



## WELCOME

We hope everyone found our first newsletter informative and that you're all finally able to start enjoying the summer now that the sun has made an appearance.

Our learners have certainly been making the most of the better weather, with plenty of outside activities taking place over the last couple of months including tennis, a Jubilee BBQ in Dorchester and travel training day to Poole Quay.

It's been full steam ahead for those following an academic year, who have been busy preparing for a transition to work experience, employment, external colleges or onward SWRAC courses. We're confident we'll have some very positive statistics for you in the next newsletter.

Meanwhile, the whole team have been working really hard to enhance the learning experience internally, with plenty of new experiences and workshops going on, which you'll find out about here.

I, personally, have really enjoyed our student council meetings as it's a great opportunity to engage with the learners. They're doing an excellent job of reviewing our website and will be encouraging the rest of the student body to report back more ideas for improvement across the organisation.

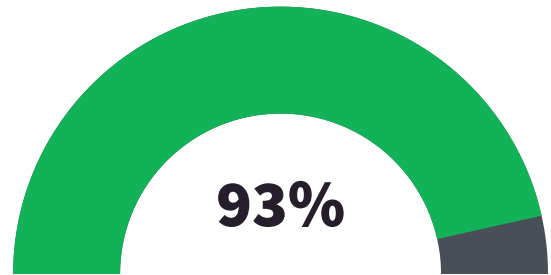
The Advisory Board, which you will also read about, has welcomed Rosie Knapper, who has many years' experience in education and working with young people at Dorset County Council.

The attendance rate also continues to improve and we've held some fantastic taster days for new learners joining us later in the year.

As always, if you have any additional questions or feedback, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at [adriangunner@swrac.ac.uk](mailto:adriangunner@swrac.ac.uk).

*Adrian Gunner*

ADRIAN GUNNER  
MANAGING DIRECTOR



**Attendance rate, up from 90%**

## WORK EXPERIENCE

Penny Bailey

Well, after a fairly stagnant 2021 due to Covid, our work experience department has certainly made up for it this year! We've been working flat out over the last couple of months, particularly because a lot of our learners are due to finish their current programme.



At the time of writing, 95% of our learners have arranged work experience, many with potential to result in paid employment, or long term meaningful activity.

Having made several new and exciting business connections over the last 12 months, some of the employers include Golf Catcher, Wickes, AutoLynx Garage, holiday clubs and nurseries.



One of our newest Partners, Lush, not only held a fantastic workshop at Boscome (see update from Kerry), but will also be taking on two learners for work experience in their Bournemouth and Poole stores. This ranges from 20 hours per week for three weeks to every Friday ongoing.

The Radipole Lake Café is now up and running and the learners there have already hosted an amazing soft launch following some rehearsal lunches with staff. Come and join us for a cuppa! :)

We also worked with BCP to launch the Project Search Assessment day, It was a huge success with five of our young people being confirmed for placement starting in September 😊.

We will continue to make more connections in the local community which will develop into some exciting educational and work experience opportunities which we can share in the next newsletter.



## **BOSCOMBE CENTRE UPDATE**

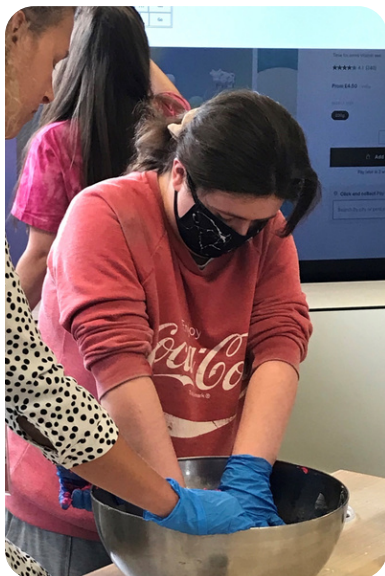
Kerry Pedder

This last term has been really successful, with so many positive things going on.

Firstly, with the post-16 and traineeships academic years coming to an end, we've been working with our learners to prepare for next steps. Our Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) has been supporting the learners in the run up to exams, helping them to stay calm and not get too stressed.



We've also been looking at work experience and college for many of our learners, with around 30 due to move on in July. We are hoping these will develop into employment, college and apprenticeships while a handful will be staying with SWRAC to complete a traineeship.



