



Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Opportunity Area Newsletter

10th January 2022

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Message from our Chair



Dear Colleagues,

Happy New Year! I hope you have all managed to have a good break and I send my very best wishes for the term ahead. We welcome Jo Kaczmarek from the DfE who will be joining the team temporarily as Delivery Lead. Jo replaces Jackie Deffley, who has been seconded to the DfE's

levelling up team, so we wish her luck in her new role.

“The only certainty is uncertainty” is a familiar saying but I would suggest there are several certainties that you can name.....for example, certainties relating to striving to meet the individual needs of every child whatever the challenges. As for the Opportunity Area (OA) programme, we shall certainly do our best to listen to your views and adapt activities to meet your needs in these uncertain times of the pandemic.

Schools, Colleges and other educational settings play a key role in addressing the barriers to learning and future employment. What is exciting about the OA programme is the way we have all learned from each other, agreed our priorities, strengthened networks in the process and seen problems as opportunities. The work will continue even when the OA funding ends. This is the fifth year of the programme and plans not just to preserve the legacy of the programme but to build upon it have already begun. The Partnership Board spent the last meeting of 2021 discussing just that.

So...good luck everyone at the start of a new year. We look forward to working with you in 2022.

With best wishes

Tricia Pritchard

Celebrations



Youth Advisory Boards Question Time event success

The Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Youth Advisory Board's (YAB) Question Time event held at Cromwell Community College was a great success. Young people were able to quiz politicians, including Mayor Dr Nick Taylor, South East Cambridgeshire MP Lucy Frazer, Cllr Ruth Hufton, Cllr Lorna Dupre and Darryl Preston Cambridgeshire's Police and Crime Commissioner about a variety of current issues.



The Youth Advisory Boards are always keen to welcome new members to find out more visit their websites [Fenland Youth Advisory Board \(20twentyproductions.co.uk\)](http://Fenland Youth Advisory Board (20twentyproductions.co.uk)) or East Cambs Youth Advisory Board (20twentyproductions.co.uk) or contact Max via Max@20twentyproductions.co.uk to discuss getting involved.

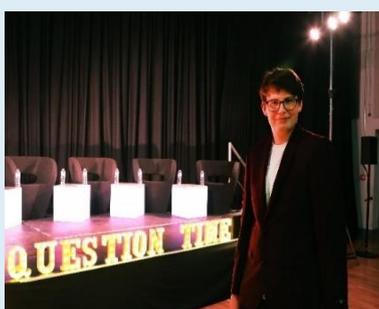
See Jack's write up of this superb event below. A huge thank you to all involved who organised and delivered such a professional well attended event

"Hi! I'm Jack, I'm 17 years old and I am the Chair for Democracy of the Fenland Youth Advisory Board (YAB). The YAB is a collective of young people and professionals funded by the Opportunity Area (OA) who help to tackle issues that affect young people in the district. Through consultation and conversation, YAB discovers these challenges to young people and then commission organisations and groups to address them.

In my role as Chair for Democracy, I work to get local politicians to engage with the YAB to help us with our goals and also educate young people on our political system and how they can engage with it. This was done in the 'Question Time' event held on 4th November, where young people could ask questions to local politicians from Fenland and East Cambs.

This event was planned by The Fenland and East Cambs Youth Advisory Boards.

On the panel, we had Mayor of Cambridgeshire Dr. Nik Johnson, Police and Crime Commissioner Darryl Preston, County and District Councillor Lorna Dupré, Leader of Doddington Parish Council Ruth Hufton, and MP for Southeast Cambridgeshire Lucy Frazer.



I was really nervous at first when I started hosting but once I got into it my confidence grew and began to build up a rapport with the panel. It was really great to see some of our local politicians showing their passion for the local area to young people who sometimes feel quite disillusioned with politics and feel that politicians do not care for them. It was also really useful to see what young people in the area cared about, from green spaces to transport to minority inclusion. These are passions I will keep in mind for the future, as a Chair of the Fenland Youth Advisory board."

