

Welcome to the Early Childhood Service Newsletter for the spring term. As we move through this term, we have been given some hope that things may return to 'normal' by the end of the summer term, bringing an end to one of the most difficult times ever experienced by the childcare sector.

## Message from Carol Fenlon, Head of Early Childhood Services

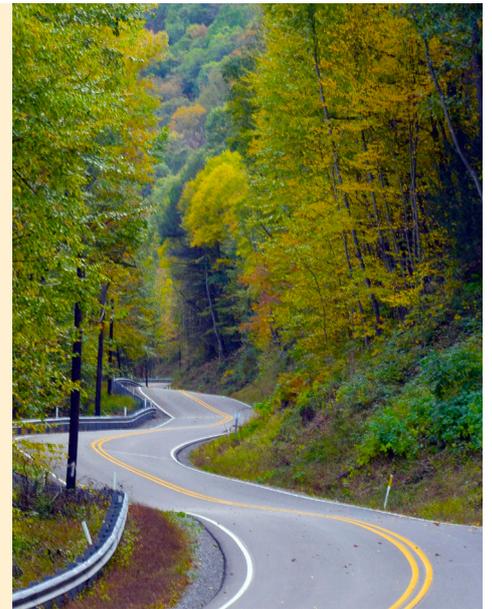
### DEAR EARLY YEARS COLLEAGUES,

I am sure like myself you have eyes front on the road map, to when times can be as near normal as possible. The start to 2021 has been tough, coming through a winter in lockdown has taken its toll but the way out of this almost feels in touching distance. You all have been amazing in continuing to provide childcare and early education to Wirral's children and families though this most recent lockdown, which has felt exceptionally long.

I am very aware there is still a long

way to go in supporting providers to be sustainable through these continued uncertain times and that is why our focus over the next 12 months will be offering access to "Future Proofing" your businesses workshops. In addition, there will be a continued focus on the health and wellbeing of practitioners, as you are key to the recovery of Wirral's early years outcomes as more children return to settings.

I would like to personally thank you for all your continued efforts. **Keep safe, well and most of all keep being inspirational.**



## TEAM UPDATES

### We have a new member of the SEND team



My name is **Lizi Williams**, I have been working with the EY SEND Team since January. I have previously worked with the Portage Team before moving

to the ASC Team in 2012. In 2014 I completed my PGCE and taught initially in Liverpool in Early Years and then in a Special School Provision. You may have already met me or seen my face whilst delivering training sessions, I would like to say thank you for the warm welcome I have received.

## TRAINING PLATFORM

**AFTER an unavoidable delay we are proud to announce that our new online platform for the Quality Improvement and Training Team will now go live in the summer term. This web page is for YOU as an early years provider on the Wirral.**

This will act as a single point of access for all early year's providers- keep up to date with the latest information both local and national, download templates, access resources, use our interactive training calendar to see what's on and book and access e-learning all at the click of a button!

You will be able to see your own personal account and makes plans to access CPD to meet your requirements. Log in details will be emailed to all providers before the launch of the platform.

## Launch of Wirral Communication and Language Pathway!

We are very pleased to announce the launch of the Wirral Communication and Language pathway. This has been developed in partnership with the Wirral 0-19 Team and NHS Foundation Trust.

The pathway is for anyone who has an interest in or works with our youngest children and their families. It is guidance and information on how to support a child's speech and language development and identify any concerns in a timely manner whilst also guiding parents to understand how to support their child.

The pathway details a child's journey from pre-birth, 0-1 years, 1-2 years, and 2-3 years. If you have not yet received your booklet linked to the pathway and your parent leaflets for those with a child 17-19 months, get in touch with your Locality Quality Improvement Officer.

# Local Offer Update

Sally Tittle



**HI EVERYONE, We hope this finds you and your families safe and well. It's been a tough January and February but hopefully... things are looking up.**

Here at the Local Offer, we continue to be kept very busy supporting our SEND families, schools and nurseries. Engagement via the website and social media is up by a whopping 60%.

For those of you unaware of the SEND Local Offer here are three ways you can be signposted to help, resources and a great deal more to support your little person. The Local Offer pulls information across Health, Education and Social Care to help you access the help you need and to enable you to feedback any identified gaps in services.

