

WELCOME

Hello and welcome to the first of what will be our quarterly newsletter!

Following your feedback from a recent survey, these updates have been implemented to keep you informed about all the great things going on across our centres and act as a reminder for key dates and events.

I think it's most appropriate to begin with a huge THANK YOU - to our staff, our learners and our parents and carers for showing such amazing resilience and commitment through what has been a very difficult two years.

Despite the challenges thrown at us, physically and mentally, by the pandemic, we were able to remain open, adapt quickly to provide a virtual learning alternative for those who could not come in and keep attendance levels surprisingly high.

Our five-year attendance rate is fantastic, and we're looking forward to welcoming new students at the next intake in June as pressure on the local authorities ease.

We've also engaged a professional company to film and edit some promotional videos that give real insight into what we are about through the eyes of the learners themselves, so keep an eye out for those in the next few weeks.

And now that we are (hopefully) coming out the other side, what better time to share all the wonderful developments and success stories from SWRAC and exciting things to come?

I trust you'll be inspired by the content of this newsletter and rest assured that we are continuously looking for ways to improve the learner experience and outcomes from within our centres.

If you have any additional questions or feedback in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at adriangunner@swrac.ac.uk.

Adrian Gunner

ADRIAN GUNNER
MANAGING DIRECTOR



GOOD OFSTED RATING - SEPT 2021

“*Inspectors met with learners with high needs who had overcome significant barriers to learning, particularly related to anxiety, as a result of the care and support provided by SWRAC's staff.*”

WORK EXPERIENCE

An area of our programme that was probably hit hardest, but is now bouncing back with gusto, is work experience.

As businesses return to 'normal', we have welcomed new and returning employers into the SWRAC family, including many in retail and hospitality as well as new collaborations with Bournemouth, Poole & Christchurch (BCP) council. The local authority will be offering work experience opportunities to our learners across a whole range of their activities.

Other exciting arrangements are also on the cards. We have just signed a contract with RSPB Radipole which enables our learners to operate and manage the visitor centre at the world-famous nature reserve.



This is a really exciting opportunity for our learners, giving them the chance to have great work experience in the catering, customer services and environmental sectors. We are also in discussion with a major cosmetic brand in Poole who will potentially offer both work experience and paid employment.

Last month we hosted an employer event, with over 20 companies in attendance, all keen to learn how they can support young people with Special Educational Needs.

KEY DATES

08/04/2022 - Break for Easter (exc THRIVE)

14/05/2022 - Mini Spring Fayre (Dorchester)

04/06/2022 - Next quarterly SEND intake





BOSCOMBE CENTRE UPDATE

Kerry Pedder

This year has got off to a fantastic start at our Boscombe Centre. Last month we had 12 new starters, which is always exciting, and we're looking to welcome more new learners at our next intake in June.



The student council is back in full swing after a short break during Covid,

meaning our learners can fully immerse themselves in supporting how things are run here and also get a taste of what it's like to be involved in decision making and idea sharing. They are doing amazingly well at being a voice for the entire student body.

Since Covid restrictions eased, there's been a big focus on health and wellbeing too. We've introduced weekly three-hour sessions, outside of the usual curriculum, to get out and about and do some physical exercise as well as mindfulness activities. This month's theme is photography where we spend time going into the forest and take photos of what interests us. Absolute Music have returned to work with our learners on another music project as well!



Alongside this, we've started Tuesday night football. About 14 students have come along to the first few sessions, run by Sam, who also happens to be a trained football coach. It's great to see learners across all courses and age groups getting involved and we hope this will become a permanent fixture.

Finally, youth group Chatterboxes has been working with our students on producing educational videos specifically for employers. They will be able to hear straight from the horse's mouth how offering work experience or placement opportunities will help our learners, and the support they need to succeed.



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'THRIVE' THRIVING

Rachel Rainsbury

Our THRIVE project is quite literally thriving. The supported internship with BCP council, for which we are providing the education aspect, began in September 2020 with just one learner and has now blossomed into a successful programme with 10 wonderful learners about to graduate.



This full-time course is designed to support people aged 16 to 30 who may have been out of education or work for some time and need to regain some momentum. Closed only for Christmas, it operates like full-time employment, with students responsible for booking leave and managing individual tasks. It aims to support learners with Independence, Community, Employment and Health.

THRIVE is unique in the way it delivers the 'Preparing for Adulthood' outcomes, using tailored records and monthly goals to meet individual targets alongside group activities and one-to-one sessions.

Our learners have come such a long way, growing in confidence, independence and social skills. You will often find our team out and about exploring communities, exercising at the gym or collecting their weekly food items from a wide range of shopping markets.

