coordinated by Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP).

There are Bursary Schemes, Resources, and support for young people with SEND





# 3 Early Years



## Staff Training and using digital resources to mitigate against professional isolation.

**P 56** “digital resources in particular created the legacy. During the pandemic WSOA funded a free to use digital resource is to improve access to interventions, these training videos information packs and other materials can now be accessed by practitioners and target populations after WSOA funding ends. Attention will need to be paid to addressing the “digital divide” to ensure that practitioners, target populations and other stakeholders have the Internet connectivity and devices to make use of resources.

# 3 Early years

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## DFE offer of free training to all early years providers

On line, bite size: [Early years child development training : About training \(education.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-child-development-training)

5 modules – giving settings a thorough understanding of the most important aspects of child development in the early years.

The course has 9 modules. 5 modules are currently available.

1 Understanding child development and the EYFS

2 brain development and how children learn

3 supporting children's personal social and emotional development

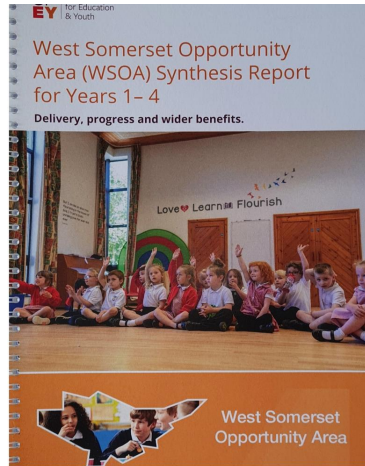
4 supporting language development in the early years

5 supporting physical development in the early years

**Somerset Council has also embraced on-line training which reduces professional rural isolation with a new Education Curriculum team specialism in ensuring our early years and schools receive high quality training.**



# 4 Somerset Works



**P 43** “I think we've done a good job in terms of retaining student. What we didn't realise... is the amount of social emotional mental health work she would be doing. We thought it would be both academic support but actually students have needed quite a lot of emotional well-being support over the last two years as has provided that alongside academic mentor work

**P 54** “addressing local challenges, another strength of priority for intervention was a focus on challenges facing West Somerset with consequences of both design and implementation. For example as a background to the establishment of go to hubs in Williton watchet Minehead and Dulverton project documents and knowledge that they did not have physical space that can bring young people together with a range of advisors and that “travel is a huge barrier for West Somerset residents”. **This has led to the intervention that looked to support young people directly helping overcome the challenges.**

**P44 4.3.4** “several reasons were given for the successful implementation of priority three interventions:

- these were partnership between schools' colleges business and other actors enabling new forms of practice
- practitioners and knowledge of young people they worked with enabling effective targeting of young people
- flexibility of funding to allow emerging needs to be met.”

# Somerset works

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Somerset Works supports young people aged 15 to 18 into employment, education or training.

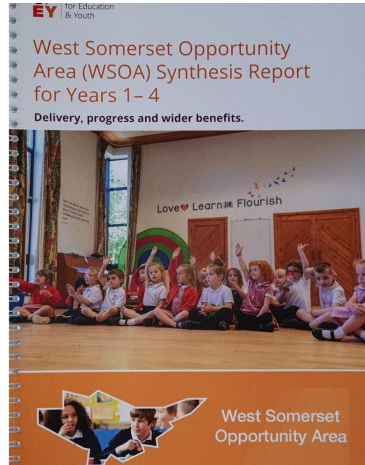
We understand how important it is for young people to be able to access information and support to help them with their next steps, whether this be employment, education or training.

Somerset Works helps young people and their families access to full time courses, apprenticeships and traineeships, job applications and writing a CV and employability skills to help prepare you for the world of work.

**Somerset Works attracted funding from the Sunday Times, European Social Fund and the Somerset Recovery grants**



# 5 Vocational Training



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**P55 4.4.3** As with other priority areas, local transport infrastructure and lack of capacity in schools to support interventions hindered delivery

# 5 Vocational Training

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## Training Centre of Excellence in Health and Social care.

The old Bridgwater Hospital will be converted into a “training centre of excellence in health and social care”, with an unspecified building in **Minehead** serving as an “annexe” to this initiative.

The new centre will be used to “attract, retain, grow, and upskill” key workers in the health and social care sector, boosting staff numbers in Somerset and encouraging them to remain in the county after they finish training.

Partners in the project are Bridgwater and Taunton College, Bridgwater Town Council Integrated Care System, NHS Foundation Trust, Public Health Somerset, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset West and Taunton Council, Somerset Association of Care Providers, Somerset County Council – Adult Social Care; Children Social Care; Integrated Living Service, University of West of England.



