

Alex Timpson Attachment and Trauma Awareness in Schools Programme

Newsletter – November 2020



The Alex Timpson Trust is funding the Rees Centre to develop a national evidence base on the effects of attachment and trauma awareness training in schools. This (usually) regular 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 do contact us with news from your school and suggestions for content.

This is our first newsletter for a year. Obviously all our lives have been deeply affected by the Covid-19 outbreak and we took the decision to pause most elements of the Programme between March and September 2020. We restarted again last month, mindful of the ongoing challenges being faced by schools, families and young people. We are really grateful to all those schools that have been helping us with data collection since October and onward into the future.

First results published

In October, we published our first working paper from the Programme – you can download a full copy (with an executive summary) [here](#). This was based around 1,288 staff survey questionnaires collected before the Covid-19 pandemic across 24 primary schools in eight local authorities, with a particular focus on the 494 questionnaires collected one year after their school received attachment and trauma awareness training. The key findings were as follows:

- Attachment and trauma training was well regarded by school staff across all roles
- 64% of staff reported resulting changes to their everyday practices working with vulnerable young people
- Increased emphasis on language, empathy, trust, safety and wellbeing
- ‘Emotion coaching’ emerged as a key practical technique
- Many schools have reviewed their behaviour policies and associated practices as a result
- Most staff felt that vulnerable young people had benefited from the changes resulting from the training
- Positivity about the training was highest among headteachers and other senior leaders – several reported transformational change in their school
- The training itself is the start of a vital wider conversation – a necessary, but not sufficient, step towards attachment and trauma awareness in the school



“We have re-written our behaviour policy so it is a relationships policy.”

“The strategies that we have been shown are very effective, and my confidence has increased.”

“In school we are all talking the same language and thinking about things in a similar way. It is not easy but we are trying.”

“With my knowledge now I know I would have handled situations in the past differently.”

“The research and approaches shared were based on strong evidence.”



We have also analysed data from five secondary schools, three special schools and two pupil referral units which was collected in the same period. We have not yet published the results of this analysis, but the findings broadly echo those for the primary schools as outlined above.

We will be turning next to analysing the data collected from pupils and the interviews with school staff conducted between 2018 and early 2020. We are intending to publish these working papers in early 2021.

Webinar series

Our webinar series is designed to showcase interesting developments around attachment and trauma awareness work in schools. The webinars are open to all with an interest in the topic and there is need to pre-register. You do not need any specialist equipment or software to join a webinar – there will be a chance to ask questions by online chat or you can just listen in. You can find recordings of our previous webinars at www.youtube.com/reescentre.

Our next webinar will take place on Wednesday 18th November between 4pm and 5pm. The presenter will be Lizzie Watt from Derbyshire Virtual School and she will be talking about the attachment aware schools programme that she has been leading since 2014 and involving over 80 schools.

The webinar is free – more details and the link to join the webinar are available here:

www.education.ox.ac.uk/events/leading-an-attachment-aware-schools-programme-the-local-authority-experience



Programme update

We're delighted that the Programme is now active in **25 local authorities** across England – since the last newsletter we have welcomed Sutton, Salford, St Helens, Trafford and Wiltshire, while several local authorities have recently added new cohorts of schools. A total of **277 schools** have now had their attachment and trauma awareness training or have it booked in for the near future. We are confident about meeting our target of 300 trained schools by the end of the 2020/21 school year – because of the Covid-19 pandemic, some of the training sessions are being offered online.

As noted above, we have just restarted collecting data from school staff and pupils, with quite a backlog to work through. If your school is one of those we have contacted recently, we are immensely grateful for your help with this in difficult circumstances. We believe that attachment and trauma awareness is going to be even more important in the coming post-Covid world, so it is important that we are able to understand how things are changing in schools as a result of the training.

Exploring teacher training

We have recently started a small research study as part of the Timpson Programme looking at how universities include attachment and trauma awareness in their teacher training courses – if they do. We are going to be interviewing academic staff at 12 contrasting universities to find out more about what coverage of these issues new teachers are offered and how it is integrated into an already-packed curriculum. We expect to report on this work in Spring 2021.

ARC Annual Conference

The Attachment Research Community (ARC) Annual Conference will be held on 24th November this year, but due to lockdown it will be delivered online only. The keynote speakers include Paul Dix, Barry Carpenter and Kim Golding, while Neil Harrison from the Timpson Programme will be part of a panel discussion about how research is put into practice in schools.



More details about the conference and booking instructions can be found here: www.the-arc.org.uk/events/2020-arc-annual-conference.

Contact us

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