

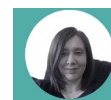
# Barnet Virtual School Newsletter

Spring 1 2025

My sincere thanks for all the work you have done to support both your looked after children and children with a social worker during 2024. These are some of our most vulnerable children and I am constantly amazed at the fantastic work schools are doing to support them to achieve their best.

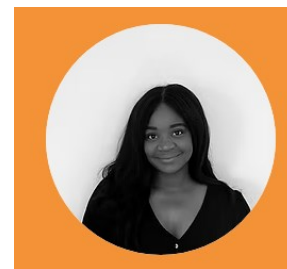
A reminder that the **deadline for Spring PEPs is the 28th February at the latest—best practice is completing them straight after the meeting to ensure there is no drift and delay.** Please ensure that your PEP meetings have happened and the PEP document is complete by this date. **For statutory age children, any PEPs completed after this date will not be able to have funding agreed.**

Any questions please get in touch. Sarah Deale Virtual School Headteacher



## Staffing

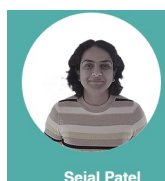
Many of you will know Ornella Rochfort, one of our caseworkers. Ornella supports most of our Year 10 and 11 young people. She has been a mainstay at the Virtual School, having been here for 8 years. Sadly Ornella will be leaving us mid-January to take up a new opportunity. Like us, I am sure many of you will be sad to see her go. She is a real champion of her young people and an advocate for them getting all the opportunities they should. We will miss her dedication, hard work and sense of humour but wish her all the best with her new role. If Ornella is the caseworker for your child, they will be re-allocated a new caseworker but if you have any concerns, please email Julie.Locke@barnet.gov.uk or Sejal.patel@Barnet.gov.uk.



As you know I am the headteacher of the Virtual School and from January will be reducing my working hours to three days—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. As a result of this, we have made some staffing changes.



Julie Locke will be Head of School on Thursday and Friday.



Sejal Patel will be Senior Caseworker taking the lead of the statutory phase as Frazier Stroud does for Post 16.



Caroline Gladkow will be taking on some casework in addition to her PEP co-ordinator role.



Hannah Hudson will be doing a day a week fulfilling our wider responsibilities to all children with a social worker.

We will let you know of any changes for your young people.

In the meantime if you have any concerns, please do contact myself—sarah.deale@Barnet.gov.uk or Julie.locke@barnet.gov.uk

## Training

### Positive PEPs

Thursday 27th February— 9.30—11.30 online

This course will help participants:

- Gain an understanding of the PEP process and your role within this
- Explore ways to gather pupil voice for the PEP
- Gain support with writing SMART targets/outcomes
- Find out how to secure Pupil Premium Plus funding

Our training is free to ALL schools. You do not need to buy into BPSI/Bels

**Leader: Sam Rothwell, Inclusion Advisory Team and Caroline Gladkow, Virtual School**

**De-escalating behaviours that challenge: prevention, response & recovery from dysregulation in the classroom**  
Wednesday 12th February 9.00—12.00 - at PDC

This half-day in person workshop will explore approaches to support the emotional regulation of looked after children/young people. Attendees will be encouraged to bring a child in mind or an example as a focus for the workshop, so you can leave with practical approaches to use immediately. The session will be facilitated by Educational Psychologists and Speech & Language Therapists.

Workshop aims

- Explore different ways dysregulation can show up in the classroom
- Consider the factors that commonly lead to dysregulation for looked after children, including communication needs, trauma, and social thinning.
- Explore practical ways to support the regulation of looked after children before, during and after dysregulation (prevention, response & recovery); including supporting communication, grounding techniques, and the PACE approach.
- Consider ways to support our own regulation when working with distressed children & young people

Leaders: Dr Amy Gibb and Speech and Language Therapists

To book these training courses, please open this link: [Training & Events | BELS | Barnet Education and Learning Service \(belstradedservices.uk\)](#)



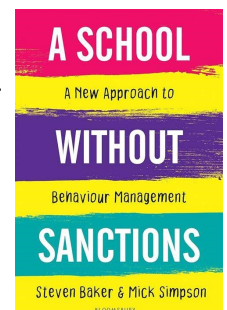
### Barnet's Second Trauma Informed Schools Conference

20th March at the PDC.

Steve Baker and Mick Simpson will return to Barnet for a follow-up session where they will discuss what they have done to promote relationships and wellbeing in their settings for staff and students. They will also facilitate a workshop where participants will be coached through implementing this approach in their own settings.

Andy and Matt Smith from Smash Life will talk about their lived experience of trauma growing up within the UK care system.

Full details and booking will be available on the BELS training link (as above)



### SCHOOLS WEEK

In September there was an article in schools Week regarding Virtual Schools and their role. You might find it useful to share this article with colleagues in your setting.

[The virtual heads dealing with a children in care crisis](#)



Department  
for Education

Many of you will be aware of the DfE 'Factors influencing secondary school pupils' educational outcomes: A literature review supporting the Growing Up in the 20s study. It was published in September. [Factors influencing secondary school pupils' educational outcomes](#)



### Beacon

Useful podcast from the Beacon School on ADHD—Strategies for Classroom Success

[ADHD in Focus: Strategies for Classroom Success With Abby Moehringer](#) They also

have free resources such as SEND handbook, Reducing Exclusions checklist, 6 immediate lunchtime fixes etc.



