Welcome to our second newsletter. Thank you for all your comments about our first newsletter, we really appreciated the offers of help and are pleased that many of you found it interesting.

Make sure you check out the Essential Life Skills Grant funding pages which provides information on how you can apply for grant funding for extra-curricular activities. This funding is available to both individual young people and to youth organisations who can provide a weekly extra-curricular activity.

Find out what activities are taking place in West Somerset this summer. We have attached the full calendar separately in the same email as the newsletter.
Home Start West Somerset works with families with young children who are experiencing problems which affect their well-being as a family. Their professional staff and trained volunteers offer regular support, friendship, and practical help to these families in their own homes, helping to prevent family crisis and relationship breakdown.

The West Somerset Opportunity Area have commissioned Home-Start West Somerset to provide two new innovative projects to help that every child have a great start in life.

Our two new exciting projects are:

**Bump-Start:** To deliver volunteer-led support for young families living in disadvantaged rural communities through pregnancy, the birth experience and during the first year of their child’s life to empower young families to give their children the best possible start in life.

Support will be offered with the baby’s child’s development, perinatal and breastfeeding issues as required and will be offered via outreach work or delivered from community settings.

**Early-Start:** To deliver volunteer-led early intervention family support for families living in disadvantaged rural communities with children up to the age of 2 years old (and up to school age if required). Early-Start will help to improve parents’ knowledge and skills, which will help to increase their confidence and ability to support their child’s early learning in the home environment. This will encourage parents to access other support services if they need to. Support will be offered via outreach work or delivered from community settings.

If you would like to know more please contact Clare Pound manager@homestart-westsomerset.org.uk

Keep in touch at:

WSOA@somerset.gov.uk
westsomerset.oa@education.gov.uk

@westsombresetoa
Many children in West Somerset start school with language skills below average for their age.

Research tells us that good language at age 5 is the most important early skill in helping children to escape poverty, so it makes sense to make this part of the early years work. In the West Somerset Opportunity Area ‘I CAN’ have been working with the Early Years Working Group, which is made up of operational and strategic leads in Somerset and area of focus is improving early language skills.

What is additionally important is helping staff to embed any training to provide resources and ongoing support to make a difference. Long-term impact is crucial so looking at ways to ensure learning and changes in practice are sustainable is key.

Real change takes time and there is much work to be done implementing new approaches and evaluating impact, but already there is a feeling of optimism in the area and communities that outcomes for children in West Somerset can improve – particularly around their speech and language.

Liz Wood - lWood@ican.org.uk

Everyone involved in the Home-Start West Somerset team is absolutely delighted to be presented with the Queens Award for Voluntary Services 2018. It’s a wonderful accolade that represents 16 years of hard work, dedication, and enjoyment of supporting and helping families in West Somerset. We are all so thrilled to be bestowed this great honour and it feels like the perfect complement to all our magnificent devoted and enthusiastic volunteers.

Clare Pound and Carol Morris Home Start
Providing High Quality training for our school staff.

This month we are starting to see the fruit of some carefully laid plans.

• Headteachers and senior leaders have received training through the Boolean Maths Hub on mastery in mathematics.
• We have appointed a Maths Mastery lead for West Somerset – Janet Calladine from Dulverton Juniors.
• Schools on the first tranche of Read Write Inc. training (which aims to improve phonics) have received £60,000 worth of resources in preparation for the training on September 4th and October 1st 2018.
• Several head teachers are now coming to the end of their National Professional Qualification for headship.
• The reviews of Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision in each of the schools in West Somerset commence this month using the Inclusion Expert.

We have published the training prospectus for teaching assistants in West Somerset Schools. Schools are working very closely in order to ensure that children move from one stage to the next with the minimum of difficulty and the maximum of excitement.