Lush came in to host an experience day, which was fantastic for many reasons.

The purpose was to acknowledge that some people have deep sensory needs and they wanted to get our learner feedback and participation on soaps, slimes and other products and the textures and smells.

Everyone from the whole centre got involved making some cosmetics.

It's not often groups from different programmes get to do something together, so it was nice and worked very well.

The student council have started working on reviewing the main SWRAC website. We are keen to get their input from a user perspective and whether they feel it accurately explains what we do and who we help. We'll be making suggested amendments in the coming weeks.

Finally, we've been given a weekly slot on Hot Radio sharing a joke of the week. Here are a couple of our favourites. Listen out for us every Friday.



## **SWRAC STAFF GETS PUBLISHED!**

Our lovely SEND Co-Ordinator, Anna Zarb, has had a children's book published. Inspired by her pet West Highland Terrier, Thistle, and background in animal behaviour.

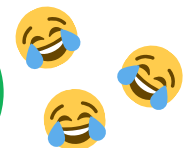


Aimed at 8-10-year-olds, it tells the story of two dogs who visit a farm with their family and land themselves in a little bit of trouble because of the way they treat the farm animals. Will they learn how to change their behaviour? You'll have to buy it to find out!

Available in WHSmith and Waterstones and online via Amazon.

**How does NASA arrange parties?**

**They Planet!**

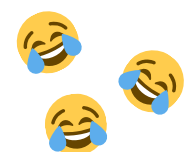
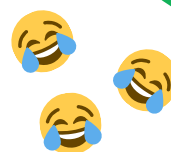


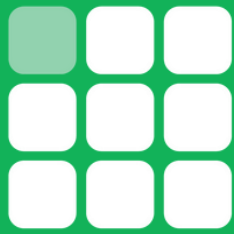
**How do you wake up Lady Gaga?**

**Poker Face!**

**What kind of tea is hard to swallow?**

**Reality!**





## **DORCHESTER CENTRE UPDATE**

Tracy Perren

We've had a wonderful couple of months here at Dorchester. A particular highlight being the Befriending Initiative that the learners got involved in.

They all wrote letters to elderly people living locally to make connections and make them feel part of the community. All having personal connections with older people themselves, it was a real joy to see the satisfaction they got from the project and how much they enjoyed it.

We're now hoping to take the Pen Pal idea to the next level, as well as host an afternoon cream tea so everyone can meet in person.

The post-16 Animal Care learners spent a day away from the rural setting and farm animals to get a feel for marine life at the Sealife Centre in Weymouth while the Prep for Work guys did a travel training day. They all proved excellent at working out the travel costs, routes and timetables.



And, of course, we can't forget the Platinum Jubilee. The staff donned Royal Family masks while the learners all dressed in red, white and blue for a street-party style BBQ at the farm. It was a fabulous day.



## **THRIVE OFFICIALLY IN DORCHESTER**

Rachel Rainsbury

Following the launch of this fantastic programme in September 2020, we are delighted to announce that our first two learners are 'graduating' THRIVE. The 19-and-23-year-olds will be transitioning to Prep to Work over in Boscombe and have already started to prepare, learning construction skills and using these to build a bug hotel and bird box.

Over in Dorchester, we have welcomed our first THRIVE learner now that the self-contained flat is up and running and expect to have more join us in September.



As part of the programme overall, catering is a big focus and we've been getting the learners to put on regular cream teas for staff, parents and carers to prepare for conference catering. The guys have been working incredibly

hard on all aspects including food preparation and service and are now confident they'll soon be able to cater for conferences for 100 people. Just brilliant!

Now that Covid restrictions have fully lifted, we've ramped up our gym project. This involves the learners going to The Junction in Broadstone, buying themselves entry and following a workout plan with individual goals. They pair up and have to work together, which has been amazing for social skills. We have been enjoying lunch in the café afterwards too and one learner has even secured work experience for when they leave in November.

Finally, we have an exciting partnership with AFC Bournemouth which will teach the learners football skills as well as tailored workshops covering topics such as equality, diversity and racism.





## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Samir Bessalem and Archie Markwell

Promoting good physical and mental wellbeing has been a focus at SWRAC for some time now and Samir in Boscombe and Archie in Dorchester are continuously experimenting with new sessions.