The International Rescue Committee run a Healing Classroom programme which aims to support schools and educators who have refugee and asylum seeking students. They offer free training sessions and resources. On their website you can find details of their training and also resources such as orientation booklets for both primary and secondary schools and information for teachers to develop an understanding of the circumstances of newly arrived Afghan and Ukrainian students

[Healing Classrooms | International Rescue Committee \(IRC\)](#)

### The Bell Foundation

The Bell Foundation are running a free webinar 'How can schools support EAL learners arriving from Year 9 and beyond? It is on 13th February at 4p.m. You can find registration details here: [How can schools support EAL learners arriving from](#)

[Year 9 and beyond? \(Webinar\) - The Bell Foundation](#) They are always updating their resources which you can sort by subject, education phase and language level. You can find details here: [Resources Resources - The Bell Foundation](#)

And lastly a reminder of the John Lyons Charity Cultural Capital Fund— it is designed to ensure access to high quality Arts activities, delivered by the best Arts practitioners, to all children across the Charity's Beneficial Area. Activities should be planned and delivered as face-to-face experiences; applications for virtual or online delivery are not suitable for this Fund. Please also be aware that there is limited funding for this particular Grant Fund, and priority will be given to schools who have not received a CCF grant before, or who have previously only received one CCF Schools grants for mainstream schools, or two grants for special schools. It can fund opportunities such as:

- Trips to the theatre (Drama / dance)
- Visits to Art galleries or museums
- Workshops delivered by established Arts institutions in London e.g. museums, galleries, theatres etc.

## Working with parents training

### Working with parents

Online—Tuesday March 4th 3.30—6pm

This webinar is designed to equip you with practical strategies for effectively engaging parents, particularly those who are hard to reach. In this training, you will:

- Understand the Importance of Parent Engagement
- Identify Parent Characteristics
- Explore Common Challenges in Parent Engagement
- Learn Effective Strategies for Engaging Hard-to-Reach Parents
- Develop Communication Skills for Difficult Conversations
- Understand Stress Management Techniques for Challenging Situations

This session will be led by Amelia Brunt who is a specialist teacher, trainer and supervisor working with educational complexity. With almost 30 years of experience as a classroom teacher, SENDCo and SEMH consultant, she works from a sound grounding of evidence based trauma informed practice. Amelia is skilled at making complex topics relatable and accessible for busy professionals.



To sign up, please follow this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/working-with-parents-tickets-1137615802489?aff=oddtcreator>

## Key Contacts at the Virtual School

**Head Teacher:** Sarah.deale@barnet.gov.uk    **Deputy/Head of School:** Julie.locke@barnet.gov.uk

**School Business Manager:** Jane.thrift@barnet.gov.uk    **Caseworker:** Allan.newby@barnet.gov.uk

**PEP Coordinator/caseworker :** Caroline.Gladkow@barnet.gov.uk

**Caseworker :** Hannah.hudson@barnet.gov.uk

**Caseworker:** Ornella.rochfort@barnet.gov.uk

**Senior Caseworker:** Frazier.stroud@barnet.gov.uk

**Caseworker:** Isabella.underhill@barnet.gov.uk

**Senior Caseworker :** Sejal.patel@barnet.gov.uk

**Caseworker—Post 16:** Aiysha.Iqbal@barnet.gov.uk

**Education Lead—Children with a social worker:** Nicola.axford@barnet.gov.uk

Website: [Home](#) | [Barnet Virtual School](#) | [London Borough of Barnet](#) | [England \(barnetvs.org\)](#) Tel: 020 8359 4534

Email: [Barnet.virtualschool@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:Barnet.virtualschool@barnet.gov.uk) Follow us on Twitter



(@barnetvs), Instagram



([Barnet\\_virtual\\_school](#)) and Facebook  ([Barnet Virtual School](#)) to keep up with news, resources, training etc.

## Attendance

Instability is an issue for many children in care (and in other vulnerable groups). Good attendance at school is important to create a sense of belonging. Children absent from school miss out on much more than learning. They miss social opportunities, clubs and events etc. Being in school is a huge protective factor for our vulnerable pupils - not just our care experienced children but all children with a social worker. Outcomes for these groups are typically significantly below that of their peers. Good school attendance is critical if we are to improve outcomes for our children. In some cases, not attending school (including suspension from school) can risk a care placement breakdown for our children.

Attendance is collected every day by Welfare Call for our children in care and by Studybugs for our children on a CIN/CP plan so our cohort is very closely monitored. Designated Teachers should inform social workers about any request to take holidays in term time.

We know you will have systems and processes in place to support attendance. Examples of actions include:

- Calling home for all children who are absent
- Providing meet and greet check ins
- Providing key adult support,
- Scheduling 1:1 time so issues are noticed before they escalate
- Working closely with the SENCo to identify SEN barriers,
- Creating nurture spaces in school
- Giving responsibilities in school such as putting chairs up or looking after a class pet
- Being aware of triggers such as tests, trips. etc.

For other ideas, please look at the case studies on the DfE site [Improving attendance: good practice for schools and multi-academy trusts - Case study - GOV.UK](#)

Always get the social worker involved straight away if you sense an attendance issue might be bubbling and contact your Virtual School case worker if the child is looked after. If you have young people who currently have a CP or CIN plan, please ensure that plans to support with attendance are clearly laid out on the plans.

Thank you to all those schools who have signed up to Studybugs. At this moment we have **93%** of Barnet schools signed up. For those who haven't, please consider signing up, as it will help the local authority with a borough wide response to school attendance and provide invaluable information to support our most vulnerable children.

Just a reminder that the Educational Psychology Service have written some fantastic information to support young people with EBSA. You can find it here: [Barnet Local Offer :: Home / Site Searches / Search Results](#)

We have heard of some amazing work being undertaken by schools, social workers, and professionals working together to increase school attendance and, in some cases, reduce the risk of exclusions for some of our most vulnerable young people - thank you for all the effort that you are putting in for this cohort of young people.