Paul Rushforth - PZRushforth@educ.somerset.gov.uk

Naturally Healthy Minehead Event 26/05/18 – Exmoor National Park

Naturally Healthy Minehead was an event held in May in Minehead as part of Naturally Healthy May. Around 150 people took part in a variety of activities ranging from Nordic walking, golf; tai chi, nature crafts and guided walks. The event provided short taster sessions of all the different activities anyone can do to keep active in the natural environment and get your Five Ways to Wellbeing!
**Introducing Inclusion Expert and their role in the West Somerset Opportunity Area**

The Somerset Partnership Teaching School (SPTS) which is based at Fiveways school in Yeovil, has been commissioned to lead the work to support West Somerset Schools improve their support for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Somerset Partnership Teaching School are working with an organisation called Inclusion Expert whose founder, Daniel Sobel, is an internationally respected leader in inclusive education and has advised the Department for Education, the European Union and governments abroad. The philosophy behind Inclusion Expert's approach to SEN reviews is to maximise the output, minimize the effort and it has been tried and tested with over 1000 schools.

"We had a positive, but intense visit from Inclusion Expert today. Very useful to reflect, very challenging and very practical in terms of advice and support. I haven’t seen the report yet, but am sure it will reflect a very realistic, but positive picture about where we are and where we need to go”

Dan Hartley - dhartley@educ.somerset.gov.uk

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**Educational excellence in the classroom**

**Keep in touch at:**

WSOA@somerset.gov.uk
westsomerset.oa@education.gov.uk

@westsomersetoa
The Children’s University provides you with the opportunity to take part in exciting and creative learning activities outside of the normal school day. Described by the Sunday Times as ‘The University of Fun’, children can only aspire to what they know exists.

Plymouth University will be working with West Somerset schools and community groups to provide a number of learning opportunities for West Somerset pupils.

Julie Young - JAYoung@somerset.gov.uk
**Connor Sanders** has been successful in securing an Apprenticeship at Beaver Ford in Minehead as a result of his work placement during the course.

**Chloe Egington** has gained employment at King Edward Road Nursery after successfully completing the World Of Work BTEC course at West Somerset College. She has been offered an Apprenticeship at King Edward Road Nursery in Minehead.

“Chloe proved herself by volunteering at King Edward Road Nursery last term, she has now gained an Apprenticeship with us to gain her qualifications. Well done Chloe.”

**Shelley Hooper, Nursery Manager**
University of Bristol ChemLabS

The Bristol ChemLabS project seeks to engage with teachers, schools and students of all ages to provide excellent teaching and learning opportunities in chemistry. They are active in primary and secondary schools and are working with schools.

“I can't thank you enough for coming into Minehead Middle this morning and giving such a brilliant assembly. Both staff and pupils are absolutely raving about you.....as I passed through the playground at break I overheard a little boy telling his friend..."It was amazing, he wasn't just a scientist, he was also a comedian!"

“What ChemlabS does to engage children in science is huge. Living in West Somerset means that we are rather distant from the nearest University and having EDF support our linkage with Bristol is extremely important. I do hope they continue to subsidise this event.”

Mr Gavin Fry, Head of Science, Minehead Middle School
**National Citizenship Service**

**National Citizen Service** is a once in a lifetime experience for 15-17 year-olds that builds skills and confidence, helping young people to get ahead in work and life. The programme connects young people to their local community by enabling them to design and deliver their own social action projects.

**How it works**

On the NCS programme young people in years 11 and 12 will take part in *adventure*, discover their potential in our *skills for life phase* and be their own boss in a *social action project* that is run completely by *young people!*

**Phase 1 – Adventure**
On a 5 day 4 night residential you will get the chance to experience activities.

**Phase 2 – Skills for life**
Another 5 day 4 night residential based away from home in a uni-style environment.

**Phase 3 – Action**
Working in teams you will put all the skills and experience you’ve learnt.

**Phase 4 – Graduation event**
At the end of each programme we’ll celebrate everything you’ve achieved.

**How to get involved**

If you are a young person, in year 11 or 12, you can sign up for NCS at [www.ncswest.co.uk](http://www.ncswest.co.uk)

