



**Calendar of events can now be found as a separate document with your newsletter email so that you can send out to families and is also detailed on our website: [www.southwesthertspartnership.org.uk](http://www.southwesthertspartnership.org.uk)**

# South West Herts Partnership

## ISSUE 184 - MAY 2021

### YOUR FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE



#### Covid-19 Update Statement Current working plans

Since the start of the Summer term our family workers have been delighted to be able to attend school meetings in person again. In line with the Government's latest announcement, we have also been able to offer and resume our face to face home visits where staff have received at least their first vaccinations.

Following our updated home visits procedure, our family workers will be conducting a pre-visit questionnaire to ensure the visit can go ahead safely.

In line with our current operational risk assessment, all staff have been offered lateral flow tests which they will carry out twice weekly prior to going into their allocated schools or home visits and follow the NHS and lead school reporting process. All staff have also been provided with PPE and will be guided by your individual schools policies and procedures when onsite.

Going forward, we will be able to offer a combination of face to face and online visits/meetings to remain flexible to the family and schools requirements.



### WINTER GRANTS



As detailed in our last newsletter, we were delighted to be part of the Covid Winter Grant Scheme in Hertfordshire issuing household vouchers to families identified by our team of family workers as being vulnerable and facing financial hardship.

We can confirm that a total of 161 vouchers were issued to 113 vulnerable families.

**This is a total value of £9,660!**



### FAMILIES FIRST AWARDS

We are proud to report that Office Team members Cary Maddison and Ella Young both received nominations in the recent Families First Awards.

Unfortunately they did not win in their categories but were really grateful to have been in the running alongside their peers.

### YOUR 21-22 FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

The Office Team have been busy sending out information on our services for Sept 21.

You should all now be in receipt of our schools brochure detailing the services available to you, your invoice and our core offer.

We have found many of our schools are recognising and requesting to buy in more support for next years' service to accommodate their escalating needs and requirements due to the affects of the pandemic.

If you haven't already done so, please can you advise us of your intentions for your 21-22 service.

We ask that all payments reach us by the end of June so we can look to maintain our current staffing levels and plan allocation of our workers to the schools that have bought in.

**Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries or would like any further information.**

## Introduction to Mental Health & Wellbeing

Kathy Buchanan, Family Support Manager and Baljit Chhina, School Family Worker both recently attended Introduction to Mental Health Training delivered by Carol Lilley from Herts Mind - Children and Young Person Team.

Some of the areas and points discussed, included;

- Mental Health Stigma - Stigma is when we attach a negative idea/thought to something that is neutral. It is all of our responsibility to ensure we don't say anything that could be harmful and instead support those who need it.
- Mental Health Spectrum - All of us exist somewhere on the mental health spectrum and it's normal to move across the spectrum in either direction.



- Anxiety - symptoms include; heart racing, shaking, forgetfulness, tense muscles and shortness of breath. Getting help is essential if it becomes overwhelming (stopping you from doing the things you want to in life).
- Depression - sadness is a normal human emotion. Clinical Depression is a mental health condition that affects our thinking, emotions, perceptions and behaviours for a longer period of time. Symptoms can include: critical thinking, aggression, irritability and avoiding social situations.
- Stress - know your limits - we learnt how to use the stress bucket model

Workshops can be delivered to children in schools and they offer parent workshops.

Useful resources:

Break the Stigma [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=break+the+stigma](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=break+the+stigma)  
5 Ways to Wellbeing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJ5V525SCK>

## LGBT+ SCHOOLS PROJECT

### Services for Young People

The Services for Young People LGBT+ Schools Project offers support with creating safe and inclusive spaces for LGBT+ students in secondary schools across Hertfordshire.

Our team of friendly Youth Workers offers schools free:

- \* Awareness raising and anti-bullying assemblies & workshops
- \* Support with setting up LGBT+ groups / allyship schemes
- \* Break time pop-ups for awareness raising and signposting to further support

All support can be tailored to meet the needs of the school.

For more information please e-mail:  
[youngprideinherts@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:youngprideinherts@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

We will often invite guest speakers from other agencies we work alongside or in partnership with to the second half of our team meetings to relay their knowledge and experiences within their roles.