In Boscombe, the success of our Tuesday night football has led to our learners being signposted to an external team with Ability Counts, which is part of AFC Bournemouth community sports trust. This is great news as it encourages them to develop new social and team skills with peers outside of SWRAC.

One of the participants has also secured part time work, with Mini Soccer Advance, a local football project for children. So, some excellent community work going on.

Tennis sessions are now being held and other activities have included bowling, virtual reality centres and a trip to the New Forest.

A Yoga pilot is also being trialled and we've had 4 sessions so far which have all been well received and completely transformed peoples' perspective of this form of exercise.

As we gear up for a summer sports day, we're also fundraising for Sport Relief by completing a lap of hope. If you'd like to sponsor us, please go to our [Just Giving](#) page.

In Dorchester, the Health and Wellbeing sessions continue to have an outdoorsy focus. Den building, walks at Weymouth beach and Thorncombe Woods have all been regulars on the agenda as well as visits to a local art gallery and pottery exhibition.

We've been asking the learners to come up with some of their own ideas so we can encourage them to share in each other's hobbies and one session that went down extremely well was fossil hunting.

The sessions, which started at the beginning of this academic year, have been great for improving confidence and getting in some physical activity outside of the main curriculum.



## LINKS

### **AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust**

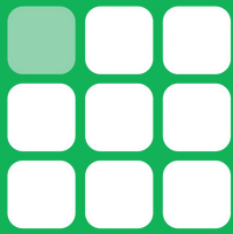
<https://www.afcb.co.uk/community-sports-trust/disability/>

### **Mini Soccer Advance**

<https://minisocceradvance.com/>

### **Just Giving Lap of Hope**

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/swrac-s-lap-of-hope>



**LEARNER'S VOICE**



Tyler joined us on our pre-16 programme in 2019 before staying on to complete the post-16 Vocational Studies programme. As he prepares to head off to Weymouth College to study animation and design on the Creative Media Level 2 course, he tells us how SWRAC has helped him get there.

*"When I came to SWRAC, I wasn't doing great and was in a pretty bad way. I just didn't like the way they taught and it was very repetitive. Here, it's been a really good balance of practical and written work with a chance to go out and have fun and play sport too. That really gets my mind in gear.*

*"It's such a nice place to be and the staff have been so supportive and there for you if you need to get something off your chest. I'm going to miss them 100% but I'm excited to go off to Weymouth College.*

*"I completed a uniformed services, construction and animal care unit at SWRAC - animal care is probably my favourite as I am an animal lover and like being outdoors - but I am also really into tech and computers, so this course seemed good. I'm doing a level 2, but hopefully can go on to do a level 3 after that."*

**TYLER**



Spotlight on...  
**ADVISORY BOARD**

In this newsletter, we wanted to tell you about our Advisory Board, and what better way to do this than from a member himself?



Stephen Young has been supporting SWRAC in this role since 2016. After serving more than 20 years in the British Army, he ran a successful heating and engineering business across Dorset and Norfolk before turning his passion to good causes.

As well as being one of the founding Directors of Helping Homeless Veterans UK, Stephen is involved in and an Ambassador for several charities. He met our Managing Director, Adrian, during a joint sponsorship project of the Vulcan at the Bournemouth Air Show and was inspired by the work SWRAC was doing with young people.

Having a son with learning disabilities himself, Stephen was enthusiastic about being on the Advisory Board, to use his own experience, skills and knowledge to encourage our learners to have ambition and reach their goals.

Also a trained councillor, Stephen really enjoys giving back to the community in any way he can.

The Advisory Board meets monthly across our various sites to support the leadership and management team. They help us to ensure clear organisational vision, monitors our performance and financial health as well as promoting high quality teaching and learning.



**NEW SERVICE...**

We have a new drop-in service from SENDIASS.

This is for learners, parents and carers or staff who would like an informal chat, support and advice around SEND issues and EHCPs.

Recently, some of our learners have been involved in the SENDIASS Film Project and now we want them to help revamp the SENDIASS website. Let your tutor know if you want to be involved.

**Call us on 01202 848099 for more information on this service.**



**SWRAC**  
Specialist Independent College

JULY 2022 NEWSLETTER

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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**THANK YOU!**