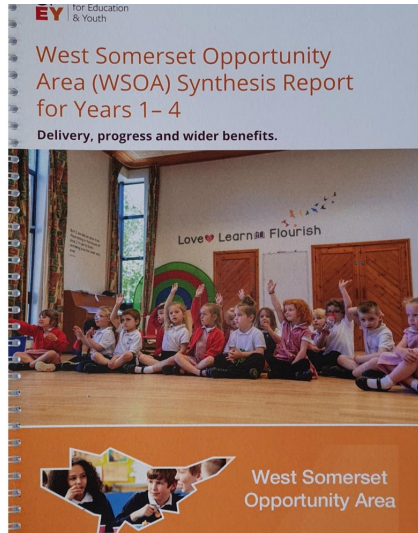
# Five examples of local practice which align

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- 1 Connect Somerset
- 2 Stronger partnership working between schools
- 3 Education Redesign
- 4 Area Inclusion Partnerships



# 6 Connect Somerset



## Benefits included:

- Staff development
- Supporting transitions into school
- Targeting resources

## Benefits to Local Partnerships

### P 16 4.1.4 Benefits to local partnerships

“WSOA priority 1 activities established or strengthen local partnerships. For example, the parenting skills and confidence programme connected multiple organisations:

- West Somerset volunteer sector including CLOWNS and Home-start
- Somerset County Council public health team (health visitors)
- NHS (Midwifery)
- West Somerset early years providers (including childminders, schools, nurseries)
- Somerset libraries (for Story start sessions)
- Parish councils, West Somerset District Council.



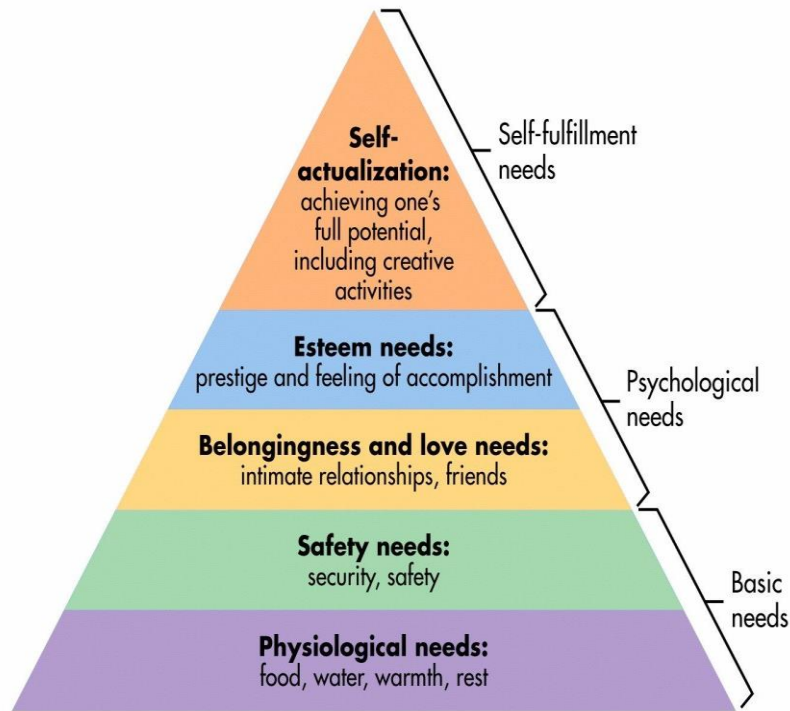
# Who has contributed to the West Somerset Success?

## Self - Actualisation

Skill Up WS  
Somerset Works  
Raising Horizons Project  
DWP  
SCC Education Business Partnership  
Sparks  
National Careers Service  
Minehead BID  
YMCA Dulverton

## Esteem

Schools/college/Partnership  
Outdoor Curriculum –  
Kilve  
EY SEND Services  
South West Heritage Trust  
Quantock AONB  
National Trust  
Contains Art/Onion Collective  
Regal Theatre  
InspireED  
Somerset Art Works  
NCS  
Lifebeat



## Belonging and Love

Homestart  
Minehead Eye  
Clowns  
Exmoor FUN project  
Church groups  
Exmoor Young Voices  
Trauma Informed Practitioners – area strategy  
SENDIAS  
SENCO Network  
WS National Trust

## Physiological

Fareshare / Incredible Edible  
Allotment Society  
Magna / Livewest / SWT Housing  
YMCA Dulverton  
P2i  
Living Better (West Somerset Healthcare including GPs/ HVs / CAMHS/Health Coaches)  
Village Agents  
Outreach Team  
Young Somerset  
Lifebeat  
CYP Somerset Health  
Early Years (EY) Providers  
Somerset Activity Sports Partnership  
Youth Sports Trust

## Safety

Team around the School  
One Team  
AS Police Violence Reduction / Topaz  
Somerset Safeguarding Children Board / SIDAS  
Village Agents  
West Somerset Advice Bureau  
WSEP  
CYP Panel  
Outreach Team  
Project ONE  
Kilve  
Chanel  
Education Safeguarding Service

**Challenge: Access to and revenue costs of premises**

# 6 Early help – Connect Somerset

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**Connect Somerset** is a new programme to improve early help in the community for children, young people, families, vulnerable individuals and older people.

