

## The Alex Timpson Attachment and Trauma Programme in Schools Newsletter November 2018

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.

Currently 24 local authorities have signed up to the Programme and over 160 schools are involved. 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. As the Programme develops, please contact us with news from your school and suggestions for content.



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

### What benefits and challenges do secondary schools face in implementing whole school approaches to attachment and trauma?

Richard Glenny, Deputy Head at Priestlands School in Hampshire, led the webinar on 7 November 2018. His presentation (20 mins), followed by questions and discussion with Judy Sebba and Helen Trivedi is available now on [YouTube](#). Richard spoke about his school's experience of whole school approaches.

**It all comes down to relationships!**

- *'Good behaviour for learning is dependent on the quality of relationships'*
- Good relationships are *'instrumental in developing the right climate'*
- Staff are expected to *'handle situations with a degree of warmth and concern'*

Learn more... Do more... Be more...

#### Webinar Series

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.

Details of upcoming sessions and how to log in are always posted on the Rees Centre website. The [March 2018 webinar](#) was led by a primary school head teacher in Hertfordshire. The June 2018 webinar was led by [Sir John Timpson](#). If there is a particular issue that you would like to have addressed in a future session, [please let us know](#).

## Teachers Who Care Report, Become 2018

Alun Rees, Consultant Virtual School Head and author of the Virtual School Handbook responds

Following on from the charity's 2017 report 'Perceptions of Care', which asked young people how they felt, ['Teachers Who Care'](#) (Become, 2018) provides the other half of the picture with respect to the education of children in care, by asking teachers about their experiences.

This short report is a must read for senior leaders in schools, designated teachers, virtual school heads, and other senior leaders in local authorities as it provides very clear recommendations they can implement.

A key finding is that the large majority of responding teachers from across England and Wales had received no training about looked after children before qualification. Interestingly that proportion shrank slightly when considering only respondents that had qualified after 2010, suggesting that things are improving – but far too slowly. This drives a key recommendation to government and training providers to ensure more detailed and consistent pre-qualification training in relation to children in care, and their needs, for all would-be teachers.

More positively, particularly for virtual schools who provide a lot of it, teachers praised the quality of individual training they had subsequently received, particularly in relation to attachment and trauma. They still, though, bemoaned the lack of whole-school training opportunities. The clear message to Heads is to ensure there is regular and effective whole school training on the issues, so their colleagues are better prepared to meet need in the classroom.

The report also highlights inconsistent teacher understanding of the inter-agency landscape in which they work. There is a clear call to encourage virtual schools and other children's services to communicate roles and responsibilities more coherently. Teachers need to know who does what, how, and why, in their locality if they are to 'do their bit'.

The report keeps perhaps its most concerning finding to last: strong evidence for the negative stereotyping of children in care heard from colleagues across the respondents' schools. A more coherent national and local response to the training and communication recommendations in the report would go some way to addressing this disturbing finding, particularly as most of the 447 respondents were teachers with specific responsibilities for looked after children in their school. The picture across the whole profession is likely to be even more concerning.

Alun Rees, November 2018

## Update on the Programme

Thanks to everyone who has completed the first staff survey in our participating schools. A great response so far. **More than 2,300 staff members** from **100 schools** have responded.

This survey is ideally completed before the first day of the whole school staff training for attachment and trauma awareness in schools.

There are also 72 schools who have received the pupil questionnaire. Typically the pupil questionnaire is completed after the staff survey and soon after training. We are also starting to arrange focus groups with pupils to discuss their views of what school is like and explore their knowledge of the support available in school to all pupils. We hope to have completed at least five focus groups before the Christmas Term break.

## Dr Neil Harrison joins the research team



**Dr Neil Harrison** has recently joined the Rees Centre from the University of the West of England, where he was an Associate Professor in Education Policy, focusing on issues of social justice in secondary and higher education. He has had a particular interest in children in care and care leavers, dating from his time as a student welfare manager (2000-03). He conceived and directed one of the first projects designed to support care-experienced students in higher education (2004-06) and was a member of the advisory group for the Buttle Trust Quality Mark. He also served on Bristol's Corporate Parenting Panel (2007-15) and as a governor of the Bristol 'virtual school' (2013-15). More broadly, he has been engaged in several recent research projects for the Office for Students. He has published over 30 journal articles and is an Executive Editor of *Teaching in Higher Education* journal, and sits as a member of the Governing Council of the Society for Research into Higher Education. Originally trained as an applied statistician, he now uses an interdisciplinary and mixed methods approach to research from a broadly critical realist perspective.

## How to Join the Alex Timpson Attachment and Trauma in Schools Programme

Virtual School Heads should get in touch with the Programme Team in the first instance by emailing [rees.centre@education.ox.ac.uk](mailto:rees.centre@education.ox.ac.uk). We are recruiting local authorities to take part from term 1 or term 2 of the academic year 2019-2020 (groups of around 10-15 schools are ideal).

## Further Information

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

### Research team at the University of Oxford

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