**Website:** [localofferwirral.org](http://localofferwirral.org)  
**Twitter:** [@lowirral](https://twitter.com/lowirral)  
**Facebook:** [The Local Offer Wirral](https://www.facebook.com/TheLocalOfferWirral)

During the pandemic, we wanted to keep Parent/Carers informed of the adjustments having to be made to the range of SEND services and so we have been publishing regular editions of a SEND Snapshot (Newsletter) with contributions from many

different services and organisations. The March edition is hot off the press, if you would like to share this with parents who have children with SEND it can be accessed online: [localofferwirral.org/send-snapshot-edition-7-keeping-you-informed-and-signposted-to-help-during-covid-19/](http://localofferwirral.org/send-snapshot-edition-7-keeping-you-informed-and-signposted-to-help-during-covid-19/)

Wirral are very lucky to have a SEND Youth Engagement Officer. Poppy is twenty one and uses her lived experience to bring about the changes needed and to make sure the young person's voice is heard. Poppy assists with the SENCO training programme for Nursery and Childminder staff and we would be happy to chat to Early Years staff if they're looking for guidance/resources to support their families. Poppy is currently working on a health led project which will co-produce a Health Passport for young people with SEND.

If you have any views you'd like to share as to what should/shouldn't be included in a Health Passport please drop Poppy an email to: [localofferwirral@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:localofferwirral@wirral.gov.uk)

**Keep safe!**

**Sally & Poppy**

## Koala North West

Lynn Loughran (VCF Coordinator)



**KOALA NORTH WEST are a charity based in Birkenhead whose prime focus is to provide tailored practical and emotional support, that improves wellbeing, reduces isolation and supports both children and care-givers to thrive.**

We are holding Lunch & Learn information sessions as a way for professionals from across the children's workforce in Wirral to hear about the services available to the children, young people and families that they work with, directly from the services themselves. They replace the quarterly Speed Networking events that we used to hold pre-pandemic.

We're running them vis MS Teams Live Events. All the sessions will be

recorded and made available for people to listen back to via our webpage: [wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/networking-events](http://wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/networking-events)

Each half-hour session will feature a presentation from a local service or initiative and the opportunity to ask questions directly to them. It's basically just a way for services to publicise what they offer and how people can access their service, or to get important information out to a wide audience.

Details of confirmed sessions are on the webpage above and will be added to as sessions are confirmed.

All sessions will start at 12.30pm, allowing 'attendees' to listen in whilst eating their lunch.

Contact Lynn Loughran for joining codes at: [lynnloughran@koalanw.co.uk](mailto:lynnloughran@koalanw.co.uk)



## Wirral National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) network

Karen Lane (Chair)

**THE LAST 12 months has been the strangest and most difficult year in all our lives.**

For me, the one thing that has stood out during this time of crisis is the way the childcare sector has worked together. I am proud to be part of the NDNA (especially the Wirral network), who together with the other childcare organisations have lobbied the Government, the Department for Education, Local Authorities and Ofsted to ensure our voices have been heard nationally and locally.

As a local network we continue to support each other and hold our regular meetings via zoom. Summer term sees the AGM and my position as Chair of Wirral Network is up for election. I have enjoyed carrying out this position during the last year, even during the pandemic and I hope I have supported the members as they wish. I feel have still got more to offer and hope I am reselected.

Nursery staff need have rose to the challenge and continued to offer are Early Years children good quality childcare under extremely difficult circumstances. **Take care and look after yourselves. Karen**



## Wirral Childminding Association (WCMA)

Nikki Griffiths (Chair)

**THE ASSOCIATION would like to thank childminders for their commitment in working so hard through this continuing pandemic.**

Unfortunately, meetings have been put on hold until they can be held face to face.

The WCMA is always there to support any Wirral Childminder and you can contact Nikki Griffiths (Chair) on 07925 685 360, if you would like to be added to the WCMA WhatsApp group or to the Facebook page.

## Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership's training and support offer:

WSCP'S WEBSITE contains links to a range of virtual training, e-learning support and all of the 7-minute briefings to support the early years sector. Visit: [wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/safeguarding-training-for-schools](http://wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/safeguarding-training-for-schools) to book your training. You can also contact [Amanda Waterfall](mailto:Amanda.Waterfall@wirral.gov.uk) on 07795 617 644 if you wish to discuss your setting specific training needs or support on offer.

