



WELCOME

I wanted to start by paying tribute to one of our colleagues and friends, Sam Page, who passed away in January following a brave four-year fight with pancreatic cancer.



Sam joined us in 2009 in a senior administrative & personnel role, to ensure that we were kept on the straight and narrow as we grew. I knew Sam from a previous employment and it was with absolute delight that she was able and willing to bring her enormous talents to help us as we developed.

One of the many things that people tend not to realise about the education sector is how so amazingly complicated all the required behind the scenes activity is and how serious the consequences can be if anything goes wrong. Sam was somehow able to keep all the balls in the air and manage everything that was thrown at her - all with competency, good grace and humour.

On a personal note, Sam was great fun, mischievous, optimistic and always happy. Toward the end of her fight, Sam was so brave and still maintained her positive outlook. In the run up to Christmas this year, after Sam had stopped working for us, she organised a secret 'elf on the shelf'. Each day we came into a different scene without knowing who had done it, which brought so much joy to the students and staff alike.

The extraordinary efforts she must have gone through to come in without being noticed through all her pain just to cheer people up. What an example of such a lovely person.



We say goodbye not just to a work-colleague, but a close friend whom we are lucky to have known. We have so many memories to look back on and her influences at SWRAC will ensure her memory lasts for a long time. She would certainly not want us to mourn but rather remember so many adventures gone through together, so many problems solved, so many fun times had and the legacy of a lovely group of people involved in an organisation that seeks only to do good.

Farewell Sam, until we meet again.

Adrian Gunner

ADRIAN GUNNER
MANAGING DIRECTOR

LIVERPOOL LIVE!

Bev Kennedy



I'm delighted to announce that our Liverpool Centre is officially open!

In November, we enrolled some fantastic young adults on both our Prepare for Life and Prepare for Work Programmes. We have already seen huge progress in confidence, motivation and life skills, with all of our learners settling in very well.

We have enjoyed exploring our local community, visiting places such as libraries, museums and community centres, whilst incorporating travel training.

Our students have also been gaining independence by learning about healthy lifestyles and living independently.

In January, our Prepare for Work students started working very closely with a local community project called 'The Big Onion', which is an enterprise to help support new entrepreneurs. Our Prepare for Life students have joined forces with a project called 'Bloom' which helps to keep the local area clean and tidy, as well as planting flower beds.



Our team is currently made up of four staff, including myself, two tutors and a learning support assistant, who is currently completing her teaching qualification. They all bring extensive knowledge and experience in SEND education to the college.

It's a fantastic space here, with the capacity to support around 100 learners. We have created a very friendly and comfortable environment to ensure our centre has a home from home feel.

With many events and open days planned, we are very excited to welcome more young adults this month on our next enrolment, who we can help reach their full potential.



BOSCOMBE CENTRE UPDATE

Kerry Pedder

After a smooth changeover in November, we quickly started gearing up for some festive fun at the Boscombe centre.

A particular highlight was the Christmas party where around 70 learners and staff got together to enjoy homemade food and games. The young people entered into a Christmas card competition too which were published.

The students also raised over £100 for Macmillan Cancer Support coffee morning as part of their social action project. They made the cakes, teas and coffees and we invited visitors from outside the centre, including the local councillor.



A highlight was the Golf Catcher internship being featured on BBC news! The coverage focussed on the positive impact on the business as well as the learners, some of whom were interviewed and really did us proud.



[WATCH "Special education college calls for more work experience placements"](#)

Over the next few weeks we will be looking at healthy eating habits after over indulging and work placements are being set up for the vocational study learners.

At Project Search, the interns are preparing for their next rotation. They'll be going through the usual interview process as if they were applying for a job and have come on leaps and bounds. The job coaches have drawn back and the young people have developed excellent time management skills, getting to and from placements independently.