Festive Fifty Things

The Fifty Things to do before you're five app, which looks to support parental engagement with their child's learning and development through low or no cost everyday activities, continues to grow in popularity, with just under 4000 users across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and 750 app users in the Fenland & East Cambridgeshire Opportunity Area (a 16% increase in the last 3 months). To promote use of the app over the festive period there was a launch of a "[Festive Fifty Things](#)" social media campaign, linking popular activities over the festive period such as baking, making Christmas cards and visiting Christmas lights to activities on the app so that families can understand how these activities can further support their child's learning and development. The social media campaign is linked to a series of handouts supplied to Early Years Settings in the area to further support parental understanding of how to carry out these activities and how they can enrich their child's developing vocabulary. As we enter the new year, we shall be further promoting the app with the campaign "2022 together", encouraging families to meet up with friends (safely) to take part in activities together.

Mental Health Training & Competency Framework

As part of the DfE Wellbeing for Education Return programme, a series of three webinars were offered to schools across Cambridgeshire to introduce the new Mental health Competency Framework. Over 125 people registered for the sessions delivered by YMCA Trinity Group, with 100% of attendees saying it was relevant and will help schools assess their training needs.

The framework forms part of a wider local collaboration to support schools, and a range of additional programmes are being launched over the coming months. Details of these will be shared in due course, including a new school's resource on the keep your head website in the new year.

Remember that all schools in the Opportunity Area can gain access to a range of mental health training from YMCA Trinity Group, and be supported to use the competency framework to identify needs. Please contact mentalhealthtraining@ymcatrinity.org.uk or call 01733 373187 for more information. For more details about the current offer visit: [SEMh Training from the YMCA \(fenlandeastcambridgeshireoa.co.uk\)](http://fenlandeastcambridgeshireoa.co.uk)

In addition to these wider staff training opportunities, a local Designated Senior Mental Health Lead training package that schools can use the DfE grant funding for, is being designed in readiness for September 2022. This will be based on local need and will be developed in collaboration with local service providers such as the local authority, NHS and YMCA Trinity Group. More details will follow later in the year, but you can register your interest by contacting YMCA Trinity Group using the details above.

Opportunity Area Evaluation Survey

Here at the OA we are keen to understand the impact that our projects and activities are having in your school, college or early years setting. We therefore invite you to complete this [OA Evaluation Survey](#) to share your thoughts and experiences. The survey will take 10–15 minutes to complete. We have commissioned a research team at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge to evaluate the range of OA-supported activities this year. Thank you to the team for developing this survey for us. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Dr Sonia Ilie via isi22@cam.ac.uk.



FEC Evidence Network – Evidence Advocates

East Cambridgeshire and Fenland (ECF) Evidence Network

We are establishing a local evidence network which will build on and sustain the work of the ECF Opportunity Area. This collaborative partnership has been designed in consultation with local system leaders to ensure that children in dispersed communities' benefit from the effective implementation of evidence informed practice within education settings.

What can the evidence network do you for your setting/school?

- Support schools to demonstrate evidence informed practice in line with the expectations from Ofsted surrounding School Improvement, this includes fully funded implementation training
- Support to demonstrate you are evidence led and engage with education peers beyond your school, prioritising excellence
- Fully funded CPD opportunities and release time to upskill your team
- Provide peer led support and challenge surrounding evidence informed practice
- Promote the use of evidence in education with a particular lens on the challenges faced by rural and smaller settings
- Regularly share educational research and signpost opportunities to engage in a range of opportunities including trials and evidence informed CPD

Evidence Advocates will...

- Provide support to increase confidence in identifying and implementing evidence informed practice, with specific areas of specialist knowledge
- Provide increased opportunities to access support and guidance surrounding evidence information practice
- Support practitioners to design, implement and evaluate evidence-informed projects in their own classroom or school (or in the EA's own school)
- Provide coaching and mentoring

Calling all evidence informed practitioners...

We are currently recruiting evidence advocates to support the development of the ECF Evidence Network. This is a fantastic opportunity for education providers and individuals to boost the evidence informed practice in their schools and settings, support the delivery of your school improvement priorities, and demonstrate your evidence led practice and peer networks with a fully funded supported CPD offer from January 2022 to July 2023. EAs will be provided with a fully funded robust induction programme along with half termly network meetings, led by the EEF. EAs host schools will receive reimbursement for all cover costs along with a wealth of opportunities for professional development. The maximum commitment for an EA will be no more than 20 days over 5 terms. This can be for you or a member of your staff to become and Evidence Advocate for the ECF Evidence Network.

