

# Community of Practice - SEND



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# What is the Community of Practice?

Conceived by Cllr Catherine Gibbons, Executive Member Children's Services and Lifelong Learning  
Borrows from the Academic world

A Community of practitioners who want to share ideas explore concepts and models of good practice to improve their own practice

The Community promotes different perspectives as part of a healthy professional culture

The Community has common purpose – in North Somerset, this is SEND



# How does it work in North Somerset?

Original concept developed following 1:1 between Executive Member and AD Education Partnerships

An innovative vehicle for a wide range of stakeholders and practitioners to discuss the complex and challenging world of SEND

MATs and SATs invited to nominate their 'prime movers' in SEND and then invitation extended to other agencies

Chairship is shared

Work programme agreed democratically agreed

Decisions made democratically

Community self-organises through volunteering to take forward agreed pieces of work



# Why does it work?

# What is a typical meeting?

# How do we know its successful?

It's democratic

It has common purpose but is multi-disciplinary

Its real – SEND Priorities form the basis of discussions

It's challenging – challenge is encouraged, valued and respected – this gets to the heart of the issues

System leaders don't often get to talk about practice but *this* is their passion

Meets every other Friday afternoon at 3pm – attendance is voluntary but around 40 people come

Starts with a presentation, or several, or a provocation or a fact – to stimulate debate

Debate amongst community – exchange of ideas

Conclusion to debate agreed and course of action

Attendance high – even on a Friday afternoon

The work is getting done

NSPCWT are also part of the Community and

Contribute to and support its work



# Examples

## **Example 1 – Graduated Response**

The Community of Practice looked a range of tools and models for identifying SEN Needs, including the North Somerset Graduated Response

Members of the Community presented models that they liked from whatever source they liked which work for them

In groups they debated what each had to offer, agreeing that they liked NS Graduated Response but that it could be improved

Members of the Community volunteered to join one of 3 groups to look at the Graduated Response in educational phases – Early Years, School Age and Post 16. They redrafted it together and then came together to ensure there was consistency. The new Graduated Response is now in process of being printed

## **Example 2 – Recruitment Fair**

Through the discussions about meeting need, Members agreed that there was a shortage of staff in several key areas. They took the initiative between them to organise a recruitment fair which takes place on March 31<sup>st</sup> in Winter Gardens



# What next?

- Continue with work programme
- Ensure the Community is credited with its work
- Build habits and new ways of working
- Consider transferability to other areas of work