

The Alex Timpson Attachment and Trauma Programme in Schools

Newsletter March 2019

The Alex Timpson Trust is funding the Rees Centre to develop a national evidence base on the effects of attachment and trauma training in schools.

This termly newsletter provides updates and support to schools and local authorities nationally, both those participating in the Programme and those who are interested in it. Please contact us with news from your school and suggestions for content. [More about the programme.](#)



What have we found out so far?

We are still at a very early stage with data collection in the project. We have begun to look in some detail at the data we have collected so far from staff and pupils, but please note that findings may change as more data is collected.

- Pupils' positive feelings towards school decline with age, but the most positive feelings, on average, are towards their teacher(s), stressing the importance of adult relationships.
- There are strong differences between schools in terms of young people's feelings and responses to difficulty – we will be undertaking future analysis the impact of demographics, OfSTED ratings and other factors.
- There is a strong contrast between confidence (generally higher) and knowledge (generally lower) among staff with respect to handling vulnerable pupils and those with attachment and trauma issues.
- Knowledge and confidence about attachment and trauma issues tends to be highest among SLT, but lower among class teachers, TAs and non-teaching staff. While most staff report having some knowledge of attachment theory and the importance of a pupil's home life, trauma is less well understood.
- Some schools are already using attachment-informed practices like calming-down areas, open door policies, time-out cards and learning mentors.
- However, attachment theory training has seeded new initiatives in schools, including more use of 'stop and think' time from staff, as well as mentoring and 'theraplay' techniques.
- More broadly, senior staff, teaching staff and pupils have all reported positive outcomes from attachment training and the resulting changes within the school:
 - "So it's not intervention for half a dozen children, it's actually how we can be inclusive in how we support all of our children" (Headteacher, Primary).
 - "The most useful part of the training that we did, [was to realise] you just sort of automatically blurt things out normally just being a normal human being, but [it's better] to actually sit back and think, 'That's really not going to help [the child] at all. They're really not going to understand what I'm trying to do'" (Staff member, Primary).
 - "I'd [now] just ask, like ask for a tutor or a TA who have been with you, 'Can I talk to you for five minutes, I've got something on my mind?'" (Pupil, Secondary).
- From the staff interviews, we have been able to gather perspectives on what will enable and hinder an attachment and trauma informed approach being taken up by all school staff:

- *Enablers of successful training*: whole school approach; senior leader support; reinforcement through staff meetings; consistent use of attachment-informed language; multiple training engagements with school; cascading of knowledge to pupils through PSHE lessons.
- *Inhibitors of successful training*: one-off training session only; stubbornness from staff; external pressures on schools; difficulty for teachers engaging when they have had their own traumatic experiences.

Webinar Series

We present one webinar each term. One online session is presented each term. The usual format is a presentation followed by questions and panel discussion. They are open to all with an interest in the topic. These sessions are recorded so you can catch up with the slides and listen to the presentation at a later date such as the [webinar with Sir John Timpson, June 2018](#). Others can be found at www.youtube.com/reescentre and details of upcoming sessions and how to log in are always posted on the [Events page](#) of the Rees Centre website.

The most recent webinar was held on Monday 25th March and consisted of a discussion of the early findings by project team members Neil Harrison and Helen Trivedi with project advisory group member Alun Rees. A recording with the slides will be available on our YouTube channel shortly.

Update on Participating Schools



We are currently working with 140 schools in 14 local authorities across England, with more joining shortly. We are excited to see Virtual School Heads approaching the Programme Team with a second cohort of schools to participate in the programme. Just over half of participating schools have completed their initial training session, and have been invited to participate in the data collection activities for the programme.

We still have opportunities for new areas to get involved, with space for around 100 more schools.

How to Join the Alex Timpson Attachment and Trauma Programme

We are recruiting new local authorities from September 2019 to September 2020. Virtual School Heads should get in touch with the Programme Team in the first instance by e-mailing timpsonprogramme@education.ox.ac.uk

The Alex Timpson ARC Attachment Award 2019

The Alex Timpson ARC Attachment Award recognises and celebrates best practice in attachment and trauma aware schools and settings. All Virtual School Head Teachers are invited to nominate a school or setting from their region for each category (early year, primary, secondary, special/alternative provision and post-16). Short listed nominees will have their work featured on the ARC website and will be put forward for the final stage where they could be in with a chance of receiving £1000 for their school or setting. For more details and an application pack, please e-mail admin@the-arc.org.uk.

Further Information

Website: [The Alex Timpson Attachment and Trauma Programme in Schools](#)

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