DORCHESTER CENTRE UPDATE

Tracy Perren

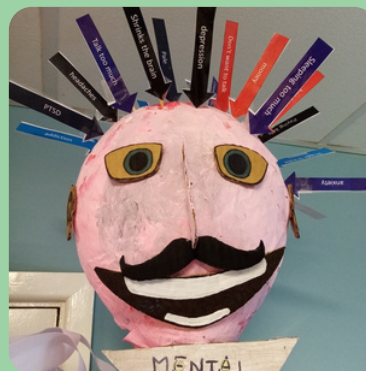
What a productive couple of months we've had here at Dorchester!

As you can imagine, a lot of our activities and learning were Christmas themed, with excellent results. Despite the appalling weather, our RSPB Christmas Fayre went down a storm. The all-day event was well attended, with plenty of stalls selling food, arts and crafts. Our learners had their own stall with games such as pin the tail on the reindeer and a Tombola and raised almost £800 for RSPB.

We also attended the Christmas Cracker in Dorchester with our own stall. The young people raised £273 for the centre by selling crafts they had made themselves like wooden decorations, cards and mugs. We're now having a ballot to decide what to do with the money, but I think it will go towards funding a nice trip out.



Just before the Christmas break, the vocational study learners cooked and served a Christmas lunch for everyone which was a huge success as well.



On the Prepare for Life Course, the students have been focussing on mental health. Our fantastic tutor, Natalie, helped the learners to visualise all the things that can impact our mental health which resulted in an impressive and very

striking papier-mache model using lollipop sticks. They are now doing a body image project, creating cement-dipped t-shirts.

In other news, we now have seven people on the Thrive course here and are currently in discussions with MacDonalds about offering supported internships in the local restaurants.



Safer Internet Day 2023



ONLINE SAFETY

BEV GOWMAN

In preparation for Online Safety Day, which took place earlier this month, we've been working on an awareness project that aims to help educate our learners on how to stay safe when using the internet.

We encourage everyone to have a conversation with the whole family about:

1. What do you they like to do online? Play games, read articles, use social media, banking, etc?
2. Do they know how to keep their personal information safe, by changing passwords regularly for example and not sharing sensitive information like address and account numbers?
3. Are they aware of privacy settings and how this impacts them?
4. Do they know how to stay safe or where to go to get help and advice if they are unsure?

To help you get started, here are some useful resources:

[Parents and Carers - UK SAFER INTERNET](#)

[Keeping children safe online - NSPCC](#)

COMING SOON



We will be working with the Citizens Advice Bureau to bring CAB adviser sessions into our Boscombe centre to offer help and advice to our young people and their families. More information to follow!

WHAT IS CEIAG?

As you probably know, a core focus at SWRAC is about supporting people far beyond their time with us and into the future, and this is where our amazing Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) team comes in.

Made up of Lorna Clark and Andrea Bennett, the role of this department is to help our learners think about and explore what they want to do and achieve in life and work and help them make it a reality where possible, taking ownership of their decisions.

Working closely with the students, Lorna and Andrea create a safe and encouraging environment where people can go on a journey of self-discovery. In several face to face sessions, our Careers Advisors aim to find out what our learners like and dislike, their current and aspirational skills, what they think they want to do as well as help them understand the full range of other opportunities out there (locally, nationally and even internationally) that they may never have realised were available.

Their work also involves taking students on visits to other educational settings and business premises too as well as CV, application and interview support.



With over 20 years' experience in a careers guidance role, working with adults and young people with complex special needs, Lorna (left) has now been with SWRAC for more than two years.

She said: "Our job is about exploring individual interests of the students and broadening their horizons. Much mainstream careers advice is limited to the time the careers adviser has available, but here we like to get to know our learners and push the boundaries so we can be responsive to their individual needs."

The team is also there to provide support and guidance relating to anything that affects the students in every day life, from mental health signposting to housing and benefits.



Andrea (left), who joined SWRAC seven years ago after supporting adults in a different service, but in a similar role, added: "The best thing about what we do is seeing the development of a young person, from being disengaged and disinterested to confident and flourishing."