We are joining up our local support between health and care, children and adult's services and people and place. Immediate areas of priority are to:

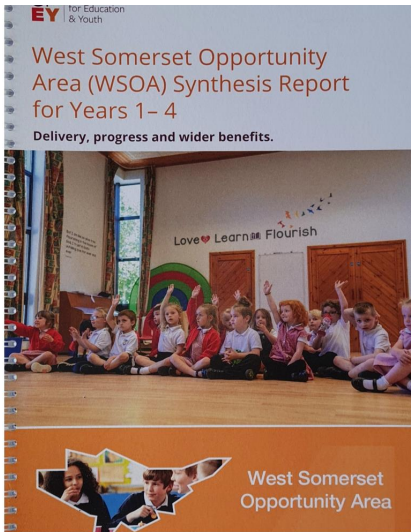
- Appoint area champions from the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sectors (VCFSE) – so local early help is led by people from the community
- Put in place a new team around the school model with named professionals supporting each school
- Increase our delivery through hubs so services are closer to home
- Bring together databases of local resources so these are easier to search for professionals and residents
- Share data using Transform so professionals are able to contact others working with a family
- Develop a universal offer of early help and support families to access this help
- Establish a new strategic partnership with an umbrella organisation representing Somerset VCFSE
- Evaluate the impact of Connect Somerset on outcomes for residents and families.

Connect Somerset is a big part of the Education for Life strategy and important to meet the needs of local residents, as well as reducing the demand to more expensive services. The team around the school model is launched in April, so schools are better supported by named professionals in their communities.



## 7 Strengthening relationships with schools and capacity building

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**P 39** “West Somerset being so tiny, it hits the same staff all the time. And there is a real pressure about wanting to engage with everything, but you just don't have enough time or enough people to go around”

# 7 Closer working between schools

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## Moorland Federation

This federation was formed in September 2017, strengthening existing links between the schools in order to raise standards, provide greater opportunities for our children and staff and ensure future sustainability.

The Moorland Federation is governed by one [governing body](#). ***Growing together, learning for life.***

*Cutcombe First School **Good** March 2020*

*Dunster First School **Good** July 2018*

*Exford First School **Good** May 2023*

*Timberscombe First School **Good** July 2023*

*St Dubricius First School Porlock **Good** April 2023*

*Joining*

*All Saints Infants School Dulverton **Good** Nov 2022*

*Dulverton Junior School **Requires Improvement** Jan 2023*

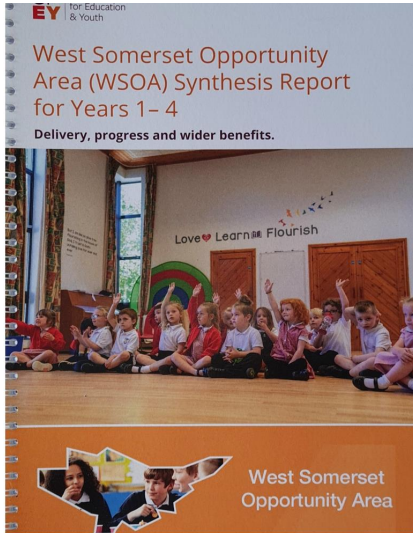
*Supporting Langford Budville School*



Moorland Federation

# 8 Education Redesign

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## 4.2.5 factors hindering successful implementation

- **Overload**
- **teacher recruitment and retention**
- **transport digital infrastructure**

# 8 Strengthening relationships with schools

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## Education redesign

### School to School support

Somerset Schools are volunteering to provide their expertise and experience to support other schools. The LA maintained leaders and staff to build the strengths and capacity across the LA maintained family. We have a number of initiatives underway and more information and opportunities to get involved with.

### Education Relationships managers

This is a new team, building on the experience of the school improvement team, early year team, SSE teams and from the pandemic. Colleagues doing this work have heard a clear message from schools and settings that one of the things they value most is having a named person that they can contact in the local authority, who will respond quickly and who knows their situation. The 'link officer' role filled some of this gap during the pandemic, and attempts have been made to continue with this model but capacity is insufficient in the current structure to deliver the value that is needed.