Please complete this short expression of interest form by **Thursday 27th January**:

Microsoft Forms version: <https://forms.office.com/r/4WYfSqYcWD>

Word version: [click the link](#) (Please email to tiffany.middleton@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

Expressions of interest will be reviewed by a panel; outcomes will be shared by Thursday 3rd February.

The induction programme will take place on the following dates: 10th February 2nd March and 10th March.

Steps support materials and post-training support packages available

The Steps team has developed a set of materials that can be shared with different audiences to help explain Steps. So far, they have a **parent leaflet** and a **governor presentation** (and handout). Please contact Jacquie Cambridge Steps, Jacquie Woodcock at jacquie.woodcock@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or Informed Lead, Trauma to request a copy of these if you have not already received one.

They also offer support through District SEND Steps tutors and link practitioners. You can also attend [network meetings](#) which are held twice every half term.

Post-training support package

We have found that settings really benefit from our SEND Step On tutors' support when it comes to embedding Steps. Our team now offers a **four-hour** support package (which can be split as required). This could include but is not limited to:

- Behaviour policy (and/or other policies)
- Step On tool guidance (walk through with specific pupil/s)
- Mini plan for specific pupil/s
- Individual risk management plan/s
- Staff focus groups (thinking models, Steps tools and/or terminology)
- Staff surgery
- De-escalation, guides, and escorts refresher
- Whole-school audit of Steps journey so far and planning for next steps
- Step On tutor coaching: monitoring and evaluation of Steps in practice

The cost of this package is £250 or four 'school hours'. If you are within the **East Cambridgeshire and Fenland Opportunity Area**, or **Peterborough**, there is a [current offer](#) available to cover this cost.

For more information about Steps therapeutic approach visit [Cambridgeshire Step Learn Together](#).

Upcoming Events



SENDIASS upcoming dates for Appointments/Drop Ins

SENDIASS offers support to parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs or a disability (SEND) or have concerns that their child has special educational needs.

Fenland Opportunity Area virtual drop

- 19th January 10:00 – 12:30
- 3rd March 12:00 – 14:30 midday to 2.30pm

Contact Donna Sparrow for Fenland bookings donna.sparrow@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

These are FUNDED session for parents/carers

Spaces are limited so please book early to avoid disappointment

For more details about the support offered by SENDIASS visit: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/SENDIASS or www.facebook.com/cambridgeshiresendiass

Mental Health and Wellbeing Follow-up Support from Karin Horowitz

Each school in Fenland and East Cambridgeshire is eligible to access one funded one-hour individual webinar follow-up session with Karin Horowitz. During the session, Karin will discuss with the school how to embed learning following one of her Mental Health and Wellbeing Coaching sessions. The deadline to apply for this follow-up support has been extended to the 1st April 2022. [To apply for this support please complete the online link.](#)

OA Webinar Series Events

The OA Webinar Series has recently been updated with a number of new pre-recorded resources and upcoming live webinar sessions. All schools across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire are eligible to access this platform, to sign up please click [here](#).

Please see below the upcoming sessions:

Christine Counsell Sessions

Transforming Literacy through Knowledge-Rich Primary Humanities

- 25th January 2022 13:30 – 16:30

Karin Horowicz sessions

Six leadership styles to manage any situation

- 28th January 2022 15:30 – 18:00
- 10th February 2022 9:30 – 12:00

Leading from 'The second chair'

- 31st January 2022 15:30 – 18:00

Resilience strategies to manage pressure and achieve school-life balance

- 3rd February 2022 15:30 – 18:00

Understanding how our beliefs shape our actions and mental health

- 7th March 2022 15:30 – 18:00
- 29th March 2022 9:30 – 12:00 (REPEAT)

Courageous Conversations

- 24th March 2022 15:30 – 18:00

Gender, Power and Authority

- 28th April 2022 15:30 – 18:00
- 25th May 2022 9:30 – 12:00

Running effective meetings to get staff engagement

- 23rd May 2022 15:30 – 18:00

Leading through turbulent times and navigating with intelligence

- 17th June 2022 15:30 – 18:00
- 5th July 2022 9:30 – 12:00

Transactional Analysis and Defences

- 23rd June 2022 15:30 – 18:00

Wensum English Hub

[Wensum English Hub](#) are delighted to be working with Kirstie Page-Speech and Language Therapist and Early Years consultant to bring you a series of Free CPD Event.