This week Anna Perry from the Services for Young People team gave us a presentation on the LGBT+ work they have going on.

This was very informative and Anna spoke about pronouns and how it is always best to ask someone how they want to be addressed and to never assume.

Bryony Laws is the lead for LGBT+ in this area

Other support can be found through;

- Mermaids [Homepage - Mermaids \(mermaidsuk.org.uk\)](http://mermaidsuk.org.uk)
- Gendered Intelligence [Home | Gendered Intelligence](http://genderedintelligence.co.uk)
- Parent Support Group: TSG (Transgender Support Group) in Stevenage.
- [Transgender and Non-Binary Support Group \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](http://hertfordshire.gov.uk)
- They have a facebook group TSG SOFA  
[TSG SOFA | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/TSGSOFA)

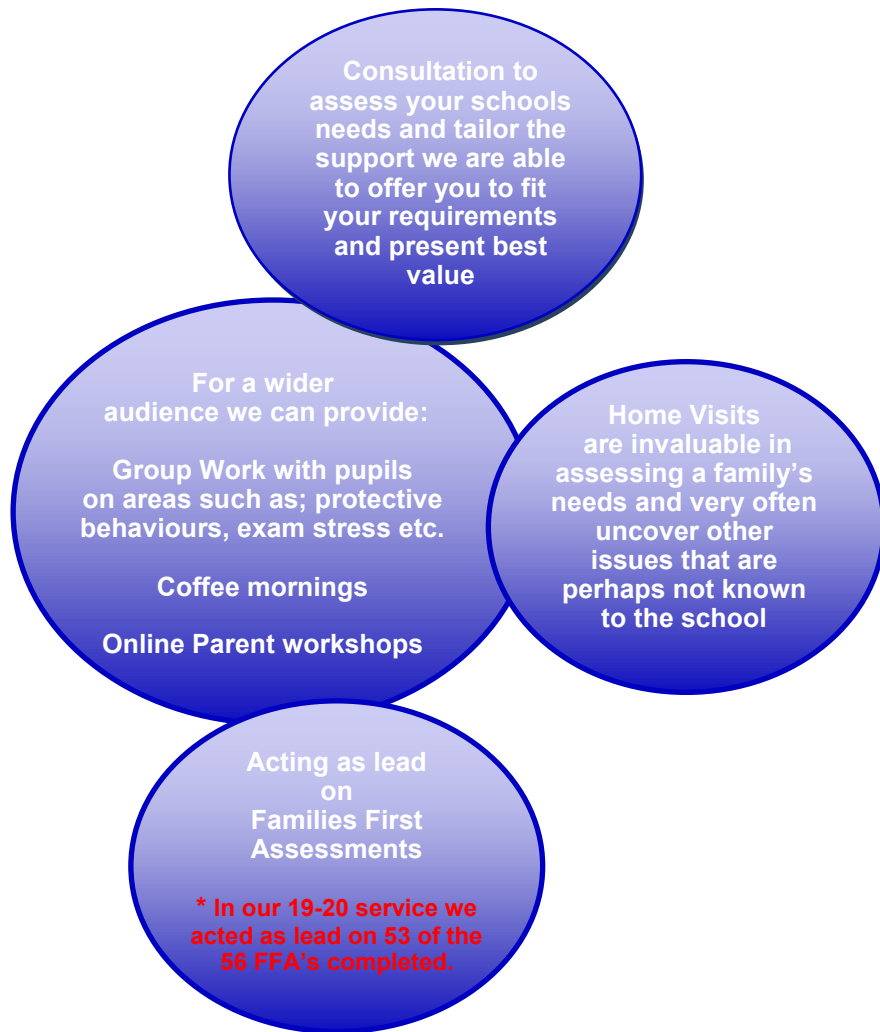
## GUEST SPEAKERS



## Why should you use our service

- ♦ **80%** of schools have seen improved relationship between parent and school.
- ♦ **67%** of schools have seen an improved attitude to learning.
- ♦ **96%** of families have increased networks with community organisations and other supports.
- ♦ **77%** of families have increased family involvement, including help with homework.
- ♦ **77%** of parents feel they are now able to put in and follow through good routines & Boundaries.
- ♦ **83%** of parent/carer(s) have a strengthened belief in ones capabilities.