The students have also formed lasting friendships, which is a huge step for many of them.

**SWRAC, Merley House,
Merley House Lane,
Wimborne, Dorset,
BH21 3AA**



DORCHESTER CENTRE UPDATE

Tracy Perren

Although our Dorchester centre has only been fully operational for two years, we are already seeing some great success stories.

Being in such a tranquil and peaceful environment surrounded by farmland, the site is especially loved by our learners who flourish in an outdoorsy and practical setting and love getting their hands dirty - quite literally.



Our animals - three donkeys, six goats, four sheep, seven chickens and a peacock - are all cared for by our learners and are a regular feature in our day-to-day vocational curriculum. Planting and gardening in our vast outdoor space is also something our learners love to get involved in.



Being a newer and smaller centre, we only support around 20 learners currently and have recently held a number of open days for other local organisations to show them what we are about. The learners have been fantastic in supporting us with these, making teas and coffees and showing visitors around! So we are looking forward to welcoming more learners to the centre soon.

With the success of the THRIVE programme at Merley House, we are also nearing completion of a classroom conversion to a self-contained flat which will give more young people access to this fantastic course in the west Dorset area.



Spotlight on...

SENCO



Anna

Laura

Zoe

As our wonderful SENCO team expands by welcoming Anna, we thought we would remind you of the great work they do with our learners across the organisation. Zoe and Anna are supported by Laura, our EHCP Coordinator, and play a critical role in supporting tutors, LSAs, Senior Management, parents/carers and young people in many different ways.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinators are here to identify the learners who may have additional needs and work alongside them and the team to ensure they have everything they need to reach their full potential. Whether it's challenges with vision, hearing, speech or language or physical or sensory needs, we aim to remove any educational barriers and give young people the best learning experience possible.

Rest assured we aim high every time - even if we have to stand on tiptoes to get there - and if we haven't crossed paths yet, we'll be sure to introduce ourselves as and when learners need our support.

We look forward to seeing many of you at your EHCP meetings or in and around centres. If you have any questions or comments at all, please get in touch at zoeread@swrac.ac.uk, laurafry@swrac.ac.uk or annazarb@swrac.ac.uk.

Our 'door' is always open.



LEARNER'S VOICE

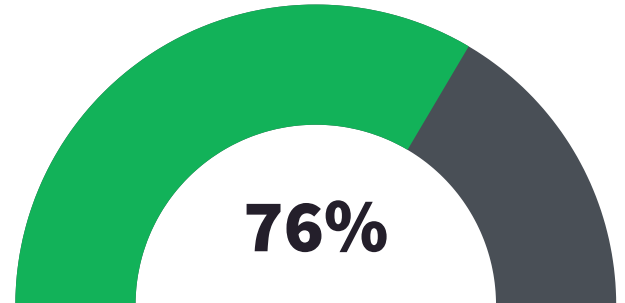


Ben is currently on our Get into Work course and recently completed a placement with the Carlton Hotel in Bournemouth. The team were so impressed with his positive attitude and commitment, that he has now secured a weekend job there in the Food and Beverage team. When he finishes the SWRAC course, he plans to take on more hours.

"I like the fun activities and being able to meet people for social skills [on the course]. I also like the work experience part as it have given me a job and I have grown as a person with confidence. The staff help me to go down the right path and the job coaches help explain more in a simple format.

"[At The Carlton Hotel] I have been doing table layouts in the restaurant, polishing cutlery, setting up tables and also helping guests to their rooms with their bags. I have also helped in the bar by restocking the fridges and in the wine cellar downstairs. My favourite part is helping the guests and making sure they know their way around the hotel. I like to put a smile on their faces."

BEN



76%

FACT: Percentage of our learners that went into employment, education or meaningful activity in the last 12 months.

WE NEED YOU...



GIVE US FEEDBACK

Watch out for a Survey Monkey link which will give you a chance to give us your feedback. We are keen to know how we can improve and are always grateful for your input. If you have anything that you think we would like to know in the meantime, pop us an email to mail@swrac.ac.uk.

BECOME A JOB COACH

Would you or anyone you know be interested in becoming a job coach? This is a paid role that involves supporting learners on work placements, visiting them on site and acting as a liaison between us and the employer. Visit our website, www.swrac.ac.uk if you'd like to know more.

COVID LATEST

We will continue to follow Government guidelines closely and are currently recommending that staff and learners take a Lateral Flow test twice-weekly and isolate for five days in the event of a positive result. For additional updates or to provide specific feedback, please email mail@swrac.ac.uk