EYFS reforms: What to consider if children are not on-track

- 20th January 2022 15:30 – 17:30

Embedding interventions

- 10th February 2022 15:30 – 17:30

Please note you will have to book each session individually

For more details please visit: [Wensum English Hub - Wensum Trust](#)

Free nutrition and physical activity resources

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), formerly Public Health England, have a range of totally free orderable and downloadable nutrition and physical activity resources that may be useful for providers and aid the running of sessions. These include:

Nutrition

- You can order the [Top Tips leaflet](#) to send home to parents with simple ideas on how to keep their families healthy by eating well and moving more.
- There are also a range of [recipe cards](#) as well as a [cooking tips toolkit](#) available to download

Physical Activity

- You can order [10 Minute Shake Up 'take home' packs](#) that can be used in sessions or to send home with children that include 12 Disney-themed activities that get children active.
- [12 Disney themed 10 Minute Shake Up activity cards](#) designed especially for HAF providers to help run physical activity sessions and get kids active.
- [Play leader activity pack](#) that encourages children to lead other children in activities
- [PE lesson plans](#) which are perfect for quick warm up activities or wet play sessions

Further free resource are available on the Campaign [Resource Centre](#) and [School Zone](#).

Opportunity Areas insight guides

The Department for Education (DfE) is investing £108 million over five years to transform the life chances of children and young people in 12 areas of the country with low social mobility as part of the Government's Opportunity Area programme.

Early years practitioners, leaders, providers and anyone with an interest in social mobility are invited to hear from those working hard to make a difference for children in the early years at a webinar on 25th January at 14:30 – 16:30 (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/208657489167>).

There is also a series of [Opportunity Area insight guides](#) available to read. The most recently published insight guide on early years explores: West Somerset's 'Healthy Movers', which develops children's physical literacy and self-esteem; early speech, language and communication skills projects delivered in Norwich and in Derby's most disadvantaged wards; professional development for early years practitioners on the North Yorkshire Coast; and creating a positive home learning environment in Oldham by building parents' and carers' knowledge and confidence to help their children read and write.

Sign up to the webinar (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/208657489167>), read the insight guide ([Opportunity areas insight guides - GOV.UK](#)) or contact Opportunity.Areas@education.gov.uk for more information.

DfE Funding Available for Phonics/Early Reading Provision for Schools in Cambridgeshire (Fenland LAD)

DfE Accelerator grant for phonics/early reading is a part of the [wider Covid-19 recovery work](#). There are three designated 'Accelerator Co-ordinator Hubs' across the country (North, Central & South) to oversee the programme and Learners First was designated as the Co-ordinator Hub for the Central region.

The funding is available for schools that fall within certain local authority districts, have pupil premium figures above 22% and which have not already accessed more than £500 from an English Hub. Fenland is identified as an eligible Local Area District and primary and special schools meeting the criteria would be eligible to access up to £6,000 of funding. The funding can be used to support the school to purchase phonics and early reading training/resources/materials linked to one of the DfE validated phonics programmes (it can be any of the validated programmes and can be backdated to when the DfE made the announcement on the 9th July 2021 if you have already made recent purchases).

The work with schools would be conducted remotely. The school would be required to attend a short briefing to go through some background information, complete a short audit document as part of an online conversation with a literacy specialist, and then be allocated up to £6000 with a 25% match funding requirement from the school and a follow up phone call once the purchases have been made by the school.

If your school is interested in accessing this funding opportunity, please complete [the register of interest form](#), for any further information, please contact Director of Learner First Schools Partnership, Sarah Page at spage@learnersfirst.org

Contact

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Wisbech

PE13 2JD

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Website: www.fenlandeastcambridgeshireoa.co.uk

Twitter: @FenlandEastCamb



"Our vision is for the Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Opportunity Area to become a beacon of excellence for promoting greater social mobility and transforming the life chances of every pupil"