\* **Results from our evaluation forms completed in 2019-2020.**



Please see our Schools' brochure for further information on the services we can provide your school



SWHP Schools  
Brochure 2021-2022.1

or visit our new website: <https://www.southwesthertspartnership.org.uk>

We welcome any feedback or suggestions you may have on how we could improve our current service so that we can all continue to provide the best for our families and communities.

Please contact:

Carly Maddison  
Business Manager  
[Carly.Maddison@swhp.org.uk](mailto:Carly.Maddison@swhp.org.uk)  
07872 991558

Kathy Buchanan  
Family Support Manager  
[Kathy.b@swhp.org.uk](mailto:Kathy.b@swhp.org.uk)  
07872 991545

Our early intervention service has helped to prevent many cases escalating to Children's Services. If schools require, we are able to take step-downs from IFST as well as CP/CIN and support families to maintain the strategies put in place and access other services to continue on their journey.

*"You always go above and beyond, especially since lockdown. Your support has been invaluable and I want you to know how much I appreciate everything you do to support the children, families and myself".*

School



We value your feedback as this helps us to not only look at how we can make the service even better, but also helps us answer any questions you may have.

We hope you find the following answers to your FAQ's about your family support service useful.

### **Are we able to refer more than one family at a time to the service?**

Once your school makes a referral to our service, your allocated family worker will schedule a planning and review meeting to understand the school and family's needs and requirements. Your family worker will try to give an estimation on how long the case may take and dependent on your hours, will look at how this can be achieved.

If you wish to refer more families, your school family worker will look at capacity and hours bought in and advise how best to accommodate the request. This could be done by conducting fortnightly parenting sessions, one-off family consultations, drop-in sessions, coffee mornings etc. We are also able to offer a blended working approach with home visits in person and online to reduce travel time and increase capacity.

At the beginning of the school year, we will provide your school with a breakdown of the hours that you have bought in and what this provides you with on a weekly basis. You will continue to receive a half-termly usage report so you are able to assess whether your school's need has increased and outweighs your current buy-in. This will help you decide whether you wish to buy in more hours throughout the year.

### **Does capacity allow for more families to be supported in the more challenging weeks?**

We recommend a proactive approach where possible and accept that sometimes unexpected families need extra support.

Whilst our budget does not allow us to employ floating family workers to pick up additional hours, our staff recognise the need to be flexible and we will look to accommodate your needs when your requirements exceed the expected weekly average for your school. We would look to do this with your allocated worker or whether we have the capacity from another worker in the team at that time.

### **What happens if our school has not used all their hours, are they able to carry over?**

By necessity, the 'hours' approach to designing our service to schools ensures we are able to manage the costs. Allocation of staffing hours is done to the maximum capacity to ensure schools receive best value.

We are unable to allow schools to carry over their hours as this mode does not allow for extra capacity.

You will continue to receive a half-termly update on your hours so you can see assess whether you are on track to fully utilise the hours you have bought in.

Our schools' brochure, website and half-termly newsletter detail the services we can provide you with and your family worker will be in regular contact to offer advice and support throughout the year.

### **How do you ensure that the admin requirements do not outweigh direct family support?**

Over the last year, we have been working with our Executive Board on how to streamline unnecessary paperwork and we will continue to review this. These changes have been positive and well received.

Whilst we try to keep notes to a minimum, there are some areas that require more administration time e.g. FFA's. It is also essential that we continue to have and note down planning and review meetings so that we ensure the school and family worker have a full understanding and agreement of the work that is being carried out, and are able to evaluate the outcomes being achieved.

With regards to administration time, schools are only charged for the administration specific to the referral.

All other administration is covered by South West Herts Partnership and the funding received.

### **Can the service be choice led?**

Absolutely! We are able to offer you a tailor made service dependent on your school's needs and requirements.

You can find further information on the services we can provide and how some of the family workers are currently working in our schools detailed in our schools' brochure. These include; providing home/garden visits, group work on areas such as exam stress, protective behaviours etc., coffee mornings, leading on FFA's. You may decide you would like a family worker based in your school for a specific amount of hours to do 1:1 drop-in sessions for pupils or parent/carer(s) to attend.