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# 8 Curriculum Training

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## **Curriculum Development**

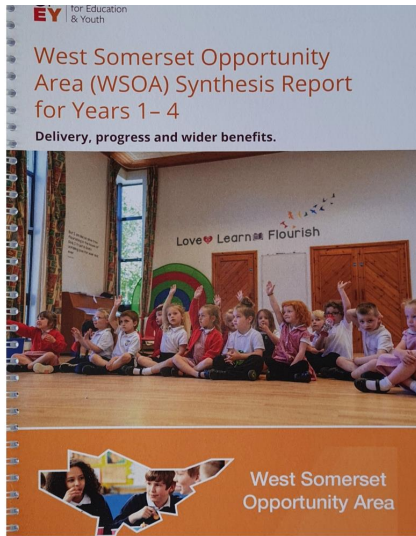
The new team builds on the effective practice established by the Early Years team in creating strong and collaborative groups of education organisations for the purpose of joint learning (the Early Years Communities), and the collaboration of the Meta-Curriculum project on the Science curriculum.

The team works with the School Library Service to create a function for curriculum networking and resourcing. This team would take on areas of topical importance, such as the eco-schools work developed by SSE and links with the new Religious Education advisors and primary Science programme



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# 9 Area Inclusion Partnerships



## P 33 4.2.3 Benefits to local partnership

Priority to build on existing infrastructure in West Somerset to strengthen relationships with local and national partners. WSOA's funding for outreach and detached youth work enabling a legacy provision for youth settings and created links to recently re - opened youth clubs. Evaluation documents cite effective links with PCSO teams, schools and community leaders as key in assuring community members that support for young people were receiving show the programme was effective.

“Closer links between West Somerset schools and other organisations, especially the charity groups. Better understanding of wider community offers available to support families”



# Area Inclusion Partnerships



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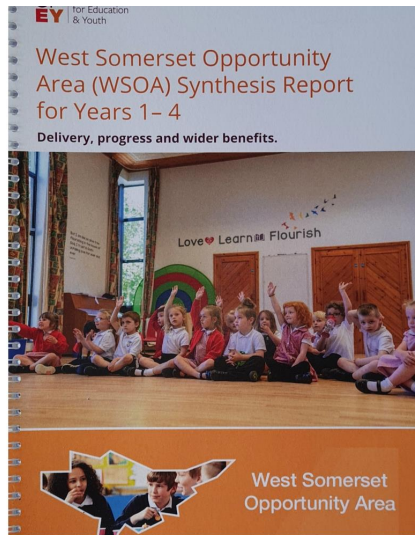
Area Inclusion Partnerships – the new structure introduced a new area partnership model for delivery and coordination of inclusion and early help services.

Central to this development will be the establishment of four Area Partnership Manager roles who will coordinate a virtual area inclusion management team including the area senior educational psychologist, lead inclusion advisor, and early years area SENCO.

Their partnership role will involve developing a coherent and joined-up partnership approach to identifying and supporting children and families who need targeted help and support with the newly establish Inclusion Partnership Boards (chaired by headteachers), Connect Somerset Area Champions, Mental Health Support Teams and local voluntary sector organisations.

# 10 Trauma Informed Approach

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## Page 31

“We thought actually this child needed specialist provision and to attend a PRU outside of the area at such a young age. We had to look at all sorts of different trauma informed ways of working. We worked with the PRU as an outreach. We upskilled our staff. We put super-vision in for those staff... and, wonderfully the pupil is successful with us and now ready to transition with their class to the next phase many years on. The progress of this pupil is significant and life changing for them.

# 10 Trauma Informed Approach

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To be trauma informed means to understand the impact of adversity and trauma on someone's behaviour learning and emotions. It also means to recognise the prevalence of traumatic experiences among all people and be responsive to the needs and symptoms of trauma survivors.

It can help leaders, providers, educators, and individuals to support and empower those who have experienced trauma.

Somerset is planning to create a coordinated and system wide trauma informed system model, using tiered training and a network of champions to educate and spread change across system partners.



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# Local Community Networks

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The Local Community Networks will have the following roles and functions:

- Establishing effective local community engagement and influence;
- Promote enhanced participation in democracy, active community decision making and scrutiny;
- Enhance collaboration by bringing together at a local level representatives from partner organisations, City, town and parish councils, community groups and others
- Ensure local influence over the Council and wider public service activity;
- Share information, ideas and solutions to enable services to be delivered to help meet local need;
- To inspire more responsibility for local place shaping;
- To identify evidence-based community priorities across Economic, Social and Environmental issues;
- To create plans to reflect how the priorities will be addressed; and
- To identify and secure resource opportunities for local projects



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# Time for Questions



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