*Summer NCS 2017, for year 11 and 12, is open for applications!*

NCS only costs £50 to take part – and some bursaries are available.
Great news for students at West Somerset College

We are part of an exciting research project to understand more about the impact of transport costs on the accessibility of A Level and Vocational provision at West Somerset College for post 16 students. As part of that all Year 12 students who live in West Somerset and attend West Somerset College in 2018-19 will receive a full travel bursary for this academic year. Those students will then receive a second full travel bursary in 2019-20, provided that they remain at West Somerset College into Year 13. Students joining the sixth form in September just need to inform county transport that they attend West Somerset College when they apply for a bus pass. They will be issued with a free bus pass for the journey to and from College for that academic year. The research project will also be looking at transport in West Somerset more broadly and finding out how it effects post-16 choices.
New Opportunities for West Somerset Women

Our New Opportunities for West Somerset Women survey attracted good responses following its launch in April 2018. A further 20 people engaged via Focus Group sessions across West Somerset, the last of which took place in June. The Priority 4 Steering Group is now busy reviewing responses and using these to inform a final programme of interventions that will be funded by the Opportunity Area programme to help women who live in West Somerset gain improved employment. This will include training, help with child care and transport - Look out for more details, coming soon!

Introducing West Somerset District Council as our partner for the Grant and encouraging people to apply

Looking for a new job or training – but can’t afford it? Then help is at hand in West Somerset, thanks to the new-look Access to Employment and Learning Fund, which has received investment from the WSOA Programme. The fund will be administered by key Opportunity Area partner, West Somerset Council and is open to individuals, to cover the costs of items such as transport, work wear, interview outfit, childcare and work equipment; and to training providers to deliver learning opportunities to people in West Somerset.

For more information please contact Emily Wishart on 07881 218669 to discuss how this fund could help you or others and for details of how to apply.
Essential Life Skills news – Roadwater Youth Club

The Essential life Skills Fund has given £5,000 to set up a new community youth club in Roadwater for 9-14 year olds.

With support from Minehead Eye, it runs once a week on Wednesdays and is based at Roadwater Village Hall. The overwhelming feedback demonstrated that these young people want a regular youth club. The youth club will plan a range of activities and countywide trips. The idea and driving force behind this initiative is the young people themselves who have approached their parish council and asked for a base and support both financially and politically. Having a base and two youth workers regularly attending provides a realistic opportunity to have a young person led programme of activities and a chance to establish a club and build some longevity for other young people in the future.

The funding covers the cost of two youth workers to deliver the session each week through 39 weeks of the year. Additional costs would include covering initial training and safeguarding for a number of adults who have already expressed interest in helping lead the club. A range of basic resources to be situated at the hall, as well as subsidising transport costs for trips and activities.

The club is now open on Wednesday evenings.
The Essential Life Skills Funding

How to apply
Grant schemes have been launched to help children and young people in West Somerset access extracurricular activities through the Essential Life Skills programme which is funded by the Department for Education.

Individual Grants for young people
Young people aged 9-14 can apply for a £350 grant to cover the cost of their chosen weekly activity for a year. To apply please complete this form.

Group Grant funding
Organisations like youth providers, schools, and voluntary organisations can apply for up to £5,000 to either develop new activities or expand existing ones. To apply organisations will need to complete this form.

The deadline for these group applications is Wednesday 5th September 2018.

If you have any questions about the grant programme.

Contact SCC’s Youth & Community Service:
youthservice@somerset.gov.uk

Keep in touch at:
WSOA@somerset.gov.uk
westsomerset.oa@education.gov.uk
@westsomersetoa
Thank you for reading. Please share it with colleagues, networks and friends.

If you have a suggestion for something we should cover, please email westsomerset.oa@education.gov.uk or WSOA@somerset.gov.uk

Tweet us at @westsomersetoa