Our careers advisers are also on hand to support parents and carers too and are currently developing a booklet for learners to work through.



THRIVE UPDATE

Rachel Rainsbury

To kick off this latest update, I'm delighted to report what a resounding success the Thrive Christmas lunch was.

The students did an absolutely incredible job of preparing, serving and clearing away a festive feast for around 40 people. It was topped off with a surprise presentation where we gave them individual hampers to say a special thank you, which they thoroughly revelled in and enjoyed.

Prior to this, our partnership with AFC Bournemouth saw the learners take a tour of the Vitality Stadium. They were shown around the entire facility including the pitch and changing rooms, which was pretty exciting, and they were also told about different kind of work opportunities available there.

The AFC Bournemouth Community Trust were very welcoming towards our learners and have also offered to deliver anti-bullying and online safety workshops in the coming weeks, followed by fortnightly football sessions in the spring/summer.

Our community placement project is progressing too which aims to get the learners into volunteering roles in the local community in places such as cafes and retailers.

We now have 10 Thrive learners based at Merley House in total, including five who joined in September. One student was very anxious about the programme initially, only coming in on a part-time bases, but enjoyed it so much that they've now gone full time, which is really positive.

As a fun incentive, we've also created a reward system where the learners can earn free time to spend doing what they want. If they successfully complete all of their daily and monthly jobs, like cleaning, maintaining the plants and monitoring the register, they'll get up to an hour off. So far, the reward time has been largely spent fine-tuning their gaming skills on the X-box!



Spotlight on...

ADVISORY BOARD

Viv has been part of our Advisory Board for four years now, but her relationship with SWRAC began when she was working with the local authority looking after the SEND provision in the area.



Working collaboratively with Adrian and the team, Viv was impressed at the way the organisation embraced and successfully delivered initiatives, so when the opportunity arose to join SWRAC, it was a perfect match.

Having worked at both local and central government level in education, training and SEND provision most of her career, Viv offers a wealth of experience as the Chair of the Board.

As well as preparing the agenda for each meeting and making sure we stay on track in terms of objectives and reports, Viv leads on safeguarding alongside fellow board member, Martin Vowles. This involves going out once a term to the various sites, reviewing measures in place and observing lessons to understand what the learners know about safeguarding.

Viv said: "There's never a dull moment at SWRAC. Not only do I enjoy how informal yet productive the Advisory Board meetings are, I love seeing how engaged the learners are. Being on site regularly is a real treat and an opportunity to follow the growth and achievements of everyone. The organisation has come such a long way and it's been great to witness and be part of that."



SAVE THE DATE - MONDAY 20TH MARCH

We will be holding drop in sessions for learners, parents and carers with [SENDias4BCP - MORE INFO](#)



CONTACT INFORMATION

DESIGNATED DEPUTY SAFEGUARDING LEADS

NAME	EMAIL	PHONE
Adrian Gunner	adriangunner@swrac.ac.uk	07841 784000
Andrea Bennett	andreabennett@swrac.ac.uk	07860 773939
Tracy Perren	tracyperren@swrac.ac.uk	07834 730347
Kerry Pedder	kerrypedder@swrac.ac.uk	07706 297613
Maria Fincham	mariafincham@swrac.ac.uk	01202 848099
Bev Kennedy	bevkenedy@swrac.ac.uk	01202 848099

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

Viv Green	vivgreen@swrac.ac.uk	01202 848099
Martin Vowles	martinvowles@swrac.ac.uk	01202 848099



01202 848 099



mail@swrac.ac.uk

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

DORCHESTER CENTRE

Poundbury Road
Bradford Peverall
Dorchester
DT2 9SL

LIVERPOOL CENTRE

Sefton Investment Centre
375 Stanley Road
Bootle
L20 3EF

BOSCOMBE CENTRE

22 Sea Road
Bournemouth
Dorset
BH5 1DD

THANK YOU!