The type of virtual sessions you can access include Designated Safeguarding Lead Refresher Session (for existing DSL's - 1.5 hours), Safer Recruitment (2 hours), Managing Allegations (2 hours), plus a whole staff safeguarding for anyone in your team who may need a refresher, all for only £30.00 per session.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead Session training for new DSL's is also available (3 hours for £50.00). There is also a wide range of free multi-agency training for you to

access here: [wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/virtual-training-provision](http://wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/virtual-training-provision)

## Wirral's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - Anne King

HELLO, my name is Anne King, and I have been in post as Wirral Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) since March 2020.

My role as set out in Children Act 2004, and in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, is to oversee and manage all allegations against professional who work with children in regulated activity to include paid and voluntary positions.

All agencies should have clear and robust policies regarding safeguarding children and be familiar with the LADO role and process.

Currently any new LADO appointments must be social work qualified unless a current LADO is transferring to another Local Authority with no break in service. The purpose of this

policy is to ensure a thorough understanding of safeguarding children which informs the LADO process.

I am available Monday to Friday 9am to 5.30pm and any emergencies outside of this time should be shared with Wirral Emergency Duty Team and Merseyside Police as appropriate.

I invite anybody working with children who may have concerns regarding another professional to contact me. I am very happy to discuss hypothetical scenarios if you are unsure that it meets LADO threshold, and in fact you do not have to give any names, more we can have a hypothetical discussion and I can advise on whether it meets LADO threshold.

A more detailed explanation of the LADO's processes can be found on the Safeguarding Children Partnership website at [wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/lado-allegations](http://wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/lado-allegations) and has been circulated as an attachment on the provider weekly email.

## Children's Centres

### Dolly Parton Imagination Library...



#### CHILDREN'S CENTRES

have been involved in the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. This is a book gifting programme devoted to inspiring a love of reading in the hearts of children everywhere.

Each month, enrolled children from birth, receive a high quality, age-appropriate book in the post, free of charge. It will be available to babies born from the 1st of April onwards in the 5 ward areas of Bidston and St James, Birkenhead and Tranmere, Rock Ferry, Seacombe and Leasowe and Moreton East. Each child who registers will receive one book per month, so 12 books per year and the goal of the project is to continue this until the child reaches their 5th birthday.

The project is part funded by local community/voluntary agencies, Foundation Years Trust and Koala North West and the

local authority, which makes it free to access.

If a family is eligible, they will be contacted by one of the agencies involved in the 1001 days project. The family can also contact anyone in the 1001 days services, who will help them to complete the registration form with some simple details. When registered with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, the child will receive their first Welcome Book which is the Tale of Peter Rabbit, then one book a month from then on.

### Invitation to Play Project

WIRRAL'S Invitation to Play - is a collaborative project between Wirral Council's Early Childhood Services and Hungry Little Minds. The aim is to create resources in the community such as posters, signs, boards, and interactive displays which will be prompts for conversations, games, and ideas for learning through play.

We know that the experiences children have within the first five years of life help

to build pathways and connections in their brains. When children have the opportunity to repeat these experiences and practice their skills, it strengthens these pathways and connections.

The project will offer the opportunity to share prompts that children and their families can use to share fun; learning through play experiences. The aim is for it to be a favourite 'pit stop' in order to not only give parents one off ideas, but to encourage them to carry on similar things at home and to come back and visit time and time again in order to consolidate that learning and build those brains.

The resources will be positioned across the Wirral, in places that families spend their time and may be looking for things to do, or just a little inspiration on familiar routes. We will be creating 'pit stops' for families, that they can visit when they are out, to give the parents a focus as well as engaging the children.

Look out for these resources that will hopefully be in place for the Summer term!

## Useful links

- COVID-19 RESPONSE - Spring 2021
- Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings,
- including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Foundation Years: Pregnancy to children aged 5
- Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus outbreak
- COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities
- Coronavirus outbreak FAQs: what you can and can't do
- Ofsted: coronavirus (COVID-19) rolling update